



Rialtas na hÉireann Government of Ireland Tionscadal Éireann Project Ireland 2040

**Ár dTodhchaí Tuaithe**Our Rural
Future



**Comhairle Contae Chill Dara** Kildare County Council



Brady Shipman Martin Built. Environment.

# Foreword

### A Masterplan

"A Town Renewal Masterplan is effectively a blueprint to guide the rejuvenation of a town or village. It is informed by a robust analysis, including for example the historical context (urban morphology), urban 'health checks,' land use surveys, building condition surveys, analysis of movement patterns (pedestrian movement/footfall and vehicular movement), car parking analysis, architectural heritage appraisals and urban design character and it is generally supported by extensive public consultation. As part of the Renewal Masterplan process a number of priority projects are identified for delivery."

(Table 14.1 - Kildare County Council Placemaking Strategies, County Development Plan)

Although not a statutory document, the Masterplan supports the objectives of the County Development Plan and the relevant Local Area Plans. The Masterplan is unique to each town and will focus on maximising the potential of the built and natural heritage by using existing assets to enhance their role as visitor destinations and helping to create new local employment opportunities. A tailored approach to each settlement's regeneration will provide for the development and enhancement of their overall function and 'unique selling point' (USP) through the identification and implementation of priority projects.

It should be viewed as a long-term plan of action (20+ years) which has been developed and agreed in consultation with residential and commercial

stakeholders from the town/village, the Elected Members and the relevant Departments within the Local Authority

The Masterplan is an important addition to the application process for URDF, RRDF and Town and Village funding where a greater priority is given to the funding of projects which are considered part of an overall town plan.

The projects identified for delivery are not prioritised within the document. Projects will be delivered when funding becomes available through the various town renewal funding streams, LPT or in partnership with other Local Authority departments to leverage available funding from other work programmes.

It should be noted that the projects identified in the Masterplan are conceptual only and are subject to appropriate planning consents and further consultation processes prior to detail design stage.

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# Introduction

### Introduction

The Castledermot Small Town Renewal Masterplan is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development under the 2019 Town and Village Renewal Scheme. It has been produced by Brady Shipman Martin Built Environment on behalf of Kildare County Council.

The strategy for this Small Town Renewal Masterplan (STRMP) is evidence based and has been developed by a multidisciplinary team. Extensive public consultation was undertaken with the local community, stakeholders and the Elected Members of the Municipal District at various stages of the STRMP process, and the feedback received together with urban design analysis informed and shaped the Delivery Projects identified in the masterplan. The Small Town Renewal Masterplan aligns with national, regional and local policies and its purpose is to guide and support the renewal and regeneration of Castledermot to create an attractive and thriving commercial and social centre in which to live, work and visit.

The STRMP sets out a renewal framework for the sustainable development of Castledermot over the next 20+ years. The implementation of the plan will enhance the liveability of the small town environment, improve pedestrian and cyclist connections and safety, with a particular emphasis on enhanced biodiversity and greening of the small town and sustainable urban drainage, all contributing towards climate change measures and improving the overall resilience and

attractiveness of the small town. The Delivery Projects identified in the plan are realistic and achievable. They will be delivered through a combination of local authority led projects and community led projects.

It is envisaged that the STRMP will enable the local authority to leverage a range of funding opportunities at EU and national level, including, Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF), Town and Village Renewal and the Eurpoean Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Programme.



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# Introduction

### Aims and Intentions

The central aim of this study is to support the renewal of Castledermot in order to improve the living and working environment of the community and increase its potential to support economic activity into the future

The overall intention is to:

- Increase the attractiveness of the small town as a local commercial and social centre and consequently increase its sustainability as a place in which to live and work
- Enhance the town environment, amenities and biodiversity in the interests of residents, businesses and visitors
- Promote the town potential for tourism and as a centre for culture and local heritage, thus enhancing the sense of identity physically and socially

The Small Town Renewal Master Plan seeks to build upon the strong asset base of Castledermot, to ensure it retains its identity, to contribute to its enhancement and to create opportunities which are unique to Castledermot for its citizens to identify with. As a town with growth potential, it needs to ensure that its current and future growth areas stitch into the town centre and its community base, and draw on its character and sense of place.

A clear sense of identity can be enabled by the creation of a strong and identifiable public realm, with activities, biodiversity and offerings bespoke to Castledermot. This in turn will contribute to competitiveness by influencing the image of the overall town and making it more attractive for people who live, work and visit.

An interactive and animated public realm brings people together. Connecting the town centre, River Lerr, Fair Green and surrounding residential areas, employment and education facilities with seamless synergy between civic spaces, streets and laneways, and between natural and physical assets is important for success. This requires improved walking and cycling routes through the town with less emphasis on private car use.

**Heritage and character** of a place can be derived from its natural and physical features and assets. Ease of access between such features, including spaces, streets, laneways, open spaces, biodiverse landscaping and public buildings all play a part in the character of a place and access to such determines how users circulate, travel, and interact within the town.

**A connected town** where inclusive connectivity is provided at every level for all people. This requires connectivity between public transport, streets, spaces, amenities, laneways and green spaces.

A comfortable place should be durable and adaptable. Comfort within and between public spaces, buildings and natural features creates good experiences for users.

A successful economy operates in a cyclical manner; ever evolving to adapt and maintain competitiveness. The foundation of a legible and connected public realm can enable an efficient and flexible business economy.

**An accessible town** is an inviting town. Connecting all components of the town, via safe and integrated accessibility encourages people to visit and more importantly to return.

# **Objectives**

The objectives of the Small Town Renewal Master Plan (STRMP) are driven by the specific characteristics of Castledermot and also by what are considered to be the essence of a successful town. All objectives are of equal importance.

The objectives of the Small Town Renewal Master Plan are to:

Success is not simply a question of the look, feel and quality of a town, but also how it functions physically, performs economically, and provides an authentic and memorable experience for locals, visitors, and tourists alike.

Create opportunities for
enabling strategies that
the local community, stakeholders,
and Kildare County Council can
support and sustain for the future
development of the town.

Re-balance the

movement network
ensuring accessibility for all. To
further enhance the walking and
cycling environment, prioritizing
public over private transport, and
creating safe connections and
places for people.

Enhance the **vitality** and **vibrance** of Castledermot through ensuring **future growth** and underutilised/derelict sites are woven into the town and the urban structure is consolidated.

5.
Enhance landscape quality and positive 'sense of place' in the town to help combat the effects of climate change and support higher property values and rental yields.

Create an enhanced
environment for people
living, working, and visiting the
town through public realm
interventions, encouraging,
and sustaining economic
growth.

Create a Compact
Low-Carbon Climate
Resilient town including
strategic regeneration proposals
incorporating best practice in lowcarbon placemaking and design of
sustainable transport modes and
enhancement of biodiversity in the
town through blue and green
infrastructure.

# Context & Character

# **History and Development**

Castledermot (Díseart Diarmada) is a small town located in the south of County Kildare and is mainly accessed from M9 which bypasses the town to the west. The town lies 10 km from Carlow Town and 11 km from Athy.

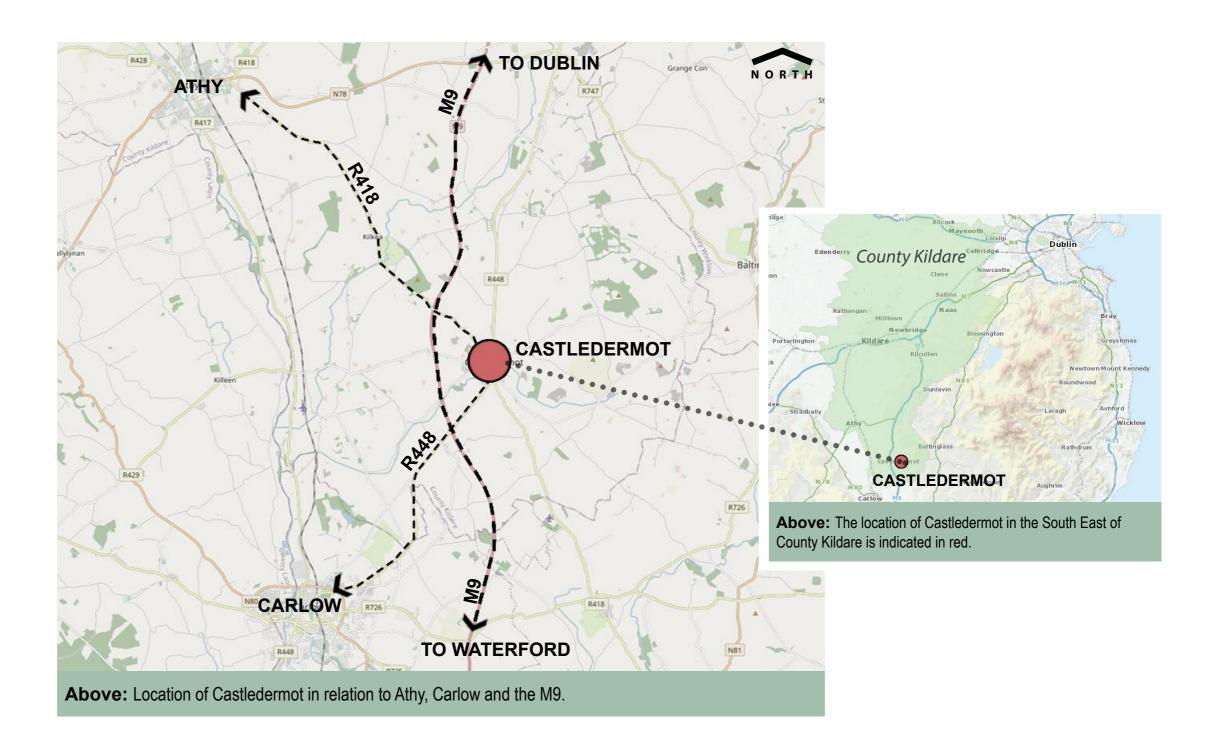
Castledermot is a service centre for the surrounding rural hinterland.

The town is of ancient walled settlement origin. It is picturesque, with elements of geographical, archaeological, architectural, historical and cultural significance. The River Lerr (a tributary of the larger River Barrow, the second longest river in Ireland) flows through the town.

