

TCF Plan
Final Draft
V4



Castlepollard

Town Centre First Plan – Main report




Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland

2040



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

Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithe
Our Rural
Future



Lár Bailte ar dTús
Town Centre First



QUEEN'S
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WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL
Comhairle Chontae na h-Iarmhí

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Credits

Credits list of the local Castlepollard Voluntary and Community groups that have contributed to the Castlepollard Town Plan process 2024 to 2026

	Castlepollard Town Team members Sectors and Groupings	
	Disability and Mental Health	Youth & Children
	Tourism	Development Associations
	Community & Voluntary	Residents Associations
	Social Inclusion & Age Friendly	Arts/Culture
	Environment/Climate Action/Biodiversity	Heritage & Conservation
	Business/Commercial/Social Enterprise	Tidy Towns
	Elected Members/Political	Religious Groups
	Sport	Agriculture/Transport
	Education	New Communities

Castlepollard Dementia Awareness Group



A list of the Castlepollard volunteer and community groups active in the area and registered with the Public Participation Network (PPN) is available at: <https://westmeathppn.ie/members/>

Introduction

Project Context

Castlepollard was awarded funding by the Department of Rural and Community Development to prepare a Town Centre First Plan. The Town Centre First policy aims to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community. The project has been led by Westmeath County Council, working alongside the Castlepollard Town Team and facilitated by a multidisciplinary team of consultants headed by Queen's University Belfast.

Project Process

The report has been developed by on-going engagements with the local community from the completion of a Collaborative Town Centre Health Check in 2021 to consultations completed by Westmeath County Council and the Castlepollard Town Team in conjunction with Queen's University Belfast and other institutions including the 2024 Town Centre Health Check, Walkability Study 2025, Place Standard Consultations 2025 and other public engagements.

SCOT Analysis

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

Based on the insights gathered from consultations, field surveys and other feedback, a SCOT analysis has been prepared as part of the Town Centre First process for Castlepollard. The key observations for each category are summarised in a table on the following page.

Project Outline

This Town Centre First Plan contains the following sections: Baseline report, including the town centre healthcheck and the team's analysis of the town; the engagement strategy and the development of the plan; and the strategy which outlines the Guiding Principles, Opportunity Sites and Delivery Plan.

Shared Priorities and Principles

The Town Centre First process, supported by extensive consultations carried out throughout 2024 and 2025, has culminated in a clearly defined set of shared priorities for Castlepollard. These priorities have been shaped into guiding principles that inform the development of projects, ambitions, and objectives, providing a structured basis for future funding applications and the phased delivery of on-the-ground initiatives.

Consultations: Shared priorities summary

1. Shift the emphasis from vehicles to people.
2. Improve pavement condition and accessibility.
3. Introduce better traffic calming at approach roads.
4. Provide more amenities and repurpose vacant sites.
5. Improve signage and strengthen way-finding.
6. Reuse vacant and derelict properties.
7. Support local enterprise and boost tourism.
8. Protect heritage, green spaces and biodiversity.
9. Redesign the Square for people and events.

Priority projects summary

The shared community priorities and guiding principles have led to the development of a project schedule, identifying key initiatives for early-stage funding applications. These projects, supported by the Castlepollard Town Team and the wider community, are outlined below:

1. Rejuvenate The Square and main access roads and junctions.
2. Rejuvenate Church Lane leading to Killafree.
3. Rejuvenate Killafree Church and Graveyard.
4. Provide in Castlepollard, preschool children's care and education services.
5. Develop loop walks to promote the Biodiversity and Heritage around Castlepollard Town Centre.



SCOT (Strength, Challenges, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis

Strengths

- **Rich Built Heritage And Identity:** Compact historic town with strong architectural character centred around the main Town Square and protected Architectural Conservation Area.
- **Natural And Cultural Assets:** Proximity to attractions such as Tullynally Castle, Fore Abbey, Lough Lene and new amenities like the Town Park.
- **Key Services:** 100% broadband coverage, schools, shops, cafés, healthcare, hotel and others.

Challenges

- **Traffic And Accessibility:** Heavy through-traffic, narrow and/or obstructed pavements, unsafe crossings and car-dominant Town Square.
- **Dereliction And Vacancy:** Visible vacant and underused premises thorough the town. Façade maintenance is required for some buildings.
- **Limited Public Transport And Alternative Transport:** Infrequent bus service, lack of formal bus stop and cycle lane network constrain sustainable travel and prolong dependency on private cars.
- **Age-Friendly And Youth Spaces:** Shortage of inclusive recreation areas, public toilets and social facilities for young and older residents.

Opportunities

- **Public Realm Improvements:** Improve accessibility throughout the town, particularly around the Town Square. Create multifunctional community/ event spaces.
- **Reuse Of Existing Buildings:** Incentivise adaptive reuse for housing, business start-ups or creative spaces.
- **Tourism Hub Development:** Build on proximity to heritage and nature destinations. Create signage, trails and visitor information networks.

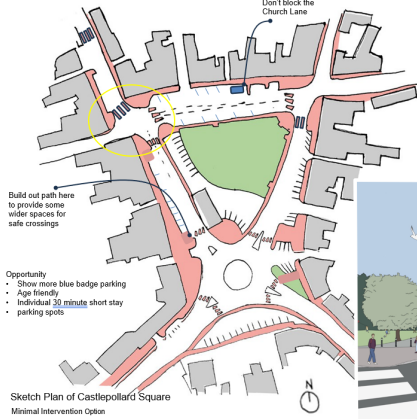
Threats

- **Traffic Dominance And Car Dependency:** Continued reliance on private cars reduces safety and discourages sustainable travel.
- **Local Economy:** Limited local employment and retail variety risk losing spending power to Mullingar and other larger towns.
- **Climate And Environmental Risks:** Biodiversity loss could affect long-term sustainability if not addressed.

Priority projects

The Concepts for the priority projects are shown below.

C1 The Square - Concept



Town Square minimal intervention , retain most of the parking Show pedestrians crossings

Most of the parking remains as it. The space is made better with the addition of pedestrian priority crossings.

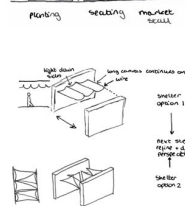
Traffic surveys and appropriate planning and consultations will need to be conducted before any interventions are enacted.



C2 Church Lane - Design Concept



This render shows how this space can be transformed from a neglected lane to a vibrant public space that draws people from the Square to Killafree Church. The removable covers help to create an attractive and flexible space for community events and public life.



C3 Killafree Church and Graveyard

Refurbish and stabilise the structure to enable access in and around the protected monument as a heritage asset and point of interest.



The Heritage Square

The Heritage Church Lane

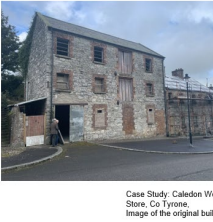
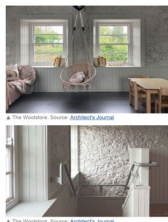
The Heritage Church and Graveyard

TT 1 Castlepollard Early Years Child Care Centre

Provision of childcare is critical to the health and vibrancy of rural towns. Deficits in provision of childcare in Castlepollard will force those parents who have access to a private car to take their children to other towns, which can, in turn, impact the viability of the primary schools in town.

The identification and re-use of an appropriate vacant building for Early Learning Centre (ELC) and School age Childcare (SAC) is a high priority for Castlepollard.

Inspiration can be taken from the illustrated Wool store in Caledon, Co. Tyrone, which was converted to a day care centre. This development has been credited with ensuring the survival of the primary school in the village.

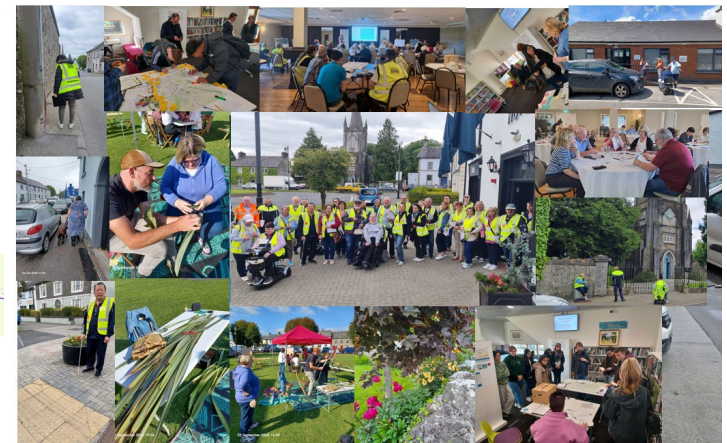
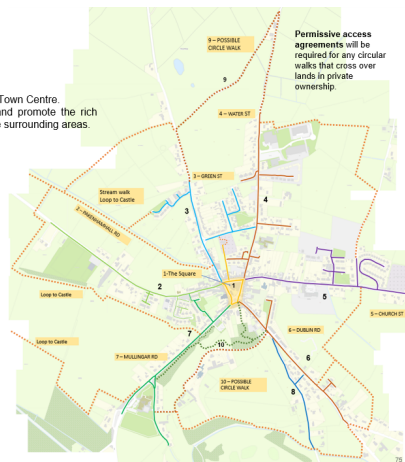


TT 2 Walking Routes

Create Looped walks with a focus point of Castlepollard Town Centre. The aim of the looped walks projects will be to link and promote the rich heritage and biodiversity offering in Castlepollard and the surrounding areas.



- Routes Numbers legend**
- Route 1. Town Centre to Killafree Church.
 - Route 2. Pakenhamhall Road.
 - Route 3. Green Street.
 - Route 4. Water Street.
 - Route 5. Church Street.
 - Route 6. Dublin Road.
 - Route 7. Mullingar Road.
 - Route 8. Old Glenview Road.
 - Route 9. Possible circle route subject to the agreement of the land owners North
 - Route 10. Possible circle route subject to the agreement of the land owners, St. Peters.
- Loop walks**, subject to the agreement of the land owners.



Children's Services

The Heritage and Biodiversity Loop Walks

The Castlepollard Community

Opportunity Heritage Sites on and adjacent to the Square

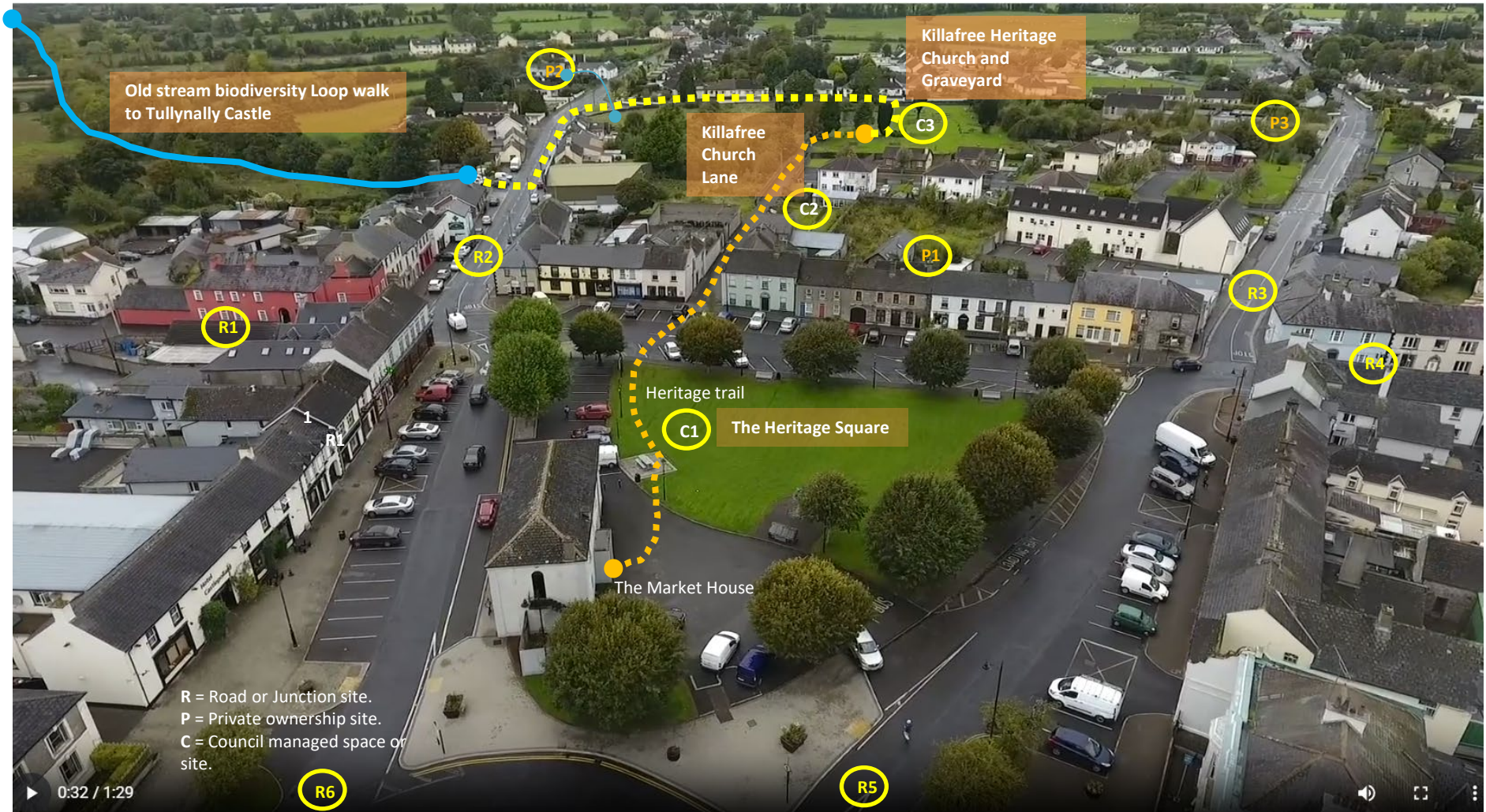


Image Credit: Castlepollard Local Development Group.

Priority projects in one shot!

Summary of the Analysis

Analysis

This analysis summary identifies the challenges that were highlighted by the members of the Castlepollard Community across many public consultation exercises.

The following issues were identified as crucial to the regeneration of Castlepollard following detailed survey analysis coupled with extensive community engagements.

- The town's rich built and natural heritage is crucial to Castlepollard's identity, economic development and social spaces. Re-use of vacant heritage buildings and improved connections with the countryside and marketing of nearby tourist destinations offers potential to enhance the town for residents and visitors alike.
- Accessibility between the Square and the streets that radiate from it requires targeted intervention to improve crossings, footpaths and calm traffic.
- Provision of spaces for all is crucial to the social fabric of the town with needs for spaces for, children's preschool care, youth and the elderly services being particularly needed.
- There is a wide range of housing needs considering unit sizes and tenures in Castlepollard.
- There are opportunities and a strong local appetite to enhance biodiversity and climate resiliency in Castlepollard.
- Additional spaces for enterprise and business startups are needed to reduce the need to commute to places of employment.



Consultation day at the Castlepollard Public Library



Views of Castlepollard

This Castlepollard Town Centre First report looks to explore the opportunities that can be enacted to resolve the challenges identified.



Context & Analysis

About Castlepollard

Castlepollard Town

Castlepollard is a very attractive compact historic town characterised by its rich built heritage, which frames and radiates out from its formally-planned square with a central green. St Michael's Church of Ireland, the former Market House and bank buildings form some of the key landmarks in the heart of Castlepollard's Architectural Conservation Area.

Castlepollard offers a wide range of essential services, amenities and employment opportunities for residents and visitors alike, while its location and rich heritage position it is well situated for sustainable development, with potential to become a local tourism hub in the years ahead.

Recent public realm improvements, including the reopening of the Castle Varagh Hotel and the development of a new town park, demonstrate both private and public commitment to enhancing Castlepollard as a desirable place to live.



Historic Development (300yrs)



Castlepollard's history can be traced back to the medieval period, with its origins likely connected to the Norman invasion of Ireland in the 12th century.



Prior to the arrival of Nicholas Pollard, in 1602, the place was known as Cionn Toirc and was associated with a ringfort, Rathyoung. There survives evidence of a single rath in the townland of Townparks, just on the eastern outskirts of the town.

The name Castlepollard itself is derived from the castle that was built in the area, which belonged to the Pollard family, a Norman lineage that settled there. This castle, though no longer standing, played a significant role in the town's early development and defense.



By examining the seventeenth-century Down Survey mapping it is possible to locate Kinturk and Rathyoung as the modern townland of Townparks, albeit in an approximate sense and with no depiction of settlement apart from Pollard's castle (Myles 2019).

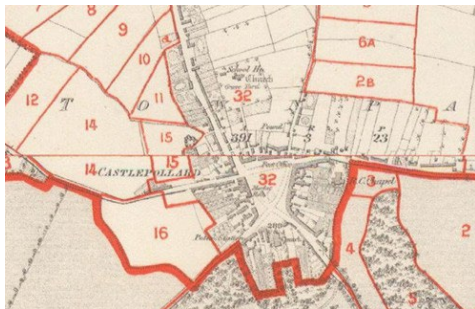


The nearby ecclesiastical centre at Fore (just 5km to the east) was a much more significant place throughout the medieval period, however, the natural topography of the area privileged Castlepollard as the principal crossroads between Oldcastle, Mullingar, Edgeworthstown, Finnea or Finea and Kells (Myles 2019).

The present architectural character and layout of Castlepollard dates to the 1820s and was the work of William Dutton Pollard (1789 – 1839). Between 1803 and 1839, Castlepollard was transformed into an elegant and spacious small town and Pollard was later granted permission to hold both fair and weekly markets (Castlepollard Regeneration Project Inception Report 2021).



Historic Development (300yrs)



The earliest OS map shows that the town had a Police Station, Pound, Post Office by this stage with prominent heritage buildings including the Market House, Kinturk House, Church of Ireland and Catholic churches constructed at this time.

Myles (2019) identifies the annotation of the Valuation Office as helpful in distinguishing Pollard's urban estate from individual properties acquired by others on the periphery of the town. This map when read with the Tenement Valuation, presents an image of Castlepollard as a prosperous, well-built market town.



The first modern representation of Castlepollard is on the 1837 Ordnance Survey map. The present-day layout and much of the built form is recognisable from the planned layout as the loose trapezoidal lines of the square were edged with trim houses gathered around a Church at the top and a Market House on the west side (Mulvin (2021: p.164). In the 1830s, the town had a population of 3612 (Lewis 1834).



The 25 inch map of Castlepollard is at a scale which makes it easier to recognise individual buildings and the majority of those shown constitute the built form of the centre today. This area aligns with the Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) designation in Castlepollard.

The majority of the buildings fronting the square were commercial in character as the town had grown to become an important market town serving a wider hinterland which extended into Meath, Longford and Cavan.



During the twentieth century, Castlepollard was to develop primarily to the North and East. New housing developments were constructed on Water Street, Green Street, Church Street and College Heights.

Significant additions to the town in the Celtic Tiger period include the Innova Business Park on Water Street (which was opened in 2008) and the Castlepollard Shopping Centre, which includes a Tesco store, on Church Street (which opened in 2007) and Castlepollard Community School on the Mullingar road (which opened in 2004).



1800s

1830s

1900s

2000s

Character



Character

Castlepollard is a town characterised by its rich built heritage with the majority of the buildings in the core of the town being identifiable in the 1910 map. The historic character of Castlepollard's built environment presents opportunities for heritage tourism, distinctive place identity and additional funding for conservation and restoration projects but also challenges related to maintenance, efficiency and retaining viable uses.

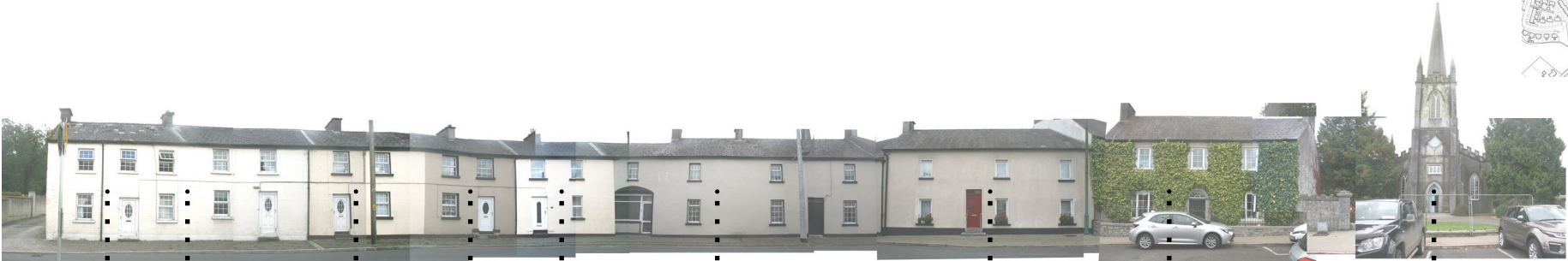
The Town Square and the surrounding areas are designated as an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA).

Condition

The buildings in the town centre vary in terms of the quality of their maintenance and the appropriateness of fenestration and shop fronts. Small interventions to improve the overall environmental quality through painting, facade repairs and shop front improvements could result in an improvement in the attractiveness and vibrancy of this historic town.

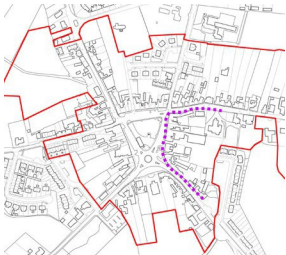
The condition of the buildings in Castlepollard were noted during the Town Centre Health Check are included in the following pages with buildings rated from from excellent to very poor condition.

Building Façades - Autumn 2024

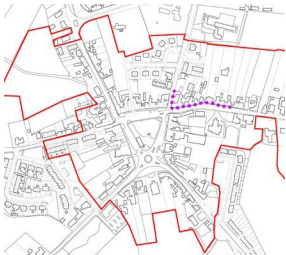


- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Very Poor

Building Façades - Autumn 2024

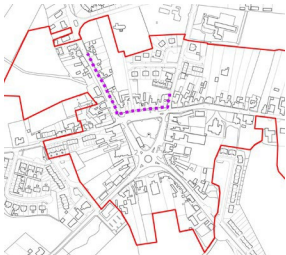


Building Façades - Autumn 2024



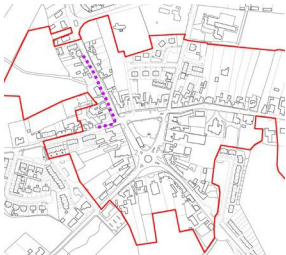
- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Very Poor

Building Façades - Autumn 2024



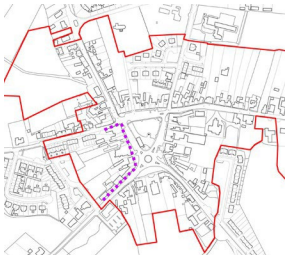
- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Very Poor

Building Façades - Autumn 2024



- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Very Poor

Building Façades - Autumn 2024



- Blue circle: Excellent
- Green circle: Good
- Yellow circle: Fair
- Orange circle: Poor
- Red circle: Very Poor

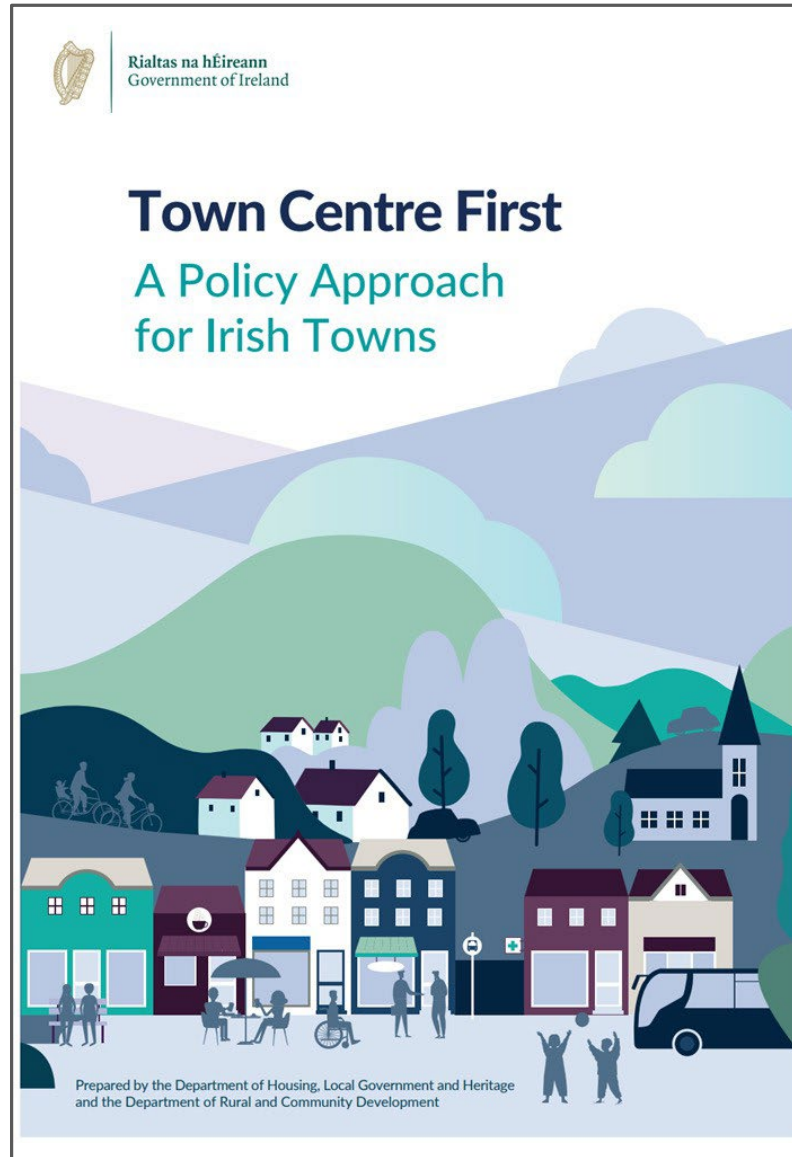
Policy Context

This report was prepared to comply with the overarching policy context (illustrated overleaf). The Town Centre First - A Policy Approach for Irish Towns is the key strategic document to frame Town Centres First Plans.

The Town Centre First policy aims to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community.

This report outlines 5 main aspects of its vision for town centres. This plan has been shaped at every stage by local community engagement and leadership. The strategic approach responds to demographic trends, climate threats and opportunities presented by new technologies. This town centre first plan seeks to improve the quality of public realm and green spaces in Castlepollard and to enhance walkable connectivity and economic opportunities in the town.

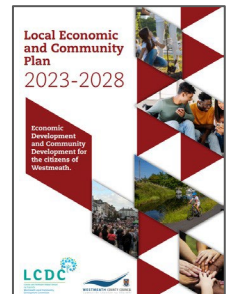
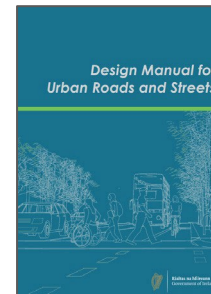
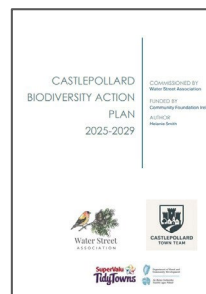
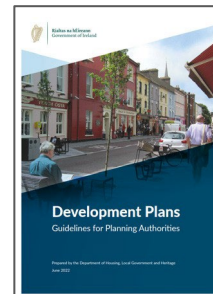
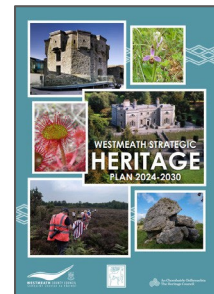
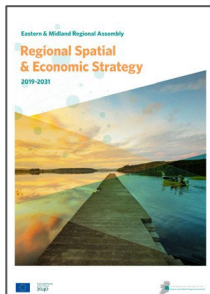
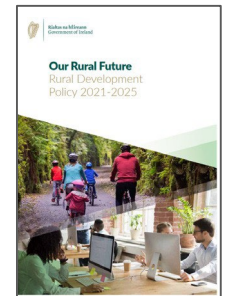
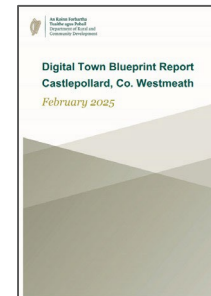
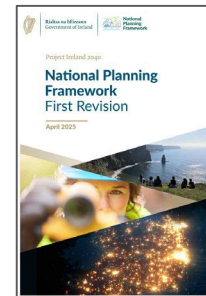
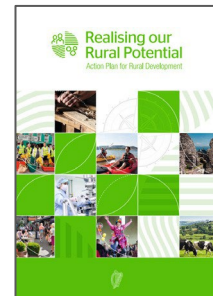
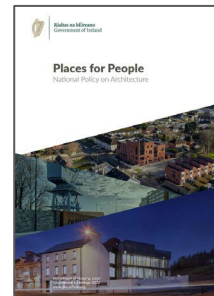
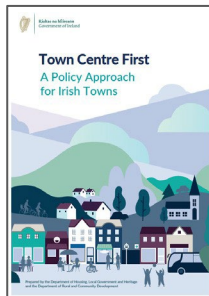
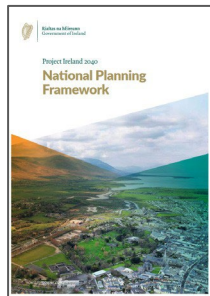
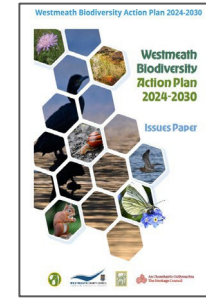
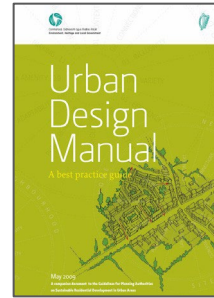
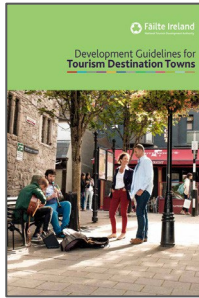
The report also aligns with policy objectives outlined in Project Ireland 2040, the National Planning Framework (NPF), the National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030 (see image to right) and the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly's Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2019-2031.



