

# Ballybofey-Stranorlar Regeneration Strategy & Action Plan

April 2022


 Pasparakis  
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In conjunction with:

Future Analytics

Sammon





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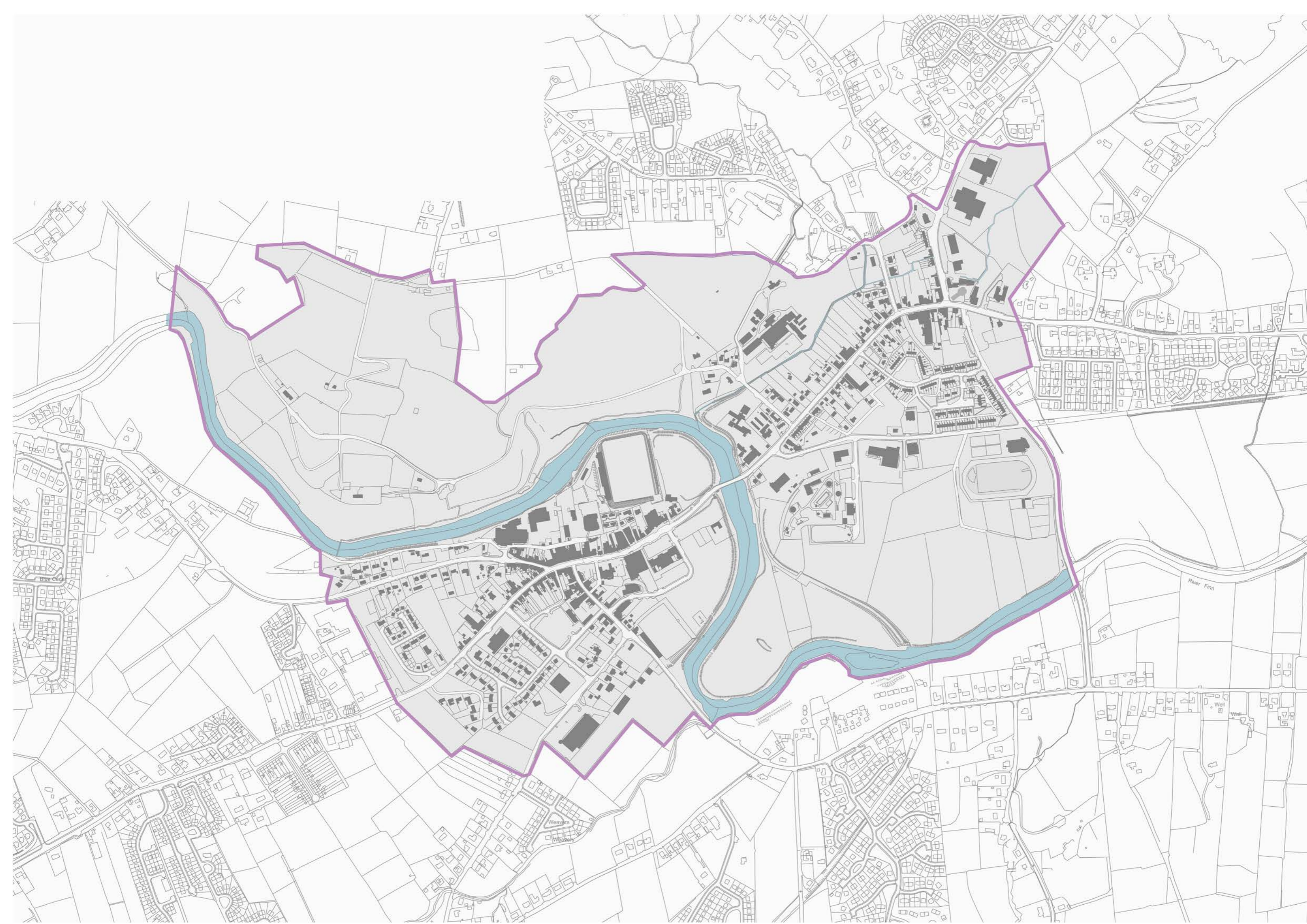
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# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Project Background

The Ballybofey-Stranorlar Regeneration Masterplan and Action Plan has been commissioned by Donegal County Council in conjunction with BASICC. The study is led by Architects Pasparakis Friel with support from socio economic consultants Future Analytics and cost consultants Sammon.

The purpose of the masterplan is to identify the key priorities and actions in supporting the sustainable regeneration of the Twin Towns up to 2040 and beyond. The masterplan is regeneration focused and considers key thematic areas: infrastructure, natural and built heritage, community provision, tourism, conservation, regeneration sites, commercial/ economic development opportunities, parking, access and recreation.

The project is to be carried out in three stages as follows:

- Stage 1 - Analysis and Targeted Consultation
- Stage 2 - Preparation of Draft Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan
- Stage 3 - Consultation on the Draft Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan

This report represents works undertaken by the team during Stage 2.

## 1.2 Stage 1 Process

Stage 1 involved research and needs based analysis. These were developed via the following processes:

1. Socio economic analysis (see standalone report)
2. Stakeholder consultation
3. Local businesses consultations
4. Public consultation
5. Field studies
6. Researched evidence base
7. Review of national and regional policies
8. Precedent analysis

Following our research and needs based analysis during Stage 1 we developed Key Findings. These in turn have facilitated the development of ten Principles of Regeneration. These regeneration principles transcend all interventions and ensure a coherent overarching thematic masterplan.

## 1.3 Stage 2 Process

Stage 2 involved the development of the placeshaping strategy and masterplan strategies.

The criteria by which projects were selected was:

1. A spread of projects across the two towns
2. Needs identified as a priority through consultation
3. Projects that were deemed to create the greatest regeneration potential
4. Projects that could be directly linked to potential funding avenues
5. Projects which delivered the project aims
6. A range of scale of projects
7. Projects which contained flexibility to be phased or accommodate change of use to that initially identified
8. Priorities as derived from the socio economic report.

Image Opposite:

The study site covers an area of approximately 472 acres (191 hectares). The two towns comprise a dense, mixed use retail town core in Ballybofey and residential focus in Stranorlar. Key natural features are the Drumboe Woods; a native woodland comprising of five wooded areas. The towns sit either side of the River Finn which meanders through the study site.







## 2.0 Key Findings

The initial analysis and consultation phase of the project (Stage 1) culminated in the development of ten 'Key Findings'. The findings were developed into ten 'Principles of Regeneration'. These 'Principles of Regeneration' transcend the proposals which follow, ensuring that common threads are woven through the masterplan.

### 1. Insufficient Retail Offering

32% of respondents to the online survey stated that a wider more diverse retail offering would attract them to the towns, in conjunction with evening eating options and longer opening hours.

### 2. Poor Pedestrian Experience

The presentation of the Main Street in the towns was criticised for lack of green space, poor signage, neglect of buildings, inadequate accessibility and general tidiness. 25% of respondents mentioned the need to improve the public realm.

### 3. Poor Connections to Existing Natural Amenities

The active community members with a passion for walking and cycling noted the deficit of dedicated paths throughout the towns. Existing routes and connectivity within the town centres require review.

### 4. Lack of Civic Space

The towns are fortunate to have Drumboe Woods on the doorstep, however within the centres there is a lack of communal green space. The requirement for a flexible outdoor space, accessible and available to all generations within the centres was mentioned 49 times in the online survey.

### 5. Heritage Buildings are Undervalued

Ballybofey and Stranorlar are fortunate to have a large number of prominently located buildings with heritage value. The dereliction and vacancy of many of these buildings is of great concern and the revival and reuse is key to the twin towns embracing their heritage and preserving it for future generations. Realisation of the SEED project will kick start this by preserving and revitalising a key town centre heritage structure.

### 6. Sustainable Development

Finding a new use for, and retrofitting, vacant buildings should be a priority over permitting new development. Promoting and encouraging of town centre redevelopment should be prioritised within the LAP and planning policy in order to avoid irreversible urban sprawl and further decay of the town centre. References to the potential development of 'bulky goods retail parks to the west of the town centre' should be considered for removal from the current LAP. Such development would likely compound the current town centre vacancy issues.

### 7. The Woods + River are Significant Assets

The River Finn and Drumboe Woods are outstanding natural amenities. They are currently under utilised and poorly connected to the town centre. They are valued by many with 131 consultees stating they are the best thing about the towns.

### 8. Community Groups Need Facilities

The sense of community is a recognised strength of the towns, with 14% of respondents mentioning it as the aspect they like most about Ballybofey and Stranorlar. The towns lack a meeting space available to the many community groups; a multi-use space centrally located and unaffiliated.

### 9. Traffic and Parking Issues Impact the Enjoyment of the Town

40% of the survey participants stated that congestion in the Twin Towns has the most negative impact on their experience. A further 7% were dissatisfied with the provision, location and cost of existing parking.

### 10. Need to Identify the USP of Ballybofey & Stranorlar

The Twin Towns are brimming with ambition, an abundance of facilities and uncontested natural amenities. The plan should harness the inherent potential of these with a series of strategic interventions and bolster them with complementary interventions.







# 3.0 Principles of Regeneration

Here follows the ten 'Principles of Regeneration' derived from the 'Key Findings' of the consultation period. These principles transcend the proposals within the masterplan.

In conjunction with these overarching principles the masterplan is cognisant of three parallel and complementary areas of work/study, notably:

## 1. The Ten-T Bypass

The proposed Ten-T bypass of Ballybofey and Stranorlar will run to the north side of the towns, connecting with the N15 (Donegal Road) approximately 3.5km west of the town centres and with the N13 (Letterkenny Road) approximately 4.5km north of the town centres. Connection spurs are to be located opposite Ard McCarron in Ballybofey and at Trenamullin outside Stranorlar.

By removing much of the heavy traffic from the town centre the Ten-T bypass presents opportunities to create a hierarchical shift from vehicle focused streets to people focused streets. At time of writing the proposed construction commencement date is 2024. The new bypass is due to be operational by 2028.

## 2. The SEED project

The SEED Project is the subject of a successful RRDF application. It is an ambitious and determined proposition to bring lasting social and economic benefits to Ballybofey-Stranorlar and the surrounding rural community. A new, high quality civic space to the front of the Ballybofey Shopping Arcade. The total project estimated costs are €9.8m.

It will deliver:

- A new high quality civic space in front of the existing Ballybofey Shopping Arcade
- A restored and redeveloped Ritz heritage building to be used as an Enterprise Centre
- Enhancements to the façade of Ballybofey Shopping Arcade
- New inclusive public conveniences
- A new two-storey car park behind the existing Ballybofey Shopping Arcade

## 3. The Drumboe Woods and Environ Feasibility Study

Running in parallel to this study is a separate feasibility study which is focused on Drumboe Woods and Environs. The study area covers the '5 woods' including, and between, Drumboe Woods and Creggan Woods. That study will identify key priorities and assess options in supporting the sustainable development of the woods and the river to 2040.

## 1. Retail Village

Establish an environment which increases dwell times, encourages longer opening hours, creates a more varied offering including more eateries. Develop towns which are prioritised towards pedestrians. Create safe and welcoming space for evening activities.

## 2. Enhance Pedestrian Experience

Create new direct linkages. Relocate on street parking to facilitate greater freedom of movement and social interaction. Develop shared surfaces. Encourage facades which can open up to the street and small niches for informal activity to further animate the streets.

## 3. Improve Connection to Existing Natural Amenities

Extend current pathways into the town, connect across the water allowing for ease of movement on safe accessible surfaces. Enhance the visual and physical links to the scenery.

## 4. Civic space for all ages

Utilise existing open space to create coherent green spaces with varied connections and multiple uses. Make attractive and inviting to all. Ensure passive surveillance and sense of ownership. Strengthen the community bond. Utilise the civic space component of the SEED project to commence a programme of high quality urban realm works.

## 5. Promote + Protect the Heritage Buildings

Pilot project to encourage the reuse of heritage buildings embrace what we have. Host drop in workshops to provide information and assistance. Create a housing group. Establish close collaboration between local authority, community groups and developers to support a Twin Town strategy for town centre living. Utilise signature projects such as the SEED project to commence and promote a regeneration strategy.

## 6. Sustainable development

Promote revive and reuse first and educate on the importance of retaining heritage buildings. Demand highest quality of design and construction in any new development. Ensure new build construction has the flexibility to accommodate change of use.

## 7. Treasure the Woods + River and Tread Carefully

Develop Ballybofey and Stranorlar trails which lead through, along and with the natural amenities. Enable that all neighbourhoods have a direct pedestrian/ cycle route to/ through these amenities

## 8. Community Space

Development of a non sport facility, flexible space which caters for all ages. Create a 'mothership' for all community groups.

## 9. Traffic and Parking

Following the implementation of T-Ten bypass the Twin Towns should capitalise on the opportunities and reclaim the street for pedestrians and relocate parking to allow for a more successful and attractive public realm.

## 10. Ballybofey-Stranorlar Blueprint

Development of a coherent, holistic, flexible plan which identifies key sites, proposes uses and allows flexibility for change of culture, socio economics and needs over a 20 year period.











# 4.0 Masterplan Strategy

## Key

● Vacant or Derelict Buildings



## Addressing Vacancy and Dereliction

High levels of vacancy and dereliction in the two towns has a significant impact on the visual impression of the place but also on the morale of business owners and residents. Prominent buildings at key junctions on arrival into Stranorlar create poor first impressions. Once busy side streets in Ballybofey such as Glenfin Street and Navenny Street now sit primarily vacant and in part derelict.

In aligning with the desired compact growth principles of the project the revitalisation of these buildings and streets must be prioritised over new building or out of town development.





