



**IRISH PLANNING  
INSTITUTE**

Institiúid Pleanála Na hÉireann



# PLANNING AWARDS 2020

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Westin Hotel, Dublin

27<sup>th</sup> February 2020



**Fáilte Ireland**  
National Tourism Development Authority



An Roinn Tithíochta,  
Pleanála agus Rialtais Áitiúil  
Department of Housing,  
Planning and Local Government

## PRESIDENT'S WELCOME



### Welcome to the 2020 Irish Planning Awards.

The Irish Planning Institute seeks, through the Irish Planning Awards, to highlight innovation and excellence in Irish planning. These Awards acknowledge the diverse range of plans taking place locally and nationally in complex and dynamic planning environments.

The calibre and quantity of projects submitted to the Irish Planning Awards has greatly improved this year, reflecting the output of the Planning Sector across the country. We feel these shortlisted projects clearly demonstrate the advantages of the participatory planning process, facilitated and enabled by professional planners. The shortlisted projects show how the cooperation and direct participation of stakeholders can have a synergistic effect of benefit to the whole planning process. The Institute are delighted to confirm a significant increase in the quantity and quality of projects submitted for consideration. In total the Panel of Judges have shortlisted 34 projects across 7 categories from a total entry of 56 projects.

This year our panel of judges noted in particular the strong interest in two new categories. Climate Change was introduced this year as an Award category and recognises the necessity to link planning and climate action for climate change to be effectively addressed. The Planning Workplace of the Year recognises employers of planners who demonstrate excellence in customer service and business processes and who contribute to the industry and profession. Organisations shortlisted under this category have been particularly dynamic in assisting their employees with their professional development.

The Institute are extremely grateful to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government for their generous support for the Awards Programme. We are also grateful to Fáilte Ireland who have generously sponsored the Planning and Economic Development Category. We are very grateful to colleagues who gave generously of their time to participate with me on our Panel of Judges.

This year the Panel of Judges were

- Ms Rachel Kenny FIPI – Director of Planning, An Bord Pleanála
- Professor Peter Roberts – Chairman, NIHE
- Ms Orla Hegarty MRIAI RIBA – Assistant Professor, UCD School of Architecture, Planning and Environmental Policy
- Mr Paul Hogan – Acting Chief Planner, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
- Mr Tom Enright – Chief Executive, Wexford County Council
- Dr. Conor Norton MIPI – President of the Irish Planning Institute

The President's Awards were chosen personally by my predecessor, outgoing President Joe Corr MIPI.

Every project shortlisted this evening has demonstrated excellence and innovation in Planning. Our panel of Judges were struck by the dedication and energy of each shortlisted entry and we look forward to the realisation of these projects in the months and years ahead. As Planners, we sometimes struggle to share the good news and the success of our profession. As a colleague from the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government pointed out at one of our Planning Conferences last year – bad planning roars at you – good planning is more subtle. Tonight, we celebrate the "subtle".

My congratulations to every local authority and every consultant who has had a project shortlisted. My thanks again to the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government for their generosity and support for the Awards programme, and my thanks to my fellow judges.

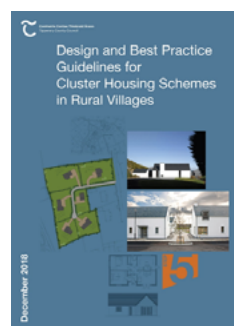
### **Dr Conor Norton MIPI**

President, Irish Planning Institute 2020/2021

# Plan Making Category

This category is for plans representing the best of the art and science of spatial planning. This can include plans, projects, strategies and the innovative use of technology in such plans.

- **The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region**
- **South Dublin County Council – Clonburris SDZ**
- **Portlaoise 2040 and Beyond – A Vision for Portlaoise: A Strategy for a Better Town Centre**
- **Dublin City Council – Cherry Orchard Local Area Plan**
- **Tipperary County Council – Design and Best practice Guidelines for Cluster Housing Schemes in Rural Villages**



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1. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region
2. Tipperary County Council – Design and Best practice Guidelines for Cluster Housing Schemes in Rural Villages
3. Dublin City Council – Cherry Orchard Local Area Plan
4. Clonburris SDZ
5. Portlaoise 2040 and Beyond – A Vision for Portlaoise: A Strategy for a Better Town Centre

## The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region

The RSES is the first plan of its kind prepared and successfully adopted in Ireland. The strategy is a strategic plan and investment framework to shape the future development of the Region to 2031 and beyond. Prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the strategy defines a holistic vision for the Regional and provides a blueprint in plan making that for the first time combines a spatial, economic and climate strategy, whilst ensuring that people and quality of life are central in shaping the multitude of places within the most diverse Region of the state.

A number of complementary factors have contributed to the pioneering nature of the Strategy. This includes:

1. The publication of an original and novel final document consisting of many firsts for Irish Planning including; -
  - a. A Spatial Strategy – Allied to International and European best practice, backed by evidence and developed to manage future growth and ensure the creation of healthy and attractive places to live, work, study, visit and invest in.
  - b. An Economic Strategy – A new mandate for Irish Planning, the Economic Strategy builds on the Region’s strengths to sustain a strong economy and support the creation of quality jobs that ensure a good living standard for all.
  - c. A Climate Action Strategy – Explicitly included in a strategic Irish planning document for the first time, the Climate Action Strategy is built in to accelerate climate action, ensuring mitigation coupled with building resilience through adaptation.
  - d. A Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) for Dublin – The first MASP within the Country to be prepared, the Plan takes a holistic approach, planning to become a smart, climate resilient and global city region, expanding access to social and economic opportunities and improved housing choice, travel options and quality of life.

e. An investment Framework – Included for the first time within a Regional Plan, the Investment Framework is aligned to the National Development Plan and is committed to the delivery of the National Planning Framework through the essential means of the RSES.

f. An implementation and Monitoring Roadmap – Committed to ensuring that the RSES is delivered over the lifespan of the Strategy, providing clear mechanisms as to how the Strategy will be finalised.

2. The approach and input of the Planning Team: - Providing Evidence Driven Policy, Facilitating Meaningful Consultation and Ensuring Delivery.

The formation of policy was supported by a Socio-Economic Evidence Baseline Report, prepared in collaboration with the All -Ireland Research Observatory (AIRO) at Maynooth University. In addition, substantial qualitative research was carried out through the production of a number of thematic research papers which were used to inform the process, stimulate debate amongst stakeholders, including Local Authorities, and validate the approach of the Planning Team. This was preceded by qualitative research carried out on 'Ensuring a Rigorous and Effective RSES Process', which was prepared to develop and ripen the RSES planning concept. The RSES also incorporated a pioneering Asset- Based Approach' in order to credibly determine strategic sites and settlements for the Region. Strategic sites and settlements were selected, in consultation with local authorities.

The planning team ensured that the consultation process allowed for collaborative working in partnership with a number of stakeholders. The new found approach of the planning team, to ensure the RSES actively drives regional development, has opened up new opportunities to deliver the Regional Strategic Outcomes through relationship building, joint research prospects and implementation funding mechanisms that are intertwined within the Regional Assembly's functions.

### Design and Best practice Guidelines for Cluster Housing Schemes in Rural Villages – Tipperary County Council

Tipperary, like many rural local authorities has faced many challenges including decline in population, loss of services and community facilities. The future viability, and in many cases the survival of villages is one of the key challenges for rural Ireland and for national and local policy makers, communities and stakeholders.

Following the establishment of Tipperary County Council in 2014, the Planning Department and the Elected Members began the preparation of the first county-wide rural settlement strategy. A number of workshops were held with the Elected Members with discussion centred around the revitalisation of our village and what the Council could do to reverse this trend. The discussions concluded that a strong policy response was needed, whereby a local need would apply in all areas in the countryside, supported by a pro-active policy response to promote low density and viable alternatives to one-of housing in all our villages.

The preparation of the Cluster Guidelines is both a direct response to delivering Project Ireland 2040 and a rural spatial planning and development priority. The ambition for the document is to make a national contribution in rural housing design and place-making and help to ensure that our villages remain at the heart of rural communities for generations to come.

In order to develop best practice in placemaking, a multi-disciplinary approach was required. The Planning Department led the direction of the document in all aspects, including research requirements stakeholder consultation, and design and guidance.

The Guidelines are structured around a '5 step approach' in designing and developing a Cluster Housing Scheme, addressing each step in the process. The Planning Department and the team also agreed at the outset that the document should be 'easy to read and easy to use'. With this in mind, the publication is a short (40 pages), avoids jargon. The document

also included a number of worked examples in village in the county, from infill, to brownfield to greenfield sites

National Guidelines on residential development have to date focused on high to medium design residential development in our urban cities and towns. This publication is the first of its kind in providing a best practice approach in developing schemes which offer viable and sustainable alternatives to building homes in the open countryside. The design approach can be applied successfully in any village and therefore as a model for development across the country.

Facilitating the development of cluster schemes on a phased basis was raised at a consultation event– as demand often only exists for 1-2 houses at a time, the guidelines demonstrate how the local infrastructure can be developed on a phased basis, with road and water services infrastructure built in tandem with the individual houses. The Council also updated the Taking in Charge Policy providing new 10 standard and guidance to streamline the taking in charge process for cluster housing schemes.

Many of our villages do not benefit from public waste water treatment systems or have capacity issues which are often seen as a significant barrier to development. However, following comprehensive background research, including consultation with Irish Water and the EPA, the team determined that small scale housing schemes (subject to environmental assessment and individual treatment plants) may be supported.

The Planning Department is now embarking on the design and development of a demonstrator project 'on a site in Kilsheelan Village, located 8km east of Clonmel on the banks of the River Suir. This project seeks to use public owned land to support the regeneration of the village, by offering opportunity for local people to buy a site and build the first home and live in a rural community.

Villages are the heart of our rural communities; they are part of our heritage and culture, and contribute to quality of life in our rural areas. These guidelines seek to deliver on an objective of Project Ireland 2040 and address a type and

tradition of development which is unique to rural Ireland. It is believed that the publication, supported by the demonstrator project will have significant and positive impact on both planning practice and in ensuring the viability of villages in County Tipperary and beyond.

### Clonburris SDZ – South Dublin County Council

In December 2015, a Government Order designated 280 hectares as an SDZ at Clonburris. Clonburris SDZ is the largest SDZ in Ireland and is identified as a Major Urban Housing Development Site (MUHDS). The Planning Scheme was approved by An Bord Pleanála subject to modifications and clarifications in May 2019.

The incubation of Clonburris SDZ at such a pivotal time in Irish planning history has resulted in a final Planning Scheme which will be an outstanding model in sustainable community development, including the integration of green infrastructure, sustainable urban drainage and the consideration of energy and climate change mitigation options.

