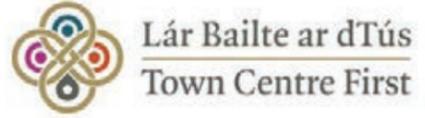


Town Centre First Plan for Ferbane Co. Offaly

This plan has been funded under Town Centre First 2024 in partnership with Offaly County Council

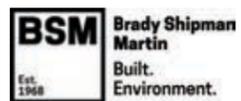


PROJECT TEAM:

Project Lead | Planning | Architecture



Urban Design | Landscape Design | Architecture



Socio Economics





Town Centre First Plan Contents

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A MESSAGE FROM THE TOWN TEAM

“A Message from the Ferbane Town Team: Charting Our Course Forward

Ferbane’s story is one of profound resilience, deep-rooted community, and an enduring ability to meet challenge with courage. This Town Centre First (TCF) Plan is not just a document; it’s a commitment to our future, forged from a rich past and an active, determined present.

Our Community’s History:

A Tapestry Woven with Peat and People

Ferbane’s history is inextricably linked to the flat, brown landscape of west Offaly, its very name a nod to the bog cotton that once brightened our horizon, and will do so again. For centuries, our community was small, our past largely unheralded, save for notable exceptions like the scriptorium at Gallen Abbey and the scientific pioneering of Mary King.

The mid-20th century marked a transformative era. The vision of individuals like Todd Andrews, supporting regional development, saw the establishment of the Turf Development Board and later Bord na Móna in the mid-40’s, followed by the construction of the Ferbane ESB Power Station in 1953. These semi-state companies were more than just employers; they built homes, and built communities. They provided stable, often lifelong employment, drawing people from across the country. The flat midland accent gained new inflections, and Ferbane grew in number and status. We became a town providing for its family, offering a future at home.

The economic engine of peat fuelled everything—from the schools and grocery stores to the local sports clubs, bringing with it a tide of prosperity and pride. Ferbane became synonymous with great sporting achievements, its teams often drawn almost entirely from the ranks of these thriving industries.

Facing the Future: Resilience in the Wake of Change

However, this boom era eventually met its natural end. The very resource that defined us was finite. The sight of the Power Station’s economic watchtowers being dismantled in 1999 and 2002 was a harsh reminder of the transition ahead. As job creation declined, the inevitable followed: shops closed, services slowed, and we lost our status as a Local Electoral Area. The community was left to weather the economic storm, even carrying an empty coffin in a vain attempt to save our bank.

Yet, this community has shown extraordinary resilience. We accepted what we couldn’t change and found the courage to change what we could. Ferbane’s voluntary spirit is exemplary, maintaining vital services for young and old that belie our declining status. The legacy of the Power Station provided a seed fund that led to the Ferbane Business and Technology Park and breathed life back into our ‘Cow Park.’ Partnerships with funding agencies - like Offaly Local Development Company -and Offaly County Council have kept our spirits high and our town viable. Even facing the accelerated energy transition, our community has refused to be derailed from its sustainability journey. We have fended for ourselves, but we know we cannot simply rely on the rising tide of others—Ferbane must float its own boat!

Town Centre First:

Our Vision and Partnership

This is where the Town Centre First (TCF) Plan steps in. The TCF initiative is a national recognition that the vitality of our towns is paramount, requiring a coordinated, collaborative effort. Our plan is the direct result of a powerful partnership between the community, businesses, Offaly County Council and OLDC, supported by significant resident interest and participation. It is the ‘rasp’ we need to sculpt our own future and the implementation of its actions will ensure Bád Féar Bán will remain afloat navigating an inclusive course towards a green and sustainable destiny.



Ferbane Town Team,
Back L-R: Padraig Boland (Chair), Colm Beirne, Feargus McGarvey, Olwen Cummins (Town Regeneration Officer, OCC), Kieran Guinan, Justin Daly, Eamon Dooley
Front L-R: Gemma Darcy, Anne Galvin, Joshua Connon, Roisin Lennon, Edel Waldron
Missing from photo: Aoibhinn Molloy Roche, Cllr Hughie Egan, Alice Campion (OCC)

The core of this plan is a clear, unifying vision for what Ferbane can and must be:

“TO BE A SAFE, ATTRACTIVE AND VIBRANT TOWN WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE, WORK, SOCIALISE, AND VISIT”.

Achieving this will ensure Ferbane is also fully established as the rural service centre for West Offaly; the economic, social, and cultural hub for Gallen Community School’s catchment area -

- **Economically:** Supporting local enterprise, facilitating remote work through hubs, and acting as a strong retail core.
- **Socially:** Serving as a vital community focal point, strengthening social capital, and

providing essential access to public services, healthcare, and education.

- **Culturally & Environmentally:** Conserving our unique local heritage and promoting sustainable development, including the regeneration of existing sites, improving access to the built and natural environment, enhancing biodiversity and supporting climate resilience.

This TCF Plan, allied to the considerable existing community action, offers renewed hope. It provides the structured path and the supportive partnership needed for Ferbane to once again rise to the challenge. We ask every resident, business, and stakeholder to embrace this plan. Let’s work together to ensure Ferbane’s next chapter is our most vibrant yet.”

INTRODUCTION

A town centre first plan has been prepared for Ferbane, Co. Offaly. The purpose of this plan is to develop a framework for future development in and around the town of Ferbane which centres around the needs and requirements set out by the local community.

The boundary for the TCF Plan is defined in the map opposite. The study focuses on the town centre as the primary focus for the assessment while being cognisant of the wider regional context including Ferbane Bog to the North and the Grand Canal to the south.

The town is focused along two main axis; the Main Street along the North-South Axis and Ballycumber and Belmont Road along the East-West Axis.

This plan examines the tangible and intangibles aspects of the existing town of Ferbane through;

- Close collaboration with the town team and local communities
- Desktop and On-site research and study
- Assessment of the town through the Town Centre Health Check

This plan has a focus on ensuring social inclusion, addressing vacant properties, improving streetscape and traffic management, celebrating natural and cultural assets and making Ferbane a more vibrant place to live for people of all ages.



Ferbane Town Centre First Plan Boundary Map

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: VISION FOR FERBANE

THIS TOWN CENTRE FIRST PLAN SETS OUT A FRAMEWORK TO DEVELOP THE TOWN OF FERBANE INTO

...A SAFE, ATTRACTIVE AND VIBRANT TOWN WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE, WORK, SOCIALISE, AND VISIT

THEME A: VIBRANT, ATTRACTIVE AND WELCOMING TOWN CENTRE

Attractive & Welcoming

Enhance Ferbane's streets and spaces through quality urban and landscape design to create a more attractive, welcoming environment that draws in new residents, visitors, and businesses.

Vibrant Town Centre

Breathe new life into the town centre by tackling vacancy, making better use of existing buildings and facilities, and supporting a diverse mix of retail, services, and community uses that promote day and evening activity.

THEME B: SOCIAL INCLUSION AND WELLBEING IN A SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE ENVIRONMENT

Safe and Accessible Environment

Ensure Ferbane is easy and safe to move around by implementing traffic calming measures, enhancing pedestrian infrastructure, improving areas around the schools and creating an inclusive environment for all ages and abilities.

Social Inclusion and Wellbeing

Strengthen social and cultural life by providing inclusive spaces and activities that promote health, belonging, and participation across all groups in the community.

THEME C: ENHANCED SUSTAINABILITY AND BIODIVERSITY AND CONNECTED NATURAL AND BUILT ASSETS

Connected Natural and Built Assets

Improve physical and visual connections between the town, the River Brosna, Grand Canal, Ballylin Bog and surrounding landscape through green routes and access points that support recreation, tourism, and a healthy environment.

Heritage and Cultural Assets

Celebrate and protect Ferbane's historic buildings and cultural identity by conserving key heritage assets and integrating them into public life and the town's future development.

Sustainability and Biodiversity

Promote environmentally responsible development by enhancing green infrastructure, protecting biodiversity, and integrating sustainable practices into the town's growth.

THEME D: ECONOMY & GROWTH

Economy and Growth

Encourage sustainable economic development by supporting local businesses, attracting investment, and meeting the growing need for quality housing in well-connected, serviced areas.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: KEY PROJECTS

THEME A

- A1. Ferbane Streetscape Improvement
- A2. Shopfronts Reactivation & Enhancement
- A3. Tackling Vacancy & Dereliction
- A4. Play for All

THEME B

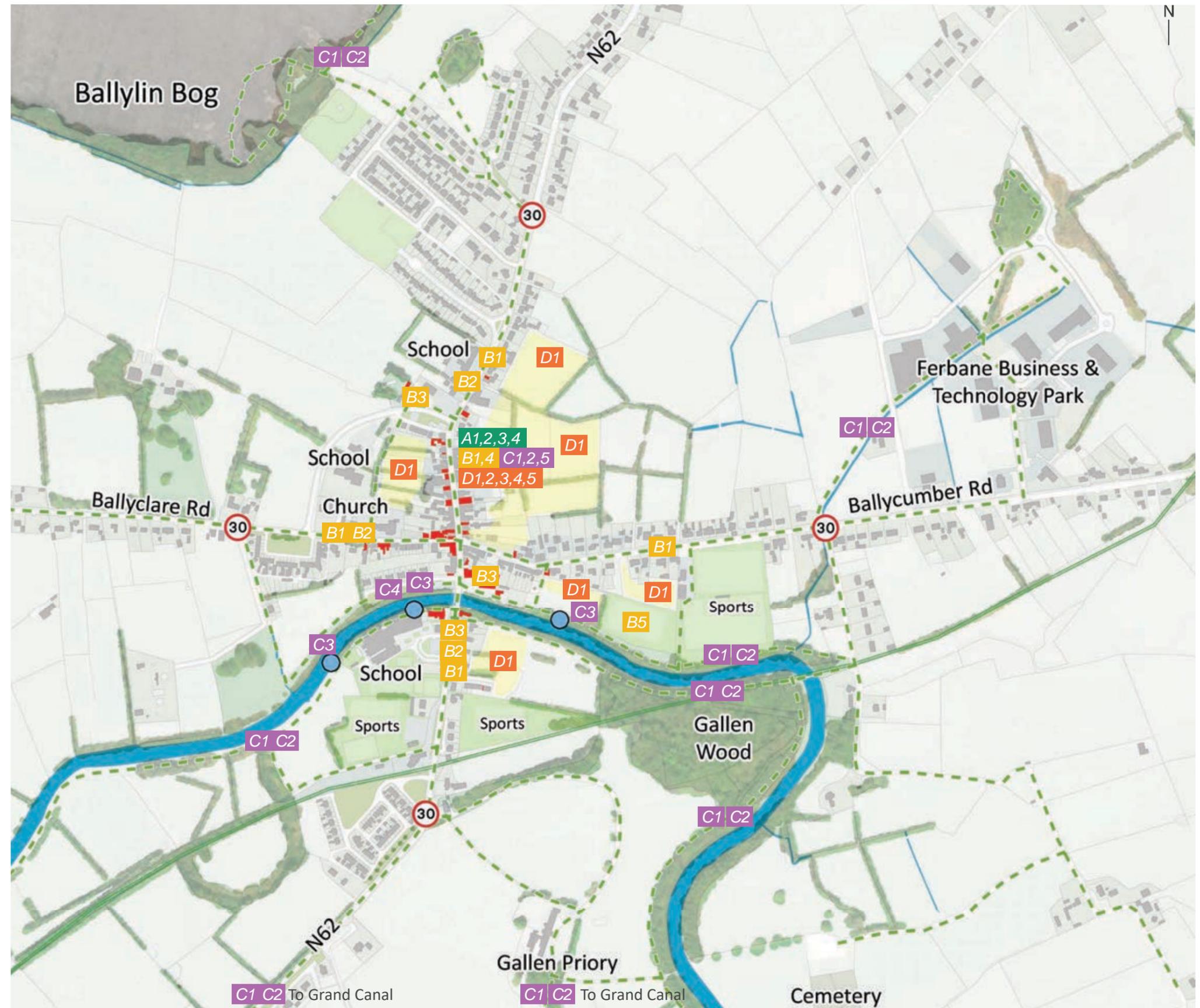
- B1. Improved Traffic Safety
- B2. Safety around the Schools
- B3. New Spaces for the Community
- B4. Ferbane Community Network
- B5. Multi-Use Sport & Active Grounds

THEME C

- C1. Ferbane Loops and Walks
- C2. Wayfinding and signage around the town
- C3. River Brosna- Small Crafts Access
- C4. Brosna Linear Park
- C5. Green Ferbane

THEME D

- D1. Town Centre Living
- D2. Supporting Local Enterprise
- D3. Digital Ferbane
- D4. Developing Skills for Local Jobs
- D5. Ferbane Tourism



OVERVIEW

Offaly County Council (OCC), Brady Shipman Martin (BSM) and Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) have been working in close collaboration with Ferbane Town Team to establish a future vision for Ferbane, which has been developed into a Town Centre First Plan for Ferbane.

The first Section of this plan documents the collaboration and public engagement which was carried out throughout the process. A number of public consultation events were held which were supported by community surveys, the carrying out of a Town Centre Health Check by TUS and engagement with the town team and the wider community of Ferbane.

Section Two of this report documents the baseline research and site analysis of the town. OCC and BSM carried out extensive investigation of the town through site visits, desktop research and direct communication with the local community.

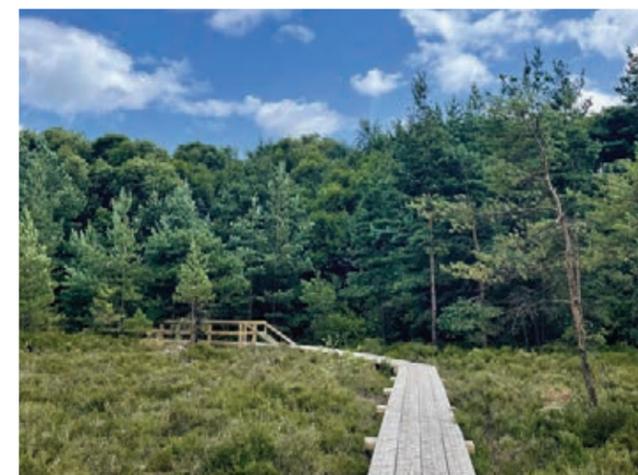
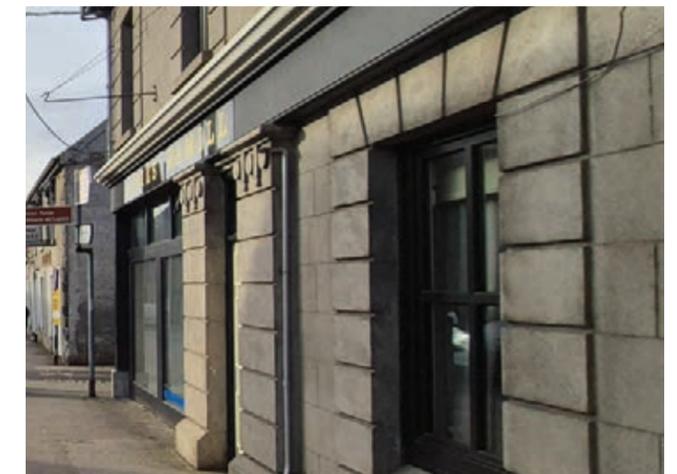
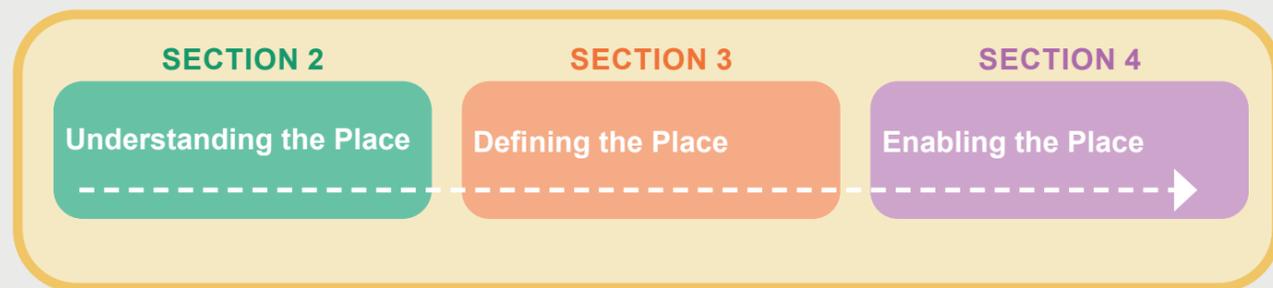
The third Section of this plan draws on the analysis and sets out the vision and a series of projects which will address issues within the town and areas for improvement. These projects have been developed to concept level. It is intended that the projects will act as catalysts for further development and enhancement of the town.

Section 4 of the Plan sets out an action plan for the delivery of the projects. The Action Plan outlines the envisaged delivery timeline, cost, priority, and community support for the various projects. It also highlights key stakeholders and potential funding avenues to realise the projects.

Town Centre First Plan Structure

SECTION 1

Collaboration and Communication



Photographs in and around the town of Ferbane depicting the variety of character and assets of the town

POLICY CONTEXT

Town Centre First Policy

“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 Government’s Town Centre First Policy represents a significant and transformative initiative aimed at addressing vacancy and combating dereliction while revitalising town centres. This policy serves as the groundwork for towns to develop customised plans in collaboration with the Local Authority and a dedicated Town Team. It is supported by a multi-million euro investment program spanning various government schemes.

The Town Centre First policy embodies an approach where communities play a central role in shaping their own spaces, while also embracing the opportunities arising from technology, climate action, and demographic shifts. The primary objective of this policy is to establish town centres that are not only viable and vibrant but also appealing to residents, workers, and visitors alike. These town centres will serve as dynamic hubs, providing essential services, social interactions, cultural experiences, and recreational activities for the local community.

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.

The Policy Recognises that Successful Places:

Are characterised by an attractive public realm (streets, spaces and parks) that is designed to invite people to meet, mingle and dwell;

Contain a variety of services/shops that provide employment opportunities, enable people to shop locally and meet the needs of the local community;

Provide a range of cultural, recreational and community spaces (that includes scope for periodic events and festivals) that bring together community members and attract visitors/tourists;

Contain a well maintained building stock that creates visual interest and animates streets and spaces;

Conserve, adapt and highlight historical buildings and streetscapes that provide the town with a unique identity;

Are attractive vibrant places for enterprises to grow and develop;

Are well connected and accessible to sustainable modes of transport, enabling a high proportion of journeys to be made by foot and/or bicycle from the immediate hinterland (e.g. the ‘10 minute town’ concept);

Manage traffic within central areas so that streets prioritise vulnerable users (pedestrians and cyclists), enabling them to move about safely and in comfort;

Provide a mix of housing typologies and tenures to cater for diverse communities in terms of age, income and mobility;

Utilise digital technology to enhance the experience of living and working in towns, enabling greater choices in terms of location and lifestyle;

Provide opportunities for the amenity, health and well-being of residents, workers and visitors.

POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Context

This Town Centre First plan has been developed in accordance with national, regional, and local policies set out below;

Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework

A strategic initiative launched by the government aimed at shaping the country's future development. At its core is the National Planning Framework (NPF), which outlines a vision for Ireland's growth and development up to the year 2040. The NPF sets out policies and objectives to guide spatial planning, infrastructure investment, and regional development across the country.

National Development Plan 2021-2030

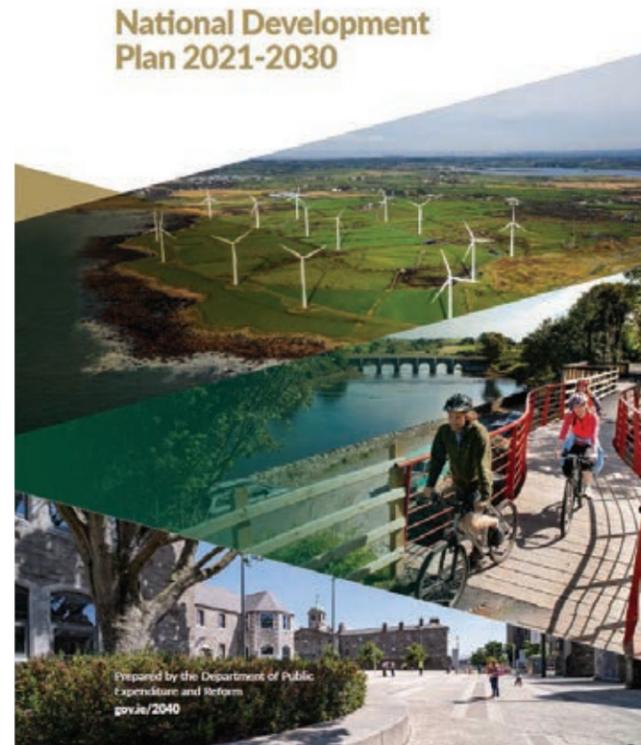
The National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030 is an update and revision of the original NDP 2018-2027, that sets out the Governments over-arching investment strategy and budget for 2021-2030. This underpins the implementation of the National Planning Framework and has a significant focus on improving the delivery of infrastructure projects to ensure speed of delivery and value for money. The NDP will support a total investment of €165 billion over the period 2021 to 2030 and will aim to ensure continuous cross-sectoral regional development and public investment.

Our Rural Future (2021-2025)

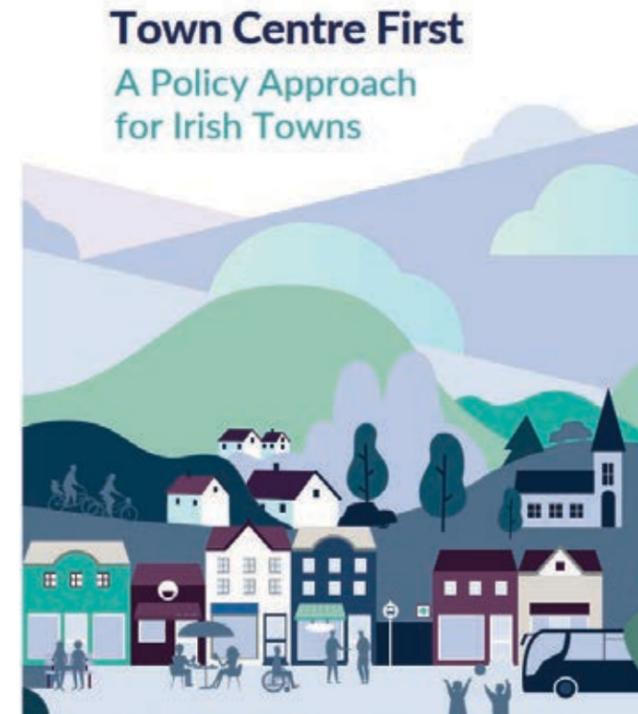
Our Rural Future 2021-2025 is a strategy launched by the government to support the sustainable development of rural areas across the country. It aims to address key challenges faced by rural communities, promote economic growth, enhance quality of life, and ensure that rural areas remain vibrant and resilient.

Town Centre First

Launched in 2022, the Town Centre First (TCF) policy aims to create towns and villages that are attractive, viable and thriving centres capable of supporting sustainable communities and sustaining rural futures. Informed by Project Ireland 2040 and Our Rural Future, the Town Centre First Policy approach sets out the role of existing built-up towns and villages in addressing Ireland's climate action requirements whilst focusing on building the capacity of local communities.



National Smart Specialisation Strategy for Innovation 2022-2027



Climate Action Plan 2025



Climate Action Plan (2025)

The Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP25) is the third annual statutory update to Ireland's Climate Action Plan under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021. CAP25 builds on previous Climate Action Plans by refining and updating the measures required to deliver carbon budgets and sectoral emission ceilings. It provides a roadmap for taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030 and achieve climate neutrality by no later than 2050.

National Smart Specialisation Strategy (2022-2027)

Smart Specialisation is a concept for developing regions in a co-ordinated manner utilising their strengths to promote economic growth and prosperity. The National Smart Specialisation Strategy for Innovation 2022-2027 sets out a plan

to address regional disparities and economic challenges to deliver a better quality of life for all through a bottom-up, place-based process for a regional approach to research development and innovation challenges in Ireland.

Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025-2030

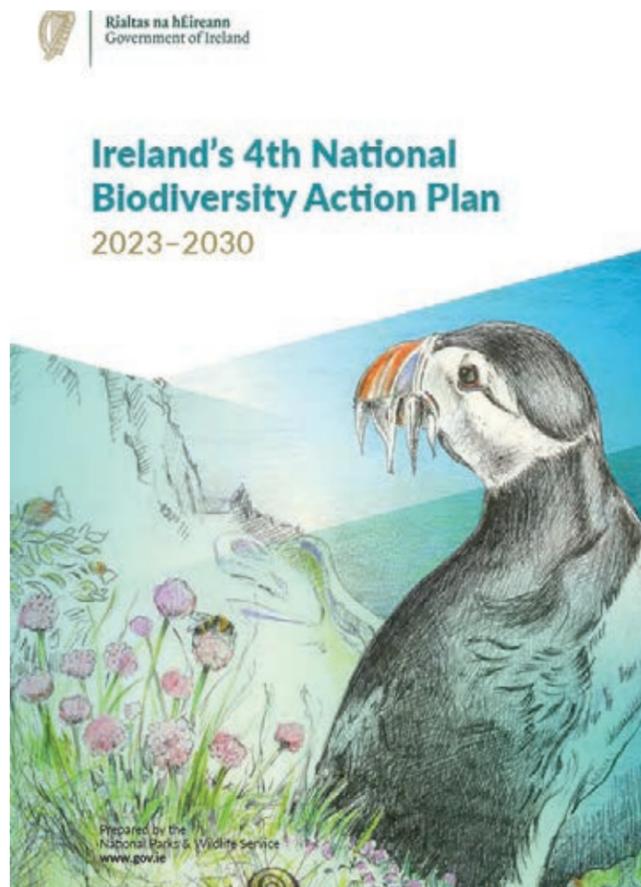
The updated National Housing Plan aims to accelerate the delivery of housing through planning reform, infrastructure investment, modern construction methods, and expanded funding for the Land Development Agency. The plan also aims to tackle homelessness and vacancy through measures like compulsory purchase orders and tax incentives. The policy promotes compact growth and urban regeneration in line with Town Centre First policies.



Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025-2030

An Action Plan on Housing Supply and Targeting Homelessness





National Biodiversity Action Plan (2023-2030)

Ireland's fourth National Biodiversity Action Plan (4th NBAP) sets out the vision for Ireland's biodiversity "that biodiversity and eco-systems in Ireland are conserved and restored, delivering benefits essential for all sectors of society so that Ireland contributes to efforts to halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems in the EU and globally."

Heritage Ireland 2030

A strategic framework developed by the government to guide the management, protection, and promotion of Ireland's heritage over the next decade. It aims to address various challenges facing the country's heritage while harnessing its potential for social, economic, and environmental benefits. The framework focuses on key themes such as sustainability, resilience, community engagement, and innovation to ensure that Ireland's heritage remains vibrant and accessible for future generations.



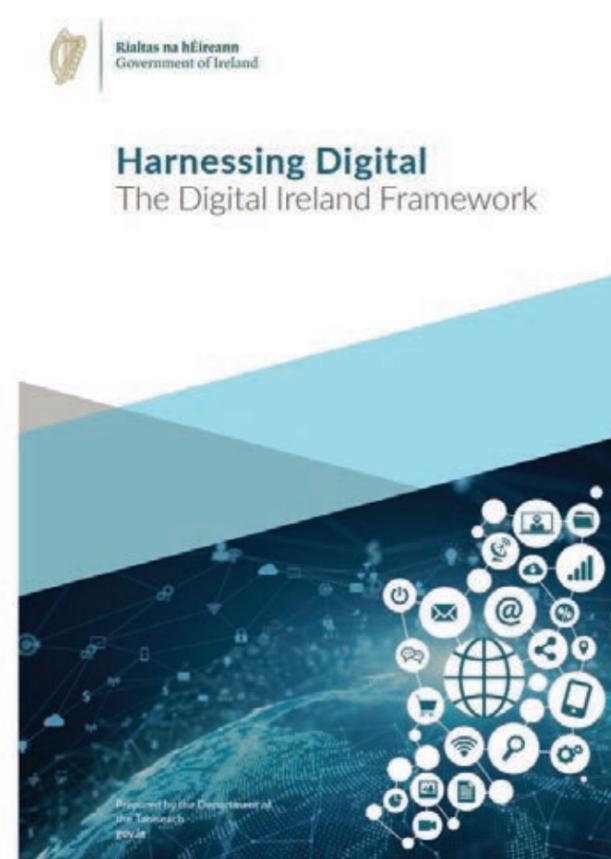
Harnessing Digital

Digital Ireland Framework

This Strategy is a high-level framework to support Ireland's ambition to be a digital leader. It sets out a pathway to drive and enable the digital transition across the economy and society, to maximise the well-being of our citizens, the efficiency of public services, as well as the productivity, competitiveness, innovation and sustainability of our economy.

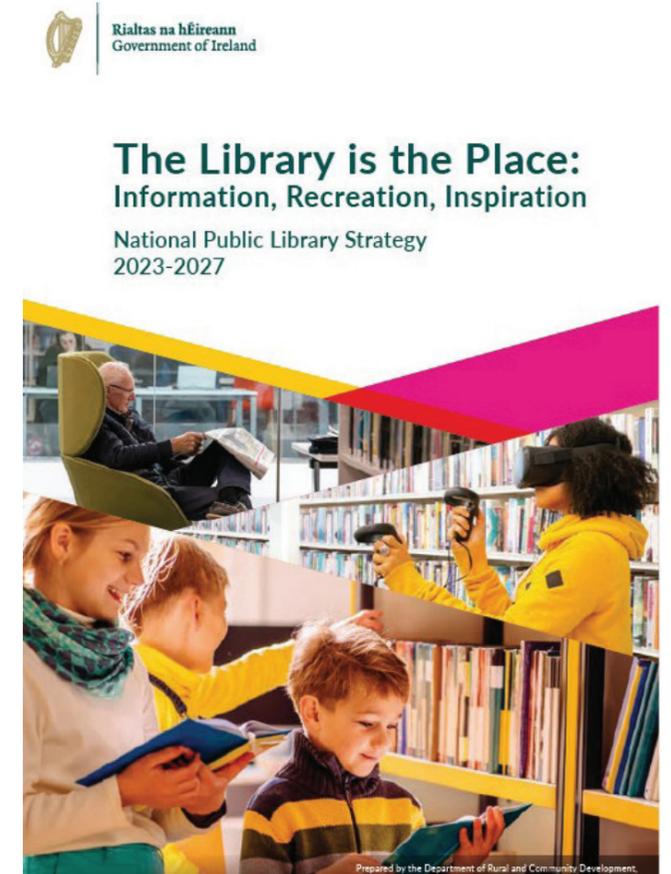
National Library Strategy 2023-2027

This strategy sets out actions under three key themes; People, Spaces, and Connections—to make libraries multi-purpose civic hubs. The policy focuses on digital inclusion, lifelong learning and cultural engagement. Libraries are positioned as anchors for community life, supporting revitalisation of town centres as social, cultural, and educational spaces.



The EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)

This directive requires all EU Member States to protect and improve water quality in all waters so that we achieve good ecological status by 2015 or, at the latest, by 2027. It was given legal effect in Ireland by the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. No. 722 of 2003). It applies to rivers, lakes, groundwater, and transitional coastal waters. The Directive requires that management plans be prepared on a river basin basis and specifies a structured method for developing these plans.



Regional Planning Context

Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly

The Regional Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES) is a strategic plan and investment framework that outlines the future development of the Eastern Midlands Regional Area (EMRA) until 2031 and beyond. The RSES sets out a vision "to create a Sustainable and competitive Region that's supports the health and wellbeing of our people and places, from urban to rural with access to quality housing, travel and employment opportunities for all."

POLICY CONTEXT

Local Planning Context



Offaly County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

The ambition of this Plan is aligned to the Government's National Climate Objective which seeks to achieve the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy by 2050. To secure this sustainable future for Offaly, the Council has prepared this Climate Action Plan for the period 2024 to 2029 to create a low carbon and climate resilient County, by delivering and promoting best practice in climate action in Offaly.

The vision for Offaly will be to transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy.

118 climate actions have been developed for Offaly County Councils Climate Action Plan under six main themes: Governance and Leadership, Built Environment, Transport, Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure, Community Resilience and Transition, Sustainability and Resource



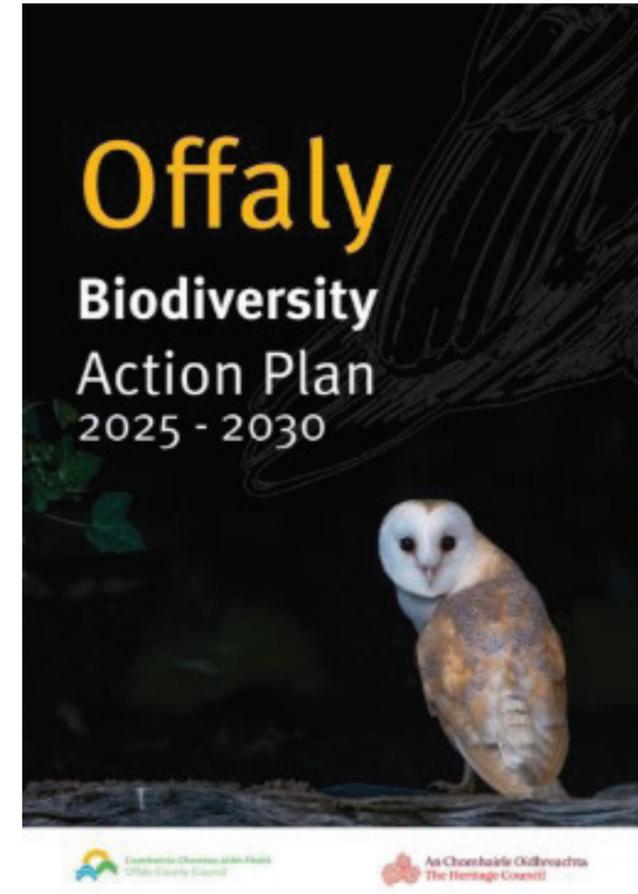
Management

Offaly Tourism Strategy 2023-2027

This Tourism Strategy builds on, and integrates, the extensive work that is ongoing in the County, not only in relation to tourism but also in other areas that help support the development of the County as a successful tourism destination. These include investment projects in infrastructure, public realm, recreation and heritage. Most importantly, this Offaly Tourism Strategy 2023-2027 provides a framework for a shared understanding of the key factors that can support sustainable tourism growth and an action plan for shared delivery.

Offaly Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030

This Plan sets out a framework for the protection, conservation and management of the county's biodiversity and provides an in-depth series of actions complementing the Offaly Heritage Plan 2023 - 2027. Together with the Offaly Climate



Action Plan 2024 – 2029, this plan acts to focus the work of Offaly County Council in the coming years to obtain a more sustainable place for people to live and where nature can thrive.

Offaly Heritage Plan 2023 – 2027

The Offaly Heritage Plan sets out the work of Offaly County Council working in partnership with groups and agencies to deliver heritage projects within the county. This is the 5th Heritage Plan for Offaly and was written in the context of the national Heritage Plan, Heritage Ireland 2030.

Offaly Age Friendly Strategy 2024-2029

As life expectancy increases, the onus is on society to adapt in a manner that provides older people with the physical, economic and cultural opportunities to ensure they enjoy the best quality of life. The development of this Age Friendly Strategy in Offaly must be reflective of the positive contribution that a healthier and more active aging population can make to our community and



our society in general. Having the key agencies working together to achieve the objectives is vital to the success of the implementation of this strategy. Improvements made to the physical and social environments in the county can in turn lead to older people remaining healthy and independent active members in society.

Offaly Libraries Development Strategy 2024-2028

This strategy sets out a vision to provide inclusive, welcoming, and innovative library spaces across Offaly. It focuses on three themes—People, Spaces, and Connections & Culture—with objectives spanning literacy, digital inclusion, sustainability, and community engagement. It complements Town Centre First by strengthening Ferbane's library as a vibrant community hub, enhancing footfall and social interaction in the town centre.

POLICY CONTEXT

Offaly County Development Plan

Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

A strategic document that outlines the long-term vision and objectives for the sustainable development of Offaly County over the next six years. It sets out policies and objectives related to land use, transportation, infrastructure, housing, environment, and other key areas to guide development and growth while preserving the county's natural and cultural heritage.

Ferbane is categorised as a 'Smaller Town' in the settlement hierarchy and typology in county Offaly where there may be limitations in terms of public transport and regional connections, in addition to a high car dependency.

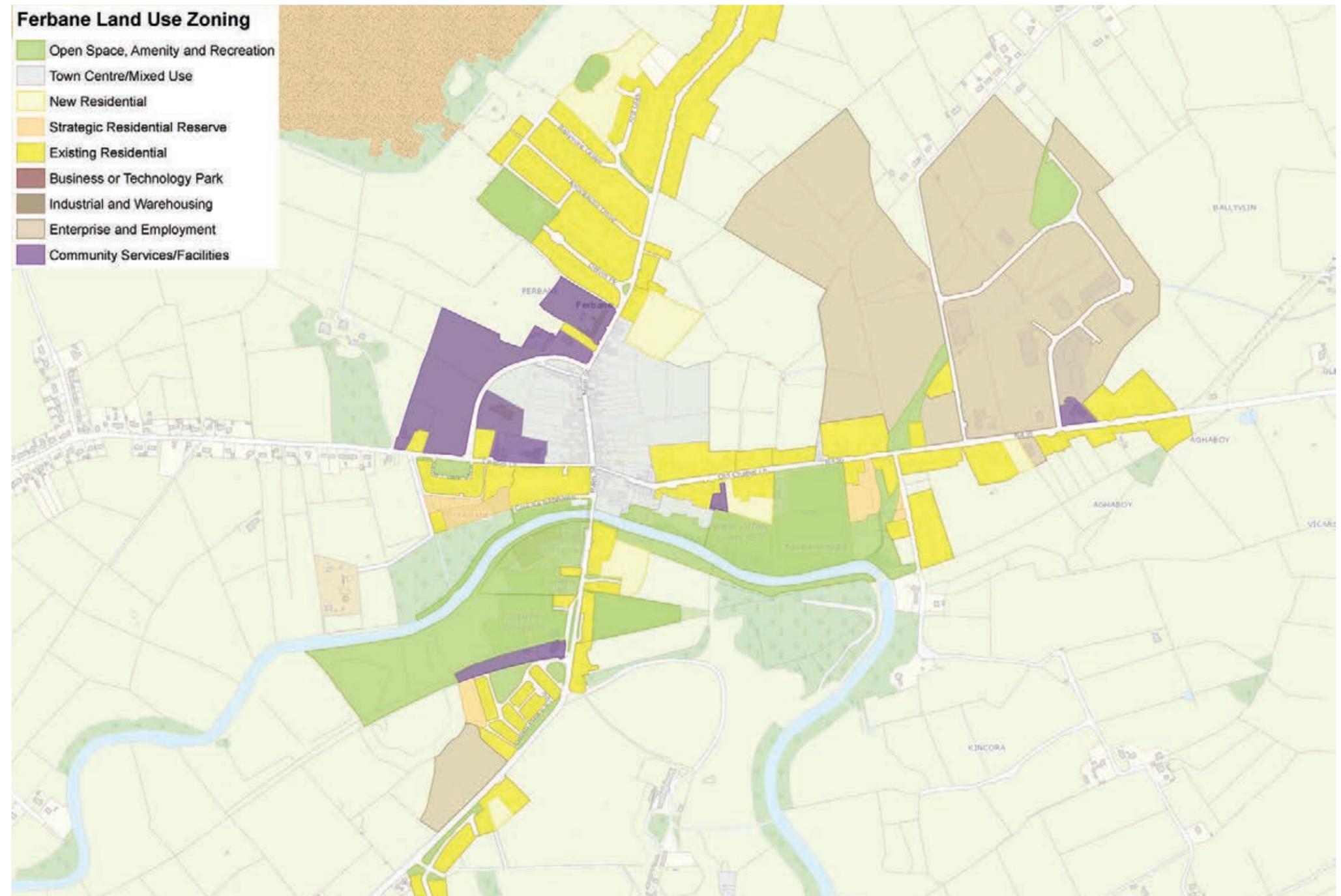
2021-2027: Volume II – Settlement Plans

Ferbane Town Plan

The Ferbane Town Plan is a component of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027: Volume II – Settlement Plans which outlines development objectives, policies, and land use zoning for the Ferbane area over the lifetime of the County Development Plan (6 years).

This settlement plan takes an asset-based approach to the future spatial development of Ferbane focusing on areas which have the greatest capacity and potential for growth in line with its place in the county settlement hierarchy and core strategy allocation in Volume 1 of the County Development Plan.

This holistic approach ensures that growth will be sustainable in the long-term supported by the provision of the necessary infrastructure, employment, amenities and services. The following Strategic Aims have been identified to shape and inform the vision for Ferbane over the lifetime of this County Development Plan.



Offaly County Council Development Plan- Land Zoning Map

EXISTING REPORTS & ASSESSMENTS

Ferbane Community Action Plan

A community Action Plan was developed in 2019 which assessed the existing town, facilities and services. A number of community action goals were outlined within the conclusion of this report.

Green Infrastructure Strategy for Ferbane

A Green Infrastructure Strategy was developed by Ferbane Tidy Towns in 2019.

The strategy sets out how to develop projects for Recreation health and well-being (People), Biodiversity (Nature), Water stewardship (Water) and Cultural assets (Heritage). It also sets out how to leverage the natural heritage of the area and utilisation of it for the benefit of the local community, the economy and environment.

Ferbane Biodiversity Management Plan

A biodiversity Management Plan was prepared in 2014 by Blackthorn Ecology on behalf of Offaly County Council and Ferbane Tidy Towns. Its proposed actions have been implemented since its launch and is now an ongoing management plan.

River Brosna SUDs Masterplan

A SUDs Masterplan was developed for the Local Authorities Water Programme in 2023 by Mitchell & Associates. This Masterplan includes recommendations for Nature Based Sustainable Drainage Systems for the six settlements along the river Brosna in Co. Offaly, including Ferbane. It is one of a suite of projects and events related to the river and local communities under the umbrella initiative 'The Brosna Relay'.

River Brosna Small Crafts Access Study

A River access study was developed for Ferbane Tidy Towns and funded by LAWPRO in 2024 by Mitchell & Associates. This study assess access for small watercraft such as kayaks, paddleboards, dinghies and small rowing boats to the River Brosna at the town of Ferbane. Access to the River would support local recreation as well as tourism to the town and the development of the River Brosna as a blueway connecting to other small towns along the Brosna River.

