

COLLABORATIVE TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECKS
OCTOBER 2019

DONEGAL

DONEGAL TOWN
BALLYSHANNON
BUNDORAN



An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



Edited by
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Acknowledgements



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Dr Neil Galway and MSc Planning & Development students



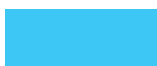
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Contents

	Introduction	4
	Donegal Town	6
	Ballyshannon	19
	Bundoran	32

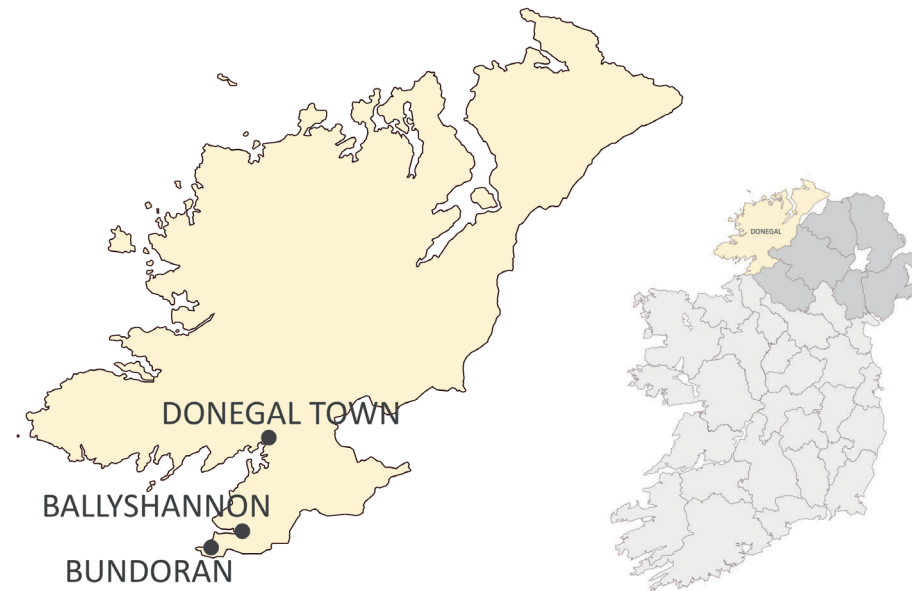


Introduction

Many town centres across Ireland are facing existential crises through the decline of traditional High Streets, falling residential occupancy rates and poor quality environments often related to the dominance of vehicular traffic over public space. These wider concerns are further exacerbated in the border region by the additional uncertainties related to Brexit with its potential impacts on cross-border rural hinterlands.

The students completing the MSc Planning and Development programme were tasked with considering how town centres can adapt to these challenges by completing Town Centre Health Checks and Plan Strategies for Ballyshannon, Bundoran and Donegal Town. This research was carried out in conjunction with the planning staff in Donegal County Council and the Heritage Council.

The study areas were selected because of their proximity to each other, comparable sizes and very different histories, urban morphologies and characters. The challenges varied according to the economic base of the towns with Bundoran's seasonality as a resort town, the dereliction of parts of the heritage of Ballyshannon and balancing growth and improving urban quality in Donegal Town.



Methodology

Following briefing sessions from the Heritage Council, Donegal County Council and Discover Bundoran in Belfast, fieldwork was completed in February 2019. MSc planning students completed land use surveys, pedestrian counts, public questionnaires and interviews with key stakeholders to gain an understanding of how their allocated town centre functions. After submitting their group reports they were invited to Letterkenny in May to present a series of their ideas at a workshop for local stakeholders after they received feedback at the Heritage Council's Collaborative Town Centre Health Check workshop in Dundalk in April.

Irish Planning Context

The hierarchy of planning strategies and plans were consulted as an evidence base to inform the final plans. At a national level, the National Planning Framework is the government's high-level strategic plan, shaping the future development of Ireland up to 2040. The long-term strategic framework acts as a guide for regional and local planning.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Regional Assembly focuses on connecting the region's economic catchments, enterprise clusters and communities to harness the area's potential. It acknowledges that the future role and function of our large network of smaller towns and villages across the region needs to be reimagined, addressing economic, physical and social decline issues.

At a regional level, the County Donegal Development Plan sets out a strategic vision for the future development of the county over the 6-year lifespan of the plan. It is spatially based with a clear aim in managing land use and prioritising development that will drive growth.

The relevant Local Area Plans for Ballyshannon, Bundoran and Donegal Town were also consulted to understand current demographic trends, zonings and designations for these areas with their very different histories, characters, economies and challenges.

Planning Policy Hierarchy, Ireland





Donegal Town



Background

Donegal Town is located at a wide and shallow estuary where the River Eske meets the Atlantic Ocean. It was a frequent stopping point for Viking raiders but its current form with its distinctive Diamond derives from its 17th century planned form. It is now the principal urban centre of economic, social and cultural activity in the south of County Donegal. The town is cherished by the local community and is a significant tourist asset with a vibrant town core, which provides facilities and services for the surrounding towns and rural hinterland.

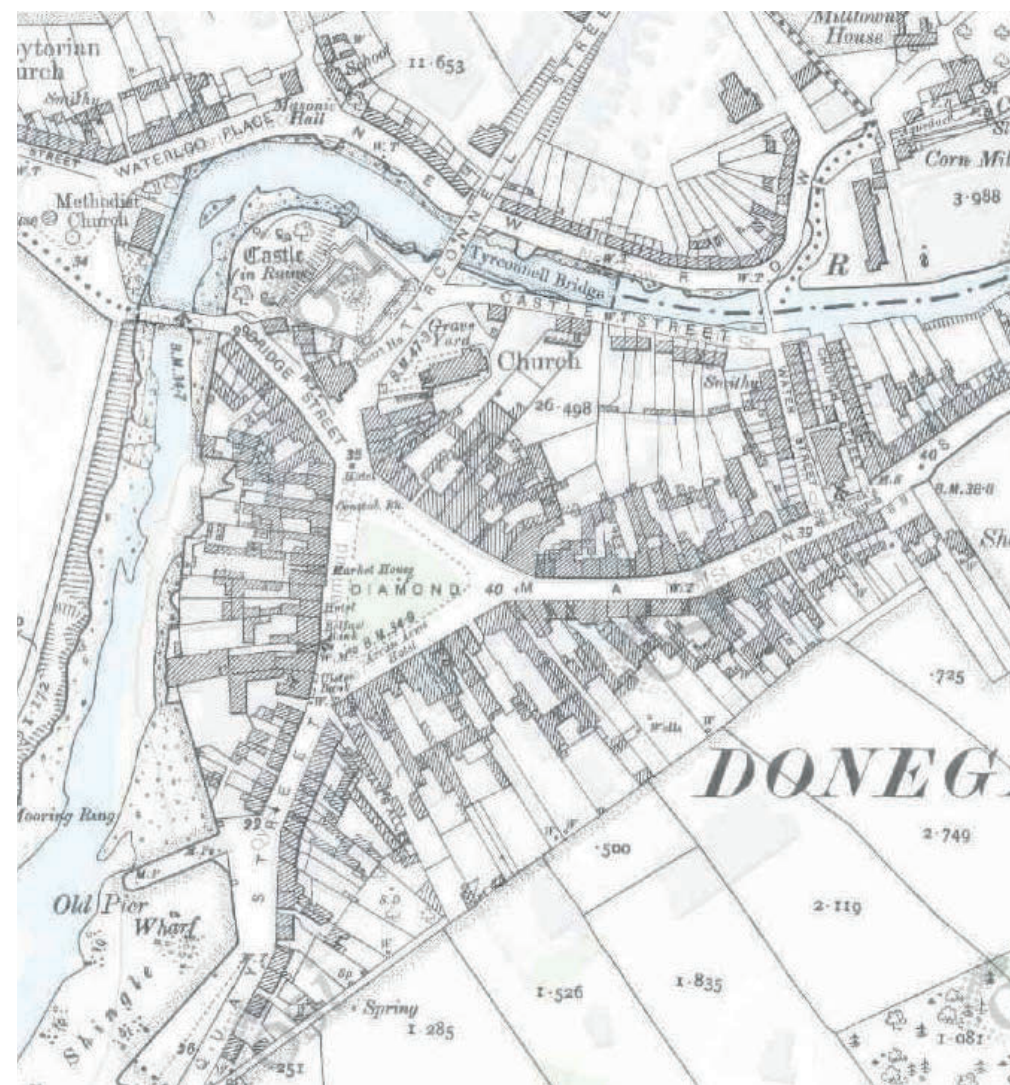
In 2016, the recorded population of Donegal Town was 2,618 persons. For the projected growth to be realised there is a need for development within the town in terms of the its facilities and services.



Donegal Town Castle



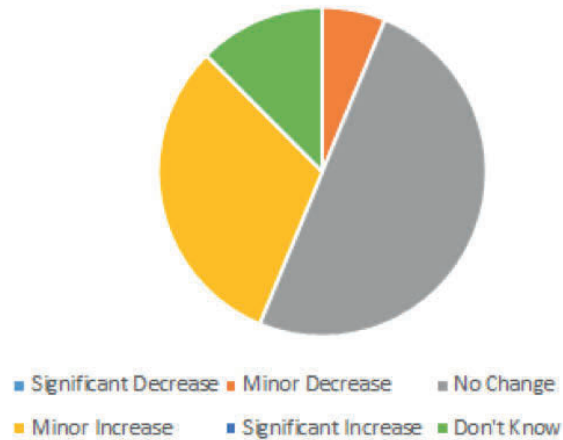
Donegal Parish Church



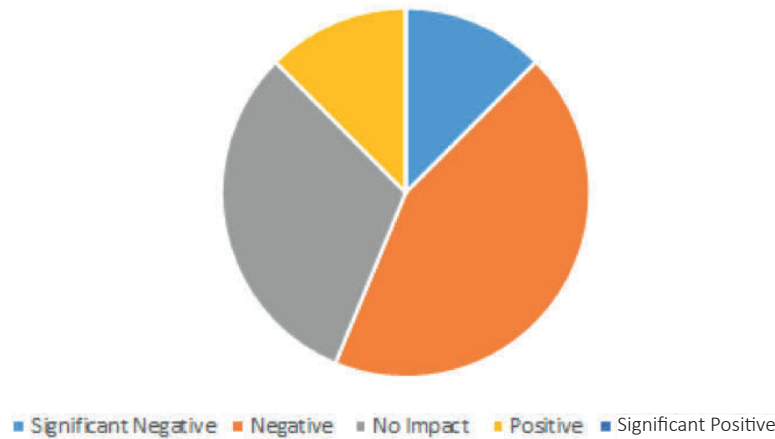
Historic map of Donegal Town (Source: OSI)

Context

Impact of Brexit Announcement



Perceived impact of Brexit



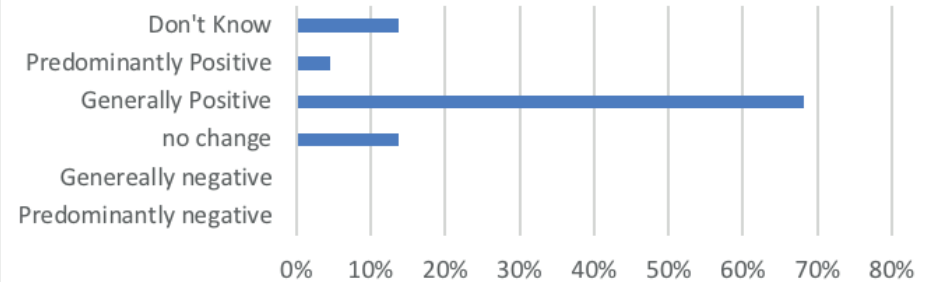
Brexit Statistics

57% of those surveyed have not noticed a difference in the town since the announcement of Brexit.

Over 80% believe that the impact of Brexit will be negative, while 13% believe that Brexit will have no impact. The Manager of Magee's clothing store noticed an increase in American tourism due to the increased strength of the dollar since its announcement.

