

# BALLYHAUNIS - Béal Átha hAmhnais

## TOWN CENTRE FIRST PLAN

September 2025



Lár Bailte ar dTús  
Town Centre First



Ríaltas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo  
Mayo County Council



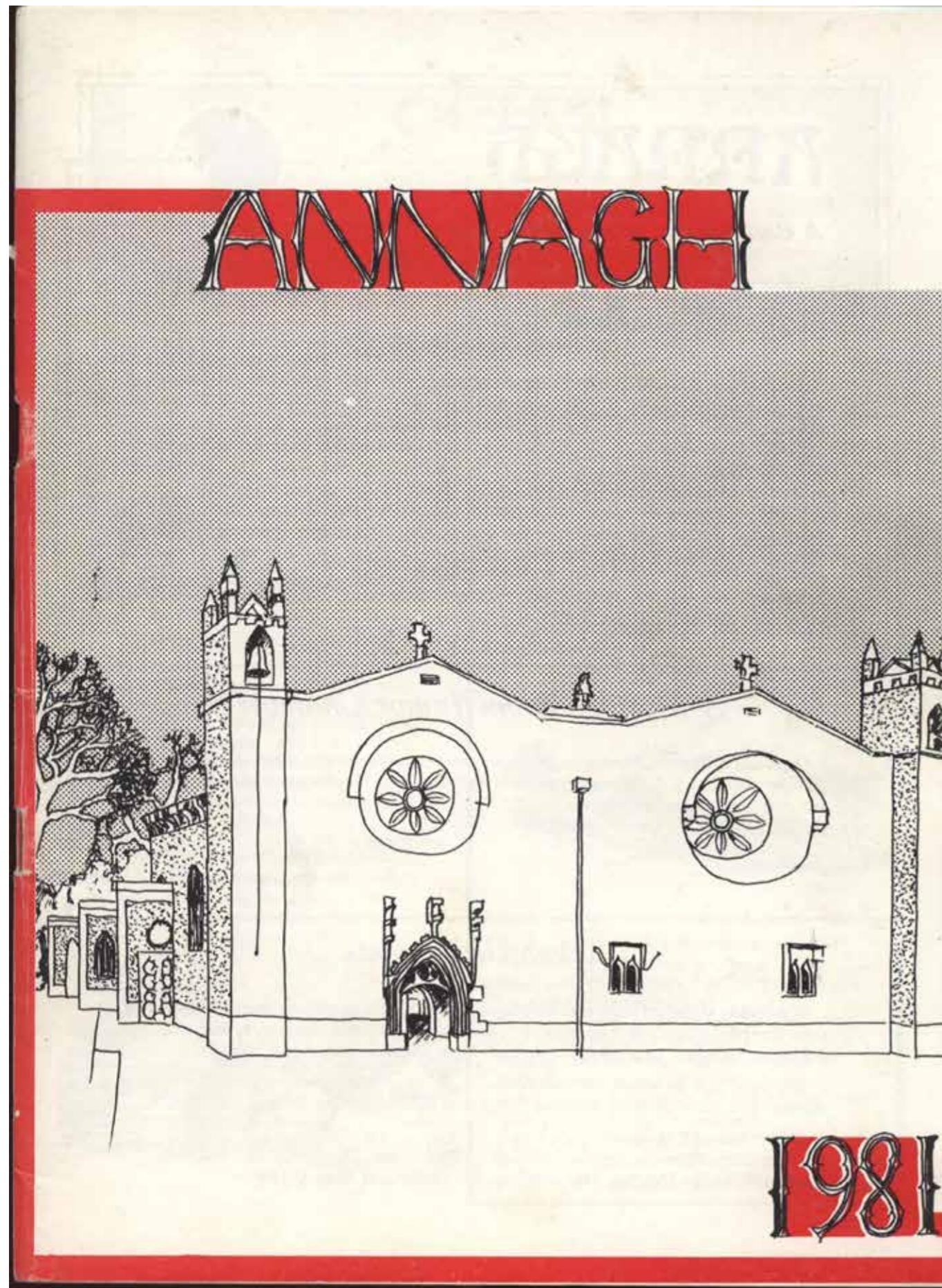


Image: Taken from the cover of Annagh Magazine 1981 edition. Artwork by Chris Pratt

**CHEERS!**

Now here's a toast, friend, to Ballyhaunis,  
And to all God's people in it!  
And should any man ask where on earth it is,  
This is hardly to his credit!  
But to bring the light now to backward folk  
From Downpatrick to Tralee,  
It's the first town set on the fine high-road  
Between Knock and Castlerea  
Or if ever by any grim misfortune's blighting  
South to Galway you must go,  
It's the last blessed town to give you heart  
Before you will leave Mayo!



But then backward folk may still well ask  
What is its claim to fame?  
Has it very much else to shout loud about  
Beyond its pleasant name?  
Well, there is its Abbey on the one high-hill,  
And its convent on the other,  
And on the third there's the parish church,  
And can many a town do better?  
Then I ask what other inland towns take pride,  
In a swimming pool of size,  
Or a plant to package there the finest meats  
That gladden European eyes?



Then, we have our social centres, friend,  
Our den for the Scouts and Cubs,  
Our libraries, courts and our playing fields,  
Our cinemas, cumanns, and clubs.  
We have homes from home and hotel rooms,  
We've the café and the lounge bar,  
With a hinterland rich in fine fishing lakes  
A golf course without par.  
And we have our schools for the willing hearts,  
And willing they are and blest,  
And wise men know them the whole world over  
As proud paragons in the west!



Besides, our town now like most good towns  
Has its cattle - mart and fair,  
But I wonder how many hold their market still  
On Tuesdays in the Square?  
So here we have reverence for past good ways,  
And we cherish old traditions,  
But this does not mean that life passes us by  
With its progress and inventions  
But how poor is the town that has no such roots,  
With no memory fine to ponder!  
Like a plastic flower with a false bright face  
It lacks the heart of wonder!

Rev. John O'Connor O.S.A.

Image/Poem: Taken from Page 1 of Annagh Magazine 1981 edition. Poem by Rev. John O'Connor O.S.A

## TOWN CENTRE FIRST PLAN September 2025

### CONTENTS

i. Introduction	4
ii. Policy	5

#### Part 1. - Understanding the Place

Welcome to Ballyhaunis	8-9
Geographic Context	10-11
Historic and Cultural Identity	12-13
Town Centre Experience	14-17
Socio-economic Profile	18-19

#### Part 2. - Consultation

Community Consultation	20-26
------------------------	-------

#### Part 3. - Defining the Place

A Vision for Ballyhaunis Town Centre	27-30
Key Themes	31-35

#### Part 4. - Enabling the Place

Action Plan	36-40
-------------	-------

#### Part 5. - Supporting Actions

Potential Projects	41-53
--------------------	-------

#### Appendices

References	
Acronyms	
Planning Policy	
Stage 1 Consultation Summary Report	
Stage 2 Consultation Report on DRAFT Plan	
Town Centre Health Check	
Digital Town Blueprint - Executive Summary	
Facilities and Groups Audit	
Liam Lyons Biography	

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mayo County Council and the project design team would like to thank all those who have contributed their time, knowledge and ideas to this plan and plan making process.

The Ballyhaunis Town Centre First Plan was prepared under the

direction of the Town Regeneration Officer of Mayo County Council, and in collaboration with:

Ballyhaunis Town Team

Claremorris-Swinford Municipal District Executive Team

TBLA - Project Lead + Urban Masterplanners

LUC - Graphic Support

Queens University Belfast - Town Centre Health Check

#### Special thank you to:

Adam Kaczmarek - Photographer - For use of digital images

<https://akmedialive.com/>

Liam Lyons Collection - For kind permission to use historic images

<https://liamlyons.com/> / [info@liamlyons.com](mailto:info@liamlyons.com)

<https://library.mayo.ie/media/Lyons%20Collection/Lyons%20Photographic%20Collection/album/index.html>

**We would like to warmly acknowledge Stephen Grogan's contribution to the Town Team and his years of dedicated work towards developing a more equitable Ballyhaunis, before his untimely death in August 2024.**

Also all the groups that helped bring this plan together including the Town Centre Health Check, Digital Town Blueprint and Groups Audit.

# Introduction

In September 2024, Ballyhaunis was chosen to be the second town in County Mayo to develop a Town Centre First (TCF) Plan. Town Centre First is the Government's policy strategy to support the rejuvenation of Irish rural town centres and halt their decline.

The initiative is a key part of Our Rural Future – the Government's ambitious five-year strategy designed to reimagine and revitalise Rural Ireland and is backed up by the Town Centre First Policy, a co-ordinated, whole of government approach to regenerate and revitalise Irish towns and villages.



Mayo County Council have appointed a multidisciplinary design team led by TBLA to prepare a non-statutory Masterplan for Ballyhaunis.



## BALLYHAUNIS TOWN TEAM

The Ballyhaunis Town Team formed to help guide this comprehensive plan and is the result of 12 months of meetings between Mayo County Council, stakeholders within the community and the consultant team.

### TOWN TEAM MEMBERS

Tom Forde - Forde's Ltd / Ballyhaunis Chamber  
Rachel Jordan - BRCIE Ltd  
Mohammad Cherbatji - Nour Foods/Ballyhaunis Chamber  
Eibhlin Murphy - Major International / BRCIE Ltd  
William Nestor - Chairperson Ballyhaunis GAA  
Mark Godfrey - Community Council  
Tzyy Wang - Family Resource Centre  
Pat Higgins - Abbey Trust  
Chris Ganley - Rural Irish Artists  
Mary Donnelly - Tidy Towns/Community Council  
Anne Cunnane - Ballyhaunis Chamber/BRCE Ltd  
Abdul Shafique - Pakistani Community & Mosque  
Arfan Rafique - Muslim Community

### The Ballyhaunis Town Team Statement

*'We are an enthusiastic group of Ballyhaunis people who have come together as a Town Team, under the Town Centre First programme. We have diverse backgrounds, skills and experiences and are all active in Ballyhaunis in different ways: business, sports, arts, culture, community, tidy towns, biodiversity, festivals & events. We want to do the best for our town, to drive it forward positively and inclusively. As Ballyhaunis has such rich cultural diversity, has one of the fastest growing populations in the West and it is one of the most youthful towns, it has incredible potential. For us it is important that everyone has a chance to contribute their ideas so that together, we can plan what needs to happen to make Ballyhaunis a better place to live, work, play, visit and do business.'*

# TOWN CENTRE FIRST POLICY

The Town Centre First (TCF) policy is the Government of Ireland's core strategy for supporting the revitalisation of rural town centres, aiming to foster places that are viable, vibrant and attractive for living, working, and visiting. As part of the broader Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021–2025, this approach promotes locally-led, nationally supported regeneration to ensure town centres thrive as service, social, and cultural hubs.

The Town Centre First Plan for Ballyhaunis has been developed within this framework, drawing on national, regional, and local policies (see Policies in Appendices) and informed by the TCF methodology set out in Town Centre First – A Policy Approach for Irish Towns. It provides a strategic, community-driven roadmap to guide Ballyhaunis through a period of transformation and long-term renewal.

## TOWN CENTRE FIRST POLICY RECOGNISES SUCCESSFUL PLACES THAT:

PROVIDE PLACES TO MEET, MINGLE AND DWELL  
ANIMATE STREETS AND SPACES  
CHERISH UNIQUE BUILDINGS  
ATTRACT BUSINESS  
UTILISE TECHNOLOGY  
SUPPORT HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

The Plan has been shaped by an extensive analysis of the town's identity, challenges, and opportunities (Part 1 – Understanding the Place), including its historic character, socio-economic profile, urban form and the experience of its town centre. It has also been strongly informed by community consultation (pages 19–23), ensuring local voices remain central to its vision and proposals.

In Part 2 – Defining the Place (pages 24–33), the Plan sets out a clear Vision for Ballyhaunis, identifies the needs of the community, and assesses infrastructure, public spaces, housing, and active travel opportunities. Notably, it includes the Friary Grounds Masterplan, offering a model for inclusive, community-oriented placemaking.

### 04 | Consultations & Data Analysis

The information collected from Stages 2 and 3 will be analyzed for common patterns, visions, and issues to inform policy.

### 03 | Open Public Consultation

Extensive public consultation will occur to help develop an idea of the town's wants and needs. This will include the creation of a town team.

### 02 | Data Collection

A village health check, SWOT analysis, and analysis of policy context will be conducted to form a baseline context of the town.

### 01 | Project Initiation

A road map for the project, stakeholders to engage with, targets and timelines, and working procedure will be established.

### 05 | Creation of Objectives & Vision

Using the now analyzed data, a joint vision for the town and general objectives to support it will be developed with the Town Team.

### 06 | Initial Strategy and Actions

Based off the Stage 2 and 3 data, specific and achievable actions will be developed to support the objectives, and a draft strategy for the town will be synthesized.

### 07 | Final Report

Following consults with the Town Team and key stakeholders the draft strategy will be refined into a final document and submitted to the Local Authority and made available to the public.

Part 3 – Enabling the Place presents the core Action Plan, which translates objectives into measurable, deliverable steps. These actions reflect the feedback gathered, align with planning policy, and are designed to guide real, tangible progress over time. Supporting materials—such as the Town Centre Health Check, Consultation Summary Report, and Digital Town Blueprint—are included in the Appendices to ground the Plan in evidence and transparency.

Ultimately, this Plan is more than a policy document; it is a shared vision for the future of Ballyhaunis, one that is durable yet flexible, rooted in community priorities, and shaped by a commitment to place-based renewal.



# Part 1 - Understanding the Place

*Emigrant Train leaving Ballyhaunis Station.*



# Welcome to Ballyhaunis



Ballyhaunis, or Béal Átha hAmhnais—meaning “ford-mouth of strife”—is a dynamic and culturally rich town in East County Mayo, located at the intersection of the N60 and N83 national roads and served by the Dublin–Westport railway line. It lies within close reach of major urban centres such as Claremorris and Tuam, offering a vital connection between rural communities and regional networks.

According to the 2022 Census, the population of Ballyhaunis stands at 2,773, continuing a strong upward trend and marking a 17% increase since 2016. The town has long served as a key employment centre in East Mayo, with deep roots in manufacturing, agri-processing, and the service sector—industries that reflect its broadly working-class population and strong ties to practical trades and rural enterprise. Ballyhaunis is the sixth largest settlement in Mayo, and a vital service hub for a wide agricultural hinterland extending into County Roscommon.

Culturally, Ballyhaunis is known as Ireland's most ethnically diverse town, with 37% of residents identifying as non-Irish nationals, including significant Pakistani, Syrian, Brazilian, Polish, and Croatian communities. This diversity enriches the town's social fabric and supports a welcoming, inclusive atmosphere.

Originally developing around the Augustinian Friary (founded in 1348), the town has grown westward along the River Dalgan, structured around four main streets and defined by a strong sense of identity. Ballyhaunis combines a proud historical legacy with ongoing public investment, regeneration projects, and sustainable growth initiatives, positioning it as a resilient and forward-looking town.

# BALLYHAUNIS TODAY

Ballyhaunis, a vibrant town in County Mayo, Ireland, is known for its rich cultural heritage, inclusive community spirit, and scenic surroundings.

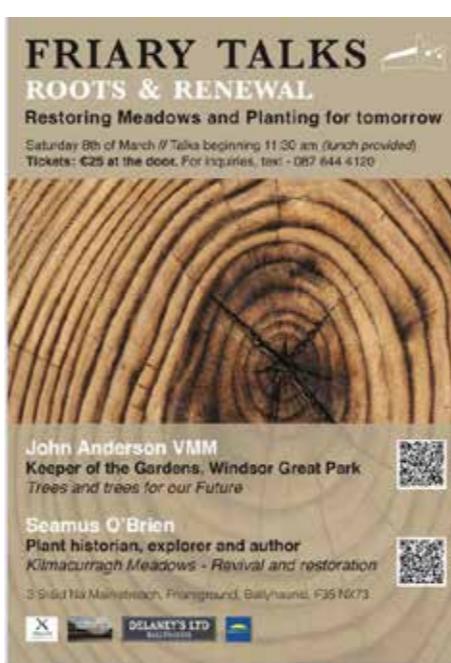
Nestled in the Irish countryside, it draws visitors eager to experience traditional life with a modern cultural flair. Historic landmarks like the 15th-century Augustinian Friary and Ireland's first purpose-built mosque highlight its diversity and long-standing heritage.

The town is a creative hub, where groups like St. Patrick's Dramatic Society and the Rural Irish Artists enrich the local arts scene through theatre and visual expression. The Women's Writing Group nurtures storytelling, while the Ballyhaunis Language Café connects people through Irish, Spanish, Italian, and English, celebrating cultural exchange.

Le Cairde, the Arts & Music Group, brings joy with performances and community events, while the Film Club fosters lively discussion around cinema. Strategy fans find a home in the Bridge Club, and the Abbey Male Voice Choir showcases local vocal talent. The Beekeepers Association promotes environmental awareness and preserves traditional skills.

Annual highlights like the Ballyhaunis Summer Festival and Abbey Pattern celebrate local culture with music, games, and heritage activities. The Christmas Festival, featuring Santa lighting up the town, adds festive cheer.

Ballyhaunis also thrives as a hub for active living. Sports clubs such as the GAA, rugby, soccer, cricket, basketball, table tennis, and boxing foster pride and connection. Leisure seekers enjoy angling, cycling, and the local gun club. Facilities like the rugby, GAA, and soccer pitches, outdoor pool, and an award-winning 9-hole golf course support a healthy, outdoor lifestyle.



# Geographic Context

Ballyhaunis is situated in the east of County Mayo, within the province of Connacht in the west of Ireland. The town's strategic location, surrounded by rolling countryside, small lakes, and rivers would have placed it as an ideal setting for a settlement to develop. It is at a crossroads of important transport routes, making it a hub for the region. With its proximity to larger towns like Castlebar and Claremorris, as well as connections to the broader Irish road and rail network, it has long contributed to Ballyhaunis' importance in both regional commerce and transport.

Ballyhaunis lies at the junction of the N60 and N83 roads, providing vital links to surrounding towns and villages. It is approximately 18 km northeast of Claremorris, 40 km south of Castlebar, and enjoys direct access to regional towns like Tuam (Galway) to the south, Charlestown (Sligo) to the north and Castlerea (Roscommon) to the east.

In addition to its excellent road connections, Ballyhaunis is also well-served by rail. The town lies on the Dublin-Westport line, which connects it to major urban centres across the country. Furthermore, Ireland West Airport Knock, located nearby, provides direct flights to several European destinations, enhancing Ballyhaunis' accessibility for both business and tourism.

Nestled within the eastern boundary of County Mayo, Ballyhaunis enjoys a picturesque rural setting that reflects the agricultural heritage of the area. The town's natural surroundings have shaped its historical role as a market centre, where livestock and other agricultural products were traded, and continue to contribute to its rural character today.

This combination of transport infrastructure and rich natural landscapes makes Ballyhaunis an accessible and vital point in County Mayo, offering both local charm and regional connectivity.



	BUS STATION		TOWN CENTRE
	TRAIN STATION		TOWN CENTRE
	KNOCK BASILICA		12 Mins
	IRELAND WEST AIRPORT		17 Mins
	Connaught Centre of excellence		8 Mins

## STUDY AREA

The Ballyhaunis Town Centre First Plan focuses on the main urban and historic core of the town, encompassing key community assets and potential development opportunities. The community assets include a retail zone with grocery shops, community buildings, religious centres, the Friary Grounds (now a park), and the town's train station. The opportunity sites identified for future growth include vacant buildings, underused spaces, and areas of land near the town centre, along with the approach roads and 'gateways' into Ballyhaunis. Additionally, the plan considers expanding recreational parkland and protecting the rural-urban edge, ensuring balanced development while preserving the town's character.

The study area boundary line, agreed with the Town Team, serves as a tool to concentrate efforts on the town centre core. It is important to note that while key projects are proposed within this defined boundary, many of these initiatives may extend beyond it or overlap with areas outside the focus zone, depending on evolving needs and opportunities. This flexible approach ensures that the wider context of Ballyhaunis is considered in planning and development, allowing for a more holistic and integrated vision for the town's growth.



# Historic and Cultural Identity

Ballyhaunis, derived from the Irish Béal Átha hAmhnais meaning "the mouth of the rough ford," is an area steeped in history and archaeological richness. The landscape is dotted with ringforts, souterrains, crannogs, and early Christian sites, suggesting continuous habitation since prehistoric times. A log boat dated to around 2000 BC, discovered in Carrowneden in 1996, confirms this ancient presence.

The town first entered written records around 1430 with the founding of the Augustinian Friary. Ballyhaunis developed around this religious centre, with the Augustinians ministering to the community until 2001. Their legacy continues through local partnerships.

By the 18th century, Ballyhaunis gained significance with the establishment of markets and fairs, notably through a 1751 patent granted to William Knox. It grew as a market town throughout the 19th century, hosting regular cattle and horse fairs. In 1841, it had a modest population of 353, with few houses and a sparse economic profile, though infrastructure like a dispensary and a police station were present.

The opening of the railway in 1861, connecting it to the Dublin-Westport line, marked a turning point. The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw the construction of key institutions like a courthouse (1875), convent (1898), banks, and churches.

Ballyhaunis played a notable role in the War of Independence, with multiple local skirmishes now commemorated by monuments.

In the late 20th century, the town experienced industrial development. United Meat Packers opened in 1974, later transitioning to operations under Dawn Meats, a major local employer. In 1999, Ballyhaunis participated in a local currency pilot scheme, part of the EU's transition to the euro.

Further reading on Ballyhaunis history can be found in the references and further reading section at the end of the report.

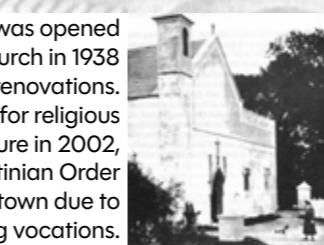
In 1751, a patent was granted to William Knox to establish a market in Ballyhaunis. This was a pivotal moment in the town's development, as it officially recognized Ballyhaunis as a commercial hub, facilitating the trade of local produce and goods.



Ballyhaunis benefited from the arrival of the railway in the 19th century. The opening of the Ballyhaunis railway station (part of the Western Railway Corridor) helped to connect the town to other parts of Ireland, promoting trade and travel.



Ballyhaunis IRA volunteers participated in the War of Independence, with local tensions rising amid RIC and Black and Tans activity, shaping the town's role in Ireland's path to independence.



St. Mary's Abbey, was opened as a Catholic church in 1938 following extensive renovations. It remained active for religious services until its closure in 2002, when the Augustinian Order withdrew from the town due to declining vocations.



Ireland's first purpose built mosque opened in 1987

United Meat Packers was established in 1974 when Chairman Sher Mohammed purchased a local slaughterhouse in Ballyhaunis. The facility provided much-needed employment in the area. However, due to financial difficulties, the company closed in 1992 and subsequently entered liquidation.



The Augustinian Friary in Ballyhaunis was founded circa 1400, with the site gifted by MacSiurtain Dubh (Mac Jordan Duff) MacCosteloe. The Augustinians were given about 150 acres of land, known as Abbey Quarter, for farming. Today, only 14 acres remain, now used as the town park.



The Ballyhaunis Courthouse, a limestone-faced building established in 1874, served the local community for nearly 140 years before its closure in 2013 due to government cutbacks.



The building of St Patrick's Catholic Church began in 1903

## Timeline

1348-1430

1751

1837

1861

1875

1898

1903-1909

1919-1921

1923

1938

1974-1992

1989

2003



Midwest Radio started broadcasting within the town

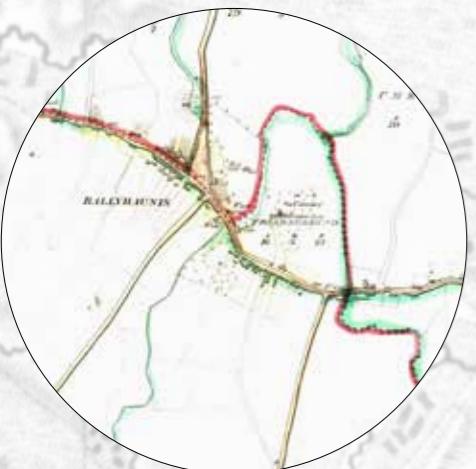


Upgrades to Market Square and surrounding streets



### Sir William Petty Map of County Mayo c. 1650

Ballyhaunis is not named on the 1650 edition of the William Petty map however historic records state that the Augustians settled in the area circa 1400. Indeed there is a wealth of archaeology in the area suggesting there were several settlements dating back thousands of years.



### 1st Edition 6inch Black and White Map c. 1837-1842

The first edition maps composed between 1837 – 1842 identify the individual plots for each building however not every building is shown to exist. It is only the second edition maps composed between 1888 – 1913 that show each building plot.



### 1893-97 6in Os Overview

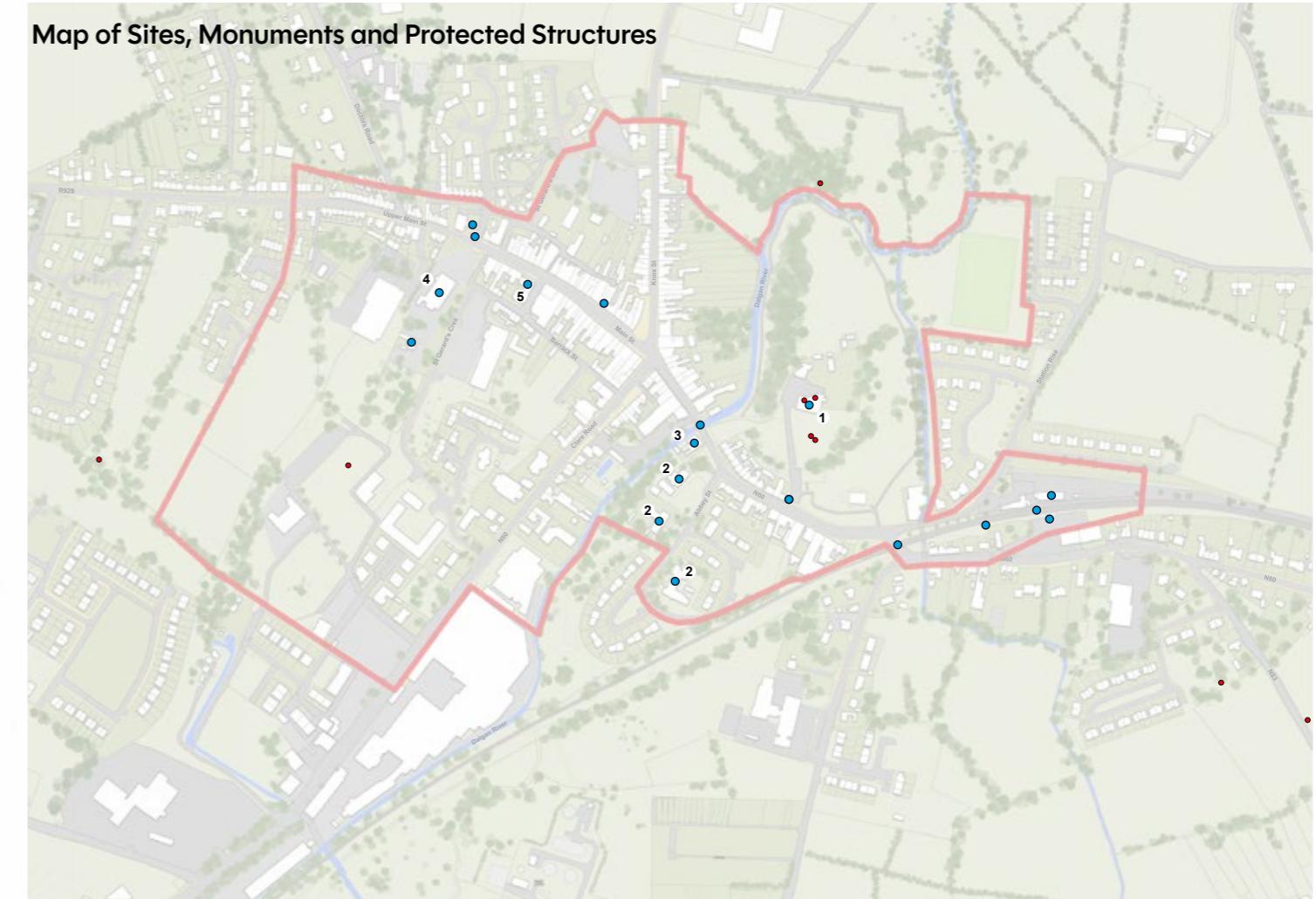
This overview map, resembling the 1650 Petty Map, illustrates Ballyhaunis within a broader landscape—featuring roads, lakes, wells, rivers, churches, and burial sites. It also highlights parish boundaries, with the northern part of the town lying in Bekan and the southern part in Annagh.



### 2nd Edition 25inch Black and White Map 1888-1913

From reviewing the maps, it can be seen that the area of Ballyhaunis has not increased significantly from the creation of the first edition map. However several changes had occurred within the region such as a Abbeyquatre school (Scoil Iosa), railway station, cemetery and Courthouse. This particular copy of the map has been marked up to show that the extent of new road surfacing in the town in 1914.

### Map of Sites, Monuments and Protected Structures



### Urban Morphology of Ballyhaunis

The urban morphology of Ballyhaunis reflects a compact, linear town structure shaped by its historical development and transportation routes. The town has evolved along a primary east–west axis, centred on Main Street, which serves as the main commercial spine connecting key landmarks like the train station, Market Square, and Friary grounds.

The historic centre around Main Street, Knox Street, and Clare Road features a traditional terraced urban fabric, with narrow plots and street-front buildings that create a strong sense of enclosure. This part of the town exhibits a mixed-use character, with retail, residential, and service functions interwoven, although some areas—particularly Knox Street—suffer from vacancy and dereliction.



### Modern Day - Urban Grain

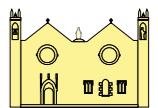
Ballyhaunis is still distinctly recognisable from the historic urban but more than 100 years on and the expansion and development of the town is evident through residential sprawl and large scale supermarkets, factories and warehouses. It also goes to highlight how all traffic is filtered through a very narrow corridor within the town centre which has both opportunities and challenges.

• National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

• Sites and Monuments Records

#### Key buildings

1 St Mary's Abbey Chapel



2 Former st Joseph's Convent



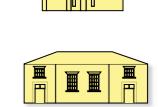
3 Ulster Bank



4 St Patricks RC Church



5 Courthouse



# Town Centre Experience

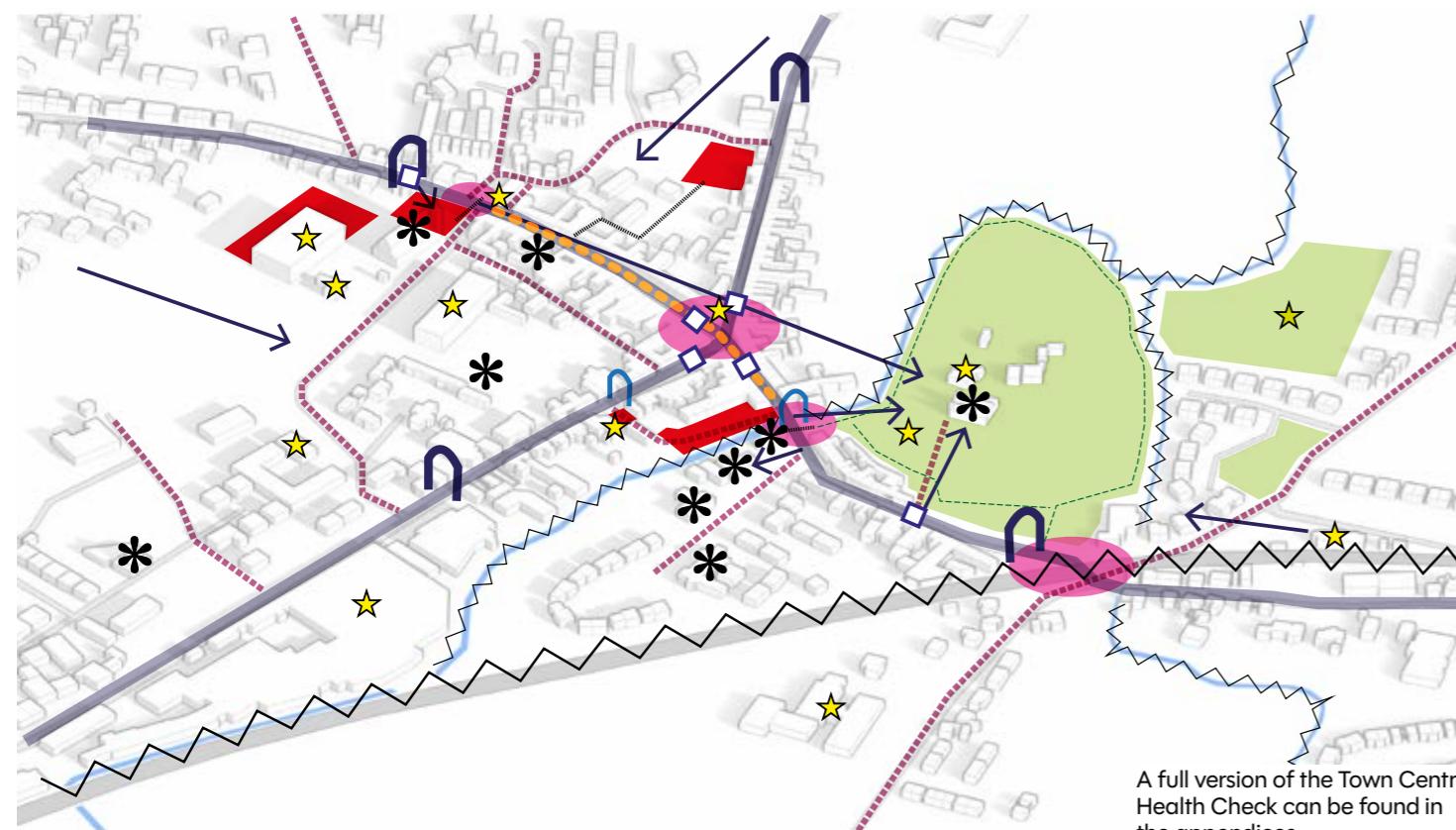
Ballyhaunis offers a positive first impression with an attractive Main Street and evident local pride, though issues like vacancy and dereliction, especially on Knox Street, detract from the experience. Narrow streets and heavy pavement parking restrict movement, creating a car-dominated environment.

Traffic counts show high vehicle use and low pedestrian footfall, with underused off-street car parks just minutes from the centre. This highlights the need for improved walking and cycling infrastructure and a shift away from car dependency.

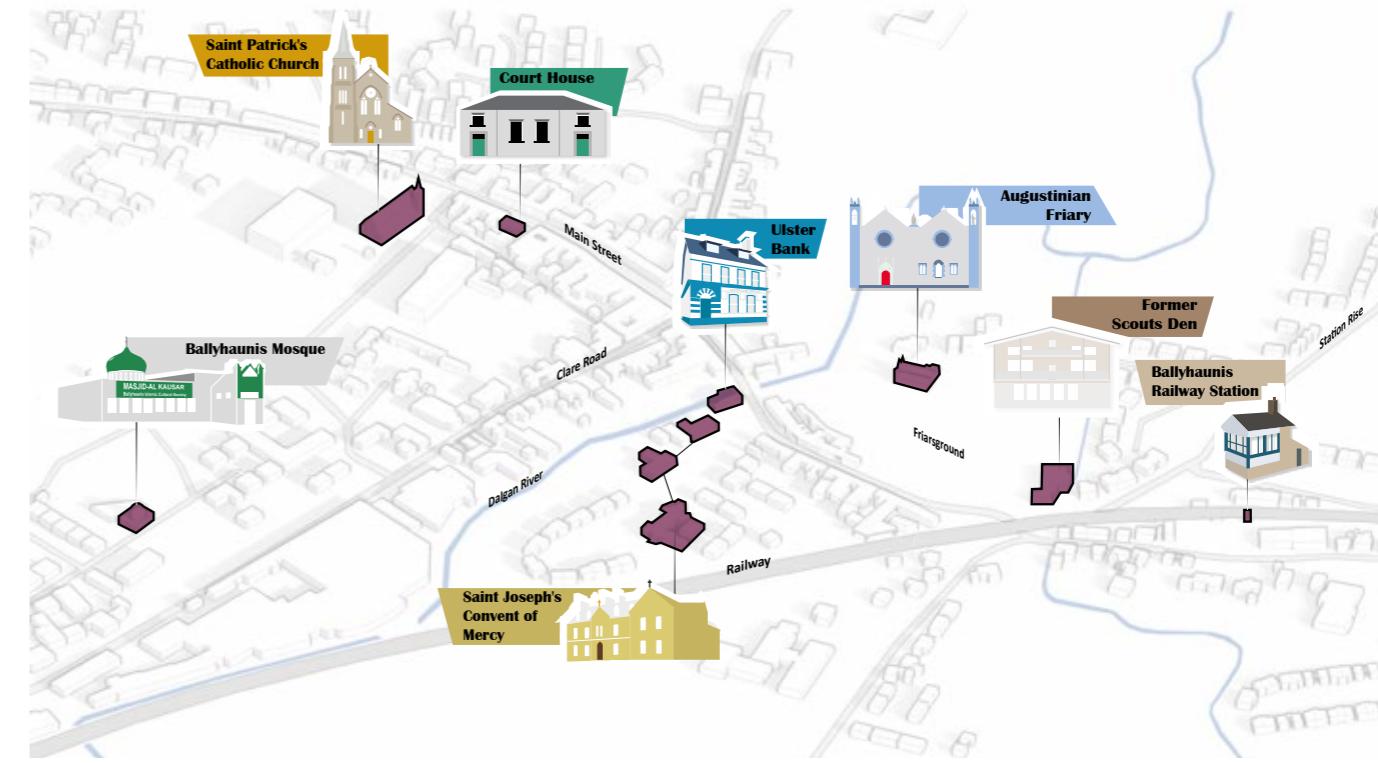
On-street parking contributes to congestion, while off-street areas like Knox St. carpark remain largely empty due to poor layout and visibility. A revised parking strategy is needed to support better pedestrian flow and reduce town centre congestion.

