

# Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan 2023-2029

[Incorporating the 'Planning and Development  
(Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan  
2023-2029) Direction 2024']



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**Comhairle Contae  
Dhún na nGall**  
Donegal County Council



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# **PART A – Land Use Planning Policies**

## **Chapter 1 – Introduction and Context**

### **1.1 Statutory Context**

The Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan 2023 – 2029 (hereinafter referred to as 'the Plan') has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Sections 18-20 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) (the Act). The Plan sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Letterkenny in the context of the National Planning Framework (NPF), the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Regional Assembly area (the RSES) and the Donegal County Development Plan 2018-2024 (As Varied) (the CDP). The Plan has been drafted having regard to Ministerial Guidelines issued pursuant to Section 28 of the Act, and in accordance with EU requirements regarding Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA). Arising from these obligations, the Plan is accompanied by supporting documents including a Natura Impact Report (in respect of Appropriate Assessment); an Environmental Report (in respect of Strategic Environmental Assessment); a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment; and an Infrastructural Assessment.

The Letterkenny Plan 2023-2029 replaces Chapter 12, Part C of the CDP, which heretofore contained the detailed planning policy framework for the town of Letterkenny. It is intended that the said section of the CDP will be deleted by way of a Variation to the CDP, which Variation shall be made by Donegal County Council at the same time as the adoption of the new Letterkenny Plan.

Section 19(1)(c) of the Act provides that a Local Area Plan must be reviewed no later than six years after its adoption. The required review will be carried out in compliance with this provision but it should be noted that this Plan has been prepared with a ten-year horizon in mind in order to align with the period covered by the 'Transitional Regional and County Population Projections to 2031' contained in the 'Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework' (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, July, 2018).

The Plan is comprised of two parts. Part A contains the plans and policies of a 'conventional' land use plan, whilst a Local Transport Plan is contained in Part B. Together, these two parts constitute the Written Statement of the Plan. The Plan also contains a Zoning Map and other maps. The Written Statement shall take precedence over the Zoning Map and other maps should any discrepancy arise between them.

The Letterkenny Plan must be read in tandem with the CDP, as general policies and standards contained with the CDP are also applicable within the Letterkenny Plan area. All proposals for development that are put forward in accordance with the provisions of this LAP must also comply with relevant objectives and policies of the CDP.

### **1.2 Public Consultation**

The strategic vision for the future development of Letterkenny has been informed by an extensive public consultation exercise, which was undertaken throughout May and June of 2018 and which augmented Donegal County Council's research and analysis as to the main issues affecting the

residents and stakeholders in Letterkenny. The consultation process included a wide range of events in order to enable engagement with the public and with stakeholders and interest groups across varying sectors. The consultation events undertaken by the Planning Authority included:

- 2 workshops with the business community.
- A workshop with the community, social and cultural sector.
- A business gathering facilitated through the Local Enterprise Office (LEO).
- Local consultation meeting with a group of Main Street businesses.
- Local consultation meeting with ATU Executive Board.
- Local consultation meeting with a grouping of larger employers.
- Local consultation meeting with the Cathedral Quarter Initiative.
- Urban Design project in respect of Letterkenny town centre; prepared by students from Queens University of Belfast, MSc Planning.
- Inviting individual submissions by email or post.
- Promotion of an online questionnaire about the town centre, which in itself resulted in over 500 responses.
- Promotion of an online survey in relation to the Local Transport Plan, again attracting in excess of 500 responses.

The findings from the overall consultation exercise were compiled into a final report and it was noted that there were nine distinct strategic themes that should be used to inform the drafting of the Letterkenny Plan; these themes are set out in Figure 1.1 below.



**Fig 1.1 Themes that Emerged from Consultation**

The Letterkenny Plan seeks to build on the nine themes identified above and sets out a strategic vision for the town over the period to 2029 and beyond. The policies, objectives and strategies presented herein, like the themes above, are interdependent and will be applied synergistically to guide the development of the town in a cohesive manner.

### **1.3 Environmental Mitigation and Management**

The Plan has incorporated significant environmental mitigation measures in the form of zoning considerations and proactive objectives and policies. These reflect the consideration given to potential environmental impacts throughout the iterative process of plan development, which has guided the formulation and environmental assessment of all policies and objectives. It should also be noted that objectives and policies set out in the CDP, and further contextualised in the Environmental Report and the Natura Impact Report of the CDP, also apply to this Plan. Some 27 of the objectives and policies set out in the CDP specifically include compliance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive as a condition of implementation. A further 10 objectives or policies impose a constraint of no impact on Natura 2000 sites. In addition to this, wider environmental constraints are referenced throughout many of the objectives and policies of the CDP.

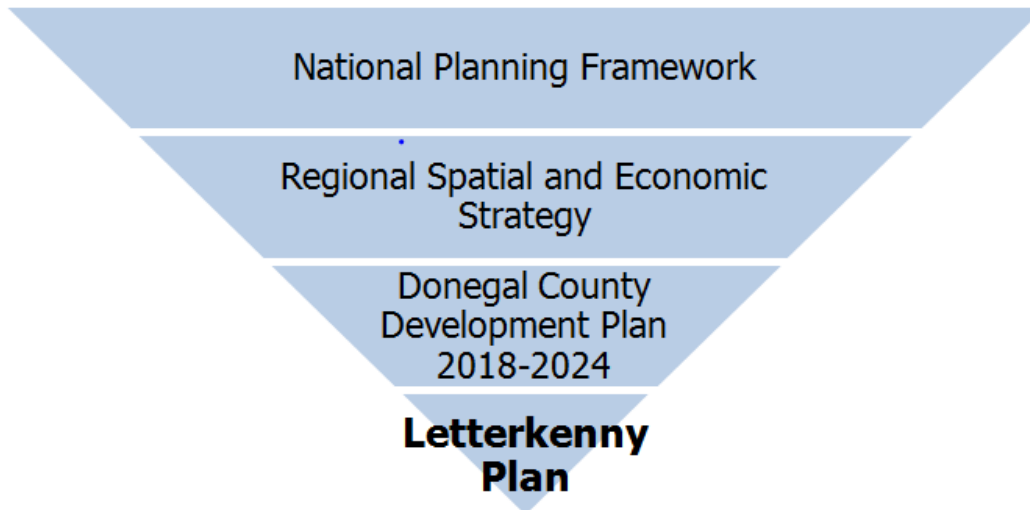
In addition to the specific objectives and policies listed in the Local Area Plan (LAP) and CDP, many others promote environmentally beneficial measures such as retention of natural vegetation, hedgerows and woodland and best practice in flood risk abatement, or consideration of statutory environmental management plans (e.g. River Basin Management Plans and Programmes of Measures, Freshwater Pearl Mussel Sub-Basin Plans, Shellfish Pollution Reduction Programmes, EU Biodiversity Strategy). Together they create an ethos of environmental awareness and appreciation that pervades the CDP and LAP and will contribute significantly to maintaining the conservation status and integrity of the Natura network.

### **1.4 Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation**

Urgent action is needed to address climate change and to move Ireland towards a low carbon, climate resilient economy and society. The effects of climate change are already discernible in Ireland and projected impacts include higher intensity rainfall events, more intense storms and storm surges, sea level rise, warmer temperatures and longer periods of low rainfall. In recognition of the need to plan for the effects of climate change, a specific chapter is included herein, detailing how climate change mitigation and adaptation measures will be considered in implementing the Letterkenny Plan.

### **1.5 Letterkenny Within the Hierarchy of Spatial Planning Policy and the Settlement Structure of the County Development Plan 2018-2024**

The Letterkenny Plan sits within a distinct hierarchy of planning policy documents, covering the entire scope of planning policy from a national to a local level. Figure 1.2 below details the policy hierarchy and the position of the Plan in this hierarchy.



**Fig 1.2 The Letterkenny Plan within the Planning Policy Hierarchy**

The above-noted planning policy hierarchy earmarks significant growth for Letterkenny and this theme is developed in the Chapters that follow.

## **1.6 Letterkenny as a Regional Growth Centre**

The NWRA’s Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy recognises the key role of Letterkenny as part of a ‘North-West City Region’; a cross-border network of urban centres focussed on Letterkenny, Derry and Strabane but also encompassing a wider metropolitan area containing many significant settlements. The RSES defines a boundary for the Letterkenny Regional Growth Centre, which is informed by geographical features, environmental considerations and by identifying the main population and employment locations of the settlement that define the Principle Urban Area, together with those areas on the periphery that display high commuting patterns towards Letterkenny. The boundary for the Letterkenny Regional Growth Centre Strategic Plan (RGCSPP) is detailed in Figure 1.3 below. It should be noted that the area covered by the RGCSPP boundary (as set out in the RSES) is more extensive than the area covered by the Letterkenny Plan boundary and that from a planning policy perspective, areas outside of the Letterkenny Plan boundary will be covered by the policy framework contained in the operative County Development Plan.

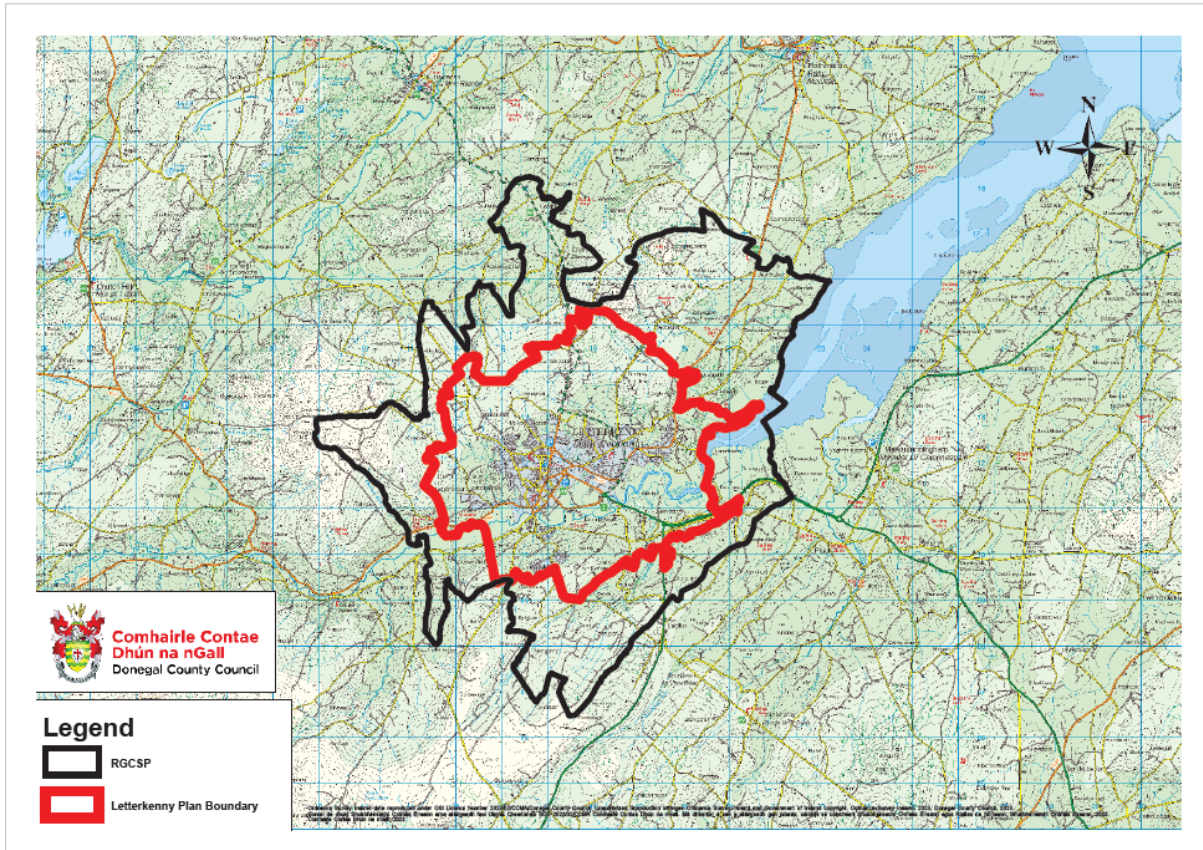


Fig 1.3 Letterkenny Regional Growth Centre Strategic Plan boundary (source: NWRA RSES)



## Chapter 2 - Strategic Context and Growth Ambitions



# STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND GROWTH AMBITIONS

### INTRODUCTION

Letterkenny is the key economic engine of the Donegal economy, and a strategic regional centre for the North-West. Inclusive of its broader function as a key component of the cross-border North-West City Region (the fourth largest urban agglomeration on the island of Ireland) along with Derry City, Strabane and their intervening hinterlands. Whilst Letterkenny had a recorded population of 19,274 persons in Census 2016, this figure is a significant under-representation of the real vibrancy and already-established critical mass of the town as it excludes a major cohort of business and recreational daytime 'visitors' to the town including those visiting out of necessity for employment, education (both full-time and part-time students) and healthcare reasons, as well as numerous other visits to the town for reasons of personal choice including for shopping and leisure purposes. It has been conservatively estimated that the day-time population of the town is closer to double the officially identified resident population levels.

The economic and strategic regional importance of Letterkenny is fully recognised and supported in the prevailing statutory planning policy framework comprised of the National Planning Framework (NPF), the Northern and Western Regional Assembly's Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), and the County Donegal Development Plan, 2018-2024 (CDP 2018-2024). Collectively, this policy framework provides strong support for the pursuit of an ambitious growth agenda for the town. In order to properly plan for the town, it is important firstly to understand why, and how, these strategic growth ambitions for Letterkenny have been identified at the national and regional level.

#### NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK



#### REGIONAL PARITY

National policy seeks to manage national growth so that it is more evenly distributed across the three administrative regions identified in the NPF. The twin objectives of this approach are to reduce unsustainable pressures on the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly area (particularly the Greater Dublin area), whilst at the same time creating a more favourable environment for the two other regional assembly areas (Northern and Western, and Southern) to prosper. Thus 'regional parity' is a specified objective in the NPF whereby the targeted growth of the Northern and Western and Southern Regional Assembly areas combined would at least equate to that projected for the Eastern and Midland Region (NPF para. 2.4 and National Policy Objective 1a refer).

#### REGIONAL SPATIAL AND ECONOMIC STRATEGY



#### STRONGER URBAN PLACES / LETTERKENNY REGIONAL CENTRE

Both the NPF and the RSES assert that a key policy instrument for delivering the regional parity objective must be the development of strong urban centres (eg. refer Chapter 4 of the NPF - 'Making Stronger Urban Places' and Section 3.4 of the RSES - 'Urban Places of Regional Scale'). Both documents identify weaknesses in the urban structure of the NWRA area relative to the other two regional areas. Notwithstanding, Letterkenny is designated as one of only five 'Regional Centres' throughout the country (the others being Sligo, Athlone, Dundalk and Drogheda).

#### LETTERKENNY STRATEGIC GROWTH AMBITIONS

In simplistic, two-dimensional terms, the strategic growth ambitions addressed in this Letterkenny Plan include:

- Increasing the population to a small city-scale of at least 35,000 people towards 2040;
- Providing an additional 5,000-6,000 jobs over the same period;
- Support for the expansion and development of the Atlantic Technological University (Letterkenny Campus).

These growth ambitions must be complemented by a parallel drive to make Letterkenny a quality place in which to live, work, visit and do business by building on the existing assets of the town and addressing deficiencies where they exist.

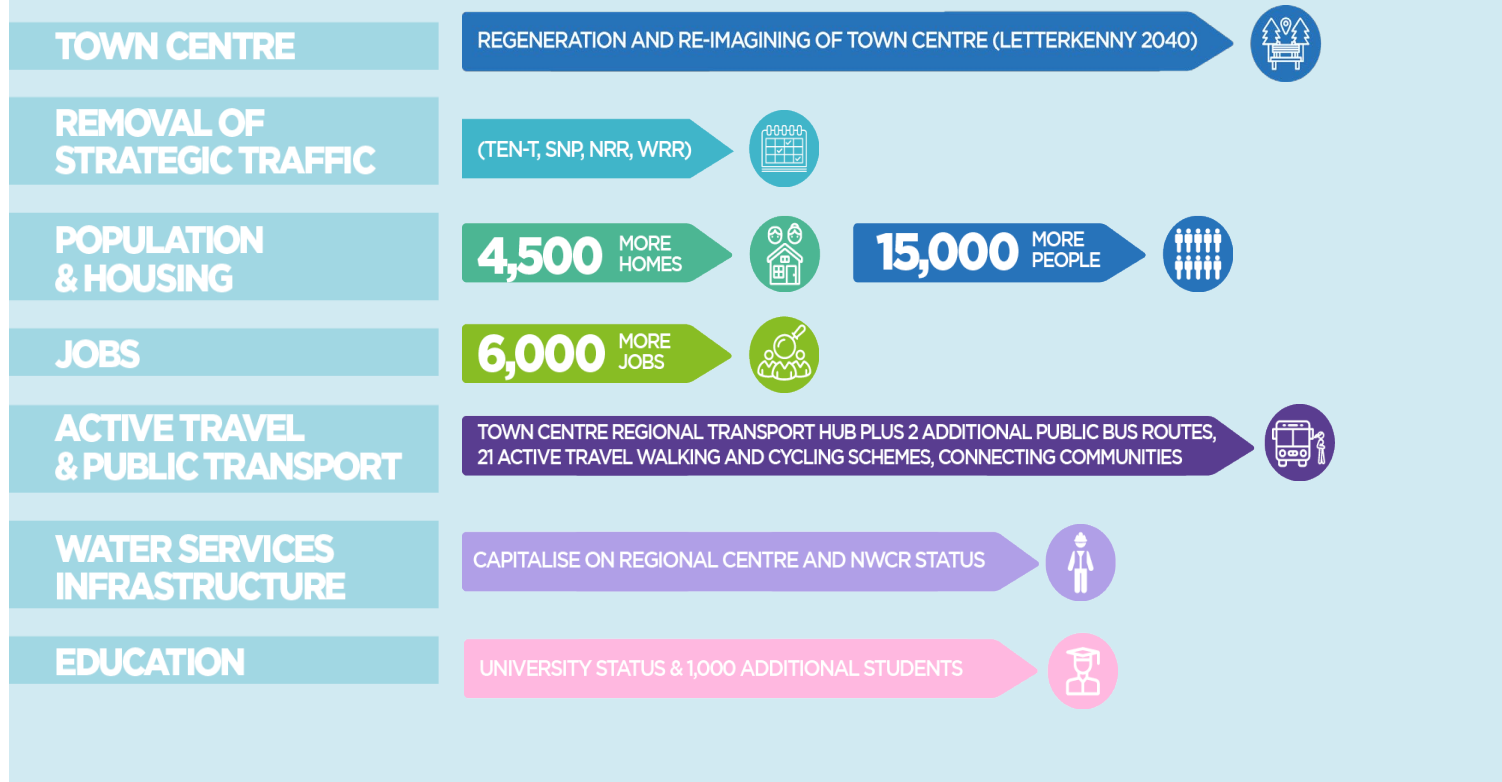
#### NORTHWEST CITY REGION



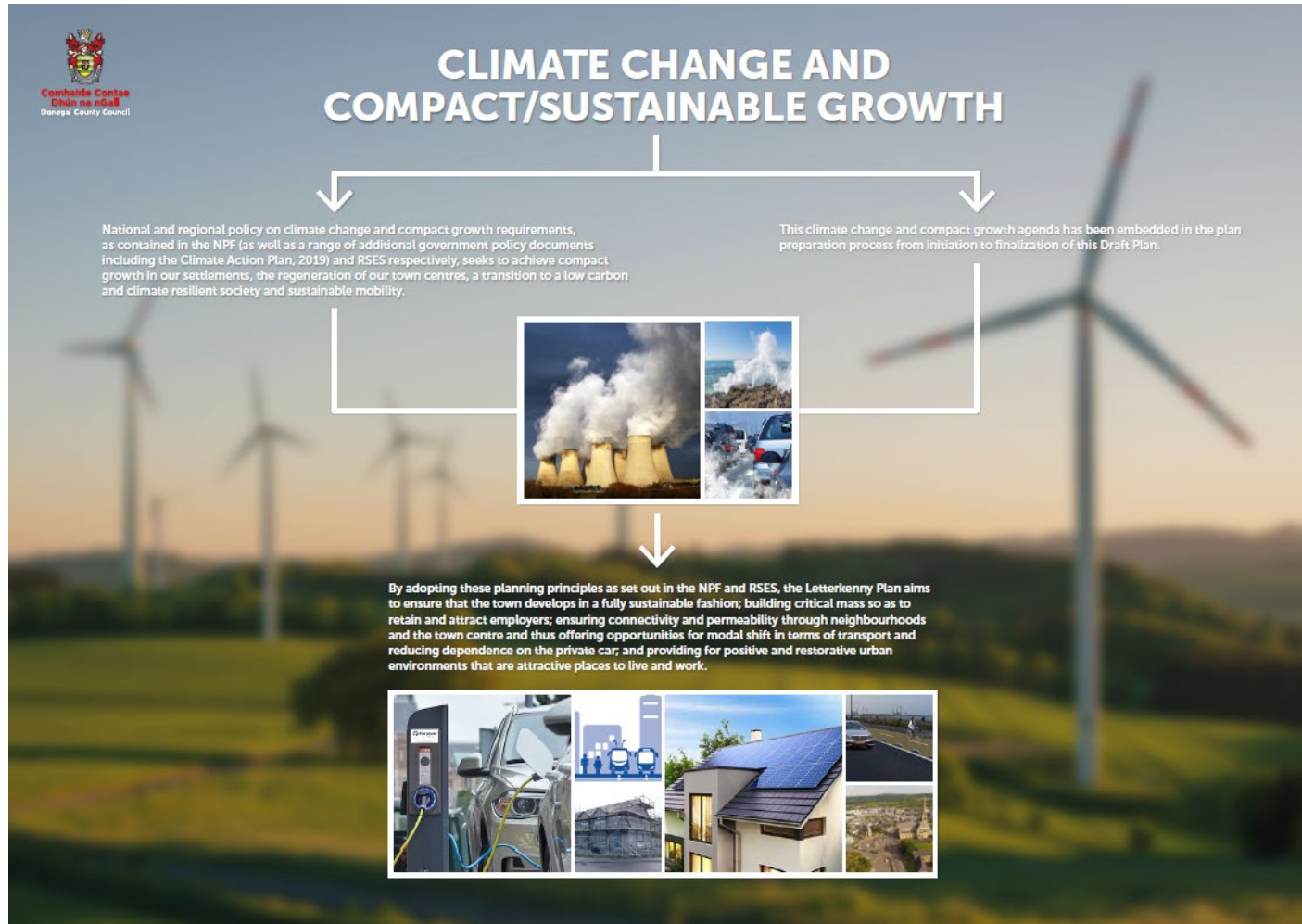
Letterkenny is also identified as part of the linked metropolitan heartbeat of the broader North-West City Region (along with Derry City and Strabane in N. Ireland). Section 8.3 of the NPF states that: 'The development of the North-West City Region, focused on Derry city, Letterkenny and Strabane ... is essential to achieving the potential of the North-West and to maximizing its contribution to regional and all Island economic growth'. This is supported, inter alia, in NPF NPO Objective 45 and RSES RPO 9.1. The population of the City Region and its functional territory is estimated as being of the order of 350,000 people.



# LETTERKENNY PLAN AND LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2022-2031 AMBITIONS



## Chapter 3 - Climate Change and Compact/Sustainable Growth



## Chapter 4 – Key Structural Issues

The following inter-linked issues have been identified as the key issues that must be recognised and placed at the centre of the new strategy for the growth of the town.

### 4.1 Strategic Transportation Issues & Sustainable Transportation Ambitions

The urban fabric and functioning of Letterkenny is heavily influenced by the dominance of the motorised vehicle and the infrastructure that perpetuates this dominance, at the expense of other more sustainable modes of transport. This prevailing situation has evolved over time due to, inter alia: a longstanding cultural preference for the car; the priority given to roads-based infrastructure and associated investment; a development pattern that encourages use of the car; and the lack of investment in sustainable modes of transport to provide genuine alternatives. Collectively, the transportation approach is having an ongoing major detrimental impact on the social and economic functioning, and environmental condition, of the town.

This dominance of the motorised vehicle is arguably the most important issue to be addressed in the Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan. There is a critical need to set out a coherent and balanced roadmap that will, over time, transform the town to one that offers meaningful sustainable alternatives to the car, whilst at the same time ensuring that the legacy road network deficiencies are addressed as a key element of the overall approach.

### 4.2 Development Patterns: Experiences to Date and the Need for Consolidation

Broadly speaking, Letterkenny has to a large extent developed in a non-sequential manner over the past 25 years. In many cases, the developed residential areas are significantly removed from the town centre and other attractors such as large employers and public parks and amenities. The impacts of the intervening respective distances, particularly between residential areas and the town centre, are often made worse by the topography of the town, which is not immediately conducive to walking/cycling, particularly when the obvious routes are served by inadequate facilities.

Life in Letterkenny was once primarily focussed around the Main Street and immediately adjoining areas. However, rising economic fortunes, particularly during the economic boom period of the mid-1990s to the late 2000s, precipitated a significant increase in the demand for housing land in the town and hence residential developments were provided for at numerous locations throughout the considerable 2,671 hectare Development Plan area. During the economic downturn that followed, there was a recognition that not all of the land zoned for residential purposes would in fact be required to facilitate the growth of Letterkenny in the medium term, and thus the Letterkenny and Environs Development Plan 2009-2015 was varied in 2013, resulting in the rezoning of considerable areas of somewhat peripheral land from 'Primarily Residential' to 'Strategic Residential Reserve'.<sup>1</sup> There was also recognition of the discordant development patterns that had emerged in Letterkenny, namely:

- An extensive area of 'new' town centre along the Paddy Harte Loop Road, providing for large floor space requirements - this area continues to be disconnected from the traditional Main Street shopping area;

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to Variation of the Letterkenny & Environs Development Plan 2009-2015 which, inter alia, introduced an evidence-based Core Strategy into the Plan, as required by the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010.



- Residential development occurring in a dispersed manner along the radial routes servicing the town; and
- Blocks of undeveloped land between the radial routes into the town.

This pattern of development is still evident today and gives rise to numerous issues including poor connectivity between neighbourhoods and the town centre, a reliance on the private car to move through the town, difficulties in terms of facilitating an effective public transport system and encouraging a transition to more sustainable forms of transport generally.

The above-referenced issues are not limited to Letterkenny as a settlement, but rather are typical of many towns throughout Ireland. In order to address the oftentimes fragmented nature of settlements therefore, the National Planning Framework (NPF) places a new emphasis on 'Compact Growth' (as referenced earlier in this Plan) and indeed cites this ambition as the first 'National Strategic Outcome' that the NPF seeks to deliver. Regional planning policy, as expressed through the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), rehearses this theme and advocates the delivery of a mix of residential accommodation in the town centre as well as the sequential, phased delivery of residential lands in suburban areas. A key opportunity in this regard is the significant area of undeveloped land located immediately to the south of the town centre and River Swilly, at Leck and Scribly. These lands are unserviced at present and the unlocking of these lands presents a key challenge for the Plan and all relevant stakeholders.

## 4.3 Infrastructural Deficits, Consequences and Challenges

### 4.3.1 Transportation

Section 4.1 above, entitled 'Strategic Transportation Issues & Sustainable Transportation Ambitions', has already outlined the issue of the dominance of the motorised vehicle, and the already-existing and ongoing impact this has on the functioning and urban fabric of Letterkenny. Section 4.1 also states that there is a critical need to set out a coherent and balanced roadmap that will, over time, transform the town to one that offers meaningful sustainable alternatives to the car, whilst at the same time ensuring that the legacy road network deficiencies are addressed as a key element of the overall approach. The longer-term, ambitious compact growth agenda and resolution of the strategic issues facing the town as identified in the preceding sections will only be achieved if supported by the delivery of a balanced suite of transportation interventions. The statutory processes for these projects are at different stages, and security of funding also varies from secured to unknown. Notwithstanding these uncertainties, this Plan sets out a rational policy framework to drive the desired transportation interventions.

### 4.3.2 Wastewater Infrastructure

#### Wastewater Treatment Capacity

There is sufficient wastewater treatment capacity in the short-to-medium term following significant recent investments made by Irish Water in the wastewater treatment plant at Magherenan. Additional capacity will be required in the medium-to-longer term however, to serve the growth ambitions for the town.

#### Wastewater Network

[North of the river]: recent improvements have provided adequate capacity in the short-to medium term for those areas already served by the network, subject to further extensions required to service specific developments. However, in the medium-to-longer term, a review of the existing network capacity is required.

[South of River/Port Road/Bonagee Area]: These large and strategically important parts of Letterkenny generally are not served by sewerage infrastructure, thereby placing obvious limitations on the potential at these locations. Significant investment is required to address these constraints.

Irish Water has prepared a 'Network Development Plan' (NDP) for Letterkenny. The NDP provides high level, indicative suggestions as to how the town in its entirety might be served from a wastewater network perspective; however, the details contained in the NDP do not constitute a commitment to funding the necessary works and at present Irish Water has no funding capacity to progress wastewater network solutions for the unserved areas of Letterkenny.

### ***4.3.3 Water infrastructure***

#### **Drinking Water Capacity**

Several significant water supply projects have been undertaken in recent years to increase and secure the water supply to Letterkenny. These include trunk watermain upgrades, a new Water Treatment Plant (WTP) at Goldrum and a new interconnector from Illies WTP to Letterkenny. Donegal County Council estimates that these works provide for capacity in the short-term and that further improvements will be needed to increase the provision of the required volumes of drinking water in the short-to-medium term.

In addition, further significant interventions will be required in the medium-to long term. These required interventions are to be identified through the full 'options assessment stage' of Irish Water's National Water Resources Plan, currently being progressed.

#### **Drinking Water Distribution Network**

[North of the river]: Recent improvements provide sufficient distribution and security of supply in the short-to-medium term.

[South of River/Port Road/Bonagee Area]: The area is currently served by a weak network unable to cater for significant development.

Thus, similar to the wastewater network situation, targeted interventions are required in relation to the water distribution network if the growth ambitions for the town are to be fulfilled. These required interventions to the drinking water distribution network will need to be determined as part of a drinking water distribution network development plan.

The ongoing work of Irish Water in relation to the National Water Resources Plan and the (Letterkenny) wastewater Network Development Plan is welcomed. However, it is evident that efforts need to be maintained to ensure that the Regional Centre of Letterkenny is not constrained in its future growth as a result of servicing issues. This Plan therefore clearly articulates the growth ambitions for Letterkenny and highlights those areas where investment in water services infrastructure will be crucial going forward.

### ***4.3.4 Flood Defence Infrastructure***

The town of Letterkenny, and particularly the town centre, has developed historically in a low-lying area adjoining the channel and estuary of the River Swilly. Consequently, parts of the town are at risk from fluvial (river) and coastal flooding, and indeed from a combination of both. The extent of the potential flood risk is highlighted in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) that accompanies the Letterkenny Plan.

The function of the Letterkenny Plan as regards flood risk is to manage development to ensure that Letterkenny can continue to thrive without placing development and residents at undue risk from flooding. The regeneration and ongoing sustainable development of the town centre in particular, is critical to the future success of Letterkenny and indeed the wider region, given the town's role as a designated Regional Centre and its function as the economic engine of County Donegal. The existing situation therefore, whereby a significant portion of the central area remains prone to flood risk, is far from ideal and has significant implications in terms of the consolidation of the central area of Letterkenny and the compact growth of the settlement.

The OPW's CFRAM study has identified that existing development in the town centre could be defended from flood risk using hard defences and a pilot delivery model for the delivery of flood defences in Letterkenny was announced in May 2023, which will transfer the management of data gathering, as a first step in designing a scheme, from consultant engineers to the Council.. Whilst this announcement is certainly welcomed, the design and construction of flood defence infrastructure will take several years and the Council will therefore continue to engage fully with the OPW and other relevant statutory agencies to progress the delivery of all required flood defence infrastructure for Letterkenny.

Detailed policies in relation to flood risk management in the town centre area are set out in Section 9.4.1 For all areas outside of the defined town centre, the planning authority will utilise the policy framework set out under Section 12.3 in addition to the flood risk management policies set out in the operative County Development Plan, which will ensure compliance with the provisions of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities.

#### ***4.3.5 Town Centre***

Notwithstanding that Letterkenny town centre functions as a regionally-important centre offering a wide range of services and facilities, the centre presents many interdependent urban and place-based challenges that are long-standing, and arise as a result of a combination of factors, including:

- a. an urban design and transport planning legacy approach that favours the car over other modes of transport;
- b. inadequate active travel and public transport connections between the various sub-areas of the centre;
- c. under-utilisation of central real estate due to low-density, poor quality developments thereon;
- d. under-provision of public realm and parks; and
- e. unsatisfactory levels of vacancy and dereliction.

In addition, even in advance of the COVID pandemic, other external challenges were also evident including currency fluctuations, uncertainty over Brexit and a changing environment towards online retail and service trade. Chapter 9 of this Plan, 'Town Centre Strategy', sets out the Councils approach for town centre development going forward, with a focus on addressing the aforementioned challenges through the provision of quality development and application of placemaking principles.

#### ***4.3.6 Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy***

Donegal County Council has already recognized the problems set out above. Since 2018, the Council has been progressing an urban regeneration programme comprising a number of measures designed to progress the strong interventions required to transform the town centre under the umbrella of the Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Project. Chapter 9: 'Town Centre Strategy' addresses the town centre in detail.



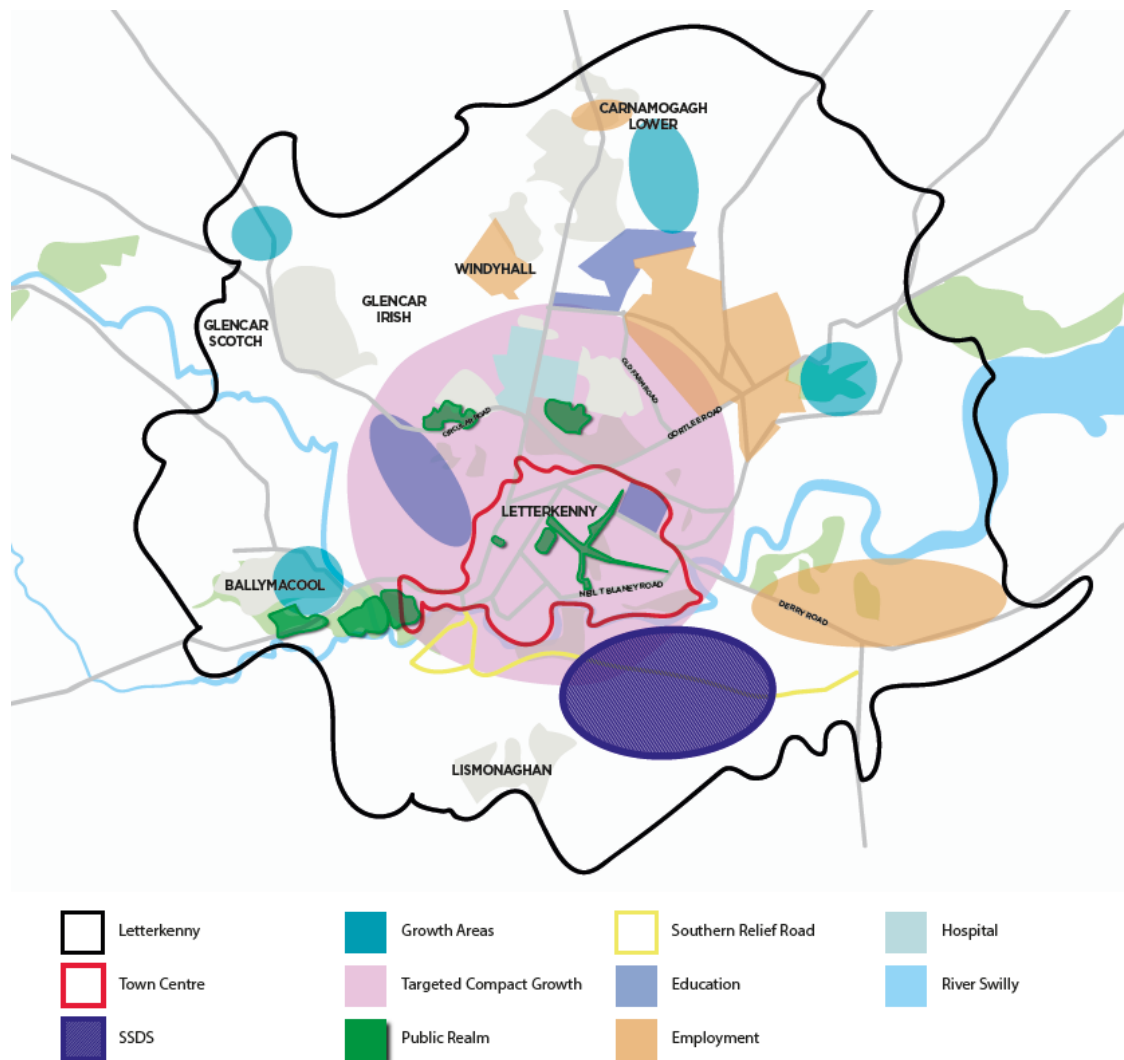
## Chapter 5 – Development Strategy and Consolidation

The preceding sections set out the broad policy context in terms of the growth ambitions, compact and sequential growth agenda, and key structural issues within which the Plan must be formulated. This Section sets out how these key national policy messages and underlying local considerations have been applied to the existing built form in Letterkenny in order to arrive at a strategic-level plan that, it is hoped, will facilitate and drive the appropriate growth of the Regional Centre in the short-to-medium term. It is intended that the Plan will also serve as a keynote reference document and roadmap, in accordance with the Plan-Led approach stipulated in national policy, for the various significant strategic infrastructure interventions that will be needed to enable the town to grow in accordance with its Regional Centre status and associated ambitions.

### 5.1 Compact Letterkenny

Figure 5.1 below identifies the location of the key spatial components of the central business district of Letterkenny. Principal amongst these are: the town centre, inclusive of the Atlantic Technological University (Letterkenny campus); the IDA Business Park and employment areas; the Letterkenny University Hospital (LUH) campus and adjacent Bernard McGlinchey Town Park; and the concentration of schools on the Convent Road and the adjacent Cathedral area. The fringes of this core area are loosely defined by the existing road network comprised of: the Business Park Road/N56 to the north; Ramelton Road/N56 to the east; Neil T. Blaney Road to the south; and Convent Road/Glencar Road to the west.

Figure 5.1 – Key Spatial Components of Development Strategy



It is evident that there is significant remaining development capacity within and on the fringes of the core area as defined above, and that there is a significant opportunity to re-balance the footprint of the town by facilitating development immediately to the south of the river in the Leck/Scribly area. The greatest majority of the housing and economic development requirements for the town can be accommodated within the broad core area thus maximising the use of existing and proposed infrastructure, enabling connectivity and permeability between neighbourhoods and simplifying the delivery of much needed improved public transport. Chapter 10: 'Housing' and Chapter 8: 'Economic Development and Employment' provide more details on relevant targets and how this broad Development Strategy has informed the identification of development opportunities.

Section 4.3.6: 'Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy' and Chapter 9: 'Town Centre Strategy', address the comprehensive regeneration strategy being progressed by Donegal County Council and stakeholders for the town centre. Implementation of the strategy will be transformative for the town centre and should also act as a catalyst for further compact growth in the wider core area as identified above.

A limited number of other development opportunities are identified outside of the core area. Chapter 10: 'Housing', also sets out the rationale behind these particular zonings, including proximity to neighbourhood services and a strategic opportunity presented by adjacent existing and future IDA and ATU campuses.

Regional Policy Objectives RPO 3.2(b) and 3.7.22 as contained in the Northern and Western Regional Assembly Regional and Spatial Economic Strategy, 2020-2032 set out targets of relevance to the Development Strategy:

**RPO 3.2(b):** Deliver at least 40% of all new housing targeted in the Regional Growth Centres within the existing built-up footprints.

**RPO 3.7.22:** To ensure that at least 40% of all newly developed lands (residential, enterprises and employment) are within the existing built-up urban areas of Letterkenny.

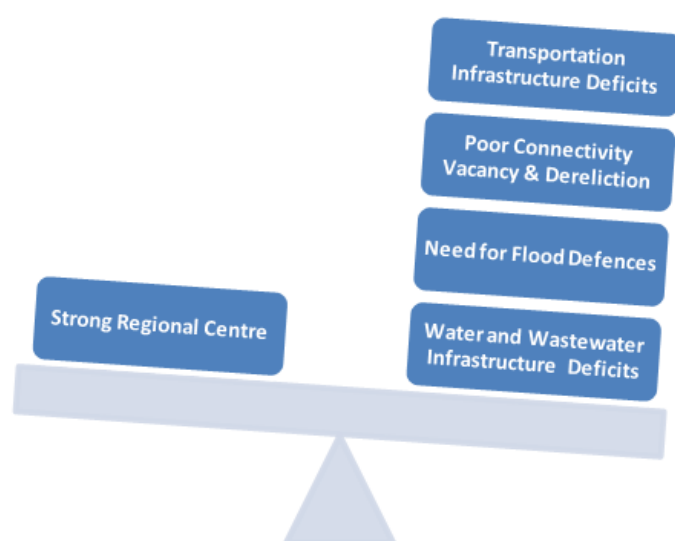
Implementation of this Development Strategy would see both targets being significantly exceeded.



## Chapter 6 – Strategic Infrastructural Deficits

Section 4.3 'Infrastructural Deficits, Consequences and Challenges', has already identified the key infrastructural deficits facing the town. Although development can be accommodated in the short-to-medium term, subject to further upgrades in terms of treated water capacity, it is clear that the nationally and regionally-supported ambition of growing Letterkenny to a Regional Centre of scale will not be realised if the infrastructural deficits and challenges remain unresolved.

Fig 6.1 below captures the key elements of these deficits in graphic form. A detailed schedule of the elements is contained in Table 6.1 below, together with a comment in relation to how these matters should be progressed.



**Fig 6.1 Infrastructural Deficits Constraining the Development of Letterkenny as a Regional Centre**

**Table 6.1 Strategic Infrastructural Deficits**

DEFICIT	PROPOSED MEANS OF PROGRESSING SOLUTIONS	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS
<b>Strategic Transportation</b>		
Rail Service – Lack of rail service to Letterkenny presents a huge impediment to growth in the town and indeed the region particularly from the perspective of attracting inward investment and visitor numbers to Letterkenny and to the county.	Participation in the All-Ireland Strategic Rail Review.	Department of Transport
Strategic east/north traffic impact on town/town centre on	TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal (Section 2)	Transport Infrastructure

DEFICIT	PROPOSED MEANS OF PROGRESSING SOLUTIONS	LEAD AGENCY & PARTNERS
national road approaches (N14/N56).		Ireland (TII) and DCC
Strategic east-west traffic impact on town/town centre	Southern Network Project	Department of Transport and DCC
<b>Town Centre</b>		
<p>An urban design and transport planning approach that favours the car over other modes of transport;</p> <p>Inadequate active travel and public transport connections between the various sub-areas of the centre;</p> <p>Under-utilisation of central real estate due to low-density, poor quality developments thereon;</p> <p>Under-provision of public realm and parks; and</p> <p>Unsatisfactory levels of vacancy and dereliction.</p>	<p>Comprehensive urban regeneration programme, being progressed by Donegal County Council and stakeholders for the town centre comprising of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Preparation of the Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy (a non-statutory and visionary framework for the regeneration of the town centre) and;</li> <li>(ii) Advancement of a number of key regeneration projects for which funding under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund has been secured.</li> <li>(iii) Adherence to town centre development policies and strategy.</li> </ul>	DCC, Dept and other stakeholders as appropriate.
Water Services Infrastructure	DCC and Irish Water to prepare a 'business case' for the funding of major investment. The individual items listed below, and further below in the sub-section on the 'Southern Strategic and Sustainable Development Site' to be considered in this context.	Irish Water and DCC.
Projected Wastewater treatment capacity deficiency in medium-to-long term.	Additional Wastewater treatment capacity inclusion in Irish Water's Capital Investment Plan.	Irish Water and DCC
Anticipated deficiencies in wastewater network.	Bespoke engagements with Irish Water for review of existing network in short-term with a view to identified works inclusion in Irish Water's Capital Investment Plan.	Irish Water and DCC.
Port Road/Bonagee Area provision of wastewater network in short-term.	Inclusion in Irish Water's Capital Investment Plan on foot of identification in Network Development Plan.	Irish Water and DCC
Marginal short-term capacity only in drinking water, major challenges in medium-to-long term.	Additional drinking water capacity to be delivered in short-to-medium term, and further significant interventions in medium-to long term to be identified through the full 'options assessment stage' of Irish Water's National Water Resources Plan, currently being progressed in consultation with the Water Services	Irish Water and DCC

<b>DEFICIT</b>	<b>PROPOSED MEANS OF PROGRESSING SOLUTIONS</b>	<b>LEAD AGENCY &amp; PARTNERS</b>
	department of Donegal County Council insofar as it deals with Donegal.	
<b>Flooding</b>		
Parts of town, most notably parts of designated town centre, at risk of flooding.	Escalation of case to a priority investment category in consultation with the Office of Public Works (OPW), and pursue funding thereafter.	OPW and DCC
<b>Sustainable Transport</b>		
Inadequate public transport services and facilities.	Identification and acquisition of preferred site in respect of a Regional Transport Hub.	DCC and DHLGH
	Expansion of town bus services in accordance with NTA-led assessment and plans.	NTA and DCC
Inadequate walking and cycling networks	Establishment of policy basis for improved facilities through the Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan, and implementation thereafter utilising Active Travel funds and similar as they become available and Letterkenny 2040 funding for the town centre.	DCC, NTA and DHLGH
Lack of strategically-located pedestrian river crossings.	Locations of potential new bridges already identified. Funding to be pursued.	DCC and DHLGH
<b>Southern Strategic and Sustainable Development Site</b>		
Undeveloped area located immediately adjacent to town centre due, at least in part, to absence of public services (water and sewer), bridge crossings over River Swilly and deficiencies in local road network.	Advance provision of drinking water and wastewater infrastructure to be pursued with Irish Water.	IW, DCC and DHLGH
	Pursue funding to deliver Southern Network Project road scheme.	DCC and DoT
	Advance provision of bridge crossing to be pursued with DHLGH.	DCC and DHLGH
<b>Glencar</b>		
Glencar and Environs - Provision of community facilities.	Explore funding options and delivery mechanisms.	DCC

The imperative of addressing these shortfalls is addressed in Objective DSC1 below

**OBJECTIVE DSC1: To work strategically with other key stakeholders to deliver resolutions to the key infrastructural deficits constraining the growth ambitions for Letterkenny.**





## Chapter 7: General Development Management Approach and Detailed Policies

Development proposals will be considered in the context of their compliance with zoning objectives as set out in Table 7.1 below, the corresponding zones identified on Map 7.1 entitled 'Land Use Zoning Map', and the zoning matrix contained in Table 7.2 below. The wider policy framework contained in both this Plan and the CDP will also be applied where relevant.

**Policy LK-DM-P-1: It is a policy of the Council to support the principle of development proposals that are:**

- (a.) Generally consistent with the zoning objectives as set out in Table 7.1 below and the corresponding zones identified on Map 7.1 entitled 'Land Use Zoning Map'; and**
- (b.) Supported in the zoning matrix contained in Table 7.2 below.**

**Such proposals will also be considered against the wider policy framework contained in both this Plan and the CDP where relevant, and relevant guidelines.**

Proposals for land-uses that are *not* specifically identified on the zoning matrix may also be considered where the proposed use does not materially contravene the relevant zoning objective, and again subject to compliance with the wider policy framework contained in both this Plan and the CDP where relevant, and relevant guidelines.

**Policy LK-DM-P-2: In assessing development proposals within Letterkenny, the Council will implement all relevant policy provisions of the operative County Development Plan in addition to the policy framework of the Letterkenny Plan.**

**Table 7.1 Land Use Zoning Objectives**

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Objective</b>
<b>Established Development</b>	To conserve and enhance the quality and character of the area, to protect residential amenity and allow for development appropriate to the sustainable growth of the settlement, including new residential development, subject to all relevant material planning considerations, all the policies of this Plan, relevant national/regional policy/guidance including environmental designations and subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
<b>Strategic Community Opportunity</b>	To achieve an appropriate mix of health and/or educational and/or social and/or community development which may include hospital expansion, educational, research and development, recreational uses, community health, childcare facilities or student accommodation.
<b>Town Centre</b>	To sustain and strengthen the core of Letterkenny as a regional centre of residential, commercial, retail, cultural and community life and to support active travel and public transport provision.
<b>Primarily Residential</b>	To reserve land primarily for residential development <sup>2</sup> .

<sup>2</sup> Alternative uses may be considered in accordance with the land-use zoning matrix set out in Table 7.2

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Objective</b>
<b>Strategic Residential Reserve</b>	To reserve a quantum of land primarily for residential development as a long term strategic landbank. <sup>3</sup>
<b>General Employment and Commercial</b>	To reserve land for commercial, industrial and non-retail purposes <sup>4</sup> and car sales
<b>Opportunity Sites</b>	To reserve lands for specific development opportunities that are appropriate in terms of mix of use and compatibility with the wider area.
<b>Community and Education</b>	To reserve land for community, educational, institutional, cultural, recreational, healthcare and amenity purposes, including ancillary recreational and childcare facilities.
<b>Open Space</b>	To conserve and enhance land for formal and informal open space and amenity purposes, and to make provision for new recreation, leisure and community facilities.
<b>Local Environment</b>	To provide for limited development only ensuring no significant negative impact on the landscape setting or the biodiversity quality of the area.
<b>TEN-T PRIPD/Established Development</b>	To conserve and enhance the quality and character of the area, to protect residential amenity and allow for development appropriate to the sustainable growth of the settlement, including new residential development, and to provide for the development of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal subject to all relevant material planning considerations, all the policies of this Plan, relevant national/ regional policy/guidance including environmental designations and subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
<b>TEN-T PRIPD/General Employment and Commercial</b>	To reserve land for commercial, industrial and non-retail purposes <sup>4</sup> and car sales and to provide for the development of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal.
<b>TEN-T PRIPD/Open Space</b>	To conserve and enhance lands for formal and informal open space and amenity purposes, to make provision for new recreation, leisure and community facilities and to provide for the development of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal.
<b>TEN-T PRIPD/Local Environment</b>	To provide for limited development only ensuring no significant negative impact on the landscape setting or biodiversity quality of the area and to provide for the development of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal.
<b>TEN-T PRIPD/OPP Site 4</b>	To provide for a mix of employment and commercial use, residential use, local neighbourhood-level retail activity and to provide for the development of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal.

<sup>3</sup> Certain uses other than residential may be considered on Strategic Residential Reserve land during this lifetime of this Plan; refer to land-use zoning matrix set out in Table 7.2

<sup>4</sup> The provision of services ancillary to industry and business including day to day facilities such as childcare facilities and cafes will be acceptable in principle. Proposals for retail uses that are ancillary to a permitted zoned use may be acceptable in principle, subject to the details set out in the land-use zoning matrix and associated footnotes.

Zone	Objective
<b>Southern Strategic and Sustainable Development Site (SSDS)</b>	To provide for a new neighbourhood inclusive of a mix of residential development, neighbourhood level services, schools, community facilities and amenities in a plan-led fashion where infrastructure is provided in a coherent, strategic manner.

## Table 7.2 Land Use Zoning Matrix

The Zoning Matrix illustrates a range of land uses together with an indication of their broad acceptability in each of the land use zones.

Notwithstanding an indication of broad acceptability for a particular land-use type within a given zoning, prospective applicants are advised to note that potential vulnerability to flooding will be a material consideration when assessing development proposals and in all cases the Planning Authority will apply the principles and guidance as set out in the 'Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities'. Further information in relation to flood risk management is set out in Sections 9.4.1 and 12.3 of this Plan.

