

ROSCREA TOWN CENTRE FIRST DRAFT REPORT

MAY 2023



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary County Council



Lár Bailte ar dTús
Town Centre First



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



PROJECT TEAM:

 mahony pike

Urban Design / Architecture



Urban Design / Placemaking / Engineering








Public Engagement / Planning



Project Management / Quantity Surveying

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Message from the Town Champion

It's a nice feeling to be helping create a little piece of history, and that's precisely what is happening in Roscrea through the Town Centre First Masterplan.

Roscrea was amongst just twenty-six towns across Ireland and the only town in Tipperary to be selected in February 2022 to participate in Ireland's inaugural nationwide Town Centre First policy initiative.

A Town Team was formed in January 2023 and committed itself to delivering a town centre plan. The new plan hopes to capitalise on the momentum and success generated by the Roscrea Enhancement Committee over the past decade. I was delighted to be a part of that committee and hope to build on what was achieved and what was learned from that experience to help benefit the new plan and the new Town Team.

Even though it is still in its infancy, the Town Team has demonstrated lots of energy and leadership. A primary goal for the Town Team was to ensure that we had as much public consultation and stakeholder engagement as possible as we sought to navigate our way through the strategic planning process. This was achieved and through the support of the public engagement forums, the Local Authority and the Town Team members, we are confident that we have helped deliver a plan that will revitalise, regenerate, reenergise and breathe new life into our town centre.

Several exciting projects have been identified for immediate review and, if delivered upon, will undoubtedly help deliver on the vision

for Roscrea that the Town Team, with the community's support, have captured in this plan. While the main projects in the plan have a town centre focus, the Town Team is also positioning itself to have the agility and flexibility to initiate or support any project that we feel will benefit the town and its environs.

This new plan is ambitious, it is aspirational and with hard work and commitment it is achievable. What I believe sets it apart from any other plan for the town over the past quarter of a century or more is that the Town Team has insisted that only projects with a real chance of obtaining funding be included as part of the new plan. Our new Town Team is not interested in raising false hopes. We are motivated on delivering achievable and sustainable projects for the benefit and advancement of Roscrea.

With the support of the local community and in collaboration with stakeholders such as Tipperary County Council, the OPW, and the public and private sector we know we can deliver.

Ni neart go cur le cheile.

Brian Mac An Rí
Bealtaine 2023

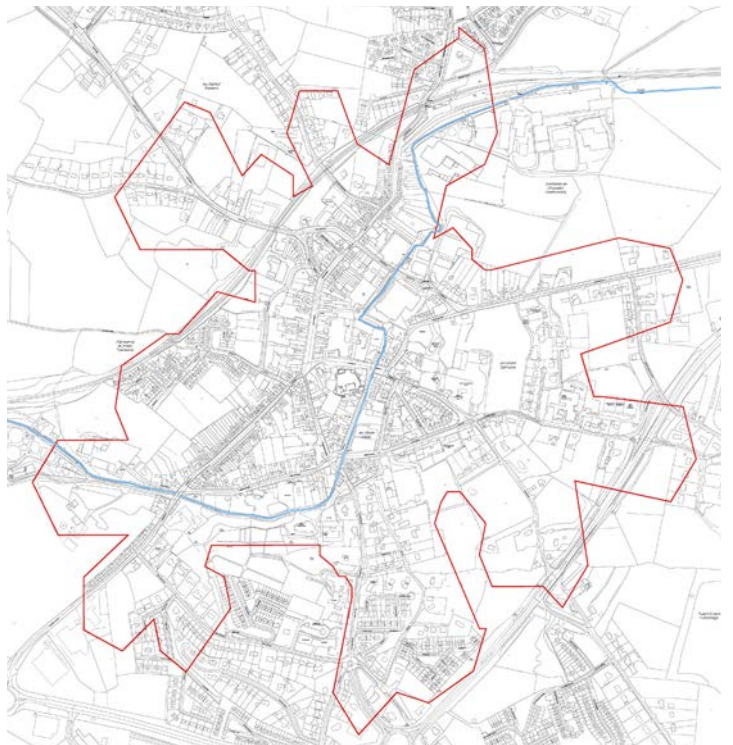


Introduction

This Town Centre First Masterplan aims to map out future development and a vision for Roscrea's future. It has a focus on tackling dereliction and vacant properties, and making the town centre a more attractive place to live, work, socialise and run a business. This initiative aims to help re-imagine and revitalise rural communities as part of the National Town Centre First Policy.

The design team have been working with the Town Team and the Council's Town Regeneration Officer to establish an emerging vision for Roscrea Town Centre and a list of potential projects. The design team have also undertaken a number of online and in-person consultations with the public to better understand the issues on the ground.

The study area for this project is defined as by a 10-minute walking distance from the town centre, illustrated below.



Map of Roscrea with Study Area Outlined

01 | Town Centre First Vision



Historic Image of Market Square, Roscrea

The sustained regeneration of Roscrea demands a strong vision which provides clear direction towards a future of possibilities. When devising a vision, it is useful to establish what winning look like. For the locals, this is likely to mean Roscrea being:

- A safer, more prosperous town.
- A great place to live and bring up a family.
- A place where there is life in the evening.
- A town where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

For Tipperary County Council, success is likely to mean:

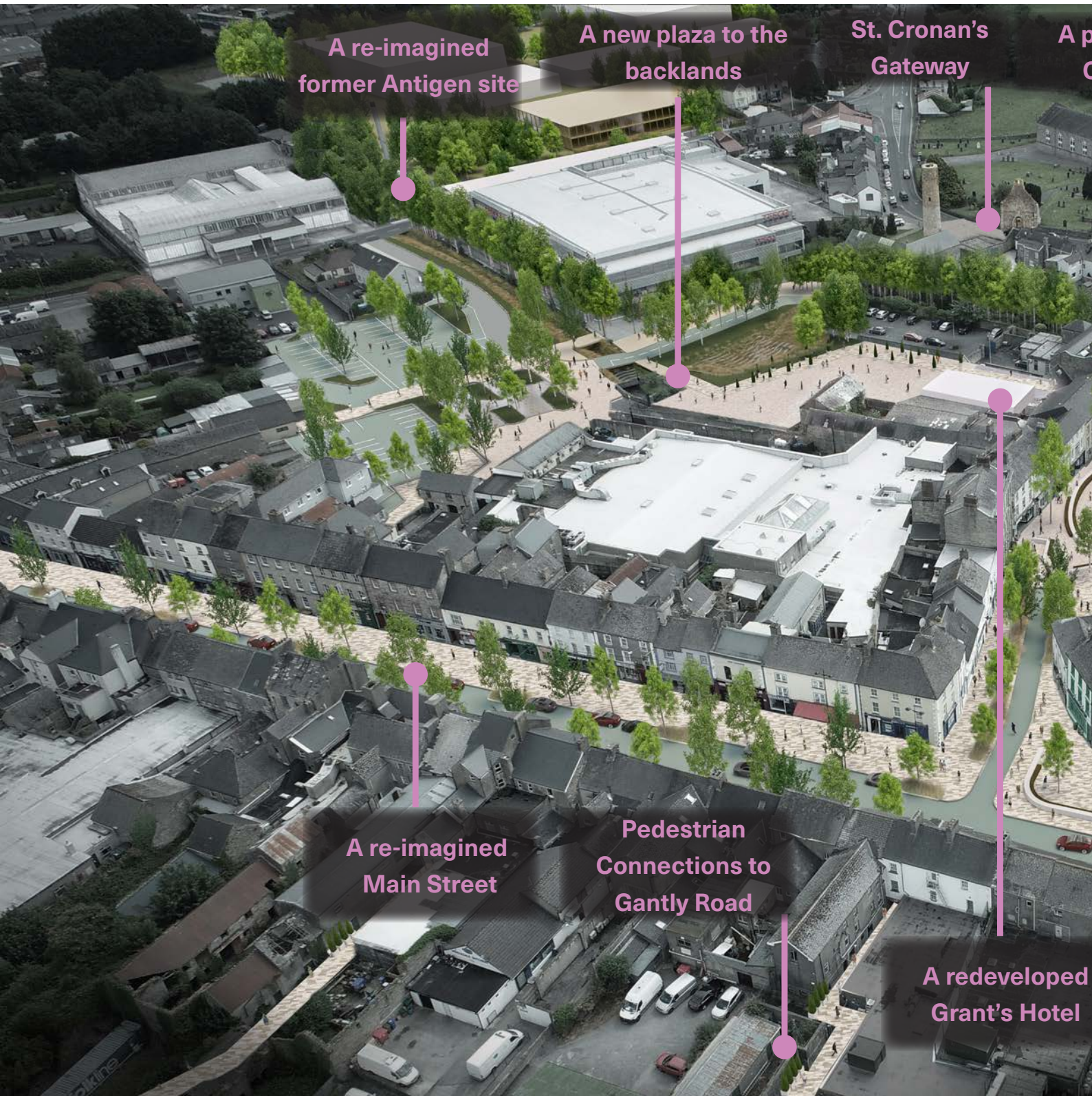
- Having a community partner which can take advantage of the available funding opportunities.
- Roscrea becoming a more vibrant heritage town, attractive to commuters.

An appropriate Vision is one which accomplishes these various definitions of winning. It is also one which is reasonably ambitious without falling into the trap of being wildly ambitious. Having a wildly ambitious vision is likely to lead to disappointment as it becomes apparent that the unrealistic aspiration will not be realised. Accordingly, our suggested vision is:

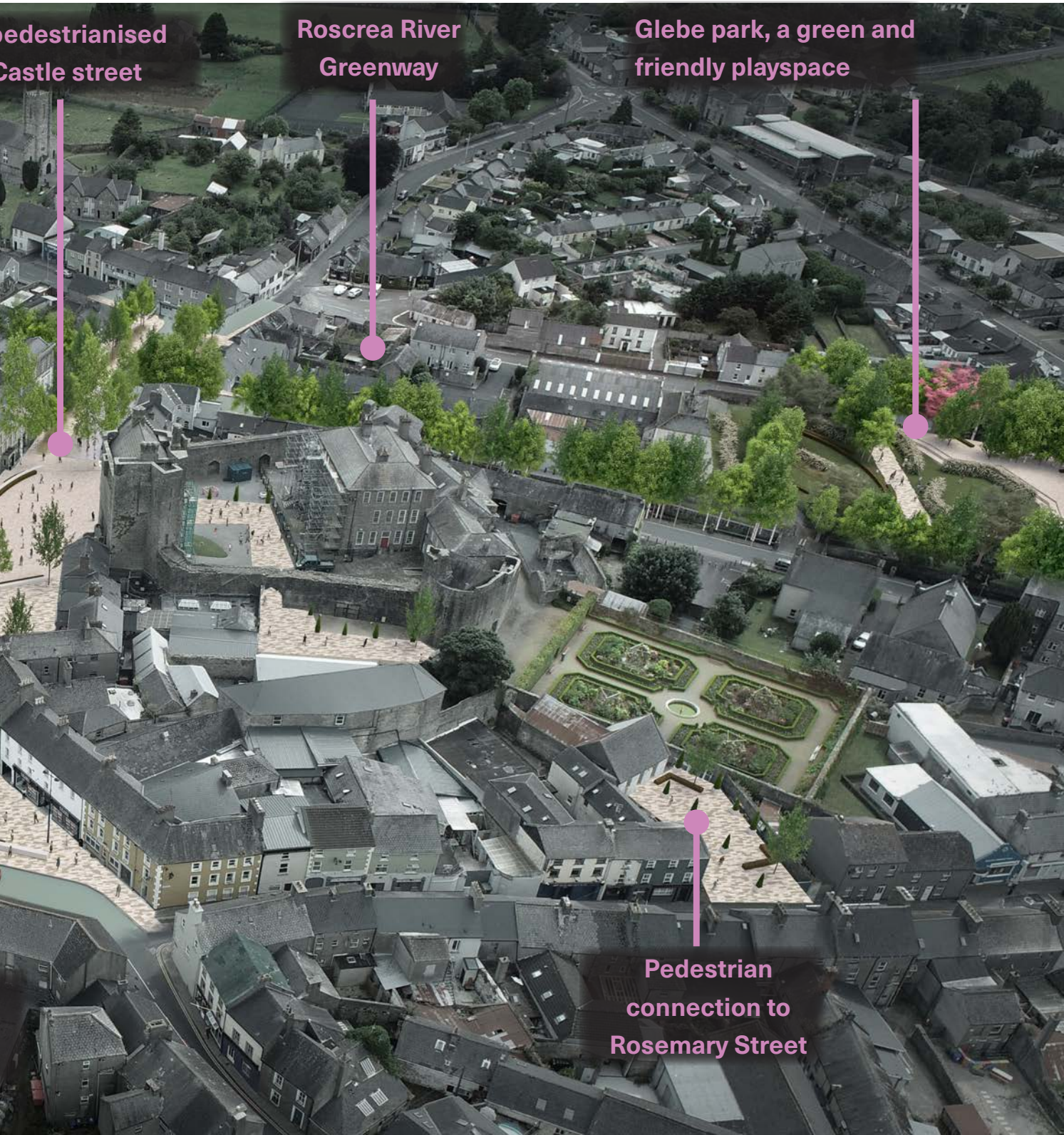
ROSCREA TOWN CENTRE FIRST VISION

A unified Roscrea using its strengths (people, buildings, infrastructure, natural environment) to create a vibrant, caring and prosperous market town.





Artist's impression of a future aerial view of Roscrea



Pedestrianised
Castle street

Roscrea River
Greenway

Glebe park, a green and
friendly playspace

Pedestrian
connection to
Rosemary Street

A DAY IN THE NEW ROSCREA



Take a stroll to the butchers on Main Street



Let the kids play in Rosemary Square, whilst you have a break

4 no. Artist's impressions of future views of Roscrea



Meet up with friends at Castle Street Market



Walk along the river greenway and grab a coffee in the cafe

1.2 Policy Background & Sustainable Development Goals

A full overview of the national, regional and local policy that sets the foundations of this plan is included in Appendix C. It shows the policy alignment under the following policy documents, plans and funding mechanisms:

- National Planning Framework: Ireland 2040
- National Development Plan 2021-2030
- Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025
- Town Centre First: A Policy Approach for Irish Towns 2022
- Making Remote Work: National Remote Working Strategy 2021
- Climate Action Plan 2021: Securing Our Future
- The Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024
- Future Jobs Ireland 2019: Preparing Now for Tomorrow's Economy
- Ireland National Skills Strategy 2025
- Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028
- Draft Roscrea Local Area Plan 2023-2029
- Rural Regeneration And Development Fund
- Croí Cónaithe
- Town and Village Renewal Scheme
- LEADER Community Led Local Development

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



The UN Sustainable Development Goals

TEXT TO FOLLOW IN NEXT ISSUE

02 | Understanding the Place

2.2 Roscrea Overview

The town of Roscrea had historical significance from ancient times due to its position along one of the five ancient roadways of Ireland, the Slíge Dhála. In the 7th century, St. Cronan founded a monastery in Roscrea and national artefacts like the Roscrea Brooch and Book of Dimma were later produced here. In the 12th century a cathedral church was built in Roscrea, of which a carved gable doorway remains, a round tower and a high cross. In 1213 Roscrea castle was built, a Norman fortification, Roscrea went under the control of the Butler family until the early 18th century. Damer House was built in 1720, while Roscrea prospered as a market-town. Like many small Irish towns, Roscrea was decimated by the Famine and subsequent emigration. Its population in 1841 was 9,000, in 2016 it was recorded as 5,446.

Roscrea features significant topography, with Main street raised on an elevation of approximately 7m to the River. The River has untapped potential for the town, with limited stretches opened up for visibility and poor walking or seating options to the river side.



The Mall, Roscrea

The town is currently suffering from substantial vacancy and dereliction. Many properties such as the Antigen Factory, Sacred Heart Convent or Grant's Hotel, are visibly derelict and have remained substantially empty since the Economic recession of 2008.

The Local Area Plan 2023-2029 notes that in 2022 the primary source of employment in Roscrea is manufacturing industries at c. 475, followed by professional services at c.425. There are a number of serviced business parks in Roscrea (Roscrea Business and innovation park in Benamore and the Parkmore industrial estate) and larger employers in meat processing, food production, nursing homes, retail etc.

The town has significant space dedicated to cars currently, with wide roads banked by perpendicular parking and narrow footpaths. Our analysis identifies c.79% of available public space is given to vehicular circulation and parking. Off-street carparking is generally underused currently, with drivers favouring on-street parking. Currently the most popular form of public transport is by bus, with four NTA Local Link services and two private commuter bus services. Roscrea rail station is currently underused, with two daily return depatures on the Limerick to Ballybrophy line.

The urban core has a lack of urban greening, with few street trees and planters in place. For green amenities there is currently the Damer House gardens, which has limited opening times, and the Glebe Park, a public park with playground. There is also a playground in front of one of the large supermarkets.