Artwork creating attractive transition period whilst buildings await new use



Accessibility + Safety



Navenny Street - Pedestrianise and Rebrand



Glenfin Street - Pedestrianise and Consider Acquisition of Terrace



Night-time activities



Adaptability - retail to residential - amalgamation

## Retrofit First - Sustainable Compact Growth

The two most vacant/derelict zones in the towns are on narrow streets which are choked by the scale and extent of traffic that exists today. Removing traffic from Navenny and Glenfin Street facilitates a wholesale reimagining of these two important streets towards them becoming calm, atmospheric, characterful, side streets which could support a mix of both town centre living and small business. The low buildings on the streets have a human scale which results in the streets having the capacity to be comfortable spaces in which to dwell and to support the type of outdoor living that enlivens town centres and which is evermore desired in a post Covid world.

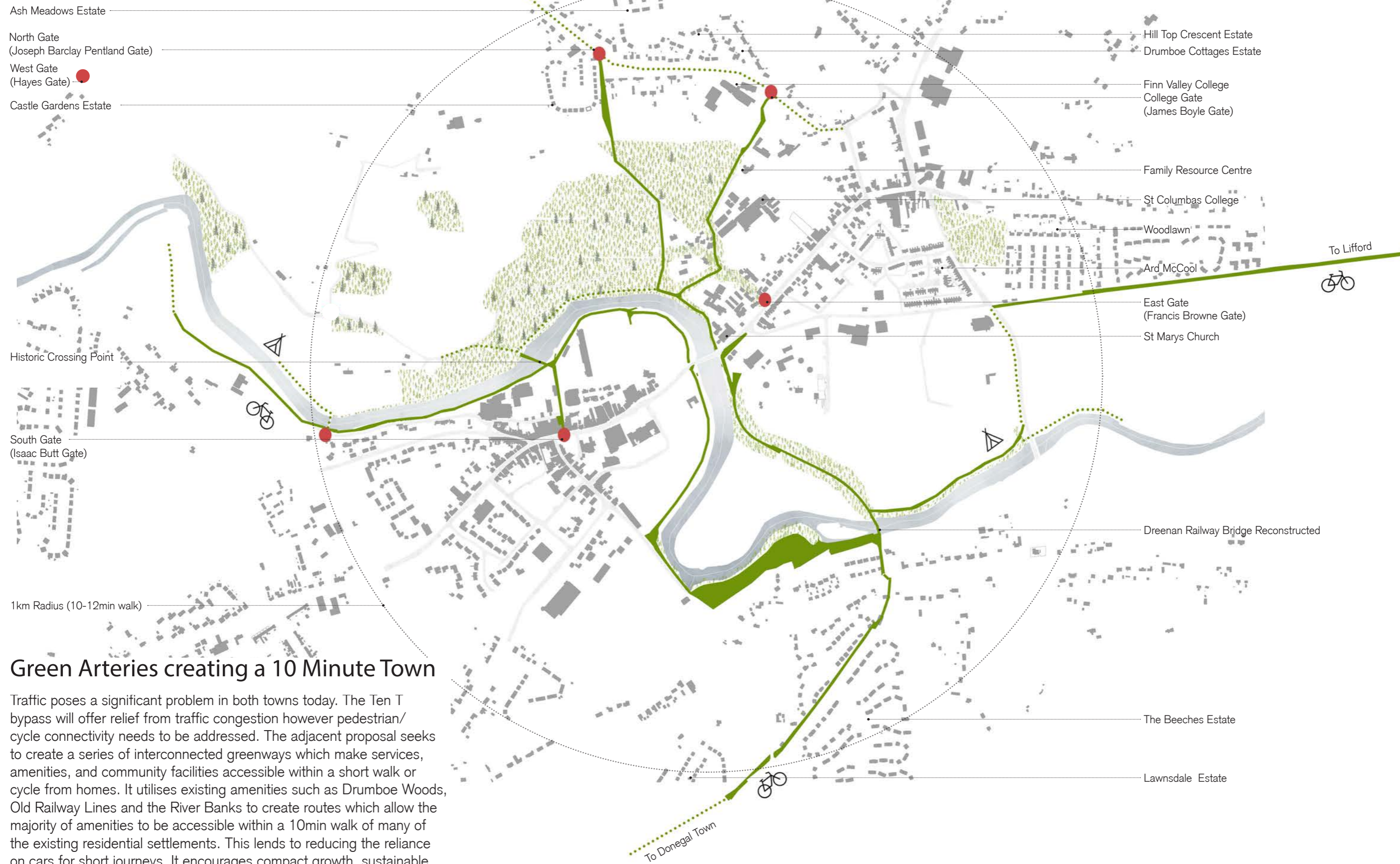
Potential interventions to be explored include collaborations between housing and regeneration departments in the acquisition of complete terraces and retrofitting these to deliver both town centre housing needs and delivering on regeneration opportunities. Such an approach allows that small holdings, which by themselves are too small to support today's living or business needs, could be joined together to form more flexible and desirable spaces.



Range of businesses + services



# 4.0 Masterplan Strategy



## Green Arteries creating a 10 Minute Town

Traffic poses a significant problem in both towns today. The Ten T bypass will offer relief from traffic congestion however pedestrian/ cycle connectivity needs to be addressed. The adjacent proposal seeks to create a series of interconnected greenways which make services, amenities, and community facilities accessible within a short walk or cycle from homes. It utilises existing amenities such as Drumboe Woods, Old Railway Lines and the River Banks to create routes which allow the majority of amenities to be accessible within a 10min walk of many of the existing residential settlements. This lends to reducing the reliance on cars for short journeys. It encourages compact growth, sustainable mobility and the development of a strong economy and sustainable society.





## People Focused Streets

Maintaining vehicular access through the towns is crucial to ensuring that a double by pass situation does not occur, i.e. a peripheral Ten T bypass in conjunction with a local town centre bypass. Consultation with retailers has identified that passing trade is a significant component of their customer base.

With this in mind it is proposed to maintain two way, through traffic, on Main Street Ballybofey and Stranorlar. However, it is proposed to put Main Street 'on a diet'; reducing vehicular carriageway widths to a minimum in order to reclaim as much space back for pedestrians and to facilitate the creation of regular crossing points. Pedestrianisation of Glenfin Street, Navenny Street and Flail Lane in Ballybofey is proposed.

Stranorlar lacks a civic space. A new link road is proposed between the N13 and Chapel Street allowing that Main Street between McClays Corner and Chapel Street becomes pedestrianised; a high quality new place for people, community and business.

These traffic calming and urban realm proposals on Main Street are contingent upon the construction of the Ten T by pass and development of the peripheral carparks on Back Road in Ballybofey and off the new link road in Stranorlar. Full pedestrianisation of Glenfin Street is contingent upon the realisation of the proposed link road between the N15 and R252 - Donegal Road-Glenfin Street to divert traffic from Glenfin Street.





# 4.0 Masterplan Strategy



Joseph Barclay Pentland - Celebrated in Proposed Museum and Park



Stranorlar Railway Station - Historic Footprint Remembered in New Plan



Main Street and Side Streets Reclaimed as Places for People and Trade



Pentland's Moon Crater - Subtly referenced in Town Park Layout



Francis Browne - Immortalised in the Naming of a Gate to the Woods

## Engendering Local Pride

Placemaking in the plan for the two towns is grounded in an understanding of the historic grain of the towns and a celebration of its most famous people. Whilst some of its greatest assets have been lost, traces of their past existence can be embedded into new developments. It is proposed to establish greenways on old railway lines and align the footprint of new buildings with those of the old railway station buildings.

Joseph Barclay Pentland was an Irish geographer, natural scientist, and traveller. He was born in Ballybofey. The lunar crater Pentland is named after him, as is the mineral pentlandite. He is celebrated in a museum and town park. It is proposed to immortalise Stranorlar's blind poetess Francis Browne in a new gate to the woods at Drumboe Avenue.



Historic Routes to River Crossing and Woods Reestablished





# 5.0 Placeshaping Strategy

## Seven Regeneration Districts

The regeneration strategy is broken down into seven primary districts. These districts address a spread of projects across the two towns whilst focusing in on key areas of vacancy and dereliction.

A range of project typologies are covered within the districts. Specific project types are proposed within each district however the sites are flexible to accommodate other uses as per the changing market/social/economic/cultural demands that might arise over the course of the next twenty years up to 2040.



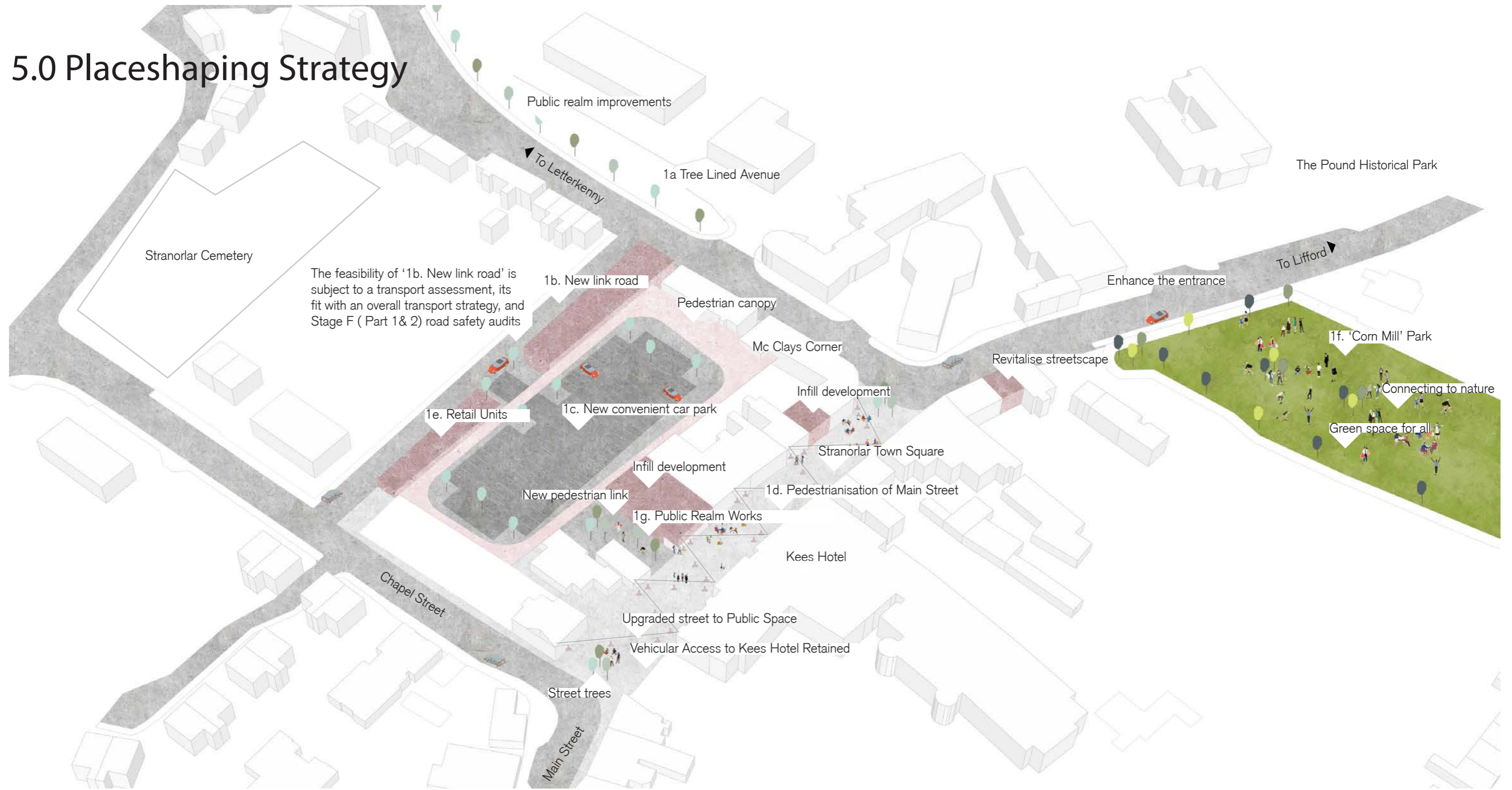
## District Key

- 1 Stranorlar
- 2 Mixed Use Redevelopment
- 3 Mary's Place
- 4 Strategic Opportunity Site
- 5 Pentland Park
- 6 Ballybofey Village
- 7 Drumboe and Linkages





# 5.0 Placeshaping Strategy



## District 1 Stranorlar

Stranorlar Main Street between Chapel Street and Mill Brae contains a fine array of historic residential and retail buildings which collectively comprise a strong streetscape. The setting is currently dominated by road and traffic. Opportunity for street life and atmosphere here is limited.

A new link road is proposed between the N15 and Chapel Street behind Main Street subject to further assessment of feasibility, traffic volumes/ types and turning movements as an integral part of future project development. Main Street now becomes pedestrianised. Front doors open onto a new civic space which is imagined as an elongated town

square. The proposed pedestrianisation of Main Street is contingent upon the realization of the Ten-T by pass.

Convenient off street parking is accessed directly off the new link road with direct, short, pedestrian links onto Main Street. The new carpark is surrounded by an arcade of new retail opportunities and a canopy which links the units.

