

TUBBERCURRY TOWN CENTRE FIRST PLAN

Sligo County Council

October 2023



Sligo County Council
Comhairle Chontae Shligigh

Sligo.



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

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040

Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithe
Our Rural
Future



Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040



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Project
Tubbercurry Town Centre First Plan

Client
Sligo County Council

LUC Project Number
12455

Project Team
Jacqueline Whitworth-Allan, Project Director
Ben Wayles, Senior Landscape Architect
Aine Bourke, Lead Planner
Mark Higgins, Project Communications
Ian Rathmell, Planner
Caitlin King, Transport & Movement Consultant

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1 Introduction

“This is about delivering on the objectives of ‘Our Rural Future’ and ensuring our towns have the right plan in place to tackle the issues of dereliction, vacant properties, and above all, to become better places to live, work and run a business.”

Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for Rural and Community Development

Background

In December 2021, Tubbercurry - Sligo's second town - was selected as one of 26 towns to develop a Town Centre First (TCF) Plan. Town Centre First is the Government's policy strategy to support the rejuvenation of Irish rural town centres and halt their decline.

The initiative is a key part of *Our Rural Future* – the Government's ambitious five-year strategy designed to reimagine and revitalise Rural Ireland and is backed up by the Town Centre First Policy, a co-ordinated, whole-of-government approach to regenerate and revitalise Irish towns and villages.

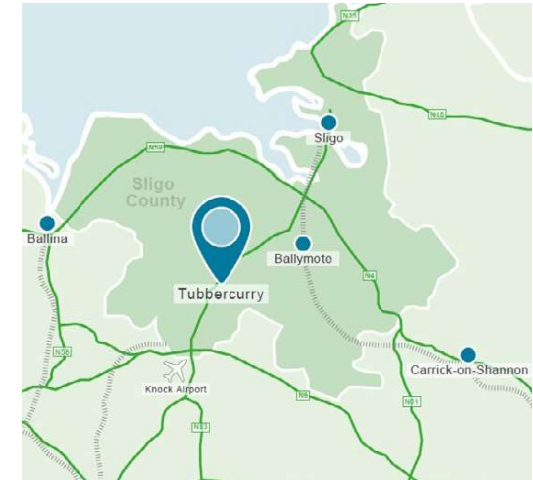
Location

Tubbercurry is located approximately 35 km south of Sligo town, in the south-west of the County, along the national primary road N-17 (Sligo to Galway). The regional road R-294 (Boyle to Ballina) crosses the town, which is also the convergence point for the local road network at Wolfe Tone Square.

Ireland West Knock Airport is located approx. 16km to the south of the town. Tubbercurry was served by a train station which originally opened in 1895, as part of the route between Claremorris and Sligo. It was closed to passenger traffic in 1963, with goods traffic ending in 1975. The disused Sligo-Limerick rail line – better known as the Western Rail Corridor – runs along the northwestern side of the town centre.

Most of the town lies at a height of between 80 and 90 m above sea level, with the land gently rising to the north-east of the town, reaching a height of 104 m at the top of Mountain Road.

The landscape surrounding Tubbercurry is flat and low-lying, with a pattern of small and medium-sized fields bounded by hedgerows and some mature tree belts. The Ox Mountains are located 7km north-west of Tubbercurry, while the hills of Knocknashee (north) and Muckelty Hill (north-east) provide an attractive backdrop to the town.



Above: Strategic location

Study Area

The study area Tubbercurry's TCF Plan comprises the settlement area of the town, alongside green space and supporting infrastructure located within the setting of the settlement area.

Whilst Tubbercurry continues to appear as a typical market town which grew from the convergence of two roads meeting at the heart of the settlement, accelerated urban growth at the turn of the 21st century has seen multi-unit residential development in backlands off the main axis, and at the north and south of the town. Strategic direction which ensures compact and sustainable growth is a key consideration of the TCF Plan.

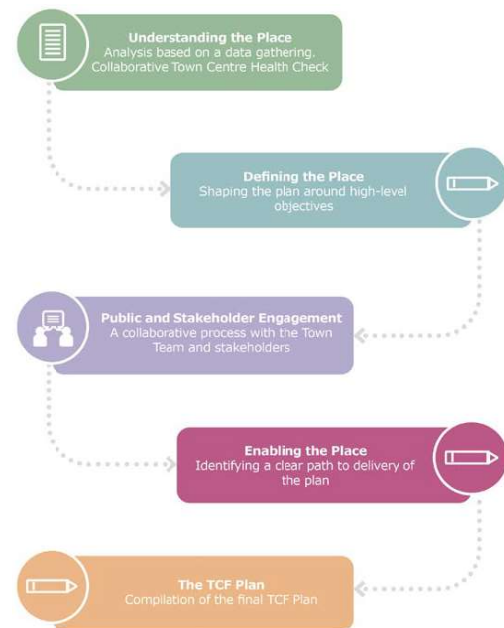


Above: Tubbercurry study area

Structure of the Report

Approach

The TCF Policy sets out a staged methodology for the production of a TCF Plan, which is set out below diagrammatically.



Above: Methodology flow diagram

Report Structure

The TCF Plan is set out in two parts in order to promote better wayfinding and ease of use.

Part One sets the scene for the Tubbercurry TCF Plan and contains all baseline information relating to Stage 1 of the TCF Plan methodology, Understanding the Place.

Information includes:

- Background to Town Centre First Policy
- National, regional and local planning policy
- An overview of public consultation and how it has impacted the development of the Plan.
- A Collaborative Town Centre Health Check (CTCHC) which follows the 15-step process set out by the Heritage Council in 2020.

Part Two is the TCF Action Plan which contains all information relating to Stages 2 and 3 of the TCF Plan methodology, Defining the Place and Enabling the Place. It is the key visioning output document to be utilised by SCC, local landowners and developers, businesses and community groups as a blueprint for the town's development.

Part 2 content comprises:

- Tubbercurry's Town Centre First Vision, themes and objectives
- Long list of Identified Opportunities
- Opportunity Overview Plan
- A focus on each shortlisted Opportunity
- Mobility Strategy
- Delivery Plan.

TCF Plan Part One

Ch 1. Introduction

Town Centre First Policy

Ch 2. Understanding the Place

Policy review - national, regional, local

Public Consultation approach & overview

Collaborative Town Centre Health Check

TCF Plan Part Two

Ch 1. Introduction

Ch. 2 Defining the Place

Town Centre First Vision

Setting out themes / objectives

Long list of Opportunities

Ch. 3 Enabling the Place

Opportunity Overview Plan

Mobility Strategy

Opportunities 1 - 12

Delivery Plan

Above: Report structure



Part 1

Analysis

Introduction

Town Centre First

Town Centre First (TCF) is the Government's policy strategy aimed at supporting the rejuvenation of Irish rural town centres and the creation of town centres which "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".

As a part of the national planning policy guidance document entitled 'Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025', the TCF Policy Approach sets out a path for how rural towns can adapt to the challenges they are facing and utilise the tools available to them to enhance and regenerate their towns. Phase One of the Town Centre First – A Policy Approach for Irish Towns programme, identifies Tubbercurry as a town for which a Town Centre First Plan will be developed in 2023.

Designed as an 'enabling framework' TCF focuses on tailored solutions, designed and implemented by local communities, and supported by both the local and national government. The figure, seen above, illustrates what the outcomes of a Town Centre First strategy should be. The figure seen to the far right, demonstrates what makes a successful town centre as determined by the policy framework.

As set out in the Town Centre First – A Policy Approach for Irish Towns document, the TCF Plan Process outlines what National, Regional,

A TCF Strategy Should Create a Town That Is:



Above: The desired outcomes of the TCF plan making process.
Source: The TCF Policy Framework

Local Policy and Best Practice Guidelines the Plan should be informed by, what the Plan will include in respect of Analysis and Appraisal of the town, the objectives going forward for the town and the strategy and actions stemming from those objectives, and how the Plan will be prepared and implemented by key personnel and enabled by funding and investment into the detailed plans and projects.

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/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.

Above: Qualities of successful places identified by the TCF Framework, Source: TCF Policy Framework.

TCF Plan

Informed By/Informs

National and regional policy

- National Planning Framework
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies
- s28 guidelines (and supporting best practice Manuals)
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets

Local policy

- Development Plan
- Local Area Plan
- Non-Statutory Plan

Best Practice Guidelines

- National TCF Health Check
- National TCF toolkit

Case Studies and Pathfinders

Athlone, Balbriggan, Boyle, Callan, Cappoquin, Cavan Town, Clonakilty, Ennis, Kilkenny, Monaghan Town, Ramelton, Sligo

Includes

Analysis and Appraisal

- National, regional and/local context
- Data gathering (e.g. health check) and auditing
- Consultation/workshops
- Opportunities and challenges

Objectives

- Role
- Image
- Vibrancy and Vitality
- Growth
- Heritage and Culture
- Sustainability
- Social Inclusion

Strategy and Actions

- Connectivity and accessibility
- Traffic Management
- Public Realm (Streets and Spaces)
- Mix of uses
- Housing Choices
- Climate change and adaptation
- Digital transformation
- Cultural and heritage assets
- Regeneration/refurbishment of building stock
- Infill/backland development

Prepared and implemented by

Key Personnel

- Town Centre Team
- Town Regeneration Officers
- Local Authority Multi-Disciplinary Team
- Local community
- Business Groups

Enabling

- Funding Streams
- Business case
- Public/Private investment
- Detailed plans/projects
- Local resources

Each Town Centre First Plan will be underpinned by a Town Centre Health Check, a data gathering exercise and assessment of the current position of the town, national, regional and local planning policy and best-practice guidance and informed by case studies from similar towns.

These plans will include the analysis and appraisal of the town, the objectives for the town, and the strategy and actions proposed to bring the outlined objectives to life. The Plan developed will provide an overall vision for the future direction of the town (Chapter 6 of the *Town Centre First – A Policy Approach* document). These Plans, while not statutory documents, once adopted, will become part of the local planning policy and provide a direction for planning policy at the local level alongside the extant Development Plan.

The creation of this Plan provides an opportunity to set a bold and imaginative precedent for how to transform and rejuvenate the town of Tubbercurry. As a result, the process of constructing this Plan has been comprehensive, seeking to incorporate the desires and needs of the community and make it into the highest quality possible path for the town to follow. The process sought to take a bottom-up approach to developing policy and identify local needs based off engagement and consultation with the local community of Tubbercurry.

The results of this process have been incorporated into the foundation of the Plan and carried through each chapter and proposal set out in Part Two of this Plan.

The main product of the Plan is the development of Objectives and Opportunities for the enhancement and revitalisation of the town which will help to frame planning policy for Tubbercurry Town Centre going forward and can be utilised by the community in the future. These Objectives and Opportunities seek to address the broad issues and desires raised during the consultation process, and come together to inform this community driven vision for the town.

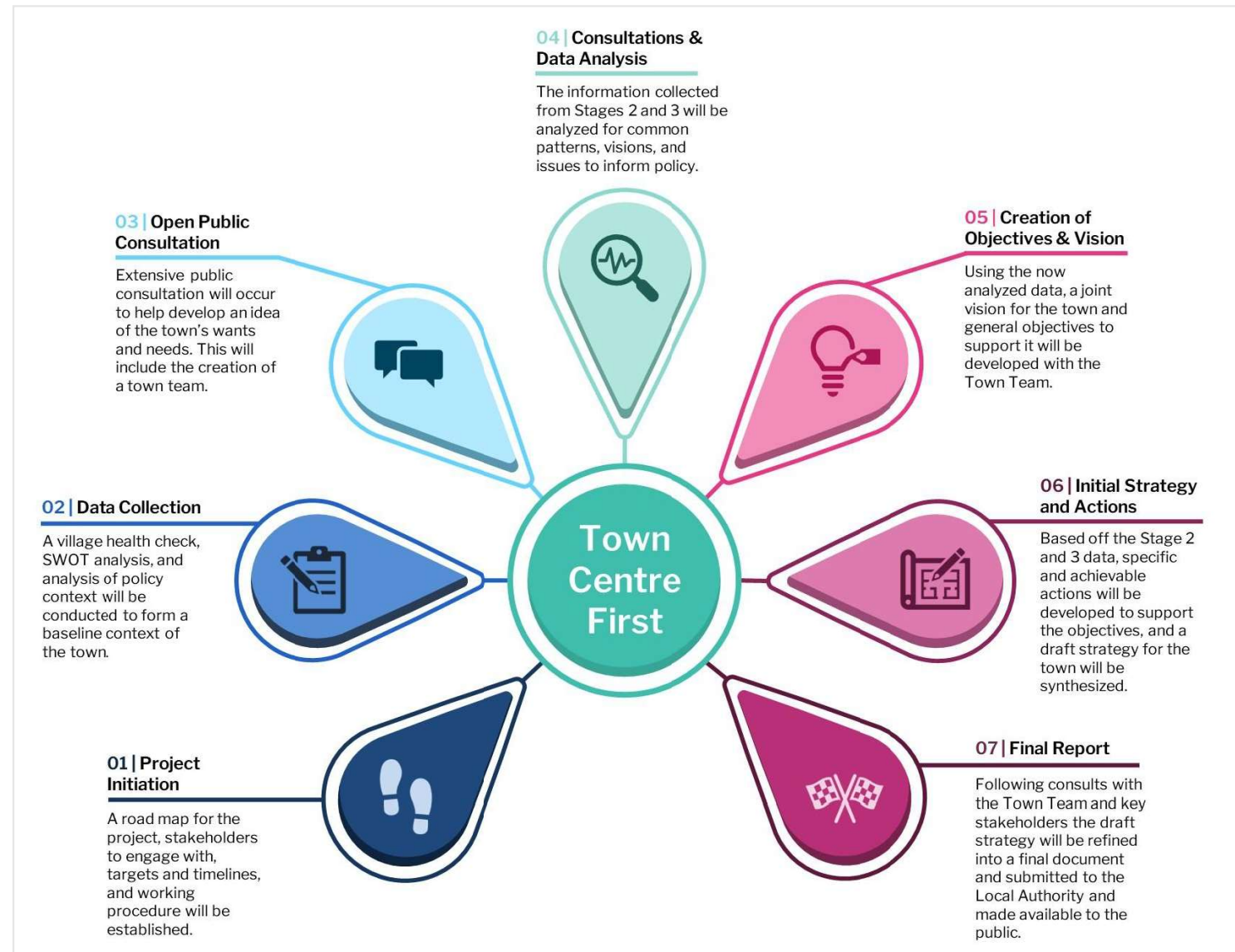
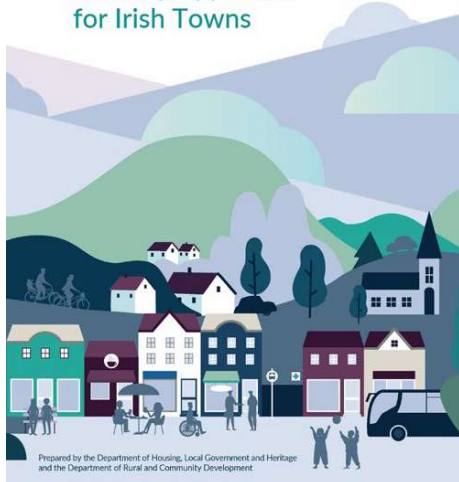
In turn, objectives are supported by achievable, measurable, and clear actions that have been identified, in Part Two, to steer forward the objectives and vision of the Plan. These actions serve as a benchmark to identify the progress of enacting the Plan and its goals, as well as providing guidelines for proceeding on the journey of revitalising the town centre. They also seek to address targeted topics and issues brought up and discussed during the public consultation and data collection process. Each objective and opportunity identified in Part Two of the Plan are informed by and assessed against the relevant policy and guidelines, later in the Plan.