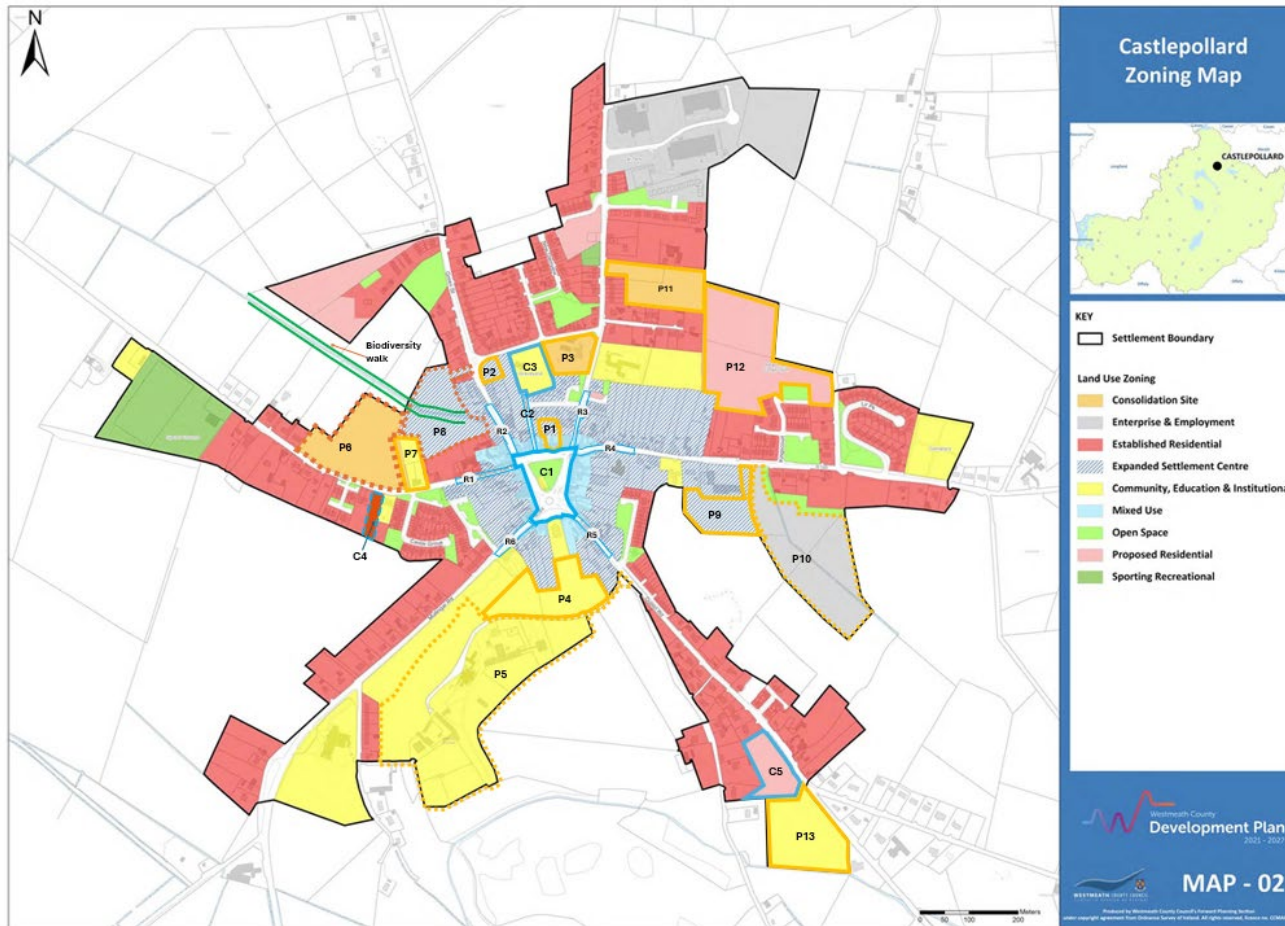
Our Town Centre First Vision is for:

- Places that are shaped by the communities that live there, where local residents and the business community are enabled to plot the future for their own towns and villages;
- Towns that embrace the opportunities presented by technology, climate action and demographic change;
- Places that are the fulcrum of economic, social, cultural and recreational activity, with a sustainable mix of commercial, retail, service and hospitality offerings;
- Town centres that reflect the current and future needs of the local community, with quality public realm, sustainable mobility infrastructure and green spaces that facilitate vibrant, connected local communities and economies;
- Vibrant, accessible and lived-in town centres that are home to young and old, which are not seen as a second-best option to more peripheral locations.

Policy Documents



Westmeath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027




Zoning Map

In the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027 Castlepollard is classified as a 'Tier 3 - Self Sustaining Growth Town'. The Westmeath County Plan Development Plan outlines its aims to promote sustainable economic growth and the attraction of new businesses, in tandem with enhanced sustainability of services, jobs and local environment, 'proportionate' population growth and to reduce vacancy and dereliction as key priorities.

Castlepollard is recognised in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 as the main service centre in North Westmeath. Opportunity exists to increase the economic profile of the town by zoning additional lands for employment use and by maximising the potential of the strategic location of Castlepollard as a tourist base for local attractions such as Tullynally Castle, Fore Abbey, Mullaghmeen Forest and Lough Lene.

The 'mixed use' commercial core shown in light blue on the map follows the historic commercial core of Castlepollard. It is then surrounded by a larger blue striped hatch, which shows the extent of the 'Expanded Settlement Centre'. The Plan identifies opportunity sites, which will be reflected in the strategy of this Town Centre First Plan.

Castlepollard Town Centre Health Check
Westmeath County Council



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WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL
Bairde na Míreanna
Government of Ireland
CASTLEPOLLARD
Town Centre First
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Town Centre First



CASTLEPOLLARD WALKABILITY REPORT
March 2025
96 Pages

ROUTES
ROUTE 1 THE SQUARE
ROUTE 2 FINEENAMHALL RD
ROUTE 3 GREEN ST
ROUTE 4 WOLFE ST
ROUTE 5 O'CONNOR ST
ROUTE 6 O'CONNOR ST
ROUTE 7 WILKINSON RD

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CASTLEPOLLARD PLACE STANDARD REPORT
September 2025
79 Pages

14 ASSESSMENT THEMES - 7 ROUTES.



CASTLEPOLLARD
BIODIVERSITY ACTION
PLAN
2025-2029

COMMISSIONED BY
Water Street Association
FUNDED BY
Community Foundation Ireland
PLANNED BY
Phyllis Smith

Water Street
ASSOCIATION
CASTLEPOLLARD
TOWN TEAM

Supporting
Tidy Towns

An Roinn Forbartha
Tuathal agus Áiteolaíoch
Comharsanacht

Digital Town Blueprint Report
Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath
February 2025

An Roinn Forbartha
Tuathal agus Áiteolaíoch
Comharsanacht

Digital Town Blueprint 2024
SUMMARY REPORT
Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath

Engagement & Evidence

Engagement Summary Overview

Introduction

Westmeath County Council is dedicated to improving the liveability and accessibility of its towns and villages for all residents and visitors. In support of this objective, Castlepollard has been the focus of a series of comprehensive studies examining the town's physical, social and economic conditions, as well as the aspirations of its residents, businesses and visitors. These initiatives represent a significant investment in understanding the functioning of Castlepollard and identifying opportunities for its sustainable development. Collectively, they provide a robust evidence base to inform the Town Plan.

Castlepollard Collaborative Town Centre Health Check (CTCHC).

Initial report completed in autumn 2021. Full report completed and presented in autumn 2024, providing a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the town's condition, land use, footfall, public realm, as well as policy context.

Castlepollard Walkability Report.

Audit undertaken in June 2024, full report presented in 2025 assessing accessibility, pedestrian safety and comfort across seven key routes in the town.

Castlepollard Local Development Community Consultation and Activation meeting 11th January 2024 .

This public consultation provided valuable community feedback on what the Castlepollard Community and neighboring communities required to create a successful future for the locality.

Castlepollard Place Standard Report.

Audit undertaken in May 2025 with a full report available in September 2025. Presents a community-centred engagement that gathered public perceptions across 14 themes, identifying strengths, challenges and priorities also across seven key routes.

Additionally, the following events and surveys had taken place, during which, valuable feedback and ideas were gathered:

'Warp and Weft' Consultation.

This event on the 20th and 21st of September 2024 was a joint effort of Workhouse Union, Water Street Association and Amicitia, funded by The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon. It is part of a wider project on inclusive neighbourhood making. Its aim was to use creativity and co-design to bring together community members, and amplify the quieter voices from within the Castlepollard Community.

Castlepollard Area Biodiversity action plan survey 2025 to 2029 .

This plan commissioned by the Water Street Association in 2025 and funded by the Community Foundation Ireland . This plan focuses on sites of local interest and aims to assess these areas, identify existing habitats, and explore ways to protect and enhance biodiversity.

Castlepollard Action Plan 2018

The Action Plan, commissioned by Westmeath County Council in 2018, sought to promote community-led socio-economic development over the period 2019–2024. Developed by local stakeholders and businesses in Castlepollard, its objectives and priorities have helped inform the Castlepollard Town Plan.

Castlepollard Town Centre Dementia Study.

This Dementia audit took place on the 10th of July 2025. The audit in association with attending members of the Alzheimer Society of Ireland focused on the square and the near by approach roads. The day was productive with a lot of learning recorded which will assist in future public realm design works.

Castlepollard Digital Blueprint report and survey 2024/2025

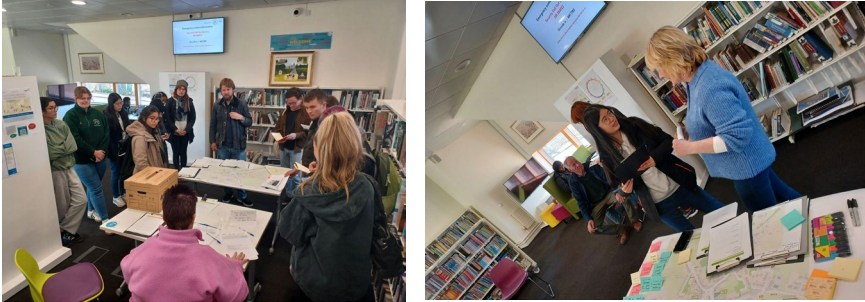
The report looks to define Castlepollard as a digital town; develop the metrics to measure the town's digital readiness; and explore the potential impacts of digitalisation on a town from a variety of socio-economic perspectives.

Castlepollard Inception Report 2021

The Inception Report was commissioned by Westmeath County Council in 2020 to underpin an application to the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, supporting the proposed redevelopment of the Market House, the delivery of a new Town Park, and associated public realm improvements. Elements of the 2021 report have helped inform the Castlepollard TCF Plan.



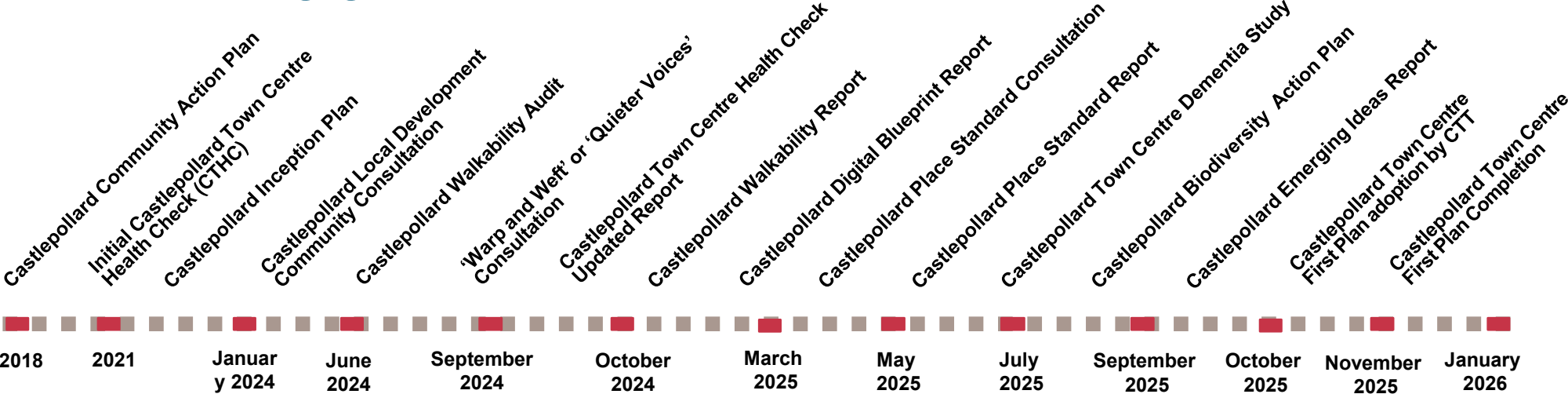
Walkability day 12th June 2024



Throughout 2024 and 2025, Town Team members and representatives from the various community sectors actively contributed to and participated in a series of community consultations.

These engagements played a key role in shaping the Town Centre First Plan, ensuring it reflects the priorities, needs, and aspirations expressed by the local community.

Timeline Of Engagements



Castlepollard Walkability Audit.



Health Check



Place Standard Report



Dementia Study



Castlepollard Town Team



▲ Image used with permission Credit Castlepollard Development Group.

The Castlepollard Town Team was established in February 2024 and comprises representatives from a broad range of community sectors. These include Community and Voluntary organisations, Social Inclusion and Age Friendly initiatives, Environment, Climate Action and Biodiversity, Business, Commercial and Social Enterprise interests, as well as Sport, Education, Youth and Children. The Team also includes representatives from Development and Residents Associations, Arts, Culture, Heritage and Conservation, Tidy Towns, Religious Groups, Disability and Mental Health, Tourism, New Communities, Agriculture, Transport, and Elected Members/Political representatives.

One of the primary objectives of the Castlepollard Town Team in 2024 and 2025 is to inform and support the development of the **Castlepollard Town Centre First Plan**, contributing to the strategic and sustainable growth of the town.

Throughout 2024 and 2025, Town Team members and representatives from the various community sectors actively contributed to and participated in a series of community consultations.

These engagements played a key role in shaping the Town Centre First Plan, ensuring it reflects the priorities, needs, and aspirations expressed by the local community.

Baseline Evidence Summary

This section summarises the key findings based on field survey work and intensive engagement with the community. The research identified the following key issues facing Castlepollard.

Connectivity and Movement

Accessibility is a critical concern. Across all the prior reports which include the 2024 Walkability report, the 2024 Town Centre Health Check report and the 2025 Place Standards report the dominance of vehicular traffic in and around the Town Square was consistently identified as a barrier to pedestrian movement. Narrow or absent footpaths, notably along Pakenhamhall Road and at the southern approaches from Dublin and Mullingar, and poor-quality crossings, limit mobility, particularly for walking aid users and people with small children.

The reports called for:

- New pedestrian crossings with tactile paving and appropriate timings;
- Traffic calming on approach roads;
- Continuous, accessible footpaths and removal of obstacles;
- Expanded Blue Badge and age-friendly parking;
- A formal, sheltered bus stop with clear bus information.

These interventions should significantly improve connectivity and accessibility, directly informing the first guiding principle of the Town Plan.

Community, Heritage and Identity

Community feedback highlighted strong local pride and sense of belonging, reflecting Castlepollard's rich built heritage and welcoming atmosphere. The ACA (Architectural Conservation Area) designation underscored the importance of conserving the historic core while enabling adaptive reuse of key buildings. Initiatives like the Market House and Town Park present opportunities to celebrate cultural and heritage assets.

Public consultations also revealed a desire for a Community lead childcare facility, more inclusive community spaces, including areas with covered seating, improved play facilities for younger children, youth facilities, meeting places for older people and flexible venues for events.

Housing, Economy and Services

While Castlepollard offers a good base of essential services, gaps remain. Past feedback highlighted in particular, the absence of a local bank branch and limited shop variety. The reports highlight the need for affordable, diverse housing options to attract younger residents and to better suit aging residents.

Castlepollard would benefit from the adaptive reuse of vacant units and support for local enterprise and start ups, as well as unlocking the tourism potential linked to nearby attractions such as Tullynally Castle and Lough Lene.



View of the old Bank facing the Square, renovated to become a Muiríosa day services Centre helping people with intellectual disabilities.

Baseline Evidence Summary

Environment, Biodiversity and Climate Resilience

Castlepollard's green spaces such as the Town Square, the new Town Park and the Heritage Graveyard are valued community assets. However, issues of maintenance, usability and biodiversity persist. The Walkability and Place Standard reports recommend improving greenery and maintenance, addressing dog fouling and incorporating features such as picnic spaces and outdoor games to promote social activity. The enhancement of existing green spaces with the introduction of pollinator friendly landscaping should strengthen biodiversity and climate resilience, complementing wider climate adaptation objectives as listed in the Castlepollard Area Biodiversity action plan survey 2025 to 2029.

Baseline Evidence Summary Conclusion

The collective evidence demonstrates that Castlepollard possesses strong foundations, a distinctive historic core, engaged community and strategic regeneration initiatives, but faces persistent challenges related to connectivity, underused spaces and limited range of amenities. The six guiding principles respond directly to the identified issues and community priorities, offering a framework to guide future development and place-making in Castlepollard.



View of Castlepollard Square Green

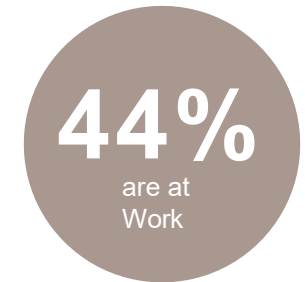
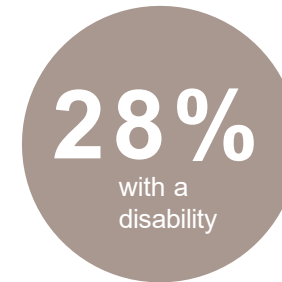
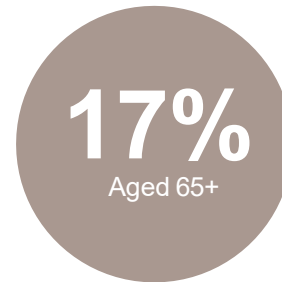
Demographics

Town Profile

In 2022, Castlepollard had a population of 1,349. This increased from 1,163 in 2016, which equates to a 2.5% annual growth rate in this time. Castlepollard has an older population than the Westmeath and Ireland averages, with 17% of residents aged 65+.

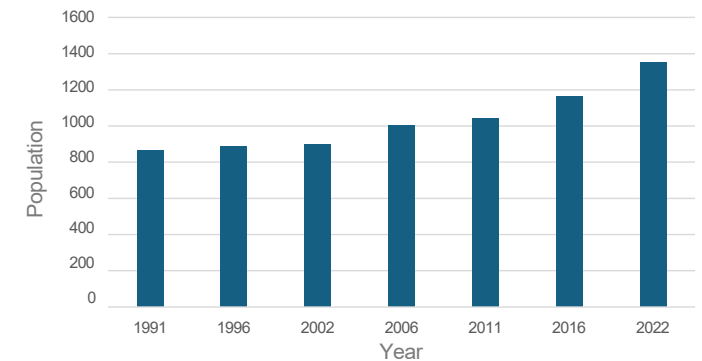
Castlepollard has less professional workers than the Westmeath average. Furthermore, less people are 'At Work' (44%) as their principal status.

There is a greater proportion of residents with a disability (28%) when compared with the Westmeath and Ireland averages (both 22%).



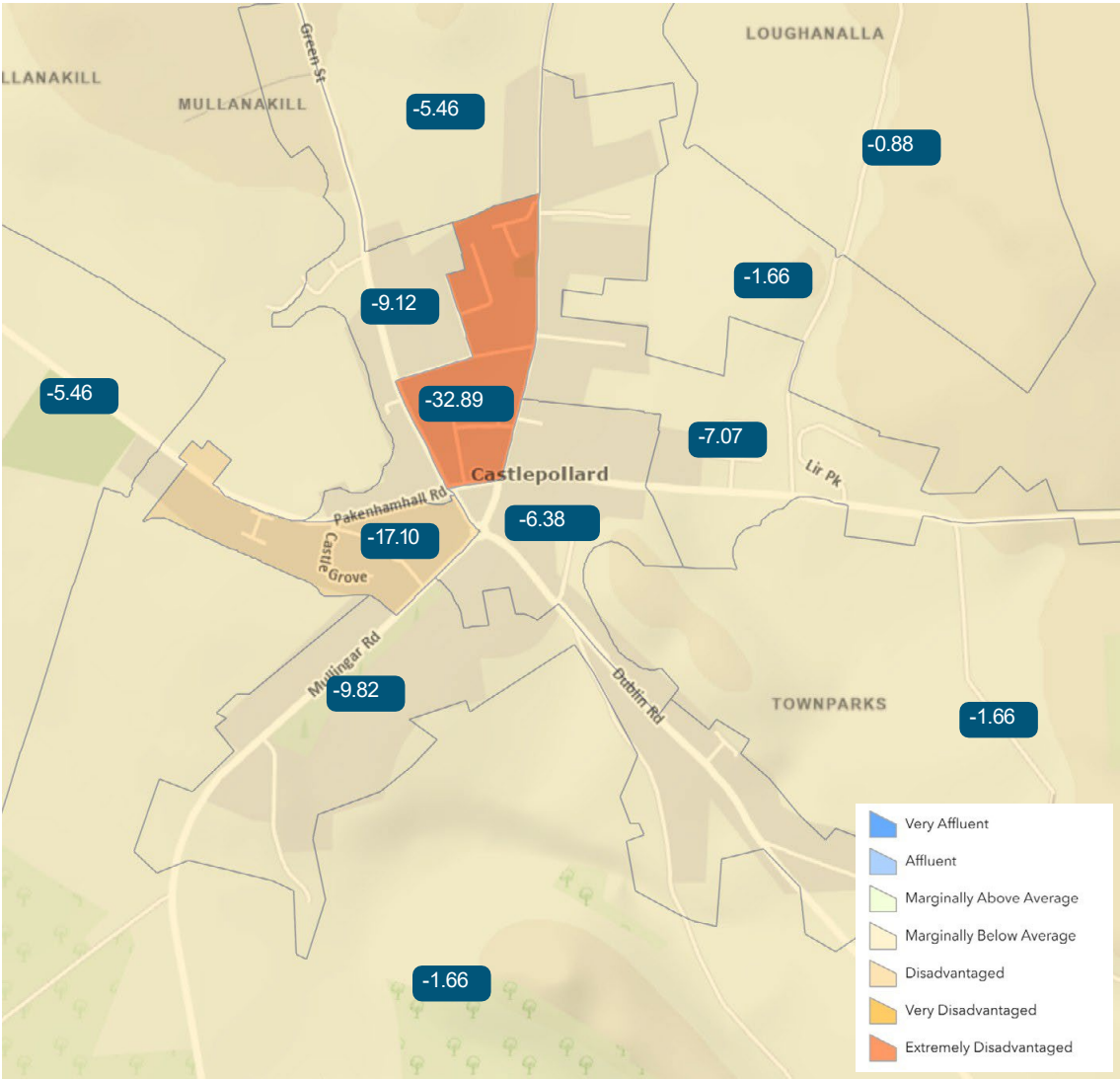
Town Profile	Castlepollard	Westmeath	Ireland
Age 0-14	21%	21%	20%
Age 15-64	62%	65%	65%
Age 65+	17%	15%	15%
Social Class: Professional Workers	5%	8%	-%
Principal Status: At Work	44%	55%	56%
Usually Resident Population: Irish Citizen	88%	85%	88%
Usually Resident Population: Non-Irish Citizen	12%	15%	12%
Persons with a Disability	28%	22%	22%

Table showing the town profile compared against Westmeath and Ireland



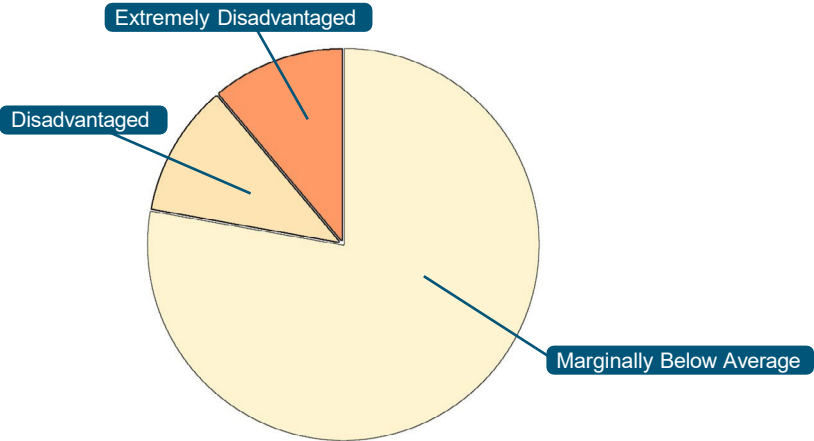
Graph showing Castlepollard population growth between 1991 and 2022

Deprivation Index for Castlepollard



Deprivation

Most of Castlepollard is marginally below average for deprivation, with Pobal Deprivation Scores of between 0 and -33. The largely residential area along the Pakenhamhall Road is classed as disadvantaged, with a score of -17.10. The area to the North of The Square, enclosed between Green Street and Water Street is extremely disadvantaged, with a score of -32.89.



Map of Castlepollard showing the deprivation scores taken from the Pobal website.

Feedback Bubbles

Positives

The square could have lots of shrubs and form town gardens.

Rich in Heritage and Community spirit.

A market would reduce carbon footprint and keep funds in the community.

The bog lands could be used for solar farms.

Protect and preserve all trees and plan to replace older ones (e.g., Cherries on Finea Road).

Challenges

Pavements not clean and difficult to negotiate with buggy.

More regular bus service needed.

Nothing for teenagers to do. The new town park is badly needed.

Castlepollard needs more preschool and childcare facilities

To try to add more facilities to have a variety of things to do and places to go to.

Walkability Report Summary

On the 12th of June 2024, over 30 people of different ages and abilities, walked seven key routes radiating from the Town Square. They were asked to identify barriers to movement and accessibility challenges.

The Universal Design approach was used as the primary framework for this assessment. The audit considered how well people of all ages and abilities, particularly, older people, people with limited mobility and those using walking aids and people with prams, could use Castlepollard's streets.

The routes were:

- Route 1:** around the Town Square itself,
- Route 2:** along Pakenhamhall Road,
- Route 3:** along Green Street,
- Route 4:** along Water Street,
- Route 5:** along Church Street,
- Route 6:** along Dublin Road and lastly,
- Route 7:** down Mullingar Road.

Consideration	Key Findings
Footpaths	Some in fair repair but many narrow, uneven, cracked or obstructed. Discontinuous in places, forcing road use. Wheelchair and pram access often poor due to high kerbs and poor surfaces.
Facilities	Seating shortage, especially age-friendly benches. No public toilets in town. Limited bus stop facilities with no shelters, poor signage. A playground on Water Street and new Town Park were noted as positives.
Crossing the Road	Unsafe and or missing crossings across most routes. Many lacked tactile paving, audible signals or fresh markings. Junctions at the Square - Pakenhamhall Road and Dublin and Mullingar approaches especially hazardous. School crossings worn and faded.
Road User Behaviour	Obstructive parking on footpaths and even outside a school's gate. Speeding and heavy traffic common, especially on Dublin and Mullingar Roads. Poor driver behaviour reduced pedestrian confidence. Private buses parked long-term created congestion.
Safety	Street lighting is good in central areas, weak in lanes and peripheries such as the lane leading to the cemetery. Hazards from uneven paving, manhole covers, water pooling. Poor visibility due to clutter.
Look and Feel	Historic Square, Castle Varagh Hotel, upcoming Town Park, green areas were noted as important and valued places. Unfortunately, dereliction and vacant buildings, graffiti, litter, takeaway rubbish. Calls for facade repainting, landscaping, hanging baskets, signage decluttering.
Outside the School Gates	Congestion and unsafe set-downs near schools (esp. Pakenhamhall Rd.). Poor markings, lack of crossings, faded zebra lines. Suggestions for one-way systems, new school zones, clear signage.

Table relating the key findings from the Walkability Community consultation day



Walkability Consultation day 12th June 2024



Narrow paths



Routes map

Place Standard Report Summary

About The Report

Conducted on the 21st of May 2025, the Place Standard Report set out to understand how people experience and perceive Castlepollard. It focused on everyday issues such as mobility, safety, facilities, housing and social life, drawing directly on the views of residents. By asking people to score the town across 14 themes, the report identified both strengths and weaknesses. Its purpose was to give the community a clear voice in shaping priorities for improvement.

To maintain continuity with the Walkability Report, the Place Standard Audit followed the seven previously established routes.

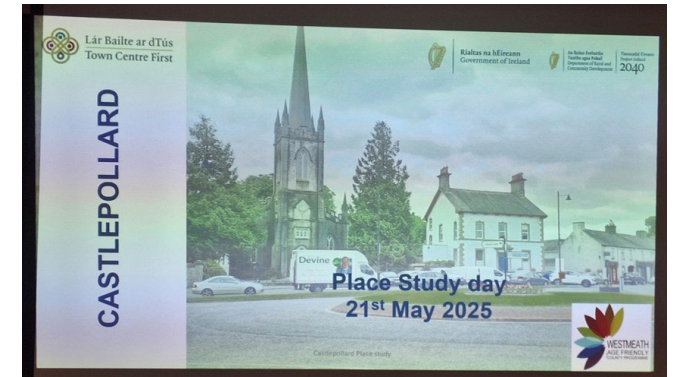
The report was structured around the 14 Place Standard themes, which are listed in full to the right. Respondents rated each theme on a scale from 1 meaning very poor to 7 meaning excellent. Compass charts were then filled in based on the received scores, through which both positives and challenges were shown in a visual way. A summary chart is shown on the following page.

A consultation event followed the practical route audit, during which participants shared their experiences and priorities for Castlepollard.

Both verbal comments and score-based feedback were presented in a way that highlighted specific local concerns such as unsafe crossings and derelict and vacant buildings, alongside broader priorities for the town, including improved transport, more inclusive recreation and better maintenance which form important reference points for this Plan Report.

14 Themes:

1. Moving Around
2. Public Transport
3. Traffic And Parking
4. Streets And Spaces
5. Natural Space
6. Play And Recreation
7. Facilities And Services
8. Work And Local Economy
9. Housing And Community
10. Social Interaction
11. Identity And Belonging
12. Feeling Safe
13. Care And Maintenance
14. Influence And Sense Of Control



Images of the Place Study Consultation Day

Place Standard Report Summary

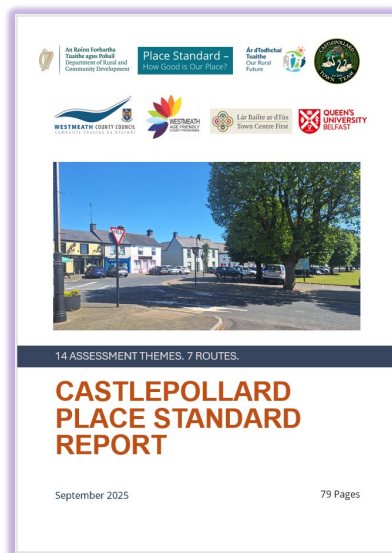
Summary

By overlaying individually filled compass diagrams the adult community's key priorities are revealed in a visual way as shown on the right. Notably, the low scores for Moving Around, Traffic and Parking, Housing and Community, as well as Feeling Safe, indicate areas where people see scope for improvement.