**Please note that the broad acceptability of uses on designated Opportunity Sites is set out in specific policies contained in Chapter 11 of this Plan, whilst the 'Southern Strategic and Sustainable Development Site' is dealt with under Section 10.7**

Y= Acceptable in Principle; O=Open for consideration; N= Not acceptable

Land Use Zoning	Primarily Residential	Town Centre	Established Development	Strategic Residential Reserve	Open Space	General Employment and Commercial	Local Environment	Community and Education	Strategic Community Opportunity
Amusement Arcade/Casinos	N	O <sup>1</sup>	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Agricultural Buildings	N	N	N	O <sup>2</sup>	N	N	O	N	O
Car Park (other than ancillary)	N	O <sup>3</sup>	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Betting Office	N	O <sup>4</sup>	O <sup>4</sup>	N	N	N	N	N	N
Cafe	N	O	O	N	N	O	N	N	O
Cemetery	N	N	N	N	N	N	O	Y	N
Cinema	N	O	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Community/Recreational /Sports	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	Y	Y
Creche/Playschool	O	O	O	N	N	O	N	Y	Y
Cultural Uses/Library	N	O	O	N	N	N	N	Y	Y

<b>Land Use Zoning</b>	<b>Primarily Residential</b>	<b>Town Centre</b>	<b>Established Development</b>	<b>Strategic Residential Reserve</b>	<b>Open Space</b>	<b>General Employment and Commercial</b>	<b>Local Environment</b>	<b>Community and Education</b>	<b>Strategic Community Opportunity</b>
Dancehall/Disco	N	O <sup>5</sup>	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Data Centre	N	N	N	N	N	O	N	N	N
Funeral Home	N	O	O	N	N	O	N	O	N
Garage/Car Repair	N	O	O <sup>6</sup>	N	N	O	N	N	N
Guesthouse / Hotel / Hostel	N	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	N
Hot Food Takeaway	N	O	O <sup>7</sup>	N	N	N	N	N	N
Industry (light)	N	O	O <sup>8</sup>	N	N	O	N	N	N
Industry (General)	N	N	N	N	N	O <sup>9</sup>	N	N	N
Medical Consultancy/Healthcare	N	O	O	N	N	O	N	O	N
Motor Sales	N	N	O	N	N	O	N	N	N
Nursing Home	N	O	O	N	N	N	N	Y	O
Offices	N	O	O <sup>10</sup>	N	N	Y <sup>10</sup>	N	O <sup>10</sup>	O <sup>10</sup>
Park/Playground	O	O	O	N	Y	N	O	Y	O
Petrol Station	N	O	O <sup>11</sup>	N	N	O <sup>11</sup>	N	N	N
Place of Worship	N	O	O	N	N	O	N	Y	O
Playing Fields	O	O	O	O	O	N	O	O	Y
Pub	N	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	N
Restaurant	N	O	O	N	N	O	N	N	N
Residential	Y	O	O	O <sup>12</sup>	N	N	O <sup>13</sup>	N	O <sup>14</sup>
Retail	N	O	O <sup>15</sup>	O <sup>16</sup>	N	O <sup>17</sup>	O <sup>18</sup>	N	N
School/Education	N	O	O	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
Solar Energy Generation (other than exempted dev. or microgeneration <sup>19</sup> )	N	O	O	O <sup>20</sup>	N	O	O <sup>21</sup>	N	O

<b>Land Use Zoning</b>	<b>Primarily Residential</b>	<b>Town Centre</b>	<b>Established Development</b>	<b>Strategic Residential Reserve</b>	<b>Open Space</b>	<b>General Employment and Commercial</b>	<b>Local Environment</b>	<b>Community and Education</b>	<b>Strategic Community Opportunity</b>
Tourist Related Facilities	N	O	O	N	N	N	N	N	N
Warehouse/Store/Depot	N	O	O	N	N	O	N	N	N

## Footnotes

- 1 Refer to Policy LK-TC-P-139. Amusement arcades and/or casinos will not be permitted where it is considered that they may have a detrimental impact on the streetscape, established character or residential amenities of an area; nor will they be permitted where the Planning Authority considers that the proposal would give rise to a proliferation of such uses.
- 2 Proposals for agricultural buildings within lands zoned as Strategic Residential Reserve (SRR) must be designed and located so as not to compromise the future residential development potential of the SRR zoned lands.
- 3 In assessing proposals for additional car parking in the town centre, the planning authority will have regard to the provisions of Policy LK-TC-P-08 (Section 9.4.1) of this Plan.
- 4 Betting offices will not be permitted where it is considered that they may have a detrimental impact on the established character or residential amenities of an area.
- 5 Dancehalls/discos will not be permitted where it is considered that they may have a detrimental impact on the established character or residential amenities of an area.
- 6 Garages/car repair will not be permitted where it is considered that they may have a detrimental impact on the established character or residential amenities of an area.
- 7 Hot Food Takeaways will not be permitted where it is considered that they may have a detrimental impact on the established character or residential amenities of an area.
- 8 Light industry will not be permitted where it is considered that the proposal may have a detrimental impact on the established character or residential amenities of an area.
- 9 Developers are advised to have regard to, inter alia, the economic development policies of the County Development Plan 2018-2024, in particular Policy ED-P-9.
- 10 Developers are advised to note that professional services, where the services proposed are provided principally to visiting members of the public, will be directed to the defined town centre or to established neighbourhood centres, in accordance with the provisions of Policy LK-EDE-P-3 of this Plan. Within the Strategic Community Opportunity zoning, office use shall be limited to offices that are ancillary to the primary uses acceptable in principle within this land use zone, namely School / Education, Playing fields, Cultural Uses / Library, Creche / Playschool and Community / Recreational / Sports.
- 11 Developers are advised to have regard to, inter alia, the economic development policies of the County Development Plan 2018-2024, in particular Policy ED-P-9.
- 12 Proposals for multiple (i.e. 2 or more) residential units will not be considered on Strategic Residential Reserve lands. Proposals for single dwellings may be considered where they accord with the Councils housing policies and where they are located and designed so as not to compromise the future residential development potential of the SRR zoned lands.
- 13 Proposals for multiple (i.e. 2 or more) residential units will not be considered on lands zoned as Local Environment. Proposals for single dwellings may be considered where they otherwise accord with, inter alia, the Councils housing policies, conservation policies and policies regarding the appropriate integration of development into the receiving landscape.
- 14 Proposals for residential development on lands zoned Strategic Community Opportunity shall only be considered where they comprise student accommodation. Such accommodation must be located generally at the southern end of the Strategic Community Opportunity zoning so as

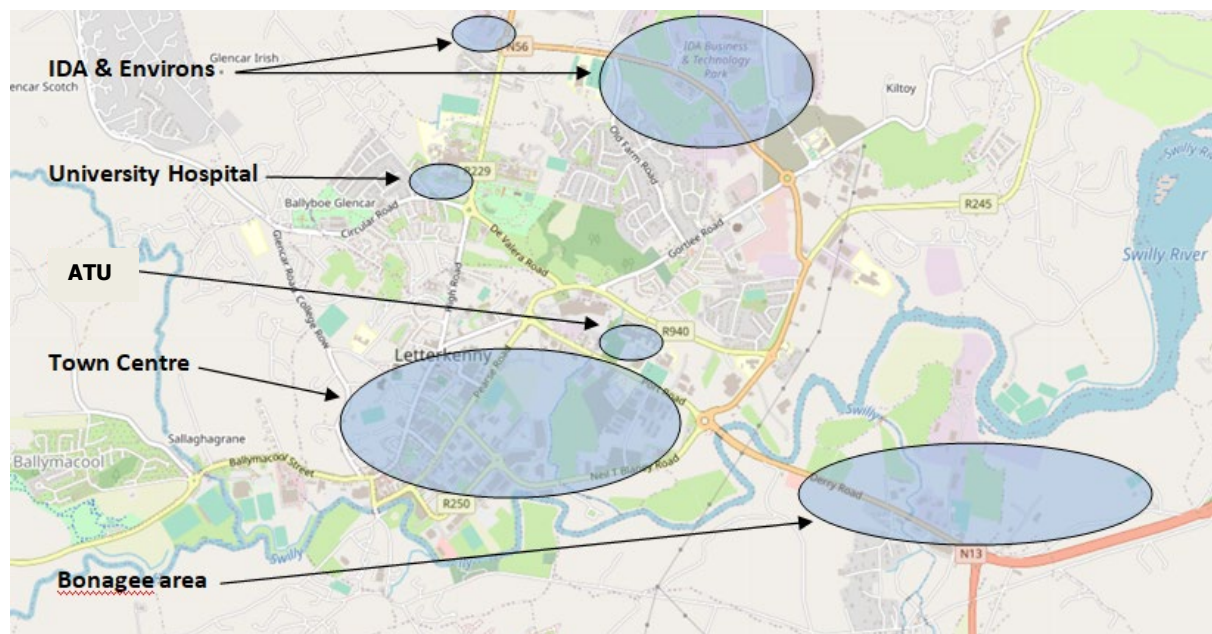
- to better facilitate active travel. Proposals for other types of residential development will not be favourably considered on lands zoned Strategic Community Opportunity.
- 15 Developers are advised to note that proposals for retail development in areas zoned Established Development shall be assessed in accordance with the provisions of the Retail Strategy as set out in the County Development Plan.
  - 16 Proposals for retail development on lands zoned as Strategic Residential Reserve shall only be considered where they comprise proposals for a farm shop selling goods that are produced on the subject landholding. Other types of retail shall not be permitted at these locations.
  - 17 Proposals for retail development on lands zoned as General Employment shall only be considered where the retail element of the proposal is clearly ancillary to the parent/main use of the site, comprises a maximum of 10% of the total floor area of the subject development, and where the goods being sold are a product of that 'main use'. Notwithstanding the foregoing, proposals for retail uses on General Employment lands shall not be permitted if such use would be detrimental to the retail function of the town centre; these matters will be assessed on a case by case basis in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Retail Strategy.
  - 18 Proposals for retail development on lands zoned as Local Environment shall only be considered where they comprise proposals for a farm shop selling goods that are produced on the subject landholding. Other types of retail shall not be permitted at these locations.
  - 19 Proposals for microgeneration shall be dealt with on a case-by-basis having regard to all relevant policy provisions of this Plan, the CDP and other statutory guidance.
  - 20 Proposals for solar energy generation on lands zoned Strategic Residential Reserve may be considered where, inter alia, such proposals are located and designed so as not to compromise the future residential development potential of the SRR zoned lands.
  - 21 Proposals for solar energy generation on lands zoned Local Environment may be considered where, inter alia, it can be definitively demonstrated that such proposals would have no significant negative impact on the landscape setting or the biodiversity quality of the area.



## Chapter 8 – Economic Development and Employment

The existing critical role of Letterkenny as the key economic engine of Donegal and as a key pillar of the wider North-West economy, and how this critical role has strong support at the national and regional level, is set out in Chapter 2: 'Strategic Context and Growth Ambitions'. Letterkenny already contains a wide range of commercial activities, from the international companies located in the IDA business park, to the service, tourism and retail businesses in the town centre and the industrial uses found in areas such as Bonagee. Letterkenny University Hospital and the Atlantic Technological University are also major employers in the town and indeed the region, alongside their core functions of providing medical and higher education services respectively.

The key employment areas in the town (inclusive of the town centre) are demarcated on Fig 8.1 below.



**Fig 8.1 Key Employment Areas**

National, Regional and County-level policy supports the further economic growth of Letterkenny. For example, the RSES anticipates that job numbers in the town will increase by 5000-6000 by 2040, bringing the overall number of jobs within the town to approximately 17,000. Given Letterkenny's proximity to the border, opportunities may also arise as a result of Brexit. For ICT and knowledge-based industries, the telecoms infrastructure in Letterkenny is excellent, providing resilient connections, a choice of high-speed fibre networks and a range of competitive suppliers.

The role of the Letterkenny Plan is to provide a land-use management framework to enable the assimilation into the town of this growth in an orderly manner. Economic growth will be supported by the full range of place-making initiatives and projects set out in the Plan such as the TEN-T project (and the resulting removal of strategic traffic from the town centre) and improved public transport and active travel measures (with associated improvements in the environment and quality of life for residents). These measures are addressed elsewhere in the Plan. This Chapter addresses issues more directly associated with the economy and employment generation.

## 8.1 Economic Sectors

### 8.1.1 Town Centre

Chapter 9: 'Town Centre Strategy', recognises the critical importance of a strong town centre and provides the strategic policy framework to guide its future development. The strategy recognises the need to tackle vacancy and dereliction and provides support for town centre living generally. The strategy also recognises the need to create more successful and attractive linkages throughout the town centre and the need for more high quality public realm, in order to enhance accessibility and visitor experience. Developing the accessibility theme further, the Letterkenny Local Transport Plan (Part B of this Plan) provides policy support for a high quality, multi-modal transport hub in the town centre; a focal point for transport in the town that would provide both for town services (e.g. bus, taxi) and wider regional transport connectivity.

The Letterkenny Plan is timely in light of a growing interest in town-centre locations by many businesses, including those in the ICT and knowledge-based industries. The CoLab Innovation Centre on the ATU campus, for example, has proven itself to be a highly successful centrally-located business space. There is a need to enable the development of additional opportunities of this nature in the town centre in order to foster new business start-ups and attract investment from already-established larger companies in second site locations. Indeed, the process of bringing additional innovation space and employment to the town centre is progressing already with the Council's development of the new Alpha and Beta Business, Enterprise and Innovation Centres on the site of the former ESB yard and adjoining land, located between the Port Road and Pearse Road. These buildings will, amongst other things, provide workspace opportunities for businesses including soft landing spaces for enterprises wishing to establish a base in Letterkenny.

The Council's ambitions for the major enhancement and regeneration of the town centre should further strengthen the attractiveness of the centre to ICT and knowledge-based industries. This is to be welcomed not only in terms of the direct employment that will be created and the increased economic security of the centre derived from diversification of the employment base, but also because of the additional footfall for the traditional town centre retail and services outlets. The Letterkenny Plan therefore supports the development of this sector in the town centre, whilst remaining fully supportive of the more traditional retail and services sector also.

The relevant policy provisions are set out in Chapter 9: Town Centre Strategy.

### 8.1.2 Atlantic Technological University (ATU)

Donegal County Council acknowledges the importance of the Atlantic Technological University (ATU) as a key economic driver for the town centre, the town in general and indeed the wider region. As well as increasing the attractiveness of the town as a potential investment location by both providing a pool of educated and skilled prospective employees and building the research and innovation capabilities that strengthen the county's economic resilience and competitiveness, the ATU also has a more immediate impact with around 500 staff/innovation centre employees and 3,300 students based at the main campus located within the defined town centre on the Port Road (the success of the Co-Lab facility is recognised above). The contribution of the ATU to the economy and employment offering of the town and indeed wider region is likely to grow, amid continuing collaboration on a cross-border further and higher education cluster with Ulster University, North West Regional College and Donegal ETB (Education & Training Board). Consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding between Donegal County Council and the ATU signed in 2016 and the broader value of the ATU for Letterkenny and the wider region as outlined above, Donegal County Council supports the development ambitions of the ATU and this is reflected in the policy framework below.

### 8.1.3 Business Parks

The business parks in the town, located principally on either side of the Business Park Road/N56, have been a notable success, resulting in the creation of a major economic hub for the town. At the time of drafting this Plan, these parks were estimated to provide 3000 jobs. It is crucial that the

Letterkenny Plan identifies an adequate land supply for this sector. As with the approach to new residential zonings, the Plan is focussed, where possible, on building on the potential of the commercial areas that already exist, and thereafter on identifying appropriately located new lands.

In preparing the Letterkenny Plan, the Council has consulted extensively with the IDA and has identified not only a need to maintain the existing employment zonings in the Business Park Road area, but also a need for additional lands with the potential to accommodate similar uses to those that currently occupy the existing IDA Business and Technology Park. To this end, the Letterkenny Plan adds to the previously-zoned supply of employment land in the broad Business Park Road area with the following:

- To the west: an additional circa 24 Ha of lands (on lands zoned 'General Employment and Commercial' to the north of Windyhall Road and to the rear of Hegarty's Garage; and on 'Opportunity Site 9' to the south of Windyhall Road);
- To the north: an additional circa 10 hectares (i.e. 50% of overall site) to the north of the IDA Business Park on Opportunity Site 12; and
- To the south: an additional circa 7.2 hectares on Opportunity Site 3.

These locations provide the twin benefits of both being close to the existing Business Park Road campuses (thereby creating opportunities for economies of agglomeration and synergies between businesses), and in most cases also being located immediately adjacent to the national road network, as such allowing for ease of access and providing high profiles for the sites. It is acknowledged that the identified Opportunity Sites may also be developed for other uses in accordance with the relevant zoning objectives and policy applying to them. This is reflected in Table 8.1 below, wherein only 50% of the Opportunity Site area is identified as contributing to the overall supply.



**Fig. 8.2 – General Location of lands/plots available on Business Park Rd and environs**

In its new strategy 'Driving Recovery and Sustainable Growth', the IDA has committed to delivering Advance Building Solutions in Letterkenny between 2021 and 2024. In addition, Donegal County Council's Economic Development Division is proposing to work with IDA with a view to securing



planning consent for an additional Advance Building Solution to enhance Donegal as an attractive location for investment, allowing the IDA to offer a 'de-risked' site to prospective investors while also conveying a strong collaborative and supportive approach to business.

#### **8.1.4 Industrial Uses**

Donegal County Council acknowledges the contribution to the economy of Letterkenny of the many businesses that are more industrial in nature (e.g. light industry, car repairs, warehousing) and less-suited to town-centre locations and business parks. The Bonagee area is a particularly important area in this respect.

#### **Bonagee Industrial Area**

A wide range of enterprises are located in the Bonagee area, and the area will continue to play an important role in the commercial life of Letterkenny. Notwithstanding the economic importance of the Bonagee area, a number of factors must be addressed in this Plan, namely that: parts of this area have been identified in the CFRAMS project as being prone to flooding; the area is deficient in terms of servicing, in particular sewerage infrastructure; and the area will also be impacted by the TEN-T roads project.

Chapter 12: 'Climate Adaptation and Mitigation' addresses the potential flooding issues affecting the town in general, including the Bonagee area, having regard to both the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) prepared to inform the Plan and also the 'Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines' (DEHLG, 2009). Based on adherence to the SFRA and the aforementioned Guidelines, the extent of zoned lands that previously allowed for employment uses at Bonagee has had to be significantly reduced.

In terms of the servicing issues at Bonagee, this Plan strongly advocates for a range of strategic servicing issues to be addressed, including the provision of suitable sewerage infrastructure to serve the wider Port Road/Bonagee area (refer Chapter 4: 'Key Structural Issues'; and Chapter 6: 'Strategic Infrastructural Deficits') and the numerous existing businesses that trade there.

Part B: Letterkenny Local Transport Plan, addresses the critical strategic importance of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, both in terms of the overall County and particularly Section 2 as it affects Letterkenny. In terms of the localised impact on the Bonagee area, the reservation corridor identified on the Zoning Map for this Plan is already adopted Council policy by virtue of the decision of Donegal County Council to make a variation to the Donegal County Development Plan, 2018-2024<sup>5</sup>. This Local Area Plan must be consistent with the County Development Plan.

#### **Additional Industrial Areas**

Having regard to the above-noted impacts on the Bonagee area, there is a need to identify new areas of land to complement the offering at Bonagee. In this regard, approximately 8 Ha of additional 'General Employment and Commercial' lands are identified in the Mountain Top area of the town. Further lands have also been identified to the east of previously-zoned lands at Bonagee/Dromore arising from opportunities created by the TEN-T project and associated service roads, given their excellent profile and connectivity to the national road network.

## **8.2 National Secondary Route N56**

National Secondary Route N56 is a key strategic transport corridor, lifeline route and multimodal urban connector in County Donegal; part of which passes through the urban area of Letterkenny. This

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<sup>5</sup> decision of the Council to make a Variation of the County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024 in respect of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal [Variation No.1] at the Plenary Council meeting of 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2021 refers

plan seeks first and foremost to preserve the safety, carrying capacity and functioning of the N56 but also recognises that this road is a critical means of access to areas of significant development in Letterkenny, most notably the employment area centred on the N56 Business Park Road. The Plan therefore seeks to ensure that the lands in the vicinity of the N56 can be developed in a sustainable fashion, to the benefit of the Regional Centre and wider County, on the proviso that the strategic functions of the National Road are preserved or indeed improved as development progresses.

The 'Four Lane' section of the N56 Road, from the Dry Arch Roundabout to the Polestar Roundabout is a key strategic transport artery into and out of the town. On weekdays, the average daily traffic before Covid was of the order of 32,000 per day. The Four Lane Road is also an important economic corridor, driven in-part by the exposure of the lands on either side to the aforementioned volumes of traffic. A cohesive policy is required that preserves the vital transportation function of the corridor, whilst also permitting development that does not compromise the aforementioned core function.

Two major projects have also informed policy; firstly, the N56/Four Lane Road Pavement, Active Travel and Safety Improvement Scheme. This scheme commenced in summer 2021, and involves improvements to the 1.4 km of road to provide an urban dual carriageway. The scheme will introduce a reduced speed limit of 60kph, reduces dangerous right turning movements, segregates the current lanes and will include much improved pavement and significant additional cycle and pedestrian facilities inclusive of pedestrian crossings. Separately, signalization is being progressed for the Polestar Roundabout as part of the Letterkenny Traffic Management Project. Another key project to be considered in relation to essential transportation connection is Section 2 of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal. This project will provide a second crossing of the Swilly Estuary, thereby diverting a large volume of traffic away from the town centre and the Four Lane road. This link will predominantly serve the Northern half of the town including residential areas, the hospital, Coláiste Ailigh and the IDA centre. This link with the Four Lane road will provide improved accessibility and circulation for all traffic modes through and within the town.

Even after these schemes, and indeed the Southern Network Project, are completed, the Four Lane Road will remain a vital transportation artery for all modes, with each of these routes improving and providing additional alternative critical access to the town to progress and sustain its future proper development and access needs. However, it should be noted that some of these key projects such as the TEN-T and the Southern Network Project are subject to planning, design and approvals. They are not immediate deliverables and will not be operational within the life of this plan. The Four Lane Road will remain the sole lifeline route into the town for the duration of the plan and as such, protecting the Four Lane route and ensuring safety and capacity going forward must remain priorities for Donegal County Council.

Given the nature of the immediate improvements to be provided and the adjacent key urban development lands for the town of Letterkenny, it is proposed that limited and coordinated new access or amended existing access may be considered. Any proposal for a new access or for the intensification of an existing access must clearly demonstrate that it will not affect the capacity, operation or safe function of the road. This road will continue to operate with significant and increasing traffic volumes. While a low urban speed limit is to be imposed as part of the above-noted Four Lane project, all development proposals shall be required to demonstrate an appreciation of the servicing of the wider area rather than focusing on singular sites, as the Planning Authority will be seeking to avoid an ad-hoc proliferation of access points along the Four Lane Road.

## 8.3 Overall Land Supply for Economic Development and Employment

Arising from the context and growth ambitions as set out above, a range of sites have been identified as being suitable in principle for economic development and employment purposes. The portfolio of such sites may be considered in terms of three zoning designations:

- (i.) General Employment and Commercial;
- (ii.) Opportunity sites; and
- (iii.) Town Centre.

In its zoning considerations, the Council has endeavoured to strike the right balance between, on the one hand incorporating flexibility and not being overly prescriptive in identifying suitable uses, and on the other hand providing clarity for all users of the Plan. The key differentiator, for the most part, between 'General Employment and Commercial' zonings and 'Opportunity sites' is that most of the latter sites are also considered to be potentially suitable for residential development.

'Chapter 11: Opportunity Sites' sets out detailed policies for the Opportunity sites, and Chapter 9 contains the detailed policies for the town centre.

With regard to the sites zoned 'General Employment and Commercial', please refer to the Zoning Map, Zoning Matrix, the Zoning Objectives in 'Chapter 7: General Development Management Approach' and the economic development and employment policies in section 8.5 below. Development proposals otherwise meeting the zoning objective for 'General Employment and Commercial' lands will also be required to be compatible with adjacent uses. In this regard, 'bad neighbour' uses (i.e. uses that would give rise to noise, or emission of air pollutants, or similar) will be a material consideration.

**Table 8.1: Zoned Sites Suitable for New Employment-Generating Uses**

<b>ZONING/REF (as appropriate)</b>	<b>AREA (Ha)</b>
<b>'General Employment and Commercial' zonings</b>	
IDA Business Park	c. 19
South of N56/Business Park Road	c. 9
North of Windyhall Road	c. 16.5
Behind Hegarty's Garage	c. 5.4
Mountain Top	c. 8
Bonagee Area	c. 5.8
East of TEN-T Road	c. 9.1
South of N56/Four Lane Road	c. 24
<b>Total</b>	<b>c. 96.8</b>
<b>Opportunity Sites – area for employment/commercial use</b>	
OPP 1 Gortlee Hse. (50% of overall site area)	c. 7.25
OPP 2 Gortlee	c. 3.35

OPP 3 Former Unifi (nb – part of site is already occupied)	c. 7.2
OPP 4 Former Creamery	c. 2.2
OPP 5 Behind Mt. Errigal Hotel	c. 2.32
OPP 6 Oldtown Rd.	c. 0.32
OPP 7 Beside Church Of the Irish Martyrs	c. 5.1
OPP 8 Windyhall (50% of overall site area)	c. 7.8
OPP 9 Model Bakery	c. 1.83
OPP 10 Carnamuggagh (50% of overall site area)	c. 9.8
OPP 11 Former Oatfield	c. 1.44
<b>Total</b>	<b>c. 49</b>
<b>Town Centre Sites</b>	
Former ESB site	c.1.1
Former Courthouse	c.0.07

## 8.4 The Role of Tourism and Hospitality

The tourism and hospitality sector provides quality accommodation, cafes, bars, restaurants, recreational facilities, retail centres, arts/crafts and cultural venues. Such facilities are already a very significant element of the Letterkenny economy, supported by, inter alia, its location on the Wild Atlantic Way (WAW). Letterkenny's attractiveness as a tourism/visitor attraction is expected to grow on foot of the place-making improvements identified throughout this Plan and the Council will continue to support the existing and prospective businesses in the hospitality and tourism sectors.

## 8.5 Economic Development and Employment – Objectives and Policies

**Objective LK-ED-O-1: To build and strengthen Letterkenny as a key centre for economic growth across the sectors and as a university town, commensurate with its Regional Centre status as provided for in the National Planning Framework.**

**Policy LK-EDE-P-1: It is a policy of the Council to support in principle the appropriate expansion and development of the Atlantic Technological University (Letterkenny Campus).**

**Policy LK-EDE-P-2: It is a policy of the Council to only support the provision of professional services, where the services proposed are provided principally to visiting members of the public, within the defined town centre or within established neighbourhood centres.**





## Chapter 9 – Town Centre Strategy

### 9.1 Background

Commensurate with its Regional Centre status, Letterkenny town centre is the primary retail and services centre for Donegal. The centre also serves a broader catchment in the context of the North-West City Region. Letterkenny town centre is home to a significant number of commercial and retail operations. The vitality of the centre is also enhanced by strong education, cultural and tourism/hospitality sectors.

Notwithstanding the evident robustness of the centre (also documented in Chapter 8: Economic Development and Employment), significant challenges pervade and in this Plan are considered in terms of three categories:

1. Regeneration Ambitions and challenges in terms of legacy urban design and transportation issues;
2. Other infrastructural deficiencies; and
3. Development Management.

In relation to Categories 1 and 2, Donegal County Council has concluded that a typical regulatory policy framework will be insufficient of itself to deliver on the re-imagining and regeneration ambitions for the town centre. Rather, a range of more direct interventions, both creative and more mainstream infrastructural, are also required. This plan therefore provides high-level policy support for a number of strategic regeneration and public realm interventions that have been identified through the plan-making process, such as –

- The delivery of walking, cycling and parkland infrastructure (LK Green Connect);
- The delivery of a creative hub and urban parkland adjacent to Church Lane, as part of the continued development of the Letterkenny Cathedral Quarter;
- The re-use of the former courthouse;
- The regeneration of the Main Street area (with particular reference to Lower Main St.) and tackling vacancy and dereliction generally;
- The development of a regional transport hub;
- The development of new public realm to complement the existing Market Square;
- Addressing the issue of the dominance of vehicles in the town centre, by supporting proposals that rebalance pedestrian and vehicular space;
- Strengthening the linkages between Main Street and Pearse Road;
- Significant public realm improvements along Port and Pearse Roads, with a view to transforming these key routes into town centre 'boulevards';
- Improvements to public realm and accessibility at Oldtown, the Station roundabout area and the Polestar roundabout area;
- Green and blue infrastructure throughout the plan area, with particular reference to the River Swilly Corridor.
- The need for the use of compulsory purchase powers available to the Council under, inter alia: the Derelict Sites Act, 1990; and the Local Government (Sanitary Services) Act, 1964.

Ultimately, the aim of the Authority is that Letterkenny Town Centre will be transformed from a car-dominated and disconnected centre to one that presents a more attractive and safer environment for all users inclusive of those who wish to live, work, do business in, or visit the town. Section 9.2 identifies a number of key infrastructural deficiencies impacting on the town centre and how they are having a fundamental impact on its performance and attractiveness.

As well as identifying necessary public sector interventions in the town centre, another key aim of the Letterkenny Plan is to harness appropriate private sector investment. A framework is required to manage both sectors and this is set out in Section 9.3: 'Town Centre Development Management'. The section also addresses, inter alia, issues that are typical to most medium-sized town centres e.g.

the most appropriate locations for retail developments, creation of dead frontages, or uses that would not contribute to daytime vitality.

## 9.2 Infrastructural Deficiencies Affecting the Town Centre

Town centre improvements are not solely dependent on works within the centre; indeed, the environment of the centre could be further improved by a number of other projects that are either located outside of the centre, or that would straddle the town centre and beyond. These potential benefits to the town centre add to the case for their delivery and thus, whilst they are addressed elsewhere in this Plan, they are also briefly discussed below in terms of the beneficial impacts these projects would have on the town centre.

### 9.2.1 TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal

The TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal (the TEN-T PRIPD) consists of and prioritises three Sections of the TEN-T road network in Donegal for improvement namely:

- Section 1: (N15/N13 Ballybofey/Stranorlar Urban Region);
- Section 2: (N56/N13 Letterkenny to Manorcunningham); and
- Section 3: (N14 Manorcunningham to Lifford/Strabane/A5 Link).

The benefits of the overall TEN-T PRIPD are significant and wide ranging for the County and are addressed in the Local Transport Plan. Specifically in relation to Letterkenny Town Centre, Section 2 of the project will have the added benefit of removing a lot of strategic traffic that currently impacts on the town centre due to the proximity to the centre of the N14/Four Lane Road and the N56/Ramelton Road. As noted earlier in this Plan, Donegal County Council has already adopted the entire extent of the TEN-T corridors by means of a Variation to the Donegal County Development Plan, 2018-2024.

### 9.2.2 Southern Network Project

The objectives behind the Southern Network Project are addressed in the Local Transport Plan. The benefits to the town centre are similar to those that will accrue from the TEN-T project, in that it would reduce/remove strategic traffic, in this case east-west traffic, away from the town centre, whilst also forming a crucial part of the active travel network envisaged by the Local Transport Plan. Please refer to Part B, Local Transport Plan for relevant policies in relation to the Southern Network Project.

### 9.2.3 Town Centre Foul Sewer Network

As identified earlier in this Plan, a significant part of the developed town centre is not connected to the public sewer network. The Council will seek to work with Irish Water to have this deficiency addressed as early as possible.

## 9.3 Town Centre Development Management

### 9.3.1 Urban Design Issues

A number of core urban design legacy issues have been identified in the town centre and it is considered appropriate that the Development Management policy framework is prepared with that in mind. These core issues are detailed below.

**Disconnect between Main St. and New Retail Parks:** The rapid growth of the retail core of the town centre during economic boom years has resulted in a disconnect between the Main Street retail area and the more recently developed retail parks. Although in close proximity (approximately only a

four minute walk between Main Street and Pearse Road), the physical environment is disjointed and is difficult and unsafe to negotiate on foot. This adds to the dependency on the car to move between different areas of what is effectively one retail core, and reduces the efficiency and economic performance of the urban core as a whole. This is further exacerbated by a heavily-trafficked Pearse Road, where the car is prioritised and pedestrian crossing points are minimal. As a result, the urban form of the connections between the traditional Main Street and the more recently constructed retail parks performs as a barrier between the two areas.

**Decline of Traditional Town Centre:** Parts of the traditional town centre are underperforming. In particular, the Lower Main Street area suffers from significant dereliction problems although this issue is also apparent in other parts of the old town centre.

**Low Density, Poor Quality Developments on Pearse Road:** The Pearse Road area is a central area in the context of the spatial layout of the overall urban core. Such central areas would normally be characterized by high density development patterns. However, the Pearse Road area, and similarly parts of the Port Road area, are dominated by low-intensity uses and low value buildings in terms of construction; notably sheds and showrooms with open storage areas and significant areas of car parking. Given the centrality and profile of this location, higher density developments would be more appropriate in terms of urban design and sustainable development.

**Poor Sustainable Mobility:** As noted elsewhere in this Plan, the existing urban form of Letterkenny urban core is a car dominated environment where sustainable mobility in terms of public transport, walking and cycling is not readily facilitated. Problems include lack of bus prioritisation at key locations, deficiency in terms of not having an appropriately sized and located transportation hub, limited cycle lane infrastructure, uncoordinated investment in pedestrian linkages and crossing points and lack of pedestrian infrastructure along key links. The consequent over-dominance of the car and poor public transport/active travel usage in the town centre is evidenced and addressed in the Local Transport Plan.

**Under-Utilisation of Physical and Environmental Landscape:** The potential of the physical and environmental landscape in Letterkenny's urban core remains under-utilised. There are significant vacant, derelict and under-utilised backland and infill lands where the market has not delivered regeneration projects. Environmental resources such as the river have not been integrated into the urban form and indeed development has turned its back on the river corridor, resulting in no public interface with the river habitat. The existing parklands (Ballymacool Town Park, Bernard McGlinchey Town Park and Ballyboe Park) provide high quality recreation, amenity and environmental infrastructure, but are located on the edge of the urban core and have not been complemented by smaller sized 'pocket parks' within the town centre core. Public realm is underperforming throughout the town centre as the competing demands between public space, walkability and the private car remain, with the situation at Market Square being a notable case in point.

More positively, investment aimed at 'greening' Main Street has been made in recent years through planters and seating, but its success is limited due to these competing demands for space along the town centre streets. There is substantial built heritage in Letterkenny that is of value in terms of streetscape and in its detailing, but the value of the town's built heritage has not yet been harnessed to its fullest potential, with the exception of a recent community led project along Church Lane leading to St Eunan's Cathedral (part of the designated Architectural Conservation Area).

### ***9.3.2 Urban Design Policy Framework***

The policy framework as outlined below has been specifically framed to enable the disruption of longstanding and disconnected development patterns, and move over time towards creating a more robust sense of place with a co-ordinated place-making approach.

### 9.3.2.1 Objectives

**Objective LK-TC-O-01: To strengthen the urban form of the town centre so as to reinforce the centre as a cohesive, attractive and high quality urban area that is attractive and safe for residents, visitors and investors and is a place where public life can thrive.**

**Objective LK-TC-O-02: To create a vibrant town centre which is a multi-dimensional, inclusive and inviting place providing a mix of homes, jobs, services, amenities, facilities and experiences.**

**Objective LK-TC-O-03: To establish the town centre as a gateway for business and enterprise, leading and driving a strong economy in the North West City Region.**

**Objective LK-TC-O-04: To create sustainable and restorative environments where environmental assets are created and enhanced, and climate change challenges addressed, for the delivery of environmental, physical, social and economic benefits to the town.**

**Objective LK-TC-O-05: To bring the concept proposals contained in the Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy through the processes of detailed design, stakeholder engagement and any required statutory approval processes and thereafter to deliver on the collaborative vision of the Strategy.**

**Objective LK-TC-O-06: To develop an active land management register and database, which shall include mapping of brownfield and other lands, such as vacant, under-utilised or large undeveloped sites, tracking progress on planning applications and identification of barriers to development, with the aim of promoting and co-ordinating development on the lands identified.**

**Objective LK-TC-O-07: To reduce vacancy and dereliction levels in Letterkenny by 75% over the lifetime of the Local Area Plan via the uptake of public funding mechanisms and schemes and through the encouragement and support of private sector investment.**

### 9.3.2.2 Policies

**Policy LK-TC-P-01: It is a policy of the Council to support the ambitions of the Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy.**

**Policy LK-TC-P-02: It is a policy of the Council to require that development proposals within the town centre are broadly consistent with, and would not prejudice the delivery of, the Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy.**

**Policy LK-TC-P-03: It is a policy of the Council that new development proposals on streets that provide physical connections in the town centre will only be supported where they would not prejudice public safety, public realm, built and cultural heritage, accessibility, character and where they provide for an appropriate mix of uses.**

**Policy LK-TC-P-04: It is a policy of the Council to support the provision of additional appropriately located and designed residential accommodation in the town centre.**

**Policy LK-TC-P-05: It is a policy of the Council to support the provision of appropriately located and designed accommodation for financial services, ICT and knowledge-based industries in the town centre inclusive of incubation/start-up units, 'soft-landing spaces', 'second-site' locations, and large-scale indigenous or FDI building space options.**

**Policy LK-TC-P-06:** It is a policy of the Council to support the principle of projects that would contribute to the climate change and biodiversity improvement agendas including, but not restricted to, projects in relation to carbon sinks, green corridors, pollination and sustainable urban drainage initiatives.

**Policy LK-TC-P-07:** It is a policy of the Council to support in principle the following strategic urban design/public realm interventions in Letterkenny town centre, subject to compliance with all relevant policies and standards contained in this plan and the CDP:

- The delivery of walking, cycling and parkland infrastructure (inclusive of the LK Green Connect project)
- The delivery of a creative hub and urban parkland adjacent to Church Lane, as part of the continued development of the Letterkenny Cathedral Quarter
- The re-use of the former courthouse for appropriate town centre uses
- The regeneration of the Main Street area (with particular reference to Lower Main St.) and tackling vacancy and dereliction generally
- The development of a regional transport hub
- The development of new public realm to complement the existing Market Square
- Proposals that rebalance pedestrian and vehicular space to give greater priority to active travel
- Strengthening the linkages between Main Street and Pearse Road, from both an accessibility and urban design perspective
- Public realm improvements along Port and Pearse Roads, with a view to transforming these key routes into town centre 'boulevards'
- Improvements to public realm and accessibility at Oldtown, the Station roundabout area and the Polestar roundabout area
- The provision of green and blue infrastructure, with particular reference to the River Swilly Corridor.

**Policy LK-TC-P-08:** It is a policy of the Council to require that development proposals within the town centre area conform to the following design criteria:

- Proposals shall have regard to the Letterkenny Design Guide and the Linkages & Public Space Action Plan, prepared as part of the Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy.
- Proposals shall provide for distinctive buildings of high architectural quality, which contribute to a distinct sense of place and a quality public realm
- Building lines shall be such that a sense of enclosure is provided to the streetscape (i.e. following established building lines where appropriate or moving the building line closer to the road edge if deemed necessary in order to better define the streetscape)
- Proposals shall promote visual interest through modulation and detailing of architectural elements (e.g. variation in building elevations, variations in roof form, cornices, windows, eaves, frontages and entrances and minor variations in setback).
- Proposals shall provide for minimum 3-storey development along the Pearse Road and 2 Storeys elsewhere in the town centre.
- Proposals shall avoid the use of industrial type cladding on the exterior of buildings.
- Proposals for refurbishment and restoration of vernacular buildings must respect the character of the existing buildings, important views and spaces and historic settlement pattern in terms of scale, height, density, grouping, design and materials.

- **Proposals shall be accompanied by a design statement clearly outlining the rationale behind the concept and chosen design approach**
- **Proposals shall comply with all relevant statutory planning guidelines**

**Policy LK-TC-P-09: It is a policy of the Council to:**

- **Ensure the retention of traditional shop-fronts as appropriate.**
- **Only approve alterations to existing traditional shop fronts if the proposal is an improvement on what exists. Particular care will be taken over proposals for the installation of blinds, canopies, security grilles and shutters to avoid harm to the visual amenity of the shopping streets; if acceptable in principle they must be designed as an integral part of the shop front design.**
- **Avoid pastiche shop fronts and facades.**
- **Encourage contemporary design resolution where appropriate, avoiding cautious pastiche and given due consideration to the appearance of security lighting and shutters, additional security measures as necessary, signage and advertisements.**

## 9.4 Additional Development Management Issues

### 9.4.1 Flood Zones – Town Centre Area

The SFRA that accompanies the Letterkenny Plan has identified that there are two distinct areas of the town centre that fall within Flood Zone A (see Map 9.1 below) –

- (i.) a significant area to the east of the Isle Burn and
- (ii.) a smaller area on the western periphery of the town centre.

Flood Zone B also affects a considerable area, most notably to the east of the Pearse Road (see Map 9.2).

#### **Town Centre Area to the East of the Isle Burn.**

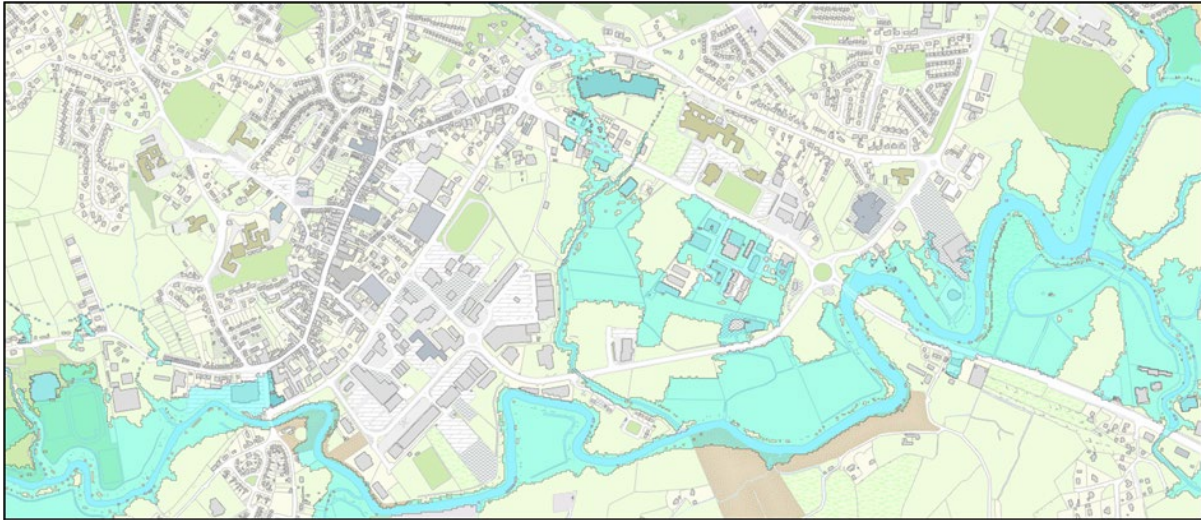
The area to the east of the Isle Burn requires special consideration in terms of two policy issues:

1. The principle of appropriate and orderly development outwards from the centre; and
2. the risk of flooding.

Preparatory work and consultation on both this Plan and the Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy has identified key challenges around the vitality and appearance of the traditional town centre, focussed on Main Street/Lower Main Street and the significant undeveloped or under-developed lands to the west of the Isle Burn in the vicinity of Pearse Road. The significant capacity of these areas in terms of being able to facilitate further development, and the principles of orderly and sustainable development, require that proposals for town centre retail developments should be restricted to west of the Burn, save for ancillary retail floorspace that is otherwise in accordance with the provisions of Policy LK-TC-10.

Having regard to the aforementioned capacity of the area to the west of the Burn, the encouragement of traditional town centre development on undeveloped lands to the east of the Burn cannot be justified in accordance with the requirements of the 'Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities'. Policy LK-TC-10 therefore identifies those uses that may be acceptable in principle and includes a recognition of those areas that have already been developed, as well as the opportunities arising from the comprehensive Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy.





**Map 9.1 Flood Zone A within Letterkenny Town Centre (SFRA for Letterkenny, 2022)**

### **Town Centre area West of R250 Pearse Road/Oldtown Road.**

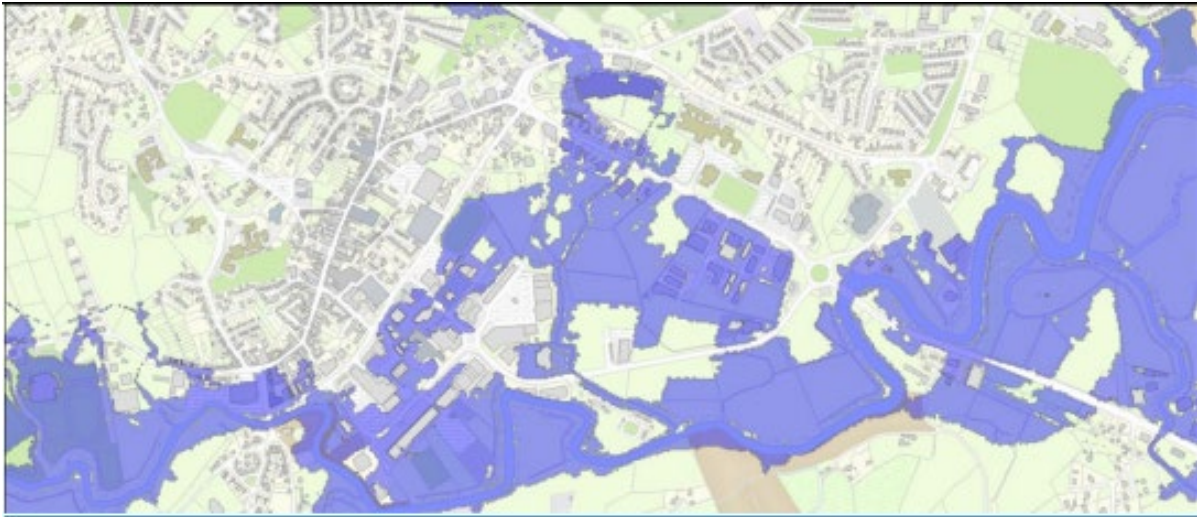
A small portion of the town centre area west of the R250 Pearse Road/Oldtown Road also falls within Flood Zone A. Undeveloped lands within the flood zone in this area have been zoned as 'Open Space' in order to address flood risk. Existing developed areas in this part of the town centre have passed a 'justification test' as part of the SFRA for this plan and proposals for development in this location may be subject to limitations pursuant to the findings of relevant justification test (see Section 6.2 of SFRA report).

**Policy LK-TC-P-10: It is a policy of the Council to only support the principle of the following uses within that part of the designated town centre that lies East of the Isle Burn and south of the Port Road, subject to the findings of a detailed site-specific flood risk assessment as required:**

- a. Water-compatible development, as defined in the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines;**
- b. Expansion of the ATU campus within the limitations set out in Part 3 of the plan-making justification test 2.7 'Justification Test for ATU Site', contained within the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report that accompanies the Letterkenny Plan;**
- c. Redevelopment/extension of existing commercial units in the area of Port Road/Joe Bonner Link Road where such developments are contained within the existing site, do not obstruct important flow paths, do not introduce a significant additional number of people into flood risk areas or entail the storage of hazardous substances and satisfy the Authority's urban design ambitions for the centre as set out in the Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy Masterplan;**
- d. Sustainable urban drainage systems and nature-based solutions for the management of rainwater and surface water runoff; or**
- e. Development that accords with the Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy subject to the following -**
  - (i) Only water compatible development will be considered within Flood Zone A**
  - (ii) Highly vulnerable development will not be considered within Flood Zone B.**

Comparison and convenience retailing and residential development will not be supported in these areas.

As noted above, the process of delivering a flood defence scheme for Letterkenny has begun, inclusive of the announcement in August, 2023 of a pilot delivery model involving the transfer of the management of data gathering from consultant engineers to the Council. Donegal County Council is committed to reviewing the policy position as set out in Policy LK-TC-P-10 above as and when plans for the flood defence scheme are advanced to a stage where such an informed review would be warranted.



**Map 9.2 Flood Zone B within Letterkenny Town Centre (SFRA for Letterkenny, 2022)**

**Policy LK-TC-P-11: It is a policy of the Council that within Flood Zone B in the town centre, proposed uses that are considered to be highly vulnerable to flooding will only be considered where -**

- a. Such uses are to be located at first floor level, above predicted flood levels.**
- b. Appropriate provision has been made for access and egress to and from the site in the event of a flood.**
- c. The proposal has been subject to detailed risk analysis as a part of a site-specific flood risk assessment.**

#### **9.4.2 Parking**

The town centre is already very well served in terms of the scale of parking provision with around 5,000 spaces being publicly-available. Indeed there is an over-supply judging by the numbers of unused spaces that can be seen on a day-to-day basis. Given the scale of current supply, and also the objectives around a more pedestrian and cycling friendly town centre driven by this Plan, the traditional policy approach to parking provision requiring defined numbers of spaces is no longer considered appropriate to having a vibrant town centre. Rather, a more balanced approach is required recognising the existing supply and its impact on the functioning and character of the centre, whilst facilitating limited new car-parking in certain circumstances. Such parking should be absorbed into development sites or in the immediate area in an unobtrusive manner where it aligns with the Authority's regeneration and urban design aspirations for the town.

In implementing this policy, alternative parking solutions including financial contributions towards the provision and maintenance of public parking will normally be considered.



**Policy LK-TC-P-12: It is a policy of the Council that parking proposals within the designated town centre will only be supported:**

- a. for commercial developments in exceptional circumstances, where it would not prejudice the objectives of the Letterkenny Plan;**
- b. for residential and other developments appropriate to the town centre generally, only where such parking can be discretely accommodated within the development, and where the development design satisfies the town centre urban design ambitions of the Council.**

**In all other cases, a development contribution will be levied using the framework of the Development Contribution Scheme in force at the time of deciding on any application for planning permission.**

### **9.4.3 Building Heights**

Regional Policy Objective 3.7.27 of the RSES supports the preparation of a building heights study to guide the future development of the regional centre, targeting minimum density rates of 50 units per hectare in the town centre and a default rate of 35 units per hectare elsewhere. This plan supports the delivery of such a study in the interests of delivering compact growth allied to a high-quality built environment; a specific action to deliver a building heights study is set out below.

**Action LK-A-1: The Planning Authority will undertake a building heights study during the lifetime of this Plan, to guide the future development of the Regional Centre of Letterkenny.**

## **9.5 Retail Development**

Chapter 4.2 of the County Development Plan, 2018-2024 (As Varied) (CDP) contains a detailed policy framework for the management of retail development throughout the County. Retail development proposals in Letterkenny will be assessed against the aforesaid CDP policy framework and other relevant policies of this Plan.

## **9.6 Cumulative Impacts**

An over-concentration of certain hospitality and entertainment outlets can have negative impacts, including anti-social behaviour and the creation of 'dead' frontages. In the context of the Authority's efforts to regenerate the town centre, careful management of such uses is required.

**Policy LK-TC-P-13: It is a policy of the Council that proposals for amusement arcades, bookmakers, casinos and food take-away units will be considered within the 'Town Centre' zone provided that their development: (a) is not located within or abutting premises consisting of residential accommodation, schools or religious institutions; (b) is not contributing to the over concentration of such uses in a given area causing excessive noise, litter and anti-social hours of operation; and (c) contributes to the enhancement of streetscape and vitality and viability of the area.**



## Chapter 10 – Housing

### 10.1 Background

The housing policies contained herein have been drafted with the aim of placing quality at the top of the housing agenda; securing the compact growth and regeneration potential of Letterkenny and providing for residential environments that are attractive and functional. The strategy seeks to provide opportunities for private, social and affordable housing that are proximate to employment services, climate resilient, age friendly, safe and desirable. The housing policies must be read in conjunction with all other relevant policies of the Letterkenny Plan and the County Development Plan.

### 10.2 Overall Supply and Additional Provision.

#### 10.2.1 Overall Supply

The housing and population targets in the Letterkenny plan are based on the projections contained in the National Planning Framework and the NWRA’s Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. In this regard, it is noted that the vision of the RSES for Letterkenny refers to an additional 4000 houses being provided in Letterkenny between 2020-2040 (this equates to 200 houses per annum), whilst RPO 3.7.23 similarly seeks to ‘provide an additional 3,000-4,000 residential units within Letterkenny to facilitate the growth of Letterkenny to a minimum of 27,300 residents by 2040.

The population projections for Letterkenny as set out in the RSES (see table 10.1 below) provide for a growth of 440 persons per annum in Letterkenny between 2016 and 2031, and assuming an occupancy rate of circa 2.6 persons per dwelling unit (as indicated in the results from Census 2022) this would equate to a requirement for approximately 169 dwellings per annum in Letterkenny (for the purpose of calculating housing requirements for the LAP is it considered reasonable to utilise a broad estimate of 200 units per annum, or 1200 over the 6 year lifetime of the LAP).

**Table 10.1 Projected population growth in Letterkenny (source: NWRA RSES)**

<b>Letterkenny 2016</b>	<b>Letterkenny Uplift 2026</b>	<b>Letterkenny Uplift 2031</b>	<b>Letterkenny 2040</b>
Population: 19,300	4,400	2,200	Population: 27,300

It must be noted that the RSES projections start from a base year of 2016 and thereafter envisage a population growth of 440 persons each year out to 2031 (or circa 200 additional dwellings per annum being constructed in the town). However, when we look at housing completions within the Letterkenny CSO boundary since 2016 (see Table 10.2) we can see that in fact only 373 dwellings were completed in the 7- year period 2016-2022 inclusive, rather than the ~1400 projected by the RSES; a shortfall of approximately 1000 units.

In order to meet the growth targets envisaged for the Regional Centre, it is evident that the Letterkenny Plan must provide for the ~200 dwellings per annum projected by the RSES, but must also make up for the recent significant shortfalls in housing construction. There is therefore a need to plan for the construction of at least 2200 residential units over the 6-year life of the Letterkenny Plan (NB – the emerging Core Strategy for the County Development Plan 2024-2030, which utilises the population projections outlined in the NPF and the methodology outlined in the ‘Housing Supply

Target Methodology for Development Planning' Guidelines for Planning Authorities, arrive at an estimated need for 2300 dwellings in Letterkenny over a 6-year period.

Given the need for the Letterkenny Plan to be consistent with the County Plan, the figure of 2300 units is utilised hereafter for the purposes of calculating the required housing land supply). Table

**Table 10.2. Housing Completions in Letterkenny, 2016-2022.**

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of Housing Completions</b>
2016	27
2017	32
2018	52
2019	76
2020	102
2021	46
2022	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>373</b>

RPO 3.7.27 of the RSES stipulates that a default housing density of 35 units per hectare should be considered in Letterkenny, with the exception of areas of high density, where a minimum of 50 units per hectare should be targeted. Assuming a delivery of approximately 300 units within the town centre area over the lifetime of the plan, the density standards set out in the RSES equate to a requirement for approximately 57 hectares of residential land outside the town centre area (i.e. 2000 units at a density of 35 per hectare outside of the town centre area and a further 300 units within the town centre). This basic requirement however, must be further supplemented by additional housing land provision, which is elaborated on in section 10.2.2 below.

#### 10.2.2 Additional Provision of Housing Lands

Section 4.4.3 of the 'Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2022) state that "in providing housing sites for development within settlements, it may be necessary to zone more serviced land and sites for residential (or a mixture of residential and other uses) than would equate to meeting precisely the projected housing demand for that settlement", in order to provide a degree of choice in development sites and thereby avoid restricting the supply of new housing development as a result of inactivity on any given site. The completions figures set out in table 10.2 above illustrate the fact that the housing delivery market in Letterkenny has been severely underperforming in recent years. Furthermore, it must be acknowledged that the zoning of a site for residential purposes does not necessarily mean that the site will be brought forward for development. It is therefore essential, in the interests of supporting the growth of the Regional Centre (which in turn will support balanced regional development) that sufficient flexibility is provided in terms of available housing land in Letterkenny. For this reason, the Letterkenny Plan provides for a significant quantum of zoned housing land over and above the basic requirements identified in the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan. This additional provision also takes into consideration other issues that will affect housing demand in Letterkenny over the lifetime of the plan, most notably the significant influx of displaced persons and international protection applicants resident in the Letterkenny area (CSO figures indicate that there have been approximately 1300 arrivals from Ukraine to the Letterkenny-Milford electoral areas since 2022. Furthermore, there were over 1100 International Protection Applicants residing in Donegal in May 2023, many of which are accommodated in the Regional Centre). Whilst the quantum of zoned residential land necessarily exceeds the base provision outlined in the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan, it must be noted that this will not

compromise the compact growth of Letterkenny; indeed, 60% of the zoned residential lands fall within the CSO boundary for the town – far in excess of the 40% requirement set out under RPO 3.7.22 of the RSES.