The strategic site of Clonburris SDZ has the potential to become an exemplar and distinctive new community into the future, centred on the provision of a choice of high-quality homes and access to a range of local services and amenities, together with the delivery of reliable public transport options. Open spaces and parks will be a central feature of this sustainable community and the public realm to be created at Clonburris will be critical in place making and ensuring that pedestrians and cyclists have maximum access to a range of local facilities and amenities.

The development of the entire Planning Scheme is expected to deliver a target of:

- 9,416, new homes
- A Minimum of 7,300 sq. m gross community floorspace
- A Maximum of c. 22,520 sq. m gross retail floorspace and
- A Minimum of 30,000 sq. m employment floorspace.

Collaboration with key stakeholders added significant value to the project by ensuring that an integrated Planning Scheme was prepared by implementing a multi-disciplinary approach to addressing the opportunities and challenges presented by the SDZ lands. The SDZ Planning Team was the central actor in the coordination of a range of professions and stakeholders which resulted in a collaborative and iterative approach to the plan making process and which ultimately resulted in a multifaceted sustainable Planning Scheme.

The Masterplanning approach added significant value to the project by ensuring the Planning Scheme captured the most up to date and best practice approaches to concepts, urban design and SDZ development. The SDZ Planning Team led a range of urban design workshops throughout the plan making process.

Each of the workshops served as a participatory forum for multi-disciplinary teams.

The phasing approach added significant value to the project by ensuring the Scheme is centred on the balanced delivery of infrastructure, urban centres and community services in tandem with projected population increase, in order to ensure sustainable communities and place making.

The Scheme delivers a network of high-quality green and blue infrastructure spaces and public parks while protecting, enhancing and sensitively upgrading the natural, built and cultural assets of the Clonburris lands.

The scheme is designed to be highly accessible for pedestrians and cyclists and to promote a sustainable modal shift for shorter journeys. The Planning Scheme demonstrates an integrated approach to land use zoning and transportation.

The SDZ Planning Team sought to expand the scope of consultation and developed a Consultation Strategy with particular emphasis placed on web-based consultation with supplementary 'face to face' interaction with the public. This resulted in a level of public participation which went beyond planning professionals and landowners and reached the wider non-technical community.

Ensuring the involvement and participation of a range of professionals in the plan making process resulted in the delivery of a robust, comprehensive and multifaceted framework, considerate of an extensive range of issues to ensure proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The end result is a Planning Scheme which is built upon an evidence-based approach to plan making and a foundation of extensive research and baseline studies

#### **Portlaoise 2040 and Beyond – A Vision for Portlaoise: A Strategy for a Better Town Centre Laois County Council and Avison Young**

A Vision for Portlaoise' is a plan that re-examines the Town Centre of Portlaoise to succeed in a changing social, environmental and economic context to 2040 and beyond. The primary achievement of the project to date has been formalising a shared vision that focuses on improving the public realm, underpinned by a more coherent spatial framework.

The project involved the development of a plan that focussed on the contemporary public spaces and buildings and the development of linkages and walkways between the heritage assets of the Town. The plan-making methods sought to improve legibility and usability of Portlaoise by delivering a public realm that provides well-connected and useable urban spaces for residents, businesses and visitors.

The project has brought a strategic approach that fuses public realm improvement with land use and spatial planning. A main feature of the project is its dual nature as a public realm enhancement strategy, and also as a town centre plan that deals with transportation, movement, green infrastructure and land use planning. Initially focussing on public realm enhancement, the project evolved to resolve broader and more fundamental issues of how the town functioned and which would heavily influence the form and potential of the future public realm. This demanded that the project team resolve traffic flows, car parking, public transport, green infrastructure and the utilisation of heritage assets within the Town centre.

The core aim of the plan was to make Portlaoise Ireland's first Low Carbon Town centre. The approach was to utilise the potential of the natural and built environment from the perspective of 'ecosystem services' and 'green infrastructure'.

One of the key innovations of the Project to deliver participation and engagement has been the development of a bespoke Environment Information Model (EIM) for Portlaoise Town Centre. This resource allows for local people, business and other stakeholders as well as the Local Authority to visualise, understand and influence the Town's development.

The Planners' role was to bring a strategic but delivery-focused approach with which to take stakeholders through a dynamic and adaptive plan-making process. This required the team to integrate strategic vision with local knowledge and micro-level understanding of how Portlaoise functions, with the aim of developing a suite of interventions that would transform Portlaoise Town Centre for a better future.

The core aim of the project was to put in place a platform to reinvigorate Portlaoise Town Centre as a people-focussed town; the 'People's Town'. The need to retain a town that was for local residents and businesses, and one that they could be proud of and continue to invest in over a long-term period was recognised by the project team. An adaptive and comprehensive approach alongside the cohesive and holistic output made the project original and innovative.

#### **Cherry Orchard Local Area Plan Dublin City Council**

The Park West Cherry Orchard Local Area Plan (LAP) covers an area of approximately 267.51 hectares and contains approximately 46 hectares of land available of development. The Park West Cherry Orchard Local Area Plan sets out the framework for the regeneration and sustainable development of a strategic area of the City. The LAP is a key strategic planning document of the City Council and a road map for active land management. It has a key role to play in delivering the City's vision and core strategy as set out in the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022.

The LAP for Park West – Cherry Orchard provides a strategic vision and development strategy for the coordinated development of key land banks within the Plan area, to provide housing and employment opportunities to serve the existing and future population, while simultaneously contributing to wider regional and national policy objectives. This will be underpinned by a strong placemaking strategy, which will implement public realm improvements within existing neighbourhoods. Furthermore, the LAP endeavours to improve and enhance connections to the existing communities, while capitalising on existing assets such as the Grand Canal and Gallenstown Waterworks, which can become catalysts for economic development, tourism and recreation.

By re-imagining this part of the City there is real potential to create a high density attractive residential and employment hub, that can take full advantage of the available public transport systems, proximity to City Centre and proximity to nearby social and community infrastructure. By redeveloping this land, the following outcomes are possible:

- Reduced greenfield land take;
- Utilisation of existing infrastructure, and reducing the need to travel long distances, thus reducing energy consumption and carbon emission;
- Improved viability of public transport services;

- Ability to plan for all sectors of housing need and inclusiveness;
- Enhancing the health of the community by encouraging and facilitating more active lifestyles by creating a more walkable and cycle friendly urban environment.
- Placemaking initiative to foster the creation of viable communities, underpinned by exemplary urban design.

The Cherry Orchard LAP seeks to create a legible built environment by capitalising on existing assets. Within Cherry Orchard it is proposed to consolidate the existing hub of community uses at the church, school and community centre through the provision of new local retail units along Cherry Orchard Avenue, in order to create an identifiable neighbourhood centre, with improvements to the streetscape and landscaping.

Extensive consultation at the pre-draft issues paper stage enabled a multitude of voices to be heard and for local concerns and objectives to be encapsulated in the plan. The planning team was then tasked with the need to balance local needs and requirements with National and Regional policy objectives. The resulting LAP expertly merges these requirements, maintaining a strong local focus.

The presence of large vacant sites, suitable for development that are located along key public transport corridors and adjoining a range of existing social and community facilities, places the development of this area firmly to the fore in its ability to deliver future sustainable communities. Since its adoption on the 7th October 2019, the City Council has already begun the process of setting up an implementation team to drive future development and to develop and regenerate this strategic land bank within the City alongside the local community and key local stakeholders.

# Participation and Engagement Category

This category is for plans, studies, strategies and projects which demonstrate how public participation has been effective in changing outcomes. It can include measures to increase engagement and awareness of planning or innovative public consultation.

- **Portlaoise 2040 and Beyond – A Vision for Portlaoise: A Strategy for a Better Town Centre Laois County Council & Avison Young**
- **Church Lane Heritage Regeneration Project – Donegal County Council**
- **Limerick City and County Living Georgian City: A Strategy for Compact Growth**
- **Ireland’s Collaborative Town Centre Health Check Training Programme – Heritage Council and Project Partners**
- **Galway Public Realm Strategy – Galway City Council with Allies & Morrison**



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## Portlaoise 2040 and Beyond – A Vision for Portlaoise: A Strategy for a Better Town Centre - Laois County Council with Avison Young

A Vision for Portlaoise’ is a plan that re-examines how the Town Centre of Portlaoise will succeed in a changing social, environmental and economic context to 2040 and beyond. The primary achievement of the project to date has been formalising a shared vision that focuses on improving the public realm, underpinned by a more coherent spatial framework. The project involved the development of a plan that focussed on the contemporary public spaces and buildings and the development of linkages and walkways between the heritage assets of the Town.

The Planners’ role was to bring a strategic approach with which to take stakeholders through a dynamic and adaptive plan-making process, following the preparation of the project Communication Strategy. This provided a step-by-step approach which outlined Avison Young’s systematic but innovative view on stakeholder engagement. The main phases of consultation were built around the following flagship events:

- Public Workshop 1
- Public Workshop 2
- Shared Vision Workshop
- Presentation of the Draft Plan

These were the main consultations events which served as focal points within a wider programme of engagement with the Planning Authority, Strategic Planning Committee and Municipal District. The project team sought to engage with local people, including young adults and schools. This was a fundamental goal as participation within the town has been poor historically and reversing this trend was an important priority for the Local Authority.

One of the key innovations of the Project to deliver participation and engagement has been the development of a bespoke Environment Information Model (EIM) for Portlaoise Town Centre. This resource allows for local people, business and other stakeholders as well as the

Local Authority to visualise, understand and influence the Town’s development.

The Communication Strategy set out concisely the Who, When and How of the engagement process, and how stakeholders at the different stages of the process would be consulted. The project not only engaged fully with stakeholders but also sought to reflect their identity in the urban design and plan output.

The core aim of the project was to put in place a platform to reinvigorate Portlaoise Town Centre as a people-focussed town; the ‘People’s Town’. The need to retain a town that was for local residents and businesses and one that they could be proud of and continue to invest in over a long-term period was recognised by the project team.

Overall, the Portlaoise 2040 process was ‘geared to hear’ and respond to local stakeholder ideas and concerns and to bring interested parties through an inclusive process towards a common vision. All of the elements of the consultation were synthesised into the final Portlaoise 2040 And Beyond – A Vision for Portlaoise: A Strategy for a Better Town Centre.

## Church Lane Heritage-Led Regeneration Project Donegal County Council

The heritage-led regeneration project is an innovative partnership project between Planning Services and Culture Division, Donegal County Council, Letterkenny Cathedral Quarter Group, the local community and with the benefit of the expertise from Dedalus Architecture to proactively initiate a package of capital works for a high quality urban living and working environment within the historic core of Letterkenny. The project consisted of a package of capital works to conserve and repair seven properties, reinforce civic pride in the area, enhance attractiveness and promote the tourism potential of the town’s historic core by putting into action relevant plans, policies and strategies for this area.

The historic core of Letterkenny like so many Irish towns has suffered vacancy and dereliction over the years requiring, regeneration and investment to attract people back into living in

the centre of the town to realise these national targets. The project focused on heritage-led regeneration as a key stage of reversing this trend and of bringing life back into the heart of this once vibrant traditional market town.

