



BALLYBAY

PUBLIC REALM & ECONOMIC PLAN



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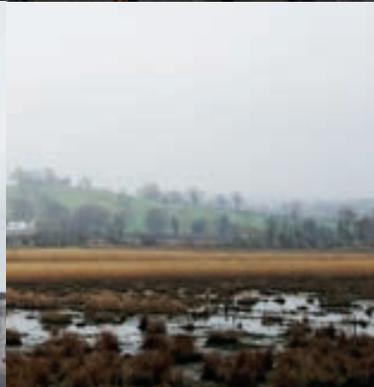
1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Public Realm and Economic Plan for Ballybay was commissioned in March/April 2018 by Monaghan County Council to develop a plan for the most effective presentation, management and development of Ballybay's Public realm and economic assets and opportunities.

While this plan is not a statutory document, it will provide a shared vision for the Public Realm and Economic Development of Ballbay, this document will also play an important role in ensuring the sustainable development of the town and in strengthening its tourism function.

The process of the Ballybay Public Realm and Economic Plan, was undertaken over a 6 month period through a close working relationship with Monaghan County Council, Ballbay Regeneration Committee, the community and local schools. The Plan was greatly informed by public consultations and school workshops held with Ballybay Community School, Scoil Eanna and Ballybay Central National School.

The Plan has been prepared by the Paul Hogarth Company and Seán Ó'Riordáin and Associates, who have extensive experience in the design and delivery of public realm projects, economic plans, policy and organisation reviews and development strategies.



Policy Context

A number of strategic documents set the policy context for Ballybay and County Monaghan, with the main point of statutory reference for this strategy being the **Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019**. The Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 is under preparation at the time of writing. **The National Planning Framework (NPF)** and the **Local Economic and Community Plan 2015 - 2021** are also relevant to this strategy.

Whilst a brief introduction is made here, the Ballybay Public Realm and Economic Plan should be read with full cognisance of these statutory plans and their respective policies.

The Monaghan County Development Plan 2013–2019

The Monaghan County Development Plan 2013–2019 (incorporating the Development Plans for the towns of Monaghan, Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, Clones and Ballybay) sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Monaghan. It became effective in March 2013.

The following are the strategic objectives for Ballybay in the Monaghan County Development Plan, the majority of which are highly relevant to the strategy :

- Create a clear strategic framework for the sustainable development of the towns and their hinterlands through zoning and servicing of lands in a manner consistent with the Core Strategy as set out in Chapter 3, Settlement/Core Strategy, Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019. (SSO 4)
- Provide a basis for public and private sector investment in infrastructure, services and development, offering clear guidance to both sectors in framing development proposals, in partnership with the community. (SSO 5)

- Facilitate the provision of adequate services and facilities in the areas of education, medical/health, transport and public administration, and encourage the co-location of these services. (SSO 6)
- Attract investment and new employment opportunities to the towns, while supporting existing sustainable enterprises. (SSO 7)
- Promote the towns as residential, employment, retail and service centres. (SSO 8)
- Promote the towns as industrial and commercial centres. (SSO 9)
- Protect and enhance the heritage, character and streetscape of the towns. (SSO 10)
- Ensure the towns are attractive places to live and work in. (SSO 11)
- Provide a wide range of amenity, sporting and cultural facilities including public spaces and parks. (SSO 12)
- Establish a framework for more detailed specific local plans and projects within the towns. (SSO 13)

Monaghan County Council aims to address the future sustainable development of Ballybay through:

- Establishment of a viable and growing population, sufficient to support a wide variety of employment and services.
- Development of infrastructure where necessary to accommodate growth within the town.
- Improved transport links both within the county and to destinations outside it.
- Encouragement of re-development of back lands and derelict sites throughout the town.
- Provision of sufficient parking within the town centre.
- Facilitation of the development of Lough Major and the Dromore River System as tourist assets.



Policy Context

The National Planning Framework (NPF)

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of the country out to the year 2040. It is a framework to guide public and private investment, to create and promote opportunities for our people, and to protect and enhance the environment - from villages to cities, everything around and in between.

The following are the National Strategic Outcomes and Strategic Investment Priorities of the National Planning Framework, many of which are highly relevant to the Strategy :

National Strategic Outcomes

- 1. Compact Growth
- 2. Enhanced Regional Accessibility
- 3. Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities
- 4. Sustainable Mobility
- 5. A Strong Economy supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills
- 6. High-Quality International Connectivity
- 7. Enhanced Amenity and Heritage
- 8. Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society
- 9. Sustainable Management of Water, Waste and other Environmental Resources
- 10. Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services

Strategic Investment Priorities

- 1. Housing and Sustainable Urban Development
- 2. National Road Network
- 3. Rural Development
- 4. Environmentally Sustainable Public Transport
- 5. Enterprise, Skills and Innovation Capacity
- 6. Airports and Ports
- 7. Culture, Heritage and Sport
- 8. Climate Action
- 9. Water Infrastructure Education, Health and Childcare

Local Economic and Community Plan 2016 - 2021 (LECP)

The Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) was been prepared by the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) for Economic Development and Enterprise Support and Monaghan Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) under the guidance of the Economic Development and Community Development Sections of Monaghan County Council. A broad range of agencies were actively involved in the preparation of the strategy, with the aim of playing key roles in implementation of actions as lead or as implementing /supporting partners.

The following are the Economic and Community high level goals of the Local Economic and Community Plan, all of which are highly relevant to Ballybay and the Strategy :

- To Maximise and Sustain Economic Activity, Entrepreneurial Spirit and Employment in County Monaghan
- To Support the Development of a Highly Skilled and Educated workforce
- To Support the Development of key Economic Infrastructure
- Maximise the potential of Natural Resources of the County
- To support individuals and communities in participating in educational and lifelong learning opportunities
- To support development of social infrastructure and community development in the county
- To support and enhance civic participation in the county
- To promote the health and well-being of all people in Monaghan by ensuring equal opportunity
- To access, participate and engage in the social, economic, cultural, sporting and educational opportunities available to the County
- To protect, enhance and maximise the potential of the natural, cultural and heritage resources of County Monaghan



Background

The town of Ballybay, located centrally in Monaghan is within 20 kilometres of the major towns in the county. Traditionally a market town that served its rural hinterland, reminders of its heritage still hold their prominence in the town such as the Market House in the square, built c.1775. The town is still largely dependant on the agricultural sector, the Mart remaining a prominent feature in the town, both in its central location and popularity on Mart day county wide.

While Ireland thrived in a relatively buoyant economy throughout the 1990's, Ballybay did not attract new inward investment and prosperity as wider economic conditions faltered. As a result, the attractive town core, with its distinctive aesthetic, has not experienced significant regeneration. The result of this is several vacant properties, particularly prominent on Main Street, and the adjoining streets.

Despite its lack of growth, Ballybay maintains a very strong community network. The Ballybay Development Association is one of the most active groups, responsible for the Ballybay Wetland Centre, who have also worked closely with the consultants on this Public Realm and Economic Plan. Successful major employers remain in the town such as Kepak and Leonard Engineering, as well as The Ballybay Enterprise Park.

Important natural resources that shaped the town of Ballybay are Lough Major and the Dromore River System. Home to the Ballybay Wetland Centre, these waterscapes are designated Proposed Natural Heritage Areas and Areas of Secondary Amenity Value.



Likes -
 More transport use, increased
 use
 • PARK
 • Docks ect
 • Pitch
 • Water Wetlands
 • Creech school variety.



Process

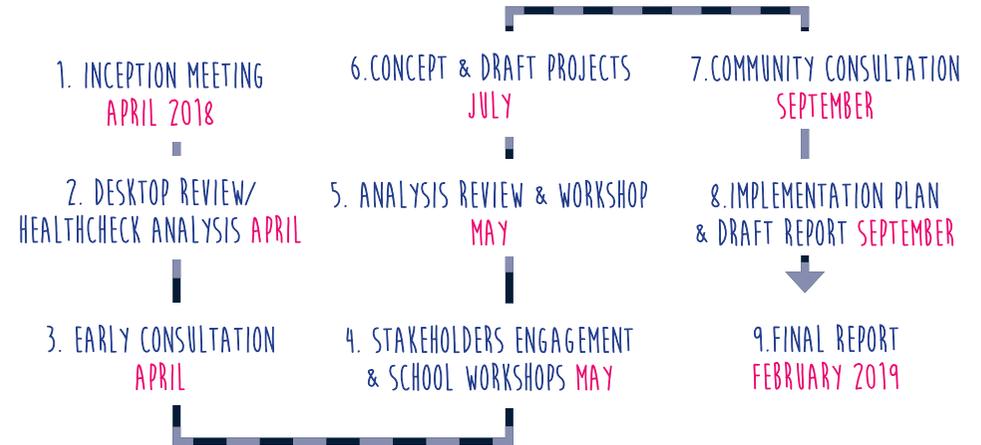
As indicated in the adjacent diagram, two successful and well attended public consultation events were held during the development of the plan. The first was at the early stages of the process to help inform analysis findings and desktop research, the second to collect feedback on the proposed Draft Plan and Projects for Ballybay, which has been summarised below.

The feedback included a wide range of positive aspects of the town that should be enhanced and celebrated, however the top priorities and issues to improve Ballybay were:

- **Parking & traffic** - in the town, in residential areas, to improve safety
- **Employment opportunities & support** - more and successful businesses, for younger generation, for all abilities / disabilities and ages
- **Dereliction & vacancy** - to address in the short and long term
- **Police / Town monitoring** - for anti-social behaviour, dog fouling, cleanliness
- **Youth facilities** - a town premises, more for facilities for young people
- **Agri-food** - a presence in the town, places to eat out, markets and fairs
- **Town improvements** - aesthetic and streetscape improvements for community and visitors
- **Community space** - A space to meet and for community events
- **Greenway** - connecting to walks, outdoor spaces and play areas
- **Environmental & water quality improvements**
- **Celebrate Heritage** - interpretation, setting of buildings and old railway, walks and tours
- **Wetlands** - better connection from the town, revitalisation or diversification of the centre
- **Retail & hotel opportunities** - range and variety of shops and places to stay in the town
- **Town Park & walks** - improvements and extension of walks, interpretation areas
- **Loughs** - improved and increased access and use of waterscape

Of those who completed the feedback form or online questionnaire, **100% were in support** of the Draft Ballybay Public Realm and Economic Plan.

The 10 projects included in the Draft Plan (which has now increased to 12) were all scored at least **7/10 or above in effectiveness** for the town.