2.3 Progress to Date

A number of significant plans have been prepared by both the community and Local Authority. These include:

- A Town-Centre Health Check was carried out in 2012 and showed a vacancy rate of 10.6%. In a 2018 Health Check this had increased to 13%.
- The 2013 Town Centre Enhancement Plan featured extensive analysis of the town and a number of rounds of public and stakeholder workshops. It recommended 7 initiatives and 12 key projects, a number of which have been carried forward into this plan.
- Age-Friendly Roscrea carried out a number of initiatives including walkability studies of 11 routes and in 2018 commissioned a needs analysis report for the elderly of Roscrea.
- The Roscrea Community Action Plan 2016-2019 was prepared in 2015. It recommended 131 actions under the themes of Environment and Security, Community Wellbeing – Youth and Families, Enterprise, Training and Employment and Corporate Structure.
- A signage and way-finding plan was prepared for Roscrea in 2016 and 12 wayfinding signs have been successfully erected across the town.
- A 2017 Roscrea Travel and Transport plan was carried out which carried out parking surveys that demonstrated an overprovision of carparking in the town and that the vast majority of on-street parking events were for less than one hour.
- The Gantly Street masterplan was prepared in 2022. It proposed a number of residential, road and public realm improvements to transform Gantly Road to an urban street. In 2023 a national competition for age-friendly housing was held for a plot on Gantly Street.

dba

PLACEMARQUE+

A Signage and Way-finding plan for Roscrea

23rd December 2016



Prepared for



Cover of Roscrea Signage & Way-finding Plan

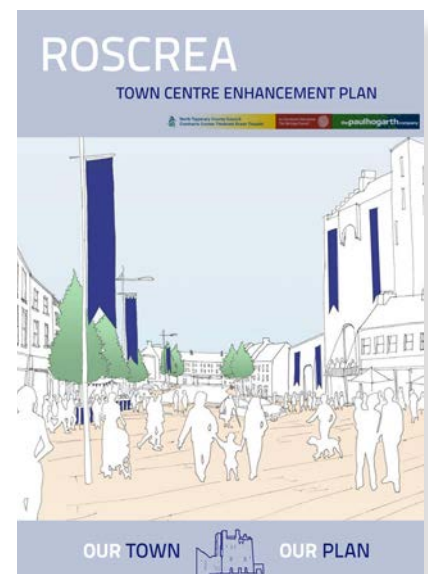


Age Friendly Roscrea

Built environment and public places

*Lets make Roscrea
a great place to live and grow old*

Cover of Age Friendly Roscrea Built Environment and public places plan



Cover of Roscrea Town Enhancement Plan

2.4 Public Consultation Statement

The consultation and engagement phase to inform the development of the Town Centre First (TCF) Masterplan took place over several weeks in March 2023. The engagement methods were selected to encourage a wide participation amongst Roscrea's business and resident communities.

A mix of in-person, virtual events, focus group sessions with key groups, semi-structured interviews with local retailers, and online community and business surveys were undertaken during this time. In total, approximately 335 to 465 individuals participated in the consultation process, which equals to c.6% to c.9% of the population in Roscrea settlement (5,446 as recorded in 2016), representing a satisfactory engagement rate in this consultation.

For further detail of consultation events and survey, please refer to Appendix A the Consultation and Engagement Report: Roscrea Town Centre First Masterplan. A summary overview of the consultation process and key issues raised is provided below.

In-Person and Virtual Consultation

Events

A series of in-person and virtual consultation events took place during March 2023 including two in-person events and one online session. The feedback from these events can be summarised under common topics such as recreational activities, community, vacancy and dereliction, and employment.

Greater diversity and choice in amenities required

The good work of the sporting communities was emphasised and championed confirming a sufficient provision of sport facilities in Roscrea. With regard to non-sporting recreational activities, however, a frequent response from the public consultation is a lack of recreation activities especially outside of daytime hours. A general need to improve the quality and provision of community facilities and initiatives was highlighted and, on several occasions, Abbey Hall was mentioned as an underutilised asset that could facilitate community functions and initiatives.



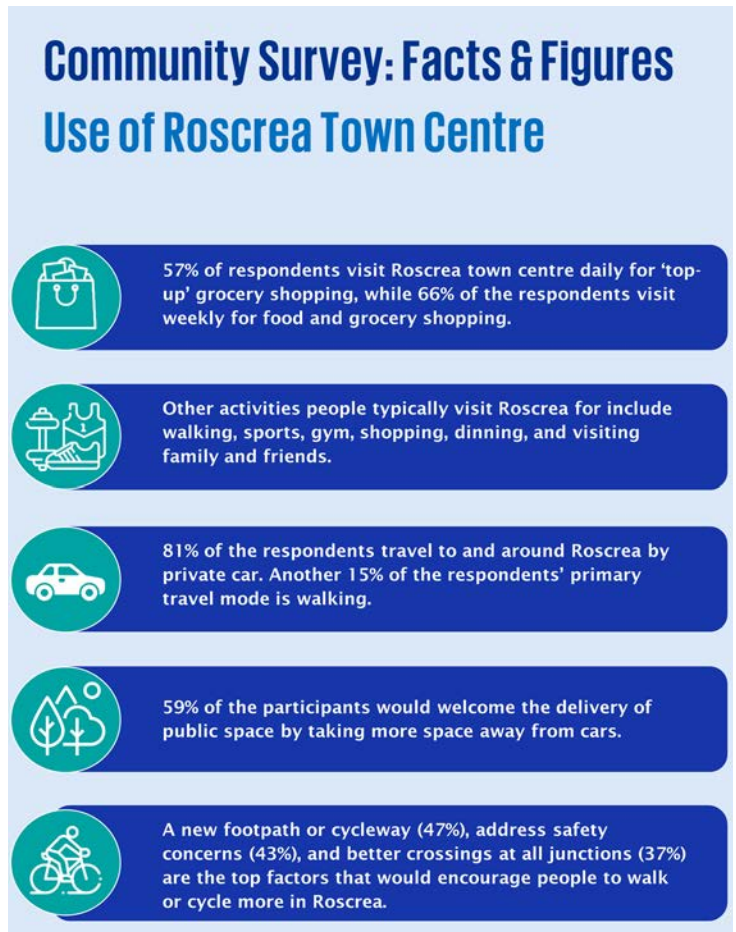
In-person public consultation, March 2023

Strong enthusiasm to bring about positive change

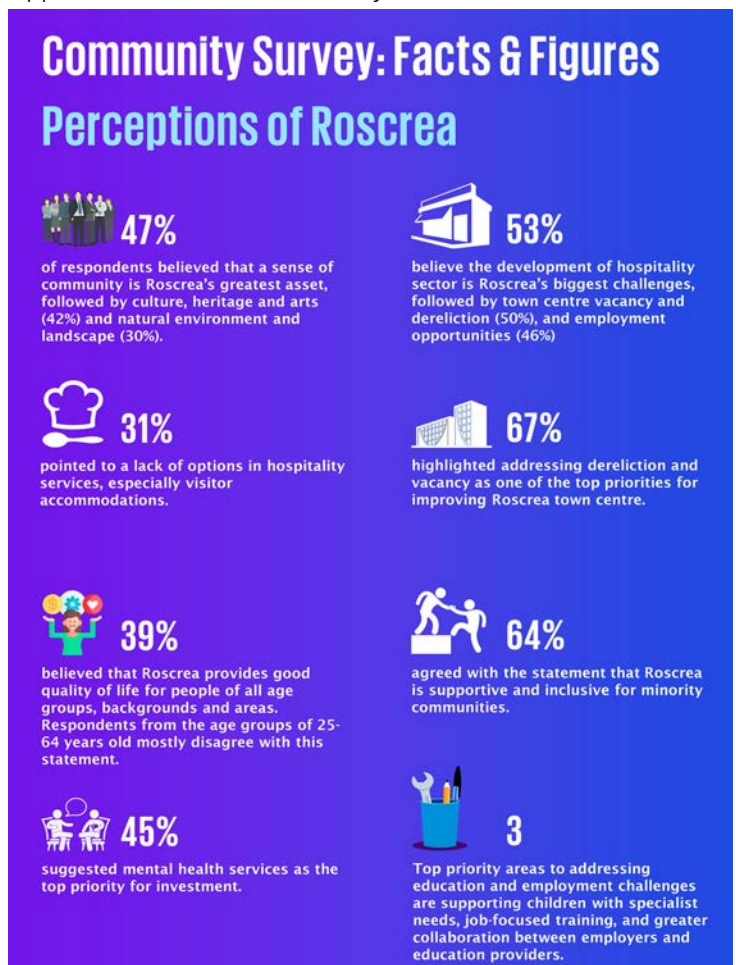
Community spirit and civic pride was mentioned throughout the consultation highlighting a need to bring the community closer together and encourage active participation in local initiatives. This is suggestive of the enthusiasm of local people to bring about positive change – good news for the TCF approach and the forthcoming Masterplan projects.

Consensus on the need to tackle vacancy and dereliction

Vacancy and dereliction within the town centre was continually highlighted at every event, with the former Grant’s Hotel and the former Antigen site commonly referred to.



Appendix A Extract - Community Use of Roscrea Centre



Appendix A Extract - Community Perceptions of Roscrea

More local employment opportunities needed

Employment was a frequently raised issue. Concerns highlighted include the perceived lack of inward investment, a lack of high paying jobs, and the need for investment in the town. Tackling vacancy and dereliction was once again emphasised in this regard, with lots of discussion on the possible redevelopment of the former pharmaceutical factory site (Antigen) on Lourdes Road for new employment purposes.

Widespread support for improvements to public realm

Participants also called for improvements to the public realm – to address accessibility and connectivity issues, improve pedestrian access and encourage both the development and active use of green/blue routes and cycleways. There were also calls to improve public transport options available within the town. Others called for enhancements to public amenities such as public garden, square, and playground.

Business Survey: Facts & Figures Perceptions of Roscrea



Accessibility to motorway network and strong growth potential were highlighted as Roscrea's main strengths as a place for doing business.



Workforce availability was selected as one of Roscrea's main constraints for doing business.



Top three priorities to help drive economic development in Roscrea identified by respondents:

- ❖ Promoting a pro-business culture.
- ❖ Working with the IDA to attract Foreign Direct Investment.
- ❖ Providing the necessary infrastructure for businesses to succeed.



3 out of the 4 businesses who were seeking space in Roscrea in the past three years were not able to source it.

Appendix A Extract - Business Perceptions of Roscrea 1 of 2

Business Survey: Facts & Figures Perceptions of Roscrea



20 businesses had no intention to scale up. 5 out of 7 businesses who intend to scale up are planning for the long term (more than 3 years).



Only 7 businesses had considered availing of available grants to upgrade vacant or derelict buildings in the town centre.



5 out of the 7 businesses who were trying to access grants to upgrade vacant or derelict buildings found the endeavour difficult and unproductive.



21 businesses believed grocery shopping is the main thing that attracts customers to Roscrea town centre.



80% expect trading to worsen or no change over the next two years in Roscrea.

Appendix A Extract - Business Perceptions of Roscrea 2 of 2

2.5 Town Centre Health Check

A Town Centre Health Check is described in 'Town Centre First – A Policy Approach for Irish Towns' as the process of taking stock of how a town is faring across a variety of parameters. These parameters which include land use activity, economic and social attributes, and key features of the built and natural environment, greatly influence the functionality and performance of a town centre. They are the reasons why people interact with a town centre. In Roscrea, there are four primary drivers for activity in the centre, as following:

- Employment and school
- Retail and social services
- Social, recreational or leisure amenities and heritage attractions
- Living in the centre

The Town Centre Health Check for Roscrea seeks to examine how the town is performing in the context of these drivers and parameters. A range of surveys have been undertaken to consider the health of the town and its performance in supporting people living, working and visiting the town for the reasons set out above. These are presented over a series of chapters and appendices set out within this Town Centre Masterplan, as follows:

- Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile (Appendix B): This allows us to understand the characteristics, skills and attributes of people living and working in the town. It is these people who will drive forward the projects

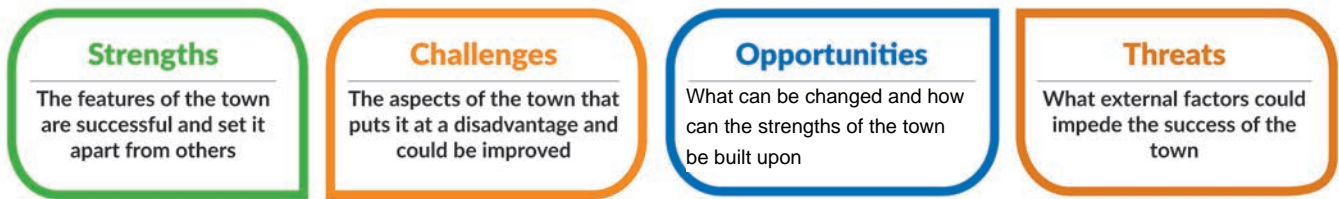
and initiatives set out in this TCF Masterplan.

- Land Use and Economy (Section 3.3): Land Use surveys to establish activity levels and diversity in the town. This includes employment activity with a specific focus on key town centres sectors such as retail to establish current levels of commercial activity and outlook. It also includes an audit of vacancy and dereliction within a town centre. Pedestrian counts to establish actual town centre visitor numbers are also provided.
- Social, Community and Culture (Section 3.4): This comprises a survey of amenities and services to establish the choice and diversity of offer serving a town.
- Movement and Connections (Section 3.1): This section is informed by detailed surveys of existing streets and movements in Roscrea.
- Nature and Landscape (Section 3.2): This section analyses the existing natural environment of Roscrea town, including greening and flood-risk.
- Built Form (Section 3.5): This section analyses Roscrea's urban development, streetscapes, housing and vacancy/dereliction.

It is through these series of studies on key attributes of the town centre and community that the following overview of strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats has been derived (SCOT).

2.6 Challenges and Opportunities

SCOT Analysis



Listed in alphabetical order:

Strengths

- A diverse population with broad range of skillsets available locally
- Accessibility to the motorway network
- Built Heritage
- Comparatively high levels of footfall on Main Street and Castle Street
- Digital infrastructure/high-speed broadband
- Diverse range of uses in the town centre
- Family-oriented
- Good presence of community services and facilities within town centre
- Healthy base of retail and trade
- It is a walkable town
- On the rail network.
- Proliferation of supermarkets in the town centre
- Roscrea's history as a market town
- Sporting Facilities
- Strong facilities in nursing and healthcare
- Strong growth potential
- Strong local appetite for positive change and to support the TCF process
- Strong local manufacturing and trade sector
- The town has a river running through it
- Well-established local community with slow but steady population growth evident

Challenges

- Comparatively high unemployment rate
- Dereliction and vacancy in buildings
- Disjointed/fractured community groups
- Dominance and over-reliance on cars
- Economic and education driven migration
- High level of residential vacancy
- Historically negative perceptions of deprivation in Roscrea
- Housing affordability constraint
- Infrequent public transport by bus and rail
- Known pockets of deprivation across the town
- Lack of cultural facilities
- Lack of evening vibrancy/activity
- Lack of new employment/investment from FDI or at a larger scale
- Lack of non-sporting recreational facilities
- Lack of public open space for community.
- Perception of increased crime and reduced safety
- Public realm maintenance issues
- Substandard pedestrian safety and accessibility

Opportunities

- Adaptive reuse of vacant buildings for housing
- Broaden the recreational and amenity offer outside of the sporting activities
- Enhance and diversify the evening economy through events and enhanced hospitality offer
- Enhance/Expand market facilities in Roscrea
- Expand and diversify the local economy
- Festivals /events to improve community spirit
- High level of renter occupied housing suggesting scope for TC residential development to diversify tenure offer
- Nurturing/enhancing existing community facilities, eg. The Abbey Hall
- Opportunities to create a sense of arrival or welcome in Roscrea
- Potential for a River greenway
- Potential for active travel and leisure offer to be enhanced
- Potential for Roscrea to become a green town, supporting the green economy
- Potential for the rail service to grow over time
- Refurbishment/renovation of vacant properties
- Small household size may align well with over the shop TC living
- Strengthen linkages between large retailers outside the core central streets by public realm and street enhancements
- Tourism as a generator for local vibrancy
- Traditional housing form dominating suggests scope for greater diversity and potential for TC living
- Increase pedestrian safety through simplifying vehicle movements and reducing speeds in main shopping areas

Threats

- Climate resilience is currently low
- Online retail continues to overtake local businesses
- Out of town centre retailers
- Potential business/employment/tourism competition from nearby towns
- Potential local concerns/resistance about reducing on-street car parking
- Residential proposals favouring out of town centre sites
- Strong dependency on manufacturing industries for employment. Potential threat of job losses through automation, factory closures.
- The potential for a 'do-nothing' maintenance of the status quo, this could reinforce the slow decline of the town.

03 | Defining the Place

3.1 Movement and Connections



Ease of Movement & Accessibility

Walking and Cycling

Roscrea is a relatively compact, historic market town, and many residents live within a walkable or cycleable distance of the town centre.

However, walking and cycling make up a low proportion of trips overall, according to data within the Roscrea Sustainable Travel Plan. Of trips to work they make up 16.8% and 1.4% respectively. Of trips to school, 22.7% are made by walking or cycling.

Most trips in Roscrea are instead made by car. Addressing this and encouraging more walking and cycling is key to achieving climate and health/physical activity targets.

There are many issues with the accessibility and quality of the pedestrian environment in Roscrea.

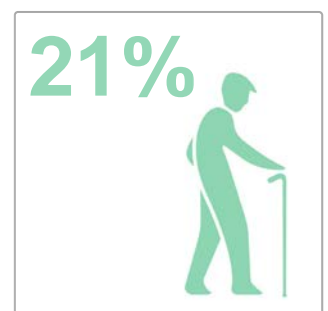
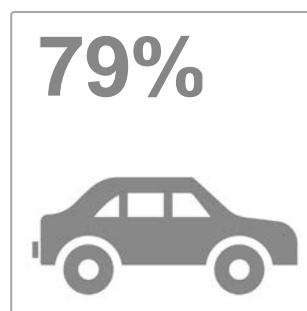
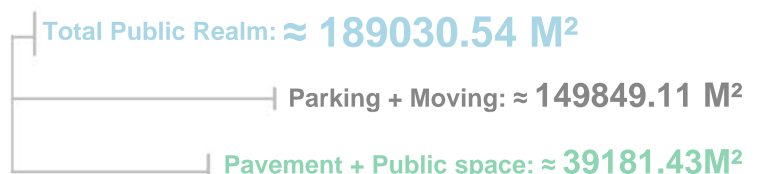
As part of the Age Friendly Roscrea scheme, residents undertook several Universal Design Walkability Audits to assess local streets and routes for their accessibility to all. This highlighted many issues with local streets. This includes:

- Lack of continuous footways;
- Lack of formal pedestrian crossing facilities (e.g. signalised or zebra crossings);
- Lack of dropped kerbs;
- Narrow footways and street clutter;
- Poor driver behaviour including speeding and inappropriate parking.

