



FUTURE Ballyshannon

A Regeneration Strategy & Action Plan



Comhairle Contae
Dhún na nGall
Donegal County Council

GMI Design
Associates

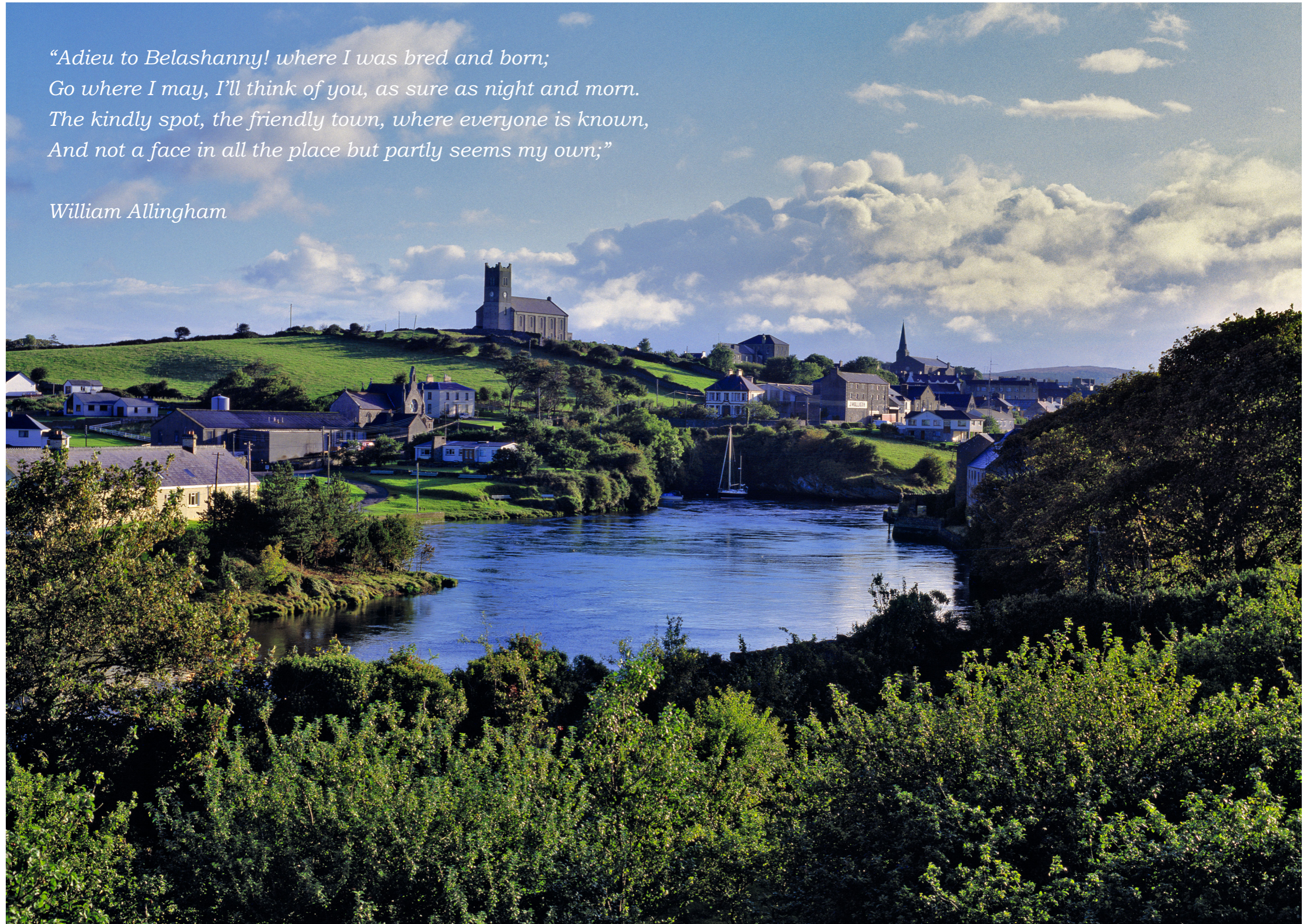


Ballyshannon Town Centre Regeneration Strategy & Action Plan

April 2022

*“Adieu to Belashanny! where I was bred and born;
Go where I may, I’ll think of you, as sure as night and morn.
The kindly spot, the friendly town, where everyone is known,
And not a face in all the place but partly seems my own;”*

William Allingham



Section



An introduction to
the Regeneration
Strategy &
Action Plan for
Ballyshannon Town
Centre

The background, purpose & process

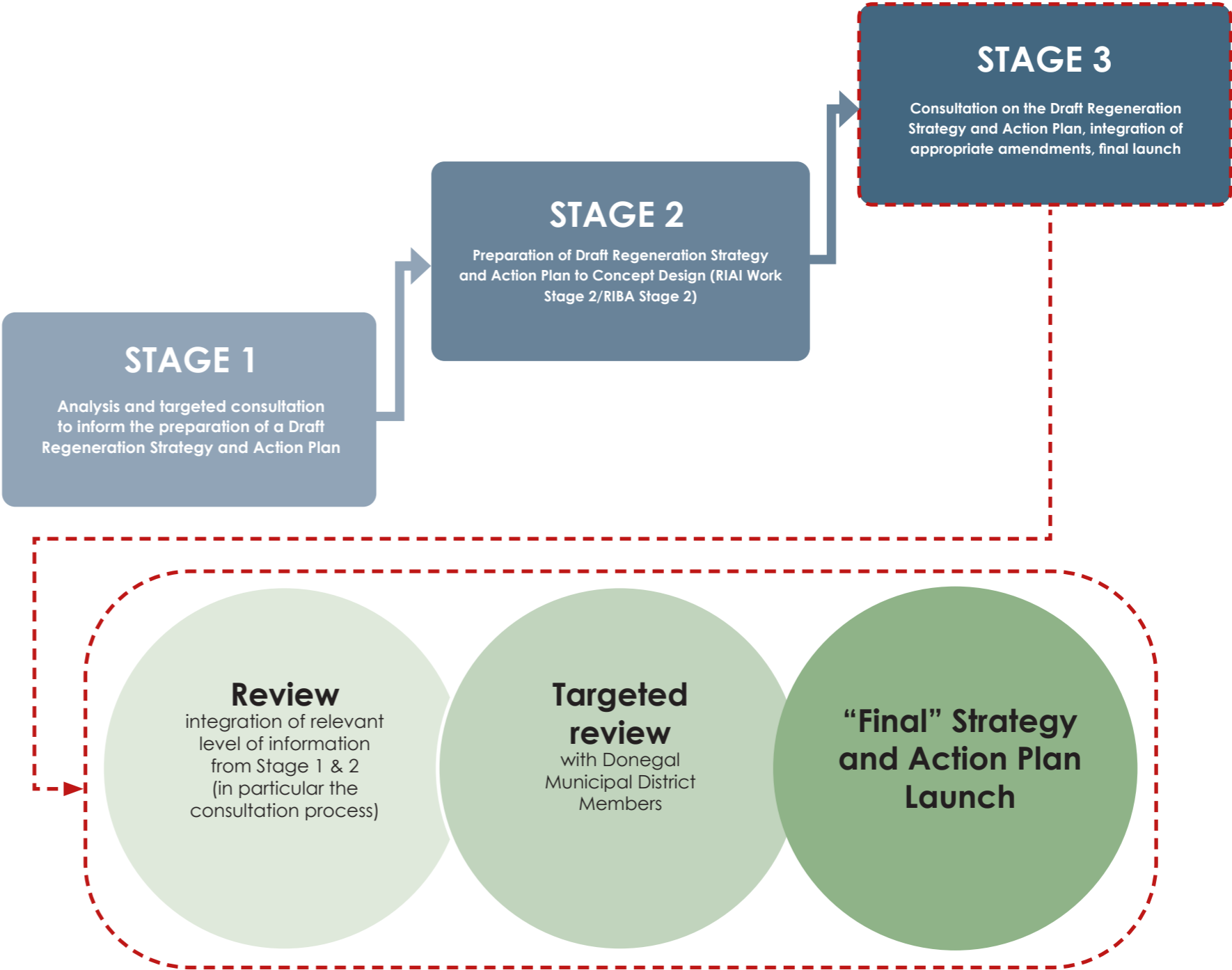
This Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan (hereafter referred to as the "Ballyshannon Town Centre RS&AP" or "the/this Strategy") identifies a range of regeneration priorities for Ballyshannon Town Centre. These are a result of the prior two stages of the process and includes a thorough analysis/review of the state and functioning of the town centre; its physical, economic and policy/legislative context; and a targeted and robust consultation process. Stage 1 highlighted Ballyshannon's many assets, including its attractive coastal and riverside setting, its built and cultural heritage; its success as a festival and events destination; and its strategic location at a 'gateway' to Donegal. It also confirmed particular issues impacting on the town centre including vacancy and dereliction; and the lack of particular town centre features such as a major retailer, a co-ordinated tourism offer, a pleasant pedestrian environment, good quality town centre housing and public space. Stage 2 involved the preparation of a Draft Strategy based upon the findings of Stage 1. This draft was then subject to extensive consultation with the various Stakeholders, interest groups and general public, resulting in some adjustments and this final version.

It is recognised that there is a need for intervention and to have a Strategy in place to address the challenges that the town centre faces over the coming years, and to unlock the great potential that the place has in an ambitious yet realistic and sustainable manner.

The Strategy has been developed to help drive revitalisation. It is a regeneration focused road-map that identifies a range of ambitious yet fairly realistic potential improvements and new developments to help regenerate the town resulting in environmental, economic and social benefits. It also aims to be a catalyst for further benefits thereby strengthening the capacity of the town centre to perform competitively as an important Strategic Town and likewise addressing local needs.

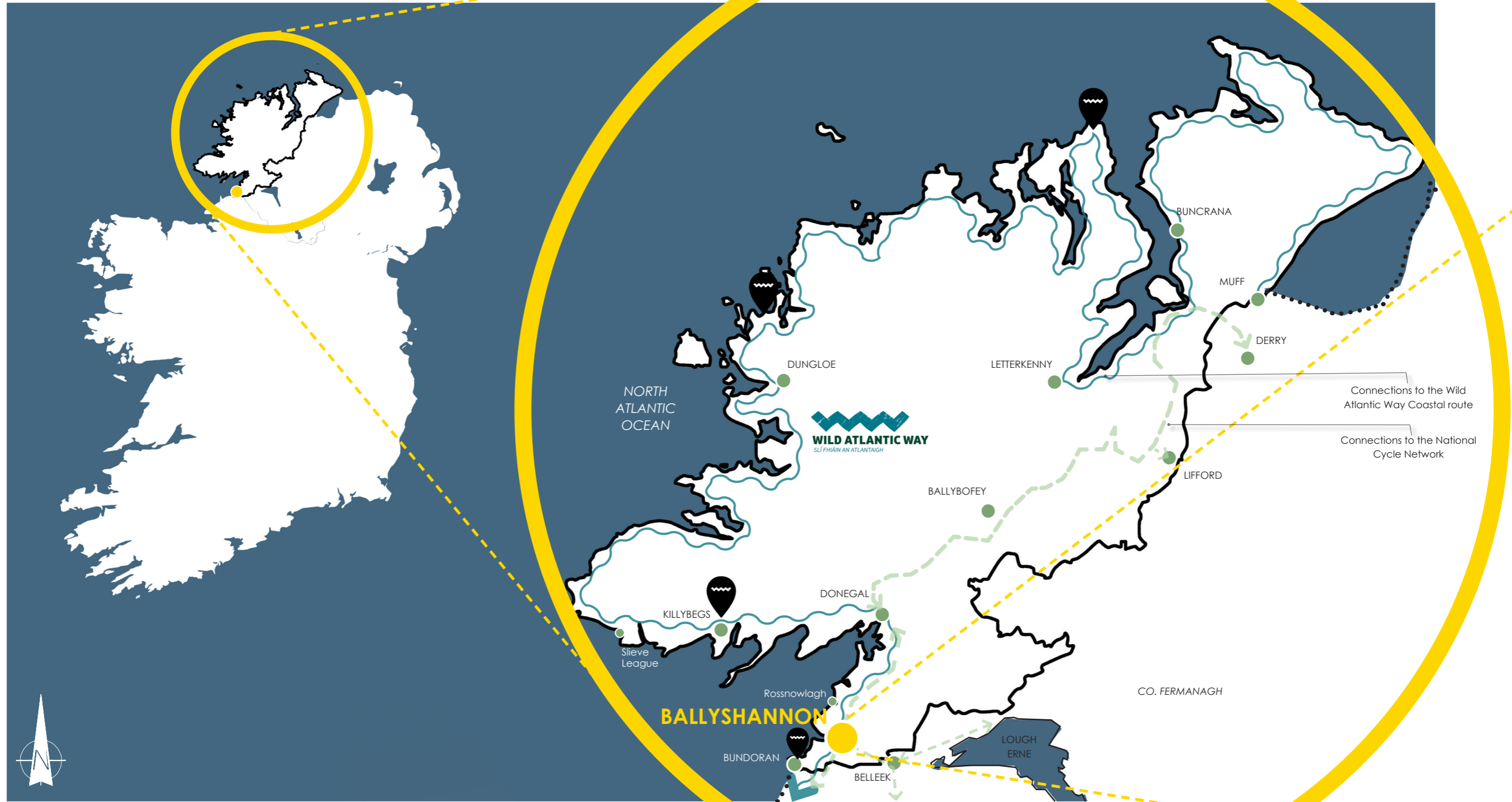
The Strategy suggests a vision, objectives, and priorities which aims to make the most of the assets and to address the issues arising from the Stage 1 & 2 analysis, draft and consultation process. It goes onto identify key actions for the town centre to support the sustainable regeneration of the town up to 2040 and beyond. Using the "traffic light" method, indicative priority, timeframe and cost bands have been identified for each action. As appropriate some of the actions have been developed to concept design stage, demonstrating the key design principles required, such as appropriate access, movement, layout, form etc.

It is important that it is recognised that the Strategy is also flexible and that priorities can and will change during the lifetime of the Strategy, and alternative actions and designs may also become more appropriate in the advancement of Ballyshannon Town Centre.



The process of the Ballyshannon RS&AP.

Ballyshannon & the study area



Ballyshannon in the context of Ireland and Co. Donegal (nts)



Ballyshannon Town Centre
(scale 1:5000)

The vision

*“Twenty years from now, Ballyshannon will be renowned as a **vibrant and prosperous place** which embraces its **rich history/heritage** and **harnesses its unique social character** and **physical attributes** capitalising on its location on the banks of the River Erne and at the mouth of the Erne Estuary.*

*The historic town centre will be enhanced to create a place that is **accessible** and **connected**, demonstrating its own **local distinctiveness, unique heritage, and character**, and supporting appealing **opportunities for employment, living and activities for visitors and residents of all ages.***

*Ballyshannon will be a place residents are **proud to live and work** in and **visitors are drawn to with animated, inclusive and socially cohesive spaces and streets** where people, businesses and amenities flourish as the centre of life for a revitalised and prosperous local community.*

*The **local economy will be regenerated by welcoming more visitors and new residents** to Ballyshannon and they, along with the existing community, will be invited and encouraged to explore, learn and celebrate the valuable assets and unique heritage of Ballyshannon together.”*



The objectives & priorities

The delivery of this vision will require significant progress on the following strategic regeneration objectives and priorities:

Theme 1
The Setting -
The Erne, amenity &
recreation

Objective:
 "Safeguard and utilise the town's natural assets, with particular focus on the River Erne and its setting, including the estuary, the Mall Quay and the coastal links."

Theme 2
The Place -
Placemaking &
public realm

Objectives:
 "Deliver integrated high-quality multi-functional public spaces designed for the pedestrian with a focus on improving aesthetics, biodiversity, amenity, recreation and civic inclusiveness."
 "Address issues with town centre function and aesthetics including vacant, derelict and physically obsolete buildings and deliver the redevelopment of existing cleared and underused sites."

Theme 3
Connections -
Transport &
movement

Objective:
 "Create a pedestrian and cyclist friendly environment with permeable streets and spaces; improve public transport facilities; ensure the essential needs of car drivers and passengers are sensitively provided for; and strengthen links and physical connections between the town centre and the wider area."

Theme 4
Heritage -
Built & cultural

Objective:
 "Capitalise on and enhance the town's historic features and cultural heritage through building conservation and revitalisation and by growing the town's festival culture and promoting its status as 'Ireland's Oldest Town'."

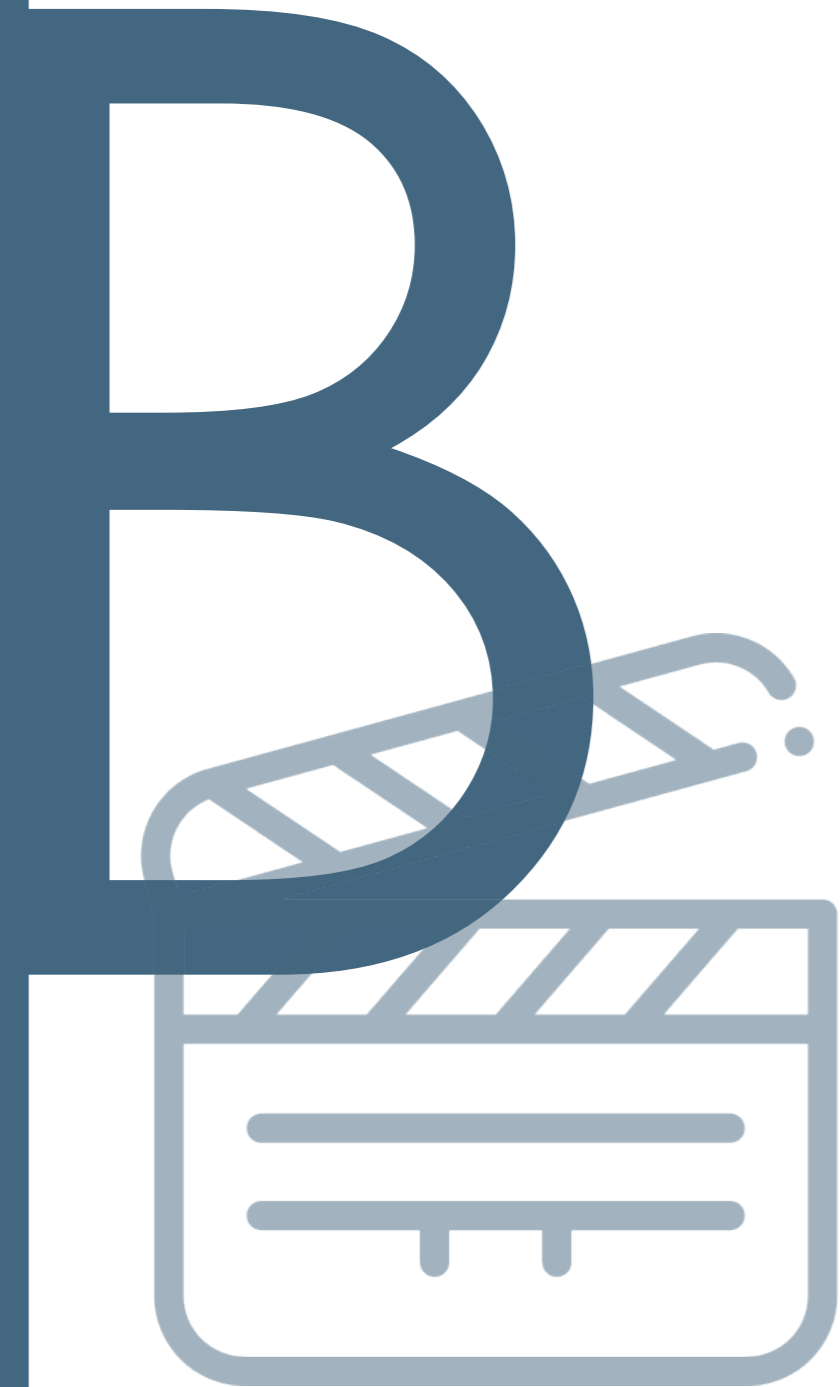
Theme 5
The Economy -
Business & tourism

Objective:
 "Use regeneration and placemaking to support and assist the development and enhancement of new and existing businesses and tourism uses."

Theme 6
The Community -
Sustainability &
facilities

Objective:
 "Nurture and strengthen the strong community spirit, & high levels of participation & activity through the provision of quality services, facilities, & environmental enhancements in a sustainable way that will improve people's quality of life."

Section



“The potential actions, categorised under the themes and objectives that they aim to fulfil, with further details of these actions and accompanying concept designs where appropriate.”

The Action Plan & Concept Designs

The “Actions” - A summary table

The adjacent table summarises the identified potential actions, relating to the development themes. This table indicates how needed the action is (priority); challenging but realistic potential timescales for delivery, the indicative cost to complete and the central stakeholders that would need to be involved.

Priority

1 = Highly desirable to deliver ASAP
 2 = Lower need to deliver ASAP
 3 = Least need to deliver ASAP

Potential Timescale

Short: within 5 years
 Medium: 5 to 10 years
 Long: beyond 10 years

Potential Indicative Cost

Low: < €1m
 Medium: between €1m to €5m
 High: > €5m

Central Stakeholders

Donegal County Council
 Regeneration & Development Team - DCC Regen
 Roads Department - DCC Roads
 Housing Department - DCC Housing
 Cultural Services (incl. Heritage) - DCC Cultural
 Community Development Department - DCC Community
 Economic Development Department (incl. Tourism) - DCC Economic
 Planning Department (incl. Conservation) - DCC Planning

Department of Rural and Community Development - DRCD

Faillte Ireland

Community based organisations - including Ballyshannon Regeneration Group and Erne Enterprises

Private - including landowners / developers / and individuals

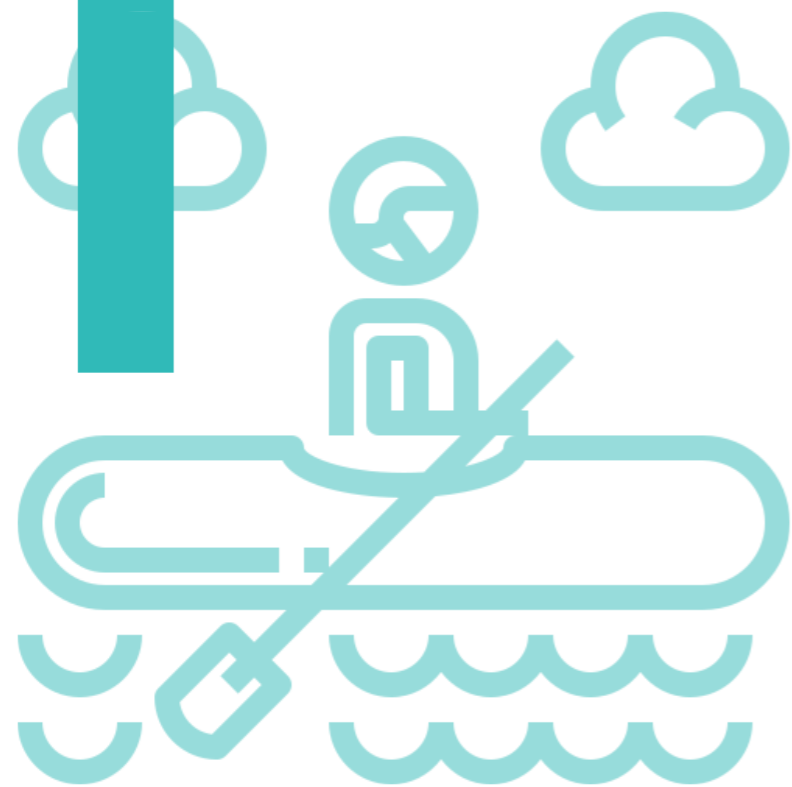
The “Actions” - The “detail”

The following pages provide further detail on the Actions, categorised under the various themes. Narrative, images, infographics and design concepts are included where appropriate in order to explain the actions. All design concepts are purposefully sketched, as they are initial ideas, and will be subject to design development as the action progresses.