67% felt that changes to the town in the last 20 years were positive, while no one surveyed perceived the changes to be negative.

Perception of changes in the last 20 years





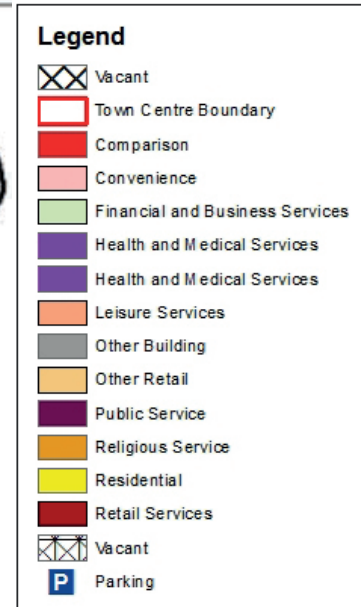
Town Centre Land Use Map

The land use map presents a mixed town core with a clearly delimited town centre where commercial uses give way to residential dominance. The urban form is very distinctive with the Diamond acting as the town's focal point. These town centre services are tourist based including a number of hotels. Non-food retail services are also well provided for the town centre and these too are also largely tourist based, including independent gift stores and specialist clothing stores including the famous Magee tweed which is made in the town. Vacancy levels are highest along Main Street.

The town centre has an urban character and is lacking in green spaces until you reach the riverside area.



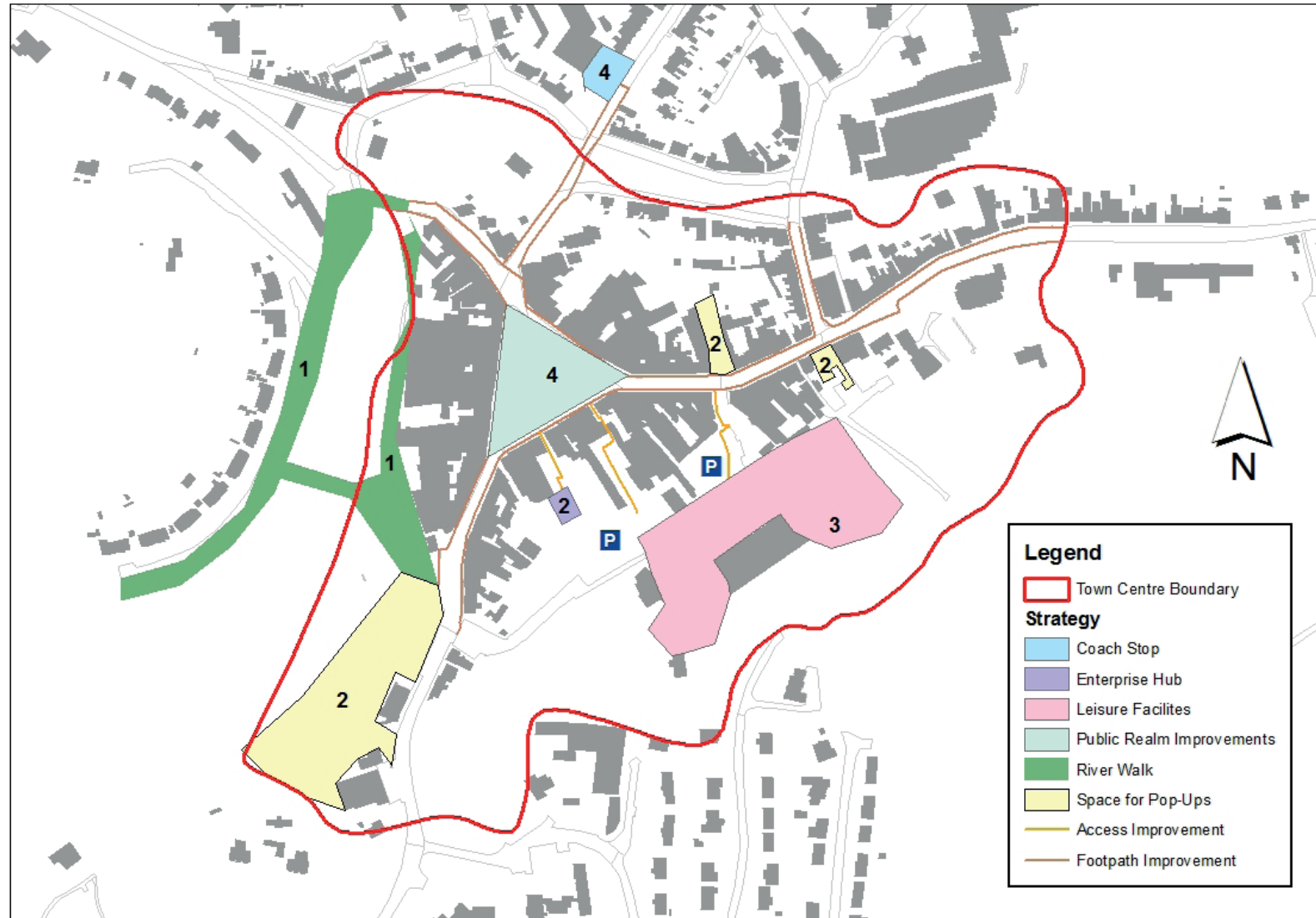
13.5%
Ground Floor
Retail Vacancy



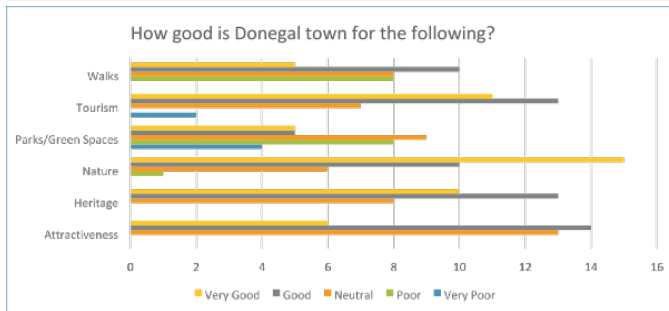
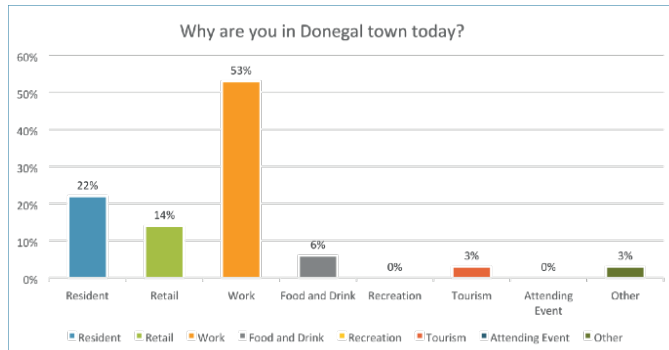


Strategy Map

The strategy map highlights the areas where new development are proposed to respond to the public consultation and physical analysis of the town. It provides a summary of the group's ideas to make Donegal town's centre more vibrant for residents and visitors alike.



Heritage and Tourism



Out of the total amount of people that completed a questionnaire, only 3% of them were visiting Donegal town for tourism, with an even lower amount of visiting for recreational reasons.

The questionnaires also emphasised that people would like the Castle and areas around the River Eske to be improved.

The Bank Walk

Parking at the river frontage

Map depicting nature and heritage value

The survey material also suggests that there are a lack of public/green spaces in the town. The map above depicts areas that could be better utilised to address this issue while enhancing the link between nature and heritage.

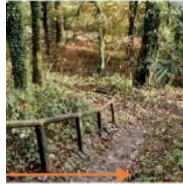


Heritage and Tourism - Proposal 1: Bank Walk linking up with the heritage

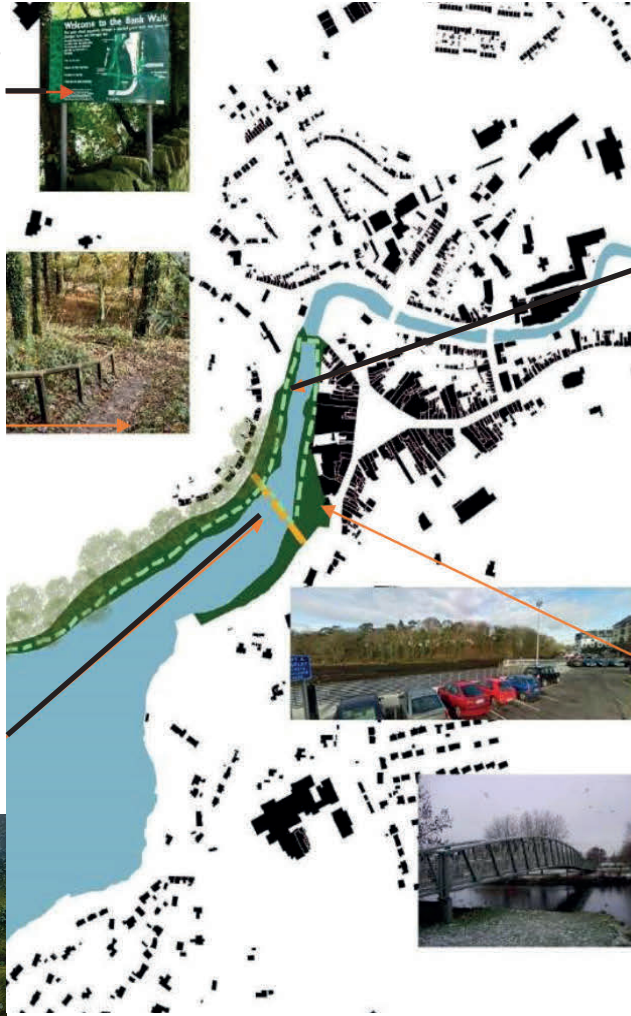
There are helpful maps provided at the beginning of the walk.



This image represents the sensitively-designed steps that would lead people up the hill onto the pathway.



A pedestrian and cycle bridge is proposed to connect both sides of the river in a loop walk that encompasses a new riverside trail on the east bank.



The links between biodiversity, heritage and tourism have not been fully realised in Donegal Town as recognised in the public surveys.

The light green line denotes a proposed shared path through the Bank Walk, which leads to the stone bridge and town centre.

There is currently a large car park here that could be used as a public space with seating areas. This space would be linked to the new riverside walk on the east bank with the potential to reorientate the buildings back to the river.