Pedestrian crossings are limited or poorly located, with many residents using informal routes. Safer, better-placed crossings aligned with actual movement patterns would improve access, especially for vulnerable users.

Public spaces lack seating and inclusive features. Narrow, obstructed footpaths and underused areas like the Market Square and Friary grounds offer opportunities for enhancement. Investing in seating, wider pathways, and interactive public spaces would make the town more welcoming and connected.



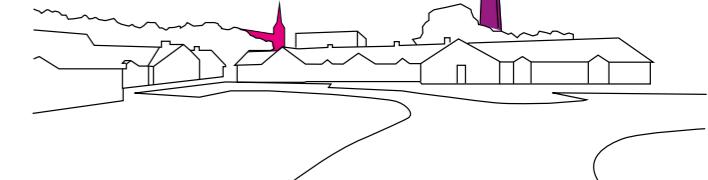
- \* Visual Landmarks
- ★ Key Attraction / Destination
- Nodes
- Primary Gateway
- Secondary Gateway
- Primary Vehicular Routes
- Secondary Vehicular Routes
- Pedestrian Links
- Desire Lines
- Crossings
- ~~ Barriers to Movement
- Accessible Community Greenspace
- Retail Core
- ← Key Views
- Dalgan River



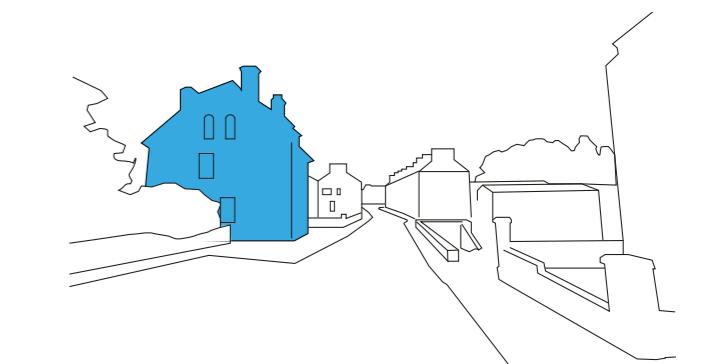
## LANDMARKS AND DESTINATIONS

Ballyhaunis is home to a range of distinctive landmarks that contribute significantly to its placemaking potential and community infrastructure. Historic and civic buildings such as the Augustinian Friary, the Courthouse, and St. Patrick's Catholic Church offer deep cultural resonance and architectural character, serving as anchors of identity and continuity within the town. Religious and institutional sites, including Ballyhaunis Mosque—the first purpose-built mosque in Ireland—and St. Joseph's Convent of Mercy, reflect the town's diverse, inclusive, and evolving social fabric.

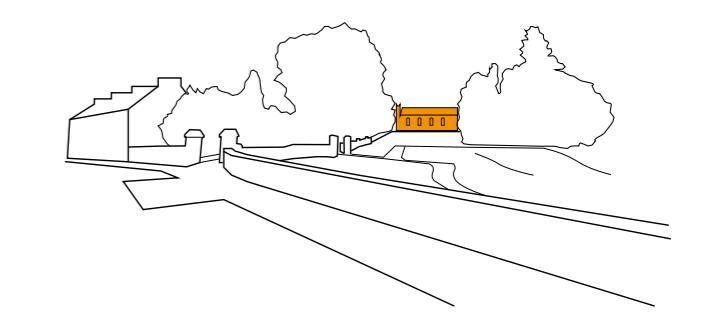
Key locations like the Ballyhaunis Railway Station and Main Street connect the town physically and socially, reinforcing walkability, accessibility, and the potential for vibrant public life. Underused or derelict sites such as the former Scouts Den and Dalgan river frontage present opportunities for adaptive reuse, providing flexible community meeting places. Together, these landmarks form a strong foundation for placemaking strategies that prioritize heritage, connectivity, and community well-being, helping to shape Ballyhaunis as a town rooted in its past but focused on inclusive, dynamic growth.



View looking north from St Gerard's Crescent / Communal House towards St Patrick's Church and the radio aerial tower



View looking west along Bridge St with the Former Ulster Bank building



View looking north from Abbey St towards St Mary's Abbey which is largely concealed behind a tree line

# BUILT FORM

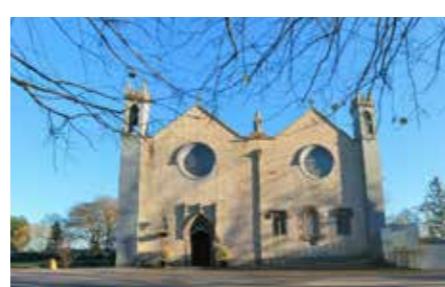
## Town Centre Streetscape



## Community Buildings



## Protected Buildings



## Housing



## Laneways



## Industrial



## Train Station



## Backlands



## Vacant Buildings



# ACCESSIBLE TOWN

## How walkable is your town?

Ballyhaunis Town Centre First, Mayo Age Friendly Programme, Claremorris Swinford Municipal District, Active Travel and local disability organisations are working together to improve the experience of the town for older and disabled people. These groups worked collaboratively to carry out a walkability audit of the town, supported by Cllr Alma Gallagher and members of An Garda Síochána. Ballyhaunis aspires to become Mayo's First Age-Friendly town.

Based on the Universal Design Tool (developed by the National Transport Authority, Age Friendly Ireland and the Centre for Universal Design) this community-based assessment of the built environment considers how people of all ages and abilities really experience navigating the streets of their town.

The Ballyhaunis Town Team and consultation carried out for the Town Centre First Plan were central in identifying key routes (most used to access shops, schools, religious buildings and other significant buildings in the town centre). Consideration was given to places to sit/ rest (& age-friendly seating), crossings, obstacles (such as cars parking on footpaths, bins, overhanging trees/ shrubs) and street signage (including signs on footpaths, sandwich boards etc). Other factors included how the streets look and feel (are they clean, do they feel safe, are people considerate).

The detailed information collected (photographs, questionnaires, feedback, comments) is vital to make a case for funding to carry out relevant works, with priority being assigned to the most urgent and safety-related issues.



## Ballyhaunis Autism Friendly Town:

A number of parents of autistic children in the community have come together to form an Autism Friendly Town (AFT) Committee for Ballyhaunis. Meetings with AsIAM's Autism Friendly Town's Manager have been initiated to formalise this process. (AsIAM is Ireland's Autism Charity). Ballyhaunis will soon be joining a national programme with huge momentum with over 40 other communities on this journey.

## Mayo Local Authority Integration Team

### Working Together for an Inclusive Mayo

The Mayo Local Authority Integration Team plays a vital role in fostering inclusion, equality, and intercultural understanding across County Mayo. "We collaborate with local agencies, schools, and community organisations to ensure that everyone—regardless of background, nationality, or ethnicity—feels welcome, respected, and empowered to participate fully in community life."

As a central point of contact, the Integration Team provides information, guidance, and advice to individuals and groups seeking support. "We help people access services that support employment, training, education, English language learning, family supports, childcare, and healthcare. We also connect individuals to sporting, voluntary, and cultural activities that help build community connections and a sense of belonging."

In addition to our outreach and support work, the Integration Team administers an annual funding scheme to assist communities in developing initiatives that promote the integration of new residents. The Mayo Local Authority Integration Team are here to help create inclusive spaces and build stronger, more connected communities throughout Mayo.



## GROUPS and ACTIVITIES

Walking	School	MABS
TC Fitness	Claremorris Drama Group	Primary Health Care
LGFA	Ballyhaunis GAA Club	Annagh Magazine
Ballyhaunis Town Soccer Club	Mayo SPCA	St Vincent De Paul
Ballyhaunis Hurlers	Active Retirement	Abbey Partnership / Trust
Agape Christian Church Group	Faith & Light	Abbey Pattern Committee
Foróige / BEY Project	Western Care use the facilities	Soccer Club
Table Tennis Club	Senior Citizens	Community Garden
Parent & Toddler Group	Pilates	Ballyhaunis Tidy Towns
Mother & Baby Group	Unislim	Sustainable Ballyhaunis
Ballyhaunis Foróige Club	Tai Chi	Mayo Autism Camp
Gymnastics	Rural Irish Artists	Devils Basketball
TC Fitness	MSPCA	GAA Hurling
Mayo Sports Partnership	Beekeepers	GAA Football
Yoga	Mayo Sligo Leitrim ETB	School of Dancing
Children's Fitness	Family Resource Centre	Janette Webb Zumba
Designer Minds	Ballyhaunis Le Caisde	Arabic classes
Language Café	Community Based Family Support	Therapies
Community Council	Crochet Group	Islamic Community Meetings
Tidy Towns	Activities for Parents	Zumba
Parish Pastoral Council	Sports Hub Coordinator/Mayo Sports Partnership	Computer skills and literacy
Muslim/Indian Communities	Tusla	Drama Society
Families	AA	
Ballyhaunis Parish	Safe Ireland	

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community Hall - Main Street

Family Resource Centre - Abbey Street

Mayo Sligo Leitrim ETB - Enterprise Centre, Clare Road

Clare Court / Communal House - Clare Road

Ballyhaunis GAA Clubhouse - Knock Road

Ballyhaunis Rugby Club - Doctors Road

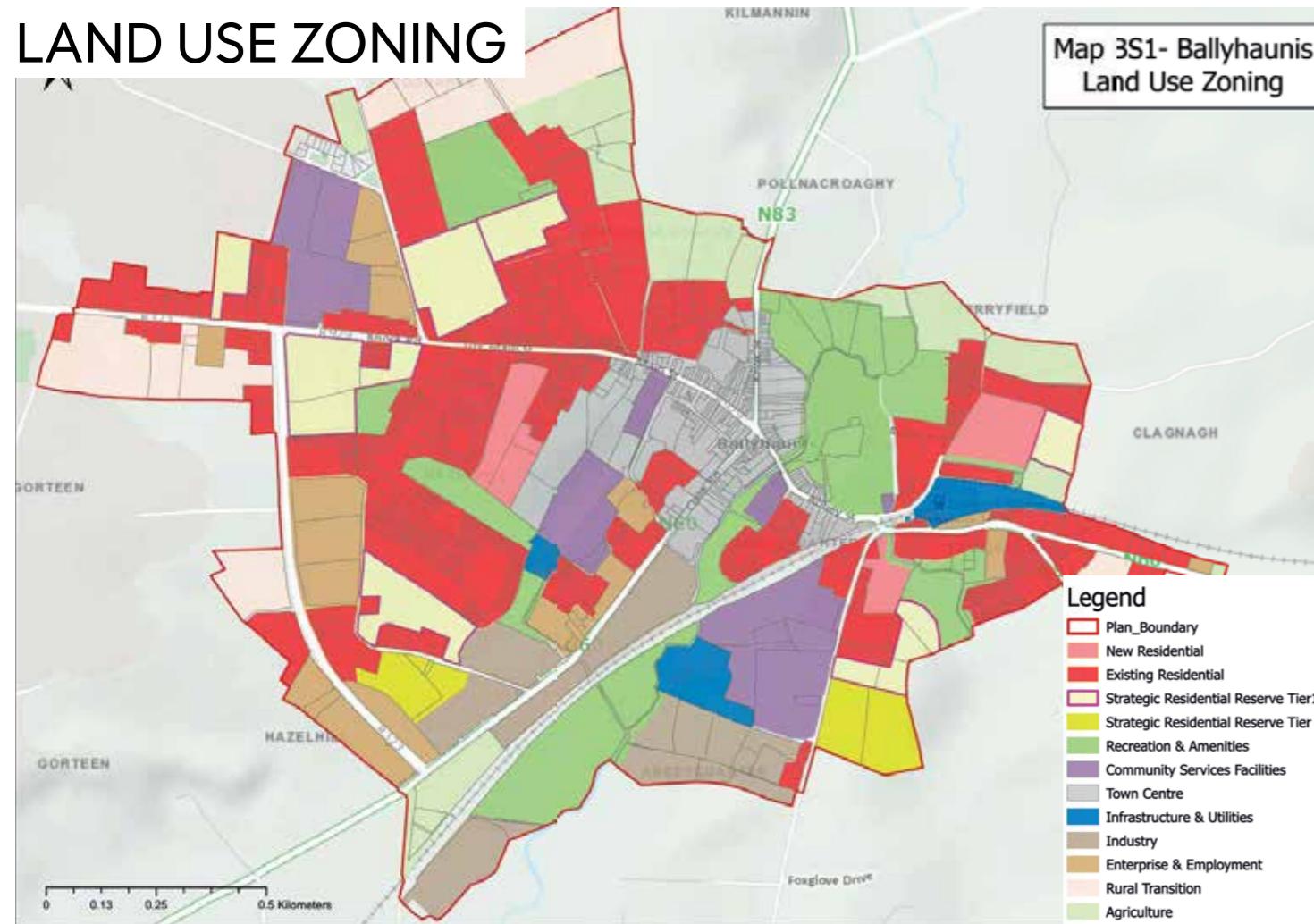
Ballyhaunis Community School - Knock Road

Scoil Iosa - Abbey Quarter

Ballyhaunis Mosque - Sherwood Avenue



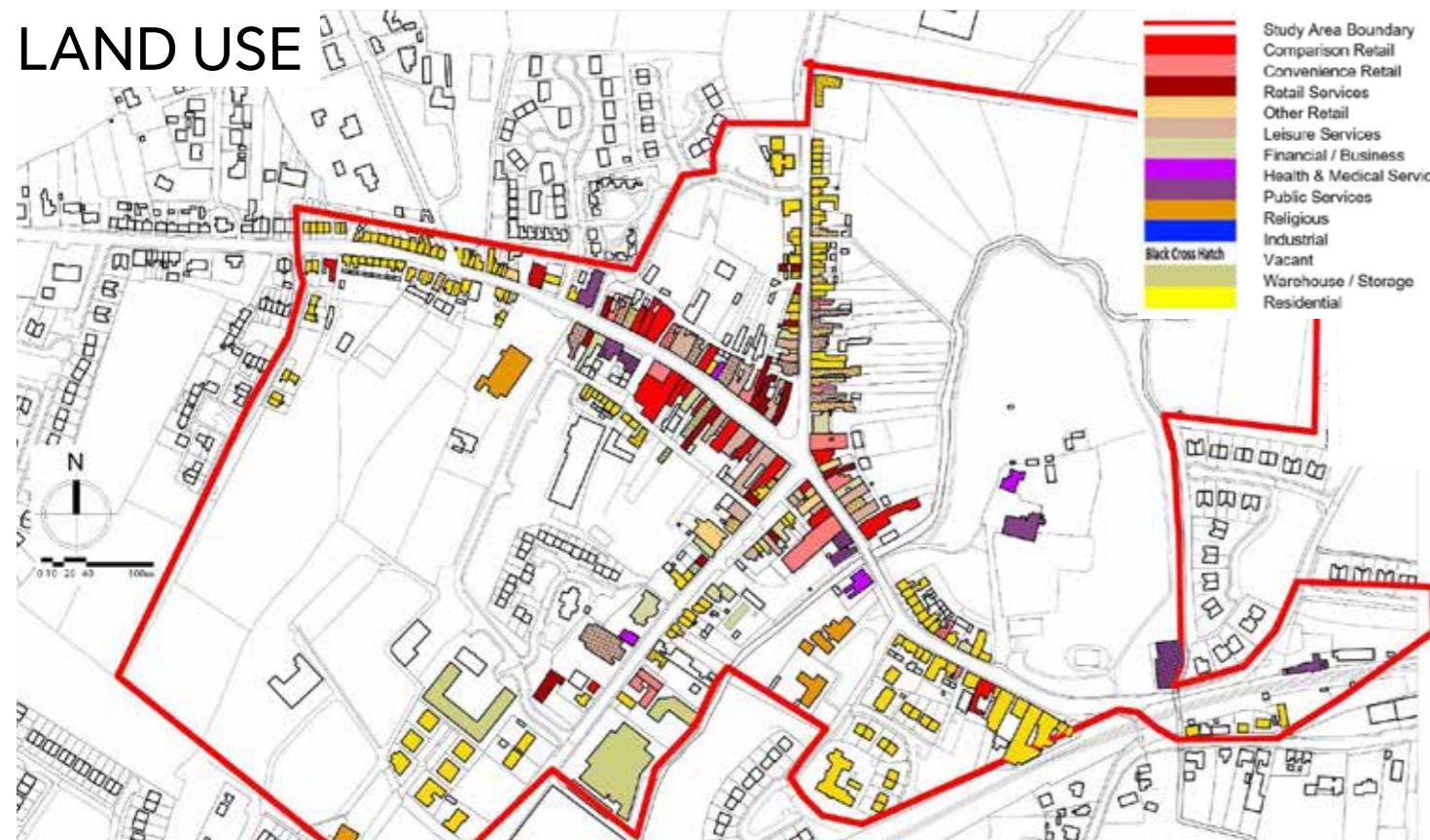
## LAND USE ZONING



Above: 'Land Use Zoning' Extract from Mayo County Development Plan 2022-28

Below: 'Land Use' Mapping Extract from the Town Centre Health Check undertaken in 2025 by QUB

## LAND USE



## TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK

### Ballyhaunis



Town Centre Health Check  
Mayo County Council

The Ballyhaunis Town Health Check, carried out by Queen's University Belfast students in collaboration with Mayo County Council, provides a snapshot of the town's physical and functional condition. The assessment identifies Ballyhaunis as a car-centric town with significant potential for improving walkability, public spaces, and connectivity. While first impressions of the town centre were generally positive—highlighting a strong commercial core and painted facades, the study found notable issues, including high vacancy rates, underutilised off-street parking, limited pedestrian infrastructure, and a lack of vibrant public people friendly spaces. The report recommends rationalising on-street parking, enhancing pedestrian crossings (especially along key desire lines), upgrading footpaths, and improving public seating and inclusive outdoor areas. Overall, the Health Check presents a data-driven call for strategic urban design space improvements to make Ballyhaunis a more accessible, inclusive, and community-oriented town.

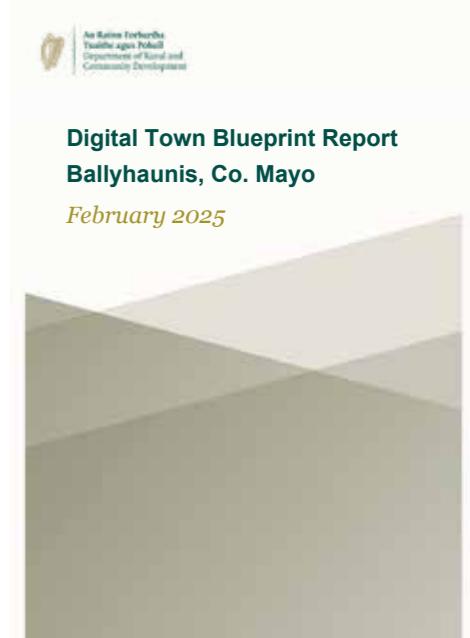
A full version of the Town Centre Health Check can be found in the appendices.

## DIGITAL TOWN BLUEPRINT

The .IE Digital Town Blueprint (DTB) is an entry-level assessment for local authorities, chambers of commerce and other local community groups interested in understanding the current digital readiness of their town. The DTB has been designed to help towns rapidly and cost-effectively:

- Understand their current digital town readiness and digital competitiveness
- Compare their town against Irish and international benchmarks
- Stimulate stakeholder engagement on digitalization.

The Ballyhaunis Digital Blueprint measures existing provision across seven dimensions: infrastructure for connectivity, the digital Economy and digital business, digital public services, digital education, digital technologies and civil society, digital tourism and governance of Digital Town initiatives.



# Socio-Economic Profile

## Population Growth

Ballyhaunis is considered to be the most ethnically diverse town in Ireland and boasts one of the fastest growing populations in the Western region. According to the 2022 census, the town's population rose 14.3 percent between 2016 and 2022, a growth of 438 people to a total of 2,773. According to the data -published by the Western Development Commission as part of a recent report - Ballyhaunis is also growing faster than the population of county Mayo which rose 5.2 percent from 2016 to 2022. This is largely due to high levels of migration of staff taking jobs in two large local food processing companies. The town is also home to approximately 400 asylum seekers. Ballyhaunis' demographic uniqueness—a young population (average age 35.1) and 49.7% foreign-born residents—defines its evolving cultural landscape.



## Age Profile

Ballyhaunis is the youngest town in Mayo with an average age of 35.1 year, compared to Mayo as a whole, where the average age is 41.6 years. Student numbers at Ballyhaunis Community School (BCS) grew from 515 to 720 in the space of nine years up to 2022. A €4million extension of the school completed in 2022 caters to this growing population.

## Economic Development

Ballyhaunis serves as the retail centre and employment base for a larger rural catchment area and provides a range of services, social and community facilities. It is an important employment base in the east of the county, particularly in the areas of food processing, agri-engineering and manufacturing. It is envisioned that Ballyhaunis, along with Claremorris and Ballinrobe can form a Growth Cluster in South Mayo to harness their combined strengths to contribute towards the consolidation of the Atlantic Economic Corridor.

**Economic Development** Ballyhaunis has an established industrial and manufacturing base in the town. Manufacturing Industries account for 27.3% of the main employment sectors in the town, which is significantly higher than the state average (13%). The other main employment sectors in the town include the Service Sector (19.3%) and ICT and Professional Services (9%). The key economic activities in Ballyhaunis are concentrated in a number of significant companies that relate directly and indirectly to the food processing industry. The town also has a range of other manufacturing industries that includes furniture, plastics and kitchen construction. A range of medium to small retail outlets, as well as employment in the state sector and the financial sector provide important employment in the town. Opportunities also exist for start-ups and incubation hubs in Ballyhaunis at the Enterprise Centre, located centrally. Additionally, Ballyhaunis remains an important service town for a wide agricultural hinterland in East Mayo and with a reach into County Roscommon.

Ballyhaunis is heavily reliant on food and farming, with the suckler and sheep industries being crucial to the local economy. Moreover, there are farms like Wild Acre Farm which focus on horticulture and growing tomatoes, and Wood Garlic Farm focusing on sustainability and eco-tourism. Ballyhaunis Farmers Market is also a major part of the local food and farming landscape.

As Ballyhaunis becomes more ethnically diverse it has an increasing set of international economic linkages. Diverse communities have opened their own businesses: the Aleppo store on Main Street, retailing Asian and middle eastern groceries, was opened in 2019 by the Rahmani family. A related distribution company, Anta Foods, also runs a bakery in Ballinlough. The local Supermac's franchise is owned by Sri Lankan businessman Dinal Swaris, while Pakistani native Adnan Ahmed operates two restaurants in the town.



## Educational Attainment

In terms of socio-economic characteristics relating to education levels amongst resident workers in the Ballyhaunis catchment, they tend to have a lower rate of 3rd level education attainment than the Western Region. The Ballyhaunis catchment also has a much higher proportion of workers engaged in the 'Manufacturing Industries' sector and lower rates in 'Education, Health and Social Work'. Resident workers in the Ballyhaunis catchment also have an older age profile than the Western Region average. 41.1% of the 101 people surveyed in that cluster have third level education while male unemployment is at 3.5 percent and female unemployment at zero.

To address the needs of the demographic base, Mayo Sligo Leitrim ETB has seen a large demand for courses in English and healthcare (level 5 qualification) classes offered at its offices in the Enterprise Centre. The Local Employment Service, funded through the Department of Rural and Community Development, meanwhile offers advice to jobseekers.



## Nationalities

Based on Census 2022, Ballyhaunis was the town with the highest proportion of non-Irish residents at 49.7%. Some 5 % of the town's population were Brazilian, 4 % were Poles and 3 % were Croatian, according to the data.

Ballyhaunis first welcomed a cohort of workers from Pakistan in 1974, when Sher Mohammed Rafique opened the Halal meat plant, also providing many locals with a livelihood. In 1987, Ireland's first purpose-built mosque opened in Ballyhaunis, serving the Muslim community which has expanded in recent years, as many asylum seekers housed in the local IPAS centres are increasingly from Muslim majority countries like Somalia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Jordan and Morocco.



In Scoil Íosa National School there are now 31 different nationalities among 399 pupils and there are 42 nationalities in Ballyhaunis Community School. Kenneth Dennedy, Principal of Scoil Íosa has said: The percentage of children who do not speak English when they go home in the evening is 63 %."

#### Pobal HP Deprivation Index

A detailed analysis of socio-economic indicators in the Ballyhaunis region shows that areas outside the town have pulled away from the town centre. Data based on a sampling of 331 people living in the centre of the town, shows far greater levels of economic disadvantage, with male unemployment levels at 37.5% and female unemployment at 41%. 26% percent of those in this cohort said they had third level education. The town-centre area is classed as "disadvantaged" in the Pobal report. 51.7% of those surveyed in the town classed themselves as lone parents.

The designation of both Ballyhaunis Community School and the local primary school as participants in the Delivering Equality in Education (DEIS) programme has allowed both schools to hire home school liaison officers while also offering free hot meals to students. The local Family Resource Centre, among its various services, also operates the Food Cloud service, redistributing donated food to those in need.

#### Socio-Economic Challenges

Unskilled workers on minimum wage salaries have been particularly impacted by acute price inflation in recent years. The national consumer price index for September 2021 to September 2022 shows a 49.6% rise in the cost of electricity with a 9.9% jump in food and beverage costs and an 11.3% rise in transport. Rent rose by an average 10% in the time frame.

Migrants nationally are more prone to poverty, according to research by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) research (published 2023) compiled by Frances McGinnity, which puts the percentage of migrants below the poverty line at 16.8%, compared to an 11.6% equivalent for the Irish born population.

Immigrant workers are also far more dependent on private (and non-social) housing compared to the Irish born population, according to the ESRI data. Most alarming perhaps, the percentage of income spent on accommodation at 41% compared to an average of 8.5% for Irish nationals.

Programmes which seek to address inequality and disadvantage among local youths include Ballyhaunis Engaging Youth (BEY) run by the national Foroige office with programmes on IT and health funded through MSLETB. BEY programmes are sometimes supported by the local Family Resource Centre.

The socio-economic challenges facing the town's population continue to evolve. Much of the town's social fabric is kept together by a team of Rural Social Scheme and Tus workers who do a great deal of the landscaping in public areas like the Friary grounds. Finding suitable applicants at a time of full employment has become a challenge and increasingly these positions are being taken by Ukrainian and other Eastern European candidates.

The presence of three evangelical Protestant churches caters -and offers support networks - to the new migrant populations: two of these churches are Brazilian while Pastor Emmanuel Olaurewaju ministers to a largely African congregation at the Word of Life church each Sunday.



#### Sustainable Travel

One of four towns surveyed in Connacht, Ballyhaunis scored well for local access to employment in the Sustainable Mobility Index for Rural Towns published by the Western Development Commission in 2023. However, the town scored only 30 out of 35 (a high score suggesting lower performance) in local low carbon transportation. Ballyhaunis scored 28 for access to social services and facilities. There have been efforts to increase [low carbon] mobility locally. The Active Travel programme improved footpaths and lighting enabling people of all ages and incomes to exercise more. Another public travel initiative, Local Link, connects rural dwellers to Ballyhaunis with several weekly routes. In 2023 the service was extended to villages in Co Roscommon and has proven an important link, particularly for those living alone.

# Part 2 - Consultation

## Needs

GP surgery,  
Leisure centre,  
Cloth stores,  
Dentist,  
Hotel,  
Dog park,  
Cinema,  
New Firestation,  
Play ground: monkey bars,  
zipline, obstacles,  
Childcare,  
Better playground for the school  
Restaurant,  
Cultural shop;  
kids clothes shop,  
Walk lanes /cycle lanes,  
Mote bins,  
Benches

## Has

Swimming Pool,  
Library, Park,  
Aldi, Primary School, Secondary school,  
train station, fastfood restaurants,  
different types of shops, G.P,  
Church, mosque, Garda station,  
firefighters, froige, sports clubs

Talking to and involving a wide range of people is a key part of creating the Town Centre First Plan. The plan brings together ideas from the community, local businesses, and people with expert knowledge from different sectors and the local council. The feedback gathered during this process has helped shape and guide the plan.

Dog  
Park

Baby  
Park \*

# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT WITH CLAREMORRIS–SWINFORD MD

Regular meetings were held with the Claremorris Swinford MD team over the months to discuss over-arching issues, key sites and future priorities in developing the TCF plan for Ballyhaunis. Discussions focused on community facilities, heritage buildings, sports and recreation, and public realm improvements, all aimed at supporting Ballyhaunis's growth as a vibrant, connected, and inclusive town.

## Key Projects & Priorities Identified:

- Scout's Den: Potential to be redeveloped as a youth and community facility (e.g., Montessori, Foróige, Boxing Club). The project will require new access and significant funding for clearance and feasibility work.
- Courthouse: Proposed lease to the Chamber of Commerce and Irish Rural Artists. Urgent repairs are needed before occupation. The building has potential for community use and creative industries.
- Ballyhaunis Friary: Under community ownership via Ballyhaunis Abbey Trust. A long-term conservation and redevelopment plan is needed, especially to protect its historic Harry Clarke stained glass windows. This site has strong potential as a cultural and community anchor.
- Swimming Pool: Recently renovated and run by local volunteers. Options are being explored to upgrade heating and extend its use beyond summer months.
- Cricket Facilities: Current space is inadequate; a dedicated pitch may be needed, depending on demand. Site ownership and use remain challenges.

- Multi-Purpose Community Hall: There is demand for an indoor sports and community events space. Successful examples exist nearby (e.g., Knock, Aghamore).
- Public Realm & Placemaking: Proposals include improved lighting, expanded park infrastructure, and a new footbridge linking the Friary to the swimming pool area. These efforts aim to improve access, safety, and the visual quality of public spaces.
- Street Enhancements: Past streetscape improvement schemes have had a positive impact but were limited in scope. There's support for further investment to revitalize vacant buildings and underused sites.
- Heritage & Arts: Opportunities exist to use upcoming heritage anniversaries (e.g., 100 years since Harry Clarke's death) as a platform for cultural programming and funding applications.
- Transport & Active Travel: There is currently no Active Travel Plan for Ballyhaunis. Improved walking and cycling routes, and the possibility of electric bus services (e.g., like Killala) were discussed. This is now being looked at by Active Travel and the routes indicated in this plan are being reviewed (See page 33).
- Town Centre Power Supply: A Phase 3 electricity upgrade would reduce the need for costly generators during events and benefit community and enterprise uses.

## Next Steps & Planning Considerations:

- A full baseline analysis of the town's physical, social, and economic characteristics.
- Identification of land use, transport patterns, community needs, and opportunities for growth.
- Coordination with existing Local Area Plans (LAPs), Mayo's County Development Plan, and recent census data.
- Consultation with local groups including the Town Team, Mayo County Council, and wider stakeholders.

The insights and priorities discussed will directly inform the TCF plan's goals to improve community infrastructure, protect heritage assets, support local enterprise, and deliver a better quality of life for all who live, work, and visit Ballyhaunis.

# TOWN TEAM MEETINGS

The Ballyhaunis Town Team was established in March 2024 as part of the Town Centre First process. Since its formation, the team has met approximately once a month, actively contributing to the development of a shared vision for the future of Ballyhaunis. These meetings, along with a mix of group and one-to-one sessions facilitated by the Town Regeneration Officer, provided ongoing opportunities for discussion, reflection, and collaboration throughout the early stages of the process.

The purpose of these engagements was to support Mayo County Council and the appointed consultant team by offering a grounded local perspective to guide their work. By consistently engaging with the Town Team, the project partners were able to build a clearer understanding of the town's needs and ambitions in advance of the first round of public consultation. This approach helped ensure the consultation was focused, relevant, and responsive to local priorities.

To help shape the initial SCOT (Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, each member of the Town Team was asked to respond to the following five questions:

What are the 3 best things about Ballyhaunis?

What are the 3 biggest challenges for the town?

What is holding Ballyhaunis back?

What top 3 things would improve the town?

What are the best opportunities for the future of Ballyhaunis?

The collective responses formed the basis of the SCOT analysis, which was instrumental in shaping the outcomes of the Defining the Place stage — now complete. This phase clarified key themes and priorities, and laid the foundation for future strategy and action.



## Strengths

- Cultural diversity of the town
- Friendly people
- Community spirit
- Entrepreneurship
- Chamber of Commerce
- Tidy Town Team
- Active groups, sports clubs and societies
- Friary Grounds
- Employment options
- High levels of employment
- Success of business
- Great local schools
- Great town layout and buildings
- The railway
- Walkable town
- Rich heritage and culture

## Challenges

- Lack of accommodation/homes
- Businesses closing
- Lack of families in the town
- Dilapidated businesses
- Dereliction
- Lack of community cohesion
- Language / culture
- Linking communities
- Traffic in the town centre
- Wider perception of the town
- Attitudes to road use
- Library too small
- Isolated communities

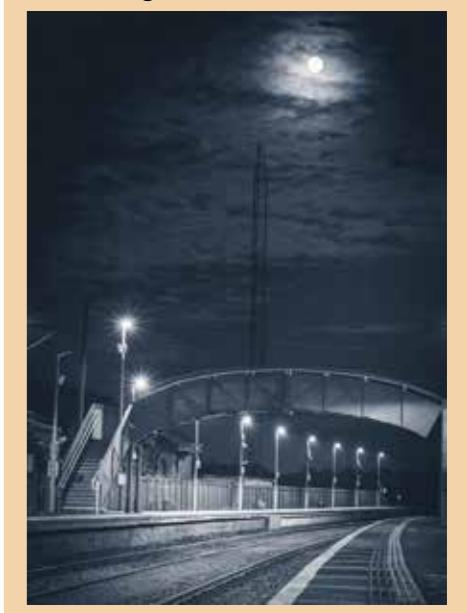


## Opportunities

- The people of Ballyhaunis
- More places to meet
- Improve existing sports and other activity options
- Improve night life with events
- To increase housing and accommodation through new housing developments
- Improve services: banks / Garda / Health care
- Space to have a useable town square
- Restore and repurpose historic buildings
- Better infrastructure for walkers and cyclists
- More useable green space
- Investment in the Friary and grounds
- Better employment for graduates
- Translation services

## Threats

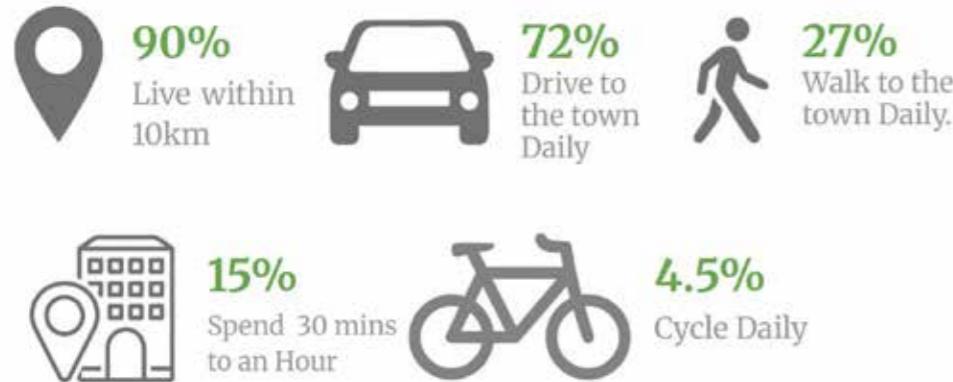
- Lack of Public Health Clinic
- No Post Office and Bank
- Garda Station only open on limited basis
- Uncoordinated transport services
- Too few volunteers
- Lack of investment
- no high speed broadband
- Nature of the employment – low wage and industrial
- No vision or plan for the town
- Aligning what is needed and getting agreement
- People not working together
- Closing retail in the Main St..



