



Clare County Development Plan 2023–2029



COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLAIR
CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

VOLUME

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Ennis 2040 – An Economic and Spatial Strategy



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1. Introduction

Ennis 2040 sets the long-term strategy for the Key Town of Ennis. It provides a focus on an agreed economic future and approach to the spatial pattern of development over the next 20 years. As a long term strategy it will inform and drive the economic, social and physical development of Ennis as both an investment location and a place to live; and will set the direction for the development of strategic sites.



Overview

The population of Ennis at the time of the 2022 Census was 27,923 persons making it the largest town in Munster and the sixth largest town in Ireland. Ennis is the principal administrative and commercial centre in County Clare and a regional focus of economic and enterprise development.

The town has developed a strong reputation for doing business based on a highly skilled population base, high quality telecommunications infrastructure and excellent connectivity to the national motorway and rail networks. The town also benefits from a host of other assets including affordable housing, an excellent quality of life and high-quality recreational opportunities, all set within a picturesque County.

Key to realising the potential of Ennis is the formulation of an Economic and Spatial Strategy for the town and its environs which will inform the future land-use and transport planning and the marketing and promotion of Ennis to 2040. This will drive the economic, social and physical development of Ennis both as an investment location and a place to live.

The actions proposed as part of this strategy make clear, concise, innovative and focused recommendations aimed at enabling the town to prosper as a successful, diverse and vibrant social, civic, commercial, cultural and residential centre. This integrated, long-term approach can achieve real economic improvements, spatial change and enhancements in the quality of life, positioning Ennis as a leading regional town and improving its economic performance as a strong and dynamic focus for development of County Clare, Mid-West, West and wider Shannon Estuary region.

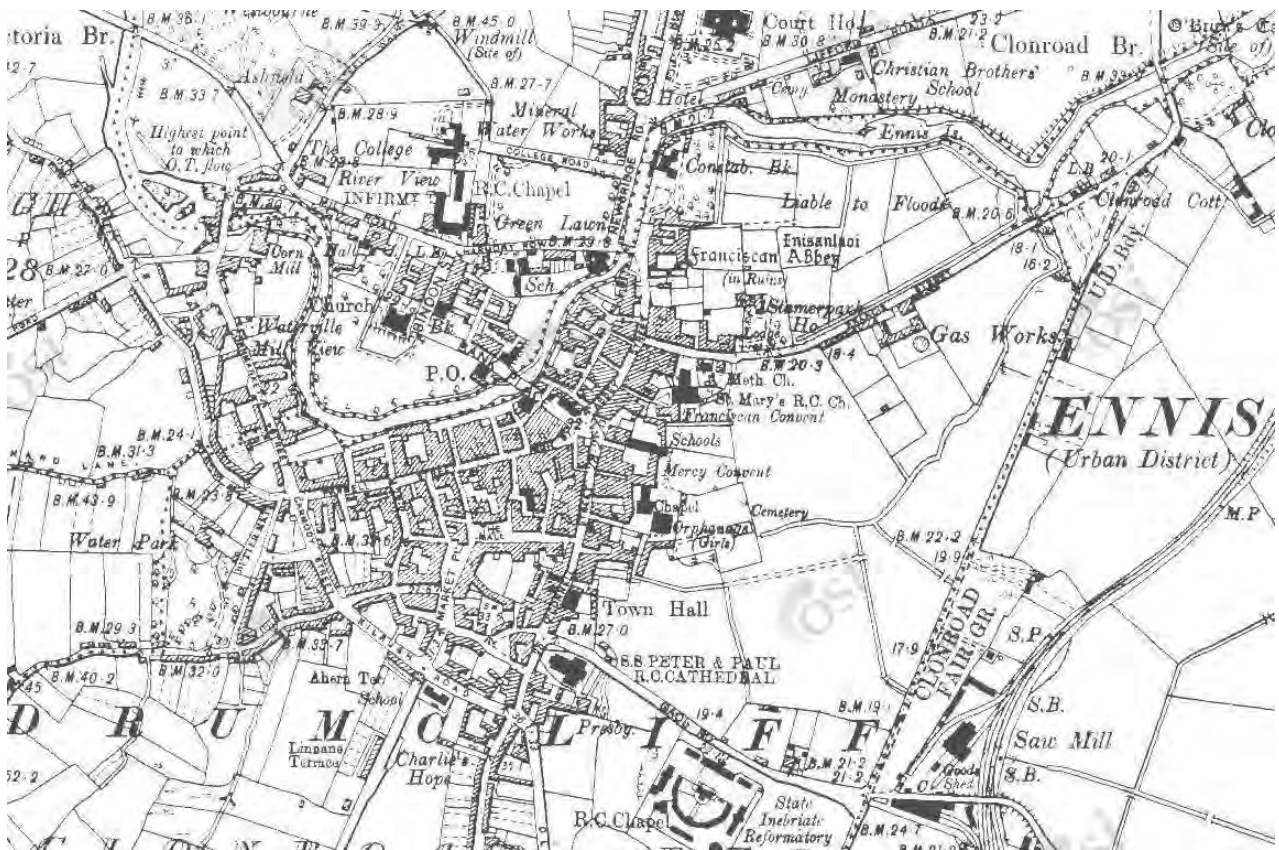
A Spatial Implementation Plan has been developed as part of this document which sets out how Ennis 2040 will be delivered, with a focus on matching economic opportunities with a plan for physical development, including development of the public realm and strategic sites.

The Marketing Plan advises on how best to brand and market Ennis to position it with local, national and international audiences. It is essential that an authentic place branding proposition is developed for Ennis, one that is reflective of the town's positive attributes, in conjunction with a place marketing strategy to attract people and investment.

Ennis 2040 is a strategy of transformational and ambitious ideas, a strategy designed to manage, harness and adapt to change for the economic, social and environmental benefit of Ennis.



6 inch Historic Map Colour (1837-



6 inch Cassini Map

How Ennis has developed

From its formation as a settlement following the Anglo-Norman invasion to its growth as a religious centre and administrative capital, Ennis has a rich history. Today Ennis is the largest town in Munster and the twelfth largest in Ireland. It continues to play an important role both as a service provider for its hinterland and a key regional economic driver.

The formation of Ennis as a settlement took place as a result of the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland. In the early 13th century the O'Brien family, who were forced to move to the area after surrendering to the Anglo-Normans in Limerick, established a Castle at Clonroad. While there is some historic evidence to show that there may have been a settlement at this location prior to Anglo-Norman times, the town morphology and distinct street patterns which are still legible in Ennis today were initially formed during this time and developed over the following decades.

The settlement of Ennis grew in the subsequent years based primarily on its importance as a religious centre. The Franciscans established a Friary in the town in the 13th century and it developed throughout the following centuries.

The importance of Ennis as a settlement was solidified in the 16th century when Queen Elizabeth 1st officially designated Clare as a County, with Ennis as its administrative capital. Ennis grew as a centre of regional importance with it becoming the focus of fairs and markets in the early 17th century. This led to a Charter

being granted to the town and the creation of an identity for Ennis as a centre for commerce and trade.

Unlike many other Medieval Towns of the time, Ennis did not have a protective boundary wall and so had the opportunity to expand naturally as population grew. Ennis experienced steady population growth until the mid-19th century and the Great Famine, which had a devastating impact on the town. Between 1841 and 1861 the population of Ennis decreased by almost a quarter, or 2,277 persons, to 7,041 persons.

Following the War of Independence, the town continued to grow through the remainder of the 20th century. In 1996 the Census recorded 17,726 persons in Ennis. The following intercensal period saw Ennis experience substantial population growth of c. 4,300 persons, with a subsequent increase in population to 25,360 in 2011. Like many other towns, the economic downturn had a noticeable impact on the growth of Ennis, with its population remaining stagnant between 2011 and 2016. However, this trend has not continued, and the population of Ennis increased between the 2016 and 2022 Census to 27,923.

Ennis – Assets and Challenges

Ennis has emerged from a challenging period linked to global economic turbulence and uncertainty and is looking to the future. It is differentiated from other county towns and urban areas due to the range of local assets from which it benefits. However, like many settlements it also faces a number of economic, infrastructural, environmental and physical challenges. These include transportation, demographic change, retail vitality and viability, restricted availability of modern office and employment accommodation, town centre accessibility issues and environmental restrictions. Ennis is responding to these challenges through a positive strategy of 'green growth' and a commitment to become a 'Climate Adaptive Town'.

Ennis has the physical and environmental capital to accommodate economic and spatial change and has the potential to attract economic drivers, establish itself as a major tourist destination and capitalise upon its high quality of life.

Ennis also has significant comparative advantages in terms of key assets and capacity, differentiating itself in the national context from other county towns and urban areas. Ennis 2040 seeks to safeguard, invest in and maximise these assets that are critical for the future growth of Ennis and to its role as a key regional economic driver in the Mid-West.

This strategy sets out an ambitious strategic vision, but it is the implementation of the strategy that will enable the achievement of this vision and deliver growth to 2040. Within this context, the key challenges faced by Ennis are detailed below

Challenges

Managing and building economic growth

Delivering compact growth patterns

Delivering quality residential accommodation in the right places

Meeting modern commercial requirements within the Town Centre

Upgrading Town Centre public realm

Delivery of water and wastewater infrastructure to support phased growth

Improving quality of life and place

Transitioning to a low carbon future

Enhancing the potential for Green Infrastructure
Environmental challenges

Addressing flood risk management

Delivering upgrades to the road network in and around Ennis

Implementing a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) for the town

Delivering public transport infrastructure

Responding to issues arising from the COVID-19 Pandemic

Strengths



Critical Mass

Ennis Town has a population of 27,923 making it the largest Town in Munster.



Population

Population of Clare is forecast to rise by up to 15% by 2031.



Strategic Location

Strategically located on the M18 between Limerick and Galway cities.



Internet Speed

Access to high quality 'dark fibre' broadband.



Transport

Served by rail and proximate to Shannon International Airport and Foynes Port.



Education

Excellent Schools & Technology University of the Shannon Ennis with 6 Higher Education Institutes within 1 hour.



Retailing

Characterised by a "specialised" town centre, Ennis is the boutique capital of Munster.



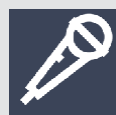
Quality of Life

Ennis offers excellent quality of life, affordable living costs and is a welcoming and inclusive place.



Tourism

Proximate to the distinct landscapes and international tourist attractions of the Burren, the Cliffs of Moher, Loop Head Peninsula and the River Shannon.



Distinctive Character

Renowned as a centre of traditional music, Ennis has hosted significant events, including Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, Fleadh Nua and the Ennis Trad festival.



Cultural Heritage

Ennis has a distinct architectural and cultural heritage that is unique to the town.



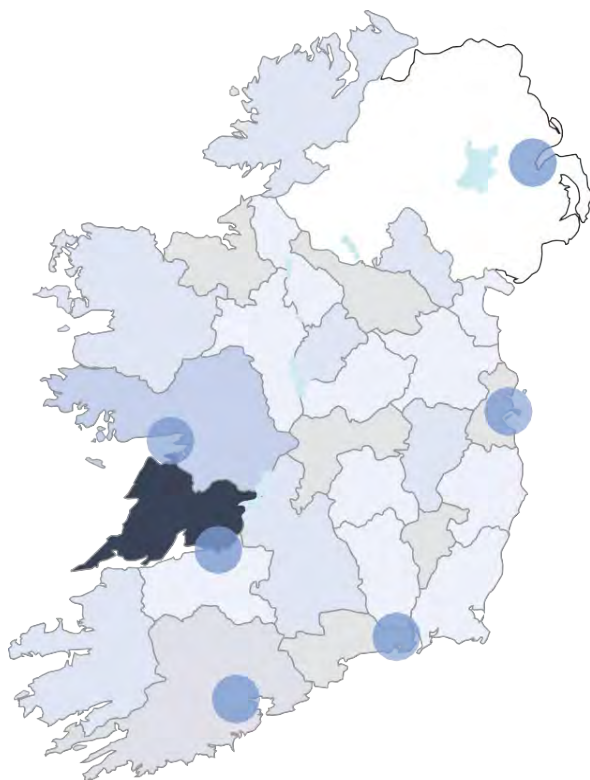
Brownfield Capacity

Ennis and its environs has Town Centre sites and locations to the east and west, with 23ha in Clarecastle and 20.8ha at the Clare Technology Park.

Strategic Policy Context

The long-term vision for the future of Ireland is set out in the National Planning Framework (NPF) which through its National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) defines the goals of the Plan. These NSOs not only establish the foundation for the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for each region but also form the basis of funding allocations under the National Development Plan.

At the regional level the RSES for the Southern Region guides the future growth of the Mid- West area which is based on leveraging national and international connectivity, higher education capacity and quality of life to secure strategic investment, underpinned by sustainable employment and housing development. Given its strategic location, its strengths and assets Ennis has the potential and attributes to not only deliver, but to lead the way in realising the NPF and RSES strategy and guidance at a local level. This document sets out the strategy for the achievement of same over the long-term.



Major Settlements

National Context

National Planning Framework

The long-term vision for the future of Ireland is set out in the National Planning Framework (NPF). The first revision to the NPF was published in 2025. The revised framework takes into account any changes that have occurred since it was published in 2018 and seeks to build on the existing framework in place. The investment priorities that will underpin the successful implementation of the NPF over a ten year period through a total estimated €275.4 billion which is set out in the National Development Plan 2026-2035. .

In relation to the Southern Region the NPF projects an increase of c.330,000 additional people over 2022 levels to 2040, resulting in a total population of just over 2 million. The growth policies of the NPF relating to the Mid-West focus on Limerick City and the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area where it is intended the bulk of investment will go. The NPF states that future growth will be based on leveraging national and international connectivity, higher education capacity and quality of life to secure strategic investment. This will be underpinned by sustainable employment and housing development, focused on the broader Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan area and a strengthening of the urban cores of the county towns, principal settlements and rural areas.

The future planning and development and placemaking policy priorities of the NPF for the region include the consolidation of development where there has been increased growth in the last number of years. The policies of the NPF are structured to look at the local community and amenity provisions in towns and cities in the region and identify needs based on these assessments.

The region and Ennis are also part of the Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC), about which the NPF states:

“The overarching objective of the AEC initiative is to maximise assets along the western seaboard in order to attract investment, support job creation and contribute to an improved quality of life for the people who live there.”



Atlantic Economic Corridor

Linkages between Ennis and other areas of the AEC will be important in order to enhance economic growth through spatial objectives that build on the physical assets of the region. In relation to implementation, the NPF contains 10 National Strategic Outcomes (NSO) and Priorities of the National Development Plan, which are outlined below.

The strategy for the economic and spatial growth of Ennis to 2040, set out in this strategy, fully accords with the NSOs in seeking to regenerate and revitalise Ennis and to secure a more sustainable future through compact growth.

The economic plan seeks to put in place the framework at a local level that will facilitate and encourage the competitive, innovative and resilient enterprise and employment base that the NPF recognises as essential for people to live and prosper. The provision of and access to quality education as both a requirement for and facilitator of economic growth has also been considered as an integral aspect of the strategy.

The 10 NSOs are as follows:



Compact Growth



Enhanced Regional Accessibility



Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities



High-Quality International Connectivity



Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society



Sustainable Mobility



Enhanced Amenity and Heritage



A Strong Economy supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills



Sustainable Management of Water, Waste and other Environmental Resources



Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services

Regional Context

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region

The strategy has regard to the strategic location of Ennis and its existing attributes when providing for enhanced connectivity with other centres and the provision of public transport infrastructure and services to meet the needs of the town. Key to the delivery of the strategy are improvements in permeability and connectivity, which in the case of Ennis is focused on facilitating and encouraging walking and cycling through well-designed public realm, amenity areas and trails including a blueway. The strategy has considered these in the context of integration with the built, cultural and natural heritage of the town and the showcasing of its distinct character and heritage.

As one of the key long-term challenges facing all countries, the issue of adapting to climate change must be addressed, with the strategy setting the framework for Ennis to become a 'Climate Adaptive Town'. Utilising and managing its environmental resources, through nature based solutions, Ennis is positioned to lead the way in 'Transitioning to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society'. This innovative approach would not only secure the delivery of NSO 8 but would futureproof the town to 2040 and beyond while also providing a unique attractor for Ennis as a location to live, work and visit.

The RSES for the Southern Region forecasts that the population of the region will grow by 380,000 people to almost two million by 2040. The strategy sets out a 12-year strategic development framework for the region and the way in which society, environment, economy and the use of land should evolve and works towards a broad vision of the region's future, identifying key priorities for investment.

In line with the NPF, the RSES promotes a focus on compact growth, broadening of the economic base and strengthen the role of and improving the quality of life. In this regard the RSES states that a healthy economy is essential to resource a high-quality environment and to realise the potential of the region. The strategy for the region is based on 11 strands which align with the 10 NPF NSOs.