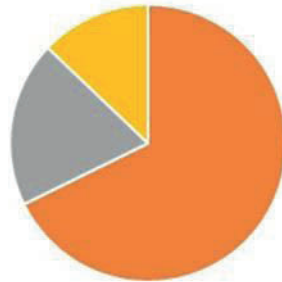


Commercial and Retail

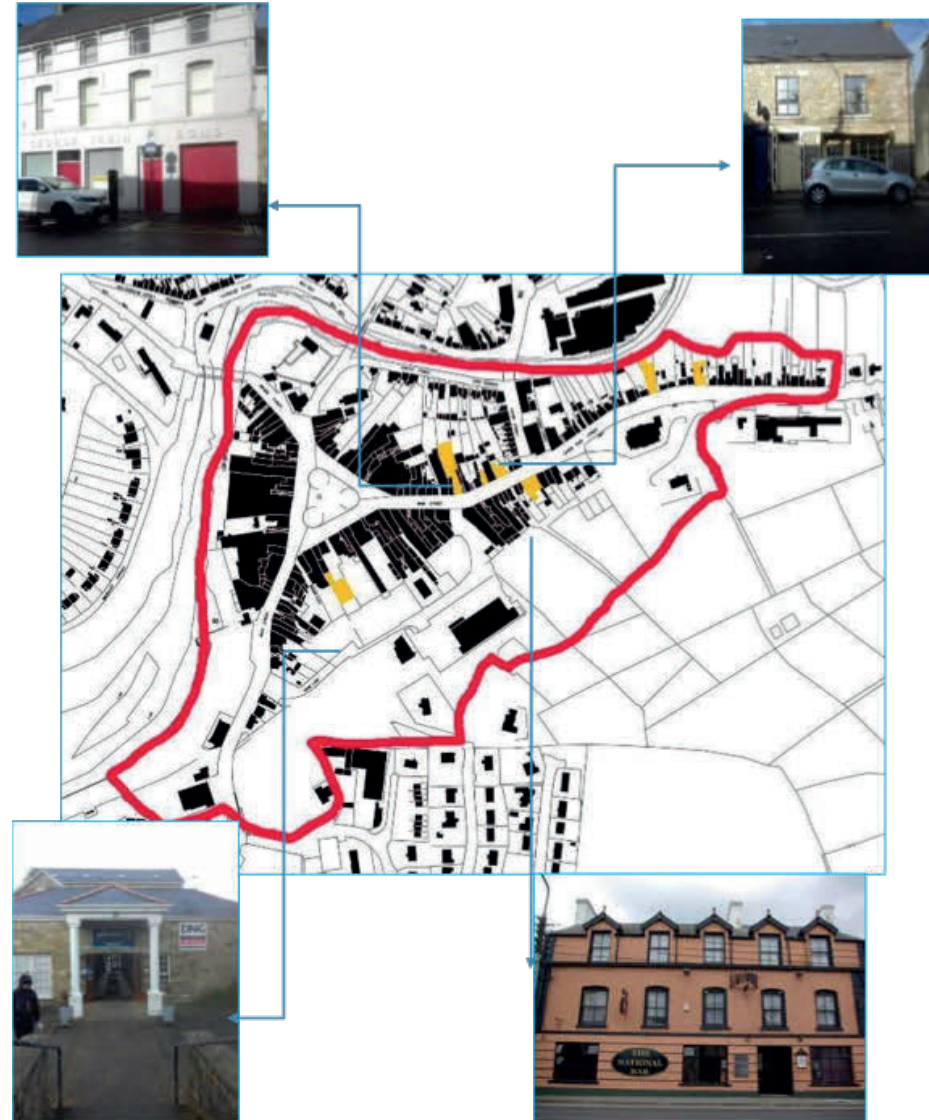
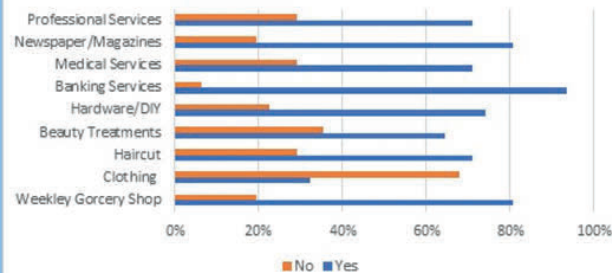
Commercial performance has a major impact on the viability and vibrancy of towns. Increasing consumer mobility, changing patterns of demand, growth of online sales and Brexit are other challenges which town centres in Donegal are trying to adapt to. Donegal Town has a large catchment area and should be able to take advantage of this retail opportunity and seek to prevent leakage of trade and spend to other towns. The ground floor vacancy rate is 13.5%.

68% surveyed said that they would go to another town or online to shop for clothing due to lack of affordable clothes shops for younger people. The favoured towns were Letterkenny, Sligo, Derry and Dublin.

The main reason to shop in another town:



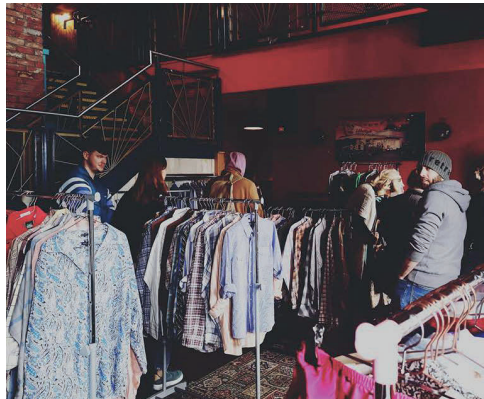
Would you purchase the following goods and services primarily in Donegal Town?



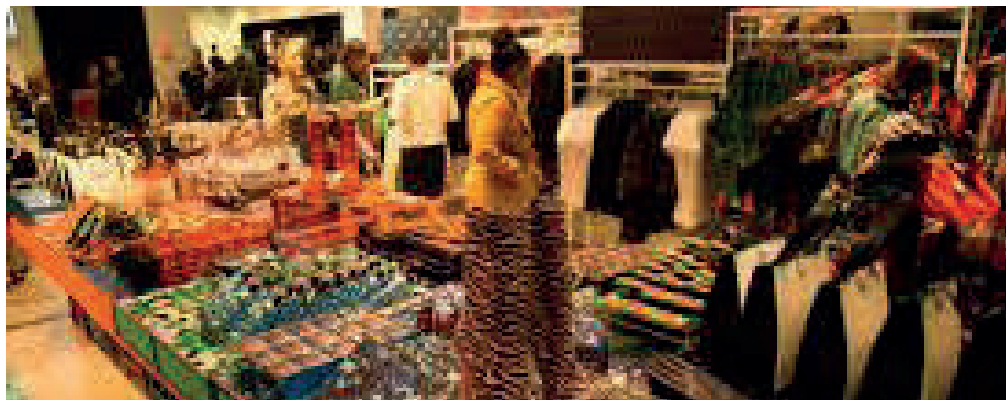


Commercial and Retail - Proposal 2: Pop-up shops

Pop-up shops are an accessible way for small businesses to test new enterprises without making large investments. Having a physical space allows you to meet your customers where they live and put your brand in front of new shoppers. It's also a direct way to encourage sales despite the rapid growth of online shopping.



Rusty Attic Online Shop, Pop-Up Strabane 1



H&M Pop Up

How?

Set up a Pop-Up Initiative in collaboration with Donegal Town Enterprise Centre. Prospective business will contact the Council to find out about potential pop up sites.

Proposed sites (as highlighted in the strategy map) include:

- Vacant buildings - The National Hotel, George Irwin and Sons, The old Post Office
- Car Parks - For mobile pop-ups
- Mill Court Shopping Mews

Creating a space for pop-ups also creates place for innovation and creativity to live. Businesses may interact to run events once an initiative has been set up. The use of these spaces may not be exclusively retail, with workshops and events taking place in these buildings also.

For example, Dún Laoghaire pop-up initiative was set up to reduce the visual impact of empty property in the town centre, increase footfall, create publicity for the area and offer reduced cost space for community organisations, social enterprise and local business entrepreneurs to try out new ideas and/or reach new audiences.

These may be a method of attracting high street shops to the centre of Donegal Town, preventing out-of-town developments.

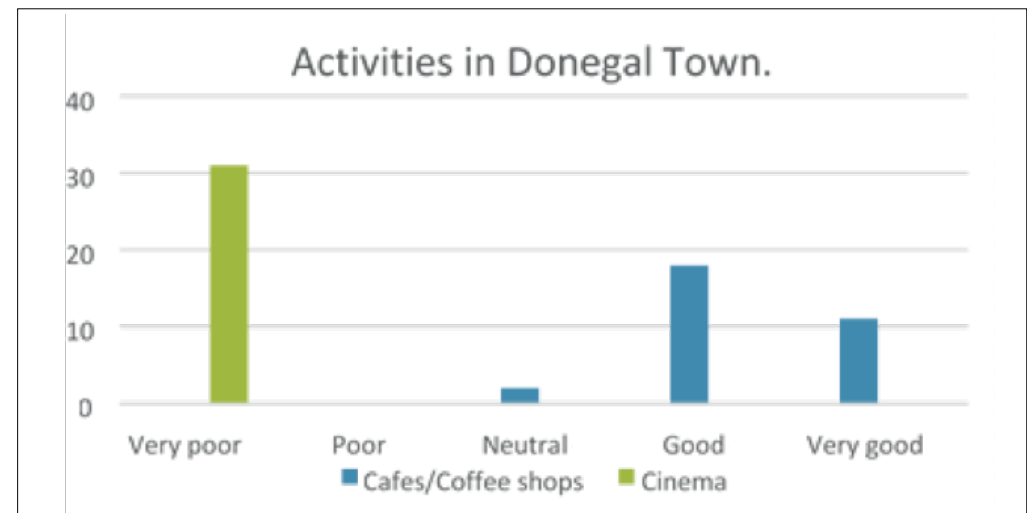
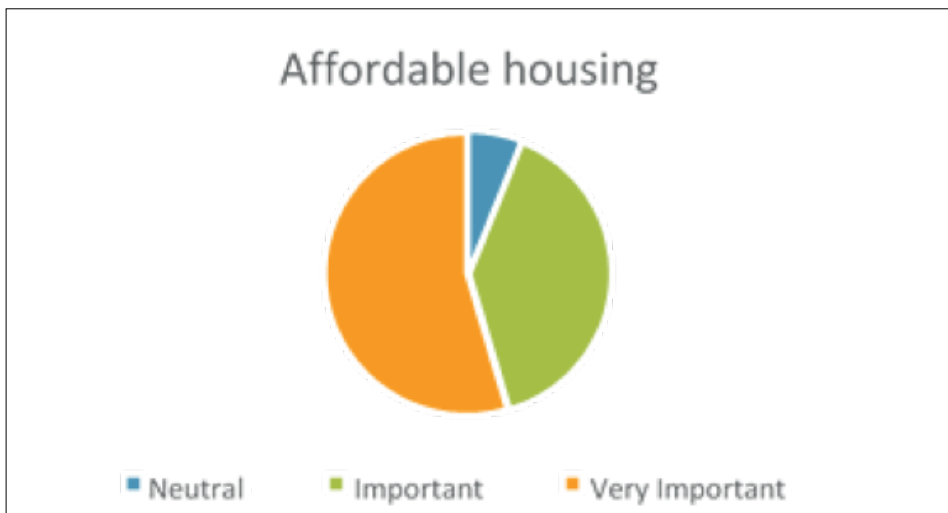
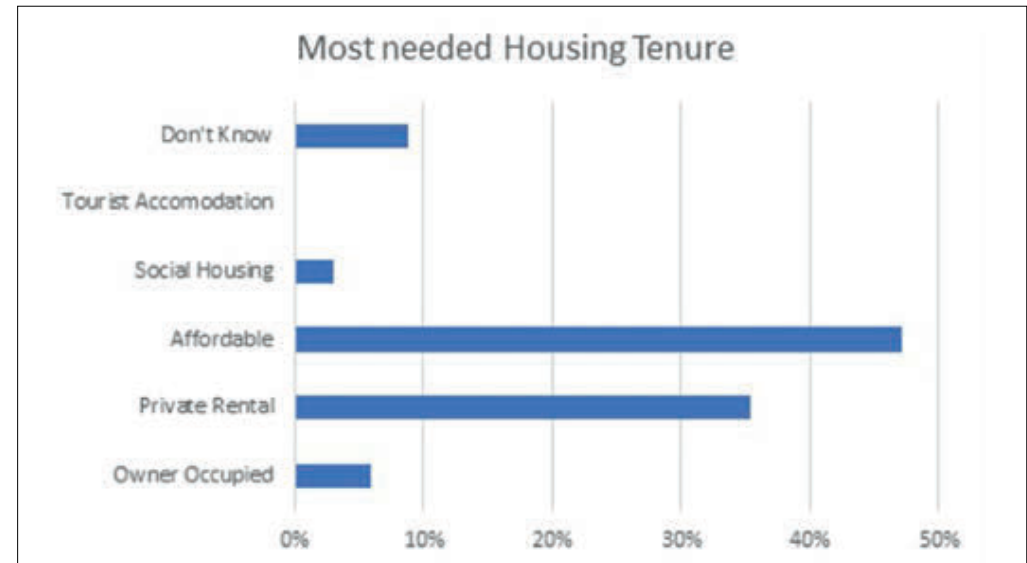




Town Centre Living

It is clear that both affordable and private rental accommodation types are needed in Donegal Town. Tourist accommodation is well catered for by the number of hotels situated on the Diamond. The interviews highlighted that there is minimal demand to live in the town centre as young families prefer detached properties with garden space. In order to increase demand for town centre housing, affordable town centre apartments over shops and improved leisure services could act as an incentive to young professionals and families.