Theme	Potential Project Description	Priority Level	Potential Timescale	Indicative Cost	Central Stakeholders
1	Improve the visual connection with the River Erne and create walking and cycle loops that incorporate the riverside embankment.	High	Short	Low	DCC Regen
	Revitalise the Mall Quay area, providing suitable recreational, leisure or other suitable uses.	Medium	Medium	Medium	DCC Community
	Redevelop the Former Mill and Distillery at Assaroe Road (Heitons) site with an appropriate mix of heritage led uses.	Medium	Long	High	Private
	Conserve and provide opportunities to enhance the biodiversity and setting of the river and its margins for leisure and educational purpose.	Medium	Short	Low	DCC Regen, Community Groups
2	Transform the Market Yard into a central civic and interaction space which will become an attractive focal point of the town centre providing a shared place for community activities, gatherings and events.	High	Short	Medium	DCC Regen, DCC Community, DCC Roads
	Revitalise the Gables area, attracting additional food / drink and entertainment establishments, and re-establishing the social purpose and commercial function of this space.	Medium	Medium	Medium	DCC Regen, DCC Community, DCC Roads
	Undertake heritage-led streetscape enhancements throughout, to restore Ballyshannon's character and enhance its setting; historic buildings and features; incl. re-surfacing, landscaping, furniture, lighting, public art, re-instatement of traditional shopfronts, signage and an appropriate vibrant/heritage colour scheme. Particular focus areas incl. The Mall, Castle St, Main St. and The Port.	High	Long	High	DCC Regen, DCC Community, DCC Roads
	Facilitate new build housing on the former Millstone Hotel Site and other suitable sites to enable town centre living.	Medium	Medium	Medium	DCC Housing, Housing Body
3	Redevelop the former Ballyshannon Bakery Site with an appropriate mix of town centre uses.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Private
	Facilitate the three bridges walk / cycleway and enhance connections to the wider greenways and blueways and to schools and key sites outside the town centre.	High	Medium	Medium	DCC Regen, DCC Roads
	Develop a walkable town centre through repair / improvement of footpaths and provision of safe crossing points.	High	Short	Low	DCC Regen, DCC Community, DCC Roads
	Enhance accompanying facilities for cyclists throughout the town centre, such as appropriate parking / secure locking points, repair hub, and lighting etc.	Medium	Medium	Low	DCC Regen, DCC Community, DCC Roads
4	Enhance facilities for the users of public transport within the town.	Low	Short	Low	DCC Regen, DCC Community, DCC Roads, Bus Eireann
	Ensure the essential needs of car drivers and passengers are adequately provided for, including addressing congestion and provision of sufficient and attractive town centre car parking spaces.	Medium	Medium	Medium	DCC Regen, DCC Community, DCC Roads
	Maintain and enhance the historic character and identity of Ballyshannon through conservation of the built fabric and by prioritizing the refurbishment, repurposing and retrofitting of vacant, derelict and obsolete buildings and sites over new building and the promotion of LOTS in vacant upper floors.	High	Long	High	Private, DCC Cultural, DCC Planning
	Promote Ballyshannon's designation as a Historic/Heritage Town, its prestige as being thought to be Ireland's Oldest Town, its archaeological findings and potential, and its links to renowned people.	Medium	Short	Low	DCC Economic Dev, Discover Ballyshannon
5	Investigate the potential to expand or re-locate the museum.	Low	Short	Medium	Private, DCC Cultural, Failte Ireland
	Promote / support existing and potential festivals through appropriate placemaking and provision of facilities.	Medium	Short	Medium	Festival Committees, DCC Regen, DCC Cultural
	Investigate opportunities to enhance economic growth and job creation in Ballyshannon by exploring the potential for a 'Remote Working Hub' and suitable 'Enterprise Spaces' and by supporting existing and attracting new business and investment.	Medium	Short	Low	Private, DCC Economic
6	Investigate the potential for the introduction of an interactive tourist information point / hub.	Low	Short	Low	DCC Regen, DCC Cultural
	Communicate the identity of Ballyshannon by developing "The Ballyshannon Brand" and a specific tourism strategy	Medium	Short	Low	DCC Economic, Discover Ballyshannon, Failte Ireland
6	Establish a working group to develop a Ballyshannon 'Green Town' Plan.	Medium	Medium	Low	DCC Regen
	Improve existing and develop new community facilities and infrastructure, encouraging increased social inclusion stimulating community spirit and building personal and collective skills in turn contributing to an overall better quality of life within Ballyshannon.	Medium	Long	High	DCC Community, DCC Regen

Theme

1



“Safeguard and utilise the town’s natural assets, with particular focus on the River Erne and its setting, including the estuary, the Mall Quay and the coastal links.”

The Setting -
The Erne, amenity &
recreation

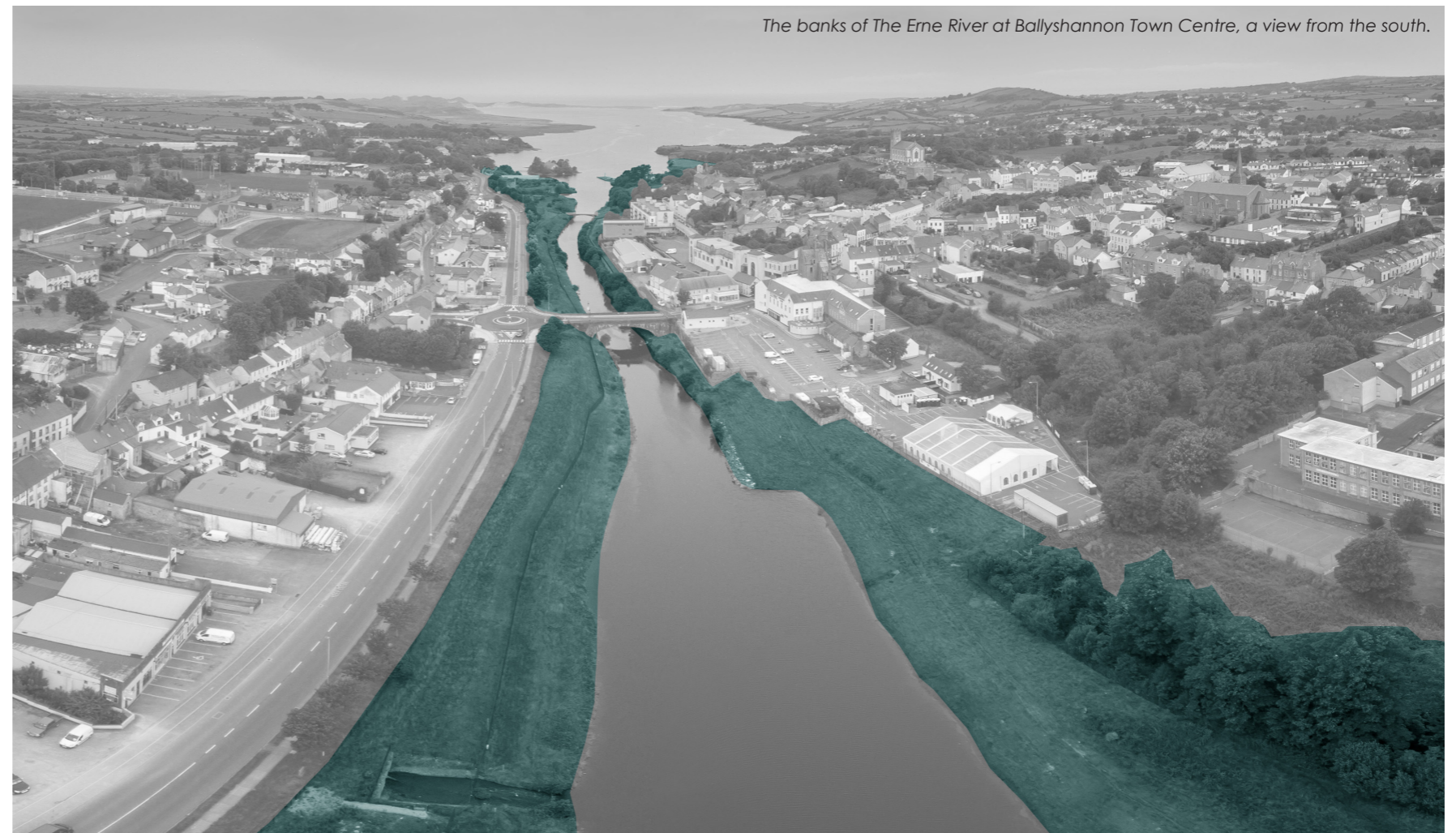
The connection with the River Erne

ACTION 1A:

“Improve the visual connection with the River Erne and create walking and cycle loops that incorporate the riverside embankment and enhance the natural setting of the river banks whilst ensuring a safe and practical environment in light of the working nature of the river.”

The River Erne is one of the most distinctive features associated with Ballyshannon. As it runs directly through the town centre, it presents both a number of opportunities and challenges. For example, the river has a very important working function in terms of its association with the Cathleen Fall's Hydro-dam. Some form of controlled access at this stretch in the river must be maintained by the regulating authority so that they can fulfil their commitments in relation to health and safety, and maintenance and efficiency of the working elements.

However, it is generally recognised by the local community and stakeholders that the margins of the river are great assets, and it is an ambition that they should, where possible and appropriate, be enhanced and utilized.



The banks of The Erne River at Ballyshannon Town Centre, a view from the south.

High	Short	Low
<p>DCC Regen; ESB</p>		

Potential enhancements

<p>Removal of unnecessary visual clutter such as signage, poles and posts etc.</p>	<p>New "riverbank" landscaping with appropriate indigenous species</p>	<p>Accompanying pedestrian/cycle-way facilities, such as seating, lighting, bins, wayfinding, educational and leisure points.</p>
<p>Where necessary, the use of a more visually sensitive and natural form of fencing, accompanied by hedge planting</p>	<p>Provision of a "mid-level" pedestrian/cycle-way (The 3 Bridges Looped Walk). The waters edge (lower level) is to close to working watercourse (H&S issues); and the upper level tends to be adjacent to the road and the unattractive environment created by adjacent traffic.</p>	

The connection with the River Erne (not to scale)

To potential recreation & leisure facilities at the "MALL QUAY"

1 no. option identified to connect / extend the Erne linear park with the Mall Quay.

The Mall roadside path.

- + can utilise existing route
- + least expense
- existing width of the road could be restrictive in providing full width cycle and walking lanes.

Pedestrian/cycle-way

The implementation of the 3 bridges walk/cycle pathway is a key ambition of the strategy. It will provide a loop via the town centre, east to west.

The path should be 3m wide for unsegregated pedestrian and cycle traffic. The surface should be finished in a suitable durable, slip resistant material such as bound gravel. There is also an ambition at areas towards the centre of the town to have a boardwalk section, which should also have an appropriate finish for bicycles.

Breakout spaces will be placed at certain points to enhance the recreational and amenity offering to include for e.g. picnic areas, planted areas & public artwork



Ambition to "link" to the Mall Quay with the existing pedestrian/cycle path with/via this site - some form of appropriate accompanying development could also be possible (identified as Opportunity Site 5 in Donegal County Council's Seven Strategic Towns Local Area Plan 2018-2024) (Note: this land is in private ownership).

Potential bridge/suspended walkway connection over the river.

- + attractive feature
- + most direct route
- significant expense
- potential significant ecological/archaeological mitigation required
- potential issues regarding access/land ownerships/safety in relation to ESB controlled/accessible areas and privately owned land.

Opportunity to highlight the historical location of Assaroo Falls and to potentially create some kind of feature (possibly interactive) which acknowledges its past form / relevance.

Ambition to "link" the "Heitons Site" with the existing pedestrian/cycle path, improving recreational value and permeability, however the site is in private ownership and it is essential that appropriate permissions/agreements / conditions etc. are sought/put in place.

To potential tourism & business facilities / "Bundoran Greenway"

Potential to create frontage and access at the "LEISURE CENTRE"

Creates an opportunity for synergy of uses where Leisure centre functions can utilise the access to the 3 bridges walk/run cycle. South facing frontage also creates a nicer micro-climate for outside dining / relaxing etc

Retain existing pedestrian & cycling links with The Mall



RIVER ERNE

A pedestrian bridge/suspended walkway link with the Mall Quay

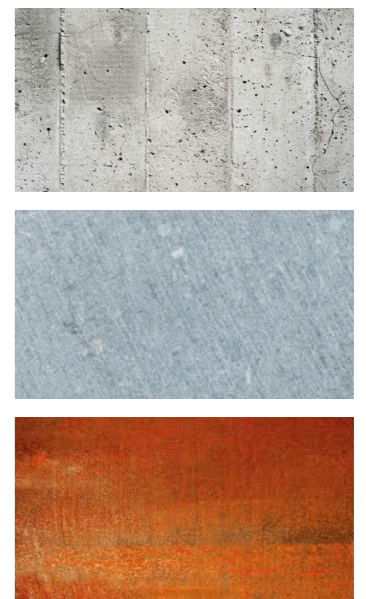
This is an ambitious option to link the Erne Linear Park with the Mall Quay. It is considered ambitious as it is likely to be an expensive option; also there could be assembly of land/ownership issues; and ecological/archaeological mitigation measures needing overcome. However it is prudent to mention, and investigate its feasibility further as it could be quite a feature in the landscape, and attractive for recreational/tourism use. Below is an example of a similar idea/structure in Wakefield.



Street furniture

To accompany the 3 bridges walk/cycle pathway a suite of new street furniture should be installed. This should include seating (spaced at least every 100m to achieve the towns Age Friendly ambitions); lighting (high / low level where appropriate); bins; wayfinding and information points.

It is essential that the design and finish of the street furniture is high quality, durable and easy to use. The finishes should relate to the place, for example the use of corten steel is a reference to the town industrial/port past and the Wild Atlantic Way suite of furniture. Concrete makes reference to the Hydro-dam and Limestone references the geology of the area.





The mid/upper levels

There is potential to provide the 3 bridges looped walk/cycle. Fencing with the lower levels is necessary, however it should be accompanied with appropriate indigenous landscaping.

Lighting

Important for security but lighting can also be attractive and unique. Options should be explored for the enhancement of the rivers feature such unique lighting for the Bridges, the Market Yard and potential viewing platform and the location of the former Assaroe Falls.



Potential to create access through the improved "MARKET YARD"

Creates clear, direct and convenient access from the proposed primary central civic space of the town with benefits to both the space and the linear park (e.g. information hub, changing/toilet facilities etc. etc.)

Potential viewing point / platform at the Market Yard, to achieve view of the Cathleen Falls Bridge, framing the Hydro dam beyond.

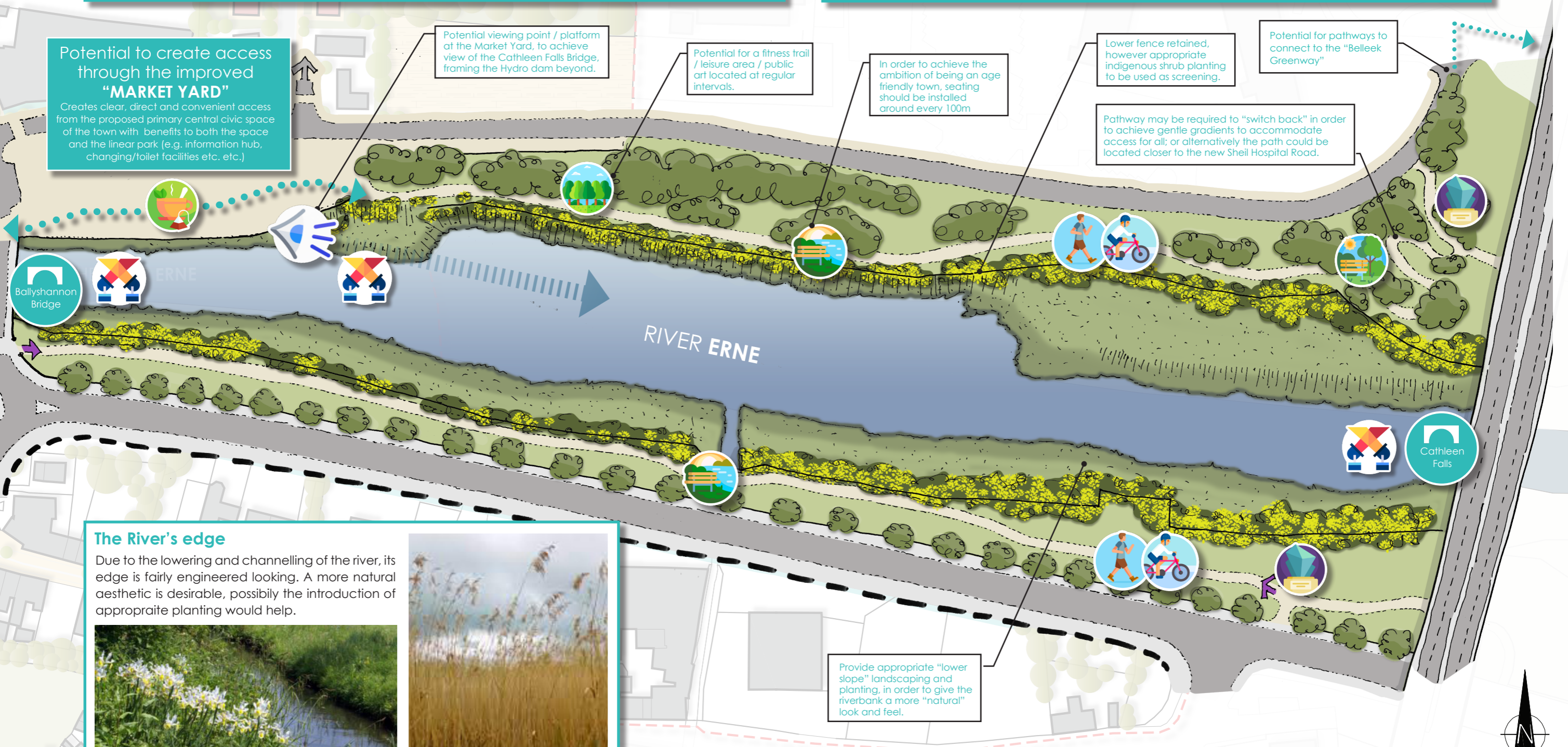
Potential for a fitness trail / leisure area / public art located at regular intervals.

In order to achieve the ambition of being an age friendly town, seating should be installed around every 100m

Lower fence retained, however appropriate indigenous shrub planting to be used as screening.

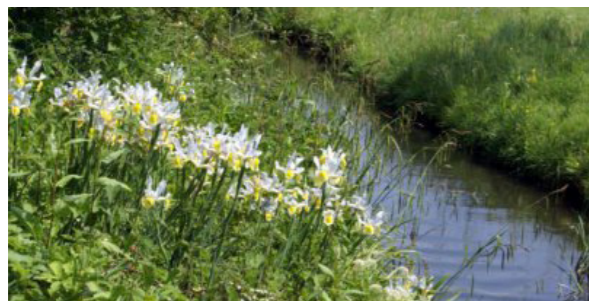
Potential for pathways to connect to the "Belleek Greenway"

Pathway may be required to "switch back" in order to achieve gentle gradients to accommodate access for all; or alternatively the path could be located closer to the new Sheil Hospital Road.



The River's edge

Due to the lowering and channelling of the river, its edge is fairly engineered looking. A more natural aesthetic is desirable, possibly the introduction of appropriate planting would help.



Provide appropriate "lower slope" landscaping and planting, in order to give the riverbank a more "natural" look and feel.

The "Linear park" - A conceptual General Arrangement (scale 1:1250)



Revitalise the Mall Quay

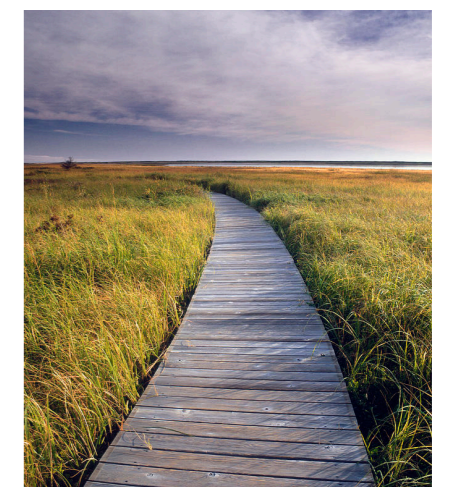
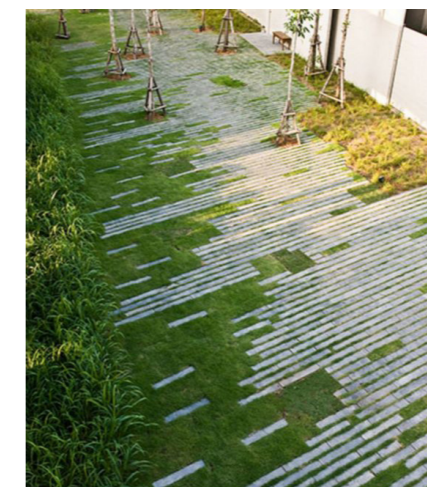
ACTION 1B:

“Revitalise the Mall Quay area (Opportunity sites 5 and 6), providing suitable recreational, leisure or other suitable uses to capitalise on this great location (e.g. parkland, marina/pontoon).”

The Mall Quay is located in an area of significant recreational potential as it avails of fantastic views of the Erne Estuary. It currently provides at its southern portion a slipway access to the water (it is the main crossing point to Inish Samier) and some informal car-parking. At its northern portion there is some formal car-parking; a playpark, handball alley and an area of open space.

In general the public realm at the site is fairly tired. The site lacks many of the basic facilities often associated with a quality public recreational space (for example permanent toilets, changing, signage and information etc.). Furthermore there is a lack of a gateway/entrance feature and a physical and visual disconnect between the northern (playpark, open space etc) and southern (slipway) portions of the site.

The site has significant potential in terms of enhancement of its recreational offer, and should be redeveloped in a sensitive manner in order to address the aforementioned shortcomings. There are partial walls in that area of old maritime buildings which should be incorporated into its re-development, and furthermore, archaeology and flood risk / any required mitigation measures must be considered. Some possible interventions are highlighted on the adjacent Concept Design.



Medium	Medium	Medium
<p>DCC Community; Private individuals / landowners</p>		



The Mall Quay enhancements moodboard

To Mall Quay Park North, with further car-parking; childrens play park; Handball Alley and potentially an interactive "Fairy Trail" and enhancements to the spaces.

Enhancement of connections to Buaille Bawns and potential for improved access and the setting (e.g. interactive signage, seating etc.) of this important historic area

Potential for an "urban sports" / adventure play facility / camping.

It is important to retain, repair & enhance existing walls associated with the former "Casworks".

Potential cafe / public toilets / changing facilities within the existing building footprint at the yard setting. The building can best avail of views, shelter and overlooking of public spaces.

Improve pedestrian / cycle route at the frontage of the site.

Potential to retain "boat yard" function, or provide additional amenity space (i.e. a walled garden/allotments).

FORMER BAKERY
should be developed as per the Seven Strategic Towns Plan (identified in the plan as Opportunity Site 6)

New gateway features, to include "welcome" signage.

Enhanced pedestrian/cycle way along The Mall, better connecting the area with the town centre.

Potential for a small/medium-scale mooring/marina facility within the area should be investigated further.

Cafe & external area can achieve water views

Picnic area and structured landscaping with boardwalks.

THE ERNE ESTUARY

New information point / potential "Wild Atlantic Way" "Wayfinder"!

Vehicle parking to achieve water views

Re-organised and defined car-parking area. Vehicles continue to face the water in order to avail of the views.

Retain, repair & enhance where required the existing slipways and quay.

provide a large turning space for cars/vehicles with boats; and areas of occasional parking to enjoy the view

Potential, however fairly ambitious, pedestrian / cycle connection with the "Erne Linear Park" (See Action 1A).