# ONLINE SURVEY – OVERVIEW

An online survey ran for the entire month of February 2025 and received 128 responses. The survey consisted of multiple choice and long answer questions to allow for detailed feedback. This page is an overview of the Stage 1 Consultation Summary Report which can be found in the appendices.

The vast majority of respondents were residents or locals with a minority stating work or visiting family or for shopping.



"First Word That Comes to Mind for Ballyhaunis"

**friendly**  
**home**  
**community**  
**diverse**  
**neglect**  
**traffic**



**39%**  
People suggested that the quality of cycling infrastructure is inadequate.

"Top Three Places to Visit in Ballyhaunis"

## Friary Grounds Supervalu Val's Bistro

The Friary Grounds provides the people of the town with a peaceful, scenic park that is centrally accessible for quiet walks, sports, play and engaging with nature.



**27%**  
People suggested that the quality of Footpath is Satisfactory.



**13.5%**  
people think disability access is good



**38%**  
people suggest that wayfinding and signage are good

## Accessibility in Ballyhaunis

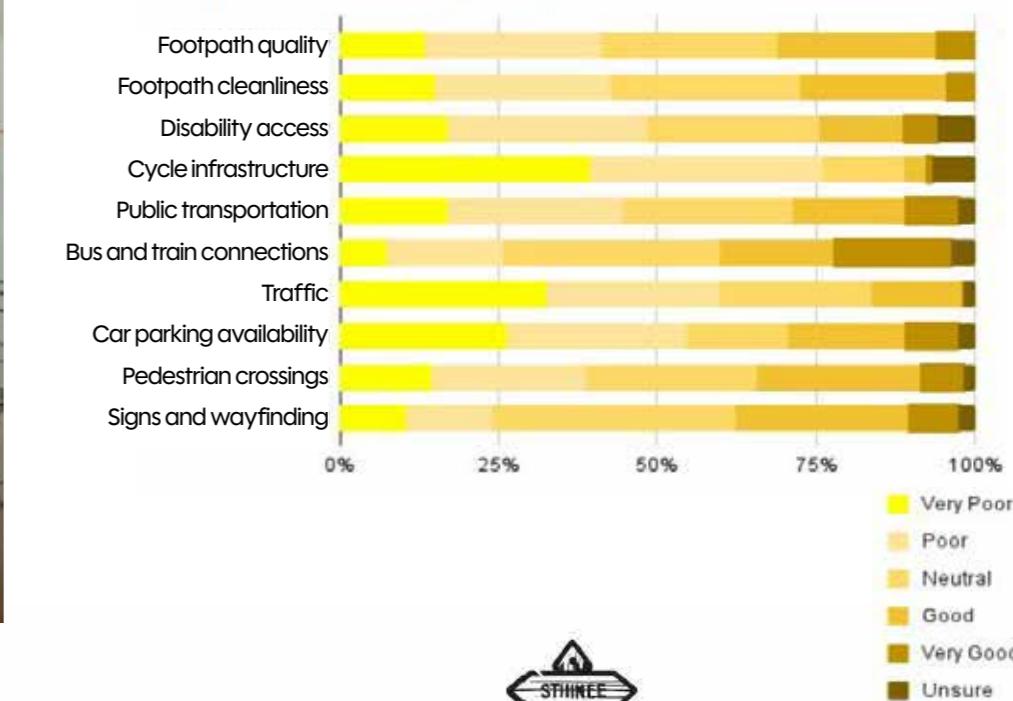
The survey highlights a strong reliance on private cars in Ballyhaunis, despite its accessibility.

55% of respondents live within a 15-minute walk, and 90% within 10km, yet 65% of daily trips are by car, while cycling remains low at 4.5%.

15% of respondents take 30 minutes to an hour for trips, likely for school runs or quick errands.

Even among the 50% living in Ballyhaunis, many still drive, underscoring the need for better sustainable transport options.

## Quality of Mobility and Accessibility in Ballyhaunis



# ONLINE SURVEY – OVERVIEW

## Liveability in Ballyhaunis

The survey reveals strong concerns about Ballyhaunis' long-term growth, with 80% of respondents believing the town offers limited opportunities beyond school or college. While housing and tackling dereliction are top priorities for improving the town centre, there is also a clear need for better pre-school and childcare facilities, leisure and play spaces, safety measures, and access to health services—highlighting a desire to make Ballyhaunis a safer, healthier, and more engaging place to live. This need is reinforced by widespread dissatisfaction with the town's social and cultural offerings, as many rated bars, cafés, events, music, arts, and tourist facilities as very poor, pointing to a significant gap in cultural and recreational infrastructure.



**40%** People voted that Pedestrian Crossings are poor



**65%** People voted that's spaces for youth are inadequate.



**33.3%** of respondents identified increasing the number of crèches in Ballyhaunis as their top priority.



**61%** of respondents indicated that addressing dereliction is their priority, noting a rapid increase in dereliction within the town centre.

## "Top 10 Most Wanted Services/Facilities in Ballyhaunis"

**Visitor accommodation**  
**Banking facilities**  
**Indoor sports facilities**  
**Youth entertainment**  
**Evening social spaces**  
**Flexible community space**  
**Safer streets**  
**Childcare facilities**  
**Affordable retail options**  
**Safer routes**

Community feedback shows strong demand for key improvements in Ballyhaunis, including a hotel, full-service bank, indoor leisure centre, and better public transport. There is widespread support for youth facilities, more dining and retail options, enhanced health services, and safer walking and cycling routes—reflecting a community eager for a more vibrant, connected, and family-friendly town.

## "Top Three Places in Ballyhaunis to improve"

**Swimming Pool**  
**Scouts Den**  
**Convent Grounds**

The swimming pool is seen as outdated, with strong support for covering it to allow year-round use. The Scouts Den is viewed as a derelict eyesore, especially given its visibility from the train station, with calls for demolition or reuse. Plans for a new library have been widely welcomed on the The Former Convent School site.

## Commercial Activity in Ballyhaunis

Survey results highlight strong concern over Ballyhaunis' commercial activity, with 31% viewing it negatively and only 28.7% expecting improvement. Respondents called for revitalising vacant town centre spaces and attracting new businesses, rather than focusing on rental accommodation. Comparisons to towns like Claremorris—seen as more developed commercially—were common. Many household, electrical, and fashion items are available locally, yet residents often travel to nearby towns, citing affordability and greater choice as key reasons.

Numerous Economic Opportunities for Private investment where highlighted during the consultation process with online respondents identifying the below as missing from the Ballyhaunis.

- Hotel / B&B
- Warehouse Spaces
- Cafes – especially later opening hours
- Clothes shops for Children / teens
- Discount stores
- Second-hand shops
- Spaces for upcycling/ making/ alterations
- Cinema

# COMMUNITY DROP-IN OVERVIEW - STAGE 1

The initial results from online survey and discussions with the Town Team formed a basis to inform and focus the community drop-in consultation sessions. A concerted effort was made to ensure a broad representation of the local community attended with announcements and adverts on social media, newspaper, radio, posters and leaflets all undertaken in the weeks before and on the day of the consultation.



Through discussions it became apparent there were a number of interconnected challenges that faced the town including infrastructure, public services, safety, and community vitality. Concerns were raised about the lack of cycling infrastructure, limited transport options, and accessibility issues, while a significant number of participants emphasized the need for affordable housing, eliminating vacant properties, and enhancing safety measures.

Additionally, there was strong community support for improving recreational and sporting facilities,



expanding tourism opportunities, and creating a more age-friendly environment.

## Community Infrastructure and Services

Safer walking and cycling routes within the town was a priority these included better lighting, footpaths, crossings and connections to schools, car parks and places of work. Providing more safe spaces for people to meet and mingle was a key priority for the town and this included public spaces and existing cafe's and restaurants. Greater inclusivity was required in the later.

## Sports Facilities

There was demand for a site for a dedicated cricket pitch and improved facilities for the active local Cricket Club. The Boxing Club requires a venue in Ballyhaunis and several existing locations are considered as well as purpose built. There was a general call for better indoor sports facilities which could be used by the whole community.

## Traffic and Parking

It was agreed that better traffic and parking management was needed in the town to reduce congestion at peak times and free up on-street parking bays. It was noted that a lot of on-street parking was taken up by 'long-stay' users where they might as easily use carparks. Reducing traffic might be eased through reduction in speed limits and encouraging more people to walk and cycle through better active travel infrastructure.



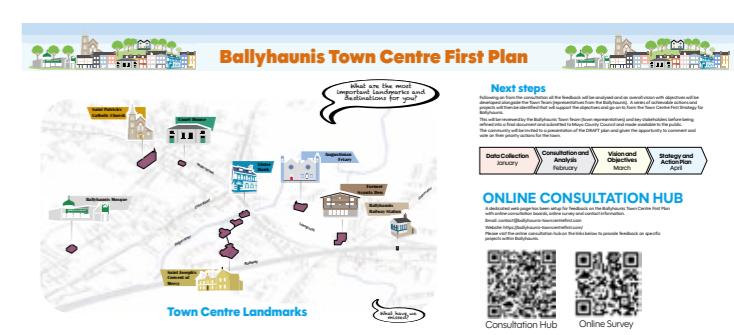
## Public Transport Connections

The train station was seen as a huge asset for the town and this might be improved by allocating more parking spaces and coordinated bus connections into the town. Wider bus services to would be beneficial



## Stage 1 Consultation Boards

A scale version of the Stage 1 Consultation Boards can be found in the appendices of the full report.



# CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT PLAN – STAGE II

A public consultation on the draft plan ran for 2 weeks from the 18<sup>th</sup> of July to the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2025 and started with a community pop-up event at the entrance of SuperValu which was attended by the Mayo Town Regeneration Officer and members of the Town Team.

The Draft Plan was made available to view on the day and online for the two weeks.

There were **246 responses** overall which represents nearly **10% of Ballyhaunis' population.**

**88%** of respondents voted in support of the Ballyhaunis Town Vision.

**BALLYHAUNIS TOWN VISION**  
*"Ballyhaunis aims to be a vibrant, inclusive town where a diverse population is actively engaged in community life, supported by strong social infrastructure, diverse employment opportunities, and a welcoming town centre."*

The online survey asked respondents to prioritise projects within their respective categories. The extracts below, taken from the Stage 2 Consultation Summary on the Draft Plan, show the importance of projects to the community.

## Community And Social Infrastructure

**60%** of respondents wanted to develop a purpose-built **Community Pre-school**  
**59%** wanted to support the delivery of the **Library** project  
**80%** prioritised exploration the provision of **sports facilities** in the town centre

## A Masterplan for the Abbey and its surrounding area

**51%** of respondents wanted to **Restore the Abbey**  
**58%** wanted to explore spaces for broader community use / agreed with exploring spaces for broader community use  
**82%** wanted to **Remove the derelict 'Scouts Den'** to support site enhancement

## Public Spaces

**67%** agree with the development of more public spaces  
**74%** *Explore opportunities to improve Main St*  
**70%** Reinforce **Market Square** as a central community hub and gathering space

## Transport and Connectivity

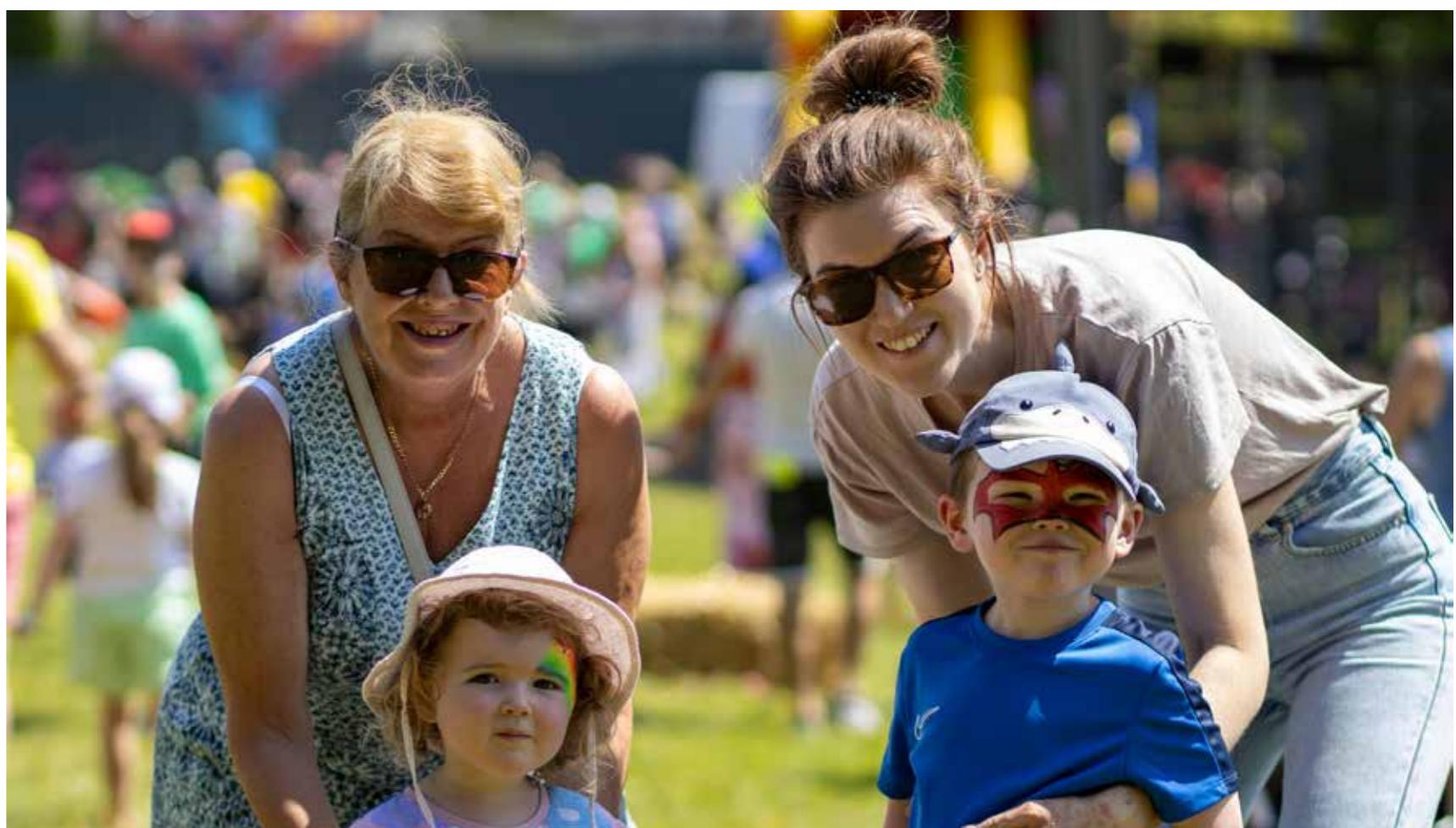
**62%** of respondents support proposals that **enhance connections** between residential areas, schools and employment centres  
**63%** wanted to improve connections to existing carparks

## People in Ballyhaunis

**75%** agreed with supporting spaces for a growing young population  
**64%** identified activating community spaces and venues to host a year-round programme of inclusive events, courses, and festivals for everyone in the community.  
**72%** wanted to **improve outdoor facilities** and spaces for young people and the wider community to meet and socialise

The top three critical projects that came out of the consultation include the development of a purpose-built community Preschool, the provision of further flexible use whole community facilities including Indoor sports hub and improving public spaces. Providing a home for the boxing club and removing the Scouts Den were also high priorities for the community.

# Part 3 - Defining the Place



# DEFINING THE PLACE: INTRODUCTION

## Defining the Place: Ballyhaunis

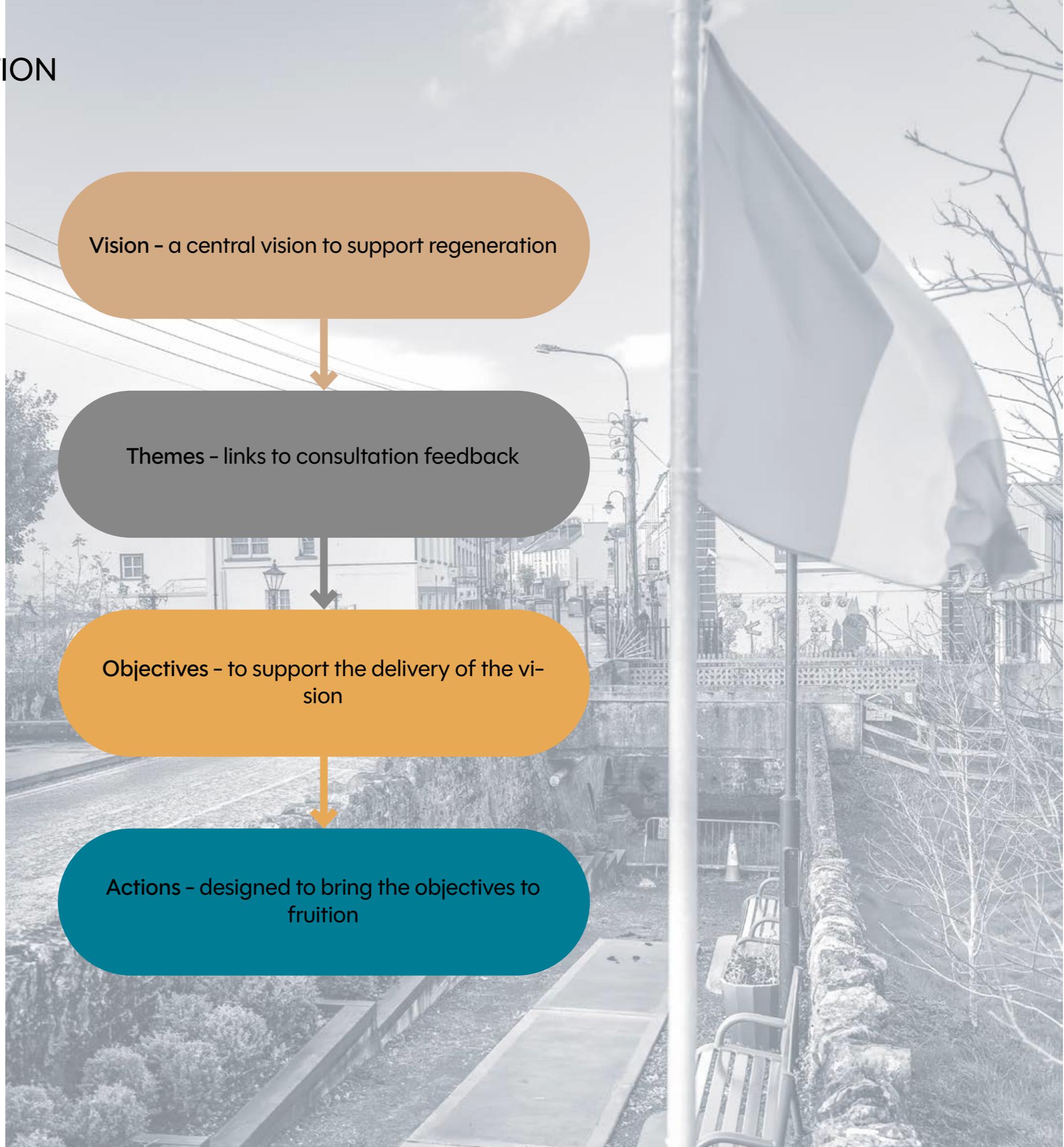
The Understanding the Place section of this plan provided a foundation for identifying the key challenges, opportunities, and assets within Ballyhaunis town centre. Building on this analysis, the Defining the Place chapter sets out a clear, strategic framework to guide regeneration—one that reflects the town's unique character and responds directly to the aspirations of the local community.

This section functions as a high-level visioning tool for Ballyhaunis. It offers a strategic direction for Mayo County Council, local stakeholders, landowners, businesses, and community groups, helping to prioritise projects as funding opportunities emerge and to inform future feasibility and masterplanning work.

## Vision, Objectives, and Actions

The vision, objectives, and actions outlined here are informed by a comprehensive understanding of Ballyhaunis—developed through site analysis, desktop research, and extensive community and stakeholder engagement.

The vision sets out an ambitious but achievable direction for Ballyhaunis over the coming decade. It is supported by a set of objectives that are aspirational yet grounded, each linked to a suite of practical actions or projects. These actions aim to deliver tangible outcomes and reflect the feedback gathered throughout the consultation process.



# BALLYHAUNIS TOWN VISION

*"Ballyhaunis aims to be a vibrant, inclusive town where a diverse population is actively engaged in community life, supported by strong social infrastructure, diverse employment opportunities, and a welcoming town centre."*



# what we'll be saying .....

## TRANSPORT & CONNECTIVITY

Ballyhaunis is great for walking, cycling or public transport.



## A SHARED VISION FOR THE ABBEY AND ITS LANDSCAPE

A place where we care for our environment and wildlife



## COMMUNITY & SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

In Ballyhaunis, we pray in different ways – but we all share the same sense of belonging

A town that has a range of experiences for young people



We are connected to and supported by our community



There are interesting places to meet and socialise



Our heritage buildings are looked after and used every day



We have a platform to progress our education and careers



We have a wide range of sports facilities and clubs which welcome everyone



Lots to do in the evenings



Businesses are supported through town marketing and attractive, accessible streets



It's so vibrant



We love our cosmopolitan town

## PUBLIC SPACES

## PEOPLE IN BALLYHAUNIS

Ballyhaunis offers a range of support services



The town encourages a healthy and happy lifestyle



A range of housing types including options for older people



Active groups work towards making the town attractive and a great place to live



# Thematic Objectives

## A. PEOPLE IN BALLYHAUNIS - COMMUNITY ACTION

Ballyhaunis has a wealth of riches when it comes to its people. As a town that has been called the 'most diverse' in Ireland, it can celebrate its array of cultures and create a vibrant and colourful cosmopolitan town with residents from across Europe, Asia, South-America and Africa.

With a young and predominately 'working class' population which includes a large number of migrant workers there is a need to provide supports to ensure that they are catered for within the community.

The consultation feedback revealed that more needs to be done for school leavers and low wage earners to develop their skills and create potential for career development.

Fostering an all inclusive community spirit would support a more considerate and responsive approach to day to day living. This could be achieved by creating more opportunities to meet and mingle.

### OBJECTIVE

**A.** To foster an inclusive, connected, and active community by enhancing access to shared spaces, programmes, and opportunities for all ages, particularly young people.

#### Supporting Actions/Projects:

1. Explore Community Action through targeted initiatives
  - See p.42: A1
2. Consider support and space for a growing young population
  - See p.42: A2
3. Activate community spaces and venues to host a year-round programme of inclusive events, courses, and festivals that celebrate local culture, support the circular economy, and make full use of existing facilities for everyone in the community
  - See p.42: A3
4. Improve indoor and outdoor facilities and spaces for young people and the wider community to meet and socialise
  - See p.43: A4



# Thematic Objectives

## B. COMMUNITY & SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE - MAYO COUNTY COUNCIL OBJECTIVE

Ballyhaunis is home to several important community facilities that provide essential services. A key priority is to retain and protect these existing assets to ensure they continue serving the town into the future.

Located within the Friary Grounds, the Family Resource Centre delivers vital services for local families, including a Pre-school catering to 66 children aged 2–4. Rehousing the Pre-school is a matter of critical importance to ensure the continuity of this service.

The Community Hall on Main Street hosts a wide range of activities throughout the week and is under significant pressure due to high demand. The recent and upcoming openings of the Information Hub, Ballyhaunis Library, and Courthouse Cultural Centre are expected to ease this strain and offer new opportunities for engagement and cultural development.

There is also strong community demand for a greater variety of sports facilities, with calls for boxing, cricket, a gym, and a dedicated indoor sports hall.

- B.** To enhance access to education, culture, information, and recreation through the development of inclusive, community-focused facilities in Ballyhaunis.

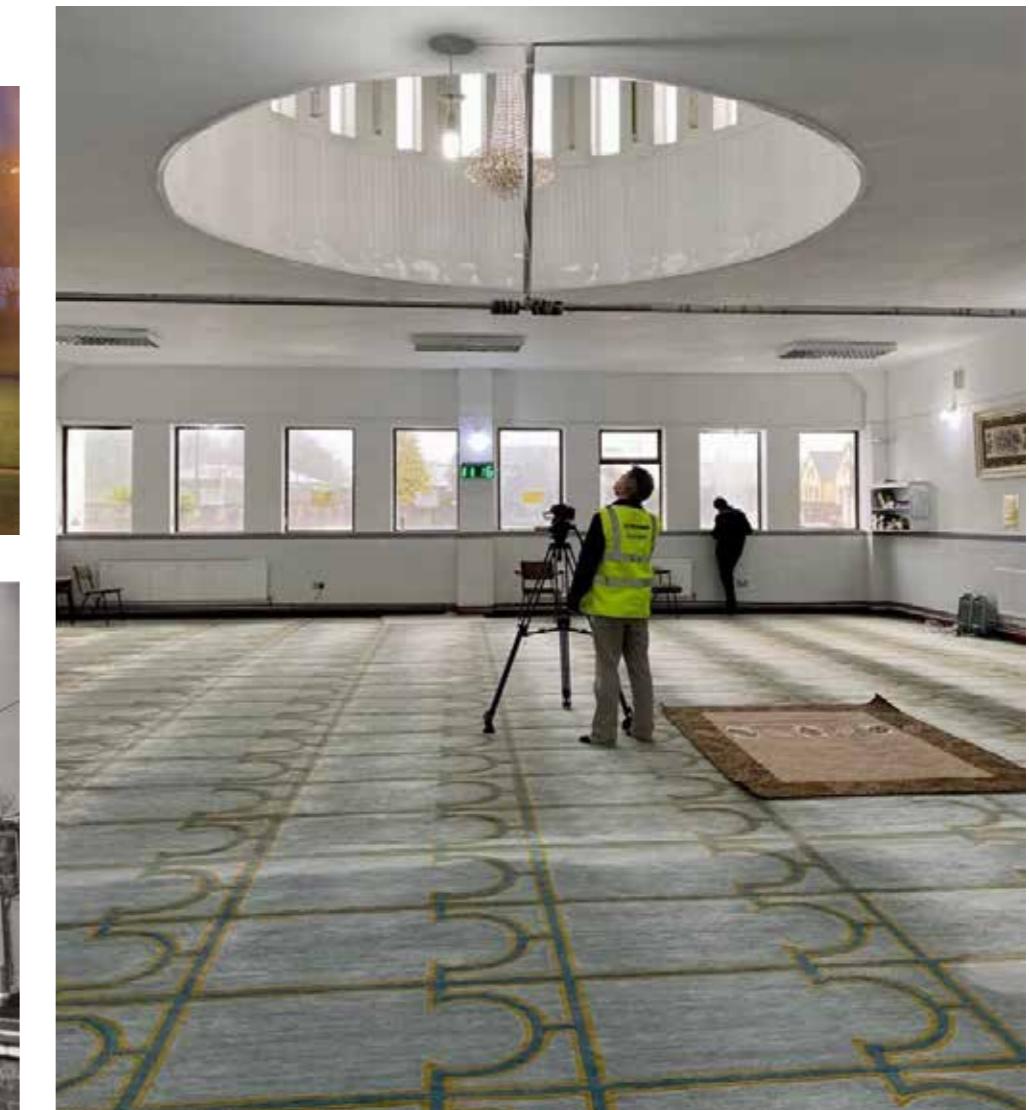
### Supporting Actions/Projects:

1. Develop a purpose-built Community Pre-school (See p.44: B1)
2. Support the delivery of the Ballyhaunis Library project (See p.45: B2)
3. Continue to work towards opening the Courthouse as a Cultural Centre for the community (See p.45: B3)
4. Support the opening of the Information Hub (See p.46: B4)
5. Explore the provision of sports facilities in the town centre in collaboration with sports groups and organisations.

Provide advice on funding sources. (See p.46: B5)



Note: A facilities audit list and groups can be found in the appendices



## C. A MASTERPLAN FOR THE ABBEY AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

The Augustinian Friary (St Mary's Abbey) was founded in the 14th century, and the town of Ballyhaunis grew around it. In the 2000s, the Augustinians handed over the Abbey and its surrounding grounds in trust to the local community, who have managed it ever since.

The site's rich setting and heritage make it one of Ballyhaunis's greatest assets. There is significant potential for the Abbey and grounds to deliver wider community benefits—such as spaces for recreation, improved access to nature, and a stronger sense of place for the town. Developing a masterplan would help unify these possibilities under a shared vision, enabling various community groups to work together effectively.

Emergent works are the preservation of the Abbey and the clearing and development of the Scouts Den site. Smaller, more immediate interventions could involve programming spaces along the river walk to enhance views and create stronger connections to the river and surrounding landscape.



### OBJECTIVE (working with the Ballyhaunis Abbey Trust)

**C.** To develop a community, heritage, and landscape-led masterplan that conserves the historic Abbey site while enhancing its use, accessibility, biodiversity, and value for all user groups.

#### Supporting Actions/Projects:

1. Conservation Plan for Ballyhaunis Abbey including all its heritage assets (See p.47: C1)
2. Remove the derelict 'Scouts Den' to support site enhancement (See p.39: C2)

#### Objectives for the Landscape masterplan should include:

- Improve access and connectivity throughout the site Exploring spaces for broader community use, such as outdoor cooking, play and cultural activities
- Ensure long-term conservation, biodiversity management, and maintenance across the site.

Essential project for the preservation and appropriate development of this valuable resource for all Ballyhaunis Citizens given its Recorded Monument and Protected Structures status.

— BALLYHAUNIS ABBEY TRUST, LOCAL ORGANISATIONS AND MAYO COUNTY COUNCIL



Extract from Vision Image showing the extent of the Friary Grounds



Restoring views towards abbey through careful editing/removal of existing trees. The landmark is brought back into townscape

# Thematic Objectives

## D. PUBLIC SPACES

Much like the Augustinians did nearly 700 years ago, Ballyhaunis has the opportunity to re-centre its community life along the Dalgan River, embracing it as a defining civic and ecological asset.

By creating a dedicated civic corridor that strengthens the social, recreational, and environmental functions of the river and surrounding heritage sites, the town can broaden the traditional footprint of the town centre. This expanded focus would incorporate key spaces such as the river frontage, Bridge Street, the Convent Grounds, and the Friary Grounds—enhancing their accessibility, connectivity, and vibrancy through a series of targeted interventions.

Priority actions include improvements to connectivity and public realm quality—such as enhancing entrances, sightlines, pedestrian priority areas, seating, shelter, and placemaking elements—to encourage increased footfall and community interaction. A central initiative is to create a seamless link between the Town Centre, Clare Street river frontage, Friary Grounds, and Convent Grounds. This will be achieved through traffic calming measures on Bridge Street, improved pedestrian crossings, and greater permeability.

A series of projects and phased actions are outlined in Part 5 of this report to support the delivery of this vision.

### OBJECTIVE (See plan numbering)

**D.** To enhance the public realm and town centre experience by improving accessibility, activating social spaces, and creating a stronger sense of place in Ballyhaunis.

#### Supporting Actions/Projects:

1. Define and enhance key town gateways to create a welcoming arrival experience (See p.48: D1)
2. Transforming riverside spaces (See p.49: D2)
3. Town centre footbridge (See p.50: D3)
4. Explore opportunities to improve Main St (See p.53 D4)
5. Reinforce Market Square as a central community hub and gathering space (See p.52: D5)
6. Investigate unused spaces for temporary community use (See p.53: D6)



# Thematic Objectives

## E. TRANSPORT & CONNECTIVITY - ACTIVE TRAVEL

Ballyhaunis is home to two centrally located schools—Scoil Íosa and the Community School—both within easy reach of the town centre. There is significant potential to improve pedestrian and cycle access, encouraging students and others to travel actively through better infrastructure.

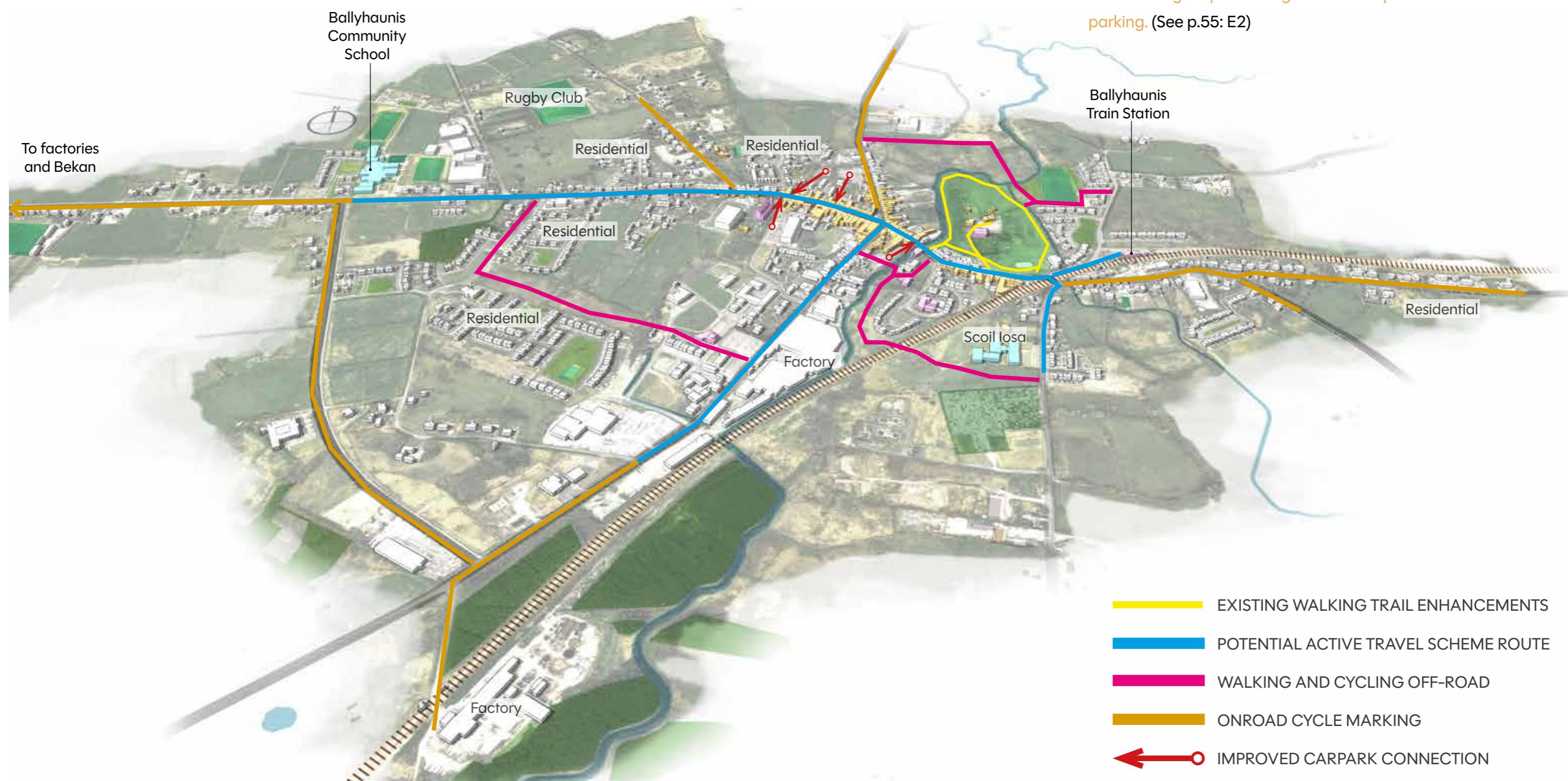
Several key Active Travel Schemes are currently in development and will be implemented in the coming years. These schemes offer an opportunity to rethink how people move around the town.

### OBJECTIVES

**E1.** To improve active travel and connectivity in Ballyhaunis by creating safer, more accessible links between homes, schools, workplaces, and surrounding communities.

#### Supporting Actions/Projects:

1. Support proposals that enhance connections between residential areas, schools, and employment centres. (See p.54: E1)
2. Introduce road markings and signage to enhance cyclist safety. Link and extend existing and planned cycle and pedestrian networks within Ballyhaunis and to nearby areas. (See p.54: E1)
3. Review existing carpark usage and connections and look at ways of increasing carpark usage to elevate pressures from onstreet parking. (See p.55: E2)



# Part 4 - Enabling the Place



# DELIVERY PLAN

Implementing the Ballyhaunis Town Centre First Plan is an ongoing, step-by-step process that must remain flexible and responsive to local opportunities, constraints, and changing circumstances. Regular review of the plan's objectives and goals will be essential to ensure it continues to reflect the community's aspirations. The Town Team, as a representative community body, will play a key role in making sure these priorities are pursued with consistency and ambition.

Delivery of this plan will require sustained effort and strong collaboration. Failure to act now risks weakening community confidence and missing the opportunity for long-term positive change. Ballyhaunis has shown remarkable community spirit and participation through this process—this momentum must be maintained through action.

