

DECEMBER 2025

# Ballaghadereen

Urban Design Analysis & Appraisal



Comhairle Contae  
Ros Comáin  
Roscommon  
County Council



STUDIO MYCO

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# 01 Introduction

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# Overview of this Study

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**Ballaghaderreen has significant potential to draw on its attractive urban fabric and strong community and heritage assets to revitalise the town centre, address vacancy and dereliction, and situate the town as a 'Gateway to the West'.**

Roscommon County Council appointed Studio Myco to deliver an urban design analysis and appraisal for Ballaghaderreen town centre, in accordance with the Town Centre First Policy.

A range of information, documentation and surveys have already been compiled into a Town Centre Health Check. This study synthesises and complements that information with a focus on the urban design analysis required as an intrinsic part of the Town Centre First Plan process. It should be noted that this is an initial study that will need further work and community and stakeholder engagement to develop the ideas further.

This report is structured as follows:

**The Ballaghaderreen Story:** An overview of the town's context and its heritage.

**Engagement Insights:** A summary of the key insights emerging from community surveys undertaken by Roscommon County Council.

**Urban Design Analysis:** Using the guidance and framework set by the Town Centre First Policy, this chapter assesses the key issues and opportunities of the urban environment of Ballaghaderreen town centre under the five themes of:

- Movement & Connections
- Nature, Landscape & Public Realm
- Land Uses & Economy
- Social, Community & Culture
- Built Form

**Ballaghaderreen Reimagined:** Based on the issues and opportunities identified, initial proposals for potential key projects and supporting actions are set out, with the aim of creating a more viable, vibrant and attractive town centre for residents, businesses and visitors. Potential funding sources and recommended next steps are identified to help move the projects forward to the next phases of design and engagement.



Map of Ballaghaderreen within Ireland and County Roscommon

# Town Centre First Policy Context

**The Town Centre First policy aims to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community.**

Town Centre First represents a new approach to the development of our towns where local communities and local businesses can be central to reimagining their own towns and planning their own futures. The policy recognises that each town is unique and thus requires unique solutions to address the challenges and opportunities they face. It acknowledges that a “one size fits all” approach will not deliver the outcomes we all want for our towns.

The policy sets out 4 key elements for the development of the Town Centre First Plan:

- 1. Collaboration and Communication** - Identifying and engaging key stakeholders, from statutory bodies to local interest groups and citizens, to understand local needs and aspirations.
- 2. Understanding the Place** - Understand the context of the town and its heritage - including physical, demographic, social, economic, political, topographical and built environment, architectural data, along with historical and cultural stories and traditions.
- 3. Defining the Place** - Develop clear opportunity areas from the issues identified through the research and engagement that form the bedrock of an inspiring vision and deliverable goals with short, medium and long term interventions. These will be co-designed with stakeholders to build buy-in and civic ownership of the vision and proposed interventions.
- 4. Enabling the Place** - Identify opportunities for quick-wins and longer term implementation, management and monitoring, linking back to key strategic priorities, to ensure the plan is actionable, well supported and that social, economic and environmental benefits to the town and wider region are maximised.

**The focus of this study is within Stage 2 Understanding the Place, specifically an urban design analysis, to provide a basis for high level recommendations for Defining and Enabling the Place.**

## The Town Centre First policy recognises that successful places:

- Are characterised by an **attractive public realm** (streets, spaces and parks) that is designed to invite people to meet, mingle and dwell
- Contain a **variety of services and shops** that provide employment opportunities, enable people to shop locally and meet the needs of the local community
- Provide a **range of cultural, recreational and community spaces** (that includes scope for periodic events and festivals) that bring together community members and attract visitors/tourists
- Contain a **well maintained building stock** that creates visual interest and animates streets and spaces
- **Conserve, adapt and highlight historical buildings and streetscapes** that provide the town with a unique identity
- Are **attractive vibrant places** for enterprises to grow and develop
- Are well **connected and accessible** to sustainable modes of transport, enabling a high proportion of journeys to be made by foot and/or bicycle from the immediate hinterland (e.g. the ‘10 minute town’ concept)
- **Manage traffic** within central areas so that **streets prioritise vulnerable users (pedestrians and cyclists)**, enabling them to move about safely and in comfort
- Provide a **mix of housing typologies and tenures** to cater for diverse communities in terms of age, income and mobility
- **Utilise digital technology** to enhance the experience of living and working in towns, enabling greater choices in terms of location and lifestyle
- Provide opportunities for the **amenity, health and well-being** of residents, workers and visitors.

# 02 The Ballaghadereen Story

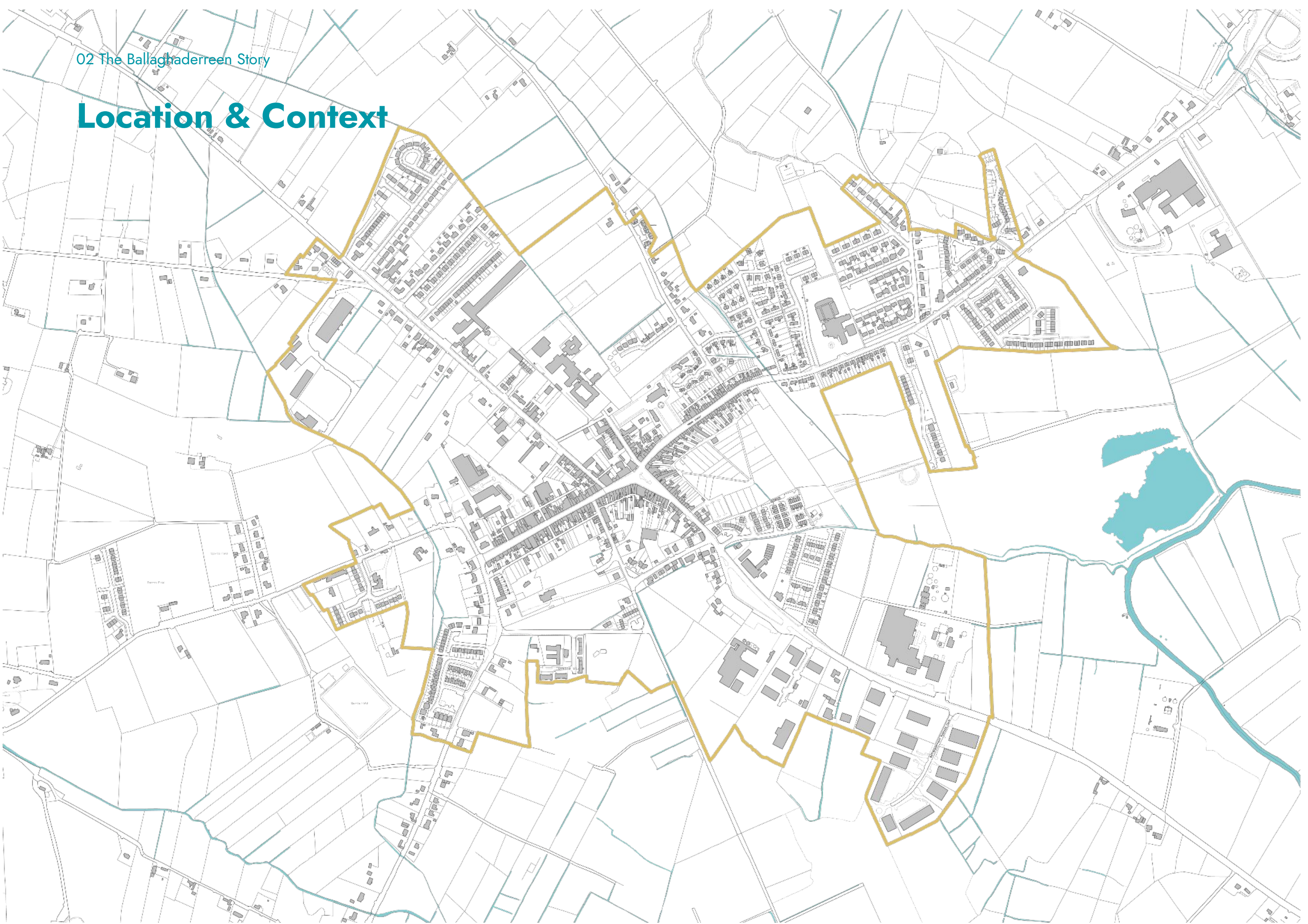
- 2.1** Location & Context
- 2.2** Character & History
- 2.3** Urban Morphology
- 2.4** Built Heritage
- 2.5** Natural Heritage
- 2.6** Regeneration Context







# Location & Context





## Location & Context

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Ballaghaderreen (Bealach an Doirín, 'The Way of the Little Oak') is a strategically placed town situated beside the national N5 Dublin/Castlebar route close to the Mayo border in north-west Roscommon.

The town sits just north of the Lung River as it flows north-east to Lough Gara, and on the Beara-Breifne Way, Ireland's longest national way-marked trail. This natural environment, together with nearby attractions such as Bockagh Hill and Lough Gara, offer recreational and 'slow tourism' opportunities, situating the town as a 'Gateway to the West'. Knock, Ireland's National Marian Shrine which attracts over 1.5 million pilgrims each year, is 30 minutes by road from Ballaghaderreen.

Ballaghaderreen is a Cathedral Town and acts as an administration, business, educational, leisure, retail and service centre. It has an attractive urban fabric and strong community and heritage assets but experiences high levels of deprivation and vacancy. It has a wide regional catchment area, but in recent years the activity levels in the town's core have declined in favour of more peripheral development.

Ballaghaderreen is designated a 'Self-Sustaining Growth Town' in the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028, which means it provides a moderate level of jobs and services with good transport links and the potential for sustainable growth. In Census 2022, Ballaghaderreen had a population of 2,387, which represented 3.4% of the County and an increase of 32% from 2016, a much higher rate of growth than both the County and State (8.9% and 8.1% respectively).

Whilst it hosts a number of successful business, significant numbers of people living in the area commute to towns such as Castlebar, Sligo and Longford for employment.





## Location & Context

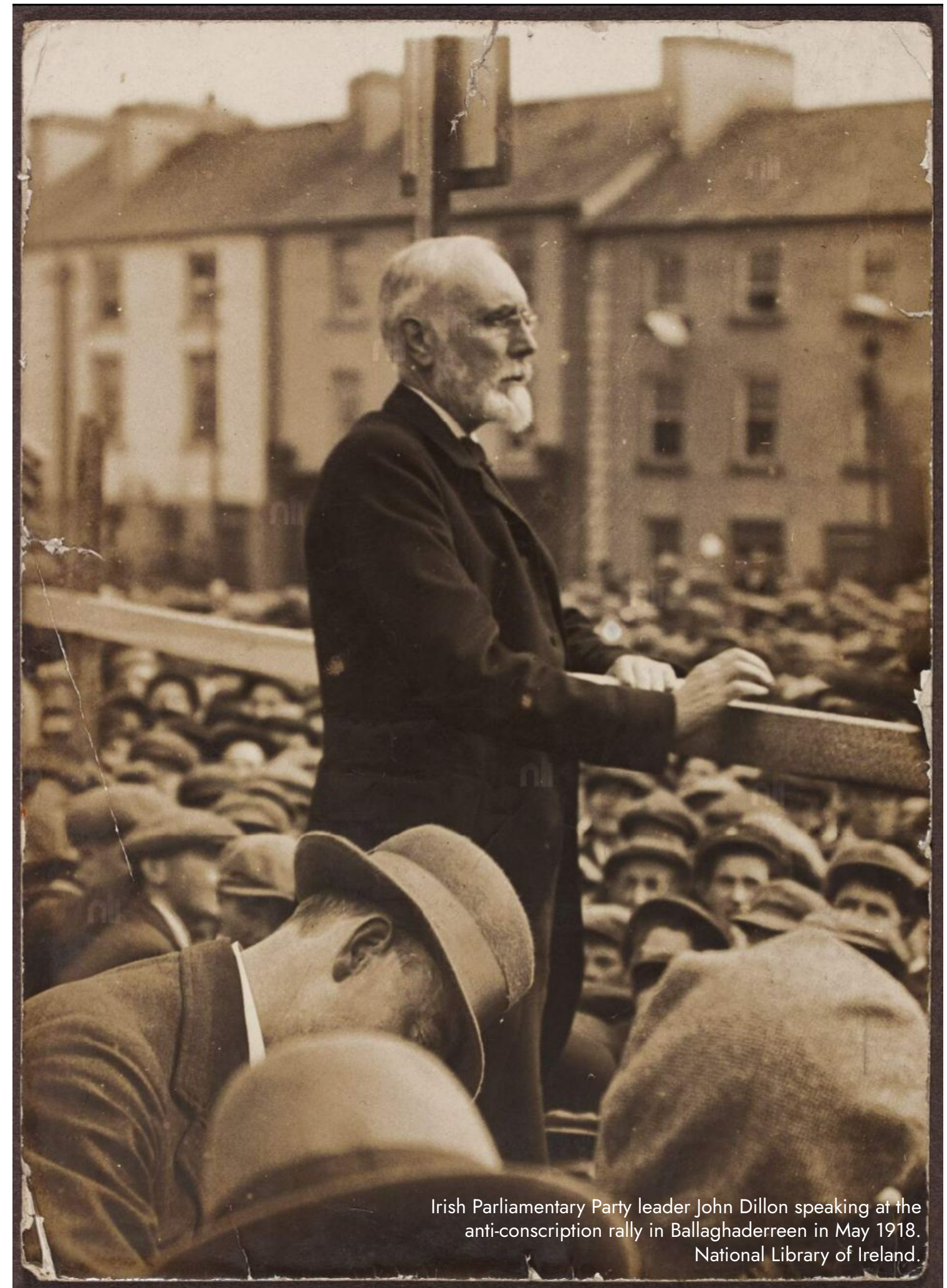
Though not without its challenges, the Ballaghaderreen community has been celebrated for its exemplary inclusion of Syrian nationals, following the establishment of an Emergency Reception and Orientation Centre (EROC) in 2017 for refugees from the Syrian Civil War. In April 2018, the community was honoured with a People of the Year Award.

In 2022, the proportion of people who were of ethnicity other than White Irish (46.5%) was higher than Roscommon (16.1%), and the State (18.4%), reflecting a diverse population.

The Pobal Deprivation Index identifies Ballaghaderreen ED as an area experiencing disadvantage, with higher Age Dependency Ratio (40.41%) and Lone Parent Ratio (21.58%) than the County (38.63% and 14.74% respectively). Health and education levels are generally lower than the County and State, though technical or vocational qualifications were higher.

Although it was in the past, Ballaghaderreen is no longer directly served by rail. The nearest railway stations are situated in Castlerea (20km) and Ballymote (24km). Public transport is provided by Bus Éireann, a number of private operators and Locallink services. Ireland West airport is 15km to the west, about a 30 minute drive. The town is situated at the junction of a local road, L1244 and R293 regional road.

Ballaghaderreen was previously located on the N5 national primary road linking Longford to Westport, which was carrying almost 5,000 vehicles per day. However, the town was bypassed in September 2014 with the re-routing of the N5 to the north of the town. This has reduced HGV and through traffic and created the potential for a much more vibrant and people-friendly town centre.



Irish Parliamentary Party leader John Dillon speaking at the anti-conscription rally in Ballaghaderreen in May 1918.  
National Library of Ireland.



