

Monaghan Town Centre First Plan:

25.02.2025



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



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An Tuaiscirt & An Iarthair
Northern & Western
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The Heritage Council



Lár Bailte ar dTús
Town Centre First



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HERITAGE
OFFICE



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Monaghan Municipal District Councillors



As Cathaoirleach of Monaghan Municipal District, I am delighted this “Monaghan Town Centre First Plan” has been developed following the extensive rounds of consultation and input from across our community. This multi-faceted document, and eventual fulfilment of its objectives, will position our town as an attractive place to live, work and visit. This plan reflects our shared aspirations, guiding principles, and will act as a catalyst in securing both public and private sector funding that will facilitate many of the proposed projects and initiatives identified in the action plan.

In an ever-changing world, it is essential that we acknowledge the challenges our town centres face but equally take account of the opportunities available to create unique place to live, work and play. This document is the result of extensive consultation with residents, businesses, and stakeholders, ensuring that every voice has is heard and every perspective considered. It harnesses various views, and develops a range of projects and initiatives that, when delivered, will enhance and preserve the town’s business and residential experience.

We recognize the importance of fostering a thriving local economy and society, creating opportunities for all, and ensuring that our public services, green spaces, and transport networks meet the needs of a growing and diverse population.

This document is not just a plan—it is a pledge to work collaboratively, transparently, and diligently toward a future that reflects the collective ambition of all those who live and work in Monaghan Town and its hinterland. I extend my sincere gratitude to everyone who has contributed to its creation and invite all members of our community to take an active role in bringing this vision to life.

Cllr. Sean Conlon **Cathaoirleach of Monaghan Municipal District**

Cllr. Raymond Aughey	Monaghan Municipal District Councillor
Cllr. Seamus Treanor	Monaghan Municipal District Councillor
Cllr. Bronagh McAree	Monaghan Municipal District Councillor
Cllr. Pauric Clerkin	Monaghan Municipal District Councillor
Cllr. Alan Johnston	Monaghan Municipal District Councillor
Cllr. Niamh McCooley	Monaghan Municipal District Councillor

Monaghan Town Team



Our town centres have long been the heart of our communities, places where people live, work, shop, and gather. However, in recent years, our town centres have faced significant challenges, including changing retail patterns, economic pressures, and the impacts of digital transformation. The Monaghan Town Centre First plan is a commitment to adapting to these trends by developing projects and policies that will ensure that our towns remain vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive spaces for future generations.

This plan places town centres at the core of decision-making, ensuring that public and private sector investment prioritises their regeneration and long-term viability. By fostering a collaborative approach between local government, businesses, and communities, we aim to create a town centre that supports the local economy, improves quality of life, and reflects the unique identity of Monaghan.

The Town Centre First approach aligns with our broader goals of sustainability, accessibility, and resilience. It encourages mixed-use development, enhances public spaces, and supports businesses to thrive in an ever-changing environment. Our vision is one where Monaghan Town is not just a place to shop, but a place to experience, innovate, and to connect with.

We extend our thanks to all those who have contributed to this plan and by working together, we can ensure that Monaghan town remains vibrant, welcoming, and economically robust for generations to come.

Aprilanna Barker and Emily McQuaid **Co-Chairs**

Monaghan Town Team Members:

Laura Hannon	Coordinator & PRO	Monaghan Municipal District
Donal McElwain	District Coordinator	Monaghan Municipal District
Glenn Mahony		Business Rep
Emer Brennan	Monaghan Tidy Towns	Community
Brian Clerkin		Community Rep
Eileen Collery		Business Rep
Gordon Read		Business Rep
Ingrid Owens		Business Rep
Paddy Sherry	Monaghan Town Tours	Community Rep
Packie Kelly	Teach Na Daoine	Community Rep
Dermot McDermott		Business Rep
Paul Bond		Community Rep
Deirdre Smyth		Business Rep

Section 1

Introduction



Introduction

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

John Mc Laughlin Architects were appointed by Monaghan County Council to develop a regeneration plan specific to Monaghan town and its environs, based on collaborative approach with the town team, local stakeholders, the town's residents and businesses.

The methodology for community-led heritage regeneration of Irish towns contained in the document “Town Centre First - A Policy Approach for Irish Towns” was instrumental to this project. The engagement with the community, a systematic analysis and appraisal of Monaghan town, underpinned by a health check process, allowed agreed objectives to be established and a series of timed, specific actions for implementation to be set out.

This project is one of our three concurrent regeneration projects for Monaghan town. In parallel to the Town Centre First strategy we developed a strategic vision for the town centre as part of the Heritage Council-funded Historic Towns Initiative. Our third task was a masterplan and Options Paper for the St Louis Convent lands on the edge of the town centre, which have been recently acquired by Monaghan County Council. These two documents are included as appendices to this report. All three studies were complementary to one another, offering a unique chance to look at the future of Monaghan from three directions, and establish a co-ordinated and ambitious vision for its future.

Through the latter half of the 20th century, many town centres have undergone significant changes, closely following economic and social changes in our society. The towns have expanded, with new homes and businesses growing outwards from their historic boundaries into the countryside. Smaller shops gradually began disappearing, giving way to shopping centres and larger stores. Roads and parking expanded into open spaces and streets, and modern buildings of increasing scale made their

way into the town centres. Small town centre houses frequently fell victims to vacancy and dereliction. The patterns of streets and laneways and the older buildings frequently adapted to these changes, remaining as recognisable features and linking the streets back to their history. The Town Centre First approach encourages the reversal of this decline through re-vitalisation of our historic town centres, adaptive re-use of existing buildings, considered densification of under-used urban sites for housing, and regeneration of public spaces.

Historically Monaghan town was shaped by its patterns of streets and buildings that gave it a distinct character. In addition to its two lakes, landmarks, squares and monuments, its more subtle features such as laneways, street railings, and trees give the town a unique identity. Our work was informed by an understanding of this historic character of Monaghan town, its relationship to the wider context, and its significance as the county town of Monaghan.

A strong community spirit of the town has emerged through our extensive consultation process, and in the active participation of the Town Team. In preparing this plan, as well as holding open public consultations, we reached out to those who may not typically attend such events. We listened to young people, community groups, representatives of local schools adjacent to St Louis site, the local heritage groups and many others. Jointly, we have developed a long term vision for the town focusing on four areas: Heritage, Living Town, Climate Resilience and Community and St Louis Lands. Actions relating to each of these topics considered national and local policies, and followed the principles of the New European Bauhaus: sustainability, beauty and inclusion.

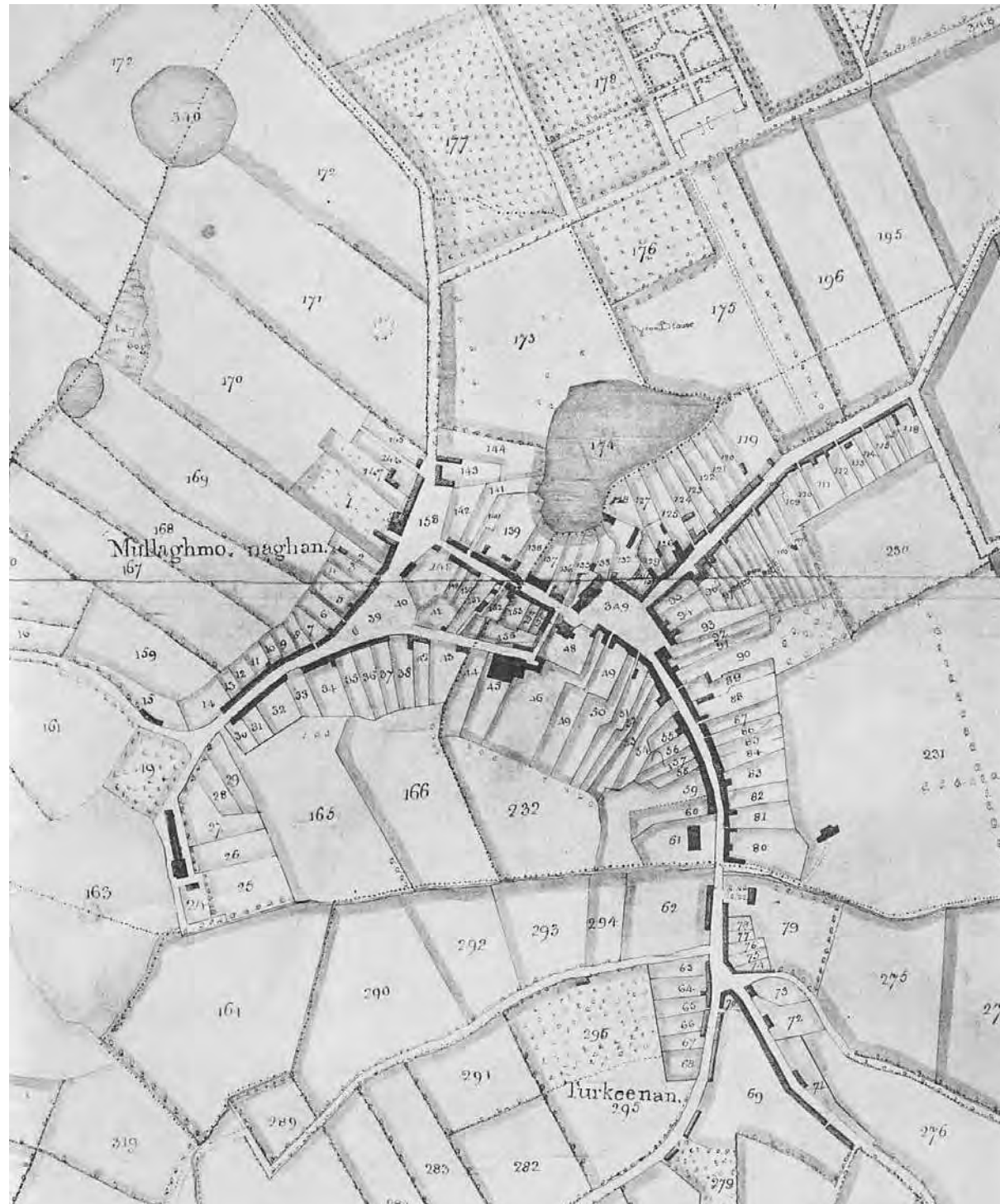
The vision, summarized at the end of this document, relies on continued community support and action, Monaghan County Council's leadership and various funding streams. The actions range from small to long-term undertakings and we hope to see the plan implemented steadily, incrementally and gaining momentum through the years.

Section 2

Baseline Research

Baseline Research

Historic Context



Map of Monaghan Town, 1787 (Historic Buildings, Groups of Buildings, Areas of Architectural Importance in the town of Monaghan, Ulster Architectural Heritage Society and Taisce)



A view of the Diamond by Eason & Son, ca. 1900- 1939 from Eason Photographic Collection



Dawson Street, 1905, T. McMahon (Old County Monaghan, Hugh Oram and Martin MacKenna)

Historic Context

Between the 12th and 16th centuries, the Mac Mahon clan became the dominant family in the Monaghan region. The fortified crannogs of the MacMahons were the earliest structures on the land that was to become Monaghan town. Historic remains of one of the crannogs is still standing on the small island on the Convent Lake to the south of the town centre. Other early military structures, including a castle and a star-shaped fort, feature on 17th century maps but have left no upstanding remains.

Earlier monastic origins of the town are also suggested on the historic maps.

Today, Monaghan town retains the layout and character of an 18th century market town, with its main streets extending outwards from its three historic open spaces: the Diamond, Church Square and Market Street, and skirting Peter's Lake.

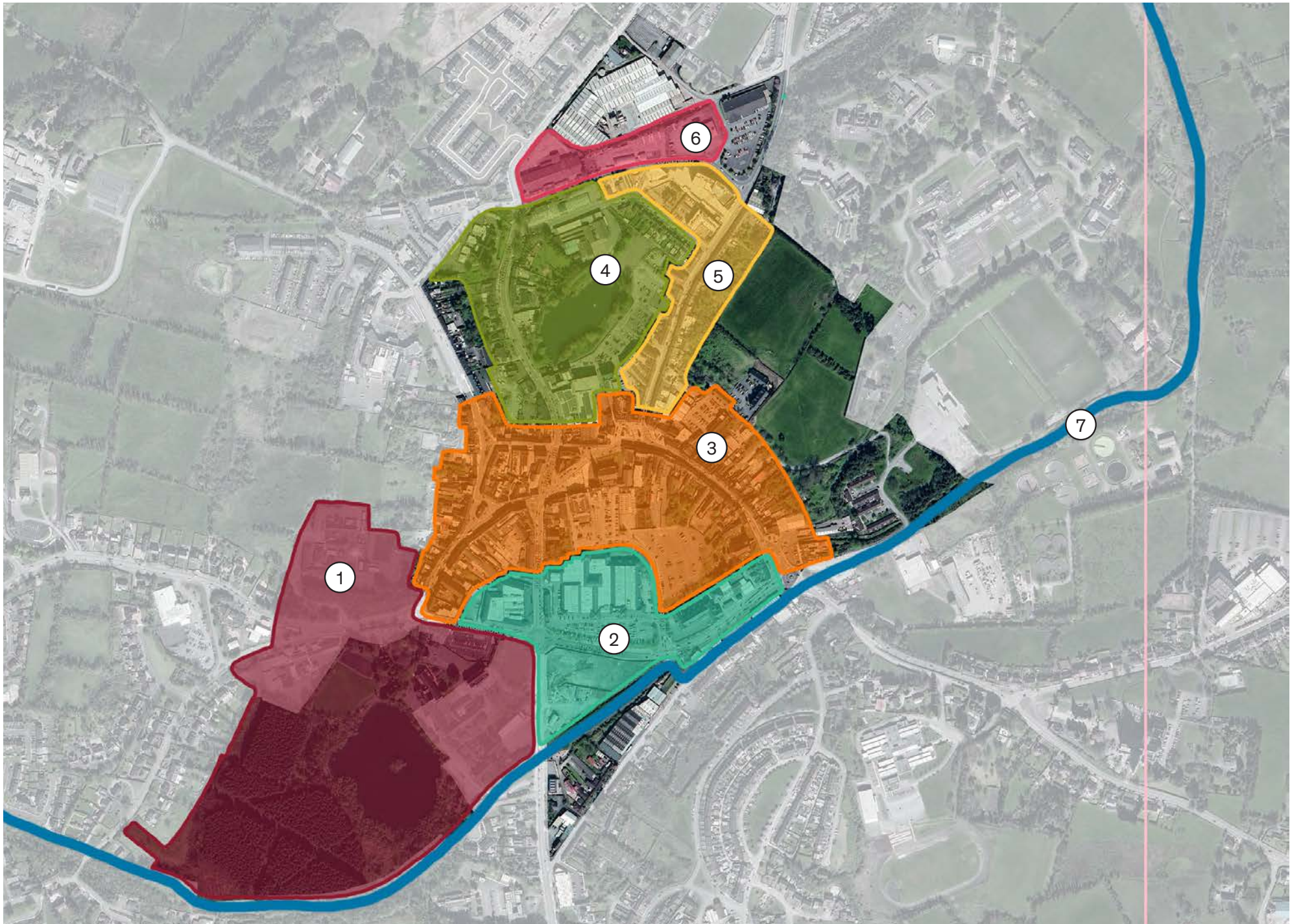
The town prospered in the 19th century, its markets and industries expanding southwards and St Louis order establishing their Mother Convent in the old brewery buildings along the Convent Lake in the mid-1800's.

Monaghan's buildings display fine stone craftsmanship, with several displaying softly rounded corners suggesting a local typology. The stone was quarried locally- hard grey limestone from quarries that have since flooded or closed.

A more detailed account on the historic development of Monaghan is contained in the Historic Towns Initiative Report at Appendix B.

Baseline Research

Historic Character Areas



Historic Character Areas

Historic Character Area Appraisal is a tool used to inform heritage-led regeneration projects. It was part of the Historic Towns Initiative (HTI) methodology and served as the basis for heritage actions forming part of Town Centre First action plan. The HTI description of the character areas is as follows:

Monaghan town has a unique identity with its urban form and buildings reflecting different periods of its development and expansion. There have been several phases in the prevailing use and building form within the town centre area, each making a unique contribution to the character of the town. The Historic Character Area appraisal below was developed to describe meaningful character areas of the modern town of Monaghan.

Monaghan Town centre can be divided into six areas, which while overlapping along their edges, display subtly different characteristics relating to the development of the town, its predominant uses, architectural or industrial character.

We have included the Ulster Canal as the seventh character area, owing to its significance to the history and development of Monaghan up to the present day.

Historic Character Area Legend

- 1. Education and Community
- 2. Broad Road Commercial
- 3. Historic Core
- 4. Peters Lake Gardens
- 5. Glaslough Street
- 6. The Northern Gateway
- 7. Greenway

Places for People: New European Bauhaus and National Policy on Architecture, Department of Housing 2022

Objective 1 is to prioritise and support sustainable practices with respect to reuse, refurbishment and conservation of buildings as well as well-considered interventions and infill, and new buildings and places, where necessary. Carbon neutrality and built longevity, flexibility and adaptability are essential to environmental sustainability;

Objective 2 is to deliver quality architecture and places, planned and designed with wider engagement and accessible to all, in rural areas and villages, towns, cities and suburbia as an essential element of social sustainability;

Objective 3 is to encourage leadership within the public sector and to show the importance of leadership at all governance levels and across the community of architects, architectural technologists and architectural conservation professionals in practice, education, engagement and policy/advisory/regulatory roles to support the delivery of high-quality built environment;

Objective 4 is to promote the architecture as a continuum, inextricably linked to society's past, present and future as both an art form and a science. This objective recognises the contribution that architecture makes to the form, character and health of places, communities and livelihoods.

Climate Action Plan: Securing Our Future, 2021 (Updated 2022)

Chapter 5: "The Climate Action Delivery Board will ensure that each department and public body is held to account for the delivery of actions set out in the Climate Action Plan."

Chapter 9: "Local Authorities, in particular, have a pivotal role to play in the decarbonisation transition, including through spatial planning, the provision of public housing and transport infrastructure, and the maintenance of biodiversity".

Chapter 13: "National Policy on Architecture has, as one of its objectives, the design of places for climate neutrality, climate resilience, circularity and sustainability. The policy will prioritise and support the integration of sustainable practices in architecture with respect to new construction, and the reuse, refurbishment and conservation of existing structures, as flexibility and adaptability are essential to environmental sustainability."

National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023–2030

The 4th NBAP strives for a "whole of government, whole of society" approach to the governance and conservation of biodiversity. The aim is to ensure that every citizen, community, business, local authority, semi-state and state agency has an awareness of biodiversity and its importance, and of the implications of its loss, while also understanding how they can act to address the biodiversity emergency as part of a renewed national effort to "act for nature".

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021

This Act sets out a road map for Ireland's transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich and climate neutral economy by no later than the end of the year 2050. This shift to a climate neutral future means that the conservation and repurposing of existing historic building stock has become increasingly more important. Existing buildings contain embodied energy which is lost if they are demolished; while the greenhouse-gas emissions involved in the demolition and replacement of a building have been calculated to take decades to recover.

National Disability and Inclusion Strategy 2019 - 2022

The National Disability Inclusion Strategy (2017-2022) aims to improve the lives of people with disabilities in various aspects of society, including employment, education, and accessibility. It focused on promoting equality and ensuring that individuals with disabilities could participate fully in their communities. The strategy emphasized collaboration between government, organizations, and individuals to address barriers faced by people with disabilities. Key priorities included enhancing support services, fostering inclusive environments, and raising awareness about disability issues. Overall, the strategy sought to create a more inclusive society where everyone has equal opportunities and rights.

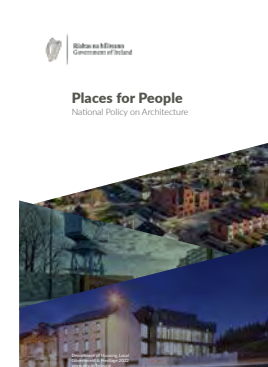
Town Centre First Policy

Launched on 4 February 2022, Town Centre First is a major cross-government policy that aims to tackle vacancy, combat dereliction and breathe new life into our town centres. It advocates for a holistic, place-based approach to sustainable rural development. Irish towns are facing significant challenges and opportunities that require a coordinated and comprehensive response.

Town Centre First (TCF) recognises that every town is unique and the policy will facilitate the response by towns of all sizes across the country so that their centres can function as the sustainable and vibrant heart of the communities they serve, in ways that are adaptable and appropriate to 21st century needs.