Second public consultation event, Town Park, Ballybay



Historic map 6 inch colour (1837-1842)



Historic map 25 inch (1888-1913)



Figure ground and waterways of Ballybay and surrounding environs



Topography and floodplain of Ballybay and surrounding environs

2.0 ANALYSIS

Heritage & Land/Waterscape

Ballybay, set in low lying pastoral landscapes and drumlins, has historically evolved around a series of loughs, rivers and watercourses. Flowing east to west, many of these loughs are linked, giving Ballybay its characteristic water and landscape. Well known and enjoyed by locals, this amenity requires nurturing, enriching and celebrating.

The town is thought to have established from the Corrybrannan Bridge to the south of the town, now the site of the vacant Riverdale Hotel. The low lying grounds and substantial floodplains surrounding the loughs and riverways has dictated the natural development patten of built form. Future development potential has and is therefore contained to the topography of the town and surrounding areas.

Over time, the rural hinterland has been developed, mostly residential in nature, but also includes businesses and the Ballybay Community School. The town core has for the most part remained physically intact, however several vacant properties and sites require attention.

The heritage of the town ranges from the Leslie Estate and Ballybay House, as well as remnants of its industrial past, which includes the dismantled railway line, extending across the landscape from Cootehill to Dundalk via Ballybay and Castleblayney, with its associated buildings such as signal boxes, station houses and platforms.

The towns history has had a notable influence on the natural, built and social fabric of the town. From its linen heritage, Market House, town-houses and stores. The legacy of the estate, in spite of Ballybay house being destroyed in 1921, still remains through several buildings and planted landscape giving the town its beautiful characteristic setting.



Ballybay railway , Main Street



Ballybay Community College



Viewing platform on Lough Major



Scoil Eanna and Ballybay Central School litter pick around the Town Park



Town flooding October 2011

Community & Business

Ballybay has long been the home of some very successful businesses. Ranging from agri-foods, engineering and retail, there is potential to drive future investment in and around the town. Key employers such as Kepak and Leonard Engineering, as well as Ballybay Mart ensure the town performs well economically, however smaller town centre businesses have struggled.

The level of retail activity in Ballybay has declined significantly, with the range and offer at present relatively limited. The variety and range of shops and office space requires expansion and diversification to become an attractive investment proposition. Several prominent vacant or derelict sites and buildings in the town, have an impact on potential investors in Ballybay and also for the community. Due to the compact nature of the town, these vacant sites and properties have the potential, through regeneration and investment to strengthen the town core, revitalising these spaces therefore will not only impact upon the space, but the town and wider environs. These spaces and sites range from historic buildings relating to the railway and towns heritage, as well as more recent developments such as Ballybay Wetland Centre, which is currently under-utilised.

The sporting pride and facilities of the town, both in the GAA pitches and Ballybay Community School is something that should be celebrated and encouraged to grow. Improved connections to these spaces ensures their prominence in the town, and also enable expansion in the future.

Community pride in the town is evident, not just through the sporting achievements and acknowledgements, but also the community events which are a driving force for positivity in Ballybay. Strong ties have endured with the twin town of Gergweis, Osterhofen in Germany, while community groups and schools continue to work together through sporting and town clean up events and initiatives.



Ballybay Wetland Centre



Figure of unoccupied buildings*

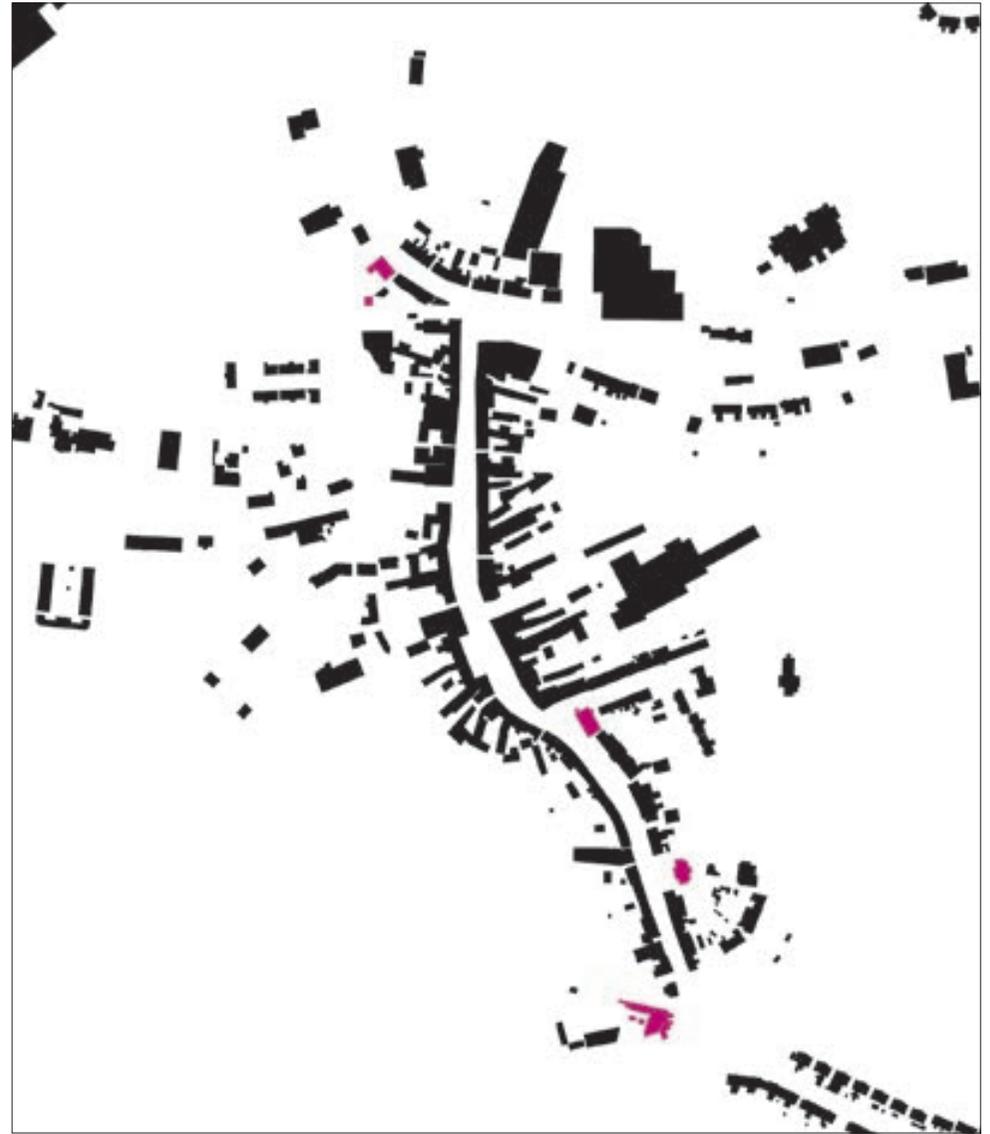


Figure of opportunity sites*

* As of June 2018

Economic Analysis

Ballybay (an urban and rural population of c1800) is at the heart of the County economy as well as having a cross border role as a key market town. The area has an average deprivation score of -14.72 making it an area defined as disadvantageous at national level.

The town and environs is highlighted in the Leader Local Development Strategy for County Monaghan (March 2016) as having:

- **3rd Highest unemployment rate @ 26.1% (190)**
- **2nd Highest rate of Lone Parent Households @ 13.5% (80)**
- **Highest rate for Secondary Level Education only @ 62%**
- **2nd Lowest rate for Third Level Education attainment @16.5%**
- **Highest rate for rented accommodation @ 44.9%**

While it is important to acknowledge the above, it is also worth noting that the town has a highly developed, largely indigenous manufacturing sector employing over 1,000 people, most notably in food processing and production and industrial engineering. Income levels are however, mainly of low industrial wage levels.

The town and environs also has a growing micro enterprise sector which is supported by the Monaghan Local Enterprise Office (LEO). The town is also a centre for food development through enterprises based in the Ballybay Enterprise Centre. The town is broadly served by primary schools and a post primary school and a local retail offering but is lacking in having a broad accommodation offering, particularly since the closure of the local hotel in the town. Also, of note, is the role the Mart plays in the town, both as a facilitator of local and international animal sales but also in the weekly spending impact for local retailers and restaurants. The traditional economic catchment of the town includes South Armagh and therefore concerns arising from Brexit have been highlighted during the preparation of this Plan.

High levels of vacancy are a feature of the town along with dereliction/under development notable in key sites. One of the most obvious is the proposed location of the Opportunity Sites Project (see Project E) located to the rear of Main Street and Castleblaney Road, where vacant/derelict residential housing and land exists at the heart of the town. As a result there is potential for economic renewal within the town footprint. This development potential includes residential and commercial/private investment led opportunities. Property prices remain competitive (at the time of writing a good quality 4 bed house can be purchased for around €150,000) relative to other parts of Monaghan and more generally within a 1 hour commute of the town.

The town and environs have the potential for a comprehensive regeneration which if underpinned by a coordinated regeneration package from the public sector would open up scope for private investors in residential developments as well as in micro food enterprises. In addition, the town needs to enhance its digital footprint to adequately demonstrate its offering. In doing so the longer term potential of restoring a full service hotel in the town could be achieved.



3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives for Ballybay demonstrate the benefits of all parts of the town working better to re-establish a stronger and more successful town core. All the projects seek to fulfil the objectives in revitalising Ballybay to a place that is a better place for its community, as well as an attractive place to work, visit and invest in.