The "Mall Quay" - A conceptual General Arrangement (scale 1:500)

Potential redevelopment of the “Heitons” site

ACTION 1C:

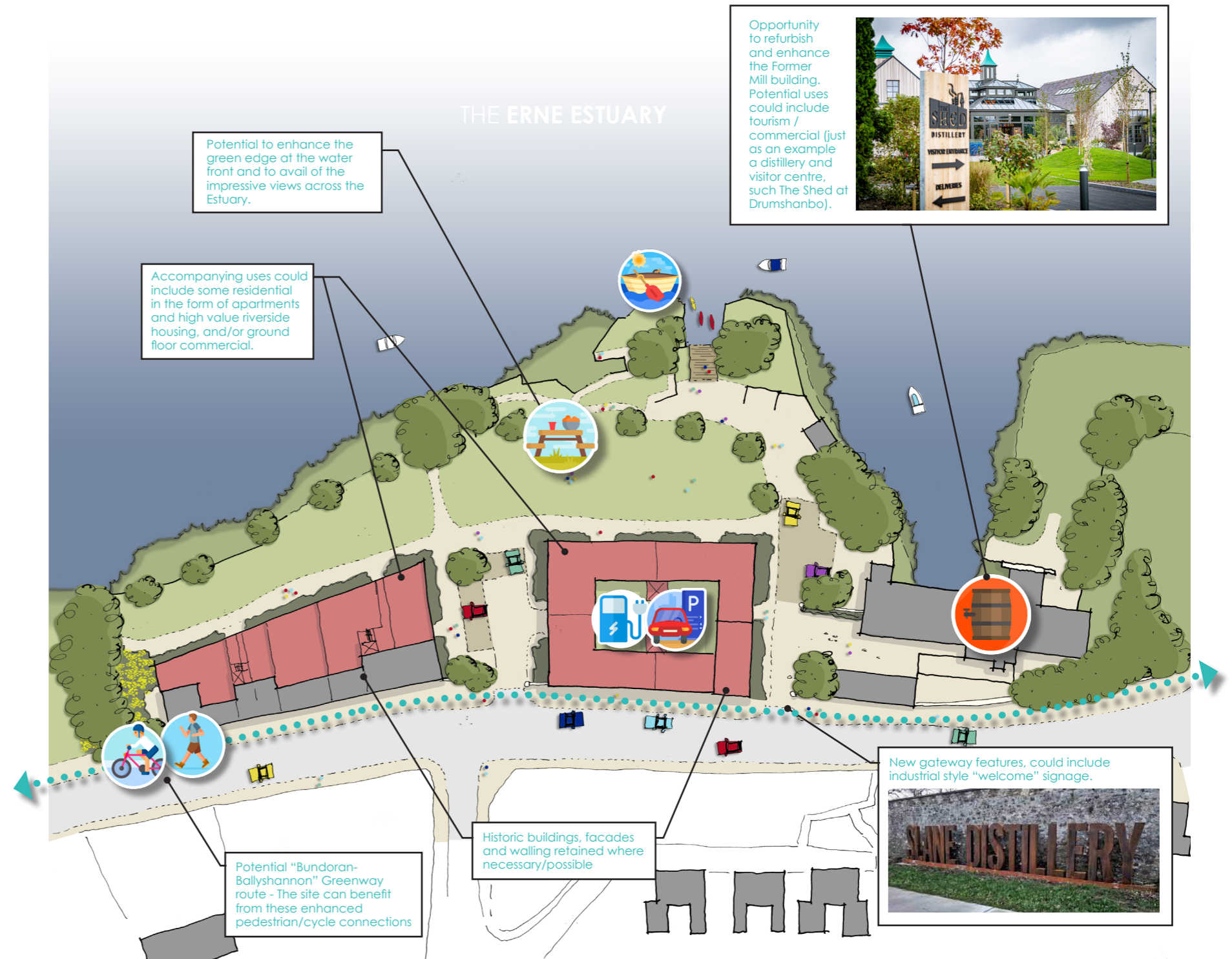
“Redevelop the Former Mill and Distillery at Assaroe Road (Heitons) opportunity site (Opportunity site 4), with an appropriate mix of heritage led uses including tourism related and associated commercial/ niche type activities together with potential for some residential development”

This 1 Ha. brownfield site was originally the location of a former mill and distillery and also housed the office of the Heitons Building Suppliers. It currently comprises of a number of partially demolished buildings and a structure that is on the Record of Protected Structures.

Given its waterfront location, its historical context and its proximity to the town centre, this site has the potential for a mix of development including tourism related and associated small scale commercial/ niche type activities together with potential for some residential development, as per the Seven Strategic Towns Local Area Plan 2018-2024.

It's redevelopment will require a heritage-led approach, and archaeology; ecology; and flood risk will need to be considered and possible subsequent mitigation measures be implemented in order to see this outstanding site fulfil its potential in creating a high quality place at the edge of the town centre.

Medium	Long	High
<p>Private individuals / landowners, assistance via DCC Regeneration Team where possible/appropriate</p>		



The “Heitons site” - A conceptual General Arrangement showing one potential option. Alternative uses and scales of development may also be appropriate (scale 1:1250)

Biodiversity at the River Erne

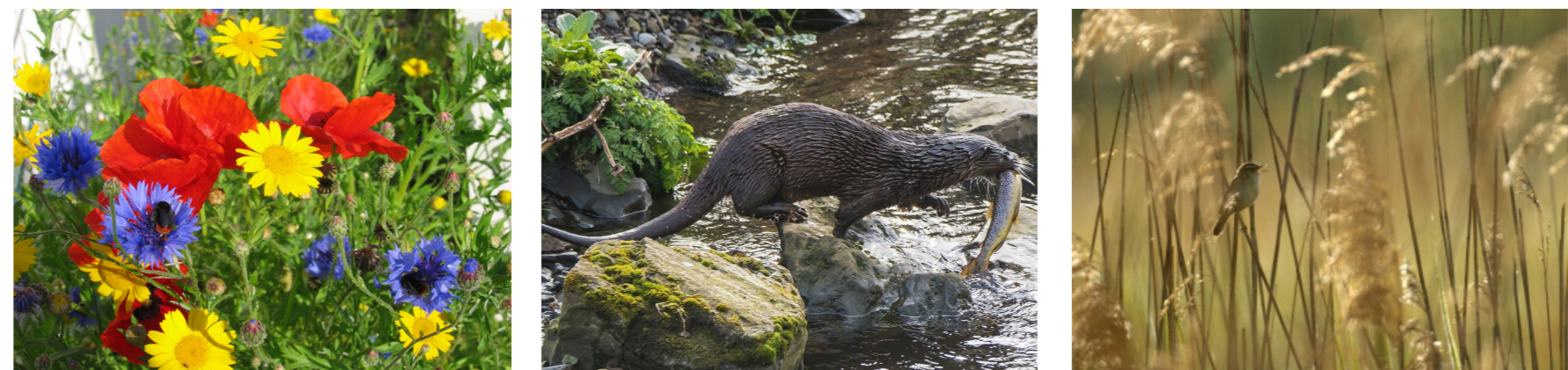
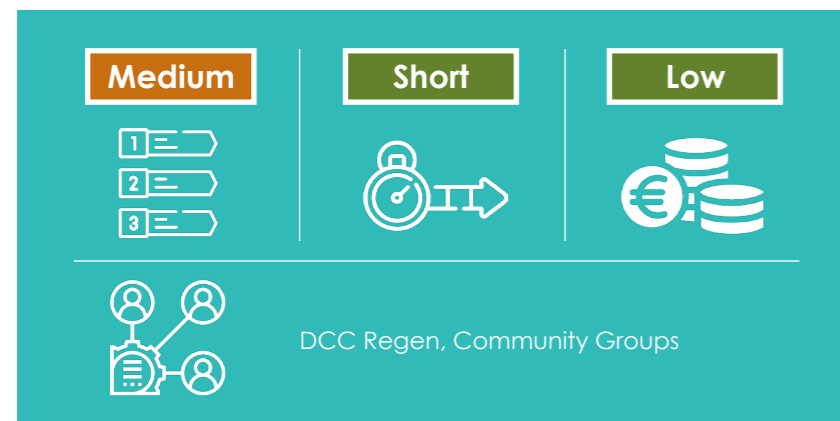
ACTION 1D:

“Conserve and provide opportunities to enhance the biodiversity and setting of the river and its margins for ecological, leisure and educational purposes.”

The current working function of the river has resulted in a somewhat engineered and sterile feel around the Erne’s embankments, where it flows through the town centre. It is important that this is addressed and that the natural setting and bio-diversity of the river is significantly enhanced so that flora and fauna can thrive, and the area is natural, welcoming and can contribute positively to the town.

Measures to achieve this could include increased tree planting/shrub provision. Vegetation on the river margin can provide valuable habitat and wildlife corridors, linking other habitat areas with the river. Riparian vegetation can also have significant benefits for people through its aesthetic value – increasing people’s enjoyment of the environment. Native species planting and a coordinated planting scheme would be an integral component of this approach. Also, the removal/more sensitive treatment of any existing physical impediments or structures from the river margins could be beneficial (e.g. fencing).

There is also an opportunity to educate visitors to the river corridor, including in relation to the use of particular bio-diversity features, and its history (e.g. the Hydro-Dam, the bridges, and Assoroe Falls). Information/viewing points could be incorporated in order to provide insights into these important features.



Infographic identifying the benefits of good river bio-diversity and images showing examples of indigenous flora and fauna.

Theme



“Deliver integrated high-quality multi-functional public spaces designed for the pedestrian with a focus on improving aesthetics, biodiversity, amenity, recreation and civic inclusiveness.”

“Address issues with town centre function and aesthetics including vacant, derelict and physically obsolete buildings and deliver the redevelopment of existing cleared and underused sites.”

The Place - Placemaking & public realm

The Market Yard as a central civic space

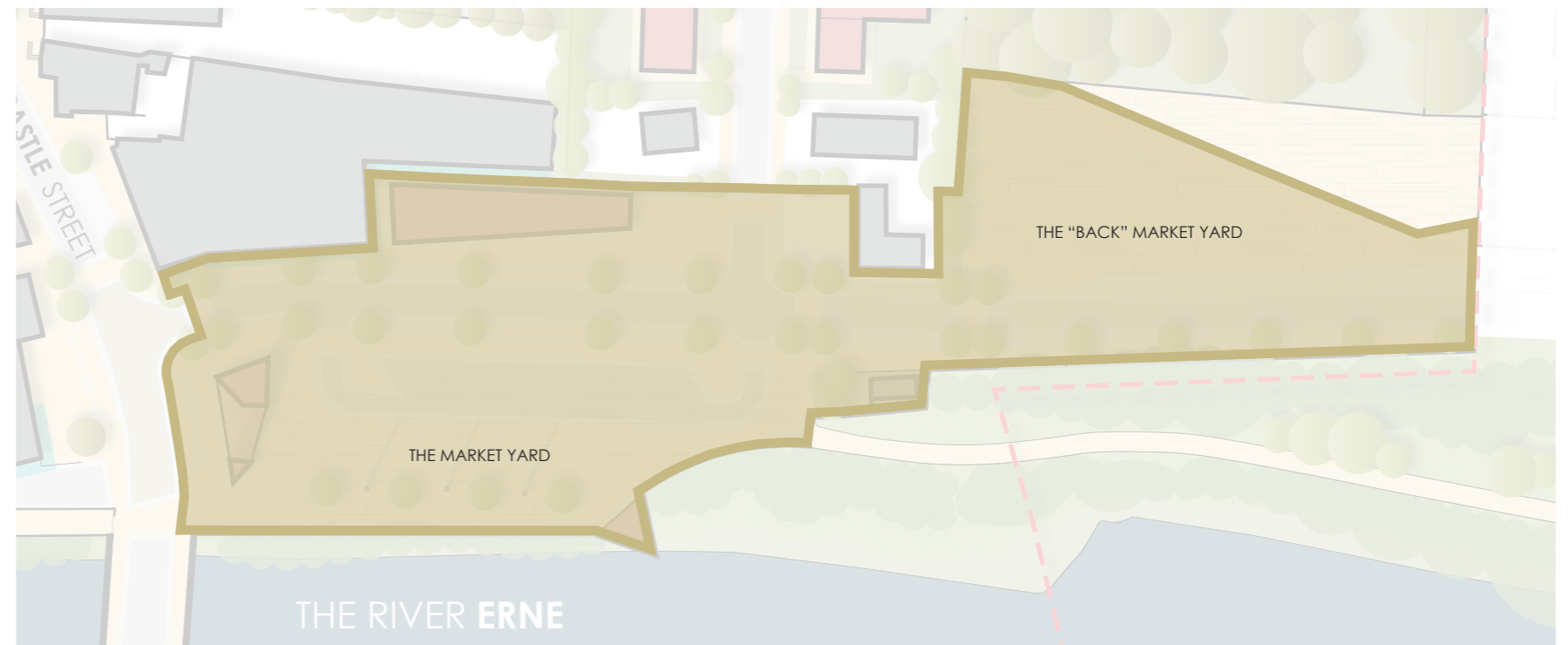
ACTION 2A:

“Transform the Market Yard into a central civic and interaction space which will become an attractive focal point, providing a shared place for the community.”

The c. 2.4 Ha. Market Yard site is located directly to the north of the River Erne and adjacent to the well known Slevins Department Store. The site comprises primarily of a car parking area with a bus station to the west, a fire station to the east and units along the northern boundary.

A proposed roadway, mainly to serve the Sheil Hospital, will dissect the Market Yard site once completed, late 2022. Any proposed re-development of the Market Yard will need to suitably tie in with this new road infrastructure and provide appropriate parking solutions. Also given the proximity of the site to the river, careful design is required as to not adversely impact upon it and its margins and the ongoing ESB operations. Furthermore, similar to the majority of Ballyshannon town centre, archaeology is of the upmost importance at this site, as it was once the location of Ballyshannon Castle.

The site has significant potential to be transformed into a central civic and interaction space for community activities and events. Its central location and physical attributes means it should become an attractive focal point of the town where residents and visitors alike can meet and enjoy the riverside setting. Concept designs, produced in line with the Council's RRDF project design, outlined on the adjacent page illustrate an option how development of the Market Yard could be fulfilled going forward.



High	Short	Medium
DCC Regen, DCC Community, DCC Roads		

Site analysis and uses moodboard

OPPORTUNITY SITE 10 - as per the Seven Strategic Towns Plan this site can provide additional town centre development and car-parking, again to further compensate any potential loss of spaces at the Market Yard.

Parallel car-parking spaces accommodating disabled, age friendly and general needs.

Potential to refurbish the existing buildings or for a new single/ two storey building(s). To include public toilets; changing places facilities; cycle storage and repair hub; possibly food/coffee kiosks, and some further enterprise units.

Car-parking provided aligning the new Sheil Hospital Road to partly compensate for any loss of spaces at the Market Yard. There is also the opportunity to "tree-line" the road, improving bio-diversity and the aesthetics.

Potential to provide car-parking "within" the "public square". This could be designed and finished appropriately so that it has the appearance of a single continuous space (e.g. similar/ continuity of paving; minimal level changes; sparing use of signage/ markings). Furthermore the area could be easily "closed off/ restricted" to vehicles for special events (e.g. festival time; markets etc.).

THE "BACK" MARKET YARD CARPARK - It is envisaged that this underused parking area will be enlarged and formally "laid out" to partly compensate for any loss of spaces at the "front" Market Yard, through more intensive and regular use (potential for c. 117no. spaces). Layout and links between it and the town centre to be improved so that it is welcoming, and easy to use. There is also potential for additional coach/ bus parking in this area, aligning with the new Road.

Potential for the Department store to enhance their frontage and access on to the new Sheil Hospital Road and revamped "Market Yard".

Potential for new crossing points located at the re-designed junction between Market Street and the new Sheil Hospital Road. Potentially a traffic light system required.

Existing bus drop-off / pick-up laybys retained in a similar location

Potential "opensided/ transparent" bus shelter facility (c.30sqm)

Potential location for a new "Information Hub / Beacon" (see Action 5D)

Crossing point / continuation of surface treatment of the western pedestrian/cycle-way over the road-way, to facilitate good connectivity to the Market Yard.

Public space extended to canterleaver towards the Erne.

ROAD TO OPP. SITE 10

"Community & Enterprise"

"Public Square"

"Gateway building"

Retain/re-position the existing utilities infrastructure.

Public space surface treatment to include "etching" /identification of the outline of any remnants of the old Ballyshannon Castle complex that once occupied the site.

Indigenous and deciduous street tree planting greens and softens the mainly hardscaped public space ("the yard"). The trees also contribute to comfortable levels of natural shelter and shade.

Potential viewing platform with interactive information point

"The 3 Bridges pedestrian/cycle-way" connects to the "Market Yard" at the east

POTENTIAL COACH PARKING

NEW SHEIL HOSPITAL Rd.

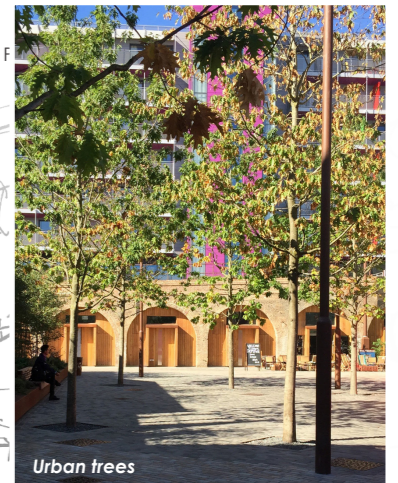
POTENTIAL COACH PARKING



The "Market Yard" - A conceptual General Arrangement (scale 1:500)



Signage example



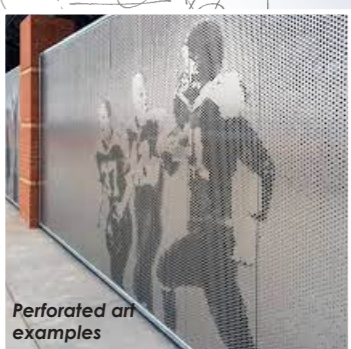
Urban trees



Evening atmosphere



Markets



Perforated an examples



3D Perspective - to show appropriate scale and massing (buiding design may differ) (nts)

Revitalisation of the Gables area

ACTION 2B:

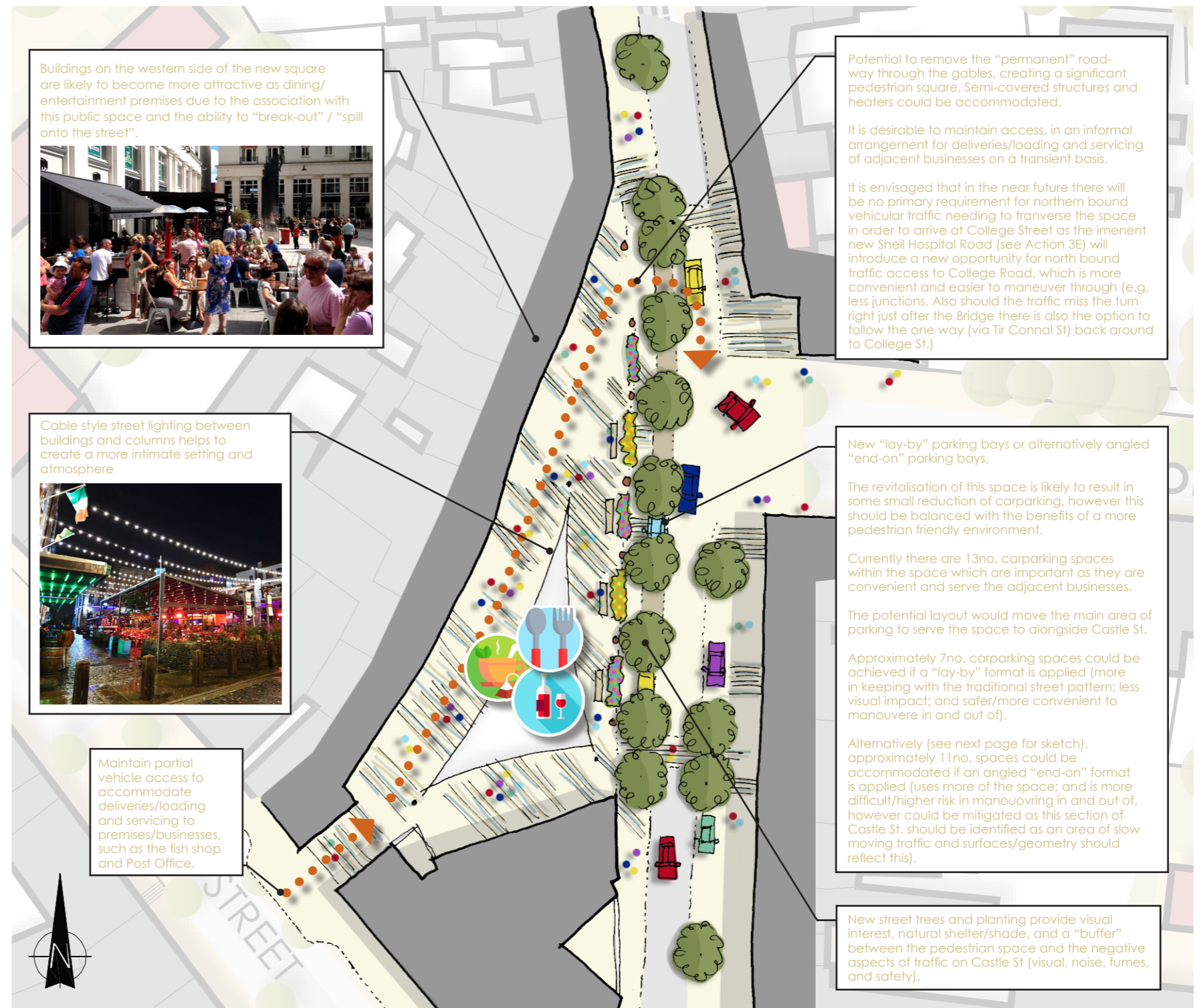
“Revitalise & reinvigorate the Gables area, re-establishing the social purpose and commercial function of this space, with a particular focus on attracting additional food / drink and entertainment establishments.”

The Gables area of Ballyshannon refers to the area located between Main Street and Castle Street in the centre of town. It comprises of the Castle Street one-way branch road and associated parking and public realm spaces. Some café/food and entertainment establishments front onto the Gables, alongside other commercial uses.

Car parking and vehicle activity in this area results in a somewhat vehicle dominated space which is largely unsuitable for social gatherings and overall pedestrian enjoyment. Ballyshannon has a limited range of food, drink and entertainment establishments that can be enjoyed in the evening time. There are also very few outdoor seating or dining areas or places for residents and visitors to socialise later in the day. Existing coffee shops and cafes close early, with little choice in restaurants. Facilitating conditions that would attract additional food, drink and evening entertainment establishments could bring massive benefits, not just from increased offer for locals and the associated increase in employment due to local spending, but also in terms of improving the attraction of the town for visitors, with an improved evening experience increasing vitality and vibrancy and driving the regeneration of the town.

The Gables area represents a great location at the centre of the town for the introduction of a relatively small and intimate public square to facilitate a break out eating and entertainment space with appropriate sheltering and heating. The south easterly facing aspect and central location is a positive and can help transform this street into a charming yet vibrant social space. Also a number of established eating and entertainment premises currently have access/frontage to the area.

The accompanying adjacent concept design illustrates how the Gables area could evolve to; be much more pedestrian friendly (whilst still accommodating the essential functions of some vehicle parking and access for servicing); facilitate small events; provide a more attractive environment for the premises fronting it; and potentially be attractive/more useful to evening economy type establishments.



The “Gables” - A conceptual General Arrangement showing one potential option. Alternative layouts may also be appropriate (scale 1:500)



Some of the buildings and their facades require significant enhancement in terms of roofscape and shop frontage treatment (a potential design shown) in order to achieve/regain the desired traditional Irish town aesthetic.

Space "tiered" as necessary with steps and ramps to accommodate changes in level and achieve accessibility for all.

It's nice sitting here in the sun!

This food is great! You want to try?

Just what I wanted ... some fresh fish for tea!

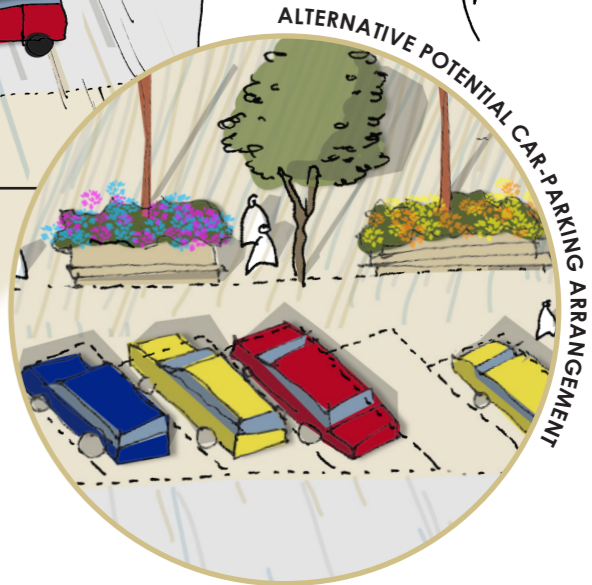
SLAINTE!!!

Restricted vehicle Access for "loading" etc.

Pedestrian crossing opportunities

Orientation - Mid October, late afternoon shadowing shown. Demonstrates that even at this time of the year the majority of the square still benefits from the sun.

Street trees and planters provide a green "buffer" between the space and the busy roadway.