Key principles in developing the RSES strategy for the Southern Region are inter alia;

- To make regeneration and development of existing built-up areas as attractive and viable as greenfield development
- To restrict urban generated sprawl
- To strengthen the urban fabric and role of settlements servicing hinterlands
- To consolidate existing settlements
- To link regeneration and development initiatives to environmental protection and climate action to support a reduced carbon footprint.

These principles are in keeping with the ethos of the NPF and along with the NPF NSOs form the basis of the long-term strategy presented in this strategy for the future development of Ennis to 2040.

Regional Policy Objective (RPO) 14 identifies Ennis as a key regional economic driver for the Mid-West and as a key location for investment and choice in the region. Its enhanced development is based on its strategic location relative to Limerick City, Galway City and Shannon

International Airport, as well as its role as a centre of employment and economic activity within the region. The RSES recognises that this is a positive economic proposition that should be supported and enhanced through initiatives such as the Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC).

Within the settlement typology for the region, which is based on the three cities as pillars supported by a network of strategically located key towns, Ennis is identified as a Key Town. Key Towns are important generators of economic activity, have a large sphere of influence and have an economic function that provides employment for their surrounding areas and wider sub regional catchment. Specifically with regard to the future development of Ennis the RSES states that it should build on its current talent and skills offer and attract a higher-level education campus.

In developing this strategy regard was had not only to the specific guidance in relation to Ennis and its future development, but to the wider RSES guidance in terms of placemaking, regeneration, economic growth, land use and transport integration, tourism, retail, low carbon economy and quality of life. These are the building blocks for the future development of the Southern Region and are key to delivering the NPF NSOs on the ground.

Central to the NPF and the RSES and at the core of the strategy contained in this strategy is the growth of Ennis in a compact manner. Such growth can only be achieved through focused social, recreation and cultural development, sustainable mobility, achieving convergence between where people live and work and enhancing the quality of the public realm.

Guided by these principles this strategy seeks to integrate land use and planning, prioritising the development of lands, within or contiguous with the existing urban area of Ennis, promoting the sequential locating of residential, office and retail developments and

maximising accessibility to public transportation infrastructure. In doing so it has regard to the opportunity compact development presents for Ennis with regard to utilising its existing urban form, and promoting its enhancement, in terms of accessibility via walking and cycling. Ennis has the existing attributes and urban form to lead the way in adopting the '10-minute town' concept.

In relation to the future economic development of Ennis, this strategy not only assesses the existing situation with regard to employers, industries and synergies but it also looks at the opportunities presented by the existing networks in the Southern Region including the AEC and the Galway-Ennis-Shannon-Limerick (GESL) Economic Network. The strategy presented is based on broadening the economic base of Ennis to make it more resilient and adaptable while in tandem developing the role of Ennis as a self-sustaining satellite economy and to relieve pressure on Limerick and Galway.

In accordance with the RSES this approach limits sprawl and encompasses connectedness that will facilitate a network of skills and talent living in Ennis. A well-skilled, adaptable and innovative workforce can underpin improved living standards, is one of Ireland's key international differentiators in the attraction of foreign direct investment and is a driver of the success of indigenous enterprise. This priority in conjunction with the other objectives of this strategy including promotion of higher education institutes, infrastructure investments, housing in the right location, enhancement of quality of life and access to trade and markets will deliver efficiencies, economies of scale and wider societal benefits for Ennis.

In line with the RSES this strategy also promotes the complementary roles of retail and tourism development in broadening the economic base, with retail services contributing to the attractiveness of Ennis for visitors, increasing footfall and potential increased vibrancy for the

Local Context

Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029

retail sector. Key to the approach presented in this strategy is the focusing of both new retail development and tourism infrastructure, including new accommodation, in the Town Centre. This will further support the compact growth of the settlement of Ennis, provide a more attractive and vibrant urban centre and is integral to the delivery of associated infrastructure such as the development of walking and cycling trails, blueway corridors and sites for modern format retailing.

At the heart of all aspects of this strategy is sustainability, with the strategy fully embracing the NPF and RSES guidance on planning for a low carbon society. The strategy takes a proactive approach in this regard, identifying an area within the settlement of Ennis which due to its natural, geographical and ecological features makes it usable as a nature based solution for carbon capture. This innovative approach, which sets the framework for Ennis to become a 'Climate Adaptive Town', is fully supported by several RPOs of the RSES including RPO 54, RPO 97, RPO 100 and RPO 126. In addition it will position Ennis at the fore of, and make it an attractive location for investment as part of, the Shannon Energy Valley initiative, a world class cluster of sustainable and renewable energy companies between Galway and Limerick. Such companies are attracted by innovation, green credentials and the demonstration of leadership in transitioning to a low carbon economy.

In this context the strategy brings together the future long-term development of Ennis from an environmental perspective, with the opportunity to further broaden its economic base in an innovative manner that will also form an integral part of 'Brand Ennis'.

The Clare County Development Plan 2023- 2029 (CCDP) sets out the relevant goals for Ennis at a local level. As the county town of Clare, Ennis is the core of activity in the County and is the largest town in Munster. It has an important role to play, complementing the neighbouring Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area driving economic growth and providing services and amenities for the surrounding network of rural towns and villages.

During the lifetime of the CCDP it is projected that the population of Ennis will grow by over 2,480 persons to 29,629 persons. The CCDP sets out the following Strategic Vision for Ennis:

"A vibrant and culturally rich Ennis area with a revitalised Town Centre and strong economic growth balanced with enhanced social inclusion, sustainable neighbourhoods and a high level of environmental quality, to ensure an excellent quality of life for all".

In order to achieve this Vision, 18 Goals for the future development of Ennis and its environs have been developed. The CCDP states that a multi-faceted approach to landuse planning in Ennis Town Centre is required to achieve its enhancement and economic growth, including public realm interventions to enhance the character, vibrancy, accessibility and physical appearance of the town, and actions to make the historic streets of Ennis more pedestrian and cyclist friendly.

The overall 'Strategic Aims' for Ennis Town Centre as outlined in the CCDP relate, inter alia, to ensure that Ennis Key Town and the Metropolitan Spatial Plan Area including Shannon, are drivers of growth and development; that the economic assets of the County are maximised; that Ennis and Shannon continue to develop as drivers of economic growth; and to encourage, support and facilitate research, technology development and innovation as well

as start-up business with high potential; and to support and strengthen the Town Centre through the introduction of pedestrian- friendly areas, the expansion of anchor developments, the retention of residential accommodation and the creation of an attractive public realm. Both the 18 Goals and the Strategic Aims of the CCDP broadly align with the NSOs of the NPF which have been carried through the strategy themes that set the structure for the strategy. These in conjunction with the 19 Opportunity Sites identified in the CCDP set a solid base from which to develop a long-term strategy for the future development of Ennis.





2. Vision

Vision for Ennis 2040:

Ennis will strengthen its role as a key regional economic driver and major tourist destination in the Mid-West through the expansion and diversification of its economic offering and by capitalising on the strength of its significant architectural, cultural and historic heritage. Its growth will be based on the '10 Minute Town' Concept with the Town Centre at the heart of this highly accessible and revitalised Ennis – the focus for retail, residential, commercial, educational, leisure and cultural growth. Ennis will support, enhance and utilise its existing natural assets to lead the way as a 'Climate Adaptive Town' and to create an accessible place of quality.

Guiding Principles

A key deliverable of this strategy is the setting out of an economic and spatial vision for Ennis to 2040. The process of preparing the strategy and its vision was informed by detailed analysis of the spatial planning, economic, social, higher education and physical context of Ennis.

The formulation of the vision provided an opportunity to think about the long-term future of Ennis and create a meaningful statement of Ennis' local, regional and national role in 2040. The strategy capitalises on the strengths and addresses the challenges and puts in place a spatial plan that will facilitate the delivery of the Vision for Ennis.

The strategy is based upon and defined by a number of guiding principles. These are formulated based on the detailed background analysis undertaken and in turn inform the strategy. These principles are set out below.

Central to Ennis' future success will be the strength, sustainability and adaptability of its economy. These guiding principles have been chosen as they will build resilience from internal and external shocks, e.g. COVID-19 Pandemic, facilitate orderly growth and create a platform for investment ready projects at strategic locations.

1 Develop a distinctive Ennis

Ennis is distinguished by its natural environment, rich history, cultural heritage, laneways and bow-ways that date to the medieval period, a high quality of life and access to amenities. Ennis must not only retain its distinctiveness but must showcase it and utilise it as the foundation of 'brand Ennis'.

3 Realise the full potential of grey, green and blue infrastructure (road, air, rail and water)

Better utilise existing infrastructure and smart investment as a key to delivering new jobs and driving population growth in the right places.

2 Take advantage of the opportunities presented and supported by the AEC

As part of the Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC), Ennis will grow and prosper as part of a connected spine of businesses and organisations.

4 Promote a high quality of life, health and well-being

Ennis needs to plan for diverse, inclusive and healthy communities through affordable, accessible residential accommodation, education, community and health facilities; and access to amenity and recreational spaces.

5

Maximise and enhance the opportunities offered by the scenic landscapes of Clare

Enhancement, management and protection of Ennis' natural assets and biodiversity is essential for maximising the town's profile, attraction and revenue from tourism.

6

Ensure cross sectorial collaboration with neighbouring towns and cities

Strengthen physical, social and economic links with Limerick and Galway and neighbouring towns, creating social and economic opportunities for Ennis.

7

Attract innovative industries and commerce

Ennis must develop and deliver infrastructure to attract and support innovative industries and commerce.

8

Build a resilient and adaptable economy

The future success of Ennis relies on the diversification of its economic base to build resilience to external shocks and allow it to adapt in an ever-changing global economy.

9

Deliver high quality and person-centred buildings and public realm

Future development should not only strengthen and protect the existing urban environment but should enhance it through quality design and materials and a person-centred focus.

1

Make Ennis known as a welcoming, connected and productive place

Through a bespoke marketing strategy Ennis must become known for its unique assets and attributes.

1

Establish Ennis as a climate adaptive leader

Ennis will lead the way in demonstrating adaptation to climate change and embed nature-based solutions that deliver multiple benefits to people and nature in its approach to managing and adapting to the effects of climate change.

1

Carry out an Appropriate Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

To ensure development is fully informed by ecological and environmental constraints at the earliest stage any necessary assessment will be undertaken, including assessments of disturbance to species, where required.

Structure of the Strategy

This strategy has been structured to respond to the Project Brief and to provide for both a top-down and bottom-up approach to planning that recognises the needs for strategic direction and guidance. The main objective is to ensure consistency and deliver on the forward looking ambitions which the strategy sets out.

The strategy is grounded in a wide range of economic, social and environmental considerations which provide a basis for targeted investment, balanced economic growth and a sustainable spatial pattern of development providing a choice of living options.

The purpose of this strategy is to guide the long-term development of Ennis and highlight opportunities that will deliver competitive advantages over the short, medium and long term. In order to achieve this, the strategy has a Town Centre focus while also looking ahead to prioritise areas that support compact growth, realise economic opportunities and respond to the call for climate adaptation.

The overall vision provides a clear direction for the town with the Guiding Principles acting as a strategic framework to assess proposed projects, giving further clarity on the nature and form of future development.

The realisation of the vision, directed by the Guiding Principles, will continue through the delivery of various projects over the next 15 years which

may include, but are not limited to, the 7 transformational projects outlined in the spatial implementation plan. This approach will give rise to many opportunities and benefits and deliver on the Strategic Objectives which Ennis will become known for, set out below. Furthermore, this strategy sets out a marketing plan as a framework to develop a 'Place-Branding' strategy for Ennis in the future.

Strategic Objectives

1. Location for Investment
2. Climate Adaptive Town
3. Accessible Place of Quality
4. A '10 Minute Town'



Transformational Projects



**Former Ennis
National School**



Friar's Walk



**Cornmarket
Precinct**



Wetlands Area



**Roche Opportunity
Site**



**Clare Technology
Park Opportunity
Site**



**Data Centre
(Toureen)**

Strategic Objectives

The Strategy is grounded in a wide range of economic, social and environmental considerations which provide a basis for targeted investment, balanced economic growth and a sustainable spatial pattern of development providing a choice of living options. This approach has identified opportunities for Ennis to focus on certain areas which will align with national policy, respond to the particular attributes of the town, diversify the offer and create a sustainable pattern for future growth.

The purpose of this Strategy is to guide the long-term development of Ennis and highlight opportunities that will deliver competitive advantages over the short, medium and long term. In order to achieve this, the Strategy has a Town Centre focus while also looking ahead to prioritise areas that support compact growth, realise economic opportunities and respond to the call for climate adaptation. Therefore, the areas set out below are clear priorities which future urban development and initiatives should be tested against to deliver on the core aims of this Strategy.

SO1: Location for Investment



Ennis, along with the rest of Ireland, functions and competes within a global economy which has changed dramatically in the past two decades, becoming more mobile, digital and competitive. As those changes are expected to accelerate in the coming years and the global political and financial uncertainty, Ireland must widen its economic base through innovation and diversification in order to build resilience.

According to the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region, economic resilience must be developed and enhanced by focusing on innovation, widening the economic sectors, export diversification, productivity enhancement and access to new markets. Ennis as a key regional town, strategically located between two cities and proximate to Shannon

Airport and the Shannon Foynes Port is well placed to plan for and respond to such challenges. Ennis also benefits from its location on the dynamic Atlantic Economic Corridor and from a skilled workforce with strong connections to international business, higher level education providers and research facilities. To grow jobs, diversify its employment base, maintain a high quality of life and protect the environment, Ennis needs to take advantage of available land within the existing urban area. Providing a diversity of jobs closer to where people live, in places such as designated business parks and education areas will not only help make Ennis more productive and competitive but will also make it a more attractive location for investment from a 'green', sustainable perspective

SO 2: Climate Adaptive Town



Safeguarding and enhancing our environment is not only an environmental sustainability issue but an economic, social and public health and wellbeing consideration. National level guidance seeks to deliver such protection through sustainable development and the transitioning to a competitive, low carbon and climate resilient economy by 2050. Climate change will be addressed through action in the two principal areas of Mitigation and Adaptation. In the absence of such measures the implications are stark. Taking steps to transform Ennis into a low-carbon town is both a necessity and an opportunity.

The future economic and social development of Ennis must thus be considered in the context of the protection and enhancement of its natural environment. Effective management and planning of this natural environment present the town with the opportunity to lead the way in transitioning to a low carbon economy and to become an exemplar as a Climate Adaptive Town. Leadership in this area would also be an economic asset for Ennis as companies seek to locate in innovative places that provide them with an opportunity to promote and support their 'green credentials'.

SO 3: Accessible Place of Quality



Ennis benefits from a range of assets, from its strategic location to its quality of life and position within the picturesque County Clare. The focus of this document is to deliver a strategy for its sustainable economic and spatial growth that both protects and builds upon these assets to the benefits of Ennis and its people.

The strategy seeks to position Ennis to deliver an economic, social and quality of life proposition that attracts talent and retains local people. Retaining and enhancing quality of life while delivering a diverse and dynamic economy is a unique selling point that will set Ennis apart from other locations.

To 2040, Ennis will not only generate growth but as a settlement has the space to accommodate this growth in sustainable, accessible, high quality locations. It offers a choice of heritage-rich place types, alongside a vibrant and robust social structure that enables it to accommodate growth while retaining its unique identity and community spirit. It will provide a variety of modern residential accommodation at locations that contribute to a quality lifestyle and which is accessible, affordable and available to all types of households.



SO 4: A '10 Minute Town'

Ennis is strategically located on the M18, has an inner relief road to the south and west, an extensive arterial road network, a direct rail connection to Limerick and Galway and is well served by several frequent bus routes. Investment in transport infrastructure will boost rail and road capacity and ensure the provision of quality levels of safety, service, accessibility and connectivity in public transportation provision.

Ennis is also served by an extensive network of lanes and bow-ways that represent the medieval stage of the town's history. These are a unique feature of Ennis and already provide excellent permeability within the Town Centre between key streets and spaces. Therefore, the town has the potential to lead the way as Ireland's first '10 Minute Town', whereby a range of community facilities and services are accessible in short walking and cycling timeframes from homes or accessible by high quality public transport to these services in larger settlements.

Use of Ennis' existing physical features in a smarter, more efficient way, planning for compact future growth and promoting the provision of a local bus service allows development to be planned and designed in a manner which maximises accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling in line with the '10 Minute Town' concept. This concept will deliver benefits in terms of energy conservation, a boost in productivity, a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and the protection of liveability and quality of life.

The Southern Regional Assembly is currently using Ennis as a '10 Minute Town' Case Study to develop a framework that can be used to map other towns in the region as part of the implementation of the RSES.

*"Someone's sitting in the
shade today because
someone planted a tree
a long time ago"*
- Warren Buffett



3. Economics & Investment

SO 1: Location for Investment

The Economics & Investment chapter of the strategy contains 10 actions related to Strategic Objective 1 to guide the future development of Ennis from an economic perspective and to provide a focus for the successful implementation of the transformational projects.

Location for Investment

Ennis currently caters for approximately 10,000 jobs and will require 5,000 additional jobs over the period to 2040 to achieve sustainable population growth. What those jobs are and where they go will not only define the physical growth of Ennis but its future performance as a strong and dynamic key regional economic driver.