1. ASSETS

INVEST IN AND IMPROVE EXISTING HIGH QUALITY ASSETS

2. CORE

MODERNISE TOWN CENTRE RETAIL & RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION

3. CONNECTIONS

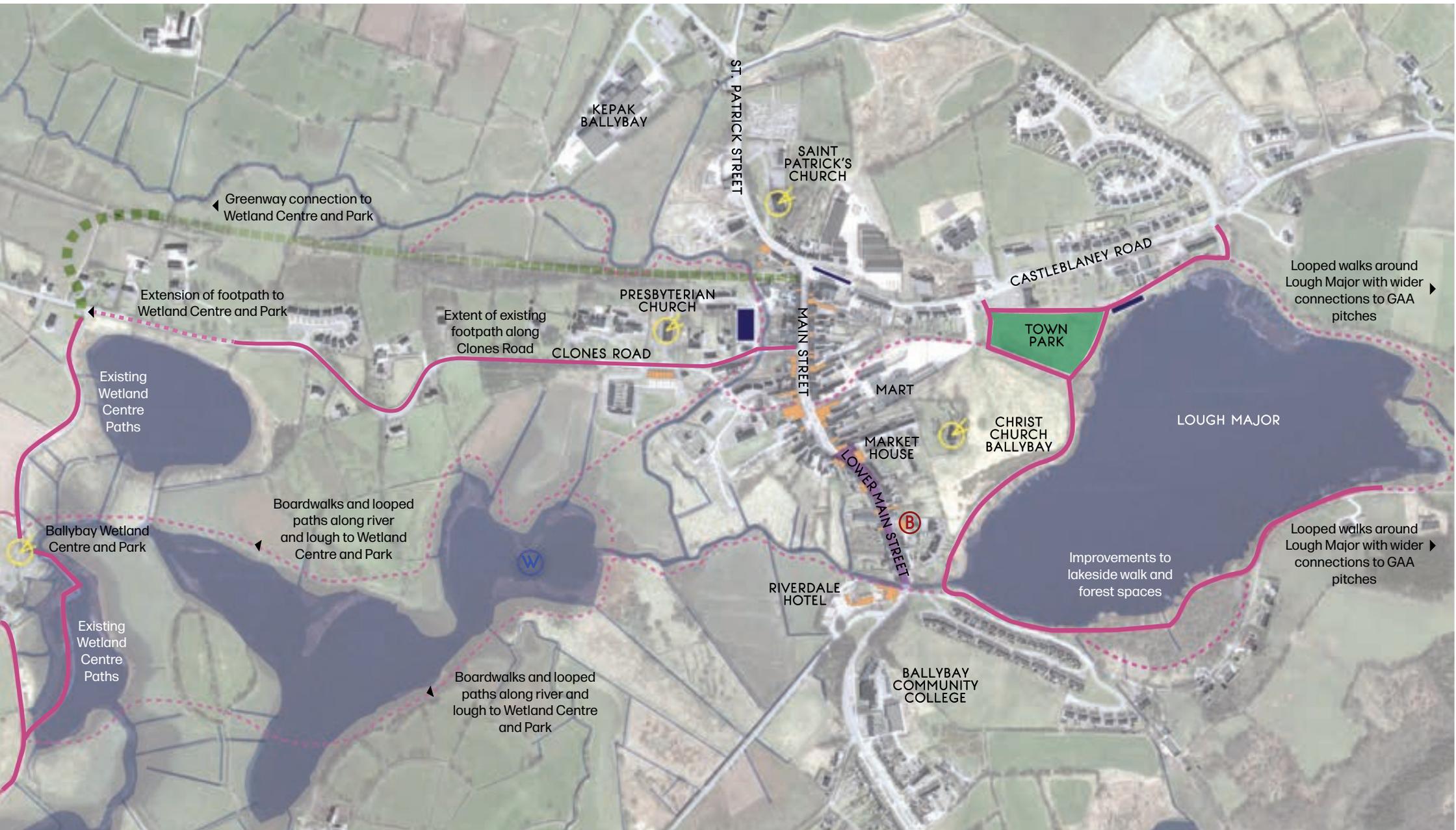
STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HISTORIC TOWN & WATERSCAPE

4. PROPOSITION

SHAPE A UNIQUE DESTINATION FOR BALLYBAY IN THE COUNTY & REGION

5. OPPORTUNITIES

CREATE NEW EXCITING DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Greenway connection to Wetland Centre and Park

Extension of footpath to Wetland Centre and Park

Existing Wetland Centre Paths

Ballybay Wetland Centre and Park

Existing Wetland Centre Paths

Boardwalks and looped paths along river and lough to Wetland Centre and Park

Boardwalks and looped paths along river and lough to Wetland Centre and Park

Extent of existing footpath along Clones Road

CLONES ROAD

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

KEPAK BALLYBAY

ST. PATRICK STREET

MAIN STREET

RIVERDALE HOTEL

BALLYBAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

MARKET HOUSE

MART

CHRIST CHURCH BALLYBAY

SAINT PATRICK'S CHURCH

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CASTLEBLANEY ROAD

TOWN PARK

LOUGH MAJOR

Improvements to lakeside walk and forest spaces

Looped walks around Lough Major with wider connections to GAA pitches

Looped walks around Lough Major with wider connections to GAA pitches

4.0 PLAN & PROJECTS

Plan

The Ballybay Public Realm and Economic Plan has been organised into 12 projects, which range in size and scope. All are envisaged to work together to enhance the quality and experience within the town and its environs, as well as drive its desirability as a location for economic investment in the future.

Delivery will be based on each project's importance, priority, complexity and availability of funding. All project's once agreed and funding is secured, will undergo a series of consultations with stakeholders, landowners and the community.

Projects

- | | | | | | |
|---|----------|--------------------------|---|----------|------------------------------------|
|  | A | TOWN CONNECTIONS |  | G | COMMUNITY BUSINESS HUB |
|  | B | TOWN PARK |  | H | WETLAND CENTRE & PARK |
|  | C | GREENWAY | | I | DIGITAL BALLYBAY* |
|  | D | LANDMARKS PROJECT |  | J | ACTIVE TRAVEL & PARKING |
|  | E | OPPORTUNITY SITES |  | K | STREETSCAPES |
| | F | COMMUNITY CENTRE* | | L | EDIBLE BALLYBAY* |

*Not shown on plan

A. TOWN CONNECTIONS

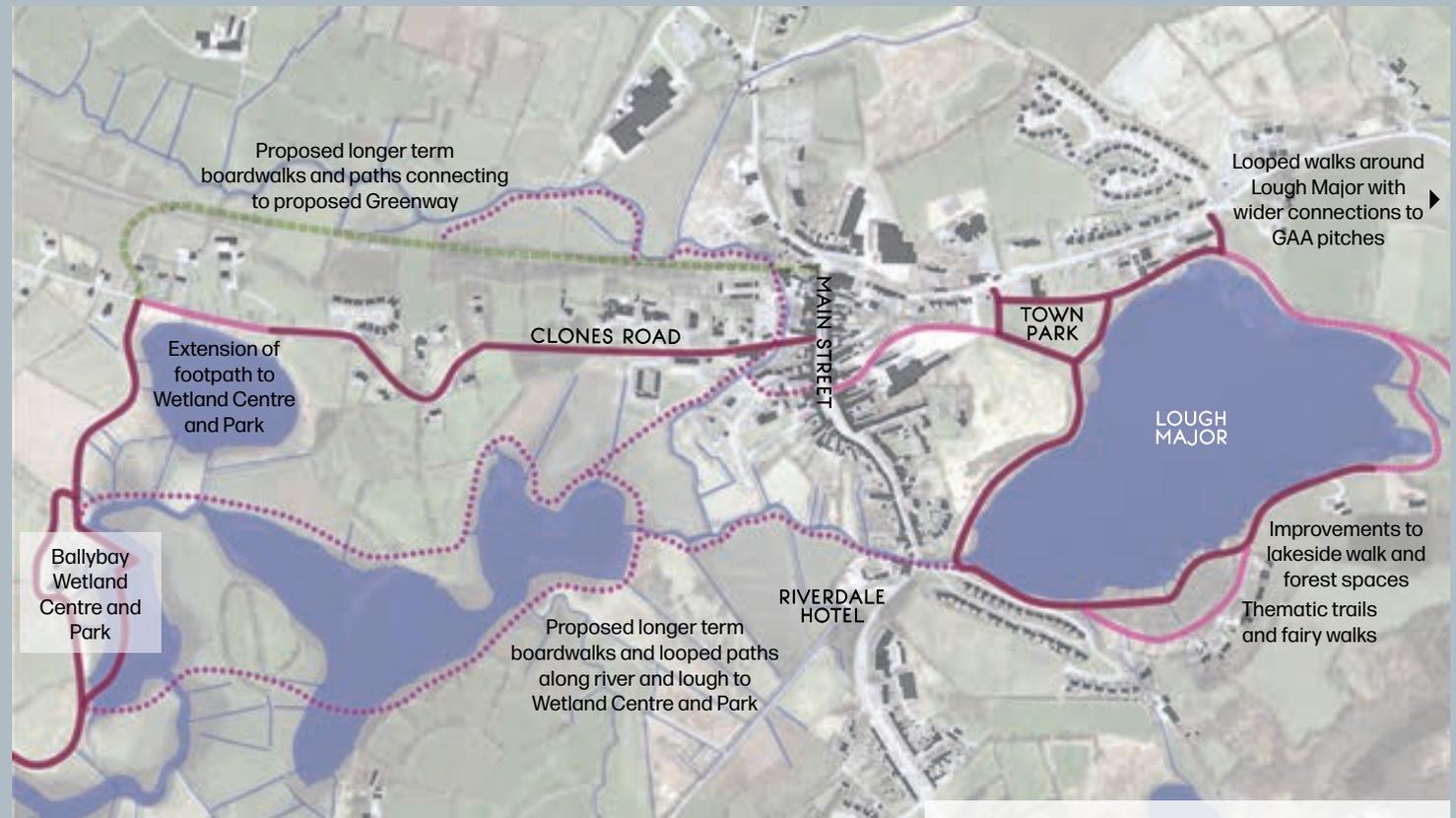
PROJECT OVERVIEW

A connected network of foot and cycle paths in and around Ballybay.

The project will improve the connectivity within the town centre and to wider networks and assets such as Lough Major, GAA pitches and enhanced Wetland Centre and Park. It will create varied points of interest along these routes such as thematic trails and interpretation areas.

STEPS TO DELIVERY

- A1. Phased delivery of path network
- A2. Associated path infrastructure (e.g. lighting and signage)
- A3. Thematic trails (e.g. Fairy Walk)
- A4. Wildlife viewing stations
- A5. Seating and viewing locations / platforms
- A6. Artwork and interpretation



- Existing path/footpath network
- Proposed boardwalk/paths/footpaths (short term)
- Proposed boardwalks & paths (long term)
- - - Proposed Greenway

Proposed boardwalk and path network (short to long term proposals)

The Ballybay Town Connections Project is an important project to link the considerable assets of the town and its environs, while growing the visitor offer of the area.

The project will comprise of an extensive network of paths and trails suitable for walking, running and cycling. The phased project will, in the short term physically link the town centre with key destinations and natural assets located around the town, such as the Town Park, loughs and schools. Delivery of the network will be phased over time, prioritising key stretches in line with benefit and deliverability. Longer term connections would extend the network to the Wetland Centre and Park.

Safe, high quality connections will encourage a more sustainable and healthier form of travel, relieving the dependency on cars for travelling around the town and its surrounds. A well connected town also has the potential to encourage those visiting to explore the wider extents of the town more freely, increasing their stay and spend in the area.

