



Enniscorthy Town Centre First Plan

1 . I N T R O D U C T I O N



1.1 A roadmap for regeneration

In spite of many challenges in recent years, Enniscorthy Town Centre remains the beating heart of the Town. This era of enormous change has exposed the vulnerabilities and highlighted the remarkable resilience of the Town Centre. The Town Centre will face many challenges in the coming years but efforts must be redoubled to rise to these, to exploit the many assets and opportunities that Town Centre presents and to set out a course for a long-lasting, sustainable regeneration.

This is Enniscorthy Town Centre First Plan (ETCFP) and it provides a roadmap for the sustainable regeneration of the Town Centre of Enniscorthy. It sets out a broad strategy for a longer-term and more holistic approach to social, economic and environmental regeneration. It has been prepared to align closely with the national Town Centre First Policy Approach for Irish Towns. Although this plan is non-statutory, it will nevertheless, play a central role in informing statutory plans and priorities for transformative regeneration actions and projects.

Urban regeneration is a process which seeks to bring about lasting change to urban areas which have been suffering from a range of urban problems. Sustainable development is the underpinning philosophy for urban regeneration and urban planning. The four pillars of sustainable development include social, economic, environmental and governance dimensions. These are now incorporated into the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which have been adopted by Ireland and permeate through all level of planning policy from the national level to the County Development Plan. While most SDGs are of relevance to urban regeneration, SDG11: Make cities and settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable is of particular importance as it targets: access to essential services for all; safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport; compact growth; safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage; reducing risk from natural disasters and climate change; good air quality; accessible green and public spaces; and better urban planning, governance and funding. The SDGs are endorsed and integrated into the current Wexford County Development Plan, 2022 - 2028. ETCFP aligns with county planning policy and addresses the SDG in its regeneration strategies.

For a variety of reasons and for at least a generation, town centres across Ireland have suffered from processes which could be described as stagnation or decline. This has undermined their viability and vitality as the heart of their communities and local economies.

Larger changes in wealth and employment-generating sectors, such as industry and retail, have profoundly affected the economic base of towns, resulting in a very different context for living and business.

These changes have been compounded by the suburbanisation of Irish towns, where homes and commercial life that could have remained in the town centre, have preferred a move to the edge of the town, or beyond. While planning policy has typically provided strong support for retaining businesses and living in town centres, this has often been compromised by a lack of public and private investment in the social, cultural and physical fabric of town centres.

At national level the recent Town Centres First Policy Approach (2022) and the National Planning Framework (2018) recognise the scale of the problems faced by town centres, and the impact of these problems not just on town centres, but on society more generally. The new national policy and political consensus is clear and backed up by substantial funding for the regeneration and development of town centres. The focus is now on how these policies can be effectively translated into real change at the local level.

ETCFP is strategic in nature, providing a broader, more integrated and more coherent view of social, economic and environmental issues through a collaborative and plan-led shared vision. ETCFP highlights key actions and projects which have the potential to be transformative and to make a positive and lasting impact on achieving the longer-term strategy for regeneration. Implementation is a critical aspect of regeneration and ETCFP expands on roles and responsibilities, management and monitoring, funding and further planning and design processes.



The UN SDGs



1.2 Purpose of Enniscorthy Town Centre First Plan

Enniscorthy Town Centre First Plan has been prepared to closely align to the principles of sustainable urban regeneration and the national Policy Approach to town centre regeneration. The purpose of the Plan can be summarised as follows:

- To establish key issues and opportunities for the Town Centre;
- To provide a longer-term vision and strategy for regeneration;
- To set out a longer-term, integrated and coherent strategy for regeneration;
- To devise a spatial and physical framework for regeneration of the built fabric and public spaces of the Town;
- To identify and prioritise specific projects and actions which can act as catalysts for regeneration;
- To provide a focus for a collaborative process for regeneration, from plan-making to implementation;
- To build on local capabilities and capacities for regeneration;
- To underpin bids for funding and supports for Town Centre actions and projects; and
- To inform the preparation of future plans for the Town.

1.3 Structure of ETCFP

The Plan is structured to recognise the rich and overlapping nature of issues and opportunities for the regeneration of the Town Centre.

It includes:

- A vision for what the regenerated Town Centre will be in 2040;
- A set of principles which elaborate on the vision and underpin the specific strategies of ETCFP;
- Five distinctive strategies for regeneration – developed around the themes of Thriving, Living, Loved, Connected and Adaptable;
- An urban regeneration framework, showing the spatial and physical framework for regeneration of the built fabric and public spaces of the Town;
- Identification and activation of actions and projects to support the strategies; and
- A broad approach to delivery and implementation of the ETCFP.

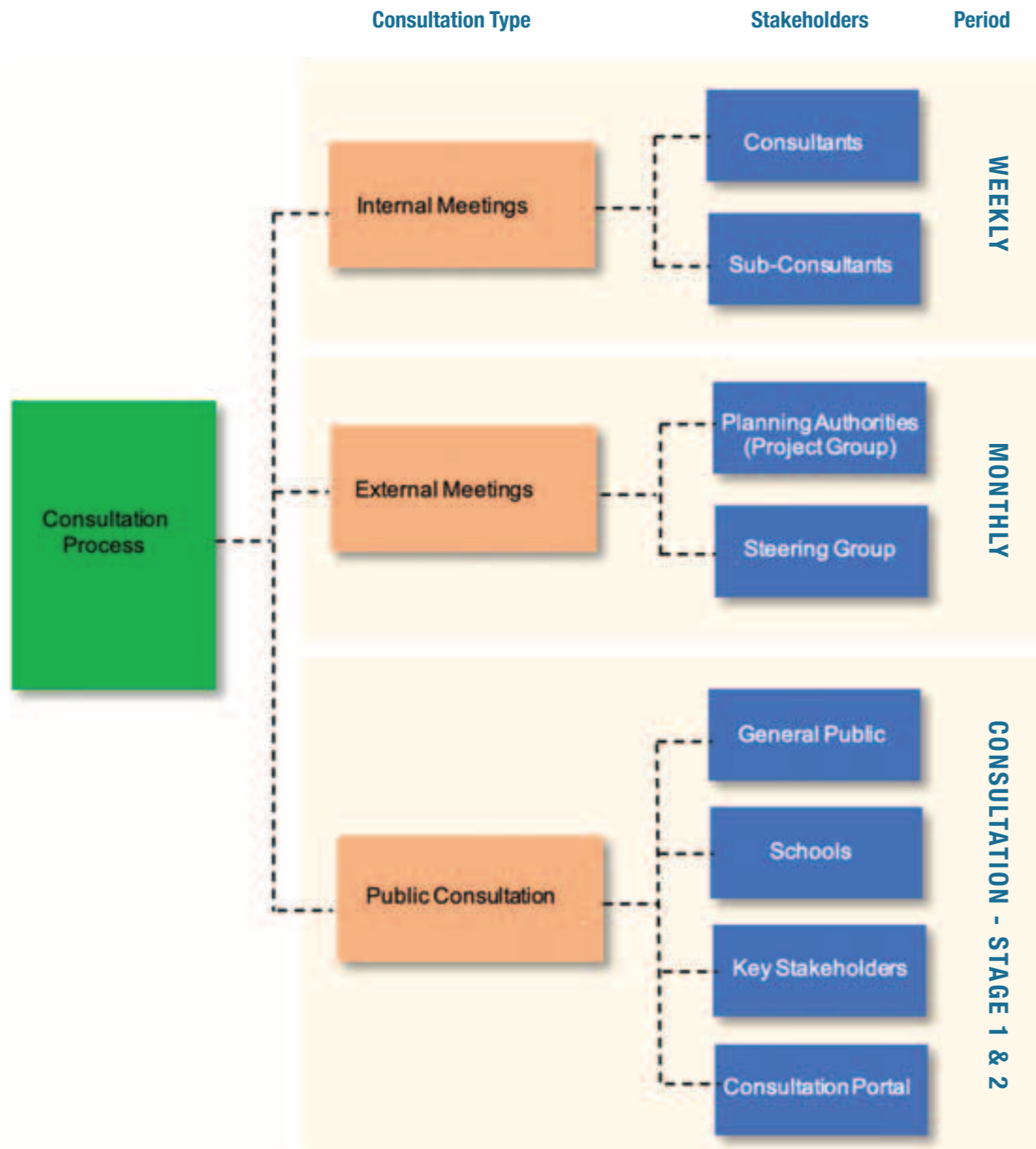
Figure 1: The ETCFP preparation process.



1.4 Preparation of ETCFP

ECTPF was prepared over a number of months using a process that included survey and analysis, collaborative formation of a vision and principles, preparation of a set of overlapping regeneration strategies, a spatial and physical framework for regeneration, identification of transformative regeneration projects, and an approach to delivery and implementation.

Figure 2: The ETCFP consultation process



1.5 Consultation

A consultation strategy was prepared at the start of the process to ensure that the views of the local community, businesses and key stakeholders were fully integrated into the preparation of the ETCFP.

The key elements of the consultation process were:

- Open community consultation - including the Council consultation portal.
- Thematic consultation workshops - the first dealing with issues and opportunities and the second exploring vision, principles, strategy, actions and projects.
- Focused consultation - for example, a local schools workshop which explored issues and opportunities from the perspective of younger people.
- Meetings with key Town Centre stakeholders.

A Steering Group of Elected Members, which included representatives of Reimagining Enniscorthy (A cross-sectoral group dedicated to the regeneration of the Town) provided strategic direction and oversight of the project. The Plan was prepared in close collaboration with the multi-disciplinary working group led by the Planning Service at Wexford County Council.

The consultation process uncovered an impressive range of local data, studies and useful insights. It was also clear that while there were different views on issues, opportunities and priorities, a great deal of consensus exists in the Town around its regeneration and the sort of projects that could be transformative for the Town Centre. The outcomes of the consultation are considered in more detail in the regeneration strategies of this ETCFP.

1.6 An overview of the town centre

There is no established or defined boundary for the Town Centre. However, there is a shared understanding in the local community that the Town Centre is distinctive and largely reflects the established and historic core of the Town. This area was considered to be broadly encompassed by the Town Centre Zone included in the most recent statutory plan for the Town (Enniscorthy Town and Environs Plan, 2008) and is the basis for the ETCFP area.

The Town Centre area includes the built-up area of Enniscorthy as it had developed by the early years of the 20th century (prior to suburbanisation of the Town). The area is largely characterised by continuous and enclosed streets and spaces, tight-grained plots, town centre commercial, mixed-use buildings and townhouses, a great variety of activities, businesses and an established, resident community.

Enniscorthy is not unusual in having two functional centres split by a river, in this case the Slaney. The area most commonly referred to as ‘the Town Centre’ on the west bank of the river is clearly dominant. It is centred on Market Square and the Castle. Templeshannon is on the east bank of the river. Although of lesser scale, it is nonetheless, an important functional centre and significant element of the structure and character of Enniscorthy.

Figure 3: Town centre focal spaces: Templeshannon

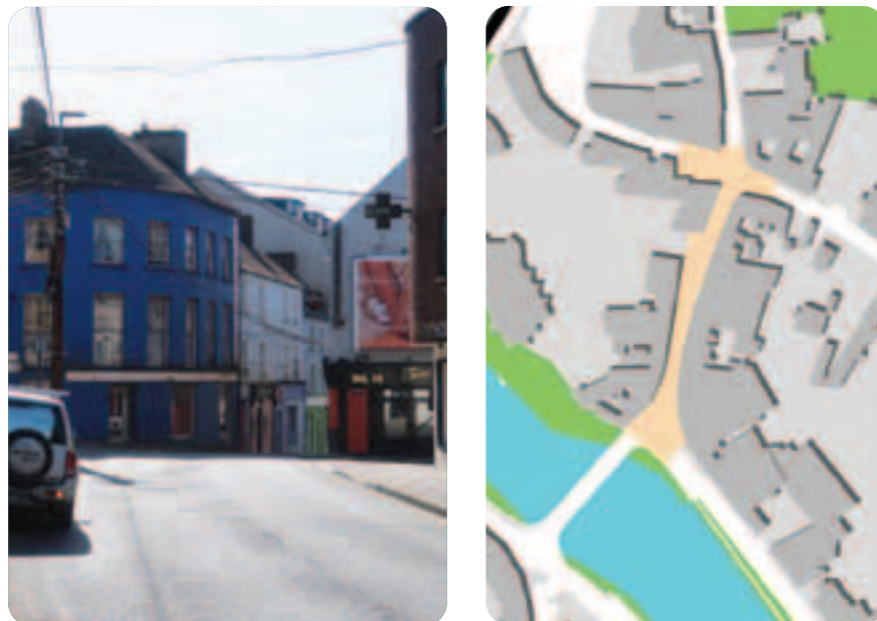
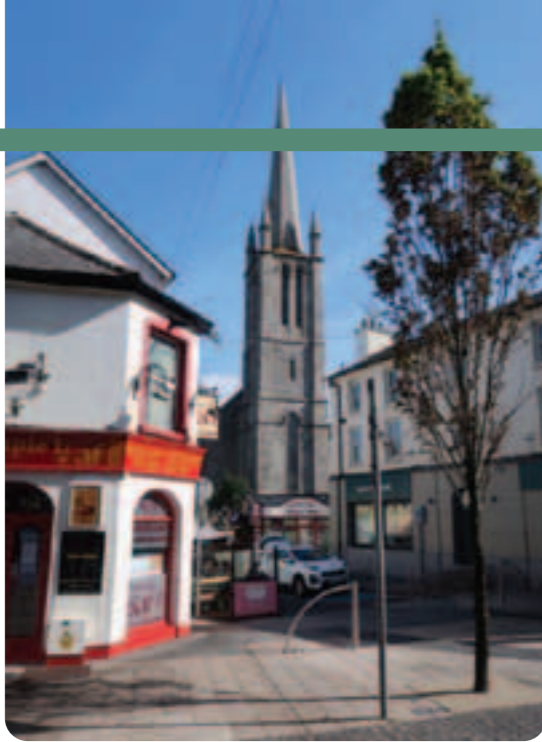


Figure 4: Town centre focal spaces: Market Square



Figure 5: The ETCFP area





unemployment rate of 32.1% of the available workforce (A figure of above 27% was considered by the CSO at that time as an unemployment blackspot). It should be noted that 2016 was the early stages of recovery from a deep recession. It is likely that the rate has declined since then as a result of a general improvement in the economy. If the improvement was to reflect national trends then the unemployment rate for the Enniscorthy Urban Electoral Division might lie somewhere around the 20%. (which remains remarkably high when compared with the current CSO national estimate of 4.5%).

Retail has always been an important element of the economic base of the Town Centre, but there have been structural changes in the sector which have increased competition from other locations in the County and the Region. Other forms of retailing, such as the rise of online shopping have also had an impact. In contrast local professional and knowledge-based services appear to have been more successful in retaining their role in the economy of the Town Centre.

Community and employment

Estimates based on census data over the years show a consistent decline in the population of the Town Centre. This has been apparent since the 1980s despite consistent growth in the Town's overall population. In large part this has reflected the aging population of the Town Centre and the choice of many existing or new households to locate or relocate to suburban parts of the Town. Survey shows under-population in parts of the Town Centre, with high levels of vacancy of former residences and high levels of vacancy of upper floor accommodation over businesses in mixed use streets. Although there have been some additions to the community in recent years, these have been mostly related to a small number of infill redevelopments. New community and social services have generally followed the suburbanisation of the Town, but the consensus in the consultation for this plan is that the Town Centre still retains a good level of supporting community, education and health services.

The economic base of the Town has changed enormously in the Town since the 1980s. The previously strong industrial and distribution base has been gradually eroded due to larger global, national and regional trends. As with other towns, Enniscorthy has struggled to replace the loss of economic activities with new activities and services in the Town Centre. This has of course, had knock-on impacts on the amount and type of employment and careers in the Town for the community.

There are no accurate figure for unemployment in the Town Centre area. The latest and most accurate figures for unemployment are only available from the CSO for the Enniscorthy Urban Electoral Division (a larger area than the Town Centre itself) for 2016. These show a very high



Historical development

While the Town's origin predates the medieval period, it was with the arrival of the Anglo-Normans and the fortification of the location (The Duffry) with the Castle (1190) that provided the basis for the modern settlement. The Town grew slowly and organically during the medieval period, the Reformation (and Cromwell's actions in 1649) and up to the end of the eighteenth century (Rebellion of 1798) reflecting its role in the larger rural economy and its advantageous position for trade.

Following the events of the 1798 Rebellion, in which Enniscorthy played a singular role, and its impact on the Town, the nineteenth century gradually ushered in a period of restructuring and renewal as the Town's economy, connections and influence expanded. The century witnessed the formation of new streets of townhouses, new riverside warehousing and trade, the arrival of the railway in 1863, and flourishing of small businesses in a strong market town.

The twentieth century saw enormous social, economic and political change and this was reflected in the development of the Town. The Town played a notable role in the revolutionary period spanning the events of 1916, the War of Independence and The Civil War. The formation of the new state in 1922 saw a new commitment to social housing and what led to, along with some private housing, the start of the suburbanisation of the Enniscorthy.

From the 1960s larger social, economic and policy changes brought about greater prosperity, which further fuelled greater car ownership and the flight of households from the Town Centre to housing estates, rural housing and ribbon development. The changes in the economic base of the Town became apparent from the late -1970s. and ultimately led to a general decline in investment in commerce and development in the Town Centre.

Modest levels of redevelopment occurred in the Town Centre in the 1990s. These were mainly associated with the then operational urban renewal programmes. Apart from continued expansion of suburban housing, the most notable impact on the Town Centre has been road engineering and the imposition of national roads and bridges (most notably in the 1990s). Undoubtedly the limited impact of urban renewal programmes and the approach to redevelopment in recent years has resulted in a Town Centre with a remarkably intact built fabric. This historic fabric now provides a very valuable asset for sustainable regeneration.

Figure 6: Historical maps of Enniscorthy (Early twentieth century; Late nineteenth century).



Landscape and urban structure

The Town formed at a strategic and defensible location on the Slaney. The local topography is striking and characterised by higher ground (Vinegar Hill, Turret Rock and the Town Centre), slopes and steep topography, the gently meandering river and its floodplain (both upstream and downstream). Despite suburbanisation, the Town retains a strong physical and visual contrast between built-up areas and the surrounding countryside.

Due to its historical development and its organic growth the Town Centre has a tight network of streets and spaces, which result in relatively small and permeable urban blocks. Most of these blocks have perimeter buildings and this contributes to well-enclosed and continuous streets and spaces.

The river and quayside frontage are a defining feature of Enniscorthy Town Centre. The River frontages on both sides play an important role in unifying the Town Centre and Templeshannon. The warehouses on the riverside are an imposing and distinctive feature of the urban structure.

Building scale is also typical of a strong, nineteenth century market town, with greatest scale in the compact heart of the Town, surrounded by lower-scaled, secondary streets and spaces.

Figure 7: Town centre urban block structure



Figure 8: Town centre landscape structure



Urban grain

Urban grain is a term used to describe the ‘finesness’ of the physical fabric of towns. A key aspect of urban grain is the size and shape of plots and the buildings that stand on them. Urban grain has very important implications for diversity of uses and businesses. Smaller plots accommodate smaller buildings that provide for smaller businesses and households and add to character and diversity of the townscape. Larger plots allow for larger businesses and activities and along with smaller plots play an important role in providing for a diversity of uses and businesses.

Enniscorthy Town Centre is defined by an attractive mix of urban grain, but it is the fine urban grain (of the many townhouses, houses and businesses) particularly in the main streets and spaces of the Town Centre, that plays the critical role in providing the range of spaces needed for local community and local businesses in the longer-term.

Figure 9: Town centre urban grain - buildings



Figure 10: Town centre urban grain - plots



1.7 Planning and development context

The ETCFP has been prepared within an established hierarchy of policy and plans, spanning national and local level. At national level a range of policy areas have direct and indirect impact on the framing of the ETCFP. Notable areas of recent public policy in areas such as climate action, energy, housing, the circular economy and sustainable transport and mobility also inform regeneration.