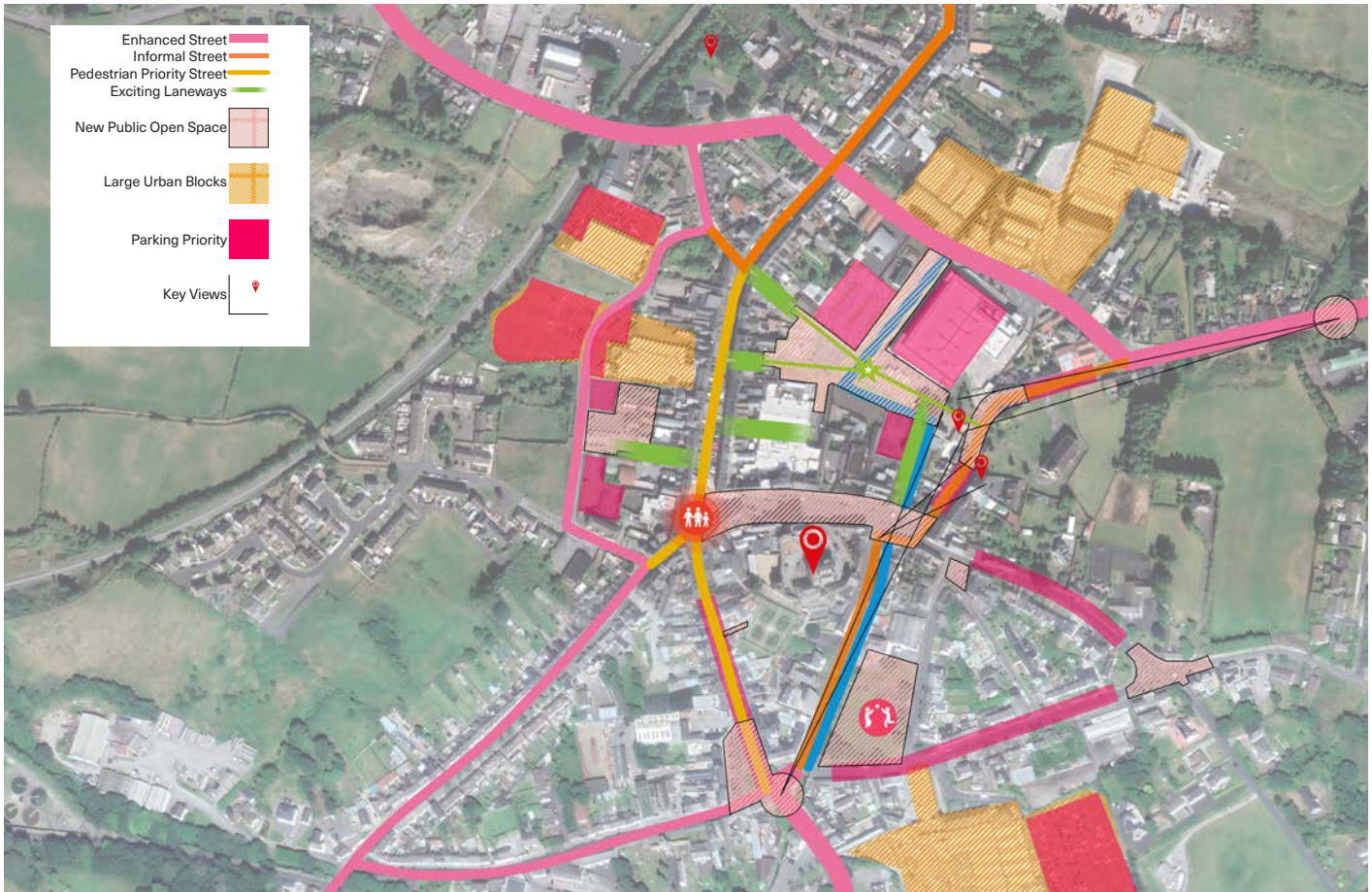
The proposition for movement in Roscrea is premised on balancing movement priorities and place priorities to create more opportunity for town centre life, space for businesses and for community life.

This doesn't mean the removal of transport freedom and choice for the town. Access through the town and in and out of it will be protected, and in addition the experience of walking around the town will be greatly improved, to make walking an attractive choice for everyday local journeys.

In movement terms, vehicles moving through the town currently come into conflict with vehicles accessing the town, as well as people enjoying the town. Opportunities can be unlocked for greater town centre vitality if we can reduce the conflict here, prioritising through-movement on the pink and orange streets shown right, and minimising through movement on the gold streets. Orange streets already have a substantial place value and so the streets and public realm should respond to this, to make clear that drivers have entered an urban setting and their behaviour will need to respond.



Appendix C Extract - Public Realm Analysis



Appendix C Extract - Strategic Streets and Movement Proposition

For gold streets, through movement would be discouraged to create more space for business activities, relaxing and spending time in the street, urban greening and biodiversity, and surface water management. Parking on the street would be provided to support adjacent business activities and loading would be accommodated.

Castle Street would become the principal piazza space for the town centre, with no movement function in the future network, albeit possibly accommodating public transport.

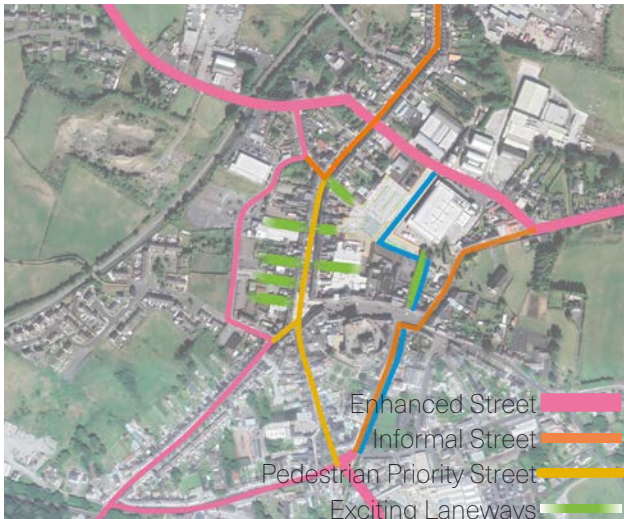
Laneways

Main Street and Castle Street can be accessed from the backlands via several laneways. These pedestrian routes are often narrow in character and provide vital links through the town, and particularly linking off-street car parks with Main Street and Castle Street.

However, these spaces are uninviting, feel

isolated and forgotten, making them unattractive links and dissuading people from using them unless essential. Encouraging greater use of off-street car parks for example, relies heavily on improving these links and creating new laneways where appropriate.

Additionally, these spaces could be celebrated as part of the public realm and character of Roscrea, utilising their unique and contrasting scale and form compared with other public spaces in the town centre. Interesting features applied to these spaces could help to provide identity and character to each laneway, using planting, public art and lighting to create unique and attractive spaces, and supporting activation where possibilities for this exist.



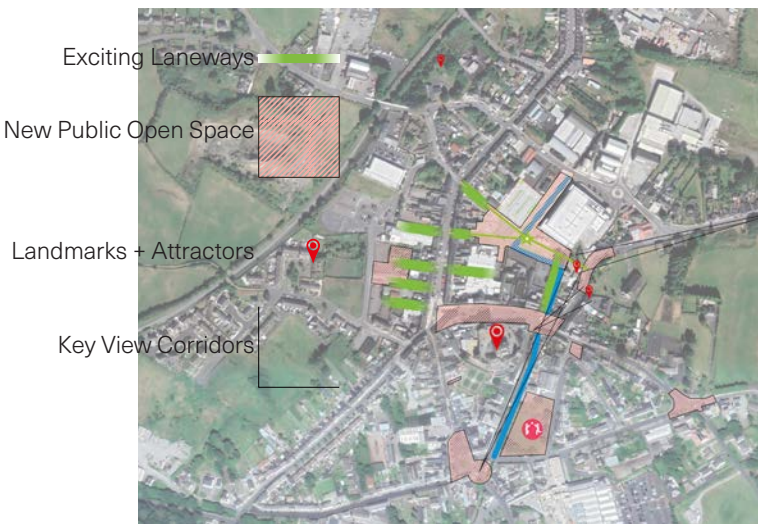
MOVEMENT

The proposition for movement in Roscrea is premised on balancing movement priorities and place priorities to create more opportunity for town centre life, space for businesses and for community life. This doesn't mean the removal of transport freedom and choice for the town. Access through the town and in and out of it will be protected, and in addition the experience of walking around the town will be greatly improved, to make walking an attractive choice for everyday local journeys. In movement terms, vehicles moving through the town currently come into conflict with vehicles accessing the town, as well as people enjoying the town. Opportunities can be unlocked for greater town centre vitality if we can reduce the conflict here, prioritising through-movement on, for example, the Enhanced Streets and Informal Streets shown right, and minimising through movement on the Pedestrian Priority Streets. The Informal Streets already have a substantial place value and so the streets and public realm should respond to this, to make clear that drivers have entered an urban setting and their behaviour will need to respond. Pedestrian Priority Streets need to be streets with more space for business activities, relaxing and spending time in the street, urban greening and biodiversity, and surface water management. Parking on the street would be provided to support adjacent business activities and loading would be accommodated. Castle Street could become the principal piazza space for the town centre, with no strategic movement function in a future network, whilst accommodating servicing and business access and public transport.



PARKING

Parking studies for Roscrea have demonstrated that there is additional capacity in the town. This represents space in the town centre that the town isn't using to support prosperity, community life or the fight against climate change for example, and so the plan is to use this valuable space for the good of the town. Larger off-street car parks tend to have the lowest occupancy and the most space to accommodate additional parking requirements in a way that doesn't detract from the town centre as a whole. These parking spaces should be prioritised as this enables the creation of a more attractive town centre for people to spend time, spend money, and come together. Parking on Main Street will be targeted to support adjacent business activities in parallel bays, rather than the current perpendicular bays. This will free up considerable space for urban greening, seating, space for relaxing and space for business activities, whilst still accommodating essential parking and loading. In parallel with this walking, wheeling and cycling routes to and from off-street parking bays will be improved to create enjoyable links between the two that feel good and safe in all weather. Castle Street currently accommodates parking for private cars as well as coaches and in the future this function would be removed with parking being accommodated in the spare capacity within off-street facilities. Moreover, coach parking would be removed, with a potential drop-off/pick-up space maintained, but vehicles would be required to park up elsewhere.



PUBLIC SPACE

Several key public realm interventions have the power to transform the character and attractiveness of the town centre. Principally, Castle Street has the potential to be an incredibly attractive visitor attraction as well as everyday space for the town, its community and its activities, such as markets for example. The arrival space and space of reflection for the Castle, the current street is given over to relatively low value uses, namely parking. This prime town centre space should be given over to higher yielding activities, driving tourism, inward investment and activity - as well as increasing biodiversity and green/blue infrastructure to create a space to spend time.

Rosemary Square represents another key opportunity to strengthen the town's economic, social and environmental offer. Currently given over to vehicles, this space should again be used for more high yield activities, both marking a gateway into the town and a key first glimpse of the tower, as well as creating a community space and welcome embrace for those entering the town. This space could be the principal tourism drop-off space, maximising the value of tourism by creating a route past a multitude of businesses, rather than dropping and collecting directly at the Castle. This space should be a green and relaxing space, a space for community days and enjoyment, local market or activities.

Rosemont Square is an opportunity to tighten up the town centre public realm, organise parking activities to unlock community space and a space for people to relax and

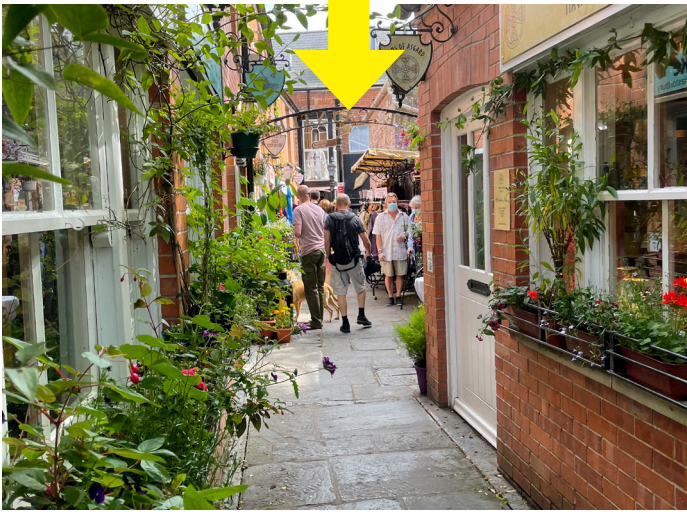
come together. Currently being a somewhat leftover space with community uses trying to take hold, a redesign of this junction space to give so much back and again create a new gateway into the town to encourage visitors to explore and discover.

The opportunity along Church Street represents an opportunity to mark this historic and value point in the town centre. Two key town centre landmarks - the church arch and the Early Medieval Monastic Round Tower are striking landmarks and the public realm should respond to strengthen the identity of the town. Movement will be enabled however the place value should be increased to give people a moment to notice their surroundings

The two key moments along Corville Road and Dublin Road are opportunities to create strong gateways into the town, to change the perception of visitors and calm the flow of vehicles, so visitors have chance to see the attractiveness of the town if they have not had the opportunity to do so before. Junction spaces should be tightened up to enable the movement functions in the minimum required space, with the leftover space being given over to place function. The principal first view of the tower along Dublin Road should be marked with a change of treatment coming into the town from this point, to showcase the change of character - moving into a slower, urban context, as well as invite people to stop and enjoy.

The alleyways off Main Street could be a key point of interest in the town, as we can see across the country, Europe and globally. Alleyways should be cherished as different experiences that can draw people in. In these examples they can draw people from the big box offer into the fine grain high street and there is a key opportunity to strengthen this to the west of main street. The gap site that exists off Gantly Road can be redeveloped into an interesting commercial and public space offer to give people a different experience from the traditional Main Street, a place of relaxation and fun which offers incubator space to local businesses.

Finally, a reincarnation of Glebe Park and Playground would offer the town a biodiverse and verdant play space and green oasis, which is lacking in the current offer.



Potential transformation, Top: Exiting Laneway, Bottom: Precedent Laneway

CAR PARKING

Roscrea town centre has a range of provision for car parking. This includes on-street parking on many streets and formal car park facilities often to the back of key streets such as Main Street. A parking study was recently carried out in the town to identify issues and make recommendations, which were to:

- Reduce on-street parking - using the road space for street enhancement;
- Restrict on-street parking to one hour;
- Provide improved signage of car parks (off-street);
- Improve the pedestrian linkages to car parks;
- Restrict on-street parking where residual street width is <5m (Rosemount etc.)

Studies have demonstrated that space in Roscrea

is unbalanced at the moment, with nearly 80% of available space given over to moving and storing vehicles, at the expense of space in the town centre for people to sit, relax, meet and gather. Space for people is key to driving footfall and activity in the town centre, and creating an attractive place in which people want to spend time, and people shop and spend money where they want to spend time.

The above parking study showed that there is additional capacity in the town centre for car parking, with peak hour occupancy only ever being between 80-85%. This means that there is wasted space in the town centre that is not performing for anyone and is doing the town centre economy harm.

The strategy for improvement is based on using the space we have in the town centre effectively to yield the benefits we want. We need to create space in the town centre to make walking down the street and popping into shops; sitting and meeting friends; and relaxing and spending time an attractive and inviting thing to do. Research shows that public realm improvements along high streets increase business activity and takings. Based on the above, proposals around reordering parking and rebalancing space should be focussed on Main Street and Castle Street.

Parking should be maintained throughout Main Street, however in parallel bays rather than perpendicular. This wins back considerable space to attract people to the street and make the street a busy and sought after shopping street. In addition, reordering parking in this way will increase safety by eliminating awkward vehicular movements, allowing for the carriageway to be narrowed which in turn will reduce speeds

Parking should also be tailored to the shops,

predominantly smaller specialist shops that people spend less time in than larger superstores. For this reason Main Street parking should be focussed on the customers and turnover it needs, with parking focussing on 30 minute bays - allowing more customers to park and visit, more frequently, rather than spaces being taken up for 2 hours whilst people go elsewhere. Main Street parking should also be supported by the Laneways Project that makes parking behind Main Street and accessing the street through the Lanes an enjoyable experience.

Castle Street is the principal space in the town centre, and the space that makes Roscrea unique. This is the street that can be used to market the town as a whole as a tourist destination. Referencing the imbalance of space in the town centre, Castle Street is again a priority area to give more space back for people to be able to use - space for community events, markets to attract locals and tourism alike, and celebration events that draw people in. Parking can be moved to the edges of the space / street, and the over-capacity in town centre parking should be used to unlock this transformational change along Castle Street aimed at driving

inward investment and tourism.

In short, evidence shows there is additional capacity of parking in Roscrea, and not enough space for people to actually use or enjoy the town properly. This gives us the opportunity to target where public realm interventions can yield the greatest return on investment for town centre prosperity and vitality, and the TCF plan projects are aimed at just this.

Movement + Connections Objectives

- Improve the accessibility and quality of the pedestrian and cycling environment in Roscrea.
- Enhance Roscrea's laneways through planting, public realm, lighting and art.
- Adjust the movement network through the town centre to create a safer, more pleasant retail and pedestrian experience, and also create a better vehicular experience.
- Adjust the parking provision and management in Roscrea town centre to make use of existing parking capacity, which is underused, and gain back space in key areas to drive footfall and community.
- Increase road safety through simplifying vehicle movements.