### 10.2.3 Housing Location and Land Availability

In terms of housing location the provision of choice is one of the key themes that emerged during the public consultation exercises undertaken in respect of the Letterkenny Plan. The plan therefore identifies a wide range of housing opportunities with varying characteristics; ranging from town centre lands and infill sites within areas of established development, to sites located on the edge of, or within relatively easy reach of the town centre, thus enabling the consideration of a wide range of housing typologies and densities to cater for the housing needs of all sectors. In all cases, there will be a focus on building communities and ensuring that all necessary physical and social infrastructure is provided in tandem with new housing development. Table 10.2 below sets out details of potential residential lands within the plan area.

**Table 10.3 Residential Lands**

Site Ref.	Area (Ha)
<b>Primarily Residential</b>	
PR1	10.75
*	
PR3	1.97
PR4	0.79
PR5	14.00
PR6	24.46
PR7	1.14
PR8	0.45
PR9	2.08
PR10	1.23
PR11	9.8
*	
PR13	5.2
PR14	0.85
PR15	4.70
PR16	3.90

<b>Site Ref.</b>	<b>Area (Ha)</b>
<b>Primarily Residential</b>	
PR17	3.50
PR18	1.89
PR19	1.74
PR20	1.93
PR21	4.37
<b>Total:</b>	<b>94.75 Ha</b>
<b>Opportunity Sites</b>	
OPP1	7.25 (50% of total site area)
OPP2	4.54
OPP3	2.00 (8% of total site area)
OPP4	2.20
OPP5	2.32
OPP6	0.32
OPP7	5.1
OPP8	7.80 (50% of total site area)
OPP9	1.83
OPP10	9.80 (50% of total site area)
OPP11	1.44
<b>Total :</b>	<b>44.60 Ha</b>
<b>Total Primarily Residential and Opp. Site housing land:</b>	
	<b>139.35 Ha</b>
<b>Southern Strategic and Sustainable Development Site Total Area</b>	
	<b>34</b>

(\* ) Omitted in accordance with 'The Planning and Development (Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan 2023-2029) Direction 2024'.

### 10.3 Social Housing

Housing Policy Objective 4 of the Governments Housing Plan for Ireland, entitled 'Housing for All', seeks to increase social housing delivery. In line with this policy objective, Donegal County Council will continue to pursue a number of delivery streams to increase social housing provision in the Letterkenny area, in order to ensure that all sectors of society can have access to a home. The primary means of delivering social housing in Letterkenny to meet this objective include –

- Turnkey Developments;
- Site acquisition;
- Part V;
- Council built developments;
- Buy and Renew Scheme; and
- Schemes delivered by Approved Housing Bodies.

### 10.4 Objectives (refer also to Objectives in the County Development Plan)

**Objective LK-H-O-1: To ensure that an appropriate quantum and mix of housing types, tenures, densities and sizes is provided in suitably located residential areas and in appropriate brownfield/infill areas, in order to meet the needs of the population of Letterkenny, including the provision of private housing, social housing, affordable housing, student housing, traveller accommodation and appropriate residential care solutions designed for older persons and/or persons with disabilities. All housing developments will be subject to compliance with all relevant policies and standards contained in this plan and the CDP.**

**Objective LK-H-O-2: To secure the provision of all necessary physical and social infrastructure, inclusive of community, educational, health, childcare and recreational facilities, as appropriate, commensurate with the needs of new residential development. All physical and social infrastructure developments will be subject to compliance with all relevant policies and standards contained in this plan and the CDP.**

### 10.5 General Housing Policies (refer also to Policies in the County Development Plan)

**Policy LK-H-P-1: It is a policy of the Council to support the principle of multiple residential development (i.e. 2 or more units) on lands where the zoning objective, zoning matrix and/or policy wording pertaining to the subject lands support, or are consistent with, such a use. In determining the appropriate density and form of development on lands zoned as Established Development, the planning authority will have due regard to the site location and context, particularly in light of the compact growth objectives of national planning policy.**

**Policy LK-H-P-2: It is a policy of the Council to determine appropriate residential densities for housing sites having regard to the provisions of all relevant departmental guidelines, the provisions of Circular Letter: NRUP 02/2021, the specific nature of the development proposed and the site location and context.**

**Policy LK-H-P-3: It is a policy of the Council to manage the appropriate release of 'Strategic Residential Reserve' lands on the basis of a transparent, evidence-led approach that will involve annual assessment of the uptake of housing land within the Plan area and having regard to the provisions of the land-use zoning matrix. Release of 'Strategic Residential Reserve' lands for the provision of multiple housing development (i.e. proposals involving 2 or more residential units) shall only occur pursuant to an amendment to the Letterkenny Plan.**

**Policy LK-H-P-4: It is a policy of the Council to consider limited residential development proposals in areas identified as 'Local Environment' in accordance with the following:**

- **Proposals for single dwellings within areas zoned 'Local Environment' will only be considered in circumstances where the land in question is in family ownership and where the applicant/s can demonstrate a genuine need to reside on the subject site. Proposals for multiple housing developments (i.e. 2 or more dwellings) within areas zoned 'Local Environment' will not be considered.**
- **Any proposal for a single dwelling on lands zoned as 'Local Environment' will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposal:**
  - a) **Would integrate harmoniously with the local landscape, utilising and retaining key landscape features such as trees and hedgerows and;**
  - b) **Would not have an adverse impact on the existing character of the area or the residential amenity of adjoining properties.**

**Policy LK-H-P-5: It is a policy of the Council to consider proposals for single dwellings within areas zoned 'Strategic Residential Reserve.' Proposals for multiple housing developments (i.e. 2 or more dwellings) will not be considered. Proposals for single dwellings will only be permitted on lands identified as 'Strategic Residential Reserve' where it can be clearly demonstrated that:**

- **The location and layout of the dwelling would not compromise the ability of the site to facilitate the provision of comprehensive integrated residential development/s utilising the entire site area;**
- **The location and layout of the dwelling would not compromise the line of any proposed relief road or the provision of other strategic infrastructure;**
- **The proposal would not be detrimental to the residential amenity of any neighbouring properties or be injurious to the general character of the surrounding area; and**
- **The proposal would otherwise comply with all relevant policies and objectives of the Letterkenny Plan and County Development Plan.**

**Policy LK-H-P-6: It is a policy of the Council to require layouts of residential development to be designed and constructed having regard to best practice in terms of Universal Design, including the guidance for housing development set out in the National Disability Authority publication, 'Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach'.**

**Policy LK-H-P-7: It is a policy of the Council to require that all new multiple housing developments comprising 7 or more units in Letterkenny contain a minimum of 30% residential units that are built to universal design standards, in accordance with the requirements of the National Disability Authority publication 'Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach'. Where the total number of units to be constructed is**



**between 2 and 6, it is a policy of the Council to require that a minimum of 1 of those units be built to universal design standards.**

**Policy LK-H-P-8: It is a policy of the Council to require proposals for residential development to prioritise and facilitate walking, cycling, and public transport and to include provision for links and connections to existing facilities and public transport nodes in the wider neighbourhood.**

## **10.6 Site Specific Housing Policies**

In all cases, developers will be required to provide relevant infrastructural services to support development and create high quality residential environments with a sense of place and connectivity to the wider area. Furthermore, the principles of sustainable, inclusive and environmentally friendly design must be incorporated into development proposals. In addition to the foregoing, the planning authority would also note the following key considerations in respect of certain 'Primarily Residential' sites -

### **Primarily Residential Site No. 1**

**Site Area:** 10.75 Ha

#### **Key Considerations:**

- Permeability through the site, connectivity to existing road and paths in the wider area
- Suitably located and designed open spaces and provision for public transport, walking and cycling.

### **Primarily Residential Site No. 3:**

**Site Area:** 2 Ha

#### **Key Considerations:**

- Increased connectivity through the area.
- Vehicular access shall be provided at the southern end of the site, in order to avoid traffic being diverted through the existing, established housing area to the north.

### **Primarily Residential Site No. 4:**

**Site Area:** Approximately 0.8 hectares

#### **Key Considerations:**

- Developers will be required to ensure that future residents have ease of access to the existing amenity area to the north of the site.

### **Primarily Residential Site No. 5:**

**Site Area:** 14 hectares

#### **Key Considerations:**

- Developers will be required to distribute vehicular traffic accessing and leaving the site by examining the potential for access via the northern, southern and eastern sides of the site.

- Careful attention will need to be paid to surface water management on site, so as to ensure that the risk of pluvial flooding is not increased as a result of the development of these lands.

**Primarily Residential Site No. 6:**

**Site Area:** 24.46 Ha

**Key Considerations:**

- Developers of this site will be required to reserve approximately 1 hectare of 'Primarily Residential Site No. 6' for the provision of a playing pitch and associated facilities.
- The design of any residential scheme will be required to provide for pedestrian and cycle permeability through the site, particularly between Long Lane and Grange Road (L-1174-1) and through to Ballyboe Park.
- Developers will be required to provide multiple points of vehicular access to the site via Dr. McGinley Road (L-2164-1) the Grange Road (L-1174-1) and/or the Northern Network Project (Windyhall Rd).

**Primarily Residential Site No. 7:** This site of circa 1.1 hectares offers potential for an 'infill' development between the existing housing estates of Windmill View and Stoney Court to the south and east respectively and An Gleann Rua to the north.

**Site Area:** 1.1 Ha

**Key Considerations:**

- Existing pedestrian infrastructure along the northern site boundary is presently substandard and accordingly, developers will be required to address this issue to the satisfaction of the planning authority.

**Primarily Residential Site No.9 :** This site is located on the immediate northern edge of the Town centre with frontage on both High Road and DeValera Road.

**Site Area:** circa 2 Ha.

**Key Considerations:**

- An application for development on this site shall require the submission of an appropriately detailed flood risk assessment.
- The Strategic flood risk assessment that informed this Plan identified the need for a buffer around the watercourse that passes through this site and this area has thus been zoned as Open space.
- The protection or diversion of public sewers passing through the site to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

**Primarily Residential Site No. 10:** This site is located in an established residential area, within easy reach of the Oldtown neighbourhood centre and indeed the town centre.

**Site Area:** 1.23 Ha

**Key Considerations:**

- Developers will be required to reserve the corridor for the Council's Southern Network Project road scheme.

**Primarily Residential Site No. 11:** This site is located in an established residential area, within easy reach of the Oldtown neighbourhood centre and indeed the town centre.

**Site Area:** 9.8 Ha

**Key Considerations:**

- Developers will be required to reserve the corridor for the Council's Southern Network Project road scheme.  
Careful attention will need to be paid to surface water management on site, so as to ensure that the risk of pluvial flooding is not increased as a result of the development of these lands.

**Primarily Residential Site No. 14:** This small site is located within an established residential area and in close proximity to the ATU. The site offers the opportunity to expand the accommodation offer in the area, whether for private family homes or student accommodation.

**Site Area:** 0.83 Ha **Key Considerations:**

- Access to the south of the site is constrained by limited road widths and accordingly developers will be required to consider innovative means to enable safe pedestrian access to the site from a southerly direction, in conjunction with the existing established vehicular access.

**Primarily Residential Site No. 16:** This site is located adjacent to established housing developments at Killylastin/Killyclug, in an area identified by the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) as a location for residential growth.

**Site Area:** 3.9 Ha

**Key Considerations:**

- Developers will be required to engage with the roads service of the Council in relation to the provision of pedestrian footpaths and the realignment/reconfiguration/resurfacing of key road junctions and road sections in the area as necessary.

**Primarily Residential Site No. 17:** This site is located adjacent to established housing developments at Killylastin/Killyclug, in an area identified by the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) as a location for residential growth.

**Site Area:** 2.1 Ha

**Key Considerations:**

- Developers will be required to engage with the roads service of the Council in relation to the provision of pedestrian footpaths and the realignment/reconfiguration/resurfacing of key road junctions and road sections in the area as necessary.

**Primarily Residential Site No. 18:** This site is located adjacent to established housing developments at Killylastin/Killyclug, in an area identified by the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) as a location for residential growth.

**Site Area:** 1.89 Ha

**Key Considerations:**

- Developers will be required to engage with the roads service of the Council in relation to the provision of pedestrian footpaths and the realignment/reconfiguration/resurfacing of key road junctions and road sections in the area as necessary.

**Primarily Residential Site No. 19:** This site is located adjacent to established housing developments at Killylastin/Killyclug, in an area identified by the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) as a location for residential growth.

**Site Area:** 1.75 Ha

**Key Considerations:**

- Developers will be required to engage with the roads service of the Council in relation to the provision of pedestrian footpaths and the realignment/reconfiguration/resurfacing of key road junctions and road sections in the area as necessary.

**Site Specific Policies:**

**Policy LK-H-P-9:** In addition to ensuring compliance with all relevant planning policies and technical standards of this Plan and the County Development Plan, it is a policy of the Council to require developers to comply with the following site specific development requirements:

**Policy LK-H-P-9a (Primarily Residential Site No. 1):**

- (i.) A well lit and secure pedestrian, cycling and wheeling link shall be provided to the south of the site, to link with the existing footpath running along the northern edge of Regional Road R245; and
- (ii.) In the event that this parcel of land is developed on a phased basis, scheme layouts shall allow for the entirety of the land parcel to be accessed via local road L-1134-1 (i.e. suitable connectivity shall be maintained throughout adjoining layouts to allow vehicular access to the entirety of the site from local road L-1134-1).

**Policy LK-H-P-9b (Primarily Residential Site No. 3):**

- (i.) Vehicular access to this site shall be provided via the southern end of the site, onto New Line Road.
- (ii.) Site layouts shall ensure that any development provides for increased pedestrian and cycle connectivity between Circular Road and New Line Road.

**Policy LK-H-P-9c (Primarily Residential Site No. 4):**

- (i.) Developers will be required to provide a pedestrian link to the existing amenity area to the immediate north of the site (unless otherwise agreed with the planning authority), and to ensure that this link is appropriately designed in terms of accessibility, lighting and passive surveillance (i.e. the pedestrian link should be open, well-lit and overlooked by residential units so as to provide a greater degree of security for users).

**Policy LK-H-P-9d (Primarily Residential Site No. 5):**

- (i.) Developers will be required to provide for the distribution of vehicular traffic associated with the development of this site, by providing for vehicular access to the subject lands from the north (i.e. from the local road bounding the northern side of the site), south (i.e. from Willowbrook/the Elms) and the east (i.e. from College Park), where possible.
- (ii.) Notwithstanding any finalised arrangements in relation to vehicular access, pedestrian and cycle access shall in any event be provided to the site from the north, south and east.

**Policy LK-H-P-9e (Primarily Residential Site No. 6):**

- (i.) Developers will be required to provide multiple points of vehicular access to the subject lands; via Dr. McGinley Road (L-2164-1), the Grange Road (L-1174-1) and/or the Northern Network Project.
- (ii.) Developers will be required to realign/reconfigure Dr. McGinley Road (L-2164-1) to the satisfaction of the planning authority, in order to provide adequate capacity for additional traffic at this location.
- (iii.) Developers will be required to reserve approximately 1 hectare of the site for the provision of a playing pitch and associated facilities. The location of the lands reserved for the playing pitch shall, inter alia, be such that it would be easily accessible and would benefit from passive supervision from adjacent development.

**Policy LK-H-P-9f (Primarily Residential Site No. 7):**

- (i.) Developers will be required to provide high quality design proposals that visually address local road L-1152-1 to the north
- (ii.) Developers will be required to remedy deficiencies in the existing pedestrian footpath network bounding the site.

**Policy LK-H-P-9h (Primarily Residential Site No. 10):**

- (i.) Developers will be required to keep the Southern Network Project road reservation corridor (see land-use zoning map accompanying this plan) free from development. The means of vehicular access to the site shall be designed and configured so as to complement and facilitate the construction of the Southern Network Project.

**Policy LK-H-P-9i (Primarily Residential Site No. 11):**

- (i.) Developers will be required to keep the Southern Network Project road reservation corridor (see land-use zoning map accompanying this plan) free from development. The means of vehicular access to the remainder of the site shall be designed and configured so as to complement and facilitate the construction of the Southern Network Project.
- (ii.) Developers will be required to carefully consider surface water management on site and incorporate appropriate measures in this regard into the development proposal.

**Policy LK-H-P-9j (Primarily Residential Site No. 14):**

- (i.) Developers will be required to provide for safe pedestrian access to the site from a southerly direction, in conjunction with the existing established vehicular access.

**Policy LK-H-P-9k (Primarily Residential Site No. 16):**

(i.) Developers of this site will be required to engage with the roads service of the Council in relation to the provision of pedestrian footpaths and the realignment/reconfiguration/resurfacing of key road junctions and road sections in the area as necessary.

**Policy LK-H-P-9l (Primarily Residential Site No. 17):**

(i.) Developers will be required to engage with the roads service of the Council in relation to the provision of pedestrian footpaths and the realignment/reconfiguration/resurfacing of key road junctions and road sections in the area as necessary.

**Policy LK-H-P-9m (Primarily Residential Site No. 18):**

(i.) Developers will be required to engage with the roads service of the Council in relation to the provision of pedestrian footpaths and the realignment/reconfiguration/resurfacing of key road junctions and road sections in the area as necessary.

**Policy LK-H-P-9n (Primarily Residential Site No. 19):**

(i.) Developers will be required to engage with the roads service of the Council in relation to the provision of pedestrian footpaths and the realignment/reconfiguration/resurfacing of key road junctions and road sections in the area as necessary.

## **10.7 Southern Strategic and Sustainable Development Site**

In addition to the housing development opportunities identified on lands zoned as 'Primarily Residential', 'Opportunity Site' and 'Town Centre', the Plan also identifies a key future development area to the south of the River Swilly. Development of this area, hereafter referred to as the Southern Strategic and Sustainable Development Site (SSDS), is currently constrained by the absence of water and sewer networks, a bridge crossing over the immediately adjacent River Swilly and deficiencies in the local road network. Notwithstanding these current constraints, the area is specifically addressed in this Plan because of its location immediately adjacent to the town centre and the sequential growth opportunities that arise. Furthermore, the area has the potential to deliver housing as part of a wider, masterplanned approach that would ensure the integration of neighbourhood level services, schools and community amenities together with opportunities for greatly increased connectivity within the town.

### **Potential of the SSDS**

The SSDS comprises approximately 34 hectares of largely undeveloped land to the south of the River Swilly (see map 10.1). These lands occupy a strategic position on the southern fringe of the town centre and offer a real opportunity to create a high quality, walkable neighbourhood incorporating housing, childcare, schools and neighbourhood level retail and service uses; a neighbourhood that would be fully aligned with the compact growth objectives of the National Planning Framework and that would offer residents the prospect to reside in, and truly interact with, the heart of the town.

Given the prime location of these lands, and the opportunity they present to achieve significant compact growth of the town, it is an objective of the Planning Authority to seek the development of this area. However, significant infrastructural challenges must be overcome if these ambitions are to be realised. It is imperative that these infrastructural challenges are addressed on an overall coherent

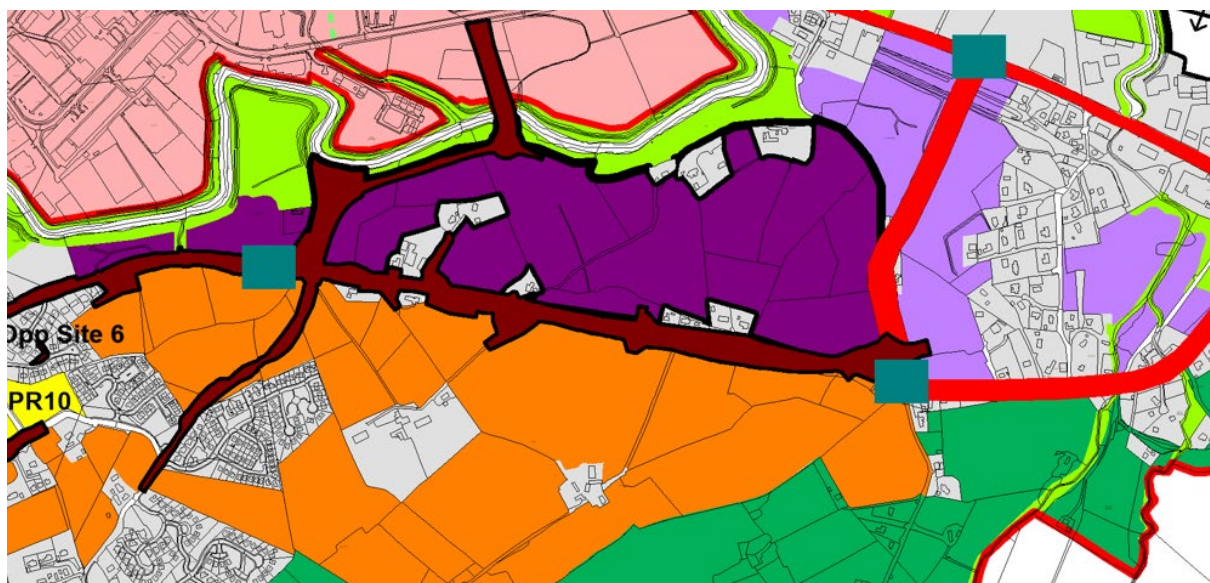
strategic basis and to ensure that individual development sites are not dealt with on a piecemeal or isolated basis.

In terms of access, there are two key issues that must be considered collectively. Firstly, a bridge crossing (both vehicular and pedestrian) over the River Swilly towards the town centre is essential before any significant occupation of lands could be considered. A connection between the required new bridge and Leck Road must also be provided. The route identified on map 10.1 below is the optimum location for such a connection, as identified by the Council during a wider detailed study of the Leck Road area.

The second issue that must be considered is the limitations of local road L-1114 (Leck Road) as it presently exists and the carrying capacity of the Oldtown Bridge. Notwithstanding, a significant proportion of the movements into and out of the planned SSDS are likely to use the aforementioned required new bridge. For this reason, it is considered that development within the SSDS could proceed in advance of the major improvements to the Leck Road envisaged under the Council's Southern Network Project, subject to the new bridge crossing and internal connection to Leck Road being provided, and subject to frontage set-back on the Leck Road as required.

The servicing of this area with sewer and water presents further challenges for all stakeholders. Given the scale of the SSDS, the Council is of the view that the most orderly way to proceed is by way of an agreed overall infrastructure masterplan, with funding and implementation mechanisms clearly identified to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority. The said infrastructure masterplan should address the identified bridge crossing and surface water drainage, as well as foul sewer and water connections. The alternative to the aforementioned is piecemeal infrastructure provision that is likely to result in greater unit costs and longer-term higher maintenance costs for relevant authorities that may also present challenges in terms of effective and robust taking-in-charge of housing infrastructure in the future.

Finally, as already noted in Chapter 6, it is an objective of the Planning Authority (Objective DSC1) to work towards the resolution of infrastructural deficits that affect areas such as the SSDS in consultation with all relevant stakeholders.



Map 10.1 – SSDS and potential link road from town centre

**Policy LK-H-P-10: It is a policy of the Council to support significant development proposals within the SSDS only where:**

- i. a. A comprehensive infrastructure masterplan has been agreed by the Planning Authority, and funding and implementation mechanisms for the required strategic infrastructure have been clearly identified to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority. The said infrastructure masterplan shall address, inter alia:**
  - **A bridge crossing of the River Swilly and link road to Leck Road,**
  - **Foul sewer connections,**
  - **Water supply connections,**
  - **Surface water drainage inclusive of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems as required,**
  - **Effective integration of the TEN-T and Southern Network Project road schemes.**
- b. A layout masterplan consistent with the infrastructure masterplan and the masterplanning principles set out in Table 10.3 below has been agreed with the Planning Authority;**
- c. Such proposals adhere to the infrastructure masterplan and layout masterplan referred to above; and**
- d. Detailed arrangements in relation to the provision of the key elements of strategic infrastructure as referred to above have been established to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.**

**The following strategic infrastructure will be required before first occupation of any development:**

- **A bridge crossing of the River Swilly and link road to Leck Road,**
  - **Foul sewer connections,**
  - **Water supply connections,**
  - **Surface water drainage inclusive of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems as required**
- ii. Occupation of development to be provided shall only be permitted where all required strategic infrastructure has been completed to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.**

The Council is committed to reviewing the Plan in terms of policy for this broad area south of the river, inclusive of the Strategic Residential Reserve lands to the south of Leck Road, as and when development between the River and Leck Road is evidently progressing. The Council will also keep its policy for this area under review in the context of the potential applicability of the 'Urban Development Zone' concept being brought forward planning under the Planning and Development Bill, 2022.



**Table 10.3 Principles for layout masterplan to guide the development of the SSDS**

<b>Vision:</b>	To create a plan-led, diverse urban neighbourhood to the immediate south of Letterkenny town centre; incorporating residential uses, neighbourhood level retail services, schools, community buildings and amenities.
<b>General Principles – Mixing Uses and Masterplanning</b>	All new development will be expected, where practicable and appropriate to the scale of the proposal, to provide a mix of uses and/or types of dwelling which combines the primary activities of housing and community uses whilst avoiding conflict with other incompatible uses.
<b>Indicative residential density:</b>	35-50 units per hectare (refer also to Policy LK-H-P-2)
<b>Housing types:</b>	<p>Mixed: Apartments, duplexes, terraced town houses, semi-detached units, detached units.</p> <p>Housing around the neighbourhood centre should consist of terraced town houses and/or apartments in a manner consistent with Policy LK-H-P-2.</p>
<b>Indicative building heights:</b>	Up to 3 storeys may be considered. Different configurations may be considered within defined neighbourhood centres.
<b>Landscape and Open Spaces:</b>	<p>Emphasis shall be placed on the quality of design and materials, landscaping, street furniture, signage and the quality of the built environment as a contribution to positive placemaking. Neighbourhood services shall be gathered around a high quality civic space.</p> <p>The layout masterplan shall create streets and spaces that are easy to navigate using key views and buildings as landmarks. The network and orientation of streets shall encourage movement on foot and by bicycle.</p> <p>The layout of all developments shall seek to maximise passive surveillance, security through design and accessibility for all. In this regard, paths shall be well lit and fitted with appropriate street furniture; devoid of potential obstacles; main entrances and areas available for public use shall be clearly visible from adjoining buildings, streets and other areas.</p> <p>The river corridor shall be developed as a public amenity / public open space and provision shall be made for the construction of walkways/greenways/cycleways along the length of the river banks. Clearly legible and aesthetically pleasing routes shall be provided to connect with the river corridor from within the masterplan area.</p> <p>Landscaping shall be designed to promote low carbon neighbourhoods through high quality green (e.g. woodlands, parks,</p>

	<p>playing fields, natural habitats) and blue (e.g. rivers, ponds) infrastructure.</p> <p>Landscaping shall be designed to provide amenity, promote biodiversity and shall incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems that are planned and built in consideration of future flood risk projections.</p> <p>Developments shall be designed to ensure that the primary elevations of any new buildings front onto adjacent open spaces and do not turn their back on or present high boundary treatments to such spaces.</p> <p>Developers shall consider the future management of the landscape, with appropriate measures put in place to ensure future funding of landscape management.</p> <p>Homes shall have access to an area of useable private or semi-private open space as appropriate.</p> <p>Applicants for new major development will be expected to provide public art within the development, having due regard to the importance of involving local artists and local community groups. The provision of any such public art installation shall be subject to local consultation.</p>
<p><b>Movement and Connectivity:</b></p>	<p>Proposals shall provide for the development of a network of roads and streets, varying in scale and character, but sharing a similar high quality sustainable and enduring design that is of sufficient quality to contribute positively to the neighbourhood’s sense of place.</p> <p>Proposals must provide for the creation of a safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle network with high levels of legibility and permeability, affording direct links to the town centre, local neighbourhood centre and the wider area.</p> <p>Proposals shall be designed to enhance public transport facilities and networks.</p> <p>Traffic speeds shall be managed by providing variation in road corridor width and edge treatments including landscaped margins, rather than via vertical deflection.</p>
<p><b>Efficiency and adaptability:</b></p>	<p>Buildings, gardens and public spaces shall be laid out to exploit the best solar orientation.</p> <p>Homes shall be energy efficient and an appropriate proportion shall be designed to allow for ease of adaptation, extension and subdivision where appropriate (e.g. for the creation of an annexe or small office or to allow for the conversion of space in the roof or garage to living accommodation if required).</p>

	The masterplan should make adequate provision for community recycling facilities. The location of such facilities will be considered at the detailed design stage.
<b>Education:</b>	The masterplan shall make appropriate provision for the reservation of lands for schools, commensurate with the level of residential development proposed and having regard to the capacity of existing schools in the area, in consultation with the Department of Education and prevailing best practice national guidelines.
<b>Flood Risk Management</b>	Development proposals shall be accompanied by a comprehensive Flood Risk Assessment in order to demonstrate that proposed works will not be subject to a flood risk or exacerbate the risk of flooding elsewhere.

## 10.8 Developments in Glencar and the Wider Vicinity

As noted in Chapter 14 of this Plan, Glencar is one of the most densely populated parts of Letterkenny, perhaps reflective of its proximity to the town centre and its range of neighbourhood shops and services. Glencar has the potential to become a thriving, edge of centre neighbourhood, fully rooted in the principles of compact growth and offering residents access to a wide range of amenities within a relatively short distance. However, the Glencar area also suffers from significant traffic congestion at peak times and it is crucial that positive intentions regarding the development of the area do not ultimately end up compounding the existing traffic issues. The Council has plans in place to ease traffic congestion in this area, via the development and enhancement of active travel measures and via roads-based initiatives. With regard to the latter, the development of the Northern Relief Road is seen as a key proposal to alleviate traffic congestion and improve circulation on the northern side of Letterkenny. For these reasons, the Council will require the payment of a financial contribution in respect of developments in the Glencar area and wider vicinity that will stand to benefit from the delivery of the Northern Relief Road, thereby ensuring that the necessary road infrastructure is delivered to support additional development on the northern side of the town.



## Chapter 11 – Opportunity Sites

The Opportunity Sites identified hereunder present a wide range of development opportunities by reason of their strategic location, scale, nature or current use. The text and associated policies below provide guidance as to the types of development that the Planning Authority would deem appropriate on each site.

**Opportunity Site 1:** This site, bounded by the Town Park, DeValera, Ramelton and Gortlee Roads, and Whitethorn housing developments, comprises one of the few remaining significant woodlands within the town. The site and the setting of Gortlee House represent a major environmental asset to the town and therefore proposals will be required to demonstrate compatibility with the environmental setting of the site.

**Design Guidance for Opportunity Site 1:** The concept for developing the site shall demonstrate the following elements:

- That the site is developed as a town park campus, retaining the substantive woodland cover of the site and providing for discrete pockets within which buildings can be introduced into an extended parkland setting.
- That pre-planning consultation be carried out with the Planning Authority.
- That the proposal provides for an extension of the existing town park, linking through to Gortlee Road and providing for the conservation of the existing mature woodland cover with full public access. The substantive areas of new parkland space must be contiguous with and adjacent to the existing town park.
- The setting of Gortlee House is safeguarded when considered both within the confines of the site and from views into the site.
- A high standard of architectural quality shall be achieved throughout, having regard to the nature of the site as an important landmark site. Density within the site will be carefully considered having regard in particular to the heritage value of Gortlee House and the wooded nature of the site.
- Vehicular access to the development shall be achieved via a new access/access improvement on Gortlee Road, subject to engineering and road safety assessment. Proposals to access the site from De Valera Road will only be considered where a clear justification is demonstrated together with evidence of minimal impacts on the town park, and subject to adequate and appropriate engineering and road safety measures both within the site and outside the site.
- Pedestrian and cycle access will be required to link through the development connecting the Town Park, De Valera Road, Gortlee Road and the Whitethorn housing area.
- The public parkland areas shall be served by footway and cycleway access, street lighting and park furniture as required by the Council and provided by the developer.

**Policy LK-OPP-1:** It is a policy of the Council to support the principle of the following development types on Opportunity Site 1, subject to compliance with all relevant policies and standards contained in this plan and the CDP and subject to adherence to the design guidance for the site:

- Residential (over a maximum of 50% of the total site area),
- Offices,
- Restaurant/Pub/Guesthouse/Hotel use,
- Tourism; and
- Institutional use.

**Opportunity Site 2:** This site is located along Gortlee Road where there is substantial residential development, the Church of the Irish Martyrs and a range of industrial and employment generating activities to the north of the site. This site presents an opportunity to develop neighbourhood centre uses (e.g. a mix of small local retail units and community services so as to enhance the existing established neighbourhood amenities). The site also offers potential for residential development and office use.

**Policy LK-OPP-2:** It is a policy of the Council to support the principle of the following development types on Opportunity Site 2, subject to compliance with all relevant policies and standards contained in this plan and the CDP.

- Residential,
- Offices,
- Local neighbourhood level retail activity in accordance with the provisions of the County Development Plan; and
- Commercial use.

**Opportunity Site 3:** The former UNIFI site is a brownfield site where regeneration is sought through appropriate sustainable uses. Development potential on a portion of the site is constrained somewhat by the existence of a potential flood risk. However, in such areas the site may offer opportunities for development that is deemed less vulnerable to flooding (in accordance with the provisions of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities) subject to the findings of a site specific flood risk assessment, which must accompany all proposals for development on this opportunity site.

**Policy LK-OPP-3:** It is a policy of the Council to –

- (i.) Support the principle of the following development types on Opportunity Site 3, subject to compliance with all relevant policies and standards contained in this plan and the CDP.
  - Employment and commercial use,
  - Car showrooms,
  - Medical related facilities/services,
  - Leisure use,
  - Sports (except sports retail),
  - Wholesale warehousing,
  - Bulky goods retail warehousing; and
  - Residential use (over a maximum area of 2 hectares on the eastern side of the site and only in locations outside of the potential flood risk area, as identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment that informs this Plan).
- (ii.) Require the submission of an appropriately detailed Flood Risk Assessment with all proposals for development on Opportunity Site 3.
- (iii.) Retain and protect the existing belt of mature trees that runs generally from the south-eastern corner of the former Unifi 'plant 2' building to the Kilty Road.

**Opportunity Site 4:** The former Donegal Creameries site is located proximate to both established residential and employment areas, at a point close to the termination of the TEN-T PRIPD road scheme in Letterkenny.

**Policy LK-OPP-4:** It is a policy of the Council to –

- (i.) Support the principle of the following development types on Opportunity Site 4, subject to compliance with all relevant policies and standards contained in this plan and the CDP and demonstration of compatibility between neighbouring uses.
  - Employment and commercial use,
  - Residential; and
  - Local neighbourhood-level retail activity in accordance with the provisions of the County Development Plan.
- (ii.) Require cycle and pedestrian connectivity to adjoining lands to the north and west, unless otherwise agreed with the planning authority.

**Opportunity Site 5:** This site is located in close proximity to the town centre and the ATU, in an area that is home to a significant amount of both commercial and residential development. The site offers potential for mixed uses including residential development. Retail uses will not be permitted on this site.

**Policy LK-OPP-5:** It is a policy of the Council to –

- (i.) Support the principle of the following development types on Opportunity Site 5, subject to compliance with all relevant policies and standards contained in this plan and the CDP.
  - Residential,
  - Use as a guest house/hostel/hotel/,
  - Nursing home,
  - Community and recreational use,
  - Education and childcare facilities,
  - Office development,
  - Light industry; and
  - Medical/healthcare uses.
- (ii.) Require that vehicular access to the site be provided via the Ballyraine Road to the north of the site and require that development proposals comply with all relevant road safety standards.
- (iii.) Require pedestrian and cycle connectivity through the site in a north south direction (i.e. facilitating pedestrian and cycle connectivity from the N56 to the Ballyraine Road).

**Opportunity Site 6:** This small site of approximately 0.3 hectares is located adjacent to existing neighbourhood services at Oldtown and presents an opportunity to further consolidate this neighbourhood centre via a mix of uses.

**Policy LK-OPP-6:** It is a policy of the Council to support the principle of the following development types on Opportunity Site 6, subject to compliance with all relevant policies and standards contained in this plan and the CDP.

- Residential,
- Local neighbourhood-level retail activity in accordance with the provisions of the County Development Plan,
- Restaurant use,
- Pub use,
- Offices,

- Community use,
- Medical/healthcare; and
- Other uses deemed to be appropriate by the planning authority, having regard to the need to both enhance the service needs of the locality and the need to protect residential amenities.

**Opportunity Site 7:** This site of approximately 5 hectares is located in close proximity to a good selection of local level services and offers potential for a mix of uses that consolidate this neighbourhood centre.

**Policy LK-OPP-7:** It is a policy of the Council to –

- (i) Support the principle of the following development types on Opportunity Site 7, subject to compliance with all relevant policies and standards contained in this plan and the CDP.
  - Residential,
  - Commercial use,
  - Offices; and
  - Educational use.
- (ii.) Require pedestrian and cycle permeability through the site in both north-south and east-west directions (i.e. residents must have easy access and connection to existing pedestrian and/or cycle paths to the east, north and south of the site, taking account of the most likely desire lines for pedestrians and cyclists).

**Opportunity Site 8:** This substantial site of approximately 15 hectares is located in close proximity to a number of major employers and significant community services such as Letterkenny University Hospital, Errigal College and Coláiste Ailigh.

**Policy LK-OPP-8:** It is a policy of the Council to -

- (i.) Support the principle of the following development types on Opportunity Site 8, subject to compliance with all relevant policies and standards contained in this plan and the CDP.
  - Residential,
  - Commercial and General Employment use that is in keeping with the nature of established development in the nearby IDA Business Park,
  - Community and recreational use,
  - Educational use; and
  - Nursing home use.
- (ii.) Require developers to construct a section of the Northern Network Project along the northern site boundary, to the specification of the planning authority (i.e. developers will be required to complete the Northern Network Project from the Knocknamona roundabout side, westwards to the junction/roundabout that serves the subject lands).
- (iii.) Require pedestrian and cycle connectivity from the site through to Long Lane, and from the south-eastern corner of the site out to the Kilmacrenan Road, unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority.

**Opportunity Site 9:** The former site of the Model Bakery is well located in relation to the town centre and offers opportunities for residential, commercial and educational use. Retail use will not be permitted on this site.



**Policy LK-OPP-9:** It is a policy of the Council to –

- (i.) Support the principle of the following development types on Opportunity Site 9, subject to compliance with all relevant policies and standards contained in this plan and the CDP.
  - Residential,
  - Commercial use; and
  - Educational use.
- (ii.) Require the provision of a pedestrian link to the existing amenity area to the south of the Opportunity Site (unless otherwise agreed with the Planning authority), and to ensure that this link is appropriately designed in terms of accessibility, lighting and passive surveillance (i.e. the pedestrian link should be open, well-lit and should benefit from passive supervision so as to provide a greater degree of security for users).

**Opportunity Site 10:** This substantial site of approximately 20 hectares offers potential for residential/neighbourhood development and/or development to complement the existing business district in the area / ATU lands to the immediate south.

**Policy LK-OPP-10:** It is a policy of the Council to –

- (i.) Support the principle of the following development types on Opportunity Site 10, subject to compliance with all relevant policies and standards contained in this plan and the CDP.
  - Residential,
  - Local neighbourhood level retail activity in accordance with the provisions of the County Development Plan,
  - Commercial and General Employment use that is in keeping with the nature of established development in the nearby IDA Business Park; and
  - Educational use.
- (ii.) Require that development on Opportunity Site 10 proceed in accordance with a masterplanned approach which shall be agreed with the Council as part of the planning process. The masterplan shall deal with the area denoted 'Masterplanned Approach' on the legend of the land-use zoning map and shall, inter alia, -
  - (a.) Provide for vehicular, pedestrian and cycle connectivity from Opportunity Site 10 through the lands to the immediate south and on through the IDA business park and,
  - (b.) Provide for pedestrian and cycle connectivity from Opportunity Site 10 through adjoining lands to the east (in order to facilitate connectivity with the Lisnennan Road) and;
  - (c.) Provide for vehicular, pedestrian and cycle connectivity from Opportunity Site 10 through adjoining lands to the north/northeast, with egress onto the N56 in the vicinity of the Mountain Top (unless otherwise agreed with the planning authority).
  - (d.) Provide comprehensive details in relation to the phasing of development,
  - (e.) Provide comprehensive details on how all relevant traffic safety policies and standards are to be complied with and
  - (f.) Provide details of collaborations with other landowners in the area as regards the overall development of the masterplan area.

**Opportunity Site 11:** The former site of the Oatfield factory occupies a prime position at the junction of the De Valera and Ballyraine Roads. Development opportunities on a portion of the site are constrained somewhat by the existence of a potential flood risk and a corridor of 'Open Space' has thus been allowed for alongside the watercourse that passes through the site, in accordance with the findings of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) that informs this Plan; however, the majority of the site is outside of the area of concern identified in the SFRA and the previously developed, brownfield nature of the site must also be acknowledged. As such, considerable potential remains for a range of development types, subject to the findings of a site-specific flood risk assessment, which must accompany all proposals for development on this opportunity site.

**Policy LK-OPP-11:** It is a policy of the Council to –

- (i.) Support the principle of the following development types on Opportunity Site 11, subject to compliance with all relevant policies and standards contained in this Plan and the CDP.
  - Residential
  - Commercial use,
  - Retail (subject to the provisions of the retail strategy of the CDP); and
  - Recreational use.
- (ii.) Require the submission of an appropriately detailed Flood Risk Assessment with all proposals for development on Opportunity Site 11.

## Chapter 12 - Climate Adaptation and Mitigation

### 12.1 Background

Planning has a key role to play in reducing vulnerability to the negative effects of climate change, by promoting compact development, providing for optimum transport and movement solutions, and by ensuring that vulnerable development is not located in inappropriate areas, such as areas of potential flood risk. The opportunities for development within the Letterkenny Plan area have therefore been identified having regard to the need to promote the compact growth of the town and taking account of best available information concerning flood risk. Furthermore, at the project level, the Letterkenny Plan will strive to promote innovative building design and residential layouts that take account of the likely impacts of climate change, thus giving due consideration to energy efficiency, flood resilience, impacts on biodiversity, provision of green and blue infrastructure, re-use of brownfield land and facilitation of public transport; thereby ensuring that the residential and commercial environments of Letterkenny serve as an exemplar in the context of Ireland's transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society.

### 12.2 Mitigation and Adaptation

Climate change adaptation and mitigation are distinct, but complementary activities. Adaptation refers to the anticipation of the effects of climate change and taking appropriate action to prevent or minimize any adverse effects whilst taking advantage of opportunities that may arise. Adaptation measures in this plan and the CDP 2018-2024 include flood risk management strategies, the promotion of Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) and the promotion of innovative urban design solutions that respond to the urban environment of Letterkenny.

Mitigation is the process of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to limit the extent to which our climate changes in the future. It involves measures such as improving energy efficiency, switching to more sustainable energy sources and trapping and storing carbon to prevent its release into the atmosphere. Mitigation measures in this Plan include the integration of land-use and transport planning, the promotion of active travel, delivering compact growth and promoting energy efficiency in the design and layout of development.

### 12.3 Flood Risk Management

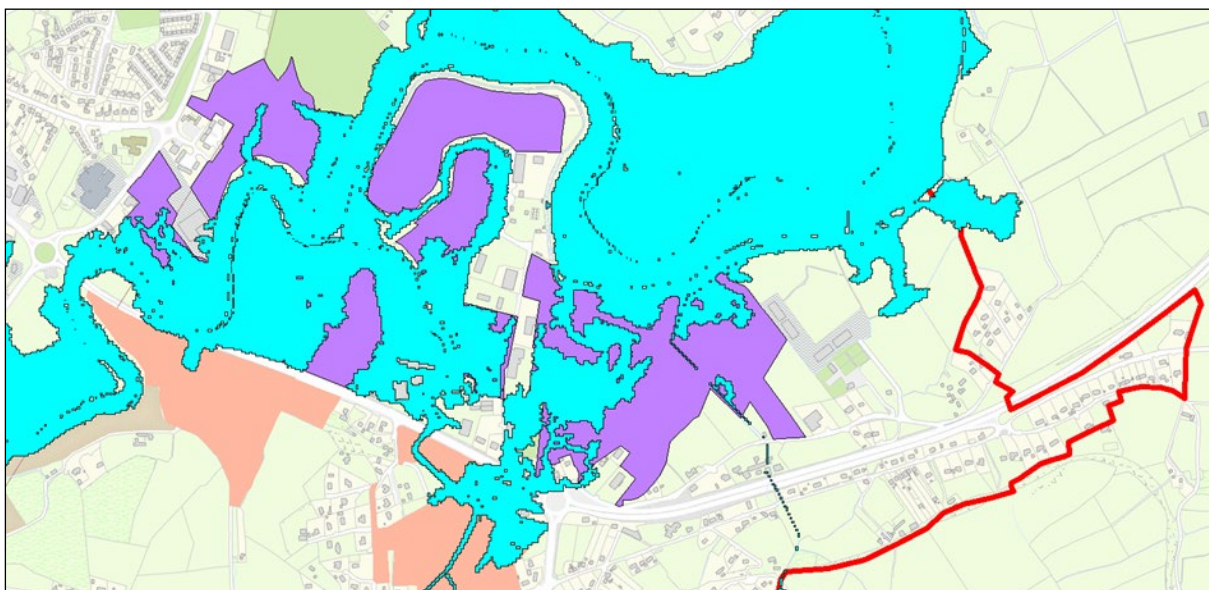
As noted in section 4.3.4, considerable areas within the Letterkenny Plan boundary are at risk from coastal and fluvial flooding. Furthermore, the topography of the town is such that the risk of pluvial flooding (overland flow that occurs when the amount of rainfall exceeds the capacity of urban storm water drainage systems or the ground to absorb it) must be carefully considered and managed.

The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) prepared in support of the Letterkenny Plan has highlighted two areas of particular concern as regards flood risk; the town centre area see Section 9.4.1 and the Bonagee area. Furthermore, the SFRA also highlights the fact that areas of existing, established development require careful consideration in the context of flood risk management.

*12.3.1 Town Centre Flood Risk and Letterkenny Regeneration Strategy (Letterkenny 2040) Refer to Chapter 9, Section 9.4.1.*

### ***12.3.2 Flood Risk in the Bonagee Area***

The Bonagee area of Letterkenny is home to numerous commercial enterprises and will continue to function as an important area of economic activity. However, as already noted under Section 8.1.4, the OPW CFRAM study, and indeed the SFRA undertaken in association with this Plan, have identified that this area is particularly prone to the effects of flooding. In accordance with the provisions of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities, this Plan aims to avoid areas of significant flood risk and hence certain locations that were previously zoned for employment use have been re-zoned as 'open space'. To compensate for the loss of employment lands in the Bonagee and Port Road areas, new areas of 'General Employment and Commercial' land have been provided for in the Mountain Top area and in Bonagee; the latter at locations outside of Flood Zone A. Coupled with the additional supply of commercial and employment lands throughout the town, these zonings ensure that there is adequate provision for economic development and employment generation in the Regional Centre.



**Map 12.1** Flood Zone A at Bonagee and the Port Road area (SFRA for Letterkenny, 2022)

### ***12.3.3 Pluvial/Surface Water Flooding***

The geography of Letterkenny, whereby the town centre lies alongside the River Swilly at the base of the adjoining valley hillsides, is such that careful consideration must be given to how further development on elevated lands might affect lands at lower elevations, particularly in terms of flooding. In this regard, the planning authority will promote the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) to ensure that new development does not compromise the proper functioning of the urban drainage network. Furthermore, the planning authority will, where appropriate, require developers to provide comprehensive Drainage Impact Assessments (DIA) that detail proposed drainage design for a development (foul and surface water) and that also examine the off-site drainage (ie the efficiency and suitability of the drainage network beyond the proposed development site).

### ***12.3.4 Flood Risk within Areas of Existing Development***

There are certain, already-developed parts of Letterkenny that are at risk of flooding. In some of these areas, it is reasonable to expect that there may be proposals for developments of a limited scale (e.g. small scale infill housing, extensions, or changes of use). Where such development is deemed to be appropriate from a locational, servicing and environmental perspective, the Planning

Authority has carried out 'justification tests' as part of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) report on the Letterkenny Plan, and where the justification test has been passed, those areas remain open in principle for development. The areas of existing development that conflict with flood zones, but where certain development types can be justified, are clearly identified in the SFRA report (see Section 6.2) and prospective applicants are advised to consult said report in this regard. In assessing planning applications within such areas, the Planning Authority will ensure adherence to the principles of the 'Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines' and in this respect will impose limitations on development proposals pursuant to the findings of relevant justification tests (see Appendix B of SFRA report).

### **12.3.5 Additional Flood Risk Management Policy**

The County Development Plan (CDP) contains a comprehensive suite of policies in relation to flood risk management, centred on the guidance and approaches set out in the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government publication 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities'. In assessing and managing flood risk within the Letterkenny Plan boundary, the planning authority will utilise both the policy framework set out in this plan and the CDP, thereby providing a solid foundation to ensure compliance with the flood risk management guidelines and effective adaptation to the increasing threat of flood risk on foot of climate change.

## **12.4 Objectives**

**Objective CAM-LK-O-1: To ensure Letterkenny transitions to a low carbon, competitive, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable settlement by 2050, via the implementation of the policies and development strategy of this Plan that, inter alia, seek to deliver compact growth, integrated land use and transport, sustainable transport choices, renewable energy production, reduced energy consumption, enhanced ecological biodiversity and climate adaptation measures such as appropriate flood risk management, sustainable urban drainage systems and high quality place-making and design.**

**Objective CAM-LK-O-2: To work in partnership with Inland Fisheries Ireland and National Parks and Wildlife Service on the construction of any flood alleviation measures.**

**CAM-LK-O-3: It is an objective of the council to ensure that flood risk management measures in Letterkenny consider and provide for effective climate change adaptation, as set out in the OPW Flood Risk Management Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan (OPW 2019).**

## **12.5 Action in Respect of Emerging Climate Change Policy**

**ACTION: To keep emerging climate change policy and best practice under review and ensure that the Letterkenny Plan remains consistent with future climate change policy formulation.**

## 12.6 Policies

**Policy CAM-LK-P-1:** It is a policy of the Council to facilitate the provision and roll-out of additional electric charging points at appropriate locations in Letterkenny, in association with relevant agencies and stakeholders.

**Policy CAM-LK-P-2:** It is a policy of the Council to increase native tree coverage and pollinator friendly planting in Letterkenny by requiring the planting of suitable native trees and hedgerows and flowers as part of development proposals, at appropriate locations along public roads, residential streets, parks and other areas of open space, in order to enhance local biodiversity, visual amenity and sustainable nature-based surface water management and drainage approaches.

**Policy CAM-LK-P-3:** It is a policy of the Council to support in principle the development of renewable sources of energy within the plan area and to encourage the integration of micro-renewable energy sources into the design and construction of new developments.

**Policy CAM-LK-P-4:** It is a policy of the Council to actively promote and encourage high biodiversity value nature-based approaches and green infrastructure solutions within development proposals, as viable mitigation and adaptation measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to increase the adaptive capacity of environments.

**Policy CAM-LK-P-5:** It is the policy of the Council to support in principle the utilisation and sharing of waste heat in new or extended industrial and commercial developments, where the processes associated with the primary operation onsite generates waste heat.

**Policy CAM-LK-P-6:** It is a policy of the Council to require, save in exceptional circumstances, that all proposals within public and private developments and within the public realm incorporate the use of SUDs as a nature based approach, to minimise and limit the extent of impermeable hard surfacing and paving and reduce the potential effects of flooding in accordance with 'Nature-based Solutions to the Management of Rainwater and Surface Water Runoff in Urban Areas, Water Sensitive Urban Design Best Practice Interim Guidance Document (2022)'.

**Policy CAM-LK-P-7:** It is a policy of the Council to require the provision of energy efficient street lighting in all developments.

**Policy CAM-LK-P-8:** It is a policy of the Council to require new residential and commercial developments to give due consideration to environmental sustainability and energy efficiency in terms of their siting, orientation, design and construction, and in this regard applications for new residential and commercial development shall be accompanied by a report setting out how these considerations have been integrated into the development proposal.

## Chapter 13 – Natural and Built Heritage

### 13.1 Background

The natural landscape setting enjoyed by Letterkenny, including the backdrop of hills to the north and south and the river corridor comprised of the River Swilly and Swilly Estuary running through the centre of the town, is one of the town's greatest assets, offering immense amenity value in addition to supporting biodiversity and contributing to a sense of place and identity. Kilty Woods Proposed Natural Heritage Area is another asset for the town on its eastern side. Likewise, the significant built and cultural heritage is a reminder of the history of the town and contributes to its streetscapes. This heritage includes the Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) centred on the Cathedral area, twenty structures on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS), twenty structures on the Record of Monuments and Places, two historic graveyards and some seventy-nine properties listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (refer to Appendix B for details). The natural heritage includes the Lough Swilly Special Protection Area (SPA) and the Lough Swilly Special Area of Conservation (SAC), both of which have an environmental influence on the town.

This Plan seeks to manage the built and natural heritage of Letterkenny whilst allowing for carefully considered interventions where such interventions may be justified. The broad policy framework contained in the County Development Plan 2018-2024 (As Varied) is already an effective suite of policies for the management of development proposals in Letterkenny (refer Chapter 7: 'The Natural and built Heritage'). These policies will be applied as appropriate in the consideration of planning applications that may impact on the heritage of Letterkenny. In addition to this broad framework, Letterkenny-specific policies are included in this Plan that will be material to the consideration of planning applications in the town where relevant.

