



# Kildare Town Renewal Masterplan



Metropolitan Workshop | Kildare County Council | Aecom | MacCabe Durney Barnes

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# Forward

“A Town Renewal Masterplan is effectively a blueprint to guide the rejuvenation of a town or village. It is informed by robust analysis, including for example the historical context (urban morphology), urban ‘health checks,’ land use surveys, building use and condition surveys, analysis of movement patterns and facilities (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.’

*Source: Kildare County Council Placemaking Strategies, Table 14.1, Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029.*

Although not a statutory document, the Masterplan is both supported by and supportive of the objectives contained in the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029 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. The delivery of transformative projects, focussing on place-based change within the town centre, will facilitate the development of a high quality and people centred public realm that prioritises active modes of travel where possible.

The Masterplan should be viewed as a long-term plan of action (approx. 20+ years) which has been developed and agreed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders from the town, the Elected Members and the relevant departments within Kildare County Council. The Masterplan is vital to enabling Kildare County Council to access funding to deliver projects through the application process for URDF (Urban Regeneration Development Fund), RRDF (Rural Regeneration Development Fund) and Town and Village funding, where a greater priority is given to the funding of projects which are considered as part of an overall regeneration masterplan.

The projects identified for delivery are not in order of priority within the document, rather projects will be delivered when funding becomes available through the various town renewal funding streams, LPT (Local Property Tax) 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 at this stage and are subject to appropriate planning consents and further consultation processes prior to detail design stage.



# Urban Design Analysis

Urban settlements contain many layers of complexity, therefore in order to develop a clear picture of the town, many strands of research are required.

Although considerable urban design analysis already existed, further on-site analysis was carried out, which was then supplemented by desktop studies. Ahead of carrying out any work, the study area as shown on the previous page was agreed with Kildare County Council. In Kildare Town there are a number of large scale proposals by private landowners (Magee Barracks, Kildare Town Outlet Village for example) which have been noted and built upon to inform this Town Renewal Masterplan.

Our analysis focuses on forming a detailed understanding of Kildare Town framed through a strategic and historical analysis, a series of detailed studies into policies relating to the town and population / socio economic profiling. A movement analysis also presented the opportunity to understand how the town is used in the context of both vehicular and pedestrian movement.

Secondly, we have looked at how the

buildings of the town are inhabited and how this affects the streetscapes. We have produced a series of quantitative maps which relate to urban massing, land use, vacancy and public realm culminating in the presentation of existing strategies and proposals in and around Kildare Town.

This analysis has been conducted with the aim of not only determining how the town is organised but also to identify key assets and opportunities within the town.

The analytical work is underpinned by a rigorous consultation process which informed the propositions later in the document.

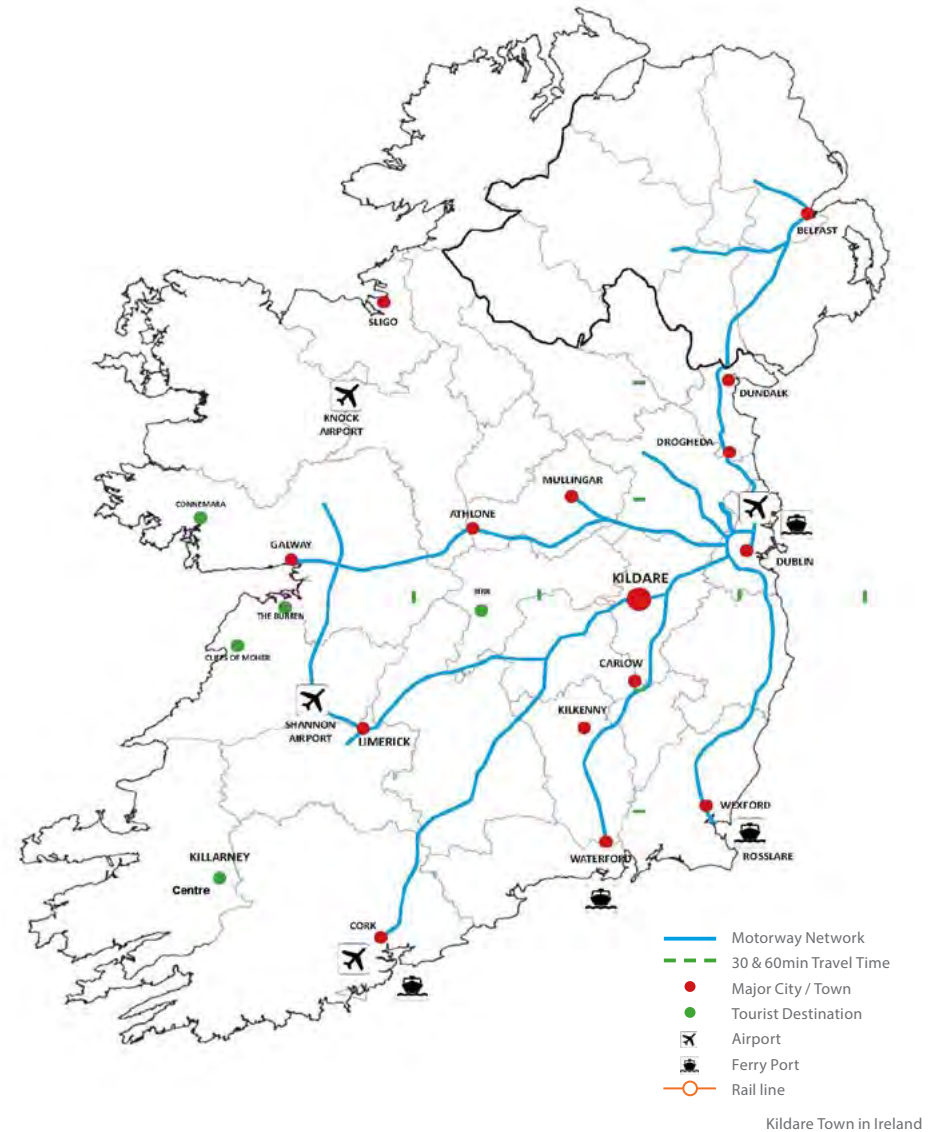


# Strategic Context

Kildare Town, situated in the centre of the county of Kildare in Ireland's eastern Midlands, was founded in the 5th Century. The Curragh plains are located to the east of the town with pastoral landscapes to the north, south and west and bogland further south. It is situated on a ridge higher than the surrounding lowlands.

Kildare Town is one of the oldest towns in Ireland however the development of the towns military and market function in the 1700's and 1800's are important periods from which most of the present day settlement derives its character and historic significance.

Over the past 10 years Kildare Town has experienced significant expansion. Extensive suburban residential development has occurred to north and east of the historic town centre and more recently to the south of the M7 Motorway. Kildare has been defined as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town in the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029. This defines the town as an area with a moderate level of jobs, a market and a commuter town with good transport links and capacity for continued commensurate growth.







# Historical Development

Kildare Town's name is derived from the Irish for "church of the oak" and is the site of the original monastery founded by St Brigid, one of the patron saints of Ireland. It developed to become one of the most important Christian foundations in Celtic Ireland. In the 1700's and 1800's the town's military and market functions developed and are important periods from which much of the present day town derives its structure, character and historic significance.

Having regard to the population allocation and analysis of the Kildare CDP 2023-2029 and the Draft Kildare Local Area Plan 2023-2029, the estimated population of Kildare is currently 10,161 persons. The population growth planned over the lifetime of the LAP, of 1,380 persons results in an overall estimated population of 11,541 for Kildare Town by the end of 2029.

Kildare town is accessed by the M7 which is a direct national route to Dublin. Furthermore it is located on mainline rail and has rapid access to all major seaports and airports.

Historically, Kildare town's economy was primarily attributed to its function as a market town, serving the town and its hinterland. In more recent times, it has also established itself as an important centre for tourism, retailing and equestrian activities. The town has a number of established industries. Kildare Tourist Outlet Village (KTOV) is the most notable employer in the town along with the hospitality industry. The equine industry generates significant employment in the surrounding hinterland.

The town is located nearby to other large urban centres in County Kildare, Newbridge is 9km distant and the county town, Naas, is 20km distant. Within its immediate context, the town is situated within easy reach of a variety of amenities.

The most notable of these include The Curragh Plains and The Curragh Racecourse which is the centre of horse racing in Ireland and is currently undergoing a large-scale redevelopment. RACE (Racing Academy and Centre of Education) is located in the town. Nearby are the Japanese Gardens and The Irish National Stud which is also the home to the Equine Innovation Hub.



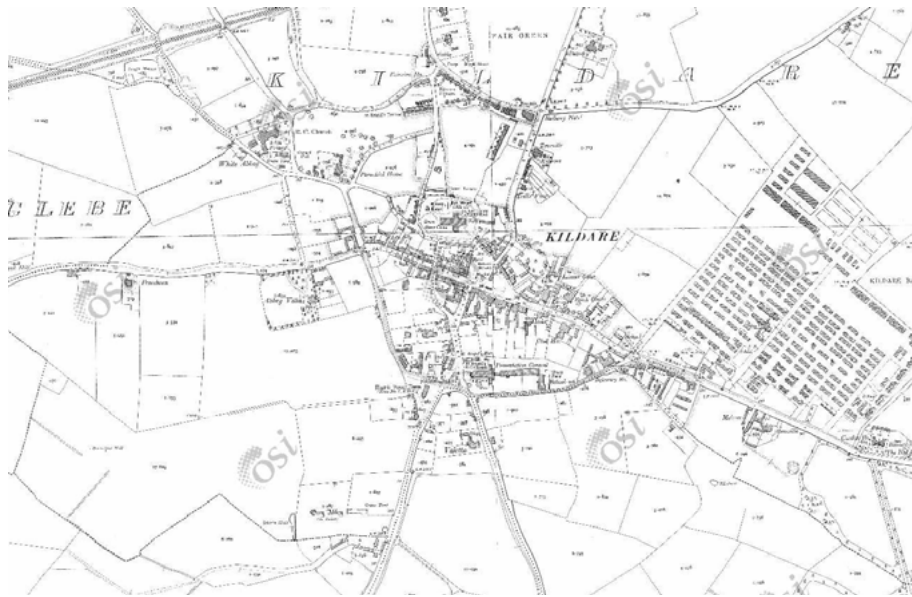
Historical Photos of Kildare Town from Chapel Hill



Kildare Town 1837



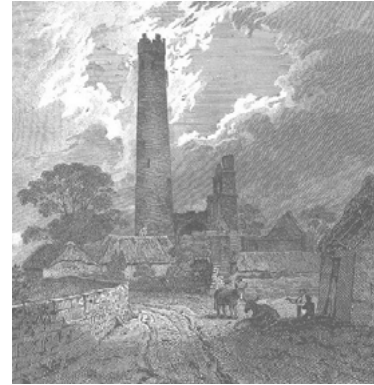
Kildare Town 2000



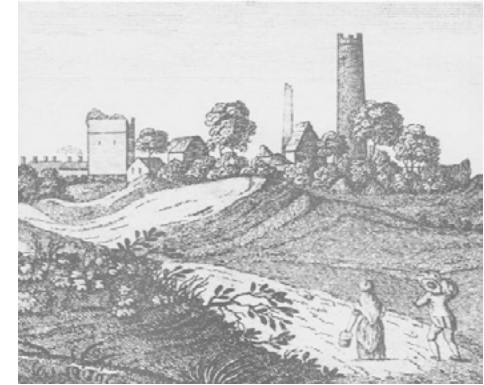
Kildare Town 1880-1915



Kildare Town 2017



19th c. view of round tower and cathedral by Petrie



Extract from W. Beauford's *View of Kildare from the North*, 1794

## Historical development of the area.

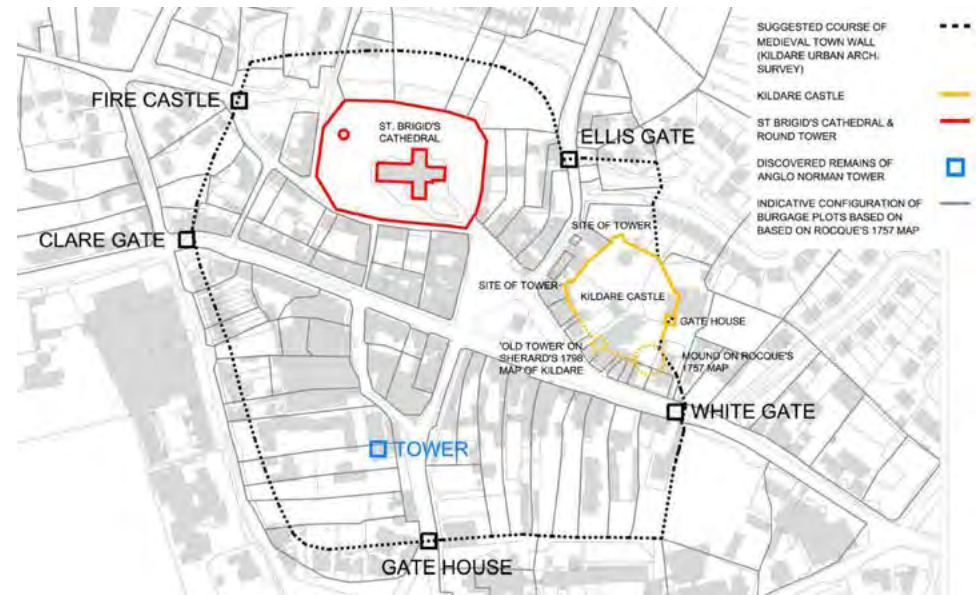
Kildare Town is an excellent example of the progression of a settlement from perhaps a pre historic habitation, into the 5th Century and on up to the 13th Century

*'This transition from monastic town to a chartered incorporated town is significant because Kildare is one of the fewer sites which possess undisputed evidence for this process'* (Urban Arch. Survey).

Kildare Town is one of the oldest towns in Ireland. It originated in pre-Christian times when it was the site of a shrine to the Celtic Goddess Brigid. St. Brigid founded her church in the 5th Century at Cruim Criaig – meaning ridge of clay – beside an ancient oak believed to have been a pagan shrine to the Celtic Goddess Brigid, from whom the Saint takes her name.

The name Cell Dara (church of the oak tree) was recorded in an annalist's entry for AD 520, the oak thought to have marked a pagan shrine, from which we get the modern name of Kildare. This was a unique Christian foundation, which flourished from the early 7th Century onwards. Kildare became a centre of learning. As the foundation grew, requirements for artisans, traders, and farmers also grew until Kildare became at least a proto-town. Evidence of this period is visible in St. Brigid's Cathedral enclosure and surrounding lanes and curvature of streets outside the walls of the Cathedral.

Situated north-west of the medieval cathedral, the masonry of the round tower (still used today) is of two types; the base and lower courses are of evenly coursed granite while above this the masonry consists of roughly coursed limestone. The tower is 32.6m high and 5.35m wide above the base. It has seven floors all of which are supported on corbels except for the third floor which is slightly off-set and has no corbels.



Medieval Brough of Kildare (from Kildare ACA, Statement of Character)



View from Round Tower over Kildare Town

Following the Norman invasion of 1169, the settlement at Kildare, owing to its strategic hilltop location and access to the rich plains of east central Ireland, became the centre of Strongbow's campaign to conquer Leinster. In developing his military base, Strongbow constructed a castle, which is likely to have comprised a motte and bailey located on a site to the east of Market Square and immediately north of Dublin Street, as suggested by a mound indicated on Rocque's Map of 1757.

A stone castle was built in the thirteenth Century by William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke and Lord of Leinster, during which time Kildare established itself as both manor and borough. Marshall resided in Kildare for a brief period only, after which time the Lordship of Kildare eventually passed to William De Vesce. The castle was subsequently conquered by Calvagh O' Connor and later retaken by the Normans. Evidence of this period are the three sides of the curtain wall of the castle, the gate house and two courses of the two of the towers.

In the early 14th Century the earldom of Kildare was created by King Edward II and awarded to the FitzGerald family in recognition of their services during the Bruce Invasion. Although the FitzGerald's were to establish their seat of power in Maynooth, Kildare Town, for the greatest part, remained in their ownership right up until the early 20th Century. Kildare Castle, positioned on elevated lands to the east of St. Brigid's monastery, comprised four towers with various out-offices surrounded by a bawn. To the south of the castle an east west axis served tenements associated with long narrow 'burgage' plots located to the south of Dublin Street and both sides of Claregate Street. Evidence of the burgage plots can be seen today in the garden boundaries of the properties to the south of the Market Square, and Dublin Street (see adjacent map).



Rocque's 1757 Survey Map of Kildare

Although once an important Christian centre and a prosperous medieval town, post medieval Kildare paints a bleak picture in the context of past glories. Following the reformation of the 16th Century, the monastic houses of Kildare fell into decay. St. Brigid's Cathedral now catered for a small protestant community which formed a fraction of both the diocese and parish population. Post reformation bishops were all absentees, as were most of the other clergy attached to the cathedral. Equally, the earls of Kildare had removed themselves from the town, establishing their seat of power in Maynooth.

Having suffered badly during Queen Elizabeth's Wars, the town of Kildare was described as being 'altogether disinhabited' in 1600. The town was later garrisoned during the Confederate Wars, during which time the cathedral was totally ruined, reputedly bombarded by Lord Castlehaven.

Paradoxically, a settlement that had once been an important Christian centre and strategically positioned medieval borough now found itself being bypassed by travellers bound for the Munster plantations, who preferred to pass through Naas and Kilcullen, both of which were located within the Pale.

The administrative functions of shire town subsequently passed from Kildare to Naas but this in itself was not the sole reason for the town's demise. Being removed from a river, the town did not lend itself to industrial development, particularly in the context of the 18th Century expansion of Ireland's milling industries.

The development of Kildare in the 18th Century was relieved somewhat by the introduction of a toll on the road from Naas to Maryborough, placing the town on the main route between Dublin and the south-west. Toward the end of the Century Kildare had established itself as a post town, benefiting from the passing trade generated by mail coaches and other traffic.

The development of the towns military and market functions in the 1700's and 1800's are also important periods from which much of the present day settlement derives its character and historic significance.

Rocque's Map of 1757 gives us some insight into the extent of 18th Century Kildare. The structure of the historic town centre is almost identical to that of the present day, the Market Square being its focus with buildings fronting onto all three sides as well as sections of Dublin Street and Claregate Street.



1837 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map



Leinster Lodge, Chaplin Lane



Lislee House, Dublin Street



Beechgrove House, Dublin Street



Virginia Lodge

A notable change in the character of the town was brought about by the construction of private and public buildings in the late 18th and 19th centuries. The result of increased trade in the town in the late eighteenth Century followed with the intensification of Dublin Street – Claregate Street axis, and the construction of out houses and offices to the rear of the principal dwellings.

Rocque’s map of 1757 indicates a large free standing house within the bawn of Kildare Castle, Leinster Lodge, which later became the residence of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, leader of the United Irishmen. To the east and south of the castle, Beechgrove House and Lislee House, both attractive detached Georgian dwellings, added to the superior residential character of Dublin Street, all visible in the 1837 First Edition Ordnance Survey.

Notable public buildings of the eighteenth and nineteenth Century included the construction of the new Catholic Church and subsequent schools to the south of the town, the construction of the Market House and the Court House, as well as the Infirmary.

The Church of Ireland school and the new Carmelite Gothic church at White Abbey were also constructed during this period.

Street widening occurred in the late nineteenth Century on Dublin Street, Claregate Street, and the junction of Bride Street and the Market Square which would have seen the replacement of earlier buildings with improved building stock.

The Great Southern and Western Railway was one of the main railway operations in Ireland in the 19th and early 20th Century. The Dublin to Cork route opened in 1846 – 47, passing through The Curragh and calling at Kildare station, which was constructed within half a mile north of the town centre.

Although having little impact on the economy of Kildare Town, the railway line strengthened links with Dublin and subsequently induced a northward shift in the expansion of the settlement. Most notably, the Fair Green, which had previously been located at St. Brigid’s Square, repositioned itself at a more strategic location north of the town, between Market Square and the Railway Station. The resurgence of Kildare’s’ economy is primarily attributed to its military and equestrian associations. New industries began to emerge in the mid twentieth Century including a wall paper factory to the west of the town and a chilling factory, initially located at Bride Street, and later on the Dublin Road, to the east of the town.

In the 1980’s Kildare saw both the closure of the wallpaper factory and the arrival of Modus Media, also located on the Monasterevin Road. Another boost to the economy of the town came in the beginning of the 21st Century with the construction of the Kildare Village Outlet Centre, taking full advantage of the town’s location on the M7 motorway.

Within the historic town centre, the most significant change to occur in recent times was the redevelopment of the southern side of Claregate Street, extending from Bangup Lane almost as far as Cleamore Road, and comprising a single mixed use building.

Notwithstanding the expansion of the town itself, the construction of the M7 motorway is the most significant change to have occurred in the landscape surrounding Kildare Town since the turn of the Century. Skirting its southern periphery, the bypass and associated junction is now the principal point of access to Kildare.



1837 Figure Ground Map



1935 Figure Ground Map



2010 Figure Ground Map

## Urban Morphology and Street Pattern

The street pattern of Kildare reflects the pattern of growth of the town since the 1700's as evidenced in Rocque's 1757 Survey Map of Kildare. A limited number of extant structures date from this period, however, primarily 19th Century structures have replaced the original buildings, and building plots have been intensified. The town is also punctuated with twentieth Century structures which add diversity to the overall pattern of development.

Central to the town is the Market Square and Cathedral enclosure. The Market Square is of an irregular triangular form. It is traversed along its southern edge by the principal east west route through the town. This road marks the Main Street of the town, and extends to the east as Dublin Street, and to the West as Claregate Street. The secondary roads entering the square are Nugent Street to the north, which provides access from the Station Road and Kildare Railway Station, and Bride Street to the south.

The Market Square is bisected to the east and west by a north south route that aligns with the entrances of Nugent Street and Bride Street to the Market Square. Bangup lane connects Bride Street to Claregate Street, and a series of laneways occur along the southern boundary of the Cathedral enclosure and north south lanes connecting the edges of the Cathedral enclosure to Claregate Street and to Chapel Hill.

Market Square is a well defined space to the Cathedral enclosure, the heart of early Christian Kildare. The Cathedral complex sits to the north west of the Market Square, with the entrance pinched to a narrow entrance point. This reflects the early relationship of commercial activity to the ecclesiastical centre.

Market Square is defined by terraces of two and three storey buildings with incidental standalone landmark buildings. It presents an understated backdrop to the dramatic Cathedral enclosure. The landmark buildings, such as the Bank of Ireland and Nolans are later additions to the fabric, and their brick finish and distinctive forms distinguish them in the context of adjoining simple render finishes.

Dublin Street is characterised by stand alone 'Lodges' in large gardens, Leinster Lodge, Beechgrove and Lislee, and the presence of civic buildings, including the former Courthouse set back from the Street. This gives the street an open and formal character. The street opens gradually to the Market Square. This is in contrast to the well defined entrance to Claregate Street from the Market Square.

The character of Claregate Street is distinctive presenting a well defined and strong building line with a compact and fine plot grain. There is a subtle change in the character of the terraces along the street, stepping down from three to two storey. The building height and detail and design of the buildings simplify from east to west. The topography of Claregate Street, sloping away from the Market Square goes hand in hand with the change in scale of buildings. The slope is demarcated in the building forms in the stepping of roofs and chimneys along the length of the street. The south western end of Claregate Street was redeveloped in recent years with modern apartments and a town centre development.

Nugent Street is narrow and curving which reflects the medieval influence in its evolution.

The topography rises when approaching the Square, which creates a strong sense of anticipation. The buildings are two storey in height, and terraced. These include a number of nineteenth Century buildings but mainly there are 20th Century buildings to the east at the entrance to the Square, along the street, and along the western side of the street. The views to the Square are punctuated by the gable of the Market building, and 'Bolands' public house in the distance.

Bride Street is well defined at the entrance to the Square, and extends southwards to the junction with Bangup Lane. It becomes more open in character further south and opens to St. Brigid's Square. The street is characterised by the landmark St. Brigid's Church, and by more modest buildings, including 19th Century terraces to the rear of 'Bolands' public house, and the twentieth Century former 'Chilling Factory'. High boundary walls to the east of the street are also a distinctive characteristic.





Market Square, 1890



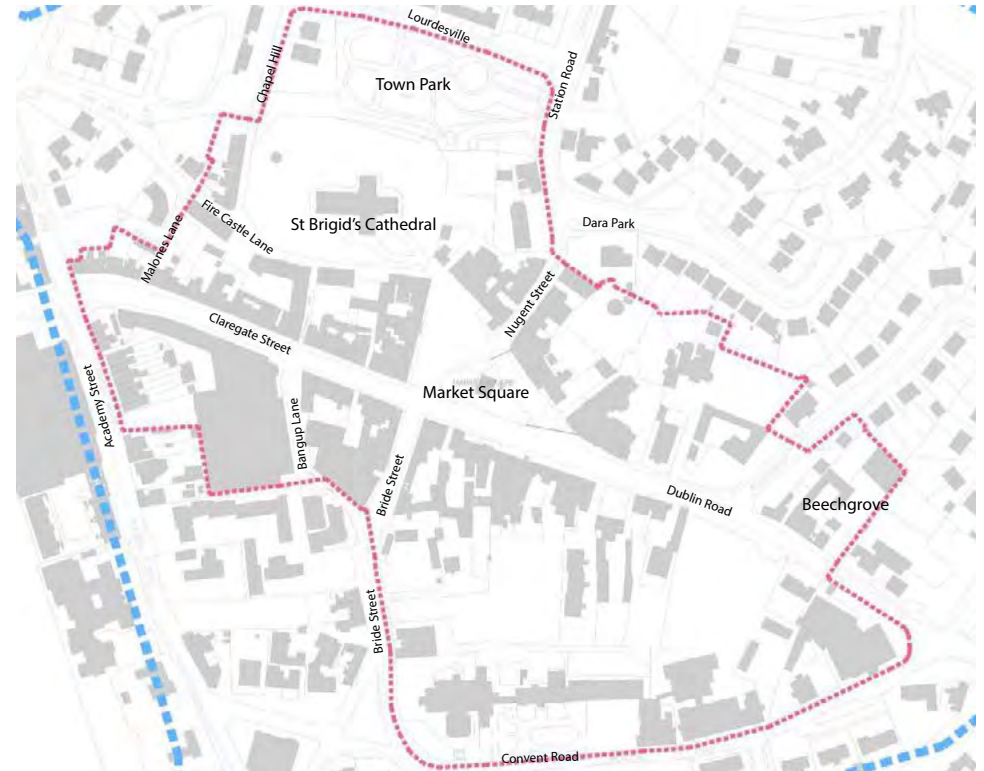
Late 19th C. / Early 20th C. Claregate Street

Bangup lane to the south of Claregate Street connects Bride Street from the south to Claregate Street. The buildings on Bangup lane are principally contemporary structures, however the street alignment is the distinctive characteristic of this street, with a rise in the topography to arrive at Claregate Street with dramatic views of the round tower in the distance to the rear of Claregate Street.

The narrow lanes surrounding the Cathedral enclosure to the south and west and the interconnecting lanes to Claregate street to the south are of particular significance. The scale and building height along these lanes, the rubble boundary walls to the side gardens, and their close proximity to the Cathedral boundary wall, together with the narrowness of the entrances to the lanes creates a strong medieval character. The building heights are single and two storey.

The closeness in the relationship of the entrance from Firecastle Lane to Market Square is a key characteristic that retains the medieval character of this area in Kildare. Convent Road to the south is distinctly formal in character defined by the historic former Infirmary (Kildare House Hotel), Killgowan Lodge, the former Presentation Convent and Secondary School buildings, setback within their own grounds creating formal areas of semi private open space facing the street.

Existing mature trees contribute to this character which are aligned to the south of the street. The entrance to the street is defined by landmark buildings, the former Infirmary (Kildare House Hotel) to the east and St. Brigid's Church to the west.

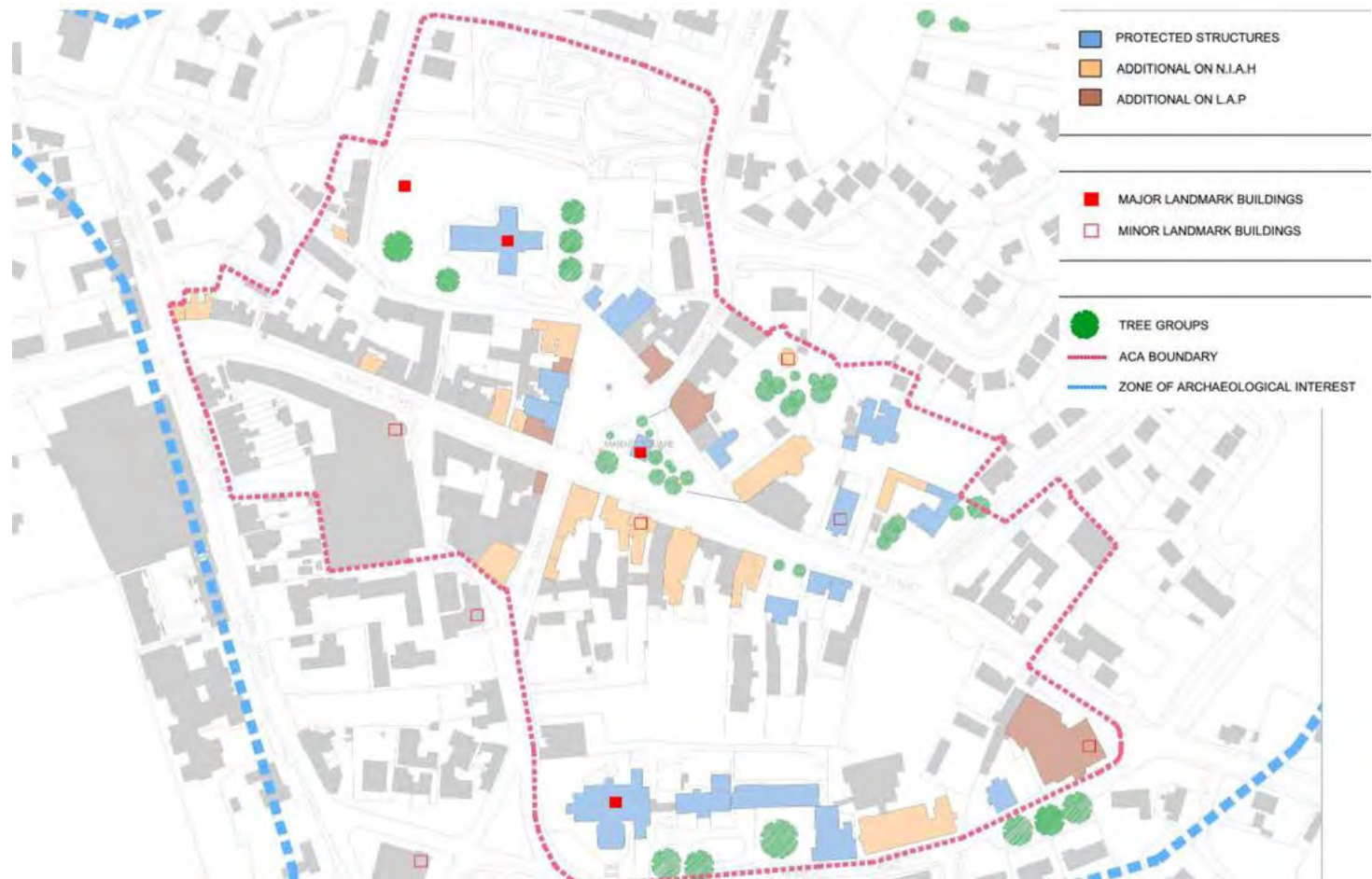


Kildare Town ACA Boundary: from Kildare ACA Statement of Character

### Urban Morphology and Street Pattern

An Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) boundary was defined in the Kildare Town Historic Landscape Characterisation Plan. The boundary incorporates the key character areas that define the historic town core, namely the Cathedral, Market Square, the principal east west route and laneways.

This incorporates most of the 18th and 19th Century building fabric. The boundaries generally terminate where post war 20th Century developments begins.



Kildare's Protected Structures, NIAH Structures and Proposed Protected Structures: from Kildare ACA Statement of Character

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# Working with Planning Policy

A number of policy documents have been analysed and evaluated as part of the development of this Town Renewal Masterplan. Detailed within the appendix the documents listed below fall under three categories all informing the growth of Kildare Town.

These are as follows:

## National Policy

- Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework
- Heritage Ireland 2030 - The National Heritage Plan
- All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020 – Councils: Actions to help Pollinators
- Climate Action Plan, 2023
- Town Centre First Policy, 2022
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, 2013
- Urban Design Manual, 2009

## Regional Policy

- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern Midland Regional Assembly, 2019-2031
- Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042

## Local Policy

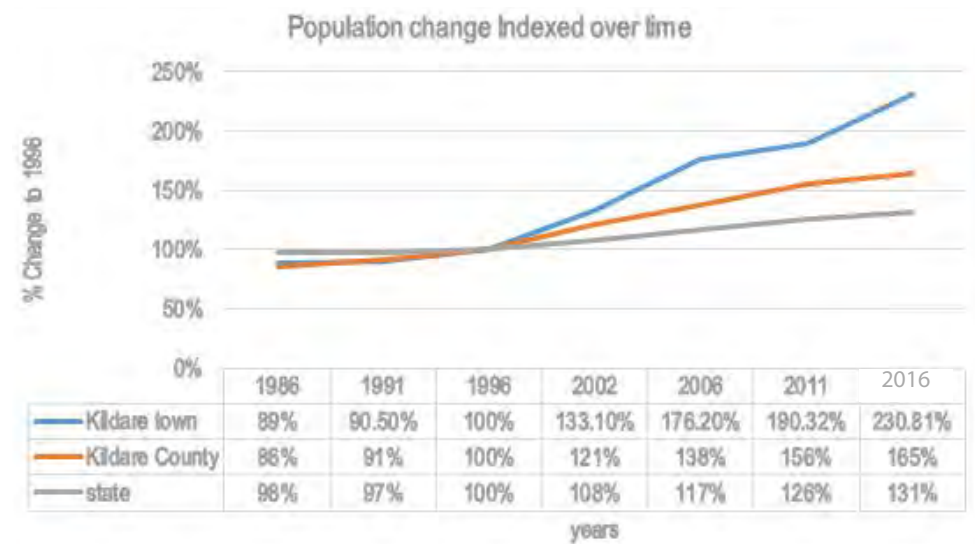
- Kildare County Development Plan, 2023-2029
- Kildare – Culture and Creativity Strategy
- Kildare Local Economic and Community Plan, 2016-2021
- Kildare Heritage Plan, 2019-2025
- Green Infrastructure in Kildare, Newbridge and Kilcullen, 2011
- Kildare Local Area Plan, 2023
- Kildare Town Historic Landscape Characterisation, 2011
- Kildare Town ACA Statement of Character, 2014
- Kildare Town Walls Conservation, Interpretation and Management Plan, 2014

# Population & Socio Economic Profiling

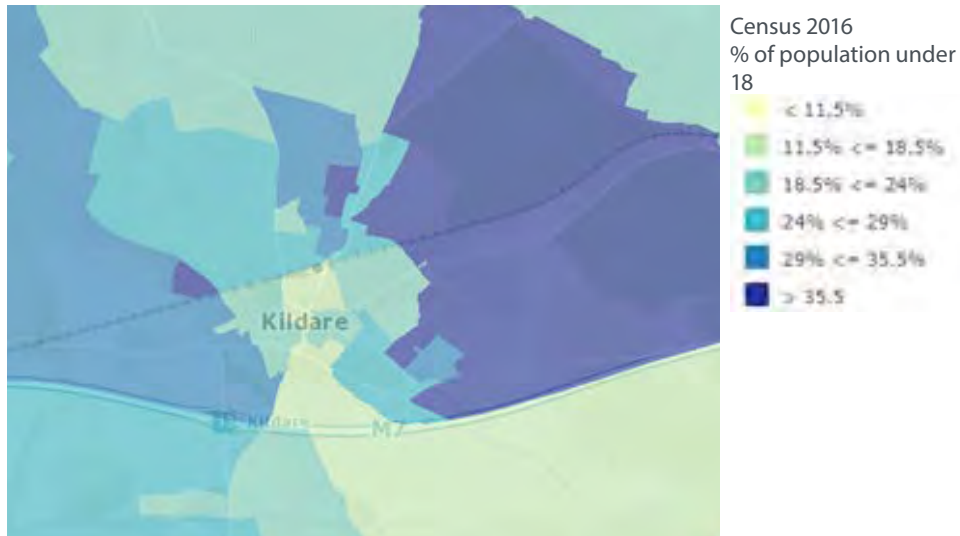
## Population over time

According to Census 2016, Kildare Town had a population of 8,634 persons. The 2022 Census population figures at settlement level, were not available prior to the publication of this Town Renewal Plan. Therefore, Census 2016 data is the most up to date population and socio economic figures for the settlement of Kildare.

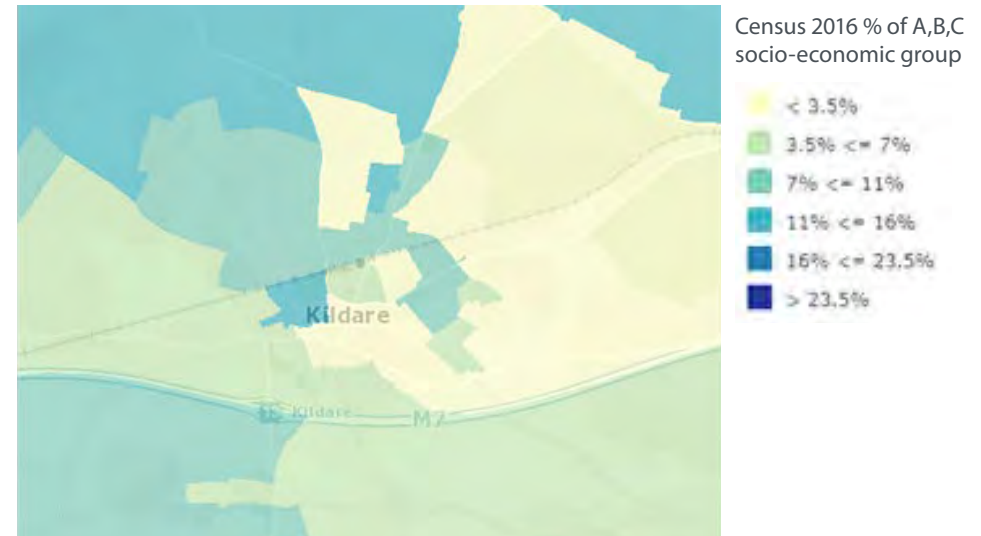
The table on the right compares the growth in population of Kildare Town, the County and the State over a 30 year timeframe. The County and State's population has risen by 65 % and 31% respectively. However, during this same period, Kildare Town experienced a 230% increase in population.



Population Over Time Source: Census.ie



Percentage of 2016 Population under 18



Percentage of 2016 Population

### Age Profile

The Age profile of Kildare town is broadly similar to the State in 2016, however there it is notable that 36% of the population is under 18 compared to 23% of the state aged under 18. Conversely, less than 10% of the population is aged over 65 compared to 13% for the state.

The figure above illustrates the under 18 year old across the town. As expected, there is a higher percentage in this category in the suburban areas of the town.

### Socio Economic Profile and Employment

The Census provides information on 'socio economic group' at small area level that can be useful to consider. These groups are classified from A to J based on the person's

role in employment. Groupings A,B and C together shows the relative distribution of people that are employers, managers, and professionals, whereas grouping from D to J includes people with non-manual, manual, skilled, semi-skilled, farmers and agricultural workers. The % in the ABC group is a relatively high compared with the surrounding area.

Of the 8,634 persons that reside in Kildare 3,501 persons are at work and 2,166 persons are at school or college. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the occupation of residents in Kildare Town and is compared with Kildare County. It shows the relative importance of retailing for Kildare Town in comparison to the rest of the County. It also illustrates a relatively low involvement in education and other social services, reflecting the lack of a major 3rd level college or hospital. The unemployment rate is high at 17% comparison to a rate of 7% for the county as a whole.

Occupation	Kildare County		Kildare Town	
Agriculture & Quarrying	3,545	3%	170	4%
Manufacturing	9,784	9%	377	9%
Construction & Utilities	7,009	6%	187	4%
Retail, T&S	19,196	18%	857	20%
Accommodation & Food	4,436	4%	223	5%
IT, Professional Services	18,111	17%	514	12%
Public Administration	6,144	6%	244	6%
Education & Social	20,035	19%	531	12%
Other	2,127	2%	106	2%
Not Stated	5,560	5%	305	7%
Unemployed	12,297	11%	740	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>108,244</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,254</b>	<b>100%</b>

Occupation of Residents in Kildare County and Kildare Town in 2016



Census 2016  
% of owner-occupied  
houses



Percentage of owner-occupied houses in 2016

## Households and Housing Tenure

In 2016, there are 2,959 households recorded in Kildare Town with 1,767 representing family households. The majority of these households are between 3-5 person households.

The three small areas that comprise the historic town centre core accommodate a population of 295 persons. There are 298 housing units in the core area, 24 of which are deemed to be vacant.

Means of Travel	Kildare County		Kildare Town	
On foot	20,384	13%	768	14%
Bicycle	2,425	2%	73	1%
Bus, minibus or coach	14,338	9%	645	11%
Train, DART or LUAS	6,096	4%	255	4%
Motorcycle or scooter	422	0%	7	0%
Motor car: Driver	64,341	43%	2,157	38%
Motor car: Passenger	28,170	19%	1,262	22%
Van	6,020	4%	169	3%
Other, incl. lorry	561	0%	13	0%
Work mainly at or from home	3,852	3%	56	1%
Not stated	4,683	3%	268	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>151,292</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,673</b>	<b>100%</b>

Means of Travel by Residents in 2016

## Means of Travel

The means of travel to work, school or college is broadly in line with the rest of the County. The predominant form of travel in Kildare Town is by car, either as driver or passenger with a combined overall figure of 60%. Given that it is an urban area, it might be expected that a higher percentage than that of the County as a whole would travel by foot. However, there is only a single percentage point in the difference for travel on foot when the Town is compared to the County.

# Economic Health Check

## Retail Destination

Kildare Town has been identified as a Level 3 Town Centre in the RSES Retail Hierarchy. The Core Retail Area and the convenient floorspace (supermarkets) serve the local and wider population. The adjacent Kildare Tourist Outlet Village has a national and international retail profile – with in excess of 5 million visitors a year. This Town Renewal Plan, along with the CDP and the LAP seek to strengthen the established retail function of Kildare through a combination of redevelopment of appropriate infill and opportunity sites in the town centre and to encourage occupancy of vacant units.

It is also a priority to deliver an appropriate and effective link route between the Kildare Tourist Outlet Village to the town centre. Enticing visitors to walk from the Kildare Tourist Outlet Village to the Town Centre could be transformative for the town and bring additional spend and dwell time. This will significantly benefit other shops, services, restaurants, pubs and accommodation.

## Enterprise and Employment

Kildare Town is designated as a Level 3 Self Sustaining Growth Town in the County Economic Development Hierarchy. The RSES describes these settlements as those with high levels of population growth and a weak employment base which are reliant on other areas for employment and/or services and which require targeted 'catch-up' investment to become more self-sustaining.

Kildare therefore requires contained growth, focusing on driving investment in services, employment growth and infrastructure while balancing housing delivery. The priority for Kildare, is to focus on identifying sectoral opportunities, the development of high value manufacturing sectors, logistics and internationally traded sectors in tandem with IDA support. Currently there are however no major industrial or multi-national employers in the town.

## A National Tourism Hub

Kildare town has an excellent location, heritage and landscape. There is significant potential to expand on the towns' unique selling points in order to drive economic growth. The town has been recognised as a National Tourism Hub within the CDP. The town's inclusion in Failte Ireland's, 'Ireland's Ancient East' infrastructure development and marketing programme, its proximity to Dublin, its rich heritage, along with its equine and retail attractions, provide opportunities to attract direct tourism from home and abroad, and spin-off tourism from the city region and neighbouring counties.

Kildare boasts numerous tourist and cultural attractions which can serve to complement destination venues, if marketed appropriately, and adding to Kildare Town's local attractions and establishing itself as a destination that is unique, attractive and successful.





## Tourism

The key to creating a national scale tourism hub is to create a 'honey pot', whereby the strengths of a locality are combined, particular strengths identified and promoted through a singular marketing strategy.

The strengths of Kildare town for international tourism, as a future hub, have been identified as Heritage, Religious, Equine, Hospitality and Retail. Kildare Town has significant potential for an enhanced tourism offer centred on its historic urban fabric, examples include St. Brigid's Cathedral and Round Tower, White Abbey, Grey Abbey and the restored 18th Century market house which accommodates the Heritage Centre and Tourist Office.

Kildare Tourist Outlet Village attracts approximately four million visitors a year and is located within the town boundary. Creating a convenient, straightforward link to the town centre will be fundamental to capitalise on the potential synergies between the town centre and the outlet centre.

A hub of tourist sites are located to the south of the M7 including the Irish National Stud, the Japanese Gardens and St. Brigid's Well. Further afield, The Curragh Racecourse and various golf courses are also major attractions to Kildare. The Curragh Plains offers significant potential in terms of amenity value, if properly promoted and managed (The Draft Curragh Masterplan).

Kildare is a major visitor destination within the eastern region. Ireland's Ancient East is a tourism initiative by Failte Ireland and aims to attract domestic tourists and to maximise the history and heritage in the East and South of Ireland and bring it to greater visitor attention.