Ferbane Community Action Plan



Goal Extracts from Ferbane Community Action Plan

#1 A centre of excellence for food research, development & production

#2 A carbon free community in which to live & work

#3 Develop the peatlands as visitor attractions

#5 Provision of housing

#4 Demolition of the old fire station & creation of a public space

#6 Develop Looped walks maximising the River Brosna Asset

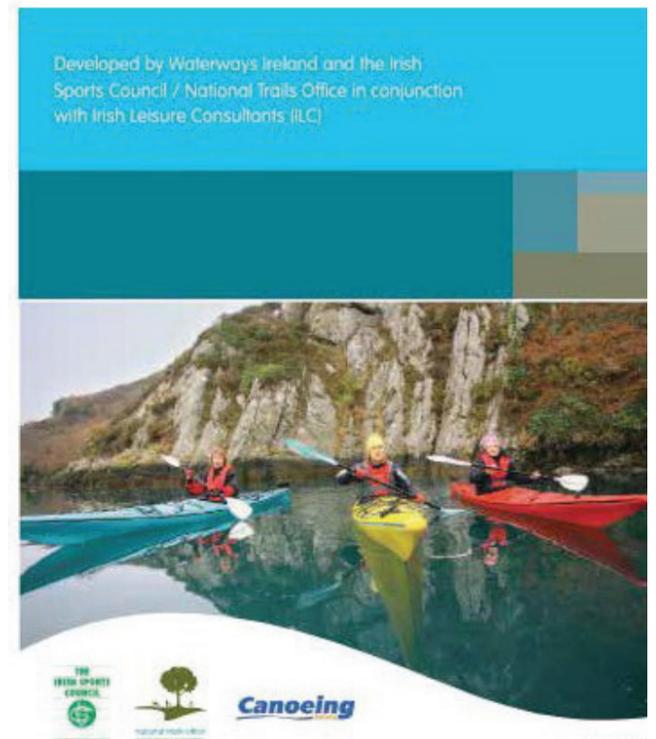


The River Brosna at Aghaboy Bridge



Extract from River Brosna Access Study at Ferbane

A Guide to Planning and Developing Small Vessel Water Trails in Ireland

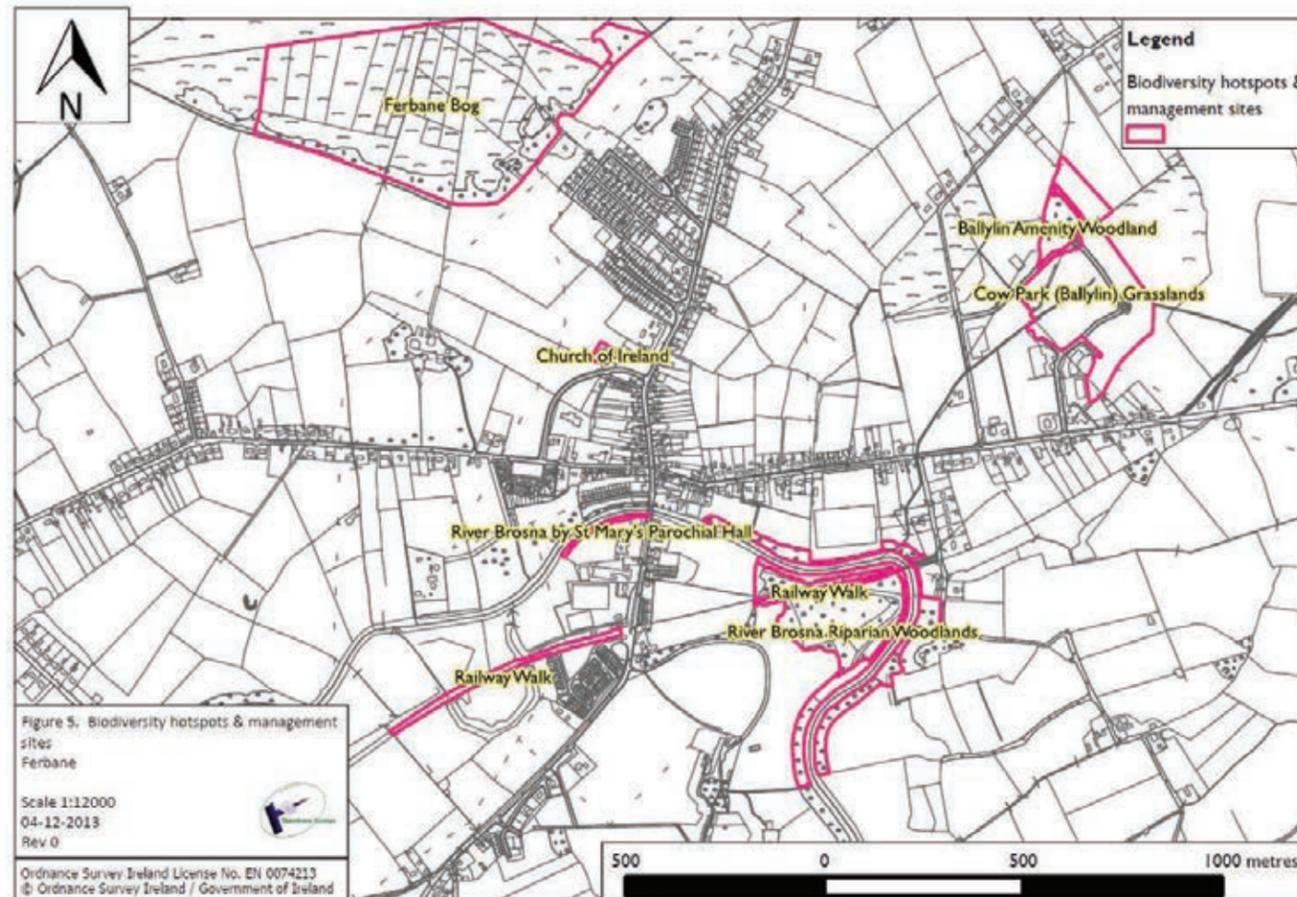




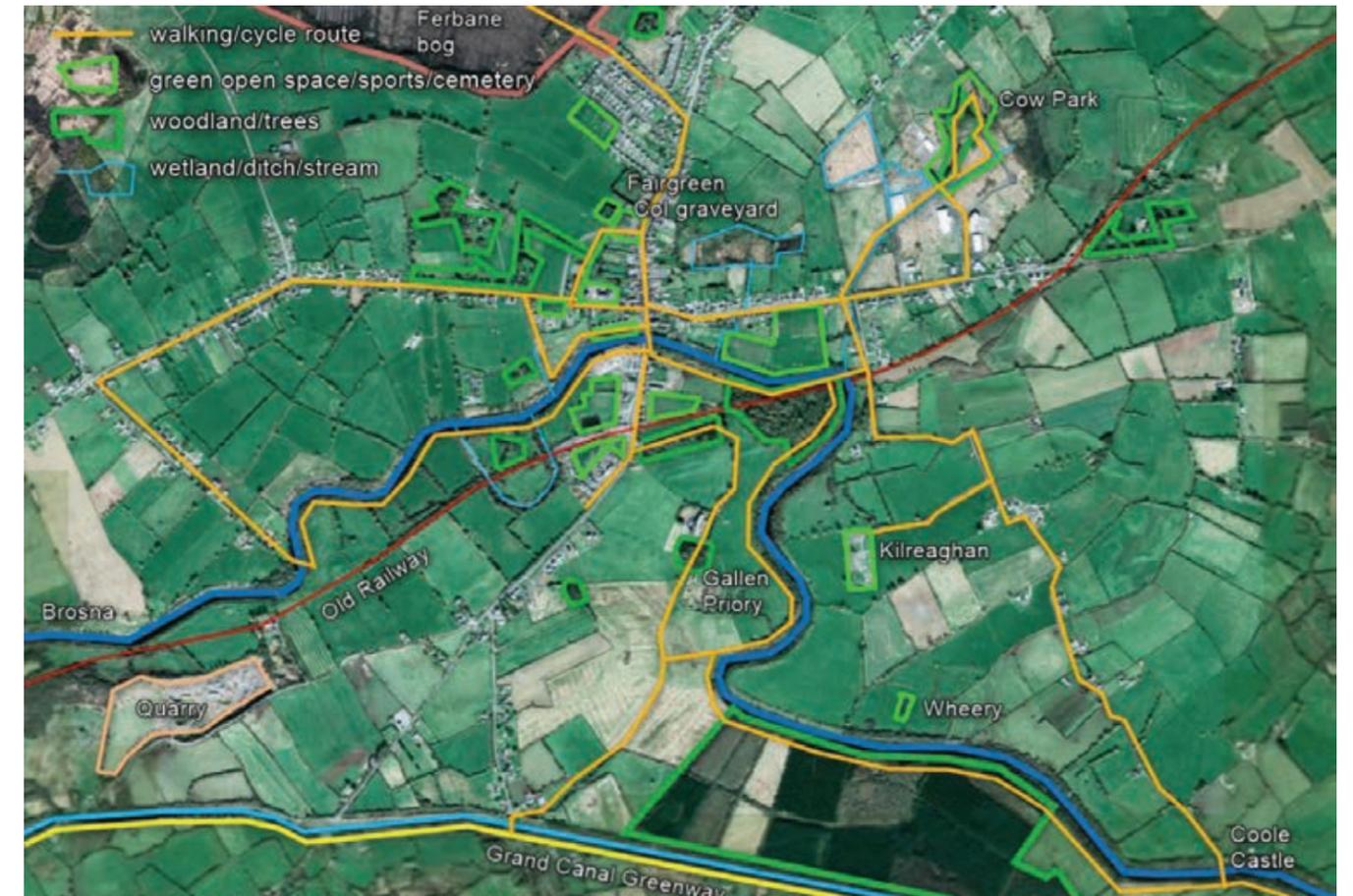
Existing Rain gardens in Ferbane- extract from Ferbane's SUDs masterplan



Potential Area for SUDs in Ferbane- extract from Ferbane's SUDs masterplan



Biodiversity Hotspots- extract from Ferbane Biodiversity Management Plan



Green Infrastructure Map- extract from Ferbane's Green Infrastructure Strategy

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SECTION 1

COLLABORATION & COMMUNICATION

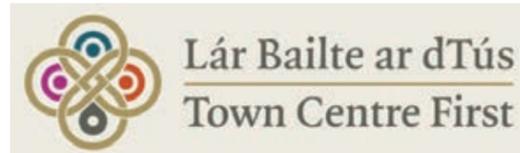
BACKGROUND

Town Centre First

The town centre first approach for Ferbane aims to establish a detailed masterplan for the town of Ferbane. The Town Centre approach recognises the importance of the plan being driven by the local community and their needs for a successful and vibrant town. The plan will be informed by strategic analysis of the existing town, communities and wider context.

In conjunction with the local communities Offaly County Council and Town Regeneration officer set out to form a 'Town Team' for the community of Ferbane in 2024.

The Town Team is a collaboration between the Local Authority and members of the local community as follows;



“Town Centre First 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.”



Some members of Ferbane Town Team and Offaly County Council Sept 2025
 Alice Campion (OCC), Justin Daly, Anne Galvin, Colm Beirne, Pdraig Boland (Chair), Kieran Guinan, Aoibhinn Molloy Roche, Olwen Cummins (Town Regeneration Officer, OCC),
 Missing from photo: Gemma D’arcy, Eamon Dooley, Joshua Connon, Cllr Hughie Egan, Roisin Lennon, Feargus McGarvey, Edel Waldron

What the Town Team Wants

“Community centre / Multipurpose space”

“End of Derelict Buildings”

“Canal Greenway”

“Better Traffic Management”

“Repopulation”

“Accessible & Availability of Housing”

“Improved sports facilities”

“Upgrade of streets and public realm in general”

“Parking Amenities”

“Enhance entrances to the Town”

Ferbane Town Team Members

Name	Representing
Padraig Bolad (LOETB)	Social Inclusion & Community Development
Colm Beirne	Sports Sector
Alice Campion (OCC)	Regeneration Section, Offaly County Council
Joshua Connon	Local Rep
Olwen Cummins (OCC)	Town Regeneration Officer, Offaly County Council
Justin Daly	Business Sector/ Foroige/ Health
Gemma D’arcy	Main Street Residents Rep
Eamon Dooley	Business Campus/ Retired Councillor/ An Síolán
Cllr Hughie Egan	Local Elected member
Anne Galvin	An Síolán/ Community Alert
Kieran Guinan	Youth Rep/ Architecture
Roisin Lennon (OLDC)	Social Inclusion & Community Development
Feargus McGarvey	Tidy Towns/ Environmental/ Biodiversity
Aoibhinn Molloy Roche	Education Sector

TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK

Overview

A town centre Health Check was carried out to determine how the town is performing under a variety of parameters including economy, land use, social vibrancy, provision of public services and facilities to name a few. The Health Check was carried out in close collaboration with the local community and used to inform the Town Centre Firstapproach for Ferbane.

TUS carried out a series of workshops, questionnaires and presentations which fed into the analysis for the Town Centre Health Check. The collaborative process facilitated open discussions and encouraged participation of all stakeholders.

Workshops

Workshops were used as an interactive platform to gather qualitative insights from participants. Two workshops were held on the 22nd October 2024 and 11th January 2025.

Participants divided into discussion groups. Group feedback was recorded and distilled down into key issues. Following this, the assessment of community questionnaires were presented back to the community.

Community Survey

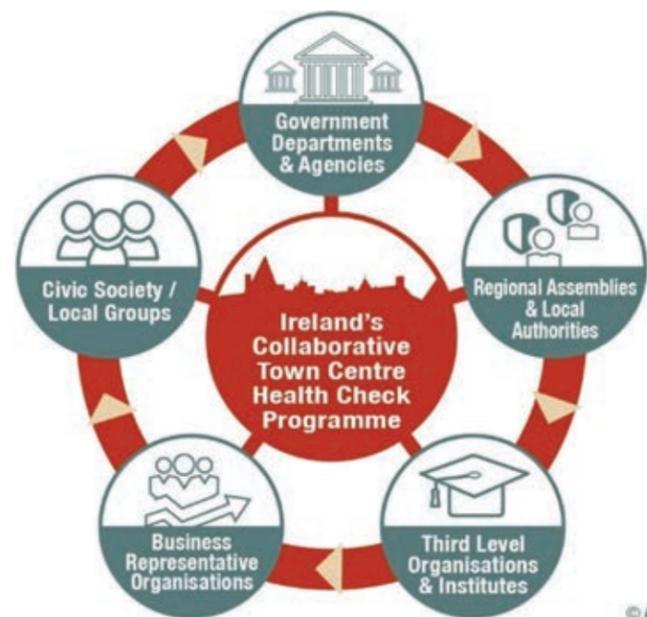
A detailed questionnaire was circulated to the groups, the findings of this are summarised in the 'Community Household Survey' section of this document (see page 24).

Findings

The final outcome of the workshops generated A SCOT analysis; Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, and Threats.

This was used as both a group discussion point and to evaluate Ferbane's current situation. The SCOT Analysis presented on the following pages are a direct assessment from the local community.

By leveraging strengths and opportunities, Ferbane can work towards a sustainable and thriving future, ensuring long-term economic and social growth. The assessment serves as a foundation for strategic decision-making and community-led initiatives.



Ferbane Community Workshop

In preparation for the Ferbane Town Centre First Plan, **Offaly County Council** and **Ferbane Town Team** in conjunction with **Technological University of the Shannon (TUS)** will be holding an information gathering workshop.

This workshop is to examine:

- the strengths and weaknesses of the town,
- what opportunities there are to develop and
- what the local community feel would be beneficial to make Ferbane a more attractive town to live, work and visit.

All are welcome! We look forward to seeing you there on the night!

Where and When
 22nd October 2024
 7pm to 8.30pm
 in
Gallen Community School, Ferbane



Walkability Audit Oct 2024



Town Centre First Workshop Oct 2024



Town Centre First Workshop Oct 2024



Walkability Audit Oct 2024



Town Centre First Workshop Oct 2024

TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK

SCOT Analysis - Main Street Ferbane

Note: This SCOT analysis was carried out by members of the community at workshops with TUS October 2024

STRENGTHS

The features of the town that are successful and set it apart from others

Well-presented shop fronts that enhance the street's character and provide an inviting commercial environment.

Strong social atmosphere where locals and visitors engage in community interaction.

Historical and cultural landmarks that contribute to the town's identity e.g Fairgreen

An Síolán: A valued community resource that serves as a hub for local initiatives and activities.

A mix of businesses supports economic activity and provides essential services.

Stable residential population contributes to the town's vibrancy.

Access to green spaces and potential cycling/walking routes enhance the quality of life.

A strong sense of local identity and engagement fosters collaborative projects.

Rich historical and cultural elements that can be leveraged for tourism and community pride.

CHALLENGES

The aspects of the town that puts it at a disadvantage and could be improved

Issues with location of bus stop for accessibility and congestion.

Traffic Flow Challenges: Congestion and navigation difficulties due to current road layout.

Visual clutter or unattractive infrastructure affecting the town's skyline e.g Overhead electricity cables & poles

Limited or inconvenient parking options for senior citizens.

Lack of Market/Gathering Space for community markets and events.

Need for better planning for freight and delivery vehicle parking.

Condition of St. Mary's Hall – Current state of disrepair or underuse of a potential community asset.

OPPORTUNITIES

What can be changed and how can the strengths of the town be built upon

Improving pedestrian and vehicular access to schools could enhance safety and connectivity.

Encouraging residential spaces above commercial units to revitalise the area and increase foot traffic.

Potential for a local guesthouse initiative to support tourism and provide accommodation.

Adapting parking spaces to better serve elderly and mobility-impaired individuals.

Implementing initiatives that make the main street more inclusive and accessible.

Creating designated social spaces to foster community events and interactions.

Enhancing streetscapes with greenery, seating, and pedestrian-friendly features.

Ensuring well-lit areas and safe access routes, particularly around An Síolán and market spaces.

Expanding and improving An Síolán Market Space to attract local vendors and shoppers.

Aesthetic upgrades such as murals, flower displays, and uniform signage to enhance the town's appeal.

THREATS

What external factors could impede the success of the town

Speeding (Regional Road Impact) – Traffic safety concerns due to high-speed vehicles passing through the area.

TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK

SCOT Analysis - Town of Ferbane

Note: This SCOT analysis was carried out by members of the community at workshops with TUS October 2024

STRENGTHS

The features of the town that are successful and set it apart from others

Bus stops, proximity to major towns (Athlone, Tullamore, Birr, Ballinasloe, Dublin, Galway, Limerick), and access to motorways.

Recreational & Heritage Assets: Greenway, Canal, Brosna, Lough Boora, Clonmacnoise, Shannon, Shannon Harbour, Gallen, Ballylin Bogwalk.

Library, Credit Union, Fire Station, Funeral Home, Fibre internet, Post Office, Nursing Home, Pharmacy, Healthcare facilities.

Presence of primary and post-primary schools, preschools, childcare facilities, and St. Hilda's.

Infrastructure & Amenities: Economic & Business Environment: Business Park, local enterprises, remote workers, food campus, strong local businesses, local expertise.

Strong sense of community, active voluntary groups, social activities (women's group, bridge group, coffee mornings, active retirement, resident groups, tidy towns).

Sports & Youth Development: GAA youth structures, boardwalks, sports facilities.

Cultural & Social Life: Church choir, local musicians, social spaces (Chat & Chill, Fairgreen), local historians.

Retail & Services: Shops, restaurants, takeaway, pubs, grocery, butchers, petrol station, garden centre, recycling, printers.

Potential Development Sites: Church of Ireland as an untapped heritage facility, An Síolan (Convent) as an anchor tenant site, LOETB, St. Hilda's.

CHALLENGES

The aspects of the town that puts it at a disadvantage and could be improved

No frequent public transport, bus stop and traffic flow issue. Issues with location of bus stop: accessibility and congestion.

Traffic and road safety concerns, speeding issues (regional road), maintenance of town infrastructure, need for traffic calming measures.

Main Street Traffic Flow Challenges – Congestion and navigation difficulties due to current road layout.

Limited or inconvenient parking options for senior citizens, Need for better planning for freight and delivery vehicle parking.

Limited job opportunities, lowest disposable income in the state, lack of enterprise space.

Need for alternative fuel sources, impact of Bord na Móna closure not addressed by Just Transition Programme.

No community hall for events, no night economy or social scene, no dedicated men's shed.

Condition of St. Mary's Hall – Current state of disrepair or underuse of a potential community asset.

Lack of available homes for purchase or rent, no new builds, ageing housing stock, derelict properties.

Limited independent living options for elderly and aging infrastructure.

Visual clutter/ unattractive infrastructure affecting the town's skyline e.g ESB Poles

Insufficient designated areas for community markets and events.

OPPORTUNITIES

What can be changed and how can the strengths of the town be built upon

Improve public realm (lighting, accessibility, town beautification).

Improve Main Street by making it more attractive and age-friendly.

Improve school access and town connectivity.

Implement age-friendly strategies and safer parking facilities.

Promote environmental tourism.

Enhance links heritage and cultural sites (Monastic Site, Clonmacnoise, Shannon Harbour).

Develop a Town First Centre to mitigate loss of Bord na Móna.

Develop green energy jobs and retrofitting initiatives

Construct business park training facilities.

Promote remote working opportunities.

Develop a new community centre or event space.

Introduce paid youth workers to support families.

Create gathering spaces (An Síolán Market Space, Fairgreen area).

Establish a TUS outreach campus.

Develop vacant properties into affordable housing, rental spaces, and enterprise zones.

Develop a community B&B and independent living spaces for aging residents.

THREATS

What external factors could impede the success of the town

Traffic congestion & lack of traffic calming measures.

Main Street infrastructure issues (bus stops, ESB poles, poor traffic flow, need for market gathering space).

Traffic safety concerns due to high-speed vehicles Speeding on Main Street (Regional Road Impact)

Post office closure (no bank services available).

National Government policies on rural Ireland may not support sustainable development.

Decline in employment opportunities due to loss of Bord na Móna and lack of targeted training programs.

Limited business investment and sustainable enterprise support.

Emigration due to lack of job opportunities.

No available tourist accommodation.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Walkability Audit

A walkability audit was carried out on 22nd October 2024. The audit was carried out by Offaly County Council, An Garda Síochána and members of the community with mixed mobility needs.

Summary of Observations:

Footpaths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trip hazards such as uneven surfaces, localised cracking, utility covers etc. • Absence of footpaths in some areas • Vehicles fully or partially parked on footpaths resulting in Wheelchair users & buggies having to dismount onto the road • Drainage channels across footpaths • Shrubbery hanging over walls and fences • Metal wall mounted post boxes protruding into pathway
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No rest stops/benches other than Chill & Chat area at Old Fire Station • No bus shelter • Need for improved signage/information regarding public bus transport • No cycling infrastructure • Need for designated loading/delivery bays near school
Road Crossings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No controlled pedestrian crossing • Crossing at National School needs upgrading • Additional crossings required in the town centre • The amount of traffic makes it hard to cross the road
Road Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicles speeding through the town • Poor parking practices i.e. parking on footpaths, double yellow lines, at junctions etc. • Traffic not stopping at existing pedestrian crossing • Pedestrians are too close to vehicular traffic in some areas
Look & Feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of street trees & planting • Vacant & derelict buildings • No public spaces to chat with friends other than Chill & Chat
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor road user behaviour • Garda Station is not very visible • Need for additional streetlights • Drivers driving wrong way up one way street from Hamills Corner
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough safe crossings to the school • No designated drop off/collection area at National Schools • Pedestrians and vehicular traffic sharing same space • U-Turns conducted in front of school on Main Street • No School Bus Stop

It was agreed at the end of the walkability audit that the following actions should be considered to improve the walkability of Ferbane;

- Installation of traffic calming measures and provision of safe pedestrian crossings especially at both schools. Discussion needs to be had with National School in relation to traffic management.
- Upgrading of existing crossings to raised surfaces would alleviate some of the issues in the short term, especially at the main pedestrian crossing
- Driver behaviour in relation to speed as well as poor practices such as conducting U-turns in front of Gallen Community School needs to be addressed.
- Provision of additional street lighting and upgrade of existing lighting. Undergrounding of ESB cables would improve the aesthetics of the streetscape.
- Upgrade footpaths throughout the town - some areas in a poor repair. Provision of new footpaths where required e.g. Ballycumber Road towards the GAA pitch.
- Rest areas needed on Main Street and Ballycumber Road where the cemetery and Ferbane Business Park are located. The business park is lit up and is well used by walkers in the evenings as part of a looped walk so the provision of rest areas along this route would encourage additional pedestrian activity.
- Planned TVR development at Fairgreen & regeneration of Ferbane Convent project will enhance the town and provide much needed civic spaces (works now complete).

Any works being carried out on crossing or on the N62 National Road will require approval from Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).



Existing N62 - R436 junction. Propose Junction tightening to reduce corner radii and vehicle turning speeds and reduce crossing distance for pedestrians.



Existing Pedestrian crossing on N62 Road. Large quantity of HGVs travelling at speed which fail to stop to allow pedestrians to cross. Poor visibility of pedestrians and safety concerns due to loading bays positioned either side of pedestrian crossing



Main Street Lower



Main Street Lower



Main Street Lower



Main Street Upper



Main Street / Fairgreen



Main Street Upper



Walkability Audit Route Map



Church Carpark during school drop off

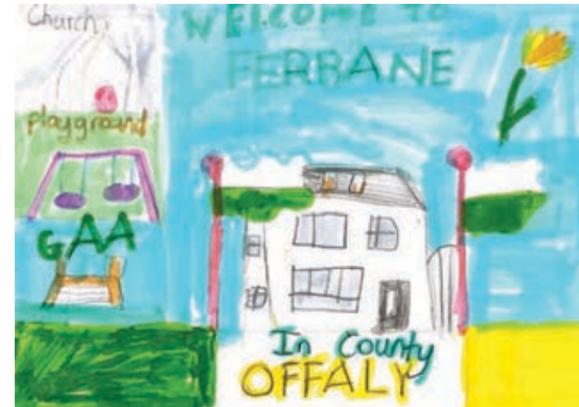
PUBLIC CONSULTATION

'The Young Protagonist' School Project

The Young Protagonist schools project, led by the Ferbane Town Team, was also shown during the drop in event. The project was based on the idea that children are an important part of the community today, and that their views can help everyone see the town in a new way.

Students from Junior Infants to Sixth Year took time to walk around and observe their town. They noticed colours, places, rhythms and landmarks that make Ferbane what it is. Through postcards, drawings and model making, they reflected on what they enjoy, what feels familiar, and what makes them feel part of the place. Their work helped capture the everyday character and spirit of the town in a way that is often missed.

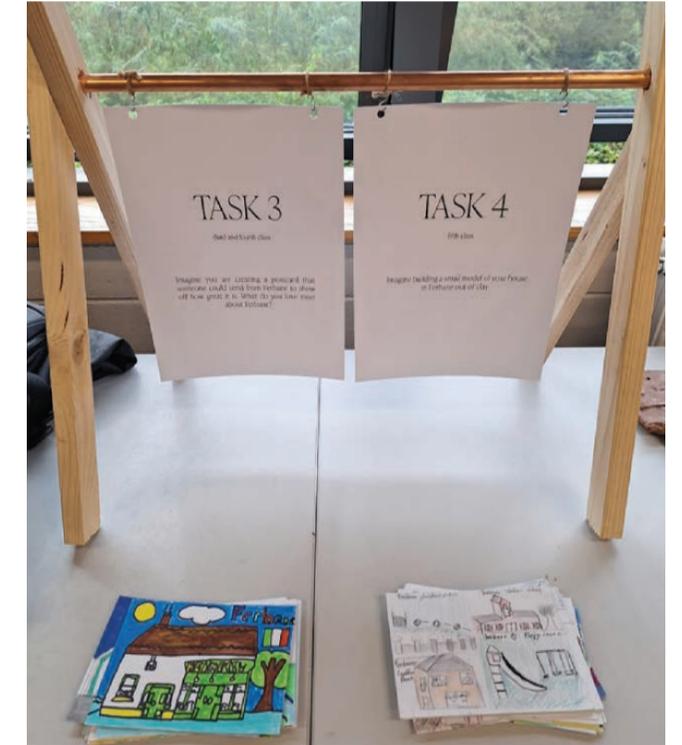
Two architectural models of Ferbane town centre, made by Town Team member Kieran Guinan, were also on display. One model was at a scale of 1:200 and the other at 1:500. These models drew great interest from people at the event and gave everyone a chance to see Ferbane from a different angle. They encouraged conversations about how people of all ages can look at the town differently and imagine what its future might hold.



Extracts from 'The Young Protagonist' School Project
September 2025



Fe 'The Young Protagonist' School Project -
September 2025



3D Model of Ferbane Town- September 2025

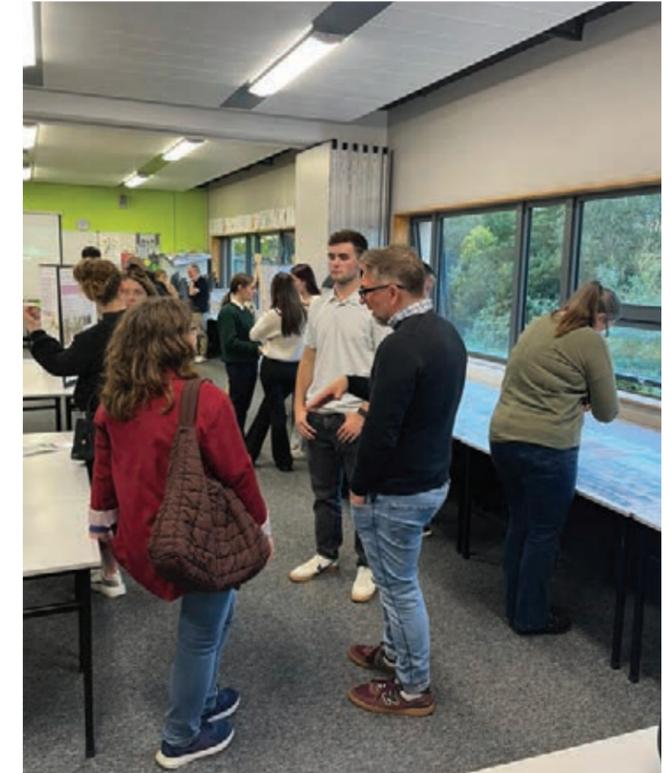
PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Public Consultation Event & Survey

A drop-in public consultation event was held on 9th September 2025 at Gallen Community School, Ferbane. Approximately 70 members of the public attended the event where attendees could view presentation boards depicting progress to date on the Town Centre First Plan, the proposed themes for the plan and key projects proposed for the plan.

The second online survey was launched on the same night and remained open for three weeks. The survey was well received with 83 responses submitted. Members of the community had opportunity to provide their suggestions and feedback on proposed projects within the plan, voted on their favourites and identified which projects should be priority for the town. .

The feedback from the survey was collated and has been used to inform Section 4 of this plan which includes the Town Centre First Action Plan.



Town Centre First Ferbane Public Consultation Event- September 2025

Survey Summary Findings

All of the projects within the draft plan were well received by the public. This is demonstrated by the high number of 5 out of 5* star ratings given to each project, outlined across. The survey also asked members of the public to order projects in order of priority and urgency.

The priority projects identified in the survey also reflect common themes which were highlighted in the SCOT analysis (page 20-21) such as issues around speeding, safety and traffic management, lack of community spaces and issues around vacancy and dereliction in the town centre.

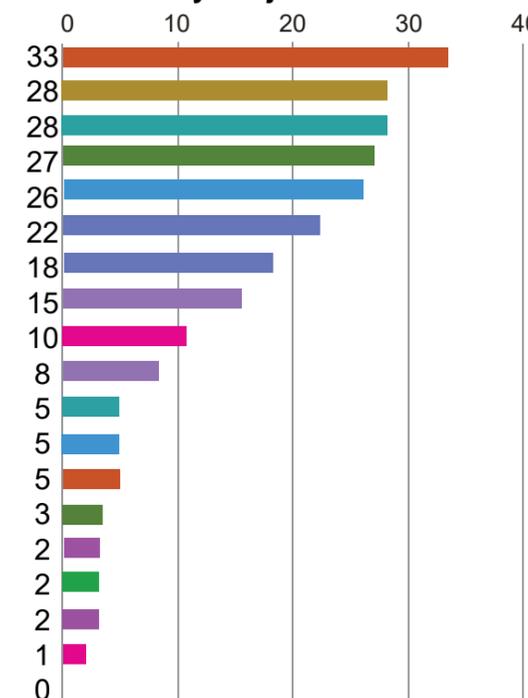
Project Name

- B2.** Safety around the Schools
- B5.** Multi-Use Sport & Active Grounds
- A3.** Tackling Vacancy & Dereliction
- B3.** New Spaces for the Community
- B1.** Improved Traffic Safety
- A1.** Ferbane Street-scape Improvement
- C1.** Ferbane Loops and Walks
- A4.** Play for All
- A2.** Shopfronts Reactivation & Enhancement
- C4.** Brosna linear park
- C3.** River Brosna- Small Crafts Access
- D1.** Town Centre Living
- D2.** Supporting Local Enterprise
- D3.** Digital Ferbane
- B4.** Ferbane Community Network Support & Growth
- C5.** Green Ferbane
- D4.** Developing Skills for Local Jobs
- C2.** Wayfinding and signage around the town
- D5.** Ferbane Tourism

Your Priority Projects

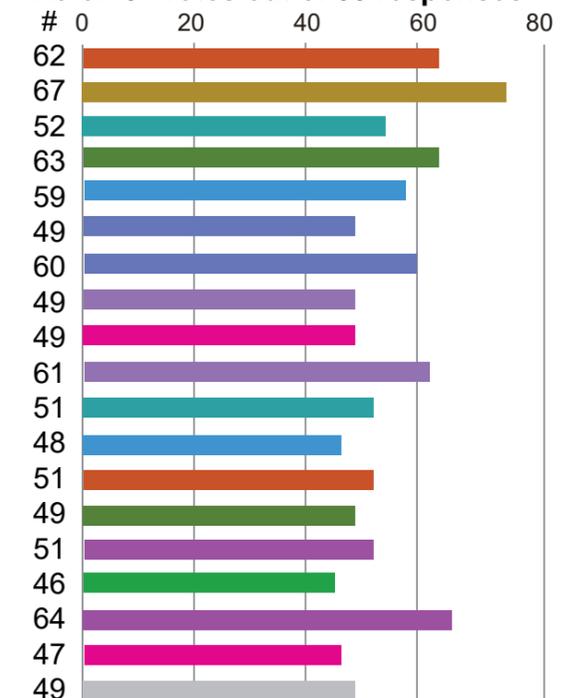
As voted in community survey Sept 2025

No of Priority Project Votes



Your Project Support

No of 5* Votes out of 83 responses



SECTION 2

UNDERSTANDING

FERBANE

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: CONTEXT

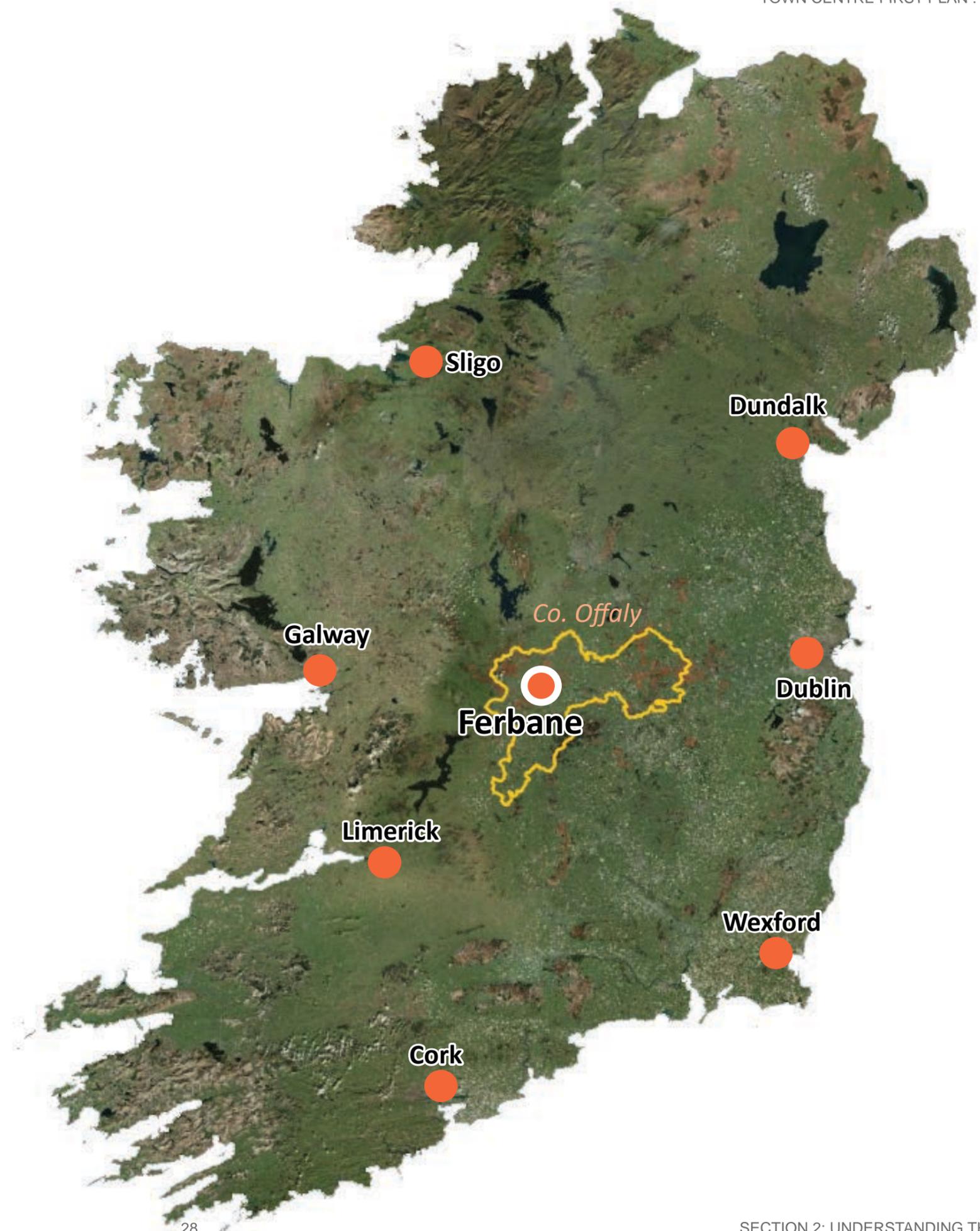
Wider Context

Ferbane is an important town in west County Offaly, located in Ireland's Midlands. Positioned on the N62 between Athlone and Birr, and set along the River Brosna, Ferbane acts as a local service centre for nearby villages and rural communities. Within County Offaly's Development Plan and the Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), Ferbane is identified as a town with potential for sustainable growth, supporting housing, local services, and small-scale economic development.

The town is surrounded by rich natural and cultural landscapes. Ferbane also sits close to the vast boglands of the region, which have shaped the area's history and economy, particularly through the former activities of Bord na Móna. These boglands are now being restored and reimagined as environmental and recreational resources.

The town's location makes it a gateway to several major natural and cultural attractions. Just outside Ferbane is Lough Boora Discovery Park, a major amenity for outdoor recreation, biodiversity, and features Sculpture in the Parklands with over 20 international sculptures. Nearby, the Clonmacnoise monastic site—one of Ireland's most significant early Christian settlements—draws visitors from across the country. The Grand Canal Way, a long-distance walking and cycling route, is also accessible nearby and connects Ferbane to wider regional greenway networks. Birr Demense 25km South of Ferbane offers tours of the castle along with vast parklands and gardens for exploration. The Ballylin Bog walk adjacent to Ferbane town and Clara Bog Nature Reserve is just a short drive away, offering boardwalk trails and educational experiences.

Today, Ferbane continues to develop as a practical and well-connected town that supports its wider rural area, while offering access to some of the Midlands' most valuable natural and heritage sites.



County Offaly



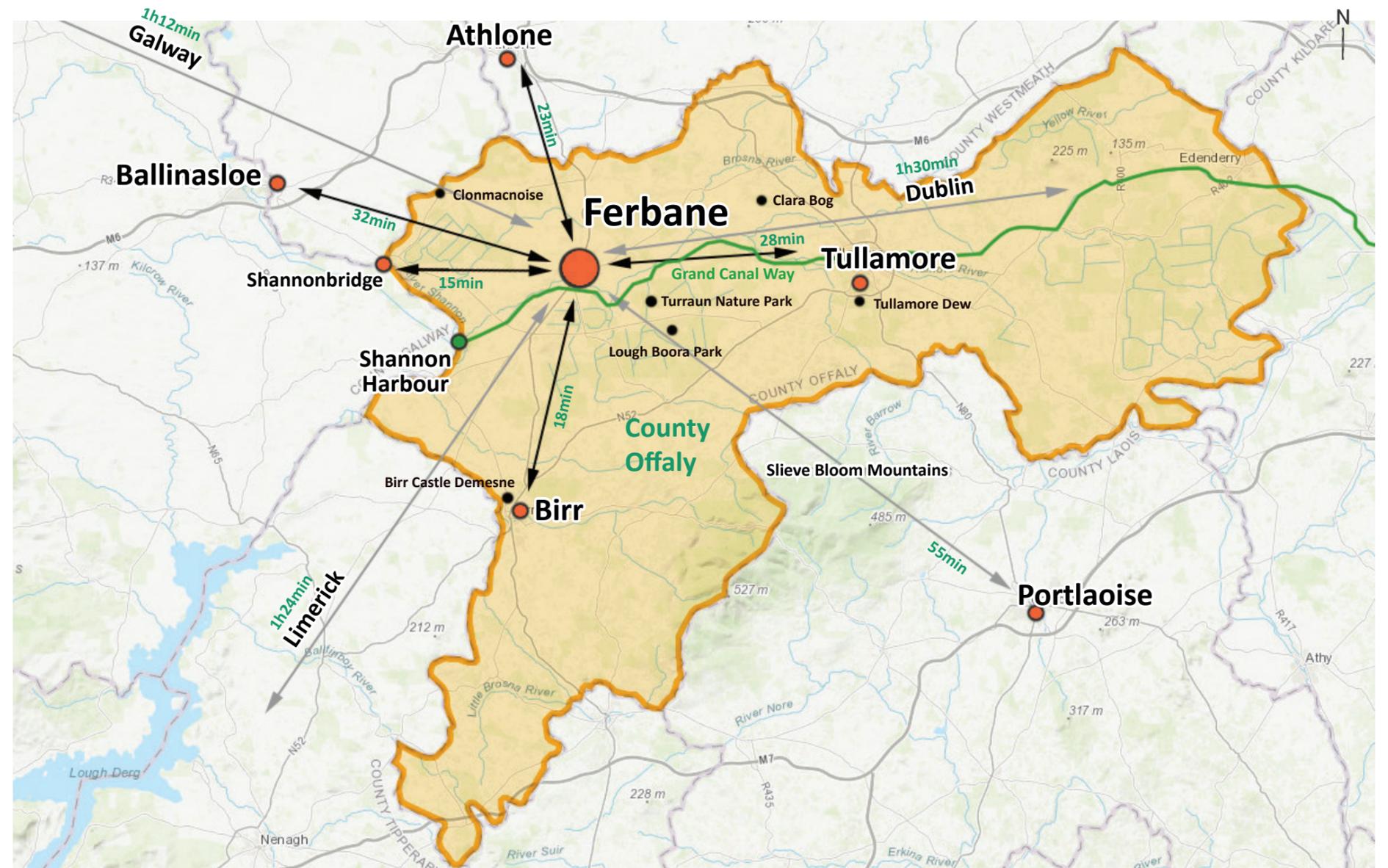
Clonmacnoise Monastic Site



Birr Castle



Clara Bog



Context Map



Cycles by Caroline Madden and Boora Convergence by David Kinane, Sculptures at Lough Boora Discovery Park



Grand Canal

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: SOCIO ECONOMIC PROFILE

A socio-economic profile of Ferbane was carried out, comparing some key statistics from the 2022 Census with national average figures.

The demographic structure of Ferbane shows a large portion of the population being over 55 or under 20 emphasising the need to consider these groups in forward planning. The decline in population of those aged 20-55 reinforces the fact that this generation are often moving away from the town for work and education

Housing

Almost one fifth of the existing housing stock was built between 1946 and 1960 likely reflecting the Bord na Móna building programme. Very few houses were built between 2011 and 2022 - about 2.5% as opposed to nearly 8% nationally further highlighting the need for additional housing in the area.