Existing green space along Millbrae is developed into 'Corn Mill Green'; a much needed public open space. Set between two existing established

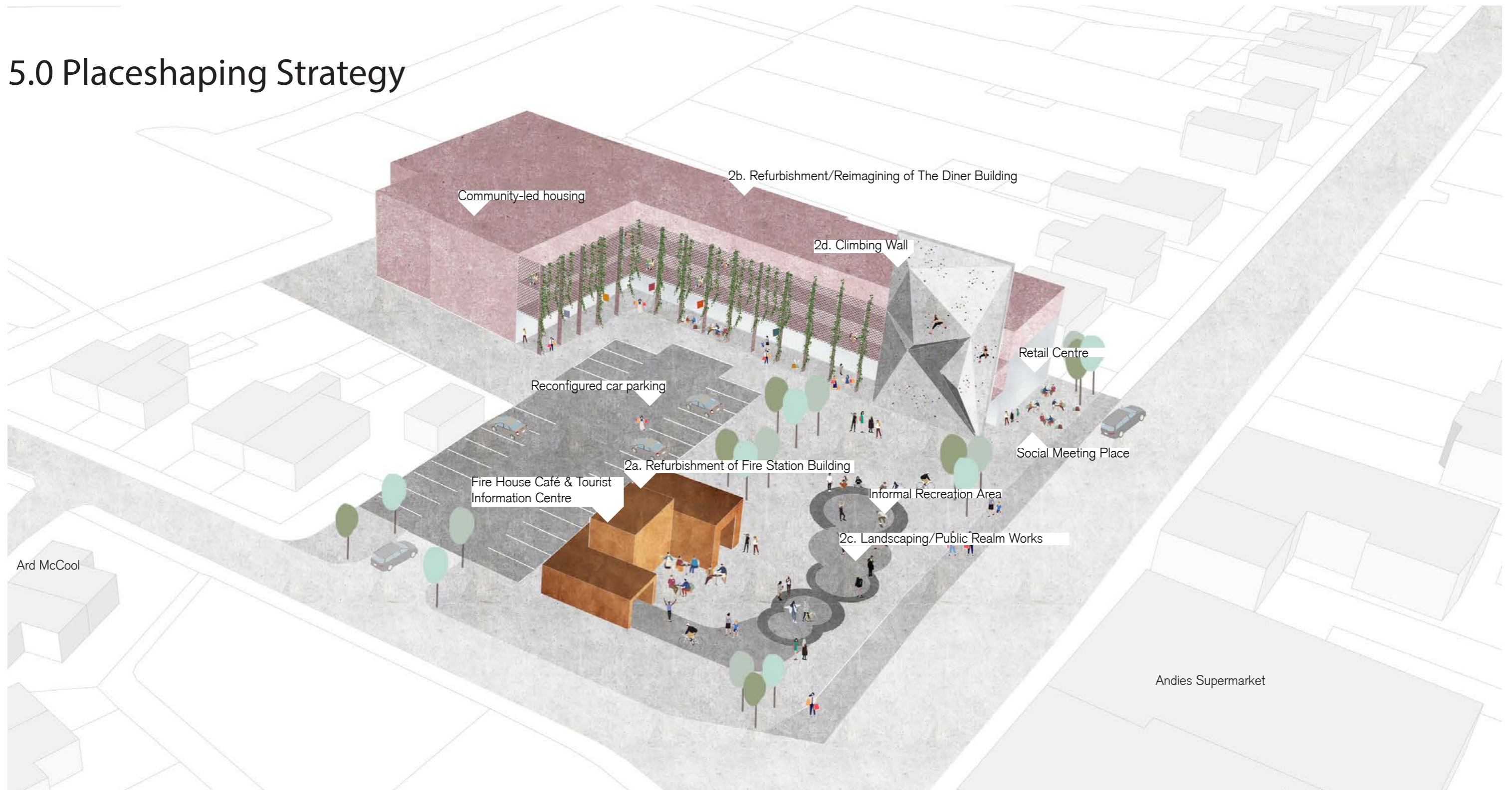
residential estates; Woodlawn and Ard McCool, it offers the opportunity to act as a social connector between two previously disconnected communities.







## 5.0 Placeshaping Strategy



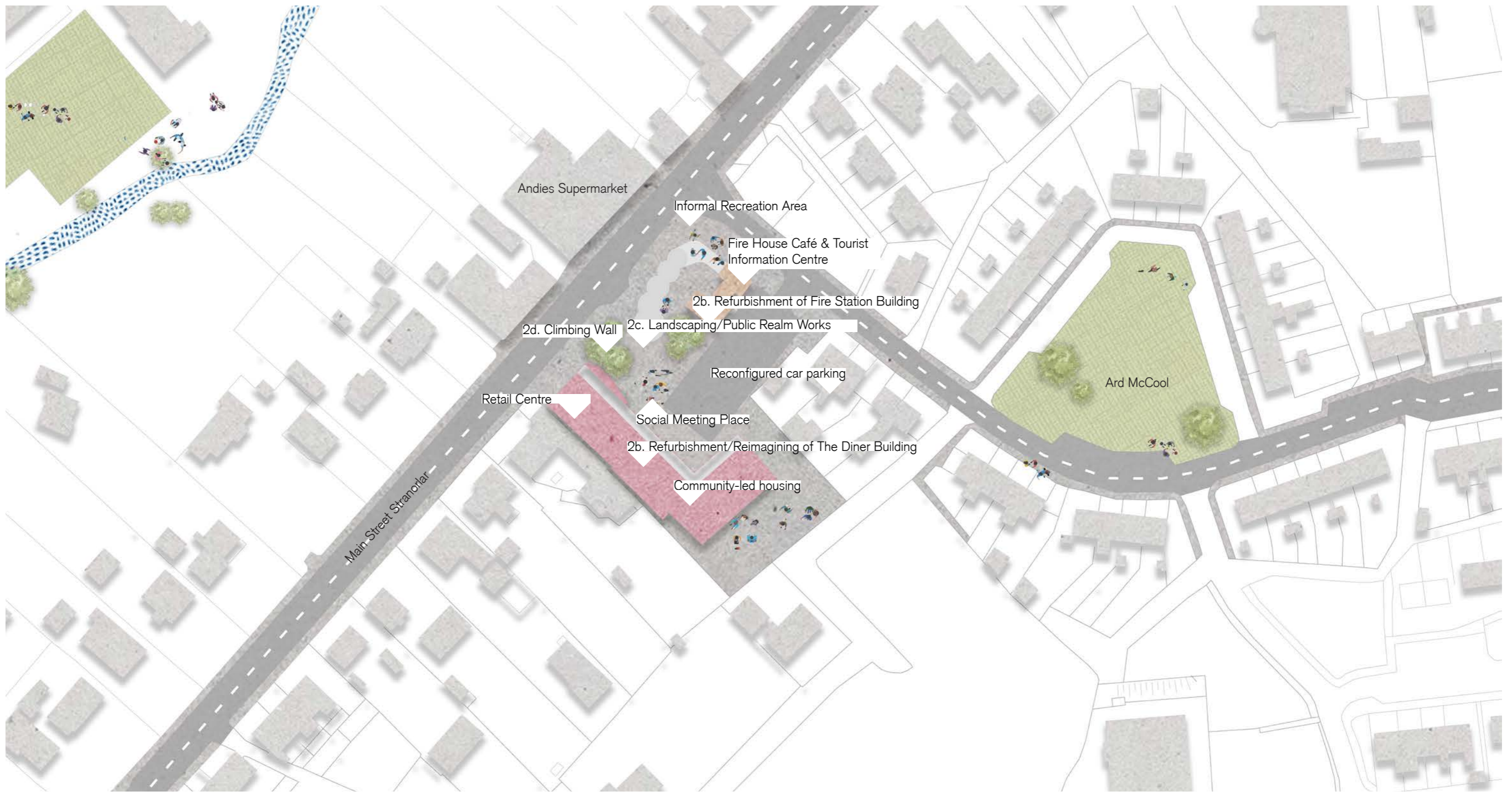
### District 2 Mixed Use Redevelopment

The former 'Fire Station' and 'The Diner' building occupy prominent sites on the main thoroughfare of Stranorlar. If considered together they offer the opportunity to create a space which combines civic, retail, residential uses and an initial statement of the two towns' character in terms of places for people, social interaction, business and living.

A skatepark, cafe, climbing wall, and retail stores combine to create a mini neighbourhood, synoptic of what the wider town experience offers.

The vacant residential properties on the first and second floor are transformed by the addition of a new offset structure of balconies and green facade. This adds value, desirability and privacy to the properties. The new facade also serves to create a more coherent architectural expression at this town centre location.







# 5.0 Placeshaping Strategy

3d. Bridge Link to Drumboe Woods



The appropriate scale of development on this site will be determined by further analysis and detailed design to ensure it is compatible with proposed hard flood defences and flood defence strategy locally.

 Outline of Existing Building to be Retrofitted

## District 3 Mary's Place

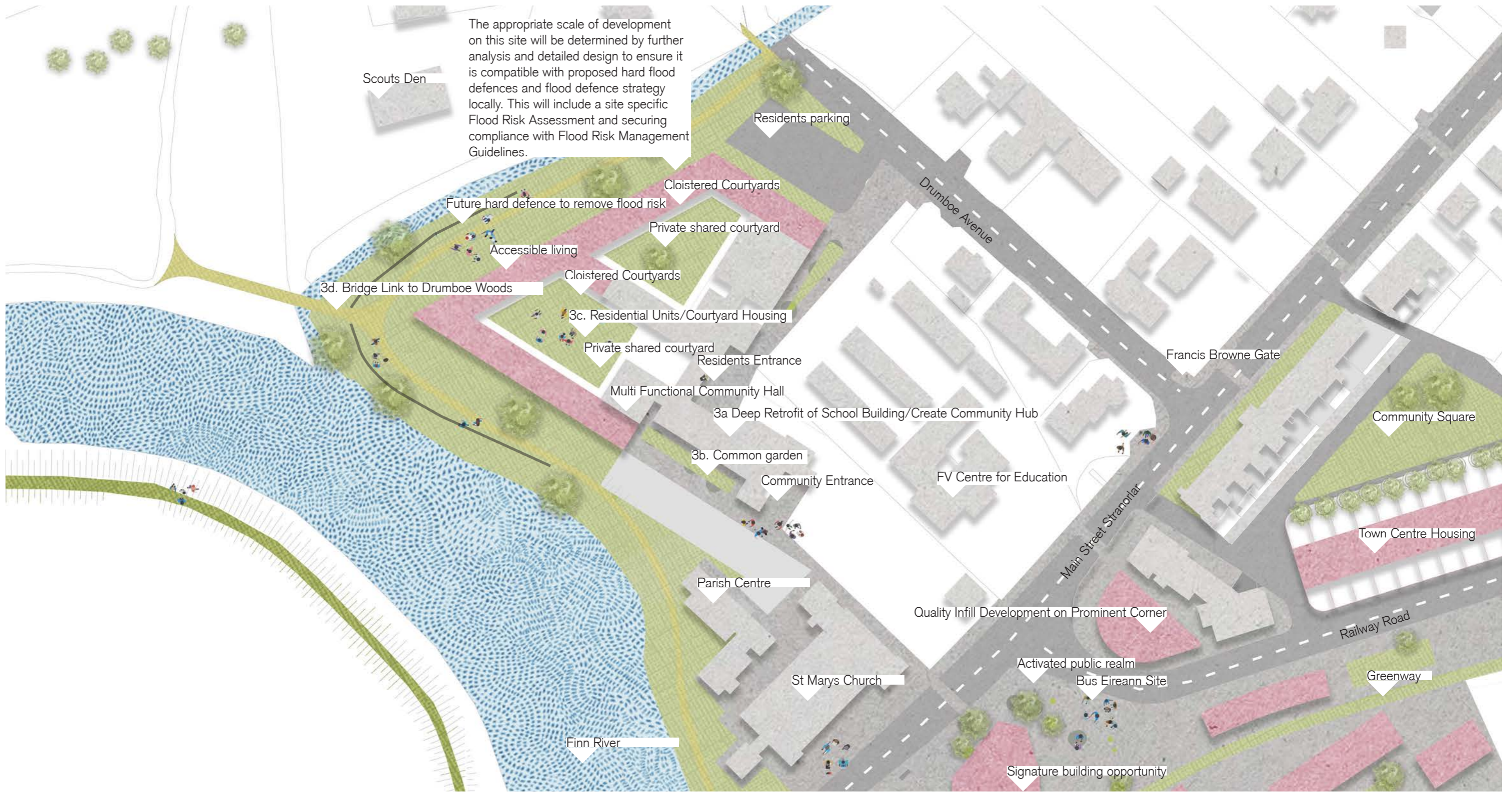
With the imminent relocation of St Mary's National School to its new building at Millbrae in early 2022, the existing school building needs to find a new long term use. It will be temporarily occupied by St Columba's College between 2022 and 2026 to enable an extension to St Columba's College. Thereafter the following is proposed: A multi-functional, community centre for all ages, creeds, and abilities was a high priority derived from the consultation process. Accessible, affordable, sheltered housing and town centre living were also noted as being in need. This site has the potential to provide all of this. The north wing of the existing school is retained and retro-fitted to form a community hub with a variety

of spaces flexible to accommodate a multitude of uses. The existing PE hall is extended to create a multi purpose hall. New extensions to the existing building create cloistered courtyard spaces around which the housing is arranged. The courtyards create enclosed, private social space and engender a sense of community and support.

The site becomes directly connected to Drumboe Woods via a new footbridge to the NW corner of the site. Entrances off Drumboe Avenue are designed to encourage students from Columbas College and Finn College into the community centre for after schools activities.