## Governance

The Town Centre First policy places the Town Team at the heart of local regeneration, working in close partnership with Mayo County Council and other stakeholders. For Ballyhaunis to achieve its collective vision, local leaders must continue to work cooperatively and reflect the diverse voices of the town.

The Town Team provides a structure through which the community can have an active say in local development. Successful regeneration depends on strong working relationships between the Town Team, Mayo County Council, and other local groups and organisations.

## Key Roles in Delivery

### Town Regeneration Officer (Mayo County Council)

The Town Regeneration Officer is the key link between the Ballyhaunis Town Team, Mayo County Council, and external agencies. This role is central to providing expert advice, building stronger partnerships, and ensuring alignment with available funding and policies.

### Ballyhaunis Town Team

The Town Team will continue to coordinate local regeneration efforts, support delivery of priority projects, communicate progress, and review the TCF Plan regularly. Supported by the Town Regeneration Officer and Town Champion, the Town Team will also have access to targeted supports, including training, funding advice, and peer learning networks through the Town Centre First programme.

## Capacity Building and Support

To ensure the Ballyhaunis Town Team is fully equipped to lead, ongoing training and mentoring is recommended. This might include:

- Procurement and budgeting skills
- Annual peer-learning visits to towns that have successfully delivered similar regeneration plans (e.g. Gort, Balla, Boyle, Carrick-on-Shannon)

## Action Planning by the Town Team

It is recommended that the Town Team prepare a short-to-medium term Action Plan for implementation of the Town Centre First Plan.

This could include:

- Annual evaluation of the plan's objectives and identification of priority projects
- Establishment of focused Working Groups aligned with key themes and member skills
- Transparent communication to the wider community—e.g., through local social media or newsletters
- Monitoring funding opportunities and how they align with the plan's priorities
- Setting clear timeframes for reviewing progress against the plan's vision and goals

## Ballyhaunis Town Centre First – Action Plan Overview

The following Action Plan sets out the key steps required to deliver each priority project identified through the Town Centre First process. Each project is accompanied by an outline of the project leads and partners, and highlights key stakeholders who could support successful delivery.

To ensure transparency and alignment with the community's voice, each action is clearly linked to one or more of the five core themes identified through public and stakeholder engagement. This thematic approach makes it easy to see how projects respond directly to local needs and priorities.

Each action is categorised and presented in a table format, with the following details:

- Project Description – a concise overview of the initiative
- Project Champions and Stakeholders – local leaders, groups or agencies who could lead or contribute
- Key Actions – steps necessary to bring the project to life
- Preliminary Budget and Timeline – indicative figures and phasing to inform funding applications and scheduling
- Policy Alignment – relevant national, regional or local policies the project supports

Each of these actions is further illustrated and expanded upon in the following section of the report, providing visual material, case studies, and more detailed context to support their delivery.

# Ballyhaunis Delivery Plan: all projects are subject to funding and resource dependent.

Thematic Objective	Project	Priority	Key Partners	Strategic Actions	Potential Funding	Further information	Timeline	Policy
<b>1. CRITICAL/ KEY PROJECTS FOR BALLYHAUNIS</b>								
B1	Community Pre-school	Critical	Ballyhaunis FRC Ballyhaunis Abbey Trust Ballyhaunis Abbey Partnership	Identify priorities & best location.	DCEDIY Building Blocks Capital Programme (Pobal) LEADER	Project may remain sited in Ballyhaunis Abbey grounds. Current facilities are inadequate for a growing population.	0 - 4 years	NPF: NPO 15, NPO 16, NPO 17, NPO 26, NPO 28  RSES: RPO 4.14, RPO 7.9, RPO 7.12,  MCDP 2022-2028: SCP 3, SCO, BEP / BEO, MTP /MTO, KAP / KAO, EDO, SO, SPP
C1	Conservation Plan for Ballyhaunis Abbey	Critical	Ballyhaunis Abbey Trust Ballyhaunis Abbey Partnership Mayo County Council	Develop Conservation plan	Heritage Council National Monuments	Plan required to preserve and maintain the Abbey and its heritage assets.	0-2 years	NPF: NPO 4, NPO6, NPO 7, NPO 14, NPO 16, NPO 17, NPO 22, NPO 28  RSES: RPO 3.4, RPO 3.5, RPO 6.26, RPO 6.29, RPO 6.41, RPO 7.9, RPO 7.12, RPO 7.13, RPO 9.3  MCDP 2022-2028: SO 11, EDO 45, EDO 50, SCO 4, BEO 1, BEP 6, BEO 12, BEP 8, BEP 11, BEP 15, BEP 16, BEP 20, BEP 22, BEP 23, BEO 24, KAP 1, KAO 1, KAO 5, KAO 6
C	Masterplan for Ballyhaunis Abbey & Grounds	Critical	Ballyhaunis Abbey Trust Ballyhaunis Abbey Partnership Mayo County Council Ballyhaunis Community Garden FRC	Ballyhaunis Abbey Trust working with MCC to source funding	Heritage Council, TVRS, LEADER	Essential project for the preservation and appropriate development of this valuable resource for all Ballyhaunis Citizens	0-2 years	NPF: NPO 4, NPO6, NPO 7, NPO 14, NPO 16, NPO 22, NPO 27, NPO 28, NPO 58  RSES: RPO 3.4, RPO 3.5, RPO 4.4, RPO 4.14, RPO 6.23, RPO 6.26, RPO 6.29, RPO 6.30, RPO 6.31, RPO 6.39, RPO 6.41, RPO 7.9, RPO 7.12, RPO 7.13, RPO 9.1 RPO 9.3  MCDP 2022-2028: SO 11, EDO 42, EDO 45, EDO 47, SCO 4, BEP 20, BEP 21, BEP 23, BEO 24, BEO 30, BEP 29, MTP 3, MTP 5, MTO 5, KAP 3, KAO 2, KAO 5
<b>2. HIGH IMPACT PROJECTS FOR BALLYHAUNIS</b>								
B2	Ballyhaunis Library and Community Space	High	Mayo County Council & Library Services	MCC Capital Delivery Team is managing this project	Funded by RRDF	Project in progress	0- 2 years	NPF: NPO 5, NPO 6, NPO 7, NPO 14, NPO 18a  RSES: NPO 5, NPO 6, NPO 7, NPO 14, NPO 18a
B4	Information Hub	High	Ballyhaunis Chamber of Commerce Ballyhaunis FRC			Project is complete. Due to open shortly and operational resources are in place.		MCDP 2022-2028: SO 3, SO 11, CSP 2, SSP 4, EDO 42, EDO 44, EDO 45, EDO 46, EDO 48, EDO 50, SCO 4, BEP 6, BEP 8, BEP 16, BEP 20, BEP 22, BEP 29, BEP 36, GSP 3, GSO 13, KAP 1, KAP 3, KAO 5, KAO 9

Thematic Objective	Project	Priority	Key Partners	Strategic Actions	Potential Funding	Further information	Timeline	Policy
B3	Old Courthouse Cultural Space	High	Rural Irish Artists Mayo County Council	CRF funding has been achieved for Phase 1	Community Recognition Fund, DRCDG, LEADER	Project in progress to deliver Phase 1	0-2 years	NPF: NPO 5, NPO 6, NPO 7, NPO 14, NPO 18a RSES: NPO 5, NPO 6, NPO 7, NPO 14, NPO 18a
C2	Former Scout's Den	High	Ballyhaunis Abbey Trust Ballyhaunis Abbey Partnership Mayo County Council	Investigate sources of funding to clear the site	TVRS PDM	Examination of feasibility for future use of this site.	0-1 years	MCDP 2022-2028: SO 3, SO 11, CSP 2, SSP 4, EDO 42, EDO 44, EDO 45, EDO 46, EDO 48, EDO 50, SCO 4, BEP 6, BEP 8, BEP 16, BEP 20, BEP 22, BEP 29, BEP 36, GSP 3, GSO 13, KAP 1, KAP 3, KAO 5, KAO 9
E1 E2 E3	Increase sustainable travel and provide Improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists	High	Mayo County Council Active Travel NTA TII	TCF plan maps desire lines and connections to maximise safe pedestrian access	Active Travel TII	Ballyhaunis Walkability Audit was carried out through collaboration of all stakeholders and provided detailed feedback to inform pedestrian friendly measures	0-3 years	NPF: NPO 4, NPO 5, NPO 6, NPO 7, NPO 14, NPO 16, NPO 18a, NPO 22, NPO 27, NPO 28 RSES: RPO 3.4, RPO 3.5, RPO 4.4, RPO 4.14, RPO 6.23, RPO 6.26, RPO 6.29, RPO 6.30, RPO 6.31, RPO 6.39, RPO 6.41, RPO 7.9, RPO 7.12, RPO 9.1, RPO 9.3 MCDP 2022-2028: SO 11, SSP 6, EDO 42, EDO 44, EDO 45, EDO 47, SCO 4, SCO 8, BEP 20, BEP 21, BEP 22, BEP 23, BEO 24, BEP 29, BEO 30, MTP 3, MTP 5, MTO 5, KAP 2, KAP 3, KAO 2, KAO 3, KAO 5

### 3. SERVICES/ GROUPS NEEDING UPGRADED ACCOMMODATION

B5	Boxing Club	High	Ballyhaunis Boxing Club Mayo Sports Partnership	Identify potential sites for relocation or new build	Sports Capital Funding	Current facilities are inadequate & outside Ballyhaunis. Club provides social integration to all communities	0-1 years	NPF: NPO 4, NPO 5, NPO 6, NPO 7, NPO 14, NPO 18a, NPO 28 RSES: RPO 3.4, RPO 3.5, RPO 3.9, RPO 6.41, RPO 6.29, RPO 6.38, RPO 7.9, RPO 7.12, RPO 7.13, RPO 9.1 MCDP 2022-2028: SO 4, SO 11, SSP 6, EDO 45, SCO 4, BEP 20, BEP 21, BEP 23, BEO 24, BEO 30, MTP 3, MTP 5, KAP 2, KAP 3
B5	Cricket Pitch	High	Ballyhaunis Cricket Club Mayo Sports Partnership	Identify suitable sites for pitch	Sports Capital Funding,	There is a strong Cricket team in Ballyhaunis which provides opportunities for integration.	0 - 2 years	
B6	Family Resource Centre	Medium	Ballyhaunis FRC Ballyhaunis Abbey Trust Ballyhaunis Abbey Partnership	FRC to identify priorities and best location for service users. Current building needs repair and refurbishment.	LEADER funding FRC Funding (TUSLA) HSF	Essential that this service is protected and maintained for community provision. Potential to develop services & expand existing offer subject to upgraded facilities.	0-2 years	

Thematic Objective	Project	Priority	Key Partners	Strategic Actions	Potential Funding	Further information	Timeline	Policy
<b>4. PUBLIC SPACES UPGRADE</b>								
D1 D2 D3 D4 D5 D6	Public Space for Community gatherings & activities Activate & enhance laneways to car parks	Medium	Mayo County Council Ballyhaunis Community Council Ballyhaunis Tidy Towns	Ongoing programme of works to improve and enhance public spaces	DRCDG (CLÁR, TVRS)	Considerable community support for proposed upgrades	Ongoing & subject to funding.	NPF: NPO 4, NPO 5, NPO 6, NPO 7, NPO 14, NPO 16, NPO 18a, NPO 22, NPO 27, NPO 28  RSES: RPO 3.4, RPO 3.5, RPO 4.4, RPO 4.14, RPO 6.23, RPO 6.26, RPO 6.29, RPO 6.30, RPO 6.31, RPO 6.39, RPO 6.41, RPO 7.9, RPO 7.12, RPO 9.1, RPO 9.3  MCDP 2022-2028: SO 11, SSP 6, EDO 42, EDO 44, EDO 45, EDO 47, SCO 4, SCO 8, BEP 20, BEP 21, BEP 22, BEP 23, BEO 24, BEP 29, BEO 30, MTP 3, MTP 5, MTO 5, KAP 2, KAP 3, KAO 2, KAO 3, KAO 5
<b>5. NEW PROJECTS FOR CONSIDERATION &amp; DEVELOPMENT</b>								
A2 A3 A4	Youth & Community Meeting Places	Medium	Mayo County Council Mayo CYPSC Ballyhaunis BEY project Foróige Community Groups	Partners to form working group to consider possible locations & sources of funding	DRCDG, LEADER, DCEDIY	High priority from consultation: Ballyhaunis needs more accessible, inclusive and informal spaces where people can meet, connect and spend time.	0-5 years	NPF: NPO 4, NPO 5, NPO 6, NPO 7, NPO 14, NPO 18a, NPO 28  RSES: RPO 3.4, RPO 3.5, RPO 3.9, RPO 6.41, RPO 6.29, RPO 6.38, RPO 7.9, RPO 7.12, RPO, 7.13, RPO 9.1
B5	Indoor Sports Hub	Medium	Relevant sporting groups, Mayo Sports Partnership	Sports organisations to form working group to consider best location & Funding source	Sports Capital Funding, LEADER, DRCDG	High priority from consultation: A dedicated, inclusive and accessible space for use by multiple sports groups.	0- 4 years	MCDP 2022-2028: SO 4, SO 11, SSP 6, EDO 45, SCO 4, BEP 20, BEP 21, BEP 23, BEO 24, BEO 30, MTP 3, MTP 5, KAP 2, KAP 3

# Part 5 - Potential design ideas to support the Action Plan

This section provides further detail and visualisation of the Supporting Actions/Projects outlined in the Action Plan. These proposals are directly informed by the Stage 1 Baseline Analysis, its recommendations, and insights gathered through stakeholder and community consultation.

Each proposal has been developed to a RIAI/RIBA Work Stage 2 – Concept Design level. They are intended to demonstrate the potential of each action and how it aligns with the masterplan objectives and wider town goals. The proposals include concept diagrams or sketches to help communicate the ideas clearly.

Each project proposal includes:

- Project Proposal – a summary of the intended intervention or initiative
- Background and Context – rationale for the project, supported by consultation findings
- Supporting Examples – reference to relevant case studies or best practices
- Visual Materials – maps, diagrams, or sketches to bring the idea to life

To ensure transparency and coherence, every project is clearly linked to one or more of the six key themes identified through community engagement. This helps demonstrate how each initiative directly responds to Ballyhaunis's priorities and long-term vision.

## A1. COMMUNITY-LED ACTION

Community consultation highlighted that one of Ballyhaunis's greatest strengths is its strong sense of togetherness and active network of local groups. From the Community Council, Family Resource Centre, and TidyTowns, to a wide range of sports clubs, youth services, and cultural groups, there is already a strong foundation for local action.

Residents also expressed a clear willingness to get more involved in shaping the future of the town—especially when opportunities are well-communicated and easy to access. Many groups, however, rely on a small number of volunteers and would benefit from fresh support and coordination.

To build on this momentum and further strengthen community life, the plan supports:

- Raising awareness of existing groups and services, (including groups like the circular and up-cycling group)
- Encouraging more people to get involved,
- Creating opportunities for shared action, from town clean-ups to events and creative projects.
- Utilise nature-based solutions (LAWPRO) to protect and enhance the urban and rural environment.

The opening of the Information Hub, led by the Ballyhaunis Chamber of Commerce, will be key in bringing people together—providing a central space for sharing ideas, promoting activities, and supporting community-led regeneration.

A thriving Ballyhaunis depends on its people. Empowering the community to lead, collaborate, and take pride in shared spaces is central to the success of this Town Centre First Plan.

## A2. SUPPORT AND SPACE

Ballyhaunis has a solid base of community support services, which are vital not only for young people but for the health and wellbeing of the whole town. Consultation has shown that maintaining and building on this support network is essential as the population grows and diversifies.

Key supports that could be strengthened or expanded—through the coordination of the Information Hub, Community Hall, Family Resource Centre, Chamber of Commerce, and Community Council—include:

### Youth and Education

- Homework Clubs and youth mentoring to support learning and build confidence.
- Volunteer-led sports, music, arts and drama activities to give young people safe, engaging outlets.
- Career and life skills programmes supported by local businesses and mentors.

### Community Wellbeing

- Mental health peer support, befriending services, and community health visits, particularly for those at risk of isolation.
- First responder volunteers and basic IT support to help residents of all ages access vital services.

### Inclusion and Integration

- Language and literacy support, intercultural events, and integration teams to help newcomers feel welcome and involved.
- Intergenerational initiatives to strengthen ties between young people and older residents.

These community-led supports, when well-coordinated and visible, can help foster a sense of belonging, purpose, and pride among young people—and ensure they feel supported to grow, contribute, and stay connected to Ballyhaunis into the future.

## A3. GROWING A YEAR-ROUND CELEBRATION OF COMMUNITY

Community consultation highlighted the desire for more year-round cultural and community events in Ballyhaunis. While the town already benefits from a vibrant mix of festivals and groups—including the Ballyhaunis Summer Festival, Abbey Pattern Day, and Christmas Festival, as well as drama, arts, music, and language clubs—residents shared that activities can feel seasonal, sporadic, or under-promoted.

People expressed pride in Ballyhaunis's strong tradition of community-led events, but also a need for greater consistency, coordination, and access—particularly during quieter months. Many existing events rely on the dedication of small volunteer groups, and there's strong local appetite to broaden participation and increase visibility.

With the opening of the new Library, Information Hub, and more flexible civic space, Ballyhaunis is well-placed to grow its calendar of inclusive, community-driven activities that reflect the town's creativity, heritage, and cultural diversity.

To support this, the plan focuses on:

- Expanding use of civic spaces—creating room for regular markets, performances, and pop-up events that activate the town centre year-round.
- Celebrating local identity and diversity—building on events like Abbey Pattern Day and Culture Days to showcase both traditional Irish heritage and the town's multicultural character.
- Strengthening coordination and promotion—using the Information Hub to improve event visibility, make volunteering easier, and support collaboration between groups.

Encouraging new community-led programming—offering support for arts, music, storytelling, and cultural exchange through the new library and creative spaces.

A more visible, inclusive, and consistent calendar of events will not only bring people together, but reinforce Ballyhaunis as a town proud of its heritage, rich in diversity, and alive with community spirit all year round.

## A4. COMMUNITY MEETING PLACES

A need for more community meeting places was identified as part of the feedback in both rounds of community consultation. While the town benefits from strong community networks and facilities, there is a clear gap in accessible, inclusive, and informal spaces where people can simply meet, connect, and spend time—particularly in the evenings and during winter months.

This need was especially highlighted for young people, immigrant workers from lower-income households, young families, and older residents—groups who may face barriers to participation or social isolation without suitable places to gather.

Creating more outdoor social spaces, such as seating areas, small shelters, and covered gathering spots, would be a simple and cost-effective way to promote everyday social interaction. These spaces become more valuable when weather-protected and integrated into key walking routes, civic areas, or scenic spots—supporting spontaneous, low-cost community use.

Equally important is the development of inclusive indoor spaces—open in the evenings, welcoming to all ages, and not dependent on purchasing food or drink. These could serve as youth-friendly hubs, family drop-in spaces, or places where older people can find company and support. Residents also pointed to the lack of non-commercial evening venues, and the potential for a shared community space to double as a social asset and a business opportunity.

These locations could accommodate flexible indoor and outdoor facilities, blending natural and historic character with modern community needs.

To support this, this proposal suggests:

- Developing informal meeting places throughout the town, including small-scale interventions like benches, shelters, and outdoor seating clusters that encourage mingling.
- Exploring shared indoor community hubs, with evening access and flexible use for youth groups, family activities, and social support initiatives.
- Activating underused heritage and natural spaces—such as the riverside, and convent lands—to host pop-up social events or accommodate future community spaces.
- Encouraging social activity as a regeneration tool, recognising that improving places to meet fosters wellbeing, inclusion, and vibrancy in town life.
- Simple flexible facilities  
Create a low-maintenance, versatile space that can host a wide range of informal and programmed activities—indoors and outdoors.
- High-quality Materials  
Use high-quality yet modest materials that blend, helping the structure feel rooted in place and welcoming to all.
- Plan for Shared and Inclusive Use  
Ensure the design supports everyday use by all age groups—from teenagers and youth groups to family meetups and older residents enjoying the green surroundings.



Photograph of the The Weston, Yorkshire sculpture park, UK

Their typology can differ in depending on their location and its context (sheltered structures, simpler platforms or individual seats in more intimate areas). Character of shelter can also reflect the population diversity of the town.



## B1. COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL

The redevelopment of the existing community preschool facility in Ballyhaunis is crucial. The project is focused on creating a high-quality, inclusive, nature-inspired environment that supports early years learning and development. The new pre-school aims to include a landscaped, nature-based outdoor area that fosters children's connection with the natural world, aligning with the principles of the Universal Design Guidelines (UDG) for Early Learning and Care settings.

The community survey revealed that 75% of respondents expressed a strong need for more and better childcare facilities in Ballyhaunis. Currently, the town is served by a single preschool building, which accommodates over 60 children. During consultations, families repeatedly voiced concerns about the lack of local early years and after-school care, noting that many are forced to travel to neighboring towns to access suitable services.

During consultations, it was noted that the nature-based aspect of play for preschoolers is often under-prioritised, highlighting the need to better integrate natural play elements into early years settings.



### Built structure inspiration



**33.3%** of respondents identified increasing the number of crèches in Ballyhaunis as their top priority.



**30%** of respondents identified importance of play as their 3rd priority.

Inspired by the RE Hub at Sutton Valence School, the proposed design is a lightweight, modular structure that complements its heritage setting while embracing the natural landscape. Using sustainable timber construction and large height windows, the building promotes daylight, biophilic connection, and sensory-rich learning. With a low-impact form and natural material palette, it offers a contemporary yet earthy presence that respects heritage and enhances early years engagement with nature.



Avonbeg, Tallaght

### Principals



Modular design allows for phased expansion as demand grows.

1. Dedicated zones for preschool and after-school services.
2. Child-height windows offer accessible views of nature.
3. Nature-based play area with trees, sensory gardens, water features, and climbing elements.
4. Inclusive facilities for children of all abilities.
5. Safe drop-off and parking zones to manage peak-time traffic.
6. Adaptable site layout supports long-term growth and evolving needs.



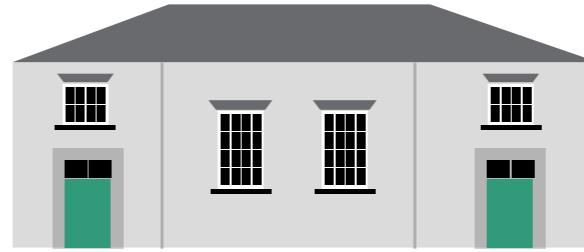
## B2. BALLYHAUNIS LIBRARY

Funding has been secured through the Rural Regeneration Development Fund to develop a design brief for the redevelopment of the former convent school on Abbey Street. The aim is to repurpose the building for community use, transforming it into a workspace that will support local enterprise and foster economic growth.

The design brief also includes the creation of a new public plaza adjacent to the library, enhancing the area's accessibility and public engagement.

To guide this project effectively, several key actions are recommended:

- Identify potential users and partners for the space
- Coordinate with the Chamber of Commerce, Community Council and BRCIE Ltd
- Enhance connections to surrounding assets
- Support the creation of a vibrant public plaza
- Celebrate the site's heritage



## B3. BALLYHAUNIS COURTHOUSE

The former courthouse in Ballyhaunis will be converted into artists and community cultural space under a €150,000 refurbishment funded by the Community Recognition Fund for Phase 1.

Opened in 1874, the limestone-faced Ballyhaunis courthouse closed in 2013 as part of a package of government cutbacks. Ownership of the building was later transferred from the Office of Public Works to Mayo County Council. The plan is to lease the building to the local Rural Irish Artists group.

The current funding will be used to carry out essential repair works to make the building safe for use by this group.

To guide this project effectively, several key actions are recommended:

- Support and monitor refurbishment works
- Develop a vision and operating model for long-term use
- Encourage multi-use and inclusivity
- Improve accessibility and connectivity





**RIA**  
Rural Irish Artists  
email: [ruralirishartists@gmail.com](mailto:ruralirishartists@gmail.com)



The Rural Irish Artists will be hosting a weekly arts social club at claeacout communal house every Wednesday evening 6.30 to 9.30 where you can come and socialise at the same time as working on your own art projects numbers will be limited details and booking is essential by emailing: [ruralirishartists@gmail.com](mailto:ruralirishartists@gmail.com)

## B4. INFORMATION HUB

The recently completed Ballyhaunis Information Hub at 16 Upper High Street, will be operated by the Ballyhaunis Chamber of Commerce, and has potential to be a vital asset for the town. Positioned at the heart of the community, the Hub has the potential to serve as both a welcoming point for visitors and a valuable support centre for residents and local groups.

Consultation feedback identified the need for a central, accessible space where people can find help, information, and opportunities to get involved in town life. The Information Hub responds to this need and can grow to play a central role in strengthening community connections and coordination.

As it develops, the Hub can:

- **Support older residents** with access to information, help with forms, and guidance on services.
- **Provide practical support to community groups**, helping residents connect with local clubs, events, and available facilities.
- **Act as a communications centre for local businesses**, sharing updates, promoting opportunities, and increasing visibility for local enterprise.
- **Offer a base for volunteer coordination and civic action**, becoming a meeting point for groups working on town clean-ups, events, or regeneration projects.
- **Serve as a central coordination point for festivals and events**, helping with logistics, promotion, and community outreach.
- **Welcome visitors to Ballyhaunis**, offering maps, local recommendations, and heritage information that highlights the town's unique story.

The establishment and growth of the Information Hub will help identify emerging needs in the community and link people to the supports available, acting as both a listening post and a connector. As Ballyhaunis works to grow its community infrastructure, the Hub can become a cornerstone of inclusive regeneration, where everyone knows where to turn for support, ideas, or involvement.



## B5. PROVISION OF SPORTS FACILITIES

A clear priority identified through community consultation is the need for more inclusive and accessible sports facilities within Ballyhaunis town centre. While the town has a proud tradition of active clubs and strong participation across all ages, several key groups currently lack suitable or permanent spaces—and many residents are travelling to Claremorris or further afield to access all-weather and flexible sporting facilities.

Two clubs in particular—the Boxing Club and Cricket Club—are well established, with growing and diverse membership bases, and are actively seeking permanent homes close to the town centre. Providing these clubs with dedicated, fit-for-purpose facilities would secure their future, support youth development, and add to the town's inclusive recreational offer.

In addition to supporting specific clubs, there is strong interest in a multi-use indoor or all-weather facility that can accommodate a range of sporting activities year-round. This would reduce reliance on external towns, provide accessible options for all age groups, and contribute to a healthier, more connected community.

To support this, the plan recommends:

- Identifying a suitable town centre location for the permanent accommodation of the Boxing and Cricket Clubs, ideally co-located with shared amenities to maximise impact and usage.
- Exploring the development of a flexible, multi-use sports facility, including indoor space and/or all-weather surfaces suitable for football, training, and community fitness programmes.
- Investigating opportunities for shared use of school sports facilities, identifying the upgrades or agreements needed to open access for community groups, especially during evenings, weekends, and holiday periods.
- Ensuring inclusivity is at the heart of design and programming, so that all groups—regardless of background, age, or ability—can find a place to be active, connected, and involved.

Expanding the town's sporting infrastructure will not only serve growing demand but also reinforce Ballyhaunis as a healthy, vibrant, and inclusive place to live, where everyone has the opportunity to participate in sport and physical activity close to home.





## C1. PRESERVING THE ABBEY

St Mary's Abbey is the oldest surviving structure in Ballyhaunis and has stood as a symbol of the town's identity for centuries. Rich in artefacts and memory, the Abbey continues to serve as a powerful link to the past and a unique opportunity for community connection.

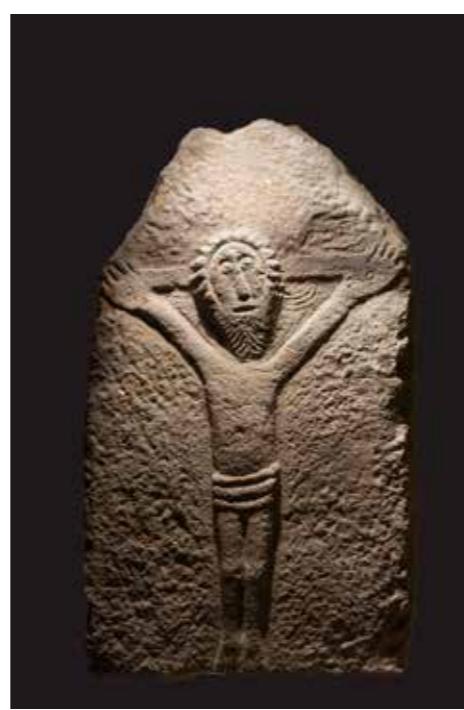
To ensure its ongoing preservation and relevance, careful management, regular maintenance, and urgent repair works are essential.

Equally important is strengthening the Abbey's relationship with the town and surrounding Friary grounds. As an iconic and defining landmark, the Abbey has huge placemaking potential—not just as a building, but as the heart of a wider heritage and landscape setting. A clear vision and masterplan for the full site will help unlock this potential, guiding future investment, improving access, and ensuring the landscape reinforces the Abbey's role as a cultural and community anchor.

### Key Actions:

- Undertake urgent repairs to safeguard the structure and its contents.
- Develop a masterplan for the Abbey and Friary grounds to guide conservation, access, and long-term use.
- Identify appropriate, respectful uses for the Abbey—such as cultural events, heritage groups, or museum/archive space—that maintain its integrity while keeping it active and relevant.

Essential project for the preservation and appropriate development of this valuable resource for all Ballyhaunis Citizens



### Restoring Views of St Mary's Abbey

Careful management and selective removal of trees can reintroduce long-lost views of St Mary's Abbey from key points around the town. Reinforcing the Abbey as a visual and cultural landmark strengthens its role as a focal point and placemaking anchor within the Ballyhaunis townscape.



View from Abbey St.



View from Bridge St.



View from Upper Main St.

## D1. TOWN GATEWAYS

The four primary entry points to Ballyhaunis town centre—Knox Street, Clare Road, Upper Main Street, and Abbey Street—play a critical role in defining the town's identity and setting the tone for arrival. By enhancing these gateways with distinctive public realm improvements, the project aims to signal a transition into a more people-focused, pedestrian-prioritised environment.

These improvements will create a stronger sense of place, improve safety for all users, and elevate the visual quality of the town centre, making it more welcoming and navigable for both residents and visitors.

### Broad Outline of Actions:

- Clearly Define Gateways  
Use surface materials, signage, planting, and public art to signal arrival into the pedestrian-prioritised town centre.
- Enhance Safety and Accessibility  
Introduce raised crossings, smooth surfaces, and clear sightlines to slow traffic and support all users, including those with mobility needs.
- Improve Public Realm and Aesthetics  
Add trees, planting, lighting, and creative features to soften the streetscape, aid navigation, and reinforce local identity.
- Ensure Integration with Wider Network  
Align gateway improvements with active travel and public realm projects for a cohesive town centre experience.

This project strengthens Ballyhaunis' town centre presence, helps manage vehicle speed, and enhances the experience of arriving on foot, by bike, or by car—making the town more inviting, legible, and cohesive.



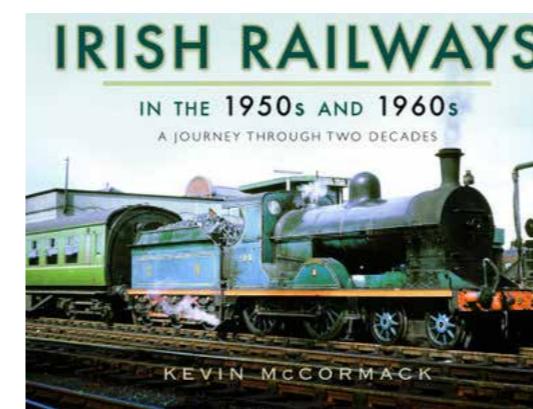
Illustrative sketch of the eastern gateway. Location of railway bridge creates obvious entrance to the town centre.



Gateway Location Plan



Unique gateway bridge signage can draw inspiration from historic railway fonts and also from modern fonts with interesting patterns



## D2. TRANSFORMING RIVERSIDE SPACES

This project reimagines the Dalgan River as a green spine of public life, bringing nature into the town and creating a space that reflects the identity and needs of the Ballyhaunis community.

To guide this project effectively there are several key recommendations:

- **Widen Footpaths Along the River**  
Expand existing footways to allow for more comfortable walking, better accessibility, and informal gathering spaces along the water's edge.
- **Install a New Pedestrian Bridge**  
Provide a new crossing between the riverside and the library site, linking key community hubs and improving local walkability.
- **Create areas for seating, outdoor dining, greenery, and social interaction—supporting local hospitality businesses.**
- **Improve Connectivity with Town Centre**  
Upgrade surfaces and crossings to make movement between the riverside and central streets more inviting, legible, and accessible for all.
- **Landscape and Planting Enhancements**  
Edit overgrown vegetation to open views to the river and introduce appropriate new planting for biodiversity, visual interest, and seasonal colour.
- **Encourage Social Use**  
Provide simple picnic areas and BBQ spots to invite gathering and outdoor cooking.
- **Create Natural Trails**  
Develop low-key paths and steps to encourage exploration and connect with wider grounds.

These small, strategic interventions will create more inviting and accessible public spaces, while maintaining the tranquility and natural charm that make the River Dalgan a valued part of the town's landscape.



## D3. TOWN CENTRE FOOTBRIDGE

A new pedestrian footbridge across the Dalgan River is a community-backed proposal that would significantly improve connections between the town centre, Friary Grounds, and Convent Grounds. More than just a crossing, it creates a clear, accessible, and inviting route into the heart of Ballyhaunis' green spaces—making it easier for people to explore, meet, and enjoy the town's natural and historic assets.

By offering a welcoming new link between key public places, this project is a catalyst for wider improvements to the town's walkability, heritage appreciation, and sense of place.

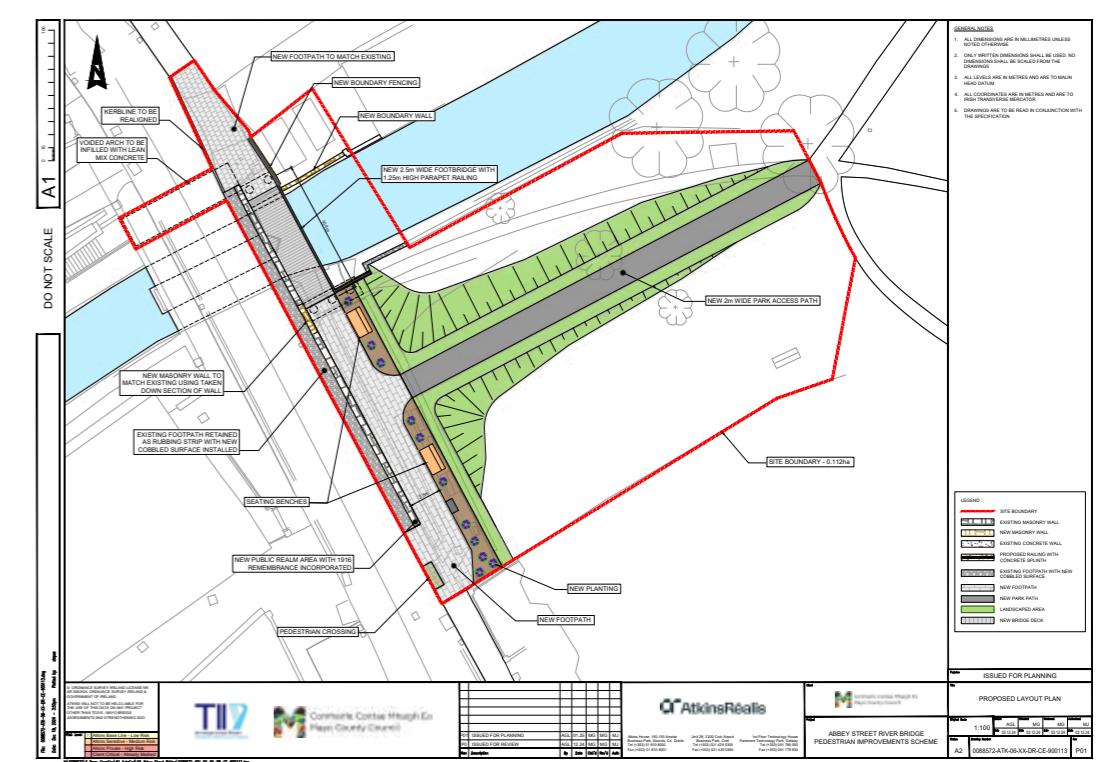
To guide this project effectively, several key actions are recommended:

- **Link Key Spaces**  
Establish a direct, inviting route between the town centre, Friary Grounds, and Convent Grounds.
- **Enhance Public Realm on Both Sides**  
Coordinate the bridge with wider improvements such as landscaping, seating, and access paths.
- **Celebrate Local Heritage**  
Improve views to the Abbey and upgrade the setting of the existing historic bridge.
- **Respect Nature**  
Retain trees and hedgerows along the river while carefully editing views from the Friary hillside.
- **Boost Biodiversity**  
Preserve the river's natural character and support wildlife through sensitive design and planting.