Architectural; Heritage Protection Guidelines 2011

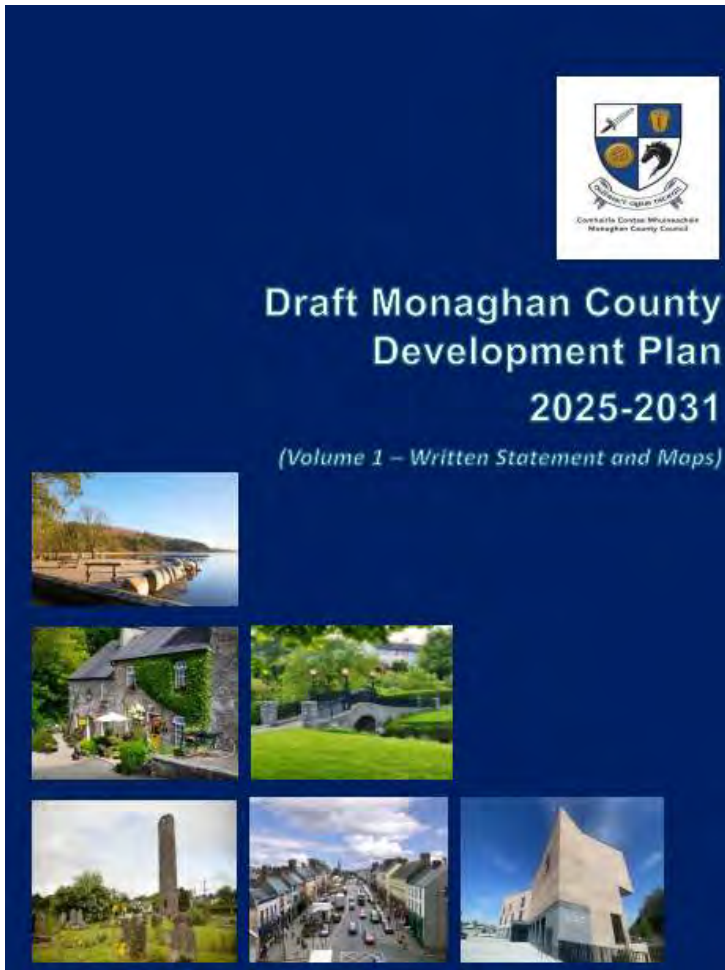
The Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2011 aim to safeguard Ireland's architectural heritage. They provide a framework for assessing and managing historically significant buildings and sites. The guidelines promote sustainable practices in conservation and restoration efforts. Stakeholders, including local authorities and property owners, have defined roles in heritage protection. Overall, the guidelines encourage awareness and appreciation of Ireland's architectural history.



Monaghan County Council

Draft Development Plan

2025-2031



HOUSING STRATEGY

- HSSO 1:** To plan for future housing in the County within defined settlements, making efficient use of infrastructure and services in towns and villages, and enabling their plan led growth, whilst facilitating sustainable rural housing where it supports rural communities.
- HSSO 2:** To guide urban residential development in a sequential manner outward from the centre of the settlements to maximise the use of existing and future infrastructure provision, to promote sustainability, to make more efficient use of underutilised lands, and to avoid the extension of services and utilities to more remote areas.
- HSSO 3:** To encourage and promote the re-use of vacant units for residential use subject to compatibility with existing and proposed surrounding uses, whilst also having due regard to the need to not adversely affect: surrounding residential amenity, protected bat species, European sites, and areas of biodiversity value; and the need to appropriately conserve built heritage.
- HSSO 11:** To encourage the acquisition of land and the activation of council owned land for sustainable housing and to promote and facilitate the provision of serviced sites within towns and villages.
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
- Goal 4:** Prioritise the targeted regeneration of the County's town and villages to address economic and community decline in rural areas.
- Goal 5:** Grow and diversify the economy and attract and create high value sustainable employment.
- Goal 6:** Foster, develop and invest in arts, culture, and the creative sector and unlock Monaghan's tourism potential to support economic growth and sustainable development.

TOURISM OBJECTIVES

- TMO 1:** To promote and strengthen the development of tourist and cultural offerings in Monaghan Town to help support its growth as a destination town within Ireland's Ancient East destination brand.
- TMO 2:** To promote the development of destination hubs in towns and villages across County Monaghan.
- TMO 3:** To support potential tourist and amenity attractions of appropriate scale in partnership with Fáilte Ireland and other relevant authorities, whilst having regard to the existing character, sense of place, distinctive features and environmental constraints and sensitivities of the Plan Area.
- TMO 4:** To promote and facilitate the sustainable use of the County's existing historical, cultural and landscape assets for tourism purposes, in an environmentally sensitive manner.
- TMO 6:** To support the reopening of the Ulster Canal given its tourism and economic potential for County Monaghan and the wider region.
- TMO 7:** To support ongoing tourism product development within the County, including the continued development of the Ulster Canal project and the expansion of the Greenway along the route of the Canal through County Monaghan.
- TMO 10:** To promote events, festivals and the development of linked tourist trails that showcase the wealth of natural, historical and cultural heritage of the County and contribute towards its unique identity and quality of life.
- TMO 16:** To support and promote tourism and recreational activity including angling and country sports, to facilitate and encourage public access to water bodies, to promote County Monaghan as a catch and release on all public waters and to facilitate the provision of supporting infrastructure such as Blueways where appropriate and sustainable.

- TMO 17:** To work in conjunction with adjoining local authorities to extend and design new walking and cycling routes that will promote sustainable tourism development and enhance access and links to the great outdoors of County Monaghan.
- COMMUNITY:**
- CFSO 1:** To protect and enhance existing community and recreation facilities throughout the County and to secure the provision of additional facilities subject to demand and availability of resources in cooperation with the relevant stakeholders, the Local Community Development Committee and their associated Local Economic and Community Plan.
- CYCLING AND WALKING OBJECTIVES**
- CFO 15:** To promote and facilitate the sustainable development of walkways, cycleways and recreational routes in appropriate locations throughout the County, in accordance with the objectives of the County Walking and Cycling Strategy 2021-2026 and any new or updated/subsequent version(s), having due regard to relevant environmental considerations, including the need to protect and enhance biodiversity, prevent habitat fragmentation, and maintain and enhance ecological connectivity.
- CFO 16:** To promote and encourage the sustainable development of walks and cycle ways in accordance with the National Sustainable Mobility Policy (SMP), Department of Transport, 2022 and to protect established routes from development which would adversely impact upon them.
- CFO 17:** To develop, in co-operation and consultation with adjoining local authorities and cross border bodies, sections of the Ulster Canal Greenway Network to connect the main urban centres throughout central Ulster.
- CFO 19:** To support the provision of safe routes between schools and surrounding residential areas to facilitate safe routes to schools, park and stride and other active travel initiatives.
- RECREATION, PARKS AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACES**

Monaghan County Council

Draft Development Plan

2025-2031

OBJECTIVES

CFO 20: *To protect established/historic railway corridors and other disused transport infrastructure routes throughout the County, primarily for strategic infrastructure provision and recreational development. Where these corridors have already been compromised by development, adjacent lands which could provide opportunities to bypass such an impediment and reconnect these routes for amenity purposes shall be protected for this purpose.*

CFO 21: *To protect and enhance public open spaces and established recreational green areas.*

CFO 22: *To support the protection of lands zoned as amenity/open space to resist the loss of existing designated areas of public open space except where a higher quality of designated open space is being provided in lieu of its loss.*

CFO 23: *To promote and support the development of cycling facilities, including a potential pump track, at appropriate locations in the County.*

PROTECTED STRUCTURES POLICIES

BHP 1: *To contribute towards the protection of architectural heritage by requiring that proposals for works shall be carried out in accordance with best practice, the legislative provisions of the Act 2000 (as amended) in relation to architectural heritage, and the policy guidance contained in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2011 (and any new or updated/superseding versions).*

BHP 2: *To review, maintain and update the Record of Protected Structures in consultation with the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage and to encourage the sympathetic conservation, renewal and repair of these structures.*

BHP 3: *Planning permission for the demolition or inappropriate alteration of any protected structure shall not be granted except in exceptional circumstances and in accordance with Section 57(10)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).*

BHP 4: *To ensure that any new development proposed to or in the vicinity of a Protected Structure will complement and be sympathetic to the structure and its setting in terms of its design, scale, height, massing and use of materials and to resist any development which is likely to impact on the building's special interest and/or any views of such buildings and their setting.*

BHP 5: *To facilitate the retention and sympathetic re-use of protected structures and their settings in circumstances where the proposal is compatible with their character and special interest. In certain instances, land use zoning restrictions and site development standards may be relaxed to secure the conservation and reuse of a protected structure and to provide a viable use for any building which is at risk by virtue of being derelict or vacant.*

BHP 6: *To use the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Derelict Sites Act 1990 to prevent the loss or deterioration of the County's Architectural Heritage.*

ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREAS POLICY

ACP 1: *To resist development that would adversely affect the character and appearance of the Architectural Conservation Areas. New development or alterations to existing building(s) in an Architectural Conservation Areas shall reflect the historic architecture in terms of scale, design and materials used. Regard shall be had to any objectives contained in the character appraisals (where applicable).*

ACP 2: *To implement and comply with the relevant guidance for Architectural Conservation Areas in relation to proposals for development.*

PROTECTED MONUMENTS AND PLACES POLICIES

PMP 1: *Development adjacent to an archaeological monument or site will only be acceptable where it is sited in a manner which minimises the impact on the monument and its setting. Development which is likely to have an adverse impact upon an archaeological monument or site or its setting shall be resisted.*

PMP 2: *To protect archaeological sites and monuments which are listed in the in Appendix 4, Recorded Monuments, (and any subsequent additions by the National Monuments Service) and to require their preservation in situ (or at a minimum preservation by record) through the planning process.*

PMP 3: *To protect the setting of archaeological sites and monuments which are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places in Appendix 4 (and any subsequent additions by the National Monuments Service) from being adversely impacted upon, co-operating with all of the recommendations of statutory bodies in the achievement of this objective.*

DESIGNED LANDSCAPE POLICIES

DLP 1: *To ensure that any new development will not adversely affect the site, setting or views to and from historic houses, gardens and designed landscapes.*

DLP 2: *To require that any proposals for new development in the vicinity of historic houses or demesnes landscapes are accompanied by an evaluation of the impact of the development on the landscape, designed views and vistas to /from such a site.*

INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

ISO 1: *To promote and facilitate the sustainable and efficient delivery of public infrastructure.*

CROSS BORDER STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

BRO 1: *To support and encourage infrastructure that ensures strong cross border transport links.*

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE OBJECTIVES:

GIO 5: *To encourage and facilitate, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, the development of Green Infrastructure that recognises the synergies that can be achieved with regard to the following:*

- *Provision of open space amenities*
- *Sustainable management of water*
- *Protection and management of biodiversity*
- *Protection of cultural heritage*
- *Protection of protected landscape sensitivities.*

Monaghan County Council

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2025-2031

MONAGHAN RECREATION, AMENITY AND OPEN SPACE

OBJECTIVE S

MPO 19: *To protect Peter's Lake and its environs as a key amenity area within the town.*

MPO 20: *To provide sufficient open space and amenity areas within and adjacent to the town.*

MPO 21: *To encourage and facilitate the provision of appropriate and sensitive recreational development within Rossmore Park.*

MPO 22: *To support appropriate recreation and amenity developments within the Convent Lands site.*

MONAGHAN NATURAL AND BUILT HERITAGE OBJECTIVE

MTO 23: *To protect natural amenities such as Peter's Lake, Rossmore Park, Tom Young's Wood, and Wright's Wood from intrusive development that would detrimentally impact upon them or their designation.*

Monaghan County Council

Climate Action Plan

2024-2029

The ambition of this plan is aligned with the Government National Climate Objectives which seek to achieve the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy by 2050

Of particular relevance , included in chapter 4 of the document is the identification of Monaghan town as a decarbonization zone and the identification of a series of actions across a wide range of stakeholder groups activities and buildings.

CLIMATE ACTION OBJECTIVES

CAO 1: *To support and encourage the implementation of the National Climate Action Plan 2024, the National Adaptation Framework, Preparing for a Climate Resilient Ireland 2024 and the National Energy and Climate Plan for Ireland 2021–2030 and any new or updated/subsequent versions during the lifetime of this Development Plan.*

CAO 2: *To promote a settlement strategy which provides for the re-use of brownfield lands, the consolidation of existing settlements and integration of land use and transportation.*

CAO 3: *To support and assist a shift to a low carbon society and a reduction in the dependence on fossil fuels in County Monaghan by implementing measures to deliver reduced energy use, energy efficiency, compact urban forms and sustainable transport patterns.*

MONAGHAN TOWN CENTRE OBJECTIVES

MTO 1: *To ensure that all development proposals within the Dublin Street North Regeneration Plan area have regard to the regeneration strategy and development objectives of the Dublin Street North Regeneration Plan.*

MTO 2: *To ensure that all development proposals within the Roosky Lands Master Plan area have regard to the master plan strategy and development objectives of the Roosky Lands Master Plan.*

MTO 3: *To ensure that all development proposals within the Dublin Street Regeneration Plan (South) area, have regard to the regeneration strategy and development objectives of the Dublin Street Regeneration Plan.*

MTO 4: *To encourage developments proposals which seek to refurbish existing buildings and backland areas in order to eliminate dereliction and reinforce the town centre.*

MTO 5: *To encourage and promote a diverse range of retail services within the town centre.*

SAINT LOUIS CONVENT OBJECTIVE

MTO 6: *To prepare and implement a Masterplan and Development Framework for the Saint Louis Convent site which will act as a blueprint for its evolution and ensure that the development of the site takes place in a sustainable manner.*

MONAGHAN RETAILING OBJECTIVE

MTO 7: *To extend the retail base of Monaghan Town as the Principal/Key Town in the County and maintain its Tier 1 designation as identified in the County Retail Strategy 2016-2022 and any new or updated/subsequent versions.*

MONAGHAN INDUSTRY, ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVE

MTO 8: *To promote Monaghan Town as the key industrial and employment centre of the County in line with its 'Key Town' status as designated in the Northern and Western Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (NWRA RSES).*

MONAGHAN ROADS AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

MTO 9: *To prepare a Local Transport Plan for Monaghan Town, during the lifetime of this plan, subject to available resources.*

MTO 10: *To implement a programme of measures to support and promote active travel in Monaghan Town, subject to funding and available resources.*

MTO 11: *To undertake feasibility and viability studies regarding the options for potential relief roads around Monaghan Town during the lifetime of this plan, subject to resources.*

MTO 12: *To protect, design and develop new road and road upgrade projects identified during the lifetime of this plan, subject to resources.*

MONAGHAN PUBLIC AND SHARED TRANSPORT OBJECTIVES

MTO 13: *To investigate the feasibility of creating a Monaghan Town Centre 'hub' that caters for public bus, park and ride facilities and taxi connections.*

MTO 14: *To plan for and develop infrastructure which will facilitate access to and encourage the increased use of public and shared transport.*

MONAGHAN TOURISM OBJECTIVES

MTO 15: *To support sustainable and well-planned festivals and events and to encourage the delivery of increased bed nights in suitable locations in Monaghan Town.*

MTO 16: *To support the re-opening of the Ulster Canal in Monaghan Town and any complementary developments along its route, including the Ulster Canal Greenway network.*

MTO 17: *To develop an Events Strategy for Monaghan Town within the lifetime of the plan, subject to available resources.*

MTO 18: *To support and encourage the development of appropriately scaled alternative forms of tourism accommodation on suitable sites within the town subject to Chapter 15 Development Management Standards.*

Consultation Summary

Public Consultation 1 - August 2024

A full day public consultation event was held at the Monaghan Shopping Centre on Saturday 18 August, as a pop-up in one of the vacant shop units. The event took place as part of the Heritage Week and was hosted by the full team from John Mc Laughlin Architects and MCC representatives. Members of the Town Team were present to give a 'local' aspect to the day. We estimated that approximately 120 persons attended.

Main objectives were:

- To inform the public of the project- funding, timescales, team, scope to participate
- To emphasise a community-led approach with the help of MCC and Town Team
- To gather targeted feedback on the community's wishes for the town regeneration.
- To gather ideas and feedback specifically on St Louis site
- Give the public an opportunity to continue to be involved in the project as stakeholders.

Format

Drop in event, full day, with themed presentation boards. The team were present to speak to the public as much as people wanted to engage. The room was arranged with spaces where the public could feel comfortable to tell stories and engage with our team over a longer period, if needed. The boards were also self-explanatory, in plain-English with several accessible interactive elements, including QR codes for an online survey, stickers/ post-its, allowing the public to contribute without engaging with the team members. A large printed aerial map of the town was positioned as a topic for discussion and as a recognisable and accessible representation of the subject area.



Consultation Summary

Public Consultation 1 - August 2024

Six display boards, represented key project themes, defined at the Baseline stage of the project and in discussions with the Town Team:

1. Introduction
2. Heritage
3. Living Town
4. Recreation and Community
5. Green Spaces & Climate Resilience
6. St Louis Convent Lands

Inclusivity and Accessibility

All graphic material was prepared with accessibility in mind, with legible font sizes and plain-English text. Graphics were designed to make the content accessible to non-English speakers and the team also had a member who was able to translate and engage with representatives from the Lithuanian community attending on the day and who have a strong presence in the town. Chairs and resting spaces were provided, as well as a separate child zone with colouring activities focused around St Louis site and heritage buildings. For those that could not attend on the day, a printed copy and a digital copy of a survey were made available, and contact details of the project lead were provided.

Sustainability

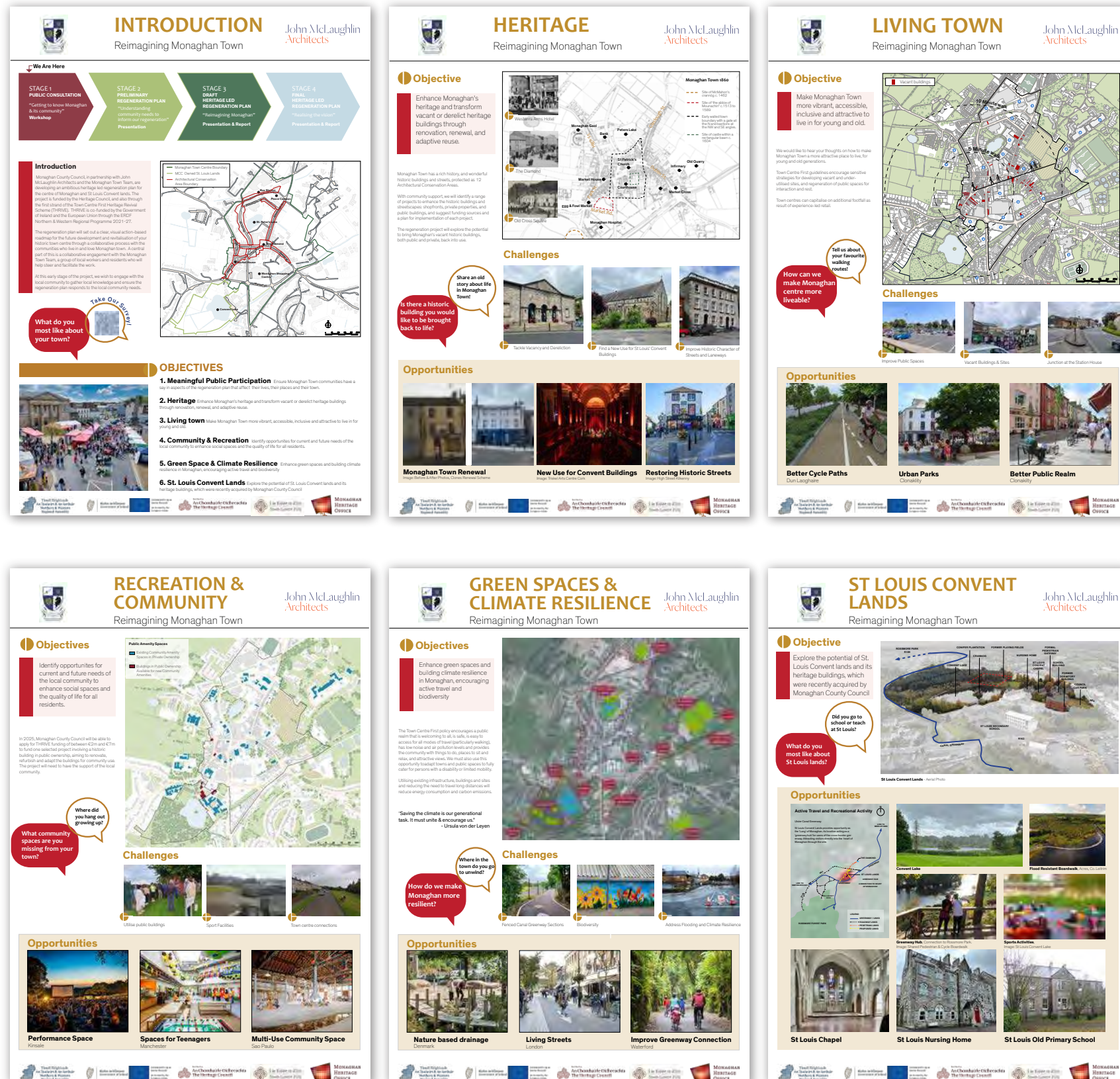
The graphic material for all consultations was printed on fully recyclable boards and paper, and were re-used at subsequent targeted consultations with two Monaghan youth groups. All consultation material- colouring pencils, post-its, etc. were collected at the end of the day for re-use.