Historical map of Ballaghaderreen  
Published 1900  
Reproduced with the permission of the  
National Library of Scotland

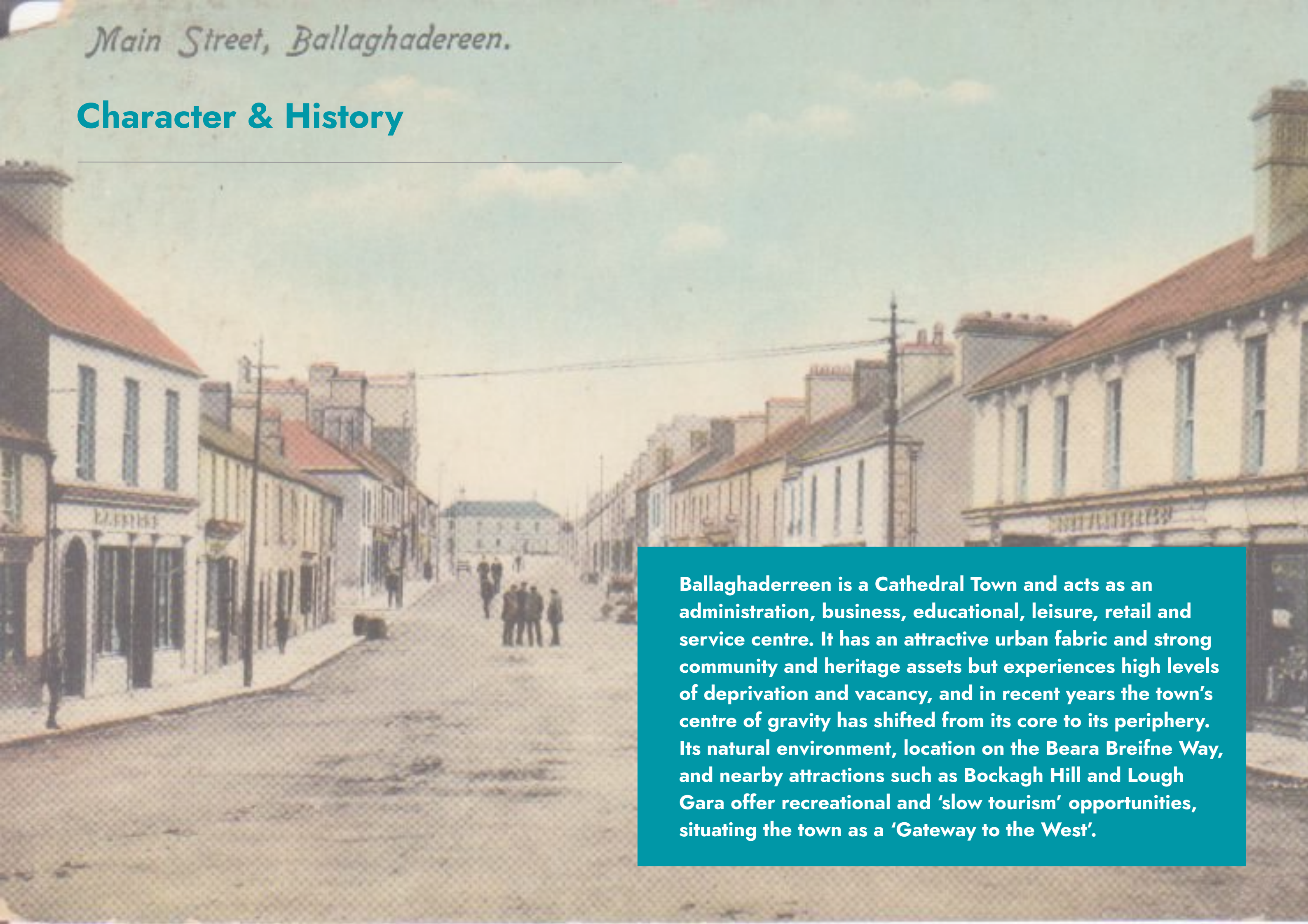
Historical map of Ballaghaderreen  
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*Main Street, Ballaghaderreen.*

## Character & History

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**Ballaghaderreen is a Cathedral Town and acts as an administration, business, educational, leisure, retail and service centre. It has an attractive urban fabric and strong community and heritage assets but experiences high levels of deprivation and vacancy, and in recent years the town's centre of gravity has shifted from its core to its periphery. Its natural environment, location on the Beara Breifne Way, and nearby attractions such as Bockagh Hill and Lough Gara offer recreational and 'slow tourism' opportunities, situating the town as a 'Gateway to the West'.**



# Character & History

## Origins and Establishment as a Market Town

Ballaghaderreen is perhaps first mentioned in the The Annals of Lough Ce in 1548. The name of the town in Irish, Bealach an Doirín, is usually translated in English as "the way of the little oak." According to folklore, there was a little oak tree near where the coaches stopped and on this account it was called Ballaghaderreen. Ballaghaderreen has operated as a fairs and market town since the 1700s. In 1786, Viscount Dillon applied for a patent to hold eight fairs annually, and in 1795 the town is home to seven annual fairs. Lord de Freyne and Viscount Dillon construct the Military Barracks around the end of the 18th century.

## 19th Century Growth and Establishment as a Cathedral Town

Like most of Ireland's rural towns, Ballaghaderreen's growth as an urban centre largely took place in the 1800s when it expanded from a basic fairs site to a significant sub-regional centre, acquiring many significant civic, community and religious buildings on the way, and also becoming linked into the railway network. In 1812, Thomas Dillon opens the grocery shop which, as Monduf, becomes a large employer. St Mary's Graveyard is created in 1820. As of 1837, the town was recorded as having 1147 inhabitants in about 200 houses and as "rising in importance" as a post-town, being on the then new mail coach road from Ballina to Longford. A Court House, Market House, Dispensary and Barracks are in place by the mid 19th Century. The Cathedral of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary and St Nathy is consecrated in 1860. Many of the buildings which form the historic town core today, comprising Market Square, Main Street, Barrack Street and Pound Street, were built during this time.

In 1862 the Sligo and Ballaghaderreen Junction Railway was established with the intention of building a railway line from Killfree junction to Ballaghaderreen, connecting the town with the Longford to Sligo train line. In 1862, the 'Bill application' was presented and agreed to by Westminster. Insufficient share capital amongst other problems prevented the project in going ahead. In 1869, Strickland, Viscount Dillon and members of Sligo Corporation raised the necessary fifty thousand pounds. The Ballaghaderreen Terminus opened in 1874. The company ran at a loss, which resulted in a take-over by the North Western and Great Union of Ireland Railway Company. Agricultural produce was the main traffic carried on these lines with local business flourishing. The town is transferred from County Mayo to County Roscommon in 1898.





# Character & History

## 20th & 21st Centuries

The town continued to function and prosper as a market and service centre well into the 20th century, despite the post-Famine decline and acute difficulties being experienced by the rural west of Ireland generally. However, for a century-and-a-half from the Famine, Ballaghaderreen's population effectively remained static, until from the 1990s it again experienced dramatic growth.

Many significant developments took place in the 20th century, including the installation of a gas-fired electricity power plant in 1906, which was converted from gas to hydro in 1912. The tower is added to the Cathedral in the same year. In 1963, the railway is closed for business. The Railway Terminus Station – including a Victorian style ticket office - is all that remains of this once great enterprise. The North Connacht Farmers Coop milk factory (now Aurivo) opened on the Dublin Road in 1972 and remains important to the economy of the town and region today.

Ballaghaderreen is noted for its historical architecture, which is evident in many landmarks throughout the town today. The historic core of the town, comprising the Market Square, Main Street, Barrack Street and Pound Street area, provides a mixture of town centre uses, including retail, commercial, residential and community services. This area of the town is characterised by two and three storey nineteenth century residential, retail and commercial buildings, which provide a sense of enclosure and a tight knit urban grain, as well as a sense of character and identity for the town centre. These core areas remain relatively unchanged since the mid twentieth century, with some expansion to the north-west to accommodate a larger scale supermarket development.

Whilst the town centre demonstrates areas of high architectural quality in terms of building form and layout, there is evidence of vacancy and dilapidation in many areas of the town core. There has been substantial outward expansion of the town towards peripheral areas which took place in the early 2000's, while many of the central areas of Ballaghaderreen comprise of redundant, undeveloped and/ or underutilised brownfield/ backland sites. A key opportunity for the town is therefore to avoid further urban sprawl and instead seek to revitalise the town centre through steering development towards existing sites within the town core which could be developed or redeveloped.





# Urban Morphology



## 1837

Historical maps produced from surveying dated 1837 show Ballaghaderreen established around the focal point of Market Square, which forms the junction of Main St, Pound St, and Barrack St (though these streets are not labelled on the map). The Church, Barrack and National School are clearly indicated as prominent landmarks, as is Beech Mount, a house which frames the approach into Ballaghaderreen from the south. The distinctive pattern of 'The Plots' commonage, with footpaths radiating from a central meeting place and well, is established in the east side of town.

## 1900

A later map dated 1900 shows the infrastructural changes as a result of the introduction of the Ballaghaderreen Railway Terminus, which opened in 1874. The town core structure remains relatively unchanged, though changes to the street pattern are noticeable to the west and south, and an extension of built form to the west. New landmarks include the Cathedral, the Shambles, and the Court House, which terminates Main Street. The Plots and its laneways remain, and additional laneways are evident behind the buildings lining Main Street and Market Square.



# Urban Morphology



## 1837

As shown in historical maps also dated 1837, Ballaghaderreen was established around the focal point of Market Square, which forms the junction of Main St, Pound St, and Barrack St. The generously proportioned Market Square remains at the centre of the town's physical and social structure. Other key structuring elements that remain today include the distinctive pattern of 'The Plots' with footpaths radiating from a central meeting place and well, as well as narrow laneways behind the buildings to the south of Market Square (which are later extended further).



## Current

Since the introduction (in 1874) and then closure (in 1963) of the Ballaghaderreen Railway Terminus, the town has continued to expand outwards. Main Street in particular has seen significant expansion to the west. The historic core of the town, comprising Market Square, Main Street, Barrack Street and Pound Street, is characterised by terraced two and three storey 19th century buildings, which provide a sense of character, enclosure and a tight knit urban grain, complemented by the spacious central Market Square.



## Built Heritage

### Dillon House (c.1780):

This detached three-storey building is the former home of the Dillon Family, an important family in the history of the town. Not only a successful business family, they were also accomplished parliamentarians. In 1814, John Blake Dillon, was born in this house. John was a founder of the Young Irelanders and James Dillon, Leader of Fine Gael (1951 – 1963), also lived there. It was a meeting place for many dominant political figures in twentieth-century Ireland. Located on an elevated site on the main axis of the Market Square, this building holds a position of prominence within the town and is the most dominant building viewed on the approach into Ballaghaderreen. Its form is enhanced by the substantial porch, while the stucco detailing enlivens and highlights its architectural design. It is currently in use as a library and offices.

### St Nathy's College (c.1798):

St Nathy's complex, comprises a school, former barracks and gate lodge. The detached fourteen-bay three-storey former barracks was established in 1798, and a detached U-plan seven-bay three-storey school built in 1916, with extension built 1941 connecting the school to former barracks. The barracks was part funded by the British Board of Ordnance (1414 – 1855) with assistance from local landlords – Barons de Freyne (Frenchpark) and Viscount Dillon (Loughglynn). Both families had held large tracts of land and property in Roscommon, Sligo, Galway and Meath. The Dillons (absentee landlords) owned the land on which the barracks was built. Between the years 1837 – 39, the barracks became the Centre of the Ordnance Survey. In 1996 the three existing secondary schools in the town amalgamated into one school, St Nathy's College. Today it is one of the oldest secondary schools in the country. The monumental size and architectural quality makes it one of the most impressive public buildings in the town.

### The Cathedral (c.1855):

The Cathedral of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Nathy was commissioned by the Catholic Bishop of Achonry in 1855. The plan to build the Cathedral came from Bishop Patrick Durcan (1852 – 75). Nobody knows why he gave the commission to Weightman, Hadfield and Goldie of Sheffield. Within five years Ballaghaderreen had a Gothic church emulating medieval English and French models. The main builder was Mr. John Clarence of Ballisodare, Co. Sligo. W.H. Byrne designed the Belfry and Tower, which was erected in 1912. The cathedral is noted for its beautiful and rare stain glass windows such as The Saint John and Saint Anne windows (1907) by Beatrice Elvery. Among the subjects illustrated in the windows are Saint Nathy and Saint Bridget, Charles Dillon (14th Viscount Dillon 1810 – 1865), and Charles Strickland (1818 -1892, local agent and town planner in County Mayo for Lord Dillon, who partly funded the build). Ballaghaderreen trade families such as Reid's, Gordon's, Beirnes's, Gallagher's, Flynn's and Duffs sponsored many of the windows in the cathedral.





# Built Heritage

## Ballaghaderreen Railway Station (c.1874)

In 1862 the Sligo and Ballaghaderreen Junction Railway was established with the intention of building a railway line from Kilfree junction to Ballaghaderreen, connecting the town with the Longford to Sligo train line. The Ballaghaderreen Terminus opened in 1874. The company ran at a loss, resulting in a take-over by the North Western and Great Union of Ireland Railway Company. The first engine to work the branch was the 'Wren' built in 1854, driven by Ben Partridge (father of William Partridge). Agricultural produce was the main traffic carried on these lines. The Railway Terminus Station is all that remains of this once great enterprise, which closed for business in 1963. The railway tracks have all but disappeared since then, as well as the Station Masters house. A Victorian style ticket office remains, though in a derelict state. The Goods Store, located further up from the terminus was converted to a dance hall in the sixties and is currently used as a venue for jiu-jitsu.

## Duff's:

The main building was the original trading premises for Monica Duff & Co. In 1812 the Dillon family moved to Ballaghaderreen. Thomas, his eldest son, started a shop, trading as Monica Duff & Co (Monica was the daughter of Luke Dillon). By the 1880's, the firm had its own MONDUF brand label on almost every grocery and household product on the market and became one of the largest employers in Ballaghaderreen. It also housed the town's Post Office. Renowned for its 'MONDUF' unsliced and unwrapped pan loaves, which had been the town's favourite bread for more than 100 years. It closed its doors for the last time in 1986.

## Gallagher's (c.1830)

Gallagher's built by Michael Gallagher (c. 1830) served as both a butcher's and publican house – the license of which remains in the Gallagher family. At the front of this building, the original timber sash windows with stone sills and timber lettering, with scroll-shaped butcher brackets survive intact. Meat hung from these brackets before days of refrigeration. Inside the shop, there are small wooden barrels – containers from which whiskey was sold, drank and bottled. Gallaghers was then a clothes shop, run by Mary and Michael Gallagher. It was recorded that at one time, there were up to 40 to 50 licensed premises in Ballaghaderreen. Some of the pubs held fair-day licenses. This meant that they could open early in the morning on fair days. It was very usual for publican houses or pubs to have another business in their premises. Many pubs carried groceries and dry goods; others operated as hardware stores. One such example can be found further up on Main Street on the same side of Gallagher's pub and hardware store J. Mulligans (c. 1944).



*Note: the information and images presented here are partly sourced from the town's website (ballaghaderreen.com), an initiative of the Ballaghaderreen Town Team. Top image of Ballaghaderreen Railway Station sourced from the National Library of Ireland.*



# Built Heritage

## The Tower House:

The Tower House is a distinctive landmark that in former times was the Rent Collectors Office for the Dillons. Other notable occupiers included William P. Partridge and his family. Market Street referred to a 'Tea or Tay Street'. Trading merchants, such as Duff and Flannery's gave bags of loose tea to people who lived on this street for them to pack into 1 lb. bags, to be sold in their shops. Opposite the Tower House is a site that fronts St. Nathy's which is the original location of the old 'Fair-green'. This space held open-air meetings, fairs and public celebrations such as May Day festivities. The Tower house is in private ownership currently.

## St Mary's Convent (c.1876):

This convent complex, built in 1876 to a design by J.J. O' Callaghan in an attractive Gothic Revival idiom is situated within its own grounds on the road leading from Ballaghaderreen. Originally built for the Sisters of Charity. Though no longer in use it remains reasonably intact. The robust walls of both the convent and the chapel are softened by the stained glass detailing seen in the main convent entrance and the large ornate rose window. The tower, gables and steeply pitched roofs add to the setting of the complex. The graveyard with its entrance guarded by kneeling angels and the orchard with its high walls have remained untouched for decades and are a reminder of a bygone era. Much of the original fabric remains untouched and every detail including the rainwater goods was executed with attention to detail.

## 'The Plots' / Garden Quarter:

This significant area in the east of the town centre (north-east side of Market Square and south side of Pound Street) was part of the Garden Quarters or the Plots for the town. This is where locals once grew their vegetables in separate garden plots. The lands were divided up into triangles with pathways between, to allow each house to have its own plot linked by a precise radial pattern of footpaths which led to a circular well. Mrs. Anne Deane (cousin of John Dillon) donated the well for the benefit of the townsfolk. The well has been recently refurbished, and the area is lush with vegetation and wildflowers. This important habitat houses a diverse population of plants such as Horsetail, Yellow Flag Iris, Clover, Silverweed, Cow-parsley and Meadowsweet amongst others. The plots can be accessed by various backways behind the Fiddlers pub for example or near the bottle bank off Barrack Street. Part of the Plots area is planned to be developed into a new public park, with landscaping, exercise equipment, children's play area, skatepark and age-friendly seating. Ballaghaderreen's 'Secret Village' music and artistic expression festival has been run very successfully, using The Plots as its location.





# Built Heritage

## The Four Altars (c.1750):

The Four Altars, a ruin of penal times is situated about 5km from Ballaghaderreen town centre on the main Sligo Road. This building is generally locally called "The Monument". This monument was used in Ireland at a time when Catholicism was banned in the country under the Penal laws of the late 17th and early 18th centuries. These laws forced Catholics to practice in secret resulting in monuments such as the Four Altars. It was constructed on a hill so the priest could see approaching English soldiers and he could flee to avoid being arrested. As its name suggests it has four altars, each within an alcove. The four altars face north, south, east and west so the priest was able to get shelter from the prevailing wind and rain when saying mass. The people heard Mass in the field around the altars. The Four Altars were built probably by Myles Costello who lived in Creggane. The gable of his home is still standing near the Altars. About 60 years ago the stone cross that was on top of the Four Altars was blown down. The present cross was put up about 1872. It is said that there is but one other such building in Ireland.