### 13.2 River Swilly/Swilly Estuary

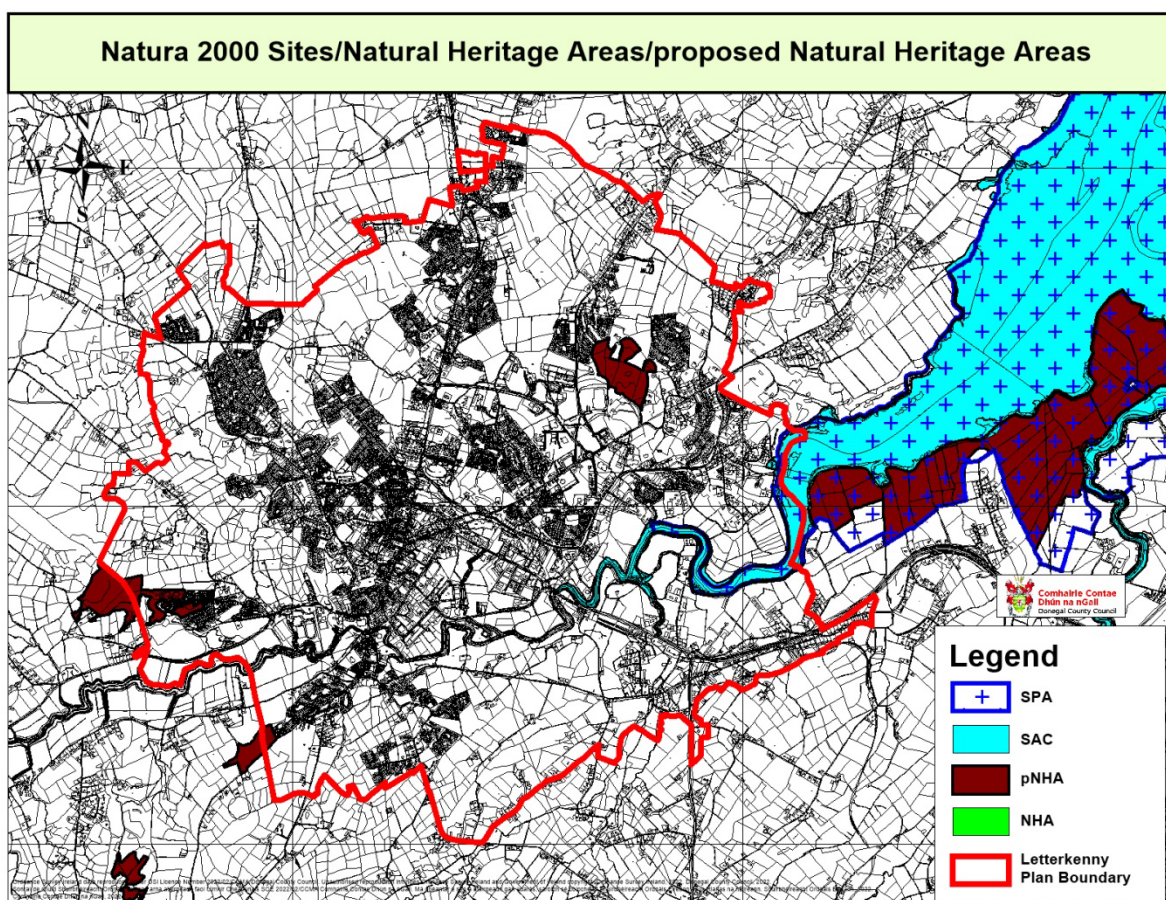
At the heart of town, but yet somewhat removed from the focus of the built environment, the River Swilly is currently an under-utilised resource. The river offers opportunities, particularly in and around the town centre, for a number of uses including the creation of new amenity space, recreational corridors and flood management areas. Given this potential, and given the Council's vision for, and investment in, the regeneration and re-imagining of the town centre, it is considered reasonable to expect private sector development to also embrace the river as a positive feature. All developments in the vicinity of the river must also ensure protection of the SPA and SAC.

**Objective LK-NBH-O-1: To ensure that an Appropriate Assessment, in accordance with Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive and with DEHLG guidance (2010), is carried out in respect of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site to determine the likelihood of the plan or project having a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects and to ensure that projects which may give rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on Natura 2000 sites will not be permitted (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) unless for reasons of overriding public interest.**



**Policy LK-NBH-P-1: It is a policy of the Council to:**

- a. **Support the principle of the creation of new amenity spaces, amenity corridors and natural biodiversity and wetlands systems adjacent to the River Swilly corridor . Such proposals shall include detailed consideration of the importance of, and the integration of, nature-based solutions for surface water management, in accordance with 'Nature-based Solutions to the Management of Rainwater and Surface Water Runoff in Urban Areas, Water Sensitive Urban Design Best Practice Interim Guidance Document (2022)' and be in line with relevant environmental designations and policies and standards contained in this plan and the CDP; and**
- b. **Generally require developments adjacent to the River Swilly to 'address' the river by means of incorporating new amenity spaces, amenity corridors, natural biodiversity and wetlands systems and publicly accessible active frontages, save in exceptional circumstances.**



**Map 13.1 Natura 2000 Sites/Natural Heritage Areas/proposed Natural Heritage Areas**

### **13.3 Letterkenny Cathedral Quarter Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)**

The positive and ongoing work in Letterkenny’s Cathedral Quarter shines a light on the opportunities that exist through the reinvigoration of our traditional streetscapes and buildings. The special character of the Cathedral Quarter ACA (see Map 13.2) is derived from its rich settlement history,



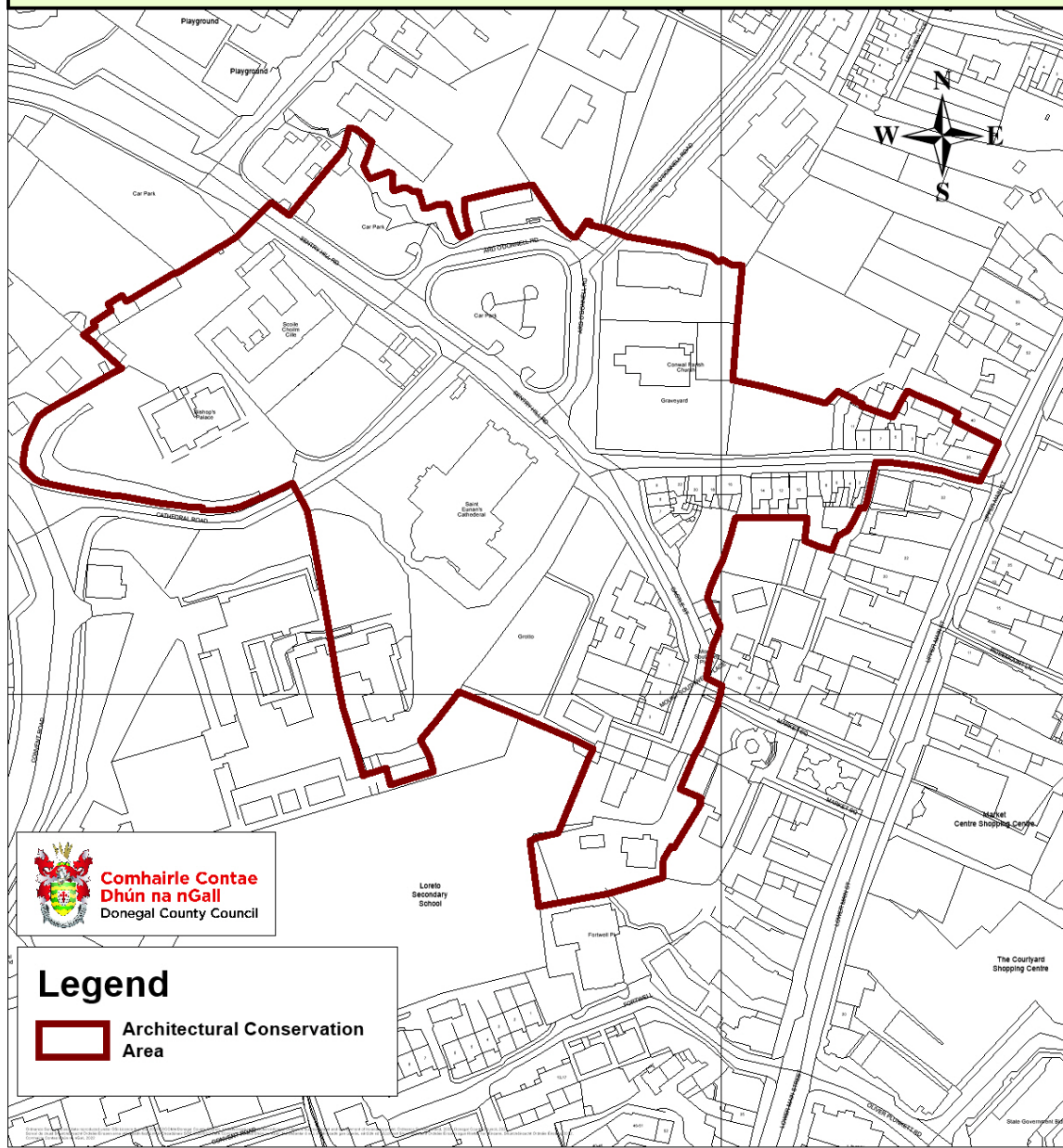
being the original historic core of the town. The ACA contains many architectural resources, from its imposing terraced houses at Mount Southwell and its more modest residential streetscapes, to its concentration of spacious school sites and important detached ecclesiastical landmark buildings, with their notable landscape settings and use of traditional building materials in their architecture. One of the most significant landmarks is St Eunan's Cathedral, with the prominent setting of the Cathedral resulting in fine views and vistas afforded throughout the townscape.

Remnants of vernacular buildings and the layers of other architectural styles add to the special character of the ACA. The retention of outbuildings and stone boundary walls to the rear of the streetscape also heighten the special interest of this area. The use of a traditional palette of materials, inclusive of rubble stone, traditional render, welsh slate, painted timber and iron work, all contribute further to the character of the ACA. Some houses retain features such as sash windows, railings and other boundary treatments that add to the attractiveness of the streetscapes. However, over time some original features and palettes of materials have incrementally been lost from buildings and have been replaced by modern inappropriate materials. In 2019, works were undertaken under the Historic Towns Initiative to reinstate the original palette of materials into Lower Church Lane, which has significantly enhanced the character of this section of the conservation area, reduced vacancy levels on the street and instilled a sense of pride in terms of the connection of local people with the history of their area. In general terms, it is a combination of all of these elements that contribute to the special character of the Cathedral Quarter ACA and the Council will continue to encourage property owners to reinstate original materials and features when modern materials or features fail and need to be replaced.

The Cathedral Quarter has established itself as a cultural destination and area for the arts, community events, local businesses and tourism. It is important that any interventions in terms of the public realm, which has a significant role to play in terms of improving the vibrancy of the area, are of high quality and meet the needs of the residents, businesses and visitors to the area whilst also relating appropriately to the historic character of the ACA.

With regard to the foregoing, Appendix C of this Plan sets out detailed guidance for developments within the ACA and developers are advised to have due regard to this guidance, as well as to Policy LK-NBH-P-3 below when designing proposals. Demolition of existing building stock which contributes to the character of the area will not generally be permitted. New build, whether modern or traditional in style, should be designed to contribute positively to the character of the area and the Council will be seeking to ensure that all development proposals complement and enhance the ACA.

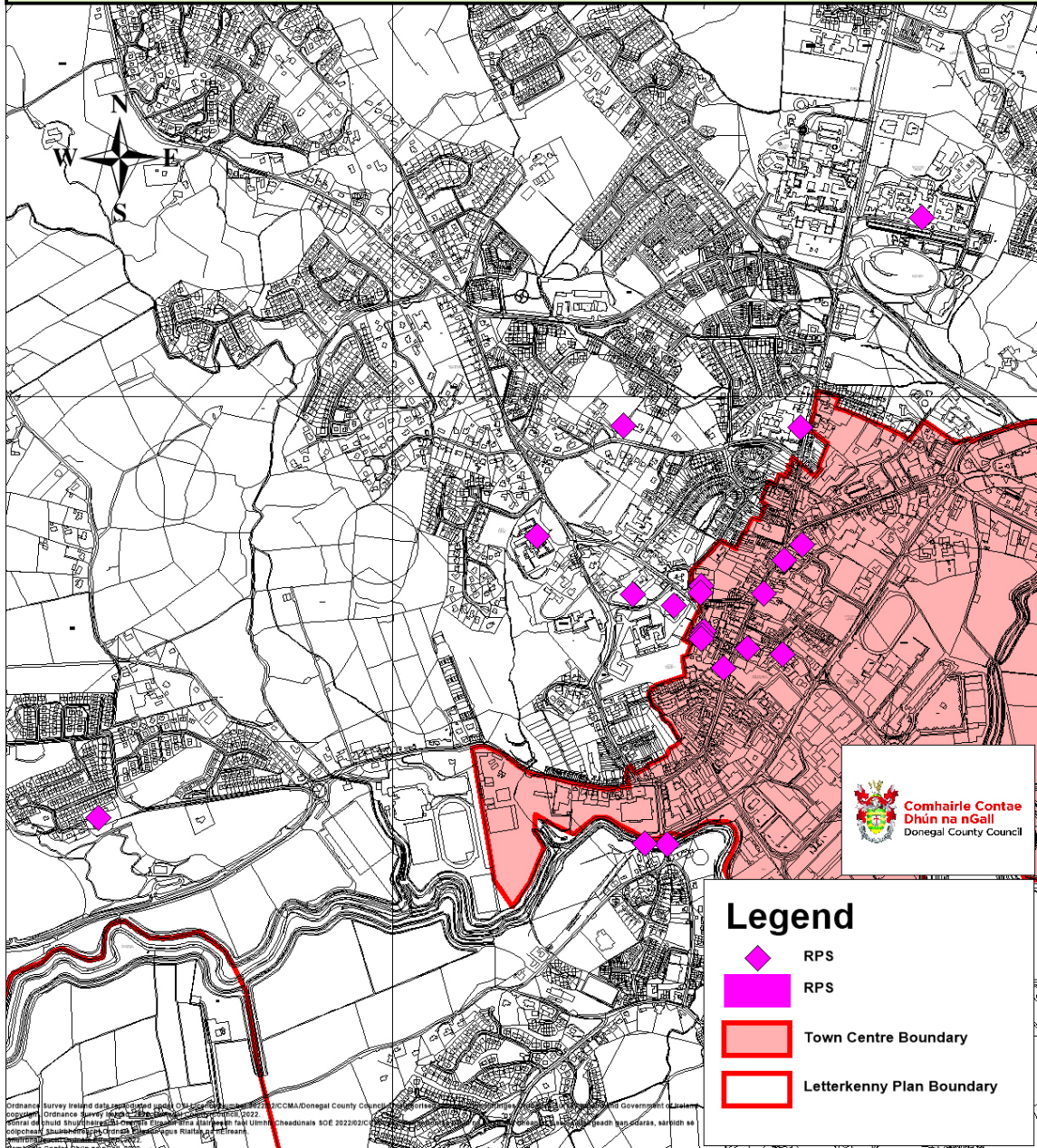
# Letterkenny Cathedral Quarter Architectural Conservation Area



Map 13.2 Letterkenny Cathedral Quarter ACA

### Map 13.3

### Record of Protected Structures



Map 13.3 Location of RPS structures within Letterkenny

**Policy LK-NBH-P-2: It is a policy of the Council to protect and enhance the special character of the Letterkenny Cathedral Quarter ACA.**

**Policy LK-NBH-P-3: It is the policy of the Council to manage the ACA as follows:**

- (a) The Council shall ensure that any development in the ACA will be carefully controlled to protect, safeguard and enhance its special character. The special character of the area includes its traditional building stock and material finishes, spaces, streetscape, landscape and setting.**
- (b) Streetscape views within, into and out of the ACA shall be maintained, enhanced and protected, particularly with reference to the character of Cathedral Square, Church Lane, and Castle Street**
- (c) It is the policy of the Council to ensure that any developments, modifications, alterations or extensions affecting a protected structure, adjoining structure or structure within an Architectural Conservation Area, are sited and designed appropriately and are in no way detrimental to the character or setting of the structure or surrounding area.**
- (d) It is the policy of the Council to protect structures recorded on the RPS and features that contribute to the character of the ACA.**
- (e) In consideration of applications for development within the ACA, the following principles will apply:**
  - Proposals will only be permitted where they positively enhance the character of the ACA.**
  - The siting of new buildings will, where appropriate, retain the existing street building line.**
  - The massing and scale of any new building form will respect and positively integrate with neighbouring buildings and the character of the area.**
  - Architectural detailing of historic buildings will be retained and restored.**
  - In respect of developments within an ACA and where, in the opinion of the planning authority, the application of car parking standards otherwise required by this Plan negatively impacts on the character of an ACA, the Council will consider a Financial Contribution in lieu of shortfall in car parking spaces.**

Planning applications for development within the ACA must include sufficient and detailed documentation to inform the proposed development, supported by a written assessment of the proposed development on the character of the area, completed by a suitably qualified individual with experience working with historic buildings. Pre-planning discussions with the planning authority shall be required in advance of making any formal application.

## **13.4 Long-Established Residential Areas**

There are a number of long-established residential areas within and on the edge of the traditional town centre. Notwithstanding the regeneration ambitions for the town centre, it is reasonable to ensure that these communities are protected and not impacted negatively by development activity in and around the town centre.

**POLICY LK-NBH-P-4: It is the policy of the Council to protect the architectural, cultural and historic value of residential communities within and on the edge of the town centre that are identified as 'Long Established Residential Areas' on the land-use Zoning Map (Map 7.1).**



## Chapter 14 – Social, Community and Culture

### 14.1 Background

It is well recognised that the creation of sustainable places is about more than the delivery of residential units; rather it is the case that a host of ancillary services, facilities and amenities must be provided to ensure that towns and neighbourhoods develop as functional communities. Letterkenny is host to a wide range of social, community, cultural, educational, recreational and public service facilities that serve the town and the wider County, and indeed the far-reaching service role of Letterkenny has recently been consolidated further as a result of its recognition as a Gaeltacht Service Town, given its significant role in providing services to Gaeltacht areas of the County.

### 14.2 Community Facilities at Glencar

Notwithstanding the extent of services available in Letterkenny, this Plan recognises that some of the most densely populated parts of the town, (and most notably the Glencar area, which contains approximately 3,000 dwellings) are lacking in terms of certain community and recreational facilities. In terms of the sequential development of Letterkenny, areas such as Glencar are considered to be ideal, being located close to the town centre and already having a certain level of neighbourhood services. However, significant levels of additional residential development in Glencar would not be appropriate without ensuring that commensurate levels of community and recreational facilities are delivered in parallel with new homes. Specific actions for the Glencar area in this regard are therefore set out below.

#### Action GC-A-1

Donegal County Council will explore all options and potential funding and delivery mechanisms, (including but not limited to the use of planning conditions and development contributions) to secure the provision of appropriate community facilities for the Glencar area commensurate with levels of new residential development, subject to compliance with all relevant policies and standards contained in this plan and the CDP. These will include :

- i. The re-imagining of Ballyboe Park, including provision of a children's play-park;
- ii. The provision of a football pitch and associated ancillary area sufficient to meet local league standards;
- iii. The provision of a community building that would accommodate changing rooms for the football pitch and space for community/youth gatherings/events;
- iv.
  - a. Development of a detailed Active Travel (walking and cycling) action plan for the broader Glencar/Long Lane area, with e.g. links down to schools on College Road also incorporated;
  - b. Development of the relevant section of the key active travel link from Glencar to Long Lane to Windyhall;

### 14.3 Burial Grounds

The Council recognises the need for the appropriate provision of burial facilities to serve the range of community needs within the area. In particular, the Council note the requirement to establish an appropriate location in respect of multi-denominational and non-religious burial services. Deciding on the correct location for such facilities involves detailed assessment on many levels, including amongst other things issues such as land-take/area requirements, potential environmental implications, traffic safety issues and integration with neighbouring land-uses. The land-use zoning map that

accompanies the Letterkenny Plan identifies an area to the east of the existing Leck Graveyard with a 'Community/Education' zoning, thus opening this area up for possible expansion of the existing graveyard if deemed appropriate. Further opportunities for burial grounds may exist outside of the plan boundary and the planning authority will continue to work proactively to identify suitable lands to cater for the burial needs of the expanding Regional Centre.

## 14.4 Cultural Venues and Public Spaces

Letterkenny is well served by cultural venues, including amongst others the County Library on St. Oliver Plunkett Road, the County Museum on High Road and the Regional Cultural Centre and An Grianan Theatre on Port Road. With regard to the latter three, linkages between the Port and High Roads are to be enhanced and promoted on foot of the 'Re-imagine' project<sup>6</sup>, bringing cohesiveness to the cultural offering in this part of the town and improving the visitor experience.

In terms of public green spaces, Letterkenny offers three very attractive and well maintained parks; namely Ballymacool Park, Bernard McGlinchey Park and Ballyboe Park, the latter of which has potential to better serve the Glencar area as discussed at Section 14.2 above. Research has shown that urban green space, such as parks, playgrounds, and residential greenery, can promote mental and physical health and reduce morbidity and mortality in urban residents by providing places to relax and alleviate stress, stimulate social cohesion, support physical activity, and reduce exposure to air pollutants and noise. As Letterkenny continues to grow therefore, it will be important to protect the existing recreational assets of the town and develop new green spaces for leisure and play, both formal and informal.

In the town centre, a competition was launched in 2020 for concept design proposals to redesign the Market Square for use as a more functional and inviting public space. Illustrations of the winning design proposal can be seen in Fig. 14.1 below. It is envisaged that more definitive design work will be undertaken in the near future and that this will be published for consultation purposes with the aim of securing Part VIII planning consent to deliver a reinvigorated public space for the town. Such works, coupled with the ongoing town centre regeneration process, will ensure that the core of Letterkenny remains attractive as a place for social gathering and events.



Fig 14.1 Winning design concept for Market Square<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> An Irish Architecture Foundation project, supported by the Creative Ireland Programme's National Creativity Fund, to promote the physical linkage between the County Museum, An Grianan Theatre and the Regional Cultural Centre.

<sup>7</sup> Designed by Joseph McCallion, Landscape Architect

## 14.5 Social Infrastructure

### 14.5.1 Background

Social Infrastructure refers to services and facilities which are essential for health, wellbeing and the social development of a town. Social infrastructure facilities include for example, schools, public transport, health services, doctors' surgeries and community specific services, as well as areas which can offer active sports and passive recreational activities such as the town parks referenced in Section 14.4

### 14.5.2 Health and Education

With regard to health services, Letterkenny has a wide range of facilities including Letterkenny University Hospital; child, family and community mental health services; addiction and counselling services; GP clinics and dental practitioners. Likewise, the town is well served in terms of educational institutions, being home to the third level Atlantic Technological University (ATU), four secondary schools and eight primary schools that serve the town's population. Going forward, the Letterkenny Plan identifies opportunities for new school construction should same be required, facilitates the appropriate expansion of the University Hospital through suitable land-use zoning and supports the provision of new healthcare and childcare facilities at appropriate locations throughout the town (the provision of childcare is expanded upon in Section 14.6 below).

## 14.6 Childcare

Childcare facilities are a critical part of the social infrastructure of successful urban areas; in many cases supporting the maintenance of the workforce, promoting social inclusion and contributing towards the social and educational development of children.

The Letterkenny urban area is served by 20 childcare facilities, providing early learning and care to approximately 1500 children; with a further 800 childcare places provided outside the town area.<sup>8</sup> Currently all services are at capacity and are operating waiting lists. Given the ambitious growth aspirations for Letterkenny, it is imperative that suitable childcare facilities are provided in tandem with new development, and in this regard the Council will require the provision of new facilities in accordance with the standards set out in the Government's 'Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2001), which set a benchmark provision of one childcare facility per 75 dwelling units, but which also allow for revised thresholds, having due regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas. The scale and unit mix of proposed development will also be a consideration in terms of determining requirements for childcare facilities. In implementing planning policy with regard to childcare in Letterkenny, the Council will actively consult with the Donegal County Childcare Committee in order to determine the extent of childcare needs in given areas.

## 14.7 Universal Design

The urban area of Letterkenny must be developed in a manner that acknowledges the diverse abilities of its residents, workers and those visiting the town. Donegal County Council recognises that people should be able to use buildings and places comfortably and safely, as far as possible without special assistance and that, as a basic principle of good design, places should be accessible, convenient and pleasurable for all to use. Policy LK-H-P-6 of this Plan (Section 10.5) requires that layouts of new residential developments be designed and constructed having regard to best practice in terms of Universal Design, whilst Policy LK-H-P-7 requires that a minimum of 30% of units within new

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<sup>8</sup> Source: Donegal County Childcare Committee, April 2021



residential developments be constructed to universal design standards. Coupled with the implementation of all government guidance and standards in this area, which Donegal County Council is committed to, this Plan and associated strategies will ensure the development of Letterkenny in a sustainable and fully inclusive manner.

## 14.8 Objectives

**Objective LK-SCC-O-1: To deliver all social infrastructure (including, but not limited to, childcare and education facilities, healthcare, social, community and recreational facilities, parks and open spaces) necessary to support the growth of the Regional Centre; both in locations of new development and in existing, long-established areas where the need exists. All infrastructure development will be subject to compliance with all relevant policies and standards contained in this plan and the CDP.**

**Objective LK-SCC-O-2: To support the development of cultural attractions and venues at appropriate locations in Letterkenny.**

## 14.9 Policies

**Policy LK-SCC-P-1: It is a policy of the Council to require the provision of appropriately located and purpose-built early learning and childcare facilities to meet the pro-rata childcare needs of housing development during the plan period, in accordance with the standards set out in Government's 'Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities' or any subsequent iteration of said Guidelines.**

**Policy LK-SCC-P-2: It is a policy of the Council to support the principle of developing new childcare facilities to serve existing established residential and commercial areas, where there is a demonstrable need for such facilities and subject to compliance with all relevant policy provisions and standards.**

**Policy LK-SCC-P-3: The Council will support the continued growth and expansion of the Atlantic Technological University campus in the town centre, including the Mission and Vision set out in the University's Strategic Plan and including business development/incubation projects that are associated with the University, subject to compliance with all relevant policies and standards contained in this plan and the CDP and the following:**

- (a) That any new development is of a high quality and innovative architectural design that will represent landmark buildings to identify this important site.**
- (b) That any new development located on the Port Road side of the campus will be of an appropriate density, and will provide for a Gateway entrance to the town whilst elsewhere on the site, new development will not impact negatively on residential amenities.**
- (c) That any new development makes provision for permeability, ease of access and provision of appropriate infrastructure that will support walking, cycling and public transport.**
- (d) That any new development will not give rise to unacceptable transport or environmental effects.**
- (e) That proposals to integrate relevant social infrastructure, such as childcare, will be encouraged.**

**Policy LK-SCC-P-4: It is the policy of the Council to protect land of recreation and open space value in order to ensure the provision of sufficient lands and amenities for the use and enjoyment of the public.**



# PART B – LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

## Chapter 15 – Transport Policy Framework

### Introduction

**Part A of this Plan - 'The Letterkenny Plan' - sets out the strategic land use framework for the town over a 6-year minimum lifetime. This 'Local Transport Plan' for Letterkenny constitutes 'Part B' and must be read in tandem, and as part of, 'Part A The Letterkenny Plan'.**

This document has been developed at a strategic level in accordance with national and regional policy, the key elements of which are set out below.

### 15.1 National Policy Context

#### **National Planning Framework (NPF) and National Development Plan (NDP)**

The National Planning Framework (NPF) sets out ten high level strategic goals that outline the priorities across key sectors and themes by way of National Strategic Outcomes' (NSO's). The NPF recognises the importance of integrating land use and transport planning to achieve compact growth and sustainable mobility, and accordingly sets out NSOs with a transport focus:

- ❖ **Compact growth** – 'Carefully managing the sustainable growth of compact cities, towns and villages will add value and create more attractive places in which people can live and work'.
- ❖ **Enhanced Regional Accessibility** – 'To enhance accessibility between key urban centres of population and their regions'.
- ❖ **Sustainable Mobility** – '...that by 2040 our cities and towns will enjoy a cleaner, quieter environment free of combustion engine driven transport systems.'
- ❖ **Transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society** – '...the national objective of achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050.'

**The NPF also identifies the following investment priorities:**

- ❖ **The National Road Network**
- ❖ **Environmentally Sustainable Public transport**
- ❖ **Climate Action.**

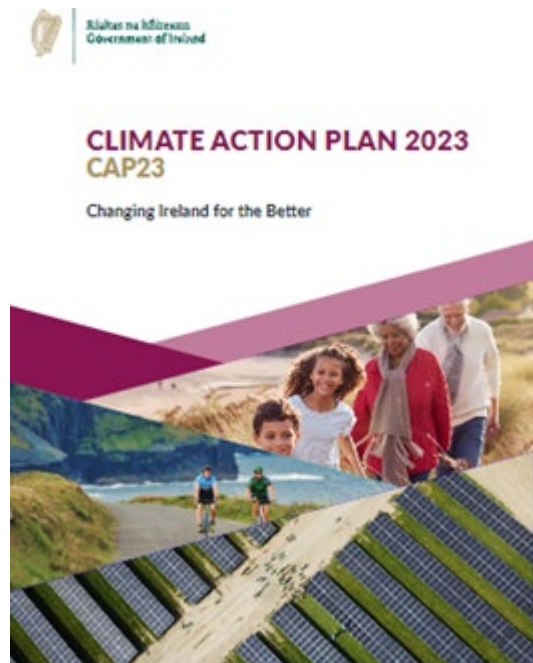
**TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal** - The National Development Plan accompanying the NPF provides specific support for TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal (Chapter 7, 'Enhanced Regional Accessibility, National Roads/New Infrastructure p.64 refers, wherein is listed the N56/N13 Letterkenny to Manorcunningham, and the N14 Manorcunningham to Lifford/Strabane/A5 routes that impact on Letterkenny).

This Local Transport Plan aligns with these strategic objectives whilst recognising that the achievement of the NSOs at a local level within Letterkenny is wholly dependent on all stakeholders

and plan users 'driving' this hugely important sustainable mobility agenda to deliver on the objectives and recommendations in the Plan.

### Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP 23)

This Plan sets out a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve Ireland's emissions by 2030 and



reach net zero no later than 2050, as committed to in the Programme for Government in 2021. Transport accounts for approximately 20% of Ireland's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions with road transport responsible for 96% of those GHG emissions and also directly responsible for a range of air pollutants that negatively impact both human health and the environment. The levels of noise, accidents, and congestion associated with road transport reduces quality of life, deters active travel, and costs society hundreds of millions of euro per annum in wasted time. Promoting cleaner, safer and more sustainable mobility is critical for climate policy, and it also represents an opportunity to improve our health, boost the quality of our lives, meet the needs of our growing urban centres, and connect our rural, urban and suburban communities.

In view of the emissions and the energy use for transport, the Plan establishes a clear approach and rationale for the need to achieve a significant change in how Irish society travel and create a shift to more sustainable alternatives.

The Climate Action Plan emphasises sustainable, and particularly active, travel but also notes that providing for the sustainable movement of goods, services and people will necessarily include some travel by road and thus the development of future necessary roads infrastructure projects. The Plan calls for a significant cut in transport emissions by 2030 through measures including:

- 500,000 extra walking, cycling and public transport journeys per day by 2030
- Increasing the proportion of kilometres driven by passenger electric cars to between 40 and 45% by 2030, in addition to a reduction of 10% in kilometres driven by the remaining internal combustion engine cars
- All replacements for bus and commuter rail vehicles and carriages to be low or zero carbon by 2030
- Increased rollout of rural public transport through Connecting Ireland. [42-50% reduction in emissions by 2030].

Ways in which to achieve these transport focused targets are comprehensively detailed in the plan and summarised below:

- Sustainable Mobility
- System efficiency and demand management
- Fleet Electrification
- Renewable and Alternative Transport Fuels.
- Horizon actions and emerging technologies.

## National Sustainable Mobility Policy

The National Sustainable Mobility Policy sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport journeys to help Ireland meet its climate obligations. Accompanied by an action plan to 2025 it sets out actions to improve and expand sustainable mobility options across the country by providing safe, green, accessible and efficient alternatives to car journeys. It also includes demand management and behavioural change measures to manage daily travel demand more efficiently and to reduce the journeys taken by private car.



The policy aims to deliver at least 500,000 additional daily active travel and public transport journeys by 2030 and a 10% reduction in the number of kilometres driven by fossil fuelled cars. It will make it easier for people to choose walking, cycling and use public transport daily instead of having to use a petrol or diesel car.

## National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI), Department of Transport

The National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI) is the Department of Transport's strategic framework for future investment and decision making in transport and seeks to enable the National Planning Framework, support the Climate Action Plan, and promote positive social, environmental, and economic outcomes throughout Ireland. NIFTI sets out the road user modal hierarchy in Ireland as;

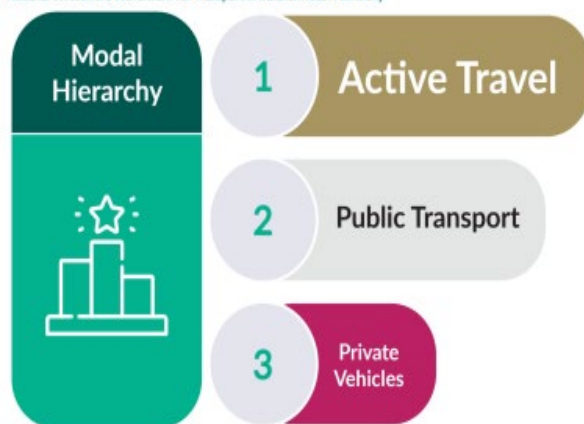
1. Active Travel (Walking & Cycling);
2. Public Transport;
3. Private Vehicles.

NIFTI also outlines an intervention hierarchy which is:

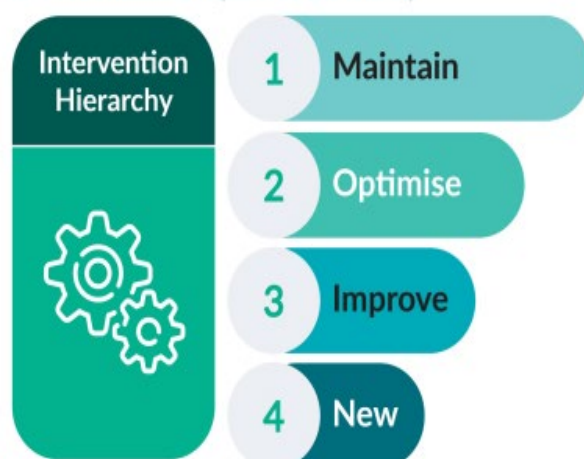
1. Maintain;
2. Optimise;
3. Improve;
4. New, all set out as per the adjacent figures <sup>9</sup>.

The NTA's ATOS tool and the Council's GIS systems have been central to the identification of modal networks and where and how improvements are necessary to create a connected and functioning network within the town in accordance with 'New' and 'improved' stages in the NIFTI hierarchy of interventions as per below.

National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland Modal Hierarchy



National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland Intervention Hierarchy



<sup>9</sup> National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI), Department Of Transport.



## 15.2 National Guidance

### Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA).

This National guidance prepared by both the NTA and TII sets out a step-by-step approach (see Fig. 15.1 below) to the assessment and development of local transport policy and interventions. It is intended to ensure that the assessment of transport demand and its associated impact plays a central role in informing the future development proposals of an area, and how local authorities can ensure that transport planning is integrated into the development planning process at a local level.

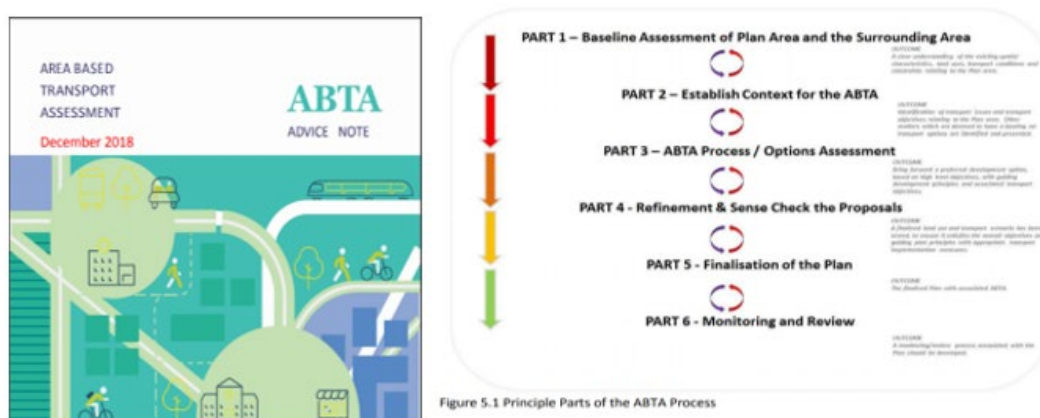


Figure 15.1 - National Transport Authority ABTA Guidance

The following summary sets out the stages of the ABTA guidance process and its application as part of this Transport Plan and Local Area Plan making process. The Council acknowledges the assistance of the NTA during the process. The steps undertaken are in accordance with the ABTA Guidance. It is important to note however that the 'ABTA' guidance note was designed as a blueprint for the preparation of these strategic plans with metropolitan areas in mind and thus its application to the Letterkenny scenario has been tailored to the scale of this settlement.

<b>PART 1 – Baseline Assessment of Plan Area and the Surrounding Area:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparation of a detailed and comprehensive Letterkenny 'Position Paper' – sets out detailed issues within the identified study area:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Socio – Economic;</li> <li>Strategic/Geographical;</li> <li>Physical Infrastructural;</li> <li>Lack of alternatives /low demand for the town bus service /lack of sustainable or multi-modal options as alternative choices.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combining the Local Area Plan and Local Transport Plan processes: LTP &amp; LAP - Working alongside preparation of the Draft Local Area Plan. Complementarity on Regional growth ambitions, and population increase projections. Future land use zonings and network development across all modes compliment each other.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSO Powscar data provided by NTA this level of detail enabled GIS info extracted pertaining to the study area to identify origins and destinations, key residential areas of the town, significant employment areas, Schools and town core retail.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilisation of ATOS software (Access to Opportunities and Services (ATOS)) for the identification of connectivity and permeability improvements and new interventions to the existing walking network within the town.</li> </ul>
<p><b>PART 2 – Establish Context for the ABTA:</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further to work on position paper at 1 above – Internal working DCC group established with Area Roads and Road Design team.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement with An Taisce and Green Schools programme.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing Engagement with the National Transport Authority.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement with Local elected members</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Letterkenny context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Regional parity;</li> <li>2. North-west City region;</li> <li>3. LK Strategic growth ambitions – regional growth centre;</li> <li>4. Atlantic Technological University;</li> <li>5. LK 2040 Regeneration strategy;</li> <li>6. NTA Active Travel funding.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>PART 3 – ABTA Process / Options Assessment:</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal working group – identified areas in need for improvement and new intervention on the basis of the work completed at earlier stages in the process i.e. where origins and destinations, schools, significant employers (Town centre, ATU &amp; LUH) . Deployment of Atos tool information.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of interventions across all networks walking, cycle and public transport. Local permeability, improvement schemes and new interventions to ensure a connected network across the town linking origins and destinations.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposals made alongside 2040 Regeneration Strategy project outputs for walking and cycle infrastructure (Active travel), reallocation of road space, creation of town centre boulevards, multi modal transport hub, public transport corridor.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Atkins consultants engaged to assess proposed interventions and assessment through an initial assessment process by way of the Multi criteria assessment framework (MCAF).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement and discussion with NTA – in how to enhance the existing town bus service. Possible future routes were identified by NTA having due regard to location of schools, origins and destinations. Routes to be identified in local transport plan to identify future ambitions for the enhancement of the Towns public transport provision.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage 1 (Macro) – ESTABLISH A 'BIG PICTURE' UNDERSTAND OF THE ANTICIPATED OUTCOME:</b></p> <p>Analysis compiled of a number of identified areas (description given to each area) of the town. Providing a current assessment and a future anticipated assessment of how that particular area would perform with new interventions for walking and cycling. Continuous ongoing consultation with working group.</p>
<p><b>Stage 2 (Micro) - IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP SPECIFIC MEASURE BASED ON THE 'BIG PICTURE' OUTCOME</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant work compiled on identification of enhanced public transport service through identification of potential additional routes. Work dependant on further continued engagement with NTA.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active travel routes progressing through 'The Pathfinder programme'. Number of Letterkenny Active travel projects currently at Phase 2 (Concept Development and Option Selection), which includes the identification of potential improvement options.</li> <li>• Consultation with NTA detailed the Active travel projects overlaid with future possible NTA Bus corridors/routes to enable further identification of any related issues that may affect any potential bus route.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Part 4 - Refinement &amp; Sense Check the Proposals.</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation with NTA regarding inline service / depots / routes and route review / future routes and options for consideration / bus stop signs and shelters / funding mechanisms / part 8 planning and incorporating bus route infrastructure into same (or generically if necessary) / review of town centre route and how one ways would work with bus stops on 2 way sections if possible.</li> <li>• DCC to further review possible bus stop locations based on NTA advise and further development of the one-way system. NTA still to progress route design and on site engagement for resilience check and amendments as required.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Part 5 - Finalisation of the Plan</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and finalisation of a Land use transportation plan.</li> <li>• Proposed transport interventions and enhancements across all networks: walking, cycling, public transport consistent with the future development of the town and the land use zoning ambitions of the town.</li> <li>• Inclusion of active travel phasing timeline.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Part 6 - Monitoring and Review</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post adoption monitoring and review practices will be initiated and established.</li> <li>• Monitoring of delivery timeline of Active travel projects.</li> <li>• Continued collaboration with NTA to ensure efficient and effective delivery of public transport network enhancements as proposed.</li> <li>• Further monitoring of how all network improvements interact with one another.</li> </ul>

### 15.3 Regional Policy Context:

#### **Northern and Western Regional Assembly's Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)2020-2032**

The RSES sets out the following key regional policy objectives specific to the delivery of key transport related projects in Letterkenny:

**RPO 3.7.30: To deliver the TEN-T priority route improvement Donegal and Letterkenny by 2028, including the N-56 Link, and also progress the Southern Relief Road (now known as the Southern Network Project).**

**RPO 3.7.31: To facilitate the expansion of the ATU Campus (now known as the ATU).**

**RPO 3.7.32: To prepare (within 2 years of the adoption of the RSES), a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Letterkenny, which will include a multi-modal focus, and Public Transport roadmap.**

**RPO 3.7.33: To develop a dedicated and integrated cycle network around Letterkenny, including the creation of a Greenway along the line of the River Swilly and oriented around the Central Linear Park Project to offer residents a viable alternative to car-based journeys.**

**RPO 3.7.34: To deliver a multi-purpose Public and Private Regional Transport Hub within the Town Core of Letterkenny to serve County Donegal and the wider region.**

**RPO 3.7.35: To carry out a feasibility study which investigates the potential and viability of a Rail Link between Letterkenny and Derry in future decades.**

This LTP has been prepared in accordance with RPO 3.7.32 above and RPO 6.27 which sets out the Assembly's support for the collaborative preparation of Local Transport Plans led by local authorities in conjunction with the NTA and other stakeholders based on the Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) guidance. The RSES also stipulates that LTPs will be based on a clear set of objectives and will include the transport priorities for each settlement in terms of public transport infrastructure and services; cycle investment; improvements to the pedestrian environment; and road enhancements.

## 15.4 Local Context

### Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy

'Letterkenny 2040' is a process to realize a Regeneration Strategy for Letterkenny Town Centre,



which builds on an ambition and vision for the town to realize its full potential as a magnet that draws and keeps people here.<sup>10</sup>

The Strategy is a multi-faceted project to deliver place-based change for the urban core of Letterkenny and thereby to provide positive impacts on Letterkenny's wider regional and cross-border catchment. The Regeneration Strategy includes a strong transportation focus and the preparation of the Local Area Plan and Local Transport Plan and Regeneration Strategy have been developed in tandem. The Masterplan process, as part of the strategy, is focused on reimagining the town centre and at the core of this is: the enhancement of 'Multi-Modes' including Active Travel connectivity; development of town centre public realm; creation of green infrastructure including the 'LK Green Connect'; public urban wetlands as blue infrastructure; identification and acquisition

of a site for a future multi-modal regional transport hub including a dedicated public transport corridor serving the hub. (refer to Chapters 4 and 9 in the Letterkenny Plan setting out the background to, and key objectives of, the 'Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy')

<sup>10</sup> Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy, 2022.

## Local Traffic Modelling

Consultants were appointed in 2019 to undertake traffic modelling for the Plan. The 2009 ILUTS model was used as a base starting point, and 2017 Present Year Validations of the ILUTS model were progressed including:

- Reviewing developments in Letterkenny between 2009 and 2017;
- Application of traffic growth in Letterkenny between 2009 and 2017;
- Changes and upgrades to the network between 2009 and 2017 (and subsequently the new Kilty junction arrangements); and
- Completing a calibration and validation exercise to the Project Appraisal guidance acceptability criteria.

Using this updated base model, three forecast year demand scenarios were developed to reflect a phased implementation of the draft Land Use Plan. The following interventions were then tested in the forecast models:

- TEN-T
- Southern Network Project; and
- 10% reduction in demand proxy test to represent a shift to sustainable modes.

A review was also undertaken of the 2019 and 2022 TII traffic counters situated on three main corridors into Letterkenny. This analysis indicated that 2022 traffic volumes and temporal profiles had broadly returned to a pre Covid-19 level.



## Chapter 16 - Key Issues & Underlying Factors.

In order to prepare an effective transportation strategy, it is critical to develop a comprehensive understanding of what the key issues/problems are and what are the underlying factors contributing to the manifestation of those issues.

### 16.1 Existing Traffic, Transport and Movement Conditions within the Plan Area:

- **Socio Economic:** Letterkenny is the primary urban centre within the county and part of an important cross border network within the North-West Metropolitan region (Letterkenny/Derry/Strabane). The town acts as the main attractor for the county across many sectors and services and for this reason there are a number of key general underlying strategic factors that contribute to the transportation issues impacting on Letterkenny today. The critical mass of population in Letterkenny acts as the driver for the multiple service function the town offers. The town is host to Letterkenny University Hospital, significant employment opportunities provided by, inter alia, large medical technology companies, and third level education opportunities provided by ATU. Retail offering in the town is also extensive.
- **Strategic/Geographical:** From a spatial perspective, Letterkenny's central geographical location within the county leads to the town being used as a destination intersection for access to key cross county and onward arterial routes in most directions. With only one bridge crossing the river Swilly at the southern gateway to the town, east and west onward bound traffic has to transit through the town before further onward county destinations are reached. Strategically there is a need to ensure that the potential and viability of Letterkenny becoming a key node for rail travel is maintained as part of a multi-modal approach to transportation and travel within and from the North West.
- **Physical/infrastructural:** There are severe inadequacies in key strategic road arteries and junctions, such that they are unable to accommodate the large volumes of strategic and non-strategic traffic using the network at peak daily commuting times, bank holidays and other special events. Many of the major junctions are unable to accommodate the demand resulting in peak-time congestion and journey time unreliability for motorized transport.
- **Spatial characteristics of the town:** The spatial pattern of land use development over the past 20 years has resulted in significant sprawl of suburban housing and road infrastructure to the extreme edges of the town primarily to the north, north-west and north-east of the town. This has unsurprisingly resulted in a demand for infrastructure and services in these locations further exacerbated by the elevated nature of the land placing these residential locations at a remove from the town centre core and as an undesirable location for active travel mobility.
- **Lack of sustainable alternatives:** The town can be described as a motorized vehicle-dominated town, primarily served by roads-based solutions and infrastructure, with priority given to motorised transport on the town's main road corridors. The distinct lack of quality walking and cycling networks means there is an over reliance on private cars. The reliance on the private car for households in the large suburban areas in the town is due to a combination of: distances to the town centre often exacerbated by the town's topography; the absence of effective public transport services including connections to a national rail

network; the absence of quality walking and cycling networks and the difficulties likely to be encountered in providing such dedicated infrastructure due to limitations in carriageway widths along most of extents of these corridors and the unreasonable gradients that exists across the majority of the town.

- **Public Transport:** Currently the town is served by one town bus service provided by a private operator offering one bus daily across 2 routes with intermittent frequency. This service, due to its non-peak time offering, may not accommodate or facilitate commuters or students and, as such, a wider choice is necessary to ensure that the regional centre offers suitably designed public transport options to service and adequately meet the needs of all residents, visitors, students and commuters.

The town bus station is located on the eastern fringe of the town centre located within the curtilage of the Letterkenny Shopping Centre and associated car-park and is the Bus Eireann hub for county and intercounty public bus and coach transport. This station does not at present possess the facilities for multi modal transport options. Multiple existing private bus operators currently offer their county and inter-county services at various on-street locations throughout the town. The provision of such a transportation hub located within the town centre is essential for the development of the connectivity and accessibility of the town going forward.

- **Car-parking provision:** The town currently provides plentiful, low cost/free and convenient car-parking, particularly within and on fringes of the town centre. To date park and ride infrastructure has not been introduced to the town due to the abundance of town centre car-parking acting as a magnet to visiting traffic. The Council aim to carry out an appraisal and assessment of town centre car-parking provision and identify a strategy for the future. It is an objective to prepare this strategy in the medium term. The results will then be used to determine the best way to address car-parking provision, reallocation and how best to encourage sustainable modes.



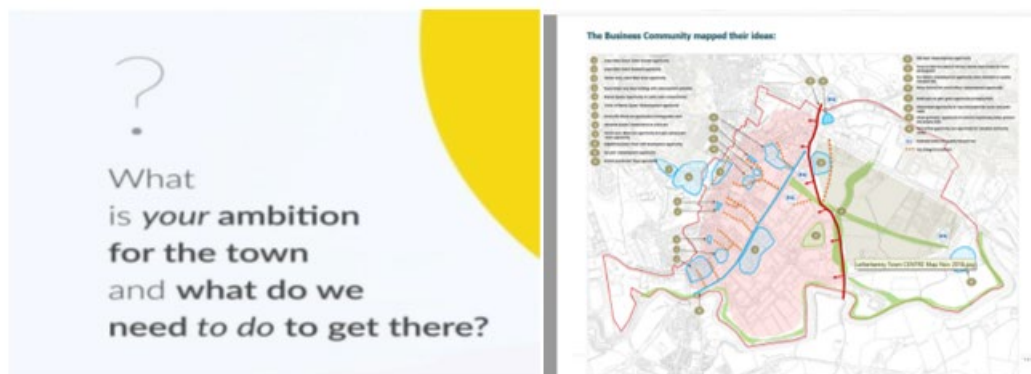
## Chapter 17 - Pre-Draft Public Consultation

**'Northern and Western Regional Assembly area's use of sustainable modes of transport was 21.3%, which is almost 8% less than the state average in 2016', (Northern and Western Regional Assembly's Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), 2020.)**

### 17.1 Collective Public Consultation Findings:

Over the course of the last 3 years a number of individual public consultation exercises have been carried out in Letterkenny. Whilst initiated for separate specific purposes described below, the findings of all are extremely relevant in assisting and informing the preparation of this Plan insofar as identifying the issues of concern to the public and residents of the town. The commonality of issues are summarised at the end of this Chapter.

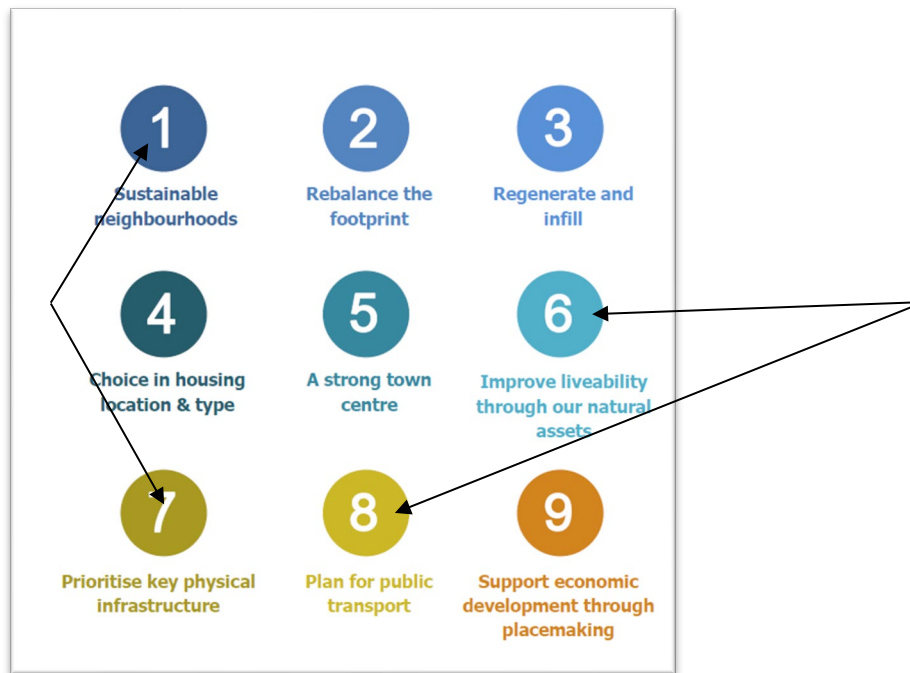
#### 17.1.1: Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan



+

**Figure 17.1 - June 2018 - Statutory Pre-Draft Public Consultation on the Letterkenny Plan**

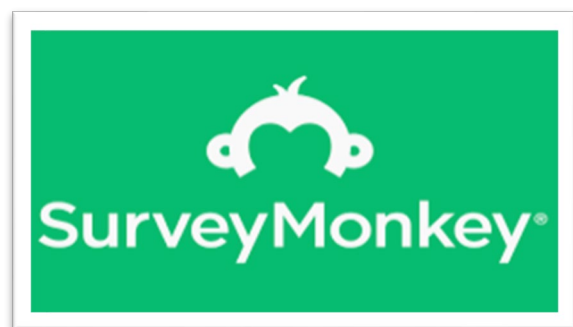
A number of public consultation events were held through sector led workshops and online surveys, and inviting written submissions. The results were compiled and grouped into nine key themes. As can be seen **'Active travel', 'Sustainable movement' and 'Transport'** feature in 4 of the 9 key pillars in Fig 17.2 below:



**Figure 17.2 - Key Pillars**

This is further evidenced in the results of the town-centre focused online survey carried out as part of this same process in May 2018 wherein, although more than half of the respondents stated that during a typical visit to the town centre, they are 'very likely' to visit more than one part of it, 76% of these people indicated that their predominant mode of transport within the town centre is car. Walking was identified as the second highest mode (22%) followed by taxi (1%), bus (0.5%) and bicycle (0.5%). 52% of respondents considered that accessibility improvements are those most required in the town centre including citing public transport, walking, cycling, greenways, pedestrianisation, traffic management and road linkages.

Pre-draft consultation was conducted during the early baseline research stage of this LTP preparation process. The consultation exercise was carried out online using the Survey-monkey platform over a 3-week period concluding on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2020. The survey prompted great interest with 533 fully completed responses returned (see Appendix E).

