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ACT



Muine Bheag / Bagenalstown

Town Centre First Plan

Lár Baile an Tús
Town Centre First

MUINE BHEAG
TOWN TEAM

COMHAIRLE CONTAE
CHEATHARLACH
CARLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

ACT

Project Statement

The Bagenalstown Town Centre First (TCF) Plan sets out a clear and ambitious pathway for the sustainable regeneration of Bagenalstown, County Carlow, a historic river town with strong community identity and significant unrealised potential. Developed through detailed research and an inclusive co-design process with the local community, the plan reflects the lived experience, aspirations and shared vision of residents, businesses, community organisations and public partners.

The plan has been shaped in collaboration with the Muine Bheag Town Team and Carlow County Council, ensuring that local knowledge, policy alignment and delivery realism are embedded throughout. This iterative engagement has ensured that priorities are rooted in local needs while responding to national Town Centre First objectives and best-practice placemaking principles.

At the heart of the plan are three interconnected place-based themes — a (Re)Connected Bagenalstown, a (Re)Activated Bagenalstown, and a Resilient Bagenalstown. Together, these themes provide a framework for delivering a compact, inclusive and climate-ready river town.

• A (Re)Connected Bagenalstown focuses on permeability, accessibility and sustainable mobility. New walking and cycling connections, improved access to the River Barrow, a clearer route hierarchy and better public transport integration will reduce car dependency while strengthening everyday connectivity.

• A (Re)Activated Bagenalstown concentrates on town centre vitality, adaptive reuse and economic life. Reactivating vacant buildings, supporting mixed uses, strengthening public spaces and promoting cultural and heritage assets will restore confidence, footfall and local pride.

• A Resilient Bagenalstown embeds climate resilience, biodiversity, digital connectivity and social inclusion into every project. Nature-based solutions, riparian planting, stormwater management, heritage protection and community facilities ensure long-term environmental and social sustainability.

In the short term, the plan provides a clear roadmap for deliverable projects such as the Bagenal Way, Riverside Plaza, Court House Renewal, Virtual Heritage Trail and Vacancy Activation Programme. In the long term, it sets a transformative ambition: a vibrant, connected, low-carbon river town that balances growth with heritage, nature and community wellbeing.

The Bagenalstown Town Centre First Plan is not simply a spatial strategy. It is a shared community vision for a resilient, inclusive and future-focused town. Through collaboration, creativity and considered investment, it charts a practical route towards a stronger Bagenalstown for current and future generations.

Acknowledgements

The preparation of the Bagenalstown Town Centre First Plan has been made possible through the commitment, generosity and insight of the local community and project partners.

Sincere thanks are extended to the Muine Bheag Town Team, whose dedication, local knowledge and constructive engagement were central to shaping the vision, objectives and project priorities within this plan. Their dedication ensured that the plan remained grounded in local realities while maintaining ambition for the town's future.

We also acknowledge the continued support and guidance of Carlow County Council, whose officers provided technical expertise, policy alignment and strategic oversight throughout the process. Their collaboration ensured that the plan aligns with county, regional and national policy objectives while remaining focused on deliverability.

We thank Elected Members for their engagement, advocacy and commitment to Bagenalstown's regeneration and long-term sustainability.

We would also like to acknowledge the valuable contribution of the 3rd year International Business students from the SETU Carlow Campus, who completed the Town Centre Health Check as part of their Business Internship Project in International Business. Their work provided important insights into the performance and challenges of Bagenalstown Town Centre, and the findings have directly informed elements of this Plan. The project offered mutual benefit—strengthening the evidence base for the town while providing students with practical, real-world experience linked to their academic studies. We greatly appreciate their time, effort and professionalism.

Most importantly, we thank the residents, community groups, business owners, young people and stakeholders who participated in workshops, surveys and discussions. Your ideas, concerns and aspirations directly shaped the projects and priorities contained in this plan.

Every contribution, whether large or small, strengthened the quality, relevance and ownership of this plan. This is a community-led vision and its success will be built on the same collective spirit that shaped it.

Produced on behalf of

MUINE BHEAG TOWN TEAM

Rialtas na hÉireann Government of Ireland | Tionscadal Éireann Project Ireland 2040 | An Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe agus Pobail agus Gaeltachta Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht | Ár dTodhchaí Tuaithe Our Rural Future | Comhairle Contae Cheatharlach Carlow County Council

Produced by

ACT

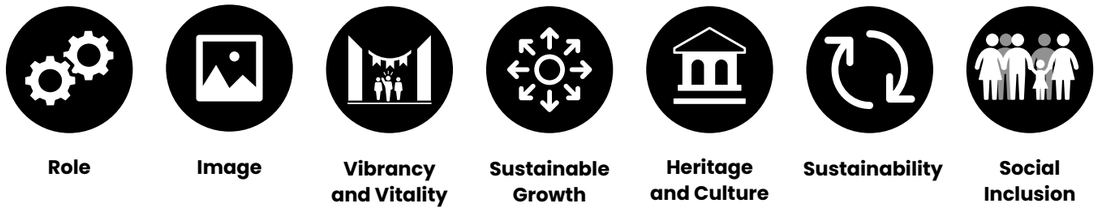
Accelerating Change Together CLG (ACT) is an award winning Social Enterprise of architects, urbanists and policy specialists that was set up to help build a sustainable future. ACT works at accelerating the Green Transition and implementing sustainable development in the natural and built environment. Our goal is to help realise a beautiful and inspiring future for us all.

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Town Centre First Policy Alignment

The Town Centre First Policy establishes core principles that guide the preparation of this plan. These principles are fully embedded within the Bagenalstown strategy and are reflected across all project themes and proposals:



Each project and action within the plan has been tested against these principles to ensure that regeneration supports a compact, inclusive, climate-ready and economically resilient town centre.

The Town Centre First policy recognises that successful places:

- Are characterised by an attractive public realm (streets, spaces and parks) that is designed to invite people to meet, mingle and dwell;
- Contain a variety of services/shops that provide employment opportunities, enable people to shop locally and meet the needs of the local community;
- Provide a range of cultural, recreational and community spaces (that includes scope for periodic events and festivals) that bring together community members and attract visitors/tourists;
- Contain a well maintained building stock that creates visual interest and animates streets and spaces;
- Conserve, adapt and highlight historical buildings and streetscapes that provide the town with a unique identity;
- Are attractive vibrant places for enterprises to grow and develop;
- Are well connected and accessible to sustainable modes of transport, enabling a high proportion of journeys to be made by foot and/or bicycle from the immediate hinterland (e.g. the '10 minute town' concept);
- Manage traffic within central areas so that streets prioritise vulnerable users (pedestrians and cyclists), enabling them to move about safely and in comfort;
- Provide a mix of housing typologies and tenures to cater for diverse communities in terms of age, income and mobility;
- Utilise digital technology to enhance the experience of living and working in towns, enabling greater choices in terms of location and lifestyle;
- Provide opportunities for the amenity, health and well-being of residents, workers and visitors.

Source: Town Centre First Policy

Structure of the Plan

In the TCF Policy, a suggested structure for the document is outlined, and this plan follows that framework. The sections include:

Introduction.

This section provides information about the study area and introduces the project process, explaining how it integrates public consultation and incorporates community feedback.

Understanding the Place (Analysis and Appraisal). This consists of the findings of a desktop study, including geographic context analysis, mobility, amenities, green spaces, a historical overview and a socio-demographic profile of the town. It also integrates community feedback, including a pre-existing SWOT analysis and existing Bagenalstown reports including the "Muine Bheag Town Centre Health Check" as well as the "Muine Bheag Digital Blueprint Survey".

Defining the Place (Objectives and Actions). This chapter outlines future global and local trends influencing the area, explains how the plan fits within the wider policy context and demonstrates how this, together with the previous analysis and appraisal, translates into project themes, objectives and corresponding actions. Based on this work, the main projects and a vision for the town's future role and identity are defined.

Enabling the Place (Proposed Projects). This section compiles the proposed projects. Each project contains a description, ecological considerations (if applicable), community input, recommendations and supporting graphic material and case studies where relevant.

Impact and Implementation. This final chapter sets out the next steps for project delivery, identifies key enablers, estimated timeframes, suggests potential funding sources while demonstrating alignment with policy objectives. A Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) assessment then outlines the broader-scale impact of the plan.

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Town Centre First Plan

Introduction

Introduction

Background

Bagenalstown is a historic market town in County Carlow, located along the River Barrow. Its original town grid was shaped to maximise connectivity with the Barrow Navigation Canal, reflecting the river's central role in trade, movement and daily life.

As economic activity shifted from canal transport to HGV-based road freight, and suburban development patterns emerged, the town gradually expanded away from the river. This weakened the physical and social connection between the town centre and one of its most valuable natural and heritage assets.

According to the 2022 Census, Bagenalstown has a population of approximately 3,000 and continues to function as an important manufacturing and residential centre for its hinterland. However, it faces challenges common to many Irish towns, including vacancy, car dependency, limited town centre living options and underused heritage buildings.

The River Barrow and the now underutilised heritage buildings along it represent one of Bagenalstown's greatest opportunities for regeneration. While central to the town's identity, access to and integration with these assets remain limited. Climate change, flooding risk and biodiversity loss further highlight the need for integrated, place-based responses.

The Town Centre First policy provides the framework for locally driven, evidence-based and community-led regeneration. For Bagenalstown, this plan translates community knowledge, policy alignment and design thinking into a shared long-term vision.

Guided by the Muine Bheag Town Team and supported by Carlow County Council, the plan seeks to reconnect the town with its river, restore the historic relationship between people and place, and establish a clear, realistic and resilient pathway for regeneration.

Delivery will be supported through national funding streams including the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, Rural Regeneration and Development Fund and other Town Centre First aligned programmes.

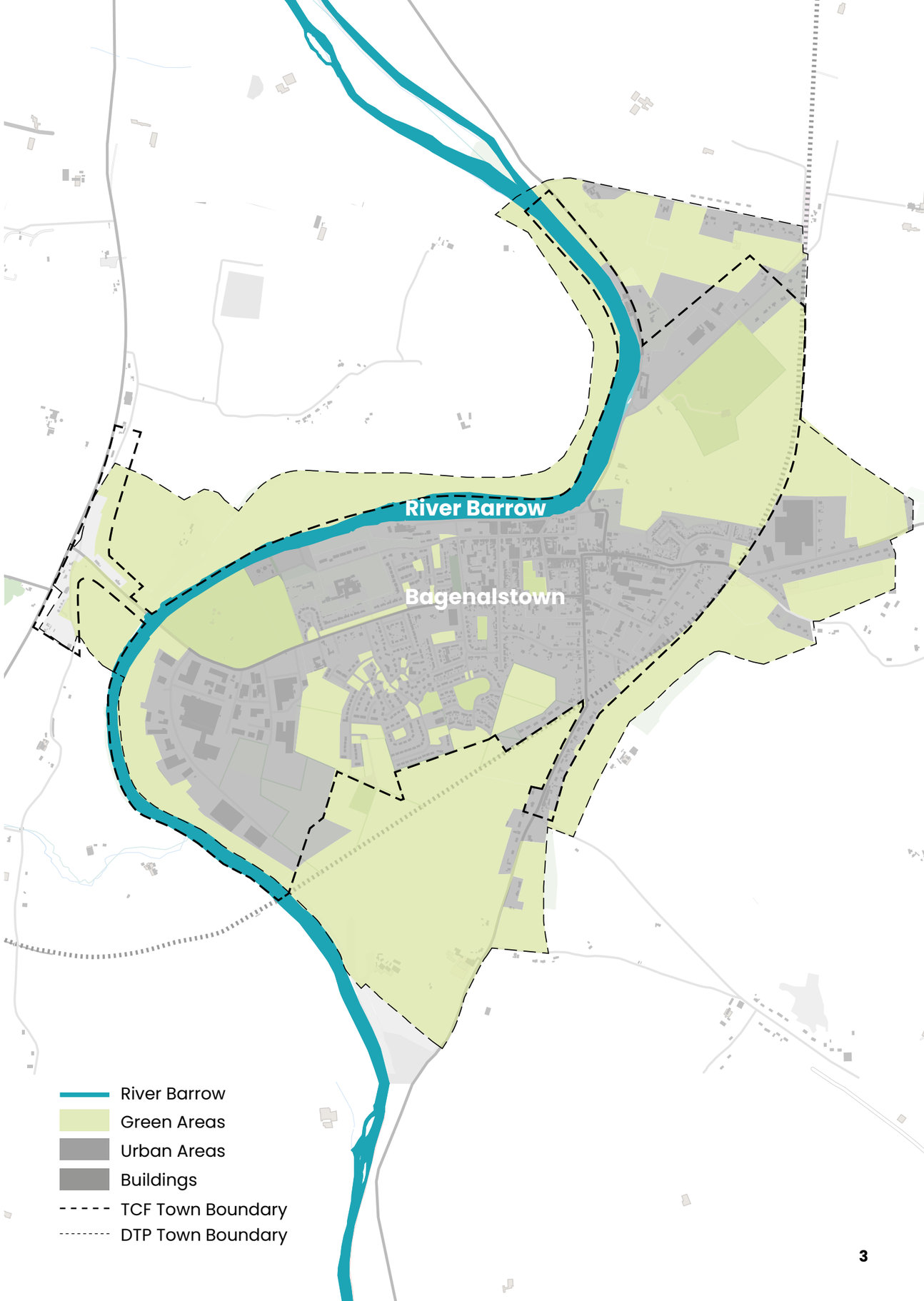
Study Area

The primary focus of this Town Centre First Plan is the Bagenalstown Town Centre as defined under the Town Centre First (TCF) Town Boundary. This boundary forms the core study area for spatial, economic and social analysis.

However the study also takes into account the wider recently passed Bagenalstown 2025 District Town Plan (DTP) Boundary, ensuring alignment between strategic planning, regeneration priorities and future growth.

All proposals have therefore been developed with an understanding of both boundaries, allowing the plan to respond realistically to how Bagenalstown functions as a place while remaining compliant with Town Centre First policy requirements.

The final study areas are illustrated on the accompanying map.



Project Process

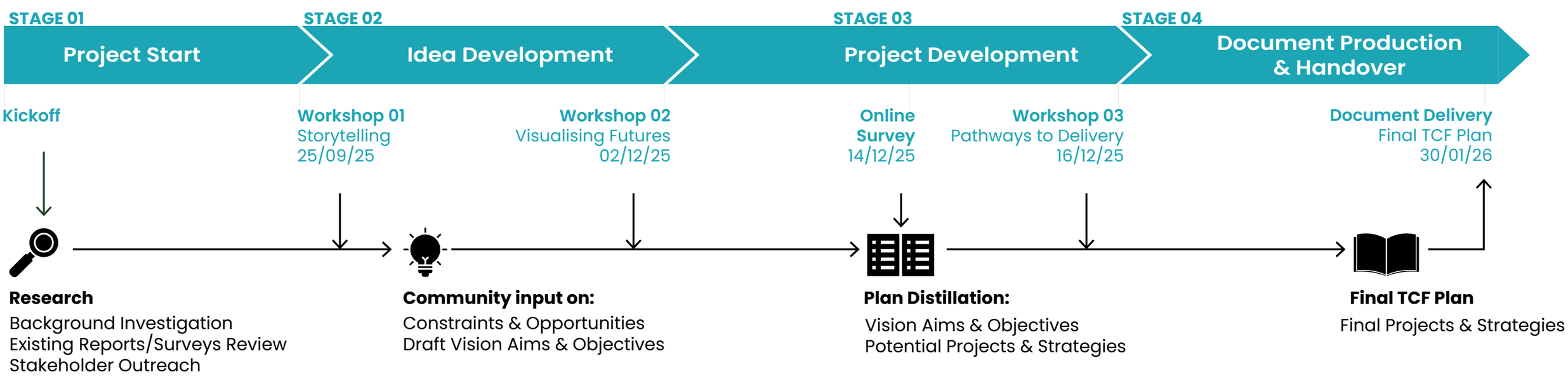
As the Town Centre First (TCF) policy workflow closely aligns with ACT's standard co-design project methodology, the two were integrated seamlessly into a single, holistic process. A comprehensive framework for project development is outlined in the diagram below.

Stage 01 begins with **Workshop 01 – Storytelling**, . This workshop with the Town Team establishes shared goals, scope and key strategies, while gathering insights on the most critical issues to analyse. It also consolidates information from multiple sources to build a holistic understanding of the town—its strengths, constraints and opportunities—drawing on the lived experience of those who know the place best: the local community. This stage forms the core of the Understanding the Place component of the plan and directly informs subsequent recommendations and design decisions.

Stage 02 focuses on idea development, during which the main objectives and potential actions are defined to shape a coherent vision for the town. Here, ideas from the first workshop are combined with insights from the Design Team. This stage concludes with **Workshop 02 – Visualising Futures**, where proposed actions are discussed, refined and evaluated with input from the community. Variety is central to this stage, allowing for the exploration of a wide range of ideas to determine which are most beneficial. This stage establishes the Defining the Place component of the plan and lays the groundwork for the next stage.

Stage 03 is the programme development phase, where ambitions established earlier are confirmed and proposals are refined based on feedback from the community, public bodies and specialists. This culminates in **Workshop 03 – Pathways to Delivery**, where shaped proposals are reviewed in terms of implementation, viability and next steps. This phase represents the Enabling the Place component of the plan.

Stage 04 integrates all of the above into the **final Town Centre First Plan**. Together, these stages form a comprehensive framework that integrates diverse perspectives and maximises the potential for well-informed, effective outcomes for Bagenalstown.



Engagement and Co-Design Process

In developing a co-designed and shared vision for this Town Centre First Plan, public engagement was critical.

Over the course of the public workshop events, public surveys and town team engagement sessions feedback was gathered on all aspects as the plan developed from local challenges and opportunities, to aspirations for the town's role and identity, to final project proposals.

The process actively involved the public and town team in the design of projects. Draft ideas were shared through visually engaging and easy to understand presentations, allowing workshop and engagement session participants to directly inform and shape the proposed outcomes. Recognising that local groups hold valuable knowledge of the town's finer details, their insights helped develop a plan that is reflective of their needs and unique to the town.

A community-informed perspective also guided the identification of relevant stakeholders and potential constraints to implementation.

Engagements where advertised locally throughout the town as well as online with the aim of gaining a broad and diverse range of insights, making the plan truly reflective of the hopes of the Bagenalstown community.

Across the overall process, engagement included over 76 in-person public workshop participants and 110 online survey responses, generating more than 500 individual comments.



Base Research at Project Start

STAGE 01 — Project Start

STAGE 02 — Idea Development

STAGE 03 — Project Development

STAGE 04 — Document Production & Handover

In-Person Engagement

Carlow CC
Initial Information Session
23/04/24



Workshop
SWOT & Ideas
Drop in Event
14/11/24
General Public



Engagement Session
Storytelling
25/09/25
Town Team



Workshop
Visualising Futures
02/12/25
General Public



Engagement Session
Pathways to Delivery
16/12/25
Town Team



Dccument Delivery
Final Bagenalstown TCF Plan
30/01/26

Online Engagement

Online Survey
SWOT & Ideas
19/12/24- 19/01/25
General Public



Online Survey
Visualising Future
Video Presentation
02-14/12/25



[Online Video Link]









PUBLIC SURVEY

MUINE BHEAG TOWN CENTRE FIRST PLAN

WE INVITE YOU TO SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON MUINE BHEAG AND LET US KNOW WHAT IMPROVEMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE TAKING PLACE

Submissions can be made via our online portal https://consult.carlow.ie (under the Survey tab) from 9 a.m. on Friday 20th December 2024 to midnight on Sunday 19th January 2025





BAGENALSTOWN (MUINE BHEAG)

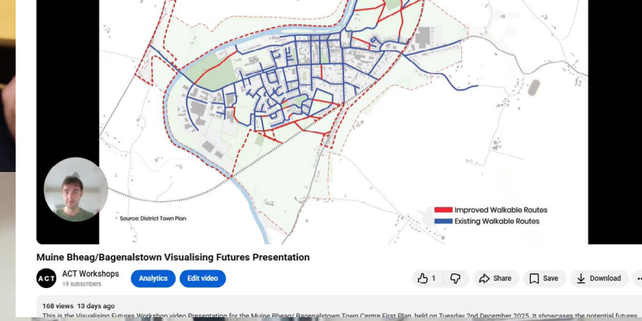
UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK 2025

SETU Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta an Oirdheiscirt South East Technological University

Comhairle Contae Cheatharlach Carlow County Council

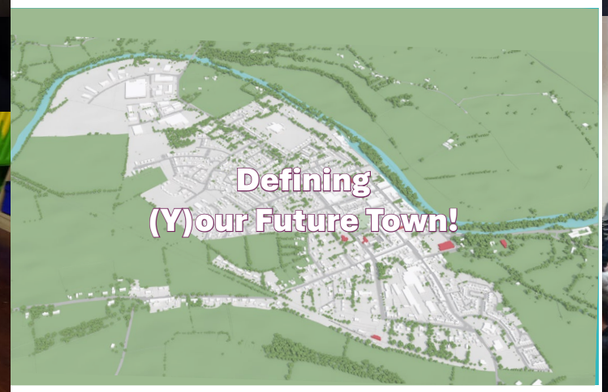
Lár Baile ar dTús Town Centre First

Ár dTodhchaí Tuaithe Our Rural Future





Muine Bheag / Bagenalstown Town Centre First Plan



WORKSHOP EVENT
Tuesday, 2nd December - 6pm - 8pm

Our Lady Queen of the Universe School, Muine Bheag, R21T280

HAVE YOUR SAY IN THE FUTURE OF BAGENALSTOWN!

Join us for a Public Workshop to help shape the Town Centre First Plan for Bagenalstown.

This is your opportunity to share ideas, give feedback and help define a shared vision for the future of your town. Whether you're a resident, business owner, part of a local group or simply interested in the process, your voice matters.

Get involved in shaping the heart of your community.

The plan is being delivered by social enterprise **A C T** on behalf of Muine Bheag Town Team in collaboration with Carlow County Council and a wide range of local stakeholders.

A C T (Accelerating Change Together CLG) is an award winning regenerative design-led social enterprise that works with communities and local authorities to deliver sustainable, practical and people-focused projects. Our team combines architecture, urbanism and sustainability expertise to support towns across Ireland in shaping resilient and inclusive futures.

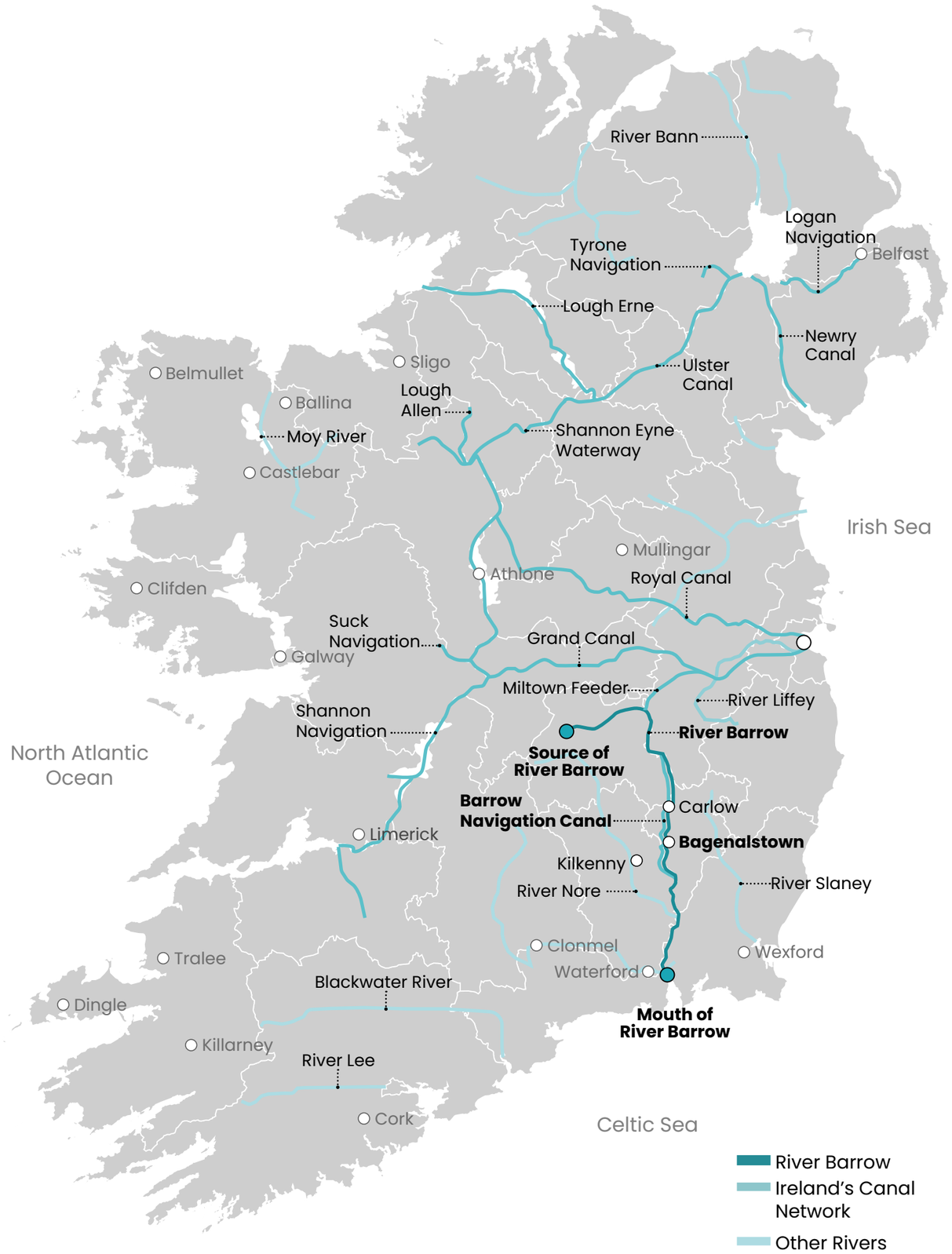
Comhairle Contae Cheatharlach Carlow County Council · MUINE BHEAG TOWN TEAM · An Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe agus Pobail agus Gaeltachta Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht · Lár Baile ar dTús Town Centre First · ACT





Analysis & Appraisal

Understanding Bagenalstown



Context Analysis

The River Barrow & The Barrow Navigation Canal

Bagenalstown is located along the River Barrow, one of Ireland's most significant inland waterways. The river historically formed the backbone of the town's economic, social and spatial development through its role as the Barrow Navigation Canal, supporting milling, trade and industrial activity.

While the River Barrow continues to define the town's identity and landscape setting, its relationship with the everyday life of the town has weakened over time. Much of the river corridor, including several historic mill and industrial buildings, are now derelict and visually disconnected from the town centre.

Nevertheless, the river remains one of Bagenalstown's greatest strategic assets. Its ecological value, heritage character and recreational potential present a unique opportunity to support town centre regeneration, regional tourism, climate resilience, biodiversity enhancement and wellbeing through a more integrated relationship between the town and its river.