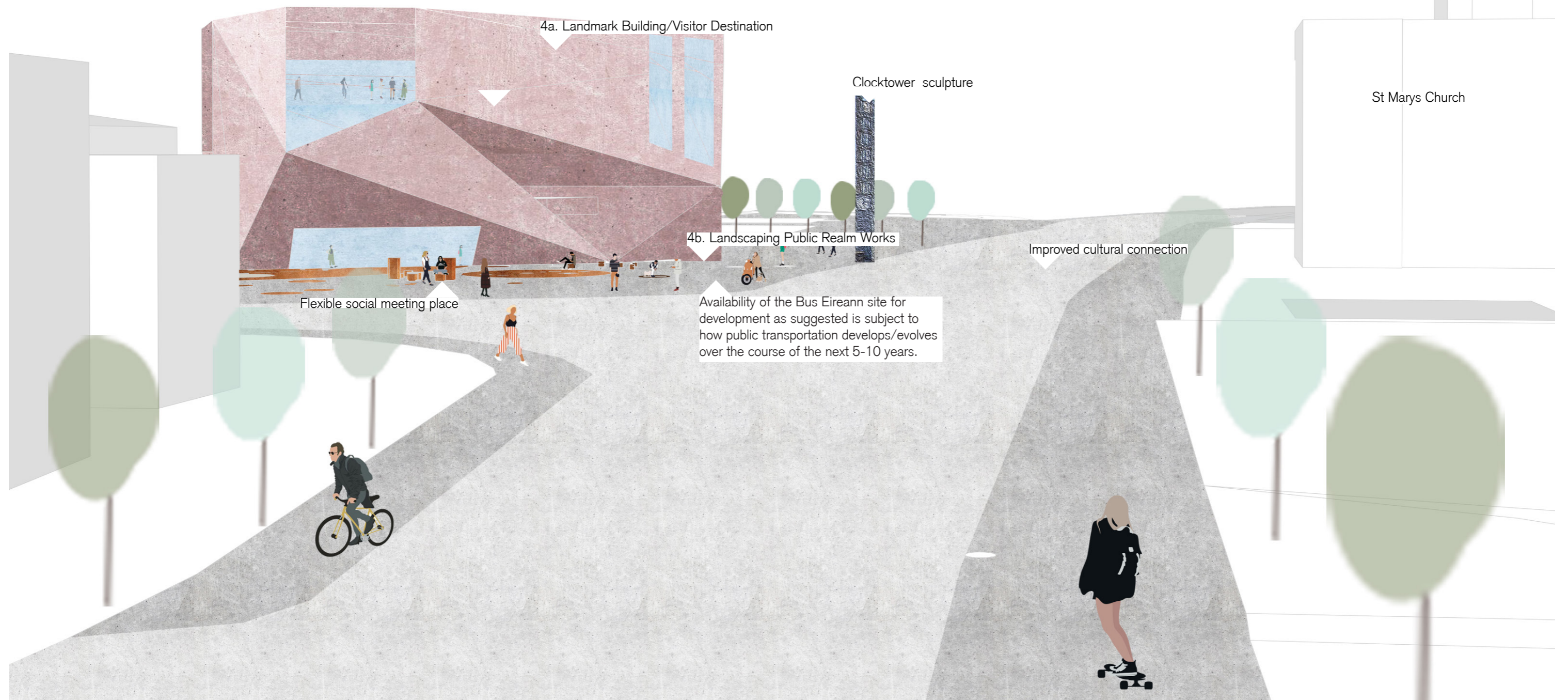
While it is recognized that the St Mary's school site is categorized as being partially within flood zones this report assumes that the hard defence proposal within CFRAM Study will be realized and in doing so remove the flood risk and allow these sites to be developed as proposed. See CFRAM Study UoM 01 Preliminary Options Report, figure 8.4.4, page 173 for further details of proposed hard defences. Notwithstanding, further project development will require a site specific Flood Risk Assessment and will be required to demonstrate compliance with Flood Risk Management Guidelines.







# 5.0 Placeshaping Strategy



## District 4 Strategic Opportunity Site

Historically the juncture between Stranorlar and Ballybofey would have been a celebrated civic space due to its fine collection of rail, ecclesiastical, and educational buildings. Today it is somewhat undefined. The Bus Eireann depot is something of a leftover space which occupies a large and key town centre site.

This site presents an opportunity to host a landmark building in a central location which in itself could have a destination quality. Its content could celebrate the towns' heritage whilst becoming an immersive experience destination for locals and tourists alike.

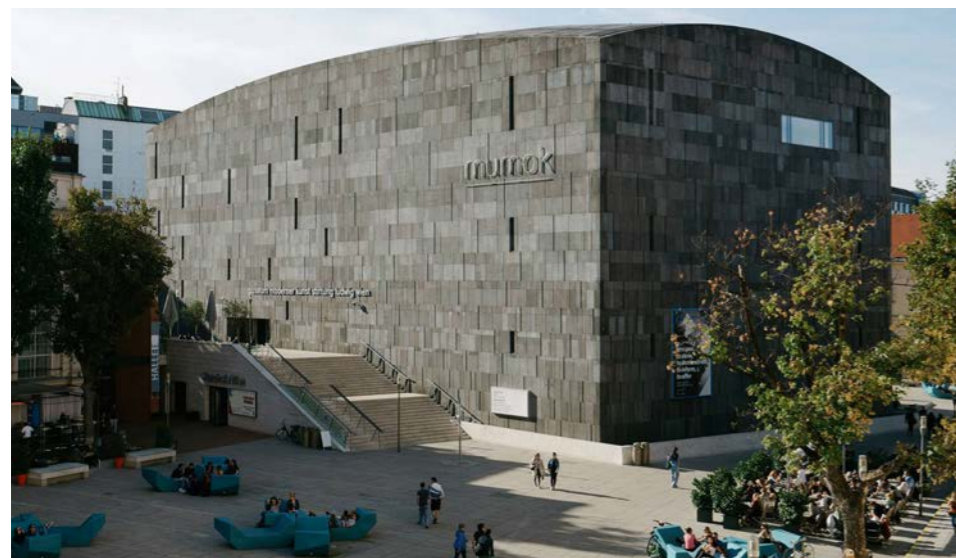
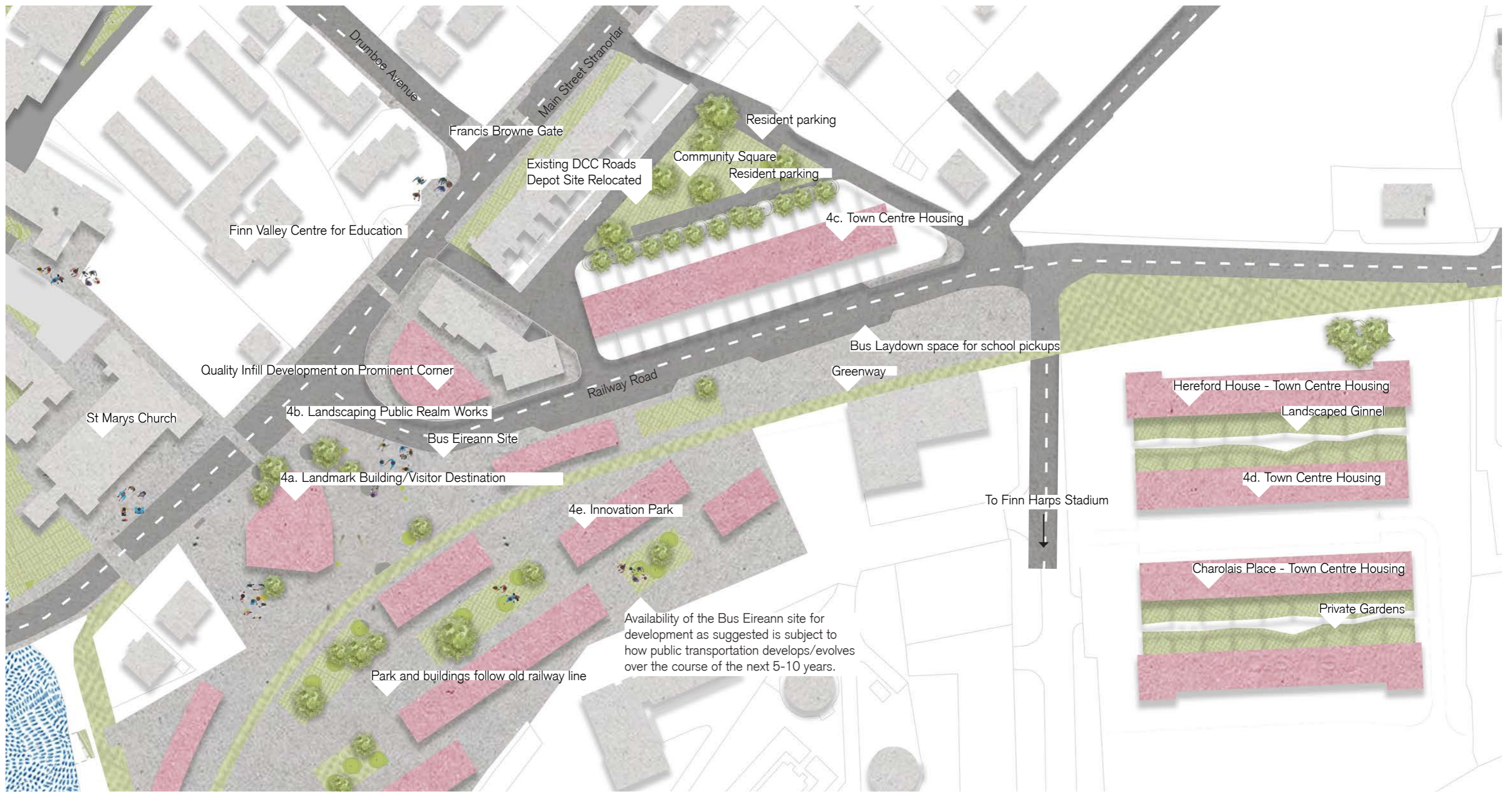
The area behind the landmark building is indicated as an innovation park; a collection of buildings which supporting business innovation. The plan arrangement of the buildings in the innovation park follows that of the historic configuration of the railway station buildings and railway lines that once occupied the site.

Two separate sites on opposite sides of Railway Road are currently used for roads department laydown space and mart activities. These are identified within this plan as future opportunity sites for high density, high quality, residential development opportunities. Developing these sites in this manner lends to improving the character and appearance of the

town centre, creates town centre living opportunities and complements the compact growth initiatives outlined within other parts of the plan. Achieving this aspiration is contingent upon alternative sites being identified on the periphery of the town to which the existing roads and mart uses can be relocated.

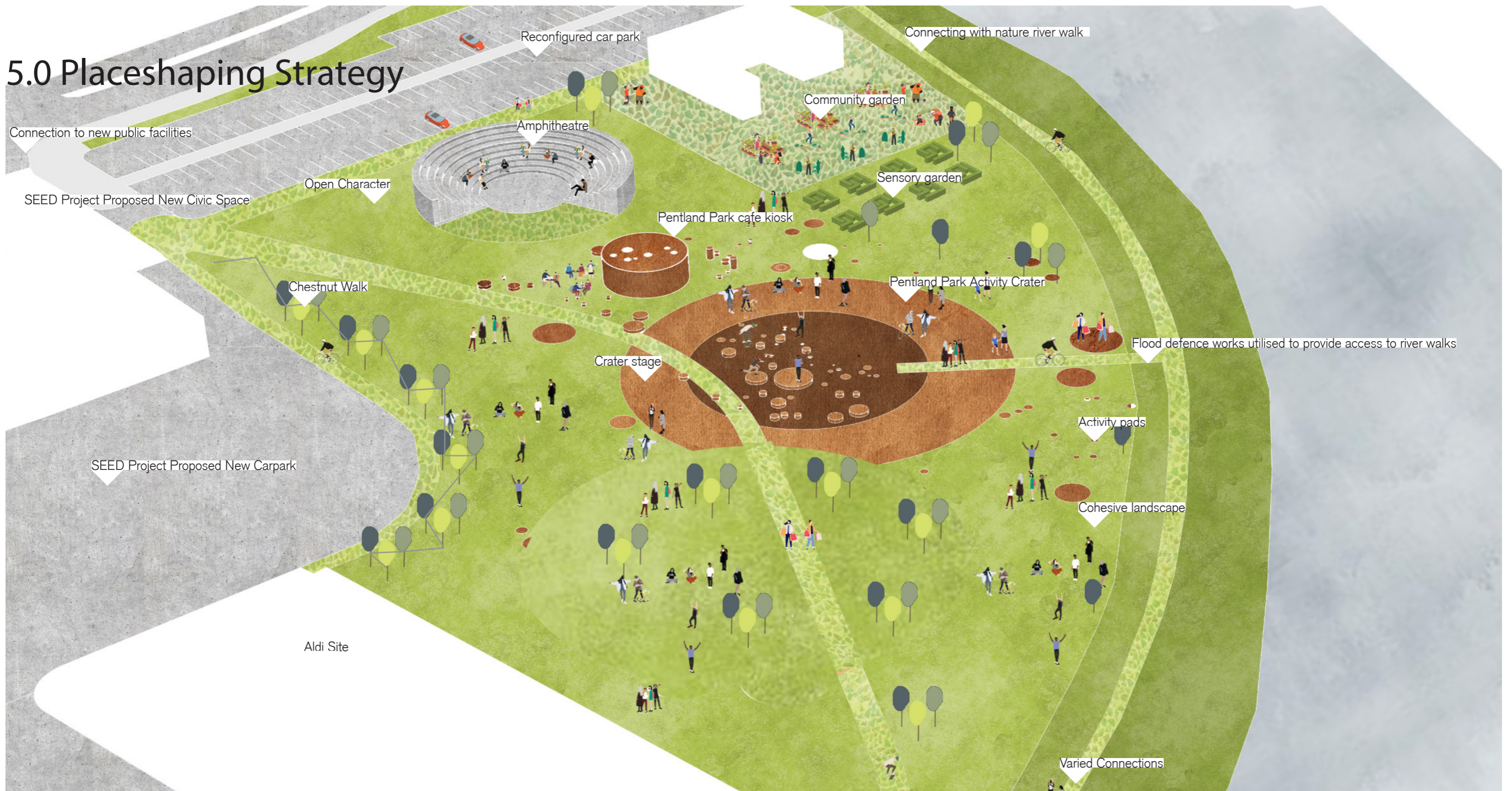
Further project development will be required to ensure compliance with Flood Risk Management Guidelines.