The framework provided by the plan is one that is durable, but flexible, and capable of supporting the changing needs of the Tubbercurry community. As a whole the creation of this Town Centre First Plan for Tubbercurry hopes to herald a new era for the town and its future, as well as for rural towns in Ireland as a whole.

Right: The Tubbercurry TCF creation process as conducted by MKO.

Below: The TCF Policy Framework

Town Centre First A Policy Approach for Irish Towns



2 Understanding the Place

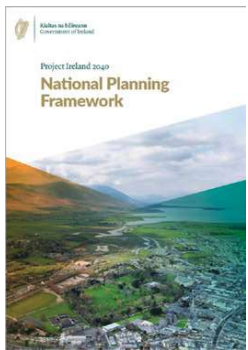
Planning Policy Review

National Policy

Project Ireland 2040

Project Ireland 2040 is the 20-year plan for developing Ireland and ensuring that it remains a vibrant and economically successful place to live. It is comprised of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan (NDP).

The National Planning Framework



The National Planning Framework (NPF) outlines the strategic vision and strategy for Ireland over the next 20 years. It sets out ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) to define the priorities and benefits to be delivered over the course of the plan. The NSOs are supported by National Policy Objectives (NPOs) that contain targeted goals to achieve the vision set out in the NSOs.

The NSOs and associated NPOs in the figure to the right are of key relevance and importance to the Tubbercurry Town Centre First Plan.

The National Development Plan

The National Development Plan (NDP) is the strategic investment plan for the infrastructure and services needed to achieve the NPF. The first NDP runs from 2021-2030 and allocated



two investments towards Tubbercurry. The first investment in the town is from the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF), which allocated €296,000 for public realm and amenity improvements in Tubbercurry. This funding will allow upgrades to St Brigid's Hall, Mary Brennan's, and Wolfe Tone Square.

The second investment is in the 'An Chroí Digital Hub' to enhance the capacity and quality of the hub, and improve the IT facilities.



Above: NSO's from the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the numbers of associated key NPOs relevant to this TCF Plan.

Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025

Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025 is Ireland's rural development policy for the 2021-2025 period. At its core, it seeks to create a rural Ireland that:

- Is integral to the national whole,
- Has increased interdependence between rural and urban places,
- Has the potential to create quality work,
- Has high quality environments, and
- Is vibrant with local people and communities at its heart.

The strategy seeks improvements in several key areas including digital connectivity, employment and careers, revitalization of towns and villages, improved resilience, and leadership in local communities, enhanced public services, and climate action.

Town Centre First: A Policy Approach to Irish Towns

As part of Our Rural Future, *Town Centre First* (TCF) policy seeks to provide local communities and Local Authorities a toolkit to achieve the goals set out in the Our Rural Future policy document, while giving communities the opportunity to drive the process and shape their own towns.

Climate Action Plan 2023

The *Climate Action Plan 2023* (CAP) is an update to the *Climate Action Plan 2019* and sets our refreshed measures to help Ireland achieve its

legal binding emissions targets under international and European law. Under the plan, Ireland is seeking to reduce its transport emissions 50%, its commercial building emissions 45%, residential building emissions 40%, and businesses emissions 35% by 2030.

In order to achieve these targets, it acknowledges a redesign and remodeling of our cities, towns, and villages is needed. The promotion of more sustainable forms of travel, bringing building stocks up to a higher standard, supporting more sustainable ways of doing business and ensuring long-term economic sustainability are both essential to meeting these targets, as well as improving the quality of life in of our towns and cities.

Heritage Ireland 2030

Heritage Ireland 2030 is the plan to protect and promote Ireland's local and national heritage. Built around three themes, communities, leadership, and partnerships, the strategy suggests 150 actions to ensure the protection of Ireland's heritage in all of its forms. The core of the strategy is an acknowledgement of Ireland's heritage as being at the core of its identity, having both an intrinsic and economic value. Both natural and built heritage are addressed in the strategy, and methods for communities to get involved in their protection are advanced.

The Digital Connectivity Strategy (2022)

Recognizing the importance of access to digital services towards the wider development of

Ireland's economy, the Digital Connectivity Strategy sets out the policies and supports available to ensure every community has access to the internet and its benefits. The strategy acknowledges that a high-quality internet service is essential to the development of rural towns and villages and commits to rolling it out to support both the local economy and provision of smart services.

Regional Policy

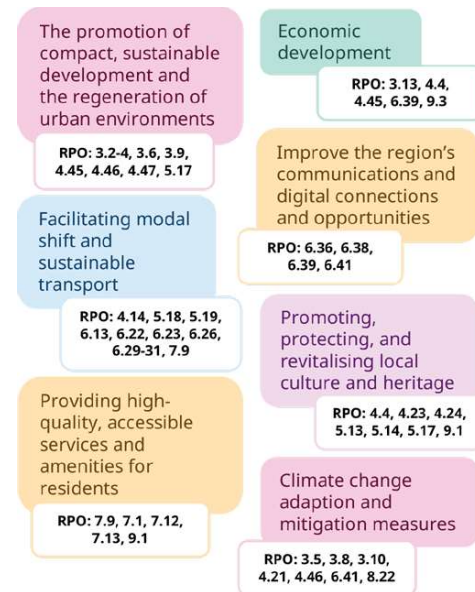
Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (2020-2032)



The *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy* (RSES) is a statutory document that sets out the physical and economic development priorities for each of Ireland's three regions. The RSES for the Northern and Western Region specifically targets sustainability as being at the core of its development goals. A move away from the 'business-as-usual' approach and shift towards this more sustainable model is intended to increase competitiveness with Ireland's other regions, while halting environmental degradation, and ensuring a higher quality of service to the region's towns, cities, and villages.

The RSES contains five growth ambitions. They are as follows with their corresponding policy

areas in parentheses: *vibrant (economy and employment), natural (environment), connected (connectivity), inclusive (quality of life), and infrastructure (enabling infrastructure)* ambitions. These define the vision for the region and guiding tenants for development over the plan's lifetime. Within the plan, Tubbercurry is identified as sitting within the Sligo commuter catchment, along with being similarly close to Ballina, Co. Mayo. The RSES is broken down into Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) that seek to guide the region towards achieving the vision set out. The figure below sets out the common themes in the RPOs relevant to the Tubbercurry TCF, with the relevant RPO's listed below each.



Above: Key themes relevant to the TCF from the RSES and the Regional Policy Objective (RPO) Numbers Associated with them.

North-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024

The *Regional Enterprise Plans* represent a 'bottom-up, collaborative mechanism' to help deliver balanced regional growth with a coherent policy approach. The plans were made in collaboration and consultation with stakeholders from across economic industries and sectors.

The main result of the North-West Plan is strategic objectives designed to better prepare the region's economy in the coming years. These are: *Encouraging entrepreneurship and scaling of SMEs, Regional strengths – wind energy and blue economy, Promotion of the region, Enterprise transition to low carbon, Cross border relationships in the enterprise ecosystem, and Skills.*

Local Policy

Sligo Development Plan 2017-2023



The *Sligo Development Plan 2017 – 2023* (SDP) is currently the extant planning policy framework for the County, with the emerging *Sligo Development Plan 2024 – 2030* currently at the Issues Paper stage of development at the

time of release of this Town Centre First Plan for Tubbercurry. The SDP sets out the following vision for the county:

"County Sligo will be an enterprising, creative, inclusive and resilient place, which values and celebrates its unique environment, rich culture and heritage, and where the wellbeing of current and future generations is central to everything we do."

The SDP identifies Tubbercurry as a 'Key Support Town', able to provide significant support to the county's social and economic development outside of Sligo City. While the SDP intended to prepare and adopt a Local Area Plan (LAP) for Tubbercurry, this remains outstanding at this point. Despite this, there are several provisions for Tubbercurry and rural areas within the Development Plan. General themes relating to the development of Tubbercurry and associated policies are in the first figure on the next page.

Promoting the economic development of towns and cities while reinforcing their economic roles, including by provision of enterprise centres, reservation of land for economic development, and use of the Tubbercurry Rural Economic Development Zone (REDZ) and the funding received for it.

SDP Policies: SP-S-2, SP-S-6, SP-ED-1

Increasing retail provision in Tubbercurry in line with the town's designation as a Key Support Retail Centre. This includes promoting initiatives to enhance the urban character and design of the town to ensure it becomes an attractive place to locate and invest in.

SDP Policies: SP-RP-3, P-RP-7

Improving the urban design of Sligo's urban areas by refurbishing historic buildings and associated fixtures in town centres, promoting sequential development and a strong edge between rural and urban areas, ensuring a continuous streetscape, and ensuring the contextual compatibility of new buildings and their facades.

SDP Policies: P-UD-1 to 10

Provide for active transport by ensuring that safe, high-quality, supporting infrastructure is created for pedestrians and cyclists.

SDP Policies: P-CW-1 to 8

Manage flood risk by restricting development in high-risk areas, and ensuring that risk is suitably assessed as necessary for the context of each site

SDP Policies: P-FRM-2, 5, 6, 7

Adapt and mitigate the effects of Climate Change by facilitating the transition to a low-carbon society collaboratively with local communities, while growing the green economy, increasing renewable energy, and taking energy efficiency measures.

SDP Policies: P-CAM-1, 3 to 6, 8 to 11

Sligo Climate Adaption Strategy (2019)

The Sligo Climate Adaption Strategy (2019) is the county's current 5 year plan to manage the effects of climate change. Created with support from the Atlantic Seaboard North Climate Action Regional Office (CARO), the strategy outlines the climatological baseline for the county, the expected changes, changes already seen, and potential solutions. The strategy notes the prevalence of more extreme weather events leading to greater coastal erosion, flooding, and cold spells and heatwaves. Risks and damages such as to critical infrastructure and services, environmental integrity, heritage, agriculture, economies, and communities are all identified as being likely to occur due to climate change in the coming years. It then sets out 48 actions to take to adapt to climate change under the banner of three goals: engagement, planning, and adaption.

Draft Sligo Climate Action Plan (2023)

While the *Sligo Climate Action Plan (2023)* has not yet been released as public consultation analysis and drafting is ongoing, the Risk Assessment commissioned for the plan is complete. That assessment concludes that climate hazards are almost universally going to become more frequent and more severe. This includes pluvial flooding, heatwaves and drought, and river flooding. It also concludes that the seasonal extremes will become more so (i.e., rainy seasons rainier, and dry seasons dryer). While the full plan has yet to be released, the need for urgent climate action can't be disputed.

Further detail on national, regional and local policies can be found in **Appendix A**.

Above: Key themes relevant to the TCF from the Sligo Development Plan and the Policy Numbers Associated with them.

Public Consultation Overview and Approach

Overview

Public consultation on the Town Centre First (TCF) Plan for Tubbercurry took place between May and July of 2023, with the aim of the finalised TCF Plan being ready for publication by the end of September.

The public consultation process was a collaborative effort involving Sligo County Council and the consultants on the project, LUC and MKO. The overarching aim of the public consultation process, in line with the stated aims of the Town Centre First policy approach, were to gather the views and opinions of the people of Tubbercurry as to how they felt their town could be improved as a place in which to live, work, do business and spend time.

LUC and MKO had undertaken previous public consultation work in the summer of 2022 as part of the Tubbercurry Public Realm Improvement programme, but after significant pushback from key stakeholders in the town, it was decided not to proceed with the programme at that time.

In early 2023, under the Town Centre First policy approach, Tubbercurry was selected to serve as the representative town for County Sligo under the pilot scheme.

LUC tendered for the project in March 2023 with MKO as a named sub-contractor. The tender was successful, and the process of public consultation began in early May. A draft timeline for the public consultation process was outlined at this time; as the project had a deadline for completion of September, the need for a swift roll-out of the process was highlighted.

Public Consultation Timeline



Public Consultation Overview and Approach

Phase 1 Public Consultation

The Phase 1 Public Consultation events were held in An Chroí and Teach Laighne, in Tubbercurry, on the evening of Wednesday, May 24th, and during the day on Thursday, May 25th, respectively. The event on Wednesday evening was to be targeted at key stakeholders within the town, such as business owners, community leaders and elected representatives, but was also open to the public. The event on Thursday was to be a 'drop-in' day for any members of the public who wished to find out more about the project or offer their input.

Prior to the in-person events, two questionnaires, one for business owners and one for residents, went live on the Sligo County Council website on Friday, May 19th. The two surveys were boosted by a post on the Sligo County Council social channels early in the following week. Hard copies of the two surveys were printed off to be brought to the event.