The lack of leisure facilities, other than cafes/pubs, makes the town centre unattractive to teenagers and young families. The absence of a cinema was raised in several of the interviews.



Town Centre Living - Proposal 3: Enhance leisure services

Issue	Inadequate service provision in Donegal Town, which will be affected by population growth.
Policy Aim	Provide service provision that caters for all age groups by 2030
Preferred Option	Pop up services to service the town weekly-3 times a week including ideas; mobile banking and a doctor drop in session; followed by longer term solutions to deal with lack of leisure services.

Short term: Enhance the public realm and provide a space which can be utilised for events such as music nights or farmers markets. These events enhance community engagement and the quality of town centre living, while making the area more attractive to tourists.

Deal with the issue of supply of much needed services through provision within the town centre.



Cinema



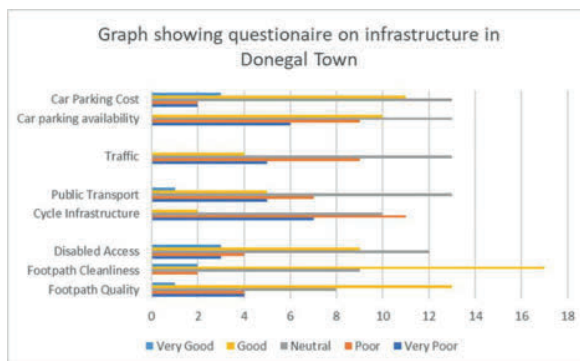
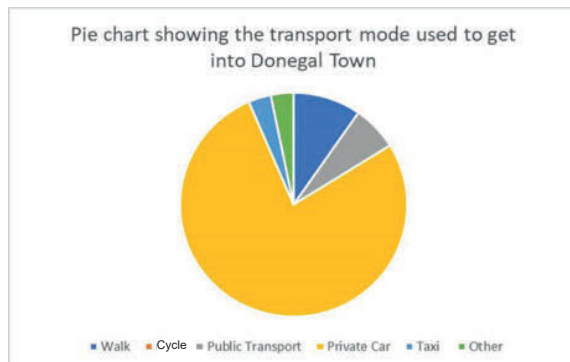
Long term: Leisure Centre



Bandstand

Movement and Accessibility

There is a strong reliance on the private car in Donegal with 74% of those surveyed travelling to the town centre by car. Cycling was not a recorded method of transport while public transport was not used by many. This suggests car dominance with a lack of infrastructure to support alternative methods of travel.



This private car dependency puts a large strain on the Diamond. The perception of those surveyed is that car parking facilities are good; however, visual analysis identified the Diamond as a bottle neck for traffic. This may be in part due to legal and illegal parking and tourist coaches dropping people off on the Diamond. These issues are depicted below.



This figure also highlights the issue of footpath quality, which according to interviewees, was a danger to the elderly and disabled. Wheelchair users find the Diamond area difficult to manoeuvre around.





Movement and Accessibility - Proposal 4: Public realm improvements

Reduce on street parking

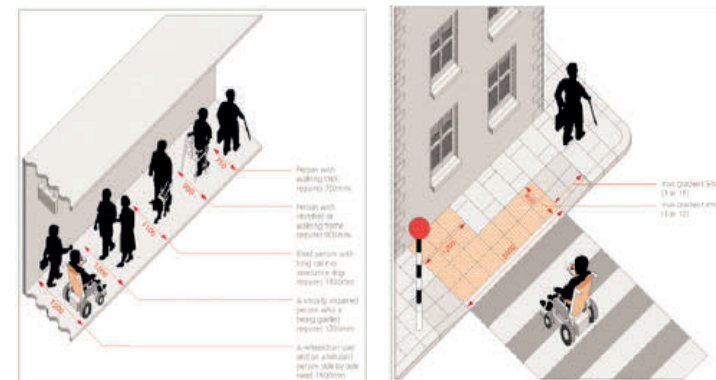
- Incremental system, first introduce short stay and pay parking with no on-street parking at peak times. Followed by a full ban of on street parking on the Diamond
- Provide edge of town centre bus drop off point at the old post office as shown below



Issue	Poor pedestrian infrastructure
Policy Aim	To enhance the pedestrian experience throughout the town centre
Preferred Option	Improve the public realm throughout the town centre by small scale infrastructure projects. This would include pavement resurfacing, one height kerbs, kerb ramps and different texture pavements when reaching crossings. This would make the town more accessible for all members of the community.

Public realm improvements

- Pavement resurfacing
- Kerb ramps and texture pavements at junctions for those disabilities or visual impairments
- Pedestrian crossings in high footfall areas
- Follow design guides on inclusive mobility



Inclusive Mobility, gov.uk





Ballyshannon





Background

Ballyshannon is a unique urban area as the oldest town in Ireland and has a very distinct character. Its population base stands at 2,299 people (2016 census).

The quality of its built heritage is recognised through designations as a Historic Town for General Protection and as a Donegal County Council Heritage Town (Donegal CoCo 2008).

The town functions as a service centre offering a range of activities and providing employment. Alongside its role as a service centre, it also has the potential for further investment in business and enterprise. There is also the potential for regeneration between public, private and community collaboration.



The Mall Quay as a key destination



Ballyshannon commercial core



Historic map of Ballyshannon, dated back to 1613 (Source: OSI)





Context



Ballyshannon has developed as a key crossing point across the River Erne and acts as a gateway to the South of Donegal. As Ireland's oldest settlement, it has a unique character especially in its urban fabric and archaeological history. Tourism is an important part of Ballyshannon's economy with the success of the Wild Atlantic Way offering the potential for additional visitors. It also has a strong cultural influence, annually hosting the Ballyshannon Folk and Traditional Music and Rory Gallagher International Festivals.

Over 49% of survey respondents felt that there had been a decline in Ballyshannon over the last 20 years. This perception is reflected by the declining population, which has went from 2,686 people in 2006 to 2,299 in 2016.



Rory Gallagher's Statue



Ballyshannon Town Centre Landmark

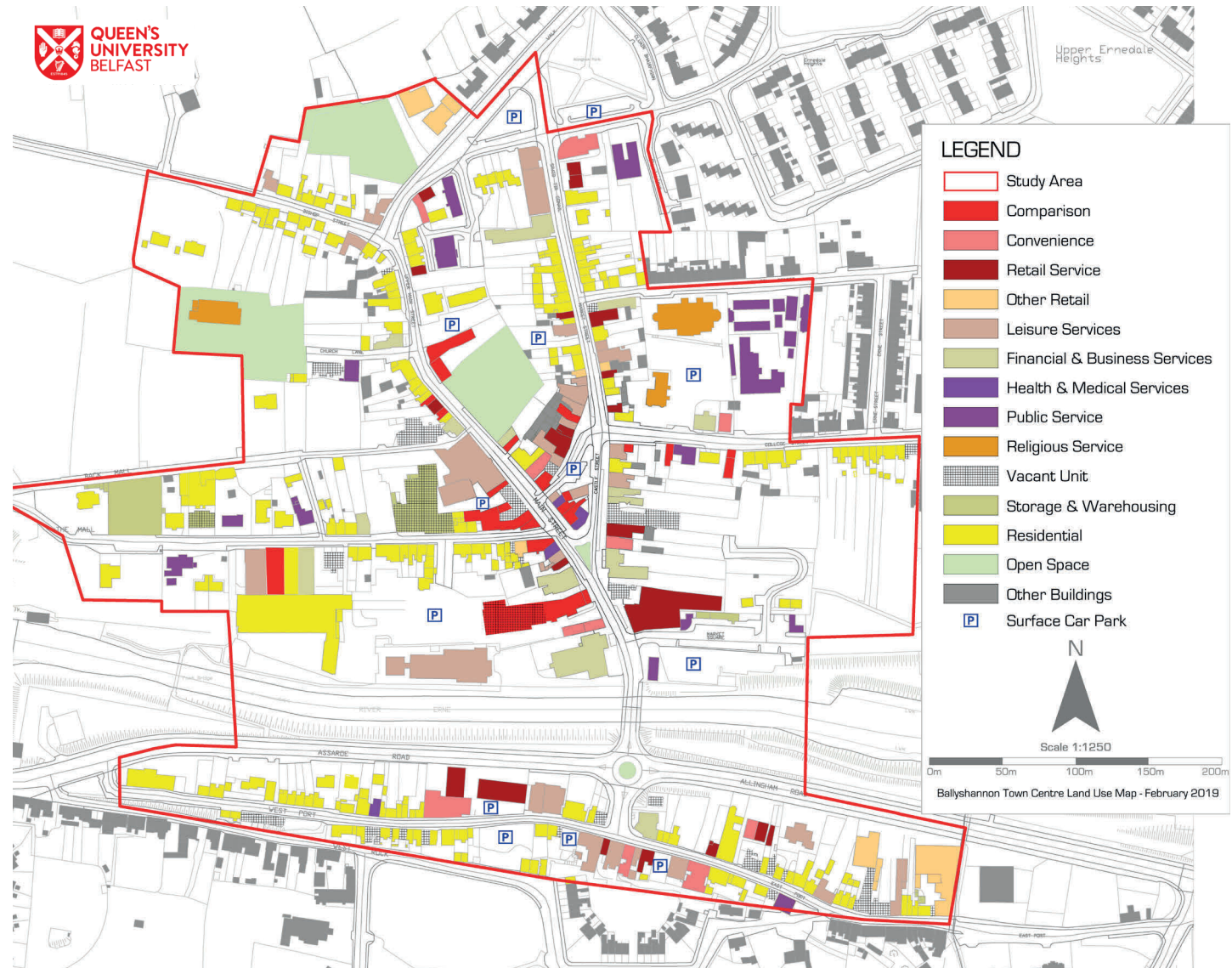


Town Centre Land Use Map

17.5% Ground Floor Retail Vacancy

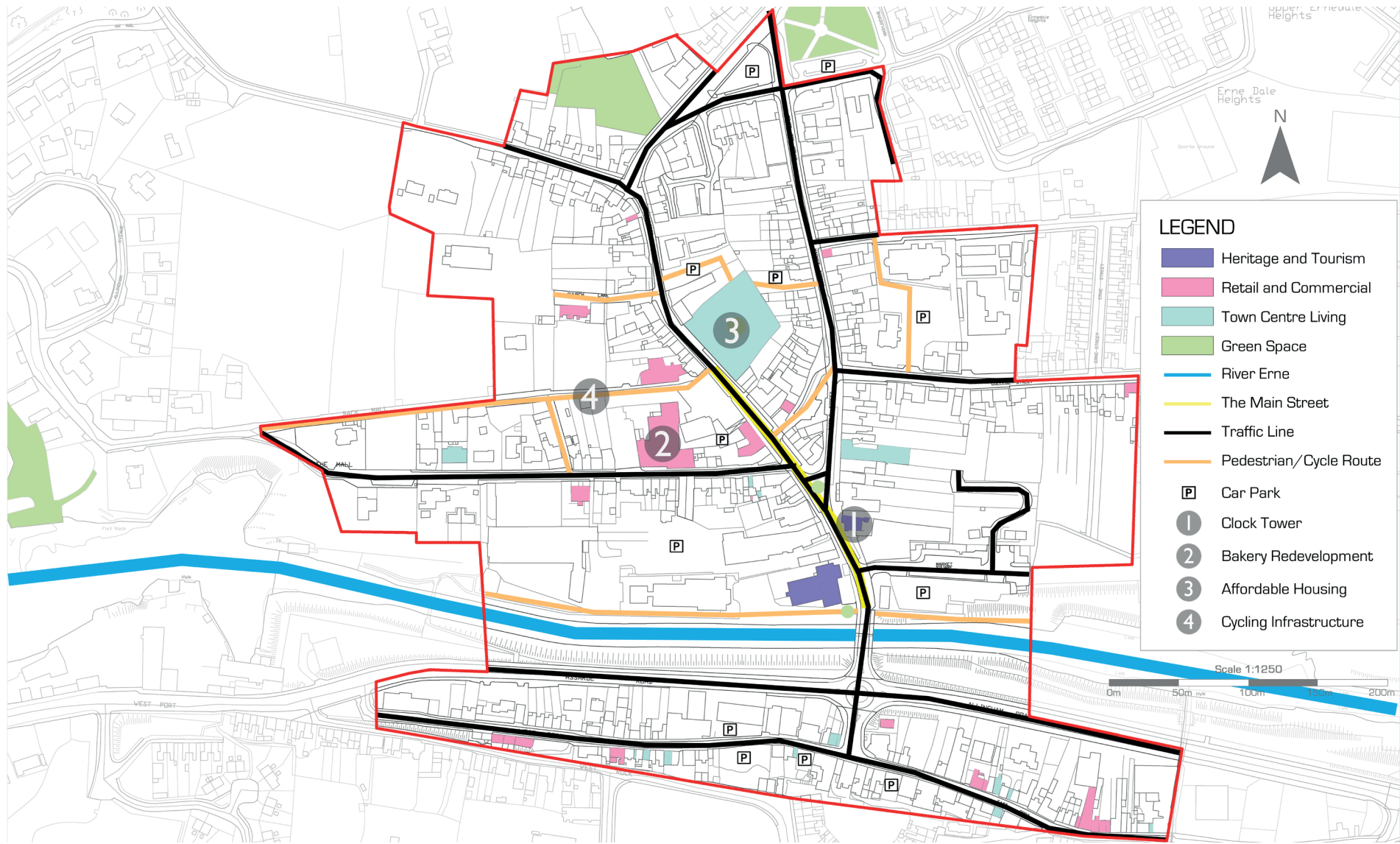
The town centre has mixed land use character with dominant functions in different areas. The commercial core of the town is focused around the junction of Main Street and Castle Streets with a concentration of retail and comparison uses but is challenged by high vacancy rates. This extends to the start of the Mall which soon becomes primarily residential with some repurposed buildings housing public services.

