

Letterkenny Planning for growth

Report on the workshop with the Youth Council, Older Peoples Forum and Irish Wheelchair Association, 26th February 2019



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1.0 Introduction

On 26th February 2019 we ran an interactive consultation event in conjunction with the Youth Council, the Older Persons Forum and representatives of the Irish Wheelchair Association. 22 people took part. We made a strategic proposition about planning for the growth of Letterkenny:



2.0 Consultation- What We Did

We asked the participants three questions:

What do you love about Letterkenny?



What do you not like about Letterkenny?



What are your ideas for change?





2.1 What people love about Letterkenny

When thinking about the things people love about Letterkenny, we asked them to think about the important places that should be protected as well as the places they use most and so should be linked and easily accessible.

There were commonalities across all three groups. Lots of participants said they loved the shops and amenities of the town e.g:

- The cinema
- Pubs, clubs and restaurants
- Aura Leisure Centre
- Town parks
- Library
- Community Gardens
- Regional Cultural Centre
- An Grianán Theatre
- Highland Radio
- Hospital





2.1 What people love about Letterkenny

Education and support services featured prominently as special places for the younger people, with specific reference to:

- LYIT and;
- The Loft (Donegal Youth Service)

lyit



An appreciation of the history and built fabric of the town was also evident, with participants referring to:

- The attractive Main Street
- The St. Conal's site
- The former Oatfields site
- St. Eunan's College
- Older architecture in general

2.2 What people dislike about Letterkenny



When thinking about the things people dislike about Letterkenny, we asked them to think about the problems and barriers to their day-to-day activities that needed solutions. Dislikes as regards the town included:

- **Vacancy and empty land is making the town unattractive**
- **The river is inaccessible**
- **Town bus has no signage and poor timetable**
- **Town is not pedestrian-friendly and is too spread out**
- **Band stand in Market Square is unusable and there are limited places for gigs/events generally**
- **Shopping areas are too dispersed**
- **No proper cycle lanes or walkways**
- **No adequate space for community groups**
- **Antisocial behaviour**
- **Disabled parking bays not wide enough**
- **No community hospital**





2.3 The ideas for change that people had

There were lots of ideas for change across four key areas (below) to make Letterkenny an even better place by building on the things that people love and addressing the things that people dislike. The more detailed ideas are set out on the next page.

**1.
Housing
issues**

**2.
Town
centre**

**3.
Accessibility &
transport**

**4.
Supporting
communities**



2.3 The ideas for change that people had

1. Housing issues

- **Identify appropriate areas to develop supported living for elderly residents and examine areas for retirement villages in the town generally**
- **Provide more 2 bed and 3 bed apartments**
- **Regenerate older estates in the town**

2. Town centre

- **Redesign and revive Market Square as a space for social gathering and identify and create more spaces including green open space in the town centre.**
- **Make it easier to go between the town centre and shopping areas**
- **Redevelop Lower Main Street**
- **Provide more public toilets in the town centre**
- **Reuse vacant shop units**
- **Develop the Cathedral Quarter as an educational and cultural centre**
- **Complement the town centre by creating more commercial estates like the IDA lands on the outskirts of the town.**





2.3 The ideas for change that people had

3. Accessibility and transport

- Identify measures to improve connectivity throughout the town centre
- Plan for full accessibility in all new developments
- Develop public transport from rural areas
- Identify an area for a new bus station
- Establish a more reliable bus timetable and route for the town bus
- Provide park and ride facilities
- Develop more cycle lanes and pedestrian crossings
- Start a town bike scheme
- Plan for train service/monorail/tram service for the town
- Invest in more charging stations for electric vehicles



4. Supporting communities

- Plan for a new leisure centre on the northern side of the town
- Provide better facilities for the Muslim community
- Reuse St. Conal's as Emergency Dept. for hospital
- Identify and protect open spaces throughout the town and let development happen around them.
- Create facilities on the river to accommodate walkers, rowing club etc.



3.0 Emerging Strategic Themes

The 4 key areas where people had ideas for change are important emerging themes that the draft plan will consider and attempt to make provision for.

All of the discussions and ideas from the workshop overlap with and reaffirm the 9 strategic themes that emerged as a result of earlier community consultation and these will continue to shape the drafting of the Plan.

9 Strategic Themes

1

Sustainable neighbourhoods

2

Rebalance the footprint

3

Regenerate and infill

4

Choice in housing location & type

5

A strong town centre

6

Improve liveability through our natural assets

7

Prioritise key physical infrastructure

8

Plan for public transport

9

Support economic development through placemaking