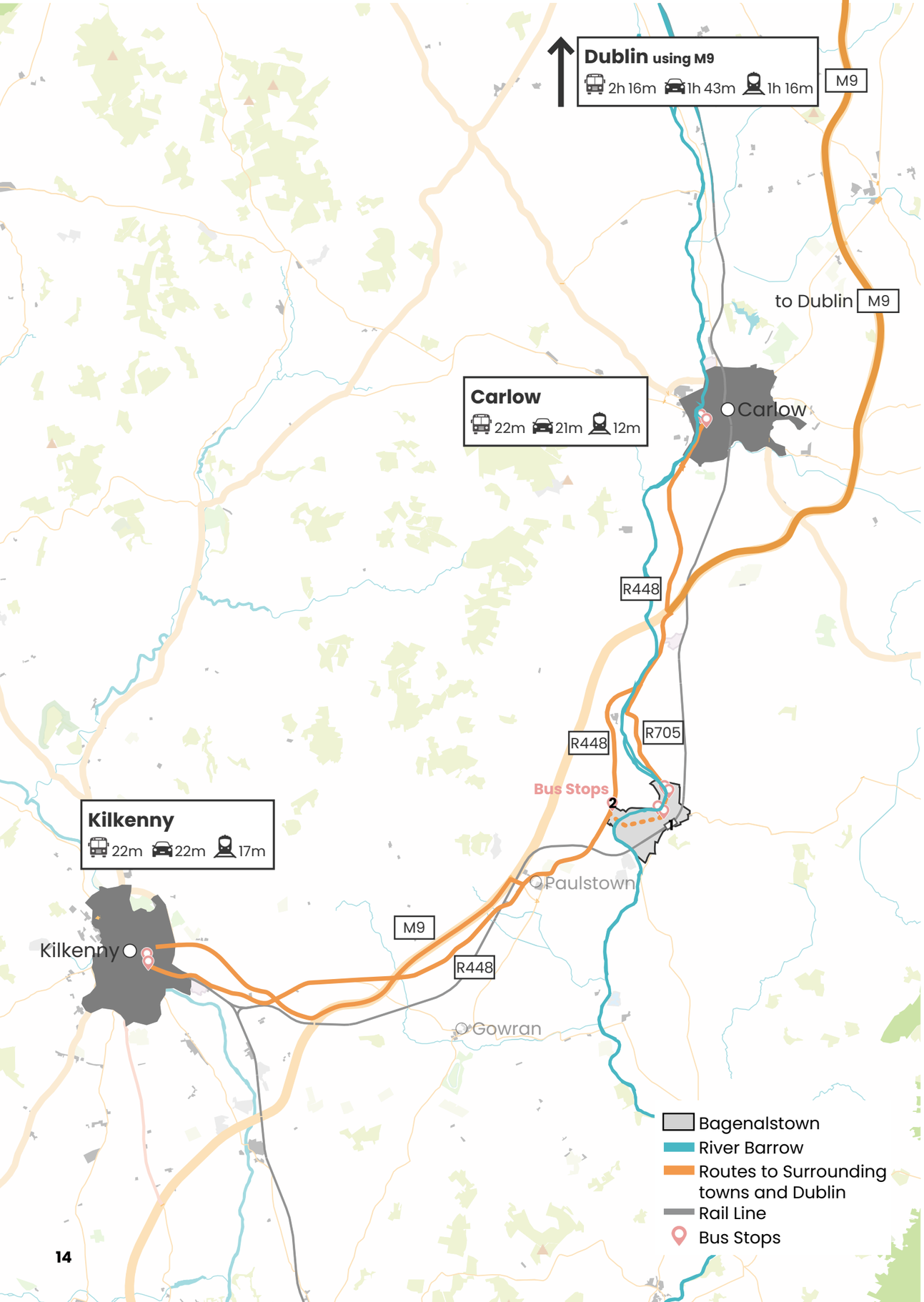
19th Century Barrow Navigation Canal



Waterford Estuary (Mouth of River Barrow)



The Barrow Navigation Canal Today



Connections

Historically, Bagenalstown was well connected through the Barrow Navigation Canal and later through the arrival of the railway, reinforcing its regional importance. Today, the town benefits from strong rail and road connectivity, with direct rail links to Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford and Dublin. Notably, Dublin is almost 30 minutes quicker to reach by train than by road, offering significant potential for sustainable commuting and remote working lifestyles.

The Barrow Way further enhances regional connectivity, forming part of a growing network of greenways and recreational routes along the river corridor. This provides opportunities to strengthen Bagenalstown's role as a river-based destination within the wider Barrow Blueway network.

Despite these advantages, internal permeability within the town remains constrained, particularly between the town centre, the river corridor and surrounding residential areas. Improving these connections is a key opportunity for Town Centre First regeneration.



Bagenalstown Train Station (1)



Train Ticketing Machine



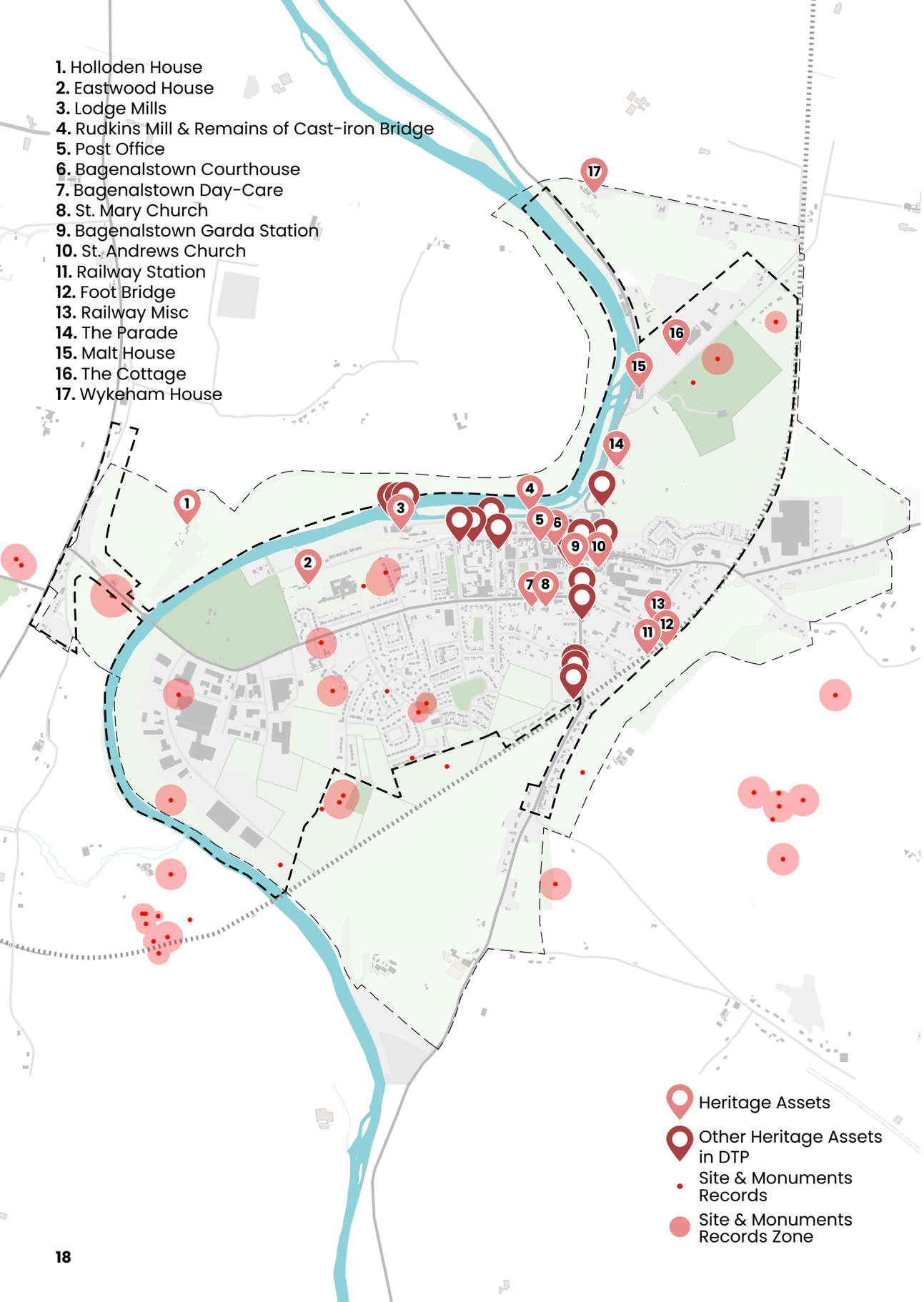
Bus Stop (2)



Motorway 9 (M9)



Market Square, Bagenalstown 19th Century



History

In the 8th century, Saint Lappan is reputed to have founded a monastic school outside present day Bagenalstown in the townland of Donore. However, the Bagenalstown we recognise today was formally established in the 18th century by Lord Walter Bagenal, who envisioned a planned river town inspired by Versailles. Central to this vision was the Barrow Navigation Canal, with the town's grid deliberately aligned so that streets connected directly to the river, reinforcing its economic, social and civic importance.

The Courthouse remains the most symbolic expression of this relationship, uniquely orientated toward the canal rather than the street. The arrival of the railway in the mid-19th century enabled further expansion and strengthened Bagenalstown's role as a regional market and industrial town.

Bagenalstown is a small town with a big history. Its milling heritage, canal infrastructure, railway architecture and civic buildings together form a layered historic environment of regional significance. Today, many of these assets are underutilised, presenting a clear opportunity for heritage-led regeneration to act as a core driver of future development.



Lodge Mills (3)



Footbridge (12)



Courthouse (6)



Bagenalstown Garda Station (9)



Malt House (15)



Wykeham House (17)

Online Image & Digital Readiness

Although not scientific, an online image search provides useful insight into the external perception of a town. Searches for “Muine Bheag” and “Bagenalstown” predominantly return imagery of the railway station, the River Barrow, historic mills, bridges and civic architecture. These themes reflect a strong association with heritage, infrastructure and landscape.

This perception is reinforced by findings in the 2024 Digital Town Blueprint (see appendix), which records that 86% of businesses in Bagenalstown have some form of online presence, with 35% demonstrating medium to high levels of digital sophistication, and 66% of websites linked to active social media platforms.Bagenalstown had an overall digital readiness score of 48.5%, scoring relatively well on Infrastructure, but poorly on Digital Business, Digital Civil Society and Digital Tourism (such as availability of information, training and services online), highlighting key opportunities for improvements.

Together, these indicators support the opportunity to position Bagenalstown as a heritage-led, digitally enabled riverside town.

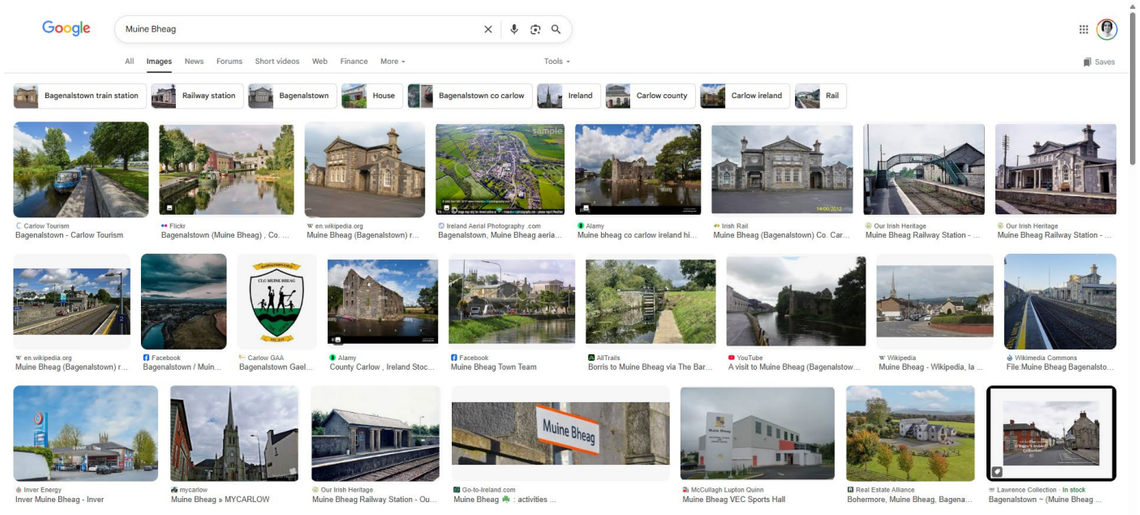
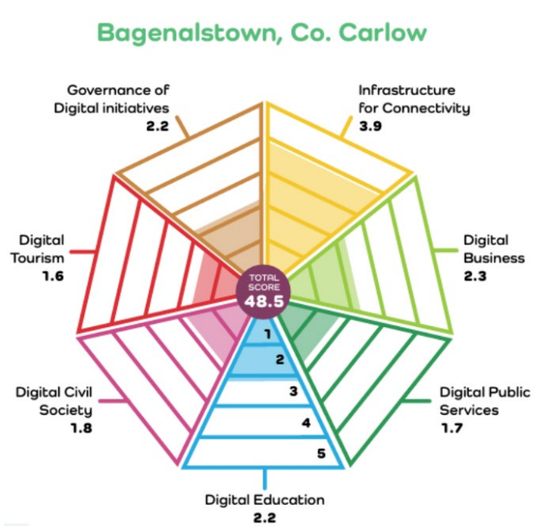


Image search engine results for “Muine Bheag”



Bagenalstown Digital Town Blueprint Scoring

The Approaches

Approaching Bagenalstown from the Carlow side, the town reveals itself at the ‘Aldi Triangle’, framed by views of the River Barrow, the canal, surrounding greenery and historic buildings. This approach offers a strong and picturesque sense of arrival, immediately establishing the town’s relationship with its river setting.

From the south and east, the town is characterised by traditional Carlow stone boundary walls, locally known as “Carlow fences.” These distinctive features form part of the town’s cultural identity and are even celebrated in local song by Richie Kavanagh, reinforcing their place in local memory and character.

The western approach unfolds in two distinct stages. It begins at the busy Royal Oak junction before crossing the River Barrow bridge and entering the town. This route passes the former Fair Oaks Foods factory site, now cleared, followed by the expanding industrial park. Together, these elements reflect both the town’s industrial heritage and its evolving economic role, while also highlighting the need for a more coherent and welcoming western gateway into the town.



North Entrance



East Entrance



South Entrance



West Entrance



West Entrance

River Barrow

Bagenalstown

SAC Zone
River Barrow
Green Areas
Urban Areas
Buildings
TCF Town Boundary
DTP Town Boundary
1/1000 Flood Chance
1/100 Flood Chance

Natural Assets

The River Barrow is one of Ireland's most important wildlife corridors. Designated as a Special Area of Conservation, it supports high-value habitats and species including Otter, Salmon and the endangered Freshwater Pearl Mussel. The river corridor includes complex riparian woodlands, calcareous springs and downstream estuarine habitats supporting migratory birds.

At Bagenalstown, the river connects Ireland's heartlands and uplands to the sea. This unique ecological position, combined with its accessibility, provides a major opportunity to enhance nature-based recreation, education, tourism and biodiversity protection while strengthening climate resilience.



Salmon (credit: biodiversity.ie)



Otter (credit: biodiversity.ie)



Grey Wagtail (credit: Allta Ecology)



Riverside Woodland (credit: Allta Ecology)

Bagenalstown in Bloom (Image Credit: Margaret Walsh)

Socio-Demographic Profile

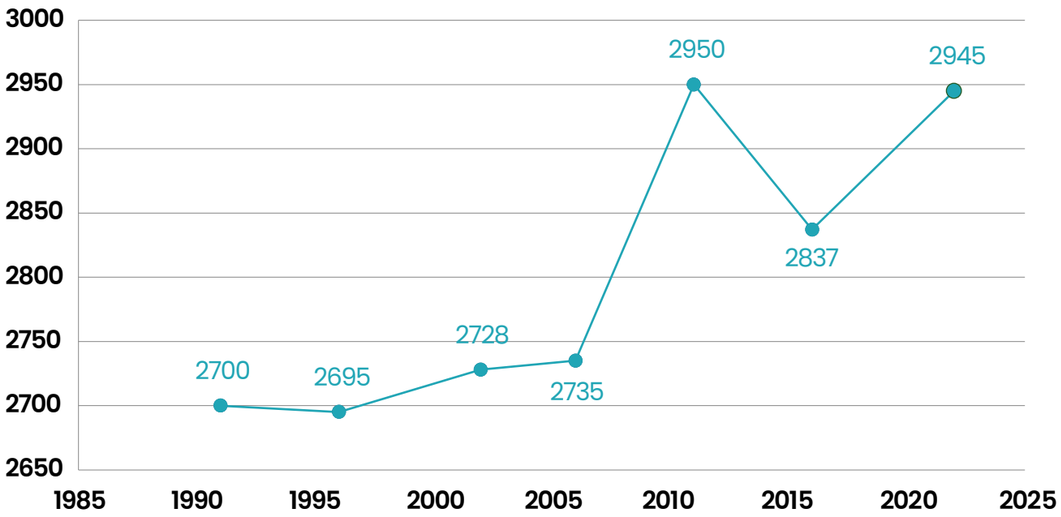
Population

Census 2022 records a population of 2,945 in Bagenalstown. Historical records from the 1840s show a much smaller settlement, with gradual growth linked to canal trade, railway arrival and later industrial development. Population growth accelerated during the late 20th century and Celtic Tiger period, driven by suburban housing expansion.

Growth between 2016 and 2022 was modest at approximately 3.6%, below both county and national averages. However, several large residentially zoned lands within the town boundary indicate significant future growth potential, particularly now that wastewater infrastructure constraints have been resolved.

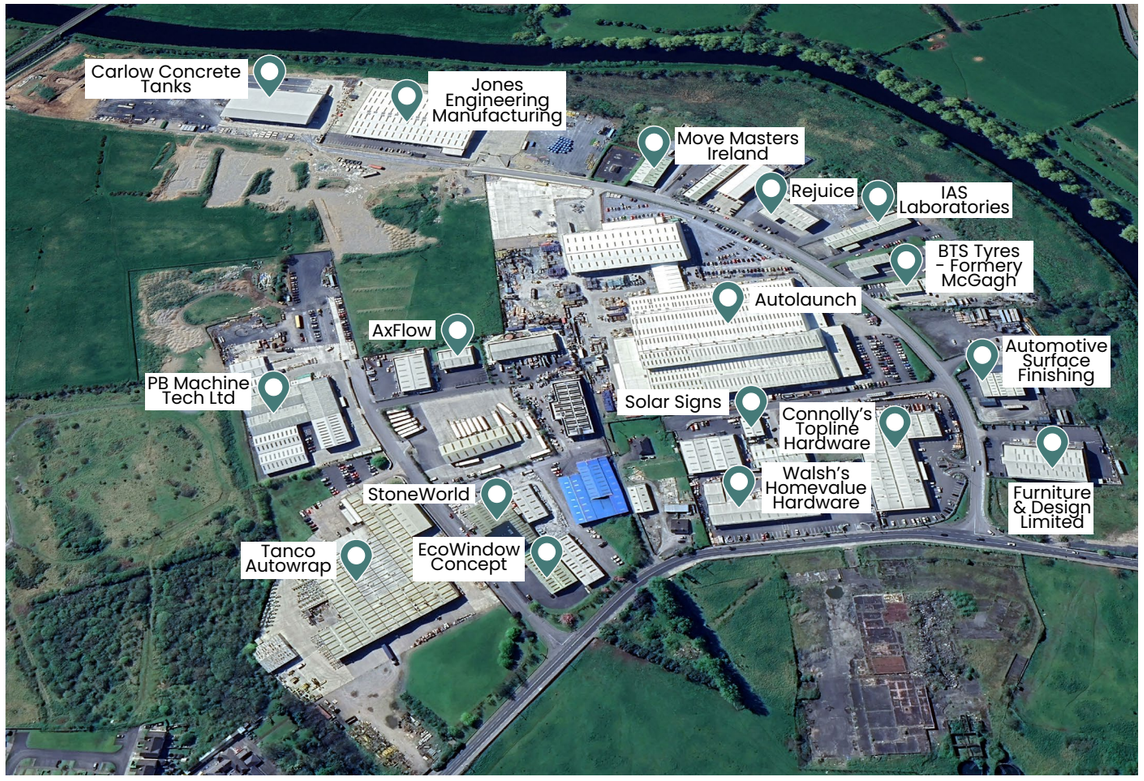
The age profile shows a strong working-age cohort, a growing older population, and a decline in younger adults aged 20–34, reflecting national rural trends. This highlights the importance of housing choice, employment opportunities and town centre living in retaining younger residents.

Commuting patterns show that more than half of residents travel outside the town for work, although remote and hybrid working trends are increasing. Importantly, Bagenalstown's industrial base means approximately 20% of residents work in manufacturing — almost twice the national average — reflecting the strength of the town's employment role.



Graphic illustrating population growth since 1991

source:CSO



Royal Oak Industrial Estate



Commuter Parking at Bagenalstown Train Station



Bagenalstown Outdoor Swimming Pool

Town Amenities, Services and Work Spaces

Bagenalstown is a relatively compact town. All town centre functions are accessible within a 10-minute walk, and the wider town within a 10-minute cycle. This offers strong foundations for a walkable, low-carbon town model.

The town benefits from a significant manufacturing employment base, concentrated in the western Bagenalstown Industrial Park and additional employment lands east of the town centre. These areas attract a disproportionately high number of commuters relative to the town's population, reinforcing Bagenalstown's regional employment role.

Town centre services are present but limited in diversity. Vacancy levels remain notable, with a retail vacancy rate of approximately 12.7% according to the most recent Town Centre Health Check (see appendix). This affects footfall, vitality and perception of the core.

McGrath Park is a key recreational asset providing high-quality sports and community facilities for all ages. It supports local clubs, promotes health and wellbeing and offers accessible, well-maintained spaces for both organised sport and informal recreation. As an important community hub, the park plays a vital role in supporting active living and enhancing the town's overall amenity.

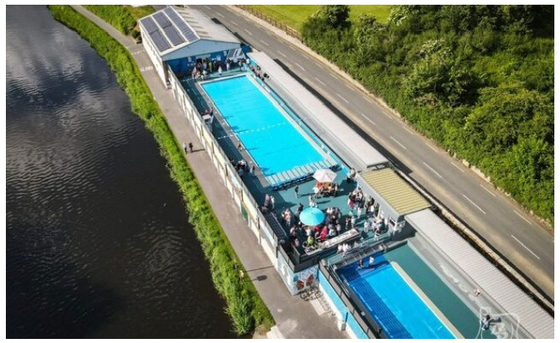
A unique seasonal asset is the outdoor swimming pool along the river, which provides a distinctive recreational attraction and reinforces the town's river-based identity. This facility demonstrates the potential of the river corridor as a driver of activity, wellbeing and place identity.



The Fairgreen



Supermarket

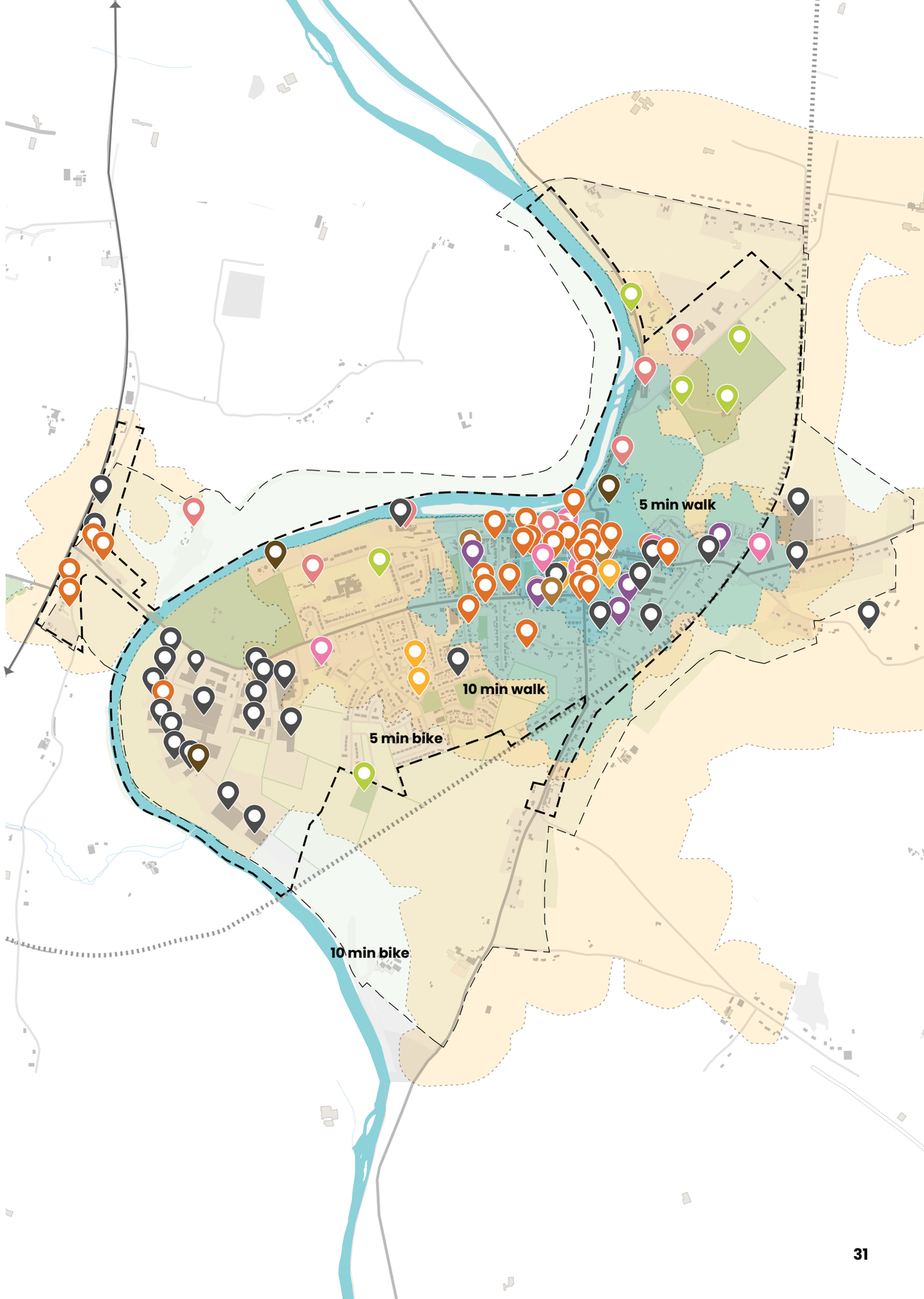


Seasonal Outdoor Pool



Pharmacy

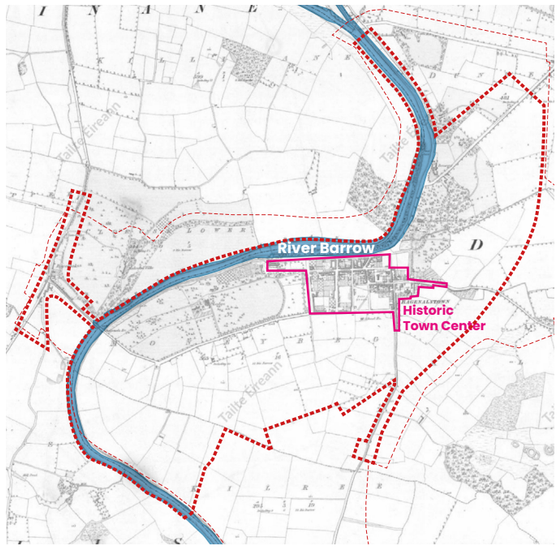
- Service Plants
- Manufacturers
- Health Facilities
- Schools
- Churches
- Leisure, Restaurants & Cafes
- Sports Centres
- Community Centres
- Heritage Buildings
- 5 min Walk
- 10 min Walk
- 5 min Bike
- 10 min Bike
- TCF Town Boundary
- DTP Town Boundary



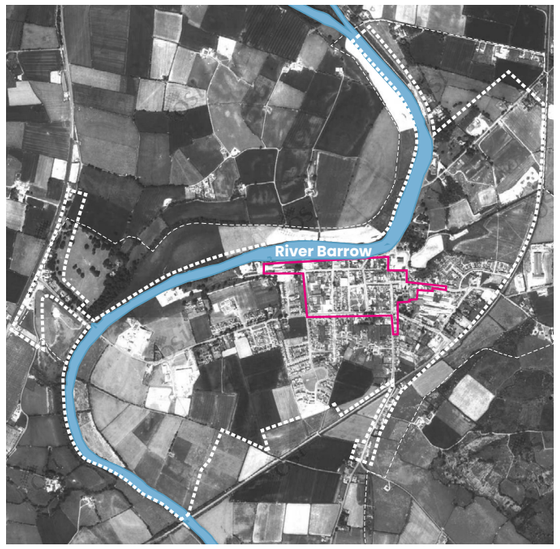
Recent Growth and Urban Form

Bagenalstown was originally a planned river town based on a formal grid layout inspired by Versailles. Connectivity to the River Barrow was fundamental, with streets designed to lead directly toward the canal and river edge, reinforcing trade, movement and civic identity. With the arrival of the railway and later the private car, growth shifted both physically and psychologically away from the river. Suburban housing estates expanded outward from the historic core, reducing permeability and reinforcing car dependency.