The town of Castledermot has developed from a monastic settlement founded by Diarmait O Aedh Roin circa 600AD. The town was walled in the 13th century, by which time two important ecclesiastic centres had been established; St. John's Priory and the Franciscan Monastery. The dissolution of the monasteries saw the role of Castledermot decline. From being an important religious centre it became a service centre for the surrounding rural hinterland, a role it retains to this day.

Today, Castledermot town has a population of 1,685 people (Census 2022).

The prime land use within Castledermot is residential, retail, commercial with some community, sport and agricultural land uses. The key destinations to and within the town include the two schools, the health centre, community centre, the retail/ commercial core focused around Market Square. The zoning objectives for Castledermot include new residential, industry and warehousing, enterprise and employment and agriculture.



The R448 is the main road link through Castledermot, connecting the town to Kilcullen in the north and the M9 to the west. The R418 and other local roads connect Castledermot to the wider regional and local road network and rural hinterlands.

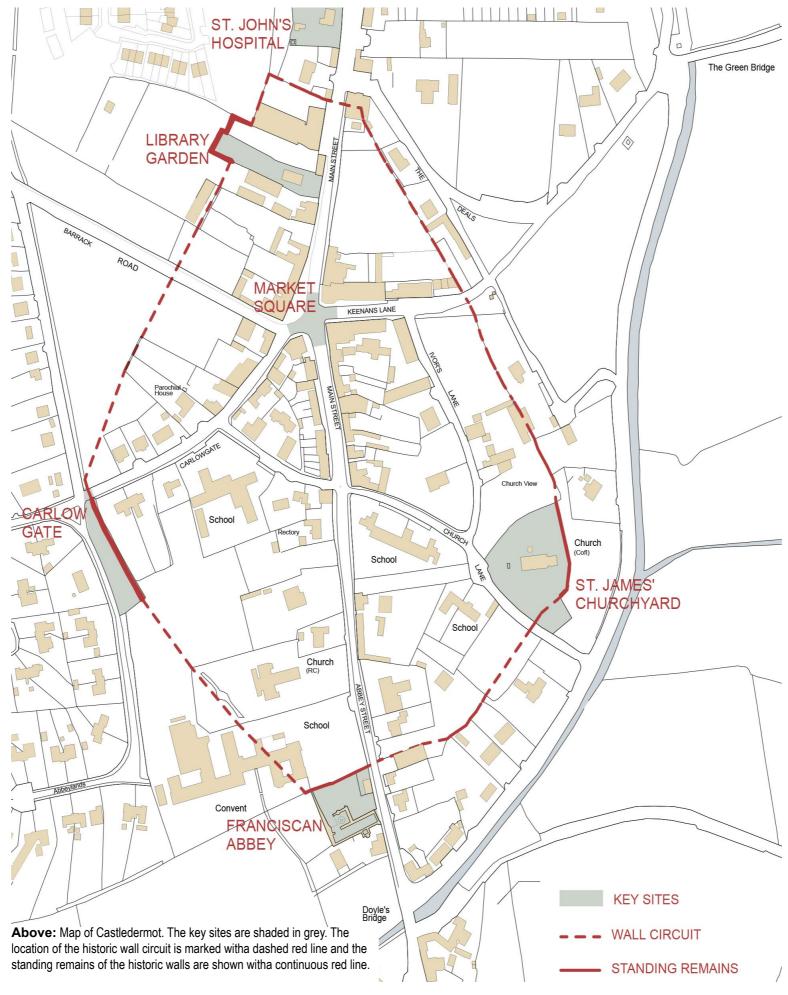
The M9 provides a connection to Dublin in the north-east and Waterford City in the south.

Castledermot is served by bus route 736, providing services to Carlow and Waterford in the south and to Dublin Airport and City Centre. The town is also served by Kildare Local Link route 880 providing services between Carlow and Naas town centre.

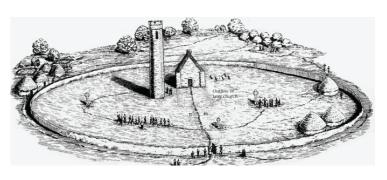
The town centre is a typical townscape with two storey streets, traditional back lanes and laneways, with evidence of past agricultural and industrial use. The town's street pattern reflects its historical development and there are still some sections of the old town wall standing.

Traditionally a market town, streets lead to the Market Square at the town's centre point, a place for gathering. There are number of arterial streets off the main street creating permeability and walkability, leading to heritage sites, River Lerr and other places of historical and natural interest.

Castledermot is a larger town with good community facilities, proximate to natural amenities and a number of built heritage features.



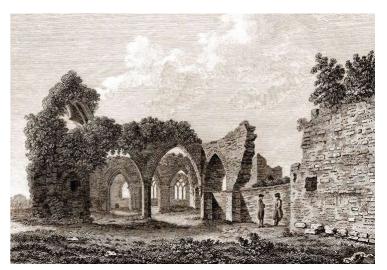
**Below:** Diseart Diarmada as it might have appeared in the 800s around St. James' Churchyard. This reconstructed view is taken from the excellent Dúchas interpretation panels on the site, and shows the earliest church, the 20m high round tower (which still stands today) and the two ornate high crosses, which also remain intact.



**Right:** High Cross in St. James' Churchyard (National Library)



**Below:** Abbey of Castle Dermot, Dan Grose, 1793



### **Historic Time Line.**

Below and to the right is a timeline representing the key dates in the history of the development of Castledermot.

> Ecclesiastical development of the town with the construction of Franciscan Friary. Following Anglo-Norman invasion, Castledermot burgesses received a murage grant from the King in 1295. Between 1295 and 1302 the town wall was substantially completed.

Town was changing hands between the English Crown and local Irish Kings several times. First recorded evidence of the modern name for the settlement, Castledermot.

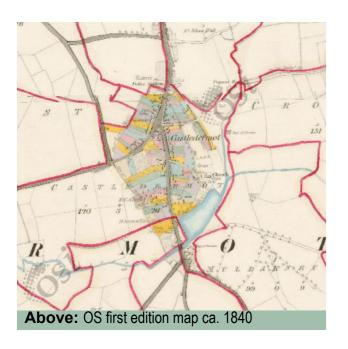
Diseart Diarmada founded (c.600)

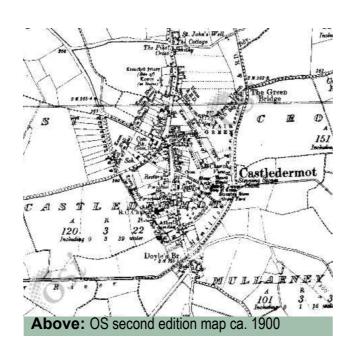
7th Century 9th Century 10th Century 11th Century 13th Century 14th Century 15th Century

Devastating Viking raids destroyed the monastery and the Vikings became resident at The town grew in size and importance partially due to its strategic location on the main route

this location.

due to its strategic location on the main route from Dublin to the south-east. It was also used as a site for regular meetings and preliminary sessions for King's Council.









Castledermot was almost fully burnt down with its walls pulled down. Since the loss of both administrative and religious functions, the town became dependent on its market.

New Catholic Church of Assumption, a Methodist Church constabulary barracks and a small courthouse were built in town, while St. James's Church of Ireland was rebuilt on the earlier medieval church site. The Kilcullen to Carlow section of the new M9 motorway was opened, bypassing the town centre with a single entry point in the south. As a result, the new residential development has spread to the north, south and west of the old town core. Recently a primary school along R418 to the north west of the town centre and a playground along Fair Green has been built in Castledermot.

16<sup>th</sup> Century 17<sup>th</sup> Century 18<sup>th</sup> Century 19<sup>th</sup> Century 20<sup>th</sup> Century 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Dissolution of the monasteries by King Henry VIII led to the town losing its key religious institutions and falling into decline.

The market has been discontinued, no trade or manufacturing was present in town and the place was described as wholly dependent on agriculture and of village character.

A number of housing estates were built to the west of Castledermot town centre. In light of the population growth, many existing dwellings in the town centre were re-roofed or restored and new public buildings were built by the end of the century.

### **Development Framework**

Volume 2 of the Kildare Development Plan provides a planning framework for the development of small towns and villages. Section 2.2 describes Castledermot's form, context and objectives for future development.

The main function of Castledermot is as a service centre. This includes convenience shops, educational facilities, churches, pubs, cafes, pharmacy, hairdressers etc. Castledermot is also a commuter centre for workers in Dublin and Carlow utilising the excellent links provided by the M9 motorway.

Objectives in Castledermot relate to housing, the town centre, movement and transport (specifically road safety).

### **Principles of Development**

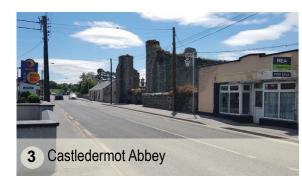
The principles of development for the town are as follows:

- Consolidating development within the town centre followed by the sequential development of land/ sites in a logical progression from the town centre to the edge of the development boundary of the town where appropriate.
- Encouraging the **re-use and redevelopment** of under-utilised, derelict and vacant sites throughout the town centre.
- Developing the town centre as the focal point for economic, cultural and social activity.
- Seeking the **retention of the historic street pattern** together with the retention of stone walls throughout the town.
- Protecting and preserving the quality of the landscape in Castledermot including open space and in particular natural, architectural and archaeological heritage.
- Providing adequate recreational and community facilities.



