



Lár Bailte ar dTús  
Town Centre First



Rialtas Áitiúil Éireann  
Local Government Ireland



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



# Town Centre First

## Annual Implementation Plan 2024





**“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**

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# Summary

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# Town Centre First - Policy Approach

The Town Centre First Policy was published in February 2022 fulfilling a key action in The Programme for Government which recognised the need for, and committed to, the development of a coordinated, strategic approach to town centre regeneration that would maximise the impact of the Government’s considerable investment in urban regeneration.

This Town Centre First policy, informed by the model in Scotland, encourages Government Departments, Local Authorities, businesses, and communities to put town centres at the heart of decision-making.

There is a strong national policy framework in place to support a Town Centre First approach, from the overarching aspect of Project Ireland 2040, through to specific policies on climate action, housing, and rural development.

As the overarching policy and planning framework for the social, economic, and cultural development of Ireland, Project Ireland 2040 set out Ireland’s high-level strategic objectives for spatial planning over the period to 2040. The delivery of these objectives under Project Ireland 2040 are supported by the detailed updated capital investment plan, the National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030, and the 20-year National Planning Framework (NPF).

## National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework is the Government’s high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of the country to 2040. This is in the context of an expected additional one million people (over 2016) living in Ireland by 2040 and an additional two-thirds of a million people working here. The NPF frames the development and implementation of regional spatial and economic strategies, county and city development plans and local area plans across the country for the years ahead.

The aim of revitalising our towns and urban areas is strongly reflected in the objectives and priorities of the National Planning Framework.

## National Development Plan

The updated National Development Plan 2021-2030, published in September 2021, mirrors the national strategic objectives of the NPF, and provides specific funding measures to support the compact growth agenda, strengthened rural economies and communities, and sustainable transport. The updated plan identifies specific investment vehicles that will support the Town Centre First policy.

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# Ireland's Towns

The National Planning Framework and Our Rural Future set out a vision to develop thriving Irish Towns which are integral to our national economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing and development. This vision is built on the interdependence of urban and rural areas, and recognises the diversity of individual towns, the centrality of people, the importance of vibrant and lived-in places and the potential to create quality jobs and sustain our shared environment.

## A Sense of Place

Our towns and villages are valuable economic, social and cultural assets. They provide us with a sense of place and belonging, while also being central to our tourism product. The built heritage of towns and villages is key to a community's sense of place and to attracting both visitors and new residents. The relative attractiveness and vibrancy of towns and villages has also become an increasingly key element in competitive advantage and in driving economic investment; Foreign Direct Investment is increasingly influenced by the quality-of-life towns can offer to prospective talent.

## A Sense of Pride

We have a sense of pride in our towns and villages. Each town is unique, varying in their size, characteristics and central function. They remain the lifeblood of local economies, supporting business and generating employment opportunities. Towns and villages provide important administrative, social, community and recreational functions. They support clusters of local services, have a significant share of homes and jobs, and act as transport hubs.

## Challenges

Regardless of the level of vibrancy of each of our towns, they all continue to face an array of challenges to their ongoing function and purpose. There is a need to reverse the pattern of stagnation or decline of many towns, which may require the identification and establishment of new roles and new functions, the enhancement of local infrastructure and amenities or a greater emphasis on services, hospitality, and social interaction.

The challenges include the provision of greater employment opportunities, the effect of vacant and derelict properties on the vitality and attractiveness of towns, the impact of out-of-town and online shopping on town centre retail, and the closure of services where providers have found it is no longer viable to maintain such services. In many places there has been a general drift away from town centre living and town centre commercial activity, which has had a "hollowing out" effect on some of our towns.



## Opportunities for Towns & Villages

While the changing environment in which towns and villages operate presents distinct challenges, a wide range of opportunities to drive future growth and development have also been identified.

- Climate Change and Adaptation of our Towns
- Digital Transformation and New Ways of Working and Living
- Demographic Change and Housing Choice in Towns
- Experience-Led Retail
- Regeneration of Public Space
- Sustainable Mobility
- Realising the Existing Cultural and Heritage Assets of Places
- Gaeltacht and Gaeltacht Service Towns
- Empowered, Inclusive and Engaged Communities

## A Vision for Irish Towns

This Town Centre First policy will empower local communities and businesses, working with Local Authorities, to develop plans to maximise the strengths and assets of their town. These plans will also provide a link to the objectives in the statutory development plans and local area plans that are relevant to each town.

- **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.**



# Introduction



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# Background to the Implementation Plan

To date some of the key strategic implementation actions that have taken place which drive Town Centre First approach and enable preparation of Annual Implementation are as follows:

## 26 Pilot Towns – Town Centre Masterplan Initiative (Phase 1)

The Town Centre Masterplan Initiative (Phase 1) intended to complement the approach of yet to be published Town Centre First Policy, by providing funding to ensure development and delivery of these Master Plans in selected towns to demonstrate the Town Centre First process at an early stage. The delivery of the plans to be done alongside the roll-out of the Town Centre First process and to be linked to the implementation structures developed for the policy.

This initiative provided funding of €100,000 to support the development of each Town Centre Masterplan and the associated analysis required.

## Town Centre First Policy

The Town Centre First Policy was published in February 2022 fulfilling a key action in The Programme for Government which recognised the need for, and committed to, the development of a co-ordinated, strategic approach to town centre regeneration that would maximise the impact of the Government's considerable investment in urban regeneration.

## Town Centre First National Office

The Town Centre First National Office was established as a joint initiative of the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) and the Department of Housing, local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) in collaboration with the Local government Management Agency (LGMA) and the County and City Managers Association (CCMA). Funding for the National Office comes from the Housing for All implementation fund.

## Town Regeneration Officer Network

Through funding provided by the Department of Rural and Community Development Local Authorities have been provided with the opportunity to recruit for the role of Town Regeneration Officer as detailed in Town Centre First Policy. A key role of these Town Regeneration Officers (TRO) will be to facilitate the establishment, training, and ongoing work of Town Teams by providing technical, communication, administrative and project management supports. The Town Regeneration Officer will be a key conduit between this multi-disciplinary team in the Local Authority and the Town Teams.

The Town Centre policy identifies more than 33 initial strategic actions across all stakeholders which will be substantially progressed in the initial implementation phase from 2023 to 2025. There are a number of key elements to the plan-led placemaking approach in Town Centre First and these will require significant foundational groundwork and planning, including



scoping, generation of research evidence, stakeholder engagement, piloting and evaluation in order to ensure that their implementation is successful. Data and evidence will underpin and guide the implementation of Town Centre First throughout and it is essential that decisions about implementation, particularly on the actions to drive policy approach, are based on strong and sound information. Much of this foundational work is expected to be undertaken within the initial implementation period. For reasons of prioritisation, resources and other considerations, the sequencing of some actions will not be fully completed but all will be significantly advanced in this first phase of implementation.

#### **The Town Centre First Annual Implementation Plan (2023–2025):**

- **Provides a summary overview of Town Centre First, including the major actions to be delivered**
- **Identifies the lead and partner(s) who will implement initial actions and articulates the key output to be achieved by 2025 for each action, alongside a clear schedule of associated annual milestones**
- **Provides an overview of the structures that will support implementation**
- **Describes the processes for reporting on implementation; and**
- **Summarises implementation challenges, risks, and mitigations.**

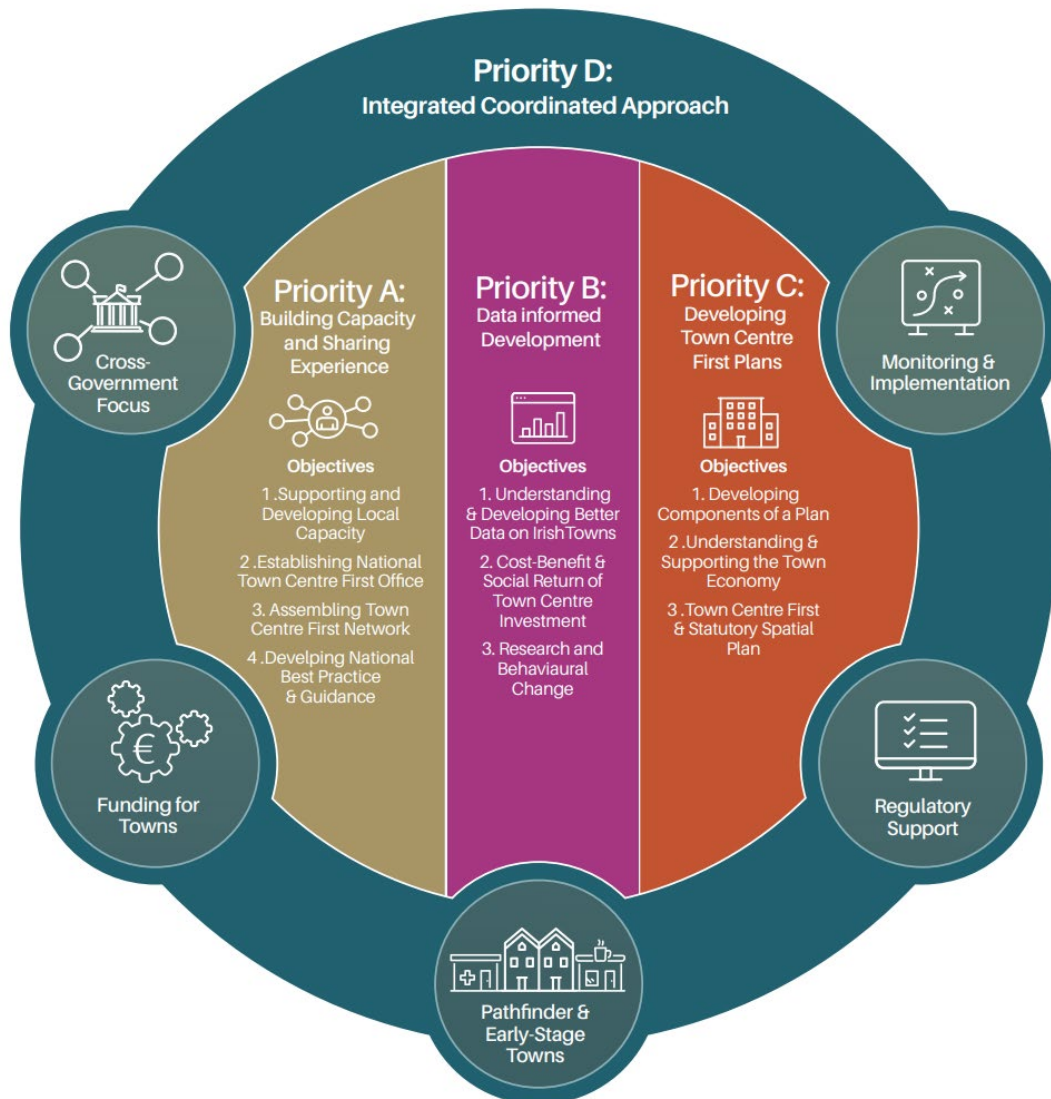
The Implementation Plan, in setting out milestones for 2023, 2024 and 2025, is a key mechanism to plan and sequence the actions, as well as to communicate more widely about what is likely to be advanced when.