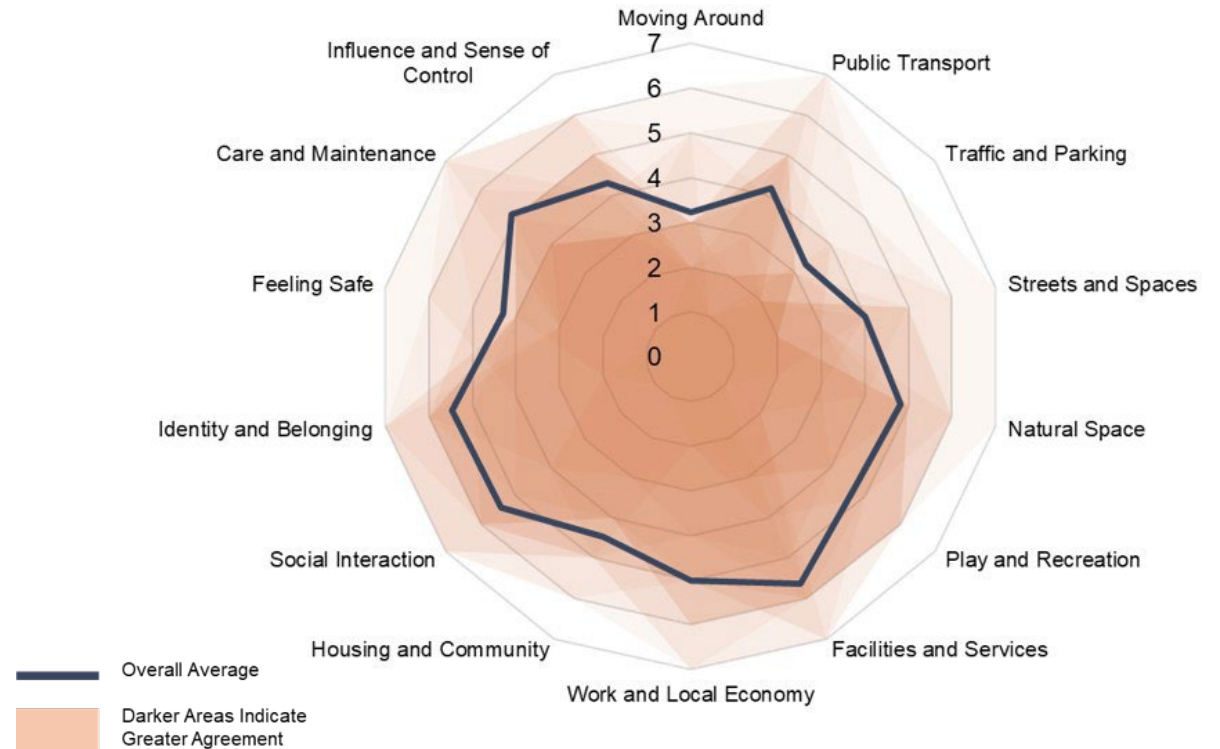
By comparison, Facilities and Services, Social Interaction, Identity and Belonging were highly rated, meaning respondents' satisfaction with the current arrangements. The average scores for each of the themes were derived from the individual scores shown in the Place Standard Data table in the appendix. As was mentioned earlier, the higher the score, the greater the satisfaction with the current condition of the place.

Score Key

1. Very Poor
2. Poor
3. Below Average
4. Mixed
5. Fairly Good
6. Good
7. Excellent



Overall Summary Diagram



Images of the Place Study Consultation Day
Feed back results compass diagram

Warp & Weft The Warp & Weft project brought the Community of Castlepollard together on the 20th and 21st of September 2024

Warp & Weft aims to creatively explore inclusive neighbourhood making in three rural Irish towns: Callan, Athenry, and Castlepollard in 2024. The project focuses on empowering marginalised communities and amplifying underrepresented voices through civic partnership and collaborative engagement, fostering a deeper sense of place and community stewardship.

Warp & Weft is led by Workhouse Union in collaboration with Water Street Association and Amicitia and is funded by The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon.

Location Partners:

- Callan, Co. Kilkenny: [Workhouse Union](#)/Nimble Spaces.
- Athenry, Co. Galway: [Amicitia](#).
- Castlepollard, Co. Westmeath: Water Street Association.

Approach:

- Person-Centered, Rights-Based Methodology: The project adopts a principled approach focusing on inclusivity and the rights of individuals, promoting peer-to-peer learning and co-production models.
- Creative Placemaking and Co-Design: Each partner will engage in creative placemaking initiatives and co-design processes to shape local communities according to their unique needs and contexts.
- Inclusive Neighbourhood Research: Building on from the 2023 Making Neighbourhoods national seminar, the project will explore inclusive neighbourhood exchanges.

Activities:

For Castlepollard working alongside the Town Team and with the Town Centre First Plan process, Workhouse Union in collaboration with Water Street Association led a community codesign process to engage quieter voices in community-led town visioning. Creative workshop approaches were developed and led by experienced facilitators.

Outcomes:

- Creative community-led town processes supporting enhanced community well-being and belonging.
- New forms of place-based stewardship and creative placemaking.
- A rich auditory journey capturing the essence of the three rural communities.



Community Activation Consultation

The Community Activation Event was organised by Castlepollard Local Development - a voluntary community group established in 2018

The Community Activation event was facilitated by the Castlepollard Local Development group On the 11th January 2024.

The Community Activation Projects Consultation in Castlepollard drew a strong turnout from local residents, business owners, and community stakeholders at the Castle Varagh Hotel. The event, facilitated by The Local Development Group and with invited guest speakers focused on identifying practical steps to enhance the town's vitality and unlock its untapped potential.

Speakers highlighted the importance of coordinated action between the Castlepollard Community and community groups to drive sustainable regeneration in Castlepollard, with an emphasis on projects that would benefit both residents and visitors. The consultation was framed as an opportunity to gather input and ideas from the community to shape initiatives aligned with the future ambitions for the Town.



Image of the event: Credit: Castlepollard.ie and Castlepollard Local Development Group

Summary table of activation ideas discussed
Credit: Castlepollard Local Development Group

Summary Table of Consultations Ideas (Unranked)	
Theme/Project Type	Representative Project Ideas and Variations
Education, Training & Skills.	Create an Environmental or Horticultural Training Centre; Local Skills & Apprenticeship Hub; Inter-generational Training Centre.
St. Peters Centre, Castlepollard.	The vacant buildings on the site could accommodate , an Active Retirement Village, Intergenerational Training Centre, Training Centre for Apprenticeships/EV's or a County Museum.
Community & Social Facilities.	Community/Social Hub; Community Centre Renovation (Market House); Men's Shed (Boat Repairs); Affordable Community Childcare; Active Retirement Village.
Accessibility & Inclusion.	Accessible fishing platforms and boats (lakes); Zebra-crossings; Wheelchair parking; Accessible social welfare office.
Renewable Energy & Climate Action.	Renewable energy on community buildings; Community-owned electricity grid; District heating; Low-carbon accommodation project.
Enterprise, Markets & Circular Economy.	Artisan/Farmers Market; Enterprise Centre; Public Bank for SMEs; Clothes Exchange; Care & Repair Shop
Outdoor Recreation, Walking & Cycling.	Walking loops around Lough Derryvaragh, Knockine & Lough Lene; Fore connection; Footpaths 4–5 km from town; GAA walkway with lighting.
Peatlands, Nature & Biodiversity..	Bog Heritage and Nature Centre; Bog Museum; Mini-forest and biodiversity areas; Pocket Forests & Allotments.
Festivals, Arts & Culture.	Festival of the Lakes; Food & Film Festival; Storytelling, Trad & Multicultural Festivals; Revival of traditional events (Puc Fada, Festival of the Old Ways).
Transport & Connectivity.	Improved bus services; Reopening Killucan Train Station; Integrated local transport; weekend rural service
Lakes, Water Recreation & Tourism.	Regattas; Slipways; Lakeside sauna and ice bath; Fishing tourism; Linked walking and heritage routes (Tullynally, Fore, Castlepollard).
Built Environment & Regeneration.	Inventory and repurposing of derelict/vacant buildings; Reopening local museum; Local history centre; Market House heritage hub.
Recreation & Amenities.	Town Park (Sensory Garden, Skate Park, Seating); Swimming Pool; Park Run; Gym; Summer Swimming Lessons.
Digital, Communication & Civic Initiatives.	Public free Wi-Fi; Active social media campaigns (TY/ETB); Town twinning; Community Alert/Text Alert; North Midlands Town Collective.

Dementia Survey Report Summary

Dementia Audit

A Dementia Audit was carried out in Castlepollard on the 10th of July 2025. The audit focused on the Town Square and nearby approach roads. The study was undertaken in partnership with the Alzheimer Society of Ireland and provided valuable insights into how the town's public spaces can better support people living with dementia. The day was both engaging and informative, generating practical ideas that should help guide future improvements to the town's public realm.

This type of work is especially important for Castlepollard as the town continues to evolve and plan for a more inclusive future. By understanding how people with dementia experience and navigate everyday places, the findings should inform small but meaningful changes, for example, clearer signage, better lighting, comfortable resting areas and, further on, more intuitive street layouts.

These improvements not only enhance accessibility for those with dementia, but also make the Town Centre more welcoming and user-friendly for everyone.

Dementia Audit summary findings

The Dementia Audit assessed the Town Centre and its approach roads against six key themes:

- Orientation and Wayfinding
- Accessibility and Navigation
- Comfort and Atmosphere
- Safety and Security
- Legibility and Cognitive Support
- Social Inclusion and Community Support

For each theme, a series of structured questions was applied. Observations were recorded using a standardised response format of **Yes**, **No**, or **Partial**, with the relevant response indicated by a tick on the audit sheet supported by observations and comments.



Images of the Dementia survey exercise in Castlepollard Town Centre

Overall, the audit identified **significant shortcomings** within the Town Centre and its approach roads. The majority of observations were recorded as **No** or **Partial** across most themes, indicating that the existing environment performs poorly in meeting dementia-friendly design and accessibility principles.

The findings from this audit, the Walkability and Place studies combined with the Age friendly strategy make a strong argument for improvements to the streets and green spaces across Castlepollard.

Castlepollard's Active Age and Age Friendly Community

Castlepollard has an energetic and engaged Active Age and Age Friendly community, with strong local participation and volunteer support. Regular social, physical, and wellbeing activities help reduce isolation and promote healthy ageing. The Age Friendly programme enables older residents to contribute meaningfully to local planning and decision-making. This established community network provides a strong foundation for inclusive and dementia-friendly Town Centre improvements.

The synergies between Town Centre First and the Age Friendly strategy for Castlepollard are highlighted on the next page.

The Age Friendly Strategy

The Dementia Audit highlights strong alignment between the Town Centre First approach and the Age Friendly Strategy for Castlepollard and Westmeath.

Both frameworks support improved wayfinding, legibility, and landmark visibility to enhance independent movement and civic identity. Safer crossings, traffic calming, and better lighting advance shared objectives for walkability and pedestrian safety also noted in the Walkability, Place, and Town Centre Health Check studies reports.

Age-friendly seating, shelter, and reduced traffic dominance improve comfort, wellbeing, and dwell time in the Town Centre. Together, these measures support inclusive place-making, social engagement, and a vibrant Town Centre that enables ageing in place.



Line Ref	Town Centre First Policy Objective	Age Friendly Westmeath Strategic Focus	How They Align in Practice	Relevance to Towns such as Castlepollard
A	Putting people first in Town Centres	Promoting independence, inclusion and quality of life for older people	Both policies prioritise people over traffic, focusing on accessibility, comfort, safety and social interaction in Town Centres	Supports age-friendly public spaces, seating, toilets, safe crossings and legible streets in Castlepollard
B	Compact growth & revitalisation of Town Centres	Supporting ageing in place and access to services close to home	Age Friendly objectives reinforce compact living by ensuring older people can access services, shops and social activities locally	Strengthens the case for concentrating health, retail, community and social uses in the town core
C	Active, accessible public realm	Improving mobility, walkability and outdoor environments	Both emphasise safe footpaths, adequate lighting, seating, and inclusive design standards	Justifies public realm upgrades around the Square, streets and parks that benefit all ages
D	Reuse of vacant and underused buildings	Access to age-friendly housing and community facilities	Town Centre First reuse goals align with Age Friendly priorities for adaptable housing, hubs and social spaces	Vacant buildings can be repurposed for Active Age Centres, community hubs or supported living
E	Strong local community engagement	Meaningful participation of older people in decision-making	Age Friendly consultation structures align with TCF's community-led planning approach	Ensures older residents are actively involved in Castlepollard town plans and projects
F	Inclusive access to services	Transport, health, social and community access	Both recognise transport as a critical enabler of participation and wellbeing	Supports Local Link, community car schemes and proximity of services within the Town Centre
G	Economic vitality & social sustainability	Reducing isolation and supporting active ageing	Social participation of older people contributes to footfall, volunteering and local economy	Reinforces the role of older people as active contributors to Town Centre life
H	Integrated place-based planning	Cross-agency collaboration (local authority, HSE, community groups)	Age Friendly governance structures complement TCF's whole-of-government approach	Enables coordinated delivery of regeneration, health, mobility and social initiatives
I	Safer, more welcoming Town Centres	Enhancing perceptions of safety and wellbeing	Age Friendly priorities align with safer streets, better lighting and passive surveillance	Improves confidence of older people to use the Town Centre daily and in the evening
J	Long-term sustainability and resilience	Supporting demographic change and future needs	Age Friendly planning ensures towns respond proactively to an ageing population	Strengthens Castlepollard's role as a sustainable, inclusive Tier 3 growth town

Table relating the synergies between Town Centre First and The Age Friendly Strategy for Castlepollard and Westmeath

Castlepollard Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2029

Biodiversity Plan Main Focus

This report was commissioned by the Water Street Association, Funded by The Community Foundation of Ireland and Authored by Melanie Smith to focus on sites of local interest and aims to assess these areas, identify existing habitats, and explore ways to protect and enhance biodiversity. Community Biodiversity Action Plans (CBAPs) outline practical actions that communities can take to conserve and enhance local biodiversity.

The project includes references to the following aims and ambitions included in this Town Centre First Plan:

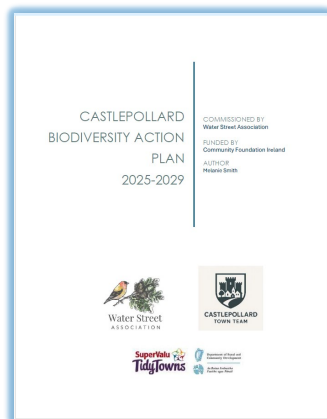
- Castlepollard Town Park Field, which includes the goal of a wooded walking route, a biodiverse meadow and an orchard in close proximity to the new town park.
- Create amenity areas where the community can gather and enjoy nature.
- Designate areas that can become places where grasses and flowers are allowed to flower. Create meadows and leave roadside verges to grow.
- The full report is available by request from the Waterstreet Association Castlepollard.



Art work vision for a biodiversity friendly Castlepollard
Credit: The Water Street Association



Views of areas for biodiversity enhancement



Digital Town Blueprint Report

Digital Town Blueprint

The Digital Town Blueprint analyses digital readiness across seven dimensions. This is accomplished through a combination of primary research, desk research, secondary data, key informant interviews and automated data collection techniques.

The key findings of this report included:

- There is 100% fixed broadband coverage in Castlepollard. This compares favourably with the EU average of 97.7%.
- 72% of the businesses surveyed scored low, very low or non-existent in relation to digital sophistication showing there is considerable room for improvement.
- Free public WiFi is available in municipal buildings, in retail and accommodation. However, it is not available at tourism sites or in some accommodation outlets.
- Castlepollard has free public Wi-Fi and online itineraries. However, other smart tourism infrastructure such as digital signage and kiosks, mobile apps, augmented and virtual reality and QR codes are not being used.

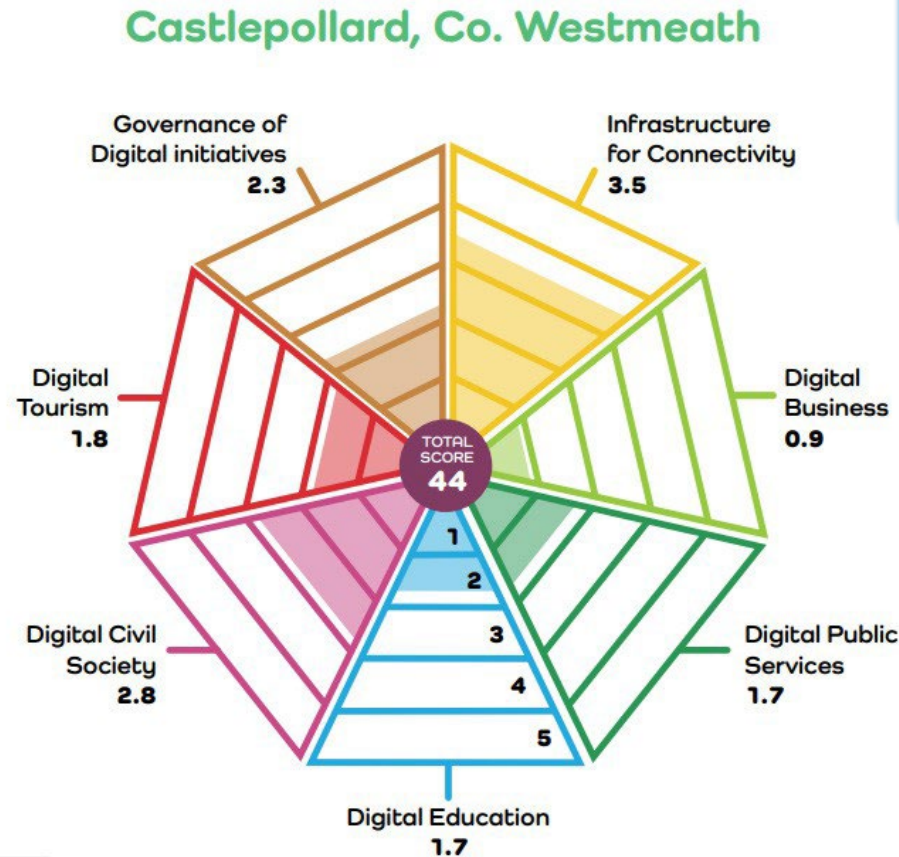


Diagram of the Digital Blue Print scores for Castlepollard



Overall Summary: Public Consultations Shared Priorities

Castlepollard is seen as a welcoming town with a strong sense of pride and community. Its active residents and decision-makers seek to make it a better place to live by identifying and addressing the challenges which the town faces.

From prior consultations conducted during the Town Health Check, Walkability Audit and Place Standard, as well as Local Development Community consultation The Dementia study and 'Warp And Weft' consultation, these are the combined shared priorities for Castlepollard.

Traffic And Parking

Across all three main reports, traffic dominance and unsafe conditions in the town centre are highlighted. According to both the Walkability and Place Standard reports, speeding vehicles, footpath parking and difficult manoeuvres around the Square discourage walking and cycling. The Health Check confirms this, noting heavy through-traffic from six converging roads and overuse of car spaces within the Square, alongside underused peripheral car parking spaces. A consistent recommendation is to rebalance traffic and parking through calming measures, stricter enforcement, improved crossings and better use of car parking spaces farther away from the Square.

Footpaths And Accessibility

Poor pavement conditions are a recurring theme. The Walkability audit found narrow, broken and obstructed pavements and insufficient dropped kerbs. The Place Standard engagements also emphasised these challenges, especially for wheelchair and walking aid users and people with prams. The Health Check supports these findings, noting steep declines in footpath quality on approach roads like Pakenhamhall and Green Street, as well as poor crossing infrastructure. Collectively, the reports stress the need for continuous, high-quality, accessible footpaths and safer junctions.

Approach Roads

All three reports identify approach routes as problematic. The Walkability and Place Standard reports stress speeding, while the Health Check highlights heavy traffic and bottlenecks at the Dublin and Mullingar Road junctions. The shared solution is integrated traffic calming, enhanced pedestrian infrastructure and landscape improvements along approaches to create safer and more attractive approach roads.

Facilities And Amenities

The Place Standard and Walkability reports note gaps such as public toilets, age-friendly seating, cycle parking and youth facilities. The Health Check adds

the importance of new amenities like the Town Park and Castle Varagh Hotel, but also reflects community demand for, preschool and childcare facilities, more sports, leisure and teen-oriented spaces. Repurposing vacant or derelict properties for community use emerges across the reports as a priority.



Image of the Castlepollard Consultation day

Overall Summary: Public Consultations Shared Priorities

Lighting, Signage And Way-finding

While lighting is generally adequate, both Walkability and Place Standard identify gaps in tourist signage, cluttered or blocked signs and weak way-finding. The Health Check records that signage and wayfinding were ranked relatively low by survey respondents, but still acknowledges their role in tourism development. Improvements such as clear and decluttered signage are recommended across the reports.

Dilapidation And Vacancy

Dereliction is a strong shared concern. The Place Standard and Walkability reports stress its negative impact, especially around the Square. The Health Check provides quantitative evidence. Although overall vacancy has fallen from 29.7% to 19.4% on the Square since 2021, retail vacancy remains at 25%. All three documents agree on adaptive reuse of vacant heritage properties as a cornerstone strategy.

Local Economy And Enterprise

All three reports emphasise the small but committed local business base. The Place Standard and Walkability reports highlight limited job opportunities and commuting to Mullingar. The Health Check underlines this with business surveys, showing cautious optimism but also demand for interventions

like co-working hubs, lower rents, pop-up events and stronger tourism promotion. Business development, alongside streetscape upgrades, is seen as vital to the town's economic wellbeing.

Heritage And Character

Castlepollard's identity and heritage are consistently valued. The Place Standard points to strong community pride. Walkability stresses heritage-sensitive renewal. The Health Check highlights Castlepollard's Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) designation, proximity to major attractions and opportunities for development. Together, the reports position heritage as both an asset and a tool for regeneration and tourism.

Key Places: The Town Square

The Square is universally recognised as the heart of the town but suffers from traffic and parking dominance. The Place Standard calls for it to be rebalanced as a social hub. Walkability highlights faded markings, clutter and poor accessibility. The Health Check notes its underutilisation for events despite being a unique asset compared with other towns. All three agree on the idea that redesigning the Square by prioritising pedestrians, seating, room for events, biodiversity and heritage sensitive improvements is essential to Castlepollard's future.

Priorities Summary

1. Shift the emphasis from vehicles to people.
2. Improve pavement condition and accessibility.
3. Introduce better traffic calming at approach roads.
4. Provide more amenities and repurpose vacant sites.
5. Improve signage and strengthen way-finding.
6. Reuse vacant and derelict properties.
7. Support local enterprise and boost tourism.
8. Protect heritage, green spaces and biodiversity.
9. Redesign the Square for people and events.



Images of Castlepollard Consultation days

Vacancy and Land-Use

Overview and Method

As part of the Collaborative Town Centre Health Check (CTCHC), ground floor land uses within Castlepollard town centre were recorded and analysed in accordance with the Goods, Opportunities, Amenities and Development (GOAD) classification system shown to the right.

Overall land uses have been summarised and shown in table and chart on the following page. There are a notable level of residential properties within the town centre, particularly along Church Street, Dublin Road and Pakenhamhall Street. This contributes to a balanced and typical land use mix for a town of Castlepollard's scale and setting.

A visual survey of ground floor uses and vacancies was undertaken as part of the CTCHC process. Overall, vacancy levels were found to be low. Vacant buildings with unknown previous uses accounted for 1.4% of total premises, while a further 4.3% were confirmed vacant, bringing the total vacancy rate to 5.7%.

The Square

The Square functions as the principal commercial hub and, therefore, has the greatest variety of land uses within the town centre. St. Michael's Church of Ireland occupies a prominent position at the lower end of the Square. The recently refurbished Castle Varagh Hotel is another notable example. The Square also contains other retail units, financial or business service premises, public houses, cafés and a takeaway, together forming a lively and diverse commercial core.

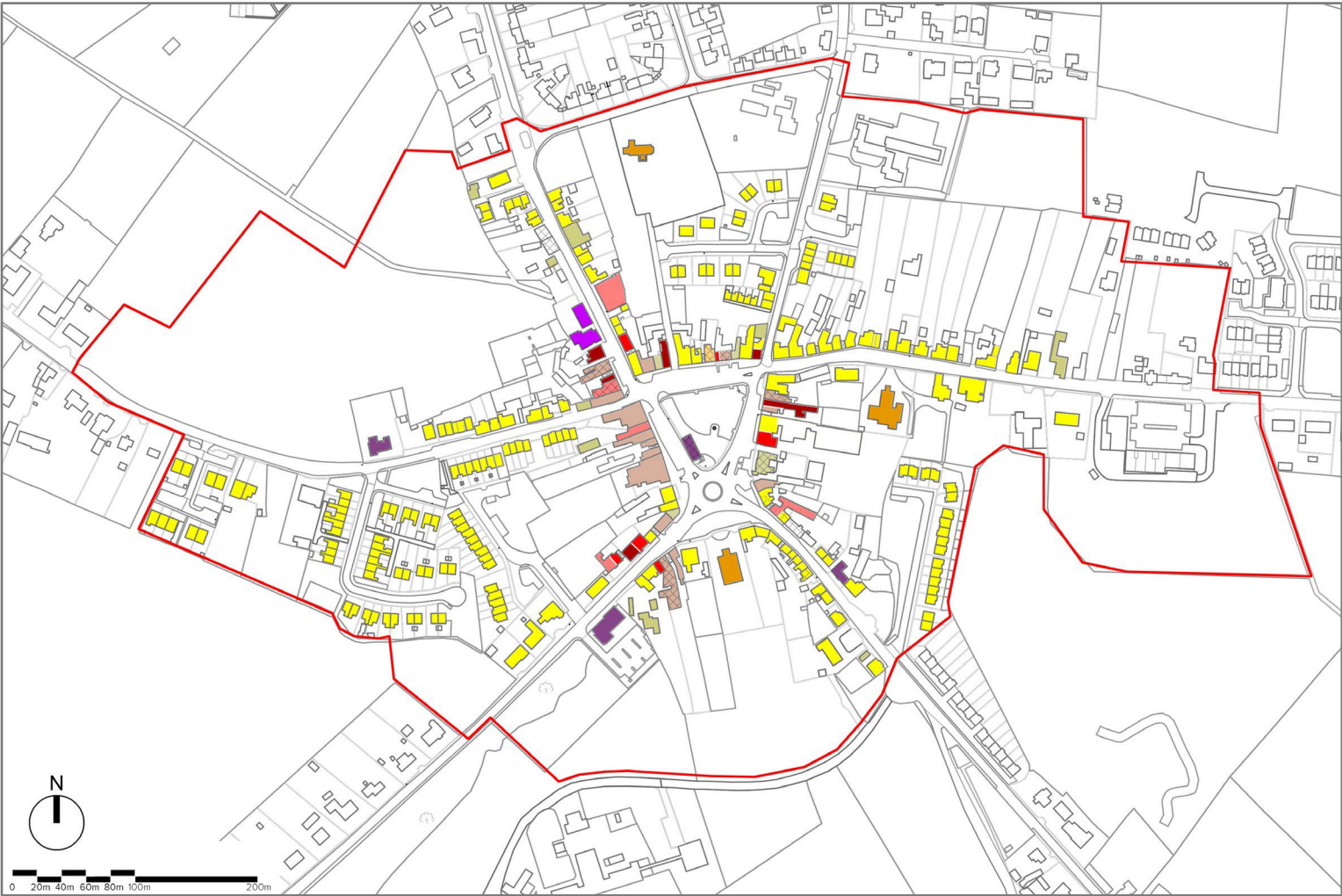
The commercial activity extends beyond the Square onto Green Street and Mullingar Road. Green Street accommodates a pharmacy, a medical practice as well as a supermarket. Mullingar Road has a fruit and vegetable shop, along with the Garda Station.

Retail Vacancy

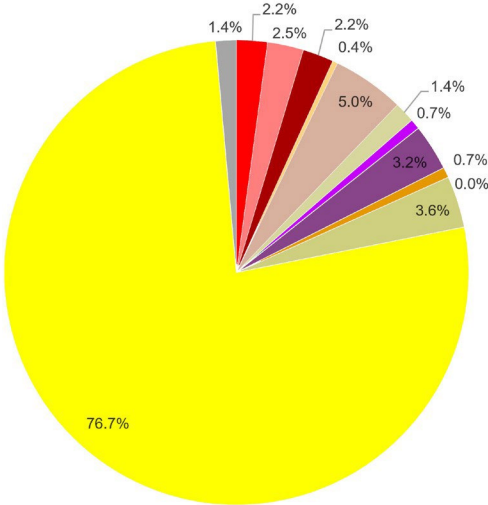
Retail vacancy stood at a more moderate 10%, while leisure services showing a higher vacancy rate of 28.6%. The vacancy map on further pages shows a small concentration of vacant premises around the periphery of the Square, particularly near the junction with Dublin Road. Residential vacancy within the study area was recorded particularly low at 1.9%, suggesting a strong local demand for housing. This figure, however, may have been influenced by the inclusion of the wider study boundary, which encompassed a newer residential area off Pakenhamhall Road, where no vacancy was recorded.

Of the twelve retail premises classified as comparison retail and retail services, none were vacant at the time of survey, indicating a healthy level of footfall sufficient to sustain these businesses.