# 5.0 Placeshaping Strategy



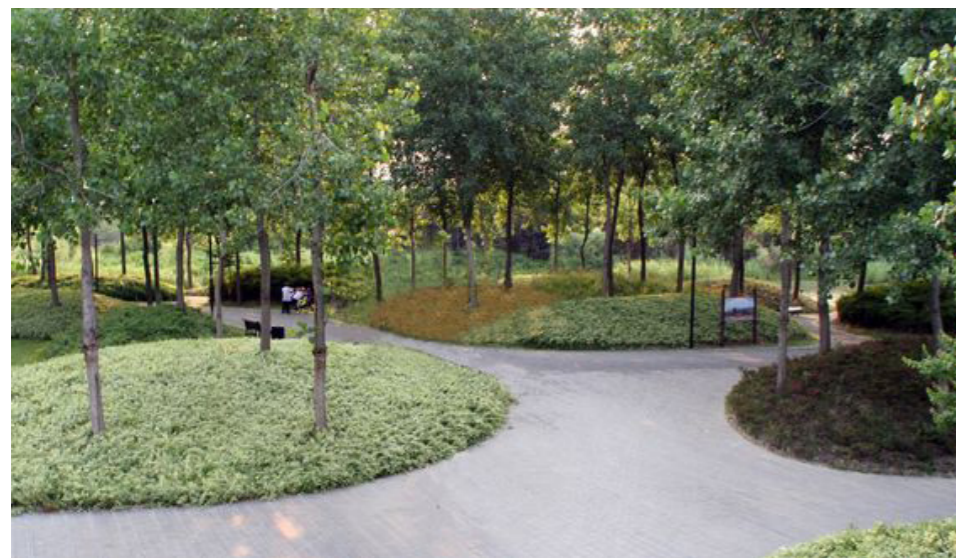
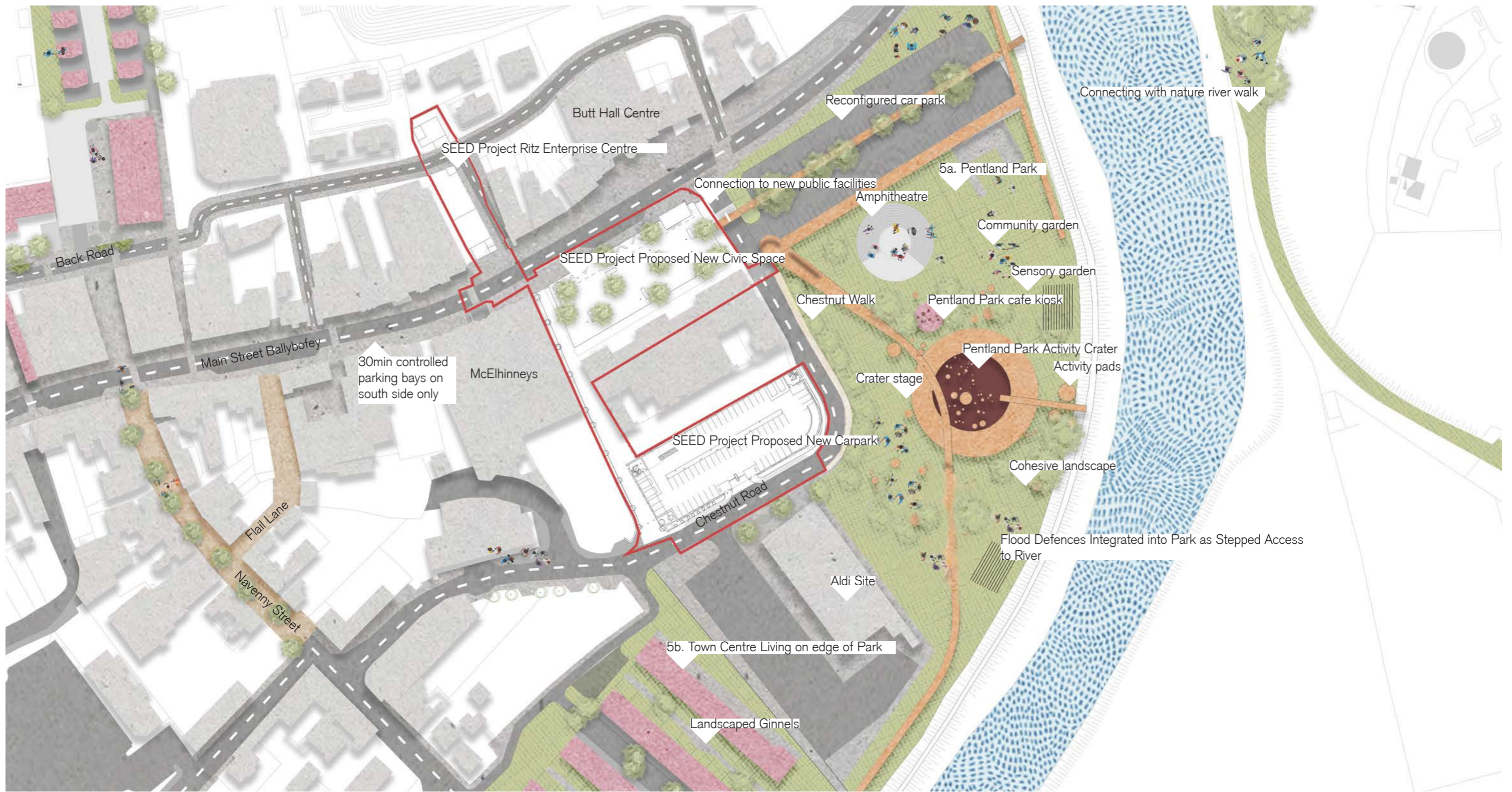
## District 5 Pentland Park

Historic photos of the arrival into Ballybofey from Stranorlar illustrate a foreground of open pastures against a village backdrop. Some of these open fields still exist today. Residents and businesses alike identified the lack of a public park as a significant deficiency. The proposed new 'Pentland Park' is named after Joseph Barclay Pentland. He was born in Ballybofey. He was a geographer, natural scientist, and traveller. The park celebrates the towns' culture and heritage whilst providing flexible spaces for social gatherings and reflection. Located in the heart of the town it is seen as complementary to the existing retail offering and critical to the supporting the rejuvenation of the existing town fabric. An outdoor amphitheatre space nods to the towns' theatre heritage and provides

a forum for curated and ad hoc performances or gatherings. The Pentland Crater on the Moon is named after Joseph Barclay Pentland. Pentland's Lunar Crater is embossed in the surface of the park; a subtle reference and an organisational tool for the various activities, planting, furniture, etc. The existing carpark is re-configured and encompassed into the park to extend the edge of the park to the road. Pentland Park and the civic square of the SEED project are two very different but complimentary public spaces. The park serves to function as a transitional space between the civic space in the core urban area and the riverine landscape. Flood risk and environmental considerations are significant challenges however as a largely water compatible

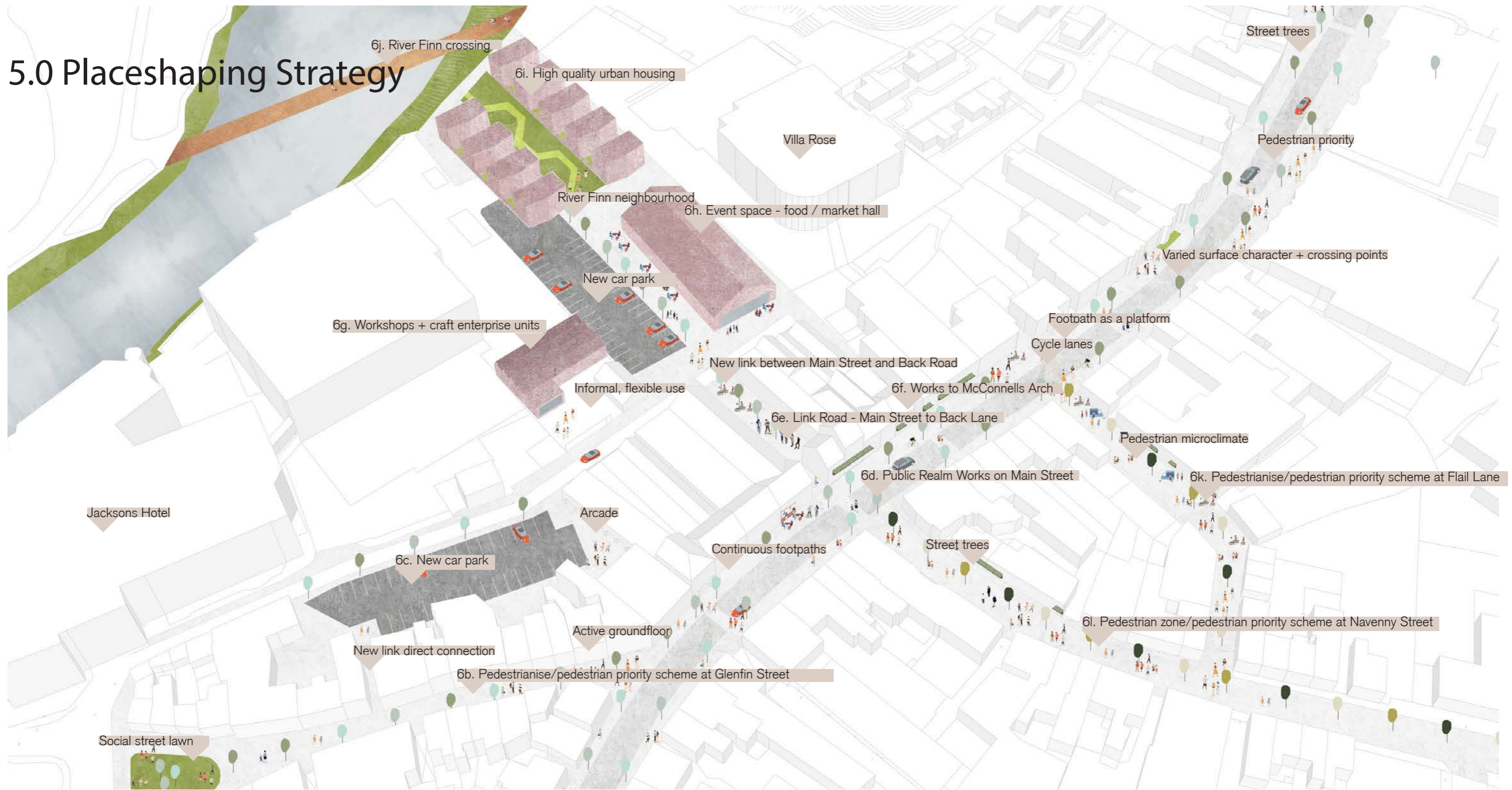
development, future flood mitigation works offer an opportunity to utilise infrastructural works as being complementary to park needs (and vice versa) in possibly aiding amenity offering and access to the river. Future use of the Finn Harps grounds is proposed as a new parkland residential district or new hotel setting which benefits from a south facing aspect overlooking the river, direct connection to the town park and one minute walk to Ballybofey Main Street. Likewise the continued use of the site as a sports and training grounds to meet local needs would also provide for the productive use of the land. Final use of the site will be determined by future market demands and planning requirements including notable challenges as regards flood risk and environmental considerations.







# 5.0 Placeshaping Strategy



## District 6 Ballybofey Village

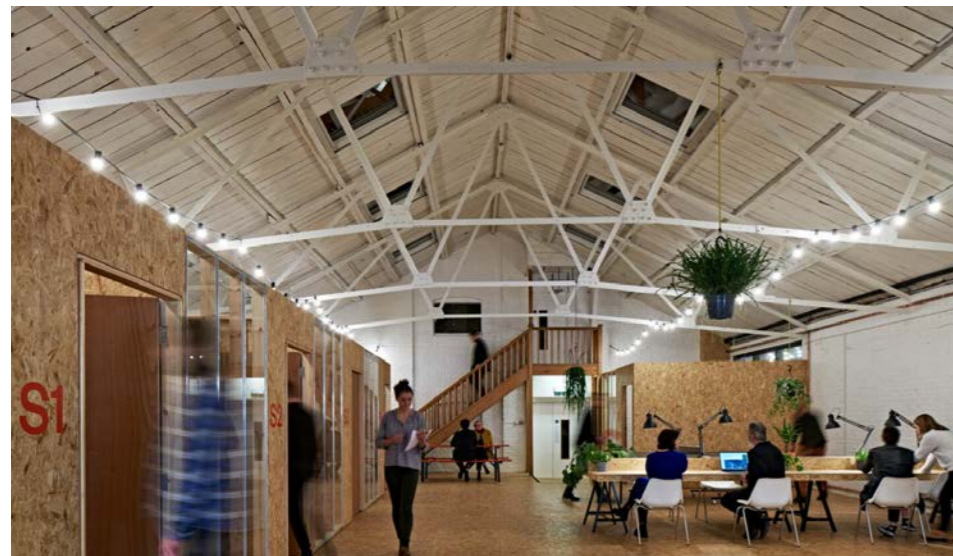
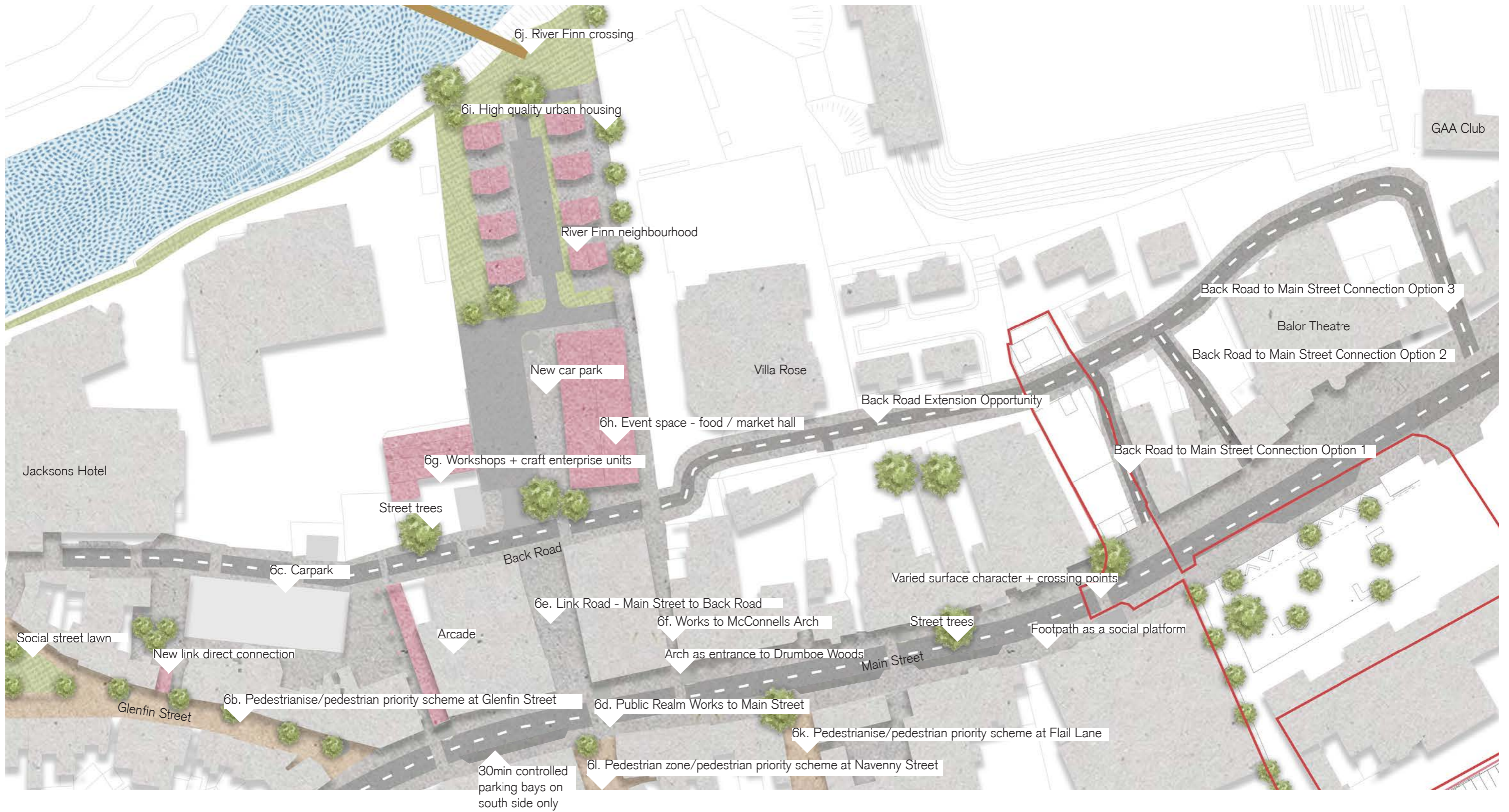
The dense grain of Ballybofey's streets and lanes lends to spatial configuration that could accommodate more vibrancy, atmosphere and character. Central to realising this will be maximising on the opportunity that Ten T offers by removing heavy traffic flows from the town centre and allocating more space for pedestrians.