Church Lane is a key street within the historic core of the town centre and contributes to the setting for Letterkenny's most important historical structures. These modest 19th century buildings are incredibly important to the area's sense of place. Buildings on Church Lane had deteriorated over a long period of time and many on lower Church Lane were vacant, derelict and close to collapse.

The Church Lane Historic Towns Initiative has resulted in conservation works to seven historic properties that include roof and chimney repairs, installation of cast-iron rainwater goods, reinstatement of timber sash windows and doors, and the repair of a historic shopfront using traditional materials and informed by best conservation practices.

Visually this project has transformed Church Lane's streetscape and has been the final major milestone in 'Saving Church Lane'. Regeneration works has had a positive visual impact on the old town centre and ensure that cultural and built heritage is a key contributor to the quality of the built environment in Letterkenny. It is hoped that this development will encourage appropriate new investment, halt the decline and reinforce the traditional town centre as the heart of the town and will complement the work of the Planning Services in implementing the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund investments in the town centre.

The level of community participation and engagement was significant. The project built upon the community-led initiative begun by the Letterkenny Cathedral Quarter group to conserve their historic built environment. Donegal County Council Planning Services, were involved in the Heritage Streets Alive Project in 2015 undertaken by architect and community engagement animator Mary Kerrigan. This engendered the creation of a shared vision for Church Lane among residents, the local community and the local authority.

Donegal County Council planning services undertook a public participation process for the preparation of the Local Area Plan in 2018 in which approximately 700 people took part. Donegal County Council planning services worked with Queen's University Belfast in 2018 on a Collaborative Town Centre Health Check working directly with the Cathedral Quarter Group and local residents.

The Donegal County Council Culture Division has facilitated the Cathedral Quarter Group's and local residents' vision of the area becoming a cultural quarter through supporting various events such as Cultural Night and Heritage Week.

The Church Lane project is essentially a place-making and place regeneration project that owes its success to the cooperation of the local partners. The lasting impact will be through the repeated delivery of plans and projects that build on this foundation of trust and collaboration.

#### Limerick City and County Council Living Georgian City – A Strategy for Compact Growth

Limerick's Living Georgian City (LGC) programme involves making positive, innovative and transformational change to Newtown Pery, the heart of Limerick city's outstanding Georgian architectural heritage. The Georgian District is a key piece of the architectural and cultural heritage of Limerick but has suffered from high levels of vacancy, underinvestment and speculative land-banking. The Living Georgian City programme is exemplary of urban regeneration in a historic city centre development, which is environmentally and physically sustainable, socially just, economically inclusive and embraces smart city living.

The LGC programme focusses on targeted interventions and underutilised stock, to increase the level of residential use in the city, showcase the transition to a low carbon and resilient city, deliver compact growth, strengthen the economy through innovation and enhance the existing public amenity and heritage. These interventions are in accordance with national, regional, county and local policy.

The LGC programme focussed on three key pillars (Pillar 1: Investment Modal/ Governance Feasibility, Pillar 2: Demonstration and Capital Works and Pillar 3: Citizen Solutions)

Under Pillar 1, the LGC programme considers the financial, governance, procurement and regulatory mechanisms for land and building activation. Design enabling and review based on the successful UK CABE model will be investigated and implemented in Limerick with a view to inform a similar model for local authorities nationally.

Under Pillar 2, four demonstration projects are being enabled by local authority buildings and land with the intent to replicate throughout the city and indeed will form the basis of a new model of city centre regeneration through the country. At a micro level, these projects realise significant levels of subsequent benefits to local businesses, reduction in energy costs, creation of jobs and reduction in welfare payments.

By enabling Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) owned property in the first instance as demonstrators, other landowners will be attracted to consolidate and proactively land assemble to unlock the future compact growth of the city. Extending these benefits to the wider city would have significant impacts.

Pillar 3 focuses on citizen-centric solutions that leverage the value of Horizon 2020, a substantial EU-funded project of €6.5 million awarded to LCCC in July 2018 to develop Ireland's first lighthouse smart city. Key deliverables impacting directly on LGC to geographically network. The scale and impact of this element of the proposal will, therefore, have a wide-ranging impact on the development of policies in city and town centre development both locally and nationally.

- The LGC programme implementation team included LCCC Senior Architect, and two planners from the Housing Development Directorate of LCCC.
- The planners involved in the programme led on the development of a cross-professional working relationship within a multi-disciplinary team.
- The development of a distinct vision and physical, economic and social framework.
- The development of pillars and work programme. The preparation of an economic input/output model to test the viability of the LGC programme.
- The preparation and adaption at Management Team level of a planning led programme.
- The promotion of LGC through meetings, talks and publications.
- The effective liaison with key partners to use their expertise and enthusiasm and to drive forward opportunities for the LGC programme.

The LGC programme is a replicable programme for urban regeneration nationally and internationally. It demonstrates how city centre living and redevelopment is economically viable, engenders a sense of community, and delivers enjoyable places where people want to live and work. It harnesses the active commitment of local government, public bodies, and other stakeholders to support citizens to effectively engage in the LGC process to deliver place-based change.

### Ireland's Collaborative Town Centre Health Check Training Programme – Heritage Council and Project Partners

Ireland's collaborative Town Centre Health Check Programme, created by the Heritage Council and its Partners in 2016, aims to establish a collaborative and robust approach to undertaking Town Centre Health Checks in Irish Towns. This informs the design, delivery and evaluation of economic development, regeneration and investment programmes – both public and private – at various levels. The CTCHC Training Programme strongly supports the implementation of the National Planning Framework and National Development Plan 2018 – 2027 – project Ireland 2040.

CTCHC Training programme is based on the premise that changing demographics and living/travel to work patterns, along with changing consumer preferences and trends, are all impacting on the overall vitality and viability of our historic town centres. In addition, existing available information and data about traditional town centres needs to be significantly upgraded as it is currently limited in scope and is out of date – i.e. the programme seeks to close the gaps.

There are currently 13 towns involved in the CTCHC Training programme with over 70 project partners involved from the public, private and civic sectors in Ireland and further afield. In addition, there are currently 13 towns on a waiting list wishing to join the programme. It is anticipated that a further strand to cover/service the East of the country will be created if additional resources are made available.

In October 2018, the first-ever Dundalk CTCHC Project was established by the Programme Coordinator, in partnership with Dundalk Business Improvement District (BID), Dundalk IT, Louth County Council and Dundalk Credit Union. Monthly project meetings and the delivery of agreed actions commenced in November 2018 and continue as the project moves from Phase 1 (preparation of Dundalk

Town Renewal Plan. The collaborative and participative approach adopted includes the operation of a 'Rotating Chair' at all meetings. This is to ensure that the representatives involved have a collective voice and role in the project, i.e. 12 no. representatives from various partner groups, including the Heritage Council Programme Coordinator. The CTCHC Programme coordinator is project manager on a day to day basis working closely with the keep partners.

The 15 – step CTCHC process commenced in earnest with Dundalk IT undertaking key steps including, a land use survey, using a classification and GIS colour coding town centre land use, which was formulated by the CTCHC Programme Coordinator in cooperation with the MyPlan team with the Department of Housing. Dundalk IT also undertook footfall, traffic counts and car parking surveys in the town centre. In addition, following a public tender organised by the Heritage Council, Red C was appointed to undertake fieldwork (400 no. people sample size) in relation to Step 5 of the 15 step CTCHC process in November 2018, using a detailed consumer questionnaire that was supplied by the programme coordinator. In addition, Dundalk BID carried out commercial surveys with 30 no. randomly – selected business owners in the town centre – the programme Coordinator provided a questionnaire to support this key step.

The innovative and transformative Dundalk CTCHC Project, which is part of the CTCHC Training Programme, has overwhelmingly enhanced and improved evidence – based planning and economic development practice and processes in Dundalk. The project has created solid and long-lasting partnerships, relationships and networks, which did not exist before the project was established. Fundamentally, the project has created a new way for the public, private and civic sectors to engage and work together on the planning and economic development of this important Border Town.

### Galway Public Realm Strategy – Galway City Council with Allies & Morrison

Those who live and work in Galway know their city; they possess immense local knowledge of the way Galway is, both in terms of what really makes the city special, and understanding what are they key priorities for change. A commitment to consultation at the outset and a belief that people can positively shape the strategy underpins the Public Realm Strategy.

Consultation was central to Galway City Council policy approach and brief. The project began with a two-day pop up event asking people what works, what doesn't and what improvements could be made to Galway's streets and spaces. Being at the outset of the project, the feedback set priorities and focus for the Strategy going forward; making streets places for people rather than cars was a top priority, all the while protecting the traits that make Galway so special and not making it feel like anywhere else. The times and location of the event were carefully selected to be easily accessed by a diverse range of people, including groups who are typically hard-to-reach.

All the events were advertised using a range of channels and maximising the use of databases of stakeholders, including the community voluntary sector (PPN) and allowed people to engage in either Irish or English.

Following the first engagement event, the team carried out a baseline analysis and collated and analysed the comments to develop emerging principles. A stakeholder workshop and waking audit to delve further into the details around the issues and opportunities identified and to test emerging principles.

To continue the conversation, a weekday and weekend pop-up were held to share the Strategy and to ask whether it succeeded in delivering the community's ambitions for their city.

The project has brought people together to forge a shared vision of Galway City Centre. The importance of accessibility, arts and sustainability rose in significance. The result has been a public realm strategy for Galway which is rooted in local knowledge, and much stronger for it.

Planners and designers from Allies and Morrison and Galway City Council worked collaboratively to design, deliver and facilitate a consultation programme which was ambitious and rooted in best practice principles of engagement.

The public Realm Strategy sets out the following six principles:

- Celebrating Galway's uniqueness
- Making Galway inclusive
- Making space
- Getting around the city
- Greening Galway
- Delivering Quality

The Galway Public Realm Strategy explores the current condition of central Galway's townscape and network of public and green spaces, and sets out a vision and strategy for improvements to guide investment and development in the future. The strategy looks to further the previous innovative steps which have already been taken, such as creating the pedestrianised zone, investment in the Fish market and Eyre Square, and the opening of the riverside walk.

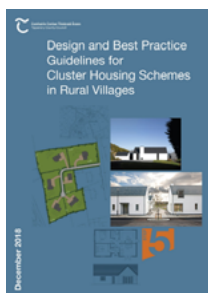


# Design Category

This category rewards the best in design from urban design or public realm plans to individual projects which respond to their context in an urban or rural setting.