The phased delivery of a path and boardwalk network would be an important step in the Town Connections project. This would include improving the 'Coachmans Walk' to complete an accessible route around Lough Major, as well as the introduction of thematic trails such as fairy walks and adventure trails. Associated path infrastructure will accompany this network with appropriate lighting, signage, artwork and interpretation and seating. Within the town itself there is opportunity to improve linkages from the town centre, to the Town Park through various development sites.

Desirable wider network links would include a series of path and boardwalk networks to the GAA pitches and the proposed enhanced Wetland Centre and Park, helping to establish these spaces as part of the town centre.

BENEFITS

The investment underpins a phased delivery of the overall Plan through investment in a cross rural/urban network of high quality paths, looped walks and boardwalks. It will also significantly enhance accessibility to existing community infrastructure. It will provide the town with an added tourism facility linking the neighbouring and high quality environment with the town and underpinning development of new tourism potential, further underpinning the existing angling tourism offer with a broader recreation offering, including additional capacity to build upon use of the existing and wholly under-utilised Wetlands Centre which has considerable potential to be a unique service point in the border area generally.



Lough Erne Boardwalk



Boardwalk with wildlife platforms / pausing points, Morden Hall Park, London



Natural riverside boardwalk at wet meadow River Norges, France



Fairy Walk, Cootehill



Tuying Wetland Park, China

B. TOWN PARK

PROJECT OVERVIEW

An enriched and enhanced Town Park with strengthened connections to the town centre.

This project will improve the Town Park for the community and visitors, with complimentary biodiversity and natural play areas, an outdoor classroom, benches and 'hangout' sheltered space.

STEPS TO DELIVERY

- B1. Path infrastructure (e.g. lighting, signage, seating, fencing)
- B2. Construction of recreation spaces and outdoor classroom
- B3. Construction of teen hangout shelter
- B4. Artwork and interpretation
- B5. Native tree and shrub planting



Proposed Town Park Plan (drawings produced by Earthlinks)

The Town Park is a vital asset to Ballybay. It's proximity to the town centre, Scoil Éanna and Community Crèche offers an invaluable resource for the local community. The Town park project will create a high quality and appropriate scheme, suitable for all users, while maximising existing landscape features of the site, surrounding lake and walkways.

The key principle for the scheme is the inclusion and enrichment of biodiversity to the area. The informal layout lends to attractive and natural spaces while allowing for the creation of different habitats.

A variety of native trees and shrubs will create seasonal interest, enhancing local knowledge of biodiversity. High standards of the works will ensure the long term sustainability of the site while creating an important local ecosystem, with features such as soft gravel footpaths minimising surface water runoff.

As seen in the adjacent plan and visualisations, the existing children's play park will be complimented by a proposed natural play area, outdoor classroom spaces, tree tunnels, wild flower areas, sheltered seating space and benches throughout the park.

It is important that the Town Park project is linked closely with Project A. Town Connections. Strong and safe physical connections for pedestrians and cyclists from the town centre is essential in reducing the need for car dependency as a means of travelling through the town. It also offers an opportunity to strengthen visual way-finding and interpretation in Ballybay.

BENEFITS

This project will significantly enhance accessibility to this existing community asset, with improved access and paths for users of all ages and abilities. It will provide the town with an added tourism facility linking the town centre and existing walks around Lough Major through an enhanced public space. It will contribute to footfall to and through the town, while enhancing the quality and character of landscape of the surrounding areas.



Sketch visualisations of proposed Town Park (drawings produced by Earthlinks)

C. GREENWAY

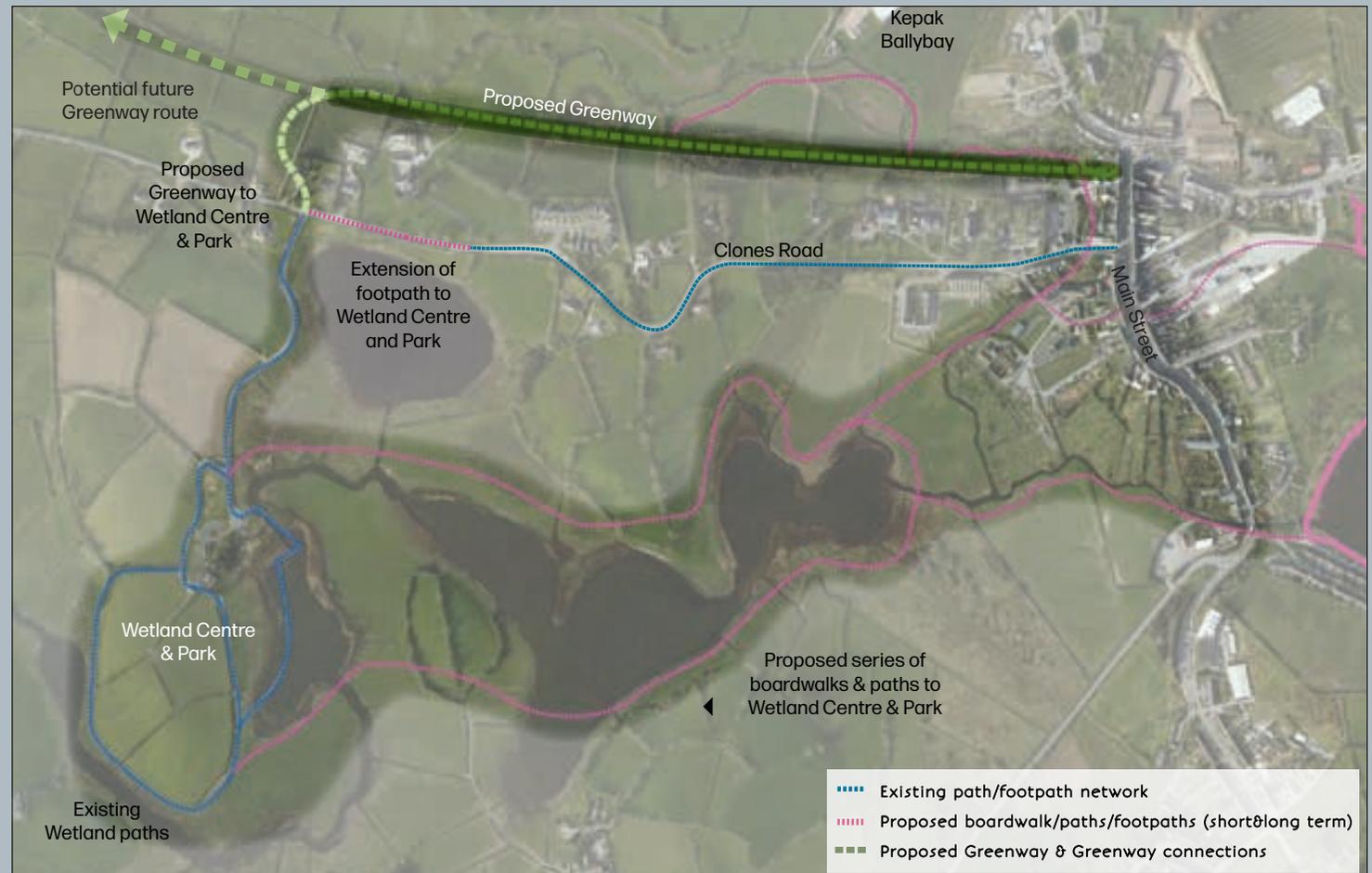
PROJECT OVERVIEW

A Ballybay Greenway with potential for future phases extending region wide.

The proposed Ballybay Greenway will celebrate the town's industrial heritage, while future phases will aim to create a regional Greenway. This will be a destination in itself and improve the physical and mental well-being of the community and those who have access to it.

STEPS TO DELIVERY

- C1. Town Greenway feasibility plan (to Wetlands Centre)
- C2. Phase 1 Greenway project (to include access from town, Water Tower, Railway bridge)
- C3. Regional Greenway plan
- C4. Restoration of signal box and platform
- C5. Restoration of Water tower (see project E1.)



Proposed Greenway route, connecting to proposed boardwalks and path network

The old railway line from Clones to Dundalk forms an integral part of Ballybay's industrial heritage. Substantial remnants of physical features and infrastructure still exist, whilst others have vanished from the town entirely. Those remaining range in condition and renovation required, include the water tower, railway bridge, signal box and station house.

The opportunity comes to improve Ballybay's connectivity to its industrial past, while putting it on the destination map for County Monaghan. Greenways have been proven to not only drive tourism but improve mental and physical health of those who have access to them.

The phased project would begin with a feasibility plan to explore connections to the enhanced Wetland Centre and Park, with future phases extending county and region wide. Sympathetic restoration of buildings should include the Water Tower, Signal Box and Platform. Historic interpretation would be important for locals and residents to learn of the historical importance the railway had for Ballybay, as well as for the younger generation to appreciate the town's industrial past. All feasibility plans must be in agreement and consultation with landowners.

The project has the ability to further open cross country connections into a national greenway network, while improving the green infrastructure and connections to cultural and heritage assets throughout Ballybay.

BENEFITS

The delivery of this project would also underpin creation of a regional greenway/blueway network linking other locations in the county and across from the border towards Dundalk. Specifically within the town and environs it will link the considerable assets of the town and its environs, while growing the visitor offer of the town. The project will locally deliver a high quality trail suitable for walking, running and cycling, providing an additional attractor for the Town. In addition, the greenway will physically link the town centre with key destinations and natural assets located around the town.