Maintaining a traffic flow through the town centre is important given the challenges that the two towns face with a reduction in passing traffic. It is proposed that Main Street remains two way but with vehicular carriageways reduced in width and new pedestrian crossing points approximately every 20metres. This changes the character and hierarchy

of the Main Street from a vehicular focused place to one which is pedestrian focused. It is proposed that Navenny Street, Flail Lane and Glenfin Street become pedestrian priority streets. Subject to further project development including Traffic Impact Assessment and detailed consultation, this could involve pedestrianisation with vehicle access for deliveries, emergency vehicles and residents parking only or shared surfaces incorporating more pedestrian space and priority for people. It is also noted that proposed pedestrian priority of Glenfin Street is predicated on the delivery of the long-reserved Strategic Road linking Donegal Road-Glenfin Road (via Mulrines) as delineated in the Seven Strategic Towns Local Area Plan 2018-2024.

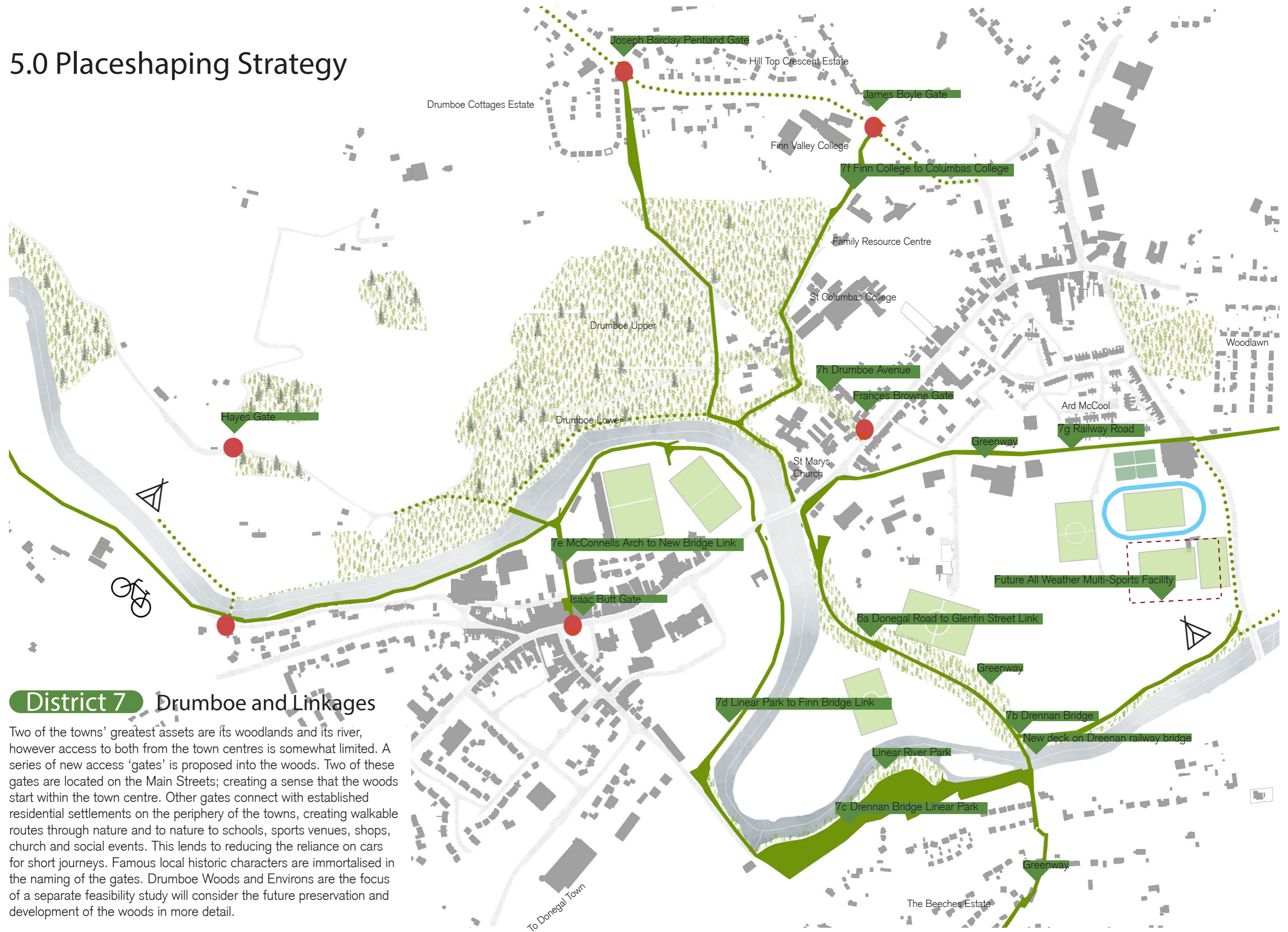
The pitched roofs, gables, back doors and industrial character of Back Road is preserved as much as possible in the new plan. Historic maps show it to be the place of the 'Smithy'. Existing warehouses are to be repurposed for community, craft or light industry use and supplemented by intensification of development for further enterprise units and town centre living. A historical route to the river and the woods is reestablished, thus creating a direct entry point into Drumboe Woods from the town centre. The arched laneway adjacent to McConnells Butchers would be pedestrianised and the archway reimagined as a portal to the woods.







# 5.0 Placeshaping Strategy



## District 7 Drumboe and Linkages

Two of the towns' greatest assets are its woodlands and its river, however access to both from the town centres is somewhat limited. A series of new access 'gates' is proposed into the woods. Two of these gates are located on the Main Streets; creating a sense that the woods start within the town centre. Other gates connect with established residential settlements on the periphery of the towns, creating walkable routes through nature and to nature to schools, sports venues, shops, church and social events. This lends to reducing the reliance on cars for short journeys. Famous local historic characters are immortalised in the naming of the gates. Drumboe Woods and Environs are the focus of a separate feasibility study will consider the future preservation and development of the woods in more detail.







## 6.0 Associated Local Projects



### SEED Project

On the 19th April 2021 Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys announced that €9.8million has been awarded under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) supported by match funding committed by Donegal County Council for the Seed project, regeneration project, in Ballybofey-Stranorlar.

The SEED Project is located central to the regeneration plan that this report sets out however it is commissioned as a separate project.



The investment will deliver transformational regeneration project in the heart of the towns. The project includes the creation of new public spaces and improved pedestrian environments, reuse of vacant buildings including heritage buildings and the development of new enterprise space and large scale economic investment.



The project will deliver the restoration and redevelopment of the former Ritz cinema as a vibrant Enterprise Centre facilitating much needed jobs, the redevelopment of an existing public car park to create a new, high quality, multi-functional civic space with enhanced pedestrian linkages and accessibility, façade enhancements to the Ballybofey Shopping Arcade improving its visual presentation to the new civic space and the development of replacement and additional car parking.



## 6.0 Associated Local Projects



### Finn Harps

On 1st April 2021 the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Catherine Martin TD, and the Minister of State for Sport and the Gaeltacht, Jack Chambers TD, announced a provisional allocation of €3.991m to the FAI under the Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund (LSSIF) for the development of Finn Harps stadium in Donegal.

Finn Harps Football Club play in the Premier Division of the League of Ireland, as of 2020. The club was founded in 1954 and elected to the league in 1969. They play their home matches at Finn Park, in Ballybofey. The club plans to move to a new covered 6,600 all-seater



stadium just across the River Finn in Stranorlar. The proposal would also feature an FAI Regional Development Centre.

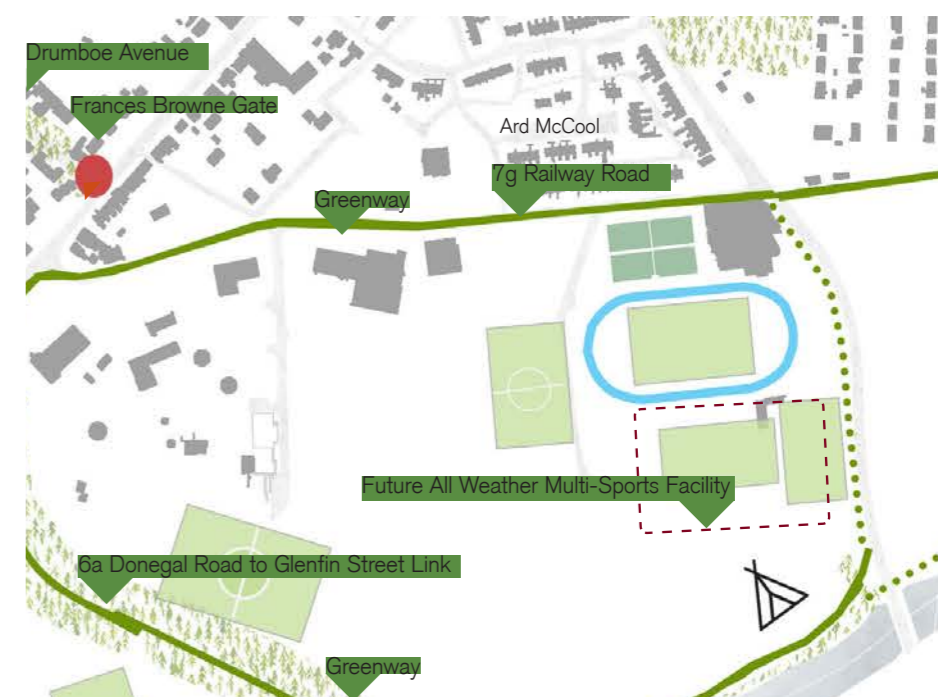
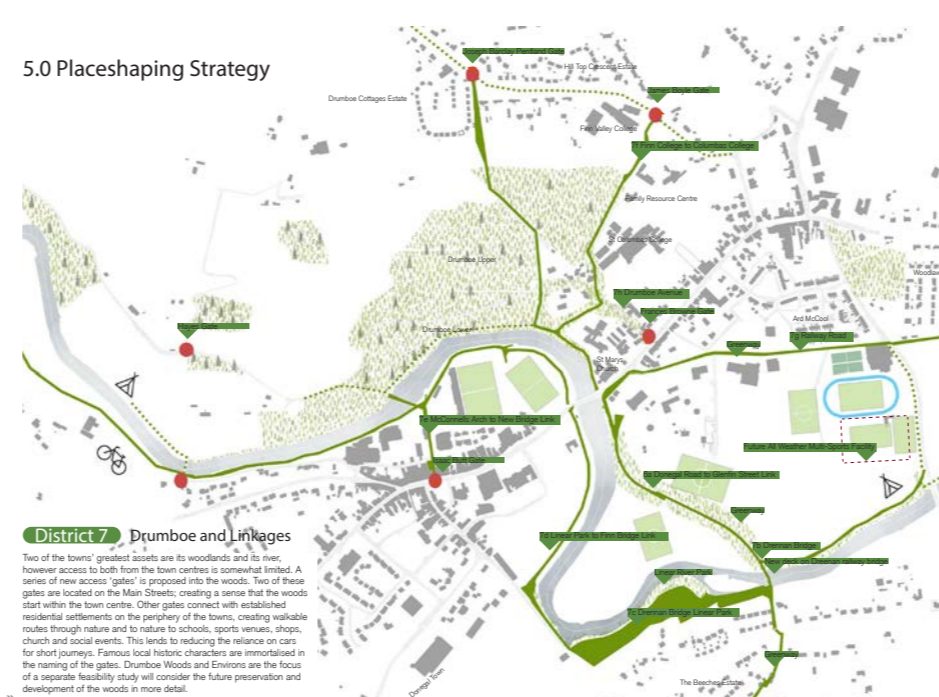
The Finn Harps project funding announcement will assist to to advance the project to construction stage. The site of the future Finn Harps Stadium is located within a wider area of land along Railway Road/ River Finn that has been masterplanned as 'Masterplan Area 1' in the Seven Strategic Towns Local Area Plan 2018-2024 (SSTLAP). The vision set out in the Regeneration Strategy for the adjoining District 4 (Bus Eireann and the Mart) and District 7 (Drumboe and Linkages) sits alongside 'Masterplan Area 1' in the SSTLAP and is complimentary to it including



the extent of recreational uses that it provides for. It is recognized that there may be further potential via collaborative and detailed project development to further integrate the potential of the future Finn Harps Stadium with the vision set out in the Regeneration Strategy for Districts 4 (Bus Eireann depot and the Mart), District 7 (Drumboe and linkages) and also with the wider 'Masterplan Area 1' of the SSTLAP. This may include further more detailed examination of the potential role and scope of the future stadium and additional public realm associated with it. This more detailed assessment however, sits outside the scope of the brief of the Regeneration Strategy'.