When compared to other locations, Ennis has significant comparative and competitive advantages in terms of key assets and capacity, specifically its strategic location, accessibility, quality of life, tourist attractions and environment that can contribute to the delivery of a diverse, resilient and flexible economy.

With regard to future population growth, the projected scenario for Ennis 2040 is set in the context of a State increase of c. 1 million people over the 2022 levels by 2040, of which the NPF First Revision forecasts the Southern Region will account for between 330,000 additional people i.e. a population of just over 2 million. The Implementation Roadmap for the NPF First Revision breaks this figure down further into Strategic Planning Areas (SPA) making population projections/targets at 2026 and 2031 for the Southern Region, the Mid-West SPA and County Clare, as shown in Figure 1.

	2026		2031	
	Low	High	Low	High
Southern Region	196,000	235,500	280,000	343,500
Mid-West SPA	51,000	61,000	75,500	90,500
Clare	10,500	12,500	15,000	18,000

Figure 1: NPF First Revision Estimated Population Growth

Ennis is the driver for economic and enterprise development within the county. This strategy recognises that there is strong potential to stimulate economic development within the town centre and its environs, it seeks to facilitate development across a range of sectors encouraging sustainable, diverse growth fostering a thriving and vibrant economy.

Location for Investment

Action 1

Set out economic activities to prioritise and target sustainable economic activity at a local level by focusing on existing assets and creating a competitive offer unique to Ennis.

One of the key challenges for Ennis will not just be to attract/stimulate further investment and economic activity, but to ensure that the types of economic activity taking place are sustainable. A sustainable economic environment would have the following characteristics/meet certain tests:

- Have connections to the place so that relocation of the economic activity is neither easy nor desirable. This would involve utilising local assets insofar as possible.
- Be sufficiently diverse to be able to withstand external economic shocks i.e. a range of industries that are counter cyclical/ less affected by adverse economic conditions in the broader context.
- Create local jobs that are not only well remunerated, but are likely to endure for a prolonged period.

The key to creating local sustainable economic activity will be to develop and build on existing local assets. The following sectors are recommended as the key economic activities to prioritise and target:

- Higher-end manufacturing
- Science and Engineering
- Information and Communications (ICT)
- Tourism and associated local industries

Primary Outcomes

PO 1: Greater economic activity in the town with increased population by 2040

A total of 12% of the people living in Ennis are employed in the manufacturing sector, making it one of the more substantial employers behind Education, Human Health and Social Work Activities (30.4%) and commerce and trade (25%). Some of the more significant manufacturing industries currently located in Ennis include Kerry Group (food), Organic Lens Manufacturing (life science), Microsemi (IT & technology), Vitalograph (life science), EASi (technology – although outside Ennis, to its east).

Science & Engineering/High-End Manufacturing

The National Skills Strategy 2025 sets out the likely skills shortages that Ireland is anticipated to experience in the period up to 2035. The

National Skills Bulletin, published by Solas, the Further Education and Training Authority, provides an update on growth industries and skills shortages. The most recent bulletin (November 2024), indicated skills shortages in the science & engineering, health, Information and Communications (ICT), Education, Construction, Social and Care, Transport and logistics and Hospitality areas.

Filling roles in niche areas, which require a high level of education and experience, is particularly challenging in the current environment, both in Ireland and globally. It is therefore important to understand and subsequently expand and promote the 'lifestyle' elements that could enable Ennis to attract members of this sought-after group.

Given the significant number of people residing in Ennis but commuting to other locations for work

it is likely that a significant proportion of those people are commuting to commercial/ business/ manufacturing centres in the region, such as at those clustered around Shannon International Airport or in Limerick. This suggests that there are currently people residing in Ennis who possess the necessary skills to fill roles in these industries and may wish to work closer to home if the opportunity arose, which would provide a key component of the ingredients to expand the industry.

The skill base of people currently residing in Ennis amongst commuters working in the manufacturing industry in Shannon/Limerick/ Galway, combined with strong transport infrastructure and the opening up of new employment lands could enable the further expansion of manufacturing within the Ennis area. This is a key asset that Ennis possesses and will be an attractor of investment.

Furthermore, given the quality of life on offer in Ennis, it is likely that others who are currently living and working in Limerick or Shannon could be attracted to relocate to work in Ennis. The ability to attract and retain a highly skilled workforce is a key component of attracting investment and facilitating sustainable economic activity.

Tourism

A key focus of this Economic and Spatial Strategy is to promote and expand the tourism sector in Ennis to take full advantage of its place within the 'Cliff Coast' section of the Wild Atlantic Way (Galway to Ballybunion). In order to achieve a significant improvement in economic activity and revenue from tourism, the implementation of the recommendations in this strategy, which involve Ennis expanding on its gateway location, is key. Action 6 addresses this issue in detail and

recommends the provision of increased conference facilities while also seeking to increase the number of nights that visitors to the region spend. The knock-on increase in employment will be significant.

Secondary Growth Sectors

The Building and Construction sector in Ennis is primarily comprised of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). While the companies are located across Ennis, there is a particular concentration in the Eastern Area, in the Quinn Road Business Park and the Clare Marts Complex.

The strategy sets out in this Economic and Spatial Strategy, if implemented, would lead to a significant increase in economic activity, as well as an increase in the population of Ennis. This expansion in economic activity and population would lead to an increase in the requirement for commercial and educational space, the refurbishment/ fit out of existing spaces as well as an increase in the requirement for housing that match the needs of the growing population. As a result, an increase in activity in the Building and Construction sector is envisaged.

An increase in activity in this sector may also help address the relatively high unemployment rate in some parts of Ennis. Significant benefits could accrue in this regard if a match exists between the existing skill base in that area and the requirements of the construction industry. Suitable training could also be sourced in the education sector for more highly skilled roles.

The Professional Services and Commerce and Trade sectors, too, will benefit from an expansion in the aforementioned industries. Any increase in economic activity in Ennis will see an increase in the requirement for these services.

Secondary Outcomes

More available expenditure to support the towns service industries

More diverse employment base with significant additional jobs by 2040

Reduced reliance as event/destination location to support the economy

Location for Investment

Action 2

Develop networks in high end manufacturing, enterprise, education and research with the aim of attracting inward investment and talent.

The opportunity for networks of settlements to strategically drive sub-regional growth is well formulated within the Southern Region, with Ennis part of the Galway-Ennis-Shannon-Limerick (GESL) Economic Network, a network of Key Towns and Metropolitan Areas on the AEC. Such networks allow for the sharing of similar economic strengths, resources and contribute specialisms, which combined, provide a strategic opportunity to attract inward investment and talent.

This unique blend of knowledge- and research-based activity will help existing businesses, such as the manufacturing sector, and produce products and services that are competitive in the global market.

There are examples where towns near, or along inter-regional corridors (including cross boundary locations) share similar economic strengths, resources and contribute specialisms which combined, provide a strategic opportunity to drive the regional economy, contributing to and interacting economically with the larger centres of growth such as Key Towns and Metropolitan Areas.

These networks present opportunities for collaborative projects and shared benefits from strategic infrastructure investments, particularly from improved inter-regional connectivity (transport networks and digital communications). This, in turn has the potential to attract a major employer to invest in the town.

Primary Outcomes

PO 1: Collaboration with educational institutes and scope for 3rd level satellite presence

The establishment of an education quarter that accommodates a range of Learning Outreach Centres (LOCs) and provides choice of learning typologies can in turn be used as an attractor to secure research facilities for Ennis.

Research centres can be located remotely from the main campuses and would be attracted by the presence of LOCs and by the strategic approach of Clare County Council to the provision of higher education facilities.

Attracting and securing research facilities is, however, a competitive area, given the range of associated opportunities they present and their

contribution to diversification of an economic profile of an area. To attract such research centres to Ennis would require incentivisation for the relevant HEI (Higher Education Institute). This may be in the form of research space, equipment or support for researchers through bursaries for example. Such incentives can be designed to ensure the educational quarter is the focus of investment which in turn will strengthen its role and its attraction to other HEIs.

The required proactive and focused approach to attracting research centres to Ennis needs to deliver:

- A clear focus in relation to the area(s) of research being targeted, ideally associated with the enterprise focus which has been identified for Ennis.

Approaches made to the HEIs to present the educational quarter concept and identify how they might be attracted to establish or occupy a centre.

Approaches made by the Local Authority to potential funders to identify if and how support for such centres might be provided.

PO 2: Potential to attract at least one large multinational employer

Ireland recently reached its highest ever number of people employed by multi-nationals according to the IDA (302,566 people as of 2024) with 55% of those people being employed in locations outside of Dublin. While attracting multi-nationals is only one part of a sustainable economic mix and must be combined with strong support for indigenous enterprise and SMEs, multi-nationals also have an important role to play in stimulating economic activity. Research shows that for every 10 jobs created through foreign direct investment (FDI), 8 jobs are created in the local economy in retail, service and other spin-off industries.

Ireland's advantages in a post-Brexit context, including English language, commitment to EU membership and a common law system, may also help to drive further FDI in the Country. Indeed, these are some of the advantages that have enabled Ireland which has less than 1% of Europe's population, to attract 3% of the FDI projects in Europe in 2019. While Brexit related investment has thus far consisted primarily of multi-nationals in the financial sector, the aforementioned advantages will also create further opportunities across a range of industries.

However, the nature and scale of multi-nationals varies widely and the type/sector of multi national investment sought should be carefully considered.

The type of multi-national investment sought for Ennis should have the following characteristics:

- There should be a connection between the type of multi-national businesses targeted and the proposed educational offer within Ennis
- There should be a match between the type of multi-national sought and the existing skill base in Ennis, even if many of those people are currently commuting to jobs in other parts of the GESL.
- While the number of people with the required skills may ultimately need to increase through inward migration to Ennis, a strong existing skill base in the targeted area will make investment more likely and potentially more sustainable.
- The types of industries targeted should be those who are less likely to see job losses in the coming years due to technological change. Profound changes are currently taking place across all industries with the roles created being increasingly complex and lesser skilled roles being lost through automation.

In order to have the capacity to attract an appropriate multi-national, it will be necessary to ensure that the required conditions are in place. The following, *inter alia*, will be required:

- An appropriate location with sufficient existing floorspace or land on which to develop, or a combination of the above (such as the enterprise area proposed to the east of the town)
- The appropriate skill base within the town/ region
- The ability for Ennis to attract the required talent/ skilled workers from the broader region/ national context/ international context including the extended lifestyle offer of education, retail, cultural amenities, etc (e.g. as proposed for the town centre)
- Suitable residential accommodation within the town, both in terms of quantity and typology
- Appropriate infrastructure in the form of high-speed communications and high-quality transport links
- Ancillary services to support the operation of a multi-national (e.g. professional services, accommodation, conference facilities)

Secondary Outcomes

Greater potential for indigenous industries and growth in the SME sector

Support in the form of additional revenue for both the existing and proposed expansion of town centre amenities, including retail

Location for Investment

Action 3

Utilising Local Authority assets (e.g. land) and access to funding sources (e.g. URDF) to establish an Ennis specific investment fund that accelerates and supports the provision of new forms of mixed residential and productive employment development by the private sector.

While achieving investment and the consequent economic activity that it brings can be challenging, there are a number of innovative ways that the local authority can help to leverage and de-risk investment. This could involve partnering with actors in the private sector or providing public land or other resources on a favourable basis to assist projects that will act as a catalyst for further investment or which might not have happened without public assistance.

Primary Outcomes

PO 1: Smoothing of investment curve and de-risking projects by balancing up front infrastructural or land costs

The investment curve involves a number of key stages, perhaps the most challenging of which is the inception/ start-up/ capital costs. The initial period following this phase as the business/ development seeks to establish trading patterns are also particularly challenging, with many ventures at high risk of failure during this period due to the need to rapidly build a revenue base and to start repaying financing from the initial capital investment stage.

The assistance of a public body, perhaps in the form of the provision of land on an incentivised long term lease for example, can significantly ameliorate these challenges by reducing the

requirement to finance the initial capital costs associated with the purchase of land or to commence repayments immediately upon start-up.

Where an intervention has been identified within this strategy, the Council should investigate the full range of possibilities to achieve project activation, including, inter alia, the following:

- Where the intervention has been identified on public land, the provision of that land as a part of a public-private partnership
- Where the identified land is within private ownership, consideration should be given to the possible purchase, holding, developing, managing and leasing of those lands in order to achieve project activation, perhaps through a specially formed investment vehicle.

PO 2: Building confidence in the market

This Economic and Spatial Strategy for Ennis proposes a range of interventions to stimulate the market both within the Town Centre and around the town's periphery, including:

- An expanded Transport Hub and Town Gateway
- The improvement and redefining of public spaces in the town
- The provision of a modern mixed use quarter immediately to the south of the existing Town Centre
- The provision of modern enterprise and office areas to the east of the town, adjacent to the M18
- Additional residential/ retail/ commercial/ community facilities in the Town Centre

The above interventions are designed to support, encourage and facilitate further economic activity in the town and once commenced will encourage further investment activity. However, a clear signal from the Local Authority and other State bodies regarding commitment to the aforementioned proposals will be critical to supporting market confidence and encouraging investment.

PO 3: Greater potential for Government and EU funding allocation

The Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) was established as a core element of Project Ireland 2040, which is the overarching policy and planning framework for the social, economic and cultural development of Ireland.

The URDF has an overall allocation of €2 billion, which is awarded on a competitive basis by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage after assessing proposals from local authorities and other State bodies.

There are a range of requirements that must be met in order to access the funds, including that any proposal must be met by at least 25% direct funding from other public and/or private sources. They must also be a catalyst for development that would not otherwise have occurred and ideally be 'shovel-ready'. As such, the fund provides a clear incentive for the public and private sectors to work together to undertake development that enables and facilitates further economic activity.

The establishment of an Ennis specific investment fund, e.g. Climate Adaptation Fund, potentially with accompanying staff/ organisation/ department within the Local Authority could facilitate the bringing together of public and private actors to ensure that Ennis is positioned to benefit from future rounds of URDF/EU funding. The role of such an organisation/ fund would be as follows:

- Facilitate the implementation of the recommendations of this Economic and Spatial Strategy
- Establish a register/ prospectus of investment sites/ projects which could be presented to private sector actors to seek investment
- Act as a 'one stop shop' to facilitate smooth interactions with potential investors in order to provide advice on Local Authority matters ranging from potential funding sources such as the URDF and to provide advice on the town planning process.

Secondary Outcomes

Potential for a revolving fund of scale

Improving Ennis' profile in the region and nationally

Encouraging secondary investment activity in new/ existing businesses/ industries

Making investment in Ennis an 'easy' decision

Location for Investment

Action 4

Establishing area-based economic vehicles (can be public, public/private, public/ semi state, public/institutional etc.) to purchase, hold and manage land/floorspace from an early stage in the development cycle with a focus on opportunity areas/ strategic sites.

IDA Ireland has met with significant success in its approach to developing strategic sites through its portfolio of Business and Technology Parks. From the 156 hectare National Technology Park in Limerick, which is home to some 80 organisations, to the c. 2,000 sq.m office building located within the Sligo Business and Technology Park in Finisklin, this model has proven successful in stimulating economic activity.

While this is just one example of what can be achieved through an area- based economic vehicle, the use of public authority assets combined with the potential to access public funding could put Ennis in a position to create a highly successful business destination.

Primary Outcomes

PO 1: Potential for public involvement early in projects when values are lowest

The actions proposed in this Economic and Spatial Strategy are designed to be mutually reinforcing and to create a clear sense of change, improvement and momentum. As momentum gathers, the pace of change will increase and this will have consequent effects on elements such as commercial property and land values. As a result, early participation by public bodies has the potential to yield the greatest results for the least investment. Such an investment might involve the purchase and holding of land designated within this plan for industrial/ employment/ enterprise/ mixed use, etc. and the subsequent promotion/ development of those projects/ locations in partnership with the private sector or other State bodies, such as the IDA.

Against the backdrop of continuing and accelerating change in technology and work practices, all locations, including Ennis, must focus on creating a diverse, innovative and resilient economy. One approach to facilitating such an economy from a spatial perspective is the creation of mixed use areas that comprise a range of flexible commercial, light industrial/ manufacturing, retail, office and even residential uses as well as short term/ flexible working spaces. While some uses, such as larger-scale more intensive manufacturing uses will not be suitable for these locations given their nature, changes in the characteristics and the emergence of new, cleaner processes with fewer negative implications for neighbours, allows these uses to be mixed more readily. A mixed use area comprising the above is proposed in this strategy to the south of the town centre.