This small but meaningful intervention unlocks major benefits for community access, connectivity, and pride in place.



Extract from Mayo County Council Part 8 planning submission for the new bridge crossing



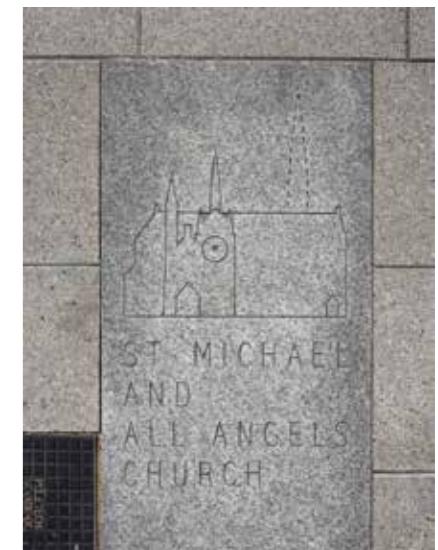
## D4. MAIN STREET

This project focuses on transforming the town centre into a more welcoming, attractive, and accessible place for all. By calming traffic, upgrading pathways, and improving the quality of public spaces, the initiative aims to support everyday use, encourage footfall, and create a more enjoyable town centre experience.

The town centre will become safer, greener, and more sociable—supporting local businesses, improving accessibility, and reinforcing Ballyhaunis's identity as a vibrant, people-focused place.

- Calm Traffic Throughout the Town Core
- Upgrade Pathways and Crossings
- Prioritise People Over Cars
- Create Inviting Spaces to Sit and Socialise
- Integrate Wayfinding and Local Identity
- Enhance Greening and Street Design

This project aims to reclaim the heart of Ballyhaunis for its people—making it more walkable, sociable, and reflective of the town's rich character and future ambitions.



## D5. MARKET SQUARE

Market Square has long been the civic and social centre of Ballyhaunis. This project aims to restore its historic role by creating a vibrant, flexible public space that supports everyday life, community events, and cultural expression.

Key interventions will:

- Respect and highlight the square's historic significance
- Improve safety and accessibility for all users
- Create a welcoming, flexible space for social gathering, markets, exhibitions, and outdoor dining
- Enhance the visual and environmental quality of the space with planting and creative features

To guide this project effectively, several key actions are recommended:

1. Declutter the Square – Remove unnecessary street furniture and visual clutter to open the space for public use and events.
2. Enhance Accessibility – Improve courtesy crossings and pedestrian links to reinforce a shared, people-friendly space
3. Encourage Social and Commercial Activity – Support outdoor dining, shopfront spill-out, and flexible use for markets and festivals.
4. Celebrate Local Identity – Install display panels, murals or temporary art curated with local artists, schools, and heritage groups to share stories and celebrate Ballyhaunis creativity
5. Improve the Edge Treatment – Introduce planting and green buffers to create a soft edge between the road and pedestrian areas.
6. Mark the Heart of the Square – Consider installing a centrepiece (e.g., sculpture, water feature or raised platform) to mark this historic crossroads and invite gathering.

This revitalised square will become a strong placemaking tool and a proud focal point for Ballyhaunis life.



Display in form of movable panels

## D6. MEANWHILE SPACES

A community led initiative to activate vacant and underused plots of land within Ballyhaunis with potential for low-cost, short-term community uses. By partnering with willing landowners, these spaces can be temporarily transformed into valuable places for social connection, health, creativity, and learning. These small-scale interventions could serve a variety of age groups and interests.

Possible uses include:

- Allotments or fruit/vegetable growing areas
- Plant nurseries for use in town landscaping
- Themed play areas or informal sports spaces
- Outdoor exercise equipment or courts
- Temporary art displays or cultural installations

To guide this project effectively, several key actions are recommended:

- Identify Suitable Sites – Map and assess empty plots in and around the town centre with potential for community use.
- Engage Landowners – Approach owners to discuss short-term leasing or partnership models.
- Assess Local Needs – Determine which age groups or activities are currently underserved (e.g. teenagers, older adults).
- Select Low-Cost Uses – Choose interventions that are easy to deliver, maintain, and remove if necessary.
- Secure Funding & Partnerships – Apply for small grants and seek support from local groups or businesses.
- Community Involvement – Involve residents in the design, delivery and use of the space to encourage long-term stewardship.

This project can be a catalyst for community engagement and vitality while testing ideas for more permanent uses in the future.



Naturalistic pump track with kiosk and sitting area for occasional events, Slavonice, Czech Republic

Community growing, IGA Campus, Berlin, Germany



## E1. ACTIVE TRAVEL ROUTES

This project aims to create a safer, more attractive and more accessible network for walking and cycling throughout Ballyhaunis. It will prioritise everyday journeys—such as walking to school, cycling to shops, or commuting to work—by making routes more comfortable, interesting, and inclusive.

Improvements will support sustainable mobility, encourage healthier lifestyles, and enhance the experience of moving through the town.

To guide this project effectively, several key actions are recommended:

- Create Segregated Paths Where Feasible – Prioritise safe, dedicated lanes for cyclists and pedestrians along key routes, especially near schools and community facilities.
- Improve Crossings and Connectivity – Install pedestrian crossings at key junctions and desire lines to connect different parts of the town and make travel easier for all users, including children and older residents.
- Implement Traffic Calming Measures – Use features such as tree planting, raised crossings, narrowed carriageways, and surface treatments to reduce vehicle speeds and create a more welcoming street environment.
- Add Interest and Identity Along Routes – Integrate public art, murals, or sculptures—especially where long boundary walls create monotonous streetscapes—to make walking and cycling routes more engaging.
- Highlight Links to Key Community Assets – Use signage and visual cues to connect active travel routes to schools, parks, Market Square, the Abbey, the swimming pool, and community centres.

These improvements will help make Ballyhaunis a safer, greener, and more connected town, while supporting inclusive access for residents of all ages and backgrounds.



Illustrative image of interpretive panels in Ballina



## E2. PARKING CONNECTIONS

A key concern raised during consultation was the pressure on on-street parking, often resulting in double parking and use of restricted areas. While many called for more parking near shops, analysis shows that Ballyhaunis already has several underused off-street car parks, both public and private.

Rather than creating new spaces, the focus is on making existing car parks more accessible, attractive, and safer to use. Improving the quality and visibility of these areas—and their connections to the town centre—can encourage greater use and reduce pressure on the High Street.

This project proposes to:

- Upgrade links between car parks and the town centre, especially laneways to Main Street and Knox Street, with better lighting, signage, surfacing, and accessibility.
- Improve safety and visibility, especially during evening hours.
- Bring elements of the High Street into car parks through planting, lighting, and creative features to make walks more enjoyable and feel shorter.
- Encourage turnover of on-street parking, making it available for quick stops, while promoting off-street parking for longer visits.

A small behavioural shift is needed: encouraging those staying longer—such as for work or appointments—to use car parks, while preserving High Street spaces for short, convenient stops. This balance will ease congestion and support local businesses through improved access and footfall.

The diagram opposite highlights the locations of existing public and private car parks, along with on-street parking areas. It also identifies potential connection points where improvements—such as clearer signage, lighting, or surfacing—could be introduced to enhance the link between parking and key streets in the town centre.

By reimagining car parks as safe, connected entry points, Ballyhaunis can create a more welcoming and accessible town centre experience for everyone.



Carpark connection improvements in Boyle, Co. Roscommon



# Appendices

## Reference list:

- Ballyhaunis Town Centre Health Check 2025
- Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028
- Mayo County Council – Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP 2023-29) Socio-Economic Statement: Draft Vision and High-Level Goals
- Digital Town Blueprint Report Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo 2025
- Ballyhaunis Local Area Plan 2010-2016
- Travel to Work and Labour Catchments in the Western Region - A Profile of the Ballyhaunis Labour Catchment - 2019
- Annagh Magazine <https://www.annaghmag.ie/>

## List of Acronyms

BAT	Ballyhaunis Abbey Trust
BAP	Ballyhaunis Abbey Partnership
BEY	Ballyhaunis Engaging Youth
BHIF	Built Heritage Investment Scheme
BRClE	Ballyhaunis Region & Community of Innovation & Enterprise
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CDP	County Development Plan
CLÁR	Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais
CTCH	Collaborative Town Centre Health Check
DHLGH	Department of Housing Local Government & Heritage
DRCDG	Department of Rural & Community Development & Gaeltacht
DTB	Digital Town Blueprint
ETB	Education & Training Board
FRC	Family Resource Centre
GMA	General Municipal Allocation
HSF	Historic Structures Fund
MABS	Money Advice & Budgeting Service
MCC	Mayo County Council
MD	Municipal District
LGFA	Ladies Gaelic Football Association
MSPCA	Mayo Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals
MUGA	Multi Use Games Area
NDP	National Development Plan
NPF	National Planning Framework
NPO	National Policy Objectives
NMS	National Monuments Service
NSO	National Strategic Outcomes
NTA	National Transport Authority
ORIS	Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme
RIA	Rural Irish Artists
RLS	Repair and Leasing Scheme
RPO	Regional Policy Objectives
RRDF	Rural Regeneration & Development Fund
RSES	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SEAI	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
SHIP	Social Housing Investment Programme
SPA	Special Protection Area
TCF	Town Centre First
TII	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
TRO	Town Regeneration Officer
TUSLA	Irish Child & Family Agency
TVRS	Town & Village Renewal Scheme

# PLANNING POLICY REVIEW

## NATIONAL POLICY

### Project 2040

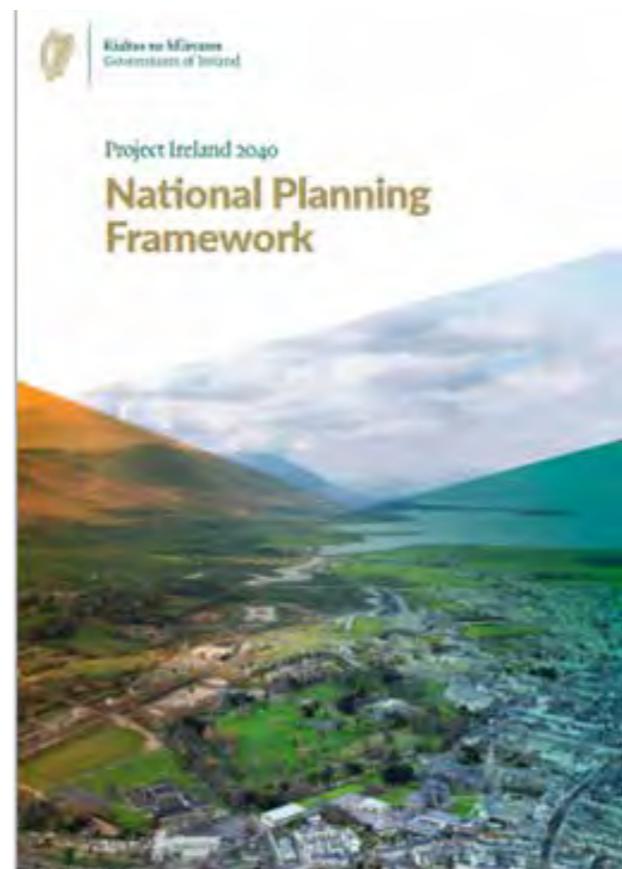
Project Ireland 2040 is the State's 20-year plan for sustainable growth, combining the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan (NDP). The NPF sets out ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs), supported by National Policy Objectives (NPOs), to guide balanced development across Ireland.

For Ballyhaunis, the most relevant NSOs focus on:

- Compact Growth: Revitalising the town centre and reusing vacant buildings.
- Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities: Supporting Ballyhaunis' role as a key service and employment town for east Mayo.
- Regional Accessibility: Enhancing its rail and road connections to Galway, Athlone, and Castlebar.
- Sustainable Mobility and Low-Carbon Transition: Promoting walking, cycling, public transport, and renewable energy.
- Inclusive Communities: Building on Ballyhaunis' cultural diversity and community strengths.

These priorities directly inform the Ballyhaunis

Town Centre First Plan.



### National Development Plan (NDP)

The National Development Plan (NDP) 2021–2030 is the Government's strategic investment programme to deliver the priorities of the National Planning Framework (NPF). While there are currently no major NDP projects directly targeted at Ballyhaunis, significant investments in nearby regional centres such as Castlebar, Tuam, and Athlone—including housing, transport, healthcare, and education projects—help strengthen the wider region. These improvements enhance connectivity, services, and opportunities, which in turn benefit Ballyhaunis by supporting its role as a key service and employment town in east Mayo.



### Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy

#### 2021-2025

Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021–2025 is Ireland's rural development policy for the 2021–2025 period. At its core, it seeks to create a rural Ireland that:

- Is integral to the national whole,
- Has increased interdependence between rural and urban places,
- Has the potential to create quality work,
- Has high quality environments, and
- Is vibrant with local people and communities at its heart.

The strategy seeks improvements in several key areas including digital connectivity, employment and careers, revitalization of towns and villages, improved resilience, and leadership in local communities, enhanced public services, and climate action.

## **Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland**

Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland is the Government's plan to make sure that Ireland's housing meets the needs of its population and address the current deficiencies in the system up to 2030. It seeks to ensure an affordable, high quality, well-located home for everyone in the State.

The plan seeks to address the high rates of vacancy in many places across the State by refurbishing properties to bring them back into use. This reuse of vacant spaces is not just essential for providing housing, but also bringing vibrancy and life back into town centres.

As part of this, the Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund has been set up to provide financial support for the refurbishment of vacant homes and provision of services. In addition, SEAI grants are available to bring older building stock up to more modern energy standards, increasing the quality of housing of older homes typically located in, or closer to, town centres.

## **Climate Action Plan 2023**

The Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP) is an update to the Climate Action Plan 2019 and sets out refreshed measures to help Ireland achieve its legal binding emissions targets under international and European law. Under the plan, Ireland is seeking to reduce its transport emissions 50%, its commercial building emissions 45%, residential building emissions 40%, and businesses emissions 35% by 2030.

In order to achieve these targets, it acknowledges a redesign and remodelling of Irish cities, towns, and villages is needed. The promotion of more sustainable forms of travel, bringing building stocks up to a higher standard, supporting more sustainable ways of doing business and ensuring long-term economic sustainability are both essential to meeting these targets, as well as improving the quality of life in of Ireland towns and cities.

## **Heritage Ireland 2030**

Heritage Ireland 2030 is the plan to protect and promote Ireland's local and national heritage. Built around three themes, communities, leadership, and partnerships, the strategy suggests 150 actions to ensure the protection of Ireland's heritage in all of its forms. The core of the strategy is an acknowledgement of Ireland's heritage as being at the core of its identity, having both an intrinsic and economic value. Both natural and built heritage are addressed in the strategy, and methods for communities to get involved in their protection are advanced.

## **The Digital Connectivity Strategy (2022)**

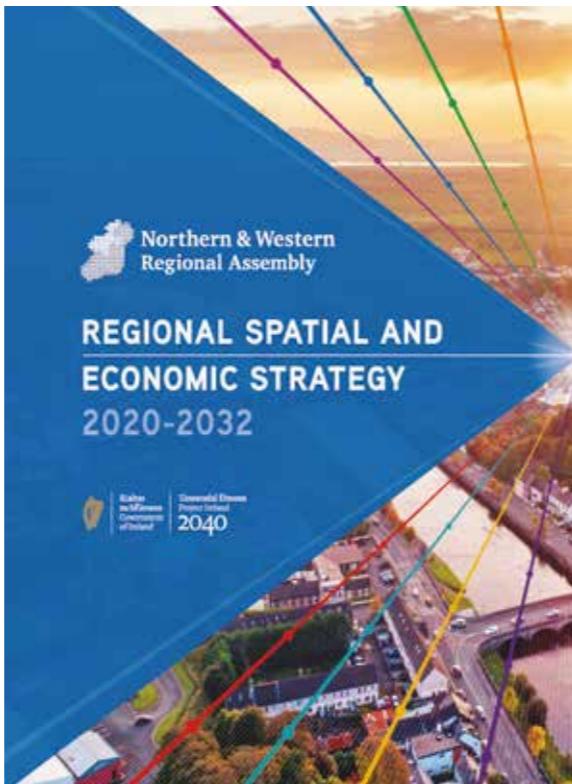
Recognizing the importance of access to digital services towards the wider development of Ireland's economy, the Digital Connectivity Strategy sets out the policies and supports available to ensure every community has access to the internet and its benefits. The strategy acknowledges that a high-quality internet service is essential to the development of rural towns and villages and commits to rolling it out to support both the local economy and provision of smart services.

## REGIONAL POLICY

### Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (2020-2032)

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) is the statutory framework guiding physical and economic development across the Northern and Western Region. Its central aim is to move away from a 'business-as-usual' approach and instead promote sustainability, resilience, and competitiveness. This shift is intended to protect the environment, enhance quality of life, and ensure that towns, villages, and rural communities benefit from improved services and opportunities.

For Ballyhaunis, the RSES is particularly significant given its location within east Mayo and its strategic role as a key service town with strong rail, road, and agricultural links. Ballyhaunis sits within the wider influence of Castlebar and Tuam, while also benefitting from proximity to larger regional centres such as Galway and Athlone. Its function as a hub for employment, retail, education, and cultural diversity makes it well positioned to align with the growth ambitions of the RSES.



### North-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024

The Regional Enterprise Plans represent a 'bottom-up, collaborative mechanism' to help deliver balanced regional growth with a coherent policy approach. The plans were made in collaboration and consultation with stakeholders from across economic industries and sectors.

The main result of the North-West Plan is strategic objectives designed to better prepare the region's economy in the coming years. These are: Encouraging entrepreneurship and scaling of SMEs, Regional strengths – wind energy and blue economy, Promotion of the region, Enterprise transition to low carbon, Cross border relationships in the enterprise ecosystem, and Skills.

# Local Policy

## Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028

The Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 (MCDP) sets out a bold, regenerative vision for the county's rural communities and their development.

The Core strategy sets out the following overarching vision for the county:

"To create a sustainable and competitive county that supports the health and well-being of the people of Mayo, providing an attractive destination, as a place in which to live, work, invest, do business and visit, offering high quality employment and educational opportunities within strong and vibrant sustainable communities, whilst ensuring a transition to a low carbon and climate resilient county that supports high environmental quality."

Key Strategic Aims set out in Section 2.3 that are relevant to this plan in relate to: housing, movement and transport, sustainable communities, built environment, climate action and renewable energy, and settlements. Overall, the plan sets a vision for the county to grow in a sustainable and compact way, that supports the unique character and identity of Mayo's places, improves the liveability and quality of life for residents, and protects and enhances the environment.

Within the settlement hierarchy of the MCDP,

Ballyhaunis is designated as a Tier III – Self-Sustaining Town. This recognises its important role as a service and employment hub for east Mayo, while also identifying a need for further investment in enterprise, housing, and community infrastructure to strengthen self-sufficiency. In the Retail Hierarchy, Ballyhaunis is identified as a Small Town and Rural Area (Tier IV), reflecting its function in serving both the local community and surrounding hinterland.

For Ballyhaunis, the plan highlights the need to:

- Support enterprise and employment growth, particularly in agri-food, logistics, and retail.
- Strengthen transport and active travel connections, including links to rail, regional roads, and cycling/walking networks.
- Encourage community-led development, supporting initiatives such as the Town Centre First Plan.
- Provide a framework for mixed-use zoning and opportunity sites to drive regeneration and attract investment.

These policies and objectives ensure that Ballyhaunis can grow sustainably, while

enhancing its role as a key service town and building on its distinctive cultural and economic strengths.



## Mayo Climate Action Plan (2024)

Mayo County Council's Climate Action Plan 2024–2029 outlines strategies to achieve climate resilience, biodiversity, sustainability, and climate neutrality.

Key objectives include:

- Promoting Renewable Energy: Supporting the development of renewable energy sources to reduce carbon emissions.
- Enhancing Climate Resilience: Implementing measures to adapt to climate change impacts and protect communities.
- Supporting Local Climate Action: Encouraging community-led initiatives to address climate challenges.

For Ballyhaunis, these policies provide a framework to integrate climate action into local development plans. The town can leverage its community engagement and existing infrastructure to implement renewable energy projects, improve climate resilience, and promote sustainable practices.

Additionally, the Mayo County Development Plan supports the transition to a low-carbon economy by facilitating the development of renewable energy sources and promoting energy efficiency.

## RSES RPOS

NPO 4	Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being.
NPO 5	Develop cities and towns of sufficient scale and quality to compete internationally and to be drivers of national and regional growth, investment and prosperity.
NPO 6	Regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages of all types and scale as environmental assets, that can accommodate changing roles and functions, increased residential population and employment activity and enhanced levels of amenity and design quality, in order to sustainably influence and support their surrounding area.
NPO 7	Reversing the stagnation or decline of many smaller urban centres, by identifying and establishing new roles and functions and enhancement of local infrastructure and amenities
NPO 14	Protect and promote the sense of place and culture and the quality, character and distinctiveness of the Irish rural landscape that make Ireland's rural areas authentic and attractive as places to live, work and visit. The Action Plan for Rural Development will support this objective up to 2020; thereafter a review of the Action Plan will be undertaken to ensure continued alignment and consistency with the National Policy Objectives of this Framework.
NPO 15	Support the sustainable development of rural areas by encouraging growth and arresting decline in areas that have experienced low population growth or decline in recent decades and by managing the growth of areas that are under strong urban influence to avoid over-development, while sustaining vibrant rural communities.
NPO 16	Target the reversal of rural decline in the core of small towns and villages through sustainable targeted measures that address vacant premises and deliver sustainable reuse and regeneration outcomes.
NPO 17	Enhance, integrate and protect the special physical, social, economic and cultural value of built heritage assets through appropriate and sensitive use now and for future generations.
NPO 18a	To support the proportionate growth of and appropriately designed development in rural towns that will contribute to their regeneration and renewal, including interventions in the public realm, the provision of amenities, the acquisition of sites and the provision of services.
NPO 21	Enhance the competitiveness of rural areas by supporting innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through the diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and services, including ICT-based industries and those addressing climate change and sustainability.
NPO 27	Ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments, and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages.
NPO 28	Plan for a more diverse and socially inclusive society that targets equality of opportunity and a better quality of life for all citizens, through improved integration and greater accessibility in the delivery of sustainable communities and the provision of associated services.
NPO 58	Integrated planning for Green Infrastructure and ecosystem services will be incorporated into the preparation of statutory land use plans.

Policy	Description
RPO 3.2 (c)	Deliver at least 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements with a population of at least 1,500 (other than the Galway MASP and the Regional Growth Centres), within the existing built-up footprints.
RPO 3.3	Deliver at least 20% of all new housing in rural areas on brownfield sites.
RPO 3.4	To support the regeneration and renewal of small towns and villages in rural areas.
RPO 3.5	Identify and develop quality green infrastructure, within and adjacent to City, Regional Growth Centres and Key Towns.
RPO 3.6	Support a coherent and consistent approach in the identification and monitoring of the scale of housing vacancy within the region, identifying vacancy hotspots and informing the setting of actions, objectives and targets in Action Plans and identify how these might best be achieved.
RPO 3.8	Support the design of new/replacement/ refurbished dwellings to high energy efficiency standards that fully avail of renewable technologies, maximise solar gain, utilising modern materials and design practices.
RPO 3.9	Identify suitable development opportunities for regeneration and development that are supported by a quality site selection process that also addresses environmental constraints and opportunities.
RPO 3.10	Ensure flood risk management informs development by avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and integrate sustainable water management solutions (such as SUDS, non-porous surfacing and green roofs) to create safe places. Development plans should assess flood risk by implementing the recommendations of the Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) and Circular PL02/2014 (August 2014).
RPO 3.13	To support the role of smaller and medium sized towns, which demonstrate an important role in terms of service provision and employment for their catchments within the economic function of the county. Such settlements will be identified through the Development Plan process as part of the Settlement Hierarchy and the Core Strategy
RPO 4.4	That the Wild Atlantic Way (WAW) touring network and visitor attractions within the region shall be upgraded and improved to cater for the growth in visitor cars, buses, and cyclists using the route.
RPO 4.14	Promote the development of integrated walking, cycling and bridle routes throughout the region as an activity for both international visitors and local tourists in a manner that is compatible with nature conservation and other environmental policies.
RPO 4.21	Promote innovative new building design and retrofitting of existing buildings, both private properties, and publicly owned, to improve building energy efficiency, energy conservation and the use of renewable energy sources following National Regulations, and Policy.
RPO 4.23	To create a stronger and more resilient region by protecting and stimulating gastronomy as part of our cultural heritage and also by identifying new opportunities for economic development.
RPO 4.24	To support the growth of the region's agrifood industry, and its SME's. This includes the expansion of the sector where already established in rural areas, as well as in small towns, and villages, where expansion should be supported.
RPO 4.45	To support retail in town and village centres through the sequential approach, as provided within the Retail Guidelines, and to encourage appropriate development formats within the town and village centres.
RPO 4.46	To encourage new (and expanding) retail developments to locate close to public transport corridors, to enable sustainable travel to and from our Town and Village Centres, where applicable.
RPO 4.47	To adopt a presumption in favour of the reuse, and restoration of town centre buildings for use as retail space, subject to satisfying other planning criteria and standards

RPO 5.14	Support the conservation of the region's National Monuments and built heritage, being structures that are of special architectural, historic, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest that are of Regional Significance or above.	RPO 7.12	Ensure local planning, housing, transport/ accessibility and leisure policies are developed with a focus on meeting the needs and opportunities of an ageing population and people with disabilities and younger persons.
RPO 5.17	Support the adaptation and re-use of heritage buildings and places.	RPO 7.18	Aim to make this region an Age-Friendly one by working with constituent Planning Authorities and recognising the demographic challenges that face the region and ensure the provision of suitable facilities and services at appropriate locations.
RPO 5.18	The Regional Assembly shall collaborate with Local Authorities, Fáilte Ireland, Waterways Ireland, DTAS, and other relevant stakeholders in developing an integrated network of Greenways across the region's catchments. To support, and enable the development of sustainable Greenway projects, the NWRA will encourage and promote: (a) The advancement and growth of Greenways through several Key National and Regional Greenway Projects, which are high capacity, and which can in the medium/long term be extended and interlinked across County Boundaries and with Local Greenways, and other cycling/walking infrastructure. (b) Prioritisation of Greenways of scale and appropriate standard that have significant potential to deliver an increase in activity tourism to the region and are regularly used by overseas and domestic visitors, and locals, thereby contributing to a healthier society through increased physical activity. (c) The appropriate development of local businesses, and start-ups in the vicinity of Greenway Projects. (d) The development of Greenways in accordance with an agreed code of practice. (e) Collaborative development of Greenways and Blueways, including feasibility and route selection studies to minimise impacts on environmentally sensitive areas.	RPO 8.22	Prioritising investment to improve stormwater infrastructure to improve sustainable drainage and reduce the risk of flooding in the urban and rural environment.
RPO 5.19	The Assembly supports the further development of Greenways as part of the 'Outdoor Recreational Plan for Public Lands and Waters in Ireland 2017-2021', as part of an overall improvement of facilities to enhance health and wellbeing across society.	RPO 9.1	Build Inclusive and Compact Places by: a) Planning for Inclusive Communities through regional cooperation and collaboration, to support the wider economic and social development agendas of the region and integrating health and wellbeing outcomes across all activities, ensuring that spaces are made available for community use. b) Accommodating Growth and Delivering Housing through compact growth where housing opportunities are close to schools, community facilities, health facilities, shopping, and employment; Prioritising the (re-)use of existing underutilised land and buildings, and other infill opportunities. c) Accessing Quality Services by maximising the use of transport and digital infrastructure to ensure people can access quality education and health services, building on the quality health and education infrastructure that exists on a cross-border basis and building more shared services and nurturing greater collaboration between actors and agencies in the co-design of new services. d) Valuing Cultural Heritage by creating appealing places through attractive and imaginative building design, street layout, civic space and public realm design; Developing new offerings in support of existing ventures in the tourism sector, such as greenways, walking trails and other inter-urban connections, based on the wealth of natural and cultural heritage assets and providing links to the Wild Atlantic Way and the Causeway Coast.
RPO 6.22	Provide new interchange facilities and enhanced bus waiting facilities together with enhanced passenger information, utilising smart technology in appropriate circumstances.	RPO 9.3	Planning for a vibrant economy through: b) Nurturing the rural economy through protecting and promoting the sense of place and culture and the quality, character and distinctiveness of the rural landscape, whilst facilitating the appropriately-scaled development of rural enterprise initiatives, including the appropriate development of tourism, delivering business start-up programmes and development support to rural communities experiencing economic disadvantage, whilst also meeting appropriate rural housing need having due regard to all material considerations.
RPO 6.23	To provide sustainable travel which will be supported by providing walking and cycling facilities (including Greenway and Blueway projects) as a priority across the region.		
RPO 6.26	The walking and cycling offer within the region shall be improved to encourage more people to walk and cycle, through: (b) Safe walking and cycle infrastructure shall be provided in urban and rural areas, the design shall be informed by published design manuals, included the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and the NTA Cycle Manual. (c) Development of a network of Greenways.		
RPO 6.29	The management of space in town and village centres should deliver a high level of priority and permeability for walking, cycling and public transport modes to create accessible, attractive, vibrant and safe, places to work, live, shop and engage in community life.		
RPO 6.30	Planning at the local level should promote walking, cycling and public transport by maximising the number of people living within walking and cycling distance of their neighbourhood or district centres, public transport services and other services at the local level such as schools.		
RPO 6.31	New development areas should be permeable for walking and cycling and the retrospective implementation of walking and cycling facilities should be undertaken where practicable in existing neighbourhoods, to give a competitive advantage to these modes. Prioritisation should be given to schools and areas of high employment density.		
RPO 6.36	Support the roll-out of the National Broadband Plan within the lifetime of this strategy and grow the regional digital economy.		
RPO 6.38	The Assembly supports the provision of Wifi Hotspots at appropriate publicly accessible locations.		
RPO 6.39	Provide information to businesses on the opportunities available through broadband connections.		
RPO 6.41	Promote technology interventions and best practice that enhance sustainability in public places, parks, waterways and building management.		
RPO 7.9	Promote the provision of high-quality, accessible and suitably proportioned areas of public open spaces and promote linkage with social, cultural and heritage sites and buildings. In this process prioritise access for walking and cycling.		
RPO 7.10	Support the Health Service Executive and other statutory and voluntary agencies and private healthcare providers in the provision of healthcare facilities to all sections of the community, at appropriate locations, with good public transport links, parking and accessible facilities.		

# MAYO DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2022-2028)

Policy	Description
SO 3	<p>Employment and Investment</p> <p>To support employment, encourage enterprise, maximise investment and create an environment that will establish Mayo as a premier investment location, capitalising on the county's existing and emerging key economic drivers, such as the Coastal Corridor and Marine Environment, the Atlantic Economic Corridor, Ireland West Airport Knock (IWAK), the IWAK Strategic Development Zone and the Economic Growth Clusters of Ballina/North Mayo, Castlebar-Westport, Ballinrobe, Ballyhaunis and Claremorris, and Ballina-Killala.</p>
SO 4	<p>Low Carbon and Climate Resilient County</p> <p>To transition to a low carbon and climate resilient county, by promoting sustainable settlement patterns, the integration of land-use and sustainable modes of transport, encourage walking, cycling and public transport, increasing reliance on green energy sources, encouraging urban and rural communities to facilitate effective change and by building climate change resilience and climate action into all services and functions of Mayo County Council.</p>
SO 11	<p>Urban Renewal and Regeneration</p> <p>Continue to enhance the towns and villages of County Mayo, through renewal and regeneration, improvements to public realm infrastructure, healthy place-making and by improving the visual amenity, urban design, viability, vibrancy of these areas so that people can live, work and invest in these areas.</p>
CSP 2	<p>To promote measures to reduce vacancy and the underuse of existing building stock and support initiatives that promote the reuse, refurbishment and retrofitting of existing buildings within all settlements in the Settlement Hierarchy and the rural countryside.</p>
CSP 3	<p>To support the growth of towns and villages and open countryside to ensure that development proceeds sustainably and at an appropriate scale.</p>
SSP 4	<p>Promote commensurate population and employment growth in the designated Self-Sustaining Towns, providing for natural increases and to become more economically self-sustaining, in line with the quality and capacity of public transport, services and infrastructure available.</p>
SSP 6	<p>To support the creation of healthy and sustainable communities that encourages and facilitates walking and cycling and general physical activity through the implementation of best practices in urban design that promotes permeability and interconnecting spaces.</p>
EDO 40	<p>To explore the feasibility of seeking the designation of the former Asahi Plant and adjoining lands outside of Killala as a Strategic Development Zone.</p>
EDO 42	<p>To promote and reinforce all town centres in the county as primary shopping areas.</p>
EDO 44	<p>To ensure proposals for retail development in towns and villages make a positive contribution to the general townscape through the promotion of excellence in urban design, signage, consideration of the built heritage; and designed to a scale appropriate to the settlement.</p>
EDO 45	<p>To continue to implement and facilitate environmental, amenity and recreational improvements to the public realm, in existing town and village core retail areas.</p>
EDO 46	<p>To maintain an appropriate mix of uses and to maintain the role of the town centre as a dominant commercial and retail centre, and prevent an excessive concentration of particular (single type) uses with the town centre areas of Mayo's towns and villages, for example bookmakers/betting offices; licenced premises, discount retail units, hot food takeaways, etc.</p>

EDO 47	To promote and facilitate on-street activities including street markets and farmers/country markets in all existing retail centres or any event that adds to the vitality and viability of existing town and village centres, whilst not unduly impacting on the existing retail function.
EDO 48	To support retail in town and village centres through the sequential approach, as provided within the Retail Guidelines, and to encourage appropriate development formats within the town and village centres.
EDO 49	To encourage new (and expanding) retail developments to locate close to public transport corridors, to enable sustainable travel to and from our town and village centres, where applicable.
EDO 50	To adopt a presumption in favour of the reuse, and restoration of town centre buildings for use as retail space, subject to satisfying other planning criteria and standards.
TRP 8	To work with the relevant authorities to promote the concept of creating Ireland's first "National Marine Park" in Killala Bay, from Easley Head to Kilcummin Head. This would enhance the Economic, Environmental and Social values of Killala Bay and promote the understanding and enjoyment of those special qualities by the public.
SCO 4	To promote and advance the attractiveness of the towns and villages throughout the county by assisting in the enhancement of the natural and built environment, through initiatives such as Pride of Place and the coordinated efforts of Mayo County Council, tidy towns organisations, community groups and local development companies.
BEO 1	To protect the archaeological heritage and sites identified in the Record of Monuments and Places, National Monuments in the ownership or guardianship of the State in addition to National Monuments that are the subject of Preservation Orders, and to safeguard the integrity of the archaeological sites in their setting.
BEP 6	To encourage the conservation of Protected Structures, and where appropriate, the adaptive re-use of existing buildings and sites in a manner compatible with their character and significance.
BEO 12	To identify places of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, and to define them as Architectural Conservation Areas and to undertake an assessment to inform the potential ACA designation for the following areas: Castlebar, Ballinrobe, Killala, Pontoon and Doogort or any other special character areas considered by the Planning Authority worthy of such protection in County Mayo.
BEP 8	To encourage the retention, sympathetic maintenance and sustainable re-use of historic buildings, including vernacular dwellings or farm buildings and the retention of historic streetscape character, fabric, detail and features, where appropriate.
BEP 11	To promote the sympathetic maintenance refurbishment and re-use of vernacular built heritage and to support the retention of original fabric such as windows, doors, renders/pub/shopfronts, roof coverings and interiors.
BEP 15	To support and promote retaining built urban fabric/structures in towns and villages, in the interest of sustainable development in the national and global context of locking in carbon.
BEP 16	To promote and support the re-use and re-purposing of extant building stock, in the first instance, over demolition and rebuilding building, where practical, with reference to the loss of our historic building stock, sense of place and the environmental cost.
BEP 20	To provide for a high-quality public realm and public spaces by promoting quality urban design that accommodates creative patterns of use, having regard to the physical, cultural, and social identities of individual settlements.
BEP 21	To encourage the continued vitality and viability of town and village centres by promoting ongoing environmental improvements to the public realm, including blue and green infrastructure measures.
BEP 22	To encourage high quality and well-designed buildings, structures, public spaces and streets and support and promote healthy place-making and quality of life.