Town Centre First

Town Centre First: A Policy Approach for Irish Towns (published by the government in February 2022) is the overarching, cross-sectoral policy for the regeneration of town centres in Ireland. The policy brings together a range of different interests and perspectives around the challenges for town centres. Critically it:

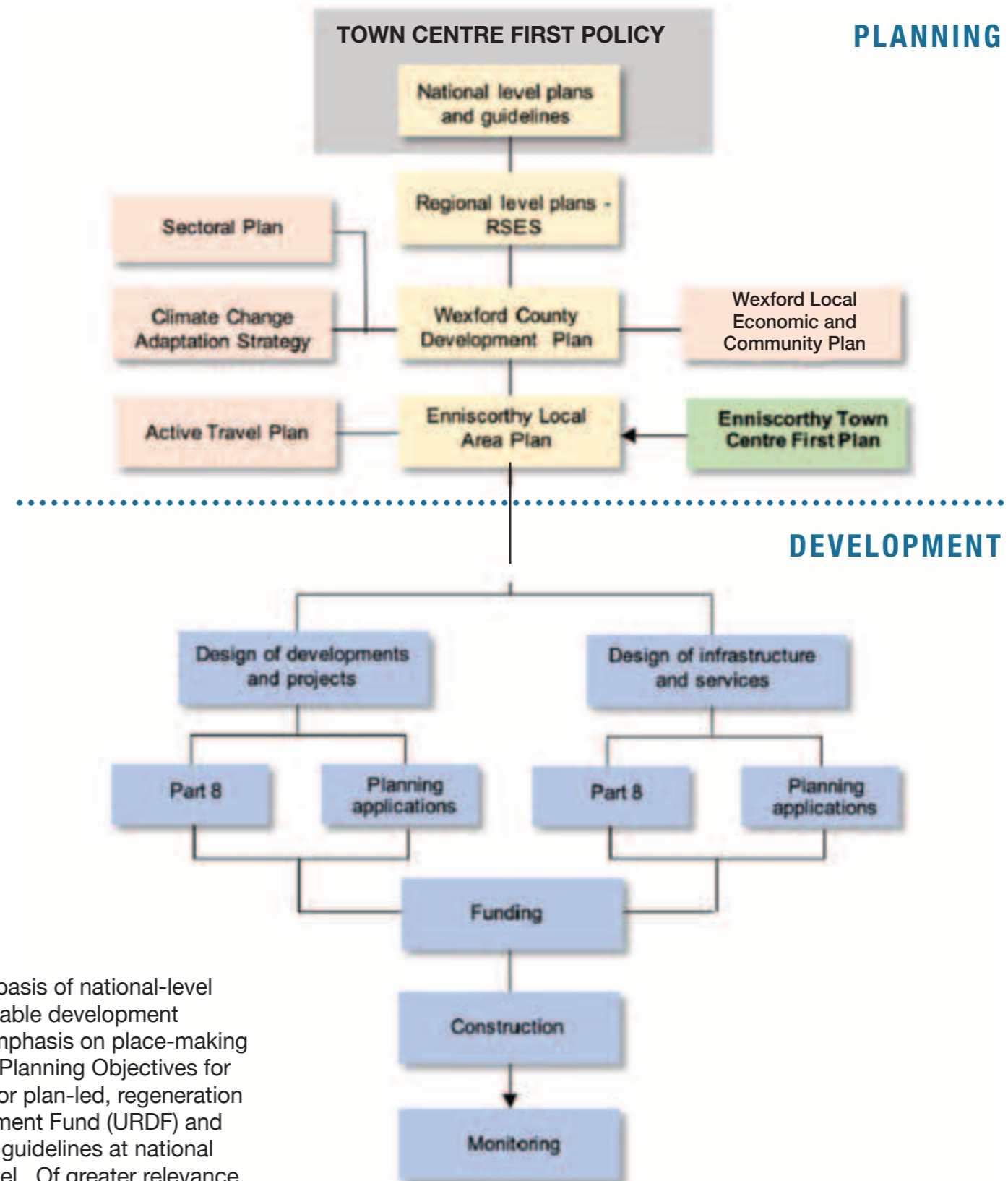
- Sets out the broad policy and regulatory context;
- Acknowledges shared challenges and opportunities for town centres;
- Emphasises the need for collaborative approaches and shared vision for town centres;
- Addresses capacity and capabilities at local level;
- Guides the preparation and adoption of Town Centre First Plans (TCFPs); and
- Sets out a broad approach and framework for funding and implementation of TCFPs.

The Policy includes valuable case examples and methodologies for best practice in plan-preparation and delivery. ETCFP has been prepared to closely align with the policy and best practices included in the Policy.

National level planning policy

The National Planning Framework (NPF) and relevant Planning Guidelines provide the basis of national-level planning policy for regeneration. The overall purpose of the NPF is to promote sustainable development through balanced regional development, more compact urban growth and a greater emphasis on place-making and integrated infrastructure delivery. The NPF includes important high-level National Planning Objectives for urban regeneration. The NPF with its link to the National Development Plan provides for plan-led, regeneration and development funds for urban areas through the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) and the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF). There is also a set of planning guidelines at national level which guide plan-making and development management at regional and local level. Of greater relevance to the ETCFP are guidelines for retail, housing, urban streets and roads, heritage and flood risk management.

Figure 11: Planning and development for town centre regeneration



Regional-level planning

The Southern Regional Assembly’s Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (2021) (RSES) is the regional level planning policy document for the Southern Region including Wexford. The RSES is guided by the NPF, applying national level policy to the region, and providing greater clarity around regional development, settlement and population distribution, regional-level housing and development, critical physical and social infrastructure and nature and built heritage conservation. The RSES also provides a regional context for other policy areas such as climate action, energy, and the circular economy.

County-level planning

The Wexford County Development Plan (2022-2028) is the statutory and overarching plan for County Wexford. It provides county-wide strategies for settlement, housing, and transport and sets out a full range of policies and objectives which apply more generally to the County. The County Development Plan sets out critical general and specific policy for Enniscorthy. Enniscorthy is designated as a Level 2, Large Town in the settlement hierarchy, and Regeneration is included as one of ten core principles for the Core Strategy for the County. The Plan recognises the need for regeneration in the town and sets out objectives for the RSES Smart Town designation for Enniscorthy. The Plan also sets out the broader Development Approach for Enniscorthy, which includes social and economic, transport, heritage and public realm objectives delivered by compact growth and sustainable urban regeneration.

The Plan include important policies and objectives for design and place-making in towns and villages in Wexford. These will have broad application to development and public realm in Enniscorthy and will be further detailed and applied to Enniscorthy in the upcoming Local Area Plan for Enniscorthy. The plan also includes important policies and objectives for regeneration relating to infill and brownfield development, active land management and local authority intervention in towns.

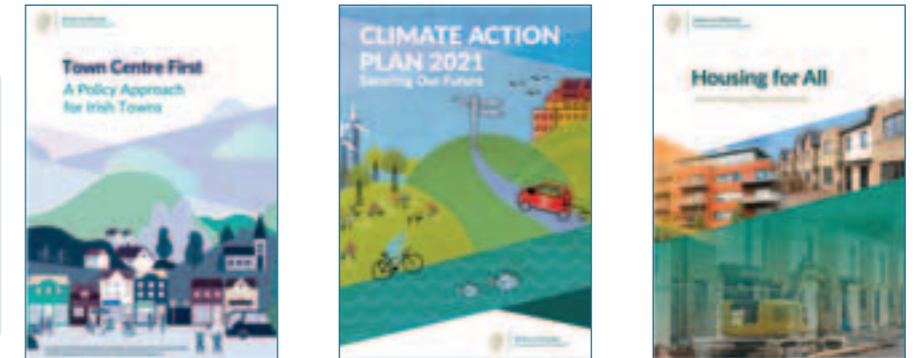
Critically the Plan includes three priorities for Enniscorthy:

- **Enniscorthy Tourism Project - Major public realm and tourism regeneration development surrounding/including**
- **Enniscorthy Castle in centre of town. Enniscorthy heritage led Regeneration – under Heritage Towns Initiative.**
- **Enniscorthy Town Centre – Urban Renewal, Regeneration and Economic Plan – this ETCFP.**

The Wexford Local Economic and Community Plan (2016-2021) provides a county-wide vision and six higher-level goals around education, inclusive and sustainable communities, workplace, business and employment, resource efficiency, natural and built heritage and the arts. These are particularly pertinent to the regeneration of the Town Centre.

Local-level plans

The most recent statutory plan was the Enniscorthy and Environs Development Plan (2008 -2014, as extended). While the plan has now expired, it designated a town centre zone and included a full set of important Town Centre policies centred on urban regeneration and the Town economy, community and housing, retail development, transport, and built heritage protection and conservation. The plan also identified Key Redevelopment sites (which are considered as part of this plan). Preparation of a new statutory Plan will commence in 2023 to replace the Enniscorthy and Environs Development Plan, but this will have to have regard to the changes proposed in the Plan Processes as set out in the Planning Bill/Act. The Plan will rest within the policies and objectives of the Wexford County Development Plan, 2022 to 2028, providing a greater level of clarity and detail for the sustainable planning and development of Enniscorthy. It will be informed by a range of local studies and strategies, including the ETCFP.



1.8 Delivery of the ETCFP

Regeneration of the Town Centre will require a new and concerted approach to delivery. The ETCFP includes a broad approach as a first step, based on best practice and the Town Centre First Policy Approach (Chapter 5). This broad approach includes important considerations such as:

- **The regulatory processes and planning for regeneration;**
- **Partnership collaboration and roles in regeneration;**
- **Regeneration priorities;**
- **Funding and funding sources;**
- **Capacity building, particularly at local level;**
- **Urban place management and marketing;**
- **Knowledge sharing and networking; and**
- **Monitoring and review of the ETCFP.**





2. VISION AND PRINCIPLES



2.1 Vision statement

The vision for the ETCFP was drawn from different sources including the consultation process, relevant plans and policy, the studies carried out for the ETCFP, and best practice and the experience of other towns of town centre regeneration. The following statement reflects this vision:

Enniscorthy Town Centre will be a sustainable, thriving, beautiful and welcoming place of unique sense of place and quality of life. Its regeneration will be for the benefit of the community, for all those working there, and for its many visitors and admirers.

The Town Centre will be the social and cultural heart of Enniscorthy, where a rich diversity of businesses and activities will flourish and be sustained.



Enniscorthy Town Centre will be a safe, accessible and attractive place for all, including children, older people and families.

The Town Centre will be a model for sustainable energy, the circular economy and climate action at the local level.

The regeneration of the Town Centre will be pursued as a collaborative partnership.

2.2 Principles for regeneration

The vision for the Town Centre is underpinned by a set of principles, which in turn underpin the regeneration strategies, and the urban regeneration framework of the ETCFP.

They are:

- To build on the positive aspects of the Town's unique character and sense of place and legibility.
- To cherish, protect and enhance the unique and cultural, urban and landscape heritage.
- To recognise and promote diversity and variety as the driver of Town Centre viability and vibrancy.
- To ensure that services, assets and spaces that support the Town Centre community are retained and enhanced within the Town Centre.
- To protect and develop the substantial urban heritage of the Town Centre for the benefit of the local community and businesses.
- To secure sustainable mobility and accessibility for all in the Town Centre.
- To strengthen the distinctive urban form and fabric of the Town Centre by protecting and reinforcing its fabric of urban blocks, plots, buildings, facades and interfaces.
- To reimagine the civic network of streets and spaces in the Town Centre by ensuring a continuity and enclosure of street and space frontages, sensitive infill development and by prioritising active, safe and attractive, pedestrian and cycle-focused streets and spaces.
- To connect the Town Centre to the larger natural and landscape network structure for the Town.
- To secure an adaptable Town Centre, by ensuring that its built fabric and public spaces are adaptable to climate change.
- To support reduced energy demand, greater energy efficiency and innovative carbon-neutral solutions.
- To create appropriate structures and resources for enhanced management and maintenance of the Town Centre.
- To put in place a robust approach to implementation which provides for enduring collaboration and partnerships.



3 . R E G E N E R A T I O N S T R A T E G I E S



3.1 Introduction

Based on the vision and principles for regeneration, five overlapping regeneration strategies were generated from stakeholder and public consultation, previous studies and surveys, new survey work conducted for the ETCFP, best practice urban regeneration and the National, regional and local policy context.

The five regeneration strategies are for:

A Thriving Town Centre

A Living Town Centre

A Loved Town Centre

A Connected Town Centre

and

An Adaptable Town Centre.

Each regeneration strategy is described in the following sections of this chapter. The strategies include essential context, community views, challenges and opportunities. Each regeneration strategy also includes a set of strategy elements for policy and action.

Figure 12: The five regeneration strategies





3.1 A Thriving Town Centre

3.1.1 A sustainable town needs a thriving town centre

The town centre is the economic heart of the sustainable town. Enniscorthy Town Centre has faced many challenges in recent years. The most critical has been a challenge to the viability and vitality of its economic base. Like so many other medium-sized towns in Ireland, the local economy has changed enormously in the last 30 years. A continued loss of jobs in the more traditional and established industrial and distribution sectors is not being compensated for through the development and growth of other sectors such as services, commerce and tourism.

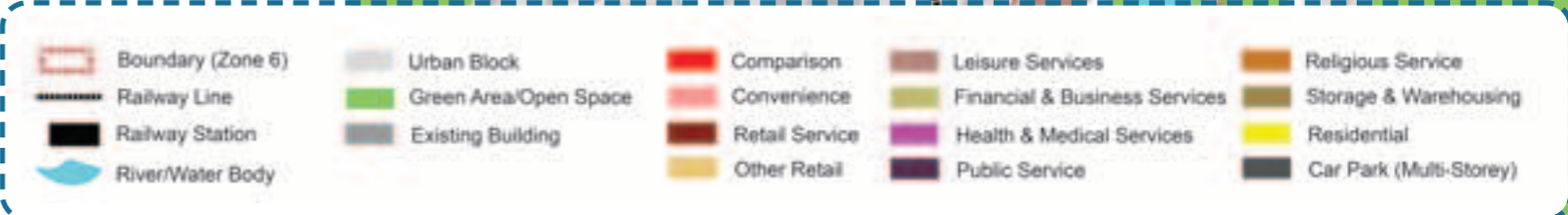
Unemployment has followed the decline of key sectors, affecting some sections of the community in Enniscorthy more than others. The ETCFP survey showed that the economic core or mixed-use area of the Town is relatively compact and focussed on the Town Centre and, to a lesser extent, in Templeshannon. Public consultation and stakeholder engagement in Enniscorthy has also highlighted the perception that Enniscorthy is underperforming as a commercial and civic centre, when compared with other towns in the County, such as Gorey and Wexford Town.

The underperformance of Enniscorthy is not only significant in terms of the viability and vitality of the Town Centre itself - it also has a wider spatial significance in that the Town Centre may also be underperforming as the commercial and civic centre for its extensive suburbs and broader, rural hinterland. Managing the urban edge and out-of-town commercial activity that could be retained in the Town Centre is a challenge for most towns and Enniscorthy is no exception. The existing, poor pedestrian connectivity within the Town certainly does not assist in addressing leakage of spend and investment to both the Town edge and to other towns. A slow drift of businesses which could be located in the Town Centre also increases competition for the established Town Centre businesses, causing some to fail, often with little chance for a suitable replacement business. This can become a cycle of decline which is difficult to break.

These mechanisms lead to further decline and hamper the drive towards a more diverse, viable and vital Town Centre. Going forward, planning policies at town and county level (Local Area Plan and County Development Plan) will need to continue to provide unambiguous support for Town Centre development, with corresponding control of development at the edge-of-town or out-of-town location.



Figure 13: Ground floor building land use in the town centre.



Retail

Enniscorthy's commercial core is centred on the historic town centre. The principal retail streets radiate out from Market Square. The retail offering comprises a mix of convenience and comparison shopping with independent retailers predominating. There is a contemporary format Dunnes Stores supermarket/department store at Barrack Street, to the north of Market Square, which is the largest retail anchor in the Town.

The retail offering in the Town Centre has changed little in recent years despite larger and fundamental changes in the retail sector (including online retail) and the continued leakage of retail spend out of Enniscorthy. The Retail Strategy for the County Development Plan (Volume 8) provides a study of the health of the Town Centre (carried out mainly in 2018) and recommendations to improve the general and retail environment of the Town Centre. The study highlighted assets, issues and opportunities for retail and addressed attractions, accessibility, environmental quality, amenity, perception of safety and diversity of uses, yields and vacancy. Notably, the strategy highlights the role of Market Square and Rafter Street as the heart of the retail core. It also confirmed the dominance of comparison retail over convenience uses and the relatively small bulky good representation in the Town Centre. The study also highlights the complementary role of non-retail commercial uses. Retail and ground floor vacancy was identified as a key issue along with a declining quality in the public realm.

The strategy recommendations include a broadening of the Town Centre retail offer to include additional, national multiples and bulky goods retail, a shopfront improvement scheme, improvements to the public realm, reduced wirescape, better pedestrian accessibility and crossings, support for tourism, and the regeneration of Templeshannon. These recommendations are incorporated into the County Development Plan policies and objectives.

A recent attitudinal research in the Town (RED C, November 2021) cites the poor quality and mix of the existing retail offer with a notable, perceived prevalence of discount stores. Public consultation and stakeholder engagement for the ETCFP also highlighted the perception in the community that Enniscorthy is underperforming in its retail and retail service function in comparison with the retail functions in towns such as Gorey and Wexford Town.

On the positive side, small-scale independent retail and professional services sector is a critical part of the local economy, with local independent businesses, in particular, providing a strong trickle down or spin-off to local communities and other businesses.

The survey for the ETCFP found that small, independent retail and services were still distributed extensively in the Town Centre.

The survey work conducted in 2021 for the ETCFP supports the perception that the Town Centre is underperforming as it shows pockets of retail vacancy in the Town Centre and on established retail frontages (similar to the findings of survey for the Retail Strategy for the County Development Plan). The ETCFP survey found ground floor vacancy of retail units was particularly pronounced in Templeshannon.



Figure 14: Distribution of ground floor retail in the town centre in 2021 (lhs).

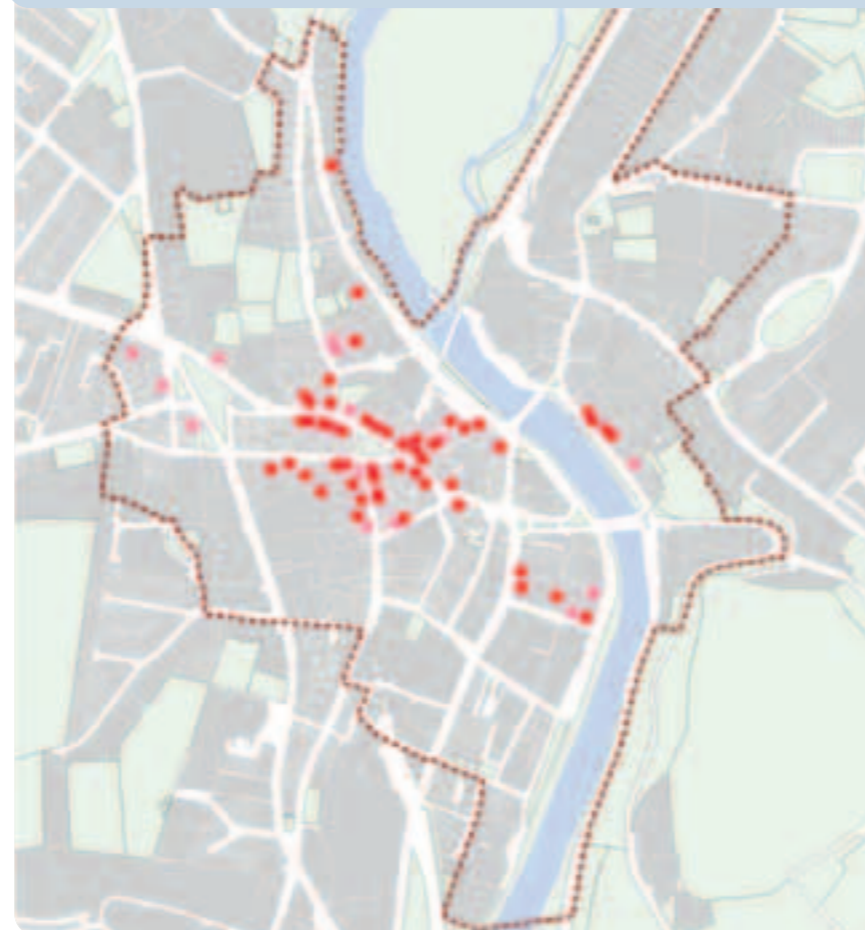


Figure 15: Distribution of vacant ground floors in the town centre in 2021 (rhs).