Advertisement/ Publicity

Advertisements on social media, MCC website and PPN network, Community Alerts and Facebook page which includes 670 individual community groups in the county. An advertisement in the Northern Standard newspaper, 30 second ad on the Northern Sound radio, posters in local shops distributed by the Town Team, local Whatsapp groups by Town Team. Direct reach-out to stakeholders by email and through Town Team contacts.

Gathering Feedback

Our team took notes on the day and offered feedback forms that people could complete on the day or take home and drop them off later in the town centre MCC offices. An email address was also provided for additional feedback.



Project: Monaghan Town Centre First
Client: Monaghan County Council

Stage: Town Centre First Plan
Revision: 25.02.2025

Reimagining Monaghan - Public Consultation Survey Introduction

Monaghan Town Centre is set for an exciting transformation, and your input is vital.

Monaghan County Council have appointed John McLaughlin Architects to develop a Heritage- and Community- led Regeneration Strategy for Monaghan Town Centre funded by the Historic Towns Initiative and Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme 2024.

Our goal is to revitalise Monaghan's streets and buildings and make the town more lively, more inclusive and accessible, and more climate resilient. Our team will listen to the ideas of the residents, businesses, and visitors to inform the design. The key themes of focus are: Heritage, A town for Living, Recreation & Community, Green Spaces and Climate Resilience, and St Louis lands regeneration.

Share your thoughts on what you love about Monaghan Town and where you see opportunities for growth.

Questionnaire Deadline: Friday 23 August
Return completed survey to Monaghan Historic Towns Initiative/ Town Centre First Project Planning Offices, 1 Dublin Street, Monaghan, H18X982

Q1. What 3 things do you like most about Monaghan Town Centre?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Q2. What three things would you most like to improve about Monaghan Town Centre?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Q3. What are your priorities for Monaghan Town Centre?
Please rank the following form 1 (lowest) - 5 (highest)

☐ Enhancing Monaghan's heritage buildings and streetscapes
Comment: _____

☐ Finding a new use for vacant and derelict buildings, encouraging city centre living
Comment: _____

☐ Improving community amenity and recreation spaces
Comment: _____

☐ Making Monaghan more climate and economically resilient
Comment: _____

☐ Providing a community use for St Louis lands and its council-owned buildings.
Comment: _____

Q4. What community amenities do you think are most needed in Monaghan?
Select as many as you want

☐ Outdoor Spaces for children and teenagers

☐ Indoor spaces for children and teenagers

☐ Spaces for older persons

☐ Spaces for multi-cultural interaction

☐ Parks

☐ Sports facilities

☐ Spaces for Festivals/ Events

☐ Spaces for community groups/ organisations

☐ Spaces for artists

☐ Better facilities for visitors

Other: _____

Q5. How good is the following infrastructure in Monaghan Town Centre for movement and accessibility?
(1=Very Poor 5 = Very Good)

Footpath Quality	1	2	3	4	5
Footpath cleanliness	1	2	3	4	5
Disability access	1	2	3	4	5
Cycle infrastructure	1	2	3	4	5
Public transport	1	2	3	4	5
Traffic	1	2	3	4	5
Car parking availability	1	2	3	4	5
Car parking cost	1	2	3	4	5

Q6. How do you rate Monaghan Town Centre for the following facilities / amenities?
(1=Very Poor 5 = Very Good)

Cafes and coffee shops	1	2	3	4	5
Bars and nightclubs	1	2	3	4	5
Restaurants	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation spaces	1	2	3	4	5
Sport facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Live music and events	1	2	3	4	5
Feeling of safety at day	1	2	3	4	5
Feeling safe at night	1	2	3	4	5
Heritage	1	2	3	4	5
Tourist facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Parks and greenspaces	1	2	3	4	5
Walks	1	2	3	4	5
Nature	1	2	3	4	5
Attractiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Spaces for youth	1	2	3	4	5
Culture arts venue	1	2	3	4	5

What would you like to see in the new St Louis Park

Draw your ideas here

I would like... to see ducks
and water fountains and park

Thank you!

Age: _____ Gender: _____

Consultation Summary

Public Survey

We prepared a survey, designed to gather feedback in addition to the consultation day, with the same objectives. The survey content was co-ordinated with the Town Centre Health Check undertaken with Queens University Belfast.

99 survey results were received over 20 days. 16 paper copies of the survey were received. The results are attached to Appendix C.

A visual survey was prepared to gather ideas from the younger generation from the St Louis Boys primary school. We collected over a hundred responses and presented them at our second public consultation event in November.

Q7. How Important do you think the following factors are to making Monaghan Town Centre a better living environment?
(1=Very Unimportant 5 = Very Important)

Housing and affordability	1	2	3	4	5
Access to schools	1	2	3	4	5
More creches / childcare	1	2	3	4	5
Access to healthcare facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Access to open space	1	2	3	4	5
More pedestrian environments	1	2	3	4	5
Quality public space	1	2	3	4	5
Leisure and play spaces	1	2	3	4	5
Quiet streets	1	2	3	4	5
Safety	1	2	3	4	5
Cycle infrastructure	1	2	3	4	5
More frequent bus services	1	2	3	4	5
Parking availability	1	2	3	4	5

Q8. Over the past 20 years, how do you feel the following has changed in Monaghan Town Centre?
(1=Worse 2 = No Change 3 = Better)

Public spaces	1	2	3	4	5
Youth spaces / facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Range of services	1	2	3	4	5
Employment opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Community pride	1	2	3	4	5
Volunteerism	1	2	3	4	5
Crime	1	2	3	4	5
Education	1	2	3	4	5
Housing	1	2	3	4	5
Recreational facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Accessibility	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping	1	2	3	4	5

Finally, some questions about you.
(All responses remain anonymous)

Q9. How far do you live from Monaghan Town Centre?

☐ Less than 1km ☐ 5 - 10km

☐ 1 - 3km ☐ More than 10km

☐ 3 - 5km

Q10. Do you walk or cycle to Monaghan Town Centre?

☐ Bus ☐ Walk ☐ Taxi

☐ Car ☐ Cycle

☐ Other: _____

Q11. Are you a current/ past student or teacher of St Louis Secondary School?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If "Yes" please tell us how you are connected to the school, any memories you may have associated with the Chapel or parkland

Q12. How often do you visit Monaghan Town Centre?

☐ Every day ☐ Several times a week ☐ Several times a month ☐ Several times a year ☐ Never

Q13. What are your main reasons for visiting the town centre?

☐ Resident ☐ Leisure ☐ Health

☐ Work ☐ Study ☐ Shopping ☐ Travel

☐ Other: _____

Q14. How long do you spend in Monaghan Town?

☐ Less than 30 mins ☐ Between 3 - 4 hours

☐ 30 mins - 1 hour ☐ Between 4 - 5 hours

☐ Between 1 - 2 hours ☐ Between 5 - 6 hours

☐ Between 2 - 3 hours ☐ Over 6 hours

Q15. What is your age range?

☐ 0-18 ☐ 50-59

☐ 19-29 ☐ 60-69

☐ 30-39 ☐ 70-79

☐ 40-49 ☐ 80+

Q16. What gender do you identify as

☐ Female ☐ Non-Binary

☐ Male ☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Other: _____

Thank you for completing this survey and helping us to develop the Town Centre First Plan for Monaghan.

If you have any further comments or suggestions, you can contact us at the below email.

studio@johnmclaughlin.ie

Return completed survey to Monaghan Historic Towns Initiative/ Town Centre First Project Planning Offices, 1 Dublin Street, Monaghan, H18X982

New European Bauhaus

From concept to action

https://new-euro-bauhaus.europa.eu/about/comm-initiative_en

sustainable

in harmony with nature and our planet

together

connecting disciplines, cultures, genders & ages

quality of experience, inspired by art & culture

beautiful

Heritage

Living Town

Recreation & Community

Green Spaces & Climate Resilience

St. Louis Lands

Consultation Summary
Public Consultation 1 -
August 2024

Re-use and Regeneration

- Gradual loss of historic town character
- Potential adaptive re-use projects:
 - Convent church
 - The Old Albany shop

Historical Sites and Preservation

- Preservation of protected structures and Sites
- Crannóg - reinstate walkway
- Strengthen knowledge and connections to local history

Cultural Significance

- St. Louis Convent Lands - Preservation of local culture, traditions & stories
- Arts centre/ culture points
- More town events & festivals - develop culture scene with ie. galleries, Irish language hub, and museums

Urban Connectivity

- Improved cycle routes - connection to schools
- Stronger footpath network
- Safer crossing points
- Connections from town to Greenway
- St. Maccartan's Cathedral and North Road (bus station)
- Wayfinding - signage improvements needed

Accessibility & Safety

- Improve footpath/ road condition for wheelchair and buggy access - dropped kerbs
- Create a cycle, wheelchair and pedestrian friendly town
- Create safe and welcoming spaces

Roads & Traffic Management

- Dangerous junctions & crossing points
- More efficient car park use (Disabled access spaces)
- Ring Road - Clones Road
- School drop off zones needed- St Louis
- Bike parking
- Park & Ride (Clones Road)

Town Centre living

- Vacancy & dereliction - Buildings on Market St. & Dublin St., The Diamond, Park St.
- Living above a shop
- Re-use of vacant buildings in the town for residential use

Sports & Outdoor Activities

- Increase public amenity space in the town
- Access to free public facilities
- Provide facilities and base for existing sports clubs
- Improve walking, cycling & jogging routes
- Lake sports - canoe/kayak
- Pump track
- Running track
- Basketball Court
- Indoor & outdoor courts- Paddle, tennis
- Football, 1Wall - handball

Community Gathering Spaces

- Increase event & community spaces
- Create multi-functional spaces that cater for various community activities
- Base for community groups & Tidy Towns
- Storage facilities

Public spaces/facilities

- Improve public spaces and event facilities in the town
- Create a town that caters for various user groups
- Teen 'hang out' space
- Town centre play areas
- Facilities for children & babies (baby & toddler parking/changing & feeding facilities)
- Special needs facilities
- Increase outdoor seating/ picnic benches/(sheltered) outdoor eating options/Disabled Access seating

Preservation of Natural Areas

- Enhance areas of natural beauty
- Rejuvenate parts of the Ulster Canal
- St. Peter's lake
- Convent lake

Biodiversity

- Increase Biodiversity within the town
- Green open space
- Green streets - tree lined streets, flowers & planting

Flood Management

- Concern about rising lake levels
- Sustainable development informed by flood mitigation strategies

Linking Town & Greenway

- Improve connections to public amenity spaces
- Capitalise on central location of convent lands for strategic link, between town and greenway.

St. Louis Vision

- Park with boardwalk, running routes
- Playground and sports amenities/facilities
- Views, nature park & landscaped gardens
- Potential for convent buildings to become a community hub/budget accommodation/work-shops/studios/
- Gallery/work spaces
- Event spaces

Green OpenSpace

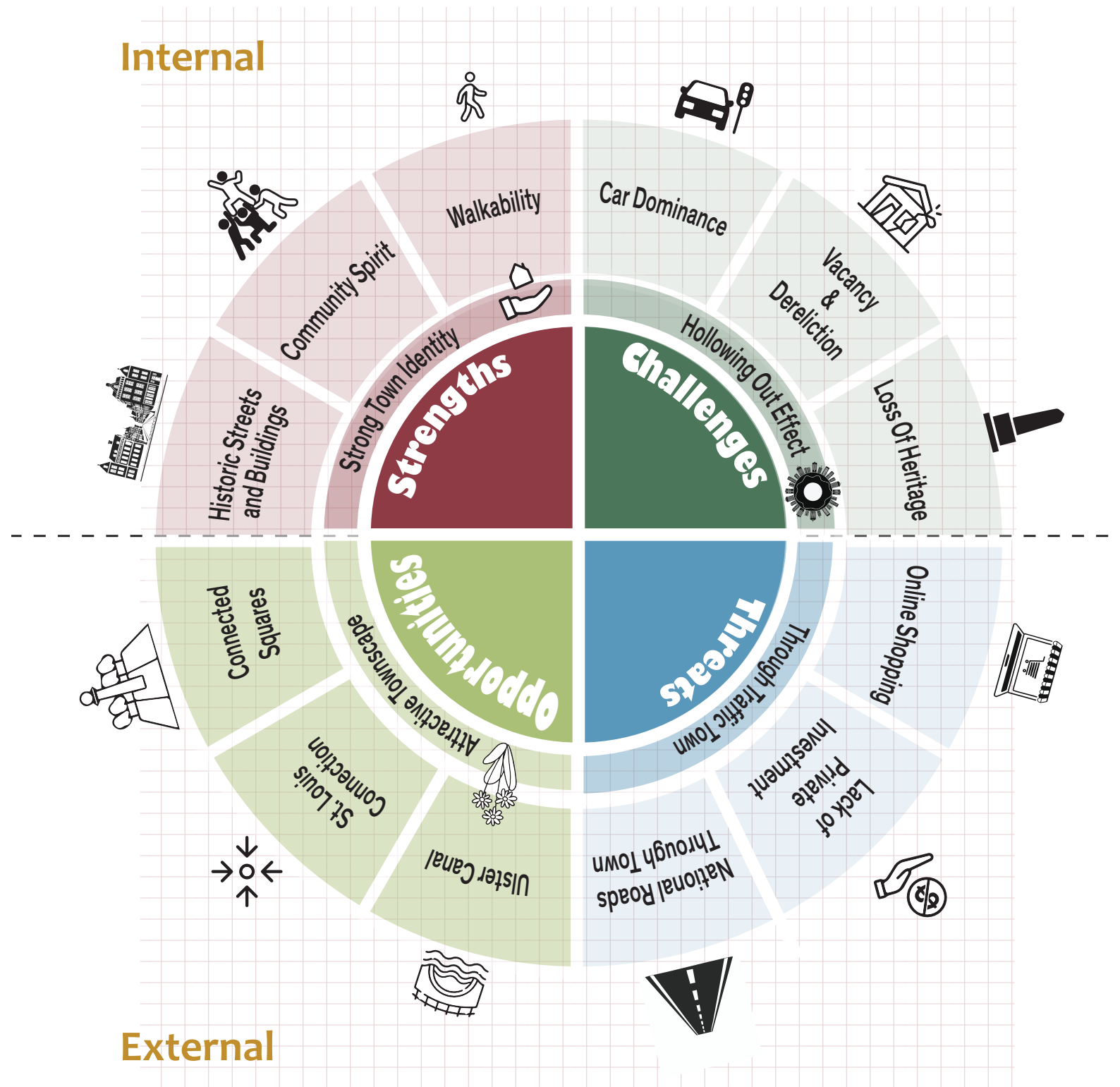
- Prioritise green open space in the town
- Green streets - tree lined, flowers & planting
- Pocket parks & more green open space

- Challenge
- ✓ Opportunity

Town Strengths



SCOT Analysis



The SCOT analysis is a summary of the strengths, challenges, threats and opportunities, following the initial public consultation process.

This analysis assisted in guiding the regeneration plan for Monaghan town by maintaining a focused, long-term vision for the masterplan area, which aided decision making about the urban development.

Awareness of the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats are a necessity for urban development plans and regeneration projects.

Consultation Summary

Public Consultation 2 - November 2024

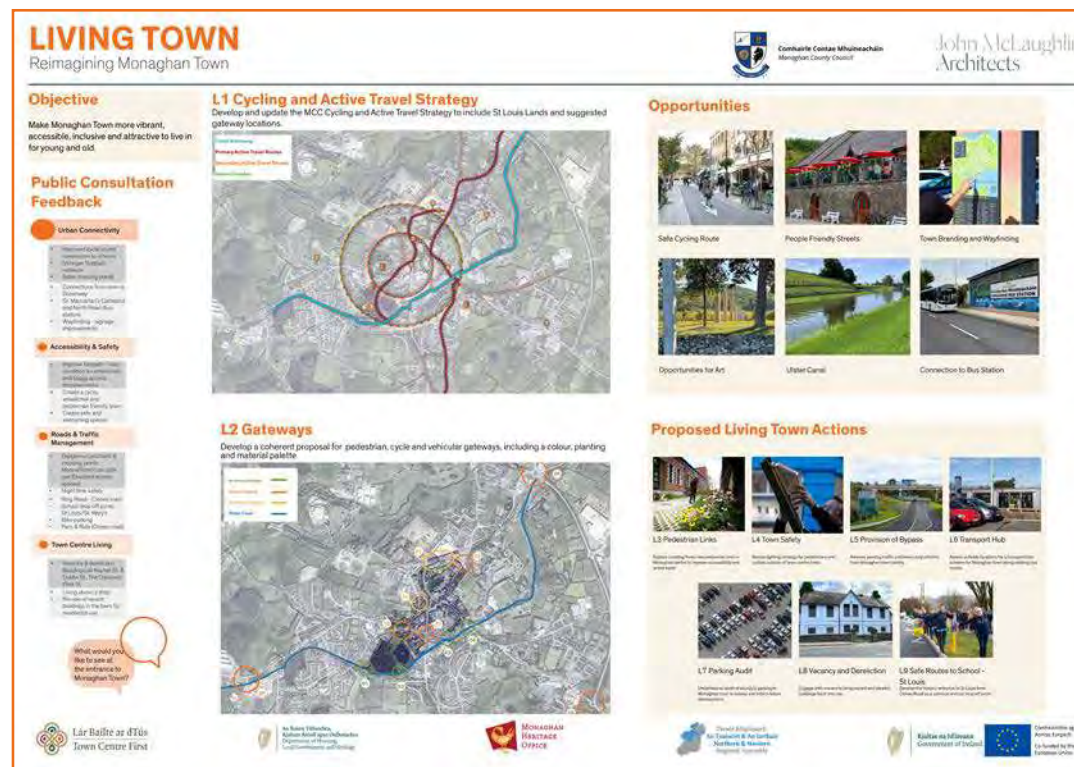
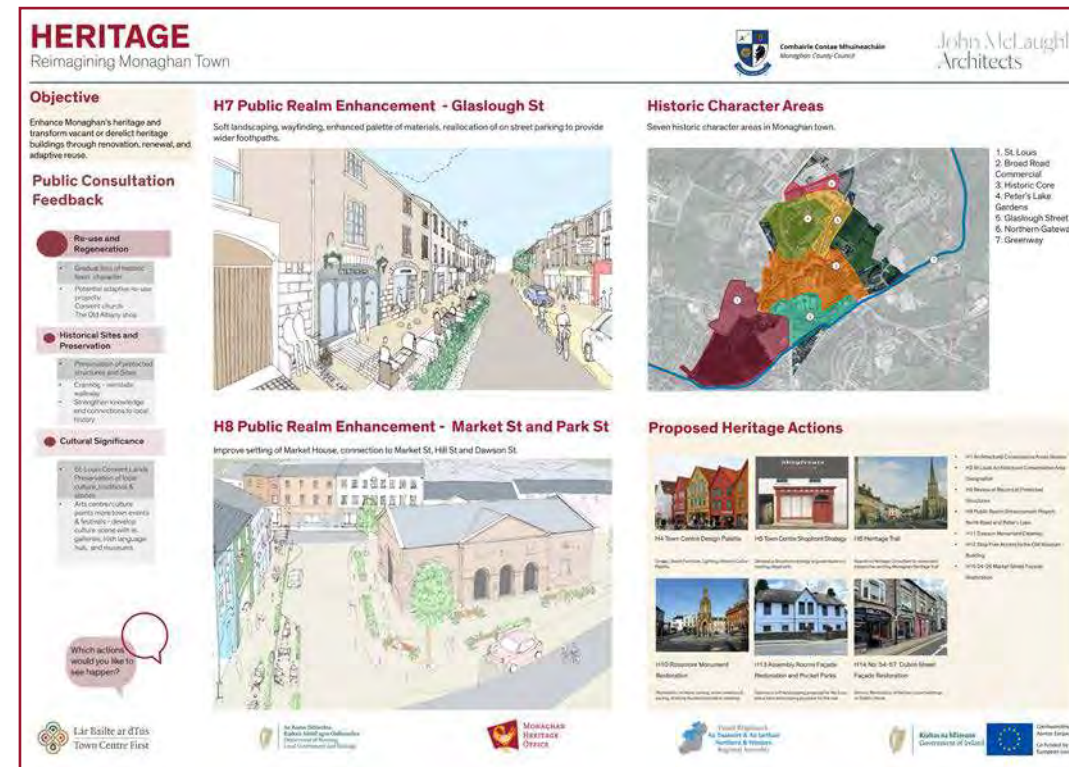
The results of the first public consultation, as well as the additional feedback from the subsequent engagement with the local groups and the MCC departments, were presented at the second public consultation event held at the Market House in Monaghan town. A draft regeneration plan and a masterplan for St Louis site were also presented at the event.