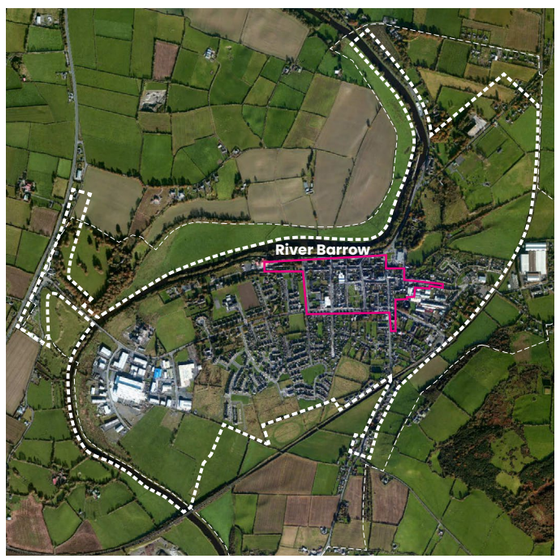
Today, the majority of the town's urban footprint consists of low-density suburban development, while key riverfront and backland areas within the historic core remain underused. This has weakened the spatial coherence of the town and diluted the original relationship between town, grid and river. The Town Centre First Plan seeks to reverse this pattern by re-centring growth, activity and identity around the historic core and river corridor, using compact growth, reuse, permeability and heritage-led regeneration as primary spatial principles.



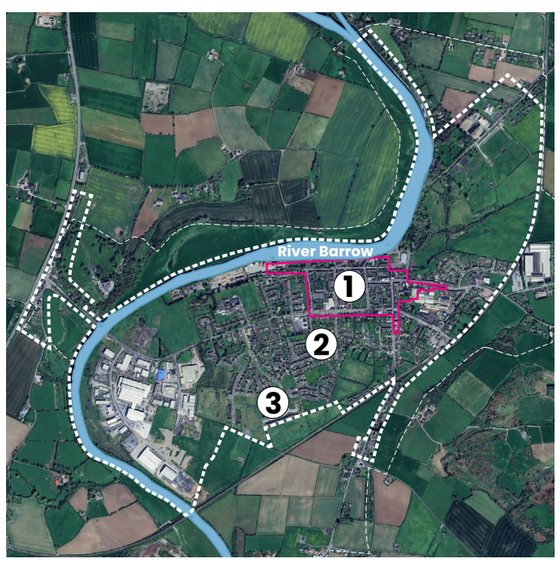
1829 -1842



1995



2013



2023



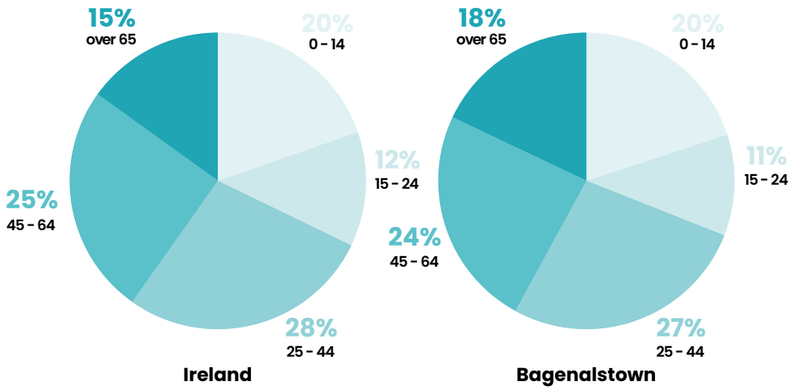
Grid Planned Historic Area (1)



Semi Urban Area (2)

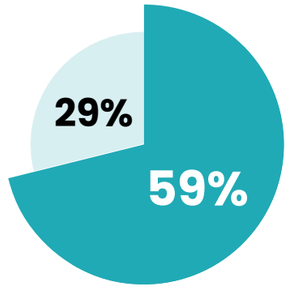


Suburban Area (3)



The working population is slightly greater than the state.

source: CSO

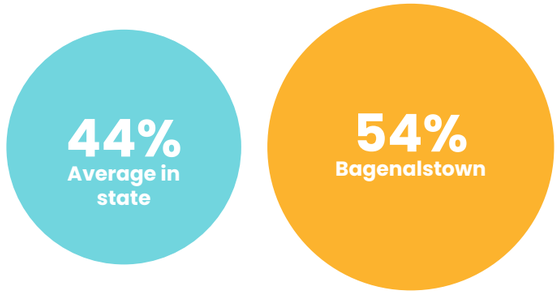


29% of the population live alone.

source: CSO

54% of the population work out of town

source:



source: CSO





active travel & public transport commuters 39% vs 55% car commuters



The town scores less than half on digital readiness.

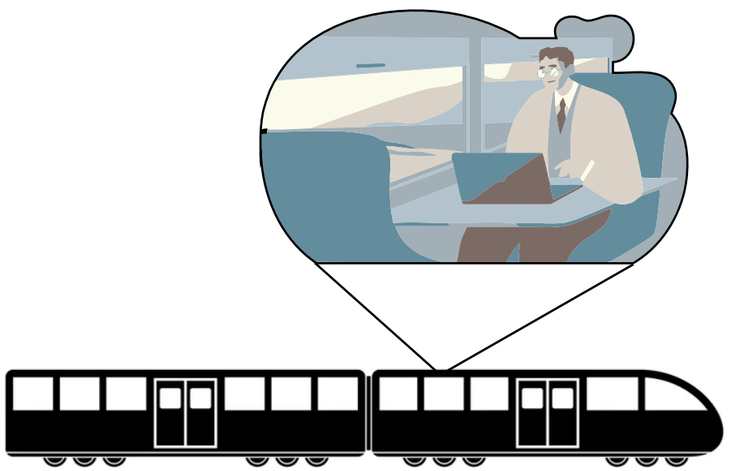
source: Digital Town Blueprint

Dublin

1 hr **16** min **via Train**

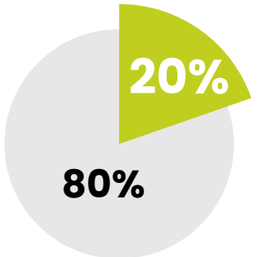
1 hr **43** min **by Car**

source: google maps

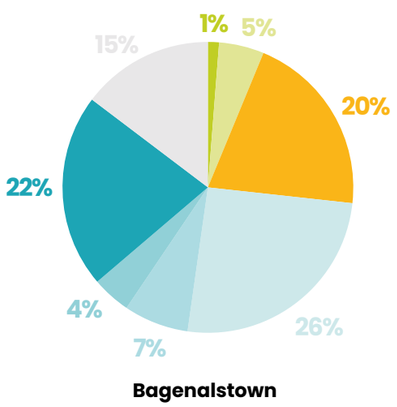


20% of green space within the town boundary.

source: Tailte Éireann







20% work in Manufacturing as compared to 10% in the state.

source: CSO

An Bad Keppel

Vacancy & Dereliction

Like many Irish towns, Bagenalstown is experiencing the impacts of changing living, working and shopping patterns, which have contributed to increasing levels of vacancy and dereliction within the historic core. While recent interventions such as decorative hoarding and façade treatments have helped to soften the visual impact in some locations, these measures remain largely cosmetic.

Although the Town Centre Health Check records a retail vacancy rate of 12.7%, a visual assessment of the town centre and adjoining river corridor indicates a significantly higher level of vacancy and dereliction when residential and heritage buildings are also considered. This broader pattern of underuse was also strongly reflected in the initial SWOT analysis (see appendix) undertaken by Carlow County Council.

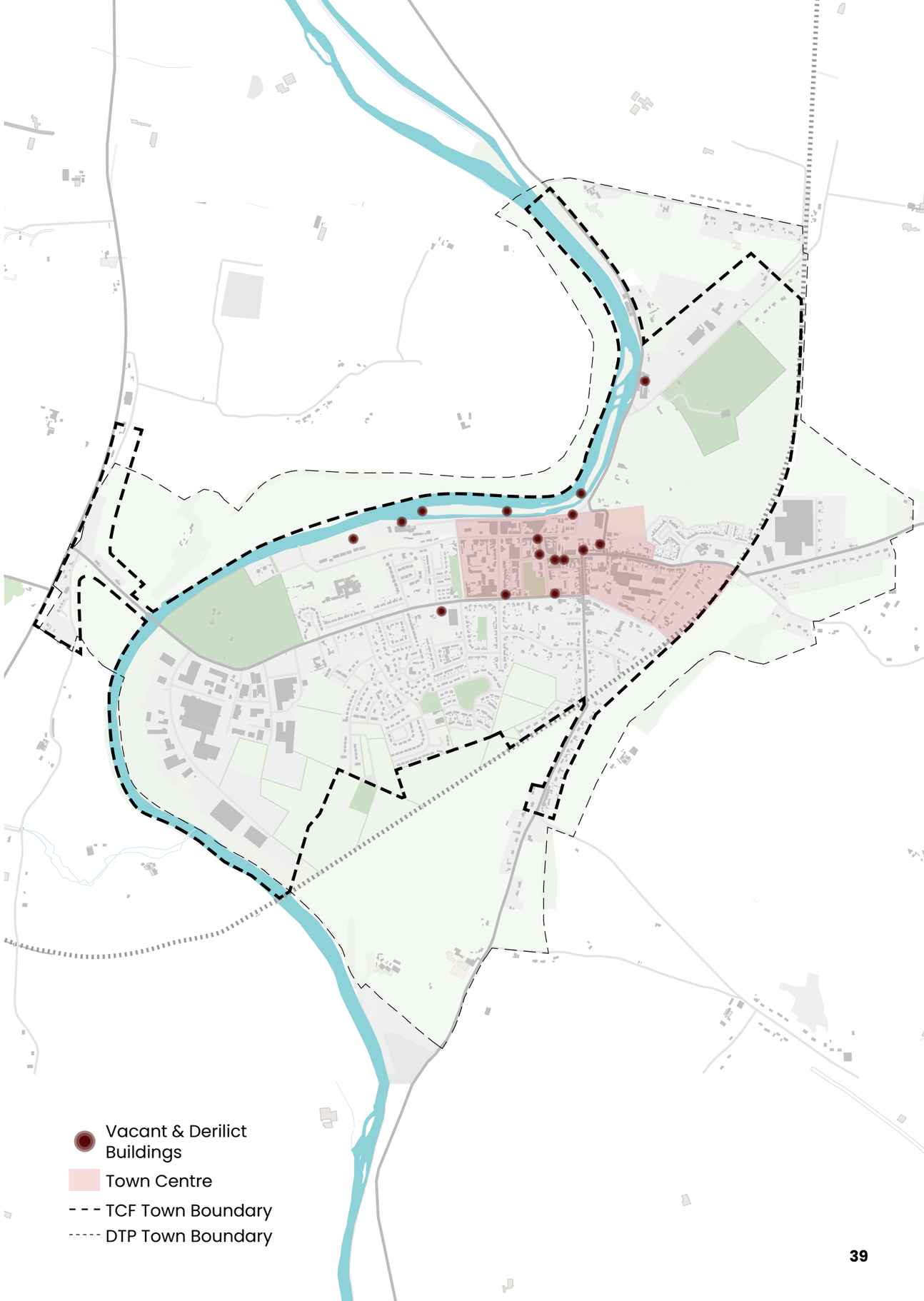
Together, these findings highlight the need for a more coordinated, long-term and strategic approach to addressing vacancy, reusing underutilised heritage assets, and restoring confidence in town centre living and investment.



Lodge Mills along the River



Retail & Residential Vacancy along High Street



Rudkin’s Mill

The Barrow Way

The Barrow Way offers a highly attractive riverside experience, with long views across the Barrow Navigation Canal and River Barrow, enriched by the sensory qualities of water, wildlife and landscape. From the Outdoor Swimming Pool to Rea's Lough, the route provides reasonable to good quality access and a strong sense of place. Beyond this point, however, deteriorating ground conditions — particularly the sodden riverbank — significantly restrict accessibility, preventing use by cyclists, wheelchair users and prams, and limiting the route's inclusivity and everyday usability.

Along this stretch, several additional challenges were identified. A number of architecturally significant historic mill buildings remain derelict and visually disconnected from the route. Bridge connections are not accessible for cyclists. Dog fouling, graffiti and long, uninviting boundary walls further diminish the quality of the experience. Access to the Middle Bank at Rea's Lough is also restricted, reducing permeability and public engagement with the middlebank.

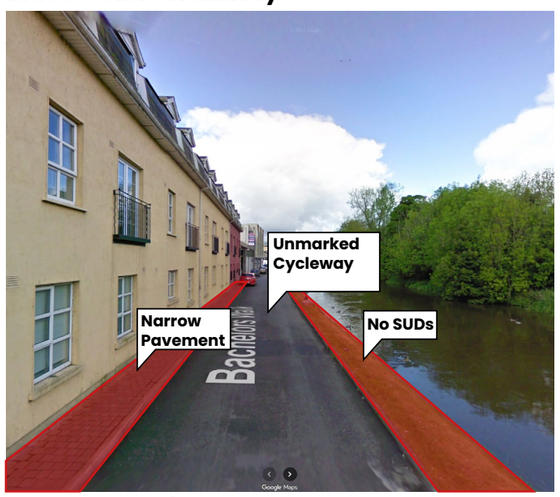
Despite these issues, the Barrow Way holds exceptional potential. With targeted investment in inclusive access, surface upgrades, heritage building activation, bridge improvements and public realm enhancements, the route could become a defining recreational, ecological and cultural spine for Bagenalstown, reconnecting the town with its river and reinforcing its identity as a riverside town.



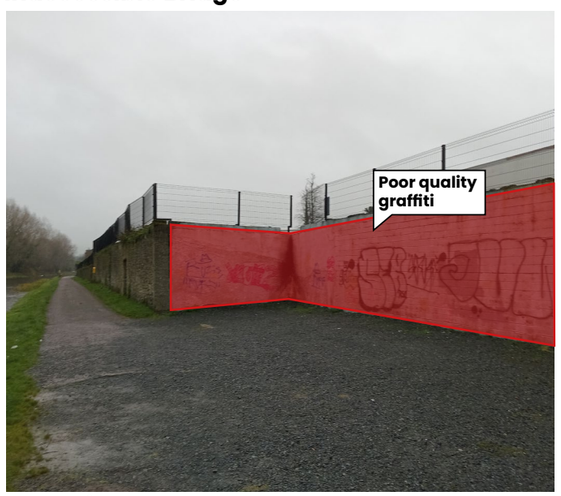
Inaccessible Walkway



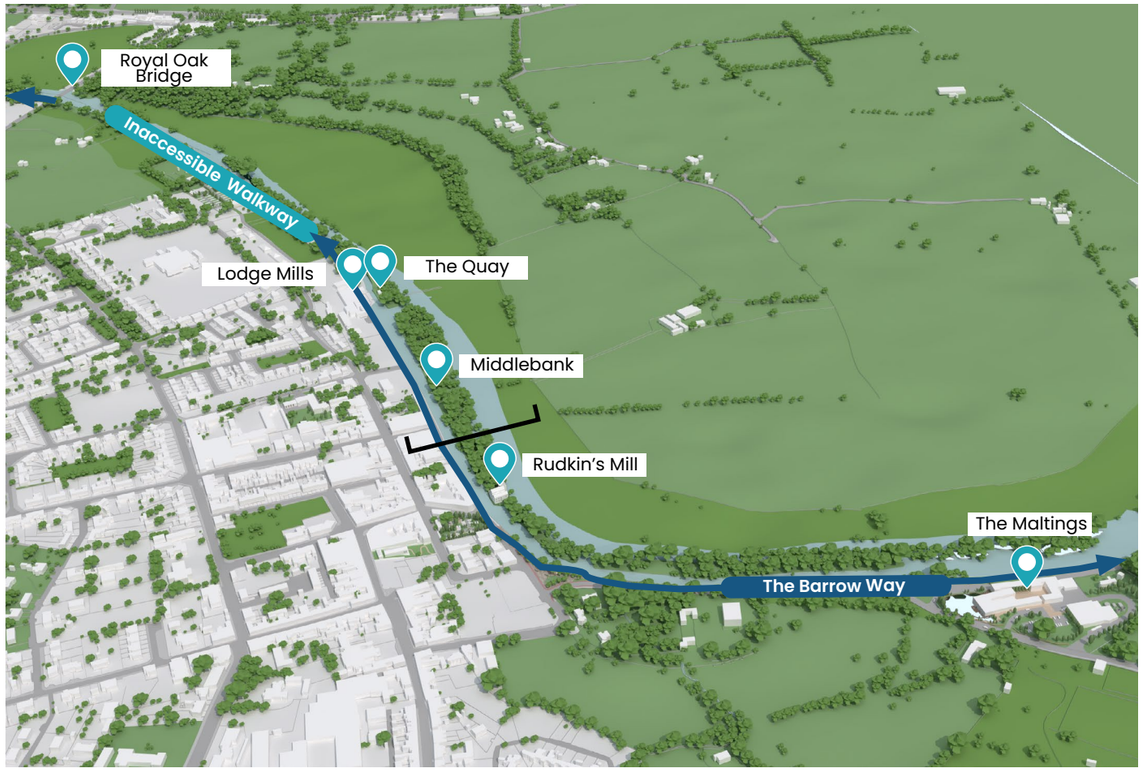
Inaccessible Bridge



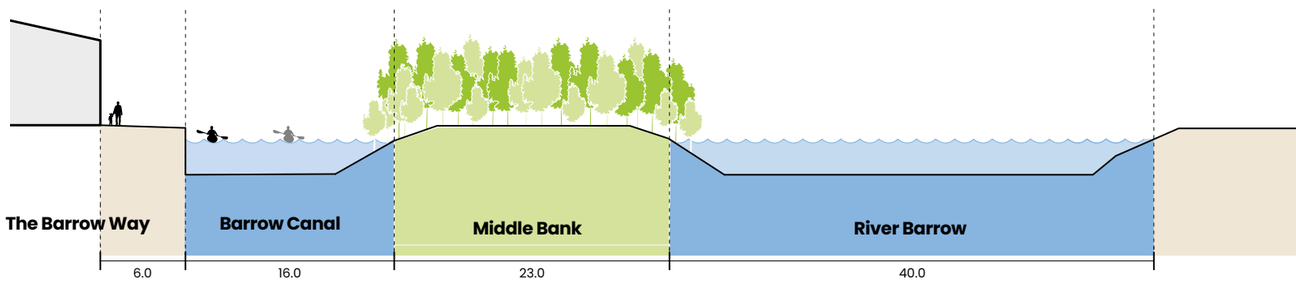
Poor Water Edge



Potential Canvases



The Barrow Way



The Barrow Way


STOP
stratticus
branding - creative - digital

Market Square Before & After the 2025 Public Realm Enhancement Works

Town Centre Parking

Like many Irish towns, Bagenalstown's town centre is experiencing the impacts of changing living patterns, high levels of private car ownership, increasing vehicle sizes and a growing tendency toward short, car-based journeys. Together, these trends place pressure on street space, footpaths, accessibility and the overall quality of the town centre environment.

Workshop feedback from both residents and traders highlighted a strong desire to improve the car parking experience in the town centre through a more proactive and coordinated parking strategy for Bagenalstown.

Participants identified the preparation of a comprehensive parking space audit as a vital first step. More effective use of existing parking resources would benefit both employees and shoppers, while also supporting a more accessible and inclusive town centre with improved conditions for active travel.

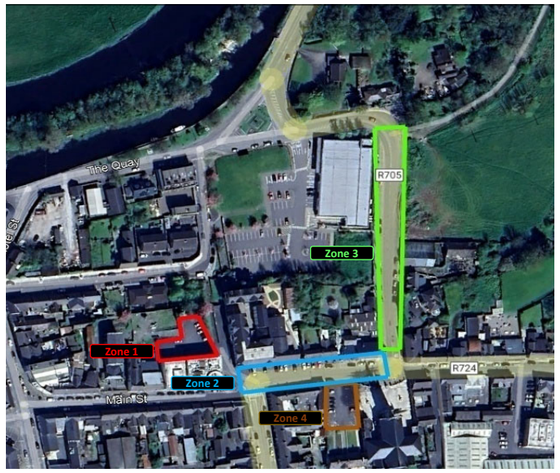
Carlow County Council has already undertaken a Parking Survey of 4 specific zones (see appendix) and an accessibility audit of the town centre. These findings provide a strong evidence base that can inform the development of a dedicated Bagenalstown Parking Plan, which is identified as a key proposed project in the enabling Bagnelstown section of this report.



Public Car Park - Street



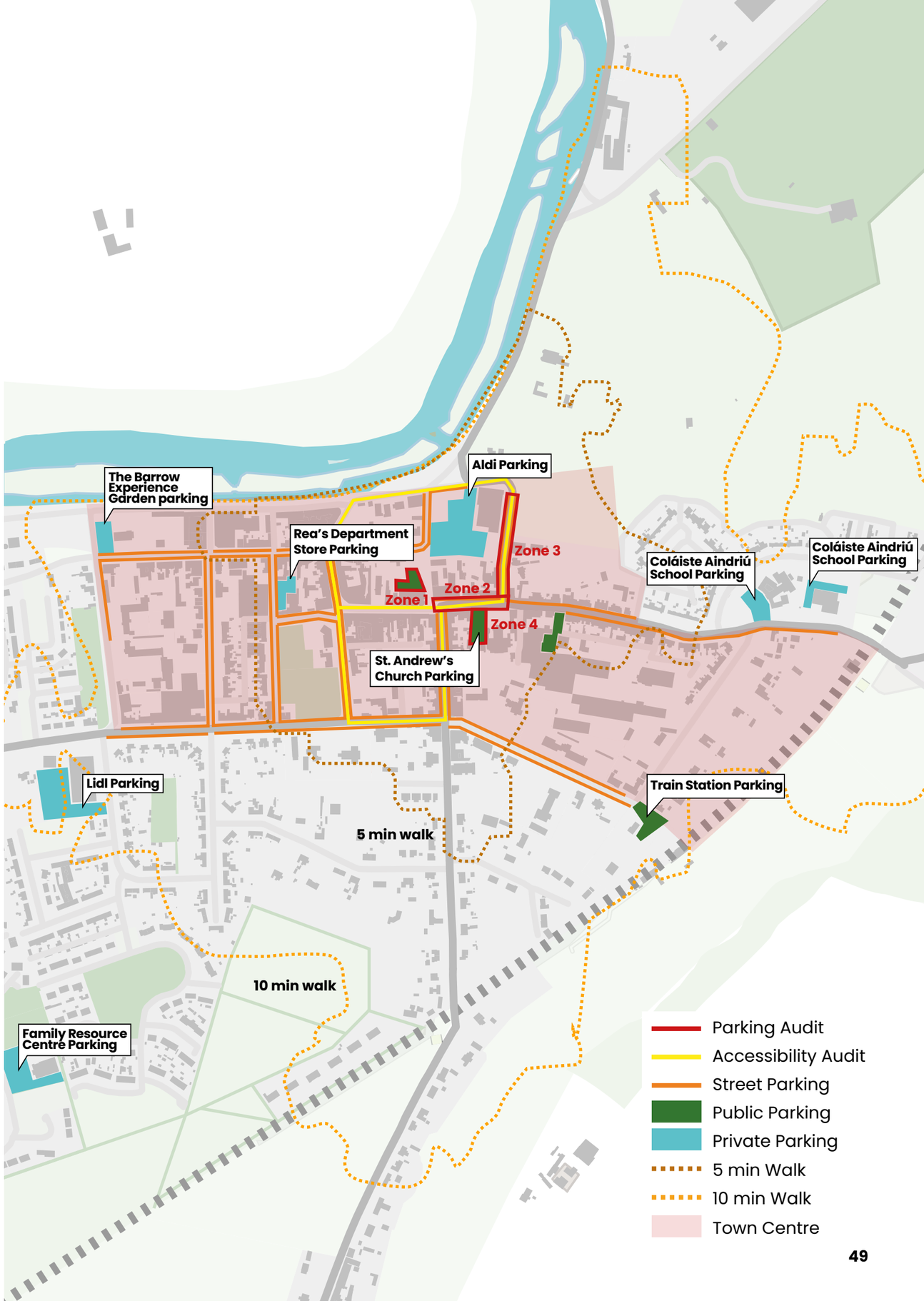
Private Car Park - Aldi



Bagenalstown Parking Survey



Accessibility & Walkability Audit



Suburbia

Today, the majority of Bagenalstown's urban footprint consists of low-density suburban development, much of it constructed during the Celtic Tiger period. When viewed from above, these housing estates reveal a pattern of fragmentation, limited internal connectivity, a lack of shared activity spaces, and a strong dependence on the private car.

This lack of permeability has tangible everyday consequences. For example, two families living an equal straight-line distance from the Bagenalstown Family Resource Centre may experience vastly different journey lengths in reaching the Resource Centre. Due to the lack of direct pedestrian and cycle connections one family can travel less than 50 metres, while the other family must travel over 1,500 metres including onto the already busy Royal Oak Road.

These disconnected green spaces between estates present a significant opportunity. Through targeted activation and improved connectivity, they can become valuable community assets, providing much-needed activity spaces while simultaneously reconnecting neighbourhoods across the town.