An important element of the tourism infrastructure of the town is hotel accommodation. Currently Kildare House Hotel, The Silken Thomas and Firecastle provide the majority of accommodation in the town.



The Irish National Stud



The Japanese Gardens



St Brigid's Well



The Curragh Racecourse



St Brigid's Cathedral and Round Tower

# Movement Analysis

In addition to the Kildare Town Transport Strategy (prepared as part of the Kildare Town Local Area Plan 2023-2029), a movement and permeability analysis was also undertaken as part of the Town Renewal Masterplan to better understand the existing hierarchy of transport nodes.

Given the town's medieval street pattern and tight urban grain it should stand to reason that the town is relatively easy to navigate and of a scale which promotes pedestrian and cycle usage. There are however often impediments to such movement owing to an over-reliance on private cars.

The following analysis is structured in the following order:

1. Pedestrians
2. Cyclists
3. Public Transport
4. Private Cars



Market Square on a Thursday Market Day (Prior to pedestrianisation of the Square)

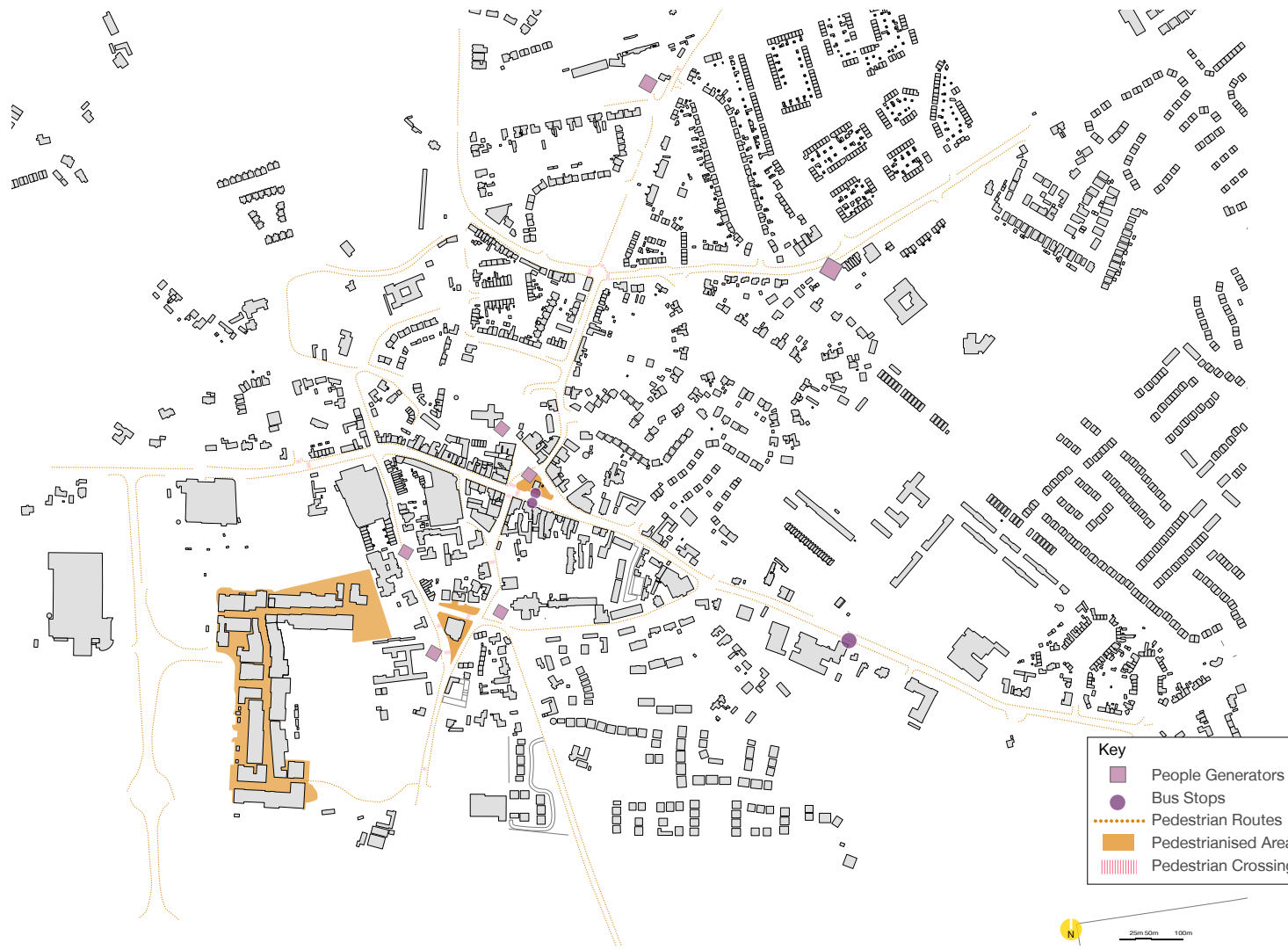
## Pedestrians

Pedestrian counts were undertaken by M.CO Architecture in Kildare Town on days between 28th March to 8th April 2017. From the counts around the square, we have found that many people do traverse the town on foot. Though mostly older people or those pushing prams during the day, at rush hour, numerous groups of unaccompanied children were seen walking to school.

Widths of footpaths, quality of hard landscaping and provision for wheelchair users are all items which should be addressed in order to improve the pedestrian experience.

Pedestrian access between the Outlet Centre and Kildare Town could be strengthened with a link route between Kildare Tourist Outlet Village and the town centre. Current pedestrian routes (either via Monasterevin Road or via Grey Abbey) are disconnected to incentivise significant movement between the two.

Further Pedestrian counts were undertaken post pedestrianisation of the Market Square by Aecom in Kildare Town in January 2022 and 2023. The surveys were taken on Friday, Saturday and Sunday and averaged.



Pedestrian Movement Strategy (Prior to pedestrianisation of the Square)

There are a number of inaccessible units on Market Square, Claregate St, and Nugent St

## Pedestrian Count Assessment

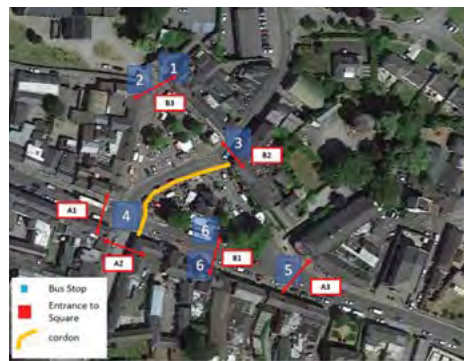
In order to understand the social life of the town, a series of observational studies were carried out around the market square. Pedestrians were counted by passing into and out of market square to determine how many people use the space. Along with this, movement was traced to understand how pedestrians use the public space of the town.

The 2017 study chose a period outside of school holidays to ensure the results represented the every day social life of the town as much as possible. In order to capture a typical midweek day, a market day and a weekend day.

The 2022 - 2023 study identified the pedestrian entrance points required to be counted and took place over a 12 hour period from 7am to 7pm on Friday 21st, Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd January 2022. The entrance points counted are listed below.

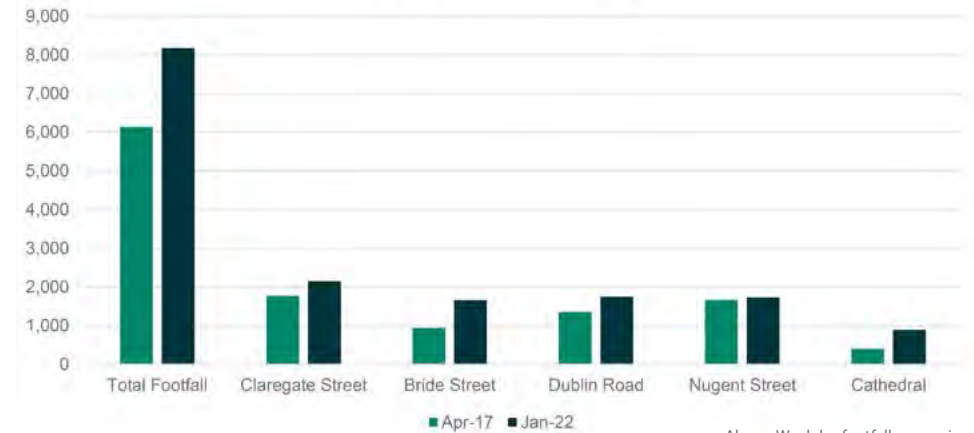
1. Nugent Street car park access lane
2. Fire castle lane
3. Nugent Street
4. Bride Street and Claregate Street
5. Dublin Street
6. Bus stops eastbound and westbound

The image below indicates the locations of the 2017 and the 2022 survey in order to provide a visual understanding of the locations and for ease of reference.



Locations of pedestrian counts in 2022 and 2023

## Total Footfall - Weekday



Above: Weekday footfall comparison

Below: April 2017 and January 2022 Pedestrian Survey Sites

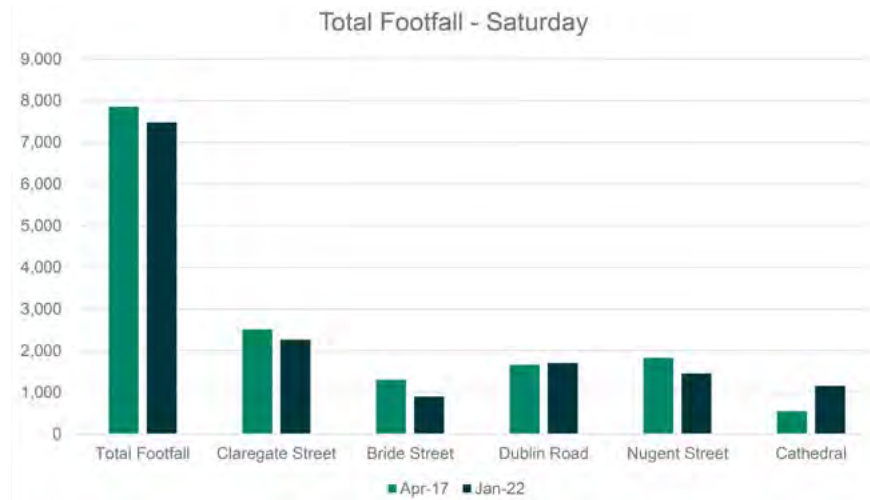
2017 Ref		2022 Ref
A1	Claregate Street	4
A2	Bride Street	4
A3	Dublin Road	5
B1	Market Square	6
B2	Nugent Street	3
B3	Cathedral Gates	1, 2

The survey undertaken in April 2017 used a Thursday as a weekday while the January 2022 survey used a Friday. For the purposes of analysis and reporting, we have grouped these together as the 'Weekday' results. The table below shows the breakdown of footfall from each of the main 5 sites for both 2017 and 2022 and highlights the difference in numbers.

There is an increase in pedestrian footfall from April 2017 to January 2022 with the highest increase being on Bride Street. Nugent Street had the lowest change in numbers. It should also be noted that the pedestrian numbers at Cathedral Gates have over doubled from 2017 to 2022.

Both the 2017 and 2022 surveys carried out pedestrian counts on a Saturday. The table and graph below highlight the decline in pedestrian numbers across four of the six of the entrances / exits to the Market Square from 2017 to 2022 on a Saturday. The two entrances where pedestrian numbers have increased is at Cathedral Gates and Dublin Road where there has been an increase of 608 people and 41 people, respectively.

When comparing the overall 2017 and 2022 footfall data, it is clear that during the weekday, there has been an increase in footfall across all five main entrances to Market Square. In comparison, there has been a decrease in footfall for three of the five entrances during the weekend count, with Dublin Road and Cathedral Gates being the exception.



Above: Weekend footfall comparison

When analysing the weekday data, the overall total footfall entering and exiting Market Square has risen from April 2017 to January 2022. The majority of pedestrians are entering and exiting from Claregate Street, closely followed by Nugent Street.

When comparing the weekend (Saturday) data, the overall total footfall entering and exiting Market Square has fallen from April 2017 to January 2022. However, the pedestrian movement trends have remained the same where the majority of pedestrians are entering and exiting from Claregate Street. However, more pedestrians are using Dublin Road to access Market Square than in 2017.

- **Where is everybody going**

As would be expected most pedestrians moving through the square had a clear objective. The most commonly noted destinations were the bus stop, the ATM at BOI or one of the numerous parking meters.

At gate A1 on Claregate Street, the main activity observed was repeated movement between the pubs and adjacent bookmakers. Those passing gate A3 on Dublin Street were often seen to walk quite far out of town while those passing gate A2 on Bride Street usually travelled to one of the seven parked cars by the point.

The two benches positioned to the south of the heritage building proved to be popular pause points, mostly used by those waiting on buses. Younger people tended to congregate adjacent to the heritage centre, in the shade.

- **How does the market influence movement?**

When we compare the movement through the square over the three days captured, the obvious difference is that relating to point B6. On market day cars are replaced by stalls and with that the movement becomes meandering in character rather than directional.

- **Who uses the town?**

Without exception, the majority of people recorded using the town during the working day were older people i.e. over the age of 70 and young mothers with prams. While this reinforces the need for safe pedestrian crossing options, it also indicates that the town is not benefiting from the Outlet Centre visitor.

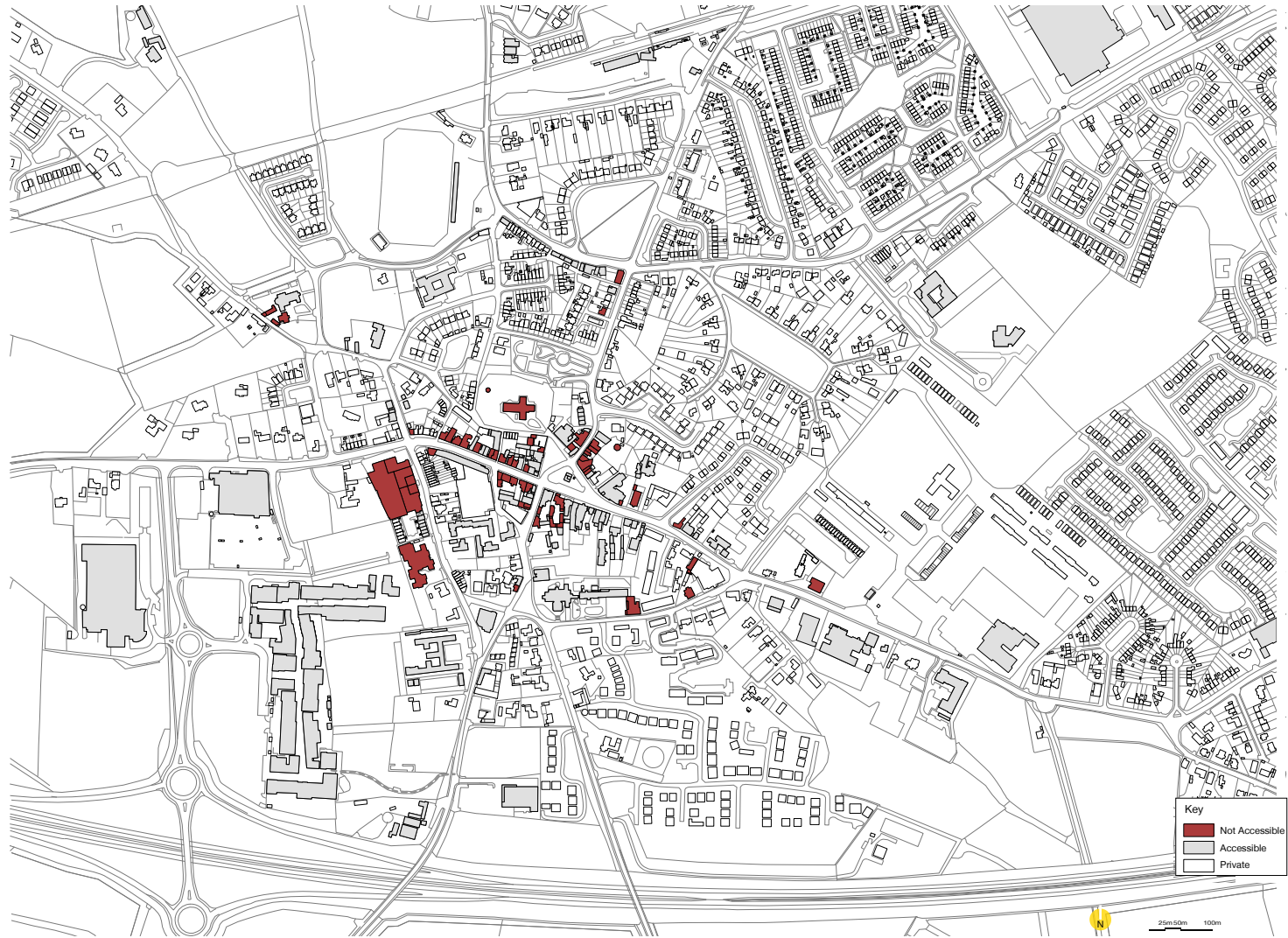
## Accessibility

Generally, vehicular access into and through the town is prioritised over pedestrians.

## Wheelchair Users

As the main demographic using the town during working hours are observed to be older people and those with prams and young children pedestrian accessibility is critical to the successful working of the town. The adjacent map identifies inaccessible properties within the town, (where accessibility is considered from the perspective of a wheelchair user).

A number of wheelchair users were seen to avoid the footpath which runs through the centre of Market Square and instead were travelling on the road, putting themselves at risk. This raises concerns regarding the quality of the streetscape within the square.



Building Accessibility





Small amounts of bike parking located in Market Square



Laneways are a feature of the Kildare townscape



## Bicycles

There are no cycle paths in the town. The majority of cyclists using the amenities of the town (as opposed to passing through at high speed), cycled on the footpath. This would suggest that the roads are felt to be unsuitable for cycling on for most users. The priority given to on street parking is likely to be a contributing factor. Although not many cyclists were observed (<1% of pedestrian numbers), perhaps if the facilities were improved, this would become a more viable mode of transport. There is parking available for eight bikes in the Market Square

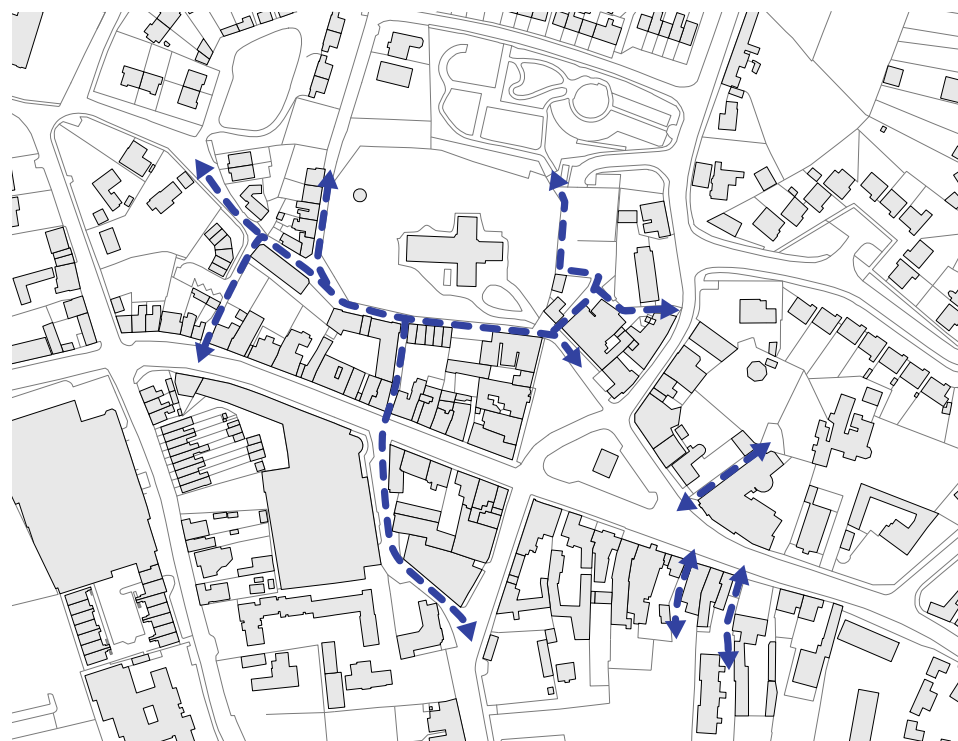
## Permeability

As previously described there are a number of historical laneways within the town centre of Kildare Town. They are often dominated by one way traffic and in many instances as seen on Malones Lane to the right these lanes have no pedestrian footpath so the perception is that cars have priority.

Many of the laneways are fronted onto by gables meaning they are not overlooked or surveilled posing further challenges to the development of a permeable network of secondary routes.

These narrow and attractively proportioned laneways provide important pedestrian linkages and are also the location of a number of residences. They give a strong connection to the Cathedral Enclosure from the business streets, and are an appropriate transition between the bustle of the main shopping street, and the calm of the Cathedral.

The lanes are characterised by the stone wall enclosure to the Cathedral and contribute significantly to the architectural character of the town. They are an integral element in explaining the evolution and history of the town. Protecting and enhancing the heritage value of the laneways is seen as a key element in securing and protecting the overall architectural heritage of the town.



Laneway Network surrounding Market Square  
E.g., Malones Lane (above)

## Public Transport

Kildare Town Train Station is located approximately 600m to the North of the town centre. The station is served by the Dublin to Kildare/ Portlaoise, Dublin to Cork/ Limerick/ Tralee, Dublin to Waterford, Dublin to Galway and Dublin to Westport/ Ballina routes. The station also provides valuable commuter rail services to Dublin (Heuston Station) with a peak time frequency of two trains per hour. The services into Heuston station are a mix of slower moving 'Arrow' suburban services and faster moving main-time services during peak periods.

Kildare Town is also well served by Bus Eireann services including route 126- Dublin/ Naas/ Newbridge/ Kildare/ Portlaoise which provides a regular service between Naas and Kildare. South Kildare Community Transport offers a local services with the support of the rural transport programme which is funded by the department of transport.



Public Transport Routes

## Travel Distances

Despite the town having good public transport links via train and bus routes, the private car still reigns supreme. Kildare town has historically had 12 varying routes that lead into the town centre. Nearly all of these are still present and used.

The opening of the M7 motorway by-pass in 2004 has significantly altered the vehicular movement within the town. The opening of the by-pass has diverted large volumes of unwanted traffic away from the town centre, creating a better environment for the town to develop as a place for people to work, shop and socialise.

The former N7 national primary road still provides the main route through Kildare Town providing a local link to Monasterevin, Milltown to the North and Nurney to the South. The R401 regional road enters the town from Rathangan in the North and heads in an easterly direction providing an alternative route to Newbridge.



### Primary Road Network

Although typically the most viable mode of transport in rural Ireland, the car has taken over many spaces within the town which have potential to be used as public spaces by pedestrians for recreational activities or by local businesses for outdoor eating.

Heavy goods and agricultural vehicles regularly pass through the centre of town which are disproportionate in scale to the streets they are travelling on and have a negative impact on ones perception of the place. Although it is recognised that an alternative route may not be available for all large vehicles, consideration could be given to restricting times of access to maintain the quality of these spaces as streets rather than roads.



Primary Roads Network

## Car Parking

Car parking dominates the backlands of the town. This has resulted in the removal of original plot boundaries, to the east of the Cathedral, to the rear of the Courthouse, and to the south of the main street. This has resulted in the loss of sections of the medieval 'burgage' plot grain to the south of Dublin Street and Market Square. The removal of original plot boundaries has a negative visual impact and a negative impact on the character of the town.

Car park surveys were carried out by M.CO Architecture during the period of March & April 2017 and again by Aecom in January 2022. The occupancy of six car parks in the town were recorded during the study period. On street parking and occupancy of car parks without a red dot have been excluded from the 2017 study.



Car parking provision - 2017

AECOM were commissioned in 2022 by Kildare County Council to prepare a further technical note regarding the existing parking provision and demand in Kildare Town Centre post pedestrianisation of Market Square.

Surveys were undertaken on Friday the 21st, Saturday the 22nd and Sunday the 23rd of January 2022, over a twelve-hour period from 07:00 – 19:00 to capture all peak parking periods

#### 353 Parking spaces in Kildare town centre

1. Bride Street Car Park (80 spaces)
2. Church Car Park (16 spaces)
3. Nugent Street Car Park (47 spaces)
4. Claregate Street (27 spaces)
5. Market Square (12 spaces)
6. Main Street (23 spaces)
7. Cleamore Road (32 spaces)
8. Fire Castle Lane (9 spaces)
9. Silken Thomas Car Park (56 spaces)
10. CMWS Hall Kildare Parking (19 spaces)
11. Station Road Parking (11 spaces)
12. Bridge Street (17 spaces)
13. Bangup Lane (4 spaces)

It should be noted that the number of car parking spaces on Market Square has been reduced since 2020, with a temporary pedestrian public realm scheme in place.

Currently the layout of Market square accommodates an enlarged public space to better accommodate outdoor dining in Kildare.

From the review of the parking surveys, the peak parking demand periods were observed as follows:

- Friday 21st January - 14:30 – 15:30 with 303 parking spaces occupied (86% Max Occupancy);
- Saturday 22nd January - 14:00 – 14:30 with 260 parking spaces occupied (74% Max Occupancy); and,
- Sunday 23rd January - 11:00 – 11:30 with 246 parking spaces occupied (70% Max Occupancy).



Car parking provision - 2022



Common Street View highlighting pavement parking

## Travel Time and Capacity

Kildare town core is only approximately 400m in diameter, suggesting that it can be served by existing and future car parking within the town boundary and close to the town centre, without the need to rely on the Market Square.

Travel time by foot from Nugent Street Car Park to the east of the Cathedral to Market Square is under one minute. However, prior to the accelerated Covid-19 Measures which pedestrianised Market Square, this car park was often found to be almost empty while Market Square car park was over capacity (See opposite).

It is apparent that a review of the parking pay structures in the town would be beneficial to incentivise parking away from central zones to facilitate a more pedestrian friendly town.



Car Parking Capacity at on varying times and days  
Source: Kildare Town Health Check June 2017

# Urban Grain

## Town Makeup

The structure of the historic town is almost identical to that of the present day, the market square being its focus with buildings fronting onto all three sides as well as sections of Dublin Street and Claregate Street.

The Dublin to Cork railway line opened in 1846-47, stopping in Kildare, with the station constructed half a mile north of the town centre. The railway line strengthened links with Dublin and subsequently induced a northward shift in the expansion of the town.

The construction of the M7 motorway is the most significant change to have occurred in the landscape surrounding Kildare Town since the turn of the Century and is now the principle port of access to the town.



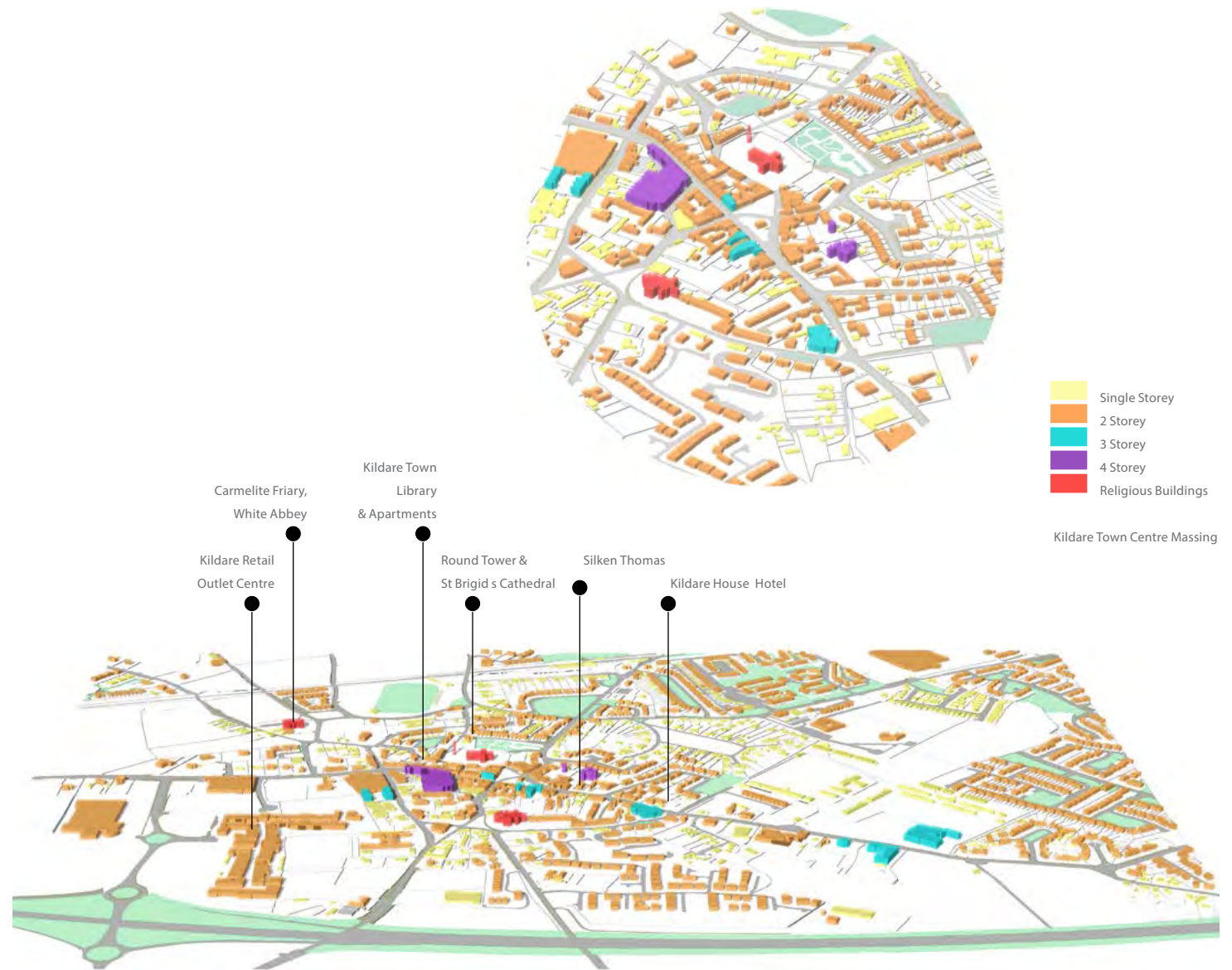
Kildare Town Makeup

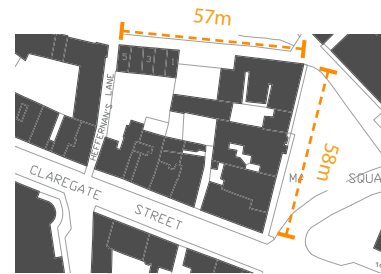


## Town Massing

Generally Kildare Town would be considered low rise. The majority of the main streets comprises 2-3 storey buildings however the most significant change to occur in recent times was the redevelopment of the southern side of Claregate Street extending from Bang-up Lane as far as Cleamore Road. This building is primarily 4 storeys in height.

The low rise of the town allows the cathedral and round tower to retain this prominence on the unique skyline. This is especially apparent from a distance as one approaches the town on the M7. The retention of this historic skyline reinforces the heritage tourism potential and offers a sign post from the motorway to potential passing visitors.





Block 1: Between Claregate Street and Market Square



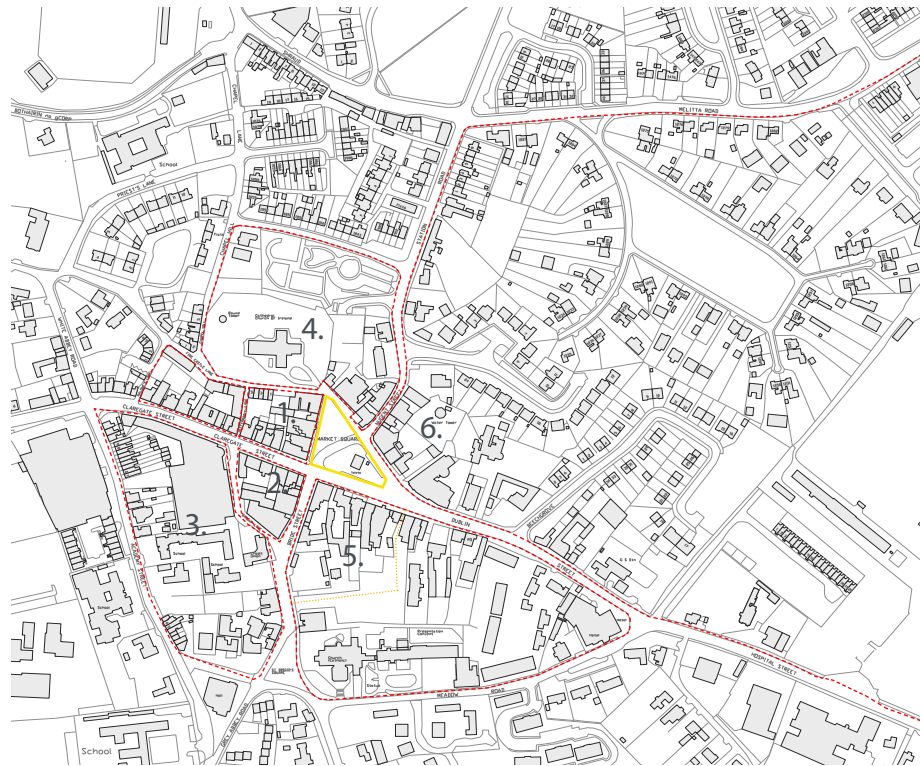
Block 2: Between Claregate Street and Bride Street

### Block Sizes

Designers must have regard to size of blocks within a street network and how they impact on permeability. Best practice would suggest that smaller, more compact blocks should be focused around centres to optimise connectivity. Larger block sizes may occur away from Centres, through less intensively developed areas.

A block dimension of 60-80m is optimal for pedestrian movement and will sustain a variety of building types. This range of dimensions should be considered for use within intensively developed areas, such as Centres, to maximise accessibility.

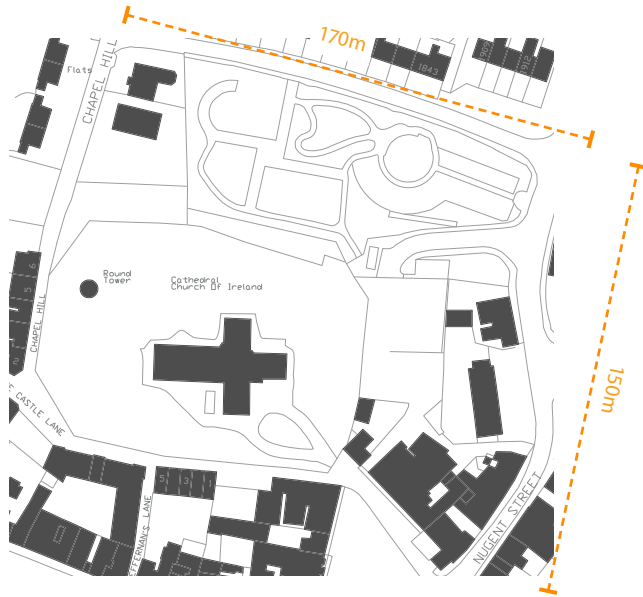
The historical land parcels created by laneways and existing roads infrastructure has allowed for small block arrangements around Market Square in the architectural conservation area of the town. The exception to this is block 6 (see adjacent diagram) located to the east of Market square.



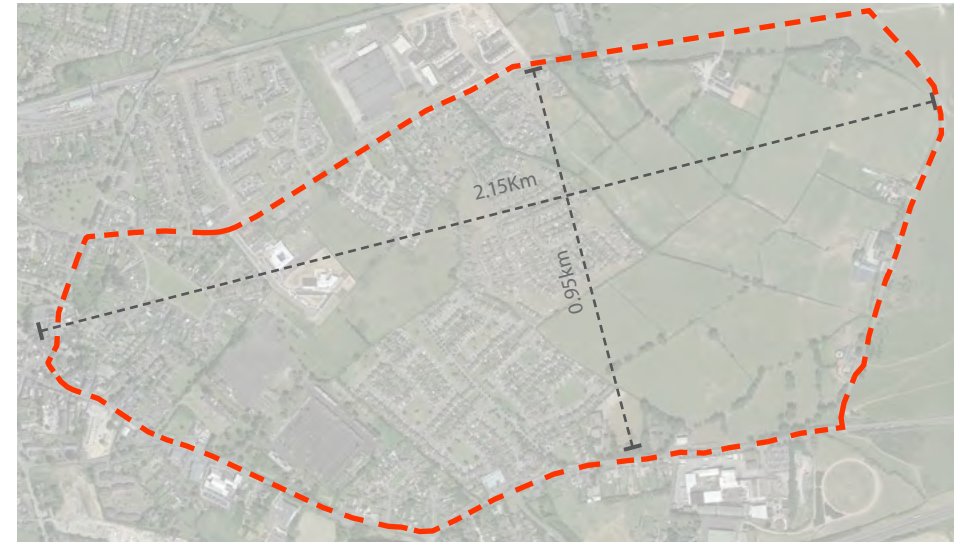
Block Analysis Locations



Block 3: Between Academy and Bride Street



Block 4: Between Chapel Hill and Nugent Street



Block 6: East of Nugent Street Aerial Map

There are however opportunities to create routes through if issues of landownership can be overcome. Areas of newer development, in particular from Kildare Village Outlet Centre, are of larger size and not very permeable. Some larger sites have the potential for mid block pedestrian linkages to increase accessibility and permeability in these areas to create greater connectivity in the town.

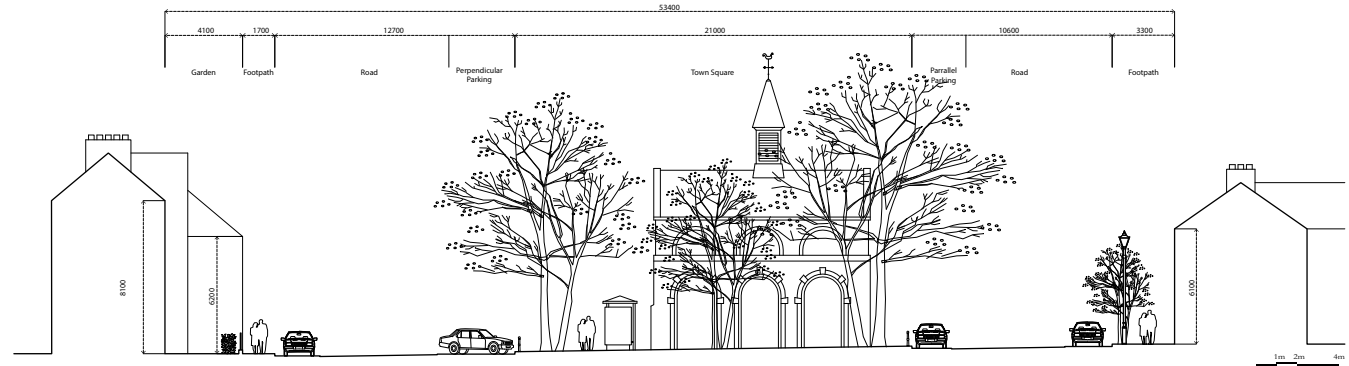
Highlighted on the left, the block splitting Academy Street and Bride Street has a variety of building types. Greater cross linkages could allow for a considerably more efficient form of development for both end-users and the towns walk-ability. This is of particular importance in this area with St Brigid's Primary School sitting on the site creating a border between Kildare Village Outlet Centre and Kildare Town Centre.



Block 5: Between Dublin Street and Meadow Road



Block 6: East of Nugent Street

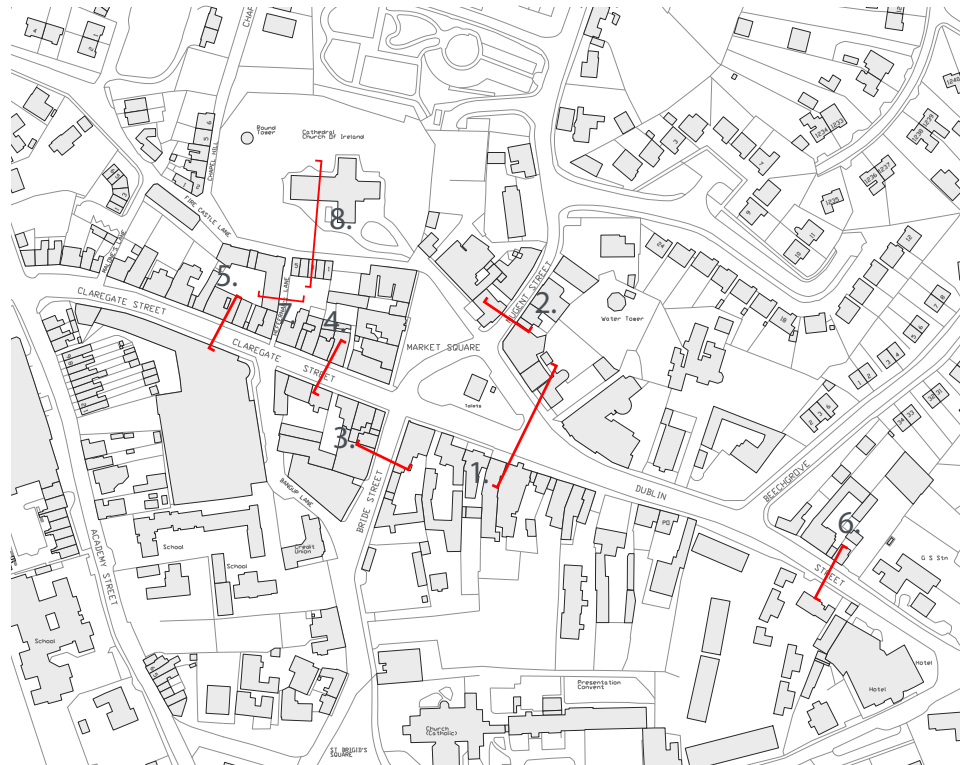


## Street Enclosure

Street enclosure is generally measured as a ratio where height of a building (measures from front building line to front building line) is measured against the width of a street. Consideration needs to be given as to how consistently this ratio applies along length of a street wall.

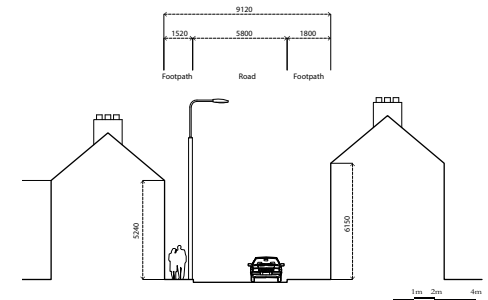
Enclosing streets with buildings helps to define them as urban places and can create a greater sense of intimacy. For example, a building height to street width ratio of 1:2 creates a strong sense of enclosure 1:3 is moderate and so on.

A strong sense of enclosure may be difficult to achieve where the total street width exceeds 30m wide. However the medieval street pattern means that street widths generally give a comfortable sense of enclosure. One could say that the town has good streets which could be enhanced through improved public realm.



Section Locations

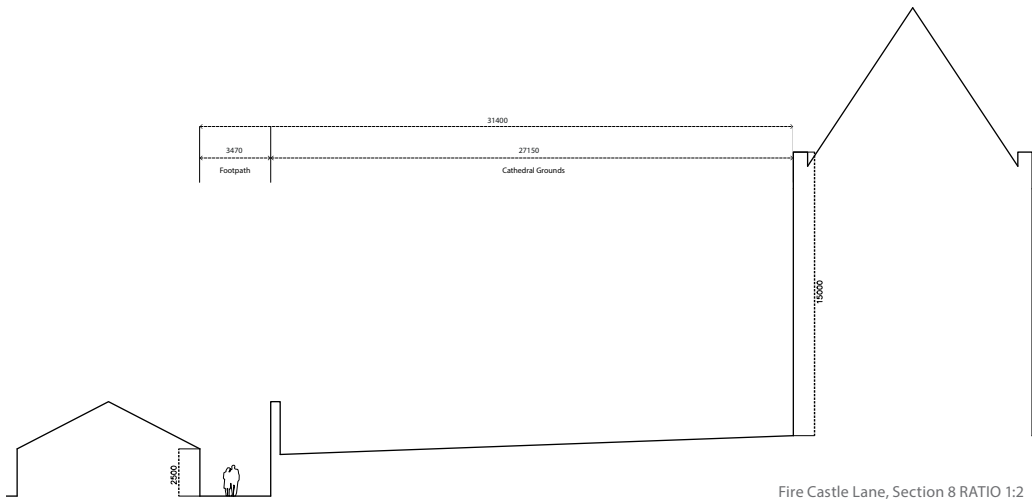
Market Square, Section 1 RATIO 1:6.5



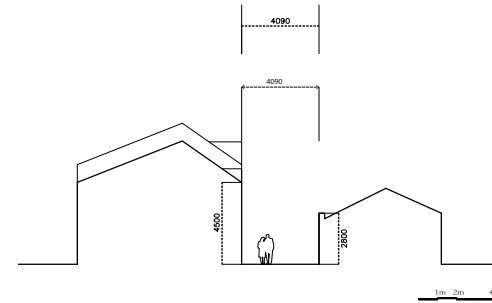
Nugent St, Section 2 RATIO 1:1.5

Location	Ratio
MARKET SQUARE	6.5:1
NUGENT STREET	1.5:1
BRIDE STREET	2:1
CLAREGATE STREET	2.4:1
CLAREGATE STREET through Kildare Shopping Centre	1.3:1
DUBLIN STREET	2.5:1
FIRE CASTLE LANE through St Brigid's Cathedral Ground	1:2
Heffernans Lane	1:1

Table highlighting Street Width-Height Ratio on Main Streets



Fire Castle Lane, Section 8 RATIO 1:2

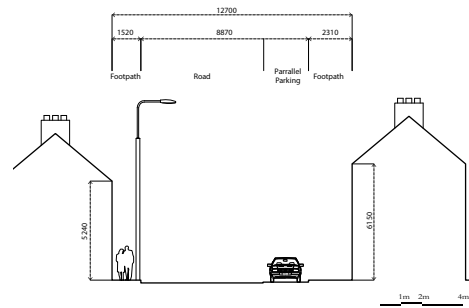


Heffernans Lane, Section 7 RATIO 1:1

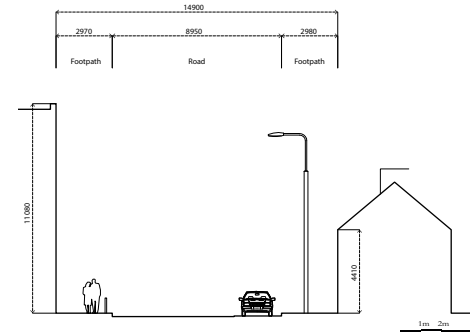


## Footpath Widths

Narrow footpaths were particularly evident on Nugent Street. This is a primary route into the Market Square, with a number of commercial properties and tertiary routes leading off it, therefore footfall is relatively high. On the west side of the street, the footpath is approximately 930mm wide at points while on the east side, the width is approximately 1390mm.