Main Objectives were:

- Present the draft TCF and St Louis Options Paper
- Describe the outcomes of the public engagement and consultations, and how they contributed to the project development
- Give the public an opportunity to engage with the Action Plan and comment on the Draft Reports.
- Gather feedback to inform the final report

Format

A full day drop in event at a central location within the town, 1-7pm, open to all members of the public, representatives of local businesses, local groups/societies, all on stakeholder mapping. The event was part of a two week consultation period. Recyclable Presentation boards, printed copies of the reports and interactive feedback forms were displayed on the day, and transferred to Monaghan County Council offices for two weeks afterwards for public display. All the information also available online on MCC consultation portal. On the day of the consultation, the design team and MCC were available to answer any questions, record feedback and offer supporting information. Two presentation time slots were advertised, where the design team and Monaghan County Council representatives gave an overview of the project to date.



Heritage



Living Town



Climate Resilience and Community



St Louis Feedback (See St.Louis Options Paper)

St Louis Lands



St Louis Buildings



Consultation Summary

Public Consultation 2 - November 2024

After the public consultation was complete, The window for feedback submissions was kept open for a further two weeks on Monaghan County Council’s website via a Submissions Portal where the public could view and comment on the proposed plans for Monaghan town including the Town Centre First Report and St Louis Options Paper. The Deadline for submissions closed on the 22nd of November 2024.

Action Plan Priorities

Heritage	Tally
H1 Town Design Palette	11
H2 Town Centre Shopfront Strategy	10
H3 Architectural Conservation Areas Review	9
H4 St Louis ACA	6
H5 Review of Record of Protected Structures	5
H6 Heritage Trail	8
H7 Public Realm Enhancement- Glasbough Street	8
H8 Public Realm Enhancement- Market Street and Park Street	3
H9 Public Realm Enhancement- North Road and Peters Lake	13
H10 Rossmore Monument Restoration	9
H11 Dawson Monument Cleaning	5
H12 Step Free Access to the Old Museum Building	2
H13 Assembly Rooms Façade Restoration and Pocket Parks	6
H14 No. 54-57 Dublin Street Façade Restoration	6
H15 24-26 Market Street Façade Restoration	3

Living Town	Tally
L1 Cycling and Active Travel Strategy	24
L2 Gateways	8
L3 Pedestrian Links	10
L4 Town Safety	8
L5 Provision of Bypass	8
L6 Transport Hub	10
L7 Parking Audit	2
L8 Vacancy and Dereliction	14
L9 Safe Routes to School - St Louis	12

Climate Resilience & Community	Tally
R1 Spaces for young Persons and Teenagers	29
R2 Playful City and Outdoor Play	27
R3 Monaghan Sports Campus Cultural Centre	31
R4 Irish Language and Cultural Centre	18
R5 Broad Road Link	10
R6 St Louis Long Term Carpark	7
R7 Biodiversity Corridors	18

St Louis Convent Lands:	Tally
S1 Parkland and Entrances	21
S2 St Louis Building	33
S3 Crannog	22
S4 Greenway Hub	22

Consultation Summary

Public Consultation 2 - November 2024

At the second public consultation, the public were asked to comment on the aspects of the Draft Action Plan which were most important to them. The results of the survey helped to define the Action Plan priorities.

Feedback Conclusion

Following the second consultation event, and further consultations on the draft plans with MCC departments and elected Members, the vision for the site and the buildings was refined. This consultation enabled public collaboration, with various groups partaking in conversations in the Market House throughout the day. Feedback was collected in an number of ways to enable inclusive and fair participation. Comments were collected by:

- Action Plan Sticker Charts at the Consultation Event
- MCC Online Feedback Portal
- Verbal Feedback on the Day
- Written Feedback by Email or in writing to MCC

The full results of the consultation events relating to St. Louis site are included in Appendix A - St. Louis Option Paper

HAVE YOUR SAY AT IDEAS STAGE OF REIMAGINING MONAGHAN

Continued from page 1.

of next year, that we will be ready to go with expertly laid out plans and applications — that's what the department wants to see. This work will be done with taxpayers' money and we want to see it come to a fruition that is "enjoyed by all." He encouraged everyone to be part of the process.

Cathaoirleach of County Monaghan Cathy Bennett welcomed the plan for Monaghan Town, recognising the importance of it in the context of the town being the county's capital. "I think it's brilliant that our main town has acquired this land and it's going to add to the value of people's experiences in Monaghan. There is so much that this site could be used for, in relation to sport, services, day services for people with special needs etc. There are so many ideas coming through and I very much welcome them. Monaghan is all-inclusive. I want to have everyone participate in the consultation. There is still time and there is an online portal where people can put in submissions. (<https://consult.monaghancoco.ie/en/c-onsultation/reimagining-monaghan-monaghan-regeneration-plan-and-st-louis-lands-options-2>)

She thanked Monaghan County Council Executives Drew Hurley, Patricia Monahan, Donal McElwain and Kevin McNally for all their hard work thus far: "This is the start of the process. It's about getting projects shovel ready, so that when funds do come we're ready to rock and roll. I think it's going to be brilliant. Not many towns can acquire a piece of land like this in the centre of the town. It is brilliant for Monaghan Town and County. We need your ideas on paper, thank you for your participation."

General Election candidate for Sinn Féin Councillor Bennett also invited Paddy McAloon, Chairperson of SNAP (Special Needs Active Parents) along to make a submission: "Today I encouraged the SNAP group to come and put a submission in for the vision for Monaghan Town and the Convent Lands here. I think it's very important, the group are looking for somewhere centrally located in the town. So Paddy and a few others have come in to say that they would like a disability day service for adults in the centre of Monaghan Town. I'm delighted to see that they have put the submission in so I hope the consultants take on board the need for this in Monaghan Town. We are very lucky to have acquired this piece of land for the public. There are so many different things that could happen here, but I think with adult disabilities not having that service in Monaghan Town, it is something that we should focus on."

Another GE2024 hopeful, Senator Robbie Gallagher, Fianna Fáil, was also at the lunchtime launch on Friday said: "As a town resident, I am absolutely delighted that Monaghan County Council had the foresight to purchase almost 30 acres of land with the lake and the fine buildings there. I think it's a hugely positive development for the town. It has serious potential and I would encourage all townspeople to make their views known as to what they would like this to look like."



Katia Papkovskaia, 2nd from left, John McLaughlin Architects, showing some of the plans for Monaghan Town to some of the attendance at the reimagining Monaghan event at The Market House. Photo Rory Geary



At the Reimagining Monaghan event with some of the plans for Monaghan Town and the convent lands were (L-R) Katia Papkovskaia, John McLaughlin Architects, Robert Burns, Chief Executive, Monaghan County Council, Cllr Cathy Bennett, Cathaoirleach, Monaghan County Council and Drew Hurley, Senior Executive Planner. Photo Rory Geary

Monaghan County Council Chief Executive Robert Burns told The Northern Standard: "We've been doing a lot of work over the last while on this whole idea of Reimagining Monaghan. There was an overall study carried out for the town, but we're honing in on the St. Louis Convent Lands specifically and looking at the potential there. We're very fortunate to have acquired those lands recently from St. Louis Convent, with a range of buildings, the lake, forestry, green spaces and it's on the doorstep of the town centre. That's very precious and rare in Ireland."

"There is huge potential to make this into something that's really engaging,

really meaningful and supportive of the town in terms of biodiversity, social and economic development. All of these things are possible. We are being very deliberate about how we are approaching this and why we've engaged experts to help us here."

"We are having our consultation because the community has a wonderful wisdom in knowing what we should do there and we invite their suggestions. We've brought it to a point but we are looking for people to come with their own ideas to amplify or refine it, or maybe suggest something completely different. I think that's really valuable in consultation processes.

People need to know that we are coming at this in good faith and we are, I can absolutely assure people of that. We want to hear their views and the overall programme will be all the better for it."

Submissions can also be emailed directly to dhurley@monaghancoco.ie or can be sent via post to Drew Hurley, Planning Office, 1 Dublin Street, Monaghan.

THRIVE is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the ERDF Northern & Western Regional Programme 2021-27.

HAVE YOUR SAY AT IDEAS STAGE OF REIMAGINING MONAGHAN



At the Reimagining Monaghan event with some of the plans for Monaghan Town and the Convent Lands were (L-R) Kara Ward, Heritage Officer, Monaghan County Council, Donal McElwaine, Monaghan Municipal District Coordinator, Patricia Monahan, Director of Services, Monaghan County Council, Drew Hurley, Senior Executive Planner, Kevin McNally, Monaghan County Council, Katia Papkovskaia, John McLaughlin Architects, Cllr Cathy Bennett, Cathaoirleach, Monaghan County Council, Cllr Sean Conlon, Cathaoirleach, Municipal District, Senator Robbie Gallagher and Cllr Raymond Aughey. Photo Rory Geary

By Veronica Corr

Monaghan County Council, in partnership with John McLaughlin Architects and the Monaghan Town Team, have developed an ambitious heritage-led regeneration plan for Monaghan Town and St Louis Convent Lands. The project is funded by the Heritage Council, and also through the first strand of the Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme (THRIVE). Presentation boards are available for viewing at the Market House and paper submissions can be made there up until the closing date for submissions, the 22nd November 2024.

On Friday afternoon, there was a public consultation event in the Market House Monaghan, where Mr. Drew Hurley, Senior Planning Executive with Monaghan County Council said: "We want your views. THRIVE funding has enabled us to carry out two elements: A Town Centre Action Plan and an option for ancillary buildings. We had an initial consultation in the shopping centre, a large number of people

made submissions and this (Draft Regeneration Plan and Options Paper) is the result. Katia (Papkovskaia) and the team at (John McLaughlin Architects) put together these reports and now we want to get your views as to what you think of them, and whether you think they are an appropriate direction for the council to go in, both for the town and the buildings themselves."

Then Ms. Katia Papkovskaia of John McLaughlin Architects commented: "To bring some life back into Monaghan Town, to enhance its qualities, we are looking to build on what you have already, rather than transform it to the point where you may not recognise it. A lot of the actions we are proposing are quite high level: to improve the shop fronts, to bring nice materials and fixtures to the town to bring a little more greener to make the town a little more climate resilient."

"We are really keen for this to be local, this plan that is specific to Monaghan Town and designed to serve the people of Monaghan," Katia concluded, adding that the people were encouraged to have their say

(before the submission deadline of November 22nd.)

Cathaoirleach of Monaghan Municipal District, Councillor Sean Conlon said: "I welcome all who have assembled here for the second tier of the consultation process, that is going to see — over the short, medium and long-term — the realisation of tremendous visions that we have for the town here anchored by the recent acquisition of some of the Convent Lands, we have up on 30 acres. That forms quite an integral part of the consultation process."

"As I said at the recent reopening of the new plaza in front of the courthouse, this is only limited by our imagination. We as elected reps have been at the forefront of the consultation, but that is only a fraction of what is going to make up the final product. The most critically important part is that all of ye, the local residents, business owners, stakeholders in various capacities representing groups such as Tidy Towns and other community groups. It is limitless, this is open to everybody."

"The whole purpose of this is when the new grants open up again in the early part

Consultation Summary

Public Consultation 2 - November 2024

Publicity

All stakeholders were contacted directly in advance of the consultation day, and the team arranged separate meetings during the two week consultation period with groups who could not attend or who wished to offer feedback more directly.

The event was publicised by the Northern Standard newspaper inviting the public to participate in the consultation process.

As part of the consultation event publicity, Drew Hurley of Monaghan County Council gave a radio interview on Northern Sound, which led to a significant uplift in submissions from the public.

Article excerpts from the Northern Standard Newspaper November 2024

Monaghan County Council Department Representatives

Transportation

- Regeneration Plan needs to consider the two national roads running through the town, and TII's previous reluctance to accept road changes which may negatively impact traffic flow
- Suitable locations for electric car and bike charging points, and visitor charging hub, should be integrated into the Plan

Active Travel

- Active travel schemes for all Monaghan Schools should be co-ordinated as part of regeneration plan
- Greenway potential as an active travel route
- St Louis as an outdoor fitness park

Water (Waste)

- Existing drainage schemes underway to alleviate flooding
- Drainage area plan at early planning stage

Housing

- MCC are delivering housing through new build schemes and adaptive reuse projects.
- Housing viability and the need to maximise units are driving the demolition of older structures within ACA in favour of new build
- Previous housing section feasibility studies for St Louis Buildings should be considered as part of the Regeneration Plan
- Assisted living accommodation and Women's aid should be explored for St Louis Buildings
- Site selection criteria. CAS offers 100% funding.
- Irish Cultural Centre suggested as an option for St Louis

Library Services

- County archive space was raised as a need, newbuild preferred
- 'Maker's Space' supporting library services and school curriculums is needed
- St Louis site is important as part of Monaghan history and many people have personal connections to St Louis secondary school and grounds. The new use for the convent's buildings could reference the school's achievements in Irish language, music education and space for girls and women
- There is a need for choral/ music rehearsal and performance space, but it shouldn't compete with the Garage Theatre and the Íontas Theatre
- Possible use for the old museum as an art gallery for library's art collection

Community (Play and Recreation)

- Ulster Canal an important active travel corridor and visitor route-entrances into town are important points
- Walking and cycling strategy for Monaghan to be incorporated into the Regeneration Plan
- Coolshannagh Roundabout lands and Clones Road lands, owned by MCC have recreation potential and should be considered as part of the regeneration plan
- Play and recreation strategy for Monaghan should be incorporated into the regeneration plan, consider 'playful towns' concept
- Mature trees in the town support the Leister's bats population and should be preserved.

Community (Funding)

- Community spaces are needed in the town, groups should be consulted further to demonstrate need
- There is a need for a shared creative community space in the town
- Community-led initiatives for streetscape enhancement should be integrated into the plan

Tourism

- Visitor experience for Monaghan should be enhanced through improved signage, Ulster canal gateway branding, connections to Rossmore Park and Ulster/ Northern greenways. Consider Destination Plan for Monaghan
- Visitor accommodation need in the town, for various budgets
- An event strategy is needed to cater for different types and sizes of events and outdoor community activities
- St Louis Buildings: opportunities for budget accommodation
- St Louis Site: a dedicated visitor experience, park as a destination

Monaghan County Council Department Representatives

Heritage Officer

- HTI strategy for vacancy and dereliction should co-ordinate with ongoing MCC vacancy/ dereliction projects
- The regeneration plan should identify character areas and provide guidance for streetscape enhancement and future development.
- Projects suited to Heritage Council funding should be explored and Heritage Council consulted National Monument Service should be consulted as town centre is within an archaeological notification zone

Climate Officer

- TCF/ St Louis masterplan should reference Climate Action Plan DZ actions for Monaghan
- St Louis Campus has potential to make town centre living more attractive
- Integrate climate resilience into the regeneration plan- wind/ rain shelter, SUDS, urban trees

Culture Officer

- Cultural/ community hub is an appropriate use for St Louis site
- Viability of adaptation of the convent building as concert venue should be verified, in terms of operational costs, competition with other venues especially Garage Theatre
- Multi-functional use for the chapel is recommended
- Accessibility needs to be integrated in the design

Biodiversity Officer

- Swift habitats should be retained and enhanced as an action in the TCF plan
- Proposals for Elliott's lands and other projects should be incorporated into the TCF plan as an action
- Greenways and parks should be connected as ecological corridors

Horticulturalist

- Green spaces should encourage play and learning
- Urban trees and restoration of lime trees on North Road should be encouraged
- Bog park on Clones Rd as a precedent for St Louis lands prone to flooding
- Safety along the greenway is an issue

Elected Members

The Elected Members were consulted by John McLaughlin Architects with Monaghan County Council representatives on the 23rd of August 2024. The following summarised the themes and topics that were raised by the Elected Members.

Summary

St. Louis Convent Lands

A significant focus was placed on the St. Louis Convent Lands, discussions around leveraging these lands for tourism, educational, and recreational uses.

Active Travel and Connectivity

Cycling infrastructure and enhancing connections to the greenway were highlighted as important for improving safety and promoting cycling among students, with ties to MCC’s Active Travel initiatives.

Sports and Recreation

Councillors emphasized the need for sports facilities, particularly a town centre sports complex.

Youth Engagement

Youth consultations revealed a demand for more recreational activities to reduce antisocial behavior. Future engagement with schools will further inform the project.

*MCC arranged a walkaround of St Louis grounds and buildings with the elected representatives. Additional comments were made.

Comments

- St Louis Secondary School is at a disadvantage as there are no proper sports facilities.
- Chapel is most appropriate for a music/concert venue. The town can benefit from its proximity to the Greenway with possibilities of greater connection to the Town Centre and Active Travel links to schools.
- St Louis buildings should be kept for community use – not for housing.
- Lack of general sports facilities in the area.
- Very little opportunity for sports at the St Louis Girls’ Secondary School and there is a high drop of rate for girls from the age of 13.
- Need for sports centre with a running track in the Town Centre.
- There should be a sports complex on the site similar to Clones Peacelink.
- Traffic congestions around the St Louis and St Mary’s schools during school drop off hours.
- Potential for tourism use for the buildings at St Louis Convent Lands. Suggested for Tourist section to make submissions for this.

Young Persons - Foróige Youth Justice Group

Consultation 1- Foróige Youth Justice Group. Location: Peace Campus

A consultation took place at a regular Foróige meeting, as an informal discussion over an hour. The consultation was supported by consultant Sean Mullen, who was gathering data for Monaghan to create a 3 year youth strategy, with Collette Deeney contributing to the discussion, and with Foróige offering their thoughts as well.

The group comprised nine teenagers, six from Monaghan and two from Castleblayney, eight male and one female. four out of nine were actively involved in a sports club.

Issues raised:

- Little to do in Monaghan for teenagers, especially between 3pm and 6pm
- Little scope for outdoor activities, hampered by bad weather
- Safety- older men drinking on the street, anti-social behaviour, drugs. Got worse in the last 2-3 years. Locations listed: bottom of Pound Hill, Dublin Street in the evenings, steps at the Mall Rd, Mullaghmat
- Struggling with school
- Enforcement perceived to target younger people
- Reliant on parents for lifts to matches, into town
- Traffic on the streets
- Lack of employment for young people

What is missing in Monaghan?

- Places to play sport- a sports club, boxing club/ non-membership gym like Castleblayney
- Places for social activities outside of the pubs - darts, pool, arcades
- More festivals, events
- Increased enforcement of anti-social behaviour
- More public transport, safer cycling, making Greenway safer connecting parts of town
- New park- all weather pitch, goal posts, public running track
- Recycling initiatives

Young Persons - Monaghan Young Activists sub-group

Consultation 2- Monaghan Young Activists sub-group. Location: Monaghan YMCA

We consulted a group of younger teenagers, ten in total: three boys and seven girls, some with special needs and from the migrant community. They were part of a voluntary young activist group.

Issues raised:

- Parks are far away from town centre
- Cycling feels ok for the most part, can be improved
- Lack of public transport- reliant on lifts, new bus links dont serve enough areas
- Cinema located outside of the town
- Lack of jobs for young people
- Underage drinking, drugs normalised – linked to having nothing to do
- Derelict buildings
- Too many cars
- Litter

What is Missing:

- Places to listen to music, draw
- More activities like a city, park with activities
- Sports activities- football pitch, also sports outside soccer/ GAA: archery, volleyball, badminton, self defence, boxing, swimming club, cycling club, chess club, under-18 gym
- Place for teenage clubs- arcade club, drama club, cinema club
- Greenway can be made safer in the evenings – to go to cinema by foot, cycle to Rossmore
- Arcade/ pool table in old cinema
- Space for skills/ workshops, cooking club
- More housing
- Better public transport
- Public seating in the town
- Covered places for teenagers to meet up

Possible uses for St Louis buildings/ site :

- New use must respect the history of the buildings, appropriate
- Multi-denominational religious space incl a mosque in the Convent chapel
- Braids salon
- Outdoor gym

Schools - St Mary's Boys' National School

Consultation 1 - St. Mary's Boys' National School

A consultation with the Principal of the St. Mary's Boys' School on the 27th of August 2024. The main issues raised were as follows:

- There is currently no designated drop off areas and the roads in the area become blocked up during school drop off hours.
- There is an Outline Delivery Plan by Safe Routes to Schools for the St Marys School.
- There are no safe crossing points around the school.
- Safer roads in the area would encourage active model of travel to school.