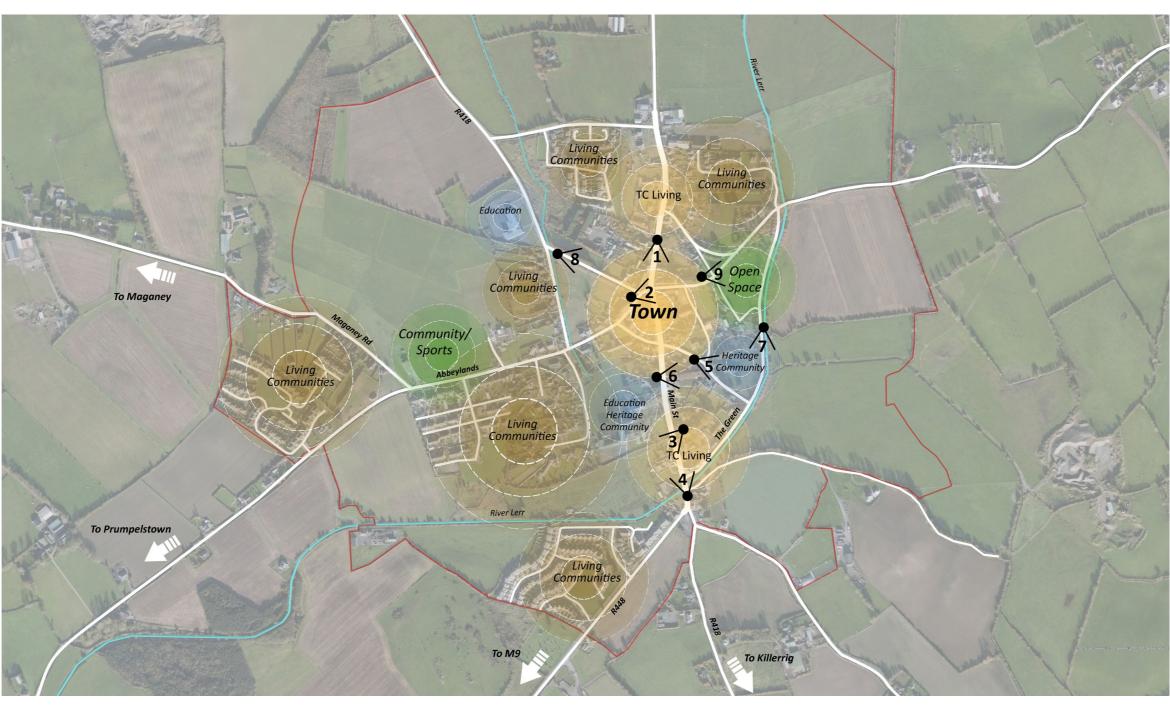


2 Carlowgate approaching Market Square

















# Analysis

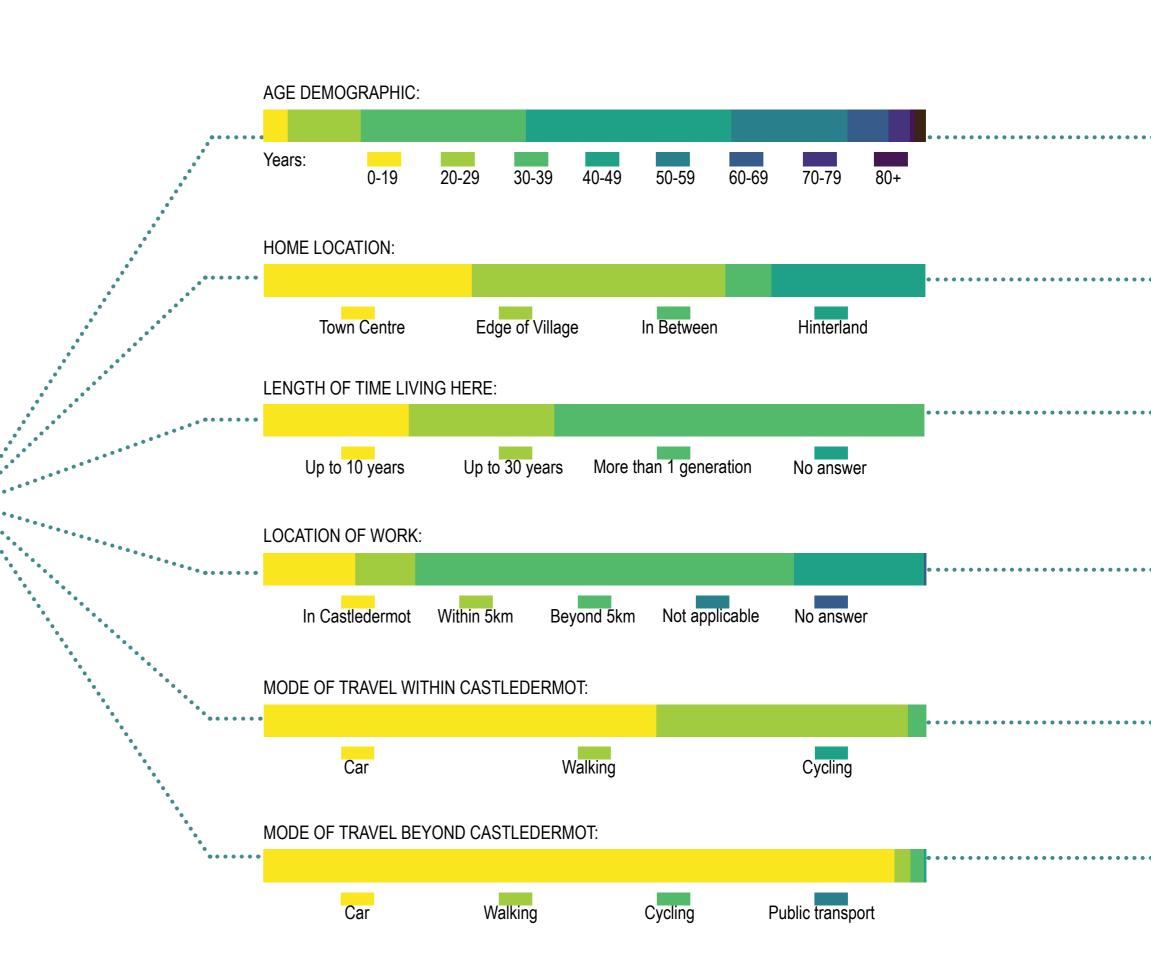
## **Public Consultation**

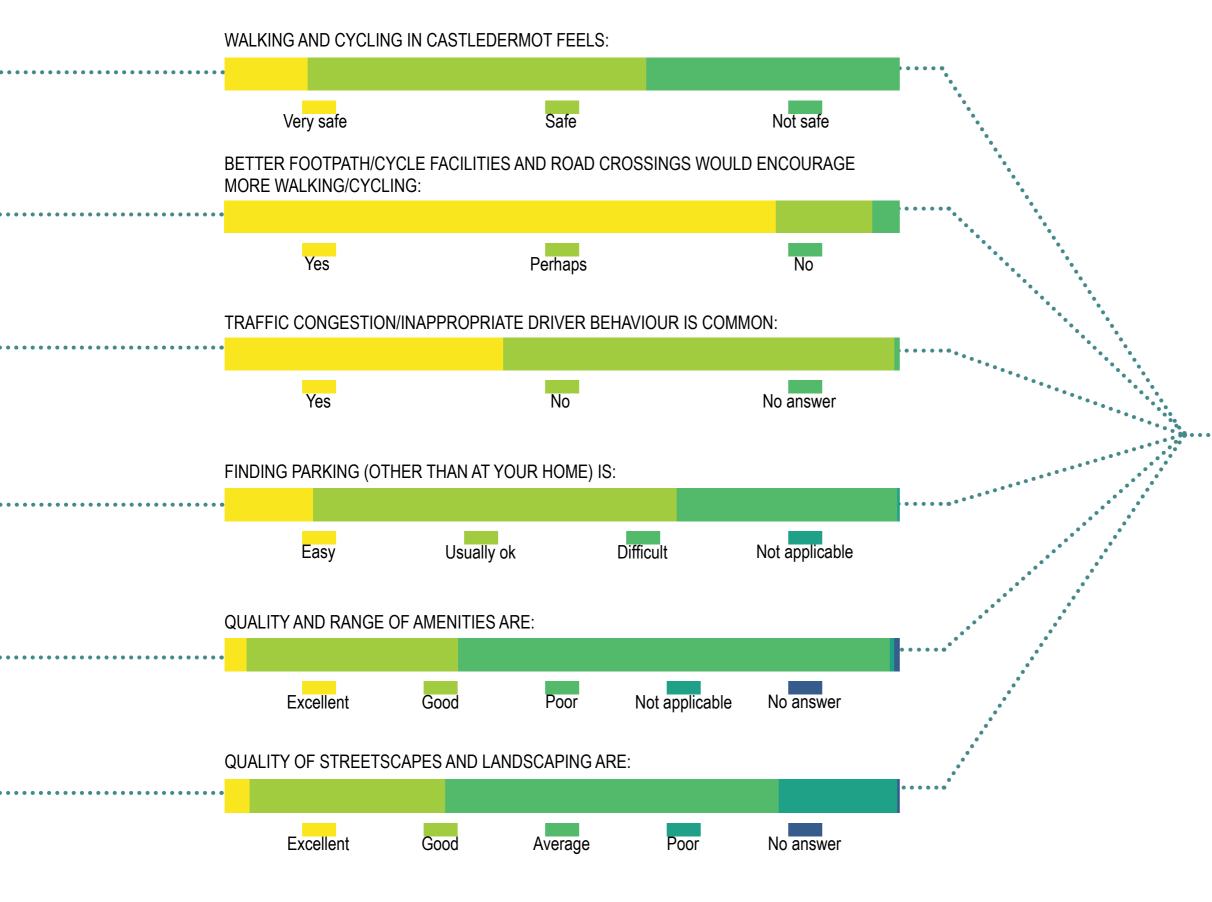
What the residents of Castledermot say.

At the preliminary stage of the project an online survey was carried out among the residents of Castledermot in June 2020 with

# 245 respondents.

In March 2022 Delivery renewal projects were put on public display and 0 submissions were received.





### **Key Observations**

What can be observed from the graphs to the left is that:

- The largest age group of respondents from Castledermot to the online survey were between the ages of forty and forty nine.
- Approximately a third of the respondents live in the town centre.
- Most respondents' location of work is beyond five kilometers from Castledermot.
- Just over half of the respondents use their car while traveling within Castledermot and the majority of the remainder indicated walking as their mode of travel within Castledermot.
- The mode of travel beyond Castledermot is dominated by the car.
- Nearly half of the respondents felt that walking and cycling in Castledermot was safe.
- But over approximately seventy five percent said that better footpath/cycle facilities and road crossings would encourage more walking and cycling.
- Over half of respondents agreed that traffic congestion/ inappropriate driver behavior is not common.
- Most people indicated that finding parking (other than at their home) is usually ok.
- Approximately half of respondents said that the quality and range of amenities are poor.
- And the majority of respondents felt also that the quality of streetscapes and landscaping are average.

# **Castledermot Regeneration Plan**

In 2021 Technological University Dublin study group took the opportunity to prepare a very comprehensive report called 'Castledermot Regeneration Plan 2021'.

The participants in the group included: Diana Bukartaite, Stephen Coyne, Catherine Dillon, Fiona Feeney-Martin, Oisin Gill, Antionette Hayden, Linda Healy, Susan Waterstone and Niall Woods - students of TU Dublin, MSc. In Urban Regeneration and Development.

