



KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT ON PUBLIC CONSULTATION

RATHANGAN TOWN RENEWAL MASTERPLAN



STRATEGIC PROJECTS AND PUBLIC REALM

October 2024

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Strategic Projects and Public Realm have undertaken three separate public consultation pieces to date as part of the process of gathering and sharing information, challenges and ideas to collaborate with the community of Rathangan and shape and inform the Rathangan Town Renewal Masterplan.

- (i) Public Workshop, Rathangan Library 1st August 2024
- (ii) Online Survey, 15th July to 30th August 2024
- (iii) Art Competition for Primary Schools, July 2024 (Refer to Appendix I)

The aim of each event was to engage with as much of the community as possible and that the final Town Renewal Masterplan for the town is representative of the views, values and needs of the community.

Role of the Town Renewal Masterplan (TRMP)



To revitalise the town, to drive and encourage the sustainable regeneration of the town, to stimulate the rural economy, and to attract people to live, work and visit in the town.



A roadmap to identify challenges and to prioritise a range of transformative projects within Rathangan.



A coherent and regeneration focussed plan to enable KCC and community to access funding through the Rural Regeneration Development Fund, Town and Village Renewal Fund and other funding streams.

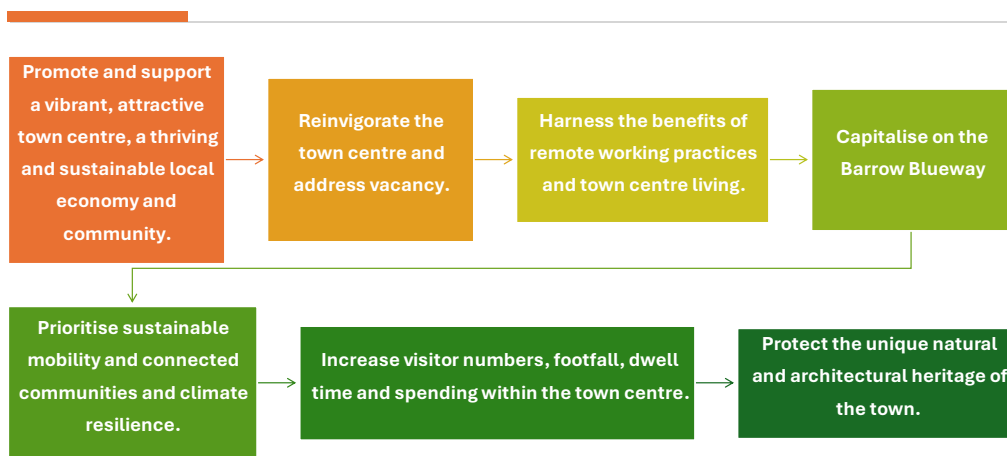


Figure 1: Attendees at Workshop 1st August 2024, Rathangan Library

2.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION WORKSHOP, AUG. 2024

Community Stakeholders in Rathangan were invited by way of public advertisement (radio, social media, email and posters) to attend the first workshop hosted by the Strategic Projects and Public Realm (SPPR) Team on the Rathangan Town Renewal Masterplan (TRMP). The aim of this workshop event was to gather important local information, highlight challenges facing the town and to exchange ideas and identify opportunities for inclusion in the TRMP.

Identify Regeneration Projects that will:



The workshop on the 1st of August in Rathangan Library was attended by 21 members of the community and was facilitated by 5 staff from SPPR. The Stakeholders comprised residents, individuals and members of groups and organisations, home and business owners, elected representatives, and people with an interest in Rathangan.

John Healy, Project Manager, welcomed the attendees and gave a brief presentation (See Appendix I for copy of the presentation) to set the context of the TRMP and to set out the themes for the evening and next steps in the preparation of the TRMP. The World Café <https://theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/world-cafe-method/> concept of public consultation informed the run of events for the evening.

Attendees were separated into four groups of 4/5 people and 1 facilitator/note taker. Each group was assigned 15-20 minutes to discuss a theme before the facilitator moved onto the next group. The themes discussed were set out as follows:

1. Image and Identity
2. Town Centre
3. Open Space and Amenities
4. Tourism and Heritage

The focus of the discussions was for attendees to identify strengths, challenges and opportunities within Rathangan relating to each theme and to propose/suggest recommendations, projects,

interventions to improve the town and to attract greater footfall within the town centre and a more vibrant town centre, to create the conditions for and to encourage sustainable travel and recreation and to create residential and business communities.

Sections 2.1 to 2.5 below set out a brief summary of the items discussed with the project facilitators under the suggested project themes. Please note that this is a non-exhaustive list of the ideas proposed by the attendees of the workshop.



Figure 2: Built Form Town Centre, 2024

2.1 IMAGE AND IDENTITY

Facilitator: Cathy Kavanagh, KCC

Challenges - Image and Identity

- Town Centre is rundown and tired looking with high levels of dereliction and vacancy.
- Pedestrian bridge is an eye sore very 'engineered' in its appearance.
- The Rath is underutilized and undervalued.
- Traffic and parking at Post Office is dangerous.
- Wheelchair parking at Post Office is difficult to use.
- There are lots of historical figures e.g. poets, writers, revolutionaries etc associated with the village. They need to be promoted and acknowledged.
- Car parking is needed.
- Roads are busy with trucks and through traffic.
- Access to the River isn't great.
- No cycle access to school
- Would like to maintain the image of a village as opposed to a town.
- No evening/nightlife (would go to Kildare to go out for dinner etc.) Cafes close at 4pm. Most places are closed before commuters are home.

Opportunities/Projects/Proposals:

- Instead of very engineered railings on pedestrian bridge, can something be incorporated to reflect the history/heritage of the town and soften the area.
- At the road edge where The Rath is, can there be flower beds or nicer fence railing that reflects the rath and Rathangan. Good example of a town entrance is Ardee, Co. Louth
- Murals to reflect the writers and the link to the quaker heritage of the area.
- People, places and things associated with identity – Pike (1798), rushes (bog), Rath, Industry (mills), Bord na Mona, Brice Springsteen.
- There has been an increase in American tourists since Burce Springstein but very little coach parking. Can use (knock down) non protected derelict building to open up access to back land area for possible car park. Best options maybe to the north of the street or build on objective in CDP for road/footpath at rath to access back land area for parking/coach parking.
- Dillons should be used as a central point/gathering spot.
- Be inclusive in regard to mobility but also ethnicity.
- Off-street parking is needed.
- More preference for wayfinding signage as in poll signs rather than in pavement signs etc.
- Open up and celebrate The Rath.
- Any signage should represent history but also existing biodiversity and amenities.
- Make walk from canal to town more inviting e.g. Gillford.
- Paint derelict buildings in mean time of finding uses for them
- Encourage restaurants, evening events, later opening coffee shops

- A tag line for Rathangan for Branding (Oasis in the bog)
- Could older/derelict buildings be made into a museum?
- Long term vision: make cycle track through bog to connect to Killinthomas and Lullymore use Rathangan as a base and encourage people using can to cycle to bog.
- Make a better online presence for Rathangan for tourists but also locals to find out events and amenities that are available
- Open a bike shop.
- Peat and link with bogs as part of identity
- Killinthomas wood is a destination that could be capitalized on with people passing through to get to the woods.
- People in the area do like Rathangan.
- Lots of options for walks.
- Tidy towns do a lot of work
- Canal is being used more
- Stone at bridge looks good.



Figure 3: The Rath, Rathangan

2.2 TOWN CENTRE

Facilitator John Healy, KCC

- Request that KCC bring ideas to the consultation for the attendees to look at as opposed to being generated by the attendees.