Schools - St. Louis Girl's Secondary School

Consultation 2 - St. Louis Girls' Secondary School

A consultation with the Principal and Deputy Principal of the St. Louis Girls Secondary School on the 29th of August 2024. The main issues raised were as follows:

- Proposals for St Louis site and building should be respectful of the history of the Convent as part of the community, and as the Mother Convent
- Lack of bus drop off is an issue
- Walking / Cycling is not considered an option- majority of the students are from a wide catchment area
- Indoor and outdoor sports facilities are badly needed by the school, requested on St Louis grounds
- Use for St Louis buildings should respect the operation of St Louis School , and consider security, overlooking and child protection

Further submissions were made in Public Consultation Stage 2

Current Front of School Environment



Images from St Mary's Outline Delivery Plan prepared by Safe Routes to School

Schools- St Louis Girls Primary and Infant School

A consultation with Principal, Ms. Marietta Graham Reynolds, St. Louis Girls' National School Principal and Ms Carmel Mc Carroll, St Louis Infant School Principal on the 8th of October 2024. The main issues raised were as follows:

- There is a lack of outdoor space in both schools, who share one yard between more than 500 students.
- Outdoor spaces, sensory gardens and spaces for nature-based play are required by both schools for the benefit of all of their students. Outdoor spaces would allow students with additional needs to take sensory regulation breaks, which the school currently cannot facilitate.
- The schools both currently use the lands at St. Louis for nature walks and as sports training facilities.
- Many students attending the school do not have access to safe outdoor spaces to play at home. There is also a lack of safe spaces for children to play within Monaghan town.
- Safe routes to schools are required by both schools.

Further submissions were made in Public Consultation Stage 2 outlining more specific issues relating to the requirements of the school

Muineachán Le Gaeilge

Muineachán Le Gaeilge is a voluntary organisation whose main role is as an organisation promoting and developing the Irish language and culture in county Monaghan

- The need for a permanent Irish Language Centre in Monaghan has been demonstrated, with clear benefit to the Irish language community, local schools, international groups
- Ard Mhacha, Co. Armagh, is an appropriate precedent for the type of building needed. The new centre should have a high visibility in the community, a presence in the town, and should allow full immersion into the Irish language.
- Capital or operational funding availability to CGM is not clear and should be investigated further.

Old Monaghan Society

Old Monaghan Society are a local Heritage group. They have been operating in their present form since 2013. They have an archive of the town's oral and visual history. The committee meets monthly. The society undertakes recording, research and presents elements of local history at events and talks. They collaborate with the Tidy Towns.

- OMS have a good knowledge of Monaghan town, its streets and laneways and should be consulted as part of the implementation of the heritage actions, including the review of ACAs/RPS
- Broad Road markets were an important part of Monaghan town history up to late 20th century
- OMS research on laneways, old street pumps and street names have the potential to feed into the heritage actions
- St Louis convent lands along Broad Road were separated from the town with a tall wall, its removal having a positive impact on connecting the lands to the centre.

SNAP - Special Needs Active Parents

Special needs active parents help to provide and increase access to services and activities for children and families with special needs in conjunction with other agencies. In addition, they perform advocacy functions on behalf of families with members who have special needs.

- Monaghan is seeking recognition as an Autism Friendly Town.
- Need for Sensory Rooms, a safe place for children to go to.
- Need for a Special School in Monaghan. There are currently no schools for persons with mild/moderate disabilities
- There is no SENO (Special Educational Needs Organisers) in Monaghan
- Would encourage reuse of building on Convent Road as a HSE service for daycare.

Arch Club

The Arch Club Monaghan provides social activities for people with intellectual disabilities from 16 years +.

They require a space for one evening a week with wheelchair accessible ground floor levels, space to accommodate up to 100 persons, tables and chairs for dancing, basic kitchen facilities and suitable car parking.

Older Persons Council

Monaghan OPC is a representative group of older people in the county. The Council identify priority areas of need, raise issues of importance and inform and influence the decision making process of the Monaghan Age Friendly Programme initiatives.

- Accessible toilets and changing facilities are needed in the town, and should be provided at St Louis park
- Safe crossings and safety along the canal are an issue
- Bus stop locations should be matched to public buildings and accessible
- St Louis park should incorporate accessible seating and wayfinding
- Allotments in the park would be welcomed
- Cycle safety is important to older peoples

LGBTQ+

The group typically meet once a month, facilitated and funded by TUSLA. There is no dedicated space for the groups gatherings. The group consists of members of the LGBTQ+ community.

- There are no LGBTQ + friendly spaces in Monaghan town for under 24s.
- The young LGBTQ+ community in Monaghan do not feel safe in the town.
- The group needs a space where they can meet safely.
- The space would need to be discreet, without obvious signage, and could be a room in a shared building.
- There are LGBTQ+ friendly spaces the group visited in Dublin and in Iceland: they have cooking and changing facilities, craft stations and a projector. Crisis counselling spaces and as ASD space would also be welcomed.
- St Louis buildings were considered appropriate for such a space

Town Team

Monaghan Town Team is a group made up of local business owners and community group ambassadors. It aims to promote Monaghan town and the wider Monaghan municipal district. Its aim is to showcase the best of the area, engage the public and foster a vibrant and connected community. The Town Team has been integral within the Town Centre First process. Certain elements were raised as a priority:

- Development of Monaghan as a “Biodiversity Town” and a “Decarbonisation Zone”
- Develop a Branding and Communication Strategy, Town Team could drive this forward.
- Underground wiring was suggested as part of public realm improvements.
- Lack of car parking at Model School. Traffic Calming Measures Needed. Lack of parking for people attending Monaghan Hospital
- Further develop the existing calendar of festivals and events within the town and environs.
- Utilise and build upon the farmers market to expand offering to the public and visitors.
- Monaghan Voucher Scheme has been successful but needs to be further built upon.
- Area leading down to Milltown needs attention. Area of North Road Needs Attention.

Whats Art

This is a grouping of artists based around Monaghan town seeking the opportunity to develop an arts workspace / exhibition spaces for artists of all media. The following points were raised at meetings with representatives:

- There is no dedicated studio workspaces in Monaghan Town even though there are numerous artists within the town.
- Propose that the old St. Louis Primary School, formerly a place where many developed their artistic talents, could be reused as a community artists studio.
- Nurturing artists in the community would promote creativity, cross cultural development and generate benefits to the tourism sector.
- In short term, consideration should be given to an alternative venue to provide studio space for artists.

Other Groups - Contact was made with groups from the Travelling Community and Persons from Direct Provision but no submissions were made.

Baseline Research

Large Scale

Regeneration Sites

Existing Regeneration Projects

Roosky Lands

- Master plan adopted April 2022.
- Access Road tender planned for 2025
- Delivery, with the exception of new Civic Offices and associated infrastructure, anticipated to be after the delivery of Dublin Street North and South

Dublin Street North

- Regeneration plan adopted 2017
- Detailed design progressed and application lodged with ABP in 2024
- ABP decision 1 year
- 2 year tender and construction period
- URDF funding approval of €14.7 m in respect of Dublin Street North & South

Dublin Street South

- Regeneration plan adopted April 2022
- Final detailed design nearly complete Q4 2024
- Application to ABP August 2024. Granted Planning Permission December 2024
- 2 year tender and construction
- URDF funding approval of €14.7m in respect of Dublin Street North & South

Proposed

St Louis Convent Lands

The Convent Lands are the fourth strategic regeneration site in Monaghan. A Masterplan for the lands is one of the strategic objectives in the Monaghan County Council Development Plan 2025-31: MTO 6: To prepare and implement a Masterplan and Development Framework for the Saint Louis Convent site which will act as a blueprint for its evolution and ensure that the development of the site takes place in a sustainable manner.



Section 3

Overall Town Strategy

Overall Town Strategy

Monaghan Town Municipal Boundary

Town Centre and Area of Influence

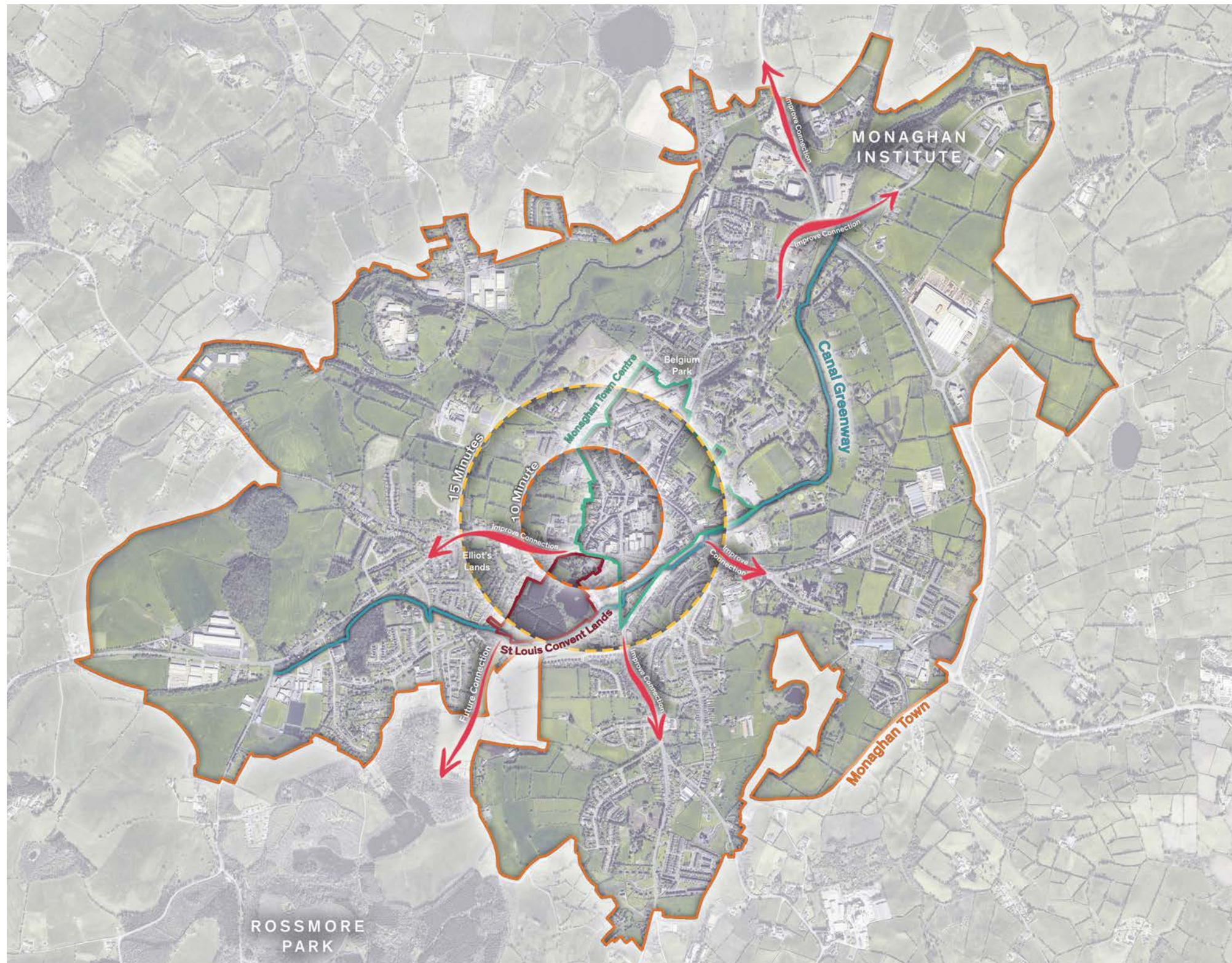
Monaghan is the largest town in the county, with a population of 7,894 in the Census of April 2022. Monaghan town centre serves the surrounding lands within the municipal boundary and the broader context. It is positioned along a route from Donegal through the North to Dublin. The nearby Rossmore Park, no. 1 of the top 10 most visited Coillte Parks had 357,834 visitors in 2023. Ulster Canal- a green spine and a biodiversity corridor- passes through the town, with its large sections recently adapted as a greenway, and future plans to connect to the wider network on canals in the North.

Monaghan town municipal boundary includes several modern housing estates, and includes large greenfield sites, some of which are in the process of being developed for housing.

The N54 national road passes through the town centre, and the N2 skirts its eastern edge- both connecting the town to the north and the South, and at the same time bringing passing traffic into the historic core and limiting possibilities to improve pedestrian and cycle safety.

Monaghan town is compact, with most of its parts within a 15 minute walking distance. It has several large supermarkets on the edge of its historic core, and many of its schools, most of which are grouped around the St Louis Convent serve as a historic educational centre of the town, addressing the needs of a large catchment.

With St Louis lands coming into public ownership, Monaghan town is presented with a unique opportunity to re-balance and expand its centre into the Convent lands. The lands have immense potential as a recreational, cultural and educational centre within walking and cycling distance of most areas, with access to the Ulster Canal greenway. The parkland has capacity to offer new walking and cycling routes and to provide much needed amenities to the town centre dwellers, many of whom lack outdoor space.





Overall Town Strategy

Town Vision



Legend

- Heritage
- Living Town
- Climate Resilience & Community
- St Louis Lands

Heritage

Objective

Enhance Monaghan's heritage and transform vacant or derelict heritage buildings through renovation, renewal, and adaptive reuse. Descriptions of the actions below are included in Appendix B - "Historic Towns Initiative"

Actions

- H1 Town Design Palette
- H2 Town Centre Shopfront Strategy
- H3 Architectural Conservation Areas Review.
- H4 St Louis ACA
- H5 Review of Record of Protected Structures
- H6 Heritage Trail
- H7 Public Realm Enhancement Project- Glaslough Street
- H8 Public Realm Enhancement Project- Market Street and Park Street
- H9 Public Realm Enhancement Project- North Road and Peter's Lake
- H10 Rossmore Monument Restoration
- H11 Dawson Monument Cleaning
- H12 Step Free Access to the Old Museum Building
- H13 Assembly Rooms Façade Restoration and Pocket Parks
- H14 No. 54-57 Dublin Street Façade Restoration
- H15 24-26 Market Street Façade Restoration



Heritage

Heritage Actions

The actions relating to the heritage-led regeneration of Monaghan town are described in detail in the Appendix B- Historic Towns Initiative report.

The Heritage actions focus on the review, protection and enhancement of Monaghan town centre architectural conservation areas.

The proposed actions include small scale initiatives, such as developing a palette of materials, street furniture and colours to inform future public realm projects in the town, ensure a coherent approach which reduces visual clutter. Amongst medium-scale actions are targeted suggestions for tackling vacancy and dereliction and bringing buildings back into active use.

The heritage actions include two public realm regeneration projects, Glaslough Street and Market House/ Park Street. Both projects will require extensive consultation with local stakeholders and TII, with Glaslough Street project dependent on the provision of a bypass before it's implemented.



Examples of Materials and Street Furniture Suited to Historic Environments

Overall Town Strategy

Living Town

Objective

To discuss making the town more livable and well connected place for everyone.

Actions

- L1 Cycling and Active Travel Strategy
- L2 Gateways.
- L3 Pedestrian Links
- L4 Town Safety
- L5 Provision of Bypass
- L6 Transport Hub
- L7 Parking Audit
- L8 Vacancy and Dereliction
- L9 Safe Routes to Schools- St Louis
- L10 Place Brand Development and Promotion
- L11 Wayfinding Strategy
- L12 Mobility and Universal Access
- L13 Street Service Infrastructure Audit
- L14 Public Realm Improvements



Overall Town Strategy

Living Town

Cycling and Active Travel Strategy

The National road passing through Monaghan brings heavy traffic into the town and makes it difficult to re-allocate road space for footpaths and cycle lanes, and provide safe routes to schools.

Numerous submissions from the public as part of our engagement asked for safer road junctions, safe routes to schools and for commuting links through the town centre through laneways, safety improvements to the greenway and its connection to Rossmore Park. In particular, the teenagers stressed the independence offered by safe bike travel, and the need for amenities that can be reached by foot or by bike, without reliance on car lifts.

The proposed strategy below builds on the 2018 Active Travel plan for Monaghan.

Routes

Canal Greenway

The Ulster Canal forms a key part of the Monaghan County Walking and Cyling Plan 2021- 2026. In addition, its connection to St Louis Convent lands has the potential to safely link the cycling routes along the canal to the four schools located around the site.

Primary Active Travel Routes

These are the primary walking/cycling routes through the Town centre using the Canal Greenway as a connecting spine. A Greening Strategy should be developed along these routes to soften the streetscapes and encourage active travel modes within the town.

Secondary Active Travel Routes

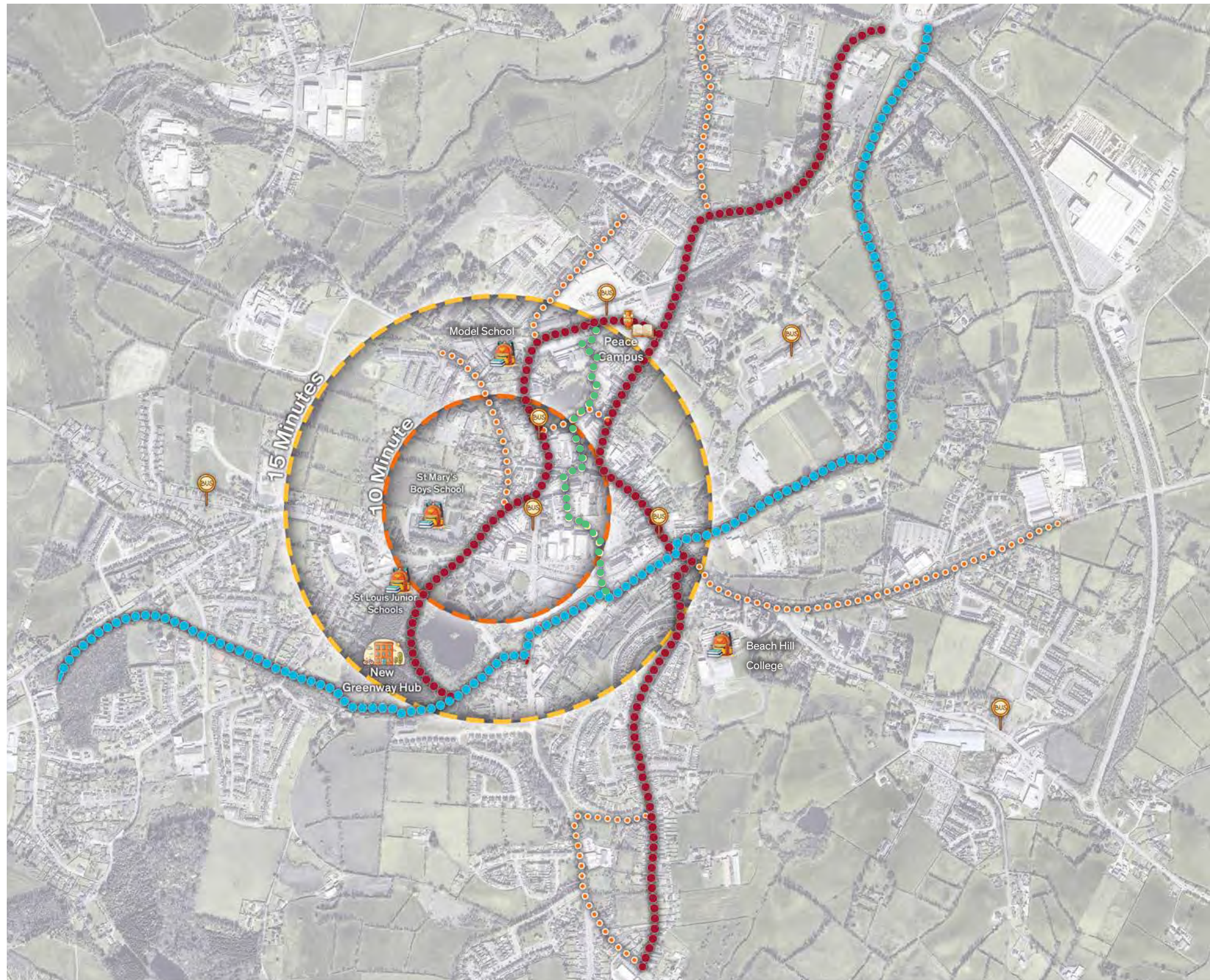
Branches off the Primary route to connect nearby housing to the town centre and schools.