Some of the key findings and recommendations included in their study were very helpful in the preparation of 'Castledermot Urban Design Analysis and Sample Renewal Plans.

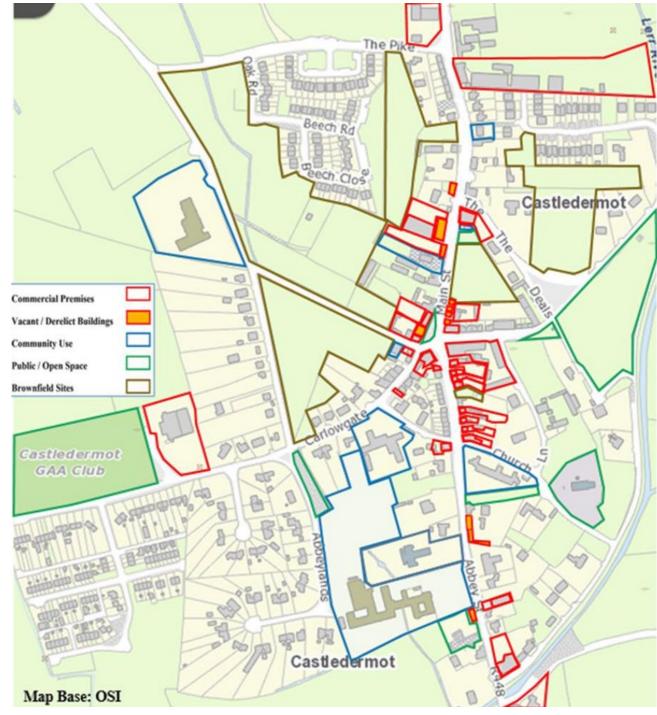
Right: Breakdown of Land and Building Usage in Castledermot (2020)

Right & Below: Prepared by Urban Masters Students (2020), Technical University of Dublin.

# Regeneration and Development

### Public Realm Analysis Findings

- Traffic flow is heavy and fast through the town.
- Illegal parking along the roads close to the Market Square.
- Market Square is a key activity area within the town, experiencing the most footfall and parking.
- Existing car parks close to the Market Square were at capacity.
- **Footpath provision is lacking** along The Lanes and arterial roads.
- The town has a number of amenities and landmarks close to the town centre including the heritage sites, parks, and River Leer, although access to them is limited.
- The street furniture, seating, lighting and signage lacked consistency.
- Shopfront maintenance varied throughout the town.
- The overhead wires detracted from the streetscape.
- The overall appearance of the town was good, no litter and footpaths were well maintained.



## **Strengths**

- · A Committed and Active Tidy Towns Team
- Tidy Towns 'Seasons' Shop Fundraises for improvements, acts as a Community Hub, active business in the Town Centre
- Heritage Assets
- Presence of nature, trees, open spaces, leafy lanes
- Fair Green and its playground development
- Wide range of amenities: modern schools, sports facilities, community centre, library, adult education centre, post office, credit union, good supermarket

### Weaknesses

- · Dereliction and Vacant Premises
- Tourism in the region is largely driven by (and to) bigger businesses (Kilkea Castle, Burton House Gardens, The Old Yard) and bypasses Castledermot.
- · Lack of footfall in the Town Centre
- Limited car parking in the Town Centre
- The town lacks cultural life
- Limited options for young people
- · Limited capacity of volunteers
- Lack of Civic Leadership Community lacks know how. Not availing of financial supports. Needs a town champion.
- · Wayfinding to points of interest

# **Opportunities**

- Riverside Amenity opportunity to create a cycling and walking route along the River Lerr from Doyle's Bridge to John's Bridge
- Concerted action on derelict sites by KCC with Tidy Town to upgrade buildings, shopfronts and bring new uses to Castledermot
- New heritage panels in the Town Centre
- Playground at Fair Green 'an opportunity to draw families to town centre'
- Establish a Community Council or Forum to bring groups together
- Potential for working hub in the Community Centre
- · Attract more visitors to Castledermot
- Opportunities for a destination shop or business (like The Old Yard) that would offer additional draw for the Town Centre

### **Threats**

- Athy is a larger, better resourced centre
- Local shopping needs largely met in Carlow.
   Continued drift to shops in Carlow or Athy undermines local businesses
- Castledermot Abbey has been a focus for antisocial behaviour. Has led to area being locked and restricted access











### **Recommended Actions**

Prepared by Urban Regeneration and Development Masters Students (2020), Technical University of Dublin.

- Health Check, Vision for the town and establishment of a "Town Team"
- Devise a Public Realm Strategy
- Create a local brand and logo for Castledermot and install welcome, heritage, and information panels and also directional signage. To consolidate and strengthen the role of Castledermot in meeting the needs of its population and the hinterland that it serves.
- Consider a redesign initiative for Market Square employing prioritisation of pedestrians with this key location in the town, address inactive frontages and encourage businesses to spill out onto Market Square, 'a tactical urbanism initiative'
- Improve the arrival into the town, having reduced road width by planting of trees, upgrading surface materials and ensuring sufficient shared space
- Tree planting along Main Street
- Review traffic management plans to address 30km/h zone, traffic flow, by-pass and parking needs within the town centre
- Install pedestrian crossings at junction at Market Square
- Establish a weekly farmer & craft market with contributors from the surrounding area
- Create a pedestrian and cycle route with appropriate lighting
- Outdoor fitness equipment
- Public art and street art including electricity boxes



**Above:** Charenton-le-Pont (France)





Right: Poynton UK

Below: Westport





# **Urban Analysis**

The Map to the right is an urban analysis map of Castledermot:

#### **LEGEND**

EXISTING LAND USE

VILLAGE CENTRE
RESIDENTIAL

COMMUNITY & EDUCATIONAL

OPEN SPACE & AMENITY
UTILITIES/SERVICES

ENTERPRISE & EMPLOYMENT

#### VILLAGE FEATURES

MAIN STREET

KEY ATTRACTORS
GATEWAYS

PROTECTED STRUCTURES & MONUMENTS

TREES & WOODLAND PRESERVATION

CLUSTER OF PROTECTED STRUCTURES



# Regeneration Strategy

## Identity

Build an **identity** for **Castledermot** that is **distinctive** and **authentic**.

Build an identity for Castledermot that is distinctive and authentic. Building on the distinct historical, natural and built heritage which Castledermot has to offer, a more robust and distinctive identity can be developed for the Town. For this to be authentic, the residential and business communities must feel they are connected to and are a part of the town and its identity and ultimately its success. Harnessing this community energy is key to revitalising the town from the ground up. This all comes from an improved town centre environment with attractive linkages to the town's residential areas, to encourage engagement with the heart of the town, dwell time and ultimate support for local businesses through increased spend opportunities.



Above: The Laurels

Below: River Lerr





### **Public Realm**

# Regeneration of Town Centre Public Realm.

Regeneration of town public realm for people who live, work and visit and to attract additional investment to the town. Public realm improvements can be incrementally delivered in Castledermot, delivering on its fine network of streets and spaces. Interventions can be locally delivered through community projects, with strong commitment required from public funding to target more permanent interventions that deliver a common vision. The next step will be to build on existing work and showcase Castledermot through a consistent public realm.

It is envisaged that a public realm design guide will be developed for the village. This will establish guidance for paving materials, street furniture, lighting, advertisements, signage, biodiversity etc. Accessibility for all and age-friendly design should be guiding principles and inform footpath widths, the provision of rest places and seating opportunities, crossing points, and dropped kerbs. The maintenance of good shop fronts and the encouragement of a high quality and consistent public realm is vital to the improvement and legibility of an area.

The examples shown right are indicative of where good design principles where implimented to achieve a cohesive public environment.



#### Right: Monkstown

Sensitive use of materials and levels. The choice of materials used in Monkstown is sensitive to the area and complimentary to the existing built heritage. The streetscape is organised with integrated raised planters acting as a buffer between the roadway and the footpath.

#### Left: Killeagh

Integrated parking and landscaping in Killeagh contributes to a safe inviting streetscape that is accessible.





#### Right: Castlebar

Good use of space, proportion and zones. There is a pedestrian zone a car/roadway zone and a transition zone. By aligning the trees, street lights and seating in the transition zone the pedestrian area is free of clutter and easily traversable. The trees soften the space and provide a visual barrier between pedestrians and the car.

### **Movement**

# **Connected** Destinations and Improved **Movement.**

Connected Destinations and Improved Movement in the form of an integrated, safe multi-use network connecting River Lerr, Fairgreen, The Abbey, Town Centre, Schools, GAA, St. James Church and all residential areas. The development of a connected network would act as a safe facility for local people, as well as a tourism feature, and contribute towards establishing Castledermot as a healthy and sustainable place to live.

An integrated network would require preparation of a Local Transport Plan (LTP). The LTP will include a detailed demand analysis to identify travel patterns, modes of transport and destinations for travel. The LTP will consider means by which more sustainable travel practices can be adopted for certain journeys thereby reducing the overall number of vehicles on the roads. The LTP will plan for all modes of transport and will place a particular emphasis on the promotion of active travel, integrated land use and transport planning, public transport and parking strategy.

Considerations should be given to reduce speed limit in town centre to 30kph and introduce more traffic calming, one-way roads with contraflow cycling, shared surfaces etc. to allow cyclists and pedestrians safely use existing infrastructure.

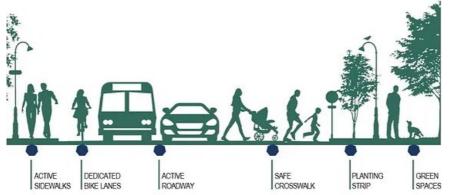
**Right:** Movement Map This map shows the key movement routes in purple and the potential movement routes in pink.

#### Map Key:

Key movement routesPotential movement routes

#### **Credit Below: Complete Street Study**

https://www.romerises.com/woodhaven-complete-streets





# **Activating Opportunity Sites**

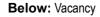
# Activating under-utilised and derelict buildings/sites.

Activating under-utilised and key opportunity sites can be realised from the ground-up by the local community and local interested businesses, and/or from top-down by Kildare County Council, Heritage Council, and others, working in tandem with landholders. Frequently opportunity is identified and generated by locals, recognising where potential lies but without the resources to follow through. These identified opportunities can be facilitated by local businesses coming together to provide expertise, know-how, and potential use of vacant shops or buildings.