Land-Use Map Castlepollard



Map of land use

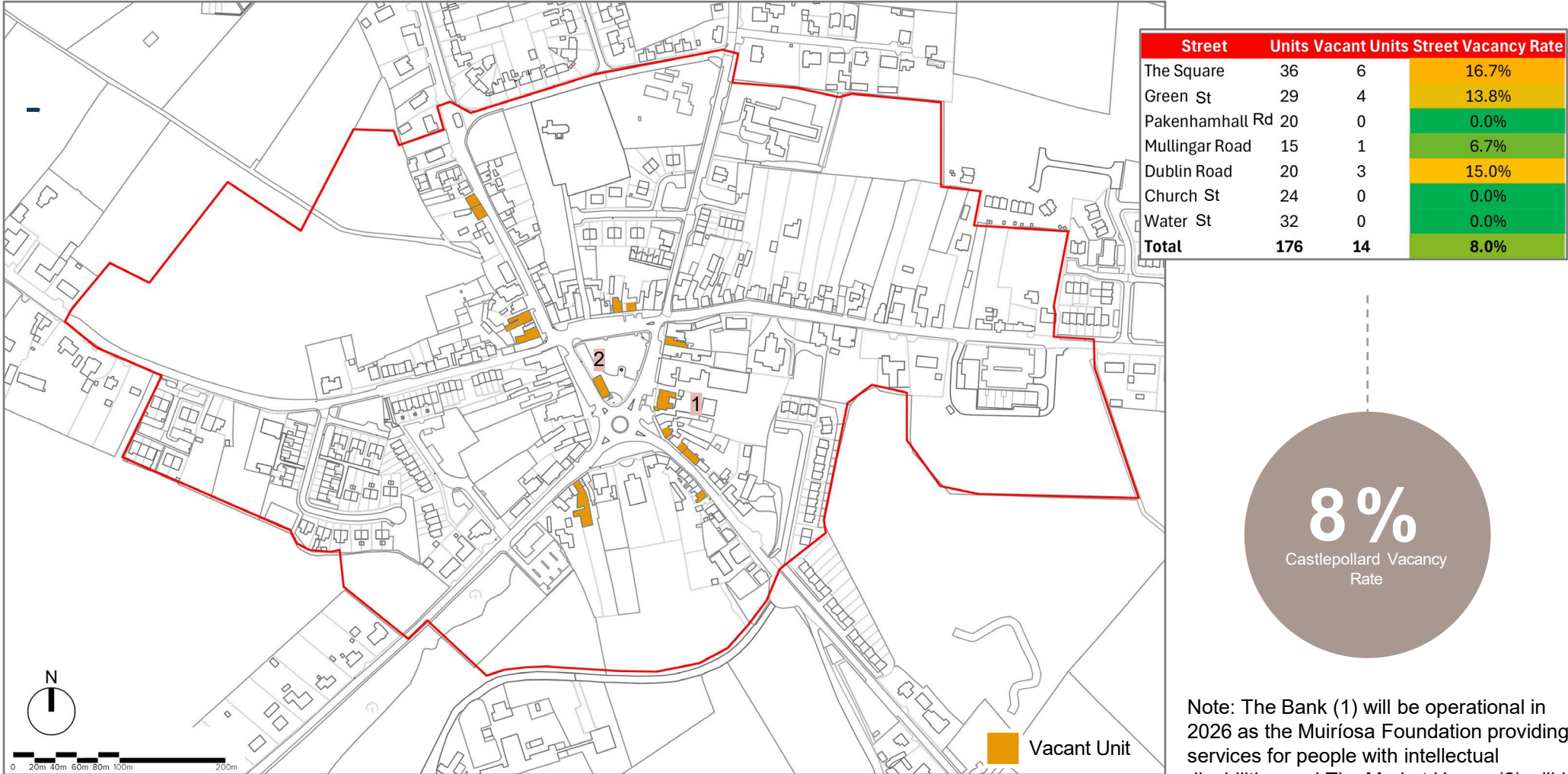


Pie chart of land use percentages

GOAD Classification:	
	Comparison
	Convenience
	Retail Service
	Other Retail
	Leisure Services
	Financial and Business Services
	Health and Medical Services
	Public Service
	Religious Service
	Industrial
	Vacant Unit
	Storage and Warehousing
	Residential

Legend of land use

Vacancy Map September 2024 study



Map of Commercial buildings vacancy

Note: The Bank (1) will be operational in 2026 as the Muiríosa Foundation providing services for people with intellectual disabilities and The Market House (2) will be operational in 2027 as a community services and activities hub.

Movement Overview

Overview

Castlepollard has a compact core in the form of the traditional Town Square. Immediate commercial streets form the largest concentration of shops and services.

The town is connected by regional roads to Mullingar and onward to the national road network. Bus services provide limited public transport connections. The nearest railway station is located in Mullingar. It is served by Iarnród Éireann's Dublin to Longford Commuter service and Dublin to Sligo InterCity service.

Typical driving distances and estimated off-peak driving times between Castlepollard and nearby main towns are shown in the map to the right.

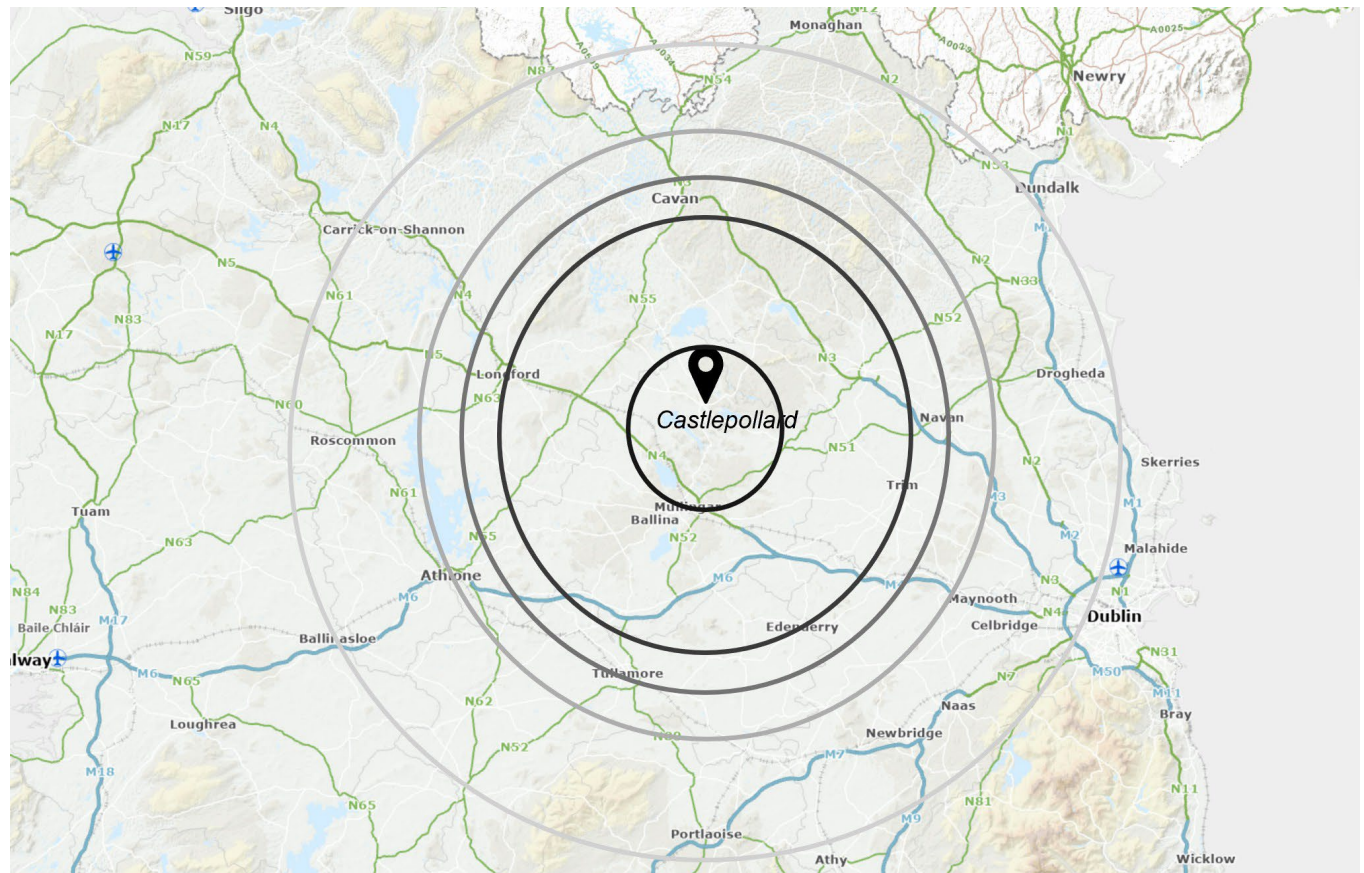
- **Mullingar**: approx. 20–25km, 20–30 min drive.
- **Longford**: approx. 45km, 40-45 min drive.
- **Cavan**: approx. 55-60km, 50-60 min drive.
- **Athlone**: approx. 60–75km, 1 hr – 1 hr 15 min drive.
- **Dublin City**: approx. 85–95km, 1 hr 20 min – 1 hr 40 min drive.



20+ min drive or
30-50+ min bus or
60+ min cycle.



1 bus stop in Castlepollard.
No shelter, route or real-time arrival/departure information.



Map of Castlepollard as the Central hub in North Westmeath

Public Transport And Modal Share

Public Transport

Public transport in Castlepollard is currently limited, with bus services being the only available option. Rail travel is accessible from Mullingar, which requires either driving a private car or taking a bus to Mullingar first.

Bus

Castlepollard is served by scheduled bus services including Bus Éireann's route that passes through the town, which is Route 447 to Mullingar and by daily 818 Local Link services that link Castlepollard with Mullingar and neighbouring towns (Bus Éireann, Local Link, 2025). Frequency is limited compared with urban areas.

Rail

As mentioned previously, the nearest major rail station is Mullingar. Access to rail relies on a short onward journey by bus or car to Mullingar.

Existing services are useful for occasional and leisure-based trips. However, they may not suit everyone due to their limited frequency, reported accessibility challenges associated with the current bus fleet, and the complete lack of supporting facilities such as sheltered bus stops, route information and real-time departure screen.

NEAREST TRAIN STATION: MULLINGAR - 20.5KM AWAY



20+ min drive or
30-50+ min bus or
60+ min cycle.



1 bus stop in Castlepollard.
No shelter, route or real time
arrival/departure information.

Modal Share

- **Private Car:** dominant for commuting, shopping and school runs.
- **Bus:** used for some journeys to Mullingar/Dublin but limited by frequency.
- **Active Travel (Walking/Cycling):** Significant for very short trips within the town but constrained by pavement widths and continuity issues, temporary and permanent obstructions and limited dedicated cycling infrastructure.

Car Ownership

Car ownership in County Westmeath is high relative to urban areas. Census household vehicle statistics show most rural households have at least one car (CSO, 2022). For Castlepollard, survey observations and the county-level statistics indicate a strong reliance on private cars for most journeys.

A town-level modal shift away from cars remains constrained by limited frequency of buses and dispersed final destinations.

Walking Isochrone Map

The walking isochrone map illustrates the areas of Castlepollard that can be reached within five and ten minutes on foot from the town centre. The 5-minute walking zone, shown in a darker shade of green, encompasses the Town Square and most of the core retail, service and community functions. The 10-minute walking zone, in lighter green, extends further to mostly capture the wider residential areas, however, also includes such services and amenities as the Community College and mechanic at the edge of the settlement.

This map highlights that Castlepollard is a compact and walkable town, where most daily needs and key services are accessible within a short walk. This further highlights the importance of maintaining safe and continuous pedestrian infrastructure and crossings along the main approach roads, where higher traffic volumes create barriers for getting around to all users.

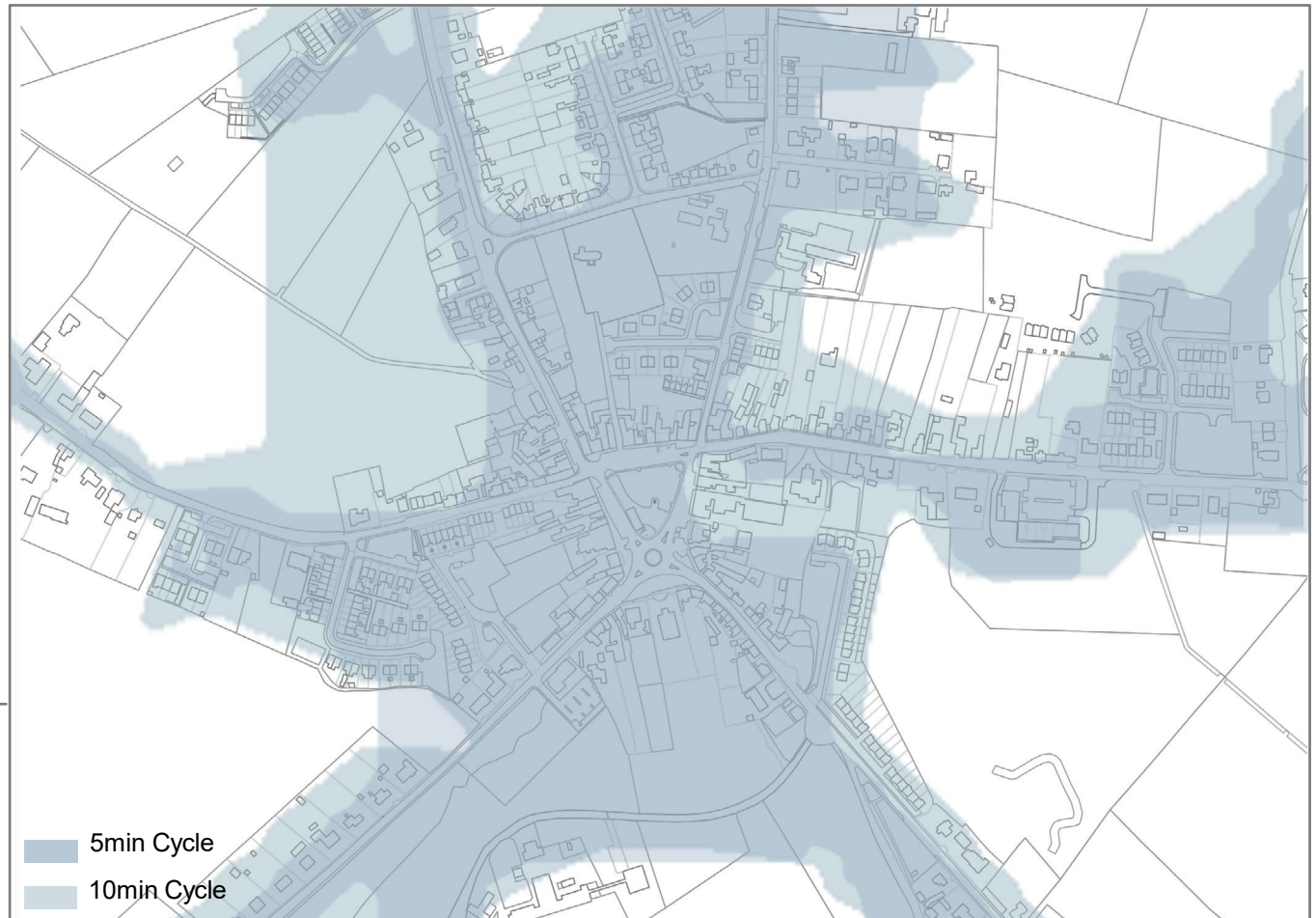


Cycling Isochrone Map

The cycling isochrone map shows the extent of the area that can be reached within five and ten minutes of cycling from the town centre. Both, extend significantly past the town centre. Within ten minutes, cyclists can access much of the wider hinterland, including connections to regional routes.

This wider reach demonstrates the potential for cycling to strengthen Castlepollard's regional connectivity and support more sustainable travel choices.

By establishing continuous and safe cycling infrastructure, Castlepollard could be better connected to, for instance, Mullingar to the south and Oldcastle to the north-east, thus forming a link between these towns.



Movement Issues and Opportunities

ISSUES

- High car dependence.
- Private cars are used for most journeys.
- Public-transport frequency and timing.
- Existing services are useful but not frequent enough for shift from private car for daily commuting. The 818 service to Mullingar operates daily, while the 447 only on selected days and times.
- Town centre vehicle dominance.
- The Town Square has on-street parking and angled bays that take up public realm space, reducing pedestrian amenity and making active travel less attractive or practical.
- Limited dedicated cycling infrastructure.
- There are effectively no continuous protected cycle routes into and through the town, restricting safe cycling.



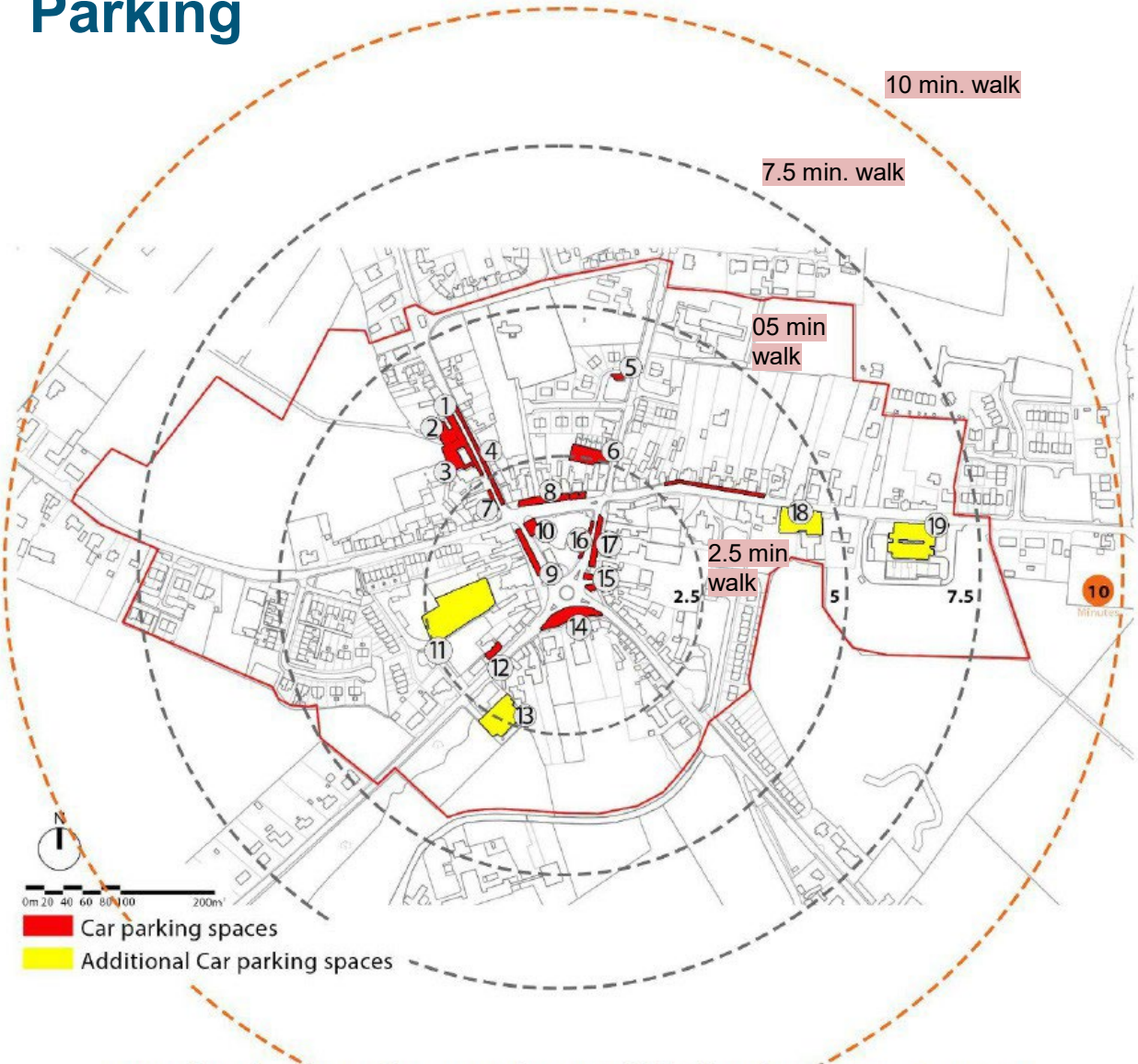
OPPORTUNITIES

- Improve links to Mullingar rail.
- Improved timing and dedicated shuttle bus could make rail a more appealing commute option.
- Rebalance the Town Square for active travel.
- Reconsider the number of on-street parking bays in selected locations around the Square, add widened pavements and formal pedestrian crossings to improve walkability and continuity of pedestrian routes.
- Introduce cycle lanes and facilities.
- Introduce and promote cycling as a travel option. Add bike stands and shelters.
- Peripheral parking.
- These spaces remain underutilised and could be more actively promoted to reduce congestion and the overuse of parking in the Town Square.



Image of traffic in Castlepollard

Parking



Parking Analysis

This analysis examines parking availability, usage, and potential for alternative parking arrangements within the Castlepollard town centre area.

The study is based on observed parking occupancy levels, proximity to major destinations, and the relationship between land use and parking demand recorded during the Health Check audit in 2024.

The study identified 19 parking locations within a 7.5-min walking radius of the town centre which are shown in the map on the right.

Map identifies the surface car parking available slots from 2024 site survey.

Parking Issues and Opportunities

ISSUES

- **Concentration of Demand.** Most parking demand is concentrated along the Town Square. Peak-hour occupancy here frequently exceeds capacity, resulting in congestion and illegal or obstructive parking.
- **Disorderly and Obstructive On-Street Parking:** Instances of obstructive parking such as completely blocking the pavement or parking on yellow line or junctions have been observed.
- **Underutilised Dedicated Car Parks:** Car parks such as at the Church, Men's Shed or Tesco show underutilisation, even during peak town-centre demand.
- **Lack Of Blue Badge And Family Parking Bays:** Higher number of Blue Badge and family parking and 30 minute short stay parking bays should be provided especially around the Square.
- **Reported Challenges With Existing Parking Design:** It has been reported during prior engagements that some residents struggle with parking their vehicles and reversing out of the parking bays around the Town Square.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Time-Restricted Town Square Parking Zone or parking bays:**
Introduce a stay limit to the car parking in a section of the Town Square or to individual parking bays to promote turnover and short-stay convenience.
- **Shared Use Agreements:**
Negotiate shared access with private landowners such as the Hotel and the church/men's shed to use their car parks during their off-peak hours to reduce pressure on the Town Square.
- **Peripheral Parking:**
Develop wayfinding signage and pedestrian improvements for parking which is not immediately off the Town Square.
- **Updated Or Alternative Design Of Parking Layouts. Additional Blue Badge And Family Parking Spaces:**
Consider updating existing parking spaces to improve safety and ease of use. Provide reminder signs on which end of car should park into the bay first. For example, 'Reverse-In, Drive-Out Bays'.
- **Blue badge, Age friendly, Family friendly parking bays**
Introduce a range of blue badge, age friendly and family friendly parking bays around the town.

PARKING CONCLUSION

Castlepollard has adequate total parking, but could benefit from better spatial distribution and management. Currently, high-demand parking spaces around the Town Square obscure the fact that there is ample capacity elsewhere. Isochrone walking and cycling maps for Castlepollard show that most of the town can be reached within a short walk.

Therefore, redistribution through shared use, time limit on some areas of Town Square parking and targeted reconfiguration and education of users would:

- Enhance the public realm of the Square,
- Improve pedestrian safety and
- Ensure efficient use of existing infrastructure without new land take.





Strategy

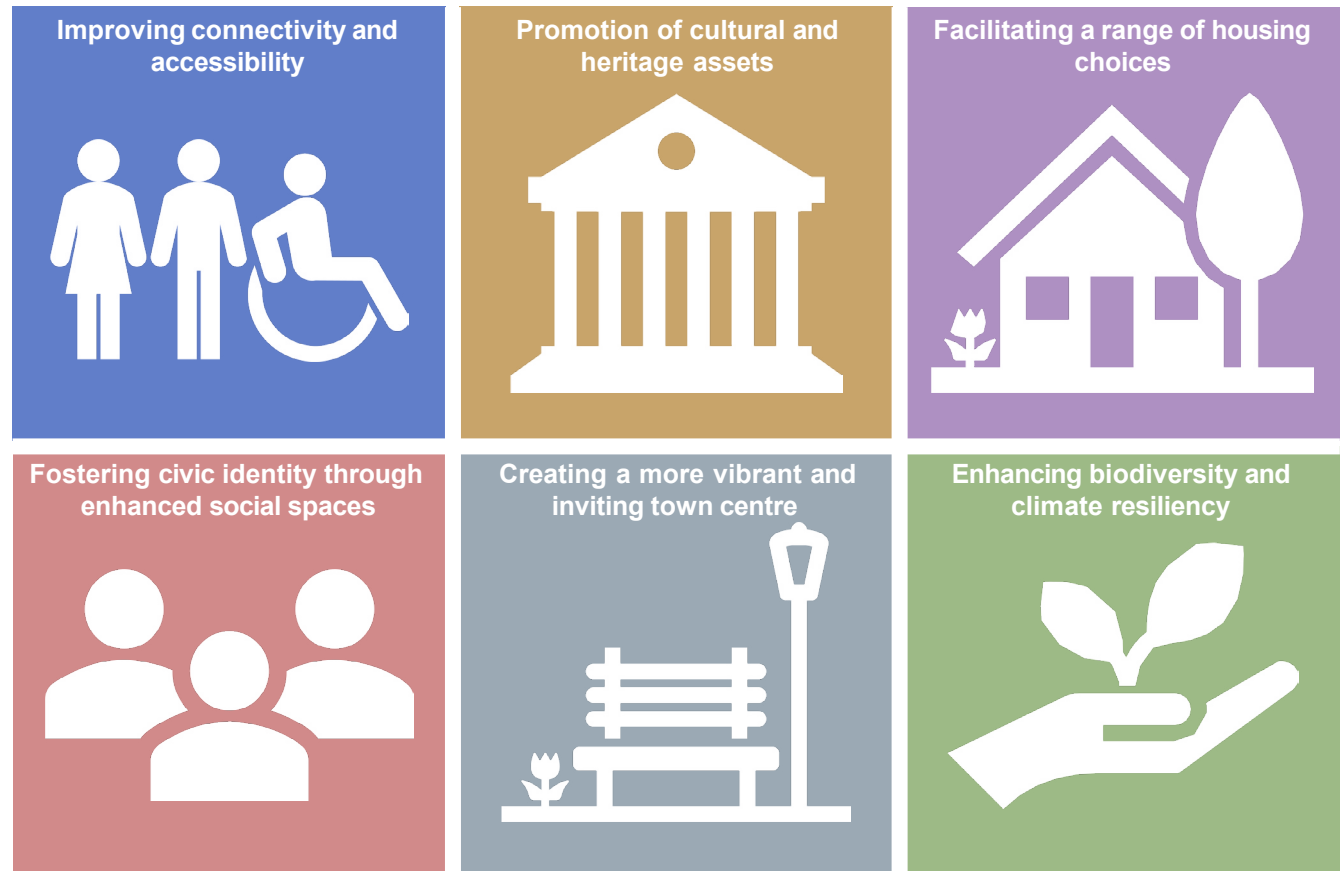
Guiding Principles

The vision for Castlepollard's Town Centre Plan has been shaped by extensive community engagement, drawing on insights from the Castlepollard Collaborative Town Centre Health Check, the Walkability Report, the Place Standard Report and other consultations.

It is also aligned with the policy context of the Town Centre First framework and the Westmeath County Development Plan.

The six guiding principles (shown across) underpin the delivery of this vision and provide a clear framework for the heritage-led regeneration, future development and placemaking initiatives in Castlepollard.

The shared community priorities and guiding principles have led to the development of a project schedule, identifying key initiatives for early-stage funding applications. These projects, supported by the Castlepollard Town Team and the wider community, are outlined below and are part of the identified opportunity sites projects strategy.



Priority projects for funding applications progression bases on the guiding principles

1. Rejuvenate The Square and main access roads and junctions. (Project reference **C1+R1 to R6**).
2. Rejuvenate Church Lane leading to Killafree. (Project reference **C2**).
3. Rejuvenate Killafree Church and Graveyard. (Project reference **C3**).
4. Provide in Castlepollard preschool children's care and education services. (Project reference **TT1**).
5. Develop loop walks to promote the Biodiversity and Heritage around Castlepollard Town Centre. (Project reference **TT2**).

Improving Connectivity and Accessibility



IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY



FOSTERING CIVIC IDENTITY THROUGH ENHANCED SOCIAL SPACES



PROMOTION OF CULTURAL AND HERITAGE ASSETS



CREATING A MORE VIBRANT AND INVITING TOWN CENTRE



FACILITATING A RANGE OF HOUSING CHOICES



ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE RESILIENCY

- Invest in traffic management measures to enhance pedestrian safety with efficient vehicle movement.
- Upgrade the public realm with high-quality, unobstructed footpaths, enhanced seating and improved street lighting.
- Introduce safe and accessible pedestrian crossings, particularly around the Square.
- Enhance public transport connections to and from Castlepollard.
- Provide clear wayfinding and signage for all users.
- Promote active travel by introducing continuous cycle routes, improving bike parking facilities.
- Ensure all new developments adhere to universal design and accessibility standards, enabling mobility for all age groups and abilities.

Fostering Civic Identity Through Enhanced Social Spaces



IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY



**FOSTERING CIVIC IDENTITY THROUGH
ENHANCED SOCIAL SPACES**



PROMOTION OF CULTURAL AND HERITAGE ASSETS



CREATING A MORE VIBRANT AND INVITING
TOWN CENTRE



FACILITATING A RANGE OF HOUSING CHOICES



ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE
RESILIENCY

- Reinforce the Town Square as the civic heart of Castlepollard through targeted interventions aimed at improving accessibility, biodiversity and usability of the Square.
- Expand facilities for youth and older residents, ensuring inclusive access to recreation and social interaction.
- Introduce public toilets and resting areas to improve comfort and encourage longer visits to the town centre.
- Create flexible community hubs capable of hosting a range of civic, cultural and social activities.
- Encourage expression of art through various media to celebrate Castlepollard's identity and heritage.
- Support community-led initiatives that promote a sense of belonging among residents.

Promotion of Cultural and Heritage Assets



IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY



FOSTERING CIVIC IDENTITY THROUGH
ENHANCED SOCIAL SPACES



PROMOTION OF CULTURAL AND HERITAGE ASSETS



CREATING A MORE VIBRANT AND INVITING
TOWN CENTRE



FACILITATING A RANGE OF HOUSING CHOICES



ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE
RESILIENCY

- Target derelict and vacant sites for adaptive reuse, promoting new commercial, civic and residential functions that respect the town's heritage character.
- Showcase Castlepollard's heritage assets through improved signage, interpretation, documentation and digital media.
- Consider developing heritage trails that connect key local attractions.
- Support cultural events such as festivals, exhibitions and performances that activate public spaces in Castlepollard and promote the town as a visitor destination.
- Encourage design approaches that integrate heritage features with contemporary uses.