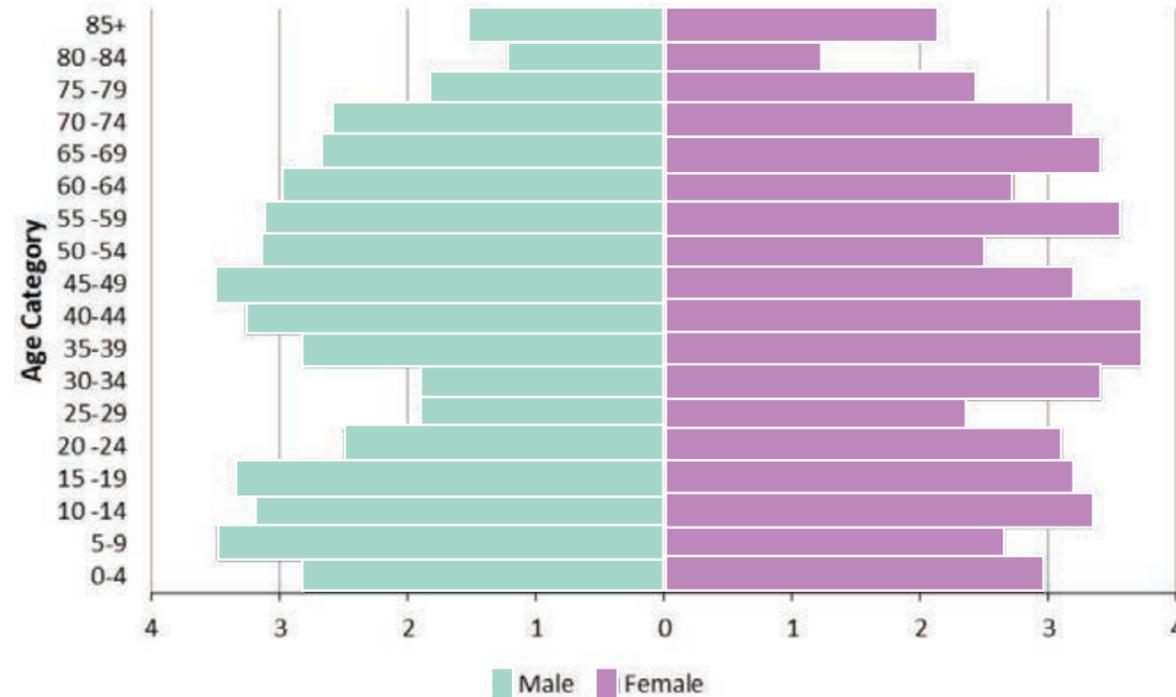
Additionally 99% of the housing stock are houses rather than apartments raising the question as to whether higher density housing of mixed size types would be appropriate for the town centre.

Again as would be expected about 75% of dwellings were owned outright or with a mortgage, higher than the national figure of 66%, while about 20% were rented compared with 28% nationally.

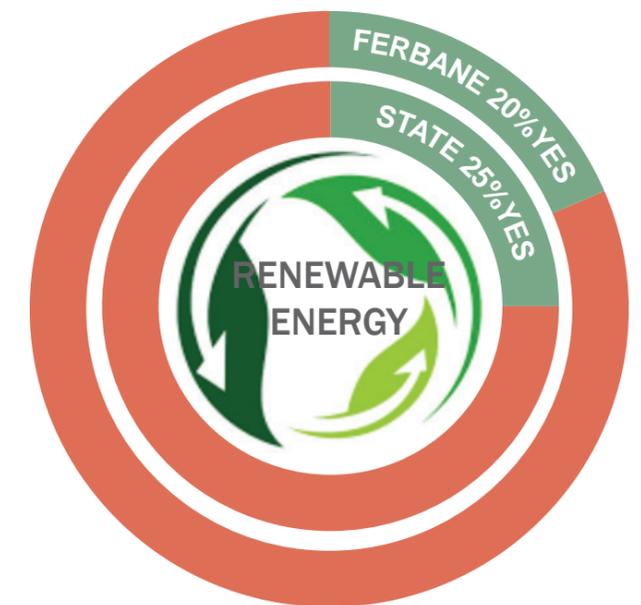
Nearly three-quarters of dwellings are clustered around the 5-7 rooms size, compared with about 58% nationally, with 3- and 4-bedroom dwellings predominating.

The 40% of residents who use peat for central heating compares to just 4% nationally. There is an energy retrofitting issue to be addressed specifically in this region and others with a history in the peat industry.

Ferbane (2022)

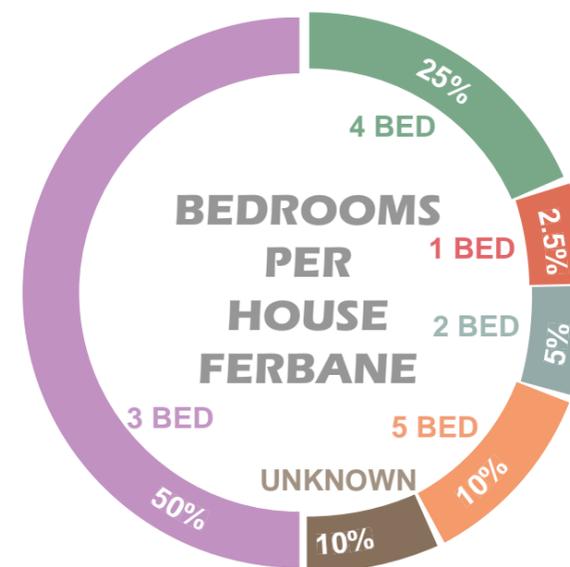


A huge 40% of households use peat to heat their homes



Over 75% of people own their own home

99% of dwelling types are houses



79% of households have broadband

Transport

There is a need to contribute to an increase in cycling and public transport to the area, this is evident from the lower than average figures which uses these methods of transport. This echoes residents concerns at lack of public transport to the area.

Vacancy

8% of dwellings were unoccupied at the time of the 2022 Census, this is comparable to the vacancy rates outlined in the OCC visual vacancy survey highlighting the need to address vacancy in the town centre.

Employment

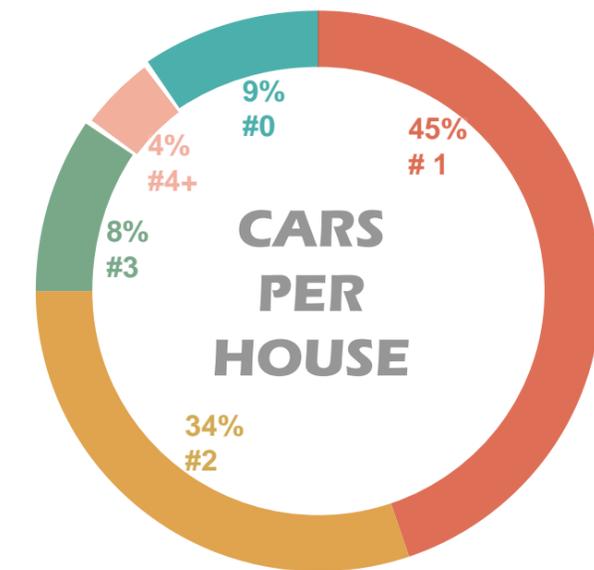
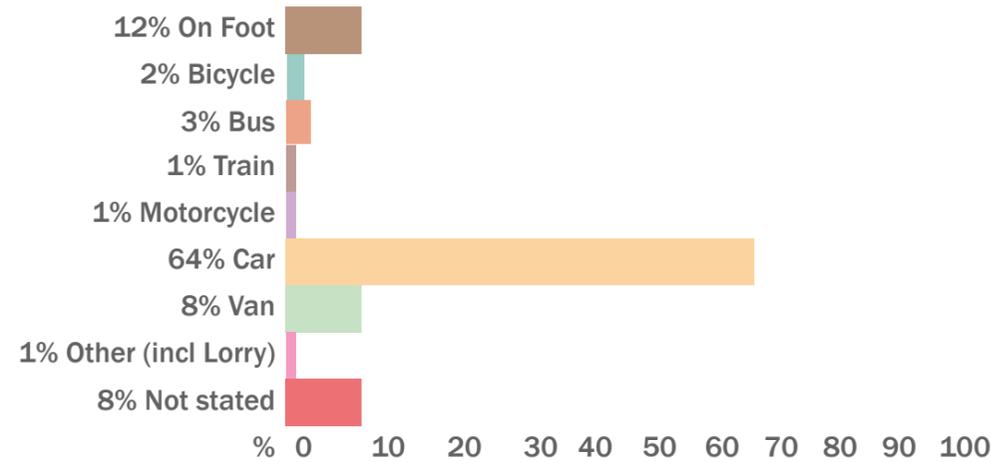
Employment patterns in Ferbane are concentrated in skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled roles. The closure of long-term employers Bord na Móna and ESB has resulted in a significant reduction in traditional industrial employment, creating a need for economic diversification. Targeted investment in upskilling and retraining the community is essential, with a focus on emerging sectors such as renewable energy, agri-food innovation, and digital services, alongside tourism development, to ensure sustainable employment opportunities for the local workforce.

Access & Inclusivity

Stastics indicate that those living with a degree of disability is higher than the National Average. This is further echoed in the large number of elderly members of the community. Accessibility will need to be included as a fundamental requirement of all new projects.

The stastics indicate that the White Irish category constitutes the largest proportion of Ferbane's population, reflecting a lower level of ethnic diversity compared to the national average. In line with equality and inclusion principles, it is imperative to implement measures that promote a sense of belonging for all residents, ensuring that individuals from different racial or ethnic backgrounds are not marginalise.

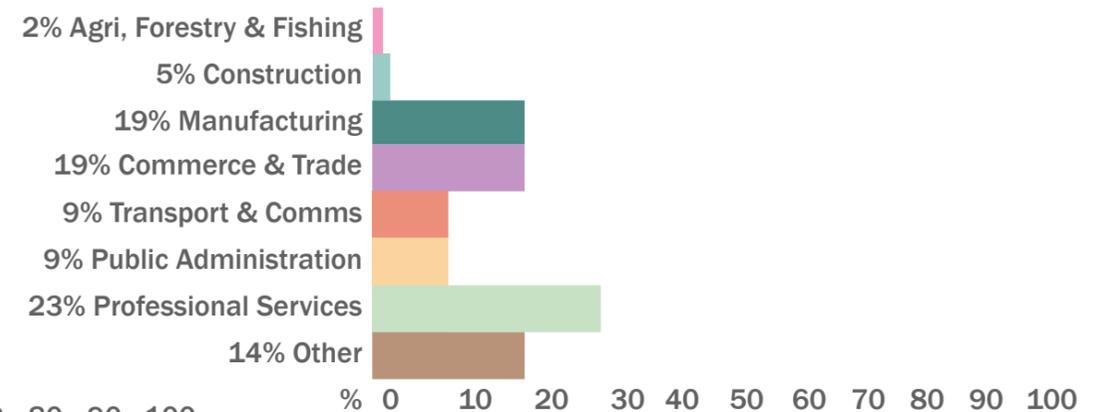
Mode of Trasport



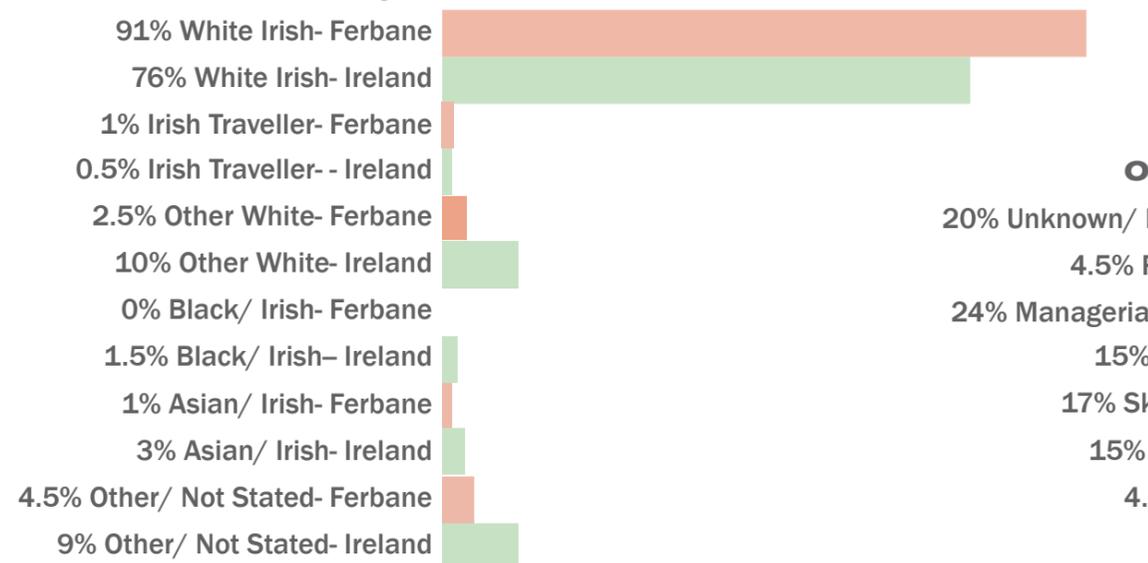
Car is the primary means of transport at 65%



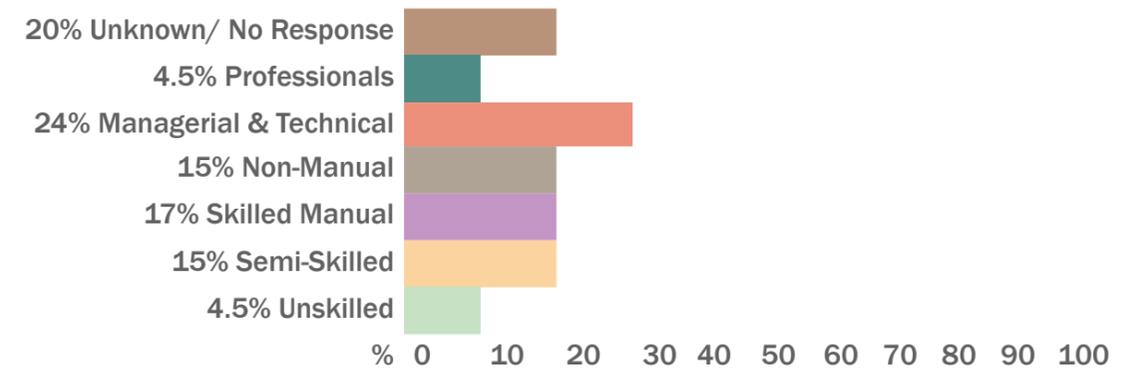
Employment Sectors



Ethnicity %



Occupations



UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: HISTORY

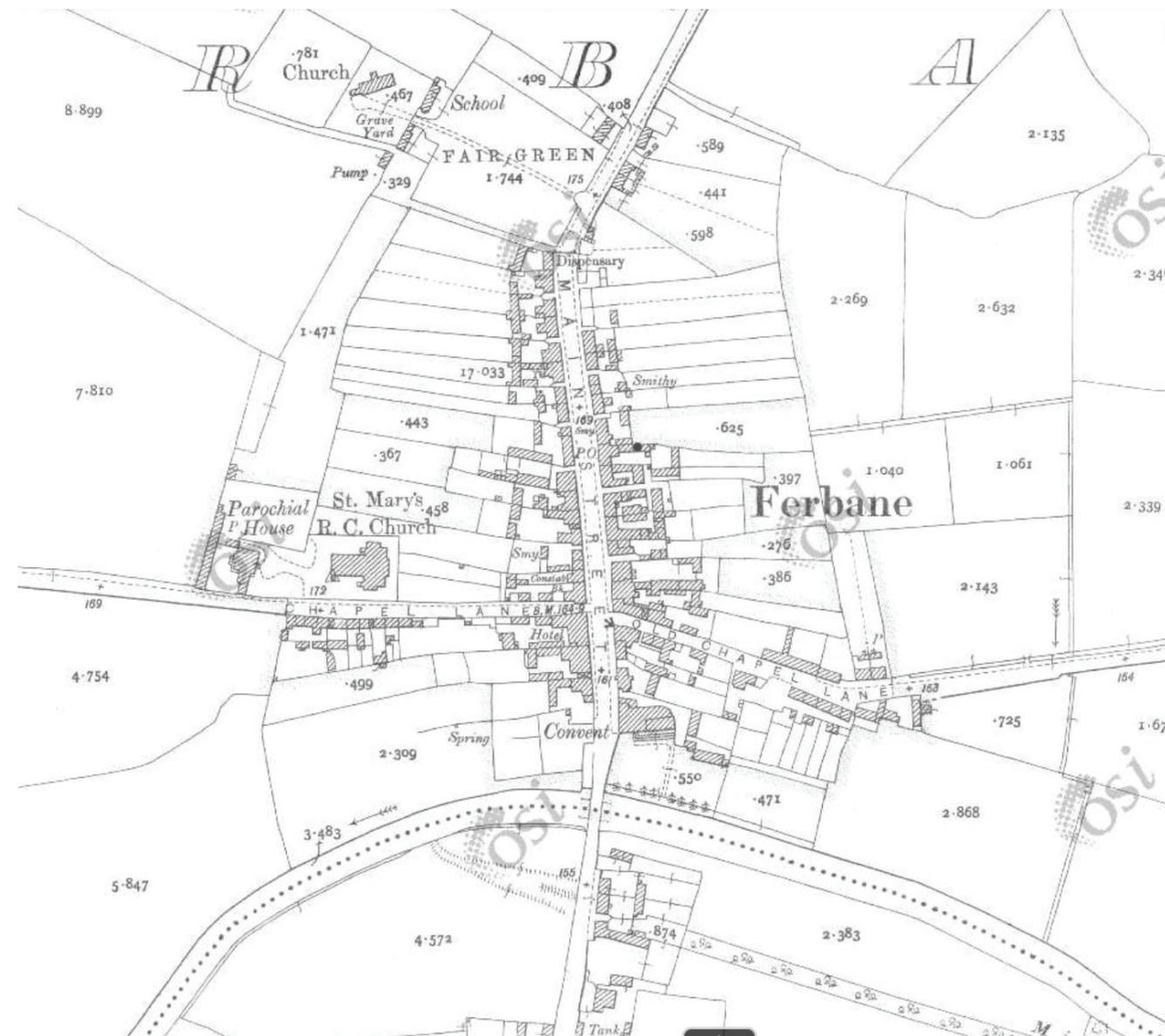
Origins & History of Ferbane

The town of Ferbane is rich in its history and heritage. There are 18 protected structures within the Town Area. There are a further three properties which are listed on the NIAH Register. The three afore mentioned properties of Regional Importance include St. Josephs Convent and St. Mary's Parochial Hall, to the North and South of the River. The properties flank Ferbane Bridge, which is another protected structure and also the main crossing point of the river for the town.

Further North within the town is Ferbane Church of the Immaculate Conception, built c.1820 with extensive renovations in 1896 by architect William Hague. Historically, the church was bounded by a low wall and cast-iron railing which was typical of churches at that time. Modern additions and changes have led to the erosion of the boundary to the street and the development of an ad hoc car park.

The Main Street of Ferbane is enhanced by a range of protected structures which front directly onto the Street. These properties mostly consist of houses with shop or pub fronts. It is often remarked that Ferbane main street has a varied and interesting set of shop fronts notable within the county. However, many of these properties are now vacant and disused.

There are also a number of archaeological monuments in the surrounding area (*indicated on map page 37*). The most significant of which is the Gallen complex with its early monastic site in the grounds of the now Gallen Nursing home just south of the town centre.



Extract of historical Map 25 Inch B&W (1897-1913)



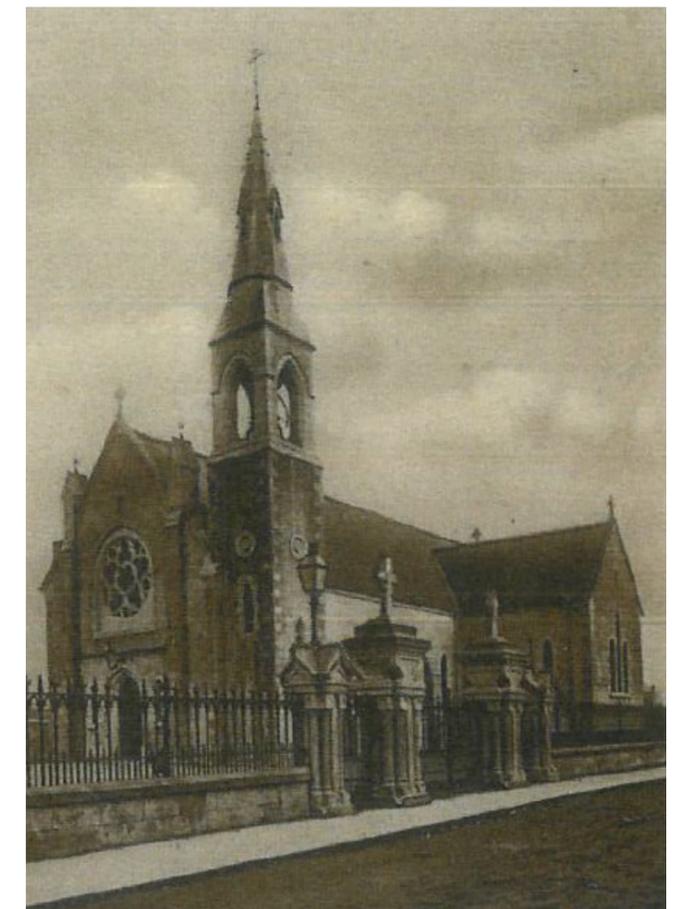
Saint Joseph's Convent c. 1910



Ferbane Main Street c. 1934



Ferbane Main Street c.1910



Historical photo Church of the Immaculate Conception, Ferbane built 1896

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: HISTORY

Town Historic Development

LEGEND

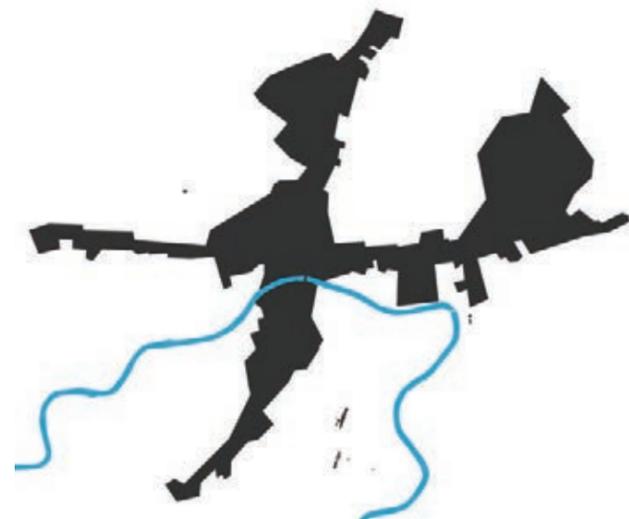
- 6 Inch B&W (1829-41)
- 25 Inch B&W (1897-1913)
- 20th Century Mapping



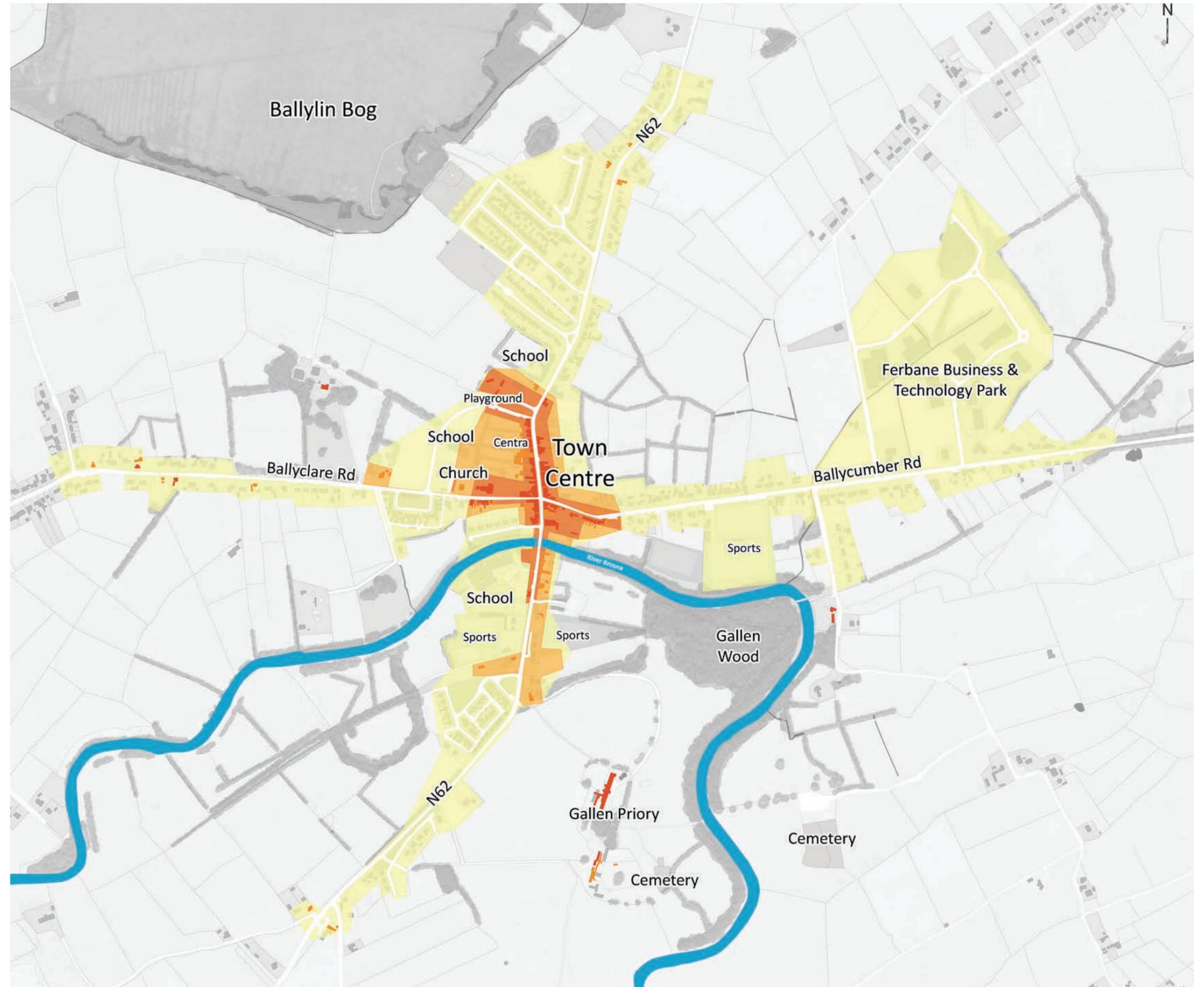
Extent of 6 Inch B&W (1829-41)



Extent of 6 Inch Last Edition (1830-1930)



Extent of 20th Century Mapping



Ferbane Town Evolution

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: HISTORY

Heritage Assets

Key Facts

- The town is rich in history and heritage.
- There are a large number of protected structures (18 in total).
- Some protected structures are vacant or in disrepair (refer to vacancy map page 44)
- A significant number of archaeological monuments are located to the south of Gallen Wood, including an early monastic site.
- There is no heritage walk currently present in the town.
- Ferbane Tidy Towns erected a number signs focused on biodiversity around the town following their biodiversity action plan.



Church of the Immaculate Conception: Roman Catholic Church



Gallen Priory



Church of Ireland



Ulster Bank



The Gallen Priory monastic site



Former primary school



Biodiversity Signage



Saint Joseph's Convent



Gallen Lodge



Six-bay two-storey house, built c.1870, with pubfront

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: HISTORY

Heritage Assets

The town of Ferbane has numerous Heritage Assets and Protected Structures identified on this map. Refurbishment to protected structures require consultation with OCC Planning & Conservation Department or consultation with an accredited Conservation Architect.

LEGEND

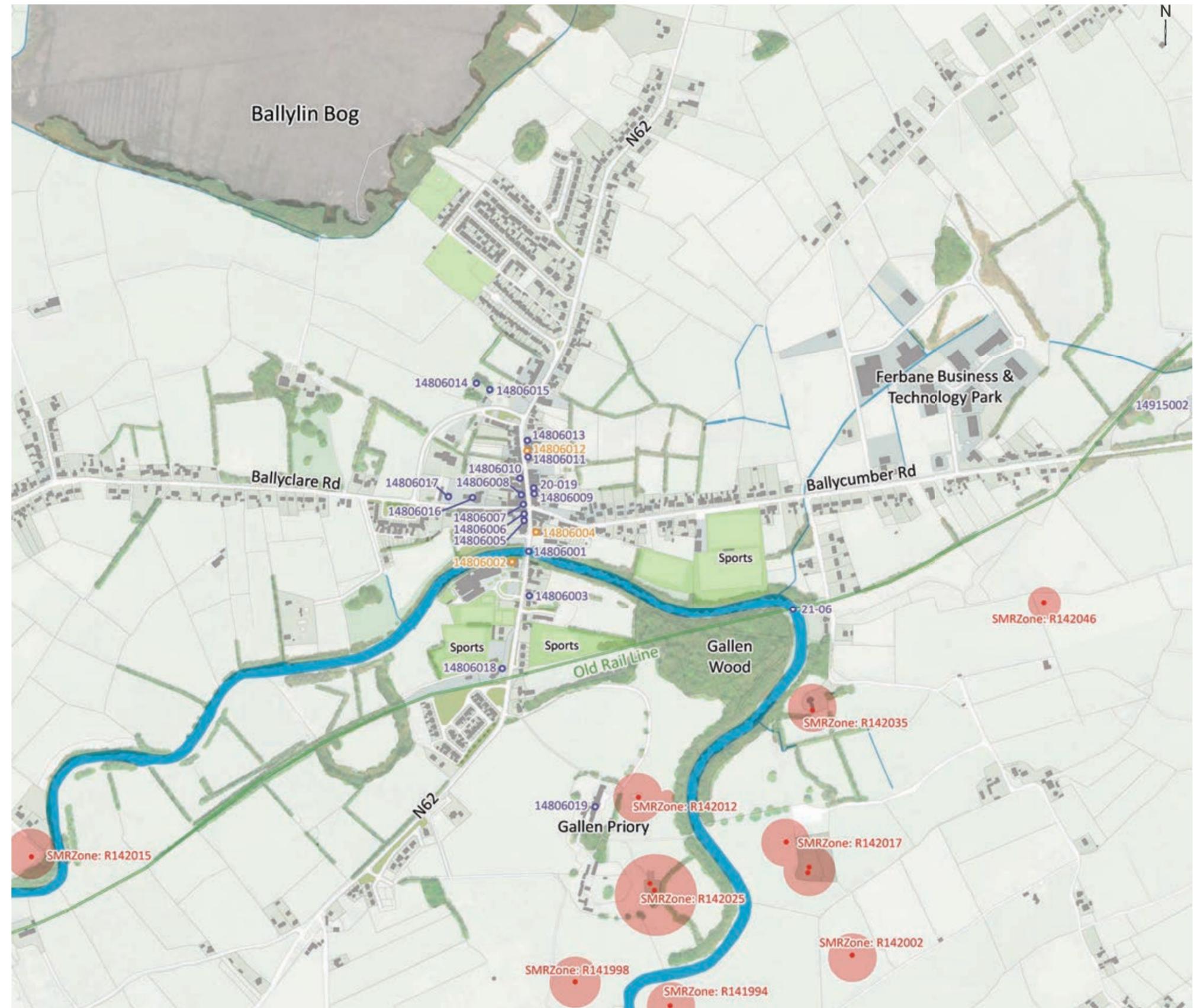
Record of Protected Structures (RPS)

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH)

Site & Monuments Record

- 14806001 : Ferbane Bridge
- 14806002 : Saint Mary's Parochial Hall
- 14806003 : Gallen Lodge
- 14806004 : Saint Joseph's Convent
- 14806005 : house
- 14806006 : house
- 14806007 : house
- 14806008 : Fleming : house
- 14806009 : Grennan : house
- 14806010 : house
- 14806011 : K. Egan : house
- 14806012 : House
- 14806013 : Ulster Bank
- 14806014 : Ferbane Church: church/chapel
- 14806015 : Ferbane Church: school
- 14806016: Church of the Immaculate Conception
- 14806017: Church:presbytery/parochial/curate's house
- 14806018 : Ferbane Railway Station
- 14806019 : Gallen Priory
- 14915002 : The Rectory
- 21-06 : Aghaboy Bridge
- 20-019 : Hennessys Pub Main Street

- SMRZone: R142015 Ballyclare Castle
- SMRZone: R141998 Potential enclosure
- SMRZone: R141994 Potential enclosure
- SMRZone: R142002 Potential enclosure
- SMRZone: R142012 Ecclesiastical Abbey remains
- SMRZone: R142025 Gallen Graveyard
- SMRZone: R142017 Old church site
- SMRZone: R142035 Castle
- SMRZone: R142046 Burial Mound



Ferbane Heritage Assets

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: BUILT FORM

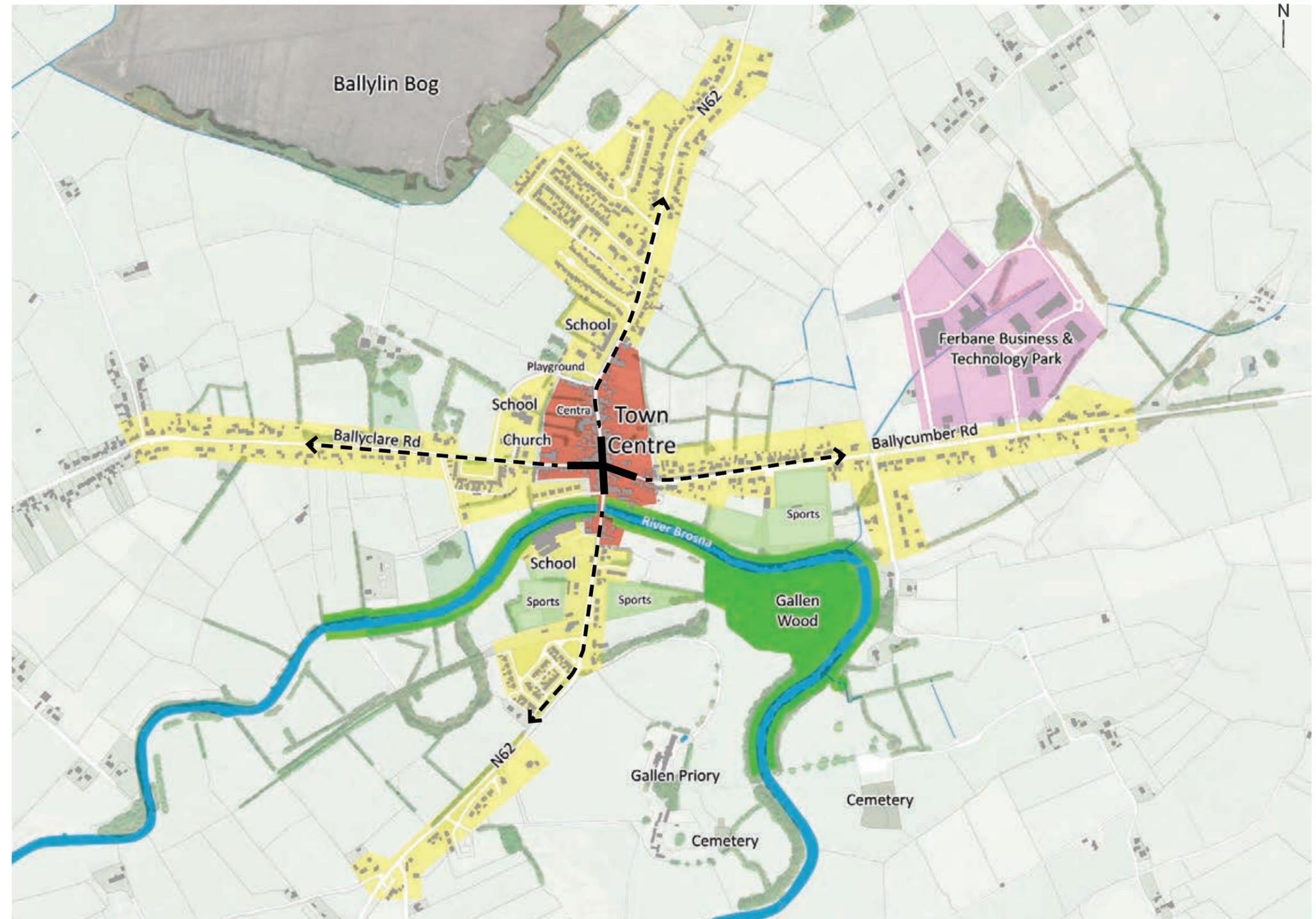
Urban Settlement Form

The town of Ferbane has its origins at a crossroads on the Northern bank of the River Brosna at the bridging point. This historic core, now the town centre, was fairly compact in nature and grew up servicing the surrounding rural area including Gallen Abbey, which is a renowned early Christian site situated on the southern side of the Brosna.

The town has developed in a linear fashion along the radial routes, in particular the approaches from Ballycumber and Belmont, and along the N62 in the direction of Athlone.

There are a number of housing estates dating from the 1950s that were built to accommodate the Bord na Móna and ESB workforce, and a number that were constructed since the mid-1990s which give the town some depth, particularly to the north and west of the town centre.

Ferbane's Business and Technology Park, located to the east of the town, was developed on the site of the former ESB power station in the early 2000s. Since the closure of the power station in 2001, the park has become home to a range of businesses, providing an important hub for local enterprise and economic activity.



Ferbane Character Areas

LEGEND:

- Historic Town Centre
- Ribbon Development
- Ferbane Business Park
- River Brosna & Gallen Wood

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: BUILT FORM

Character Areas



Main Street



Ballycumber Rd



Ferbane Business and Technology Park



River Brosna



Main Street



Athlone Rd/ N62



Ferbane Business and Technology Park



Old Railway Line at Gallen Wood

Historic Town Centre

- A well-established historic street network, with a clearly defined street frontage.
- A variety of building scales and architectural styles.
- A general sense of historic character, though building ages vary widely, including some recent frontage renovations.
- A diverse mix of uses, featuring shops and businesses at the core of the Main Street, alongside residential uses.
- Deep plots extending away from the road, often with secondary buildings and yards—some offering off-street parking via yard access, while others depend on on-street parking.
- Number of vacant buildings along historic streets.

Ribbon Development & Modern Estates

- The roads leading into the town have been built up bit by bit over time.
- Buildings along these old roads vary in age, but most were built in the 20th and 21st century.
- Houses were built one at a time or in small modern estates.
- Houses are usually set back from the road, with bigger plots, and are often detached or semi-detached with their own driveways.
- The style and shape of buildings vary greatly from one plot to the next. There is a dominant mix of bungalows, with occasional two-storey houses scattered throughout.

Ferbane Business Park

- The park features an organized layout with paved roads, footpaths, and street lighting.
- The park accommodates a mix of building sizes, from small-scale operations to larger, purpose-built facilities for manufacturing and distribution.
- A number of serviced plots are available for new businesses or future expansion.
- Located to the north of the business park's built-up area, Ballylin Amenity Woodland and the former Cow Park are accessible to those working in the park.

River Brosna & Gallen Wood

- The River Brosna forms a natural wildlife corridor through the town.
- Native riparian woodland flank both sides of the river.
- The river's riparian woodlands are dominated by ash, willow, alder, and birch, with mosses and wildflowers.
- Gallen Wood, a mature beech woodland is located at a bend of the River Brosna to the east of Ferbane.
- Early spring wildflowers such as lords-and-ladies, wild garlic, and lesser celandine bloom before the canopy fully develops, creating a colourful carpet across the woodland floor.

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: BUILT FORM

Town Centre Urban Structure

Key Facts

- Compact town built along 2 intersecting roads
- Well defined street frontages in the town centre
- 2 notable landmark buildings in the town Church of the Immaculate Conception & Saint Joseph's Convent
- Important views over River Brosna at Ferbane Bridge
- Focal areas in the town limited to the Main Street around Centra, playground and small public space at The Fairgreen
- Limited public open in the town except for the recently completed Fairgreen

Landmark Buildings



Church of the Immaculate Conception, Roman Catholic Church



Saint Joseph's Convent

Focal Areas



The Fairgreen (Recently completed)



Playground

Town Centre Gateways



Ballyclare Rd



Ballycumber Rd



Athlone Rd



N62/Lower Main Street

Defined Street Frontages



Main Street

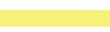


Main Street

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: BUILT FORM

Town Centre Urban Structure

LEGEND:

-  Local Landmark Buildings
-  Important Views
-  Defined Street Frontages
-  Discontinued Street Frontages
-  Town Centre Key Streets
-  Public Open Space
-  Focal Areas
-  Town Centre Gateways



Ferbane Urban Structure

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: BUILT FORM

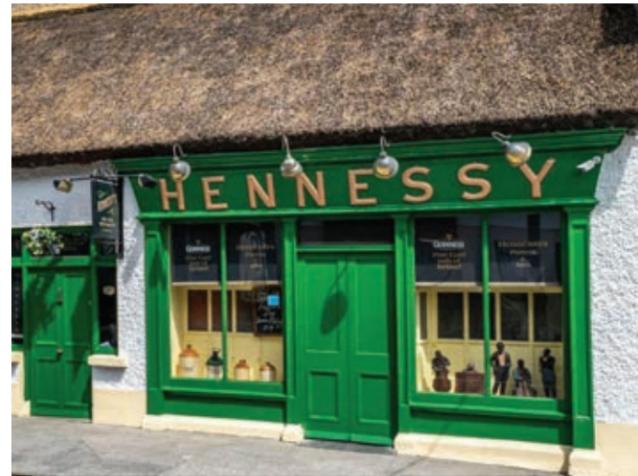
Ferbane Character

The town features a mix of traditional and modern buildings. Older stone houses and shopfronts stand alongside newer homes and facilities. Notable buildings include the parish church, schools, a community centre, and sports grounds, which all serve as important parts of daily life. Ferbane's streets are easy to navigate, with most shops and services located within walking distance, creating a practical and convenient town layout.

*Ferbane is the English name for An Féar Bán in Irish, which translates to "the white grass". The name is said to originate from the white fluffy seedheads of the two types of bog cotton (Hare's Tail Cottongrass) *Eriophorum angustifolium* and *vaginatum*), which grow in the peatlands surrounding the town.*

Ferbane has a strong connection to its rural surroundings and a history rooted in farming and peat harvesting. The nearby boglands were once a major source of local employment, especially through the work of Bord na Móna.

The old railway line, now disused, was once a key part of transport and industry in the area. While those industries have declined, their impact is still visible in the town's layout and character. Today, Ferbane remains a quiet and steadily growing place. It reflects a balance between preserving its history and adapting to modern life, offering a sense of stability and pride in the local area.



Main Street, Hennessy's



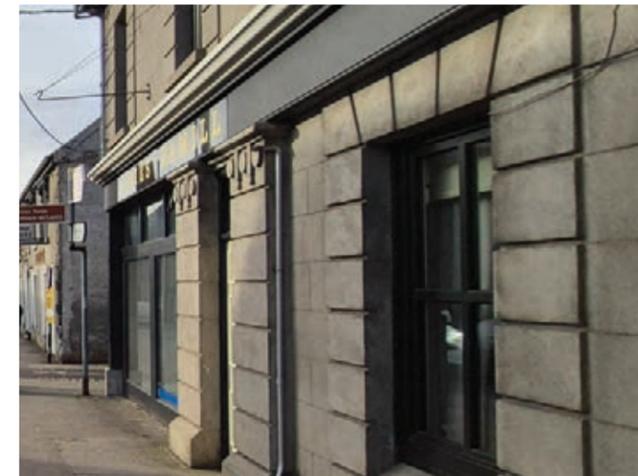
Main Street, Ulster Bank



Old Railway Line and Gallen Wood



Former Railway Bridge & River Brosna



Former Ulster Bank Main Street, James Hamill



Ballyclare Rd, Brosna Press



Ballylin Bogwalk



Church of Ireland ruins



Main street

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: BUILT FORM

Town Centre Streetscapes

Streetscapes

Ferbane's town centre streets still retain their historic character through a good sense of enclosure, particularly evident on Main Street and Chapel Lane. Main Street maintains a strong civic character, preserving its traditional linear market town form. Currently, approximately 70% of the street's width is dedicated to car parking and traffic circulation. There is a noticeable lack of greenery and public street furniture, while overhead cables dominate the views along the street.



Main Street



Cross Section

Enclosure Ratio: 1:2.55
Moderate Enclosure
Street Character: Mixed Use
Greening: Minimal (planter boxes)

Street Enclosure

Street enclosure is the ratio of building height (measured from front line to front line) to street width. A consistent ratio along a street enhances the urban feel. Ratios like 1:2 create a strong sense of enclosure; 1:3 is moderate. Wider streets over 30m may feel less enclosed, but historic street patterns typically offer a comfortable scale. The town's streets could be further improved with better public realm design.