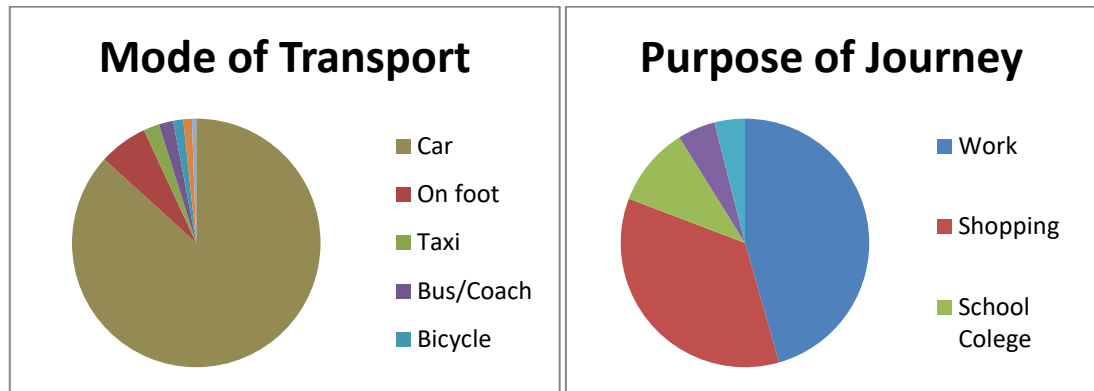


The following information represents the salient points derived from the consultation responses:

- Respondents have a preference for the use of motorized transport for the majority of trips to the town across numerous journey purposes and destinations.
- Sustainable mobility modes are amongst the three lowest forms of transport.
- Questions sought information on what part of the town respondents originate from, the respondents' destinations, and the mode of transport.

For example, of 46% of respondents where work was the destination:

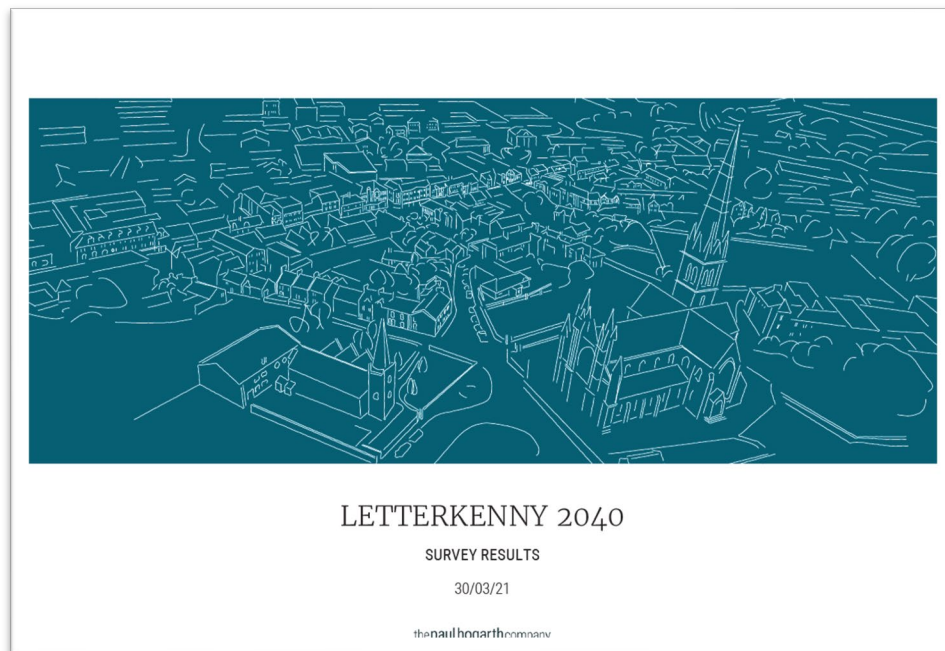
- 86% used the car to reach their destination; and
- 36% of these were commuters travelling from outside of Letterkenny.



- The main points to be taken from the survey are as follows:

- Car is the dominant mode of transportation to and within the town.
- Work destinations is the main trip generator.
- Majority of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists find the town 'not so user friendly'.
- Increase in Active travel only if dedicated infrastructure is to be put in place.
- Development of a regional transport Hub is 'Extremely important'.
- Strategic road schemes and key infrastructure rate the highest as being 'Extremely important'.

### 17.1.2: Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy



An online public consultation survey was initiated as part of the 1<sup>st</sup> stage 'Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy' during March, 2021. A total of 810 submissions were received following the survey and public engagement conducted across a number of thematic workshops. The questions asked sought to gather a wide-ranging and extensive level of detail on the high-level issues affecting the town and concerning the public. Subsequent questions then further drilled down to the main local issues that the public felt were important areas for consideration and addressing as part of the Regeneration strategy for the town centre.

The results of this process highlighted key areas of concern from the public with a particular transport focus. When asked to name 3 dislikes of the town the compilation of results showed that 2 of the top 3 dislikes were transport-related, namely:

- Traffic and congestion; and
- A disconnected Town Centre that discourages pedestrian and cyclist journeys.

When asked to identify the top priorities for the future of the town, the results showed that the public ranked among the top 7 categories:

- Pedestrian and Active travel,
- Improvements in road infrastructure; and
- Better public transport

## 17.2 Public Consultation Conclusions:

The collective findings across all three public consultation exercises display common transportation themes that may be summarised as follows:

- **An identified need for dedicated sustainable and active travel walking and cycling infrastructure connecting a permeable town centre;**
- **Key priority strategic infrastructure projects to address access into town and congestion at peak times**
- **The development of a regionally important multi modal transport hub is vital for the town.**
- **Improvements in frequency, service and offering of public transport with particular regard to a Town Bus service.**







# Chapter 18 - Challenges and Priorities

## 18.1 SWOT Analysis

A high-level SWOT analysis of the preceding analyses chapters may be summarized as follows:

Figure 18.1 SWOT Analysis:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Large population base with future population projected to grow.</li><li>2. Planned strategic roads project(s).</li><li>3. Key service provider across numerous functions: Employment base, Health, Education and Retail.</li><li>4. Attractive traditional Main Street including Cathedral Quarter and existing diversity of retail offering.</li></ol> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Vehicle dominated town, primarily served by roads-based solutions and infrastructure.</li><li>2. Town centre traffic regime not supportive of walking, cycling infrastructure.</li><li>3. Inadequate town public transport service.</li><li>4. Lack of active travel options in the town centre and wider area.</li><li>5. Residential development located in elevated and dispersed areas.</li></ol> 

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Effective combining of land use and transport planning for access and mobility.</li> <li>2. LK 2040 Regeneration Strategy for town centre.</li> <li>3. Development of a town centre Regional Transport Hub as a single multi-purpose transport point.</li> <li>4. Creation of opportunities for improved permeability and connectivity to encourage sustainable mobility.</li> </ol> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of future funding options.</li> <li>2. Strategic roads projects creating greater appeal for motorized travel.</li> <li>3. Topography throughout the town remains an obstacle to greater take up of walking and cycling.</li> </ol> 

**Table 18.1 - Summary of Key Issues / Challenges:**

1.	<b>Dominance of car dependant development(s).</b>
2.	<b>Road traffic congestion throughout the town particularly at peak times.</b>
3.	<b>The lack of alternative sustainable transportation options.</b>
4.	<b>Land use patterns that encourage car usage.</b>
5.	<b>Lack of permeability throughout the town.</b>
6.	<b>Closed cell neighbourhoods with no potential for permeability.</b>



**Table 18.2 - Summary of Key Priorities**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Investment in improved networks and new interventions for the delivery of Active travel infrastructure by way of the development of the various pillars of Active travel schemes as set out in Chapter 19 and illustrated on Map 19.2 below.</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Continued collaboration with the NTA in developing a route network development plan for public transport provision within the town.</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Continued support for the development of future strategic road realignment and development schemes on the fringes of the town.</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Continued support for the development of the 'Letterkenny 2040' Regeneration Strategy with particular regard to the identification and development of the Regional transport hub, Letterkenny Green Connect and proposed Town Centre linkages and interventions as presented in the Linkages and Public Space Action Plan. P providing for seamless connectivity with all other identified active travel schemes in Table 19.1. (Chapter 19).</b>

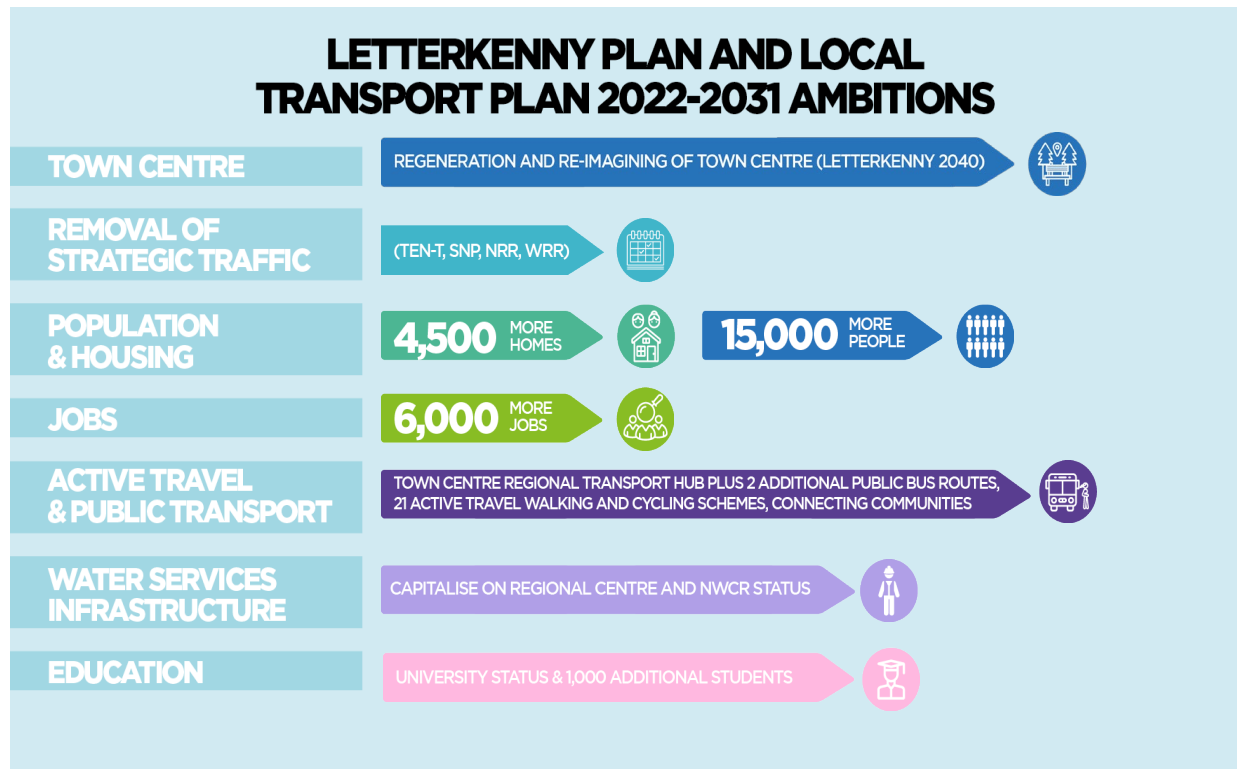
## **18.2 Conclusions**

National and regional planning policy strongly advocates compact growth to facilitate and promote live-able compact towns where most destinations and services can be readily accessed, preferably by way of sustainable and or active travel infrastructure. Walking and cycling are completely sustainable options and a low-cost effective mode of public transport. It is widely acknowledged that active travel can create long term meaningful benefits for the sustained future vibrancy of local neighbourhoods, social health and wellbeing of the local population, and climate and environmental quality. The creation of options can lead to reduced car dependency, reduced transport costs and given the blended home working lifestyle thereby less time spent travelling.

To align with national policy, inclusive of the NIFTI hierarchies, this Plan addresses networks for all modes: walking, cycling, public transport and, for private vehicles, the long-required strategic road improvements, which projects shall incorporate multi modal infrastructure.

This Local Transport Plan incorporates ambitions to address the above-noted issues and priorities:

Figure 18.2 - Ambitions of the LAP & LTP



The resulting strategy is set out under five specific networks:

1. **Walking/Pedestrian - Section 19.3**
2. **Cycle Strategy – Section 19.4**
3. **Public Transport Strategy – Chapter 20**
4. **Town Centre Transport Strategy – Chapter 21**
5. **Strategic Roads Strategy – Chapter 22**

# Chapter 19 - Walking & Cycling Mode Networks

## 19.1 Context

Several projects that are either specifically for active travel purposes, or that incorporate active travel facilities as part of a wider project, are already being progressed in Letterkenny, or in the town and its environs. These include:

- LK Green Connect public realm project: Phase 1 opened June 2023; Phase 2 progressing to statutory and planning approvals and consents in 2023/2024;
- The Swilly Way riverside walkway (a local community group has undertaken extensive work on this project in recent years, which work is acknowledged by DCC);
- The Burtonport-Letterkenny Greenway;
- Various multi modal active travel schemes across the town and town centre including a pedestrian bridge from Oldtown to the town centre, currently funded by the NTA for design;
- The Southern Network Project: aims to develop the transport network around the south of the town as a multi modal corridor to improve traffic congestion, support compact growth, and encourage a modal shift. The project is currently at Phase 2 (Option Selection). This includes the identification of potential improvement options; and
- Section 2 of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal (proceeding through statutory planning process).

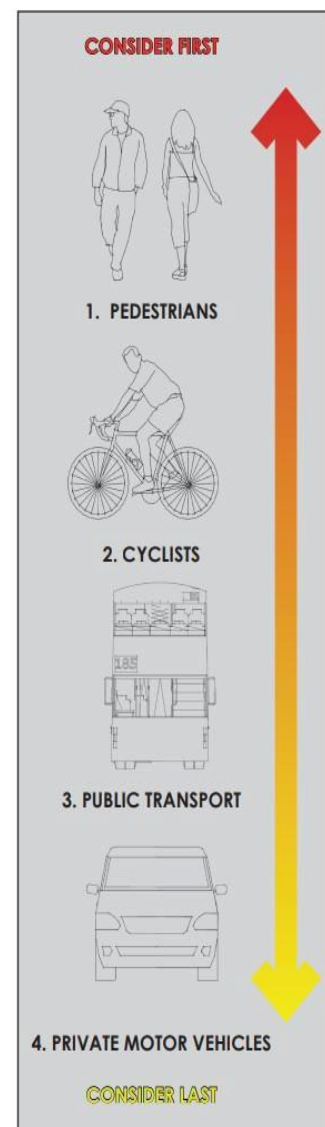
## 19.2 Strategy Development

The development of this Strategy was informed by, inter alia: the principles and hierarchy contained in the Department of Transport’s NIFTI document (refer Chap. 15); the identification of key origins and attractors, and a potential network hierarchy; and the National Transport Authority’s (NTA’s) ‘Access to Opportunities and Services’ software tool (ATOS).

The Strategy incorporates several inter-related objectives, notably the identification of:

- active travel alternatives to the car;
- the connection of communities with each other and with adjacent important areas of employment, business and/or recreation; and
- the creation of permeability links within communities that encourage shorter-distance active travel journeys over more circuitous car trips.

In line with commentary in the RSES, key ‘origins and ‘destinations’ were identified as a starting point. Map 19.1 below identifies strong residential community origins in the north-west, north, north-east, east, (coloured light blue); and south-west and west of the town (coloured

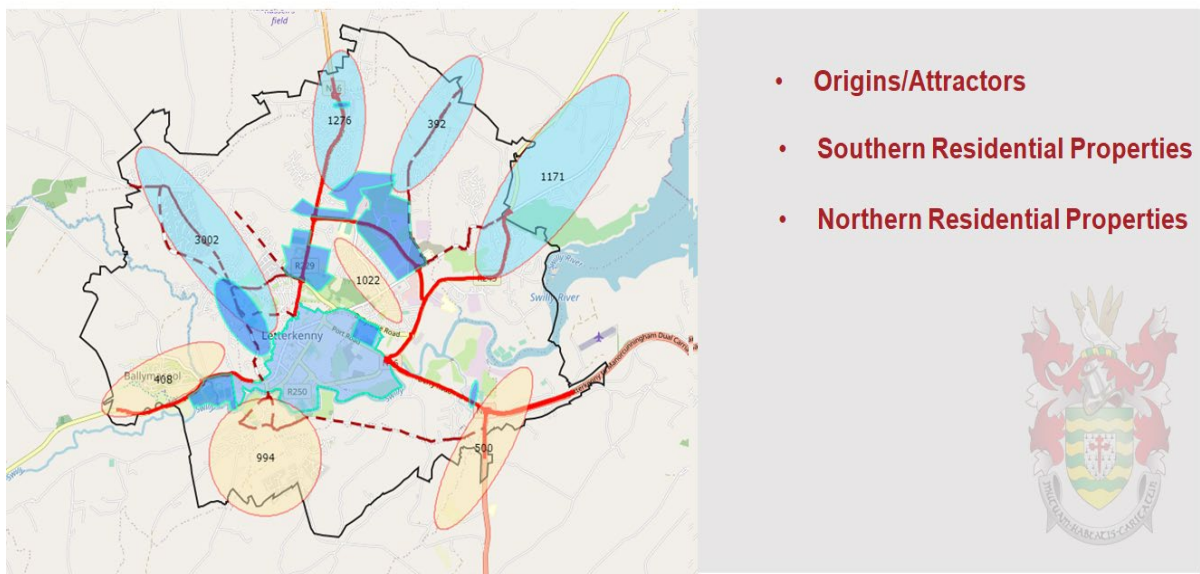


light yellow) (the numbers identified on the Map represent the number of households contained in each area). The Map also identifies (in dark blue) the key attractors in the town including the town centre; the IDA Business Park and environs; the University Hospital; the ATU; the cluster of five schools on College Road; and the cluster of leisure/recreational facilities in the west of the town including O'Donnell Park, the Aura Leisure Centre and Ballymacool Park.

**Map 19.1: Locally Generated Demand – Key Origins/Attractors**



**Locally Generated Demand – Key Origins/Attractors**

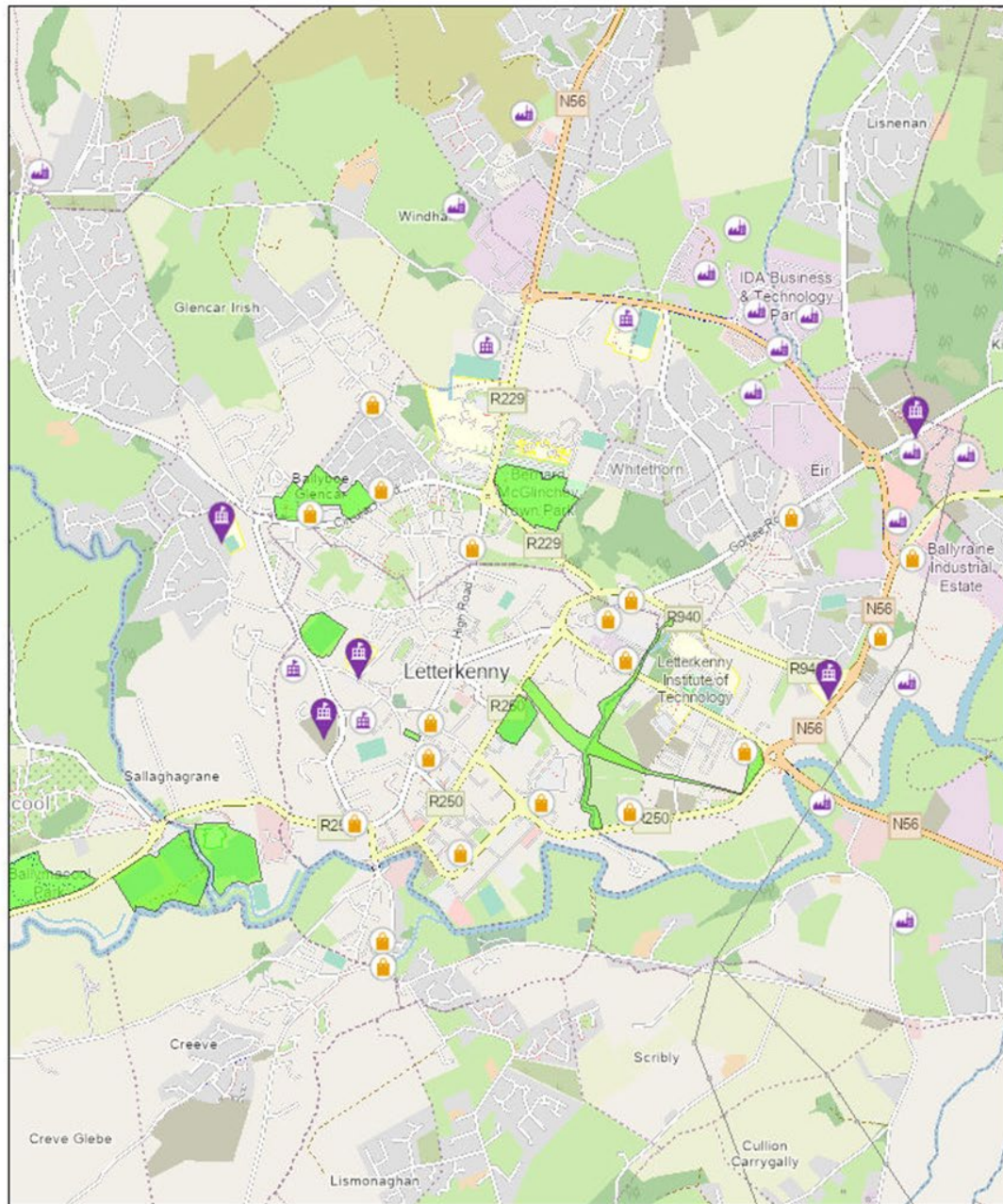


The Council’s identification of origins and attractions was verified against the National Transport Authority’s (NTA’s) ‘Access to Opportunities and Services’ software tool (ATOS). This tool also identifies origins and destinations such as parks, schools, employment centres and supermarkets (refer Map 19.2 below), and demonstrates current levels of walkability, accessibility, and permeability between them. The model was used to identify current impediments to effective active travel connections, and to demonstrate the impact proposed interventions would make to the network.

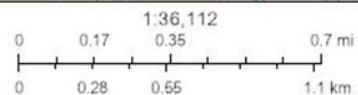


**MAP 19.2: Origins and Destinations/Attractors (NTA, ATOS Tool)**

**Origins and Destinations**



23/03/2023, 07:15:15



-  Revised ATOS Models - Supermarkets
-  Revised ATOS Models - Primary Schools
-  Revised ATOS Models - Post - Primary School
-  Revised ATOS Models - Donegal\_Parks
-  Revised ATOS Models - General Employment

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Map data © OpenStreetMap contributors, Microsoft, Facebook, Inc. and its affiliates, Esri Community Maps contributors, Map layer by Esri |

Having identified the key origins and destinations, opportunities for making the connections were then examined. A network comprised of the following hierarchy was identified:

### Strategic Multi-Modal Network Projects

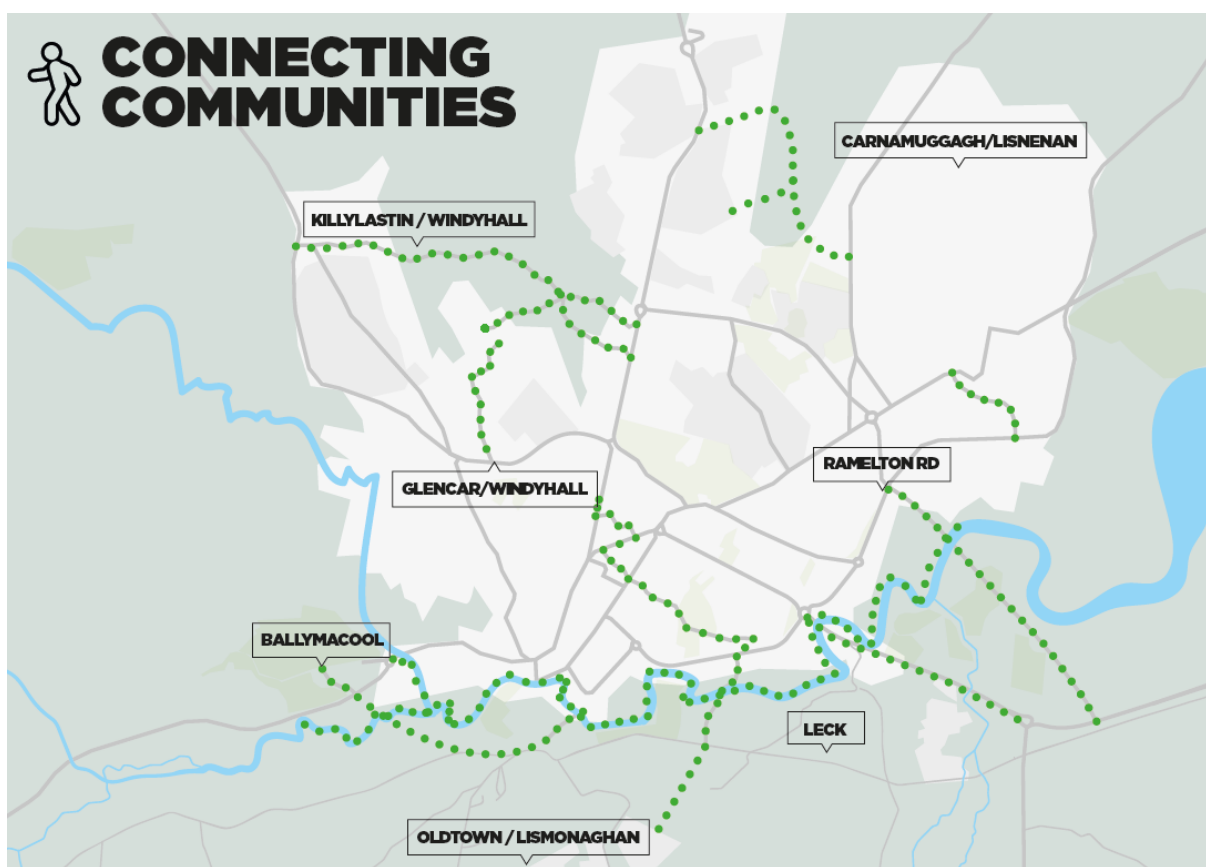
**Interconnecting routes** comprising of existing road and footpath walking and cycling networks identified for new interventions and improvements creating a wider connected network for walking and cycling between key origins and destinations;

**Town centre interventions** on existing networks as identified in the 'Linkages and Public Space Action Plan' developed under the Council's 'Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration' project; and

**Neighbourhood-scale permeability links.**

Throughout this process, a key objective was to improve active travel connectivity between communities. The key opportunities in this regard are identified in Fig. 19.1 below.

Figure 19.1: Connecting Communities



## 19.3 Walking/Pedestrian Strategy

The Walking/Pedestrian Strategy was conceived on a town-wide basis. However, this section focuses on key routes outside of the town centre only; proposals for the town centre are addressed in Chapter 21: 'Town Centre Strategy'.

The Strategy for outside of the centre includes the interventions listed in Table 19.1 and identified on Map 19.3 below (nb. there are a small number of overlaps with town centre projects also addressed in Chapter 21).

**Table 19.1: Key Walking Projects Outside of Town Centre**

<b>Proposed/Upgrade Strategic Network Projects</b> (Multi Modal infrastructure - walking and cycling inclusive of crossing points as required - to be incorporated into strategic transport network upgrades)			
SM1	TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal (Donegal TEN-T), Section 2		
SM2	N56 Four Lane (improvement project completed 2023) including potential future 'Park and Share Hub' at eastern end'		
SM3	N56 Polestar Roundabout to Creamery Roundabout		
SM4	N56 Business Park Road		
SM5	Western Network Project		
SM6	Southern Network Project		
SM7	N56 Knocknamona Roundabout to Mountain Top Roundabout		
SM8	Northern Network Project *		
<b>Interconnecting Routes</b>			
IC1	High Road *		
IC2	Circular Road *		
IC3	Convent Road (Upper) *		
IC4	Convent Road (Lower)/Plunkett O'Boyle Terrace *		
IC5	R250 Ballymacool Roundabout to Lower Main Street Roundabout *		
IC6	Knocknamona Roundabout to Hospital Roundabout		
IC9	R940 Ramelton Road/Ballyraine Road *		
IC10	Gortlee Road *		
IC11	Old Farm Road *		
IC12	Glencar Road *		
IC13	Ramelton Road		
IC14	Mkt Sq. to Cathedral Area		
IC15	Scribly/Leck/Town Centre, Inclusive of Swilly Bridge Crossing (nb. refer to Policy LK-H-P-10 and associated narrative re 'Southern Strategic and Sustainable Development Site/Southern Network Project')		
IC16	Leck (vicinity of new Cemetery)/Town Centre (vicinity of Cinema), inclusive of Swilly Active Travel Bridge		
IC17	De Valera Road *		
IC18	Swilly River Corridor		
IC19	Lurgybrack		
<b>Key Northwest Area Connections/Improvements</b>			
		<b>Land Use Plan Site-Specific Zoning</b>	<b>Site-Specific Policy Ref. and Associated Design Guide</b>
NW1	Grange Road		

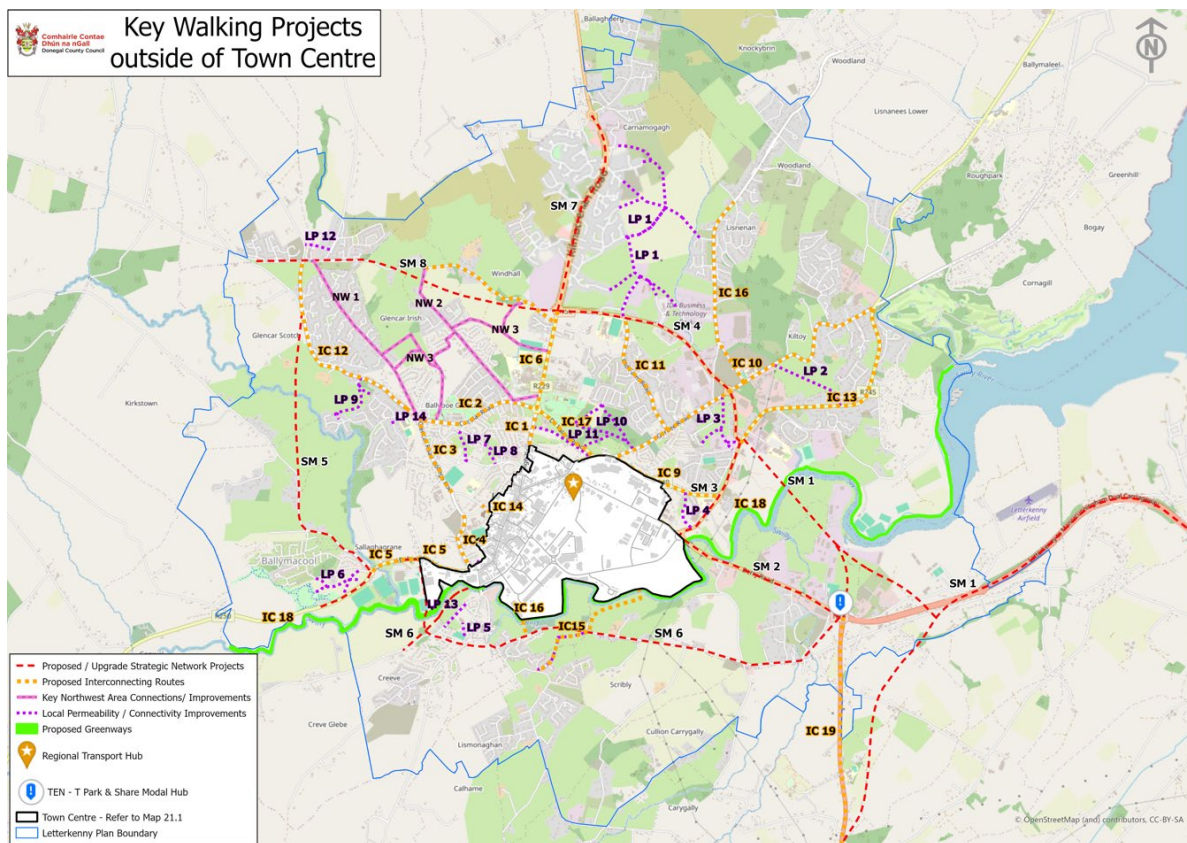


NW2	Long Lane Inclusive of Link To Kilmacrenan Road via Errigail College		
NW3	Glencar/Long Lane/Windyhall *	PR6 and OPP8	LK-H-P-9e and LK-OPP-8
<b>Local Permeability/Connectivity Improvements (nb. Most of the Permeability Links route through sites zoned for development potential in Part A: Land Use Planning Policies. Where relevant, these zonings and associated specific policies are also identified below)</b>			
		<b>Land Use Plan Site-Specific Zoning</b>	<b>Site-Specific Policy Ref. and Associated Design Guide</b>
<b>LP1</b>	Carnamuggagh	OPP10	LK-OPP-10
<b>LP2</b>	Kiltyoy	PR1	LK-H-P-9a
<b>LP3</b>	Gortlee	OPP4 and OPP7	LK-OPP-4 and LK-OPP-7
<b>LP4</b>	Ballyraine	OPP5	LK-OPP-5
<b>LP5</b>	Oldtown	OPP9	LK-OPP-9
<b>LP6</b>	Ballymacool	PR13	
<b>LP7</b>	New Line Road 1/Glenwood Park *	PR3	LK-H-P-9b
<b>LP8</b>	New Line Road 2	PR4	LK-H-P-9c
<b>LP9</b>	Glencar Rd/'The Elms'	PR5	LK-H-P-9d
<b>LP10</b>	Gortlee House/Kilmacrenan Road/De Valera Road *	OPP1	LK-OPP-1
<b>LP11</b>	High Road/Former Oatfield Site *	PR9/OPP11	n/a
<b>LP12</b>	Killylastin	n/a	
<b>LP13</b>	Crieve Road	n/a	
<b>LP14</b>	Willowbrook-College Farm Road (serving Gael Scoil Adhamháin/St. Bernadette's Special School/St. Eunan's College	n/a	

Schemes denoted with an asterisk (\*) were assessed under a **Multi-Criteria Analysis Framework process (MCAF)** to provide a high-level evidence base for their development. The Council is currently progressing some of these schemes through detailed design stage.

Full details of **MCAF assessments** are contained in Appendix D. Further detailed analysis and design will be required as all projects are developed. All schemes were assessed in accordance with the following criteria: *Accessibility, Adaptability, Attractiveness, Coherence, Comfort, Deliverability, Directness, Safety, Socio-Economic* and rated accordingly.

**Map 19.3: Walking/Pedestrian Strategy**



### 19.3.1 Sub-Areas

#### 1. West of the Town:

The cluster of schools in the vicinity of Convent Road are Key destinations/attractors in this part of the town (refer Map 19.2: **Origins and Destinations/Attractors: (NTA, ATOS Tool)**). Convent Road also connects the large residential areas to the north with the town centre and other attractors to the south.

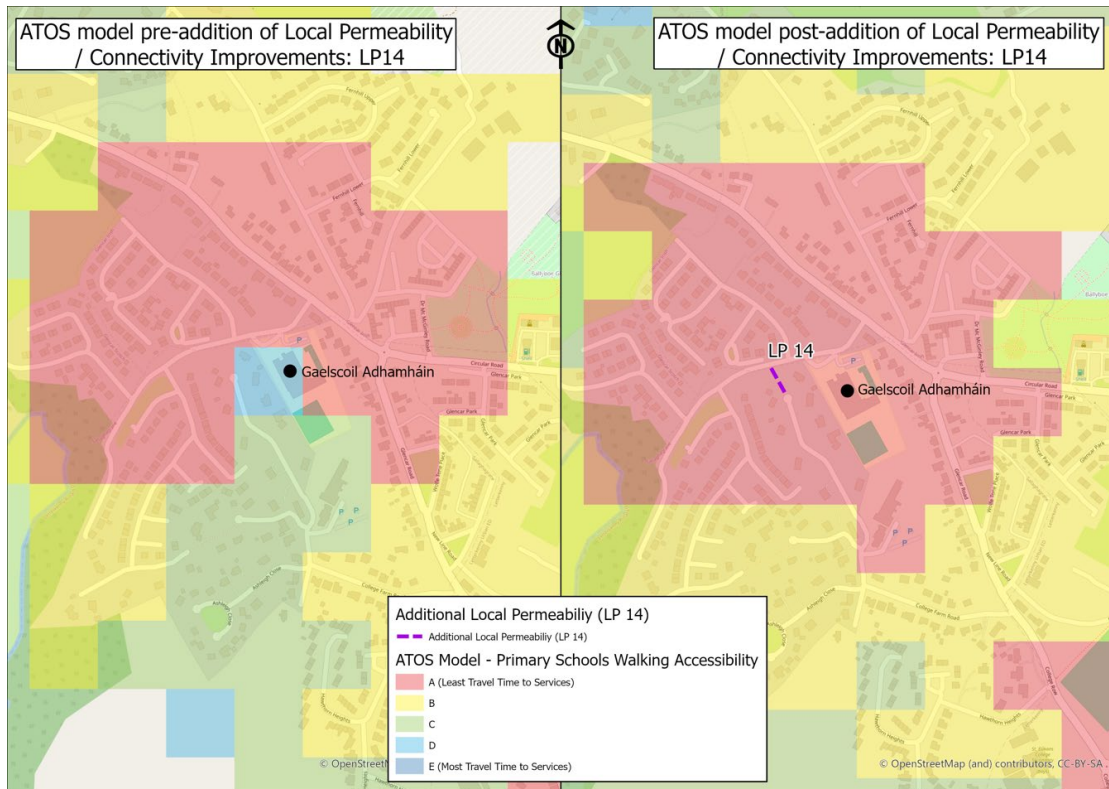
#### Proposed Improvements:

The Cathedral One Way project was completed in November 2022 and successfully converted portions of Convent Rd, Cathedral Road and Castle St. to one-way traffic flow around the school precinct. The reduction in carriageway width required to accommodate the one-way system allowed the reallocation of the existing road pavement and construction of widened pedestrian facilities through the area. The widened footpaths along with traffic calming measures and formalised courtesy crossings have helped provided a safer environment for vulnerable road users through a busy area.

As part of the current NTA Active Travel works package for Letterkenny schemes have been included to the north (identified on Map 19.3 as IC3) and south (IC4) of the Cathedral One Way system providing improved pedestrian facilities and linkages to Circular Rd and Ballymacool Terrace. These schemes are progressing through the approval process outlined in the NTA Project Approval Guidelines and are scheduled for delivery in the coming years.

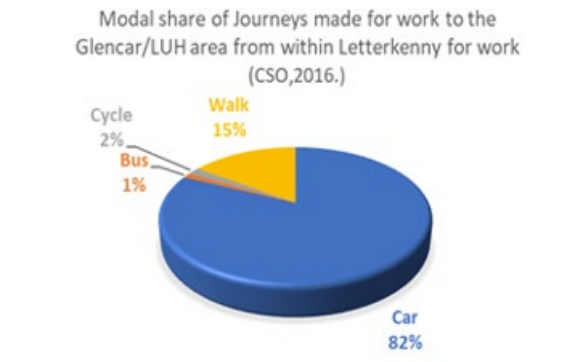
## ATOS Tool Proposed Enhancement

The ATOS tool identified a potential permeability link between Willowbrook and College Farm Road adjoining residential area (identified as LP14 on Map 19.3). This link would benefit local families and children attending the nearby Gael Scoil Adhamháin School, St. Bernadette’s Special School and St. Eunan’s College school by creating a desire line between the two, thereby reducing walking and cycling time. The difference between the first model run on the left side of Fig. 19.2 and the second model rerun on the right-hand side illustrate the potential improvement. The increase in red and yellow on the right-hand side indicates a higher level of access and connectivity.



## 2. North & North-West:

The North and North-West, centred on the townlands of Glencar Irish and Glencar Scotch, is the most populated in the town, containing over 3,000 residential properties. The area contains several key road arteries, including Windyhall Road, Grange Road and Glencar Road, but little by way of walking (or cycling) infrastructure.



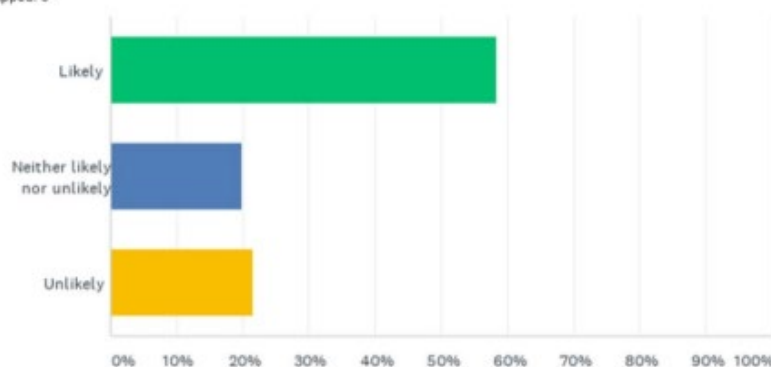
Large numbers of trips originate in this area, whether to: the local schools, Letterkenny University hospital (LUH), Ballyboe Park, the Bernard Mc Glinchey Town Park, and the town centre via Convent Road and High Road to the south; or to the large employers to the east. As can be seen from the pie chart above, the highest percentage of residents' journeys are made by private car (CSO, 2016). This pattern arises because, inter alia:

- The spatial pattern of development is largely devoid of internal pedestrian permeable links or desire lines between residential housing estates, especially in the areas of Glencar Scotch and Glencar Irish, due mainly to the cul-de-sac designs devoid of connections to adjacent phases. This discourages even short active travel journeys between estates.
- The local topography and elevation of the upper areas relative to the location of many significant attractors in the town, plus the distances between the two, discourage return active travel journeys. The current inadequate active travel network is a further disincentive for the making of such journeys.

The pre-draft public consultation results identified a keen interest of residents to use active travel modes, subject to the development of dedicated infrastructure, with 58% stating they would be likely to walk, or cycle compared with 6% and 1% of respondents who currently walk or cycle.

### Q6: 6. A If you are not a frequent pedestrian or cyclist in Letterkenny is this likely to change if the town had dedicated walking and cycling lanes?

Answered: 536 Skipped: 0



### **Proposed Improvements:**

This Plan therefore identifies significant walking projects (also suitable for cycle) for this part of the town both for north-south trips (refer projects IC12, NW1 and NW2 on Map 19.3) and east-west trips (refer projects NW3, IC2 and SM8).

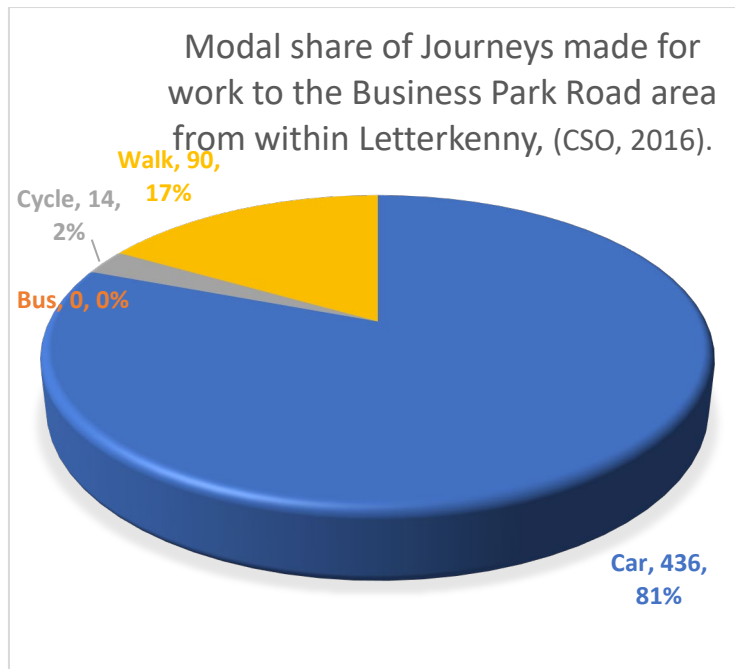
The Northern Network Project (Ref. SM8) is being designed as a multi-modal project to provide for walking, cycling and public transport, as well as motorists. The scheme will provide active travel commuting options for the residents residing at its western end and employed at its eastern end in, inter alia, the IDA Business Park.

Circular Road runs along the southern edge of, and is a key transport artery for, the Glencar area. There are important facilities adjacent to Circular Road itself, including Ballyboe Park and Glencar Neighbourhood Centre. In addition, it also provides an important link between the north-west of the town at its western end, and services on its eastern end including the Hospital, access to the town centre, and access to the strategic road network. Circular Road currently accommodates eight turning lanes serving accesses both north and south of the road for residential estates and the Glencar neighbourhood centre. The envisaged project for Circular Road (ref. IC2) incorporates proposals to remove the turning lanes and narrow the carriageway, in addition to using the roadside grass verges to create walking provision on the existing footpath and two-way cycle lane provision on reallocated carriageway. Upon completion of the Scheme the road will continue to function as an important arterial link for motorized traffic but will also present a much safer environment for pedestrians.

### **3. East of the Town**

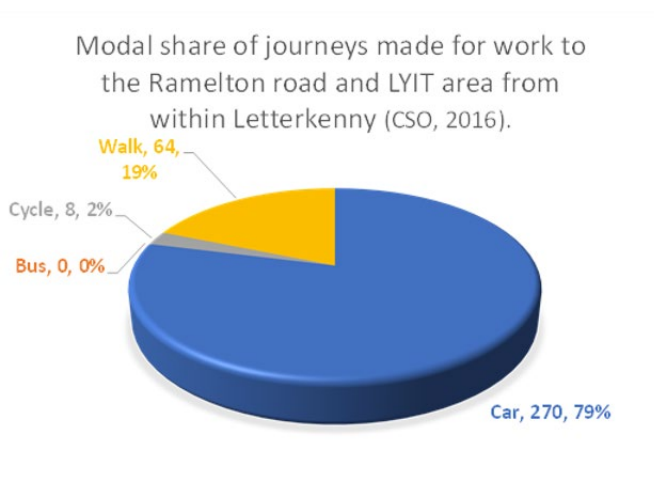
This is a settled, popular and long-established area of the town with significant concentrations of housing, small neighbourhood services and other enterprises on Old Farm Road, Gortlee and Ballyraine Road. This area also contains several schools including Gaelscoil Colasite Ailiagh on Old Farm Road, Educate Together on Kilty Road and Ballyraine National School on Ramelton Road. The town centre and ATU lie to the south and are connected by the arterial Ramelton Road and Gortlee Road. The IDA Business Park lies immediately to the north. The N56 National Secondary Road serving strategic traffic also traverses through this area.





The large employers in the IDA Business Park Road generates a high level of internal and inward commuting journeys to this part of the town. The pie chart above shows that 81% of journeys to this destination for the purpose of work are made by the private car. The low level of sustainable modes movements to the area of the town with the highest level of employment (outside of the town centre), can be attributed, to some extent, to the lack of sustainable modes linkages between the area and key residential origins. At present, cycle provision is by way of a combination of advisory cycle lanes and shared provision for walking and cycling on footpaths.

The modal share pie chart below again illustrates the dominance of the private car with 79% of journeys made in this area using this mode with walking 19%, cycling 2% and public transport 0% respectively.



The relatively higher rate of walking can be attributed mainly to students living within walking distance of the ATU during the academic year. This is an encouraging marker going forward given that 58% of pre-survey respondents stated that they would be likely to choose walking (or cycling) following the commitment of dedicated walking and cycling infrastructure in the town.

### **Proposed Improvements:**

The key objectives for this area include improving the walkability to and from the employers on the Business Park Road to the north, and the town centre and ATU to the south. The schemes identified on Map 19.3 as IC10 (Gortlee Road) and IC11 (Old Farm Road) will deliver such improvements for local residents and other uses alike. Another key measure in this part of the town will be the incorporation of two signalised pedestrian crossings on the N56 Business Park Road as part of a wider strategic traffic management scheme on that road (Scheme SM4 refers).

### **4. Town Centre**

(Please refer to Section 21: 'Town Centre Transport Strategy').



## 19.4: Cycling Strategy

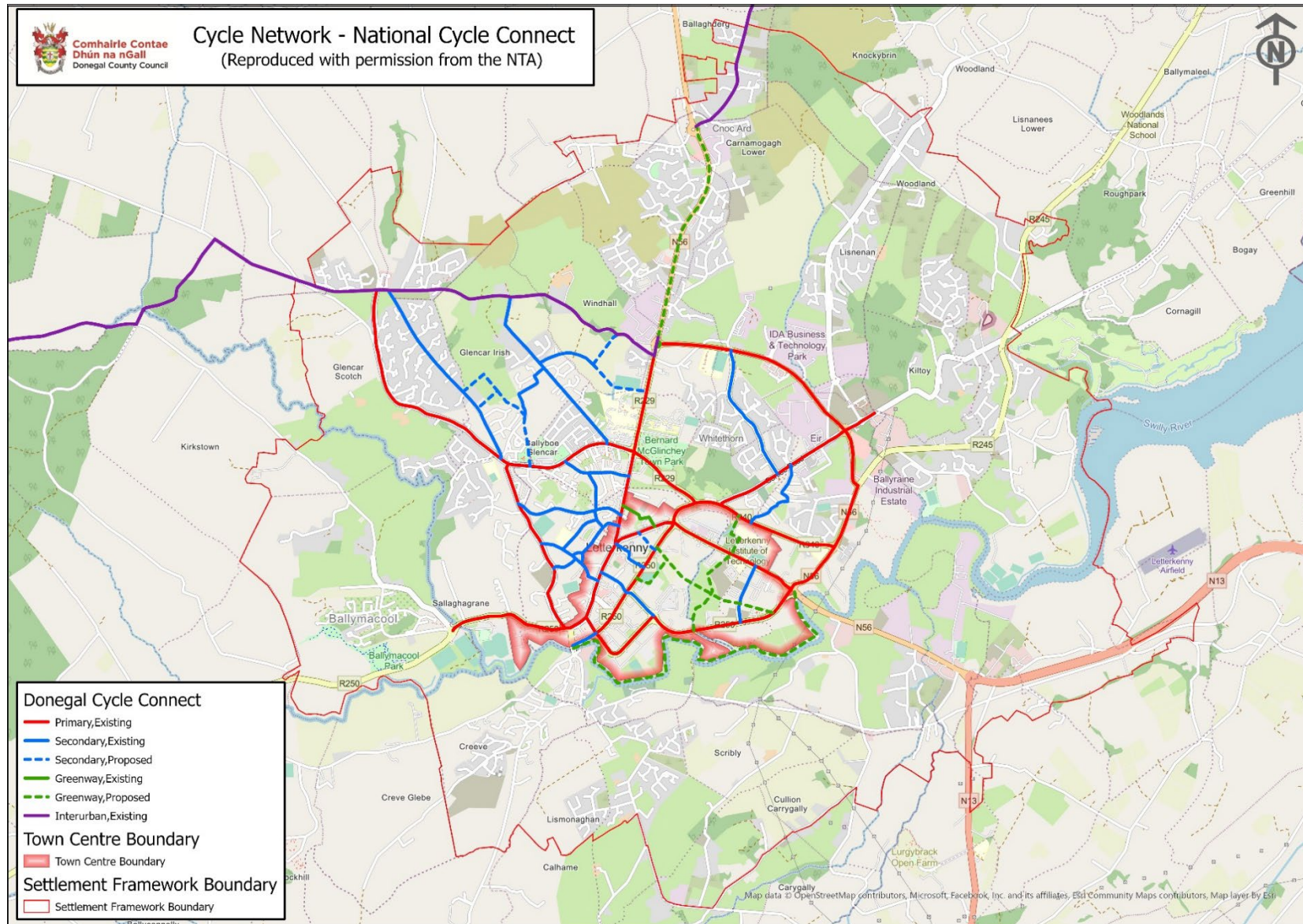
### National 'Cycle Connect'

In consultation with the National Transport Authority (NTA), the Cycling Strategy is based largely on the potential cycling network for Letterkenny identified in the NTA's 'CycleConnects' document. Additional projects reflecting the multi-modal nature of various strategic transport projects impacting on the town are also included (refer Map 19.4



The 'CycleConnects' project 'aims to improve sustainable travel by providing the potential for more trips on a safe, accessible and convenient cycling network, connecting more people to more places'. Proposals for cycling links in key cities, towns and villages in each county are included in the plan, in addition to connections between the larger towns, villages and settlements. The plan also incorporates existing and planned cycle routes such as Greenways and Blueways.

## Map 19.4 Cycling Network



## **19.5 Additional Complementary Measures**

Several schemes have been, or are being, developed at a national level such as behavioral change programmes or incentivized schemes with the aim of encouraging more active travel trips to and from school and reducing reliance on the private car.

### **19.5.1 Schools**

There is a low level of active travel to schools, particularly for primary schools, in Letterkenny with resulting high levels of car usage for these relatively short trips. This has been the focus of collaborative work in recent years attributed to the Green Schools programme administered by An Taisce and the NTA with a view to making walking to schools a more realistic option.