Challenges - Town Centre

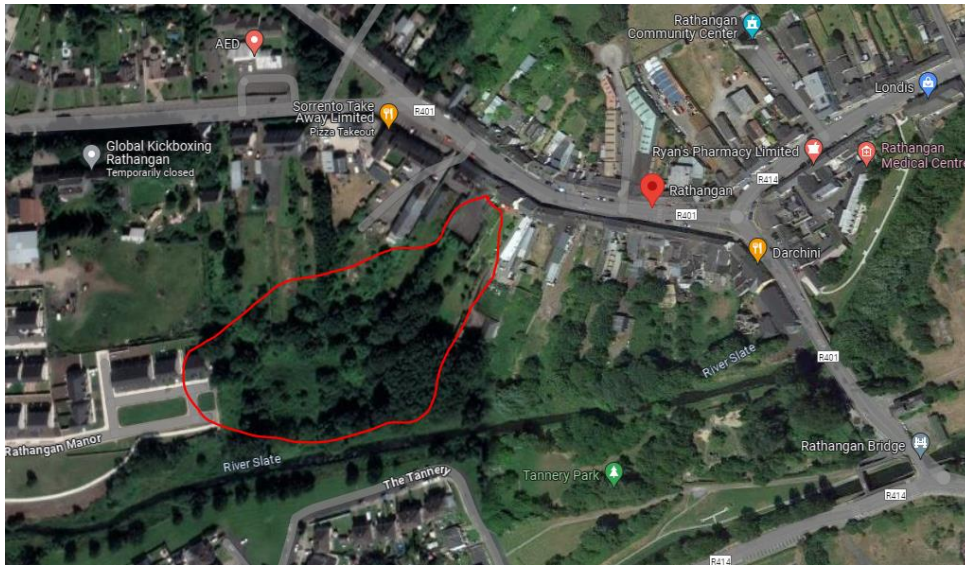
- Note that all the residential development is outside of the town and disconnected from the main street. Suggestion that we build another street behind the main street which would be more residential and bring people back to the centre.
- Streetscape is disjointed.
- Vacancy and dereliction throughout the town centre.
- Conflicting opinions on the provision of Cycle lanes within the town centre.
- Parking is a problem, create off street and coach parking particularly towards the post office end of town
- Remove HGVs + agri traffic from the town. Not all in agreement though as there may still be some farms within the town centre area which will need to be catered for.

Opportunities/Projects/Proposals:

- Conflicting opinions regarding the Narrowing of streets for traffic calming- Some feeling that it's a rural town and should cater for large farm machinery.
- Possible planning permission for 'Avoca style coffee shop at Dillon's on the town square. Would be good but is facing objections. This development could be used as a catalyst to enhance the rest of the town.
- Remove barriers to doing business to incentivise small businesses to fill vacant units.
- Create event space in the square, possible seating and picnic area similar to poplar square, Naas.
- Clean and paint vacant buildings in a consistent style. Fake windows etc, similar to Kilcullen
- Create cycle routes to the schools.
- Rationalise the Monasterevin/Sorrentos junction as its dangerous
- Create working hubs within the town
- Encourage/incentivise small business to use the vacant units. Possible uses for sports/recreation activities, i.e. class-based gyms
- Use history as an opportunity, recreate old markets etc. Similar to potato market in Naas
- Relocate post office due to difficulties with parking
- Relocate bus stop away from post office area due to constriction at bridge
- Celebrate the peatland history of the area including biodiversity and agri. Promote heritage/fishing etc.
- Ensure footpaths to housing estates and promote active travel.
- Create an Event Space in The Square.
- Address dereliction in the town centre.
- Incentivise the bike facilities and bike rental shops in the town – could KCC instigate this?

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- KCC should acquire the land shown below to create a route to the residential areas to the west.



2.3 OPEN SPACE AND AMENITIES

Facilitator: Darragh Carey, KCC

Challenges – Open Space, Amenities, Services

- Shortage of Restaurants, ‘Ma’s Kitchen’ full on a daily basis but appears to close in the afternoon with none of the pubs serving for evening meals meaning travel to other towns to enjoy same.
- Leaving town to complete the grocery shopping. This was clarified by another group who confirmed Centra were due to open in Conlans Garage in the coming months, however Centra/Londis would not be identified as a main supermarket retailer.

Opportunities/Projects/Proposals

- Facility for Gym and Exercise (be it private company or integrated to the existing town park as an outdoor exercise area)
- Opportunity for the Introduction of Heritage/Guided tours as part of the whole of Kildare Heritage week.
- Addition of Rathangan to the ‘INTO Kildare’ site to affirm what is available following this study.
- Identify Killinthomas Wood as an amenity to Rathangan, linking this via pedestrian means may be a long-term goal.
- Work to improve the existing public park (Tannery Park), replace fixtures that are currently damaged and open up the landscape to be more visible from the public road to deter anti-social behaviours.
- Request to liaise with Gardai to confirm opening hours currently following the allocation of two gardai to the area.
- The re-opening of Dillons pub which may assist with a point made by group 1.
- Public car park required to free up street parking and encourage traffic passing through to stop.
- Traffic calming to reduce speed through the town and possibly integrate improved cycling and pedestrian facilities.
- Modernise playground equipment including the establishment of a sensory area similar to what exists in Edenderry.
- Encouragement of native peatland biodiversity and establish its connection with the town.
- Inclusion of Killinthomas as a selling point amenity to the town.
- Promotion/assistance with the provision of a campervan site such as AIRE style which has been very successful in Graiguenamanagh Co Kilkenny.
<https://www.campercontact.com/en/ireland/county-kilkenny/grauguenamanagh/89085/the-hub-grauguenamanagh>
- Recommendation as part of street works/public realm area works or even the suggested public car park that Electric Car charges be installed.
- Working in association with tidy town and residents’ groups for assistance with the provision of bins which would need to be managed by the residents when placed in a housing area.
- Provision of a Plack or similar to identify Bruce Springsteen ancestral home.

- Provision of bus parking and public parking to attract passing traffic footfall.
- Remove large trees to create clear visibility from the public roadway to the playground and park. Alternatively move the park to a more open and visible area to avoid anti-social activities.
- Installation of public lighting on the pathway to the northeast of the river bridge entering the town.
- Continuation of the footpath from the industrial estate to the soccer grounds.
- Would it be possible to acquire the Drummonds Mill grounds.



Figure 4: Mural on Hoarding in Rathangan

2.4 TOURISM AND HERITAGE

Facilitator: Patricia Hyland, KCC

Challenges – Tourism and Heritage

- Vacancy and dereliction are prevalent throughout the town.
- How to attract visitors, residents and businesses into the town??
- Lack of accommodation, bedspaces, restaurants, hospitality options
- Need to capitalise on the Blueway, Peatlands, Woodlands etc yet. Poor facilities in terms of bike hire, toilets, places to eat, stay and socialise etc.
- Lacking interpretative signage to direct people to the town and to give them information about the rich history, built and natural heritage of the town.
- Poor public transport options.
- Need to highlight and inform people about The Rath, Maura Laverty, William A Byrne, Ned Broy, Bruce Springsteen etc.
- Unique Selling Point(s) need to be identified for Rathangan.

Tannery Park

- Significant issue of anti-social behaviour in both playground and park. These areas are completely hidden from view and many people don't even know they exist. Certainly, visitors would not know they are there. There is a lack of passive surveillance in both the playground and the park.
- Parking should be provided off street and to serve the park.
- Removal of some trees from Tannery Park should be considered to open up the area. It is completely covered in by trees.
- Tannery Park needs to be re-imagined. It is a great resource but it completely underutilised due to safety concerns and tourists would never use either the park or playground as they do not know it is there.