Main Street



Cross Section

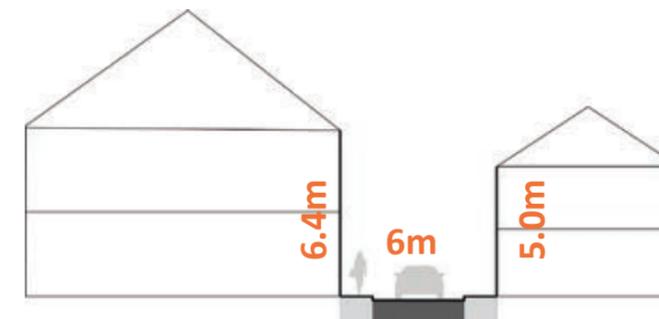
Enclosure Ratio: 1:2.55
Moderate Enclosure
Street Character: Mixed Use
Greening: Minimal (planter boxes)

Footpath Widths

Narrow footpaths were particularly evident on Chapel Lane. This is a primary route into the Main Street from the church and junior school. Footpaths on Main Street are generally wide and comfortable with localised pinch points and some cluttering. Along Church Lane footpaths are very narrow and not accessible for wheelchair or buggy users.



Chapel Lane

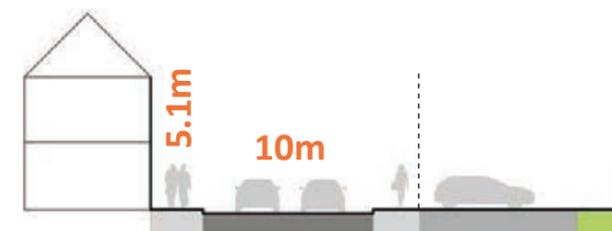


Cross Section

Enclosure Ratio: 1:2.55
Strong Enclosure
Street Character: Mixed Use
Greening: None



Ballycumber Rd



Cross Section

Enclosure Ratio: 1:2 (close to Main Street)
Strong Enclosure
Street Character: Mainly Residential
Greening: Very Limited

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: BUILT FORM

Land Use

Key Facts

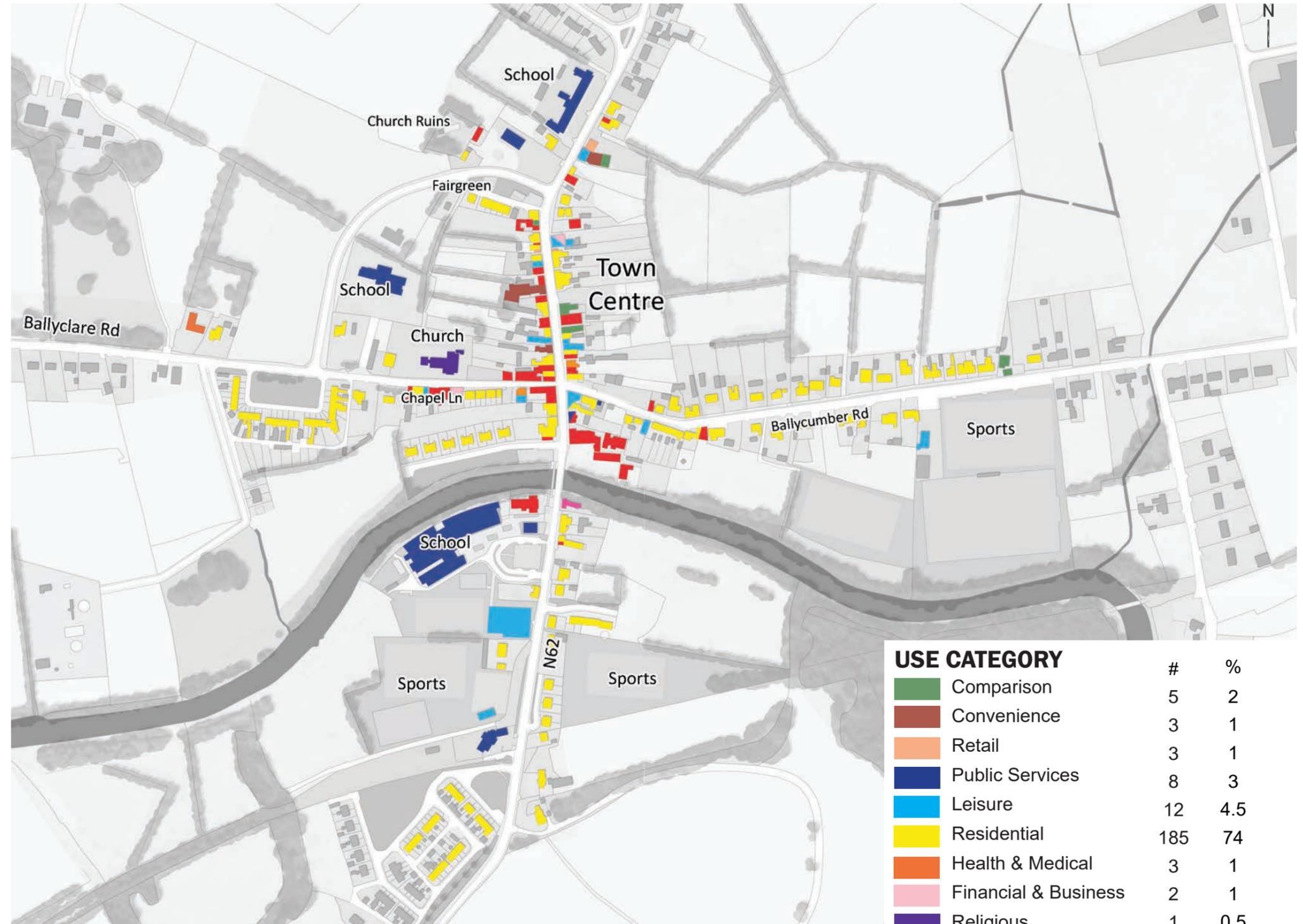
- Commercial uses are concentrated in the heart of the town, primarily along Main Street and Chapel Lane.
- Public and religious services are located on Main Street or within a five-minute walk of it.
- Residential areas are primarily situated just outside the town centre, along Ballycumber Road, Ballyclare Road, and the N62.
- There is an apparent level of vacancy in the town of Ferbane with 29 properties identified as vacant in the town centre.

Summary

A land use survey was undertaken in November 2024 to gain a greater understanding of the facilities available in the town centre. 252 properties were surveyed as identified in the map opposite.

Almost 12% of the properties were vacant while 74% of the properties surveyed were in residential use. The remaining 15% is made up of a mix of commercial uses and public services which includes three relatively large schools.

It is evident from these numbers that there is a relatively low percentage of retail and convenience facilities with most of the population traveling to the larger towns of Athlone or Tullamore for shopping or carrying out online shopping. This pulls people from the town centre and creates a cyclic effect leading to further deterioration of the town centre and vacancy.



Land Use Map (November 2024)

USE CATEGORY		#	%
	Comparison	5	2
	Convenience	3	1
	Retail	3	1
	Public Services	8	3
	Leisure	12	4.5
	Residential	185	74
	Health & Medical	3	1
	Financial & Business	2	1
	Religious	1	0.5
	Vacant	29	11.5
	Derelict	1	0.5
Total Properties		252	100

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: BUILT FORM

Streetscape & Active Frontage

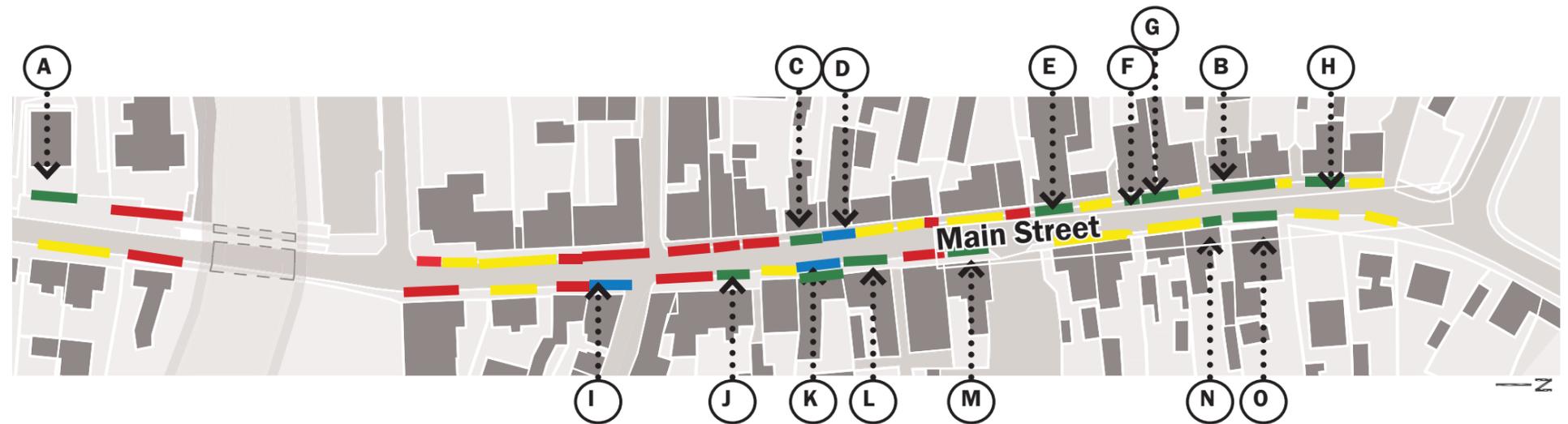
A visual survey was carried out of the active frontage on the main street of Ferbane. With almost 30% of the properties vacant and a further 40% in use but without an active frontage. The main street remains underused during the daytime while at night time only 6% of the properties have an active front. This lack of activity and passive surveillance can make walking on the main street at night time feel unsafe, although crime figures in Ferbane are very low.

Ground floor activity and holding the edge of the street needs to be addressed in order to reframe the street as a public space for people to linger and meet with friends rather than just pass through.



LEGEND

	#	%
■ Vacant Property/ Shopfront	14	28
■ In Use but no active frontage	19	38
■ In Use- Day	13	28
■ In Use- Night	3	6
Total Properties	49	100



- A. Library
- B. Beautician
- C. Butchers
- D. Public House
- E. Convenience Store
- F. Barber Shop
- G. Food Take Away
- H. Storage Facility
- I. Public House
- J. Physiotherapist
- K. Public House & Restaurant
- L. Hair Salon
- M. Pharmacy
- N. Post Office
- O. Cafe (Ground) Accountant (1st)



UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: BUILT FORM

Opportunity Sites

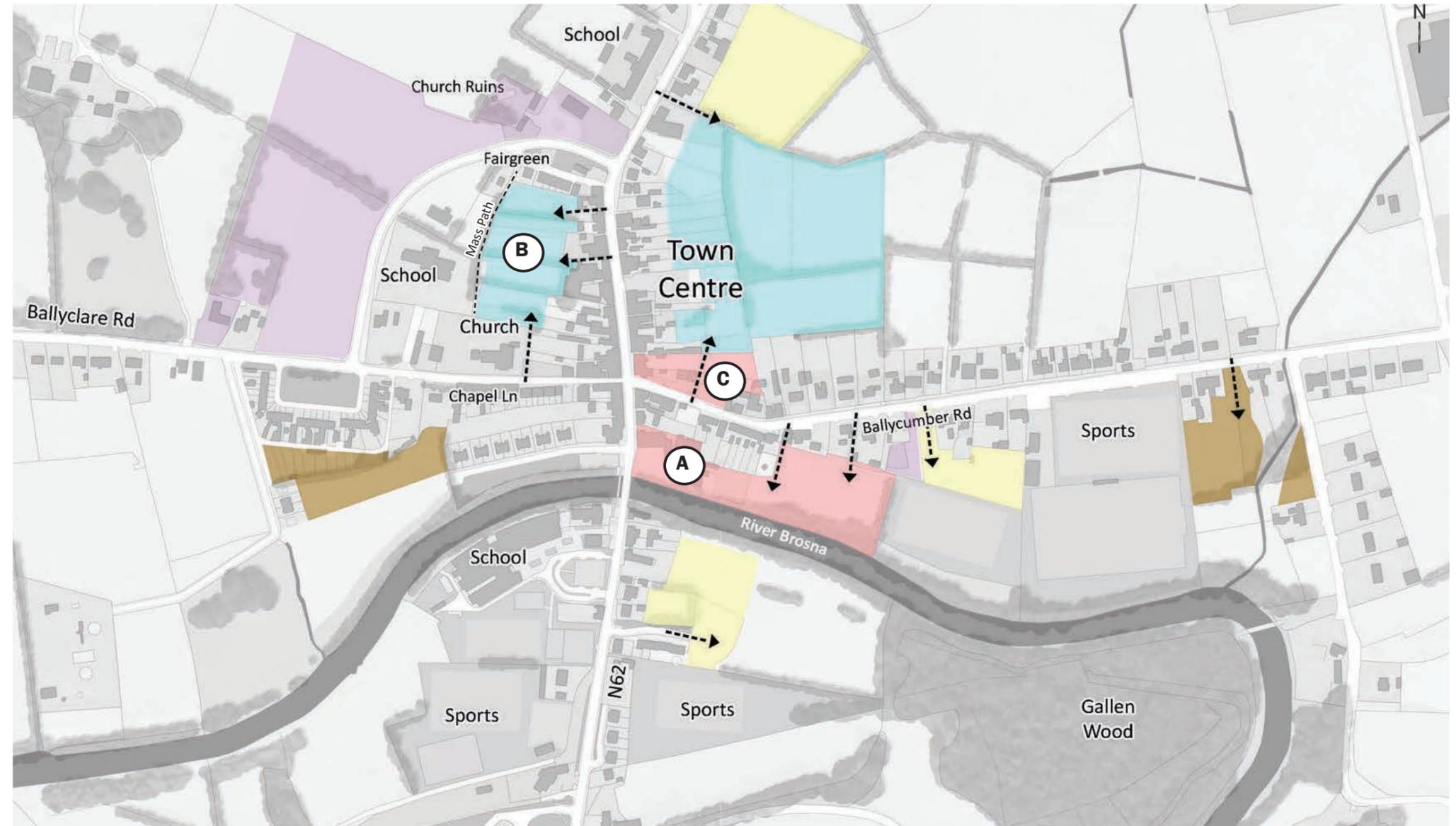
Key Facts

- There are two notable opportunity sites for development accessible from Ballycumber Road.
- There is an extensive area of town centre-zoned backland available for consolidated growth.
- A number of residential-zoned lands are available to meet future housing needs.
- There is a significant bank of undeveloped land to the East of the town which is zoned for community services/ facilities. This land could be suited for development.

Summary

A number of opportunity sites have been identified within the town. It is envisaged that these will act as catalyst sites for activity within the town which will also encourage further development on other sites from private investors.

The zoned lands are as identified in Offaly County Council's Development Plan 2021-2027 and will be reviewed in the next County Development Plan (2025-2031)



LEGEND:

- ▶ Potential Links
- Opportunity Sites (Ferbane Town Plan)
- Undeveloped Town Centre Zoned Lands
- Residential Zoned Lands
- Community Services/Facilities Zoned Lands
- Strategic Residential Reserve



Saint Joseph's Convent lands



Lands along Mass Path



Ballycumber Rd informal car park opportunity site

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: BUILT FORM

Vacancy & Dereliction

OCC and the Town Team carried out a visual inspection of vacancy of the properties located in Ferbane Town Centre in November 2024. Vacancy in Ferbane is concentrated around the Main Street, with a number of the more significant historical properties lying vacant.

The main National Road from Athlone to Limerick passes directly through the town of Ferbane and the road network has been designed to facilitate this. The requirement for the National Road to pass through the town does not put people at the centre of town and has contributed to the Urban sprawl of the town and depopulation of its centre, thereby increasing the vacancy and dereliction of the town.

The historic meeting point and main crossroads of Ferbane has been further eroded through vacancy due to migration of younger people to larger towns and cities for education and employment, and the increase in the use of online shopping causing a sharp decline in footfall within the town centre.

The large number of vacant properties within the town centre is an issue which has been raised by the community and residents. The Vacant Property grant is aiming to address this issue, further strategies will need to be put in place to encourage business and enterprise back to the town centre.



Vacant building on Main Street



Vacant St Mary's Parochial Hall



Derelict building at Ferbane Bridge



Vacant former primary school & courthouse



LEGEND		#	%
■	Derelict	1	0.5
■	Vacant- Fully	29	11.5
■	In Use	<u>222</u>	<u>88</u>
Total Properties		252	100

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: BUILT FORM

Your Concerns & Ideas

Lack of houses to buy or rent

Main Street needs upgrades - phone lines, trees.

Renovations to buildings on Main Street

To improve our community, we need more amenities and action on the vacant properties on Main Street - either through purchase or better upkeep - to prevent a run-down appearance.

Some abandoned buildings

Upgrade of streets and public realm in general

Derelict buildings etc. Lack of rental properties and houses in the town.

Improve the aesthetics of the town

Derelict sites in town

The lack of housing and amenities, especially for young people

Lack of managed Tourist / Visitor Attractions and Facilities for tourists

Retirement village for older people to make houses available for families.

Lack of housing available

there are v little opportunities to rent or buy houses in ferbane.

Main Street not being fully utilised with a number of empty/ derelict buildings

Empty buildings in the town, pubs restaurants and shops closing over a number of years.

lack of retail

More job opportunities and more housing

Assisted living houses. Incentive for people to sell vacant properties in the town.

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: NATURE & LANDSCAPE

Natural Assets: Blue Infrastructure

The town of Ferbane is located on the banks of the Brosna River. The river forms a natural wildlife corridor through the town, the wildlife to the area is further enhanced by the presence of the native riparian woodland which flanks both sides of the river. The dark staining in the water is due to the presence of peat silt and sediment within the river

Riparian Woodland

A woodland along rivers and water courses, helps regulate natural processes and mitigate events like flooding. Native Riparian Woodland is a vital part of the water ecosystem; helps regulate the temperature of the water by providing shade and the tree roots (such as the deep roots of the water-loving alder) help prevent banks from eroding.



Ferbane Bridge and Gallen School

The Grand Canal at Gallen is located approximately 2km South of Ferbane Town Centre. The canal runs almost parallel to the Brosna River from Pollagh to the East to Shannon Harbour to the West where both the canal and the Brosna enter the River Shannon.

Other wetland habitats around Ferbane include drainage ditches, which provide suitable conditions for wetland plants, frogs and invertebrates.

Most built development within Ferbane is not within the flood plain and has been developed on higher ground. Elevated levels of flood risk exist to the west of Gallen View and east of Mill Race.

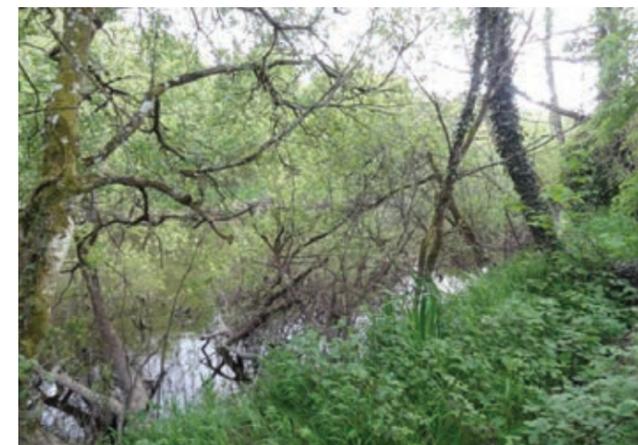
There is a small pocket of swamp and wet woodland that occupies a former river meander to the west of the Brosna bridge. This former oxbow lake now exists within the flood zone and offers potential for a wetland project.

The River is primarily observed from the Bridge at Main Street. Direct access to the River from the town centre is challenging. It presents huge potential to become an amenity space within the town centre. Various uses could benefit from improved access such as River and Wildlife Walk Routes and trails, access for aqua sports, tourism and more.

An extensive study was carried out by Mitchell & Associates to determine potential access points to the River for small boats and kayaks. The Convent site to the North of the River, East of the main street is highlighted as an opportunity site within Development Plan. Development of this site and area along the River bank will open up opportunities to develop and enhance the public Realm around the River and its banks. Opening up access along the River bank here will set a precedent and starting point to a new River way walking route.



Ferbane Old Railway Bridge crossing the River Brosna, East of the Town Centre



Riparian Woodland along Brosna River Banks



Ferbane Bridge



Riparian Woodland along Brosna River Banks



Ferbane Bridge viewed from below

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: NATURE & LANDSCAPE

Natural Assets: Green Infrastructure

The topographical characteristics of Ferbane are primarily flat due to the town's location within the peatland landscape of West Offaly.

The town has an abundance of green infrastructure assets in and around the town. In addition to the blue infrastructure of the River and canal, one of the most important natural assets to the town is Ballylin Bog. A raised bog to the North-West of the town, it is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Ballylin bog boardwalk was opened in 2023. A project created by the National Parks and Wildlife Service and part of The Living Bog Project funded by EU LIFE, the Dept. of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Although the boardwalk provides an enjoyable public amenity it is somewhat disjointed from the town centre and underutilised.

Aside from the Riparian woods along the River, the majority of the woodlands in Ferbane are made up of non-native trees, such as beech and sycamore. Gallen Woods is located east of the town, on the southern bank of the River. Historically the railway passed directly through this wooded area and across Ferbane Railway bridge. The old railway line now exists as one of

the many possible greenway routes throughout the country. The link has potential to become a very prominent and enjoyable walking and cycling route, easily accessible from the town centre. At present the walking route is difficult to access since many of the access points are currently via private land.

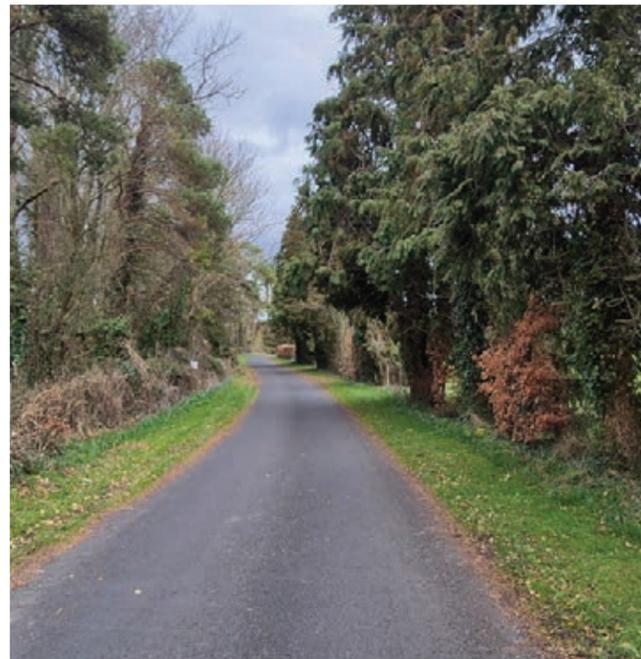
Most fields around Ferbane are separated by hedgerows, which provide a sort of substitute woodland edge habitat. The hedgerows are composed of hawthorn with some blackthorn and other shrubs like elder and bramble.

There are numerous sport and amenity spaces within the town including Ferbane GAA fields and Gallen United Football Club Grounds, both of which are used extensively by the community. Ferbane Pitch & Putt Club is located North of the town centre where outdoor tennis courts are also available for use.

Mature woodland planting is present at Gallen Priory and at the Church of Ireland ruins. To the North-East of the town, at Ferbane business and technology park there is Ballylin Amenity Woodland and the former Cow Park.



Gallen Wood



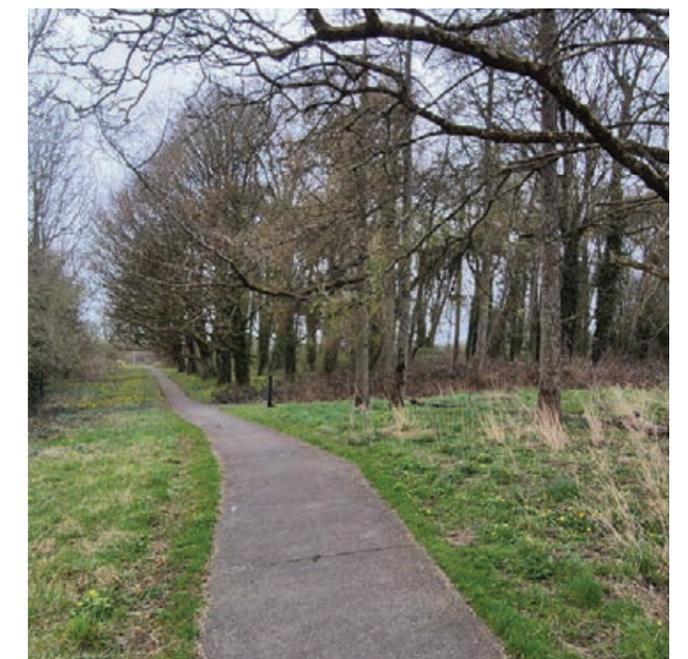
Gallen Priory tree planting



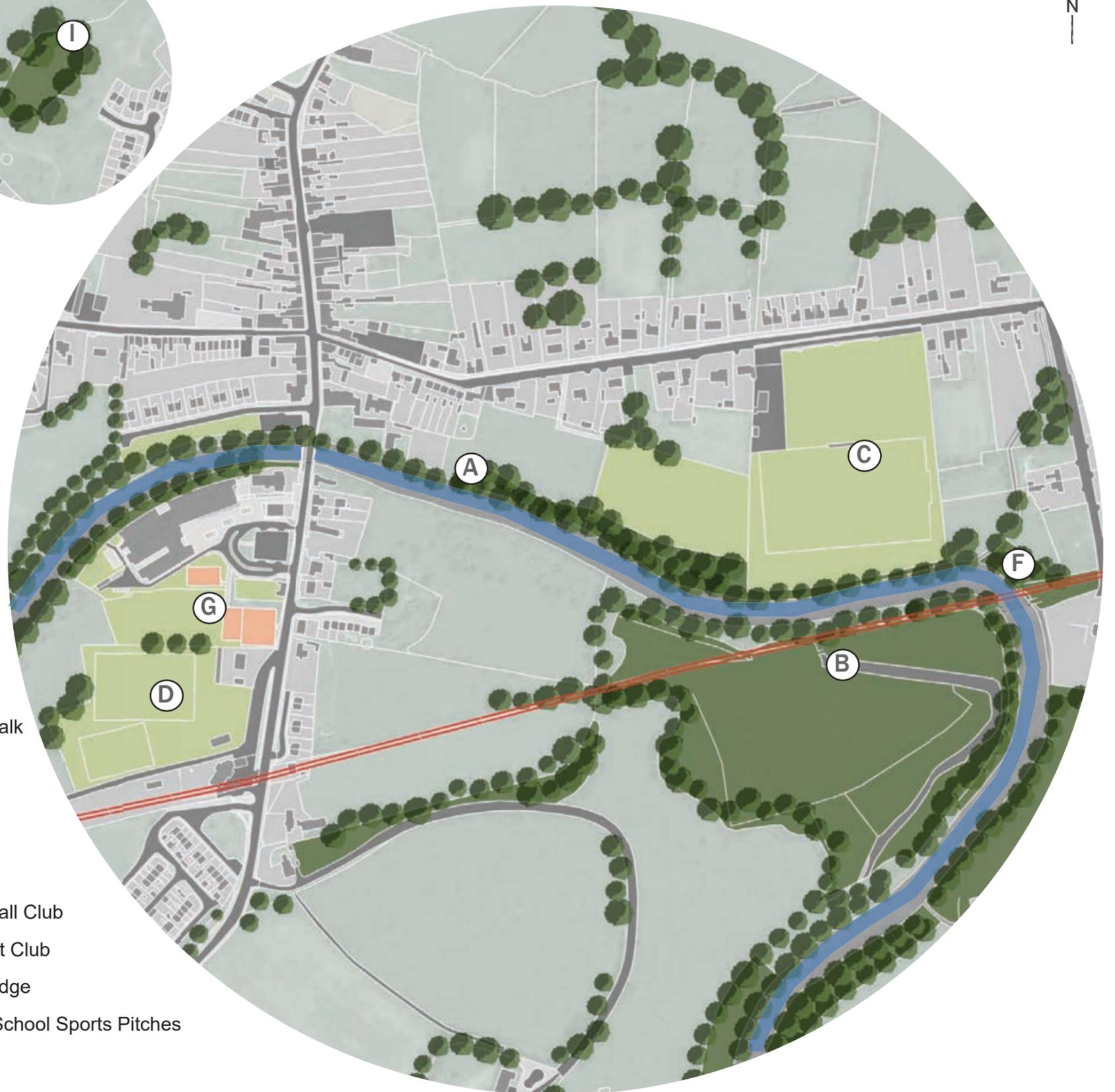
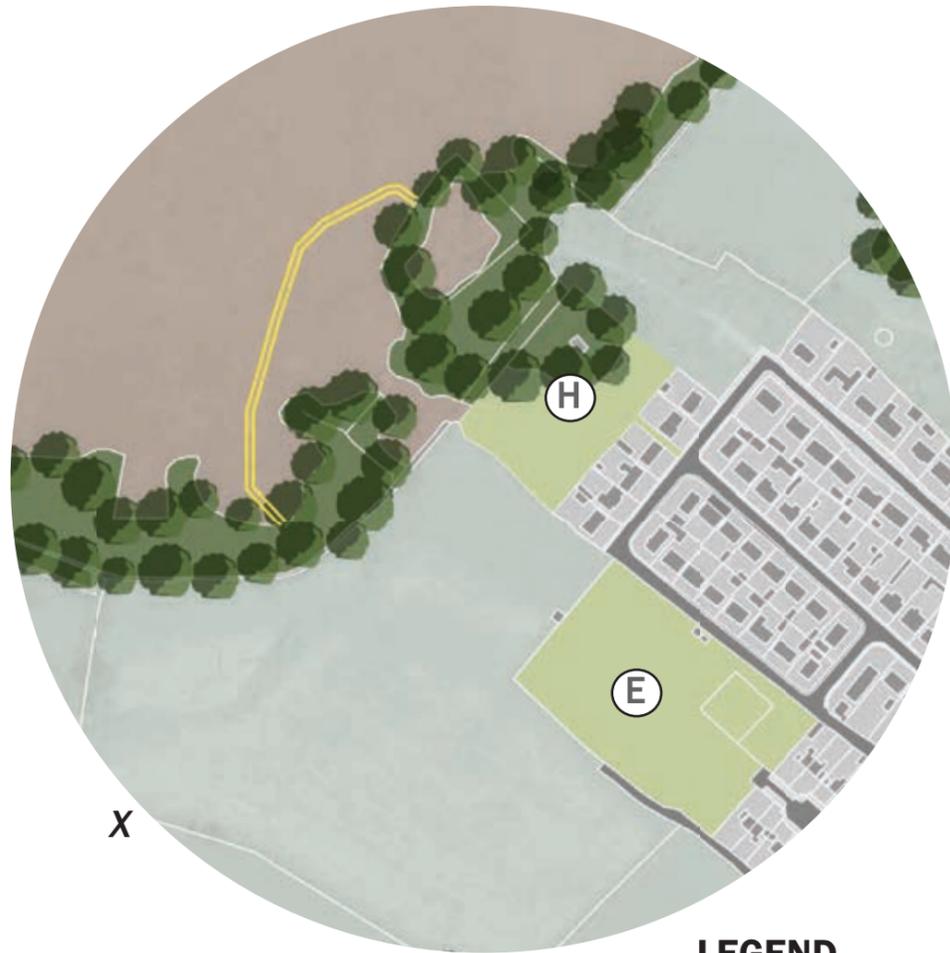
River Brosna wetlands



Ballylin Bog



Ballylin Amenity Woodland



LEGEND

-  Woodland
-  Ferbane Bog
-  Agricultural Land
-  Ballylin bog boardwalk
-  Old Rail Line
-  (A) Riparian Woodlands
-  (B) Gallen Woods
-  (C) Ferbane GAA
-  (D) Gallen United Football Club
-  (E) Ferbane Pitch & Putt Club
-  (F) Ferbane Railway bridge
-  (G) Gallen Community School Sports Pitches
-  (H) Informal Play Area
-  (I) Ballyvora Grove

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: NATURE & LANDSCAPE

Ferbane Green & Blue Infrastructure

LEGEND

- (A) Ferbane Bog
- (B) Ferbane Bog Woodlands
- (C) Ballylin Amenity Woodland and Cow Park
- (D) River Brosna and Riparian Zone
- (E) Gallen Wood
- (F) Gallen Priory Trees
- (G) River Brosna Wetlands
- (H) Church of Ireland Trees
-  Flood Zone- High Probability
-  Flood Zone- Medium Probability
-  Flood Zone- Low Probability
-  Historic River Meander
-  Riparian Zone



Extract of historical Map 25 Inch B&W (1897-1913) showing the historical bend in the River Brosna



Ferbane Natural Assets Map

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: MOVEMENT & CONNECTION

10-minute Walkable Town Centre

Key Facts

- Ferbane has a compact, walkable town centre, with all key facilities located within a 5–10 minute walking distance.
- The town is also a 5-minute cycling town, based on travel distance.
- Cyclists share road space with motor traffic, as there is no dedicated cycling infrastructure.
- Outside the town centre core, key walking destinations include schools, public services, and sports facilities.
- Majority of footfall is coming from people moving between the car park and the local Centra.

LEGEND:

Key walking attractors/destinations:

- (A) Town Centre Core
- (B) Playground
- (C) Shops at Texaco Petrol Station
- (D) St. Cynocs National School
- (E) Ferbane Bog
- (F) St.Cynocs Junior National School
- (G) HSE Health Centre
- (H) Church of the Immaculate Conception
- (I) Gallen Community School
- (J) Gallen United Pitches
- (K) Sport Grounds
- (L) Ferbane GAA
- (M) Community Creche

-  5min walking distance
-  10min walking distance
-  5min cycling distance
-  Bus Stops



Walking Range and Destinations

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: MOVEMENT & CONNECTION

Walking Network

Key Facts:

- Key pedestrian activity areas in Ferbane are concentrated around schools and along Main Street.
- There are several barriers to pedestrian movement and permeability, including a lack of dedicated crossings in key locations, missing or poor-quality footpaths, and no traffic calming measures in important pedestrian zones.
- School drop-offs create specific safety concerns during peak times, particularly due to congestion and conflicts with pedestrian movement.
- Pedestrian access to off-street car parks is poor, reducing their usability and discouraging walking.
- Limited wayfinding and signage further reduces ease of pedestrian navigation, especially for visitors or less mobile users.

Identified Issues



Obstructed Sightlines



Blocked footpath



Unsafe environment on the approach to school



Unsafe crossing and no school drop-off



Lack of markings and defined walking routes



No crossings at desired locations



Narrow and poor quality footpaths



Blocked bus bays



Lack of pedestrian facilities

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: MOVEMENT & CONNECTION

Pedestrian Activity and Walking Network

Key Observations:

1. No speed calming measures entering school zone
2. School zone area and crossing in front of school unsafe
3. No pedestrian crossing across the Main Street
4. No pedestrian crossing along desire route
5. Crossing unsafe, no speed calming
6. No speed calming entering town centre
7. No dedicated pedestrian crossings
8. Unmarked parking and walking routes
9. No clear pedestrian route to Mass Path
10. No pedestrian footpath on southside
11. Very narrow footpaths along Chapel Lane
12. No pedestrian crossing across Main Street
13. Informal parking, cars reversing into footpath
14. No pedestrian crossing across Main Street
15. No crossing/ speed calming at school zone
16. No crossing/ speed calming approaching school zone
17. Footpath stops here
18. Footpath in bad quality, no footpath on south-side
19. No pedestrian crossing to access GAA, car oriented environment
20. No pedestrian crossing/ speed calming
21. Footpath very narrow, no footpath on south-side
22. No footpath
23. Challenging access to Old Railway Route

LEGEND:

-  Key pedestrian hot spot areas
-  Main walking network
-  Informal walking routes (Old Railway Line)
-  Controlled pedestrian crossing



Walking Network Map

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: MOVEMENT & CONNECTION

Vehicular Movement & Public Transport Network

Key Facts

- Ferbane is served by the N62 regional route, connecting the town to Birr, Athlone, and the wider Midlands region
- The road network within the town primarily consists of local and regional roads, with Main Street acting as the main thoroughfare.
- There is no dedicated bypass, so through-traffic, including goods vehicles, passes directly through the town centre.
- The town has limited traffic management infrastructure, with no significant traffic calming along Main Street or near schools.
- The speed limit in the town centre is 50 km/h.
- Public transport frequency is limited, especially outside peak times and on weekends.
- The town is served by bus routes 840 and 72, both stops are located at one central location with no bus shelters present.
- No rail service is available in Ferbane; the nearest train stations are in Clara and Athlone.
- A planned relief road will link Ferbane Business Park to the N62, potentially easing traffic in the town centre.

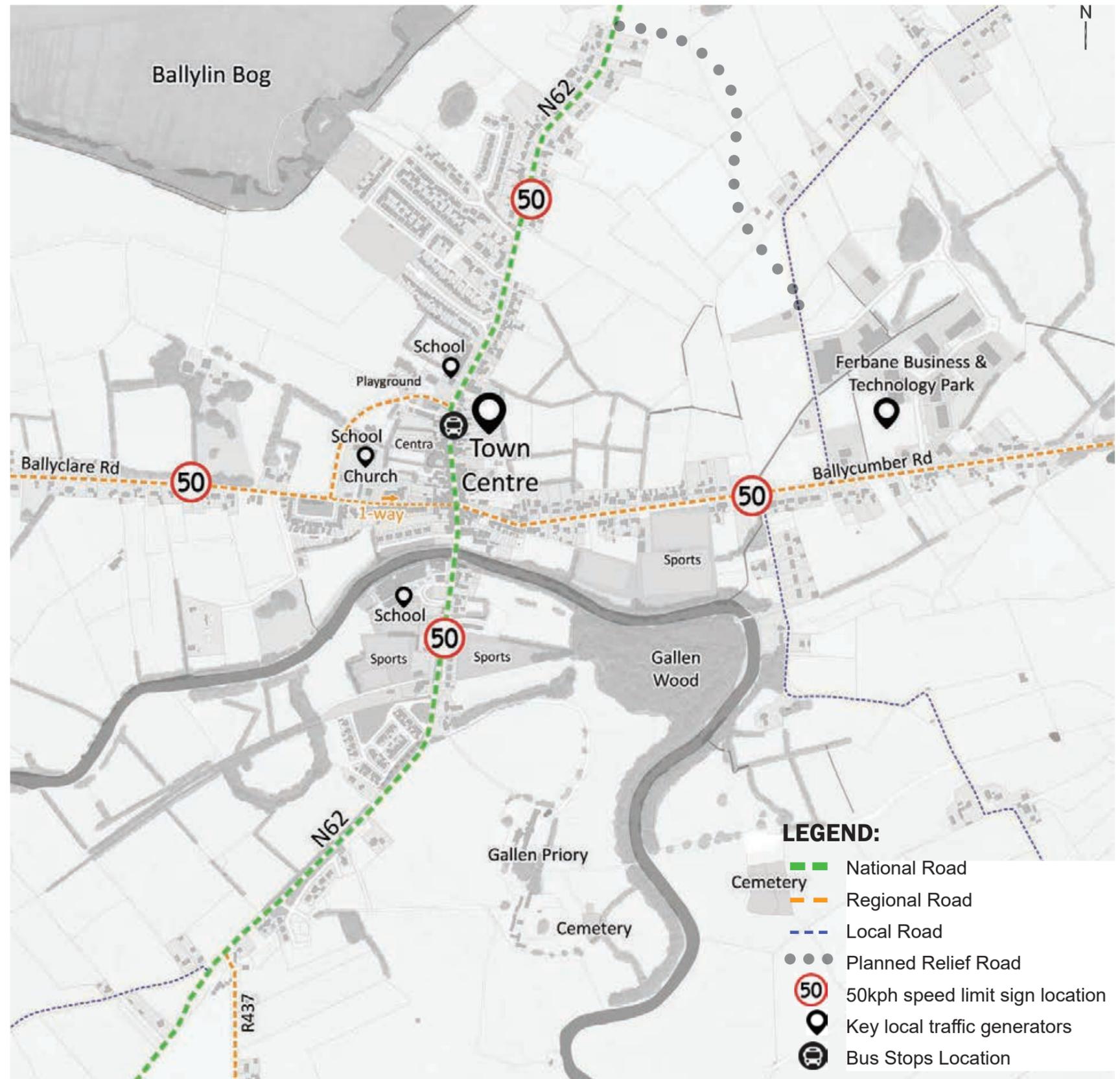
Public Transport



840 Banagher to Tullamore (6 times a day)



Route 72 Limerick to Athlone (3 times a day)



Ferbane Road Network

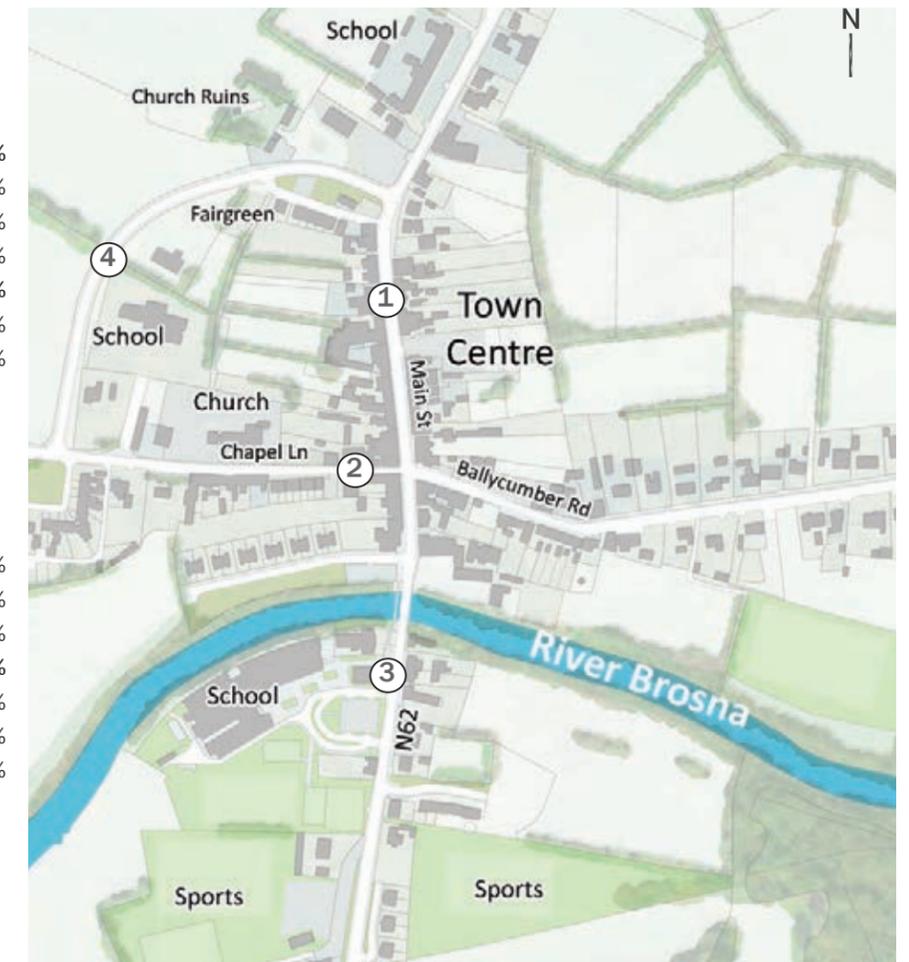
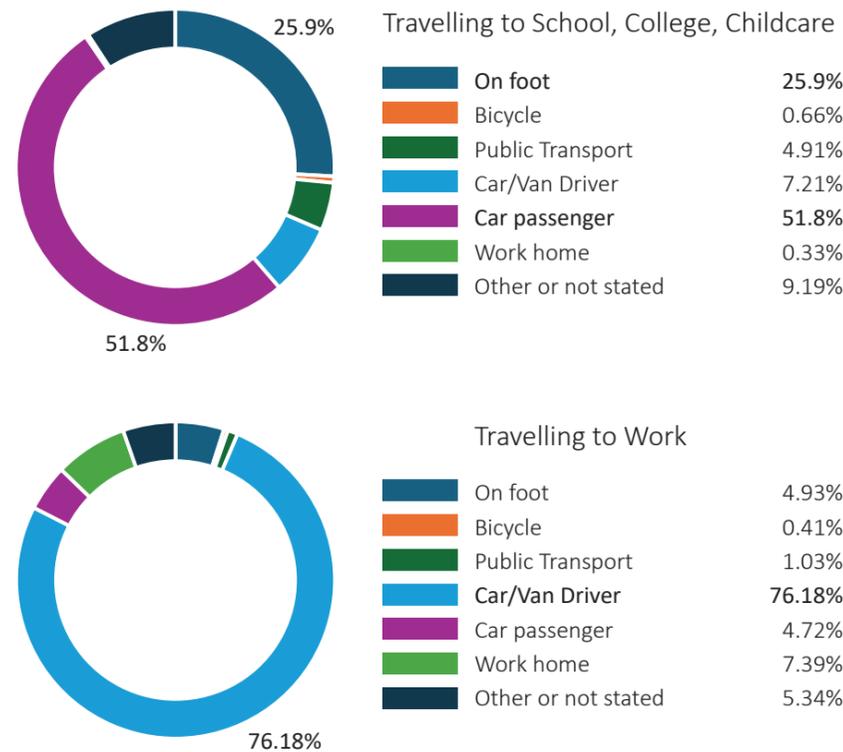
UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: MOVEMENT & CONNECTION

Traffic in Ferbane

Key Facts

- Traffic is busiest in Ferbane town centre during weekday mornings and afternoons, with an average of approximately 700 vehicles per hour at peak times.
- For a small town centre, this level of traffic is relatively high.
- This contributes to perceived high speeds and reduced pedestrian safety.
- The predominant traffic flows occur along Main Street.
- Approximately 90% of motor vehicle traffic consists of cars.
- 10–12% of traffic is made up of light and heavy goods vehicles.
- Around 80% of people commute to work by car.
- 26% of children walk to school, while over 50% are driven.
- Average speeds range from 31 to 48 km/h in the town centre.