Bride St, Section 3 RATIO 1:2

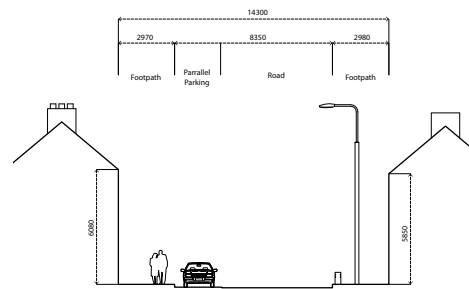


Claregate St, Section 5 RATIO 1:1.3

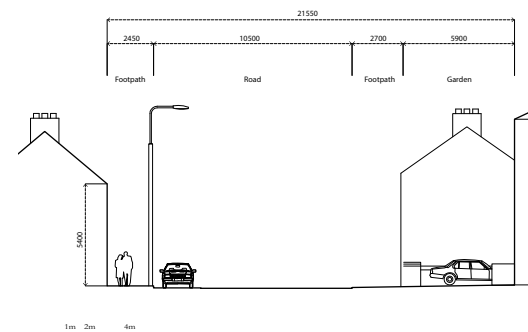


Bride Street looking into Market Square

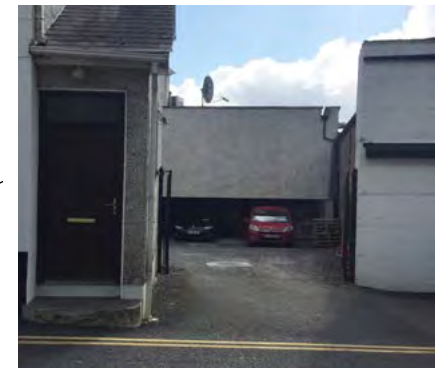
The Design Manual for Urban Roads & Streets indicates 1800mm as the minimum amount of space required for two people to pass comfortably. Although, space for vehicular access needs to be maintained, consideration could be given to restricting access or vehicular direction in certain locations in order to widen footpaths and increase space for pedestrians.



Claregate St, Section 4 RATIO 1:2.4



Dublin St, Section 6 RATIO 1:2.5



Some footpaths are extremely tight or even non-existent from property fronting onto it

# Land Use & Vacancy



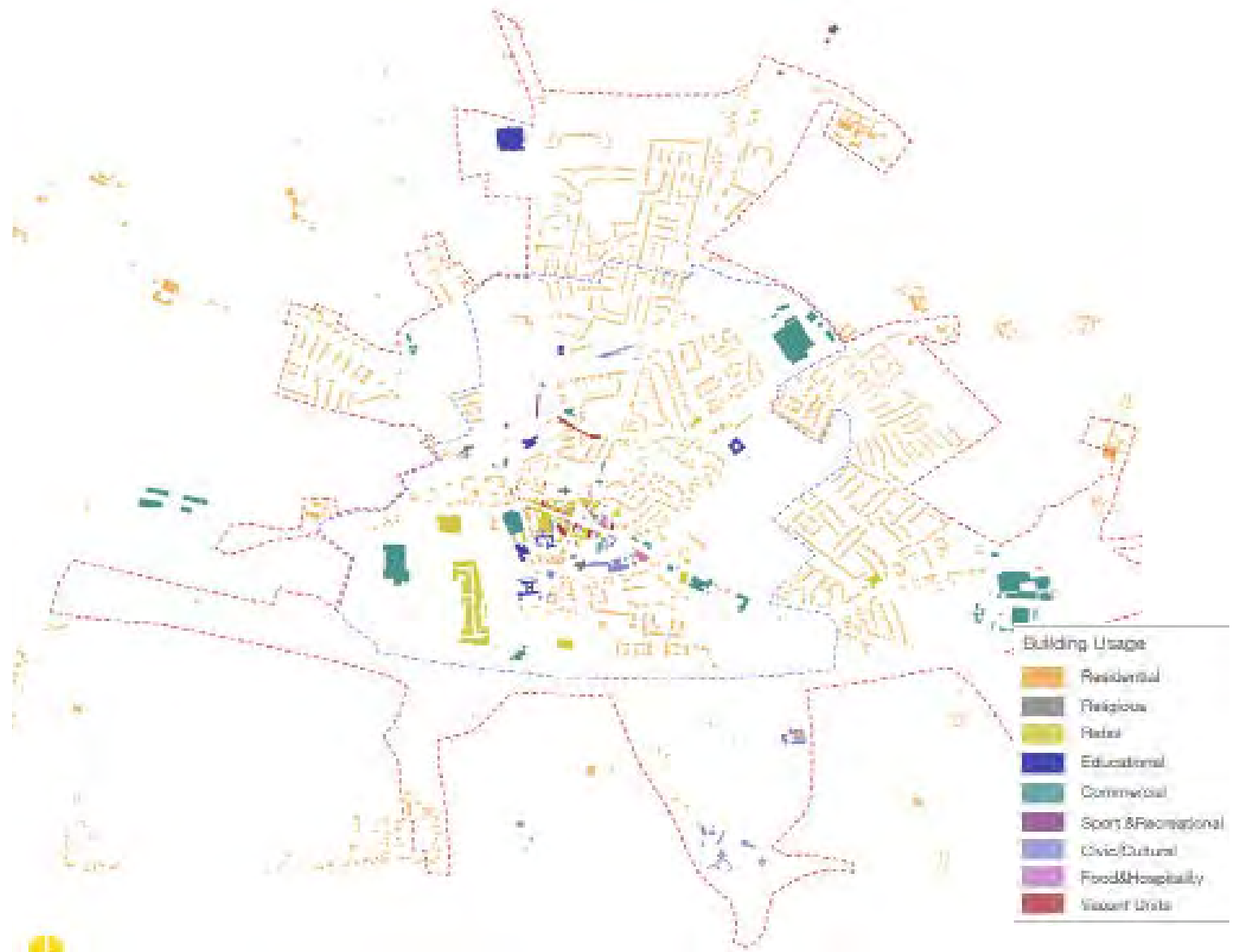
Kildare Town Built Fabric

## Land Use

As one might expect of any urban development, the ground floor building use illustrated by map opposite, show commercial uses concentrated to the centre and residential forming a ring around the periphery. The primary streets of the town i.e. Dublin Street, Claregate Street and the Market Square are clearly identifiable on this map with commercial being the main use at ground floor level.

Many properties on these primary streets contain residential uses on the upper floors as indicated in map overleaf, though some vacancies do exist. This mix of uses in the town core is positive in terms of evening use and hence activity outside of daytime hours.

Academy Street contains a number of commercial units on the western side of the street and is a lively in parts. The eastern side of the street has a high level of dereliction, vacancy and is underutilised. There is a lack of tertiary routes springing from this street.



Kildare Town Extents Ground Floor Building Usage



Units on Market Square

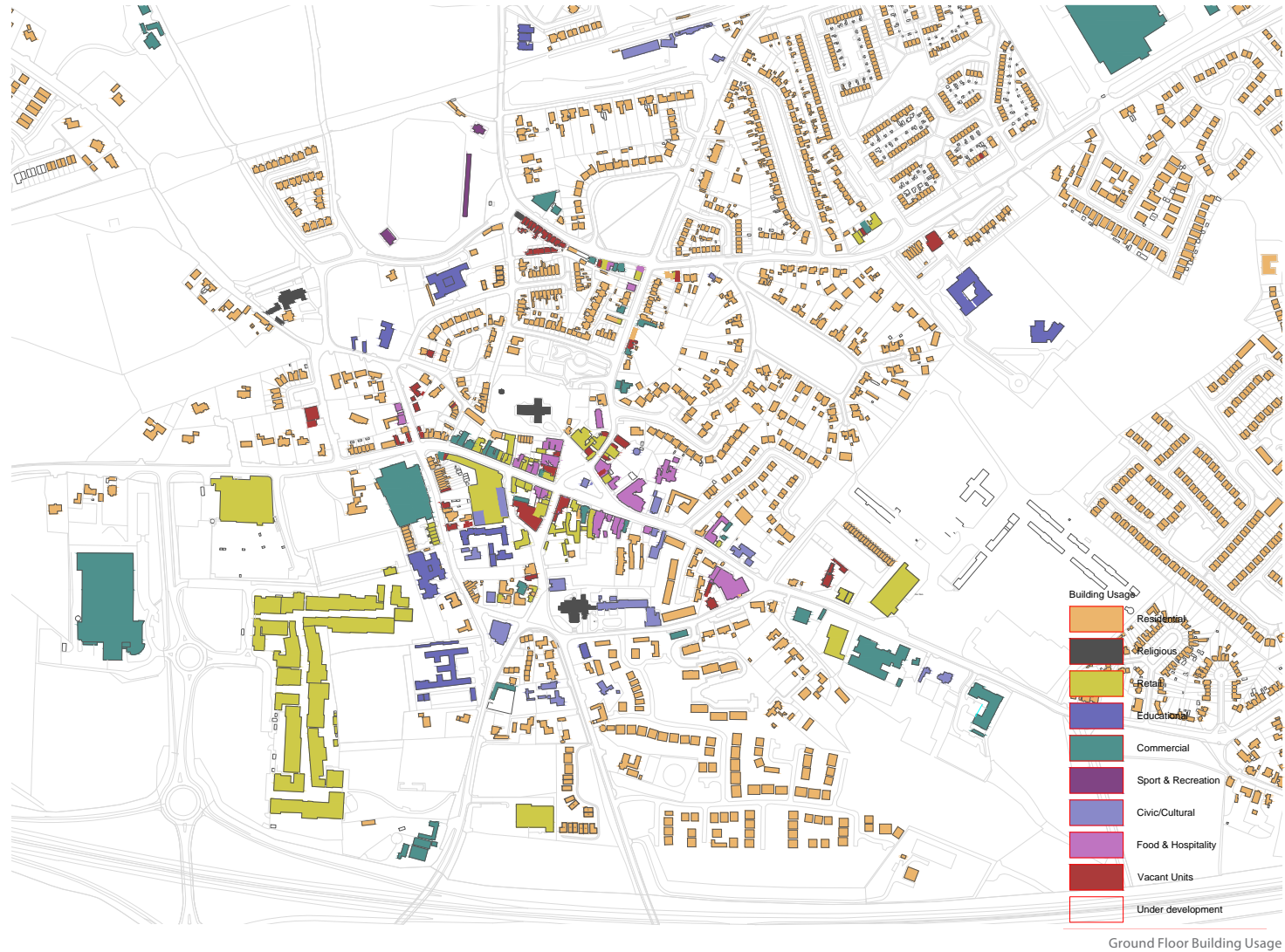
## Ground Floor Use

The majority of commercial activity at ground floor on the Market Square can be attributed to food and beverage establishments. Given the favourable orientation of many of these buildings, there is an opportunity to encourage some placement of tables for eating in the public space of the square.

## First Floor Use

Around Market Square first floor building usage often takes the form of a commercial unit above a retailer below.

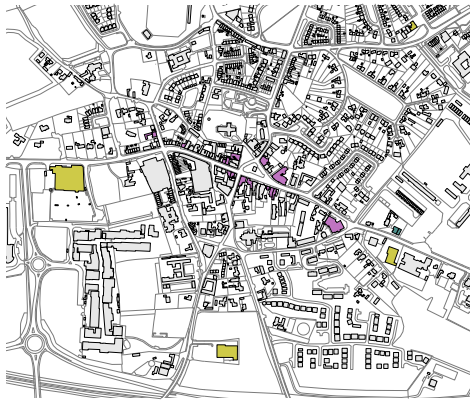
Night time activity within Kildare Town is centred around Market Square with a varied hospitality offering comprising a cluster of pubs, restaurants, cafés and fast food outlets. The main bus stop is also located on Market Square. Large retailers such as Tesco and Lidl close between 9 and 10pm.



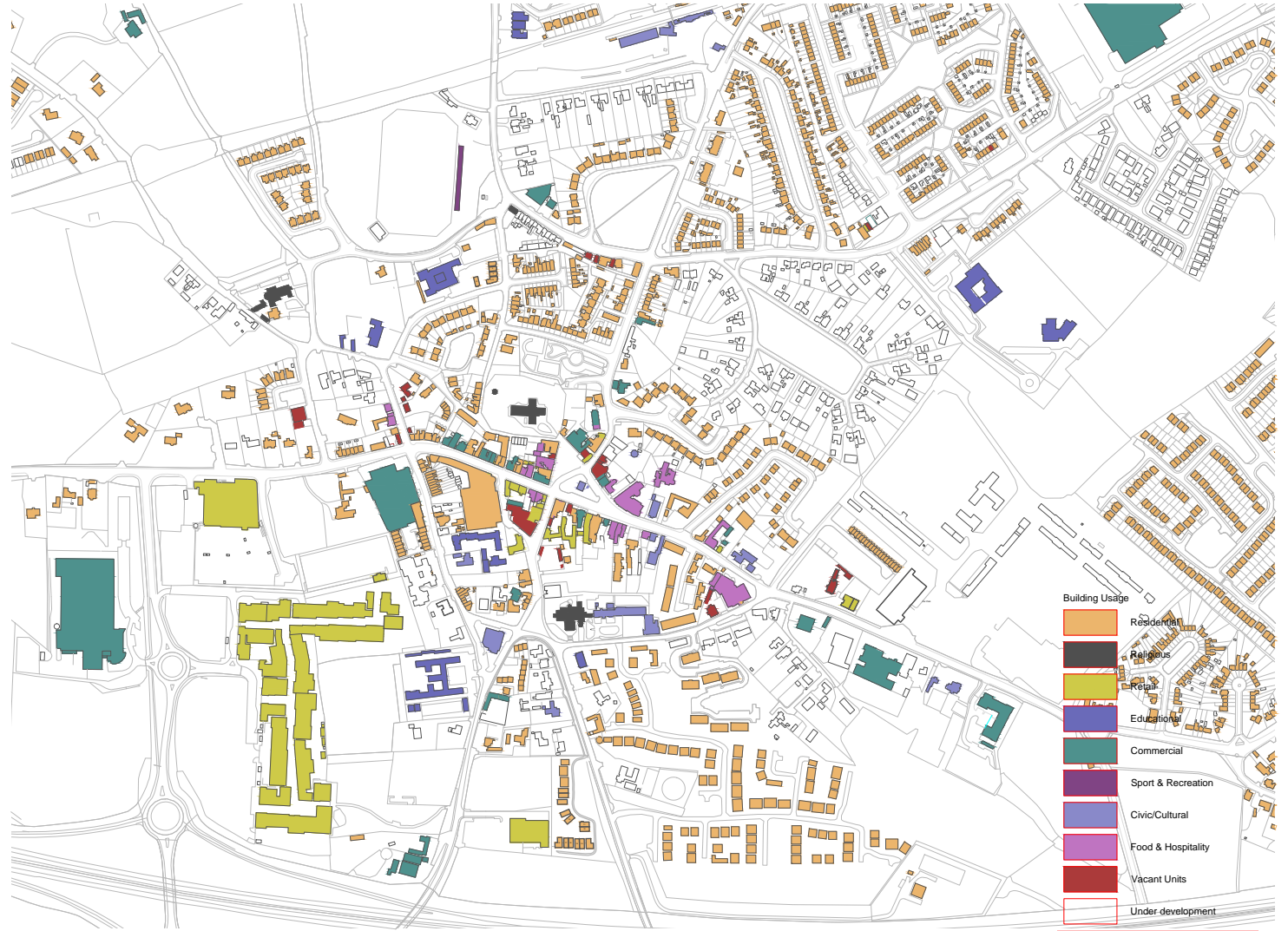




Units on Market Square



Open Buildings after 6pm



1st Floor Building Usage

## Vacancy

The map opposite shows the properties recorded as vacant at ground floor level, many of which are on the Market Square although some are currently being redeveloped. These vary from derelict buildings to commercial units in good condition.

The clusters of vacant properties on Claregate Street and to the north east and south west of the Market Square fall into the latter category.

This level of vacancy at prominent locations in and around the Market Square impacts the vibrancy and activity of the space. Most notably Bolands Pub, Whipped Ice Cream, Southwells and Millies Through incentivising use of these spaces, life can be drawn back into the centre of the town. The properties surrounding the square all have manageable floor areas suitable for start-up and/or established businesses and a sunny aspect which could be capitalised on. With little intervention, these sites could become recreation spaces for young people of the town.



Ground Floor Building Vacancy (March 2023)



Vacant Old Kildare Town Courthouse

Shraud Street, home to the Fairview Cottages has a high level of vacancy rate on ground floor. A number of these units are fully vacant as depicted in images on the next pages and vacancy maps. The street is commonly now used for free on street parking and from here people either walk to Market Square or the Train Station.

The map opposite indicates vacancies at first floor level as of March 2023. A large proportion of properties are occupied at first floor level which is a positive feature, however, there are a number of vacant properties in prominent locations on Market Square.



1st Floor Building Vacancy (March 2023)



View up to Vacant Water Tower Site



Existing Backlands Informal Parking Site



Town Centre Ground Floor Building Vacancy



Town Centre 1st Floor Building Vacancy



Vacant units on Bride Street



Vacant units on Market Street



Vacant units on Bride Street



Vacant units on Bride Street



Images around Market Square

## Public Realm

### Existing Public Spaces

The quality of hard landscaping, soft landscaping and street furniture are important contributing factors when it comes to ones enjoyment of a public space.

The ratio of public buildings and space in the town versus private property as shown in the map opposite appears reasonable until one considers how much of this space consists of vacant buildings is/or was previously given over to car parking.

Following the predestrianisation of the square (Accelerated Covid-19 Measures) and the relocation of car parking spaces from the main public space in the historic town core, the level of public space provision has vastly improved in Market Square.



Main Thoroughfares



Inaccessible Pavement Quality on Market Square

## Quality of Public Space

The main public spaces in Kildare have a significant amount of signage, street furniture and planters. Bollards dominate the pavement edges to differentiate between where parking is and isn't permitted.

The quality of hard landscaping, soft landscaping and street furniture are important contributing factors when it comes to ones enjoyment of a public space. In the case of Kildare, the Market Square contains a number of mature trees which are a positive attribute during the summer months however, the quality of hard landscaping was found to be poor in many parts of the town and the street furniture is in need of rationalisation.

Market Square in particular has the opportunity to be seen as a key community asset. It is an ideal location for significant town improvements to enable the opportunity for a variety of events, markets and festivals to be hosted on the square.



## Urban Nodes

The main gathering spaces in Kildare Town are centred along Main Street and are situated along the North South Axis which goes through Market Square. Market Square is the key urban centre around which most activity takes place.

Areas around CMWS Hall and Academy Street are extremely busy during school drop off and pick up times with students often walking from school to home due to the relatively short travel distances in the town and traffic congestion throughout.

The Heritage Centre while a modest historic building hosts a number of community events in Market Square for all ages. Other destinations also get considerable footfall, in particular the Silken Thomas, Firecastle, Hartes, Agape Cafe, Strongs Cafe, Square Coffee, Flanagan Harhen, Boyle's Off Licence, the pharmacies and the Bank of Ireland.

Kildare Tourist Outlet Village has considerable footfall but this removed from the town centre, located a 10 minute walk from Market Square.



Key Urban Nodes and gathering spaces in Kildare Town Centre



## Building Frontages

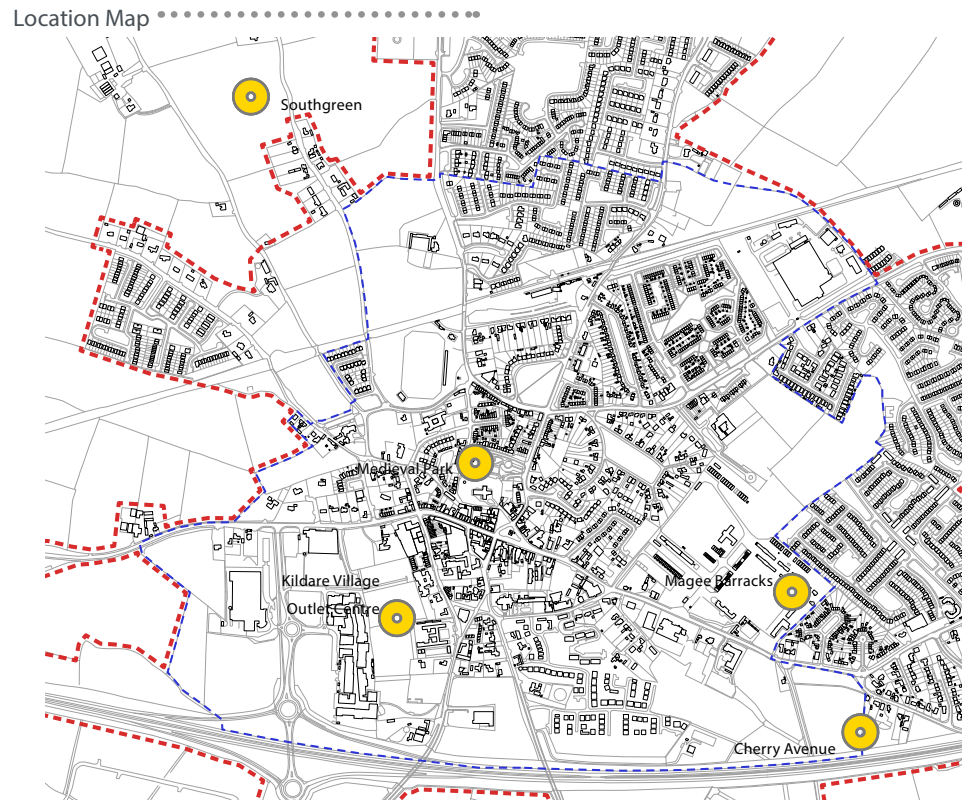
Market Square and Claregate Street have the potential to have a near 100% ratio of active frontage onto the streetscape. Outwards from these two areas onto the connected streets and laneways, a different pattern of development emerges. It is evident that there is a mix with residential (often direct without a front garden) frontage.

This tired streetscape does not promote walk-ability within the town and also affects the vacancy rates. The playground and park to the rear, suffers due to the lack of active frontage and passive surveillance with antisocial behaviour an ongoing issue.

Academy Street contains a number of commercial units and is lively in parts with Mary-Kathryns Deli, Sult Gallery and Kudos Beauty providing the majority of daytime commercial activity. The entrance to two school campus are also located on this street. There are a number of vacant, derelict and underutilised residential units and sites. There is a lack of tertiary routes from this street.



# Future Development Proposals for Kildare Town



## Kildare Village Outlet Centre Expansion

An extension to Kildare Tourist Outlet Village comprising an additional c6,000 sqm was recently completed. A key condition of permission for this extension was that a future link to Academy Street via the adjoining lands would be provided.

## Cherry Avenue Park Dublin Rd

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Following a feasibility study and design process, a Part 8 was approved by the Council to deliver a park, known as Cherry Avenue Town Park covering over 5ha. On the Dublin Road. It is envisaged that work will commence on the park in Q4 of 2023.

A number of key elements to be delivered as part of the park are as follows:

- Field Day Space – predominantly green open space for pop-up community events
- Adventure & Youth Space – active play, experimental and user-generated activities,
- Grassroots / DIY Space – community gardens, local enterprise, eco-food, learning & entrepreneurship.
- Ecological & Horticulture Space – integrated destination with environmental learning, horticulture, forestry and native plants
- Sculpture Parkland – drawing on heritage / environment themes, open green space with walking infrastructure.

## Magee Barracks Site Dublin Rd

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The regeneration of Magee Barracks (20.1 ha) for residential purposes is a key objective of the Kildare Local Area Plan 2023-2029.

In order to deliver compact growth within the Kildare Town Local Area Plan, Phase 1 of the Former Magee Barracks redevelopment accounts for ca. 60% of all new housing units (taking account of the adjustment for additional provision) within the Census 2022 defined Built-Up Area. Therefore, given the importance of the site for the delivery of sustainable compact growth the Plan has designated the Former Magee Barracks site as a Settlement Consolidation Site.

Given the significance of this prominent brownfield site, within the established urban form, with the potential to unlock congestion in the town centre, the site has been designated as a Settlement Consolidation Site. An Urban Design Framework has been prepared in this regard to guide the successful delivery of the Former Magee Barracks site

## South Green Framework

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Kildare County Council and a range of stakeholders (Landowners in South Green, Residents in South Green, CIE) in the area prepared a Framework Plan for the South Green area. The purpose of this non-statutory Framework Plan is to supplement planning guidance.

The central aim of this Plan is to achieve an integrated and holistic approach to the development of the South Green lands in tandem with the developer of the necessary physical and social infrastructure. The lands South Green is expected to deliver sustainable expansion and growth for Kildare Town over the next 15 - 20 years.

## Medieval Park Chapel Hill

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A proposal is being developed by the parks department in KCC and it will be developed to detail design stage.

Map evidence indicates that the site, while clear during the eighteenth Century, was the site of a terrace of houses in the nineteenth Century. Should archaeological remains of a previous structure be identified, consideration could be given to resolving part of the site and presenting it to the public. This would make an excellent amenity in the town.

# Conclusions

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

### Strengths

- KTOV is a major employer and visitor attractor in the area
- Rich heritage with the Cathedral, Round Tower, Castle, Walls, Heritage Centre
- Proximity to other tourist attractions include The Curragh Plains, The Irish National Stud and Japanese Gardens, The Curragh Plains, The Curragh Racecourse, Ecclesiastical sites, Spiritual retreats/festivals.
- Weekly markets
- Proximity of the M7 and the railway

### Opportunities

- Pleasant town/market square
- Leverage spillover and synergistic effects from KTOV
- Develop existing tourism offer or a cluster of attractions which can be marketed together
- Young population
- Sites within the town which could realise regeneration objectives
- Potential for further hotel and restaurant development to serve tourist attractions
- Potential for a Kildare Bike Scheme to link up destinations.

### Weaknesses

- No large institutional employers
- High unemployment
- Limited diversity of employment
- Limited cultural and recreational facilities (e.g. theatre, cinema, swimming pool, tennis courts etc.)
- Traffic congestion and priority largely given to cars
- Accessibility issues within the town
- Poor quality public realm
- Lack of cycle infrastructure within the town

### Threats

- Ageing population in town centre
- Vacancy levels
- Challenges in delivering key link between KTOV and town centre
- Lack of funding
- Cost of living
- Online retailing
- Persistence of unemployment

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# Consultation

## The Public Consultation Process

Kildare County Council undertook an extensive public consultation exercise in preparation for the Town Renewal Masterplan in Kildare Town. This process took the form of an initial pre urban design analysis stakeholder workshop, a public consultation event organised after the analysis, then analysis and presentation of the ideas in the Town Renewal Masterplan to go on public display.

From the outset of the process, it was deemed critical to engage with the relevant stakeholders initially and then continuously in an open and transparent way to ensure clarity of understanding about the process. As a result, it was decided to approach the consultation in three stages.

- A Stakeholder Engagement Workshop
- A post Urban Design Analysis Public Consultation call for ideas event
- Consultation with businesses operating in the town centre.





# Strategy

## Stakeholder Engagement Workshop

On September 5th 2018, a Stakeholder engagement workshop was held in the Solas Bhride Centre in Kildare Town. The event was organised to signal the start of the development of Kildare Town Renewal Masterplan and Urban Design Analysis initiating a conversation with key stakeholders in the area.

The workshop was setup in two parts.

- Introduction of the plan and process that would be undertaken showcasing precedents of similar work and studies undertaken. A Q&A session followed.
- A Break Out Session where groups were setup under four themes to discuss and learn about key town aspects, concerns and needs which are crucial to good town growth. They were then presented back to all groups forming an open discussion forum where themes were discussed. Summarised in point format.



Photos from initial stakeholder engagement workshop



## Workshop Group Themes

### G1. Accessibility and Connectivity

- There is going to be a future population growth in Kildare Town and good town accessibility & connectivity is important
- There are approximately 4 million people from Kildare Village Outlet Centre (KVOOC) each year . How can we link them to the town quickly?
- Pedestrianise the square- a fully pedestrianised KVOOC works so could similar work the town Market Square
- Backlands of Bank Of Ireland is an interesting site and could be investigated to leverage possible parking needs and development
- St Brigid's Square needs work acting as a stopping point from KVOOC to main square but also the low grade CMWS hall should be looked at.
- The possibility of a locomotive from KVOOC - Market Square - Train Station - Heritage Sites - Cherry Ave.
- Smaller connecting parks / amenities from place to place
- Linkage to Cherry Ave. Park is currently poor and virtually non existing

### G2. Heritage, Identity & Cultural

- Reinforce and reinvent the tourism identity
- Ecclesiastical heritage could be recognised - strong religious community in Kildare Town
- Lost Garrison town routes and apparent lack of town acknowledgement of these
- Equine Heritage, similar to Cheltenham in UK for horse racing but there does not seem to be the same consideration or regard
- There should be varying food options to compliment the offer in KVOOC
- The Cathedral could have a more attractive offer and access as could the four abbeys of the town – Black, White, Grey and Church
- There is no bespoke cultural facility or local theatre
- The old Courthouse is now out of use but culturally significant
- The towns strong historical heritage should be acknowledged through the public realm

### G3. Enterprise & Tourism

- There is no direction from Boardwalk (grey abbey) and Train station - lack of signage and wayfinding initiatives
- Greeted by a sea of dereliction from the Train Station up to main square (Fairview Cottages Area)
- Could we use cosmetic work to tell the towns story?
- There is a lack of food opportunities in Market Square and they are all indoors without an outdoor seating offering
- Permeable access to cathedral (currently single access from main square)
- Local Business should be consulted as part of the process of renewal
- No hotel offer in town centre to keep people there
- St Brigid's school site separated into three separate blocks is dangerous and should be assessed
- Kildare Town is Ireland's number one day trip destination but can renewal initiative allow people stay longer?

### G4. Linkage

- Town laneways and routes should be evaluated then given a common design strategy
- Possible shuttle bus / cycle connections between important town sites
- 2 main current pedestrian day walks not recognised or signposted
- Fun needs to be introduced to journey in Kildare Town between Heritage Sites
- Lack of signage
- The apparent Silo mentality within the town has lead to separation between various sites and developments
- No where to go to rest and relax for tourists in the town centre
- There is a very small number of outdoor facilities
- Potential of vacant courthouse should be investigated
- People movement and routes could be more efficient and safe
- Kildare Towns offer (tourism retail etc..) should be further highlighted and sold

## Public Consultation

On 1st of February 2019, a Town Renewal Masterplan consultation event was held on Market Square to coincide with the already established annual St. Brigid's Day. This was seen as a great opportunity to reach many members of the community that might not have attended a typical public consultation event. Kildare county's main radio station Kildare FM attended alongside street performers who created an energy and enthusiasm throughout the day.

The event attracted visitors of varying ages allowing members of the community to engage with the plan before a Town Renewal Masterplan strategy is put in place. This provided the opportunity to gain a crucial insights into town needs, wants and also opportunities.

Using a handout questionnaire and open online survey a number of submissions were received from people who live in (351 responses) or around (95 responses) the town. The questions were framed to get an idea of how the people of Kildare first used and thought best described the town.

The aim was to learn how they wanted their town to develop, where they felt was undervalued and then how they envisioned that this could happen.

In these questions a number of common themes and ideas were seen and are presented in the coming pages.

Further consultation with businesses and stakeholders also took place in July 2022 and February 2023.

Where possible the comments are summarised and illustrated in the coming pages with all responses (listed in appendix) being evaluated to inform the development of this Renewal Masterplan.



Photos from the Public Consultation Day

Q3 What three words do you feel best describe Kildare Town?

Answers: 426 Skipped: 24



Q4 What particular aspects of the town do you feel are underused or undervalued?

Answers: 417 Skipped: 35



Word Cloud Generated survey responses (most common answers highlighted, full list of responses attached in Appendix)

# Findings

## Public Consultation Feedback

In general, there was an energy and positivity to both consultation sessions with a general consensus that this is a crucial time in the growth and development of Kildare Town.

It became clear that the Kildare community had been consulted on numerous occasions on various plans preceding this document. It is felt that it is important that the town renewal masterplan is seen as soon as possible to complement private developments ongoing around the periphery of the town.

What initially emerged through the stakeholder engagement session was the need for a strategy that tied together what Kildare town has to offer. This was then further enforced at the public consultation event. Crucially, both sessions highlighted that any strategy must be for visitors to the town but more importantly the Kildare Town community.

## Common Themes

Recognition and development of Kildare Town's heritage and cultural offer formed the main theme of discussion in the consultation process. The feeling amongst key stakeholders and residents is that, even though there is a strong cultural / heritage offer in Kildare Town, a silo mentality has led to each offer becoming isolated - having a detrimental effect on the town's attractiveness and usability. This could be enhanced with a more collective offering where entities support each other tied together through the town renewal masterplan process.

Many comments discussed both concerns and needs for Kildare Town. They felt there was a growing need for renewal in the town to help with future town population growth projections. Generally, comments related to the opportunity for town renewal and what should be given greater consideration.

Over 70% of respondents travel within the town via car but highlighted that there was a need for greater and safer opportunities to travel via both foot and bicycle. Particular concerns on walkability referred to a lack of safe crossing points, poor pavement quality for elderly / pushchair use and also the clear priority of the car in many key town nodes such as Market Square and Academy street.

Areas that were highlighted from the Urban Design Analysis provided the opportunity for specific site related discussion but this also provided the opportunity for suggestion of other locations around the town. A key theme was the need for town development proposals (no matter what size) to be developed collectively to inform a coherent and progressive Renewal Masterplan .

The need for improvements of key community infrastructure became another common point of discussion throughout both events and common concerns were raised by community members of Kildare town were reflected in our initial soundings with key strategic stakeholders.

'I feel that Kildare Town's reputation is going down the toilet with the amount of people getting attacked on their way home, no-one can walk by themselves anymore'

'a place for teens'

'its history, it goes way back beyond even St Brigid's times. Its such an amazing part of Ireland with so many stories to tell'

'people do not know what the town has to offer'

'as a tourist town it should have more to offer tourists'

'the square should be used as a centre for activities, benches for people to sit and chat. The car park ruins the centre of Kildare. It takes away from the heart of Kildare Town'

'a great town centre'

'Kildare village not linked to the town'

'empty run down buildings could be used for something community based'

'the square as a community space'

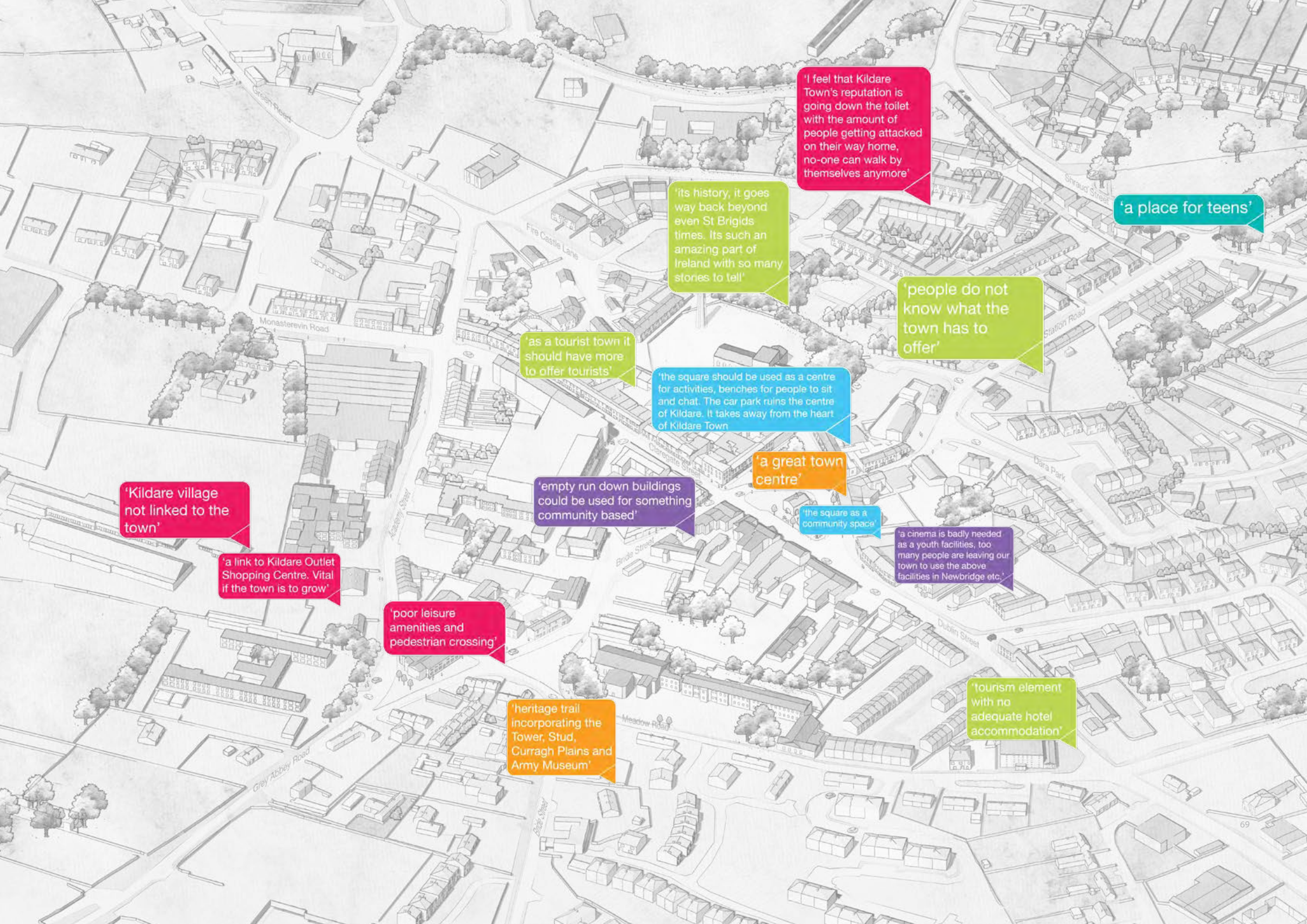
'a link to Kildare Outlet Shopping Centre. Vital if the town is to grow'

'a cinema is badly needed as a youth facilities, too many people are leaving our town to use the above facilities in Newbridge etc.'

'poor leisure amenities and pedestrian crossing'

'tourism element with no adequate hotel accommodation'

'heritage trail incorporating the Tower, Stud, Curragh Plains and Army Museum'



## Concerns

### Town Expansion

Future proposed development plans in the Southgreen and Magee Barracks are a concern to the community due to forecasted population surge that this will see. There are concerns about how the towns infrastructure, resources and amenities can handle this potential population growth.

### Town Rejuvenation

Its is generally felt that Kildare Town has become less vibrant in recent years. With the towns strong heritage and overall offer people feel that the town centre is overlooked and in poor condition in need of a much needed 'shot in the arm'.

### Connectivity & Accessibility

There is a common consensus that the variety of amenities and attractions in Kildare are extremely poorly connected. They work in an isolated manner rather than a cohesive one to attract locals and visitors. Many are only accessible safely by car being a concern for many in the town.

### Heritage & Recognition

When asked what best describes Kildare Town, Heritage and History was the most common answer but they felt that the offer is not promoted / advertised within the town. People are unaware of how to travel between each site and there often isn't the opportunity to travel between them.

### Vacancy

A concern was the growing amount of vacancy within the town. There is a high rate of both ground and first floor vacancy in and around the town centre. The feeling that this gives a poor image to visitors into Kildare Town. Areas such as the Fairview Cottages / Shraud Street and Nugent Street were highlighted as particular areas presenting a poor image upon entry into the town centre.

## Needs

### Town Centre Revitalisation

To coincide with the towns projected expansion the need for the town centre to be revitalised to be able to accommodate this growth was the most common response.

### Youth Facilities

Highlighted by varying age groups was the need for a space for the youth population. Kildare Town has the fourth largest primary school in Ireland and with two secondary schools it is felt that there is a growing need for a number of facilities that cater for their needs. They feel that this would encourage them to stay in the town rather than travelling elsewhere which is often the case currently.

### Market Square Renewal

A very specific need discussed was for improvements to Market Square. The area is seen to be cluttered and vehicle dominant without the opportunity for public or community use.

### Modern Community Space

There are a small amount of community centre like offerings but community feel that there could be a specific community centred space open for use by all rather than specific clubs or members in other smaller locations.

### Sports / Leisure Offering

What was stressed was the need for a leisure offering to compare to offers in both Newbridge and Naas. The need for all weather facilities was also noted in relation to improving the sports / leisure offering away from clubs in the town.

### Pedestrian Street Improvements

A number of streets and lanes were highlighted as being unsafe and/or in poor condition needing immediate improvements. Varying age groups highlighted the lack of safe crossings points, pavement quality variations and even no pavements in places as area which need to be assessed and improved in this plan.

### Action

Many people passionately talked of how they have been consulted before without seeing change. They believe now is the time for action and implementation of the projects proposed in this plan but also past projects as well to enable the town to grow and develop as a modern heritage town.

## Consultation Ideas

Consultees were asked to put forward proposals which could help inform the developing Town Renewal Masterplan. These submissions were analysed and mapped against areas as illustrated on the coming pages

### Town Centre

The main recurring comments were to enable the square itself to become a greater town asset with a more attractive pedestrian friendly public space. At present there are poor market facilities and limited opportunity for business to avail of external seating and display areas. The space is also cluttered with excessive signage, unintegrated landscaping and a distinct lack of pedestrian crossings.



Consultation Diagram

- 1 Need for outdoor seating within Market Square for both the bus stop and potential spill out from cafés / pubs
- 2 Investigate Opportunities to relocate the heritage centre to a larger premises with potential to re-purpose the market hall and return this to an open structure
- 3 Increase the facilities available for markets in relation to power, arrangement and water.
- 4 Re Identify the ancient water supply well on the square
- 5 Improve the access to information on town heritage and things to do in Kildare Town
- 6 Potential for pedestrianisation of this area and/or readjustment of car parking
- 7 The space should become a more active social area rather than a crossing point to have the potential for more community events
- 8 A greater public realm & landscape strategy for the square that ties together the important heritage landmarks on the square
- 9 There is potential for a coherent strategy for shop frontage respecting conservation/heritage policy
- 10 Make this area safer and more accessible. Currently underused
- 11 Reuse the Old Convent Building and grounds
- 12 Improve the parking arrangement on the site
- 13 Adjust the landscaping in backlands areas to allow for more community usage / permeability







Grey Abbey Road



Academy Street



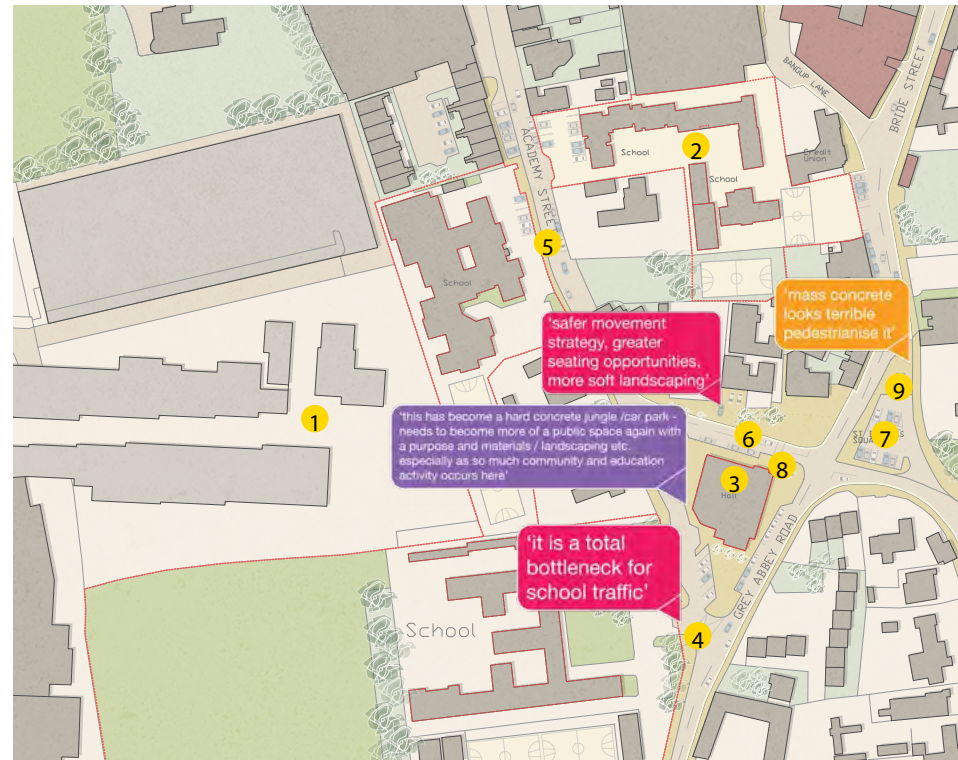
St Brigid's Church Entry

### Kildare Retail Outlet / St Brigid's Square

Lands to the South West of Market Square were also regularly discussed. Respondents felt that this area should be better connected to create better, more considered linkages between Kildare Village Outlet Centre (KVOC) and the town centre highlighted below.