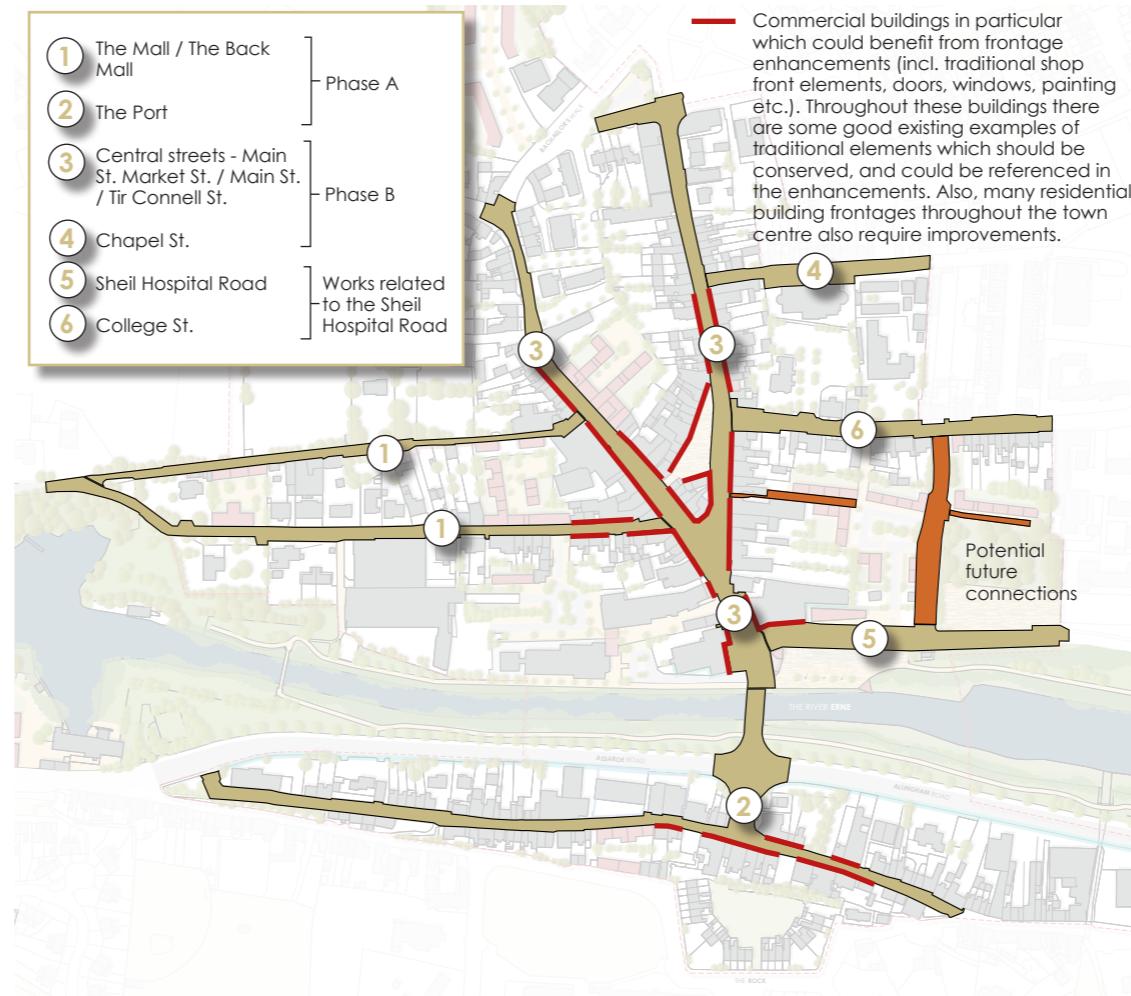
The "Gables" - A conceptual 3D Perspective / Artists Impression showing one potential option. Again, alternative layouts may also be appropriate (not to scale)

Heritage-led streetscape enhancements

ACTION 2C:

“Undertake heritage-led streetscape enhancements throughout, to restore Ballyshannon’s character and enhance its setting; historic buildings and features; incl. re-surfacing, landscaping, furniture, lighting, public art, re-instatement of traditional shopfronts, signage and an appropriate vibrant/heritage colour scheme. Particular focus areas incl. The Mall, Castle St, Main St. and The Port.”

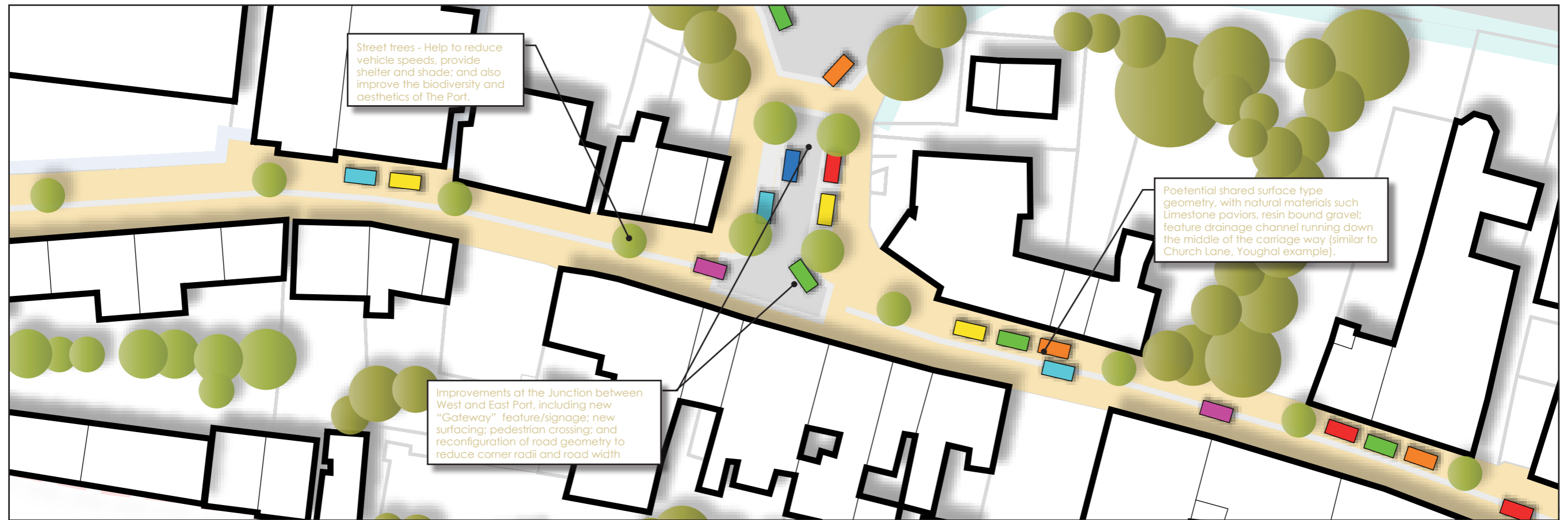
Due attention should be paid to the Ballyshannon Design Guide which provides direction on how buildings, streets and features can be appropriately maintained, repaired and/or restored where required. Streetscape enhancements at the Mall, Castle St and Main St. could include re-surfacing of roads and footpaths with high quality natural material (i.e. granite stone/cobbles etc.); new on street layby car parking, new street furniture inc. seating and street lighting and new directional and promotional signage. Works at the Port could include the creation of a shared surface road with traffic calming measures, street trees, street furniture, seating and street lighting.



High	Long	High
DCC Regen, DCC Community, DCC Roads		



Streetscape enhancements moodboard



The Port - A conceptual General Arrangement (scale 1:500)



The Mall - A conceptual General Arrangement (scale 1:500)

Redevelopment of the former Millstone Hotel site

ACTION 2D:

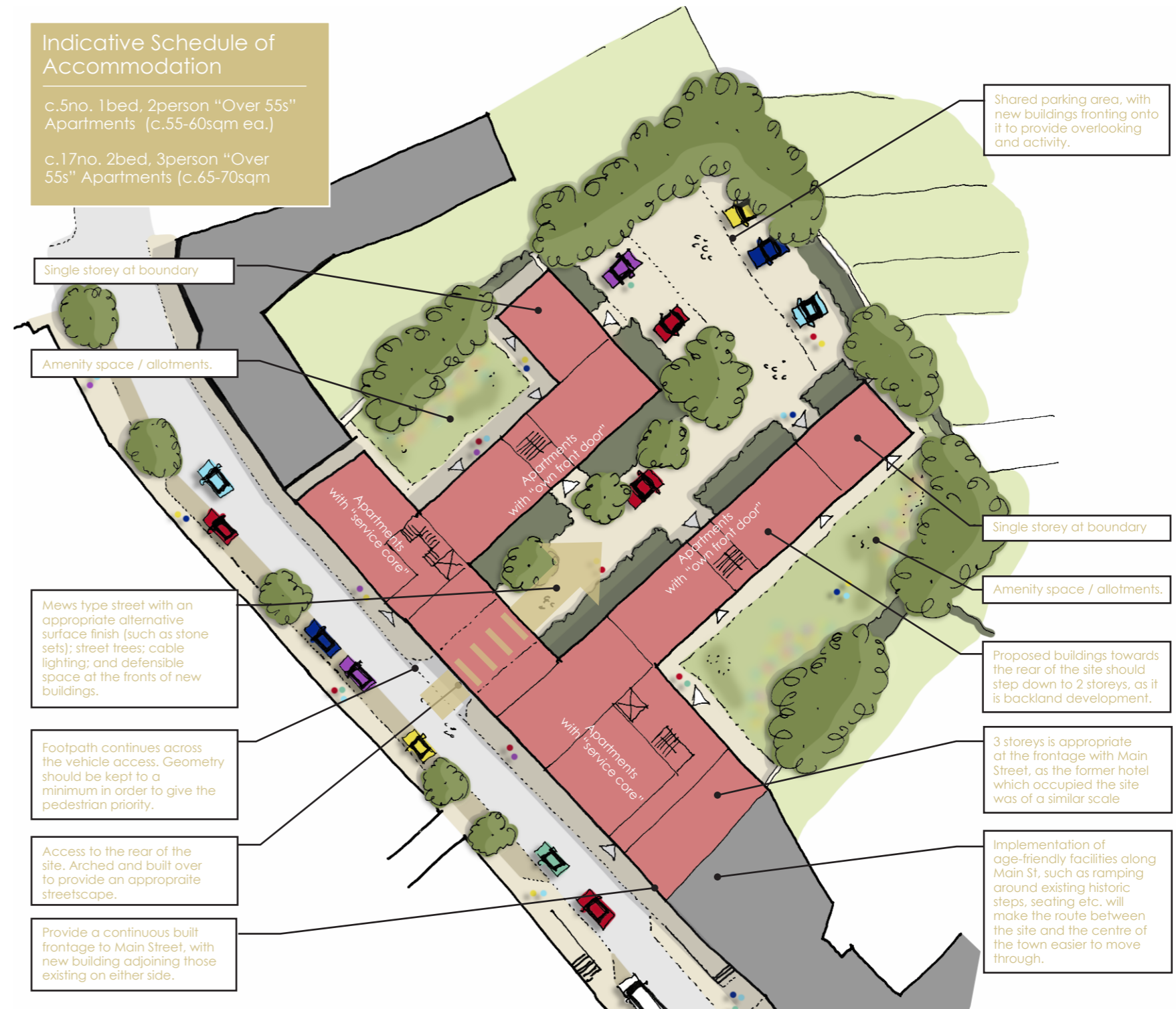
“Facilitate housing on the former Millstone Hotel Site (Opportunity site 8) to enable town centre living through a mix of house types including elderly housing, etc.”

This 0.3 Ha. brownfield site previously housed the former Millstone Hotel, which is now demolished leaving clear and vacant land. The site is located within the designated archaeological complex of Ballyshannon. It currently provides frontage to Main Street along its western boundary and is perhaps one of the largest brownfield sites within the town centre. Surrounding uses include a range of residential and commercial premises as well as the adjacent Dorrians Hotel.

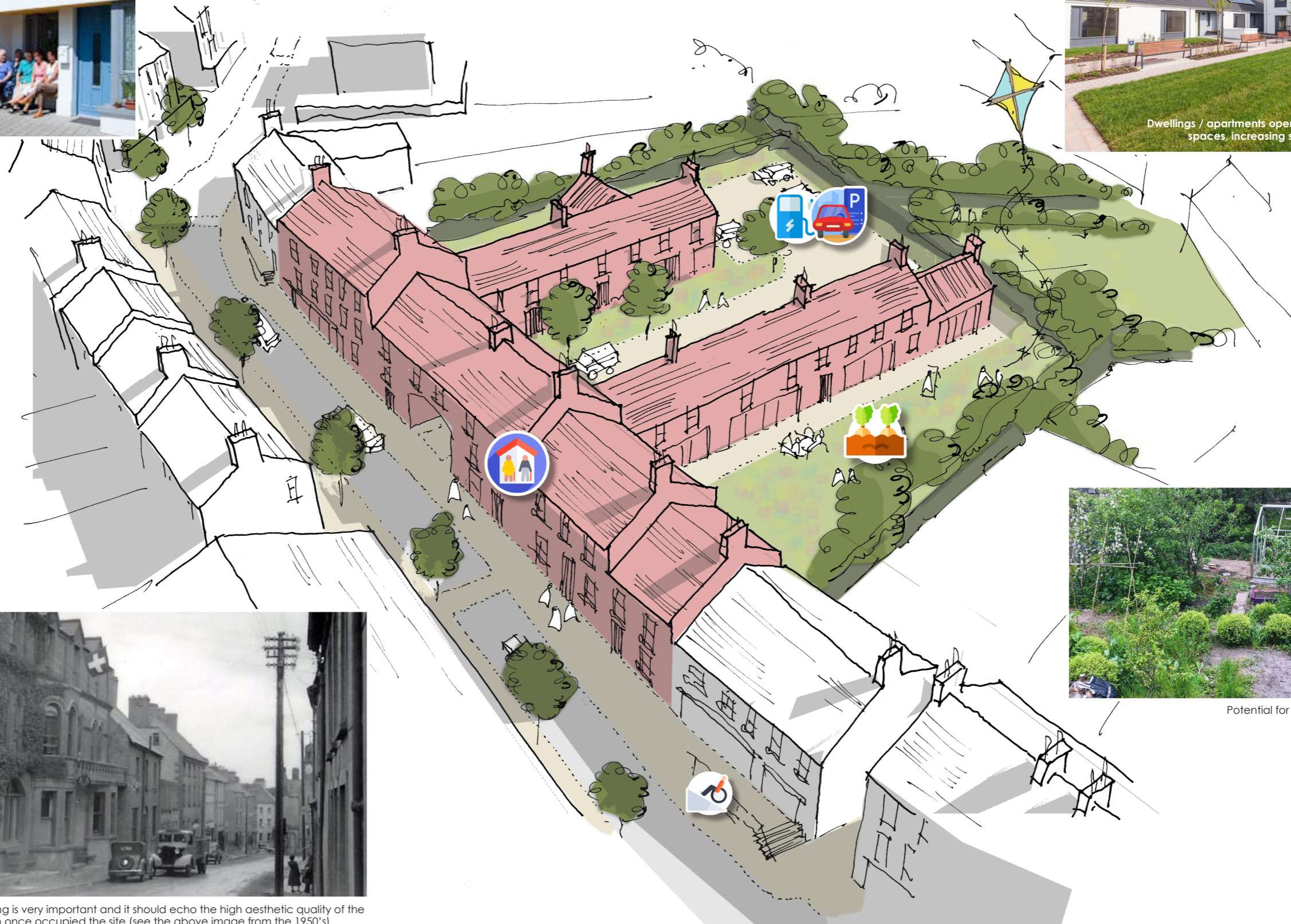
Site levels slope down from north to south within the site which could present potential challenges and restrictions to its future development. Having laid derelict for the past number of years, this site has become an eye sore and development is needed to fill this gap site.

Various uses could be possible, such as mixed use/commercial, however, it would be appropriate to provide some town centre living, in particular sheltered/elderly housing, given its central location in close proximity to the range of town centre services. This could be accommodated through sensitive design and the using of suitable house types, appropriate to the potential elderly occupants. The introduction of age friendly facilities along Main St would also enhance the attractiveness of such uses. A potential layout and associated details are outlined on the adjacent Concept Design.

Medium	Medium	Medium
1 2 3		
DCC Housing, Housing Body		



The "Millstone" site - A conceptual General Arrangement showing one potential option. Alternative uses/layouts may also be appropriate (scale 1:500)



Traditional vernacular detailing is very important and it should echo the high aesthetic quality of the impressive former hotel which once occupied the site (see the above image from the 1950's).



Potential for allotment gardens

3D Perspective - to show appropriate scale and massing (building design may differ) (nts)

Redevelopment of the former Ballyshannon Bakery site

ACTION 2E:

“Redevelop the former Ballyshannon Bakery Site (Opportunity site 7) with an appropriate mix of town centre uses.”

The former Ballyshannon Bakery Site, located along the Mall in the west of the town centre, comprises of the disused bakery building, associated outbuildings and circulation as well as an area of private car parking in its western portion, which is in use. It is approximately 0.2 Ha in size and is accessed via the Mall to the south. The site is also located within the designated archaeological complex of Ballyshannon and is one of three identified town centre brownfield sites that have the potential to accommodate a mix of town centre uses.

The old bakery building has become one of the town's most significant derelict buildings. Development proposals should be of appropriate scale, massing and detailed design in order to complement and enhance the townscape character of the Mall. There is potential to redevelop the site to provide two levels of accommodation, comprising ground floor commercial fronting The Mall with residential above, and two storey residential development behind. Alternatively, the redevelopment of the site could reflect its historical industrial/commercial use (a bakery) and provide enterprise space/creative hub, accommodating uses such as artisan food production (e.g. The Food Hub, Drumshanbo) / arts and crafts studios/production facilities (e.g. carving school) etc.

Any redevelopment should include the retention of the building façade frontage to The Mall. The adjacent concept layout demonstrates the potential redevelopment proposal.

Medium	Medium	Medium
 Private individuals / Land owners		

Indicative Schedule of Accommodation

- c.180sqm GF commercial; & c.230sqm FF commercial.
- c.4no. 3bed, 5person townhouses (c.110sqm ea.)
- c.3no. 2bed, 3person townhouses (c.75sqm ea.)



The "Ballyshannon Bakery" site - A conceptual General Arrangement showing one potential option (Mixed-use - Commercial and residential). Alternative uses/layouts may also be appropriate (scale 1:500)



Example of the mews type housing that could be at the rear of the site.



Potential to create a vehicular/ pedestrian through road at the Former Bakery site, to better link The Mall and The Back Mall. Note: if desirable, it would probably be better if the road in not "built over" at the Mall frontage, as shown.



Use of industrial style materials towards the rear of the site may be appropriate



Traditional vernacular detailing is important, and particularly for the buildings fronting the Mall.



Potential for Remote Working Hub in the former bakery building fronting the Mall.

3D Perspective of a potential mixed-use scheme - to show appropriate scale and massing (building design could differ) (nts)

Theme



“Create a pedestrian and cyclist friendly environment with permeable streets and spaces; improve public transport facilities; ensure the essential needs of car drivers and passengers are sensitively provided for; and strengthen links and physical connections between the town centre and the wider area.”

Connections - Movement & transport

The “Three Bridges” loop & wider connections

ACTION 3A:

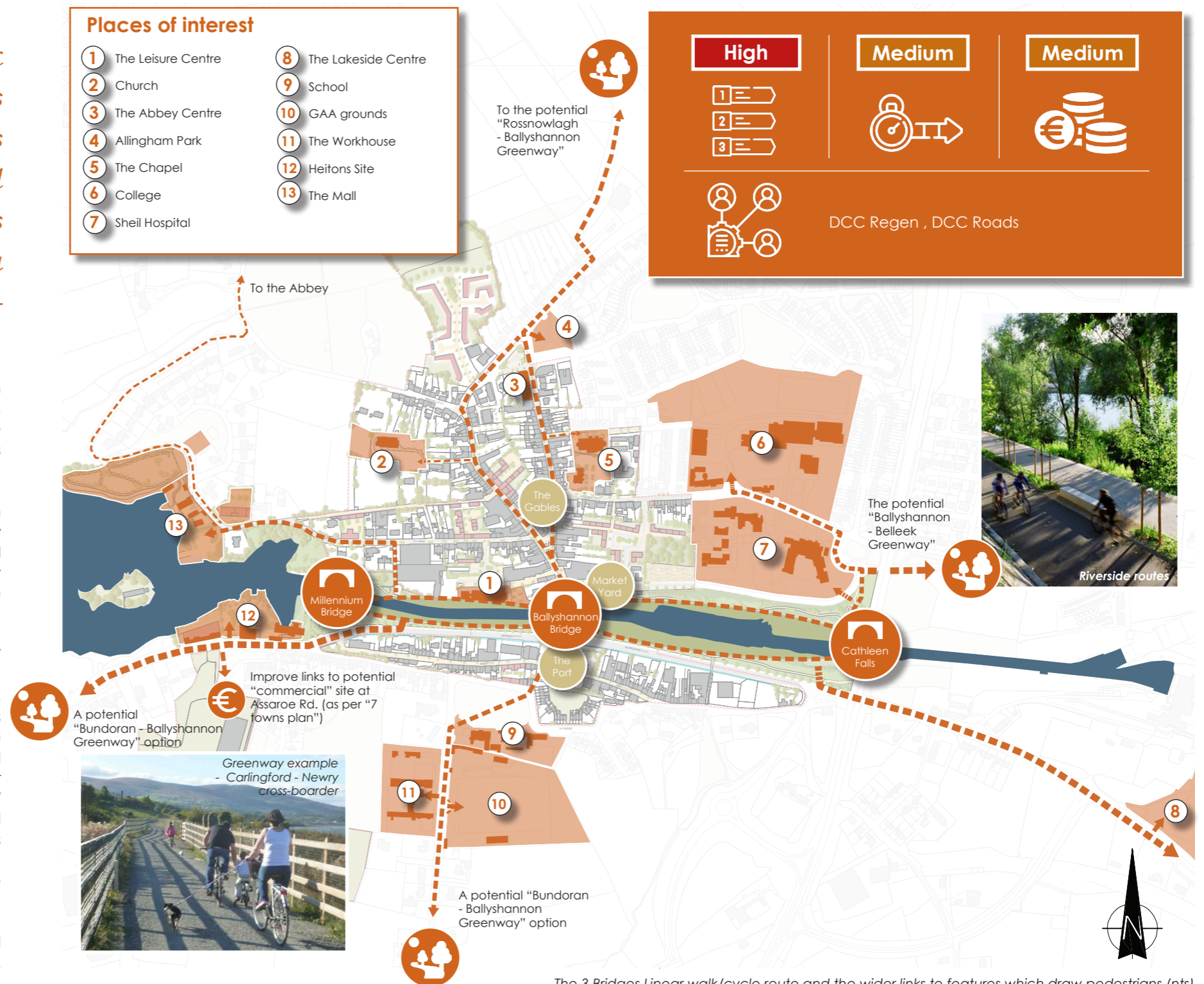
“Facilitate the Three Bridges Looped Walk / Cycle way and enhance connections to wider Greenways and Blueways (e.g. along disused railway lines) and connections to schools and key sites outside the town centre, creating a safe and pleasant environment for non-vehicular users.”

The stunning Erne setting and historical streetscape of Ballyshannon provides a unique backdrop for any potential walking and cycle routes. A safe and pleasant environment for non-vehicular users will improve the lifestyle of locals, attract tourists and contribute to the town's sustainability/Green Town ambitions.

The facilitation of the three bridges walk / cycleway has long been an ambition of many people within Ballyshannon, and thus this Strategy identifies a specific action focusing on its implementation. A conceptual path route has been identified in Action 1A. It is recommended that this concept is agreed and progressed further by the appropriate stakeholders, in order to unlock funding opportunities, such as the RDDF.

There are also opportunities to connect the three bridges walk / cycleway and the town centre with wider greenways and blueways, such as the disused railway lines to the north and south of the town. Such greenways could then provide subsequent improved connections to and from Rosstown, Belleek, Bundoran etc. In order to provide these connections, adaptations, improvements and upgrades to road infrastructure would be necessary, for example at Bachelor's Walk, Knader Road and the Rock. Works required are likely to include segregated / unsegregated cycle lanes, re-surfacing and lining, tree planting and signage etc. The enhancement of linkages and connections to schools and key sites outside of the town centre could also be accommodated, providing people, particularly younger people, with an alternative means of moving to and from the town centre.

The adjacent concept map illustrates some potential routes and connections which could be facilitated within and around Ballyshannon.



The 3 Bridges Linear walk/cycle route and the wider links to features which draw pedestrians (nts)

Creating a more walkable town

ACTION 3B:

“Develop a walkable town centre through re-imagining and de-cluttering of footpaths and provision of crossing points as identified in the Ballyshannon Walkability Audit.”

Ensuring that people can get out and about in their local area and participate in all their community has to offer can play an important role in town centre Regeneration. By providing and achieving a level of walkability, people with a range of ages and abilities are encouraged to walk their town, actively visit civic spaces, participate in community events and of course contribute to the local business economy through increased footfall. Also, the associated increased visible presence can add to the sense of place and atmosphere.