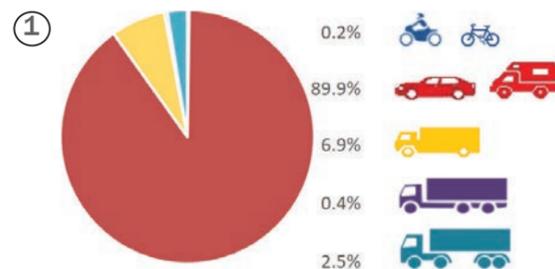
Means of Travel in Ferbane



Traffic Survey Location Points

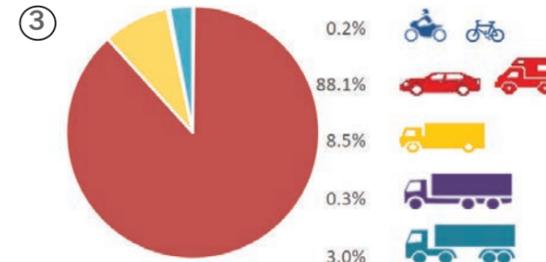
Traffic Survey Summary of Results

Main Street (Centra)



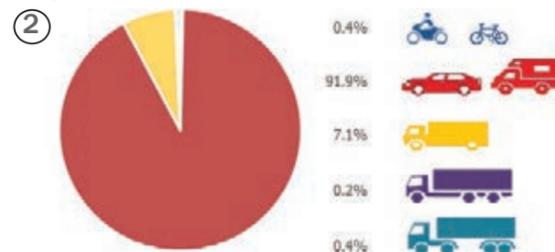
Average Weekday AM (8-9am) 650 Vehicles
 Average Weekday PM (4-5pm) 715 Vehicles
 7-Day Average Traffic 333 Vehicles per hour
 Weekly Traffic Total 56,000 Vehicles
 Average Speed 32 km/h

Main Street (Gallen School)



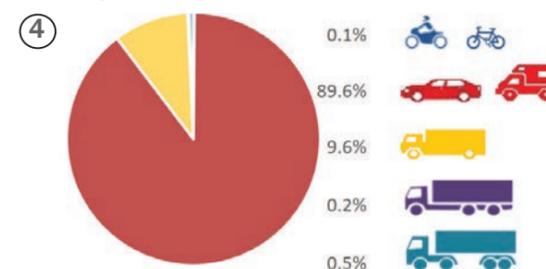
Average Weekday AM (8-9am) 659 vehicles
 Average Weekday PM (4-5pm) 654 Vehicles
 7-day Average 305 Vehicles per hour
 Weekly Traffic Total 51,338 Vehicles
 Average Speed 46.4 km/h

Chapel Lane



Average Weekday AM (8-9am) 55 vehicles
 Average Weekday PM (4-5pm) 48 Vehicles
 7-day Average 29 Vehicles per hour
 Weekly Traffic Total 4,938 Vehicles
 Average Speed 30.6 km/h

The Faigreen



Average Weekday AM (8-9am) 214 vehicles
 Average Weekday PM (4-5pm) 195 Vehicles
 7-day Average 94 Vehicles per hour
 Weekly Traffic Total 15,889 Vehicles
 Average Speed 47.9 km/h

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: MOVEMENT & CONNECTION

Town Centre Parking

Key Facts

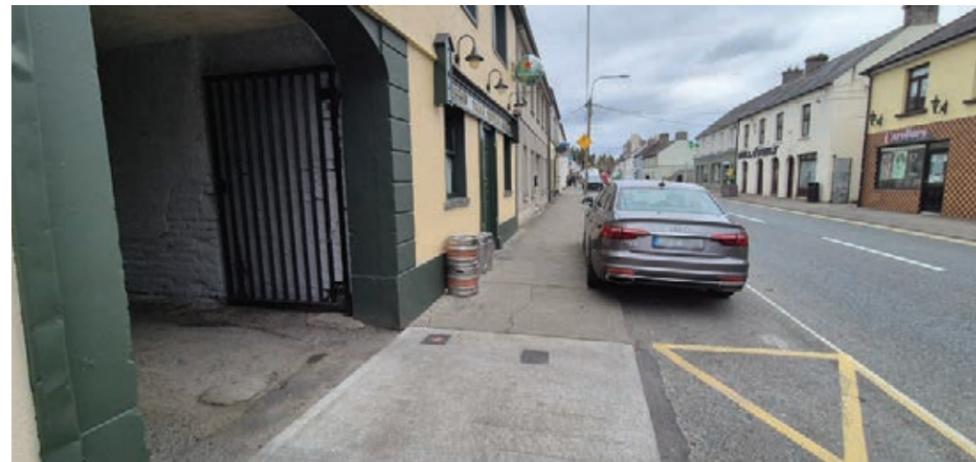
- Ferbane is very dependent on car travel, which in turn means that parking is a particular concern for the town centre.
- Only 8.5% of people in Ferbane do not own a motor vehicle.
- There are a total of 319 parking spaces within a 5-minute walk from Main Street.
- Main Street has 18 parking spaces, which see the highest occupancy rates in town.
- Average parking occupancy north of the Brosna River is 55%, indicating a sufficient overall supply of parking.
- Some off-street car parks have low occupancy due to poor pedestrian access and perceived safety issues on Main Street.
- Illegal parking occurs on footpaths, within yellow boxes, and in bus bays, contributing to traffic and safety concerns.
- School drop-offs present safety issues, especially during peak times, due to congestion and conflicts with pedestrian movement.
- There is a limited number of accessible parking spaces and only 2 electric vehicle charging points in the town.
- No age-friendly parking is currently available in Ferbane.



Loading Bay obstructing sightlines at the crossing



Unmarked parking and lack of defined pedestrian routes increases risk of accidents



Parking on footpath restricting space for wheelchair users

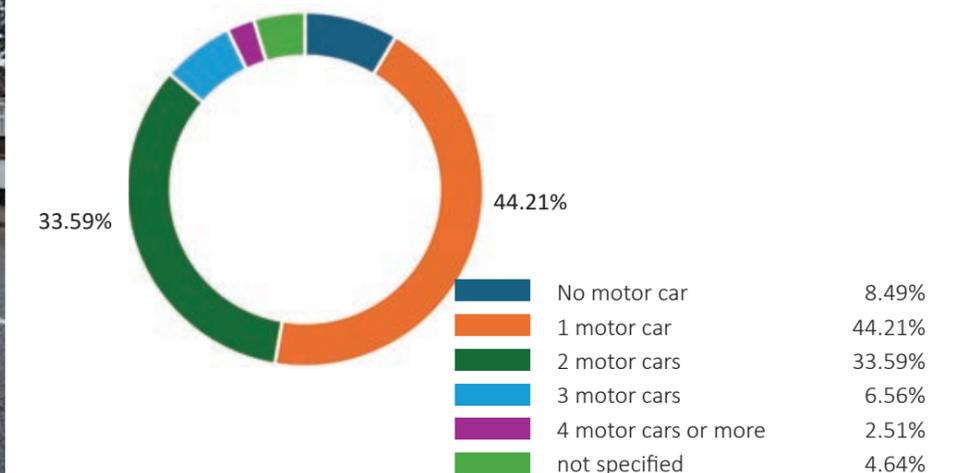


Informal School drop-off area on church grounds outside school peak times



Illegal parking in bus bays

Number of Cars per Household (%)



UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: MOVEMENT & CONNECTION

Parking Occupancy

Parking Survey Results:

- ① Heritage Centre Car Park
Total Spaces: 29 (including 2 electric charging ports)
max surveyed occupancy 51%
- ② Texaco Car Park
Total Spaces: 35 (including 1 accessible space)
max surveyed occupancy 60%
- ③ Town Centre (Centra/Pharmacy) Car Park
Total Spaces: 55 (including 1 accessible space)
max surveyed occupancy 67%
- ④ Chapel Lane Car Park
Total Spaces: 10 (including 1 accessible space)
max surveyed occupancy 80%
- ⑤ Church Car Park
No spaces marked (space for approx. 100 spaces)
max surveyed occupancy 30%
- ⑥ Ballycumber Rd Parking area
No spaces marked (space for approx. 30 spaces)
max surveyed occupancy 40%
- ⑦ Gallen Community School Car Park
Total Spaces: 45 (including 2 accessible spaces)
max surveyed occupancy 1% (school closed)
- ⑧ Gallen Utd Car Park
Total Spaces: 11 (including 1 accessible outside gate),
No designated spaces inside gate
max surveyed occupancy 0%
- ⑨ Main Street on-street parking
Sufficient space to fit 18 legally parked cars
max surveyed occupancy 83% (legally parked)

Note: Survey carried out in July 2024

LEGEND:

- Parking Occupancy above 80%
- Parking Occupancy between 70% - 80%
- Parking Occupancy between 50% - 70%
- Parking Occupancy below 50%
- Potential Future Car Park Expansion Area
- Privately Owned Carpark



Town Centre Parking Occupancy

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: MOVEMENT & CONNECTION

Gehl 12 Urban Quality Criteria

Main Street, Church Lane, and Ballycumber Road serve as the central focal points for pedestrian activity in Ferbane. These streets benefit from attractive and historic building frontages along both sides, which contribute to the town's aesthetic charm and sense of place.

Despite these visual assets, town centre streets underperform as public spaces. Overhead cables, neglected vacant buildings and lack of greening detract from the overall town aesthetic. An excessive amount of space is allocated to car parking and vehicle movement, leading to narrow and cluttered footways that hinder pedestrian movement. This also results in limited space for shops, cafes, and other businesses to spill out onto the streets, a common feature of thriving town centres that encourages foot traffic and social interaction.

The town centre lacks a high-quality pedestrian environment, which is crucial for supporting local businesses and enhancing the tourism industry. A vibrant public realm, which encourages a range of activities and facilitates easy movement, is key to the success of many town centres. In Ferbane, the absence of such features means that public space does not foster the same level of activity or community engagement.

By reallocating excess road space and rethinking parking, a town centre that truly puts people first could be created. These changes would make streets safer, reducing conflicts between traffic and pedestrians, and open up more space for everyone to enjoy. A more walkable, welcoming environment would strengthen community ties, support local businesses, and invite more visitors to experience everything the town has to offer.



Main Street



Church Lane



Ballycumber Road

Protection

PROTECTION AGAINST TRAFFIC + ACCIDENTS

There is limited protection for pedestrians in Ferbane town centre due to the absence of traffic calming measures and the presence of heavy vehicle traffic along Main Street. The lack of dedicated pedestrian crossings in key locations, especially near schools, raises significant safety concerns.

PROTECTION AGAINST CRIME + VIOLENCE (FEELING OF SAFETY)

Town centre streets are generally well-overlooked by buildings on both sides, contributing to daytime safety. However, Main Street experiences low activity at night, particularly near vacant or underutilized spaces. Enhancing lighting and passive surveillance could help improve safety and comfort after dark.

PROTECTION AGAINST UNPLEASANT SENSORY EXPERIENCES

Traffic noise and visual clutter—such as overhead wires and the condition of vacant building frontages—detract from the street's overall appeal. The lack of greenery and open spaces further diminishes the sensory experience and comfort of the town centre.

Comfort

POSSIBILITIES FOR WALKING

Ferbane town centre prioritises vehicles, with over 70% of street space for traffic and parking. Parked cars often encroach on narrow footways, and pedestrian infrastructure is inconsistent, with poor or missing paths and few safe crossings—undermining walkability and accessibility.

POSSIBILITIES FOR STANDING/ STAYING

The small green space at the old Fire Station at Fairgreen and Ferbane Bridge provides some opportunity to pause however opportunities for standing and staying are otherwise very limited.

POSSIBILITIES FOR SITTING

Public seating is currently limited to the Fairgreen public space, with no seating available along Main Street, Church Lane, or Ballycumber Road. Introducing resting areas would greatly improve comfort, particularly for older residents and visitors.

POSSIBILITIES TO SEE

The town centre streets retain their historic charm, featuring visually interesting building frontages. However, overhead cables, neglected vacant buildings and parked cars detract from the overall aesthetic. Additional greening would greatly enhance the visual experience.

POSSIBILITIES FOR HEARING/ TALKING

Noise levels are generally low, allowing for conversation; however, at peak times, traffic noise makes casual communication difficult. The only designated space for social interaction is the Fairgreen public space, with no other areas providing similar opportunities.

POSSIBILITIES FOR PLAY/ UNFOLDING ACTIVITIES

The existing playground at Fairgreen offers play options within the town centre. However, there are no play spaces or opportunities within the streets themselves. The dominance of traffic and the large amount of carriageway space limit opportunities for both organised and spontaneous activities.

Enjoyment

SCALE

The town centre has a human-scale character, with low-rise buildings and a pedestrian-friendly layout that makes it easy to navigate and feel comfortable. However, space for public life and walking is limited, with a significant portion allocated to vehicle movement and parking.

POSSIBILITIES FOR ENJOYING POSITIVE ASPECTS OF CLIMATE

There are limited opportunities to enjoy the town centre due to a lack of seating, gathering spaces, and green infrastructure. This contributes to poor climate comfort. More public seating and greenery would greatly enhance the year-round usability and appeal of the space.

AESTHETIC QUALITY/ POSITIVE SENSORY EXPERIENCES

The historical character of the town centre is evident but undervalued, partly due to poorly maintained public spaces and vacant properties. The visual appeal could be greatly enhanced with improved landscaping, better maintenance, and more effective use of public spaces.

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: MOVEMENT & CONNECTION

Your Concerns & Ideas

Get much better public transport connectivity

Dangerous pick up at senior school

Pedestrian crossing needs to be made safer.

National school kids are made to wait on path beside a very busy road and not allowed onto school grounds. There is going to be a tragic accident!

Unsafe Footpaths

traffic travelling too fast.

Road safety along main street

Introduce a slow zone within the town both for safety and to better present the town

traffic speeding

The speed of traffic

Heavy traffic going through the town, lack of bypass

No Safe pick up at Senior School.

Traffic Calming needed on main street

Very poorly connected by public transport

no age friendly parking

Speed of traffic through main street and past the national school.

Footpaths on Ballycumber Road, Ballyclare and Mass Path need attention

Public transport options are extremely limited

More busses to Athlone and Birr Tullamore

more suitable parking

Make town look nicer, better lighting on approach roads, Ballycumber road, Cloghan Road after Gallen United too dark.

speed of traffic through the town

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: SOCIAL, COMMUNITY & CULTURAL

Community & Social Infrastructure Assets

Key Facts

- The town is well served by several educational institutions, including two primary schools and one post primary; Gallen Community School.
- Healthcare services include a primary care centre, pharmacy, and access to GP services.
- Religious and spiritual needs are met by the Church of the Immaculate Conception, located within walking distance of the town centre.
- Sport and recreational facilities are well established, including GAA grounds, soccer pitches, a pitch & putt course, and tennis courts.
- There is limited provision of community and youth-specific indoor spaces, indicating a gap in inclusive infrastructure.
- There is a lack of a dedicated market or gathering space, with insufficient designated areas for community markets and public events.
- Community infrastructure gaps include the absence of a community hall, a night-time social scene, and a dedicated Men's Shed.



Ferbane GAA



Playground



Gallen United



St.Cynocs National School



St.Cynocs Junior National School



Fairgreen public space



Ferbane Library

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: SOCIAL, COMMUNITY & CULTURAL

Community & Social Key Infrastructure Assets

LEGEND:

Key community and social assets:

- (A) Pitch and Putt Club
- (B) St.Cynocs National School
- (C) Playground
- (D) Fairgreen seating area
- (E) St.Cynocs Junior National School
- (F) Church of the Immaculate Conception
- (G) HSE Health Centre
- (H) Garda Station
- (I) Ferbane GAA Club
- (J) Bright Beginnings Community Creche
- (K) Gallen Community School
- (L) Gallen United FC
- (M) Fire Station
- (N) Sports Grounds
- (O) Ferbane Care Centre
- (P) Informal Play Area



Community and Social Assets in Ferbane

UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE: SOCIAL, COMMUNITY & CULTURAL

Your Concerns & Ideas

Assisted living houses. Incentive for people to sell vacant properties in the town.

Make use of natural resources e.g. river. Eg river walk way. To include old railway bridge.

Lack of services and public meeting spaces.

A centralised hub or 'one-stop shop' for information on all things related to the community, volunteer opportunities, and local events to encourage wider participation.

The lack of a community centre

More exploration of cultural heritage and nature

Lack of facilities for teens and elderly

A recreational venue to socialise and have concerts and shows.

Decent community hall somewhere to hold a play, concert, meeting etc.

More public recreational areas.

Dominance of sporting activities is causing neglect of non sporting activities

Ideally a few more options for kids, outside of sports

No festivals or push for community events, like the past.

A 5k loop around town to promote well-being and fitness.

Lack of a local market

More clubs for the elderly, kids, and teens—music, speech and drama, dance

Greater access to a range of recreation and sport opportunities, and to nature

Lack of spaces to meet up and have conversations with people and do activities.

More green spaces

Need to attract tourists to our area

Mens shed

SECTION 3

DEFINING

FERBANE

DEFINING FERBANE: WHAT YOU HAD TO SAY...

Ferbane Town Team and community members directly participated in the plan preparation process, offering valuable feedback that helped to formulate vision for the town, strategic objectives, emerging themes, and project opportunities. This input has enabled the plan to address community concerns and priorities.



DEFINING FERBANE: VISION

The following vision statement has been formulated having regard to national, regional and local planning context, through community and stakeholder engagement in Ferbane and from a process of extensive research and analysis of the town. Accordingly, our suggested vision is:

‘Vision for Ferbane’

FERBANE WILL BE A SAFE, ATTRACTIVE AND VIBRANT TOWN WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE, WORK, SOCIALISE, AND VISIT.

By managing the impact of through traffic and improving pedestrian safety, the town centre will feel more welcoming, accessible and inclusive. Tackling vacancy and improving the quality of the public realm will be key to reactivating the town centre and supporting new opportunities. Unlocking connections to the River Brosna and the surrounding landscape will open up natural and recreational spaces, supporting wellbeing and attracting visitors. With the community at its heart, the town will benefit from improved social, cultural, and recreational facilities that serve people of all ages. Ferbane will meet the growing need for housing by reusing existing buildings and making better use of opportunity sites. Local enterprise and thoughtful, sustainable growth will drive a resilient and thriving future.

DEFINING FERBANE: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Aligned with The Town Centre First policy eight high level objectives for a Ferbane Town Centre First were identified. These eight objectives centred on the town's role, image, vibrancy and vitality, regeneration, economic resilience, inclusion, heritage and culture and climate have played a pivotal role in shaping the TCF's development and projects selection. A short overview of how each objective has been addressed in the plan is provided below:



Attractive & Welcoming

Enhance Ferbane's streets and spaces through quality design and landscaping to create a more attractive, welcoming environment that draws in new residents, visitors, and businesses.



Vibrant Town Centre

Breathe new life into the town centre by tackling vacancy, making better use of existing buildings and facilities, and supporting a diverse mix of retail, services, and community uses that promote day and evening activity.



Safe and Accessible Environment

Ensure Ferbane is easy and safe to move around by implementing traffic calming measures, enhancing pedestrian infrastructure, improving areas around the schools and creating an inclusive environment for all ages and abilities.



Social Inclusion and Wellbeing

Strengthen social and cultural life by providing inclusive spaces and activities that promote health, belonging, and participation across all groups in the community.



Connected Natural Heritage and Built Assets

Improve physical and visual connections between the town, the River Brosna, Grand Canal and surrounding landscape through green routes and access points that support recreation, tourism, and a healthy environment.



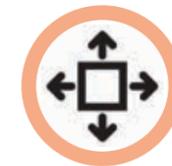
Built Heritage and Cultural Assets

Celebrate and protect Ferbane's historic buildings and cultural identity by conserving key heritage assets and integrating them into public life and the town's future development.



Sustainability and Biodiversity

Promote environmentally responsible development by enhancing green infrastructure, protecting biodiversity and water quality, and integrating sustainable practices into the town's growth.



Economy and Growth

Encourage sustainable economic development by supporting local businesses, attracting investment, and meeting the growing need for quality housing in well-connected, serviced areas.

DEFINING FERBANE: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



Attractive & Welcoming

The attractiveness and overall image of Ferbane's town centre play a vital role in its ability to retain residents, attract visitors, and support local businesses. At present, vacancy, inconsistent signage, overhead cables, and limited greening detract from the town's character and weaken the visual appeal of its streets and public spaces. Areas that could function as community gathering places often lack seating, planting, or quality materials, leaving the town centre feeling less welcoming and underutilised.

Creating a high-quality, attractive public realm is central to the Town Centre First Plan. This involves using good design and landscaping to protect and enhance Ferbane's identity. Greener streets, coordinated signage, and well-defined spaces for walking, resting, and socialising will make the town centre more inviting and easier to navigate. Improvements to lighting, street furniture, and planting will further contribute to a sense of safety and comfort, encouraging people to spend more time in the town.

By investing in the quality and character of its streets and spaces, Ferbane can present a more inviting and vibrant image, making the town centre an attractive destination for community life, new businesses, services, and future residents alike.



Vibrant Town Centre

Ferbane's town centre has the potential to become the social, cultural, and economic heart of the community. However, vacancy, underused upper floors, and limited retail activity have weakened its role as a lively, people-focused place. A lack of diversity in uses creates a less vibrant atmosphere, reducing opportunities for community interaction and discouraging visitors.

The Town Centre First Plan seeks to reverse this trend by reactivating vacant and underutilised buildings, encouraging new retail, food, and service businesses, and creating spaces for community and cultural activities. Repurposing upper floors for residential accommodation, co-working, or community uses can bring more people into the centre, supporting a "live-work" environment that generates activity throughout the day and evening.

A more vibrant town centre will also depend on a strong mix of services and experiences that respond to local needs while attracting footfall from the wider area. By encouraging café culture, small independent shops, events, and flexible spaces for community use, Ferbane can create a dynamic and engaging town core that strengthens local identity and supports economic resilience.



Safe and Accessible Environment

The ability to move safely and easily around Ferbane is central to the success of its town centre. At present, the presence of the national road in the core, combined with narrow or poor quality footpaths, limited crossings, and congestion around schools, reduces walkability and creates an environment that feels unsafe and uninviting for pedestrians and cyclists. Heavy traffic and high vehicle speeds at key locations, particularly near schools and the main crossroads, further discourage active travel and diminish the appeal of the town centre.

A key objective of the Town Centre First Plan is to rebalance movement in Ferbane by placing people, rather than vehicles, at the heart of its design. This involves introducing traffic calming measures, upgrading pedestrian infrastructure, and prioritising safe routes to schools. Improving accessibility is not just about safety—it is also about inclusivity, ensuring the town centre can be enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities, including older residents, families with young children, and those with mobility impairments.

By creating a safe, accessible, and attractive environment, Ferbane can encourage more people to walk and spend time in the town centre. This will improve quality of life, support local businesses through increased footfall, and help establish Ferbane as a more welcoming, people-focused place to live, work, and visit.



Social Inclusion and Wellbeing

Ferbane's strength lies in its community and active local groups, yet the town centre does not currently provide enough inclusive, accessible spaces that bring people together. Limited public seating, underused open spaces, and a lack of facilities for all members of the community for participation in community life, which can contribute to isolation among older residents, young people, and those with additional challenges.

The Town Centre First Plan places social inclusion and wellbeing at the heart of Ferbane's renewal. Creating welcoming public spaces, accessible recreational areas, and facilities for cultural and community events will help strengthen connections and encourage belonging. Initiatives such as age-friendly seating, outdoor exercise equipment, play areas, and multipurpose community spaces will support health and wellbeing across generations, while festivals, cultural events and public art can celebrate identity and encourage participation from all groups.

New housing options in the town centre—including sheltered and assisted living, social and affordable housing—will help meet local needs and allow more people to live centrally. Expanding childcare and family supports such as breakfast and after-school clubs and baby and toddler groups will also be important in creating a town that is inclusive for all ages and life stages. Together, these measures will ensure Ferbane's town centre is not only functional but also a place where people feel connected, supported, and valued.

DEFINING FERBANE: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



Connected Natural Heritage and Built Assets

Ferbane benefits from a unique setting along the River Brosna and a rich surrounding landscape of boglands, woodlands, and farmlands. These natural assets are, however, not fully connected to the town centre, limiting their contribution to community life, recreation, and tourism. At present, physical barriers, a lack of clear routes, and underdeveloped access points mean that residents and visitors have few opportunities to enjoy these distinctive natural amenities as part of their everyday experience of the town.

The Town Centre First Plan seeks to strengthen Ferbane's identity by creating stronger physical and visual connections between the town, its waterway, and the wider landscape. New green routes, walking and cycling paths, and improved signage can link the town to the River Brosna and the Grand Canal, offering opportunities for leisure, active travel, and healthier lifestyles. Enhanced access points, including small craft launch areas, will make the natural environment more visible and inviting, while sensitive landscaping and planting will reinforce biodiversity and climate resilience.

By better integrating natural and built assets, Ferbane can position itself as a destination for outdoor recreation and slow tourism. Trails, riverfront spaces, and connections to regional greenways and boglands can draw visitors into the town, supporting local businesses and creating synergies between nature, heritage, and community life. For residents, these improvements will support a stronger sense of wellbeing and encourage daily connection to the unique landscape that surrounds Ferbane.



Built Heritage and Cultural Assets

The town is rich in history and heritage, with 18 protected structures including the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Saint Joseph's Convent, Old Church of Ireland, stone bridges, and traditional shopfronts. While these buildings add greatly to Ferbane's character, some are vacant or in disrepair, diminishing their contribution to the town centre. To the south of Gallen Wood, in vicinity of Gallen Priory, lies a significant cluster of monument sites, including an early monastic settlement, further underlining Ferbane's historic importance.

Despite this wealth of heritage, there is currently no heritage walk or interpretative signage, meaning residents and visitors have limited ways to connect with the town's past.

The Town Centre First Plan aims to celebrate and safeguard Ferbane's heritage by conserving key assets, adaptively reusing vacant buildings, and integrating historic sites into the fabric of everyday town life. Initiatives such as a heritage trail, signage, public art and public realm improvements can enhance visibility and appreciation, while cultural traditions in music, drama, sport, and festivals can ensure heritage is not only preserved but actively lived.

By strengthening the role of heritage and culture, Ferbane can reinforce its identity, celebrate its unique character, and support tourism and economic vitality for the future.



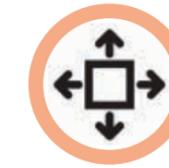
Sustainability and Biodiversity

Ferbane's town centre has an opportunity to lead by example in embedding sustainability and biodiversity within its future growth. While the town benefits from its riverside setting, native riparian woodlands, Gallen Woods and existing green spaces, much of this natural potential is currently underutilised or disconnected from everyday town life. A more integrated approach to green infrastructure can strengthen Ferbane's resilience to climate change, improve visual appeal, and enhance quality of life for residents.

Environmentally responsible development will involve protecting and expanding biodiversity corridors, supporting pollinator-friendly planting, and making better use of underused open spaces. Integrating sustainable practices, such as nature based sustainable drainage systems (NBS SuDS), tree planting, and nature-based design solutions, will help manage surface water, reduce heat impacts, and increase ecological value.

The Forest of Ferbane and Ferbane Food Forest initiatives are already in motion, contributing to these efforts.

By prioritising sustainability alongside economic and social renewal, Ferbane can develop a town centre that is attractive, resilient, and aligned with the Town Centre First policy. Green infrastructure will protect biodiversity, create healthier public spaces, encourage footfall, and strengthen community connection.



Economy and Growth

Ferbane has strong potential for sustainable economic development, supported by its strategic location along N62, natural assets, and a resilient community. At the same time, there is a growing need for quality housing in well-serviced, connected areas, highlighting the importance of planning for balanced growth.

The Town Centre First Plan seeks to strengthen the local economy by supporting existing businesses, encouraging entrepreneurship, and fostering innovation. Expanding housing within the town centre will bring more residents into the heart of Ferbane, supporting local shops, services, and community life, while also promoting sustainable travel. Enhancing digital infrastructure and skills will enable businesses to adopt new technologies, improve productivity, and attract enterprise opportunities.

Tourism and cultural activities represent further opportunities for economic growth. By improving accessibility to Ferbane's heritage, natural amenities, and cultural offerings, the town can attract visitors and create new income streams for local businesses. Complementary training and skills programmes will help residents, particularly younger generations, access local employment opportunities, strengthening the workforce and encouraging people to live and work in the town.

By combining housing growth, enterprise support, digital development, and tourism initiatives, Ferbane can build a more resilient and diverse economy, increase activity in the town centre, and ensure long-term vitality for the community.

DEFINING FERBANE: PROJECTS THEMES

The Vision outlined in the plan translates into tangible project concepts that can be implemented and nurtured over time. Throughout the plan's development, supporting themes and illustrative proposals have been employed to shape ideas, organizing them into groups that can serve as the foundation for a delivery. Potential projects and regeneration opportunities were categorised into 4 themes:

THEME A: **VIBRANT, ATTRACTIVE AND WELCOMING TOWN CENTRE**

Breathing new life into the town centre by tackling vacancy, making better use of existing buildings and facilities (Celebrate and protect Ferbane's historic buildings and cultural identity by conserving key heritage assets and integrating them into public life and the town's future development), and promoting a diverse mix of retail, services and community uses that promote day and evening activity, enhancing Ferbane's streets and spaces through quality urban and landscape design to create a more welcoming environment that draws in new residents, visitors and businesses.

THEME B: **SOCIAL INCLUSION AND WELLBEING IN A SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE ENVIRONMENT**

Ensuring Ferbane is safe and easy to move around by implementing traffic calming measures, enhancing pedestrian infrastructure, improving areas around the schools and creating an inclusive environment for all.

Strengthen Social and cultural life by providing inclusive spaces and activities that promote health, belonging and participation across all groups in the community.

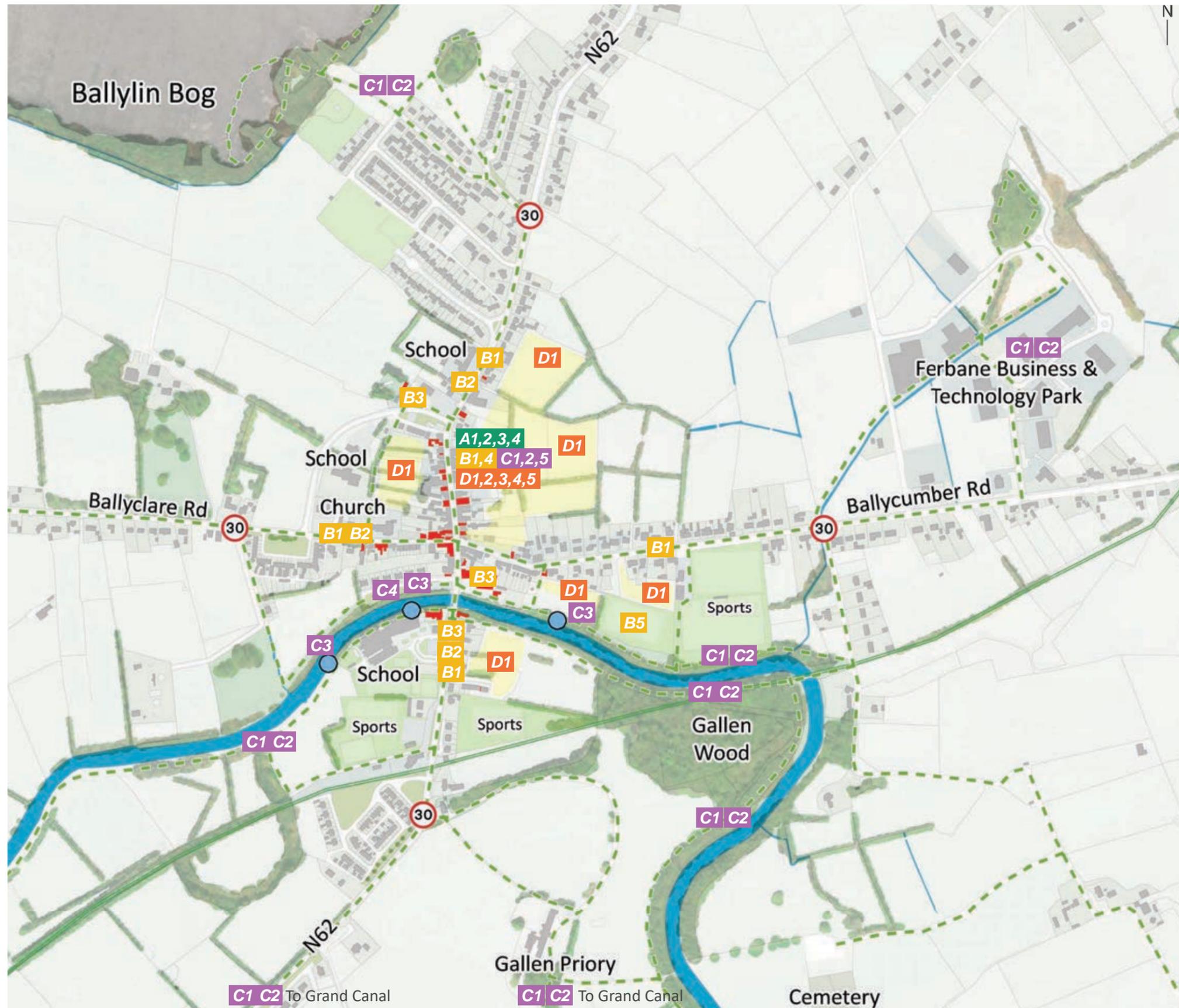
THEME C: **ENHANCED SUSTAINABILITY AND BIODIVERSITY AND CONNECTED NATURAL AND BUILT ASSETS**

Promote environmentally responsible development by enhancing green infrastructure, protecting biodiversity and integrating sustainable practices into the town's growth. Improve physical and visual connection between the town, the River Brosna, Grand Canal and surrounding landscape through green routes and access points that support recreation, tourism and a healthy environment.

THEME D: **ECONOMY & GROWTH**

Encourage sustainable economic development by supporting local businesses, attracting investment and meet the growing need for quality housing in well-connected, serviced areas.

DEFINING FERBANE: PLAN OVERVIEW



This overall plan consolidates possibilities for regeneration, enhancement and improvements in the Ferbane Town Centre. Specific potential projects are set out, followed by detailed outline of individual project ideas.

THEME A: VIBRANT, ATTRACTIVE AND WELCOMING TOWN CENTRE

- A1. Ferbane Streetscape Improvement
- A2. Shopfronts Reactivation & Enhancement
- A3. Tackling Vacancy & Dereliction
- A4. Play for All

THEME B: SOCIAL INCLUSION AND WELLBEING IN A SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE ENVIRONMENT

- B1. Improved Traffic Safety
- B2. Safety around the Schools
- B3. New Spaces for the Community
- B4. Ferbane Community Network Support & Growth
- B5. Multi-Use Sport & Active Grounds

THEME C: ENHANCED SUSTAINABILITY AND BIODIVERSITY AND CONNECTED NATURAL AND BUILT ASSETS

- C1. Ferbane Loops and Walks
- C2. Wayfinding and signage around the town
- C3. River Brosna- Small Crafts Access
- C4. Brosna Linear Park
- C5. Green Ferbane

THEME D: ECONOMY & GROWTH

- D1. Town Centre Living
- D2. Supporting Local Enterprise
- D3. Digital Ferbane
- D4. Developing Skills for Local Jobs
- D5. Ferbane Tourism

LEGEND:

- Existing and potential loops and walks
- Old Railway Line
- Potential small crafts access points
- Vacant / derelict buildings
- Potential Town Centre Housing
- Potential 30kph speed limit extent

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme A:

Vibrant, Attractive and Welcoming Town Centre

Potential Projects:

A1. Ferbane Streetscape Improvement

This project will enhance Ferbane's streets through improved public realm quality, increased street greening, redefined street edges, improved parking and loading bays, enhanced walkability between carparks and main street and the addition of public seating and age-friendly parking.

A2. Shopfronts Reactivation & Enhancement

This project will enhance and restore shopfronts with traditional detailing and a unified painting scheme to improve the streetscape and strengthen town identity.

A3. Tackling Vacancy & Dereliction

This project will identify new opportunities to revitalise the town centre by repurposing vacant buildings and underused upper floors for community, residential, and commercial use.

A4. Play for All

This project will centre around an inclusive play initiative creating a network of spaces for play for all ages. The project will include Natural Play Toddler area, engaging zones for teens and adults. The project will be guided around a playful map which encourages exploration, creativity and connection.

Breathing new life into the town centre by tackling vacancy, making better use of existing buildings and facilities (Celebrate and protect Ferbane's historic buildings and cultural identity by conserving key heritage assets and integrating them into public life and the town's future development), and promoting a diverse mix of retail, services and community uses that promote day and evening activity, enhancing Ferbane's streets and spaces through quality urban and landscape design to create a more welcoming environment that draws in new residents, visitors and businesses.

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme A: Vibrant, Attractive and Welcoming Town Centre

A1. Ferbane Streetscape Improvement

Project Description:

This project will enhance Ferbane’s streets through improved public realm quality, increased street greening, redefined street edges, improved parking and loading bays, and the addition of public seating and age-friendly parking.

Context:

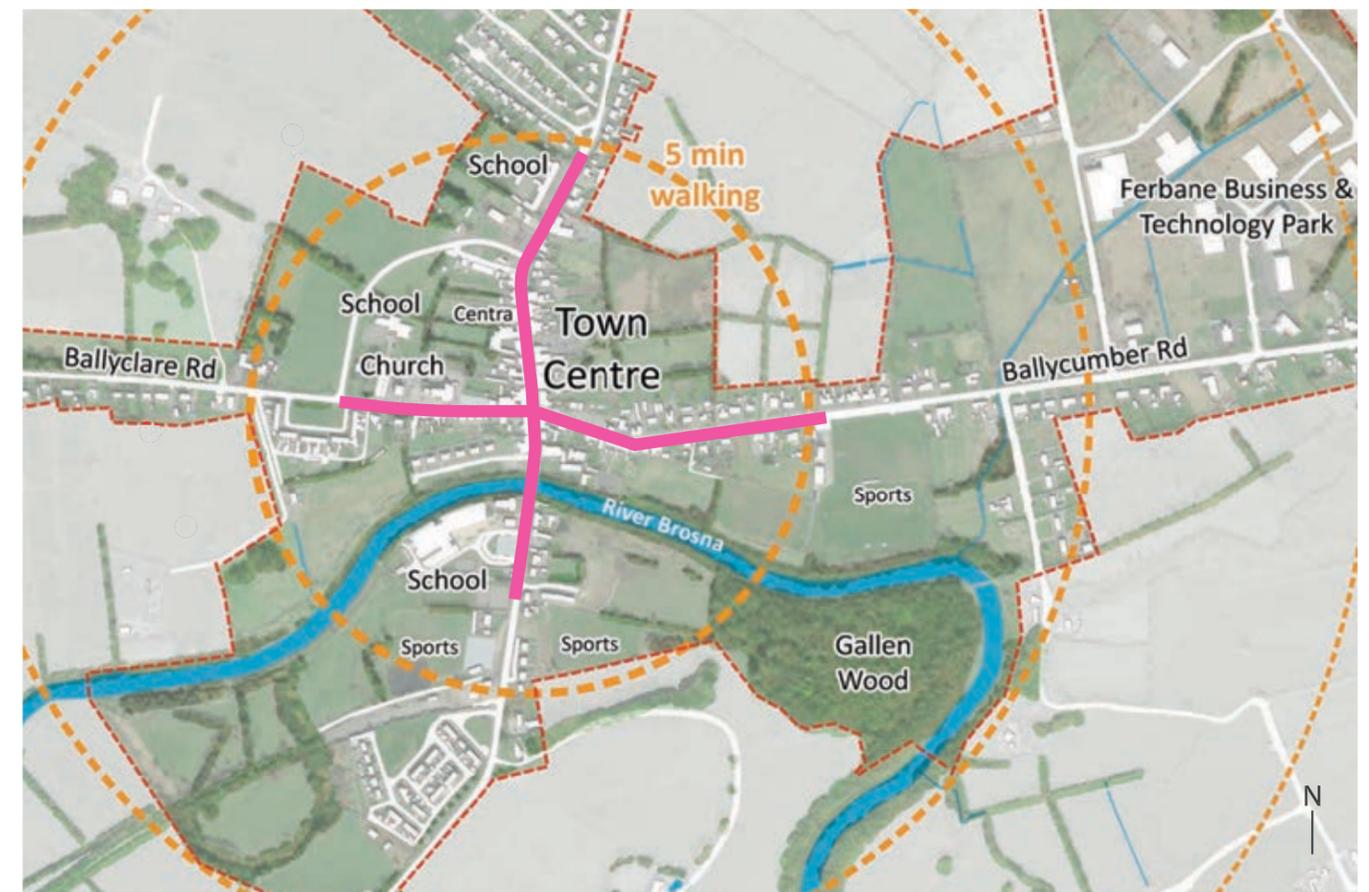
Ferbane’s town centre streets still retain their historic character through a good sense of enclosure, particularly evident on Main Street and Chapel Lane. Main Street maintains a strong civic character, preserving its traditional linear market town form. Although, overhead ESB cables, lack of greening and street furniture and general low quality public realm detract from the town’s streetscape and skyline, diminishing its aesthetic appeal.

Public feedback has also highlighted serious safety concerns, particularly on Main Street, where fast-moving traffic, including HGVs, creates an unsafe and uninviting environment for both pedestrians and cyclists.

A well-designed public realm can enhance the pedestrian experience while clearly signaling to motorists the presence of more vulnerable users. By encouraging greater footfall and enabling spill-out activities, it can also provide a boost to local businesses and enhance the tourism industry.



Existing Context



Priority streets for an improvement

‘Upgrade of streets and public realm in general’

‘Main Street needs upgrades - phone lines, trees.’

‘Improve the aesthetics of the town’

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme A: Vibrant, Attractive and Welcoming Town Centre

A1. Ferbane Streetscape Improvement



Potential Main Street Improvement (Artist Impression)

Note: Proposals shown are illustrative only (subject to further investigation prior to detailed design, traffic studies, technical consideration and planning consent etc.)