At busy times of the year, further vehicle parking could be provided at under-used sites, which can be initiated by local businesses and community groups and the County Council, ensuring that vehicles do not dominate the public realm of the town centre, while providing ease of access to it. Legibility and certainty of availability of additional parking will be required, which can be notified through social media when advertising events.



Above: Derelict site





Right: Vacancy



Below: Vacancy



### **River Lerr**

Ensure the **River Lerr** is a **key part** of the **public realm**.

Ensure the River Lerr is a key part of the public realm by way of activating it and connecting it with key streets and spaces and improving local biodiversity.

The River Lerr, a tributary of the River Barrow, flows through the town of Castledermot. The River Barrow / River Nore is a designated Special Area of Conservation (cSAC, Site code 002162) selected for alluvial wet woodland sand petrifying springs, priority habitats on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site is also selected as a candidate SAC for old oak woodlands, floating river vegetation, estuary, tidal mudflats, Salicornia mudflats, Atlantic salt meadows, Mediterranean salt meadows, dry heath and eutrophictall herbs, all habitats listed in Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site is also selected for a number of species listed in Annex II of the same directive.

The River Lerr is a valuable amenity resource in the town and should be protected and enhanced. A minimum buffer zone of 10m of vegetation shall be retained along the riverbank to mitigate against pollution risks and maintain habitat.

It is proposed to limit vehicular traffic along the river and promote sustainable modes of travel such as walking and cycling as part of the LTP. The use of 'homezone' low traffic shared treatment principles could be explored here. **Right:** The River Barrow/ River Nore Special Area of Conservation. (cSAC, Site code 002162)

Below: Examples of Low traffic shared roads





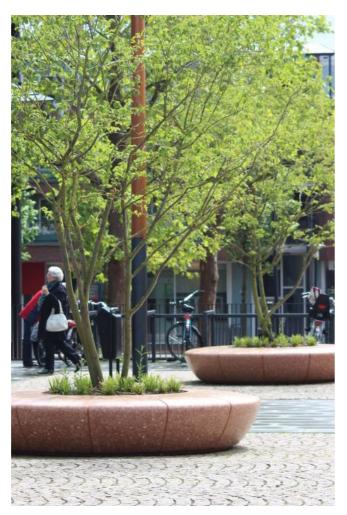


### **Sense of Place**

Enhance biodiversity, landscape/town greening quality and positive 'sense of place' in town.

Enhancing biodiverse landscape quality and positive 'sense of place' in town which will create a better urban environment to live, work and visit, help combat the effects of climate change and could also support higher property values and rental yields. New tree planting can breathe new life into public realm areas and help to reinvigorate the area, by visually softening the streetscape and improving biodiversity.

Local, native and biodiverse landspcaping in the form of street trees, in - ground planting, hanging baskets and window boxes along shopfronts can also enhance local biodiversity in the area, with carefully selected native species catering to pollinators and birds. There is evidence of successful efforts to introduce soft landscaping and biodiversity-friendly inputs throughout the town and this should be re-enforced and expanded where possible. Soft landscaping should be focused on Main Street and all roads leading to Main Street. Where applicable, it is suggested the number of on-streetcar-parking spaces should be reduced to provide adequate room for new street trees.





The Images here show various ways in which plants and vegetation including trees can be used effectively to improve biodiversity in the streetscape and create an inviting vibrant space.





# Wayfinding

# Create **legible** and **attractive markers** around the **town centre**.

Create legible and attractive markers around the town centre which create strong 'sense of place' opportunities and provide a distinctive feel to Castledermot. There is potential to link this orientation to historical features in the town which go back in time to the 7th century.

This proposal seeks to improve the signage and interpretation provision within the town centre, to ensure that visitors fully appreciate when navigating the streetscape all that the town has to offer.

The new interpretation media should be focused on the strong underlying stories and themes relating to Castledermot, the architecture, and historical links and folklore.





The image here are examples of innovative and unique wayfinding and information signs that can be incorporated into the public realm to assist users while exploring the area.





### **Sense of Arrival**

# Reinforce the sense of arrival to the town.

Reinforce the sense of arrival to the town and enhance the 'welcome' experience within and around the town. Visitors must be made to feel welcome and be actively encouraged to explore and spend time within the town, which will be achieved through enhancing the arrival experience at key gateway points. Gateway point enhancements should ideally feature the following public realm interventions such as: the narrowing of the road, introduction of street trees, landscaping, sculpture, or art, referencing Castledermot's culture and history and appropriate town-branded signage, directing visitors into town and encouraging them to actively explore, and interact with the town features and amenities.



Town signs that are customised and unique to the area as well as artistic installations or sculptures can serve to mark the entrance to a town or village.

Left: Welcome sign to Burnley

**Right:** Town branding sign for Mallow, County Cork. **Below:** Wire frame sculpture of a jazz band.

Below and Right: Sculptural arch with tree and leaf design.



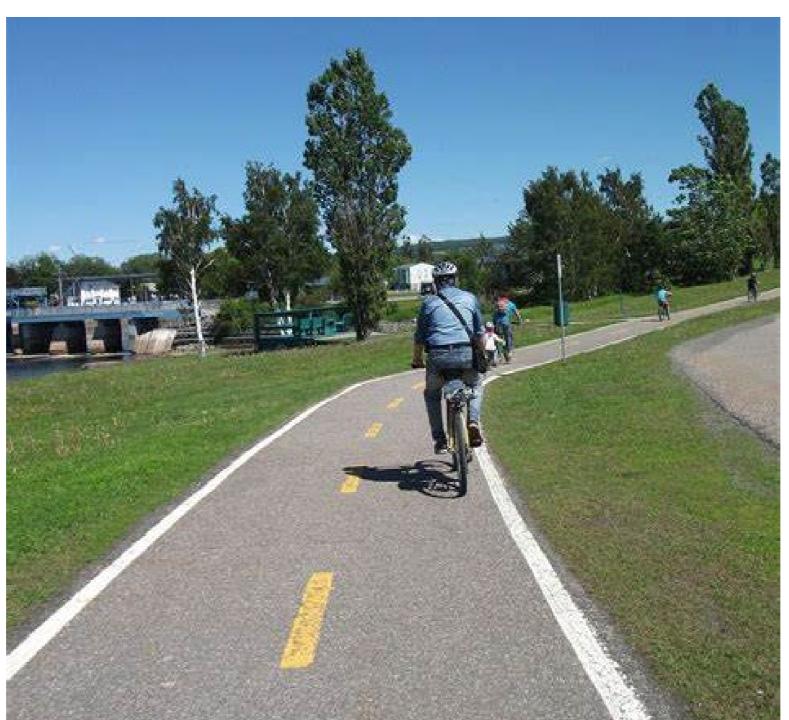




# **Opportunity Areas**

## **Local Opportunities**

The Map of Castledermot, overleaf, indicates where the key opportunities for improvement and development are. There are eleven opportunity areas listed and shown on the map.



**Right:** Cycle Path Cycling in Montréal – GoBiking.ca

### **Eleven Local Opportunities**

- Re-think the town centre. Re-balance pedestrian and vehicular space, provide landscaping, upgrade materials, introduce town branding, and establish stronger pedestrian facilities.
- General streetscape improvement on Main Street, consistent public lighting, landscaping opportunities, pedestrian crossings in critical locations and traffic calming.
- 3. Potential to improve streetscape around Castledermot Abbey to highlight this important landmark feature.
- 4. Improve streetscape, introduce town branding at this 'gateway' location, opportunity to reduce size of the junction, improve traffic calming and pedestrian crossings.
- 5. Explore options for walking/cycling green route along The Green and River Lerr, with strong links to the town.
- 6. Community and amenity opportunity at Fairgreen town park, with multi-function facility
- 7. Provide/improve footpaths and public lighting, improve road width and alignment, consider one-way network for narrow lanes within Town Centre area.
- 8. Opportunity at Church Lane and Main Street to reinforce relationship between St. James' Church and Round Tower, The Laurels, and the Parochial House.
- 9. Provide/improve linkages between residential clusters and town centre.
- 10. Provide/improve footpaths and public lighting.
- 11. Create more legible streetscape, incorporating improved traffic calming and enhanced pedestrian facilities and safety at school zone area.

#### **LEGEND**

#### **EXISTING LAND USE**

TOWN CENTRE RESIDENTIAL

COMMUNITY & EDUCATIONAL

OPEN SPACE & AMENITY

UTILITIES/SERVICES

ENTERPRISE & EMPLOYMENT

AGRICULTURE

#### PLANNED LAND USE

(KCC Development Plan 2023-2029)