The development of the Town Centre First Implementation Plan (2023–2025) was led by the LGMA Town Centre First National Office and overseen by the Town Centre First Sponsors Group. This Group comprises the Department of Rural & Community Development, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the LGMA Town Centre First National Office. This Group agreed the broad structure of the Implementation Plan and its individual members engaged with officials within their respective Departments, State Agencies and with partners (where appropriate) to examine their actions, agree key outputs over the initial implementation phase and chart the associated milestones for the period 2023–2025.

# Overview of Town Centre First

## Vision, Priorities, Principles & Framework for Action

“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”.





## Principles

- **The principles which underpin Town Centre First** are drawn from Our Rural Future – Rural Development Policy 2021-2025.
- **People-centred:** Recognising the centrality of people, to enable them to increase their capability and confidence to achieve progress together, based on their rights and aspirations.
- **Sustainable:** Promoting and developing sustainable rural communities, economies, and environment and linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Participative and Inclusive:** Building active participation, fostering social cohesion amongst all communities, and prioritising the needs of those experiencing social or economic exclusion, including rural isolation.
- **Integrated:** Ensuring consistency with strategies across national and local government to achieve complementarity of objectives and actions and to ensure coordinated delivery.
- **Progressive:** Building on significant positive progress as well as retaining the flexibility necessary to capitalise on emerging opportunities.
- **Rural-Urban Interdependence:** Recognising the functional interdependence between urban and rural areas, and the economic and social interactions between the two. The policy seeks to reframe the narrative around rural Ireland to reflect the integral role which rural areas play and their economic and social importance to our national development.
- **These principles are consistent** with the State's commitments to progressing human rights and equality in Ireland.
- **The policy aligns** in design and implementation with the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.

# Framework in Action

The four Priorities being delivered through ten interlocking Objectives (under Priorities A, B and C) and five Supporting Pillars (under Priority D). Through each Objective and Supporting Pillar, Strategic Actions are being implemented. The framework for action for the duration of Town Centre First is the basis on which implementation is being monitored. In the policy 33 actions to be progressed over the first three years have been identified, for each action key tasks are being delivered to drive implementation of policy. These actions are building on existing work on-going in regeneration and placemaking along with ensuring a consistent sustainable plan-led approach across Irish Towns.

As a living policy with a built-in review after three years, it is expected that new specific actions for delivery in the medium- to long-term will be added as implementation progresses.





# Actions and Milestones

# Priority A: Capacity Building and Sharing Experience

## Task A1: Support and Develop Local Capacity

Related TCF Policy Action	Key Activities and Milestones 2023	Outputs 2023	Key Activities and Milestones 2024	Projected Actions 2025	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Performance Indicators
<b>Action No.1 Support the establishment (where the equivalent does not exist) and operation of Town Teams</b>	<p>Establish Town Teams in line with Town Centre First Policy in all 26 Pilot Towns.</p> <p>Undertake analysis of process of development of Town Teams across 26 Pilot Towns.</p> <p>Review examples of best Practice in Town Regeneration and master planning in Ireland.</p>	<p>Town Teams established in 26 No. Pilot Towns and engaged in the creation of Town Centre First plans for their towns.</p> <p>Town Teams established in 26 No. Pilot Towns and engaged in the creation of Town Centre First plans for their towns.</p> <p>Methods &amp; approaches for creating Town Teams in 26 No. Pilot Towns along with terms of reference and governance arrangements for Town Teams recorded and documented.</p>	<p>Undertake Review of Town Team findings from Town Centre Masterplan Initiative (Phase 1)</p> <p>Develop guidance for the establishment, operation and governance of Town Teams.</p> <p>Implement Guidance for Town Team Formation in Pilot Phase 2 and review implementation.</p>	<p>Complete and implement Town Centre First Guidance for Town Teams.</p> <p>Review implementation of Town Centre First Town Teams throughout pilot towns and present findings to inform review exercise of Town Centre First Policy.</p>	<p><b>Town Regeneration Officer</b></p> <p>Local Government Sector, DHLGH and DRCD</p>	<p><b>Competence to assemble and coordinate Town Teams in line with Town Centre First Policy and inform development national guidance for Town Teams.</b></p>
<b>Action No. 2 Develop a skills building programme to increase the capacity and capability of Town Teams</b>	<p>Gather data of best practice in Town Centre Masterplan Initiative for 26 Pilot Locations.</p> <p>Document experience of community capacity and where deficits exist.</p> <p>Undertake analysis of existing community development resources and programmes across government and in other jurisdictions.</p> <p>Gather understanding of communities and capacity through engaging with all stakeholders at National &amp; Local Level.</p>	<p>Analysis of best practice in Town Centre Masterplan Initiative for 26 Pilot Locations. Including scale, terms of reference and governance of Town Teams.</p> <p>Extensive review of Town Teams for each of the 26 Pilot Locations.</p> <p>Directory of community development financial resources and programmes across government and in other jurisdictions developed.</p> <p>Understanding developed of communities and capacity through pilot town and engaging with all stakeholders at National &amp; Local Level.</p>	<p>Develop detailed case studies as exemplars of best practice.</p> <p>Present models of best practice for resource structure within Local Authority</p> <p>Define supports available in developing increase capacity and capability of Town Teams.</p> <p>Implement Capacity Building programme for Town Teams and communities from funding provided by DRCD</p>	<p>Develop supports for Town Teams tailored to town centre first and newly developed Health Check process.</p> <p>Develop resource for Town Teams on Web Portal for Town Centre First.</p> <p>Provide basis for development of programmes relevant to communities in Irish Towns through compiling report of current supports and deficiencies found.</p>	<p><b>Town Regeneration Officer and the National TCF Office</b></p> <p>Local Government Sector, DHLGH and DRCD</p>	<p><b>Baseline understanding of capacity &amp; capability to inform development of Town Centre First Skills Programme.</b></p>
<b>Action No.3 Provide Town Regeneration Officers, supported by multi-disciplinary teams in each Local Authority area, to drive the implementation of TCF</b>	<p>Complete recruitment of TRO as per DRCD Guidance.</p> <p>Undertake survey as regard recruited TROs based on previous experience &amp; background. Compile analysis on resourcing of Town Centre First Policy/regeneration within Local Authority Network</p>	<p>Each Local Authority subject to funding successfully recruited a Town Regeneration Officer as per DRCD Guidance.</p> <p>Detailed survey undertaken of TRO's and their resourcing and responsibilities within various Local Authority's. Developed proposals as regard where best practice align with particular resourcing arrangement.</p>	<p>Report on various approaches and resourcing of Town Centre First Policy Highlight exemplars of best practice in resourcing of Town Centre First Policy.</p> <p>Monitor TROs within Local Authority and encourage recruitment where vacancies arise in line with DRCD requirements. Support consolidation of resourcing of Rural Development by Local Authority's along with the identification of resource requirements.</p>	<p>Present exemplars of best practice in approach to resourcing of Town Centre first within Local Authority with a focus on integrated models across all services of Local Authority.</p> <p>Provide basis for development of resources to support communities in Irish Towns through compiling report of current resources and deficiencies found.</p>	<p><b>Local Government Sector</b></p> <p>National Town Centre First Office, DHLGH and DRCD</p>	<p><b>Detailed understanding of best practice in approach and resourcing of Town Centre First Policy within Local Government Sector.</b></p>

## Task A2: Establishing National Town Centre First Office

Related TCF Policy Action	Key Activities and Milestones 2023	Outputs 2023	Key Activities and Milestones 2024	Projected Actions 2025	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Performance Indicators
<b>Action No.4</b> <b>Establish a dedicated National TCF Office to assist in policy delivery and implementation of the TCF actions, and to co-ordinate stakeholder engagement at a national level</b>	Establish National Town Centre First Office within Local Government Management Agency	Town Centre First Office established within Local Government Management Agency, along with the appointment of National Town Centre Co-Ordinator.	Report of operation of National Town Centre First National Office.	Report of operation of National Town Centre First National Office.	<b>LGMA,</b>	<b>Town Centre First National Office to lead implementation of Town Centre First Policy, its review and policy progression.</b>
	Recruit Staff associated with National Town Centre First Office.	Performance Management of National Town Centre First Office through LGMA Performance Management System.	Performance Management of National Town Centre First Office through LGMA Performance Management System.	Performance Management of National Town Centre First Office through LGMA Performance Management System.	DRCD and DHLGH	
	Develop Annual Implementation Plan for Town Centre First Policy.	Annual Implementation Plan for Town Centre First Policy for 2023 developed and agreed.	Review and report on Annual Implementation Plan for Town Centre First Policy.	Review and report on Annual Implementation Plan for Town Centre First Policy.	Review and report on Annual Implementation Plan for Town Centre First Policy.	
	Drive Recruitment of Town Regeneration Officers by Local Authority Sector	Engaged directly with Local Authority's and Department stakeholders to drive Recruitment of Town Regeneration Officers by Local Authority Sector	Review and report on implementation of Town Centre First National Office Communication Strategy.	Review and report on implementation of Town Centre First National Office Communication Strategy.	Review and report on implementation of Town Centre First National Office Communication Strategy.	
	Lead establishment & Coordination of Town Regeneration Officer Network.	Town Regeneration Officer Network has been established and is being centrally coordinated by National Town Centre First Office. Driving policy implementation and communication.	Lead coordination & development of Town Centre First Network prioritising policy implementation through AIP and communication Strategy.	Report on Implementation Phase of Town Centre First Policy and contribute to Policy review at end of implementation phase.	Report on Implementation Phase of Town Centre First Policy and contribute to Policy review at end of implementation phase.	
Develop Communication Strategy for implementation of Town Centre First National Office.	Communication Strategy developed for implementation of Town Centre First National Office.	Delivery and on-going review of Communication Strategy for implementation of Town Centre First National Office.	Delivery and on-going review of Communication Strategy for implementation of Town Centre First National Office.	Delivery and on-going review of Communication Strategy for implementation of Town Centre First National Office. Output on communication strategy to inform review of policy, identifying barriers to implementations and communication of Town Centre First Policy.		