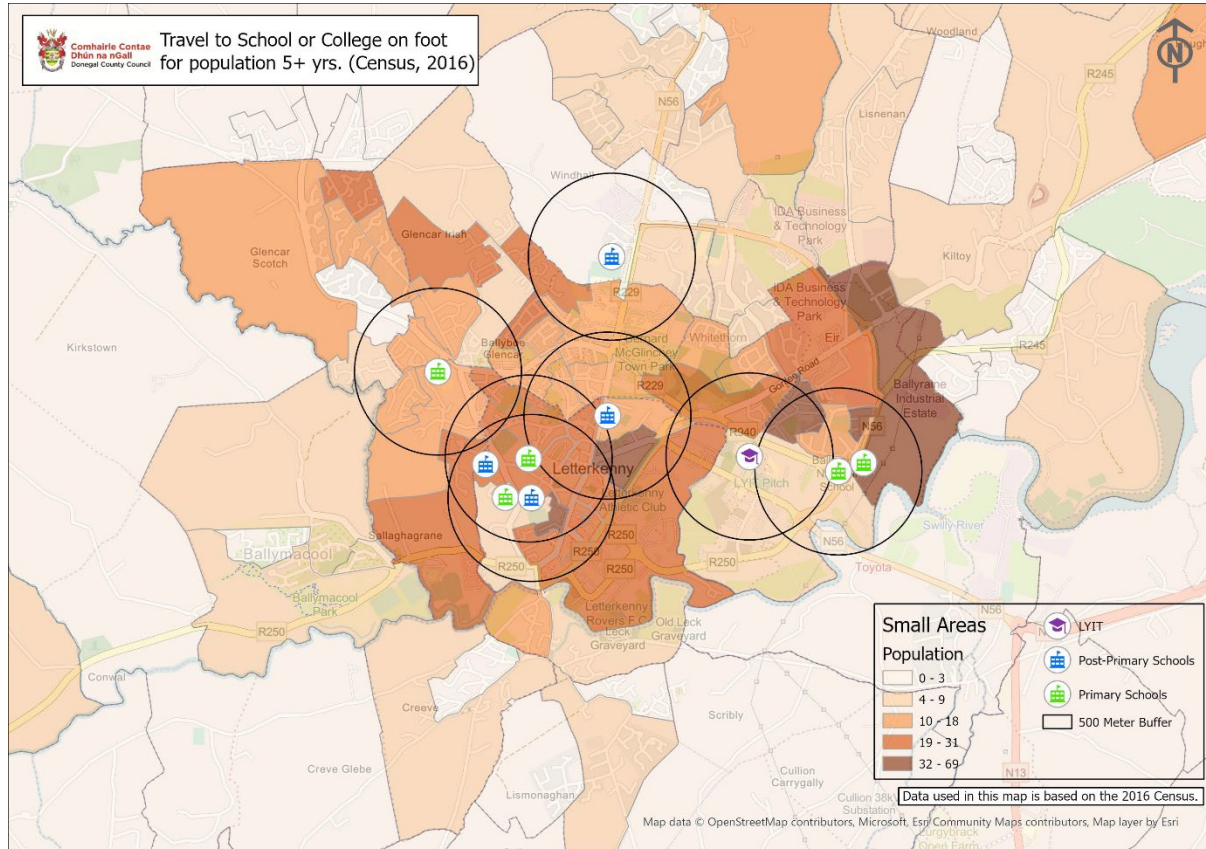
### **19.5.2 An Taisce Green Schools**

The An Taisce Green Schools programme is Ireland's leading environmental management and education programme for schools and promotes long-term action for the environment. One of the programme's themes is 'Transport' which aims to increase the number of students walking, cycling, scooting, using public transport or carpooling to school by using action plans to promote and increase these numbers. See Map 19.5 below that depicts current low levels of active travel to and from schools (CSO, 2016).

Dedicated regional Green Schools Officers assist in developing the programme with individual schools at all levels across the county, one of the main outputs being the development of walkability audits and identification of suitable locations for park and stride sites in close proximity (between 300m and 1km) to schools. These locations act as alternative drop off/pick up locations which encourage students to walk some of the distance to school, increasing exercise, mental awareness and reducing the risk of accidents, congestion and pollution at the front of the school gate. The Council's Road Safety Team continues to work with green schools across the county in active travel infrastructure implementation and to find improved ways of removing the pressure from outside of schools at peak times.



**Map 19.5**



### 19.5.3 Behavioural Change Programmes

A significant body of work has been initiated and developed by the schools over the past number of years through their individual walkability audits. This has resulted in significant awareness raising and behavioral change with regard to sustainable mobility to and from schools. In addition, in March 2021 the Government announced the Safer Route to Schools Programme (SRTSP) which is a country-wide initiative designed to encourage as many pupils and students as possible in primary and post-primary schools to walk and cycle. The Programme model is based on partnership between the NTA, An Taisce Green Schools (ATGS) and the Local Authorities.

In this regard DCC have recently completed a significant transformative traffic management project in the Cathedral Road, Convent Road, College Row and Sentry Hill areas of the town. Changes involve a one-way traffic flow running clockwise from St. Eunan’s Cathedral to St Colmcille NS, St. Eunan’s College and Scoil Mhuire gan Small. One of the biggest impacts to be felt is the addition of footpaths in areas where they were absent, providing a ‘Safer route to school’ in an area of the town that accommodates 4 schools.

The scheme will improve traffic movement, increase footpath width, provide new footpaths and to make the conditions safer to encourage Active travel from students and families and improve conditions as set out in Map 19.2 above. **Main aims are:**

1. To accelerate the delivery of walking/scooting and cycling infrastructure on key access routes to schools.
2. To provide “front of school” treatments to enhance access to school grounds.
3. To expand the amount of bike parking available at schools.

#### **19.5.4 Community Bike Hire scheme:**

The introduction of a community bike hire scheme as a local public facility and transport service would create a new means of movement and circulation within the town. Such a scheme, and especially if electric, could help address the currently low rates of cycling to work and college due to the barriers that currently exist within the town such as topography and access to a bike. Users need not own a bicycle but can still gain the advantages of using one on a regular basis for a nominal fee, including monthly and yearly rental options.

#### **Community bike hire scheme anticipated benefits to Letterkenny:**

##### **1. Environmental Benefits;**

- Uses minimal fossil fuels and is a pollution-free mode of transport.
- Reduce congestion of cars in urban areas, creating cleaner air in built up areas.
- Cycling conserves roadway and residential space, thereby providing opportunities for less concrete and more plant life in urban areas.

##### **2. Community Benefits;**

- Fewer cars and car dependency which can lead to a safer road environment. Improving environment for cycling to school.
- When people walk or ride a bike as transport, they are more likely to use local businesses for their shopping.
- Riding enables people to interact socially and feel more connected with their local community

##### **3. Social Benefits**

- Affordable and independent travel for those who might otherwise have restricted travel options.
- Offers increased mobility to many groups of the population such as low income earners, seniors and those under 18 years of age.
- Construction of shared active travel infrastructure creates benefits for pedestrians and vulnerable road users by providing an increased network of paths and improved road crossings

##### **4. Economic Benefits**

- Savings in fuel costs,
- The local economy may benefit from increased footfall on the active travel journeys.

#### **19.5.5 The 15 Minute City**

'The 15-minute City' is an urban planning concept and represents current innovative thinking around a de-centralised urban centre. It is a relatively new concept of an accessible and connected urban core where all services and uses coexist and can be reached within a 15-minute radius of home by foot or bicycle. Whilst the buzz word might be new, the concept is not and ties in with the long-standing ambitions and targets of compact urban growth and the 'centre out' urban areas. This will assist in lowering carbon emissions, reducing car dependency with a modal shift to sustainable modes, repopulating declining town cores and creating active travel infrastructure. This new and evolving ideology of a 15-minute city would address a number of significant objectives within both the Letterkenny Plan and Local transport Plan.

## 19.6 Active Travel Policies and Objectives

**LTP-AT-O-1:** To provide for an increase in active travel through an expansion of parks, public realm and the strategic, inter-connecting and permeability walking and cycling networks in Letterkenny.

**LTP-AT-O-2:** To support the progress and implementation of the 'Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy's 'Linkages and Public Space Action Plan' and 'Letterkenny Design Concepts' and to support any future subsequent phases of the project as funded under the URDF.

**LTP-AT-O-3:** To support the development and implementation of pilot mobility schemes for the encouragement and development of multi-modal travel in Letterkenny.

**LTP-AT-O-4:** To support the delivery of the National Transport Authority's National Cycle Network 'CycleConnect' and the development of an extensive cycling network across the county.

### **LTP-AT-P-1: It is a policy of the Council to:**

- a) Not permit development that would prejudice the implementation of any active travel scheme as set out on the Land Use Zoning Map, Map 19.3 'Walking/Pedestrian Strategy' or Map 19.4: 'Cycling Strategy'.
- b) Incorporate active travel infrastructure into Strategic Roads projects;
- c) Utilize existing footpaths and roads, and off-line routes identified on the Land Use Zoning Map or Map 19.2: Active Travel Overview and as opportunities arise, for the purpose of the development of 'Local Scale' and 'Interconnecting Arterial' walking and cycling routes.

### **LTP-AT-P-2: It is a policy of the Council to:**

- a. Require that all new proposed development(s) where appropriate, shall include active travel connectivity using permeability desire lines including filtered pedestrian permeability link(s) to adjoining land uses where such links would serve a meaningful purpose in terms of promoting active travel and/or connecting to a wider walking and cycle network. Detailed design of such links shall be agreed at pre-planning design stage, thereafter incorporated into finalized schemes, and delivered by the developer. This policy shall be applied to secure the delivery of those Schemes listed in Table 19.1 and other opportunities that may present;
- b. ensure new residential and commercial development(s) shall be designed to the latest DMURS<sup>11</sup> standards, unless precluded by space or other constraints, to be accessible and permeable for pedestrians, cyclists, vulnerable road users and those of reduced mobility.

**LTP AT-P-3:** It is a policy of the Council to continue to work with the National Transport Authority to enable the development of a future electric bike, including other electric scooters, hire scheme for the town.

### **Greenway**

**LTP-AT-P-4:** It is a policy of the Council to support the development of the Letterkenny to Burtonport Strategic Greenway route as it affects the lands within the Letterkenny Plan boundary and to ensure that it integrates effectively with active travel initiatives within the town.

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<sup>11</sup> DMURS- Design manual for urban roads and streets

## Chapter 20 - Public Transport Strategy

### 20.1 Existing Bus Services

At present Letterkenny is served by one town bus service provided by a single private operator offering one bus daily across 2 routes with intermittent frequency. The service covers a wide catchment with 7 different service patterns utilising a looped route that creates long diversions. Improvements to the existing public bus network are necessary in order to offer a realistic alternative to the car. Such services should be more convenient, attractive and of higher frequency, thereby offering a realistic alternative to use of the private car. Walk-ability and accessibility from origins will be a central objective in the planning and design of all new transport infrastructure and public transport networks by ensuring convenient active travel networks to and from bus stops is available with particular regard to the town centre.

### 20.2 Proposed Additional Public Transport Service(s)

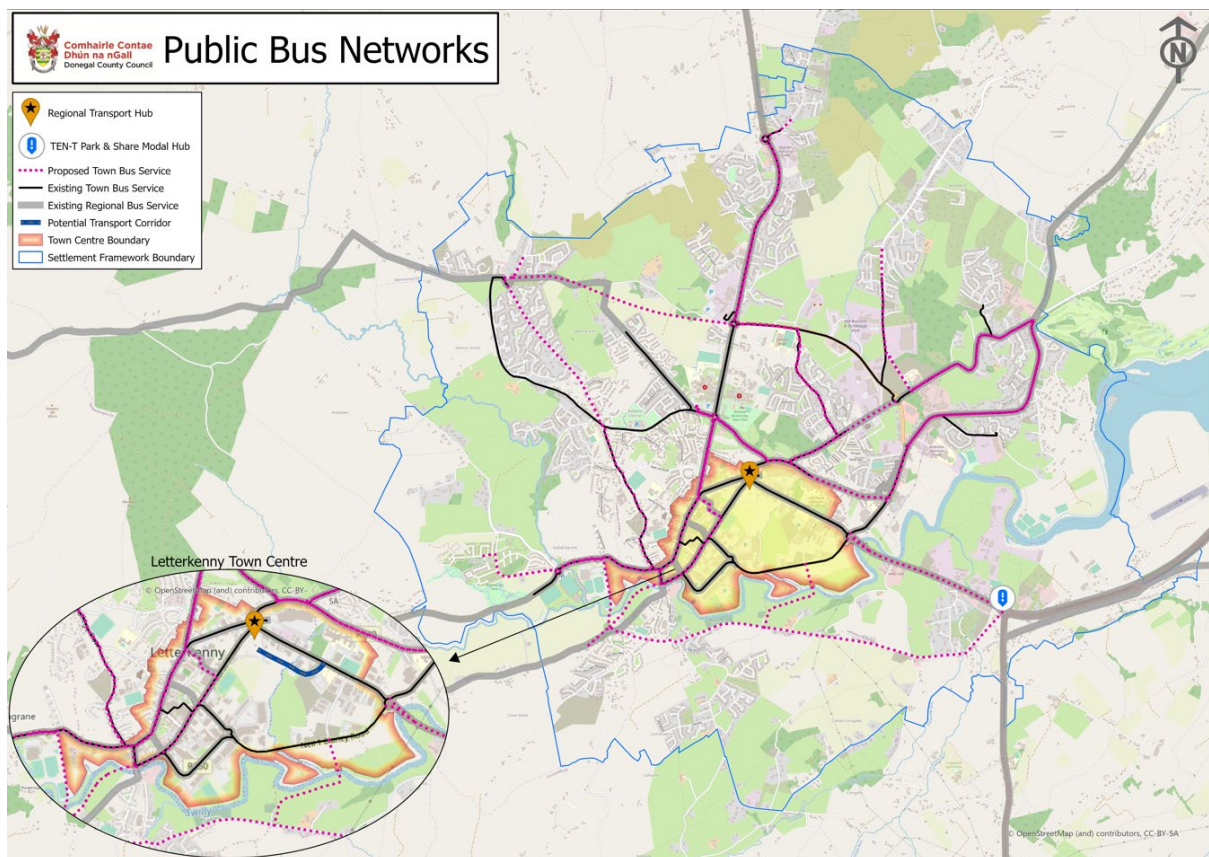
Significant consultation and collaboration have taken place to date, and is ongoing, with the National Transport Authority (NTA) on developing additional bus services for the town. A key aim of this work is to ensure that the services and routes are optimized to meet passenger demand commensurate with the resources allocated at this current time. Route planning and enhancing the network must also take account of the existing town centre traffic regime and the location of the proposed town centre multi modal transport hub, as identified in the 2040 Regeneration Strategy.

Notwithstanding the significant body of work completed to-date in identifying the emerging preferred route alignments, the route alignment suggested in Map 20.1 below is subject to further change until it reaches the final stage in the NTA process. Therefore, the contents of Map 20.1 should be considered as indicative only at this stage. The finalised service expansion will be strongly influenced by, and proposals are also subject to:

- Identification of potential stop locations (subject to the approval of the relevant Roads Authority).
- Potential non-statutory consultation on route alignments and service specification (subject to approval of local authority)
- Development of detailed stop designs including road safety audit as required (subject to approval).
- Development of draft timetables and sectional runtimes to integrate proposed routes and the wider transport network.
- Detailed examination of routes to identify potential physical network constraints.
- Identification and detailed design of suitable locations for termini, bus turnaround facilities and regulatory layover (subject to the approval of the relevant Roads Authority).
- Discussions with landowners and other stake holders as required in instances where buses are planned to operate on lands not in public ownership / charge of the Local Authority (e.g.: HSE campuses, Retail Outlets, etc.).



## Map 20.1: Public Bus Networks



In addition to the above-noted measures, the roll-out of The NTA's 'Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan' should augment and complement the future enhanced public transport offering in the town as set out above.

## 20.3 Proposed Intervention Measures for Implementation of an Enhanced Town Centre Public Transport Network

This section describes the measures that are likely to be required to enable the development of an efficient and effective public bus network within the town centre, inclusive of associated measures to improve public transport integration with other modes, particularly walking and cycling, and easy connection to the future multimodal transport hub. The Council will work with all relevant stakeholders and responsible authorities to develop these measures.

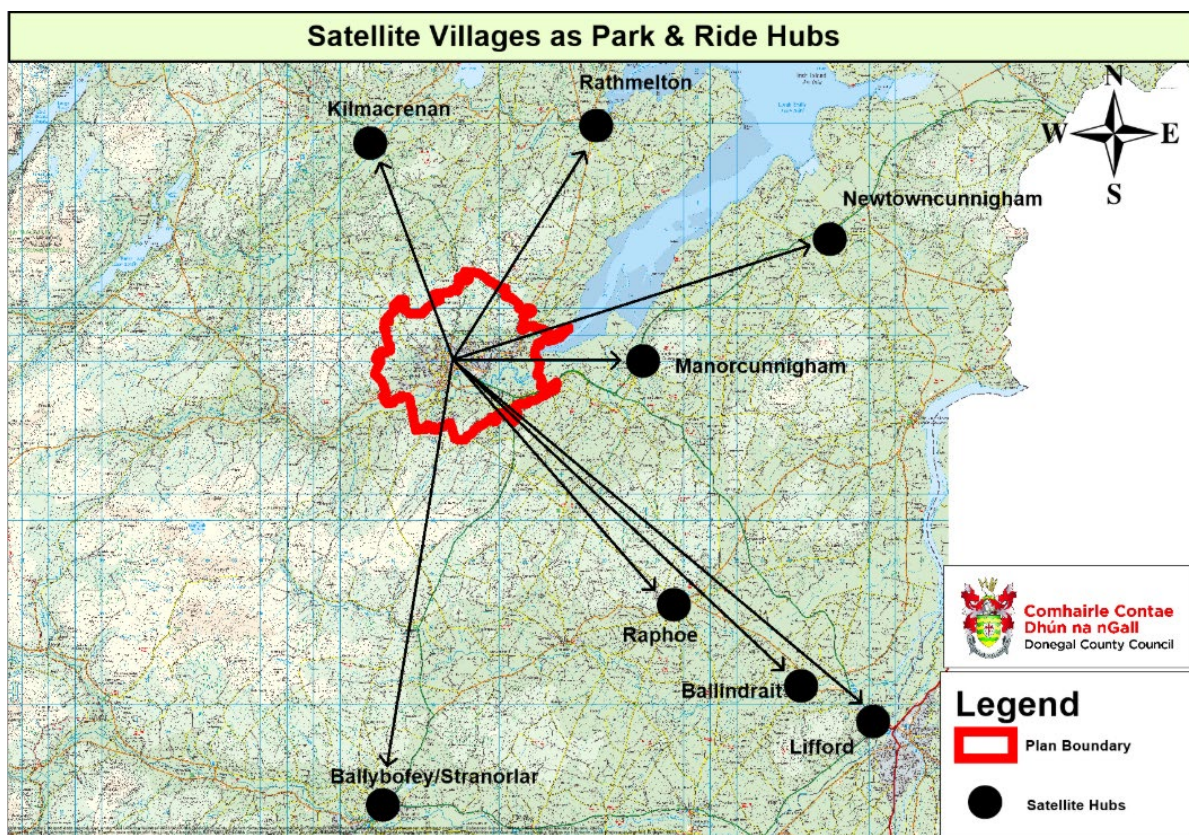
### Re-imagining The Character and Functioning of Main Street:

- **Increasing the public realm pedestrian space and pedestrian priority by means of reallocating on-street public car parking.**
- **Creating temporary partial pedestrianisation through the installation of retractable bollards at strategic locations, (as supported by the Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy).**
- **~ Prioritising public transport access, inclusive of the provision of a two-way interchange for public transport between certain points along the Main Street. This will allow for greater pedestrian wayfinding especially for vulnerable**

members of society by creating bus drop off and pick up points on opposite sides of the same street.

- **Comprehensive Car Parking Study:** The availability of cheap and plentiful car-parking spaces both public and private within the town centre makes the shift from the private car to sustainable modes difficult to accomplish. This Council has therefore identified the need for the preparation of an effective car parking strategy including pricing. This is an objective of this council.
- **Park and Ride/Park and Share Hubs:** The Council has identified various satellite villages and other locations around Letterkenny in which the provision of hubs for parking and continuation of journeys by walking, cycling or by bus could be effective in reducing peak-time car congestion in the town (see Map 20.2 below).

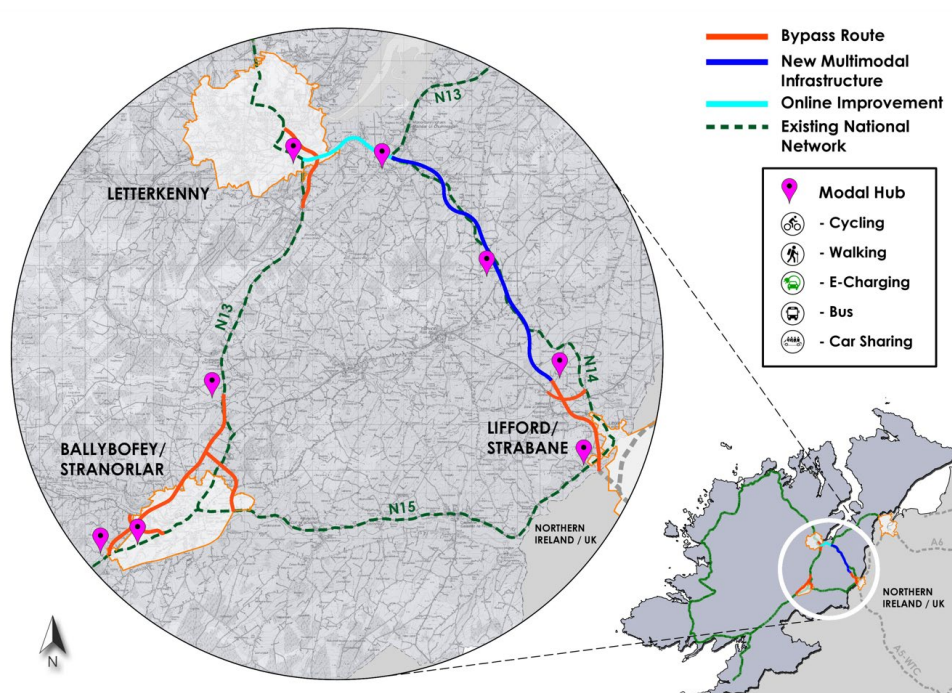
**Map 20.2: Potential Park and Ride Hubs**



The proposals for Kilmacrenan, Ramelton, Manorcunningham, and Newtowncunningham were identified through this Plan process. Those projects in and around Ballybofey/Stranorlar, Lifford, Ballindrait and Raphoe are planned as part of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal. The site inside of the Plan boundary is proposed for the Bonagee area.



**Fig. 20.1: TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal Proposed Modal Hubs**



The Council will continue to consult with the NTA and TII to progress these hubs with a view to ensuring that they are serviced by regular and efficient 'Connecting Ireland' and 'Local link' public transport services.

- **Bus Priority Lanes:** The identification of bus priority lanes will be a priority for the Council over the course of the Plan period. Map 20.1 (see Inset) identifies a potential Public Transport Corridor off the Port Road serving the proposed transport hub.
- The Council's 'Linkages and Public Space Action Plan' identifies a range of pedestrian, cycle and public realm projects designed to improve the existing environment for active travel choice. These improvements will, inter alia, encourage active travel mobility to and from the proposed multi-modal transport hub and other bus-stops.
- It is expected that there will be a significant increase in the uptake and use of electric vehicles and other low-carbon mobility technologies such as electric cars, bikes and scooters during this Plan period. The Council will seek to support this increase through the provision of parking and charging infrastructure in the town centre and publicly accessible locations, where it is feasible to do so. DCC will endeavour to work with TII and the NTA regarding support for longer-distance travel via electric vehicles, including providing for hybrid public transport.
- It is an objective of the Council to seek to restore rail services within the county and to work with all regional and national stakeholders to ensure this is fully explored.

## 20.4 General Objectives and Policies

**LTP-PT-O-1:** To deliver significantly enhanced public transport services and facilities for Letterkenny.

**LTP-PT-O-2:** To encourage a modal shift from use of the private car towards more sustainable modes of transport.

**LTP-PT-O-3:** To engage and work closely with the National Transport Authority and other relevant transport authorities and both public and private operators, in facilitating and securing improvements to and the expansion of public transport infrastructure and services in the town.

**LTP-PT-O-4:** To support the NTA's 'Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan'.

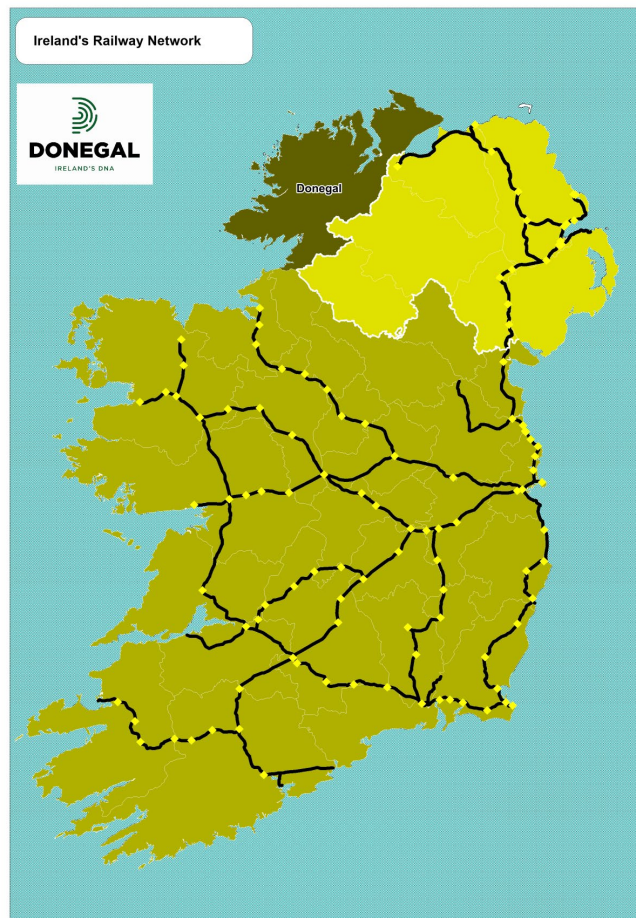
**LTP-PT-P-1:** It is a policy of the council to:

- a. Continue to collaborate with the NTA and all other stakeholders to develop the provision of new public transport services and the necessary physical interventions that enable the expansion of Letterkenny's public transport service, to provide an efficient, frequent, effective and legible public transport bus service to serve the needs of the town.
- b. Provide a service that will connect origins and destinations throughout the town including residential, education, healthcare facilities, employment and the future multi modal transport hub, by way of a local bus service.
- c. Support bus priority infrastructure particularly in the town centre, through the identification of a network of roads for the development of bus priority roads and lanes.
- d. Identify suitable locations for the development of 'Park and Share/Ride Hubs' located within a network of strategic satellite villages (identified, but not limited to, those on Map 20.2) serviced by efficient and effective public transport routes and providers such as 'Connecting Ireland' and 'Local Link'.
- e. Provide new supporting public transport infrastructure in Letterkenny Town Centre to include, inter alia: bus stops, shelter infrastructure including real time passenger information, electric modes charging infrastructure, bicycle parking and provision of electric bike/scooter hire.
- f. Support the delivery of the proposed public transport interventions measures listed in Section 20.3.

## 20.5 Rail Overview

Public transport including Rail plays a key role in providing a future sustainable alternative to motorised transport for longer journeys and contributes towards achieving Ireland's sustainable development goals and reduction in carbon emissions. Donegal has no rail services and therefore rail does not exist as a viable alternative to the private car at this current time. The feasibility of extending the rail network to the North-West City Region (Letterkenny/Derry/Strabane) from Sligo and Dublin is set out as a growth ambition and a Regional Policy Objective in the Northern and Western Regional Assembly's RSES. Alongside this, this transport plan is being prepared during a time of unprecedented awareness of the need for the protection of both local and global environments and the huge potential sustainable travel has in positively contributing to the global climate change challenge in reducing emissions and private car dependency.

**Map 20.3: Ireland's Railway Network**



### **20.5.1 National Strategic Rail Review April 2021.**

In April 2021 an Island wide 'Strategic Rail Review' was launched between both governments to consider how the rail network on the island of Ireland can improve sustainable connectivity between the major cities, enhance regional accessibility and support balanced regional development. Donegal County Council and other stakeholders have made submissions to the public consultation process associated with this review. In addition, the Review will consider the feasibility of high- higher speeds on the network and whether there is a potential to increase use of the network for freight. This joint approach and commitment is currently in draft form with government approval on an island wide basis required before publication of the final review.

This process could be transformative for the North-West region in general, and Letterkenny in particular, having regard to Map 20.3 above and the current lack of rail provision in the region when compared with the rest of the country. There is already strong statutory planning policy support for such rail development. The NWRA included objectives supporting such a review for the Western Rail Corridor in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) (refer RPO6.11) and, more specifically, the investigation of the feasibility of extending the rail network to the North-West City Region from Sligo and Dublin (RPO 6.16) in the RSES. Similarly, the CDP 2018-2024 (as varied) also supports the provision of a rail link between Letterkenny and Derry and also onwards to Sligo, and the reopening of the Western Rail Corridor from Athenry to Sligo.

Previous statutory plans for Letterkenny have included policies seeking to preserve the old railway line running parallel with the Four Lane Road from the Dry Arch Roundabout to the Polestar Roundabout along with all other intact railway lines for possible future re-instatement within the national rail network. A review of this approach for this Plan, however, identified that such an approach was no longer justifiable as large sections of the historic Letterkenny-Strabane and

Letterkenny-Derry have been compromised by development within the Letterkenny Plan area boundary. Whilst the Council recognizes the social economic and environmental opportunities associated with the reintroduction of rail services within and to and from the county, it is considered appropriate to include the following objective and policies.

## 20.6 Rail Objective and Policies

**LTP-PT-O-5:** To support the provision of rail links between Letterkenny and Derry, and Letterkenny to Sligo.

**LTP- PT- P-2: It is a policy of the Council to:**

- a. support the provision of a Rail link between Letterkenny and Derry and Letterkenny to Sligo; and to support the reopening of the Western Rail Corridor from Athenry to Sligo, thereby completing the All Ireland rail network;
- b. not protect the abandoned historic railways corridors within the Letterkenny Plan area boundary for strategic infrastructure provision (such as rail/road/greenway projects) or for recreational development.

**ACTION: Pursuant to the outcomes of the All-Island Strategic Rail Review, Donegal County Council, in collaboration with strategic partners, will seek to identify an appropriate location for a Letterkenny rail hub.**





# Chapter 21 - Town Centre Transport Strategy

## 21.1 Key Issues

This Chapter of the Local Transport Plan focuses on the key transportation interventions proposed as part of the broader suite of measures to achieve the ultimate aim that Letterkenny Town Centre will be transformed from a car-dominated and disconnected centre to one that presents a more attractive and safer environment for all users, inclusive of those who wish to live, work, do business in, or visit the town.

The key factors that have influenced the Strategy include:

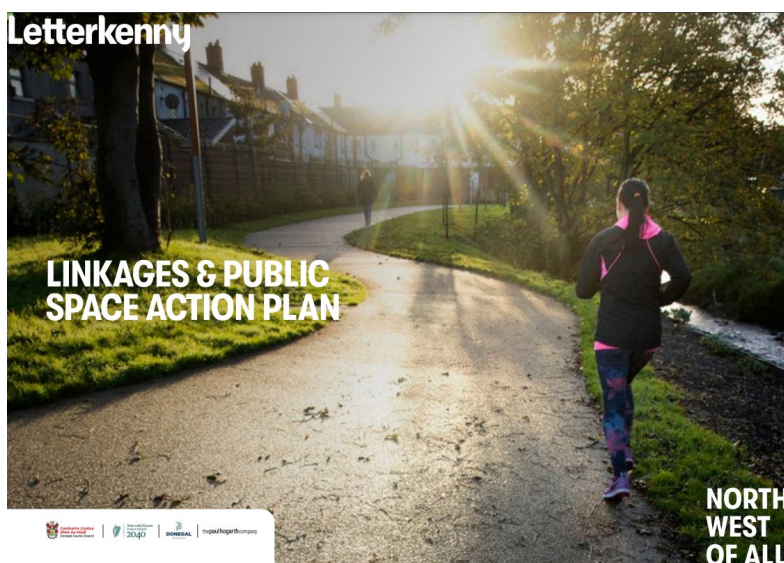
- The historical transport planning approach favouring the car over other modes of transport;
- The impact of strategic traffic on the town centre;
- Inadequate public transport services and facilities;
- Inadequate active travel and public transport connections between the various sub-areas of the centre; and
- Under-provision of public realm and parks.

Whilst all of these issues are interlinked, strategic traffic issues are addressed in Chapter 22: 'Strategic Roads Strategy', and the legacy urban design issues are addressed in Chapter 9: 'Town Centre Strategy'. Indeed, Chapter 9 contains a broad strategy to guide future development in the Centre in general.

## 21.2 Active Travel

### Proposed Interventions

This Strategy incorporates active travel proposals for the town centre contained within the LK 2040 Regeneration Strategy's - 'Linkages and Public Space Action Plan' <http://www.letterkenny2040.ie>. As noted in that document, these proposals are drawn from both Regeneration Strategy 'Vision' and work to develop this Local Transport Plan. This enabled a process of coordination and prioritisation to take place, after which detailed stakeholder engagement, landowner consents (where necessary), detailed planning and design can take place as each project is taken forward.



The projects are listed in Table 21.1 and identified on Map 21.1 below.

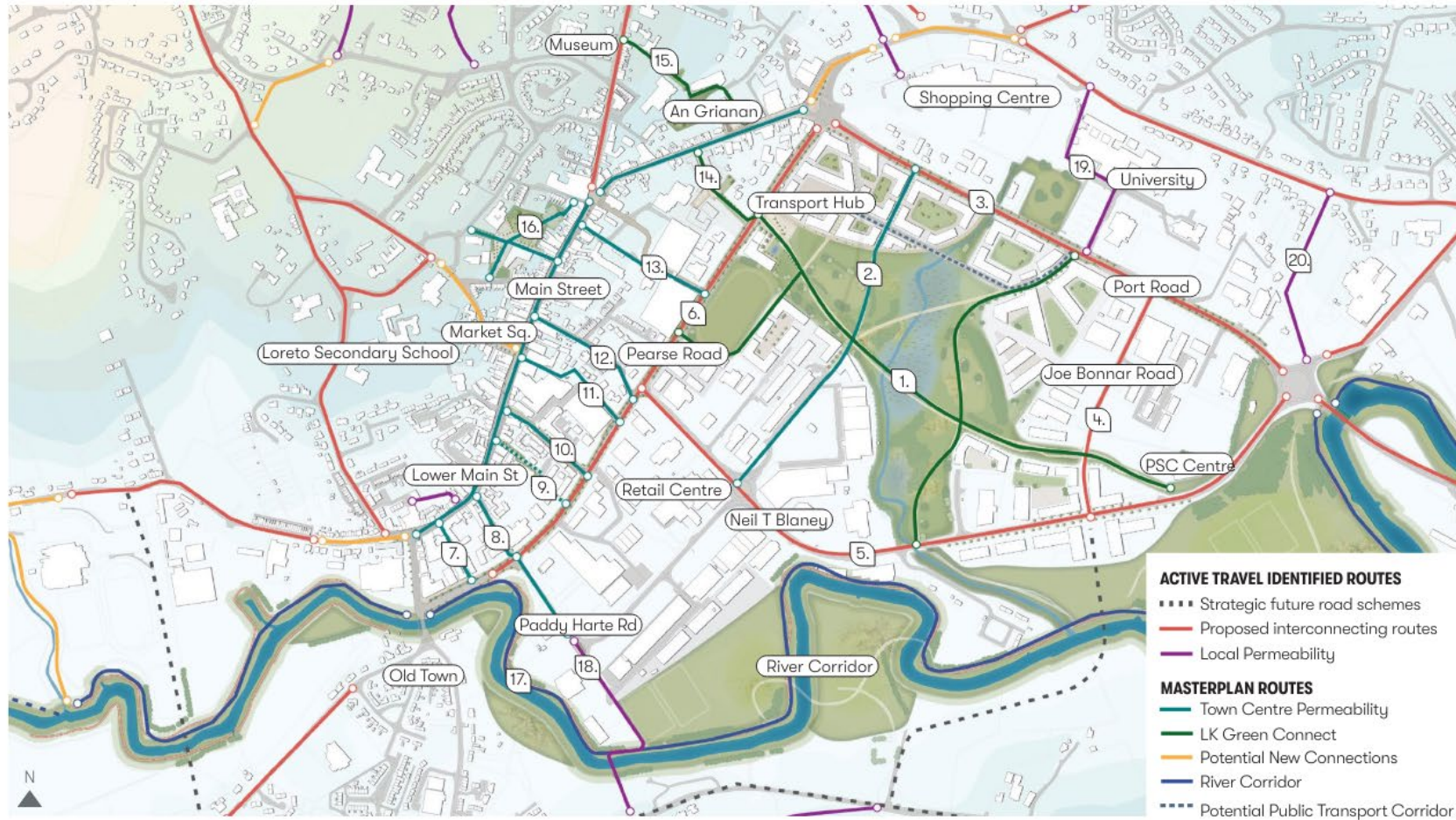
**Table 21.1: Town Centre Linkages**

<b>NO.</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY</b>
1	LK Green Connect	Safe walking and cycling route connecting Pearse Rd, the retail parks, ATU and the Public Service Centre.	<b>x</b>
2	Port Road retail area	Connection from Port Road- LK Green Connect onwards to the Retail area and junction with Neil T. Blaney Rd and Paddy Harte Rd.	
3	Port Road	Improve existing infrastructure along Port rd. Reallocate carriageway space to create dedicated wider walking & cycle lanes and public realm improvements.	<b>x</b>
4	Joe Bonnar Rd	Connection linking Port Road to Neil T. Blaney Road.	
5	Neil T Blaney Rd	Improve existing environment for walking and cycling infrastructure, connecting to both Port and Pearse roads creating a continuous circuit.	<b>x</b>
6	Pearse Road	Improve existing infrastructure along Pearse rd. Reallocation of carriageway space to create dedicated, wider walking and cycle lanes and public realm improvements.	<b>x</b>
7	Lw Main St – Pearse Rd – Apartment connection	Improve existing connection linking Lower Main Street with Pearse road creating a safe and accessible route.	
8	Larkins Lane	Public realm improvements to strengthen connection between Lower Main Street and Pearse Road.	<b>x</b>
9	Lower Main St -Pearse Rd.	Potential vehicle free walking and cycling route connecting Lower Main St and Pearse Road.	
10	St Oliver Plunkett Rd	Improve existing environment for walking and cycling infrastructure connecting from Lower Main Street to Pearse Road.	
11	Courtyard Shopping Centre connection	Improve existing connection linking Main Street with Pearse Road creating a safe and accessible route.	
12	Rosemount Lane	Public realm improvements to strengthen connection between Main Street and Pearse Road.	<b>x</b>
13	Kinnear Lane	Public realm improvements to strengthen connection between Main Street and Pearse Road	
14	LK Green Connect – ESB Site.	Safe walking and cycling route connecting Pearse Road to Port Road through the former ESB lands.	<b>x</b>
15	LK Green Connect – Cultural Connection.	Safe walking and cycling route connecting Donegal County  Museum on High Road, through the town’s cultural destinations at the regional Cultural centre and An Grianan Theatre.	<b>x</b>

<b>NO.</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY</b>
16	Cathedral Quarter Park	Safe walking and cycling routes connecting Church Lane, Main Street, Speers Lane and Ard O Donnell.	
17	River Swilly Greenway	Safe walking and cycling route connecting along The River Swilly with several access points linking into the Town Centre.	<b>x</b>
18	Paddy Harte Rd to River Swilly	Improve existing environment for walking and cycling infrastructure, connecting Pearse Road to the River Swilly Greenway.	
19	University-Port Rd-Ramelton Rd.	Link from Ramelton Road through ATU to Port Road.	<b>x</b>
20	Port Roundabout - Ramelton Rd.	Link from Port Roundabout to Ramelton Road.	
21	Port Road -Main St-Station Roundabout.	Improve existing environment for walking and cycling infrastructure with crossing linking Lk Green Connect between the former ESB site and cultural connection. (Also linked to potential redesign of Station roundabout reference in Design concept for project B2, Port Road).	<b>x</b>
22	Main Street	Improve existing environment for walking and cycling infrastructure.	

**Map 21.1: Town Centre Active Travel Measures (As Identified in the LK2040 Regeneration Strategy's 'Linkages & Public Space Action Plan')**

**TOWN CENTRE LINKAGES & DESTINATIONS**



Routes shown are indicative only



## 21.3 Public Transport

This Plan supports the following key public transport interventions in the town centre:

- the provision of a centrally located, multi-functional Regional Transport Hub that will accommodate public and private services; and
- the expansion of the public bus services serving the town centre (refer to Chapter 20: Public Transport for more background information to initiative being pursued in this regard).

## 21.4 Town Centre Strategy Objectives and Policies:

**LTP-TC-0-1:** To deliver a multi-functional, centrally-located regional transport hub serving Letterkenny, County Donegal and the wider region.

**LTP-TC-0-2:** To create a dynamic, accessible town, anchored by a centrally-located local transport hub, served by a centre and town wide network of multi modal infrastructure providing for connectivity and enabling transitional shift to public transport, walking and cycling.

**LTP-TC-0-3:** To support the principle, development and implementation of the 'Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy' and all associated documents and plans including the recommendations listed in the 'Linkages and Public Space Action Plan.

**Policy LTP-TC-P-1:** It is a policy of the Council to support the principle of the following sustainable transport plans and interventions in the Town Centre as identified in the 'Letterkenny 2040 Regeneration Strategy' and this Local Transport Plan:

- a. the delivery of the 'Linkages and Public Space Action Plan' with particular regard to the Town Centre Linkages as set out in Table 21.1 above; future development proposals will be located/sited/designed in a manner which positively relates to and complements the LK Green Connect project and Donegal County Council shall engage with landowners and ensure that future development proposals will be located/sited/designed in a manner which positively relates to and complements LK Green Connect;
- b. the development of a centrally-located Transport Hub/interchange;
- c. development of the network of walking and cycling routes and public transport priority measures, inclusive of the preservation of corridors necessary for such purposes connecting to the network of town wide schemes;
- d. the re-allocation of road space and crossings for the development of priority pedestrian and cycling corridors;
- e. the re-allocation of road corridors and crossings for the development of bus priority measures.

**Policy LTP-TC-P-2: It is a policy of the council to:**

- a. support the development of the public realm /active travel routes within the Town Centre core as identified in the Land Use Zoning Map; and
- b. support the development of the Swilly Way as provided for within the Letterkenny Plan Land Use zoning map.



## Chapter 22: Strategic Roads Strategy

### 22.1 Background

Chapter 16: 'Key Issues and Underlying Factors' identifies the context for this Strategic Roads Strategy, notably the chronic inadequacies of key strategic road arteries and junctions, and the debilitating impact both on the capacity of these roads to fulfil their primary function of conveying strategic traffic in a safe and efficient manner, and on the functioning of the town due to regular congestion events and resulting delays. To address these critical issues, Donegal County Council, in conjunction with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and the Department of Transport, has identified and prioritised a number of major projects to resolve the challenges presented by the inadequacies of the N56/Four Lane Road and N56/R950 (Ramelton) Road Corridor and associated junctions, namely:

1. Section 2 of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal (TEN-T PRIPD);
2. The Southern Network Project (SNP);
3. Four Lane Road Safety Improvement Project (designed primarily as a road safety scheme but will also provide some level of improvement in traffic movement and active travel infrastructure provision) and
4. The Polestar Roundabout Project (inclusive of improvements along the adjacent section of the N56/Ramelton Road extending to the Knocknamona roundabout).

The TEN-T project is comprised of 3 sub-sections, including a Letterkenny section (other two sections address: a. Ballybofey/Stranorlar; and b. Manorcunningham Roundabout to Lifford). The Letterkenny section includes a crucial second crossing of the River Swilly and will enable traffic travelling to and from the north of the County to decouple from town centre-bound traffic and west-of-the-County traffic, and avoid the edge of the town centre. The SNP will perform a similar function for traffic travelling to and from the west of the County.

Preliminary designs for both above-noted major projects include dedicated infrastructure for safe walking and cycling and will also consider how alternative public transport services could be provided for these key arterial corridors. 'Park and Share' and 'Park and Cycle' facilities in addition to facilities for public and private bus pick up and drop off form a key aspect of these schemes. In combination all measures will support the introduction of alternative options to the private car. This not only supports the operation of the strategic routes themselves but in addition and in the round will support the long-term Masterplan ambitions for the town centre. To create a less car dominated town centre and less car dependant town.

### 22.2 TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project

The N13, N14 and N15 National primary routes form part of the European TEN-T Comprehensive strategic transport network. Enhanced Regional accessibility, including upgrading access to the North West utilising routes such as the N14 and progressive development of the Atlantic Economic Corridor northwards by upgrading the N15/N13 link, is a National Strategic Outcome of the NPF. Furthermore, the N13/N14/N56 Letterkenny Bypass and Dual Carriageway to Manorcunningham is listed as a priority for investment within the National Development Plan 2018-2027.



Map 22.2 - The TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project Donegal (TEN-T PRIPD)



The TEN-T PRIPD Donegal is a strategic infrastructure project which consists of and prioritises 3 Sections of the TEN-T transport network in Donegal for improvement namely:

- Section 1 - N15/N13 Ballybofey/Stranorlar Urban Region,
- Section 2 - N56/N13 Letterkenny to Manorcunningham,
- Section 3 - N14 Manorcunningham to Lifford/Strabane/A5 Link.

Specifically, regarding Letterkenny, the project will tackle some of the key transportation issues affecting the existing strategic transport network identified above, namely:

- **Economic:** To improve the efficiency of the transport network by improving journey time and journey time reliability.
- **Safety:** To reduce the frequency and severity of collisions and to improve the overall safety of the national road network.
- **Environment:** To reduce overall air pollution levels near sensitive receptors caused by congestive queuing of vehicles and to reduce overall traffic noise levels near sensitive receptors.
- **Accessibility:** Improve accessibility to/from the North West region and in particular Improve network resilience such as strategic access to Letterkenny where the N56 (Four Lane Road) is a "Lifeline Route" access to Letterkenny and northwest Donegal.
- **Sustainable Transport/Active Travel:** To encourage sustainable/active travel modes by providing walking and cycling infrastructure as an integral part of the project, and segregating strategic traffic from localized traffic thus easing congestion and freeing up urban road space for sustainable travel modes including bus transport.

The Preferred Route Corridors for the Project were selected by DCC following a detailed and comprehensive 'Option Selection Process' in accordance with Transport Infrastructure Ireland Guidelines (TII). In May, 2021 DCC adopted the Variation to the County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2018 in respect of the TEN-T PRIPD which provides the necessary policy and spatial planning

framework to facilitate the overall TEN-T PRIPD through the statutory approval process including reserving and protecting the Preferred Route Corridors within the plan. In parallel with the process of adopting said Variation the preparation of the detailed design for the scheme, the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), and the Compulsory Purchase Order documentation for the project continues to be progressed and the project will be the subject of an application to An Bord Pleanála for approval in due course.

### **Section 2 (N56/N13 Letterkenny to Manorcunningham) of the TEN-T PRIPD**

The Preferred Route Corridor identified for Section 2 of the TEN-T PRIPD affecting Letterkenny includes: a new offline section of the N13 through the townlands of Drumany and Dromore (south of the existing N13 dual carriageway), a new junction with the N13 dual carriageway at Dromore, a new offline section traversing the townlands of Dromore, Bunnagee and Milk Isle (north of the existing N13 dual carriageway) with a new link to the existing Dry Arch roundabout at Bunnagee, a new clear-span 100m strategic crossing of the River Swilly and a new roundabout at the junction of the N56/R245 at Ballyraine on the edge of the town centre.

The Section 2 TEN-T PRIPD preferred route corridor will therefore: provide a second strategic access point to Letterkenny coming from Derry, Belfast, Dublin and Sligo, significantly reduce traffic congestion on the heavily congested N56 from the Dry Arch Roundabout west to the Polestar roundabout, remove a significant volume of traffic from the Polestar roundabout and junction of the N56/R940 Ballyraine road (thereby also reducing air and noise pollution and freeing up road space for sustainable modes of transport), and improve safety.

#### **22.2.1 Active Travel Infrastructure**

Active transport infrastructure forms an integral part of the TEN-T Project, and combined cycling and pedestrian facilities are proposed throughout Section 2 of said scheme. In particular, a segregated shared cycleway/footpath is proposed from the southern end of Section 2 of the scheme at Listillian northwards to the new junction with the existing N13 dual carriageway at Dromore all of which are located on the outskirts of the town. This facility will have a significantly improved gradient which will make it a more attractive option for active travel compared with the current scenario. In addition, new cycling/ pedestrian connections are also proposed to the local road infrastructure in this area and St Patrick's Primary School Lurgybrack as part of this element of the scheme.

A shared cycleway/footpath (Non-Motorised User Facility), segregated where possible, is also proposed from the abovementioned new junction at Dromore east to the N13/ N14 junction at Manorcunningham and onward to Lifford creating new active travel opportunities throughout the county.

A segregated shared cycleway/footpath is proposed from the abovementioned junction at Dromore, to a proposed new junction north of the Dry Arch at Bunnagee and across the new strategic bridge crossing of the Swilly to connect with the town's existing pedestrian and cycling infrastructure at the N56/R245 junction at Ballyraine. In addition, shared cycleway/footpath connections are proposed from the new proposed junction at Bunnagee to the existing Dry Arch Roundabout connecting to new proposed facilities to be constructed as part of the N56 Four Lane Road Project.

In combination with the sustainable/active travel infrastructure planned for the Section 3: N14 Manorcunningham to Lifford/Strabane/A5 Link of the TEN-T PRIPD the abovementioned infrastructure would provide for continuous dedicated walking and cycling infrastructure from Lifford to Letterkenny. Furthermore, the abovementioned active travel infrastructure would also connect to the walking and cycling infrastructure approved for the N56 Four Lane Road Safety Improvement Scheme. This

provides for new safe and dedicated cycleway and footpaths connections to the southern edge of the town.

### 22.2.2 TEN-T PRIPD - Policies and Objectives:

**LTP-T-O-1** - Should there be any ostensible or apparent conflict between, on the one hand, the Objectives, Policies and/or provisions of the Local Area Plan herein providing for the development of Section 2 of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal (TEN-T PRIPD) and, on the other hand, any other Objectives, Policies and/or provisions of the Local Area Plan, those Objectives, Policies and Provisions which provide for the development of the TEN-T PRIPD shall take priority over all or any other provisions of the Local Area Plan and any such other provisions or Objectives shall be read and construed as subservient to and not in any material way contravening so much of the Objectives, Policies and provisions contained within this Plan as provide for the development of the TEN-T PRIPD.

**LTP-T-P-1:** It is a policy of the Council to support and facilitate the appropriate development, extension and improvement of the TEN-T network within Letterkenny, subject to environmental, safety and other planning considerations. In this regard it is a specific policy of the Council to:

- a) Progress and ultimately carry out/implement the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal within Letterkenny as one of critical strategic importance to Donegal subject to the granting of the required statutory approvals for same and the terms and conditions of any such approvals (if granted).
- b) Reserve the preferred route corridor for Section 2 of the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal within Letterkenny as shown on the Zoning Map for the purposes of the project and the ancillary facilities to service the same and not to permit other development within those corridors where such development may prejudice the carrying out/implementation of the said project.
- c) Facilitate any development related to the TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project, Donegal within Letterkenny within lands zoned:
  - TEN-T PRIPD/Established Development.
  - TEN-T PRIPD/General Employment and Commercial.
  - TEN-T PRIPD/Open Space.
  - TEN-T PRIPD/Local Environment.
  - TEN-T PRIPD /Opportunity site.

## 22.3 N56

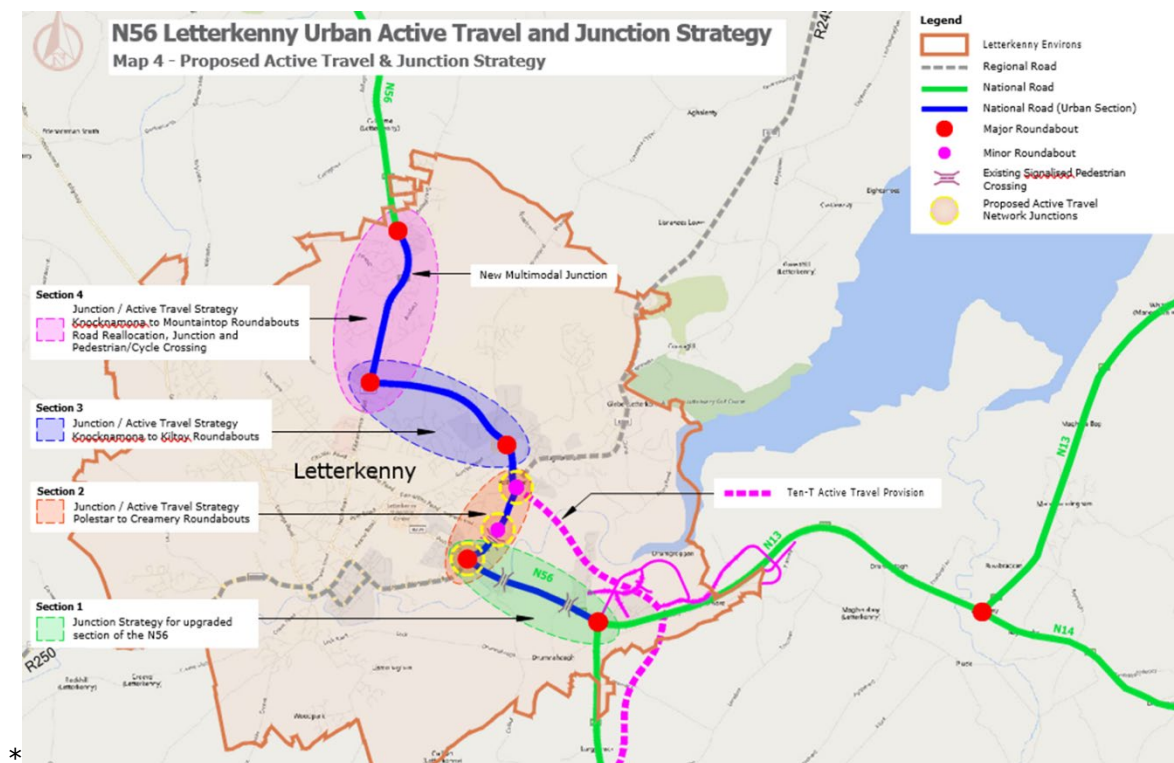
The N56 through Letterkenny is a critical multimodal transportation corridor enabling movement of all goods, services and people within and around Letterkenny and is fundamental for compact urban growth, economic development and modal shift within Letterkenny as envisaged under national, regional and local policies. It is the sole primary access to and from Letterkenny for all vital emergency services and the limited network resilience means that any operational issues arising can rapidly result in shutdown and significant disruption to these services and the wider town.

Planning policy in respect to the N56 Letterkenny is to create a safe and attractive multi modal corridor that facilitates active travel along and across the N56 through Letterkenny and to safeguard and maintain the function and operation of the N56 as a Strategic distributor and lifeline route for all transport modes. It is also vital to enable sustainable and appropriate development access. The key policy deliverables with respect to the N56 include provision of new/improved active travel facilities, provision of new crossing facilities, signalisation and rationalisation of existing junctions. This will enable multimodal connectivity along and permeability across the N56 for all road users and will optimise function and efficiency of the urban N56.