Residential uses interspersed with public services dominate the Northern section of the town centre. The Port area in the south has a primarily residential use with several vacant commercial properties.





Strategy Map



LEGEND

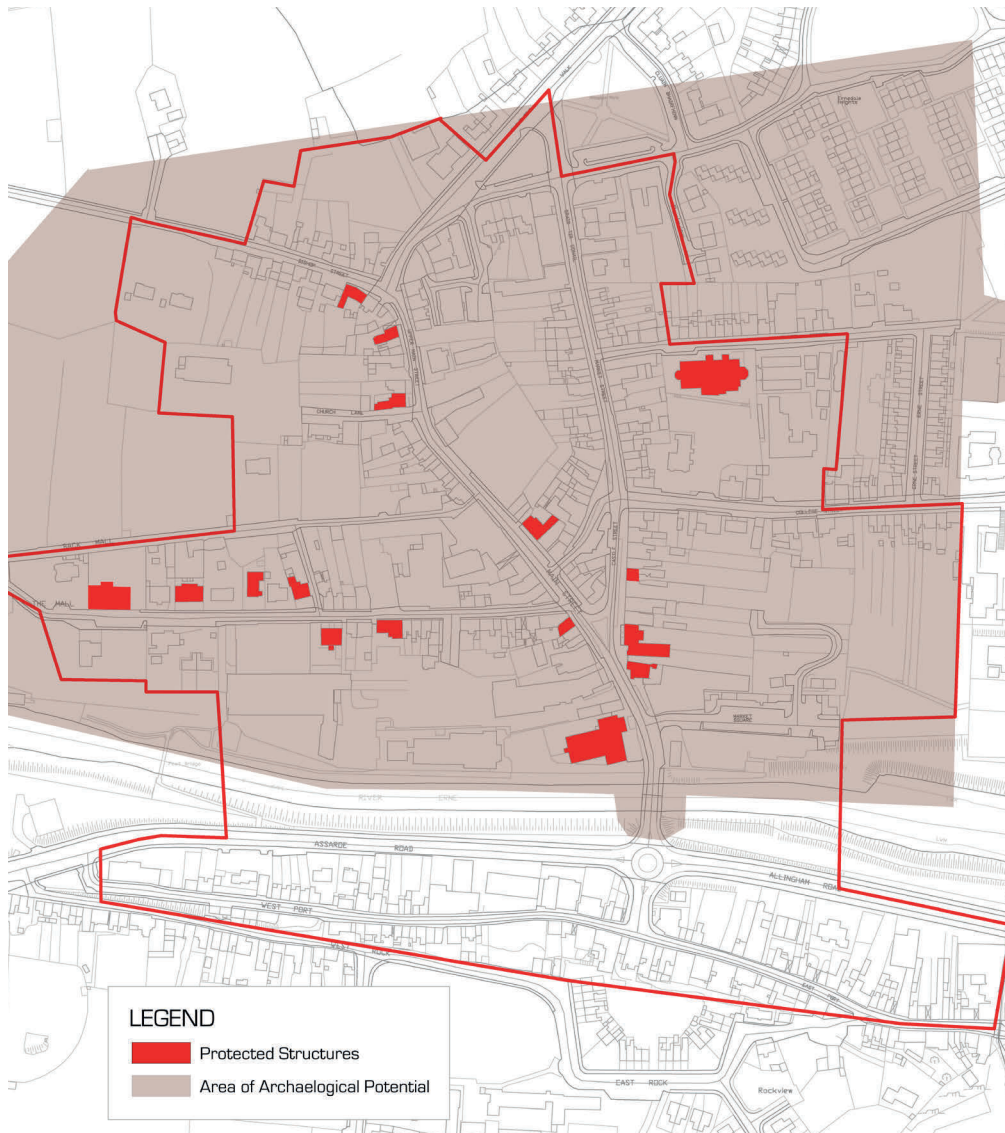
- Heritage and Tourism
- Retail and Commercial
- Town Centre Living
- Green Space
- River Erne
- The Main Street
- Traffic Line
- Pedestrian/Cycle Route
- P Car Park
- 1 Clock Tower
- 2 Bakery Redevelopment
- 3 Affordable Housing
- 4 Cycling Infrastructure

Scale 1:1250

0m 50m 100m 150m 200m



Heritage and Tourism



Ballyshannon has a rich built and natural heritage with a strong potential for tourism. Over 13% of the visitors to the town are drawn by tourism. Despite having abundant examples of built heritage, poor maintenance and long-term vacancy have led to significant buildings becoming derelict eyesores. Spaces which have a large potential such as the Mall Quay are also underdeveloped with poor linkages to the centre of the Town. Furthermore, the construction of the Hydro-electric Dam and alteration of the River Erne's flow has seen the town to turn away from having a more positive relationship with the River.

Engagement from a number of stakeholders also highlighted the challenges faced within the tourism sector. Whilst marquee events such as the Rory Gallagher Festival draws large crowds, the duration of visitor stays was noted as being low and not of benefit to the town from a number of stakeholder interviews.



The built heritage has been poorly maintained with active processes of dereliction being visible across the town.



Heritage and Tourism - Proposal 1: Clock Tower

The Clock Tower is arguably the most prominent building in Ballyshannon and acts as a key landmark as you enter the town. In recent years, it has fallen into disrepair and exterior features such as the clock have been allowed to deteriorate.

It is proposed that the clock tower should be restored as a priority measure in partnership with the local community. The restoration of this building would offer a new facility that could act as a catalyst to regenerate Ballyshannon.

The Town Museum could be a potential tenant following restoration, making use of the connections with the town's heritage. This would also offer a more visible tourist facility and encourage longer stays in the area. This use coupled with an accompanying coffee shop could act as a third space for social interaction.



Landmark Clock Tower built in 1878

Concept of visitor centre and museum



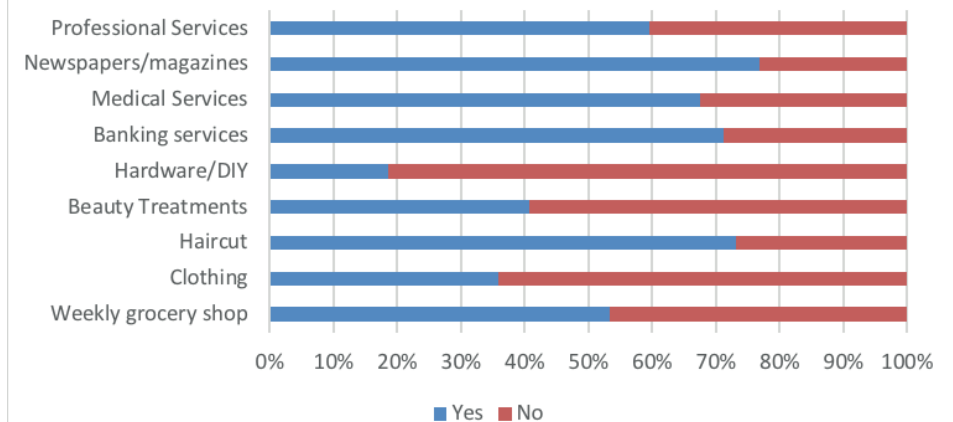
Commercial and Retail



Most of Ballyshannon's retail provision is focused in the commercial core of the town. Here the primary type of unit provides for convenience goods. This lack of variety is highlighted with 55% of respondents choosing to shop elsewhere due to a better variety of services being offered. This lack of variety means that the town's population visit other service centres, particularly Bundoran, Donegal Town and Sligo, to meet their needs.

It is evident that vacancy is another major issue here. Retail vacancy was calculated at 17.5%. Another challenge is that the retail and commercial services are hindered by vacancy as it creates a gap in active frontage onto the street and so the retail is spread across the town rather than in a core area.

Proportion of Town Services used by Residents





Commercial and Retail - Proposal 2: Bakery redevelopment

The site of the Old Bakery on the Mall currently lies derelict. This is a key site for potential redevelopment particularly due to its size. Currently the offering of recreational activities for families and children is largely underdeveloped. Ballyshannon's position on the Wild Atlantic Way gives the opportunity to offer these recreational services for visitors. There is a clear need within Ballyshannon to provide more recreational activities that cater to a wide variety of ages.

The site would be proposed to be zoned to accommodate any potential changes to a recreational use such as a bowling alley or play zone. Its location on the Mall, in close provision of Main Street, can also act as a driver for other forms of regeneration along the street. In enabling development in this location, it would focus a town centre first approach policy in any new businesses situating within the town. It would also act to complement surrounding businesses by attracting footfall.



Current Bakery Site



Proposed leisure use



Town Centre Living

Perception Heatmap of areas requiring Regeneration



Over 30% of the population surveyed currently reside within the town centre of Ballyshannon. The quality of amenity was rated highly by a number of respondents showing it is an attractive place to live. Despite this there were a number of issues highlighted that could help improve the town. Affordable accommodation was shown by 31% as being a strong need. A desire to increase the available tourist accommodation was also shown by 33%.

A heatmap of respondents' perceptions shows the areas identified as needing regeneration in the town. East Port, West Port and the Mall were highlighted as needing regeneration with multiple vacant units and derelict buildings.