Artist's Impression of transformed Castle Street

3.2 Nature and Landscape



Climate

The climate crisis is a major challenge for smaller towns centres like Roscrea. This is most evident in the following areas:

- Challenges for traditional industries that support the town
- Ensuring a just transition to climate neutrality
- Need for sustainable energy production and infrastructure
- Need for sustainable transport infrastructure
- Loss of biodiversity in the town centre
- Impact of the town centre on the natural environment, e.g. pollution of waterways, emissions
- Potential for extreme and variable weather conditions, flooding.

Despite these challenges, developing a green economy in Roscrea will offer significant benefits for the town, such as:

- Creating better green spaces and amenities for residents of Roscrea
- Creating a range of employment in manufacturing and designing a green future for Roscrea
- Re-activating vacant building stock, protecting the town's heritage
- Improving the liveability of the town
- Surface Water management
- Building on the green economy already present in Roscrea, e.g. wind-farms being developed in Roscrea environs.

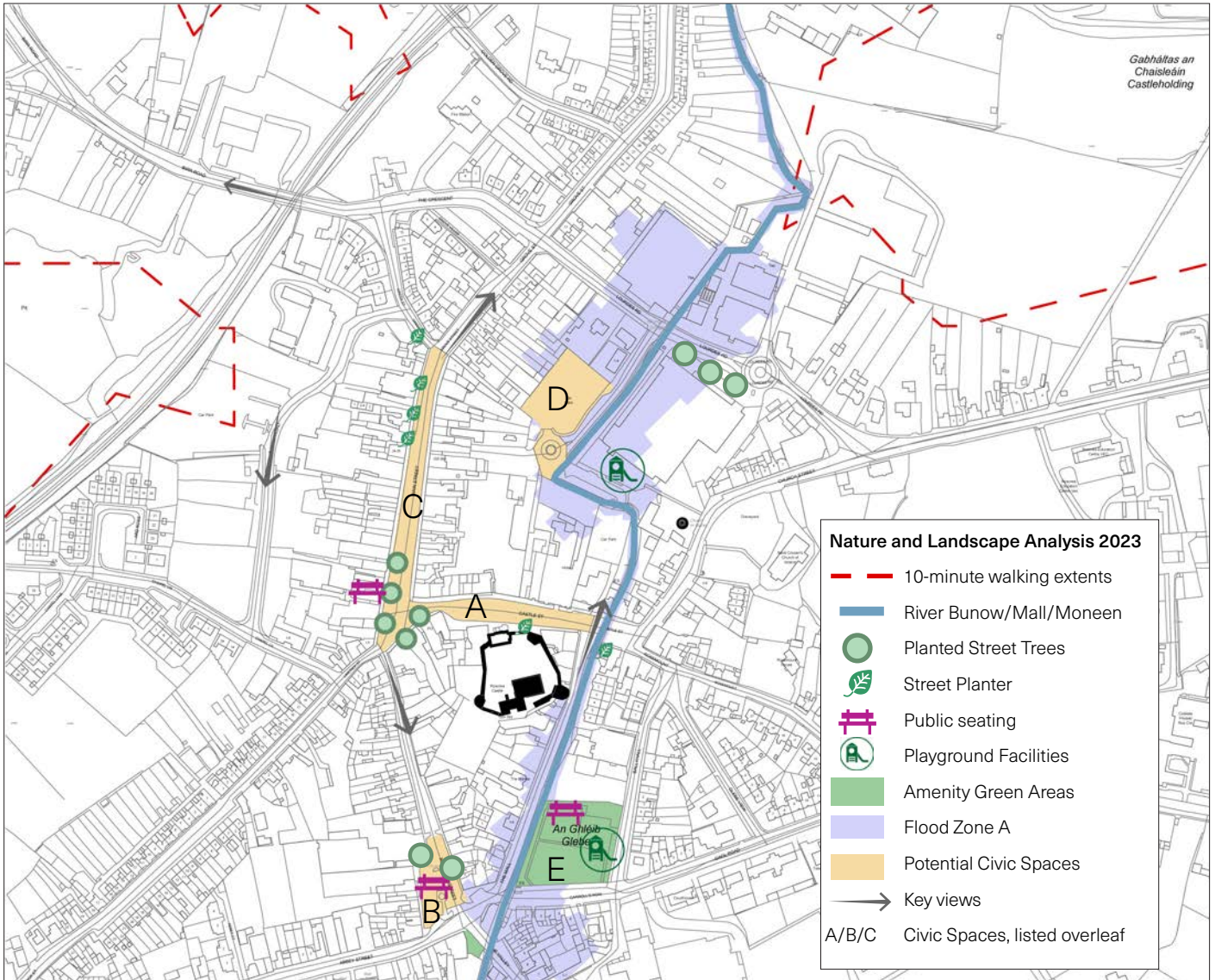
Public realm and landscaping

Roscrea's public realm is currently car-dominated and in need of uplift. Appendix B outlines that almost 80% of public space in Roscrea is currently given to cars and parking. Recent investment in public-realm is limited to the former Market Square public realm works on Main street. There are currently designs in planning to improve the layout of Gantly Street.

There is very little intentional urban greening within the town centre currently: Main street has only five trees (all part of the redeveloped Market Square crossing). A number of sporadic street planters are located throughout the town, but have little continuity between each other.



View of Roscrea Market Square pedestrian crossing, 2023



Nature and Landscape Analysis Map of Roscrea Town Centre, 2023

Scenery and Setting

One of Roscrea’s strongest assets is its scenery. It is geographically located in a valley between the Slieve Bloom and the Devil’s Bit Mountains. It functions as an inland gateway to the Shannon Region.

With steep topography, the Town Centre has impressive views south, down the valley created by the River Bunnow to the Parkmore neighbourhood on a hill. It also has long-ranging views out to the rolling landscape from various high points, to the west from the Railway bridge, to the north from Grove street.

The architectural heritage of Roscrea Castle, Damer House, St. Cronan’s gateway, the Round Tower and Black Mills, Rosemary Square, all provide a unique backdrop to the town’s public realm. Aspects of the town such as the traditional shopfronts on Main Street, Rosemary street and Castle street offer huge potential for renovation.

Civic Spaces

There are currently five open spaces in Roscrea with potential to be become Civic Spaces.

Castle street (A) features Roscrea Castle and access to Damer house and gardens. It has the wide proportions and the grandeur of a civic street however it currently performs poorly for pedestrians, tourists and as the setting for its historical assets.

Rosemary Square (B) has historic shop-fronts facing onto an open space and relocated fountain from Market Square. It is part of the Rosemary Street Architectural Conservation Area, it is currently dominated by traffic circulation and parking.

Main Street and Market Square (C) are part of an Architectural Conservation Area. There have been recent public realm upgrades to the pedestrian crossings at Market Square, the street favours perpendicular car-parking spaces over additional pedestrian walking space.

The backlands of Main Street and Castle Street, sometimes referred to Roscrea Plaza (D), are an open space surrounding the River Moneen, large supermarket and car-parking. It is currently a hostile environment for pedestrians and a hard-surfaced space predominantly. There have been previous plans developed to convert this space into a landscaped plaza.

Glebe park (E) is a public park and playground. It is one of the few areas in the Town Core that is zoned for amenity. It has potential for further diversifying its landscaping to offer a lush park experience, engaging with the adjacent River Mall.



View of Castle Street 2023



View of Rosemary Square 2023



View of The Mall River, 2023

Green and Blue Infrastructure

A mostly untapped asset that Roscrea offers is the River's riparian corridor. The River has three names depending on one's location in the town: The Bunow, The Mall and The Moneen. In a number of areas it is culverted or inaccessible, it is most visible along the Mall, fronting onto Glebe Park. Along this stretch the public footpath adjoining the river is narrow.

North of Lourdes Road the River passes through private lands to the edge of town. The River's landscaping could be protected and enhanced to support bio-diversity of flora and fauna and a public amenity.

An objective of the Tipperary Transforming Tourism Product Development Plan 2020-2030 was to establish a cycling greenway from Roscrea to Birr to Portumna along a disused railway line. Any public realm improvements in Roscrea Town Centre could eventually connect into a broader regional active travel network.

Similarly, the River Bunow and River Moneen are part of the River Suir Catchment Network. This could help thematically connect to the Roscrea riparian corridor to the River Suir waterway, which connects Thurles to Carrick-on-suir.

Nature and Landscape Objectives

- Assist Roscrea in its development as a climate-resilient, sustainable town.
- Improve the public realm and civic spaces of Roscrea to be accessible, pedestrian-friendly and bio-diverse.
- Protect the vistas of Roscrea's natural environment and built heritage.
- Strengthen the green and blue infrastructure network of Roscrea to connect to a regional network of rivers, lakes and natural heritage.



Artists' Impression of enhanced Roscrea River Greenway

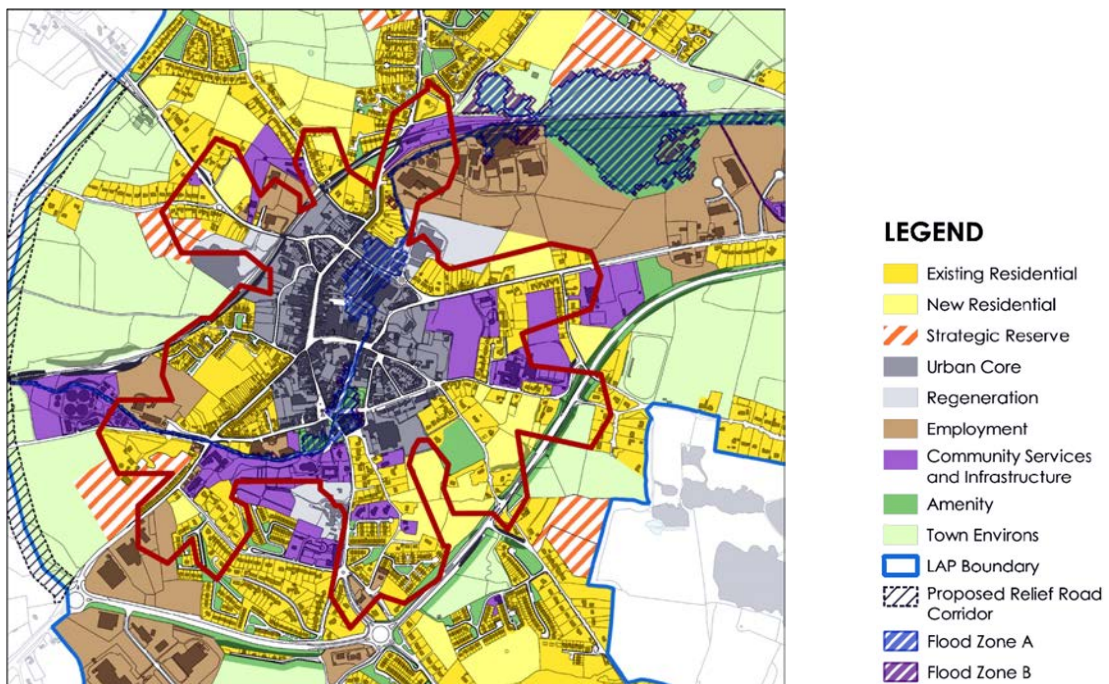
3.3 Land Use and Economy



The survey of land use shows that Roscrea offers a comparatively strong offer in terms of retail and the service sector, but that greater diversity is needed to strengthen the overall offer and appeal of the town. However, the greatest detractor for town centre vibrancy currently facing Roscrea is the level of vacancy and dereliction evident. While this is not a concern unique to Roscrea, it is an issue that is particularly prevalent in the town – with a vacancy rate higher than both the county and national average.

Vacancy and dereliction is quite evident within the core at prominent locations on Main Street and Castle Street detracting from the heritage assets and well performing functional uses active within the area. There are a few large-scale disused sites in Roscrea town centre including the former Grants Hotel on Castle Street and the former pharmaceutical factory on Lourdes Road which present major opportunities to revitalise the area and bring more activity and jobs to the town.

Regeneration of disused sites is a priority of the draft LAP and a key opportunity area to strengthen the town centre. A clear opportunity exists to re-establish the town centre as a residential location, and this can help address the vacancy and dereliction issue. The review of the housing delivery pipeline shows a preference for development outside of the core area as would be consistent with most towns across Ireland. Targeted actions and initiatives to encourage repopulation of the town centre is required and could be facilitated through the TCF approach. Other town centre initiatives promoted and delivered through TCF that focus on improvements to the public realm, for example, will strengthen the appeal of town centre living.



Land Use Zoning of Roscrea under Roscrea Local Area Plan 2023-2029 with Study Area Outlined

Business Demography

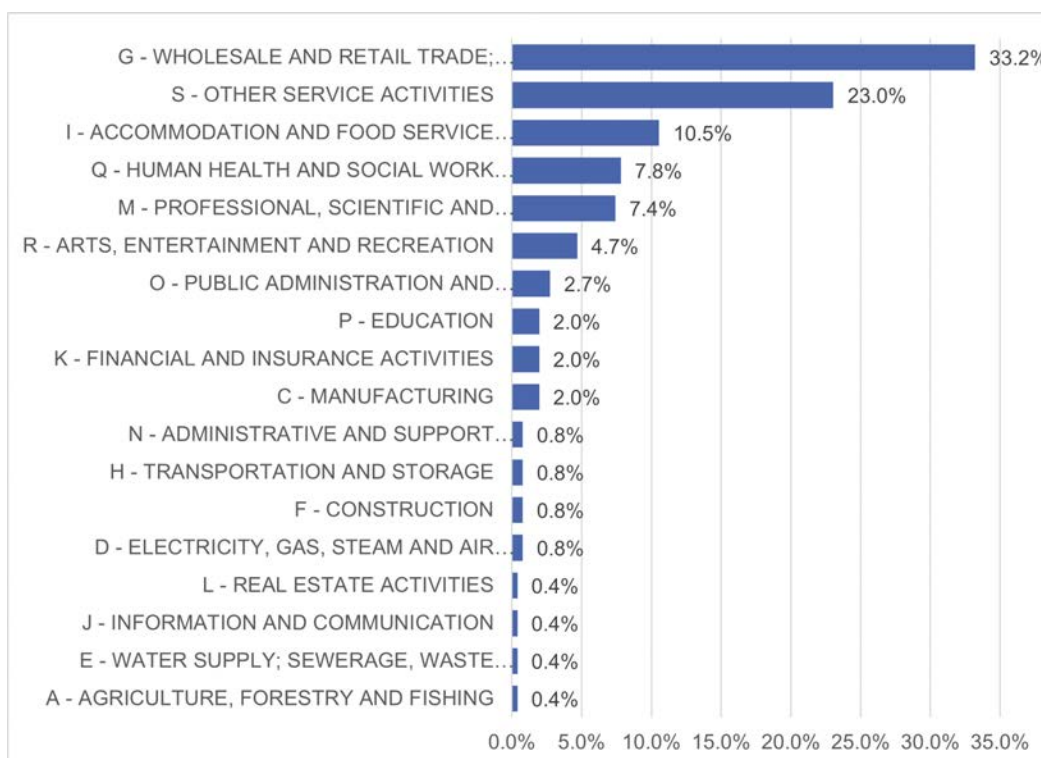
A land use analysis undertaken in March 2023 shows the level of existing commercial activity within the study area. This analysis utilises data from GeoDirectory (Q4 2022) which provides a detailed breakdown of businesses by NACE code and an on-site street survey (March 2023). The results of the survey are presented on the map overleaf and in Appendix B.

In total, there are 315 commercial premises in the town, of which 256 are in active use. The town centre is home to a healthy mix uses most notably in 'Wholesale and Retail Trade' (33.2%), but also in 'Other service activities' (23%), 'Accommodation and Food Service Activities' (10.5%), 'Human health and social work activities' (7.8%), and 'Professional, scientific and technical activities' (7.4%) uses.