### Task A3: Develop Town Centre First Network

Related TCF Policy Action	Key Activities and Milestones 2023	Outputs 2023	Key Activities and Milestones 2024	Projected Actions 2025	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Performance Indicators
<p><b>Action No.5</b>  <b>Establish and support a collaborative National TCF network to ensure consistency and best practice in the roll-out of the TCF policy</b></p>	<p>Establish TRO Network structure to share progress/best practice in implementation of Town Centre First Policy.</p> <p>Through Communication Strategy define communication with TCF Network.</p> <p>Establish progress reporting tool.</p> <p>Monitor plans for TCF Pilot towns to ensure adherence to TCF Principles</p>	<p>TCF Network structure created to share progress/best practice in implementation of Town Centre First Policy. Initially as group of Town Regeneration Officers which has been expanded to include representatives from City Local Authority's.</p> <p>Town Centre First communication strategy developed and implementation within TCF Network commenced. Brand identity &amp; logo developed and implemented.</p> <p>Two solutions for project management appraised with recommendation for preferred solution in Q1 2024.</p> <p>Development of all plans monitored and discussed with TCF Network. Review of Pilot Phase 1 of TCF Plans being undertaken to inform how TCF principles with implemented in developing plans.</p>	<p>Further develop TRO Network structure to share progress/best practice in implementation of Town Centre First Policy.</p> <p>Lead implementation of Town Centre First communication strategy along with toolkits developed within TCF Network</p> <p>Development and implementation of project management &amp; reporting system for Pilot Phase 2 of TCF Plans.</p> <p>Provide detailed feedback to Town Centre First Network on review of Pilot Phase 1 highlighting best practice, along with implementing processes that align with principles &amp; methodology outlined in Town Centre First Policy Phase 2 of TCF Plans.</p>	<p>Engage Town centre First Network in structured review of progress/best practice in implementation of Town Centre First Policy, for the purpose of review of policy.</p> <p>Publish complete communication toolkit for TRO to support consistent implementation of Town Centre First communication strategy and principles of Town Centre First</p> <p>Launch integrated project management &amp; reporting system through Town Centre First Web Portal for Towns part of pilots for policy implementation.</p> <p>Publish guidance on process for development of Town Centre First Plans. Through the development of this guidance inform review of Town Centre First Policy based on experience gained in development of Town Centre First Plans through implementation phase.</p>	<p><b>National Town Centre First Office,</b></p> <p>Local Government Sector, DHLGH and DRCD</p>	<p><b>A Town Centre First Network ensuring consistency and best practice in the roll-out of Town Centre First Policy</b></p>

<p>(x) Varied examples (Pathfinder Towns/ Case Studies) of successful, vibrant, revitalised town centres</p>						
<p><b>Action No.7</b>  <b>Develop and share exemplary/ operational practices of TCF through a National TCF Awards scheme and host events that provide networking opportunities at a national level</b></p>	<p>Undertake review of existing National Award schemes for Irish Towns to inform development of Town Centre First National Awards.</p> <p>Review current exemplars of best practice in town regeneration and placemaking with a view to defining methodology for assessing best practice and categories of same in context of Town Centre First and an awards scheme.</p>	<p>Existing National Award schemes for Irish Towns that align with Town Centre First principles reviewed to inform development of Town Centre First National Awards. Town Centre First aligned award included in Tidy Towns 2023, which saw Cappoquin, Co. Waterford (TCLI Pilot Town) win.</p> <p>Review being undertaken best practice in Pilot Phase 1 Town Centre First Plans in town regeneration and placemaking with a view to defining methodology for assessing best practice and categories of same with context of Town Centre First and an awards scheme.</p>	<p>Design and run launch event curated to highlight Town Centre First principles, including national launch for all 26 No. Plans prepared in Pilot Phase 1 and announce locations for Pilot Phase 2. Launch also for Town Centre First website and brand. Review event and potential for expansion to include national awards element.</p> <p>Develop assessment methodology for best practice and categories in town regeneration and placemaking in context of Town Centre First along with associated awards scheme.</p>	<p>Review national launch event and report to Sponsors Group on potential of national awards event, its likely structure and viability. The value of how such an event would highlight Town Centre First principles,</p> <p>Defined assessment methodology for best practice and categories in town regeneration and placemaking in context of Town Centre First along with associated awards scheme., recommended for adoption by Sponsors Group and NOAG.</p>	<p><b>National TCF Office</b></p> <p>DRCD, DHLGH, Local Government Sector</p>	<p><b>National Town Centre First Awards scheme and associated events.</b></p>

# Priority B: Data Informed Development

## Task B1: Understanding & Developing Better Data on Irish Towns

Related TCF Policy Action	Key Activities and Milestones 2023	Outputs 2023	Key Activities and Milestones 2024	Projected Actions 2025	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Performance Indicators
<p><b>Action No.10</b>  <b>Map existing and emerging data for towns in order to provide an on-going evidence base</b></p>	<p>Review best practice across government for systems capable of mapping key data outputs and develop business case for a similar system for TCF.</p> <p>Identify key datasets relevant to Towns which would provide on-going evidence base as mapped data.</p>	<p>Review undertaken best practice across government for systems capable of mapping key data outputs.</p> <p>Identification process undertaken for key datasets relevant to Towns which would provide on-going evidence base as mapped data. Document how data informed analysis took place in pilot phase 1 and how same was presented as mapped information.</p>	<p>Develop technical solution for mapping system facility along with business case for hosting same with a view to integrating same into newly developed Town Centre First website.</p> <p>Develop technical solution for mapping system facility along with business case for hosting same with a view to integrating same into newly developed Town Centre First website.</p>	<p>Test and launch technical solution for integration of TCF mapping system into web portal facility. Providing platform to accumulate data from Pilot towns to host an integrated updated health check model.</p> <p>Test and launch technical solution for integration of TCF mapping system into web portal facility. Providing platform to accumulate data from Pilot towns to host an integrated updated health check model.</p>	<p><b>National TCF Office</b></p> <p>DHLGH, DRCD, academic institutions, CSO, State Bodies</p>	<p><b>Portal of mapped existing and emerging data for towns in order to provide an on-going evidence base to support Town Centre First approach.</b></p>
<p><b>Action No.11</b>  <b>Establish a dedicated and on- going TCF research and evidence base platform which can be shared at a national level by towns.</b></p>	<p>Undertake Gap Analysis of current research with respect to Irish Towns.</p> <p>Define areas of current research and evidence at national level by engaging with academic institutions and state bodies.</p> <p>Develop methodology for sharing of research and evidence along with review of platform solutions suited for access by towns.</p>	<p>Identification process undertaken for key research relevant to Towns which would provide on-going evidence base as research data. Document how research informed analysis took place in pilot phase 1 and how pilot identified gaps for potential new research analysed.</p> <p>Current research and evidence at national level reviewed and engagement with academic institutions and state bodies has commenced.</p> <p>Review undertaken to develop methodology for sharing of research and evidence along with review of platform solutions suited for access by towns. Existing research where relevant was integrated into new Town Centre First website.</p>	<p>Review how research informed analysis took place in pilot phase 1 and how pilot phase reveals gaps for potential new research. Investigate research opportunities that would complement Town Centre First policy approach and inform understanding of Irish Towns.</p> <p>Integrate Town Centre First Plan process through pilot phases into current research and evidence at national level through structured engagement with academic institutions and state bodies has commenced.</p> <p>Develop technical solution for research platform along with business case for hosting same with a view to integrating platform into newly developed Town Centre First website.</p>	<p>Review how research informed analysis took place in pilot phase 2 and how pilot phase informs new research. Inform review of Town Centre First Policy based on understanding gained from implementation phase and ongoing research established.</p> <p>Review Integration of Town Centre First Plan process through pilot phases into current research and evidence at national level through structured engagement with academic institutions and state bodies. Inform review of Town Centre First Policy based on understanding gained from implementation phase and ongoing research established.</p> <p>Test and launch technical solution for integration of research platform into web portal facility. Providing platform to accumulate data from Pilot towns to host an integrated updated health check model.</p>	<p><b>National TCF Office</b></p> <p>DHLGH, DRCD, Academic Institutions, State Bodies</p>	<p><b>Town Centre First research and evidence base platform which can be shared at a national level by towns.</b></p>

<p><b>Action No.12</b>  <b>Identify agreed data measurement requirements with respect to social and economic outcomes, digitalisation skills and climate action</b></p>	<p>Undertake Gap Analysis of data measurement with respect to Irish Towns.</p> <p>Define key datasets that can be developed to support Town Centre First implementation in areas of social and economic outcomes, digitalisation skills and climate action.</p> <p>Undertake review of Digital Blueprint process as carried out in 26 Pilot locations as part of Town Centre Masterplan Initiative.</p>	<p>Gap analysis underway for data measurement in Irish towns. Through Digital Blueprint process assess how gaps can be identified and solutions developed.</p> <p>Review undertaken of key datasets that can be developed to support Town Centre First implementation in areas of social and economic outcomes, digitalisation skills and climate action. This includes engagement with international experience and initiatives.</p> <p>Detailed review and workshop of Digital Blueprints &amp; process as carried out in 26 Pilot locations as part of Town Centre Masterplan Initiative undertaken with .IE &amp; UCD along with Town Centre First Network.</p>	<p>Through review of gap analysis exercise document data measurement with respect to Irish Towns. Highlight relevant datasets along with data gaps. Develop proposal for technical solution for hosting data for Irish Towns along with review potential solutions for data gaps where they exist. Document how data informed analysis took place in pilot phase 1 and how this can be developed for Pilot Phase 2.</p> <p>Through findings of review of key datasets develop guidance and toolkits that can integrate this data in work of Town Teams and Town Regeneration Officers in creating better understanding of Irish Town along with informing process for development of Town Centre First Plans. Particularly for implementation in Pilot Phase 2. Commence development around areas where data doesn't currently exist.</p> <p>Through findings of review and workshop of Digital Blueprints &amp; process as carried out in 26 Pilot locations as part of Town Centre Masterplan Initiative implement improved process integrating Town Team and Town Regeneration Officer fully into Digital Blueprint process. Through review of Pilot Phase 1 Town Centre First Plans develop understanding of how digital Blueprints were integrated into plans and inform process for implementation in Pilot Phase 2</p>	<p>Review implementation through pilot phases of town centre first plans and publish guidance and toolkit-based data measurement relevant to Irish Towns and how they are integrated into Town Centre First Plan process and in accordance with Town Centre First Policy. Integrate data for Irish Towns into Town Centre First portal. Inform review of Town Centre First Policy based on understanding gained from implementation phase.</p> <p>Review implementation through pilot phases of town centre first plans and publish guidance and toolkit-based datasets relevant to Irish Towns and how they are integrated into Town Centre First Plan process and in accordance with Town Centre First Policy. Inform review of Town Centre First Policy based on understanding gained from implementation phase.</p> <p>Review implementation through pilot phases of town centre first plans and publish guidance and toolkit based on a clear approach to development and structure of Digital Blueprint for Town Centre First Plans in accordance with digitalisation ambition of Town Centre First Policy. Inform review of Town Centre First Policy based on understanding gained from implementation phase.</p>	<p><b>National TCF Office</b></p> <p>DHLGH, DRCD, Academic Institutions, State Bodies</p>	<p><b>Comprehensive approach to data measurement of Irish Towns with respect to social and economic outcomes, digitalisation skills and climate action.</b></p>
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## Task B2: Cost -Benefit & Social Return of Town Centre Investment