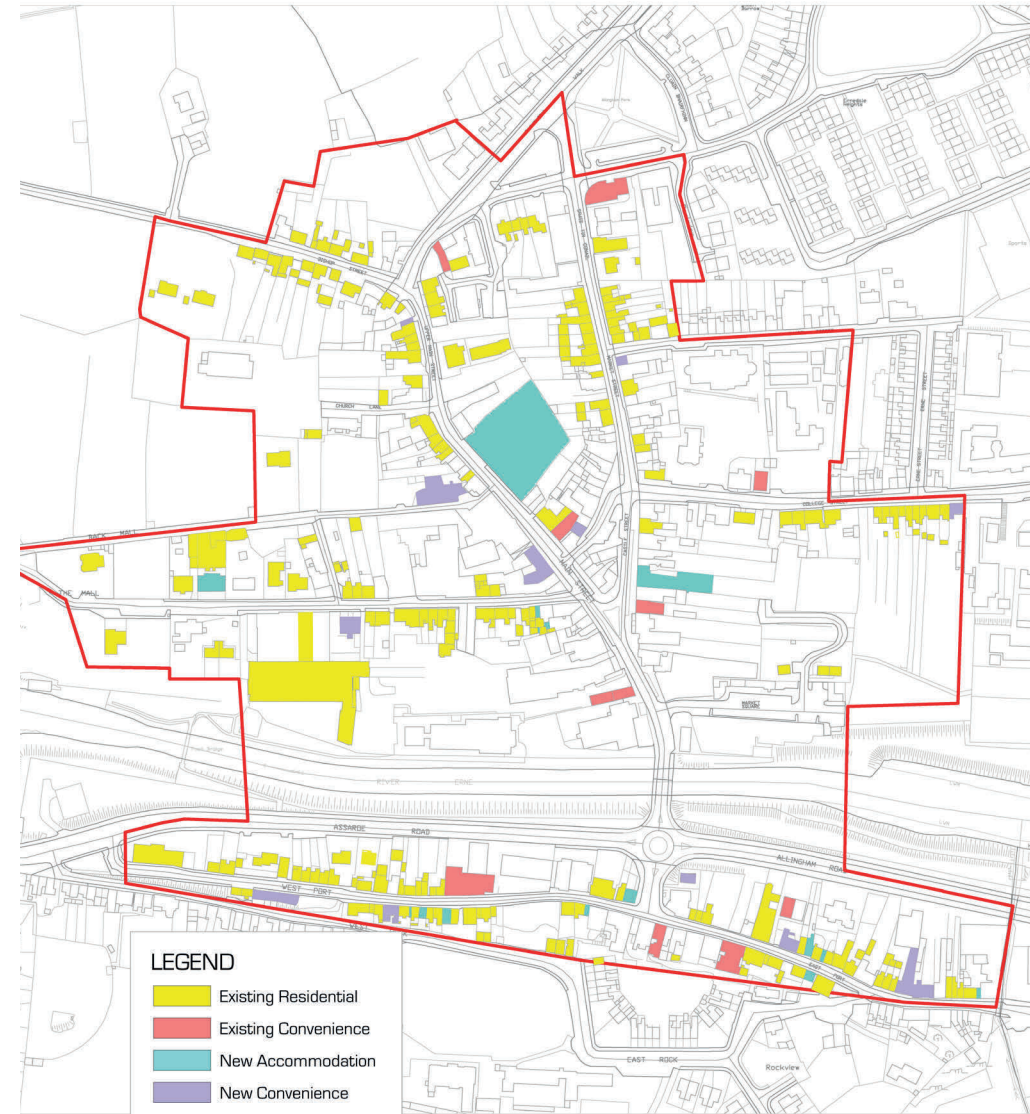
Issue	Lack of town centre housing - long term solution
Policy Aim	Provide housing in the town centre to encourage more people to live in Ballyshannon.
Preferred Option	Zone areas in the town centre specifically for housing developments and make use of vacant buildings.
Issue	Lack of tourist accommodation in Ballyshannon
Policy Aim	Provide short term rental accommodation in the town centre.
Preferred Option	Provide tourist accommodation within the town centre boundary so that it is close enough to the attractions and amenities in Ballyshannon.



Town Centre Living - Proposal 3: Zoning of land for affordable and tourist housing

In addressing the issues highlighted, a number of areas can be zoned for accommodation. To encourage town centre living, there are several sites and derelict buildings, which could be used for affordable housing. The vacant site on Main Street could be zoned for mixed tenure housing to meet the need identified in the health check. This will act to revitalise this part of the town centre through repopulation.

The Port area has been identified as requiring regeneration. Zoning all types of accommodation would help to encourage vacant units to be brought back into use. Increased provision for tourism would also help to alleviate the need for further accommodation within the town. Increasing accommodation in this area would be beneficial as the area already offers strong transport links and would also increase visitors staying within the town offering positive economic impacts.



Vacant land on Upper Main St



Proposed residential use



Movement and Accessibility



A well-designed town centre should be accessible to all sections of society, for the purposes of quality of life, work and leisure. The level of ease of movement within Ballyshannon town centre was assessed through first hand survey work.

A footfall counter survey conducted at 4 different locations within Ballyshannon town centre boundary showed that there is a significantly higher footfall around the retail core (Castle Street and Market Street) than the areas across the River Erne (West Port and East Port).

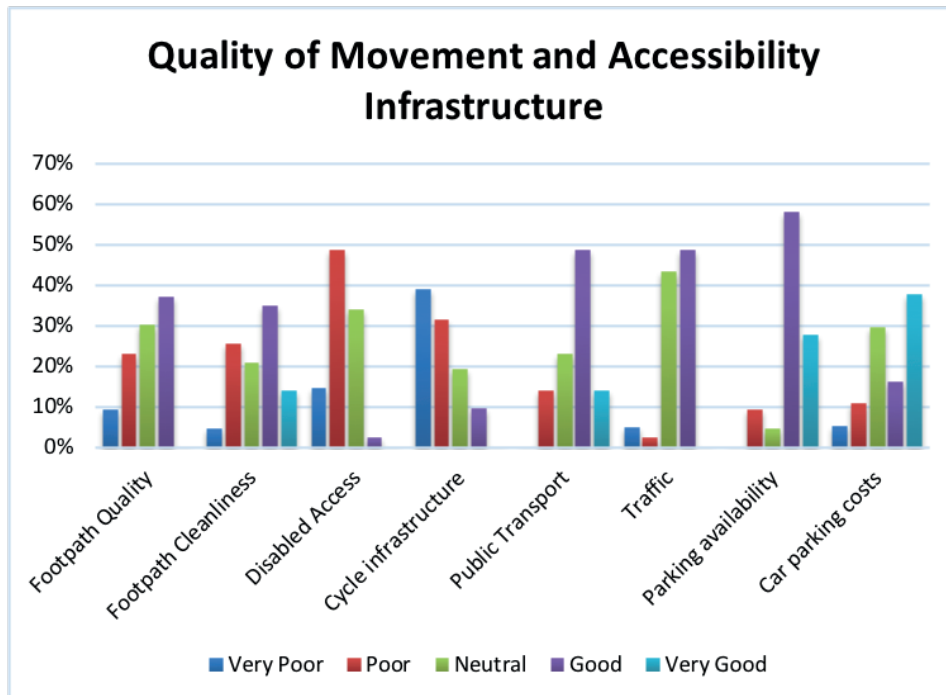
Cycling infrastructure and disabled access were identified as an issue facing Ballyshannon Town Centre by a majority of respondents. Disabled access was rated as poor by 48% of respondents, with the quality of the footpath also being identified. The infrastructure provided for cycling was rated as poor by 40% of the population. This is reflected in none of the respondents using cycling as their mode of transport.

Issue	Lack of public realm which serves as pedestrian destinations and connects the areas in the town
Policy Aim	Improve connectivity to public realm and pedestrian experience within Ballyshannon town centre.
Preferred Option	Uniting existing pedestrian pathways on the Back Mall and the opportunity site identified on the Upper Main Street with better landscaping to enhance pedestrian experience and link between the town centre retail core and tourist attractions such as the Mall Quay.

Movement and Accessibility - Proposal 4: Extension of cycling infrastructure

The map on the right illustrates the existing pedestrian pathway and the proposed new pedestrian and cycle paths, mainly on Market Street, the Back Mall, Main Street and the Upper Main Street.

The pedestrian experience will be enhanced through the creation of public realms and community spaces on the proposed residential area. This aims to improve the accessibility and ease of movement from the retail core to the Mall Quay.



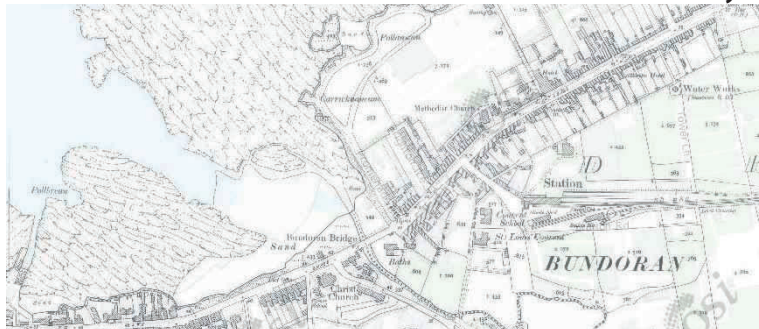


Bundoran



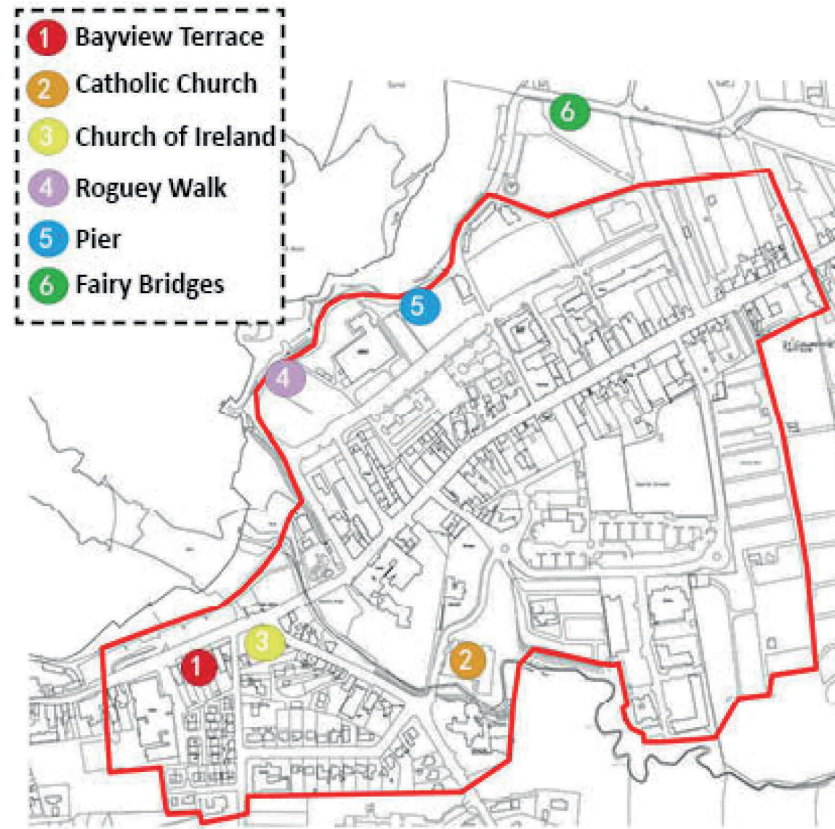
Background

Bundoran is the most southerly town in County Donegal, on the west coast of Ireland. The town, which was originally two separate villages, is widely regarded to have been established by the Viscount Enniskillen when he chose to locate his summer home there in 1777 before its expansion as a seashore resort with the arrival of the railway.



Historic map of Bundoran

Today, the town has a population of under 2,000 people, however, as a popular seaside resort, this increases significantly during the summer. The influx of people are accommodated in holiday homes, hotels and caravan parks. Tourism has been at the heart of the local economy. Bundoran is a world-renowned surfing area and was listed by National Geographic magazine in 2012 as one of the World's Top 20 Surf Towns.