Glaslough Signal House renovation



Waterford Greenway

D. LANDMARKS PROJECT

PROJECT OVERVIEW

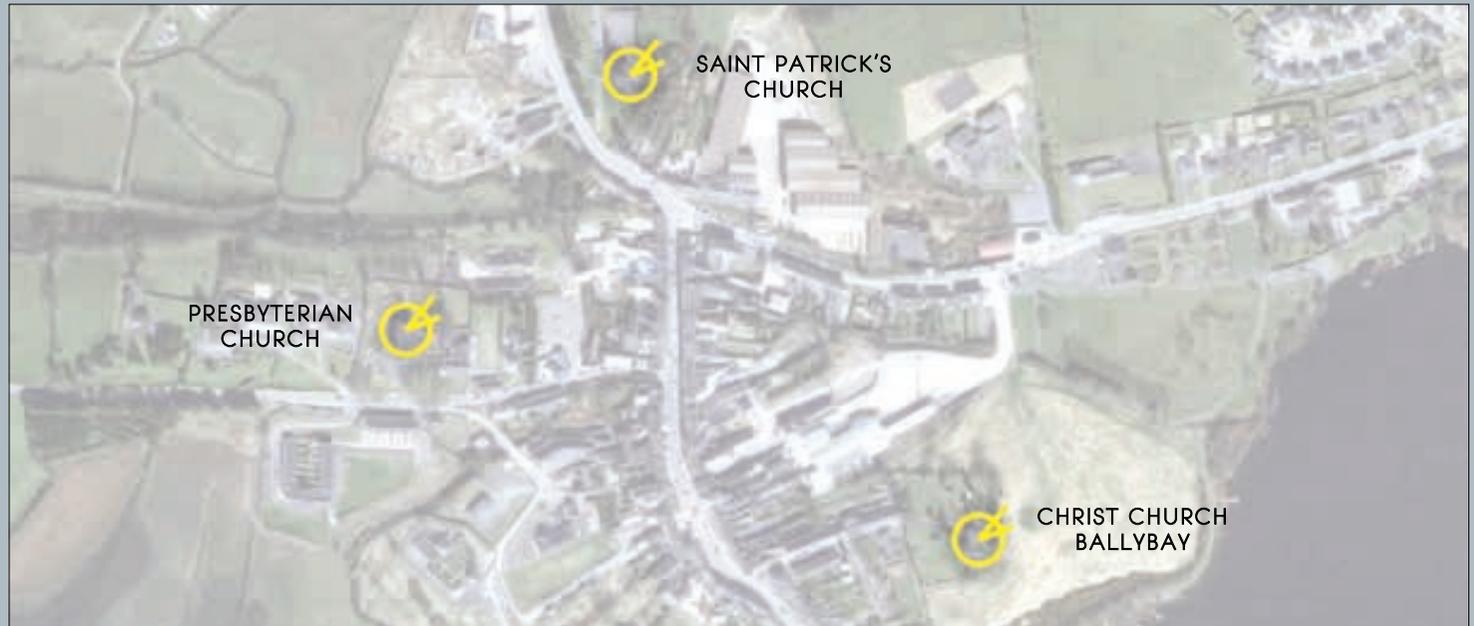
Showcasing natural and built heritage in the town through view improvements, lighting and events.

This project will ensure townscape and architectural assets are celebrated and enhanced through a series of small and long term interventions. Improving the impression of the town for the locals and visitors is a positive and memorable one.

STEPS TO DELIVERY

D1. Town views improvements

D2. Floodlighting of landmark buildings



Proposed landmarks location plan



Christ Church floodlit, Ballybay



St. Patrick's Church, Ballybay



Overgrown tree example at south of Ballybay

The townscape and architecture of Ballybay, emphasised by its dramatic topography, offers iconic and striking views of landmark buildings in the town. Such buildings include the town's churches - St. Patrick's Church, Christ Church, and the Presbyterian Church, all holding prominent locations on the hill lines. Historic buildings along Main Street, such as the Market House, have the potential if lit during the evening, to dramatically enhance the aesthetic of the town and leave a lasting memorable impression.

Proposals for these views should be considered sensitively, such as appropriate cutting back of overgrown trees to improve views and access points. Landmark buildings can be highlighted by lighting, as shown in the town with Christ Church lighting (see adjacent image), to enhance and celebrate these iconic rural landscape features of Ballybay.

Lighting shows and events should also be considered in picturesque settings to highlight the unique natural and built assets of the town. Sensitive but dramatic light shows could enhance the beauty and appeal of places like the Town Park, Lough Major walks, and proposed boardwalks around the waterscape. Extending these spaces uses into the evening will increase their versatility and overall offer of Ballybay for the community and visitors.

BENEFITS

This project will open up enhanced viewing points for both the built and rural environment in and around the town taking particular advantage of the high quality water based characteristics of the area. It will contribute to enhanced footfall given its attraction to an ageing market visitor sector seeking environs with a high quality walkability and landscape character.



Annecy, Palais de l'Isle, France



Example of rural feature lighting, Franches Church, France



Event lighting at Mount Stewart, Festival of Light

E. OPPORTUNITY SITES

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Regeneration of underutilised and vacant town centre sites, strengthening connections to existing assets.

Building and site regeneration will be used as a means of showcasing the potential of vacant and derelict sites in the town. This project will encourage inward and future private investment in the town.

STEPS TO DELIVERY

- E1. Register of dereliction and vacancy
- E2. Investment proposition (for retail/residential/hospitality)
- E3. Pop up initiative and open door event
- E4. Showcase refurbishment project



Sketch layout of opportunity site - Indicative sketch only of Ballybay Courtyards Project

Dereliction and vacancy in the town is of considerable scale and prominence. Rather than considering this as a negative issue, these sites can be seen as important and exciting regeneration opportunities for Ballybay.

The condition of each of the buildings and sites needs to be understood, to appreciate and inform the future of these spaces in the short and long term. A register of dereliction and vacancy would help inform an investment proposition for the town, which should include a variety of uses appropriate for the town. Such examples include town centre living, retail, co-working spaces and hospitality spaces.

Several intervention areas should be assessed to address dereliction and vacancy, in particular housing on Lower Main Street and Hall Street / Clones Road. Bringing these properties back into occupation in conjunction with Project K. Streetscapes will contribute to improving the overall townscape of Ballybay.

The Ballybay Courtyards Project, in particular, will comprehensively address a major eyesore in Ballybay Town Centre. The adjacent indicative sketch design provides an example of showcasing this town centre living, involving renovation of the existing partially constructed buildings into mixed tenure residential accommodation and construction of new housing units. This would strengthen the town centre by removing the existing visual blight and adding valuable housing stock to the market.

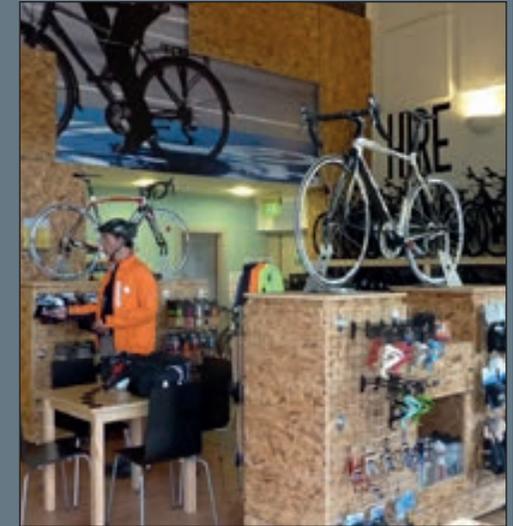
It is vital that a strong, high quality town centre connection is established through the proposed development, which will provide a much needed link between Main Street and Town Park via the Mart site. This will encourage sustainable transport, improve access to facilities in the town and attract development to the market. Access to the existing residential properties on Castleblaney Road should be explored to help alleviate congestion and improve safety for pedestrians and motorists.

BENEFITS

This project will comprehensively address a major challenge in the Town Centre through enabling re-population and renewal of the streetscapes. The potential for the development of 35 plus town centre housing units and also providing for linkage from the town centre to the town park and Mart will allow the town centre to regain its lost vibrancy whilst underpinning local services such as retail and education.



Co-working studio space, Uberlin, Germany



Social enterprise project - 'The Cycle Hub', Newcastle upon Tyne.



Charity-run creative hub and cafe, 'The Goldsmiths' Centre, London

F. COMMUNITY CENTRE

PROJECT OVERVIEW

A multifunctional Community Centre in the heart of Ballybay.

This project will involve restoring a vacant and/or derelict building to house a multi functional space for the community to meet periodically, host classes, training courses and workshops.

STEPS TO DELIVERY

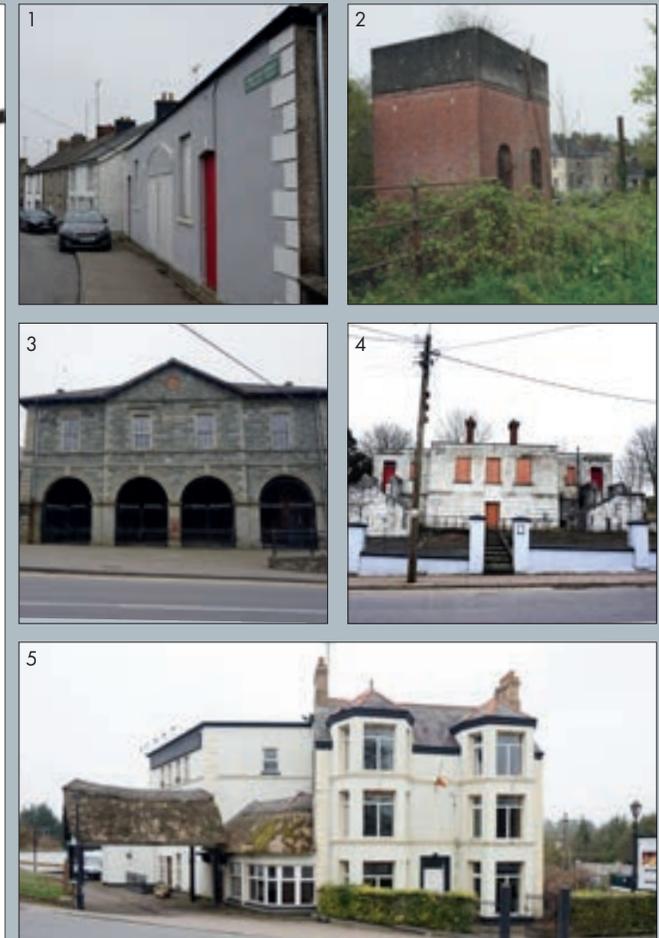
F1. Review of existing spaces and facilities use in town

F2. Assessment of vacant / derelict buildings and sites

F3. Renovation and/or replacement of building/site for Community Centre



Potential opportunity sites for Community Hub



There are limited indoor and outdoor meeting spaces for the community in the town. Understanding the community's needs and requirements for these spaces, dictates site and building opportunities and constraints that are present.

A review of existing spaces and facilities will demonstrate potential opportunities of shared resourcing and amenities. Some examples exist in the town of vacant buildings that offer a range of spaces which could provide for community training classes, fitness and well-being, counselling, workshop and studio spaces, meeting spaces as well as a space for younger members of the community.