Opportunities/Proposals/Projects

Peatlands

- Rich heritage and history associated with Rathangan e.g. Bog of Allen, Boglands, The Rath, Silken Thomas connection.
- Any tourism or heritage amenities or interpretive signage etc should take a modern approach in terms of design, materials etc yet bespoke and unique to Rathangan. E.g. Wild Atlantic Way.
- Sustainability should be at the forefront of all tourism and heritage facilities.
- Need to capitalise on the location of Rathangan as the 1st stop/gateway to the Peatlands from Dublin on west to Galway.
 - Bigger Picture connections and attractions.
 - Sense of importance/arrival into the town/area.
 - Sense of place
 - Take back ownership of the culture and heritage and amenity of the boglands.

- Introduce public art.
- Acknowledge the contribution of families to the area through Bord na Mona works etc. Tell this story/part of history.
- Develop education piece for younger people about the bogs, habitats, heritage, your locality, etc
- Youth Groups/facilities are lacking in Rathangan, particularly for ages 12-16.
- Example of desirable facility is Ballycastle, Co. Antrim – has signage, wayfinding, skate, park, outdoor gym etc.

Barrow Blueway and Grand Canal

- Interpretation, signage, wayfinding is urgently required identifying distances, clear information on points of interest, rest stops, restaurants, viewing points, accommodation etc.
- Produce a physical map and digital interactive map for the Blueway that can be updated for Rathangan as the town evolves.
- QR Codes are great for each business re information about the Barrow Blueway.
- Heritage of Grand Canal needs to be celebrated.
- Provide facilities for walkers/cyclists e.g. Toilets, rest stops, wayfinding to restaurants in the town centre.
- Provide stop off points along the way with rest areas, information boards etc.
- Develop a water sport hub close to town centre (possible location Lavender Lodge) to facilitate canoeing, fishing, SOP etc.

Tourist Accommodation

- Bed spaces, hotels, glamping, camping, facilities are urgently needed to capitalise on the Blueway.
- Bring vacant buildings into use as accommodation, housing, bike rental/repair shops, food and drink, heritage centre. How to incentivise re use and restoration of buildings?

The Rath and the Historic Famine Wall

- The wall between the Church of Ireland and The Rath is crumbling and requires urgent attention/restoration.
- A viewing platform and appropriate planting should be developed to give back importance and significance to The Rath.

Bus

- Provide a looped bus from Rathangan – Lullymore- onto other attractions

Preston Brook

- Develop the walled garden in Preston Brook into a community garden, orchard or similar.

Vacancy and Dereliction

- Need to address vacancy and dereliction on a surface level and on a deeper lever.
- Streetscape Enhancement Scheme – A quick win
- Mural Trail- tell the story and history of Rathangan

Education

- Educate visitors and locals on the heritage of Rathangan
 - develop a heritage centre/tourist hub
 - highlight the link to literature and music
- - Need to highlight the history/buildings/works by Bord Na Mona etc at Ballydermot and Killinthomas

Signage Strategy

- Urgently need to develop a signage and way finding strategy for the entire town and the Blueway and Grand Canal, Killinthomas, Lullymore etc.
- Mark out the historic trail (e.g. Naas) using QR codes/ interpretative signage etc.
- Intokildare.ie need to upgrade information on Rathangan on this platform.
- Identify attractive walkways past Drummonds Mill and on down the canal.
- Wayfinding Strategy/Interpretation signage/arrival signage urgently needed.
- Identify the history trail (refer to audio trail)

The Rath

- Need to resolve access and provide information and an appropriate setting to highlight the importance of the Rath.

The Pound

- Develop/improve the walkway through The Pound.

Maura Laverty Memorial

- Needs to be reimagined and a sense of importance afforded to it.

Streetscape Improvements

- Painting of building in bright complimentary colours to add interest and
- Underground all utility services.
- Bespoke heritage type streetlights to show off the architecture and urban form of the streets.
- Footpath improvements much needed.
- Additional pedestrian crossings need to be identified.
- All historic facades should be retained.
- Some historic facades could be knocked to open up backlands?

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- Decorative Railings need to be protected, and new ones introduced to reflect the heritage of the town.

Town Twinning/People

- Need to capitalise on the twinning programme
- Highlight the Bruce Springsteen, William A Byrne and Maura Laverty, Ned Broy (Clonbullogue Road) connections

The old Garda Barracks and adjacent buildings/ all vacancy and dereliction

- All need to be brought into use
- What can KCC do?

The Lodge

- Can this be acquired and brought back into community or similar use or bedspaces/accommodation/hotel?

Drummonds Mill and Harbour

- Open up the old harbour and find uses
- Highlight the harbour
- What is happening with Drummonds Mill? Can KCC acquire?



Figure 5: Rathangan Streetscape

3.0 SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED BY ATTENDEES OF THE WORKSHOP

The four groups identified a very broad range of opportunities and ideas for the consideration within the Town Renewal Masterplan (TRMP). The following section summarises the ideas and opportunities proposed by attendees, categorised by theme and identifies them as short-, medium- or longer-term opportunities proposed to be built upon within the Rathangan TRMP.



Figure 6: Attendees of Public Workshop 1st August 2024, Rathangan Library

3.1 IMAGE AND IDENTITY PRIORITIES

Attendees of the Workshop highlighted their concerns regarding the overall vacant and run-down image of the historic town centre in particular and the lack of coherent and cohesive strategy in terms of the identity of Rathangan and how that can be acknowledged and promoted. Of particular concern is vacancy in the town centre, The Bridge, The Rath, parking options, cycling options, lack of accommodation and nightlife. Suggestions by attendees for consideration in the TRMP include:

Short Term Interventions:

- Signage and planting at gateways into the town.
- Interpretative and marketing piece around links to peatlands, blueway,
- Bespoke upgrading of the pedestrian bridge to reflect the history/heritage of the town. E.g. Ardee, Co. Louth.
- Mural Trail
- Open up and celebrate The Rath.
- Looped walks/cycles.
- Building Painting and Repair Scheme

Medium – Long terms interventions:

- Footpath improvements
- Cycle track to link the boglands to Rathangan and onto the Blueway.
- Incentivise owners to repair, restore their vacant/derelict buildings and bring them back into use. Acquire buildings from unwilling owners.
- In ground planting which reflect the boglands, canal, support biodiversity etc.
- Underground all utility services.
- Bespoke heritage type streetlights to show off the architecture and urban form of the streets.
- Open a bike shop/depot.
- Footpath improvements much needed.
- Additional pedestrian crossings need to be identified.
- All historic facades should be retained.
- Acquire buildings to open up backlands.
- Develop a remote working hub
- Provide a covered seating/event space area within the town centre.
- Off street parking needs to be provided.
- Streetscape Enhancement Scheme

3.2 TOWN CENTRE PRIORITIES

The issue of vacancy and dereliction within the town centre was a recurring theme raised by the attendees and a challenge that needs to be addressed. Need to revitalize and reinvigorate the town centre visually, socially, culturally and economically. A variety of business and uses need to be incentivized. Improvement of the public realm of the town centre and reuse of buildings will act as an attractor for additional activity. Suggestions for improvement and consideration in the TRMP include:

Short term interventions:

- Elevate the visual appearance of the historic core such as painting and repairing building facades.
- Incentivise building owners to sell, restore, reuse or refurbish vacant or derelict buildings to accommodate bed spaces, bicycle shops, restaurants, cafes, heritage/tourist centre, gym, yoga, studio/gallery, museum, craft etc.
- Incentivise entrepreneurs to invest in/start their business in the town centre.
- Agree a palette of materials for footpaths, signage etc.
- Prepare a signage strategy for way finding, information etc. to support Barrow Blueway visitors and to link to Killinthomas, Lullymore, The Rath etc.
- Develop a mural trail to depict/interpret people, places and things synonymous with Rathangan.
- Off-street parking and bike depots to attract visitors, especially coach parking.
- Relocate bus stop away from post office area due to constriction at bridge.
- Use history as an opportunity, recreate old markets etc. Similar to the potato market in Naas.
- Incentivise the development bike facilities and bike rental shops in the town

Medium-Long terms interventions:

- Narrow streets for traffic calming, a good idea but also a bad idea. Some feeling that it's a rural town and should cater for large farm machinery.
- Create event space in the square, possible seating and picnic area e.g. poplar square, Naas.
- Create cycle routes to the schools.
- Rationalise the Monasterevin/Sorrentos junction as its dangerous
- Create remote working hubs within the town
- Encourage/incentivise small business to use the vacant units. Possible uses for sports/recreation activities, i.e. class-based gyms.
- Relocate post office due to difficulties with parking
- Celebrate the peatland history of the area including biodiversity and agri. Promote heritage/fishing etc.
- Ensure footpaths to housing estates and promote active travel.
- KCC should acquire the land shown below to create a route to the residential areas to the west.