BEP 23	To encourage and facilitate improvements to the physical fabric and environment of town and village centres, including streetscape, street furniture, landscaping (hard and soft), signage and wirescape, while recognising that both private and public developments can contribute to effective public realm.
BEO 24	<p>To apply the following key attributes when considering public realm and public space enhancements:</p> <p><i>Accessible</i> - connected and linked permeable spaces to ensure ease of movement.</p> <p><i>Functional</i> - safe, adaptable and social environments to attract and foster activity.</p> <p><i>Attractive</i> - visually pleasing spaces with high quality design, materials and installations (lighting, furniture and signage) based on a singular common design theme.</p> <p><i>Distinctive</i> - reference to local context and building on the character and identity of place.</p> <p>Where appropriate, recreational considerations and access to blue and greens space should be underpinned by the Green Space Principles including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance urban greening through planting strategies that mitigate noise and air pollution and maximise local biodiversity gain and facilitate sustainable drainage (e.g. deciduous wooded and wildflower meadow areas).</li> <li>• A networked approach: emphasising green infrastructure networks (rather than isolated parks) can provide new opportunities for connecting existing and new green spaces and creating linkages between urban and rural areas. Examples include greenways and linear parks, local greenways or cycleways that link to regional and national greenways and de-culverting watercourses to provide new blue corridors.</li> <li>• Well managed and maintained, creating a high-quality environment: poorly managed spaces or vandalism lead to negative perceptions among potential users.</li> <li>• Multifunctional uses: examples include spaces that encourage active mobility, physical activity and sports, relaxation and tranquillity, and opportunities for social exchange (e.g. that incorporate community gardens or encourage park runs).</li> <li>• Create multisensory restorative environments that help mitigate the psychological stresses of modern living through the provision of “restive places for rejuvenation”.</li> </ul>
BEO 30	To require proposals for public realm enhancements to include inclusive universal design principles.
BEP 29	To promote the consolidation of town and village centres with a focus on the regeneration of underused buildings and strategic sites and on the establishment of a mix of uses to encourage greater vibrancy outside of business hours.
BEP 36	To support the viability of small towns and villages, through sustainable targeted measures that address vacant premises and deliver sustainable reuse and regeneration outcomes targeted in core areas.
GSP 3	To support the provision of mixed-use developments in the town centre which create opportunities to live, work, shop, etc., within the town and reduce the propensity to travel by private car.
GSO 1	To ensure appropriate development occurs in a sequential manner outward from the core area, to maximise the utility of existing and future infrastructure provision, to promote sustainability and active travel, to make more efficient use of underutilised lands, and to avoid the inappropriate extension of services and utilities.
GSO 2	To encourage and facilitate the development of the economic and tourism potential of towns in a manner that respects, builds on, protects and enhances the cultural, built heritage, natural heritage and local amenities of the town.
GSO 13	To protect the role of the town centre as the dominant retailing and commercial area.
KAO 1	To work with existing service providers and relevant interests to promote Killala as one of the key tourist locations within County Mayo, in accordance with the objectives contained within this Plan.
KAO 5	To ensure that the historic architectural character of Killala is protected and enhanced.
KAO 6	To designate within the lifetime of this plan an Architectural Conservation Area for Killala town centre including Market Street, Courthouse Street, Church Street, Steeple Hill, William Street, Georges Street, and Ballina Road (R314) and the coastline to the pier.

SSP 7	To promote the integration of land use and transportation policies and to prioritise provision for cycling and walking travel modes and the strengthening of public transport.
EDO 49	To encourage new (and expanding) retail developments to locate close to public transport corridors, to enable sustainable travel to and from our town and village centres, where applicable.
MTP 3	To support and facilitate any ‘Smarter Travel’ initiatives that will improve sustainable transportation within the county, including public transport, electric and hybrid vehicles, car clubs, public bike schemes, improved pedestrian and cycling facilities, as appropriate.
MTP 5	To ensure new development areas and employment land-uses are permeable for walking and cycling and are laid out in such a way as to facilitate the operation of and access to public transport by residents and employees
MTO 5	To retrospectively provide public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure and facilities in existing development areas to achieve growth in sustainable mobility
MTP 12	To promote the design and construction of new developments to create low carbon, walkable neighbourhoods and workplaces containing high quality green and blue infrastructure.

# Ballyhaunis

Town Centre Health Check  
Mayo County Council



Lár Bailte ar dTús  
Town Centre First



QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST

# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Introduction	4
First Impressions	5
Land Use	6
Vacancy	7
Footfall and Vehicular Counts	8
Car Parking Assessment	9
Desire Lines	11
Public Realm	12



## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the individuals and organisations who assisted in the completion of this project by generously offering their time and expertise with special thanks to the staff from Mayo County Council and Tom Bradford Landscape Architecture for the opportunity to get involved in this study. This report summarises analysis completed in Ballyhaunis on 7th - 8th February 2025.

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# Introduction

This report summarises the details associated with a town centre health check for Ballyhaunis, County Mayo, conducted by students from Queen's University Belfast on Friday 7th and Saturday 8th February 2025.

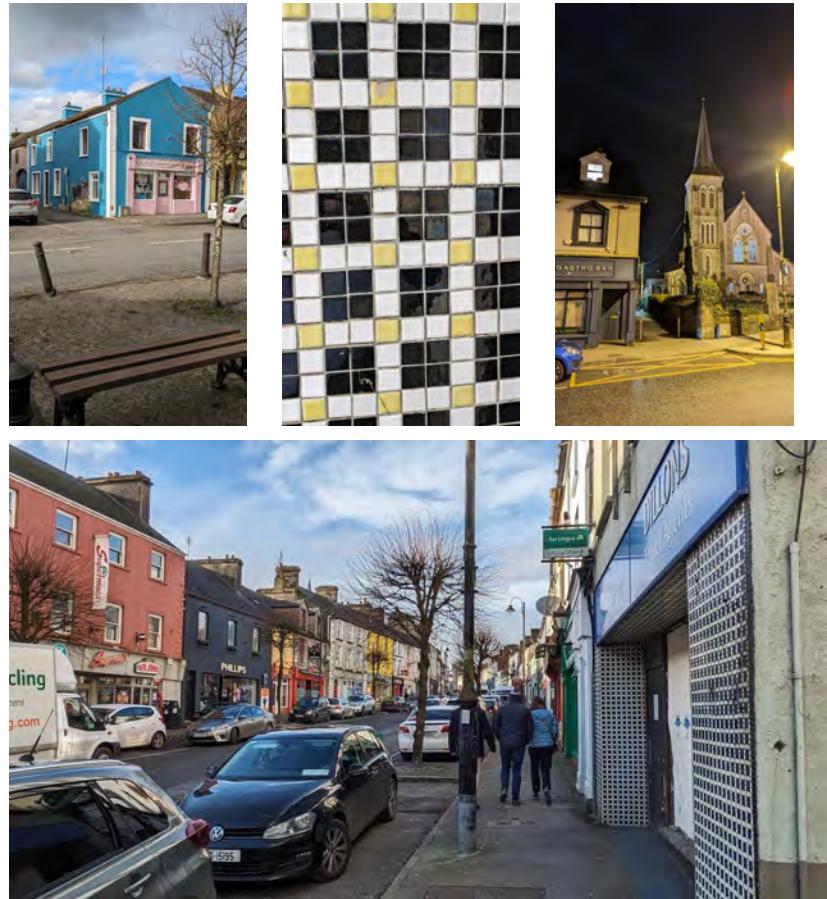
The main content of this short health check is the collection of quantitative data, which paints a picture of Clones' land uses, vacancy, parking, footfall, and vehicular traffic. This data was collected by students completing the EVP3004 - Conservation of the Built Environment module at Queen's University Belfast.

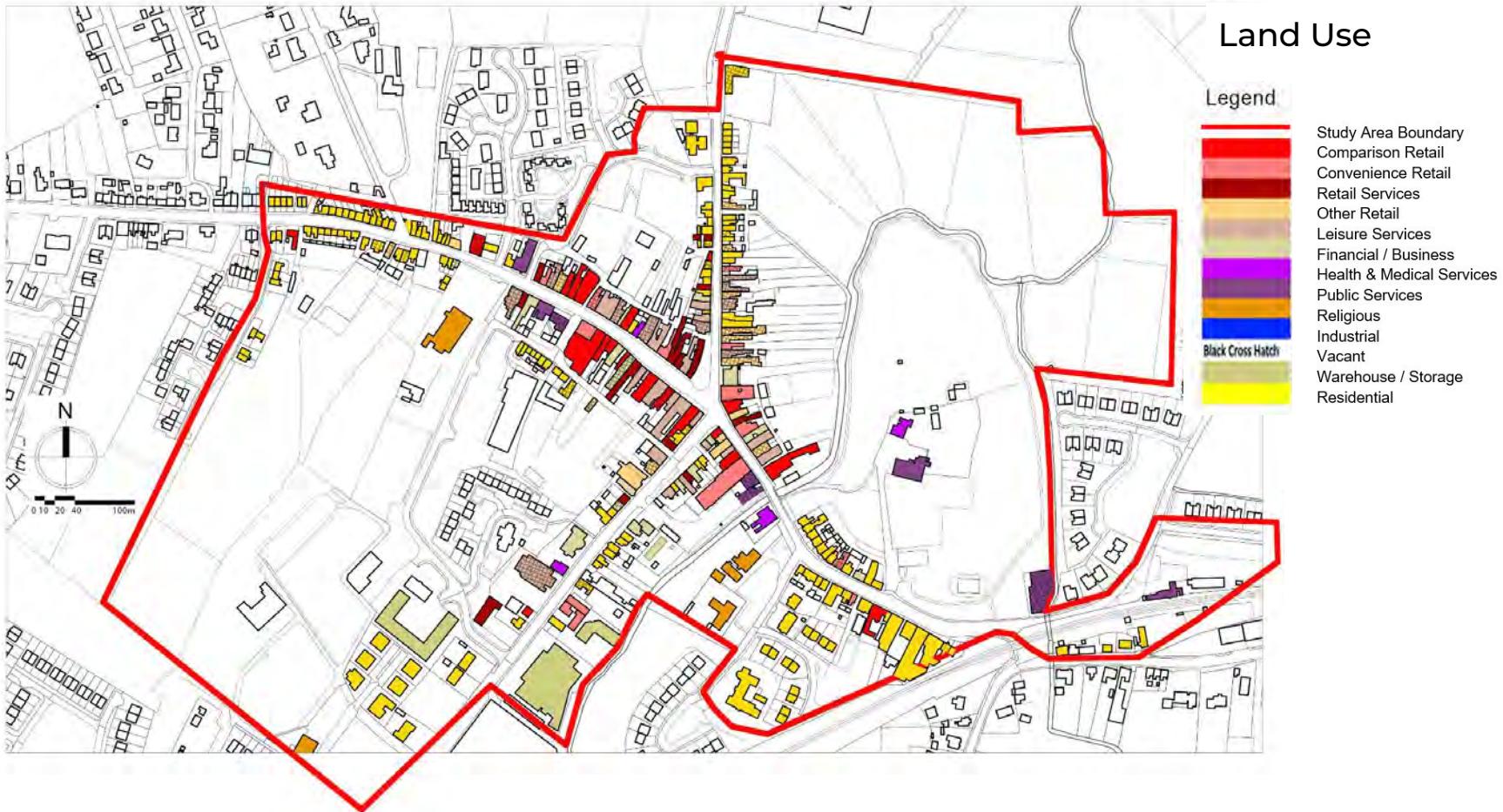


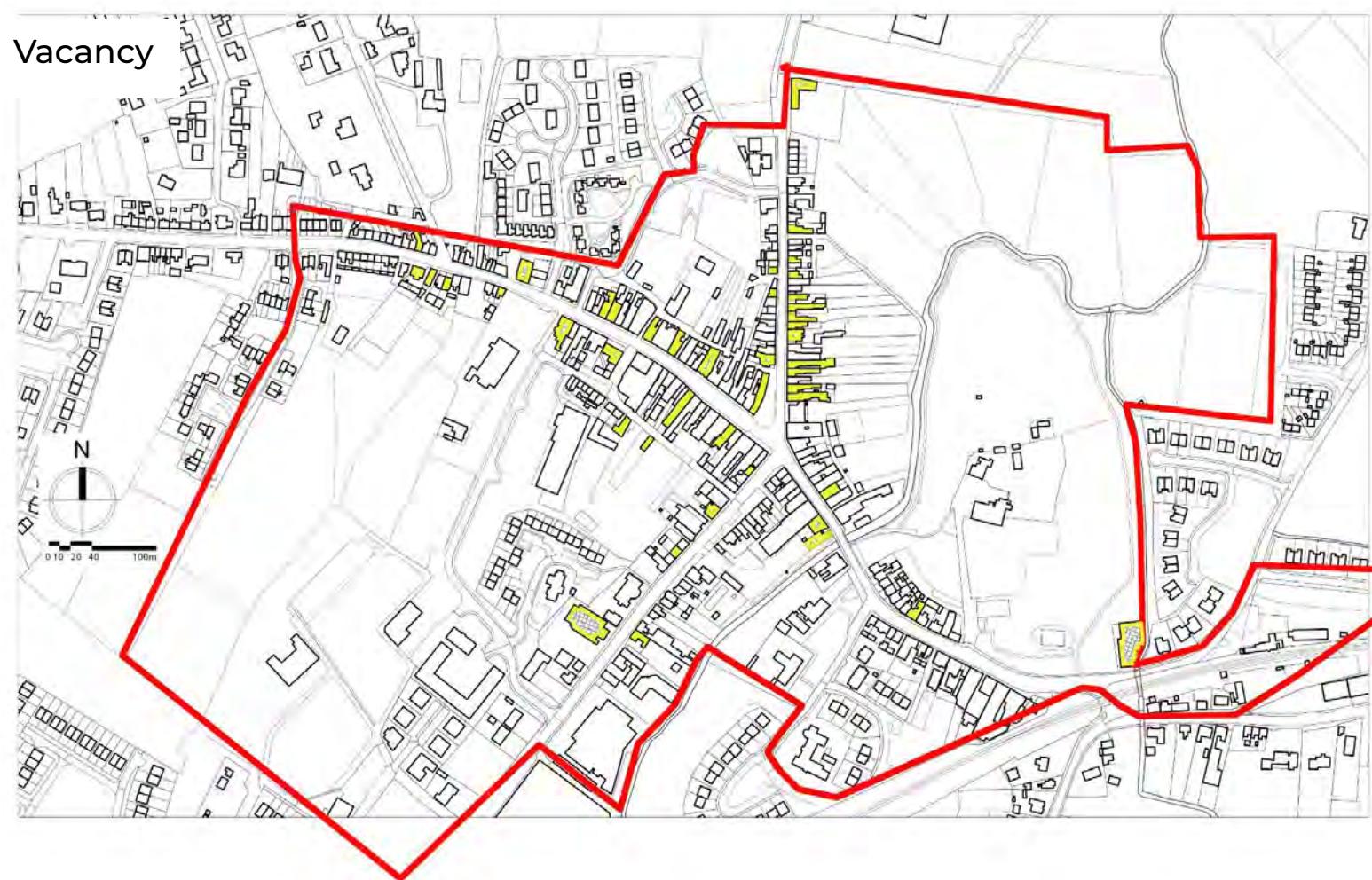
## First Impressions

The first impressions of Ballyhaunis were positive as the town has a strong sense of enclosure along its main commercial core along Main Street towards the train station. There are some vacant units in this area but the attractive painted facades convey local pride in the town. The narrower streets at the staggered crossroads at the heart of Ballyhaunis, Knox Street and the Clare Road have a considerably more constrained feel with high levels of pavement parking limiting movement for drivers and pedestrians alike. The high levels of through traffic and busy usage of on-street parking in the heart of Ballyhaunis were contrasted with lower levels of pedestrian footfall and largely empty off-street car parks a few minutes walk from the Market Square. Significant pockets of vacancy and dereliction are found in the historic terraced fabric on Knox Street.

The scale of the factories was a striking aspect of the town's built form with a clear dominance in terms of commercial floorspace and employment opportunities in Ballyhaunis. The town's ethnic diversity is represented in the range of stores and restaurants within the town. Whilst the town does contain public spaces of potential in the form of the Friary grounds and Market Square but both offer opportunities for improvement as spaces to bring the community together. The need for social infrastructure and spaces that bring communities together was an issue that was to be raised by many individuals during the community, schools and Foroige consultations.







# Footfall and Vehicular Counts



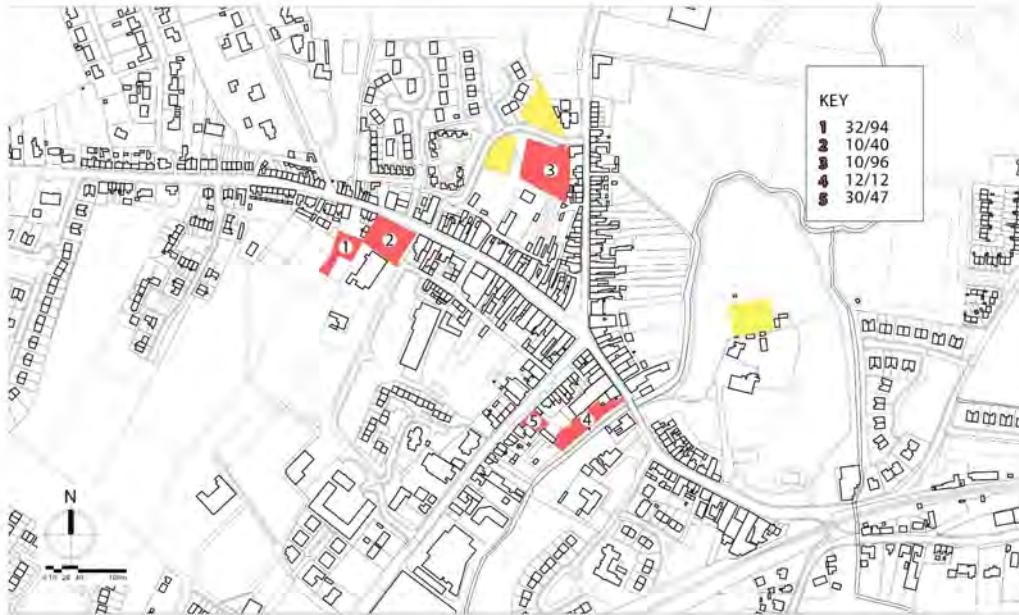
Balluhuinis									
Day Date	Timings	Location 1		Location 2		Location 3		Location 4	
		Vehicular	Pedestrian	Vehicular	Pedestrian	Vehicular	Pedestrian	Vehicular	Pedestrian
Friday 07-02-2025	10.00-10.15	117	47	66	9	73	2	138	23
	12.00-12.15	124	41	111	32	78	2	152	37
	02.00-02.15	171	48	140	35	83	1	83	1
	04.00-04.15	180	61	109	36	99	14	212	57
Saturday 08-02-2025	11.00-11.15	144	35	121	35	100	24	171	24
	01.00-01.15	156	43	130	56	98	9	187	61
Total Average		149	46	113	34	89	9	157	34
Overall % of Pedestrian		24%		23%		9.20%		17%	

The vehicular and footfall count conducted on the 7th and 8th of February across four key locations provides valuable insights into the town's mobility patterns. The data reveals a clear dominance of vehicular traffic, with pedestrian footfall consistently low, indicating a lack of adequate active travel infrastructure. This trend suggests that walking and cycling are not currently attractive options for many residents, reinforcing the town's car-centric nature and limiting sustainable transport alternatives.

A detailed analysis of vehicular movement shows that 16:00 is the busiest period across all surveyed locations, likely corresponding to peak commuting hours, school pickups, or commercial activity. The lowest traffic volumes were recorded at 10:00 for Locations 1, 2, and 3, whereas Location 4 experienced its lowest count at 14:00. These variations highlight distinct usage patterns and potential opportunities for intervention.

Overall, the findings underscore the urgent need for enhanced pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, improved public transport integration, and strategic urban design interventions to encourage more sustainable travel behaviour. By reducing dependency on private vehicles and prioritising pedestrian movement, the town can create a more accessible, efficient, and environmentally friendly transport network.

## Car Parking Assessment

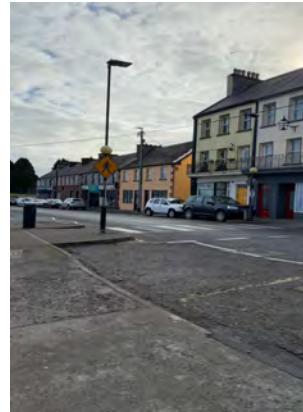
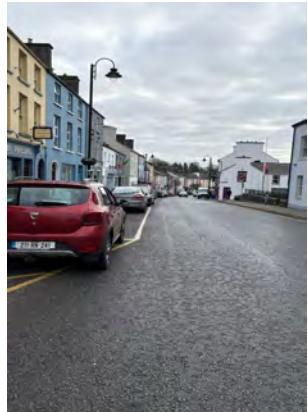


The illustration presents an analysis of surface car parking availability within the town, excluding on-street parking, which significantly contributes to congestion along the main thoroughfare. This excessive vehicular presence creates substantial conflicts with pedestrian and cyclist movement, compromising overall urban mobility and accessibility.

Notably, Car Park 3, situated within a five-minute walking radius, remains severely underutilised at only 10% capacity, despite its strategic location. Additionally, the yellow-highlighted zones, designated for parking, exhibit inefficient spatial utilisation due to the absence of clear demarcation, particularly in areas adjacent to Car Park 3 and near the Men's Shed.

A holistic re-evaluation of parking strategy is imperative to mitigate vehicular dominance on Upper and Lower Main Street. A key intervention would involve the rationalisation of on-street parking, retaining only a limited number of strategically positioned bays while redirecting overflow to Car Park 3 and the currently underutilised designated spaces. This approach would enhance urban permeability, promote sustainable multimodal transport solutions, and foster a more pedestrian-centric public realm, ultimately improving the town's functionality and liveability.

## Car Parking Assessment



## Desire Lines

The site visit revealed that the town is heavily car-centric, with limited pedestrian-friendly features. The map illustrates both formal crossings and the informal crossing patterns used by residents.

The **pink-highlighted desire lines** indicate areas where new crossings should be introduced, as current conditions make it unsafe for children and elderly pedestrians to cross. These key connections link SuperValu to the community space and the town's commercial hub, improving accessibility and safety.

The **yellow-highlighted crossings** represent designated pedestrian crossings that are formally marked on the road, while the **orange-highlighted crossings** indicate desire lines with traffic lights. However, these signal-controlled crossings function similarly to the formal ones and may not fully address pedestrian movement needs.

Overall, the town's crossings require a thorough reassessment to better align with community movement patterns. A strategic redesign that considers pedestrian interactions and safety would create a more accessible and walkable urban environment.

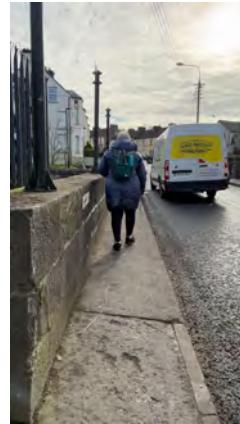


# Public Realm

Enhancing the town's public realm by improving seating and pedestrian pathways would greatly benefit the community. Currently, public seating is limited, with benches only available at Aldi, the Friary, the Square and along the pathway to the Family Resource Centre. Introducing more seating in key locations would create inviting spaces for people to rest and connect.

Pathways also need attention, particularly at the bridge, where the narrow walkway poses challenges for pedestrians. On the upper part of Main street, footpaths are often obstructed by parked cars, reducing accessibility. Widening pathways and keeping them clear would make the town more pedestrian-friendly and inclusive, encouraging community engagement and ease of movement.

Outdoor public spaces for socialising are also scarce. The public square, has a small market but it only sells workwear with a limited appeal to many, remains underused due to a lack of seating and interactive furniture. Meanwhile, the Friary playgroup and walking track could be upgraded into a vibrant, multi-generational community space. By enhancing these areas with better seating, interactive elements, and inclusive design, the town can create welcoming and engaging spaces that foster greater community interaction and outdoor activity.





# Ballyhaunis - Town Centre First Plan

## STAGE 1 CONSULTATION SUMMARY REPORT



Lár Bailte ar dTús  
Town Centre First



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo  
Mayo County Council



FEBRUARY 20, 2025

TBLA LTD AND QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

DRAFT

# INTRODUCTION

The following report presents key findings from the community engagement process conducted as part of the **Town Centre First** program.

The engagement included an online survey, which launched on **February 1st, 2025**, and has received **128 responses** to date, with additional paper copies still to be collected and entered. To ensure broad participation, **community drop-in sessions** were held on **February 7th and 8th**, attended by approximately **60 people**, and facilitated by students from Queen's University.

In addition, **several group sessions** were conducted with **Ballyhaunis Community School, St. John's National School, and Foroige BEY**, ensuring representation from all age groups. A workshop with **Scoil Iosa's 6th-year students** took place separately on **February 11th**.

This report highlights the feedback gathered from the online survey and consultations, providing a foundation for the **physical Town Centre First plan**, which aims to shape the future development of the area based on community needs and aspirations.



## KEY STATISTICS



**128**

Total Respondents



**55%**

Estimated population live within 15 mins walk of Ballyhaunis.



**49.2%**

People live in BallyHaunis



**28.1%**

Live in Town center



**73.4%**

The population grew up in Ballyhaunis; therefore, they visit Ballyhaunis often.

## “First Word That Comes to Mind for Ballyhaunis” foreigner

for Ballyhaunis foreigners  
home  
disgrace bleak stagnation economic  
multi jams dull closing eyesore  
cosmopolitan safety culturally blacks  
great smell potential  
place ballyhappiness nice  
banks cultural  
traffic parking dying  
paki-haunis communi  
declining sporting love diver  
communi culture calm

welcoming  
untidy neglected  
decline run-down dilapidated  
tired small diverse  
busy friendly factory empty  
living multicultural  
town terrible work factories  
life deprived live  
creche busy lacking  
multi-cultural bad  
supervalu  
sure meat  
diversed kip run  
employment muslim limited

town buildings walk street  
swimming trees train convent  
shops river building traffic bridge  
knox old den club car  
playground centre scouts site shop  
millions road put library  
lights parking park pool office better  
main access courthouse restaurants  
empty clare beside house  
mosque beside housing  
double

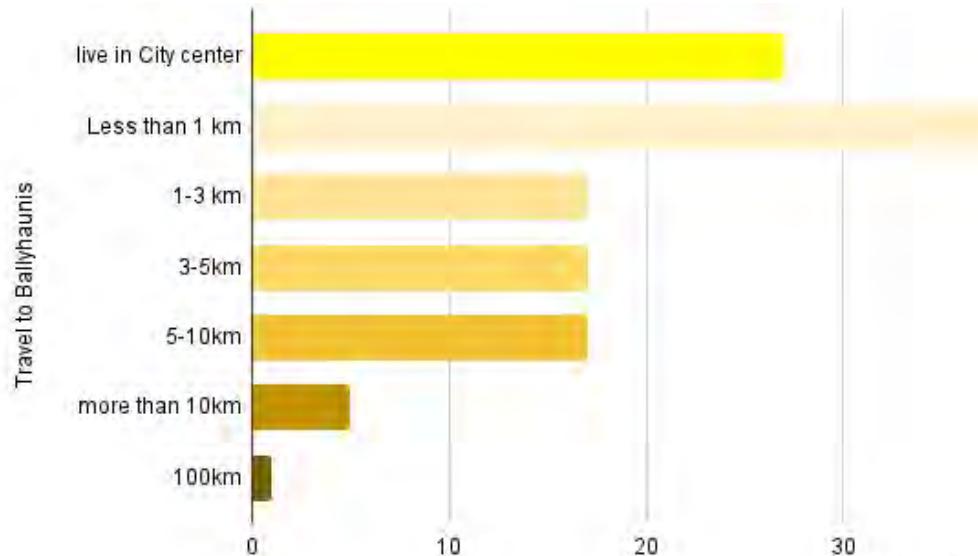
## **“What Services or Facilities Are Missing in Ballyhaunis”**

shopping leisure taxis traffic heated gym station house modern building cr youth club young place car euro play town parking bus garda area shop park indoor hall local facilities hub road walks yes go small clothing areas services che dentist good business better open places restaurant facility street night cinema working center restaurants spaces centre staff need ballyhaunis kids community etc people lights coffee school

supervalu friary community park aldi  
walk sports library mosque parochial  
school club scoil val's swimming  
shop phillips pitch hall station curleys  
schools supervalue pitch hall station swimming  
gaa super vals coe court playground  
field grounds train val's murphy  
bistro gem centre town ballyhaunis  
supermacs street iosa footwear

## “Top Three Places to Visit in Ballyhaunis”

# Travel Patterns and Distances to Ballyhaunis



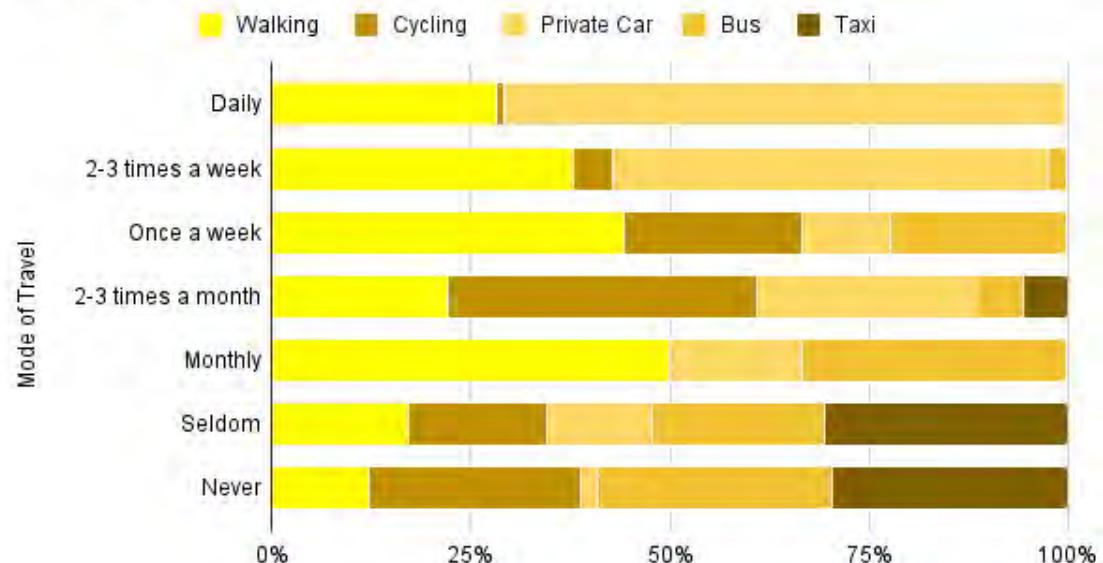
The survey highlights a strong reliance on private cars in Ballyhaunis, despite its accessibility.

55% of respondents live within a 15-minute walk, and 90% within 10km, yet 65% of daily trips are by car, while cycling remains low at 4.5%.

15% of respondents take 30 minutes to an hour for trips, likely for school runs or quick errands.

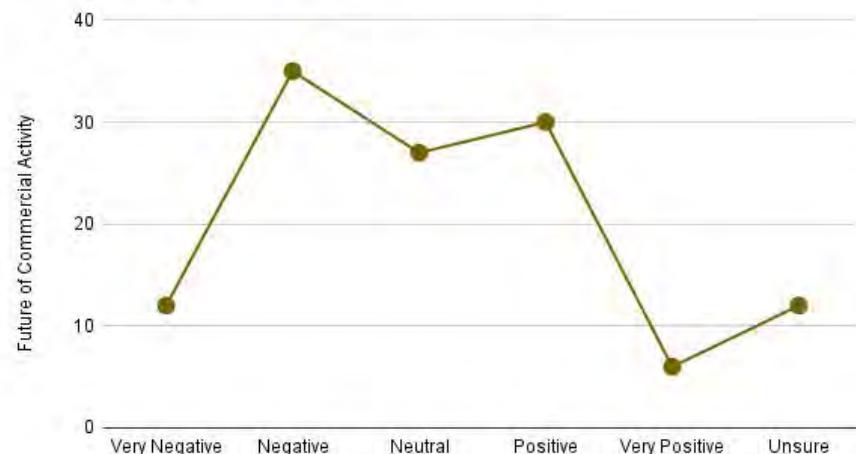
Even among the 50% living in Ballyhaunis, many still drive, underscoring the need for better sustainable transport options.

## KEY STATISTICS

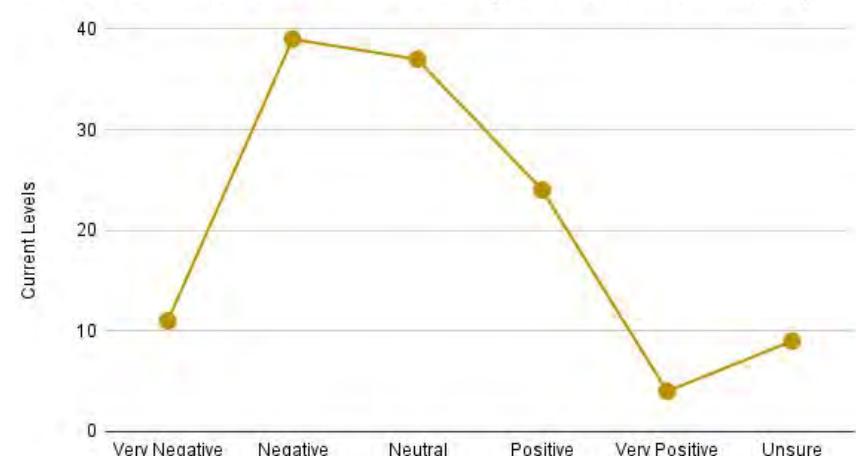


# Commercial Activity in Ballyhaunis

Numbers vs Commercial Activity



Current Levels of Commercial Activity vs Commercial Activity

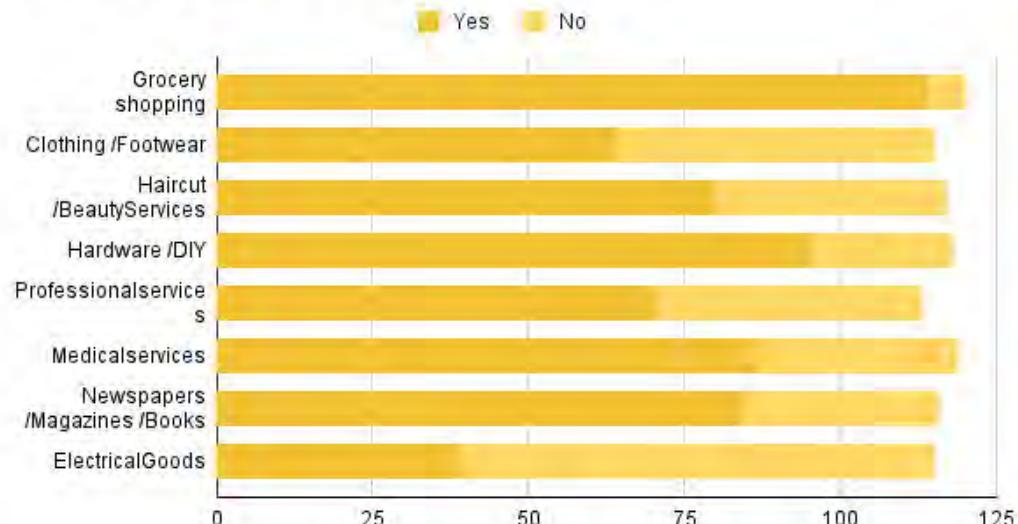


The survey results indicate significant concerns regarding commercial activity in Ballyhaunis. 31% of respondents perceive the current commercial landscape as very negative, while expectations for future improvement remain modest at 28.7%.

A recurring suggestion is to encourage new businesses to establish themselves in the town centre, with an emphasis on revitalising vacant commercial spaces rather than expanding rental accommodation. Many respondents note that Claremorris has surpassed Ballyhaunis in terms of commercial development, offering superior services, shopping facilities, and entertainment options.