Overall new accesses to the N56 Urban will not be allowed except if 'exceptional circumstances' are established in accordance with National Spatial Planning Guidelines. Similarly, any development resulting in intensification of an existing junction(s) must be consistent with the overall strategy for the N56 and for the particular policy for improvement as outlined below.

The existing N56 Letterkenny Urban is a key multimodal transport corridor and can be divided into four distinct sections (see map below) for the identification of future upgrading/interventions to create multi modal options along these distinct stretches of urban national secondary route.

**Map 22.3 N56 Letterkenny Urban Sections**



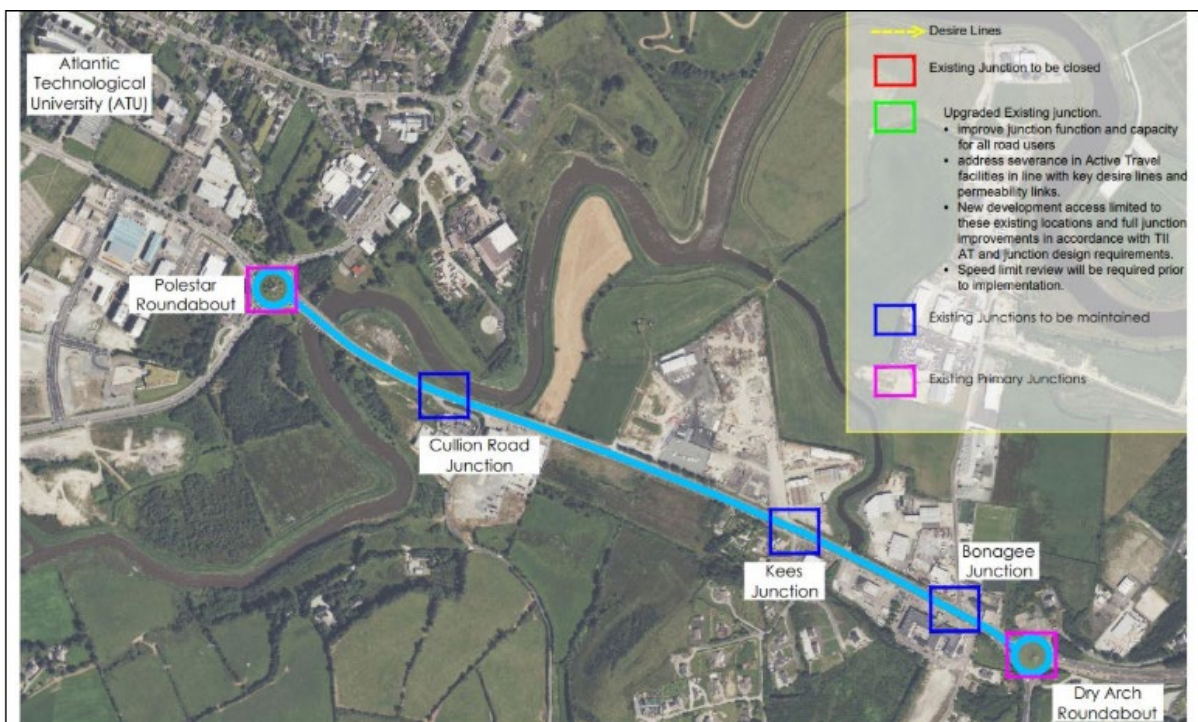


1. N56 Four Lane Road (Dry Arch Roundabout to Polestar Roundabout): DMurs designed upgrades to the existing N56 Four Lane Road were completed mid-2023, reducing speed, full carriageway segregation, removal of all but two right turning junctions and full Active Travel (pedestrian and cycle) facilities on both sides of the road including two signalised crossings.
2. N56 Polestar Roundabout to Creamery Roundabout: is a legacy section of the N56 and has the benefit of Part VIII approval for signalisation and rationalisation of the existing junctions. In addition, it is proposed to provide new and improved Active Travel facilities along and across the N56, including potential road-space re-allocation where feasible, in conjunction with the signalised junctions.
3. N56 Creamery Roundabout to Knocknamona Roundabout (Business Park Road): new walking and cycling facilities are anticipated to be proposed as future improvements along and across this stretch, including primary signalised junctions and rationalisation of existing junctions and accesses to enable permeability across the N56 for non-motorised users and to facilitate improved function and efficiency on the N56. This also includes a reduced speed limit to provide consistency along the N56 and to facilitate junction arrangements.
4. N56 Knocknamona Roundabout to Mountaintop: It is proposed to provide new/improved Active Travel facilities along and across the N56 to improve connectivity and permeability for pedestrians and cyclists. It is also proposed to rationalise existing junctions and accesses by providing new Primary Junctions to improve safety, connectivity, permeability, function and efficiency of this section of the N56 for all road users.

### 22.3.1 N56 Policies and Objectives:

**LTP–T-P-2:** It is a policy of the Council to permit the development of lands adjacent to the N56 Four Lane Road by means of access only via the existing local road junctions identified in Fig. 22.1 below or alternatively by a single improved junction to the N56, replacing the existing poorly aligned Cullion Road and junction, subject to the safety and carrying capacity of the National Road being maintained.

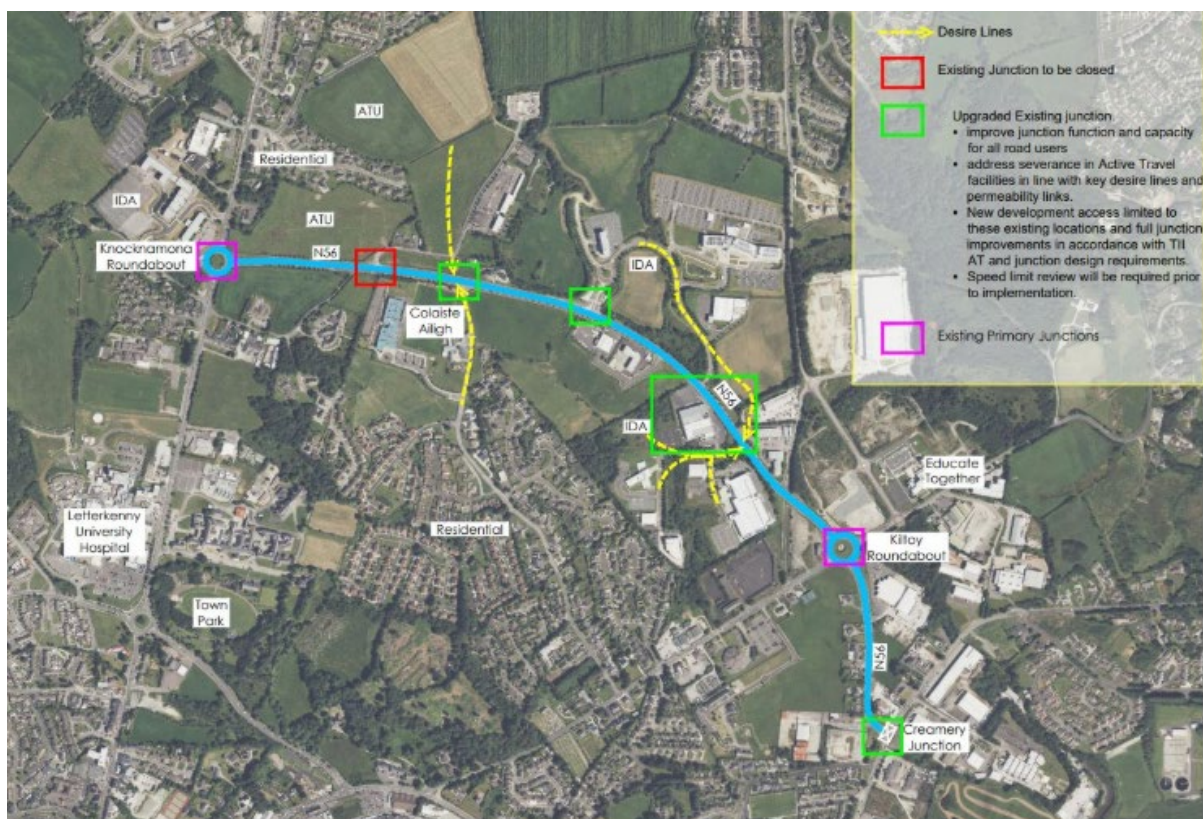
**Figure 22.1: Four Lane Road Access Strategy**



**Policy LK- T-P-3:** It is a policy of the Council that development proposals requiring access to the N56 Business Park Road shall only be permitted where such proposals are consistent with the Council’s strategy to:

- a. Provide new/improved active travel facilities along and across the N56;
- b. Upgrade and rationalise the junctions identified in Fig. 22.2 below to enable permeability across the N56 for non-motorised users and to facilitate improved function and efficiency on the N56; and
- c. Implement a reduced speed limit to provide consistency along the N56 and to facilitate junction arrangements.

**Figure 22.2: Business Park Road Access Strategy**



**Policy LK-T-P-4:** It is a policy of the Council to signalise and rationalise the existing junctions, from the Polestar to the Creamery roundabout and to provide new and improved Active Travel facilities along and across the N56, including potential road-space re-allocation where feasible, in conjunction with the signalised junctions.

**Policy LK-T-P-5:** It is a policy of the Council to:

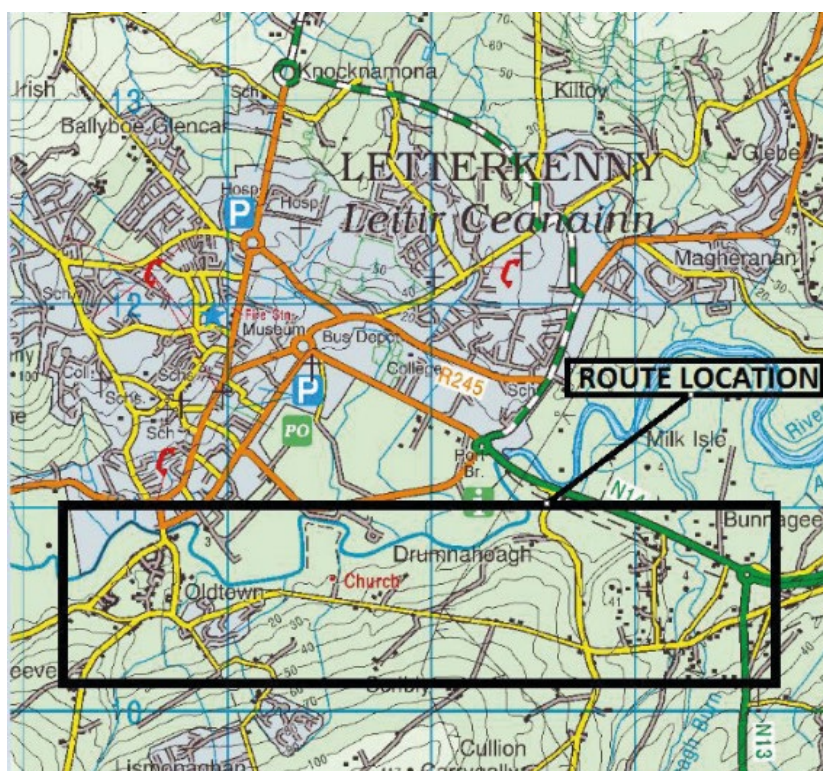
- a. provide new/improved Active Travel facilities along and across the N56 from the N56 Knocknamona Roundabout extending to the Mountain Top, to improve connectivity and permeability for pedestrians and cyclists.
- b. to rationalise existing junctions and accesses by providing new Primary Junctions to improve safety, connectivity, permeability, function and efficiency of this section of the N56 for all road users.



## 22.4 Southern Network Project

The Southern Network Project (SNP) (previously referred to as the Southern Relief Road) has been conceived as a strategic transportation corridor development project commencing on the N13/N14 and traversing in a westerly direction. The scheme terminates adjacent to the Ballymacool roundabout located to the west of the town with a proposed connection onwards to the Rock Hill Road and the west of the county. The SNP is a combination of both a comprehensive upgrade of the main road network in the south of the town, and the provision of significant new active travel facilities to complement and to form part of the wider network of active travel facilities proposed in this Plan. The project comprises online widening (Leck Road and Rockhill Road), new road construction and new river crossings.

Map 22.3 - Southern Network Project Route Location



**Map 22.4 - Southern Network Project/Relationship with TEN-T and Four Lane Projects**



### 22.4.1 Background/Existing Policy Support

The Southern Network Project is already supported at regional and county planning policy levels. The RSES RPO 3.7.30 supports both the TEN-T project and the SNP as follows:

- RSES RPO 3.7.30: 'To deliver the TEN-T priority route improvement Donegal and Letterkenny by 2028, including the N-56 Link, and also progress the Southern Relief Road (Leck Road), the N-14 Manorcunningham – Lifford. and N-13 Letterkenny - Ballybofey.'
- The SNP is also identified in Fig. 33: 'Letterkenny Core Projects' and Fig. 35: 'Strategic Road Schemes'.
- County Donegal Development Plan, 2018-2024 lists in Table 5.1B: 'Proposed Transport Improvement Projects' and provides support in Objective T-O-7: 'To protect the corridors and routes and acquire the lands necessary for transportation improvement projects as identified in Table 5.1B'.

The Southern Network Project (SNP) has been supported in policy since the project was identified and supported with an evidence basis in the ILUTS Report, 2009. The SNP has been identified as an important strategic route for the town to intercept traffic prior to approach to the heavily saturated Port Bridge Roundabout and Oldtown junctions and thereby to provide an effective means of transferring westbound traffic from the east.

### 22.4.2 Key Objectives/Anticipated Benefits:

The key objectives of the project are as follows:

- To minimise town centre congestion with the redistribution of west bound traffic by providing an alternative route.
- To increase capacity of the local road network and to reduce congestion in the town centre and on the approaches to the town centre thus maximising the capacity of the town centre and the

extended town centre for shoppers, visitors, local residents, customers and businesses creating a more favourable environment.

- Provision of new and/or improved relief roads to ensure the continued effective operation of the strategic road network.
- Provision of access to key development lands to the south of the town via new link roads to assist in reshaping Letterkenny and providing opportunity for residential/ suburb development within walk/cycling distance of the town centre and amenities in accordance with the compact growth strategy of this Plan.
- To encourage and promote modal shift and remove traffic in the urban environment and promote a more user-friendly town centre with the provision of safe and continuous pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities.
- Improve road safety to the south of Letterkenny for all road users and current and future residents.

**Table 22.1 – Anticipated Benefits of Southern Network Project**

Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving average journey times.</li> <li>• Improve economic performance and reduce transport costs.</li> <li>• Improve urban congestion</li> </ul>
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce the severity of collisions along the national road network;</li> <li>• To improve safety for all road users including pedestrians and cyclists along both the national road network and on the surrounding road network;</li> <li>• To support the RSA Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030;</li> </ul>
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To improve the environment in terms of air quality and noise levels by improving the existing road alignment.</li> <li>• To improve the town centre environment through: removal or reassignment of strategic traffic to the subject road; and by removal of traffic to park and stride facilities.</li> <li>• To promote Modal Shift.</li> <li>• To avoid adverse impacts on the internationally important European Site of Lough Swilly Special Area of Conservation (002287) &amp; Lough Swilly Special Protection Area (004075).</li> </ul>
Accessibility and Social Inclusion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To improve accessibility to key facilities, such as employment, education, transport, and healthcare for all road users, but in particular vulnerable groups;</li> <li>• To improve accessibility and reduce severance and in turn support social and economic development within this strategically located hinterland; and</li> <li>• To support the accessibility and social inclusion objectives of national, regional and local planning policy.</li> </ul>
Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To support initiatives to bring investment into the Northern &amp; Western Region;</li> <li>• In the case of roads provide access to poorly served regions, for large scale employment proposals, to complete missing links and to address critical safety issues; and</li> <li>• Support identified national and regional spatial planning priorities</li> </ul>
Active Travel:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To improve ambient conditions and thereby encourage increased physical activity; and</li> <li>• To improve safety for all road users, in particular cyclists and pedestrians, along the L1114, thereby encouraging increased physical activity.</li> </ul>

## 22.5 Additional Strategic Roads Schemes

Successive Donegal Councils have given policy support to the development of a Northern Network Project (previously referred to as the 'Northern Relief Road') and a Western Network Project (previously referred to as the 'Western Relief Road') to address challenges on the northern and western sides of the town. Support for these projects is also contained in the RSES. The proposals are retained, therefore, in this Plan inclusive of the identification of indicative routes on the Land Use Zoning Map and active travel maps, and their inclusion in relevant policies below, given the huge potential they offer for the provision of multi-modal travel providing further connectivity to the existing network modes. Whilst the Western network project is unlikely to be realized in the long term, the horizon for the development of the Northern Network Project is anticipated in the short to medium term in tandem with anticipated private development in the area.

### 22.5.1 Mountain Top Road Considerations

Donegal County Council acknowledges ongoing challenges around congestion issues on the Mountain Top Road/N56. The undernoted Action contains a commitment of the Council to investigate the feasibility of a suggested measure to help alleviate these issues.

**ACTION: Donegal County Council will investigate the feasibility and cost/benefits of providing a relief road between the Mountain Top Roundabout and Killylastin.**

## 22.6 General Strategic Roads Objective and Policies

**LTP-T- O-2: To develop the Strategic Roads programme for Letterkenny.**

**LTP-T-P-5:** It is a policy of the council to:

- a. Support and facilitate the appropriate development, extension and improvement of Letterkenny's transport network, including the strategic roads projects identified in Table 22.2 below;
- b. Not to permit development that would prejudice the implementation of a strategic roads project identified in Table 22.2.
- c. Protect the corridors and routes and acquire the lands necessary for new roads and road improvement projects as identified in Table 22.2 below.

**LTP-T-P-6: It is a policy of the council to:**

- a. Address the inadequate strategic road network serving the town of Letterkenny so as to alleviate current congestion to and from and within the town.
- b. Provide for and support the removal of non-strategic traffic from the town through support for the provision of strategic roads infrastructure projects.
- c. Manage future traffic interventions to ensure reprioritizing from the private car to sustainable modes so as to create a safer and more comfortable environment for pedestrians cyclists and public transport.
- d. Protect the corridors and routes and acquire the lands necessary for new roads and road improvement projects as identified in Table 22.2.

**Table 22.2 - Strategic Roads Projects**

<b>TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project (Section 2)</b>
<b>Southern Network Project</b>
<b>Northern Network Project</b>
<b>Western Network Project</b>
<b>Urban Road Improvement Projects</b>



## Appendix A – Infrastructural Assessment

### A.1 Introduction

The Letterkenny Plan 2023-2029 has been prepared in accordance with the requirements and provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). It sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Letterkenny in the context of the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region and the Donegal County Development Plan 2018-2024. The Plan has been drafted having regard to Ministerial Guidelines issued pursuant to Section 28 of the Act and in accordance with EU requirements regarding Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA). The Letterkenny Plan 2021-2027 replaces Chapter 12 of Part C of the County Development Plan 2018-2024, which heretofore contained the planning policy framework for the town of Letterkenny.

The Letterkenny Plan is required to be consistent with the objectives of the County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024 and the Core Strategy contained therein. The Letterkenny Plan must also be consistent with the provisions of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Region.

The NPF provides (see National Policy Objective 72a) that, when making land-use zoning decisions, “planning authorities will be required to apply a standardised, tiered approach to differentiate between i) zoned land that is serviced and ii) zoned land that is serviceable within the life of the plan”. Furthermore, National Policy Objective 72b states that, “when considering zoning lands for development purposes that require investment in service infrastructure, planning authorities will make a reasonable estimate of the full cost of delivery of the specified services and prepare a report, detailing the estimated cost at draft and final plan stages”. The NPF notes that Further guidance will be provided by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in respect of Infrastructural Assessments in updated Statutory Guidelines that will be issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

### A.2 Purpose of Infrastructural Assessment and Methodology

The purpose of this Infrastructural Assessment is to:

- Examine the suitability of sites for future residential development, having regard to NPF criteria, the provisions of the Donegal County Development Plan and the proper planning and sustainable development of Letterkenny;
- Assess the infrastructure requirements to service each site;
- Assess and weight the planning and serviceability/infrastructure provision for each site to enable a ‘Tier’ to be assigned, as may be applicable; and
- Identify services required to support new development.

In the absence of Departmental guidance which is expected to issue under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), this Infrastructural Assessment has been developed in accordance with the general guidance set out under Appendix 3 of the NPF. Engineering expertise in terms of roads infrastructure requirements was provided by the Council’s roads engineers for the Letterkenny Municipal District, whilst Irish Water provided information in relation to water and wastewater infrastructure. It must be noted from the outset that Irish Water has indicated that there are commercial sensitivities in relation to the cost of providing water/wastewater infrastructure, and therefore no cost estimates have been provided in terms of such services. The Roads Department of



Donegal County Council has assisted the planning department in arriving at reasonable cost estimates for certain road, drainage and lighting works likely to be associated with the sites identified in this report.

### **A.3 Disclaimer**

This infrastructural assessment has been prepared using a desktop study and deals only with roads infrastructure. It is expressly stated that no independent verification of any documents or information supplied by others has been made. This assessment makes no representations in relation to other matters that may affect site development costs or indeed matters that may affect the provision of roads, water or wastewater infrastructure; e.g. ground conditions, presence of existing sub-surface infrastructure, archaeology, land acquisition costs, environmental constraints etc. In all cases, prospective developers are strongly advised to engage their own consultants to advise in more detail on potential site serviceability and site development costs. No liability is accepted by Donegal County Council for any use of this infrastructural assessment, other than the purpose for which it was prepared. The infrastructural assessment does not account for any changes relating to the subject matter of the assessment, or any legislative or regulatory changes that have occurred since the assessment was produced that may affect the assessment. Donegal County Council does not accept any responsibility or liability for loss whatsoever to any third party caused by, related to or arising out of any use or reliance on the infrastructural assessment.

### **A.4 Detailed Site Serviceability Assessment in Relation to Water and Wastewater Infrastructure**

This infrastructural assessment provides a high level overview of servicing requirements for 'Primarily Residential sites' and 'Opportunity Sites' (where such sites include potential for residential development) in Letterkenny. Precise details regarding individual site serviceability must be confirmed through the Irish Water Pre-Connection Enquiry (PCE) process. New infrastructure will generally be developer-led, and developers will need to engage with Irish Water at an early stage via the Irish Water PCE process. Options for the local network will then be reviewed and assessed. The assessment may identify infrastructure upgrades required to supply the specific site demand. Any other costs in relation to connection fees, or work to be carried out by Irish Water, will be in line with the Connection and Developer charges set out by Irish Water.

### **A.5 Definition of Tier 1 and Tier 2 Lands**

Appendix 3 of the NPF distinguishes between Tier 1 and Tier 2 lands as follows:

'Tier 1: Serviced Zoned Land, comprising lands that are able to connect to existing development services for which there is service capacity available and can therefore accommodate new development; and

Tier 2: Serviceable Zoned Land, comprising lands that are not currently sufficiently serviced to support new development but have the potential to become fully serviced within the life of the plan.'

The NPF requires that where lands are identified as Tier 2 lands, the potential for delivery of the required services and / or capacity to support new development must be identified and specific details provided by the planning authority at the time of publication of the draft and final local area plan. The NPF further states that an infrastructural assessment in this regard must be aligned with the approved infrastructural investment programme(s) of the relevant delivery agency(ies), or be based on a written commitment by the relevant delivery agency to provide the identified infrastructure within a specified timescale (i.e. within the lifetime of the plan). It is noted that the planning authority may also commit to the delivery of the required and identified infrastructure in its own infrastructural investment

programme (i.e. Budgeted Capital Programme) in order to support certain lands for zoning. The NPF notes that lands that cannot be serviced during the life of a development or area plan should not be zoned for development (National Policy Objective 72c) or included within a development plan core strategy for calculation purposes.

Table A1 below sets out details of the 22 No. 'Primarily Residential' sites within the Letterkenny Plan boundary and identifies the infrastructural requirements for each. Following on from this, an appropriate 'tier' is assigned to each site based on infrastructural needs.

Table A2 below sets out details of the 11 No. 'Opportunity Sites' within the Plan boundary (that allow for some element of residential development) and identifies the infrastructural requirements for each. As with the 'Primarily Residential' sites, each 'Opportunity Site' has been categorised as either Tier 1 or Tier 2, based on servicing requirements.

## **A.6 Phasing, Implementation and Funding for Infrastructural Development on Primarily Residential Lands**

### **Phasing**

The intention of phased development is to ensure the delivery of supporting infrastructure (including, inter alia; community facilities, public transport, water and wastewater infrastructure) in tandem with development. In this regard, the Letterkenny Plan is intended to be a flexible working framework that enables the Planning Authority to work with communities and developers to meet the needs of a growing Regional Centre. The Plan therefore, does not specify the order in which identified residential sites should be developed, but rather has sought to identify sites that are proximate to local services and/or the town centre and thus would be suitable for development at any time over the plan period, subject to the delivery of all required infrastructure and supporting services.

### **Implementation, Monitoring and Review**

It is likely that development within the Letterkenny Plan area will occur gradually and on an incremental basis, subject to prevailing economic circumstances in the region; and in effect, much of the implementation of the plan strategy will be through the determination of planning applications. However, the policy framework as set out in the Plan is designed to ensure the careful management of such 'step-by-step' development, thus ensuring co-ordination over time and the delivery of a sustainable, connected settlement.

Monitoring is an integral part of the planning process. In preparing the Letterkenny Plan, extensive baseline data has been collated in relation to, inter alia, existing land uses, traffic movements, cycling/walking infrastructure, water and wastewater infrastructure. The planning authority will use this baseline data and other indicators to monitor and review progress in terms of achieving the objectives of Plan and to identify potential changes to development strategies should they be required.

### **Funding**

Funding for development of infrastructure and services within the Letterkenny Plan area will be derived through a combination of investment from Donegal County Council, anticipated investment from semi-state agencies such as Irish Water and TII, and private sector investment. The Council will also work with government agencies such as the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and other bodies to seek funding through available sources (e.g. the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, Active Travel Funding, Climate Action Fund etc.).

## A.7 Infrastructural works required for 'Primarily Residential' Lands

The land-use zoning map that accompanies the Letterkenny Plan identifies 19 sites as 'Primarily Residential'. Table A1 below sets out high level details of the infrastructure required to serve each site.

**Table A1 – Tiered approach to differentiate between serviced and serviceable Primarily Residential lands**

Site Ref.	Infrastructural Requirements	Tier 1 / 2
<b>PR1</b>	Wastewater: Extension of sewer required (sewer to be extended approximately from Educate Together school or alternatively from Ramelton Road). Roads infrastructure: Widening of carriageway to accommodate right turning lane circa 310 metres, footpath and public lighting. Approximate cost: €150,000  Water: Connection to water supply required.	Tier 2
	No PR 2	
<b>PR3</b>	Roads infrastructure: Works required to create suitable vehicular access on southern side of site (i.e. road widening). Cost estimates not available as works may require acquisition of land and valuations/estimates vary considerably.	Tier 2
<b>PR4</b>	All required services available.	Tier 1
<b>PR5</b>	Wastewater: Pumping station may be required for sewer connection; alternatively connect through housing development to southeast.	Tier 2
<b>PR6</b>	Roads infrastructure:  South/West of site- Works to improve access arrangements/junction improvements/road widening etc. Estimate 220m new footpath with lighting, drainage and overlay existing road. Cost estimate: € 220,000  North of Site – Provision of Northern Relief road. Cost estimate unavailable; details to be agreed with Road design section.  Link road between Northern Relief road (Windyhall Road) and site- cost estimate unavailable.	Tier 2
<b>PR7</b>	Roads infrastructure: Provision of appropriate pedestrian infrastructure along northern site boundary.  Estimate 280m new footpath with lighting, drainage and overlay existing road. Pedestrian crossing required eastern junction.  Cost estimate: € 125,000	Tier 2
<b>PR8</b>	All required services available.	Tier 1
<b>PR9</b>	All required services available.	Tier 1

<b>Site Ref.</b>	<b>Infrastructural Requirements</b>	<b>Tier 1 / 2</b>
<b>PR10</b>	Developers will be required to keep the Southern Network Project Road reservation corridor free from development.	Tier 2
<b>PR11</b>	Roads: Developers will be required to keep the Southern Network Project Road reservation corridor free from development.  Additional road infrastructure likely to be required: Road Widening, footpath provision, public lighting, and drainage. Cost estimates unavailable.  No sewer mapped in area; connection may be available via adjoining housing developments.	Tier 2
No PR 12		
<b>PR13</b>	Wastewater: Extension to public sewer required.	Tier 2
<b>PR14</b>	Roads infrastructure: Existing narrow lane to the south of the site with houses either side. 130m length and 8m width required to accommodate 6m carriageway and 2m footway with lighting  Cost estimate: € 200,000	Tier 2
<b>PR15</b>	Wastewater: Extension of sewer required (sewer to be extended approximately from Educate Together school or alternatively from Ramelton Road).Roads infrastructure: Widening of carriageway to accommodate right turning lane circa 310 metres, footpath and public lighting. Approximate cost: €150,000  Water: Connection to water supply required.	Tier 2
<b>PR16</b>	Roads infrastructure: Road realignment and surfacing required in vicinity of site. Upgrade existing lighting and drainage.  Cost estimate: € 220,000	Tier 2
<b>PR17</b>	Roads infrastructure: Road widening and footpath provision required along site frontages, upgrade existing lighting and drainage, pedestrian mobility requirements  Cost estimate: € 215,000.	Tier 2
<b>PR18</b>	Roads infrastructure: Road widening and footpath provision required along site frontages, upgrade existing lighting and drainage, pedestrian mobility requirements  Cost estimate: € 220,000	Tier 2
<b>PR19</b>	Roads infrastructure: Road widening, footpath provision, upgrade existing lighting and drainage, pedestrian mobility requirements Cost estimate: € 210,000	Tier 2

Site Ref.	Infrastructural Requirements	Tier 1 / 2
<b>PR20</b>	Roads infrastructure: Upgrade of road surface, footpath upgrades, street lighting, survey of existing storm networks, connection of footway to the opposite side of the road either by controlled crossing or beacons - Cost estimate: €150,000	Tier 2
<b>PR21</b>	Roads infrastructure: 210m footpath, drainage, streetlighting and pedestrian links at proposed new junction at SE corner, resurface from Kilty junction to the end of the proposed development or provide a bond to cover these works. – Cost estimate: €215,000	Tier 2

PR2 and PR12 omitted in accordance with 'The Planning and Development (Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan 2023-2029) Direction 2024'.

### A.8 Infrastructural works required for Opportunity Sites<sup>12</sup>

The land-use zoning map that accompanies the Letterkenny Plan identifies 11 sites as 'Opportunity Sites', all of which allow for an amount of residential development as part of a potentially broader mix of uses. Table A2 below sets out high level details of the infrastructure required to serve each site.

**Table A2 – Tiered approach to differentiate between serviced and serviceable Opportunity Sites.**

Site Ref.	Infrastructural Requirements	Tier 1 / 2
<b>Opp 1: Gortlee</b>	All required services available.	Tier 1
<b>Opp 2: Ballyraine</b>	All required services available.	Tier 1
<b>Opp 3: Kilty</b>	Wastewater: Extension to sewer required.	Tier 2
<b>Opp 4: Ballyraine (former creameries site)</b>	All required services available.	Tier 1
<b>Opp 5: (behind Mount Errigal Hotel).</b>	Roads Infrastructure: Vehicular access to site (from Ramelton Road on northern side of site) will need to be configured to facilitate two-way traffic. Land acquisition may be required. Cost estimate unavailable.	Tier 2
<b>Opp 6: Oldtown</b>	All required services available.	Tier 1
<b>Opp 7: Gortlee</b>	All required services available.	Tier 1
<b>Opp 8: Windyhall.</b>	Wastewater: Extension to sewer required.	Tier 2

<sup>12</sup> i.e. Opportunity sites allowing for an element of residential development as part of a potentially broader mix of uses.

Site Ref.	Infrastructural Requirements	Tier 1 / 2
	North of Site – Provision of Northern Relief road. Cost estimate unavailable; details to be agreed with Road design section.  Link road between Northern Relief road (Windyhall Road) and site- cost estimate unavailable.	
<b>Opp 9: (former Model Bakery)</b>	Roads Infrastructure: Requirement for either a controlled crossing or construction of a footpath. Provisions of streetlights. Infrastructure upgrade would be required to the existing carriageway to make this suitable for a new development - Cost estimate: €165,000	Tier 2
<b>Opp10: Carnamuggagh</b>	Master-planned approach required for the development of site, to ensure vehicular and pedestrian connectivity to adjoining lands and wider area. Cost estimates unavailable in absence of agreed masterplan.	Tier 2
<b>Opp 11: (Former Oatfield site).</b>	All required services available.	Tier 1

The 'Primarily Residential' and 'Opportunity' sites identified as 'Tier 1' in tables A1 and A2 are deemed to be serviced, in that there is currently adequate provision of water, wastewater and roads infrastructure adjacent to or in close proximity to each of these sites to facilitate the immediate commencement of construction. In all cases however, small scale levels of additional infrastructural works are likely to be required (e.g. provision of public lighting, construction of short extensions to public footpath/cycleways etc.); however, the scale of these works would not be such as to deem the sites 'unserved' or as falling within 'Tier 2'.

#### **A.9 Phasing, Implementation and Funding for Infrastructural Development on Lands within the Southern Strategic and Sustainable Development Site (SSDS)**

**Policy LK-H-P-10** of this Plan requires, inter alia, that an infrastructure masterplan is agreed for the development of the SSDS lands, inclusive of funding and implementation mechanisms for the strategic infrastructure that is required to serve this area. The provision of infrastructure within the SSDS is a critical factor in achieving the future compact growth of Letterkenny, and the planning authority will continue to proactively engage with, inter alia, agencies such as Irish Water; the Department of Transport; the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage; HISC0 and indeed the private sector, to secure the successful delivery of services to the SSDS.





## Appendix B – Record of Protected Structures, Record of Monuments and Places, Historic Graveyards & National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

Table B.1 - Record of Protected Structures within the Letterkenny Plan Area

Ref. No.	Name	Description	Address	Rating
40501170	1 Mount Southwell Place	End-of-terrace, 3 bay, 1865-1870. 2 Storey over basement house.	1 Mount Southwell Place	Regional
40501171	2 Mount Southwell Place	Terraced 3 bay, 2 storey over basement house. 1865-1870	2 Mount Southwell Place	Regional
40503163	Mount Southwell Mews	End-of-terrace, 3-bay, 1865-1870 2 storey over basement house.	Mount Southwell Mews	Regional
40504072	Rosemount House	Detached 4-bay, 2 storey house. Pre 1858.		Regional
40500012	St. Conal's Psychiatric Hospital	Mid Victorian. 2-storey. Central section, 1860-1890 3-storey additions.	Kilmacrennan Road	Regional
40501090	St. Eunan's College	3-Storey, symmetrically planned school building. 1900-1910.	College Road	Regional
40504052	Bank of Ireland	Detached, 4-bay, 2-storey former house. 1875-1880.	Upper Main Street	Regional
40502279	Courthouse	Detached, 3-bay, 2-storey over basement, 1825-1830 neo-Classical courthouse.	Upper Main Street	Regional
40502086	Bank	End-of-terrace, 3 bay, 2-storey bank. 1900-1910.	Upper Main Street	Regional
40501167	Conwal Church	Church of Ireland Parish Church. 1750-1790	Church Lane	Regional
40501168	Cathedral of Saints Eunan & Columba	French Neo Gothic cruciform plan Cathedral. 1890-1905.	Sentry Hill Road	Regional
40501199	Conwal Church	Conwal Parish Church graveyard. 1650-1940.	Church Lane	Regional
40504036	Ernest Speer	Terraced 3-bay, 1875-1880. 2 storey shop retaining period shop front and interior.	Lower Main Street	Regional

Ref. No.	Name	Description	Address	Rating
40503214	Oldtown Bridge	Triple-arch road bridge over River Swilly 1700-1740.	Oldtown	Regional
40503215	Bridge	Disused single-span plated lattice-truss Railway Bridge. 1900-1905.	Oldtown	Regional
40501164	Ardenaun	Detached six-bay, c.1900. Three-storey over-basement Bishop's Palace.	Cathedral Road	Regional
40502222	Donegal County Museum	Detached Five-bay, c. 1845, two-storey former workhouse and infirmary.	High Road	Regional
40501130	House	Single Storey stone wash cottage with thatch roof.	New line Road	Regional
40905303	Ballymacool House	Detached, five-bay three-storey over basement built c.1825	Ballymacool	Regional
40502274	Allied Irish Bank	Detached five-bay two-storey bank building, built in 1867	Upper Main St.	Regional

**Table B.2 - Record of Monuments and Places within the Letterkenny Plan Area**

No.	RMP Map Ref:	Mon. No.	Townland	Classification
1	15	DG053-015---	Castlebane	Cashel
2	17	DG053-017---	Lisnenan	Holy Well
3	18	DG053-018---	Kiltoy	Bullaun Stone
4	19	DG053-019-	Kiltoy	Church
5	21	DG053-021--	Carnamogagh Lower	Bullaun Stone
6	22	DG053-022---	Ballymacool	Cashel
7	23	DG053-02301-	Ballymacool	Enclosure Site
8	23	DG053-02302	Ballymacool	Souterrain
9	24	DG053-024---	Ballymacool	Enclosure Site
10	25	DG053-025--	Sallaghagrane	Standing Stone Site
11	26	D6053-026---	Ballyraine	Enclosure Site
12	30	DG053-030--	Ballymacool	Souterrain

No.	RMP Map Ref:	Mon. No.	Townland	Classification
13	31	DG053-031--	Ballymacool	Souterrain
14	32	DG053-032--	Oldtown	Standing Stone Site
15	33	DG053-033---	Oldtown/Drumnahoagh	ECCLESIASTICAL REMAINS
16	33	DG053-03301-	Oldtown	Church And Graveyard
17	33	DG053-03302	Drumnahoagh	Holy Well Site
18	33	DG053-03303	Drumnahoagh	Bullaun Stone
19	34	DG053-034--	Scribly	Enclosure Site
20	35	DG053-035--	Bunnagee	Bullaun Stone

**Table B.3 - Historic Graveyards within the Letterkenny Plan Area**

No.	Name	Townland	RMP Number
1.	Aghanunshin	Kilty	DG053-019001-
2.	Leck	Drumnahough/Oldtown	DG053-033004

**Table B.4 National Inventory of Architectural Heritage Structures within the Letterkenny Plan Area**

No.	Ref.	Name	Description (summary)	Address	Rating
1.	40905317	St. Conal's Psychiatric Hospital	Detached multiple-bay two-and-three-storey psychiatric hospital, built c. 1860-5.	Ballyboe Glencar	Regional
2.	40905315	The Vestry	Freestanding former hospital chapel associated with St. Conal's psychiatric hospital built 1935.	Ballyboe Glencar	Regional
3.	40905318	St. Conal's Psychiatric Hospital	Detached multiple-bay three-storey over basement former psychiatric hospital associated with St. Conal's built c. 1902-4.	Ballyboe Glencar	Regional
4.	40905319	St. Conal's Psychiatric Hospital	Former burial ground originally (on triangular-plan) serving St. Conal's psychiatric hospital (see 40905317), in use from c. 1866 until 1900.	Ballyboe Glencar	Regional

No.	Ref.	Name	Description (summary)	Address	Rating
5.	40905320	Tir Conaill House\Parkview House	Detached four-bay two-storey with dormer attic level former medical superintendent's house associated with St. Conal's psychiatric hospital (see 40905317), built c. 1890.	Ballyboe Glencar	Regional
6.	40500027	Gortlee House	Detached five-bay two-storey over basement house\country house with attic level, built c. 1800 and altered c. 1860.	Gortlee	Regional
7.	40905305	Gortlee Presbyterian Church	Freestanding gable-fronted former Reformed Presbyterian church, remodelled and dated 1904 and possibly containing fabric of earlier church\meeting house to site, built 1785, comprising a four-bay hall.	Gortlee	Regional
8.	40905321	Church of the Irish Martyrs	Freestanding multiple-bay double-height Catholic church on complex regular-plan, built 1994.	Ballyraine	Regional
9.	40905327	Kiltooy Church of Ireland Church	Freestanding former Church of Ireland church, built c. 1630 and altered c. 1750, comprising three-bay hall.	Kiltooy	Regional
10.	40905393	House	Detached three-bay single-storey vernacular house, built c. 1860.	Glebe	Regional
11.	40905336	The Thorn	Detached three-bay two-storey house, built c. 1820.	Glebe	Regional
12.	40905326	Bridge	Single-arch bridge carrying the former Burt Junction to Letterkenny narrow gauge railway line over former tributary of the River Swilly (river diverted), built c. 1883.	Bunnagee	Regional
13.	40905394	Bridge	Single-arch former railway bridge, built c. 1909, carrying road over the former Strabane to Letterkenny narrow gauge railway line.	Dromore	Regional
14.	40905339	House	Pair of semi-detached three-bay two-storey houses, built c. 1860,	Dromore Lower	Regional

No.	Ref.	Name	Description (summary)	Address	Rating
			each having two-storey return to rear (east).		
15.	40905301	Leck Church of Ireland Parish Church	Freestanding gable-fronted single-cell former Church of Ireland church, built c. 1840, comprising three-bay hall.	Drumany	Regional
16.	40905324	Holly Vale	Detached three-bay two-storey house, built c. 1860, with single-bay flat-roof porch extension to front, single-bay two-storey corrugated iron extension to rear.	Cullion	Regional
17.	40905380	Bridge	Triple-arched former railway bridge, built c. 1909, carrying road over the former Strabane to Letterkenny narrow gauge railway line.	Drumnahoagh	Regional
18.	40905322	Bridge	Single-arch former railway bridge, built c. 1883, carrying road over the former Derry Middle Quay to Burtonport narrow gauge railway line.	Drumnahoagh	Regional
19.	40905314	Old Leck Church	Remains of three-bay single-storey former Catholic church, built c. 1500, having bellcote over the west gable end.	Oldtown	Regional
20.	40503214	Oldtown Bridge	Triple-arch bridge carrying road over the River Swilly, built c. 1720.	Oldtown	Regional
21.	40503215	Oldtown Railway Bridge	Single-span railway bridge, built c. 1903, carrying former Letterkenny to Burtonport section of the Derry to Burtonport Railway over the River Swilly.	Oldtown	Regional
22.	40905311	Sallaghagrane House	Detached three-bay two-storey house, built c. 1870, having single-storey return to rear.	Sallaghagrane	Regional
23.	40905303	Ballymacool House	Detached five-bay three-storey over basement former county house, built c. 1770 and altered c. 1830.	Ballymacool	Regional



No.	Ref.	Name	Description (summary)	Address	Rating
24.	40905350	Mass rock	Mass rock, erected\in use c. 1690-1730, comprising an irregular-shaped stone slab set on rubble stone\bounder supports with small stone packing to top.	Ballymacool	Regional
25.	40905308	House	Semi-detached two-bay two-storey house, built c. 1925.	Glencar Irish	Regional
26.	40905309	House	Semi-detached two-bay two-storey house, built c. 1925,	Glencar Irish	Regional
27.	40502223	Graveyard/ cemetery	Former union workhouse graveyard on rectangular-plan associated with Letterkenny Union Workhouse (see 40502222), in use c. 1845 - 51, containing unmarked graves of victims of the Great Famine.	New Line Road	Regional
28.	40502222	Donegal County Museum	Detached five-bay two-storey former workhouse administration block with attic storey, dated 1844.	High Road	Regional
29.	40502215	House	Detached three-bay single-storey vernacular house, built c. 1912.	High Road	Regional
30.	40502198	House	Terraced two-bay two-storey house, built c. 1886.	High Road	Regional
31.	40502318	building misc	Freestanding crane with cast-iron or steel winch, cast-iron or steel cog wheels and cast- and wrought-iron lifting arm\jib, erected c. 1883 or c. 1908.	Ramelton Road	Regional
32.	40502131	Bus Eireann Bus Station	Detached five-bay single-storey former railway station, dated 1908.	Ramelton Road	Regional
33.	40502289	House	Detached five-bay two-storey house and former shop with attic level, built c. 1900.	Ramelton Road	Regional
34.	40502279	court house	Detached corner-sited seven-bay two-storey over basement courthouse, built c. 1828-31 and altered c. 2000.	Upper Main Street/Justice Walsh Road	Regional

No.	Ref.	Name	Description (summary)	Address	Rating
35.	40502274	Allied Irish Bank	Detached five-bay two-storey bank building, built in 1867, having multiple modern single- and two-storey extensions attached to east, c. 1985.	Upper Main Street	Regional
36.	40502092	Trinity Presbyterian Church (First)	Freestanding double-height Presbyterian Church over basement level, built 1905-7 and rebuilt c. 1920.	Upper Main Street	Regional
37.	40502087	House	Attached three-bay two-storey house, built c. 1875.	Upper Main Street	Regional
38.	40502086	Bank/financial institution	Attached corner-sited three-bay two-storey former bank, built or rebuilt c. 1905 and altered c. 1931 or 1933.	Upper Main Street	Regional
39.	40504076	House	Mid-terrace two-bay two-storey house, built c. 1900, having two-storey extension to the rear (south).	Rosemount Lane	Regional
40.	40504075	House	End-of-terrace two-bay two-storey house, built c. 1900	Rosemount Lane	Regional
41.	40504072	Rosemount House	Detached four-bay two-storey house with attic level, built c. 1830.	Rosemount Lane	Regional
42.	40504052	Bank Of Ireland	Detached four-bay two-storey bank, built c. 1876	Main Street	Regional
43.	40503173	house	Attached two-bay three-storey house, built c. 1864,	Lower Main Street	Regional
44.	40503174	House	Attached two-bay three-storey house, built c. 1864, having later shopfront inserted.	Lower Main Street	Regional
45.	40503185	House	Attached two-bay three-storey house, built c. 1860, with former shop to ground floor, c. 1953.	Lower Main Street	Regional
46.	40503186	House	Attached two-bay three-storey house, built c. 1860, with former shop to ground floor, c. 1970.	Lower Main Street	Regional

No.	Ref.	Name	Description (summary)	Address	Rating
47.	40504012	Charles Kelly Ltd	Boundary wall associated with the former Letterkenny town corn market, erected 1852.	Lower Main Street	Regional
48.	40504036	Ernest Speer	Attached three-bay two-storey house with attic level, built c. 1877, having traditional timber shopfront to east elevation and extensions to the rear (west), c. 1900.	Lower Main Street	Regional
49.	40503157	Cullinane Steele Architects;	Detached three-bay double height former Methodist church\meeting house, built c. 1814.	Market Square	Regional
50.	40503163	House	End-of-terrace two-bay two-storey over basement house with dormer attic level, built c. 1866.	Mount Southwell Place	Regional
51.	40501171	Cara House	Mid-terraced three-bay two-storey over basement house with dormer attic level, built c. 1866.	Mount Southwell Place	Regional
52.	40501172	F. Monaghan & Company	End-of-terrace two-bay two-storey over basement house with dormer attic level, built c. 1866.	Mount Southwell Place	Regional
53.	40501181	House	Corner-sited end-of-terrace four-bay two-storey former house, built c. 1900.	Castle Street/Church Lane	Regional
54.	40501198	Loreto Convent	Main gateway serving Loreto convent (see 40501188), erected c. 1861 or 1900.	Cathedral Square	Regional
55.	40501163	St Eunan's and Columba's Catholic Cathedral - Monument	Memorial statue commemorating to Cardinal Patrick O'Donnell, erected c. 1930.	Cathedral Square	Regional
56.	40501168	St Eunan's and Columba's Catholic Cathedral	Freestanding Catholic cathedral on complex irregular-plan, built 1891-1901.	Cathedral Square	<b>National</b>
57.	40501196	Post Box	Wall-mounted cast-iron post-box, cast c. 1890 and erected in current site in 1946.	Cathedral Road	Regional

No.	Ref.	Name	Description (summary)	Address	Rating
58.	40501164	Bishop's Palace	Detached multiple-bay two- and three-storey over basement bishop's palace and parochial house on complex irregular-plan, built c. 1900.	Cathedral Road	Regional
59.	40503094	Letterkenny Loreto Convent – Graveyard Cemetery	Nuns' graveyard on irregular-plan associated with Loreto Convent (see 40501188) to the north-east, in use since c. 1864.	Convent Road	Regional
60.	40501098	House	End-of-terrace two-bay two-storey house, built c. 1910.	College Road	Regional
61.	40501097	St. Eunan's College - Gates	Main gateway serving St. Eunan's College (see 40501090), erected c. 1909.	College Road	Regional
62.	40501092	St. Eunan's College – chapel	Attached Catholic chapel associated with St. Eunan's College (see 40501092), built 1961.	College Road	Regional
63.	40501090	St. Eunan's College - College	Detached ten-bay three-storey boys' secondary school and former Catholic seminary on complex rectangular-plan, built c. 1904-6.	College Road	Regional
64.	40501091	St. Eunan's College	Attached twelve-bay three-storey over basement extension to St. Eunan's College (see 40501090), built 1930-1.	College Road	Regional
65.	40501157	Raphoe Pastoral Centre	Detached seven-bay single-storey former national school, built 1895.	Monastery Avenue	Regional
66.	40501166	Trinity Hall	Detached gable-fronted three-bay double-height former Presbyterian church\meeting house, dated 1841 and remodelled in 1901	Cathedral Square	Regional
67.	40501167	Conwall Church of Ireland Parish Church	Freestanding gable-fronted Church of Ireland church, built c. 1776 and altered 1832 and 1865.	Cathedral Square	Regional
68.	40501199	Conwal Parish Church Graveyard	Graveyard associated with Letterkenny Church of Ireland church\Conwal Church of Ireland church (see 40501199), originally	Church Lane/Cathedral Square	Regional

No.	Ref.	Name	Description (summary)	Address	Rating
			laid out c. 1636 and containing a collection of gravemarkers from seventeenth to twentieth centuries.		
69.	40504049	Gerry's Barbers\MP3	Mid-terrace three-bay two-storey former house with half-dormer attic level, built c. 1865.	Upper Main Street	Regional
70.	40504117	Music Centre	End-of-terrace three-bay two-storey house with dormer attic level, built c. 1865.	Upper Main Street	Regional
71.	40826002	House of Harriet	Mid-terrace two-bay three-storey structure originally forming part of hotel with structures to either side (see 40826001 and 40826003), built c. 1899.	Upper Main Street	Regional
72.	40826003	John Robinson & Son	Attached end-of-terrace two-bay three-storey structure originally forming part of hotel with structures to the south (see 40826001 and 40826002), built c. 1899.	Upper Main Street	Regional
73.	40502025	House	Terraced two-bay two-storey house, built c. 1895.	Speer's Lane	Regional
74.	40502023	House	Terraced two-bay two-storey house, built c. 1895.	Speer's Lane	Regional
75.	40502020	House	End-of-terrace two-bay two-storey house, built c. 1908.	Speer's Lane	Regional
76.	40502018	House	Terraced two-bay two-storey house, built c. 1908.	Speer's Lane	Regional
77.	40502019	House	Terraced two-bay two-storey house, built c. 1908.	Speer's Lane	Regional
78.	40501134	Hill Mount House	Detached three-bay two-storey former Presbyterian manse on L-shaped plan, built c. 1896.	New Line Road	Regional
79.	40501130	house	Detached three-bay single-storey vernacular house, built c. 1820.	New Line Road	Regional

## Appendix C – Guidance for Developments Located with the Architectural Conservation Area

Specific policy provisions regarding the protection of the built heritage can be found in the 'Natural and Built Heritage' chapters of this Plan and the County Development Plan. In addition to these specific policy provisions, the following sections set out guidance for material finishes and workmanship within the Cathedral Quarter Architectural Conservation Area.

As noted in Section 13.3 of this Plan, pre-planning discussions with the planning authority shall be required in advance of making any formal application within the ACA.

### External walls –

- Exposed stone and brickwork should not be painted.
- Original historic finishes must be retained where possible and any proposals for alterations that adversely affect the character of the ACA will not be acceptable.
- Removal of modern cement finishes and replacing with the original lime finish which would have been traditionally ruled and lined will be encouraged.

### Roofs

- Original roofing materials must be retained where possible and should be reused and repaired like for like rather than replaced.
- Where modern roofing materials like fibre cement tiles have been used in the past, replacement with an appropriate natural slate and ridge tiles will normally be required.
- Removal of existing chimney stacks and early terracotta or clay pots or other features of the roofscape such as cast iron rainwater goods or down pipes will not be permitted unless otherwise agreed with the planning authority.
- Installation of roof lights on the front elevation of a structure will not be permitted
- Erection of solar panels, tv satellite dishes, communication antennae or support structures for same will not be permitted.

### Windows and doors

- Original elements should be retained, repaired and reused rather than replaced unless otherwise agreed with the planning authority.
- Planning permission is likely to be required for the alteration or enlargement of original windows, removal of original timbers or metal windows.
- Replacement with modern, artificial materials such as uPVC and aluminum will not be deemed acceptable.
- Removal of stone cills and doorsteps and not be acceptable.
- Removal of fanlights and original timber doors and replacement with modern, artificial materials such as uPVC and aluminium will not be deemed acceptable.

### Commercial frontages

- Proposed shop front designs must have regard to adjoining and surrounding structures, taking account of scale, proportion, material and details.
- Signage and fascias should be in proportion to the shop front and colours should be complementary to those of the building and adjoining structures; high quality durable materials should be used.
- Any new shopfront or extension to an existing shopfronts should not obscure architectural details of the original structure, such as sills, stringcourses, eaves details, windows and doorways.



- Windows of the main façade of the shop should be made of clear glass and not used as a surface for advertisements or other coloured signage.
- New signage must not detract from the special character and visual amenity of the ACA.
- Handpainted signs will be encouraged.
- Owners and occupiers of commercial premises shall maintain an appropriate traditional style, which complements extant historic structures.

### Boundary treatments

- Original boundary treatments, such as walls, railings hedges and trees must be retained unless otherwise agreed with the planning authority. Planning permission may be required for the total or partial removal of a boundary wall or railings.
- Where boundary treatments have been removed in the past, they should be reinstated wherever possible and should be replicated in terms of material, proportions and design.
- Modern decorative boundary wall treatments such as concrete block walling are not appropriate and will not be permitted.
- Existing concrete block walling should be removed if the opportunity arises.