TOWN CENTRE

RESIDENTIAL

COMMUNITY & EDUCATIONAL

OPEN SPACE & AMENITY

#### TOWN FEATURES

MAIN STREET

**⊚** KEYATTRACTORS

**─** GATEWAYS

PROTECTED STRUCTURES & MONUMENTS

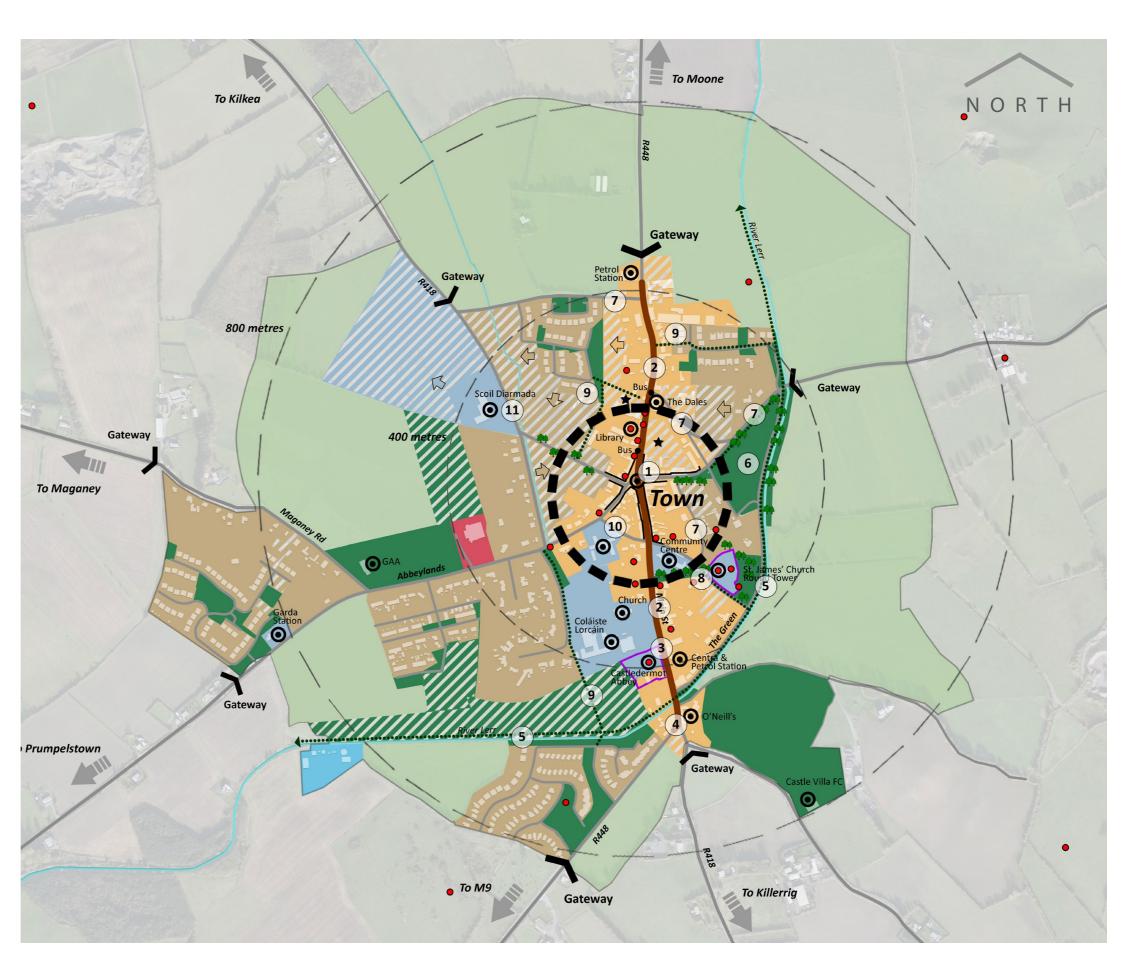
----- KEY BUILT FRONTAGES

TREES & WOODLAND PRESERVATION

CLUSTER OF PROTECTED STRUCTURES

★ KEY OPPORTUNITY SITE

POTENTIAL/IMPROVED WALKING ROUTES/LINKS



# Key Delivery Projects

# **Key Projects**

The Map to the right shows where the key projects could take place including:

- Public Realm Design
- Castledermot Heritage
- Wacancy & Dereliction
- 4. Market Square
- Main Street
- 6) St James' Church/Church Lane
- Walking/cycling potential at the Green and River Lerr.
- 8. Fairgreen Town Park
- Scoil Diarmada School Zone

### Map key

- – – Historic Town Wall Circuit
- Wall Standing Remains





# 1. Public Realm Design

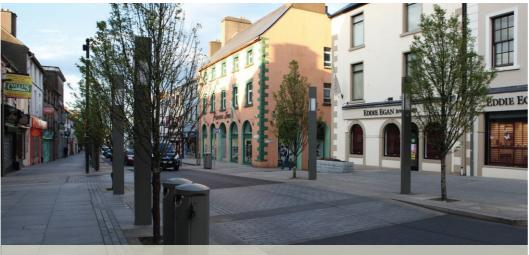
The public realm is the area contained in the public street space. This area is under public ownership and includes areas such as streets, footpaths, open spaces, biodiverse landscaping, lighting, and street furniture. Comprehensive planning and design of public and private streetscape elements can help establish a cohesive character and, ultimately, a stronger, more distinct identity for Castledermot.

In the public realm, emphasis is placed on creating a safe and suitable pedestrian environment. Particular attention should be paid to the design of new and replacement footpaths, pedestrian crossings, use of storefront displays and merchandising to promote pedestrian traffic, and provision of outdoor dining areas. The aim is to create a unified and visually attractive environment.

This effort will ultimately act as an investment catalyst, encouraging private property upgrades and new development.

Specifically, the intention of the design guidelines

- Establish a clear sense of arrival, through a distinct change in landscape, built areas, or special entrance features.
- Rationalise and organize signage, lighting and street furniture to give people a sense of direction and orientation.
- Create a public realm that is attractive safe, secure and enjoyable.
- Establish a high-quality surface materials and street furniture palette that creates interest and comfort for the public realm.
- Establish a biodiverse and native landscape palette that is attractive, easy to maintain and is appropriate to the locale; and
- Balance the needs of the pedestrian with vehicular and bicycle traffic.



Quality materials, legible/ safe pedestrian crossings.

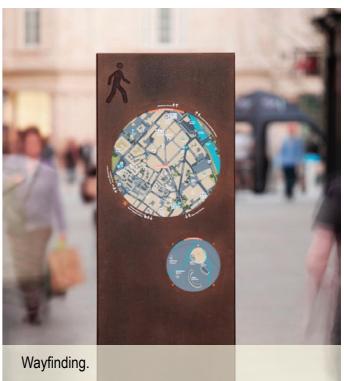












## 2. Castledermot Heritage

# Celebrating the **rich heritage** of **Castledermot.**

Castledermot has a wealth of architectural and archaeological heritage features, as well as recorded protected structures, including St James Church and Romanesque Archway, Franciscan Friary, Carlowgate with a number of structures representing 19th Century Vernacular Architecture. Despite Castledermot having such a strong framework of landmarks and historic buildings there is no dedicated heritage trail and very little suitable pedestrian signage and interpretation within the town for residents and visitors.

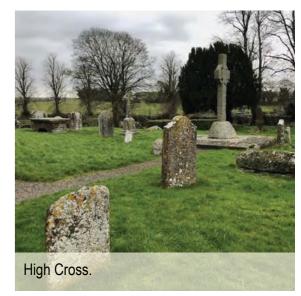
Celebrating the rich heritage of Castledermot can be achieved through the following actions:

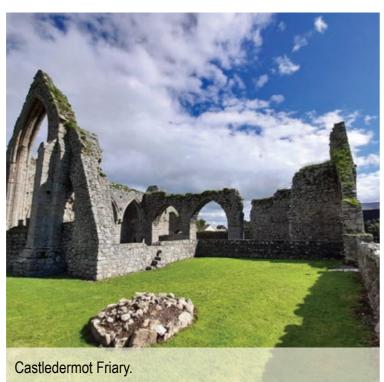
- To further enhance visual accessibility to and around town centre, as well as adding value to its tourism product, the town would benefit from a comprehensive review of existing directional and interpretative signage. The development of a signage strategy, which caters specifically to the needs of Castledermot, would allow for an evidence-based review of existing signage in and around the town.
- In conjunction with elevating the status of several historic sites throughout the town, a dedicated heritage trail could be explored along existing and new walking routes around Castledermot.
- An interactive tourist map could be created for the Town to showcase this rich heritage and provide a heritage trail for visitors to the Town. This should be completed in conjunction with

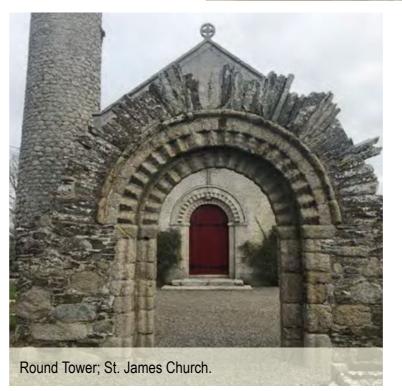


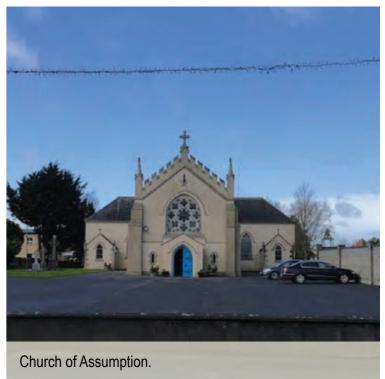








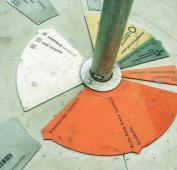




Kildare County Council to include important buildings along Main Street and further afield.

- Improved wayfinding signs should be placed within the Town with distances to the respective Heritage points shown.
- Heritage Interpretive Panels should be erected on buildings of importance with details of the history of the building, this should be linked with the interactive tourist map.
- A small museum/information centre could be included in one of the vacant buildings to highlight the heritage and history of the Town with regular presentations from local historians to inform visitors to the town.
- Historic buildings should be conserved and restored to maintain their important status and historical context within this heritage Town. A full assessment in conjunction with Kildare County Council should be carried out to identify Right: Example of modern buildings of importance and methods for their renovation and restoration.
- Gateway signage or banners on the approach roads into Castledermot, including along the R448 and R418 from both ends could be installed
- Interpretation at ground level, in the form of text, detail and graphic inlays could be explored
- Introduce consistency between online mapping/apps, leaflet maps and on-the-ground interpretation boards.

Right: Example of modern wayfinding signage



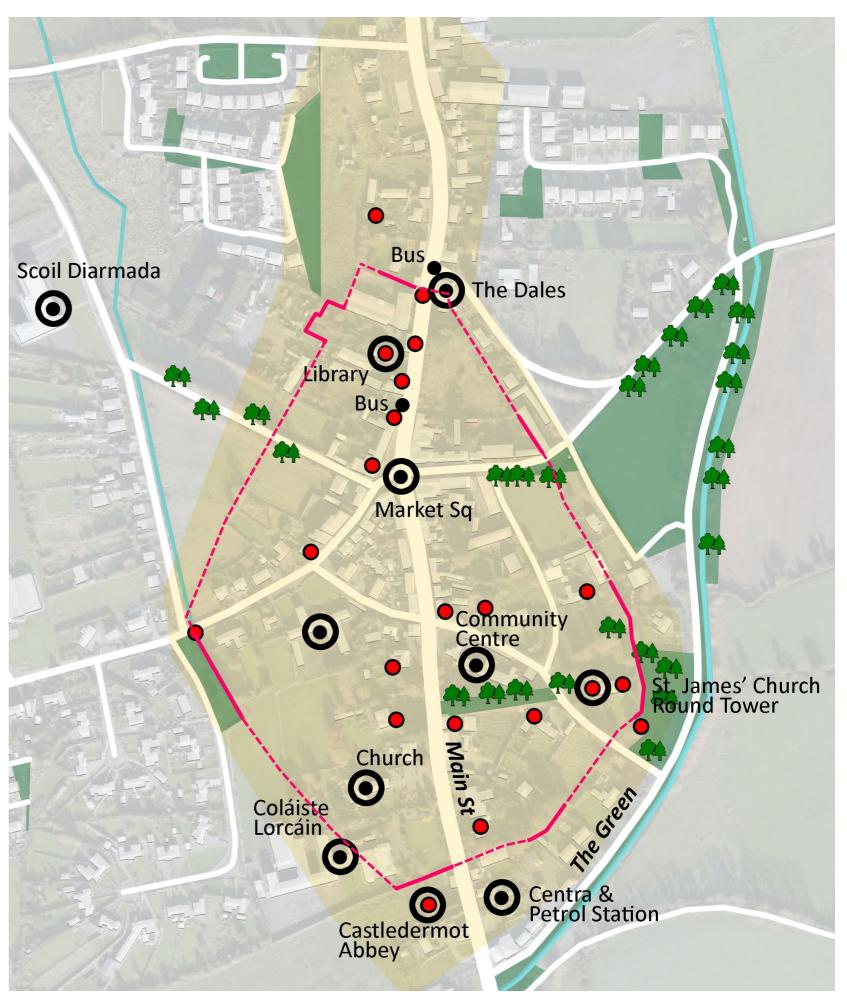
Left: Example of modern directional signage.

information signage at historical sites.