3.3 OPEN SPACE, AMENITIES, FACILITIES PRIORITIES

The attendees of the workshop discussed the shortage of open space, amenities and facilities across the board for the community. Most notably supermarkets, sports facilities, hospitality services and some workshop participants highlighted their concerns regarding the playground and Tannery Park. The lack of passive supervision, feeling of safety and knowledge of Tannery Park and the playground in particular was raised by attendees. Proposals for consideration in the TRMP included:

Short term interventions:

- Promotion of Killinthomas Woods, Lullymore as a selling point amenity to the town.
- Implement biodiversity rich landscaping and planting and the encourage the use of native peatland species where possible.
- Encouragement of native peatland biodiversity and establish its connection with the town.

Medium-Longer term interventions:

- Develop footpaths connecting key amenities such as the football pitch and other amenities further afield eg. Killinthomas Woods.
- Red-developent/re-imagining/relocation of the playground facilities and Tannery Park to make them more attractive to locals and visitors, more inclusive and less susceptible to anti-social behaviours.
- Incentive the reuse of vacant buildings and lands into amenity facilities for the town e.g. yoga studio, art studio, gym, hospitality, shops.
- Acquisition of the Drummonds Mill lands (folio KE70614F) provision could be made for parking within a short distance of the town, public realm opportunity to integrate the town with the Barrow Blueway, possible sublet of an area for use as campervan space with an opportunity for a market type area.
- Introduction of additional public parking space.
- Promotion/assistance with the provision of a campervan site such as AIRE style which has been very successful in Graiguenamanagh Co Kilkenny.

<https://www.campercontact.com/en/ireland/county-kilkenny/grauguenamanagh/89085/the-hub-grauguenamanagh>



Figure 7: Grand Canal, Rathangan

3.4 TOURISM AND HERITAGE PRIORITIES

The attendees raised significant concerns regarding the prevalence of vacancy and dereliction throughout the town and the lack of accommodation, bedspace options, restaurants, bike hire, rest stops and hospitality in the town needs to be addressed to ensure that Rathangan can capitalise on rising visitor numbers, the Blueway, Woodlands, Peatlands etc. The rich heritage and attractive architecture of the town should be prioritised and promoted. A significant challenge for the TRMP is to consider how to attract business, visitors and the community into the town, while educating and information people of the unique heritage and history of the town and wider area:

Short term interventions:

- Revise/reimagine/redevelop Tannery Park and the playground to increase passive surveillance, use, safety, awareness and attractiveness.
- Implement a coherent welcome, interpretive signage and marketing strategy to draw people into the town centre, identify key destinations, attractions and information e.g. The Rath, Grand Canal, Mill, Barrow Blueway, History, heritage, biodiversity, culture, people, Bord na Mona, Town Twinning. e.g. Wild Atlantic Way signage. Link in with the audio guide.
- Additional interpretive signage to inform people about Maura Lavery, William A. Byrne, Ned Broy, Bruce Springsteen etc.
- Sustainability should be at the forefront of all tourism and heritage facilities.
- Incentivise building owners to refurbish buildings to provide bed spaces, hostels, glamping, camping, bike shops, housing etc.
- A viewing platform and appropriate planting should be developed to give back importance and significance to The Rath.
- Painting of building in bright complimentary colours to add interest and

Medium – Long terms interventions:

- Off-street parking should be provided.
- Explore great public transport options to support the vision of a sustainable and connected town.
- Need to capitalise on the location of Rathangan as the 1st stop/gateway to the Peatlands from Dublin on west to Galway.
 - Bigger Picture connections and attractions.
 - Sense of importance/arrival into the town/area.
 - Sense of place
- Develop education piece for younger people about the bogs, habitats, heritage, your locality etc. Youth Groups/facilities are lacking in Rathangan, particularly for ages 12-16.
- Example of desirable facility is Ballycastle, Co. Antrim – has signage, wayfinding, skate, park, outdoor gym etc.
- Produce a physical map and digital interactive map for the Blueway that can be updated for Rathangan as the town evolves.
- QR Codes are great for each business re information about the Barrow Blueway.

- Provide ancillary facilities for Blueway users e.g. toilets, rest stops, wayfinding to restaurants, town centre etc.
- Develop a Water Sports Hub (potential location Lavender Lodge), Preston Brook into a community garden or orchard.
- The Rath and it's setting, Maura Laverty and William A. Byrne Memorials all need to be elevated through a renewed public realm and landscaping and given a sense of importance.
- Bespoke heritage type streetlights to show off the architecture and urban form of the streets.
- Footpath improvements, connections and pedestrian crossings need to be delivered.
- Acquire The Lode and brought back into community or similar use or bedspaces/ accommodation/hotel?
- Open up the old harbour of Drummonds Mill and find uses



Figure 8: D&T Dillon

4.0 ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS, AUGUST 2024

An online survey was published and widely advertised throughout the town, on radio, social media and online during the dates 15th July and 1st August 2024.

A total of 119 people completed the online survey during the consultation period. The following info graphics and comments highlight the prevalent themes, concerns and proposals that came to the fore in the online survey. The original survey can be viewed at

<https://kildarecoco.ie/AllServices/PublicRealm/TownRenewalMasterPlans/RathanganTownRenewalMasterplan-2024/>

In summary the majority of people who took part in the survey were between the ages of 30 and 49 years old. 35 % of people surveyed have lived in Rathangan between 0 to 5 years with the majority of the remaining respondents have lived in Rathangan greater than 5 years with 23% residing in the area for more than one generation. 64% of respondents visit or pass through the town on a daily basis with the main reasons for visiting being shopping (28%), living in the town (24%) and for leisure/socialising purposes (22%). Only 11% of respondents visit the town for work/business purposes and 9% for education purposes.

45% of respondents live within a 5-10 minute walk of the town centre and 74% use their car, 23% travel on foot and 1% cycle as their most frequent mode of transport to visit or pass through the town centre of Rathangan. In terms of accessibility, 2% of respondents experience mobility issues.

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What is Your Vision for the Future of Rathangan?

Public Workshop Event
Date: 1st August 2024
Time: 5pm – 7pm
Venue: Rathangan Library

What is a Workshop?
A chance for you to have your say and to guide the sustainable regeneration of Rathangan, to gather valuable local information, exchange ideas, to identify challenges and opportunities.

Please complete the survey

Online
On the Rathangan Town Renewal Masterplan Public Consultation Portal:
<https://consult.kildarecoco.ie/en/browse>

OR

Scan the QR Code

Figure 9: Advertisement poster for the Pre-Draft Consultation Survey and Workshop.