## Former Power Station (c. 1908):

Locally known as 'the Powerhouse', this power station represents an important component of the early twentieth-century built heritage of Ballaghaderreen. Electric light was introduced to Boyle in 1901 and Ballaghaderreen followed suit when a provisional order was granted (1905) 'by the Board of Trade under the Electric Lighting Acts 1882 and 1888 to the Rural District Council of Castlerea in respect of the town of Ballaghaderreen' (The Electrician 6th January 1905, 478) and a site for a power station was secured (1906) from the Congested Districts Board for Ireland (Roscommon Messenger 30th June 1906, 6). The power station was originally equipped with two suction gas engines but the Ballaghaderreen Lighting Committee subsequently applied to the Local Government Board for a loan of £1,100 to adapt it to hydro-electricity powered by water harnessed from the Lung River (The Electrician 16th May 1913, 235). Before the power station, this was possibly the location of a school. After the power station was closed, the building was subsequently used as a science laboratory for students studying at St Nathy's College and was last used as an art centre and museum (1988-96). A video exploring the building's fascinating history is available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EF5JWEZZiPw>

## The Cut:

Located in a field on the outskirts of town, a constructed site on the Lung River which fuelled a hydro turbine that powered the town from 1913 to the early 1930's. It also housed an outdoor swimming pool, once a focal point for gathering and interaction for the community in the 1970s and 1980s. Video available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZxlds35z7w>





# Built Heritage

## Ballaghaderreen Architectural Conservation Area (ACA):

The Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) in the town centre of Ballaghaderreen is of interest due to its early nineteenth-century town planning origins. The urban form of the square and the tightly-knit terraces of classical buildings lining it, and extending from it, are architecturally important as a group. The ACA incorporates structures that are of individual significance, as well as many modest buildings in the general area. The ACA is also of special historical interest from the point of view of the commercial life of an Irish town as it was the site of businesses which were of both local and national significance. The ACA is focused around the Market Square area of the historic town core, as shown on the following page.

## Record of Protected Structures (RPS):

There are 26 protected structures in Ballaghaderreen, entered on the current Record of Protected Structures (RPS). These structures are safeguarded under Ireland's Planning and Development Act 2000 to ensure their preservation for future generations. The RPS is maintained by the local authority, in this case, Roscommon County Council, and includes buildings, monuments, and features that are deemed of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical interest (structure footprints identified in pink on the map on the following page). Included within this list are Dillon House, St Nathy's Cathedral, St Nathy's College, The Four Altars, the former Railway Station, Tower House, St Mary's Convent Complex and Graveyard, the Courthouse, former Bank, Beech Mount House, and various detached houses, terraced houses, house/shops and a house/pub.

As shown in the bottom right image, the Courthouse acts as an attractive landmark terminating the view looking west down Main Street from Market Square.

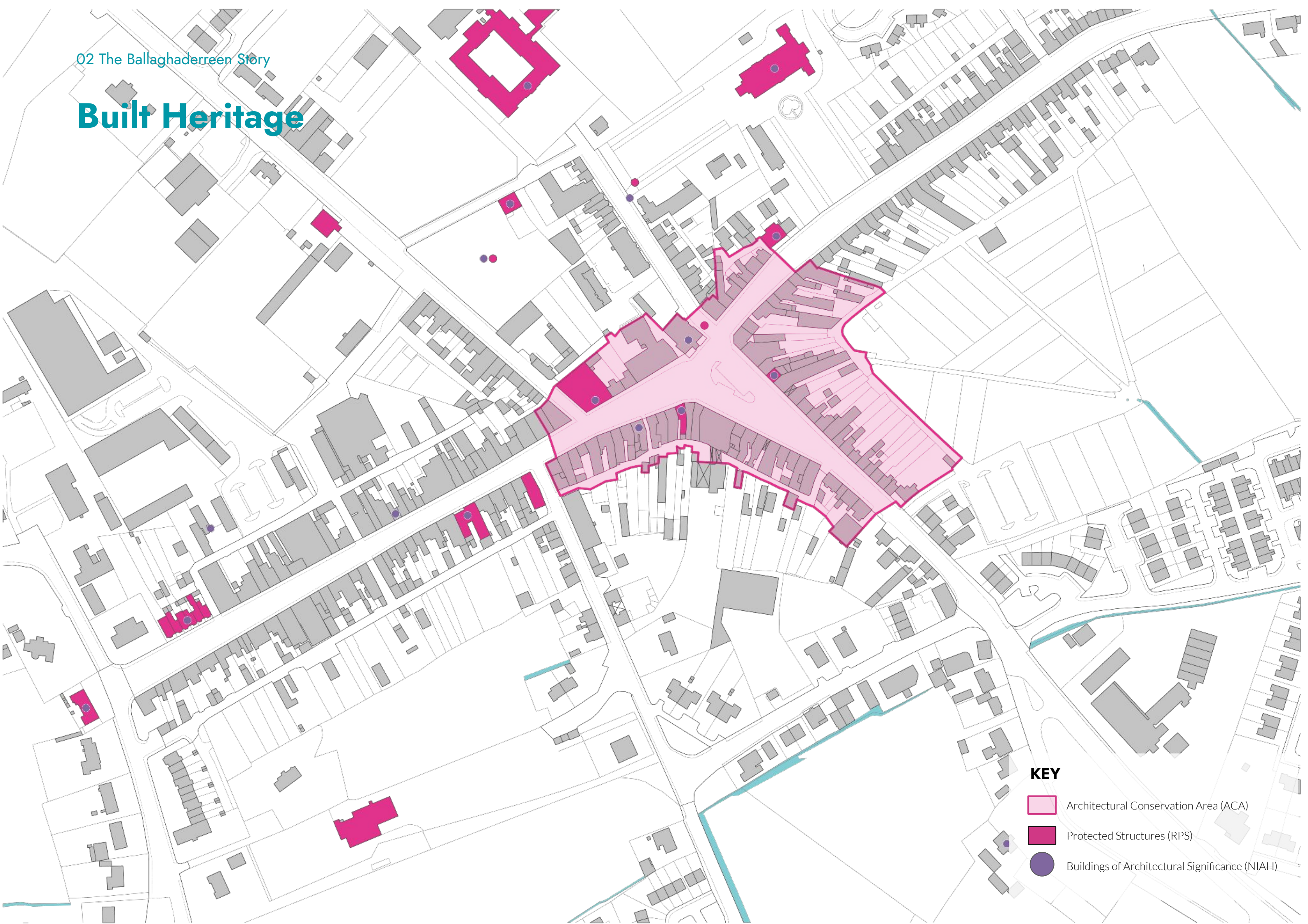
## Buildings of Architectural Significance (NIAH):

While there are 26 specific structures within Ballaghaderreen which are afforded the statutory designation of Protected Structure, the town incorporates a wide array of buildings of architectural distinction which contribute to the architectural heritage of the area, as identified in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) and shown with purple dots in the map on the following page.





# Built Heritage



## KEY

-  Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)
-  Protected Structures (RPS)
-  Buildings of Architectural Significance (NIAH)



Historical map of Ballaghaderreen  
Published 1915  
Reproduced with the permission of the  
National Library of Scotland



**Anna Deane (1834-1905)** was a pioneering entrepreneur, philanthropist, and a key figure in the fight for tenants' rights in Ireland. She transformed Monica Duffs store from a simple shop into one of the most successful businesses in the region, which included hardware, grocery, haberdashery, millinery, clothing and footwear, a bottling plant for Guinness, and a 'select' bar, with private snugs for 'ladies'. Her incredible business acumen was matched by her commitment to social causes, making her a beloved figure in her community and beyond. She worked alongside legendary figures, such as the leaders of the Land League - Michael Davitt and Charles Stewart Parnell. (Source: Anna King, [www.annaking.ie/anne-deane/ballaghaderreen-creative-places](http://www.annaking.ie/anne-deane/ballaghaderreen-creative-places))

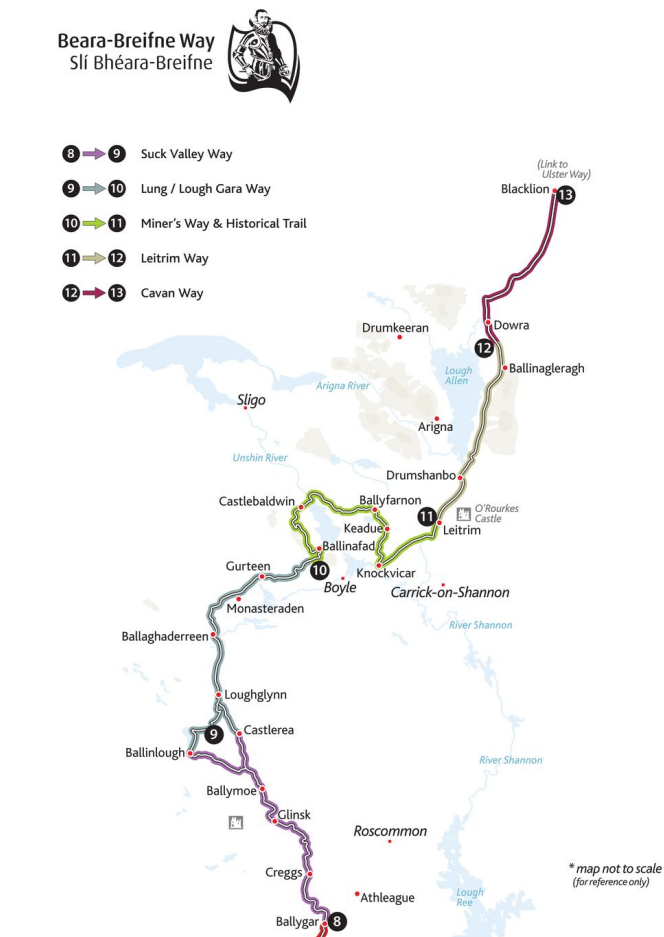


# Natural Heritage

There are no designated sites within Ballaghaderreen, however, there are a number of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) within a 15 kilometres radius of the town. The town also falls within two Landscape Character Areas (LCA), as defined in the Landscape Character Assessment which forms part of the Roscommon County Development Plan - LCA 22: **Cloona Lough and Lung River Bogland Basin** and LCA 23: **Ballaghaderreen and Bockagh Hill Uplands**. Both areas are defined as being of Moderate Landscape Value, reflecting their nature value and low lying scenery of the watercourses. **Bockagh Hill** is located about 5km outside of Ballaghaderreen, offering a pleasant walk and panoramic views of the mountains which are in counties Mayo, Roscommon, Galway, Leitrim, Sligo, and Donegal.

**Lough Gara** is only 4 miles east of Ballaghaderreen town. Lough Gara was known in ancient times as Loch Techet, but the O'Garas, during their ownership of the Coolavin district from about the thirteenth century, renamed the lake "Loch Uí Ghadhra". The first documented reference appeared in 1285. Even though the family lost control of all their Coolavin townlands about 1650, their name has remained on the lake to the present day. The area around Lough Gara is referred to as "O'Gara heartland". Lough Gara is famed for having a high number of crannógs or ancient habitations on its shores and is perhaps one of Ireland's best kept secrets. These crannogs were discovered in 1952 when drainage work was carried out on the lake. The word crannóg comes from the Irish words, crann, meaning tree, and óg, meaning young or, more accurately, small woods. There are various estimates of the actual number of crannógs on Lough Gara, with numbers ranging from 145-369. Crannógs are man-made islands mainly used as a defensive refuge or stronghold. It is thought they were occupied by various social classes with them being used as royal residences, ecclesiastical settlements and also serving as craft centres. The crannógs at Lough Gara date from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age making them over 2000 years old.

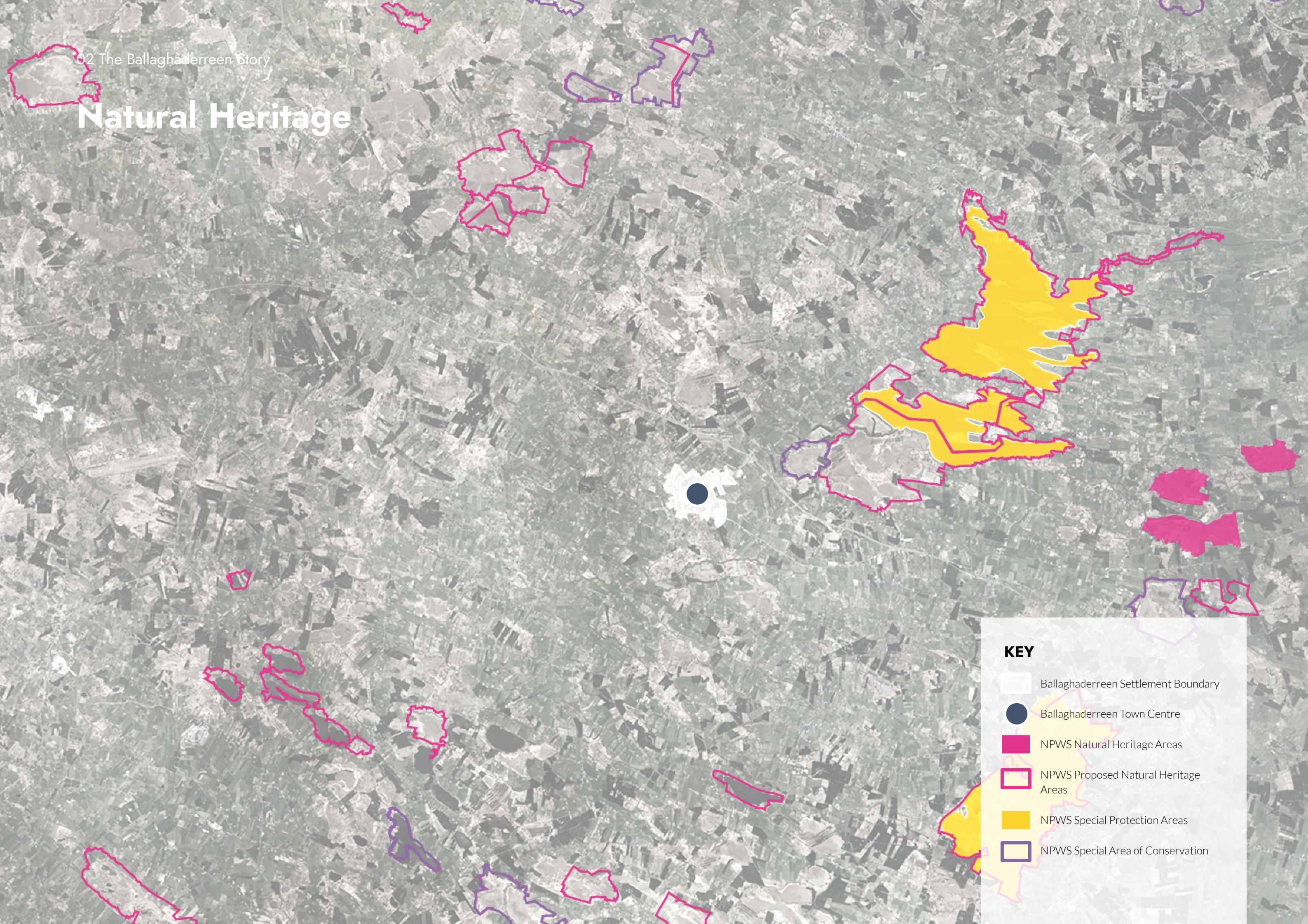
Ballaghaderreen is located on the **Lung/ Lough Gara Way, part of the Beara-Breifne Way**, which is Ireland's longest national waymarked trail. It follows the legendary fourteen-day march taken by Dónal Cam O'Sullivan Beare and his one thousand supporters in 1603, and it visits many of the places and communities shaped by their story. The Way runs almost the length of the country and takes walkers and cyclists to some of the most beautiful and least explored areas in Ireland, along the coast of the Beara Peninsula, across six mountain ranges, along the banks of the River Shannon and through the lake regions of Roscommon and Leitrim. Travellers can collect stamps along the way to fill the Way's 'passport', including in Durkins or the Fiddlers in Ballaghaderreen.