This concept, as well as the proposed change/ expansion areas, could be undertaken through the establishment of area-based growth vehicles, whose responsibility would be to purchase, hold and manage land/ space within the area(s) identified. The establishment of an area based local economic vehicle could have the following benefits:

- Facilitate the involvement of institutional investors by potentially amalgamating landownership parcels to create investment opportunities that will; appeal to such investors
- Leverage established networks and contacts through the Local Authority and other State bodies such as the IDA
- Ensure that the space/ facilities created are appropriately and reliably managed to reduce uncertainty for tenants/ investors
- Enable more affordable commercial units of an appropriate size/ scale to be brought to the market that might enable start-ups who might otherwise not have had sufficient investment capital to commence or expand operations but who have the potential to grow and develop into market leaders over time
- Enable financing to be obtained to fund the earlier stages of the project by providing guarantees and certainty regarding repayment
- Leverage a mix of public and private funding through the URDF
- Provide start-up incubation units and business support services

PO 2: Greater potential for delivering economic ambition and associated infrastructure

The approach to establishing area-based development vehicles to initiate and facilitate development, as well as to act as a catalyst for further investment and economic activity, will enable a range of the strategy's proposals to be brought forward, especially those that may not be delivered by the market without intervention. These could include a 3rd level educational presence, purpose built student accommodation, multi-storey car parks, start-up enterprises and SME accommodation, housing and retail/leisure facilities. In particular, the establishment of a significant third level presence and associated accommodation may require determined interventions, over a prolonged period. An area based economic vehicle could potentially not only work with third level providers, but also with investors and landowners to realise the required facilities. Without such determined intervention, the development of a significant third level presence, which are highly sought after, is perhaps less likely to occur.

Secondary Outcomes

Potential for an additional source of revenue once the vehicles and enterprises are established

Build relationships with real estate and lettings agencies within the town

The potential emergence of economic vehicles that are focused on achieving primarily social outcomes

Location for Investment

Action 5

Realise the delivery of seven transformational projects (buildings, public realm, transport etc.) that demonstrate a range of economic and social activity.

It is recognised that different areas within Ennis have varying levels of scope for physical change and development as some areas are already performing well and others have specific physical, historical or environmental constraints.

The execution of the economic actions and the enactment of the Spatial Implementation Plan centre on the delivery of inter-related transformational projects. The projects identified are driven by the actions contained in the strategy and will deliver multiple outcomes aligned to the strategic objectives. The three Town Centre transformational projects chosen can be delivered in the short to medium term and present the opportunity for early realisation of multiple outcomes. The 7 no. transformational projects are as follows:

- Former Ennis National School
- Friars Walk
- Cornmarket Precinct
- Wetland and Enterprise Area
- Clare Technology Park Opportunity Site
- Roche Opportunity Site
- Data Centre (Toureen)

These specific projects have been identified as transformational as they demonstrate a range of economic and social activities and present multiple opportunities to diversify Ennis' economic base. For example, the Cornmarket Street project that will deliver modern hotel and conference facilities, is directed by the strategy to build on Clare's unique tourist attributes and position Ennis as a gateway and a location in its own right. This transformational project not only presents major regeneration benefits for the Town Centre district in which it is located but will increase economic activity within the wider town, deliver improvements to the physical environment, and provide an enhanced tourism and accommodation offer focused on Ennis as a place to stay.

The realisation of transformational projects is fundamental to the delivery of the long term strategy for the growth of Ennis and its development as a place to do business, work, shop, live and visit. Each of the transformational projects is addressed in detail as part of the Spatial Implementation Plan.

Primary Outcomes

PO 1: Regeneration of the physical and economic environment

Led by the ethos of compact growth, the transformational projects are focused on Ennis Town Centre and public transportation facilities and specifically sites which are currently underutilised in terms of land-use, given their locations. Concentrating on the redevelopment of these strategic sites not only allows for the utilisation of existing infrastructure but also ensures that the economic and regeneration benefits for the town are maximised.

The development of the transformational projects presents the opportunity to deliver more beneficial, sustainable uses on these strategic lands and will act as a catalyst for the regeneration of the Town Centre.

Town Centre regeneration has been shown to have measurable benefits beyond the immediate area to the wider physical environment of the town as people move back to live in the Town Centre, footfall and spend increase, vitality and viability improve and further investment is attracted.

Together, these outcomes will deliver transformational change and 'breathe new life' into the physical environment of the Town Centre in a relatively short period of time.

PO 2: Builds confidence for investors

The establishment of a long-term spatial and economic strategy for Ennis sets a clear marker as to the intent of the Local Authority to plan for and drive the future economic, social and physical development of Ennis as an investment location and place to live.

Delivering projects in the Town Centre requires coordination with and buy-in from partners and investors. Local Authority buy-in and investment in the delivery of the identified transformational projects is not only a fundamental requirement but is key to building investor confidence. The Local Authority must put in place supports, in the form of policies, initiatives and incentives, to ensure the realisation of the transformational projects in the short to medium term.

Implementation of the strategy on the ground will demonstrate to investors that Ennis is a proactive town, that backs itself to deliver on its strategy for growth and economic development. Securing investor confidence in Ennis will in turn stimulate demand for further investment.

Secondary Outcomes

Social benefits in terms of access to facilities and quality of life

Greater utilisation of sustainable modes of transports

Location for Investment

Action 6

Build on Clare's unique tourist attributes to create an offer of Ennis as a gateway and a location in its own right that competes nationally and internationally.

Tourism is a major economic driver for the Mid West region, which consists of the counties of Limerick and Clare and Tipperary. In 2024 1.25million overseas tourists spent €536 million in the region, with Irish residents (including Northern Ireland) trips generating a further €378 million. A majority of the overseas visitors to the region came from Britain (40%), North America (28%) and Mainland Europe (25%).

County Clare is a popular destination for overseas tourists visiting Ireland, welcoming 361,000 in 2024. The Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience was the second most visited fee-charging visitor attraction in Ireland in 2023. While there was a significant amount of revenue generated in County Clare in 2024 by overseas tourists (€687million), it is noted that the average spend per capita of €459 in Clare, was significantly lower compared to neighbouring counties of Limerick (€821) and Galway (€655).

These statistics demonstrate that while County Clare is a popular Irish destination with overseas tourists it is currently not maximising the revenue potential of this market. This is largely due to the fact that at present Clare is a place to visit and not a place to stay, with large numbers of coach tours stopping at the County's tourist attractions enroute to accommodation elsewhere. Tourism as an established asset must be developed further by working alongside the tourism industry and promoting existing assets and developing resources to attract tourists to stay in the County.

Ennis benefits from a range of assets, from its historical, cultural and traditional music heritage, to its position at the gateway to the unique landscape of County Clare including the Burren and Cliffs of Moher. Ennis' challenge is to create a unique tourism experience, encourage investment in infrastructure that meets tourism demand and ensure that Ennis becomes a tourist destination from which to explore the County. Key to this is the provision of modern, quality tourist accommodation which is required to address existing bedspace capacity issues during peak periods, enabling and encouraging more visitors to stay in Ennis and capturing more overseas tourist spend in the County.

Studies have shown that each hotel room generates between 1.5 and 3 jobs directly meaning the provision of additional tourist accommodation as well as revenue generating itself has wider benefits in terms of employment and supporting associated job creation. Ennis 2040 provides for such additional accommodation within the Town Centre of Ennis. This focus will not only deliver compact growth but ensure that the economic, employment and associated benefits are focused on the Town Centre, enhancing its vitality and viability which in turn will make it a more attractive destination.

Primary Outcomes

PO 1: Delivery of modern conference facilities

The challenge for all tourist destinations is to facilitate a sustainable year around tourist trade. At present summer season is the peak tourist time for Ennis, with events such as the Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann attracting large visitor numbers and generating c. €38m for the town.

Outside of peak season Ennis has developed an event based tourist trade including the successful Trad Fest held in November. While event based tourism is, and will continue to be, an important component of Ennis' overall tourism base, to deliver a year round tourist trade other actions are required to boost demand outside of the peak season.

Targeting selected markets presents the opportunity for the achievement of medium to longer term sustained growth. One such selected market, which is currently largely unserved in Ennis, is business tourism. Business tourism is a rapidly growing sector in Ireland, and contributes in excess of €1billion to the economy annually. It supports 22,000 jobs, and it is estimated that business event delegates inject two and a half times more revenue into the local economies than leisure travellers (Business Events Strategy 2030).

Central to business tourism is the meeting, incentive, conference and events (MICE) market where large groups are brought together for a particular purpose for example a conference, product launch, exhibition or an incentive trip. The Business Events Strategy 2030 aims to grow the revenue generated from overseas business visitors but 8% annually in the period to 2030. Ireland is appealing to attract more international conferences to Limerick and Shannon, joining up with the Shannon region Conference and Sports Bureau to recruit academics in the region to attract more conferences through its

conference ambassador programme. In 2018 the partnership brought conferences to the region worth c. €4.5 million with the majority going to Limerick where the required facilities and accommodation are available.

Ennis must position itself to take a share of this lucrative and growing market as a means of diversifying its economic base and tourist trade. Ennis 2040 provides for the delivery of modern conference facilities and hotel accommodation, required to facilitate such events and allows Ennis to compete as a host location. Given its existing ties to HEIs and its strategic location proximate to Shannon Airport, with the appropriate infrastructure in place, Ennis should be aiming to secure a substantial portion of this market.

In addition to the delivery of the physical infrastructure, as over 75 per cent of all international association conferences that come to Ireland do so at the direct invitation of a local Irish member, the Local Authority must actively engage with Fáilte Ireland and local groups in promoting Ennis as a conference location. In this regard its unique cultural and landscape assets and competitive rates compared to larger cities are Unique Selling Points that need to be marketed in seeking to establish Ennis as a business tourism destination.

PO 2: An increase in the number of nights people stay in Ennis

At present accommodation capacity constraints in Ennis are impacting ability to cope with demand, specifically at peak times of the year. This has been a limiting factor for Ennis in marketing itself as a tourist destination in which to stay, as rooms are not available when demand is highest. With investment in accommodation infrastructure and improvements to marketing to showcase Ennis' unique attributes and visitor experience, there are huge opportunities for Ennis to attract tourists and encourage them to stay multiple nights to both experience the town and to utilise

it as a base to explore the wider region.

An increase in visitor nights to Ennis will not only result in a marked increase in overnight tourism expenditure, improving viability for accommodation providers, but it will also lead to increased visitor spend in the town, supporting restaurants, bars, service providers etc. Locating new accommodation within the Town Centre ensures that such spin-off economic benefits are maximised.

Increased visitor numbers and spend will also encourage investment in the enhancement of existing tourist facilities and the delivery of

new facilities and attractions. This in turn will contribute to the visitor experience offered by Ennis and its overall attraction as a tourist destination.

The development of Ennis as a niche destination for tourism should be developed through a dedicated framework plan for the implementation of policies and objectives contributing to the promotion of Ennis as a key visitor location. 'Promote Ennis: Niche Destination Plan' has been produced with a development focus on Ennis realising the significant opportunity that tourism presents for increased economic activity.

Secondary Outcomes

Greater exposure and showcasing of Ennis

Increased numbers to tourism facilities, heritage assets etc.

Enhanced consumer demand for shopping, leisure and food/beverage facilities

Improved viability for hotels, guesthouses, hostels etc.

Location for Investment

Action 7

Ensure integration of employment land and identified strategic sites with transport improvement measures (public transport, walking/cycling routes, parking etc.).

Ennis is strategically well placed on the road network, located adjacent to the M18 Motorway, which provides excellent connectivity to Limerick and Galway. Ennis has two national secondary routes, the N68 and N85 and a radial internal road network, with eight regional roads and numerous local roads which are the main form of transport across the town. The town also benefits from having a train station with services directly to Galway and Limerick and it is well served by bus both in the form of Bus Éireann scheduled services and the non-profit Local Link bus service 'Clarebus'. Further, Ennis is served by a regular City Express bus service which connects to Shannon Airport, also City Link and Flight Link buses provide direct services between Ennis, Limerick and Dublin Airport.

As detailed in Chapter 6, Mobility and Infrastructure, Ennis 2040 proposes several upgrades to the transport infrastructure serving Ennis and its environs including the provision of an urban bus network, and the delivery of new roads including the Northern Relief Route, Northern Bypass, Town Centre East Link Road and Skehanagh Arterial Road. The strategy also proposes a range of enhancements to walking and cycling infrastructure which will be delivered through the active travel actions in the recently published Ennis Local Transport Plan.

This existing and planned transport infrastructure must support the long term development of Ennis with regard to residential growth, the operation of a vibrant Town Centre, the delivery of additional employment and the provision of enhanced educational facilities. Account must be taken of how people access such facilities, with a focus on delivering access to places of work as well as services such as education, shopping and recreation via public transport and walking and cycling. It will thus be important to maximise the benefits of the existing and planned transport infrastructure through integration with land use planning, specifically the delivery of the identified strategic sites.

Identifying and creating opportunities for development within the existing footprint of Ennis will not only maximise public value from investment in transport infrastructure but can ease pressure for sprawl and provide greater certainty for residents, investors, and the construction industry. Also, as Ennis Town Centre is the focus of existing and planned enhanced public, walking and cycling infrastructure, Town Centre development provides the opportunity to align with this network to ensure that wherever possible the use of sustainable modes of transport are utilised. Renewal and development of Town Centre sites offers the opportunity to contribute to the enhancement of transport infrastructure in Ennis, specifically in relation to improvements to pedestrian facilities such as footpaths and the provision of new, direct pedestrian linkages.

Primary Outcomes

PO 1: Less car usage and increased levels of walking, cycling and public transport usage

According to the 2022 Census, 13% of travel within Ennis is on foot. This can be attributed to Ennis' relatively compact form and the network of lanes and bow-ways that provide permeability throughout the Town Centre. This level of walking is proof of the fact that if services are accessible by foot people will choose to walk to avail of them.

The integration of employment land and the identified strategic sites, with the existing and planned transport infrastructure of Ennis presents the opportunity to align facilities with enhanced public transport and walking and cycling infrastructure. In the case of Ennis where cycle infrastructure is currently poor and public transportation within the town limited, integration of land use and enhanced infrastructure will

provide a safe, alternative and cheaper travel option to the use of the private car for accessing facilities within the town. Having the option to utilise walking, cycling and public transport as a viable alternative to the private car, also presents a far more sustainable employment offer for former commuters, making Ennis an attractive location to live and work.

The proper integration between land use and transport also considers the safety and health of the community. Planning for access to employment as well as services such as education, shopping and recreation via public transport and walking and cycling will not only facilitate a reduction of car-based carbon emissions but is also an excellent opportunity to incorporating physical activity into daily lives, thereby promoting healthier lifestyles.

Secondary Outcomes

More sustainable employment offer for former commuters

Reduced Carbon Emissions

Healthier Lifestyles

Appealing to talented people as an attractive location to live and work

Location for Investment

Action 8

Utilise the strategic location of Ennis to explore third level opportunities with adjacent cities (i.e. Galway and Limerick)

The strategic location of Ennis between Limerick and Galway cities means that six Higher Education Institutes (HEI) lie within one hour, with five within 45 minutes of Ennis. Technology University of the Shannon (TUS) also opened its Ennis Campus on Bindon Street in December 2019. Between them these HEIs have over 50,000 students and programmes of study across all disciplines.

Third level education facilities have the potential to play a significant employment, investment and servicing role in Ennis. This strategy identifies areas for the locating and growth of third level educational facilities, most likely in the form of LOCs. Locating such facilities within the Town Centre will make better use of existing infrastructure, support ancillary retail, commercial and related services and promote the growth of associated businesses and industries. It would also present opportunities in terms of the provision of student accommodation. The planning for the delivery of these areas will focus on improving access, particularly walking and cycling and public transport, integration with the surrounding area and diversifying job choices.

A focused, proactive approach to locating HEIs within Ennis will create employment, stimulate innovation and is fundamental to the emerging knowledge economy and growth of Ennis.



Primary Outcomes

PO 1: Satellite third level presence in Ennis

Expanding existing and attracting new third level facilities presents multiple opportunities for Ennis, including the enhancement of services, employment and innovation. The form of third level facility likely to locate in Ennis, its attributes and requirements and planning for their delivery are thus key considerations.

Given the strategic location of Ennis and the proximity of existing educational facilities in Limerick, Galway and Shannon, it is unlikely that a fully-fledged campus would be developed during the duration of this strategy. There is, however, the opportunity to build on the current strong relationship with TUS and its existing, successful Learning Outreach Centre (LOC), to both expand this facility and attract new LOCs from other institutes.

While there are limitations to LOCs in terms of the range of programmes of study offered, level of demand, scale and attracting staff, the creation of an education quarter provides the platform through which to address such issues. An education quarter, where facilities are co-located and there is access to shared services, would provide a focus for higher education provision and a choice of learning i.e. online and blended learning. Such a facility and the knowledge and resource sharing opportunities it presents are attractive to new institutes at home and abroad.

The location of such a quarter within the Town Centre area would not only ensure that the campus has access to supporting services and amenities but would present opportunities for Ennis in terms of the growth of associated facilities, businesses, industries and specialised economic functions.