Green Corridor

A pedestrian and cycle, north-south link through the town centre as there is high traffic pressure on the existing roads with two national roads passing through the town. A new link that prioritises non vehicle movement will improve safety and provide an opportunity for a biodiversity corridor.

15 Minute City

To encourage the town centre to thrive and avoid a hollowing out effect, the majority of appropriate development, including housing should mainly occur within the 15 minute boundary of the Town Centre



Overall Town Strategy

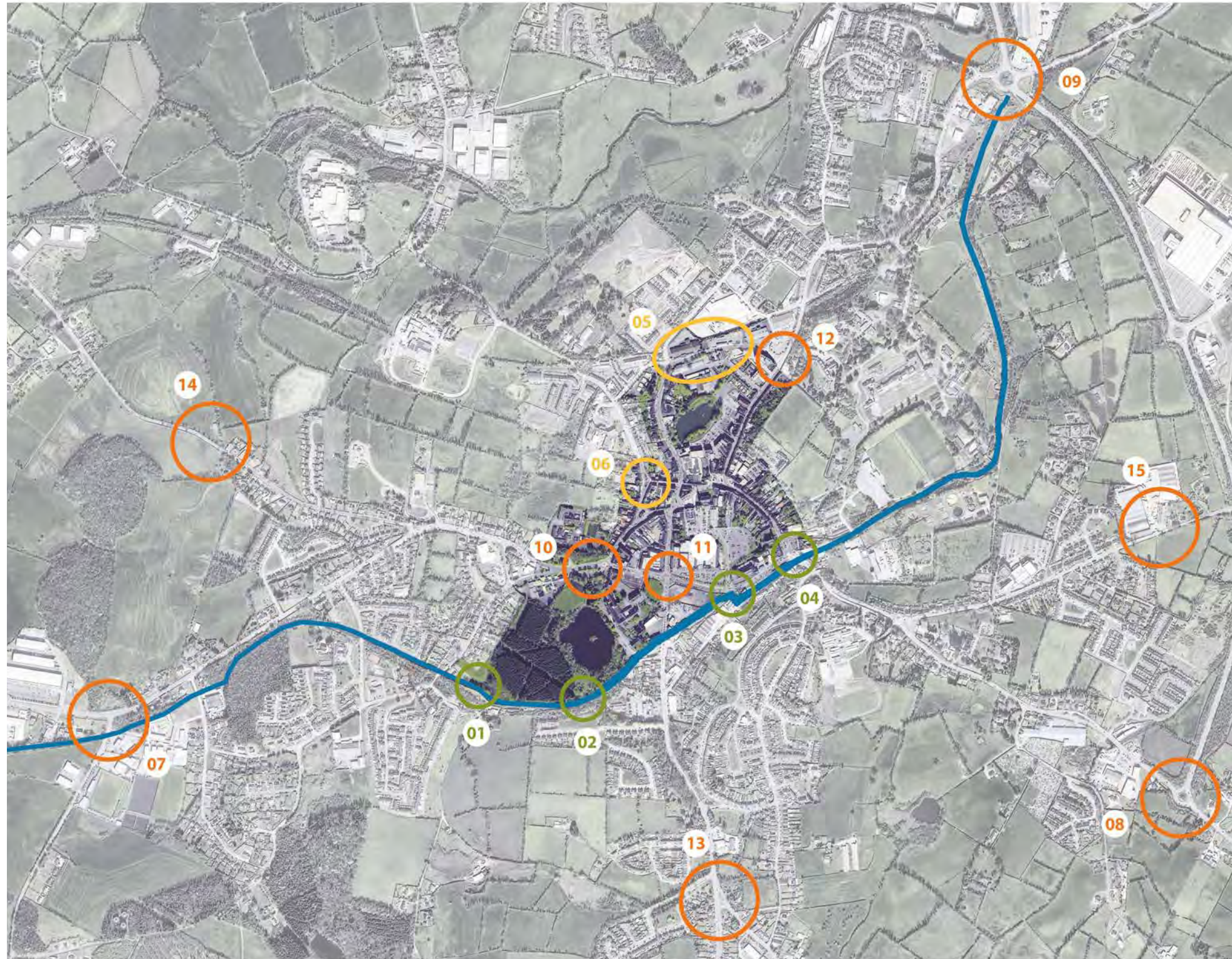
Living Town

Town Gateway Strategy

Monaghan town has an untapped capacity as a visitor destination, with potential to showcase its heritage, links to the outdoor recreation centres, and offering numerous festivals and events throughout the year.

A Town Gateway Strategy would offer a welcome to all those entering the town by foot, by bike, by public transport and by private car. It would serve as developing a local identity branding whilst providing a means of promoting attractions, activities and services to visitors. We have identified locations where small installations including sculptures, soft landscaping, and signage, can serve as 'gateways'.

Location of Proposed Gateway No.11, Broad Rd



Ulster Canal Greenway Gateway

- Gates**
- 01 St Louis Park Entryway 1
 - 02 St Louis Park Entryway 2
 - 03 Broad Road and Castle Road Junction
 - 04 Old Cross Square

Pedestrian Gateway

- Gates**
- 05 Old Train Station
 - 06 High Street Junction

Vehicle Gateway

- Gates**
- 07 Clones Road
 - 08 Corlat Roundabout
 - 09 Coolshannagh Roundabout
 - 10 Margaret Skinnider Roundabout
 - 11 Dawson St and Broad Road Junction
 - 12 Glaslough St
 - 13 Cootehill Gates
 - 14 Ballinode Road
 - 15 Old Armagh Road

Overall Town Strategy

Living Town

Town Gateway Strategy

A Town Gateway Strategy can significantly enhance a community by improving the first impressions visitors have when entering the town.

By focusing on key entrances, this strategy can incorporate attractive signage, landscaping and art installations that reflect the Monaghans unique identity and heritage. These enhancements not only create a welcoming atmosphere but may also instill curiosity and ambiguity, encouraging the visitor to wander further. Additionally, well-designed gateways can improve traffic flow and safety, making the town more pedestrian-friendly.

Town Gateway Strategy fosters civic interaction, offers a sense of place and boosts tourism, benefiting residents and visitors alike.

Coherent town branding can be effectively depicted through well-designed gateways, which serve as the first impression for both visitors and residents . These gateways can reflect the town’s identity, culture, and values through architectural styles, signage, and landscaping that align with the overall branding strategy.

A Gateway Strategy would have a coherent soft landscaping, materials and signage palette. Contributions from local artists, local industries and use of local materials would be important.



Civic Shelter in Roscommon, GKMP Architects



Faillie Cache de Marais, Paris. Gaufray, Barthe and Pattenotte



Memorial Statue at a gateway to the town of Battle, Kent, UK

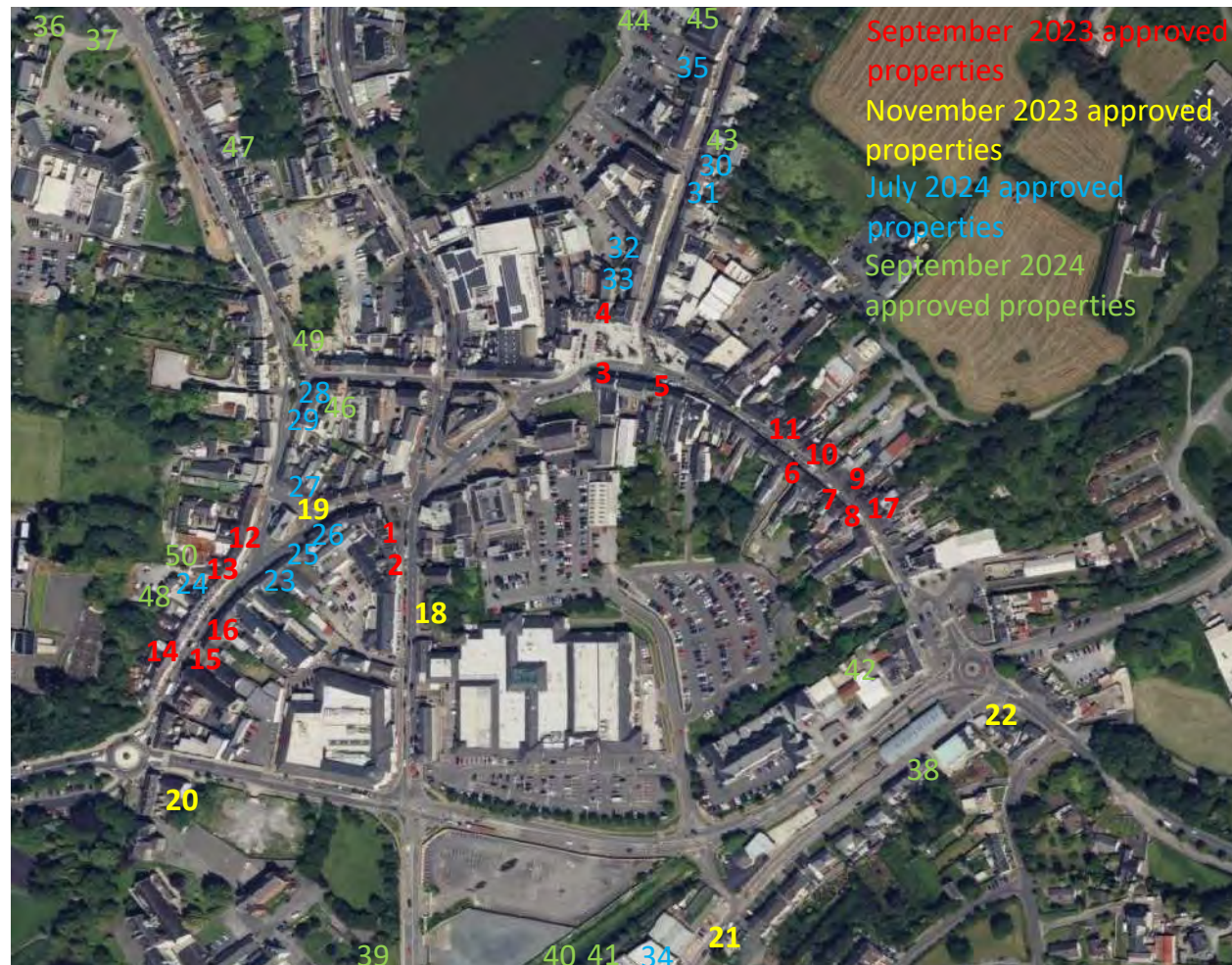


Wayfinding Signage, John deWolf



Kilkenny Greenway, Mitchell and Associates

Vacancy and Dereliction



Map showing Derelict Properties in Monaghan Town Centre part of MCC Vacancy and Dereliction Action under URDF

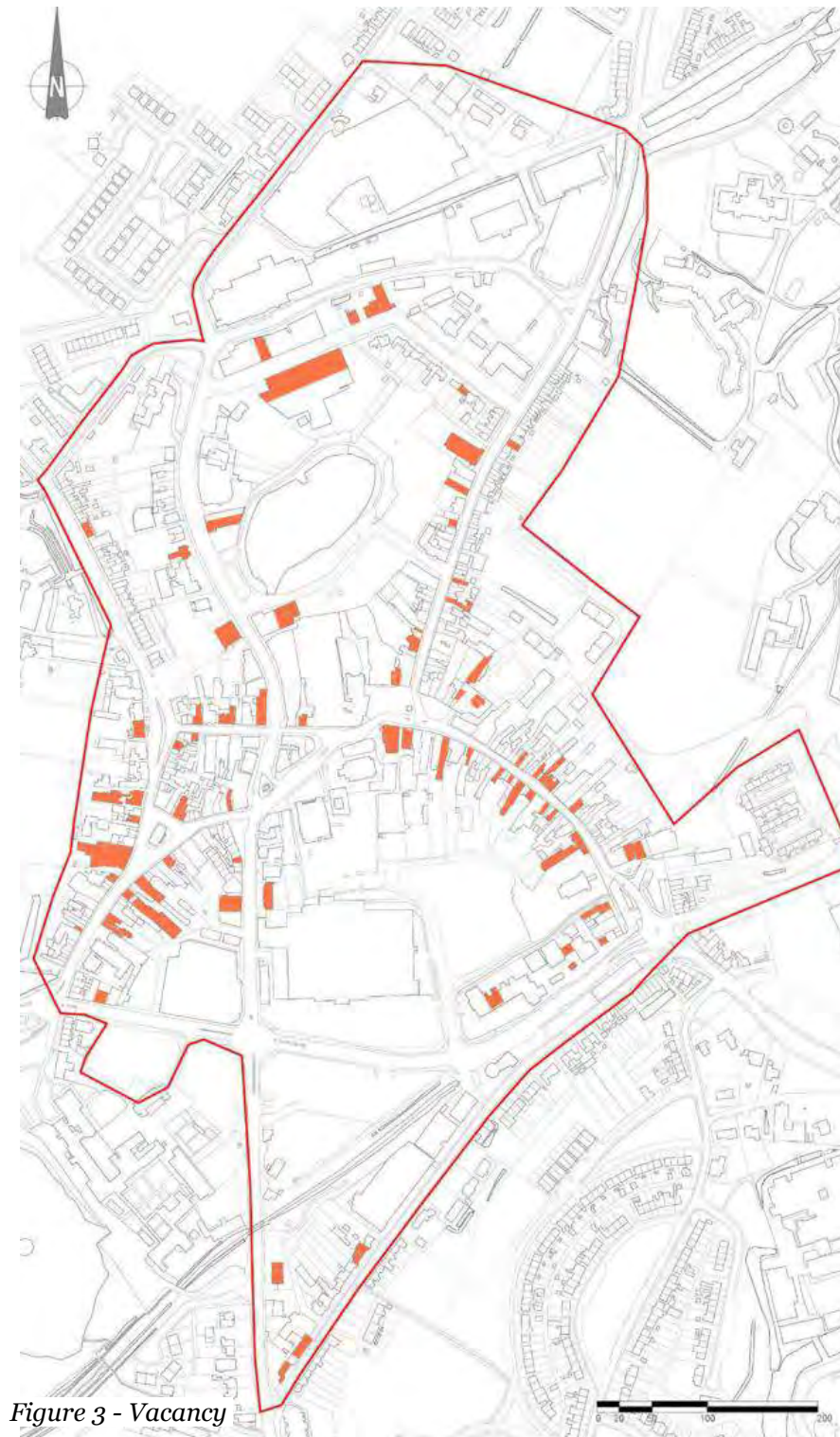


Figure 3 - Vacancy

Vacancy Map, Queen's University Belfast 'Monaghan Town Health Centre Check'

The 2024 Town Centre Health Check undertaken by Queen's University Belfast is included at Appendix C. It highlights that overall vacancy in Monaghan town has risen significantly from 8% in 2023 to 14% in 2024. The increase reflects changes in both residential and non-residential properties:

Residential vacancy in 2024 is at 3.4%. However, commercial vacancy is at 19% surpassing the national average of 14.4%.

Vacancy remains a widespread issue in the town, particularly affecting Park Street and Dublin Street. Other historic streets in Monaghan town, including Glaslough Street, are also impacted by vacancy.

The highest vacancy is seen in The Diamond, the historic retail centre in the town. To the North of the town, a number of former industrial buildings on Plantation Road are vacant. Monaghan County Council's Town Regeneration unit has undertaken significant work over the past year to identify vacant and derelict buildings and engage with their owners to repair and activate their properties. CPO process has been used as a measure where agreement with the owners hasn't been reached.

The focus of the current regeneration project was to build on MCC's substantial work already carried out to tackle vacancy and dereliction in Monaghan town, and identify key projects that could complement this action, identified in the Historic Towns Initiative report at Appendix B.

Overall Town Strategy

Climate Resilience and Community

Objectives

Develop an strategy for connected green spaces, offering opportunities for play, active travel, absorb rainwater and reduce flooding, enhance biodiversity and wildlife corridors and reduce the visual and sensory impact of the busy roads and car parking.

Identify opportunities for current and future needs of the local community to enhance social spaces and the quality of life for all residents, including younger generation.

Actions

- R1 Spaces for young Persons and Teenagers
- R2 Playful City and Outdoor Play
- R3 Monaghan Sports Campus
- R4 Irish Language and Cultural Centre
- R5 Broad Road Link
- R6 St Louis Long Term Car Park
- R7 Biodiversity Town
- R8 Biodiversity Corridors / Spaces
- R9 Community-Led Climate Action
- R10 Improved Play Spaces
- R11 Greenway Active Use



Overall Town Strategy

Climate Resilience and Community

Nature Based Play

Incorporating natural elements into play areas, children engage in enhancing their physical fitness and creativity. These spaces encourage social bonding as families and neighbours gather, strengthening community ties. Exposure to nature cultivates a sense of respect for the environment, inspiring collective efforts to protect local ecosystems. This recreational activity enriches community life by fostering connection, health, and sustainability.

St Louis Lands present an opportunity to incorporate nature based play areas into the new public park.

Where resources allow, in existing parks within the town, the redevelopment should reflect the objectives and where new developments are proposed and open space is incorporated more creative solutions and designs should be installed.



Overall Town Strategy

Climate Resilience and Community

Spaces For Teenagers

In our consultations with teenagers, they spoke openly about lack of spaces and facilities for them in Monaghan town, suggesting it is the major contribution to anti-social behaviour and alcohol consumption in the town. Creating indoor and outdoor spaces for the teenagers in the town would offer them a place of their own, and help to instill a sense of belonging.

Public spaces for teenagers can offer an opportunity for young people to connect, and express themselves. They offer open areas for sports, picnic spots for socializing, and quiet corners for relaxation or reading. These places can host community events, music performances, and art installations, making them vibrant hubs for creativity and fun. Whether it's skateboarding, playing basketball, or relaxing with friends, made places for young people provide a sense of freedom and a place to build memories.

A range of outdoor spaces suited to young adults are proposed at St Louis Lands.



Pavilion, Donal Colfer



Co,Build School For Girls, Beirut



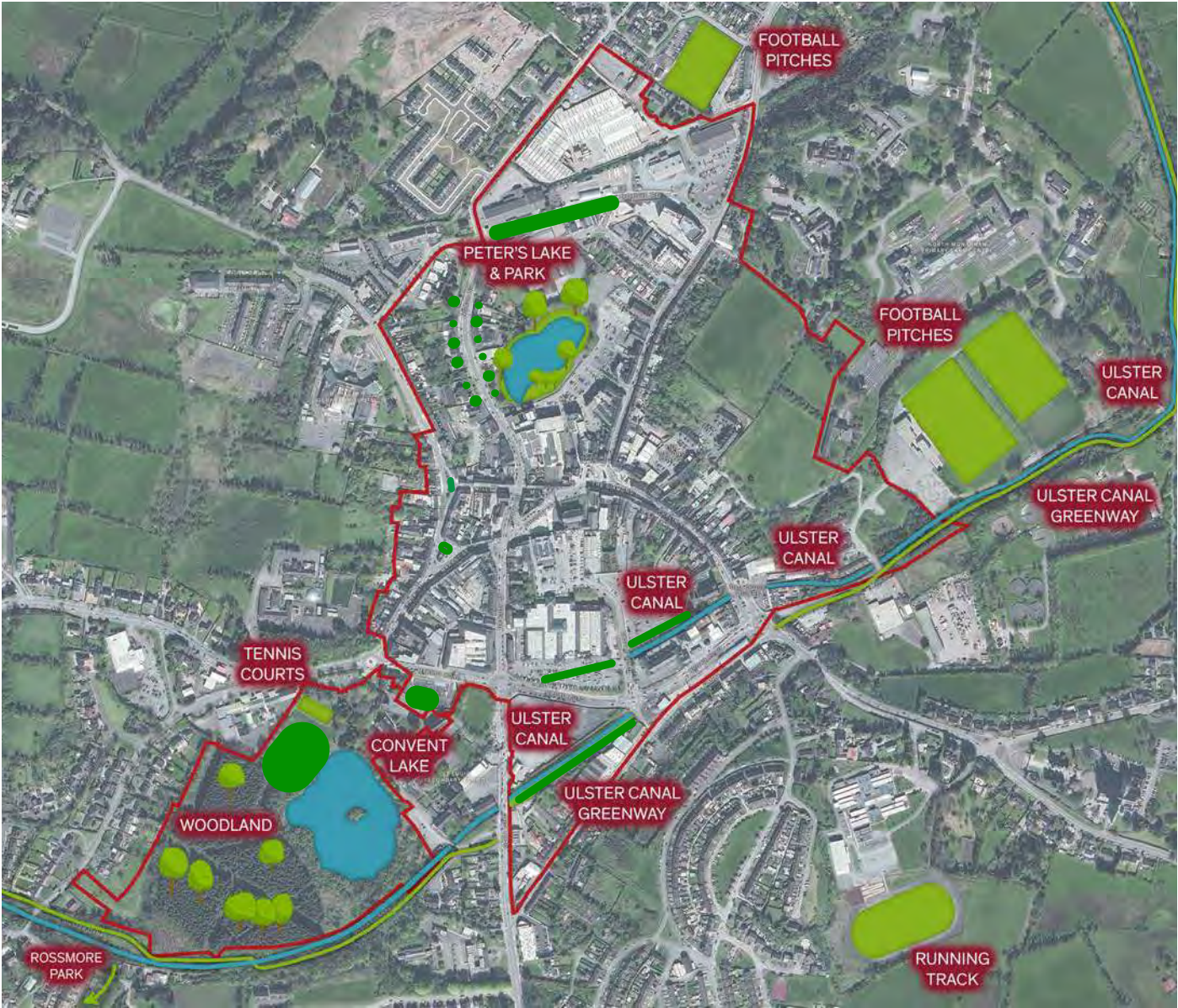
Fitzgerald Park, Cork



Boardwalk in Park, Robert Skitek

Overall Town Strategy

Climate Resilience and Community



● Suggested Location for Pocket Parks
■ Location of Existing Green Spaces

Aerial Land Map Showing Greenspaces in Monaghan Town



Green Route, Silkborg, SLA



Kilkenny Riverside Gardens, Mitchell

Pocket Parks

Pocket parks can be incorporated into Monaghan's streetscapes by re-allocating road and parking spaces where possible, in close engagement with adjoining property owners. Pocket parks can incorporate small play areas for children and sustainable urban drainage features.