*Note: the information and images presented here are partly sourced from the town's website (ballaghaderreen.com), an initiative of the Ballaghaderreen Town Team.*



# Natural Heritage



## KEY

-  Ballaghaderreen Settlement Boundary
-  Ballaghaderreen Town Centre
-  NPWS Natural Heritage Areas
-  NPWS Proposed Natural Heritage Areas
-  NPWS Special Protection Areas
-  NPWS Special Area of Conservation



# Regeneration Context

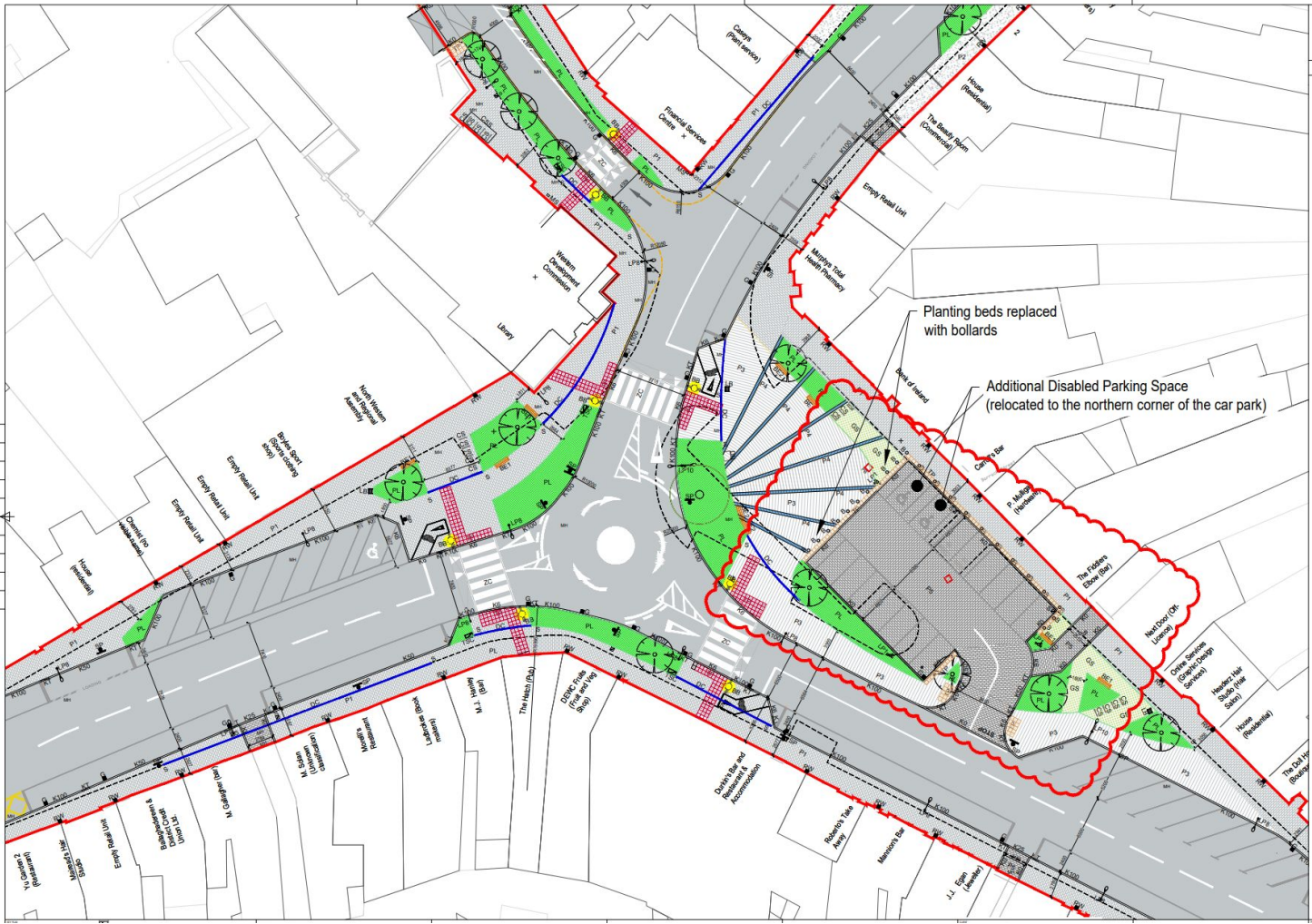
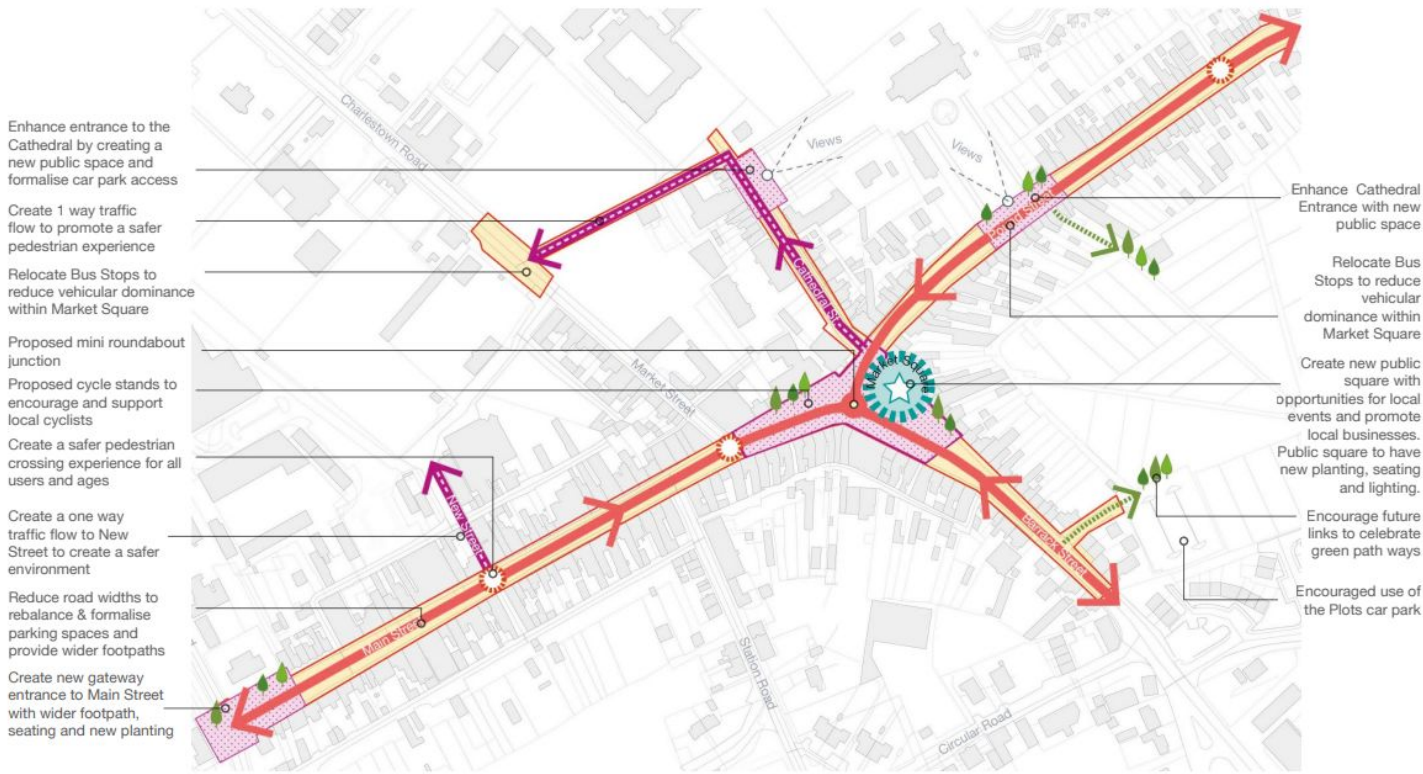
Ballaghaderreen has a proactive Town Team that include business owners, individuals and residents working collaboratively with local government to improve the town. Working with the Town Team, Roscommon County Council has recently led / planned a number of strategic investment projects within Ballaghaderreen, that have been considered as part of the town centre regeneration context, summarised below:

|   | Project                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Status       |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Ballaghaderreen Town Public Realm and Active Travel improvements, including enhancements to Market Square, Main Street, Barrack Street and Pound Street (pictured opposite, subject to a series of objections and design changes to ensure a balance between a useable and attractive public space capable of hosting events / markets, and providing short stay parking /loading areas that support the market town function, everyday use and vitality of the town centre) | In Progress  |
| 2 | Covid Fund: Website development, gazebo/tables/chairs, Christmas lights, signage, bog oak                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Complete     |
| 3 | Ballaghaderreen GAA Club: Development of Car Parking Area, Disabled parking and viewing area of main pitch.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Complete     |
| 4 | Ballaghaderreen to Kilfree: Feasibility Study to convert old Ballaghaderreen to Kilfree Railway as Greenway                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Complete     |
| 5 | Ballaghaderreen Community Park, including all weather pitch and walking track                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Complete     |
| 6 | Ballaghaderreen Plots: Creation of a welcoming, inclusive and accessible town park, offering outdoor recreation in the centre of Ballaghaderreen.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Design Stage |
| 7 | Ballaghaderreen Childcare Facility - The Growing Tree: Convert existing building into a purpose-built facility to provide childcare for 210 children.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Approved     |
| 8 | JT Ballaghaderreen Community Centre: Refurb old filling station to provide Community Centre and EV Training                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Approved     |
| 9 | Refurbishment of library to provide a My Open Library                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Complete     |

Two other significant regeneration initiatives are described in the following pages - Creative Places Ballaghaderreen and An Bealach.

## THE FUTURE OF BALLAGHADERREEN

Roscommon County Council intend to enhance Main Street, Pound Street, Barrack Street, and Cathedral Street (see highlighted in the map below). The Design Vision sets out to create a thriving town centre, creating safer pedestrian spaces whilst formalising and rebalancing the streets and roads around them. The design aims to follow the guiding principles set out below:





# Regeneration Context

## Creative Places Ballaghaderreen

Creative Places/Cumas Ceantar is an Arts Council national programme for places around Ireland that have not had opportunities to benefit from sustained investment in the arts and creativity. It aims to enable people to create and run vibrant, accessible and stimulating local arts programmes, and to build capacity and engaged artistic and cultural practice into their town and its hinterlands.

Creative Places Ballaghaderreen is a 3 year funded programme to support development and engagement with the Arts in Ballaghaderreen over the next 3 years. With a permanent Project Coordinator based in Ballaghaderreen and funding from The Arts Council and Roscommon County Council **the programme aims to strengthen connections across the community, support local artists to thrive, and help ensure that creativity is recognised as a vital part of Ballaghaderreen’s development and future.**

Coordinated through the Council Arts Office, the project has already engaged three artist-researchers (Nollaig Molloy, Julie Sharkey and Anna King) in year-long residencies (from Nov 2023 to Nov 2024) to deliver socially engaged sessions with the local community and targeted local groups. Projects encompassed themes of heritage, biodiversity, drama, visual arts, writing, history and mindfulness. They mentored early career artists, worked alongside a growing local artist network, and produced / curated a number of stand-alone events and for Ballaghaderreen Arts Festival, Heritage Week, and Culture Night.

Outputs included key reflections (below) and a vision: **“Building a Better Ballaghaderreen where arts, regeneration & creativity are central to a vibrant, diverse & proud community.”**

Further information on Creative Places Ballaghaderreen, including research findings and programme highlights, is available at:  
<https://www.roscommoncoco.ie/coco/en/services/community/arts-office/creative-places.html>



KEY REFLECTION FROM THE YEAR

Time is important for relationships and trust to grow, and for ideas to form and develop.

Creative Places Ballaghaderreen Research & Development Year

RICH HERITAGE

Celebrating the area's Resources and Reconnecting with Place.

"Found it really good, brought a real highlight on the hidden, forgotten areas in Ballaghaderreen as well as a real creative buzz in the town."

- Local Artist

Creative Places Ballaghaderreen Research & Development Year

CONNECTION

Opportunities and Spaces to gather, get to know each other, showcase, connect and collaborate.

"As a multicultural, diverse community - creativity, connection to place and art can help us all work towards commonality, create discussions and potentially address and heal some of the current difficulties."

- Local Artist

Creative Places Ballaghaderreen Research & Development Year

LOCAL CREATIVE TALENT

"I found that perhaps the biggest success of the entire initiative in 2024 was reaching out to local creatives and rallying them together, where before there was no central group where everyone could meet. Indeed, we all found that there is absolutely no shortage of artistic and literary talent in Ballaghaderreen and its surrounding areas."

- Local Artist

Creative Places Ballaghaderreen Research & Development Year

BUZZ ABOUT BALLAGH

Sharing good news stories has a ripple effect.

"Art is really Alive in Ballaghaderreen. Continuing on from a successful showcasing summer. #ballaghtalent"

- Public Comment on 3-of-Arts event social media post.

Creative Places Ballaghaderreen

An aerial photograph of the town of Ballaghaderreen, showing the town's layout, buildings, and surrounding green landscape. The image is part of a promotional graphic for Creative Places Ballaghaderreen.



# Regeneration Context

## An Bealach

On a key vacant site within Ballaghaderreen town centre - the Fairgreen site adjacent to St. Nathy's College - Bealach Nua CLG is proposing to develop An Bealach, a cutting-edge multi-unit innovation hub for the creative industries, designed to drive regional economic growth, enterprise development and skills training.

An Bealach is a community-led collaborative public/private initiative that aims to deliver tangible impacts as envisioned by national, regional and local strategies, by providing global industry standard facilities for XR, traditional stage content production, live audience events and showcases together with a suite of training and incubation services.

Bealach Nua Cuideachta Faoi Theorainn Ráthaíochta is the registered not-for-profit entity which trades as An Bealach. The lead public agency is Roscommon Integrated Development Company (RIDC). The An Bealach project also has the backing of Roscommon County Council, GRETB, GMIT, Western Development Commission, Tusla and North West Roscommon CDP CLG and is supported by Leader, RCC, RRDF and Enterprise Ireland funding.

Since its inception its main focus has been on the development of a Hub for the Creative Industries in the Region. The plans incorporate a 25,000 square foot educational and working hub along with a 7,500 square foot separate building comprising a cutting edge technology studio with augmented and virtual reality services. An Bealach addresses the identified national and global industry need for small to medium sized facilities. The immersive technology studio will be the only such studio in the Republic of Ireland, benefiting from proximity to an international airport which facilitates the necessary links to the European and UK Immersive Tech markets, vital for industry collaboration, R&D, and for sustainable growth.

The project has now received full planning permission from Roscommon County Council (June 2023). The next step is the provision of an updated Business Plan and Cost Benefit Analysis which is underway. The Board of An Bealach are now working with local business interests and the Roscommon Diaspora to ensure that the provision of public monies can be matched with a direct input from the private sectors.

Further information on the project is available at: <https://anbealach.com/#Overview>





# Regeneration Context

The vision for Ballaghaderreen has already been clearly set out by the community, Town Team and key stakeholders through strategic and planning policy processes, including the 2020-2025 Community and Economic Plan for Ballaghaderreen, the Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028, and the Local Community and Economic Plan for the County.

The **Ballaghaderreen Community and Economic Plan 2020-2025** contains useful information and analysis about the place and its people, a brief urban analysis, and a SWOT Analysis. Through a series of community workshops, a collective vision for the future of the town was developed (highlighted below).

To help deliver this vision, an action plan is then set out, structured around five themes:

- 1. Team Ballaghaderreen
- 2. Town Appearance and Image
- 3. Business and Innovation
- 4. Culture and Creativity
- 5. Recreation and Tourism

These aspirations, themes and actions have helped shape the proposals within this report, ensuring that the vision and priorities of local stakeholders are reflected and that there is a coordinated approach.

**“Ballaghaderreen, a gateway to and from the west that’s an eye-catching, safe and prosperous town in which to live, work, shop and relax.”**

Ballaghaderreen Community and Economic Plan 2020-2025 Vision

**“Enable Ballaghaderreen to develop as a settlement dedicated to the growth of a vibrant and competitive creative sector and related industrial base, capable of providing opportunities for new and existing enterprises to support the local community and economy.”**

Vision for Growth, Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028

The Vision for Growth in Ballaghaderreen as identified in the **Roscommon County Development Plan 2022-2028** Settlement Plan is highlighted above. In order to achieve this vision, the Plan goes on to say that: “in order to promote Ballaghaderreen as a sustainable economic engine, capable of serving its resident community and its wider hinterland, the spatial development of the town needs to focus on creating a strong compact centre which will serve to regenerate the existing town core.”