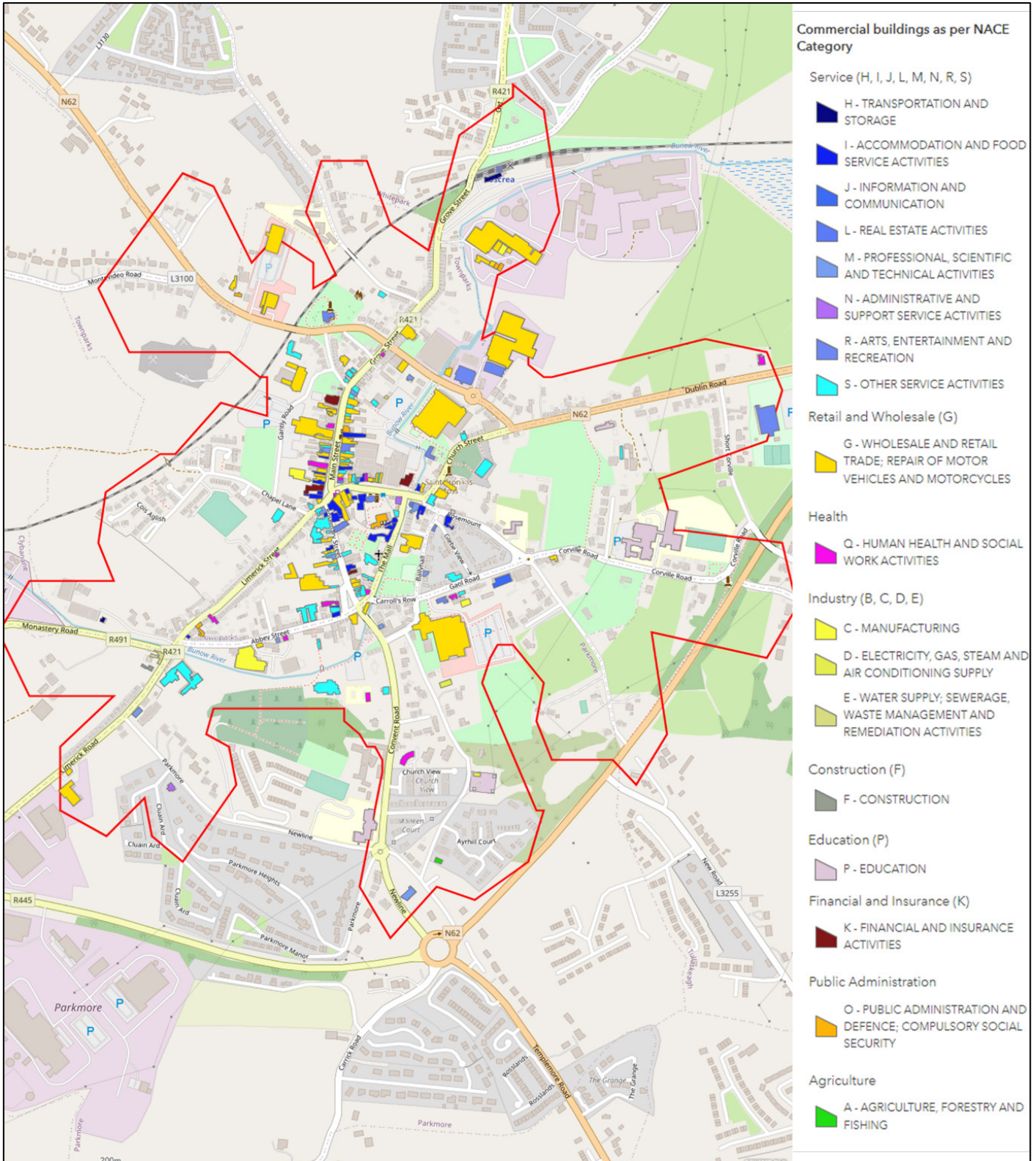
Well performing and located service sector but with scope for improvement

Service related activities which include s- 'other service activities', I - 'accommodation and food service activities', H, J, L, M, N, and R, makes up the largest proportion of the commercial activities mix in Roscrea town centre at 48%. On a national level, the service sector accounted for 49.3% of the commercial sites as of Q4 2022 according to GeoDirectory. It indicates that Roscrea town has a reasonable comparable service offering, although the level of provision is slightly lower than the national average.

Retail and wholesale sector (G) is the second largest sector in Roscrea town centre accounting for 33.2% of the commercial activities mix, compared with 22.2% nationally. This suggests a comparatively healthy retail base concentrated within the centre which is a positive indicator for growth and expansion prospects.



Composition of Commercial Activities in the Study Area



Commercial Land Use in the Study Area

Retail primarily concentrated in town core but opportunities to further consolidate these uses

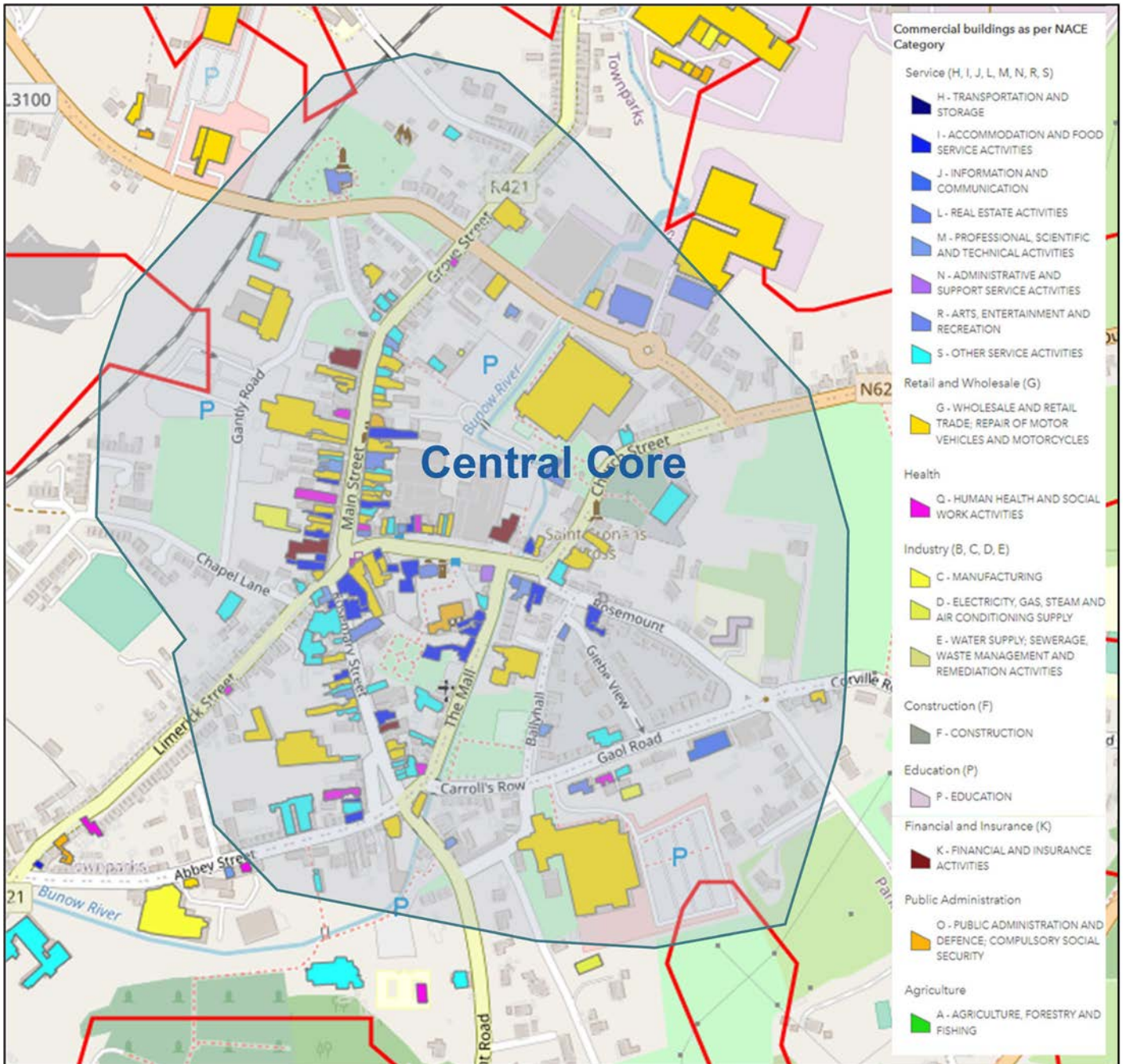
The commercial land use maps show that, in terms of spatial distribution, there is a clear concentration of retail and wholesale activities (G) (highlighted in yellow) along Main Street, which is positive news for the health of the core and the opportunity for consolidation and further growth which is evident given the extent of vacancy within the central streets. However, as with most Irish towns, larger retail units which drive high levels of footfall are located on the outer edges of the core including Dunnes Stores, Lidl, and Aldi. A challenge exists to encourage footfall from these shops into Main Street – this could potentially be achieved through accessibility initiatives and improvements to the public realm.

Roscrea offers a reasonable mix of health and social works (Q) at 7.8% and public administration (O) at 2.7%. Compared with the national figures in Q4 2022 of 9.4% and 2.1% respectively, there is a

marginally below-average provision of health and social services situated within the town centre.

In the town core, there is a dentist on Main Street, a GP on Grove Street, and a surgery on Rosemary Square. Mount Carmel Nursing Home on Limerick Road and Abbey Street is located towards the edge of Roscrea town. Essential local services like these which consistently drive footfall and activity should continue to be encouraged to locate within the central area to help support the wider retail and service offer of the centre.

In terms of education, there are 3 schools, one school of music and one education centre serving the town. These comprise 2% of the commercial activities mix in Roscrea town centre compared with a national average of 4.5%. Except for the School of Music, which is located on Rosemount in the Central Core of Roscrea town, other education facilities are all located towards the edge of the Study Area, although still within 10 minutes walking distance.



Commercial Land Use in the Central Core of Roscrea Town

Financial and insurance activities are located in the central location of Roscrea town along Main Street, Castle Street, and Rosemary Street. These businesses comprise 2% of total commercial activities in the study area, slightly below the national average of 2.6%.

Industry sector (C, D, E) shares 3.4% of the commercial activities mix in Roscrea town centre, lower than the national average of

5.1%. The distribution of these activities is mostly at the edge of the study area. Roscrea Industrial Estate, the largest industrial land use in Roscrea is located outside of the study area at the outer edge of the town. The consultation and engagement process pointed to the need to bring employment back into Roscrea town centre, suggesting a potential opportunity for light industrial uses such as workshops in the town centre, where appropriate.

Tourism is not currently a significant sector within the town. However, the town centre first model offers an opportunity to embed the sector more firmly as a contributor to the local economy. These include a broad range of upgrades and enhancements to the public realm which can, if successfully targeted and delivered, greatly enhance the vibrancy of the town. Other more tourism focused projects that promote and highlight key heritage assets within the town centre will bring a multitude of benefits in terms of job creation, vibrancy and viability within the centre. Among the most notable of these include the opportunity to promote and capitalise on the town centre position of Roscrea Castle, and also the redevelopment of underutilised, derelict town centre sites such as the former Grant's Hotel and Sacred Heart Convent for accommodation and or event purposes.

Land-Use & Economy Objectives

- Protect Roscrea's service and retail economy, but help diversify the town through other uses.
- Tackle vacancy and dereliction to make Roscrea a better place to do business.
- Encourage footfall in the urban core to increase activity in smaller shops and businesses.
- Identify opportunities to bring greater employment into the Town Centre as opposed to solely on the edges of the Town Area.
- Re-establish and encourage town centre living
- Strengthen connectivity between large retail units and Main Street through upgrades to streetscape and public realm
- Consider opportunities to develop the tourism and accommodation offering of the town centre



Artist's Impression of a refurbished Antigen Factory on Lourdes Road

3.4 Social, Community & Culture



Community, Cultural and Social Infrastructure includes a wide range of services and facilities that contribute to quality of life. It is a key part of the fabric of an area, not simply for wellbeing, but also in creating a sense of place and local identity for the population of the area. The Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028 under its 'Town Centres and Place-making' chapter lays emphasis on some key aspects of place-making, which includes (but is not limited):

“To support and facilitate a collaborative approach to the regeneration and revitalisation of our towns to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant, and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as service, social, cultural, and recreational hubs for the local community...”
[Chapter 7, p. 111]

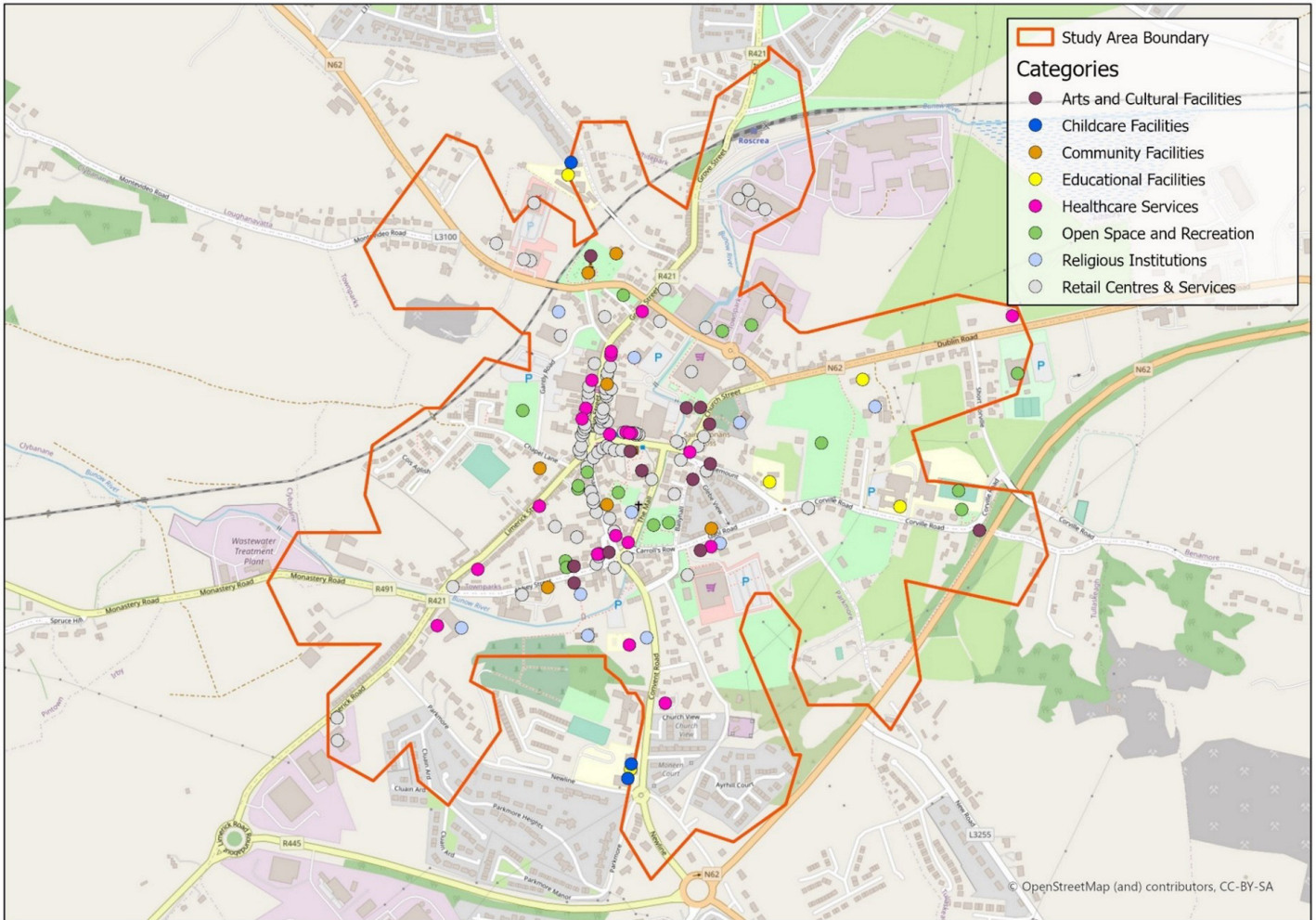
Roscrea provides all the functions and services associated with a small town of its scale and character. The quality of built heritage evident at key locations in the town and the retail and service offer of the town are important elements that, with further support and enhancement through targeted interventions, can contribute to higher activity levels and a livelier, healthier and prosperous town centre that will attract people to live, work and visit the town centre.

A social and community infrastructure audit for the town is presented in full in Appendix B. The audit documents the range of services available in respect of arts and cultural facilities, childcare and education, community facilities, healthcare facilities, open space and recreational amenities,

religious institutions and retail. As shown on the accompanying map and listed in tabular format overleaf, there are 160 social, community and cultural uses supported within the town. The facilities are visibly focused in or around the core of the town, with some located on the edges of the centre. These services and facilities contribute to quality of life and form a key part of the fabric of an area, for wellbeing as well as creating a sense of place and local identity for the population of the area.

There is a relatively high concentration of retail, arts/cultural and tourism facilities and healthcare services within the town centre core, with some public open spaces and recreational facilities also available within the town centre. Most education and childcare facilities are located outside of the centre core, with only 1 primary, 1 post primary and 1 third level education facility located within the town centre. While there are community facilities located within the town centre, there is still some scope for greater diversity, as also identified in the new Local Area Plan period (2023-2029).

The town's unique and historic core has been acknowledged in the Local Area Plan 2023-2029 and Roscrea has been identified in the Fáilte Ireland's tourism programme called 'Ireland's Hidden Heartlands'. Roscrea is rich in architectural and historical heritage, and the Roscrea Enhancement Plan, 2013 recognises it as one of the country's oldest towns and sets out a strategy for the setting of historical assets and the key arrival points to the central area.



Vibrancy and Amenity facilities identified within and bordering the TCF Masterplan Study Area

The draft Local Area Plan 2023-2029 identifies the Roscrea Castle and Damer House and Gardens complex as a striking and outstanding historical asset which is key to promoting tourism and tourist related businesses in the town. In 2019, visitor numbers to Roscrea Heritage Centre and Grounds were in the region of 17,000 people. Opportunities to extend the benefit of this major tourism asset to the wider community should be explored. In this context, the regeneration of vacant sites in the town centre including, for example, the potential redevelopment of the former Grant's Hotel for new accommodation purposes, is an important consideration for the TCF team.

The Public Consultation carried out in Roscrea Town documented a range of suggestions for improvements to community, art/cultural spaces, open/recreational spaces, and retail within the

town centre core. Examples included more event spaces, cafes, community halls, and the overall improvement to the vitality of the town centre – which reflects a general requirement for a safe and vibrant space for people to gather in town. A brief description of the performance of the town in delivering social, community and cultural services is provided below. For full details please refer to Appendix B.

Community

Access to quality community services and facilities can have a significant bearing on quality of life and the health and well-being of a community, by encouraging social interaction, promoting learning, and providing support services for those living, working, and visiting an area. These facilities are essential generators of local footfall bringing life and vibrancy to a place.

Where they are present within a town centre location they can greatly add to the vitality and viability of the local service and retail offer.

There is a considerable level of community facilities across the Study Area most of which are situated on the main streets within the town, including some community halls and community/youth centres and a public library. Essential community facilities are well represented in the town centre but there is clear scope for greater diversity.

Arts, Culture and Tourism

Roscrea is served by a relatively high level of arts and cultural facilities and tourist attractions, with around 13 facilities identified, concentrated largely within the town centre. These are hugely important assets that bring character, sense of place and appeal to the town centre. Suggested improvements include diversifying the selection of activities particularly for participatory arts, sport, and cultural activity in town during the evening and at night. This could be achieved through the provision of a dedicated arts centre or event space.