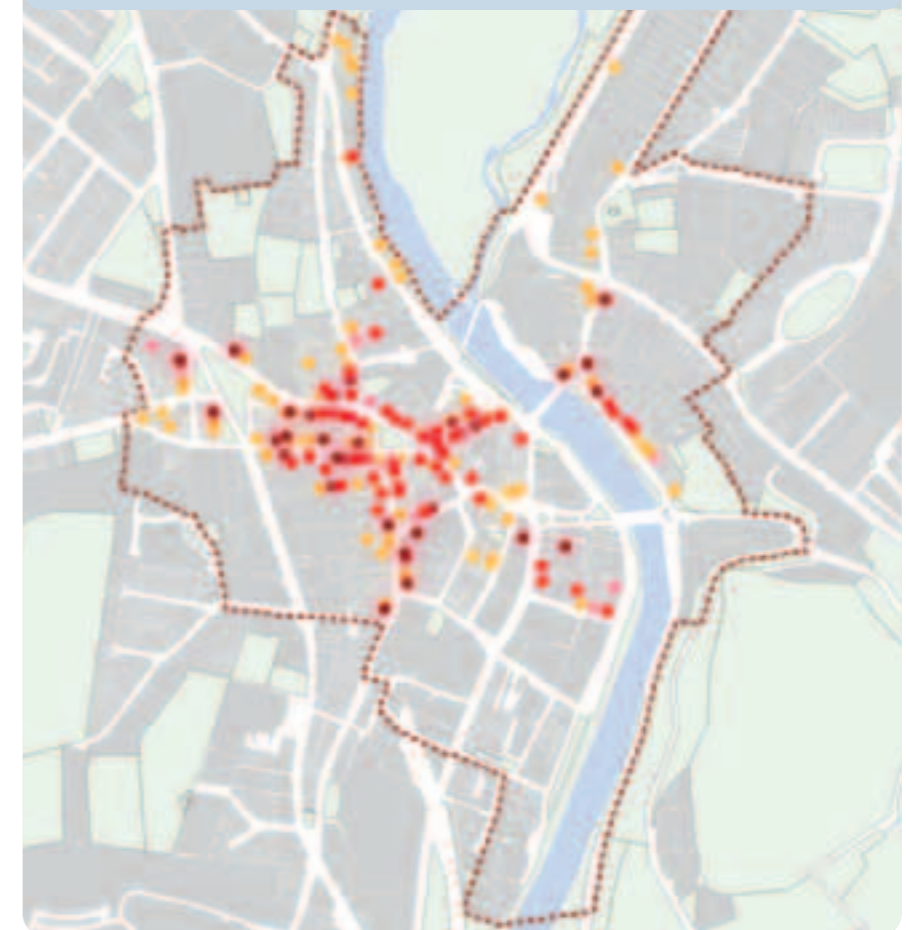




Figure 16: Distribution of ground floor hospitality and services in the town centre in 2021.

Hospitality and services

Although established and cherished, Enniscorthy’s hospitality and services sector has room for considerable expansion. Cafes and restaurants are well established in the Town Centre, mainly serving day trade. Hotels, notably Treacy’s in Templeshannon and the Riverside Park Hotel, provide a range of services in the Town and a foundation for further services and tourism expansion.

The recent attitudinal research in the Town (RED C, November 2021) indicates mixed views on eating out in the Town. While the role of the hotels, established restaurants and small daytime cafés is acknowledged, the consensus is that there is a lack of high-quality and good value restaurants when compared with other towns in the County. The attitudinal survey reported a perception that the Town Centre was well-served by pubs and bars, especially around the Market Square, but that Wexford Town, in particular, had become a more popular destination for many for a night out.

Survey, studies and consultation all conclude that there is a relatively small and disjointed evening and night-time economy (ENTE) in the Town Centre. ENTE has been a feature of regeneration for many town centres as it is considered to provide wider social and economic benefits. The Association of Town Centre Managers (ATCM) has described the benefits of a stronger ENTE as a raised profile and an improved public image for the location, a wider patronage, increased expenditure, lower crime and anti-social behaviour, and a more successful mixed-use economy in the longer-term. ENTE is clearly an important area to be developed for Enniscorthy Town Centre. This could be tied to the improved exploitation of the heritage of the Town - and indeed its tourism potential.

Figure 17: Distribution of KIBS in the town centre in 2021.



KIBS

The knowledge intensive business services (KIBS) sector encompasses a broad range of activities, which require higher levels of knowledge, expertise and creativity. Aspects of the sector, such as professional services and office-based work, are well established in Enniscorthy and the Town Centre remains the focus for these. Most KIBS in the Town Centre serve local needs. This role will need to be protected and enhanced. There is also significant potential to broaden the range of KIBS in the Town Centre, particularly in the area of creativity and digital business, and to exploit opportunities for linkages with businesses outside of the Town Centre and across the County.

Creativity

Creativity involves processes of exploration and examination, in an effort to generate new ideas and reframe old ideas. Although originally associated with the artistic sector, it is now an important aspect of business, administration and commerce. Creativity also involves innovative activities such as research and development and a broad range of design activities. Creativity has strong connections to culture, in particular the arts and local creativity often emerges from local culture. Urban creativity is creativity based in or associated with urban areas. It has been seen as a way to make towns more liveable and vital by harnessing imagination and talent. The larger concept of the Creative Town or City (including ideas of mobile capital, creative classes and creative assets) has been popular in town centre regeneration in recent years.



Digital economy

Digital technology has transformed business and presented challenges and opportunities. The advantage of the digital economy is that it ensures efficiency in the workplace. It gives organisations and individuals the opportunity to execute tasks better and faster using technology.

Currently, there is no provision for a remote working hub (Workspace and hot desks, conference facilities etc.) within the Town Centre area. The National Remote Working Strategy (2020) and the National Hub Network (ConnectedHubs.ie) aims to build on the progress made in the adoption of remote work during the Covid-19 pandemic. The objective is to ensure that remote working is a permanent feature in the Irish workplace in a way that maximises economic, social and environmental benefits. These benefits include increasing participation in the labour market, attracting and retaining talent, enabling balanced regional development, alleviating accommodation pressures, improving work/life balance, improving child and family wellbeing, reducing the amount of time spent commuting, and reducing transport-related carbon emissions and air pollution (Remote Working Strategy, 2020).

Employment

The creation of new employment opportunities in Enniscorthy is a priority for Wexford County Council and a key element in reducing unsustainable levels of commuting and tackling existing levels of social deprivation. Enniscorthy has significantly higher levels of unemployment relative to the County and State. The unemployment rate, as expressed as a percentage of the labour force in the 2016 census, was at 26.6% in Enniscorthy, compared to 16.6% in Wexford County and 12.9% in the State. The unemployment rate for the Enniscorthy urban area was in excess of 30%. RED C (November 2021) survey research found that up until recently, many people originally from the Town who got jobs in Dublin (or elsewhere in the country) after leaving school or college moved to the city (or closer to it). However, for some people, the need to be physically close to their workplace has lessened with more people working from home. This presents a significant opportunity for Enniscorthy.

3.1.2 Policy and plans for a thriving town centre

National Planning Objective (NPO) 16 seeks to target the reversal of rural decline in the core of small towns and villages through sustainable, targeted measures that address vacant premises and deliver sustainable reuse and regeneration outcomes. Investment in market towns and villages through regeneration, public realm improvements and the appropriate adaptation and re-use of the built heritage are key factors in developing, promoting, and investing in a sense of place aligning the objectives of creating high quality urban environments with that of spatial planning.

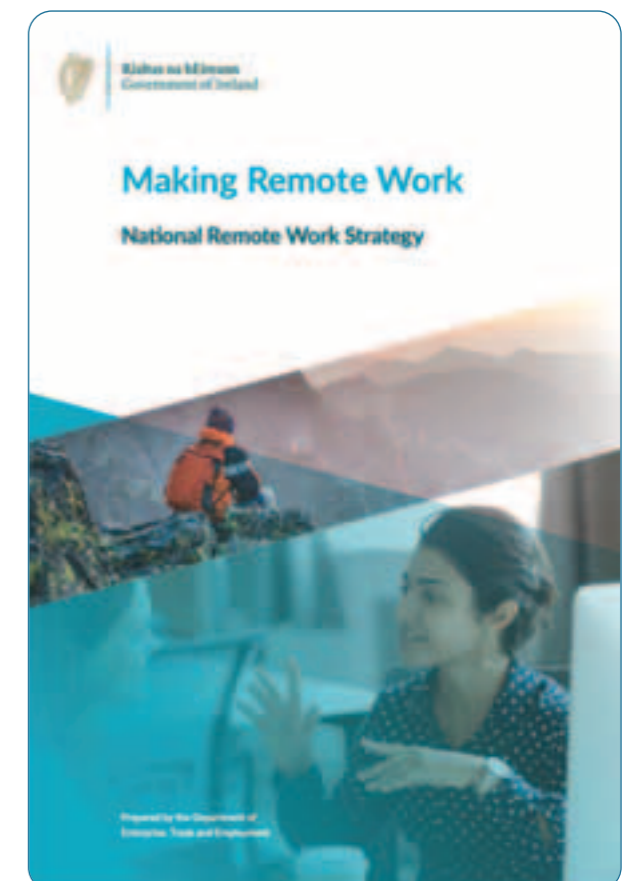
This is also in line with the economic strategy of the RSES for the Southern Region which aims to develop a sustainable, competitive, inclusive, and resilient regional economy. Key to delivering the overarching vision is ensuring that cities and towns within the region develop a strong and diverse economic base. One of the central enablers is revitalising urban areas and spaces through creative and regenerative place-making to deliver on compact growth and housing need, and to provide new vitality for city and town centres.

The Government is committed to a Town Centre First Policy Approach that seeks to deliver the best outcomes for town centres by aligning policies and targeting available resources. This may result in making investment choices in the prioritisation of central locations over investment on the urban periphery. The Town Centre First Policy Approach provides the foundation for each town to develop, at a local level, their own plan-led path forward to achieving a thriving and economic sustainable town.

Wexford County Development Plan, 2022-2028, designates Enniscorthy and New Ross as Level 2 Large Towns. These towns are allocated moderate population growth in the core strategy. It is recognised that Enniscorthy may experience the same negative economic and social impacts of commuting experienced by towns at a similar distance from Dublin. Wexford County Council will facilitate economic development and employment growth with a strong focus on life sciences, funds and other similar financial services sectors and environmental research and development sectors as outlined in its strategic objectives.

Wexford County Development Plan 2022-2028 supports the NPF focus on the regeneration and rejuvenation of towns and villages using the core strategy development approach. The County Development Plan notes that there are opportunities to leverage funding under the rural and urban regeneration funds as many of the County's towns and villages will benefit from targeted regeneration.

connectedhubs



3.1.3 Consultation on a thriving town centre

The challenges and opportunities for a Thriving Town Centre were considered in the public consultation. A summary of these is set out in the table below.

CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
A lack of housing choice in the Town Centre. Disconnected communities represented by two distinct and separated urban areas at Templeshannon on the east side of the Slaney and the Market Square / Castle Hill area on the west side of the Slaney.	The reuse of vacant buildings and the development potential of vacant sites, specifically the strategically located Murphy Flood site at Market Square/Irish Street/Barrack Street.
Templeshannon has high levels of vacancy and underutilisation and requires urgent regeneration. There is a high level of vacancy generally above ground floor level within the Town Centre commercial core.	Potential for quality sustainable mixed-use development including housing, improved retail, professional services and amenities.
Enniscorthy has an underperforming commercial core in terms of its retail offering and Town Centre experience in comparison to other towns in the region, in particular, Gorey and Wexford Town.	Development of the new business park and the potential to exploit TC synergies.
Pedestrian movement and street life are severely compromised by traffic volumes and lack of public space, which is overwhelmingly dedicated to vehicles.	The opportunity offered by remote working channelling the energies and spending power of residents who previously travelled to Dublin on their daily commute.
Access to the Town Centre is restricted by lack of public transport and active travel options including clearly defined direct links with the suburbs and broader hinterland.	Exploit the latent tourism potential of Enniscorthy by promoting and developing the Town's-built heritage, historic sites and river frontages. For example, to provide a visitor's centre for Vinegar Hill in a vacant heritage building in Templeshannon;
Primary cultural attractions are underdeveloped and poorly connected with limited supporting infrastructure. There is no clear access point /orientation for the visitor who is confronted by surface car parking on arrival to the Town.	Exploit the direct and indirect benefit of a future flood relief scheme including the redirection of vehicular traffic, reimagining of public space, and thereby improving the business environment.
The evening, night and weekend time economy is limited.	
The high cost of doing business, including local charges and rates etc.	



3.1.4 Strategies for a thriving town centre

The central aim and objective of the Strategy

A vibrant performing core will be central to a sustainable future for Enniscorthy. In practical terms the attraction of the Town Centre as an employment, retail, service, cultural, social and recreational anchor in its hinterland is central to the vitality of the Town Centre itself while providing for the sustainability of the Town. A vibrant core will also support compact growth and embed more sustainable travel patterns.

A thriving Town Centre will require targeted public and private sector investment, with priority given to investment in the Town Centre over other potential or competing investment locations at the edge of town, and in the surrounding areas. The viability gap between development costs (at its simplest, site assembly and construction costs) and end-user valuations must be bridged by strategic, targeted and co-ordinated investment in the Town Centre through a bundle of principally public sector supports and initiatives initially.

The flow of public sector investment will need to be established through sectoral and tailor-made local investment actions, attracting subsequent private sector investment. This positive dynamic will lift all boats (the delivery of commercial/civic /residential growth enablers) including delivering feasibility on the identified key redevelopment sites. Integral to this dynamic is decarbonisation as investment funds and companies push the green agenda and follow through on investment decisions as part of their focus on sustainability and governance.

Public sector investment will be required to support comprehensive and phased public space improvements with the redevelopment of the identified key redevelopment sites. It is envisaged that the public sector will, through sectoral initiatives and local specific investment actions, act as catalyst to promote and support a sustainable private sector investment dynamic. The realisation of the strategy will anchor Enniscorthy Town Centre as the beating economic, civic and cultural heart of its broader suburban and rural hinterland.

Diversity

A key aspect of sustainable town centres is diversity - a broad concept, which provides them with longer-term adaptability and robustness to survive ever-changing economic and social conditions. It is recognised as the single, most important component of urban vitality and viability.

Diversity encompasses, among other things; mix of uses, adaptability of built form, and variety of buildings and blocks. Importantly, diversity brings a variety of employment and employment opportunities. Small and independent business will have an important role to play in securing a diverse Town Centre. Diversity within the Town Centre will need to be enhanced to exploit new areas of activity to provide a range of job opportunities including KIBS, education, energy, creative arts and innovation. In delivering the ECTFP, it will be important to monitor diversity and identify critical features or trends. This should be done by further, detailed analysis and regular update of the land use survey for the ECTFP.

TV1 - To promote and support diversity in the mix of uses activities and businesses of the Town Centre.

Activate key redevelopment sites

Critical investment to activate and redevelop key sites for mixed-use development is essential in delivering a thriving Town Centre. The public consultation highlighted the need to activate the Murphy Flood site and the Abbey Square car park/lands for substantial, mixed-used redevelopment. The Retail Strategy of the County Development Plan has projected a floor space requirement of approximately 14,000 sqm for Enniscorthy over the plan period (this excludes pipeline projects and extant permissions and including bulky comparison retail).

This would make a significant contribution to regeneration, particularly if it can be deployed as a component of integrated, mixed-use redevelopment of one or more opportunity sites.

TV2 - To activate key redevelopment sites for integrated, mixed-use development.

Refurbishment and improvement

Vitality and vibrancy, refers to the 'busyness' of urban centres. It is normally measured by a set of metrics including footfall, commercial yields, local rental values, vacancy rates, customer views and behaviour, and retailer representation. Planning and public policy strongly supports the concepts of longer-term vibrancy and vitality in our town centres. Addressing vacancy is critical in achieving vibrancy and maintaining confidence for local businesses, investors, shoppers and visitors. As the building stock of the town centre is largely intact, reuse and refurbishment should be preferred over redevelopment. This will also have benefits for smaller scale businesses and activities. Facade and shopfront improvements to support independent retailers and businesses will also enhance on-street presence and street image.

TV3 – To prefer the refurbishment and improvement of the existing building stock in preference to demolition and redevelopment.

Hospitality, leisure, entertainment and the evening and night-time economy

A strategic and co-ordinated approach to the planning and management of the evening, night-time and indeed, weekend economy will play an important role in expanding the use mix of the Town Centre. The survey and public consultation for the ETCFP also indicated that the Town Centre lacks adequate hospitality, entertainment and leisure services to serve the needs of the community and visitors. These uses are key to developing and maintaining a sustainable evening and night-time economy. While the outdoor dining in the Town Centre initiated in response to Covid-19 restrictions was modest in nature, it nonetheless showed the potential of the enhanced on-street presence of restaurants and bars, particularly in the established areas for such activities such as Main Street, Market Square and in parts of the riverfront. Experience elsewhere has shown that the evening and night-time economy must be carefully managed to ensure it is compatible with other uses in the town centre, in particular residential use. Accreditation under the Purple Flag process (with its focus on a coherent approach and careful management) should be pursued as an early action and guide.

TV4 – To develop, promote and carefully manage the hospitality, leisure, entertainment, evening and night-time economy in Enniscorthy Town Centre.



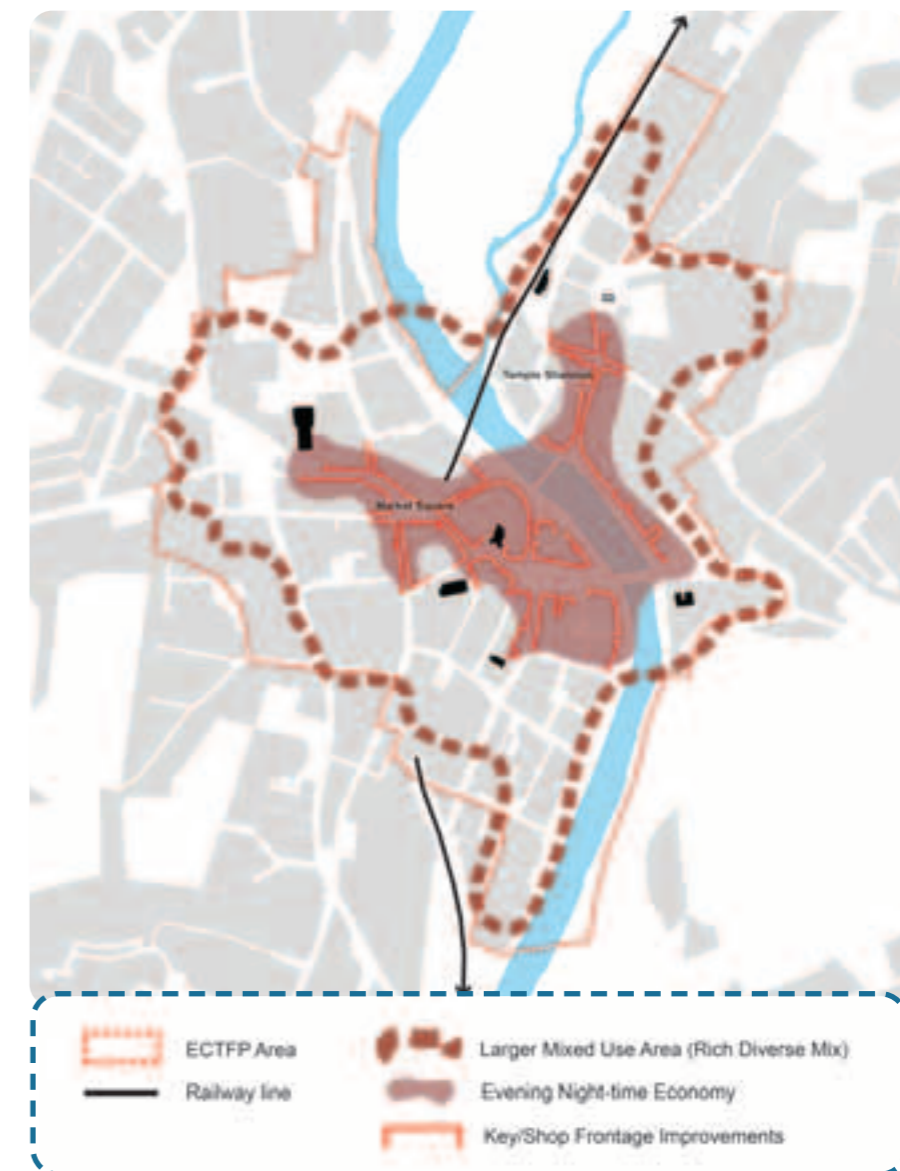
Employment and the digital economy

The Town Centre First Policy Approach recognises the critical role of the Town Centre in providing employment opportunities. New employment opportunities will come with opportunities and supports for new businesses, and the growth and diversification of established businesses. The building stock in the Town Centre is ideal for small business and start-ups, providing room for growth and nearby relocation, if necessary. Home-based employment also provides new opportunities for employment in the Town Centre. Digital technology has had an immense impact on sectors, businesses and workplaces.

The pandemic forced a step-change in working and the digitalisation of businesses, forcing many businesses to pivot to a remote workforce. Although a range of government and local authority supports are available, there remains little in the way of structured provision for remote working in the Town Centre itself (i.e. dedicated workspaces, hot desks, conference facilities, support services etc.). The consultation and the survey highlighted the attractiveness of Enniscorthy for remote working or hybrid working, given its urban character and heritage and its base of supporting services. The benefits of digital and remote working will need to be promoted and supported by appropriate services and networks.

TV4 – To develop, promote and carefully manage the hospitality, leisure, entertainment, evening and night-time economy in Enniscorthy Town Centre.