Related TCF Policy Action	Key Activities and Milestones 2023	Outputs 2023	Key Activities and Milestones 2024	Projected Actions 2025	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Performance Indicators
<b>Action No.13 Commission research to inform the assessment of the costs, benefits and social return of investment in town centres, which will better inform public policy interventions that impact and shape investment decisions in our towns</b>	<p>Undertake review of existing assessments of the costs, benefits and social return of investment in town centres.</p> <p>Define research opportunities associated with Town Centre First approach to Irish Towns.</p> <p>Using Town Centre First Plans arising from Town Centre Masterplan Initiative to highlight areas of research to inform the assessment of the costs, benefits and social return of investment in town centres.</p>	<p>Review progressed for existing assessments of the costs, benefits and social return of investment in town centres.</p> <p>Engaged with research organisations associated with Irish towns to define research opportunities associated with Town Centre First approach to Irish Towns.</p> <p>Through review of Town Centre First Plans arising from Town Centre Masterplan Initiative areas of research to inform the assessment of the costs, benefits and social return of investment in town centres have been highlighted.</p>	<p>Integrate current research and evidence at national level into Town Centre First Plan process through pilot phases, through structured engagement with Town Centre First Network.</p> <p>Develop full research business case to inform the assessment of the costs, benefits and social return of investment in town centres, which will better inform public policy interventions that impact and shape investment decisions in our towns</p> <p>Integrate Town Centre First Plan process through pilot phase 1 into current research and evidence at national level through structured engagement with academic institutions and state bodies has commenced.</p>	<p>Review how research informed analysis took place in pilot phase 1 and how pilot phase reveals gaps for potential new research. Investigate research opportunities that would complement Town Centre First policy approach and inform understanding of Irish Towns. Inform review of Town Centre First Policy based on understanding gained from implementation phase.</p> <p>Progress research with suitable partner to inform the assessment of the costs, benefits and social return of investment in town centres, which will better inform public policy interventions that impact and shape investment decisions in Irish towns. Inform review of Town Centre First Policy based on understanding gained from implementation phase.</p> <p>Review integration of Town Centre First Plan process through pilot phases into current research and evidence at national level through structured engagement with academic institutions and state bodies has commenced. Inform review of Town Centre First Policy based on understanding gained from implementation phase.</p>	<p><b>National TCF Office</b></p> <p>DHLGH, DRCD, Academic Institutions</p>	<p><b>Research based assessment of the costs, benefits and social return of investment in town centres in context of Town Centre First Policy.</b></p>
<b>Action No.14 Develop &amp; establish an appropriate town centre impact methodology to assess the impact of development and investment on town centres, for applicability within the statutory planning system and the public spending code</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DHLGH will work with DPER, the Local Government Sector, DRCD and the National TCF Office to develop assessment tools that address the impact of development and investment on town centres.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing engagement and socialisation of Town Centre First policy, funding and structures across Government and Key Stakeholders</p>	<p>Launch of Phase 1 plans in February 2024 will provide further basis for development of impact methodology which can be aligned with Phase 2 plans and further inform the review process to be delivered in Year 3</p>	<p>Development of Impact Methodology to align with TCF Review process</p>	<p><b>DHLGH</b> DPER, Local Government Sector, DRCD, National TCF Office</p>	<p><b>Town centre impact methodology to assess the impact of development and investment on town centres.</b></p>

### Task B3: Research & Behavioural Change

Related TCF Policy Action	Key Activities and Milestones 2023	Outputs 2023	Key Activities and Milestones 2024	Projected Actions 2025	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Performance Indicators
<b>Action No.15</b>  <b>Promote existing exemplars and current models which illustrate successful Town Centre living and explore how to encourage behavioural change</b>	<p>Undertake detailed of review of pilot towns under Town Centre Living Initiative.</p> <p>Develop through Town Centre First Network case studies based on Town Centre Living Initiative Towns.</p> <p>Highlight funded projects through Town Centre Living Initiative and success in addressing vacancy and promoting town centre living.</p>	<p>Review of pilot towns under Town Centre Living Initiative undertaken to understand techniques and resources applied in initiative along with impact of process.</p> <p>Through Town Centre First Network detailed workshops undertaken based on pilot Town Centre Living Initiative Towns.</p> <p>Through Town Centre First Network detailed workshops undertaken based on pilot Town Centre Living Initiative Towns and success in addressing vacancy and promoting town centre living. Including detailed engagement with Vacancy Unit in DHLGH along with joint event with national Vacant Homes Officers network.</p>	<p>Undertake review of pilot towns under Town Centre Living Initiative focusing on successfully funding and implemented projects arising from initiative along with detailing timelines and resources associated with project development and implementation.</p> <p>Through relevant Town Regeneration Officers, Town Centre First Network and Government Departments develop case studies based on Town Centre Living Initiative Towns.</p> <p>Undertake review of pilot towns under Town Centre Living Initiative focusing on successfully funding and implemented projects arising from initiative along with documenting success in addressing vacancy and promoting town centre living.</p>	<p>Review and publish case studies focused on resourcing and timelines associated with successful project implementation based on Town Centre Living Initiative Towns and how same can inform approaches and projects of Town Centre First Plans.</p> <p>Review and publish case studies based on Town Centre Living Initiative Towns and how same informs approaches and projects of Town Centre First Plans.</p> <p>Document and publish best practice in addressing vacancy and promoting town centre living of pilot towns through Town Centre Living Initiative and how same informs approaches and projects of Town Centre First Plans.</p>	<p><b>National TCF Office</b></p> <p>DHLGH, DRCD, DETE, Research Institutions</p>	<p><b>Promotion of detailed case studies and examples of successful projects in Town Centre Living.</b></p>

# Priority C: Developing Town Centre First Plans

## Task C1: Developing Components of a Plan

Related TCF Policy Action	Key Activities and Milestones 2023	Outputs 2023	Key Activities and Milestones 2024	Projected Actions 2025	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Performance Indicators
<b>Action No.16</b> <b>Promote and assist towns to develop a TCF Plan which will also align with the National Planning Framework approach to compact urban growth</b>	<p>Through Town Centre First Network establish clear approach to development and structure of Town Centre First Plans in accordance with Town Centre First Policy.</p>	<p>By engaging with Town Centre First Network a clear approach to development and structure of Town Centre First Plans in accordance with Town Centre First Policy and its alignment with the National Planning Framework approach to compact urban growth has been discussed.</p>	<p>Through engagement with government departments and Town Centre First Network develop guidance and toolkit based on a clear approach to development and structure of Town Centre First Plans in accordance with Town Centre First Policy and its alignment with the National Planning Framework approach to compact urban growth. Review implementation through pilot phase 1 of Town Centre First plans and develop guidance and toolkit to inform consistent approach to same.</p>	<p>Review implementation through pilot phases of town centre first plans and publish guidance and toolkit based on a clear approach to development and structure of Town Centre First Plans in accordance with Town Centre First Policy and its alignment with the National Planning Framework approach to compact urban growth. Inform review of Town Centre First Policy based on understanding gained from implementation phase.</p>	<p><b>Town Team supported by the Town Regeneration Officer and multidisciplinary team in the Local Authority</b></p> <p>LGMA, DHLGH, DoT and DRCD</p>	<p><b>Development of TCF Plans aligning Town Centre First Policy along with the National Planning Framework approach to compact urban growth.</b></p>
	<p>Through Town Centre First Network establish clear understanding of role and function Town Team in the development of Town Centre First Plans in accordance with Town Centre First Policy.</p> <p>Review process through Town Centre Masterplan Initiative 26 No. Pilot Towns.</p>	<p>By engaging with Town Centre First Network document a clear approach creation and establishment of Town Teams including defining role and operation of Town Teams in development and adoption of Town Centre First Plans in accordance with Town Centre First Policy. Review implementation through pilot phase 1 of Town Centre First plans to inform guidance and toolkit to support consistent approach for same.</p> <p>Ongoing engagement with Local Authorities during the development of the Phase 1 26 plans</p>	<p>Through engagement with Town Centre First Network and Town Teams implement guidance and toolkit based on a clear approach to the creation and establishment of Town Teams including defining role and operation of Town Teams in development and adoption of Town Centre First Plans in accordance with Town Centre First Policy. Ensuring alignment with the National Planning Framework approach to compact urban growth. Review implementation through pilot phase 1 of Town Centre First plans and review guidance and toolkit to inform consistent approach to same.</p> <p>Launch of revised Phase 2 TCF Plan Funding Stream and additional TCF Supports to facilitate/support plan development</p>	<p>Review implementation through pilot phases of town centre first plans and publish guidance and toolkit based on a clear approach to the creation and establishment of Town Teams including defining role and operation of Town Teams in development and adoption of Town Centre First Plans in accordance with Town Centre First Policy and its alignment with the National Planning Framework approach to compact urban growth. Inform review of Town Centre First Policy based on understanding gained from implementation phase.</p> <p>DRCD/DHLGH will incorporate, where appropriate, learnings/findings from Phase 1 and Phase 2 into future guidance and toolkits</p>		