A number of detailed policy objectives and zoning plans are also set out in the Settlement Plan for Ballaghaderreen, which will guide future development. Policy objectives most relevant to Ballaghaderreen town centre and to this study include:

- BN2: Identify and facilitate the development and renewal of vacant sites, obsolete areas, derelict sites and derelict buildings in a manner appropriate to the area.
- BN3: Promote and develop the creative sector and related industries within Ballaghaderreen to enable opportunities for new and existing enterprises to scale and grow.
- BN4: Promote the development of the Town Core as an intensive, high quality, well-landscaped and accessible environment. Facilitate an appropriate mix of residential, commercial, service, tourism, enterprise, public and community uses that provides a range of services, facilities and amenities to serve the local community and visitors to Ballaghaderreen.
- BN5: Promote the development of the identified Town Centre Residential Opportunity site for the delivery of new residential development.
- BN6: Encourage residential use of vacant upper storey space over commercial premises on the main thoroughfares of the Town Core.
- BN7: Encourage the regeneration of derelict buildings and appropriate mixed use development on infill sites, including residential development and upper floor apartments.



# 03 Engagement Insights

- 3.1** Overview
- 3.2** Movement & Connections
- 3.3** Nature, Landscape & Public Realm
- 3.4** Land Uses & Economy
- 3.5** Social Community & Culture
- 3.6** Built Form



# Overview

The Town Centre First policy aims to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community. The Policy recognises that successful places will:

- Optimise connectivity and accessibility to promote sustainable mobility.
- Manage traffic to reduce the impact of private vehicles on public spaces and living environments.
- Enhance public spaces to create attractive, accessible streets for all, including those with disabilities.
- Encourage a mix of uses to generate activity, supporting both daytime and nighttime economies.
- Promote diverse housing options and opportunities for rightsizing over time.
- Explore climate action opportunities in urban development.
- Embrace digital transformation and new ways of working post-pandemic.
- Maximise the potential of cultural and heritage assets.
- Refurbish or repurpose vacant and derelict buildings for reuse.

The Policy also outlines **five key themes**, or assessment criteria, for exploration during the development of a Town Centre First Plan to better understand the challenges facing the town, and the subsequent opportunities for change. The themes and a brief description of each is provided opposite.

The following pages summarise the key needs and aspirations of the local community, gathered through surveys conducted online and on the streets within the town in late 2024, structured into the five themes. Ballaghaderreen had the highest response rate compared to similar surveys carried out across the County, with a **total of 559 responses** (on street and online combined).



## Movement and Connections

The accessibility of the town and ease of movement to, from and within the town centre, including the impact of traffic and parking provision on the pedestrian experience.



## Nature, Landscape and Public Realm

The quality and extent of public spaces and street furniture within the town centre, including green infrastructure, landscaping and green spaces for people and nature.



## Land Uses and Economy

The type and level of activity within the town centre, including the mix of uses, variety of shops/services and levels of vacancy/dereliction.



## Social, Community and Culture

How the town celebrates its unique identity and caters to both the local community and visitors through facilities, attractions and events.



## Built Form

The quality of streetscapes, buildings and features that contribute to the unique identity and character of the town centre.





## Movement and Connections

### Assessment Criteria:

The accessibility of the town and ease of movement to, from and within the town centre, including the impact of traffic and parking provision on the pedestrian experience.

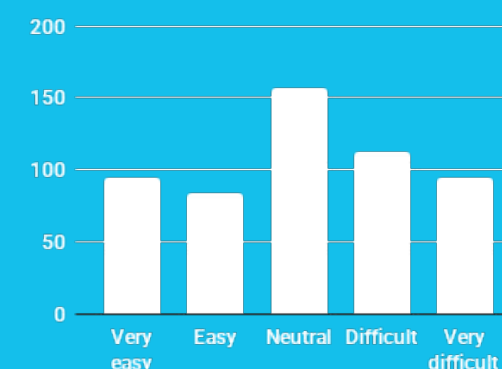
### Engagement Insights Summary:

- **Travel modes:** Most people (81%) travelled to the town centre by private car, followed by walking (10%), public transport (2%) and cycling (1%).
- **Parking:** Parking is a key issue in the town centre, with the majority of respondents strongly disagreeing or disagreeing (31% and 24% respectively) that parking is readily available and in good locations, implying more, well-located parking would be welcomed in the town centre. Parked cars are not generally felt to impede walking, or screen out shopfronts, implying that existing parking is valued as well.
- **Last mile:** After parking, 97% of respondents who drive get to their destination on foot, and less than 1% by bike.
- **Connectivity:** There were mixed views on whether it is easy to reach the centre of the town from the neighbourhoods (35% neutral, 21% agree and 14% disagree).
- **Shortcuts:** 51% of people take a route for ease rather than it being a structured pathway (e.g. a short cut), perhaps including the laneways.
- **Footpaths:** Most people (61% of respondents) think the footpaths are not maintained, e.g. suitable for buggies/ wheelchairs/mobility scooters.
- **Accessibility:** According to respondents, the easiest way to get around Ballaghaderreen is on foot, followed by car and bike. It is very difficult for those using a wheelchair, mobility scooter, or with other mobility impairments, and fairly difficult for those wheeling a pram/buggy.

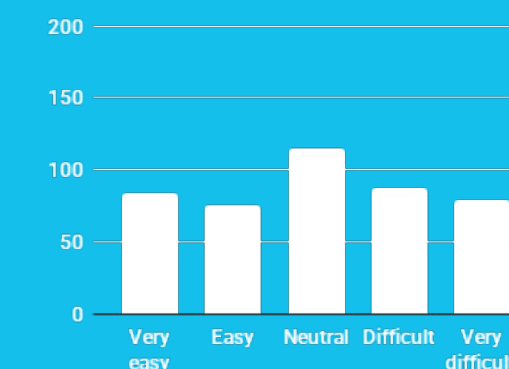
## Accessibility & Inclusivity

### How easy is it to get around Ballaghaderreen?

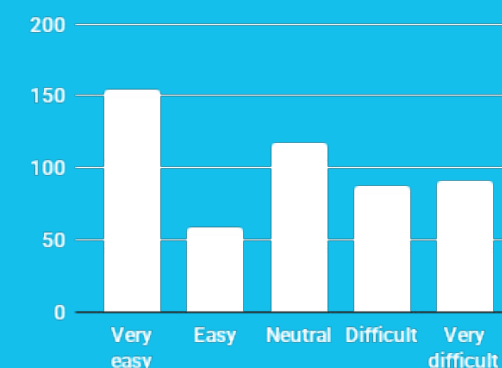
#### By Car:



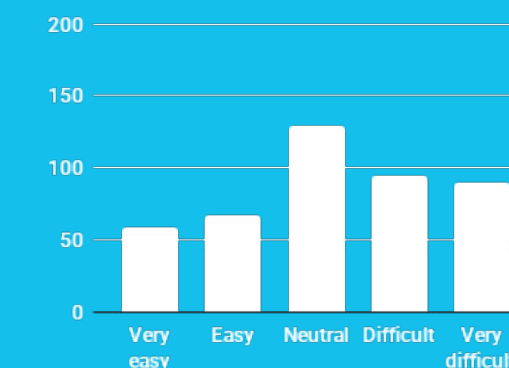
#### By Bike:



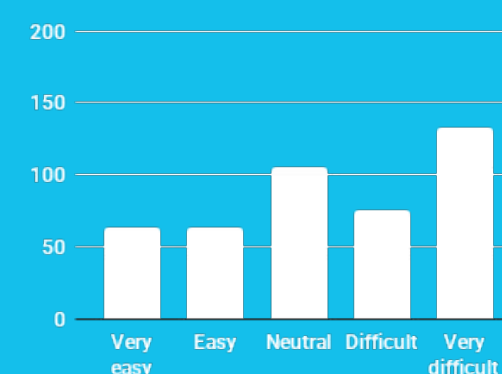
#### On Foot:



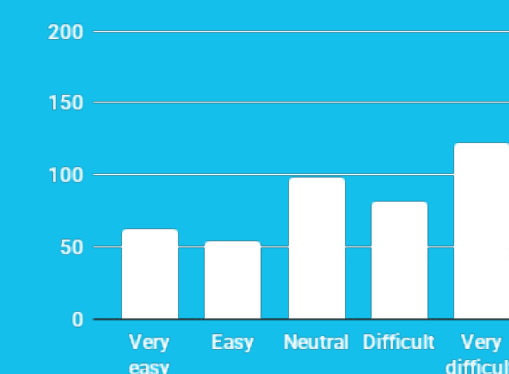
#### Wheeling a pram/buggy:



#### Wheelchair/mobility scooter user:



#### Other mobility impaired user:







## Nature, Landscape and Public Realm

### Assessment Criteria:

The quality and extent of public spaces and street furniture within the town centre, including green infrastructure, landscaping and green spaces for people and nature.

### Engagement Insights Summary:

- **Public Green Spaces:** The majority of respondents (61%) think that Ballaghaderreen is inadequately served by Public Green Spaces (parklets/parks/walks/places to sit). Green spaces and planting is the third most popular way to improve the way the town functions, after Building and Shop Frontage and Parking.
- **Condition of Green Spaces:** Most respondents either strongly disagree (42%) or disagree (17%) that green spaces are in good condition.
- **Public Grey Spaces:** 61% of people feel that the town is inadequately served by Public 'Grey' Spaces (performance/ community spaces).
- **Seating:** The majority disagree that there is sufficient public seating for people to rest/relax/socialise with others (46% strongly disagree and 16% disagree, while only 6% agree and 14% strongly agree).
- **Signage:** The levels of signage are not generally felt to be sufficient.
- **Noise:** Responses were mixed regarding noise levels, with 33% neither agreeing or disagreeing that the town is noisy, 31% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing and 30% agreeing or strongly agreeing.
- **Climate Action:** The most popular climate actions were retrofitting of buildings, and increased public transport services, then charging points. Support for the Ballaghaderreen Community Garden was also identified.

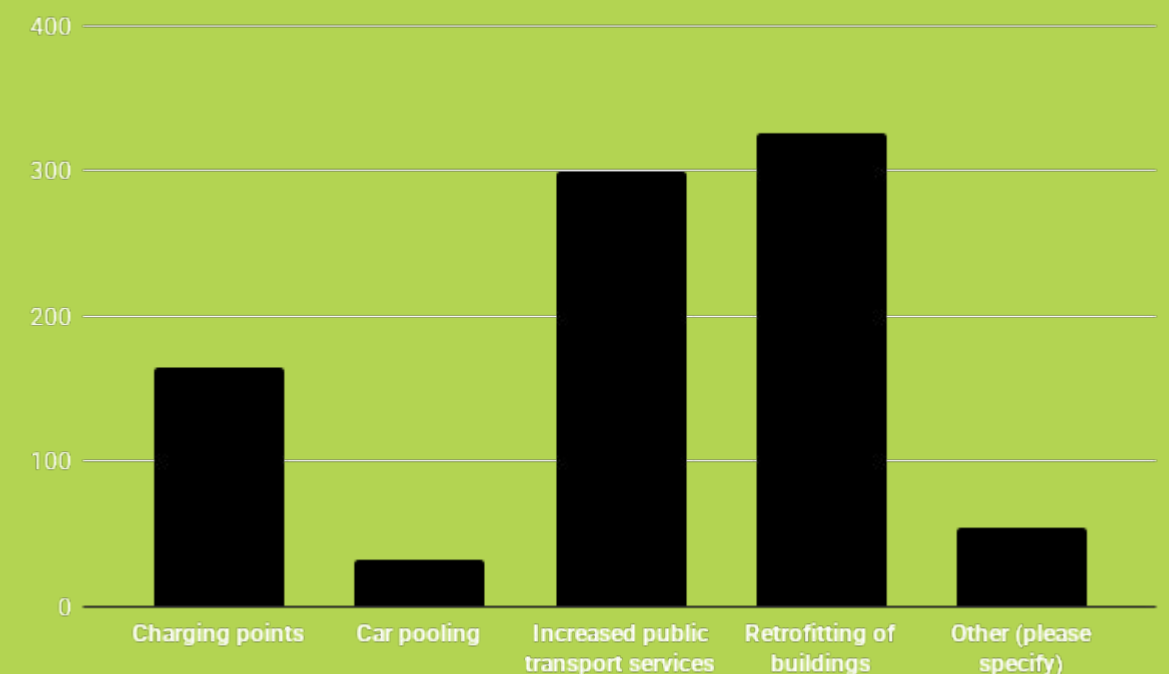
## Improving the Public Realm

What would improve the way Ballaghaderreen functions?



## Climate Action

How can Ballaghaderreen help to combat climate change and adapt to a changing climate?







The type and level of activity within the town centre, including the mix of uses, variety of shops/services and levels of vacancy/dereliction.

- **Addressing dereliction and vacancy** was seen as the most important action to improve Ballaghaderreen as a place to live and work.
- **Improvements as a place to live and work:** Other popular suggestions to improve Ballaghaderreen include more leisure and sports facilities, improvements to aesthetic aspects of buildings and shopfronts, more cafes, and a food market (indoor/outdoor). Other ideas included reopening the swimming pool (which has since happened), space for the arts, more shops (including a supermarket and clothes/shoes), cafes and restaurants, health services, and a heritage centre (suggested in the old railway ticket office).
- **Youth Services:** The majority of respondents (68%) think Ballaghaderreen is inadequately served by Youth Services (schools, other educational facilities, sports facilities, other recreational facilities).
- **Family Facilities:** 77% of people surveyed said that the town is inadequately served by Family Facilities (schools, childcare, community meeting places, dining out, playgrounds, public toilets/baby changing).
- **Older Persons Facilities:** 72% also felt that the town is inadequately served by Older Persons Facilities (easily accessible meeting places, public seating indoor and outdoor, community meeting places).
- **Shopping and Retail:** 45% of respondents think that Ballaghaderreen is adequately served by Shopping and Retail (supermarkets, butchers, chemist, hairdressers), but 40% think it is inadequately served.

## What would improve Ballaghaderreen as a place to live and work?



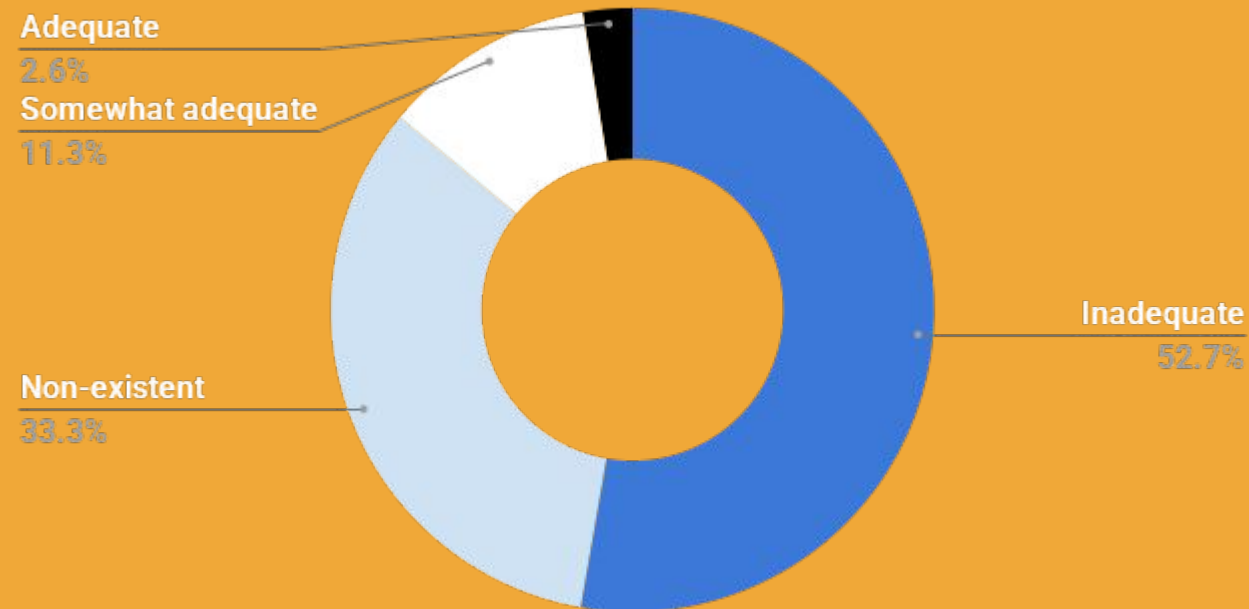




How the town celebrates its unique identity and caters to both the local community and visitors through facilities, attractions and events.