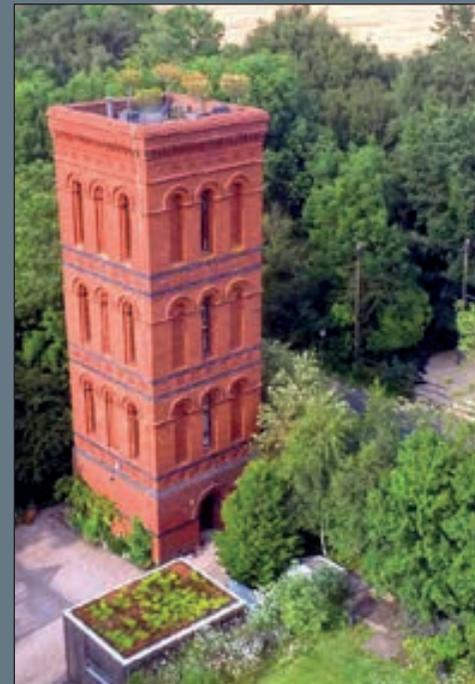
Some buildings in the adjacent figure are possible locations for a community hub in the town. The vacant / derelict former Meeting Hall and Cinema building (St. Patrick's Hall) (1), Water Tower (2), Market House (3), the former Health Centre (4) and Riverdale Hotel (5) would all be key sites for a community building in the heart of Ballybay. Renovating and recovering these once thriving buildings, which all range in size and condition, could house various uses such as training, classes and workshops as well as place for the community to meet and run / host events from. Smaller buildings such as the Water Tower (2) provide future opportunities to regenerate important heritage assets to iconic landmarks for Ballybay, possibly through competitive design competitions in collaboration with Universities, Architectural schools or practices.

The project will regenerate a formerly vacant or derelict building, to provide a shared community space and help sustainable compact development through building re-use and renovation. The improved historic setting and architectural quality of the town has the potential to lead to further economic investment and contribute to a townscape that is appropriate to Ballybay.

BENEFITS

The Ballybay Community Hub will play a pivotal role of supporting social engagement in the town. It will enable local indoor community activities, providing a complementary focal point with the newly developed Town Park for the community. The hub will also be available for local service provision by the public authorities and local interest groups meeting a current gap in capacity to deliver services by both the statutory and non statutory sectors.

A potential community hub has the opportunity to provide a variety of uses such as art classes, and fitness classes, counselling space and one to ones spaces, workshop and training facilities, cafe and meeting space, and a space for younger group events.



Example of renovated Grade II listed Victorian Water Tower converted in 1985 with 5 levels and raised gardens. Mythe, Gloucester.

G. COMMUNITY BUSINESS HUB

PROJECT OVERVIEW

A Community Business Hub supporting economic growth and local businesses in the town.

The hub should be centrally located in the town and provide a range of flexible, affordable offices, workshops and shared spaces.

STEPS TO DELIVERY

G1. Survey of possible sites

G2. Site options and feasibility study (to include potential removal of vacant/derelict building(s))

G3. Business plan for short and long term



Potential vacant and derelict sites for Community Business Hub



'Dogpatch Labs' CHQ building, Dublin - curated startup hub to accelerate the development of Ireland's startup ecosystem, providing a valuable community and variety of spaces for co-working, hotdesking and events

The Community Business Hub will play a pivotal role in supporting economic activity and growth in Ballybay Town Centre. The project has the potential to remove or refurbish a derelict or vacant site from the town centre, aiding with the restoration of this historic town.

The hub design should consist of a range of affordable, flexible office and workshop spaces, suitable for short term rent. Ideally these spaces will be offered to new business start ups, local businesses wishing to grow, and those who would have to commute from Ballybay to facilities elsewhere. The town centre location will increase footfall to this and other service providers, promoting active travel and improving both economic and environmental sustainability of Ballybay.

The hub should be equipped with shared and adaptable meeting rooms, reception, kitchen and admin area and off street car parking where possible.

This project will underpin the economic and physical need for space in the town centre, which will improve the sustainability of the town, potentially remove or restore a derelict or vacant site which will improve the heritage setting of the town and also encourage future investment and development in Ballybay.

Various vacant and derelict properties should be investigated in the town that could accommodate a range of spaces from small start up to larger co-working spaces. Examples have been shown in the adjacent images of a range of business hubs, from compact hot-desking facilities to spaces capable of hosting events and conferences.

BENEFITS

Ballybay has several under-utilised buildings. While derelict, they bring potential for the creation of spaces in very short supply in the area to enable self-starters, the food industry and others to advance new self-employment projects as well as opening spaces for expansion of other existing enterprises now at a point in their development which requires a high-quality working environment.



Felisa CoWork - compact professional coworking space, Barcelona



The Hub, Newry - network of three coworking hubs (co-working, hot desks, office space for rent)

H. WETLAND CENTRE & PARK

PROJECT OVERVIEW

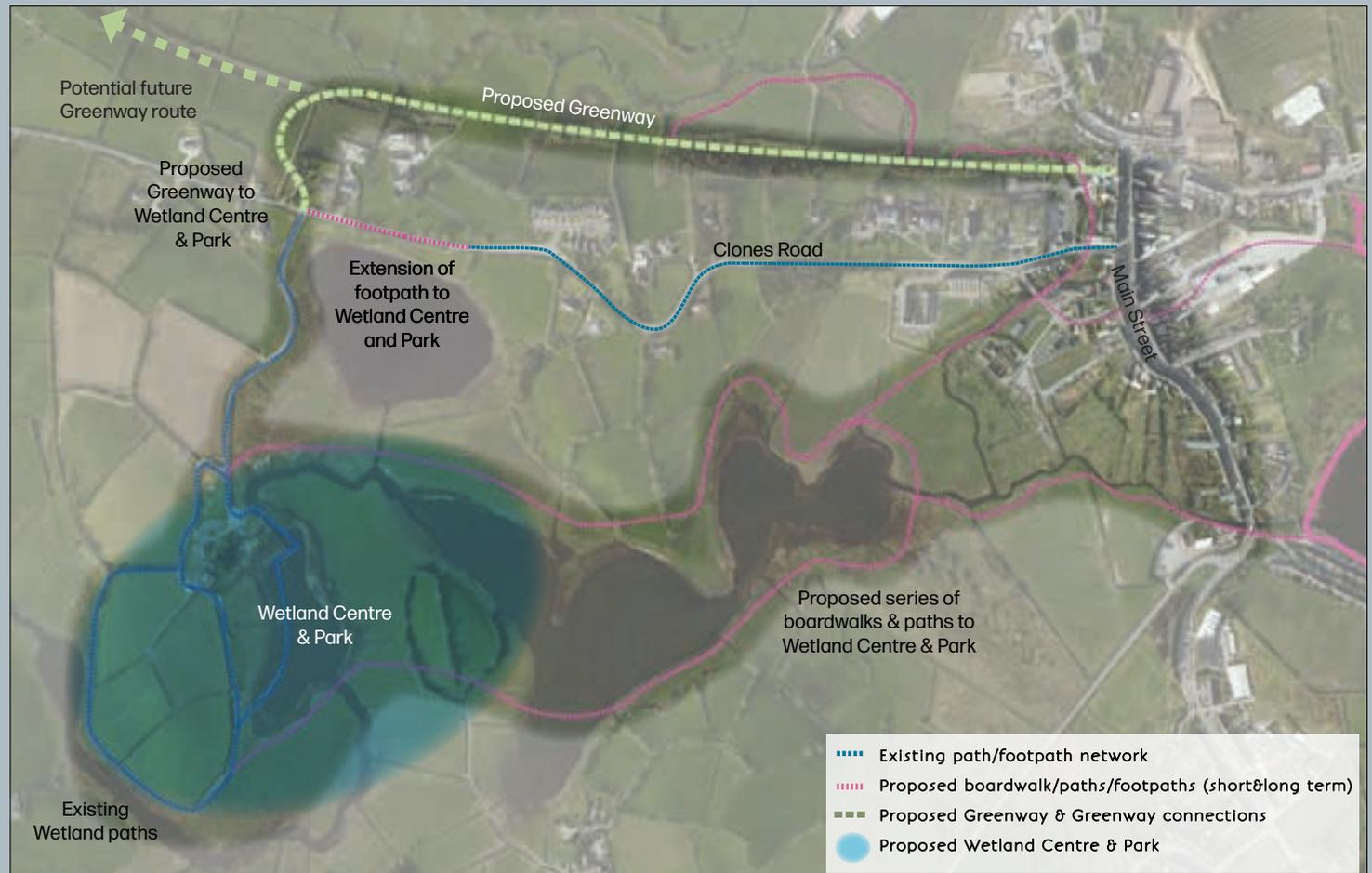
A destination Wetland Centre and Park with strong physical connections to the town centre.

Enhancing the Wetland Centre to a thriving business and destination Wetland Park. The project will include improving the environmental conditions of the waterscape as well as physical connections to the town core through a series of boardwalks and paths.

STEPS TO DELIVERY

H1. Wetland Centre business case (1-3 years)

H2. Wetland Park feasibility study (3+ years)



Proposed connections to Wetland Centre & Park

The Ballybay Wetland Centre has the potential to become an outstanding resource and attraction for the community and visitors. By improving connections to the Wetland Centre and proposed Park from the town, the journey to this revived amenity becomes as much of a draw for the town, as the destination of the Wetland Centre and Park itself.

A business case for the Wetland Centre is needed to revive this resource, which should explore potential partnering to ensure survival of its future use.

A bold and exciting vision for the site should include development of a Wetland Park, with stronger visual and physical connections to the town. Opportunities the Wetland Centre and Park should explore would be a greater use of the waterscape, which could include wildlife interpretation, educational workshops and excursions, lake fishing, wildlife viewing platforms and towers.

Improvements to the Wetland Park will promote and enhance the rich biodiversity of the area, as well as retaining and enhancing existing wetlands, wildlife features and habitats, which can be sensitively viewed by the public.

Environmental improvements to water bodies and open spaces will enrich these spaces to support further wildlife habitats, and aim to provide an exciting attraction and amenity space for locals and visitors to enjoy. Helping to re-establish the loughs and waterways as an angling centre through improved accessibility between and onto the lakes and rivers. The Wetland Centre has the potential to provide a perfect base for angling and associated activities, which could encourage future economic and private investment in short and longer stay accommodation in the area such as B&B's and hotels or investment in the vacant Riverdale Hotel.

BENEFITS

This development will return to full use an existing and largely under used facility which was developed with private philanthropic funds. The current status of the centre is generally seen as a barrier to further private resourcing of public facilities so its return to full service would overcome this barrier as well as providing a critical regional service to, among others, the higher education sector in the North East and in doing so enhance footfall in the town.



Wetland Centre opportunities could include guided excursions and water activities, improved foot and cycle connections from the town, improved and enhanced wildlife interpretation and education and lake fishing.