## Task C2: Understanding & Supporting the Town Economy

Related TCF Policy Action	Key Activities and Milestones 2023	Outputs 2023	Key Activities and Milestones 2024	Projected Actions 2025	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Performance Indicators
<b>Action No.17</b> <b>Support the implementation of local and national economic initiatives in the TCF Plan including enabling and collaboration measures for employment generation</b>	<p>Review opportunities for rural employment generation as discussed in Our Rural Future – Rural Development Policy and Town Centre First Policy.</p> <p>Engage with employment and enterprise stakeholders to develop on current opportunities and identify potential others in rural Irish towns.</p> <p>Review Town Centre Masterplan Initiative Pilot towns for potential employment generation initiatives. Undertake review of Digital Blueprint reports developed for each location.</p>	<p>Analysis of existing opportunities for rural employment generation as discussed in Our Rural Future – Rural Development Policy and Town Centre First Policy.</p> <p>Engagement with employment and enterprise stakeholders to develop on current opportunities and identify potential others in rural Irish towns progressed.</p> <p>Review undertaken of Town Centre Masterplan Initiative Pilot towns for potential employment generation initiatives. Digital Blueprint reports developed for each location analysed.</p>	<p>Based on analysis of existing opportunities for rural employment generation develop case study and guidance toolkit to inform Town Centre First plan development. for Town Teams and Town Regeneration Officers.</p> <p>Through inter-departmental forums engage with employment and enterprise stakeholders to develop on current opportunities and identify potential others in rural Irish towns, particularly supporting governmental initiatives in Nighttime Economy &amp; Digitalisation &amp; Tourism.</p> <p>Review undertaken of Town Centre Masterplan Initiative Pilot towns for potential employment generation initiatives. Digital Blueprint reports developed for each location analysed.</p>	<p>Review implementation and publish on analysis of existing opportunities for rural employment generation develop case study and guidance toolkit to inform Town Centre First plan development. for Town Teams and Town Regeneration Officers.</p>	<p><b>Local Government Sector, National TCF Office</b></p> <p>Government Departments, State Bodies, Sectoral Bodies.</p>	<p><b>Employment Generation attributable to Town Centre First Planning and Projects.</b></p>
<b>Action No.18</b> <b>Enable a consistent methodology for the development of TCF Plans by each town</b>	<p>Through Town Centre First Network develop understanding of key roles and actions associated with them within Town Centre First Policy.</p>	<p>Through detailed surveying and engagement with Town Centre First Network an understanding of key roles and actions associated with them within Town Centre First Policy. Analysis focuses on various backgrounds and skillsets of Town Regeneration officers, Local Authority multi-disciplinary teams and town team capability and capacity.</p>	<p>Develop and issue guidance around the key roles and actions associated with them within Town Centre First Policy. In addition to this implement training and capacity building programmes for Town Regeneration Officers and Town Teams.</p>	<p>Oversee and review process including guidance around the key roles and actions associated with them within Town Centre First Policy. Review impact of training and capacity building programmes for Town Regeneration Officers and Town Teams. Publish final guidance for TRO and Town Teams and establish enduring training and capacity building programmes to support Town Centre First Principles.</p>	<p><b>National TCF Office</b></p>	<p><b>Consistent Methodology for the development of Town Centre First Plans.</b></p>



	<p>Through Town Centre First Network develop understanding of overall structure to Town Centre First Plans detailed within Town Centre First Policy.</p> <p>Through Town Centre First Network highlight vision, challenges and opportunities within Town Centre First Policy. Focusing on how Town Centre First Plans can bring these concepts into reality for Irish towns.</p>	<p>Through ongoing engagement with Town Centre First Network an understanding of overall structure to Town Centre First Plans detailed within Town Centre First Policy. Best practice exemplars are currently being developed from Pilot Phase one.</p> <p>Through ongoing engagement with Town Centre First Network through detailed workshops the vision, challenges and opportunities within Town Centre First Policy have been highlighted. In particular on how Town Centre First Plans can bring these concepts into reality for Irish towns.</p>	<p>Develop and issue guidance around overall structure to Town Centre First Plans detailed within Town Centre First Policy based on best practice exemplars developed from Pilot Phase 1.. In addition to this implement training and capacity building programmes for Town Regeneration Officers and Town Teams to facilitate consistent approaches.</p> <p>Develop and issue guidance highlighting vision, challenges, and opportunities within Town Centre First Policy. Focusing on how Town Centre First Plans can bring these concepts into reality for Irish towns. In addition to this implement training and capacity building programmes for Town Regeneration Officers and Town Teams to facilitate consistent approaches.</p>	<p>Oversee and review process including guidance around overall structure to Town Centre First Plans detailed within Town Centre First Policy. Review impact of training and capacity building programmes for Town Regeneration Officers and Town Teams. Publish final guidance to support consistent methodology and establish enduring training and capacity building programmes to support Town Centre First Plan development methodology.</p> <p>Oversee process implementation including guidance highlighting vision, challenges, and opportunities within Town Centre First Policy. Focusing on how Town Centre First Plans can bring these concepts into reality for Irish towns. Review impact of training and capacity building programmes for Town Regeneration Officers and Town Teams. Publish final guidance to support consistent methodology and establish enduring training and capacity building programmes to support Town Centre First Plan development methodology.</p>	<p>Local Government Sector, DRCD and DHLGH</p>	
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### Task C3: Town Centre First & Statutory Spatial Plans

Related TCF Policy Action	Key Activities and Milestones 2023	Outputs 2023	Key Activities and Milestones 2024	Projected Actions 2025	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Performance Indicators
<p><b>Action No.19</b>  <b>Ensure TCF plans and initiatives are informed by and supported in relevant statutory development plans and local area plans in order to integrate TCF plans with the statutory planning system</b></p>	<p>Comply with published updated Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities, June 2022, that incorporate the need for development plans to take account of and form the policy basis for action orientated TCF plans.</p> <p>Common strategic policy objectives of National Planning Framework, Our Rural Future and Town Centre First are reflected in statutory development plans and local area plans.</p>	<p>Significant experience gained from Pilot Phase 1 of Town Centre First Plans understanding of how Development Plan Guidelines and Planning Authorities, can incorporate in development plans the policy basis for action orientated TCF plans.</p> <p>Circular on relationship between Development Plans and Town Centre First Plans is being prepared DHLGH.</p>	<p>Develop understanding of key aspects of Town Centre First plan elements that align with Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities, and what development plans can incorporate to take account of and form the policy basis for action orientated TCF plans.</p> <p>Undertake review of examples of where common strategic policy objectives of National Planning Framework, Our Rural Future and Town Centre First are reflected in statutory development plans and local area plans.</p>	<p>Develop guidance and toolkit based on understanding of Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities, can incorporate in development plans the policy basis for action orientated TCF plans.</p> <p>Through review of Town Centre First Policy articulate how common strategic policy objectives of National Planning Framework, Our Rural Future and Town Centre First was reflected in statutory development plans and local area plans during implementation phase of Town Centre First Policy.</p>	<p><b>Local Government Sector</b></p> <p>DHLGH, Town Regeneration Officers, DoT</p>	<p><b>Town Centre First Plans integrated with the statutory Planning System.</b></p>
<p><b>Action No.20</b>  <b>Ensure that Guidelines for the preparation of County Development Plans incorporate the need to take account of TCF plans when drafting statutory plans</b></p>	<p>Support published updated Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities, June 2022, that incorporate the need for development plans to take account of and form the policy basis for action orientated TCF plans.</p>	<p>Significant experience gained from Pilot Phase 1 of Town Centre First Plans understanding of how Development Plan Guidelines and Planning Authorities, can incorporate in development plans the policy basis for action orientated TCF plans. Circular on relationship between Development Plans and Town Centre First Plans being prepared.</p>	<p>From review of Pilot Phase 1 of Town Centre First Plans understanding of how published updated Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities, June 2022, can incorporate in development plans the policy basis for action orientated TCF plans. Implement approaches and techniques that compliment Statutory Planning processes</p>	<p>Develop guidance and toolkit based on understanding of Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities, can incorporate in development plans the policy basis for action orientated TCF plans.</p>	<p><b>DHLGH</b></p> <p>Local Government Sector, Town Regeneration Officers</p>	<p><b>Guidance Published.</b></p>

# Priority D: Coordinated Approach to Delivery

## Task D1: Funding For Towns

Related TCF Policy Action	Key Activities and Milestones 2023	Outputs 2023	Key Activities and Milestones 2024	Projected Actions 2025	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Performance Indicators
<p><b>Action No.21</b>  <b>Provide targeted TCF funding through Government investment programmes such as the URDF and RRDF</b></p>	<p>Undertake review of previous town masterplan initiatives and exemplars of best practice to develop understanding of how regeneration was funded through Government Investment Programmes.</p> <p>Through Town Centre Masterplan initiative identify project potential arising from Town Centre First Plans and how same are funded through Government Investment Programmes.</p> <p>Document funding programmes available through Government Investment Programmes and barriers to implantation in Town Centre First Plans or Town Teams.</p>	<p>Review of previous town masterplan initiatives and exemplars of best practice to develop understanding of how regeneration was funded through Government Investment Programmes. Along with community structures and Local Authority resources supporting same.</p> <p>Through Town Centre Masterplan initiative project pipeline arising from Town Centre First Plans documented and how funding through Government Investment Programmes can support same. Gap analysis undertaken of resource deficiencies exist in bringing projects from concept to delivery.</p> <p>Directory developed of funding programmes available through Government Investment Programmes Through detailed surveying of Town Centre First Network barriers to implementation in Town Centre First Plans or Town Teams identified.</p>	<p>Develop case studies of previous town masterplan initiatives and exemplars of best practice to develop understanding of how regeneration was funded &amp; resourced at a local level.</p> <p>Undertake detailed analysis of barriers to delivery of project pipeline arising from Town Centre First Plans documenting challenges in engaging with funding through Government Investment Programmes and the resources associated with same, and document challenges and opportunities.</p> <p>Develop interactive directory through online portal of funding programmes available through Government Investment Programmes. Investigate and commence development of project management interface to integrate with portal and funding streams also.</p>	<p>Publish factual guidance and recommendations based on case studies of previous town masterplan initiatives and Town Centre First Pilots of best practice in undertaking regeneration through Government Investment Programmes &amp; resources at a local level.</p> <p>Document breakdown of project arising from initial pilots of Town Centre First Plans along with their success in engaging with funding through Government Investment Programmes, and document challenges and opportunities. Review how Government Investment Programmes may be informed by understanding of Irish Towns gained through Town Centre First.</p> <p>Launch interactive directory through online portal of funding programmes available through Government Investment Programmes. Integrate project management interface with portal and funding streams.</p>	<p><b>National TCF Office</b></p> <p>Local Government Sector, Funding Providers, DRCD and DHLGH</p>	<p><b>Number of successfully implemented projects arising from Town Centre First Plans funded through Government investment programmes.</b></p>