- **Reason for Visiting:** Aside from living in the town (77%), the most common reason for visiting is shopping (24%), followed by work (15%), services (12%), entertainment (9%) and education (8%).
- **Attraction:** Only 7% of respondents travelled more than 10km to get there. People tend to visit frequently for a fairly short time (most commonly 1-2 hours) with 67% of people visiting Ballaghaderreen every day, and another 20% 2 to 3 times per week.
- **Sense of Safety and Security:** Safety is a key concern, with the majority saying the streets are completely unsafe (39%) or unsafe (28%).
- **Friendliness:** Views on friendliness are mixed, with 38% neutral, 17% saying people are friendly and 19% saying people are unfriendly.
- **Youth Facilities and Services:** Most people (53%) feel there are inadequate free spaces for young people to hang out, with a further 33% saying these are non-existent and less than 3% saying they are adequate. Similarly, paid activities for youth (youth clubs/activities that are fee based) are seen by only 6% of respondents to be adequate (45% inadequate and 18% non-existent). Overall, the level of youth services in the town is seen as inadequate (52%), somewhat inadequate (19%) or non-existent (17%). The most common places where young people are seen congregating is in the street, outside the library, the church car park, the square, playground, park and around the Supervalu.

## Where do you see young people congregating?







### Assessment Criteria:

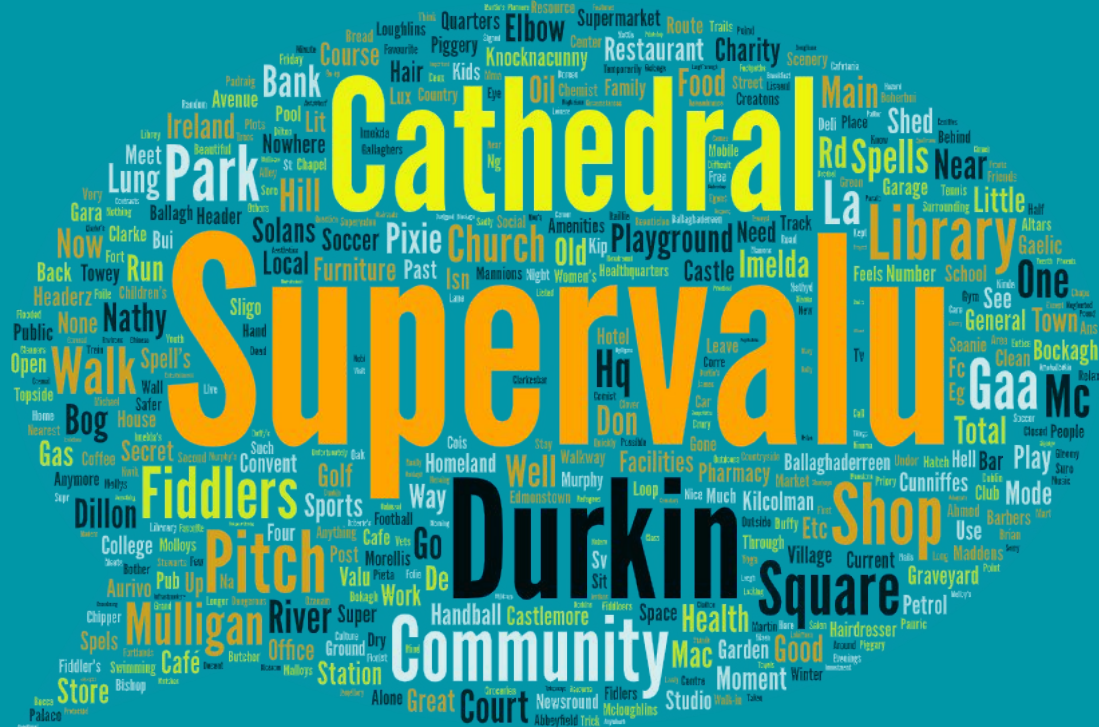
The quality of streetscapes, buildings and features that contribute to the unique identity and character of the town centre.

## Engagement Insights Summary:

- **Improvements to aesthetic aspects of buildings and shopfronts** was seen as a very important issue to improve the town.
- **Building Design:** Views were mixed on whether buildings are well designed, possibly reflecting poor condition, but valuable heritage/form.
- **Streetscape:** There were strong views on both improving footways and accessibility (including for wheelchair users, buggies and elderly people), and ensuring ease of movement and parking for vehicles within the town centre (particularly buses and delivery vehicles) to limit congestion. People generally disagree that streets are clean and well-kept.
- **Neighbourhoods:** There were mixed views on whether residential areas/neighbourhoods are well planned and designed, highlighting the need for future neighbourhoods to have an appropriate density, mix of uses and typologies, high quality design, and good connectivity to amenities.
- **Most common favourite places** in Ballaghaderreen include the Supervalu, Cathedral, Durkin's, community park / garden, library, the square, GAA/sports pitches, Fiddlers and Mulligans.
- **Top suggestions for places that could be improved** include Main Street, backways and footways, the Plots, enhanced outdoor activity spaces such as parks and playgrounds, addressing vacancies and dereliction in the town centre, and the appearance of the town generally. The top reasons for selecting these are that places are dirty and unkempt, poorly designed with unattractive buildings, and feelings of insecurity.

## Places to Celebrate & Improve

### Name your 3 favourite places in Ballaghaderreen:



### Name up to 3 places that could be improved:





# 04 Urban Design Analysis

- 4.1** Overview
- 4.2** Movement & Connections
- 4.3** Nature, Landscape & Public Realm
- 4.4** Land Uses & Economy
- 4.5** Social Community & Culture
- 4.6** Built Form
- 4.7** Urban Design Analysis Summary



# Overview

Building on the insights gathered through community engagement, further urban design analysis was conducted through site walks, observations, and desktop research. The following pages explore the key issues and opportunities facing Ballaghaderreen town centre in further detail, using the five assessment criteria set out below. Each assessment includes a summary of key findings and accompanying site observation photos, which should be read in conjunction with the analysis map on the following page.



## Movement & Connections

The accessibility of the town and ease of movement to, from and within the town centre, including the impact of traffic and parking provision on the pedestrian experience.



## Nature, Landscape & Public Realm

The quality and extent of public spaces and street furniture within the town centre, including green infrastructure, landscaping and green spaces for people and nature.



## Land Uses & Economy

The type and level of activity within the town centre, including the mix of uses, variety of shops/services and levels of vacancy/dereliction.



## Social, Community & Culture

How the town celebrates its unique identity and caters to both the local community and visitors through facilities, attractions and events.



## Built Form

The quality of streetscapes, buildings and features that contribute to the unique identity and character of the town centre.



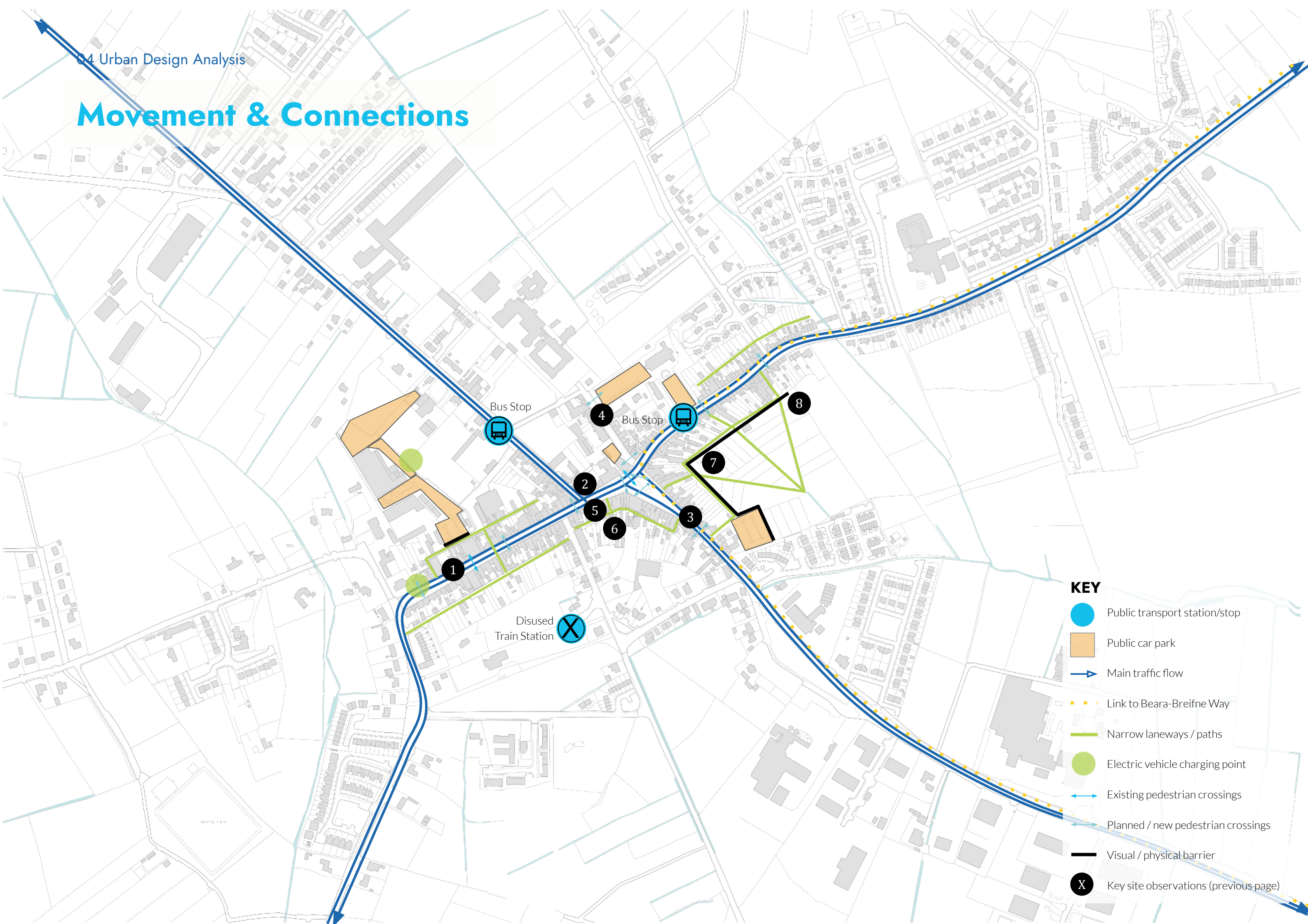
# Movement & Connections

- **Compact, walkable town centre:** The study area included within the map opposite contains roughly the areas that are within a 10 to 15 minute walk of the town centre, which shows the majority of homes within the settlement are within walking distance of the town centre.
- **Disused train station:** The train station is no longer operational.
- **Central bus stops:** The town is served by bus services from Ballina - Dublin and Athlone, with bus stops in the centre of town. Recent public realm works have moved these stops to free up the area around Market Square. The distance and lack of coordination between stops/routes travelling in opposite directions makes certain journeys difficult for some users to make using bus services.
- **Car parking:** On street parking is available along the main thoroughfares, at Market Square, and in a few larger car parks. The on-street parking tends to be in much higher demand than the car park areas, despite short walking distances from the car parks into the town centre, creating a vehicle dominated streetscape (photos 1, 2, and 3).
- **Narrow laneways:** behind the buildings lining Market Square, Main Street and Pound Street create an interesting network of walking routes away from traffic on the main streets, though these are not all pedestrian only and are currently underused due to perceived lack of safety / attractiveness (photos 5, 6, 7).
- **Physical/visual barriers:** The paths leading into the Plots green area are not obvious or easily accessible due to vegetation overgrowth, parked cars, and a lack of clear pathways / signage, etc. Stone walls and thick vegetation line most of the boundary, creating a physical and visual barrier. (photo 8)
- **Vehicle movement:** is concentrated along the town's east/west and north/south R293/L1244 axis, with access from/to the N5 national route via the R293 (photos 1, 2, 3). The Ballaghaderreen bypass of the N5 to the east of town, completed in 2014, has helped to alleviate traffic congestion in the town centre.
- **Footpaths and pedestrian crossings:** Pedestrian crossings are limited, particularly across Main Street, although additional crossing points are planned / underway. Footpaths are available and currently undergoing improvements, but issues such as lack of dropped kerbs in some areas limit accessibility for users of wheelchairs and buggies (for example, photo 4, though this is planned to become a controlled crossing with a ramp / level crossing).
- **Cycling infrastructure:** Despite a signposted link into the Beara-Breifne Way and wide streets, there is limited cycle infrastructure (additional stands are planned).
- **EV charging points:** Four on-street EV charging spaces are available, 2 on New Street and 2 on Market Street (both at the western side of the town centre).
- **Public wifi and fibre:** High quality broadband is available in the town.





# Movement & Connections



## KEY

- Public transport station/stop
- Public car park
- Main traffic flow
- Link to Beara-Breifne Way
- Narrow laneways / paths
- Electric vehicle charging point
- Existing pedestrian crossings
- Planned / new pedestrian crossings
- Visual / physical barrier
- Key site observations (previous page)



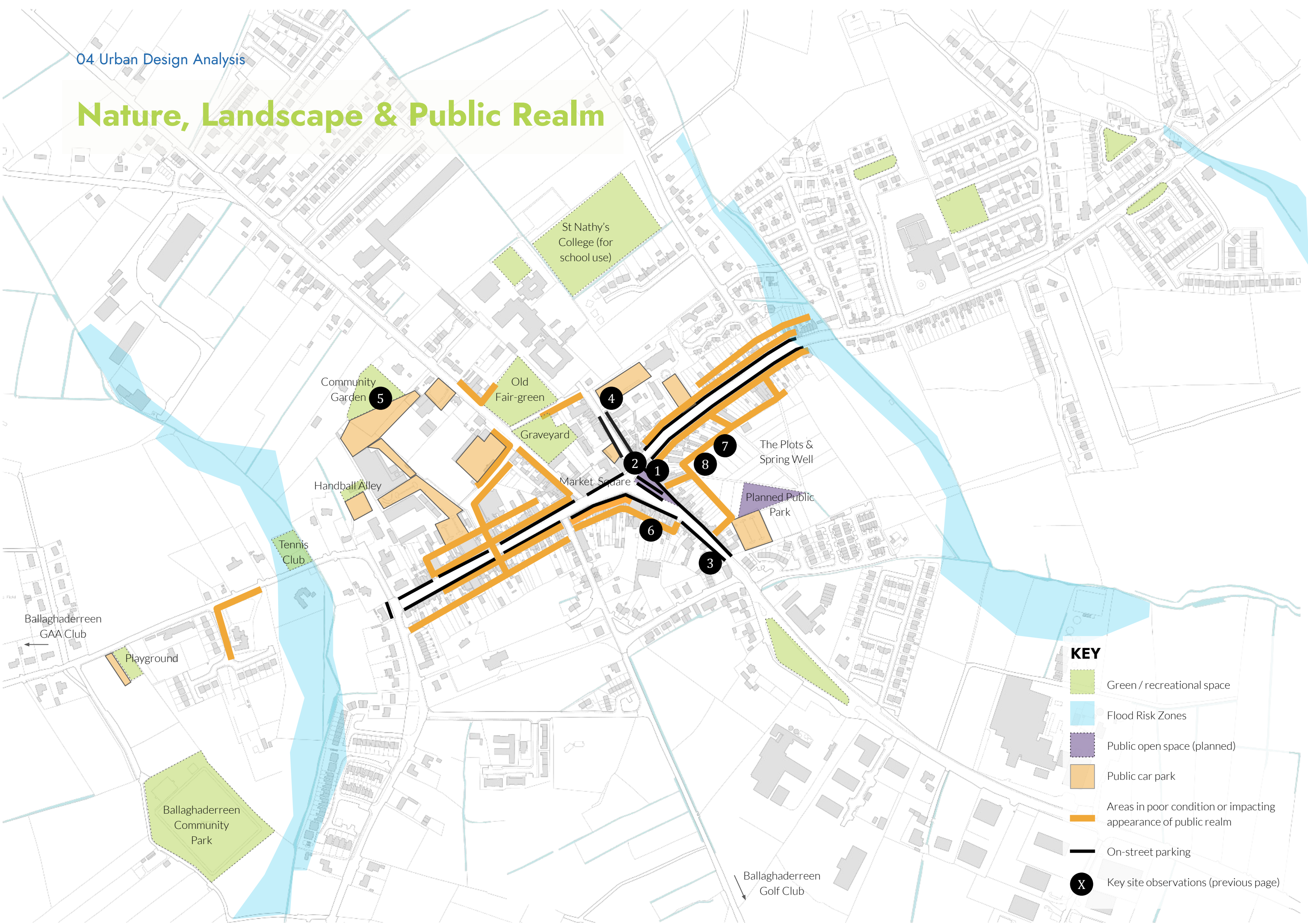
# Nature, Landscape & Public Realm

- **Need for functional town square:** While the town has retained much of its historic street pattern with its focal point at Market Square, the square currently functions more as a thoroughfare and parking area than a town square for people (photos 1 and 2). Planned improvements to the public realm could create a much needed public space for people to meet and dwell, and for performances/markets.
- **Well-proportioned but car-dominated streetscape:** The streetscape of the town centre is dominated by motor vehicles, with on street parking lining large parts of Main Street, Pound Street, Barrack Street and Market Square (photos 1, 2, 3). Wide streets offer good opportunities to provide an enhanced experience for pedestrians and cyclists, for example by widening and improving footpaths. Recent and ongoing improvements are making positive impact (photo 4).
- **Green spaces:** There are several green spaces / recreational facilities in the town, though many of these are outside the town core, including a small playground to the west of town and the Community Park (home to Ballaghaderreen FC, Cricket ground, a 5-a-side astro turf pitch available to rent and a walking track). Other sporting facilities include the Gaelic Football pitch and clubhouse, tennis courts, handball alley, and pitches for school use at St. Nathy's College. A Golf Club is located on the southern outskirts of the town. Within the town centre there is a Community Garden (photo 5), which provides a valuable focal point and outdoor location for various community groups. A new public park is planned at The Plots to potentially include a skating area, exercise equipment, and age-friendly seating.
- **Poor condition of properties impacting experience of public realm:** While the scale of the urban environment is attractive to pedestrians, the poor condition of many properties negatively impacts the experience of the public realm, particularly many shop fronts along Main Street and Pound Street, and many of the sheds and boundaries that line the laneways and the Plots (photos 6, 7 and 8).
- **Limited age friendly public seating / rest points:** Armed seating at regular points along key routes such as the main streets, square and parks would be valuable.
- **Lack of identity:** A consistent materials palette or "Design Guide" for elements like paving, street furniture, lighting, signage / wayfinding could better reflect the town's heritage and create a more welcoming and cohesive public realm.
- **Planting:** The town centre has limited street trees and planting, but some good examples of public flower planting and an active Tidy Towns group.
- **Flood Risk Zones:** The Ballaghaderreen Settlement Plan incorporates a Flood Risk and Protection Strategy which aims to avoid flooding in areas at risk of flooding, by not permitting development in these areas (see mapped zones). The constrained zoning limits new development but offers the potential to facilitate a degree of expansion and modification of existing premises.