1. **Design & Best Practice Guidelines for Cluster Housing Schemes in Rural Villages – Tipperary County Council**
2. **Portlaoise 2040 and beyond – A vision for Portlaoise: A Strategy a Better Town Centre**
3. **Cherrywood Town Centre Urban Form Development Framework**
4. **Carrick-on-Shannon Public Realm Improvement Scheme**
5. **Marianella, Rathgar, Dublin – Cairn Homes plc**
6. **Dublin Landings – Ballymore**
7. **Galway Public Realm Strategy**
8. **Rejuvenation of Fitzmaurice Place Portlaoise**
9. **2018 Public Realm Plan for Sligo City**

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## Design & Best Practice Guidelines for Cluster Housing Schemes in Rural Villages- Tipperary County Council

Tipperary, like many rural local authorities has faced many challenges including decline in population, loss of services and community facilities. The future viability, and in many cases the survival of villages is one of the key challenges for rural Ireland and for national and local policy makers, communities and stakeholders.

Following the establishment of Tipperary County Council in 2014, the Planning Department and the Elected Members began the preparation of the first county-wide rural settlement strategy. A number of workshops were held with the Elected Members with discussion centred around the revitalisation of our village and what the Council could do to reverse this trend. The discussions concluded that a strong policy response was needed, whereby a local need would apply in all areas in the countryside, supported by a pro-active policy response to promote low density and viable alternatives to one-of housing in all our villages.

The preparation of the Cluster Guidelines is both direct responses to delivering Project Ireland 2040 and a rural spatial planning and development priority. The ambition for the document is to make a national contribution in rural housing design and place-making and help to ensure that our villages remain at the heart of rural communities for generation to come.

In order to develop best practice in placemaking, a multi-disciplinary approach was required. The Planning Department led the direction of the document in all aspects, including research requirements stakeholder consultation, and design and guidance.

The Guidelines are structured around a '5 step approach' in designing and developing a Cluster Housing Scheme, addressing each step in the process. The Planning Department and the team also agreed at the outset that the document should be 'easy to read and easy to use'. With this in mind, the publication is a short (40 pages), avoids jargon. The document

also included a number of worked examples in village in the county, from infill, to brownfield to greenfield sites

National Guidelines on residential development has to date focused on high to medium design residential development in our urban cities and towns. This publication is the first of its kind in providing a best practice approach in developing schemes which offer viable and sustainable alternative to building homes in the open countryside. The design approach can be applied successfully in any village and therefore as a model for development across the country.

Facilitating the development of cluster schemes on a phased basis was raised at a consultation event- as demand often only exists for 1-2 houses at a time, the guidelines demonstrate how the local infrastructure can be developed on a phased basis, with road and water services infrastructure built in tandem with the individual houses. The Council also up-dated the Taking in Charge Policy providing new 10 standard and guidance to streamlines the taking in charge process for cluster housing schemes.

Many of our villages do not benefit from public waste water treatment systems or have capacity issues which are often seen as a significant barrier to development. However, following comprehensive background research, including consultation with Irish Water and the EPA, the team determined that small scale housing schemes (subject to environmental assessment and individual treatment plants) may be supported.

The Planning Department is now embarking on the design and development of a demonstrator project 'on a site in Kilsheelan Village, located 8km east of Clonmel on the banks of the River Suir. This project seeks to use public owned land to support the regeneration of our village, by offering opportunity for local people to buy a site and build the first home and live in a rural community.

Villages are the heart of our rural communities; they are part of our heritage and culture, and contribute to quality of life in our rural areas. These guidelines seek to deliver on an objective of Project Ireland 2040 and address a type and

tradition of development which is unique to rural Ireland. It is believed that the publication, supported by the demonstrator project will have significant and positive impact on both planning practice and in ensuring the viability of villages in County Tipperary and beyond.

#### **Portlaoise 2040 and Beyond – A Vision for Portlaoise: A Strategy for a Better Town Centre – Laois County Council with Avison Young**

A Vision for Portlaoise' is a plan that re-examines the Town Centre of Portlaoise to succeed in a changing social, environmental and economic context to 2040 and beyond. The primary achievement of the project to date has been formalising a shared vision that focuses on improving the public realm, underpinned by a more coherent spatial framework.

The project involved the development of a plan that focussed on the contemporary public spaces and buildings and the development of linkages and walkways between the heritage assets of the Town. The plan-making methods sought to improve legibility and usability of Portlaoise by delivering a public realm that provides well-connected and useable urban spaces for residents, businesses and visitors.

The project has brought a strategic approach that fuses public realm improvement with land use and spatial planning. A main feature of the project is its dual nature as a public realm enhancement strategy, and also as a town centre plan that deals with transportation, movement, green infrastructure and land use planning. Initially focussing on public realm enhancement, the project evolved to resolve broader and more fundamental issues of how the town functioned and which would heavily influence the form and potential of the future public realm. This demanded that the project team resolve traffic flows, car parking, public transport, green infrastructure and the utilisation of heritage assets within the Town centre.

The core aim of the plan was to make Portlaoise Ireland's first Low Carbon Town centre. The approach was to utilise the potential of the natural and built environment from the perspective of 'ecosystem services' and 'green infrastructure'.

One of the key innovations of the Project to deliver participation and engagement has been the development of a bespoke Environment Information Model (EIM) for Portlaoise Town Centre. This resource allows for local people, business and other stakeholders as well as the Local Authority to visualise, understand and influence the Town's development.

The Planners' role was to bring a strategic but delivery – focused approach with which to take stakeholders through a dynamic and adaptive plan-making process. This required the team to integrate strategic vision with local knowledge and micro-level understanding of how Portlaoise functions, with the aim of developing a suite of interventions that would transform Portlaoise Town Centre for a better future.

The core aim of the project was to put in place a platform to reinvigorate Portlaoise Town Centre as a people-focussed town; the 'People's Town'. The need to retain a town that was for local residents and businesses, and one that they could be proud of and continue to invest in over a long-term period was recognised by the project team. An adaptive and comprehensive approach alongside the cohesive and holistic output made the project original and innovative.

#### **Cherrywood Town Centre Urban Form Development Framework – Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council**

Cherrywood Town Centre Urban Form Development Framework (UFDF) for Cherrywood Town Centre forms part of the Cherrywood Planning Scheme. The Planning Scheme area extends over a 360ha site and plans for a Town Centre, 3 villages, 6 schools, 3 main parks, circa 8,500 new homes and associated infrastructure.

The preparation of the UFDF was considered necessary due to the design challenge the town centre site presented in terms of ground levels as well as the scale of the project which will form the heart of Cherrywood. The development of the four town Centre quadrants, identified as TC1, TC2, TC3 and TC4, had to relate to the ground level established by the luas line viaduct which spans the town centre site. The challenge was to ensure that a comfortable pedestrian

and cycling environment was provided within the urban and built form.

The UFDF focus is to masterplan a new Town Centre for Cherrywood and surrounding areas which would have a rich urban diversity, whilst respecting the historical and natural setting, as well as facilitating innovation and creativity. Cherrywood was planned to be a place which would develop a cohesive yet diverse community, promote economic growth and provide a safe and attractive environment for employees, residents and visitors.

The UFDF considers urban and built design quality to create active frontages and vitality, in addition to the treatment of buildings to ensure interesting and attractive facades. The Plan also focusses on the treatment of spaces between buildings, with guidance on materials and finishes to provide a high quality, legible and inclusive environment. The UFDF is an all-encompassing framework which guides planning, design and implementation, whilst maintaining a focus on the quality of the finished environment.

The UFDF is a clear example of a successful urban design and public realm project that has moved from design to implementation – including starting the construction of the single largest development application in the history of the State – in 2 years.

The influence of the planning team is also evident in the masterplan preparation process; building on the land uses set out in the Planning Scheme, the UFDF builds and layers detail in terms of urban grain, land use arrangement, building form, frontages, activation, primary and secondary civic spaces and thoroughfares, and streetscapes.

The UFDF puts in place the planning and design guidance necessary for the detailed design and development of the new Town Centre. It is essential to guide the creation of world-class streetscapes, quality public realm, and a vital and viable new town.

Via the first application (TC1, TC2 and TC4) the project will see the delivery of:

- 191,115sq.m in 15 blocks including;
- 1,269 no. residential units (115,332 sqm);

- Retail (20,284 sqm);
- High Intensity Employment (22,946 sqm);
- Non-Retail including a primary care unit (31,115 sqm);
- Community uses including a new library (1,437 sqm);
- Associated roads, public spaces and services infrastructure;
- Reconciling levels across the site.

Overall the town Centre can accommodate 362,909 sqm of development including circa 1,600 apartments.

#### **Carrick-On-Shannon Public Realm Improvement Scheme – Leitrim County Council**

Leitrim County Council is presently undertaking a transformative urban regeneration and development project in the historic core of Carrick-On-Shannon. Following the announcement of the URDF Scheme, the Chief Executive appointed the Senior Planner to lead the preparation of the application on behalf of Leitrim County Council. There was no agreed Master Plan in place in which to ground such an application for funding. The design team was procured within six weeks of the scheme being announced and work began in earnest in devising and designing the contents of the application.

The planning authority engaged with the Elected Members of the Carrick on Shannon Municipal District from the outset. The project team also engaged with the Town Team in addition, the Design Team met with the owners of both cruise hire businesses who occupy a critical interface to the water edge in the town. The agreement to include lands in private ownership was considered critical to indicating the catalyst effect which the project could develop in time. The other landowners who would be affected by the proposals to develop the proposed car park were also met with and their support was secured for the submission of the application.

Following the application being submitted, the Planning Authority continued the next stage of the design of the project that included bringing

the project through the Part 8 consultation process. When the application received the green light for funding from the URDF Scheme the next stage in the process was the application to confirm Compulsory Purchase Order of the lands to develop the car park to An Bord Pleanála. Following an Oral Hearing in June 2019, the CPO was confirmed by the Board without modifications on 11 September 2019. The project is currently in procurement stage for the appointment of contractors with construction expected to commence January 2020.

The availability of funding under the URDF Scheme allowed for individual policies to be brought together in the preparation of a comprehensive Master Plan, from which emerged the Public Realm Improvement Scheme. It has also allowed the Local Authority to begin a meaningful dialogue with the owners of the international boating hire companies along the riverside to reimagine their interface with the river, to open up private lands for the enjoyment of the general public but also enhance the connectivity of the town centre.

The project will have gone from inception to construction including the obtaining of the necessary planning consent, the need to pursue the acquisition of the site through CPO which necessitated an Oral Hearing, the procurement of consultants and contractors within the space of approximately 18 months. Leitrim County Council would therefore contend that the Carrick on Shannon Public Realm Improvement Scheme demonstrates both effective and innovative management and success in delivery in planning. The Chief Executive demonstrated his thrust in the contribution of planners in the management, and project management. Planners held a central leadership role within multi-disciplinary teams, in forging and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders, and use of work programmes for delivery.

An overall masterplan was developed which provided the basis for a series of projects that are interdependent and rooted in the fabric of the town.

They include:

- Significant enhancement of the quality and extent of the public realm of the town centre.
- Strengthening the town's physical infrastructure through the provision of off street car parking.
- Increase footfall and facilitation of visitors through the extension of existing routes and the creation of new links.
- Celebrating the town's commercial development by improving visitor facilities.
- Celebrating the town's cultural strengths through a high-quality public realm addition.
- Increasing the residential potential and quality of the town.