Figure 18: Thriving spatial strategy





3.2. A Living Town Centre

3.2.1 A sustainable town needs a living town centre

While the resident community of the Town Centre has declined over many years it remains an important part of the Town Centre. Although the population of Enniscorthy (Town and suburbs) has grown consistently for over a generation, this growth has occurred almost solely in the suburbs with the Town Centre suffering from population decline in the same period.

Figures show that the Enniscorthy Urban Electoral Division (which is more extensive than the ECTFP area) population fell by around 20% between 2002 and 2016. A rapid decline was witnessed between 2002 and 2011, but there was a degree of recovery by 2016. The results of Census 2022 will indicate if this recovery has been sustained.

The Town Centre population is now characterised by smaller, older households and few families. While town-centre living has declined in numerical terms in recent years, there is still a coherent, cohesive and proud community in the Town Centre that is active in local politics, associations and initiatives.

The housing stock in the Town Centre is made up mainly of traditional townhouses, living over the shop and a small number of more recent, infill apartment developments. The consultation highlighted a perceived lack of choice for new households in the Town Centre. The survey for the ETCFP also showed that much of the traditional housing stock in the Town Centre was in moderate condition, with a worrying amount of the stock in poor condition, and only a small amount of the stock in good condition.

Figure 20: Vacancy of entire buildings (middle) in the town centre in 2021.



Figure 21: Vacancy of upper floors (rhs.) in the town centre in 2021.



Vacancy of housing stock was found to be a significant problem for the Town Centre with elevated levels of vacancy in some of the established, residential streets approaching the core, and vacancy of floorspace above ground floor shops and businesses on mixed-use streets. In 2021, approximately 40 buildings, which were suitable for residential use in the Town Centre, were entirely vacant. In addition, the upper floors of approximately 70 buildings with reasonable potential for residential use (through reuse and refurbishment and reconfiguration) were found to be vacant. This is a very substantial unused element of the housing stock and a priority for reactivation, which could cater for between 150 and 200 households. It was also apparent from the survey for ETCFP that upper floor vacancy has been a problem for many years and that it is strongly associated with poor and deteriorating building condition.

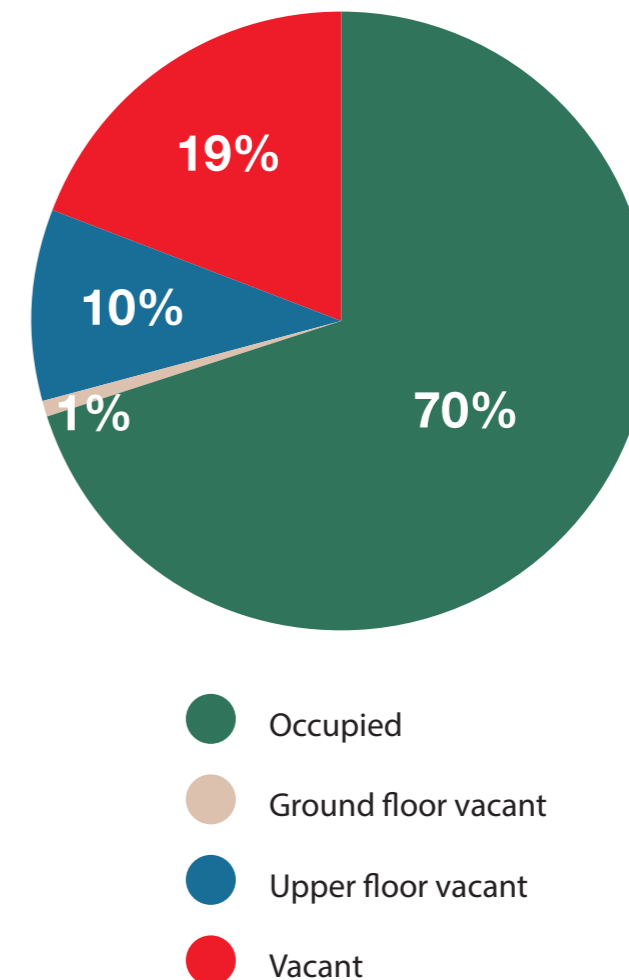
A recent study on local economy and development for the upcoming Local Area Plan has highlighted problems with land and development values in the Town Centre, which affect the development feasibility of new private housing. The study indicates that a feasibility gap exists that needs to be bridged in the short-to medium term while values for housing in the Town Centre gradually improve. It is clear, however, that there are important infill redevelopment sites across the Town Centre area. And many of these have medium and longer-term potential for residential development as part of mixed-use or residential schemes. Although further analysis is needed on this development potential, it could be in the range of between 300 and 500 new homes (mainly in the format of apartments and townhouses). These redevelopment sites, and their potential are likely to be identified and addressed in more detail in the upcoming Local Area Plan.

The survey and consultation for the ETCFP also confirmed that the environment in much of the Town Centre is not conducive to safe and attractive living, with many streets dominated by traffic and congestion, and little in the way of quality urban spaces to support living. Alongside the challenges of adapting housing and providing new housing in the Town Centre, it is recognised that the necessary supporting, social, community, health and educational services and physical infrastructure are available to deliver sustainable housing. Primary and secondary education is well catered for in the Town Centre and the Town. Higher-level educational opportunities are, however, limited. The UN Centre of Excellence for High Performance Building was established in

2021. It has been providing NZEB training for social housing with the Education and Training Board and is an example how specialised higher-level education could also develop in the Town Centre.

While existing community facilities (such as The Presentation Centre and the Waterfront Pool and Leisure Centre) are significant assets for the Town Centre, the consultation did identify the need or accessible, multi-use spaces in the Town Centre for younger people, including facilities such as a skatepark, a cinema and a bowling alley.

Figure 22: Building vacancy in town centre in 2021 (lhs - GF: Ground floor; UF: Upper floors vacant, Vacant: entire building).





3.2.2 Policy and plans for a living town centre

Planning and public policy strongly supports living in our town centres as a key component of town centre vitality and viability. The Town Centre First Policy Approach recognises that many parts of Irish town centres are underutilised and contain a limited variety of housing. The policy also promotes new and innovative housing models to enable more compact and adaptable forms of housing (including own-door housing) to cater for a greater range of household types. The policy targets the activation of under-utilised and obsolete areas, such as infill redevelopment sites, including large areas to the rear of existing buildings (backland redevelopment). The Policy Approach supports development proposals of varying character, scale, and density facilitating the provision of a mixed supply of private, affordable, and social housing in town centres.

National Policy Objectives (NPO) 3a, 3b and 3c of the National Planning Framework target infill and brownfield redevelopment requiring the delivery of at least 40% of all new homes nationally within the 'built-up' footprint of existing settlements (compact growth targets require at least 50% of new homes in cities and their suburbs and 30% in other towns and villages) within existing built-up areas. This requirement of 30% of new homes in the built-up area applies to Enniscorthy Town. The RSES also promotes the best practice model of the '10-minute city' concept and smart growth principles in the achievement of successful neighbourhoods. Guidelines for Planning Authorities, notably Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009), promote increased population in city and town centres supported by their range of employment, recreation, educational, commercial and retail uses. Town centres inherently have the greatest potential for the creation of sustainable housing within the context of sustainable development.

The Housing Strategy of Wexford County Development Plan, 2022-2028 allocates an additional population for Enniscorthy to 2040 of 3,414 people. The County Development Plan acknowledges the issue of housing vacancy and sets out to reduce the number of vacant homes in the county. Tackling vacancy is also identified as a key priority for Wexford County Council in providing new homes, driving urban regeneration, tackling urban blight, promoting community cohesion, and meeting the aims of Housing policy.

3.2.3 Consultation on a living town centre

The challenges and opportunities for a living Town Centre were considered in the public consultation. A summary of these is set out in the table below.

CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
A lack of housing choice in the Town Centre with dated units and small apartments predominating.	Potential to significantly increase the Town Centre population.
Heavy traffic volumes causing congestion, noise, air pollution and general residential dis-amenity. No dedicated parking for Town Centre residential units.	Activate vacant and under-utilised buildings and derelict sites for new housing. Wastewater capacity available to support residential development.
Air pollution, litter, and poor public realm.	Improve accessibility for pedestrians, buggies/prams and provide a shuttle bus to assist older people to get around the Town.
Anti-social behaviour and an absence of general supervision on Town Centre streets and public places.	Connect to walkways, trails, outdoor recreation and the river.
No dedicated location for refuse disposal.	Build event spaces, cinema, community hub and a bowling alley to support living.
Protected structure status sometimes an impediment to re-purposing older buildings for residential use.	

3.2.4 Strategies for a living town centre

Housing is essential to people's sense of safety and wellbeing at all phases of life. The achievement of regeneration goals and the reversal of decline will require a strengthened Town Centre community accommodated in appropriate and accessible housing.

The survey for the ETCFP indicates that the Town Centre alone could accommodate the full requirement for the delivery of 30% of new homes within the built-up area of Enniscorthy to 2040, through a combination of reuse and reactivation of existing stock and redevelopment.

In framing the upcoming Local Area Plan, it will be important to focus on the potential for new housing in the Town Centre as part of the overall requirement to achieve compact, sustainable growth in Enniscorthy. It may also be appropriate to set explicit targets for housing in the Town Centre as a distinct element of the more-extensive built-up area of Enniscorthy. It is entirely possible that the existing, built-up area of Enniscorthy, including the Town Centre, could exceed the national compact growth standard, in the interests of longer-term sustainable development and a living Town Centre.

Strengthening the community of the Town Centre will provide a host of other benefits. For example, a larger population will contribute to meeting Enniscorthy's decarbonisation zone objective to achieve a 7% reduction in emissions per year, by continuing to use, and reusing existing building stock, by reducing the need for travel and facilitating active local travel. The consultation highlighted the need for Enniscorthy Town Centre to become a more attractive residential investment location. A central determinant in the success of the Town Centre as a location of choice will be the image and the character of the Town Centre and the quality of life that it can offer residents.

Unlocking town centre housing supply

The achievement of regeneration goals will require a significant new Town Centre population accommodated in appropriate and tailored accommodation to reverse the decline and replace the significant loss in housing supply over recent decades. The reuse and refurbishment of vacant homes and the vacant residential floors of mixed-use buildings will be a priority in addressing housing need and delivering on compact growth objectives. Further, it should be an objective to eliminate effective vacancy in the housing stock of the Town Centre

by 2040. There are a number of government supports available to assist in achieving this objective.

LV1 – To target the reuse and refurbishment of vacant homes and the vacant residential floors of mixed-use buildings in the Town Centre, and to eliminate effective vacancy in the housing stock of the Town Centre by 2040.

Inclusive living

In the consultation it became apparent that the resident Town Centre population has an older profile. It is an objective of planning policy at a national, regional, and local level to ensure that housing, transport, accessibility, and leisure policies meet the needs and opportunities of an ageing population and those with mobility challenges. Town Centre living will need to support the Age Friendly Ireland Programme over its nine themes, including housing. Quality of life and community cohesion measures, a diverse, represented and engaged community, sustainable mobility, accessibility, belonging, identity, and pride are essential in achieving an inclusive neighbourhood. A central determinant in the success of the Town Centre as a location of choice will be a high quality of life.

LV2 – To engage with and provide for the living needs of all in the community, especially the young, the elderly, the disadvantaged and those who suffer from exclusion.

Housing diversity

There is a need to provide a diversity of housing types and tenures to facilitate a balanced and sustainable residential community in the Town Centre. Town centre housing also needs to be reflective of current and future needs. Although development economics and the market will strongly influence housing provision and choice, the Town Centre can be repositioned as a competitive and attractive investment location if it is supported by public and community investment. Leveraging of private sector investment through supports and partnership with public agencies will also be critical in housing delivery and realising a living Town Centre.

LV3 – To provide a diversity of housing types and tenures in the Town Centre to meet current and future needs, through a collaborative effort between the community, public agencies and the private sector.

Targeted redevelopment of key redevelopment sites

Public consultation and the survey for the ETCFP highlighted pockets of dereliction and underuse in the Town Centre. There are key infill redevelopment sites across the Town Centre, with short, medium and longer-term potential for residential development as part of mixed-use or residential schemes. Although further analysis is needed on this development potential, it could be in the range of between 300 and 500 new homes (mainly in the format of apartments and townhouses). It will be important that residential development on these sites is realised as part of the compact development of Enniscorthy. It is also important the residential development on these sites also supports housing diversity in the Town Centre. It is also considered realistic and appropriate that all larger infill redevelopment sites are sustainably redeveloped by 2040.

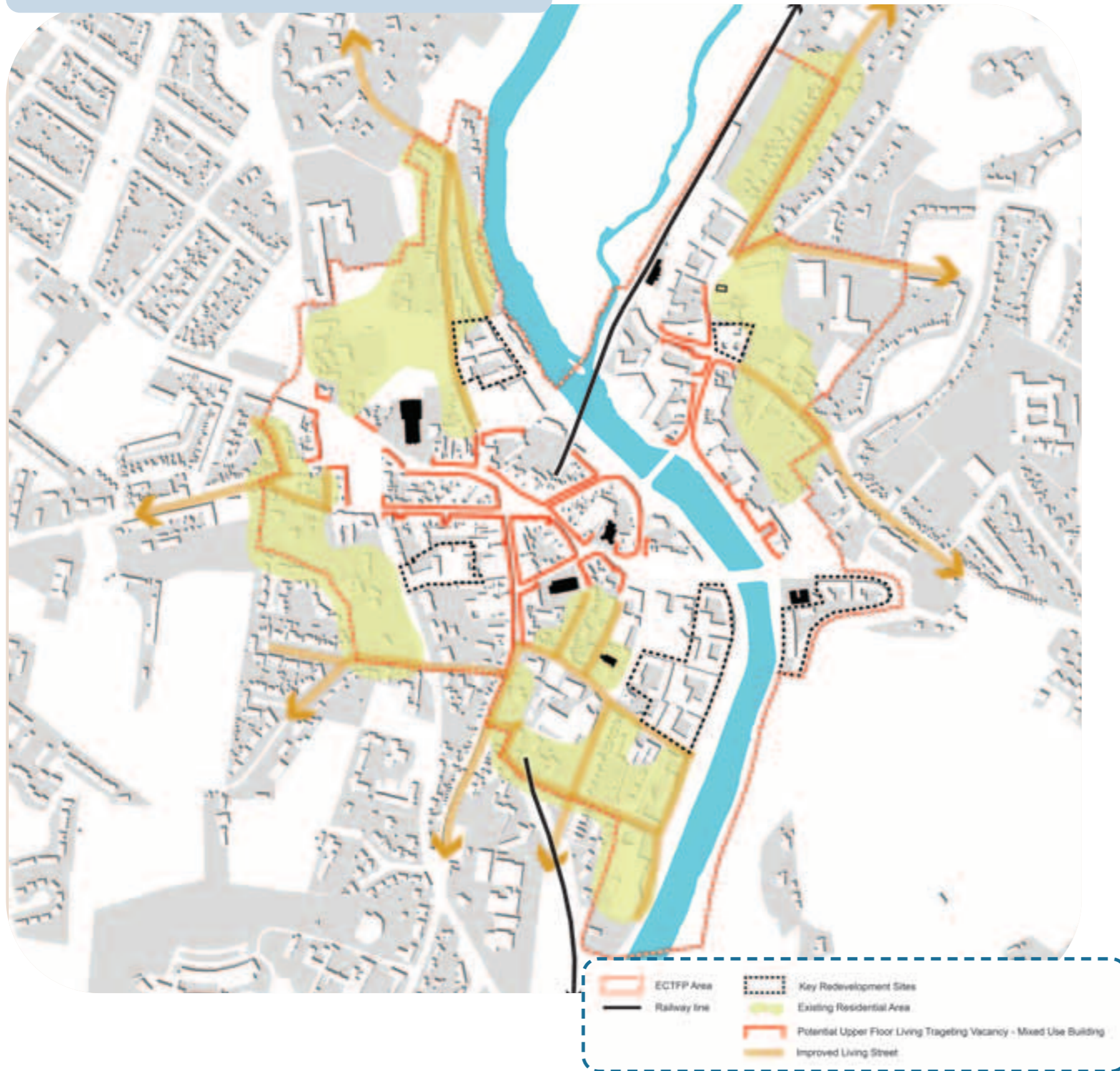
LV4 – To target the redevelopment of all larger infill redevelopment sites in the Town Centre by 2040, and to ensure that they support the delivery of housing diversity in the Town Centre.

Social and community supports

Community and social facilities and services such as schools, childcare, healthcare, community and recreation spaces provide essential support for the local community. Primary and secondary education is well provided for in Enniscorthy, albeit with some challenges around routes to school and accessibility for walking and cycling. Further opportunities exist to develop specialised higher-level education in the Town Centre. It will be important to consolidate existing primary and community healthcare in the Town Centre in the longer term. It will also be critical that recreation and childrens' play areas are enhanced and safely accessed. This is especially important for families. A dedicated family resource centre should be developed to support the resettlement of families in the Town Centre.

LV5 – To retain and improve essential community and social facilities and services in the Town Centre, and to ensure ease of access for Town centre residents to these services.

Figure 23: Living spatial strategy





3.3 A Loved Town Centre

3.3.1 A sustainable town needs a loved town centre

Each town has its own unique character that provides a sense of place, belonging and attachment. Local character is a powerful asset and a basis for sustainable urban regeneration. Vibrant town centres are the traditional centres of towns, the scene of interaction and social life over many generations. From a regeneration perspective, town centres, despite their challenges, remain the ‘beating heart’ of their communities, with untapped potential for cultural development that is accessible to all and reflective of the diversity of the local community.

The most powerful theme in the consultation process is the passionate pride that the community have in their town. This is described broadly as a pride in the heritage, people, and culture of the Town. The consultation, however, uncovered a concern about the general performance, image and perception of the Town Centre. The consultation also raised the critical issue around how this pride and passion for the Town might be translated into more tangible outcomes for the citizens.

The Government’s Policy Approach for the community and voluntary sector seeks to create vibrant and active civil society that contributes to decision-making and policy implementation. The Red C survey (November 2021) confirms the importance that the community places in community-building through leisure and civic activities. Citizens in Enniscorthy see these activities as one of their key links to the wider community. There have been many reports and studies prepared since the early 1990s, which in one way or another have addressed issues caused by the decline of the Town Centre. These have been commissioned by Wexford County Council, and other groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, Enniscorthy Tidy Towns and other significant stakeholders.

These reports highlighted the desire of the community to have a cultural, attractive and inviting Town Centre, and proposed a range of environmental and townscape improvements and beautification.

They have also highlighted the importance of a high-quality network of safe and attractive public spaces in the Town Centre as the context for the social and cultural life of the Town. The consultation for the ETCFP also highlighted a

frustration in the community with the poor delivery of specific actions from these previous plans and studies.

3.3.2 Policy and plans based on a loved town centre

Quality of place has an important impact on the quality of life that people enjoy. National Policy Objective (NPO) 4 seeks to ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well-designed, high-quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being.

The Town Centre First Policy Approach recognises that every town is unique. It supports heritage-led regeneration, with investment in public space, the conservation and promotion of built and natural heritage, including biodiversity networks. The Town Centre First Policy Approach encourages and supports local communities to be creative and ambitious in developing public space that is welcoming to all, is safe, is easy to access for all modes of travel (particularly walking), has low noise and air pollution levels, and provides the community with things to do, places to sit and relax, and attractive views.

The five-year strategy for Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities in Ireland (2019-2024) sets out a vision for community development, local development, and the voluntary sector. It encourages a cooperative approach between public bodies and the community and voluntary sector. Local development promotes area-based, integrated, community-led interventions based on participative democracy to address long-term unemployment, economic marginalisation, and social exclusion. It recognises the inter-dependence of economic, social, and cultural issues in working for sustainable and inclusive growth and social cohesion.

The RSES also recognises that physical design of settlements has profound effects on the way we live, affecting our mobility and levels of physical activity. It highlights the vital role of quality of life in good place-making and social inclusion. It includes quality of life to build and safeguard inclusive communities and places as a central ambition and social principles based on social capital, needs-based access to services and amenities, equity, transparency, democracy and the development of a collective approach to sustainable living in sustainable communities.

Wexford County Development Plan, 2022-2028, commits to improving the quality of the County’s towns and villages and contains objectives to ensure that they are attractive and functional places where people want to live, work, access services and raise their families. In this regard, the Plan acknowledges that the creation of successful places is a shared activity between local authorities, infrastructure providers, designers, businesses and local communities. The Plan also acknowledges that successful places share common social, economic, and physical factors.

The Wexford County Development Plan, 2022 - 2028, strategy is to create attractive, healthy, safe and efficient places through its own interventions and ensuring that all future developments achieve the highest standards in design and layout.



3.3.3 Consultation on a loved town centre

The challenges and opportunities for a Loved Town Centre were considered in public consultation.

A summary of these is set out in the table below.

CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Enniscorthy is underperforming as a cultural and tourist destination. Town Centre presentation to the visitor is sub-optimal and there is a lot of upper floor vacancy.	Town ambassadors promoting Enniscorthy, guiding visitors and telling the rich historical and cultural story of the Town.
The rich and unique heritage assets and history of Enniscorthy are not clearly apparent. Primary cultural attractions are underdeveloped and poorly connected with limited supporting infrastructure.	Network Enniscorthy Castle, the 1798 Centre and the Presentation Centre, heritage buildings and Vinegar Hill.
Templeshannon has elevated levels of vacancy and underutilisation which badly affects the image of the place and requires urgent regeneration.	Pugin Quarter with a locus at the Cathedral.
Pedestrian movement and street life is severely compromised by traffic volumes and lack of public space, which is overwhelmingly dedicated to vehicles.	Re-making and re-imagining Market Square.
The evening, night and weekend time economy is limited.	Protect and support heritage buildings, streetscapes and implement architectural conservation areas.
Visually unappealing streetscapes including poor building maintenance and ugly 'wirescapes' in the historic Town Centre.	Improve town aesthetics by engaging local artists to innovate imaging of the Town.
Ugly, wood palisades and hoardings looking unkempt and communicate a negative image of the Town.	Creating a 'blueway' along the River Slaney between Enniscorthy and Wexford Town.
	Make the Town Centre more colourful.



3.3.2 Strategies for a loved town centre

The central aim and objective of the Strategy

It will be important to translate the passion held by the community for the Town Centre into real and tangible outcomes. This component of the ETCFP focuses on the elements of culture, urban heritage and leisure, and the enjoyment of public space as the essence of the cultural and social life of the Town. A Loved Town Centre will mean placing the wider community at the centre of the decision-making and decisions affecting the Town Centre.

The Strategy will help to transform the image of the Town Centre, with a network of improved, safe and attractive streets and spaces hosting a new social and cultural life for Enniscorthy. This will be combined with consolidated urban heritage and culture assets. Developing the cultural life of the town and its heritage and leisure assets will have a powerful impact on a Thriving Town Centre, with all of its benefits for the development of tourism and the evening and night-time economy.

Urban culture

Culture is a larger concept about local customs and beliefs, art, way of life and the social organisation of a place and a community. Culture is seen as a powerful urban regeneration tool with strong benefits for the local economy. The importance of cultural activities, and in particular the arts is recognised and a part of urban policy for many years. It is seen as a tool for attracting inward investment and economic development.

Understanding and developing the unique culture of the Town is a first step in ensuring that the Town is cherished and loved. The Town Centre is the focus and the principal location of the Town's cultural assets, including The Castle, The Atheneum, the Town Centre Churches, The Presentation Centre, Vinegar Hill and 1798 Centre and the Library. The cultural life of a successful Town Centre is not confined to established cultural attractions. It also includes the rich social life and cultural activities accommodated by cherished public spaces. Enniscorthy currently lacks the focal space and the network of public spaces for a thriving cultural life, and it must as a priority establish a focal space for culture within a coherent network.

LO1 - To develop the existing cultural life and assets of the Town Centre, within a connected network of public spaces.

Urban heritage - built and natural

Urban heritage includes both built and natural elements. The built heritage includes a wide variety of elements including archaeological vestiges, historic streets, blocks and plot patterns, historic building groups and buildings (many of which are protected structures), typical vernacular architecture, historic gardens, walls, street paving and furniture. Urban heritage can also be extended to include social practices, rituals, and festive events, among other things. It can also be seen as a special type of cultural property that is associated with neighbourhoods and urban centres. The natural heritage of the Town Centre includes the topography and the river, the landscape of open spaces and their connections and elements such as trees and tree groups. There are also small spaces which are currently in an unmanaged or 'wild' state, which play an important role in the local biodiversity.

LO2 - To protect and conserve built and natural heritage assets and places in the Town Centre.



Tourism

Tourism is a broad concept and an increasingly important part of the economy of successful town centres. It encompasses a range of activities including culture, recreation, relaxation and entertainment. As a sector it is reliant on attractions (of a broad variety) and destinations and the supporting businesses and services. The Thriving Town Centre strategy focuses on the need for a diversity of uses and activities in the Town Centre and acknowledges the importance of developing hospitality, leisure, entertainment and the evening and night-time economy in supporting tourism. The consultation indicated that Enniscorthy's tourism sector is established but small, under-developed and not fully exploited. It is currently based on the notable and long-established cultural attractions of The Castle, the Slaney River and Vinegar Hill (and the associated but relatively remote National 1798 Rebellion Centre). Tourism numbers are considered to be relatively low, having regard to the current and potential tourism offer. While Vinegar Hill is outside of the Town Centre area, it is part of the Town's remarkable heritage. It is, however, poorly linked to the centre and other potential tourist attractions. This should be addressed by building a well-connected network of primary and secondary attractions within a coherent network of public spaces and supporting activities.

LO3 - To develop tourism in the Town Centre within a larger, connected tourism offer for the Town, County and the South-East.

Cultural and leisure assets

Cultural and leisure activities promote social and community interaction and help to make town centres attractive and vibrant. Many of these activities are dependent on cultural and leisure assets. It is important that the Town Centre's endowment of cultural and leisure assets is protected and enhanced to support regeneration. It will be important to build on these assets as regeneration of the Town Centre progresses. Notably, many of the younger people in the consultation for the ETCFP identified the lack of a cinema, a skate park and a bowling alley as a significant cultural deficiency.

LO4 - To protect and enhance cultural activities and assets as the regeneration of the Town Centre progresses.

A coherent network of quality streets and spaces

An attractive, safe and connected network of public spaces is a prerequisite for successful Town Centre regeneration. Consultation and the studies for the ETCFP highlighted the poor network and quality of public spaces in Enniscorthy Town Centre. There was also a clear consensus around the need to address the traffic congested nature of the Town Centre streets and spaces, the very limited amount of pedestrianised and pedestrian-priority spaces, and the generally poor provision for active travel such as walking, cycling and public transport.

The survey for the ETCFP also highlighted a number of concerns about the streetscape (character and quality of streets), which often presented poor building condition and maintenance, poor quality footpaths, limited or poor-quality street furniture and cluttering of signs and wirescape. Improving the quality of public spaces will need to be done on a phased basis and as part of a coherent network. It will also need to progress in tandem with measures for active travel for Enniscorthy and other measures to address building vacancy and underuse.

LO5 – To deliver high quality public streets and spaces within a coherent and connected network.

Safety

Safety and the feeling of safety (particularly for more vulnerable groups) on public streets and spaces is an essential condition for a living and thriving Town Centre. Public consultation for ETCFP specifically highlighted the need to address anti-social behaviours in areas of the Town Centre at night. Safety can be addressed in many ways such as activating vacant housing and 'bringing eyes back onto the street', by redesigning and retrofitting affected spaces, by providing better lighting and sightlines, and, as a very last resort, formal surveillance. In most instances liaison between community interests and the relevant authorities brings about a lasting solution to safety concerns.

LO6 – To ensure that the Town Centre is a place where all groups feel safe at all times.

Figure 24: Loved spatial strategy



3.4 A Connected Town Centre



3.4.1 A sustainable town needs a connected town centre

The Town Centre must be a place that is accessible to all and supports the life of the Town. For so many years towns in Ireland have developed and invested with the car in mind resulting in longer-term car-dependency. Car-based development has come with very significant impacts for town centres, promoting suburbanisation and causing town centre traffic congestion. Congestion has had an immense impact on the environment of town centres, dominating scarce urban space, polluting air, and making streets and spaces unattractive for living and unsafe for children and older people. Enniscorthy has followed the same pattern of development like so many other medium-sized towns it will now have to gradually free itself from this dependency and move towards more sustainable mobility (active travel and public transport). This will require a shift from the car to the more sustainable modes of walking, cycling and public transport. It will also require a new perception around local transport and multi-modal solutions.

Traffic dominance has also been identified in the public consultation and survey work as a major cause of the perceived and very real disconnections, particularly for pedestrians and cyclist in the Town Centre. This is most acute in the isolation of Templeshannon and The Shannon from the rest of the Town Centre, and the impact of through-traffic on the 'spine' of the Town Centre at Main Street/Market Square Castle Hill and Abbey Square is clearly evident. The public consultation confirmed the very negative effect on the use and enjoyment of public spaces and the urban experience for residents and visitors. The survey for the ETCFP also highlighted the negative impact of traffic dominance on businesses and homes, and its association with high levels of vacancy.

The volume of traffic in the Town Centre is promoted by existing road configurations, poor traffic management, facilitation of through-traffic crossing the Slaney accessing destinations in the environs on either side of the River and larger car parks and on-street car parking in the Town Centre. The dominance of the vehicle and vehicle infrastructure, including large volumes of stationary and free-flowing cars and lorries, large open areas of surface car parking in prominent

gateway locations, on-street, car parking, safety barriers and signage, seriously impact on the visual quality of the Town Centre and severely detract from its unique character and urban heritage.

3.4.2 Policy and plans for a connected town centre

The National Planning Framework (NPF) recognises the need for significant investment in sustainable mobility (active travel and public transport) networks to secure NPF population growth targets. The NDP represents a step-change in the approach towards funding sustainable mobility in Ireland. National Policy Objectives (NPO 27 and 64) support public transport, walking and cycling as more sustainable modes of transport and promote urban development along existing public transport corridors.

The National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022) sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport journeys to help Ireland meet its climate action obligations. It is accompanied by an action plan to 2025 which contains actions to improve and expand sustainable mobility options across the country by providing safe, green, accessible, and efficient alternatives to car journeys.

The Sustainability Policy Action Plan (2022-2025) contains goals and related actions that includes expanding the availability of sustainable mobility in regional and rural areas. The Plan recognises the need to develop a robust cycle network in every town. It also has a goal to expand the greenway network and establishing linkages with towns and villages aligned with the strategic national cycle network.

The Regional Transport Strategy provides for Local Transport Plans (LTPs) to be prepared by Local Authorities to focus on Key Towns based on the Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) guidance produced by NTA (National Transport Authority) and TII (Transport Infrastructure Ireland). LTPs will include priorities for each settlement in terms of public transport infrastructure and services, cycle investment, improvements to the pedestrian environment and road enhancements. The policies, objectives and measures which emerge from the LTPs will be incorporated into the relevant statutory land use plans for urban areas.

The RSES (Southern Regional Assembly) promotes the concept of the '10-minute' city and town. The baseline is to understand how our towns and city neighbourhoods work in terms of compact and permeable urban form and to provide high quality links to public transport and local services. The Southern Regional Assembly has progressed a framework for the '10-minute town concept', and has commissioned a study to interrogate the implementation of the concept in 3 towns in the Southern Region in Carlow, Ennis and Tralee. This may provide an appropriate model for Enniscorthy.

The Town Centre First Policy Approach recognises that the implementation of a mobility and place-based transport model can have significant benefits for urban regeneration. It also advises that expanding sustainable mobility options in town centres to provide meaningful alternatives to everyday private car journeys is necessary to reduce transport emissions.

Wexford County Development Plan, 2022 - 2028, provides the policy basis for a transition to sustainable mobility in the County, based on the priority for active travel and public transport. The County Development Plan commits to reducing travel demand, reducing carbon in local transport and the preparation of Local Transport Plans, to support the more detailed statutory Local Area Plans for the Key County Towns, including Enniscorthy.



3.4.3 Consultation on a connected town centre

The challenges and opportunities for a connecting Town Centre were considered in the public consultation. A summary of these is set out in the table below.

CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Car and HGV dominated urban environment with poor pedestrian priority and connectivity.	People-focused town centre rather than a car-focused Town Centre.
Poor intra-Town Centre connectivity and poor interconnectivity between the Town Centre and the suburban environs.	Pedestrian bridge over the River Slaney between Templeshannon (east side of the Slaney) and the commercial town core in the Market Square area (west side of Slaney).
No public transport options within / to access the Town Centre.	Public transport interchange for rail, bus and taxis.
Limited and ineffective cycle infrastructure.	Strategic car parking designations providing access to the Town Centre on the periphery requiring short trip pedestrian access to business and services.
Bring people back into the Town Centre.	All HGV's to be diverted to the by-pass. Improve public realm around the train station.

3.4.4 Strategies for a connected town centre

The central aim and objective of the Strategy A Town Centre connected by sustainable mobility is a prerequisite to the regeneration of the Town Centre. A decisive move towards sustainable mobility, with priority for pedestrians and cyclists and public transport is now required to meet national, regional and county transport and planning policies and objectives.

The Town Centre is uniquely positioned to deliver on the concept of the compact, diverse and rich '10-minute town' where most daily requirements are within a short walk, cycle and/or by public transport, and where the need to travel by car is obviated or radically reduced. Reducing vehicular traffic and eliminating traffic dominance in the Town Centre will have immense benefits in terms of reducing carbon emissions, providing for cleaner air, allowing more space for living, businesses, and social and cultural life in Town Centre streets and spaces.

Active Travel

Initial studies for active travel are underway to inform the preparation of a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Enniscorthy. Ultimately, the LTP will inform the upcoming, overarching, statutory Local Area Plan for Enniscorthy. While much survey work is still needed to underpin the LTP, it will embrace active travel and elimination of traffic dominance as a central element of sustainable mobility for Enniscorthy. It will also establish sustainable transport options within the larger context of transport in Enniscorthy (notably the strategic bypass of the town). While the LTP will need to consider active travel for the Town as a whole, it will need to acknowledge its critical role in the regeneration of the Town Centre.

CT1 - To transition to active travel and to eliminate traffic dominance in the Town Centre as a critical condition for regeneration.

Sustainable public transport

Although the objective of carbon neutrality in the transport sector by 2050 will be supported by technological solutions, it will be largely achieved by a transition away from car-dependency to active travel and public transport. It is evident that many car trips affecting the Town Centre as through-traffic (particularly cross-town trips) are associated with the spatial dislocation of housing from local services, community and health services, and schools. Eliminating these unsustainable traffic patterns in the Town Centre will be a difficult task. However, it can be done with new and targeted local public transport services, allied with active travel measures. These measures will also have the added benefit of vastly improving connections between the Town Centre and the rest of the Town.

CT2 - To develop new and targeted local public transport services to strengthen connections to the Town Centre, and to eliminate unsustainable through traffic.

Pedestrian priority

The ‘10-minute town’ concept is motivated by the goal to meet most daily requirements within a short walk. The public consultation and survey confirmed that the Town Centre is characterised by very small areas dedicated to pedestrians, narrow footpaths, on-street car parking and traffic-dominance. This has had very negative impact on Town Centre living, businesses, and social and cultural life. Steady progress will need to be made to rapidly increase the amount and quality of space allocated to pedestrians. Pedestrian priority will need to be based on accessibility for all, including wider and quality paved footpaths, and dedicated pedestrian crossings informed by pedestrian needs.

CT3 – To prioritise pedestrian movement in the Town Centre as part of a larger transition to sustainable mobility.

Car Parking

Town Centre car parking, in dedicated car parks and on-street, has a big impact on traffic volumes and congestion. The Town Centre is well-served by larger dedicated car parking outside of the immediate core. While the overall provision and access to dedicated car parks will be considered in the larger context of the Town Centre and the Town in the LTP, re-evaluation of car parking provision is likely to be required in the short to medium term to accommodate a phased transition to sustainable mobility.

Car parks will likely remain accessible after essential, short-term traffic management measures. In contrast, on-street car parking is pervasive in the Town Centre, and in some cases provided at the expense of safe and comfortable footpaths. Much of the on-street car parking in the Town Centre provides little or no benefit to priority parking needs of the Town Centre. In terms of regeneration the priority is to provide for the essential needs of residents and businesses, but to eliminate on-street car parking that conflicts with the use, enjoyment and visual appeal of public streets and spaces.

CT4 – To carefully manage the quantum and access to dedicated car parking areas and to eliminate all non-essential on-street car parking from the Town Centre.

Connecting landscape

The quantity and quality of landscape elements within a larger landscape is a significant consideration in promoting liveability and connectedness in the Town Centre. Landscape connections can have a very beneficial impact on active travel, providing easy and direct access to amenity, recreation and heritage. It is important that smaller elements of the landscape in the Town Centre are accessible and of the highest quality to support regeneration within the Town Centre. The upcoming LAP should establish a landscape structure which connects the Town Centre landscape with major elements of the Town’s landscape such as the River, The Island, Turret Rock and Vinegar Hill.

CT5 – To provide access to high quality landscape elements in the Town Centre and to ensure that these elements are connected to the larger landscape of the Town.

Sustainable traffic management

Traffic management measures will need to make room for the transition to sustainable mobility as provided by walking, cycling and public transport. Traffic management measures in the Town will also need facilitate the elimination of car dominance and congestion. It is expected that the LTP will provide a basis for phased improvements in traffic management to allow this to happen. It is likely that these measures will also be incorporated into the upcoming LAP.

CT6 - To develop a sustainable traffic management strategy for the Town as part of the upcoming LTP and Local statutory plan, as a measure to eliminate congestion and car-dominance in the Town Centre.



Figure 25: A spatial strategy to support a connected town centre (Short -medium term, with no additional traffic infrastructure)



Figure 26: A spatial strategy to support a connected town centre. (Long term, with new traffic infrastructure)



3.5 An Adaptable Town Centre



3.5.1 A sustainable town needs an adaptable town centre

The Town Centre will need to be adaptable and robust to mitigate and adapt to changing climate and to contribute to the transition to a carbon-neutral economy by 2050. Being adaptable is about being able to sustain the community over the longer-term, over larger changes in society and economy, and within the larger context of climate change. It is also about taking climate action, by mitigating and physically adapting against its effects. The sustainable regeneration of the Town Centre will make a strong contribution to the adaptability of Enniscorthy.

The local topography, urban form and the characteristics of the Slaney mean that parts of the Town Centre are at risk of flooding. Flooding has resulted in severe disruption and significant property damage, with the most recent event occurring in December 2021. Extreme flooding events occurred in Enniscorthy in 1924, 1947, 1965, 2000 and, more recently, in 2015 when the Slaney burst its banks in the Town Centre. Climate change will increase the probability of more extreme and frequent flooding events. Dealing with flood risk will require a comprehensive response to managing the risk, which will include management, recovery and structural approaches. The current, Slaney (Enniscorthy) Drainage Scheme, proposes several integrated measures to prevent flooding in Enniscorthy Town Centre. Surface water management in the Town Centre is provided by a traditional, piped management and treatment systems, and a transition to more sustainable urban drainage systems will be required in the medium term.

The policy objective of Wexford County Council is to de-carbonise Enniscorthy as an exemplar of climate action in the County. The challenge of reduced CO₂ emissions will include a wide range of actions which align closely with sustainable urban regeneration. These include behavioural change, adaptation of the urban form towards more compact

form, decarbonisation of the local economy and business sectors, embedding of sustainable mobility, energy efficiency of buildings, and building adaptation. In practical terms, Enniscorthy will need to take action in all of these areas if it is to meet the ambitious carbon emissions reduction target of 7 percent per annum. The Town Centre can take the lead in achieving this for the Town.

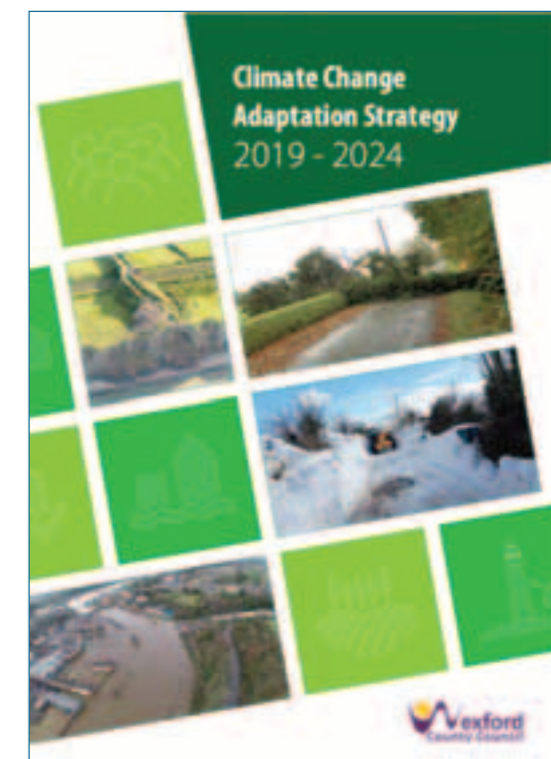
3.5.2 Policy and plans for an adaptable town centre

Ireland's first statutory National Adaptation Framework (NAF) was published in January 2018 by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment. The NAF sets out the national strategy to reduce the vulnerability of the Country to the negative effects of climate change and to avail of positive impacts. The realisation of a sustainable future will be achieved inter alia through sustainable land management and resource efficiency (adapting the principles of the circular economy to enable more sustainable planning and land use management of our natural resources and assets) achieving a low carbon economy (the need to accelerate action on climate change) and by promoting renewable energy (transition to a low carbon energy future).