# Nature, Landscape & Public Realm



## KEY

- Green / recreational space
- Flood Risk Zones
- Public open space (planned)
- Public car park
- Areas in poor condition or impacting appearance of public realm
- On-street parking
- Key site observations (previous page)



# Land Uses & Economy

- **High levels of vacancy and dereliction:** In a survey of the town undertaken in December 2020, 106 retail units were identified, of which 40 were vacant, giving a vacancy rate of 37.7%. This accounts for approximately 8,872 sq.m of vacant retail space (varying in size from 20 sq.m. to 842 sq.m). As of December 2021, Ballaghaderreen had the highest commercial vacancy rate in Roscommon at 26.4% (overtaken recently by Boyle). Vacancy is prominent in the Ballaghaderreen Business Park and many properties along Main Street and Pound Street, where there are also significant levels of dereliction (photos 2, 4, 5, 6).
- **Inactive frontages:** In addition to high vacancy levels, a number of properties present inactive storage sheds and unattractive boundary walls/fences, which create a lack of vibrancy in key areas of the town centre, particularly along the laneways and the area around the Plots (photos 7 and 8). A betting shop also presents an inactive frontage on a prominent corner site in the ACA (photo 4).
- **Development opportunities for town centre living:** There are significant vacant and underutilised sites within and around the town centre, offering opportunities to encourage town centre living (including upper floors of existing buildings) to increase activity levels and provide an alternative housing typology to the low density housing developments on the periphery of the town.
- **Retail and services presence:** The town has a varied range of retail, health and financial services, including supermarkets, independents, pharmacies, butchers, a bank, credit union and post office, encouraging use of the town centre (photos 1, 2, 3, 4). The main convenience store is a purpose built supermarket that has been developed on New Street. The complex also accommodates a number of ancillary units including a café and the post office. Comparison provision in the town centre is concentrated on Market Square and Main Street, with the majority of the town's retail offering comprising of independent retailers and owner occupiers.
- **Food, drink and visitors:** The town has several pubs, restaurants and takeaways, though more cafes and a food market are fairly high in terms of community priorities. Evening economy and visitor accommodation are also limited.
- **Variety of employment, businesses and services:** Ballaghaderreen has traditionally, and continues to have the role of a large market town for the surrounding areas, acting as an administration, business, educational, leisure, retail and service centre. Industries such as Aurivo (with a valuable green energy / green economy focus), as well as those located in the town's business and enterprise parks, are vital to sustaining the local economy and employment base, as are the small to medium scale retailers and other businesses. However, many residents still commute to nearby towns for work.





# Land Uses & Economy



**KEY**

Community / social facilities

Agriculture / greenbelt

Residential

Retail / services / food & drink

Industrial / storage / unknown

Significant vacant site

High vacancy levels

Inactive town centre frontages

X

Key site observation (previous page)



# Social, Community & Culture

- **Range of outdoor recreational spaces:** Ballaghaderreen has a range of outdoor sports and recreational facilities and sporting organisations, including the playground (photo 7), Community Park (photo 8, which hosts Ballaghaderreen FC, the Cricket ground, a 5-a-side astro turf pitch available to rent and a walking track), the Gaelic Football pitch and clubhouse, tennis courts, handball alley, Golf Club, as well as pitches at St. Nathy's College. The Community Garden and planned new public park at The Plots provide valuable additional green open space for recreation, relaxation and connection with nature within the town centre.
- **Health and social care:** Health facilities within the town include Ballaghaderreen Health Centre, Willow Brook Medical Centre, Oakwood private nursing home, and a few pharmacies (photo 1), clinics and doctors within the town centre. Given recent increases in population and demand, there is a need for additional services.
- **Community facilities:** within the town centre include the library (photo 2, located within the prominent historic landmark of Dillon House, on Market Square), Phoenix Youth and Community Centre (photo 4), a Fire Station, a Family Resource Centre, a Community Resource Centre at The Shambles, and the reopened Swimming Pool at Abbeyfield Hotel (though this is privately run and charged for).
- **Strong educational institutions:** There are currently two schools in Ballaghaderreen - St. Attracta's National School and the highly regarded St. Nathy's College Secondary School (photo 5). Post leaving certificate courses are run by the local Youthreach Centre, which provides VEC and SOLAS sponsored second and third level programmes. There are also three childcare services in or adjacent to the town which are registered with the Roscommon Childcare Committee. The facilities offer morning pre-school services and parent and toddler groups.
- **Religious institutions:** include the Cathedral, which is also a key landmark and historic building within the town centre (photo 3), a Baptist Church and a mosque.
- **Refugee centre:** Since 2017, the Abbeyfield hotel and leisure centre on the eastern end of town has served as an Emergency Reception and Orientation Centre (EROC) for refugees from the Syrian Civil War.
- **Heritage sites and attractions:** include the Cathedral, St Nathy's, Dillon House, Duff's, Courthouse, Tower House, and the Spring Well in The Plots. Signage, wayfinding and heritage interpretation is lacking and some historic buildings are derelict, such as St Mary's Convent and the former Power Station (photo 6).
- **Lack of facilities for young people:** Aside from the youth centre (photo 4) and sports facilities, there are limited places for young people to hang out.
- **Events:** Ballaghaderreen has a proud tradition of staging cultural and heritage events, including Ballaghaderreen Arts Festival (3rd year running in 2025), the County Fleadh, The Lakes and Legends festival, theatre and music at Edmondstown House, and the Creative Places Ballaghaderreen programme.





# Social, Community & Culture



**KEY**

- Community / cultural facilities
- Health facilities
- Religious institutions
- Education facilities
- Green / recreational space
- Key heritage assets / attractions
- X Key site observation (previous page)



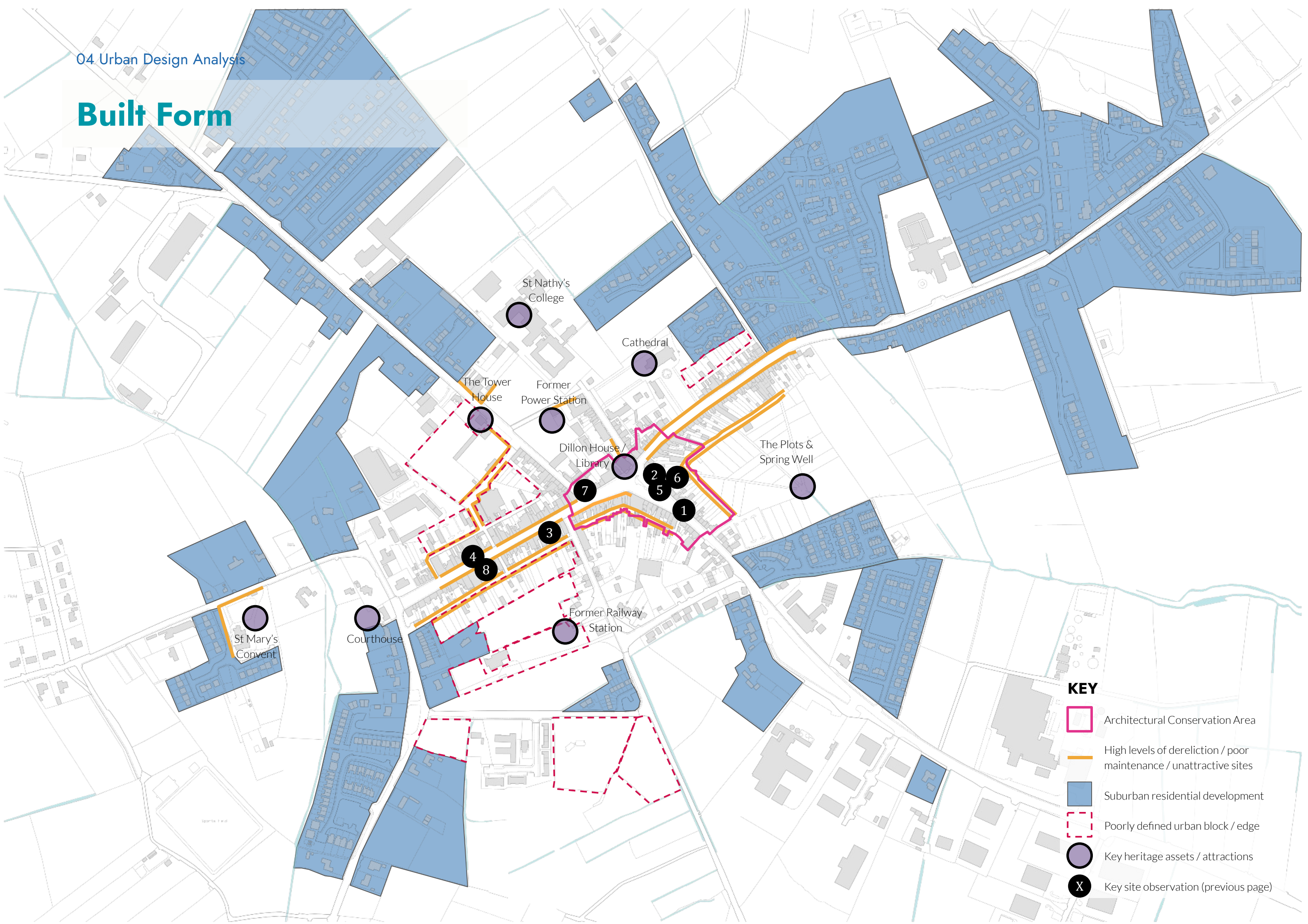
# Built Form

- **Distinctive historic character of the town core:** Ballaghaderreen has retained much of its original street pattern and contains a number of significant historic buildings which form important landmarks in the town centre, including the Cathedral, which is the most prominent building in the town, and the adjacent St Nathy's College. The town centre is predominantly focused around Market Square, Main Street, Pound Street and Barrack Street. These streets are characterised by terraced two and three storey 19th century buildings, many with shopfronts at ground floor and residential above (photos 1, 2, 5, 7). This character is somewhat undermined by the visual clutter of utilities cables (photo 4).
- **Laneways:** There is an opportunity to enhance and promote use of the laneways running behind some of the urban blocks of the town core, which act as valuable, calm pedestrian routes away from vehicles on the main streets, and are a distinctive element of the town's character. A particularly interesting feature is the passage running underneath the Fiddlers Elbow, connecting the nodes of Market Square and the Plots (photos 5, 6).
- **Mosaic shopfronts:** Another distinctive feature of Ballaghaderreen's townscape is the mosaic shopfronts, of which there are several examples (photos 2, 3). The local history and examplars of this technique in the County and town should be further celebrated.
- **Dereliction and degradation of building fabric:** There are a significant number of derelict sites and degraded buildings that are impacting the definition of urban blocks, and attractiveness and character of the town (photo 8). These are most prevalent along Main Street, Pound Street and the laneways. Many of these vacant and underused sites present excellent opportunities for development / redevelopment to help revitalise and repopulate the town centre. Relatively simple initiatives in the town, such as new paving, maintenance and shopfront improvements would assist in further improving the aesthetics of the town, to provide a more attractive environment for investment.
- **Inappropriate building interventions:** The character of the town centre is facing significant threat through poor maintenance (photo 8), poor shopfront signage, and inappropriate methods of building alterations to historic fabric, including PVC gutters, fascias, downpipes and windows. Within the designated Conservation Area, planning permission is required for any significant changes to the exterior of a building, such as windows and doors, which should match the original style and material of the buildings, however, large parts of the town core fall outside the protections of the ACA.
- **Suburban nature of residential development:** although all areas shown on the map are roughly within 10 to 15 minutes walking distance of the town centre, the predominant modern residential typology is suburban, with relatively low density, detached or semi-detached buildings set back from the street edge, on the peripheries of town.
- **Town gateways and wayfinding:** More defined town gateways, colourful planting and improved signage could help strengthen the identity of the town centre.





# Built Form





# Urban Design Analysis Summary

The key issues and opportunities facing Ballaghaderreen town centre under each of the five assessment criteria can be summarised as follows:



- Compact, walkable town centre
- Central bus stops (well-lit shelters and seating desirable)
- Significant on-street car parking, as well as parking lots
- Narrow laneways provide alternative walking routes
- Limited cycling infrastructure and pedestrian crossings. Need for lit, safe walkways/cycle paths
- Physical / visual barriers around The Plots area
- Accessibility issues identified



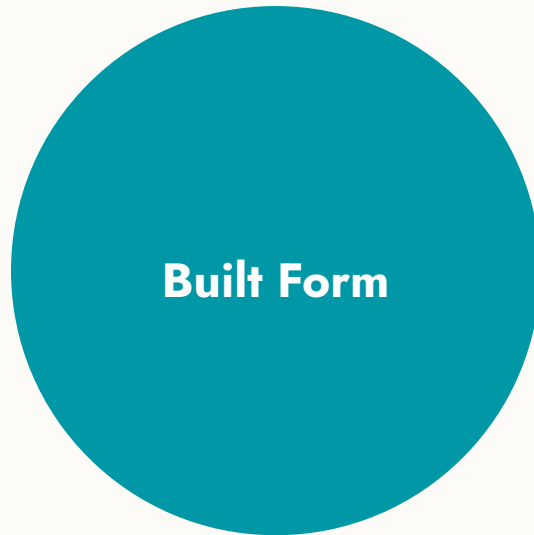
- Well-proportioned but car-dominated streetscape
- Need for functional, people-oriented town square and public toilets / baby changing
- Range of green recreational spaces, though limited in core
- Poor condition of properties impacting public realm
- Limited age-friendly seating
- Lack of consistent public realm identity / materials / signage
- Flood risk zones



- High levels of vacancy and dereliction
- Inactive and unattractive frontages, particularly along laneways and at The Plots
- Development opportunities to encourage town centre living
- Retail and services presence, with many independents, though another supermarket desired
- Restaurants, cafes and visitor accommodation limited
- Variety of employment, businesses and services



- Range of outdoor recreational spaces and new park planned
- Variety of health, social and community facilities (though more needed and a focus on affordability /accessibility for all)
- Strong educational and religious institutions, and interesting heritage sites
- Signage, wayfinding, lighting and heritage interpretation is limited
- Lack of facilities for young people
- Strong arts, culture, events and creative industries potential



- Distinctive historic character and grain of the town core
- Opportunity to enhance laneways and mosaic shopfronts as key features
- Significant dereliction and degradation of building fabric
- Poor shopfront maintenance, signage and inappropriate interventions to historic fabric
- Suburban nature of residential development
- Enhance town gateways



# 05 Ballaghadereen Reimagined

- 5.1** Key Opportunity Sites
- 5.2** Key Projects
- 5.3** Action Plan
- 5.4** Next Steps



# Key Opportunity Sites

**1. Market Square Public Space**

Support for public realm enhancements (already underway).