High Line Seating and Planting, Diller Scofidio + Renfro

Overall Town Strategy

St Louis Lands

Objectives

Explore the potential of St. Louis Convent lands and its heritage buildings, which were recently acquired by Monaghan County Council.

Develop a Masterplan for the lands in line with the other three themes of the Town Centre First Strategy.

Develop meaningful and accessible connections between St Louis Convent lands, the town centre and the surrounding areas.

Actions

- S1 Parkland and Entrances
- S2 St Louis Buildings
- S3 Crannog
- S4 Greenway Hub
- S5 Greenway Links to St Louis

Legend

St Louis Convent Grounds	
Safe Route to School Scheme	
Key Walking Routes to St. Louis from Town Centre	
Location of New Boundary Wall to St Louis Secondary School	
Cycle Route	
Existing Plantation	
New Broadleaf Plantation	
Crosswalk	
Parking	
New Bridge	



Section 4.

Key Strategic Regeneration Projects

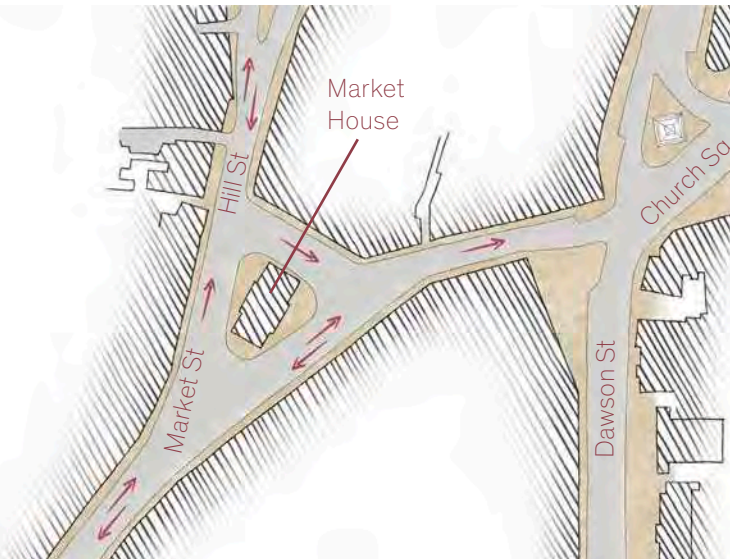
Strategic Regeneration Projects

Market Street

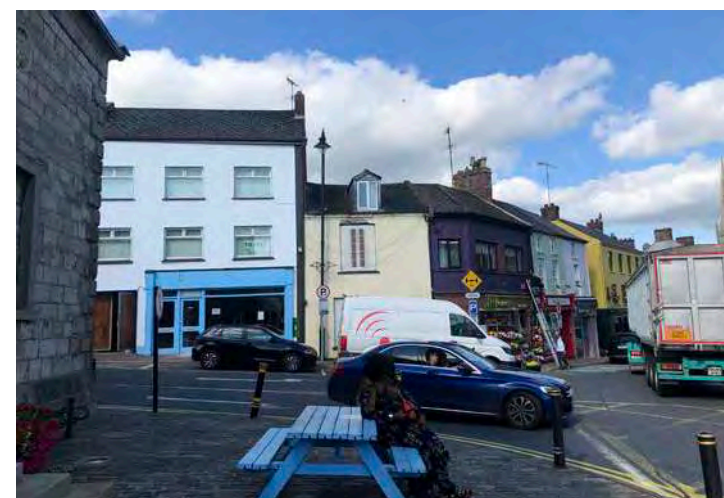
Existing Condition

Market House was built in 1792 to the designs of a talented amateur architect of the time called Samuel Hayes, on the site of an important open space in the town which had similar prominence to the Diamond and Church Square. Market House originally had a plinth with open space on either side, as seen on the historic photographs from the late 19th century.

Today, Market House remains a prominent landmark in Monaghan, a sensitively restored cultural building. The roadways surrounding the Market House have left it in the centre of a 'roundabout', with no safe crossings to the surrounding streets and separated from the other squares in the historic core of Monaghan town.



Existing Sketch Plan



Market Street

Proposed

The proposals involve reconnecting the Market House to the surrounding streets, improving the public realm surrounding the Market House and making access to the building safer for pedestrians.

A good quality palette of materials is recommended, referencing the fine stonework of the Market House.

The proposals will require assessment of the existing road and traffic conditions, to minimize the impact on the existing traffic flow and parking.



Proposed Sketch Plan



Strategic Regeneration Projects

Glaslough Street

Existing Condition

Glaslough Street is one of the oldest streets in Monaghan. It is an attractive street with many active small shops at its southern end, and a more residential character at its north end.

The street is a busy one way street in the town.

The footpaths look tired and there is limited accessibility along footpaths.

The street has potential for re-paving with high quality materials, incorporation of soft landscaping where possible, and opportunities for cycle parking.



Strategic Regeneration Projects

Glaslough Street

Proposed

Public realm project for Glaslough street has the potential to enhance the streetscape, restore some of its historic character and make it more accessible to pedestrians and cyclists. The street can also be enhanced as a route to the Peace Campus, the bus station and the old train station, through considered signage and wayfinding.

The potential public realm enhancement would include compliance with DMURS, soft landscaping, wayfinding to Peace Campus, enhanced palette of materials with reference to historic context. A parking audit would be required to provide a data-based approach to possible reallocation of on-street parking to provide wider footpaths, outdoor dining, cycle parking and soft landscaping, while retaining accessible parking and loading bays for businesses.



Impression sketch of public realm enhancement idea, Lower Glaslough Street



Blackrock Public Realm



Clonakilty Public Realm



Accessibility Enhancement



Streetscape Enhancement

Peters Lake

Existing Condition

In the Historic Town Initiative report (Appendix B), North Road and St Peter's Lake were jointly considered as Peter's Lake Gardens Historic Character Area. The lake, surrounding greenery, mature trees and distant views of the western hillsides of Monaghan town are an integral part of the character of this area.

Historically, North Road was lined with mature lime trees, dating back to late 19th century photographs of the town. The lake was more open on its southern edge. Old maps show the laneways and rear gardens of Glaslough Street extending to the lake.

Today, while Peter's lake remains a valuable green space at the heart of Monaghan town, it has become disconnected from the surrounding streets and its eastern and southern edges are dominated by roads and car parking.



Existing Plan of Peters Lake and Pedestrian Links



Peters Lake

Proposed

The primary aims of this public realm enhancement actions are to restore the historic character of North Road, enhance the pedestrian links around Peter's Lake and reduce the visual impact of the areas of car parking on the east side of the lake. The project should incorporate enhancement of biodiversity and sustainable urban drainage, and also explore locations where small play areas may be incorporated. A soft landscaping masterplan should be prepared, connecting North Road to the lake, supported by traffic and parking studies and consultations with the local businesses and residents.



Proposed Plan of Peters Lake and Pedestrian Links



Green Corridor



Shelter Space



Kilkenny Green Corridor, Mitchell and Associates (Informal Play Spaces)

Legend

1. North-South Active Travel link through Peters Lake, shared surface.
2. Sheltered pavilion as a covered outdoor space for younger people
3. Pocket park- playground with smaller play spaces
4. Safe crossing points across North Road
5. Potential for future development to incorporate views towards the lake
6. Public Realm improvements to Plantation Road, e.g. street trees, restoration of railings to the terraced houses.
7. Remove hedging to open up view to Peter's Lake from North Road
8. Extend footpaths / shared surface with soft landscaping from Glaslough Street to Peters Lake to prioritise pedestrian access
9. Reinststate lime trees on North Road
10. Improve accessibility between North Road and Plantation Road

Section 5

Town Centre First Action Plan

Town Centre First

Action Plan

ACTION PLAN - MONAGHAN Rev.1 6 December 2024

OBJECTIVE	FOCUS AREA	PRIORITY	PHASING	INDICATIVE COST	KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN ADDITION TO TOWN TEAM AND MCC:	RELEVANT NATIONAL AND MCC POLICY
Heritage H1 Town Design Palette - Signage, Street Furniture, Lighting, Historic Colour Palette. Appoint a conservation-architect-led design team to design and provide proposals for a street furniture, signage, interpretation and lighting strategy for Monaghan Town. The project deliverable will be a comprehensive guidance document to inform ongoing and future public realm works. It will contain a materials and colour palette, fixtures and fittings, wayfinding and street art strategy and a planting scheme to guide all new development.	Monaghan Town ACAs	High	Short	Medium	Heritage Council, MCC Heritage Department, MCC Culture and Tourism Departments, MCC Tourism Old Monaghan Society, Tidy Towns, Town Team	
H2 Town Centre Shopfront Strategy . Develop a shopfront strategy to guide repairs to existing shopfronts in the town centre, and installation of new shopfronts and signage, with the aim to - Encourage the maintenance of original shopfronts - Encourage the reinstatement of traditional shopfronts where poor replacements have been installed - Promote modern design and high quality materials where new shopfronts on new or modern buildings are being proposed.	Monaghan Town ACAs	High	Short	Low	Heritage Council, MCC Heritage Department Old Monaghan Society, Tidy Towns, Town Team	
H3 Architectural Conservation Areas Review . Undertake a review of the extent of existing ACAs to include entire plots as well as building frontages, particularly Dublin Street North and Glaslough Street. Seek Conservation Architect Advice.	Town Centre Boundary	High	Short	Low	Heritage Council, MCC Heritage Department Old Monaghan Society	Architectural Heritage Guidelines for Local Authorities
H4 St Louis ACA . Review St Louis Lands against provisions in 2000 Planning Act and Architectural Heritage Guidelines for Local Authorities for inclusion on the list of ACAs in Monaghan Town. Seek Conservation Architect Advice.	St Louis Lands	High	Short	Low	Heritage Council, MCC Heritage Department	2000 Planning and Development Act Architectural Heritage Guidelines for Local Authorities
H5 Review of Record of Protected Structures Review backland development in Historic core and smaller storage structures on St Louis site for inclusion on the MCC Record of Protected Structures. Seek Conservation Architect Advice.	St Louis Lands, Historic Core	High	Short	Low	Heritage Council, MCC Heritage Department Old Monaghan Society	2000 Planning and Development Act Architectural Heritage Guidelines for Local Authorities
H6 Heritage Trail . Appoint a heritage consultant to review and expand the existing Monaghan Heritage Trails into St Louis lands and Peace Campus, provide a clear universally accessible route option and routes suited to young children. The output should be a document highlighting key landmarks as well as architectural features of modest buildings and public realm, and suggesting public realm markers for the trail.	Monaghan Town Centre, St Louis Lands	Low	Short	Low	Heritage Council, MCC Heritage Department, MCC Culture, MCC Tourism Strategy 2022-28, Old Monaghan Society	2000 Planning and Development Act
H7 Public Realm Enhancement Project- Glaslough Street . Public realm enhancement to include compliance with DMURS, soft landscaping, wayfinding to Peace Campus, enhanced palette of materials with reference to historic context. Undertake a parking audit to provide a data-based approach to possible re-allocation of on-street parking to provide wider footpaths, outdoor dining, cycle parking and soft landscaping, while retaining accessible parking and loading bays for businesses.	Glaslough Street Character Area	Medium	Long	Medium	MCC Roads, MCC Active Travel Glaslough Street Residents and Business Owners Old Monaghan Society	
H8 Public Realm Enhancement Project- Market Street Public realm enhancement to improve the setting of the Market House and its connection to Market Street, Dawson Street and Hill Street. Provide a safe walking route from Market House to the old County Museum and to St Louis lands. Undertake road safety audits, traffic and parking surveys to investigate potential to re-allocate carriageway to the north of the Market House as a shared surface.	Historic Core Character Area	Medium	Medium	Medium	NTA, MCC Roads, MCC Active Travel Market and Park Street Residents and Business Owners	MCC Tourism Strategy 2022-25 MCC Biodiversity and Heritage Strategic Plan 2020-2025
H9 Public Realm Enhancement Project - North Road and Peter's Lake . Landscaping plan to restore the historic line of lime trees on North Road and unify and soften the eastern side of Peter's Lake Park.	Peter's Lake Gardens Character Area	Medium	Medium	Medium	Heritage Council, National Monuments Service, TII MCC Roads, MCC Active Travel, MCC Climate and Biodiversity, MCC Heritage North Road Residents and Business Owners	

Phasing

High Priority
Medium
Low

Highly desirable to deliver ASAP
Lower need to deliver ASAP
Least need to deliver ASAP



Phasing

Short
Medium
Long

within 3 years
3 to 10 years
beyond 10 years



Indicative Cost

Low
Medium
High

< €0.5m
between €0.5m to €3m
> €3m



Key Stakeholders

Monaghan County Council
MCC Heritage
MCC Culture
MCC Tourism
MCC Roads
MCC Active Travel
MCC Climate + Biodiversity
MCC Town Regeneration
MCC Horticulture
MCC Housing

Monaghan Town Team
NTA
TII
Built Heritage Service
Arts Council
Tidy Towns
National Monuments Services
Youth groups
Tusla
Muineachán Le Gaeilge
Parks and Wildlife Service
Glaslough St, Market St, Park St and North Road residents and business owners
Monaghan Shopping Centre management and individual business owners.
Old Monaghan Society

Town Centre First

Action Plan

H10	Rossmore Monument Restoration. Restoration of eroded historic stone carving to the perimeter and vaulted stone undercroft and paving, restoration of drinking fountain including bronze spout, stone cleaning. To be informed by Grade I or Grade II conservation architect report and methodology.	Historic Core Character Area	High	Short	Low	Heritage Council, MCC Heritage
H11	Dawson Monument. Stone cleaning of the upper section of the monument. To be informed by Grade I or Grade II conservation architect report and methodology.	Historic Core Character Area	Medium	Short	Low	Heritage Council, Built Heritage Service, MCC Heritage, MCC Culture
H12	Step Free Access to the Old Museum Building. Appoint heritage consultants to develop an accessibility strategy for the Old Museum Building in line with Access- Improving the Accessibility of Historic Buildings and Places Advice Series by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The design should be informed by measured and topographical surveys and minimise impact on historic fabric, symmetry and character of the building. Implementation of the strategy will be subject to establishing a long-term public user group for the building.	Historic Core Character Area	Medium	Short	Low	Heritage Council, Built Heritage Service, MCC Heritage, MCC Culture, Arts Council
H13	Assembly Rooms- Façade Restoration and Pocket Parks. Develop a soft landscaping proposal for the front courtyard of the Assembly Rooms and a 'Wild Garden' proposal for the rear.	Historic Core Character Area	Medium	Medium	Low	MCC Climate and Biodiversity, MCC Town Regeneration Tidy Towns, Other Community groups Future users of Assembly Rooms (Once Established)
H14	No. 54-57 Dublin Street Façade Restoration. Historic character restoration to the group of 4 stone buildings on Dublin Street on NIAH, comprising stone cleaning and reporting for a unified front elevation, restoration of Wyatt windows and historic archway to no.55 Les Cadeaux.	Historic Core Character Area	Medium	Short	Low	Heritage Council, MCC Town Regeneration Team, MCC Heritage Building Owners
H15	24-26 Market Street Façade Restoration. Project to restore timber windows following a fire, and replace remaining PVC windows with timber. Requires confirmation of end user and full commitment from building owner to bring the rest of the structure back into use.	Historic Core Character Area	Low	Short	Low	Heritage Council, MCC Town Regeneration Team, MCC Heritage Building Owners

Living Town		FOCUS AREA	PRIORITY	PHASING	INDICATIVE COST	KEY STAKEHOLDERS	RELEVANT NATIONAL AND MCC POLICY
L1	Cycling and Active Travel Strategy Appoint a Design Team to develop and update the MCC Cycling and Active Travel Strategy to include St Louis Lands and suggested gateway locations as L2 Gateways . Project to include a road safety audit and a consultation with TII. Strategy to propose improvements along national roads and to incorporate a long-term vision for Monaghan which will consider the construction of the bypass. Short term and long term bike parking, electric bike charging and bike rental schemes to be considered as part of the strategy. Revisit existing public realm and active travel proposals and map against current and planned housing and leisure developments and identify new active travel routes in response	Municipal Boundary	High	Short	Medium	MCC Active Travel, MCC Roads, MCC Climate	MCC Walking & Cycling Strategy 2021 MCC Local Transport Plan MCC Climate Action Plan
L2	Gateways. Develop and implement a 'Gateway' strategy for Monaghan based on the locations indicated in the Town Centre First report. The gateway strategy shall provide a proposal for each pedestrian, cycle and vehicular gateway, including a colour, planting and material palette, wayfinding for visitors, and a branding strategy for Monaghan. Include opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. The gateway project shall make reference and be consistent with the materials and planting palette developed as part of H1 Town Design Palette . Establish partnerships with nearby businesses to support and contribute in the Gateways' implementation	Municipal Boundary	High	Medium	Medium	Town Team, MCC Climate, Culture, Heritage, Arts Departments, Roads, Active Travel, Horticulture Tidy Towns Arts Council Local Businesses/ Town Teams	MCC Tourism Strategy 2022-28 MCC Biodiversity and Heritage Strategic Plan 2020-2025
L3	Pedestrian Links In consultation with landowners and owners of adjoining properties, explore creating three new pedestrian links in Monaghan centre to improve accessibility and active travel and create biodiversity corridors. Locations: 1. North-south link between St Peter's Lake, bus station and lands to the north, 2. Along the Shambles through Monaghan Presbyterian Church grounds 3. Reinstate historic laneway between Park Street and Dawson Street	Northern Gateway, Historic Core	Low	Medium	Medium	Town Team, MCC Roads, MCC Active Travel Local property and business owners	MCC Walking & Cycling Strategy 2021 MCC Biodiversity and Heritage Strategic Plan 2020-2025
L4	Town Safety Review lighting strategy for pedestrians and cyclists outside of Town Centre limits, develop a low level pedestrian and cyclist lighting strategy in parallel with the L1 Cycling and Active Travel Strategy and with Biodiversity/ Ecologist input, and in co-ordination with H3 Town Design Palette . Consider smart energy-efficient and aesthetically pleasing lighting fixtures that compliment the town's character. Consider lighting types suitable for persons with special needs.	Municipal Boundary	High	Medium	Medium	MCC Active Travel, MCC Roads, MCC Climate, MCC Heritage, Town Team	MCC Walking & Cycling Strategy 2021
L5	Provision of Bypass to remove passing traffic and heavy duty vehicles from Monaghan Town.	Municipal Boundary	High	Long	High	TII, NTA, MCC Roads	MCC/ NTA Local Transport Plan
L6	Transport Hub Assess suitable locations for a transport hub scheme for Monaghan Town along existing bus routes. To accommodate public bus, park and ride and taxi connections (MTQ13). Location to prioritise brownfield sites.	Municipal Boundary	Medium	Medium	High	TII, NTA, MCC Roads	MCC Development Plan