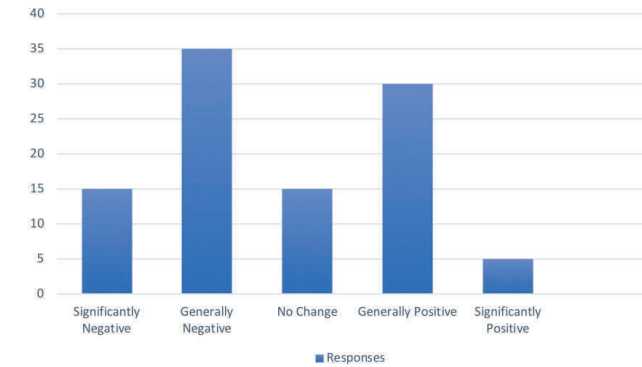




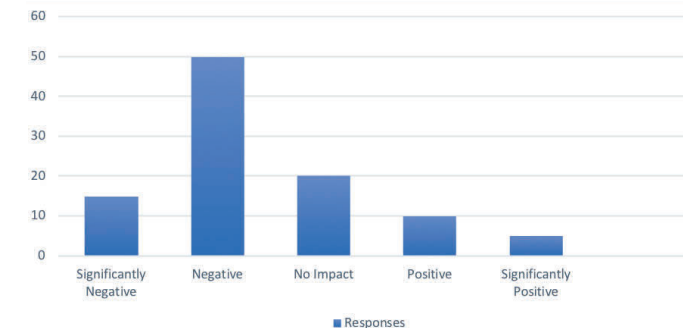
Context



There was not a conclusive answer to the question regarding the nature of the changes within the town in the last 20 years. 35% thought that the changes that had occurred were generally negative, whilst 30% stated that they had been generally positive.



45% of people questioned had not noticed any change in activity in the town since the announcement of Brexit; however, 50% believed that the forthcoming exit of Northern Ireland from the European Union would have a negative impact on Bundoran town centre.



Town Centre Land Use Map

10% Ground Floor Retail Vacancy

As the land use map shows, the town centre provides a diverse range of tourist facilities ranging from accommodation to entertainments such as amusements. Main Street, otherwise referred to as the 'Golden Mile', is where such entertainment developments are concentrated.



LEGEND

- COMPARISON
- CONVENIENCE
- RETAIL SERVICE
- OTHER RETAIL
- LEISURE SERVICES
- FINANCIAL & BUSINESS
- HEALTH SERVICES
- PUBLIC SERVICE
- RELIGIOUS SERVICE
- VACANT UNIT
- STORAGE
- RESIDENTIAL
- OPEN SPACE
- OTHER BUILDINGS
- CAR PARK

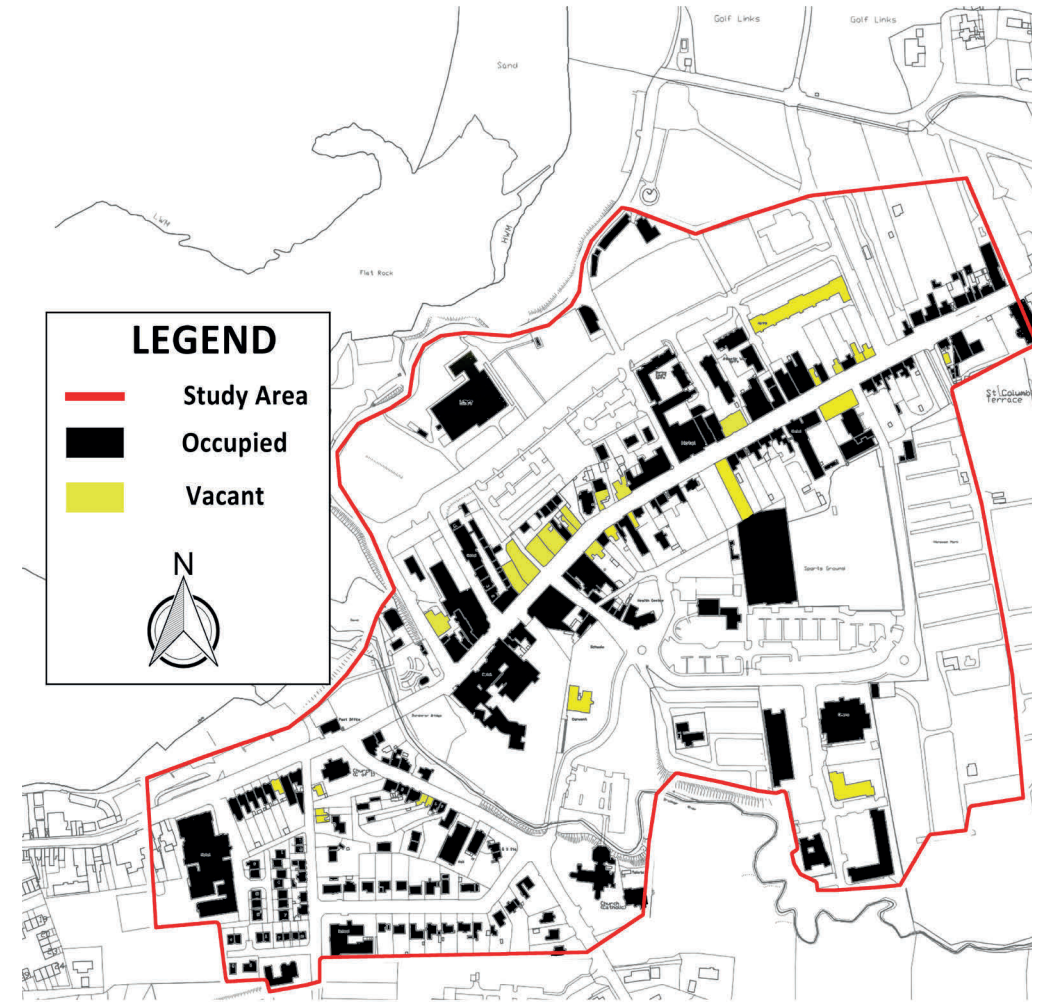
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Seasonal Vacancy

Whilst Bundoran can be a vibrant town in summer months, the seasonality of the tourism can lead to high vacancy rates in the low season. At the time of data collection (February 2019), the vacancy rate was 15.5% for the Golden Mile.



Strategy Map

The strategy for Bundoran focuses on maximising the town’s primary asset: its natural environment and dramatic landscape and seascape setting. Other proposals focus on the need to consider how its surface level car parks could be utilised more optimally and how community infrastructure could be improved.

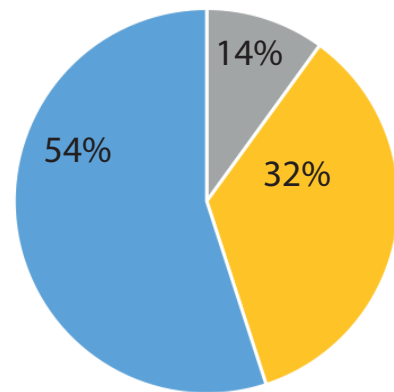
The potential to promote active transport and improved cycle infrastructure through the development of Wild Atlantic Way cycle route and Cross-Border Great Northern Greenway are also recommended.



Heritage and Tourism

Research by QUB concluded that access to Tullan Strand and the nearby Fairy Bridges was a barrier to tourism development and made it difficult for locals to access the famous surf break. 90% of those questioned stated that walkable environments were important or very important in creating a better living environment and due to the prominence of surfing in the area it is important that appropriate facilities are provided. These include public toilets, outdoor showers, lockers to hold valuables whilst in the water and an easily accessible pathway to the beach.

The importance of walkable environment in contributing to a better living environment



■ Very Unimportant ■ Unimportant ■ Neutral ■ Important ■ Very Important



Tullan Strand



Access to the beach



Insufficient protection of built heritage

Issue	Lack of infrastructure for adequate promotion of natural heritage
Policy Aim	Protection of natural and built heritage through planning conditions, no development ones and community liaison.
Preferred Option	Develop site sensitive facilities that serve both locals and visitors.



Heritage and Tourism - Proposal 1: Surfer friendly facilities

Due to the prominence of surfing within Bundoran it is important that appropriate facilities are provided. These include public bathrooms and outdoor showers as well as lockers to hold valuables whilst in the water.

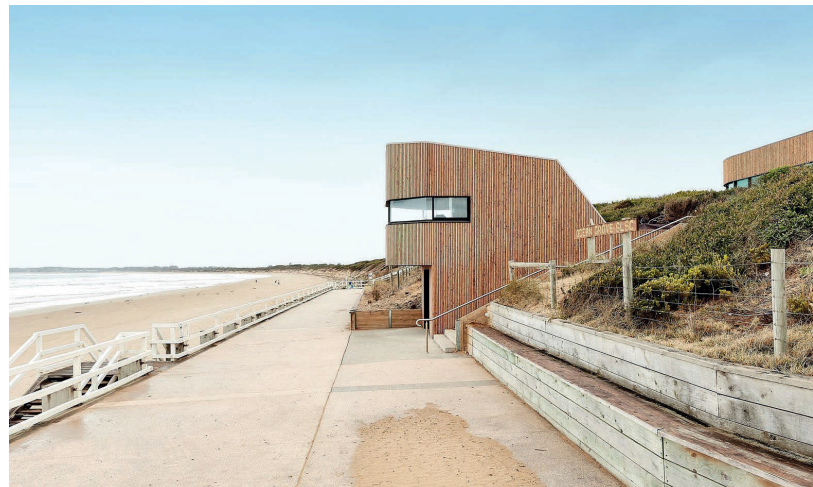


Possibilities exist to expand this proposal with the phased development of associated tourist facilities such as a tourist information centre, parking, a small gift shop or coffee shop, increased signage to points of interest as well as the installation of public art. It is important that these are sensitive to the natural environment.

Coach parking was highlighted as a key need for the area and design of this should be sensitive to the natural environment, similar to the development at the Cliffs of Moher. Other attractions could be added to further the tourist experience including as the installation of public art such as the yellow frame capturing Table



EastBeachcafeinLittlehamptonincludedby Thomas Heatherwick



Ocean Grove Surf Life saving club in Barwon Coast, Australia

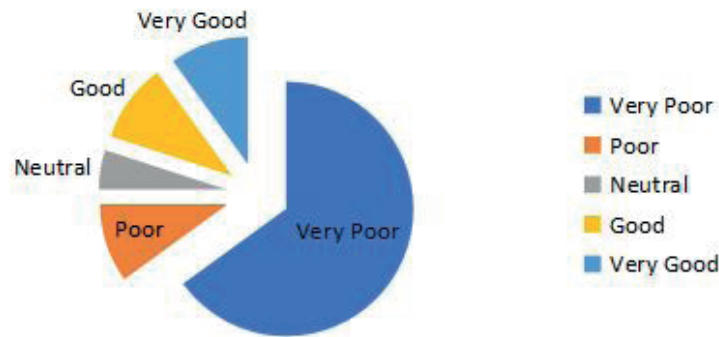


Yellow frame in Cape Town, South Africa.



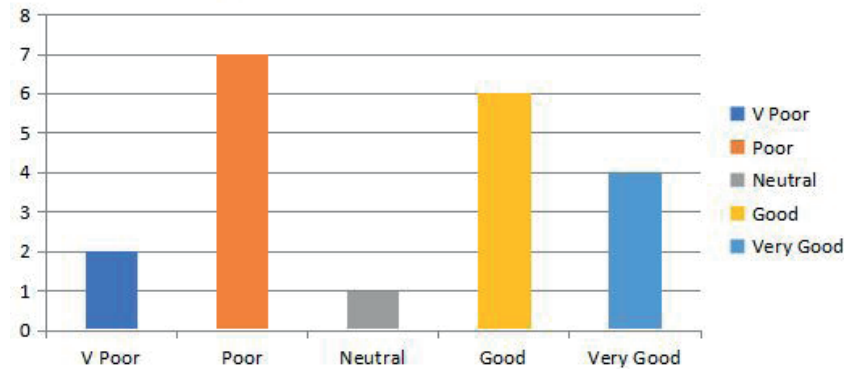
Commercial and Retail

How good are the Restaurants in Bundoran?



65% of those surveyed thought the options for eating out in Bundoran were limited.

How good are the Bars in Bundoran?



Approximately 50% of people surveyed thought that the atmosphere of Bars in Bundoran needed to improve.



A typical cafe in Bundoran

Issue	Absences of award winning restaurants within Bundoran town centre
Policy Aim	To facilitate development of ancillary tourism attractions (e.g. restaurants, cafes, bars, tourist accomodation) in a manner consistent with the brand identity of the Wild Atlantic Way.
Preferred Option	Implement a branding strategy to highlight Bundoran as a quality food orientated destination (e.g. Kinsale or Cornwall).