Trallee Bay Wetlands Centre with viewing tower

I. DIGITAL BALLYBAY

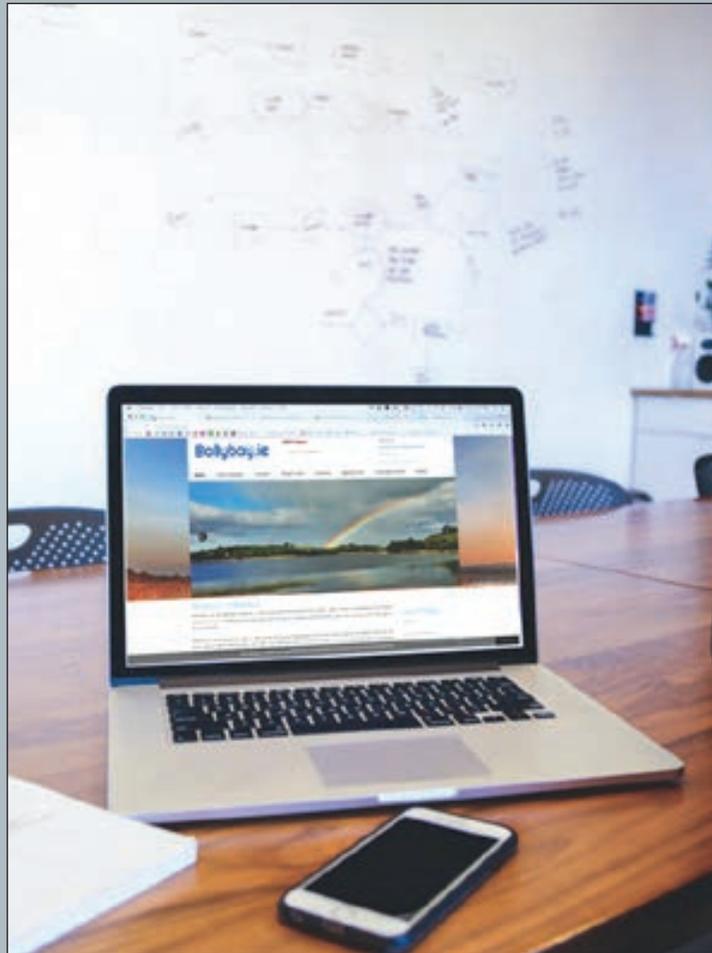
PROJECT OVERVIEW

Improved digital infrastructure for the community, local businesses and future economic development.

Digital Ballybay will improve community resources and town promotion through digital investment. It will be a means of showcasing the town and events, as well as improving the economic environment for remote working spaces and business start ups.

STEPS TO DELIVERY

11. Lobby for better broadband and mobile coverage in rural hinterland
12. Invest in town website and promote digital connectivity
13. Invest in social media networks
14. Festival and events calendar



Ballybay.ie town website



Ballybay Triathlon in the Town Park

The town is well served by a developing digital infrastructure. Ballybay.ie website is a good resource for outsiders to the town, however further investment in it, alongside social media sites such as Facebook ('Ballybay and its people') and Twitter, are means to explore as an improved community resource as well as a promotional tool.

Digital Ballybay has the opportunity to add to the existing events calendar, and showcase town events, such as sporting and community events and fairs, as well as one off events such as pop up markets and shows.

Improving the digital connectivity of the town can provide the environment for remote working spaces, enterprise zones and small business start ups, co-working spaces. Project G (Community Business Hub) will be a means of supporting local business growth, through improved digital infrastructure, aiding with compact growth of the town. In doing so, reducing the need to commute for employment, reducing congestion and pollution in Ballbay.

Improved digital infrastructure could also encourage the agricultural community to utilise digital technologies to improve their businesses, farming production and supply chains.

BENEFITS

The town's current digital platform is underdeveloped and passive. This project will establish a proactive marketing vehicle for the town and environs which over time can be developed to enable local footfall growth, service sales as well as active news management of the Ballybay area. The platform will also support access for local SMEs as their sale strategies are delivered as well as acting as a key source of information on the town for potential local and international investors.



Small business remote working opportunities



Co-working space



Agricultural community opportunities with digital technologies.



Expanding town events calendar - one off event showcasing online

J. ACTIVE TRAVEL & PARKING

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Alleviate traffic and congestion within Ballybay to improve historic character and pedestrian movement through the town.

The project will promote sustainable active travel within and around the town, with the aim of encouraging more sustainable modes of transport and active travel.

STEPS TO DELIVERY

- J1. Sustainable travel promotion and awareness campaign
- J2. Business led parking strategy
- J3. Temporary parking opportunities (explore town sites)



Existing parking the town

Parking has been emphasised as a concern by the community, at key locations throughout the week, but also the duration of stay of vehicles in the town centre.

There is a need to work together towards more sustainable and active travel. In addition, opportunity exists to examine further off street parking for the town, which will aid with improving the townscape and historic character of Ballybay.

Local businesses where possible, should encourage staff to park in off street parking locations, or alternatively, utilise public transport or active travel. As part of Project J, appropriate locations for cycle stands should be introduced to the town, making travel by cycle a more attractive and easy option for those working, going to school and visiting the town. As with many projects in this plan, improving active travel will compliment other projects in the plan, such as A. Town Connections and C. Greenway, in improving pedestrian and cycle connections in Ballybay. It is an imperative step in encouraging a modal shift from car dependency to foot and cycle for the town, which will encourage healthy lifestyles while reducing harmful environmental impacts on the town and wider environment.

Signage throughout the town, both wayfinding and parking, as well as high quality cycle parking and interpretation are all means of increasing active travel around the town and its surrounds.

BENEFITS

Car parking is a persistent challenge in the town and the delivery of this project will enable the town to meet likely future growth in demand for parking across the Town thus enabling greater and dispersed footfall. Doing so will reduce possible congestion, particularly on Mart days. It will also underpin the broader development of a quality environment for walkability across the town and environs. The proposed project involves upgrading pedestrian areas in the town, the provision of a well-planned on street parking layout for cars and cycles, undergrounding of existing utilities, upgraded street lighting and provision of street trees where space permits.



Examples of improved parking and directional signage, range of bicycle parking, service station and interpretation

K. STREETSCAPES

PROJECT OVERVIEW

High quality upgrade of streetscape from Main Street to Lower Main Street.

The project will enrich the town's streetscape, highlight built heritage settings, while ensuring safe and universal access to all areas and buildings of the town.

STEPS TO DELIVERY

K1. Accessibility audit and intervention measures

K2. Phase 2 streetscape and public realm

K3. Shopfronts improvement scheme



Proposed streetscape and public realm improvements

The continuous streetscapes of Ballybay, with assorted building heights, frontages, materials and colours all define the distinctive historic town. However the nature of the undulating streetscape of the town has led to difficulty with accessing many town centre buildings.

It is important that the streetscape has a uniformity across the town, but also the beautiful intact shop fronts remain protected, restored and enjoyed. Universal access to all buildings is needed, as well as the continuation of high quality streetscape from Main Street to Lower Main Street.

This will include upgraded pedestrian areas being resurfaced with high quality paving, kerbing, street de-cluttering to remove unnecessary pillars and posts, aesthetically improving the setting and access to the heritage buildings. Pedestrian crossing points will be provided where appropriate, with improved car parking demarcation and cycle stands installed at appropriate locations along the street. Street lighting will be improved throughout the street, with featured lighting of specific key buildings considered through detailed design. Street tree planting at appropriate spaces will improve the streetscape, as well as enriching the biodiversity of the town core.

The de-cluttering of footpaths will allow for spill out spaces from cafés. A building and shop-front improvement scheme would also help improve the aesthetic appeal and consistency of the town. The Streetscape project will respect and improve the historic and architectural consistency throughout the town, while greatly adding to the attractiveness and sense of place of Ballybay.

BENEFITS

The existing built environment, notwithstanding the efforts of the townspeople and local retailers, is now confronting economic leakage to other centres and as a result economic performance is at risk. This is increasingly manifesting itself in spreading dereliction, business closures and loss of footfall. The town therefore badly needs on-going investment to bring it back to self-reliance and to underpin its strategic role in the County, and as a border service centre. In addition, with the prospect of Brexit, the town needs to be enabled to take advantage of its natural setting and general high-quality environment as there is likely to be a significant negative impact with the loss of shoppers and visitors from south Armagh, a traditional retail catchment for the town.



Example high quality streetscape materials with integrated seating and planting



Small street space used as an event space, Belfast, Festival of Fools

L. EDIBLE BALLYBAY

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Edible Ballybay and agri-food presence in the town centre, showcasing Unique Selling Point (USP) of Ballybay.

The role of agri-food production and food manufacturing should be showcased in the town, through a series of short and long term interventions. The project will ensure Ballybay's unique role in the food industry is celebrated and enhanced, encouraging future investment.



Ballybay Mart



STEPS TO DELIVERY

L1. Feasibility of town centre retail space for showcasing local food

L2. Mart exploration of uses (e.g. meanwhile uses, parking and access)

L3. Wider agri-food industry role in town



Ballybay Enterprise Park



'Rucksacks' - Example of successful business working from Ballybay Enterprise Park

Agri-food production and food manufacture has long had a substantial role in Ballybay, yet, other than the Mart, has little visible presence in the town. There is potential to examine the creation of a focal point within the town as a space for retail opportunities for those in the development centre.

A short term example could be the trial of a monthly farmers market showcasing local food and produce. Several locations in the town could host this, ranging from portable food and coffee vans, to temporary stalls and stands. Spaces such as the Town Park should be explored as a location for a pop up cafe / coffee spot during weekends or peak times. While the Mart site offers exploration of diversifying during days while not in use as a market space.

While Ballybay Enterprise Park provides a state of the art food incubation unit on the Carrickmacross Road, this should be bolstered in the longer term with a local farm shop in the town centre to promote Edible Ballybay, celebrating the rural farming community in the town centre. Several vacant buildings would provide the opportunity for a central space to celebrate the role of food, as well as diversifying the range of retail in Ballybay, potentially stimulating future growth in this field.

Enhancing the streetscape and sense of place of the Ballybay as a food destination, will help grow a distinctive brand and unique selling point for the town, while growing its sense of place for the community and local businesses.

BENEFITS

The town has a long history of producing high quality food products with more recent efforts focused on building micro enterprises in the food sector through the Enterprise sector. This investment will underpin greater investment in this sector as well as expanding opportunities for investment and added employment. It will also over the longer-term enable the town to establish a platform for high quality micro food/artisan production.



Variety of ways for Ballybay to establish a town centre presence in town, such as farm shop, pop up cafe/coffee van or weekly or monthly farmers market.