#### **Marianella, Rathgar, Dublin - Cairn Homes PLC**

Cairn Homes PLC acquired the former Redemptorist Congregation Monastery site at Orwell Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6, along with a planning permission for an apartment. A number of amendments were made to the planning applications to maximise the development that would enhance its surrounding area and architecture. John Spain Associates were the planning consultant on the parent application.

Marianella is an infill development on a previously underutilised central, serviced site. The consolidation of the urban area through high quality, high density infill development has been a central tenet of the planning system for the past 15 years. In the midst of a housing crisis, the provision of over 300 units in a central established residential area is a significant planning gain.

The primary objective of the overall design was to ensure it complements and enhances the existing surroundings, reinforcing a sense of place by creating distinctive and individual buildings of quality. The centrepiece of the design is a new public park that faces onto Orwell Road, which incorporates the existing landscape assets of mature trees and enhances the existing sylvan character of Rostrevor Park.

Buildings were then designed to continue the woodland character of the area.

The urban pattern is based on the principle of ease of movement and a logical sequence from the public realm to the private domain. The layout is organised with a series of public spaces, streets and small courtyards. It is designed to respect the existing content and neighbouring properties while providing for quality public, shared and private open space.

The development considers the existing character of surrounding lands and streets, while also recognising the scale and presence of the previously existing Marianella monastery buildings. Traditional houses (reflecting the villa typology of Orwell Park) are located along the southern boundary in response to the neighbouring existing character and scale. Apartment buildings in the remainder of the site, bounding and defining the new public park, while interspersed with landscape gardens eastward towards Saint Luke's land.

Each unit has access to a private outdoor space, terrace or balcony. A variety of semi-private open space is arranged in courtyards, terraces and gardens. The design maximises the number of homes with dual aspects. The location of fenestration has been arranged to provide privacy for the existing and new residents.

The units are also aimed at the downsizer market i.e. those who have raised their families and willing to sell family homes that are often dated and inefficient and costly to maintain.

The development therefore helps other people stay in their local area while releasing older family homes to new families interested in moving into the area or in some cases facilitating redevelopment and the more sustainable use of urban land. By bringing new people into the area, the development helps support local businesses and services, such as local schools. A new public park is a welcome addition to the amenities in the area. The development also includes social housing which in an area where there is a shortage of such units, contributes greatly to social integration in the area.

The ability of planners in large schemes such as this to work together with a large team of sub-consultants and specialists is vital to delivering quality homes and spaces. Marianella is a high-quality example of this successful collaboration and innovative features within the scheme such as the residential amenity space, sensitive extension to the gate lodge protected structure, high tech specification and furnishing of apartments, trees projecting through the podium from below and swales within the amenity space.

#### **Dublin Landings - Ballymore**

Dublin Landings is a new urban quarter in Dublin's Docklands, comprising 1 million sq ft of workspace and retail spaces, as well as residential accommodation over 13 buildings. On completion the site will comprise 560,000 sq. ft. of Grade A office space, around 300 one, two and three bed apartments and a number of retail units. It will be home to 5,500 people who will live and work in the area, creating a vibrant new community in a dynamic, new part of the city.

At the outset of the scheme, Ballymore held an architectural competition to explore design potential and kick start the development proposals. This exercise created a compelling urban vision which has been refined in the process of dialogues with the commercial stakeholders, planners, utility providers and contractors – without losing the focus on the benefits for the key stakeholder group.

The resulting aesthetic has largely been inspired by the heritage of this area of the city, with the new buildings influenced by the architecture, through augmented by a clean and modern aesthetic. Much of the inspiration, for the materials, comes from the immediately adjacent waterfront – with the traditions robust materials previously used in the docklands employed in the buildings' designs. Durable materials such as wood, bricks and darkly painted iron feature prominently.

The aesthetic is already evident in Buildings 1 and 2 which are now complete, with feature façade clad in precast brick panels, glazed screens with anodised aluminium and a large

entrance double height rain screen profiling anodised panel.

Externally, the public realm features a varied streetscape, which highlights special entrances, retail spaces and other communal places has been formed. These create a further distinctive scale to the development, reinforced by change of materiality and tactility; organically – shaped beds of windflowers, herbs, mosses, grasses and bushes are flanked by limestone paving and incorporate benches with direct views to the water.

Furthermore, this strategic placement of volumes with varying proportions and scale allows for views of the River Liffey to be opened up and for the sunshine to flood the residential blocks with daylight. The result is a new development that reconnects the area to the docklands' history and the River Liffey.

The sustainability of the design of Dublin Landings has also been carefully considered; two completed buildings at the development – Blocks 1 and 2 – have both achieved LEED Platinum ratings. Innovation in sustainability includes a CHP unit with natural gas as the fuel source for heating each building.

To ensure a constant engagement with the design, Ballymore consulted with a broad audience for Dublin Landings; investors, end users, commercial agents and planners, but also the local community, consulting each of them to gauge how our designs would impact on the urban environment.

The result is somewhere that has been generously conceived, a new urban environment, which delivers effective and stimulating contemporary workspaces as well as surrounding public realm for local people. Features including a central courtyard, with mature trees and places to sit and relax offering an oasis to the buzz of the neighbourhood.

Destined to be a vibrant, richly urban part of the city, Dublin Landings is well connected by transport, and located between Dublin's international airport and historic centre, it is the ideal gateway to the city but also a destination in its own right. Thoughtful, sensitive architecture will open up to the River Liffey, drawing on the docklands rich heritage,

while designs have considered external spaces, resulting in tree-limited avenues and squares which will give those who live, work and play here a great space to spend their day.

### Galway Public Realm Strategy – Galway City Council with Allies & Morrison

The Galway public realm strategy sets out a vision of place, a set of spatial interventions and design guidance tailored to the different types of spaces in the city centre.

The public Realm Strategy sets out the following six principles:

- Celebrating Galway's uniqueness
- Making Galway inclusive
- Making space
- Getting around the city
- Greening Galway
- Delivering Quality

As Galway has grown in population, visitor numbers and economically, the retail and city centre uses have expanded beyond the traditional 'high streets'. The principal streets are places which provide a city centre role and are visited by growing numbers of people. However, the streetscape does not reflect this role. Most of these streets consist of wide blacktop carriageway and overly narrow concrete pavements.

For streets within this typology, the level of ambition and investment in the urban design must be raised to align with their increasingly significant role as a destination, while continuing to support movement. This improvement will allow for a continuous experience of high-quality streets for visitors to the city centre and will enhance the natural loop to the west and back. In these streets, materials will remain high quality, though perhaps be slightly less formal in their application and expression.

The balance of space must be redressed, giving pedestrians more priority throughout. Design must consider daytime and night-time use, given the strong night-time economy. The City Centre vehicular access route designated in the Galway Transport Strategy (Dock Road, Spanish Parade, Father Griffin Road) will need

to be designed to serve primarily as a key road access route, while also providing a positive environment for people on foot. All proposals for the Principal Streets should be examined at scheme stage in consultation with stakeholders.

The strategy provides a palette for general upgrades across the city. Here the focus is on lifting the quality of streetscape and achieving a level of consistency in the design approach. The approach is pragmatic – to focus on achieving consistency on some key elements, such as kerbs and pavement widths, which can be implemented as part of maintenance, renewal or when the opportunity arises through infrastructural investments. Some sections identified as general upgrade form part of the new bus priority route through the city.

The interconnected circuit of waterways and their adjacent footpaths act as an important amenity space for Galway. The canal and river walkways provide a retreat from the urban environment, being green, quiet and characterised by the different qualities of water. They also serve ecological functions, providing habitats for wildlife and most of the city's trees and planting.

The canal and river walkways should be treated with consistent material throughout, creating a strong visual identity and allowing for people to be naturally drawn along the waterway's 'loop'. The walkways should be accessible, adding pedestrian crossings at junctions and considering width for cyclists and pedestrians. Overall, the walkways should be enhanced to allow them to better deliver on the diverse roles they play: as a central linear park for the city, as a significant walking and cycling route and as a vibrant ecosystem.

County Galway is divided into two geological zones with characteristic Galway granite to the west of the River Corrib and the limestone bedrock to the east. This simple geological difference is visible in the materiality of Galway and gives the city much of its character and cohesiveness. Pavements are upgraded from in-situ concrete or tarmac to new concrete paving with granite kerbs. In addition, granite is proposed at key moments such as micro-spaces and accessible crossings.

### Rejuvenation of Fitzmaurice Place Portlaoise – Laois County Council

The project involved redevelopment of Fitzmaurice Place as a public park, conservation of 16th Century masonry in the Fort walls at Fitzmaurice Place, removal and reduction of clutter (lighting, signage, security cameras), reconfiguration of parking, public lighting, installation of a purpose-designed performance space at the heart of the new park, landscaping and pollinator-friendly planting.

Fort Protector and the late medieval town which grew up around it are archaeological monuments and both the fort and other buildings in the area are also protected structures. It was therefore necessary to obtain consent for the project from the National Monuments Services of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The project was approved for Part VIII planning which also required consultation with the Architectural Heritage Unit of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

The aim of this project is to focus on regenerating the original town centre and Main Street areas and how they relate to the expanded town, with a view to creating more attractive, desirable places that people want to live and spend time in. The Demonstration Project was initiated on a community and locally led urban design and renewal initiative. Investment from the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, the wider community and local businesses will deliver a new vision for the centre of Portlaoise, showing how the best quality planning, urban design and implementation can create a rejuvenated town.

The steering group for the project and the Portlaoise Town Team have worked together to ensure that the regeneration of Fitzmaurice Place has enhanced the quality of life and public space of this part of historic Portlaoise, and the wider project of which this is an integral part, will lead to the improved social, economic and environmental development of Portlaoise.

The key benefit of the project in relation to design is that it enhances the historical setting of the town within a contemporary yet useable space. It also gives Fitzmaurice Place

a bespoke look, feel and design set within a comprehensive and coherent plan, which is unique but authentic to Portlaoise and its inhabitants. It provides a pallet of quality design, materials, planting and lighting from which to continue to develop within the town centre.

This amenity space at Fitzmaurice Place will act as a catalyst to connect a series of green spaces within the town centre along which walking and cycling will be encouraged. The planning of the landscaping and planting using the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan will ensure that the area is of benefit to wild bee species and other biodiversity throughout the year.

Fitzmaurice Place is located between two regeneration areas intended for future residential development and are at an advanced stage of pre-planning – the Presentation Convent to the south and the landbank of the former Christian Brothers School to the north west. This space will provide a recreational amenity within the town centre for future residents for both passive recreation and potential active classes into the future.

The close cooperation between the local authority and stakeholders has led to direct participation of stakeholders in the planning and delivery of the regeneration project. The local authority, with the support of the Heritage Council and the design team, has worked closely with the public throughout the planning and implementation of this project.