**2. Former Power Station / The Powerhouse**

Creative hub / heritage / craft centre for young people, and to support local artists, crafts, heritage and small businesses.

**3. The Shambles**

Potential food / farmers / craft market venue, and perhaps public parking when not in use to free up town core parking, as well as public toilets with baby changing facilities.

**4. Laneways Improvement Project**

Public realm and wayfinding improvements, including lighting and public art, to create a more attractive, vibrant pedestrian environment.

**5. Developing The Plots**

Explore potential for development in this area, creating a more accessible green space, with potential for residential-led mixed use development to help activate the area.

**6. Vacant / Derelict Buildings along Main Streets**

Many opportunities for refurbishment and town centre living e.g. over shop residential development and a shopfront improvement programme. This includes the significant Duff’s site.

**7. Significant Opportunity Sites for Town Centre Living and/or Community/Recreation**

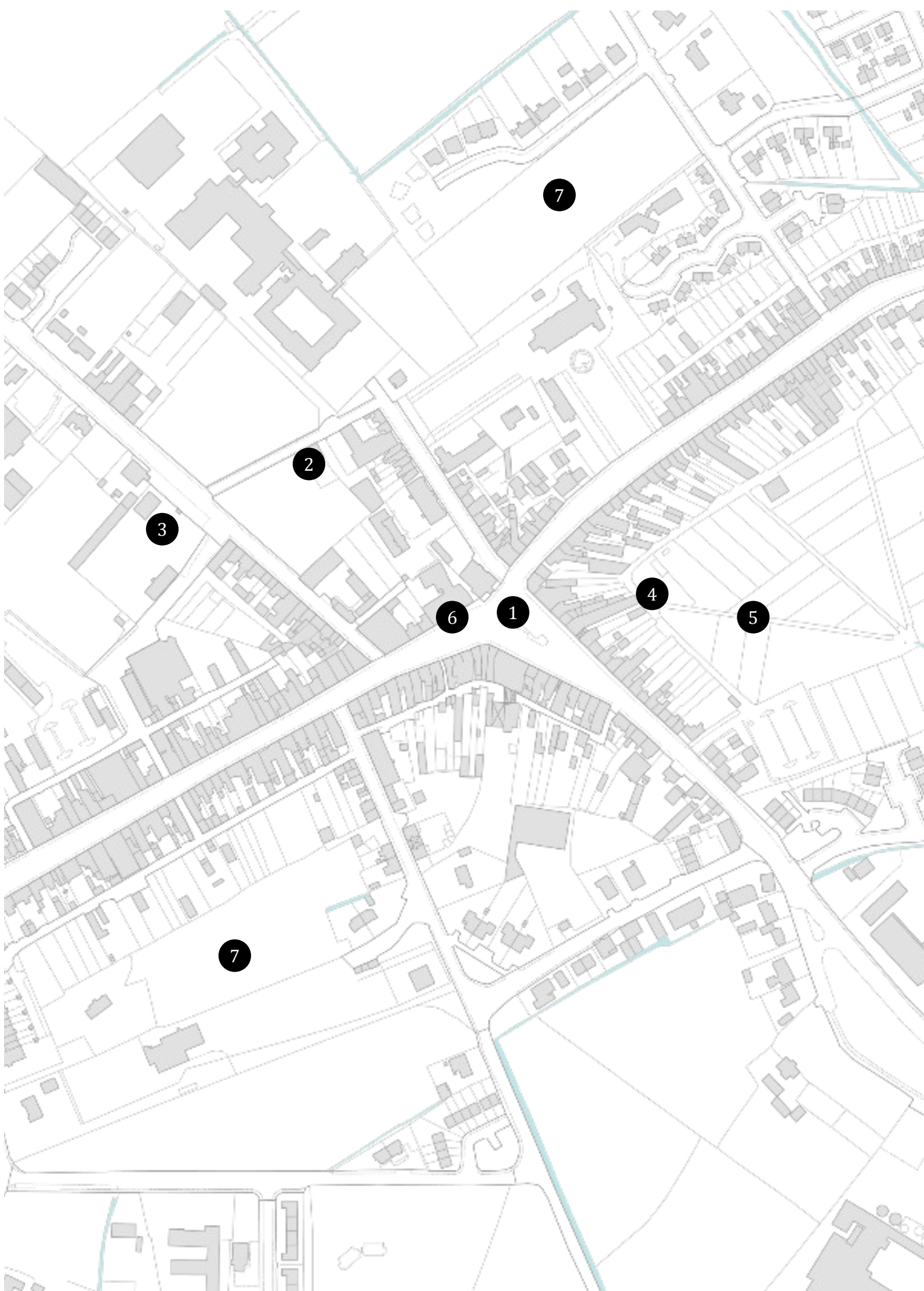
Including the former Railway Station site and the site adjacent to the Cathedral.

**8. Town Gateways, Wayfinding and Heritage Interpretation (townwide)**

Consider creating a heritage trail, incorporating blue plaques, historic landmarks, laneways, mosaic shopfronts. Improve gateways into town with planting, public art, lighting, etc. Ensure consistent and easily legible signage and public realm materials.

**9. Refresh Town Website / Continue Social Media (online)**

Use existing digital platforms to promote the town’s heritage, jobs, businesses, amenities, events and plans.





# Key Projects

## Project Name

The Powerhouse / Former Power Station

## Location

Chapel Street

## Project Overview

Explore the potential of a creative hub / heritage / craft centre for young people, artists, and small businesses, as well as visitors to the town. This could complement the planned An Bealach development with a more heritage / craft / local arts focused space.

## Reference Example

Banana Block, Belfast

## Key Challenges

- Limited scale and significant degradation of historic fabric
- Adjacent to graveyard

## Key Opportunities

- Proximity to the planned An Bealach creative industries hub, as well as St Nathy's College and other town centre amenities and heritage sites
- Could act as a visitor & heritage centre / starting point for a town heritage trail
- Opportunity to celebrate the distinctive mosaic shopfronts in the town centre and the fascinating history of the building: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EF5JWEZZjPw>

## Themes Addressed





# Key Projects

## Project Name

The Shambles

## Location

Market Street

## Project Overview

The underused Shambles site (opposite the proposed An Bealach development on the Fairgreen site) could become a regular food / farmers / craft market venue, either permanent / covered, or more flexible and low cost (such as food trucks / moveable stalls) with supporting landscaping, lighting, and public toilets / baby changing. In the meantime, the site could potentially be used for public parking when not in use as a market to free up town core parking.

## Reference Example

Canopy Market, King’s Cross, London

## Key Challenges

- Community Resource Centre on site will require continued access, parking, etc.

## Key Opportunities

- Embrace Ballaghaderreen’s heritage as a market town
- Collaborate with local farmers, producers, makers, musicians and artists to draw more footfall, visitors and business to the town and provide food and entertainment options for users of the planned An Bealach creative industries hub
- Build on experience of previous markets here, such as the May Day Fair

## Themes Addressed





# Key Projects

## Project Name

Laneways Improvement Project

## Location

Various laneways around the town centre (behind the urban blocks lining Main Street and Pound Street) and around the Plots

## Project Overview

Improvements to lighting, surface materials, maintenance and cleanliness, planting, public art, boundary walls/fences, and wayfinding to create a more attractive, vibrant pedestrian environment and improve the sense of safety and orientation. Working with local artists, this could showcase the unique creative spirit and talent within Ballaghaderreen.

## Reference Example

Laneways Improvement Project, Roscommon Town  
9ft in Common alleyways project, Belfast

## Key Challenges

- Ensuring buy-in and collaboration with various landowners, residents and businesses along the laneways

## Key Opportunities

- Enhance this distinctive, historical feature of Ballaghaderreen’s urban fabric while promoting active travel and safer pedestrian routes.
- Work with local artists to create a unique, consistent concept for public art and wayfinding across the laneways which celebrates local heritage and creativity.

## Themes Addressed





# Key Projects

## Project Name

Developing The Plots

## Location

The Plots area (see site 5 on page 51)

## Project Overview

Consider improvements to the Plots boundaries, pathways, signage, age-friendly seating, vegetation maintenance, route to the well, etc. to make this a more welcoming and accessible green space within the town centre, complementing and enhancing the impact of the planned new public park, with potential for surrounding residential-led mixed use development to encourage activation, town centre living and provide a range of housing typologies.

## Reference Example

Dr Neil's Garden, 'Edinburgh's Secret Garden'

## Key Challenges

- Land ownership and boundaries will need to be coordinated to enable public access
- Existing vegetation may provide significant habitat potential, so the ecological impact of any development would need to be assessed and managed

## Key Opportunities

- Opportunity to create a peaceful oasis in the heart of the town centre
- Complement the planned new public park in this location and ensure access to the well
- Significant public green space could enhance the appeal of town centre living

## Themes Addressed





# Action Plan

| Initiative Name                       | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Timescale                                                | Budget Range  | Lead/Partners                                                                            | Next Steps                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Market Square Public Space            | Support for public realm enhancements which create more space for pedestrians, seating, planting, and events, and complement the historic character of the town centre, while ensuring accessibility and ease of movement for all ages and abilities and for vehicles, particularly short trips, public transport and delivery vehicles.                                                                                                                                 | Quick Win (within 1 year)                                | N/A           | Roscommon County Council                                                                 | Various community groups are actively involved to ensure these improvements are delivered in the best way, and this is ongoing.                                                    |
| The Powerhouse / Former Power Station | Explore the potential of a creative hub / heritage / craft centre for young people, artists, crafts, heritage and small businesses. This could complement the planned An Bealach development with a more heritage / craft / local arts focused space.                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Long Term (5 years +)                                    | Medium        | Roscommon County Council, Town Team, local artists and creative industries, young people | Explore potential funding streams and partners, consider a feasibility study together with land owner.                                                                             |
| The Shambles                          | The underused Shambles site (opposite the proposed An Bealach development on the Fairgreen site) could become a regular food / farmers / craft market venue, either permanent/covered, or more flexible and low cost (such as food trucks / moveable stalls) with supporting landscaping, lighting and public toilets/baby changing. In the meantime, the site could potentially be used for public parking when not in use as a market to free up town core parking.    | Quick Win (within 1 year) / Medium Term (within 5 years) | Low / Medium  | Roscommon County Council, Town Team, local businesses and farmers                        | Continue pop-up markets and events to test the market for different types of activities. Explore funding options for public toilets and landscaping / infrastructure improvements. |
| Laneways Improvement Project          | Improvements to lighting, surface materials, maintenance and cleanliness, planting, public art, boundary walls/fences, and wayfinding to create a more attractive, vibrant pedestrian environment and improve the sense of safety and orientation. Working with local artists, this could showcase the unique creative spirit and talent within Ballaghaderreen.                                                                                                         | Medium Term (within 5 years)                             | Low           | Roscommon County Council, Town Team, Tidy Towns, local artists and volunteers            | Explore potential partners and funding for mural / street art projects. Lighting should also be prioritised to assist with the sense of safety.                                    |
| Developing The Plots                  | Consider improvements to the Plots boundaries, pathways, signage, age-friendly seating, vegetation maintenance, route to the well, etc. to make this a more welcoming and accessible green space within the town centre, complementing and enhancing the impact of the planned new public park, with potential for surrounding residential-led mixed use development to encourage town centre living and provide a range of housing typologies on sections of this area. | Long Term (5 years +)                                    | Medium / High | Roscommon County Council, Town Team, private landowners                                  | Discussions with various land owners, and investigation of funding opportunities for incremental improvements or large scale development as they arise.                            |



# Action Plan

| Initiative Name                                                                               | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Timescale                    | Budget Range  | Lead/Partners                                                                 | Next Steps                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Addressing Town Centre Vacancy & Dereliction                                                  | There are many opportunities for refurbishment and town centre living e.g. over shop properties along Main Street and Pound Street. This includes the historically significant Duff’s site, which is largely vacant and in need of refurbishment to revitalise it. Consider running a shopfront improvement scheme (focused within the Conservation Area to start, then the rest of Main Street and Pound Street). Consider undergrounding utilities to enhance historic character and appearance of the town centre. Consider creation of cafes with outdoor seating space.                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Medium Term (within 5 years) | Medium / High | Roscommon County Council, Town Team, private landowners, Heritage Council     | Consider potential Historic Towns Initiative (HTI) / Heritage Council funding streams for conservation-led works and repairs within the Conservation Area.         |
| Significant opportunity sites for town centre living and/or community / recreation facilities | Including the former station site (ticket office to be refurbished if possible) and the site adjacent to the Cathedral. Development typology, use mix and density should be appropriate to town centre environment and in accordance with the Ballaghaderreen Settlement Plan (County Development Plan 2022-2028).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Long Term (5 years +)        | High          | Roscommon County Council, Town Team, private landowners                       | Explore land ownership and potential appetite and funding streams to support development.                                                                          |
| Town gateways, wayfinding and heritage interpretation                                         | There is an opportunity to make the town’s heritage more visible and accessible. Create and promote a heritage trail, with interpretation panels / QR codes with an accompanying audio tour and/or online information as a way for visitors to explore and engage with the town’s heritage - incorporating existing blue plaques, historic landmarks, laneways, mosaic shopfronts. The local history and exemplars of this mosaic technique should be further researched and celebrated, perhaps through a heritage / craft centre at the former power station. Public art and colourful planting at town gateways (approach roads), together with clear and consistent signage and town maps, working with local artists and volunteers, could strengthen the town identity and character. | Medium Term (within 5 years) | Low / Medium  | Roscommon County Council, Town Team, Tidy Towns, local artists and volunteers | Convene a working group with potential partners and volunteers to decide on project programme and resources available. Investigate small grants for these actions. |
| Refresh town website / continue social media promotion                                        | Use digital platforms, including existing town website and social media, to highlight the unique heritage, range of jobs, businesses and education infrastructure in the town, as well as events and planned improvements / opportunities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Quick Win (within 1 year)    | Low           | Town Team                                                                     | Consider funding / resources available for a website refresh.                                                                                                      |



# Next Steps

A collaborative approach to town centre regeneration is critical to success. Partners, stakeholders and the community must be kept informed, engaged and involved in further co-design and delivery of interventions to embed a sense of collective pride and ownership in Ballaghaderreen town centre.

Strategic leadership on implementation will come from Roscommon County Council, including the further development and feasibility testing of some of the key transformative projects. However, many other local stakeholders have key roles to play in bringing to life these projects, as well as the supporting projects listed in the action plan and the wider vision for the future Ballaghaderreen.

The existing proactive and positive Town Team, and joint working between the Town Team and Roscommon County Council to deliver improvements to the town, will be a crucial foundation for further development and implementation of the proposals within this report. Ballaghaderreen’s vibrant arts, culture, and creative industries communities are also important stakeholders and potential partners for the delivery of placemaking interventions, including physical improvements and ongoing events programming within the town, ensuring the town’s distinctive heritage and creative spirit is maintained and enhanced.

Potential Funding sources for delivery of the identified projects could include:

- Rural Regeneration and Development Fund
- Housing for All Crói Cónaithe (Towns) Fund
- European Regional Development Fund
- Active Travel Grants Programme
- Town and Village Renewal Scheme
- Climate Adaptation/ Retrofitting Initiatives
- Historic Towns Initiative

To help coordinate these actions, a town manager role and/or stronger strategic coordination between various bodies and stakeholders with an interest in Ballaghaderreen’s town centre regeneration and vitality should be explored.

## Key Performance Indicators:

- ❑ The numbers of buildings and structures conserved, restored, refurbished and brought back into active use
- ❑ Amount of floor area brought back into use
- ❑ Areas of public realm enhanced
- ❑ Changes in visitor numbers
- ❑ Satisfaction of visitors and the likelihood of repeat visits
- ❑ Impact on tourism spend in the town
- ❑ Numbers of jobs created and the quality of those jobs
- ❑ Amount of investment from public or private sources
- ❑ The viability and competitiveness of businesses in the town
- ❑ The level of pride and ownership by the community of their local experience, history and culture
- ❑ The extent of engagement of the local community
- ❑ The strengthening of local economic and social structures
- ❑ The level of respect and appreciation for the heritage and authentic culture, traditions and distinctiveness of the community



*This report (including any enclosures and attachments) has been prepared for the exclusive use and benefit of Roscommon County Council as the commissioning agent and solely for the purpose for which it is provided. We do not accept any liability if this report is used for an alternative purpose from which it is intended, nor to any third party in respect of this report. Our analysis has been undertaken based on information supplied to us by Roscommon County Council including previous reports and data prepared by third parties. Where we have relied on information provided by third parties we take no responsibility for the accuracy of that information.*



**Comhairle Contae  
Ros Comáin**  
Roscommon  
County Council



STUDIO MYCO