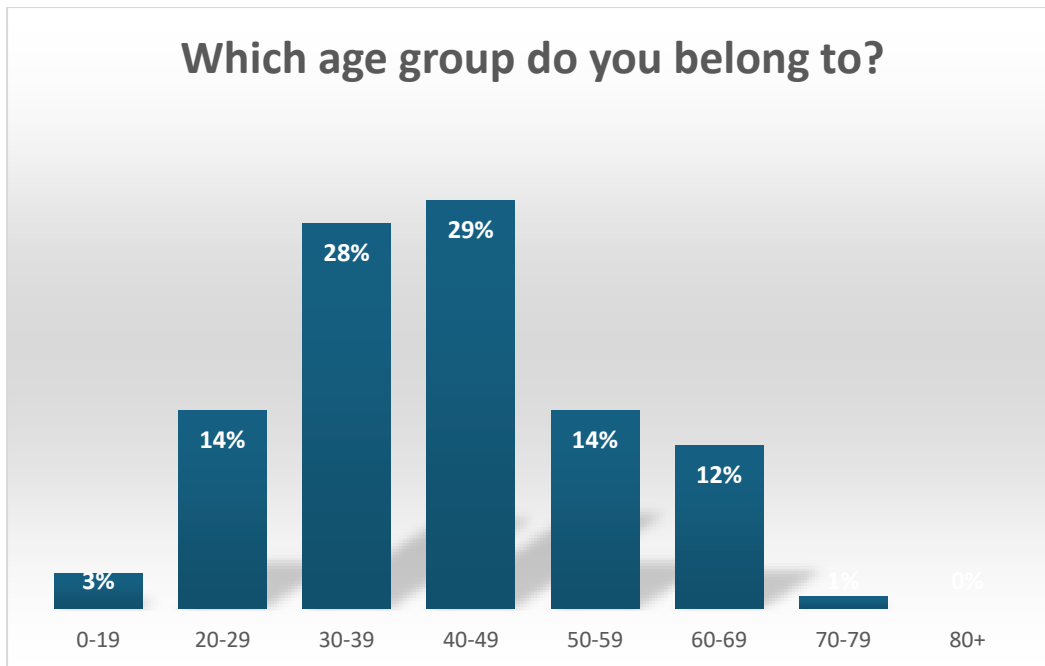


Figure 11: Which age group do you belong to?

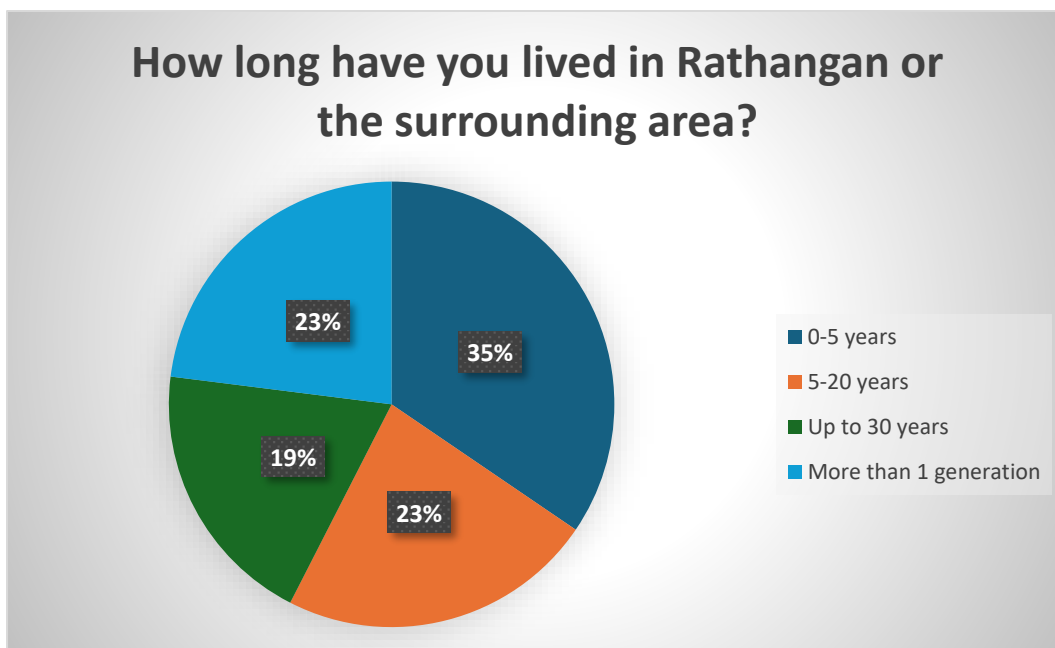


Figure 12: How long have lived in the area?

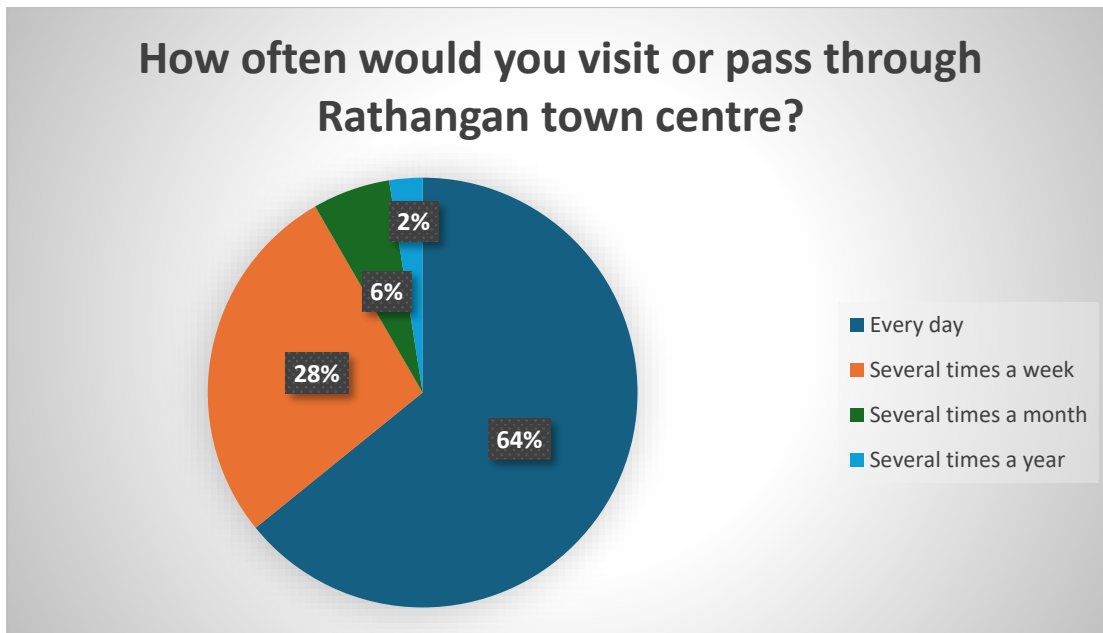


Figure 12: How often would you visit or pass through Rathangan Town Centre?