# 6.0 Associated Local Projects



## Future All-Weather Multi-Sport Facility

To date funding of €1.5m has been secured under the Shared Spaces Theme of the Peace IV Programme for the development of a future all-weather multi-sport facility in Stranorlar. Donegal County Council will also be providing match funding in respect of this project which will be the first of this scale in the County.

The Peace IV programme is a cross-border initiative, financed through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) designed to support Peace and Reconciliation and to contribute to the promotion of social and economic stability particularly through actions to promote cohesion between communities.

Ongoing work is currently being undertaken by Donegal County Council to deliver the project on lands south of the Finn Valley complex including advanced planning and design.

This project is consistent with the Seven Strategic Towns Local Area Plan 2018-2024, 'Masterplan Area 1: Railway Road/Finn Valley Complex' which identifies the wider lands between Railway Road, Stranorlar and the River Finn as one of two pillars of outdoor/active recreation in the twin towns that provide significant opportunity to expand the portfolio of attractions and facilities to enhance the towns status as a Centre of Excellence for Sport and Recreation.

The development of an all-weather multi-sport facility, south of the Finn Valley complex, has direct linkages to integrate with District 7 of this Regeneration Strategy that envisions the strategic potential for enhanced accessibility to Drumboe Woods, enhanced sporting capacity of the area and further connected linkages through Stranorlar to the River Finn

As this project develops and delivers, options are also being explored to renew the site specific masterplanning of the wider lands between Railway Road and the River Finn as a separate project to this Regeneration Strategy and in recognition of its role as a key pillar in the towns status as a Centre for Sport and Recreation. This approach would complement and reflect the ongoing work led, by BASICC in collaboration with Donegal County Council to prepare a Feasibility Study in respect of the Drumboe Woods and linkages.







# 7.0 Costing/Funding

## District Costings

This summary chart is an extract from a standalone cost report. The purpose of this estimate is to give an Order of Cost for the key cost centres of the proposed masterplan, namely;

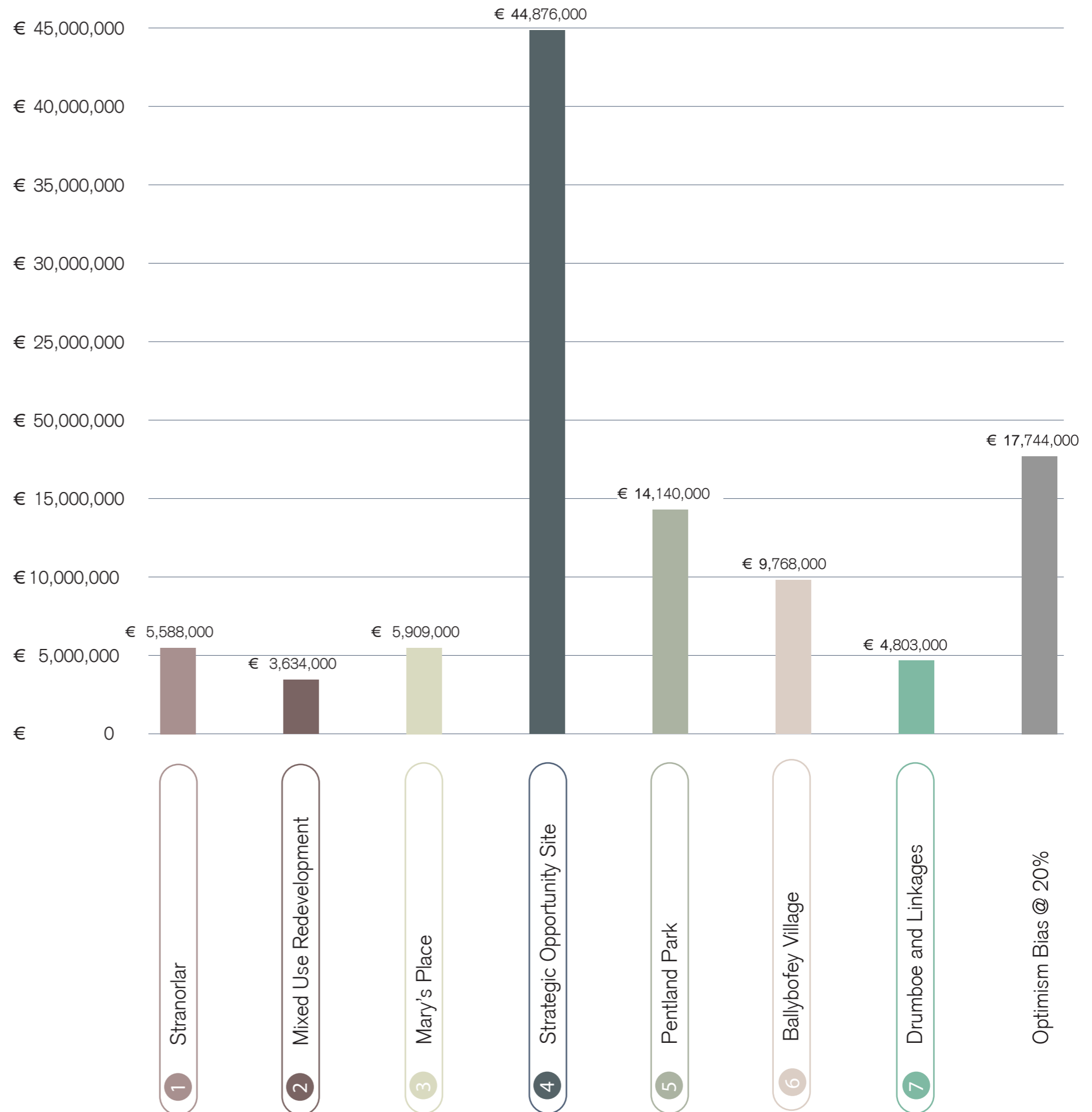
1. Stranorlar Main Street public realm and environs
2. Fire Station and "Diner" building redevelopment
3. Stranorlar Marys Place redevelopment
4. Stranorlar signature project and urban housing
5. Ballybofey Pentland Park and environs
6. Ballybofey public realm redevelopment
7. Ballybofey and Drumboe strategic linkages

The total estimated cost is € 106,462,000 including main contractor preliminaries , OH&P, contingency, design fees, project management cost , VAT and Optimism Bias provision of 20%. The estimate excludes allowance for inflation. Please refer to Section 2 of the associated report for a breakdown of these costs.

### SURVEYOR'S NOTE

The costs detailed in this Order of Cost are based on information outlined in the BALLYbofey Stranorlar Regeneration Strategy & Action Plan issued by Pasparakis Friel Architects, as received 21st September 2021.

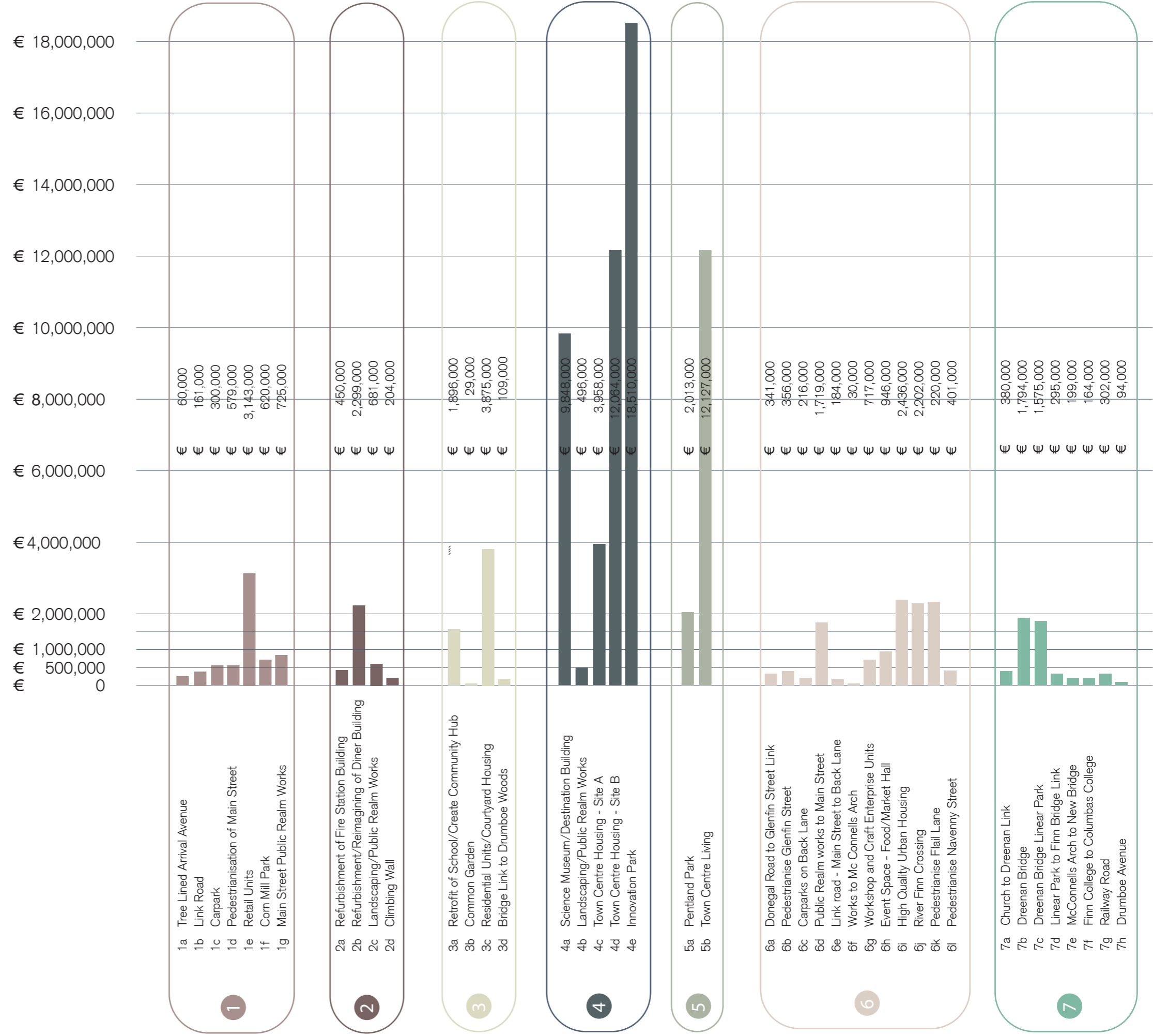
A number of assumptions have been made regarding infrastructure and design. To ascertain more certain costs, detailed design proposals for the new works will be required. See Section 3 of the standalone Sammon report for detailed assumptions.





# Project Costings

This adjacent table provides a summary overview of individual project costs. A further level of detail and breakdown of these costs is contained within the appendix to the standalone Sammon Cost Report.





## Funding Opportunities

The projects identified range in scale from small to large. They present a variety of projects type including restoration, conservation, adaptive reuse, landscaping and standalone new buildings. This variety of project types lend to there being many potential funding avenues available. Possible funding avenues will be rural redevelopment fund, conservation grants, towns and villages alongside exploring opportunities for developing crowd funding initiatives.

A single source of funding is unlikely to be available to facilitate the complete delivery of any of the projects. Realising the larger projects in particular will require various stages of development. Each stage of the project development is likely to require its own mechanism of funding.

Whilst specific uses have been identified for certain buildings alternative uses can be explored. As new funding calls are announced the criteria they outline will likely inform the use and scale of the individual projects take.

The adjacent table outlines some of the potential funding avenues to be explored with the various funding agencies.