#### Map key

Historic Town Wall Circuit Wall Standing Remains Protected Structures & Monuments Zone of Archaeological Potential



# 2. Vacancy & Dereliction.

# Activating under utilised and derelict buildings/sites.

There are a number of key sites in the town centre which offer great potential for revitalisation, reimagination, and regeneration. Some of these which are under-utilised, and/or derelict, blight the town centre.

The presence of derelict and empty properties can quickly lower the quality of the environment and depict a poor image of a town, particularly if located on prominent sites within the town centre or along key approach routes. Knock on effects can often include anti-social behaviour, heightened perceptions of crime and lower property values.

The redevelopment of these sites offers immense potential to transform the town centre into a vibrant, attractive and consolidated town centre if developed to a high standard, whilst protecting and enhancing the built heritage and unique natural setting of the town.

Regeneration potential for under-utilised buildings and sites can be realised from the ground-up by the local community and local interested businesses, and/or from top-down by Kildare County Council, Heritage Council, and others, working in tandem with landholders. Frequently opportunity is identified and generated by locals, recognising where potential lies but without the resources to follow through. This can be facilitated by local businesses coming together to provide expertise and know-how, to generate potential out of vacant shops or buildings.

Town Centre vacancy is a complex issue. To increase footfall and stimulate demand, there are many different strategies which can be utilised such as those listed overleaf:

Vacant buildings Re-Purposing Ideas:







- Establish a centralised database on all
- Priority would be placed on achieving 'quick wins' in the most problematic cases such as the painting of facades, while exploring the potential of 'meanwhile' uses and longer-term solutions.

vacant and derelict properties throughout the town, including brownfield sites and partially

completed development sites. This will then enable a cohesive and 'joined up' approach to tackling the issue, based on dialogue with

- Re-Purposing vacant buildings i.e., the introduction of residential accommodation in the town centre, co-working hubs etc., utilising backland areas or attracting outside investment from large companies by making Castledermot more attractive.
- The vacant units within Castledermot would make a good location for pop-up shops and activities, helping to stimulate demand within the Town Centre and generate footfall. Pop-up shops are a lower cost option for brands, artists, designers and makers to advertise and sell their goods and services.
- At busy times of the year, further vehicle parking could be provided at under-used sites, which can be initiated by local businesses and community groups and the County Council, ensuring that vehicles do not dominate the public realm of the town centre, while providing ease of access to it. Legibility and certainty of availability of additional parking will be required, which can be notified through social media when advertising events.



# 4. Market Square

The ten key recommendations/ potential projects for Market Square Castledermot shown in the indicative plan to the right are listed below.

- 1. Proposed surfacing with realigned paved pedestrian crossings.
- 2. Tightened turning radii with additional biodiverse landscaping at junction corners (subject to auto tracking).
- 3. Proposed landscaping.
- 4. Square materials and furniture upgrade.
- 5. Retained loading.
- 6. Retained parking/ loading.
- 7. Dedicated parking.
- 8. New tree planting/ landscaping with seating.
- 9. New tree planting.
- 10. Encourage restoration and re-use of vacant, derelict and under-utilised properties.
- 11. Continue the Lime Tree avenues through town where appropriate to extend existing avenues and enhance this unique feature of the town.

Please note that all recommendations are subject to detail design and are illustrative only.



# **Key Recommendations**

The key recommendations for Market Square Castledermot are listed below and illustrated to the right with a sketch plan drawing. The recommendations include:

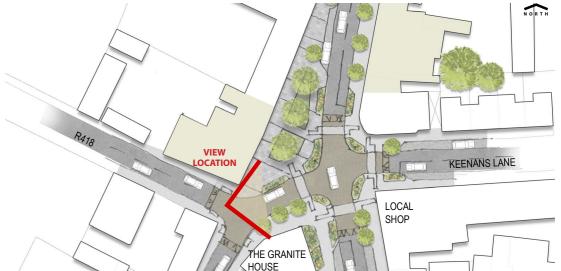
- Upgrade the main square with new paving, mature trees, native and biodiverse in-ground landscaping, streetlamps and high-quality seating and street furniture to mark the importance of this area as a heart of the town centre.
- Encourage restoration and re-use of vacant, derelict and under-utilised buildings around the square.
- Provide additional landscaping at junction corners which would soften the area, collect rain water and improve the town's look and feel.
- Provide surfacing at the junction and on junction approaches (subject to auto tracking).
- Tighten turning radii at the junction to reduce speeds (subject to auto tracking).

Please note that all recommendations are subject to detail design and are illustrative only.



**Above:** Market Square Castledermot Photo of Market Square as existing.







Right: Market Square Castledermot Artists impression of recommendations and opportunities for the public space at Market Square Castledermot.

### 5. Main Street

The key recommendations/ potential projects for Main Street are listed below.

- Improve streetscape by using high quality paving, lighting, and street furniture.
- Widen Footpaths.
- Reduce carriageway width where appropriate (subject to auto tracking).
- Introduce junction alterations with at grade pedestrian crossings in critical locations around Market Square, Carlowgate and the local churches.
- Improve streetscape by integrating high quality landscaping.
- Improve streetscape by reducing on-street parking where appropriate.
- Minimise street signage and footpath clutter.
- Potential for paved parking bays treatment.
- Encourage restoration and re-use of vacant, derelict and under-utilised properties along Main Street.
- Underground, overhead electrical cables.
- Introduce improved wayfinding and street art.

Please note that all recommendations are subject to detail design and are illustrative only.



**Above:** Main Street
Photo of Castledermot Main Street as existing.







Right: Main Street Public Realm Artists impression of recommendations and opportunities for the public space at Main Street Castledermot.

### **Main Street, Carlowgate Junction**

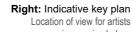
The key recommendations for Main Street, Carlowgate Junction are listed below and illustrated to the right. The recommendations include:

- Improve streetscape by using high quality paving, lighting, and street furniture including areas for outdoor dining.
- Widen Footpaths.
- Reduce carriageway width where appropriate (subject to auto tracking).
- Introduce junction alterations with at grade pedestrian crossings in critical locations i.e., around Market Square, Carlowgate, Church
- Improve streetscape by integrating high quality street planting.
- Improve streetscape by reducing on-street parking where appropriate.
- Minimise street signage and footpath clutter.
- Potential for paved parking bays treatment.
- Encourage restoration and re-use of vacant, derelict and under-utilised properties along Main Street.
- Underground, overhead electrical cables.
- Introduce improved wayfinding and street art.

Please note that all recommendations are subject to detail design and are illustrative only.

Above: Main Street,

Carlowgate Junction







Right: Main Street, Carlowgate Junction Artists impression of recommendations and opportunities for the public space at Main Street, Carlowgate Junction.

#### 6. St. James' Church/Church Lane

The key recommendations/ potential projects for St. James' Church/Church Lane are listed below.

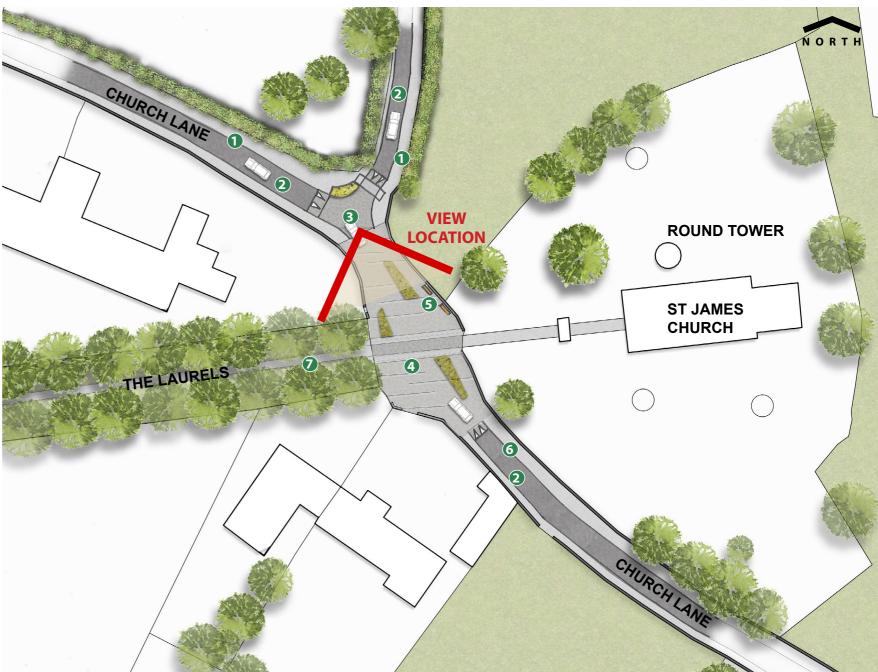
- 1. Widened footpath
- Potential of one-way/ local access street in conjunction with future traffic management study
- 3. Proposed paved surface
- 4. Paved low speed shared area with feature setts and planting
- 5. Seating/ Interpretation board
- 6. Proposed footpath
- 7. Introduce low level lighting along The Laurels

Right: Map of Castledermot showing the seven key recommendations listed to the left for St James' Church and Church Lane.