The first public consultation event was staged in An Chroí on the evening of Wednesday, May 24th. The event had been advertised via press release to local newspapers, the *Sligo Champion* and the *Western People*, in their editions of the previous week. The event was attended by approximately 40 members of the Tubbercurry community, including several of the town's business owners and community leaders.

Following introductions which included an explanation of the Town Centre First Policy Approach and an explanation of the methodology that would be employed in the consultation approach, the attendees were subdivided into four groups of approximately ten people each.

Each of these groups were engaged in discussions on the current state of Tubbercurry and what changes, if any, ought to be made to improve the town. These discussions were facilitated by representatives of LUC, MKO and Sligo County Council.

These group discussions lasted approximately an hour and contained some forthright expressions of opinions, particularly from one group comprised primarily of business owners around Wolfe Tone Square. The members of this group were strong in their views that any plan which would reduce the number of parking spaces in Wolfe Tone Square would be met by strong opposition from the business owners. The discussions evolved into more open conversations about the possibilities available to the town through the Town Centre First Plan.

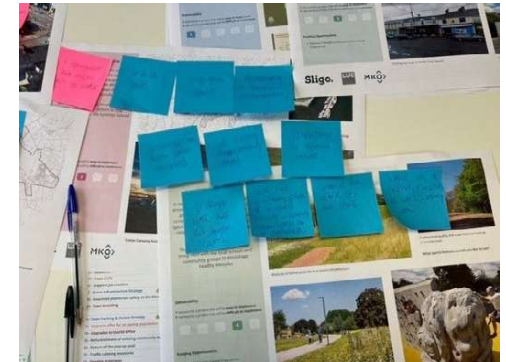
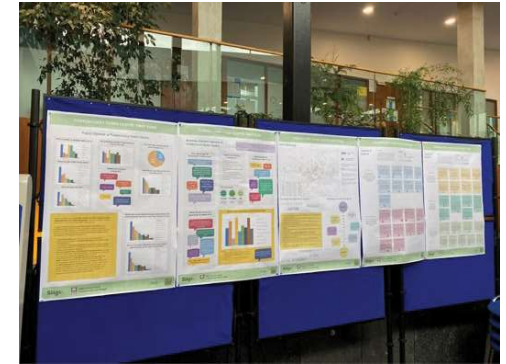
On Thursday, May 25th, a 'drop-in' event was held at the town library at Teach Laighne. This was designed and advertised as an opportunity for members of the local community to call in, learn more about the aims and ambitions of the TCF plan, and offer their own views on how the town might be improved.

A steady flow of people called in to discuss the plans and offer their opinions. The overall feeling was one of optimism about the Town Centre Plan and the opportunities it could present to the town.

Online Surveys

Online Surveys were live until Friday 9th June. A total of 36 residents and 43 business owners completed surveys. It was decided to re-open the business surveys later in the month to allow additional surveys to be submitted.

All surveys were collected and collated, which informed the creation of a 'long-list' of potential projects to be carried forward to Phase 2 of the consultation process.



Public Consultation Overview and Approach

Phase 2 Public Consultation

The second phase of public consultation on the Tubbercurry TCF Plan took place in the first week of July. LUC finalised the 'long-list' by shaping the ideas and suggestions gathered in the first phase of consultation into a list of 42 proposed projects, sub-categorised under five distinct headings: **Strategic Projects, Public Realm Improvements, Roads and Infrastructure, Tourism and Destinations, and Communities and Facilities.**

The Phase 2 event was held the night of Wednesday 5th July in An Chroi. The event was advertised in the local media and via Sligo County Council's social platforms, and those who had left their contact details at the first consultation evening were also informed of the event.

The Phase 2 event was to consist of two elements; an opening presentation detailing the progress of the project to date and setting out the long-list of projects, before the attendees were split into smaller breakout groups to discuss the proposed projects in more detail. The aim was to whittle down the long-list and move closer to a consensus on the final shortlist of 10-12 projects to bring forward.

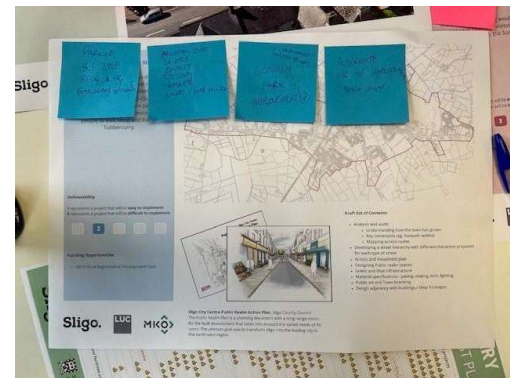
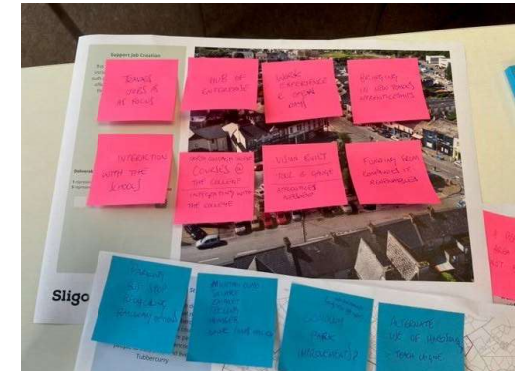
Approximately 30 people attended the Phase 2 event. Upon arrival, attendees were asked to sign in and given a designated coloured sticker – red, blue, green or yellow – assigning them to their respective breakout groups later in the evening. These colours were assigned randomly and were intended to give each breakout group a cross-section of viewpoints, and to prevent groupings in which one singular issue could become the dominant theme of the discussion.

Once the presentations were complete, the breakout sessions began. The four facilitators brought their respective groups through the long-list of proposed projects and elicited their opinions and views on what projects should be carried forward to the shortlist.

Although the time restraints were a challenge for the facilitation, the format of small groups with a good cross-section of viewpoints helped to facilitate engaging discussions. While some proposed projects still generated some debate, ultimately the groups were able to reach consensus on several significant points.

At the end of the session, participants were asked to fill out forms, listing their preferred 10-12 projects from the long-list of 42. These forms, coupled with the feedback recorded from the discussions, formed the basis of the emerging shortlist which was devised by LUC over the following week and presented at the next phase of consultation.

Tubbercurry TCF Long List - Select your top 10 projects		X
1- Shop Frontage Strategy	★★★★★★★★★★★★	14
2- Town Signage Strategy	★★★★	4
3- Green Infrastructure Strategy	★★★★★★★★	10
4- Town Parking & Access Strategy	★★★★★★★★	9
5- Re-opening Railway	★★★★	4
6- Additional Bus Services, strategic and local	★★★★	4
7- Tubbercurry Public Realm Strategy	★★★★★★★★	14
8- Improving Recycling Initiatives	★★	2
9- Improving Digital Blueprint	★★★★	5
10- Greening the Town Centre	★★	1
11- Greater amenity provision within the Town Centre	★★	2
12- Re-use of derelict properties and land	★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★	21
13- Improve links between Town Centre and the Park	★★	3
14- Improve offer for young people and teenagers	★★★★★★★★★★★★	17
15- Improve offer for an ageing population	★★★★★★★★	9
16- Improve electrical supply to Town Centre spaces	★★	4
17- Town CCTV	★★★★★★★★	12
18- Improved pedestrian safety at the Mountain Road Junction	★★★★★★★★	10
19- Improved access to existing business and facilities on Mountain Road	★★★★	8
20- Traffic calming measures	★★★★	1
21- Relocation of bus services to N17	★★★★★★★★	13
22- Improving walking and cycling opportunities	★★★★	6
23- Underground electrical and telecoms cabling in Town Centre	★★★★	6
24- Town branding	★★★★	10
25- Develop greenway	★★★★	8
26- Warning and getting traffic	★★	6
27- Celebrating the Town's walls	★★	1
28- Town museum/heritage space	★★★★	5
29- Computer / RV parking	★★★★★★★★★★★★	19
30- Upgrades to tourist office	★★★★★★★★	9
31- Events programme	★★	2
32- Markets programme	★★	-
33- Utilise An Chroi locality and regionality	★★	4
34- Community centre / hub building	★★	3
35- Community enterprise group	★★	1
36- Refurbishment of existing community buildings	★★★★	9
37- Access to toilets in the Town	★★	3
38- Develop a sports complex	★★★★★★★★★★★★	21
39- Return of the pop-up park	★★★★	9
40- More accommodation within the Town	★★	3
41- Support job creation	★★★★	12
42- Improve healthcare facilities	★★	4



Public Consultation Overview and Approach

Phase 3 Public Consultation

The third phase of public consultation took place one week later, on Wednesday 12th July at An Chroí. The purpose of the Phase 3 consultation was to present the short-list of projects, as determined by the Phase 2 consultation and the forms filled out by participants at its conclusion.

A short-list of 12 projects was presented to attendees at the Phase 3 event. The short-list was evenly divided between short-term and easily deliverable projects, and more long-term, complex projects. Each project had been ranked from 1 to 5 in terms of ease of deliverability: 1 being the easiest and 5 the most complex.

The Phase 3 event was split into two sessions, each running for approx. 90 minutes. After introductory remarks, the attendees at each session were sub-divided into two groups of 7-8 people each, each with one facilitator.

Each sub-group focused on six of the 12 short-listed projects and the discussion was designed to tease out more detailed views and opinions on how the projects might best be delivered, where in the town certain elements of the plan might be best located, etc. The narrowed focus of the consultation allowed for more in-depth conversations to develop and by the end of each discussion, each of the 12 short-listed projects had been carefully considered.

The feedback generated by the Phase 3 consultations was again collated and added to the body of work from the previous phases.

Phase 4 'Citizen Tubbercurry' Public Consultation

A fourth phase of public consultation comprised of two online events on Monday, July 17th. These events were advertised in advance via local media and Sligo County Council's social platforms. These online events were targeted at the broader community within Tubbercurry and were organised and facilitated by DEMOTEC.

The aim of the workshops was to test the shortlist of ideas, to understand whether there was broader consensus within the community. Attendees were organised into three groups in order to facilitate active discussions which were encouraged via a controlled set of questions.

DEMOTEC

From the early stages of the public consultation process, a research unit named DEMOTEC, based out of the University of Strathclyde, were part of the project team. DEMOTEC is a three-year EU Commission-funded participatory research project focusing on the methodology of public consultation programmes in relation to urban development. DEMOTEC were represented on the project by Annie Cook (Democratic Society) and Carlos Mendez (the University of Strathclyde).

Beginning from the Phase 2 public consultation events in early July, DEMOTEC attended and helped facilitate the consultation events, both in-person and online, while conducting their own parallel research to gauge the participants' opinions and feelings on the consultation process itself.

Annie led a knowledge-sharing session on Tuesday 4th July, the day before the first Phase 2 consultation in Tubbercurry, to instruct the facilitators on how best to conduct public consultation.

At the event the following evening, Carlos introduced the DEMOTEC project and explained their intentions to conduct their research during the opening presentation. Before the breakout sessions began, attendees were asked to fill in short questionnaires about their feelings towards community consultation and how their local authorities engage with the public. They were then asked to fill out a post-consultation questionnaire after the breakout sessions had concluded to ascertain whether the experience had changed their feelings on the subject.

Attendees were requested to fill out another questionnaire after the Phase 3 consultation a week later, again asking whether their feelings towards the consultation process, and the efficacy of local government in general, had been changed over the course of this process.

Feedback is awaited on the Demotec project outcomes, at the time of publishing the TCF Plan.

Tubbercurry Town Team

A key outcome of the public consultation process is the development of a Town Team in Tubbercurry. All stakeholders were invited to apply for Town Team membership, on the understanding that it represented a significant commitment to the town and its future.

The Team has provided collective and individual feedback on Stage 4 and 5 outputs of the TCF Plan, which has been integrated following review with SCC.

The Town Team features representatives from key groups such as the Tubbercurry Chamber of Commerce, Tubbercurry Tidy Towns and South Sligo Summer School alongside local sports groups, businesses and Elected Member representation.

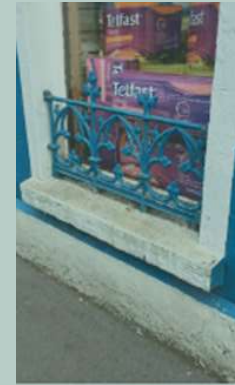
The Town Team membership includes the following community champions, most of which are present in the corresponding photograph:

- Mary Barry
- Barry Brennan
- Geraldine Brennan
- Martin Connolly (Councillor)
- Sandra Cribben
- Margaret Gormonly
- Séana Haughey
- Gerry Henry
- Joann Hosey (Chair)
- Teresa Krebs
- Sean McDonagh
- Cleiton Mercus
- John Murphy
- Greg Smith Stanislawski
- Gearoid Surlis
- Paul Taylor (Councillor)
- Jane Walsh.



Tubbercurry

Collaborative Town
Centre Health Check



Introduction

Aim of the CTCHC

This report summarises the key findings from the 15-step Collaborative Town Centre Health Check (CTCHC) Programme methodology, developed by the Heritage Council and its partners.

The key findings from Tubbercurry's CTCHC and baseline data will inform plans and strategies in relation to the following:

- Arts, Cultural Tourism, e.g. music, food, etc.
- Climate change adaptation
- Commerce / E Commerce and Enterprise
- Enabling infill development
- Heritage-led Regeneration
- Living in the Town Centre
- Public Realm, e.g. historic streetscapes, parks and public spaces
- Renewable Energy / Energy Harvesting
- Strategic Planning and Place-making.