Key Opportunities:

- Upgrade the public realm along key Ferbane streets using cohesive quality materials and heritage-sensitive design to strengthen town identity-minimise visual intrusion & maintain the character of the historic streetscape
- Improve the streetscape by undergrounding overhead cables and incorporating high-quality paving, lighting, and public art
- Provide inclusive, age-friendly features such as durable and comfortable to walk ground surfaces and public seating
- Improve pedestrian safety with traffic-calming measures and additional controlled crossing points
- Incorporate climate-resilience measures such as SuDS and enhance biodiversity with native planting
- Improve parking and loading, introduce age-friendly spaces with clear signage
- Boost local business footfall through enhanced public realm and spaces for outdoor activities
- Incorporate quality fixtures and fittings such as EV Charging points, benches, fountains, litter bins, and potential well-considered sculptures

Key considerations and next steps:

- Undertake design work in coordination with the Traffic and Transport Scheme for the town.
- Engage early with residents, businesses, and accessibility groups to ensure inclusive and informed proposals.
- Recognise that potential project(s) may be delivered in number of phases or in conjunction with other initiatives.

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme A: Vibrant, Attractive and Welcoming Town Centre

A2. Shopfront Reactivation & Enhancement

Project Description:

This project will enhance and restore shopfronts with traditional detailing and a unified painting scheme to improve the streetscape and strengthen town identity.

Context:

It is noted that Main Street Ferbane has a varied and interesting set of shopfronts within county Offaly.

Shop fronts provide colour, diversity and interest to our main streets. Older shop fronts demonstrate the development of the town, while newer shop fronts should reflect a traditional design or be more contemporary in their approach.

The most successful shopfronts use quality materials and design which has regard to the features and scale of the building that they front.

This project will therefore focus on breathing new life into vacant or underutilized shopfronts and upgrading existing or historic shopfronts through targeted investment and design improvements. By enhancing the visual appeal and functionality of these spaces, the project will support local businesses, encourages footfall, and foster a stronger sense of place on Main Street.

The project will ensure that Ferbane's unique character is preserved by supporting the protection of Ferbane's architectural heritage and the goals and guidance set out in Offaly County Council's 'Guide to Shopfronts and Signs'.

The project will also contribute to tackling vacancy and dereliction, promoting economic activity, and reinforcing Main Street as social and cultural hub.

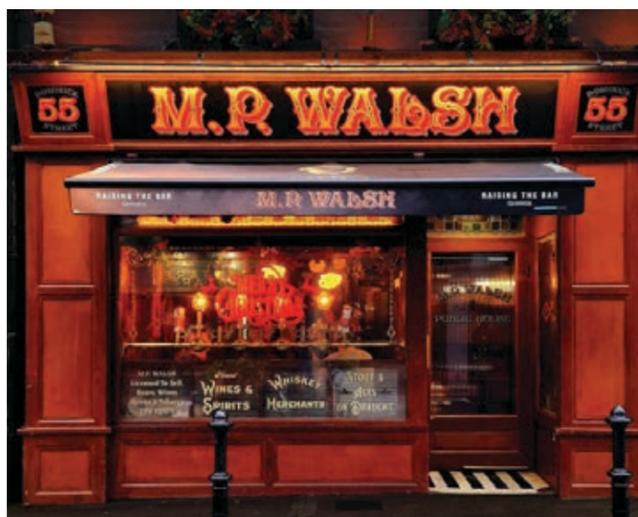


Variety of shopfronts Main Street Ferbane

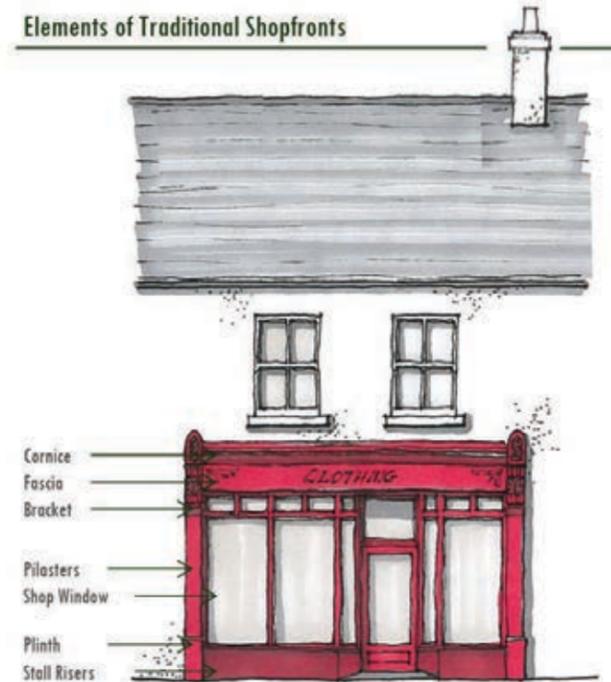
DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme A: Vibrant, Attractive and Welcoming Town Centre

A2. Shopfront Reactivation & Enhancement



Examples of well designed shopfronts courtesy of Galway City Council shopfront design guidance showcasing use of colour, modern shopfronts and lighting



Sketches showing well designed traditional shopfronts courtesy of Offaly County Council

Key Opportunities:

- Foster community pride by improving the appearance and vitality of Main Street through the use of a cohesive colour schemes and considered signage.
- Improve the appearance of vacant units making them more attractive to potential tenants and pop-up businesses, helping to activate underused spaces.
- Celebrate Ferbane's Heritage by restoring traditional shopfront features like timber frames, hand-painted signs, and historic colour palettes to reinforce the town's unique character and cultural heritage.
- Improve accessibility and wayfinding by introducing clear, consistent signage and accessible entrances to make the town centre more navigable and inclusive for all users.
- Showcasing the 'best of Ferbane' through careful use of advertising and signage.
- Support local artists and craftspeople by commissioning murals, signage or decorative elements from local artists, promoting creative industries and adding interest to the streetscape.
- Referring to exemplar schemes where appropriate and ensuring proposals align with the principles outlined in Offaly County Council's guide to Shopfronts and Signage.
- Boost tourism appeal by creating visually appealing and photogenic streetscapes that attract visitors..
- Improve the safety and the appearance of Main Street at night time through careful use of lighting and considered security measures such as the use of traditional timber shutters, toughened glass or open mesh type security grilles fitted internally.

Key considerations and next steps:

1. Establish parameter's for a shopfront enhancement scheme including establishing categories such as repairs, painting, signage, decluttering, accessibility and structural alterations.
2. Develop a grant scheme and application and evaluation process for the scheme.
3. Consult with OCC Conservation Officer and ensure compliance with relative design guidance and standards and Architectural Conservation.

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme A: Vibrant, Attractive and Welcoming Town Centre

A3. Tackling Vacancy & Dereliction

Project Description:

This project will identify new opportunities to revitalise the town centre by repurposing vacant buildings and underused upper floors for community, residential, and commercial use.

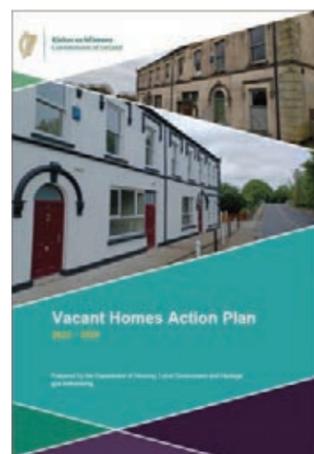
Context:

A visual survey of Ferbane Town Centre highlighted vacancy concentrated around the main crossroads, where several prominent heritage buildings now stand empty. This vacancy undermines the town's character, weakens its visual appeal, and creates an environment that feels less safe and welcoming for pedestrians. The requirement for the National Road to pass through Ferbane has further displaced activity from the centre, contributing to urban sprawl and depopulation.

Shifts in demographics and retail behaviour, including younger people leaving for larger towns and cities and the rise of online shopping, have accelerated decline and reduced footfall. Almost 30% of Main Street properties are vacant or derelict, compared to 10% across the wider town, while three-quarters of properties remain in residential use. Although overall vacancy is moderate, the concentration of empty properties in the town centre negatively affects its attractiveness but also represents significant untapped potential for reuse as housing, community facilities, or commercial activity.



Existing Context



'Renovations to buildings on Main Street'

'Main Street not being fully utilised with a number of empty/derelict buildings'

'Empty buildings in the town, pubs restaurants and shops closing over a number of years.'

'To improve our community, we need more amenities and action on the vacant properties on Main Street - either through purchase or better upkeep - to prevent a run-down appearance.'

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme A: Vibrant, Attractive and Welcoming Town Centre

A3. Tackling Vacancy & Dereliction

A targeted programme to address vacancy and dereliction is a key priority under the national Town Centre First policy framework. The primary approach to dealing with vacant and derelict sites should be for property owners to proactively undertake significant measures, such as refurbishment or selling the properties. In cases where this proactive step is not taken, and initial engagement by the Council does not yield progress, the acquisition of properties through mutual agreement or, if necessary, compulsory purchase, should be considered.

Key Opportunities:

- Establishing a centralised database on all vacant and derelict properties throughout the town. This will then enable a cohesive and 'joined up' approach to tackling the issue, based on dialogue with property owners.
- Priority would be placed on achieving 'quick wins' in the most problematic cases such as the painting of facades, while exploring the potential of 'meanwhile' uses and longer term solutions.
- Re-purposing vacant buildings through the introduction of residential accommodation (e.g. over-the-shop living or rental units), co-working hubs, community spaces, cafés, restaurants, or assisted living units.
- The vacant units within Ferbane could make a good location for pop-up shops and activities, helping to stimulate demand within the Town Centre and generate footfall. Pop-up shops are a lower cost option for brands, artists, designers and makers to advertise and sell their goods and services.
- Regeneration potential for under-utilised buildings can be realised from the ground-up by the local community and local interested businesses, and/or from top-down by Offaly County Council, Heritage Council, and others, working in tandem with landholders.

Key considerations and next steps:

- Collate comprehensive property inventory, identify land and property owners and assess buildings potential for re-purposing.
- Begin dialogue with property owners, make them aware of available funding streams and discuss options for bringing the land/property back into active use.
- Where possible seek short term interventions such as façade painting and 'pop-up' or 'meanwhile uses'.
- Identify potential funding opportunities with the Heritage Council and other relevant funding agencies to explore how public sector financial support might be secured.

Vacant buildings Re-Purposing Ideas:



Completed Banagher Painting Scheme



Pop-up shop



Industrial to rented accommodation



Historic to office co-working hub



Retail to residential

'Flemings' Main Street Ferbane



Before Croí Cónaithe /Vacant Property Grant



After Croí Cónaithe /Vacant Property Grant

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme A: Vibrant, Attractive and Welcoming Town Centre

A4. Play for All

Project Description:

This project will centre around an inclusive play initiative creating a network of spaces for play for all ages. The project will include a Natural Play and Recreation Toddler area, engaging zones for teens and adults. The project will be guided around a playful map which encourages exploration, creativity and connection.



Existing Children's Playground

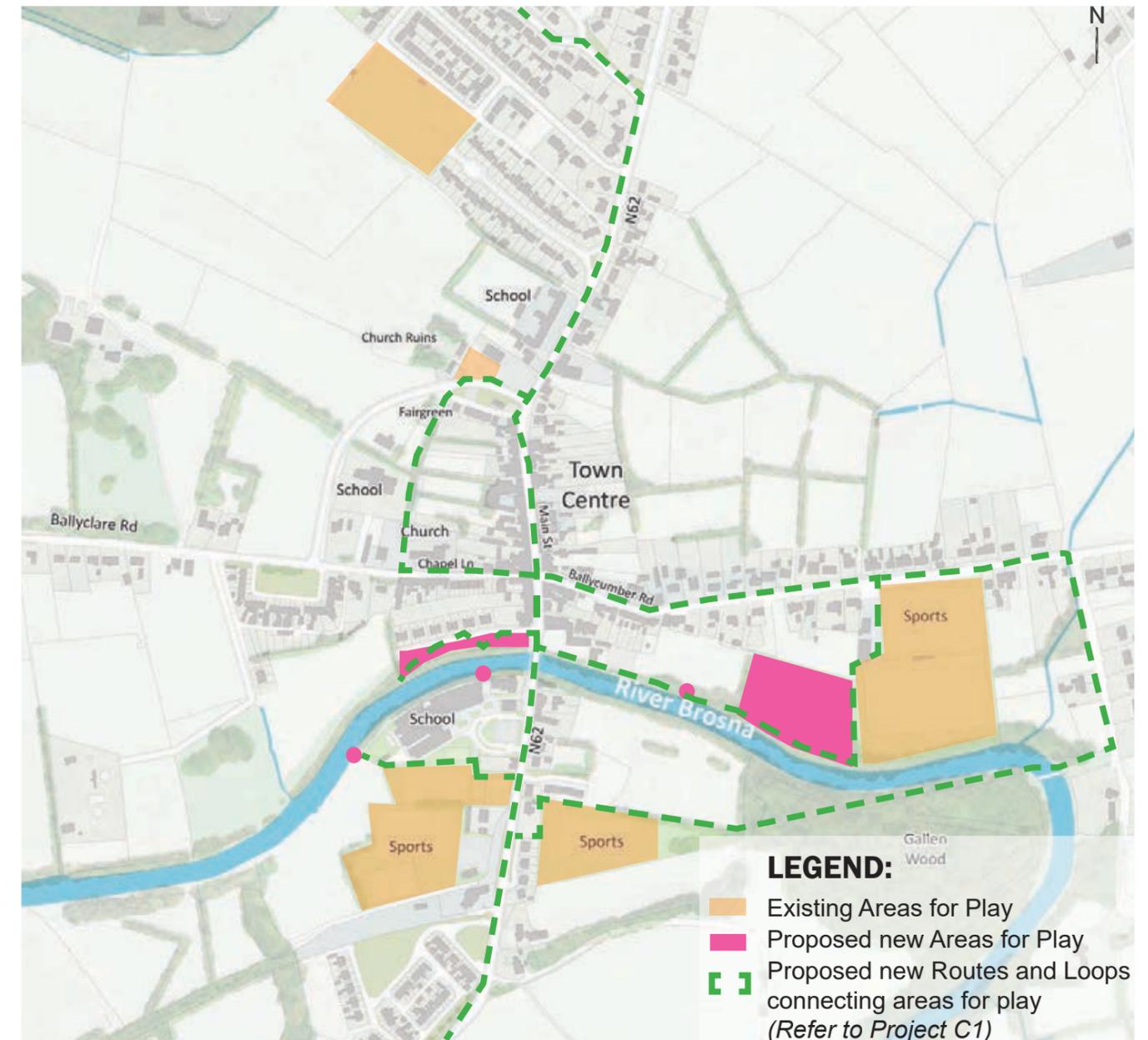
Context:

This project aims to revitalise the town of Ferbane as a playful town for people of all ages ensuring to respond to the need for inclusive, accessible, and intergenerational public spaces that foster wellbeing, creativity, and community connection. At a macro level the project will tie together various aspects of Play in Ferbane through the use of a 'Play Map', this will be developed in co-ordination with the new signage and wayfinding strategy.

The Map will link the existing playground at the centre of the town and existing sports facilities with new play and recreation spaces such as Brosna Linear Park (C4), the various loops and walks (C1) and River Access points (C3) and the multi-use active grounds (B5). It is intended that this project can be built upon over time.

The project also provides a framework and opportunity for the development of playful cultural projects or pop-up events and projects which can further enhance tourism, heritage and conservation within the town e.g. Kilkenny Catwalk project public art trail.

The project seeks to reimagine the town of Ferbane as a place for exploration and engagement, encouraging people of all ages to interact with their environment and each other.



DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme A: Vibrant, Attractive and Welcoming Town Centre

A4. Play for All



Natural Play Area- South Dublin City Council



'Kilkenny Catwalk' project- public art trail around the city of Kilkenny promoted outdoor engagement for all ages

Key Opportunities:

- Activate underused or overlooked spaces with playful interventions that draw footfall and encourage longer dwell times.
- Promote Intergenerational Engagement
- Create spaces where toddlers, teens, adults, and older people can interact, fostering social cohesion and reducing isolation.
- Support Local Identity and Creativity
- Incorporate local materials, stories, and artists into the design of play zones and the playful map, celebrating the town's heritage and character.
- Encourage Active Travel and Exploration
- Use the play map to link key destinations, encouraging walking and cycling while promoting discovery and curiosity.
- Increased footfall and dwell time can support local businesses, while vibrant public spaces enhance the town's appeal to residents and visitors.
- Align with Health and Wellbeing Goals
- Promote physical activity, mental wellbeing, and outdoor engagement through accessible and stimulating environments.
- Boost local business footfall through enhanced public realm and spaces for outdoor activities.

Key considerations and next steps:

- Ensure universal accessibility and sensory inclusivity, with input from diverse community groups during the design phase.
- Use durable, low-maintenance materials and incorporate passive surveillance principles to ensure safe, welcoming spaces.
- Align play zones with existing walking routes, public transport, and amenities to maximise accessibility and connectivity.
- Ensure all interventions respect local planning regulations, conservation guidelines, and heritage sensitivities.
- Engage residents, schools, youth groups, and older people in shaping the design and identity of the play network

' An inclusive area in the playground with wheelchair swing/merry go round or adapted swing with bucket seat for bigger kids.'

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DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme B:

Social Inclusion and Wellbeing in a Safe and Accessible Environment

Potential Projects:

B1. Improved Traffic Safety

This project will enhance pedestrian accessibility in the town with improved crossings and footpaths, upgraded bus stops, and passive traffic calming measures. The project includes potential to reduce the speed limit in the town centre to 30km/h and implement town gateway features in line with TII standards on the approaches to the town.

B2. Safety around the Schools

This project will improve safety around schools through streetscape enhancements for safe routes to school, identification of potential school drop-off zones, and an upgrade of the church car park to support safer access and circulation.

B3. Community Focused Spaces

This project will support the development of sustainable community facilities that connect local services and groups, provide safe spaces for all members of the community by utilising existing spaces such as The Convent, St. Marys Hall, The Heritage Centre and The Library.

B4. Ferbane Community Network Support & Growth

This project will support the establishment of an inclusive, overarching community and local development structure that ensures a cohesive community response to local needs. The new entity will identify, source resources, and oversee programmes and projects that enhance the sustainability of the community.

B5. Multi-use Sport & Active Grounds

This project will create a multi purpose facility in the lands adjoining The Convent. The project will include an all-weather pitch to serve rugby, soccer, athletics, and GAA training and a potential natural swimming pool. It will include multi-sport markings and environmentally sensitive lighting for year-round, day-and-night use.

Ensuring Ferbane is safe and easy to move around by implementing traffic calming measures, enhancing pedestrian infrastructure, improving areas around the schools and creating an inclusive environment for all.

Strengthen Social and cultural life by providing inclusive spaces and activities that promote health, belonging and participation across all groups in the community.

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme B: Social Inclusion and Wellbeing in a Safe and Accessible Environment

B1. Improved Traffic Safety

Project Description:

This project will enhance pedestrian accessibility in the town with improved crossings and footpaths, upgraded bus stops, and passive traffic calming measures. The project includes potential to reduce the speed limit in the town centre to 30km/h and implement town gateway features in line with TII standards on the approaches to the town.

Context:

Ferbane's town centre is currently dominated by vehicular traffic, with pedestrians often coming second. Most of the road space is given to cars and trucks, and there are few safe places for people to cross where they naturally want to walk. Public feedback has shown strong concerns about safety, especially on Main Street, where fast-moving vehicles, including HGVs, make the area unsafe and unwelcoming for pedestrians and cyclists. The situation is even more worrying near schools, where poor crossings, speeding, and dangerous maneuverer like U-turns create serious risks.

Traffic congestion and the steady flow of through-traffic all add to the problem. The town also has limited facilities for cycling, some poor-quality or missing footpaths, and very few traffic-calming measures. Access for pedestrians to off-street car parks is inconvenient, which discourages walking. At peak times, around 700 vehicles pass through the centre each hour, which is a high volume for a small town and contributes to both the perception and reality of unsafe speeds.

These challenges also present opportunities—such as redesigning streets to give more space to pedestrians, introducing traffic calming, improving crossings and footpaths, enhancing cycling facilities, and developing better public transport links—to make Ferbane's town centre safer, more welcoming, and easier to move around for everyone.



Existing Context

'Unsafe Footpaths'

'Road safety along main street'

'Traffic Calming needed on main street'

'Introduce a slow zone within the town both for safety and to better present the town'

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme B: Social Inclusion and Wellbeing in a Safe and Accessible Environment

B1. Improved Traffic Safety

Key Opportunities:

It is a recommendation of this plan to undertake a Traffic and Transport Scheme for Ferbane, focusing on road infrastructure, public transportation, walking and cycling facilities, traffic management and better access to car parking. The study would aim to improve mobility, enhance traffic safety, and promote sustainable transportation options to cater to the needs of both residents and businesses in the Ferbane.

Potential projects arising from the Ferbane Traffic and Transport Study that could be delivered independently or in conjunction with other initiatives:

1. **Improved existing pedestrian crossings**
Review and upgrade existing pedestrian crossing points to ensure compliance with the latest accessibility standards, improve visibility for drivers, and reduce wait times for pedestrians. This could include traffic lights, better surface treatments, tactile paving, raised tables, and enhanced markings to increase safety and encourage active travel.
2. **New dedicated pedestrian crossings in key locations**
Identify desire lines and high footfall areas where dedicated pedestrian crossings would significantly improve safety and convenience. Zebra or signal-controlled crossings would be recommended, supported by lighting and traffic-calming features.
3. **New and improved footpaths, increased widths and space**
Assess the current condition and connectivity of footpaths, with a focus on filling gaps in the network, widening and upgrading paths where possible, and ensuring a continuous, safe, and accessible pedestrian environment. This may also include provision for shared surfaces with cyclists in certain locations.
4. **Upgraded and potentially relocated bus stops**
Evaluate the location, design, and accessibility of existing bus stops to improve user experience and integration with the town's transport network. This could involve adding shelters, seating, real-time information, and relocating stops to safer, more visible, or more convenient locations.
5. **Improved Public Transport**
Convenient and reliable public transport is essential to reducing car dependency. Increasing the frequency of bus services alongside upgraded bus stops would make services more attractive and accessible. These improvements could cut commuter car trips, easing congestion, lowering emissions, and improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists by reducing traffic volumes.
6. **Loading and parking strategy for the town including wayfinding**
Develop a coordinated strategy to manage goods deliveries and parking, balancing the needs of businesses, residents, and visitors. This may include relocated loading bays, short-stay parking, age-friendly spaces, EV charging, improved signage, and a wayfinding system that directs drivers to available parking while reducing unnecessary circulation.
7. **Public realm upgrade along key streets as a passive traffic calming measure**
Introduce design-led interventions—such as high-quality paving, street trees, planting, and narrowed carriageways—that naturally slow traffic by changing the visual character of the street. This signals to motorists that they are entering an area with high pedestrian activity and vulnerable road users.
8. **Improved street lighting**
Assess and upgrade if required lighting infrastructure to modern, energy-efficient and environmentally sensitive LED systems that improve visibility and safety for all road users, particularly pedestrians and cyclists. Lighting design should reduce dark spots, enhance crossings, and contribute to the town's visual appeal in evening hours.
9. **Planned Relief Road**
Consider the role of the proposed relief road between Athlone Road and Ferbane Business and Technology Park in diverting some of the through-traffic away from the town centre, thereby improving safety, reducing congestion, and creating opportunities for enhanced pedestrian and cycling environments in the town centre area.
10. **30 km/h speed limit**
Assess the feasibility of introducing 30 km/h limits in residential and town centre high-footfall areas, taking into account forthcoming legislative changes expected in late 2025 and any Special Speed Limits which could be adopted by elected members. Supporting measures such as signage, street design changes, and enforcement strategies should also be examined.
11. **TII gateways**
Work with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) to install 'gateway' features at town entry points, providing visual cues for motorists to slow down and signaling a transition into a more pedestrian-focused environment. Gateways can include road markings, signage, landscaping, and public art.

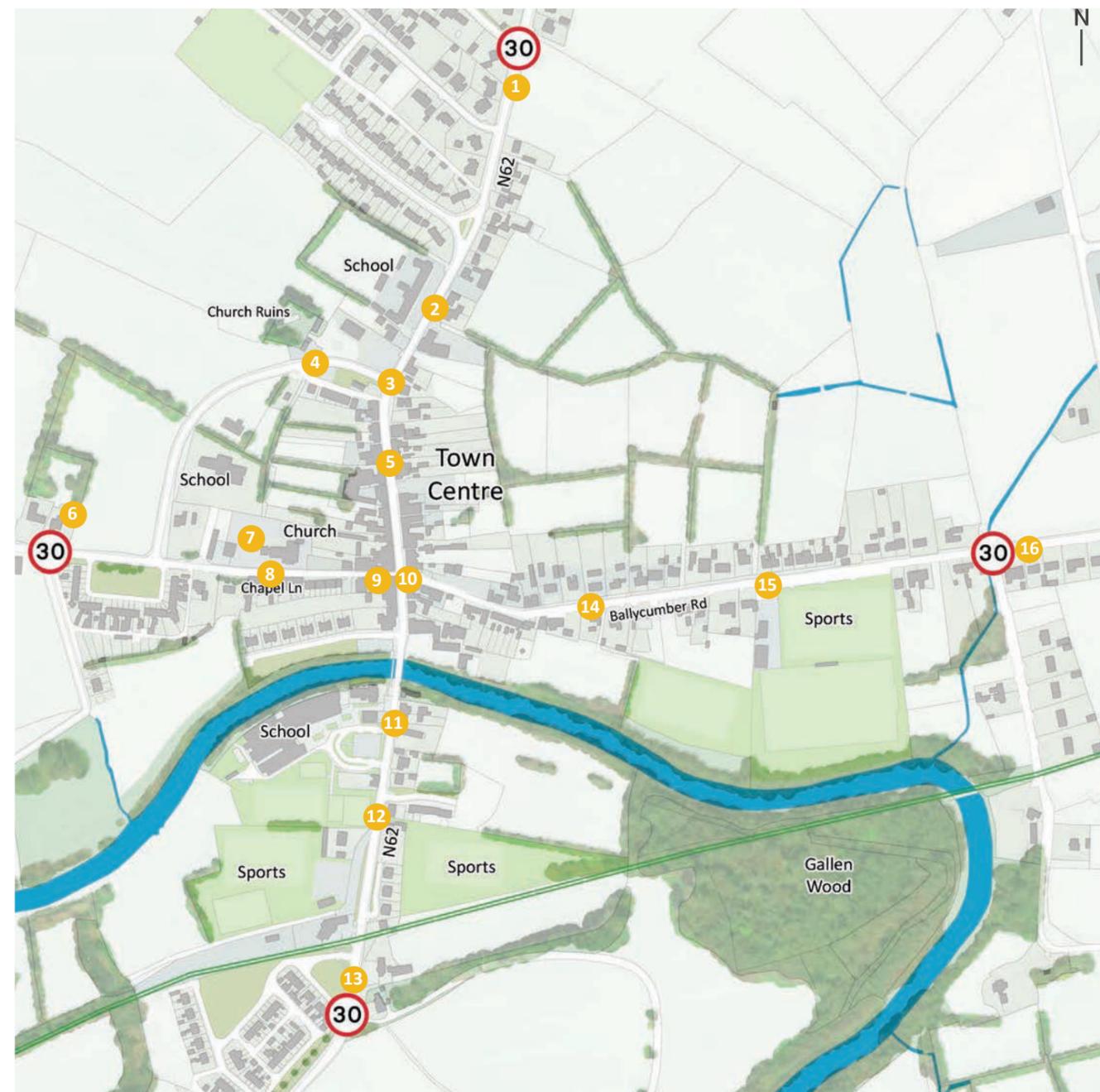
DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme B: Social Inclusion and Wellbeing in a Safe and Accessible Environment

B1. Improved Traffic Safety

Potential Traffic Safety Improvements:

1. 30kph speed limit town centre gateway
2. Upgraded pedestrian crossing in front of the school
3. New pedestrian crossing across the Main Street, tightening of turning radii and railings removal
4. New pedestrian crossing linking Mass path and playground
5. Upgraded pedestrian crossing with improved visibility
6. 30kph speed limit town centre gateway
7. Proposed marked walking route through carpark to Mass Path
8. New pedestrian footpath on southside
9. Potential to improve existing crossing and junction treatment
10. New Pedestrian crossing across Main Street and upgraded crossing across Ballycumber Road
11. New Pedestrian crossing across Main Street in front of the school
12. New pedestrian crossing across Main Street to access sport grounds and Gallen Wood
13. 30kph speed limit town centre gateway
14. Widened and upgraded footpath on northside, new footpath on southside
15. New pedestrian crossing to safely access GAA Club with speed calming
16. 30kph speed limit town centre gateway with new pedestrian crossing and speed calming



Note: Potential Traffic Safety Improvements shown on the map above are indicative only and would include extensive consultations with a number of stakeholders and are subject to further investigation prior to detailed design.



Typical TII Town Gateway



Key considerations and next steps:

- Prepare a project brief to guide the development of a Traffic and Transport Study for the town.
- Undertake any design work in coordination with potential public realm improvement projects.
- Engage early with residents, businesses, accessibility groups, and other relevant stakeholders to gather input and build consensus.
- Recognise that potential projects may be delivered either independently or in conjunction with other initiatives.

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme B: Social Inclusion and Wellbeing in a Safe and Accessible Environment

B2. Safety around the Schools

Project Description:

This project will improve safety around schools through streetscape enhancements for safe routes to school, identification of potential school drop-off zones, and an upgrade of the church car park to support safer access and circulation.

Context:

Ferbane benefits from strong educational provision, with two primary schools and Gallen School serving the local and surrounding population. However, school drop-off and pick-up periods create significant safety and traffic management challenges. Congestion, illegal parking, and conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians are common.

The St Cynoc's Senior school on the Athlone Road lacks a drop-off facility, resulting in vehicles stopping on footpaths, obstructing visibility, and creating traffic delays. At St Cynoc's Junior school, informal drop-offs in the church car park create additional hazards. With no marked parking spaces or defined pedestrian routes, the car park becomes chaotic at peak times, increasing the risk of accidents.

Although 26% of children walk to school, over half are driven, adding pressure to already limited road space. Narrow footpaths, inadequate crossings, and a lack of traffic calming reduce walkability and discourage active travel, making safety concerns particularly high around all school sites.



Existing Context

'Dangerous pick up at senior school'

'Speed of traffic through main street and past the national school.'

'National school kids are made to wait on path beside a very busy road and not allowed onto school grounds. There is going to be a tragic accident!'

Key Opportunities:

- Introduce a safe school drop-off/pick-up location for the senior primary school at Athlone Road.
- Narrow the carriageway and widen footpaths to improve pedestrian safety.
- Upgrade the existing pedestrian crossing at Athlone Road to enhance visibility and safety.
- Implement a school zone treatments for both schools on N62 with pencil-shaped bollards, upgraded streetscape and distinctive surface finishes to slow traffic, prevent illegal parking, and alert drivers to the presence of children.
- Provide road markings and a dedicated walking and drop-off area within the church car park to reduce congestion and improve safety.
- Improve connectivity between the two primary schools with upgraded lighting along the Mass Path and a new pedestrian crossing on the Fairgreen road.
- Install a new pedestrian crossing in front of Gallen Community School.

Key considerations and next steps:

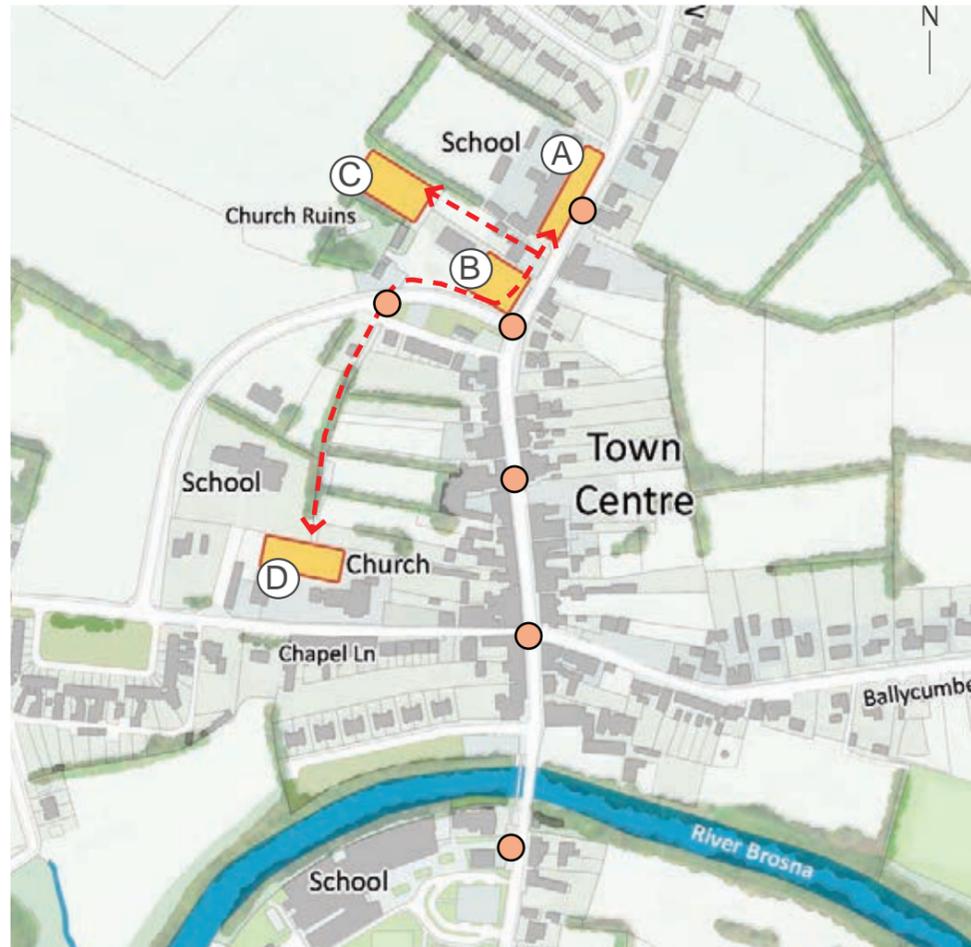
- Undertake design work in coordination with the Traffic and Transport Scheme for the town and in coordination with potential public realm improvement projects.
- Engage early with stakeholders, private land owners, residents, and accessibility groups to ensure inclusive and informed proposals.

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme B: Social Inclusion and Wellbeing in a Safe and Accessible Environment

B2. Safety around the Schools

Potential Traffic Safety Improvements:



Note: Potential Schools Safety Improvements shown above are indicative only and would include extensive consultations with a number of stakeholders and are subject to further investigation prior to detailed design.

- Potential School Drop off Locations:
- (A) Existing School Front Yard
- (B) Fairgreen Car Park
- (C) New Car Park
- (D) Church Car Park
- Potential New/ Improved Crossings

Potential Athlone Road School Zone Treatment (Artist Impression)



Note: Proposals shown are illustrative only (subject to further investigation prior to detailed design, traffic studies, technical consideration and planning consent etc.)

Existing Context



‘A School Zone is a designated area outside the entrance to a school that is specifically designed to make it safer for children to arrive and leave on foot, by bicycle, or scooter, and to limit on-street illegal parking.’

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme B: Social Inclusion and Wellbeing in a Safe and Accessible Environment

B3. Community Focused Spaces

Project Description:

This project will support the development of sustainable community facilities that connect local services and groups, provide safe spaces for all members of the community and respond to the need for breakfast clubs, afterschool care, baby & toddler groups etc. by utilising existing spaces such as The Convent, St. Marys Hall, The Heritage Centre and The Library.

Context:

Offaly County Council carried out a survey of existing community spaces in Ferbane in conjunction with volunteers from An Síolan, The GAA and St. Hilda's.

The survey revealed:

- Over 50% of the existing community spaces are over capacity.
- An increase in operating activity over the last two years, indicating an increased need for additional community spaces.
- Poor satisfaction rate with the existing community, cultural and civic facilities.
- Challenges arising from multi-use spaces, highlighting the need for designated spaces to accommodate groups such as Mother & Toddler Group, Coffee Morning, Active Aging.

Key Opportunities:

- Reusing historic buildings like The Convent, The Old School/ Court House and other buildings of historical significance preserves Ferbane's local identity and history while meeting modern needs.
- Renovating existing buildings to facilitate community spaces is more sustainable than new builds and contributes to decreasing the rate of vacancy and dereliction in the Town Centre in particular around the Main Crossroads in Ferbane.
- Increased activity in the town centre can support local businesses and attract further investment.
- Involving local groups in the design and management of spaces builds community spirit, interest and civic pride.
- Potential Community Uses;
 - Farmers Market
 - Mother & Baby Groups/ Parenting Groups
 - Active Aging Group
 - Youth/ Teen Group
 - Breakfast/ Afterschool Club
 - Social Enterprise e.g. community cafe/ workshop
 - Working Hub (Refer to Project D3)

Examples of other Community focused projects:



Before and after photo of recently refurbished Killeigh Community Centre, Co. Offaly



Recently restored Stradbally Market house



Farmers Market at Stradbally Market house



Moneygall Community Café, Co. Offaly operated by Moneygall Development Association

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme B: Social Inclusion and Wellbeing in a Safe and Accessible Environment

B3. Community Focused Spaces

Key considerations and next steps:

- Form a Community Facilities Working Group as a sub-group of project B4 to oversee planning, implementation, and operations. Clear roles and responsibilities should be defined for managing shared spaces.
- Identify suitable buildings and land, explore funding options to bring them into Local Authority or community ownership. Prioritise buildings based on readiness and community impact.
- Assess the sustainability of the spaces, the long-term viability will depend on efficient use, maintenance plans, and income generation.
- Assess structural integrity, accessibility, and upgrade needs of each proposed building.
- Ensure ongoing consultation with residents and stakeholders to ensure spaces meet real needs.
- Launch temporary or pop-up activities in selected buildings to test demand and gather feedback.
- Seek funding to develop scheme designs and capital project development funding.



PROJECT A

Ferbane Convent:



Existing

PROJECT B

St Mary's Hall:



Existing

PROJECT C

The Heritage Centre:



Existing

PROJECT D

Ferbane's Existing Library:



Existing

'Community hubs for community events where we can promote our diverse people's living.'

'Farmers Market.'

'A youth club or den would be of benefit, nice to have somewhere for teenagers and young kids to go to hang out in a safe environment.'

'Community Centre.'

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme B: Social Inclusion and Wellbeing in a Safe and Accessible Environment

B3. Community Focused Spaces

PROJECT A

Ferbane Convent:



Concept image of the refurbished Convent

The refurbishment of Ferbane's former convent into a multi-purpose community, enterprise, and learning hub will address town centre vacancy, preserve a historic landmark, and create a vibrant focal point for Ferbane.

Project Status:

Part 8 Planning Permission Granted

Project Impact:

- Heritage: Refurbishment and preservation of a historic building
- Vacancy & Dereliction: Activation of a vacant town centre site
- Town Centre Revitalisation: Creation of green and recreational riverside spaces
- Co-location of community, enterprise, and learning services (including LOETB and St Hilda's Services) creating vibrant community hub
- Connectivity: Improved access links from Ferbane Bridge to the River Brosna

PROJECT B

St Mary's Hall:



Example Project: Llangollen Canal Canoe Centre, Wales

The redevelopment of the historic St Mary's Parochial Hall to transform it into a vibrant access and activity hub along the River Brosna, supporting outdoor recreation, education, and community wellbeing.

Project Status:

Yet to commence

Project Impact:

- Preservation and activation of a historic community-built hall
- Improved access to the River Brosna for recreational use
- Support for Active Travel & Tourism with the potential for a kayak and cycle centre for hire and repair services
- Potential creation of a sensory garden off-road, enhancing biodiversity and wellbeing
- Youth Engagement: Support for Gallen Community School through shared use of outdoor and activity spaces
- Strengthening town centre connectivity and outdoor tourism infrastructure

PROJECT C

The Heritage Centre:



Concept image of the refurbished Heritage Centre

The repurposing of Ferbane's Heritage Centre will establish a new cultural hub in the town centre, anchored by the relocation of Ferbane Library. This move will activate a key site adjacent to existing playground, fairgreen and recreational amenities and support broader placemaking goals.

Project Status:

Pending relocation of St. Hilda's Services to the refurbished convent.

Project Impact:

- Adaptive reuse of the Heritage Centre following vacancy
- Relocation of Ferbane Library to a more central and accessible site
- Integration with existing amenities including the playground and Fairgreen recreational space
- Creation of a cultural hub to support community engagement, learning, and events
- Catalyst for further site development and town centre activation

PROJECT D

Ferbane's Existing Library:



Concept image of the refurbished Library

The repurposing of the existing library space—once relocated—offers an opportunity to create a flexible, multi-generational community hub. Located at the entrance to Gallen Community School, the space is ideally positioned to support family-oriented and educational activities.

Project Status:

Pending library relocation

Project Impact:

- Activation of a vacant public building in a strategic town centre location.
- Creation of a flexible community space for mixed-age groups and families
- Potential uses include:
 - * Breakfast club
 - * Afterschool club
 - * Mother and baby group space
- Support for Gallen Community School through proximity and shared programming
- Strengthening social infrastructure and promoting inclusive community development

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme B: Social Inclusion and Wellbeing in a Safe and Accessible Environment

B4. Ferbane Community Network Support & Growth

Project Description:

This project will support the establishment of an inclusive, overarching community and local development structure that ensures a cohesive community response to local needs. The new entity will identify, source resources, and oversee programmes and projects that enhance the sustainability of the community.

Context:

The community of Ferbane is well served by a vibrant community and voluntary sector with two existing community-led companies; Ferbane Business and Technology Park Ltd and An Síolán Ltd, each of whom has a primary focus - on the Business Park and the redevelopment of St Joseph's Convent (into a multipurpose community, enterprise, and learning hub) respectively.

The community consultation phase of Ferbane Town Centre First has identified a number of potential community-led initiatives that are best achieved through a coherent and coordinated community effort – from prioritisation, to accessing funding, to implementation of the action.

Key Opportunities:

- To develop the town of Ferbane and its hinterland in a manner that benefits the community
- By the organisation, promotion and management of projects for the development of sustainable enterprise and employment,
- By establishing and implementing a series of community development projects aimed at improving the local economic and cultural welfare
- By promoting and assisting the participation of disadvantaged groups in the socio-economic development of this disadvantaged region and its inhabitants
- By coordinating the delivery of the Community Development, Green Infrastructure Strategy & Town Centre First Plans
- By promoting Social Inclusion across all the Pillars and creating Social Enterprise opportunities
- By liaising with state bodies and funders to source funding

'Focus on setting up a proper community development group.'

Key considerations and next steps:

The initial task of the newly formed Development Group would be to agree and implement a structure conducive to supporting and facilitating the attainment of the named objectives in a community-led, cohesive and inclusive fashion. In that regard, the group will consider a representative structure based on sub-structures/pillars inclusive of existing groups and cognisant of identified community needs including

- Children and Youth
- Community Facilities
- Enterprise/ Employment
- Environmental
- Health, Education and Wellbeing
- Sports and Recreation
- Tourism

Ferbane Town Team will work with existing groups to support and facilitate the transition to an overarching structure that enables all groups continue to achieve their individual aims while contributing to the attainment of overall objectives of the community.



DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme B: Social Inclusion and Wellbeing in a Safe and Accessible Environment

B5. Multi-use Sport & Active Grounds

Project Description:

This project will create a multi purpose facility in the lands adjoining The Convent. The project will include an all-weather pitch to serve sports such as rugby, soccer, athletics, basketball, tennis and GAA training and a potential natural swimming pool. It will include multi-sport markings and lighting for year-round, day-and-night use.

Context:

Ferbane has strong sporting tradition and well-established facilities however the existing grass pitches are limited by seasonal waterlogging, restricting year-round use.