Secondary Outcomes

Enhanced research facilities working with third level institutes, business, international partners and the community

PO 2: Direct and indirect job creation and increased levels of start-up enterprises

Planning for the provision of an educational quarter within Ennis town has clear physical benefits in terms of the compact growth of the town and the utilisation of existing infrastructure and serviced land. In addition, it would also have a range of economic benefits in terms of the generation of the requirement for ancillary support services.

As well as the direct jobs created, the locating of LOCs in Ennis will also deliver indirect jobs in support services in the areas of retail, commercial and related businesses. The scale of the jobs delivered will be dependent on the size of the LOCs, the range and type of courses offered and the number of students in attendance.

HEIs also have positive impacts on economic development as they encourage knowledge-based and start-up enterprises to locate in areas by providing the enterprises with confidence that there will be an adequate supply of people with the correct knowledge and skills to act as employees of the enterprise. In addition, where the HEIs have a positive attitude towards engagement with such enterprises, it encourages the enterprise to have confidence that the HEI will be in a position to provide up-skilling training for staff. HEIs also provide a source of research capacity which can be targeted at addressing the particular needs of an enterprise or supporting start-up enterprises.

Greater levels of innovation and support for lifelong learning and personal development

Location for Investment

Action 9

Address policy gaps in national and regional strategies that are suboptimal for Ennis' competitiveness and development.

National policy guiding the long-term, strategic growth of Ireland is provided in the NPF First Revision (2024). For each of the three regions, the Regional Assemblies have prepared their own strategy to provide regional level strategic planning and economic policy in support of the implementation of the NPF and provide a greater level of focus around its NPOs and NSOs.

The long-term strategy for the growth of Ennis provided in the RSES for the Southern Region, which sets out the potential of towns and their catchments. While the RSES recognises Ennis as a Key Town and acknowledges its role in the economic engine known as the triangle of Limerick-Shannon-Ennis guidance on its future growth is high level referring to building on current talent and skills offer and attracting a higher-level education campus. The policy guidance on how Ennis can achieve such development and a strategic plan for its future growth are not detailed in the RSES, which focuses more on the cities of the Southern Region and their development under the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans.

Ennis 2040 builds upon the framework provided by the NPF and on the high level guidance contained in the RSES in setting out the long-term economic strategy for the development of Ennis. As a long term strategy, Ennis 2040 informs and will drive the economic, social and physical development of Ennis as an investment location and place to live, setting the direction for the development of strategic sites. In its absence there is no strategic plan for the long-term growth of Ennis nor is there any specific policy to support same, thus despite its strategic location and many assets, nationally and regionally Ennis would be treated the same as other Key Towns from a policy perspective at national and regional level.

Ennis 2040 therefore, has an important role to play in delivering the policy guidance that bridges the gap between the long-term but high level RSES for the Southern Region and the short-term County Development Plan, that if unaddressed would have a negative impact on the competitiveness and future growth of Ennis. In that regard, the RSES does recognise the potential of this current process to create a long-term strategy for the sustainable development of Ennis.

Primary Outcomes

PO 1: Recognition nationally that Ennis is a viable alternative to the established cities for job creation and associated population growth

In line with the guidance of the NPF and the RSES, future growth in the Southern Region will be focused on strengthening the existing settlement structure to capitalise on the strength of the three cities, the metropolitan areas, and the strong network of towns. In this structure the cities provide the pillars on which to base a coherent settlement and economic strategy.

As an identified Key Town Ennis has a critical and strategic role in underpinning the RSES strategy and ensuring the consolidation and spread of growth beyond the cities to the sub regional level. Ennis, however, has a comparative advantage from other Key Towns in the Southern Region, due to its strategic location between two cities, its accessibility, land availability, existing employment base and quality of life.

While Ennis currently experiences relatively high levels of inward commuter flows as the principal administrative and commercial centre of County Clare, it also acts as a major commuter town for both Shannon and Limerick. This existing employment base, along with the other attributes of Ennis, position it as the foremost viable alternative location for job creation and population growth outside of Limerick and Galway. In this context Ennis has a strategic role

to play in releasing pressure for land in these areas, promoting compact growth and ensuring the spread of growth into the region.

In setting a long-term strategy that will position Ennis as an investment location, Ennis 2040 works with and builds on its existing attributes. Future growth will be based on leveraging connectivity, specifically with the adjacent cities, higher education capacity and quality of life to make Ennis an attractive alternative to the established cities and secure strategic investment.

The provision of economic growth through the creation of new employment opportunities will also encourage and facilitate population growth and the retention of residents working in Ennis, place back into employment local residents who are currently unemployed and attract new residents to the town. This will deliver a more vibrant and dynamic place which in turn will further increase Ennis' attraction to national and international businesses and an increasingly mobile workforce.

Furthermore, the focus of Ennis 2040 on sustainability, and climate adaptation, including its ambition to become a 'Climate Adaptive Town' and a '10 Minute Town', will set Ennis apart from other urban areas. These initiatives will give Ennis a profile nationally and internationally and contribute to its attraction as an alternative 'green and sustainable' place to live, locate and do business.

Secondary Outcomes

The RSES will recognise that the role of Ennis regionally and nationally is greater than other similar sized towns due to its strategic location, unique assets and quality of life and place

Greater recognition by bodies such as the IDA and Shannon Group

Location for Investment

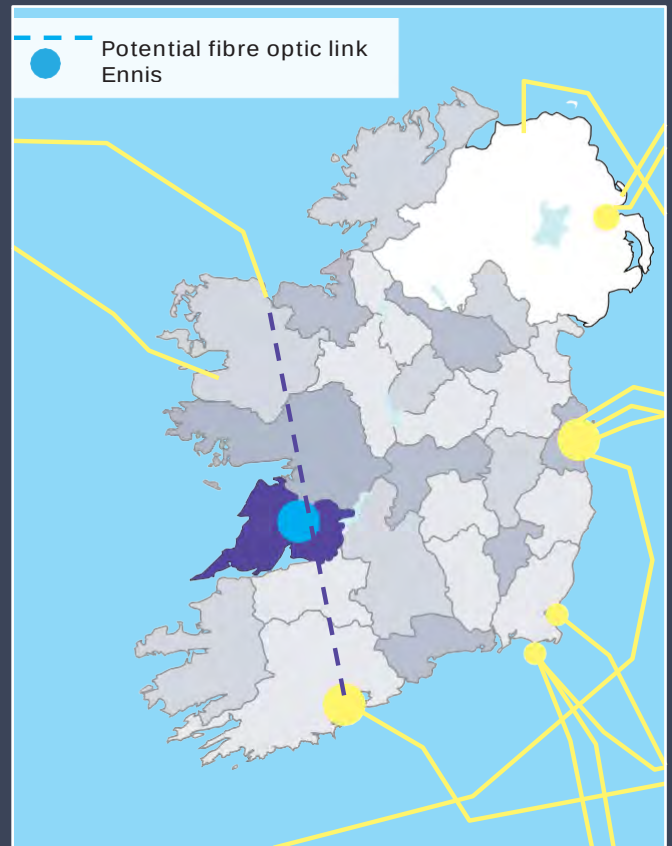
Action 10

Invest and improve IT infrastructure continuously to deliver high speed access.

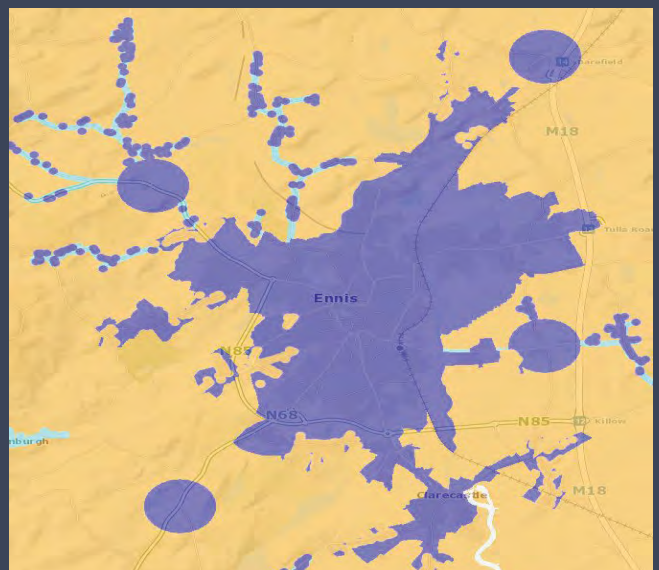
IT infrastructure is a critical component in attracting and retaining business and investment, especially for locations physically removed from the commercial and financial hearts of Ireland's key cities. It allows businesses to trade and locate internationally and provides workers with a choice of living remotely to their place of work. Currently Ennis has high quality 'dark fibre broadband', however, as Ireland advances its fibre optic networks Ennis must position itself to take maximum advantage of the proposed upgrades and investment.

There are currently 3 no. transatlantic subsea fibre optic cables connecting Ireland directly with the US, one arriving into Killala, Co Mayo, one arriving at Lecanvey, Co. Mayo and the other into Co.Cork. Several subsea cables also link the east coast of Ireland with the UK, landing in Dublin and Wexford. As the only fibre optic link connecting Ireland with Europe is via the UK, and in light of Brexit, direct connections to France are planned, the Celtic Interconnector, is expected to be fully operational by Spring 2028.

This investment and improvement in the fibre optic network presents the opportunity to link the fibre-optic cables at Cork and Mayo in order to reduce latency and provide high quality telecoms to businesses along the Atlantic Economic Corridor. Ennis is strategically located on a direct link between these cables and should position itself to tap into this high speed telecommunication infrastructure. Direct access to this network would be of huge benefit to Ennis as a location for investment and business and would be a unique selling point that would further enable the town to capitalise on its strategic location.



Map 1 Potential Fibre Optic Link to Ennis



Map 2 National Broadband Plan - Ennis

Primary Outcome

PO 1: Promotes economic activity and opportunities to secure 'big businesses'

The availability of a high speed fibre broadband connection in Ennis would benefit its future growth and attraction as a location for a range of investment and business, from start-ups in the IT sector to large multinational organisations looking to have a European base.

Advances in secure technology enable businesses to have immediate access to their customers and suppliers allowing for flexibility in their work practices, improvement in efficiency and the development of opportunities for new business creation. In combination with high speed fibre broadband, 'big businesses' look for accessibility, quality of life and environmental factors in deciding on a location in a mobile economy. Such considerations position Ennis, with improved IT infrastructure, to benefit from its strategic location in actively marketing itself as a location for national and multinational businesses.

The National Broadband Plan shows Ennis as a location where commercial operators are delivering or have indicated plans to deliver high speed broadband services, see Map 11. In the UK, the provision of such 'Superfast' broadband has been shown to boost business turnover across the Country by £9bn from 2012 to 2016.

PO 2: Provides access to global markets and supports the tourist industry

High quality subsea cables across the Atlantic Ocean ensure low levels of latency and provide the most secure connection and access to markets across the globe. The network of fibre broadband connectivity being developed in

Ireland offers the potential to include Ennis and other settlements on the west coast with the aim of upgrading overall IT Infrastructure.

High quality IT infrastructure is also important in terms of promoting and facilitating the tourist industry. In this regard the internet is the main medium through which holiday bookings are now made, with access to high speed internet in accommodation a prerequisite for many tourists. In addition, if Ennis is to develop its year round tourism industry by providing a business tourism offer, specifically conferences, then access to reliable and high speed broadband is essential to meeting the needs of the business tourism delegate.

PO 3: Attracts talented people in the tech sector

The opportunity to attract talented people in the tech sector to Ennis must be viewed not only in terms of IT infrastructure but quality of place including its good quality of life, strategic location, access to schools and universities as well as the provision of facilities for business flexibility.

The Ennis DigiClare Digital Hub was opened in 2021, this facility offers flexible hot-desks, co-working and conference and training facilities combined with high quality internet connectivity. This facility enables remote working from Ennis and has the potential to become a target location for niche practices such as 'App Development' which is increasingly becoming a large growth market within the tech sector.

Secondary Outcomes

Essential to establishing a greater 3rd level presence

Reduces demand on support services (e.g. health)

Improves quality of life

"Plans to protect air and water, wilderness and wildlife are in fact plans to protect man" - **Stewart Udall**



4. Climate Adaptation

SO 2: Climate Adaptive Town

This chapter provides key guidance information with regard to climate adaptation, how it will work for Ennis and what funding streams are available to encourage the development of projects within and surrounding the town centre.

Climate Adaptation

In addition to the cultural heritage features of Ennis, from its monastic origins to its surviving medieval core, the River Fergus is the most significant environmental resource of the town, offering landscape, ecological, water and human health benefits.

The strategic importance of the settlement of Ennis as an island between two branches of the River Fergus and surrounded by limestone soil was an attractive characteristic to the O'Brien dynasty.

The River has a total length of 59.5 km and a catchment area of 1,041km², including many interconnected lakes and streams, which drain part of the Burren region. The main channel is a designated salmonid water under the European Communities (Quality of Salmonid Waters) Regulations of 1988 (S.I. No. 293, 1988), implementing the Freshwater Fish Directive (78/659/EEC). The lower reaches of the River are also protected as a component of the Lower Shannon candidate Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)

Together, the Shannon and Fergus Estuaries form the largest estuarine complex in Ireland. Important habitats include saltmarsh and mudflats, which are increasingly recognised for their roles in water regulation, flood resilience and carbon storage.

In seeking to adapt, respond and mitigate for climate change, the existing environmental resources of Ennis should be viewed as a means to provide multiple benefits, especially if Ennis prioritises a nature based solutions approach, that seeks to increase co-benefits across biodiversity, water, landscape and human health. Examples of measures that are underpinned by such an approach include:

- Green walls and roofs, providing water attenuation, biodiversity and noise and air quality benefits subject to appropriate design;
- Flood resilience measures that provide greater room for the River, and improve the functioning of historical floodplains, urban parks, green spaces; and
- Increasing tree canopy cover provides landscape, human health, air, noise and biodiversity benefits.

This approach has been used to underpin the following Climate Adaptation Actions and Outcomes.

What is Climate Adaptation?

The National Adaptation Framework identifies the critical role to be played by local authorities in addressing climate change adaptation. This will effectively build on their existing expertise and experience as first responders in emergency planning scenarios. Under the NAF each local authority is required to implement their own adaptation strategies in line with guidelines developed for the sector.

Currently Cork County Council is the lead local authority for the Regional Action Regional Office (CARO) which includes County Clare. The Climate Change Adaption Strategy for County Clare sets out actions which seek to adapt to and mitigate against risks identified from climate change to the county and beyond.

The Climate Action Regional Offices are being operated by a lead local authority in four different regions that have been grouped together based on a climate risk assessment with a focus on the predominant risk(s) in each geographical area. The establishment of these offices enable a more coordinated engagement across the whole of government and will help build on the experience and expertise which exists across the sector.

Climate change effects to urban areas can be exacerbated due to a number of factors, including lack of permeability surfaces and increased flood risk and surface run off; less tree cover with accompanying effects relating to air quality; and potential risks to existing infrastructure, such as wastewater treatment plants, waste management facilities and transport infrastructure.

As the Local Authority Adaptation Strategy Development Guidelines (2018) state:

“Opportunities to work towards greater climate resilience over the medium to long term should be clearly identified and planned for at this stage of the strategy development process.”

How it works

Adaptation actions can be usefully classified into those that either build adaptive capacity (raising awareness, education, sectoral capacity and understanding of climate change) or deliver progress in responding to climate change risks (examples include nature based solutions to climate change, that bring co benefits). In relation to a nature based approach for Ennis, this looks at the river and floodplains and uses a variety of measures to enhance ecological and water quality and provide for what are considered ‘softer’ approaches that work with the landform and landscape. Furthermore, this approach recognises the multiple benefits of floodplains and wetlands, in terms of environmental and cultural and social services.

Why it will work for Ennis

Ennis is fortunate in having a large area east of the town centre that could, if planned for properly, bring long term benefits and increased resilience to climate change effects. This area relates to the eastern lands between the railway and the M18 motorway. This area includes the River Fergus and its floodplains as well as a network of smaller streams, wetlands and small lakes. Large extents of this area have been identified as Flood Zone A line with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines.

Ennis could be a national leader in demonstrating this approach, by optimising these lands for climate change adaption, promoting the leadership required to deliver this and crucially enhancing the environmental resilience and benefits of such an approach. Through provision of non-vehicular access particularly on an east west orientation, keyhole development could be planned for a small number of identified areas and contribute to an exemplary project that puts pedestrians and cyclists first.



Boutique Hotel Ecohotel, Vienna.

Moreover, the planning of this area could be a means to demonstrate and pilot innovative responses to climate change through third level collaboration and with EU Partners. The next round of EU Life funding specifically includes climate change and adaption and there is a great opportunity to access this funding with other project partners.

There is an opportunity with the Ennis 2040 strategy to recognise the multiple functions this area can provide, particularly if sensitively approached, that would demonstrate a key commitment by Ennis town and Clare County Council to adaptation and mitigation to climate change, whilst allowing recreational opportunities and keyhole development sites.