Carlow County Council have identified the need for increased walking and cycling routes between these housing estates in their District Town Plan (see appendix).



Open Spaces



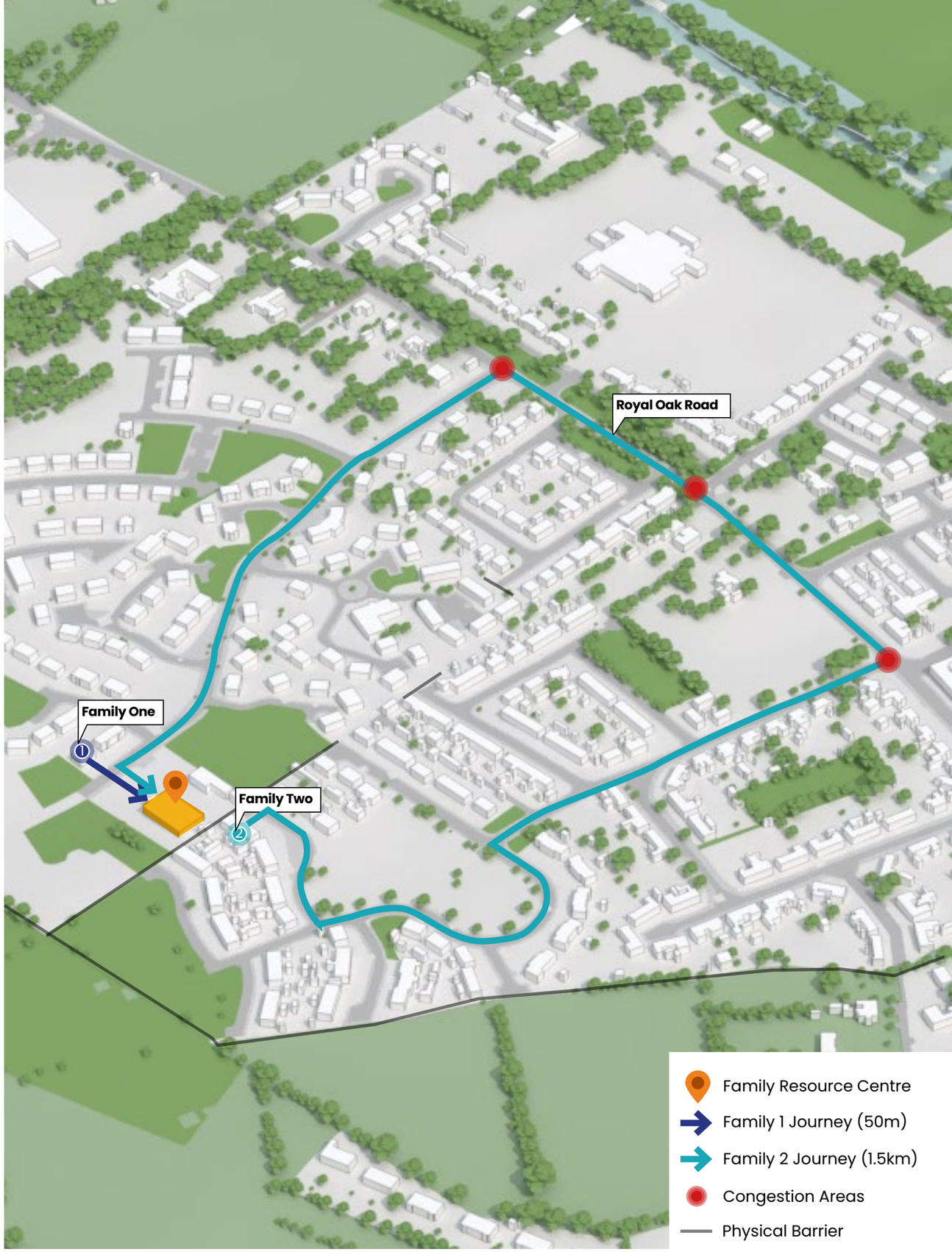
Disconnected Housing Estates



Lack of Permeability



Underutilisation



Two Journeys, One Family Resource Centre

Open Space & Amenity Zoned Land at Gleann Na Bearú

SCOT Analysis

The following SCOT analysis was prepared based on baseline research, site analysis, existing studies and input from participants in the Town Centre First co-design workshops.

Strengths

- Bagenalstown benefits from a **strong river setting** and canal heritage, which together form a distinctive historic landscape and identity.
- The town retains a **compact walkable core**, with key services, schools and amenities located within a short walking and cycling distance.
- A **strong manufacturing employment** base reinforces Bagenalstown's role as a regional employment centre.
- The town has an **engaged community**, supported by active sports clubs, voluntary groups and youth participation.
- **Excellent rail connectivity** to Dublin, provides a sustainable transport advantage for commuters and visitors.

Challenges

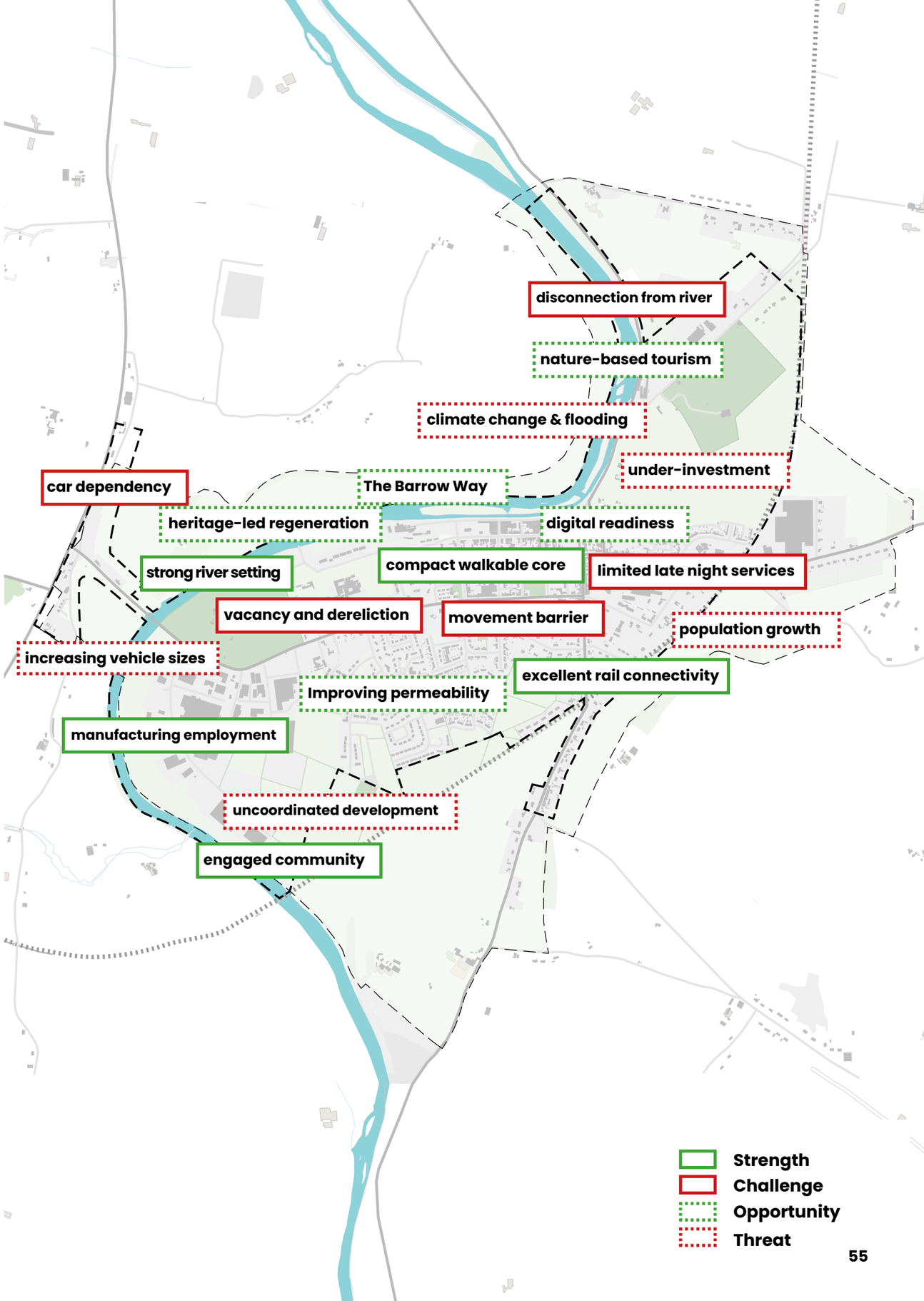
- High levels of **vacancy and dereliction** continue to undermine confidence, footfall and town centre vitality.
- **Car dependency** remains strong due to fragmented pedestrian and cycling networks.
- The Royal Oak Road creates a major **movement barrier** between residential areas and town centre services.
- **Limited town centre service options** outside retail hours.
- The river corridor remains visually and physically **disconnected** from everyday town life.

Opportunities

- The River Barrow and canal corridor provide major potential for **heritage-led regeneration** and **nature-based tourism**.
- Vacant and underused buildings offer opportunities for **adaptive reuse**, town centre living and mixed-use development.
- The **Barrow Way** can become a high-quality inclusive greenway, strengthening town connectivity, wellbeing and tourism.
- **Improving permeability** between housing estates can unlock community spaces and active travel connections.
- **Digital readiness** among local businesses supports the development of a heritage-led, digitally enabled town identity.

Threats

- **Under-investment** in town centre buildings may accelerate decline and loss of heritage assets.
- Traffic dominance and **increasing vehicle sizes** could further reduce pedestrian comfort and accessibility.
- **Population growth without parallel infrastructure** delivery may place pressure on schools, health and community services.
- **Uncoordinated development** risks weakening the town's historic character and spatial coherence.
- **Climate change & flooding** present long-term resilience risks if not addressed through integrated planning.



"Work on a 'I am proud of what we have in Bagenalstown' campaign and have everyone in the town be the concierge and ambassador for the place!"

"Give people reasons to COME INTO the town, not just depart."

"Convenient Parking in the centre of the town."

"Keep the planting appropriate... hawthorn, mountain ash, fruit/crab apple etc."

"we NEED more outdoor spaces and facilities"

"More activities in fair green for older children."

"All Season Astro Turf full size & Soccer cages – Multiple 5 aside."

"Need of Accommodation for Tourists & Visitors to hold them in the town for extended time."

"Embrace the nature park element of the River Barrow and the relaxed and quiet banks of the river."

"Major restoration of Rudkin's Mill."

"Major restoration of Rudkins Mill."

"Pedestrian/ cycle access from Kilcarrig area."

"Use a barge, anchored in the middle of the river, as a cine screen for films on the water."

"Walking history tours and (QR codes, drama enactments)."



Objectives & Actions

Defining Bagenalstown

Future Trends

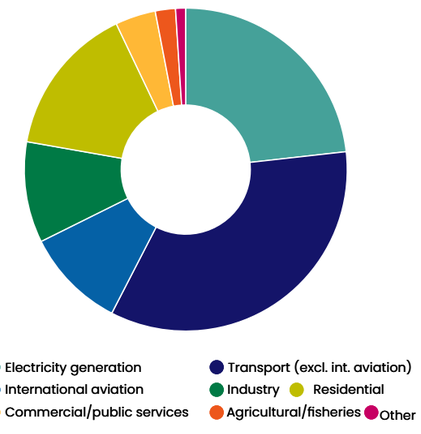
National Trends

Car dependency drives emissions and limits town potential.

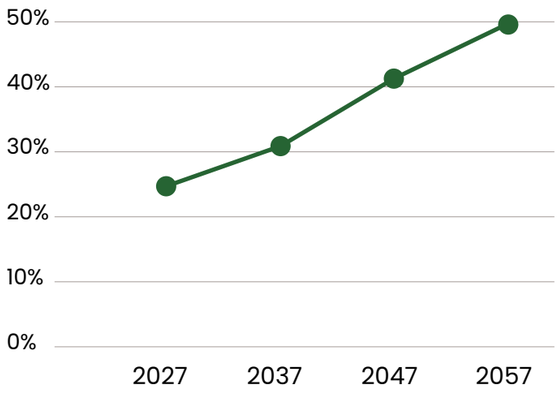
Bagenalstown's car dependency is evident, with nearly 55% commuting by car, contributing to transport's 21.5% share of Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions and accelerating climate change. Under current measures, transport emissions will drop by only 8.7% by 2030, which is far below what is needed to meet Ireland's goal of halving emissions by 2030 and reaching carbon neutrality by 2050. Car dominance also shapes the town negatively, with roads and parking occupying space that could instead serve community needs and active travel. To meet climate goals and create a more liveable, people-friendly town, a major shift toward sustainable, low-carbon transport is essential.

Remote work creates new opportunities for local life.

The growth of remote and hybrid work will reduce daily commuting for many residents, allowing people to spend more time locally. This presents a major opportunity to revitalise Bagenalstown's town centre with co-working spaces, local services and cafés, supporting local businesses and boosting daytime activity.



Share of energy related CO2eq by sector in 2023



Old dependency ratio in moderate scenario CSO projection

An ageing population will reshape town priorities.

Nationally, Ireland will see a significant increase in the over-65 age group, requiring accessible public spaces, age-friendly housing and healthcare services concentrated within town centres.

Green infrastructure is key to climate resilience.

Policies for protecting biodiversity and enhancing green infrastructure will require towns to integrate green spaces, nature-based solutions and sustainable drainage systems. With its surrounding River Barrow SAC and biodiverse landscape, Bagenalstown is well positioned to lead in this transition.

Compact growth is the future of sustainable development.

Continued population growth and housing demand will drive a shift toward higher-density, compact and sustainable development, moving away from low-density sprawl. This approach aligns with national policies such as Project Ireland 2040 – the National Planning Framework, promoting compact growth to create attractive, sustainable places while using land and infrastructure efficiently.

Local Trends

Commuter patterns are shifting, creating both challenges and opportunities.

As a commuter town for Dublin, Bagenalstown growth is relying on its rail connection and housing affordability. While these connections make it attractive to workers, the rise of remote and hybrid work is reducing daily travel. This shift can strengthen the local economy as more people spend time and money in town. However, limited evening activities constrain local life and social engagement. Expanding public transport, active travel and leisure options will be key to supporting sustainable growth and a more vibrant community.

Housing diversity is key to an inclusive and balanced community.

Most new and proposed housing in Bagenalstown is family-oriented, with detached, semi-detached, or terraced homes and few apartments or smaller units. This pattern reinforces car dependency and limits options for other groups, especially young people and single professionals. The shortage of smaller, affordable homes makes it difficult for the local workforce to stay in the area, impacting community diversity and economic resilience. Expanding the mix of housing types will help meet the needs of all residents and support a more balanced, dynamic town.



Grand Canal Barrow Line Marathon Kayak Race 2025

A renewed interest in outdoor recreation is shaping Gen Z lifestyles.

Younger generations, particularly Gen Z, are placing greater value on outdoor recreation, wellbeing and nature-based experiences. This trend accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic, with over 40% of young adults taking up new outdoor activities. In Bagenalstown, proximity to the River Barrow presents a strong opportunity to respond to this shift, particularly through water-based activities such as kayaking, paddleboarding and riverside recreation. National policy support, including the National Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2023–2027, reinforces this direction through investment in blueways, greenways and active recreation infrastructure. Enhancing access to the river and expanding outdoor amenities can help attract and retain younger residents, support local tourism and strengthen the town's identity as an active, nature-connected place.

Legislation & Policies Context

This vision for Bagenalstown exists within the framework of various international, national and local legislation, policies and plans & studies. The following is an indicative list that may be relevant to Bagenalstown. This list serves as guidance and is not exhaustive. Efforts should be made to ensure compliance with the applicable legislation, policies and plans when implementing any projects developed in this document.

Town Centre First

The Town Centre First Policy is a government strategy aimed at revitalising town centres across Ireland, forming a key part of Our Rural Future, Ireland's rural development policy. It prioritises town centres as the heart of community, social, and economic life, aiming to address vacancy, support local businesses, improve public spaces and encourage sustainable living within towns.

The policy promotes compact growth, reduced car dependency and enhanced public and active transport, aligning with national climate goals. It also emphasises collaborative approaches, empowering local communities and stakeholders to take a leading role in shaping their town's future, ensuring that development meets local needs while supporting vibrant, resilient town centres.

National

Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the government's high-level strategic plan for shaping Ireland's future growth and development by 2040. It places the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the centre of long-term planning, emphasising compact growth, sustainable transport and the revitalisation of town centres. The NPF supports the principles of the Town Centre First policy by encouraging the regeneration of towns as attractive, liveable places, reducing urban sprawl and making better use of existing infrastructure. It also aligns with national climate action goals by promoting development patterns that reduce car dependency and greenhouse gas emissions, while supporting resilient, vibrant communities.

National Development Plan (2018 - 2027)

The National Development Plan (2018–2027) commits to meeting Ireland's infrastructure and investment needs with €116 billion planned over ten years, prioritising a transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient society.

It supports outcomes relevant to Bagenalstown including compact growth, regional accessibility, strengthened rural economies, sustainable mobility, enterprise and innovation, enhanced amenity and heritage, environmental protection and improved childcare, education and health services.

Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines

The Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines guide planning authorities in delivering high-quality, sustainable, and well-designed residential areas while promoting compact growth. They emphasise efficient use of land, integration with public transport, and the creation of walkable, vibrant communities with accessible services and amenities.

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023–2030

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (2023–2030) sets out the country's strategy to protect and restore biodiversity, addressing key challenges such as habitat loss, pollution and climate change. The plan promotes integrating biodiversity conservation into land-use planning, supporting nature-based solutions and enhancing green infrastructure.

Housing for All

Housing for All is the national strategy to increase housing supply and affordability across Ireland, promoting diverse and sustainable development. For Bagenalstown, it stresses the need for varied housing types to support all residents, including young people and workers, helping to build a balanced and resilient community.

Local

Carlow County Development Plan 2022–2028

Adopted by the Council's Elected Members on 23rd May 2022 and effective from 4th July 2022, the CDP sets out the strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County over the plan period. The approach is centred on sustainability, with a focus on regeneration and economic development, supported by vibrant, liveable and climate-resilient communities. The Plan is consistent with the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region. The overall vision for County Carlow is to champion quality of life through local employment, high-quality development, healthy placemaking and transformational regeneration; to grow and attract a diverse, innovative economy; to support the transition to a circular economy and a low-carbon, climate-resilient environment; and to enhance inclusiveness and the natural and built environment for future generations.

The Plan is underpinned by a number of cross-cutting and interrelated themes. One of the 14 Strategic Objectives (S04) is to promote consolidation and growth in the District Towns of Tullow and Muine Bheag / Bagenalstown, supported by targeted investment in local employment, services and sustainable transport, building on existing assets. Within the Settlement Hierarchy, Muine Bheag / Bagenalstown is identified as a Tier 2 District Town, defined as a well-serviced settlement with a moderate level of employment, services and community facilities, good transport links, and capacity for continued, balanced growth towards greater self-sufficiency.

County Carlow Heritage Plan 2024–2029

The aim of this plan is to raise awareness of County Carlow's heritage in an inclusive and sustainable manner and to conserve, manage and safeguard shared heritage for future generations. This is delivered through four strategic objectives, including telling County Carlow's heritage story, supported by 28 actions over the lifetime of the plan.

Carlow Climate Action Plan 2024–2029

This plan supports the transition of County Carlow to a low-carbon and climate-resilient county, in line with the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 and national climate and energy targets. A climate risk assessment identified severe windstorms, extreme precipitation and river flooding as the most frequent hazards. The plan is structured around five Strategic Goals: Governance & Leadership; Built Environment & Transport; Natural Environment & Green Infrastructure; Resilience & Transition; and Sustainability & Resource Management, with a commitment to delivering ambitious climate action projects.

Carlow Biodiversity Action Plan 2023–2025

The BAP supports local implementation of national and international biodiversity legislation and the County Development Plan, with a strong emphasis on community action and cross-stakeholder coordination. It highlights the county's network of ecological corridors—including rivers, riparian zones and hedgerows—as its most significant biodiversity assets.

Bagenalstown Biodiversity Action Plan 2021–2025

This plan provides a more local focus, identifying Sites of Biodiversity Interest such as the River Barrow, Dunleckney Graveyard, local gardens and Ballymoon Esker, and sets out four key objectives with associated targets and actions.

Bagenalstown Town Centre Health Check 2025

Informed by the Collaborative Town Centre Health Check programme, research was undertaken in Bagenalstown between September 2024 and early 2025 by Year 3 International Business students from SETU Carlow. The study included surveys of town users and businesses, land-use and vacancy analysis, pedestrian footfall, traffic and parking counts, and school workshops. Key themes—including traffic and transport, doing business, recreation and sustainability—have informed this Town Centre First Plan.

Bagenalstown District Town Plan 2025

Through a Variation to the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028 made on 10th November 2025 the Muine Bheag (Bagenalstown) / Royal Oak District Town Plan 2025 (see appendix) was adopted as a statutory plan.

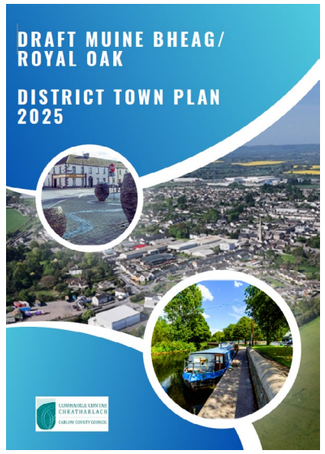
The draft plan and supporting documents were subject to a Public Consultation process, being available for public viewing online at https://consult.carlow.ie/ and in hard copy at Carlow County Council and Muine Bheag Library from 24th June, 2025 to 5pm on Monday, 28th July, 2025. Following this, a further round of public consultation on proposed material alterations commenced from 23 September 2025 to 22 October 2025.

The plan was then passed by resolution at a Meeting of Carlow County Council held in on Monday 10th November 2025, on the proposal of Councillor A.Gladney, Seconded by Councillor M. Doran, with seventeen members voting in favour and one member absent.

The Bagenalstown District Town Plan establishes the strategic planning framework to guide the proper planning and sustainable development of the town, and replaces and builds on the previously operative Muine Bheag/Royal Oak Local Area Plan 2017-2023 (as extended), while taking account of national and regional planning policy, the key planning issues for the area that have emerged in the intervening period, and the Core Strategy of the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028.

It considers the current context of Muine Bheag/Royal Oak in terms of population trends, socio-economic factors, land use changes, the need for facilities and amenities, the availability of services and infrastructure, along with heritage and environmental considerations.

Chapter 3 sets out an overall vision for Muine Bheag/Royal Oak: "To ensure that Muine Bheag/Royal Oak builds on its District Town designation, its unique strengths and attributes including accessible location, a strong employment base, and a distinct character of natural and built heritage, contributing to the creation of sustainable communities, improved quality of life,



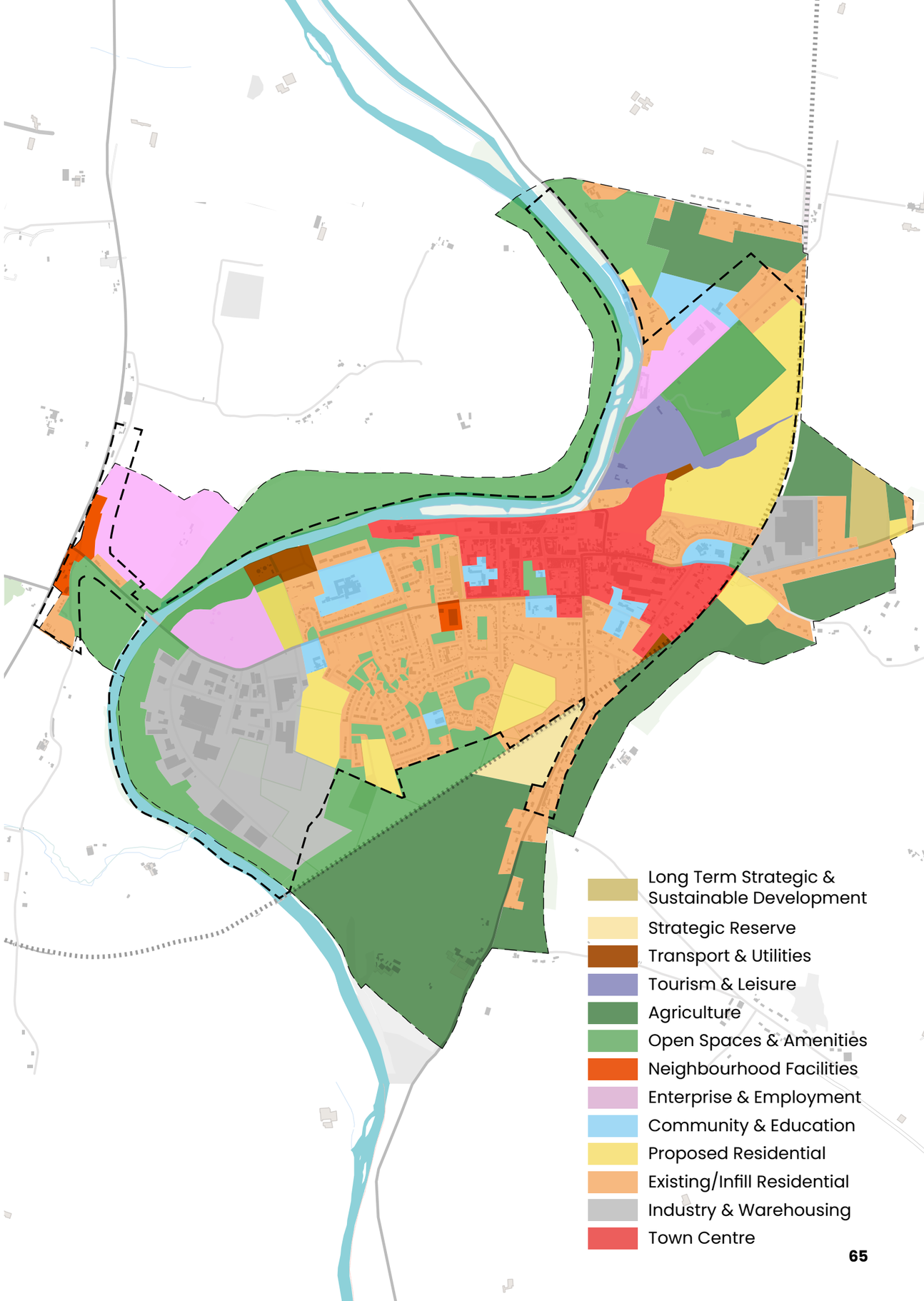
Muine Bheag/Royal Oak District Town Plan 2025

self-sustaining economic development, town centre vitality and vibrancy, urban regeneration and compact growth, while conserving important natural and built heritage assets, and the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient future."

Strategic Objective 2 aligns strongly with the purpose of this Town Centre First Plan: "Support town centre led urban regeneration in Muine Bheag/Royal Oak, with a focus on key derelict, vacant and underutilised sites and buildings, the consolidation of the town centre through the use of brownfield, infill and backland sites, the implementation of public realm improvements, and the conservation of historic built fabric."