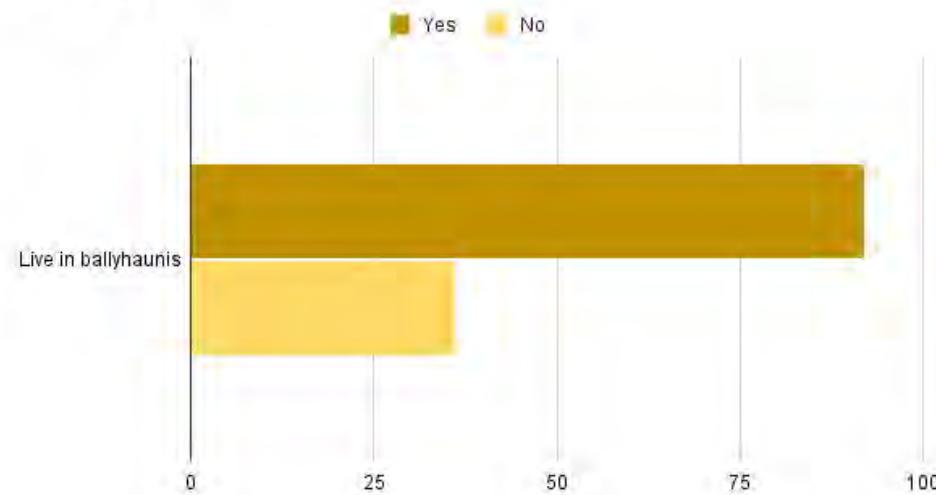
To enhance Ballyhaunis' economic vitality, residents propose taking inspiration from successful towns such as Carrick-on-Shannon, Westport, and Athlone, which have transformed into thriving commercial and cultural hubs. Strategic planning, investment incentives, and infrastructure improvements will be essential in positioning Ballyhaunis as a more attractive destination for businesses and consumers alike.

## Buy Locally in Ballyhaunis

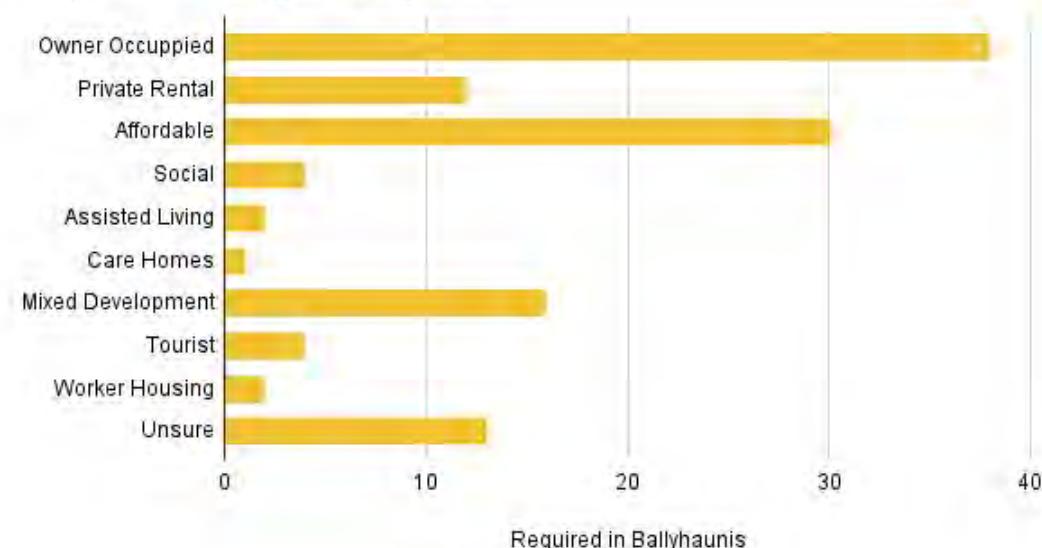


## Liveability in Ballyhaunis

### Liveability



### Required Housing In BallyHaunis



### KEY STATISTICS



**71.9%**  
Live in  
BallyHaunis



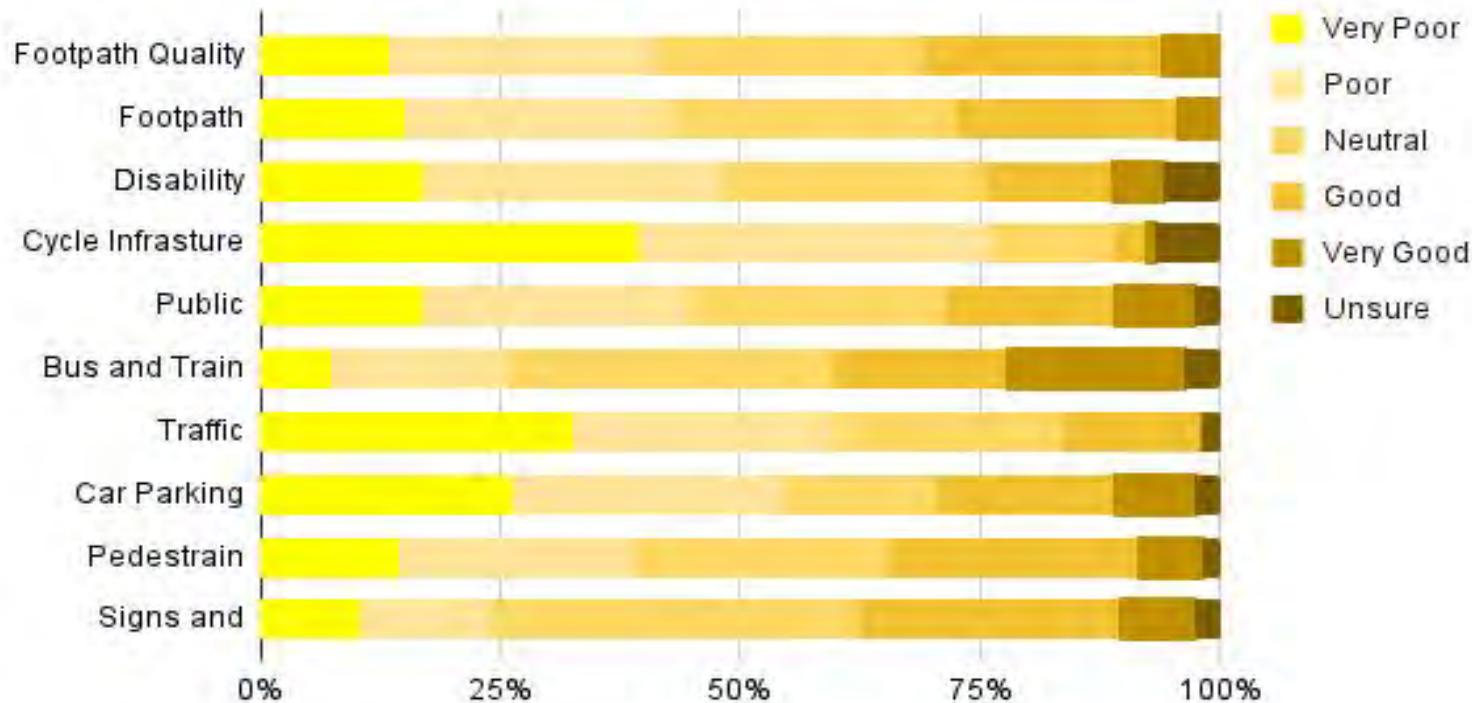
**30%**  
People favor  
Affordable  
Housing



**38%**  
People favor  
Owner  
Occupied  
Housing

# Accessibility in Ballyhaunis

## Quality of Mobility and Accessibility in Ballyhaunis



## KEY STATISTICS



**39%**

People suggested that the quality of cycling infrastructure is inadequate.



**27%**

People suggested that the quality of Footpath is Satisfactory.



**13.5%**

people think disability access is good

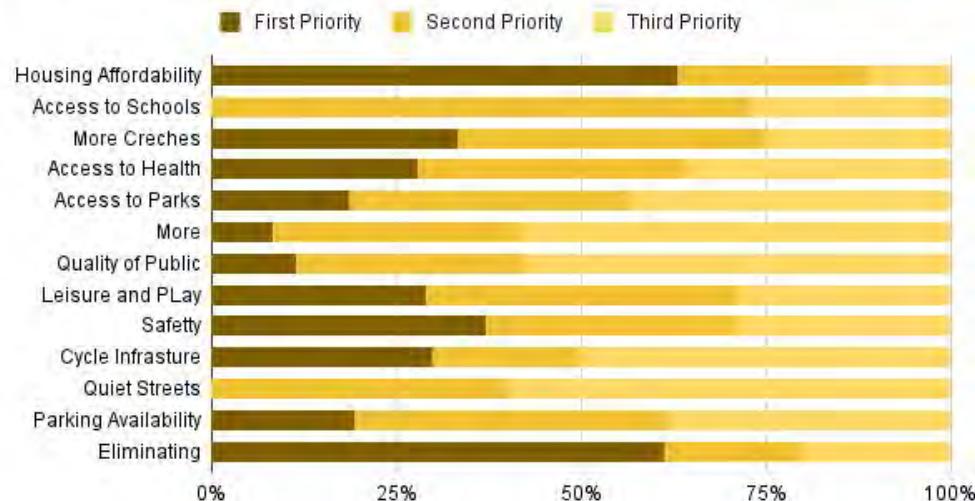


**38%**

people suggest that wayfinding and signage are good

# LIVEABILITY

## 3 Factors for a Better Town Centre



72%

Tourism should be further explored



37%

History and Heritage should be further explored



60%

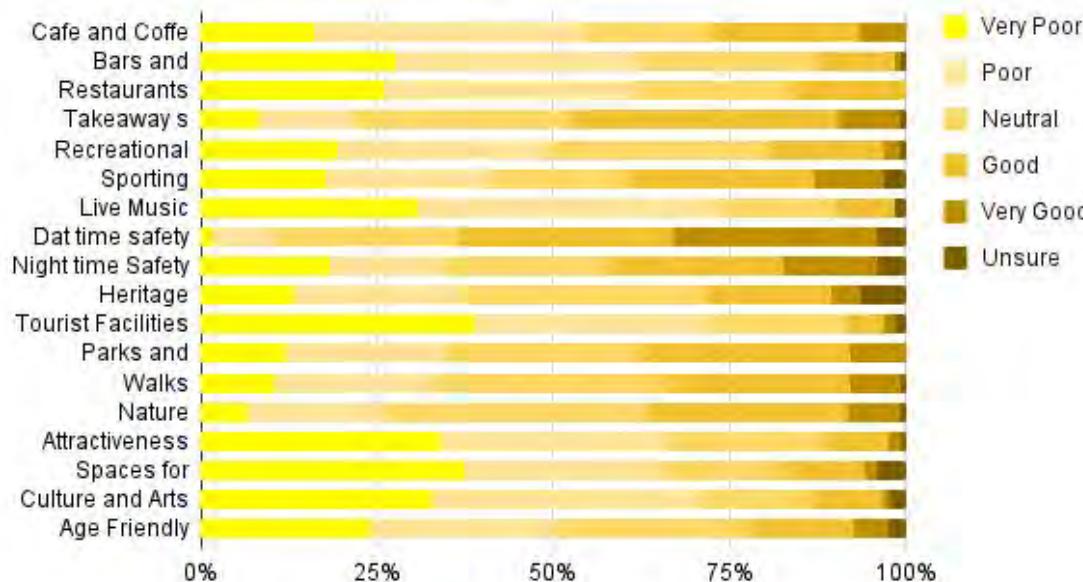
Attractiveness of ballyhaunis further explored

The survey highlights concerns about Ballyhaunis' long-term growth, with 80% of respondents feeling the town lacks pathways for progression beyond school or college.

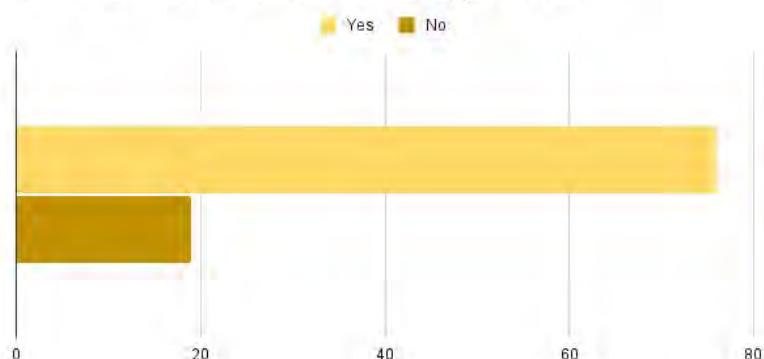
To improve the area, over 65% prioritized affordable housing, followed by eliminating vacancy and enhancing safety. More than half supported making Ballyhaunis age-friendly for better accessibility.

Additionally, over 70% believe tourism facilities should be developed, while over 35% emphasized the need for better recreational and sporting amenities. These insights underscore the community's desire for a more inclusive, vibrant, and future-focused town.

## Qualities of Amenities and Facilities



## Future Education and / OR Career Opportunities



## CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

A detailed community consultation was conducted on February 7th and 8th, 2025, facilitated by Queen's University students and supported by local schools and youth organizations, including Ballyhaunis Community School, St. John's National School, Foroige BEY, and Scoil Iosa.

Approximately 60 people attended the drop-in sessions, providing opportunity for residents to share their perspectives, concerns, and aspirations for the future of Ballyhaunis.

Discussions focused on key themes such as housing, accessibility, business development, public spaces, and community engagement. Concerns were raised about the lack of cycling infrastructure, limited transport options, and accessibility issues, while a significant number of participants emphasized the need for affordable housing, eliminating vacant properties, and enhancing safety measures. Additionally, there was strong community support for improving recreational and sporting facilities, expanding tourism opportunities, and creating a more age-friendly environment.

This document summarizes the feedback gathered, highlighting the community's priorities and potential pathways for improvement.



# CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

## Drop in consultation

### Challenges



Ballyhaunis struggles with traffic congestion, parking shortages, and a busy train station. Key concerns include the rail bridge, main junction, N60 approach, and the Scout Den bridge, which needs widening. Improved infrastructure is essential.



Ballyhaunis needs a bank, Garda presence, and better bus services to Dublin Airport and universities. Key priorities include a cricket ground, heated and covered swimming pool, intercommunity sports center, gym, and boxing club space. Converting the courthouse into a community or sports hall and revamping the old Scout Hall would benefit locals. Economic growth calls for more warehouses, a hotel, and camper van facilities, while seating and rubbish bins would improve public spaces.



Ballyhaunis has several safety concerns, including unsafe Friary grounds, a dangerous footpath beside the station, and poor lighting in town. The riverbank and footpaths need improvements, and a safe bridge connection to the soccer pitch is necessary. Additionally, a pedestrian crossing from Abbeyquarter to Scoil Íosa and public realm enhancements are required to improve overall safety.

Ballyhaunis needs more recreational spaces, business incentives, and community engagement. Key concerns include derelict properties, dog fouling, isolation among older residents, and limited play areas. Improvements in cycling, parking, and community arts would benefit the town.

### Solutions

Ballyhaunis requires better traffic management through solutions like a roundabout, a link road near the graveyard, and a one-way system. Speed control measures, better lighting, and stricter parking enforcement—including freeing up Main Street for shoppers—are also needed.

Ballyhaunis needs daily transport, a Garda station with an Immigration Officer, and more warehouses for jobs. Key priorities include a running track, leisure center, gyms, and an activity center near the pool. Community upgrades like AIRES facilities, seating, and public space improvements are essential. Suggested redevelopments include the Old Courthouse, Scouts Den, and MCC land for a boxing ring (18ft x 18ft) in an €80K industrial shed.

### Services Facilities

To improve safety and accessibility in Ballyhaunis, better lighting is needed, especially around the Old Courthouse, Friary, and lower car park. A barrier along the river and footpath repairs are essential for pedestrian safety. Additionally, the town would benefit from a Pelican crossing and inclusive infrastructure such as dished paving, tactile paving, and auditory crossings. Creating safe spaces for young people to gather is also a priority.

### Security

The town needs better parks, play areas, a skate park, and nightlife. Improved paths, housing over shops, and cultural tourism could revitalize the area. Signage, bins, and social spaces for all ages are essential.

### Other

## CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

### St John's School

Love	Like	Don't Like	Want	Need
Swimming Pool	Our Sport Field	Dirty Footpaths	Kids Café	More Traffic lights
Food is Yummy	Walking by River	Play ground is not good enough	Flowers	
		Roads are small	More books in library	
		Train Station in bad state	Cinema	
		Houses are dirty	A Bigger playground	
		Friarsground needs renovation	Community Activity	
			More Refugee Houses	
			Play centre	
			Cleaner Train Station	

## CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

### BEY Youth Group

BEY Youth Group		
Don't Like	Want	Need
No Garda Presence	Cultural Festival – music & food	A place where all people of all ages can mix
Nothing to do	Boxing/ Basketball, Hurling/ Irish Dancing/ rugby	Mixed use for park / people
No summer jobs	More attractive jobs	
Main Street junction is bad – difficult to cross safely		
Nowhere to go: hang out at Aldi or Supermacs	Cinema Bowling Flexible spaces to rent	Safe indoor space for teenagers (a home away from home) Scout's Den – youth space
Cycling dangerous	Safer cycling	
Friary is not safe- older teens hanging out there	Skate Park	Covered Area- Weather proof Places to sit/ hang out
	Further education	
Dirty streets, dirty playgrounds		
Different Ages need different facilities		

# CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

## Summary

### Youth & Community Spaces

Lack of safe, engaging places for young people.

Need for a **youth centre, skate park, and indoor play area**.

**Scout's Den** could be repurposed for youth activities.

A **cinema, bowling, and flexible rental spaces** for activities would enhance social life.

### Recreation & Sports

**Swimming pool upgrades** (roof and heating).

More **sports facilities**, including a **boxing club, cricket ground, running track, and gym**.

Development of **cycling lanes and safer pedestrian routes**.

### Public Safety & Infrastructure

Poor **Garda presence** and unsafe public spaces like **Friary grounds**.

**Unsafe bridges, footpaths, and dark areas** in town.

Need for **better traffic management** (roundabouts, speed controls, pedestrian crossings).

**Public realm improvements**, including **seating, bins, and lighting**.

### Employment & Economic Development

**More local job opportunities**, particularly for youth.

**Support for markets & local businesses** (e.g., farmer's market, showcase events).

**More warehouses** to keep businesses in town.

Revitalization of **Main Street** and incentives for businesses.

### Transport & Connectivity

**Better bus services** (links to Dublin Airport & universities).

Parking issues near **train station and Main Street**.

Improvements needed at **train station**.

**Cycle lanes** for safer commuting.

### Cultural & Social Life

Need for **community events, festivals, and celebrations**.

**More multicultural initiatives** to reflect the town's diverse population.

A **community cinema** to replace lost social spaces.

More **cafés, restaurants, nightlife, and entertainment options**.

### Tourism & Heritage

Development of **The Old Friary & grounds** for cultural tourism.

**Revamp derelict buildings** for community use.

Highlight the town with **landmark signage (like Lahore/Aleppo-style)**.

**Golf course and camper van facilities** to attract visitors.

## CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

### Summary

#### Housing & Living Conditions

**Concerns over excessive HMO (House of Multiple Occupancy) developments.**

Need for **family-friendly housing** in the town centre.

Calls for **more refugee housing** and better integration.

#### Environment & Cleanliness

**Dirty streets, playgrounds, and footpaths** require attention.

Need for **more bins, dog waste disposal, and green spaces**.

**Community-led clean-up initiatives** could improve the town's image.

#### Inclusivity & Volunteerism

**Older people feel isolated** – need for community networks.

**More volunteer opportunities** but a need for better outreach.

Encouragement of **intercultural engagement** through arts and events.

## CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

### Summary

#### Housing & Living Conditions

**Concerns over excessive HMO (House of Multiple Occupancy) developments.**

Need for **family-friendly housing** in the town centre.

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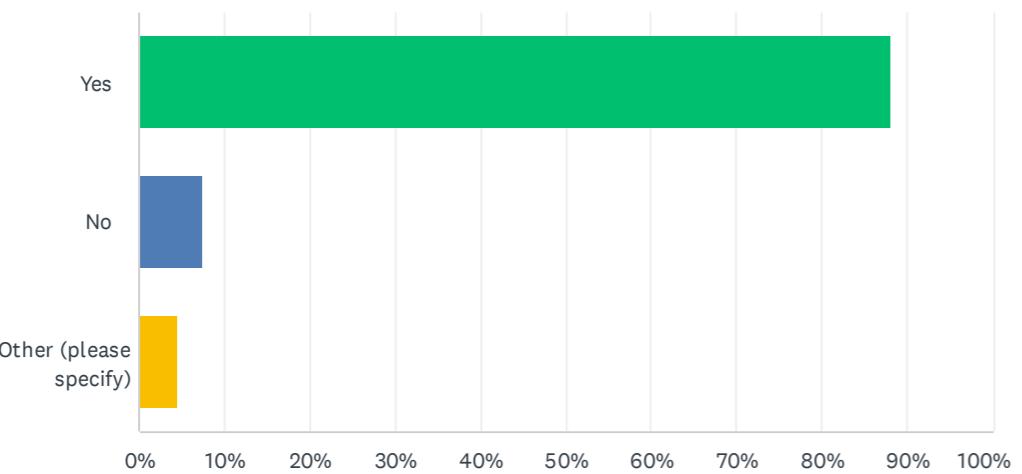
Encouragement of **intercultural engagement** through arts and events.

# CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT BALLYHAUNIS TOWN CENTRE FIRST PLAN

The following data is the complete set of responses from the second round of consultation on the DRAFT TCF Plan and this has been summarised on page 26 of the Full Unambridged Version of the report.

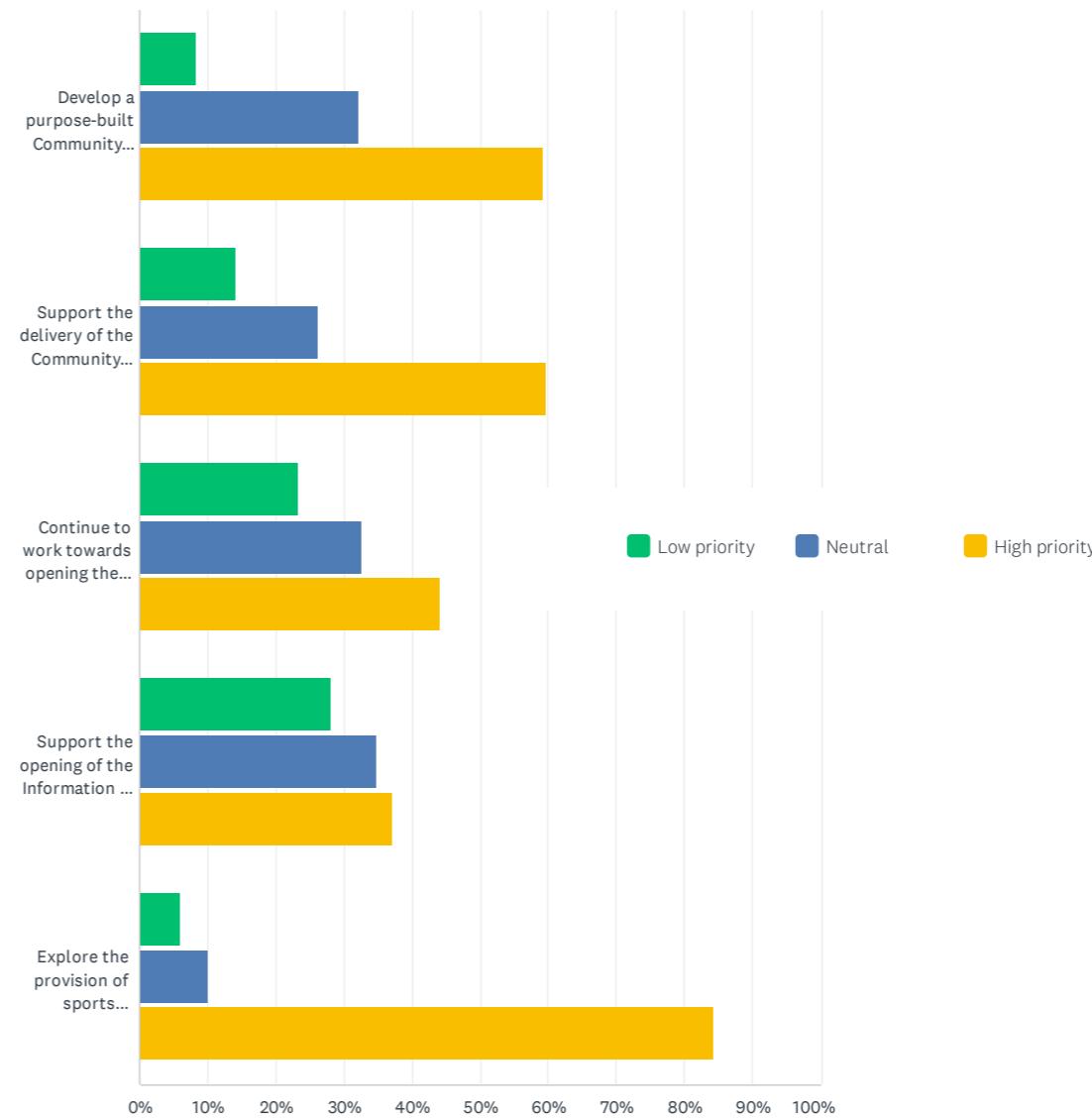
## Q1 Do you agree with the above Vision Statement?

Answered: 242 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	88.02%	213
No	7.44%	18
Other (please specify)	4.55%	11
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>242</b>

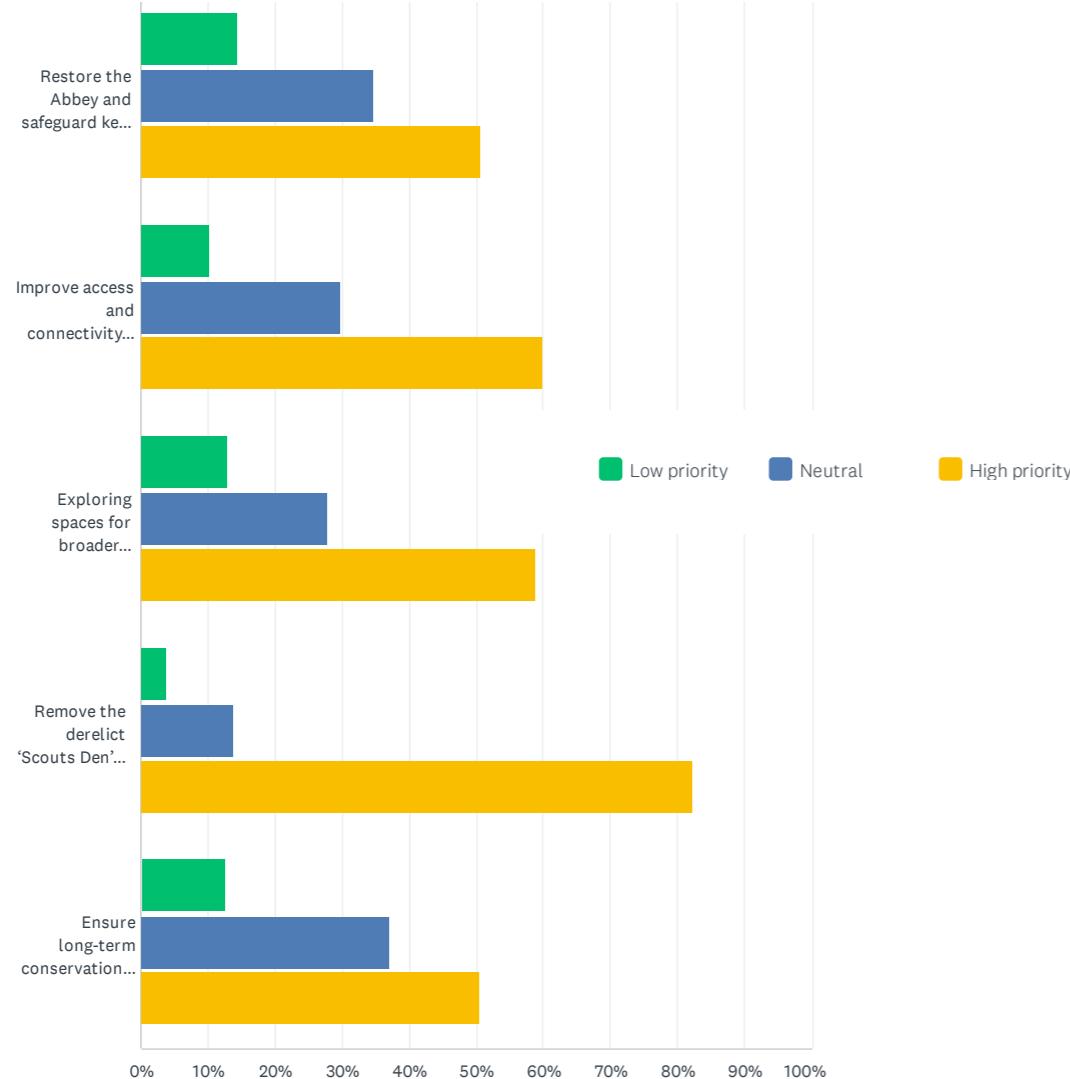
**Q2 COMMUNITY & SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE OBJECTIVE** To enhance access to education, culture, information, and recreation through the development of inclusive, community-focused facilities in Ballyhaunis. How would you rate the below Actions to support this objective?



	LOW PRIORITY	NEUTRAL	HIGH PRIORITY	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Develop a purpose-built Community Pre-school	8.41% 18	32.24% 69	59.35% 127	214	3.51
Support the delivery of the Community Library project	14.08% 30	26.29% 56	59.62% 127	213	3.46
Continue to work towards opening the Courthouse as a Cultural Centre for the community	23.22% 49	32.70% 69	44.08% 93	211	3.21
Support the opening of the Information Hub	28.10% 59	34.76% 73	37.14% 78	210	3.09
Explore the provision of sports facilities in the town centre in collaboration with sports groups and organisations	5.88% 13	9.95% 22	84.16% 186	221	3.78

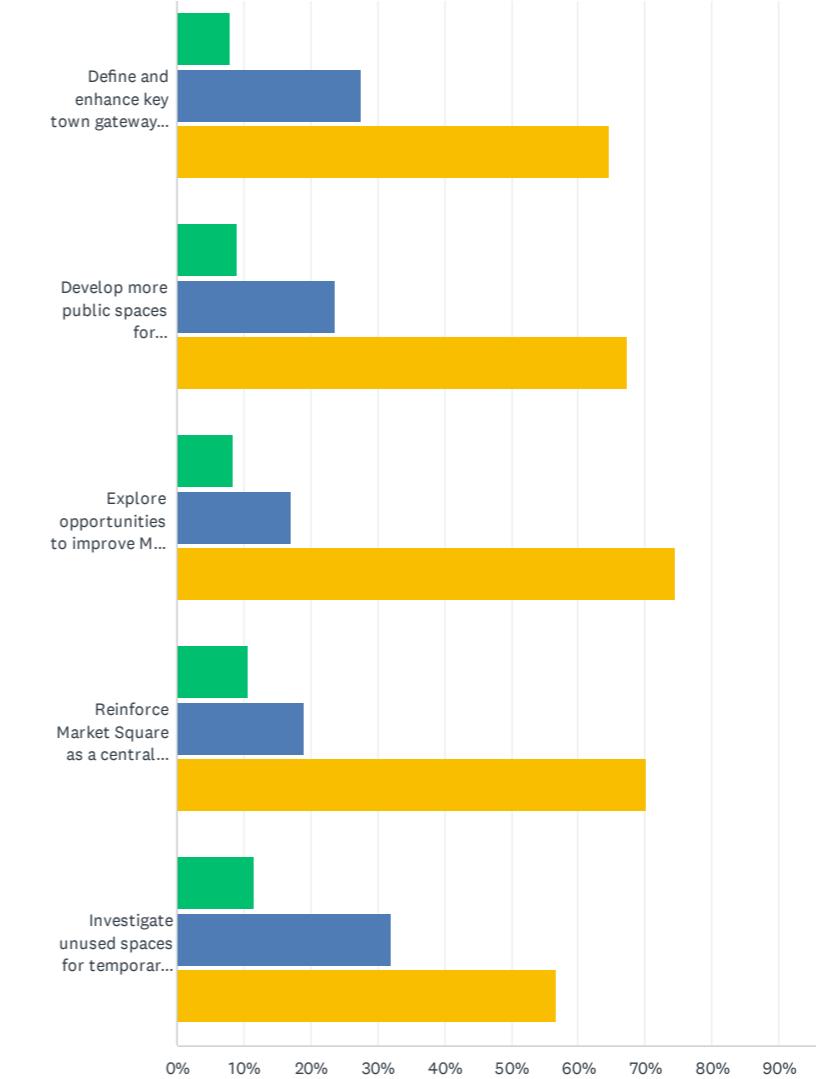
**Q3 A MASTERPLAN FOR THE ABBEY AND ITS SURROUNDINGS**

**OBJECTIVE** To develop a community, heritage, and landscape-led masterplan that conserves the historic Abbey site while enhancing its use, accessibility, biodiversity, and value for all user groups. How would you rate the below Actions to support this objective?



**Q4 PUBLIC SPACES**

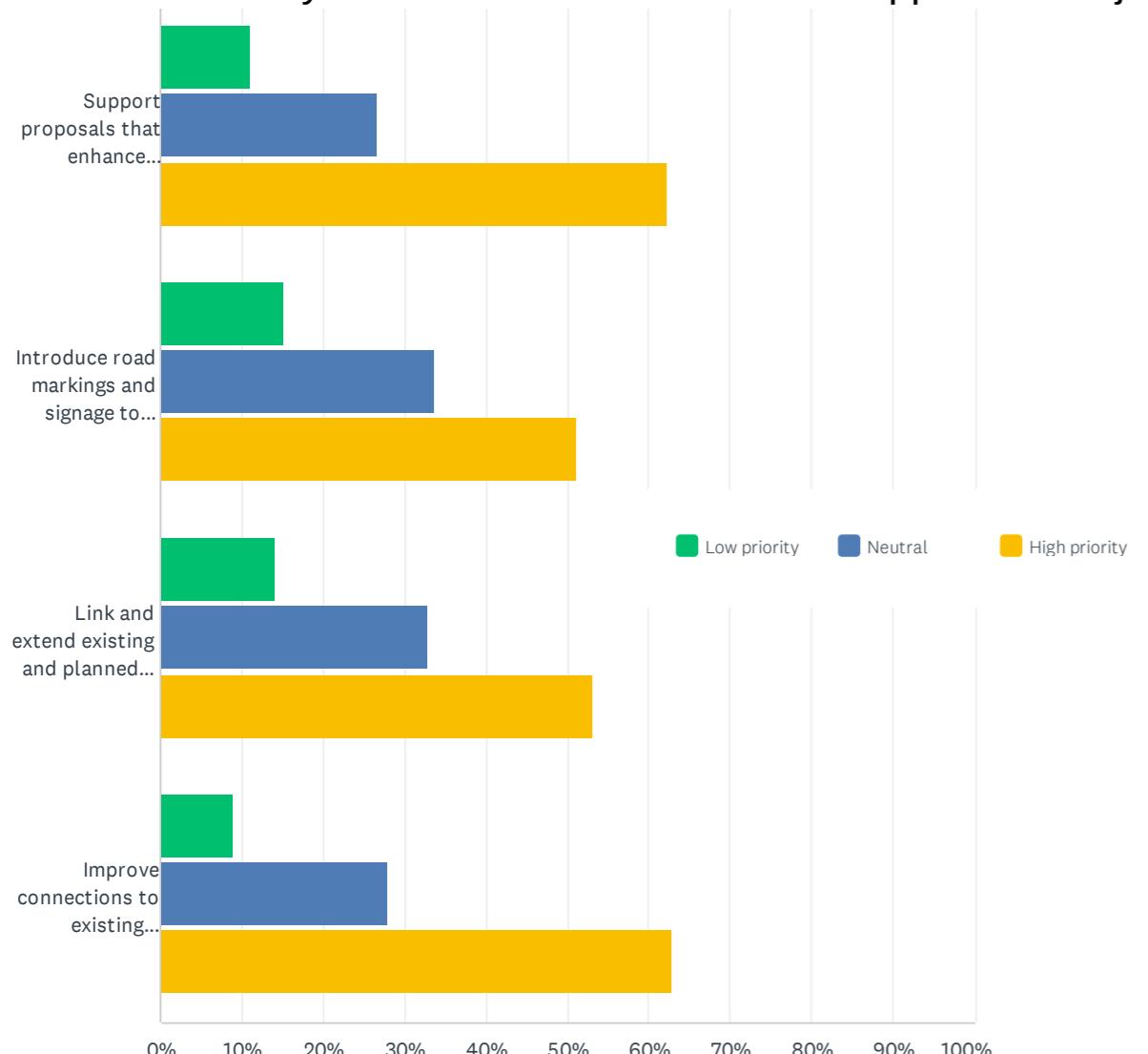
**OBJECTIVE** To enhance the public realm and town centre experience by improving accessibility, activating social spaces, and creating a stronger sense of place in Ballyhaunis. How would you rate the below Actions to support this objective?