Secondly improving the street network to the South of the square was a key concern as many areas were said to be unsafe, of poor quality and non-existent for pedestrian use. Academy street was highlighted as an area in need of vast improvement.

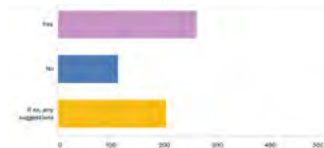
The area of St Brigid's Square with the CMWS hall was talked of as an extremely trafficked area and with potential to be a more formalised public space with a higher grade landscape and public realm development



Consultation Diagram

- 1 Create a closer connection from Kildare Village Outlet Centre to Kildare town centre
- 2 Do not move the schools out of the town centre
- 3 Renovate and give the CMWS hall a facelift
- 4 Develop safer crossing point for children and families around St Brigid's primary school
- 5 Resurface and develop pavements on Academy Street
- 6 Potential for more landscaping around the CMWS Hall
- 7 Resolve the parking arrangements for schools and community during school pick up / drop off times
- 8 Use this space for more town activities
- 9 Improved planting, seating and information points for tourism and navigation

Q6 Do you feel that any parts of the town should be better connected?





Train Station Entrance

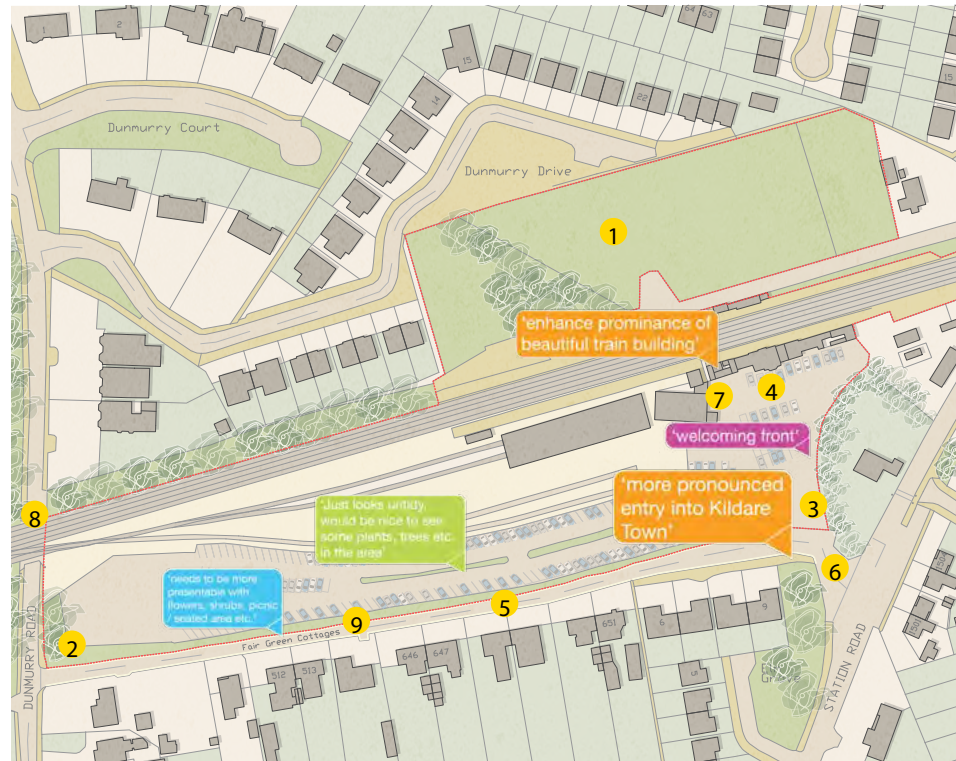


Fairgreen Road

### Train Station

Kildare Town train station and its lands were also discussed with the feeling that this space should act as a more attractive and welcoming entrance point of Kildare. A provision of information on the towns offer and destinations was highlighted as a necessity in this location.

Other comments discussed how the site should become more accessible and a site to the North of the train was highlighted by many as an opportunity site to enable easier access to the station while also increase the parking offer around the station due to current parking issues around the town.



Consultation Diagram

- 1 CIE Lands to the North of the train are vacant and could help with parking issues
- 2 Develop a second entrance into the station from Drumurry Road
- 3 Resurface entrance to include pedestrian route to station
- 4 Setup a more efficient parking layout in existing parking area with pick up and drop-off points
- 5 Improve the pavements around fairgreen cottages with lighting and natural landscaping
- 6 Develop safer pedestrian and cyclist access to the station from station road
- 7 Potential for a park and ride bike facility to access Kildare Town heritage
- 8 Improve traffic and congestion be reduced through underpass
- 9 Landscape the boundary between the train station and fairgreen road to be more aesthetically pleasing

### Fairview Cottages / Shraud Street

Regeneration of this area was frequently discussed during the consultation day. Previously an active public area the street is seen as a town eye sore located on an important route into the town centre.

Suggestions focused on the reuse of vacant buildings, using potential public space more efficiently and also providing much needed pavement and street improvements works to attract investment.



Consultation Diagram

- 1 Maintain and renovate Fairview Cottages
- 2 Change the usage of vacant blocks to housing with some units below
- 3 The character of these buildings should be restored to increase attractiveness for usage
- 4 The Elm Park green lands should be improved as a more usable green space
- 5 Resurface and upgrade the road surface and the pavements on both sides of the street
- 6 Increase the lighting provision along the building lines
- 7 Increase the usability for pedestrians through the street rather than mainly parking
- 8 Promote as part of the town centre
- 9 Potential for a cycle lane route to Melitta Rd
- 10 Develop parking strategy for street

## Next Steps

The cultural heritage of Kildare town is rich and varied, representing major periods from Irish history. This highlighted in the Urban Design Analysis was further emphasised during the consultation process. By building on and promoting the town's unique heritage, Kildare can realise its full potential as a heritage town and major tourism destination.

The next steps are the establishment of a series of delivery projects and strategies. These strategies look into areas that strengthen the town centre core through varying renewal proposals. Projects which can enhance existing and develop new linkages and arrival points to connect both the town centre and the many valuable offerings around the town. Strategies look at methods to tell the Story of Kildare Town through town renewal.

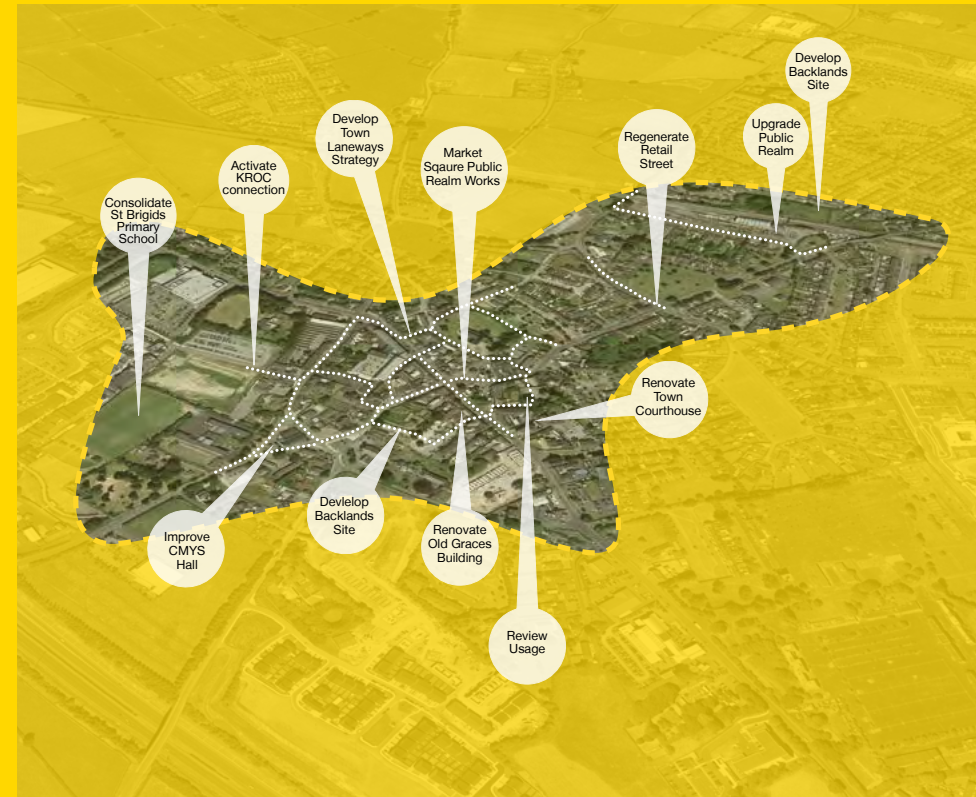


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# Town Renewal Strategy

Following the detailed Urban Design Analysis & Public Consultation process a Town Renewal Masterplan strategy has been developed arising from the findings from these studies.

A Town Renewal Masterplan strategy focusing on developing a clear, a more sustainable and better connected centre with the pedestrian and cyclist at its heart. An overall strategy for town renewal informs each specific delivery project detailed later in this report where they are assessed and merited in accordance with this strategy.





Train Station

Sraud Street

Town Gateway

Lanes Project

Town Gateway

Cathedral

Town Gateway

Water Tower / Bawn

Bang-up Lane

Market Square

Town Gateway

Old Courthouse

School

Burgage Plots

Kildare Village

School

Scoti na Mainistreach De La Salle

St. Brigid's Square

School sites

Magee Barracks

# Our Approach Key Themes & Rationale

## Delivering a Sustainable Town Centre

The places which offer vitality are characterised by a number of common themes which contribute to the creation of sustainable, successful city centres and urban districts. Such towns tend to rely on a combination of a number of factors including the following themes:

- Excellent connections and accessibility
- Balanced offer of town centre uses and spaces
- Reputation as a cultural destination
- Distinctive heritage and identity
- Opportunity for investment

Growth and evolution is often triggered by a particular asset, but the most successful examples often involve a combination of factors which allow places to establish a competitive advantage and initiate a sustained upward trajectory.

## Themes of Sustainable Development

All of the projects identified in this Town Renewal Masterplan fall within five overarching themes of good practice in delivering good growth. They are

- Connectivity and accessibility
- Deliver a balanced and appealing town centre that feels safe and usable
- Realise Kildare Town's potential as a cultural destination
- Renew and celebrate Kildare Town's heritage and identity
- Create a centre for opportunity and investment in a growing rural town

These five themes are borne out of the site analysis and public consultation. The projects which come out of this will aid the delivery and creation of a 'mindset change' in the perception of and confidence in Kildare Town.

There is a need to communicate the story of these interventions and the approach, clearly understanding the needs of the town in direct conversation with its users is a crucial aspect already highlighted in previous sections.

Through consultation we have learned of the communities vision for the towns improvement and renewal. Communicating and representing communities needs form part of all the projects as part of this Town Renewal Masterplan





## The Need for Quality

There is also a need to commit to quality. If new schemes don't deliver the requisite quality, their effects will not be sustained. This is a policy that must be operated in the short, medium and long terms and will be pioneered by the Renewal Masterplan project to demonstrate its efficiency and how important it is for Kildare Town's future success.

In addition to the Town Renewal Masterplan a public realm strategy will be developed to inform and guide the delivery projects to establish a clear, coherent design guide for the plan.



Further quotes from Public Consultation

# Public Realm Strategy

The public realm encompasses everything from pavements, street lighting, street furniture (such as bollards, benches, litter bins, etc.) municipal signage and greening features such as street trees and planters. Signage and advertising on building are also part of the public realm.

A common problem visible on Kildare's streets and spaces is the discordant positioning of street furniture, variety in ground finishes, arrays of cabling, lighting, alarm boxes and variety signage scarring the façades of historic buildings. Much of this is redundant or no longer in use. These elements detract from the often finely detailed upper floors of historic buildings and spoil the wider streetscape. More subtly invasive is electrical and television cabling strung down façades or trunked above shop fronts, while projecting floodlighting and fascia lighting is often bulky and cumbersome.

Care and attention is required when adding new utilities or when undertaking refurbishment that might allow for the removal of redundant elements. A process of rationalisation is required, so that the elements of the public realm are provided in a controlled and in a coordinated manner. Careful consideration should be given to the balance of pedestrian and vehicular zones.

A public realm strategy will be published within 12 months of publication of the Town Renewal Masterplan.



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# Delivery Projects

During the Urban Design Analysis and Public Consultation process the study area focused on the wider Kildare Town not just the town centre itself. This study area has been continued into the development of delivery projects whereby sites and areas have been identified across the town for further consideration.

The projects are aligned with the Council's vision, and work with Kildare's current planning policy. These also respond to public consultation held upon the completion of the urban design analysis conducted as part of the development of this document. Significantly the projects also form a circuit route which intersects the most visible and intact historical fragments of the town, while also encountering other aspects of the built heritage. The projects provides a sense of the scale to the medieval town, as well as the range of different settings.

The Delivery Plan identifies projects that are realistic and achievable that will change perceptions and create confidence. Some projects relate to major transformative sites that already have a clear trajectory, but provide additional focus with the aim of accelerating delivery, while others suggest the development of supporting development briefs or strategy to enable investment and development.

Others suggest direct intervention by the council, or by public/private partnership vehicles. There are also a range of 'early wins' and catalytic temporary projects to help ignite interest and change perceptions which could establish discussion for further enhancement as part of a longer term strategy.

These projects are also underpinned by the public realm strategy discussed with a series of projects at differing scales informing and integrating into one and other both in the short and long term. Other projects look at built renovations and refurbishments complemented by the public realm work.

The delivery projects are presented in the coming pages in the following order

1. Market Square and Environs
  - 1A. Market Square Public Realm Improvements
  - 1B. Nugent Street Car Park Upgrade
  - 1C. Old Burgage Plots Development
  - 1D. Streetscape Regeneration
2. Cycle & Pedestrian Network Enhancements
3. Public Realm Enhancements
  - 3A. Kildare Town Gateways
  - 3B. Kildare Town Laneways Strategy
  - 3C. CMWS Hall Entry
  - 3D. Kildare Town Wayfinding
4. Kildare Town Train Station
  - 4A. Iarnoid Eireann Vacant Site Development
  - 4B. Train Station Forecourt & Fairgreen Road Improvements
5. Kildare Outlet Village link and Schools site Consolidation
6. Old Town Courthouse & Water Tower Site Improvements
  - 6A. Old Town Courthouse Renovation
  - 6B. Water Tower Site Improvements



Medieval Park

Kildare Town Laneways Strategy

Kildare Retail Outlet Connection

CMWS Hall Entry

Old Burgage Plots Development

Market Square Public Realm Renewal

Shopfront Regeneration

Water Tower Site Improvements

Nugent Street Car Park Upgrade

Old Town Courthouse Renovation

Kildare Town Gateways Strategy

Shraud Street Regeneration

Train Station Forecourt & Vacant Site Usage

Magee Barracks Site

Cherry Avenue Site

# 1. Market Square & Environs

1A. Market Square Public Realm Improvements

1B. Nugent Street Car Park and Laneway Upgrade

1C. Old Burgage Plots Development

1D . Streetscape Regeneration



Shraud Street  
Regeneration

Nugent Street Car Park  
and Laneway Upgrade

Shopfront  
Regeneration

Market Square  
Public Realm  
Renewal

Old Burgage Plots  
Development

'the square as a community space'

'a great town centre'



Market Square Images

### 1A. Market Square Public Realm Improvements

**Where**  
Market Square and surrounds

**Background**  
Market Square is the traditional commercial centre of Kildare defined to the west, north and south by continuous rows of buildings. The buildings forming the edge of the Square are configured in narrow plot widths, creating a fine urban grain.

Market Square was originally used as a public space, now comprises a small pedestrianised area adjoining the Market House. It is traversed and bisected by roadways and used principally for car-parking. The Square is well defined, well connected to nearby vacant sites and provides a strong sense of place.

Kildare Market House is the focal point of Market Square, being centrally positioned within the space and originally comprising a classically composed symmetrical block with an open round headed arcade at ground level and meeting / governor's room over. A louvred timber cupola with pyramidal roof and weather vane is centrally positioned on the ridge of the roof and is reflective of the building's agricultural associations.

Constructed in 1817, Kildare Market House is an important landmark within the town, reflecting its historic role as an agricultural service centre. Attractive views of this structure include those from Dublin and Claregate Street as well as Station Road. Today, the Market House is also an important orientation point for visitors to the town, the fabric of the Market House was significantly altered when renovation works were carried out circa 2000.

The Market Square remains the civic focus of the town. In order to reflect the importance of the space, there is an opportunity to create a more pedestrian friendly public realm now that most of the traffic has been diverted to the motorway. Examples of similar civic design projects can be found in Kilkenny and at Abbeylax.

The Covid-19 response project removed clutter, resurfaced the carpark and laid artwork in the form of 'dots' along the intersection of gridlines at 2m centres to represent social distancing and to be 'of this time'. The Covid-19 Response Tactical Urbanism project interventions were intended to be simple in nature and to allow the beautiful historic space with its rich architectural heritage to be used again as a public space and available to all.



Site Analysis & Observations (Pre-pedestrianisation)





Existing View 2

### Opportunities

The site analysis and stakeholder comments have influenced the opportunities and constraints drawing as shown right.

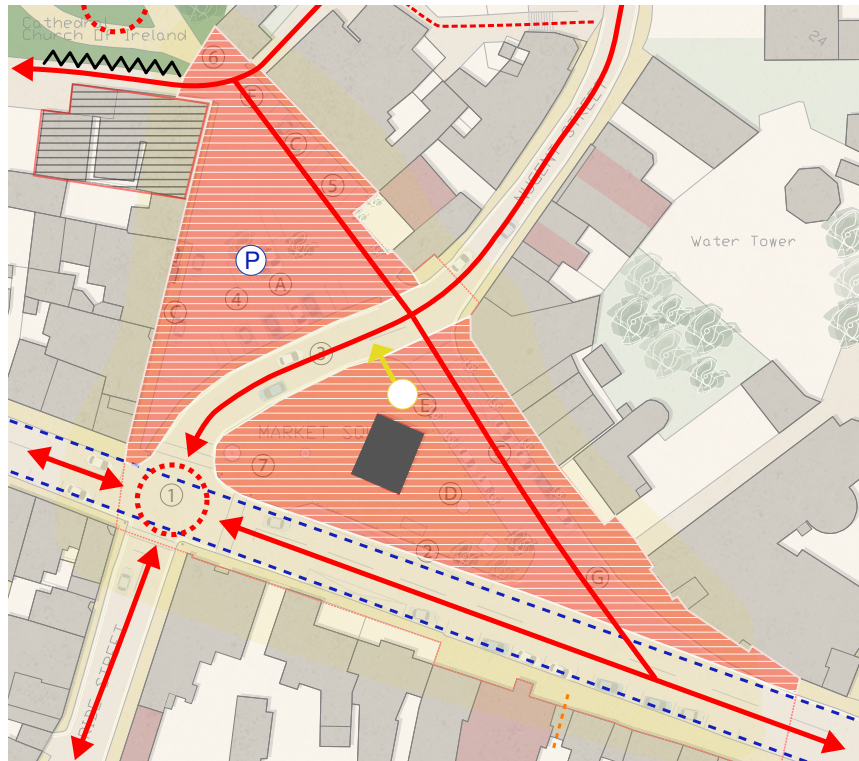
The major opportunity for the area is the prioritising of pedestrian usage rather than vehicular to create a more civic & community friendly town square. There would be considerable civic gain with the public realm renewal on the Square. It would provide Kildare Town with a recognisable centre and attractor.

The site has greater potential to recognise the heritage in the vicinity of Market Square, particularly St. Brigid's Cathedral and Round Tower.

### Constraints

The site is the location of two key vehicular routes in the town. Management of these junctions becomes a major consideration in the development of the area.

There is public support to permanently remove car parking from Market Square by way of a Part 8 Application.



Opportunities and Constraints (Pre Pedestrianisation)

### Key

	Opportunity Area		Node
	Granted Planning Permission		View
	Inaccessible Lands		Parking
	Significant Building		Vehicular Link
	Green Space		Pedestrian Link
	Barrier to Movement		Potential Link
	Potential Character Area		Potential Cycle Link

### Opportunities

- A There is potential to permanently pedestrianise Market Square
- B Heritage Centre has opportunity to expand if needed
- C Potential for shopfronts to open onto Market Square with outdoor uses with street closure
- D Old Town Well should become a feature within the square
- E View towards St Brigid's Cathedral offers potential for site aspect within the square
- F To create a pronounced entry to Cathedral / Round Tower site
- G Potential Road closure offers the chance to extend market square

### Constraints

- 1 Junction is a central node for traffic into and around Kildare Town
- 2 Main Town coach and bus stop is located on the square
- 3 Busy thoroughfare splits the square in two
- 4 Area of parking is cluttered with excess signage and furniture
- 5 Route is used to access cathedral by Church of Ireland members
- 6 Only access to cathedral is located on the crossing point of two laneways
- 7 The only safe pedestrian crossing point in the square

## Delivery Projects



Bonn Square Oxford

### What

A public realm improvements proposal on Market Square to create a pedestrian friendly experience celebrating the heritage both in and around the square as part of a renewed more usable town square with a re balancing of pedestrian and car movement. This will enhance the capacity for usage of the town square, improving its cultural offer and creating a significant improvement for town centre living. This will act as a trigger for further projects in and around the square which build upon and are informed by this proposal.

### Why

Market Square includes a variety and discordant positioning of street furniture, variety of ground finishes, arrays of cabling, lighting, alarm boxes and variety signage scarring the facades of historic buildings but also blocking significant heritage structures on the square. Much of these are redundant or no longer in use. These elements detract from the often finely detailed upper floors of historic buildings and spoil the wider streetscape.

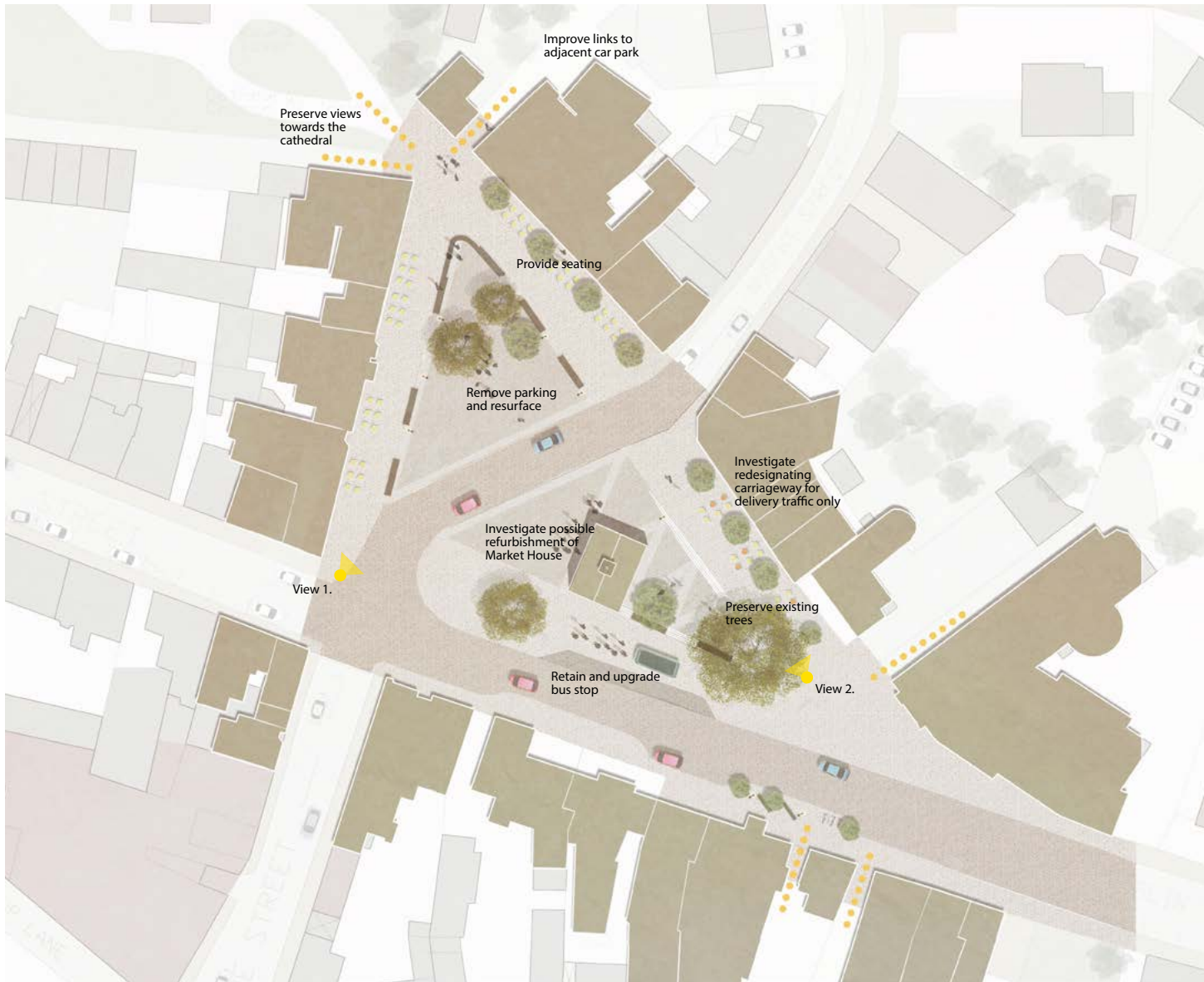
Prior to the temporary pedestrianisation of Market Square, an extensive area of car parking, with minimal pedestrian zones lessened the potential for pedestrians to linger and enjoy the architectural quality of the existing space and there was no opportunity for units to spill out onto the street being fronted by parking on all sides.

The permanent pedestrianisation and renewal of Market Square will create a more attractive, vibrant and consolidated town centre by utilising quality urban design principles that preserve and enhance the existing townscape character of the centre. The redevelopment of the square will also encourage investment in the area. This will incentivise the development or improvement of existing and/or vacant premises around the renewed and revitalised town square.

Renewal of this area will instigate and provide a catalyst for improvements and investment to be made in neighbouring sites and projects proposed later in this report.



Delivery Project sites around Market Square



Market Square Sketch Plan



Materials Palette



View 1



Existing View 1



Existing View 2



View 2

## How

- To investigate the role and use of lower speed limits to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Formalise parking to the lands south of the square to cater for removal of spaces
- Pedestrianise road link North of The Square
- Retain trees (subject to arboricultural survey)
- Provide new and consistent paving materials from facade to facade to include carriageways
- Provide the opportunity for increased dwell times using seating, landscaping etc.
- Retain and improve bus shelter with bike hire scheme attached to connect The Square to Train Station / Cherry Avenue, KTOV, The Irish National Stud & Japanese Gardens
- Examine the possibility to relocate the heritage centre on market and reopen ground floor (project 1B)
- Remove signage, wiring, clutter so buildings and spaces could be better revealed
- Improve accessibility
- Improve and formalise facilities for market traders such as in ground electric points

As previously mentioned the Covid-19 response project removed clutter, resurfaced the carpark and laid artwork in the form of 'dots' along the intersection of gridlines at 2m centres to represent social distancing and to be 'of this time'. In this context it could be seen as a "test bed" for future proposals.

## Qualities



## 1B Nugent Street Car Park Upgrade

### Where

Nugent Street, North of Market Square

### What

Public realm improvements in Nugent Street car park to improve navigability to Market Square and increase perception of safety through improved lighting signage and landscaping.

A minor lane connects the public car park to the north of the Market Square which also interconnects to Nugent Street. Activation of this route for more frequent usage form an important development as part of this areas renewal

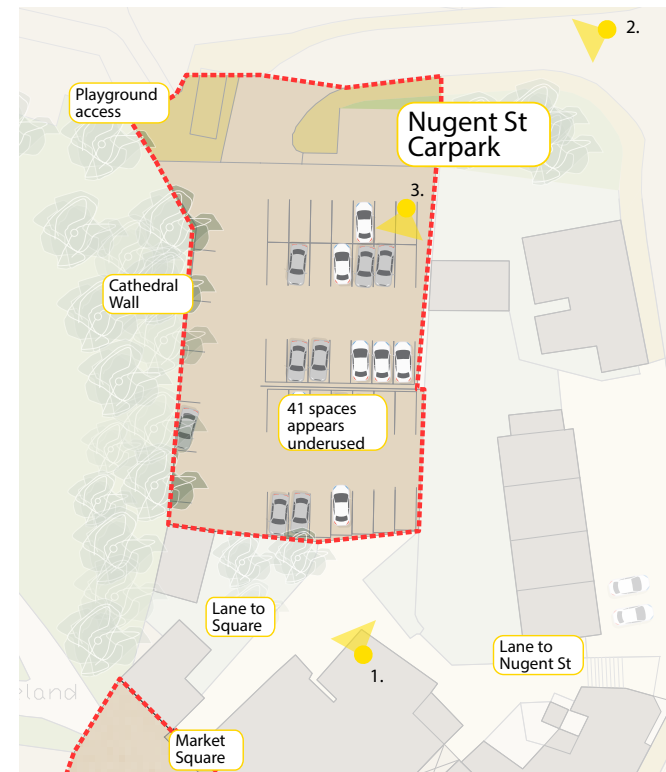
### Why

Prior to the temporary pedestrianisation of Market Square, the Nugent Street Car Park was underused with a perception that the car was unsafe due to the lack of overlooking and public lighting. The lane connecting the car park to Market Square was also underused.

The preference was to park on Market Square rather than Nugent Street car park. However since the removal of the majority of car parking on Market Square and following installation of public lighting, Nugent Street car park has a high turnover of cars and people with significantly reduced anti-social behaviour and increased activity over all. The laneway connecting the car parking to Market Square is a busy and important link route.

### How

- Car park to be surveyed to assess current layout / levels and extent of lighting.
- Public routes to Market square to be made more obvious with a pedestrian pavement between market square through the site to the town playground
- Provide street lighting fixtures along cathedral wall as per public realm strategy specifications
- Use materiality to match improvements as part of a organised public realm improvements strategy



Existing Site Plan & Observations



Existing Site Photos



Possible Improvements of Nugents Street



Precedents of renewal projects

KCC has since acquired and made some minor upgrades to this car park. The comparative analysis shows a high turnover of cars hourly and there is a significant reduction in anti-social behaviour.

Qualities





## 1C Old Burgage Plots Development

**Where**  
 Burgage Plots, Dublin Street, Bride Street

**Background**  
 The alignment of the historic 'Burgage' Plots of the 14th Century are still evident in the plot boundaries of the properties to the south of Dublin Street, and the Market Square. They form long narrow plots from Dublin Street to the rear of the former Presentation Convent. The site is currently being used as an unofficial car park. The lands are visible through the archway from Market Square and also from Bride St.

The existing plots today comprise of uncoursed rubble stone walls, and the boundaries between existing buildings. A significant extent of the boundaries have been removed to the rear of a three properties in particular. The destruction of the plots detracts significantly from the visual character of the area, it detracts from the setting of each of the individual properties facing the square, and their removal represents a significant loss in the historic interest of the area.



Existing Site Plan



Site Analysis & Observations



'carpark behind Cunningham's should be surfaced'

'maybe a long path that takes you around Kildare Town, the National Stud, on a walk through the Curragh etc. With so many wonderful things in the town it'd bring them together'

Public consultation quote

### Opportunities

The site analysis and stakeholder comments have influenced the opportunities and constraints drawing as shown right.

The old burgage plots form a key strategic site for town growth. The old footprints and site layout could be respected to create new link routes and investment opportunities.

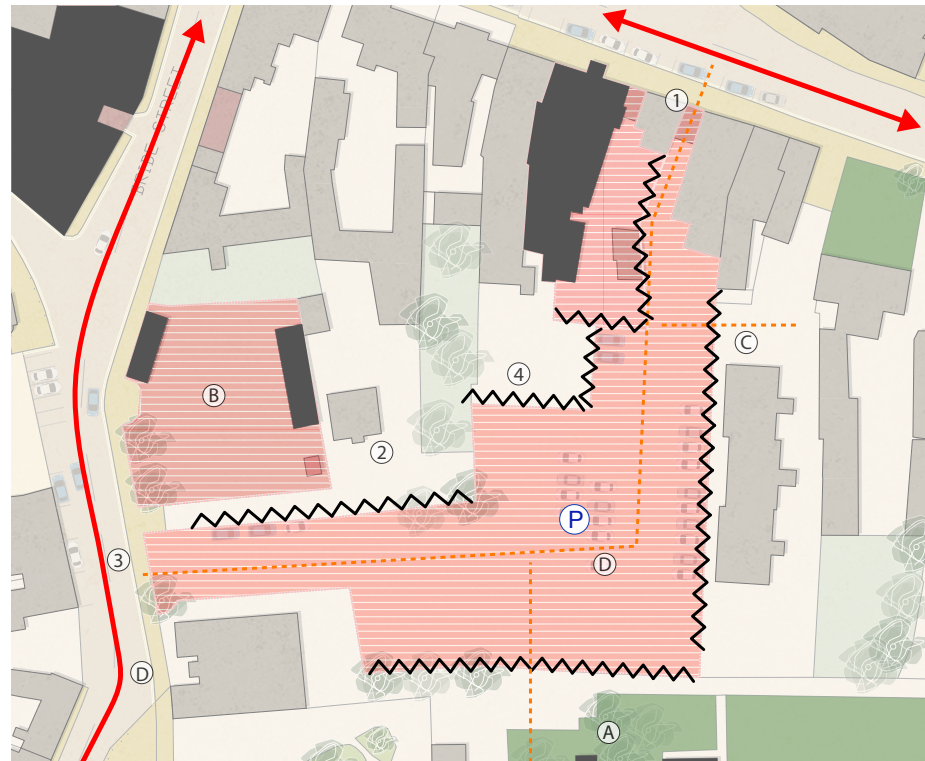
A number of sites also have the potential to leverage parking from the square and reduce traffic congestion.

### Constraints

The backlands site currently has only one access point and negotiation with stakeholders around the site would be required to increase access to the site.

The site is within the ACA boundary lines so the approach should be cognisant of conservation concerns.

The site is not in public ownership so regulation would need to take place with the landowner.



Key			
	Opportunity Area		Node
	Granted Planning Permission		View
	Inaccessible Lands		Parking
	Significant Building		Vehicular Link
	Green Space		Pedestrian Link
	Barrier to Movement		Potential Link
	Potential Character Area		Potential Cycle Link

### Opportunities

- A. Former convent building backs onto site and could be accessed
- B. Vacant Site could tie into potential redevelopment of the lands in a phased strategy
- C. A potential connection between the site and existing houses to the East of the site
- D. Site can be better organised to leverage parking from Market Square
- E. Site entry could overlap with redevelopment of old town gateway site

### Constraints

- 1. Main access to Market Square is single storey archways currently inaccessible
- 2. Site is in private ownership preventing connection between sites
- 3. Only location for two way vehicular access to site
- 4. Backlands of some plots are accessed from the site for deliveries

Opportunities and Constraints

**What**

The initial public realm proposal leverages the loss of parking from Market while creating a new landscaped pedestrian route from Bride Street to Market Square.

In the longer term the site could be developed for cultural/commercial uses which re-interpret the original burgage plots.

**Why**

This area is a key strategic location to enhance the town centre as the core of activity through the re-use of land and buildings, promoting infill and backland development and strategically providing for its appropriate extension. These lands in particular have development potential and investment echoing goals highlighted in the LAP.

In the short term formalising of the car-parking arrangements and improved pedestrian facilities help facilitate refurbishment of the Market Square and offer an east west pedestrian link from Kildare Village Outlet Centre and Kildare Town.

The sites use would facilitate the consolidation/expansion of the historic core of Kildare Town Centre through regeneration of derelict/ under-utilised sites and buildings in and around the Core Retail Area. This site also has the scope to breakdown a significant plot size enabling greater accessibility and connectivity from/to the town centre.

**How**

The lands may be redeveloped sometime in the future but as an interim reuse parking for approximately 85 spaces could be formalised.

An animated pedestrian through route (echoing Kildare Town Laneways Strategy presented later in this report) can be encouraged helping to link the square to Kildare Village Outlet Centre with vehicular access being off Bride Street. A potential kiosk building could sit along this route.



Site Plan



Public Realm Improvements with integrated landscaping



Site Perspective towards Graces Building

Qualities



## 1D Streetscape Regeneration

### Where

Market Square, Nugent Street, Claregate Street and Shraud Street

### What

A strategy that investigates the potentials for shopfronts to be reconsidered to meet and adapt to the regulations of an ACA.

### Why

A number of shop fronts are poorly maintained and constructed of inappropriate materials that age poorly. In addition, a profusion of projecting signage, cabling, lighting and oversized fascias further clutters the streetscape and degrades the visual appearance of buildings.

It is recommended that inappropriate shop fronts are reconsidered and replaced protecting the unique character of Kildare as a designated Heritage Town steeped in history

It is suggested to adopt the strategy prepared as part of the Kildare Architectural Conservation Area statement.

### How

Initiate a 'Beautiful Street Initiative', encouraging the formation of Terrace / Street partners to carry out analysis and proposals for works to cumulatively enhance their section of the streetscape through:

- The rationalisation of Building Façades, including removal of unnecessary clutter, wires, alarm boxes, signage and lighting.
- The reinstatement of historic features, such as up and down sash windows and cast iron rain water goods.
- The repair or enhancement of existing shop fronts or the replacement of inappropriate shopfronts
- The removal of inappropriate shop fronts in buildings of original residential use, adopting a modest shop front approach
- The differentiation of original building plots in the use of colour on façades and through alternate complimentary colours
- Shopfront improvement scheme run by local enterprise offices with a vacant and derelict site levy and reduced development contributions



Analysis of Facade 1920's as interpreted from historic photographs. The Facades chosen are two separate properties a shop with a residence over and a residence with an archway to a rear yard. The first floor of both properties and the ground floor of the residence have timber up and down sash windows. The timber shop front includes the entrance to the upstairs residence and has vertical mullions giving a strong vertical emphasis. The facade is unpainted lime rendered with ashlar coursed render to the ground floor facade of the building.

'uniform heritage signage in the town. Remove/rationalise commercial signage'

Public consultation quote



#### Analysis of the Facade 2011.

The two properties have been amalgamated into one, with the entrance door and staircase having been removed to facilitate a larger ground floor retail space including the ground floor rooms of the residence. Also the gateway has also been converted to retail use. A new shopfront has been positioned to extend across the entire facade of both properties. It conceals the quoined surround to the entrance door of the residence. The signboard is shallow and wall mounted lighting brackets have been positioned over.



#### Recommendation

The suggested modifications include different paint colours on each building to reflect the origins of the building plots, a modification to the shop front increasing the signboard and including concealed illumination in the fascia. The fascia and signboard are removed over the entrance door to reinstate its importance and the shop windows are altered to include vertical mullions to reintroduce a greater vertical emphasis to the facade.

Extract from Architectural Conservation Area Statement  
Prepared by Sheridan Woods Architects

#### Qualities





Existing Photos highlighting recent renovations and remaining dereliction on Shraud Street

### Shraud Street Regeneration

#### What

Street improvements and shopfront refurbishments to vacant properties on Shraud Street to create a more attractive streetscape which could facilitate reinvestment of business' into the area to create a secondary retail street forming a stop off point upon entry from the train station to Market Square.

#### Why

As you arrive into Kildare Town from the train station. The high level of dereliction on the street is notable. Described numerous times during consultation as an eyesore the area is in need of immediate renewal or redevelopment for a different use.

The street is extremely well connected but at present is tired and largely used for parking. Pavement quality is poor and the area is unsafe at night with poor street lighting



Site Analysis & Observations

## Opportunities

The site analysis and stakeholder comments have influenced the opportunities and constraints drawing as shown right.

The Elm Park green provides the opportunity for a more usable green / public space increasing the areas aesthetic.

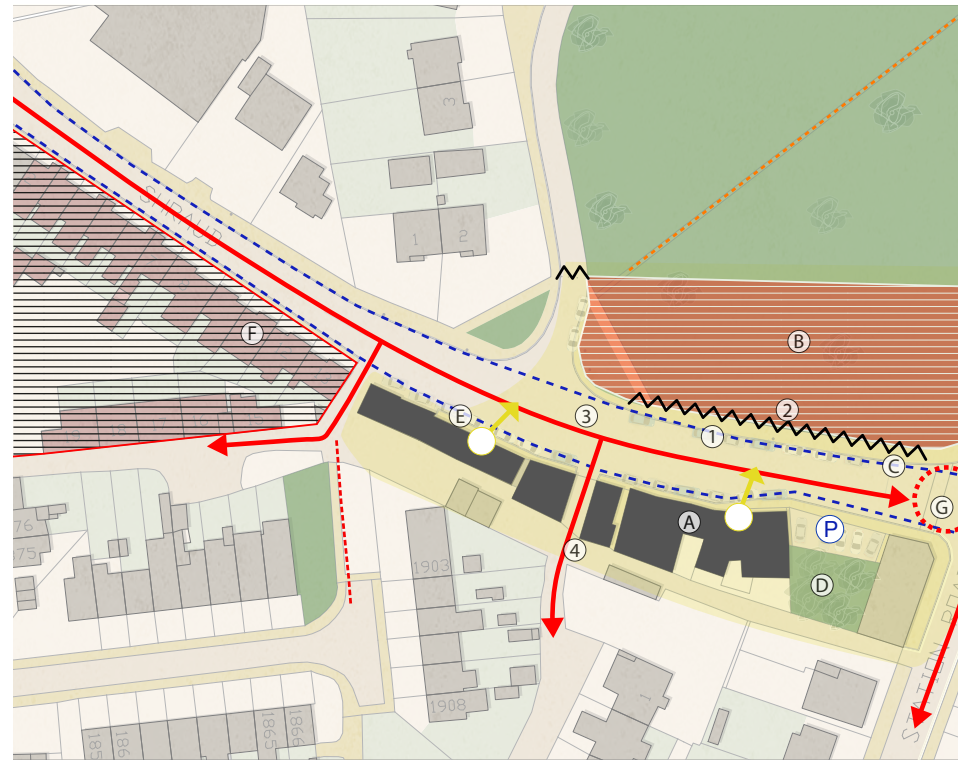
The area is well connected and located at an important crossroads with potential to become a secondary town centre.

If acted upon planning granted for FairView cottages development could instigate further development and improvements of the area.

## Constraints

Free parking used by train station commuters needs to be managed and integrated into a renewal strategy

The current levels of vacancy make the area unpleasant for investment.



### Key

	Opportunity Area		Node
	Granted Planning Permission		View
	Inaccessible Lands		Parking
	Significant Building		Vehicular Link
	Green Space		Pedestrian Link
	Barrier to Movement		Potential Link
	Potential Character Area		Potential Cycle Link

### Opportunities

- A Opportunity to redevelop vacant units into various uses
- B Potential for a more usable public open space amenity
- C Cycle lane development connecting schools sites
- D Access could be opened up within openspace between two parking areas
- E Develop an important community asset out of the town centre
- F Use of existing redevelopment to encourage investment in area
- G Improve the first town journey from train station up to town centre

### Constraints

- 1 Current street used for free parking on both sides
- 2 Openspace is raised from pavement level
- 3 Street is in tired and poor condition
- 4 Laneway is frequently used for vehicular access of residents

Opportunities and Constraints

## Delivery Projects



Existing view of Shraud Street

- Widen footpaths and introduce cycle ways connecting with developed routes on Melitta Road
- Introduce integrated street lighting and landscaping along pavements allowing for potential breakout space from units
- Brighten and tidy up existing shopfronts to encourage investments following street improvement works
- Improve the boundary connection to Elm Park open space with Shraud Street
- Investigate the potential for a potential change of use of vacant units to be redeveloped as housing



Proposed view of Shraud Street

### Qualities







Street Improvement Examples

Shopfronts could be renewed before tenancy to increase the street aesthetic

## 2. Cycle & Pedestrian Network Enhancement

### What

Despite the fact that Kildare Town is a walkable town it currently offers a poor pedestrian experience and little or no cycling infrastructure. There are no cycle lanes in place despite the vision of the Government's National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020, which formed part of their policy document '2009-2020 Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future'. This document explained:

*"Our vision is that all cities, towns, villages and rural areas will be bicycle friendly. Cycling will be a normal way to get about, especially for shorter trips. Next to walking, cycling will be the most popular means of getting to school, both for primary and secondary school. Our Universities and colleges will be bustling with bicycles. Business men and women will see the bicycle as the best way to travel for part or all of their daily commute. Shopping by bike will be as normal as it is in many of the Northern European cycling friendly countries. The bicycle will be the transport mode of choice for all ages. We will have a healthier and happier population with consequent benefits on the health service. We will all gain economically as cycling helps in easing congestion and providing us with a fitter and more alert work*

*force. A culture of cycling will have developed in Ireland to the extent that by 2020, 10% of all trips will be by bike."*

KCC share the same vision and have adopted and embraced the ideals of Smarter Travel.

### Why

There are several nodal points which could be better connected through improved infrastructure such as Kildare Village, the local schools, the train station, Market Square etc. Furthermore there are new developments coming on stream such as Magee Barracks and improved public realm suggested in this Town Renewal Masterplan .

In order to direct and prioritise investment in cycle infrastructure, it will be deemed necessary to develop a Cycle Network Study, to be undertaken by Kildare County Council. The study aims to identify a contiguous series of cycle routes which will provide for the five needs of cyclists i.e.