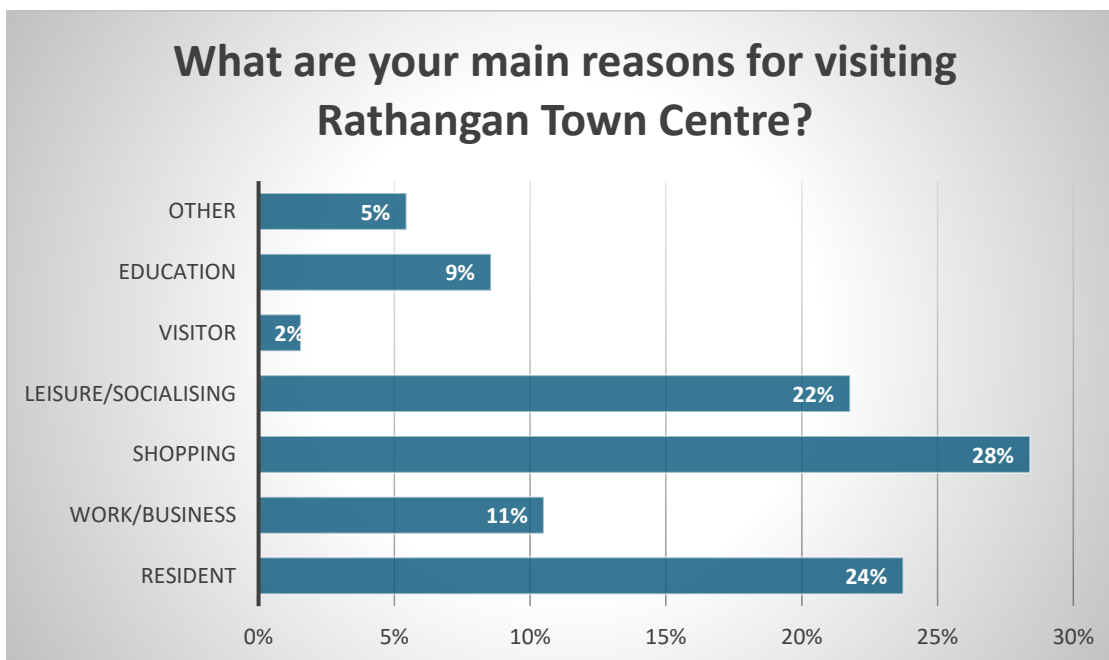


Figure 13: Main reasons for visiting Rathangan Town Centre

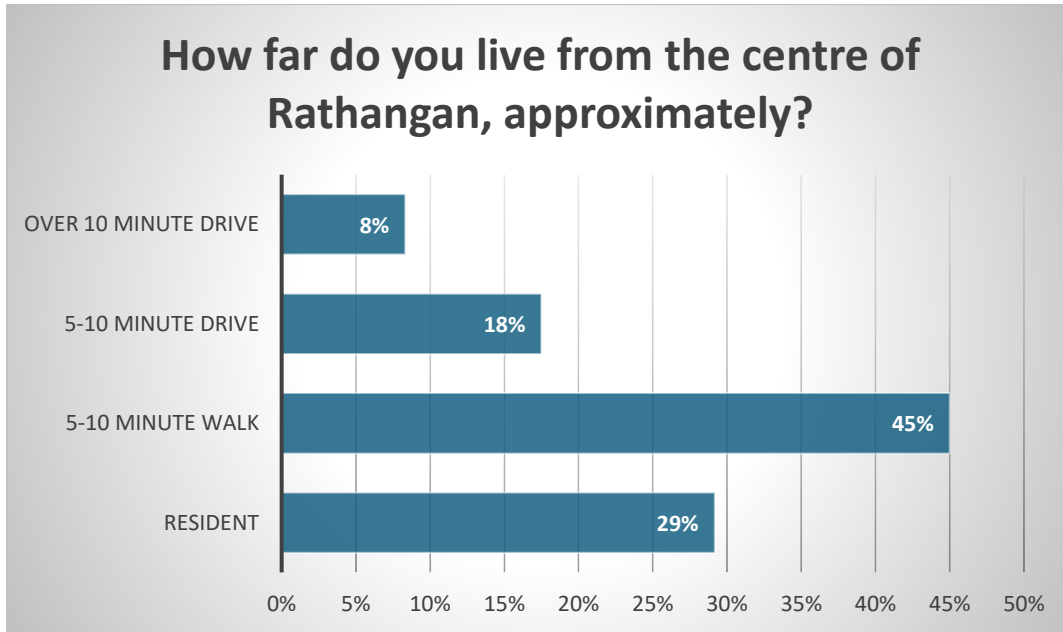


Figure 14: How far do you live from Rathangan?