Open Space, Sports and Recreation

The availability of, and access to, affordable sports and recreation facilities that are within easy reach by walking/cycling within towns, is of considerable importance both to the health and wellbeing of residents and also in attracting people to live and stay in an area. The town has a variety of open spaces including a couple of pitches, town parks, and a playground. Roscrea Leisure Centre is one of the major destinations in Roscrea with other facilities in the town centre including gyms and other training facilities.

Retail

Roscrea town centre offers a reasonably strong convenience retail offer with many of the large retail chains located within the town centre, offering a wide range, and helping support comparison retail in the town. However, some of the large retailers are situated on edge of centre sites. This presents a challenge to improve connectivity from these retail centres to the town centre. The Public Consultation carried out for Roscrea observed suggestions from the respondents indicating that they would spend more time in the town centre if there were more small shops, cafes, and restaurants available.

A brief description of the performance of the town with respect to social, community and culture services, is provided below. For full details please refer to Appendix B.

Social Community & Culture

Objectives

- Protect Roscrea's existing social, community and arts infrastructure and help diversify the town through new and expanded services.
- Increase footfall and vibrancy in the Town Centre.
- Support the development of Roscrea as a 10-minute town.
- Support the concept of Roscrea Castle, Damer House and Demense becoming a 'hero product' per the TCDP and expand out the opportunity presented by this important tourism asset by considering complementary projects such as the redevelopment of vacant sites for accommodation purposes.
- Expand the recreation offer to include more activities that will support the evening and night time economy in Roscrea
- Encourage the adaptive re-use and redevelopment of town centre buildings to host community events and services.

Type	Facilities
Educational and Training Facilities	
Primary (3)	Scoil Eoin Naofa, Saint Cronan's National School, Sacred Heart Primary School
Post Primary (1)	Coláiste Phobal Ros Cré
Third Level and Training (1)	Roscrea Education Centre
Childcare Facilities	
Childcare Facilities (3)	Laethanta Sona Montessori Preschool, First Steps (Little Learners), Little Einstein's Preschool and Afterschool
Community Facilities	
Community Facilities (4)	Roscrea Abbey Community Centre, Irish Wheelchair Association, Muintir Na Tíre Community Hall, Roscrea Community Hall
Senior and Youth Centres (1)	Roscrea Youth Centre
Civic Services (2)	Roscrea Garda Station, Roscrea Fire Station
Libraries (1)	Roscrea Library
Arts and Cultural Facilities and Tourist Attractions	
Arts Facilities (2)	Theresa Larkin School of Music, Roscrea Musical Society
Cultural Sites and Tourist Attractions (8)	Roscrea Tourism, Roscrea Courthouse, Rosemary Square Fountain, Roscrea Castle, Roscrea Round Tower, Saint Cronan's Cross, Roscrea Damer House, Roscrea Abbey,
Healthcare Services	
Health Centres and GPs (6)	Dr Patrick Yon Hin, Dr Pádraig G. Ó Reachtagáin, Dr Pauline De Feu, Dr Paul Booth, HSE Ambulance Service, HSE Roscrea Health Centre
Mental Health Services and Other Therapy Providers (5)	Autism Awareness Roscrea, Positive Physiotherapy, Massage and Spa Therapy, Active Recovery, Luscious Health and Beauty
Nursing Homes (2)	HSE Dean Maxwell Community Nursing Home, Mount Carmel Nursing Home
Speciality Clinics (4)	Shields Dental and Implant Clinic, Expressions Dental Clinic, Roscrea Centre Surgery, Dental Laboratory
Pharmacies (5)	Madden's Care Plus Pharmacy, Frawley's Haven Pharmacy, Coffey's Allcare Pharmacy, Roscrea Centre Pharmacy, Henessey's Total Health Pharmacy
Open Space, Sports, and Recreational Facilities	
Sports Facilities and Grounds (5)	Roscrea Leisure Centre, Scouting Ireland, Roscrea Handball Club, Football Pitch, Coláiste Phobal Pitches
Parks, Playgrounds and Open Space (6)	Glebe Playground, Glebe Park, Townparks (3), Coláiste Phobal Garden
Gyms and other Training Facilities (5)	Fit Factory Roscrea, Premier Martial Art Academy, Flynn Personal Training, Carey's Gym, DU Strength Coaching
Religion Facilities	
Place of Worship (8)	Saint Cronan's Parish Office, Saint Cronan's Church (2), Saint Cronan's Parish Centre, Parkmore House Convent, Oasis Christian Fellowship, Roscrea Methodist Church, Daughters of Charity
Burial Grounds (2)	Doyle's Funeral Home, Tierney's Funeral Home,
Retail Facilities	
Shopping Centres (2)	Roscrea Shopping Centre, Antigen Business Park
Supermarkets and Convenience Shops (10)	Keller's Carry Out, Dunnes Stores, Vincent's Church St, Delahunty's Off Licence, Bernie's SuperValu, Spencer Spillane, Aldi, Tesco, Hogan's, Lidl
Food and Farmer's Markets/Co-ops (7)	John Hastings & Sons Ltd., P J Ahearne Victualler, Carey's Butchers, Polish Shop, Keane's XL, Healthy Vision, Duggan's Butchers
Other Retail Services (41)	Top Gas Station, Open Roscrea, Oliver Douglas and Sons, Corville Educational Supplies, Tipperary Car Parts, Doherty Brothers Topline, J. & C. Neville, Retail, Floral Blooms, The Home Centre, Shaws, An Post, Petals, Interior Fashions, JJ Percival, Fogarty's Day-to-Day News, Roscrea Tourist Information Office, Euro Giant, Vodafone, Movie Time, M. O'Donnell, Jazz Alley, Moloney Sportswear, NCBI Shop, Patterson's Hardware, Alvini, Culture Clothing, Sue Ryder Foundation, Albany Home Décor, Mullally Electrical, Fairbrother Fuels, Roscrea Tyres, Milan Motors, Wrennswood Fuels, Grove Oil and Motors, Texaco, Clothing Store, Auto Care Centre, Midland Site Supplies, Midland Power Tools, Ger Maher Home Improvements
Bars and Restaurants (23)	Abbey Bar, Jumbo Restaurant, Tasty Spice, Kickback Youth Café, Burgoo Pizza and Kebab, C Henessey Bar, The Central, The Damer Lounge, Stock and Barrell, The White House, Riverside, The Office Bar, MC's Pub, John Carroll's, Lily O'Brien's, The Ugly Duckling, Dragon Inn, Phelan's Market House, Tasty Burger, Del's Bar, Jack's Bar, Supermac's, Papa John's

3.5 Built Form



Quality of Built Form

The most significant change in Roscrea's urban development over time was the shifting westwards of the village or town's centre from the River, 7th century monastery and Round Tower to the 13th century castle and main street. The current central streets date from the 18th century, when the Butler of Ormond estates fell.

Roscrea grew significantly in the 19th century. The historic 6 inch OSI mapping (1829-1841) shows much of Roscrea's current urban form already defined, Main street and Castle Street are the primary streets, with perhaps more prominence previously given to Rosemary Square. In the Twentieth-Century, there has been a gradual sprawl from this central core in a northern, east and southern direction, with limited development to the west or north-west.

The former Antigen Factory and adjacent supermarket were significant 20th century interventions in the urban fabric, with quite large building footprints and intensive traffic infrastructure to support them. The town centre now has five medium to large supermarkets within a 10-minute walk of the town centre.

Housing

Most of the housing stock in Roscrea Town Centre is detached, semi-detached or terraced housing. The LAP notes that 'it is expected that more than 30% of new population growth will occur in this area' [zoned Urban Core and



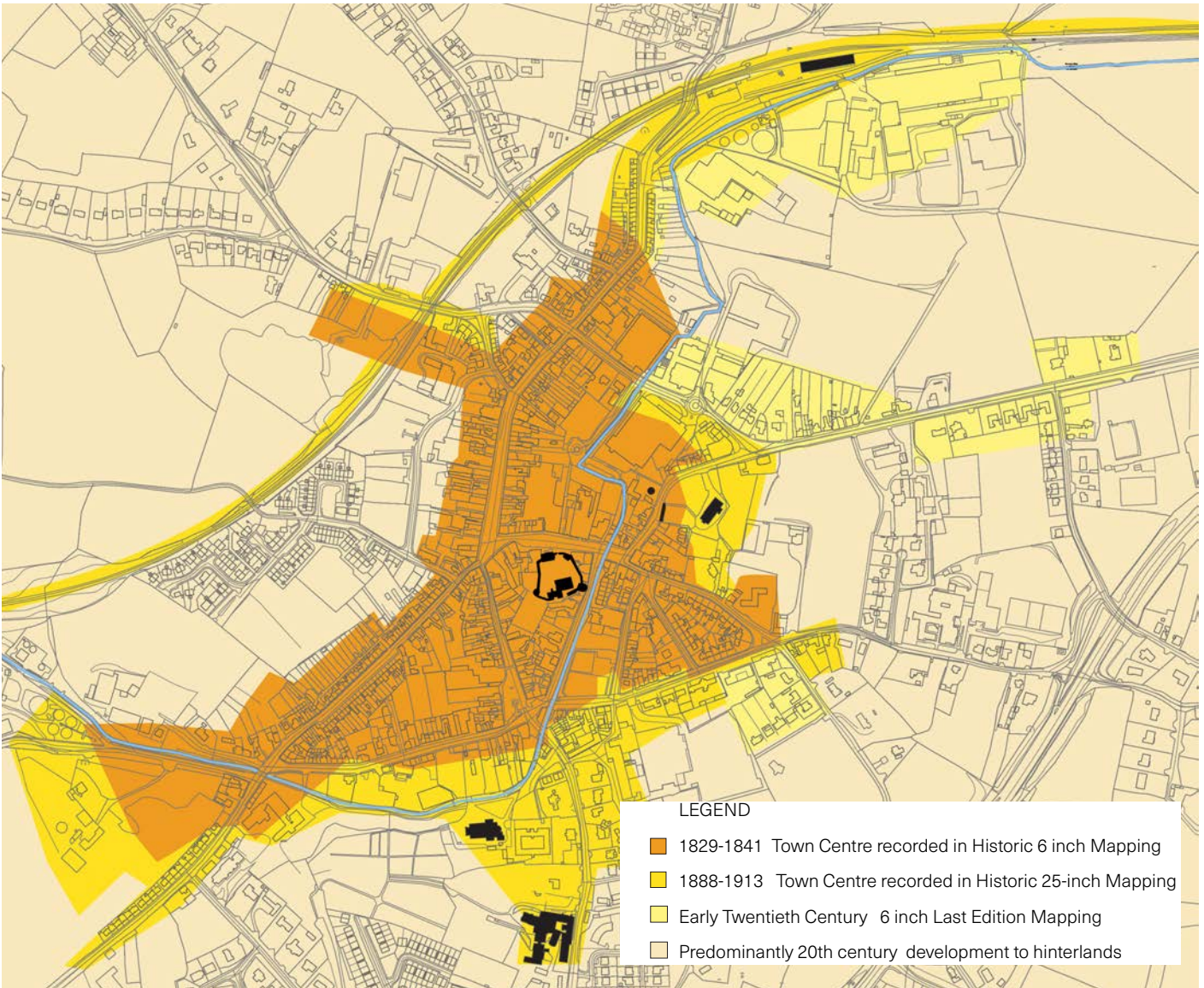
Aerial View of Roscrea showing Main Street, Castle Street and Limerick Street



Bunker's Hill, 2023



Former Antigen Factory, Lourdes Road



Urban Morphology Map of Roscrea Town Centre, 2023

Regeneration]. In central areas of the town, the houses are 'living above the shop' units in mostly 19th century building stock. On these streets, 26 properties are protected structures.

On Limerick street, the Burgoo Architectural Conservation Area is located. This covers a terrace of sixteen three-bay, two-storey houses running along the western side of the street, estimated to date from the 19th century. The houses set up a pleasant rhythm of pitched roofs stepping down the hill, with inset porches shared between two houses with a singular steel column.

Bunker's Hill Architectural Conservation Area features 46 terraced houses with gable-fronted elevations. This is a denser street occupation with a similar rhythm of pitched roofs as Burgoo. With projecting rather than inset porches, there is a lack of buffer from the residences onto Main street.

The LAP notes that 107 people are currently accommodated in Roscrea in Social Housing, with plans to build 100-150 more homes in Roscrea in the next 6 years. Some of the notable Twentieth century council-owned housing estates in Roscrea include Cois Aglish and Kennedy Park.

The environs of Roscrea feature a substantial number of late Twentieth or early Twenty-First century housing estates of detached or semi-detached housing. A typical condition of Irish development, these properties are typically in good condition, albeit with poor energy performance generally.

As outlined previously, there is a good provision of educational, sports, leisure and health facilities to support Roscrea's housing population. There is a clear lack of public open space. Glebe Park provides the only significant park space in the town centre and is in need of regeneration.

Streetscapes

Many of Roscrea's streets still maintain their historic character, either through a narrow sense of enclosure or ad-hoc geometries. This is particularly evident on Rosemary street (An Architectural Conservation Area) and on the laneways connecting Main street east to the backlands or west to Gantly Street.

Some streets have a strong civic character, such as Castle street, approximately 22m in width. Its jagged street frontage folds out of Roscrea castle creates a dramatic setting. Main Street retains its 17th-century linear market town form, a gradual widening to the node where the Market House once stood (now Market square). Both streets currently give 80% of their width to car-parking and traffic circulation.

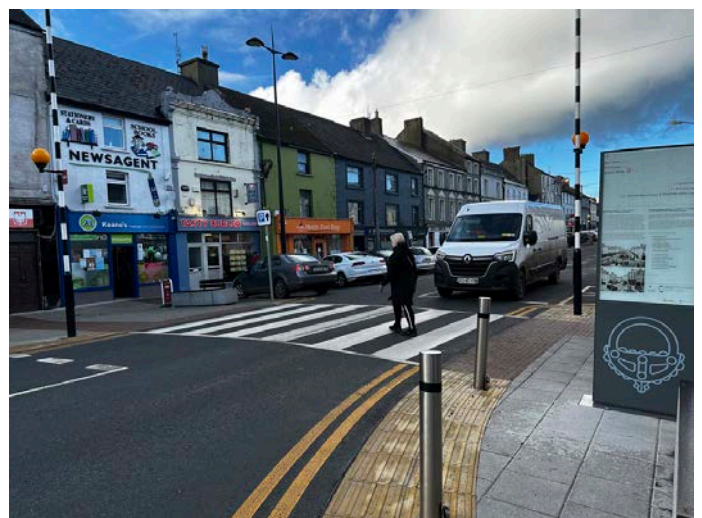
Main Street, Castle Street and Rosemary Square are analysed in detail in Appendix B using Gehl's 12 Quality Criteria Analysis. Eight of Roscrea's key streets are analysed in the adjacent diagrams in terms of street enclosure and character.



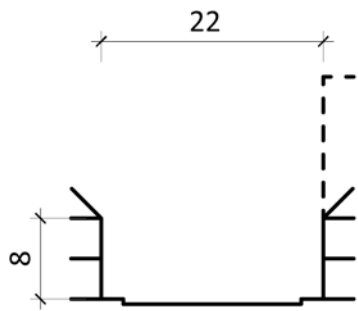
Rosemary Street, 2023



Laneway off Main Street, 2023

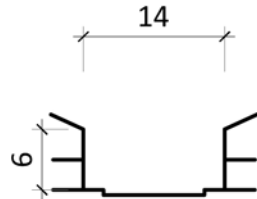


Main Street, 2023



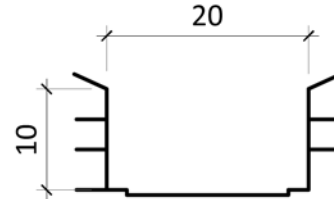
Castle Street

Enclosure Ratio: 1:2.75
 Moderate Enclosure
 Street Wall Continuity 90-100%
 Street Character: Heritage/Civic with some retail
 Topography: Steep
 Greening: Minimal



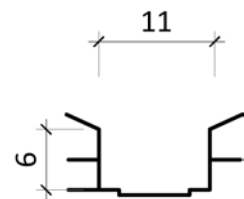
Abbey Street

Enclosure Ratio: 1:2.75
 Moderate Enclosure
 Street Wall Continuity 90-100%
 Street Character: Heritage/Residential
 Topography: Steep
 Greening: Minimal



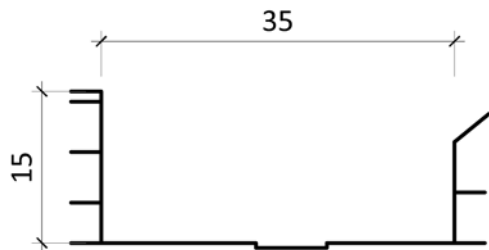
Main Street

Enclosure Ratio: 1:2
 Strong Sense of Enclosure
 Street Wall Continuity 90-100%
 Street Character: Heritage/Residential
 Topography: Flat
 Greening: Low with focused interventions



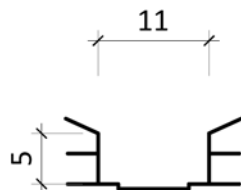
Grove Street

Enclosure Ratio: 1:1.8
 Strong Sense of Enclosure
 Street Wall Continuity 90-100%
 Street Character: Residential
 Topography: Moderate
 Greening: Minimal



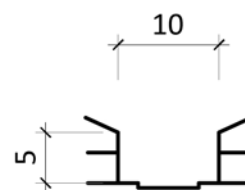
Lourdes Road

Enclosure Ratio: 1:2.3
 Moderate Enclosure
 Street Wall Continuity 40-50%
 Street Character: Industrial/Commercial
 Topography: Flat
 Greening: Minimal



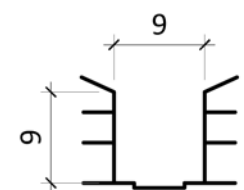
Church Street

Enclosure Ratio: 1:2.2
 Moderate Enclosure
 Street Wall Continuity 40-50%
 Street Character: Heritage/Residential
 Topography: Moderate
 Greening: Minimal



Limerick Street

Enclosure Ratio: 1:2
 Strong Sense of Enclosure
 Street Wall Continuity 90-100%
 Street Character: Residential
 Topography: Steep
 Greening: Minimal



Rosemary Street

Enclosure Ratio: 1:1
 Strong Sense of Enclosure
 Street Wall Continuity 90-100%
 Street Character: Residential/Commercial
 Topography: Steep
 Greening: Minimal

Streetscape Analysis Diagrams, 2023 (all figured dimensions are high-level approximations)

The streetscape analysis shows a number of results:

- All of the streets could do with better greening
- Most of the streets have a good sense of enclosure, with Lourdes Road needing more continuous street frontage.
- Most of the streets have moderate to steep topography.
- Most of the streets have narrow footpaths.
- Castle Street, Main Street are the only streets with substantially active frontages on the street.