Creating a More Vibrant and Inviting Town Centre



IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY



FOSTERING CIVIC IDENTITY THROUGH ENHANCED SOCIAL SPACES



PROMOTION OF CULTURAL AND HERITAGE ASSETS



CREATING A MORE VIBRANT AND INVITING TOWN CENTRE



FACILITATING A RANGE OF HOUSING CHOICES



ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE RESILIENCY

- Encourage a diverse mix of land uses, including retail, hospitality, culture and other spaces, to promote varied local economy.
- Support local entrepreneurs and start-ups to foster community-driven growth and retain local talent.
- Improve shopfronts that have fallen into disrepair and ensure regular maintenance of building facades to enhance the town's visual appeal.
- Facilitate pop-up stalls and markets to revitalise vacant or underused sites and create lively community spaces.
- Strengthen Castlepollard's tourism offering by promoting the town as a local hub for visitors.
- Promote evening economy initiatives by ensuring a safe, welcoming environment, supported by continuous street lighting and a visible Garda presence.

Facilitating a Range of Housing Choices



IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY



FOSTERING CIVIC IDENTITY THROUGH ENHANCED SOCIAL SPACES



PROMOTION OF CULTURAL AND HERITAGE ASSETS



CREATING A MORE VIBRANT AND INVITING TOWN CENTRE



FACILITATING A RANGE OF HOUSING CHOICES



ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE RESILIENCY

- Deliver a mix of housing, including affordable, smaller and age-friendly developments to meet diverse community needs.
- Encourage adaptive reuse of vacant properties and vacant upper floors for residential purposes, considering the importance of town centre living.
- Promote infill and backland development that complements existing town character.
- Ensure new housing developments adopt high-quality design standards, contributing positively to the urban fabric.

Enhancing Biodiversity and Climate Resiliency



IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY



FOSTERING CIVIC IDENTITY THROUGH
ENHANCED SOCIAL SPACES



PROMOTION OF CULTURAL AND HERITAGE ASSETS



CREATING A MORE VIBRANT AND INVITING
TOWN CENTRE



FACILITATING A RANGE OF HOUSING CHOICES



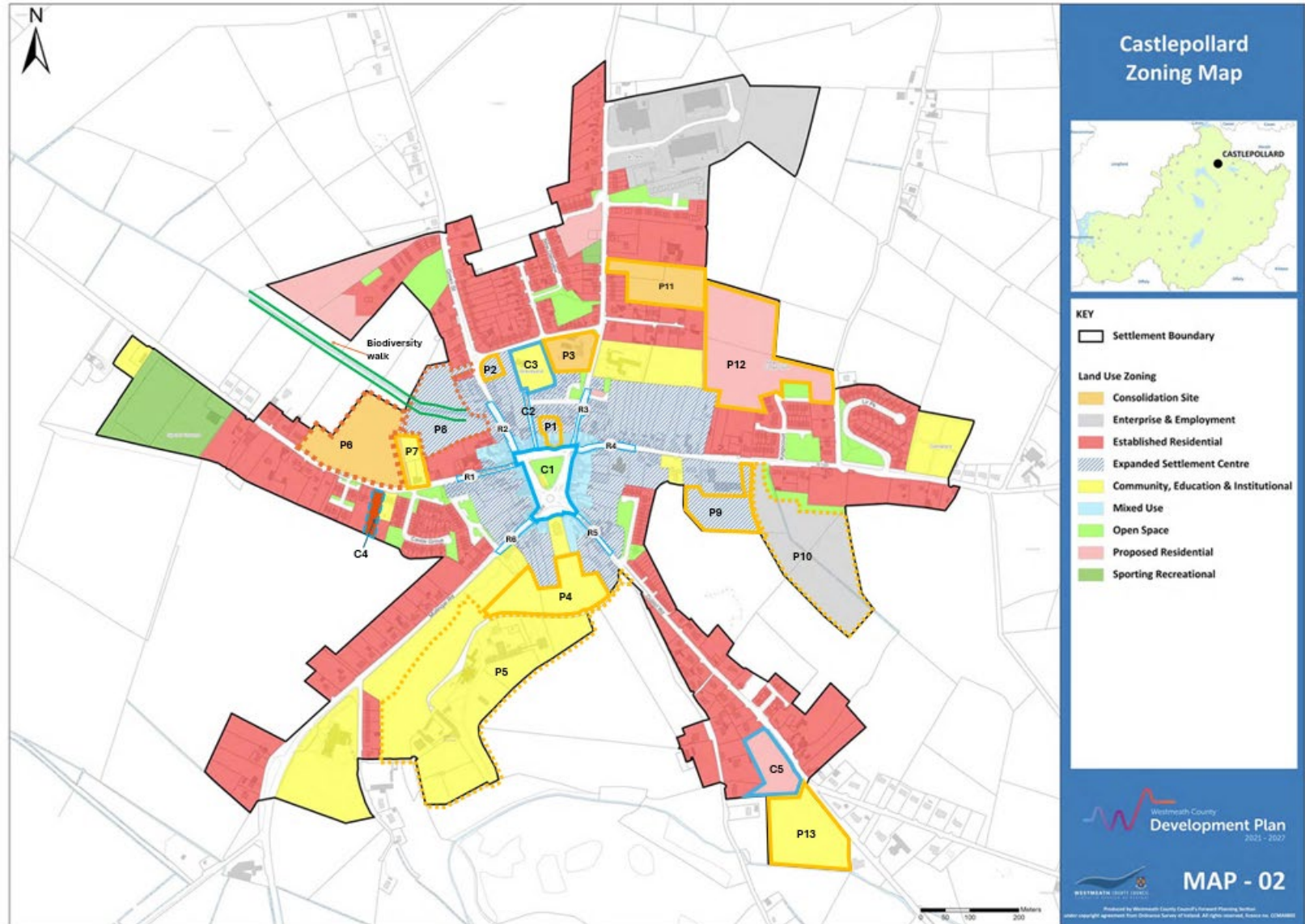
ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE
RESILIENCY

- Protect and enhance existing green spaces, ensuring their management supports pollinator-friendly and native planting.
- Create new community growing spaces, encouraging local participation and social interaction.
- Improve access to walking trails and natural areas, linking the town centre to the surrounding countryside and heritage landscapes.
- Promote climate-resilient design in new developments and retrofits, particularly considering energy efficiency.
- Support community education and engagement initiatives focused on biodiversity, recycling and sustainable living.

Opportunity Sites

The opportunity sites included in this plan align with the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

All those sites identified as consolidation, expanded settlement centre and those with specific zonings in the Westmeath County Development Plan are reflected in this TCF plan to demonstrate how the zoned lands can be developed to make Castlepollard more vibrant, viable and attractive.

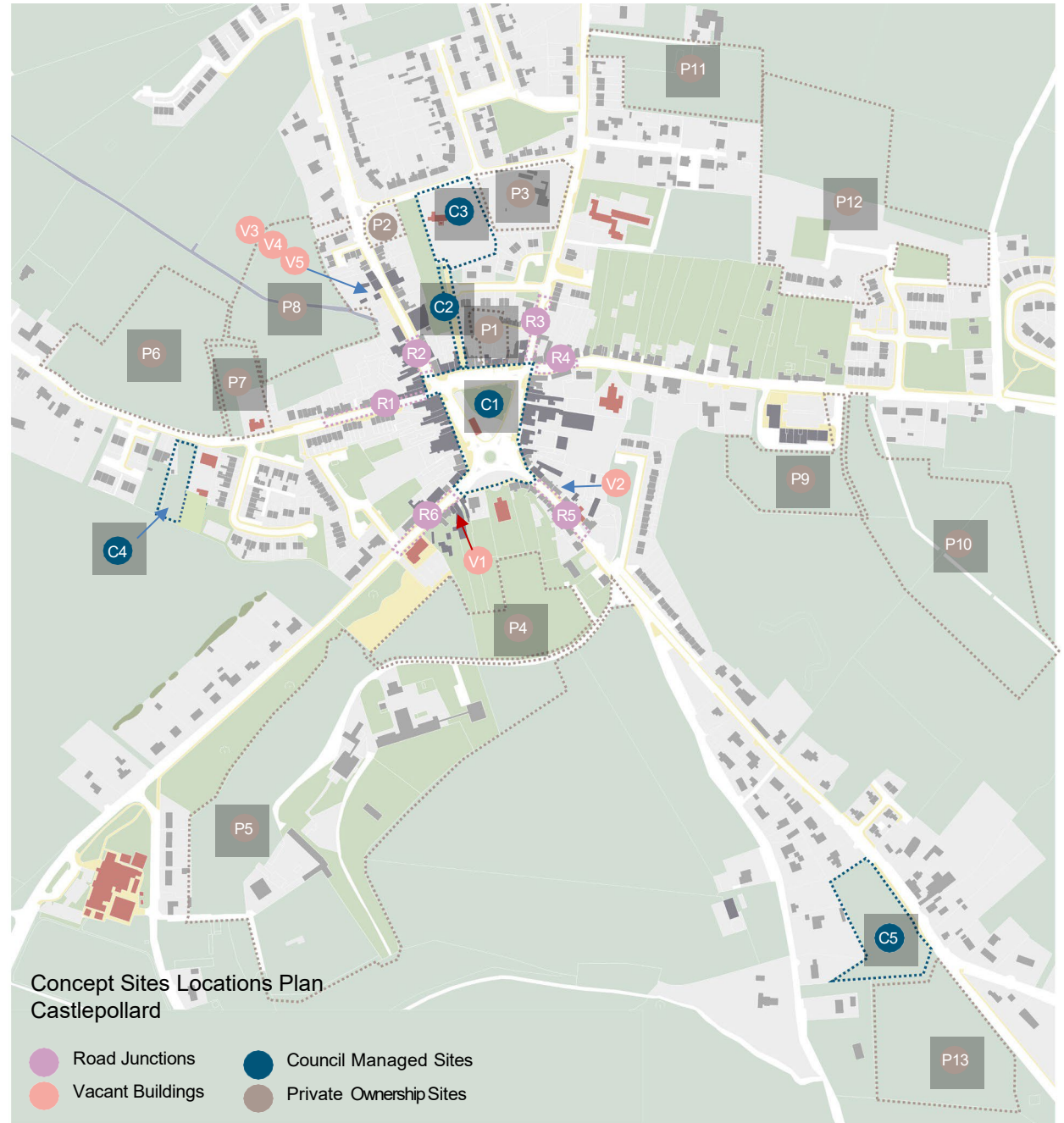


Opportunity Sites

This map illustrates all of the opportunity sites identified in this Town Centre First Plan. The opportunity sites included are structured by land ownership with the council and / or Managed and owned sites being listed before those in private ownership.

The Opportunity sites are illustrated with the symbols associated with the Guiding Principles to show the projects respond to the strategy.

	Projects relating to Improving Connectivity and Accessibility
	Projects relating to Fostering Civic Identity Through Enhanced Social Spaces
	Projects relating to Promotion of Cultural and Heritage Assets
	Projects relating to Creating a More Vibrant and Inviting Town Centre
	Projects relating to Facilitating a Range of Housing Choices
	Projects relating to Enhancing Biodiversity and Climate Resiliency



➤ Council Managed Sites

- C1: Rejuvenation of The Square and main access roads and junctions.
- C2: Rejuvenation of Church Lane linking the Square and Killafree Church.
- C3: Rejuvenation of Killafree Church and Graveyard.
- TT01: Pre school Children's care and early years Education provision.
- TT02: Develop loop walks to promote the Biodiversity and Heritage around Castlepollard Town Centre.

Priority Sites and Projects identified for early funding applications.

- C4: Fire station adjacent undeveloped site.
- C5: Dublin Rd Housing site.

C1

The Square

The Square is the heart of Castlepollard.

The community consultations raised the importance of better utilising the space, improving its pedestrian connections to the surrounding streets and enhancing biodiversity.

These aims reinforce the placemaking policy County Policy Objective (CPO) 8.33 found in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 to “ensure that the town centre is accessible to all members of the community, including people with mobility issues, the elderly and people with young children” and the placemaking objective, CPO8.34 to “secure resources for the enhancement, renewal and regeneration of the public realm in Castlepollard”.

The future detailed design of the Square will be subject to further consultation with the community and informed by a multidisciplinary team of designers, transport planners and engineers. The following pages illustrate its current condition and options for possible intervention from minimal changes with enhanced crossings to proposals that illustrate rebalancing the Square more towards users rather than vehicles.

The Square (C1) along with the Killafree Church Lane (C2) linking to the Killafree Heritage Church and Graveyard (C3) are identified propriety projects for early funding applications that will be supported by the Community Consultation reports and the Castlepollard Town Centre First Plan reports accommodated through the Town Centre First Process.



View of the junction of Pakenhamhall Rd and Green St. that is difficult for pedestrians to cross safely



Views of the Square



Concept Plan view of the existing Square



C1 The Square – Current layout



Opportunity for more outdoor seating
 Difficult crossing
 Very narrow and dangerous junction
 Popular greenspace

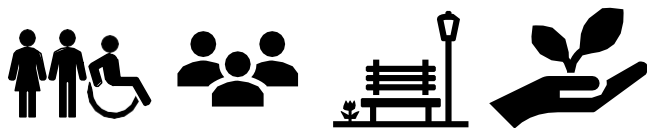
Popular Hotel with high footfall

Important roundabout - to be kept

Prominent Church Building



Plan view of the existing Square

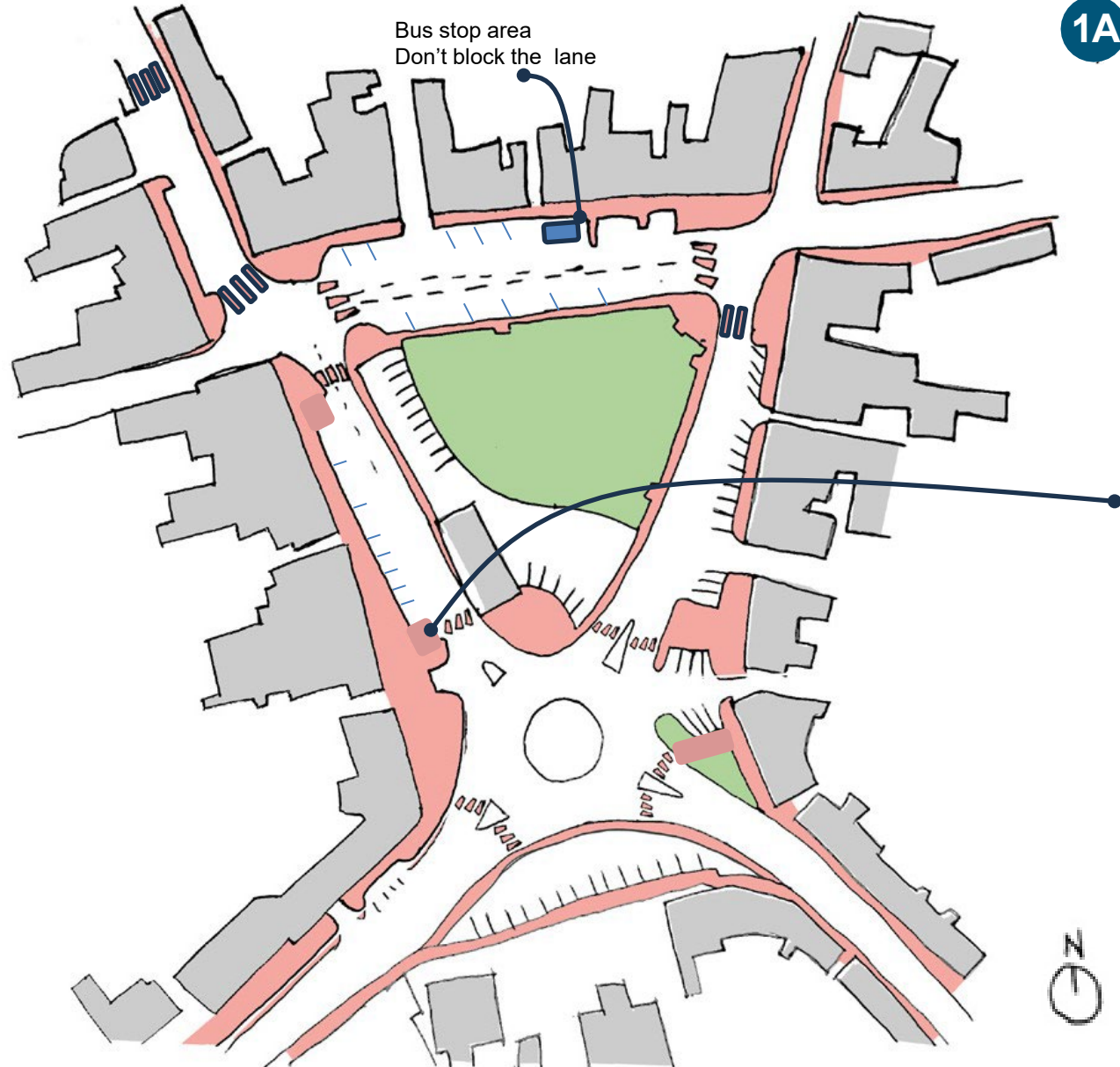


View of the existing Square looking North



View of the existing Square looking East

C1 The Square – Concept Options



1A

Most of the parking remains as it ,
The space is made better with the addition of pedestrian priority crossings.

Opportunity

- Show more blue badge parking
- Age friendly parking bays
- 30 minute short stay parking bays in selected areas

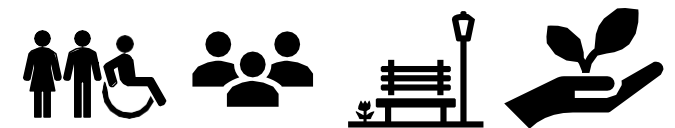
Traffic surveys will need to be conducted before any interventions are designed or enacted.

Build out path here to provide some wider spaces

Town Square minimal intervention.

- Retain most of the parking
- Improve pedestrian crossings

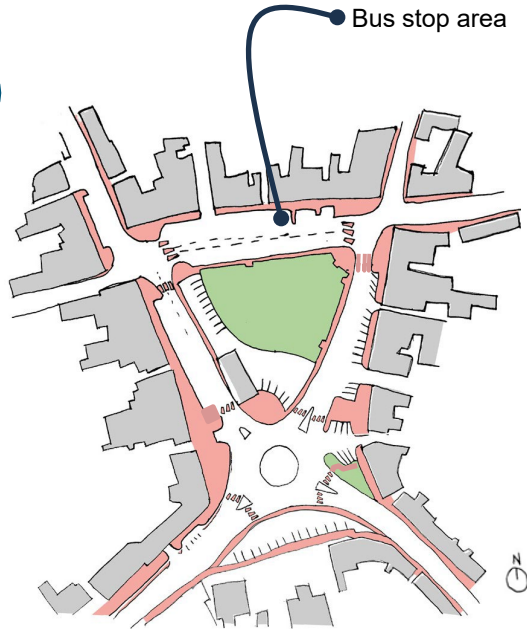
Sketch Plan of Castlepollard Square
Minimal Intervention Option



C1

The Square – Concept Options

1



Minimal Intervention Option

Build out of paths in areas for safe pedestrian crossings road markings.

2



Medium Intervention Option

Path areas widened on north and west of the square for use of outdoor market stalls and cafes, Pedestrian crossings , road making upgrades.

3



Higher Intervention Option

Path areas widened on north, west and east of the square to promote an improvement of the public realm, Pedestrian crossings are all raised to path level with raised crossing and ramps to slow traffic.



C1

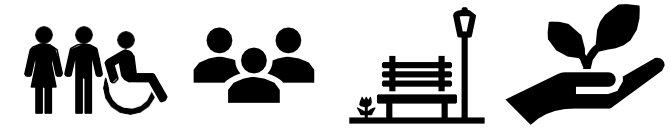
The Square - Proposed Concept



Artist impression of the Square showing improved pedestrian crossing
At the junction of Green Road



View today looking towards the church
No pedestrian priority



This sketch illustrates a concept of how the pedestrian crossings could be improved at the junction of the Square with Pakenhamhall Road and Green Street. The future design of the Square will be developed by a multidisciplinary team of designers, transport planners and engineers and will be subject to community consultations.



View of Difficult junction - No pedestrian priority



Views of the Square looking West

R1 to R6 Road Junctions

These sites are the junction areas around the Square (**Project C1**). They are strongly associated with C1, and their development will be completed alongside C1.

R1 is the junction of Pakenhamhall Road onto the Square. It is a particularly narrow junction, highlighted repeatedly by residents during consultations. There is currently no footpath on either side of road along one stretch with the road passing between narrow buildings. One of many options is to install a footpath, and make this section of road single track, with an alternating traffic system.

The other junctions require zebra crossings at a minimum, considering their usage, proximity to schools, and centrality to the town square, With R4 benefitting from a widened footpath.



Artist impression of the Square showing improved pedestrian crossing At the junction of Green Road



Concept Plan view of the existing Square with a focus on the main road junctions

C2 Church Lane

Opportunity site C2 is the Church Lane linking the North of the Square and the heritage site of Killafree Church ruins and graveyard.

Currently this site is an unwelcoming connection with no active frontage or activity resulting in issues of littering that were noted in the Town Centre Health Check. This lane acts as a key connection, which will be necessary to enhance the connectivity between the Square and the Killafree heritage assets.

Church Lane acts as the only vehicle access to the Graveyard which is still an active space for burials, and to a planned housing development. Any future ambition for this area will need to ensure the current activity and traffic use is catered for.

Efforts to animate and environmentally improve the space comply with policy CPO 8.21 in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 to “promote cycling and walking within the community through improved walking/cycling infrastructure within the town, its hinterlands and at areas of interest and attractions”.



Concept Plan view of Church Lane



View of Church lane towards the Market House on the Square



View of the existing Square looking North

C2 Church Lane - Design Concept



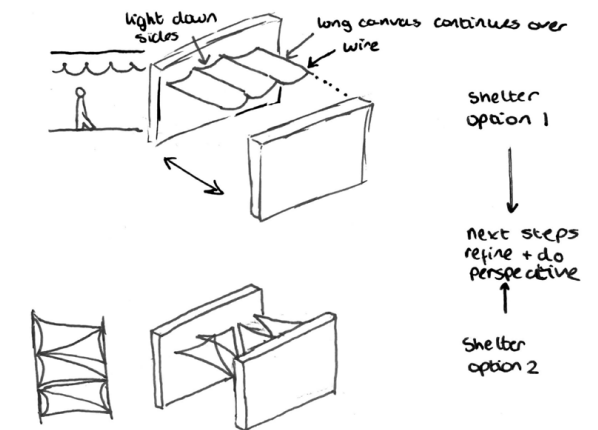
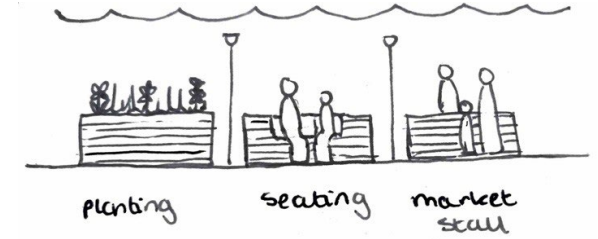
This render shows how this space can be transformed from a neglected lane to a vibrant public space that draws people from the Square to Killafree Church. The removable covers help to create an attractive and flexible space for community events and public life.



Concept Image of the lane's potential



Image of the Lane today looking in the direction Of the Square and the Heritage Market House



Images of Artists sketch ideas for the Lane



C3

Kilafree Church and Graveyard

This site comprises the ruined Killafree Church and its graveyard. At present, this significant historic site is not particularly accessible for local walkers and tourists.

The ruined St. Michael's Church offers an opportunity for additional access, heritage interpretation, site management for biodiversity and it could become a restorative green space for residents and visitors alike. Furthermore this concept provides a quality pedestrian connection from Old Glen View to the Town Square.

The structure is a Protected Structure and a Recorded Monument and any works and project ambitions must be approved by the National Monuments Service, DHLGH the Planning Authority and should be discussed with the Heritage and Conservation Officers.



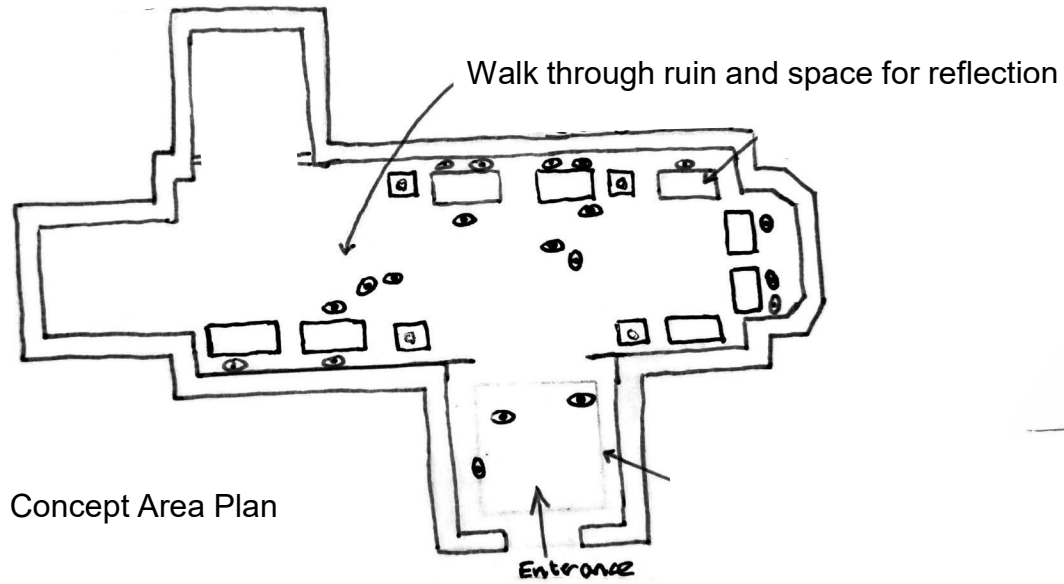
Concept Location Plan



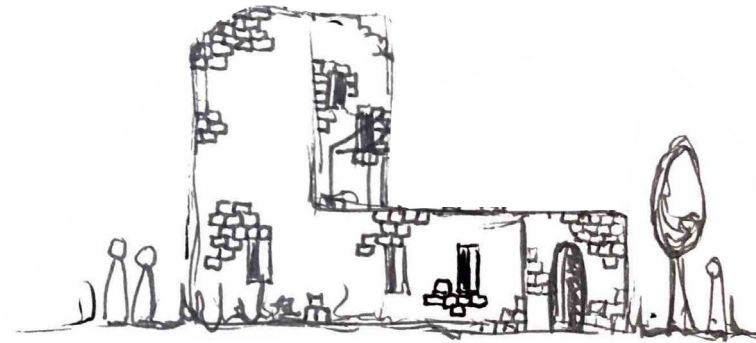
Views of Killafree Church and Graveyard

C3

Kilafree Church and Graveyard – Concepts



Concept Area Plan



Artist impression of monument



Views of Killafree Church and Graveyard

C3

Killafree Church and Graveyard – Concept Sketch Proposal



Artist impression of the Killafree Church walk through monument
Looking out of the arched gable



View of arched gable



TT 1

Castlepollard Early Years Child Care Centre

Provision of childcare is critical to the health and vibrancy of rural towns. Deficits in the provision of childcare in Castlepollard will force those parents who have access to a private car to take their children to other towns, which can, in turn, impact the viability of the primary schools in town.

The identification and re-use of an appropriate vacant building for Early Learning Care (ELC) and School age Childcare (SAC) is a high priority for Castlepollard.

Inspiration can be taken from the illustrated Wool Store in Caledon, Co. Tyrone, which was converted to a day care centre. This development has been credited with ensuring the survival of the primary school in the village.



Concept: Bright interior of a pre-school facility



▲ The Woolstore. Source: [Architect's Journal](#)



▲ The Woolstore. Source: [Architect's Journal](#)



▲ The Woolstore. Source: [Architect's Journal](#)

Case Study:
Caledon Wool
Store,
Co. Tyrone,
Converted to an
Early Learning
Centre.



Case Study: Caledon Wool
Store, Co Tyrone,
Image of the original building.

TT 2

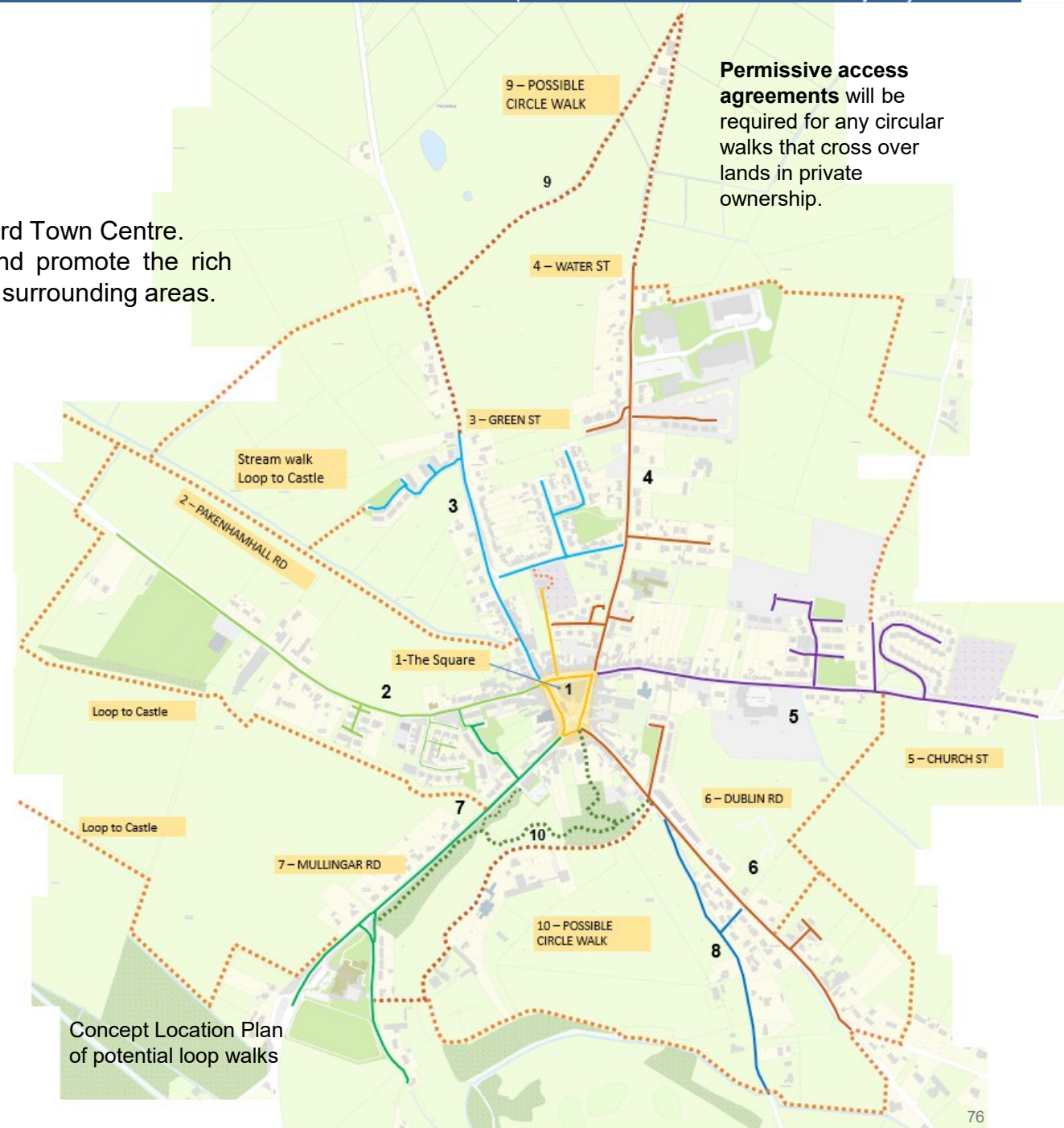
Walking Routes

Create Looped walks with a focus point of the Castlepollard Town Centre. The aim of the looped walks projects will be to link and promote the rich heritage and biodiversity offering in Castlepollard and the surrounding areas.