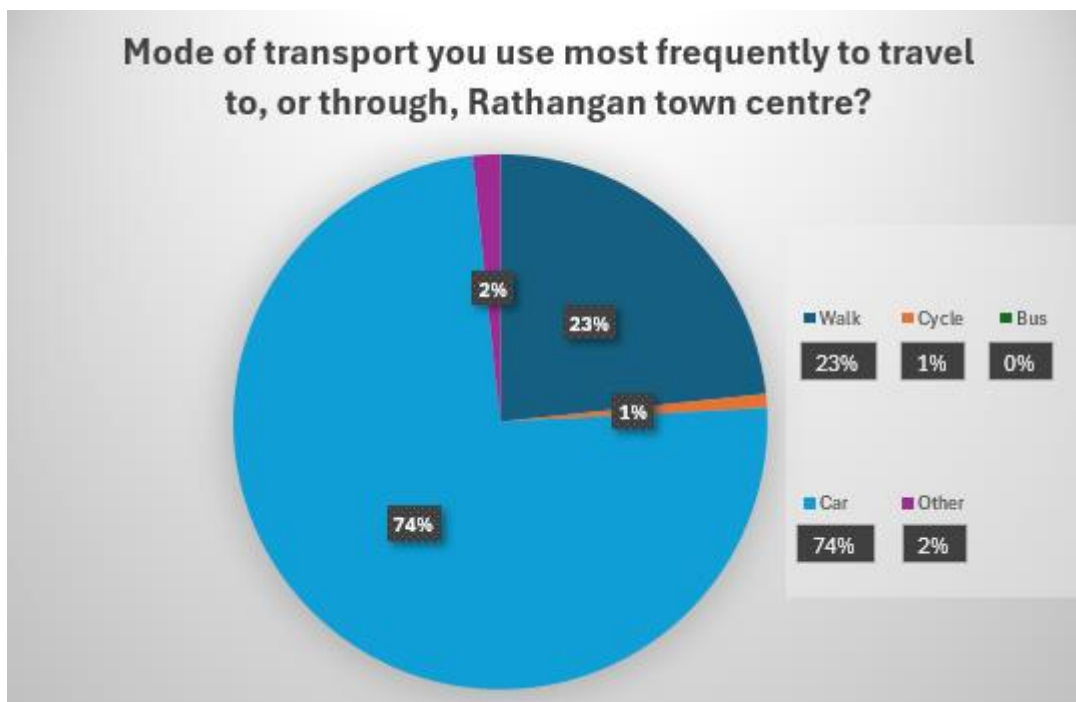


Figure 15: Mode of transport most frequently used

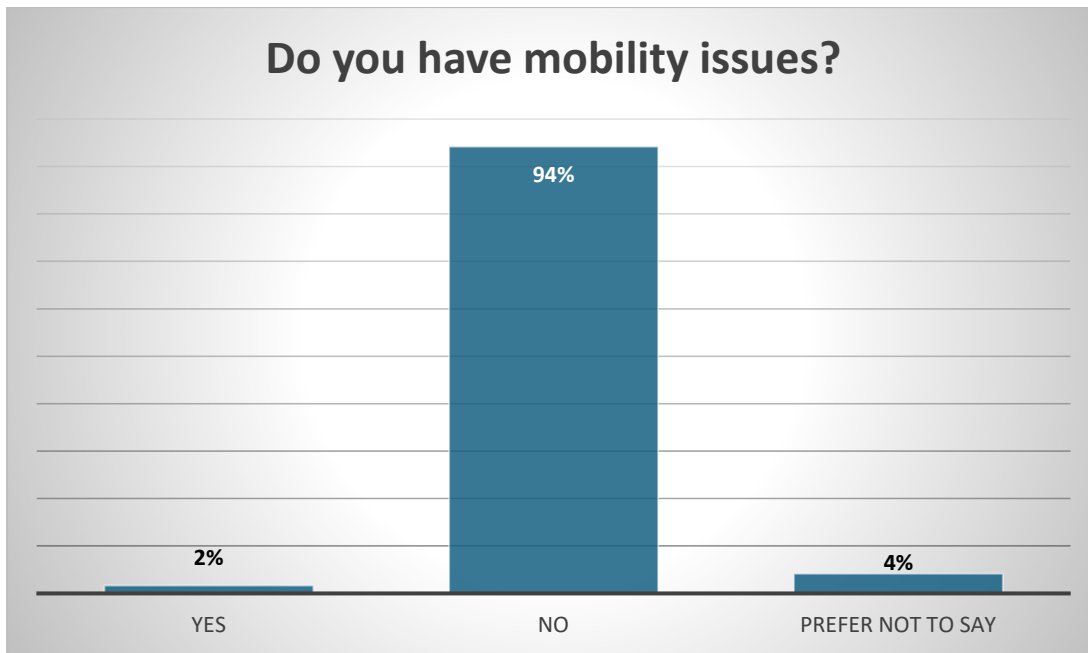


Figure 16: Do you have any mobility issues

4.1 SPECIFIC COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM RESPONDENTS TO THE ONLINE SURVEY, JULY-AUGUST 2024

Footpaths

- Continuous path needed on both sides of the bridge over the Canal.
- A number of paths are broken, in poor condition or parts are missing.
- A second bridge crossing at the Bridge Bar would be welcomed.
- Recent upgrades to part of footpaths is welcomed.
- The Bridge is so dangerous for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.
- Frustration regarding the parking at the front of the Post Office. Very dangerous.
- No path on the Monasterevin Road.
- Some footpaths are in poor condition and a littered with dog waste.
- Need better, level and continuous footpaths.
- Need more pedestrian/zebra crossings. The ones that are there are no adhered to and drivers often ignore them.
- Crossing over the Bridge is annoying and dangerous. There is no direct and safe path.
- Cars parking on the street make it difficult for cars to pass.
- Footpaths are not safe.
- Need more pedestrian crossings, the area around the Bridge especially is very dangerous.
- Need a pedestrian crossing at the pharmacy.
- There are paths throughout the town but one along the canal past the school would be a lovely addition with lights
- Footpaths are not on all the roads and/or just come to a sudden end on some roads.
- Footpaths are overgrown and not maintained in parts.
- Street lighting is poor and does not encourage a safe environment.
- Footpath from the Bridge into town is too narrow and with parking on street and on the footpath, it further obstructs vehicle and pedestrian traffic.
- Footpath from the bridge into the town centre is too narrow, lots of cars park on double yellow restricting free flow of traffic.
- Footpath to Tullylost, to make it safer to walk that stretch of road.
- Footpath needed between GAA pitch & Cribbons Lane and past soccer pitch.
- Also make the footpaths slightly narrower on Main Street to facilitate car parking as it is very narrow when vehicles meet

Town Centre

- Very busy with through traffic and cluttered with car parking.
- Streets are wide and busy making it hard to cross the road safely at times.
- Happy to park and walk to my destinations.
- Poor Street lighting.
- Not enough parking for the few businesses that are operating in the town.
- Everything is close together in the town centre
- Lack of proper parking options on Main Street.

- Too much traffic and the roads are not wide enough to accommodate it.
- The location of the Post Office is a bad idea as traffic is reduced to a stop and go system due to on street parking and it is a danger to pedestrians.
- There aren't enough streetlights around the town
- Speed of cars and lorries coming through the village is crazy. It is so dangerous.
- Large trucks driving through the town centre are dangerous.
- Town is very tight with cars parked on both side of the road
- Bridge is too narrow for cars to pass safely.
- Roads should be widened to make room for more parking.
- Need to make space on the road for cycling.
- Roads are very busy with traffic and surfaces are in poor condition.
- Streets are wide enough.
- No issues moving through the town or between businesses.
- Good connections to all directions out of the town centre.
- Cars are speeding through the town.
- High volume of trucks driving through town.
- On street parking is narrowing the road.
- Very few T Junctions.
- Very high traffic volumes in the morning especially at Londis and at all schools. Delivery times to Londis coincides with school times.
- The Bridge is a major choke point for traffic and parked cars make it even more difficult to navigate.
- Footpaths are too narrow in areas and the area just after the Bridge beside the post office is dreadful.
- Traffic congestion, through traffic, parking and street lighting all need to be addressed.
- Bridge parking causes issues driving & when walking. There are no ramps to reduce speed and no pedestrian crossing near bridge.
- Not enough pedestrian crossings.
- Uneven paths are a hazard.
- Not pedestrian friendly. Not enough safe crossings.

Parking

- Parking obstructs traffic at times.
- Very little parking for people driving into the town.
- Cars parked on Main Street are dangerous.
- Constant double parking and parking on double yellow lines at the post office.
- Lack of parking
- People park on footpaths which blocks buggies, wheelchair users etc.
- Parking on the bridge near the post office is very dangerous.
- Always plenty of parking options.
- Town is congested with parked cars.
- Cars parked at Londis and on the Bridge

- Traffic at school times is dreadful from Newtown side of town traffic is tight at the Village Pump also.
- Bridge over the canal is tight and along by the post office you have to stop to let traffic from the town pass.
- Traffic around school times in a joke and people parking on double yellow lines on the bridge and parking on the road outside.
- Vehicles parked beside Post Office to Canal Bridge. Visibility poor near zebra crossing. Parked cars near shops.
- Not enough car parking spaces - cars lining streets makes it difficult.
- If walking, pavements are inconsistent and in need of repair.
- If driving the parking in the main street is selfish & dangerous.
- More parking is needed, especially near Londis, the chemist, Natashas people park in the zigzags make it impossible to see pedestrians.
- Keep some parking areas for people who have to drive into town.
- Extend the footpaths out from the town.

Accessibility

- Could be easier for wheelchair users and mobility scooters.
- Some estates and the town centre do not have enough dips from the path onto the road, making it very difficult to navigate if walking or as a wheelchair user or buggy.
- Town is generally accessible with a buggy but not with a wheelchair.

Tannery Park

- Park is in poor condition for the most part. As a general note, maintenance seems to be sparse if non-existent.

Vacancy

- Many vacant units that should be used. Can KCC offer an incentive to attract new businesses.

Amenities

- No bike track or cycle lanes.

Miscellaneous

- With the town continued to grow more sports pitches will be required both Soccer and Gaelic are full.
- Let's build a Lidl.
- Development of Drummond seeds site.
- This project must be of beneficial use to all locals and not just benefit some individuals. The youth is the future.
- Playground is a huge issue. It's out of sight & therefore a hot spot for antisocial behaviour. I don't feel safe bringing my kids.
- In my opinion this town lacks the most a reliable and frequent public transportation and a big cheap store like Lidl/Aldi/Tesco.

- Art or Monuments to give a sense of place - Rath, outside the Pale, Quakers, 1798 and Bord na Mona influence.
- A bigger public park with community amenities like seating, tables, a rose garden, litter bins or a linear canal park.
- There needs to be a major upgrade on the bridge coming into the town, the footpath should be removed from one side.
- Develop the old Drummonds site as a public space in the way the billboard on it has promised for years.
- Slow down traffic to make Rathangan safer – high crime, kids being hit by cars or loads from the quarry lorries.
- Fix St. Patrick's Park.
- Have footpath going to graveyard.
- New residential housing to include single story units to allow for downsizing and to free up large family homes.
- Develop water sports on the canal.
- No need to do anything to the town. Would like to see it left alone.

Town Centre/Market Square

- Need more businesses/shops back in the centre of the town
- High speed traffic going through the town.
- Rathangan is beautiful with a great community. It would be nice to have more shops and events for the community.
- More amenities are needed.
- Better pedestrian access to the village (Bridge is steep).
- Better lighting and seating along the canal.
- Bring a supermarket chain here please.
- Need to ensure we have amenities to cater for all the community, not sure the shop owners.
- Encourage more cafes/restaurants.
- Explore business development opportunities.
- Improve the canal infrastructure.
- Introduce frequent public shuttle buses to nearby train stations.
- Provide a remote working hub.
- Visual improvements of the village are much needed.
- Invest in improving the flow of the town as currently it is very congested with no parking.
- Schools should be co-educational.
- Open the Garda Station.
- Premises in the town centre should have lower rates rather than no rates.
- More heritage/tourist information should be provided.
- Leisure activities are needed for adults e.g. art and craft evening classes.
- Provide broadband in Cappanargid.
- Introduce traffic calming and ramps to reduce speeds.
- Provide streetlights on the Edenderry Road.
- Provide a pool or gym in the industrial estate at the soccer pitch or the industrial estate further out.