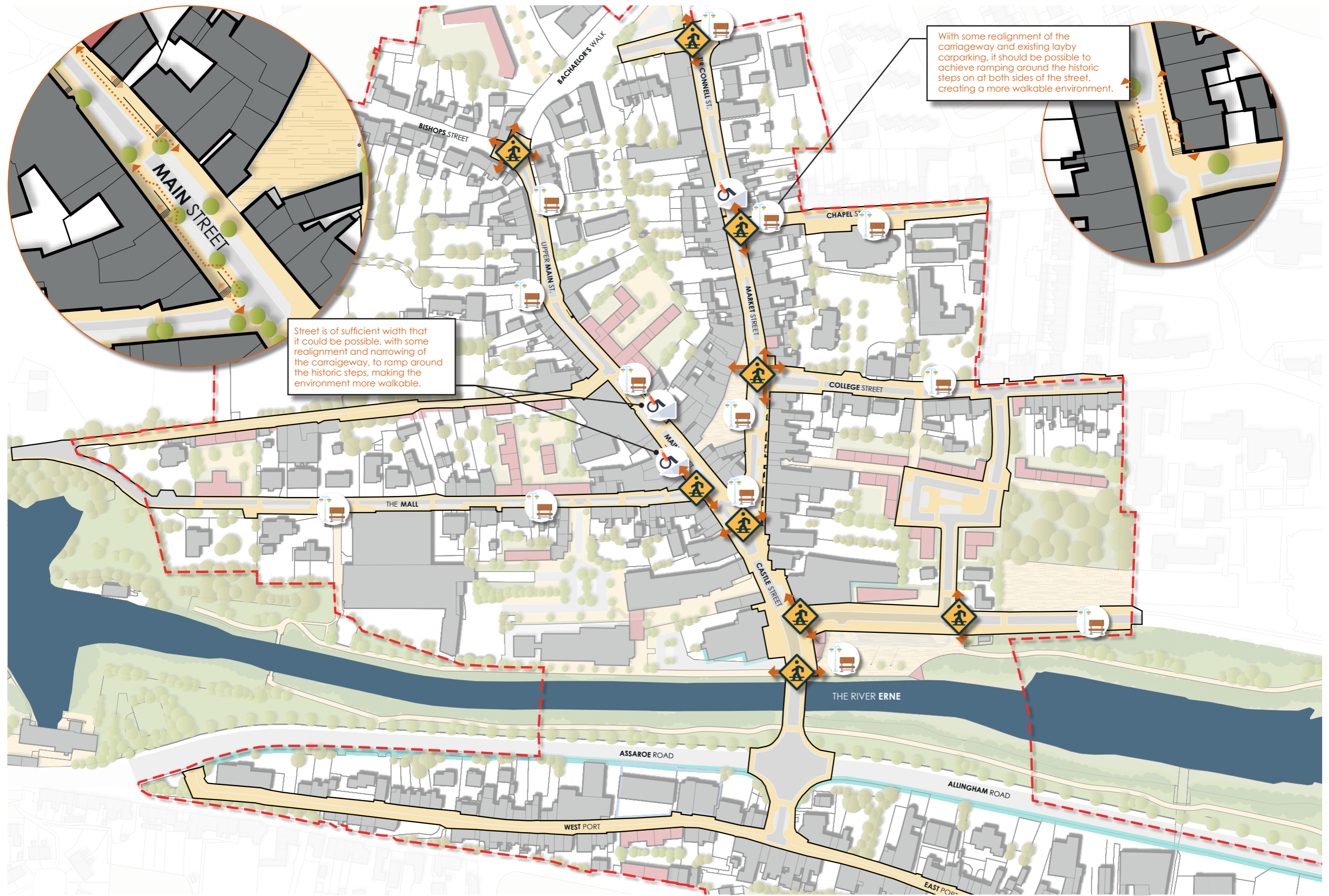
The Audit has been produced by Donegal Age Friendly. It's purpose is to increase awareness of the specific spatial needs of people with a wide range of ages and abilities. It identifies a number of issues that constrains the walkability of the Town Centre and identifies certain actions in order to address these.

This Strategy recommends that the actions are implemented in an appropriate manner over the plan period to improve the walkability of Ballyshannon. Some may be piloted/trialed and results could be achieved within a short time frame, whereas others may be longer term.

High	Short	Low
<p>DCC Regen, DCC Community, DCC Roads</p>		

The walkability audit was undertaken on four priority routes in the town and as a result, it gives a feel for its overall walkability. The issues raised on all four routes are relatively similar with the condition of footpaths and the lack of safe and adequate crossing points identified as major issues for participants of the audit. The illegal parking of vehicles on footpaths is also viewed as an issue impacting walkability. The following key actions and findings were identified in the audit.

<p>Key Finding No. 1: Illegal parking of vehicles on footpaths.</p>	<p>Action No. 1: Implement an awareness campaign in Ballyshannon to highlight inappropriate parking and the impact on pedestrians in Ballyshannon.</p>
<p>Key Finding No. 2: The steps at Main Street and Tír Chonnáil Street (and Main St) require re-design. The steps are hard to navigate for pedestrians and are a serious trip hazard.</p>	<p>Action No. 2: Investigate the installation of appropriate Bollards to prevent parking on footpaths.</p>
<p>Key Finding No. 3: Public Seats and the provision of adequately placed seats and bins are important for the participants.</p>	<p>Action No. 3: Investigate the appropriate re-design of the steps to a ramped surface or an alternative ramped access to compliment the steps on these two streets.</p>
<p>Key Finding No. 4: Objects that impede mobility, such as flowerpots, signs, faulty manholes, leaves, and flooding were found on all routes.</p>	<p>Action No. 4: Install 3 Age Friendly seats in appropriate locations in Ballyshannon. Placement of the seats is critical and collaboration with the public is necessary.</p>
<p>Key Finding No. 5: Meet and explain the issue to the relevant parties such as local shops and business's highlighting the impact of objects left on the footpath and try and find a common ground solution to the problem.</p>	<p>Action No. 5: Meet and explain the issue to the relevant parties such as local shops and business's highlighting the impact of objects left on the footpath and try and find a common ground solution to the problem.</p>



Street is of sufficient width that it could be possible, with some realignment and narrowing of the carriageway, to ramp around the historic steps, making the environment more walkable.

With some realignment of the carriageway and existing layby carparking, it should be possible to achieve ramping around the historic steps on at both sides of the street, creating a more walkable environment.

Map identifying indicative potential locations of new/improved seating (spaced no more than 100m apart); and crossing points within the town centre. The crossings could be light controlled or "courtesy" (e.g. zebra/pelican/or raised table). Also shown are location where streetscape enhancements could include provision of ramping around existing historically important steps (nts)

Improve the facilities for cyclists

ACTION 3C:

“Enhance accompanying facilities for cyclists throughout the town centre, such as cycle paths, parking/secure locking points, repair hub, and lighting, etc.”

The facilitation of the three bridges walk / cycleway, the enhancement of associated connections to wider greenways and blueways, and the development of a more walkable and accessible town centre will result in a requirement for additional and enhanced facilities for cyclists throughout the town. The provision of safe and comfortable parking, secure locking points, appropriate lighting, repair and storage facilities and showering facilities can all help stimulate the use of bicycles in the town.

The positioning of such cycling facilities along and around the three bridges route will increase the use of this cycleway. The future redevelopment of the Market Yard would offer an opportunity to provide appropriate cycling facilities at a central location within the town centre. This would also be beneficial given its position along the proposed three bridges walk / cycleway. Facilities at the Market Yard could be accommodated within any new build unit or facility. The provision of cycling facilities could tie in with the Councils plans to introduce bicycle repair stations at various locations throughout the county.

Medium	Medium	Low
1 2 3	🔒 →	€
👤 👤 📄 👤 👤		
DCC Regen, DCC Community, DCC Roads		



Map identifying potential improvements to cycle routes, facilities and features (nts)

Improve the facilities for public transport users

ACTION 3D:

“Enhance facilities for the users of public transport within the town centre, thereby further increasing the use of existing bus services.”

Although the current bus station at the Market Yard is generally in good condition and serves its purpose for public transport users, the building does not adequately address the adjacent Market Yard area. The potential future transformation of the Market Yard into a central civic and interaction space for community activities and events should incorporate enhanced facilities for public transport users and a bus station facility that suitably addresses this key public space. Associated improvements to road crossing points, bus parking and pick up / drop off points, the introduction of ticketing and information points, bicycle stands, and high quality waiting facilities including seating, shelter and convenience facilities (e.g. Coffee Kiosk) will further enhance the offer and experience for public transport users.

Development of the Market Yard, the bus station and its surroundings can help create safer and more accessible conditions for public transport users, including elderly users and those with disabilities. It will also further support and strengthen this central space as Ballyshannon's public transport hub. Improvements to the comfort, convenience and accessibility of public transport facilities can lead to an increase in the number of public transport users and a decrease in peoples dependency on their car. The conceptual layout and images highlight potential improvements to public transport facilities at the Market yard.



Examples of "transparent" structures



The Market Yard main transport hub building with dual frontage to the street and the square.

Bus stop, located on the opposite side of the street

3D perspective of potential public transport facilities at Market Square - to show appropriate scale and massing (actual building design could vary) (nts)

<p>Low</p> <p>1E 2E 3E</p>	<p>Short</p>	<p>Low</p>
<p>DCC Regen, DCC Community, DCC Roads, Bus Eireann</p>		

The vehicular environment

ACTION 3E:

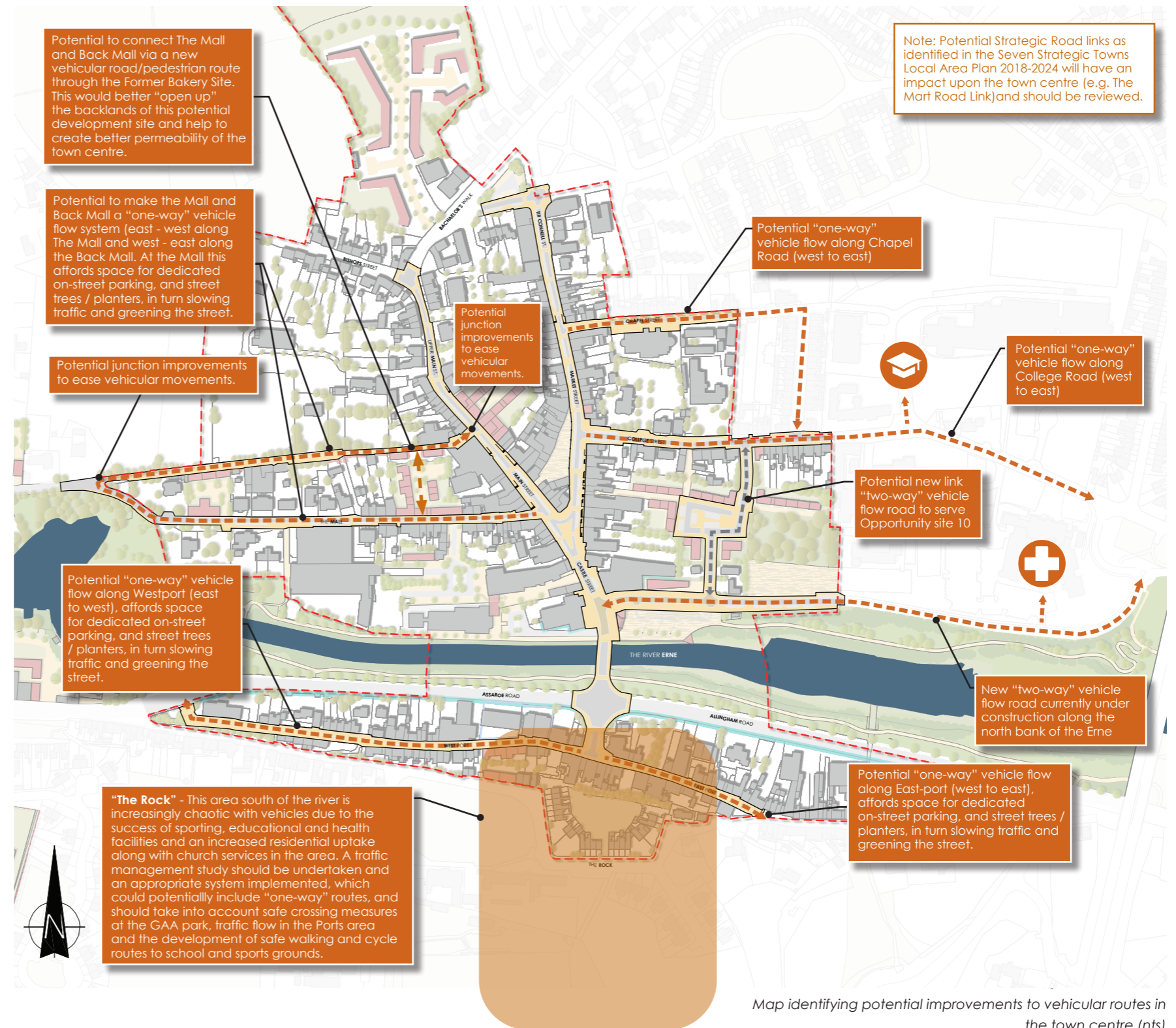
“Ensure the essential needs of car drivers and passengers are adequately provided for without dominating the environment.”

Although this strategy places a strong emphasis on creating a pedestrian friendly environment, with improved infrastructure and facilities for walking, cycling and public transport users, it also recognizes the essential needs of car drivers and passengers and the benefits of providing a balance between the various methods of movement and connectivity.

Market Street/Castle Street, Tir Conaill Street and Main Street/Upper Main Street are the sections of road that run through the town centre, north of the River Erne, and which experience the highest levels of traffic. A number of streets within the town centre, including The Mall, Chapel Street, College Street and West/East Port, are particularly impacted by a lack of dedicated on-street parking spaces which result in vehicles partially parking on the footpath, causing obstruction.

It is expected that the implementation of the new two-way relief road, which will connect Main Street and the Market Yard with College Street/Knader Road, will result in a reduction in vehicular traffic along College Street, alleviating issues along this street and improve the town's general circulation and traffic management. The adjacent concept map and associated commentary illustrates how additional measures could be introduced to ensure the needs of car drivers are provided for, such as streetscape enhancements (e.g. geometry - reduction in some unnecessarily wide carriageways/tighter radii, in order to facilitate more space for lay-by parking and maneuvering), regularization of car parking spaces and the potential use of one way vehicle flow systems.

Medium	Medium	Medium
DCC Regen, DCC Community, DCC Roads		



Map identifying potential improvements to vehicular routes in the town centre (nts)

Potential streetscape enhancements to the streets within the town centre (The Port; Market St.; The Mall; The Back Mall; Main St.; Tir Connell St.; Chapel St.; College St.; Castle St.), incl. improvements to geometry (e.g. tightening corner radii, narrowing carriage widths), defining parking, resurfacing, and creating more pedestrian crossing opportunities (also see Action 2C).

Loading bays / access areas for local shops to be retained and incorporated into public realm improvements where required.

On-street car-parking throughout the existing town centre streets but redefined and regularised by new kerbing, surfacing, signage and rows of spaces broken up by street trees and planters.

Opportunity to provide further carparking along with the re-development of Opportunity Site 10 (DCC Seven Strategic Towns Plan).

It is expected that the Back Market car-park will become more intensively used as better access and links are provided to it..

Some of the existing car and bus parking at the Market Yard to be used as a new "public square". The parking spaces to be re-organised in an on-street format running along the new Sheil Hospital Road. Bus parking to be potentially moved to the "back Market car-park".

Map identifying potential improvements to vehicular facilities and features (e.g. parking) (nts)



Theme



“Capitalise on and enhance the town’s historic features and cultural heritage through building conservation and revitalisation and by growing the town’s festival culture and promoting its status as ‘Ireland’s Oldest Town’.”

Heritage -
Built & cultural

Vacant, derelict & obsolete buildings/sites

ACTION 4A:

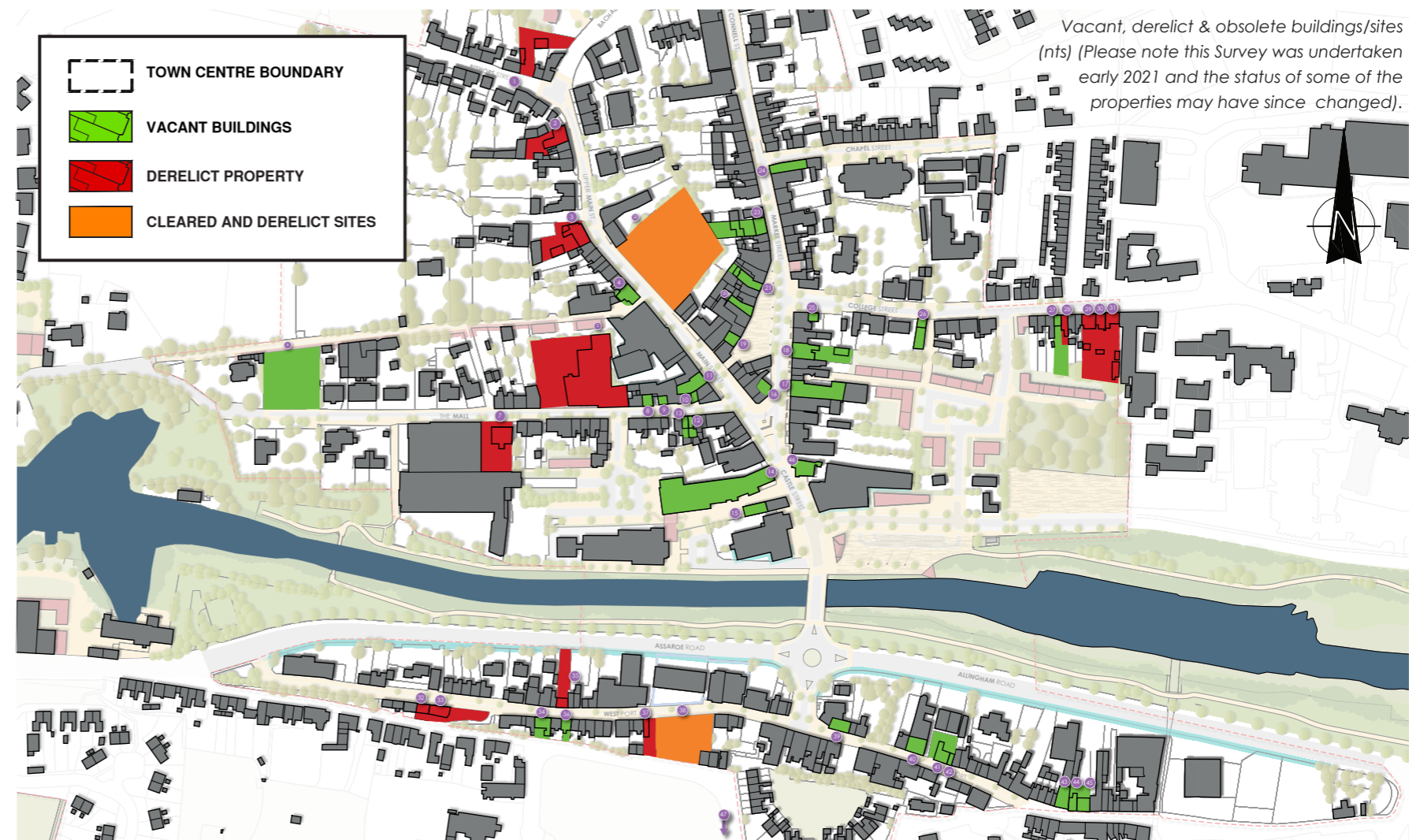
“Maintain and enhance the historic Townscape character and identity of Ballyshannon through conservation of the built fabric and by prioritizing the imaginative and sustainable refurbishment, repurposing and retrofitting of vacant, derelict and obsolete buildings and sites over new building; and the promotion of LOTS (Living Over The Shop) in vacant upper floors.”

The accompanying map illustrates the development opportunity sites and buildings that have been identified for either redevelopment, refurbishment or reuse. This includes the Millstone site and the Bakery site as identified in the Seven Strategic Towns Local Area Plan (Ballyshannon) 2018 to 2024.

A total of 45 sites have been identified comprising a mix of 30 vacant buildings, 13 derelict buildings and 2 cleared/derelict sites. Where appropriate sites have been grouped together to assemble a single larger site, offering greater potential. Several heritage buildings are identified. An assessment has been prepared for each building and site, setting out its existing condition and use and also the redevelopment/reuse potential. Concept layouts have been prepared for some of the larger sites illustrating appropriate proposals including for the Millstone and Bakery sites.

For many of the sites, intervention will be minimal, with simple reinstatement of the previous use, however other sites will present more of a challenge and will require significant intervention through demolition and redevelopment, or in the case of heritage buildings, the sensitive refurbishment and reuse to safeguard their character and existence.

Several of the identified opportunity sites are occupied by heritage buildings. The buildings are of varying condition ranging from extremely



poor with only a shell remaining or in a derelict state eg Site 1 and Site 7 (The Condon House) through to being in generally fair condition. Buildings in poor or derelict condition and in private ownership can be a challenge, particularly heritage buildings with the restrictions on design and use of materials and potential increased costs associated with heritage type work. It is appreciated that refurbishing derelict or vacant buildings for commercial uses on all floors may well not be economically viable. Where appropriate consideration should be given to providing residential use on vacant upper floors through promoting LOTS – Living over the shop initiative. This will not only contribute to the urban renewal of the town centre but, providing a range of complimentary hospitality leisure/recreation uses, and can also help to generate an evening economy for the town centre.

High	Long	High
1 → 2 → 3 →	🕒	€
<p>Private individuals / landowners, DCC Cultural, DCC Planning</p>		

Site 1

Bishop Street

Site Area: 525 sqm / **Present use:** Derelict former 2 storey dwelling and associated grounds / **Potential:** This heritage building is in very poor condition with only its external walls remaining. This site could be redeveloped for residential development of up to 3 levels with frontages to both Bishop St. and Bachelor's Walk. If possible the existing façade to Bishop Street should be retained and incorporated into a future redevelopment proposal.



Site 4

Corner of Main St. & The Back Mall

Site Area: 140 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant building with 2 levels of accommodation previously used for health care service. / **Potential:** Remove in order to facilitate improvements to the access to/from the Back Mall, particularly if any one-way system and additional development along the Back Mall is implemented. Otherwise refurb existing property to provide commercial or residential use.



Site 2

39 Upper Main Street

Site Area: 310 sqm / **Present use:** Derelict former 2 storey dwelling and associated grounds / **Potential:** This site could be redeveloped for residential development of up to 3 levels with two level frontage to Upper Main Street comprising retention and refurbishment of the existing heritage building.



Site 5

The Former "Ballyshannon Bakery", The Mall

Site Area: 2380 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant building with two levels of accommodation with associated out buildings, circulation areas and wider site associated with previous use. / **Potential:** Redevelopment of site to provide two levels of accommodation comprising ground floor commercial fronting The Mall with residential above and two storey residential development behind. Redevelopment to comprise retention of the building façade frontage to The Mall. Refer to concept layout illustrating proposal / These buildings form part of the ongoing Historic Towns Initiative proposals for Ballyshannon.



Site 3

Corner of Main St. & Church Lane

Site Area: 505 sqm / **Present use:** Derelict former dwelling with 3 levels of accommodation / **Potential:** Redevelopment to include refurbishment of the existing property to provide residential development with additional residential development on remainder of the site / This building forms part of the ongoing Historic Towns Initiative proposals for Ballyshannon.



Site 6

The "Mulligan" building, The Mall

Site Area: 1410 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant former industrial/warehouse building associated with fish/exporting business. The building is included on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage / **Potential:** Mixed use development - conversion of the existing building to provide GF commercial and apartments above, and also additional residential development fronting the Back Mall. Vehicular access is proposed from The Mall.



Site

7

“Condon” House,
The Mall

Site Area: 660 sqm / **Present use:** Derelict former dwelling which is included on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. / **Potential:** Sensitive refurbishment to bring this important heritage building back to beneficial residential use / This building forms part of the ongoing Historic Towns Initiative proposals for Ballyshannon.



Site

10

The Mall

Site Area: 30 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant former small residential property with two levels of accommodation / **Potential:** Reinstate previous residential use.



Site

8

The Mall

Site Area: 50 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant former commercial/office building with two levels of accommodation / **Potential:** Reinstate previous commercial use for retail or office premises / This building forms part of the ongoing Historic Towns Initiative proposals for Ballyshannon.



Site

11

Main Street (south of
Dorrian's Hotel)

Site Area: 148 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant former commercial properties with 2 levels of accommodation / **Potential:** Reinstate previous commercial/office use



Site

9

The Mall

Site Area: 33 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant former commercial/office building with two levels of accommodation / **Potential:** Reinstate previous commercial use for retail or office premises / This building forms part of the ongoing Historic Towns Initiative proposals for Ballyshannon.



Sites

12 & 13

The Mall

Site Area: Combined area 109 sqm / **Present use:** Ground floor access to rear of premises with vacant residential on remainder of ground floor and on first floor / **Potential:** Reinstate previous residential use / These buildings form part of the ongoing Historic Towns Initiative proposals for Ballyshannon.