Vacancy rates & Dereliction

As indicated in more detail in Appendix B, In 2023 Roscrea town centre has an overall commercial vacancy rate of 16.2% (51 vacant commercial buildings out of 315), with another 2.5% (8 out of 315) of the commercial buildings categorised as derelict. The commercial vacancy rate in Roscrea town centre is considered substantially higher than the average commercial vacancy rate of 14.5% across County Tipperary and 14% nationally. This is a particular challenge for the town centre core with a lot of vacant and derelict premises at prominent locations on Main Street and Castle Street. While vacancy does exist in other parts of the town centre, it is less pronounced with no obvious clusters. However, there are several prominent sites of large scale which will need to be addressed to improve the general appeal of the town centre.

The Study Area also has a residential vacancy rate of 13.9% recorded in 2016 which is substantially higher than the average in County Tipperary of 10.8%. There is an opportunity for Roscrea to regenerate derelict sites in the town centre for this purpose, to promote the adaptive reuse of vacant buildings and facilitate more mixed-use residential-led developments in town centre locations.

Efficient utilisation of vacant and derelict sites is a key feature of current planning policy which can be addressed through the TCF Masterplan. The Draft Roscrea Local Area Plan 2023- identifies 13 regeneration sites and regeneration areas in the town centre area that are suitable for residential/ mixed use development.

Tipperary County Council is committed to working with landowners of sites with potential for regeneration and development to enable their planning and delivery as part of the Town Centre First programme. The draft map of Roscrea for Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) has outlined 11 vacant/idle sites in Roscrea town centre that are currently zoned as 'Town Centre' with the objective 'to provide and enhance for Town Centre Mixed Use facilities' and are in scope for RZLT.



Main Street, 2023



Limerick Street, 2023

Heritage

Roscrea has an abundance of historic buildings and infrastructure in the Town centre. These include approx. 70 protected structures. The OPW own and maintain a number of national monuments in the town, including the remains of the Romanesque church, Round Tower, High Cross, Roscrea Castle, Damer House, Franciscan Friary and the Black Mills Interpretive Centre.

The 12-century church, a national monument, is currently at extreme risk from damage due to passing traffic. It has no bollard or footpath separation from a busy roadway on Church street. The Round-Tower opposite this could benefit from more interpretive elements to allow visitors to interact with the historic monument.

The Tipperary Transforming, Tourism Product Development Plan proposed enhancements to the interface between Roscrea Castle and Demense with the town, as it noted the Castle and Demense are a bit hidden from view in their current configuration. It also proposes the development of a Butler Trail, which could connect the heritage of Cahir, Clonmel, Carrick-on-Suir and Roscrea.

Built Form Objectives

- Prioritise in-fill and refurbishment opportunities for the urban core, to densify and repair the existing town fabric, while simultaneously protecting and enhancing Roscrea's rich built heritage.
- Look at a variety of housing solutions to diversify the housing stock in Roscrea and cater for a broader range of people. Moving away from just detached or semi-detached 3-4 beds to provide apartments, age-friendly housing, affordable housing, key worker accommodation etc.
- Identify opportunities to 'repair' streetscapes with appropriately-scaled interventions and considered thresholds to the street.
- Identify opportunities to tackle dereliction through re-use of existing buildings and targeted public realm interventions.



Artist's impression of Roscrea's public realm surrounding its built heritage

04 | Enabling the Place

4.1 Key Projects

As part of our analysis, we reviewed 85 potential projects that were either:

- Proposed in one of the various spatial plans in Roscrea over the past 10 years,
- Suggested to us during our public consultation
- Emerged from our baseline analysis

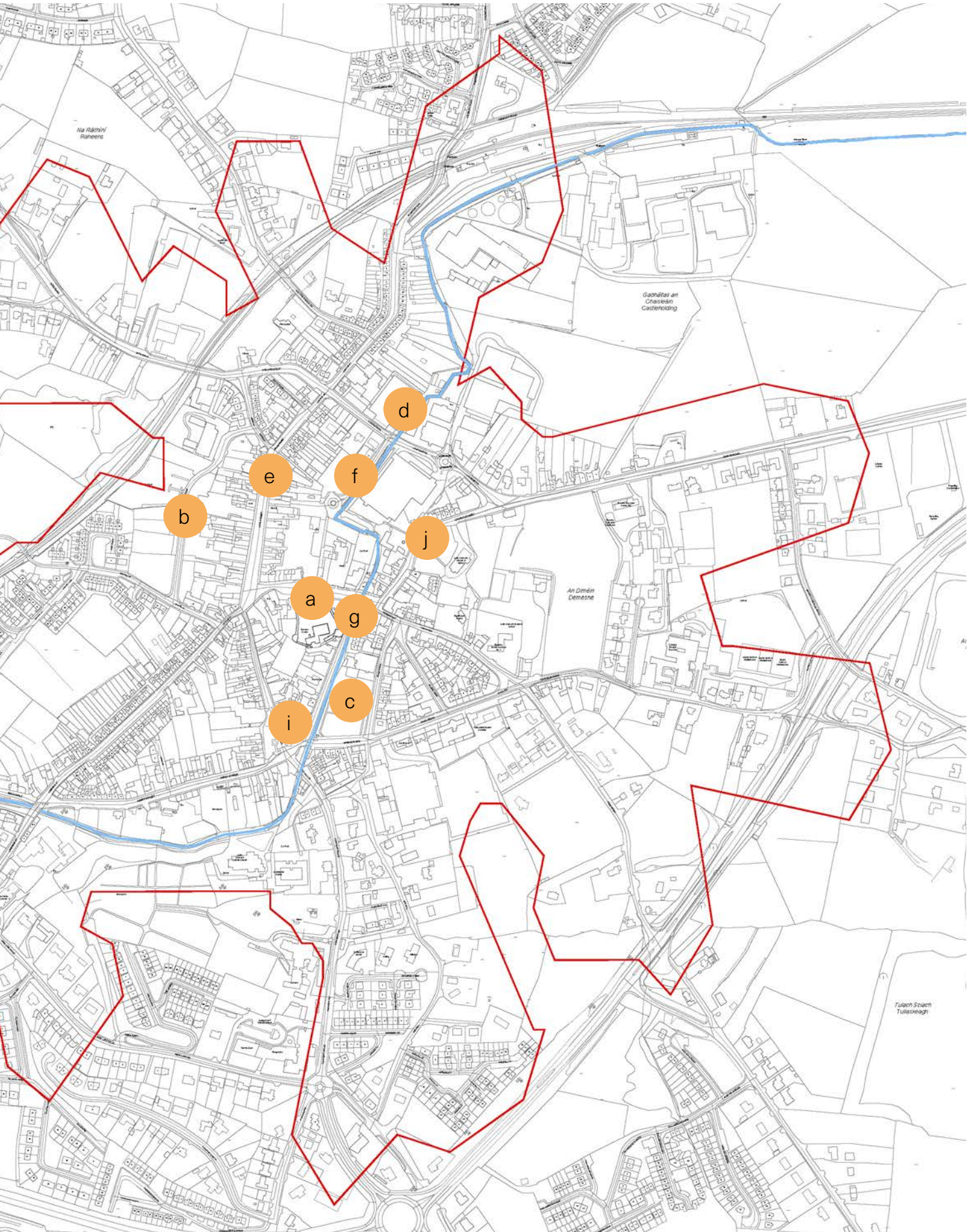
We tested each project against the key objectives of Town Centre First and scored each with a ease of implementation and level of impact on the town centre. This gave us a shortlist of projects which we brought to Tipperary County Council and the Town Team to shortlist to the following 10 (listed alphabetically):

- a. Castle Street
- b. Gantly Street Masterplan
- c. Glebe Park
- d. Lourdes Road Masterplan
- e. Main Street
- f. Roscrea Plaza
- g. Roscrea River Greenway
- h. Roscrea Smart Town
- i. Rosemary Square
- j. St. Cronan's Gateway

Any project indicated hereafter is intended to be illustrative and each will require detailed study and collaboration by the relevant parties and stakeholders.



Map of Roscrea with Key Projects indicated



CASTLE STREET REGENERATION



The Castle Street regeneration project has four components:

1.1 Redesign of Castle Street to create 'Castle Street Square'

The re-imagined Castle Street should include substantial green / blue infrastructure to create a relaxing and sheltered town centre space, which manages surface water on site. The new space should be constructed from high quality local natural stone with hardwood seating, elegant lighting and a mixed species of trees. For more detail see Appendix C.

1.2 Renovation of the vacant Grant's Hotel on Castle street, conversion with a community café on ground floor and apartments above.

This former 24-bed hotel extends to 2,300 m2 and has been vacant for a decade since its closure in 2013. It has a key presence on Castle street and would offer a potential new frontage to the redeveloped backlands with the Roscrea Plaza project.

1.3 New pedestrian connection through the Castle courtyard, drying yards and Ryan's hall on Rosemary street.

1.4 Storage facilities in Grant's hotel for a markets to be held on Castle street.

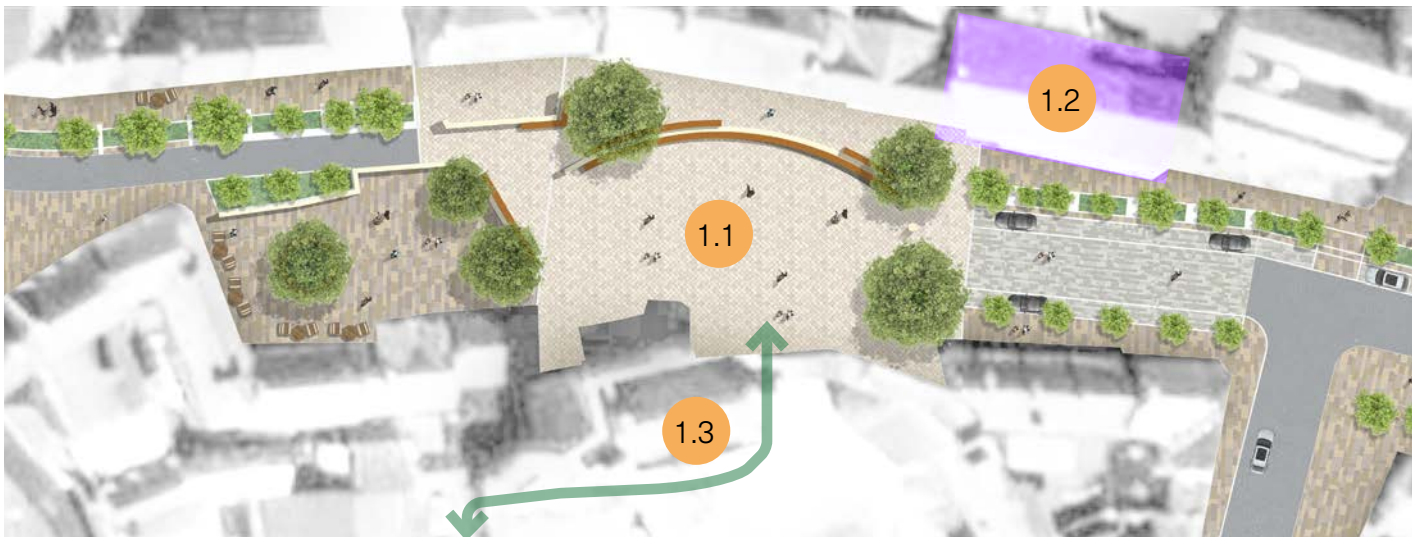


Illustration of Castle Street Square

Draft LAP 2023-2029 Policy Alignment (Abridged)

- Zoned Urban Core: Provide for the development and enhancement of urban core uses including retail, residential, commercial, civic and other uses.
- Objective 3.2 Work with and support landowners of sites with potential for regeneration and development to enable their planning and delivery as part of a Town Centre First programme.
- Objective 3.5: Develop and improve areas in need of regeneration, renewal and redevelopment
- Objective 4E: Better link the town centre and Castle Street to Roscrea Castle and Demesne Castle through public realm works, in line with the Tipperary Transforming Heritage Theme and its 'Hero Product' concept,
- Objective 6A: Actively seek funding for investment in active travel and public transport in the town in line with the provisions of the Sustainable Travel Plan.

Key Project Criteria

- More space to be given to pedestrians and parking rationalised.
- Ensure access for businesses can be maintained during agreed servicing times. Public transport access should be accommodated but reconfigured.
- Work with the private landowner to develop a vision for the future of Grant's Hotel.
- Simplify vehicle movements to increase pedestrian safety.
- Explore potential for a community facility, market storage, residential programme in Grant's Hotel.
- Explore potential for a landscaped space to the rear of Grant's hotel, including flood defence works to the river.
- Work with the OPW, local businesses and community groups to develop a proposal for the Ryan's Hall pedestrian link.

GANTLY STREET MASTERPLAN



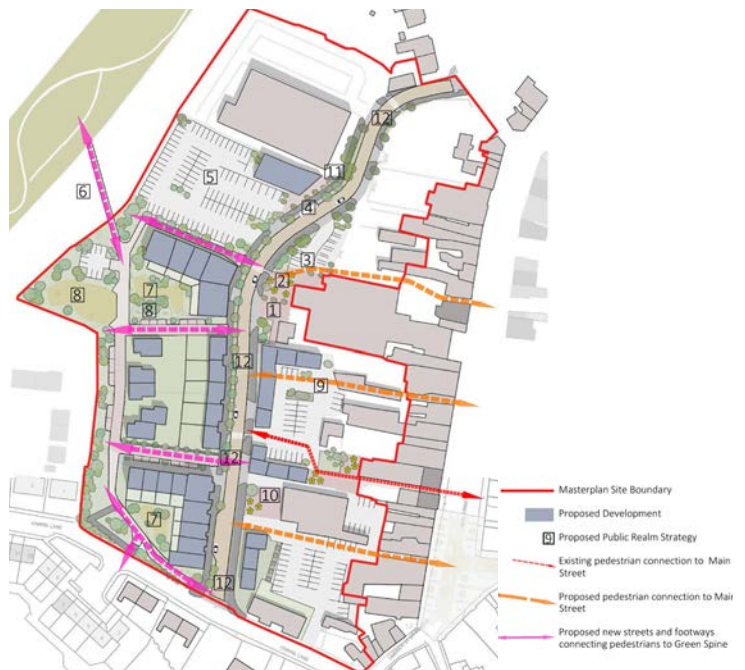
The Gantly Street Age-Friendly Neighbourhood Masterplan states its intent is to act as a catalyst, and be a transformative town-centre regeneration project. It aims to drive the sustainable residential, social and economic development of Roscrea into the future. As such, it is proposed to enshrine the objectives of the Gantly Street masterplan in the Town Centre First plan.

Phase 1 of the masterplan is currently being progressed by Tipperary County Council. Phase 2 of the masterplan is being progressed as a design competition for age-friendly housing being run by the RIAI.

Further study should now be carried out for phase 3, 4 and 5 of the masterplan. The Town Centre First Plan will have particular focus on Phase 5, how the backlands of Main street could be activated to stitch back into the progress on the Gantly Street lands. This will have particular relevance in enhancing an existing laneway connection and creating three potential new laneway connections.



Gantly Street Masterplan Phasing



Key Project Criteria

Draft LAP 2023-2029 Policy Alignment (Abridged)

- Objective 3.7 Deliver on the collaborative vision as set out in the Gantly Street Master Plan.

- Ensure Phase 5 of the Gantly Street Masterplan integrates with the proposed upgrades to Main Street and the Laneways.
- Ensure Phases 2-4 of Gantly Street promote the principles of a ten-minute town with a mixture of uses, amenities, and appropriate compact living.
- Ensure Gantly Street encourages people to explore Roscrea Town on foot, increasing footfall in the urban core.
- Create opportunities for reactivation of vacant buildings through Phase 5 of Gantly Street and the opening up of new pedestrian routes.

GLEBE PARK



Glebe Park is critical to the success of Roscrea as a place to live and work, since it is the only substantial area within the Urban Core zoned as Amenity. Therefore if Roscrea is being promoted as a town to live in 'above the shop' scenarios, Glebe Park will need investment as both green open space, and a play space for children.

The park and playground should be modernised and transformed into a playable, biodiverse parkland, marrying play and environment to create both a wild and exciting playable parkland, and a green and biodiverse habitat. Currently the park separates out uses and activities, with a clearly defined play space set within a grassed playing field type space which, whilst giving flexibility, doesn't necessarily create excitement and draw people in. Moving forward the playable elements within the space should be surrounded by lush planting that both creates habitat but also intrigue and excitement. Play should be encouraged throughout the park with formal play facilities alongside playable elements. Finally, the Bunnow River should be seen as an extension of the park with the future design using this asset as part of the park design.