Approach

The CTCHC research focuses on a number of key areas:

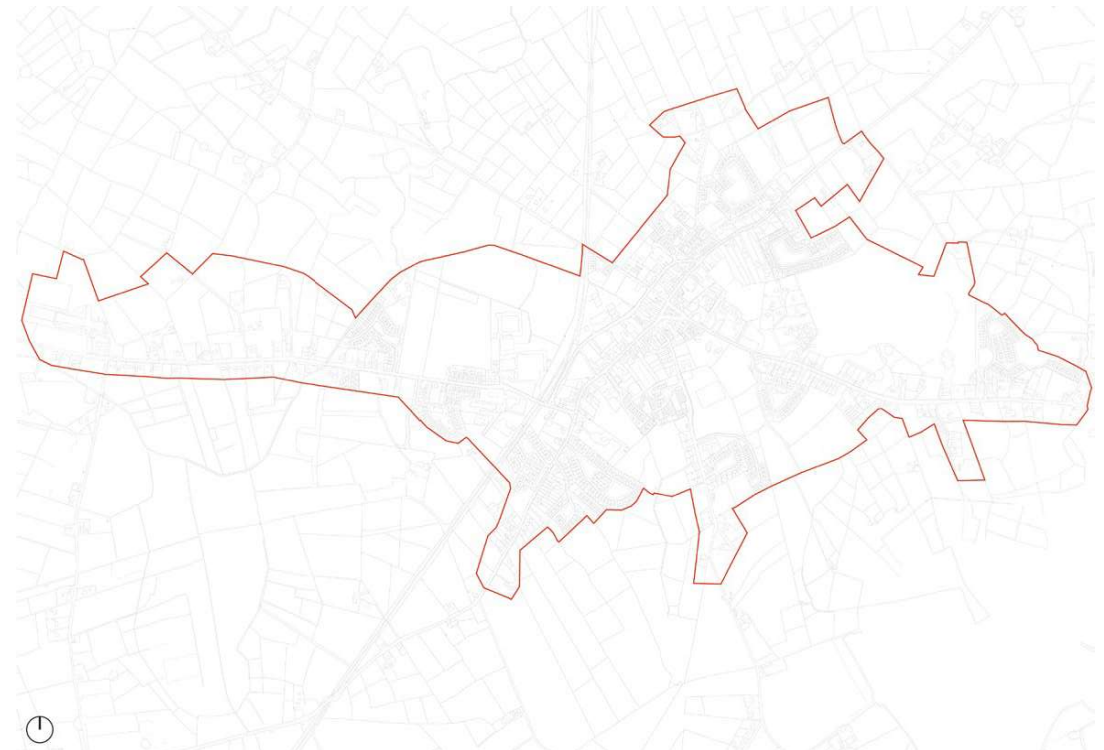
- Land use in the historic town centre
- Consumers' opinions and attitudes
- Business owners' attitude toward the town centre
- Footfall in the historic town centre
- Movement and accessibility.

Representatives from Sligo County Council, Tubbercurry Chamber of Commerce, Tubbercurry Tidy Towns and the community were actively engaged in a collaborative process to achieve the goals set out by the Collaborative Town Centre Health Check and Town Centre First Plan policy.

Study area

The plan below sets out the study area for the Tubbercurry CTCHC. It is defined as the settlement boundary of the town and incorporates green space within the immediate setting of existing development.

Tubbercurry is located within the county of Sligo and within the electoral division of Connacht.



Above: Tubbercurry Study Area



Above: 15-step CTCHC Process. Source: Heritage Council

Survey Methodology

Changing demographics, lifestyles, travel to work patterns and consumer preferences are all impacting on the vitality and viability of our historic town centres. In addition, the available information about our historic town centres is limited in scope.

This summary report presents up-to-date research that will help inform our response to these challenges through existing and future operational programmes that support heritage-led urban and rural regeneration.

Tubbercurry's CTCHC research was undertaken during 2023, following the recommended 15-Step Methodology set out by the CTCHC Programme.

Surveys

Public Stakeholder & Business Surveys

Local stakeholders - including community members, visitors to the town and local businesses - were encouraged to undertake surveys to understand opinion and key issues. Surveys were advertised in the Sligo Champion newspaper and through a 'Tubbercurry TCF Plan' Sligo County Council web page. Stakeholders were informed of the surveys via email and face-to-face at a public consultation event. Businesses were engaged with on a face-to-face basis, with follow-up emails and liaison with the Tubbercurry Chamber of Commerce.

Surveys were available online, via the web page and in paper, at the local library.

Land Use Surveys

LUC collected survey data on the vitality and vibrancy of the historic town centre for a land-use survey, which examined the use of ground floor space in the core town centre area. This core area covered all streets within the town centre. The land use data was verified on site.

The survey was conducted in May 2023 and uses were classified using the GOAD Classification of Land Use. The land use findings were peer reviewed in September 2023.

Movement Surveys

Movement surveys, assessing vehicle counts, pedestrian footfall and town centre parking audits were conducted by traffic surveyors in June 2023.

Traffic counts and pedestrian footfall surveys were conducted electronically over a period of 7 days to determine the areas of high and low flow. Assessment focused on key town centre routes and junctions located within the economic heart of the town.

Car parking audits were undertaken manually on a weekday with surveyors assessing town centre car parking areas every 30 mins. The focus of the audit was publicly accessible town centre car parks and town centre on-street parking. Private car parks associated with shops, hotels and the local Family Resource Centre were not included in the audit.

Business Owners' Opinion of Tubbercurry Town Centre

Main advantages for businesses in Tubbercurry?

'A lot of volunteerism which keeps the town looking well'

'There is easy access and parking on Wolf Tone Square for customers to park and shop locally with ease'

'Lower rent lovely'

'Being close to the main footfall of the town'

'Large and well populated catchment area'

Tubbercurry's Unique Selling Point

- Accessible for local and rural communities
- A variety of shops and public amenities
- Easy free parking
- Market square and excellent festivals culture
- A mix of modern and traditional
- A state of the art facility at An Chroi
- Reasonably priced housing
- Close proximity to larger towns and Knock Airport.

DO YOU SELL ONLINE?



72.5%

of respondents have a website



27.25%

of respondents sell online



9%

of respondents planning to sell online

Main challenges for businesses in Tubbercurry?

'Internet issues'

'Things to keep people about the town, green areas and benches'

'Two way traffic is very dangerous on Teeling St with parking on one side'

'Lack of variety of shops'

'Footfall'

'Lack of attractive office space'

Business Owners' Opinion of Tubbercurry Town Centre

What changes would you want to see in Tubbercurry?

'Introduce a one way system on Teeling St and route Boyle/Ballymote traffic down "The Lane" onto the N17 (Circular Road)'

'More green areas & review of where you can park in the town'

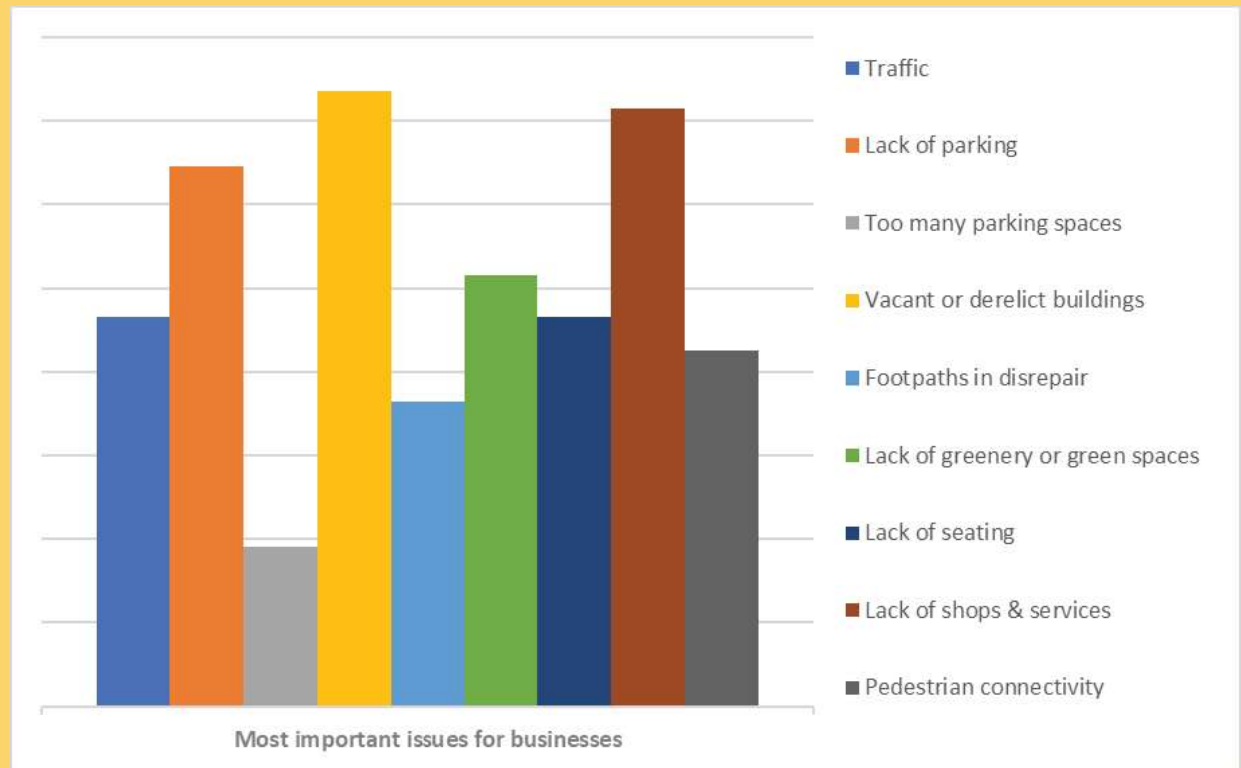
'Centralised attractive office areas for commercial'

Grants for more festivals and for existing festivals. Bus shelters, seats and public toilets to encourage public transport use.

'Bring in more businesses. Clean up the old buildings. Try and make a town centre as Tubbercurry is so spread out'

'More cafes, a gastronomy pub and bakery are required.'

What are the most important issues for businesses?



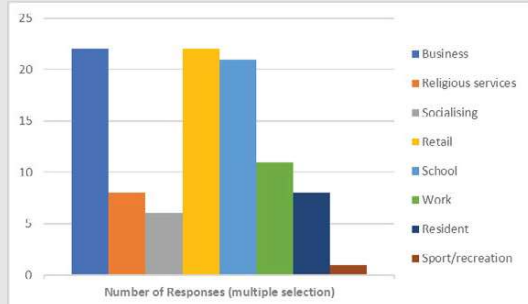
Summary:

- Vacancies / Dereliction and Lack of Shops / Services noted as the biggest issue for businesses in Tubbercurry town centre.
- Lack of parking noted as one of the more significant issues for local businesses.
- Too many parking spaces noted as the least significant issue for businesses.

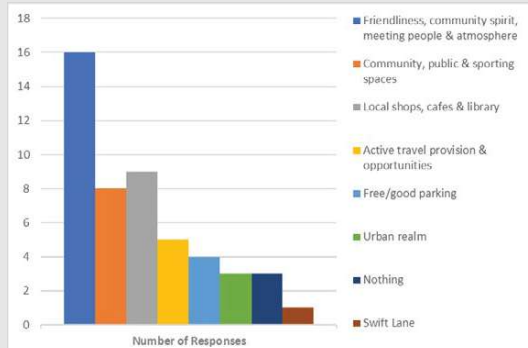
'There is no interaction or networking among businesses. A business directory would be useful for services and businesses'

Public Opinion of Tubbercurry Town Centre

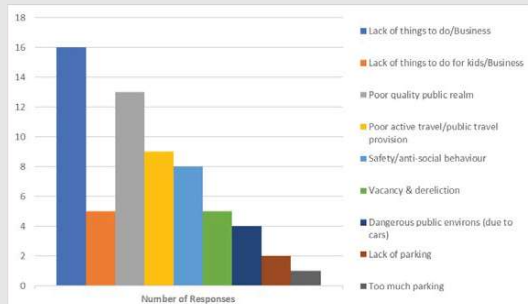
Main purpose in visiting Tubbercurry



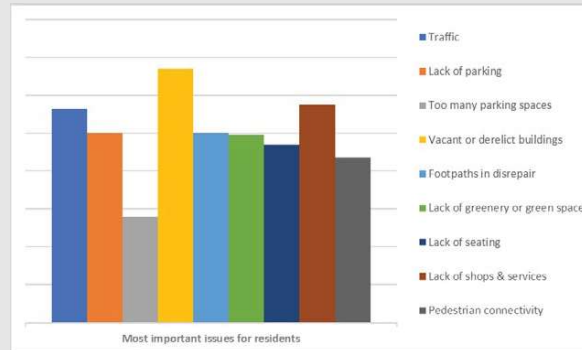
What do you enjoy doing here?



What do you not like?



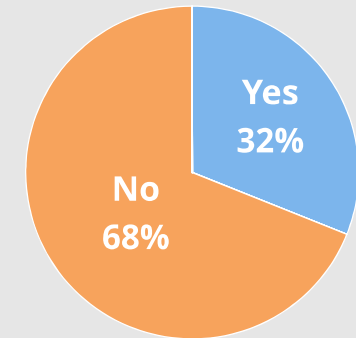
Key problems and their importance to the community



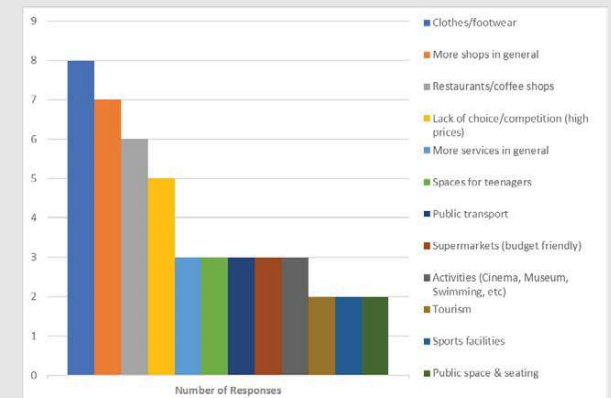
Tubbercurry's Unique Selling Point



As a consumer, are your needs met in Tubbercurry?



What do you want to see more of in Tubbercurry?