## Task D2: Regulatory Supports

Related TCF Policy Action	Key Activities and Milestones 2023	Outputs 2023	Key Activities and Milestones 2024	Projected Actions 2025	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Performance Indicators
<p><b>Action No.22</b> Update the planning regulations that exempt certain vacant commercial properties from requiring planning permissions to change of use for residential purposes, to extend the timeline to 2025 and to include certain classes of public houses</p>	<p>2018 Planning Regulations reviewed and extended up to 2025 and amended to include a new use class 12 (public house).</p> <p>Monitor and analyse the implementation of planning exemptions to date.</p> <p>Record Development activity in urban areas to highlight success of measure in addressing vacancy and dereliction in Irish Towns.</p> <p>Develop exemplars and successful case studies to act as exemplars to increase awareness of planning exemptions as a measure to address vacancy and dereliction.</p>	<p>In 2022, local authorities received notifications of 260 exempted developments relating to converting certain vacant commercial properties into homes. The 260 notifications aim to provide 665 homes.</p>	<p>Monitor the uptake of exemptions based on annual returns detailing the number of notifications, received by local authorities, of planned changes of use of vacant commercial property into residential units.</p>	<p>Monitor the uptake of exemptions based on annual returns detailing the number of notifications, received by local authorities, of planned changes of use of vacant commercial property into residential units.</p>	DHLGH	<p><b>Number of vacant commercial properties availing of planning exemptions that are brought back into re-use.</b></p>
<p><b>Action No.23</b> Develop guidance relating to protected structures to encourage the use of such properties for repurposing and/or refurbishment for residential accommodation</p>	<p>Support online hub to provide guidance for owners of protected structures on funding and supports.</p> <p>Support Dublin Civic Trust to develop a suite of materials on conservation works for historic properties.</p> <p>Publish Technical guidance Improving Energy Efficiency of Traditional Buildings on energy retrofitting of historic buildings.</p>	<p>Minister O'Brien announced the publication of the revised edition of Bringing Back Homes - Manual for the reuse of existing buildings, which provides property owners, members of the public, local authorities and those involved in the construction industry with guidance to facilitate the reuse of old and vacant buildings – bringing them back as homes. This Manual also signposts to new energy efficiency guidance to support upgrading of older traditional buildings, including protected structures, which was published by the DHLGH under the Climate Action Plan 2023.</p>	<p>Monitor and review implementation of guidance and make recommendations based on same.</p> <p>□</p>	<p>Monitor and review implementation of guidance and make recommendations based on same.</p> <p>□</p>	DHLGH	<p><b>Technical guidance on Improving Energy Efficiency of Traditional Buildings on energy retrofitting of historic buildings published.</b></p>

### Task D3: Pathfinder & Early-Stage Towns

Related TCF Policy Action	Key Activities and Milestones 2023	Outputs 2023	Key Activities and Milestones 2024	Projected Actions 2025	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Performance Indicators
<p><b>Action No.24</b>  <b>Identify a number of towns to act as early priority demonstrators of the TCF process – Pathfinder Towns</b></p>	<p>Undertake review of previous placemaking and regeneration initiatives to identify best practice in Town Master Planning.</p> <p>Develop case studies across a number of different size towns based best practice of previously progressed regeneration projects.</p> <p>Based on 26 No. pilot towns associated with Town Centre Masterplan Initiative select a cross section (population scale) of best practice in implementation of Town Centre First Policy.</p> <p>Promote best practice in case studies through national events and campaigns relating to town regeneration and master planning.</p>	<p>Review of Irish and Scottish placemaking and regeneration initiatives to identify best practice in Town Master Planning. Noting focus, approaches, resourcing and funding.</p> <p>Analysis and identification across a number of different size towns based best practice of previously progressed regeneration projects including Town Centre Living Initiative amongst others.</p> <p>Best practice in implementation of Town Centre First Policy assessed across 26 No. pilot towns associated with Town Centre Masterplan Initiative. Exemplars from pilot Phase 1 selected as demonstrators of Town Centre First.</p> <p>Communication strategy developed to promote best practice in case studies through national events and campaigns relating to town regeneration and master planning. Town Centre First website developed as a platform through which best practice can be communicated.</p>	<p>Develop exemplars of previous placemaking and regeneration initiatives to identify best practice in Town Master Planning. Documenting approaches, resourcing and funding.</p> <p>Develop exemplars of previously progressed regeneration projects including Town Centre Living Initiative amongst others to highlight best practice and techniques implemented in previous plan led approaches to Irish Towns.</p> <p>Develop exemplars of best practice in implementation of Town Centre First Policy assessed across 26 No. pilot towns associated with Town Centre Masterplan Initiative to highlight best practice and techniques implemented that align with Town Centre First policy principles</p> <p>Implement communication strategy developed to promote best practice in case studies through national events and campaigns relating to town regeneration and master planning. Promote Town Centre First website developed as a platform through which best practice can be communicated.</p>	<p>Integrate into best practice guidance and toolkits case studies around previous placemaking and regeneration initiatives to identify best practice in Town Master Planning to inform lessons learned and serve as exemplars to Town Regeneration Officers and Town Teams.</p> <p>Integrate into best practice guidance and toolkits exemplars of previously progressed regeneration projects including Town Centre Living Initiative amongst others to highlight best practice and techniques implemented in previous plan led approaches to Irish Towns.</p> <p>Integrate into best practice guidance and toolkits exemplars of best practice in implementation of Town Centre First Policy assessed across 26 No. pilot towns associated with Town Centre Masterplan Initiative to highlight best practice and techniques implemented that align with Town Centre First policy principles.</p> <p>Deliver and review communication strategy's impact in promote best practice in case studies through national events and campaigns relating to town regeneration and master planning. Analyse impact of Town Centre First website and how platform communicated best practice.</p>	<p><b>National TCF Office</b></p> <p>Local Government Sector, DRCD and DHLGH</p>	<p><b>Town Centre First Pathfinder Town Case Studies.</b></p>

<p><b>Action No.25</b>  <b>Identify and support towns where stakeholders require greater capacity building and support to engage with the TCF approach</b></p>	<p>Through Town Centre First Network establish understanding of capacity within communities along with deficiencies in support for communities in 26 No. Pilot Towns of Town Centre Masterplan Initiative.</p> <p>Engage with community stakeholders to understand supports currently available to communities.</p> <p>Identify gaps in supports for communities engaging with Town Centre First and with sectoral stakeholders drive development of appropriate supports.</p>	<p>Extensive workshopping and surveying undertaken with Town Centre First Network an understanding of capacity within communities along with deficiencies in support for communities in 26 No. Pilot Towns of Town Centre Masterplan Initiative Phase 1 has been established with key outputs for Town Centre First Sponsors group to consider.</p> <p>Extensive engagement undertaken by TROs with communities to develop understand of supports and opportunities that exist for communities at present. Central directory of supports developed and issued to Town Centre First Network to assist in this process.</p> <p>Gap analysis for supports for communities engaging with Town Centre First undertaken. Findings being reviewed with sectoral stakeholders drive development of appropriate supports.</p>	<p>Through analysis of workshop and survey outputs from Town Centre First Network develop resources in training and capacity building programmes for 26 No. Pilot Towns of Town Centre Masterplan Initiative. Integrate these resources along with developing methodologies to support communities for Pilot Phase 2 locations</p> <p>Develop guidance and toolkits based on supports available to communities. Through communication strategy integrate these toolkits into consistent communication through Town Centre First Network. Through Town Centre First website develop understanding of supports for communities through integrated directory and guidance.</p> <p>Through review of gap analysis develop resources in training and capacity building programmes for 26 No. Pilot Towns of Town Centre Masterplan Initiative to broaden understanding of existing supports. Integrate these resources along with reviewing development of additional supports for communities in Pilot Phase 2 locations.</p>	<p>Through Town Centre First Network develop overview of experience gained through pilot locations in the area of capacity within communities along with deficiencies in support for communities and how Town Centre First policy assisted communities. Inform review of Town Centre First Policy based on understanding gained from implementation phase.</p> <p>Develop overview of understanding within pilot locations in supports available to communities and how Town Centre First policy assisted communities in availing of supports. Inform review of Town Centre First Policy based on understanding gained from implementation phase.</p> <p>Through Town Centre First Network develop overview of experience gained on gaps in supports for communities and how Town Centre First policy assisted communities in understanding supports available along with developing solutions where gaps existed. Inform review of Town Centre First Policy based on understanding gained from implementation phase.</p>	<p><b>National TCF Office</b></p> <p>Local Government Sector, DRCD and DHLGH</p>	<p><b>Town Centre First informing development of community capacity building and supports.</b></p>

<p><b>Action No.26</b></p> <p>As part of a pathfinder programme to be initiated as part of a Croí Cónaithe (Towns) fund, TCF will promote an integrated approach to both a Towns Serviced Site programme alongside adaptive re-use supports to be delivered through Local Authorities to enable the delivery of more housing choice and encourage town centre living</p>	<p>Monitor and Support two schemes launched in 2022, under the Housing For All/Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the Ready to Build (Serviced Sites) scheme for New Homes, and;</li> <li>- the vacant Property Refurbishment Grant for vacant and derelict properties.</li> </ul>	<p>All 31 local authorities now have a full-time Vacant Homes Officer in place who are engaging with TROs at LA level.</p> <p>The Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant, launched in July 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 7,300 applications</li> <li>- 4,200 approvals</li> <li>- 104 Grants paid in 2023.</li> </ul>	<p>A comprehensive review and evaluation of the schemes under the Croí Cónaithe Towns Fund is underway and is due to be completed by mid-2024.</p> <p>Grants paid now at 240 (April 2024) but expected to increase significantly by year end as projects are completed.</p> <p>Government announced the extension of the Local Authority Home Loan to cover the purchase and/or renovation of non-habitable homes that are potentially eligible for Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant funding.</p> <p>17 sites have been made available for sale by local Authorities under the Ready to Build Scheme (April 2024). DHLGH is currently engaging with local authorities in respect of the identification of sites suitable for the Ready to Build scheme.</p>	<p>Additional Actions may be identified on foot of scheme review.</p> <p>Government agreed to increase the target for homes to be delivered from 2,000 to 4,000 by 2025.</p>	<p><b>DHLGH</b> Local Authorities</p>	<p><b>Number of vacant properties availing of the Croí Cónaithe Towns fund that are brought back into use.</b></p>