Routes Numbers legend

- Route 1**, Town Centre to Killafree Church. ———
- Route 2**, Pakenhamhall Road. ———
- Route 3**, Green Street ———
- Route 4**, Water Street. ———
- Route 5, Church Street. ———
- Route 6**, Dublin Road. ———
- Route 7**, Mullingar Road. ———
- Route 8**, Old Glenview Road. ———
- Route 9**, Possible circle route subject to the agreement of the land owners North - - - - -
- Route 10**, Possible circle route subject to the agreement of the land owners, St Peters. - - - - -
- Loop walks**, subject to the agreement of the land owners. - - - - -



C4

West of Fire Station site, Pakenhamhall Road



This site is located adjacent to the fire station on Pakenhamhall Road within the existing residential area as identified in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

The community ambition for this site is identified as residential development of an appropriate density.

This proposal complies with policy objective CPO 8.15 as it could aid in the delivery of an appropriate mix of housing type, tenure, density and size to meet the needs of the population of Castlepollard.



Concept Location of the site next to the Fire Station



Views of the site



Concept Location Plan

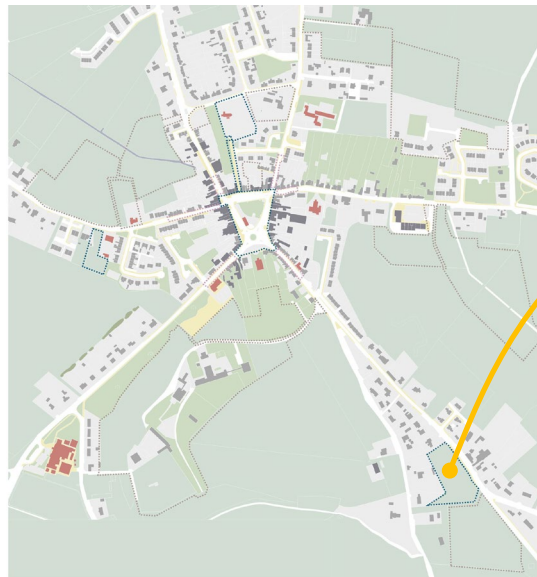
C5

Housing Site Dublin Road

This site on the Dublin Road has been identified in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 for the provision of a serviced site in accordance with Regional Policy Objective (RPO) 4.78 of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

The ambition for this site will be for the development of serviced sites to create 'build your own home' opportunities within the existing footprint of Castlepollard.

The development of this site for serviced sites is subject to site feasibility and commercial viability.



Concept Site Location Plan



➤ Potential development sites in Private ownership

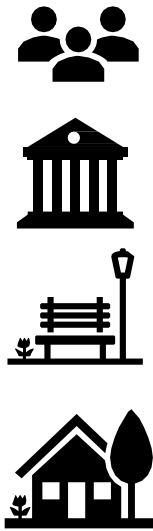
Site Reference	Site Identification	Site Reference	Site Identification
P1	Vacant buildings on the Town Square North.	P7	Parocial School, Pakenhamhall Road.
P2	Corner site, Green Street.	P9	Shopping Complex land to rear, Church Street.
P3	Former Vocational School, Water Street.	P10	Lands to East of Shopping Complex, Church Street.
P4	Site to the rear of the Library, Mullingar Road.	P11	Undeveloped lands off Water Street.
P5	Kinturk House and Demesne, South of the Town Square.	P12	Undeveloped lands off Church Street.
P6 and P8	Old Stream biodiversity walk, Green Street.	P13	Undeveloped lands off Dublin Road.
		V1 to V5	Vacant Buildings potential.

P1

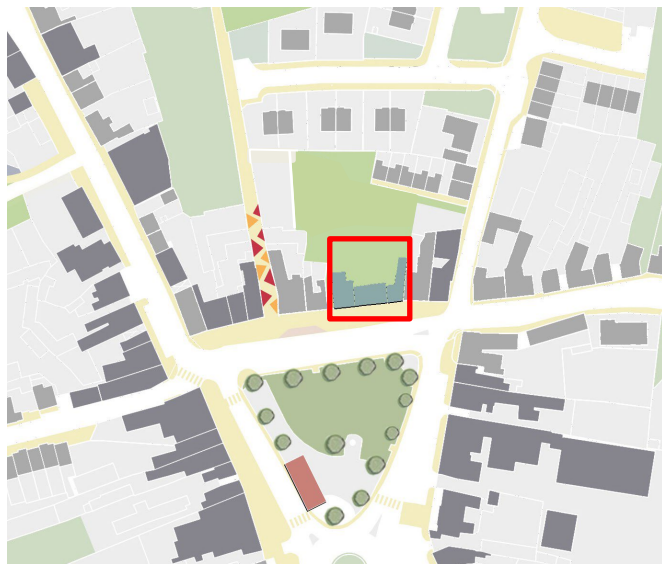
Vacant buildings on Town Square North

Opportunity site P1 comprises vacant units to the North of the Square. They currently constitute one of the main clusters of vacancy in Castlepollard Town Centre.

Their potential restoration and re-use reflects the commercial and retail policy objective 8.26 in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 to “Encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail and other town centre uses with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach”.



Images Credit of Daft.ie



Concept Location Plan



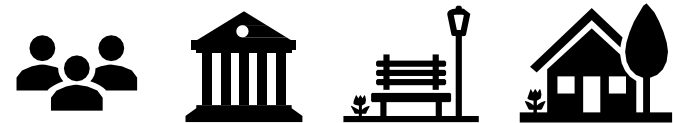
Views of the site and façade

P1

Vacant buildings on Town Square North Sketch



Artist's Impression of how the concept of the refurbished Elevations could look in the future.

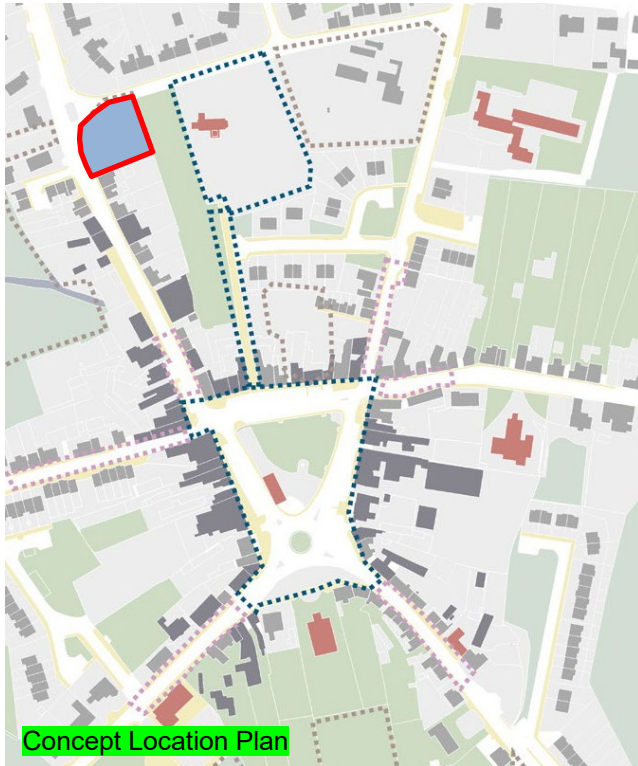


P2

Corner Site, Green Street

This site at the junction of Green Street and Old Glen View is designated in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 for uses associated with an expanded settlement centre.

Proposals that reflect the mixed use nature of the town centre are appropriate in this site to complement existing provision.



Images of the corner site



To the East of the corner site is the Killafree church monument and Killafree Graveyard



P3

Former Vocational School site, Water Street

Opportunity site P3 is located in lands associated with the former community school on Water Street.

This site is identified as an opportunity site in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and zoned as a "Consolidation Site". It has the potential to provide a suitable mix of uses including new residential development, which will harness its prime location in the town centre.

The development of such a strategic site, having regard to its proximity to adjacent primary school and within the town centre will aid in increasing the vibrancy and vitality of Castlepollard town centre.



Concept Site Plan



Concept Location Plan



Images of the site as of 2025
Showing the old school building



P4

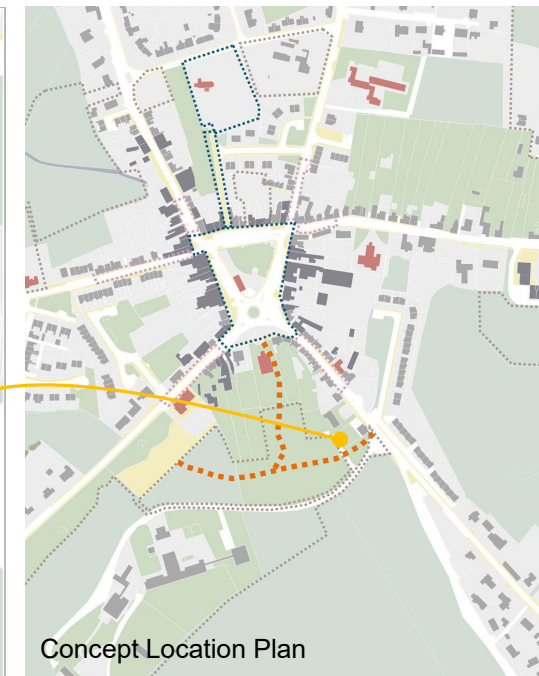
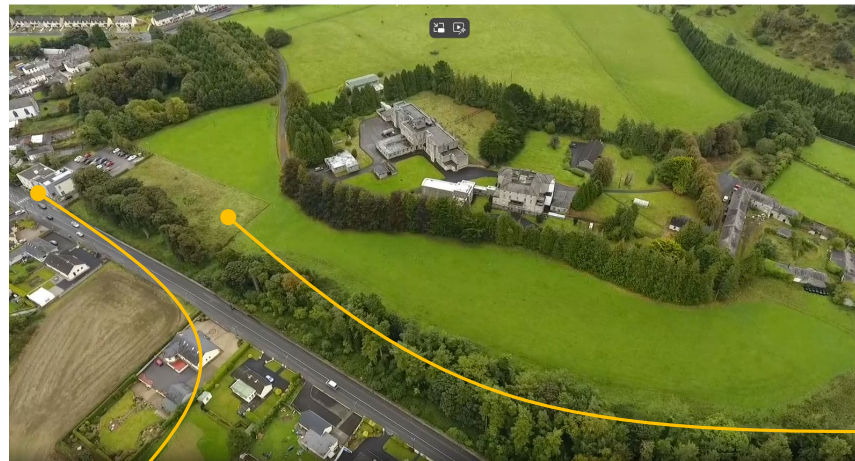
Site to rear of Library, Mullingar Road

This site is at the rear of the Library and Town park.

The Community have several ambitions for the site which includes for the provision of the following:

- Biodiversity walk and viewing of the herony reputed to be over a century old.
- Re opening the historic link between the Church of Ireland building and the Kinturk Demesne.
- New pedestrian link from the Dublin Road to the Town Park.
- Creating a community vegetable and flower garden.
- Creating a sheltered space where people can meet and rest outdoors.

The space could also accommodate an extension to the Library Car park which has become busier with the opening of the new town park and playground



Concept Location Plan

New pathways for community access
pedestrian link from the Dublin Rd.

P4

Bandstand and Forest Path - Concept Design



Artist's impression of a sheltered space looking onto the Town Park playground

- Bandstand e.g. school orchestra
- sheltered picnic area for parents supervising children in the park



Inclusive Community Garden

community workshop
e.g. making planting
beds for individuals,
bird houses + insect
hotels
↳ tool hire + safe
storage



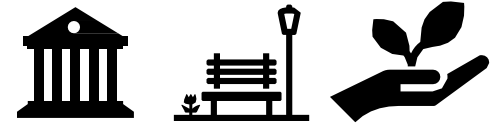
community food waste
compost

Artist concept sketches of the
potential of the site



P5

Kinturk House and Demesne, South of Town Square



This site comprises Kinturk House, landscaped grounds with walled gardens, an extensive complex of outbuildings, in addition to a hospital and a church.

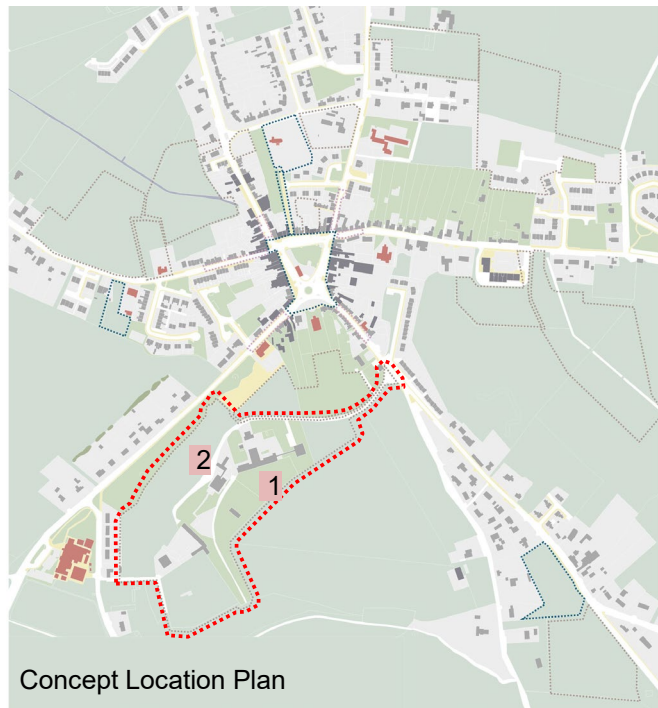
The site contains 15 protected structures and a land area totaling several hectares that are zoned "Community, Educational & Institutional".

County Policy Objective CPO 8.28 supports the appropriate reuse and regeneration of Kinturk Demesne (St Peter's Centre) with an appropriate development that contributes positively to the character of the town having regard to its architectural and cultural heritage value.



Site Plan

Aerial View of the location



Concept Location Plan

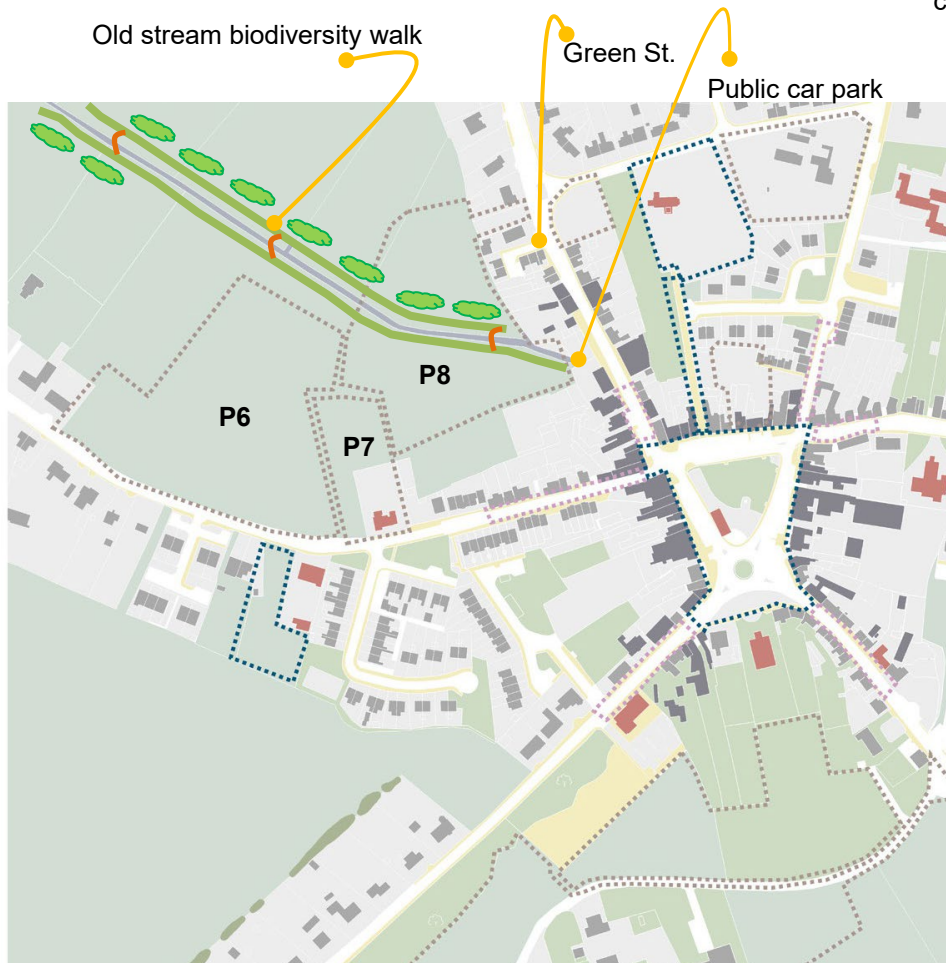
- 1 – St. Peters Centre Hospital
- 2 – Kinturk House

P6 and P8

Concept for the Biodiversity Stream Path

Behind the Green Street carpark is the track of a historic stream which is currently overgrown with a wide range of hedgerows, trees and native plants. Older members of the Castlepollard Community remember swimming and bathing in the stream as children.

The ambition for this area is to create a circle walk along the track of the old stream integrated as part of the biodiversity experience. Any walks across this privately owned land will require the negotiation of 'permissive access agreements'. Future plans for housing and other developments the sites should consider the river biodiversity walk concept.



Concept Location Plan



Access gate to the area from the public car park



Images of the area looking onto the old Stream biodiversity walkway concept

P6

Visual Concept the Old Stream Biodiversity Walk



▶ 0:39 / 1:29

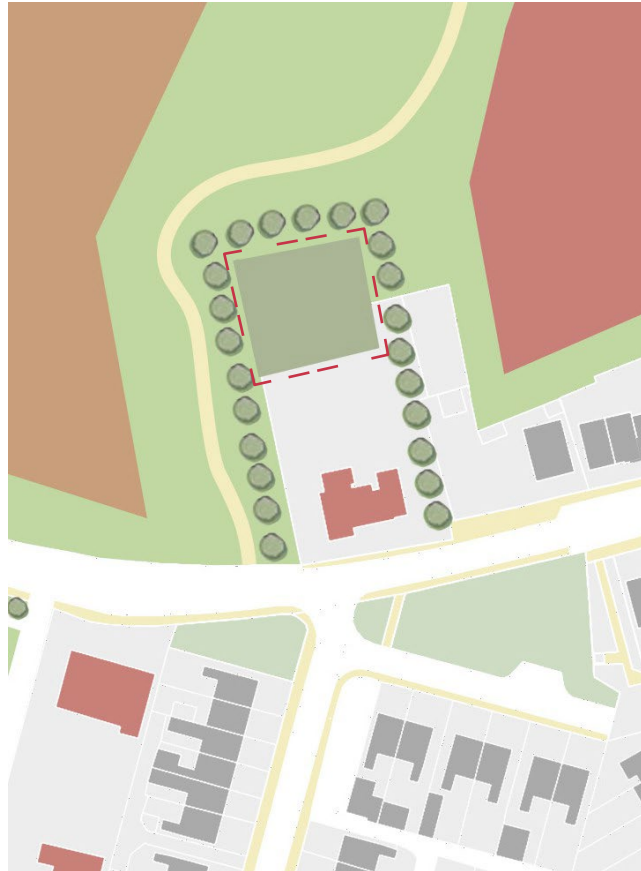
P7

Parochial School site, Pakenhamhall Road



This site comprises land to the rear of the historic Parochial School on the Pakenhamhall Road. The school currently has limited outdoor space for play and staff parking.

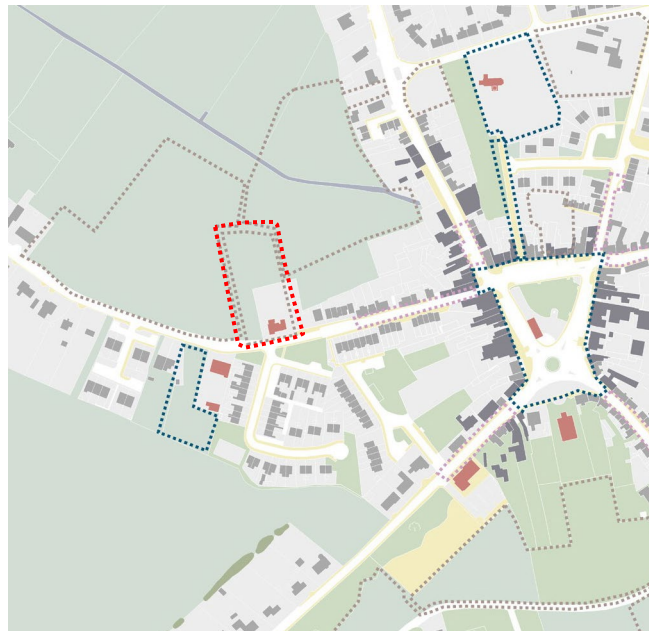
This site is identified for community, educational and institutional usage in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 to support future expansion opportunities for the school.



Concept Site Plan



Images of the School Location



Location Plan

P9 & P10

Undeveloped Lands to Rear and East of Retail Complex, Church Street

P9

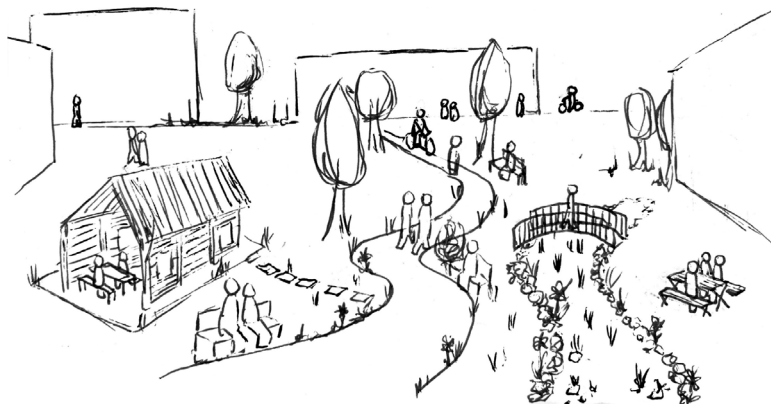
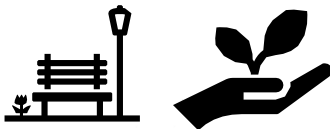
This site is located to the south of Castlepollard Retail Centre on Church Street. This land is zoned in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 for expanded settlement centre. This site offers development potential to support the plan objective CPO 8.16 to “encourage the appropriate redevelopment of brownfield and infill sites for residential uses within the footprint of the existing built-up area”.



P10

This site located off Oldcastle Road has been identified in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 policy objective CPO 8.8 for the establishment of an Enterprise Centre to support the existing Enterprise Centre at Innova Business Park. The enterprise centre can be composed of units of a scale appropriate to the locality. Larger warehouse units could accommodate a larger business or multiple smaller businesses. This enterprise centre proposal will need a Flood Risk Assessment (CPO 8.10).

Human Experience



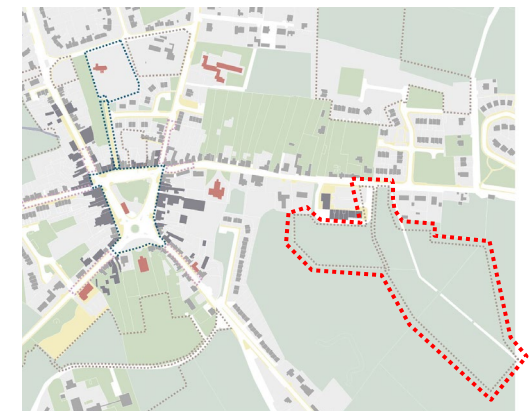
This concept sketch illustrates the importance of the enterprise centre being designed at a human scale.



Image of the location P9



Image of the location P10



Location Plan

P11 & P12

Undeveloped Sites

P11 - Undeveloped Site on Water Street

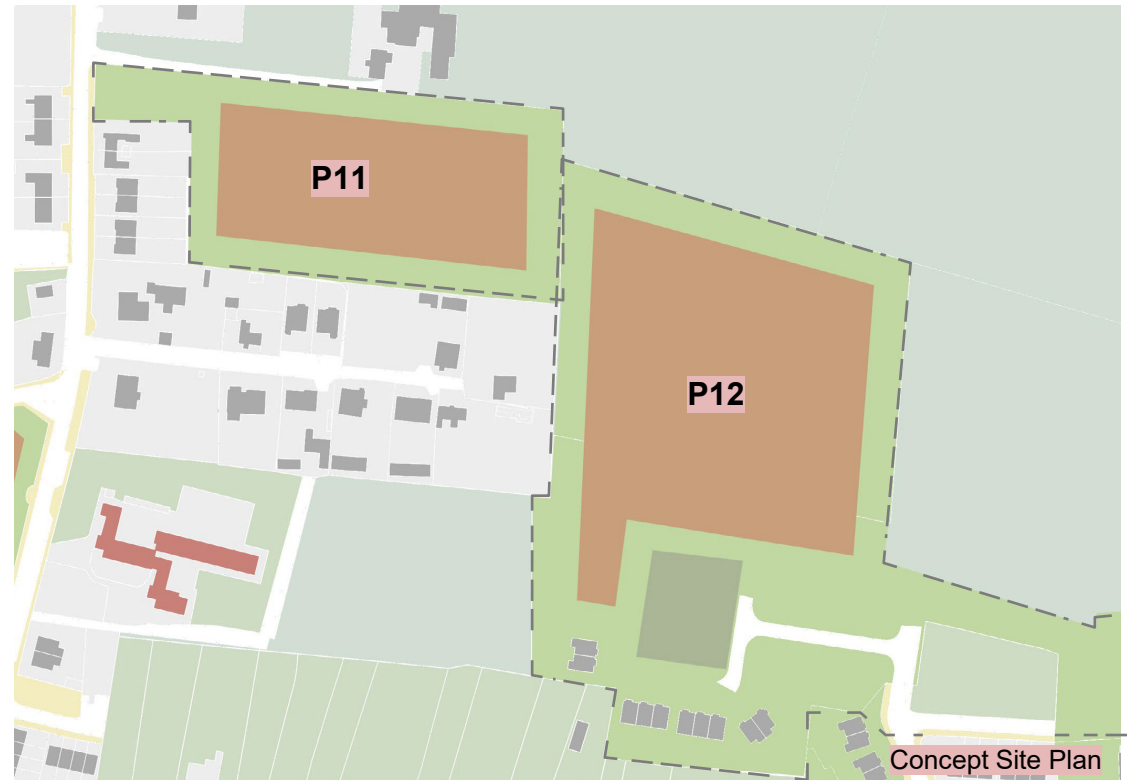
This site is accessed from Water Street in the North of the town centre in Castlepollard. It is designated as a consolidation site in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

The development of such sites could accommodate residential, community, and, if deemed appropriate, mixed use purposes or a combination thereof. The scale and nature of development permissible for the settlement shall be commensurate with its position in the Settlement Hierarchy and shall be consistent with relevant Core Strategy Policies. Development proposals shall be required in their layout and design to respect and reinforce the character of the individual settlement.

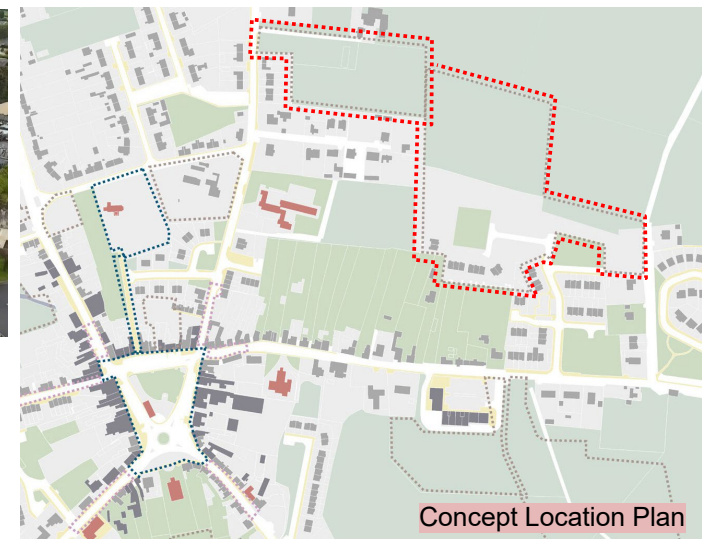


P12 - Undeveloped Site to Rear of Housing on Church Road

This site is accessed from Kingscourt in the Northeast of the town centre in Castlepollard. It is designated for proposed residential development in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027. Housing proposals should comply with policy objective, CPO 8.15, to aid in the delivery of an appropriate mix of housing type, tenure, density and size to meet the needs of the population of Castlepollard.



The sites of P11 and P12 are located at the top of the image



P13

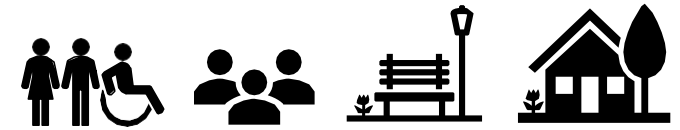
Undeveloped Site, Dublin Road

This site on the Dublin Road has been zoned for community, educational and institutional usage in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

This site offers the potential to provide for a range of accommodation and building types that supports policy objective CPO 8.15 as it will aid in the delivery of an appropriate mix of housing type, tenure, density and size is provided to meet the needs of the population of Castlepollard.