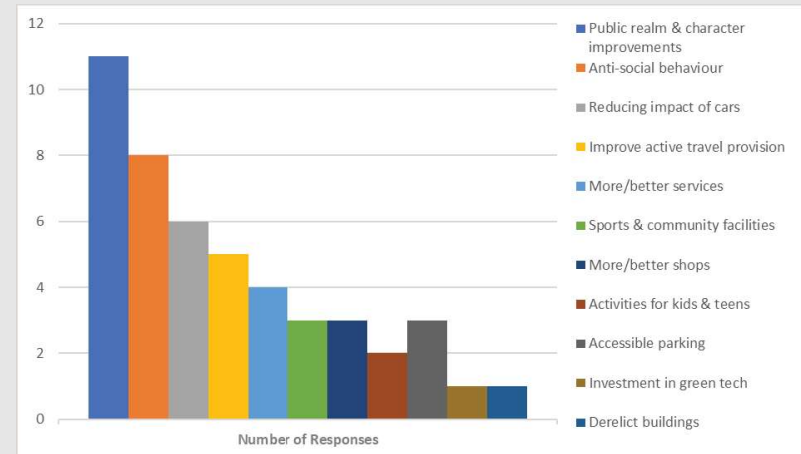
Public Opinion of Tubbercurry Town Centre

Overall, residents report a **fantastic community spirit and genuine joy in interacting with their fellow townspeople**. There is a strong community, town culture, and history to work with and build from.

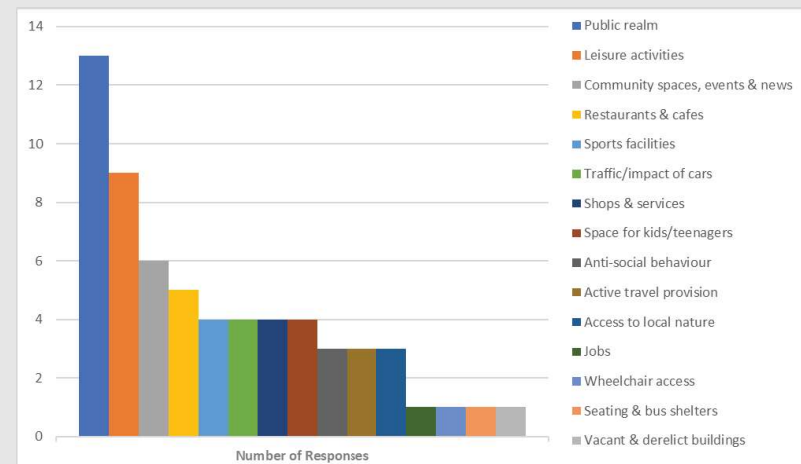
Several key trends have emerged from the public consultation on the Tubbercurry Town Centre First Plan. The public at large was relatively consistent in their responses and reviews of the town presently. Key trends that should be examined further and be addressed where appropriate in the strategy include but are not limited to:

- A **lack of activities** and reasons to come into the town. This is particularly noticeable for **teens/young people** which has potentially contributed to a...
- ...prevalence of **anti-social behaviour**. Respondents often mentioned issues surrounding anti-social behaviour from young people including underage drinking and vandalism.
- Significant **public realm improvements are greatly desired** including more bins and trees, reducing dereliction improvements to the quality of shop fronts, and seating, amongst other concerns.
- A significant desire for **expanded services and shops within the town**, as well as competition for existing shops to potentially encourage price reductions. The most requested was a clothing shop.
- A **conflict between cars and active** travellers. The poor repair and design of footpaths, the speed of cars passing through towns, and dangerous intersections were often mentioned. At the same time, several respondents were concerned about a loss of parking or expressed disappointment in the current offering.

What issues facing Tubbercurry town centre that you feel require particular attention in this Town Centre First Plan?



How can we make Tubbercurry town centre a more appealing place to live, work or spend time?



Landuse Survey - Whole Town

4%
Total vacancy
rate

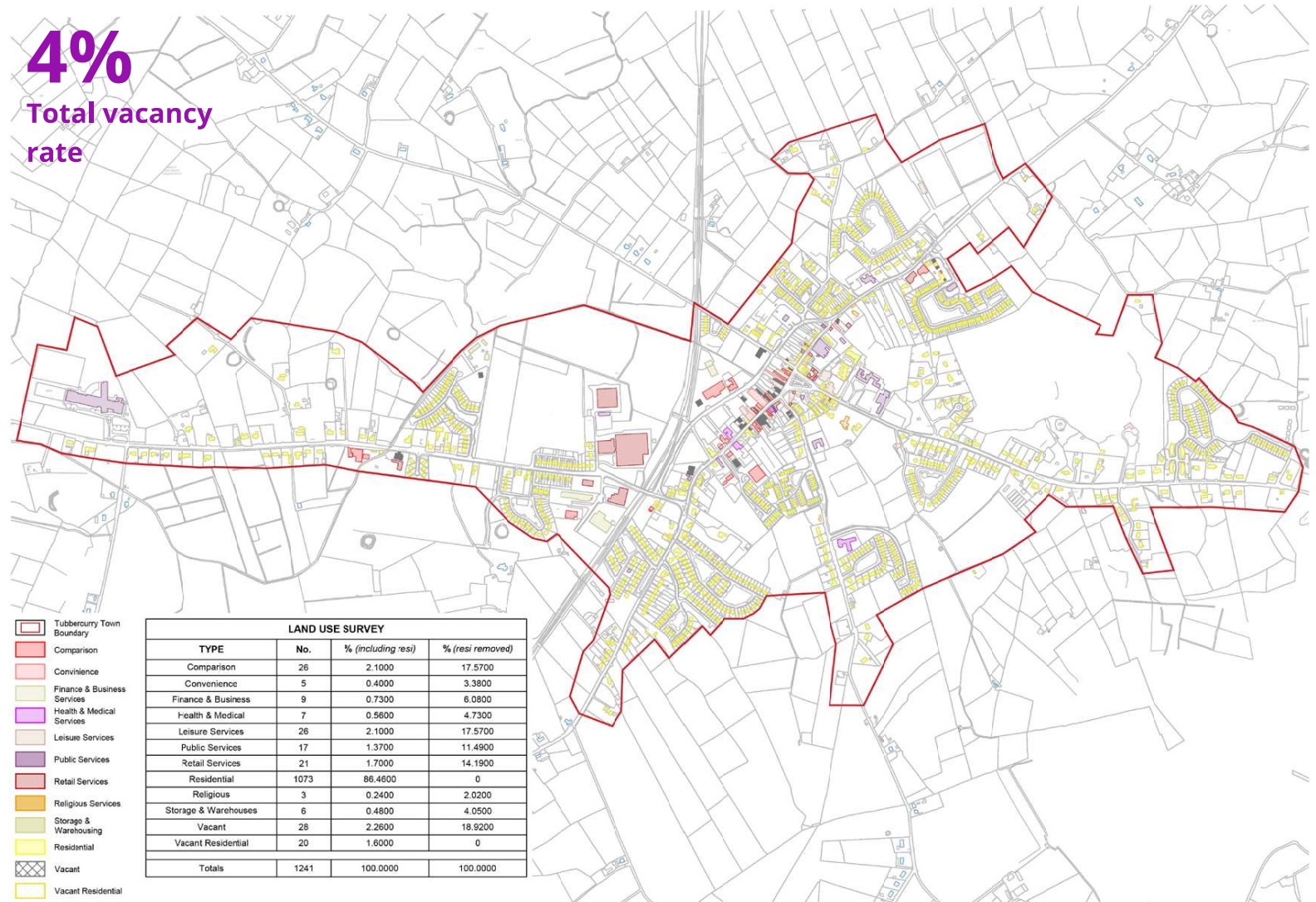
Comparison - Comparison goods stores sell non perishable goods such as furniture, carpets, televisions, etc.

Convenience - Convenience goods stores sell items such as sweets, prescriptions, groceries, etc.

Leisure - Leisure services are a range of businesses supplying entertainment such as pubs, cinemas, theatre, etc.

Public - Public services include community centres, council offices, libraries, etc.

Retail - Retail services provide specialised tasks including dry cleaning, hairdressers, travel agents, etc.



Landuse Survey - Town Centre

There a variety of empty residential and commercial buildings within the Town Centre Core, these include:

- **Humber St** - 1 commercial unit & 5 residential units
- **Masshill Rd** - 1 commercial unit & 1 residential unit
- **Wolfe Tone Square** - 3 commercial units & 1 residential unit
- **Teeling St** - 11 commercial units & 3 residential units
- **Mountain Rd** - 2 commercial units
- **Backlands** - 3 commercial units.

There are also a number of underutilised commercial spaces along the N17 and backlands within the town centre core. These have been highlighted in light green and have great development potential.

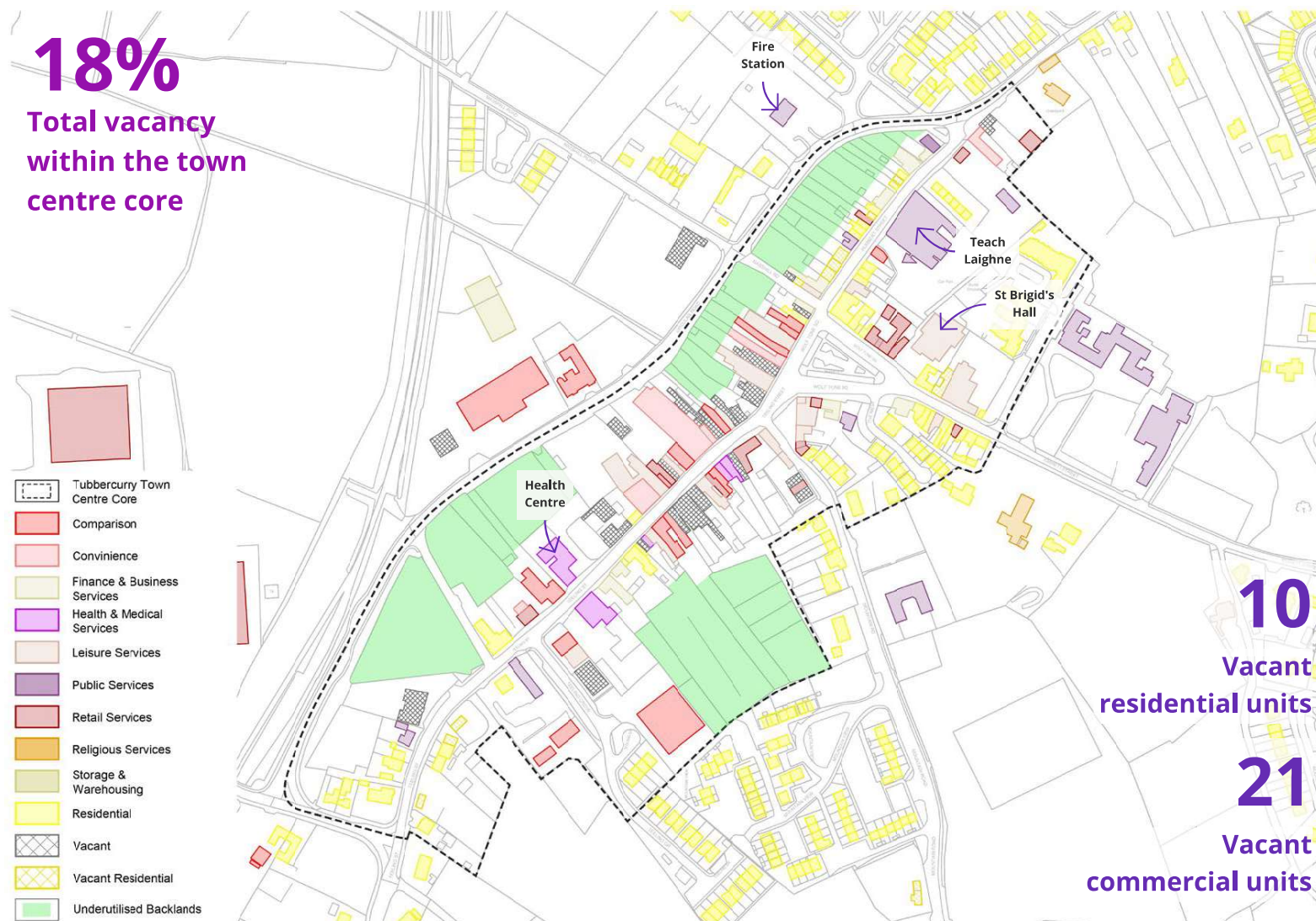
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Transport & Pedestrian Facilities

The N17 is a national primary road in Ireland providing access to the wider strategic road network. It begins in County Galway and ends in County Sligo, and is the primary road running north-south through Tubbercurry. The R294 is the main route connecting the town with Ballina to the west and Boyle to the east. Existing transport provision is car dominant, with traffic management being identified as the third most important issue for the TCF to address during public consultation, indicating an appetite for change within the local community.

Pedestrian facilities within the town tend to be in the form of footways at the road side. These footways along the main routes of the N17, Teeling Street and Humbert Street tend to be 1.8m wide, lit and in relatively good condition. There are crossing points facilitated at locations in the form of traffic signal controlled junctions or controlled crossing points such as zebra crossing. These are often associated with drop kerbs and tactile paving to aid those with mobility and visual impairments. However many of the side streets are narrow with limited or not to standard pedestrian facilities which inhibit or discourage east/west movements including access to the bus stops on the N17.

There is limited public transport provision and currently limited potential for its use as a viable alternative mode to the private car for educational and work trips.

The stops are flag stops with no additional infrastructure such as shelters, bus boarding kerbs or real time information. The bus stop at Wolfe Tone Square is behind car parking spaces which creates issues for those with mobility impairment and prioritises cars over public transport, contrary to national and local policy.



Above: Tubbercurry road network

Traffic Survey



The above plan highlights the locations identified for traffic counting in order to better understand the volume and movement flow of vehicles within the town.

Survey findings highlighted the following:

- Vehicle speeds were observed to be over the speed limit at some locations, particularly on Mountain Road.
- Speeds on Wolfe Tone Square are highest on the north-eastern arm.
- The town centre does not experience high HGV traffic flows - 95% of vehicle traffic is from cars.
- Zero pedal cycles were observed in the town centre on the day of the surveys.
- Approximately 4,500 vehicles travel through the town centre every day between 7am and 7pm (one vehicle every 10 seconds on average).