Town Centre First

Action Plan

L1	Parking Audit Undertake and audit of all public parking in Monaghan Town to assess capacity and inform future development. Attention to be given to the parking to serve the capital and schools within the town centre and environs. Discourage long term parking in the town centre, leaving sufficient spaces for older drivers and persons with special needs.	Municipal Boundary	Medium	Short	Low	TII, NTA, MCC Roads	
L3	Vacancy and Dereliction Continue engagement with owners of vacant and derelict building owners to bring structures back into active use.	Town Centre Boundary	High	Short	High	Heritage Council, MCC Town Regeneration Team, MCC Housing	Town Centre First, Compact Settlement Guidelines
L9	Safe Routes to Schools- St Louis Develop the historic entrance to St Louis from Clones Road as a safe bus and car drop off point.	St Louis	High	Medium	Medium	NTA, TII, MCC Roads, MCC Active Travel	MCC Walking & Cycling Strategy 2021
L10	Place Brand Development and Promotion Facilitate a visioning exercise to determine a shared vision/image for Monaghan Town, related to the vision and image of the County. Review the current baseline offer and establish a 5-10-15 year vision for the image and offer to be developed within Monaghan Town, through: - Bringing together and facilitating cross-sectoral stakeholders - Developing a Branding and Identity Options Paper - Agreeing a preferred Branding and Identity offer/option - Building upon existing festivals, create a co-ordinated Event Strategy and Calendar - Developing a Strategy to promote Monaghan as a destination on digital platforms - Further develop Monaghan Voucher Scheme. - Utilise and build upon the Farmers Market to expand offering to the public and visitors - North Road Needs Attention	Municipal Boundary and County	Medium	Medium	Low	School teaching staff and students Town Team, Failte Ireland, Private Sector involved in the tourism, cultural, arts, night-time economy sectors	Failte Ireland Monaghan Destination and Experience Development Plan
L11	Wayfinding Strategy In parallel with L3 Cycling and Active Travel Strategy, develop a clear wayfinding system that accommodates various modes of sustainable transportation, including pedestrians and cyclists. Implement clear signage for parking facilities, pedestrian walkway and bicycle routes, and wayfinding on the Ulster Canal		Medium	Medium	Low		
L12	Mobility and Universal Access Undertake a Universal Design Walkability Audit, / Disability Audit of the town. Provide Universal Access to all Public Areas and Facilities: Promoting Inclusivity and Equality in Community Spaces. Engage with private business owners to provide step free access to public buildings in private ownership.	Municipal Boundary	High	Short	Low	MCC Active Travel, MCC Roads, MCC Heritage and Conservation, MCC Community Development	
							Irish Wheelchair Association
L13	Street Service Infrastructure Audit In co-ordination with H3 Town Design Palette, undertake a review of street service infrastructure within the town and provide recommendations to address the following issues - Bin locations and accessibility issues - De-cluttering of street signage - Increased optimisation of interpretative signage within the town centre and identified public buildings e.g. Library - Improving street lighting at identified sites - Installation of sustainable 'smart' technologies such as EV charging points for cars and bikes within existing areas of parking - Initiatives to reduce overhead cabling within the town centre as part of public realm projects - Initiatives to further improve tree planting and other 'greening' opportunities within the town centre		Medium	Short	Low	Inclusion Ireland Town Team, MCC Town Regeneration	
L14	Public Realm Improvements. Subject to the availability of resources public enhancement initiatives shall be investigated and developed in the remaining streets within the town centre. - Dublin Street - Old Cross Square - The Diamond - Investigate the feasibility of undergrounding of overhead wiring within the main streets	Town Centre Boundary	Medium	Medium	Low	MCC Town Regeneration	
R1	Climate Resilience and Community Spaces for young Persons and Teenagers Create a task force to establish need and funding streams for a youth centre in Monaghan, offering after school activities to young people and teenagers, including those with special needs.	Municipal Boundary	High	Medium	High	MCC Culture, Town Team, Tusla, Youth Groups	MCC Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

Town Centre First

Action Plan

R2	Playful City and Outdoor Play Develop and implement an outdoor play strategy for Monaghan which incorporates St Louis Lands, opportunities for risk-based and nature-based play, sensory gardens and pocket parks, pump track, spaces for persons with autism.	Town Centre Boundary	High	Low	Medium	MCC Culture, MCC Biodiversity, MCC Horticulture, MCC Community	MCC Climate Action Plan 2024-2029
R3	Monaghan Sports Centre. In consultation with the Monaghan Community, identify suitable sites and implementation plan for a public indoor and outdoor sports facility in Monaghan Town. Preferred locations would be within 15mins walk of Monaghan town centre and would not rely on car access. Brownfield sites, particularly vacant or underused properties, should be investigated as a priority.	Municipal Boundary	High	Medium	High	Local Schools MCC Town Regeneration, MCC Planning, MCC Culture	
R4	Irish Language Centre. Develop a spatial brief and business plan together with the Muineachán Le Gaeilge to select a suitable site in Monaghan Town for a permanent Irish Language Centre, including St Louis as an option. Prioritise adaptive re-use of existing MCC-owned buildings in the town centre.	Town Centre Boundary	High	Low	High	MCC Town Regeneration Team, MCC Heritage, Muineachán Le Gaeilge	
R5	Broad Road Link. Develop a landscaping strategy for Monaghan Shopping Centre car park and soft landscaping to Broad Road as a pedestrian route from town centre to St Louis, including pedestrian paths from Castle Rd car park. Include SUDS, electric car charging, bike parking and accessible parking.	Broad Road Commercial	Medium	Medium	Low	MCC Roads, MCC Climate, MCC Biodiversity, MCC Active Travel	MCC Climate Action Plan 2024-2029
R6	St Louis Long Term Car Park Extension. Rationalise and re-allocate car parking spaces to create a new public entrance to St Louis lands in line with proposals in St Louis Options paper.	St Louis	Low	Short	Medium	MCC Roads, MCC Climate, MCC Biodiversity, MCC Active Travel St Louis Schools	MCC Biodiversity and Heritage Strategic Plan 2020-2025 MCC Biodiversity and Heritage Strategic Plan 2020-2025
R7	Biodiversity Town. Build upon the work carried out to develop Monaghan Town as a Biodiversity Town and specifically publicize the work that is going on, to inform public of the purpose behind the biodiversity projects implemented. Encourage increased involvement by the community.	Municipal Boundary	High	Medium	Medium	MCC Climate, MCC Biodiversity, Town Team, Tidy Towns	MCC Climate Action Plan 2024-2029
R8	Biodiversity Corridors / Spaces Develop a series of pocket parks, locations for urban trees, and SUDS locations as a network of small green spaces around town. Incorporate nature-based play opportunities from R2 Playful City and Outdoor Play	Municipal Boundary	High	Medium	Medium	MCC Climate, MCC Biodiversity, Town Team, Tidy Towns	MCC Biodiversity and Heritage Strategic Plan 2020-2025 MCC Climate Action Plan 2024-2029
R9	Community-Led Climate Action In co-ordination with R7 Biodiversity Corridors / Spaces undertake a review of and lead out on climate action community schemes in partnership with Tidy Towns, encouraging the development of community initiatives such as 'Neat Streets', encouraging further engagement in the annual 'National Spring Clean' initiative and creating more localised 'Green Communities' aiming to support groups via training and guidance to improve green sustainable approaches in day to day living and enhance local biodiversity	Municipal Boundary	Medium	Medium	Low	Town Team, Tidy Towns, MCC Climate, MCC Diversity.	MCC Biodiversity and Heritage Strategic Plan 2020-2025 MCC Climate Action Plan 2024-2029
R10	Improved Play Spaces In co-ordination with R2 Playful City and Outdoor Play, initiate the upgrade and further development of Belgium Park and Killygoan play areas, as resources allow	Municipal Boundary	Medium	Medium	Low	MCC Town Regeneration, Monaghan MD	
R11	Greenway Active Use a) Increase greenway activities and promote usage locally and further afield b) Seek private sector involvement in development of activities along the routeway. Advocate for the further development of the Greenway Route Corridor.	Municipal Boundary	Medium	Medium	Low	Waterways Ireland MCC Active Travel, MCC Biodiversity, MCC Climate, MCC Tourism. Private Sector	MCC Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 MCC Biodiversity and Heritage Strategic Plan 2020-2025
St Louis Lands							
S1	Parkland and Entrances. Develop the feasibility study contained in St Louis Options Paper into a comprehensive phased masterplan for St Louis site, which includes all boundary treatments, greenway gateways and Hub, biodiverse planting and natural drainage solutions, spaces for events and for children, future structures on the site and hardstandings around all buildings. The design should be informed by a heritage-led approach, and comprehensive surveys of the site ecology, habitats, drainage, topography and trees. Co-design parkland and facilities with input from local groups and young people.	St Louis	High	Short	High	Monaghan town community, Town Team Parks and Wildlife Service, Heritage Council, National Monuments Service MCC Biodiversity, Horticulture, Climate, Culture	MCC Development Plan

S2 St Louis Buildings Determine a long-term use for each vacant council-owned building on the St Louis Site, St Louis building on the Town Centre First consultation outcomes and St Louis Options Report. Develop a phased redevelopment and operational strategy for each building:

Community Building/ Old Primary School

Building on the Town Centre First Consultation - Confirm the viability for a Community Building for Monaghan Town or an alternative use as as a Day Centre for Persons with disabilities, linked with an ancillary use for the Arch Club/SNAP.

St Louis Convent Chapel

Examine the feasibility of a shared multi-use/multi-functional hub space in the St Louis Chapel. This could provide an inclusive space which could/should include: a social/drop in space , an arts and cultural space/exhibition/performance space, a possible museum provision reflecting the history of St Louis Order, an informal/life long learning spaces and provision

Former Nursing Home

On the ground floor develop, a) a tourism based development providing facilities for a greenway hub including café, toilets, linked service area to the chapel and b) Hostel type Tourist accommodation on the upper floors. For clarity the accommodation element would be for visitors to the town and be a separate offering from that currently available from other providers.

Former Heritage Building

Examine the potential to develop age friendly/independent housing options in the heritage building.with ancillary community facilities.

S3 Crannog Undertake archaeological and ecological surveys of the crannog on the Convent Lake and establish feasibility of providing public access St Louis

S4 Greenway Hub. Develop an Ulster Canal Greenway Hub as an ancillary and complementary adaptive re-use St Louis of the Chapel and Nursing Home buildings. To include bike parking locations, accessible toilet facilities, outdoor picnic areas, opportunities to discover the heritage of St Louis and Monaghan Town as part of the stopover, wayfinding to Monaghan Town.

S5 Greenway Links to St Louis Develop a pedestrian and cycle bridge and connections to St Louis site from the Greenway

High	Short	High	MCC Town Regeneration Team, MCC Heritage, MCC Culture, MCC Planning, MCC Housing, MCC Arts, MCC Tourism Community Groups	MCC Development Plan
			MCC, Statutory representation including HSE and TUSLA, Representatives of other voluntary and community organisations and groupings supporting inclusion	
Medium	Short	Low	MCC Heritage, MCC Tourism, MCC Culture	MCC Development Plan
High	Short	High	MCC Active Travel, MCC Culture, MCC Biodiversity, MCC Tourism, Waterways Ireland	MCC Development Plan
Medium	Short	Medium	Waterways Ireland, MCC Active Travel, MCC Culture, MCC Biodiversity, MCC Tourism	MCC Development Plan

Section 6

Funding and Implementation Plan

Responsibilities for Delivery - Key Stakeholders

Town Team

Monaghan town has a Town Team comprising of local community members, as well as community group and business representatives. Monaghan County Council in the recent years have provided the Town Team with community liaison support as well as external support to build capacity. It is extremely important that the Town Team remains engaged in the implementation plan- as a link between the community, Monaghan County Council, consultants and contractors that come on board in the implementation stage.

Community Groups

Monaghan Town has a number of active community groups who have successfully implemented small projects in the town, for example Tidy Towns and Old Monaghan Society.

Monaghan County Council

The actions in this report should be led by Monaghan County Council departments- including Regeneration Team, Housing. Capital Projects, Biodiversity, Climate and Active Travel teams. Each action should have close involvement of the MCC Heritage department and Architectural Conservation Officer, when appointed.

Heritage Council

As the main supporter of heritage led regeneration projects of the kind described in this report, the Heritage Council is a stakeholder in the implementation plan.

Department of Rural and Community Development

DRCD supports sustainable rural development in Ireland and has several funding streams relevant to this report. The department is a key stakeholder in the implementation plan.

Funding and Delivery Partners

The main funding sources for the plan are:

- 1. **The Local Authority.** It is envisaged that some of the actions can be implemented either fully, or partially, with support from Monaghan County Council. For example, other local authorities have funding supporting street enhancement within ACAs.
- 2. **Public Sector.** The HTI and Town Centre First reports for Monaghan town can be used as supporting documents for funding initiatives administered by various government departments and government bodies. Various public funding streams are listed in the section below. Proposed potential uses for St. Louis buildings may be supported by The Department of Health or The Irish Language Support Scheme by the department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media
- 3. **Private Sector.** It is important for Monaghan town regeneration team to continue engaging with the private owners of sites, businesses and houses. Private capital should be the primary source of funding to tackle vacancy and dereliction in the town, part supported by grant initiatives listed below.
- 4. **Regeneration initiatives.** Existing regeneration plans for Dublin Street North, South and the Roosky lands rely on buy-in from private landowners to facilitate large scale developments.
- 5. **The Heritage Council.** Appendix B attached with this report, was prepared in consultation with the Heritage Council and has identified actions which can be actioned with support of the Heritage Council grant funding, with other funding partners where appropriate. The funding may be sought to develop conservation led methodologies, surveys and feasibility studies which could be implemented under other sources of funding.

Implementation Plan

The implementation of the actions contained in this report requires co-operation and co-ordination between Monaghan County Council, national agencies and funders, private and commercial stakeholders in Monaghan town, landowners, local community groups, the Town Team and the elected members. A consultation with the National Monument Service, which was not possible to arrange within the project timescales, will be needed at an early stage of implementation of all Strategic Regeneration Projects in the Action Plan.

Actions marked as ‘high priority’ on the Action Plan above have the potential to instill confidence in the public, encourage private funders and embolden Monaghan County Council to carry out the other actions, marked as ‘medium’ and ‘low’ priority.

The appointment of the Architectural Conservation Officer (ACO) in Monaghan County Council will be instrumental in guiding the action plan, offering assistance to private and public stakeholders, and ensuring the spirit of the Historic Towns Initiative runs through the implementation period. Input from the ACO will also ensure the compliance of each project with the statutory requirements for heritage protection, and advising on the appropriate level of skill and experience required for consultants and contractors appointed on each project. Conservation Architects appointed on each project should be in accordance with the RIAI Conservation Skills Matrix [insert p.4 from here https://www.riai.ie/uploads/files/general-files/RIAI_Skills_Matrix_for_Conservation_Projects.pdf]

Potential Funding Sources

Community Monuments Fund

Type of Support- Capital

The Community Monuments Fund was first established in 2020 to provide investment in Ireland’s archaeological heritage. Funding is prioritised for local authorities, private owners and custodians and community groups for the care, conservation, maintenance, protection and promotion of archaeological monuments. Total funding available nationally for projects under Community Monuments Fund 2024 will be €7,000,000 .

CLÁR programme 2024

Type of Support - Capital

In 2024, over €11.4 were allocated to million to deliver 264 projects under the 2024 CLÁR Programme. The investment will support the development of sports and outdoor facilities such as playgrounds, astro-turf pitches, running tracks and spectator stands. The programme has a focus on supporting Schools by investing in play areas for the children. There is also significant funding to develop our green spaces, sensory gardens and biodiversity areas, with funding also going to a number of our Tidy Towns groups.

Housing

Type of Support - Mainly capital

A range of housing assistance programmes are available (e.g., renovations, adaptations, energy efficiency improvements), excluding incentives (e.g., help to buy). Funding sources include Housing for All (Town) Croí Cónaithe schemes.

National Development Programme

Type of Support- Mainly Capital

Climate Action Fund provides up to 50% project cost support for initiatives aligned with Ireland’s climate and energy goals. Open to public bodies, private organizations, academia, and NGOs. Additional funds like the Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund target large, multi-partner projects, potentially including retrofitting homes, electric charging points, and other sustainability-focused initiatives.

Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme - THRIVE

Type of Support - Capital (€ 2 - 7 Million)

The Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme grants local authorities funding for the strategic renewal of locally developed plans for towns. MCC would be eligible to apply for Strand 2 which grants between 2 million and 7 million towards the renovation and adaptive reuse of vacant or derelict buildings in public control or ownership.

Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF)

Type of support: Mainly capital (minimum €500K) with minor revenue up to 3 years)

Annual call, highly competitive, requiring match funding and “shovel-ready” projects (e.g., planning permission in place). Supports rural renewal and regeneration projects in towns with populations under 10,000. Initial funding of €315 million allocated over 2019-2022, with a government commitment of €1 billion to be invested in rural Ireland from 2019 through 2027.

Irish Language Support Scheme

Type of Support - Captial

Community-based committees/organisations, that operate through Irish outside the Gaeltacht, may make an application under the department’s Irish Language Assistance Schemes. Funding can be provided to assist with the costs associated with building/repairing Irish language centres, purchasing buildings for use as Irish language centres, and/or purchasing equipment for such centres. The purpose of the capital assistance provided under this fund is the strengthening of Irish as a community and family language in accordance with the objectives of the Gaeltacht Act 2012 and the 20 Year Strategy for Irish 2010-2030.

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

Type of Support- Capital

Funds the development and enhancement of recreational infrastructure, including trails, walkways, and greenways, as well as other outdoor leisure and recreational facilities.

Creative Ireland Grant Scheme

Type of Support - Capital

Creative Ireland has several grant schemes which are administered by Local Authorities. There is potential for Monaghan County Council to engage with Creative Ireland in establishing community art projects for the town.

National Transport Authority - Active Travel Programme

Type of Support- Capital

The NTA has a dedicated Active Travel team who work in collaboration with Local Authorities across the country on the delivery of hundreds of Active Travel projects. This includes the development of segregated cycle lanes and widened footpaths, new walking and cycling bridges, and new pedestrian crossings. The work of the NTA’s Active Travel Programme is underpinned by the aims and objectives set out in the Government’s Climate Action Plan 2023. One of the key aims cited is to increase the number of walking and cycling networks so that walking, cycling and public transport will account for 50% of all journeys made by 2030. Projects are funded by the Department of Transport through the National Transport Authority’s Active Travel Programme and are managed and delivered by the Local Authorities. In 2023, 290 million euros was allocated by the NTA to enhance the delivery of hundreds of projects.

Community Enhancement Programme (CEP)

Type of Support- Capital

Provides funding to disadvantaged communities across Ireland, supporting minor improvements to community centers, town parks, common areas, and energy-saving projects.

LEADER 2023- 2027

Type of Support- Capital

A rural development initiative co-funded by the EU, aimed at addressing needs of rural communities and businesses. €180 million in funding available to support rural enterprises and communities through 2023-2027.

Town and Village Renewal Scheme

Type of Support- Capital

Managed by the Department of Rural and Community Development, this scheme funds projects under Project Ireland 2040, providing up to €200,000 (increased to €500,000 max) to towns with populations under 10,000, supporting economic and social revitalization focused on town centers.

IDA, Enterprise Ireland, and the Western Development Commission (WDC)

Type of Support - Capital and revenue

IDA and Enterprise Ireland provide a range of grants and support options, including Business Financial Planning Grant, with grants typically ranging from small amounts (approx. €25k-50k) to large (€800k). WDC can assist projects like developing hubs and financing local initiatives.

Potential Funding Sources

North West Regional Assembly

Type of support: Capital and revenue (indirect)

The region benefits from access to a wider pool of EU funds than most of Ireland, due to its strategic location near the border.

ERDF Programme for Towns

Type of support: Capital

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) supports the Town Centre First initiative, co-funded by the EU and Irish government, aiming to reduce town vacancy rates and support revitalisation.

Destination Towns Initiative

Type of support: Capital

Supported by Fáilte Ireland under the Government’s Project Ireland 2040, this initiative promotes tourism growth by enhancing town centers.

Disability Capital Project

Type of Support - Captial

The HSE provides funding for strategic projects and identifies short and medium term infrastructure needs in disability services.

Active Travel Fund & Sustainable Mobility Investment Programme

Type of support: Capital

These funds support rapid deployment of new and improved active transport infrastructure for walking, cycling, and other