- Safe,
- Coherent,
- Direct,
- Attractive
- Comfortable

Cycling is not a goal in itself but rather a component to make Kildare a more liveable city. The Cycle Network Study is about identifying a network to make Kildare a more cycle friendly city. The study will set out the envisaged cycling network for Kildare and will form the basis of funding and delivery of the cycle network on a phased and structured basis towards an achievable end goal.

### How

The Kildare Cycle Network Study will be prepared in accordance with Steps 1 – 5 of the National Cycle Manual's Seven Steps to Planning a Cycle Network.

- Step 1: Inventory of Existing Cycling Regime
- Step 2: Understanding Trip Demand and the Potential for Cycling Trips
- Step 3: Trip Assignment to the Network
- Step 4: Trip Forecast
- Step 5: Urban and Transport Planning
- Step 6: Prioritising Improvements
- Step 7: Programme, Consultation, Budgets

The provision of a bike hire scheme to connect Kildare Town Train station - Market Square - Cherry Avenue (when completed) and to visitor destinations should be investigated as part of this study.



**Key**

**Priority Route 1**  
The provision of improved cycle and pedestrian access from the Kildare Railway Station into the town centre (Market Square)

**Priority Route 2**  
The provision of improved cycle and pedestrian access from the Kildare Railway Station into the town centre (Market Square)

other routes for investigation

node point

**Qualities**

- Excellent Connections
- Cultural Offer
- Town Centre Balance
- Strong Identity
- Investment Opportunity

Potential pedestrian & cycle network in Kildare town

Irish National Stud & Gardens

Dublin Road & Market Square Kildare Town



## Primary Street: Dublin Road

Dublin Road presents an opportunity for public realm enhancements both for the square and adjoining streets such as Claregate Street, by introducing quality bus shelters, thorough signage and on-street seating.



Above: Tourist wayfinding by FWD, Lincoln, UK





Claregate Street Kildare Town



## Primary Street: Claregate Street

Claregate Street is directly west of Dublin Road and presents an opportunity to reduce parking and replace this with quality and dedicated cycling infrastructure, enhancing the pedestrian and cycling experience across this primary street.



Above: An example of an urban integrated bicycle lane

## Secondary Street with Parking

Multiple iterations have been considered for Academy Street.

Local connection routes offer a variety of key functions, including their role as residential corridors and key connections between civic institutions such as schools and retail areas.



Above - Gravel Treepit Planting and parking, Red Cross Way London

Academy Street Kildare Town





Academy Street Kildare Town



## Secondary Street with Cycling

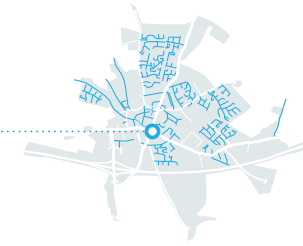
Anticipating a reduced requirement for parking in certain areas of the town centre, the option shown, opposite demonstrates in principle the spatial accommodation of segregated cycling infrastructure.



Per the Kildare County Council policy on cycle parking (5.0 of the Road and Street Design For All), bicycles should always be parked in a place and manner that is not hazardous to pedestrians, and not located directly on footpaths.



Above: Standard Sheffield style bike lock



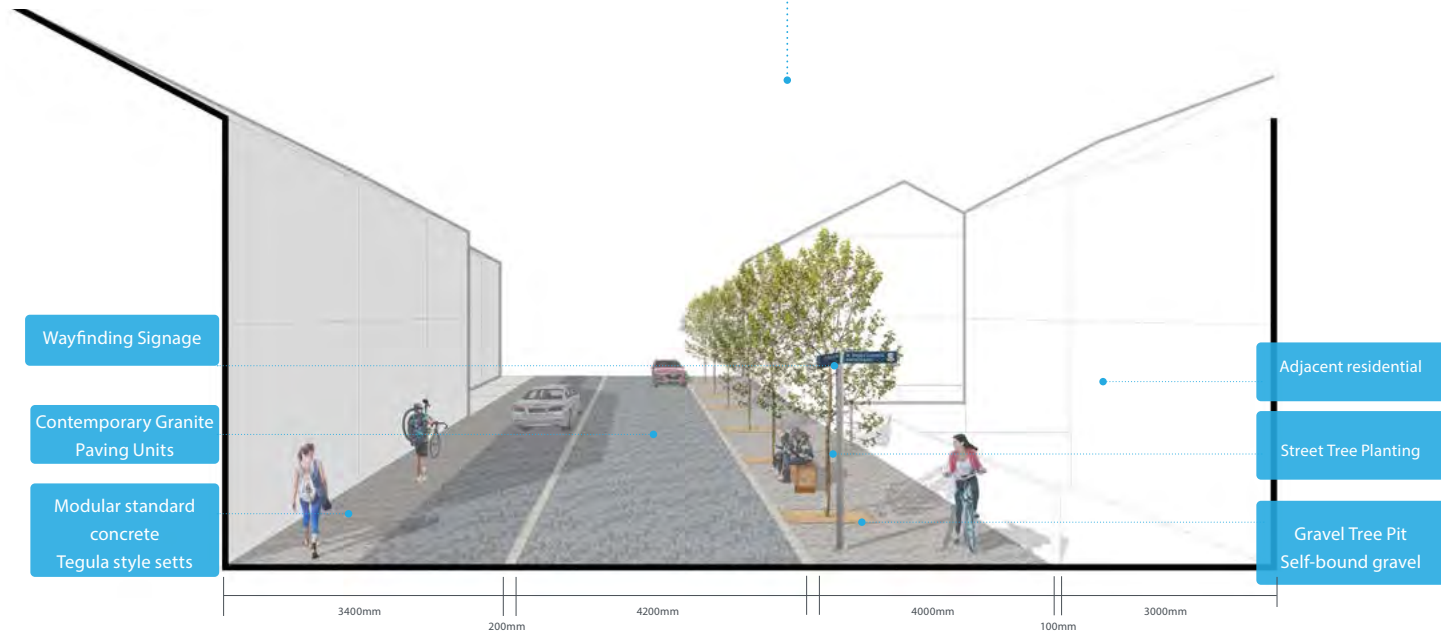
Fire Castle Lane Kildare Town

### Local Street - Direct

Seen here is a second option for Local Street design in Kildare, demonstrating consolidated parking on one side (shaded) with seating and planting on the opposite side.



Sorbus aria Lutescens is examined as a feasible and attractive softworks option, in line with the County Development Plan list of recommended native species.







Fire Castle Lane Kildare Town



## Local Street - Staggered

Multiple iterations have been considered for Fire Castle Lane. Local connection routes offer a variety of key functions, including their role as residential corridors and key civic connections.



Resin bound tree pit, UK

# 3. Public Realm Enhancements

- 3A. Kildare Town Gateways
- 3B. Kildare Town Laneways Strategy
- 3C. CMWS Hall Entry
- 3D. Kildare Town Wayfinding



'heritage trail incorporating the Tower, Stud, Curragh Plains and Army Museum'

Public Consultation Quote



White Gate Location



Fire Castle Gate Location

### 3A. Kildare Town Gateways

#### Where

Bride Street, Claregate Street, Fire Castle Lane, Nugent Street, Dublin Street, Silken Thomas Accommodation

#### Background

As noted in various town historical reports (see for example Conservation, Interpretation and Management Plan by Howley Hayes Architects), it is documented that there were a number of gateways in the historical centre of Kildare Town through the town walls which.

Their locations are approximate but they formed an important piece of the infrastructure of the town itself. The rough locations of these gateways or entrances to the town is indicated on the map right.

#### What

A public realm proposal which seeks to signify and recognise the old town gateways through a series of signifiers and moments integrated within the streetscape which recognise an important piece of Kildare Towns history and development

#### Why

Recognise and celebrate an important piece and story of the history of Kildare Town as part of and extending the cultural offer within the Town

#### How

- Identify the locations of old gateways through amalgamation of the studies and reports compiled on the old town walls and gateways
- Develop pavements markers to be introduced within the dimensions and existing paving layouts in Kildare Town which highlight and inform passers-by of the gateways.

#### Qualities



Historic Town Centre Gateway Locations



South Gate Location



White Gate Location



Precedents of Historical Information integrated into Paving

'need to map and revitalise all lane-ways and roads into the town'

### 3B. Kildare Town Laneways Strategy

#### Where

Chapel Hill, Fire Castle Lane, Bang-up Lane, Market Square - Nugent St Passage, Market Square - Water Tower Lane, Malones Lane, Heffernans Lane

#### What

A public realm renewal strategy to revitalise the existing historical laneway network and provide a model for future laneway developments in Kildare Town.

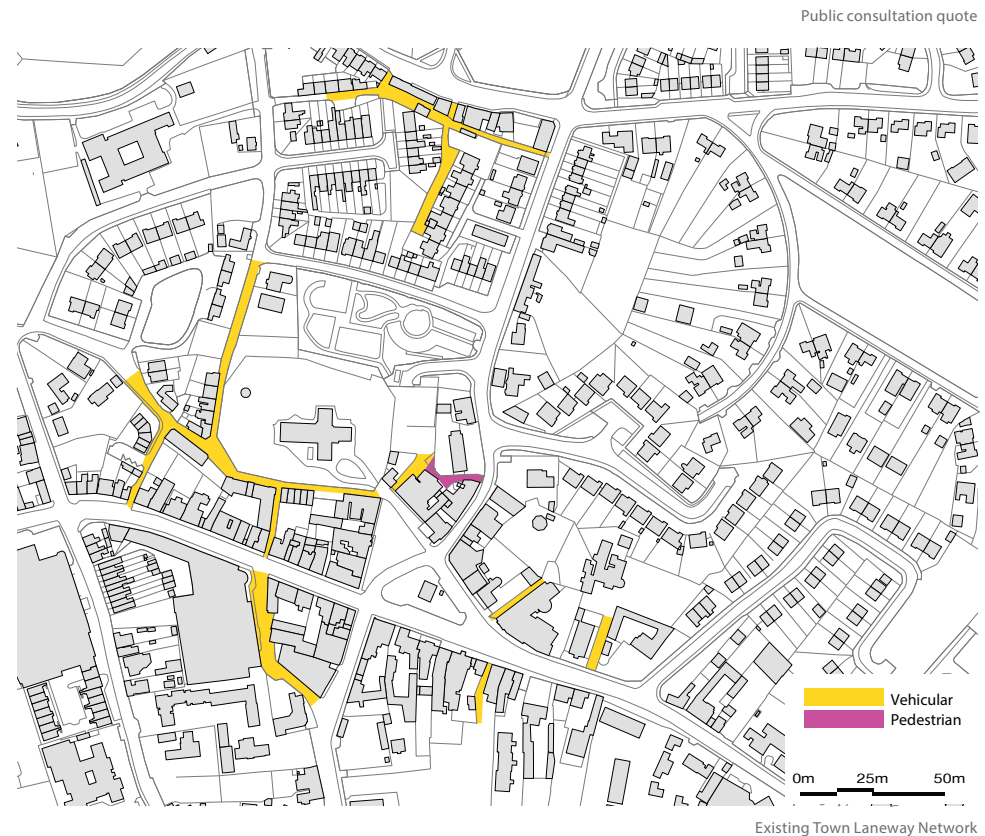
The narrow lanes surrounding the Cathedral enclosure to the south and west and the interconnecting lanes to Claregate street to the south are of particular significance. The scale and building height along these lanes, the rubble boundary walls to the side gardens, and their close proximity to the Cathedral boundary wall, together with the narrowness of the entrances to the lanes creates a strong medieval character. The building heights are single and two storey.

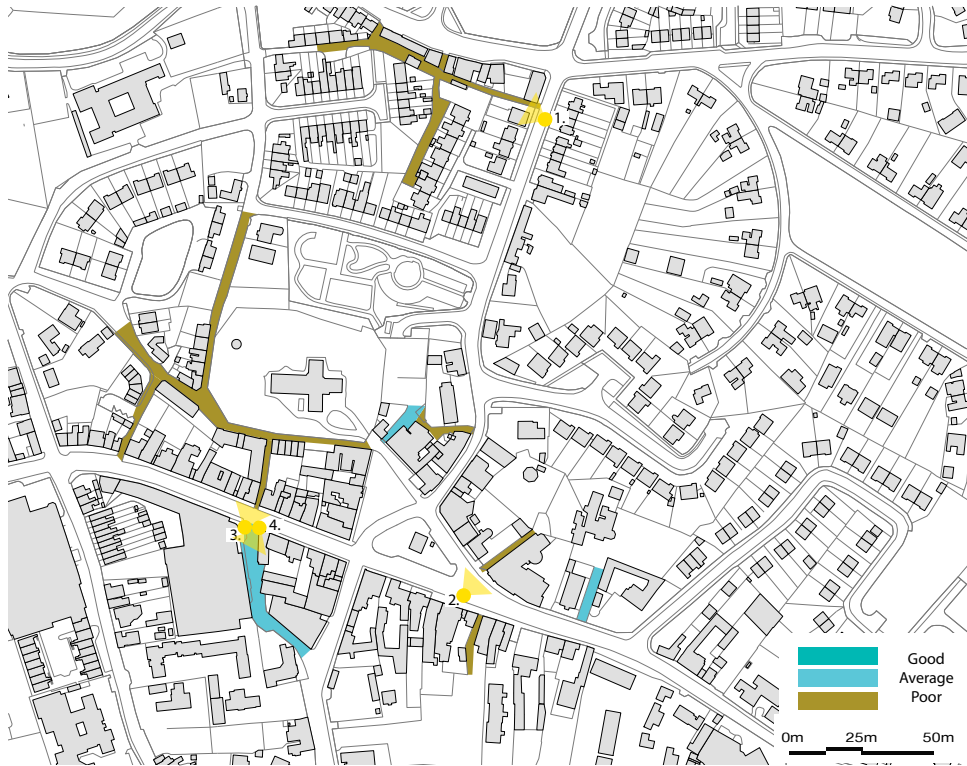
Kildare has a unique street pattern that reveals its medieval past. The laneways provide a continuous route around the boundary of the Cathedral Enclosure, with the potential to connect to the town park to the north, and they connect to Claregate Street and the Market Square. Fire Castle Lane connects Priests Lane to the Market Square and Malone's lane and Heffernans lane connect Claregate Street to Fire Castle Lane.

#### Why

The lanes are characterised by the stone wall enclosure to the Cathedral and contribute significantly to the architectural character of the town. They are an integral element in explaining the evolution and history of the town. Protecting and enhancing the heritage value of the laneways is seen as a key element in securing and protecting the overall architectural heritage of the town.

A common design strategy in tandem with the overall enhancement of the Architectural Conservation Area would create an overall coherence to the legibility of the Architectural Conservation Area.





Existing Town Laneway Condition



Shraud Street Back Alley



Lane up to Water Tower Site



Heffernans Lane



Bang-up Lane







## How

It is recommended that the scale and form of the laneways are protected, and that the public realm is enhanced to include upgrading its street surface and the provision of lighting.

The provision of appropriate lighting would improve the safety and attractiveness of the Laneways for local residents, and would also help to encourage the further use of the laneways by visitors to the Cathedral.

Appropriate interpretation of the laneways as part of an overall interpretative signage strategy as proposed in the Public Realm Strategy is also recommended to integrate the laneways as part of the overall heritage package offer by Kildare.



Malones Lane Before and After

Heffernans Lane Before and After

Market Square / Nugent St Car Park Laneway Before and After

## Qualities



**Precedent**

Similar laneways strategies have been seen for Dublin One and Ennis in County Clare. These both look at the laneway as a important area for movement but also activity. Both provide a clear appraisal of the existing laneways while also providing a set of guidelines for renewal of these areas.

Similar projects around the world have sought to make often tired and dangerous area of town and cities a more safe, accessible route for, in particular, pedestrian movement. This should be a key driver as part of this strategy following examples like the Green Alley Project as seen on the right.

Through the usage of a clear palette of materials defined as part of an overall town public realm strategy Kildare Town's laneways could follow many precedents to renew an existing network of historic lanes while also providing a guide for potential new lanes to be seen as part of towns growth



Green Alley Project Los Angeles



Property fronting onto Laneways

**Case Study - Bang-up Lane**

Using Bang-up lane, a historic route between Bride Street and Claregate, as a local precedent for renewal there is an opportunity to rethink how the laneways of the town are used.

Here the existing lane is dominated by a wide one way carriageway with parking on the side facing the town library. The opposite side has no pavement with property opening onto this route. There is no public lighting on the street with the pavement itself being cluttered with bollards, signage and railings.

Through a reduction in width of the carriageway there is the potential to create a safer pavement for the property on the lane. Integrated public lighting and some minor landscaping could create a safer accessible space. Adjustments of the ground materials will then further reduce speed on the street making the lane feel like a walkable public space rather than a vehicular corridor as it does now.



Bang-up Lane Re-imagined



Bang-up Lane



Bang-up Lane Street Improvement Works

### 3C. Gateway Project



#### What

A project seeking to signify the entry into Kildare through a public art commission on the face of CMWS hall. This face is the current first sight for visitors from KVOC / National Stud/Japanese Gardens and St Brigid's Well

#### Why

To create an attractive entrance from the south of Kildare Town through public art reflecting the aspiration of the LAP which seeks 'to continue to enhance the profile of Kildare through strategic environmental enhancement, the creation of spaces and places of interest and the introduction of public art.'

#### How

Repaint the CMWS hall façades and commission a local artist to generate an art piece on the facade to reinterpret the heritage and history of Kildare Town creating a attractive and symbolic entrance point.



CMWS Wall , Potential Artwork Intervention

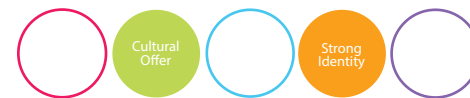


Perspective based Artwork could be different depending on the angle its looked at



'Ugly Wall' Balham, Metropolitan Workshop

### Qualities



'people do not know what the town has to offer'

Public consultation quote



Wayfinding and Town storytelling example

### 3D. Kildare Town Wayfinding

#### Where

Town Extents

#### What

A town wayfinding project to create a common strategy for branding and public art to identify routes and locations of significant town offering while being integrated into public realm rather than creating town clutter.

#### Why

To improve and recognise Kildare Towns various cultural, retail and historic offerings it is important that a strategy is implemented which seeks to inform, clarify and explain to both visitors and town inhabitants where and what offers the town has.

Highlighted during the consultation process it was evident that many visitors are unaware of many of the towns offerings and how close they are to one and other. People (some who live in town) do not know how far / short distances are between areas like the National Stud and Market Square. All town offerings are accessible by foot within minutes but this is not described within the town itself when you are in it, travelling though it or visiting one of the towns offers.

It is important as part of an overall town renewal masterplan strategy to seek to combine or highlight the towns offers so they can feed off each other as part of an overall town offer to create a more connected, accessible and permeable street network

#### How

- Highlight important locations for the introduction of way-finders and signage to guide and inform people in the town.
- Calculate travel distances and times between locations for accurate journey times in and out of the Town
- Introduce a town-wide wayfinding and signage strategy using the guidelines and specifications set out in the Kildare Town Public Realm Renewal Strategy.

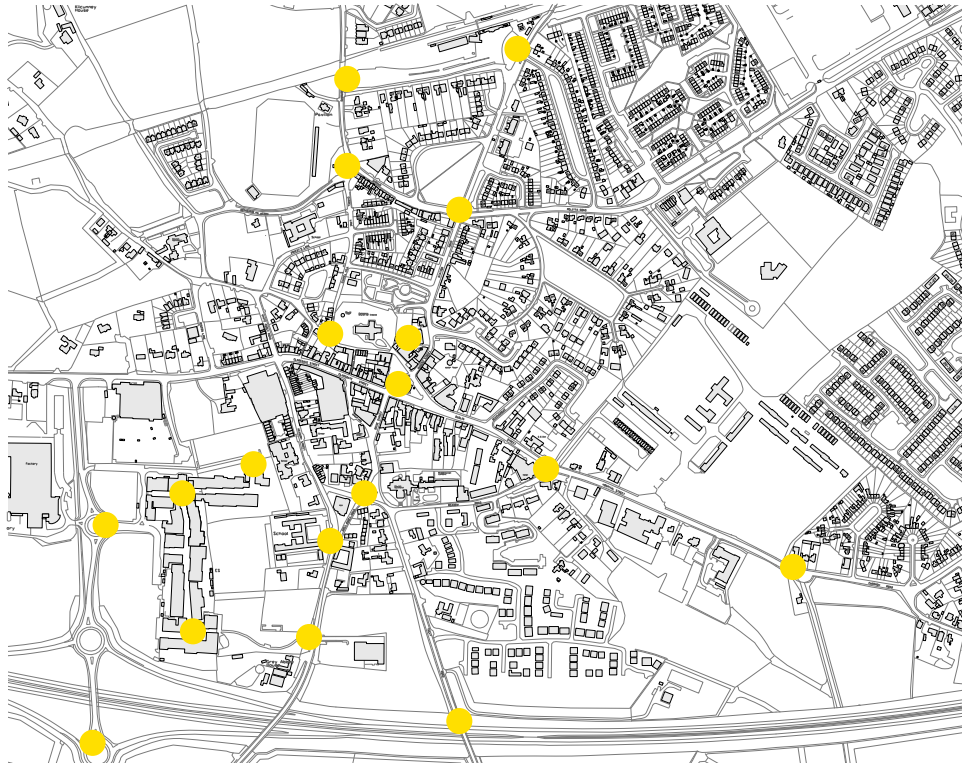
#### Qualities



Wayfinding and Signage could be integrated into Public Realm Improvements around Kildare Town



Wayfinding Signage could be immediately introduced around Kildare Town



Locations where Wayfinding Markers / Signage should be introduced



Simple Signage unintrusive on the streetscape



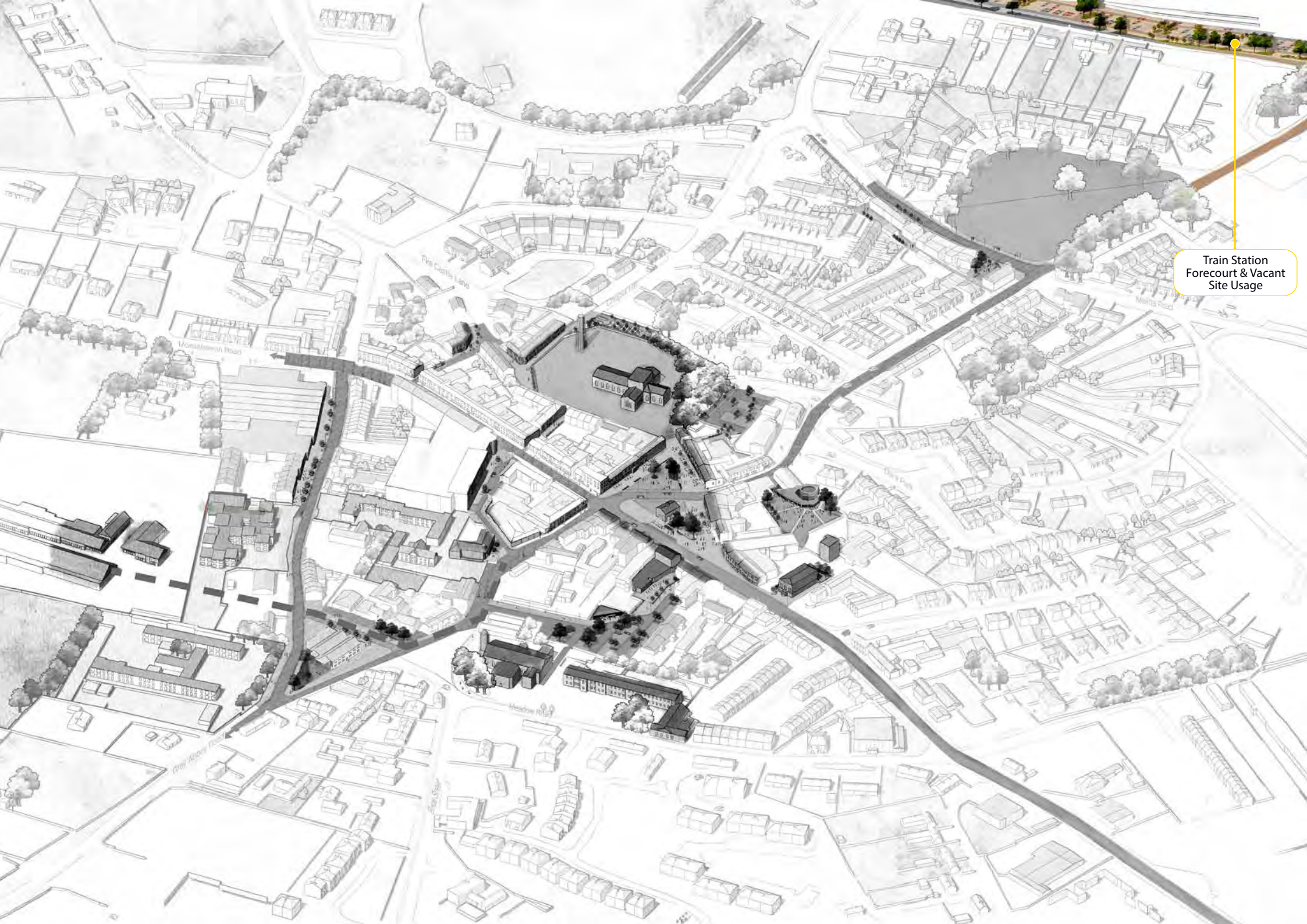
Blank Walls could be used to tell Kildare Town's history

## 4. Train Station Improvements

4A. Iarnoid Eireann Vacant Site  
Development

4B. Train Station Forecourt & Fair Green  
Road Improvements





Train Station  
Forecourt & Vacant  
Site Usage

## 4. Train Station Area

### Where

Kildare Town Train Station, Fair Green Road

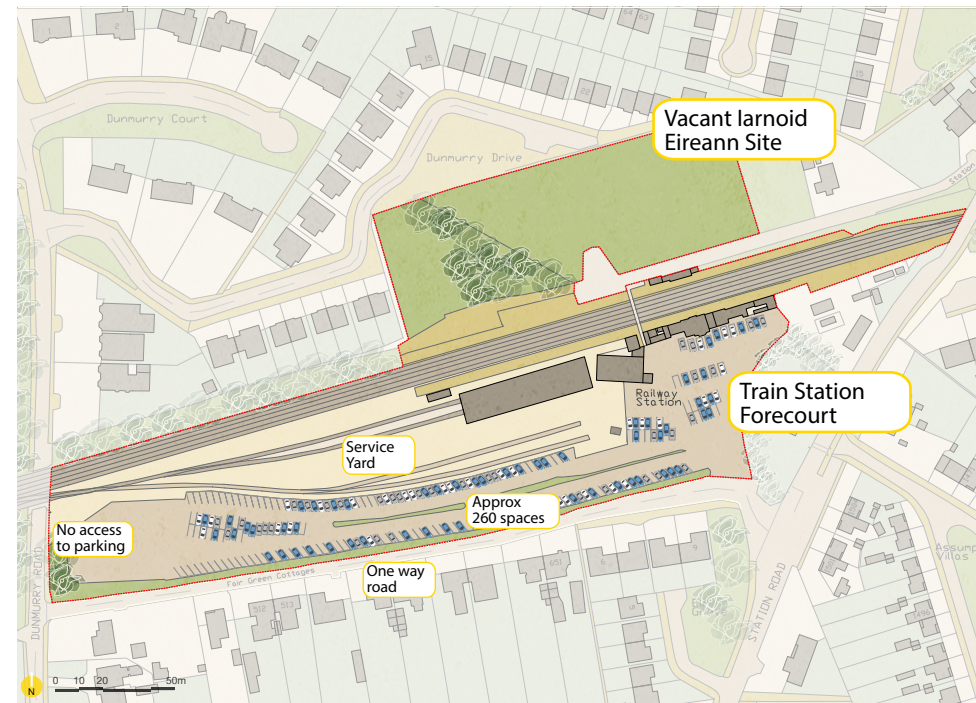
### Background

Kildare Railway Station was opened in 1846 and is typical of railway stations constructed in the county. Designed by Sir John MacNeill in the Tudor Revival style, the station is characterised by its stepped roof line, steeply pitched roofs, gabled dormers and slender chimney stacks. Set back from the road on its own grounds, the setting of the station is less attractive than the building itself, comprising a large area of surface car parking.

The station is constructed of rendered masonry walls (south elevation) and red brick Flemish bond walls (north elevation) with cut granite quoins, window and door surrounds and hood mouldings. An attractive glazed timber screen wall to the ticket office survives internally. Removed some distance from the town centre, Kildare Railway Station is important as an entrance and departure point to and from the town.

The station reflects significant investment in transport communications during the nineteenth Century and the commercialisation and industrialisation of major urban centres that formed part of the railway network.

There are bridges east and west of the station lands forming two of 3 no. road bridges spanning the railway line to the north of Kildare Town. The west bridge constructed in the late nineteenth Century, this bridge comprises broken coursed squared rubble stone walls with rusticated stone voussoirs, a cut-stone string-course, and cutstone coping to the parapet wall. The construction of the elliptical arch that has retained its original shape is of technical and engineering merit. The bridge exhibits good quality stone masonry and fine, crisp joints. The bridge is of historical and social significance testifying to the development of the railway network in the late nineteenth Century.



Site Analysis & Observations



## 4A Iarnoid Eireann Vacant Site Development

### What

A public realm strategy to investigate the potential to open up the site as parking and enable an access to the train station from the North of the tracks from the (West Dunmurray) Road and East (Rathbride Road). This could be of particular benefit with the proposed future development of the South Green Area.

The site also has future development opportunities being located at an important location in close proximity to the train station. Potential investment and tenancy could be sought after initial improvements.

### Why

To instigate and develop an important strategic site in Kildare to both increase parking levels for the train, alleviate congestion caused by access issues to the train station and promote the re-use and development of underutilised site as per an objective within the Kildare Town LAP.

There is no access to the train station from the north, promoting car use across the town. Parking related to the train station is impacting on the environment of nearby streets, connecting pedestrian cyclist infrastructure is poor. Irish Rail are a key stakeholder in a position to partner with KCC and help deliver the project.

### How

- Open access to the site from both Dunmurray Drive and Rathbride Road
- Carry out site survey to note levels, existing trees of importance to inform site layouts and configurations
- Introduce zoned strategy on site for initial and future development
- Formalise parking and paving strategy on the site to initiate Northern train station site access
- Introduce relevant signage and way-finders to the site to reduce traffic congestion around neighbouring roads

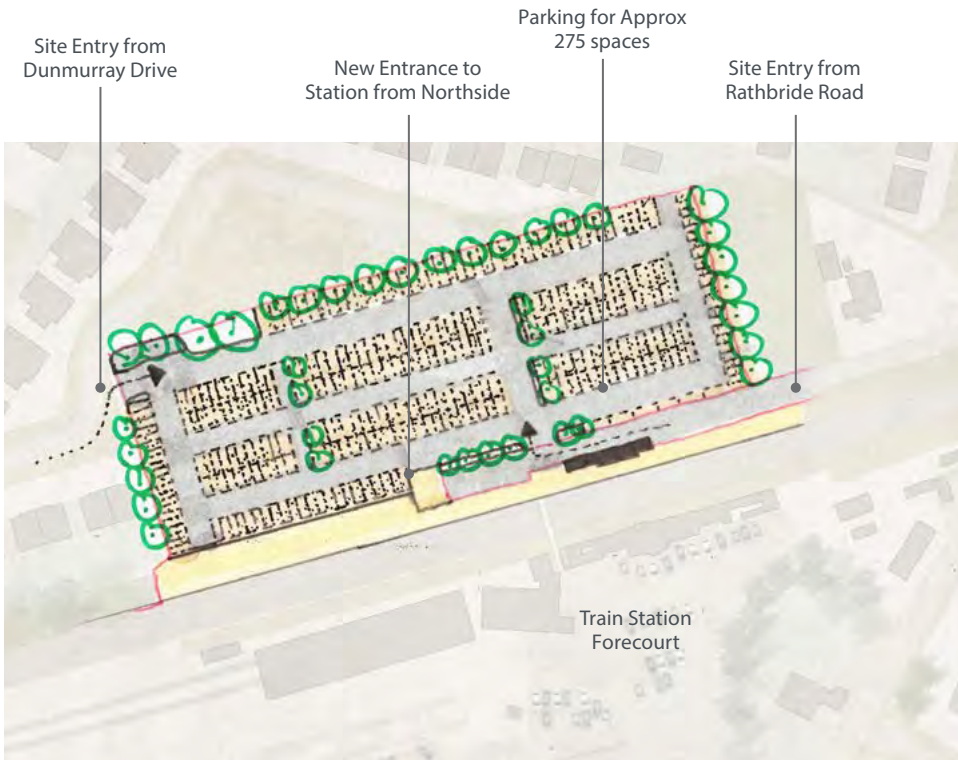
### Qualities



Diagram depicting the current long routes the Kildare Train Station causing congestion



Existing Site Photos



Sketch Plan of Potential initial parking configurations



Parking with integrated landscaping

## 4B Train Station Forecourt & Fair Green Road Improvements

### What

A public realm improvements strategy to enhance the train station forecourt with a formalised parking strategy and animation of the edge condition between the Fair Green Road and station grounds.

### Why

Kildare Town Train is a significant attractive structure without any public space frontage or information to visitors entering the town. The creation of a public forecourt will enable a safer more attractive entry the town with integrated information and points that showcase the towns offer and travels routes to each location.

At present there is no distinction between pedestrian routes, parking and road on the site with there being a lack of drop off points, cycle parking and landscaping to the station.

Significant traffic congestion is also caused on the site due to there being only one entrance onto the site and to the station. Increasing access to the train station from different locations will benefit the town itself significantly.



Site Plan of Public Realm Improvements



Public Realm Improvement examples



Perspective of potential renewal of train station forecourt

### How

Opening up an entrance to the Western side of the side would significantly reduce town centre traffic but also reduce parking by the Fairview Cottages to avoid traffic caused by the loop to the site. Use of the northern site as described will significantly improve this.

The reduction in traffic at the main entry route to the site enabling a public plaza to be developed will create a formal entrance to the station, landscaped and seating areas with information /signage on the towns cultural offers. A drop off point and bus will formalise shuttle routes between KVOC and the National Stud with safer cyclist and pedestrian access providing through pavement provision, street lighting and integrated landscaping along the fairgreen road and site entry at both sides. A bike hire scheme here would connect the station to Market Square and Cherry Avenue as part of an overall town cycle strategy

### Qualities



# 5. Kildare Village Link

## Characteristics

The area is currently occupied by a single storey dwelling and garages. The site is in close proximity to Kildare Village Outlet to the West and is a 2 minute walk from Kildare Market Square.

To the East the site benefits from frontage to what was historically the towns Fairgreen, an area with a lot of vehicular access and in which now stands the community centre, but has the potential to be regenerated.

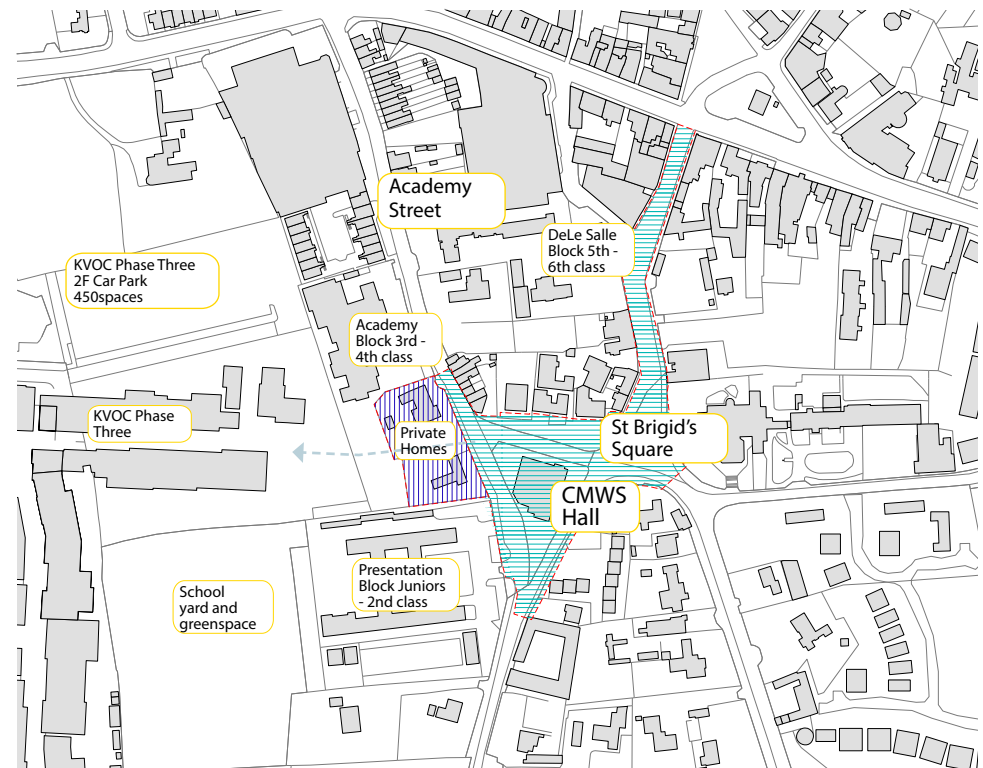
On the opposite side of the old Fairgreen is St Brigid's Parish Church and carpark occupying what is known as St Brigid's Square. A pedestrian link from the Church to the KVO would improve the flow of pedestrian footfall to the area together with the old Fairgreen site these areas could greatly benefit from being regenerated as part of the improved link between KVO and the town centre.

The North perimeter of the site is bound by St Brigid's Primary school and playing yards which currently run along the west boundary of the site to which the pedestrian link is proposed. The southern boundary is shared with another single dormer dwelling with garage.

'Kildare village not linked to the town'

'a link to Kildare Outlet Shopping Centre. Vital if the town is to grow'

Public Consultation Quotes



Site Extents & Observations



## Opportunities

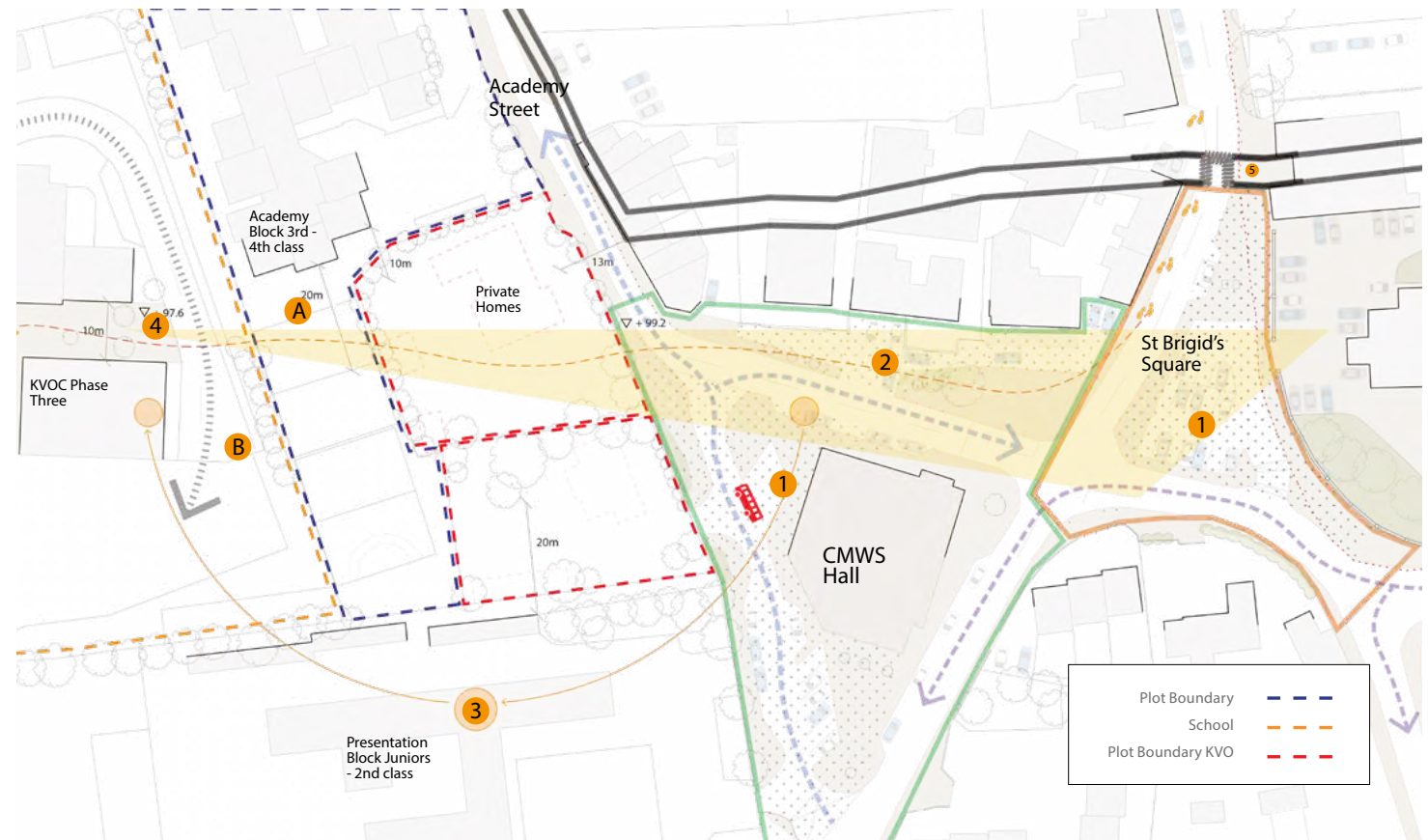
- 1 Car dominates creating a poor public realm - not pedestrian friendly
- 2 Opportunity to define fair green
- 3 South facing elevation
- 4 View straight through to Church from KVO
- 5 Historic location of town wall

## Constraints

- A Set backs required for privacy for neighbouring buildings
- B Delivery / access to service yard for KVO

## Constraints

- The proximity to primary schools either side of the link requires consideration of the existing conditions of the school yards.
- Level changes from the KVO across the site.
- Proximity to residential dwellings and consideration of privacy, noise for these residents from a proposed commercial development that would operate after 6pm.
- Any potential operational requirements associated with a hotel (e.g. deliveries, drop off)
- The proximity to the KVO service yard and the access required for this across any proposed pedestrian link
- Maintaining access to residential flats to the North and consideration of daylight and sunlight impacts
- Height, scale and massing of surrounding existing buildings
- Mix of residential and non-residential uses, including understanding more about the implications of proposed works on the mix of uses



### Historic Context : St Brigid's Square

#### A Street Junction

Among the features of 1757, not previously recorded, was a marginal street-junction in the south at what is now known as St Brigid's Square. A low-lying area within reach of ground water.

#### Fair Green

St Brigid's Square was also the site of a pound and may already have been functioning as a fair green when Rocque surveyed it. It is easy to understand how the Fair Green got its name. It was originally a grassy commonage. Farmers brought their livestock to sell and buy. The shopkeepers did good business on fair days. The pubs, eating houses, clothes shops, grocery shops and hardware shops were all busy. Cattle marts lead to the demise of fairs in the 1960s. The main effect of railway transport on Kildare town was the removal of the fair green from St Brigid's Square to a field north of Shraud, near the station.

### St Brigid's Square

In 1829 the Presentation order of nuns established a convent on what had been the largest undeveloped tenement within the town's network of streets. The room available for expansion on this site was quickly taken up, first by a new catholic church (replacing the eighteenth-century chapel) and subsequently by both male and female national schools. Later another order of nuns was to enlarge this south side 'catholic sector' by taking over the infirmary after the county authorities had ceased to finance it. The presence of a new church must have helped to improve the social standing of the nearby street-junction, previously known only for its fairs, as well as causing it to be renamed St Brigid's Square.

#### Town Wall

This area is also the setting of historic town defences. Historically the town wall and gate located to the North end of St Brigid's Square along the Southern Boundary of the Town.