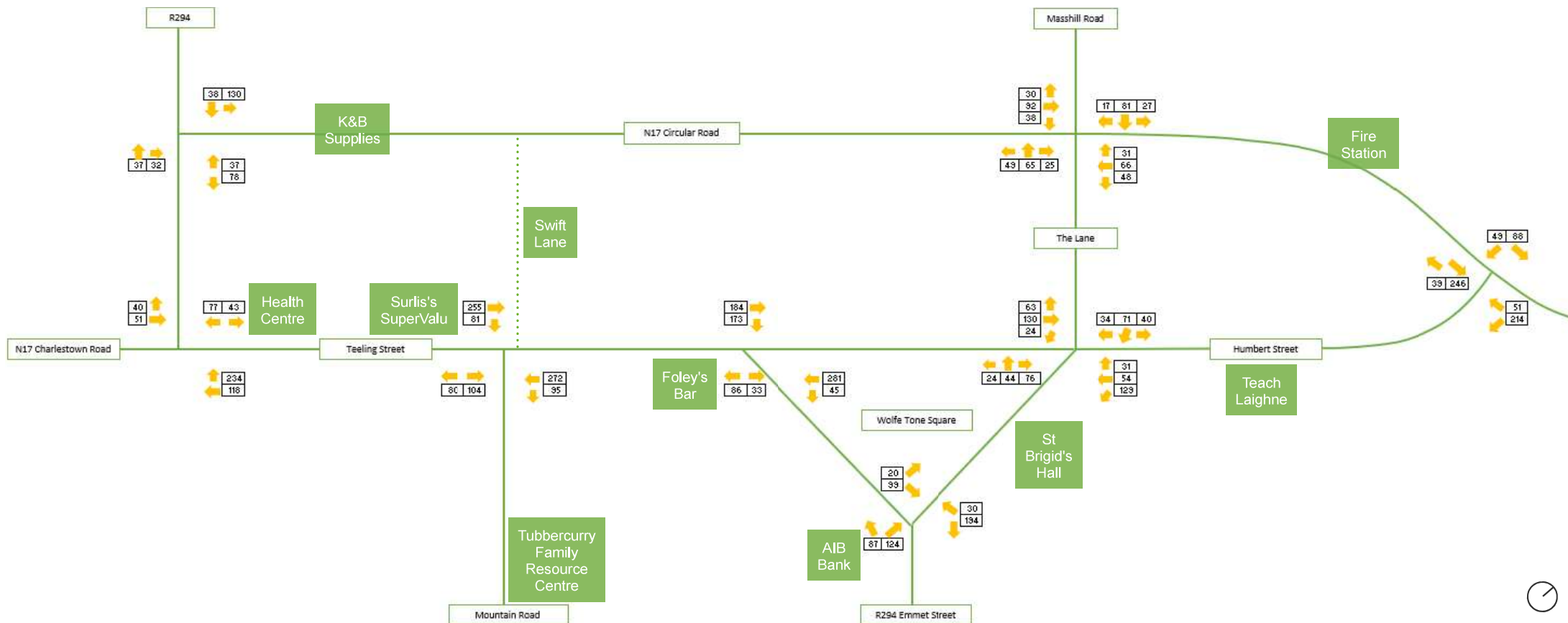


* The speed at or below which 85% of all vehicles are observed to travel.

Footfall Survey

The pedestrian footfall survey was conducted from 7.00 to 19.00. Survey findings highlighted the following:

- Pedestrian flows are significantly lower than vehicle flows in the town.
- Approximately **915 pedestrians** travel through the town centre every day 7am and 7pm, compared to **4,500 vehicles**.
- The highest footfall is experienced along Teeling Street between Mountain Road and The Lane. c. 360 pedestrians movements were recorded in each direction between 7am and 7pm (720 two-way).
- Most pedestrians approach the town centre from the south:
 - 30% from Teeling Street (south)
 - 25% from Emmet Street (south-east)
 - 21% from Humbert Street (north)
 - 12% from Mountain Road
 - 12% from The Lane (south-east).

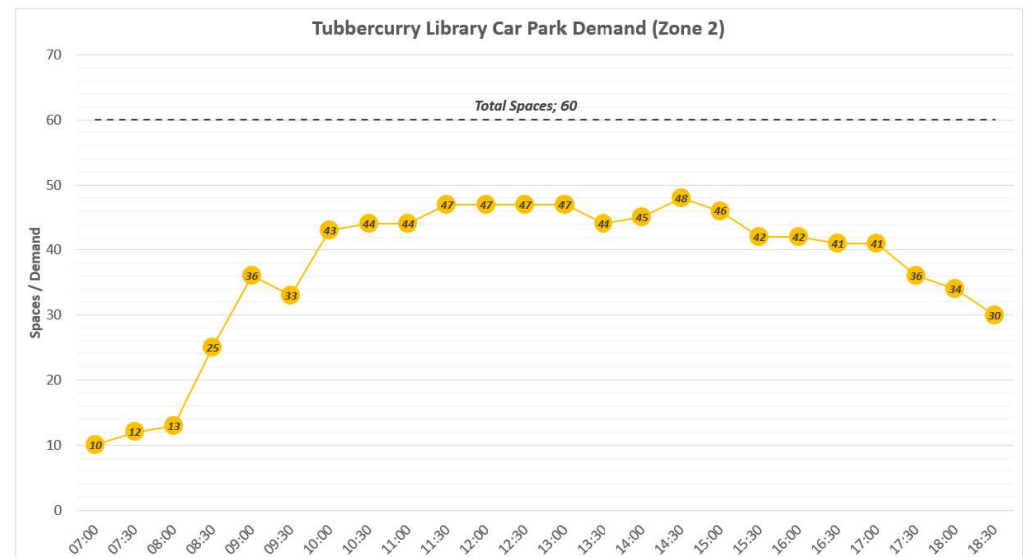
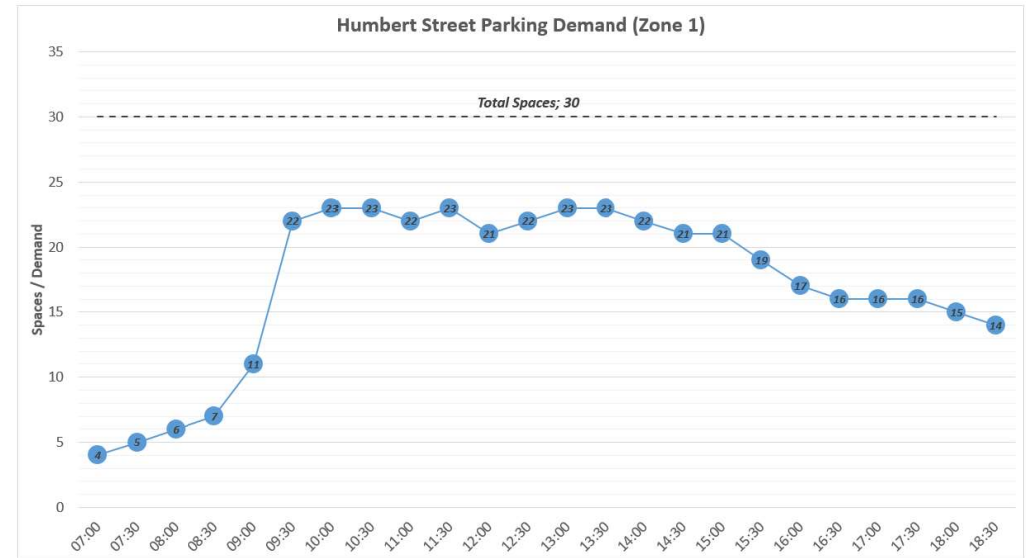


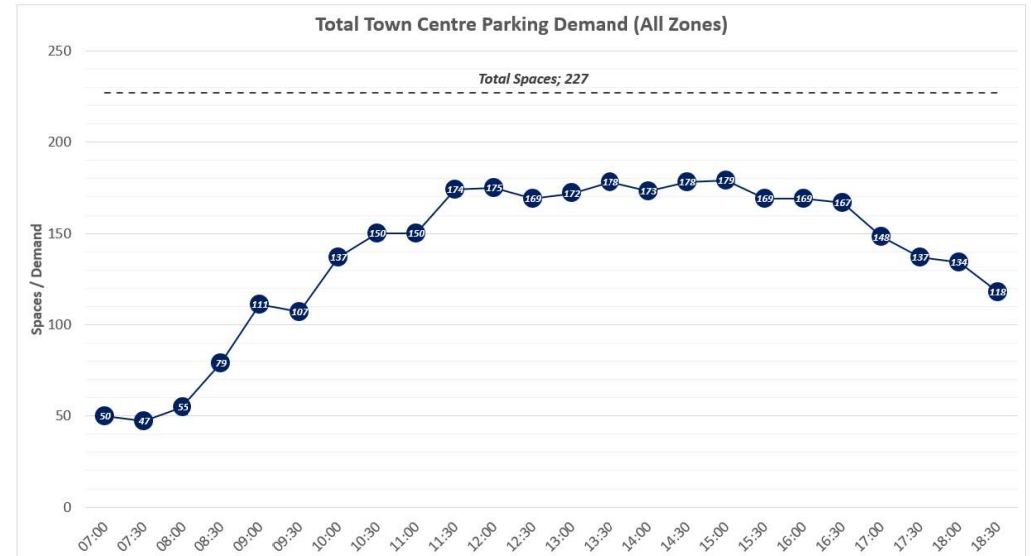
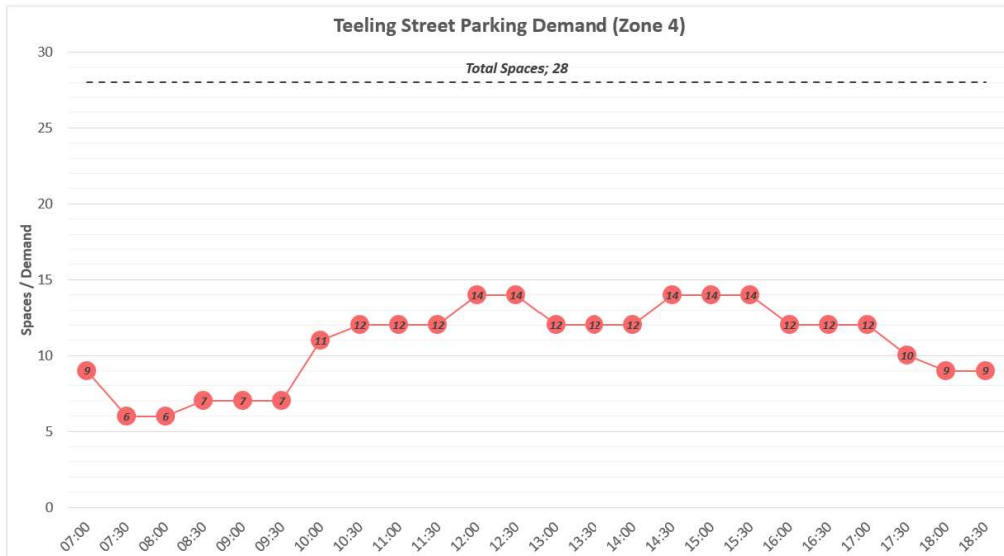
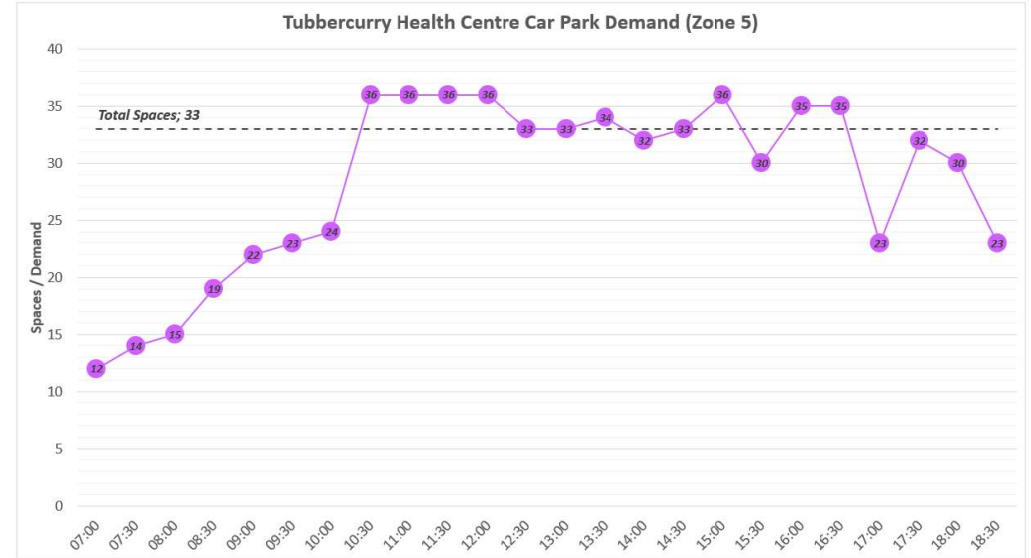
Car Park Survey



The car park audit highlighted the following:

- There is a total of **c. 227 parking spaces** within the town centre. This is determined as Wolfe Tone Square, Humbert Street, Teeling Street, Teach Laighne and Tubbercurry Health Centre.
- All spaces surveyed are a maximum of **250m (c.3-minute walk)** from Wolf Tone Square.
- Parking in the town was an average of **61% occupied** throughout the 12-hour period.
- A **maximum of 179 spaces** were occupied at any one time, leaving a minimum of **48 available spaces**.
- The car park by the Tubbercurry Health Centre is the only zone experiencing capacity issues. This is likely mostly used by Health Centre patients and staff.



