

# **Elphin Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement & Redevelopment of the Former Courthouse to Provide a Cultural/Community Centre**

## **Proposed Development**

## **Part 8 Documentation**

**September 2020**

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An Environmental Impact Assessment Report, in respect of this Part 8 Planning Proposal, has been carried out and is included in Appendix A.

An Appropriate Assessment Screening has been carried out and is included in Appendix B

# INTRODUCTION

Project Ireland 2040 is the overarching policy and planning framework for the social, economic and cultural development of Ireland. It includes both the 20-year National Planning Framework (NPF) and a detailed capital investment plan for the period 2018 to 2027, the National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2027. The NPF outlines the broader policy principles and priorities to plan, in a more strategic, sustainable and coordinated manner, for future population and economic growth over the next 20 years.

The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) has been established to support more compact and sustainable development, through the regeneration and rejuvenation of Ireland's towns, villages and other areas, in line with the objectives of the National Planning Framework and National Development Plan. This is to enable a greater proportion of housing and commercial development to be delivered within the existing built-up footprints of our towns and villages and to ensure that more parts of our urban areas can become attractive and vibrant places in which people choose to live and work, as well as to invest and to visit.

The proposed project involves two main elements, principally:

## **1. Elphin Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement**

This element of the project has been developed to ensure areas within the urban footprint of Elphin, namely Chapel Street and Main Street are reimagined to become more amenable, safe and pedestrian friendly spaces. This scheme will enhance key points of interest along these street, provide formalised parking spaces and provide a central amenity area adjacent to the Bank of Ireland to allow for a safe public space which can facilitate social gatherings and a staging point for events. This scheme will ensure that the community and visitors will benefit from a revitalised town centre, bringing with it the benefits of an enhanced public realm and an increase in town centre footfall.

## **2. Redevelopment of the Former Courthouse to Provide a Cultural/Community Centre**

This involves a complete refurbishment of this town centre focal landmark, which will see a repurposed building providing a multifunctional range of cultural and community services. The redeveloped former courthouse has significant potential to develop as a resource for education, training, local and cultural events, festivals and community services. This town centre facility will serve as a valuable resource to the community creating opportunities ranging from social engagement and cultural activities to business/employment development. The refurbishment of the building, particularly the front façade of the exterior, will have a significant uplifting impact upon the streetscape of Elphin which is within an Architectural Conservation Area.

## Scope of Works Proposed

### Chapel Street/Main Street

- Reimagined space which delivers the concept of shared surfaces and a more pedestrian friendly environment
- Widening of pavements and introduction of formalised parking spaces to serve visitors, residents and commercial premises
- Integrate services and underground infrastructure to facilitate temporary staged events, markets, lighting, power, water etc.
- New lighting (lamps and potentially lower bracket lighting) to create a more intimate and convivial space
- Undergrounding of overhead ESB wires
- Appropriately sited public congregation areas to strengthen this reimagined more people friendly space

### Redevelopment of the Former Courthouse

- Refurbishment and repurposing of this building to provide a multifunctional cultural/community resource in the centre of the town
- This building will be refurbished internally and externally to provide a central high quality building which will provide a range of community/social/cultural/educational/training services.

## PROJECT VISION

It is widely recognised that what makes a quality town centre is its attractiveness, its accessibility and its amenities. Elphin is an architecturally attractive and highly accessible destination, however the town centre requires an positive injection in terms its public realm and community amenity offer.

In securing the delivery of this project, it will create a significant transformation in the centre of Elphin through reimagined, active and attractive spaces within the heart of the town. The works will provide a functionally diverse urban centre, focused on shared, safe spaces, serving both the pedestrian and vehicle., along with a revitalised courthouse which will serve as a resource for all members of the community. The proposed development will have a positive impact upon the economic, social and physical environment of Elphin, stimulating a greater level of investment to be steered towards the town centre.