Chapter 6 focuses on Urban Design, Town Centre and Regeneration. It identifies a number of Town Centre Opportunity Sites, to promote the redevelopment and regeneration of underutilised sites and buildings in and adjoining the town centre.

Objective A6.02 is to: "Prepare a Town Centre First Plan for Muine Bheag/Royal Oak, and actively seek further funding from relevant agencies and Government sources including the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) to secure financial support the implementation of urban development and regeneration projects identified in the Plan."



Bagenalstown District Town Plan 2025

The District Town Plan includes a Land Use Zoning Map. This includes a number of sites identified for 'Open Space and Amenity' use.

Within the Carlow County Development Plan 2022-2028, this land use zoning category has the following Objectives and Land Use Acceptability:

Objective and Purpose:

To protect, provide for and enhance open space, amenity facilities, and recreational uses. The areas included in this zoning objective cover both private and public open space and are dispersed throughout towns and villages, as well as riparian zones and environmental buffers. The aims of this land use-zoning objective include;

- to protect residential amenity in housing developments;
- to protect, improve and provide for recreation, open space, and amenity provision;
- to protect, improve and maintain public open space;
- to preserve private open space, and
- to provide recreational and community facilities.

Permitted in Principle Uses:

Park/Playground, Playing Fields, Walkway/ Cycleway Trails, Recreational Open Space and Amenity.

Open For Consideration Uses:

School, Childcare Facility, Community Facility, Recreational Facility, Community Hall and Sports Hall, Cultural Uses, Car Park, Tourist related Facility, Utility Structures.

There are a total of 51 no. sites, making up a total area of XXX (sqm), designated for Open Space and Amenity Use.



Bagenalstown District Town Plan 2025

Open Space & Amenity Overview



Open Space & Amenity Overview



Site 1
60,529 sqm



Site 2
205,067 sqm



Site 3
308,506 sqm



Site 4
21,424 sqm



Site 5
2,075 sqm



Site 6
7,893 sqm



Site 7
2,838 sqm



Site 8
1,512 sqm



Site 9
354 sqm



Site 10
856 sqm



Site 11
3,293 sqm



Site 12
2,412 sqm



Site 13
662 sqm



Site 14
1,329 sqm



Site 15
1,180 sqm



Site 16
417 sqm



Site 17
1,269 sqm



Site 18
804 sqm



Site 19
1,121 sqm



Site 20
117 sqm



Site 21
515 sqm



Site 22
292 sqm



Site 23
1,418 sqm



Site 24
3,154 sqm



Site 25
1,509 sqm



Opportunity to support proposed pedestrian & cycle routes



Site, Monuments & Records Zone Present



Site 26
414 sqm



Site 27
2,814 sqm



Site 28
3,067 sqm



Site 29
464 sqm



Site 30
501 sqm



Site 31
233 sqm



Site 32
4,387 sqm



Site 33
822 sqm



Site 34
1,540 sqm



Site 35
1,709 sqm



Site 36
1,070 sqm



Site 37
5,096 sqm



Site 38
272 sqm

Site 39
268 sqm

Site 40
9,683 sqm

Site 41
415 sqm

Site 42
7,255 sqm

Site 43
392 sqm

Site 44
10,353 sqm

Site 45
660 sqm

Site 46
5,210 sqm

Site 47
7,385 sqm

Site 48
1,876 sqm

Site 49
117,037 sqm

Site 50
5,129 sqm

Site 51
84,441 sqm

Opportunity to support proposed pedestrian & cycle routes

Site, Monuments & Records Zone Present

Chapter 7 of the District Town Plan looks at Sustainable Travel and Transportation.

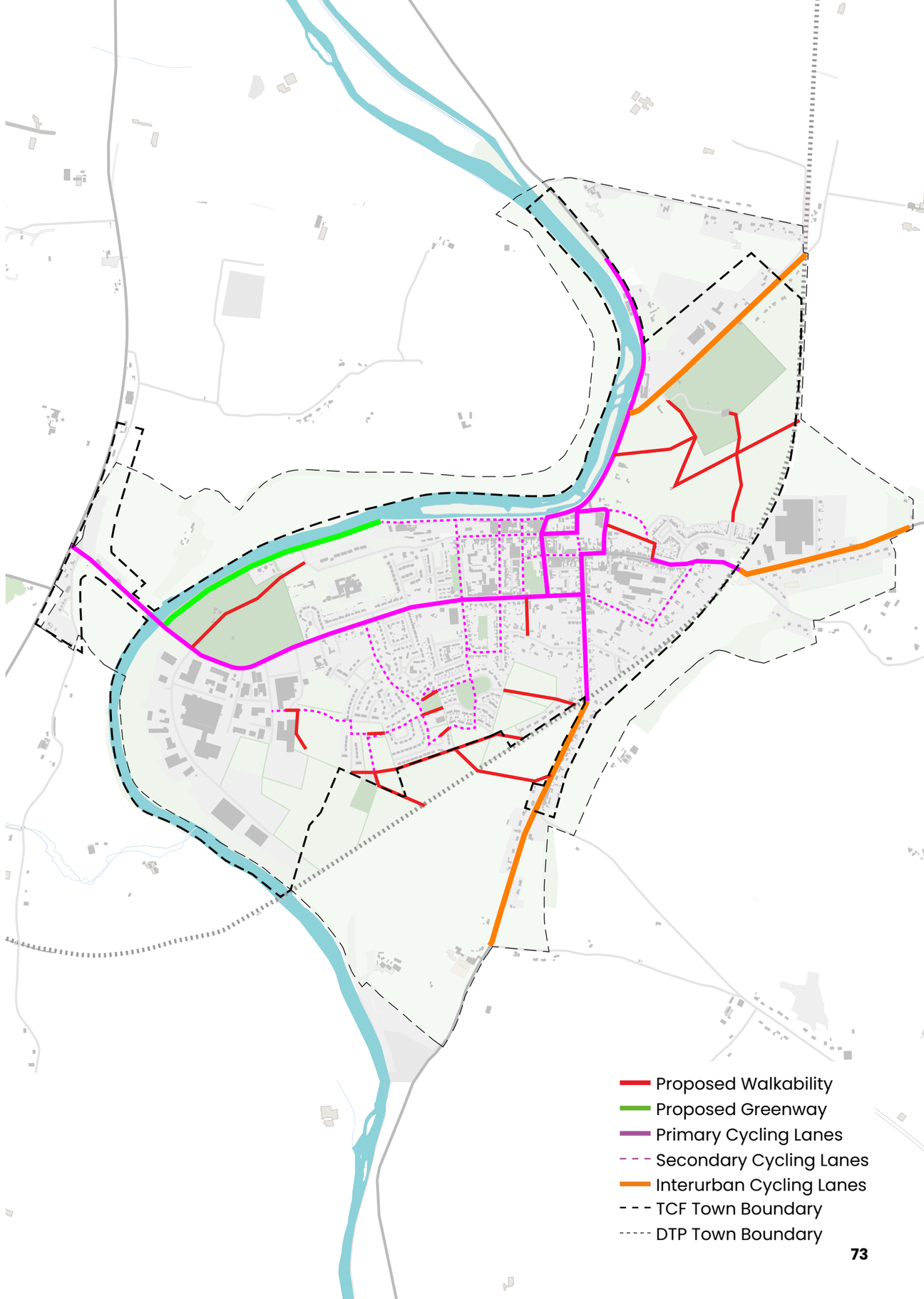
The overall aim of the chapter is: "To develop a sustainable and integrated transport system for Muine Bheag/Royal Oak that supports the future development of the town, with prioritisation for walking, cycling and public transport along with an appropriate level of road infrastructure, road capacity and traffic management, thereby facilitating the transition to a lower carbon-based climate resilient and healthy urban environment."

As part of the preparation of the District Town Plan a Local Transport Plan (LTP) was undertaken - key elements of which have been incorporated into Chapter 7 of the DTP. This includes a Walking Strategy, Cycling Strategy, Public Transport Strategy, Road Strategy and Parking Strategy. These highlight existing routes, planned / proposed future routes, bus routes and potential stops,proposed active travel improvements and junction upgrades, as well as Park & Stride Sites and Routes.

The Walking Strategy focuses on establishing efficient and convenient pedestrian routes by improving connectivity between residential areas and key destinations such as schools, parks, and retail centres. Proposed measures include the creation of new footpaths, the introduction of pedestrian links to remove physical barriers, and the upgrading of existing infrastructure to enhance overall accessibility and user experience.

The Cycling Strategy aims to deliver a high quality and integrated cycling network that prioritises safety and convenience. Key interventions include the provision of dedicated cycle tracks, the incorporation of stepped segregation where appropriate, and the development of shared spaces in areas where space is limited. In locations with restricted road width, low traffic routes are proposed to reduce vehicle speeds and create a safer environment for cycling. A central element of this strategy is the use of the River Barrow as a recreational and tourism asset, with the delivery of a cycle route that offers both local and regional connectivity.

Both the walking and cycling strategies are guided by a commitment to improving filtered permeability throughout the town. This supports the creation of a safer and more attractive environment for walking and cycling.



A Shared Vision

By 2050, Bagenalstown will be a vibrant, inclusive and climate-resilient river town that celebrates its built and natural heritage while proactively embracing a connected, low-carbon future.

A (Re)Connected Bagenalstown

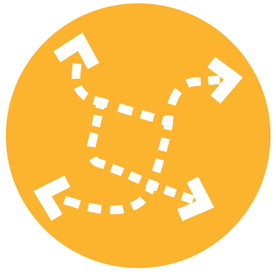
A (Re)Activated Bagenalstown

A Resilient Bagenalstown

Key Themes

What if We Dream Big for the Future?

By 2050, Bagenalstown will be a vibrant, inclusive and climate-resilient river town that celebrates its built and natural heritage while proactively embracing a connected, low-carbon future.



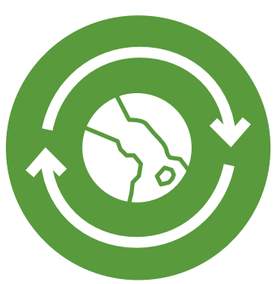
A (Re)Connected Bagenalstown

A town where people, places and opportunities are well linked through accessible walking, cycling, public transport and digital networks, enabling easy movement within the town, including the harnessing of the River Barrow route, strong regional connections, and equal access for all residents and visitors.



A (Re)Activated Bagenalstown

A lively and adaptable town centre that supports local business, culture, services, housing and community life, reactivating underutilised buildings and green spaces to generate activity, identity and economic opportunity.



A Resilient Bagenalstown

A town that plans for Ireland's changing climate, protects its river and natural assets, strengthens community wellbeing, and grows sustainably through forward-thinking spatial, environmental and social strategies.

Key Objectives

What if We Dream Big for the Future?

During the workshop series participants were invited to envision Bagenalstown in the year 2050, imagining the desired future image and role of the town. The community's ideas for the kind of place they aspire Bagenalstown to become have been summarised below and aligned with the objectives of this plan's proposed projects.



Reinforce public transport



Encourage active travel



Increase accessibility and permeability



Improve digital connectivity



Increase access to the River Barrow



Improve car parking in town centre



Enhance town centre living quality



Reactivate underutilised spaces



Provide a range of visitor accommodation options

Promote local businesses, services and events

Foster social inclusion

Define a clear role for the town



Create an Image for the town



Ensure sustainability



Plan sustainable growth



Integrate climate resilience



Protect river and nature assets



Protect heritage and culture



Promote active lifestyles



Support local employment and remote working



Strengthen community and public partnerships

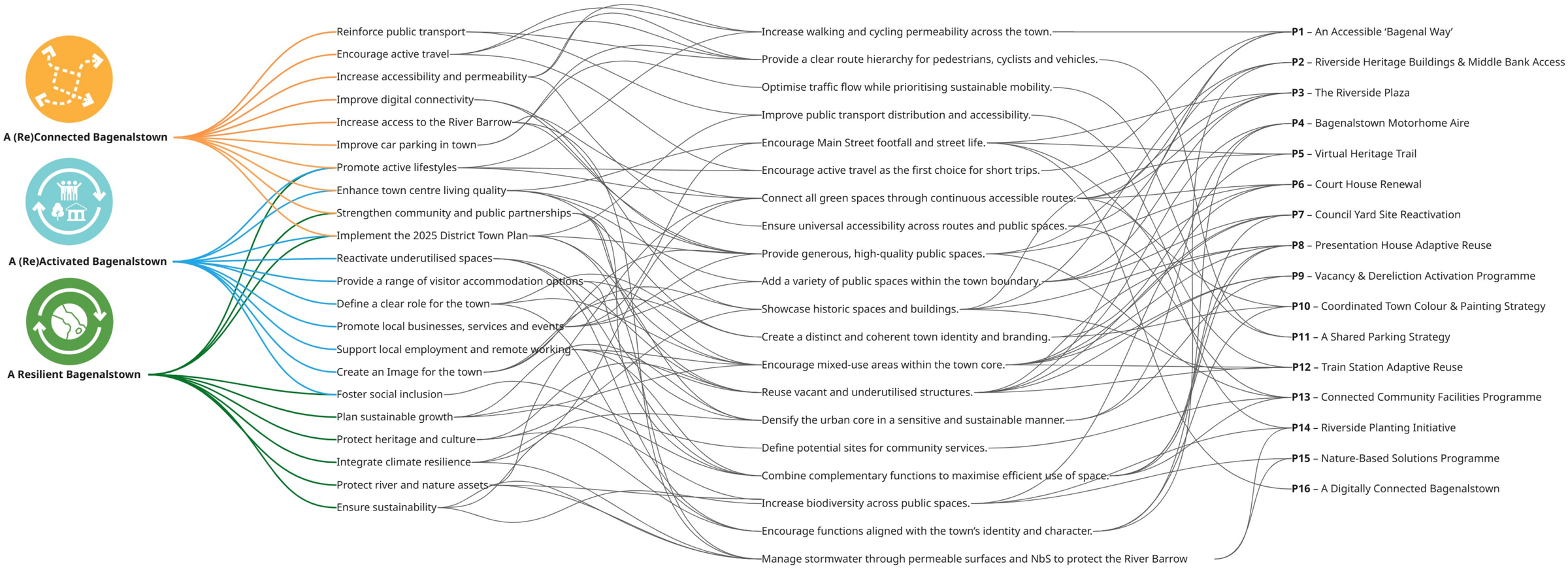


Implement the 2025 District Town Plan

Proposed Projects Mind Map

Shared Vision

By 2050, Bagenalstown will be a vibrant, inclusive and climate-resilient river town that celebrates its built and natural heritage while proactively embracing a connected, low-carbon future.

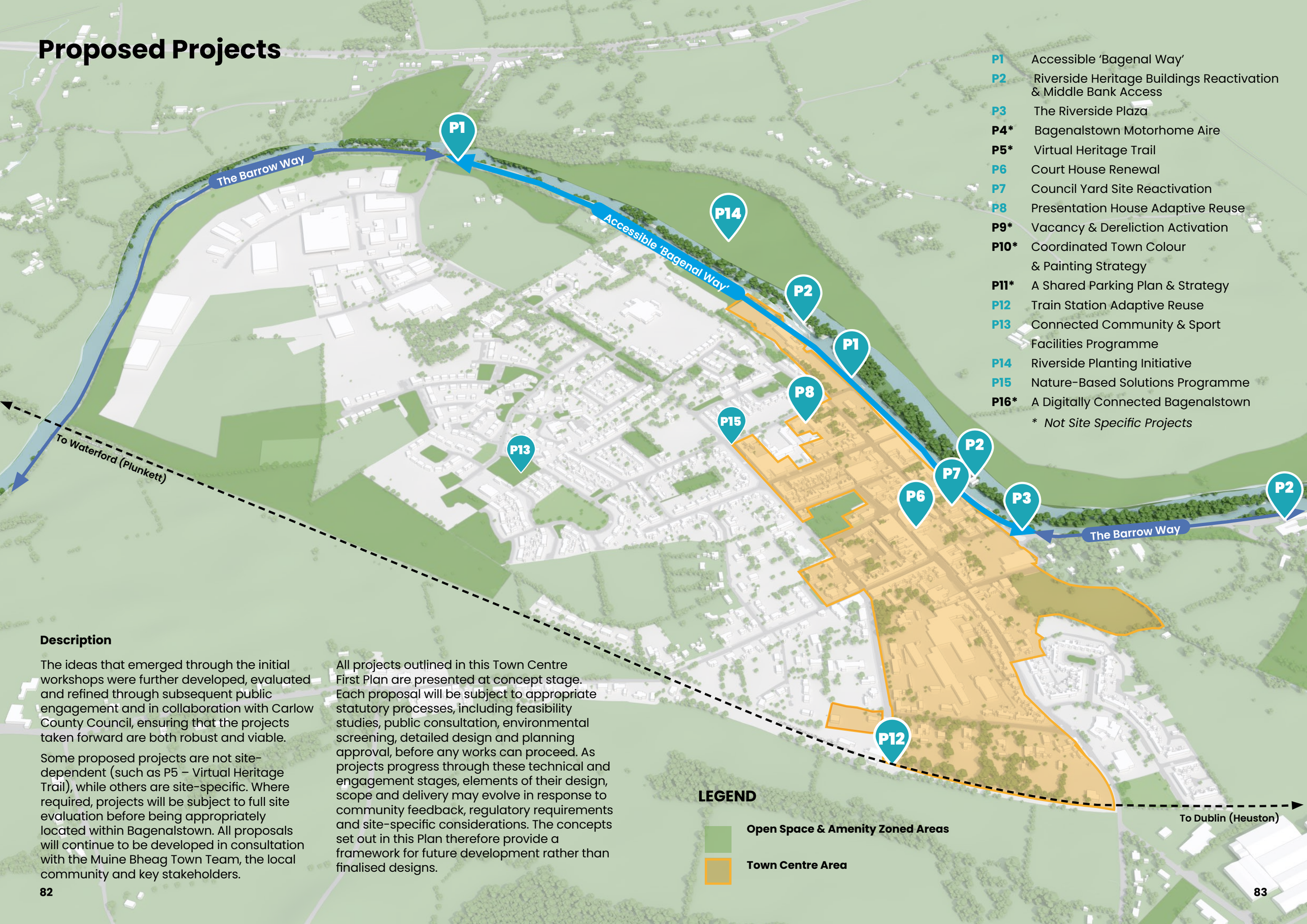




Proposed Projects

Enabling Bagenalstown

Proposed Projects



P1 Accessible 'Bagenal Way'
P2 Riverside Heritage Buildings Reactivation & Middle Bank Access
P3 The Riverside Plaza
P4* Bagenalstown Motorhome Aire
P5* Virtual Heritage Trail
P6 Court House Renewal
P7 Council Yard Site Reactivation
P8 Presentation House Adaptive Reuse
P9* Vacancy & Dereliction Activation
P10* Coordinated Town Colour & Painting Strategy
P11* A Shared Parking Plan & Strategy
P12 Train Station Adaptive Reuse
P13 Connected Community & Sport Facilities Programme
P14 Riverside Planting Initiative
P15 Nature-Based Solutions Programme
P16* A Digitally Connected Bagenalstown

** Not Site Specific Projects*

LEGEND

Open Space & Amenity Zoned Areas

Town Centre Area

Description

The ideas that emerged through the initial workshops were further developed, evaluated and refined through subsequent public engagement and in collaboration with Carlow County Council, ensuring that the projects taken forward are both robust and viable.

Some proposed projects are not site-dependent (such as P5 – Virtual Heritage Trail), while others are site-specific. Where required, projects will be subject to full site evaluation before being appropriately located within Bagenalstown. All proposals will continue to be developed in consultation with the Muine Bheag Town Team, the local community and key stakeholders.

All projects outlined in this Town Centre First Plan are presented at concept stage. Each proposal will be subject to appropriate statutory processes, including feasibility studies, public consultation, environmental screening, detailed design and planning approval, before any works can proceed. As projects progress through these technical and engagement stages, elements of their design, scope and delivery may evolve in response to community feedback, regulatory requirements and site-specific considerations. The concepts set out in this Plan therefore provide a framework for future development rather than finalised designs.

Proposed Projects



P1 - Accessible 'Bagenal Way'



P2 – Riverside Heritage Buildings Reactivation & Middle Bank Access



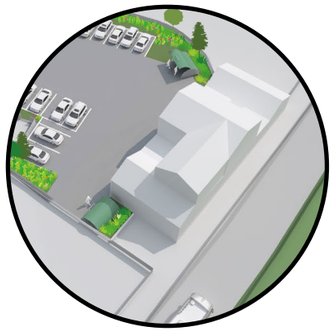
P3 – The Riverside Plaza



P10 – Coordinated Town Colour & Painting Strategy



P11 – A Shared Parking Plan & Strategy



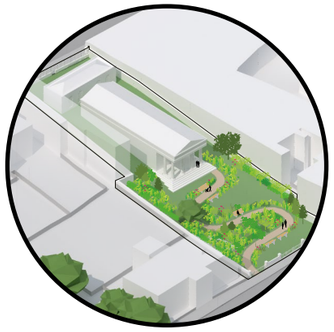
P12 – Train Station Adaptive Reuse



P4 – Bagenalstown Motorhome Aire



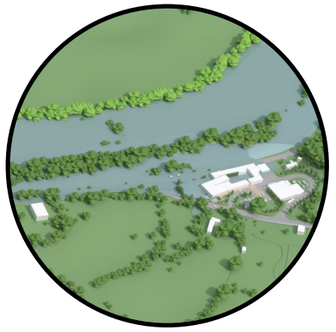
P5 – Virtual Heritage Trail



P6 – Court House Renewal



P13 – Connected Community & Sport Facilities Programme



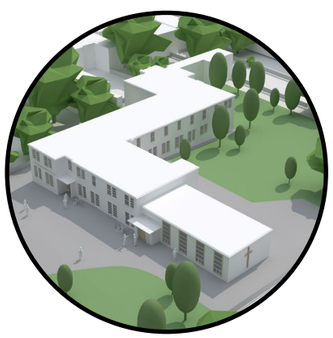
P14 – Riverside Planting Initiative



P15 – Nature-Based Solutions Programme



P7 – Council Yard Site Reactivation



P8 – Presentation House Adaptive Reuse



P9 – Vacancy & Dereliction Activation Programme



P16 – A Digitally Connected Bagenalstown



SDG Impact Screening

P1: An Accessible ‘Bagenal Way’

Overview



Description

A fully accessible riverside walking and cycling route along the River Barrow, designed for people of all ages and abilities, including wheelchair users. The project delivers inclusive surfacing suitable for wheelchairs and mobility aids, insect-friendly lighting, clear wayfinding signage branded as ‘The Bagenal Way’, dog bins, seating, and improved bridge accessibility (including bike channels and gentle gradients). The route allows people to walk, cycle, push a pram or use a wheelchair safely along Bagenalstown’s river edge, with enhanced access under and onto bridges. Vibrant Bagenalstown-themed murals will animate existing boundary walls along the route.

Community Input

“Bench’s to sit down or picnic benches would be nice.”

“Concerns as to how planning permissions required can be obtained and interaction with Waterways Ireland.”

“Walk on the grass like everyone has for years. If you want to walk on asphalt walk in the town.”

“More bins.”

“Make better use of the river.”



Indicative Proposal

Case Study: Kildare Barrow Way, Ireland





The Kildare Barrow Way is a mostly flat, easy long walk following the towpaths of the Barrow line canal. The way stretches 100-117 km and goes from Robertstown in Co. Kildare to St. Mullin, Co. Carlow. There are road crossings installed along the path to make it accessible and safe. By having this path people in the locality have space to explore the history of the canal and to spend time outdoors safely.

This project was funded by the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund receiving over €3.9m. This amount helped the completion of the route between Lowtown and Athy and goal is to create more employment opportunities and increase outdoor activity and tourism in towns along the River Barrow.

P2: Riverside Heritage Buildings Reactivation & Middle Bank Access

Overview

Description

Reactivation and conservation of key riverside heritage buildings, including the Maltings, Rudkin's Mill, the Mill Building and the Quay Cross Fisherman Building. The project opens the Middle Bank riverside zone as a publicly accessible and vibrant heritage area, enabling passive surveillance and supporting long-term regeneration and activity along the River Barrow. The initiative may include restoration works, improved access, interpretive signage, potential enterprise/visitor uses, and an improved riverside walking network linked to the town centre.

Community Input

"Major restoration of Rudkins Mill."

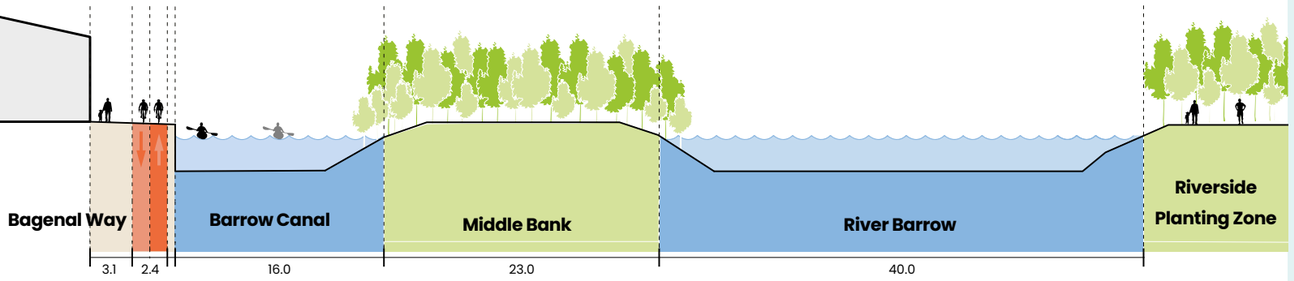
"I agree to the buildings being restored and feel they should be made accessible to the general public."

"Perhaps until this happens, light it with a little drama - the beauty of these buildings is the interesting silhouette and well designed lighting, would show it to its best and create interesting reflections and backdrops. "

"Middle Bank needs to kept for nature."

"Tourist office, café and meeting point. Put back mill wheel and drawbridge life reas lock. Smart bridge."

"River swimming is very popular, provide showers at river."



Indicative Proposal



Indicative Proposal

Case Study: Lyons Mill, Sligo

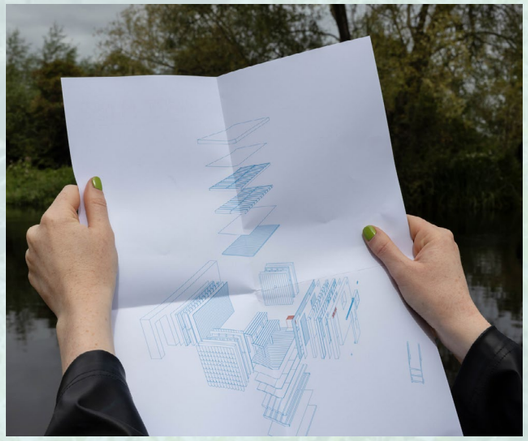




Lyons Mill in Sligo demonstrates how a historic industrial building can be sensitively restored and repurposed to support contemporary community and economic activity. The 150-year-old, five-storey protected warehouse underwent a comprehensive conservation and adaptive reuse project, preserving its industrial character while introducing new public and commercial uses. Phase 1 focused on structural rehabilitation in line with international conservation standards, alongside the creation of a new public plaza linking the mill to Finisklin Road and the wider town centre.