Site

14

Saimer Court Shopping Centre

Site Area: 1160 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant former shopping centre with 3 levels of accommodation / **Potential:** There is the option to refurbish the existing building to provide a mix of retail and office space or alternatively convert or partly convert it to community uses, such as leisure/recreation use as part of enhanced facilities for the town with proximity to the existing leisure centre and potential linkages. Refer to concept layout illustrating proposals



Site

17

Site on Castle Street

Site Area: 344 sqm / **Present use:** Building with 3 levels of accommodation with vacant commercial on ground floor with residential above served by own door access / **Potential:** Reinstate commercial use on ground floor with residential above at first and second floor. Allingham Court could be used as a future pedestrian "ally-way" access to Opportunity Site 10 behind Main St. This building would also be particularly suitable as a new location for either the Museum or FabLab.



Site

15

South of Saimer Court Shopping Centre

Site Area: 98 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant commercial units with two levels of accommodation / **Potential:** Reinstate previous commercial use or alternatively convert for residential use.



Site

18

Castle Street

Site Area: 375 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant two storey heritage dwelling / **Potential:** Reinstate residential use



Site

16

Site on Castle Street (adjacent to Dorrian's Pharmacy)

Site Area: 61 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant commercial on ground floor with residential above / **Potential:** Reinstate commercial use on ground floor with residential above at first and second floor



Site

19

Castle Street

Site Area: 60 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant commercial building with 3 levels / **Potential:** Occupy with commercial use either retail, office space or café/restaurant



Site
20 Castle Street (Adjacent to Post Office)

Site Area: 85 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant commercial building with 2 levels of accommodation / **Potential:** Occupy with commercial use either retail, office space or café/restaurant



Site
23 Market Street

Site Area: 370 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant dwellings providing 3 levels of accommodation / **Potential:** Reinstate previous residential use.



Site
21 Castle Street

Site Area: 140 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant commercial building with 3 levels of accommodation / **Potential:** Occupy with commercial use either retail, office space or café/restaurant with residential on upper floors.



Site
24 Site at the corner of Market St./Chapel St.

Site Area: 142 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant commercial building with residential above providing 3 levels of accommodation / **Potential:** Reinstate commercial use on ground floor with residential above.



Site
22 Former Millstone Hotel, Main Street

Site Area: 2865 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant gap site / **Potential:** There is a current proposal to redevelop this site to provide a sheltered / elderly town centre housing scheme. Refer to concept layout illustrating the proposals.



Site
25 Site on College St.

Site Area: 35 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant commercial property / **Potential:** Reinstate commercial use with small scale retail use or fast food.



Site 26

Site on College St.

Site Area: 120 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant commercial property / **Potential:** Reinstate commercial use with small scale retail use



Sites 29 to 31

College Street

Site Area: Combined area 1050 sqm / **Present use:** Derelict terrace of 3 residential properties providing 2 levels of accommodation / **Potential:** Refurbish existing properties and reinstate former residential use or alternatively demolish and redevelop site for residential development to provide up to 3 levels of accommodation.



Site 27

Site on College St.

Site Area: 277 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant residential providing 2 levels of accommodation / **Potential:** Refurbish and reinstate residential use to safe guard this heritage building



Sites 32 & 33

West Port

Site Area: Combined area 400 sqm / **Present use:** Derelict former dwelling providing 2 levels of accommodation and adjacent derelict out buildings/garages / **Potential:** demolish existing buildings and redevelop to provide new residential terrace providing 2 levels of accommodation.



Site 28

Site on College St.

Site Area: 84 sqm / **Present use:** Derelict former residential property providing 2 levels of accommodation / **Potential:** Reinstate or redevelop to provide residential development.



Site 34

Site on West Port

Site Area: 140 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant building with former commercial use on ground floor with residential above / **Potential:** Reinstate previous uses or alternatively refurbish for solely residential use.



Site
35

Site on West Port

Site Area: 280 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant heritage building with 3 levels of accommodation previously used as a dwelling / **Potential:** Refurbish building to safe guard its character and reinstate former residential use.



Site
38

Gap site on West Port

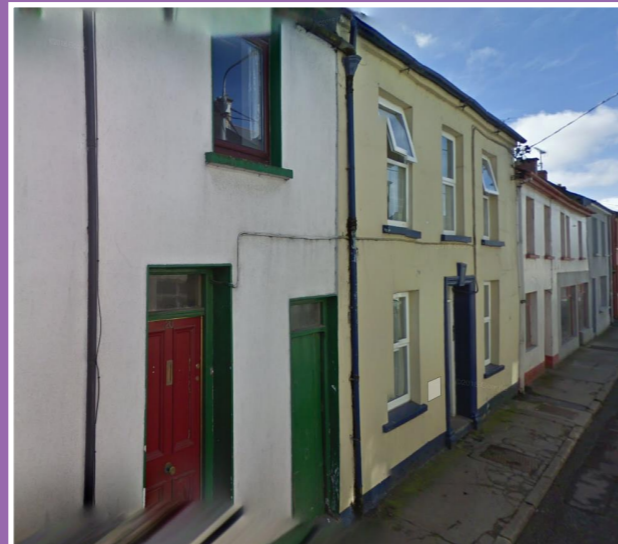
Site Area: 320 sqm / **Present use:** Derelict gap site within street frontage / **Potential:** Redevelop to provide residential terrace providing 2 levels of accommodation with frontage at the back of the existing footpath.



Site
36

Site on West Port

Site Area: 80 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant dwelling with 2 levels of accommodation / **Potential:** Reinststate former residential use



Site
39

Site adjacent to No 8 East Port

Site Area: 94 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant pub with two levels of accommodation / **Potential:** Reinststate existing hospitality use.



Site
37

Site on West Port

Site Area: 194 sqm / **Present use:** Derelict dwelling with 2 levels of accommodation / **Potential:** Refurbish existing property to provide dwelling with new dwelling adjacent on remainder of the site or alternatively demolish and redevelop for residential use.



Site
40

East Port

Site Area: 120 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant dwelling providing 2 levels of accommodation / **Potential:** Reinststate existing residential use.



Sites
41 & 42 East Port

Site Area: Combined area 300 sqm / **Present use:** Pair of derelict dwellings providing 2 levels of accommodation / **Potential:** Refurbish existing properties for residential use or alternatively demolish and redevelop site for residential development providing 2 levels of accommodation with frontage at back of the footpath.



Site
46 The Clock Tower

Site Area: 248 sqm GF / **Present use:** Key / prominent, and vacant historic building with 4 levels of accommodation / **Potential:** Museum; Arts/ heritage / cult.



Site
43 East Port

Site Area: 115 sqm / **Present use:** Vacant heritage building providing 2 levels of accommodation previously used as an Irish Dancing studio / **Potential:** Refurbish existing building to safe guard its character. Building could be used for a variety of uses including community, hospitality or commercial uses.



Site
47 The Workhouse

Site Area: 1.3 ha. (site) / **Present use:** Key/prominent and vacant historic building with 2 levels of accommodation / **Potential:** Flagship tourism project (e.g. Carrickmacross Workhouse Community & Visitor Centre); Artisan Food Production; Remote Working Hub; Hostel/Hotel; Museum; Community/educational use - e.g. Centre of Excellence for Traditional Building and Conservation Skills; Creative Hub.



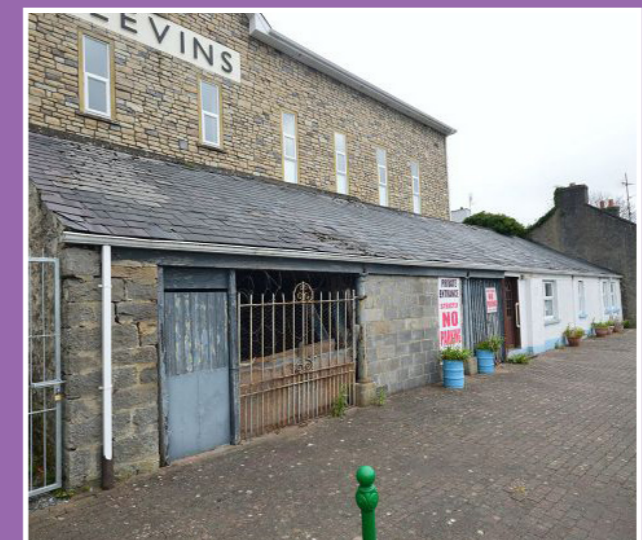
Sites
44 & 45 East Port

Site Area: Combined area 230 sqm / **Present use:** Two vacant dwellings with 2 levels of accommodation / **Potential:** Refurbish existing properties to reinstate residential use.



Site
48 The "Kellys" building, Market Square

Site Area: 320 sqm / **Present use:** A row of 3 vacant buildings over one and two levels / **Potential:** Public facilities - Changing Places, Cycle Hub, pop up uses e.g. cafe etc.



Communication of Ballyshannon's history

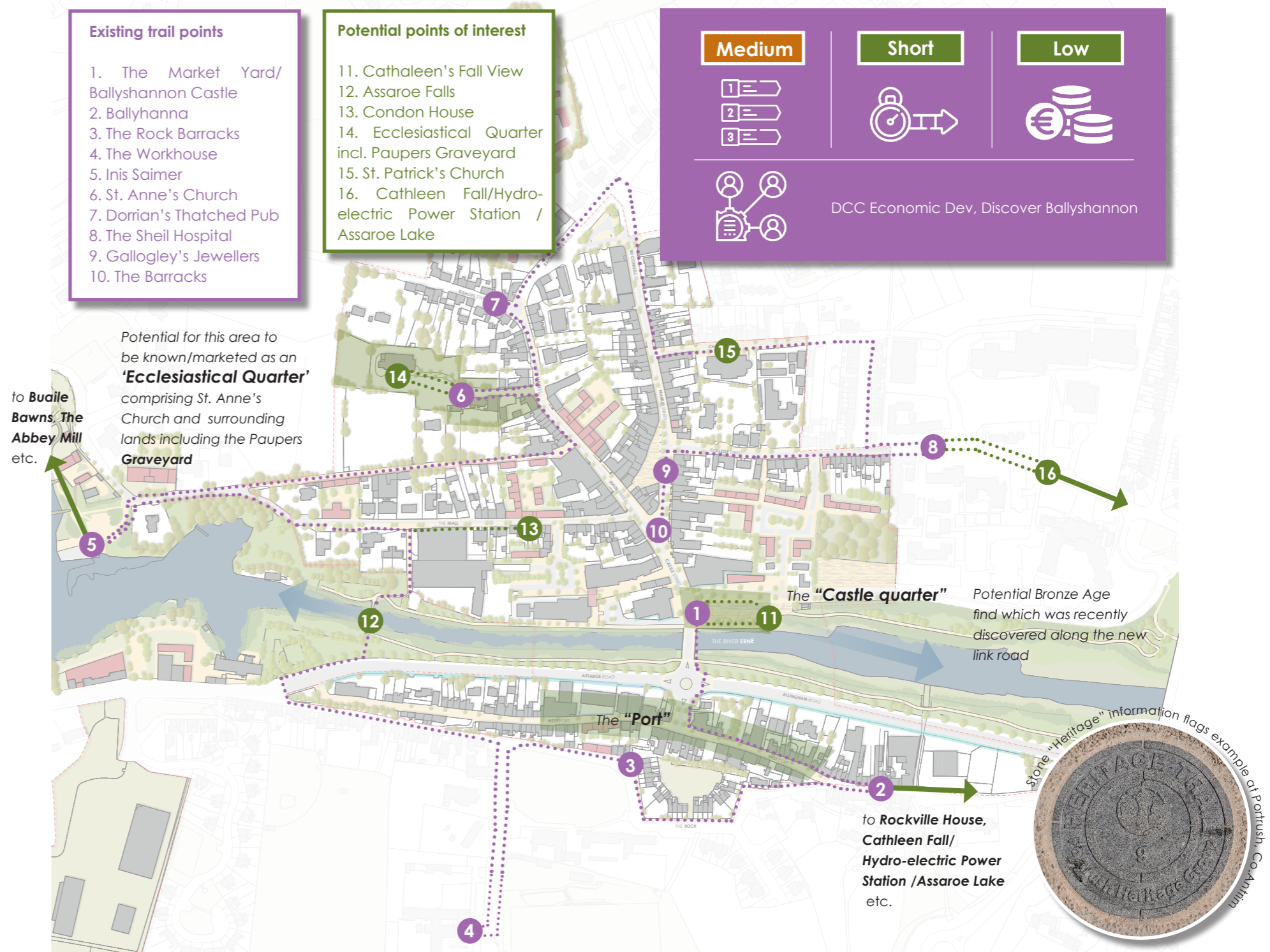
ACTION 4B:

“Communicate the importance of Ballyshannon’s designation as a Historic Town; a Heritage Town; and its prestige as Ireland’s Oldest Town by celebrating the history and distinctiveness of the place. Including the telling of the story of Ballyshannon with its archaeological findings and potential, and its links to renowned people, events, folklore and its industrial past.”

Ballyshannon has many features and assets that led to and contributes to its designation as a Historic Town and a Heritage Town. Its built and archaeological heritage is exceptional, with the town being well renowned as Ireland’s Oldest, and as a result is a unique and historic urban centre. It is also the location of an extensive Archaeological Complex, many National Monuments and numerous Protected Structures.

The promotion and communication of the town’s unique and distinctive built and cultural heritage, including its archaeological importance and its links to renowned people, events, folklore and industrial past, could invigorate the town’s tourism sector, increasing footfall and revenue through increased visitor numbers, both domestically and internationally. Increasing visitor numbers can have a spin-off effect on other aspects and sectors such as a higher demand and need for visitor accommodation, shops and services, new attractions and an improved market for housing development.

Means of achieving the above objective could be through improved/increased marketing (see Action 5A) the improvement and extension of the existing Ballyshannon heritage/walking trail, with the introduction of additional points of interest and new feature plaques or stones which help tell the story of Ballyshannon. Each plaque or stone could also include an interactive feature with QR codes providing links to the Museum website and a dedicated app which will give more detailed information about the specific point of interest.



Map illustrating the Ballyshannon heritage trail with 10 existing points of interest and 6 additional suggested locations for inclusion. (nts)

The Museum

ACTION 4C:

“Investigate the potential to expand or relocate the museum increasing the ability to showcase and promote the storytelling of the town’s heritage.”

As a result of the rich local history, heritage and mythology associated with Ballyshannon, the need for a dedicated and appropriate Museum is abundantly clear. As of present the Ballyshannon and District Museum, located at the second floor of Slevin's Department Store, is considered too small for what is envisaged, with a lack of space currently restricting its growth. With the Museum experiencing in the region of 4,000 to 6,000 visitors each year, with potential for growth, a larger/more appropriate space is required.

Expanding the offering of the museum, which currently includes exhibitions, collections, artefacts and memorabilia stretching back from the recent past to 10,000 BC, could be greatly beneficial to the town. A greater selection of artifacts with historic interest on a national and international basis could be made available if there was a more suitable and safe location to display them. These are artifacts that could have a major impact on the tourist and cultural offering not just in Ballyshannon but also the wider South Donegal Region. There are also opportunities to offer family genealogy and heritage services, however again, a dedicated area is required. An area where local heritage and crafts experts could give classes could also be popular. The museum has previously started a series of town historical walks which have proved to be popular and these are seen as an important addition to the museum moving forward.

Low	Short	Medium
Private individuals, DCC Cultural, Fáilte Ireland		

1. The Clock Tower - Relocating the Museum to the Clock Tower is potentially a fantastic option, as this would lead to the reuse of an existing historic landmark building, located at a prime central location within the town centre, and it is a building that visitors naturally gravitate towards. However, due to the small footprint of the building (GF is c.113sqm, 1F to 3F is c.65sqm each), exhibitions would have to span over a number of floors and access for all would have to be resolved (e.g. installation of a lift etc.). Also it is estimated that there would be substantial costs to upgrade and make it fit for this purpose.

2. Slevin's Department Store - The advantages of this option is that the store is located at a central position within the town and where the Museum has already been established and running since 2013. The current arrangement and location however has led to a stagnation in the growth of the Museum. There is currently little possibility of expansion without compromising Slevin's ongoing business. Future plans for the development of the Market Yard could include the opportunity to provide new frontage and, preferably, a ground floor location within Slevin's, providing a larger floor space.

3. Condon House - This option would also represent the reuse of an existing historic landmark building which is located in a relatively central location. As with the Clock Tower option, it is estimated that there would be substantial costs to upgrade Condon House and make it fit for purpose.

4. The Workhouse - This option would again be the reuse of an existing historic landmark building. In this case, there would be adequate and ample space available for extending the Museum offering and would provide an opportunity for visitors to 'walk through' the history of the town. The remote location of the Workhouse site, relative to the town centre, however means it would not be as readily accessible as other options. Furthermore this entire site require re-development and the museum offer would only be one part/phase of this.

5. Heitons Site - Another identified option for the Museum is relocating to the Heitons Site. Similarly to the Workhouse, this option would represent the reuse of an existing historic landmark building with adequate and ample space available for extending the Museum offering. The Heitons site does not however benefit from being located in a central position within the town, being located on the periphery of the town centre limit.

6. Former Castle Hardware Store - This building would be particularly suitable for reuse due to its central location and attractive heritage features.

Map identifying potential museum options (scale 1:5000)

Existing and potential festivals and events

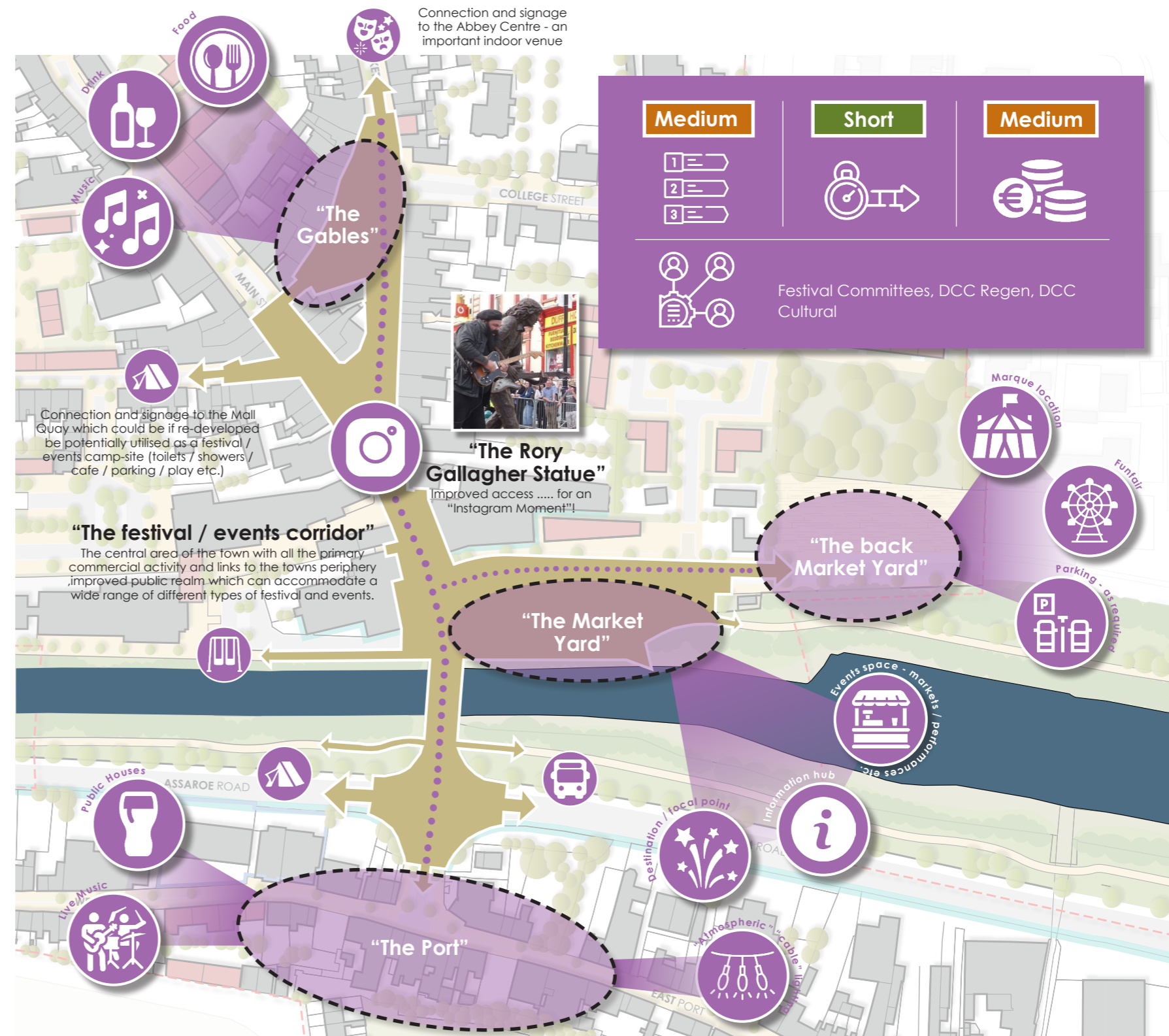
ACTION 4D:

“Support existing and potential festivals and events through appropriate placemaking and provision of facilities.”

Ballyshannon has experienced great success as a festival and events destination, with the Rory Gallagher International Festival; the Folk Festival; and the Allingham Arts Festival to name a few, attracting many visitors to the town on a yearly basis. These festivals and events have helped to reinforce the social and cultural history in the town, and there is great potential and enthusiasm amongst local people to grow this sector even further. This action would aim to provide appropriate placemaking that can help to protect, promote and provide for the arts, performing arts and festivals within Ballyshannon and grow its tourist offering.

Appropriate placemaking and the provision of facilities are required in order to accommodate, enhance and support existing and potential festivals and events in Ballyshannon. The Gables area and the Market Yard (including the back Market Yard) can be made more suitable for main events. These areas have traditionally been utilised for festivals and events and the further bespoke enhancement of these areas with, for example, the creation of unobtrusive public realm, clear spaces, high quality lighting, shelter access and information can make a more pleasant user experience. It would also allow for more convenient/easier erection of stages, facilitation of larger crowds and the fulfilling of various and emerging health and safety standards. These locations are also located centrally, benefitting local business and services and could be temporarily closed off without causing major disruption to town centre movement or business functioning during festival times.

There is also a realisation that additional ancillary facilities will be required if there are increases in visitor numbers resulting from these events. Additional visitor accommodation (hotels beds / camping etc.), convenient visitor information services, pedestrian / cycling infrastructure, public transport facilities, and central break out spaces could help facilitate increased numbers. The production of a co-ordinated festival plan or strategy could also be explored, to assist in the appropriate maximisation of Ballyshannon's 'festival town' potential.