John Rocques Survey 1757



Valuation Map 1850



Thomas Sherrard Survey 1798

Fair Green



Street Junction  
(now St Brigid's Square)



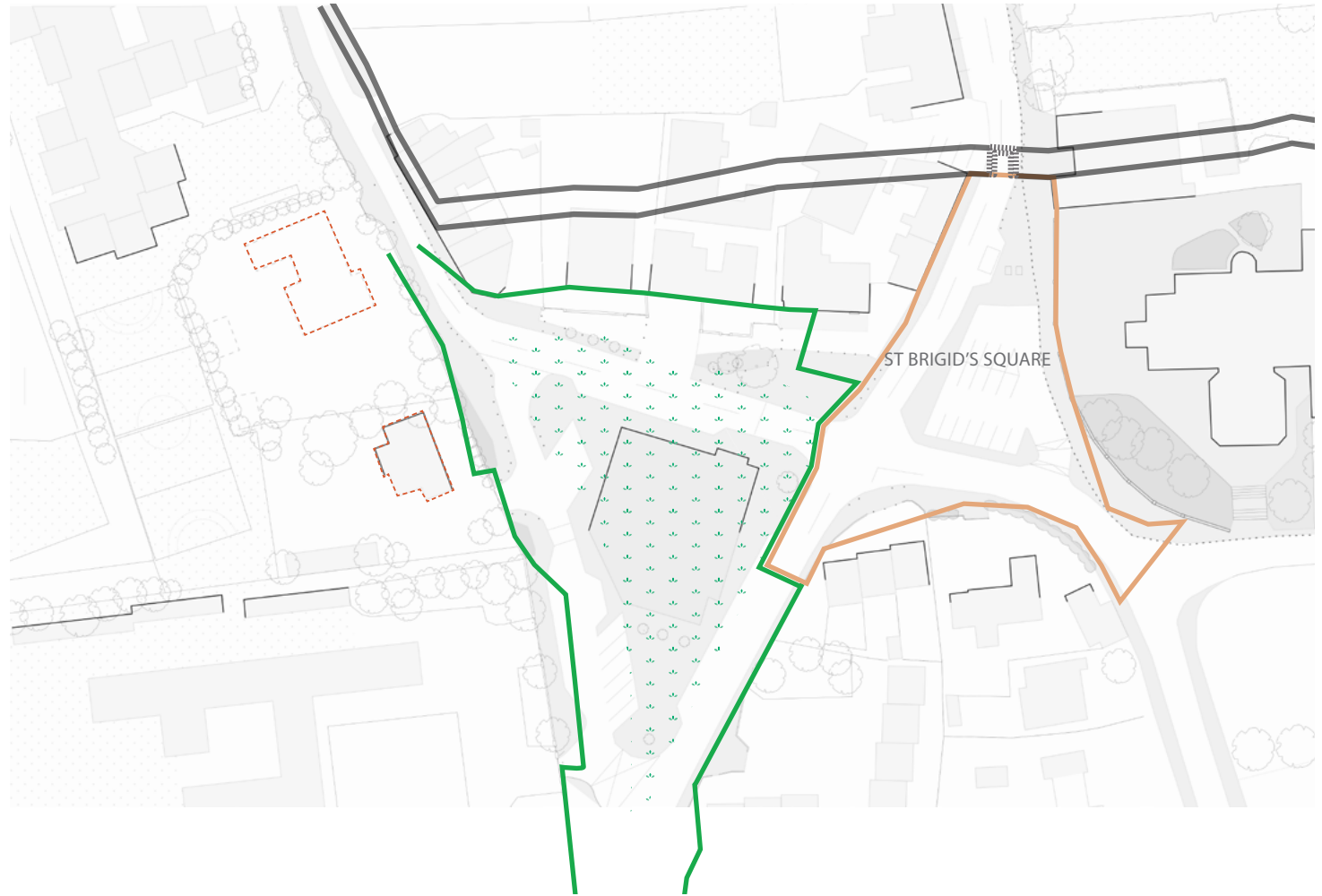
Historic Town Gate



Historic Town wall



Map showing the conjectural lines of the town wall enclosures along with the town gates

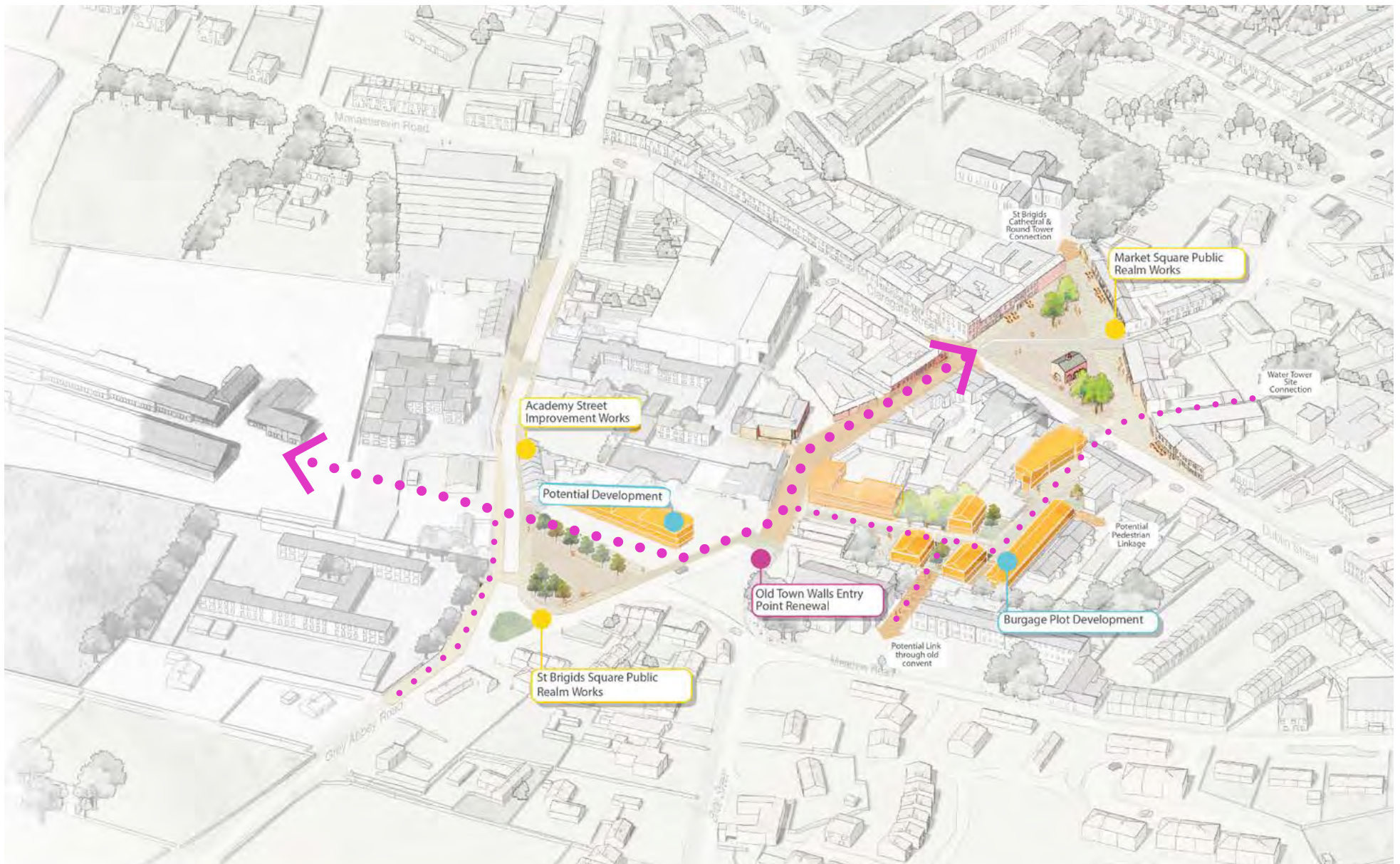


Draft Sketch Option for a Pedestrian Link to and from Kildare Village Outlet

Pros:

1. Vista through to Church on St Brigid's Square is maintained
2. New Building maintains a full elevation to the square, opportunity for outdoor seating
3. Large area of public realm extension is south facing





Academy Street Improvement Works

Potential Development

St Brigid's Square Public Realm Works

Old Town Walls Entry Point Renewal

Burgage Plot Development

Market Square Public Realm Works

St Brigid's Cathedral & Round Tower Connection

Water Tower Site Connection

Potential Pedestrian Linkage

Potential Link through old convent

Grey Abbey Road

Moylshrewin Road

St Brigid's Lane

St Brigid's Lane

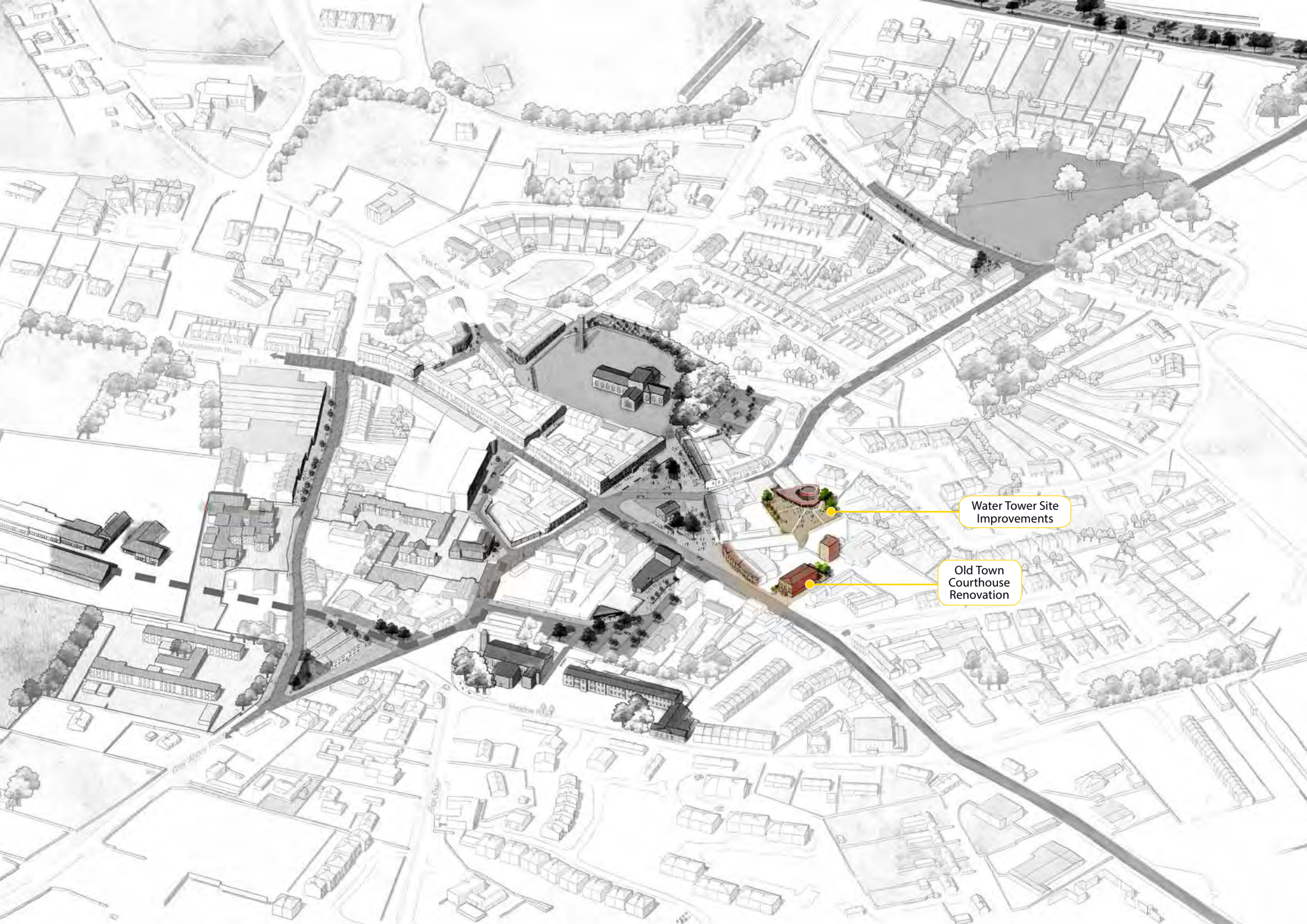
St Brigid's Lane

6.

Old Town  
Courthouse &  
Water Tower  
Site  
Improvements

6A. Old Town Courthouse Renovation

6B. Water Tower Site Improvements



Water Tower Site Improvements

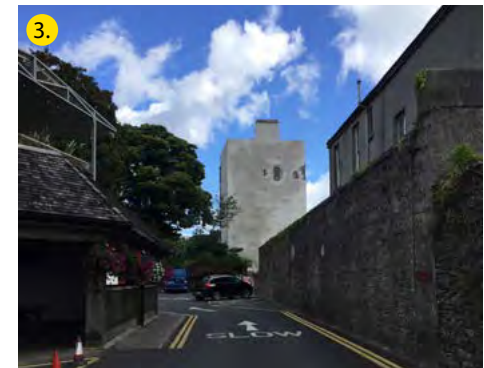
Old Town Courthouse Renovation



**Where**  
 Old Water Tower Site and Vacant Courthouse

**Background**  
 In KCC ownership as a service yard the old Water Tower site on the ground of Kildare Castle. The Silken Thomas occupies most of the footprint of the land and the old keep and gatehouse has been restored into accommodation. The yard where the unused tower lies is the site of the old castle park and can be seen in Roques 1759 surveys with views over the town akin to the cathedral and round tower site opposite

The Courthouse was constructed in 1829 positioned to the eastern end of Market Square, fronting onto Dublin Street, comprises a three bay, two storey structure with a rectangular plan and single storey flat roofed porch on its front elevation. The courthouse is stepped back from the street forming a forecourt that is defined on its eastern and western sides by a rubble stone wall. This building is an important landmark on the streetscape, representing one of the earliest civic buildings in the locality.





'this was originally the people's site- added to the castle this could be a wonderful attraction that could be developed in the future'

'make it a feature and open it up in conjunction with the courthouse.'

Public consultation quote

### Opportunities

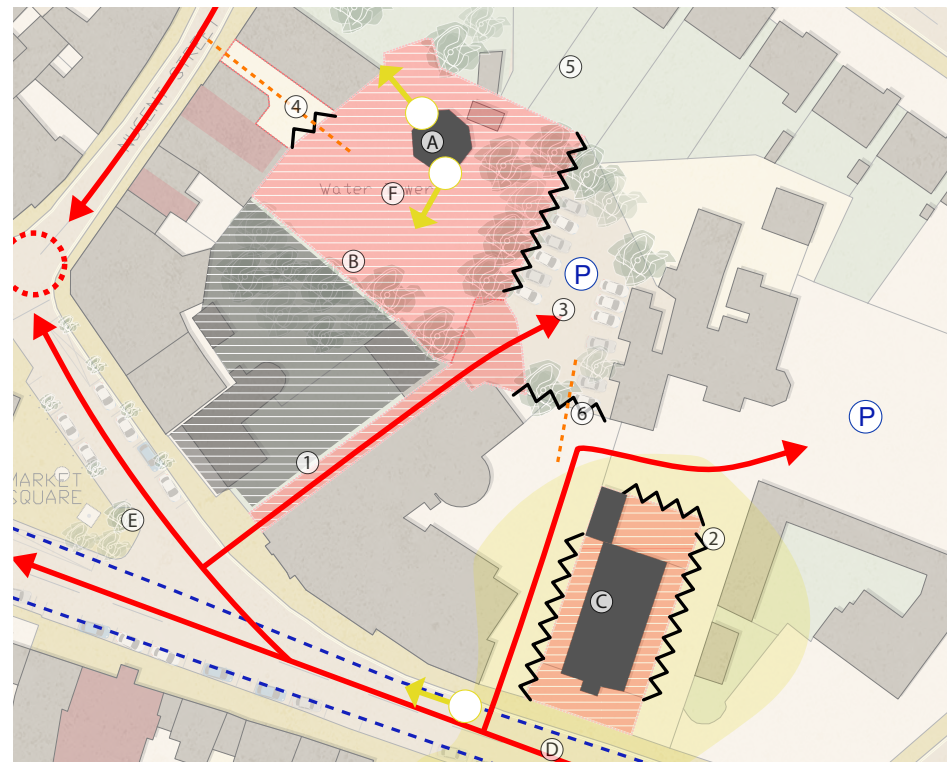
The site analysis and stakeholder comments have influenced the opportunities and constraints drawing as shown right.

The key opportunity is the potential for any projects to be developed quickly with both sites having historical significance. The water tower site offers the opportunity for a secondary public space off the square while the courthouse site presents the chance to activate an area which once formed one of five town gateways

### Constraints

Access to both sites is limited with the Silken Thomas grounds splitting the sites creating clear private owned barriers to movement / access in these areas. Potential linkages to both areas would require negotiation.

The courthouse is a protected structure and would need to be carefully renovated. This historic structure would need proper archaeological assessment to ensure and designs brought forwards are appropriate/



### Key

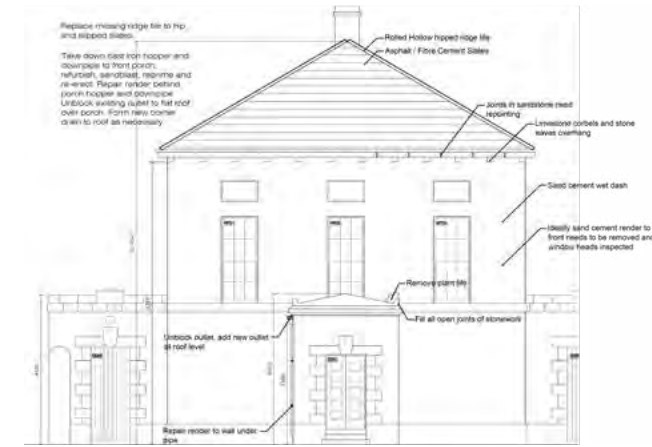
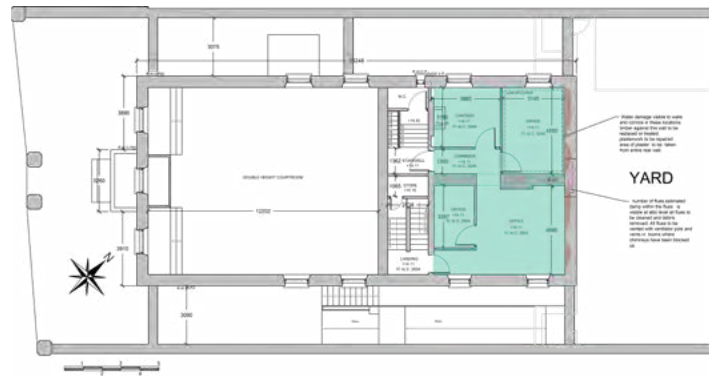
	Opportunity Area		Node
	Granted Planning Permission		View
	Inaccessible Lands		Parking
	Significant Building		Vehicular Link
	Green Space		Pedestrian Link
	Barrier to Movement		Potential Link
	Potential Character Area		Potential Cycle Link

### Opportunities

- A Old Water Tower can become a feature along a historic trail
- B Site is in KCC ownership for immediate PT8 application process
- C Old Courthouse has the potential to be reused and renovated - currently being used from time to time for community events
- D A potential connection between the Youth Centre / Old Post Office Courthouse could be developed recognising the old town gateway
- E Site can be developed in similar language as Market Square works to become an important public space
- F Site is on a high point and has town views on ground level to the North, East and West of Kildare Town

### Constraints

- 1 Laneway up-to Site is tight and used as access to rear car park
- 2 Courthouse site is closed from rear parking potential
- 3 Rear parking is used by staff and employees on Market Square
- 4 Potential pedestrian site access route is in private ownership
- 5 Gardens of private houses may have an overlooking issue if tower is refurbished
- 6 Site is raised above courthouse ground level



Improvement works proposed by Laura Bowen Architects

## 6A. Former Town Courthouse Renovation

### What

Renovation and restoration of the old courthouse as a community building to enhance a building of significant identity and heritage value. This study will propose potential uses and tenants for the building while also proposing improvement to its surrounding lands increasing the prominence of a significant town block.

### Why

This fine imposing classical style building is prominently located on the main approach to the town from the north, its set back emphasising its importance. It is of considerable social and historical significance as one of the earliest civic buildings in the locality. It has an almost intact interior, and is in good condition retaining many important early or original features.

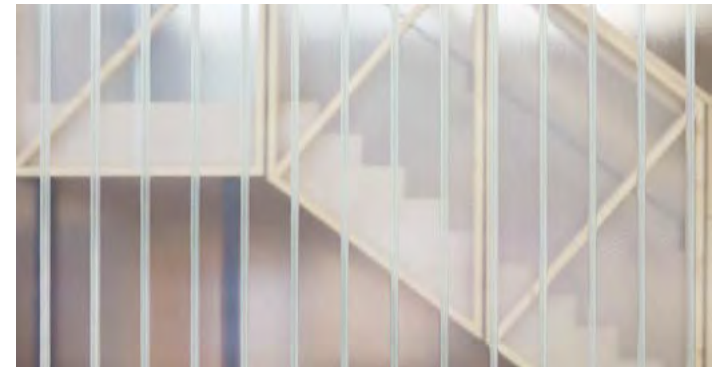
A condition of the Kildare Town LAP seek the retention, restoration and improvement of all buildings of architectural merit in the Town Centre in a manner, which respects the special character of the area. The building also has the potential to enhance and further the cultural

offers in Kildare Town to act as a community space and landmark well connected to other town offers being located just off the Market Square on Dublin Road

### How

Conduct a detailed survey of the existing courthouse to inform a possible building re-purpose and reuse as artist studios with a multifunctional event space located where the old court used to be. Renovation will retain and respect the existing structure with in-filled partitions and furnishing separating spaces.

The provision of new paving, seating and lighting on the site could promote the old town gateway located at this point while increasing opportunities for breakout space from the building directly opposite the site of the old post office now being used as the Kildare Town Youth Centre. There is the opportunity for the building to be used in tandem with the centre and vice versa promoting and recognising an old important town axis of the original Courthouse and Town post office.



Swindon Carriage Works, Metropolitan Workshop

'bring the courthouse into community / cultural use'

Public consultation quote



The Impact Hub - London



The improvement and retention of the existing facade, amending issues highlighted within a conservation report prepared by Laura Bowen architects, will create a more welcoming frontage onto the streetscape .

The introduction of new windows and doors with the refurbishments will brighten the facade complimenting this with the potential for an enhanced entranceway investigated through a detailed feasibility study

#### Qualities



Abbeylix Market House Renovation, De Blacam & Meaghar

## 6B. Water Tower Site Improvements

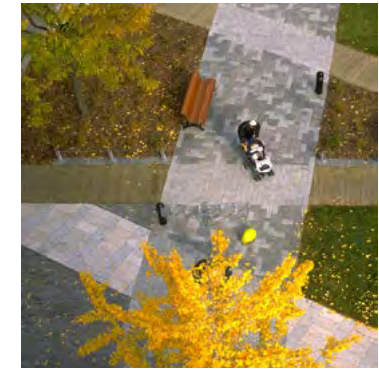
### What

The free-standing cast-concrete water tower was constructed in the latter half of the 20th Century within the bawn of Kildare Castle. The tower has a polygonal plan and reflects the challenges which have historically faced Kildare Town in terms of providing a water supply. It is of technical and engineering interest and adds to the streetscape of Nugent Street.

The site can offer a point of interest, at height, along the laneways linking Market Square to St. Brigid's Cathedral. The water tower could be up-lit as a memory of Kildare's industrial heritage. There is potential for the base to be converted for interpretive use to support the tourist office and overlook a new public space and cathedral beyond.

### Why

Highlighted in public consultation as the site of the old peoples park on the castle lands this site is of important historical significance.



Material and Texture Precedents

Restoring the park as a reinterpretation of the nineteenth Century maps could enhance the setting of the rich archaeological heritage at the castle site.

The park would provide a better environment to visit and appreciate the castle walls and the gate house and would involve the cooperation of the owners in the opening up of the former bawn to the public.

The water tower should be retained and made accessible as a landmark, much as the round tower, with the presence rather than the appearance of a castle keep.

Archaeological investigations undertaken in advance could identify the location of the original structure, it is shown directly underneath the water tower on historic maps. This would then form the focus of the new park, with the fencing removed and the grounds planted out. The outer walls could be lined by a gravel pathway, with the walls of the keep outlined out in stone paving.



Water Tower Park

### Qualities





Chipping Barnet Park, Metropolitan Workshop



View of potential re-use of water tower as a public amenity

Most of all, this fascinating site would be better presented, and its preservation assured. The lands offer the opportunity to consolidate the existing town centre by encouraging the development of underutilised sites in a sensitive and appropriate manner. The restoring and reinterpreting of the old bawn in a sensitive manner can help bring Kildare's evolution to light adding to the vast heritage of the town.

#### How

- Enable access through Nugent's St with the development of an entrance to the west of the site to continue a heritage loop around Market Square.
- Construct a small unit to support the Heritage Centre at the base of the water tower providing views over the town
- Retain and maintain existing trees on the site as part of public realm works using palettes seen in the Kildare Town public realm strategy
- Introduce integrated landscaping and lighting on the side wall of Silken Thomas to create a welcoming, safe and informative route up to the site

# Project Delivery Plan

Project	Phasing			Notes	Importance Rated 1-5 (important)
	0-2yr	2-4yr	5yr +		
1A. Market Square Public Realm Improvements	■			Catalyst project. Renewal here could spark improvements of nearby sites in conjunction or after renewal	5
1B. Nugent Street Car Park & Laneway Upgrade	■*			Can be delivered as a 'quick win' project promoting and achieving immediate change	3
1C. Old Burgage Plots Development		■	■		4
1D. Streetfront Regeneration		■	■	Activates underused site opening new pedestrian connections to market / leverage parking needs	3
Shraud Street Regeneration	■	■			2
2. Cycle & Pedestrian Network Study	■	■	■	Creates attractive public realm for vacant block reuse	3
3A. Kildare Town Gateways			■		4
3B. Kildare Town Laneways Strategy	■	■	■		3
3C. CMWS Hall Entry		■	■**		5
3D. Kildare Town Wayfinding	■*			Can be delivered as a 'quick win' project promoting and achieving immediate change	3
4A. Iarnoid Eireann Vacant Site Development	■				5
4B. Train Station Forecourt & Fairgreen Road Improvements			■		3
5. St Brigid's Primary Site Consolidation / activate Kildare Retail Outlet connection			■***		3
6A. Old Town Courthouse Renovation			■		4
6B. Water Tower Site Improvements		■		Can be delivered as a separate project	3

\* Delivered in conjunction with Market Square renewal  
 \*\* Follows public realm strategy guidelines  
 \*\*\* Delivered in combination with Iarnoid Eireann vacant site use

## Delivery

A Project Delivery Plan is shown to the left, with phasing, importance & benefits to town growth, costs and comments about inter relationships with other projects.

It is recognised that the delivery of comprehensive projects such as those detailed within this report is reliant upon the availability of funding which is likely to be limited or spread over time. Nonetheless, the strategies contained within this document could be used as the basis for further funding bids such as the URDF.

It is recommended that where funding opportunities are scarce, an incremental approach can be taken to the implementation of these projects, allowing progress to be made as and when funding is received.

A possible approach might be the following:

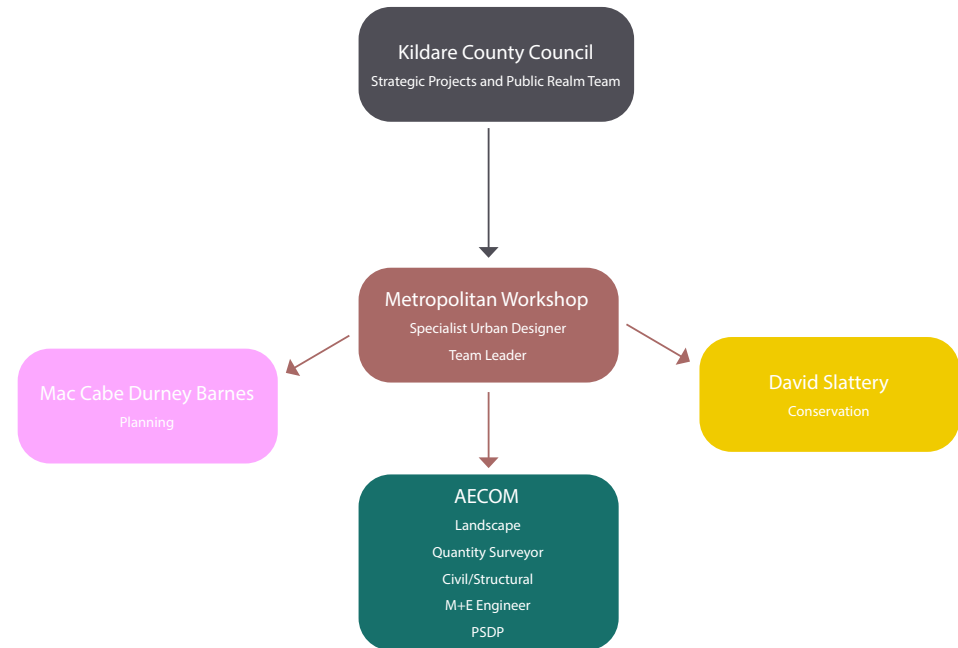
- Step 1 – Tidy up street
- Step 2 – De-clutter street
- Step 3 – Relocate or merge street functions as appropriate
- Step 4 – Rethink traffic management options – circulation, traffic flow, priorities etc.
- Step 5 – Recreate the street as final project proposal.

This approach enables projects to commence at an earlier stage, achieving change and 'quick wins' ahead of full project completion.

# Our Team

Metropolitan Workshop have assembled a team for this commission who have worked together previously. The team brings unparalleled experience for projects of this kind and are committed to delivering an exemplary scheme for Kildare Town.

Individually and collectively we are passionate about making successful places and would relish the opportunity to work with Kildare County Council and local stakeholders. Our Team is:





## Metropolitan Workshop

Architecture + Urbanism

### Specialist Urban Designer- Team Leader

Through our architecture and urban design, in our research and press articles and through our involvement in national, regional and local design review panels, we strive to influence and improve the way people live.

Metropolitan Workshop principles have more than eighty-five years of combined experience of designing mixed-use, housing-led urban schemes and working with private sector developers and public sector housing agencies in the UK Norway and Ireland.

The perspective that our broad range of experience provides, gives the organisations we work with early confidence in the deliverability of their projects.

From bespoke houses to major urban residential-led, mixed-use projects, we bring the highest possible standards of

design thinking and delivery to the built environment at every scale and context.

We are experienced communicators and believe that resident and public consultations are crucial to finding the right solution, to give the community the opportunity to ensure proposals meet their needs and in doing so, those of the client.

We believe that there is always more than one good way to do something so we always offer options – this helps everyone engage with the issues and see that different solutions offer different virtues.



### Planning

MacCabe Durney Barnes is a multi-disciplinary practice providing specialist planning, environmental and economic services. The practice provides spatial planning, chartered surveying and marine spatial planning. Their mission is to promote planning, environmental sustainability and economic development as a process for achieving an enhanced physical environment and consequent improvement to the quality of people's lives.



### Conservation

The practice works and projects include the repair and conservation of historic stonework, brickwork and metalwork; the preparation and use of historic materials such as lime and the conservation and repair of decorative plasterwork, joinery and statuary are areas where the practice has a particular expertise. In addition, the practice has completed a substantial number of assessments of historic buildings and has provided consultancy services for the historic fabric aspects of a number larger mixed developments.

## AECOM

### Landscape, Quantity Surveyor, Civil/Structural, M+E, PSDP

AECOM is global network of experts working with clients, communities and colleagues to develop and implement innovative solutions to the world's most complex challenges. Delivering

clean water and energy. Building iconic skyscrapers. Planning new cities. Restoring damaged environments. Connecting people and economies with roads, bridges, tunnels and transit systems. Designing parks where children play. Helping governments maintain stability and security.

AECOM connects expertise across services, markets, and geographies to deliver transformative outcomes. Worldwide, AECOM designs, builds, finances, operates and manages projects and programs that unlock opportunities, protect our environment and improve people's lives.

# Appendices

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening  
Appropriate Assessment Screening

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# Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

FOR  
PROPOSED  
TOWN RENEWAL MASTERPLAN  
FOR  
Kildare Town  
Co. Kildare

ON BEHALF OF  
Kildare County Council

## DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

Client	Kildare County Council
Project Title	Proposed Town Renewal Masterplan for Kildare Town, Co. Kildare
Document Title	Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

Revision	Status	Author(s)	Reviewed	Approved	Issue Date
0.0	Draft for internal review	Sanni Hintikka <i>Ecologist</i>	Ben Lansbury <i>Principal Ecologist</i>	-	-
1.0	Draft for Client Review	Sanni Hintikka <i>Ecologist</i>	Ben Lansbury <i>Principal Ecologist</i>	Lizy Tinsley <i>Technical Director – Ecology</i>	14.12.2022
2.0	Consultation 1 (Environmental Authorities)	Sanni Hintikka <i>Ecologist</i>	Ben Lansbury <i>Principal Ecologist</i>	Lizy Tinsley <i>Technical Director – Ecology</i>	14.12.2022
3.0	Final SEA Screening Determination	Sanni Hintikka <i>Ecologist</i>	Ben Lansbury <i>Principal Ecologist</i>	Ben Lansbury <i>Principal Ecologist</i>	13.02.2023

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report has been prepared by Enviroguide Consulting (on behalf of Kildare County Council) for the Proposed Town Renewal Masterplan (TRMP) for Kildare Town, Co. Kildare, hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Masterplan' in this document. The 'Site' refers to the area defined within the Proposed Masterplan, i.e., Kildare Town. This report considers whether the Proposed Masterplan is likely to cause significant effects on the environment, and whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required.

## 1.1 Legislative context for SEA

An SEA is a process for the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. SEA aims to provide a high level of protection to the environment and contribute to the integration of environmental considerations during the preparation and adoption of plans with a view of promoting sustainable development.

The SEA evaluation process of plans and programmes is required by European Directive 2001/42/EC ('the SEA Directive'). For a specific range of land-use plans, this Directive is transposed into Irish law by Statutory Instrument (S.I.) No. 436 of 2004 (the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011 (the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).

For all other relevant plans and programmes in Ireland (including other types of plans in the land-use planning sector), the SEA Directive is transposed into Irish law by S.I. No. 435 of 2004 (the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 (the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011). The Proposed Masterplan presented in this report falls under S.I. 435/2004.

## 1.2 Requirement to carry out SEA – Pre-Screening Checklist

In order to determine if the Proposed Masterplan is considered a plan/programme under Article 3 of the SEA Directive, a pre-screening check is necessary. Figure 1 shows a decision-tree which reflects the SEA Directive and how it may be concluded (using the steps set down in S.I. 435 of 2004, as amended): a) if a plan is exempt from the Directive's requirements; b) if SEA is mandatory or c) if screening for SEA is required.

Following finalisation and publication, the Proposed Masterplan will be adopted by Kildare County Council and will act as a non-statutory guiding document for future urban development in the town of Kildare. Therefore, the Proposed Masterplan "sets a framework for future development consent of projects (EIA and non-EIA projects)", and thus Screening for SEA is required.

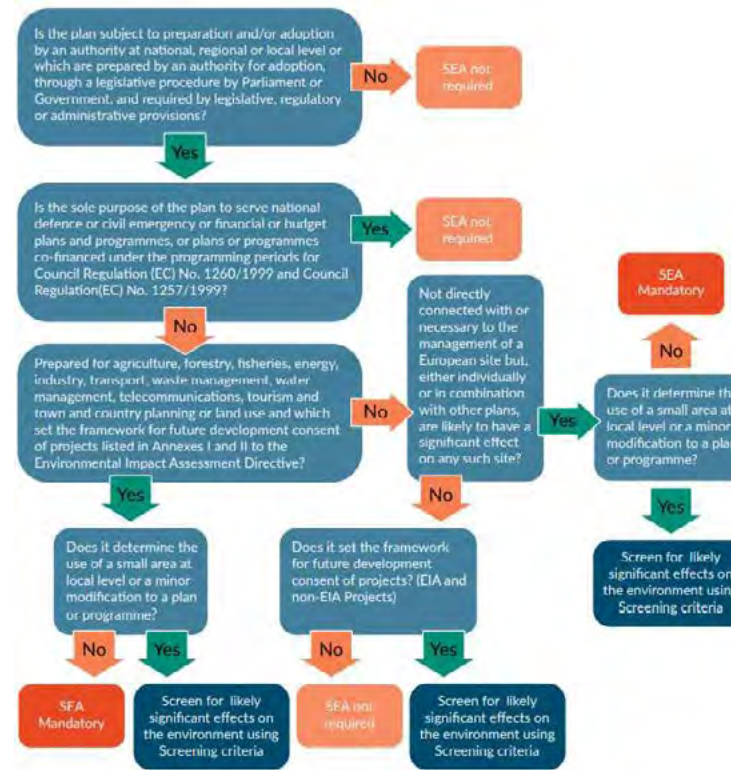


FIGURE 1. DECISION-TREE SETTING OUT REQUIREMENTS FOR SEA UNDER S.I. 435 OF 2004, AS AMENDED (SOURCE: DHLGH, 2022).

## 2 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PLANS AND POLICY

### 2.1 National Context

#### 2.1.1 Project Ireland 2040

Project Ireland 2040 is the government's long-term overarching strategy to make Ireland a better country for all and to build a more resilient and sustainable future. The strategy ensures the alignment of investment plans with the stated National Strategic Objectives for 2040 in a considered, cohesive and defined manner. This represents a shift from the approach of the past, which saw funding spread thinly across sectors and public investment decisions. Alongside the development of physical infrastructure, Project Ireland 2040 supports business and communities across all of Ireland in realising their potential.

#### 2.1.2 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is the Government's high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of the country to the year 2040. The NPF sets out ten National and Strategic Outcomes and 75 National Policy Objectives. The purpose of the NPF is to enable all parts of Ireland, whether rural or urban, to successfully accommodate growth and change, by facilitating a shift towards Ireland's regions and cities other than Dublin, while also recognising Dublin's ongoing key role.

Both the SEA and Appropriate Assessment (AA) processes were undertaken during the preparation of the NPF. The SEA and AA processes have ensured that potential environmental impacts (both positive and negative) associated with the NPF have been given due consideration in the finalisation of the NPF.

The NPF was supported by the publication of the Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework ('Roadmap') which was published on the 3rd of July 2018. This document confirmed that the NPF was adopted as a strategy to replace the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) (2002-2020) and advised that the NPF is of direct relevance to the preparation of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES) and County Development Plans.

### 2.2 Regional Context

#### 2.2.1 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The RSES 2019-2031, prepared by the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly, seeks to determine at a regional scale how best to achieve the shared goals set out in the National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) of the NPF. To this end, the Strategy sets out 16 Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs), which are aligned with international, EU and national policy and which in turn set the framework for city and county development plans. Thus, the RSES can assist local authorities in aligning with EU priorities to leverage funding and partnership opportunities.

Similarly to the NPF, the RSES include Regional Strategic Objectives (RSO). Of particular relevance to town renewal plans for Kildare Town are:

- RSO 2 – Compact Growth and Urban Regeneration which promotes the regeneration of towns by making better use of under-used lands.
- RSO 5 – Creative Places which seeks to enhance and integrate arts, culture and heritage assets to promote creative places and heritage led regeneration.
- RSO 10 – Green Infrastructure.
- RSO 12 – A Strong Economy Supported by Enterprise and Innovation which encourages to build a resilient economic base, while promoting innovation, entrepreneurship and smart specialisation.

The draft RSES uses an asset/potential based criteria approach to the growth strategy for the Eastern Midland Region. For places to reach their potential, a series of criteria was devised so that growth is cognisant of: scale, function, human capital, placemaking, ecosystem enterprise, connectivity, natural capital and infrastructure. 'Placemaking' promotes high quality and vibrant public spaces for enhanced quality of life, focused on access to amenities, facilities arts, culture and heritage as key determinant of placemaking policy. The settlement hierarchy for the Region is broadly split into three distinct areas, Kildare town forming part of the Hinterland.

#### 2.2.2 Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023

The Kildare County Development Plan (KCDP) 2017-2023 includes a comprehensive Settlement Hierarchy, in which Kildare Town is characterised as a 'Moderate Sustainable Growth Town' in the Hinterland Area. Kildare Town is a Secondary Economic Growth town which supports and complements regional growth. Its sectoral strengths include high value-added manufacturing sectors, logistics and internationally traded sectors. The plan recognises that Kildare Town has the opportunity to strengthen its economic base through capitalising as an important tourism destination.

The KCDP includes objectives seeking to stimulate regeneration of its town centres, in particular objective EO 20 which will identify and implement flagship projects for urban renewal. The objective of the renewal projects is to strengthen the economic and social fabric with a view to increase the capacity of towns and villages 'to support the economic and social wellbeing of their rural hinterland'. As a result, the use of derelict, vacant residential and regeneration sites will be key in towns which are subject of a Local Area Plan (EO 21) and where lands are appropriately zoned. Finally, the Council seeks to utilise the Shop Front / Town Centre Improvement Grant Scheme to assist independent business owners to improve the appearance of the high street (EO 24). An improvement programme of façades and streetscapes is also considered (EO 25).

Tourism forms an integral part of the KCDP 2017-2023 which considers its role in terms of job creation. The upkeep of a clean and attractive environment is essential in achieving sustainable outcomes in the county tourism industry (ECD 30). The expansion and upgrade of existing tourism facilities and infrastructure such as accommodation, restaurants etc. (ECD 33). Importantly, equine and bloodstock industries are important component of the local tourism industry (ECD 42). Facilitation of the development of tourism infrastructure such as accommodation, restaurants, car and coach parking and toilet facilities in the designated hubs throughout the county.

The Plan essentially seeks to influence the way people travel in the county to steer them toward more sustainable modes (MT 3), in particular, within the major towns which continue

to be dominated by private car use (MT 4). Reducing walking and cycling distances through Local Permeability Improvements will be essential to increase the catchment of public transport services (PT 8). To promote cycling and walking, the Council seeks to promote 'safe and convenient routes' in a 'safe street environment' (WC 1 / WC 2). Improved connectivity will be key to maximise access to town centres (WC 3). To stimulate the change from private car use to cycling, the Council requires 'the provision of secure cycle parking facilities in town, at public service destinations' (WC 8) and that notes Cycle Network Studies in the major towns of Kildare should be carried out (WC 01).

A number of policies contained in the plan regard the protection and enhancement of the architectural and archaeological heritage throughout Kildare County. The plan also promotes the appropriate re-use of buildings of architectural, cultural, historic and aesthetic merit (PS 11) and will encourage uses that are compatible.

Issues pertaining to conservation and protection of architectural heritage are particularly significant in Kildare Town due to its status as a former Walled Town, and an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) applies to the town.

The protection and enhancement of natural heritage form part of the CDP. Basic habitat assessments are to be carried out to ensure the protection of biodiversity (NH 2). It is an objective of the Council to designate Local Biodiversity Areas (NHO 1) and to identify, conserve and provide guidance on development in important local biodiversity sites (NHO 4). One large Natural Heritage Area (NHA) is proposed at the Curragh (Site Code 000392), one at Pollardstown Fen (Site Code: 000396) and one at Mouds Bog (Site Code: 000395). Pollardstown Fen and Mouds Bog are also a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (Respective Site Codes: 000396 and 002331).

Furthermore, the SEA process for KCDP 2017-2023 identified specific aims, policies and objectives within the plan to mitigate any potentially negative effects on the environment.

### 2.2.3 Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029

The Kildare County Development Plan (KCDP) 2023-2029 also includes a comprehensive Settlement Hierarchy, in which Kildare Town is characterised as a 'Self-sustaining Growth Town'. Together with Newbridge, Leixlip, and Athy, Kildare Town will continue to attract a moderate level of jobs and services through a range of employment types including biotechnology, ICT, high-tech manufacturing and research, bloodstock, tourism and food and beverage products.

As identified in the previous plan, tourism plays a key role in job creation within the county, and a number of attractions are located within the cluster around Kildare Town. The Plan also acknowledges that the environmental sustainability will be central in the development of a viable tourism sector. This is a key consideration in a county where many tourism attractions are located in environmentally sensitive areas and close to historic areas where the quality of the built heritage and environment must be protected from inappropriate development – whether tourism related or not. It is also noted that an ACA still applies to Kildare Town.

The KCDP 2023-2029 contains several policies and objectives that are aimed at protecting both built and natural heritage.

Additionally, the SEA process for KCDP 2023-2029 identified specific aims, policies and objectives within the plan to mitigate any potentially negative effects on the environment that could result from the implementation of the plan.

### 2.2.4 Kildare Town Local Area Plan 2012-2018

The overall aim of the Local Area Plan (LAP) is 'To build on Kildare town's strengths and to provide a focused approach to planning for future growth in a coherent sustainable, spatial fashion. The Plan aims to achieve a more consolidated urban form that facilitates a sustainable economic base and creates sustainable and integrated communities while balancing future development with the conservation and enhancement of the town's natural and built environment.'

The LAP recognises that the town's expansion has been limited in comparison to other settlements in Kildare County and faces a number of challenges such as retaining its physical identity for the town by establishing a clear built edge, avoiding sprawl into the surrounding countryside and protecting the Curragh plains. The plan also notes that the Magee Barracks and the lands between the town and the Kildare Village Outlet Centre require a clear vision. The designation of the town as a Heritage Town clearly highlights the town's unique character.

It sets out the development strategy as follows:

- Regenerating Magee Barracks with a potential for the development of a mix of employment, educational, community and residential uses.
- Enhancing the Historic Town Centre, so that the town can realise its full potential as a heritage town and major tourism destination.
- Planning for Town Centre expansion with a view to create a new vibrant urban area connecting the outlet centre to the town and centred around a well-designed public realm.
- Enhanced linkages to Kildare's National Tourism Hub, connecting the attractions available in and around the town to make Kildare Town a national tourism destination.
- Development of high density employment areas in three potential sites.
- Phasing of lands.
- Transportation infrastructure and development of linkages to provide for the integration of strategic objectives into an overall urban structure of connected vehicular, cycle and pedestrian routes, organised along key routes around the town. This structure includes inter alia:
  - A new street connection between the Dublin Road, the Tully Road and Grey Abbey Road
  - New streets between the Village Outlet and the Monasterevin Road and St Brigid's Square
  - An avenue at Magee Barracks connecting the Dublin Road and Mellita Road
  - Connections between Mellita Road, Ruanbeg, Coolaghknock and Magee Barracks
- The creation of a new gateway entrance to the town to provide for character and identity.

Note that the new LAP (Kildare Town Local Area Plan 2019-2025 Issues Paper) is currently being reviewed.



### 3 PROPOSED MASTERPLAN DESCRIPTION

#### 3.1 Kildare Town – Location & Description

Kildare Town, situated in the centre of the county of Kildare in Ireland's eastern Midlands (Figure 3), was founded in the 5th Century. The Curragh plains are located to the east of the town with pastoral landscapes to the north, south and west and bogland further south. It is situated on a ridge higher than the surrounding lowlands. Over the past 20 years Kildare Town has experienced limited expansion in comparison with other settlements in the county. The majority has been suburban to the North and east of the historic town centre reflecting the role of Kildare Town as dormitory settlement arising from improved rail and road links to Dublin city.