Phase 2 completed the transformation with a ground-floor café and modern office accommodation above, enabling sustainable reuse while retaining the building's identity. Lyons Mill now acts as a catalyst for docklands regeneration, demonstrating how heritage assets can actively support placemaking and contemporary community life.

Case Study: ‘Sweat House’, Bagenalstown



Sweat House was a site-specific artistic intervention by Mollie Anna King, created for both the local community and those passing through Bagenalstown. The work engaged with a small riverside structure, reflecting on its previous uses while suggesting new future possibilities, and positioning it as a space of transition, memory and potential.

Inspired by the community’s relationship with water and collective wellbeing, the project reimagined a concrete shed along the River Barrow through the speculative idea of a hydro-powered hydrotherapy system. In doing so, Sweat House connected heritage, health and environmental resilience, illustrating how modest riverside structures could be reactivated as meaningful public assets.

The Sweat House (Image Credits: Muine Bheag Arts)

coherent town identity

reuse vacant and underutilised structures

provide a variety of public spaces

SUDs to protect the River Barrow

showcase historic spaces and buildings

increase walking and cycling

universal accessibility across routes

activities aligned with town's identity

P3: The Riverside Plaza

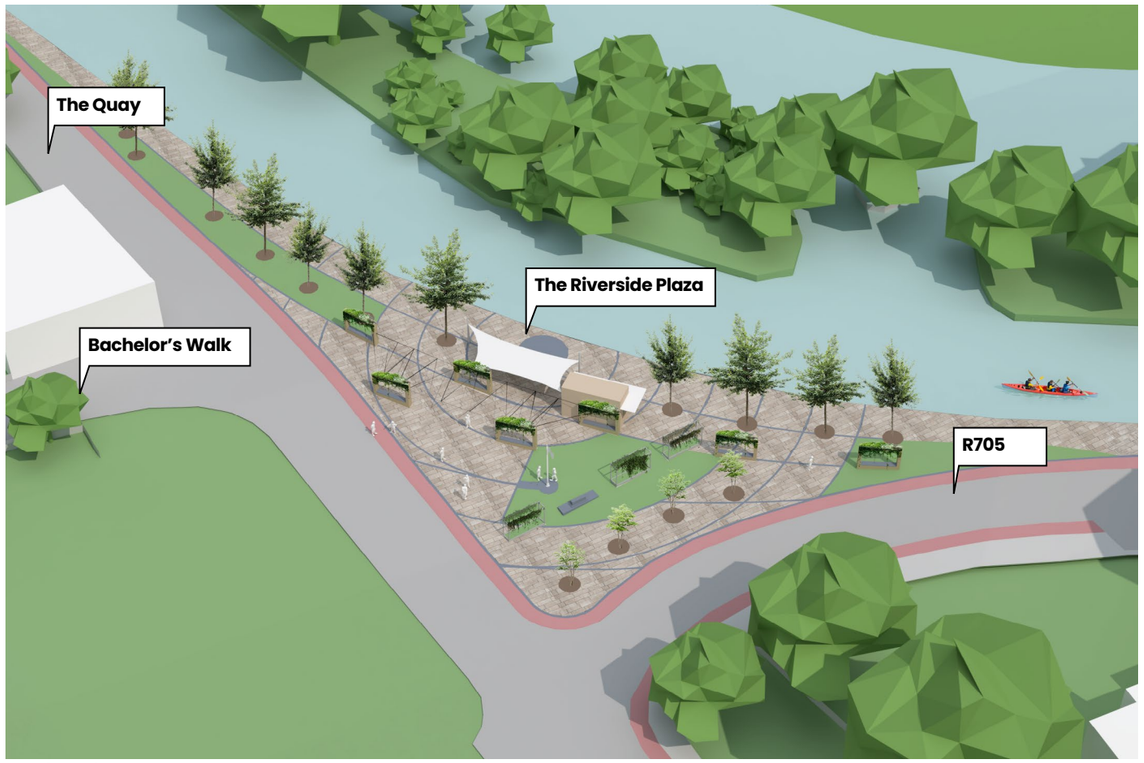
Overview

Description

A new civic gathering space at the start of the Bagenal Way river walk and the northern entrance to Bagenalstown. This welcoming public plaza will overlook the River Barrow and provide a place to meet, rest, and enjoy the water, acting as a social anchor for the river corridor. The plaza will accommodate informal seating, planting, and potentially a small event or performance space. It will strengthen the relationship between the town centre and the river by drawing footfall toward the waterfront, while providing an enhanced public realm experience.



North Entrance



Indicative Proposal

Community Input

"Great idea, maybe a small band stand? To make it a focal point for social occasions."

"Covered seating area would be a help."

"Please ensure the current coffee shop is not put out of business by putting another business in this area. "

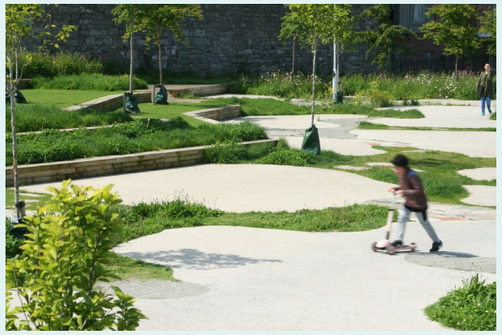
"Give me more reasons to stay in the town and socialise."

"Give people reasons to COME INTO the town, not just depart."

"Use a barge, anchored in the middle of the river, as a cine screen for films on the water."

"More boat trips on the river."

Case Study: Bridgefoot Park, Dublin





Bridgefoot Street Park in Dublin is a strong small-scale precedent for a flexible riverside-adjacent plaza. Completed in 2022, it transformed a vacant site into a high-quality public space with green landscaping, terraced seating, hard gathering areas and biodiverse planting. Designed for everyday use and community events, it shows how compact sites can deliver meaningful civic value.

The park includes accessible paths, open grass, native planting, sculptural seating and a central hardstanding area for classes, performances and informal gatherings. Terraced seating made from reclaimed materials creates a natural amphitheatre, supporting social interaction and small events. Dublin City Council recognises the park as contributing to urban greening, community wellbeing and climate-resilient placemaking. Now a popular neighbourhood destination near the River Liffey, Bridgefoot Street Park offers a calm, nature-rich public realm.

Bagnel Way Projects Combined

The Barrow Way

Accessible 'Bagenal Way'

The Barrow Way

P1

P2

P2

P3

P2









P4: Bagenalstown Motorhome Aire

Overview

Description

Development of a serviced motorhome park within or close to the town centre, ideally connected to the river corridor. This community run (social enterprise/CLG purpose) facility will provide secure overnight parking for motorhomes, with essential amenities such as power, water, waste disposal, and shower/toilet facilities. The project supports tourism and local economic development, encouraging longer visitor stays and increased spending in local businesses, while reinforcing Bagenalstown's position as a destination along the River Barrow.



Along the Barrow Way

Community Input

"An optimum site is key to this project."

"Traffic flow would have to be considered. I like the idea of following in the footsteps of Graiguenamanagh, a beautiful town that utilises the river for tourists and locals alike "

"Need of Accommodation for Tourists & Visitors to hold them in the town for extended time."

" There is a lack of tourist accommodation like hotels, camping areas and camper van parks."



Indicative Proposal

Case Study: Graiguenamanagh Motorhome Aire





The Barrow Valley Activities Hub is a community hub and motorhome park in Graiguenamanagh set along the river Barrow. The park has all the facilities needed for motorhome owners to have a glamping experience including 8 electric hubs. The location of the hub gives it access to many outdoor recreational activities such as canoeing and kayaking on the River Barrow and swimming along with diving boards.

The towns annual revenue has increased by €1.5 million (2023) since the inception of the caravan park. It has given employment opportunity to locals and increased the tourism industry in the small town.

P5: Virtual Heritage Trail

Overview

Description

A town-wide digital heritage experience accessible via mobile devices. Stories, images and audio content will be accessed through QR codes at key heritage sites, allowing visitors and locals to explore Bagenalstown's history in an engaging and interactive format. The project could incorporate multilingual content, links to local services, events and businesses, and connections to existing heritage trails. It strengthens the tourism offer while also supporting local pride and intergenerational learning.



Bagenalstown's Heritage Trail App



Existing Locations of Heritage Buildings and Monuments for Trail

Community Input

"Multiple languages obviously a must"

"Link it to other facilities and services in the town - parking, shops, restaurants etc. Places of interest."

"Walking history tours and (QR codes, drama enactments)."

"QR Codes outside the church and central positions giving information on say Dunleckney Manor or the Court House."

"Link it to local drama and youth theatre. Older persons - access, ease of access - smart. Enhance the digital revolution for Bagenalstown. "

Case Study: Tullow Heritage Trail



The Tullow Virtual Heritage Trail (VHT) demonstrates how digital storytelling can bring local heritage to life in an engaging and accessible way. Delivered by the Tullow Town Team and funded through the Town & Village Renewal Scheme, the project created a high-quality digital trail featuring 16 places of interest across the town.

A key strength of the VHT was its community-led approach. Local people were cast as actors portraying historical characters and stories linked to each site, ensuring authentic voices and a strong sense of place. This involvement helped build community pride while making the content relatable and memorable.

The success of the Tullow VHT highlights how combining community participation with quality digital production can reinforce local identity, support tourism and strengthen a town's digital presence—providing a strong precedent for Bagenalstown.

P6: Court House Renewal

Overview

Description

Re-imagining the historic Courthouse as a central civic and community building within Bagenalstown town centre, in line with Town Centre First and placemaking objectives. The project supports a longer-term vision to relocate the existing library to an alternative premises, enabling the Courthouse to be reimagined as a flexible civic and community space. Future uses may include meeting spaces, ceremony and event accommodation, community functions, exhibitions, and other activities that reinforce the role of the town centre as the heart of civic life.

In support of this vision, the space beneath the Courthouse will be transformed into a high-quality sensory garden aligned with Ireland's Pollinator Plan. The garden will enhance the setting of the building while delivering measurable public realm and biodiversity benefits. The design will respond to steep ground conditions through improved non-slip surfaces and appropriate handrails, ensuring universal accessibility and safe movement for all users.



Bagenalstown's Iconic Courthouse Building

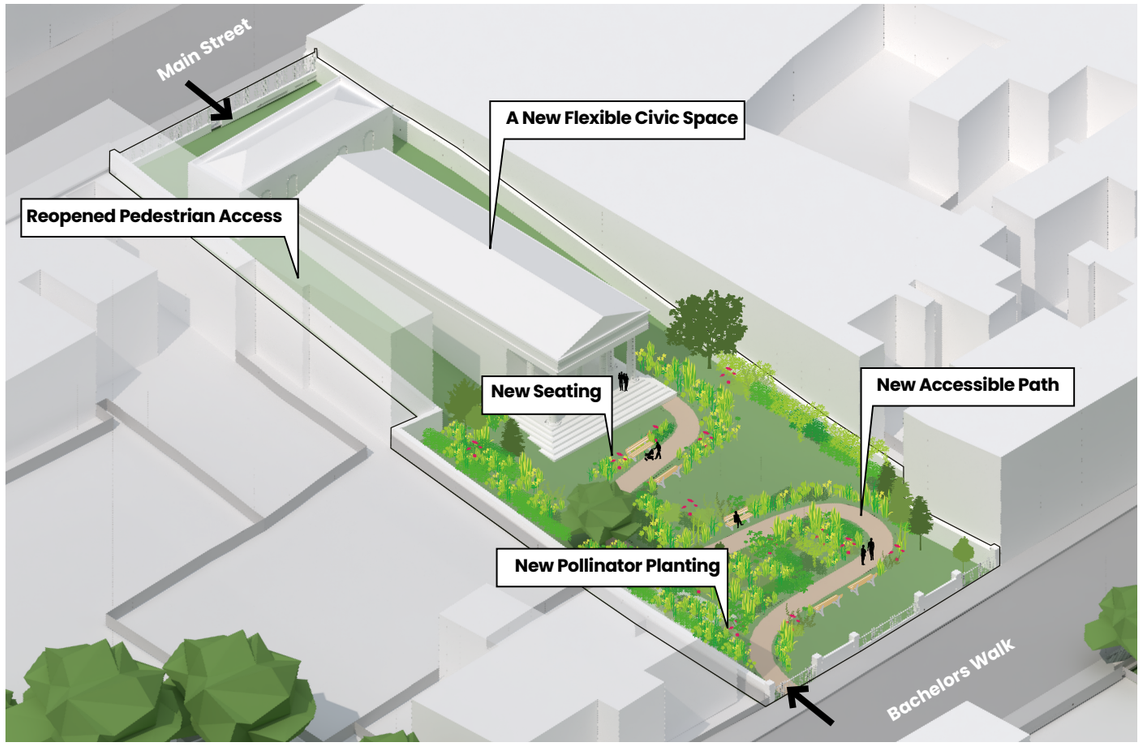
Community Input

"Let's reimagine Bagenalstown's Courthouse as the new townhall! "

"I would love this courthouse area to be a community garden."

"Something easy to maintain and keep such as a wildlife or sensory garden."

"Steepness of site brings feasibility into question."



Indicative Proposal

Case Study: Kilmainham Courthouse, Dublin





Kilmainham Courthouse in Dublin is a strong reference for the adaptive reuse of a classical, temple-front courthouse similar to Bagenalstown Courthouse. Built in 1820, it underwent major conservation works completed in 2016, transforming the building into a fully accessible civic and cultural space as part of the wider Kilmainham Gaol visitor experience. Led by the Office of Public Works the project included structural roof strengthening, suspended floor repairs, restoration of stone façades and sensitive renewal of historic joinery and interiors.

The project also enhanced the courthouse setting, with its elevated portico and landscaped frontage creating a dignified civic arrival space and outdoor amenity. Now housing exhibitions and visitor facilities, the restored courthouse remains active while preserving its architectural significance. Awarded Irish Building of the Year 2017, it demonstrates how Greek Revival courthouses can be successfully repurposed for cultural, educational and community use.


The Barrow Way
Rudkin's Mill
The Riverside Plaza
The Bagenal Way
The Council Yard Reactivation
Bachelor's Walk
The Court House Renewal
Market Square

P7: Council Yard Site Reactivation

Overview

Description

Assessment and development of the Council Yard site to create a vibrant riverside destination that enhances town centre vitality. The site offers significant potential for a range of uses, including community space, motorhome park, enterprise space, food markets, or public realm improvements. The project will explore options that respect surrounding uses, improve access to the river, and bring underutilised land into productive community use.

Community Input

“Consider monthly weekend market to bring hustle to town centre”

“Create an area similar to Carlow Exchange, Potato Market, Carlow so that Bagenalstown could have a space of endless possibilities”

“More social activities”

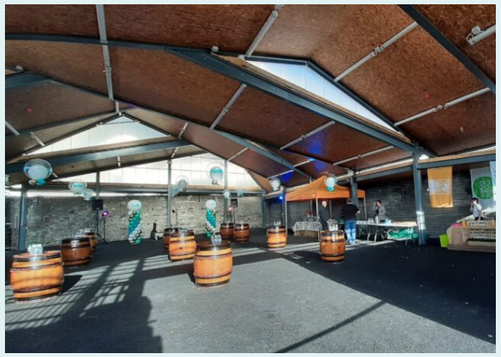


Indicative Proposals showing an Open Event Space or a Motorhome Park

Case Study: The Exchange, Carlow







The Exchange in Carlow Town is a strong example of how an underused urban space can be transformed into a vibrant, flexible public amenity that supports cultural, economic, and community activity. Developed by Carlow County Council and officially opened in September 2022, The Exchange converted a long vacant yard in the historic Potato Market into a 332m² semi covered event space designed to function as a central hub for local life.

The project created a managed, weather resilient venue suitable for a wide range of uses including micro festivals, performances, markets, film screenings, workshops, exhibitions, youth events, and community gatherings. Operated on a not for profit basis through the Local Enterprise Office, the space has quickly become a focal point for social, cultural and economic exchange, hosting over 100 events in its first year. Its distinctive roof structure and open layout provide a strong civic identity for the town centre, while ensuring accessibility and flexibility for diverse users.

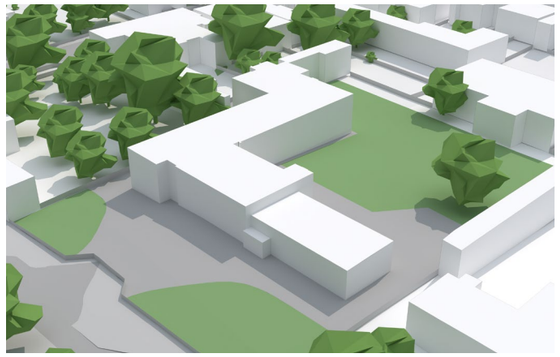
Part funded through the Open Public Spaces Scheme 2021 and the Town & Village Accelerate Scheme, The Exchange now plays an integral role in supporting town centre vitality. It demonstrates how reclaiming derelict or vacant sites can deliver high impact public realm improvements, offering a model for similar community driven spaces in other towns.

P8: Presentation House Adaptive Reuse

Overview

Description

Delivery of a multi-use community and enterprise centre within the historic Presentation Convent. This project will transform the building into a vibrant hub offering flexible spaces for community services, enterprise support, workshops, training, cultural events and social innovation. The reuse of this heritage building will support town centre regeneration, heritage conservation, inclusion and year-round activity, while respecting its architectural significance.



Presentation House

Community Input

“Fabulous idea. Badly needed in the area, a central hub like in other counties.”

“Using the convent as a hub is a good idea but consideration of residents and traffic is essential.”

“That building should be used to expand queen of the universe school.”



The Part 8 Approved Proposal External (image credit: O’Driscoll Lynn Architects)



The Part 8 Approved Proposal Interior (image credit: O’Driscoll Lynn Architects)

Case Study: Station House, Hacketstown, Co. Carlow





The Station House in Hacketstown has been reopened as the Station House Hub, a remote working and enterprise hub. The Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2021 provided funding to redevelop the former fire station house in line with the Town Centre First objectives.

The project was developed by Carlow County Council and Carlow Community Enterprise Centres. The building had fallen into dereliction since the fire station closed but now is an important part of the community providing a space for remote workers and start up local businesses. There are 3 offices and a community and training space in the centre. The building is equipped with modern digital infrastructure to allow for smooth remote working. The hub has also started two flagship infrastructure called Hub Start and Hub Grow to assist new entrepreneurs and current businesses.



Case Study: Safe Routes to Bagenalstown's Schools



St. Bridget's National School

Slite Sábháilte Chun na Scoile
Safe Routes To School

The Safe Routes to School programme in Bagenalstown demonstrates how targeted street improvements can create safer and more accessible routes for children travelling to school. Delivered at St. Brigid's National School and soon to be implemented at Queen of the Universe School, the schemes focus on improving the key spine routes of Royal Oak Road and Station House Road.

At St. Brigid's National School, the completed scheme has introduced measures to slow traffic, improve pedestrian crossings and enhance footpath quality, creating a safer environment for pupils, parents and staff. These changes have made walking and cycling to school more attractive, while improving overall street safety and accessibility for the wider community.

Together, the two projects demonstrate how coordinated interventions along key routes can support active travel, reduce car dependency at peak times and reinforce child-friendly, people-focused streets. They provide a strong foundation for further connectivity improvements within Bagenalstown's Town Centre First Plan.

P9: Vacancy and Dereliction Programme

Overview

Description

A comprehensive audit of vacant and derelict properties within Bagenalstown Town Centre, followed by a targeted activation programme. This initiative will identify priority buildings and sites for reuse, support owners in accessing grants and incentives, and create a clear roadmap for bringing underused buildings back into productive use. The programme will enhance streetscape quality, support town centre living and local economic activity, and strengthen Bagenalstown's appearance and tourism appeal.



Existing Retail & Residential Vacancy

Community Input

"Need affordable / middle income housing downtown."
"Give young people running small businesses from home free rent for 6 months in empty shops to develop the town & themselves."

"Audit of all derelict buildings."



Case Study: Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant



Before



After

The Croí Cónaithe Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant has proven to be an effective tool for addressing vacancy and dereliction across County Carlow. The scheme supports the refurbishment of long-term vacant and derelict buildings, bringing homes back into use while supporting Town Centre First objectives and encouraging living within existing settlements.

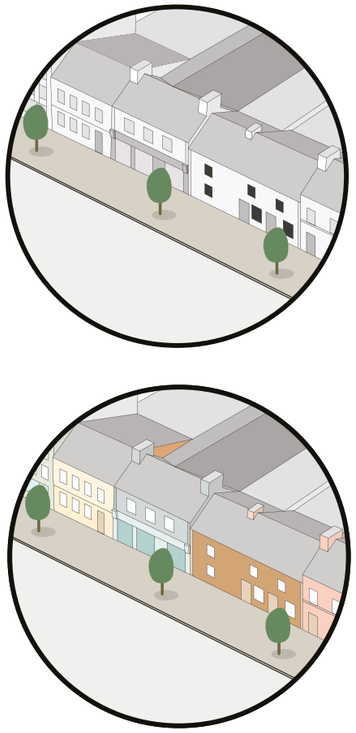
The example shown highlights the scale of transformation possible. Formerly a roofless and structurally compromised stone building, unused for decades, the property has been sensitively restored and extended to create a modern, energy-efficient home. Projects such as this demonstrate the wider value of the Croí Cónaithe scheme, including revitalising housing stock, supporting local construction skills, encouraging repopulation and preventing further deterioration of historic buildings. These outcomes provide a strong foundation for Bagenalstown's Vacancy and Dereliction Activation Programme.

P10: Town Colour & Painting Strategy

Overview

Description

Development of a unified visual identity and colour palette for Bagenalstown to strengthen character and civic pride. This strategy will guide the coordinated painting of building façades, shopfronts, and underused structures, enhancing vibrancy and cohesion. The initiative may include practical guidance, grant support, and community participation, and could be complemented by murals and public art that reflect local heritage and culture.



A Coordinated Painting Strategy

Community Input

"Excellent suggestion- the town is very sad looking and a makeover with thought in the colour palette is a great start."

"Owners should be allowed choice to paint whatever colours they wish."

"Main street first. The owner of the properties should be encouraged to do so."

"Big yes to this, will really brighten the town is people get on boards? Cleaner paths would be great too."

Case Study: Dublin Street, Carlow Painting Strategy



Before



After

The transformation of Dublin Street in Carlow illustrates the impact a coordinated colour and painting strategy can have on a traditional town centre streetscape. Delivered by Carlow County Council in partnership with local businesses and property owners, the project applied a curated colour palette along the street, replacing faded façades with a vibrant and cohesive range of tones.

Before the intervention, the street lacked visual coherence. Following the repainting programme, Dublin Street was significantly revitalised, with bold colours enhancing the architectural character of the terrace while contributing to a unified identity. Combined with planting and public realm improvements, the refreshed façades have created a more welcoming and attractive environment for shoppers, businesses and visitors.

This project demonstrates how design-led painting programmes can strengthen town centre character, support civic pride and animate commercial streets, offering a strong precedent for a similar strategy in Bagenalstown.

Case Study: Dundalk SEEK Project



SEEK Urban Arts Festival is held in the town of Dundalk annually since its inception in 2018. During this around 5 festival murals are painted on buildings throughout the town which then comprise a walking tour.

This tour is an excellent visual display of the history and culture of the town. This project aims to regenerate and refocus the perception of the town as well as giving both local and international artists a platform to display their talents. As the festival has gone on several years the town has an impressive collection of vibrant murals which are of interest to both the locals and tourists.

P11: A Shared Parking Plan & Strategy

Overview

Description

Development of a Shared Parking Plan & Strategy for Bagenalstown. This project will begin with a detailed audit of existing parking provision to assess capacity, usage patterns, and accessibility. The strategy will explore improved signage, short-stay and long-stay zoning, park & stride, better utilisation of underused spaces and improved accessibility for all users. It aims to improve the parking experience for residents, shoppers and visitors and support town centre vibrancy.

Bagenalstown's Shared Parking Plan & Strategy

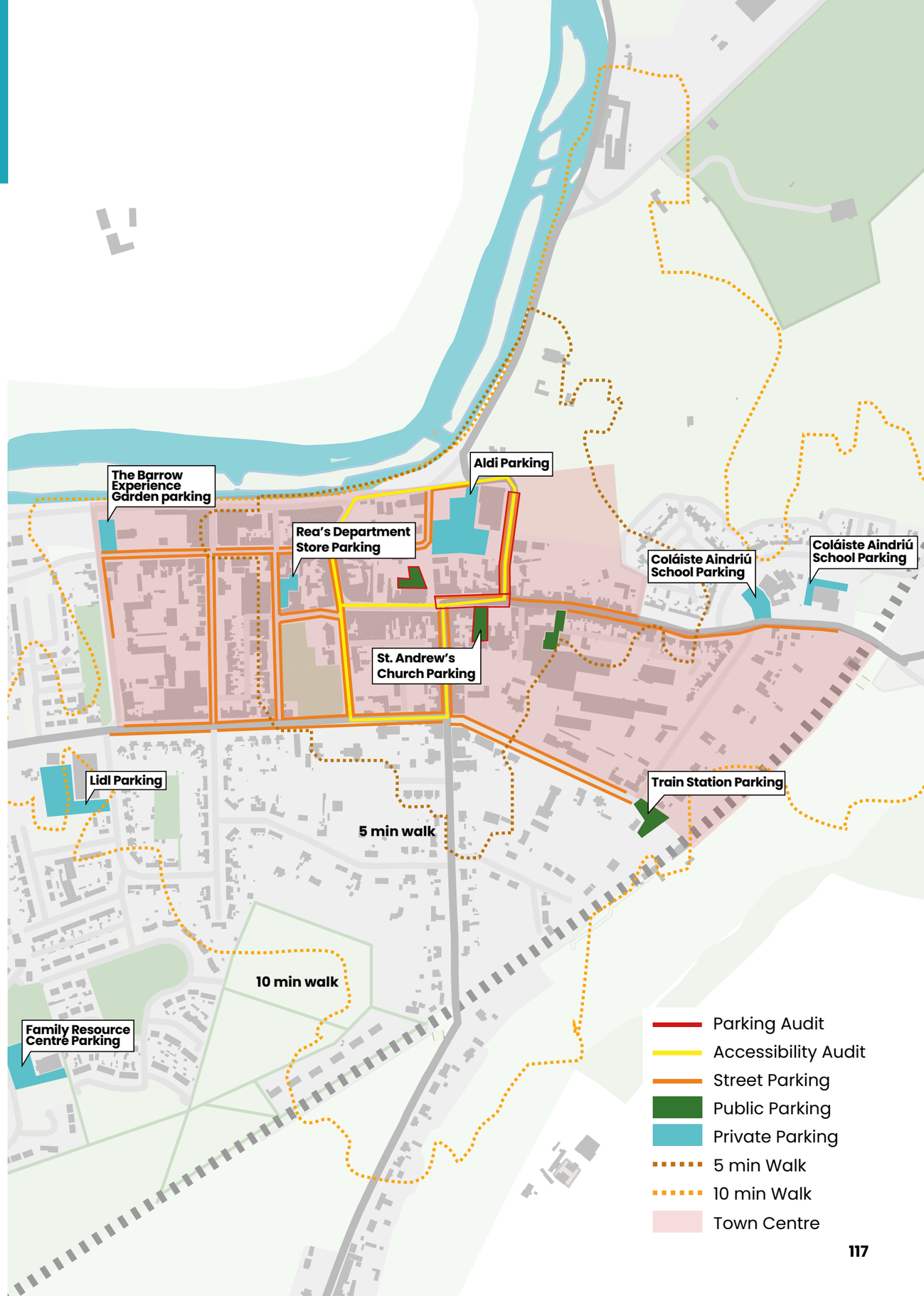
A Shared Town Centre Car Parking Plan

Community Input

"Please don't take away any more spaces it's hard enough to find one."