To address this, a new multi-use synthetic pitch is proposed to support GAA and soccer training, and athletics activities such as sprinting and long jump. A potential natural spring-fed recovery pool is also proposed at the site.

The project will also link to the proposed Riverside walkway at the Convent and will facilitate improved connections between The Convent, Town Centre and Ballycumber Road.

The project will promote active lifestyles, improved connectivity, and enhance the town's public realm.

Key Opportunities:

- Introduce a synthetic multi-use pitch to enable year-round training for GAA, soccer, and athletics, overcoming seasonal limitations of grass pitches.
- Provide a high-quality training facility for use by local groups such as Foróige and Schools
- Encourage active lifestyles and community participation.
- Enhance community wellness through a better connections to new riverside walk and natural spring-fed recovery pool.
- Improve links between The Convent, the GAA grounds, and the town centre.
- Potential to attract regional training camps and community events, boosting local economy and activity.
- Use of the Brosna tributary River for eco-friendly water features and recovery amenities.
- The formation of new clubs in varied sports such as basketball, badminton and tennis which would have the potential to bring people in to the town from a wider area.

Key considerations and next steps:

- Determine suitable access routes and connections
- Assess ecological impacts near the river
- Plan for long-term upkeep including maintenance costs and management.
- Co-ordinate with Traffic and Transport requirements and proposed updates to the Convent to ensure cohesive development.

Location



LEGEND

- Multi-use Pitch Area
- Potential Access Points

'Outdoor fitness.'

'The town needs a community field where all clubs can use; Athletics club, Rugby, Soccer, GAA etc, as current facilities are over used.'



Multi-use markings in various colours ensure maximum flexibility of the new pitch



Banagher Outdoor Natural Swimming Pool, Co. Offaly draws swimmers from the surrounding area

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DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme C:

Enhanced Sustainability and Biodiversity and Connected Natural and Built Assets

Potential Projects:

C1. Ferbane Loops and Walks

This project will develop a series of potential walking trails connecting Ferbane to its wider natural and cultural landscape, including the river, canal, and peatlands. It will feature heritage trails, a scenic old railway walk, expanded bog loop, and a new link from the Grand Canal into the town centre.

C2. Wayfinding and signage around the town

This project will deliver clear and accessible wayfinding and signage throughout Ferbane to guide residents and visitors to nature trails, cycleways, waterways, and key local amenities.

C3. River Brosna- Small Crafts Access

This project will enhance community access to the River Brosna in Ferbane for small craft such as kayaks and canoes. It will establish designated access points along the river, promote recreational use, and support tourism through the development of potential water trails.

C4. Brosna linear park

This project will create a new linear park along the northern riverbank in Ferbane, on a site zoned for open space, amenity, and recreation. It will offer a sensitive extension of green space near the convent, enhancing public access to the river while complementing the Small Crafts Access project and protecting the natural riverbank environment.

C5. Green Ferbane

Green Ferbane will deliver a coordinated approach to climate action, green infrastructure, and sustainable water management across the town. The project will strengthen Ferbane's natural systems by combining biodiversity enhancement, nature-based drainage solutions, and community greening to create a more resilient, attractive, and healthy environment.

Promote environmentally responsible development by enhancing green infrastructure, protecting biodiversity and integrating sustainable practices into the town's growth. Improve physical and visual connection between the town, the River Brosna, Grand Canal and surrounding landscape through green routes and access points that support recreation, tourism and a healthy environment.

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme C: Enhanced Sustainability and Biodiversity and Connected Natural and Built Assets

C1. Ferbane Loops and Walks

Project Description:

This project will develop a series of potential walking trails connecting Ferbane to its wider natural and cultural landscape, including the river, canal, and boglands. It will feature heritage trails, a scenic old railway walk, expanded bog loop, and a new link from the Grand Canal into the town centre.

Context:

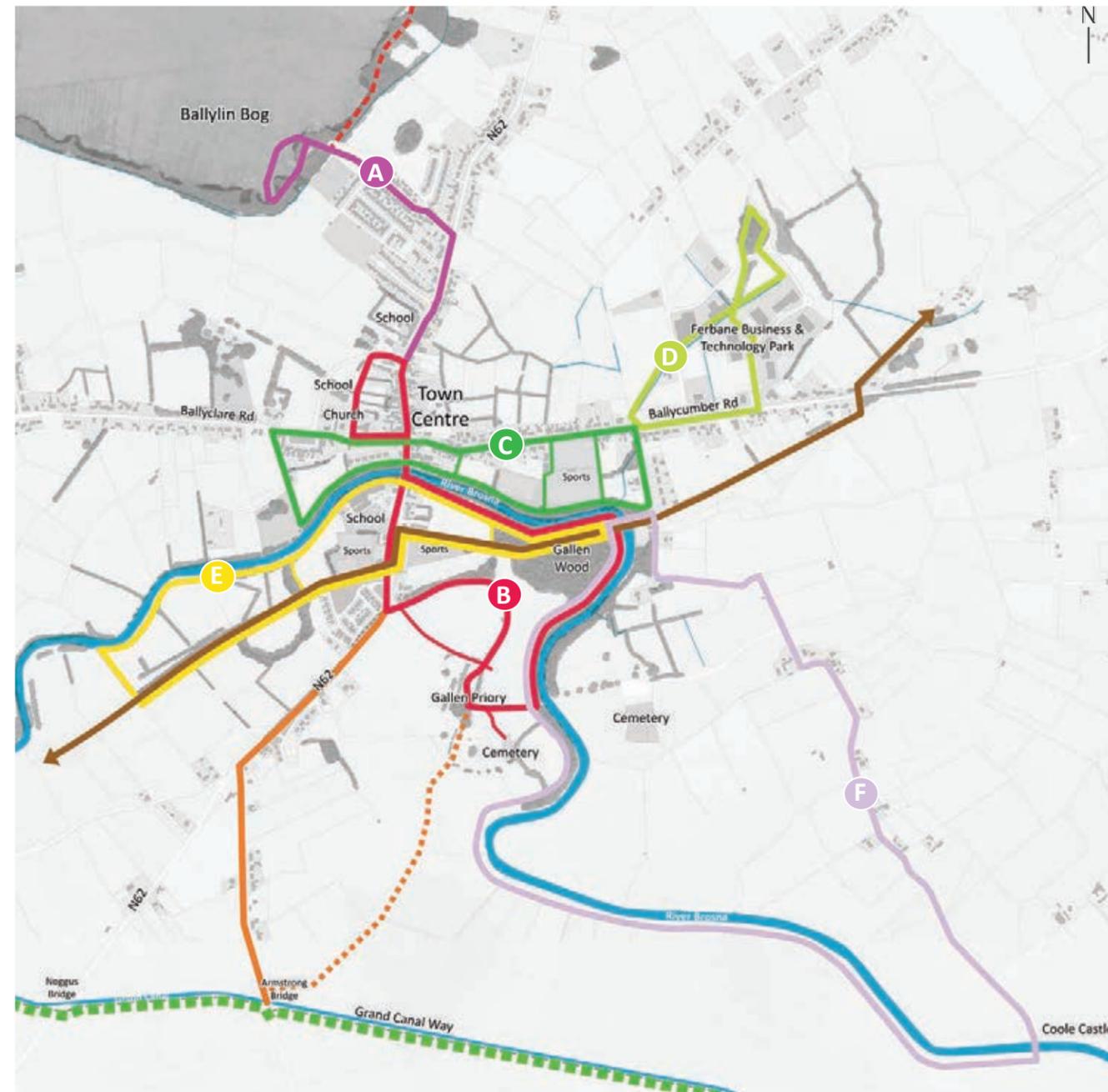
Community engagement and public survey have identified the aspiration to develop a wider network of recreational routes around the town connected to the existing routes in the Town Centre. Proposed routes would be used for active recreation, potentially including hiking, running and cycling.

The proposed loops have the potential to link with the wider walking and cycle context within the County identified in the County Development Plan and will eventually link with Bord na Mona and Failte Ireland trails linking with Old Rail Trail/ Dublin Galway Greenway and The Great Western Greeway to the South.

A number of potential connected routes are identified on the map to the right. Potential routes are indicative only and would include extensive consultations with a number of stakeholders.

'Development of link routes for walking, cycling between all of the key location's in the town'

Potential Network of Recreational Loops and Links for Ferbane



Note: Potential routes shown above are indicative only and would include extensive consultations with a number of stakeholders and are subject to further investigation prior to detailed design.

Loops:

- A** Ballylin Bog Loop: 2.3km route
- B** Heriatge Trail Loop: 3.8km route including Gallen Wood and walk along River Brosna
- C** North Riverbank Loop: 2.8km route through Old Convent lands and along northern riverbank
- D** Cow Park Loop: 2.0km route through Ferbane Business and Technology Park and along existing stream
- E** South Riverbank Loop: 3.5km route including Gallen Wood and Old Railway Line
- F** Coole Castle Loop: 5.0km route along River Brosna and L30048 Coole Road

Links:

- Planned shared surface cycle/pedestrian route to Grand Canal Way
- Alternative route to Grand Canal Way
- Old Railway Line (link to Grand Canal Blue way to the East & Shannon Monastic Greenway to the West)
- Grand Canal Way
- Potential Link to Clonmacnoise

A 5k loop around town to promote well-being and fitness.

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme C: Enhanced Sustainability and Biodiversity and Connected Natural and Built Assets

C1. Ferbane Loops and Walks

Potential Old Railway Walk (Artist Impression)



Note: Proposals shown are illustrative only (subject to further investigation prior to detailed design, technical consideration and planning consent etc.)

Key Opportunities:

- Develop a network of recreational loops and links of varying lengths and character, providing safe and healthy options for walkers, runners, and cyclists to move around Ferbane.
- Support these routes with improved wayfinding, enhanced lighting, and accessible areas for rest, play, and exercise for all ages and abilities.
- With the help of the Town Team and Ferbane community, a heritage trail route could be also explored along existing and proposed walking routes with interpretive panels and plaques to be mounted with consent of all relevant property owners.
- Explore potential future expansion of the network to include the Ferbane Environs Bog Loops and heritage trail links connecting key cultural and historic sites, such as a route from Gallen Monastic Settlement to Clonmacnoise.
- Proposed routes refer to the Green Infrastructure Strategy for Ferbane 2021 and Ferbane Community Action Plan 2019

Key considerations and next steps:

- Engage early with stakeholders, private land owners, residents, and accessibility groups to ensure inclusive and informed proposals.

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme C: Enhanced Sustainability and Biodiversity and Connected Natural and Built Assets

C2. Wayfinding and Signage around the Town

Project Description:

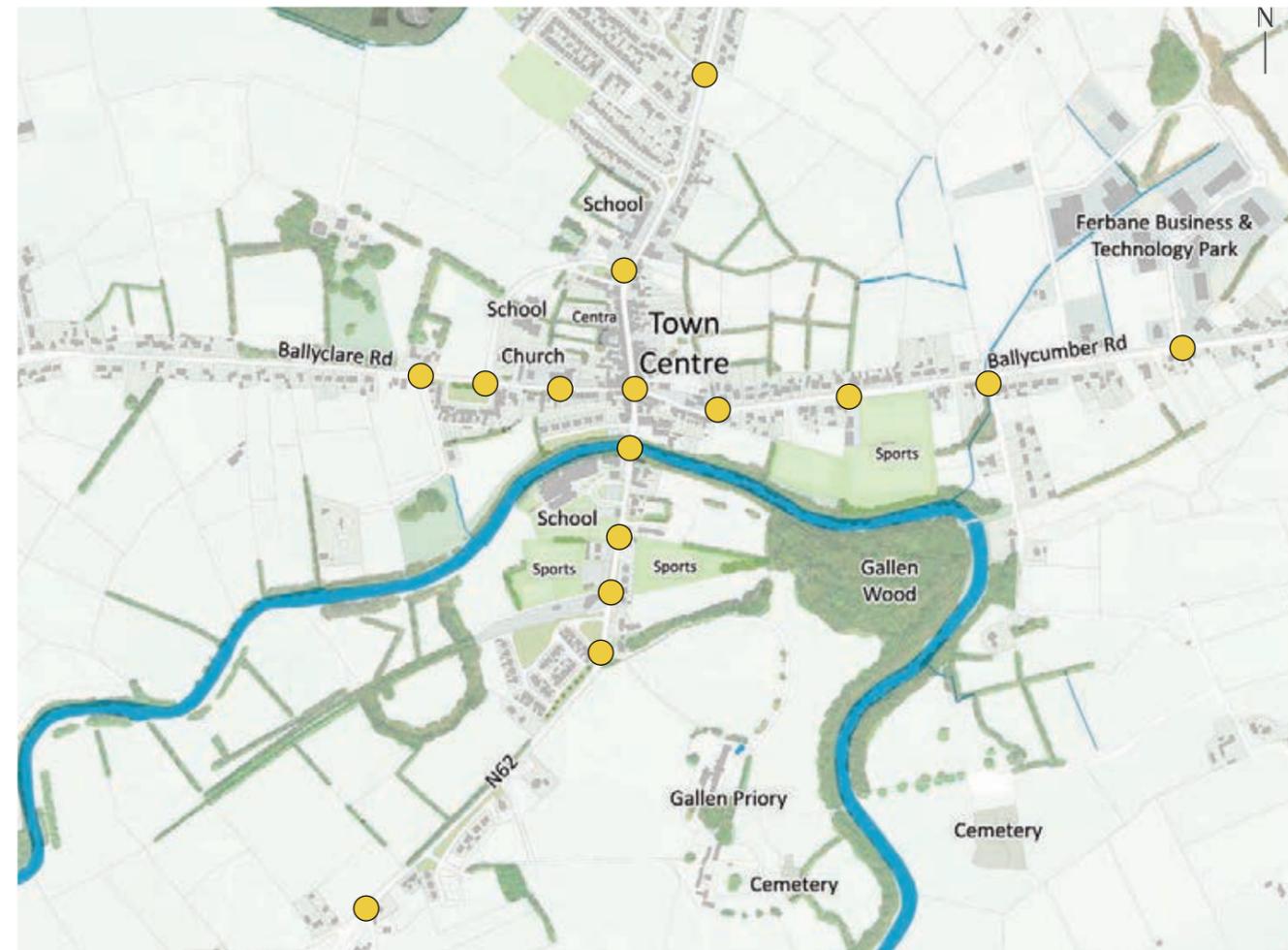
This project will deliver clear and accessible wayfinding and signage throughout Ferbane to guide residents and visitors to nature trails, cycleways, waterways, and key local amenities.

Context:

A wayfinding system is used to guide and direct people within a town. It typically includes signage, maps, and other visual cues to help residents and visitors navigate the urban environment efficiently. Currently, there is a variety of sign types and messages throughout the town.

A coordinated signage strategy would help to rationalise these, ensuring ease of understanding, minimising street clutter, and clearly direct people where they want to go. Signs could include car parking and public transport information, align with existing and future walking and cycling routes, and incorporate a distinct town brand to strengthen Ferbane's identity.

Potential Key Locations for Wayfinding Signage

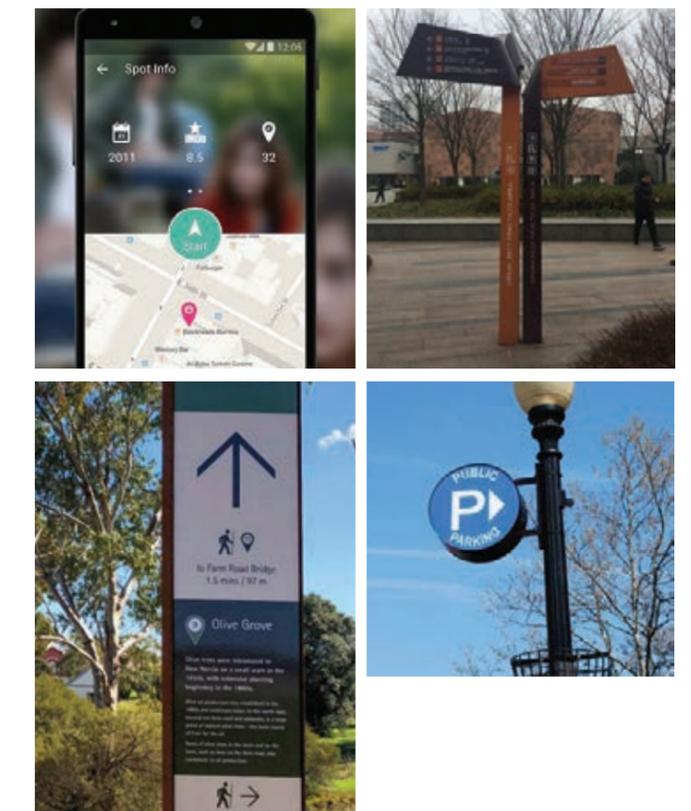


● Potential Key Locations for Wayfinding Signage

Key Opportunities:

- Review all existing directional signage in the town centre.
- Evaluate the town's layout, key landmarks, and popular destinations.
- Implement clear and visible signage at strategic locations, including street signs and directional markers.
- Explore digital options, such as mobile apps or interactive stands.
- Integrate technology for real-time updates and personalized navigation.
- Ensure the wayfinding system is accessible to people of all abilities.

Wayfinding sample ideas:



'Signage is need badly everywhere in Ferbane for all its amenities'



DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme C: Enhanced Sustainability and Biodiversity and Connected Natural and Built Assets

C3. River Brosna- Small Crafts Access

Project Description:

This project will enhance community access to the River Brosna in Ferbane for small craft such as kayaks and canoes. It will establish designated access points along the river, promote recreational use, and support tourism through the development of potential water trails.

Context:

A feasibility study was commissioned by Ferbane Tidy Towns in 2024 and carried out by Mitchell & Associates. The study examined opportunities for small water craft access such as kayaks, canoes and paddle boards, identifying potential launch points and routes.

Improved access to the River would support water based recreational activities and tourism to the town, boosting the local economy as a result.

Key Opportunities:

- Create designated launch points enables safe and convenient access to the River Brosna for residents and visitors.
- Establish Ferbane as a hub for water-based recreation, linking into a potential regional water trail from Ballycumber to Shannon Harbor.
- Encourage active lifestyles and outdoor recreation, particularly among youth and local clubs, through increased access to the river.
- Support tourism and local business by attracting paddling enthusiasts and nature tourists to Ferbane.

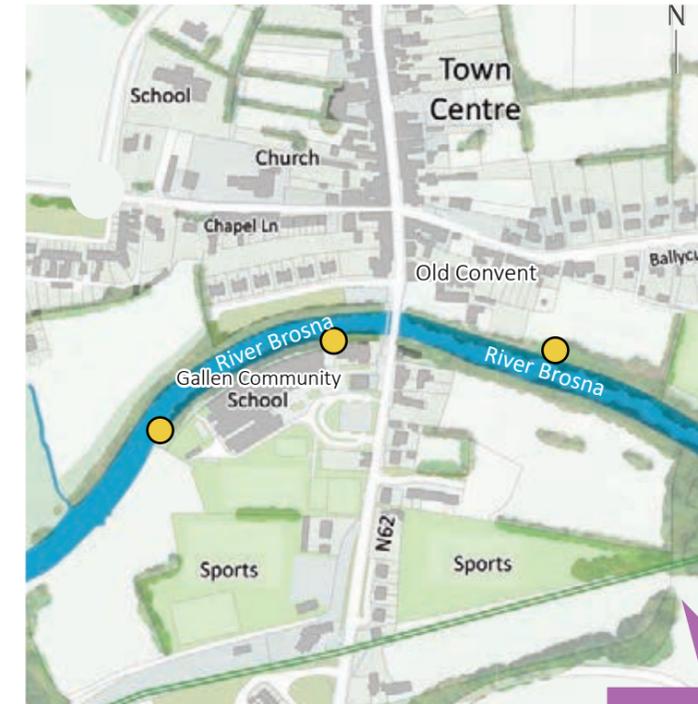
Key considerations and next steps:

- Refine the identification of suitable locations for launch points based on safety, accessibility, and minimal environmental disruption.
- Confirm land ownership and secure access agreements where necessary.
- All works should comply with Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) guidelines and be reviewed by an ecologist to ensure protection of aquatic and riverside habitats.
- Design launch points with appropriate surfaces, gradients, signage, and emergency access provisions.
- Engage local groups and schools in the design and promotion of the project.
- Consider a phased implementation of the project starting with one access point close to the town centre before expanding to additional access points. Ensure development of suitable wayfinding and signage to support the project in conjunction with project C2.

'Access points to our river Brosna.'

'Clean up of the Brosna with public access from the towncentre of the town. We should utilise the river for activities such as fishing, kayaking, safe swimming areas.'

Potential Locations



LEGEND

- Potential small crafts access points

'The Brosna really needs to be cleaned both sides have become very over grown.'



Potential Floating Pontoon Access Point



Access Study by Mitchells & Associates



Ferbane Old Railway Bridge

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme C: Enhanced Sustainability and Biodiversity and Connected Natural and Built Assets

C4. Brosna Linear Park

Project Description:

This project will create a new linear park along the northern riverbank in Ferbane, on a site zoned for open space, amenity, and recreation. It will offer a sensitive extension of green space near the Convent, enhancing public access along the river while complementing the Small Crafts Access project and protecting the natural riverbank environment.

Context:

Ferbane is located on the banks of the River Brosna, a natural wildlife corridor flanked by native riparian woodlands. Despite this huge asset, public awareness and access to the river are limited.

Much of the riverside land zoned for open space remains underutilised, often as grass lawns or overgrown areas of low ecological value. At Cois Na hAbhainn on the northern bank, there is strong potential to transform existing open space into a valuable public amenity. With investment, the site could enhance biodiversity, improve connection with the river, and form part of a wider walking and biodiversity network.

'More green spaces.'

Potential Linear Park along Brosna (Artist Impression)

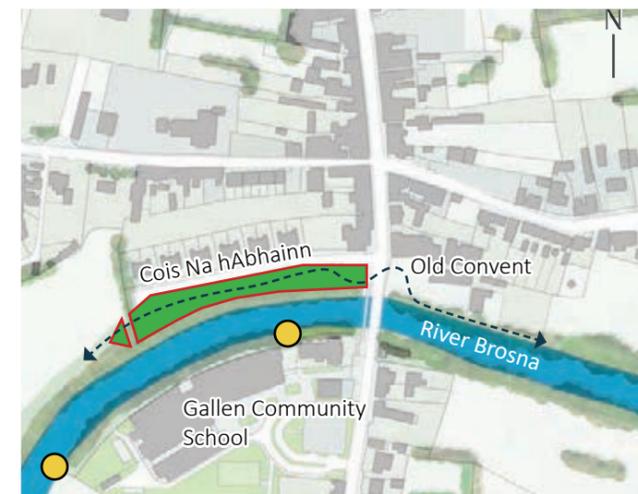


Note: Proposals shown are illustrative only (subject to further investigation prior to detailed design, technical consideration and planning consent etc.)

Existing Context



Location



Key Opportunities:

- Open up access along the River Brosna, creating a starting point for a wildlife and recreational route and linking into Ferbane's wider walking and cycling network.
- Enhance biodiversity through the creation of a linear park, integrating biodiverse links with existing green corridors and incorporating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).
- Provide play and exercise areas for all ages, along with public seating, encouraging residents and visitors to spend more time outdoors.
- Support wider initiatives by connecting with small craft access projects or establishing outdoor environmental classrooms to highlight the ecological value of Ferbane's diverse habitats.

Key considerations and next steps:

- Development and ongoing management could be led by local community groups, such as Tidy Towns, supported by the Town Team.
- Protection of riparian planting must be prioritised.
- Given the ecological sensitivity of the area, all proposals should be reviewed by an ecologist and comply with IFI guidelines.

- Potential linear amenity space
- ▶ Potential north riverbank walk
- Potential small crafts access points

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme C: Enhanced Sustainability and Biodiversity and Connected Natural and Built Assets

C5. Green Ferbane

Project Description:

Green Ferbane will deliver a coordinated approach to climate action, green infrastructure, and sustainable water management across the town. The project will strengthen Ferbane's natural systems through biodiversity enhancement, nature-based drainage solutions, and community greening, creating a more resilient, attractive, and healthy environment.

The project is supported by 4 key strategies;

- Green Infrastructure Strategy
- Woodland Management Strategy
- Water Management Strategy
- Biodiversity Strategy

A key action will be the preparation and updating of these strategies, ensuring that all future drainage, habitat, and water-related projects are strategically aligned, address capacity and pollution issues, and deliver multiple benefits for ecology, amenity, and resilience.

Once these plans are in place, Green Ferbane will guide the implementation of linked projects including the Forest of Ferbane, wetlands, swales, rain gardens, and bio-retention areas, all designed to enhance biodiversity, support natural drainage, and improve public access to green spaces and waterways.

Context:

Ferbane's townscape combines historic streets, riverside spaces, and public open areas, but is dominated by hard, grey infrastructure with little planting or integration of nature. Streets, footpaths, and large car parks often lack greenery, creating an environment with limited biodiversity, and climate resilience.

However, local community has already demonstrated the potential for change. The Fair Green rain gardens highlight how sustainable design can manage surface water while enhancing public space, and the Forest of Ferbane reflects strong community leadership in tree planting and habitat creation.

Green Ferbane will build on these foundations, ensuring that climate action and nature-based solutions are coordinated through a clear framework of supporting plans — Ferbane Green Infrastructure, Sustainable Water Management, and Biodiversity Management — before implementation begins. This sequencing will ensure that Ferbane's projects are coherent, technically sound, and deliver long-term benefits for people and nature.



Existing Context



Green Infrastructure Strategy for Ferbane (2021)

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme C: Enhanced Sustainability and Biodiversity and Connected Natural and Built Assets

C5. Green Ferbane

Key Opportunities:

- Main Street & Core Streets – Introduce tree pits, rain gardens, and rainwater planters to manage surface water and to green the town centre and calm traffic.
- Car Parks – Retrofit large paved areas with swales, permeable paving, and shade trees to reduce runoff and improve amenity.
- Electric Vehicle Charging – Install additional EV charging points in the town to encourage visitors to park, charge, and spend locally. This initiative will help boost economic activity and position Ferbane as a leader in sustainable transport.
- River Brosna Corridor – Develop the Brosna SuDS Masterplan for Ferbane to guide riverside wetlands, nature walks, and biodiversity areas, with opportunities for interpretation and education on water quality and ecology.
- Ballycumber Road – Create linear planting and bioswales that manage drainage and improve the visual character of the road (linked with project A1)
- Forest of Ferbane – Continue woodland management and planting at Gallen Wood, Ballyvoura Grove, and Cow Park Wood, linking green corridors to Ballylin Bog and recording tree benefits via Cameo or i-Tree.
- Business Park & Food Campus – Integrate wetlands, woodland, and productive landscapes for drainage, biodiversity, and community use.
- Former Landfill Site – Develop new managed woodland to strengthen habitat networks and provide public access opportunities.

- Open Residential Spaces – Enhance meadows, mowing regimes, and community greening, working with residents to improve biodiversity and local amenity.

‘Planting more trees and wild flowers for the bees.’

Key considerations and next steps:

- Update the Green Infrastructure Plan and Biodiversity Management Plan to respond to Town Centre First Plan
- Develop a Sustainable Water Management Plan to guide all water and drainage interventions.
- Develop Woodland Management Programme and Tree Planting Programme to guide ongoing care and expansion of Ferbane’s urban forest and green corridors.
- Prepare concept designs for pilot projects in the town centre, car parks, and along the River Brosna.
- Coordinate implementation through Offaly County Council, Ferbane Tidy Towns, Town Team, LAWPRO, Inland Fisheries Ireland, and OCC Climate Action Office.
- Explore funding through URDF, Climate Action Fund, LEADER, and biodiversity or water quality grant schemes.



Bioretention Gardens and Swales



Rainwater Planter



Constructed Wetland

‘Tree planting’

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme D:

Vibrant, Attractive and Welcoming Town Centre

Potential Projects:

D1. Town Centre Living

This project will develop a series of town centre living projects. By bringing more housing into the town centre there will be a stronger sense of community in the core of the town. This will bring additional support for business and local groups. It will support active travel and aim to reduce car use in the town centre. Housing will be of mixed scale to support those at different stage of life, right size/ age friendly housing will be provided for those who need to downsize will support independent living for the elderly.

D2. Supporting Local Enterprise

This project will support the establishment and development of a local network of enterprises and entrepreneurs in Ferbane. The network, operating under the Community and Local Development structure at B4, will facilitate upskilling and reskilling for existing enterprise and plan programmes and projects that enhance the entrepreneurial culture in the community and attract new enterprises to Ferbane.

D3. Digital Ferbane

This project will implement the recommendations of Ferbane's Digital Town Blueprint Report, including the development of digital hubs, improvement of e-commerce adoption among local business, expansion of digital skills and training which will link closely with project D4, enhance smart tourism infrastructure and develop a comprehensive tourism website for the town.

D4. Developing Skills for Local Jobs

This project will develop education and training programmes to upskill the community and provide young adults the opportunities to develop skills that will enable them to work and live locally. Ferbane Town Team will work in partnership with key stakeholders including An Síolán, Gallen Community School, and LOETB to ensure that skills required for the sustainability of the local economy are provided in the community.

D5. Ferbane Tourism

Ferbane Town Team will work with key stakeholders including the proposed overarching Community Structure, Ferbane Tidy Towns, local enterprise, and statutory entities with tourism responsibilities to pursue the vision of Ferbane: A Prospectus for Development, 08/2021, with some of its objectives included as specific projects in the Town Centre First Plan particularly Actions C1 to C5.

Projects and ideas identified in this section are conceptual only and are subject to appropriate planning consents and further investigation and consultation processes prior to detail design stage.

Encourage sustainable economic development by supporting local businesses, attracting investment and meet the growing need for quality housing in well-connected, serviced areas.

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme D: Vibrant, Attractive and Welcoming Town Centre

D1. Town Centre Living

Project Description:

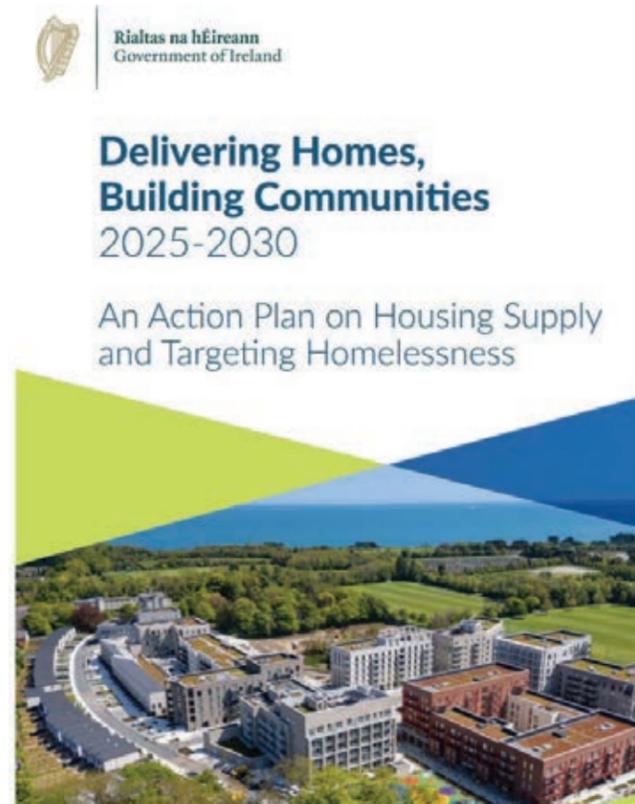
This project will to develop a series of town centre living projects. By bringing more housing into the town centre there will be a stronger sense of community in the core of the town. This will bring additional support for business and local groups. It will support active travel and aim to reduce car use in the town centre. Housing will be of mixed scale to support those at different stage of life, right size/ age friendly housing will be provided for those who need to downsize will support independent living for the elderly.

Lack of houses to buy or rent

Context:

This project proposes the development of compact, high-quality housing within Ferbane’s town centre to address the growing need for accessible, sustainable, and community-oriented living. It prioritises compact growth in response to national and regional planning objectives, aiming to reintroduce residential life into the heart of the town to revitalise the local economy, support existing services, and create a more vibrant, walkable community.

The project will focus on the densification of backland plots, offering mixed housing types to cater to diverse needs—young professionals,



National Housing Plan

older residents seeking to downsize, and families—while ensuring high design standards.

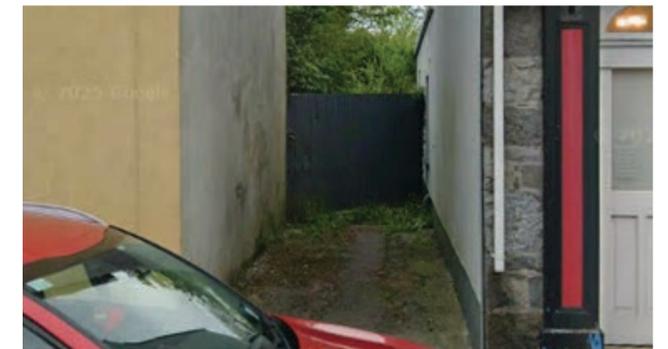
There are a number of sites within the town centre that are currently underdeveloped, including Sites B and C, which are zoned as Town Centre Mixed Use in the County Development Plan. These sites have the potential to unlock backland areas behind Main Street to the east and west and offer opportunities for integrated pedestrian and cycle links to the town core. Their development would support the regeneration of Main Street and would be well suited to age-friendly housing.



Potential for Town Centre Housing adjacent to Mass Path (Site B)

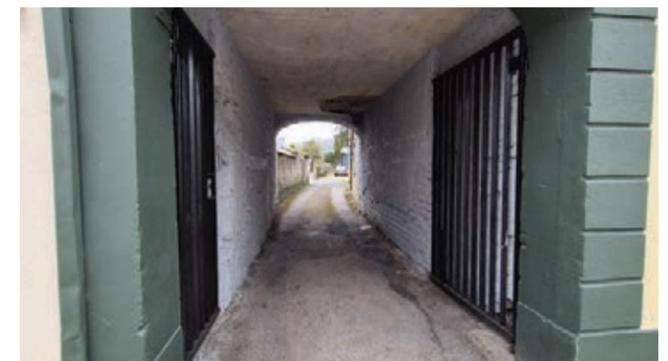
‘Age friendly housing.’

Retirement village for older people to make houses available for families.



A new access road would likely be required to access land at Site C, which could also help reduce traffic and congestion on Main Street.

Additional sites at A, D, E, and F should also be explored. These sites, located in close proximity to Main Street, have excellent access to Ferbane’s existing facilities including schools and recreational grounds, making them ideal for housing young couples and families. Development across these sites could deliver a mix of housing sizes to meet the needs of Ferbane’s aging population while supporting a more inclusive and vibrant town centre.



Potential for pedestrian links from Main Street to backland sites

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

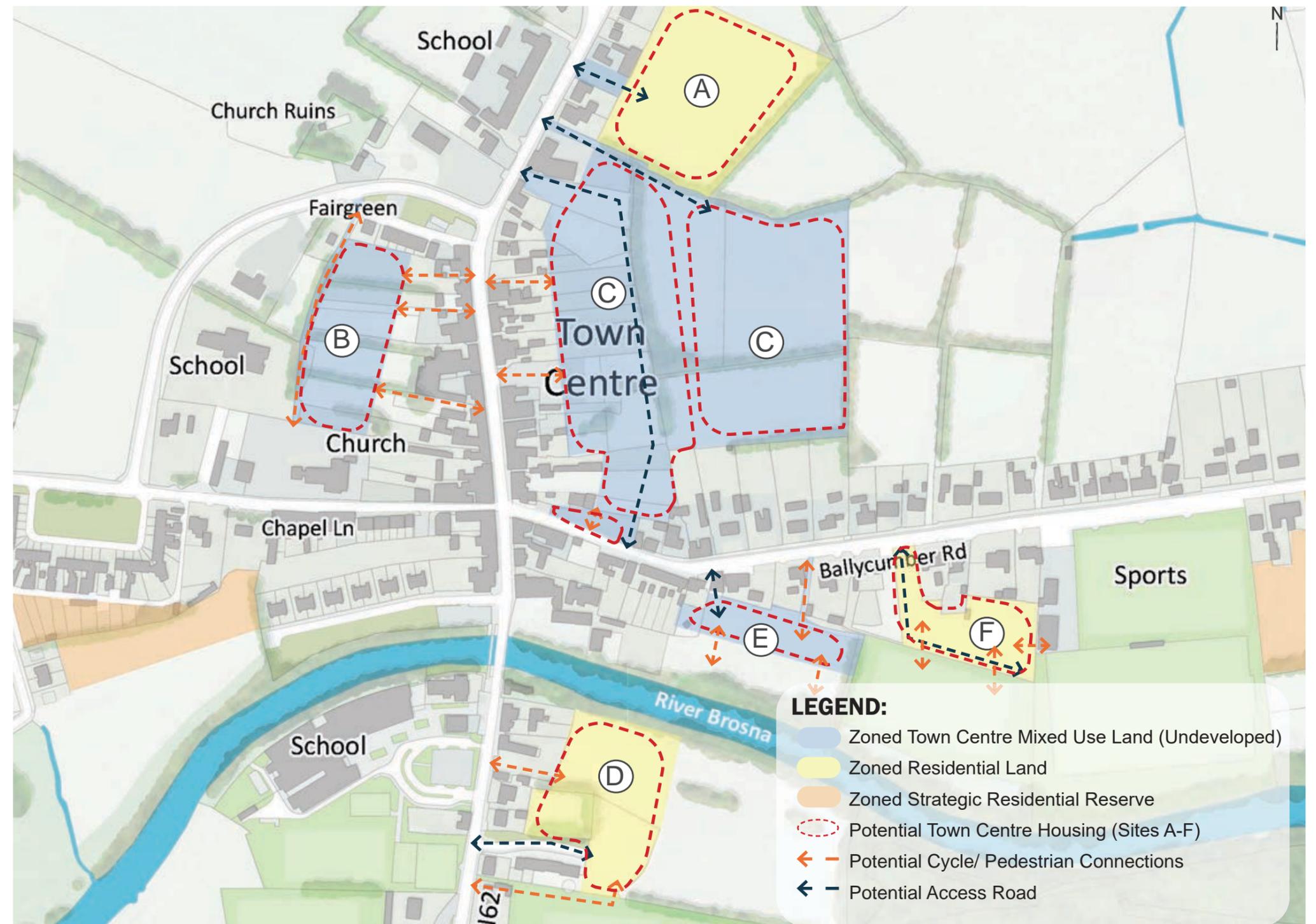
Theme D: Vibrant, Attractive and Welcoming Town Centre

D1. Town Centre Living

Key Opportunities:

- Repopulate the Town Centre: Encourage people to live centrally, supporting local shops, services, and amenities, and reducing car dependency.
- Enable a low-carbon lifestyles through proximity to services, active travel routes, and energy-efficient building design.
- Support Age-Friendly and Inclusive Housing by providing accessible, adaptable homes that allow older residents to age in place and younger people to remain in their community.
- Integrate housing design with public realm improvements, such as green spaces, pedestrian links, and play areas, to foster a sense of place and community.
- Maximise the use of existing utilities, roads, and services where possible, reducing the cost and environmental impact of development.
- Enhance energy performance of existing housing stock by promoting and encouragement of energy retrofitting through SEAI

*Assisted living houses.
Incentive for people to sell
vacant properties in the town.*



Map Overview showing potential Town Centre Housing Sites

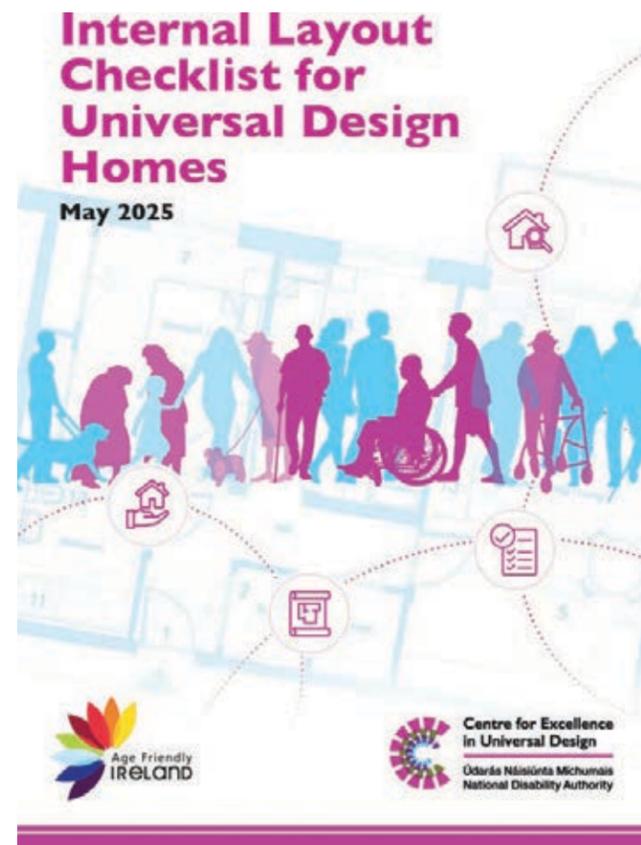
DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme D: Vibrant, Attractive and Welcoming Town Centre

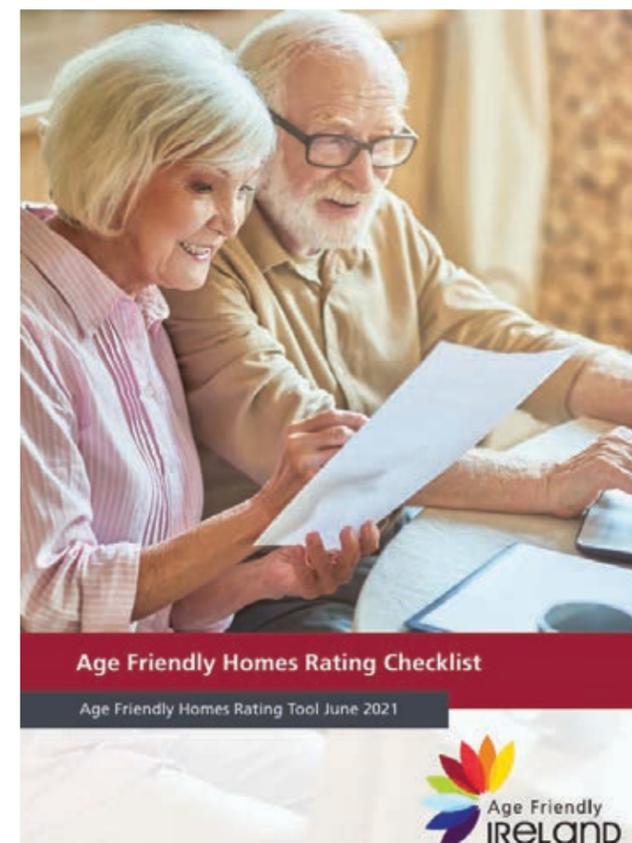
D1. Town Centre Living

Key considerations and next steps:

- Involve local residents, landowners, and stakeholders in shaping the vision for town centre living, ensuring the project reflects local needs and aspirations.
- Develop a design framework that promotes high-quality, context-sensitive housing typologies, including mews houses, courtyard schemes, and upper-floor conversions.
- Explore collaboration with Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs), Offaly County Council, and private developers.
- Ensure alignment with the County Development Plan, Town Centre First policy, and national housing strategies.
- Identify a flagship site for a pilot housing scheme to demonstrate the potential of town centre living and act as a catalyst for further development.



Age Friendly Design Guidance Documents



Age Friendly Homes Rating Checklist



Brady's Court Age Friendly Housing, Tallaght, South Dublin



Clonminch Age Friendly Housing, Tullamore, Co. Offaly



SEAI Grant Promotion



Cloughjordan Eco Village: Cloughjordan, Tipperary



Medium Density Housing, Dublin 6
Shay Cleary Architects



Medium Density Housing Winning Competition Entry for RIAI Town Centre Living Competition, Roscrea
JFOC Architects

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme D: Vibrant, Attractive and Welcoming Town Centre

D2. Supporting Local Enterprise

Project Description:

This project will support the establishment and development of a local network of enterprises and entrepreneurs in Ferbane. Initially the Ferbane Town Team will facilitate meetings of local entrepreneurs/enterprises to explore common needs, opportunities for collaboration and an appropriate structure to support the sustainability of an enterprise network.