The Climate Action Plan, 2021 provides a pathway to net zero emissions by 2050 and provides a detailed plan for taking decisive action to achieve a 51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Furthermore, the National Resilience and Recovery Plan, 2021, commits to prioritising de-carbonisation projects such as retrofitting, ecosystem resilience and regeneration, climate mitigation and adaptation. The RSES prioritises climate actions that will achieve decarbonisation of transport, energy efficiency and to embed the circular economy. It is an objective to support measures to build resilience to climate change throughout the region to address impact reduction, adaptive capacity, awareness raising, providing for nature-based solutions and emergency planning.

Wexford County Climate Adaptation Strategy (2019 - 2024) was adopted in September 2019. Its purpose is to ensure a proper comprehension of the key risks and vulnerabilities of climate change, to bring forward the implementation of climate resilient actions in a planned and proactive manner, to ensure that climate adaptation considerations are mainstreamed into all plans and policies and integrated into all operations and functions of the Council. The strategy is developed around the following key themes: local adaptation, governance, and business operations; infrastructure and the built environment; land use and development; drainage and flood risk; natural resources and cultural infrastructure; and community health and well-being.

The Town Centre First Policy Approach places renewed focus on the sustainable and adaptive reuse of existing assets and increasing the energy efficiency of individual buildings, including the thermal upgrading of the historic building stock. Given the concentration of historic assets and brown field sites in the Town Centre, there is the potential for longer-term sustainable investment in these existing assets, which will deliver real and lasting social and economic benefits.



3.5.3 Consultation on an adaptable town centre

The challenges and opportunities for an Adaptable Town Centre were considered in the public consultation. A summary of these is set out in the table below.

CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Recurring flood events that have inundated Enniscorthy Town centre in 1924, 1947, 1965, 2000 and 2015.	Redevelopment of key brownfield sites.
There is an elevated level of building vacancy and pockets of dereliction in the Town Centre (notably Murphy Floods site).	Reuse of existing vacant floors and buildings.
Active Travel in Enniscorthy is restricted by poor pedestrian and cycle links to the Town Centre and car dominance in the Town Centre.	Multi-use of public spaces in the Town Centre, for example, use of existing spaces for festivals, public gatherings.
Town Centre has degenerated in recent years.	Ground floors of commercial premises could be reconfigured to allow direct access from the street to upper floors.
No joined up thinking or integrated approach to town regeneration development.	Pedestrianisation of the Town Centre.
	Implementing the Flood Relief Scheme.
	Promote positive change and quality of life by being open to innovative ideas and new developments.

3.5.4 Strategies for an adaptable town centre

The central aim and objective of the Strategy

A core challenge of all places is taking climate action through measures for adaptation and mitigation, while making progress towards carbon neutrality. Town centres through the process of regeneration have a key role to play in shaping the transition towards more sustainable communities.

Town centres are uniquely positioned to reduce the need for new resources, such as buildings and infrastructure, and offer the possibility of extensive reuse and refurbishment. Town centres are compact and diverse in terms of blocks, plots and buildings. They can accommodate rapidly changing economic and market conditions. Regenerated Town Centres ensure that flows such as local movement and energy are minimised. Regenerated Town Centres can also promote and host sustainable consumption, production and behaviour. They are the ideal focus for the essential and still-emerging circular economy.

Circular Economy

The decarbonisation of Enniscorthy will require behavioural change to ensure that sustainable patterns of consumption and production are adopted in the economy of the Town. The Whole-of-Government, Circular Economy Strategy (2022-2023) is a policy to systemically change the Irish economy from a linear to a circular economy. The circular economy will play a key role in reducing the carbon footprint of economic and other sectors, as part of commitment to a carbon-neutral society. This is very much about change at local level too, and town centres have a huge role to play. The circular economy is about minimising waste and resource use and extracting the maximum value from these through remanufacture and repair to 'as new' and transformation of an existing product into a new product. While there are numerous dimensions to the circular economy, one potential area for the Town Centre would be a circular economy for sustainable mobility, which could involve such things as; the remanufacture of cycles, street furniture, such as signage, benches and lighting, the inclusion of recycled material in public space improvements, composting in public open spaces and areas of biodiversity.

AT1 – To establish the Town Centre as the focus of the circular economy in Enniscorthy.

Decarbonising transport in Enniscorthy

There are challenging national, regional, and local adaptation and mitigation targets for decarbonisation of transport. The strategy for a 'Connected Town Centre' has already set out the main challenges and opportunities and highlighted the centrality of sustainable Decarbonising transport in Enniscorthy. There are challenging national, regional, and local adaptation and mitigation targets for decarbonisation of transport. The strategy for a 'Connected Town Centre' has already set out the main challenges and opportunities and highlighted the centrality of sustainable

AT2 – To decarbonise transport in the Town Centre, through sustainable mobility measures and support for sustainable transport technologies.

Adaptation of the existing building stock and public places

The retrofitting of the building stock to achieve energy efficiency is a central action in Government policy on climate action. There is an opportunity for Enniscorthy to build on existing initiatives in this area to achieve the goal of SMART Town status including the promotion of the Enniscorthy Technology Park for smart business, the presence of the National Near Zero (NNZO) building training centre, and a proposed UN Centre of Excellence on High Performance Buildings. Adaptable solutions such as retrofitting of traditional and modern buildings, adaptation and reuse of existing buildings preference to new build, using energy efficient public lighting and facilities on streets and public spaces will make the Town Centre more resilient to climate change and promote the SMART status of the Town Centre.

AT3 – To realise a more resilient and energy efficient Town Centre through the reuse, retrofit and adaptation of buildings and public spaces.

Green infrastructure, sustainable surface water management and flood risk management

Enniscorthy has been the subject of several damaging flood events. The frequency of flood events and their magnitude is expected to increase with climate change. SUDS is a significant flood mitigation measure. Furthermore, water management and conservation will become increasingly important in sustainable resource management. A larger, multi-purpose green infrastructure, which provides for sustainable surface water management (or sustainable urban drainage systems) will assist in managing flood risk and reduce dependence on structural drainage and flood risk management measures. It could also provide accessibility to passive and active recreational open space to further well-being goals. These measures will need to be incorporated into the upcoming LAP. Areas at risk of flooding in the Town Centre will need to be protected through a combination of structural and non-structural measures for buildings, streets and public spaces.

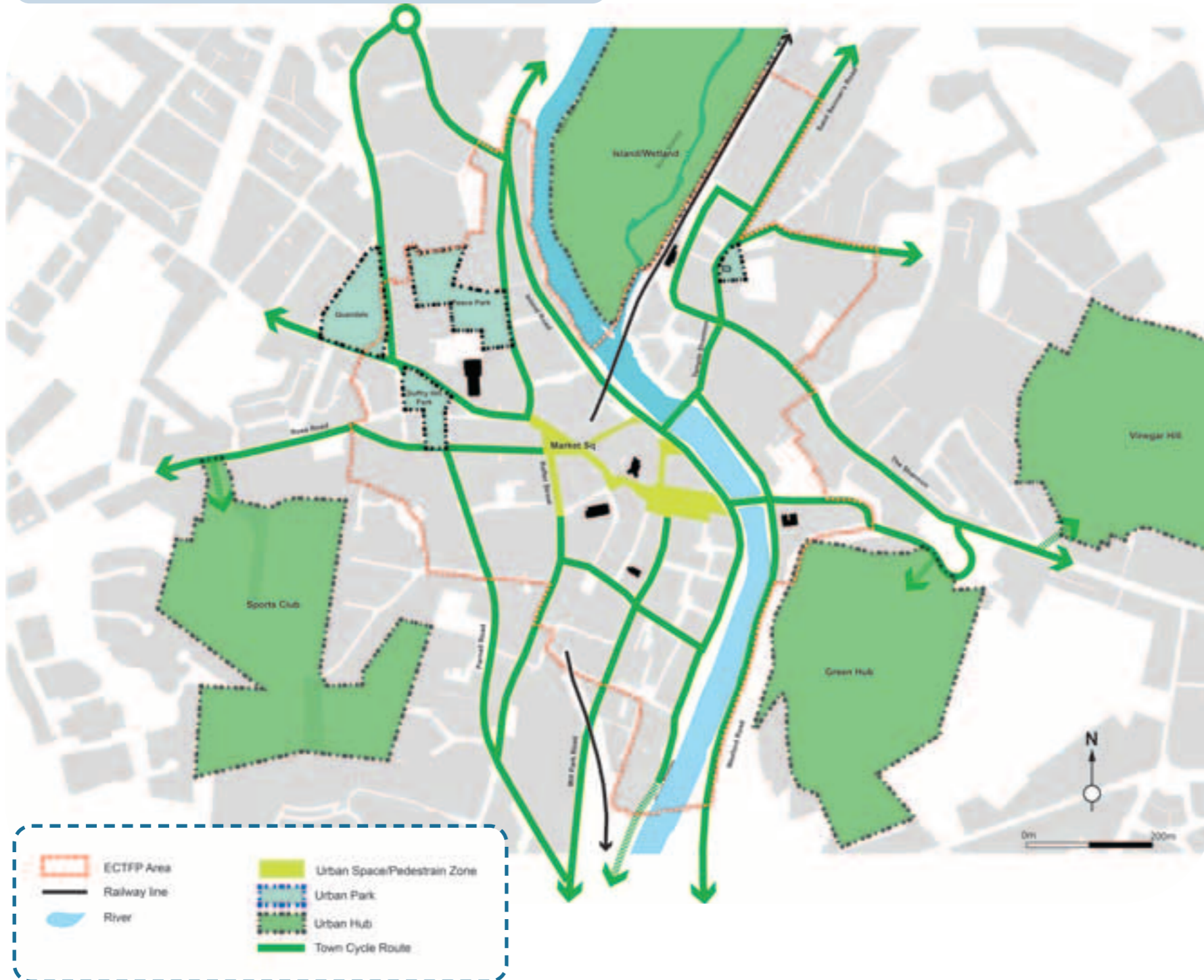
AT4 – To support regeneration of the Town Centre through planning of an integrated green infrastructure within which surface and flood risk can be sustainably managed.

Sustainable energy

In addition to energy efficiency measures, new local sources for sustainable energy will support the regeneration and decarbonisation of the Town Centre. Advances have been made in micro-generation of electricity through small scale solar and wind technologies and these could assist homeowners, business owners, communities in reducing their energy needs, costs and greenhouse gas emissions. District Heating (DH) technology could also make use of waste energy from a variety of sources in the Town Centre to heat nearby homes and businesses. Low-carbon district heating networks reduce carbon emissions and can help in meeting County climate action targets.

AT5 – To investigate the potential of sustainable energy technologies and networks in supporting the regeneration and decarbonisation of the Town Centre.

Figure 27: Adaptable spatial strategy





4 . U R B A N R E G E N E R A T I O N F R A M E W O R K A N D P A C K A G E S

4.1 Introduction

The vision and principles for regeneration of Enniscorthy Town Centre underpin the five regeneration strategies. The regeneration strategies contain a variety of projects and actions, many of which include specific projects in the private domain and in public space. These projects will require a substantial investment of resources, which will need to be placed clearly within a coherent structure or framework for lasting change in the physical structure and fabric of the Town Centre.

The urban regeneration framework comprises a set of key projects across the Town Centre, which have the potential to act as catalysts for social, economic and physical regeneration. The framework is longer-term and indicative, and it shows how short, medium and longer-term projects will ultimately knit together.

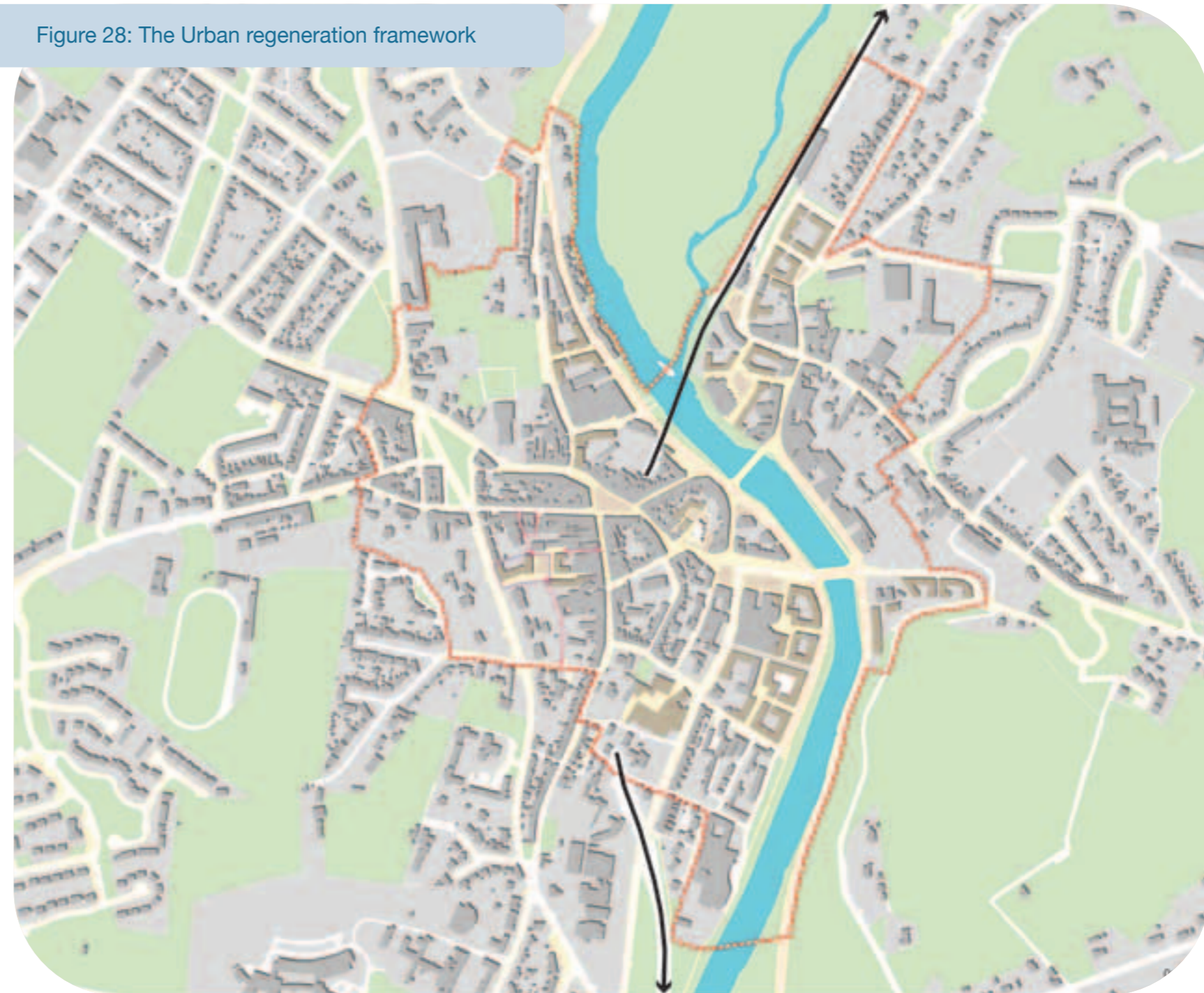
This section also identifies priority regeneration projects for the Town Centre. These are grouped into packages, which combine projects and actions in both the private domain and public space, to ensure that investment is targeted, multi-dimensional, integrated and impactful.

4.2 Urban regeneration framework

The Urban Regeneration Framework is a coherent structure within which urban regeneration projects relating to the private domain (typically lands in different types of ownership that are suitable for redevelopment, refurbishment or development) and public space (including all space intended for movement, public access or use) can be placed within a longer-term context.

The Framework shows that an incremental approach to improving the fabric of the Town Centre is eminently achievable. The Framework is indicative in that it shows the general location and scope of projects and their linkages to each other. The Framework also shows a preliminary approach to layout and design, but this is by way of a preliminary and broad concept only. Each element of the Framework will be subject to further concept and detailed design, before being advanced as a regeneration project.

Figure 28: The Urban regeneration framework



The Framework assists in the spatial and locational prioritisation of key regeneration projects and the combination of projects in the private domain and public spaces as independent but integrated packages. These packages do not preclude the development of subsequent packages that may meet or exceed the criteria for establishing priority.

4.3 Urban regeneration projects and priorities

A key element of the Urban Regeneration Framework is the identification of projects, which have the potential to act as catalysts for social, economic and physical regeneration. These projects can be loosely defined as being:

- **Redevelopment and refurbishment of sites and buildings; and**
- **Restructuring and improvement of public spaces.**

In broad terms, redevelopment projects relate to infill and backland sites and lands which are undeveloped, unused, underused, obsolete, or derelict and in need of redevelopment. Refurbishment projects can vary in size and scale and relate to individual buildings or building groups which are generally vacant, underused, poorly used and/or require upgrade and active reuse. Redevelopment and refurbishment projects can relate to land and buildings in public or private ownership, or a combination of both. Redevelopment and refurbishment can also provide for new or different uses, or mixed use.

In broad terms, projects for the restructuring and improvement of public spaces relate to lands in public ownership. These include footpaths, streets (carriageways), grassed areas, amenity spaces, open spaces, and any ‘left-over’ spaces. These projects can also target land which is zoned or intended for public access or use.

Urban regeneration is most effective where projects and actions are integrated and multi-dimensional. For this reason, priority projects in public space and the private domain are grouped as packages. This will ensure that public and private investment is combined and that it is optimised (i.e. targeted, deliverable and impactful).

While the precise impact of an individual project or a package on town centre regeneration is difficult to establish, their alignment with the vision and strategies and framework of the ETCFP can be clearly shown. Further, initial priority packages can be established by reference to a set of criteria, including:

- **Contribution to the vision, principles, strategies and framework of the ETCFP;**
- **Alignment with statutory policy and plans – notably the County Development Plan and the Local Area Plan;**
- **Integrated nature with multiple benefits – delivering social, economic and physical sustainable urban regeneration outcomes;**
- **Transformative impact on the receiving environment – being of adequate scale and impact to substantially improve the image and character, function and use mix, urban form and street life of the Town Centre;**
- **Short to medium-term delivery potential – with particular reference to ownership, investment, design, construction and management;**
- **Medium to longer-term viability; and**
- **Collaboration and partnership – in aspects such as planning, funding, development, use and management.**

4.4 Priority regeneration packages

On the basis of the above criteria and having regard to the extensive consultation process, the following three packages are considered as priorities for the urban regeneration of the Town Centre:

- **Package One: The Civic Spine**
- **Package Two: The Castle Heritage Quarter**
- **Package Three: Templeshannon Hub and Link**

These packages are considered deliverable on a phased or concurrent basis with the flexibility to allow for overlap. It should also be noted that priorities can and may change over time, within a changing urban, policy and funding context. These changes can be considered against the criteria set out for prioritisation.

Figure 29: Main priority generation packages



Figure 30: Proposed priority package 1



4.4.1 Package One: The Civic Spine

PACKAGE

One

ETCFP Strategy

LOCATION

Main Street - Market Square - Castle Hill

Contributes to strategy elements TV 1-5; LV1,4,5; L01, 3-6; CT1,3,4; AT2,5;

Outline

This is an integrated regeneration investment package involving different stakeholders in partnership to deliver redevelopment, refurbishment and improvement of urban space. It will provide the activities and the spaces needed to support a diverse and vibrant focus for the social, business and cultural life of the town.

This package will be the critical, early catalyst to the rejuvenation of the function, fabric and image of the Town Centre. The package supports the vision and spatial strategies of the ECTFP. The package will provide a key role in supporting the strategy for a thriving Town Centre by combining investment in both public and redevelopment and refurbishment. The improvements to the public realm will also play an important role in securing a more sustainably connected and accessible Town Centre. The improved public spaces will also support the development of the culture and heritage of the Town Centre, thus contributing to the strategy for a loved Town Centre.

The package is also a central element of the urban regeneration framework, from which later packages and projects can extend. Consultation for the ECTFP highlighted the importance of the civic spine to the people of Enniscorthy and the urgency for action in its regeneration.

Public space improvement

Access and movement

- Improvement of all public spaces in the package, initially centred on Market Square and extending to Main Street, Castle Street and Castle Hill, in tandem with active travel measures for the Town Centre.
- Phased pedestrianisation and pedestrian prioritisation of all spaces in line with incremental, active travel traffic management measures for the Town Centre, such as one-way traffic management, closure of sections to through-traffic, time-based controls etc.
- Phased pedestrianisation of Market Square, with restriction and ultimately elimination of all through traffic.
- Expansion of footpaths to provide useable urban space and traffic control measures on Main Street. Left turn only exiting to Irish Street at junction with Market Square. One-way movement at Irish Street to Barrack Street junction (Dunnes). Improvement of public space to Island Road.
- Phased pedestrianisation of Castle Hill, with restriction and ultimately elimination of all through traffic from Market Square and Abbey Square.
- Appropriate access and parking for those with disabilities.