"Safe, secure all day parking facilities need to be provided for people who work in the town."
"Parking locators to alleviate on street demand."
"Parking centres to support greater access to the town and alleviate congestion."
"Employ a traffic warden."
"No all day parking on Main Street."
"Convenient Parking in the centre of the town."

"No parking fees. Its a rural town where driving is necessary."



P12: Train Station Adaptive Reuse

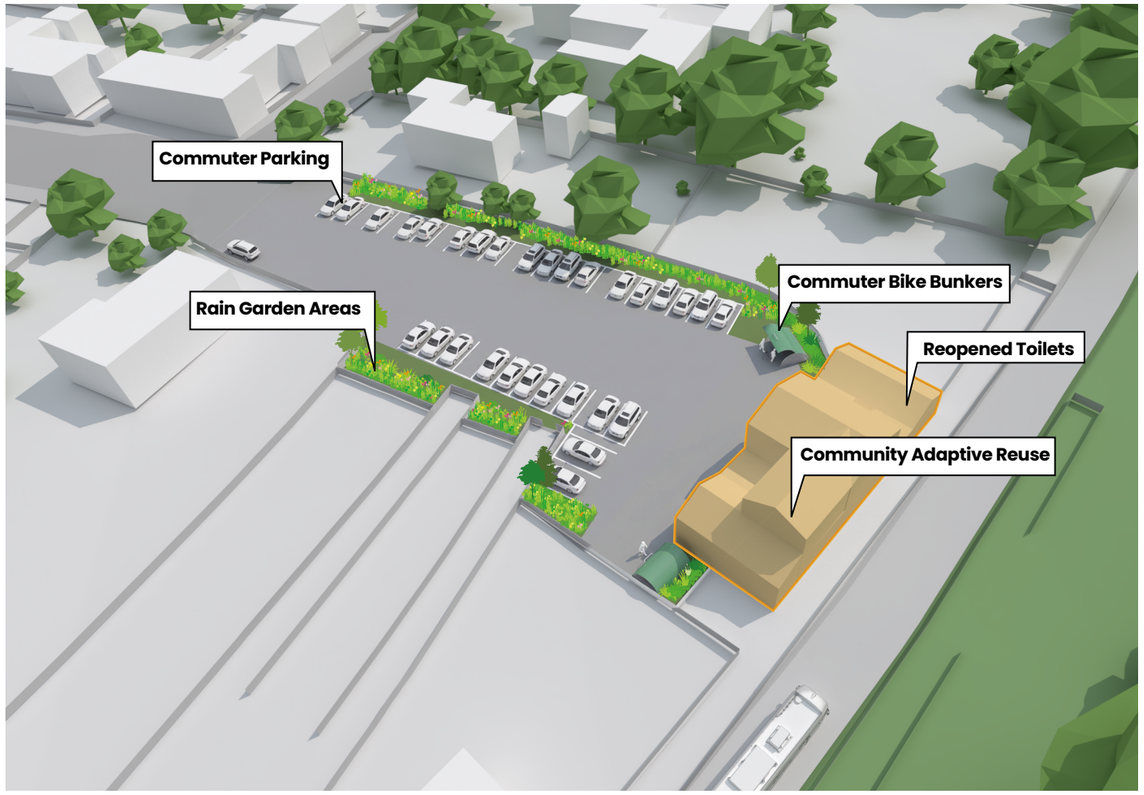
Overview

Description

Repurposing the historic, protected Train Station building to create a vibrant community asset and gateway to Bagenalstown. The project will explore a range of potential uses, including a community café, visitor information point, flexible community space, applying nature-based solutions to the commuter parking area, bike bunkers, and cultural or enterprise uses. The reuse will preserve the building's heritage value while introducing modern amenities and enhancing tourism, accessibility, biodiversity and social life around the station.



Bagenalstown Train Station



Indicative Proposal

Community Input

"Train station should be open for people to use facilities and the older generation to talk to someone there or may need assistance."

"Open it to art groups and other shows that would invite the public to use this beautiful building."

"Station should be open especially the toilets for people to use."

"Possibly for bike storage, also need to reopen public toilets in this area."

"The Bagenalstown train station could be used as a modular cultural space to host various activities including workshops, exhibitions and as a bookable art studio / project space."

Case Study: Abergavenny Train Station Adaptive Reuse





Abergavenny's 160-year-old railway station was reimagined as a vibrant community and cultural hub through the adaptive reuse of previously disused spaces. Supported by investment from Transport for Wales and heritage funding partners, the project transformed parts of the historic station into artist studios and gallery spaces operated by Peak Cymru.

The initiative created new opportunities for local artists, children and young people to engage with creative programmes, while complementing existing station uses such as a family-run café and small businesses. By bringing life back into underused areas, the station demonstrated how historic transport infrastructure could evolve beyond its original function to become an accessible, multifunctional civic space rooted in local identity and everyday community life.

P13: Connected Community & Sport Facilities Programme

Overview

Description

The Connected Community & Sports Facilities Programme proposes a coordinated audit, planning and delivery framework for community and sports facilities within the Bagenalstown District Town Plan boundary. It will review existing facilities and identify opportunities to improve access, avoid duplication, and provide community-requested amenities such as parks, skateparks, pump tracks, Multi-use Games Areas (MUGAs), courts, pitches, BBQ areas, picnic spaces and walking/running routes. The programme supports a phased and funding-aligned approach to delivering win-win facilities that increase connectivity and permeability between neighbourhoods and town centre.

Community Input

"A skatepark would be amazing, I travel for skateparks the one in Gorey is amazing and Athlone."

"More exercise equipment in the fair green."

"Needs to be done in consultation with residents."

"All Season Astro Turf full size + Soccer cages – Multiple 5 aside."

"More activities in the fair green for older children."

"A centre for sport. Running track with large sports centre."

"A municipal multipurpose sporting facility would offer tremendous benefits to the health and mental wellbeing of the whole town."

"The playground could be updated like Carlow Park."

"Fix the heat in the swimming pool."



Indicative Proposal

Case Study: Bike Bunkers Glasgow

In 2023, Cyclehoop was appointed to deliver a secure, app-enabled cycle parking network across Glasgow city centre, funded through Sustrans' Places for Everyone programme and forming part of Glasgow City Council's Avenues Project.

Twenty high-demand locations were identified near workplaces, retail areas and social destinations, providing flexible, short-stay parking that removes key management, enables remote access control and generates valuable usage data. The project was delivered in two phases, with 20 Bike Bunkers installed in total, including a cargo unit. Following a one-month trial, the service launched in September 2023 and has seen strong uptake, with around 50 new users registering via the app each week—demonstrating how secure, digitally managed parking can directly support everyday cycling in city-centre environments.



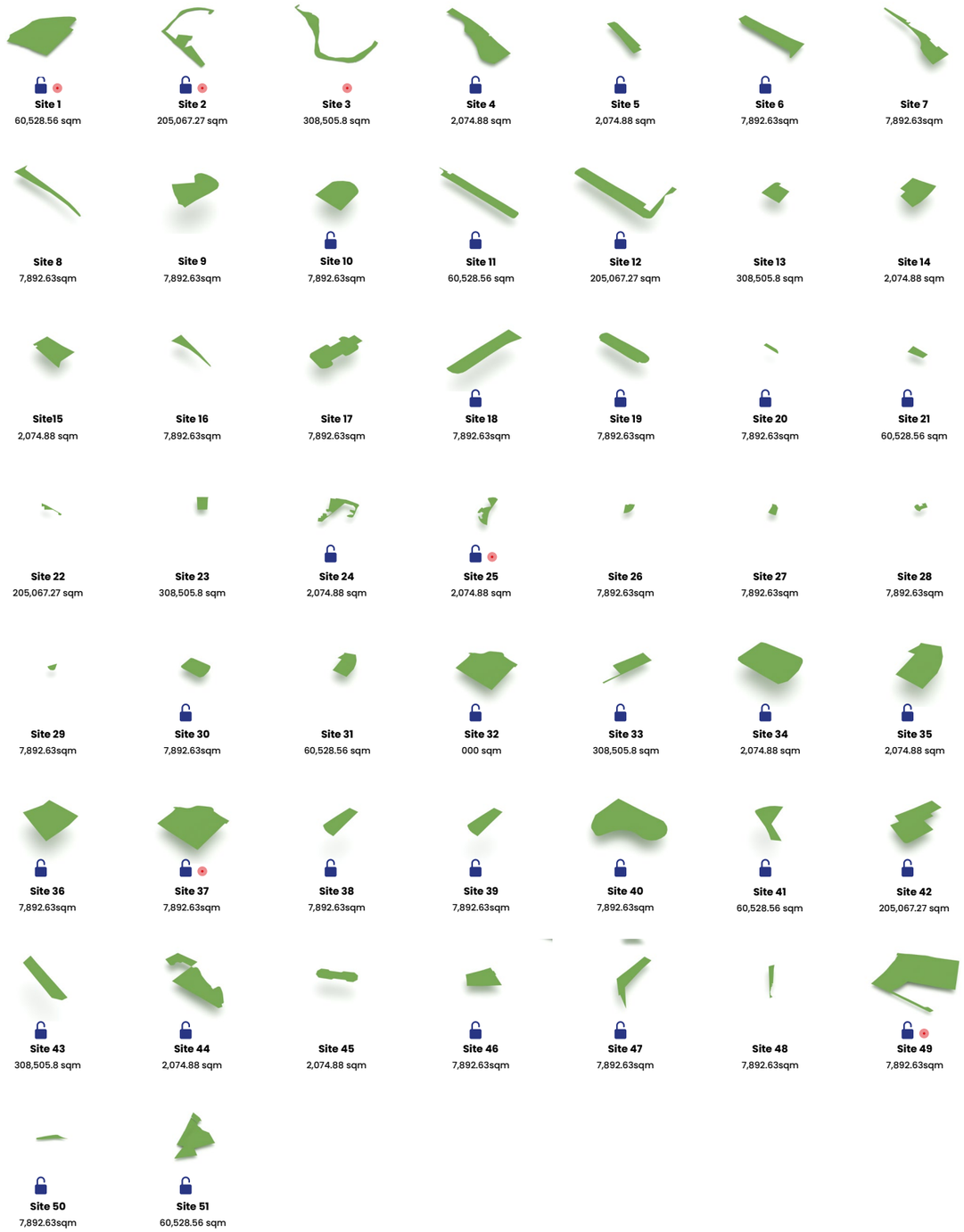


Openspace Overview

Openspace & Amenity Space Overview

Opportunity to support proposed pedestrian & cycle routes

Site, Monuments & Records Zone Present

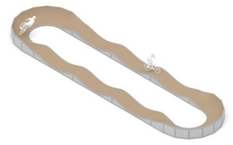


Potential Uses



Pocket forest

50 - 300 sqm



Pump Track

400 - 800 sqm



Skate park

400 - 1,200 sqm



Basketball court

420 - 600 sqm



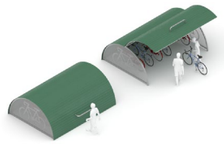
BBQ & Glamping Area

60 - 150 sqm



Community Garden

200 - 2,000 sqm



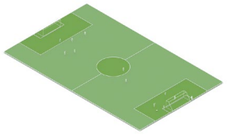
Bike Bunkers

15 - 25 sqm (10 bikes)



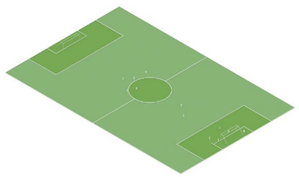
400m Track

15,000 - 18,000 sqm



5 Aside Pitch (Youth)

1,500 - 2000 sqm



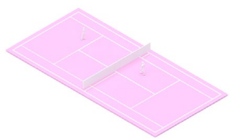
Multi-Use Game Areas (MUGAs)

8,000 sqm



Dog park

400 - 800 sqm



Tennis Court

670 - 720 sqm



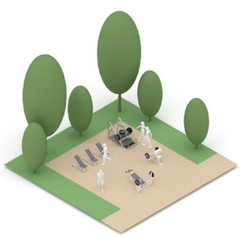
Green Wall

5 - 10m Wall Space
(fed by rainwater gutters)



Rain Garden

variable sqm



Outdoor Gym

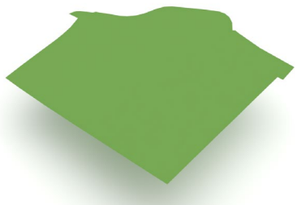
100 - 250 sqm



Applying the Programme

Description

The following pages demonstrate the indicative application of the Connected Community & Sports Facilities Programme to Open Space & Amenity Area (Site No.37), transforming the site into a multifunctional community hub that delivers much-requested recreational facilities for all ages while directly supporting the District Town Plan's walking and cycling routes strategy.



Site 37

5,096 sqm

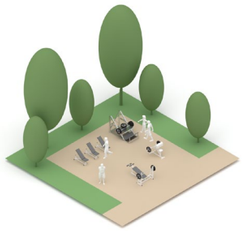
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Skate park

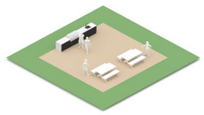
400 - 1,200 sqm

+



Outdoor Gym

100 - 250 sqm



BBQ Area

60 - 150 sqm



Community Garden

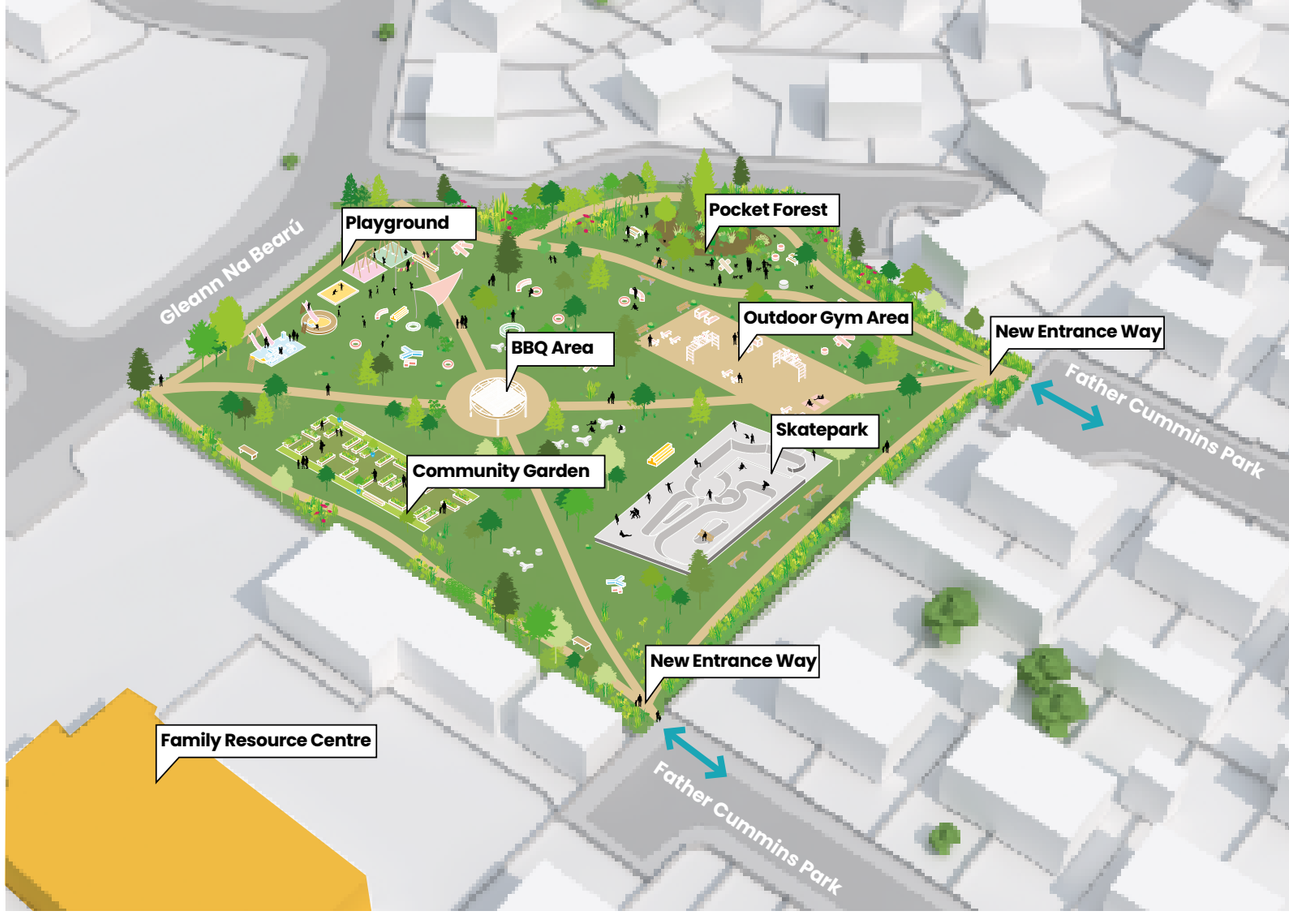
200 - 2,000 sqm

Family Resource Centre

Family 1 Journey (50m)

Family 2 Journey (110m)

Physical Barrier



Indicative Proposal

Case Study: Ballina Sensory Park





The Ballina community has championed a shared vision for an inclusive outdoor environment that actively welcomes neurodivergent children while enhancing local biodiversity.

The project responds to this ambition by providing accessible pathways with clear sensory wayfinding, creating distinct zones for active play and quiet reflection, and introducing pollinator-friendly planting to support nature recovery. Sustainable Urban Drainage measures, including raingardens, are integrated throughout the site to manage surface water naturally while adding educational and ecological value. Together, these elements create a welcoming, resilient space that supports wellbeing, learning and connection with nature for all users.

P14: Riverside Planting Initiative

Overview

Description

Native riparian planting along the River Barrow to enhance biodiversity, improve water quality, and increase flood resilience. This initiative will restore and strengthen the riverbank ecosystem by introducing native trees, shrubs and wildflowers that stabilize riverbanks, reduce runoff, filter pollutants, and create habitats for pollinators and wildlife. The project could also include interpretive signage, community engagement, and links to wider climate action and biodiversity goals.



Native Tree Planting (Image: Pocket Forests)



Potential Planting Zone

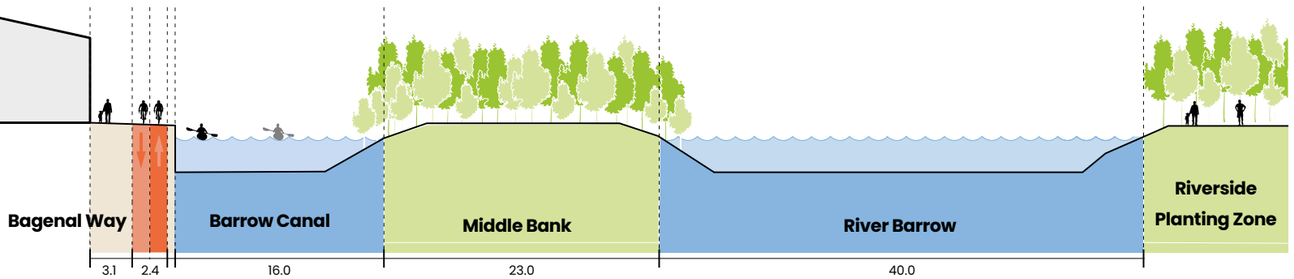
Community Input

"Embrace the nature park element of the River Barrow and the relaxed and quiet banks of the river."

"Ensure any private landowners are in agreement."

"Yes keep sowing trees please."

"Keep the planting appropriate... hawthorn, mountain ash, fruit/crab apple etc."



Indicative Proposal



Indicative Proposal during a Potential Flooding Event

P15: Nature-Based Solutions & Resilience Programme

Overview

Description

The Nature-Based Solutions & Climate Resilience Project Programme embeds climate adaptation, biodiversity and nature recovery into every project within the Bagenalstown Town Centre First Plan.

Recognising that Bagenalstown is becoming wetter and warmer, the programme establishes nature-based solutions as an integrated requirement rather than an add-on. It includes measures such as rain gardens, pocket forests, green walls, habitat corridors, and treating public realm projects as climate adaptation opportunities. It also includes questions and examples to ensure all projects are assessed against climate resilience outcomes.



Community Garden

200 - 2,000 sqm



Pocket Forest

50 - 300 sqm



Green Wall

5 - 10m Wall Space



Rain Garden

variable sqm

NBS and Resilience Focused Solutions

Community Input

"Yes, but please keep the middle and far side of river for nature."

"Keep the planting appropriate - we are a rural town with the Irish country side on the doorstep"

"Rain gardens should be installed and a suitable location found for a green wall. "

"The area needs to be kept as natural as possible."

"Cleaner water in Barrow."



Indicative Proposal

Case Study: Carlow Rain Gardens





A number of Rain Water Gardens have been installed in Carlow Town. The rain gardens are made with a free draining soil mix which helps move runoff water. Street surface water is directed towards the rain garden where the plants use the water and any excess runs to a drainage layer. This provides flood relief as well as enhancing biodiversity in the area. Since the first two gardens were installed funding from LAWPRO has allowed for an additional 14 rain gardens to be installed, replacing unused old concrete areas in the town.

In 2024 Carlow town won 3 awards at the Entente Florale Europe Competition which celebrate local efforts towards environmental excellence. The gardens won an overall Gold Award, the President's Prize for the town's rain garden development and a Special Characteristic Prize for the Delta Sensory Gardens in Carlow.

P16: A Digitally Connected Bagenalstown

Overview

Description

Installation of digital community information boards to share events, services, and real-time updates. These interactive boards will act as a central communication tool, promoting local activities and improving community connectivity. The initiative supports digitally connected town centre regeneration by reducing reliance on paper noticeboards, strengthening Bagenalstown's online presence, and supporting inclusive access to information for residents and visitors. It may also include Wi-Fi measures, online platforms, coordinated digital strategy actions, and support for emergency communications.



A Digitally Active Bagenalstown

Community Input

"Work on a 'I am proud of what we have in Bagenalstown' campaign and have everyone in the town be the concierge and ambassador for the place!"

" Not on the midden of footpaths blocking accessibility."

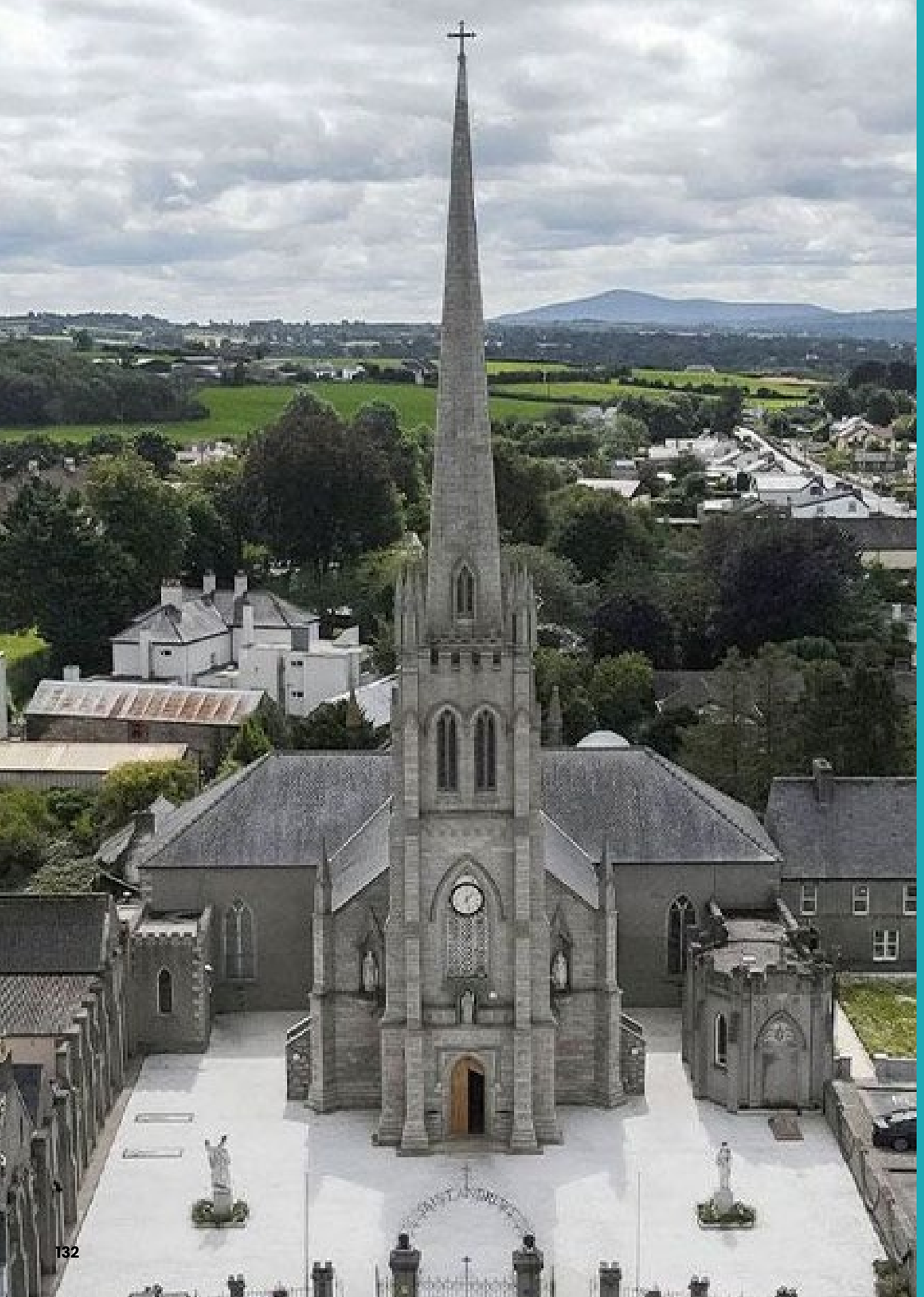
"Solar powered."

"Maybe put in charging benches like Fingal Co Council have done in Dublin."





Indicative Proposal



Town Centre First Plan

Impact & Implementation

Sustainable Development Goals Screening

Potential Projects Impact(s)

What are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a globally agreed framework that define what good development looks like. They provide a shared language for addressing social wellbeing, economic resilience and environmental protection in an integrated way.

Rather than focusing on single outcomes in isolation, the SDGs emphasise balanced development that supports healthy communities, inclusive economies, climate resilience and the protection of natural and cultural heritage. The SDGs align closely with the core objectives of Town Centre First, particularly compact growth, reuse of existing buildings, active travel, improved quality of life, and long-term sustainability.