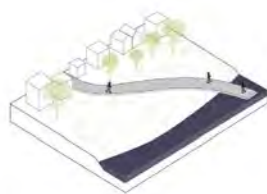
The ecological sensitivities of the River Fergus and habitats and species that rely upon this area would be a key starting point in any potential future management and we would envisage a series of areas grading from managed habitats to wilder areas that would include ecological corridors and buffer zones for species sensitive to potential disturbance. In turn, there are opportunities to enhance existing ecological features, increase habitat such as alluvial woodlands and increase water filtration, carbon capture services as well as enhancing the overall landscape of the area. This area could be linked by a series of non-

vehicular bridges that would span existing watercourses and offer the means to increase pedestrian and cycling connectivity in and around the Ennis area.

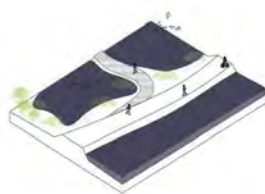
However, this area also includes the former landfill site, as well as the major public transport hub for the town. Ensuring the area is resilient to climate change effects is critical to adapting to climate change. This proposal if implemented could provide additional safeguards to these infrastructural features through the water retention elements of the proposal. Moreover, by promoting a nature based solution to climate change adaption, there can be multiple benefits at landscape scale and in turn increase Ennis towns' resilience to climate change.

The master planning of this area would be likely to include the following:

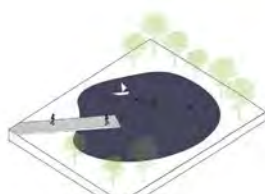
- Recognition of the River Fergus and its floodplain – increasing the riparian vegetation in key areas of the River and extending habitats to improve ecologically connectivity.
- Increased appropriate woodland including alluvial woodland both captures carbon and decreases soil run off.
- This area could be connected by a series of pedestrian and cycle paths that could connect



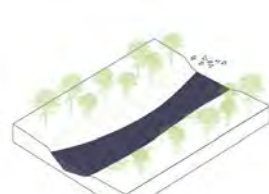
URBAN WETLAND WALKWAY



WETLAND PARK



WATER ACTIVITIES



RIPARIAN BUFFER

north south to Rosleven and southwards to Clarecastle.

- As a wetland parks area this would be of huge recreational benefit to residents and citizens of Ennis and beyond.
- Given the scale of the area, there could be opportunities for more active recreation such as kayaking etc.
- Through this approach, increased resilience and adaption to effects of climate change would be provided, including:
 - ◇ increased carbon storage (retention of wetlands, riparian and alluvial woodland),
 - ◇ water storage and filtration, again this would absorb increased surface water and/or pluvial waters
 - ◇ enhanced ecological benefits including ecological corridors
 - ◇ landscape benefits associated with a high quality River Corridor and supporting floodplains with tailored and sensitive interventions
 - ◇ areas of high habitat value could be identified and enhance, contributing to a diverse mosaic of habitats increasing the overall biodiversity value.



Map 3 Green Infrastructure

Climate Adaptation

Action 11

Reduce resource consumption and transition to a low carbon society with appropriate climate change adaptation measures that prioritise nature based solutions.

Given the challenges facing Ireland in meeting, and responding to climate change commitments, Clare County Council should aim to be a leader at Local Authority level in demonstrating how a county town the size of Ennis can deliver and respond to climate change, and transition to a low carbon society.

While statutory and policy framework is driving these requirements, given the relatively compact nature of Ennis, the existing built environment, and key environmental resources including the River Fergus, surrounding wetlands and diversity of habitats and species, the strategy presented in this document can provide co-benefits or win-win for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

In order to be a leader in the area it is essential that Ennis refocuses its thinking from overly engineered approaches and uses nature based solutions and measures to achieve this strategy. This approach will also provide for a more cost effective, resource friendly and ultimately benefit the population and environment that we rely upon.

Primary Outcomes

PO 1: Efficient uses of resource

The efficient use of resources will be achieved by a number of measures, notably the 'circular economy'. In a circular economy *"the value of products and materials is maintained for as long as possible. Waste and resource use are minimised, and when a product reaches the end of its life, it is used again to create further value"*. The circular economy can bring major economic benefits, contributing to innovation, growth and job creation.

The EU Commission has just adopted the implementation report covering the Full Circular Economy Action Plan. The Report presents the main achievements under the Action Plan and sets out future challenges to shaping our economy and paving the way towards a climate-neutral, circular economy where pressure on natural and freshwater resources as well as ecosystems is minimised. Ongoing adherence to and implementation of EU and national legislation relating to water quality, air quality and resource management will underpin economic benefits.

PO 2: Transition to a low carbon society

Driven by international, EU and national commitments, at Local Authority level, the short-term transition to a low carbon society will be achieved through the Clare Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. The Atlantic Seaboard South Climate Action Regional Office, run by Cork County Council, should have ongoing input with Clare County Council, as a means also to leverage potential funding opportunities under the Climate Action Fund, worth €500m to 2027.

Potential measures that can contribute to this transition include:

- District heating networks for new buildings in particular
- Local Authority energy efficiency measures including public lighting, heating and building energy efficiency measures
- Using a nature based solutions approach to adaptation and mitigation for example through recognition of the role of wetlands in and around Ennis, their restoration and enhancement where possible.

- Soil permeability studies and a commitment to increasing tree cover and tree canopy cover, with appropriate largely native species, in and around Ennis town.
- Increasing modal shifts in and around Ennis through increased public transport provision, improving the existing railway infrastructure and enhancements to walking and cycling infrastructure and overall permeability.

PO 3: Protection and enhancement of Ennis' important biodiversity and landscape

The landscape and biodiversity in and around Ennis contributes to local character, creates a distinctive identity and provides numerous services and provisions to the functioning of the town and surrounding areas.

Opportunities exist to enhance the local landscape character whilst providing greater ecological integrity and connectivity, for example through the River Fergus and floodplains, enhancement of existing and new green space and protection of existing important habitats and species dependent upon them.

By implementing a green and blue infrastructure approach to Ennis and environs that promotes co-benefits for biodiversity, landscape and wellbeing, the significant resources that help define Ennis can help make the county town more resilient to climate change and reinforce a strong local landscape character and sense of place.

Secondary Outcomes

Attractive to business

PO 4: Improved health and well-being

By maintaining and enhancing a network of blue and green space the citizens of Ennis can continue to access areas for formal and informal recreation. Integrating higher densities in new builds and increasing the residential population in and around the Town Centre can deliver a network of restorative spaces that can benefit all age groups. Inclusion of natural play areas will also diversify the potential physical activities that can be engaged in. Increasing physical activity brings both health and wellbeing benefits and increases the opportunities for outdoor education across all educational levels. Designing these spaces to allow for passive supervision, increases overall participation and design measures can also incorporate biodiversity and landscape enhancement measure that will provide a more diverse recreational environment.

PO 5: Builds relationships with other (global) locations with similar civic responsibilities

Ennis can take advantage of numerous collaborations across the EU and beyond. One such example is the Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM) where signatories are committed to battling the increasing threats of climate change and accelerating ambitious, measurable climate and energy initiatives that lead to an inclusive, low-emission and climate resilient future. By becoming a signatory Ennis commits to taking local action but also to work side by side with peers around the world and share innovative solutions.

Accessing EU funding and collaboration through Interreg Programmes and EU Life programmes is another means to build relationships and collaboration. Consideration should be given to dedicated staff who can work on behalf of the Local Authority identifying potential project partners, funding streams, applying for projects and including civil society in such applications.

Attractive environment for talent, particularly in the tech, energy, life science etc. sectors

Climate Adaptation

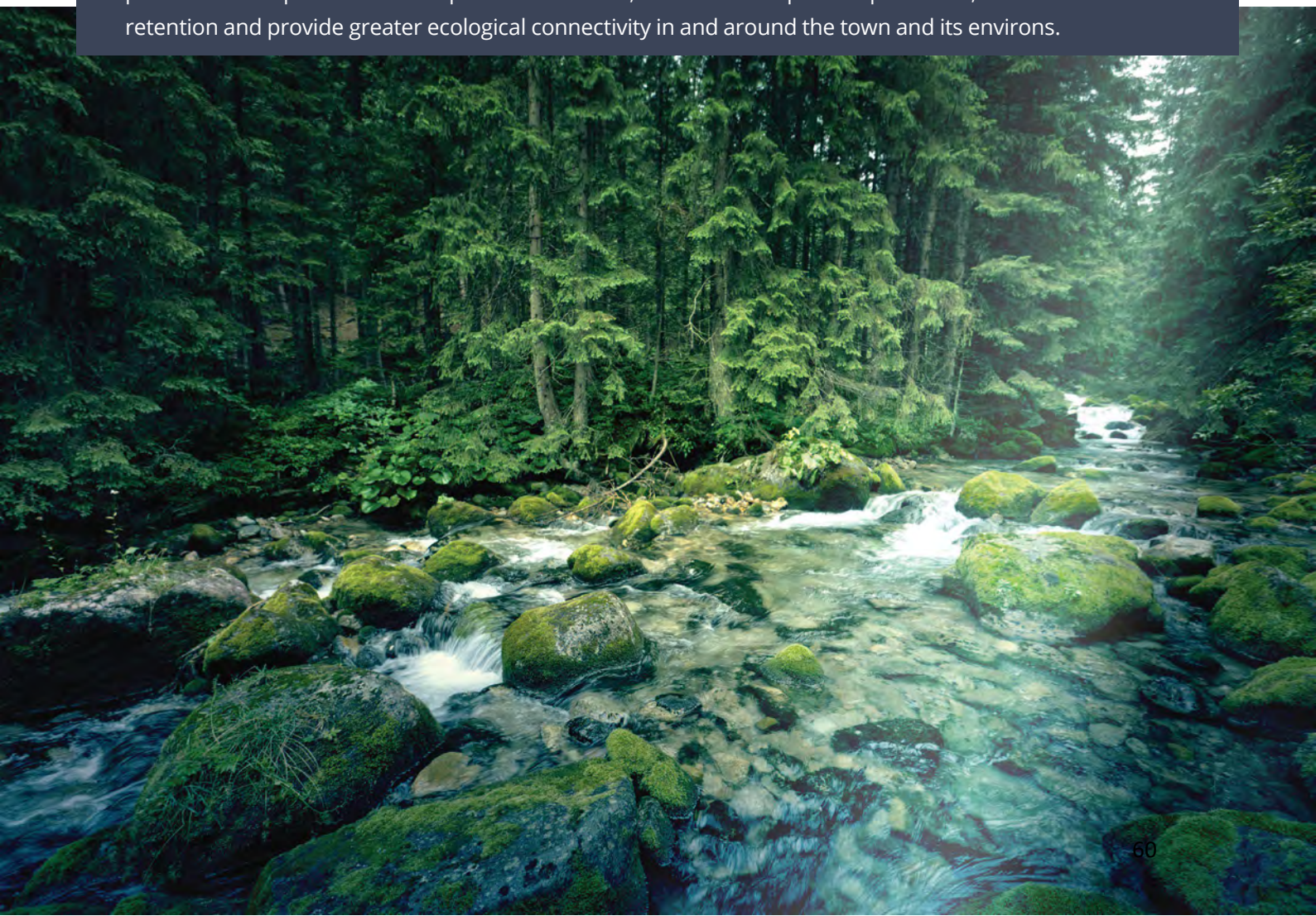
Action 12

Take action to become resilient to climate change and mitigate against natural hazards

The impacts of climate change have already been experienced at a national level and by citizens of Ennis at a local level. These impacts include extreme weather events, for example in 2018 the first ever Status Red warning for snow was issued in February, and this was followed by one of the hottest summers on record during June and July. In addition, rising sea levels, increased flooding and rainfall events are all challenges that require a robust response and appropriate measures.

Urban areas are identified as being at particular risk from climate change due in part to the urban heat island effect i.e. the prevalence of buildings retaining heat, lack of cooling and shading from natural vegetation. In turn this impacts on air quality which declines as the concentration of pollutants increase.

When considered in this manner, the opportunity to plan for co-benefits or win-win measures by using nature based solutions becomes more apparent. For example, increasing the tree canopy in Ennis can provide landscape and streetscape enhancements, increase absorption of pollutants, increase soil retention and provide greater ecological connectivity in and around the town and its environs.



Primary Outcomes

PO 1: Better and more robust flood management measures that incorporate nature based solutions at landscape scale

Nature based solutions to flood management while well established in other EU countries have had limited uptake to date in Ireland. Taking a landscape scale approach to flood management will thus require a change in thinking.

Ennis can be a leader in this regard by approaching flood management with ecological and landscape considerations at its core and prioritising an environmental approach over engineered approaches wherever possible. Recognising the essential role that the River

Fergus, its tributaries and floodplains provide in terms of carbon storage, water filtration and water storage, in addition to the ecological benefits can position Ennis as a national leader in the area.

In addition, there are currently considerable EU funding streams available through Intereg, Horizon 2020 and LIFE to collaborate with other member states and undertake innovative nature based solutions to flood management and responses in and around Ennis. As an example the themes of Intereg currently are Low Carbon Economy, Environment and Resource Efficiency, Research and Innovation and SME competitiveness.

Secondary Outcomes

Opportunities for alternative sources of funding

Better environment for residents

More streamlined implementation of national and EU policies and directives

Climate Adaptation

Action 13

Facilitate appropriate and well-designed access to natural spaces, features and landscapes.

By promoting higher densities of residential units, and integrating land use and transport generally, the importance of facilitating access to good quality, multifunctional green and blue spaces become even more significant. An increasing body of evidence demonstrates the health and wellbeing benefits from access to green and blue space. There is also evidence for disproportionate heat-related health burdens associated with unequal distribution of green space in urban areas.

Access to urban green space has been found to provide a number of positive health effects including perceived general health and a reduction in morbidity from disease or stress. Green spaces further promote health by providing means to engage in physical activity, both formal and informal, and by providing space for recreation, social engagement and simply enjoying and experiencing nature.

With climate change, urban green spaces can contribute to addressing urban heat island effects, as well as reducing noise and air pollution. However, it is essential that this access to existing and future green space is carefully considered, designed and provides for multifunctional benefits. This could include riparian tree planting close to water features, meandering walks of permeable paving, active and natural play opportunities for children, as well as formal playing pitches.

Urban green spaces also provide ecosystem services, which in addition to reducing the urban heat island effect, decrease other risk factors and mortality in vulnerable groups, for example by reducing noise and air pollution.



Primary Outcomes

PO 1: Greater understanding of the natural environment and an increase in its use

Ennis can lead by example in raising awareness and understanding of the natural world and our connections to it. This can be achieved by:

- Encouraging citizen engagement and citizen science initiatives, building on the excellent work already being undertaken by Ennis Tidy Towns.
- Increasing overall participation in Green Schools programme for primary and secondary schools.
- Provision of and support for community gardens and allotments.
- Raising awareness of measures such as pollinator friendly municipal planting and relaxing mowing regimes in areas of green space, along with interpretation of same.
- Running annual competitions for schools on Bioblitzs, nature and art competitions and applying for funding to engage with the River again through art.

Secondary Outcomes

Increased access to diverse and ecologically designed amenity areas for residents

Attractive to tourists

Improved health and well-being

Climate Adaptation

Action 14

Maintain, enhance and protect healthy air and water and enhance biodiversity resources

The health and wider environmental benefits of a high quality environment will become an increasing factor in the attractiveness of Ennis as a place to live, work and visit. Maintaining and improving the air, water and biodiversity resources will require a sensitive approach, but also one that plans for potential adverse effects such as extreme weather events and potential effects on water and wastewater infrastructure.

The nature based approach can promote co-benefits, through additional green and blue space, river and floodplain restoration and potential measures such as increased greening of the urban environment. Such greening can be achieved through green roofs, and walls, increasing the tree canopy, soil permeability measures and fundamentally increasing the opportunities and permeability of Ennis to its citizens and visitors alike.



Primary Outcomes

PO 1: Better quality of life with improved health and well-being

By positioning itself as a leader in responding and adapting to climate change, Ennis can ensure its citizens are spared its worst effects. This can be achieved by allowing and planning for resilience to extreme weather events and ensuring key services such as water, wastewater and transport are appropriately resilient and protected from such events.

By ensuring that nature based solutions and co-benefits are considered through climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, win-win outcomes can be achieved. For Ennis these include reduced damage from flooding, increased capacity of flood plains and wetlands, combined with enhanced measure such as increased walking and cycling options, urban woodlands and ecological diversity.

Through the promotion of the reuse of existing buildings Ennis can embed the circular economy approach and other measures such as rainwater harvesting, green roofs and walls, reuse of resources and provide for a robust environment that reduces environmental hazards and improves health and wellbeing.

PO 2: Significant overall environmental co-benefits

The delivery of significant environmental co- benefits is the key objective of endorsing nature based solutions to the challenges that face Ennis to 2040, of which climate change and biodiversity loss are the most pressing.

Ennis should aim to be the national leader in demonstrating this approach for county towns, providing citizen engagement, restoration of wetlands and floodplains and delivering a climate resilient town, whilst accruing benefits for landscape, biodiversity, air and water quality.