Commercial and Retail - Proposal 2: Incubation retail space at coastal car park

The land use map of Bundoran shows a high provision of car parking within the town and throughout the winter months this is largely underutilised and vacant space as shown in the images below. It is proposed to repurpose the seafront car park as pop up incubation units to allow artists and local retailers to market their products more effectively.

The suggested proposal has been successful elsewhere, for example Project 24 in Bangor, County Down (shown below) where residual spaces have been transformed into a cultural hub.



Town Centre Living



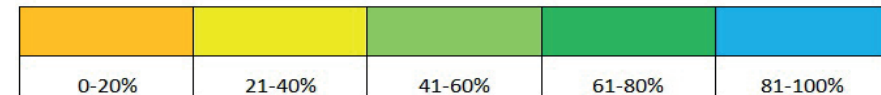
A map showing town centre facilities



Poor quality apartments in Bundoran

The majority of those questioned believed that all the topics were important or very important in contributing to a better living environment. 100% thought that affordable housing and health services were very important.

How important do you think the following factors are to making Bundoran town centre a better living environment? (%)					
	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important
Affordable Housing	0	0	0	0	100
Access Schools	0	0	0	30	70
Health Services	0	0	0	0	100
Open Space	0	0	20	45	25
Walkable Environments	0	0	10	35	55
Leisure and Play Services	0	0	0	30	70
Quality Public Realm	0	0	10	50	40
Quiet Streets	0	0	20	50	30
Safety	0	0	0	10	90

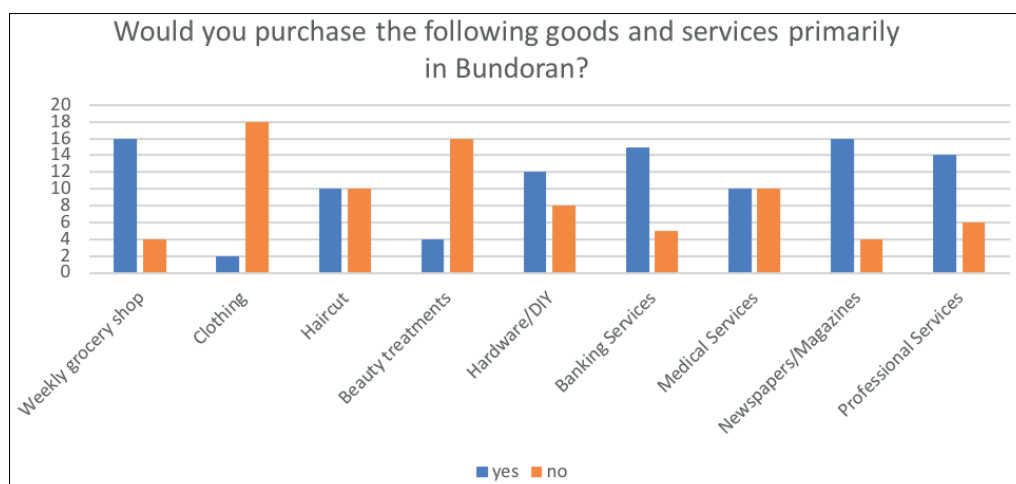


Issue	Inadequate provision of high-quality mixed-use developments
Policy Aim	Provide high quality, high density sustainable housing with the town centre to reduce urban sprawl.
Preferred Option	To ensure greatest efficiency in the use of land and to reduce urban sprawl, densities of 35-50 units per hectare will be required.

Town Centre Living - Proposal 3: The creation of a community hub

The proposed Community Hub is multipurpose and would provide a range of services that reflect local need. The Hubs utilise existing buildings and land with a focus on community led regeneration and is an alternative approach to service delivery that is underpinned by community involvement and partnership.

By establishing a Community Hub, Bundoran can benefit from allowing members of the community a direct input into service provision decisions. The Hub offers the opportunity to give everyone a voice and creates a greater community spirit in the town.



The figures in the graph highlight a gap in service and retail provision within Bundoran town centre with a large proportion of those questioned choosing to leave the town in search of these facilities elsewhere with clothing and beauty treatments most poorly catered for in Bundoran.



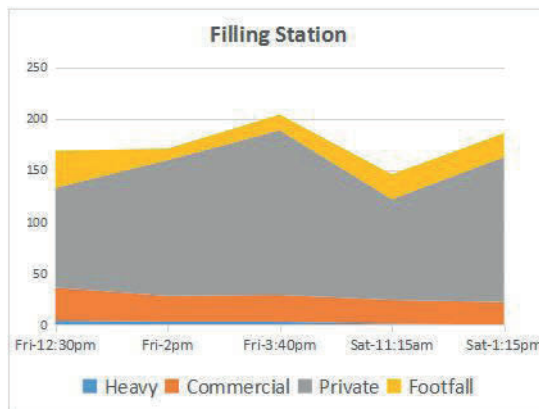
Movement and Accessibility



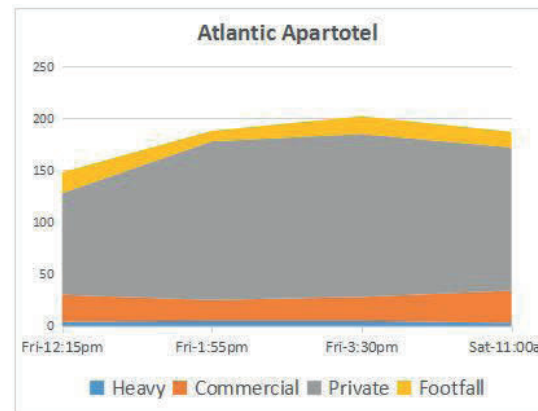
Counts were conducted at three key points (Tourist Office, the Atlantic Apartotel, the Filling Station) for pedestrian footfall and vehicle numbers at specified times on Friday 8th and Saturday 9th February. The footfall next to the tourist office is the highest count of all three locations, which shows this is the busiest area of Bundoran. These graphs indicate that Bundoran is heavily reliant on private transport as public transport provision is limited.

Issue	Inadequate provision of walking and cycling infrastructure within the area.
Policy Aim	To promote walking, cycling and other sustainable modes of transport.
Preferred Option	Introduce sustainable infrastructure of cycling lanes, shelters, bike stands and safe walking and cycling areas around Bundoran.

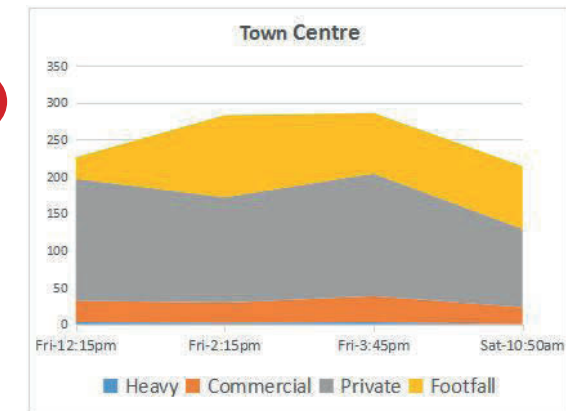
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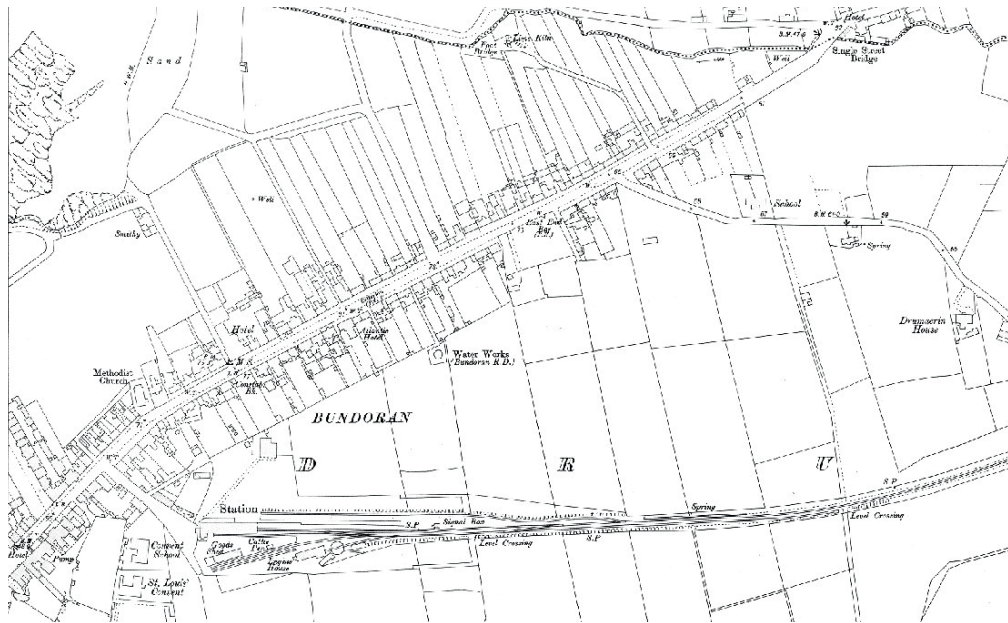


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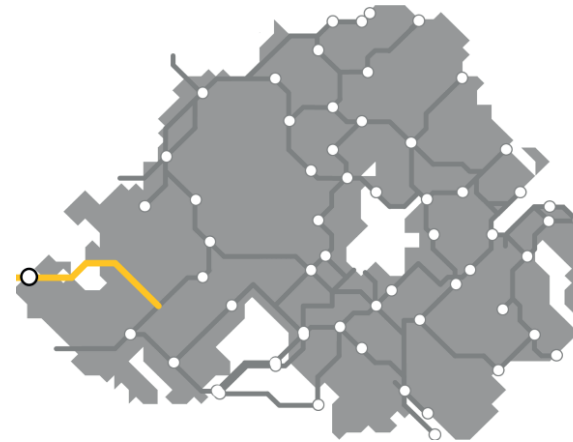




Great Northern Greenway



A map showing where the railway was in Bundoran



Belleek - Ballinamallard Greenway

The improved cycle path along the Wild Atlantic Way from Tullan Strand past Rougey into the town centre could potentially link into the Great Northern Greenway, which would link from Bundoran to Ballyshannon over the border into Belleek. Work on the viability of the section in Northern Ireland has already been completed. This project could draw upon best practice from the popular Great Western Greenway in Mayo and Waterford Greenway and connect the Fermanagh Lakelands to the Wild Atlantic Way.



Bundoran Train Station



Belleek Train Station



A former railway bridge for the Great Northern Railways near Ballyshannon to Bundoran road





Movement and Accessibility - Proposal 4: Coastal Cycle paths Concept



Recommendations

Towns	Proposal	Timescale	Next Step
Donegal Town	1. Bank Walk	Short to medium term	Improve signage, footpath quality and access
	2. Pop up shops	Immediate	Secure funding for temporary uses
	3. Enhance leisure services	Medium term	Development of Leisure facilities such as cinema and leisure centre
	4. Public realm improvements	Short to medium term	Prioritise interventions to improve accessibility and quality of public realm
Ballyshannon	1. Clock Tower	Immediate	Secure funding for building condition and feasibility survey
	2. Bakery Redevelopment	Immediate	Identify vacant historic buildings that could be converted for new uses
	3. Affordable and tourist housing	Medium term	Ensure that new residential developments include affordable units
	4. Extend cycling infrastructure	Medium term	To be considered in conjunction with Bundoran 4 to improve accessibility and encourage tourism and development
Bundoran	1. Surfer friendly developments	Short to medium term	Phased improvements from environmental improvements to the provision of world class facilities befitting the town's global significance for surfers
	2. Incubation retail space	Immediate	To be piloted in off season and with events
	3. Creation of a community hub	Immediate	To be considered by the town team
	4. Cycle paths / Greenway	Short to medium term	Wild Atlantic Way improvements to be prioritised. Feasibility studies for Great Northern Greenway to be funded in short term by Fáilte Ireland.