Localising the SDGs in Ireland

As part of the National Implementation Plan for the SDGs, the Government of Ireland has committed to localising the SDGs, recognising that many of the actions required to achieve them are delivered at local authority and community level.

Irish local authorities are increasingly encouraged to:

- Integrate SDG thinking into plans and strategies
- Use the SDGs as a lens for assessing policy and project impacts
- Demonstrate how local actions contribute to national and global sustainability goals

Town Centre First Plans provide a particularly strong mechanism for this localisation, as they focus on place-based regeneration, reuse of existing assets, active travel, climate resilience and community wellbeing.

Scope and Limitations of this SDG Screening

This SDG Impact Screening represents an initial, high-level assessment of the potential direct SDG impacts of the proposed projects within the Town Centre First Plan.

The screening is:

- Based on initial project descriptions, not detailed designs
- Intended to identify likely areas of SDG contribution, rather than quantify impact
- A strategic overview, not a substitute for detailed assessment

ACT recommends that project-by-project SDG impact assessments are undertaken as each individual project is progressed through design, funding and delivery stages. This will allow impacts to be refined, evidenced and measured appropriately.

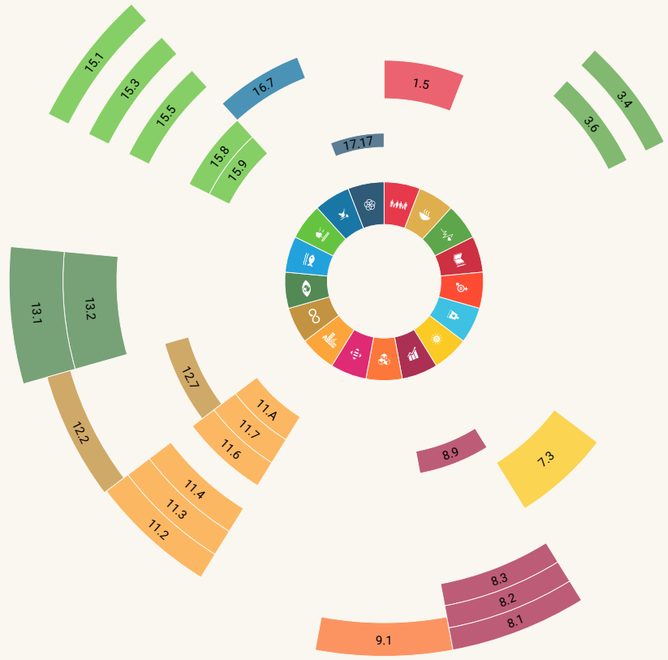
Summary of Potential SDG Contribution

Based on ACT's initial screening, the Town Centre First Plan for Bagenalstown has the potential to contribute to 11 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, through Direct impacts on 26 individual SDG Targets

The strongest areas of potential contribution relate to:

- Inclusive and accessible public spaces
- Active travel and sustainable mobility
- Town centre regeneration and reuse of existing buildings
- Climate resilience and nature-based solutions
- Community wellbeing, social inclusion and local economic vitality

These potential contributions reflect the integrated, place-based nature of Bagenalstown's Town Centre First Plan and its alignment with both national policy objectives and international sustainability principles.



Muine Bheag/ Bagenalstown Town Centre First Plan

Impact Overview

36	11/17	26/169
Tags Selected	SDG Contributions	Target Contributions

Environmental	Economic	Social	Governance
27%	27%	42%	3%

Relevant SDG Goals



Proposed Projects List

Name	Description	Key Enablers	Timeline	Funding Streams	Policy Alignment	Ecology Considerations
P1: An Accessible 'Bagenal Way'	A fully accessible riverside walking and cycling route along the River Barrow, designed for people of all ages and abilities, including wheelchair users. The project delivers inclusive surfacing suitable for wheelchairs and mobility aids, insect-friendly lighting, clear wayfinding signage branded as 'The Bagenal Way', dog bins, seating, and improved bridge accessibility (including bike channels and gentle gradients). The route allows people to walk, cycle, push a pram or use a wheelchair safely along Bagenalstown's river edge, with enhanced access under and onto bridges. Vibrant Bagenalstown-themed murals will animate existing boundary walls along the route.	Local Community. Land Owners. Waterways Ireland. Inland Fisheries. National Parks & Wildlife Services. Disability Advocacy Groups. Carlow County Council. Active Travel Partners. Carlow Tourism. Funding Bodies.	Short Term - 0 to 5 years	TVR, ORIS, RRDF	SDG: 3.6, 11.2, 11.3, 11.7 CDP: WC. P1, WC. P2, SG. P1, AC. P1, LP. P1, PD. O2, CA. P7, GI. P7, NH. P8, IW. P6, IW. P12, HT. P2, HT. P11, HT. P12, HT. P13, GB. P1, R. P5, R. P7, R. P9 DTP: A5.P9, A5.P11, A5.P12, A6. P6, A7. P3, A7. P5, A7. P8, A7. P9, A7. O1, A9. P18, A9. P19, A10. P9, A10.P10, A10. P18, A10. P25	Works must prioritise the conservation objectives of the Barrow and Suir SAC. Use sustainable, recycled or locally sourced materials and low-intensity construction methods. Keep heavy machinery away from the river edge to protect bank integrity. Prevent any aggregate or topsoil entering the river; reuse excavated material in other TCF projects where possible. Integrate SuDS where feasible (permeable finishes, rain gardens where appropriate). Lighting should be low-intensity, warm (<2700K), mounted low with beams <80 degrees, in line with dark-sky guidance. Incorporate native and pollinator-friendly planting (All-Ireland Pollinator Plan), using native provenance stock. The project will be examined and screened for ecological impact during design and implementation.
P2: Riverside Heritage Buildings Reactivation & Middle Bank Access	Reactivation and conservation of key riverside heritage buildings, including the Maltings, Rudkin's Mill, the Mill Building and the Quay Cross Fisherman Building. The project opens the Middle Bank riverside zone as a publicly accessible and vibrant heritage area, enabling passive surveillance and supporting long-term regeneration and activity along the River Barrow. The initiative may include restoration works, improved access, interpretive signage, potential enterprise/ visitor uses, and an improved riverside walking network linked to the town centre.	Local Community. Land Owners. OPW. National Heritage and Conservation Bodies. Disability Advocacy Groups. Carlow County Council. Carlow Tourism. Funding Bodies.	Medium/Long Term - 5 to 15 years	RRDF, ERDF, EU	SDG:11.4 CDP: CS. O12, ED. P17, MB. O7, WC. P3, PD. O2, PS.P 8, ITH. P1, ITH. P2, TVC .P4 DTP: A5.P9, A5. P10, A5. P11, A5.P12, A5. P13, A6.P4, A6. P6, A6. P14, A9. P1, A9. P19, A10.P18, A10. P25, A10.P27, A10. P28, A10.30	Assume bats are present in all heritage buildings; swifts may also be present. Complete bat and bird surveys by a qualified ecologist and apply NPWS guidance prior to any fabric repairs. Identify active swift nests (May–July) and assess bat roost features outside hibernation periods. Repointing should be minimal and timed to avoid entombment risk. Where external works or public realm upgrades occur, maximise permeable paving and SuDS to reduce runoff to the river. Provide native and pollinator-friendly planting using native provenance. Avoid façade illumination; if lighting is required, use bat-sensitive, warm (<2700K), low-level, directional fittings. The project will be examined and screened for ecological impact during design and implementation.
P3: The Riverside Plaza	A new civic gathering space at the start of the Bagenal Way river walk and the northern entrance to Bagenalstown. This welcoming public plaza will overlook the River Barrow and provide a place to meet, rest, and enjoy the water, acting as a social anchor for the river corridor. The plaza will accommodate informal seating, planting, and potentially a small event or performance space. It will strengthen the relationship between the town centre and the river by drawing footfall toward the waterfront, while providing an enhanced public realm experience.	Local Community. Land Owners. Waterways Ireland. Inland Fisheries. National Parks & Wildlife Services. National Transport Authority. Disability Advocacy Groups. Carlow County Council. Carlow Tourism. Funding Bodies.	Short Term - 0 to 5 years	RRDF	SDG:11.3, 11.7 CDP: MB. O7, CA. P2, NH. P8, IW. P6, IW. P12, HT. P12, EF. P1, OS. P2, OS. P5, UD. P1, UD. P2 DTP: A4.P9, A5.P6, A5. P9, A5.P12, A5. P13, A6.P5, A6.P6, A6.O1, A8. P7, A9. P18, A9. P19, A9. P20, A10. P25	Minimise hard surfaces and prioritise green infrastructure: native trees/shrubs, pollinator-friendly planting (All-Ireland Pollinator Plan), and biodiverse planting beds. Use permeable paving where accessible and incorporate SuDS (rain gardens / tree pits / infiltration planters as appropriate) to reduce runoff into the River Barrow. Lighting should be low-intensity, warm (<2700K), low-level and directional, avoiding spill to the river corridor. The project will be examined and screened for ecological impact during design and implementation.
P4: Bagenalstown Motorhome Aire	Development of a serviced motorhome park within or close to the town centre, ideally connected to the river corridor. This community run (social enterprise/CLG purpose) facility will provide secure overnight parking for motorhomes, with essential amenities such as power, water, waste disposal, and shower/ toilet facilities. The project supports tourism and local economic development, encouraging longer visitor stays and increased spending in local businesses, while reinforcing Bagenalstown's position as a destination along the River Barrow.	Local Community. Land Owners. Community Operating Entity. National Transport Authority. Irish Water. ESB Networks. Disability Advocacy Groups.	Short Term - 0 to 5 years	TVR, RRDF	SDG: 8.3, 8.9 CDP: S. O14, ED. P17, MB. O8, SG. P1, HT. P1, HT. P11, HT. P9, HT. P12, HT. P13, TA. P2 DTP: A5.P9, A5.P10, A5.P11, A6. P14, A7. P5, A9. P18, A10. P6	Site selection and layout should avoid sensitive habitats and maintain buffers to the river corridor where relevant. Use permeable paving and SuDS to manage water quality and quantity (oil/interceptor where required, infiltration where feasible) to prevent polluted runoff entering the SAC. Provide native tree and hedge planting and pollinator-friendly species (All-Ireland Pollinator Plan), using native provenance stock. Lighting should be warm (<2700K), low-level and directional to avoid disturbance to bats and riparian habitats. The project will be examined and screened

Proposed Projects List

Name	Description	Key Enablers	Timeline	Funding Streams	Policy Alignment	Ecology Considerations
P5: Virtual Heritage Trail	A town-wide digital heritage experience accessible via mobile devices. Stories, images and audio content will be accessed through QR codes at key heritage sites, allowing visitors and locals to explore Bagenalstown's history in an engaging and interactive format. The project could incorporate multilingual content, links to local services, events and businesses, and connections to existing heritage trails. It strengthens the tourism offer while also supporting local pride and intergenerational learning.	Local Community. Carlow County Council. Carlow Tourism. Funding Bodies.	Short Term - 0 to 5 years	TVR	SDG: 11.4 CDP: S. O14, ED. P17, TD.P8, HT. P1, DTP: A5.P9, A5.P10, A5.P11, A5.P12, A7. P9, A10. P38	Include natural heritage and biodiversity interpretation alongside built heritage The project will be examined and screened for ecological impact during design and implementation.
P6: Court House Renewal	Re-imagining the historic Courthouse as a central civic and community building within Bagenalstown town centre, in line with Town Centre First and placemaking objectives. The project supports a longer-term vision to relocate the existing library to an alternative premises, enabling the Courthouse to be reimagined as a flexible civic and community space. Future uses may include meeting spaces, ceremony and event accommodation, community functions, exhibitions, and other activities that reinforce the role of the town centre as the heart of civic life.	Local Community. Land Owners. Library Service. National Heritage and Conservation Bodies. Disability Advocacy Groups. Carlow County Council. Carlow Tourism. Funding Bodies.	Short Term - 0 to 5 years	TVR, RRDF	SDG: 11.4, 11.7, 15.5 CDP: RT. P13, MB. O6, WC. P3, AC. P1, NB. P1, PD. P1, CG. P1, GI. P2, NH. P4, ND. P6, ND. P7, OS. P2, OS. P5, OS. P7, UD. P1, UD. P2, HW. P1, BH.P2 DTP: A5. P6, A5. P8, A5. P12, A5. P13, A6.P4, A6.P5, A6.P6, A7. P5,	Use native species of local provenance and pollinator-friendly planting aligned with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. Establish wildflower areas on nutrient-poor substrates; avoid enriched topsoil. Reuse rubble/aggregate from other projects where suitable to create free-draining, low-fertility beds. Incorporate permeable surfacing and SuDS where feasible to manage runoff, while maintaining accessibility and non-slip performance. The project will be examined and screened for ecological impact during design and implementation.
P7: Council Yard Site Reactivation	Assessment and development of the Council Yard site to create a vibrant riverside destination that enhances town centre vitality. The site offers significant potential for a range of uses, including community space, motorhome park, enterprise space, food markets, or public realm improvements. The project will explore options that respect surrounding uses, improve access to the river, and bring underutilised land into productive community use.	Local Community. Land Owners. Operating Entity. Disability Advocacy Groups. Carlow County Council. Carlow Tourism. Funding Bodies.	Short Term - 0 to 5 years	TVR, RRDF	SDG: 8.3, 11.7 CDP: ED. O10, RT. P13, MB. O7, AC. P1, PD. O2, CA. P2, NH. P8, HT. P12, GB. P2, OS. P2, OS. P6, OS. P7, UD. P1, UD. P2 DTP: A4.P9, A5.P6, A5. P9, A5.P12, A5. P13, A6.P5, A6.P6, A8. P7,	Use permeable paving and SuDS (rain gardens, infiltration planters, tree pits) to reduce runoff and protect water quality. If any existing buildings/structures are reused or altered, include bat/bird checks and adopt bat-sensitive lighting (warm <2700K, low-level, directional). The project will be examined and screened for ecological impact during design and implementation.
P8: Presentation House Adaptive Reuse	Delivery of a multi-use community and enterprise centre within the historic Presentation Convent. This project will transform the building into a vibrant hub offering flexible spaces for community services, enterprise support, workshops, training, cultural events and social innovation. The reuse of this heritage building will support town centre regeneration, heritage conservation, inclusion and year-round activity, while respecting its architectural significance.	Local Community. Land Owners. Local Enterprise Office. Disability Advocacy Groups. Carlow County Council. Funding Bodies.	Short Term - 0 to 5 years	RRDF	SDG: 7.3, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 17.17 CDP: CSP. 6, CS. O12, CS. O13, ED. O3, ED. P15, ED. P16, ED. O10, PM. O4, PT. O2, URR. P1, SE. P3, PD. P1, CF. P4, CA. P1, BH. P2, BH. P6, HW. P1, TVC. P1, TVC. P4 DTP: A5. P2, A5. P6, A5. P8, A6. P4, A6. P9, A6. P10, A6. P11, A6. P14, A7.	Assume potential bat roosting and nesting birds within the building fabric; complete ecological checks/surveys and follow NPWS guidance prior to works. Public realm / entrance upgrades should maximise permeable paving and SuDS to reduce runoff and improve microclimate. Integrate native and pollinator-friendly planting aligned with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (native provenance). Avoid unnecessary façade lighting; where required, use bat-sensitive warm lighting (<2700K), low-level and directional, avoiding spill. The project will be examined and screened for ecological impact during design and implementation.
P9: Vacancy and Dereliction Programme	A comprehensive audit of vacant and derelict properties within Bagenalstown Town Centre, followed by a targeted activation programme. This initiative will identify priority buildings and sites for reuse, support owners in accessing grants and incentives, and create a clear roadmap for bringing underused buildings back into productive use. The programme will enhance streetscape quality, support town centre living and local economic activity, and strengthen Bagenalstown's appearance and tourism appeal.	Property Owners. Housing Agencies. Carlow County Council. Funding Bodies.	Immediate start and will remain ongoing	Croi Conaithe VPRG, Over the Shop Grant, SHIP, CRF,	SDG: 7.3, 8.1, 8.3, 11.3 CDP: CS. O12, ED. O10, PM. O1, PM. O2, RT. P11, HW. P1, TVC. P1, TVC. P4, CGR. P1, SF P1 DTP: A4.P3, A4. P9, A4. O3, A6. P1, A6. P2, A6. P3, A6. P4, A6. P5, A6. P10, A6. P11, A6. P12, A6. P13, A6. P14, A10. P1, A10. P4	Assume bats and nesting birds may be present in older/ derelict buildings. Require proportionate bat/bird checks as part of activation feasibility and prior to works, with seasonal constraints and NPWS guidance as applicable. Encourage green infrastructure as part of reactivation (courtyard planting, climbers/green walls where suitable, pollinator-friendly planting) and integrate permeable surfaces and SuDS in yards/laneways to reduce runoff and heat stress. The project will be examined and screened for ecological impact during design and implementation.

Proposed Projects List

Name	Description	Key Enablers	Timeline	Funding Streams	Policy Alignment	Ecology Considerations
P10: Town Colour & Painting Strategy	Development of a unified visual identity and colour palette for Bagenalstown to strengthen character and civic pride. This strategy will guide the coordinated painting of building façades, shopfronts, and underused structures, enhancing vibrancy and cohesion. The initiative may include practical guidance, grant support, and community participation, and could be complemented by murals and public art that reflect local heritage and culture.	Property Owners. Carlow County Council. Funding Bodies.	Short Term - 0 to 5 years	TVR	SDG: n/a CDP: CA. P2, CA. P6, CA. P7, HT. P2, CA. P1, CA. P4, UD. P2, SF P1 DTP: A5.P7, A5.P12, A9. P19, A10. P30	Encourage inclusion of natural heritage themes and pollinator messaging. Use low-VOC paints/finishes where possible.
P11: A Shared Parking Plan & Strategy	Development of a Shared Parking Plan & Strategy for Bagenalstown. This project will begin with a detailed audit of existing parking provision to assess capacity, usage patterns, and accessibility. The strategy will explore improved signage, short-stay and long-stay zoning, park & stride, better utilisation of underused spaces and improved accessibility for all users. It aims to improve the parking	Local Businesses. Local Residents. National Transport Authority. Gardai. Disability Advocacy Groups.	Short Term - 0 to 5 years	Carlow County Council, TII	SDG: 3.6, 11.6, 16.7, 17.17 CDP: PR. P1, SG. P1, CP. P5, CP. P6, GI. P8, UD. P1, UD. P2, HW. P1 DTP: A7.P2, A7.P15, A7.O8, A7.O9, A8. P7, A10. P6, A10. P24	Permeable paving should be a default option where feasible to reduce runoff entering the SAC, supported by SuDS (tree pits, rain gardens, infiltration planters). The project will be examined and screened for ecological impact during design and implementation.
P12: Train Station Adaptive Reuse	Repurposing the historic, protected Train Station building to create a vibrant community asset and gateway to Bagenalstown. The project will explore a range of potential uses, including a community café, visitor information point, flexible community space, applying nature-based solutions to the commuter parking area, bike bunkers, and cultural or enterprise uses. The reuse will preserve the building's heritage value while introducing modern amenities and enhancing tourism, accessibility, biodiversity and social life around the station.	Local Community. Irish Rail. Community Operating Entity. Disability Advocacy Groups. Carlow County Council. Carlow Tourism. Funding Bodies.	Short Term - 0 to 5 years	LEADER, TVR, RRDF, CCF	SDG: 3.4, 9.1, 11.A,11.4 CDP: ED. P17, ED. P17, RT. P11, RT. P13, MB. O5, WC. P1, WC. O5, WC. O6, PT. P1, SG. P1, AC. P1, CF. P4, CA. P1, BH. P2, BH. P6, PS.P 8, ITH. P1, ITH. P2, HT. P2, HT. P9, R. P10, UD. P1, TVC. P1, TVC. P4 DTP: A5. P8, A5. P9, A5.	Assume potential bat roosting within the building fabric; complete bat checks/surveys and follow NPWS guidance prior to works. Any forecourt/public realm upgrades should maximise permeable paving and SuDS (rain gardens/ tree pits) to reduce runoff. Integrate native and pollinator-friendly planting aligned with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (native provenance). Lighting should be bat-sensitive: warm (<2700K), low-level, directional, and avoiding spill to rooflines/roost features. The project will be examined and screened for ecological impact during design and implementation.
P13: Connected Community & Sport Facilities Programme	The Connected Community & Sports Facilities Programme proposes a coordinated audit, planning and delivery framework for community and sports facilities within the Bagenalstown District Town Plan boundary. It will review existing facilities and identify opportunities to improve access, avoid duplication, and provide community-requested amenities such as parks, skateparks, pump tracks, Multi-use Games Areas (MUGAs), courts, pitches, BBQ areas, picnic spaces and walking/running routes. The programme supports a phased and funding-aligned approach to delivering win-win facilities that increase connectivity and permeability between neighbourhoods and town centre.	Local Community. Land Owners. Disability Advocacy Groups. Carlow County Council. Funding Bodies.	Short Term to Long Term - 0 to 15 years	TVR, ORIS, Active Travel, Carlow County Council	SDG: 3.4, 3.6, 9.1, 11.6, 11.7, 13.2, 16.7 CDP: WC. P1, WC. P3, WC. O2, WC. O3, WC. O4, NB. P1, YP. P2, PD. P1, PD. O2, CG. P1, GI. P7, GI. P8, NH. P1, ND. P6, ND. P7, R. P4, R. P9, OS. P2, OS. P5, OS. P7, PA. P1, UD. P1, UD. P2, HW. P1 DTP: A5.P12, A6.P5, A6.P6, A6.P16, A7.P1,	All new and upgraded facilities should integrate green infrastructure as a baseline: native and pollinator-friendly planting (All-Ireland Pollinator Plan), permeable surfaces, and SuDS drainage (rain gardens, swales, infiltration planters) proportionate to project scale. Avoid habitat loss where possible and provide ecological enhancement (hedgerows, trees, wildflower meadows on appropriate substrates). Lighting should be warm and directional, with bat-sensitive measures near green corridors and water. The project will be examined and screened for ecological impact during design and implementation.
P14: Riverside Planting Initiative	Native riparian planting along the River Barrow to enhance biodiversity, improve water quality, and increase flood resilience. This initiative will restore and strengthen the riverbank ecosystem by introducing native trees, shrubs and wildflowers that stabilize riverbanks, reduce runoff, filter pollutants, and create habitats for pollinators and wildlife. The project could also include interpretive signage, community engagement, and links to wider climate action and biodiversity goals.	Local Community. Land Owners. Waterways Ireland. Inland Fisheries. National Parks & Wildlife Services. Catchment Flood Risk Assessment & Management (CFRAM) liaison.	Short Term - 0 to 5 years	Climate Action Funding, Forestry,	SDG: 13.1, 15.1, 15.3, 15.4, 15.8 CDP: S. O8, WQ. P4, FR. P5, NB. P1, LA. P5, GI. P2, GI. P3, NH. P1, NH. P4, NH. P8, ND. P6, ND. P7, IW. P1, IW. P2, IW. P6, IW. P12, HT. P2, DTP: A8.P14, A10. P6, A10.P7, A10.P8, A10.P11,	Planting must be compatible with SAC objectives and will require an afforestation licence from DAFM where applicable. Use native riparian species of native provenance and design for bank stabilisation, habitat enhancement, and shading benefits. Avoid invasive species and manage establishment to protect water quality. Native woodland types FT2 and FT3 should be considered where appropriate. The project will be examined and screened for ecological impact during design and implementation.

Proposed Projects List

Name	Description	Key Enablers	Timeline	Funding Streams	Policy Alignment	Ecology Considerations
P15: Nature-Based Solutions & Resilience Programme	The Nature-Based Solutions & Climate Resilience Project Programme embeds climate adaptation, biodiversity and nature recovery into every project within the Bagenalstown Town Centre First Plan. Recognising that Bagenalstown is becoming wetter and warmer, the programme establishes nature-based solutions as an integrated requirement rather than an add-on. It includes measures such as rain gardens, pocket forests, green walls, habitat corridors, and treating public realm projects as climate adaptation opportunities. It also includes questions and examples to ensure all projects are assessed against climate resilience outcomes.	Local Community. Land Owners. LAWPRO. Carlow County Council. Funding Bodies.	Short Term to Long Term - 0 to 15 years	LAWPRO, Climate Action Funding, Carlow County Council	SDG: 1.2, 3.4, 4.7,11.6, 11.7, 13.1, 13.2, 15.1, 15.5, 15.8, 15.9, 16.7 CDP: S. O8, S. O9, S. O10, FR. P5, NB. P1, GI. P2, GI. P3, GI. P4, GI. P7, GI. P8, NH. P1, NH. P4, NH. P8, ND. P6, ND. P7, IW. P1, IW. P2, IW. P6, IW. P12, HT. P2, UD. P1, UD. P2 DTP: A5. P12, A6. P5, A6. P6, A8. P7, A8. O3,	All species used should be native and of native provenance. Ornamental planting should be screened for invasive risk; avoid non-designated but high-risk invasives (e.g., montbretia, cherry laurel) using National Biodiversity Data Centre risk listings. Embed SuDS, permeable finishes, rain gardens, pocket forests, habitat corridors and biodiversity uplift as standard across projects. The project will be examined and screened for ecological impact during design and implementation.
P16: A Digitally Connected Bagenalstown	Installation of digital community information boards to share events, services, and real-time updates. These interactive boards will act as a central communication tool, promoting local activities and improving community connectivity. The initiative supports digitally connected town centre regeneration by reducing reliance on paper noticeboards, strengthening Bagenalstown's online presence, and supporting inclusive access to information for residents and visitors. It may also include Wi-Fi measures, online platforms, coordinated digital strategy actions, and support for emergency communications.	Local Community. Local Businesses. Land Owners. LAWPRO. Carlow County Council. Carlow Tourism. Local Enterprise Office. Funding Bodies.	Short Term - 0 to 5 years	LEO, IT, Tourism	SDG: 8.3, 17.17 CDP: RT. P12, MB. O8, TD. P8, UD. P2, WC. O4, ED. P15, ED. P17, PM. O1, PM. O2, EF.P1 DTP: A5. P5, A5. P6, A5. P8, A5. P9, A5. P11, A5. P12, A5.P13, A5. P14, A6. P6, A6. P10, A6. P11, A9. P20	Locate infrastructure to avoid habitat disturbance and minimise excavation. Where boards are near the river/ green corridors, avoid light spill and use wildlife-sensitive settings. Consider integrating biodiversity messaging (pollinators, invasive species, SAC awareness) within digital content. The project will be examined and screened for ecological impact during design and implementation.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1: AA Screening - Muine Bheag Town Centre First Report
APPENDIX 2: SEA Screening - Muine Bheag Town Centre First Report
APPENDIX 3: Collaborative Town Centre Health Check (CTCHC) Report
APPENDIX 4: SWOT Summary
APPENDIX 5: Parking Survey
APPENDIX 6: Muine Bheag / Royal Oak District Town Plan
APPENDIX 7: Digital Blueprint
APPENDIX 8: Accessibility Audit