Layout and design

- Coherent approach to allocation, layout, design and materials of all urban space between building frontages.
- Design for social and business life including walking, sitting, social gatherings of different types and sizes, public performances and entertainment and spill-out of ground floor businesses.
- Design for All with physical adaptability and flexibility of movement and use.
- Flexible sloping floor plane minimising stepped, level changes.
- Limiting fixed elements, such as street furniture and landscape elements in gathering and social spaces.
- New street furniture and lighting to be prioritised at the edges of spaces.
- High quality, durable materials, preferably vernacular and locally-sourced, to include reused and recovered material.
- New public art (by commission).
- Potential for urban heritage locational and interpretative signage, as part of a larger strategy for the Town and County.
- Rationalisation of all over-ground and underground services and infrastructure. Undergrounding of all services and utilities in consultation with service providers.
- Investigation of potential for a small district heating loop, connecting waste heat sources and potential users.

Redevelopment and refurbishment

Redevelopment (former Murphy Flood site)

- Mixed use, commercial development, with active ground floors to all frontages. Inclusion of a significant community and civic use. Potential to provide a centre for voluntary and community groups and a family resource centre. Potential for upper floor residential use, to provide new homes, and provide passive supervision of public space.
- Appropriate urban grain of development, with appropriate building massing and articulation.
- Ground floor stepped to closely match surrounding street gradients.
- Building height to reflect town centre context.

Refurbishment

- Establish a vacancy task force as part of the Town Team, with support of the professional services of Wexford County Council.
- Update of the building vacancy survey required to establish the impact of the pandemic on vacancy on the civic spine.
- Target vacant ground floors in collaboration with stakeholders and the business community, with a focus on new areas of business activity, support for heritage and cultural uses and the evening economy.
- Target vacant upper floors in collaboration with stakeholders and the business community. Identification of a pilot Living Over The Shop (LOTS) project.
- Promote and investigate supports for further trade and shopfront and façade repairs and refurbishments.

4.4.2 The Castle Heritage Quarter

PACKAGE	LOCATION
Two ETCFP Strategy	The Castle Heritage Quarter Contributes to strategy elements TV 1-4; LV5; L01-6; CT1,3; AT3,5;

Outline

The Quarter will provide a focal point for the rich heritage of the Town. It will draw on the diversity of urban heritage in this important urban block, including Enniscorthy Castle, the Atheneum and the rich fabric of street buildings. Combined these can provide the sort of scale and uniqueness needed to underpin the wider heritage offer in Enniscorthy. The rich fabric of street buildings in the Quarter has the potential to expand its current offer of supporting uses, such as merchandise and crafts, food, drink and entertainment. The Quarter will be the focal attraction and orientation space for tourism in Enniscorthy. It will require the involvement of different stakeholders in partnership to deliver redevelopment, refurbishment and improvement of urban space.

This package will be an important catalyst to the rejuvenation of the function, fabric and image of the Town Centre and Enniscorthy. The package supports the vision and spatial strategies of the ECTFP. Most critically it is likely to make the single, most important contribution to the strategies for a thriving and a loved Town Centre.

The package is also a central element of the urban regeneration framework, from which later packages and projects will extend. Consultation for the ECTFP, highlighted the importance of the Castle and the surrounding streets to the people of Enniscorthy and the importance of action in their regeneration.

Public space improvement

Access and movement

- Improvement of all public spaces surrounding the Heritage Quarter block in the package, in conjunction with Packages One and Three.
- Phased pedestrianisation and pedestrian prioritisation of all spaces in line with incremental, active travel traffic management measures for the Town Centre, such as one-way traffic management, closure of sections to through-traffic, time-based controls etc.
- Phased pedestrianisation of Castle Hill in conjunction with Package One, with restriction and potential elimination of through traffic. Potential extension of pedestrianisation to Abbey Square with later traffic management measures and infrastructure.
- Upgrade of Slaney Street and Slaney Place and Road in conjunction with Package Three: Templeshannon Hub and Link Package.

Figure 31: Proposed priority package 2





Layout and design

- Coherent approach to allocation, layout and design of all urban space between building frontages.
- Design to emphasise the civic and heritage importance of the Castle and the Atheneum.
- Design for All, for physical adaptability and for flexibility of movement and use.
- Flexible sloping floor plane minimising stepped, level changes. Provision of benches and informal resting places in sections of steeper gradient.
- New street furniture and lighting to be prioritised at the edges of spaces.
- High quality, durable materials, preferably vernacular and locally sourced, to include reused and recovered material.
- New public art (by commission).
- Potential for urban heritage locational and interpretative signage, as part of a larger strategy for the Town and County heritage strategies.
- Rationalisation of all overground and underground services and infrastructure. Undergrounding of all services and utilities in consultation with service providers.
- Investigation of potential for a small district heating loop, connecting waste heat sources and potential users.

Redevelopment and refurbishment

Redevelopment

- Protection and enhancement of core heritage assets of the block.
- Preparation of a block master plan, underpinned by a detailed heritage and building and archaeological study. Study to identify later building stock which may be removed to provide for redevelopment.
- Potential for new internal courtyard (subject to rationalisation of later building stock) which could provide a linking and focal space for the cultural and heritage activities of the Atheneum and the Castle.
- Maximise views from the courtyard to the Town and wider landscape and screen as appropriate nearby exposed and unsightly structures and buildings.

Refurbishment

- Prepare detailed proposals for the conservation of the Castle.
- Prepare detailed proposals for the conservation and refurbishment of The Atheneum, for potential multi-purpose use.
- Establish a vacancy task force as part of the Town Team, with support of the professional services of Wexford County Council.
- Update of the building vacancy survey on vacancy in the Castle Heritage Quarter.
- Target vacant ground floors in collaboration with stakeholders and the business community, with a focus on new areas of business activity, support for heritage and cultural uses and the evening economy.
- Target vacant upper floors in collaboration with stakeholders and the business community. Identification of a pilot Living Over The Shop (LOTS) project.
- Promote and investigate supports for further, traditional shopfront and façade repairs and refurbishments.

4.4.3 Templeshannon Hub and Link

PACKAGE	LOCATION
Three ETCFP Strategy	Templeshannon Hub and Link Contributes to strategy elements TV 1-5; LV1,3-5; L01-6; CT1-6; AT1-5;

Outline

The Templeshannon Hub and Link package aims to intervene decisively to counter the worrying decline of the heart of Templeshannon and its disconnection from the Town Centre. The package aims to be a catalyst in the restoration of vitality and vibrancy through redevelopment, refurbishment and a radical improvement of public spaces. This decisive intervention will complement the existing mixed-use nature of Templeshannon. It will also explore the potential to develop a substantial leisure and recreation hub to complement the existing Waterfront Pool and Leisure Centre. This area would also be an ideal location for a state of the art, riverside civic playground and skate park.

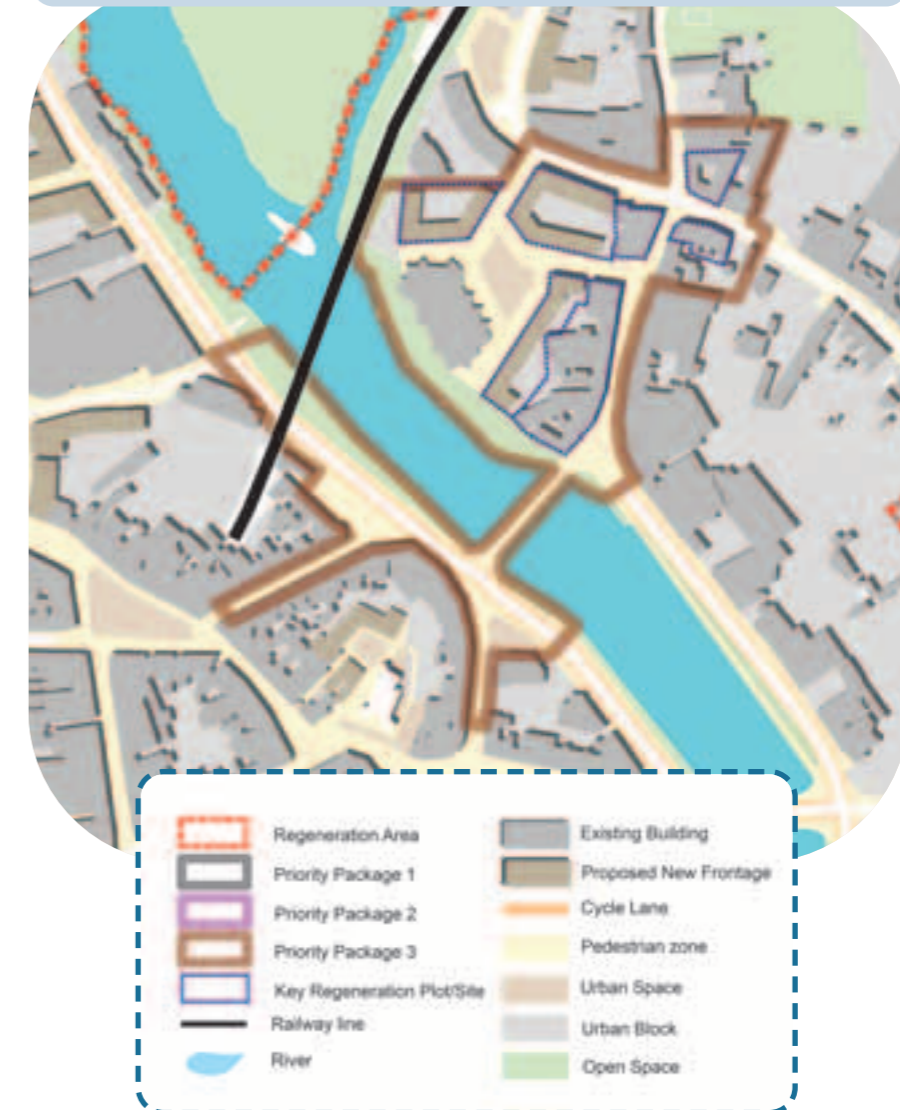
The package aims to rapidly improve walking and cycling connections between Templeshannon and the Town Centre. While uncertainty remains around longer-term traffic management and infrastructure and flood risk management measures particularly at Shannon Quay, this does not preclude essential, early and phased interventions.

The reconnection of Templeshannon and the Town Centre will provide mutual benefits for the Town. On the one hand, Templeshannon will be plugged back into the social and business life of the Town Centre. On the other, the Town Centre will benefit from the integration of the added urban fabric, town centre uses and activities, and the urban heritage of Templeshannon. The regeneration of Templeshannon will also provide a 'stepping-stone' linking the Town Centre with the wider landscape and most-notably, Vinegar Hill.

The package supports the vision and spatial strategies of the ECTFP. The package will provide a key role in supporting the strategy for a thriving Town Centre by combining investment in both public and redevelopment and refurbishment. The improvements to the public realm will also play an important role in securing a more sustainably connected and accessible Town Centre. The improved public spaces will also support the development of the culture and heritage of the Town Centre, thus contributing to the strategy for a loved Town Centre.

The package is also a central element of the urban regeneration framework, from which later packages and projects will extend. Consultation for the ECTFP, highlighted the importance of the Templeshannon to the Town Centre and the Town, and the urgent need to act decisively to reverse its very apparent decline.

Figure 32: Proposed priority package 3



Public space improvement

Access and movement

- Phased pedestrianisation and pedestrian prioritisation of principal urban spaces in the package in line with incremental, active travel traffic management measures for the Town Centre, such as one-way traffic management, closure of sections to through-traffic, time-based controls etc.
- Distinct sections within the public space to be addressed are the focal space centred on the four corners of the junction between Templeshannon and The Shannon (with extensions to St. Senan's Church and Graveyard, to the Railway Station and to Shannon Quay) and the connection with the Town Centre (comprising Enniscorthy Bridge and junctions with Island Road, Slaney Street and Slaney Place).
- The focal space will require phased pedestrian prioritisation with restriction of with potential in the longer term for full pedestrianisation. Traffic management measures, including a one-way system, will be required to facilitate this. In the longer-term pedestrianisation may be feasible subject to more extensive traffic management measures and infrastructure. It may also have a role in any future multi-modal transport solution based on the railway station/heavy rail service.
- The connection with the Town Centre will require radically improved pedestrian and cycle connections and infrastructure. With the overdue restoration of two-way traffic on Shannon Quay, Island Road to The Promenade, and Rafter Street Bridge, Enniscorthy Bridge should be upgraded to a pedestrian and cycle bridge with the removal of vehicular traffic. Pedestrian priority junctions will need to be installed at The Shannon, Slaney Street/Island Road and Slaney Place Island Road. Remaining urban space improvements will be completed in conjunction with packages One and Two.

Layout and design

- Coherent approach to allocation, layout and design of all urban space between building frontages.
- Address pedestrian and cyclist safety at Templeshannon, notably between St. Senan's Church and Graveyard and Shannon Quay.
- Design to emphasise the four-corner junction at Templeshannon/The Shannon, the junction of Templeshannon/Shannon Quay, and the junctions with Island Road.
- Design for All, for physical adaptability and for flexibility of movement and use.
- Flexible sloping floor plane minimising stepped, level changes. Provision of benches and informal resting places in sections of steeper gradient.
- New street furniture and lighting to be prioritised at the edges of spaces.
- High quality, durable materials, preferably vernacular and locally sourced, to include reused and recovered material.
- New public art (by commission).
- Potential for urban heritage locational and interpretative signage, as part of a larger strategy for the Town.
- Rationalisation of all overground and underground services and infrastructure.

Redevelopment and refurbishment

Redevelopment

- Preparation of a detailed study and master plan for the block containing the frontage buildings and backlands of Templeshannon/The Shannon/Waterfront to support its mixed-use redevelopment and expansion of the established leisure and recreation function. Preparation of detailed flood risk management assessment and strategy.
- Potential for completion of closing perimeter blocks to rear of existing townhouses fronting Templeshannon, new frontage to The Shannon/station road and a small internal linking space.
- Building height to respect town centre context, with range of between 3 and 4 storeys on the street frontages.
- Potential for improvement of the landscape and biodiversity of the riverside as part of flood risk management measures.
- Protection of the fine urban grain of frontage buildings to Templeshannon which provide the essential urban setting, and floorspace necessary for a rich mix of uses.

Refurbishment

- Stabilisation of important corner buildings and urban fabric at the four corners of Templeshannon/The Shannon. Preparation of critical reuse strategies and refurbishment proposals.
- Establish a vacancy task force as part of the Town Team, with support of the professional services of Wexford County Council.
- Update of the building vacancy survey required to establish the impact of the pandemic on vacancy on the Templeshannon.
- Target vacant ground floors in collaboration with stakeholders and the business community, with a focus on new areas of business activity, support for heritage and cultural uses and the evening economy.
- Target vacant upper floors in collaboration with stakeholders and the business community. Identification of a pilot Living over the shop (LOTS) project.
- Investigate and promote supports for further shopfront and façade repairs and refurbishments.

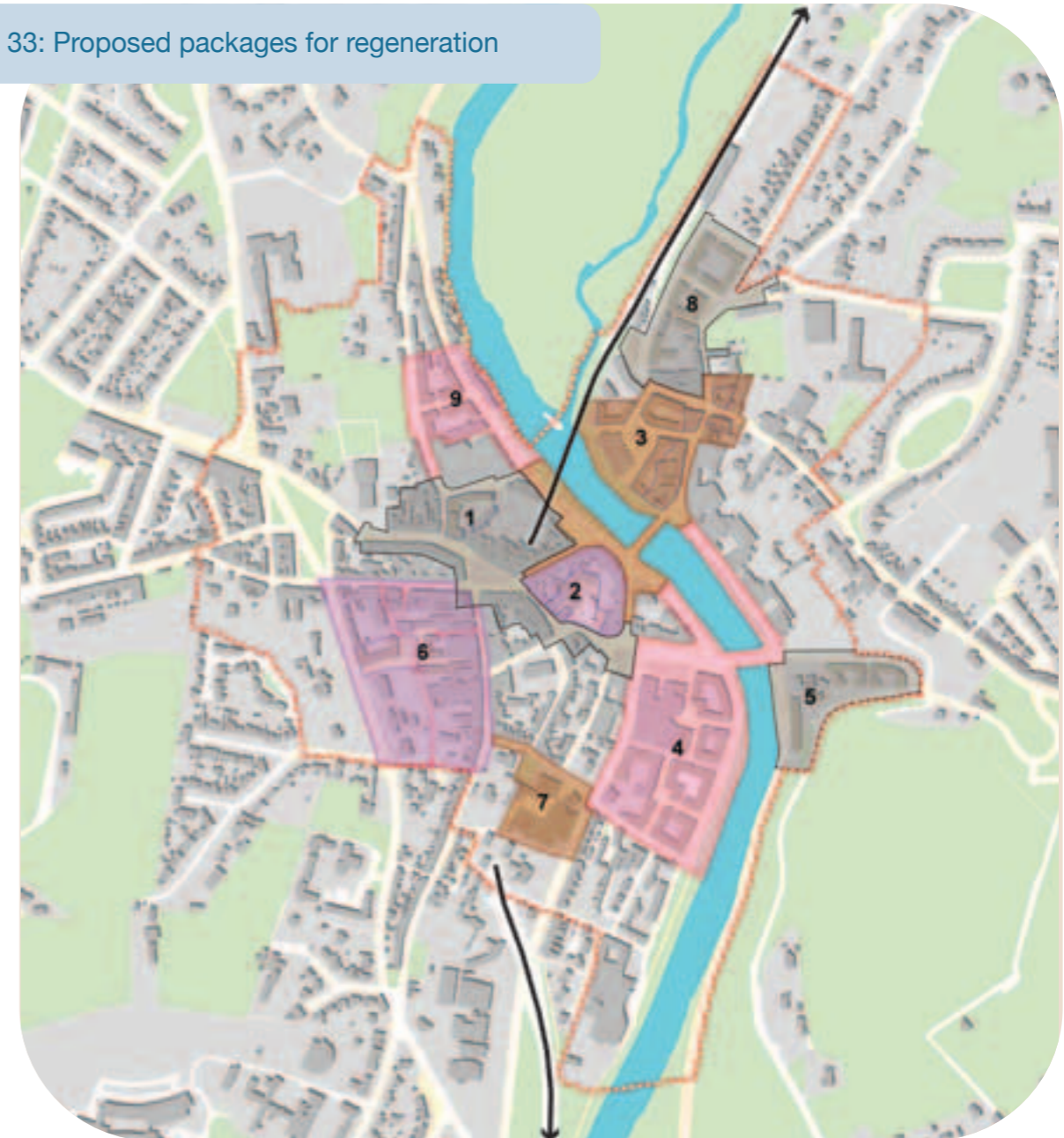
4.5 Remaining urban regeneration packages

The remaining packages are considered important aspects of the regeneration of the Town Centre, however, their delivery is likely to be either a medium to longer-term priority for the Town Centre or delivered largely through the planning and development management process and future improvements for active mobility and public spaces in Enniscorthy. The remaining urban regeneration packages in the urban regeneration framework are:

Table 4.2 Other regeneration packages

PACKAGE	NAME	PROJECTS
Four	Riverfront	Public space improvement as part of a revised approach to flood risk management. Urban block development with new, mixed-use river frontage.
Five	Spring Valley	Mixed use redevelopment, public space improvement at junction with Shannon Quay/Seamus Rafter Bridge.
Six	Weafer and Rafter Street	Public space improvements and new linking spaces. Mixed use infill development in a new urban block structure.
Seven	Lett's	Public space improvements and connections. Potential campus redevelopment with potential for inclusion of circular and mixed use economy.
Eight	St. Senan's / former hospital	This block is of strategic importance, located next to railway station. Mixed use redevelopment, including enterprise and employment, in a new urban block structure. Potential to provide new vehicular access and a relieving route for Templeshannon/St. Senan's Church and Graveyard.
Nine	Island Road / Irish Street	Mixed typology residential development

Figure 33: Proposed packages for regeneration



5 . DELIVERY



5.1 General

This chapter focuses on the delivery of the shared vision, which is to be realised through the implementation of the ETCFP. A concerted, coherent, consistent and collaborative effort will be required over the longer-term to secure the regeneration of the Town Centre. The preparation of the Plan is in itself an early regeneration milestone, but much more work needs to be done to ensure that a more coherent process of regeneration can begin and start to produce real and lasting outcomes. In this regard the role of the community supported by the Local Authority in the delivery of the vision is paramount.

5.2 ETCFP and the regulatory process

ETCFP is a long-term, multi-dimensional framework for the collaborative regeneration of the Town Centre. The Plan has been prepared in close alignment with the Town Centre First Policy Approach. It is a non-statutory plan, which is designed to provide a broader vision of regeneration and development in the Town Centre. It is also a framework for identifying specific projects and groups of projects which have the potential to be catalysts for regeneration and transformation. ETCFP also provides a broader context for other studies in Enniscorthy, in areas such as sustainable mobility and urban and development economics.