The festival and events "corridor" - Map identifying how placemaking can accommodate and enhance Ballyshannons festival and events culture (nts)

Theme



*“Support and assist the
development of business and
tourism sectors.”*

The economy -
Business & tourism

Enhancement of Business & Enterprise

Action 5A:

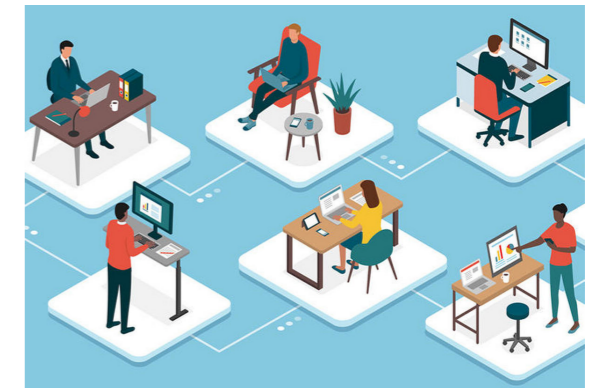
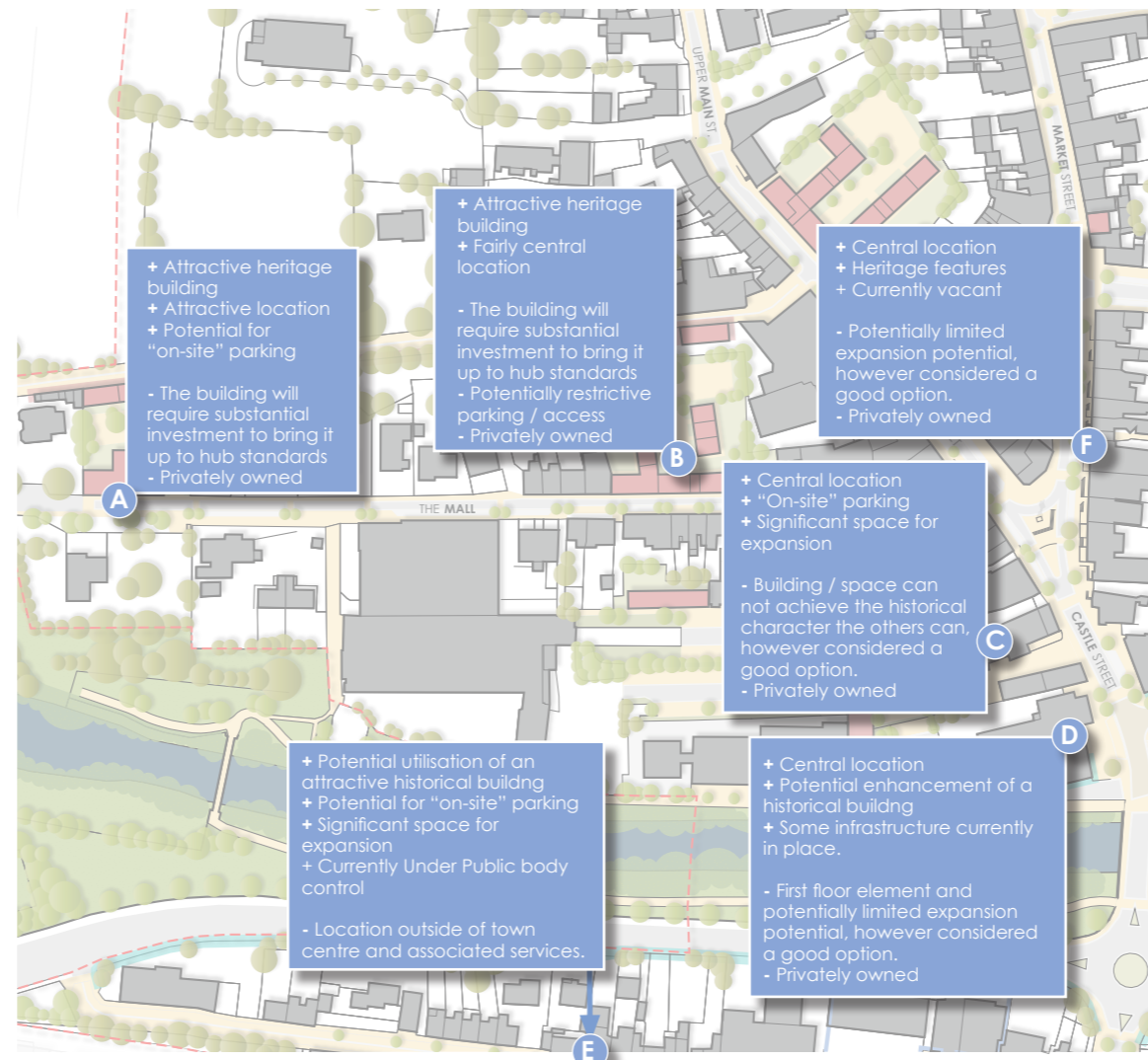
“Investigate opportunities to enhance economic growth and job creation by the provision of a ‘Remote Working Hub’; suitable ‘Enterprise Spaces’ and by supporting existing and attracting new business and investment.”

There is an identified need within Ballyshannon to promote economic development, and provide options for enterprise/employment creation and sustainable business growth.

The shift in work practices resulting from Covid-19 has brought into further perspective the possibility of introducing, developing and improving facilities for remote working throughout Ireland. More and more people want to continue with remote working and so the demand for such facilities has increased. Investigating the potential for a remote working hub within Ballyshannon town centre and identifying the most suitable location(s) for these facilities can provide the basis for their introduction over the plan period.

A remote working hub within Ballyshannon should provide facilities which take cognisance of the skills and profile of the town’s workforce. Although facilities should be accessible and usable by everyone, it is important that they are tailored for those most likely to utilize them. Ballyshannon comprises of many people with creative, artistic and crafting backgrounds and so a remote working hub should perhaps be bespoke to those within these sectors. Facilities could include large spill out meeting spaces, provide a range of printers and projectors and offer users access to the technology they require such as Adobe Creative Suite etc. A remote working hub could also be utilized by local businesses that can use the facilities to improve and create new business opportunities.

The right environment and working conditions must be created for any remote working hub to be implemented and run successfully. A suitable town centre location is key, potential locations may include, but are not limited to; the Ballyshannon Bakery site, the Mulligan site at the Mall, the Saimer Court Shopping Centre, the Barracks, the Workhouse, and the former Castle Hardware building. Ballyshannon Fab Lab (Fabrication Laboratory), formerly located along the Mall, could, if suitable, be incorporated within any new remote working hub.



Medium	Short	Low
1 → 2 → 3 →	🕒	📁
👤👤👤 Private individuals, DCC Economic		

“Remote Working Hub” locational options and example images (nts)

The facilitation of enterprise spaces for potential light manufacturing facilities such as a craft or food hub could be explored. Such an initiative would benefit Ballyshannon by regenerating and reoccupying a central area of the town, delivering employment opportunities and creating a central visitor attraction. An initiative to incentivise an artisan food or craft producer to set-up in a currently vacant town centre building, could also be explored, further improving enterprise and job creation opportunities.

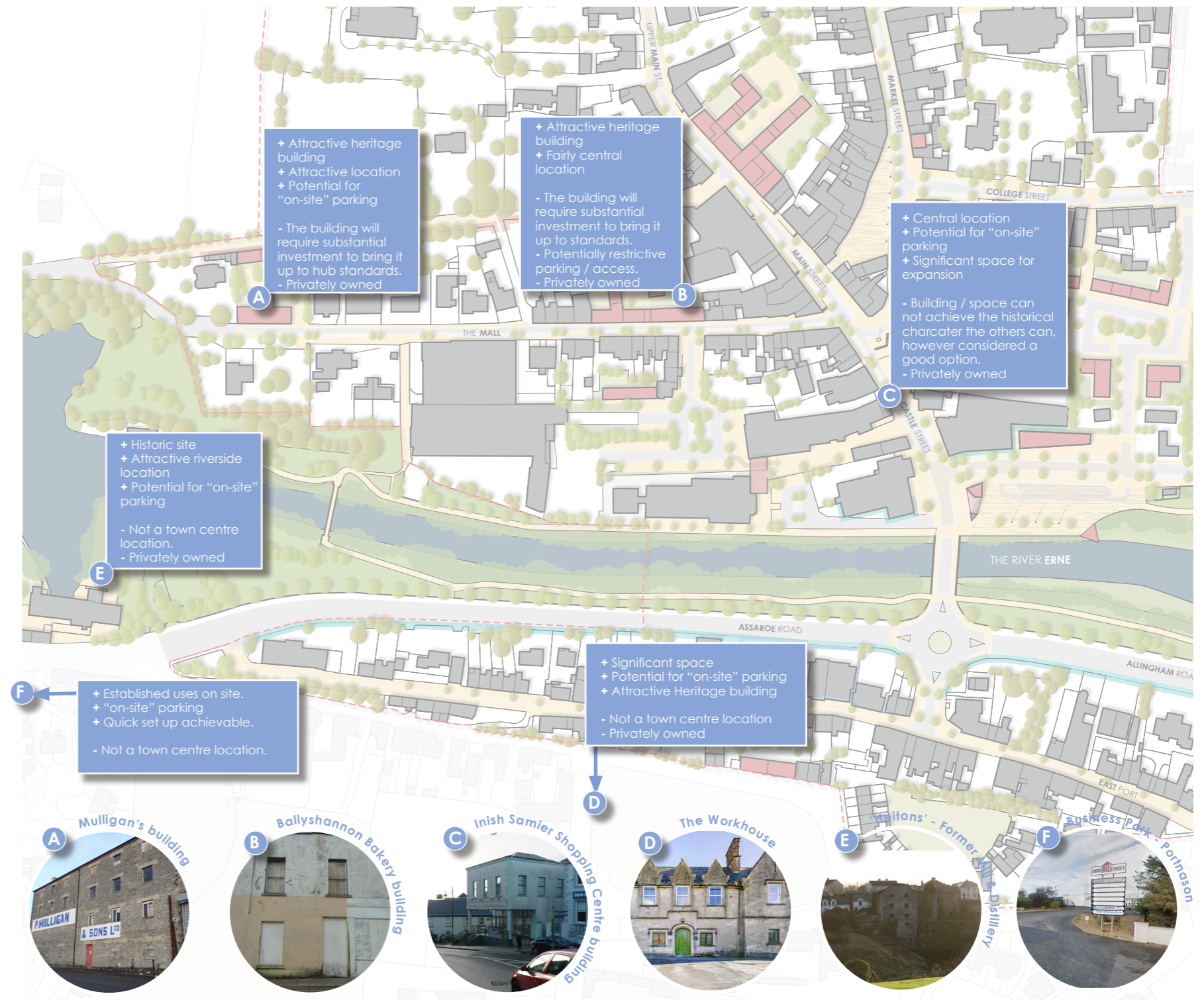
Whilst not located within the Ballyshannon Town Centre study area, the existing business park at Portnason and the Council owned land in this area provide opportunities for suitable larger site developments and attracting investment.

The location of Ballyshannon in a post-Brexit landscape, coupled with the development of supporting infrastructure within the town, should make the area an attractive location for inward investment. Sufficient public sector investment will stimulate private investment, which will attract new business and grow enterprise in the area.

Other methods to improve economic growth in Ballyshannon could include the establishment / re-establishment of a chamber of commerce group, which would be for the collective benefit of business and would provide such a platform where funding could potentially be granted for training/mentoring schemes and the support of planned activity, which in time should become self sustaining.



Reception / spill out spaces



'Enterprise Spaces' locational options

An interactive tourist information point / hub

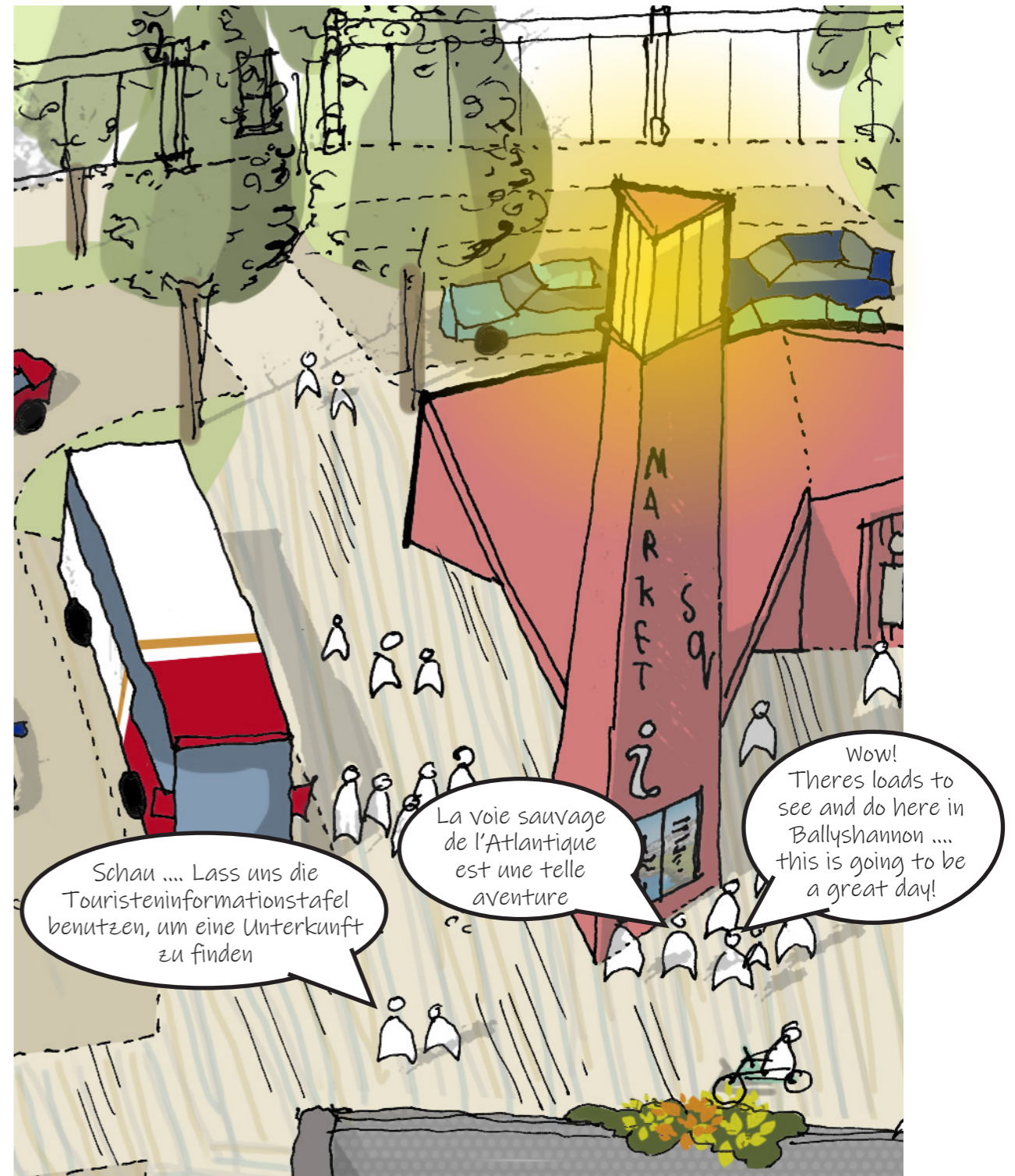
Action 5B:

“Investigate the potential for the introduction of an interactive tourist info point/hub at the Market Yard”

There are currently tourist/visitor information points in Ballyshannon, however these are limited in functionality and aesthetics. The presence of a modern, convenient and accessible physical source(s) of information at a central location within the town centre could help capitalise on Ballyshannon's tourism offer. Information points are often the first point of contact for tourists and visitors who rely on them for up-to-date information and advice on what to see and do on their trip. Interactive hub options can allow visitors the freedom to search for local services, attractions and sites and opens up marketing opportunities for local businesses and clubs to promote offers, activities and events.

Ballyshannon could benefit from the introduction of an interactive tourist information feature / beacon at the bus station / Market Yard area. This is the preferred location for visitor information as it is located centrally and is the obvious and established meeting and arrival point in Ballyshannon.

Adjacent is an indicative concept of how the interactive tourist information wall/panel could be incorporated in the rejuvenated Market Square. It is located at the base of a beacon (which visitors will be naturally drawn too) located at the rivers edge, between Port and the north side of Ballyshannon Town centre, and also mid way along the 3 bridges walk. Furthermore it is right beside the town centres main bus stop, public toilets / changing places facility and cycle hub.



An indicative concept of how the interactive tourist information wall/panel could be placed at the Market Yard (nts)

Low	Short	Low
DCC Regen, DCC Cultural, Failte Ireland		

Developing “The Ballyshannon Brand”

Action 5C:

“Communicate the identity of Ballyshannon by developing “The Ballyshannon Brand” and a specific tourism strategy. Building upon the town’s rich history/heritage, arts and culture scene and position along the Wild Atlantic Way, with access to open space and the natural environment and associated leisure and recreation activities.”

It is important to build upon the existing “Discover Ballyshannon” branding (which currently has a web and facebook pages), with the development of a modern and eye-catching brand for the town centre. As this can present an effective opportunity to attract residents, bolster business, and boost tourism within the town.

The communication of the town's identity, including the promotion of its assets, can be an effective tool in stimulating investment and growth within the tourism sector and in marketing the town as an attractive destination for people to visit, live and work.

It is vital that the 'Ballyshannon Brand' is considerate of the towns attributes and should take inspiration from key town features such as the River Erne, the estuary, Ballyshannon as Ireland's Oldest Town or the clock tower for example, features that are synonymous with Ballyshannon. Effective branding is further assisted through the creation of a logo, the use of suitable colours, and the development of a website and social media pages.



Medium	Short	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 → 2 → 3 → 		
<p>DCC Economic, Discover Ballyshannon, Fáilte Ireland</p>		

Quality town and tourism branding examples. Also the Town needs to use its unique features in the development of a town “brand”, such as The Clock Tower and Ballyshannon as Ireland’s oldest town

In tandem with the 'Ballyshannon Brand', a specific tourism strategy for the town could assist the future growth of the tourism sector in Ballyshannon. Growth of the tourism sector is dependent on innovation, enhancement of existing/development of new attractions, added value and strengthening the appeal of the town to various markets including local, regional and international visitors.

A tourism strategy, which should integrate with wider tourism policy and guidance including the *People, Place and Policy - Growing Tourism to 2025* document, will identify a specific vision and certain objectives for tourism and set out the framework and mechanisms that will achieve these, ensuring that Ballyshannon is recognised as an attractive destination. Like the branding, the tourism strategy should build upon the towns greatest assets and placemaking should respond to and provide for identified opportunities, including but not limited to:

- Location on the Wild Atlantic Way - potential for a new Discovery Point at the Mall Quay; also review of the Wild Atlantic Way signage at the entrance points into the town;
- Heritage and History - A place of the first settlers, the castle, the Dam, through to more recent history - Rory Gallagher etc.
- The potential of a Flagship Tourism Project at the Workhouse. Examples of other repurposed workhouses exist around Ireland, e.g. Carrickmacross Workhouse Community & Visitor Centre
- A town of "green" infrastructure excellence, e.g. the Eden Project in Cornwall (also see Action 6A);
- An events destination - music, literature and drama (see Action 4D)
- An angling destination;
- A destination for produce, food/drink and entertainment (e.g. Carlingford has created a unique offer ... oysters etc.).

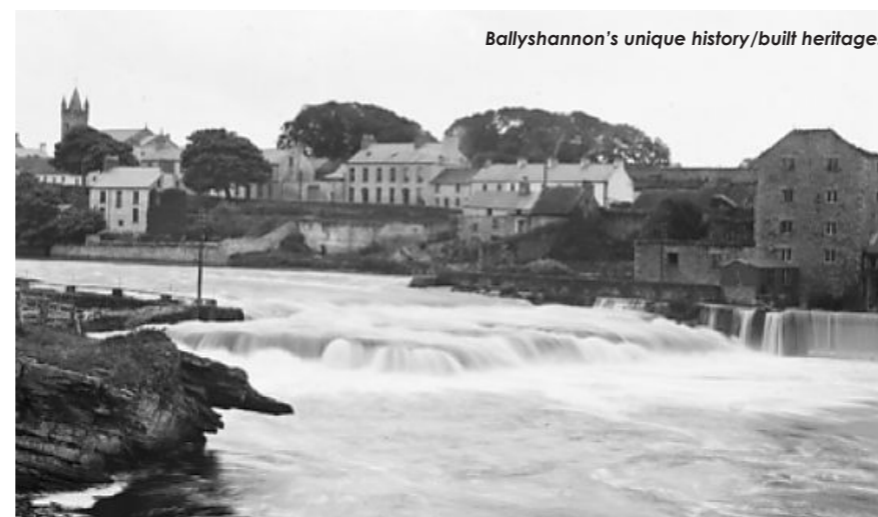
Of recent significance, is the granting of planning approval for a new hotel at the former cinema on Assaroe Rd. which will significantly bolster the number of available bed spaces in the town.



Potential Flagship Tourism Project at the Workhouse



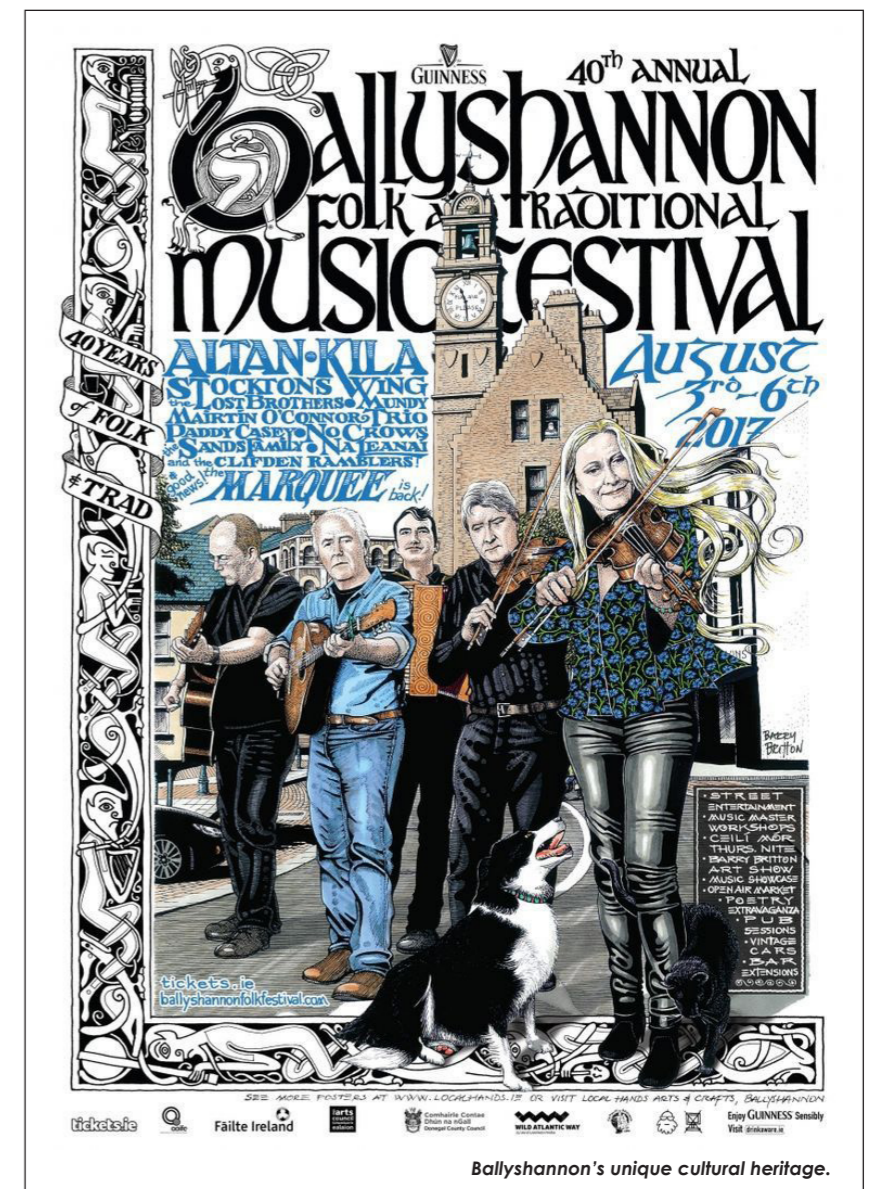
Angling at Assaroe Lake.



Ballyshannon's unique history/built heritage.

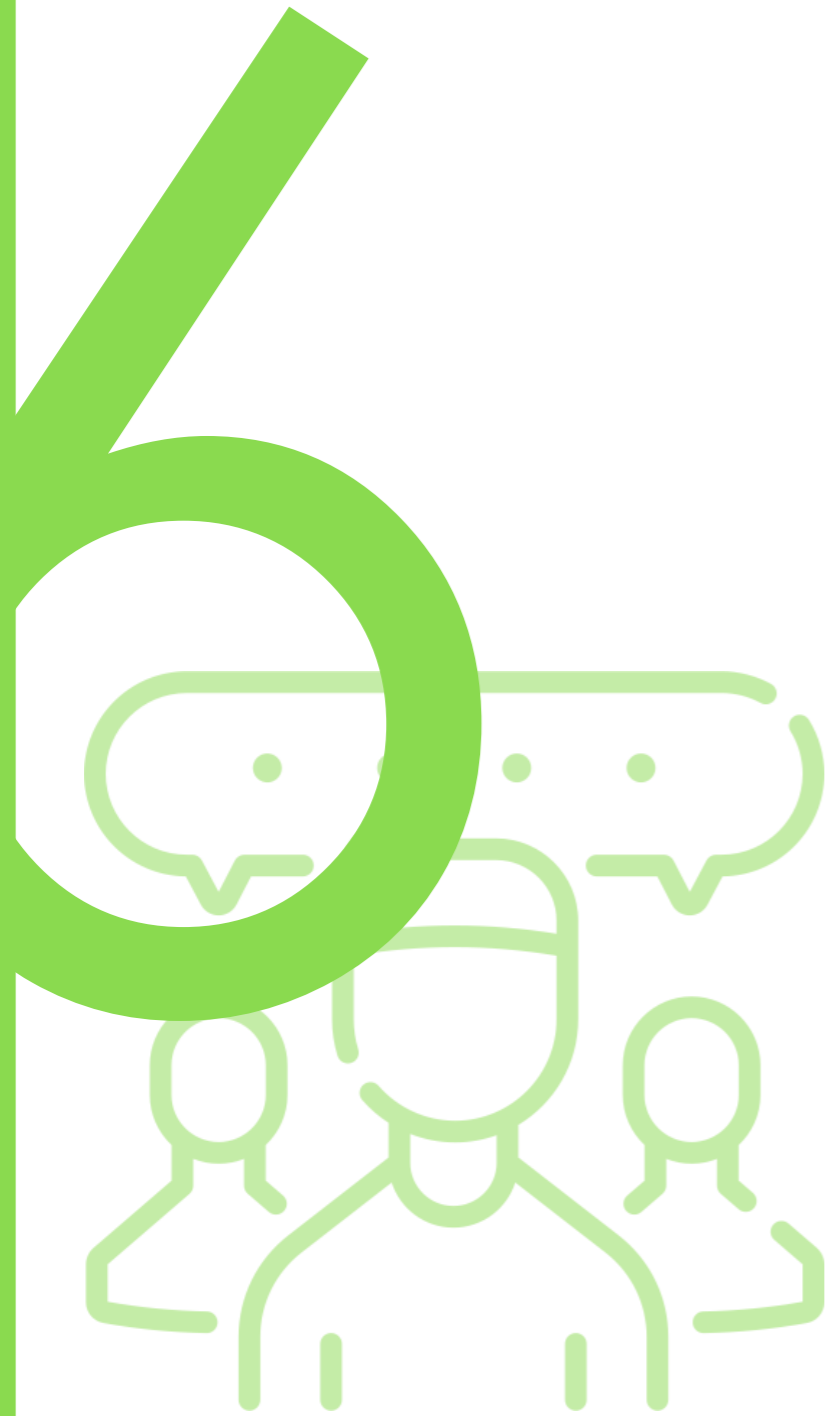
Some of the towns assets need to be promoted further, locally, regionally and internationally. A Tourism Strategy can help define the best methods and sources of funding etc. to achieving this.