V1, V2, V3, V4, V5 Vacant buildings

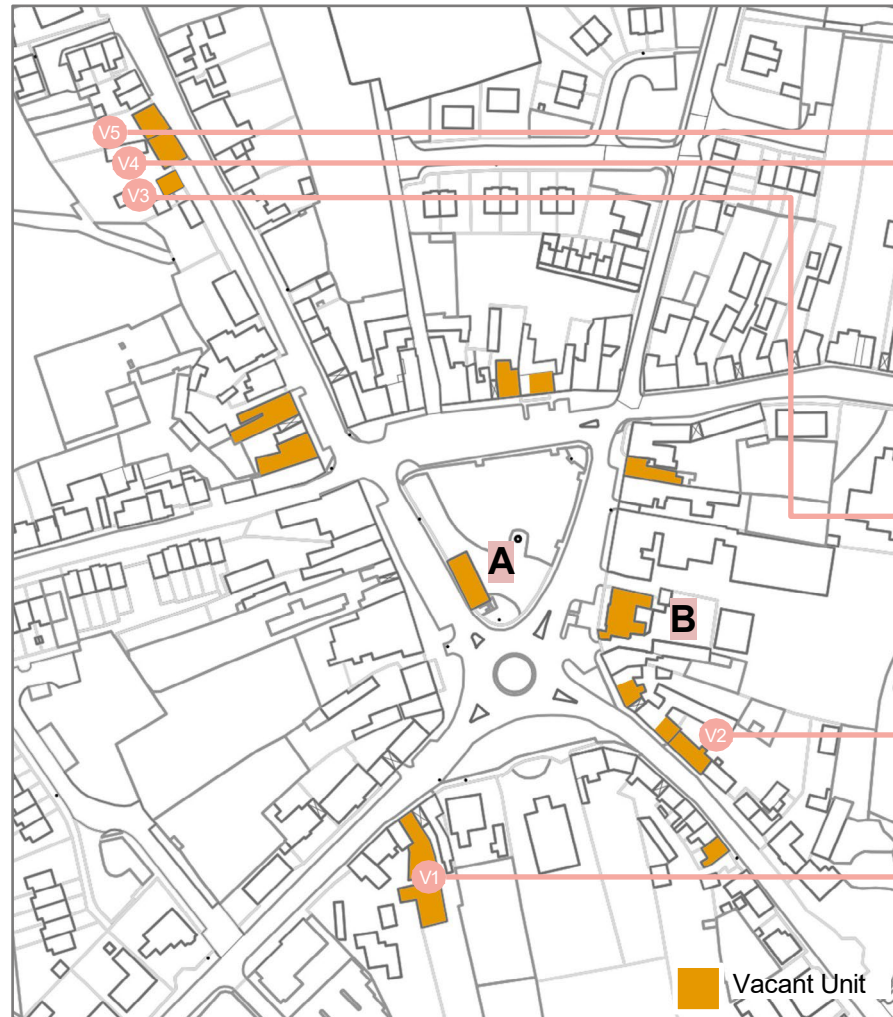


The Baseline Evidence noted a decline in overall vacancy in Castlepollard but also identified pockets of historic vacant units within the town centre. Bringing these units back into use will improve the vibrancy of Castlepollard by providing spaces for community usage, commercial enterprises and residential premises. This section identifies 5 number vacant units and offers a vision of how these buildings could be re-used to benefit Castlepollard.

The restoration and re-use of these buildings reflects the commercial and retail policy objective 8.26 in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 to “Encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail and other town centre uses with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach”.

The restoration and re-use of these buildings reflects the tourism policy objective 8.12 in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 to “support the provision of tourist accommodation and associated services in Castlepollard”.

The buildings marked **A** - The Market House and **B** the Old Bank are being renovated and will be operational by 2027.



Map Plan of the Vacant Buildings around the Town Centre

V1

Vacant Building on Mullingar Road



The vacant unit on Mullingar Road was previously in use as the Anchor Bar.

The conceptual image shows how this historic building could be brought back into use as a third space again, providing a space for young people in Castlepollard. The need for social spaces for youth was noted in several community engagements.



Current view of the vacant building 2025



Artist's impression of how the building could be brought back into use

V2 Vacant building on Dublin Road



Artist's impression of how the building could be brought back into use

McGovern's is a protected structure. This semi-detached five-bay, single-storey building, constructed in 1850 is one of the few in Castlepollard that retains its traditional timber shopfronts.

The vacant structure offers the opportunity to accommodate an outdoor activity and hire hub. Providing equipment such as kayaks and fishing tackle, along with guided tours of nearby lakes and local trails, harnesses the natural beauty of the area and encourages overnight stays. Combined with a small shop selling refreshments, the once-empty building becomes an active community hub, creating opportunities for tourism and local enterprise.

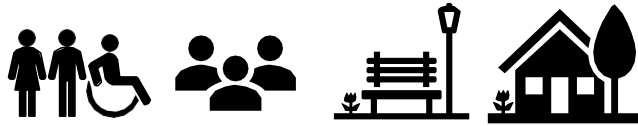


Current view of the vacant building 2025

V3, V4 & V5

Vacant Buildings on Green Street

The vacant units on Green Street were formerly in commercial use (V3) and residential (V4 and V5). V3, the detached gable-fronted unit was previously in use as a clothing alterations business. The conceptual image shows how these units could be re-used as a community arts space (V3) and residential premises (V4 and V5).



Current view of the vacant buildings 2025



Artist's impression of how the building could be brought back into use

The Next Steps for Castlepollard

Next Steps Summary

As Castlepollard continues to evolve, the next steps should build on better utilising the town's rich heritage and geographic position. There is real potential to position Castlepollard as a welcoming base for visitors exploring north Westmeath's many attractions.

The restoration of the Market House offers a unique opportunity to deliver a vibrant mixed-use hub that combines community, enterprise, and visitor facilities, serving as both a cultural anchor and a tourism information centre.

Enhancing tourism infrastructure through improved wayfinding, signage and promotion will be essential to highlight connections with nearby attractions including Tullynally Castle, Fore Abbey, Lough Derravaragh and the Children of Lir story.

Development of themed trails, loop walks, and coordinated visitor information, potentially through the Library and The Market House should encourage longer stays and local spend.

The advancement of the identified priority projects, aligned with suitable funding opportunities, will significantly enhance the pedestrian environment and active travel experience for both residents and visitors to the town.

Together, these initiatives would aim to reinforce Castlepollard's distinctive identity and boost its town centre economy.



View of the Square looking towards Church Street.

The Approach

The Approach

Most visitors to the town will arrive by car. On approach to, and at, the main junction in the town there are no tourism signs or tourism information ("i") signs.

Other than seeking a rest, there is no obvious reason to stop. The obvious stopping places would be the car-parking spaces by the Church and the Town Hall.

There is no tourism information by the Church, and the signs, shown in the report, at the Market House car park are of limited value.

The town's proximate connection to the Children of Lir, is physically noted only by an unsignposted statue in the green by The Market House. Given the international awareness of the Children of Lir mythology, the town would benefit from more overt visual associations.

Castlepollard has many visitor assets that may currently go unnoticed, and under appreciated. Therefore, there is a need to make it easier for the visitor to discover them.



View of the Square looking towards the Castle Varagh Hotel and the Market House

Current Wayfinding



Images of existing signage around the Square in Castlepollard.

Importance of Wayfinding

Wayfinding is critical to help visitors navigate around the local area. It enables visitors to make informed decisions whether to stay or go, and to choose between one place and another. Most of all it allows them to self-discover, and make the most of an area.

Wayfinding takes many forms. Many people will look online before exploring, while approaching, and when in a new place. Wayfinding is a combination of physical and online offerings.

Current Signage

The current tourist signage often excludes some of the key tourist sites. For example, there is no sign to Fore Abbey at the junction on the Town Square heading towards Fore Abbey along Church Street. This is a missed opportunity.

Further, the volume and variety of signs, in terms of colour and direction, would make it difficult for any person to make a fully informed decision whilst driving.

There is a need for simpler, up-to-date visitor specific signage to firstly encourage people to stop and assess their options (if not following directions) and appreciate the town's offer.

Maps & Tourist Information



Images of existing and tired tourist information signage in Castlepollard at the car park adjacent to the Market House .

Maps

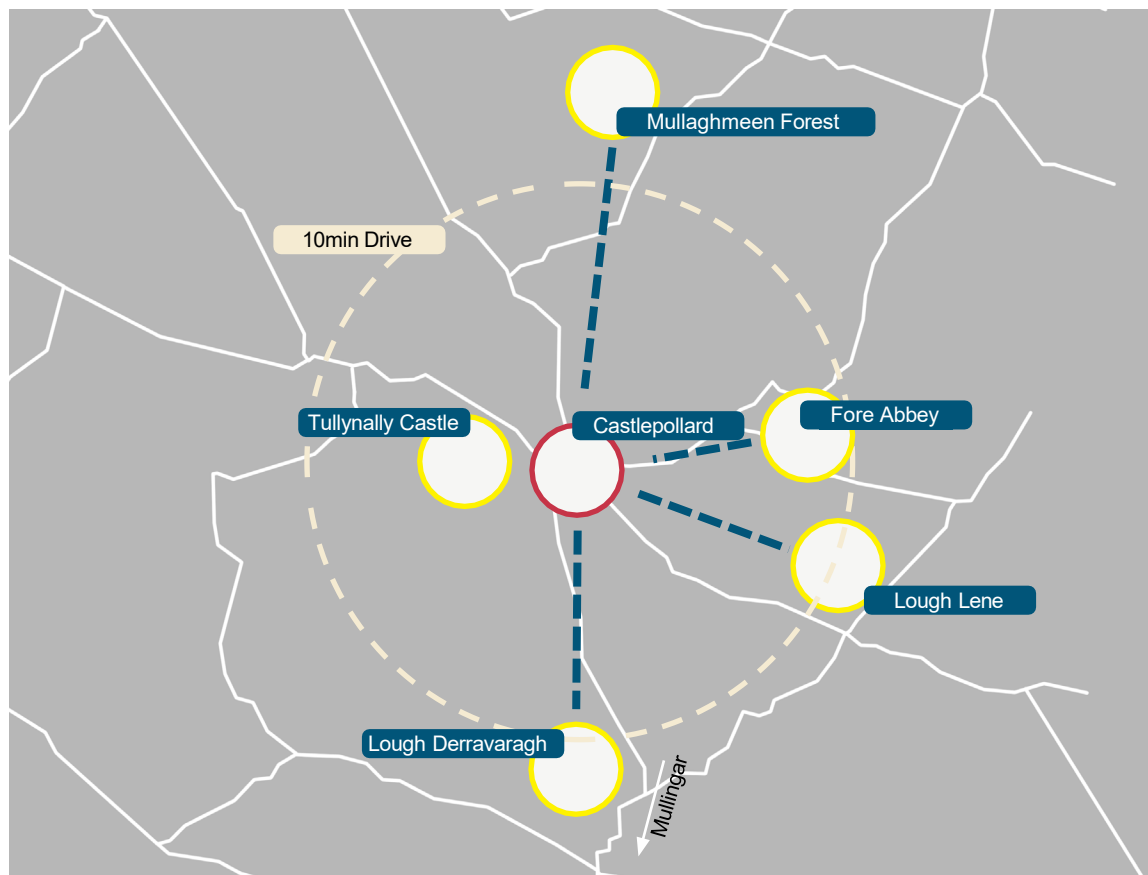
Large maps can be helpful visual tools to show the location of nearby tourist destinations. There is a strong artistic element to them also, to convey attractiveness of the surrounding area.

Maps, more than signs, can show pictures, highlight heritage, relay key points of note, display visitor information, outline trail connections and links to online sources. They can represent this in a variety of tones, levels, layouts and even languages.

They can act as standalone points or part of themed network of wayfinding assets. There is scope for more modern co-ordinated maps and visitor information provision.



Nearby Visitor Sites



Map image showing the attractions that are close to Castlepollard.

Nearby Tourist Sites

A number of outdoor visitor sites are within approx. 10 minutes of the town:

- **Mullaghmeen Forest** is a 400ha forest with a mixture of both native and non-native species. It is a 12 minute drive North of Castlepollard.
- **Fore Abbey** is the ruins of a Benedictine and Early Gaelic 7th century Abbey, with other associated historic features. It is a 5 minute drive East of Castlepollard.
- **Lough Lene** is a 500ha lake suitable for swimming, paddleboarding and watersports with parking and toilet facilities. It is a 10 minute drive East of Castlepollard.
- **Lough Derravaragh** is a lake commonly used for angling and watersports, which is connected with the Children of Lir fairytale. It is a 10 minute drive South of Castlepollard
- **Tullyally Castle** is over 350 years old, with over 120-rooms, and 12 acres of surrounding parkland and gardens. It is a 2 minute drive or 15 minute walk from Castlepollard.

This shows Castlepollards potential role as a central 'base' for visitors. With improved cycling infrastructure all of these sites would easily accessed from Castlepollard.

Most Popular Nearby Sites

TULLYNALLY CASTLE



Trip Advisor Rating: 4.5/5 (144)

Annual Visitors: 9,000 (footfall much higher)

Key Strengths

Walking distance from Town Centre, popular tours, impressive castle, and beautiful gardens.

Challenge

Castle open for limited periods during the year.

Opportunities

Highlight existing off-road walkway (not obvious to visitors), and extent of grounds open all year round. Proximity to the town and loop walk potential.

FORE ABBEY



Trip Advisor Rating: 4.6/5 (101)

Annual Visitors: 25,000 (estimated)

Key Strengths

Distinctive built & religious heritage. Impressive and unique abbey built across the 13th and 15th centuries.

Challenge

Making Castlepollard the obvious stopping point for visitors.

Opportunities

Site's scale and car-parking can facilitate big numbers. Tourism information point close by.

LOUGH DERRAVARAGH



Mind Trip Rating: 4.8/5 (57)

Annual Visitors: Unknown

Key Strengths

The lake from Children of Lir fairytale, beautiful and tranquil lake, well suited to watersports.

Challenge

Narrow entrance lane. No recognition at lake, and safety issue as only waters edge. No non-water visitor provision.

Opportunities

Build on the Children of Lir brand to gain national significance, clearer signposting from the town centre.

Lough Derravaragh & Children of Lir

The town has one statue close to The Market House that could be easily missed and/or not readily associated with the Children of Lir.

The entrance lane to the picturesque lake is via a sharp turn along a bend at the bottom of a hill. The lane itself is narrow with no passing bays. It opens to a large carpark.

At the end of the carpark is a single picnic table and small jetty. There is no signage or information panels to indicate the connection with the Children of Lir.

Furthermore, the absence of parks, play space, trails or toilets greatly limits the appeal to those not engaging in water activities.

Safety considerations may hinder directing large numbers there without greater 'dry' visitor provision.

The extent to which this is possible should be explored fully, and potential visitors should be informed of the provision before going.



Images from the area around Lough Derravaragh.

Tourist Facilities in Castlepollard Town



Town Park with playground adjacent to the Library.



The Castle Varagh Hotel.



Public Library.



The built heritage around the square is a designated Architectural Conservation Area.

Castle Varagh Hotel and Essentials

Castle Varagh Hotel sits on the edge of the square. It offers a popular bar and restaurant, and a selection of rooms, including family-friendly rooms.

For daily essentials, there are two convenience stores: the Mace and Tesco Express. The Green Bean Café, situated on the square, is a popular independent café.

Travel

The Bus Éireann Route 447, and Local Link route 818, both link the town with Mullingar – which is useful for car-free visitors. However, transport to nearby attractions is difficult without a car.

There is an attractive off-road greenway to Tullynally Castle, which could be better signposted. This indicates the potential for further active travel delivery.

Town Park and Library

The new Town Park and playground are designed as an accessible, multi-generational spaces providing useful downtime after travelling. It is built beside the library, which has toilets and car parking for visitors. Some visitors may also benefit from WiFi, working space, and notice board information points at the library.

Images of the current facilities available in Castlepollard 2025.

Hotel/BnB Provision

Nearby Hotel Provision

There is only one hotel in the Castlepollard area, which is Castle Varagh Hotel & Bar, located in the town centre. This is a popular place to stay (almost 500 reviews on booking.com with an average rating of 9.0/10), with various types of rooms available.

Other Places to stay

In the surrounding countryside, there are a couple of guest lodges, a BnB, and some holidays homes/cottages. These will be seen in more detail on the AirBnB page on the following page.

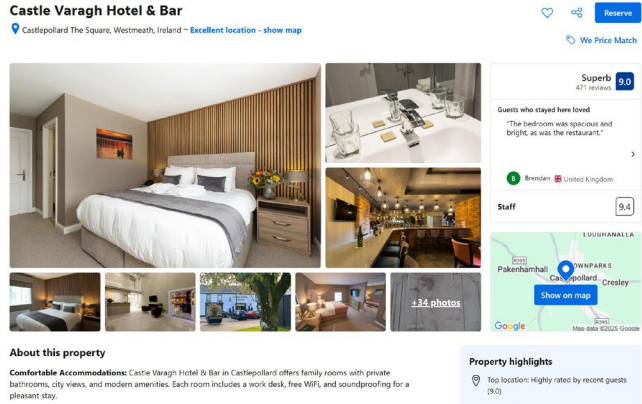


Image of the Castle Varagh Hotel web page.

▼ Booking.com Accommodation around Castlepollard. As at 29-Sep-25

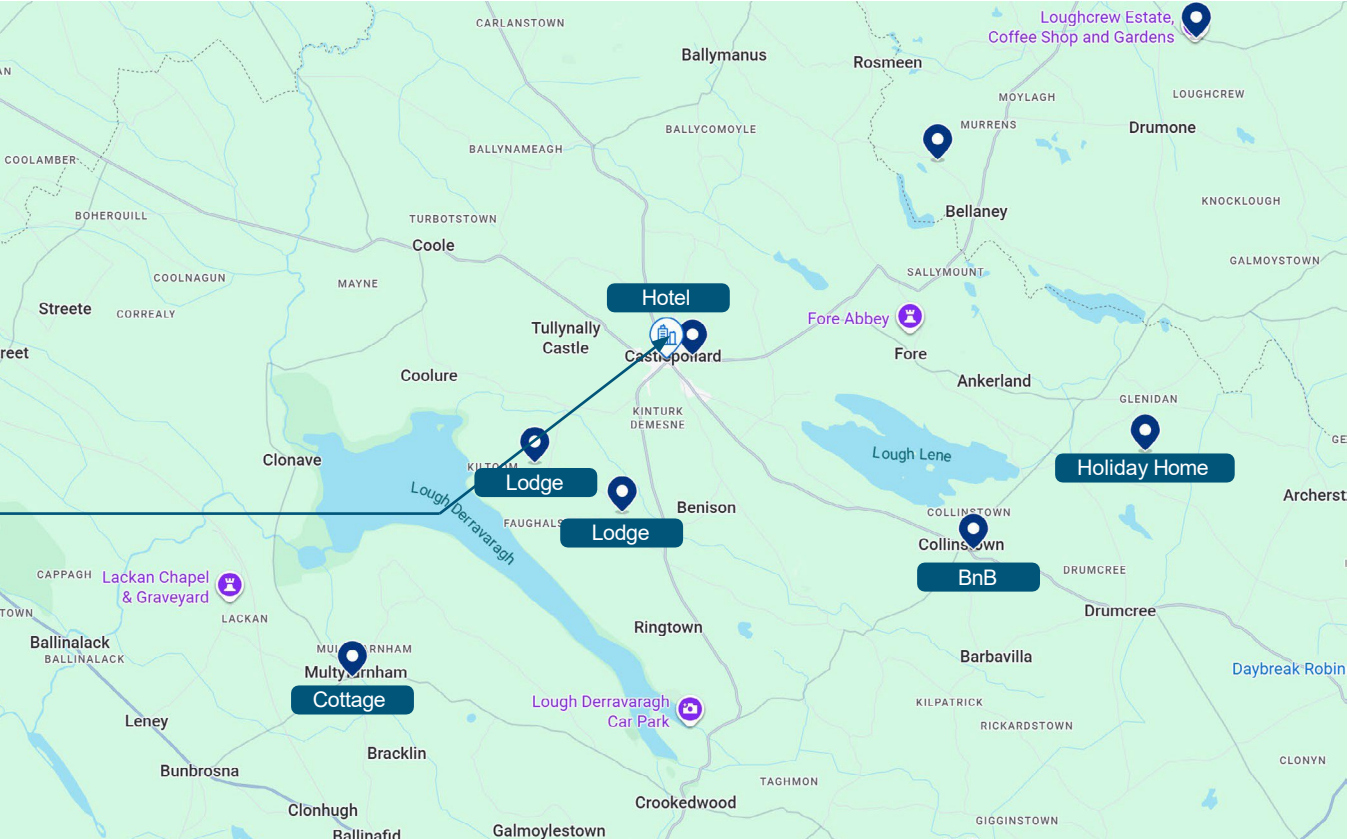


Image of the bed and breakfast and self-catering type accommodation around Castlepollard.

AirBnB Provision

▼ AirBnBs available and price for two weekend nights in October. As at 22-Sep-25

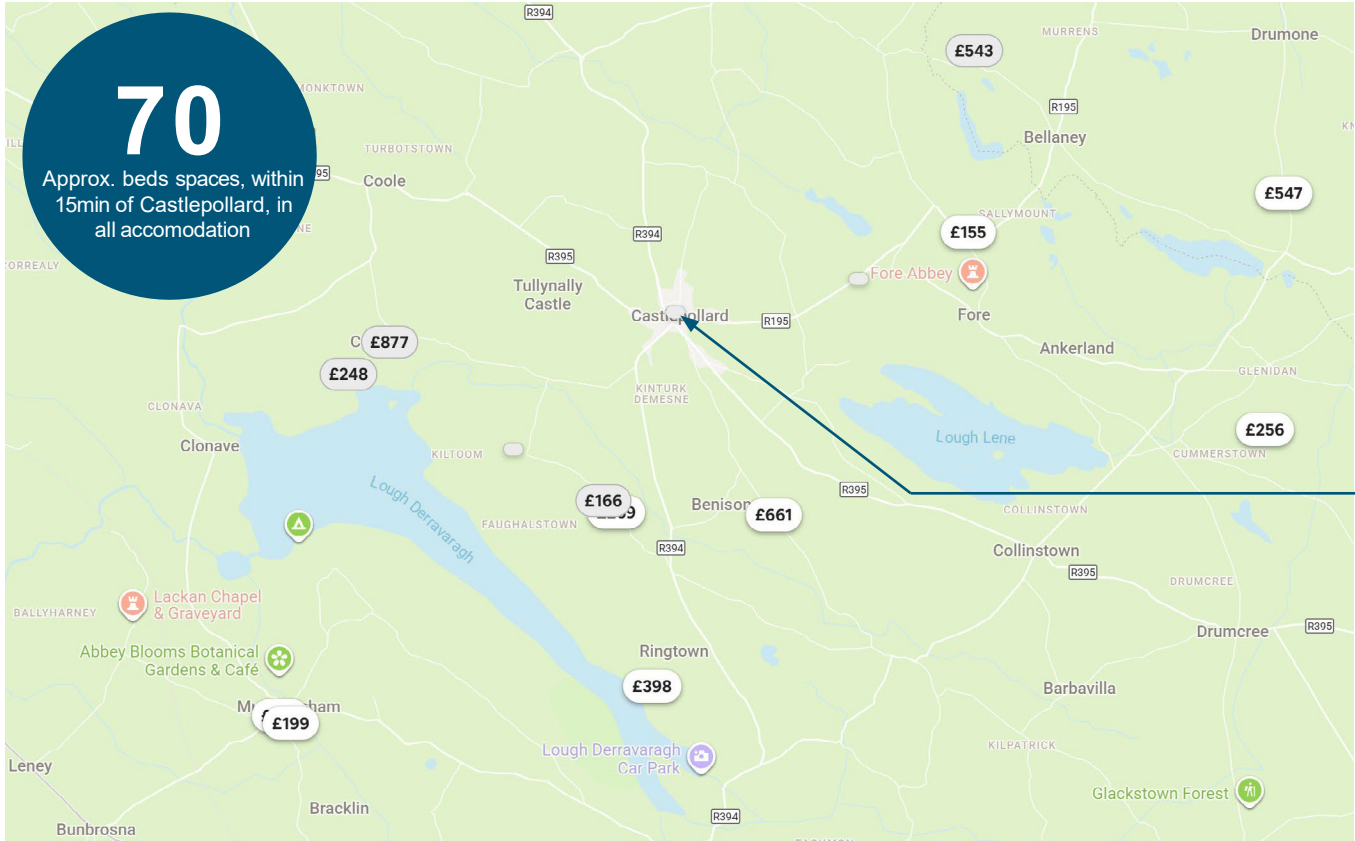


Image of the AirBnB type accommodation around Castlepollard.

Nearby AirBnB Provision

This map shows the AirBnBs available in and around Castlepollard for any weekend in October 2025. The cost shown is for 2 nights.

Visitor provision varies in price points and scale from double rooms up to larger houses for 12 guests.

Castlepollard Town Centre

There is one AirBnB in Castlepollard Town Centre. It is a 4 bedroom bungalow available for up to 10 guests. It has a 4.89/5 rating from 45 reviews. There are other highly rated AirBnBs outside of the town centre

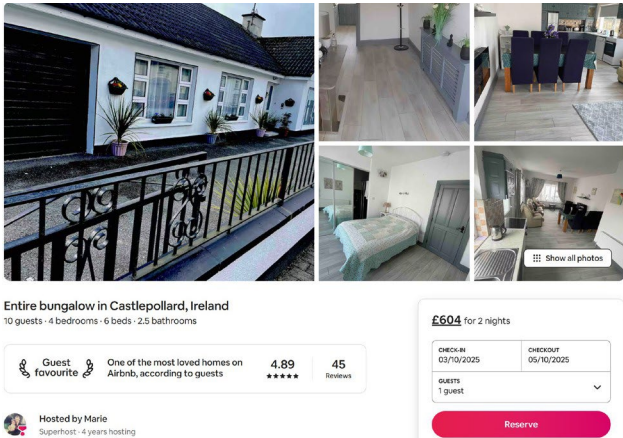


Image of the accommodations web page.

Market House Proposals - Community Engagement

The **Community Needs Survey Report** for the *Castlepollard Regeneration Programme including the Town Park, Market House and Public Realm* was completed in 2021. It revealed the public perceptions for the usage of the Market House.

The general public (48 responses) in Castlepollard were asked: *Question 3. We are considering new uses for the Market House building. How would you like to see the building used in the future? Please rate the following uses in order starting with 1 for your favourite, followed by 2 etc.*

Their responses showed a strong preference for **facilities for community groups**, followed by **tourism facilities**.

Secured Funding

In November 2022, The Market House Project as a part of the Castlepollard Regeneration Project, was **awarded £3.8million through the RRDF**.

The Town Park has been completed, as of November-2025, the Market House Project has commenced works towards detail design to be followed by building contractor appointment. It is hoped that the Market House will become an active community asset and open to the public in 2027.

The following pages indicate some examples of similar projects and possible community uses for the Market House.

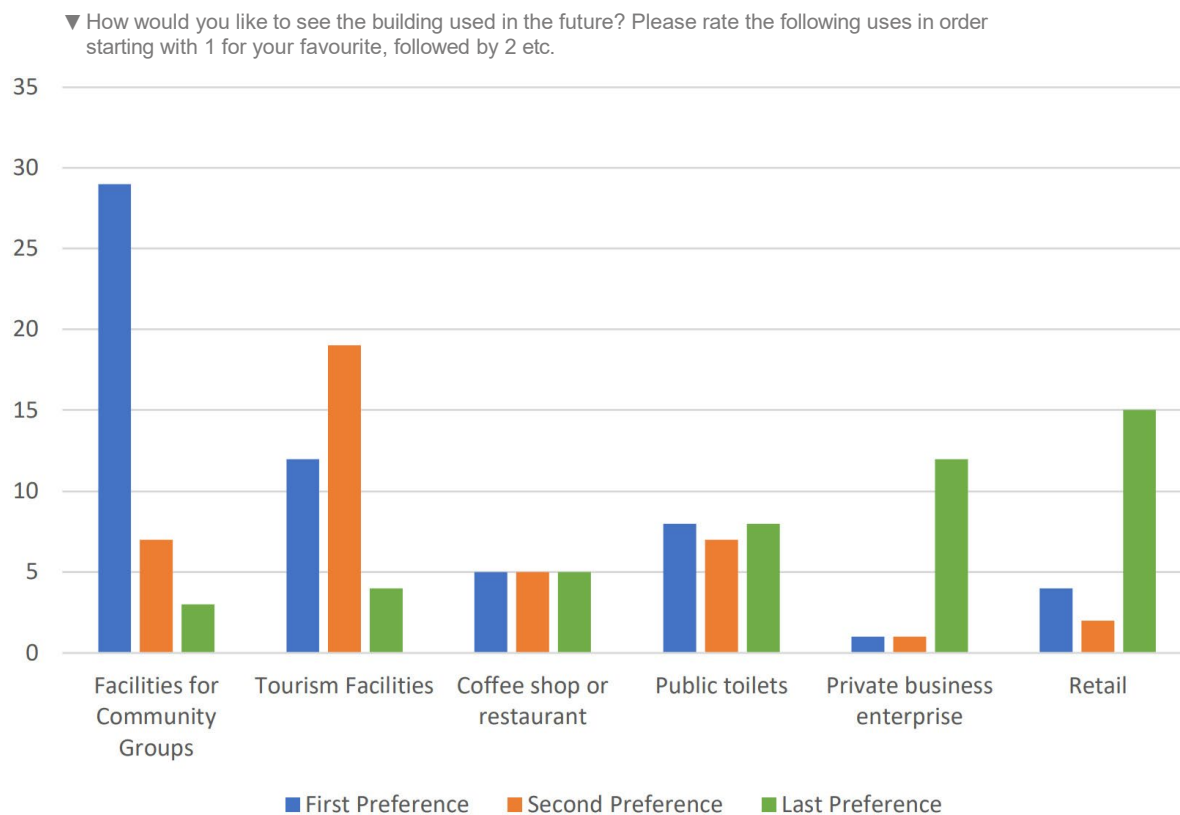


Image of the 2021 survey results for the potential uses for a refurbished Market House building

Example 1 - Community and Tourism Space



The Tipperary Excel

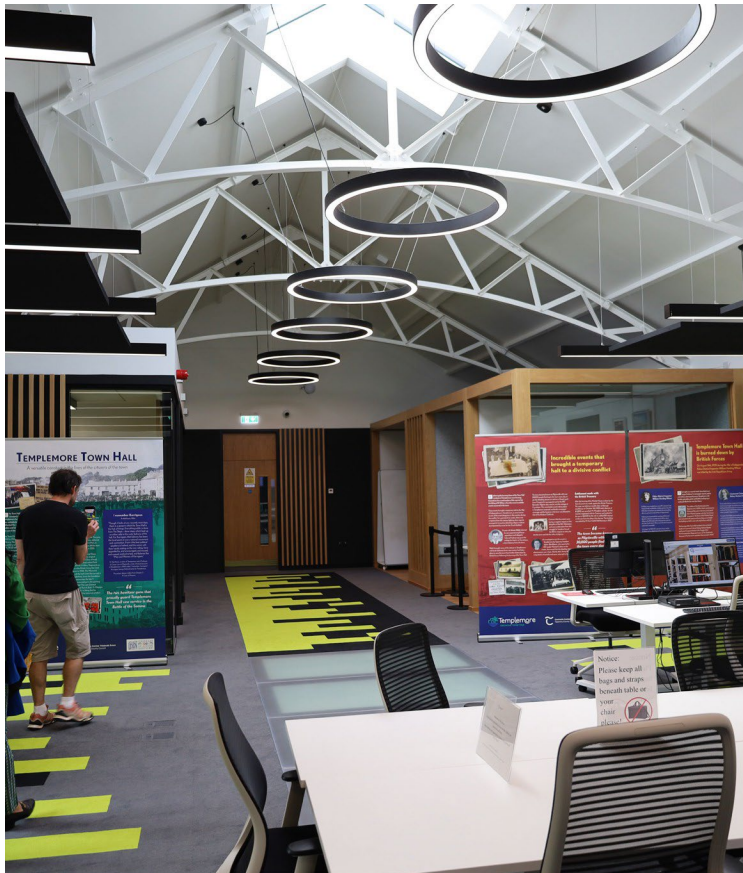
The Tipperary Excel is an example of a historic building being repurposed into a central arts and cultural hub.