Below: Map of Castledermot showing a potential one-way local access street layout in conjunction with future traffic management study.

Potential 1-way/local access streets





# **Key Recommendations**

The key recommendations for St James Church/ Church Lane are listed below and illustrated to the right. The recommendations include:

- Opportunity at Church Lane to reinforce relationship between Main Street, St. James' Church, Round Tower, The Laurels and The Green.
- Reduce carriageway width to reduce speeds and slow down traffic (subject to auto tracking)
- Tighten generous turning radii at junctions (subject to auto tracking)
- Widen existing footpaths and provide new paving
- Explore options of one-way/ local access street network in conjunction with traffic management study
- Introduce shared paving treatment to reduce speeds and improve quality and historic character of this part of the town
- Provide consistent street lighting and street furniture.

Please note that all recommendations are subject to detail design and are illustrative only.





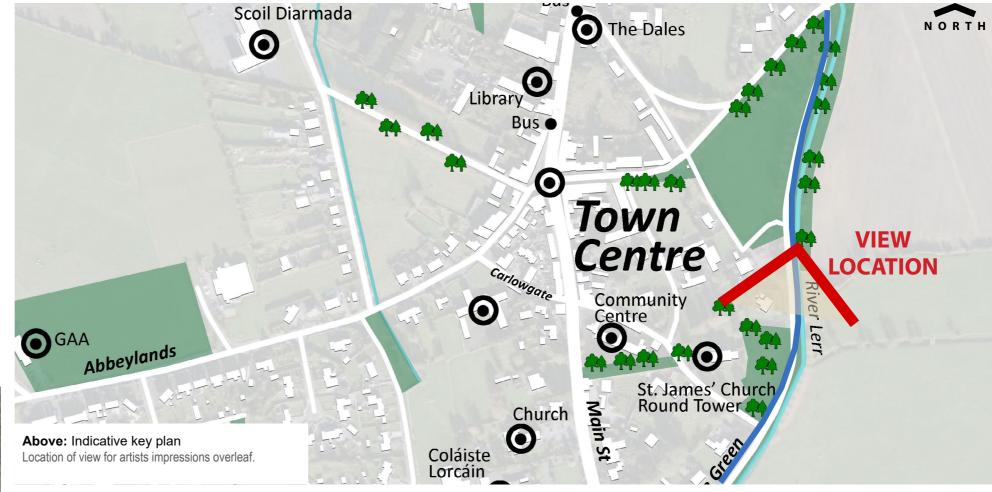
#### 7. The Green and River Lerr.

The key recommendations for the Green and River Lerr are listed below.

- Explore options for walking/cycling green route along The Green and River Lerr, with strong links to the town
- Protect ecological value of River Lerr
- Explore option of one-way street in conjunction with traffic management study or low traffic/ limited vehicular access shared street environment which may require a reduction in speed limits..
- Introduce consistent street lighting and street furniture.

Please note that all recommendations are subject to detail design and are illustrative only.





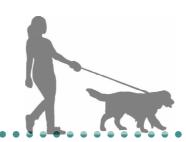


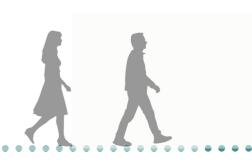












**Group Seating** 

# 8. Fairgreen Town Park.

The key recommendations for the further development of Fairgreen Town Park are listed below.

- Support the development of the Fiargreen town park taking into consideration the Masterplan submitted under part 8 planning number P82019.02
- Provide safe access to the park from the town by providing appropriate footpaths and street lighting along Keenans Lane, linking to The Green. Potential for traffic calming and dedicated pedestrian crossings.
- Increase passive surveillance within park by providing strategically located feature lighting
- Enhance/expand town park as a multiuse passive recreation area with sports, activity and event hub catering for young, teen and older users with a programme of events (ie. weekly farmer & craft market with contributors from the surrounding area)
- Introduce additional multi-use games area (MUGA), outdoor gym equipment etc. which would complement recently built playground
- Opportunity for more street furniture such as family tables, quality benches and sheltered seating within park.

Note: All recommendations are subject to detail design and consultation with existing registered landowners and are illustrative only.















# **Key Recommendations**

The key recommendations/ opportunities for Fairgreen Town Park are listed below and indicated on the map to the left.

- 1. Pedestrian crossing (traffic calming)
- 2. Continuous footpath with street lighting linking the park and The Green back to the town centre
- 3. Accessible parking
- 4. Existing playground
- 5. Potential multi-use games area (MUGA)
- 6. Informal play/sports/events area including teen friendly areas.
- 7. Potential sheltered seating area
- 8. Key locations for feature lighting to improve overall safety and passive surveillance within the park.
- Continue the Lime tree avenues at appropriate locations through the town to extend the existing avenues and enhance this unique feature of the town.

Please note that all recommendations are subject to detail design and consultation with existing registered landowners and are illustrative only.



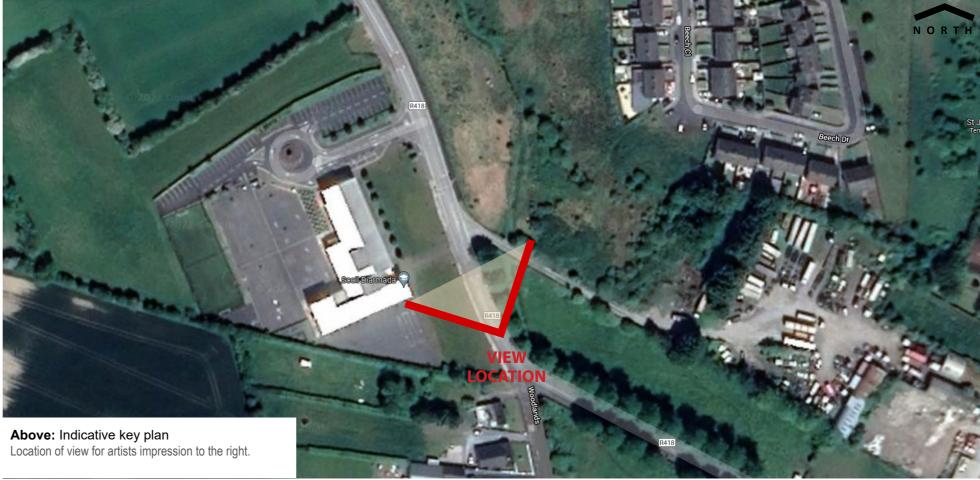
#### 9. Scoil Diarmada School Zone

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Design guide is available to provide guidance to create safer, calmer, more attractive routes to school and front of school environments.

"Congestion issues at the school gate can be tackled by considering an integrated design that removes or at least reduces traffic volumes, reduces speeds, discourages set down, and provides an alternative, attractive means of travel to school." (Safe Routes to School Design Guide)

**Above:** Credit - Safe Routes to School Design Guide, 1.3 Fundamentals, Improving the Street Environment.











# **Key Recommendations**

The key recommendations for Scoil Diarmada Castledermot are listed below. The recommendations include:

- Introduction of school zone treatment with bollard protection, change in road surface, enhanced main school crossing.
- Proposed school zone gateway with improved signage and traffic calming
- Upgraded existing footpath along school boundary
- Reduce carriageway width (subject to auto tracking)
- Introduction of low-level shrub planting along footpath to provide visual safety buffer between pedestrians and vehicles
- Explore the opportunity for dedicated segregated cycle infrastructure to and from the school.
- More details of school zone enhancements can be seen on the national transport web site under 'safe routes to school (SRTS) program'

Please note that all recommendations are subject to detail design and are illustrative only.





# Assessments

#### **Environmental Assessments**

Environmental assessments have been carried out for this Master Plan as follows:

i. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

An SEA Screening Report has been prepared for this Masterplan (See Appendix A). For reasons set out in detail in the SEA Screening Report, it is at this stage determined that the Proposed Masterplan does not require an SEA. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) shall be prepared for projects where the requirement for EIA is mandatory, where the project meets or exceeds stated thresholds, or where it is determined that the project is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

ii. Appropriate Assessment (AA)

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report was prepared for this Masterplan (Refer to Appendix B). For the reasons set out in detail in the AA Screening Report, an Appropriate Assessment of the Masterplan is not required as it can be concluded, on the basis of objective information, that the Plan, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on any European sites. It should be noted that what is included in the Masterplan regarding Delivery Projects represents indicative drawings, scale, and location of specific projects. When the final location and design of the projects are prepared and further detail is available, it will then be possible to assess the impact of each project and if mitigation is necessary, then a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment will be required.

iii. Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA)

A Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA) has been prepared for this Masterplan (See Appendix C). It has been concluded in the SSFRA that the proposed delivery projects set out in this Masterplan are deemed 'Appropriate' in accordance with The Planning System and Flood risk Assessment Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) and Circular PL02/2014.



# Framework & Funding

### **Town Centre First Policy**

The Town Centre First Policy is a major strategy to respond to climate change, tackle vacancy/ dereliction, encourage sustainable transport and prioritising the town and village centre as a vibrant and attractive place to live, work, visit and do business.

Our towns and villages, of all sizes, can contribute to the transition to a fair, low carbon and climate resilient society through addressing the spatial patterns of development and consideration of how people travel. Utilising existing infrastructure and sites within the village while encouraging the adaptive reuse of existing and improved energy efficiency of individual buildings is a priority of Town Centre First along with reducing the need to travel long distances by providing the opportunity for people to live and work closer to local services and amenities, to enable people to travel by a sustainable mode of transport where and when possible.

Urban and rural centres have the potential to make a major contribution to our societal response to issues such as housing, remote and flexible ways of working, climate change, modal shift, accessibility and community engagement. Investing in our towns and villages can help deliver a better quality of life for all.

#### **Funding**

The policy is underpinned by a number funding streams to aid in the implementation of its objectives.

They include but are not limited to:

- Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF)
- Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF)
- Town & Village Renewal Scheme
- Failte Ireland Destination Towns
- Investment supports from the forthcoming ERDF programme for Towns via Regional Assemblies
- Active Travel Investment Programme
- SEAI Climate adaption/retrofitting
- Built Heritage supports such as Historic Town initiative (HTI)
- Housing for All Croí Cónaithe (Towns) fund

Funding opportunities are available to assist the progression of community projects, infrastructure upgrades and design recommendations, as outlined.



Castledermot Small Town Renewal Master Plan January 2024



Rialtas na hÉireann Government of Ireland Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040