Today the town has a population of 9,874 (2016 census) and has a growth rate of 6% with an average age of 34.2 years old. Kildare Town is accessed by the M7 which is a direct national route to Dublin. Furthermore, it is located on mainline rail and has rapid access to all major seaports and airports. The town is located nearby to other large urban centres in Kildare County, Newbridge is 9km distant and the county town, Naas, is 20km distant. Within its immediate context, the town is situated within easy reach of a variety of amenities.

The most notable of these include the Curragh horse racing venue, which is the centre of horse racing in Ireland and is currently undergoing a large-scale redevelopment. Also nearby are the Japanese gardens and the Irish National Stud farm, an established successful tourist attraction.

Kildare Town is also a former historical Walled Town, and an ACA applies within the majority of the Proposed Masterplan area. Several protected structures are located within the Proposed Masterplan area (Figure 2).



FIGURE 2. KILDARE'S PROTECTED STRUCTURES, NIAH STRUCTURES AND PROPOSED PROTECTED STRUCTURES. IMAGE EXTRACTED FROM KILDARE TOWN ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENT OF CHARACTER.

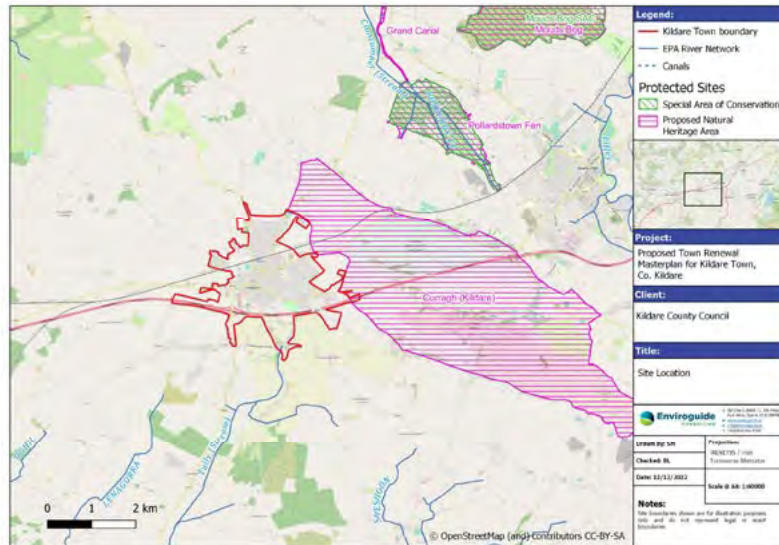


FIGURE 3. SITE LOCATION.

## 3.2 Kildare Town Renewal Masterplan

### 3.2.1 Background

Under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme launched in 2016, Kildare County Council's in-house team was successful in securing funding from the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. As part of the implementation process of this project, KCC are required to complete the following steps:

- **Step 1:** Conduct a town 'Health Check' to assess the vitality and viability of the town centre;
- **Step 2:** Establish a Town Renewal Masterplan Committee with the involvement of the Local Authority, Local Business representatives, residents and the wider community;
- **Step 3:** Prepare a Town Renewal Masterplan on the basis of the results of the Health Check, setting out in detail the measures to be taken to support the renewal and revitalization of the town; and
- **Step 4:** Implement the Town Renewal Masterplan.

The TRMP includes a masterplan and an implementation strategy for the town with several projects designed and ready to be developed to Part 8 approval stage. Identification of key 'delivery projects' in the town were informed by the 'Health Check' and 'Urban Design Analysis' as well as an extensive consultation process ranging from public events through to discussions / workshops with the Town Committee and in-house KCC project team. These delivery projects are described in the Proposed Masterplan document

During the Urban Design Analysis and Public Consultation process the study area focused on the wider Kildare Town, not just the town centre itself. This study area has been continued into the development of delivery projects whereby sites and areas have been identified across the town for further consideration. The projects are aligned with the Council's vision, and work with Kildare's current planning policy. These also respond to public consultation held upon the completion of the Urban Design Analysis.

The Delivery Plan identifies discrete projects that are realistic and achievable that will change perceptions and create confidence. Some projects relate to major transformative sites that already have a clear trajectory but provide additional focus with the aim of accelerating delivery, while others suggest the development of supporting development briefs or strategy to enable investment and development.

Others suggest direct intervention by the council, or by public/private partnership vehicles. There are also a range of 'early wins' and catalytic temporary projects to help ignite interest and change perceptions which could establish discussion for further enhancement as part of a longer term strategy.

This report is prepared as part of Step 3, prior to implementation of the Proposed Masterplan. The implementation step will involve bringing the identified delivery projects forward to design and planning stages for Part 8 applications. Each of these applications will be subject to the appropriate environmental assessments, including the AA process.

### 3.2.2 Delivery Projects

It is recognised that the delivery of comprehensive projects such as those detailed within the Proposed Masterplan is reliant upon the availability of funding which is likely to be limited or spread over time. Nonetheless, the strategies contained within the Proposed Masterplan document could be used as the basis for further funding bids such as the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF).

The following sections describe the delivery projects included in the Proposed Masterplan (Figure 4). A Project Delivery Plan has also been provided in the Proposed Masterplan, showing phasing, comments about inter-relationships between the delivery projects, and importance to town growth (Figure 5).

#### 3.2.2.1 Market Square and Environs

##### a) Market Square Public Realm Improvements

Improvements to the Market Square to create a pedestrian friendly experience, celebrating the heritage both in and around the square as part of a renewed more usable town square with a rebalancing of pedestrian and car movement. This will enhance the capacity for usage of the town square, improving its cultural offer and creating a significant improvement for town centre living. This acts as a trigger for further projects in and around the square which build on and are informed by this proposal.

##### b) Nugent Street Car Park Upgrade

Public realm improvements in Nugent Street car park aim to improve navigability to Market Square and increase perception of safety through improved lighting signage and landscaping. A minor lane connects the public car park to the north of the Market Square which also interconnects to Nugent Street. Activation of this route for more frequent usage form an important development as part of this area's renewal.

##### c) Old Burgage Plots Development

A proposal for the public realm that seeks to utilise the backlands site of the former burgage plots. The initial public realm proposal leverages the loss of parking from Market Square while creating a new landscaped pedestrian route from Bride Street to Market Square. In the longer term, the site could be developed for cultural/commercial uses which reinterpret the original burgage plots.

##### d) Streetscape Regeneration

A strategy that investigates the potentials for shopfronts to be reconsidered to meet and adapt to the regulations of an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) including Market Square, Nugent Street, Claregate Street and Shraud Street.

#### 3.2.2.2 Cycle & Pedestrian Network Study

Despite the fact that Kildare Town is a walkable town it currently offers a poor pedestrian experience and little or no cycling infrastructure. There are no cycle lanes in place despite the vision of the Government's National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020, which formed part of their policy document '2009- 2020 Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future'.

In order to direct and prioritise investment in cycle infrastructure, it will be deemed necessary to develop a Cycle Network Study, to be undertaken by KCC. The Kildare Cycle Network Study will be prepared in accordance with Steps 1 – 5 of the National Cycle Manual's Seven Steps to Planning a Cycle Network, which are shown in bold below:

#### **Step 1: Inventory of Existing Cycling Regime**

#### **Step 2: Understanding Trip Demand and the Potential for Cycling Trips**

#### **Step 3: Trip Assignment to the Network**

#### **Step 4: Trip Forecast**

#### **Step 5: Urban and Transport Planning**

Step 6: Prioritising Improvements

Step 7: Programme, Consultation, Budgets

The provision of a bike hire scheme to connect Kildare Town Train station - Market Square - Cherry Avenue (when completed) and to historic sites should be investigated as part of this study.

#### 3.2.2.3 Public Realm Enhancements

##### a) Kildare Town Gateways

A public realm proposal which seeks to signify and recognise the old town gateways through a series of signifiers and moments integrated within the streetscape which recognise an important piece of Kildare Towns history and development. Areas included cover Bride Street, Claregate Street, Fire Castle Lane, Nugent Street, Dublin Street and Silken Thomas Accommodation.

##### b) Kildare Town Laneways Strategy

A public realm proposal which seeks to signify and recognise the old town gateways through a series of signifiers and moments integrated within the streetscape which recognise an important piece of Kildare Towns history and development. Areas included cover Chapel Hill, Fire Castle Lane, Bang-up Lane, Market Square - Nugent St Passage, Market Square - Water Tower Lane, Malones Lane and Heffernans Lane.

A common design strategy in tandem with the overall enhancement of the ACA would create an overall coherence to the legibility of the ACA.

##### c) CMWS Hall Entry

A project seeking to signify the entry into Kildare through a public art commission on the face of the Catholic Men and Women's Society (CMWS) hall. This face is the current first sight for visitors from KVOC/National Stud/Japanese Gardens and St Brigids Well.

##### d) Kildare Town Wayfinding

A town wayfinding project to create a common strategy for branding and public art to identify routes and locations of significant town offerings while being integrated into public realm rather than creating town clutter.

#### 3.2.2.4 Kildare Town Train Station

##### e) Iarnoid Eireann Vacant Site Development

A public realm strategy to investigate the potential to open up the site as parking and enable an access to the train station from the North of the tracks from the (West Dunmurray) Road and east (Rathbride Road). This could be of particular benefit with the proposed future development of the South Green Area.

The site also has future development opportunities being located at an important location in close proximity to the train station. Potential investment and tenancy could be sought after initial improvements.

#### f) Train Station Forecourt & Fairgreen Road Improvements

A public realm improvements strategy to enhance the train station forecourt with a formalised parking strategy and animation of the edge condition between the Fair Green Road and station grounds.

#### 3.2.2.5 *Kildare Village link and Schools Consolidation*

The area is currently occupied by a single storey dwelling and garages. The site is in close proximity to Kildare Village Outlet (KVO) to the West and is a 2-minute walk from Kildare Market Square. To the east the site benefits from frontage to what was historically the towns Fairgreen, an area with a lot of vehicular access and in which now stands the community centre but has the potential to be regenerated. On the opposite side of the old Fairgreen is St. Brigids Parish Church and carpark occupying what is known as St. Brigids Square.

A pedestrian link from the Church to the KVO would improve the flow of pedestrian footfall to the area together with the old Fairgreen site these areas could greatly benefit from being regenerated as part of the improved link between KVO and the town centre.

The North perimeter of the site is bound by St. Brigids Primary school and playing yards which currently run along the west boundary of the site to which the pedestrian link is proposed. The southern boundary is shared with another single dormer dwelling with garage.

#### 3.2.2.6 *Old Town Courthouse & Water Tower Site Improvements*

##### a) Old Town Courthouse Renovation

Renovation and restoration of the old courthouse as a community building to enhance a building of significant identity and heritage value. This study will propose potential uses and tenants for the building while also proposing improvement to its surrounding lands increasing the prominence of a significant town block.

##### b) Water Tower Site Improvements

The free-standing cast-concrete water tower was constructed in the latter half of the 20th Century within the bawn of Kildare Castle. The tower has a polygonal plan and reflects the challenges which have historically faced Kildare Town in terms of providing a water supply. It is of technical and engineering interest and adds to the streetscape of Nugent Street.

The site can offer a point of interest, at height, along the laneways linking Market Square to St. Brigids Cathedral. The water tower could be up-lit as a memory of Kildare's industrial heritage. There is potential for the base to be converted for interpretive use to support the tourist office and overlook a new public space and cathedral beyond.



FIGURE 4. PROPOSED DELIVERY PROJECTS FOR KILDARE TOWN (SOURCE: KILDARE TRMP (METROPOLITAN WORKSHOP, 2022))

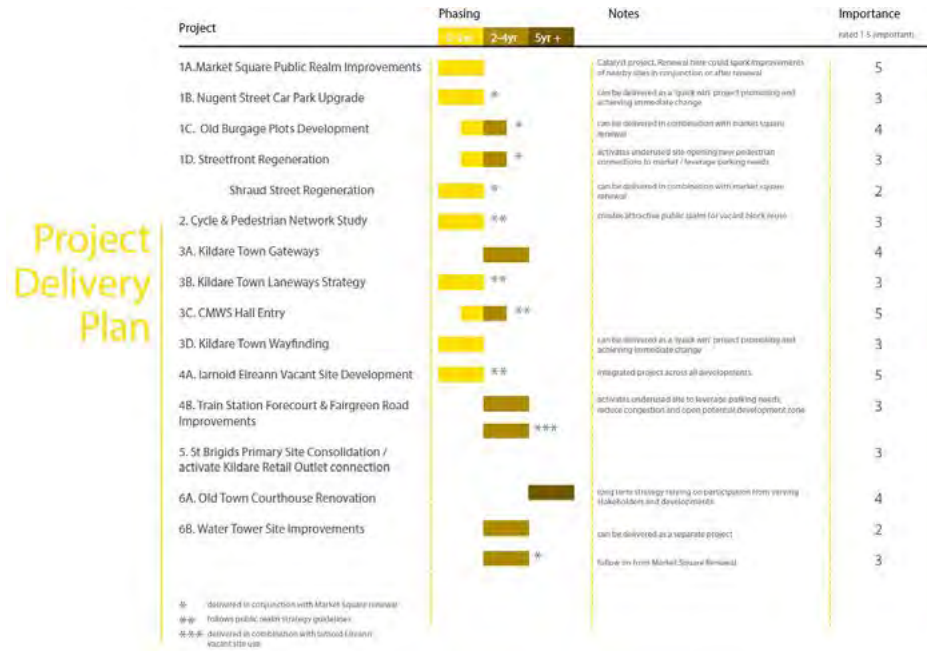


FIGURE 5. PROJECT DELIVERY PLAN FOR DELIVERY PROJECTS INCLUDED IN THE PROPOSED MASTERPLAN (SOURCE: KILDARE TRMP (METROPOLITAN WORKSHOP, 2022))

## 4 SEA SCREENING

### 4.1 Screening Criteria

The Proposed Masterplan is a non-statutory land use plan and is being screened for the requirement for SEA in accordance with the requirements of:

- Directive 2001/42/EC (SEA Directive) and particularly Articles 3(3), 3(4) & 3(5) relate to 'Screening' for the requirement for SEA.
- S.I. No. 435 of 2004 European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 - European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.

The Proposed Masterplan for Kildare Town is therefore screened using the criteria contained in Schedule 1 of S.I. No. 435/2004 - European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004. Table 1 details the screening assessment using the *criteria for determining the likely significance of effects* as set out in Schedule 1.

TABLE 1 SCREENING DETERMINATION FOR DETERMINING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS AS PER SCHEDULE 1 OF S.I. NO. 435/2004.

<p><b>1. The characteristics of the plan having regard, in particular, to (the following criteria):</b></p> <p><i>The degree to which the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.</i></p>
<p>The land use zoning objectives and activities for lands in Kildare Town are set out in the Kildare Local Area Plan 2012-2018 and the KCDP 2023-2029. The preparation of the Proposed Masterplan aligns with the objectives set out in these documents, particularly with LAP strategy for regeneration of Kildare Town. The focus is on enhancing both pedestrian and cycling links within the town to connect hubs of activity, such as the Market Square and the KVO area, while also proposing rejuvenating projects for areas currently underutilised such as the Old Burgage Plots. The LAP was subject to an SEA, and the AA Screening of the LAP found no indication of potential significant effects on any European sites as a result of the plan, and thus Stage II AA was not required.</p> <p>The KCDP 2023-2029 sets out the proposed vision and objectives for the development of the county over a six-year period. The Development Plan aims to plan for and support the sustainable long-term development of Kildare County and provide for the creation of sustainable and integrated communities. All planning proposals are assessed against the objectives of the Development Plan and all lower plans must be consistent with the County Development Plan.</p> <p>The Core Strategy which defines the settlement hierarchy identifies housing and population targets and provides a rationale for the land proposed to be zoned for residential development, together with the associated zoning this will not be altered as a result of the Proposed Masterplan. Should the KCDP or the LAP be varied in the future to take onboard the Proposed Masterplan then and only then will zoning changes be reviewed and taken into consideration as part of the statutory process.</p>

The Proposed Masterplan document will act as a guidance document for projects and other activities for rejuvenation and enhancement of Kildare Town. It sets a non-statutory framework for projects that focus on delivering the policy objectives for the town in accordance with the policy objectives of the KCDP 2023-2029 and the LAP. There is a strong focus on improving the connectivity and safety within the town to make it into a more welcoming and safer place for both residents and visitors alike.

It is important to note that any future individual development within the Site of the Proposed Masterplan will be considered under the SEA, EIA and/or AA processes as appropriate.

*The degree to which the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, influences other plans including those in a hierarchy.*

The Proposed Masterplan will be a non-statutory plan that provides detail and clarity with regard to the existing land use objectives for Kildare Town. The principles at the core of the Proposed Masterplan are informed by the existing policy and key objectives in the current KCDP 2017-2023. Therefore, future development will continue to accord with the objectives and policies, including the environmental requirements of the KCDP 2023-2029.

The Proposed Masterplan will not have significant influence on other plans in the hierarchy, instead it will be led by those higher up in the process. As a Masterplan, it is compatible and complementary with the vision and objectives of the LAP and KCDP 2023-2029 and will be led by the higher-level plans such as the RSES and the NPF.

Additionally, future individual development projects within the town and Proposed Masterplan area must be considered under the SEA, EIA and/or AA processes as appropriate.

*The relevance of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.*

The Proposed Masterplan outlines potential future arrangements for Kildare Town in a manner which is entirely consistent with the land use zoning objectives for the lands as established in the KCDP 2023-2029 and arising from the LAP (as amended). The KCDP was subject to a full SEA and AA. The Proposed Masterplan takes account of the existing requirements of the KCDP 2023-2029 to avoid effects on European Sites:

- The Proposed Masterplan has been subject to Screening for the requirement for AA;
- Avoid giving rise to adverse flooding effects, or effects on existing flood patterns;
- The Proposed Masterplan has been cognisant of the SFRA prepared as part of the KCDP 2017-2023 (as varied);
- Ensure adequacy of critical infrastructure including, wastewater treatment, potable water supply, sustainable transport corridors; and
- Provide for sustainable development, in terms of meeting the needs for balanced population growth, enhanced biodiversity, promotion of green infrastructure, positive climate action and protection of heritage.

As the Proposed Masterplan will not lead to the alteration of existing protective objectives within the KCDP 2023-2029, and it will be subject to the high-level protective objectives with which it must comply together with the SEA Strategic Environmental Objectives associated with the KCDP.

*Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme.*

The Proposed Masterplan is not prepared in response to a particular environmental problem, nor are any major environmental problems known from the Site of the plan.

The SEA process for the KCDP 2017-2023 identified the majority of the county as *low environmental sensitivity*, with the level of environmental sensitivity increasing towards the centre of the county, concentrated between the areas of Kildare Town, Kilcullen and Newbridge. This is due to a variety of overlapping and related factors including soil type (peat), groundwater status (bad), landscape value (exceptional), ecological designation (proposed NHA) and geological designation (County Geological Heritage Area). Details of these areas together with aims and policies for their protection is set out in the KCDP 2017-2023, as varied, as well as the accompanying SEA and AA. Elevated levels of sensitivity are also found in the foothills to the west of the Kildare / Wicklow county boundary. The sensitivities near Kildare Town relate largely to the Curragh proposed NHA and groundwater vulnerability in and around Kildare Town. The SEA process for the KCDP 2023-2029 came to the same conclusions.

As already stated, the Proposed Masterplan will act as a non-statutory guidance document and has been prepared in accordance with the policies and objectives of the KCDP 2023-2029. Any future individual development projects within the town and Proposed Masterplan area must be considered under the SEA, EIA and/or AA processes as appropriate.

*The relevance of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).*

The EU has a wide range of environmental legislation, dealing with such issues as tackling climate change, sustainable development, waste management, air pollution, water protection, nature and biodiversity, soil protection and noise pollution:

- EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC),
- EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC),
- EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2006/60/EC),
- EU Groundwater Directive 92006/118/EC),
- European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2014 S.I. 350 of 2014
- Wildlife Act 1976, as amended,
- Flora Protection Order 1999; and
- EU Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC).

The Proposed Masterplan will be a non-statutory framework document which outlines potential development arrangements for Kildare Town in a manner which is entirely consistent with the specific policies and objectives for the town as established in the KCDP 2023-2029. By its nature as a guiding document, it is not directly linked to the implementation of any of the aforementioned legislation, however, all recommendations made within the Proposed Masterplan will have cognisance of the international legislation related to the protection of the environment.

<b>2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:</b>
<i>The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects</i>
<p>The probability that the Proposed Masterplan will result in significant, long-term environmental impacts is moderate. It is expected that the effects will be largely positive, since additional pedestrian and cyclist routes, as well as promoting sustainable modes of travel, will likely enhance and improve various environmental aspects of the town (incl. human health, air, etc.). These positive impacts are reversible to an extent, for instance via the degeneration of the new recommended spaces, however, are envisioned to provide lasting, positive impacts on the town.</p> <p>There is also a low probability of negative effects associated with the construction of any future developments prepared with reference to this Proposed Masterplan, however, due to the scale of the Proposed Masterplan, these are not considered to be of significant duration. It is also likely that any negative impacts (e.g., from construction activity) are of a brief or temporary nature.</p> <p>Final decisions relating to architectural detail and public realm and other issues will be determined through the development management process, and any individual future developments under this Proposed Masterplan will be subject to the appropriate environmental assessments.</p>
<i>The cumulative nature of the effects</i>
<p>No cumulative effects are identified for the Proposed Masterplan. There are no specific development proposals arising from the Proposed Masterplan and no changes to the Core Strategy which could potentially lead to cumulative effects with the KCDP 2023-2029. The preparation of the Proposed Masterplan has been undertaken with consideration to the overall balanced development strategy of Kildare County Council, and the specific objectives set for Kildare Town, as set out in the KCDP 2017-2023 and in the KCDP 2023-2029.</p>
<i>The transboundary nature of the effects</i>
<p>The Proposed Masterplan is entirely within Kildare County Council's administrative area and is not expected to have any effects (negative or positive) on areas outside of the county boundaries.</p>
<i>The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)</i>
<p>No risks to human health or to the environment due to accidents or other considerations due to the preparation of the Proposed Masterplan have been identified.</p>
<i>The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).</i>

<p>The area of the Proposed Masterplan Site encompasses Kildare Town as shown on Figure 3. Any potential environmental effects are expected to be largely confined to the area within and in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Masterplan.</p> <p>The KCDP 2023-2029, contains objectives to facilitate population and economic growth. The purpose of the Proposed Masterplan is to set out the Spatial Framework within which the Town Centre can become more integrated, create pedestrian and cycling connections between key activity centres, provide better traffic flows through the town and improve and enhance the experience of visitors and locals alike. Therefore, the Proposed Masterplan itself is not envisaged to lead to any negative effects and will not go beyond or over and above the effects arising from the KCDP 2023-2029. The current population within the Site of the Proposed Masterplan is estimated to be between 8,000 - 9,000.</p>
<i>The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</i>
<p>(a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage, (b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values, (c) intensive land-use</p>
<p>There are no European sites or Natural Heritage Areas within the geographical extent of the Proposed Masterplan.</p> <p>The Curragh, located adjacent to the northeast of Kildare Town, is the largest area of unenclosed natural grassland in the country and provides a valuable amenity area for the surrounding towns of Kildare, Newbridge and Kilcullen. The Curragh Camp and the Curragh Racecourse are located within the plain. The Curragh is of conservation value for a number of reasons. It is most unusual in an Irish and European context, in that it is an extensive open plain area of lowland acidic grassland, succeeding to dry heath in places.</p> <p>The nearest European site is Pollardstown Fen SAC, situated on the northern margin of the Curragh, approximately 3km northwest of Kildare Town. It lies in a shallow depression, running in a north-west/south-east direction. Pollardstown Fen is the largest remaining calcareous spring-fed fen in Ireland. Covering an area of 220 ha, it is recognised as an internationally important fen ecosystem with unique and endangered plant communities.</p> <p>Additionally, as detailed in preceding sections, an ACA applies within Kildare Town, and the Proposed Masterplan area contains several protected structures (full list provided in Appendix I). However, as the nature of the Proposed Masterplan is conceptual, with no detailed designs or development proposals put forward at this stage, the probability of significant impacts on these protected structures arising from the Proposed Masterplan is negligible. Furthermore, any of the key projects and deliverables put forward within the Proposed Masterplan will be subject to higher level policies and standards at detailed design stage. Specific policies and objectives within the KCDP 2023-2029 that will serve to conserve and protect the listed protected structures, monuments and places, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Policy AH P2:</b> "Protect and enhance archaeological sites, monuments and where appropriate and following detailed assessment, their setting, including those that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) or newly discovered archaeological sites and/or subsurface and underwater archaeological remains."</li> </ul>

- **Objective AH 03:** "In co-operation with the National Monuments Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage require archaeological impact assessment, surveys, test excavation and/or monitoring and/or underwater archaeological impact assessments for planning applications in areas of archaeological importance and where a development proposal is likely to impact upon in-situ archaeological monuments, their setting and archaeological deposits, based on recommendations of a suitably qualified archaeologist and the Council will seek and have regard to the advice and recommendations of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage."
- **Objective AH 023:** "Require an Architectural Heritage Assessment Report, as described in Appendix B of the Architectural Heritage Protection, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011), to accompany all applications with potential for visual or physical impacts on a Protected Structure, its curtilage, demesne and setting. This report should be prepared by a person with conservation expertise that is appropriate to the significance of the historic building or site and the complexity of the proposed works."

The KCDP 2023-2029 also contains protective objectives with respect to the special natural characteristics of the area. The Proposed Masterplan will not alter, remove or change these protective objectives which will ensure the continued protection of these sites and features.

As the Proposed Masterplan and any works arising from it must be consistent and compliant with the KCDP 2023-2029 including specific provisions regarding environmental quality standards such as those contained in the WFD and other environmental standards it is not anticipated that any environmental quality standards will be exceeded.

*The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status*

The Site of the Proposed Masterplan does not contain any land associated with European sites, i.e., Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds, Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) for habitats and species, Ramsar wetland sites or European marine sites.

The Curragh pNHA as stated before is located adjacent to the Proposed Masterplan area, however the delivery projects and key recommendations made within the Proposed Masterplan are not anticipated to have the capacity to cause significant impacts (negative or positive) on this recognised site due to the nature of the Proposed Masterplan. Additionally, any individual development arising as a result of the Proposed Masterplan is subject to the appropriate environmental assessments in accordance with the KCDP 2023-2029.

#### 4.2 Appropriate Assessment and relationship to Screening for SEA

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) requires an AA to be carried out where a plan or project is *likely to have a significant impact* on a European site. European sites include SACs and SPAs. The first step in the process is to establish whether AA is required for the particular plan or project. This first step is referred to as Screening for the requirement for AA and the purpose is to determine, on the basis of a preliminary assessment and objective criteria, whether a plan or project, alone and in combination with other plans or projects, could have significant effects on a European site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

As set out in Department Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/084 (15th February 2008), Screening for AA is of relevance to screening for SEA in that "**where following screening, it is found that the draft plan or amendment may have an impact on the conservation status of a Natura 2000 site or that such an impact cannot be ruled out, adopting the precautionary approach:**

- An AA of the Proposed Masterplan must be carried out, and
- In any case where a SEA would not otherwise be required, it must also be carried out."

Hence, where the Proposed Masterplan requires AA it shall also require a SEA.

#### 4.2.1 Appropriate Assessment Screening Conclusion

The Proposed Masterplan was screened for the requirement of AA to determine the potential for significant effects on relevant European sites. The conclusion from the AA Screening Report accompanying this SEA Screening Report under separate cover is reproduced below:

*"The Proposed Town Renewal Masterplan for Kildare Town, Co. Kildare, has been assessed taking into account:*

- *The nature, size and location of the proposed works and possible impacts arising from the construction works.*
- *The QIs [qualifying interests] and conservation objectives of the European sites.*
- *The potential for in-combination effects arising from other plans and projects.*

*In conclusion, upon the examination, analysis and evaluation of the relevant information and applying the precautionary principle, it is concluded by the authors of this report that, on the basis of objective information; the possibility **may be excluded** that the Proposed Masterplan will have a significant effect on any European sites.*

*As such, no further assessment is required. In carrying out this AA screening, mitigation measures have not been taken into account. Standard best practice construction measures which could have the effect of mitigating any effects on any European Sites have similarly not been taken into account."*

Thus, it is determined that AA is not required for the Proposed Masterplan.

## 5 CONSULTATION

### 5.1 Statutory Consultation

#### 5.1.1 Environmental Authorities

Unless it has been determined that SEA is mandatory for the Proposed Masterplan concerned, a formal 'screening notice' must be issued to the relevant environmental authorities (including the adjacent planning authorities), consulting them on whether they consider significant effects on the environment are likely to arise.

The following environmental authorities have been notified of this SEA Screening for comments on the Proposed Masterplan:



- Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) – *Required for all cases.*
- Development Applications Unit (“DAU”), Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage – *Required where there might be significant effects on architectural or archaeological heritage or nature conservation.*

### 5.1.2 Consultation Responses

All received consultation responses are included in full in Appendix II.

The EPA responded to the Screening Notice on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December 2022. The EPA noted the Proposed Determination of the Proposed Masterplan and provided a number of guiding comments, focusing their efforts on reviewing and commenting on key sector plans. While noting the nature of the Kildare Town Masterplan, the EPA recommend that guidance document ‘*SEA of Local Authority Land Use Plans – EPA Recommendations and Resources*’ should be taken into account in the finalisation of the Proposed Masterplan, and relevant recommendations be incorporated as appropriate to the Plan.

No changes to the Proposed Masterplan in response to the EPA’s submission are anticipated that would require a renewed SEA Screening.

The DAU responded on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2023 noting particularly the Archaeological and Architectural Heritage within Kildare Town. The submission and notable comments have been summarised below:

#### Archaeological Observations/Recommendations

- Kildare Town represents a significant area of archaeological heritage and is afforded statutory protection in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. Any sub-surface works within the Zone of Archaeological Notification associated with the historic town must be notified in advance to the Department under Section 12 (3) of the Act.
- The known and presumed alignment/s of historic town walls are considered to be National Monuments under the provisions of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1930-2014. Any works that are considered to have potential to impact on the location of and, in the case of upstanding remains, the setting and amenity of town walls must be carried out under Ministerial Consent in accordance with Section 14 of the Act.
- The following identified delivery projects have potential to have significant impacts (both positive and negative) on the archaeological heritage of Kildare Town & Environs:
  - ‘Market Square and Environs’ – Proposals (a) to (d);
  - ‘Public Realm Enhancements’ – Proposals (a), (b) & (d);
  - ‘Old Town Courthouse Renovation’ – Proposal (a).
- Any development proposal with potential to impact on both recorded and previously unknown archaeological heritage within the SEA Screening area should be subject to project specific Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) as per Development Management Standard of the KCDP 2023-2029.

#### Architectural Observations/Recommendations

- The Screening does not make reference to protected structures or architectural conservation areas in Table 1.

- It is recommended that the report is revised to include an assessment of architectural heritage.
- Additionally, the DAU recommends the following matters are given due cognisance:
  - The definition of a Protected Structure as per the Planning and Development Act which includes, (i) the interior of the structure, (ii) the land lying within the curtilage of the structure, (iii) any other structure lying within the curtilage and their interiors, and (iv) all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of any structure or structures referred to in subparagraph (i) or (iii).
  - The presence of historical, urban and planned landscapes, which may form part of a protected structure and/or may contribute to the landscape characterisation of an area which may be of importance to an area/region.
  - The Heritage Council in conjunction with numerous partners has developed a trans-disciplinary Collaborative Town Centre Health Check Programme. The Health Check will establish an innovative baseline which can be employed to monitor and plan for the future of Irish Towns.

In addition, the DAU makes general recommendations for the preparation of this and future Masterplans. These recommendations include seeking the advice and inputs of Kildare County Council’s Architectural Conservation Officer (ACO). It should be noted that KCC confirmed the ACO has been actively involved in the preparation of the Proposed Masterplan.

As such, considering the above submission from the DAU, the following amendments and updates were made to this SEA Screening Report:

- The description of Kildare Town was updated to include a map from the ACA Statement of Character for Kildare Town. This shows the locations of protected archaeological and architectural structures within the town.
- Table 1 was updated with clarification of sensitive cultural heritage features within the Proposed Masterplan area.
- It was further clarified that the Proposed Masterplan is a conceptual plan providing a vision for the future development of Kildare Town and does not put forward detailed development proposals or applications.
- Details of policies and objectives in the KCDP 2023-2029 that ensure all development proposals, including those arising as a response to the Proposed Masterplan are subject to the appropriate environmental assessments, were added to Table 1. These include where necessary an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) in line with the KCDP 2023-2029.

Therefore, due to the high-level vision that the Proposed Masterplan provides for Kildare Town, the lack of detailed development proposals within the Proposed Masterplan, and the existing policies in the new KCDP 2023-2029 to protect cultural and built heritage, it is deemed that the concerns expressed by the DAU are covered higher in the planning hierarchy and will therefore be addressed appropriately at detailed design stages for any key deliverables identified within the Proposed Masterplan.

## 6 SCREENING DETERMINATION

The Proposed Town Renewal Masterplan for Kildare Town, Co. Kildare, is a non-statutory development framework which translates and implements the statutory policies and objectives of the relevant national and regional development plans and frameworks.

Considering the objectives, scale and nature of the Proposed Masterplan, and with due regard to the screening criteria as set out in Schedule 1, it is at this stage determined that the Proposed Masterplan does not require an SEA.

The principal reasons the Proposed Masterplan does not require an SEA are as follows:

- The Proposed Masterplan does not provide a framework for plans/projects listed on Annex I or Annex II of the EIA Directive<sup>1</sup>.
- All individual planning applications made with consideration of the Proposed Masterplan framework are subject to the appropriate environmental assessments (i.e., AA, SEA, EIA) where required under the KCDP 2023-2029.
- The Proposed Masterplan does not require Stage 2 AA (see AA Screening Report accompanying this report under separate cover).

## 7 REFERENCES

DHLGH (2022). Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines for Regional Assemblies and Planning Authorities. Prepared by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, March 2022.

EPA (2021). '*Good Practice Guidance on SEA Screening*'; prepared by RPS Consultants, with input from A&L Goodbody, on behalf of the EPA. Published December 2021

Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023: Volume 1

Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023: Volume 2

Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023: Strategic Environmental Assessment

Kildare Town Architectural Conservation Area Statement of Character 2012

Kildare Town Local Area Plan 2012-2018

Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework

Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework: SEA Statement

East and Midlands Regional Assembly, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031

EMRA RSES 2019-2031: SEA Statement

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 2014/52/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 amending Directive 2011/92/EU

**APPENDIX I – RECORD OF PROTECTED STRUCTURES WITHIN KILDARE TOWN**

RPS Ref.	Location	Description	Image <sup>2</sup>
B22-18	Leinster Lodge, Chaplin's Lane	House (former)	
B22-19	Virginia Lodge, Market Square	House	
B22-21	No. 19 Fairview Cottages	House	
B22-23	Bungalow One, Dunmurray Road	House (former now a childcare facility)	
B22-24	The Cottage, Tully Road	House	
B22-26	Aisling House, Dublin Road	House	
B22-27	Abbey View House, St Brigid Square	House	
B22-28	White Abbey Road	House (former)	

<sup>2</sup> The images are included for information purposes only.

B22-29	Firecastle Lane	House	
B22-30	Verger's House, Market Square	House	
B22-31	Kilcumney House	House	
B22-32	Valetta House	House (former)	
B22-33	Ulster Lodge, French Furze Road	House	
B22-34	The Nook, French Furze Road	House	
B22-35	Mons Lodge, Leinster Walk	House	
B22-37	Saint Jude's House, Hospital Street	House (former)	
B22-38	Beech Grove House, Dublin Street	House	

B22-38A <sup>3</sup>	Beech Grove House, Dublin Street	Gates/railings/wall	
B22-39	Lislee House, Dublin Street	House	
B22-41	M.J. McEnerney, White Abbey Road	House with Public House	
B22-42	Kildare Market House (former), Market Square	Market House (former)	
B22-43	Market Square	Lamp Standard	
B22-44	Nolan's/Seeta, Market Square	Public House	
B22-45	St. Brigid's Cathedral, Market Square	Cathedral	
B22-47	The Vatican, Market Square	Public House	

<sup>3</sup> This reference number A was created for mapping purposes and is not represented in the actual Record of Protected Structures.

B22-48	Southwell's, Market Square	Shop	
B22-49	St Brigid's Catholic Church, St Brigid's Square	Church	
B22-50	Presentation Convent, Meadow Road	Attached nine-bay two-storey over part-raised basement convent (former)	
B22-51	Kildare Convent National School, Meadow Road	School (former)	
B22-52	Kilgowan Lodge, Meadow Road	House	
B22-53	Kildare Post Office, Dublin Street	Post Office (former)	
B22-54	Kildare Courthouse, Dublin Street	Courthouse (former)	
B22-56	Kildare Carmelite Catholic Church	Church	
B22-58	Kildare Railway Station, Station Road	Foot Bridge	

B22-59	Kildare Railway Station, Station Road	Railway Station	
B22-60	Presentation Convent, Meadow Road	Thirteen-bay two-storey over basement convent (former)	
B22-61	Grey Abbey	Fransican Friary ruins RMP	
B22-62	Kildare Castle Gatehouse	Castle gatehouse	
B22-63	Grace's Public House	House /Former pub	

**APPENDIX II – STATUTORY CONSULTATION RESPONSES**



#### **Environmental Sensitivity Mapping (ESM) WebTool**

This new tool was launched recently by the EPA. It is a new decision support tool to assist SEA and planning processes in Ireland. It is available at [www.enviromap.ie](http://www.enviromap.ie). The tool brings together over 100 datasets and allows users to create plan-specific environmental sensitivity maps. These maps can help planners examine environmental considerations, anticipate potential land-use conflicts, and help identify suitable development locations while also protecting the environment.

#### **EPA SEA WebGIS Tool**

Our SEA WebGIS Tool has been updated recently and is now publicly available at <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/SEA>. It allows public authorities to produce an indicative report on key aspects of the environment in a specific geographic area. It is intended to assist public authorities in SEA screening and scoping exercises.

#### **EPA WFD Application**

Our WFD Application provides access to water quality and catchment data from the national WFD monitoring programme and is available through EPA Maps. It is also publicly available data can be accessed via the [www.catchments.ie](http://www.catchments.ie) website.

#### **EPA AA GeoTool**

Our AA GeoTool application has been developed in partnership with the NPWS. It allows users to select a location, specify a search area and gather available information for each European Site within the area. It is available at: <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/AAGeoTool>

#### **SEA Determination**

As soon as practicable after making your determination as to whether SEA is required or not, you should make a copy of your decision, including, as appropriate, the reasons for not requiring an environmental assessment, available for public inspection in your offices and on your website. You should also send a copy of your determination to the relevant environmental authorities consulted.

If you have any queries or need further information in relation to this submission, please contact me directly. I would be grateful if you could send an email confirming receipt of this submission to: [sea@epa.ie](mailto:sea@epa.ie).

Yours sincerely,

David Galvin  
SEA Section  
Office of Evidence and Assessment

Dr Sanni Hintikka  
Enviroguide Consultancy  
The Plaza  
Park West  
Dublin 12  
D12 F9TN

19<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Our Ref: 221203.1

#### **Re. SEA Screening Report for the Proposed Kildare Town Renewal Masterplan**

Dear Dr Hintikka,

We acknowledge your notice, dated 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022, in relation to the Proposed Kildare Town Renewal Masterplan (the 'Plan') and associated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening.

The EPA is one of the statutory environmental authorities under the SEA Regulations. In our role as a SEA environmental authority, we focus on promoting the full and transparent integration of the findings of the Environmental Assessment into the Plan and advocating that the key environmental challenges for Ireland are addressed as relevant and appropriate to the plan. Our functions as an SEA environmental authority do not include approving or enforcing SEAs or plans.

#### **Proposed SEA Determination**

We note your proposed determination that SEA is not required for the Plan. As a priority, we focus our efforts on reviewing and commenting on key sector plans. For land use plans at county and local level, we provide a 'self-service approach' via our guidance document '[SEA of Local Authority Land Use Plans – EPA Recommendations and Resources](#)'. While noting the nature of the Kildare Town Masterplan, we recommend nevertheless, that you take this guidance document into account and incorporate the relevant recommendations as relevant and appropriate to the Plan.



Ref: **LAP00032/2022**  
(Please quote in all related correspondence)

25 January 2023

Dr Sanni Hintikka  
Enviroguide Consulting  
Head Office, 3D, Core C, Block 71,  
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Dublin 12,  
D12F9TN

Via email: [shintikka@enviroguide.ie](mailto:shintikka@enviroguide.ie)

Re: SEA Screening Notice in accordance with the SEA Regulations (S.I. 435 of 2004, as amended)

**Re: Consultation regarding the Draft SEA Screening Report and AA Screening Report in respect of a Proposed Town Renewal Masterplan for Kildare Town, County Kildare.**

A chara

I refer to correspondence on 16 December received in connection with the above.

Outlined below are archaeological observations/recommendations co-ordinated by the Development Applications Unit.

#### Archaeology

The Department welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on the aforementioned referral. The following are the observations of the Department in respect of the continued protection and enhancement of the archaeological heritage of Kildare Town & Environs. The Department notes, at time of writing, that the new Kildare County Development Plan (2023-2029) is due to come into effect on 28/01/2023 and appreciate that this may necessitate some reference amendments to the Draft SEA Screening Report.

The Department acknowledges the inclusion in the Kildare Town Renewal Masterplan Draft SEA Screening Report of reference to the relevant policies of the Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 pertaining to the protection and enhancement of the architectural and archaeological heritage throughout County Kildare together with reference to the promotion of the appropriate and compatible re-use of buildings of architectural, cultural, historic and aesthetic merit. It is noted that the draft SEA Screening Report makes particular reference to issues pertaining to conservation and protection of architectural

heritage in Kildare town due to 'its status as a former Walled Town' (section 2.2.2, paragraph 6).

Please be advised that the historic town of Kildare additionally represents a significant area of archaeological heritage and is afforded statutory protection in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. There is an established and defined Zone of Archaeological Notification associated with the historic town; within which any proposed sub-surface works must be notified in advance to the Department under Section 12 (3) of the Act.

Additionally, the known and presumed alignment/s of historic town walls are considered to be National Monuments under the provisions of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1930-2014. Any works that are considered to have potential to impact on the location of and, in the case of upstanding remains, the setting and amenity of town walls must be carried out under Ministerial Consent in accordance with Section 14 of the Act.

It is further noted that Section 3.2.2 and Figure 3 of the Draft SEA Screening Report sets out 'Delivery Projects' to be included in the Proposed Renewal Masterplan. Of these Delivery Projects, those detailed under the following headings have potential to have significant impacts (both positive and negative) on the archaeological heritage of Kildare Town & Environs:

- Section 3.2.2.1: 'Market Square and Environs' – Proposals (a) to (d);
- Section 3.2.2.3: 'Public Realm Enhancements' – Proposals (a), (b) & (d);
- Section 3.2.2.6: 'Old Town Courthouse Renovation' – Proposal (a).

In this regard, the SEA process for the Kildare Town Renewal Masterplan should take cognisance of national policy as set out in the publication 'Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage' (Government of Ireland 1999). Due regard should also be had to the 'Kildare Town Conservation Management Plan' (2014) which sets out the objectives and best practice principles for the conservation and management of the historic town core and associated town walls. Any development proposal with potential to impact on both recorded and previously unknown archaeological heritage within the SEA Screening area should be subject to project specific Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) as per Development Management Standard 17.15.5 of the Kildare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (DMS 15.16.3 of the upcoming KCDP 2023-2029) and Section 3.6.2 of 'Framework and Principles' as previously referenced.

The Department would be happy to provide future advice and observations regarding protection and enhancement of the archaeological heritage during the progression of the SEA process and the development of the Kildare Town Renewal Masterplan.



An Roinn Tithíochta,  
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht  
Department of Housing,  
Local Government and Heritage



You are requested to send any further communications to this Department's Development Applications Unit (DAU) at [manager.dau@npws.gov.ie](mailto:manager.dau@npws.gov.ie), where used, or to the following address:

The Manager  
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Wexford  
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Is mise, le meas

Sinéad O'Brien  
Development Applications Unit  
Administration

Ref: **LAP00032/2022**  
(Please quote in all related correspondence)

26 January 2023

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Via email: [shintikka@enviroguide.ie](mailto:shintikka@enviroguide.ie)

Re: SEA Screening Notice in accordance with the SEA Regulations (S.I. 435 of 2004, as amended)

**Re: Consultation regarding the Draft SEA Screening Report and AA Screening Report in respect of a Proposed Town Renewal Masterplan for Kildare Town, County Kildare.**

A chara

I refer to correspondence on 16 December received in connection with the above.

Further to the archaeological observations/recommendations that issued to you yesterday please find outlined below the architectural observations/recommendations co-ordinated by the Development Applications Unit.

#### Architectural Heritage

The Department welcomes the opportunity to make a submission on the aforementioned 'Draft Environmental Assessment Screening Report for the Proposed Town Renewal Plans' at Kildare Town, County Kildare. Kildare County Council are commended for their approach to undertaking Master Plans for the renewal and enhancement of their towns.

For what pertains to the specifics of the 'Draft Environmental Assessments Screening Report for the Proposed Town Renewal Plans', the Department's observations are as follows;

1. The screening report does not include reference to protected structures or architectural conservation areas under the 'Screening Determination for Determining the likely Significance of Effects' as per Schedule 1 of S.I. NO. 435/2004.
2. Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas are subject to statutory protection under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Aonad na nIarratas ar Fhorbairt, Oifig an Rialtais, Bóhair an Bhaile Nua, Loch Garman, Y35 AP90  
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[manager.dau@npws.gov.ie](mailto:manager.dau@npws.gov.ie)  
[www.gov.ie/housing](http://www.gov.ie/housing)

.....  
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Architectural Heritage does form part of the wider definition of cultural heritage which is to be given consideration as part of the screening determination.