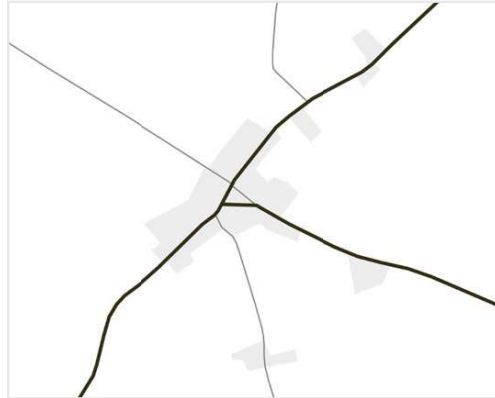


Spatial Development of the Town

Historic maps provide a clear understanding of how Tubbercurry has grown over the years, and highlight both historic movement patterns and the presence of historic fabric and form that tells the story of the town.

Tubbercurry is a market town within a predominantly rural, agricultural community.

Historically, market towns with their central squares acted as multi-functional spaces for economic and social activity. They were spaces for the exchange of goods and animals, but also communal spaces for events and gatherings bringing the community together.



Above: Town Centre development - 1830s

Teeling Street is the main north-south route through the town, connecting with the regional road at Wolfe Tone Square which is easily detected due to its distinctive triangular shape.

Development along Teeling Street is concentrated to the area around the square. The triangular shaped square has road access along its southern boundary, with the space to the north functioning as an off-road gathering space, likely for the siting of markets. Place names indicate the square is known as Fair Green at this time.

Mountain Road is a visible route providing access into the wider farming community.



Above: Town Centre development - early to mid 1900s

Considerable growth occurred by the early to mid 20th century. Notable development includes the Marist Convent and Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart (now St. John the Evangelist), both of which reinforce the prominence of the R294.

Increased development necessitates the extension of the local street network. For example, Tubbercurry Train Station, located to the south of the town, heralds the creation of Station Road which is to later become a section of the N17 which bypasses the town.

There is another key road opening up behind and in parallel to Teeling Street, to enable access to backland development. The square is now known as Wolfe Tone Square.



Above: Town Centre development - 2000s

Development has increased significantly to the present day, with predominantly residential areas expanding the town in the southeast and southwest and in the vicinity of Mountain Road. Local streets tend to connect directly to main vehicular routes in the town which reinforces the importance of the town centre for all residents.

The route parallel to Teeling Street became part of the N17 which connects Sligo to Galway. This route bypasses the town and has large retail and commercial units along the route. The increased number of residents has led to the development of the Community Park that includes a play area and sports pitches.

Wolfe Tone Square is enclosed by vehicular routes on all sides with the addition of a second two-way road connecting Ballymote Road with Teeling Street. Parking is present on all three sides of the triangular square.

Heritage Assets

History

Tubbercurry ('Tobar A' Chaire' meaning the Well of the Cauldron) is a settlement in South Sligo with a population of 1,986 inhabitants (2016 census). Tubbercurry is located within a predominantly rural community.

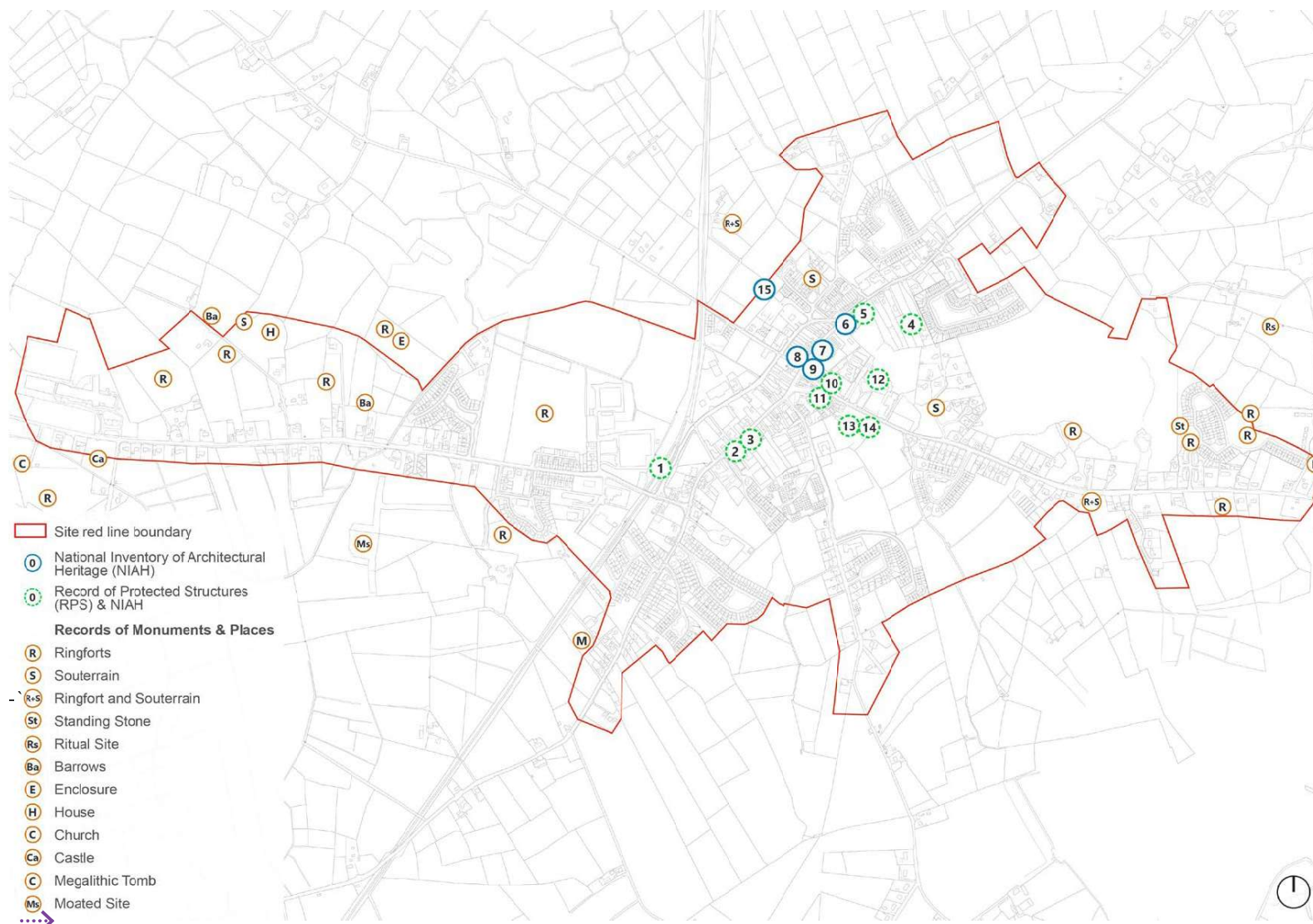
The earliest mention of Tubbercurry is in the Annals from 1397 when a battle took place in the town between two O'Connor families - the O'Connors from Roscommon and from Sligo town.

By 1830, the town contained 650 inhabitants and markets were held on Mondays and fairs were held for the exchange of goods seven times a year.

Heritage assets

Designated buildings within the town include:

1. Tubbercurry Railway Station
2. Leonard's
3. Bank of Ireland
4. The Mount
5. Saint George's Church
6. McIntyre and Durkin
7. Teach Laighne
8. House Reg. No. 32316017
9. House Reg. No. 32316005
10. House Reg. No. 32316006
11. Allied Irish Bank
12. Saint Joseph's Convent
13. Catholic Church of Saint John the Evangelist
14. Catholic Church of Saint John the Evangelist House
15. Springmount.



Tourism and Destinations

Tubbercurry is a compact market town with Wolfe Tone Square being within a 15 to 20 minute walk for the majority of the residential areas.

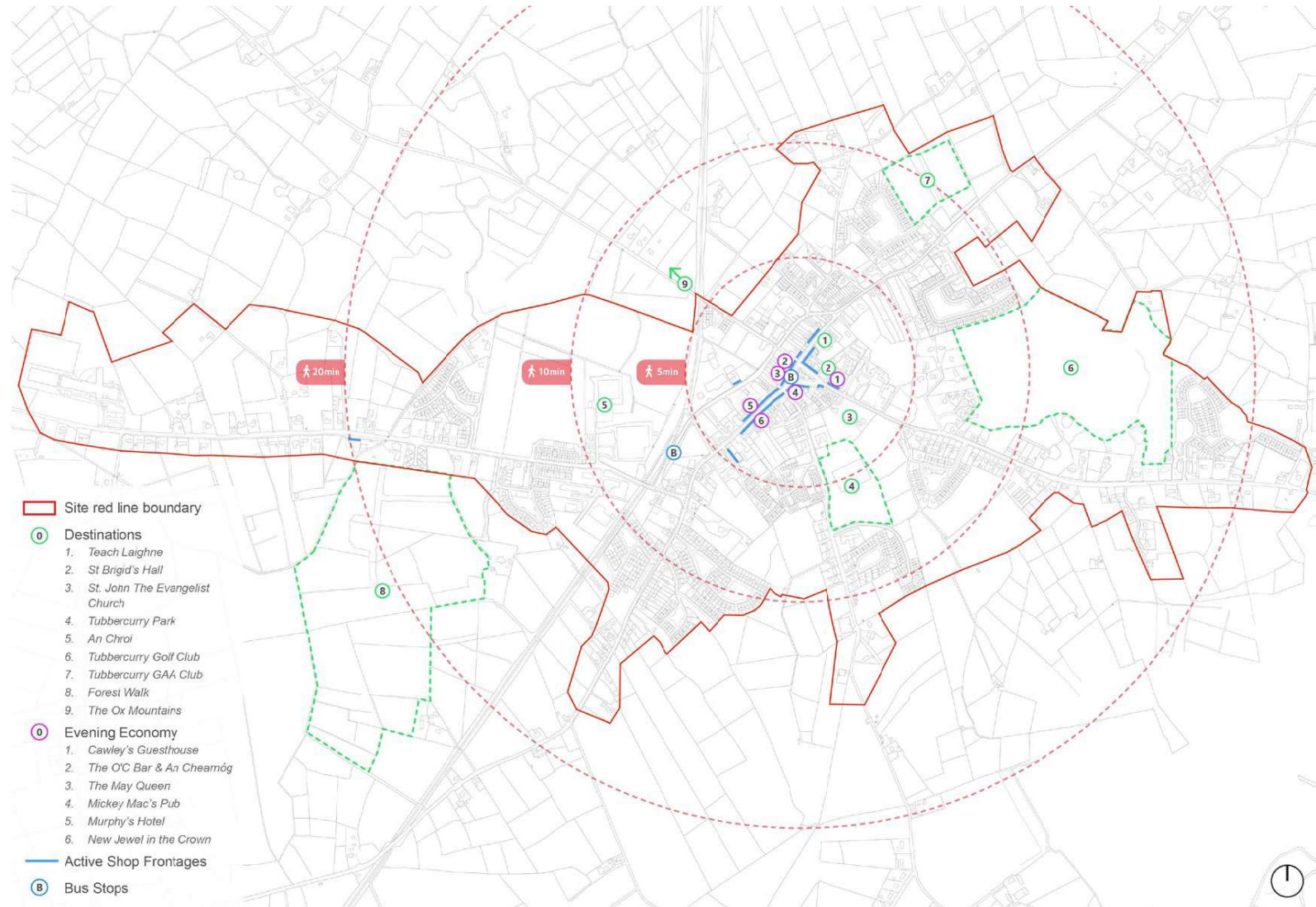
There are numerous places of interest within a 15 minute walk of the town centre, including:

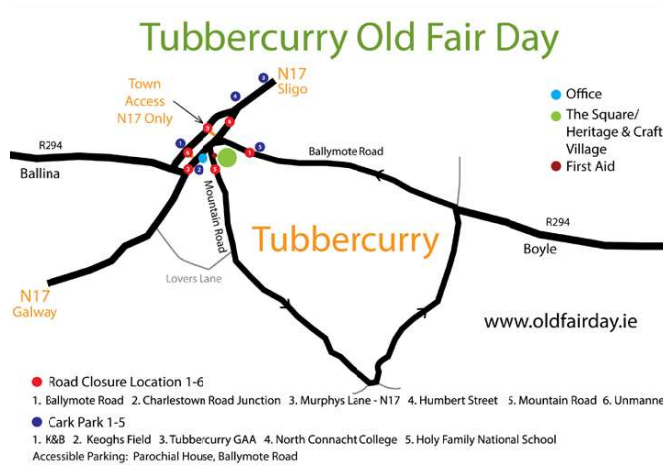
- The Community Park and Forest Walk, which are two key green space and recreational destinations in the town
- Tubbercurry GAA Club and Golf Club which provide sports destinations within the town
- Public amenity destinations such as St Brigid's Hall which provides theatre and sports, Teach Laighne which includes a library and community services, and An Chroí Digital Hub, a facility providing business support and access to technology for the community.

The Ox Mountains are situated approximately 10km to the northwest of Tubbercurry and are a key walking and cycling destination.

The evening economy is situated primarily around the town square and along Teeling Street. There is an Indian Restaurant and two hotels in the town whose in-house restaurants provide the only option for an evening dining experience. There are three pub premises on or close to the Square. Other venues contributing to the night-time economy are take-aways.

There are two local cafes, located in the vicinity of Wolfe Tone Square, which provide outdoor seating during the day.





Above: Tubbercurry Old Fair Day map



Above: Tubbercurry Old Fair Day Teeling Street



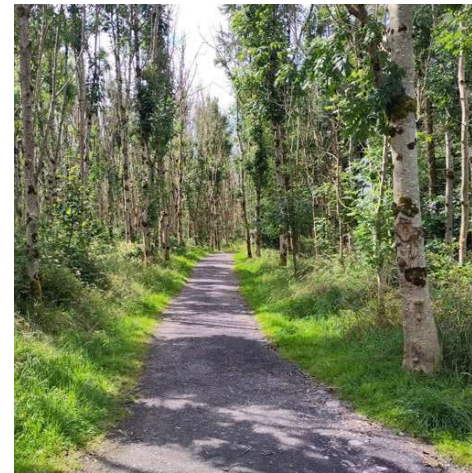
Above: The Ox Mountains to the northwest of Tubbercurry



Above: Bars and Cafes within Tubbercurry



Above: St Brigid's Hall Theatre and community hub



Above: Forest Walk route



Above: View of the Ox Mountains from the Forest Walk

Socio-economic context

Tubbercurry is a relatively small town covering 1.754km² in the county of Sligo. It is Sligo's second town and its socio-economic characteristics include:

Population

Tubbercurry had a population of around 2,307 people according to the 2022 Census, which is an increase of 16.6% from 2016.