## Task D4: Monitoring & Implementation

Related TCF Policy Action	Key Activities and Milestones 2023	Outputs 2023	Key Activities and Milestones 2024	Projected Actions 2025	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Performance Indicators
<b>Action No.27</b> <b>Establish a National Oversight &amp; Advisory Group (NOAG) to oversee the delivery and implementation process and to provide a shared forum for engaging across Government</b>	DHLGH and DRCD will work with, the National TCF Office, Local Government Sector, State Bodies, Government Departments and Expert Bodies to engage with National Oversight & Advisory Group (NOAG) to oversee the delivery and implementation process and to provide a shared forum for engaging across Government	National Oversight & Advisory Group (NOAG) engagement framework to oversee the delivery and implementation process developed and implemented.	DHLGH and DRCD will work with, the National TCF Office, Local Government Sector, State Bodies, Government Departments and Expert Bodies to engage with National Oversight & Advisory Group (NOAG) to present progress of implementation process and inform review of Town Centre First Policy.	DHLGH and DRCD will work with, the National TCF Office, Local Government Sector, State Bodies, Government Departments and Expert Bodies to engage with National Oversight & Advisory Group (NOAG) to present outcomes of implementation process and inform review of Town Centre First Policy.	<b>DHLGH and DRCD</b> National TCF Office, Local Government Sector, State Bodies, Government Departments, Expert Bodies	<b>National Oversight &amp; Advisory Group (NOAG for implementation of Town Centre First Policy.</b>
<b>Action No.29</b> Produce an Annual Implementation Plan to guide delivery at a national level and monitor delivery through regular Progress Reports	Develop and agree framework for implementation of Town Centre First Policy for Implementation Phase 2023- 2025  Agree structure and approach for Annual Implementation Plan and Progress Reporting.  Produce Town Centre First Annual Implementation Plan.	Framework for implementation of Town Centre First Policy for Implementation Phase 2023- 2025 developed and agreed.  Structure and approach for Annual Implementation Plan and Progress Reporting agreed  Town Centre First Annual Implementation Plan produced and agreed.	Framework for implementation of Town Centre First Policy for Implementation Phase 2023- 2025 developed and agreed.  Structure and approach for Annual Implementation Plan and Progress Reporting agreed  Produce updated Town Centre First Annual Implementation Plan.	Framework for implementation of Town Centre First Policy for Implementation Phase 2023- 2025 developed and agreed.  Structure and approach for Annual Implementation Plan and Progress Reporting agreed  Produce updated Town Centre First Annual Implementation Plan.	<b>National TCF Office</b>  NOAG, Local Government Sector, DRCD and DHLGH	<b>Clear Framework for implementation of Town Centre First Policy.</b>  <b>Report on First Phase Implementation Planning period. Review Report for overall progress of Policy Implementation.</b>
<b>Action No.30</b> Provide Annual Progress Updates on the Implementation Plan to the Cabinet Committee on Housing	Agree structure and approach for progress updates on the Annual Implementation Plan.  Produce Town Centre progress update on Annual Implementation Plan.	Structure and approach for progress updates on the Annual Implementation Plan agreed.  Town Centre progress update on Annual Implementation Plan developed.	Structure and approach for progress updates on the Annual Implementation Plan agreed.  Develop Town Centre progress update on Annual Implementation Plan.	Structure and approach for progress updates on the Annual Implementation Plan agreed.  Develop Town Centre progress update on Annual Implementation Plan.	<b>National TCF Office</b>  NOAG, Local Government Sector, DRCD and DHLGH	<b>Report on First Phase Implementation Planning period. Review overall progress of Policy Implementation.</b>
<b>Action No.31</b>						



<p>Carry out a review of the effectiveness of this Town Centre First policy Approach every three years</p>	<p>Record progress on implementation Plan in context of annual review with a view to overall implementation phase review.</p> <p>Undertake review of all actions and progress in initial implementation phase 2023-2025, with a view to informing future of Town Centre First Policy.</p>	<p>Progress on implementation Plan in context of annual review with a view to overall implementation phase review prepared.</p> <p>Review undertaken of all actions and progress in initial implementation phase 2023-2025, with a view to informing future of Town Centre First Policy.</p>	<p>Record progress on implementation Plan in context of annual review with a view to overall implementation phase review.</p> <p>Undertake review of all actions and progress in initial implementation phase 2023-2025, with a view to informing future of Town Centre First Policy.</p>	<p>Record progress on implementation Plan in context of annual review with a view to overall implementation phase review.</p> <p>Undertake review of all actions and progress in initial implementation phase 2023-2025, with a view to informing future of Town Centre First Policy.</p>	<p><b>National TCF Office</b></p> <p>NOAG, Local Government Sector, DRCD and DHLGH</p>	<p><b>Review report on effectiveness of Town Centre First Policy along with recommendations for development of policy.</b></p>
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## Task D5: Cross-Government Focus

Related TCF Policy Action	Key Activities and Milestones 2023	Outputs 2023	Key Activities and Milestones 2024	Projected Actions 2025	Lead and Partner(s)	Key Performance Indicators
<b>Action No.8</b> <b>Provide support to Approved Housing Bodies and Local Authority Housing Teams to develop suitable accommodation in town centres for people with specific requirements including older people, citizens with a disability and smaller households. The Housing Agency will also put in place supports and accommodation suitable for Housing First, as part of the Social Housing Programme</b>	<p>The Housing Agency will work with DHLGH, the Local Government Sector, and the AHB's to develop suitable accommodation in town centres for people with specific requirements including older people, citizens with a disability and smaller households. The Housing Agency will also put in place supports and accommodation suitable for Housing First, as part of the Social Housing Programme.</p>	<p>Engagement with Housing Agency and Age Friendly Ireland on the potential of schemes associated with universal design principles within vacant units in town centres.</p>	<p>The Housing Agency will work with DHLGH, the Local Government Sector, and the AHB's to develop suitable accommodation in town centres for people with specific requirements including older people, citizens with a disability and smaller households. The Housing Agency will also put in place supports and accommodation suitable for Housing First, as part of the Social Housing Programme.</p>	<p>The Housing Agency will work with DHLGH, the Local Government Sector, and the AHB's to develop suitable accommodation in town centres for people with specific requirements including older people, citizens with a disability and smaller households. The Housing Agency will also put in place supports and accommodation suitable for Housing First, as part of the Social Housing Programme.</p>	<p><b>Housing Agency</b> Local Government Sector, AHB's, DHLGH</p>	<p><b>Suitable accommodation in town centres for people with specific requirements including older people, citizens with a disability and smaller households. Supports and accommodation suitable for Housing First, as part of the Social Housing Programme.</b></p>
<b>Action No.9</b> <b>The LDA will support the Town Centre First policy objectives in the developments they are involved with in towns with a population of over 10,000 people</b>	<p>LDA will work with DHLGH, to support objectives of Town Centre First policy in the developments they are involved with in towns with a population of over 10,000 people.</p>	<p>Engagement with LDA on the potential of schemes associated with state lands and assets within town centres to support regeneration and reuse where possible.</p>	<p>LDA will work with DHLGH, to support objectives of Town Centre First policy in the developments they are involved with in towns with a population of over 10,000 people.</p>	<p>LDA will work with DHLGH, to support objectives of Town Centre First policy in the developments they are involved with in towns with a population of over 10,000 people.</p>	<p><b>Land Development Agency</b> DHLGH</p>	<p><b>Integration of objectives of Town Centre First Policy in LDA developments in towns with population over 10,000 people.</b></p>
<b>Action No.28</b> <b>The Regional Assemblies will support Local Authorities in delivering the objectives of the Town Centre First policy through proposals to utilise ERDF funding for urban development.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DHLGH and Regional Assemblies will work with, the Department of Public Expenditure &amp; Reform, Local Government Sector, to support the delivery of the objectives of the Town Centre First policy through proposals to utilise ERDF funding for urban development.</li> </ul>	<p>Engagement with all stakeholders to design and finalise the THRIVE – the Town Centre First Heritage Revival Scheme to be delivered under 2 ERDF programmes.</p> <p>THRIVE represents a multi-year investment of €120m</p>	<p>THRIVE Scheme Launched in February 2024</p> <p>€2m to €7m funding for individual local authorities to renovate, refurbish and adapt vacant and derelict heritage buildings in their town centres</p>	<p>Ongoing monitoring of delivery of THRIVE projects</p>	<p><b>Regional Assemblies</b> LGMA, DHLGH, DPER, Local Government Sector</p>	<p><b>Proposals to utilise ERDF funding for urban development to support the delivery of the objectives of the Town Centre First policy.</b></p>
<b>Action No.32</b>						