3. It is therefore recommended that in the interest of consistency and the compilation of a robust screening determination, the existing report is revised to include an assessment of the architectural heritage that is subject to statutory protection, as part of the screening determination process.
4. In respect of the above the consultants are advised to give due cognisance to the following matters;
  - The definition of a Protected Structure as per the Planning and Development Act which includes, (i) the interior of the structure, (ii) the land lying within the curtilage of the structure, (iii) any other structure lying within the curtilage and their interiors, and (iv) all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of any structure or structures referred to in subparagraph (i) or (iii).
  - The presence of historical, urban and planned landscapes, which may form part of a protected structure and/or may contribute to the landscape characterisation of an area which may be of importance to an area/region.
  - The Heritage Council in conjunction with numerous partners has developed a trans-disciplinary Collaborative Town Centre Health Check Programme. The Health Check will establish an innovative baseline which can be employed to monitor and plan for the future of Irish Towns. Further information is available at <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/projects/town-centre-health-check-programme>.
5. Please refer to/seek the input of suitably qualified persons in respect of matters that relate to the architectural heritage.

Built Heritage Policy notes that individual projects outlined in the final Master Plans will be subject to relevant statutory provisions under the Planning and Development Act.

**General Observations/Advice for Consideration in the Preparation of Master Plans:**

In respect of the general protection and enhancement of the architectural heritage, Built Heritage Policy would like to take this opportunity to provide general observations as outlined below that may be of assistance in the preparation of the respective Master Plans as well as the delivery of architectural heritage related projects. The Department remains available to Kildare County Council, their officers and appointed agents to provide any future assistance/advice or observations that may be required.

Appropriate Personnel:

It is recommended that the input of the Architectural Conservation Officer (ACO) of Kildare County Council is sought as part of the preparation of the proposed Town Renewal Plans.

.....  
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The ACO is ideally placed to provide the necessary technical and developmental advice, policy analysis and funding activation advice.

Where consultants are required for design and delivery of specific projects it is recommended that the multidisciplinary team include suitably qualified conservation architects/engineers and/or built heritage professionals. The ACO will be in a position to advise on the skills set required for each project to ensure a competent creative team as well as providing continued advice to allow for an agile and informed decision making process in planning and developing the respective historic built environments.

Architectural Heritage Assessments, Character Assessments and Town Centre Health Checks:

Certain projects will require individual Architectural Heritage Assessments. It is recommended that the ACO is consulted regarding the compilation of the same. The ACO will be in a position to advise on the practicalities of these assessments including the extent of the assessment and survey, the required content and the appropriate persons to undertake the same.

It is recommended that Character Assessments are carried out for historic areas, architectural conservation areas and/or historic landscapes. Character Assessments are an effective tool in assessing the historic environment, understanding its unique and authentic character and the significance and value of the same.

Character Assessments, are a multi-functional and collaborative tool as they help to inform and direct frameworks, policies and strategies for the delivery of other essential services such as public realm schemes, strategic infrastructure, addressing dereliction and vacancy, urban and rural regeneration and integrated land use solutions.

The Heritage Council in conjunction with numerous partners has developed a trans-disciplinary, Collaborative Town Centre Health Check Programme which aims to raise awareness, understanding and appreciation of the critical role that historic town centres play and the wide-ranging impacts that their vitality and viability have on overall socio-economic, environmental and cultural growth and development, and on quality of life for citizens and visitors alike. The Health Check is a highly developed tool that can establish an innovative baseline which will be employed to monitor and plan for the future of Irish Towns.

Legislative and Policy Framework:

The preparation of any Master Plan and the subsequent delivery of architectural heritage related projects or projects with an architectural heritage related component shall give due regard to the following legislation and policy frameworks;

1. Statutory designations under Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

.....  
3



2. Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, '*Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities*' (Dublin, The Stationary Office, 2011).
3. Development Management Policies and Objectives for Architectural Heritage, Kildare County Development Plan 2023.
4. The 'Principles Governing Future Development of the Town', as outlined in the relevant Small Town and Environs Plans, Kildare County Development Plan 2023.

There are a number of National policies that may be relevant in setting out a national context for the framework and delivery of the proposed Town Renewal Plans, these include;

1. Project Ireland 2040
2. Places for People: National Policy on Architecture
3. Climate Action Plan 2023,
4. Housing for All (of which Town Centres First is an objective)
5. Heritage Ireland 2030,
6. Our Rural Future and
7. A Living Tradition; A Strategy for Enhancing the Understanding, Minding and Handing on of Our Built Vernacular Heritage.

You are requested to send any further communications to this Department's Development Applications Unit (DAU) at [manager.dau@npws.gov.ie](mailto:manager.dau@npws.gov.ie), where used, or to the following address:

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Is mise, le meas

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Sinéad O'Brien  
Development Applications Unit  
Administration

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# APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

FOR  
PROPOSED  
TOWN RENEWAL MASTERPLAN  
FOR  
KILDARE  
Co. KILDARE

ON BEHALF OF  
Kildare County Council

## DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

Client	Kildare County Council
Project Title	Proposed Town Renewal Masterplan for Kildare Town, Co. Kildare
Document Title	Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Revision	Status	Author(s)	Reviewed	Approved	Issue Date
00	Draft for internal review	Sanni Hintikka <i>Ecologist</i>	Ben Lansbury <i>Principal Ecologist</i>	-	-
01	Draft for Client Review	Sanni Hintikka <i>Ecologist</i>	Ben Lansbury <i>Principal Ecologist</i>	Lizy Tinsley <i>Technical Director – Ecology</i>	14.12.2022
02	Final	Sanni Hintikka <i>Ecologist</i>	Ben Lansbury <i>Principal Ecologist</i>	Lizy Tinsley <i>Technical Director – Ecology</i>	14.12.2022

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## REPORT LIMITATIONS

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The methodology adopted and the sources of information used by Enviroguide in providing its services are outlined in this Report.

The work described in this Report is based on the conditions encountered and the information available during the said period of time. The scope of this Report and the services are accordingly factually limited by these circumstances.

All work carried out in preparing this Report has used, and is based upon, Enviroguide’s professional knowledge and understanding of the current relevant national legislation. Future changes in applicable legislation may cause the opinion, advice, recommendations or conclusions set-out in this Report to become inappropriate or incorrect. However, in giving its opinions, advice, recommendations and conclusions, Enviroguide has considered pending changes to environmental legislation and regulations of which it is currently aware. Following delivery of this Report, Enviroguide will have no obligation to advise the client of any such changes, or of their repercussions.

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Unless otherwise stated in this Report, the assessments made assume that the site and facilities will continue to be used for their current or stated proposed purpose without significant changes.

The content of this Report represents the professional opinion of experienced environmental consultants. Enviroguide does not provide legal advice or an accounting interpretation of liabilities, contingent liabilities or provisions.

If the scope of work includes subsurface investigation such as boreholes, trial pits and laboratory testing of samples collected from the subsurface or other areas of the site, and environmental or engineering interpretation of such information, attention is drawn to the fact that special risks occur whenever engineering, environmental and related disciplines are applied to identify subsurface conditions. Even a comprehensive sampling and testing programme implemented in accordance with best practice and a professional standard of care may fail to detect certain conditions. Laboratory testing results are not independently verified by Enviroguide and have been assumed to be accurate. The environmental, ecological, geological, geotechnical, geochemical and hydrogeological conditions that Enviroguide interprets to exist between sampling points may differ from those that actually exist. Passage of time, natural occurrences and activities on and/or near the site may substantially alter encountered conditions.

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**1 INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Background**

Enviroguide Consulting was commissioned by Kildare County Council (KCC) to prepare an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report in respect of a Proposed Town Renewal Masterplan (TRMP), hereafter referred to as 'Proposed Masterplan' or 'Site' (where referring to the area of the Proposed Masterplan), for Kildare Town, Co Kildare. This report contains information to enable the competent authority to undertake Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening in respect of the Proposed Masterplan.

**1.2 Legislative Background**

The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) seeks to conserve natural habitats and wild fauna and flora by the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) seeks to protect birds of special importance by the designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs). It is the responsibility of each Member State to designate SPAs and SACs, both of which will form part of the Natura 2000 Network, a network of protected sites throughout the European Community. These designated sites are referred to as 'Natura 2000 sites' or 'European sites'. SACs are selected for the conservation of Annex I habitats (including priority types which are in danger of disappearance) and Annex II species (other than birds). SPAs are selected for the conservation of Annex I birds and other regularly occurring migratory birds and their habitats. The annexed habitats and species for which each site is selected correspond to the qualifying interests of the sites; from these the conservation objectives of the site are derived.

An AA is a required assessment to determine the likelihood of significant effects, based on best scientific knowledge, of any plans or projects on European sites. Screening for AA determines whether a plan or project, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a European site, in view of its conservation objectives.

This AA Screening has been undertaken to determine the potential for significant effects on relevant European sites. The purpose of this assessment is to determine, the appropriateness, or otherwise, of the Proposed Masterplan in the context of the conservation objectives of such sites.

**1.2.1 Legislative Context**

The obligations in relation to AA have been implemented in Ireland under Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended ("the 2000 Act"), and in particular Section 177U and Section 177V thereof. The relevant provisions of Section 177U in relation to AA screening have been set out below:

*"177U.— (1) A screening for appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or application for consent for proposed development shall be carried out by the competent authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if that Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site.*

(2)...

(3)...

(4) *The competent authority shall determine that an appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or a proposed development, as the case may be, is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the draft Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.*

(5) *The competent authority shall determine that an appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or a proposed development, as the case may be, is not required if it can be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the draft Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site."*

An Appropriate Assessment is required under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive where a project or plan may give rise to significant effects upon a European site. Paragraph 3 states that:

*"6(3) Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site, in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public."*

### 1.2.2 Stages of Appropriate Assessment

This AA Screening Report (the 'Screening Report') has been prepared by Enviroguide Consulting. It considers whether the Proposed Masterplan is likely to have a significant effect on any European sites and whether a Stage 2 AA is required.

The AA process is a four-stage process (Figure 1). Each stage requires different considerations, assessments and tests to ultimately arrive at the relevant conclusion for each stage. An important aspect of the process is that the outcome at each successive stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required.

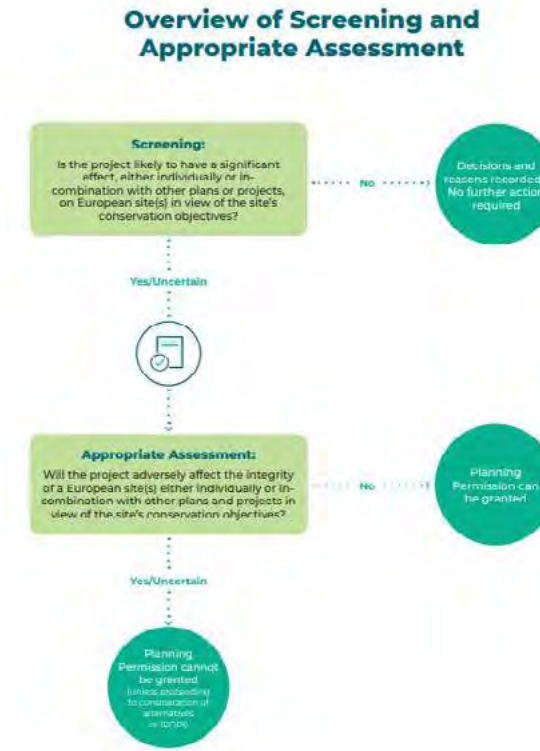


FIGURE 1. OVERVIEW OF SCREENING AND APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT (OPR, 2021).

The four stages of an AA, can be summarised as follows:

- Stage 1: **Screening**. The first stage of the AA process is to determine the likelihood of significant effects of the proposal, this addresses:
  - whether a plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the European site, or
  - whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a European site in view of its conservation objectives.
- Stage 2: **Appropriate Assessment**. The second stage of the AA requires the competent authority to determine whether the project or plan (either alone or in combination with other projects or plans) will have an adverse effect on the integrity of the European site, having regard to the conservation objectives of the site and its ecological structure

and function. The developer must provide a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) to the competent authority to inform the AA, which is a statement, for the purposes of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive of the potential impacts of a proposed development, on its own or in combination with other plans or projects, for one or more than one European site, in view of the conservation objectives of the site or sites. It must include a report of a scientific examination of evidence and data, carried out by competent persons to identify and classify any potential impacts for one or more than one European site in view of the conservation objectives of the site or sites. The competent authority must consult with the public in relation to any plan or project that requires AA. If the competent authority determines that the plan or project would have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site, it can only grant consent after proceeding through stages 3 and 4.

- Stage 3: *Assessment of alternative solutions*. If the outcome of Stage 2 is negative i.e., adverse impacts to the sites cannot be scientifically ruled out, despite mitigation, the plan or project should proceed to Stage 3 or be abandoned. This stage examines alternative solutions to the proposal.
- Stage 4: *Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain*. The final stage is the main derogation process examining whether there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) for allowing a plan or project to adversely affect a European site, where no less damaging solution exists.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Guidance

This Screening Report has been undertaken in accordance with the following guidance:

- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities*. (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 revision);
- *Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities*. Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10;
- *Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle* (European Commission, 2000);
- *Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC* (European Commission, 2019);
- *Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC* (European Commission, 2021); and
- *Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, OPR Practice Note PN01, Office of the Planning Regulator March 2021*.

### 2.2 Screening Steps

This Screening Report has been undertaken in accordance with the European Communities Methodological Guidance on the provision of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2002) and the European Commission Guidance 'Managing Natura 2000 sites' (EC, 2000). Screening for AA involves the following steps:

- Establish whether the plan is directly connected with or necessary for the management of a European site;
- Description of the plan or project and the description and characterisation of other projects or plans that in combination have the potential for having significant effects on the European site;
- Identification of European sites potentially affected;
- Identification and description of potential effects on the European site;
- Assessment of the likely significance of the effects identified on the European site; and
- Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no significant effects.

### 2.3 Desk Study

A desktop study was carried out to collate and review available information, datasets and documentation sources relevant for the completion of this Screening Report. The desktop study relied on the following sources:

- Information on the network of European sites, boundaries, qualifying interests and conservation objectives, obtained from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) at [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie);
- Text summaries of the relevant European sites taken from the respective Standard Data Forms and site synopses available at [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie);
- Information on waterbodies, catchment areas and hydrological connections obtained from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at [www.gis.epa.ie](http://www.gis.epa.ie);
- Information on bedrock, groundwater, aquifers and their statuses, obtained from Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) at [www.gsi.ie](http://www.gsi.ie);
- Satellite imagery and mapping obtained from various sources and dates including Google, Digital Globe, Bing and Ordnance Survey Ireland; and
- Information on the existence of permitted developments, or developments awaiting decision, in the vicinity of the Proposed Masterplan from KCC.

For a complete list of the specific documents consulted as part of this assessment, see *Section 5 References*.



## 2.4 Field Surveys

No field surveys were deemed necessary for the preparation of this Screening Report.

## 2.5 Identification of European sites

In order to identify the European sites that potentially lie within the Zone of Influence (ZOI) of the Proposed Masterplan, a Source-Path-Receptor (S-P-R) method was adopted, as described in 'OPR Practice Note PN01 - Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management' (OPR, 2021), a practice note produced by the Office of the Planning Regulator, Dublin. This note was published to provide guidance on screening for AA during the planning process, and although it focuses on the approach a planning authority should take in screening for AA, the methodology is also readily applied in the preparation of Screening Reports such as this.

The methodology used to identify relevant European sites comprised the following:

- Identification of potential sources of effects based on the Proposed Masterplan description and details;
- Use of up-to-date GIS spatial datasets for European designated sites and water catchments – downloaded from the NPWS website ([www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie)) and the EPA website ([www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie)) to identify European sites which could potentially be affected by the Proposed Masterplan; and
- Identification of potential pathways between the Proposed Masterplan and any European sites within the ZOI of any of the identified sources of effects.
  - The catchment data were used to establish or discount potential hydrological connectivity between the Proposed Masterplan and any European sites.
  - Groundwater and bedrock information used to establish or discount potential hydrogeological connectivity between the Proposed Masterplan and any European sites.
  - Air and land connectivity assessed based on Proposed Masterplan details and proximity to European sites.

There is absolutely no reliance placed in this Screening Report on mitigation measures intended to avoid/reduce harmful effects on the European sites.

## 2.6 Assessment of Significant Effects

The potential for significant effects that may arise from the Proposed Masterplan is considered through the use of key indicators, namely:

- Habitat loss or alteration
- Habitat/species fragmentation
- Disturbance and/or displacement of species
- Changes in population density
- Changes in water quality and resource

In addition, information pertaining to the conservation objectives of the European sites, the ecology of the designated habitats and species and known or perceived sensitivities of the habitats and species were considered.

## 3 STAGE 1 SCREENING

### 3.1 Management of European Sites

The Proposed Masterplan is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European sites.

### 3.2 Kildare Town Renewal Masterplan

#### 3.2.1 Kildare Town – Location & Description

Kildare Town, situated in the centre of the county of Kildare in Ireland's eastern Midlands (Figure 2), was founded in the 5th Century. The Curragh plains are located to the east of the town with pastoral landscapes to the north, south and west and bogland further south. It is situated on a ridge higher than the surrounding lowlands.

Over the past 20 years Kildare Town has experienced limited expansion in comparison with other settlements in the county. The majority has been suburban to the North and East of the historic town centre reflecting the role of Kildare Town as dormitory settlement arising from improved rail and road links to Dublin city.

Today the town has a population of 9,874 (2016 census) and has a growth rate of 6% with an average age of 34.2 years old. Kildare Town is accessed by the M7 which is a direct national route to Dublin. Furthermore, it is located on mainline rail and has rapid access to all major seaports and airports.

The town is located nearby to other large urban centres in County Kildare, Newbridge is 9km distant and the county town, Naas, is 20km distant. Within its immediate context, the town is situated within easy reach of a variety of amenities.

The most notable of these include the Curragh horse racing venue, which is the centre of horse racing in Ireland and is currently undergoing a large-scale redevelopment. Also nearby are the Japanese gardens and the Irish National Stud farm, an established successful tourist attraction.

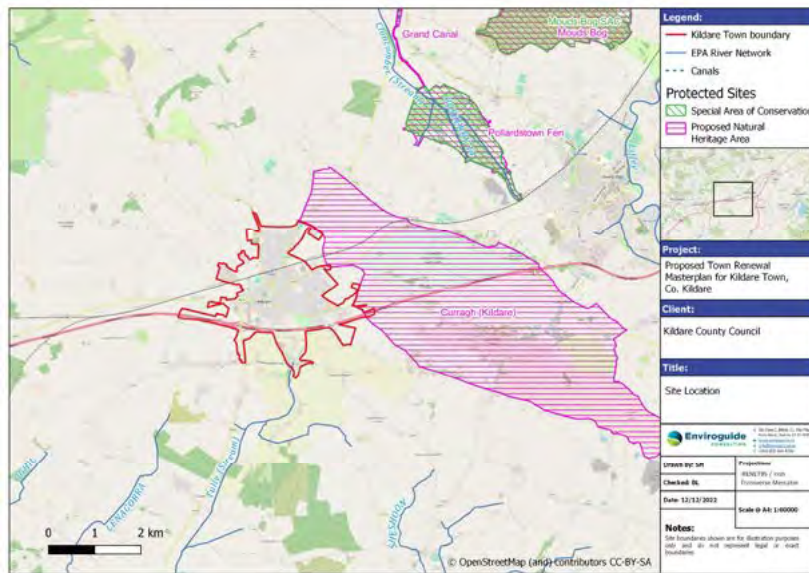


FIGURE 2. SITE LOCATION.

### 3.2.2 Kildare Town Renewal Masterplan

#### 3.2.2.1 Background

Under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme launched in 2016, Kildare County Council's in-house team was successful in securing funding from the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. As part of the implementation process of this project, KCC are required to complete the following steps:

- **Step 1:** Conduct a town 'Health Check' to assess the vitality and viability of the town centre;
- **Step 2:** Establish a Town Renewal Masterplan Committee with the involvement of the Local Authority, Local Business representatives, residents and the wider community;
- **Step 3:** Prepare a Town Renewal Masterplan on the basis of the results of the Health Check, setting out in detail the measures to be taken to support the renewal and revitalization of the town; and
- **Step 4:** Implement the Town Renewal Masterplan.

The TRMP includes a masterplan and an implementation strategy for the town with several projects designed and ready to be developed to Part 8 approval stage. Identification of key 'delivery projects' in the town were informed by the 'Health Check' and 'Urban Design Analysis' as well as an extensive consultation process ranging from public events through to discussions / workshops with the Town Committee and in-house KCC project team. These delivery projects are described in the Proposed Masterplan document

During the Urban Design Analysis and Public Consultation process the study area focused on the wider Kildare Town, not just the town centre itself. This study area has been continued into the development of delivery projects whereby sites and areas have been identified across the town for further consideration. The projects are aligned with the Council's vision, and work with Kildare's current planning policy. These also respond to public consultation held upon the completion of the Urban Design Analysis.

The Delivery Plan identifies discrete projects that are realistic and achievable that will change perceptions and create confidence. Some projects relate to major transformative sites that already have a clear trajectory but provide additional focus with the aim of accelerating delivery, while others suggest the development of supporting development briefs or strategy to enable investment and development.

Others suggest direct intervention by the council, or by public/private partnership vehicles. There are also a range of 'early wins' and catalytic temporary projects to help ignite interest and change perceptions which could establish discussion for further enhancement as part of a longer term strategy.

This report is prepared as part of Step 3, prior to implementation of the Proposed Masterplan. The implementation step will involve bringing the identified delivery projects forward to design and planning stages for Part 8 applications. Each of these applications will be subject to the appropriate environmental assessments, including the AA process.

### 3.2.2.2 Delivery Projects

It is recognised that the delivery of comprehensive projects such as those detailed within the Proposed Masterplan is reliant upon the availability of funding which is likely to be limited or spread over time. Nonetheless, the strategies contained within the Proposed Masterplan document could be used as the basis for further funding bids such as the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF).

The following sections describe the delivery projects included in the Proposed Masterplan (Figure 3). A Project Delivery Plan has also been provided in the Proposed Masterplan, showing phasing, comments about inter-relationships between the delivery projects, and importance to town growth (Figure 4).

#### Market Square and Environs

##### a) Market Square Public Realm Improvements

Improvements to the Market Square to create a pedestrian friendly experience, celebrating the heritage both in and around the square as part of a renewed more usable town square with a rebalancing of pedestrian and car movement. This will enhance the capacity for usage of the town square, improving its cultural offer and creating a significant improvement for town centre living. This acts as a trigger for further projects in and around the square which build on and are informed by this proposal.

##### b) Nugent Street Car Park Upgrade

Public realm improvements in Nugent Street car park aim to improve navigability to Market Square and increase perception of safety through improved lighting signage and landscaping. A minor lane connects the public car park to the north of the Market Square which also interconnects to Nugent Street. Activation of this route for more frequent usage form an important development as part of this area's renewal.

##### c) Old Burgage Plots Development

A proposal for the public realm that seeks to utilise the backlands site of the former burgage plots. The initial public realm proposal leverages the loss of parking from Market Square while creating a new landscaped pedestrian route from Bride Street to Market Square. In the longer term, the site could be developed for cultural/commercial uses which reinterpret the original burgage plots.

##### d) Streetscape Regeneration

A strategy that investigates the potentials for shopfronts to be reconsidered to meet and adapt to the regulations of an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) including Market Square, Nugent Street, Claregate Street and Shraud Street.

#### Cycle & Pedestrian Network Study

Despite the fact that Kildare Town is a walkable town it currently offers a poor pedestrian experience and little or no cycling infrastructure. There are no cycle lanes in place despite the vision of the Government's National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020, which formed part of their policy document '2009- 2020 Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future'.

In order to direct and prioritise investment in cycle infrastructure, it will be deemed necessary to develop a Cycle Network Study, to be undertaken by KCC. The Kildare Cycle Network Study will be prepared in accordance with Steps 1 – 5 of the National Cycle Manual's Seven Steps to Planning a Cycle Network, which are shown in bold below:

#### **Step 1: Inventory of Existing Cycling Regime**

#### **Step 2: Understanding Trip Demand and the Potential for Cycling Trips**

#### **Step 3: Trip Assignment to the Network**

#### **Step 4: Trip Forecast**

#### **Step 5: Urban and Transport Planning**

Step 6: Prioritising Improvements

Step 7: Programme, Consultation, Budgets

The provision of a bike hire scheme to connect Kildare Town Train station - Market Square - Cherry Avenue (when completed) and to historic sites should be investigated as part of this study.

#### Public Realm Enhancements

##### a) Kildare Town Gateways

A public realm proposal which seeks to signify and recognise the old town gateways through a series of signifiers and moments integrated within the streetscape which recognise an important piece of Kildare Towns history and development. Areas included cover Bride Street, Claregate Street, Fire Castle Lane, Nugent Street, Dublin Street and Silken Thomas Accommodation.

##### b) Kildare Town Laneways Strategy

A public realm proposal which seeks to signify and recognise the old town gateways through a series of signifiers and moments integrated within the streetscape which recognise an important piece of Kildare Towns history and development. Areas included cover Chapel Hill, Fire Castle Lane, Bang-up Lane, Market Square - Nugent St Passage, Market Square - Water Tower Lane, Malones Lane and Heffernans Lane.

A common design strategy in tandem with the overall enhancement of the ACA would create an overall coherence to the legibility of the ACA.

##### c) CMWS Hall Entry

A project seeking to signify the entry into Kildare through a public art commission on the face of the Catholic Men and Women's Society (CMWS) hall. This face is the current first sight for visitors from KVOC / National Stud/Japanese Gardens and St Brigids Well.

##### d) Kildare Town Wayfinding

A town wayfinding project to create a common strategy for branding and public art to identify routes and locations of significant town offerings while being integrated into public realm rather than creating town clutter.

#### Kildare Town Train Station

##### e) Iarnoid Eireann Vacant Site Development

A public realm strategy to investigate the potential to open up the site as parking and enable an access to the train station from the North of the tracks from the (West Dunmurray) Road and East (Rathbride Road). This could be of particular benefit with the proposed future development of the South Green Area.

The site also has future development opportunities being located at an important location in close proximity to the train station. Potential investment and tenancy could be sought after initial improvements.

#### f) Train Station Forecourt & Fairgreen Road Improvements

A public realm improvements strategy to enhance the train station forecourt with a formalised parking strategy and animation of the edge condition between the Fair Green Road and station grounds.

#### Kildare Village link and Schools Consolidation

The area is currently occupied by a single storey dwelling and garages. The site is in close proximity to Kildare Village Outlet (KVO) to the West and is a 2-minute walk from Kildare Market Square. To the East the site benefits from frontage to what was historically the towns Fairgreen, an area with a lot of vehicular access and in which now stands the community centre but has the potential to be regenerated. On the opposite side of the old Fairgreen is St Brigids Parish Church and carpark occupying what is known as St Brigids Square.

A pedestrian link from the Church to the KVO would improve the flow of pedestrian footfall to the area together with the old Fairgreen site these areas could greatly benefit from being regenerated as part of the improved link between KVO and the town centre.

The North perimeter of the site is bound by St Brigids Primary school and playing yards which currently run along the west boundary of the site to which the pedestrian link is proposed. The southern boundary is shared with another single dormer dwelling with garage.

#### Old Town Courthouse & Water Tower Site Improvements

##### a) Old Town Courthouse Renovation

Renovation and restoration of the old courthouse as a community building to enhance a building of significant identity and heritage value. This study will propose potential uses and tenants for the building while also proposing improvement to its surrounding lands increasing the prominence of a significant town block.

##### b) Water Tower Site Improvements

The free-standing cast-concrete water tower was constructed in the latter half of the 20th Century within the bawn of Kildare Castle. The tower has a polygonal plan and reflects the challenges which have historically faced Kildare Town in terms of providing a water supply. It is of technical and engineering interest and adds to the streetscape of Nugent Street.

The site can offer a point of interest, at height, along the laneways linking Market Square to St. Brigids Cathedral. The water tower could be up-lit as a memory of Kildare's industrial heritage. There is potential for the base to be converted for interpretive use to support the tourist office and overlook a new public space and cathedral beyond.



FIGURE 3. PROPOSED DELIVERY PROJECTS FOR KILDARE TOWN (SOURCE: KILDARE TRMP (METROPOLITAN WORKSHOP, 2022))

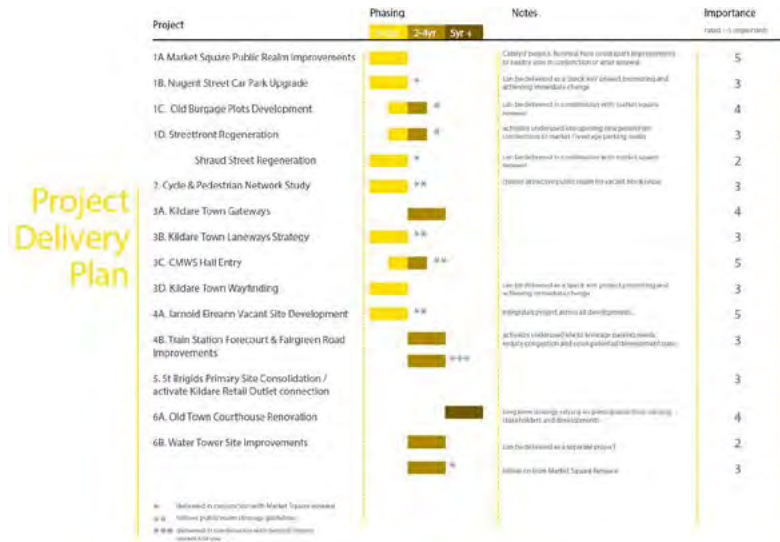


FIGURE 4. PROJECT DELIVERY PLAN FOR DELIVERY PROJECTS INCLUDED IN THE PROPOSED MASTERPLAN (SOURCE: KILDARE TRMP (METROPOLITAN WORKSHOP, 2022))

### 3.3 Existing Environment

#### 3.3.1 Hydrology

The Site has been mapped by the EPA to be within the Barrow Water Framework Directive (WFD) Catchment (ID: 14), the Barrow\_SC\_060 Sub-Catchment (Sub-catchment ID: 14\_18) and the TULLY STREAM\_010 WFD River Sub Basin (European Code: IE\_SE\_14T020200) (EPA 2022).

The Tully Stream (WFD ID: TULLY STREAM\_010) flows from the southeast corner of Kildare Town in a southerly direction to ultimately join the Finnelly River approx. 12 river km downstream, where it also becomes part of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC. The Tully Stream course from Kildare Town to Nurney (approx. 7 river km downstream) has been assigned a *Poor* ecological status based on monitoring, and it is projected to be *At risk* of not achieving its WFD objectives (EPA, 2022).

No other open watercourses have been mapped within 1km of the Proposed Masterplan.

#### 3.3.2 Geology and Hydrogeology

The Site is situated on the Curragh Gravels West (IE\_SE\_G\_133) groundwater body. The WFD status of this GWB is *Good* and is projected to be *Not At Risk* of not achieving its WFD objectives (EPA 2022). Two bedrock aquifer types split the town: the northwest half is underlain by '*Locally Important Aquifer - Bedrock which is Moderately Productive only in Local Zones*', while the southeast half is underlain by '*Regionally Important Aquifer - Karstified (diffuse)*'. The groundwater rock units underlying the aquifer types and following the same split are classified as *Dinantian Lower Impure Limestones* and *Dinantian Lower Impure Limestones* respectively. The level of vulnerability to groundwater contamination from human activities is *High* across the town (GSI, 2022).

The majority of the town is underlain by *Made* ground, while the east, south and west margins are of '*Limestone sands and gravels (Carboniferous)*' (EPA 2022). The northern areas are of '*Limestone till (Carboniferous)*' subsoils, and this type is also found at the southern ends of the town along Tully Road. The southwest corner contains an area underlain by '*Undifferentiated Lake sediments*', and a small area of '*Undifferentiated Alluvium*' occurs at the just north of the Kildare Bypass (M7). In the northwest corner a small area of '*Sandstone till (Lower Paleozoic/Devonian)*' occurs.

### 3.4 Identification of Relevant European Sites

The following sections detail the results of the S-P-R method applied as outlined in section 2.5.

#### 3.4.1 Potential Sources of Effects

The Proposed Masterplan will act as a non-statutory framework for the enhancement and rejuvenation of Kildare Town and includes a variety of delivery projects envisioned to be put forward as Part 8 applications and delivered within the next 1-4 years. The Proposed Masterplan itself does not propose any direct works, and where delivery projects have identified a need for works (e.g., road improvements), these will be subject to the appropriate environmental assessments as part of the planning applications process, following the policies

set out in the Kildare County Development Plan (KCDP) 2017-2023 and the new KCDP 2023-2029 for Development Standards.

The main focus of the delivery projects is on enhancing the public spaces for pedestrians and cyclists, including both locals and visitors alike. Thus, the following elements of the Proposed Masterplan were considered for their potential to cause likely significant effects on European sites:

- Increased human presence due to promoting visitors;
- Increased traffic due to improved permeability for both cars and cyclists;
- Increased lighting / noise due to improved public realm safety; and
- Changes to land-use within the Proposed Masterplan Site.

Note that there are no works proposed as part of the Proposed Masterplan which would lead to impacts either on groundwater or surface water quality through emissions or the loss of fine sediments or silts.

**3.4.2 Potential Pathways to European Sites**

For the above listed potential sources of effects to have the potential to cause likely significant effects on any European site, a pathway between the source of potential effects (i.e., the Site of the Proposed Masterplan) and the receptor is required. The potential for pathways between European sites and the Proposed Masterplan Site was assessed on a case-by-case basis using the S-P-R framework (OPR, 2021). Pathways considered included:

- Direct pathways e.g., proximity/location within a European site, water bodies, air (for both air emissions and noise impacts).
- Indirect pathways e.g., disruption to migratory paths, 'Sightlines' where noisy or intrusive activities may result in disturbance to shy species.

Potential impact pathways are discussed in the following sections in the context of the potential impact sources as identified in section 3.4.1.

**3.4.2.1 Direct Pathways**

**Hydrological pathways**

The Tully Stream flows from the southeast corner of Kildare Town in a southerly direction to ultimately join the Finney River approx. 12 river km downstream, where it also becomes part of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC (002162).

Any potential pollutants that may enter the Tully Stream at the Proposed Masterplan Site would become diluted to indiscernible levels within the receiving freshwater environment of the river, prior to reaching the European sites. Equally, the Proposed Masterplan does not put forward any planning applications which could lead to emissions into any surface water systems, either directly or via the surface water sewer network.

No other European sites are linked to the Site via hydrological means.

**Hydrogeological pathways**

During groundworks and other construction activities that may result from developments made under the Proposed Masterplan, the ground will be exposed and any potential accidental

discharges to ground could potentially migrate vertically downward to the underlying bedrock aquifer and laterally within the aquifer to downgradient European sites or watercourses, such as the Tully Stream. The nearest European site that could potentially be linked to the Proposed Masterplan via groundwater flows is the Pollardstown Fen SAC (000396), located approx. 2.9 km northeast of the Site. However, this pathway is considered to be insignificant due to the intervening distance and the nature of the Proposed Masterplan. Similarly, the combined distance via groundwater and the Tully Stream to the River Barrow and River Nore SAC deems that pathway insignificant. Furthermore, the Proposed Masterplan does not put forward any planning applications which could lead to emissions into the ground.

**Air and land pathways**

No air and land pathways from the Proposed Masterplan to any European sites were identified, as the distance between the Site and the nearest European site (i.e., Pollardstown Fen SAC, approx. 2.9 km linear distance) is deemed sufficient to exclude any potential for impacts from increases in noise, lighting and/or dust or other airborne pollutants that could result from increases in traffic.

**3.4.2.2 Indirect Pathways**

No indirect pathways (e.g., disruptions to migratory paths) were identified.

**3.4.3 Relevant European Sites**

A European site will only be at risk from likely significant effects where a notable S-P-R link exists between the Proposed Masterplan Site and the European site. The preceding steps identified a potential S-P-R link to two European sites, however, these were not considered significant and therefore no further assessment is required. The European sites considered under the various potential pathways are listed in Table 1 and shown in Figure 5.

**TABLE 1. EUROPEAN SITES CONSIDERED WITH THE SOURCE-PATHWAY-RECEPTOR (S-P-R) METHOD TO ESTABLISH NOTABLE LINKS BETWEEN THE SOURCES OF AFFECTS ARISING FROM THE PROPOSED MASTERPLAN, AND ANY RELEVANT EUROPEAN SITES. THOSE SITES WITH NOTABLE S-P-R LINKS ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN GREEN (IF ANY).**

European site	QIs / SCIs	Potential Pathways
	<b>Habitats</b> 1130 Estuaries 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide	
River Barrow And River Nore SAC (002162)	1170 Reefs 1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima)	Hydrological (insignificant) via the Figle River
Linear Distance to Proposed Masterplan: approx. 22 km	1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation 4030 European dry heaths 6430 Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels	

European site	QIs / SCIs	Potential Pathways
	<p>7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)*                      91A0 Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles                      91E0 Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>)*</p> <p><b>Species</b>                      1096 Brook Lamprey (<i>Lampetra planeri</i>)                      1355 Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)                      1103 Twaite Shad (<i>Alosa fallax fallax</i>)                      1099 River Lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>)                      1095 Sea Lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>)                      1106 Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>)                      1092 White-clawed Crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>)                      1029 Freshwater Pearl Mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>)                      1990 Nore Pearl Mussel (<i>Margaritifera durrovensis</i>)                      1016 Desmoulin's Whorl Snail (<i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>)                      1421 Killarney Fern (<i>Trichomanes speciosum</i>)</p>	
<p>Pollardstown Fen SAC (000396)</p> <p>Linear Distance to Proposed Masterplan: approx. 2.9 km</p>	<p><b>Habitats</b>                      7210 Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i>*                      7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)*                      7230 Alkaline fens</p> <p><b>Species</b>                      1013 Geyer's Whorl Snail (<i>Vertigo geyeri</i>)                      1016 Desmoulin's Whorl Snail (<i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>)                      1014 Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail (<i>Vertigo angustior</i>)</p>	<p>Air and land (insignificant) due to distance.</p>

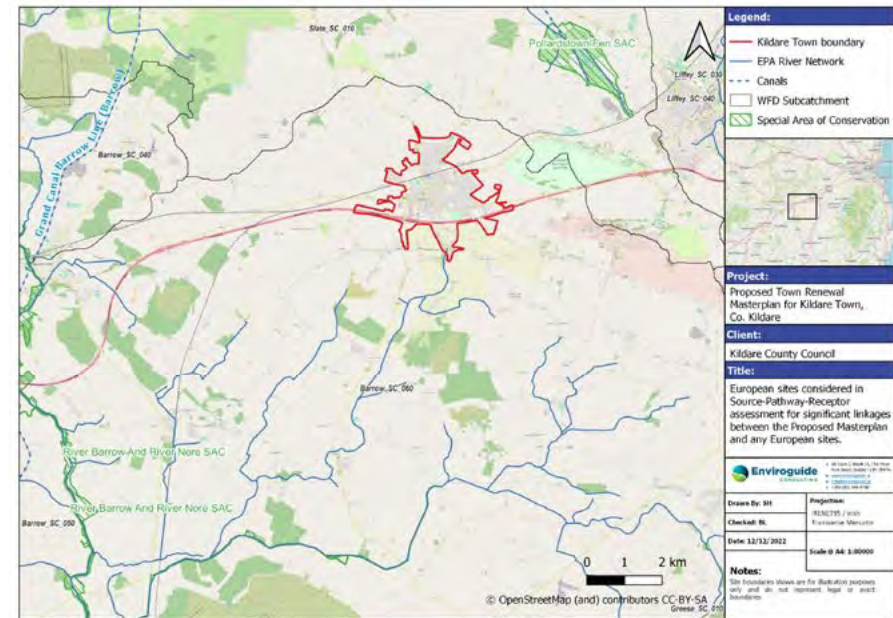


FIGURE 5. EUROPEAN SITES CONSIDERED IN S-P-R ASSESSMENT TO IDENTIFY RELEVANT EUROPEAN SITES WITH NOTABLE LINKAGES TO PROPOSED MASTERPLAN.

### 3.5 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

As the preceding sections show, no S-P-R links of note were identified. As such there will be no risk of significant effects on any European sites or on their qualifying interests as a result of the Proposed Masterplan alone. Therefore, no further assessment to that effect is required.

#### 3.5.1 Potential for In-combination Effects

Although the Proposed Masterplan is not considered to have the capacity to cause significant effects on any European sites alone, it is important to consider the potential for cumulative effects with other plans and/or projects. The following sections outline existing granted or pending planning permissions in the vicinity of the Proposed Masterplan and assess the potential for adverse in-combination effects on any European sites.

##### 3.5.1.1 Existing Granted or Pending Planning Permissions

A search of planning applications located within the Proposed Masterplan area and within a 1 km radius of the Site was undertaken using online planning resources such as the National Planning Application Database (NPAD) (MyPlan.ie), KCCs Planning Applications Map Viewer (<http://webgeo.kildarecoco.ie/planningenquiry>), and the An Bord Pleanála database (pleanala.ie).

Any planning applications listed as granted or decision pending from within the last five years were assessed for their potential to act in-combination with the Proposed Masterplan and cause likely significant effects on the relevant European sites. Long-term developments granted outside of this time period were also considered where applicable.

The larger key projects within the Kildare Town area are listed below.

- **Kildare Village Outlet Centre:** Planning permission was recently granted for an extension to KVOC of c6,000 sqm. Key conditions was that the development should facilitate a future link to Academy Street via the adjoining lands.
- **Cherry Avenue Park, Dublin Road:** Following a feasibility study and design process, a Part 8 was sanctioned for a town park, known as Cherry Avenue Town Park covering over 5ha. On the Dublin Road. A number of key elements have been proposed and which formed part of the Part 8 approval. They are as follows:
  - Field Day Space – predominantly green open space for pop-up community events;
  - Adventure & Youth Space – active play, experimental and user-generated activities;
  - Grassroots / DIY Space – community gardens, local enterprise, eco-food, learning & entrepreneurship;
  - Ecological & Horticulture Space – integrated destination with environmental learning, horticulture, forestry and native plants; and
  - Sculpture Parkland – drawing on heritage / environment themes, open green space with walking infrastructure.
- **Magee Barracks Site:** The regeneration of Magee Barracks (20.1 ha) for residential purposes is a key objective of the LAP. Although planning permission was recently refused for a strategic housing development consisting of 264 units as part of Phase 1 (ABP Ref: PL09 .301371) on grounds of inadequate density, it is an objective of the

LAP to facilitate development on the lands which over all of the lands could accommodate approx. 500 units.

- **South Green Framework:** KCC and a range of stakeholders (Landowners in South Green, Residents in South Green, CIE) in the area prepared a Framework Plan for the South Green area. The purpose of this non-statutory Framework Plan is to supplement planning guidance established within the Kildare County Development Plan (KCDP) 2017-2023 and the Kildare Local Area Plan 2012-2018, with regard to the South Green area of Kildare Town. The central aim of this Plan is to achieve an integrated and holistic approach to the development of the South Green lands in tandem with the developer of the necessary physical and social infrastructure. The lands South Green is expected to deliver sustainable expansion and growth for Kildare Town over the next 15 - 20 years.
- **Medieval Park:** A proposal is being developed by the parks department in KCC with Mary O Connor and it will be developed to detail stage in the coming months. Map evidence indicates that the site, while clear during the eighteenth Century, was the site of a terrace of houses in the nineteenth Century. Should archaeological remains of a previous structure be identified, consideration could be given to resolving part of the site and presenting it to the public. This would make an excellent new amenity in the town, in a location that is currently overgrown.

The above projects are not anticipated to result in significant in-combination effects with the Proposed Masterplan on any European sites. Furthermore, any individual planning applications arising as a result of the Proposed Masterplan will be subject to the appropriate consideration of in-combination effects with any current or future plans / projects as per the Development Standards set out in the KCDP 2017-2023 and the new KCDP 2023-2029.

##### 3.5.1.2 Relevant Policies and Plans

The following policies and plans were reviewed and considered for possible in-combination effects with the Proposed Masterplan:

- KCDP 2017-2023.
- KCDP 2023-2029.

Both County Development Plans have directly addressed the protection of European sites through specific policies and objectives. Additionally, the Natura Impact Report for the Kildare CDP Draft 2023-2029 concludes that *“the Plan itself, subject to it securing the mitigation detailed in this report, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.”* Therefore, **no in-combination effects are expected** with the relevant policies and plans.



#### 4 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING CONCLUSION

The Proposed Town Renewal Masterplan for Kildare Town, Co. Kildare, has been assessed taking into account:

- The nature, size and location of the proposed works and possible impacts arising from the construction works.
- The QIs and conservation objectives of the European sites.
- The potential for in-combination effects arising from other plans and projects.

In conclusion, upon the examination, analysis and evaluation of the relevant information and applying the precautionary principle, it is concluded by the authors of this report that, on the basis of objective information; the possibility **may be excluded** that the Proposed Masterplan will have a significant effect on any European sites.

As such, no further assessment is required. In carrying out this AA screening, mitigation measures have not been taken into account. Standard best practice construction measures which could have the effect of mitigating any effects on any European sites have similarly not been taken into account.

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