## Projects

### 1 Stranorlar

- 1a Tree Lined Arrival Avenue
- 1b Link Road
- 1c Carpark
- 1d Pedestrianisation of Main Street
- 1e Retail Units
- 1f Corn Mill Park
- 1g Main Street Public Realm Works

### 2 Mixed Use Redevelopment

- 2a Refurbishment of Fire Station Building
- 2b Refurbishment/Reimagining of The Diner Building
- 2c Landscaping/Public Realm Works
- 2d Climbing Wall

### 3 Mary's Place

- 3a Deep Retrofit of Existing School Building/Create Community Hub
- 3b Common Garden
- 3c Residential Units/Courtyard Housing
- 3d Bridge Link to Drumboe Woods

### 4 Strategic Opportunity Site

- 4a Science Museum/Destination Building
- 4b Landscaping/Public Realm Works
- 4c Town Centre Housing - Site A
- 4d Town Centre Housing - Site B
- 4e Innovation Park

### 5 Pentland Park

- 5a Pentland Park
- 5b Town Centre Living

### 6 Ballybofey Village

- 6a Donegal Road to Glenfin Street Link
- 6b Pedestrianise Glenfin Street
- 6c Carparks on Back Lane
- 6d Public Realm works to Main Street
- 6e Link road - Main Street to Back Lane
- 6f Works to Mc Connells Arch
- 6g Workshop and Craft Enterprise Units
- 6h Event Space - Food/Market Hall
- 6i High Quality Urban Housing
- 6j River Finn Crossing
- 6k Pedestrianise Flail Lane
- 6l Pedestrianise Navenny Street

### 7 Drumboe and Linkages

- 7a Church to Dreenan Link
- 7b Dreenan Bridge
- 7c Dreenan Bridge Linear Park
- 7d Linear Park to Finn Bridge Link
- 7e McConnells Arch to New Bridge
- 7f Finn College to Columbas College
- 7g Railway Road
- 7h Drumboe Avenue

## Cost

## Funding Sources

## Funding Lead

€ 5,588,000

- € 60,000 The Streetscape Enhancement Initiative
- € 161,000 NTA/DCC Roads/RRDF
- € 300,000 NTA/DCC Roads/RRDF
- € 579,000 NTA/DCC Roads/RRDF
- € 3,143,000 Local Authority/ Private Developer or Operator
- € 620,000 Town and Village Renewable Scheme/ORIS
- € 725,000 RRDF

BASICC. DCC Roads  
DCC Roads  
DCC Regen  
DCC Regen/Roads  
BASICC. DCC Regen  
BASICC. DCC Roads  
DCC Roads

€ 3,634,000

- € 450,000 RRDF/Failte Ireland/LEADER
- € 2,299,000 DCC Housing/Private Developer/SVP
- € 681,000 RRDF/Failte Ireland/LEADER
- € 204,000 Sport Ireland/RRDF

DCC Regen/Econ. Dev  
DCC Regen/Econ. Dev/Housing  
DCC Regen/Community/Econ. Dev  
DCC Regen/Community/Recreation

€ 5,909,000

- € 1,896,000 RRDF/ TVRS/ IFI/ Peace Plus
- € 29,000 CLÁR
- € 3,875,000 DCC Housing/Private Developer/SVP
- € 109,000 LEADER/ORIS/Peace Plus

BASICC. DCC Community/Regen  
BASICC. DCC Community/Regen  
BASICC. DCC Community/Housing  
BASICC. DCC Community/Recreation

€ 44,876,000

- € 9,848,000 RRDF/Failte Ireland Platform for Growth
- € 496,000 RRDF/Failte Ireland Platform for Growth
- € 3,958,000 DCC Housing/Private Developer
- € 12,064,000 DCC Housing/ Private Developer
- € 18,510,000 IFI/RRDF

DCC Cultural  
DCC Regen/Roads  
DCC Regen/Econ. Dev/Housing  
DCC Regen/Econ. Dev/Housing  
DCC Regen/Econ. Dev/Enterprise Irl.

€ 14,140,000

- € 2,013,000 RRDF/ TVRS
- € 12,127,000 DCC Housing/ Private Developer

DCC Regen/Recreation/Cultural  
DCC Regen/Econ. Dev/Housing

€ 9,768,000

- € 341,000 NTA/DCC Roads/RRDF
- € 356,000 NTA/DCC Roads/RRDF
- € 216,000 NTA/DCC Roads/RRDF
- € 1,719,000 NTA/DCC Roads/RRDF
- € 184,000 NTA/DCC Roads/RRDF
- € 30,000
- € 717,000 RRDF/ LEADER
- € 946,000
- € 2,436,000 DCC Housing/Private Developer
- € 2,202,000 NTA/DCC Roads/RRDF
- € 220,000 NTA/DCC Roads/RRDF
- € 401,000 NTA/DCC Roads/RRDF

DCC Roads  
DCC Roads  
DCC Regen/Roads/Econ. Dev  
DCC Regen/Roads  
DCC Regen/Roads/Econ. Dev  
BASICC/DCC Regen/Recreation  
DCC Regen/Econ. Dev/BASICC  
DCC Regen/Econ. Dev/BASICC  
DCC Regen/Econ. Dev/Housing  
DCC Regen/Recreation  
DCC Regen/Roads/Econ. Dev  
DCC Regen/Roads/Econ. Dev

€ 4,803,000

- € 380,000 NTA/DCC Roads/RRDF/ORIS
- € 1,794,000 NTA/DCC Roads/RRDF/ORIS
- € 1,575,000 NTA/DCC Roads/RRDF/ORIS
- € 295,000 NTA/DCC Roads/RRDF/ORIS
- € 199,000 NTA/DCC Roads/RRDF/ORIS
- € 164,000 NTA/DCC Roads/RRDF/ORIS
- € 302,000 NTA/DCC Roads/RRDF/ORIS
- € 94,000 NTA/DCC Roads/RRDF/ORIS

BASICC. DCC Regen/Recreation  
BASICC. DCC Regen/Recr./Roads  
BASICC. DCC Regen/Recreation  
BASICC. DCC Regen/Recreation  
BASICC. DCC Regen/Recreation  
BASICC. DCC Regen/Recreation  
BASICC. DCC Regen/Recr./Roads  
BASICC. DCC Regen/Recr./Roads















# 8.0 Programme/Action Plan

## Realising the Plan

Realising an ambitious masterplan such as this will require a coordinated approach between the community and the local authority. This initial project programme outlines a spread of projects over a fifteen period. These have been programmed relative to assumed priorities and dependencies, i.e. the completion of the Ten T project. The spread of projects is aimed at facilitating a concentrated campaign of regeneration over an extended period of time.

Projects are listed with indicative timescales within which they could potentially be completed. The programme is live. Prioritisation of projects, availability of funding, and state of the economy at any one time will determine what projects happen, and when.

A summary of the proposed programme is as follows:

### 1. 2040 Masterplan Launch Event

A twenty year plan can be both exciting and daunting. We need to communicate the ambition and establish its benefits to place it securely in the hearts and minds of the community; “a collective dream...and creating a scenario that everyone can understand and see is desirable. Then they will help you make it happen.” Marking the start of the initiative with events such as a street party both engenders community spirit and reinforces the ethos of supporting local businesses.

### 2. Communicate Biannual Updates To Community

Maintaining momentum and community support over an extended period of time relies on clear and regular communication. Success will require persistence and determination of the whole community. Regular updates will garner support for the projects and ensure a smooth delivery.

### 3. Establish Projects Team/Report Biannually

The client group will require a projects team with ‘project champions’ aligned to, and with responsibility for, individual projects. Applying a structure with a minimum of biannual reporting facilitates that momentum is maintained and there is cross communication between the various projects.

### 4. Appoint A Town Architect/Projects Administrator

Maintaining quality and a coherent holistic vision is crucial. The administrative demands will be significant. The ability to deliver extensively on the basis of voluntary efforts alone is unrealistic. Appointment of a Town Architect/Projects Administrator to drive the various projects forward is a necessity.

### 5. Deliver Quick Wins Programme Of Works

Start today. Demonstrate immediate benefits and result to the community. Projects such as the window box initiative can create visual delight and kick start a biodiversity campaign in the town centre.

### 6. Foster Relationships + Self Educate

Strengthen and expand relationship between DCC personnel, BASICC, local community and consultants. Experiment with how projects can be developed for mutual benefit. Develop a series of talks/workshops from experts in the field to facilitate upskilling of locals to support community endeavours, i.e. contractors and conservation skills in support of preserving heritage buildings and installing heritage shopfronts.

### 7. Test Ideas Through Pilot Projects

Consider weekend closure of Glenfin Street/Navenny Street./Flail Lane. Combine this with a festival. Test alternative opening hours of shops. In doing this we can test the viability and benefit of a more pedestrian focused town centre. Review shop opening hours to test whether evening shopping could attract more business/visitors.

### 8. Commission Marketing Campaign

How can we best promote Ballybofey and Stranorlar’s offering? How can we make town centre living more desirable? What is the story we are trying to tell? Who are we targeting? How can we target them? Establishing this via an intelligent and innovative marketing and branding strategy will pay dividends in attracting people and businesses to the towns.

### 9. Negotiate Land Ownerships/Transfers

Establish focused study of work (and personnel to lead it) which reviews ownership of key development sites, derelict sites, contested sites. Liaise with DCC on opportunities to fund, purchase or CPO. Consider land transfer options or opportunities to obtain key portions or slivers of land on basis of value added through intervention.

### 10. Agree Coordinated Approach To Address Vacancy

Commission a ‘town centre health check’ to create a detailed analysis and database of existing retail offering and potential gaps/opportunities in the town or region. Identify premises that provide space conducive to today’s retail needs. Consider rezoning others for other uses. Support ‘adaptive reuse’ of existing buildings over new build.

### 11. Review Festivals Schedule And Identify Gaps

Reinforce the cultural and social fabric of the town by creating a spread of events throughout the year in conjunction with strengthening existing events and festivals.

### 12. Embed Masterplan Principles Into LAP 2025-2031

Realisation of many of the masterplan proposals is reliant of their acceptance into a statutory plan. Work with DCC to embed proposals into the Local Area Plan.



# Projects Programme

2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025 2026 2027 2028 2029 2030 2031 2032 2033 2034 2035 2036 2037 2038 2039 2040

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- 1b Link Road
- 1c Carpark
- 1d Pedestrianisation of Main Street
- 1e Retail Units
- 1f Corn Mill Park
- 1g Main Street Public Realm Works

## 2 Mixed Use Redevelopment

- 2a Refurbishment of Fire Station Building
- 2b Refurbishment/Reimagining of The Diner Building
- 2c Landscaping/Public Realm Works
- 2d Climbing Wall

## 3 Mary's Place (Subject to Realisation of Flood Defences)

- 3a Deep Retrofit of Existing School Building/Create Community Hub
- 3b Common Garden
- 3c Residential Units/Courtyard Housing
- 3d Bridge Link to Drumboe Woods

## 4 Strategic Opportunity Site

- 4a Landmark/ Visitor Destination Building
- 4b Landscaping/Public Realm Works
- 4c Town Centre Housing - Site A
- 4d Town Centre Housing - Site B  
Innovation Park

## 5 Pentland Park

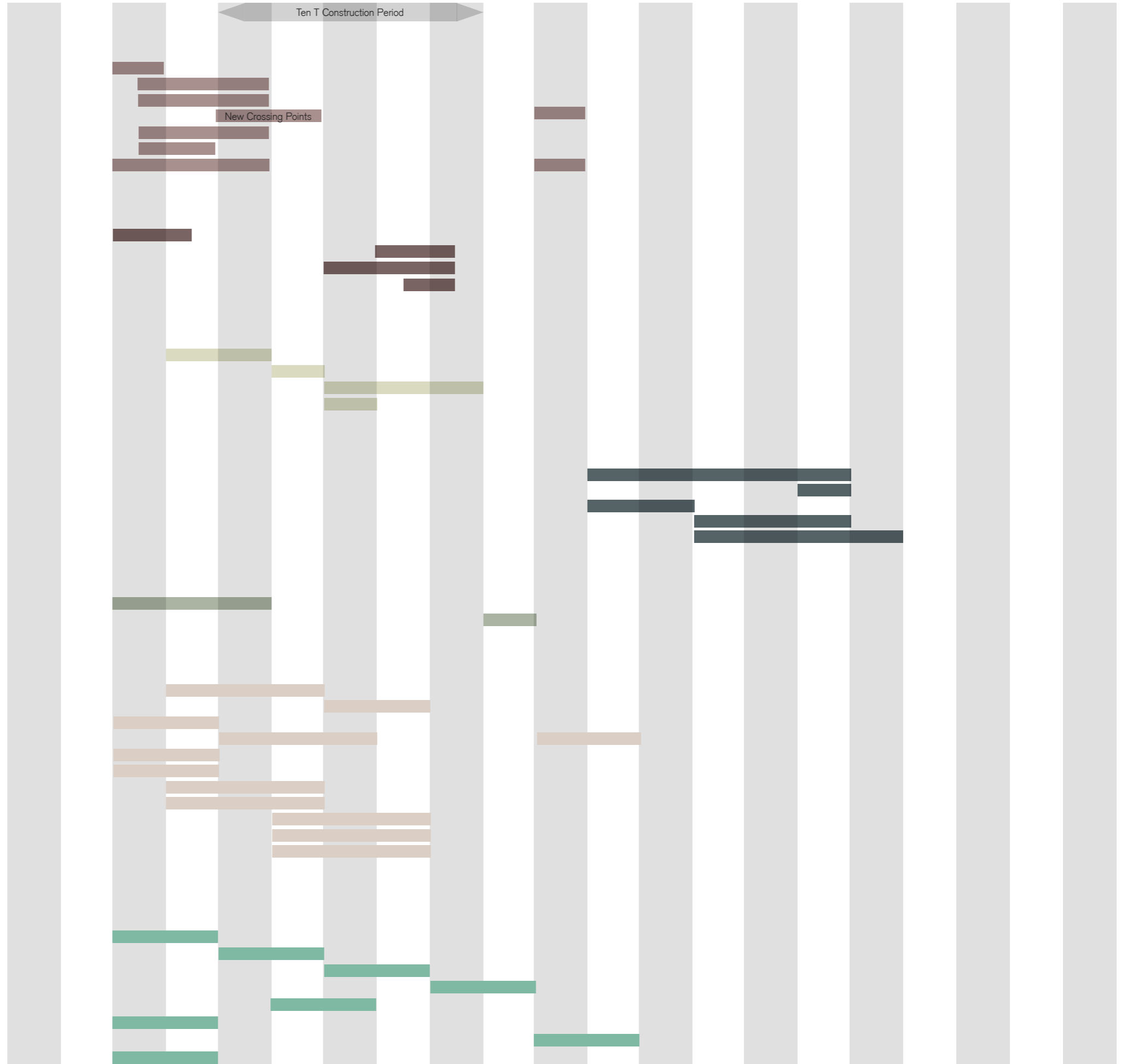
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