### Public realm

- Historic street features and surfaces such as historic paving, kerbstones, utilities features should remain in situ unless otherwise agreed with the planning authority.
- The design of roads and other public areas should respect the character of their surroundings in layout, detailing and materials. Historic street surfaces, materials or furniture should be retained, repaired, and where appropriate reinstated.
- New highway surfaces or verges should complement the surrounding architecture in design, materials, colour, texture and detailing.
- Paths should complement their surroundings in design, materials, colour, texture and detailing.
- Street furniture, signs and lighting should be appropriate to their context in design, materials and location.
- Tree planting and landscape features should be used selectively to enhance the space between buildings, reinforcing the area's character and distinctiveness.
- New public realm plans must be multi-functional and in particular look at innovative approaches as to how to improve open street events
- The planning authority will seek to ensure that there is a mutually supportive relationship between public space, surrounding buildings and their uses, so that the public realm enhances the amenity and function of buildings and the design of buildings contribute to a vibrant public realm.

### Demolition

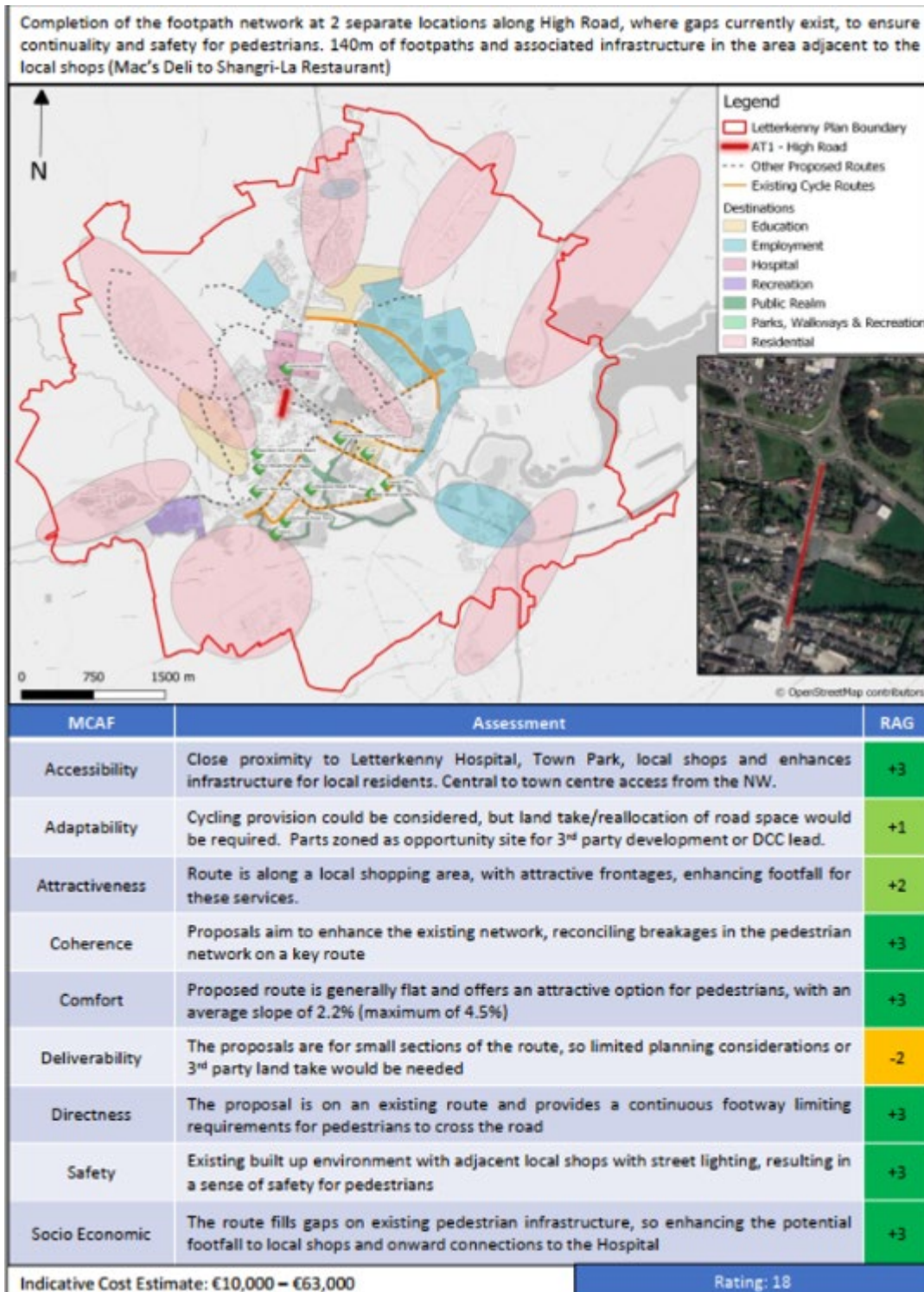
- Demolition of buildings, structures or boundary treatments which contribute to the character of the area will not generally be permitted unless otherwise agreed with the planning authority.

### Streetscape

- Streetscape views within, into and out of the ACA shall be maintained, enhanced and protected, particularly with reference to the character of Cathedral Square, Church Lane, and Castle Street.

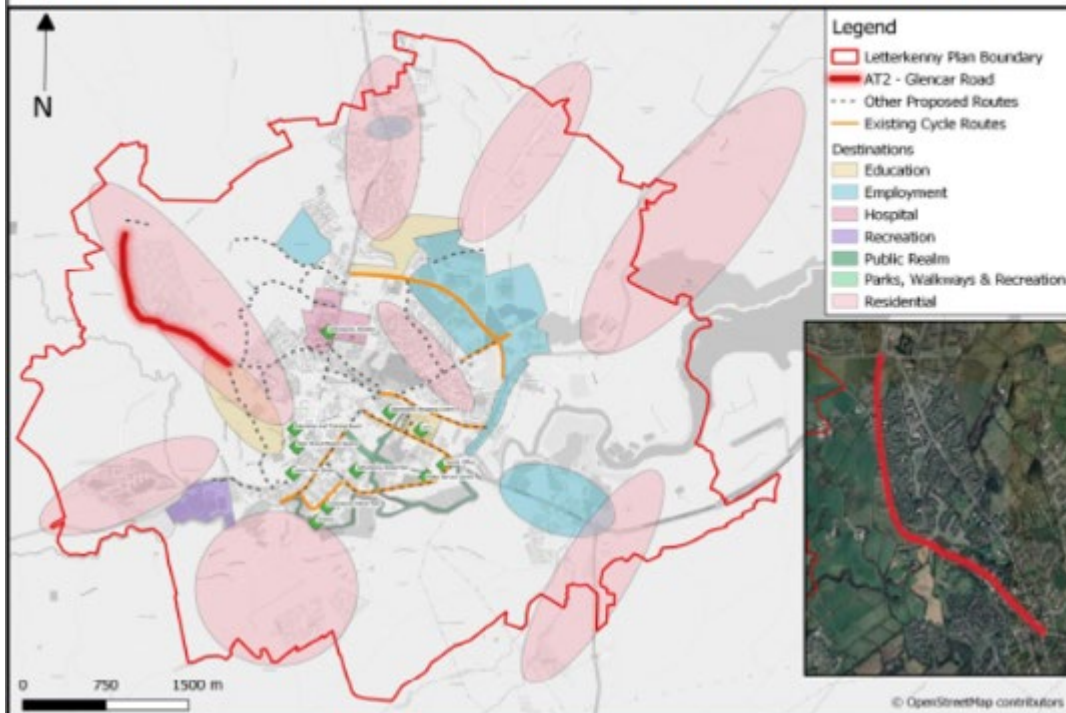
# Appendix D – Multi-Criteria Analysis of Active Travel Projects

## IC1 High Road



## IC12 Glencar Road

Creation of safe online walking and cycling facilities serving a significant residential catchment. The existing footpath network is incomplete in places with no cycle facilities in place at all. Assumed to be formalisation of 1.7km long shared cycle footway and associated infrastructure (dropped kerbs, tactile paving etc) on both sides of the road.

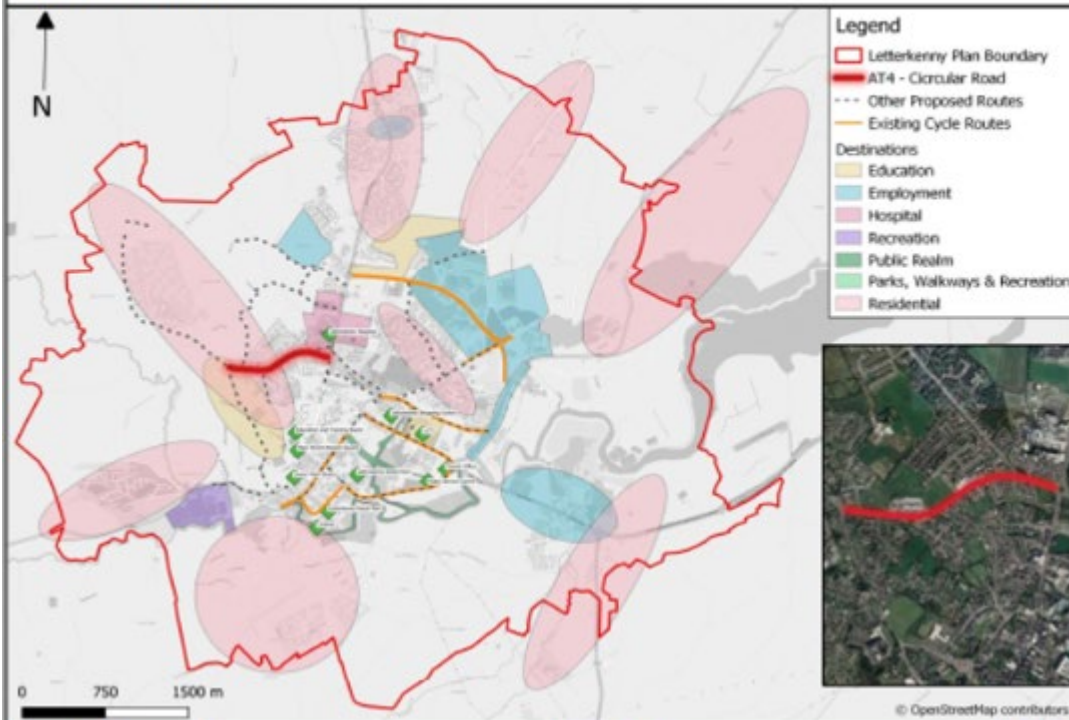


MCAF	Assessment	RAG
Accessibility	Serves a large residential areas of Glencar & Laurel Hill (c. 3000 properties), providing key access route to Town Centre.	+2
Adaptability	Potential to serve future land zonings, as they come online.	+1
Attractiveness	Passes through predominantly residential area, surrounded by rural fields. The area is well maintained but has limited specific attractions along its course.	+2
Coherence	This route benefits a significant residential origin and connects local schools and employment. However, connections to town centre are dependent on other routes.	+2
Comfort	In a north-west direction, there is a gradient increase of approximately 50m over the course of the route, with an average slope of 4% (maximum of 10.6%)	-1
Deliverability	To implement shared cycleways on both sides, it would appear that 3 <sup>rd</sup> party land take and reallocation of road space would be needed.	-3
Directness	Route offers the most direct route, facilitating direct connectivity to the town centre.	+3
Safety	Existing built up residential environment with street lighting, resulting in a sense of safety for pedestrians and cyclists.	+3
Socio Economic	Route is outside of Letterkenny Town Centre and dependent on other routes, but development of the route could effect a change towards sustainable mobility.	+1
Indicative Cost Estimate: €233,000 – €1,527,000		Rating: 10



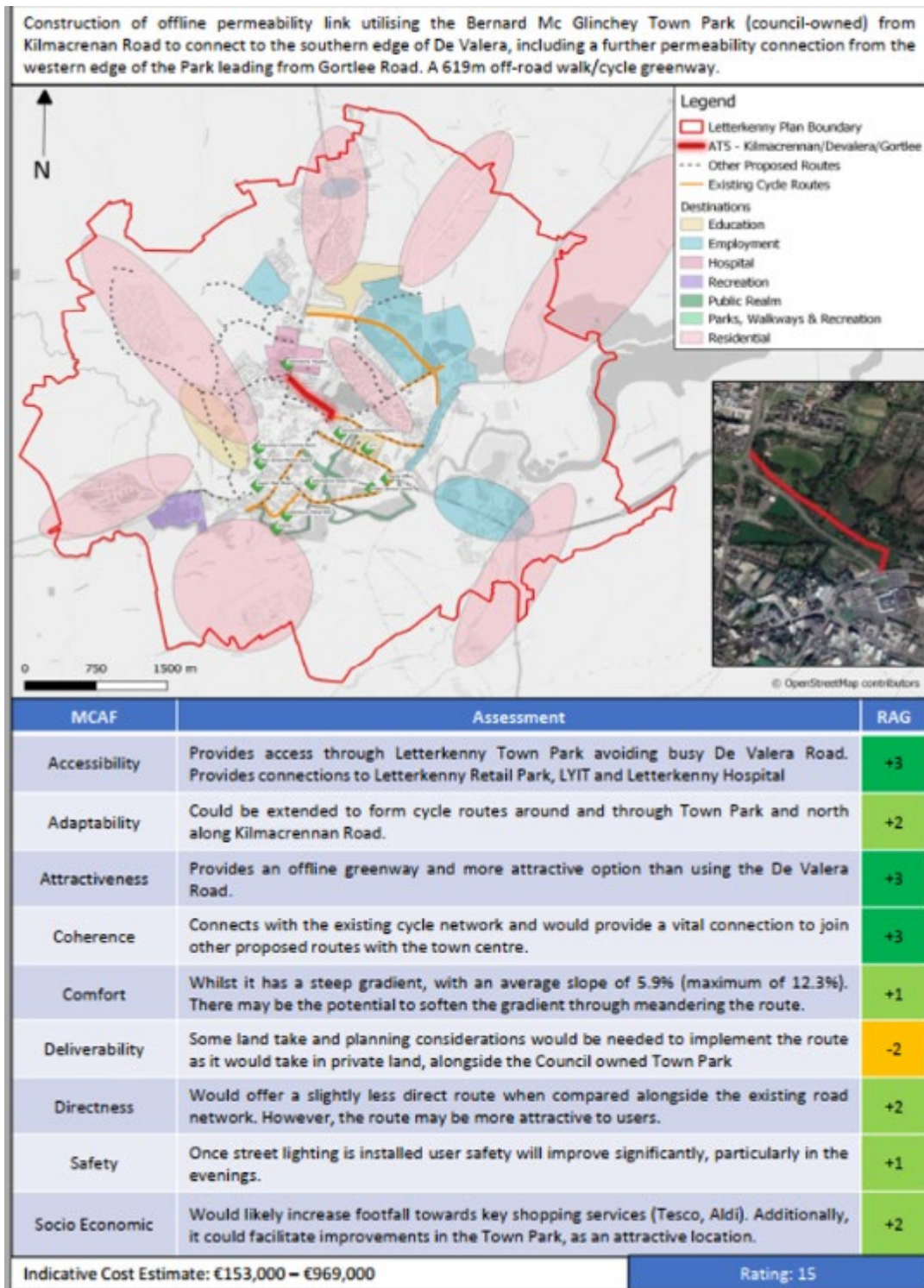
## IC2 Circular Road

Removal of 8 no. turning lanes and narrowing the carriageway in addition to using the roadside grass verges to create walking provision of 923m carriageway reallocation and formalisation of footpath and segregated on-road cycle lane on both sides of the road.



MCAF	Assessment	RAG
Accessibility	Route will provide a key connection between residential areas, education and Letterkenny Hospital.	+3
Adaptability	Scheme offers segregated cycling provision, therefore limited levels of expansion.	0
Attractiveness	Very attractive route that offers service to many residents in local area, passing local shops and services.	+3
Coherence	The route would provide a vital connection to join other proposed routes with the town centre. However, it does not connect to the existing network	+2
Comfort	Surface largely flat, with only a small gradual gradient increase along the route, with an average slope of 3.3% (maximum of 6.9%).	+3
Deliverability	High levels of deliverability as it would appear the scheme is largely reallocation of existing grass verge and road reallocation.	+3
Directness	Route follows a direct route aligning with key destinations such as Letterkenny Hospital, local shops and residential areas.	+3
Safety	The route has on-street lighting on both sides of the road and passes through existing residential and local shopping areas, resulting in a sense of safety for pedestrians	+3
Socio Economic	Has the potential to add to footfall numbers in the town centre and will serve a significant catchment of people. A necessary connections for other proposed routes.	+2
Indicative Cost Estimate: €84,000 – €318,000		Rating: 22

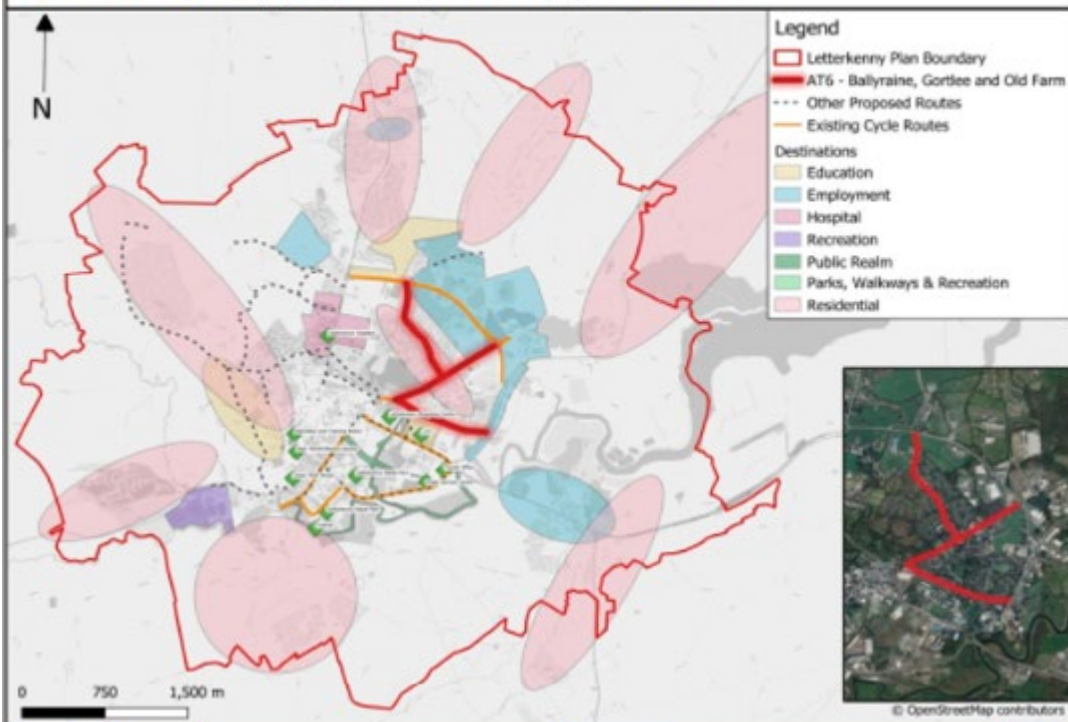
## IC17 De Valera Road





## IC10 and IC11 Ballyraine Road/Gortlee Road/Old Farm Road

Improvement to the existing infrastructure, with a 2.8km long shared cycleway (Gortlee Road and Old Farm Road) and associated infrastructure (dropped kerbs, tactile paving etc) on each side of the road. On Ballyraine Road, improvements to the existing footpaths and cycle lanes are proposed to be considered.

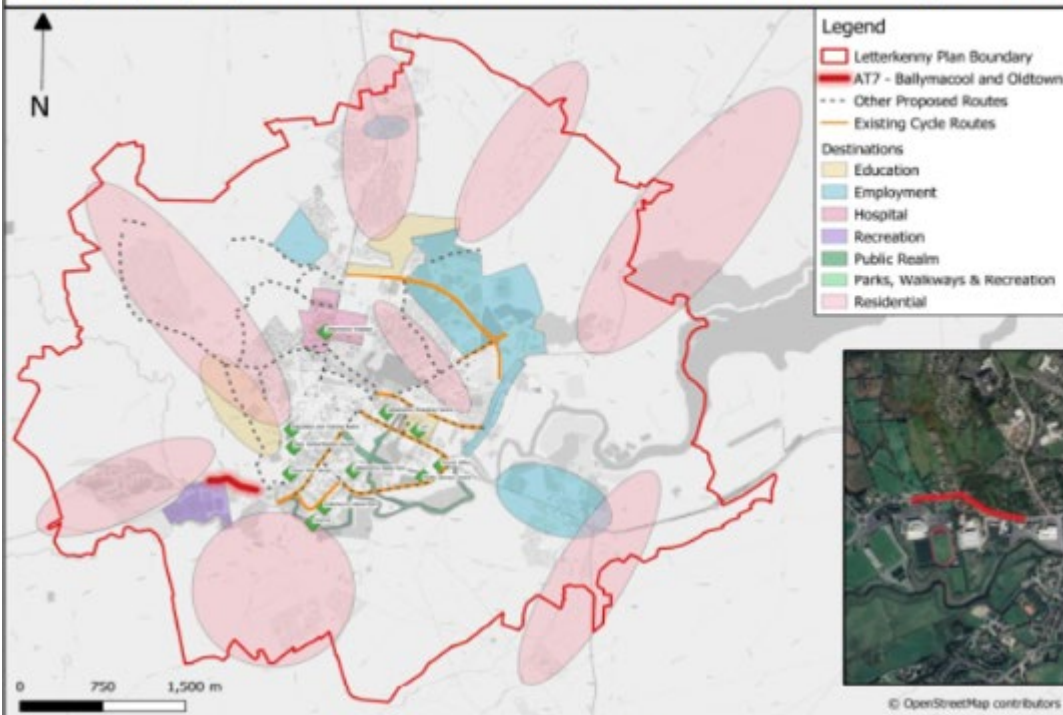


MCAF	Assessment	RAG
Accessibility	Extended route which will serve a large catchment, including residential, employment and education, and will provide onward connections to retail.	+3
Adaptability	These routes could be expanded to link the residents of Nas Mor, Springdale and Thorn, as well as further beyond the boundary, should demand arise.	+2
Attractiveness	Passes through predominantly residential area, surrounded by rural fields. The area is well maintained but has limited specific attractions along its course.	+2
Coherence	Connects with the existing cycle network and provides a vital connection to join other proposed routes with the town centre. On road cycle lanes are on Ballyraine Road.	+3
Comfort	Old Farm Road has a gentle gradient (average of 2.9%). Gortlee Road has a slightly larger gradient (average of 5.2%). Ballyraine Road is largely flat (average of 1.6%).	+1
Deliverability	Land take would be needed to implement the route. In some area existing footways are narrow and consideration is needed to ensure a shared cycleway is viable.	-1
Directness	The route provides a direct option between residential areas, retail park and LYIT.	+2
Safety	Street lighting only in place in some sections of the route. Ensuring that the entire route is well lit will be necessary to ensure users feel safe.	+1
Socio Economic	Route could provide footfall increase towards the retail park area and onward connections to the town centre due to the large catchment area it would serve.	+2
Indicative Cost Estimate: €383,000 – €2,517,000		Rating: 15



## IC5 R250 Ballymacool Roundabout to Lower Main Street Roundabout

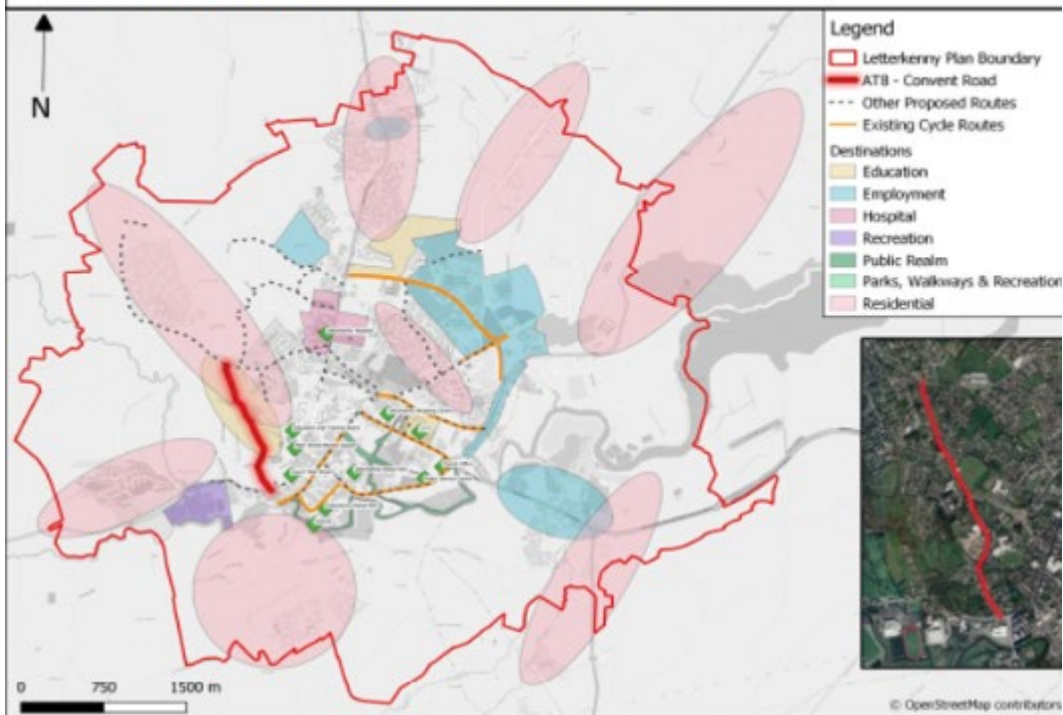
Need for width and alignment to provide for online walking and cycling infrastructure on both sides of the existing road to provide for active travel opportunities. Assumed to be a 506m long shared cycle footway. Develop safe walking and cycling along the southern side of road and to the footpath network that terminates at Ballymacool Park.



MCAF	Assessment	RAG
Accessibility	The route passes alongside a number of local services, including Aura Leisure Centre, St Eunan's GAA club and local shops.	+2
Adaptability	Could be extended South-West to serve residential areas at the Garden, The Green and The Forrest.	+2
Attractiveness	Route facilitates access to local services, with attractive frontages, enhancing footfall for these services.	+2
Coherence	The route does not connect directly to the existing network, but is very close. A minor extension to the proposed route would ensure onward connections from these routes.	+1
Comfort	The route is relatively smooth and level, allowing users to access this route easily, with an average slope of 2.9% (maximum of 12.5%)	+3
Deliverability	In some areas existing footways are narrow or missing and consideration is needed to ensure proposals on both sides of the road are viable. Land take will be needed.	-2
Directness	The route would serve as a direct link to recreational services	+2
Safety	There is limited developments along the route, which may make some individuals feel unsafe. Once street lighting is added, the sense of safety will increase.	+1
Socio Economic	Increased footfall towards Leisure Centre as younger users without access to a car could use this as an alternative travel option. Could increase users of leisure facilities.	+2
Indicative Cost Estimate: €68,000 – €450,000		Rating: 13

### IC3 and IC4 Convent Road

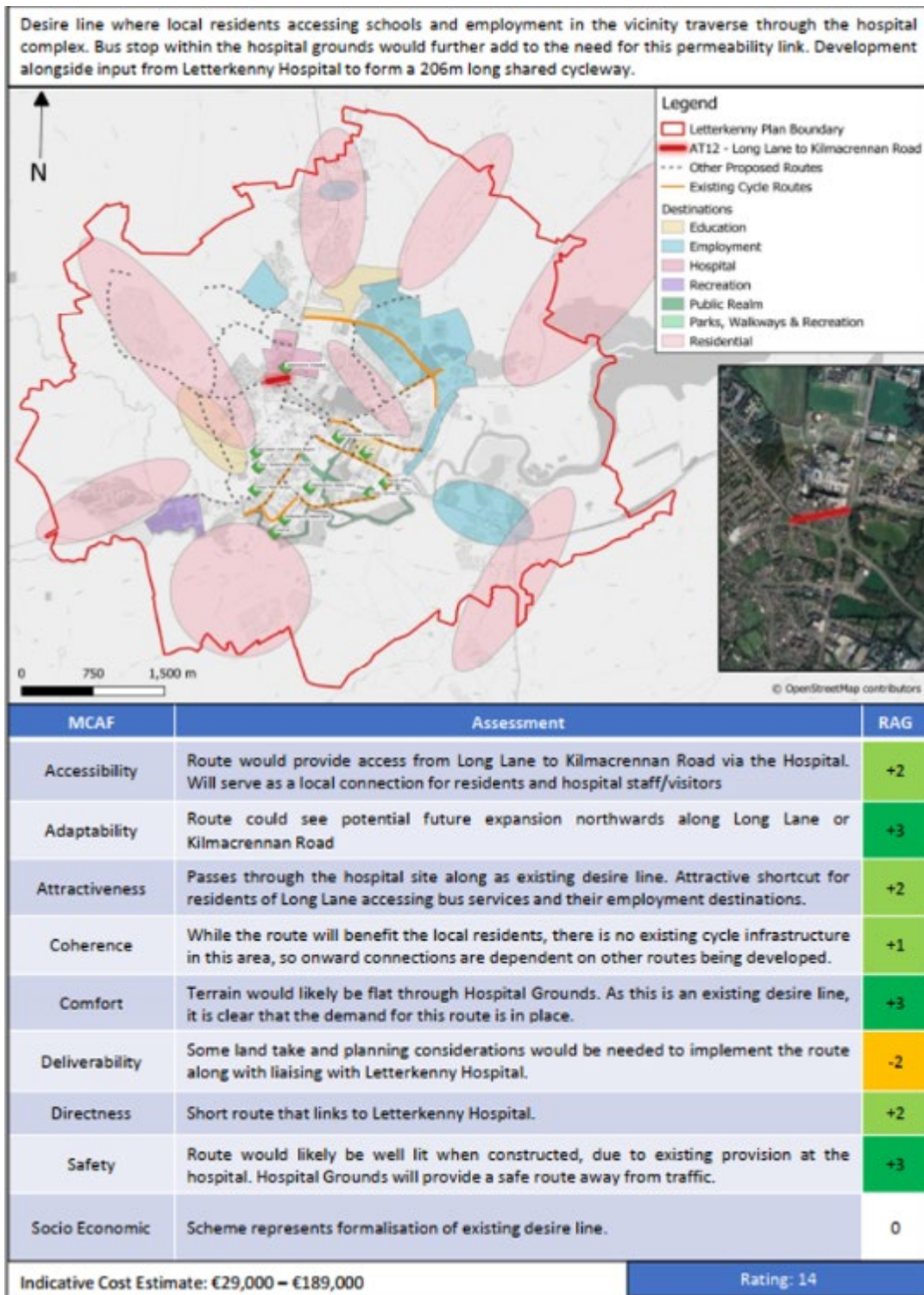
Active travel funding available to address fundamental traffic safety concerns in proximity to the schools. Infrastructure for cycling and walking from the northern residential origins to the schools and the Town Centre requires focus. 1.3km long shared cycleway and associated infrastructure.



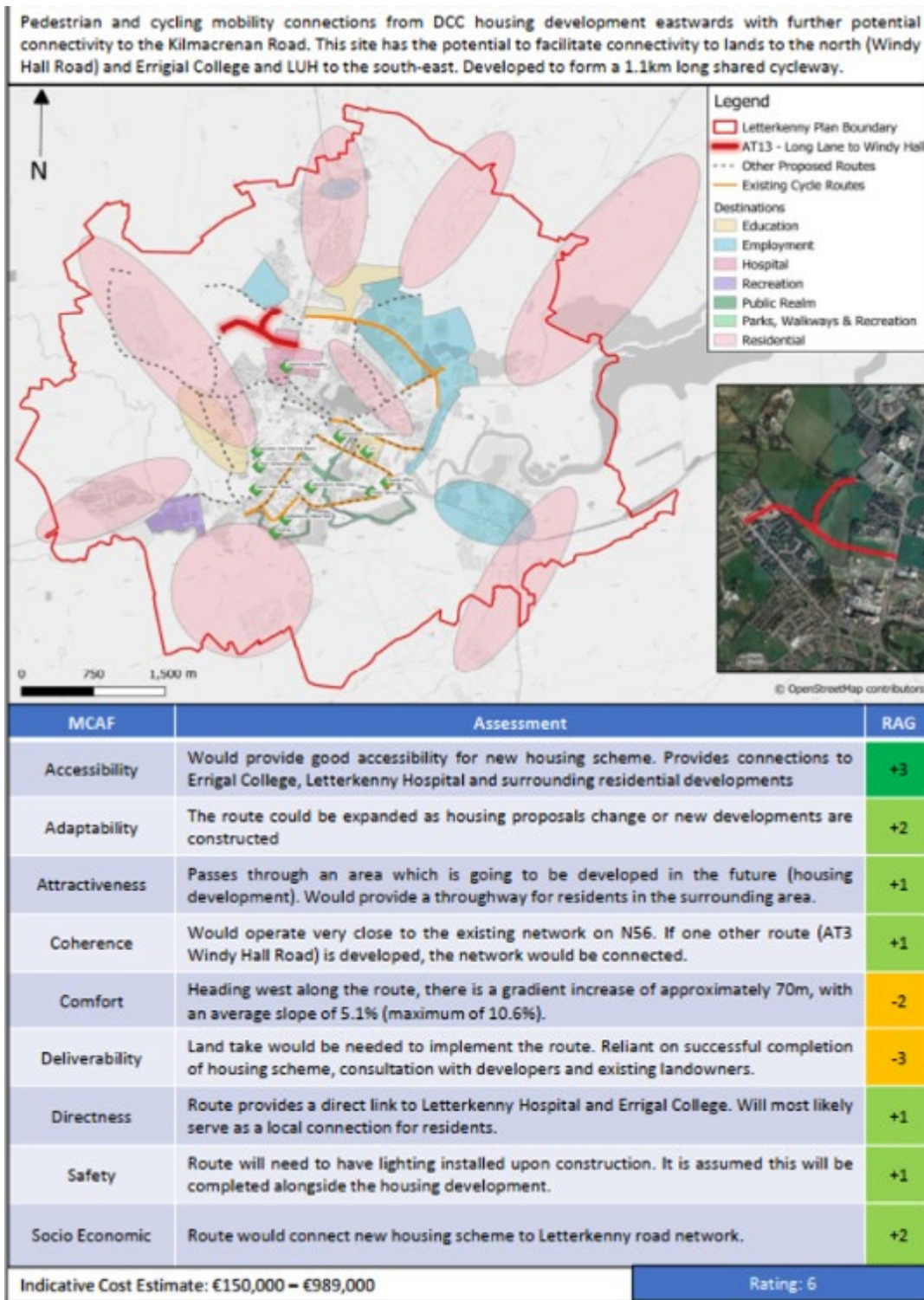
MCAF	Assessment	RAG
Accessibility	Connects to key destinations (schools, sports pitches, local services) as well as the Town Centre and retail parks, serving a significant catchment of people.	+3
Adaptability	There are proposals for active travel routes at either end of this route, therefore it is largely confined to the extent of the current proposals.	0
Attractiveness	Passes through predominantly residential area and provides a route for local schools. The area is well maintained but has limited specific attractions outside of this.	+2
Coherence	The route does not connect directly to the existing network, but is very close. A minor extension to the proposed route would ensure onward connections from these routes.	+2
Comfort	There is a steep gradient of approximately 80m incline change heading north, with an average slope of 6.2% (maximum of 13.1%).	-3
Deliverability	Route could largely be facilitated by reallocation of existing road space. However, care is needed with respect to presence of on-street parking at Town Centre section.	+1
Directness	The route would provide a direct connection from the north west to the Town Centre. If not delivered, indirect travel along Circular Road and High Road would be needed.	+3
Safety	As this is an area which is likely to have high levels of school travel, safety is a key concern. Once street lighting is added, the sense of safety will increase.	+1
Socio Economic	Route will likely increase footfall towards Town Centre and will provide connections from residential and schools. An important route to ensure town centre connections.	+3
Indicative Cost Estimate: €178,000 – €1,169,000		Rating: 12



## NW2 – Part Of (Section from Long Lane to Kilmacrennan Road Link via Errigail College)

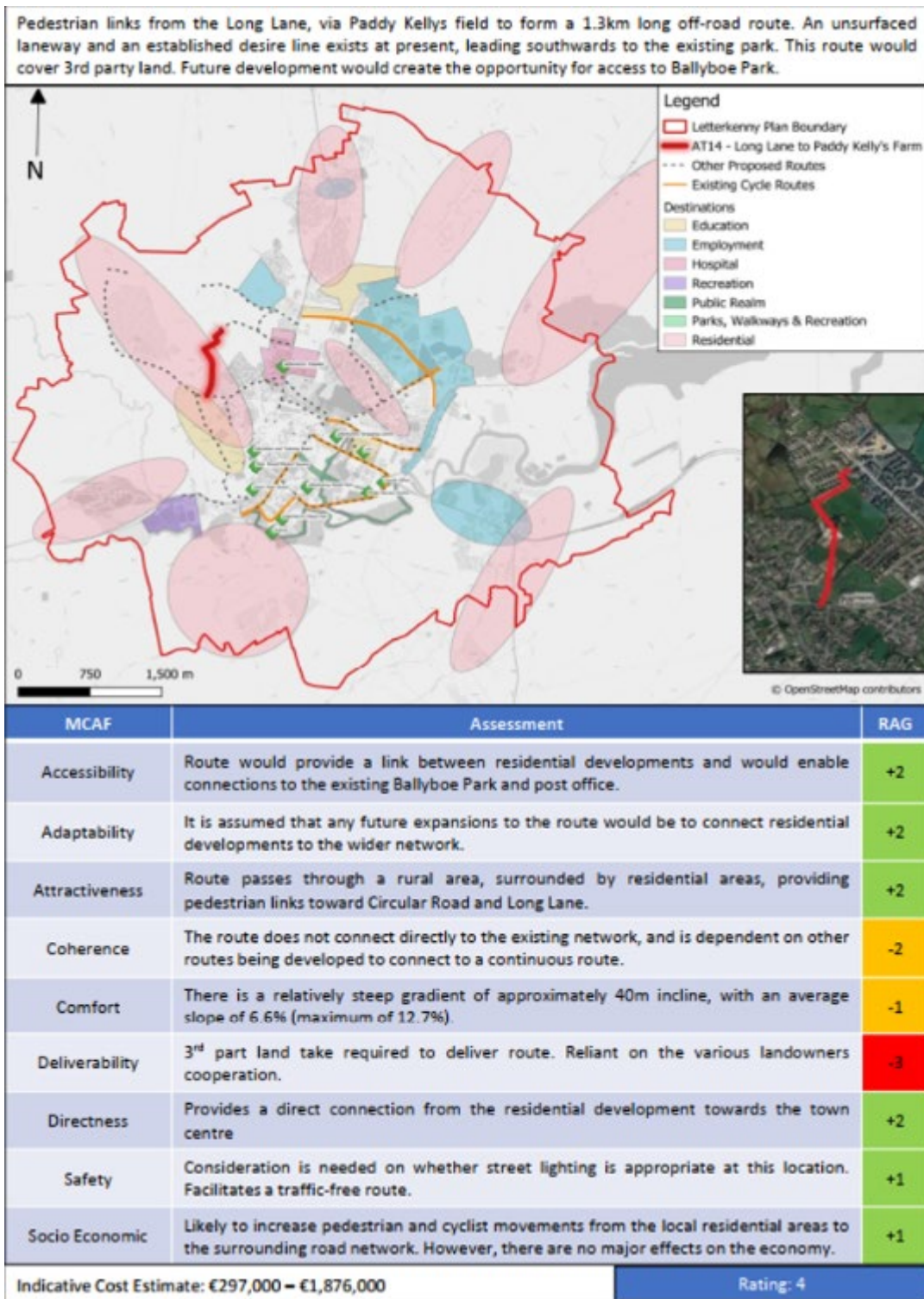


### NW3 – Part Of (Section including Long Lane-Windyhall-Errigail College)

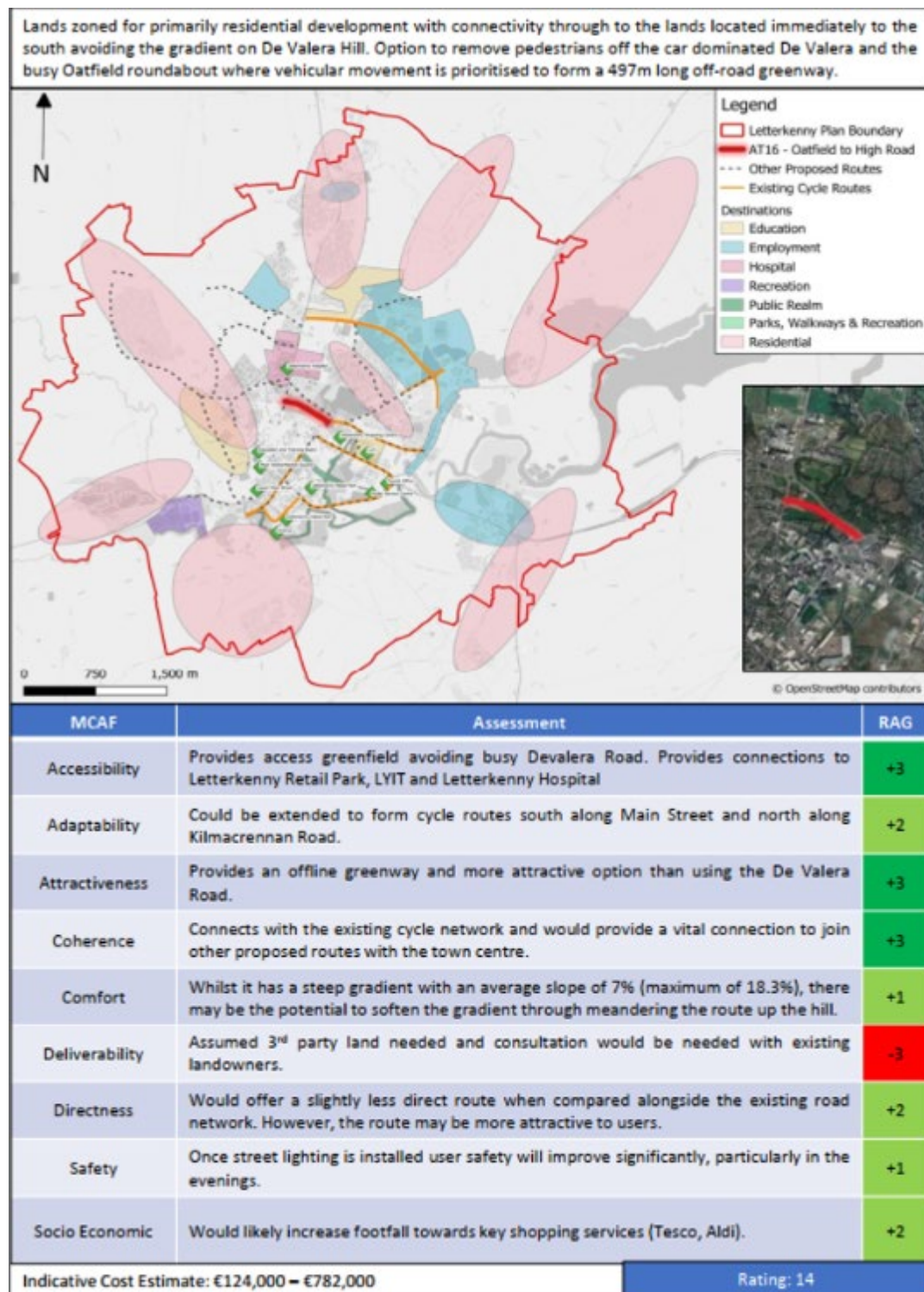




### NW3 – Part Of (Section from Long Lane-Fairgreen-Glencar)

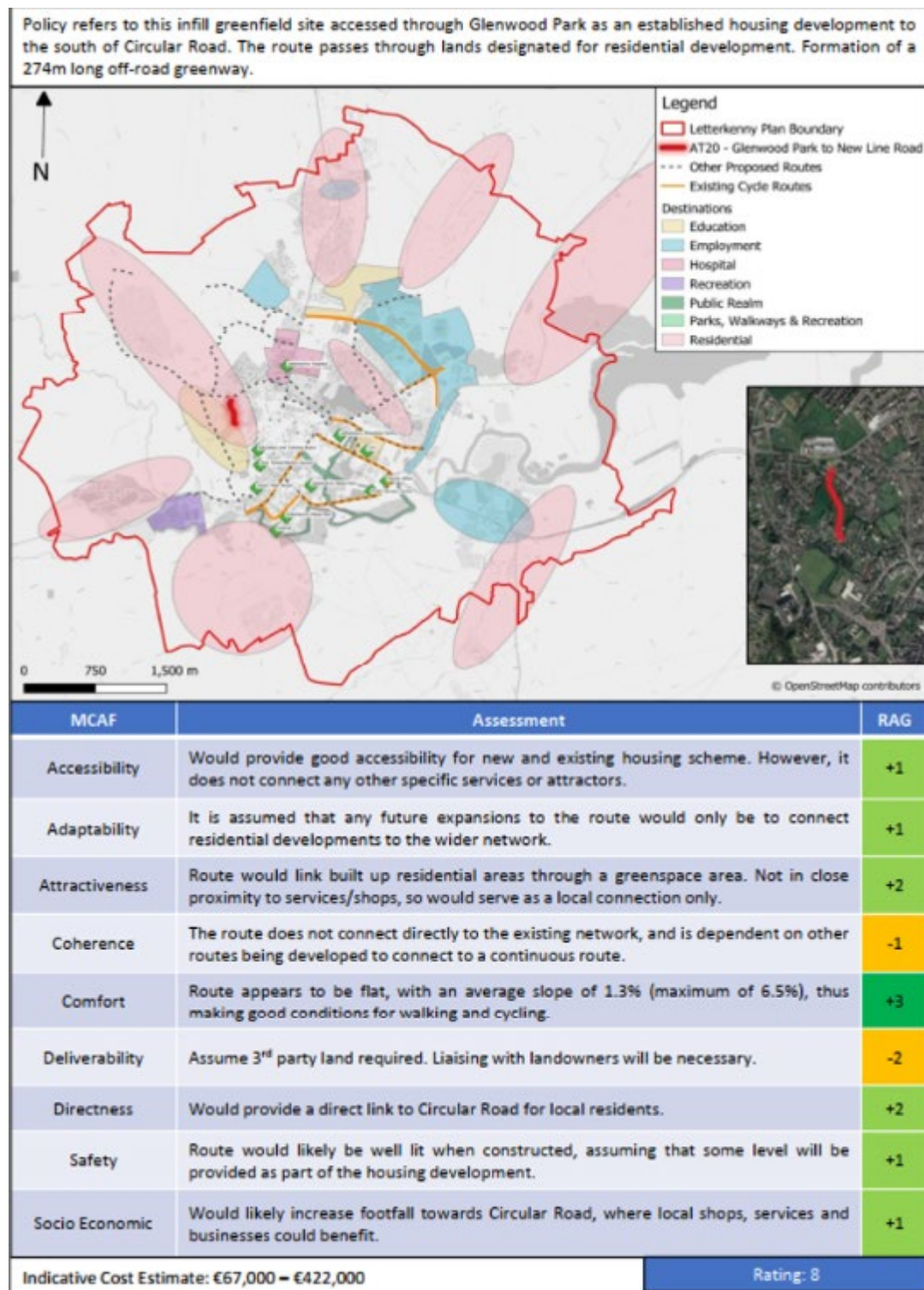


## LP11 High Road - Former Oatfield Site





## LP7 New Line Road 1/Glenwood Park



## Appendix E – Acronyms and Glossary of Terms

### Acronyms

AA: Appropriate Assessment

ABTA: Area Based Transport Assessment

ACA: Architectural Conservation Area

ATU: Atlantic Technological University

CDP: County Development Plan

CFRAM: Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management

DCC: Donegal County Council

DCCAE: Department of Climate Action and Environment

DCCC: Donegal County Childcare Committee

DCHG: Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

DES: Department of Education and Skills

DHLGH: Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

DMURS: Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets

DTTaS: Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

EIA: Environmental Impact Assessment

EIAR: Environmental Impact Assessment Report

EPA: Environmental Protection Agency

ESB: Electricity Supply Board

EU: European Union

EV: Electric Vehicle

GHG: Greenhouse Gas

HNDA: Housing Need and Demand Assessment

IDA: Industrial Development Agency

LAP: Local Area Plan

NIR: Natura Impact Report

NPF: National Planning Framework

NRR: Northern Relief Road

NTA: National Transport Authority

NWCR: North West City Region

NWRA: Northern and Western Regional Assembly

NZEB: Nearly Zero Energy Building

RPS: Record of Protected Structures

RSES: Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

SAC: Special Area of Conservation

SEA: Strategic Environmental Assessment

SFRA: Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

SSDS: Southern Strategic and Sustainable Development Site

SUDS: Sustainable Urban Drainage Solutions

TEN-T: Trans-European Network for Transport

TII: Transport Infrastructure Ireland

URDF: Urban Regeneration and Development Fund

WAW: Wild Atlantic Way

WRR: Western Relief Road

## Glossary

This glossary contains phrases relating to land use and planning matters. It covers a variety of issues ranging from new development and regeneration, to conservation and environmental protection.

The glossary is neither a statement of law nor an interpretation of the law, and its status is only an introductory guide to planning phrases. This glossary should not be used as a source for statutory definitions.

### **Active Travel**

Active Travel is travelling with a purpose using your own energy. Generally, this means walking (including all users of footpaths) or cycling as part of a purposeful journey. Increasingly, non-motorised scooters are also being used for urban transport, especially by school children, and this would also be considered as active travel. Walking as part of a commute to work, cycling to the shop or scooting to school are all considered active travel, whereas walking or cycling for purely leisure purposes is not.

### **Adaptability**

The potential to modify the spaces of a home by altering the fabric of the building to cater for the different needs of an individual's or family's life cycle (e.g. a study space becomes a bedroom; a living room area enlarges by merging with an adjacent room etc).

### **Appropriate Assessment**

A requirement to consider the possible nature conservation implications of any plan or project on the Natura 2000 site network before any decision is made to allow that plan or project to proceed.

### **Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)**

Designated areas where significant groupings or concentrations of heritage structures require protection and conservation. The special character of an ACA could include amongst other things its traditional building stock, material finishes, spaces, streetscape, landscape and setting.

### **Biodiversity**

The variety of life (wildlife and plant life) on earth.

### **Brownfield Land/Site**

Land within an urban area that has previously been subjected to building, engineering or other operations (excluding temporary uses or urban green spaces).

### **Climate change**

Climate change includes both the global warming driven by human emissions of greenhouse gases, and the resulting large-scale shifts in weather patterns.

### **Community Facilities**

Facilities, which are operated for the benefit of the public and which are open to the public.

### **Density (Housing)**

This is a measure of the intensity of use of land, specifically with regards to housing, the number of dwelling units provided on a given area of land, usually expressed in dwelling units per hectare. When a 'gross' density figure is used, land for main distributor roads, public open spaces and other facilities is added into the calculation. The area used for 'net' density figures includes only private open space, access roads and incidental public open spaces.

### **Development Contribution Scheme**

A scheme which allows a Planning Authority to levy financial contributions for the provision of public infrastructure, facilities, projects or services as a condition of planning permission.

**Development management:**

This is a term to describe the process where the local authority assesses the merits of a proposed development through the planning process (where planning applications are lodged) including the processing, evaluation, decision making and notification components of that process.

**Green field land/sites**

Potential development land/sites within, or on the periphery of the urban settlement, that has not been subject to previous development.

**Green Roof**

A green roof, also known as a living roof or rooftop garden, is a vegetative layer that is grown on a rooftop.

**Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA)**

A HNDA estimates the future number of additional homes to meet existing and future need and demand within the local authority area. It also captures information on the operation of the housing system to assist the Council to develop policies for new housing supply, management of stock and provision of housing related services.

**Infill**

New building which fills in a gap in otherwise continuous built-up frontage, i.e. a small unused site within a built-up area.

**Infrastructure**

The services required to support new development – can include, inter alia, drainage, water supplies, sewage treatment plants, sewerage networks, lighting, and telephone lines, broadband, electricity supply, roads, buildings, schools, community facilities, cultural and recreational facilities.

**Mitigation**

An action that helps to lessen the impacts of a process or development on the receiving environment.

**Modal shift**

The process whereby people change their travel behaviour from a particular type of transport (private car for example) to another more sustainable form of travel (public transport for example).

**Modal Split**

The split of users of different modes of public and private transport.

**Natural Heritage Area (NHA)**

Areas which cover nationally important semi-natural and natural habitats, landforms or geomorphological features, wild plant and animal species or a diversity of these natural attributes.

**Permeability**

The degree to which an area has a variety of pleasant, convenient and safe routes through it.

**Protected Structure**

A building, feature, site or structure identified in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) as worthy of protection or preservation in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

**Record of Protected Structures (RPS)**

The principal mechanism for protection of buildings and structures of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical importance in the county is through inclusion on the 'Record of Protected Structures'. This provides a positive recognition of the structures' importance, protection from adverse impacts and potential access to grant aid for conservation works.

**Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**

These are prime wildlife conservation areas in the country, considered to be important on a European as well as Irish level. The legal basis on which SACs are selected and designated is the EU Habitats Directive, and these sites form part of the 'Natura 2000' network of sites throughout Europe.

**Special Protection Areas (SPAs)**

Areas of special interest for the conservation of wild bird habitats, especially listed, rare or vulnerable species and migratory species. They are established under the Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC), and form part of the 'Natura 2000' network of sites throughout Europe.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

Strategic Environmental Assessment is a process which attempts to evaluate the likely consequences on the environment of implementing a plan, programme or strategy.

**Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDs)**

Sustainable urban drainage systems aim towards maintaining or restoring a more natural hydrological regime, such that the impact of urbanisation on downstream flooding and water quality is minimised. SuDS involve a change in our way of managing urban run-off from solely looking at volume control to an integrated multi-disciplinary approach which addresses water quality, water quantity, amenity and habitat. SuDS minimise the impacts of urban runoff by capturing runoff as close to source as possible and then releasing it slowly.

**Sustainability**

Refers to development, which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Traffic Impact Assessment**

A detailed assessment of the nature and extent of the impact of any substantial development on the immediate and surrounding road network and, if deemed necessary, on the wider transportation system.

**Urban Renewal**

The revitalisation of urban areas through specific development objectives and strategic planning principles.

**Urban Sprawl**

The excessive outward expansion of built development, away from the core city/ town centre and into the surrounding countryside. This form of development is viewed as unsustainable.