The network, operating under the Community and Local Development structure at B4, will facilitate upskilling and reskilling for existing enterprise and plan programmes and projects that enhance the entrepreneurial culture in the community and attract new enterprises to Ferbane.

Context:

Ferbane boasts a growing enterprise sector with Ferbane Enterprise and Technology Park instrumental in its development of the past two decades.

There is a proud tradition of supporting indigenous business start-ups with the provision of Incubation Units and enterprise space proving crucial to this success.

Key Opportunities:

The network serves as a platform that creates specific opportunities:

- **Access to Expertise and Skills:** Provides a forum for members to tap into the diverse knowledge, experience, and specialised skills present within the local business community.
- **Collaborative Ventures:** Facilitates the identification of potential partners for joint projects, shared resources, or pooled purchasing, leading to economies of scale.
- **Local Supply Chain Development:** Creates opportunities to build and formalise local 'buy local' relationships, making it easier for businesses to source goods and services from each other.
- **Collective Bargaining Power:** Allows members to negotiate better terms for essential services (e.g., insurance, training, utilities) than they could individually.
- **Input into Local Policy:** Establishes a recognised voice for the business community to lobby and provide informed input to local government or development agencies on infrastructure, planning, and support needs.
- **A cohesive, dynamic business network** enhances the overall perception of the area, making it more attractive to visitors (tourism), new residents, and external investment.

Key considerations and next steps:

The Town Team will:

- Undertake the research to identify potential members of the proposed network
- Facilitate the initial meeting to explore the level of interest in establishing a network
- Work with the relevant agencies to present the options (Chamber of Commerce, Business Network etc) to those interested in establishing a structure
- Facilitate a meeting to implement the structure – agreeing personnel for key roles
- Ensure the voice of local enterprise is integrated into any new community coordination structure



Existing businesses of Ferbane located in Ferbane's Technology and Business Park and Main Street Ferbane

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme D: Vibrant, Attractive and Welcoming Town Centre

D3. Digital Ferbane

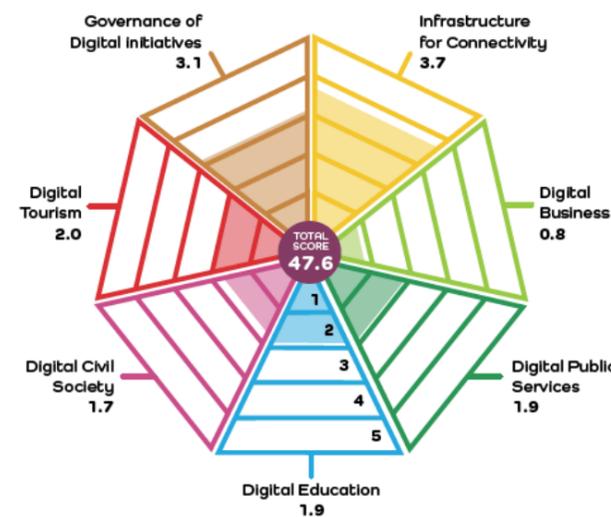
Project Description:

This project will implement the recommendations of Ferbane’s Digital Town Blueprint Report. The project will include development of digital hubs, improvement of e-commerce adoption among local business, expansion of digital skills and training which will link closely with project D4, enhance smart tourism infrastructure and develop a comprehensive tourism website for the town.

Context:

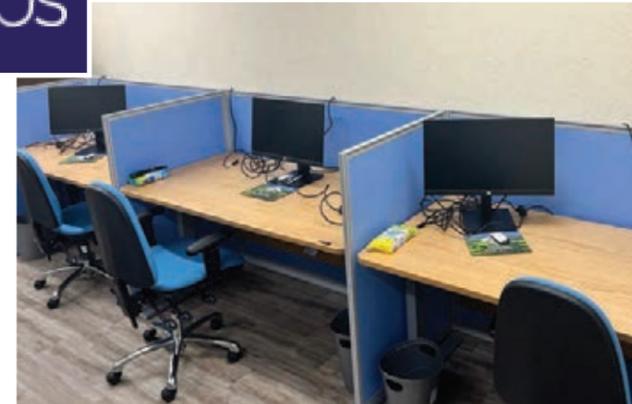
A Digital Town Blueprint assessment was carried out by the Irish Institute of Digital Business, University of Galway, and .IE for the town of Ferbane. The Report summarises Ferbanes’s digital readiness, identifies gaps and makes informed recommendations on the rollout of digital strategies for the town.

Ferbane’s digital readiness score is 48 out of 100. This puts Ferbane in line with the National average of 49 out of 100. The town fares well for a rural town of its size but there are improvements which can be made . Key gaps identified in the Digital Blueprint are limited 5G availability, no digital hubs or co-working spaces, and low digital adoption among businesses.



Ferbane Digital Blueprint Score

- 62% of businesses lack websites.
- Only 10% of businesses use e-commerce.
- Early exposure to digital skills exist through Ferbane CoderDojo.
- No vocational or further education programmes.
- Seniors have access to library e-learning but no tailored courses.
- 47% of tourism businesses have websites, 40% use social media, only 7% sell online.
- Smart tourism infrastructure is lacking
- Existing tourism website is promotional and lacks essential information and integration with county platforms.
- Free public WiFi exists in municipal buildings and outdoor spaces but is absent in retail, hospitality, and tourism venues.



Moneygall Co-working hub, Moneygall, Co. Offaly with on-line booking facility available



The Ludgate Hub: Digital Hub, Skibbereen, Cork



'Digital Points': Wild Atlantic Way Project

Key Opportunities:

- Development of a Digital Hub and co-working space. Potential to repurpose a vacant town centre building to support this initiative.
- Promote and support E-commerce & improved online presence for businesses.
- Improve smart tourism infrastructure and redevelopment of Ferbane’s tourism website, ensuring a user-friendly portal with integrated county links and booking features. Closely linked with project D5
- Build on existing education resources and skills like Ferbane Library and CoderDojo, and address gaps in formal and vocational education. Closely linked with project D4.

Key considerations and next steps:

- Identify potential locations and assess costs, partnerships, and business model for Ferbane Digital Hub.
- Provide support for website development, E-commerce setup, digital marketing training and analytics guidance.
- Launch a Smart Tourism Pilot project e.g. a QR-coded heritage trail and interactive map. Partner with local artists and historians to create engaging content.
- Commission an upgraded tourism website with listings for attractions, accommodations, and events. Include for booking integration and links to county and national tourism platforms.

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme D: Vibrant, Attractive and Welcoming Town Centre

D4. Developing Skills for Local Jobs

Project Description:

This project will develop education and training programmes to upskill the community and provide young adults the opportunities to develop skills that will enable them to work and live locally. Ferbane Town Team will work in partnership with key stakeholders including An Síolán, Gallen Community School, and LOETB to ensure that skills required for the sustainability of the local economy are provided in the community.

Context:

Ferbane is the second level education service centre for a broad catchment area, best illustrated by Gallen CS student body, that represents the west Offaly communities of Ballinahown, Ballycumber, Belmont, Cloghan, Clonmacnoise, Doon, High Street, Moystown, Pullough, Rashina and Shannonbridge.

There is neither a Further Education and Training Centre nor an Adult Learning Centre in this catchment area. It (west Offaly) is the country's most adversely impacted community in the transition away from the utilisation of peat for energy generation.

The tradition of gaining a 'job for life' with Bord Na Mona directly from school contributed to relatively low progression to tertiary education, a trend that needs to be broken now that those jobs no longer exist.



Key Opportunities:

- The partnership between An Síolán and Offaly County Council in the redevelopment of St Joseph's Convent offers an opportunity for Ferbane to focus on the development of skills that provide learner currency in today's labour market and that of the future.
- It is imperative that Just Transition communities develop skillsets that will accelerate the transition to a local and regional green economy. Both agriculture and construction offer the opportunity for that transition in Ferbane; in the modernisation of new build and especially, given the dominance of peat-fueled home heating locally, in retrofit in the construction sector, to sustainable agricultural practices and exploration of new income generation streams for family farms heretofore dependent on Bord Na Mona for their sustainability in the agricultural sphere.



Image of the future St Joseph's Convent



Aerial view of Gallen Community School, Ferbane

Key considerations and next steps:

The refurbishment of St Joseph's Convent by An Síolán and Offaly County Council will allow Ferbane Town Team to:

- Liaise with An Síolán and Gallen CS to plan programmes initially aimed at those not progressing directly from second to third level formal education
- Engage LOETB to host Post Leaving Certificate provision in Ferbane that relates specifically to local labour market needs and which can contribute to the development of a sustainable green economy locally
- Ensure that education and training is included in the new community structure pillar

DEFINING FERBANE: POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Theme D: Vibrant, Attractive and Welcoming Town Centre

D5. Ferbane Tourism

Project Description:

Ferbane Town Team will work with key stakeholders including the proposed overarching Community Structure, Ferbane Tidy Towns, local enterprise, and statutory entities with tourism responsibilities to pursue the vision of *Ferbane: A Prospectus for Development, 08/2021*, with some of its objectives included as specific projects in the Town Centre First Plan particularly Actions C1 to C5. 'Tourism Ferbane' is a likely Working Group of the proposed community structure.

'Lack of managed Tourist / Visitor Attractions and Facilities for tourists'



Context:

Ferbane has had a number of successful community planning exercises which have generated a positive community response as well as worthwhile outcomes for the town.

In 2022, Ferbane Town Development Group, in conjunction Offaly Local Development Company, developed "Ferbane: Prospectus for Development", which built on all of the work undertaken and sought to further profile the opportunities presented by the visitor economy to deliver social, economic, cultural and environmental benefit for the town.

"Confident that the qualities which served it so well in the past will sustain it into the future, Ferbane's ambition is to be a place that is living the environmental message; a place where economy and nature are aligned; culture and creativity are celebrated and where people, working together, are committed to building a brighter, more sustainable future" Ferbane: Prospectus for Development

Key Opportunities:

- There is a key opportunity to develop the 'Further, Deeper, Slower, Connected' theme highlighted in *Ferbane: A Prospectus for Development*.
- This includes the opportunity to create a connected network of peatland and waterway trails that celebrate the landscapes of Ferbane and Noggus Bogs, encouraging low-impact outdoor recreation and fostering local pride, biodiversity awareness, and economic activity.
- Ballylin Bog's identification as one of 12 bogs across Ireland for The Living Bog project offers the opportunity to heighten awareness of the importance of the natural heritage of the bog.
- Ferbane can become a living hub for environmental education and sustainable recreation — where people can explore, learn, and contribute to the conservation of bogs, waterways, forests, and cultural landmarks. This initiative would complement the ambition of the Green Infrastructure Plan already developed for the town and its environs.
- Ferbane is ideally positioned to tell a renewed story about food and drink that celebrates the town's leadership in innovation while staying true to its rural roots and traditions.
- Ferbane's location on the River Brosna and proximity to the Grand Canal reinforces it as a popular spot for anglers. This could be promoted further through Ferbane Tourism and linking with Project C3 to provide better river access, ensuring to encourage sustainable fishing practices in line with Inland Fisheries Ireland guidelines.

Key considerations and next steps:

The proposed overarching inclusive community structure at B4 will include a pillar whose primary focus is Ferbane as a visitor destination.

- This pillar will encourage and support the development of tourism initiatives working closely with the environmental and business pillars so as to weave food experiences, for example, into the wider Ferbane story — connecting it with heritage, nature, and community identity. This pillar will also raise awareness and promote the town's heritage and its regional significance, support community-based projects to interpret the historical and physical environment and archaeological resources.
- It could explore the enhancement of Ferbane's tourism value by telling authentic stories of place through walking routes, digital and creative interpretation, and community-led initiative



Old railway line bridge River Brosna, Ferbane

SECTION 4

ENABLING

FERBANE

ENABLING FERBANE: HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

This Town Centre First Plan is a practical roadmap for revitalising and sustaining Ferbane’s town centre. The plan is designed to guide decision-making, investment, and community action over the coming decades.

WHO SHOULD USE THE PLAN

- Local Authority (Offaly County Council):** To inform planning, funding applications, and policy decisions
- Ferbane Town Team:** To identify opportunities for growth and generate interest within the local community
- Local Businesses:** To identify opportunities for growth and collaboration
- Community Groups & Residents:** To engage in projects and shape the future of the town

HOW TO NAVIGATE THE PLAN

Themes & Actions: Projects are grouped under the four key themes: Vibrant Attractive and Welcoming Town Centre, Social Inclusion and Wellbeing in a Safe and Accessible Environment, Enhanced Sustainability and Biodiversity and Connected Natural and Built Assets, Economy & Growth

Projects: Each theme has 4-5 projects. Projects are intentionally broad in scope, allowing them to be broken down into smaller, actionable sub-projects over time e.g Project B1:Improving traffic safety can generate multiple initiatives—such as upgrading pedestrian crossings, enhancing footpaths, improving public transport, and introducing traffic-calming measures—each of which can be delivered independently or in combination with other actions.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

Action Plan: Start with short-term actions that deliver quick wins and build momentum. Develop key priority projects identified in the public survey

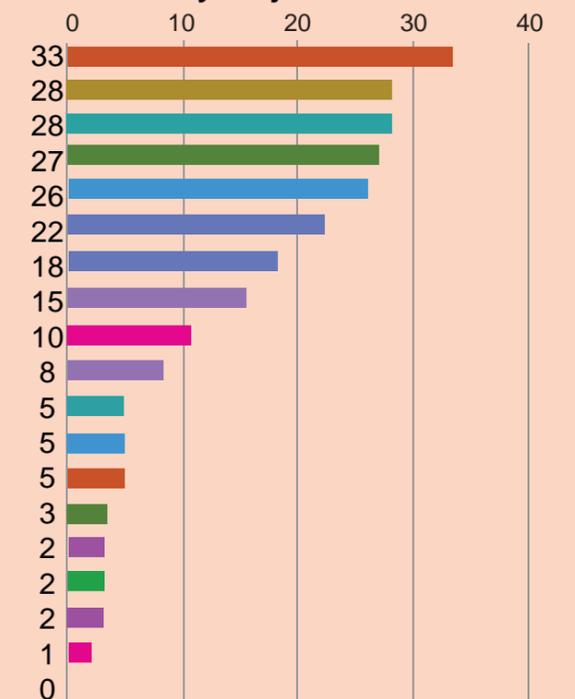
Project Name

- B2.** Safety around the Schools
- B5.** Multi-Use Sport & Active Grounds
- A3.** Tackling Vacancy & Dereliction
- B3.** New Spaces for the Community
- B1.** Improved Traffic Safety
- A1.** Ferbane Streetscape Improvement
- C1.** Ferbane Loops and Walks
- A4.** Play for All
- A2.** Shopfronts Reactivation & Enhancement
- C4.** Brosna linear park
- C3.** River Brosna- Small Crafts Access
- D1.** Town Centre Living
- D2.** Supporting Local Enterprise
- D3.** Digital Ferbane
- B4.** Ferbane Community Network Support & Growth
- C5.** Green Ferbane
- D4.** Developing Skills for Local Jobs
- C2.** Wayfinding and signage around the town
- D5.** Ferbane Tourism

Your Priority Projects

As voted in community survey Sept 2025

No of Priority Project Votes



Identify Relevant Actions: Find projects that align with your role or interest

Collaborate: Join working groups or partner with stakeholders

MONITORING & REVIEWING

Monitor & Review: The plan progress will be monitored and reviewed to track progress, adapt to changing needs, measure the impact of the plan and ensure it remains relevant and effective over its lifespan.

This plan is not static—it is a living document that will evolve as our town grows and as new opportunities arise.

ENABLING FERBANE: ACTION PLAN

This Section of the Plan outlines the delivery strategy for the projects identified in Section 3 of the Plan. This high-level delivery plan outlines the project priorities, timelines, stakeholder engagement and potential funding mechanisms which will need to be accessed in order to deliver the objectives of the plan.

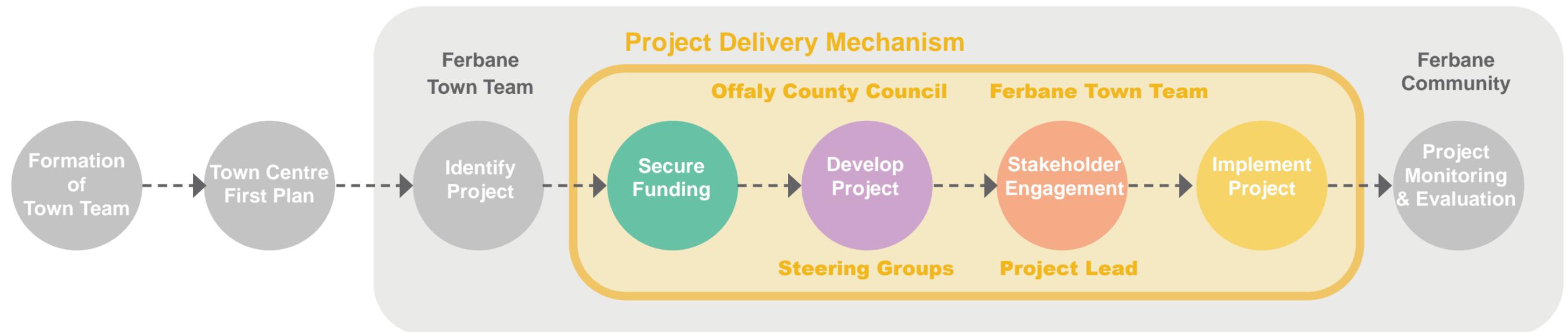
The priority, support and timeframe of each of the projects have been evaluated by the community through public consultation workshops and surveys.

The majority of projects will require funding to support their delivery. The delivery of the projects will be supported by the project leads identified in the Action Plan on the following pages. The success of all of the projects will require close collaboration with the community of Ferbane and other relevant stakeholders. Offaly County Council will work with the local community to seek and secure funding to deliver the projects. Ferbane Town Team will use the Delivery Action Plan to assist them in coordinating their work programme and organise their resources.

The initial focus will be on 'quick wins' or easy to implement projects which will create encouragement and momentum for the progression of other more long term and challenging projects. A number of the proposed projects have the flexibility to be developed in stages e.g. Ferbane Street-scape Improvements and the Development of Ferbane Loops and walks.

The Town Team and Town Regeneration Officer will review the progress of the Plan in an ever changing context. The next step for the success of the plan is to establish a strategy for project delivery and to secure funding. Funding is a crucially important step in the delivery of Town Centre First objectives for Ferbane. The overall objectives and vision will only be realised by ensuring the projects are followed through and delivered.

Project Delivery Strategy



ENABLING FERBANE: ACTION PLAN



THEME A: VIBRANT, ATTRACTIVE AND WELCOMING TOWN CENTRE

- A1. Ferbane Streetscape Improvement
- A2. Shopfronts Reactivation & Enhancement
- A3. Tackling Vacancy & Dereliction
- A4. Play for All

LEGEND:

- Existing and potential loops and walks
- Old Railway Line
- Potential small crafts access points
- Vacant / derelict buildings
- Potential Town Centre Housing
- Potential 30kph speed limit extent

ENABLING FERBANE: ACTION PLAN

Vibrant, Attractive and Welcoming Town Centre

PROJECT ID	NAME	TIMELINE	ESTIMATED COST	COMMUNITY SUPPORT	LEAD	STAKEHOLDERS (Not limited to)	POTENTIAL FUNDING (Not limited to)
A1	Ferbane Streetscape Improvement	S/ M/ L	€€€	★★★★★ 4.42	OCC Town Team	OCC, TII /NTA/ Dept of Transport/Utilities companies, Local Businesses & Residents, Schools, Community Groups, Tidy Towns, Arts Council	TVRS, RRDF, Street-scape Enhancement Initiative. Festival Investment Scheme
A2	Shopfronts Reactivation & Enhancement	S/ M/ L	€€	★★★★★ 4.41	OCC Town Team OLDC	OCC, Heritage, Local Businesses & Property Owners, Community Groups, Tidy Towns, Local Enterprise Office (LEO), Heritage Council	TVRS, Street-scape Enhancement Initiative, Shop Front Enhancement Grant, Local Enhancement Programme (LEP), BHIS, HSF
A3	Tackling Vacancy & Dereliction	S/ M/ L	€€	★★★★★ 4.38	OCC	OCC Private & Public Property Owners	Croí Cónaithe(Vacant Property Grant), TVRS, RRDF, BHIS, HSF, SEAI
A4	Play for All	S/ M/ L	€€	★★★★★ 4.41	OCC Town Team	OCC, DESSA (Disability Equality Specialist Support Agency), Creative Ireland, Ferbane Steering Groups; Tidy Towns, Local Schools	TVRS, Disability Participation and Awareness Fund (DPAF), Capital Grant Scheme for Play and Recreation, Cruinniú na nÓg, Creative Ireland Grants, LEADER,

Timeline

S Short term: 0-2 years
M Medium term: 2-5 years
L Longterm: 5+ years

Estimated Cost

€ € 0- €0.5million
€€ € 0.5- €5million
€€€ € 5million +

Community Support

0.00- 1.50 ★
1.50- 2.50 ★★
2.50- 3.50 ★★★
3.50- 4.50 ★★★★
4.50- 5.00 ★★★★★

ENABLING FERBANE: ACTION PLAN



THEME B: SOCIAL INCLUSION AND WELLBEING IN A SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE ENVIRONMENT

- B1.** Improved Traffic Safety
- B2.** Safety around the Schools
- B3.** New Spaces for the Community
- B4.** Ferbane Community Network Support & Growth
- B5.** Multi-Use Sport & Active Grounds

LEGEND:

- Existing and potential loops and walks
- Old Railway Line
- Potential small crafts access points
- Vacant / derelict buildings
- Potential Town Centre Housing
- Potential 30kph speed limit extent

ENABLING FERBANE: ACTION PLAN

Social Inclusion and Wellbeing in a Safe and Accessible Environment

PROJECT ID	NAME	TIMELINE	ESTIMATED COST	COMMUNITY SUPPORT	LEAD	STAKEHOLDERS (Not limited to)	POTENTIAL FUNDING (Not limited to)
B1	Improved Traffic Safety	S/ M/ L	€€	★★★★★ 4.61	OCC Town Team	OCC, Dept of Transport, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), National Transport Authority (NTA) , Road Safety Authority(RSA), Irish Wheelchair Association, Local Businesses & Residents, Schools, An Garda Síochána, Ferbane Schools	RRDF, TII, OCC, Greenways & Active Travel Fund (NTA), Safe Routes to School SRTS (NTA)
B2	Safety around the Schools	S/ M/ L	€€	★★★★★ 4.70	OCC Schools	OCC, Dept of Transport, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), National Transport Authority (NTA) , Road Safety Authority(RSA), Schools, Parents Groups, Students, Local Businesses, An Garda Síochána, An Taisce/Green Schools	OCC, Active Travel Fund (NTA), Safe Routes to School SRTS (NTA), Community Safety Fund (Dept. Of Justice)
B3	New Spaces for the Community	S/ M/ L	€€€	★★★★★ 4.77	OCC Town Team	OCC, Town Team, An Síolan, OLDC, Local Community, Focus Groups & Clubs, Local Businesses & Property Owners	RRDF, TVRS, Local Enhancement Programme (LEP), LEADER, ORIS, CCIF
B4	Ferbane Community Network Support & Growth	S/ M/ L	€	★★★★★ 4.48	OLDC Town Team	Ferbane Residents, Town Team, An Síolan, Local Businesses, Schools, Voluntary & Community Groups and Clubs e.g. Tidy Towns, GAA	Local Enhancement Programme (LEP), LEADER, Capacity Building Support Scheme, SICAP
B5	Multi-Use Sport & Active Grounds	S/ M/ L	€€	★★★★★ 4.86	OCC Town Team	OCC, Offaly Sports Partnership, Local Sports Clubs (GAA, soccer, athletics, swimming) Sport Ireland, Ireland Active, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media	THRIVE, ORIS, Healthy Ireland (Sport Ireland), LEADER, RRDF, Community Sport Facilities Fund (CSFF) <i>previously Sports Capital & Equipment Fund, LAWPRO</i>

Timeline

S	Short term: 0-2 years
M	Medium term: 2-5 years
L	Longterm: 5+ years

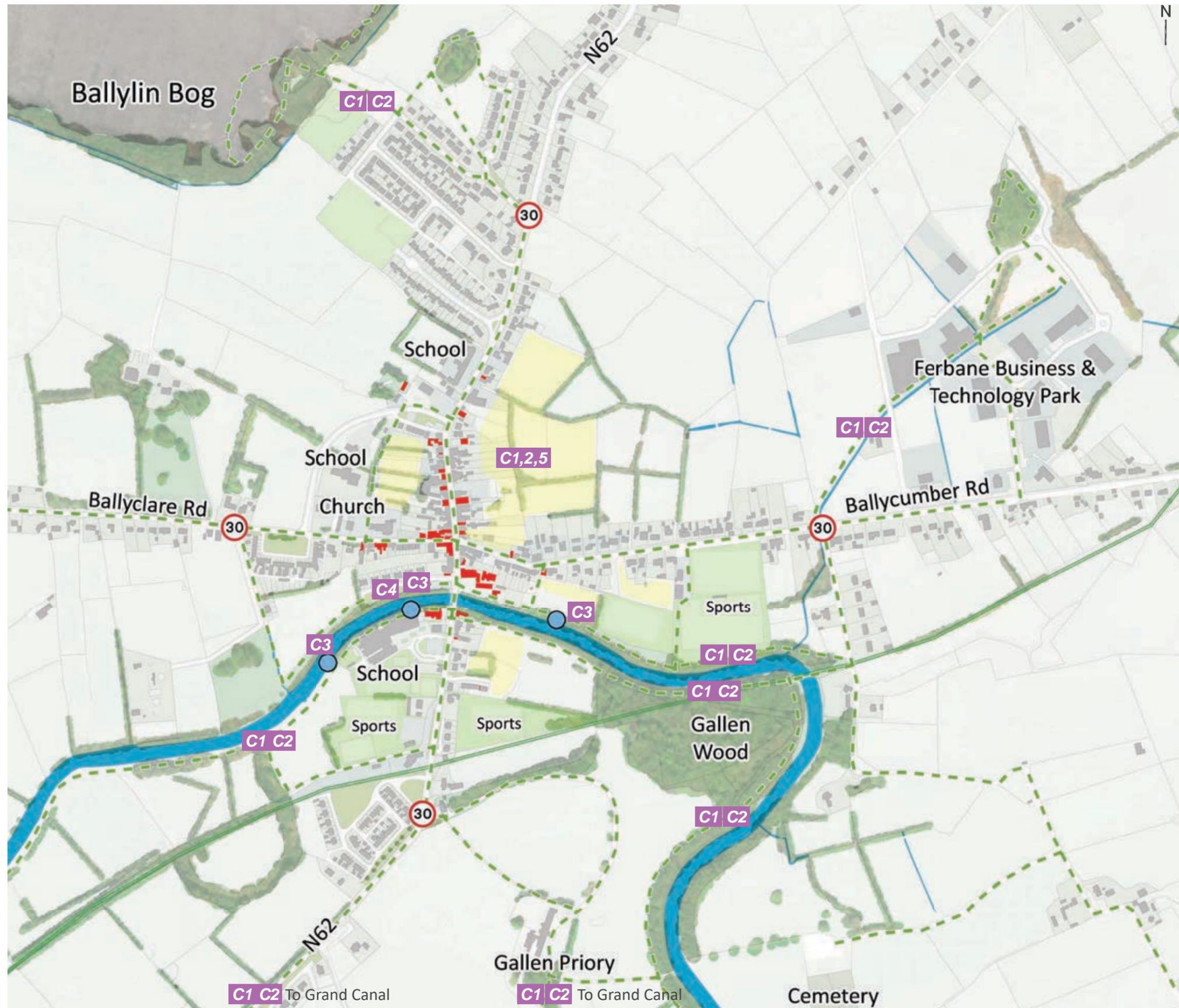
Estimated Cost

€	€ 0- €0.5million
€€	€ 0.5- €5million
€€€	€ 5million +

Community Support

0.00- 1.50	★
1.50- 2.50	★★
2.50- 3.50	★★★
3.50- 4.50	★★★★
4.50- 5.00	★★★★★

ENABLING FERBANE: ACTION PLAN



THEME C: ENHANCED SUSTAINABILITY AND BIODIVERSITY AND CONNECTED NATURAL AND BUILT ASSETS

- C1.** Ferbane Loops and Walks
- C2.** Wayfinding and signage around the town
- C3.** River Brosna- Small Crafts Access
- C4.** Brosna linear park
- C5.** Green Ferbane

LEGEND:

- Existing and potential loops and walks
- Old Railway Line
- Potential small crafts access points
- Vacant / derelict buildings
- Potential Town Centre Housing
- Potential 30kph speed limit extent

ENABLING FERBANE: ACTION PLAN

Enhanced Sustainability and Biodiversity and Connected Natural and Built Assets

PROJECT ID	NAME	TIMELINE	ESTIMATED COST	COMMUNITY SUPPORT	LEAD	STAKEHOLDERS (Not limited to)	POTENTIAL FUNDING (Not limited to)
C1	Ferbane Loops and Walks	S/ M/ L	€€€	★★★★★ 4.64	OCC Town Team	OCC, OLDC, Local Landowners, Local Clubs and groups, Tidy Towns, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO), Fáilte Ireland, National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS)	ORIS, LEADER, Community Recognition Fund (CRF), Healthy Ireland
C2	Wayfinding and signage around the town	S/ M/ L	€	★★★★★ 4.35	OCC Town Team	OCC, OLDC, Local Businesses, Tidy Towns, Schools, Local clubs & Groups, Fáilte Ireland, Heritage Council,	ORIS, TVRS, LEADER, Disability Participation and Awareness Fund (DPAF), Local Enhancement Programme (LEP)
C3	River Brosna- Small Crafts Access	S/ M/ L	€€	★★★★★ 4.42	OCC Town Team	OCC, OLDC, Local Businesses, Tidy Towns, Schools, Local clubs & Groups, Waterways Ireland, Sport Ireland, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO), Fáilte Ireland	ORIS, LEADER, TVRS, LAWPRO
C4	Brosna linear park	S/ M/ L	€€	★★★★★ 4.62	OCC Town Team	OCC, Tidy Towns, Neighbouring Residents, Schools, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO), Waterways Ireland, Fáilte Ireland	ORIS, TVRS, LAWPRO
C5	Green Ferbane	S/ M/ L	€	★★★★★ 4.25	OCC Town Team Tidy Towns	OCC, Town Team, Tidy Towns,	ORIS, LEADER, TVRS, LAWPRO

Timeline

S	Short term: 0-2 years	€	€ 0- €0.5million
M	Medium term: 2-5 years	€€	€ 0.5- €5million
L	Longterm: 5+ years	€€€	€ 5million +

Estimated Cost

Community Support

0.00- 1.50	★
1.50- 2.50	★★
2.50- 3.50	★★★
3.50- 4.50	★★★★
4.50- 5.00	★★★★★

ENABLING FERBANE: ACTION PLAN

THEME D: ECONOMY & GROWTH

- D1.** Town Centre Living
- D2.** Supporting Local Enterprise
- D3.** Digital Ferbane
- D4.** Developing Skills for Local Jobs
- D5.** Ferbane Tourism



LEGEND:

- Existing and potential loops and walks
- Old Railway Line
- Potential small crafts access points
- Vacant / derelict buildings
- Potential Town Centre Housing
- Potential 30kph speed limit extent

ENABLING FERBANE: ACTION PLAN

Economy & Growth

PROJECT ID	NAME	TIMELINE	ESTIMATED COST	COMMUNITY SUPPORT	LEAD	STAKEHOLDERS (Not limited to)	POTENTIAL FUNDING (Not limited to)
D1	Town Centre Living	S/ M/ L	€€€	★★★★★ 4.37	OCC Town Team Developers	OCC, Local Landowners, Dept of housing, Utilities Companies, Local Residents & Businesses, Developers, Potential Homeowners/ Tenants	Private Investment, Public-Private Partnerships, Croí Cónaithe(Vacant Property Grant), SEAI Grants,
D2	Supporting Local Enterprise	S/ M/ L	€	★★★★★★ 4.51	OLDC Town Team	OLDC, Local Enterprise Office, Local businesses & entrepreneurs, Enterprise Ireland	LEO Grant Schemes, LEADER, Social Enterprise Capital Grants Scheme, Capacity Building Support Scheme
D3	Digital Ferbane	S/ M/ L	€	★★★★★ 4.38	OCC Town Team	OCC, Local Enterprise Office, Department of Enterprise, trade and employment, Local businesses & entrepreneurs, Community Groups, Schools, Fáilte Ireland	TVRS, Croí Cónaithe(Vacant Property Grant), SEAI, Grow Digital Voucher, Digital that Delivers, European Digital Innovation Hubs. Capacity Building Support Scheme, LEADER
D4	Developing Skills for Local Jobs	S/ M/ L	€	★★★★★★ 4.77	OLDC Town Team	OLDC, Offaly Education & Training Board, SOLAS, Schools, Local Employers, Community Groups	SOLAS, ETB Grants, Springboard Programme, LEADER, Digital Skills & Jobs Platform, SICAP
D5	Ferbane Tourism	S/ M/ L	€€	★★★★★ 4.45	OLDC OCC Town Team	OCC, Fáilte Ireland, Offaly Tourism, Tidy Towns, Local Businesses & Community Groups, Heritage Groups, Local Residents	RRDF, TVRS, Fáilte Ireland Support Grants, LEADER, Historic Towns Initiative, Creative Ireland. Festival Investment Scheme

Timeline

S	Short term: 0-2 years
M	Medium term: 2-5 years
L	Longterm: 5+ years

Estimated Cost

€	€ 0- €0.5million
€€	€ 0.5- €5million
€€€	€ 5million +

Community Support

0.00- 1.50	★
1.50- 2.50	★★
2.50- 3.50	★★★
3.50- 4.50	★★★★
4.50- 5.00	★★★★★

ENABLING FERBANE: ACTION PLAN

Abbreviation List

Abbreviation	Name
DRCDG	The Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht
DHLGH	The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
LAWPRO	Local Authorities Water Programme
NTA	National Transport Authority
TII	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
OCC	Offaly County Council
OLDC	Offaly Local Community Development Committee
SEAI	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland

ENABLING FERBANE: ACTION PLAN

Funding Options Summary Table

Abbreviation	Name of Fund	Description of fund	Funding Agency	Typical Value
Active Travel Fund	Active Travel Programme	Projects which help to increase walking & cycling e.g. Segregated cycle lanes, Pedestrian and cycling bridges, Improved pedestrian environments, Safer crossings and urban mobility enhancements	OCC/ NTA/ TII	Average €150,000 - €450,000
BAM	Building Acquisition Measure under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme	Purchase vacant or derelict buildings or land in town centres for future use as multi-purpose community spaces aligned with regeneration goals.	OCC/ DRCDG	Up to €500,000
BHIS	Built Heritage Investment Scheme	Supports repair and conservation of protected structures, vernacular buildings, and historic shopfronts.	OCC/ DHLGH	€2,500 -€50,000
Capacity Building Support Scheme	Capacity Building Support Scheme	Supports arts organisations strengthen strategic, artistic, and operational capacity to improve sustainability and inclusivity e.g digital infrastructure upgrades	Arts Council	Up to €20,000 dependant on project
Capital Grant Scheme for Play and Recreation	Capital Grant Scheme for Play and Recreation	Projects which enhance play & recreation facilities for children & young people e.g. Playgrounds, Play areas, Refurbishment or upgrading of existing facilities, Inclusive and accessible features, Sensory play equipment, Biodiversity planting, Mini sports courts	OCC	Up to €20,000 per project
Capital Grants	Large & Small Grants for tourism projects	Projects which enhance local tourism including promotion of local heritage & cultural attractions. Enhancement of tourism destination brand e.g. Ireland's Ancient East, Hidden Heartlands and Offaly - Ireland's Hidden Gem'	Fáilte Ireland	Up to €200,000 and Up to €5 million for large projects
CCIF	Community Centre Investment Fund	Supports development of project design and capital costs for new build multi-functional community centres across Ireland.	OCC/ DRCDG	From €10,000 -€6million depending on the project
Community Safety Fund	Community Safety Fund	Projects that reduce crime & improve feelings of safety & build communities e. g outdoor gyms/ recreational spaces which targeting youth or anti-social behaviour, renovations or fit-outs for community hubs, youth centres, or safe spaces, CCTV, lighting upgrades, safety signage	National Office for Community Safety	€20,000 - €150,000
CRF	Community Recognition Fund	Development of community infrastructure & facilities.	OLDC/OCC/ DRCDG	€50,000 - €500,000
CCF	Creative Communities Fund	Supports local arts, heritage, and cultural projects that foster community wellbeing, inclusion, and creative engagement e.g arts & cultural events, creative workshops, STEAM, climate action through creativity, heritage & local history projects	Creative Ireland/ OCC	Average €1,500 - €10,000
Croí Cónaithe	Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant	Up to €50,000 to refurbish vacant property (property vacant 2+years & built before 2008) or buildings for use as a principal residence or rental property, with a top-up of €20,000 available for derelict properties	OCC/ DHLGH	€50,000–€70,000

ENABLING FERBANE: ACTION PLAN

Funding Options Summary Table

Abbreviation	Name of Fund	Description of fund	Funding Agency	Typical Value
Cruinniú na nÓg	Cruinniú na nÓg	Creative projects for children and young people (ages 0–18) e.g. Workshops, Performances & Exhibition, Community Engagement	Creative Ireland	Up to €50,000
CWDF	Community Water Development Fund	Projects which deliver direct water quality improvements or raise awareness e.g. Bank Stabilisation, Bog Restoration, Rainwater Planters, Raingardens, Citizen Science Infrastructure, Feasibility Studies and Reports, Signage and Water Literacy Projects	LAWPRO	€1,000 - €25,000
Digital Programme	Digital Programme	Projects which improve digital infrastructure, encourage community-led digital innovation, support remote working hubs and smart village initiatives e.g. Remote Working Hubs, Smart Village Initiatives, Digital Innovation projects	DRCDG	Typically up to €24,000 - €120,000
DPAF	Disability Participation and Awareness Fund	Enhance community, social, cultural, and physical participation of people with disabilities including wayfinding, inclusive design & capital projects for people with disabilities.	Rethink Ireland	Up to €200,000 per project
Festival Investment Scheme	Festival Investment Scheme	Supports small-to-mid-scale festivals to deliver high-quality arts experiences for audiences. Scheme prioritises programmes engaged with, and relevant to, local communities or communities of interest.	Arts Council	Up to €5,000
Greenways	Greenways Programme	Enhance community, social, cultural, and physical participation of people with disabilities including wayfinding, inclusive design & capital projects for people with disabilities.	OCC/ NTA/ TII	Average €500,000 - €1,000,000
Healthy Ireland	Healthy Ireland Fund	Health & wellbeing projects e.g. Outdoor gyms, Multi-sport facilities, Walking tracks, Playground upgrades, LED lighting and solar panels, Pitches and courts, Equipment purchases	OCC/ Pobal	Up to €200,000 Up to €40,000 equipment
HSF	Historic Structures Fund	Supports larger-scale conservation, refurbishment, and reuse of historic structures with public or residential benefit	OCC/ DHLGH	€50,000 and €200,000 (Smaller amount for shopfronts & vernacular)
HTI	Historic Towns Initiative	Projects such as Conservation of landmark buildings, Street-scape and public realm improvements, Reuse of vacant historic buildings for residential or community use	Heritage Council	Up to €350,000 per town
LEADER	Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale	Community-led rural development which supports Economic Development & Job Creation, Rural Infrastructure & Social Inclusion and Sustainable Development & Climate Action e.g. Rainwater harvesting systems, Community solar panels, Accessibility upgrades	DRCDG/ OLDC	Typical €30,000 to €200,000
LEP	Local Enhancement Programme	Equipment, signage, minor repairs, Small-scale capital grants	OLDC/OCC/DRCDG	€1,000–€3,000

Funding Options Summary Table

Abbreviation	Name of Fund	Description of fund	Funding Agency	Typical Value
ORIS	Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme	Development & enhancement of outdoor recreational infrastructure such as trails, walkways, cycleways, blueways and bridleways in rural areas	OCC/ DRCDG	Generally €30,000-€50,000 but up to €500,000 for large scale projects
Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme	Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme	Projects such as walking & cycling trails on former industrial peatlands, redevelopment of heritage sites & visitor centres, Low-carbon tourist accommodation, Digital transformation for tourism SMEs	Fáilte Ireland	Typically €1 million - €8 million
RRDF	Rural Regeneration and Development Fund	Projects which promote sustainable regeneration, economic activity, and community development e.g. Edenderry Library	OCC/ DRCDG	Typically €3 million - €10 million
SEAI Grants	Community Energy Grant	Programme to help communities reduce energy costs, lower carbon emissions, and improve comfort and sustainability. Supports energy efficiency upgrades and renewable energy projects for Community buildings, Homes, Businesses & Public sector facilities e.g. PV Panels, Heat Pumps, LED lighting, Insulation, Energy efficient windows and doors. Managed by SEAI-registered Project Coordinators	SEAI	Typical €20,000 to €100,000
SFF	Community Sport Facilities Fund	Previously known as Sports Capital Grant. Funds community sports equipment & infrastructure facilities.	Sport Ireland	Up to €200,000 Up to €40,000 equipment
Shop Front Enhancement Grant	Shop Front Enhancement Grant	Funding to Painting, local businesses to improve the appearance of shop fronts and commercial properties, enhancing the overall street-scape and attractiveness of town centres.	OCC	50% - 75% of costs. €750- €6,000
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme	Funding to tackle poverty and social exclusion through local engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies e.g Social Enterprise projects, start ups serving SICAP target group	Pobal/ OLDC	Up to €2,500
Social Enterprise Capital Grants Scheme	Social Enterprise Capital Grants Scheme	Building works, renovations, and repairs for projects which support social enterprise	Pobal/ OLDC	€1,500 - €100,000
SRTS	Safe Routes to School Programme	Infrastructure upgrades around school which support safety e.g. school zones & school streets, cycle parking, footpaths & crossings, traffic calming	National Transport Authority	€20,000 to €250,000 per school
Street-scape Enhancement Initiative	Street-scape Enhancement Initiative	Funding to property owners and retailers to improve building facades, install street furniture, murals, lighting, and other visual enhancements to make town centres more vibrant and welcoming.	OCC/ DRCDG	Upto €100,000 per town
TVRS	Town and Village Renewal Scheme	Public realm improvements, building reuse, digital hubs, and community infrastructure to enhance economic and social vitality	OCC/ DRCDG	€20,000 - €500,000

SUMMARY: OVERVIEW

This Town Centre First Plan for Ferbane represents a collaborative vision for the future of the town centre. The plan has been shaped by extensive public engagement and consultation. The contents of this plan is the result of 12 months of dialogue, and consultation across the community.

SCALE OF ENGAGEMENT

Public Meetings: 6 workshops and information sessions held

Consultation Responses: 163 surveys and written submissions received (Town Centre First & Health Check Surveys)

Stakeholders: Local businesses, residents, community groups and Offaly County Council

SCOPE OF THE PLAN

Themes: 4 key themes identified

Projects: 19 projects and supporting actions identified

Vision: A generational approach—designed to guide development and revitalisation of Ferbane for the next 20+ years

HARNESSING THE ENERGY

The enthusiasm and commitment shown during consultation on this plan will drive implementation of the projects. This plan is the beginning of a shared journey for Ferbane.

Next Steps:

- Establish working groups for priority projects
- Secure funding and partnerships
- Monitor progress and report annually

HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE

- Join a project team or volunteer for initiative
- Share ideas and feedback during reviews
- Support local businesses and community-led projects

Together, we can transform our town centre into a vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive place for generations to come

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Town Centre First Plan for Ferbane, Co. Offaly c. 2025

This plan has been funded under Town Centre First 2024 in partnership with Offaly County Council

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