- Bonaghmore to Newtown link road should be developed.
- The town needs to grow like Naas and Kildare have over the past 20 years.
- The community centre and church yard car parks need a swale or rain garden each to filter pollutants going into the river.
- Need to improve the playground and provide more places for young people and children.
- The most cost and time efficient solution is to repair and paint the facades in colours to fix the grey aesthetic.
- Provide a covered seating area similar to Edenderry or Abbeyleix where people can meet.
- Parking on both sides of the main street leads to dangerous conditions for pedestrians as they cannot be seen wanting to cross.
- Skate Park for teenagers.
- Extra bins
- Better bus services
- More restaurants, childcare facilities, amenities needed.
- More Gardai in the station.
- Acquisition of buildings- refurbishment or selling of vacant buildings preferably by the owners rather than by use of draconian methods.
- Rathangan is beautiful but Main Street is sad and is missing so much business that used to be there.
- Parking is a major issue in Rathangan. Inconsiderate, selfish and dangerous parking. Control and enforcement are required and provision of a dedicated car park.

5.0 NEXT STEPS

All the material gathered through the public consultation and engagement that has taken place to date has been collated and is summarised in this report. Having regard to the outcomes of the positive public consultation engagement, the Strategic Projects and Public Realm (SPPR) team are currently preparing the Draft Town Renewal Masterplan (TRMP) with a wealth and wide range of information and ideas generated through collaboration and consultation between the community of Rathangan and the Strategic Projects and Public Realm Team.

It is proposed to publish a draft TRMP in Q1 of 2025. The Draft TRMP will then be the subject of further public consultation and subsequent agreement to finalise and publish by the Municipal District Councillors.



Figure 17: View of Spencer Bridge, Rathangan

APPENDIX I ART COMPETITION, JULY 2024

Kildare County Council ran an Art competition in July 2024 inviting all students from both Primary Schools in Rathangan to enter. This gave the Design Team for the TRMP a valuable insight into the perspective of the children who live in Rathangan and to engage with and see the town through their eyes. The theme of the competition was:

My Life in Rathangan: Show us life in Rathangan, your favourite, space, building, park, activities, nature, views, community events, and people.

The competition was hugely successful with 260 entries from children ranging in age from 4-13. The standard of art submitted was exceptional and the subject matter chosen by each of the entrants highlighted the special qualities of Rathangan and the strong sense of place, community, pride and identity that they feel about their town. The poster advertising the competition, and the winning entries are included below and a full slideshow of all the entries can be viewed at <https://kildarecoco.ie/AllServices/PublicRealm/TownRenewalMasterPlans/RathanganTownRenewalMasterplan-2024/>



The poster features a vibrant background of yellow, orange, and blue paint splatters. The title 'ART COMPETITION' is written in large, black, hand-drawn letters. Below the title, the text 'RATHANGAN TOWN RENEWAL MASTERPLAN' is centered. To the left, there is a small illustration of a house, trees, and people. To the right, there is a photograph of a child painting. The text on the poster provides details about the competition, including the theme, age groups, prizes, and contact information.

**ART
COMPETITION**

RATHANGAN TOWN RENEWAL MASTERPLAN

This art competition is open to students from
**Bunsoil Bhríde & St. Patrick's Boys National School
Rathangan.**

Deadline for entries: **15th June 2024**
Entries will be collected from each school
The art work must be **A4** in size.

The theme of the art work is
'My life in Rathangan'

*Show us life in Rathangan, your favourite, space, building,
park, activities, nature, views, community events, and people.*

Age Groups	Prizes:
4-6 years	Art set + €50 Voucher
7-9 years	Art set + €50 Voucher
10-13 years	Art set + €50 Voucher

- The winning entries will be displayed in Rathangan Library and included in the Town Renewal Masterplan.
- Contact details for entrants, (Full name student and Parent/Guardian and Parent/Guardian Email Address) to this competition will only be used for the purpose of this competition.
- Entries may be used by Kildare County Council for the purpose of Kildare County Council publications and associated promotions
- This competition is open to current students of Bunsoil Bhríde & St. Patrick's Boys National School Rathangan.
- Kildare County Council staff family members are not eligible to participate
- Personal details will be retained for one month after the prize giving
- Only one entry per young person
- Images must be your own work (originals, not copied!) and owned by you.



Figure I Poster circulated for Primary School Art Competition.



Age 7-9 Myam Farnan



Age 7-9 David Fitzsimons



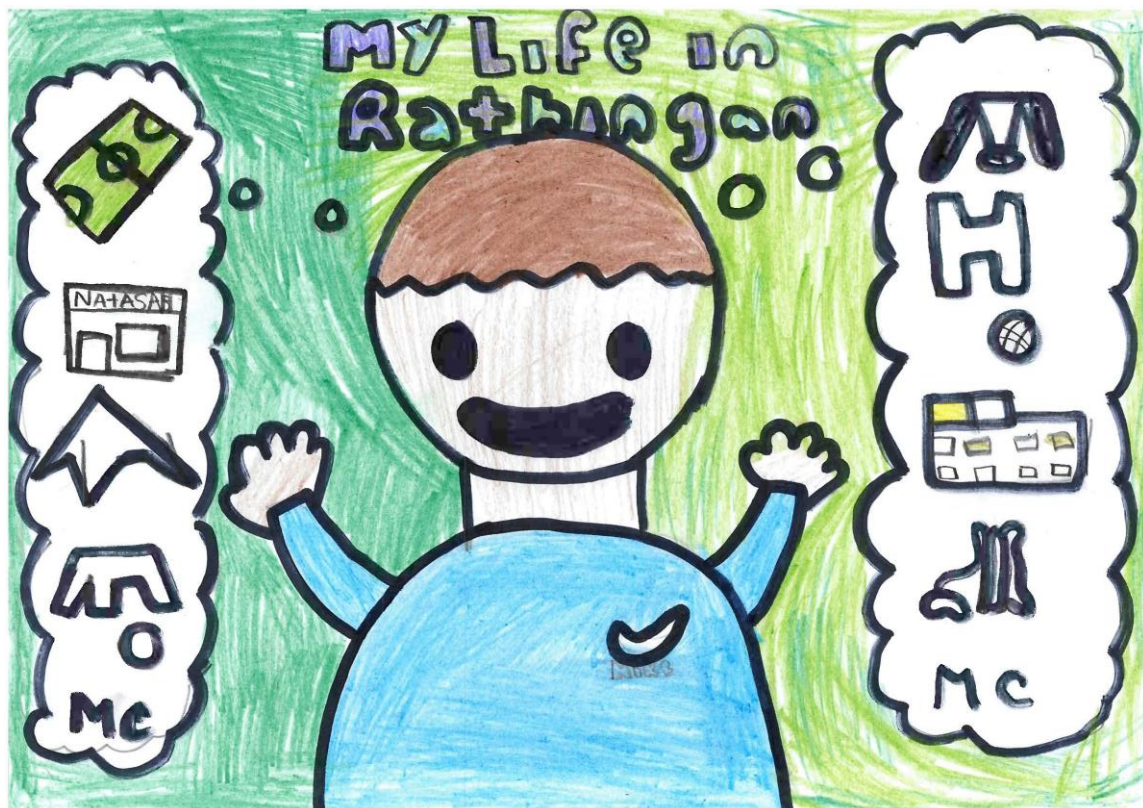
Age 10-13 Libbie Ward



Age 10-13 Kourtney Bakare



Age 4-6 Finn Walker



Age 10-13 Mason Campbell