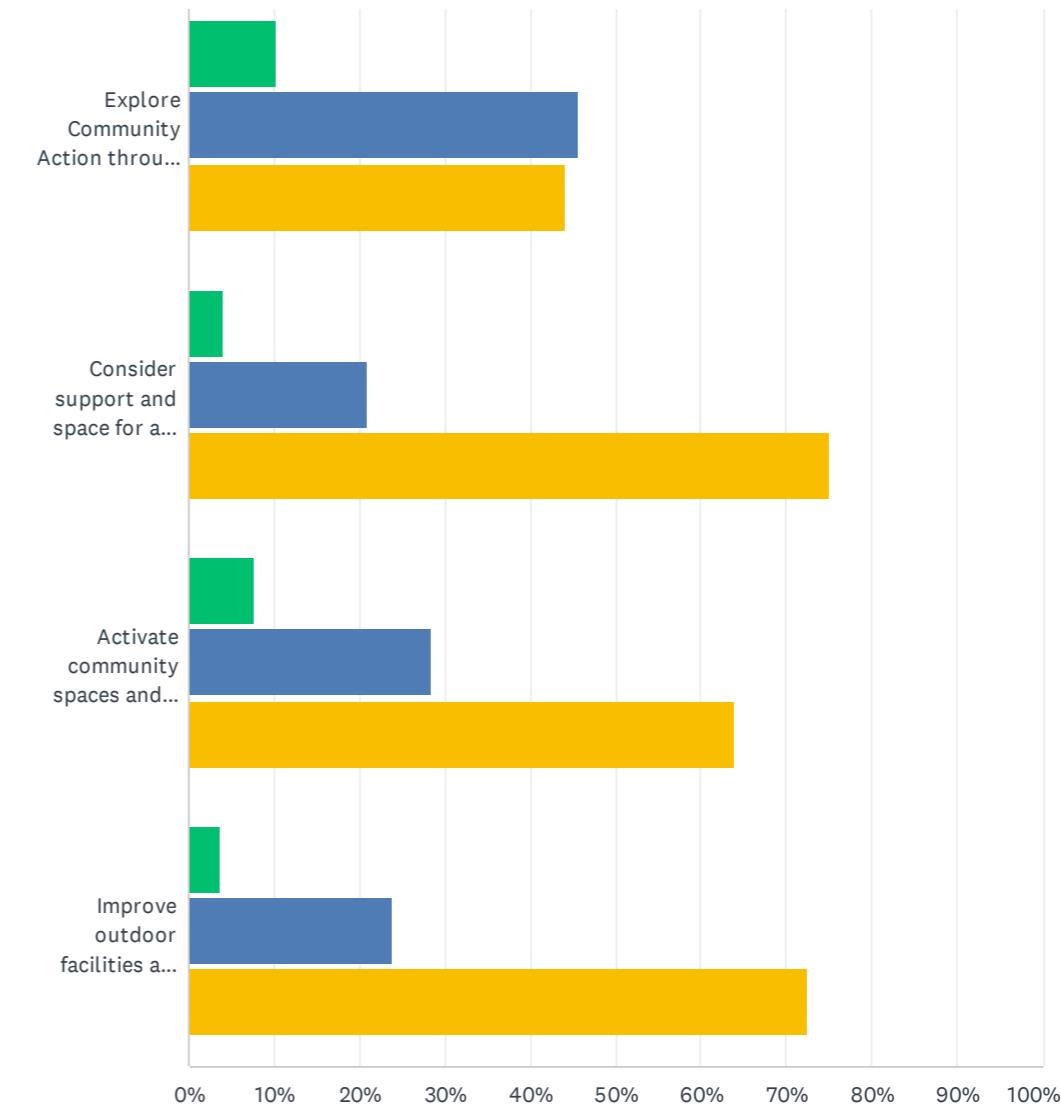
	LOW PRIORITY	NEUTRAL	HIGH PRIORITY	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Restore the Abbey and safeguard key artifacts, including the Harry Clarke windows	14.49% 30	34.78% 72	50.72% 105	207	3.36
Improve access and connectivity throughout the site	10.14% 21	29.95% 62	59.90% 124	207	3.50
Exploring spaces for broader community use, such as outdoor cooking, play and cultural activities	13.04% 27	28.02% 58	58.94% 122	207	3.46
Remove the derelict 'Scouts Den' to support site enhancement	3.85% 8	13.94% 29	82.21% 171	208	3.78
Ensure long-term conservation, biodiversity management, and maintenance across the site	12.50% 27	37.04% 80	50.46% 109	216	3.38

	LOW PRIORITY	NEUTRAL	HIGH PRIORITY	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Define and enhance key town gateways to create a welcoming arrival experience	7.84% 16	27.45% 56	64.71% 132	204	3.57
Develop more public spaces for socialising, gathering, and community use	8.91% 18	23.76% 48	67.33% 136	202	3.58
Explore opportunities to improve Main St	8.33% 17	17.16% 35	74.51% 152	204	3.66
Reinforce Market Square as a central community hub and gathering space	10.73% 22	19.02% 39	70.24% 144	205	3.60
Investigate unused spaces for temporary community use	11.43% 24	31.90% 67	56.67% 119	210	3.45

**Q5 TRANSPORT & CONNECTIVITY OBJECTIVE** To improve active travel and connectivity in Ballyhaunis by creating safer, more accessible links between homes, schools, workplaces, and surrounding communities. How would you rate the below Actions to support this objective?



**Q6 PEOPLE IN BALLYHAUNIS OBJECTIVE** To foster an inclusive, connected, and active community by enhancing access to shared spaces, programmes, and opportunities for all ages, particularly young people. How would you rate the below Actions to support this objective?

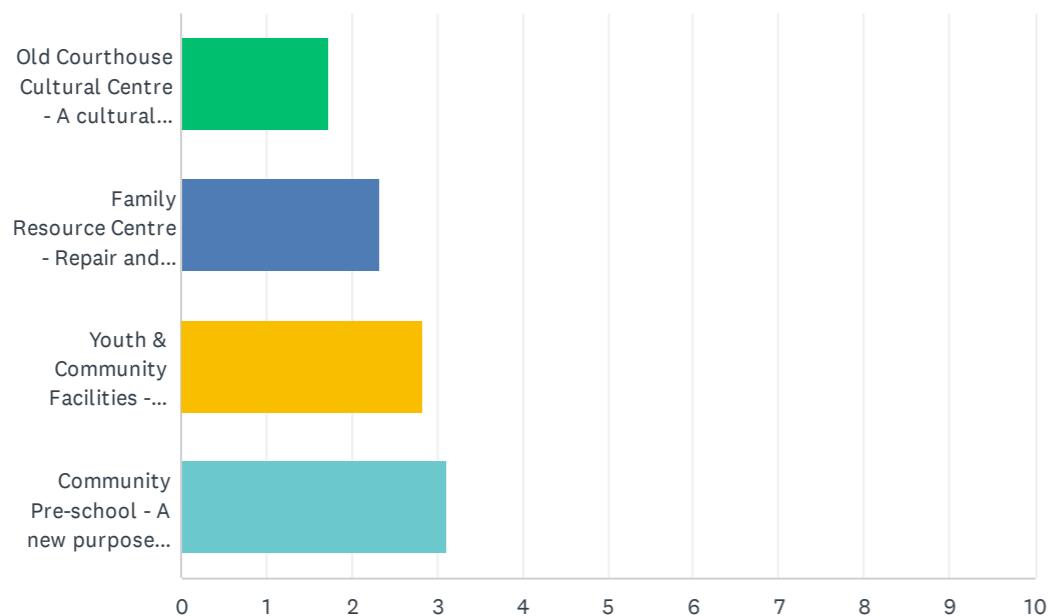


	LOW PRIORITY	NEUTRAL	HIGH PRIORITY	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Support proposals that enhance connections between residential areas, schools, and employment centres	11.06% (22)	26.63% (53)	62.31% (124)	199	3.51
Introduce road markings and signage to enhance cyclist safety	15.08% (30)	33.67% (67)	51.26% (102)	199	3.36
Link and extend existing and planned cycle and pedestrian networks within Ballyhaunis and to nearby areas.	14.14% (28)	32.83% (65)	53.03% (105)	198	3.39
Improve connections to existing carparks	9.00% (18)	28.00% (56)	63.00% (126)	200	3.54

	LOW PRIORITY	NEUTRAL	HIGH PRIORITY	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Explore Community Action through targeted initiatives	10.15% (20)	45.69% (90)	44.16% (87)	197	3.34
Consider support and space for a growing young population	4.06% (8)	20.81% (41)	75.13% (148)	197	3.71
Activate community spaces and venues to host a year-round programme of inclusive events, courses, and festivals for everyone in the community	7.61% (15)	28.43% (56)	63.96% (126)	197	3.56
Improve outdoor facilities and spaces for young people and the wider community to meet and socialise	3.55% (7)	23.86% (47)	72.59% (143)	197	3.69

Q7 Please rate the below projects in order of importance?(Press and hold the four lines on the left (Ξ), or click the arrow icons, to drag and drop the projects into your preferred order of priority, from most to least important.)

Answered: 153 Skipped: 93

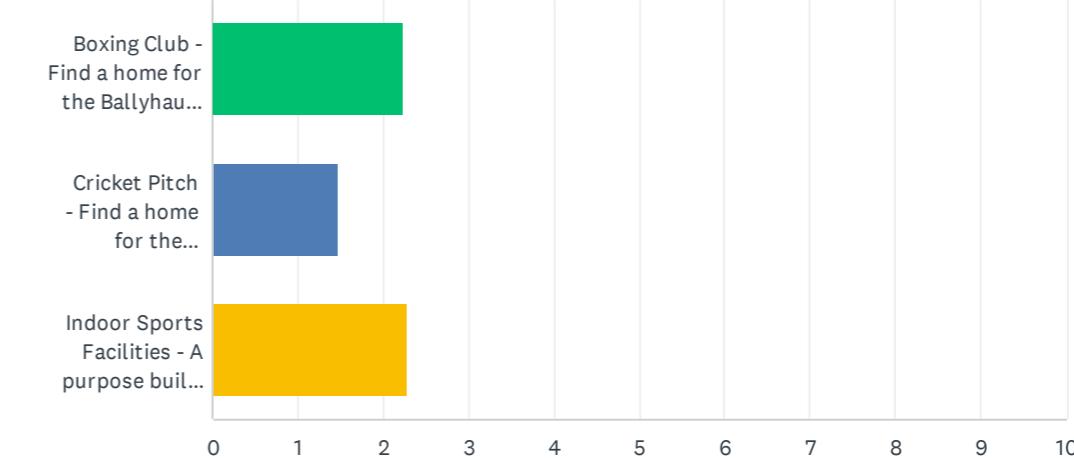


	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	SCORE
Old Courthouse Cultural Centre - A cultural centre for the community based in the Old Courthouse	9.15% 14	14.38% 22	16.34% 25	60.13% 92	153	1.73
Family Resource Centre - Repair and refurbishment of the existing building	12.42% 19	25.49% 39	45.10% 69	16.99% 26	153	2.33
Youth & Community Facilities - A new flexible use facility for the whole community	32.03% 49	32.03% 49	22.88% 35	13.07% 20	153	2.83
Community Pre-school - A new purpose built facility	46.41% 71	28.10% 43	15.69% 24	9.80% 15	153	3.11

15 / 16

Q8 Please rate the below sports facilities in order of importance?(Press and hold the four lines on the left (Ξ), or click the arrow icons, to drag and drop the projects into your preferred order of priority, from most to least important.)

Answered: 194 Skipped: 52



	1	2	3	TOTAL	SCORE
Boxing Club - Find a home for the Ballyhaunis Boxing Club either in an existing building or in a new purpose built facility	43.30% 84	37.11% 72	19.59% 38	194	2.24
Cricket Pitch - Find a home for the Ballyhaunis Cricket Club including space for a full size cricket pitch	13.92% 27	19.59% 38	66.49% 129	194	1.47
Indoor Sports Facilities - A purpose built indoor sports centre for the community	42.78% 83	43.30% 84	13.92% 27	194	2.29

16 / 16



An Roinn Forbartha  
Tuaithe agus Pobail  
Department of Rural and  
Community Development

# Digital Town Blueprint 2024

SUMMARY REPORT

Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo



# Contents

- 2** Introduction
- 3** Understanding your Digital Readiness Score
- 4** Visualisation of Dimension Scores
- 5** Ballyhaunis's Digital Readiness Score
- 9** Comparison of the 26 Phase 2 Towns
- 10** Digital Town Case Studies
- 12** About .ie and the Researchers

# Introduction

To help town leaders and policymakers embed their own digital town programmes and action plans in empirical data, .ie partnered with the Irish Institute of Digital Business at DCU to fully explore the concept and value of the ‘digital town’ through a comprehensive research project. It is the first research of its kind in Europe.



Our goals were to define the digital town; develop the metrics to measure a town’s digital readiness; and explore the potential impacts of digitalisation on a town from a variety of socio-economic perspectives.

The Department of Rural and Community Affairs (DRCD), recognising the value and impact of this approach, has funded a Digital Town Blueprint assessment for 26 additional towns as part of the Town Centre First Policy.

In doing so, we created the .ie Digital Town Blueprint, a framework that uses primary and secondary data to measure a particular town’s digital readiness. The Digital Town Blueprint is designed to be used by town leaders and policymakers to assess their own towns, thereby facilitating the creation and effective rollout of a local digital strategy and action plan.

**The Digital Town Blueprint has been designed to help towns rapidly and cost-effectively**



Understand their current digital town readiness and digital competitiveness



Compare their town against Irish and international benchmarks



Stimulate stakeholder engagement on digitalisation

“There is also the opportunity to utilise technology to enhance the experience of living and working in towns, and to integrate digital technology into daily commercial and social life. Digital technology can improve the quality and accessibility of services, and can be used to address challenges faced by our towns, providing them with new roles in the digital economy”

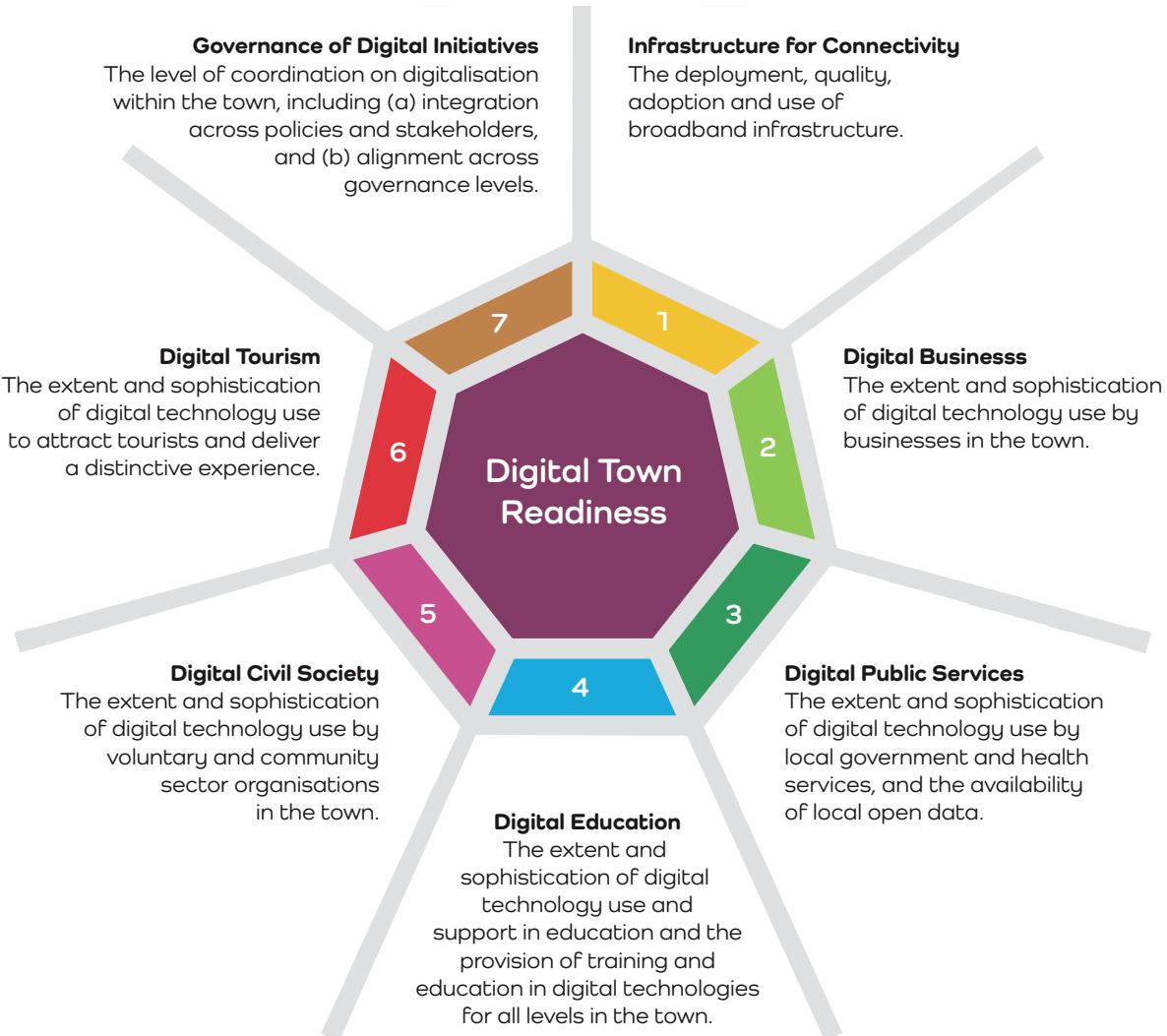
**Town Centre First, A Policy Approach for Irish Towns**

# Understanding your Digital Readiness Score

## Digital Town Blueprint Dimensions

The Digital Town Blueprint analyses digital readiness across seven dimensions. This is accomplished through a combination of primary research, desk research, secondary data, key informant interviews and automated data collection techniques. The findings of the assessment are synthesised into a digital town readiness score and assessment report.

**Note:** For the purposes of this report and to be consistent with Town Centre First, measurements are calculated within a 2km radius of the town centre for each town.

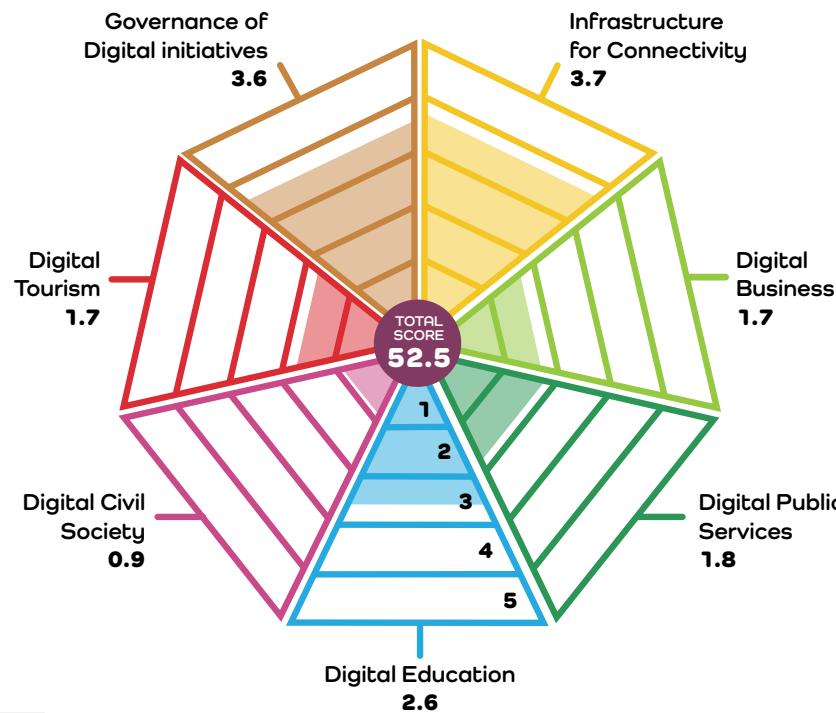


## Visualisation of Dimension Scores

Based on the analysis of the Digital Town Blueprint, an overall Digital Town readiness score can be attributed to the town. This score, and supporting observations, provides an important insight into key indicators for improvement at town level.

This final score is a weighted average of each of the dimension scores (1-5), rescaled out of 100 for easier interpretation. The weighting for each dimension is applied based on the peer-reviewed academic analysis and assessment.

### Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo



## Website Technology Intensity Score

The Web Technology Intensity Score (WTIS) seeks to use an organisation's decision to use a website and associated technologies as a proxy for its degree of digitalisation. At its core, the WTIS comprises eleven indicators that measure the digital readiness of organisations in Ireland applying widely used signals for digital sophistication. These include:

### WTIS: 11 digital readiness indicators



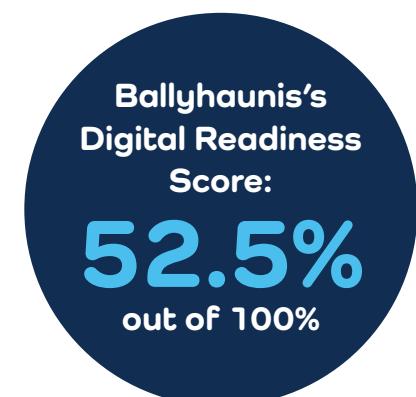
## How the Dimensions are weighted

Digital Town Dimension	Score out of 5	% Weighting	Weighted score	Score	Maximum % Score	Ballyhaunis's % Score
<b>Infrastructure for Connectivity</b>						
Fixed broadband	4.5	35%	1.58	3.7	20%	14.6
Mobile broadband	3.7	35%	1.30			
Competition	4.8	10%	0.48			
Free Public WiFi	3.0	10%	0.30			
Digital rural hubs	0.0	10%	0.00			
<b>Digital Business</b>						
Website Technology Intensity Score	1.0	33%	0.33	1.7	20%	6.8
Digital technology take-up	2.1	33%	0.70			
eCommerce take-up	2.0	33%	0.67			
<b>Digital Public Services</b>						
e-Health	2.2	67%	1.47	1.8	5%	1.8
Open data	1.0	33%	0.33			
<b>Digital Education</b>						
Digital skills courses for young people	3.8	25%	0.94	2.6	5%	2.6
Vocational and further education digital skills courses	3.3	25%	0.83			
Digital skills courses for seniors	1.7	25%	0.41			
Other digital skills courses	1.7	25%	0.41			
<b>Digital Civil Society</b>						
Website Technology Intensity Score	0.9	33%	0.30	0.9	10%	1.8
Digital technology take-up	0.8	33%	0.27			
eCommerce take-up	1.0	33%	0.33			
<b>Digital Tourism</b>						
Digital readiness of Tourism Businesses	1.9	60%	1.14	1.7	10%	3.3
Smart Tourism & Digital Infrastructure	0	20%	0.00			
Tourism destination website & maturity	2.6	20%	0.52			
<b>Digital Governance</b>						
Horizontal Integration	3.1	75%	2.30	3.6	30%	21.6
Vertical Integration	5.0	25%	1.30			

Each dimension is allocated a percentage out of 100, based on the relative importance of the dimension. For example. Infrastructure for Connectivity is given 20% whereas Digital Civil Society is allocated 10%.

Each (sub) dimension has a number of indicators, each of which is allocated a percentage weighting out of a total of 100. See 'W1 Weighting' column.

Scores are calculated from 1-5.



# Key findings: Ballyhaunis

## Infrastructure for Connectivity

### Fixed broadband

100% level of fixed broadband coverage across the Ballyhaunis townlands in question with strong coverage from commercial operators and National Broadband Plan support.

### Mobile broadband

Ballyhaunis also appears to have near universal mobile broadband coverage. However, this coverage displays variability across townlands when classified in terms of data speed.

### Competition

There are eleven mobile service providers in total currently operating in Ballyhaunis, though only four provide 5G broadband.

### Free Public WiFi

No availability of outdoor municipal Wi-Fi or free Wi-Fi in municipal buildings or tourism sites. However, free Wi-Fi is available in retail outlets, accommodation and hospitality.



### Digital rural hubs

There is no connected hub so the ability for remote working or co-working is not an option.

## Digital Business

### Website Technology Intensity Score

75% of the 176 businesses analysed had some sort of online presence, that is they have either a website or a social media profile. While 24% of them are only on social media, 37% of them have both a website and social media accounts. 35% of businesses had medium, high or very high levels of digital sophistication.



### Digital technology take-up

46% of businesses assessed are using mobile friendly websites. 61% have a social media with only 6% using sophisticated online advertising.

### eCommerce take-up

18% of businesses are selling online, with 32% of websites assessed showing evidence of international activity.

## Digital Public Services

### e-Health

9 healthcare providers were identified in Ballyhaunis. 100% of the providers uses e-prescriptions, 86% exchange medical data electronically with other healthcare providers, and 14% provide online consultations.



### Open data

Irish public sector bodies are required to adhere to the principle that public sector data should be open by design and default. There is a very limited amount of open data available in Ballyhaunis other than weather data.

# Key findings: Ballyhaunis

## Digital Education

### ↗ Digital skills courses for young people

Young people are specifically catered for through a CoderDojo offering coding skills to primary school students, St. Pats Secondary School offers training to support its ICT infrastructure and a range of digital literacy courses for secondary level students.



### ↗ Vocational and further education digital skills courses

The BTEI Programme (Back to Education Initiative) offers multiple courses like Computer Literacy, Word Processing, Internet Skills, and Desktop Publishing, aimed at developing competence in using computers for vocational purposes.

### ↗ Digital skills courses for seniors

The data does not show any specific digital skills provision targeting seniors directly. While the e-learning offered by Ballyhaunis Library and some courses offered by the Community Education Initiative and the BTEI Programme may be accessible to seniors, there is no clear indication that these programs are designed or marketed specifically for older adults.

### ↗ Other digital skills courses

The inclusion of e-learning options at Ballyhaunis Library (e.g., cybersecurity, web development, Microsoft Office, Adobe Captivate, and SEO skills, amongst others) offers additional resources for all age groups to access independently.

## Governance of Digital Initiatives

### ↗ Horizontal integration

Ballyhaunis has a destination website, [ballyhaunislife.com](http://ballyhaunislife.com), managed by the Ballyhaunis Chamber. The site provides local and tourist information, as well as links to retail outlets.



### ↗ Vertical integration

Although it does not support transactions, the website directs visitors to external sites. It features links to social media accounts, but two-way communication is limited to email and a contact form. The website is primarily promotional and not integrated with county portals.

## Digital Tourism

### ↗ Digital readiness of Tourism Businesses

72 accommodation, hospitality and retail businesses were assessed. 54% are not utilising technologies to enhance their online presence. 3% had medium, high or very high levels of digital sophistication.



### ↗ Smart Tourism and Digital Infrastructure

There is no availability of free public outdoor Wi-Fi, other free public Wi-Fi, digital transport or signage, tourism information outside normal working hours, online itineraries, or town-specific tourism mobile apps.

### ↗ Tourism destination website and maturity

A town website or portal is available, along with contact details or a contact form. Information is provided on accommodation, hospitality, retail, tourist activities, and attractions. The town also has a social media presence. However, there is no information available for a local tourist office, transport to and from the town, public Wi-Fi, subscription for town updates, or the ability to complete transactions on the town website.

## Digital Civil Society

### ↗ Website Technology Intensity Score

39 voluntary and social groups were identified. 26% had a discrete website. A small number featured on an affiliate website, e.g. a political party.



### ↗ Digital technology take-up

18% of civil society organisations scored medium to very high from the WTIS. 69% received a non-existent score.

### ↗ eCommerce take-up

10% had evidence of selling online with 21% having some form of international activity.

# This report can be used to...



**1**

**Stimulate stakeholder engagement and empower towns on digitalisation.**



**2**

**Prioritise digital initiatives and apply for funding**



**3**

**Align activities with national and county-level strategies, plans and initiatives**



**4**

**Benchmark progress and performance**



**5**

**Understand their current digital town readiness and digital competitiveness and address the gaps**

## For Town Teams

The Blueprint provides empirical data on the potential of digital to shape the future of local communities and local businesses.

## For Town Regeneration Officers

The Blueprint's findings can be used to support and develop the digital vision of the Town Teams and help prioritise local digital initiatives.

## For Local Authorities

Local authorities can use the Blueprint reports to identify digitalisation strategies to help regenerate and develop local towns and villages.

## Comparison of the 26 Towns in Phase 2

Town	Infrastructure for Connectivity (out of 5)	Digital Business (out of 5)	Digital Public Services (out of 5)	Digital Education (out of 5)	Digital Civil Society (out of 5)	Digital Tourism (out of 5)	Governance of Digital Initiatives (out of 5)	Overall Score (out of 100)
Athenry	4	2.4	2.1	2.7	2.3	1.3	2.2	51
Bagenalstown	3.9	2.3	1.7	2.2	1.8	1.6	2.2	49
Ballybay	3.5	1	2.1	2	1.7	1.8	3.1	48
Ballyhaunis	3.7	1.7	1.8	2.6	0.9	1.7	3.6	53
Ballymahon	3.4	2.4	1.6	2.2	0.4	1.6	2.2	44
Ballymote	3.5	1.2	1.6	2.6	1.2	1.3	2.2	41
Carrick-on-Suir	3.8	1.2	1.8	2.7	2.1	2	2.9	50
Castlecomer	3.6	1.6	1.9	1.7	2	1.7	3.1	51
Castlepollard	3.5	0.9	1.7	1.7	2.8	1.8	2.3	44
Castlerea	4	2.2	1.9	2.5	1.5	2	2.4	51
Clogherhead	3.5	0.7	2.2	2.2	3	1.9	2.9	49
Courtown-Riverchapel	3.5	2.3	1.7	1.3	2.2	1.8	4.1	59
Dunmore East	3.7	1.8	1.9	1.7	1.1	2.1	2.7	48
Dunshaughlin	4.1	2.3	2.3	2.7	2.3	1.8	2.7	55
Ferbane	3.7	0.8	1.9	1.9	1.7	2	3.1	48
Glenties	3.7	0.6	1.7	1.8	2.1	1.7	2.4	43
Graiguenamanagh	3.7	0.9	1.7	2.2	1.8	1.5	2.2	42
Kanturk	4	0.7	1.4	1.8	2.2	2	2.7	47
Kenmare	4.2	2.3	1.8	2.5	1.9	2.3	3.6	60
Killeshandra	3.6	0.6	1.7	1.7	1.9	1	2.2	39
Kilrush	4.1	1.7	1.6	2.5	0.7	1.5	2.7	48
Manorhamilton	4.3	2	1.6	1.9	1.4	2	3.1	54
Mountmellick	3.5	1.3	1.7	2.2	1.9	2	3.6	52
Newtownmountkennedy	4.2	2.5	1.8	0	2.6	1.4	2	49
Rathkeale	3.5	0.8	1.8	2.1	1.7	2.2	3.6	50
Rush	3.8	2.3	1.9	2	2.5	1.7	2.2	50
Average	3.8	1.6	1.8	2.1	1.8	1.8	2.8	49
TCF 1 Average	3.8	1.2	2.8	2.5	1.2	0.9	2.4	45

# Digital Town Case Studies



## Mobile Coverage Blackspot

MALINBEG, CO. DONEGAL

FUNDING BY	DRCD Digital Innovation Programme
FUNDING AWARDED	€35,000

### OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Improve cellular range and minimise blackspots
- ▶ Add positively to rural society and economy via digital connectivity

### WHAT

The project was initiated as part of the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce. The taskforce was set up to develop mobile phone coverage of benefit to the local community and enterprise. Partnering with telecoms operator Vodafone, Malinbeg was connected to the mobile broadband network via a new mast. Giving all relevant stakeholders equal share of voice was critical to the project's successful and expedited implementation.



## 'Digital Points'

WILD ATLANTIC WAY

FUNDING BY	DRCD Digital Innovation Programme
FUNDING AWARDED	€35,000

### OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Map the area on a user-friendly and accessible digital platform
- ▶ Establish and create a greater number of digital points for tourists to access information about the sites they visit
- ▶ Digitally enhance the tourist experience through innovative use of digital technology to bring real, sustainable benefits to local communities

### WHAT

This project features interactive digital mapping on different signs along the Wild Atlantic Way. The signs have visible QR codes or iTags that connect to an interactive platform with information, facts, activities, and amenities specific to the local area and points of discovery. The best sights to visit on the route, such as Blasket's View, are known as Discovery Points.



## Asset Mapping

CO. WESTMEATH

FUNDING BY	DRCD Digital Innovation Programme
FUNDING AWARDED	€52,600

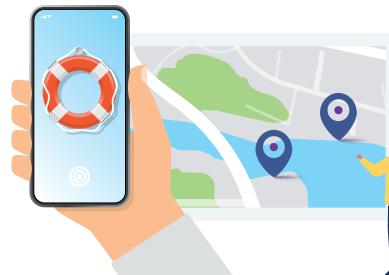
### OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Combine datasets across the county into a digital reporting tool with the express purpose of monitoring funding effectiveness
- ▶ Implement geocodes for assets and information streamlining
- ▶ Provide Business Intelligence (BI) dashboards for County Council decision makers and a public web portal to enhance communications

### WHAT

All funding assets will be assigned a geocode to create an overall "digital funding system". This digital tool will record details of all items funded, their funding source, allocation, receiving communities, photos/ images/ video reels, celebration/ launch and impact.

# Digital Town Case Studies



## Ring Buoy Theft Prevention

CO. SLIGO

FUNDING BY	DRCD Digital Programme
FUNDING AWARDED	€120,000

### OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To reduce and prevent the theft of life buoys in order to lower the risk of drowning and save lives.
- ▶ To reduce the cost of replacing stolen life buoys.

### WHAT

The Smart Ring Buoy technology works through low-cost sensors paired with a mobile, map-based platform with real time monitoring. It will alert Water Safety officers when ring buoys are tampered with or go missing and ensure their timely replacement. The technology will also reduce the number of manual checks that need to be made annually.



## Smart Skills for Farming

CO. TIPPERARY

FUNDING BY	Not clear on website who funded
FUNDING AWARDED	€24,000

### OBJECTIVES

- ▶ The purpose of this project is to support the implementation of a new Digital Skills Training Programme in the use of new digital technologies in Irish agriculture in rural County Tipperary.
- ▶ To enable access to the use of digital technologies for smart farming in rural County Tipperary.

### WHAT

The programme will support the production of a number of YouTube training videos on all aspects of Smart Agriculture IoT- (Internet of Things) based Network Solutions will be produced which will initially be shown and launched in the BCPs (Broadband Connection Points).



## Trim Air Quality Monitoring

CO. MEATH

FUNDING BY	DRCD Programme 2021 and Meath County Council
FUNDING AWARDED	€163,518

### OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Prevent the development of health issues related to exposure to urban air pollution.
- ▶ Develop an air quality index for Trim.

### WHAT

By collecting this data, it will be possible to inform further policy on climate change solutions and interventions likely to be successful. Thereby air quality will improve and emissions will be lower. Enhancing the experience of living in a town, Trim is an exemplar in utilising digitalisation for improved quality of life delivery.

# Town Centre First

The Town Centre First (TCF) policy is a major cross-government policy that aims to tackle vacancy, combat dereliction and breathe new life into our town centres. It supports "Our Rural Future", Ireland's rural development policy which is integral to our national economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being.

It advocates for a holistic, place-based approach to sustainable rural development. The policy seeks to support towns of all sizes, recognising each town is unique and diverse and acknowledges that a "one size fits all" approach will not achieve sustainable and thriving communities.

The Digital Town Blueprint research was funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development 2024 to support the objectives of the Town Centre First suite of supports.



**Lár Bailte ar dTús**  
**Town Centre First**

## About the Researchers

The Irish Institute of Digital Business is a University Designated Research Centre located in Dublin City University. It is an internationally recognised centre of excellence for theoretical and applied research that investigates and accelerates the adoption of digital technologies and the transformation of business and society using these technologies.

J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics at University of Galway is energised by its regional edge on the west coast of Ireland. It is a globally engaged School of Business and Economics for the public good that makes a transformative impact for students, society and business.

As the trusted national registry for over 330,000 domain names, .ie protects Ireland's unique online identity and empowers people, communities and businesses connected with Ireland to thrive and prosper online. A positive driving force in Ireland's digital economy, .ie serves as a profit for good organisation with a mission to elevate Ireland's digital identity by providing the Irish online community with a trusted, resilient and accessible .ie internet domain.



## **Liam Lyons**

Internationally acclaimed Mayo man, Liam Lyons, was the first Irish photographer to be awarded an Honorary Fellowship from the Irish Professional Photographers Association in recognition of his outstanding landscape photography.

During his career, he held many successful exhibitions across Europe and the United States, and his work is on display around the world, including in the White House and Aras an Uachtaráin. His work was also published in international newspaper, magazines and books.

A collection of more than 50,000 of his images was generously donated to the county of Mayo, documenting public and private events that occurred in Mayo, providing striking illustrations of life in Mayo over the past 50 years. Mayo County Council has digitised this collection, and it can be viewed in any library in the county.

Austin Vaughan, County Librarian stated: “We are extremely lucky to have this wonderful collection of photos in the county thanks to the generosity of the late Liam Lyons. The photos are a unique record of the social, cultural and sporting life of the people of Mayo from the 1960s through to the 1980s.”

[https://liamlyons.com/content/about\\_liam/](https://liamlyons.com/content/about_liam/)