Crucially, the ETCFP will inform the preparation of the upcoming Enniscorthy Local Area Plan (LAP), which will be the statutory plan for the larger Town and Environs area. It is expected that aspects of the LAP that relate specifically to the Town Centre will be informed and shaped by the vision and strategy of the ETCFP. It is expected that the LAP will be prepared and adopted by the Council following broad consultation in 2024.

5.3 Institutional roles

Delivery of the ETCFP will be dependent on a robust institutional framework. Urban regeneration is a multi-level, cross sectoral and collaborative effort, and robust structures are needed to manage these. While much of the effort for regeneration is local, it is supported by institutions across a hierarchy of local, County and regional levels.

At national level, agencies, institutions and government departments set out general policy and administer regeneration initiatives, including important funding streams. A range of other agencies engage in efforts which support regeneration including Fáilte Ireland and the Heritage Council.

The Town Centre First Policy Approach includes a commitment to establishing a National Oversight Committee. This will be an important resource that will provide useful monitoring and benchmarking of progress in the regeneration of the Town Centre.

Although regional-level planning is underdeveloped in Ireland, the Regional Assembly provides a valuable role in providing a broad consistency in policy and approach for regeneration across the region. The Regional Assembly also administers funding streams, such as the ERDF, which can be targeted at improvements of urban areas.

At the County level, Wexford County Council provides the broader context, policy and plans for critical aspects of regeneration, including employment and enterprise, heritage protection, housing, and local economic and community development through the County Development Plan. Proposals for development across the County are also managed through the development management process at County level.

The County Council prepares and adopts a Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for the County, which sets out important higher-level objectives for economic and community development. These objectives underpin the broader process of town centre regeneration in County Wexford.

Wexford County Council is the Planning Authority for Enniscorthy. This role includes the preparation, adoption and delivery of the crucial, statutory Local Area Plan. It will set out an integrated approach to the sustainable planning of Enniscorthy through a set of focussed policies and objectives.

The role of the Council also includes the preparation, adoption and delivery of the County Development Plan. The current Wexford County Development Plan, 2022 - 2028, provides the overarching planning strategies for the County. The County Development Plan sets out important policies for town centre and urban regeneration, which will underpin more specific policies in the LAP. The County Development Plan also includes specific planning objectives which apply to Enniscorthy.

Wexford County Council is also an important provider and developer of housing, community infrastructure and mixed-use developments across the County and in the Town. The Council is also responsible for the maintenance and improvement of critical services, infrastructure and the public domain through various departmental budgets.

The role of the County Council will become even more central to the Town Centre regeneration effort in the County with the appointment of new Town Regeneration Officers, the establishment of new Town Teams (comprising strong Council representation) and the increased engagement of their staff in the critical disciplines of the built and natural environment (notably planning, engineering, architecture, heritage, community and others).



5.4 Partnership, collaboration and town teams

A high-level objective of the Local Economic and Community Plan (2016-2021) commits to facilitating active citizenship, achieving social inclusion and promoting community development. These are critical foundations for robust, sustainable urban regeneration.

At the local level, a robust partnership will be needed to deliver on the ETCFP over the short, medium and long term. While there are many different models for this task, the Town Centre First Policy Approach promotes the establishment of multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral and broadly-representative Town Teams. There is no specific formula for Town Teams, but each town will need to constitute these on the basis of representativeness and inclusion, particularly of groups which have in past found it difficult to engage with processes such as regeneration.

For Enniscorthy Town Centre it is suggested that the Town Team comprises:

1. Local elected members – providing local political representation;
2. The Town Regeneration Officer – supporting the operations of the Town Team;
3. Local Authority Management – senior services representatives with executive roles;
4. Local Authority multi-disciplinary professional teams – coordinated by the planning team and including architecture, engineering, heritage, housing, community, development and other critical local services;
5. Local community, representative and regeneration groups – Reimagining Enniscorthy, local housing and resident associations, community interest groups etc.;
6. Chamber of Commerce and business groups – representing local traders and local business interests;
7. Service and infrastructure providers – providing input as needed on the provision and improvement of local services and infrastructure; and
8. Groups which will broaden inclusions – such as younger and older people, ethnic groups and minorities.

5.5 Projects, priorities and packages

Section 4 of the ETCFP presents the urban regeneration framework within which projects, packages and priorities have been established. The ETCFP seeks to have priority packages advanced as soon as possible. This will require a collaborative approach to taking the projects forward to concept and detailed design stages. It will also require development of business cases and preparation of submissions and bids to funding and investment streams as they become available. Other projects have been identified in the urban regeneration framework, which will also have a regenerative impact. These projects may be brought forward for earlier delivery through the normal planning and development processes, with or without the support of specific urban regeneration funds and supports.

It is important to note that these priority projects and packages, while a crucial aspect of the ETCFP, are not in themselves a guarantee of lasting and broader social, economic and environmental regeneration of the Town Centre.

5.5 Funding

Town centre regeneration requires targeted investment from different public and private sources. Currently, studies show viability issues around attracting and delivering private investment and development in the Town Centre. These issues will remain until such time as general market values for such investment and development recover.

Given the broad direction of high-level policies and supports, it is expected a gradual recovery in Town Centre values will occur in the medium term. In the interim, public investment through different channels (including grants and funds) is required to protect the Town Centre as the single most important social, economic and environmental asset for the Town.

Public funding

Public investment is provided from national, regional and local sources. Elements of this are targeted specifically at town centre regeneration; others are not targeted specifically at town centre regeneration, but clearly support the larger process.

Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF)
The URDF is a key aspect of National Planning Framework and a critical measure to drive investment in Ireland's larger towns and five cities. The fund drives collaborative, complementary

and integrated investment in projects at local level which can have a transformative impact, particularly on city and town centres. Two calls have already been completed. Enniscorthy is eligible for this fund but has been not successful in the previous calls. A key objective of the ETCFP is to provide the strategic context and platform for future bids to this and to other funds.

Housing for all

Notably, the Croí Conaithe initiative supports serviced sites for new homes in towns and villages alongside supporting the refurbishment of vacant houses. (Action 26: Provide support towards the refurbishment of vacant properties where the level of vacancy or dereliction is high.)

ERDF

This fund is managed by the Regional Assemblies. The current programme is for 2021 to 2027. Part of the current fund is dedicated to 'Sustainable Urban Development'. Vacancy and dereliction has been identified as a critical area for funding from the fund in TCF Policy Approach.

Town and Village Renewal Scheme

Since 2016 projects for rejuvenation of smaller towns and villages have been supported by the Scheme. The fund has generally targeted the enhancement of streetscape (for example an allocation of €7m was made in 2021).

National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022) Pathfinder Programme

Improvements to local mobility will have a regenerative impact on the Town Centre. The Department of Transport's National Sustainable Mobility Policy provides the framework for investment in local active travel infrastructure and the potential for towns to receive 'pathfinder' funding for scalable and innovative projects, which could be delivered in the near-term. These projects should demonstrate their capacity to achieve carbon abatement, air quality and/or other co-benefits in line with the goals of this Policy'

Circular Economy

Town centres have a key role to play in developing the circular economy in Ireland. The Circular Economy Strategy (2022 - 2023) provides the broad framework for this and a range of funding sources with potential for town centre regeneration, covering grant schemes and innovation funds.

A table with important current public funding sources is included in Appendix D.

5.6 Capacity building and the pathfinder

Enniscorthy will seek Pathfinder Status for the ECTFP under Actions 24 and 25 of the Town Centre First Policy Approach. Pathfinder status will be apt for Enniscorthy as:

- The ECTFP is one of the first of its kind following publication of the Policy Approach;
- The ECTFP meets all the relevant criteria for preparation of an ECTFP, and could be considered a model plan for other Town Centres;
- The statutory Local Area Plan will soon commence and will be informed by the ECTFP, making critical provisions and elements statutory in nature;
- Work is now underway to develop proposals which will secure the vision and objectives of the ECTFP; and
- The County Council is actively working on delivery elements, including the Town Team and the Town Regeneration Officer.

5.7 Urban place management and marketing

Urban place management is an integrated approach to town centre management. This approach emphasises the importance of monitoring and managing uses and activities, movement and accessibility, and the quality of the public and private domains. Urban place management will be critical in:

- Changing the perception of public spaces and street life in the Town Centre;
- Developing and managing a programme of public events in public spaces;
- Monitoring liveability, and the impact of commercial uses and the Evening and Night-time Economy on Town Centre residents;
- Working with businesses to make small local improvements to public spaces;
- Ensuring high levels of maintenance; and
- Addressing litter and vandalism.

It is expected that the Town Regeneration Officer will play a central role in Urban Place Management in consultation with the Town Team, and with the support of the wider County Council.

Marketing and promotion of the Town will need to be coordinated and targeted. The hidden and considerable urban heritage of the Town will gradually be unveiled in parallel with the process of regeneration. Again, it is expected that the Town Regeneration

Officer will play a central role in marketing the Town in consultation with the Town Team, and with the support of the wider County Council.

5.8 Knowledge sharing and networking

The Town Centre First Policy Approach proposes the establishment of a National Oversight and Advisory Group. This group will provide high level strategic review of the Policy Approach and best practice as it emerges nationally. This will become an important resource for Town Teams and Town Regeneration Officers, providing invaluable opportunities to learn from best practice in other towns with similar challenges and opportunities.

5.9 Monitoring and review

As a strategy with short and medium-term actions, the ECTFP will require a proper and enduring monitoring and reporting regime. It is suggested that monitoring is carried out on two cycles:

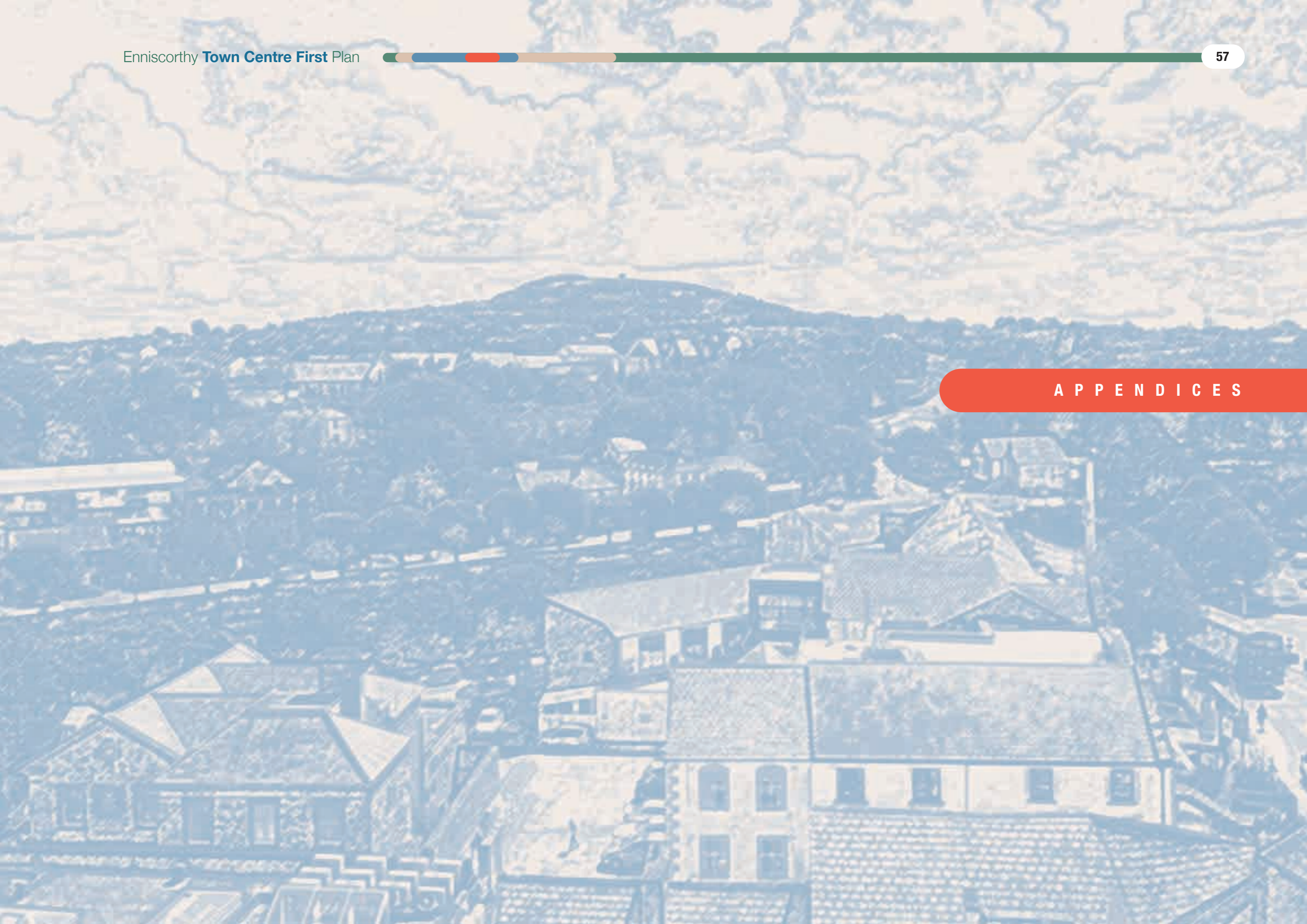
- Annually, to measure progress on key objectives; and
- As part of the Local Area Plan preparation process (typically 6 year cycles) to measure strategic progress and the general robustness of the ECTFP.

In terms of the process of monitoring and reporting:

- The monitoring should be based on a set of metrics established by the delivery team (The Town Team on its establishment);
- Monitoring should be coordinated by the Town Regeneration Officer, with the support of the Town Team;
- Reporting should be done by the Town Regeneration Officer, for consideration of the Town Team and the wider County Council; and
- Actions arising from the monitoring and reporting should then be actioned by the Town Team and others as appropriate.



A P P E N D I C E S



Appendix A - Summary of Regeneration Strategies

REGENERATION STRATEGY	STRATEGY ELEMENT
Thriving	<p>TV1 – To promote and support diversity in the mix of uses, activities and businesses of the Town Centre.</p> <p>TV2 – To activate key redevelopment sites for integrated, mixed-use development.</p> <p>TV3 – To prefer the refurbishment and improvement of the existing building stock in preference to demolition and redevelopment.</p> <p>TV4 – To develop, promote and carefully manage the hospitality, leisure, entertainment, evening and night-time economy in Enniscorthy Town Centre</p> <p>TV5 – To provide employment opportunities through the support of small business enterprise and the development of the digital economy in the Town Centre.</p>
Living	<p>LV1 – To target the reuse and refurbishment of vacant homes and the vacant residential floors of mixed-use buildings in the Town Centre, and to eliminate effective vacancy in the housingstock of the Town Centre by 2040.</p> <p>LV2 – To engage with, and provide for, the living needs of all in the community, especially the young, the elderly, the disadvantaged and those who suffer from exclusion.</p> <p>LV3 – To provide a diversity of housing types and tenures in the Town Centre to meet current and future needs, through a collaborative effort between the community, public agencies and the private sector.</p> <p>LV4 – To target the redevelopment of all larger infill redevelopment sites in the Town Centre by 2040, and to ensure that they support the delivery of housing diversity in the Town Centre.</p> <p>LV5 – To retain and improve essential community and social facilities and services in the Town Centre, and to ensure ease of access for Town centre residents to these.</p>
Loved	<p>LO1 – To develop the existing cultural life and assets of the Town Centre, within a connected network of public spaces.</p> <p>LO2 – To protect and conserve built and natural heritage assets and places in the Town Centre.</p> <p>LO3 – To develop tourism in the Town Centre within a larger, connected tourism offer for the Town, County and the South-East.</p> <p>LO4 – To protect and enhance cultural activities and assets as the regeneration of the Town Centre progresses.</p> <p>LO5 – To deliver high quality public streets and spaces within a coherent and connected network.</p> <p>LO6 – To ensure that the Town Centre is a place where all groups feel safe at all times.</p>
Connected	<p>CT1 – To transition to active travel and eliminate traffic dominance in the Town Centre as a critical condition for regeneration.</p> <p>CT2 – To develop new and targeted local public transport services to strengthen connections to the Town Centre and to eliminate unsustainable through-traffic.</p> <p>CT3 – To prioritise pedestrian movement in the Town Centre as part of a larger transition to sustainable mobility.</p> <p>CT4 – To carefully manage the quantum and access to dedicated car parking areas and to eliminate all non-essential on-street car parking from the Town Centre.</p> <p>CT5 – To provide easy access to high quality landscape elements in the Town Centre and to ensure that these elements are connected to the larger landscape of the Town.</p> <p>CT6 – To develop a sustainable traffic management strategy for the Town as part of the upcoming LTP and local statutory plan, as a measure to eliminate congestion and car-dominance in the Town Centre.</p>
Adaptable	<p>AT1 – To establish the Town Centre as the focus of the circular economy in Enniscorthy.</p> <p>AT2 – To decarbonise transport in the Town Centre, through sustainable mobility measures and support for sustainable transport technologies.</p> <p>AT3 – To realise a more resilient and energy efficient Town Centre through the reuse, retrofit and adaptation of buildings and public spaces.</p> <p>AT4 – To support regeneration of the Town Centre through planning of an integrated green infrastructure within which surface and flood risk can be sustainably managed..</p> <p>AT5 – To investigate the potential of sustainable energy technologies and networks in supporting the regeneration and decarbonisation of the Town Centre.</p>

Appendix B – Alignment of ECTFP with Town Centre First Policy Approach

CATEGORY	ELEMENT	CATEGORY	ELEMENT
Informed by/informs National and regional policy	NPF RSES S28 Guidelines and manuals DMURS	Strategy and actions	Connectivity and accessibility Traffic management Public realm Mix of uses Housing choices Climate change and adaptation Digital transformation Cultural and heritage assets Regeneration/refurbishment Infill/backland development
Local policy	Development Plan Local Area Plan Non-statutory plans Best Practice Health Checks		
Best practice guidelines	National TCF Toolkit Case studies and pathfinders		
Includes Analysis and appraisal	National, regional and local context Data gathering Consultation/workshops Opportunities and challenges		
Objectives	Role Image Vibrancy and vitality Growth Heritage and culture Sustainability Social inclusion		
		Prepared and implemented by Key personnel	Town Centre Team Town Regeneration Officer Local Authority multi-disciplinary team Local community Business groups
		Enabling	Funding streams Business case Public/private investment Detailed plans/projects Local resources

Appendix C - Evaluation of regeneration projects against ETCFP (Based on Section 4.2 of the ETCFP)

CRITERION	COMMENT
Contribution to the vision, principles, strategies and framework of the ETCFP.	
Alignment with statutory policy and plans – notably the County Development Plan and the Local Area Plan.	
Integrated nature with multiple benefits – towards social, economic and physical sustainable urban regeneration outcomes.	
Transformative impact on receiving environment – of adequate scale and impact to substantially improve the image and character, function and use mix, urban form and street life of the Town Centre.	
Short-to medium term delivery potential – particularly in relations to ownership, investment, design, construction and management.	
Medium to longer-term viability.	
Collaboration and partnership – in areas such as planning, funding, development, use and management.	

Appendix D - Table with important current public funding sources

FUND	DETAILS	FUNDER
Croí Conaithe (Towns) Fund	Sites for new homes and support for refurbishment of vacant homes.	Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH)
European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)	The 2021 to 2027 Fund includes funding dedicated to urban areas and is envisaged that this can targeted at vacancy and dereliction.	Regional Assemblies
Historic Towns Initiative	Historic buildings and streetscape enhancement and conservation support.	Heritage Council
Destination Towns Initiative	Develop tourism potential through development of local sense of place and infrastructure.	
Repair and Lease Scheme	Works to upgrade private property for lease to Local Authorities for social housing.	DHLGH
Buy and Renew Scheme	Purchase and renew of housing in need of repair by Local Authorities and Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) for social housing.	DHLGH
Social Housing Investment Programme	Capital investment programme for urban areas.	DHLGH
Sustainable Mobility Investment Programme	Active travel infrastructure for the Town Centre. Potential for 'pathfinder' designation.	Department of Transport
Creative Communities Initiative	Support for place-making initiatives for community wellbeing, including the 'Reimagine' project.	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.
Historic Structures Fund	Capital grants for conservation and enhancement of heritage structures and historic buildings.	DHLGH
Built Heritage Capital Grant	Grant for repair and conservation of historic structures in the Town Centre.	DHLGH
Climate Action and Retrofitting Initiatives	Local Authority funding for retrofit for improved building energy rating for the least energy efficient social homes	Wexford County Council
Regional and Local Road Grant programme	Maintenance and traffic management measures to support more active travel.	Wexford County Council
Circular economy and Social economy and enterprise	Green Enterprise: Innovation for Circular Economy.	EPA
Circular economy	Circular Economy Innovation Grant Scheme (CEIGS)	Department of Environment, Climate and Communications
Circular economy	Circuléire Innovation Funds	Circuléire - National Platform for Circular Manufacturing



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