Secondary Outcomes

Reduced emissions that adversely affect population, human health and all environmental resources.

EXEMPLAR

Hördter Auwald – Sustainable forestry and reserve retention capacity for Extreme flood water on the Rhine

Under the terms of international treaties, Rhineland-Palatinate is obliged to contribute to the restoration of security against flooding events on the Rhine, which have a probability of occurring once every 200 years. In 1982, France and the German federal states of Rhineland-Palatinate, Baden-Württemberg and Hesse agreed to join forces and create retention capacity for a volume of approximately 288 million m³ of flood water.

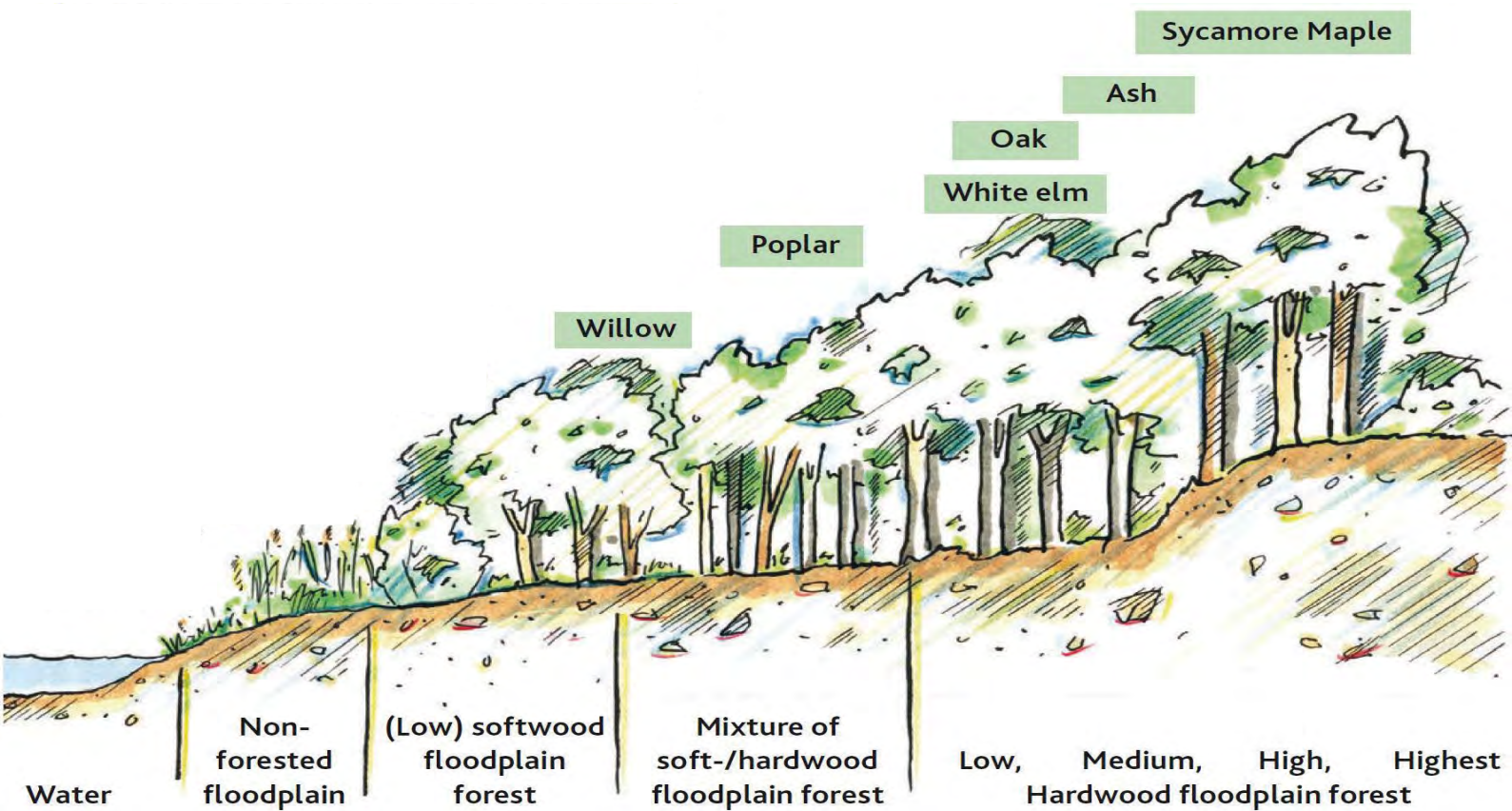
As flooding on the Elbe and Danube has in recent years been shown to occur less than once every 200 years the Rhineland-Palatinate is providing additional retention areas including the reserve retention area for extreme flood water at Hördt. The development of this area, which by 2024 should provide approximately 32 million m³ of water retention capacity over an area of approximately 870 ha, is being subsidised by the EU within the framework of the Interreg Project IVb, ALFA (Adaptive Land use for Flood Alleviation).

In order to prepare the forest and its habitats for the effects of flooding, there are plans to permit smaller scale “ecological flooding”. In bringing these plans forward an intensive consultation process was initiated to determine the best possible balance between the existing interests which included forestry, agriculture and fisheries, nature conservation and leisure. By permitting flooding at different times and in different areas, it will be possible to ensure that the largest possible retention capacity is available in the reserve area and that biological diversity as well as the protection and conservation aims of the NATURA 2000 network are not impaired.

In future, during ecological flooding, water from the Rhine will be allowed to discharge into the reserve area through three inlets. This will promote the growth of typical floodplain species and allow the habitats to adapt gradually to future environmental conditions. As part of this process the sustainability of the existing forestry as

considered and it was found necessary to adapt both the forestry management concept of the reserve area and the composition of its tree species, with low-lying areas where the water level will be higher, and which may be subject to flooding several times each year, taken out of use. An area of approximately 100 ha will be left, for the most part, to develop under its own dynamic resulting in a range of natural and biologically diverse communities, with a further area of approximately 70 ha, where the focus will be on changing the predominant tree species. The retention area for extreme flood water in Hördt is a model example of multifunctional land use where traditional economic activities will be adapted with the agreement of stakeholders so they can continue alongside and be supplemented by the new role in flood water retention.

The Rhine floodplain at Hördt is of major ecological significance with the forested sections part of the pan-European conservation area NATURA 2000 due to the presence of many species that are important from a conservation perspective. The ecological flooding programme will restore conditions similar to those found on natural floodplains and thus increase the value of the Hördt floodplain to nature conservation. An educational trail is planned in order to inform visitors about the interesting local species and conditions in the area. Importantly, the trail will show how to combine sustainable forestry operations with the future use of the area



Climate Adaptation

Action 15

Investment in sustainable water services with innovative solutions particularly flood management including surface water run off that maximises the use of SuDs (sustainable drainage systems) and green/blue infrastructure measures and can be developed in partnership with the private sector where appropriate.

Large parts of Ennis are located in areas designated as having a high risk of flooding, with the town subject to significant flood events in the past, particularly around the River Fergus. Climate change is causing an increase in the risk and severity of flooding and therefore, the management of flood related issues is of critical importance to ensure the safety and quality of life for residents and for the future sustainable development of the town.

The National Development Plan, 2018-2027 identified investment in water services as being critical in meeting the needs of the growing economy across the regions and for the protection and enhancement of the environment and public health. €8.8 billion is committed to the sustainable management of water and environmental resources over the period 2018-2027, with €1 billion specifically committed to flood relief measures. The NDP 2026-2035 highlights the government is leveraging funds to increase capacity for water infrastructure and Uisce Éireann services, noting that an additional injection of €4.5 billion has been specifically provided for water services on top of the NDP 2018-2027 Provision.

This strategy aims to enhance Ennis' ability to adapt to environmental challenges including climate change, reduce the impact of natural hazards such as flooding and build resilience into the town's infrastructure. It also seeks to position Ennis as a leader in the area of climate adaptation by refocusing the approach to water management from overly engineered methods to nature based solutions and measures.

A nature based solutions approach to managing risk works with natural processes and uses nature's own capacity to absorb excess waters. The morphology of Ennis, specifically the eastern lands between the town and the M18, have been identified as suitable for such an approach and present the opportunity for the adoption of innovative solutions to flood risk management that will not only benefit Ennis but the wider region by naturally alleviating pressure on the River Shannon.

Nature based solutions are also more cost-effective and in the case of Ennis present the opportunity to contribute to the town's biodiversity and amenity landscape. In addition, a proactive nature based approach will set Ennis apart as a leader in the field, making it an attractive location for companies and enterprises that operate in the area of renewable energy and to those that value the sustainable credentials of their location.

Primary Outcome

PO 1: Alleviates flooding issues

Working with the existing morphology and landscape of Ennis presents the unique opportunity to manage flood risk utilising nature's own capacity, with the area to the east of Ennis between the town and the M18 identified as suitable.

Examples of nature based solutions to address the risk of flooding include woodland creation, incentivised agricultural land use changes, floodplain restoration and wetland protection. Green Infrastructure such as rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable paving enhance infiltration while open space preservation can also retain water strategically at times of flood risk, complementing the use of grey infrastructure.

By reducing runoff, protecting floodplains and slowing the flow of water on a catchment wide scale, reliance on expensive 'grey infrastructure' such as the Ennis (Upper), Ennis (Lower) and Ennis (South) flood relief schemes, which include flood defence walls and embankments, can be reduced. This approach also presents the opportunity

to alleviate flooding pressure prior to the River Fergus entering the Shannon Estuary thereby, reducing flood risk on the Shannon and benefiting the wider region.

While the area to the east of Ennis has been identified as suitable for the use of nature based solutions, the most appropriate solutions and the associated potential contribution to the overall amenity and biodiversity of Ennis will be examined in detail as part of a Masterplan for this area.

Secondary Outcomes

Ensures sufficient and clean water supply and appropriate wastewater treatment

Encourages private sector investment

Offers the opportunity to develop innovative solutions in partnership with the private sector

Improves efficiency and level of public sector expenditure per capita

Climate Adaptation

Action 16

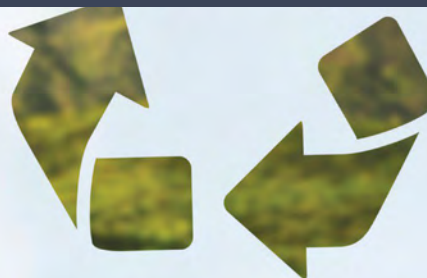
Promote energy generation and the delivery of energy efficient buildings, sustainable energy measures for the public realm (including maintenance) and encourage innovative solutions from the private sector.

Delivering sustainable energy generation and energy efficient buildings are essential in order to transition to a low carbon society and mitigate the impacts of Climate Change. Under the EU Renewable Energy Directive, Ireland is required to meet 16% of its energy demand from renewable sources by 2020 with an EU wide target of 32% by 2030. The Energy Performance of Buildings Directive requires all new buildings to be Nearly Zero - Energy Buildings (NZEB) by 31st March 2021. Member states are required to inter alia, introduce a long term vision for decarbonisation of buildings by 2050, encourage e-mobility, strengthen the links between public funding for building renovation and energy performance certificates and incentivise tackling energy poverty through building renovation.

This transition presents a wide range of opportunities for Ennis, with the town in a position to benefit significantly from the move to a low-carbon economy. In terms of energy generation large areas to the west of the R476 between Ennis and Corofin have sufficient wind speeds and access to the grid for onshore energy generation while the Old Mill has been identified as having potential for commercial micro hydro power. Existing commercial / industrial sites and the delivery of the transformational projects, where large areas of roofspace are available, also present opportunities in terms of the generation of solar energy. In addition, the delivery of the compact growth of Ennis would facilitate the provision of district heating in the town as large heat users such as schools, industrial estates and hospitals are located proximate to existing residential areas, identified opportunity sites within the Town Centre and the proposed residential expansion areas.

Sustainable energy measures for the public realm have also been provided for in terms of promoting an increase in the provision of e-Car charging points, enhanced public transport provision for the town, improving pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and reducing car dominance to encourage a shift towards low carbon transport. Retrofitting of public lighting and smart solar-powered compactor bins will also contribute to a sustainable, attractive public realm. In addition providing energy efficient buildings will reduce dependency on fossil fuels, reduce air pollution, increase thermal comfort and reduce energy poverty.

Through the delivery of the long term Economic and Spatial Strategy, Ennis has the potential to be a leader in the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient economy. From a private sector perspective this will make Ennis an attractive investment location as companies are increasingly looking to locate in areas that have access to low-carbon, cheap, renewable energy, where there is a pro-active approach to climate adaptation and reducing carbon emissions.



Primary Outcome

PO 1: Reduced carbon footprint

This strategy supports energy generation and energy efficient buildings, together with smart energy systems and provides for the conversion of the built environment into both a generator/ consumer of energy. These measures are the means by which a transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society can be achieved.

By taking a proactive, nature based approach to reducing its carbon footprint, Ennis has the potential to lead the way and become an exemplar climate adaptive town. Reducing its carbon footprint, particularly in the heating, transport and electricity sectors, will also lead to improvements in air quality and public health.

Further physical as well as mental health benefits will accrue as a result of encouraging a modal shift away from cars towards walking and cycling.

Promoting local low-carbon renewable energy development will also support local jobs and boost the economy while increasing energy security by reducing dependency on fossil fuel imports. In addition, large scale renewable energy projects have the potential to attract businesses wishing to source energy from renewable sources while smaller scale energy projects can provide energy savings to local communities.

Secondary Outcomes

- Greater scope to avail of sources of funding
- Reduced operating costs
- Improvements in public health

- Better quality of life and place
- Enhanced energy security
- Opportunities for growth of the local economy

"Nothing in this world is more simple and more cheap than making cities that provide better for people" - Jan Gehl



5. An Accessible Place of Quality

A number of urban design and place-making principles have been introduced as part of this Strategy to enable future development to have a positive impact on the existing community and to improve the quality of life of its current and future residents.

| An Accessible Place of Quality

Ennis in 2040 will be a person-centred place that offers a strong, diverse economy that has retained and built on its current high quality of life, place based assets and heritage.

The Accessible Place of Quality is built on five pillars –

- Quality of place including housing
- Health and Well-being
- Accessibility
- Sustainability
- Vibrancy and Activity

Place Making

Ennis benefits from a range of assets, from its strategic location, to its quality of life and position within the picturesque County Clare. The focus of this document is to deliver a strategy for its sustainable economic and spatial growth that both protects and builds upon these assets to the benefit of Ennis and its people.

The strategy seeks to position Ennis to deliver an economic, social and quality of life proposition that attracts talent and retains local people. Retaining and enhancing quality of life while delivering a diverse and dynamic economy is a unique selling point that will set Ennis apart from other locations.

To 2040, Ennis will not only generate growth but as a settlement it has the space to accommodate this growth in sustainable, accessible, high quality locations. It offers a choice of heritage rich place types, alongside a vibrant and robust social structure that enables it to accommodate growth while retaining its unique identity and community spirit.

This strategy seeks to structure the pattern of development to 2040 so that business, residential, recreational and amenity space is available in the right location. This will support the sustainable and compact growth of Ennis.

Place Making Principles

- A vibrant, viable and accessible Town Centre that accommodates a mix of uses.

Densification and intensification within the existing urban footprint of Ennis.

- High-quality, person-centred building and urban design.
- Coordination and integration of land use and transport.
- Focus on creating quality public space and public realm.
- Integration of Ennis' unique amenity and biodiversity spaces into the urban fabric.
- Build resilience, flexibility and adaptability, specifically climate adaptation, into Ennis.
- Community focused forms of development.

A Thriving Town Centre

Ennis Town Centre is the historical core of the town and the heart of its retail and commercial offer. Residents and visitors favour historic towns that offer a range of services and facilities and have a unique identity and public realm in combination with a good quality of life.

It is not clear how retailing and commercial activity will evolve in the long term, but due to the internet more transactions will be carried out remotely. However, people will always desire to socialise and businesses will always benefit from close physical proximity and profile of presence.

The development of Ennis in the long term will be based on the concept of 'compact growth', with a specific focus on the physical and spatial development of the Town Centre in the first instance. Developing, enhancing, refining and showcasing the unique identity of Ennis's medieval town should be progressed with the aim of maximising its potential. Emerging concepts that support the appreciation of the impact of our physical environment on our health and wellbeing should also be considered in terms of the future development of the Town Centre.

Development in the Right Locations

In line with the NPF and RSES for the Southern Region, the Economic and Spatial Strategy seeks to deliver compact growth by channelling appropriate levels of development to locations within the existing urban footprint of Ennis in the first instance.

Existing densities in Ennis are relatively low for an urban area and present the opportunity for the consolidation of development to deliver more appropriate and sustainable levels. This strategy seeks to deliver increased densities in Ennis by focusing development into brownfield and underutilised sites within the existing urban area. This approach is required not only to deliver compact growth but to support the provision and enhancement of public transport infrastructure.

Delivery is dependent on achieving the right development in the right locations, supported by sustainable transport infrastructure. Such development must also be of a high quality and following a design-led approach that delivers a high-quality built environment that support Ennis' vibrant communities.