SHORT TERM TOWN IMPROVEMENTS



Clonakilty Street Carnival



Ennis floral displays and street dressing



Small cafe spill out space, Templebar Dublin



Street lighting, Wexford

In addition to the projects outlined thus far, potential exists to bring about short term interventions. Great work has been done to date to animate Ballybay, with community and local businesses bringing the town to life with events and fairs. This can be built upon to increase footfall in the town centre and also drive investment in future businesses.

Town animation

Animation of the public realm has an important role to play in the life of a town, both how it is perceived by visitors and to those who live in it. Building on work to date, events, street cafés, markets, fairs and the dressing of the town with floral displays and festive lighting would all improve Ballybay's vibrancy. Particular spaces for such short term interventions which would make the most impact would be the Main Street and square (1), and the arrival spaces to the town from the north (St. Patrick Street and Castleblayney Road) (2) and south (Corrybrannan Bridge) (3).

Key spaces for small to medium sized events such as street festivals, small markets and fairs and community events could take place in the Main Street square and adjoining spaces such as the proposed Ballybay Courtyards Project (see project E), which will provide future links to the Mart site and Town Park. This would directly improve the town's animation, while celebrating the heritage Ballybay has as a market town. Larger events have the opportunity to utilise the excellent spaces outside of the town core that Ballybay has to offer. The Town Park, which has been used in the past for sporting and community events, is an ideal location for similar events, fairs and markets where a number of marquees can be installed. The Mart site also offers potential to further maximise the town's vibrancy throughout the week for various markets and fairs, as mentioned in project L. Edible Ballybay.

The existing shops, cafés and restaurants have potential to use the public realm to animate the street in key locations such as the Main Street square, the public realm spaces at the St. Patrick Street junction with Castleblayney road (2). The use of these spaces, as well as key locations along Main Street, for outdoor cafés and gathering spaces is a short term improvement that has great impact for relatively little cost or investment. Seasonal festive lighting and floral displays can aid with the variety of the town vibrancy throughout the year.



1
Main Street square



2
Small square on junction of St. Patrick Street and Castleblayney Road



3
Corrybannan Bridge

Restoration of Historical Character of Streetscape

Ballybay Historic Landscape Characterisation Plan provides useful guidance and history of many of the town's buildings and their important historic roles, however some are currently unoccupied or derelict. As outlined in project K. Streetscape, uniformity across the town to restore the urban grain and character, requires the protection and repair of some building façades and streetscapes.

Following the successful improvements to the residential dwellings on Lower Main Street, buildings on Main Street, which are mostly commercial at ground floor, have a high impact on the town, and should therefore be prioritised for continuing frontage restorations and restored historical character. The following buildings on Main Street would benefit from restorations and improvements, however a full survey of Main Street building condition would be invaluable : McGinnity's (Former Northern Bank, derelict building adjacent to the O'Mahoney site (4), Market House, vacant residential and/or commercial premises such as Monaghans (5, 6). Buildings located on the Main Street should also be reviewed for potential facade improvements such as repainting, improved signage and shopfront displays/ window dressings.

Landmark buildings such as the Riverdale Hotel (7), Railway Station (8) and Water Tower (9) should be targeted as important restoration projects which mark the arrival to the town, or will become important future features in various projects included in this plan.



4
Key buildings requiring restoration on Main Street



7
Key landmark / feature buildings requiring restoration



MEDIUM TO LONG TERM TOWN IMPROVEMENTS



Corrybrannan Bridge and entrance to Lough Major / Loch Mor Avenue

Medium to long term improvements should aim to revitalise and celebrate important arrivals to the town, as well as meeting and socialising spaces. Below are some visualisations of the Corrybrannan Bridge and entrance to Lough Major / Loch Mor Avenue, and the Market House public realm and streetscape.

Investment in these historic spaces will dramatically change the first perceptions and lasting impressions for the community and those who visit the town, increasing Ballybay's desirability as a place to live, work, visit and invest in.



Market House public realm and streetscape



5.0 PROJECT DELIVERY

From Plan to Delivery

This document sets out a strategy for the reinvigoration of Ballybay as a place in which to live, work and visit. Achieving this will rely on an ability to successfully manage the delivery of the range of projects identified by the plan, while also shaping and capitalising upon other opportunities as they arise. In this section we summarise some of the key consideration in this regard.

Strategy Oversight

Managing of the delivery process should be a collaborative exercise that involves representatives of local groups, officers and elected members of Monaghan County Council and where appropriate, partner agencies and funders. This group should meet on a regular basis to review progress using the Project Action Plan and to identify any relevant issues and opportunities that emerge. It may prove practical to also form project specific sub-groups with smaller number of people and reporting back to the oversight group within a defined timeframe.

Communication and Engagement

A hallmark of this process to date has been the level of engagement with the people of Ballybay, resulting in a widespread support for its proposals. Great scope exists to further harness the knowledge, energies and enthusiasm of local people in delivering the projects of this strategy. This should go beyond standard processes of consultation to identifying opportunities for voluntary efforts and participative design processes. Furthermore, a relationship with the wider public through social media and local media outlets should be nurtured, so that everyone is brought along on the journey. Celebrating key milestones and completed projects will be an important (and fun) aspect to maintaining and building momentum.

Project Prioritisation and New Projects

An important ongoing exercise will be the prioritisation of projects in line with priorities, available resources and funding. As per the Project Action Plan, projects should be delivered by a range of parties to spread effort, to avail of various funding opportunities and to share a sense of ownership. Changes in circumstance will require revisions to the Action Plan over the plan period. This will include project completion, new funding opportunities and changes in stakeholder circumstances, e.g. landownership. Ideas for new projects may also emerge. These should be carefully reviewed and modified if necessary to ensure strategic fit with this plan. Work on early phases of larger, more complex projects should not necessarily be deferred, as more time will be required to bring them to fruition.

Funding

A range of funding opportunities currently exist and require constant monitoring by all parties. These include Town and Village Renewal Funds, Outdoor Recreational Schemes and Rural Regeneration and Development Funds. Opportunities for partnership with the private sector should also be sought, whereby elements can be delivered as planning gain on development projects. Community initiatives, fundraising and philanthropic offers should also be energetically pursued as delivery of a project can be community led.

Commitment to Quality

Finally, the success of this plan will not only rest upon delivery, but also on quality. 'Spreading funds thinly' must be avoided at all costs. Efforts are required to ensure projects are developed to a high standard of design and with adequate funding to support the use of high quality materials, construction standards and maintenance. Such investment will help to ensure that the plan does not result in short term quick fixes, but in long term improvements that catalyse wider prosperity in the town.

6.0 ACTION PLAN

PROJECTS	PROJECT STEPS	PRIORITY	TIMESCALE	INDICATIVE COST
		Immediate (I) Very High (VH) High (H) Moderate (M)	Short (S) Medium (M) Long (L)	< €50,000 (€) < € 1M (€€) > € 1M (€€€)
A. TOWN CONNECTIONS	A1. Phased delivery of path network	VH	S-L	€€€
	A2. Associated path infrastructure (e.g. lighting and signage)	VH	S-L	€€€
	A3. Thematic trails (e.g. Fairy Walk)	H	S	€€
	A4. Wildlife viewing stations	H	M	€
	A5. Seating and Viewing locations / platforms	H	M	€€
	A6. Artwork and interpretation	M	S-M	€
B. TOWN PARK	B1. Path infrastructure (e.g. lighting, signage, seating, fencing)	I	M	€
	B2. Construction of recreation spaces and outdoor classroom	H	M-L	€
	B3. Construction of teen hangout shelter	M	S-M	€
	B4. Artwork and interpretation	H	M	€
	B5. Native tree and shrub planting	VH	S-M	€
C. GREENWAY	C1. Town Greenway feasibility plan (to Wetlands Centre)	I	S	€ - €€
	C2. Phase 1 Greenway	H	S-M	€€€
	C3. Regional Greenway plan	VH	M-L	€€€
	C4. Restoration of signal box and platform	H	S-M	€ - €€
	C5. Restoration of Water tower	H	S-M	€ - €€
D. LANDMARKS PROJECT	D1. Town views improvements	H	S	€
	D2. Floodlighting of landmark buildings	H	S	€
E. OPPORTUNITY SITES	E1. Register of dereliction and vacancy	I	S	€
	E2. Investment proposition (for retail/residential/hospitality)	H	S-M	€€
	E3. Pop up initiative and open door event	VH	S	€
	E4. Showcase refurbishment project	H	M	€€

PROJECTS	PROJECT STEPS	PRIORITY	TIMESCALE	INDICATIVE COST
		Immediate (I) Very High (VH) High (H) Moderate (M)	Short (S) Medium (M) Long (L)	< €50,000 (€) < € 1M (€€) > € 1M (€€€)
F. COMMUNITY CENTRE	F1. Review of existing spaces and facilities use in town	I	S	€
	F2. Assessment of vacant / derelict buildings and sites	VH	S-M	€
	F3. Renovation and/or replacement of building/site for Community Centre	VH	S-M	€€
G. COMMUNITY BUSINESS HUB	G1. Survey of possible sites	H	S	€
	G2. Site options and feasibility study (to include potential removal of vacant/derelict building(s))	H	M	€€
	G3. Business plan for short and long term	H	m	€€
H. WETLAND CENTRE & PARK	H1. Wetland Centre business case (1-3 years)	H	S-M	€€
	H2. Wetland Park feasibility study (3+ years)	M	M-L	€€€
I. DIGITAL BALLYBAY	I1. Lobby for better broadband and mobile coverage in rural hinterland	VH	S	€
	I2. Invest in town website and promote digital connectivity	H	S	€€
	I3. Invest in social media networks	H	S	€
	I4. Festival and events calendar	H	S-M	€
J. ACTIVE TRAVEL & PARKING	J1. Sustainable travel promotion and awareness campaign	H	S	€
	J2. Business led parking strategy	I	S	€
	J3. Temporary parking opportunities (explore town sites)	VH	S-M	€€
K. STREETSCAPES	K1. Accessibility audit and intervention measures	I	S	€€
	K2. Phase 2 streetscape and public realm	VH	M-L	€€€
	K3. Shopfronts improvement scheme	H	S-M	€€
L. EDIBLE BALLYBAY	L1. Feasibility of town centre retail space for showcasing local food	H	S	€
	L2. Mart exploration of uses (e.g. meanwhile uses, parking and access)	H	S-M	€€
	L3. Wider agri-food industry role in town	H	S-L	€€



the paul hogarth company **Seán Ó'Riordáin**
AND ASSOCIATES