The Project Lead maintained the focus of the architectural team on the need to develop a public realm and design for the urban environment that was true to the character, meaning and identity of the Town Centre, as conveyed by stakeholders who know and understand the Town Centre, and its long history from the 16th Century Plantation to the present day. Throughout, the focus of the plan was to restore the Old Fort Wall and develop appropriate design interventions to facilitate use of the space, conservation of biodiversity and respect for the history and built fabric of the town.

### 2018 Public Realm Plan for Sligo City – Sligo County Council

Sligo County Council's vision for Sligo city is that of a 'compact liveable city for people', with a self-contained vibrant core and safe, attractive streets. Essential to the achievement of a 'vibrant core' and 'city experience' is a pleasant and engaging public realm where people want to spend time.

A public realm plan for Sligo was prepared to promote a coordinated approach to any works within the town centre. The plan also proposed improvements to Sligo's public spaces, including streets and car parks in order to enhance the town as an attractive place in which to live, work and visit, encouraging people to explore, business to flourish and creating a vibrant street scene.

The plan identified a number of key locations within the urban core where there are significant opportunities to create high quality urban spaces. While the Plan outlined the design considerations to be addressed in transforming these sites, detailed design plans need to be prepared for each area.

The plan proposes a fresh approach to thinking about the public realm in Sligo. In the past, the look of the public realm was largely influenced by the city's road department and there was no consistency or overall view of how the city should look.

A set of guiding principles were established to govern all further interventions into the public realm including principles such as 'putting people first / design spaces for pedestrians / simplify the streetscape / ensure consistency in design and use of materials/ create memorable and identifiable spaces where people want to be.'

Six sketches were prepared of well-known spaces/ streets in Sligo to show how the public realm at each location could be improved to favour pedestrians. These sketches have caught the imagination of the public and have been crucial to the general 'buy-in' for the project.

While the scope of the plan was limited, it did propose a list of recommended actions to be undertaken over the next few years in order to commence the process of transforming Sligo's public realm as well as 6 potential capital works projects to develop further. From the list, a 5 year Plan was devised by the Planning Section in order to provide some structure to, and a road map for, the overall strategy.

Sligo County Council has been successful in securing an initial funding offer for the first phase of public realm improvements in Sligo. The refurbishment of the city centre in line with the public realm plan recommendations and the 5 year Plan will revitalise the city of Sligo in a number of ways, both directly and indirectly.

# Planning and Economic Development Category

This category rewards planning projects that stimulate tourism or economic development.

- **Longford Regeneration – Longford County Council**
- **Limerick City and County Living Georgian City: A Strategy for Compact Growth**
- **Rejuvenating Ireland’s small town centres – Future Analytics**
- **Múscraí Heritage Plan – Cork County Council and Research & Dig**



1. Longford Regeneration – Longford County Council
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## Longford Regeneration – Longford County Council

Longford Regeneration is a unique project that was undertaken by Longford County Council to address the significant challenges that were facing Longford across many sectors, to identify possible solutions, source funding and implement those projects. Longford regeneration is a multi-disciplinary team, with planners playing a key role within the team. The approach of Longford Regeneration is unique nationally in relation to a dedicated, cross-sectoral, multi-project regeneration team to improve the quality of life of citizens across the county. This will be achieved by driving forward the economic development of the county, through enhanced placemaking and the development of key tourism and social infrastructure projects that ultimately make Longford a more attractive place to invest and live in.

Longford suffered significantly as a result of the last economic boom and subsequent recession due to the population being heavily dependent on the construction sector and many housing developments were constructed or commenced without significant demand for those developments. Longford County Council took a proactive approach and tackled the challenge of unfinished housing estates, working with remaining developers, banks and institutions. As the unfinished housing estates issue became resolved, it became clear that Longford faced a much larger challenge in terms of the public realm in towns and villages, attracting new investment into the county, encouraging young people to stay or return to Longford and making it a county that people wished to visit. The Council established the Regeneration Department, a standalone department within the Local Authority, under the Finance Directorate due to the large amounts of funding involved in the project.

One of the primary aims of the Team is to develop and build on the stunning natural heritage and beauty which has remained untapped with the county for many generations.

The enhancement of the tourism infrastructure in the county has also had the impact of driving forward the economic development of the county. Longford work with many different stakeholders including Failte Ireland, Waterways Ireland and the OPW. Community engagement is key to the success of the work of Longford Regeneration, supporting and empowering local communities to deliver transformational change to local towns and villages.

Work carried out in relation to tourism interventions includes work on the Granard Motte project, the Royal Canal Greenway and Centre, the Maria Edgeworth Visitor Centre. Longford regeneration prepared a masterplan for the Ballyminion area of the town, an area blighted by inappropriate development that occurred during the economic boom as a result of tax incentives. Longford regeneration have engaged directly with all landowners in the area to identify opportunities for the potential development of their lands and has encouraged the investigation of land swaps with current uses in the town centre to relocate to this area of the town. Longford Regeneration are also working to develop a number of digital hubs throughout the county, which will facilitate direct employment opportunities within the county, as well as encouraging new business development and opportunities.

Longford Regeneration works closely with stakeholders across all levels to ensure that the work carried out has the most positive impact on the social, economic and physical environment of Longford. This work has resulted in an investment in excess of 16 million in the county, developing and building on the tourism infrastructure within the county and throughout enhanced placemaking improving the quality of the environment in which the people of Longford live and work and making it more attractive place for people to visit and invest in, as well as improving the economic environment of County Longford.

### Limerick City and County Council Living Georgian City – A Strategy for Compact Growth

Limerick's Living Georgian City (LGC) programme involves making positive, innovative and transformational change to Newtown Pery, the heart of Limerick city's outstanding Georgian architectural heritage. The Georgian District is a key piece of the architectural and cultural heritage of Limerick but has suffered from high levels of vacancy, underinvestment and speculative land-banking. The Living Georgian City programme is exemplary of urban regeneration in a historic city centre development, which is environmentally and physically sustainable, socially just, economically inclusive and embraces smart city living.

The LGC programme focusses on targeted interventions and underutilised stock, to increase the level of residential use in the city, showcase the transition to a low carbon and resilient city, deliver compact growth, strengthen the economy through innovation and enhance the existing public amenity and heritage. These interventions are in accordance with national, regional, county and local policy.

The LGC programme focussed on three key pillars (Pillar 1: Investment Modal/ Governance Feasibility, Pillar 2: Demonstration and Capital Works and Pillar 3: Citizen Solutions)

Under Pillar 1, the LGC programme considers the financial, governance, procurement and regulatory mechanisms for land and building activation. Design enabling and review based on the successful UK CABE model will be investigated and implemented in Limerick with a view to inform a similar model for local authorities nationally.

Under Pillar 2, four demonstration projects are being enabled by local authority buildings and land with the intent to replicate throughout the city and indeed will form the basis of a new model of city centre regeneration through the country. At a micro level, these projects realise significant levels of subsequent benefits to local businesses, reduction in energy costs, creation of jobs and reduction in welfare payments.

By enabling Limerick City and County Council (LCCC) owned property in the first instance as demonstrators, other landowners will be attracted to consolidate and proactively land assemble to unlock the future compact growth of the city. Extending these benefits to the wider city would have significant impacts.

Pillar 3 focuses on citizen-centric solutions that leverage the value of Horizon 2020, a substantial EU-funded project of 6.5 million awarded to LCCC in July 2018 to develop Ireland's first lighthouse smart city. Key deliverables impacting directly on LGC to geographically network. The scale and impact of this element of the proposal will, therefore, have a wide-ranging impact on the development of policies in city and town centre development both locally and nationally.

- The LGC programme implementation team included LCCC Senior Architect, and two planners from the Housing Development Directorate of LCCC.
- The planners involved in the programme led on the development of a cross-professional working relationship within a multi-disciplinary team.
- The development of a distinct vision and physical, economic and social framework.
- The development of pillars and work programme. The preparation of an economic input/output model to test the viability of the LGC programme.
- The preparation and adaption at Management Team level of a planning led programme.
- The promotion of LGC through meetings, talks and publications.
- The effective liaison with key partners to use their expertise and enthusiasm and to drive forward opportunities for the LGC programme.

The LGC programme is a replicable programme for urban regeneration nationally and internationally. It demonstrates how city centre living and redevelopment is economically viable, engenders a sense of community, and delivers enjoyable places where people want to live

and work. It harnesses the active commitment of local government, public bodies, and other stakeholders to support citizens to effectively engage in the LGC process to deliver place-based change.

### Rejuvenating Ireland's small town centres – Future Analytics Consulting

Future Analytics Consulting were commissioned to prepare a policy statement for the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland (SCSI), framed as a call to action to rejuvenate Ireland's small-town centres.

Regional high streets have been significantly affected by the recent economic downturn. The impact of this decline has been felt throughout Ireland with increasing vacancy rates and a decline in the vibrancy of many rural communities. Changes in consumer behaviour, specifically a move towards 'experiential' shopping, a vacuum in local government and increased costs for businesses have helped create 'the perfect storm' for regional businesses.

The purpose of the report was to provide an overview of the trends currently influencing the regional high street and the impacts of those trends on the ground, consider a range of barriers in enabling a vibrant high streets, and provide pragmatic policy interventions – recommendations to revitalise the regional high street and being a stronger sense of place and new lease of life to rural communities.

Several key trends are identified that are driving the transformation in the retail landscape, with implications for the regional high street. A range of barriers to developing vibrant regional high streets were also identified.

The SCSI policy statement provides distinct and progressive examples of what can happen if communities are empowered and local authorities work in partnership with key local stakeholders. The statement includes many positive case studies, which can act as demonstration projects, where successful outcomes have and are being achieved. These exemplar projects, that act as a catalyst for renewal, including towns such as Westport, Naas and Clonakilty.

Thirteen recommendation themes have been identified, framed in terms of Positioning, People, Planning Product & Place and Promotion. SCSI consider these recommendations the key initiatives required to rejuvenate and revitalise the regional high street.

Seven priority recommendations that the SCSI believe are fundamentally important to ensure that regional high streets can thrive and become vibrant and successful community hubs include the following:

- Informed high streets – An Irish Towns Partnership should be established to enable the sharing of best practice, innovation and mentoring.
- Viable high streets – Further development of large-scale retail centres and convenience stores that compete with, rather than complement, small town centres should be managed to encourage consolidation and enhance economic viability and vitality.
- Collaborative high streets – Inclusive and collaborative engagement mechanisms must be created that includes the local authority, community and business.
- Attractive high streets – Public realm strategies must be commissioned for each town and included in town places.
- Living high streets- Local authorities must proactively address vacant buildings in towns to revitalise town centres.
- Working high streets – Local authorities and other stakeholders must recognise the changing commercial landscape and attract new high street business through incentives.
- Connected high streets – Delivering quality broadband connections to rural areas is fundamentally important for high streets and must be prioritised by government.