Location along the Wild Atlantic Way.



Ballyshannon's unique cultural heritage.

Theme



“Nurture and strengthen the strong community spirit, & high levels of participation & activity through the provision of quality services, facilities, & environmental enhancements in a sustainable way that will improve people’s quality of life.”

The community -
Sustainability &
facilities

Ballyshannon as a “Green Town”

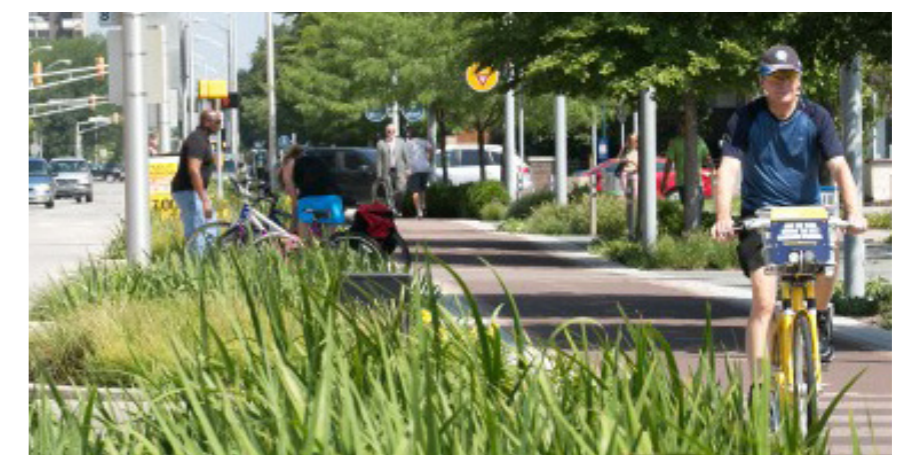
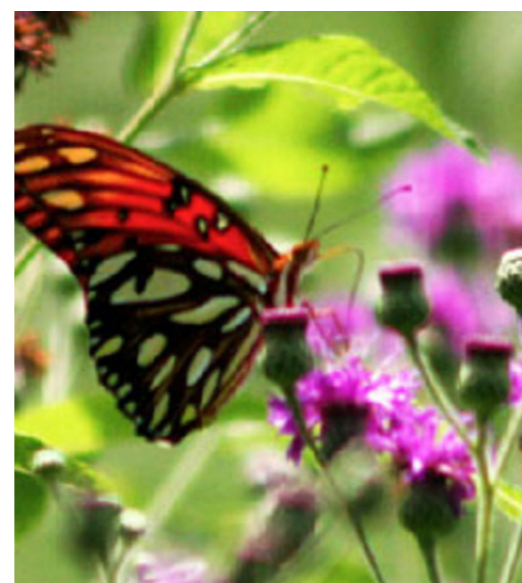
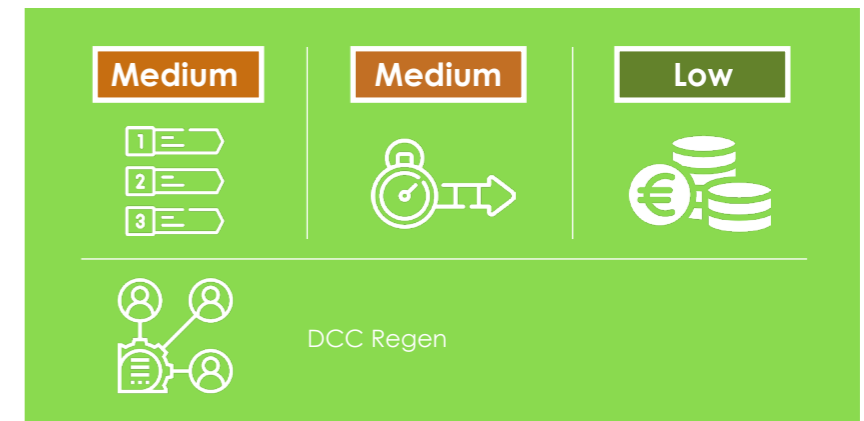
ACTION 6A:

“Explore opportunities for Ballyshannon to become a ‘Green Town’ tackling sustainability issues with regards to climate change and the impacts on the town.”

There are opportunities to make Ballyshannon a more environmentally friendly place, with an overall ambition of becoming a ‘Green Town’. The need to reduce emissions and carbon footprints throughout the globe has never been more important and Ballyshannon, much like many other towns and cities, has an opportunity to make vital contributions to tackling climate change. Ballyshannon’s already unique position of being the location of the Cathleen’s Fall hydroelectric power station, could be something to build upon in order to grow the town’s potential as an innovation centre/hub of sustainable energy provision and practices. The town also benefits from its attractive location and natural setting, along the banks of the River Erne and in proximity to the Atlantic Coast, with potential to avail of these assets.

The establishment of a working group, who would have the responsibility of developing a Green Town Plan for Ballyshannon, is a sensible and practical starting point in the overall approach to achieving the Green Town ambition. The working group could identify and discuss targets and objectives and the mechanisms that could be set in place to achieve sustainable development opportunities such as the provision of electric vehicle charge points, improvements to the town’s cycle and pedestrian networks and facilities, the proposed use of street trees throughout the town centre creating green boulevards/biodiversity corridors etc, provision of accessible green spaces and the promotion of public transport as a viable alternative to the private car. What’s particularly important, is ensuring the built environment within Ballyshannon is climate resilient with buildings sensitively retrofitted, where necessary, to make good and to help achieve climate change aspirations.

There are numerous potential related benefits from becoming a greener town, such as improved health and wellbeing, enhanced social integration, increase in real estate values (it turns out that money does grow on trees!), biodiversity enrichment, and pollution reduction, all of which contribute to sustainable regeneration. Learning from best practice, such as the Ballina Green Town initiative, Ballyshannon can work towards a more sustainable future.



Small interventions could boost Ballyshannon's Green credentials even further including many of the actions identified in this strategy, such as the potential improvements to green pedestrian / cycleways; enhancing the biodiversity at the River and throughout the town centre; street tree planting; and additional electric charge points.

Improvement of community facilities & infrastructure

ACTION 6B:

“Improve existing and develop new community facilities and infrastructure (e.g. internet coverage provision / utilising the location and the riverside setting of the Leisure Centre as a catalyst for the regeneration of Ballyshannon’s town centre”

The provision of suitable and appropriate community facilities and infrastructure can make a valuable contribution to the quality of life within towns such as Ballyshannon, providing essential services, activities and opportunities that play an important role in creating a sense of place. A range of facilities and infrastructure provision can cater for the health, welfare, social, educational, spiritual, recreational, leisure and cultural needs of the community.

Prior community consultation identified a desire for improved/new convenience retail facilities (i.e. supermarket). The provision of such, will largely depend upon the market conditions and availability of opportunities. The DCC Seven Towns Strategic Plan identifies a large site at Assaroe Road as part of the town centre area. This could potential be appropriate for such a use, subject to satisfying normal statutory approvals/conditions etc. Also the existing Samier Court Shopping centre once accommodated ground/lower ground floor convenience retail and again could be potentially re-utilised for this use.

Ballyshannon could particularly benefit from improved internet coverage provision, social enterprise opportunities, and the utilisation of the central location and riverside setting of the Leisure Centre as a catalyst for the regeneration of the town centre. The extension or enhancement of the Leisure Centre could accommodate and provide an improved level of community facilities. There is also the potential for the Saimer Court Shopping Centre and car park area to be incorporated within the wider enhancement of the Leisure Centre, creating a leisure and community ‘hub’, which could provide a package of services for the entire community. Also, the town should strive to achieve “Age-friendly” status, where the town centre is truly inclusive for all ages (young and old alike), is easy to use and is a pleasant place to spend time for the differing demographics.

Improved internet coverage



Improved leisure facilities







Age friendly status



Social Enterprise

MISSION	TRADE	PROFIT
		
Economic, social, cultural or environmental mission aligned to public or community benefit	Trade a product or service to fulfil the mission	Reinvest the majority of their profit or surplus in the fulfilment of the mission

Financial & Social Value co-exist

Medium	Long	High
		
 DCC Community, DCC Regen, HSC, Private individual / landowner		



The potential to develop a range of community uses at the Saimer Centre should be developed further. It is also advised to strengthen the potential synergy with the adjacent Leisure Centre to the benefit of the wider community.

Section



Associated local
projects

Associated Local Projects

Historic Towns Initiative (HTI)

On 4th March 2021 the Minister of State for Heritage & Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan, announced the award of funding under the HTI of €200,000 for Ballyshannon, augmented by funding of €85,000 by Donegal County Council as well as private investment by property owners. An additional award of €37,700 was secured in August 2021 to further assist with the project.

This project is being led by Donegal County Council's Conservation Officer and Heritage Officer in partnership with the Ballyshannon Regeneration Group and the property owners. The project provides a unique opportunity to conserve and bring back into use some of the historic buildings that contribute significantly to the very valuable built heritage of Ballyshannon.

The project is now underway and will draw on best conservation practice and make use of traditional skills and historic materials to undertake a range of conservation works and repairs to a total of thirteen properties on the Mall and a further property at Upper Main Street.

Further funding has been awarded in March 2022, again under the Historic Towns Initiative, to continue the heritage-led regeneration of Ballyshannon. Eight historic buildings including the Town Clock building will benefit from a total investment of c. €500,000, including an award of €250,000 from the Heritage Council, augmented with €100,000 in funding from Donegal County Council as well as private investment by property owners. Works will commence imminently and are targeted for completion by November 2022.



Ballyshannon RRDF Project

On 25th June 2021 the Minister for Rural & Community Development, Michael Ring, announced that funding had been awarded under Category 2 of the Rural Regeneration & Development Fund (RRDF) to provide for the further development of the Ballyshannon Town Centre Regeneration Project.

The regeneration project is located central to the regeneration plan that this report sets out however it is commissioned as a separate project.

The Ballyshannon Town Centre Regeneration Project will aim to deliver major transformational change in the heart of the town to include for the reimagining of public spaces, the repurposing of derelict and vacant buildings and the development of a new riverside amenity including a network of green transport infrastructure in the form of new walking and cycling routes that will maximise the existing assets of the river banks.

The project will be centered on the Market Yard with the creation of a new, high-quality, multi-functional civic space leading to new pedestrian and cycle linkages and new amenity corridor through the formation of the Three Bridges Loop.

This project presents a valuable opportunity to deliver significant infrastructural improvements within the centre of Ballyshannon that will capitalise on the town's natural assets to enable optimum regeneration results.



The Diamond & Main Street, Ballyshannon
Early twentieth-century postcard image of The Diamond in Ballyshannon



An Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and Community Development

Rural Regeneration and Development Fund



Section



An implementation
strategy

Funding & enabling delivery

The delivery of the Strategy will require a flexible, co-ordinated and committed approach by all stakeholders responsible for its implementation. This approach will be required throughout the Strategy time-frame. The scale of individual development proposals will dictate the level of resources required for their delivery, either solely by the public sector, or solely by the private sector or as some form of joint venture.

It will be important to bring together the resources for the delivery of certain proposals at an early stage, to “kick start” the Strategy, bringing visible short term benefits and creating confidence. The improvement of the visual connection and partial access between the town centre and River Erne, improving the walkability of the town and the promotion and celebration of the town’s heritage would all be catalysts for the future regeneration of the town.

For all the Strategy proposals, it will be important to ensure that all necessary mechanisms, including funding, responsibilities, co-ordination and co-operation, are in place to ensure timely and robust delivery. Public sector Intervention, particularly leadership by Donegal County Council and their various internal departments will be essential in ensuring the delivery of many components of this Strategy.

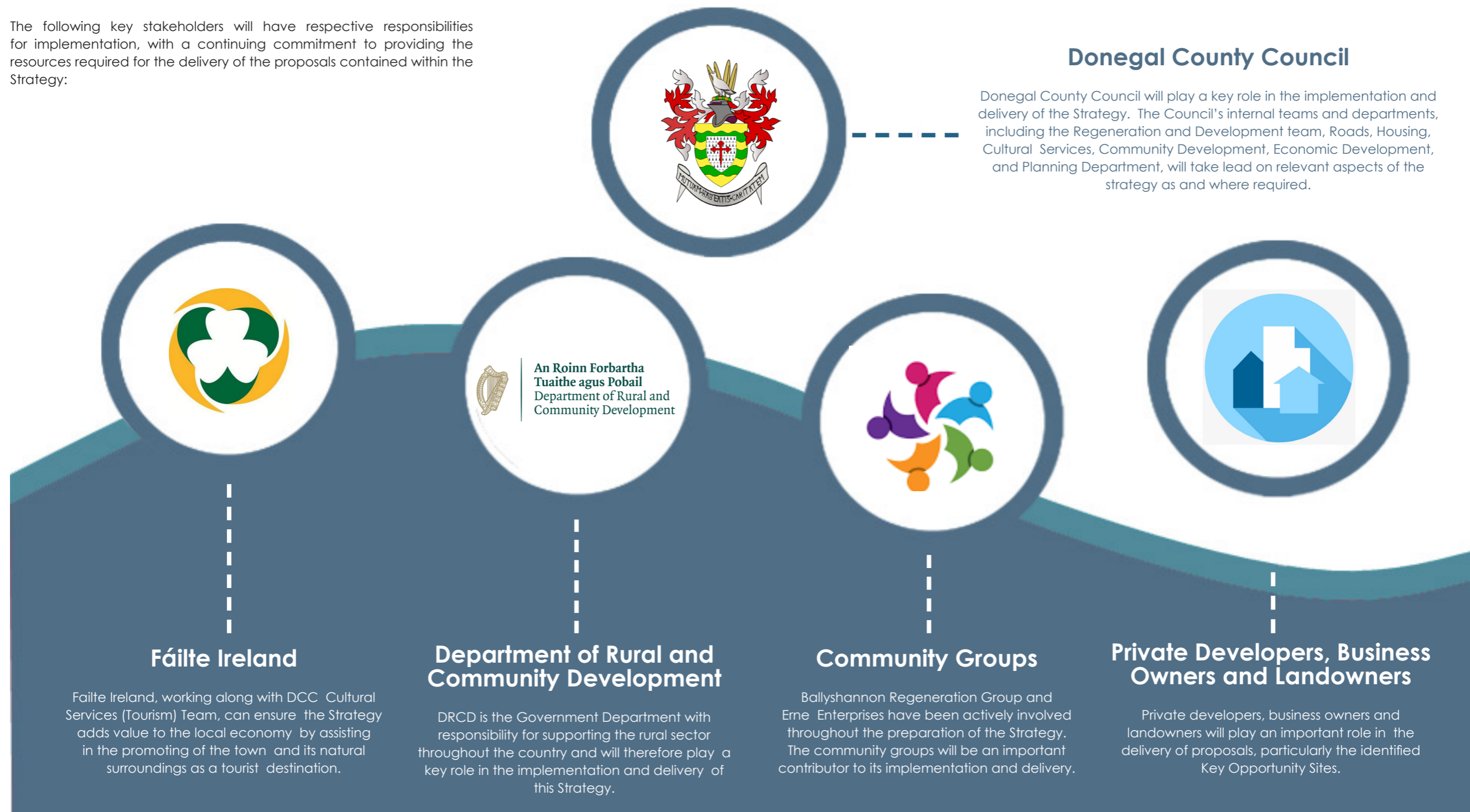
The Strategy seeks to respond to the economic, social and environmental challenges facing Ballyshannon. It also seeks to respond to many of the town’s physical, environmental and natural attributes including its location at a gateway to Donegal, the attractive Erne estuary and the Atlantic coast, its Historic and Heritage Town status with many Listed Buildings, its cultural heritage being a destination for festivals and events, and the good transport links associated with the town.

The sources / tools of potential funding and delivery include:

A	<p>The Public Sector and Local Authority</p> <p>It is an ambition that Public Sector funding for particular proposals could be facilitated by Donegal County Council, however in the current economic climate there can be no certainties. Other Public Sector funding sources may include for example the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF), the Town and Village Renewal Scheme, LEADER, Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS), and the CLÁR Programme.</p>
B	<p>The Private Sector</p> <p>It is expected that the private sector will play a major part in fulfilling the regeneration objectives, given that a large portion of the town comprises of private businesses and lands that are in private ownership. It will be important for the Council to work closely with the Private and Community Sectors to facilitate co-ordinated delivery.</p>
C	<p>Development Briefs</p> <p>In the circumstances where there are sites which require particular regeneration, Development Briefs could be used as a mechanism to achieve regeneration goals by informing potential developers and other interested parties of the opportunities of each site.</p>
D	<p>Local Asset Backed Vehicles</p> <p>This potential delivery mechanism involves a joint venture between the Public and Private Sectors. It could be a successful approach to delivering mixed use regeneration, particularly in relation to some of the Strategy’s more complex proposals.</p>
E	<p>The Heritage Council</p> <p>Heritage Council funding, particularly through the Historic Towns Initiative, should be considered as a means for funding. Donegal County Council have of course already benefited from the granting of funding through this mechanism, with works planned which will conserve the historic built environment along the Mall, Main Street and, more recently, the Diamond.</p>
	<p>Other funding avenues that could be explored include the Outdoor Public Space Scheme, Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, the Irish National Lottery Funding, the Strategic Funding Unit, Historic Structures Fund, Built Heritage Investment Scheme and the Historic Towns Grant Scheme.</p>

Responsibility for delivery

The following key stakeholders will have respective responsibilities for implementation, with a continuing commitment to providing the resources required for the delivery of the proposals contained within the Strategy:



Managing progress

Potential project programme

The Action Plan set out within this document identifies the actions for delivery of the Strategy's proposals and a timetable for their delivery that will extend over at least the next 20 years. Regular monitoring and evaluation is recommended. Successful delivery will require a collaborative approach between all stakeholders. Some opportunity sites identified will be ideal contenders for "Quick Wins", bringing short term visible benefits to the town. Development on other sites and delivery of other Strategy proposals will be longer term.

The following have been identified as deliverable short term actions that will improve confidence and tackle the towns identified weaknesses in the near future. These "Quick Wins" are generally identified in the Action Plan as actions which fall into the brackets of having a short potential timescale (<5years) and will be of low indicative cost (<€1m). They are generally projects which occur at sites where ownerships are relatively clear (normally public) and they can act as catalysts for longer term actions throughout the town, and include:

- Improve the visual connection with the River Erne and create walking and cycle loops that incorporate the riverside embankment and enhance the natural setting of the river banks whilst ensuring a safe and practical environment in light of the working nature of the river.
- Conserve and provide opportunities to enhance the biodiversity and setting of the river and its margins for leisure and educational purposes.
- Develop a walkable town centre through repair / improvement of footpaths and provision of safe crossing points.
- Improve the walkability of the town through repair / improvement of footpaths and provision of safe crossing points.
- Enhance facilities for the users of public transport within the town.
- Promote Ballyshannons designation as a Historic/Heritage Town, its prestige as being thought to be Ireland's Oldest Town, its archaeological findings and potential, and its links to renowned people.
- Investigate the potential to expand or re-locate the museum.
- Investigate the potential for a suitable 'Remote Working Hub' within the town.
- Identify and investigate how to facilitate a major and other ancillary tourist attractions, facilities and festivals/events.
- Investigate the potential for the introduction of an interactive tourist information point / hub.
- Communicate the identity of Ballyshannon by developing "The Ballyshannon Brand" and a specific tourism strategy.

Monitoring and evaluation

A series of measurable indicators to quantify progress will be established on implementation of projects to enable the monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy on a regular basis. The measured change over time will give an indication of the progress towards full achievement of the vision, the delivery of specific objectives and the overall vitality and viability of this town.

Typical measures could include an annual review of the audit information contained within this report - such as comparing the number of vacant buildings year on year to ensure the Strategy proposal is increasing occupancy in the town.

To give a balanced and comprehensive picture the statistical measures need to be complemented by qualitative assessments, which could include regular forums with the community. For example, statistics may show a decrease in vacant property, though qualitative assessment may highlight that a key asset has become vacant and so the issue is exacerbated. Some of the data may be collected on an annual basis, some on a biannual basis, some every 5 years, and Census related data every 10 years.

This review should be used to ensure the Strategy continues to be sufficiently flexible and capable of appropriate adaption to changes in the physical, social, economic and environmental context, rather than being a rigid and quickly outdated document of little benefit to the community.

Land ownership

Given the mixture of public and private land ownerships throughout the town centre, the strategy will require a number of different delivery mechanisms to suit the requirements of each project and their respective stakeholders. The participation of and ongoing engagement with and between landowners will form an important element of the implementation of the strategy, particularly the delivery of the proposed key opportunity site developments. In some cases the delivery of proposals advocated by this masterplan will require the simultaneous redevelopment of land that is under more than one land ownership. The following table outlines the land ownership status of the key sites and the potential delivery mechanisms for any future development proposals on these lands:

Key Site	Ownership status & potential delivery mechanism
River Erne - margins & surrounds	The majority of lands are under private ownership (largely ESB) with some elements publicly owned. Potential regeneration could be facilitated by private owners or in a joint venture with the public sector.
The Mall Quay	Lands are under a mixture of public and private ownership. Potential regeneration of this site could be facilitated through a joint public and private venture. Development briefs could be utilised.
Heitons - Former Mill & Distillery Site	Lands are entirely under private ownership. Development could be facilitated by the private owner or in a joint venture with the public sector. Development briefs could be utilised.
The Market Yard	The Market Yard is under public ownership. Potential regeneration of this site could be lead by the local authority.
The Gables	The Gables is under public ownership. Potential regeneration of this area could be lead by the local authority.
Former Millstone Hotel Site	This site is owned by a Housing Association. Future development of the site could be facilitated by the Housing Association, if demand is demonstrated. Alternatively, site development could be supported by the Council's Housing Department.
Former Ballyshannon Bakery Site	These premises are privately owned. Development could be facilitated by the private owner or in a joint venture with the public sector. Development briefs could be utilised.
Mulligans Site	These premises are privately owned. Development could be facilitated by the private owner or in a joint venture with the public sector. Development briefs could be utilised.
Ballyshannon Lesiure Centre	Building and lands are in public ownership. The local authority will need to take lead with the potential regeneration of these lands.
Saimer Court Shopping Centre	Building is in private ownership. Development could be facilitated by the private owner or in a joint venture with the public sector. Development briefs could be utilised.

This Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan was commissioned and overseen by Donegal County Council's Regeneration & Development Team, with the aim of providing an evidenced framework that will set out the future regeneration aspirations and priorities for Ballyshannon town centre. GM Design Associates, an Architectural, Landscape and Planning practice, have assisted the Council with this project and the production of the Strategy and Action Plan.

The Strategy has been developed in consultation with a number of important stakeholders whom are acknowledged and thanked. The input and participation of elected members of the Donegal Municipal District, Donegal County Council internal departments, public authorities, landowners, business owners, and the local community, including members of Ballyshannon Regeneration Group and Erne Enterprises, has been vitally important, representing the range of statutory, community, business and political interests in the area. A particular mention must also be made to the younger members of the community, including those at primary and secondary levels. A thank you to school staff and to the Foroige group for facilitating the input of Ballyshannon's younger generation.

When implemented, the actions contained within this Strategy and Action Plan can result in economic and social benefits and help to secure a vibrant future for Ballyshannon as a prosperous town with a distinctive sense of place. The Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan will establish a road map for the reinvention; re-imagining and place-making of the town centre that will help facilitate the unlocking of its unique potential including the high quality physical/heritage assets, cultural heritage and attractive location on the banks of the River Erne and mouth of the Erne Estuary.