View of Glebe Park

Draft LAP 2023-2029 Policy Alignment (Abridged)

- Zoning: Amenity, To provide, preserve and enhance open space, biodiversity and amenity uses. Protect sensitive, biodiverse and scenic locations from development that would adversely affect the environmental quality/sensitivity of these areas.

Key Project Criteria

- Develop Glebe Park as a biodiverse habitat supporting wildflowers and fauna.
- Create integrated playing spaces in Glebe Park immersed in the natural environment.
- Integrate with the River Mall greenway.
- Provide seating areas, a diversity of outdoor spaces, to be a communal garden for all the residents of Roscrea.
- Include sustainable urban drainage systems in Glebe Park to alleviate flooding risk.
- Make Glebe Park a space that can be enjoyed all year round, in all weather conditions.

LOURDES ROAD MASTERPLAN



Over the years, this 5.3ha site has hosted a number of pharmaceutical employers: Antigen, Miza and Taro factories. Antigen had been located in Roscrea since the 1960s, at its peak 300 people were employed on this site. Today a number of smaller business have been established in the Eastern quarter of the site.

The Town Centre First plan recommends a masterplan be prepared to future-proof the site, maximise its potential and better integrate it back to the Town Centre. A large portion of this site could be given back to the local community with a linear park along the Moneen River, which bisects the site and creates a substantial floodzone. A key connecting site to the north-west should be explored as a potential riverside walk to the Railway station. The masterplan would also have to repair the street frontage on Lourdes Road, with active uses on the street, to make a more dynamic and pedestrian-friendly environment.



Artist's Impression of reimaged Lourdes Road

Draft LAP 2023-2029 Policy Alignment (Abridged)

- Zoned Regeneration: Provide for targeted enterprise and/or residential-led regeneration within the consolidation area on underused sites
- Objective 3.6 - As part of the Town Centre First Plan, prepare site development briefs for sites zoned for 'Regeneration' with consideration to the provisions of existing plans and studies in place for Roscrea.
- Objective 4A - Enable enterprise and employment development in Roscrea
- Objective 7C - Support and work with the local community in the development of blue and green infrastructure an in enhancement of the biodiversity, amenity and conservation value of the River Bunnow corridor.
- Objective 8B - Integrate a nature based approach to SUDS, with a focus on biodiversity

Key Project Criteria

- Masterplan proposals for an active street frontage on Lourdes Road.
- Activate the river, through greening, walking trails amenities etc.
- Explore a pedestrian connection through the site to connect to the rail station.
- Masterplan a mix of uses, including potential residential components, to support the existing enterprises on the site, and open the possibilities for more employment in the future.

MAIN STREET REGENERATION



The main street regeneration project has two components:

2.1 Redesign of Main Street Layout

To deliver a better balance, parking on Main Street should be reorganised, rather than accommodating perpendicular parking bays, bays should be accommodated parallel to the carriageway. In addition, and supported by the surveys, parking should be implemented to best support the adjacent businesses, restricting parking to 20-30 minutes, rather than the existing 2 hour bays. For more detail see Appendix C. This would also improve the pedestrian safety, with cars leaving or entering perpendicular spaces causing a safety hazard.

2.2 Reactivation of Roscrea's Laneways

The improvement of Roscrea's Laneways off main street should be prioritised to improve connections to adjacent, longer-stay parking lots behind Main Street. These laneways would be enhanced through planting, public realm, lighting and art.



Illustration of Redesigned Main Street

Draft LAP 2023-2029 Policy Alignment (Abridged)

- Zoned Urban Core: Provide for the development and enhancement of urban core uses including retail, residential, commercial, civic and other uses.
- Objective 3.2 Work with and support landowners of sites with potential for regeneration and development to enable their planning and delivery as part of a Town Centre First programme.
- Objective 3.5: Develop and improve areas in need of regeneration, renewal and redevelopment
- Objective 6A: Actively seek funding for investment in active travel and public transport in the town in line with the provisions of the Sustainable Travel Plan.

Key Project Criteria

- Make Main Street a place that invites people to stay and enjoy the dynamic town centre, not simply a place for people to jump out their cars and into a shop on their way home.
- Areas of seating, tree planting and bicycle parking should be provided along Main street. Rain-gardens should be incorporated within the 'parking zone' created at the edge of carriageway to break up parking and loading whilst also providing an important environmental function.
- Every effort should be made to simplify vehicle movements and parking to increase safety and reduce awkward turning maneuvers; maximise the place function and downplay the movement function; to create a pedestrian priority street, that vehicles can use. Continuous footways at side streets could be used, as well as crossings over Main Street being tabled, with footway materials breaking up carriageway space.
- Phase 2 would extend public realm improvements along Grove street to connect to the Rail Station.

ROSCREA PLAZA



Following successful design studies there is an opportunity to bring previous work and current thinking together to develop a refined set of proposals for Roscrea Plaza that maximises on the opportunity of the laneways and improvements around Castle Street and Main Street. The revised scheme should ensure that the laneways from Castle Street and Main Street steer the scheme development, bringing people from these two areas along exciting, interesting laneways that give them a different experience of the town centre. The axis of these laneways can be used to set out the new Plaza to better stitch the external town centre (Castle Street + Main Street) with the internal town centre (Central Plaza). The River should also feature more heavily in the Plaza design, incorporating more blue / green infrastructure within the space and minimising the dominance of highway characteristics to create a pedestrian priority space throughout. There is also an opportunity to bring the Plaza scheme together with the existing hardstanding space by Tesco that holds a play facility, to make them work as one community space.



Artists Impression of Roscrea Plaza Lands

Draft LAP 2023-2029 Policy Alignment (Abridged)

- **Objective 3.5: Develop and improve areas in need of regeneration, renewal and redevelopment.**

Key Project Criteria

- Integrate any proposal in with the public realm proposals for Main Street, Castle Street and the Laneways.
- Incorporate green and blue infrastructure into the space. Use the potential of the River Greenway to soften and animate the Roscrea Plaza. Use nature-based solutions for flood protection and sustainable urban drainage.
- Combine proposals for Roscrea plaza with the hardspace to the supermarket entrance, and proposals for a semi-public space to the rear of Grant's Hotel.

ROSCREA RIVER GREENWAY



The Roscrea River, referred as such due to its three possible names: The Bunow, Mall and Moneen, offers a huge potential to activate and rejuvenate the town centre. The River Greenway is an opportunity to thread biodiversity and nature throughout the town centre experience, making the town centre a more attractive place to live; making public and active transport more inviting; and sparking regeneration interest and activity throughout. Creating this Green Spine through the town centre will also give us the opportunity to increase biodiversity and greening for the town centre, making it a more attractive place to visit and live whilst defending the town against surface water run off and flooding.

Certain stretches are prime for walkways/ viewing points and biodiversity: The junction of Abbey street and Limerick street, The Mall, The backlands of Castle street, the Lourdes Road former pharmaceutical site. The Greenway can significantly improve the connection between the town centre and Roscrea Train Station, which can have a huge impact on the desirability of public transport use and the reduction of short vehicle trips in the town.

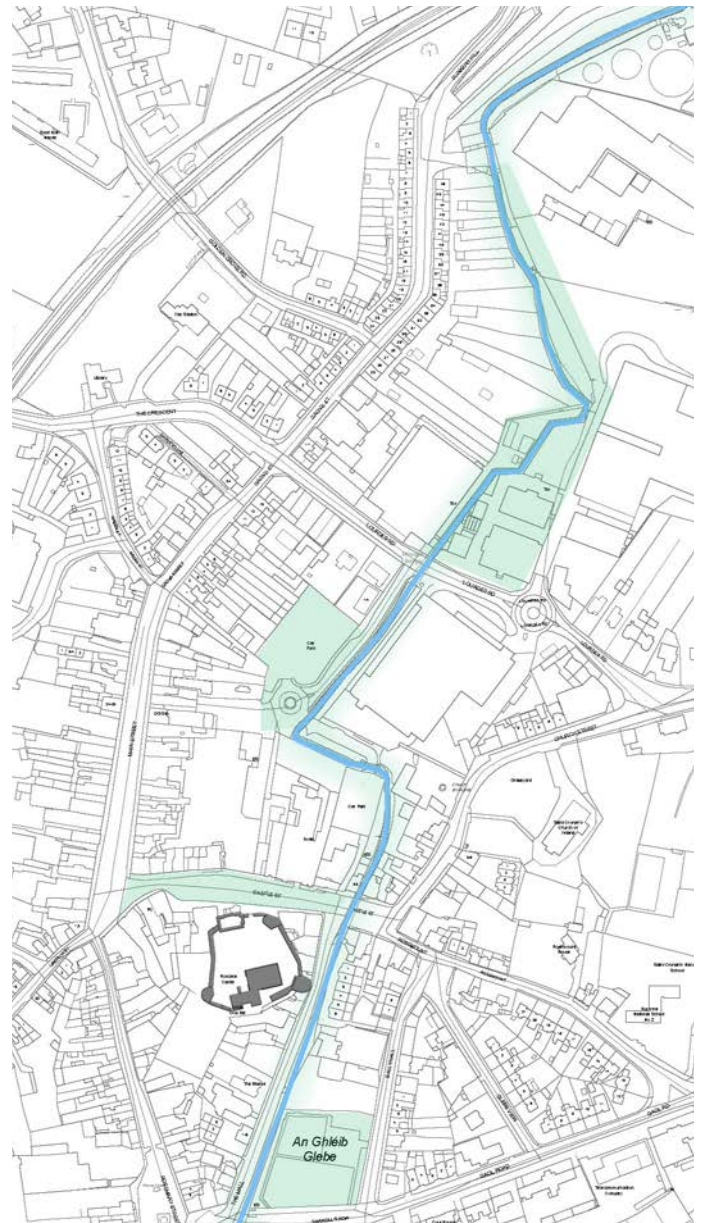


Illustration of conceptual greenway

Draft LAP 2023-2029 Policy Alignment (Abridged)

- Objective 7C - Support and work with the local community in the development of blue and green infrastructure and in enhancement of the biodiversity, amenity and conservation value of the River Bunnow corridor.
- Objective 8B - Integrate a nature based approach to SUDS, with a focus on biodiversity as part of a new public realm and public sector development

Key Project Criteria

- Protect and enhance the existing riparian corridor.
- Make light-touch and sensitive interventions to open up the river to the public, including viewing platforms, benches, walking trails.
- Introduce nature-based solutions to mitigate flood risk throughout the town.
- Introduce educational programmes to inform local children about the natural benefits and ecology of the Roscrea river.
- Identify opportunities for businesses to maximise the River greenway, cafés, restaurants etc.
- Explore the possibility of a pedestrian connection to the rail station along the river.

ROSCREA SMART TOWN



This project proposes to transform Roscrea into a Smart Town/Village.

'Smart Villages' (applicable to Irish rural towns) broadly refers to rural communities that build on and enhance existing strengths and assets through creative solutions, embracing innovation to create attractive and sustainable places in which to live and work. Community is at the heart of the Smart Village – a key principle is that communities steer the course of their own sustainable, resilient and smart future. The aim is to ensure that these communities are attractive places to live and work in, with sustainable population growth, equitable access to services and a good quality of life for all.

The design and delivery of Smart Village measures in Europe is most often supported under LEADER, the EU's initiative to support rural development projects across the member states. The number of Smart Village Strategies prepared and implemented will be a new result indicator for the LEADER programme 2023-2027. The North Tipperary Development Company (NTDC) administer LEADER funding for SMART Villages in north Tipperary. Funding for Smart Villages may be made available through the new LEADER Programme 2023-2027. Further information will be available from NTDC in Q4 2023. Steps toward developing Roscrea as a smart town could be developed as part of further study of the findings of the Roscrea Digital Blueprint (2023), it identifies the areas of Digital Town Readiness that are weakest, such as Digital Business, Digital Civil Society and Digital Tourism and other areas that need improving to stay competitive to peer towns.

A component of Roscrea's development as a smart town is the **Roscrea Enterprise, Digital and Social Impact Hub (REACH) project**. This will see the transformation of a 1,064 sqm vacant commercial unit (vacant since 2011) into an enterprise, education and community innovation hub with superior connectivity through 1 gigabit broadband.



Illustration of the REACH project building

Key Project Criteria

- Help build the capacity of local communities to utilise new technologies and to empower them in addressing challenges and shaping their future.
- Give participating communities an understanding of how to engage with and apply new technologies to thrive, addressing areas such as renewable energy, health and communication.
- Unlock new opportunities for employment and support enterprise and innovation through collaboration and the development of supporting infrastructure.
- Develop the REACH project as an enterprise, education and community innovation hub in Roscrea's backlands.

ROSEMARY SQUARE



The Square has been lost from Rosemary Square in Roscrea with both forks of the street (Rosemary Square in the west and Rosemary Street in the east) now being given over to vehicle movement and storage. The scheme should reinstate the square by rebalancing parking provision in Rosemary Square - reattaching the fountain and tree planting back to the public realm and frontage to the west, whilst maintaining vehicle movement and some parking along Rosemary Street. The restored space should be a community space that builds on the green and soft nature already provided by the mature tree planting to create a space of calm and relaxation, of play and socialising.



Illustration of Rosemary Square

Draft LAP 2023-2029 Policy Alignment (Abridged)

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- Objective 3.5: Develop and improve areas in need of regeneration, renewal and redevelopment
- Objective 6A: Actively seek funding for investment in active travel and public transport in the town in line with the provisions of the Sustainable Travel Plan.

Key Project Criteria

- Restore the Civic Presence of Rosemary Square through appropriate landscaping and planting.
- Carry out parking surveys to determine how to manage the parking in Rosemary square.
- Create a bio-diverse, green square with opportunities for people to sit, rest or play.
- Protect and enhance the existing mature trees on Rosemary square and the historic fountain.

ST. CRONAN'S GATEWAY



There are two components to St. Cronan's Gateway:

7.1 Public Realm Upgrades create St. Cronan's Gateway

The Eastern fringes of Roscrea Town present a number of opportunities for Public Realm upgrades, which together can combine to create St. Cronan's Gateway. This would highlight the previous focus of the town in ancient times, along the Slí Dála trail. In cases it involves giving back leftover 'baggy' space to pedestrians or businesses, or creating a change in public realm character at key viewing points. As Church street passes in between the ancient St Cronan's arch and the tower (both identified as National Monuments), this moment should be marked through public realm intervention to both allow people space to take in these beautiful heritage assets. It would also slow vehicles and protect them, especially true of the arch, which is currently immediately adjacent to the carriageway. For more detail on the St. Cronan's Gateway proposal see Appendix C.

7.2 Interpretative Element to the Round Tower

Some of the public consultation suggested a viewing platform at the round tower, this project should explore the feasibility of this or less-intensive interpretative features to this historic monument, perhaps a camera obscura.



Illustration of St. Cronan's Gateway

Draft LAP 2023-2029 Policy Alignment (Abridged)

- Policy 7.4 Safeguard sites, features and objects of archaeological interest in Roscrea (in situ where practicable or as a minimum, preservation by record) included in the Record of Monuments and Places and sites.

Key Project Criteria

- Create a change in public realm character that invites drivers to change their behaviour and drive in a more urban context along the Dublin road.
- Explore the potential to protect the archway through traffic management solutions.
- Create a sensitive landscaping treatment suitable for both National monuments.
- Explore light-touch interventions to create an interpretative element to the Round Tower.

LONG TERM PROJECTS

Upgrade of Roscrea Rail Station

The 2023-2029 Draft Local Area Plan notes the Council's objective to liaise with Irish Rail and the NTA to better tailor the Roscrea Rail service to the local community. The Town Team should inform this process by canvassing the needs of the community as part of a submission to the All-Ireland Strategic Rail Review in 2023 or 2024. The sustainable travel plan of the Local Area Plan notes the vehicular junction to the rail station is particularly unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists. The public realm improvements to Main street should therefore be extended up Grove street to the Station on a phased basis to improve pedestrian safety. The masterplan for Lourdes Road could also offer a safe alternative route to the station.



Roscrea Rail Station, 2023



Train at Roscrea Rail Station, 2023

Regeneration of the Sacred Heart Convent

This 0.78 hectare site includes a series of buildings established by the Sacred Heart Convent, dating back to 1845. The Sacred Heart Order left the premises in 2009 and it has remained vacant since. It is a very prominent site in Roscrea, located on a hill overlooking the town. The convent is a protected structure and has key heritage features in need of restoration.



Sacred Heart Convent, Convent Hill

As set out in the draft Local Area Plan, the Town Centre First proposal for the convent would be to commission a feasibility study for adaptive re-use of the existing fabric for a mix of uses including educational or hospitality use. A residential component could be accommodated on the upper floors with numerous precedents for adapting old convent buildings to residential use.



Sacred Heart Convent, Rear Elevation

Refurbishment of the Abbey Hall Building

Building on the existing arts culture in Roscrea would be a key objective of this plan. Dating from 1920-1930, the Abbey Hall building is identified of Regional interest in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, it is not currently on the record of protected Structures. The building is used regularly for live music performances, theatrical performances, community classes and gatherings. Roscrea Musical Society have their recitals and stage performances in the building currently. The site area is 0.08ha and includes a small carpark which could be reaccommodated elsewhere and developed on.



Abbey Hall, 2023



Abbey Hall, 2023

Redevelopment of the former Quarry on the Birr Road

A masterplan is required for this 0.2 hectare site, to rehabilitate the former Quarry area, integrate with the adjacent Gantly Street age-friendly masterplan, create a frontage onto Birr Road and an appropriate frontage onto the railway line.



Birr Road Former Quarry, 2023



Birr Road Former Quarry, Aerial View



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