The policy statement is a call of action for those who are considering or are in the process of interventions to revive and rejuvenate their high streets. The goal of the SCSl is to start a dialogue and encourage the rejuvenation of the heart of our rural communities – the essence of Ireland.

### Múscraí Heritage Plan – Cork County Council with Research & Dig

The Múscraí Heritage Plan is the largest, most complex heritage and development plan ever attempted by the State. It took over three years to complete. The report is a strategy document directing the management of heritage in the West Cork Gaeltacht. Its role is to identify what is significant about the Gaeltacht's heritage and create a framework through which that significance is promoted and protected.

In addition to being the conservation, management and interpretation plan for the Gaeltacht's heritage, the document contains sufficient information to be used as a rural development plan and tourism strategy. The early objective of the document was to create a strategy that would assist the local community and Cork County Council in the protection of the Gaeltacht's heritage. However, after an appraisal of the significance of built, natural and intangible heritage, it soon became apparent that a more ambitious approach was needed.

The previously unknown international importance and its dependence upon residents, required a radically different approach to heritage management than had been attempted in Ireland before. Essentially, rather than merely preserving stone buildings, it became imperative to keep a largely Irish speaking population living in the landscape. As a result, the plan evolved into becoming a rural development plan.

The project team devised a series of actions that would not only negate these threats but position the Gaeltacht from a defensive to assertive posture as regards the preservations of its culture, dialect and economic vitality.

This was the first time that an approach was taken whereby rural development and heritage were brought together in a truly symbiotic strategy. Already, the plan is impacting on how sustainable tourism is carried out in the Gaeltacht and is heavily influencing how Cork County Council manage the Gaeltacht.

Combining the conservation of a place along with its interpretation in an area of c.255km<sup>2</sup> brings challenges. However, it also presents the unique opportunity to have one coherent document guiding the care and presentations of all the area's heritage. The role of professionals was to inform and facilitate discussions amongst those living in the Gaeltacht. In addition to the steering group meetings with Acadamh Fodhla and the County Heritage Officer, an extensive series of public consultation meetings took place.

The ongoing process of regular consultation ensured that the project team kept within the expectations, capabilities and requirements of both the client and the population of Múscraí. This minimised conflict and maximised effectiveness.

Outside of Múscraí, several other Gaeltachts have been observing the creation of the plan and are interested in developing their own documents. The Heritage Council was one of the plan's funders. The innovations in the document's methodology and the combination of economy with heritage is seen as best practice in Ireland.

Internationally, the approaches taken in the plan have begun to have an influence. In Wales and Australia, heritage professionals are already learning from the Múscraí plan when managing heritage in regions with a threatened language.



# Management and Delivery Category

This category recognises both effective and innovative management and success in delivery in planning. We want to recognise the contribution of planners and organisations in exemplary and innovative practice in management and delivery in any of the key areas of planning, be that plan-making, development management, and programme and project management. This category has also considered the central and leadership role of the planner within multi-disciplinary teams, relationships with stakeholders, and the use of work processes, programmes and technologies for delivery.

- **Coillte – Dublin Mountains Conversion**
- **Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Cherrywood Development Agency Project Team (DAPT)**
- **Leitrim County Council – Carrick-on-Shannon Public Realm Improvement Scheme**
- **Limerick City and County Council Living Georgian City – A Strategy for Compact Growth**
- **Monaghan County Council – Clones Renewal Scheme**



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## Coillte – Dublin Mountains Conversion

Coillte Nature was established in June 2019, with the primary focus of delivering new native woodlands and nature restoration schemes on a not-for-profit basis. Coillte Nature's flagship endeavour, the Dublin Mountains Conversion, comprises the conversion of over 900 hectares land in the Dublin uplands from commercial plantations to forests managed primarily for recreation and biodiversity.

The planning-led initiative has emerged as a direct result of a 10-year collaboration effort with key stakeholders in the Dublin region and in particular a partnership between Coillte's in house forest management and planning staff, the Dublin Mountain Initiative and Local Authority planning teams in South Dublin County Council, Dublin City Council and Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council.

There are several unique features of this endeavour, including its scale; the long-term collaborative effort that brought it about; the direct benefits to Dublin and surrounding regions in terms of refining this natural resource for recreation and biodiversity; and the influence of planners in delivering fundamental change within agriculture/forestry land use management.

This endeavour is an example of Coillte staff/planner and Local Authority planners using planning skills over an extended 10-year period to direct and influence sustainable agricultural land management to create a new and improved recreational resource for the City and wider region.

Furthermore, while focused upon sustainable land use management and delivery of an enhanced rural-based amenity resource for the region it will also stimulate the local, regional and national tourism products with resulting regional economic benefits.

In 2017, Dublin Mountain Initiative proposed a vision document that was embraced by Coillte and the group and set the scene for the 2019 Conversion. Coillte engaged in a public consultation on the conversion concept in the summer of 2019. Coillte is in the process

of reviewing all 350 submissions received. Potential ideas include treetop walkways, sensory trails for visually impaired, archaeology trails and improves accessibility for all forms of transport. Further public consultation will continue over the coming months and years.

The management of this resource will continue to deliver important decarbonisation benefits as these carbon sinks continue to thrive. It will also deliver associated benefits of wellness and mental and physical health; issues that are of paramount importance to the surrounding urban and built environment. This endeavour supports the management and delivery of short, medium- and long-term objectives in surrounding City and County development plans that seek to provide active and passive amenity, sustainable tourism products and to green their administration areas.

## Cherrywood Development Agency Project Team (DAPT) – Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council

Cherrywood was designated as a Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) by Government in 2010 to facilitate a development of national economic and social importance. Cherrywood SDZ was placed under its own dedicated Directorship within Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council. The Development Agency Project Team (DAPT) responsible for the SDZ has been retained for both the planning and implementation/ construction phases. This represents a highly focused approach from planning to delivery, and serves to retain experience and knowledge, and successfully follow through on quality placemaking.

The DAPT is a departure from the traditional Local Authority teams in that it comprises 5 professional planners working alongside 4 engineers (drainage, transport and civil), with a Landscape Architect & Project Manager for Green Infrastructure, and 3 administrative support staff.

Cherrywood is exemplary in that it has delivered on the need to have supporting infrastructure – road, parks, drainage, utilities – in place prior to the construction or occupation of the development. This enables delivery

of development that is economically sound, environmentally friendly, and supports healthy communities – sustainable development that enhances the quality of life.

Construction has started on sustainable residential and commercial development. Cherrywood stands out in two key aspects in relation to the management and delivery of sustainable development including; water management, drainage and flooding are priorities due to the topography, flood risk zones, and 2 no rivers within the SDZ. All development is restricted to specific reduced run-off rates whilst incorporating SUDS features, such as green roofs. Also, sustainable transport from inception to detailed design Cherrywood has been planned to deliver a dramatic modal shift to sustainable modes.

The DAPT is responsible for the assessment of development proposals within the Cherrywood Development Agency. The DAPT works alongside the established Development Management service within the DLR Planning Authority. The DAPT has supported the granting of planning permission for all development within the SDZ. The value added by planners is ensuring that permitted development is consistent with the Planning Scheme and aligned to national, regional and local policy.

The Cherrywood Development Agency Project Team manages and is delivering on a very diverse workload including; economic development, transport and traffic management, development and regeneration, social cohesion and enhancing cultural identity.

The level of on-the-ground delivery, plus the extent of planning applications for new development secured in more recent times is evidence that the approach of a multi-disciplinary and dedicated multi-disciplinary, planner-led team under a single directorate is highly effective.

The Cherrywood approach is fundamentally a multi-party collaboration that is focussed on delivering a compact, higher intensity and higher intensity and higher quality urban environment. The DAPT builds close working relationships with State agencies and other stakeholders to maximise the quality of planning and development within the SDZ.

#### **Carrick-on-Shannon Public Realm Improvement Scheme – Leitrim County Council**

Leitrim County Council is presently undertaking a transformative urban regeneration and development project in the historic core of Carrick-on-Shannon. Following the announcement of the URDF Scheme, the Chief Executive appointed the Senior Planner to lead the preparation of the application on behalf of Leitrim County Council. There was no agreed Master Plan in place in which to ground such an application for funding. The design team was procured within six weeks of the scheme being announced and work began in earnest in devising and designing the contents of the application.

The planning authority engaged with the Elected Members of the Carrick-on-Shannon Municipal District from the outset. The project team also engaged with the Town Team in addition, the Design Team met with the owners of both cruise hire businesses who occupy a critical interface to the water edge in the town. The agreement to include lands in private ownership was considered critical to indicating the catalyst effect which the project could develop in time. The other landowners who would be affected by the proposals to develop the proposed car park were also met with and their support was secured for the submission of the application.

Following the application being submitted, the Planning Authority continued the next stage of the design of the project that included bringing the project through the Part 8 consultation process. When the application received the green light for funding from the URDF Scheme the next stage in the process was the application to confirm the Compulsory Purchase Order of the lands to develop the car park to An Bord Pleanála. Following an Oral Hearing in June 2019, the CPO was confirmed by the Board without modifications on 11 September 2019. The project is currently in the procurement stage for the appointment of contractors with construction expected to commence January 2020.

The availability of funding under the URDF Scheme allowed for individual policies to be brought together in the preparation of a comprehensive Master Plan, from which emerged the Public Realm Improvement Scheme. It has also allowed the Local Authority to begin a meaningful dialogue with the owners of the international boating hire companies along the riverside to reimagine their interface with the river, to open up private lands for the enjoyment of the general public but also enhance the connectivity of the town centre.

The project will have gone from inception to construction including the obtaining of the necessary planning consent, the need to pursue the acquisition of the site through CPO which necessitated an Oral Hearing, the procurement of consultants and contractors within the space of approximately 18 months. Carrick on Shannon Public Realm Improvement Scheme demonstrates both effective and innovative management and success in delivery in planning. The Chief Executive demonstrated his trust in the contribution of planners in the management and project management. Planners held a central leadership role within multi-disciplinary teams, in forging and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders, and the use of work programmes for delivery.

#### **Limerick City and County Council Living Georgian City – A Strategy for Compact Growth**

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### Monaghan County Council Clones Renewal Scheme

Clones serves the economic needs of a large rural hinterland, which extends into County Fermanagh. The closure of border roads and direct links with its traditional hinterlands, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, severely impacted the local economy with a loss of industry and the currency fluctuations have contributed to the economic and social decline of the town.

In 2015, it was acknowledged the high levels of vacancy and dereliction in County Monaghan towns, a decision was made to establish an Urban Regeneration Unit these issues and also the wider need for regeneration of town centres. The Urban Regeneration Unit has been led by an Executive Planner since 2015 and leads collaborations with other Council sections and external agencies, to achieve a multi-disciplinary team approach to regeneration. It is critical to develop the town as a vibrant, residential centre along with social and economic facilities that encourage residential development around the town.