Population growth is 2.5% since the 2016 census, with 7% seen across the county as a whole. Population density is low, with 1,315 people living in a km² area.

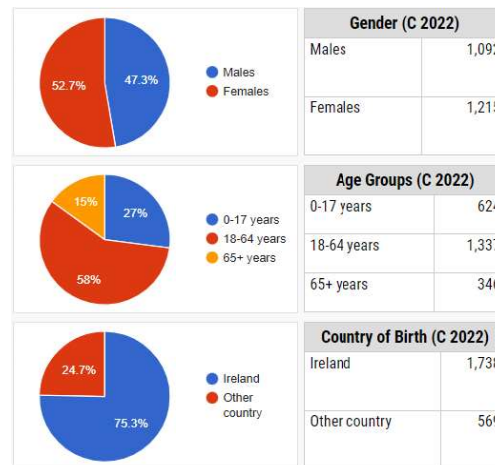
Of Tubbercurry's population, there were 1,215 females compared with 1,092 males - in line with county and national trends. 58% of people living in the town fall within the 18-64 age bracket which is aligned with the county's average population age of 40.7 years, compared with 39.2 years in April 2016. Nationally, the average age of the population was 38.8, up from 37.4 in April 2016. 15% of Tubbercurry town is over 65 years, and 27% under 17 years.

44% of people in Tubbercurry are single. The average number of persons per household is slowly falling, from 3.0 in 2002 to 2.58 in 2022.

Non-Irish citizens accounted for 9% of the county's population. However, in Tubbercurry, this is a greater percentage, at 24.7%. Most non-Irish are UK and EU nationals with a smaller percent of African and Asian nationalities.

14% of residents in the Tubbercurry electoral district are living with a disability.

There were 13,373 children, 15 and under, within the Sligo area in the 2022 census. Of these, 37% were in childcare, compared with 33% nationally.



Above: Tubbercurry population make-up.
Source: Central Statistics Office (cso.ie)

Employment and Industries

In the 2022 census, there were 30,360 people in work (aged 15 and over) in Sligo, which is 43.2% of the population, and a 17% increase from the 2016 census. In Sligo, 8,216 people (aged 15 and over) worked from home at least one day a week, which represents 27% of the workforce.

The local employment offer consists mainly of light engineering and manufacturing, with a number of small to medium-sized companies. There are two industrial estates, located off the R-294 (Ballina Road) which host 7 businesses and An Chroí - the South Sligo Enterprise Centre.

While many people commute to work in Sligo Town or outside the County, the South Sligo Enterprise Centre (An Chroí)/Digital Hub supports new businesses and provides remote working facilities for the local community. Enhancement and expansion of this and similar facilities is important for the continued viability of Tubbercurry.

Tubbercurry functions as a retail and service centre for the surrounding rural communities of South Sligo. The primary retail zone comprises Wolfe Tone Square, Teeling Street, Humbert Street and Emmet Street. The town has a reasonable range of convenience shops along the Main Street, in the town centre.



Primary retail zone in Tubbercurry



An Chroí digital hub

Socio-economic context

Education

Tubbercurry has one primary school, a secondary school and a college of adult and further education.

Housing

The 2016 Census highlighted 1,116 dwellings in the town, of which 291 were considered vacant. Housing predominantly consists of a mix of single-family homes and some rural properties. Housing stock is generally older than 20 years, although there is evidence of more recent housing developments on the outskirts of the town.

Home ownership rates in Tubbercurry fell to 57.8% at the 2016 census, from 80.6% in 2002. There was an upward trend nationally in rented accommodation. The average weekly rent in 2016 was 76.43 euros, falling from 77.47 euros in 2011.

Early published data from the 2022 census show that 67% of Sligo residents own their own houses, with 27% renting.

Transport

Tubbercurry's road network comprises the national primary road N17 (Sligo to Galway) and regional road R294 (Ballymote to Ballina.) Tubbercurry's rail infrastructure is disused but remains in situ. The town is served by Bus Eireann which stops in Wolfe Tone Square and provides a service between Galway and Derry. The Local Link provides local routes and other there are other private buses both of which use the stops on the N17.

Cultural and Community Activities

Teach Laighne "One-Stop-Shop" with Library and Council offices, St. Brigid's Community Hall, nursing home, Family Resource Centre, supermarkets, crèches, playground and post office.

Tubbercurry lacks publicly accessible, landscaped open spaces and recreational areas. A play area on Mountain Road provides formal play, and an adjacent undeveloped sports field remains the only publicly accessible open space area in the town. Forest Walk is a popular walking route.

Tubbercurry's health centre is located on Teeling Street. A Primary Care Centre has recently been approved, providing a broader range of health services and reducing the need to travel to Sligo University Hospital.

Tourism

Tubbercurry is well-sited, in proximity to the Ox Mountains and Lough Talt. The town attracts many visitors during its calendar of annual festivals and events such as the Old Fair Day, the Western Drama Festival and the South Sligo Summer School.

A community tourist office, operated in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland, is located at Humbert Street. It is staffed all year round and gives visitors information on attractions, activities and events.



Tubbercurry transport networks



View along Mountain Road towards the Ox Mountains

The Town Centre Experience

Vehicle routes around Wolfe Tone Square are wide which is accentuated by on-street parking along both sides of northern, western and southern routes. This forms a major barrier to movement for pedestrians and contributes to the dominance of cars in the town.

Public transport facilities fall below standard and limit the potential for active travel. A bus route runs along Teeling and Humbert Street, setting down at Wolfe Tone Square. The private bus service runs along the N17 to Galway and Limerick. The absence of a sheltered waiting space is further compounded by disembarking onto an area of on-street parking bays. There are limited cycle routes and stands available.

There are no pedestrian crossing points in the vicinity of the Square. Footpath widths are generally good in the town, however a number of pinch points are present, along Mountain Road and also in areas where clutter reduces useable space. Swift Lane provides a pedestrian only green route connecting Teeling Street to the N17.

Active frontages are primarily situated along Teeling Street and surrounding Wolfe Tone Square. Facades can appear tired and quality of the built form inconsistent. There is some evidence of retail spill-out with seating and tables but this is limited to two cafes.

Street level planting in Tubbercurry is focused around the pedestrianised area within Wolfe Tone Square. Whilst the planters are well maintained, the location of the planting further restricts pedestrian movement. Clutter is evidenced within the public realm, which is further accentuated by the presence of overhead wires and supporting poles.



The Town Centre Experience



In situ concrete concrete paving denotes low quality, with pole at the kerb edge which limits useable space and is dangerous for vehicles



Wide roads surrounding Wolfe Tone Square without facilities in place to assist with pedestrian movement



Planting and seating opportunities within Wolfe Tone Square provide some relief to the vehicle dominated environment



Barrier to movement at the junction of Mountain Road and Teeling Street



Limited cycle infrastructure



Sculptures within Wolfe Tone Square telling the story of the town

Open Space

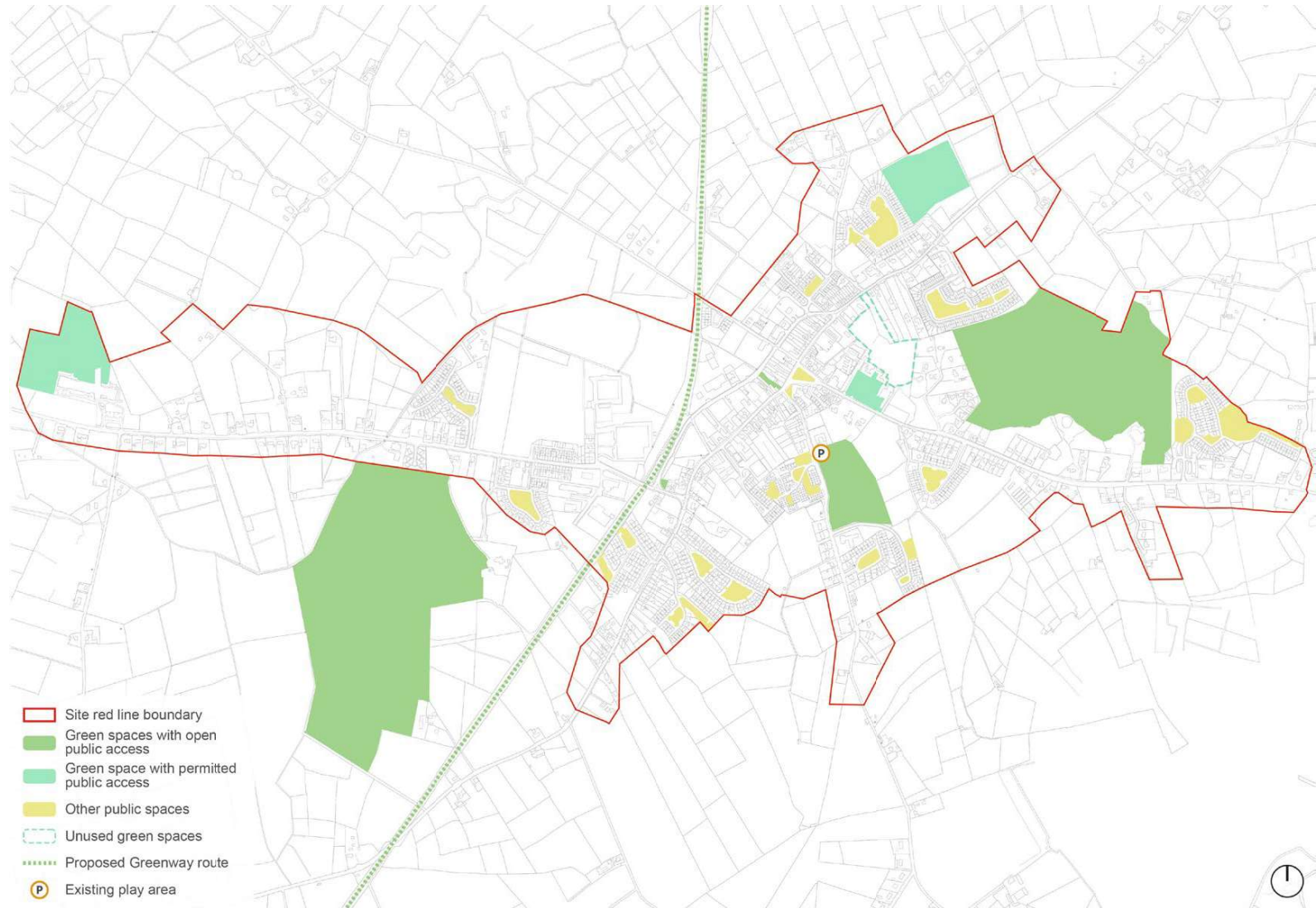
Open space throughout Tubbercurry is generally underutilised and could be improved with better connections and facilities. Exploring the potential to create a multi-functional green spaces embracing sustainable drainage, community use and spaces for nature is recommended.

Existing open space comprises:

- Open green space with public access such as the Community Park, Swift Lane & the Forest Walk
- A publicly accessible play space on Mountain Road
- Green spaces where permission is required to access such as school grounds and the GAA pitches
- Green spaces which are privately owned and require a visitor fee to use, such as Tubbercurry Golf Club
- Incidental green spaces located within residential development which are open to all, but generally featureless.

There is also an unused green space within Tubbercurry is the former school playing fields behind the Holy Family School.

The disused Sligo-Limerick rail line – better known as the Western Rail Corridor – runs along the northwestern side of the town centre. Making use of this linear green route to connect disparate green space across the town would provide a more robust and resilient walking and cycling network.



Summary SCOT analysis

Strengths

- Tubbercurry has a good strategic location as a commuting town to Sligo, Ballina, Boyle, Castlebar and close to Ireland West Airport
- Proximity to local tourism destinations such as the Ox Mountains and within 30mins of Enniscrone beach and Lough Key and Forest Park
- Presence of heritage buildings and Protected Structures
- Economic relevance of the town to local rural community
- Strong sense of community stewardship and local pride in the town and the appearance of its public spaces
- Number and variety of active community groups and sports groups
- Programme of annual events which draw hundreds of people to the town, from across Ireland and also internationally
- A good range of community facilities within the town
- A world-class facility at An Chroí Digital Hub providing IT services and business support to the community.

Challenges

- 26 vacant units within the town centre which make a negative contribution to the economic vibrancy of the town.
- A limited night-time economy, with three restaurants located within hotels
- A lack of office space
- A lack of variety within the retail offer, particularly in relation to clothing and footwear
- A car-centric town centre environment where on-street parking is dominant and impedes pedestrian movement and active travel networks
- Limited bus service
- No access to the train network
- A general lack of quality within the public realm environment
- Built form around important node spaces can look tired or lack consistency across the line of properties
- An abundance of clutter such as signage and overhead electricity lines.

Opportunities

- RRDF Stage 1 funding for public realm enhancements to the town centre committed to Tubbercurry
- Vacant heritage assets have the potential to be restored and re-used as mixed development
- A potential Tubbercurry Greenway along the former railway line provides an opportunity to strengthen the network of walking and cycling, and bring more footfall into the town
- Undeveloped backland areas present opportunities for sustainable development or a new location for parking facilities
- Community spirit and sense of pride brings opportunities for place-making, harnessing the power of groups working together to achieve something unique for Tubbercurry.
- Community activities and sport has the potential to be used as a way of bringing together the many diverse nationalities in the town.

Threats

- The high number of vehicles which pass through the town each day, and the dominance of on-street parking present a threat to creating a pedestrian-friendly town with high levels of footfall
- Young people in Tubbercurry have limited facilities or welcoming spaces in the town. As a result, anti-social behaviour is increasingly becoming an issue
- A lack of private investment in rural Ireland limits opportunity, and creates an over-reliance on the availability of funding
- Continued consultation and community engagement is essential to the TCF Plan and the projects emerging from it.