The Excel is made up of the Simon Ryan Theatre, cinemas, and an art gallery, tourism office, interpretative centre, Internet café and genealogy research centre. The site is also used to host a dance school.

It originally opened in 2001, and had a refurbishment in 2023.



Example 2 - Community Workspace



Templemore Library and Enterprise Centre Project
 Templemore Town Hall was transformed into a library and enterprise centre, opening in 2024. This provided space for the local community to work, study and meet, which benefits both local students and workers.

A section of the Market House project could incorporate a workspace or community meeting space.



Example 3 - Mixed Use Space



Abbeyshrule's Remote Working and Community Space

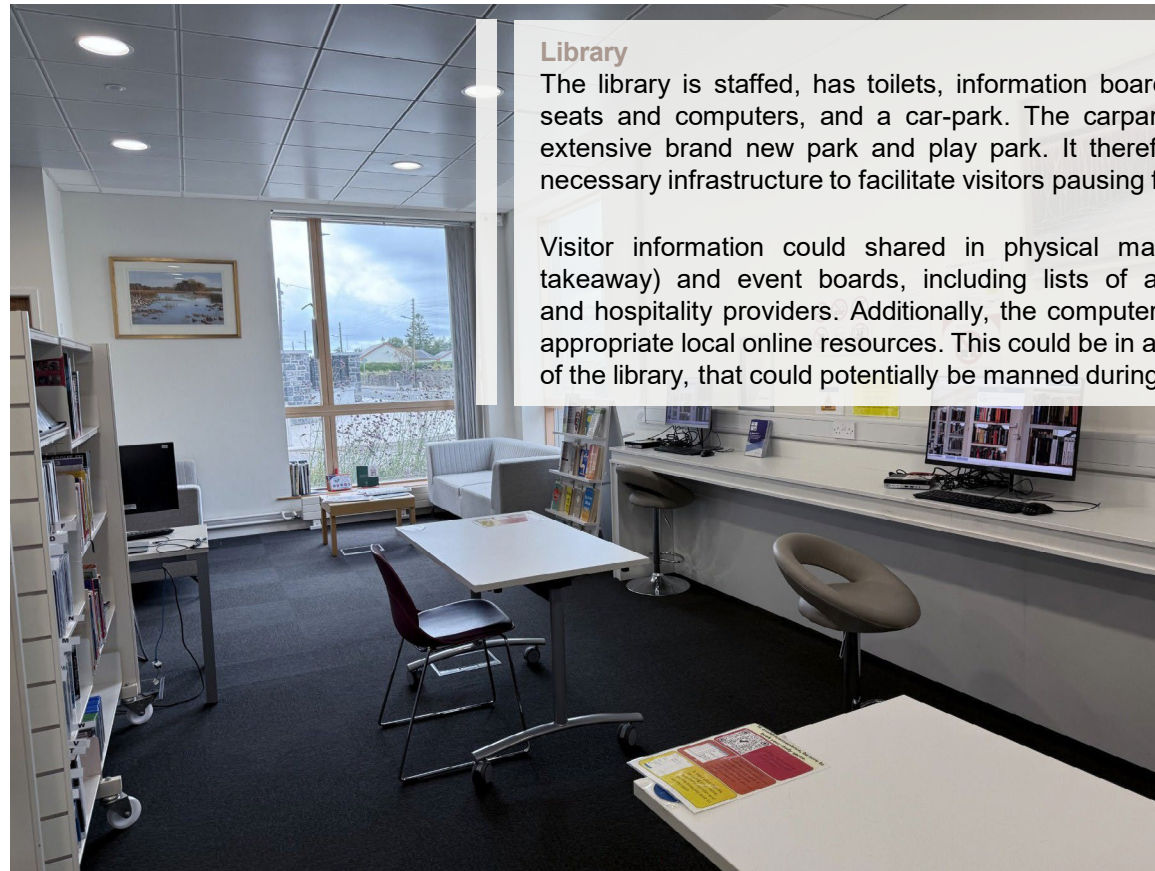
As provided by [Longford County Council](#), the development includes:

- Two individual office units, each with four desks.
- A shared co-working space with six hot desks.
- A small meeting room.
- A large event/co-working space in the renovated North Barn.
- Purpose-built kayak storage shed.
- Landscaping with a low stone wall and connecting pathways.
- A service block for Royal Canal Greenway users and canal boats, integrated into the site by Waterways Ireland.

All works were completed to a high standard, ensuring long-term functionality, comfort, and visual appeal.

This space could equally be used as a community hub.

Library as a Tourist Information Centre



Library

The library is staffed, has toilets, information boards, a variety of seats and computers, and a car-park. The carpark is beside an extensive brand new park and play park. It therefore has all the necessary infrastructure to facilitate visitors pausing for information.

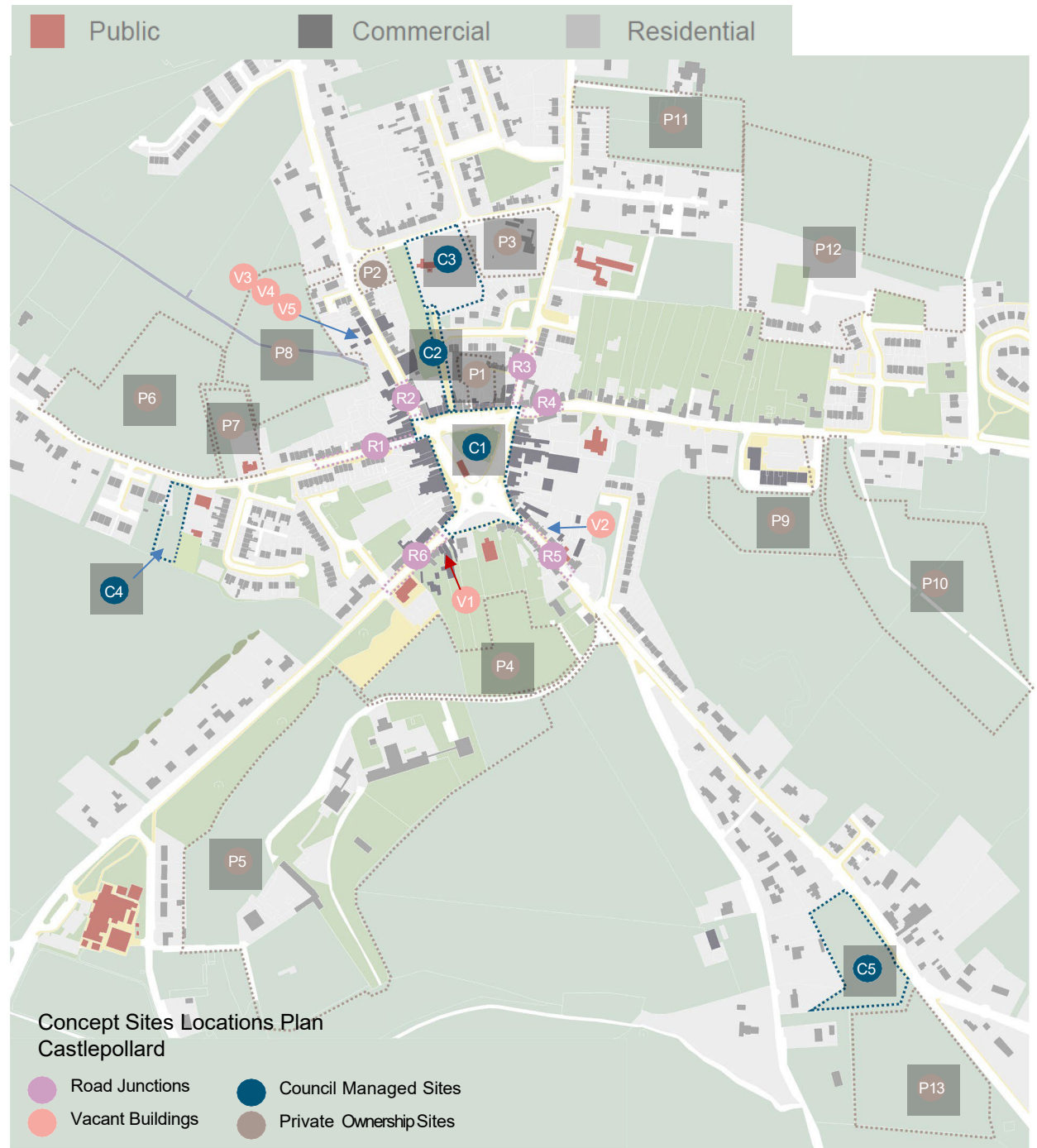
Visitor information could be shared in physical maps (fixed and takeaway) and event boards, including lists of accommodation and hospitality providers. Additionally, the computers could link to appropriate local online resources. This could be in a small section of the library, that could potentially be manned during peak periods.

Maps of the spaces in and around Castlepollard

Opportunity locations for Projects

This map illustrates all of the opportunity sites identified in this Town Centre First Plan. The opportunity sites are colour coded with the council owned sites being shown in blue and those in private ownership being shown in brown. The sites were identified through detailed physical analysis, community engagement and cognisant of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

All those sites that were identified as consolidation, expanded settlement centre and those with specific zonings in the Westmeath County Development Plan are reflected in this TCF plan to demonstrate how the zoned lands can be developed to make Castlepollard more vibrant, viable and attractive.



Biodiversity

This map illustrates the main green spaces within and adjacent to Castlepollard Town Centre and scores their biodiversity value from low to high based on a visual assessment. The areas highlighted in lighter shades of green have significant potential for community-led projects for biodiversity enhancement.

Castlepollard Town Square is the most accessible green space in Castlepollard, but it represents a biodiversity desert with high potential for enhancement through management for pollinators.

Killafree graveyard and the copse to the rear of the Church of Ireland are the most biodiverse areas in the town and both of these sites are identified as opportunity sites in this plan.

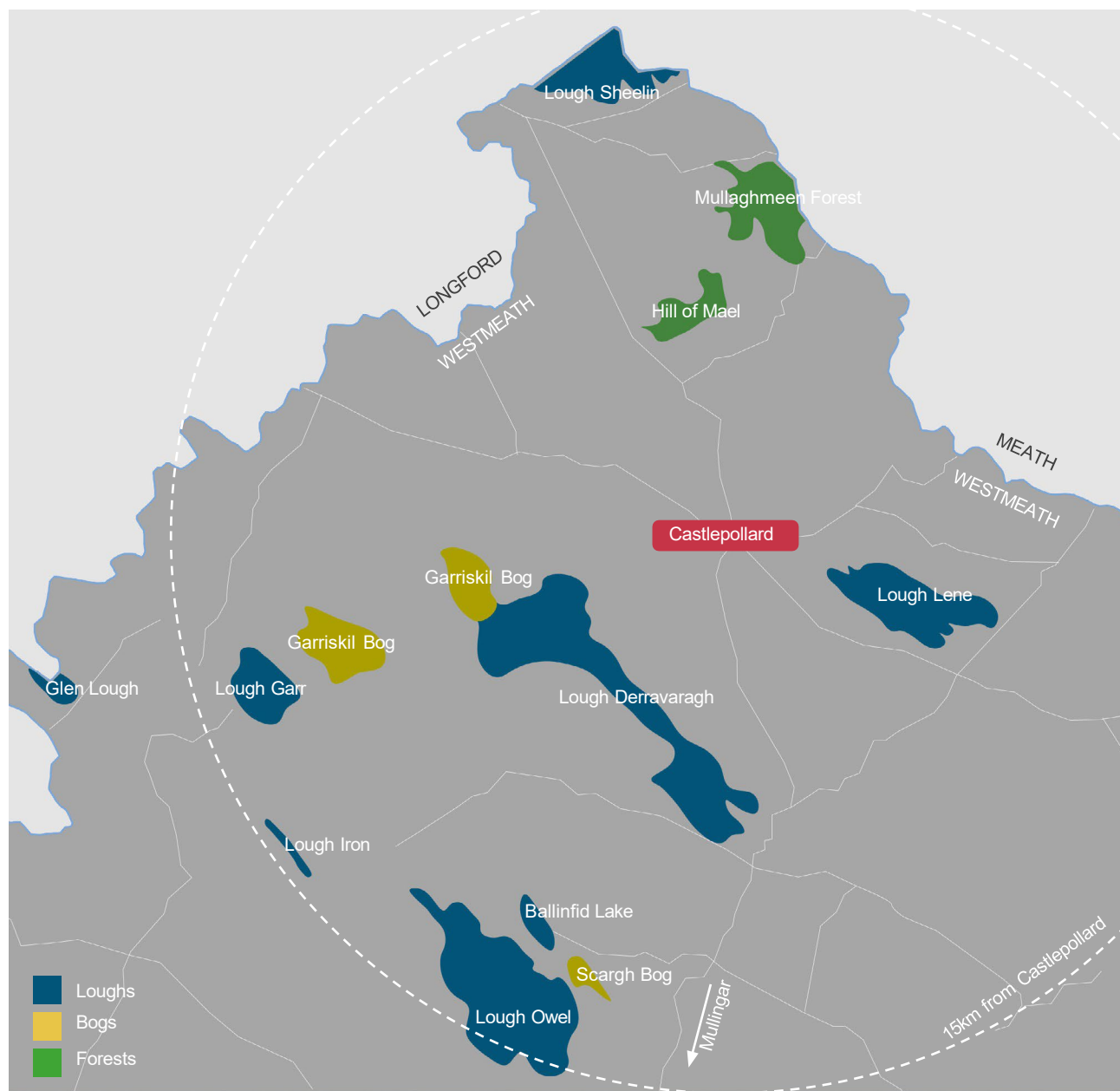
The decisions on lighting, path design and planting will have to be considered sensitively during any planned project development.



Natural Heritage

This map illustrates the rich natural heritage in close proximity to Castlepollard.

These not only provide spaces for nature but also opportunities for tourism and recreation with Lough Lene, Lough Derravaragh and Mullaghmeen Forest identified as key tourism attractions in North Westmeath.



Natural Heritage Sites
Locations Plan
Castlepollard

Built Heritage

This map identifies the diverse arrangement of heritage assets in and around Castlepollard Town Centre

- 1: Worker's house
- 2: The Parochial School
- 3: Killefree Graveyard
- 4: Church
- 5: Memorial Stones
- 6: House
- 7: Water Pump
- 8: Shop/Retail Outlet
- 9: House
- 10: House
- 11: Vent Pipe
- 12: House
- 13: St. Michael's Catholic Church
- 14: Castlepollard National School
- 15: Castlepollard Town Hall
- 16: RIC Barracks
- 17: Ulster Bank
- 18: St. Michael's Church
- 19: J. McGovern Shop
- 20: Castlepollard Garda Síochána Station
- 21: Kirkview House
- 22: Kenny's
- 23: Bank of Ireland
- 24: Kinturk House: gates/railings
- 25: Steps
- 26: Kinturk House: walls
- 27: Kinturk House: chapel
- 28: Kinturk House: hospital/infirmary
- 29: Kinturk House: country house
- 30: Kinturk House : building misc
- 31: Kinturk House : gates/railings/walls
- 32: Kinturk House: outbuilding
- 33: Kinturk House: building misc
- 34: Kinturk House: icehouse
- 35: Kinturk House: barn
- 36: Kinturk House:
- 37: Kinturk House: bridge
- 38: Kinturk House: icehouse
- 39: Kinturk House: walled garden



Walking Routes

Castlepollard is situated in an attractive scenic landscape and the community consultations have shown a strong local desire to improve walking connections between the town and its immediate landscape.

These trails have been devised in conjunction with the Town Team and will require permissive access agreements to allow usage of privately owned lands.

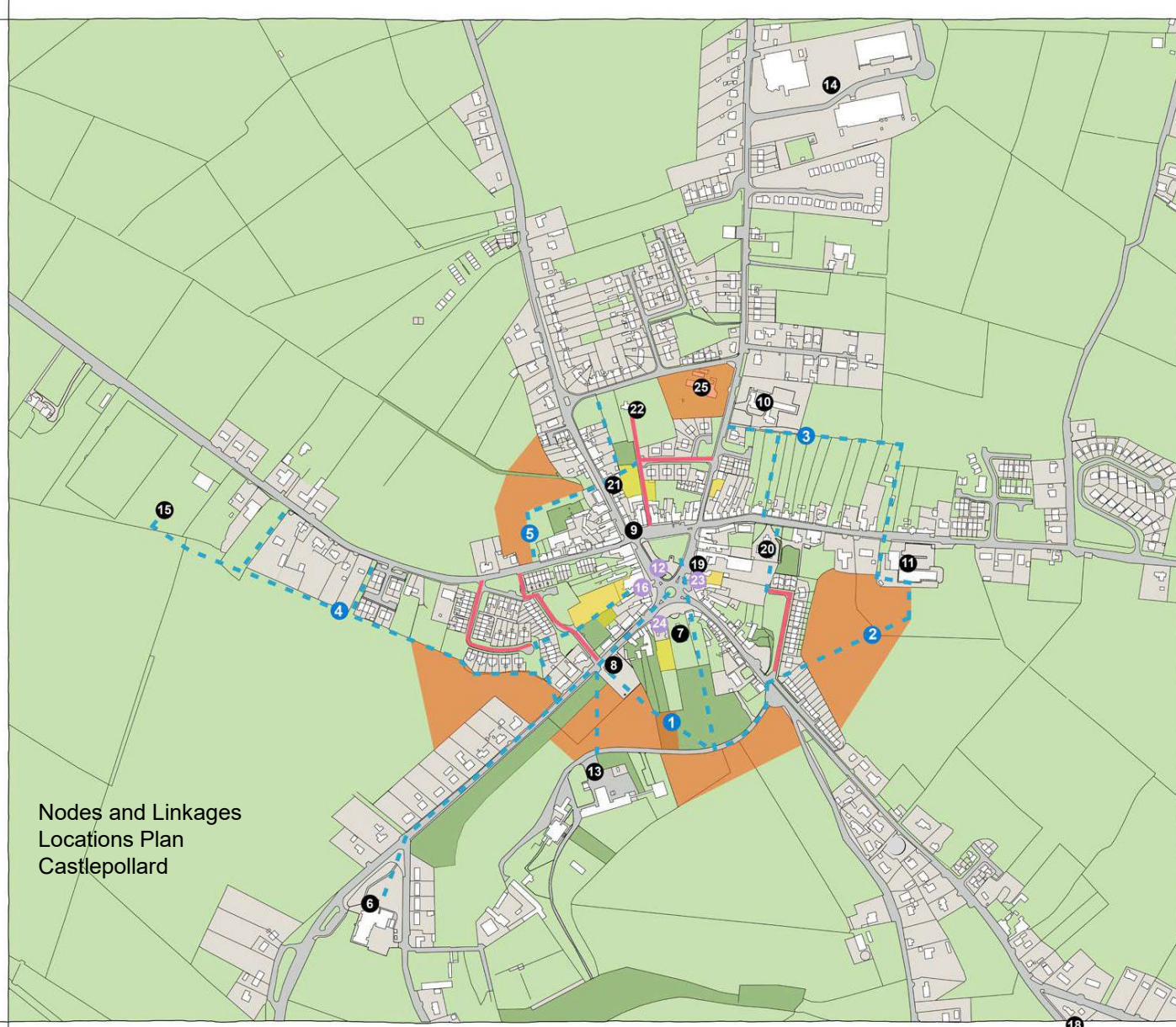
The creation of a network of safe local walks will greatly benefit residents who would otherwise be reliant on travelling outside of Castlepollard for recreational walking to improve their physical and mental health.

Routes Numbers legend

- Route 1**, Town Centre to Killafree Church.
- Route 2**, Pakenhamhall Road.
- Route 3**, Green Street
- Route 4**, Water Street.
- Route 5, Church Street.
- Route 6**, Dublin Road.
- Route 7**, Mullingar Road.
- Route 8**, Old Glenview Road.
- Route 9**, Possible circle route subject to the agreement of the land owners North
- Route 10**, Possible circle route subject to the agreement of the land owners, St Peters.
- Loop walks**, subject to the agreement of the land owners.



Nodes and Linkages Map



— Existing Linkages, excluding the roads

- - Potential Linkages. Exact routes to be investigated as opportunities arise in the future:

- 1 Village Green to Secondary School
- 2 Service Centre to Town Park
- 3 Green Street to Service Centre
- 4 GAA Club to Town Park
- 5 Green Street to Town Park

Opportunity sites:

- Key Existing Buildings in the Town Core
- Brown Field Sites adjacent to Market Square
- Edge of Town Core

Nodes:

- 6 Secondary School
- 7 St. Michaels Church
- 8 Library / Councill Office
- 9 Bus Stop
- 10 Current National School
- 11 Service Centre/Tesco
- 12 Market House
- 13 Health Centre
- 14 Industry
- 15 GAA Club
- 16 Castlepollard Hotel
- 18 Mace
- 19 Hardware Store
- 20 St. Michaels Church RC
- 21 An Post
- 22 Killfree Church and Cemetery
- 23 Bank of Ireland
- 24 Ulster Bank Building
- 25 Former National School

Nodes and Linkages Locations Plan Castlepollard

Project Delivery Toolkit

Projects Delivery Toolkit

The Project Delivery Toolkit sheets provide a structured framework for identifying, prioritising, and implementing Town Centre projects, ensuring that each initiative aligns with Town Centre First principles and is supported by clearly defined actions, responsibilities, and potential funding sources. As projects are developed, the sheet will be expanded to include the following categories:

- C – Council Reference Projects:** Projects, locations or sites under the care, ownership or management of the Westmeath County Council.
- P – Private Reference Projects:** Projects on privately owned sites.
- TT – Town Team Reference Projects:** Initiatives led by the Town Team that strengthen social capital within Castlepollard.

Site Reference

A unique identifier assigned to each project site to ensure clear tracking, cross-referencing, and management throughout the delivery process.

Description

A brief, factual summary outlining the project’s purpose, key features, and intended outcomes within the town centre context.

Site Details / Name

The official name and specific location of the site, including any relevant land or property identifiers required for planning or coordination.

Other Stakeholders

A list of all parties involved or affected by the project—such as community groups, landowners, businesses, agencies, or partner organisations—who contribute to or influence the project's delivery.

Cost / Benefit

An overview of the estimated financial investment required and the expected social, economic, or environmental benefits that justify the project.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles prioritise revitalising the town core through community-led decision-making, sustainable regeneration, improved accessibility, and coordinated public–private investment to strengthen the social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of the town.

Potential Funding and Supporting Organisation’s.







The potential sources of funding are listed as a guide for applications.



Actions or Categories	Descriptions
Cost / Benefit	€ - less than 1 million Euros. €€ - 1-3 million Euros. €€€ - over 3m Euros.
Time scale	Short , Within 18 months. Medium , within 36 months. Long , Within 60 Months. Open , No determined time limit.
Priority scale	Low , the priority is determined low Medium , the priority is determined medium High , the priority is determined High Open , there is no priority score at this time

Project Tool Kit Table priorities explanation table



The Guiding Principle for the TCF plan projects and ambitions

Site Reference	Description Version: 1 Date: 30/01/26	Site Details		Cost / Benefit		Action Plan				Guiding Principles						Potential Funding and supporting organisations.
		Name	Other stakeholders	Cost	Benefit	Time scale	Priority	Related Project Refs	Project relationships							
C1 Priority Project.	Castlepollard main square Public realm improvements, enhanced crossings, improved soft landscaping and street furniture. Zoned as: Green Space. The location is part of an Architectural Conservation area (ACA).	The Square.	Land Owner/s. Westmeath Co. Council, various departments. Heritage authorities. Castlepollard Town Team. Local Heritage Groups Castlepollard public.	€€€	€€€	Medium	High	C2, P1, C3. R1 to 6	Enhancements to the design of the Square relate directly to the improvements to Church Lane (C2) and re-use of vacant units to the North of the Square (P1)	✓	✓		✓		✓	Rural Regeneration and Development Fund. Just Transition Fund. Town and Village Renewal Scheme. Biodiversity Action Plan Grant Scheme. Outdoor Recreation. Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS).
R1 R2 R3 R4 R5 R6 Priority Project.	Community surveys feed back and ambitions require these access roads to the Town Centre to become pedestrian friendly, cycle friendly, slower and quieter traffic zones, to allow the town to become once more a people focused space with increased numbers of locations for biodiversity and nature enhancement.	Pakenham all Road. Green Street. Water Street. Church Street. Dublin Road. Mullingar Road.	Westmeath Co. Council, various departments. Property owners bordering the site. Castlepollard Town Team. Castlepollard public.	€€€	€€€	Medium	High	C1	The improvements to the roadway will relate directly to the redevelopment of the Square in terms of enhancing walkability, inclusivity and connectivity.	✓						Rural Regeneration and Development Fund. Just Transition Fund. Active Travel Grants Programme. Town and Village Renewal Scheme. Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant.
C2 Priority Project.	Killafree Church Lane Public realm improvements, dismantable awnings, environment improvements. This is a public access laneway to the graveyard that is still in use.	Killafree Church Lane.	Land Owner/s. Westmeath Co. Council, various departments. Heritage authorities. Castlepollard Town Team. Local Heritage Groups. Castlepollard public.	€	€€	Short	High	C3	Public Realm improvements and animation of Church Lane relate directly to improvements to the Square (C1) and improvements to Killafree Church (C3) and the re-use of vacant units to the North of the Square (P1)	✓	✓		✓			Rural Regeneration and Development Fund. Town and Village Renewal Scheme. Arts Programme. Fáilte Ireland. Westmeath Creative Ireland Programme.

Site Reference	Description Version: 1 Date: 30/01/26	Site Details		Cost / Benefit		Action Plan				Guiding Principles						Potential Funding and supporting organisations.
		Name	Other stakeholders	Cost	Benefit	Time scale	Priority	Related Project Refs	Project relationships							
C3 Priority Project.	Killafree Church and Graveyard Improved interpretative signage, seating, enhanced biodiversity and accessibility, heritage maintenance / stabilisation works Zoned as: Community, Educational and Institutional.	Killafree Church and Graveyard.	Land Owner/s. Westmeath Co. Council, various departments. National Monuments authorities. Castlepollard Town Team. Local Heritage Groups. Castlepollard public.	€€	€€	Medium	High	C2	This project relates to the Church Lane project (C2) as it provides an additional reason to use the lane to reach this site.		✓	✓			✓	Rural Regeneration and Development Fund. Town and Village Renewal Scheme. Historic Structures Fund. Historic Towns Initiative. Westmeath Cemetery Maintenance Grant. Community Monuments Fund.
TT1 Priority Project.	Provision of facilities and services to accommodate early learning and care of pre-school and school aged children.	Children's and Young persons education and care facilities with associated services.	Castlepollard Childcare Committee. Castlepollard Town Team	€€	€€	Short	High	V Sites	Possibilities to use suitable vacant buildings or sites.		✓	✓	✓			Children's Development funding sources. Children's Education funding sources. LEADER Funding. Employment provision funding.
TT2 Priority Project.	Looking to map and provide photos of loop walks around Castlepollard with guide maps on the quality of the biodiversity in the area. The group could start a project to advocate for permissive access to private lands to progress loop walks. The mapping has commenced for walks of 2km locally to 60 km across county borders and linking to national walks and trails.	Biodiversity and Heritage Trails, Walks and mapping and walks creation project.	Biodiversity work group, Rural Recreation Officers. Castlepollard Town Team	€	€€	Short	Medium	C1, C2, C3, P4, P5, P7, P8	Work with land owners to develop walks with permissive access agreements in place and plan developments and projects walks links to match up segments of walks across different land banks over time.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Outdoor Recreation. Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS.) Biodiversity Action Plan Grant Scheme. The Walks Scheme, Heritage Council - Community. Heritage Grant Scheme.	

Appendix

Appendix – The reports that make up the Castlepollard Town Centre First Plan

Reference	Appendix	Document title
A		The Castlepollard Town Centre First Plan – Summary Report - January 2026. (PDF Document).
B		The Castlepollard Town Centre First Plan - Main Report - January 2026. (PDF Document).
C	Appendix 1	The Castlepollard Town Centre Health Check report. (PDF Document).
D	Appendix 2	The Castlepollard Walkability report. (PDF Document).
E	Appendix 3	The Castlepollard Place Standards Report. (PDF Document).
F	Appendix 4	The Digital Blue Print for Castlepollard. (PDF Document).
G	Appendix 5	The Digital Blue Print for Castlepollard – Executive Report. (PDF Document).
H	Appendix 6	The Castlepollard Community Projects Tool Kit Planning Document. (PDF Document).
I	Appendix 7	The County Development plan zoning explanation table. (PDF Document).
J	Appendix 8	The Castlepollard Dementia Audit Sheets.

End of Report