Following a town centre survey of vacancy/dereliction, two streets were highlighted with a prevalence of dereliction, Fermanagh Street and Analore Street, both of which radiate from the Diamond. Using the legislative powers available, the Derelict Sites Act, 1990, was deemed an appropriate tool, to reverse the trend of dereliction and the demise of this culturally rich historic town centre. It was agreed at Municipal District level to fund the acquisition costs.

Prior to the compulsory acquisition, the locals considered the loss of retail/commercial function within the town centre, along with population loss, the emphasis on the residential occupation of the town centre was considered a viable solution. The Urban Regeneration Unit liaised with the Housing section to provide social housing within these town centre sites. Following discussions with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, under the aegis of Rebuilding Ireland, Pillar 5 Utilise existing housing, agreement in principle was given to a scheme to build new infill residential units at derelict sites at Fermanagh Street and Analore Street.

The process resulted in the compulsory acquisition of eight individual property parcels. The Housing/Planning/Regeneration sections worked collaboratively to prepare designs for social housing needs assessments. Consultant architects were procured to advance the scheme design, prepare the Part 8 consent application, while the Housing team engineers are supervising the construction element of the project.

Consultation and engagement were vital in the process involving a range of sectors. The Clones Renewal Scheme represents local authority good practice in managing and delivering Compact Growth, a top priority National Strategic Outcome in the National Planning Framework. The scheme activates areas that are suitable and capable of re-use to provide housing, amenities and services, with a coordinated approach to their development, investment in enabling infrastructure, and achieving effective density and consolidation, rather than the sprawl of urban development.

## Planning Workplace of the Year Category

Recognising the vital role Employers play in supporting planning professionals in their professional development. This category recognises Employers of Planners that have created a stimulating and supportive work environment and a real commitment to the welfare of their Planning Teams, resulting in high staff satisfaction levels and a well-motivated, ambitious and integrated planning workforce.

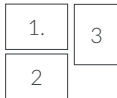
- **An Bord Pleanála**
- **John Spain Associates**
- **Dublin City Council**



# Climate Change Category

Climate Change is the greatest challenge facing the current generation and there is greater awareness now of the necessity to link planning and climate change if it is to be effectively addressed. The potential type of projects/plans for this category can include education, energy, transport, green infrastructure, flood resilience.

- **Dublin Local Authorities – Climate Change Action Plan 2019 – 2024**
- **McCutcheon Halley – Lidl Ireland GmbH – Solar Photovoltaic Installation**
- **Eirgrid - Tomorrow's Energy Scenario**



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## Dublin Local Authorities – Climate Change Action Plan 2019 – 2024

For the first time, Dublin's four Local Authorities - Dublin City Council, South Dublin County Council, Fingal County Council and Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council have joined together to prepare Climate Change Action Plans (CCAP) as a collaborative response to the impact that climate change is having and will continue to have, on the Dublin Region and its citizens. The CCAPs both sit within and respond to, an evolving hierarchy of climate action and spatial planning policy, in particular at national and regional level. The CCAPs are directly aligned to and complement the implementation of the local authority actions outlined in the Climate Action 2019 to tackle Climate breakdown.

The evidence base and actions contained in the CCAPs will inform emerging spatial planning policy at local level. This includes the adherence to the EMRA Regional Spatial Economic Strategy. The CCAPs involved a unique partnership of the four Dublin Council's, Codema and the Dublin CARO. Through the partnership a variety of skills have been brought to bear on activating enhanced Local Authority-led climate action, cutting across all business units within the Local Authorities.

The climate change action plans address four targets of:

- A 33% improvement in the Council's energy efficiency by 2020;
- A 40% reduction in the Council's greenhouse gas emissions by 2030;
- To make Dublin a climate resilient region, by reducing the impacts of future climate change – related events; and
- To actively engage and inform citizens on climate change.

The CCAPs provide a shared Local Authority climate action vision, a cross boundary and spatially defined approach to develop climate actions, which progress both climate adaption and mitigation, and explore co-benefits between both. The CCAPs comprise

a comprehensive adaption and mitigation baseline informed by data and information from internal and external sources. The evidence base and related climate actions, have been developed to enable ongoing monitoring and review of the Plans, in line with National and European climate legislation and policy. The planning process will be a key enabler of climate action projects. The CCAPs evidence base will be used to inform both climate mitigation and adaption policy in the preparation of new City/ County Development Plans and other plans and strategies.

The preparation of the CCAPs arose from a series of inter departmental workshops across the Dublin Local Authorities, coordinated by Codema. This approach has progressed to the CCAP implementation stage, whereby the four Local Authority climate teams are facilitated by Codema and the development of a Spatial Planning Working Group for Climate Action. The CCAPs have allowed for shared up skilling of Local Authority staff in the areas of developing evidence-based policy, climate key indicators, stakeholder engagement, identifying funding supports and is aligned to the EU Covenant of Mayors initiative.

The public consultation campaign included a wide range of components including; a public consultation video was prepared publicising climate action and the public consultation process, the video gathered 6,000 views in total. The plan was accessed by 4,000 users during the public consultation period. An effective social media campaign #Councils4ClimateAction was ran during the public consultation. There was widespread national and local media coverage. The public consultation process resulted in over 960 attendees to the Public Information Session across the four Councils. There were over 560 public submissions made to the draft CCAPs which were then analysed for a Chief Executive's Report on submissions received.

Planners were involved throughout the CCAPs they were involved in the working group that developed each individual plan. Planners from each Local Authority were involved in the

compilation of CCAP actions, with particular regard to Energy & Buildings, Transport, Flood Resilience and Nature Based Solutions. Policies and objectives were aligned to the City/County Development Plans and a specific CCAP action is included to develop evidence-based climate policy in new City / County Development Plans. Planning expertise within the CARO team oversaw the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment of the CCAPs. Planning staff were available to engage with members of the public on a variety of planning related climate actions at Public Information Sessions.

#### **Lidl Ireland GmbH – Solar Photovoltaic Installation – McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultants**

McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultants secured planning permission from Kildare County Council for the installation of a rooftop solar PV array at Lidl's Regional Distribution Centre in Newbridge, Co. Kildare in June 2019. The consent allowed for the installation of 4,364 solar panels over an area of 8,860 sq.m, making this Ireland's largest ever installation of solar PV panels. The installation is equivalent to the size of almost 6 rugby pitches.

As part of Lidl's carbon reduction strategy, an analysis of the future energy consumption of the Regional Distribution Centre was undertaken. The operational phase of the Regional Distribution Centre will require high levels of energy consumption, the estimated total annual energy is 5,000 MWh. Lidl commissioned an Option Study to understand how they might meet the facilities energy demands through renewable energy technologies. Given the scale of the roof area available on Lidl's Distribution Centre, the installation of solar PV was considered as a viable option for Lidl to realise its ambitions to switch to clean energy.

The landscape and visual effect of the proposed solar array and determined that the landscape character of the subject site

was of low sensitivity with the capacity to accommodate the proposed solar PV installation without significant effects. A key issue highlighted by McCutcheon Halley was the potential for solar reflection to occur. Glint and glare are phenomenon caused by many reflective materials, whereby light from the sun is reflected off materials, in this case the solar panels, with a potential to cause hazard, nuisance or unwanted visual impact.

The robust approach to the preparation of the planning application as advised by McCutcheon Halley demonstrates the value of engaging a planning consultant in receiving a timely consent. Securing this modification permission during the construction of the Regional Distribution Centre allowed the Client to install the solar PV array in parallel with the ongoing build and ensures that a renewable energy source will power the facility from the outset.

The solar panels will produce 1,011,929 kilowatt hours of energy from a sustainable resource annually which is equivalent to meeting the electricity requirements of 240 homes and reduces the centre's carbon output by some 473 tonnes annually. As a result of this investment over one quarter of Lidl's energy requirements will now be generated by solar power.

The project responds to the issue of climate change and will assist the State in meeting its legally binding energy commitments. By using a renewable source to power the Regional Distribution Centre, Lidl will reduce their consumption of fossil fuels and in turn emissions of greenhouse gases.

The Lidl Regional Distribution Centre solar installation can act as an exemplar, a demonstration of how commercial operator can move to more sustainable forms of energy. The role of a planner ensured that in achieving sustainability goals that other matters pertaining to proper planning and sustainable development were not comprised.

#### **Eirgrid – Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios**

The electricity industry is in a period of rapid change Outstanding energy policy action is needed to bridge between today's policies and those required to ensure climate neutrality. Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios enhances the best of Eirgrid's previous technical engineering approach to network planning, and sets it into an innovative balanced and holistic proactive and planning-led collaboration with stakeholders. This collaboration culminates in a transparent and robust decision-making process that is informed by external consultation and engagement and delivers positive and outstanding energy policy action.

Eirgrid Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios (TES) aims to manage the risk of uncertainty associated with Ireland's energy transition by charting credible scenarios for the electricity grid out to 2040. Eirgrid's planners expertly use these scenarios to identify long term needs of the grid and to make timely and strategic decisions regarding development of the grid. Although Eirgrid cannot predict the exact composition of the future electricity grid they can use the scenarios to develop plans for a range of credible outcomes.

Fundamentally, this includes an iterative assessment of the scenarios and ensures opportunities for public participation in the lifecycle when important decisions are being made. The new planning led scenarios have transformed the way EirGrid undertakes the delivery of critical grid infrastructure in Ireland. It represents a transformational, innovative and cultural change for EirGrid, from an engineering-led, to a planning-led, sustainable approach to delivery of critical grid infrastructure and its safe and secure operations as we progress to meet immediate and long-term challenges of climate action and climate change management.

Eirgrid identifies and develops scenarios using their planning experience as well as input from government departments and agencies, energy research groups, industry representatives and bodies, and the public. Each scenario depicts a different possible future for the generation and consumption of electricity out to 2040. The process will be taken every 2 years, always with a 20-25 planning horizon.

Eirgrid first published draft scenarios in February 2017 as part of an extensive consultation on the future of our energy future. There was a significant response to the consultation, including, submissions from those in the industry and public stakeholders. This information was used to improve the scenarios developed. In July 2017, Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios 2017 Report was published. In 2019 a review took place the consultation closed in August 2019. The final TES 2019 scenarios detailed in the 2019 report will be used to test the performance of the electricity transmission grid and publish the results in the TES 2019 System Needs Assessment.

The introduction of Scenario Planning into the grid development process, Eirgrid believe this will encourage a plan led, flexible and robust approach to grid development which will enhance the decision-making process. It provides the opportunity to plan, develop and build strategic electricity transmission infrastructures at scales and locations which manage uncertainties and ensures that Ireland is prepared for changes so that the electricity grid continues to support long term economic growth and expanding population in the face of an uncertain future, particularly in regard to climate change and decarbonisation. An investigation of key influences on the future usage of the grid in order to develop our scenarios included an assessment of energy and climate change policies, economic developments, technology evolution and adaption and other national and international policies.



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