<p><b>Implement and apply tools to assess the impact of investment by Government Departments and their agencies on Town Centres in terms of economic, social, cultural and sustainability parameters</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DHLGH and DRCD will work with, the Local Government Sector, State Bodies, Government Departments and Expert Bodies to develop assessment tools that address the impact of development and investment on town centres.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing engagement and socialisation of Town Centre First policy, funding and structures across Government and Key Stakeholders</p>	<p>Launch of Phase 1 plans in February 2024 will provide further basis for development of impact methodology which can be aligned with Phase 2 plans and further inform the review process to be delivered in Year 3</p>	<p>Development of Impact Methodology to align with TCF Review process</p>	<p><b>DHLGH and DRCD</b> Local Government Sector, State Bodies, Government Departments, Expert Bodies</p>	<p><b>Town centre impact methodology to assess the impact of development and investment on town centres.</b></p>
<p><b>Action No.33</b> <b>Explore approaches to collaborating with linked cross- Government programmes and initiatives</b></p>	<p>Identify complementary Actions in Strategy and Policy across other Government Departments, State Bodies and Sectoral bodies as documented in Our Rural Future – Rural Development Policy 2021-2025.</p> <p>Develop engagement structures with other Government Departments in order to progress common policy objectives with a view to integrating work into Town Centre First approach to towns.</p> <p>Develop communication strategy to manage communication with various groups and organisations to help embed Town Centre First Masterplan approach.</p>	<p>Detailed exercise in identification of complementary Actions in Strategy and Policy across other Government Departments, State Bodies and Sectoral bodies as documented in Our Rural Future – Rural Development Policy 2021-2025.</p> <p>Through analysis undertaken of existing engagement structures within framework of gNo. Thematic Objectives of Our Rural future with other Government Departments in order to progress common policy objectives. These structures and stakeholders were integrated into Town Centre First communication strategy.</p> <p>Cross Government Departments and other stakeholders identified through g No. Thematic objectives of Our Rural Future integrated into communication strategy to manage communication and to help embed Town Centre First plan led approach.</p>	<p>Undertake documentation of progress made in complementary Actions in Strategy and Policy across other Government Departments, State Bodies and Sectoral bodies as detailed in Our Rural Future – Rural Development Policy 2021-2025. Share progress with Town Centre First network with a view to integrate common areas of interest into Town Centre First Pilot locations.</p> <p>Integrate Town Centre First into of existing engagement structures within framework of gNo. Thematic Objectives of Our Rural future with other Government Departments to progress common policy objectives. These structures and stakeholders will form part of Town Centre First communication strategy implementation.</p> <p>Implement communication strategy to manage communication and to help embed Town Centre First plan led approach by engaging cross Government Departments and other stakeholders identified through g No. Thematic objectives of Our Rural Future integrated into same.</p>	<p>Document progress made in complementary Actions in Strategy and Policy across other Government Departments, State Bodies and Sectoral bodies as detailed in Our Rural Future – Rural Development Policy 2021-2025. Integrate same into review of implementation process for Town Centre First Policy.</p> <p>Document progress integrating Town Centre First into of existing engagement structures within framework of gNo. Thematic Objectives of Our Rural future with other Government Departments to progress common policy objectives. Document how same informs review of implementation process for Town Centre First Policy.</p> <p>Document implementation of communication strategy to help embed Town Centre First plan led approach by engaging cross Government Departments and other stakeholders identified through g No. Thematic objectives of Our Rural Future integrated into same.. Integrate same into review of implementation process for Town Centre First Policy.</p>	<p><b>National TCF Office, DHLGH and DRCD</b> Government Departments, State Bodies, Sectoral Bodies</p>	<p><b>Funding and project support for Towns the subject of Town Centre First Plans, driving integrated approach to Towns.</b></p>

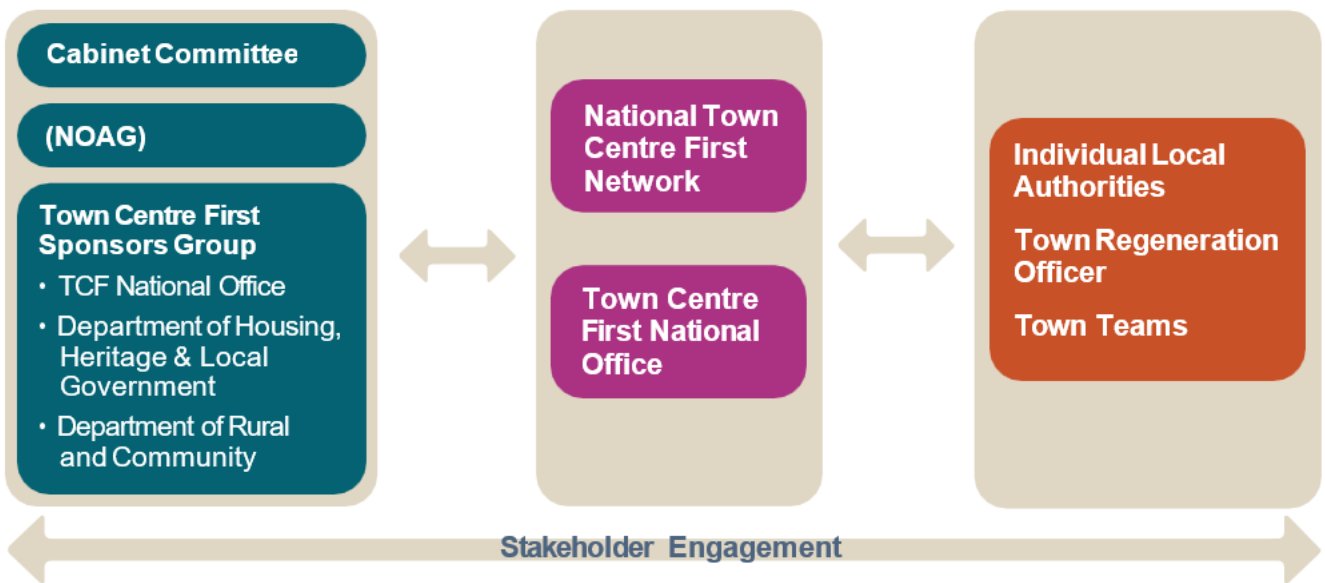


# Supporting Implementation

# Implementation in Action

Town Centre First recognises the importance of strong collaboration between Government Departments, State Agencies and others in the pursuit of better outcomes for towns, local communities and businesses. It acknowledges the interconnecting areas of work, and that towns, local communities and their businesses benefit most when the work of all stakeholders at national and local levels is integrated. The Department of Community and Rural Development and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage along with LGMA Town Centre First National Office will provide national leadership of this collective effort and ensure that national policy dovetails with local implementation. Implementation of Town Centre First is a shared responsibility across Government.

## Town Centre First Implementation



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## Implementation Structures

Implementation structures for Town Centre First are being delivered through in accordance with the initially designed implementation framework. This framework has enabled a coherent approach to priorities and objectives in the delivery of the Town Centre First Policy. The implementation structures are providing an extensive enabling network for Town Centre First.

These structures are bringing together stakeholders across Government Departments, State Agencies, and the community and is including the voices of all. This is connecting national policy, local planning and project delivery.

## National Oversight and Advisory Group

Ensuring support from across Government Departments and agencies is important to deliver a whole-of Government approach. A National Oversight and Advisory Group (NOAG) will be established to monitor and guide the delivery process and provide a shared forum for engaging across Government and national stakeholders.

The Group may include Government Departments, the Local Government sector, agencies central to supporting towns, other experts, and sectoral, business and community representatives as appropriate. The National TCF Office will provide ongoing updates to, and be guided by, the NOAG.

An Annual Implementation Plan, underpinned by regular Progress Reports, will be used to guide the work of the National Town Centre First Office at a national level and to monitor implementation of the policy. The Annual Implementation Plan will be produced by the National Town Centre First Office with oversight and agreement from the National Oversight and Advisory Group. The National Town Centre First Office will report to NOAG on the delivery of the Implementation Plan. The Plan should be underpinned by Key Performance Indicators to assist in monitoring progress.

## Cabinet Committee

The oversight of and accountability for the implementation of Town Centre First ultimately rests with the Cabinet Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The Cabinet Committee is chaired by Deputy Stephen Matthews and comprises 9 No. Deputies and 5 No. Senators. The Cabinet Committee is supported by a Senior Officials Group, which meets in advance of Cabinet Committee and provides cross-departmental coordination. Cabinet Committees refer substantive issues to Government for approval. An Annual Policy Progress Report will be prepared and submitted through the Town Centre First Sponsors Group for consideration by the Cabinet Committee.

## Town Centre First National Office

A dedicated National Town Centre First Office established within Local Government Management Agency with funding support and external expertise as required. The Office will specifically drive the delivery of this Town Centre First policy and deal with the range of actions referenced.

## Town Centre First Network

In order to support the Town Regeneration Officers and ensure best practice across all areas, a collaborative TCF network will be established. The national network of TROs will be drawn from every Local Authority area and be co-ordinated by the National TCF Office.

The role of the network will be to ensure consistency in the roll-out of the TCF policy nationally by respective Town Teams, share experience and good practice, provide a key instrument of delivery for the National TCF Office, and to report back on implementation. The network will explore how to build the capacity of towns that have been less successful in getting local stakeholders to collaborate and/or access funding support.

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## Town Centre First Sponsors Group

The Town Centre First Sponsors Group comprises senior officials from the Government Departments leading implementation of cross-cutting action areas in Town Centre First. The Sponsors Group proposes.

annual priorities in response to emerging needs. Senior officials from the Department of Community and Rural Development and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage along with the LGMA Town Centre First National Office, who have lead responsibility for Town Centre First Policy,

This Group will spearhead the coordination and monitoring of implementation of Town Centre First and ensure the necessary infrastructure is in place to support implementation.

## Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement with stakeholders will be central to the successful implementation of Town Centre. Virtually every action will require communication and consultation with partners outside of Government Departments and State Agencies, including communities and business, the wider public, organisations representing different sectors of economy, and voluntary organisations and other organisations with special expertise relevant to the particular action area, social partners, and others. In some instances, there are standing groups of representatives which can help to inform and guide implementation.

While it is not possible to list every stakeholder for each action, it is implied that widespread engagement will be a key feature of the implementation of this Strategy.

Special efforts will be made to develop approaches to engaging with communities and the local economy so that their experiences and preferences remain central to the implementation of Town Centre First.

The Implementation Plan outlines specific milestones to progress a framework for planned placemaking.

to be accompanied by guidance and training on methodologies and mechanisms relevant to Irish Towns.

# Processes for Reporting on implementation

## Reporting Progress

An Annual Progress Report, charting the status and progress of actions, will be prepared by the Town Centre First National Office, and submitted to the National Oversight and Advisory Group.

The Annual Report will focus on the achievement of the actions overall, with a particular focus on the high-level priorities, strategic tasks and supporting pillars of Town Centre First Policy. The Town Centre First aims (see below). Supplementary indicators relevant to Town centre First will also be developed.

## Town Centre First Review

Town Centre First covers the period from 2023 to 2025. While the overarching vision is set for the enduring approach to plan-led placemaking in Irish towns, the detailed actions in the Policy and Implementation Plan are focused on the first three years.

For accountability and continued relevance, a review of the Policy will take place within three years. An updated implementation plan will take account of the progress of the first implementation phase, respond to emerging challenges or barriers, and reflect new actions required to address issues affecting the towns and villages around Ireland.

### Town Centre First aims:

**By 2025, a more integrated and coordinated approach to the development of Irish Towns; with a central, coordinating lead, benefitting each of the various investment programmes and policy supports cumulatively.**

**By 2025, actions to make optimal use of investment outlined in the National Development Plan through:**

- Developed capacity and experience gained.
- Implementing projects from vision Plans of Towns
- Necessary National and Regional Structures being in Place.
- Data of process demonstrating the progress of Town Centre First concepts.