Accessibility

Ennis has the characteristics and potential to lead the way as Ireland's first '10 Minute Town'.

Building on its existing network of lanes and bow-ways and its high levels of walking this strategy seeks to locate employment, services, housing and education facilities within the existing compact urban area of Ennis. This will be supported by the prioritisation of walking and cycling and by the coordination of land use and infrastructure to facilitate the continued shift to sustainable modes of transport.

The achievement of the '10 Minute Town' would make Ennis a leader in the area nationally and would act as a valuable attribute in terms of quality of life and cost competitiveness.

Quality of Place

Ennis offers an excellent quality of life based on a quality, vibrant and picturesque environment. This quality of life, when coupled with a dynamic and diverse economic environment can enhance Ennis' competitive advantage.

In a global economy where capital and talent are mobile, this strategy acknowledges the importance of the quality of place not only to residents and visitors, but to businesses in attracting and retaining talent and increasing efficiency and productivity. As vibrant, attractive, safe places encourage investment the quality of Ennis as a place must be protected and enhanced as an integral part of its future development.

A Town for its People - While the world and its global economy continues to change, many aspects of the way people live and their human needs will remain constant. Retaining and enhancing Ennis' quality of life and unique assets, will ensure that it remains a healthy place that supports the wellbeing of its population.

Design - The design of buildings and the built environment need to be flexible in providing for changing lifestyles in the longer term. While such dynamism must be built into the future development of Ennis, quality places will offer a permanency that can be enjoyed by future generations.

Sustainability is now an integral part of design and must be considered in the context of the character and visual aesthetic of Ennis' built and natural environment. Energy efficiency and generation, biodiversity and habitat, water and waste management and safety must also be considered when designing buildings and spaces.

Accommodation - This strategy targets a population increase of approximately 13,000 persons to 2040, generating a requirement of approximately 4,800 dwellings to accommodate this growth.

Housing affordability is of strategic importance to not only maintain Ennis' quality of life but its attraction as a place to live in terms of cost competitiveness.

A mix of housing/accommodation types and sizes at a variety of sustainable locations will be required to facilitate the long-term growth of Ennis. Housing mix will reflect demand and demographic change with an appropriate mix that supports choice and sustainable vibrant communities essential.

Environment - Ennis is defined by its assets from its historic and cultural heritage to its amenity and recreational facilities. These not only make the town an attractive location but give it a competitive advantage.

A central aspect of successful place making will be retaining and expanding on Ennis' assets, noting their uniqueness and providing the enhanced amenity, recreational and biodiversity infrastructure that the growing town requires to meet needs and retain quality of life and place. Adaptation, particularly in relation to climate change, will be of critical importance to the future growth of Ennis.

Technology Integration - With the global economy and an increasingly mobile workforce comes the requirement for high-quality digital connectivity. Ennis needs to utilise its strategic location to enhance and advance its digital connectivity.

Technology will also have an increasingly important role to play in how we use, manage and interact with places. It can be used to enhance the experience of a place from navigation to information, and in turn to understand users and visitors. It also has a central role to play in showcasing and communicating the identity of Ennis.

Vibrancy & Activity

In order to ensure its existing quality of life is maintained and enhanced as Ennis grows, space and opportunity must be provided for the social and cultural infrastructure that the town will require.

Retail & Commercial Activity - As the county

town Ennis fulfils an important service function in providing for the retail and commercial needs of its catchment. The Town Centre is the traditional heart of Ennis and continues to be the focus of retail and commercial activity in the town.

While long term retail floorspace requirements are not clear as they are dependent on a range of factors from floorspace turnover, to household expenditure and consumer behaviour, there is an identified existing need for modern retail floorplates within the Town Centre to accommodate middle to higher order comparison retailers and destination brands in mediums sized units and anchor stores. In line with national policy and the sequential approach, this new floorspace will be directed to Town Centre sites in the first instance, where it will have the most significant impact in terms of securing and enhancing vitality, vibrancy and activity.

The retail sector is also continuing to undergo significant changes, driven by changes in technology and preferences. It is expected that the experiential aspects of the shopping experience as well as that of place will become increasingly important. Ennis needs to be ahead of the game in understanding these emerging changes and the impacts and opportunities they

present for its traditional retail and commercial units and its public realm.

Culture, Tourism & Art - Providing for and supporting cultural activity and the arts as part of the fabric of our spaces and places has the potential to enliven and invigorate the public realm and contribute to the development of the experiential environment.

This strategy supports capitalising on Ennis' heritage, traditional Irish music culture and character, which offer significant opportunities in terms of defining an identity for Ennis and attracting urban tourism.

A Unique Identity

Developing and communicating Ennis' unique identity and 'brand' is essential to generating growth. Brand Ennis must communicate the quality of life proposition and the economic, environmental and social offer of Ennis. The Local Authority must work in partnership with public and private sector stakeholders in developing a place marketing strategy to promote Ennis as a location for investment.



The Education Economy

A key challenge in delivering economic growth is ensuring residents are equipped to participate in the emerging economy. Ennis must seek to supplement its existing education offer to ensure that evolving needs are met as a means of future proofing existing employment and targeting potential growth sectors.

Ennis has the strategic advantage of being located between the cities of Limerick and Galway with six HEIs located within one hour. This presents opportunities for Ennis in advancing its current third level offer through the expansion of LOCs. It also provides opportunities to utilise Ennis' cost competitiveness in attracting student accommodation.

Such facilities must be embedded into the physical environment and woven into the cultural and social fabric of Ennis. The capacity to accommodate such facilities within the Town Centre and proximate to the train station is addressed in this strategy.

Improving Health & Wellbeing

As a key asset and an intrinsic part of the economic and social offer of Ennis, quality of life must be maintained and enhanced as the town grows.

Lifestyle - Poor quality, low density development can inhibit walking and cycling and induce car use. Considering health and wellbeing as a core principle in the design of spaces is vital and will directly influence the delivery of a person-centred built environment. Other considerations that affect health and wellbeing include transport, water services, character and visual amenity, sustainable energy and habitat management. Changing how these are approached can have a notable impact on health and well-being. In relation to Ennis smarter water management in the context of climate change and the provision of infrastructure to facilitate sustainable mobility, present major opportunities

for enhancements in health and well-being.

Culture and Identity - Ennis as a place is differentiated by its unique culture, specifically its association with traditional Irish music. This culture, along with the unique physical and heritage assets of Ennis, that encapsulate its identity need to not only be retained but showcased as the town develops. Ennis has the potential to create a recognisable and marketable identity.

Accessibility - The design of buildings and the public realm should accommodate the needs of all users from the young, to the old, to those with disabilities. As the needs of the population change, Ennis must adapt to facilitate all stages of life.

Health and wellbeing will become a more important design consideration as people live longer and their needs and expectations change. Our spaces, facilities and supply of accommodation for older people will also change, which will in turn require the efficient use of the existing building stock. The location of new, appropriate, housing typologies must also consider access to services for an ageing population, with a particular focus on Town Centre living.

Social Infrastructure - Ennis has a substantial school-going population that supports a range of clubs and facilities. The growth of Ennis set out in this strategy seeks to protect existing provision while supporting the enhancement of existing facilities.

Recreational and amenity spaces are also a key part of the social infrastructure of Ennis, with the town benefiting from direct access to a high-quality green-infrastructure network. It is imperative not only that this existing asset is protected but that it is embedded into the future growth and development of Ennis. This strategy takes a proactive approach in this regard, focusing on compact growth within the existing urban area and delivering high-quality amenity and biodiversity areas where expansion is proposed to the east.

An Accessible Place of Quality

Action 17

Implement the hierarchy of place to deliver compact growth through Town Centre sites and strategic expansion areas that demonstrate an economic and/or social contribution to the town.

The NPF and the RSES for the Southern Region both promote and support 'compact growth' where development is, in the first instance, located within existing built-up areas, combined with a focus on infill development, integrated transport and promoting regeneration and revitalisation of urban areas. NSO 1 of the NPF outlines the multiple outcomes expected from the adoption of this approach which include *inter alia* enabling urban infill development that would not otherwise occur; improved 'liveability' and quality of life, enabling greater densities of development; encourage economic development and job creation; building on existing assets and capacity to create critical mass and scale; ensure transition to more sustainable modes of travel and energy consumption; and encourage labour mobility to support employment-led growth, and improved community services.

These outcomes were used as the benchmark when assessing opportunity sites and expansion areas within Ennis. The 7 no. transformational projects chosen which can be delivered across short, medium and long terms, all not only support but promote the compact development of Ennis. Three of the transformational projects are located within Ennis Town Centre, on lands which are currently underutilised given their central locations, access to infrastructure and proximity to services and facilities.

Each of the 7 no. transformational projects has the potential to contribute to the economic and social activities of Ennis through, *inter alia*, tourism, retail, infrastructure, Town Centre living, educational offer and employment opportunities and present multiple opportunities to diversify the town's economic base.

The areas of development identified for the long term growth of Ennis have also been guided by the hierarchy of place and the delivery of compact growth. The Roche site in Clarecastle is already an established employment land-use outside of Ennis but also serving the town. The Wetlands area, located between the town and the M18, is a natural expansion area and provides for the future growth of Ennis in a compact manner. It also presents the greatest opportunities in terms of economic, social and environmental contribution delivering not only NSO 1 but NSO 7 'Enhanced Amenities and Heritage', NSO 8 'Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society' and NSO 9 'Sustainable Management of Water and other Environmental Resources'. The development of these lands presents the opportunity for Ennis to lead the way in terms of climate adaptive Towns and nature based solutions to water management.

Primary Outcomes

PO 1: Provides the strategic roadmap for the long-term economic future

The 7 no. transformational projects form the basis of the land activation strategy for Ennis to 2040 and provide the strategic roadmap for its long-term economic future. Lead by the hierarchy of place and the delivery of compact growth, each project and area has been brought forward based on an identified need and having assessed its potential economic contribution, as outlined in the Implementation strategy. Together they not only set out how Ennis should develop spatially to 2040 but the physical projects, interventions and expansion that is required to achieve sustainable and diversified economic development.

For example, the current lack of a modern conference hotel has been identified as impacting Ennis' year round tourist trade and limiting its revenue generated per overseas tourist. In addition, the lack of suitable and available residential units in the Town Centre, has resulted in a marked decrease in its resident population and an expansion of the suburbs, removed from existing infrastructure, services and facilities. Both of these issues are addressed in transformational projects which identify suitable locations within the existing Town Centre for such uses, outline indicative layouts, heights etc. and provide guidance on the implementation of each.

PO 2: Defines a spatial pattern for Ennis town and a role for its environs, Clarecastle and Barefield

As well as providing a strategic roadmap for the long-term economic future of Ennis, the hierarchy of place, delivered through the strategic and transformational projects, will define the spatial pattern of Ennis town, its environs, Clarecastle and Barefield. In this regard the spatial element of Ennis 2040 has at its core the delivery of compact growth, with all 7 transformational projects located within the town and the existing built-up footprint of Ennis or Clarecastle. The potential movement of the barrage at Clarecastle may also open new areas for development in the future.

Where expansion of the urban area has been identified as required this has been considered at length having regard to existing and future infrastructure provision, integration of land- use and transportation, sustainable mobility and environmental characteristics. Following the delivery of the Town Centre sites limited areas adjacent to the existing built-up area have been identified for residential, employment, amenity and biodiversity uses all of which reinforce the compact footprint of Ennis. In this regard the Wetlands area provides for a range of uses within lands that are a natural expansion area, located between the town, the train station and the M18. While representing a substantial expansion of the development area of the town, its delivery will rationalise the urban footprint of Ennis, providing for the long term spatial requirements of the growth of Ennis and preventing sprawl.

PO 3: Provides the strategic land use framework for the delivery of quality housing/accommodation in the right location and access to social and recreational facilities

The strategic land use framework provided through the designated transformational projects focuses in the first instance on the development of Town Centre sites. These sites are already served by existing infrastructure, are proximate to social and recreational facilities and are accessible by a range of transport options. Locating quality residential development at such locations builds on these existing assets and enables greater densities of development, improves 'liveability' and quality of life, promotes a transition to more sustainable modes of travel and improves community and recreational facilities.

Following the delivery of the Town Centre sites, appropriate expansion of the urban area has been identified as required to accommodate future residential development. The designated areas are adjacent to the existing built up area, have existing infrastructure or are identified for future infrastructure provision, can deliver integration of land-use and transportation, have access to existing or planned social and recreational facilities and will work with the sustainability mobility proposals in relation to the provision of an urban bus network and connections with enhanced walking and cycling infrastructure.

Secondary Outcomes

Creates a framework for future more detailed localised plans that will contribute to the delivery of Ennis 2040

Ensures the efficient use of land, enhanced legibility and improved wayfinding

Supports and provides a rationale for investment in public transport

Supports the concept of neighbourhoods with local day to day services accessible by sustainable modes of transport

Facilitates choice of working and living, where employment, amenities and activities are accessible

Reduces the carbon footprint of Ennis

An Accessible Place of Quality

Action 18

Realise the land uses, intensity and high level phasing of development to be directed towards identified strategic sites.

While this Economic and Spatial Strategy forms the basis of the long term land activation strategy for Ennis to 2040, three of the transformational projects located within the Town Centre can be delivered in the short to medium term and present the opportunity for early realisation of multiple outcomes.

The Implementation Plan sets out how these transformational projects can be realised, outlining the parameters for development including the appropriate land uses for each site, permissible heights, proposed densities and where appropriate the phasing of development. The strategy identifies the actions required to facilitate their delivery, the funding options available and the marketing and sale of the developments.

The Implementation Plan will not only facilitate the ordered and sustainable delivery of these strategic Town Centre sites and projects from the initial concept stage through to occupation but in doing so it seeks to maximise the economic and social contribution of each to the town.

Primary Outcomes

PO 1: Ennis becomes a regional benchmark for orderly long term sustainable planning that differentiates it from other similar sized urban areas nationally

Under the RSES for the Southern Region Ennis is identified as a key town along with 13 other towns. However, Ennis is the largest town in Munster and the sixth largest town in Ireland and has multiple attributes that set it apart from other towns including its strategic location between two cities, proximity to an international airport and port, its quality of life and its position on the AEC. If Ennis is to build on and maximise these attributes and differentiate itself as a location for investment and as a place to live and visit it requires a long term plan that will

inform and drive economic, social and physical development. Ennis 2040 is the only long term Economic and Spatial Strategy for a key town in the Southern Region and is the first such plan to be prepared nationally under the NPF and RSES policy structure. Through its structured and focused actions, transformational projects and the Spatial Implementation Plan, it not only sets a benchmark nationally for long term sustainable planning but delivers a new identity for Ennis as an environmentally proactive town and provides certainty for investors and employers as to its planned development and growth.

PO 2: Quantifies at a high level the scale and nature of the economic opportunity thereby allowing for, inter alia, the implementation of transport initiatives, greater certainty for financial planning, opportunities for public sector involvement, delivery of housing and investment in the public realm

The Economic and Spatial Strategy seeks to utilise, develop and showcase the existing attributes of Ennis that are the basis of its comparative advantage as a location to invest, live and visit. Through the transformational projects the strategy sets out the framework for the long term growth and development of Ennis. In doing so it quantifies at a high level the scale and nature of the economic opportunity to 2040, putting in place an Implementation Plan to facilitate the realisation of this opportunity.

Having a long term strategy not only differentiates Ennis as an investment location but presents multiple opportunities for the development of the town including, *inter alia*:

- Enables the Local Authority to plan for the integration of land-uses with transportation and infrastructure
- Demonstrates the critical mass that can be achieved to support new sustainable transport initiatives
- Highlights areas where public sector involvement can have maximum benefits,
- Provides certainty to investors and employers as to the intention of the Local Authority to actively promote and support economic development,
- Ensures the long term compact growth of the town by focusing housing in the first instance in the Town Centre where infrastructure, services and facilities are available
- Encourages development that will benefit the public realm
- Allows for new sustainable environmental initiatives such as nature based solutions, to be incorporated into the planned development of Ennis

Secondary Outcomes

Sets out an approach to spatial distribution that will facilitate the co-ordination of land use, infrastructure, connections and service planning

Ensures availability of sites to accommodate purpose-built type developments such as educational, multinational companies, start-ups and modern retailers

Delivers a housing/accommodation mix that responds to the town's needs in the future (e.g. elderly people downsizing to Town Centre locations)

Creates the conditions for affordability to prevail

An Accessible Place of Quality

Action 19

Deliver modern retail floorspace within the Town Centre to accommodate middle to higher order comparison retailers and destination brands in small to mediums sized units and anchor stores.

Ennis' development as a market town is still legible in the urban fabric and structure of the Town Centre including the narrow streets and plot sizes and the small floorplates. While the small, irregular units within the Town Centre accommodate a range of operators, including a number of boutique retailers, newer, larger floorplate retail operators have had to locate on the edge of the Town Centre where modern format stores can be accommodated.

In 2022, a total of 156 comparison retail units were trading in the Town Centre, representing 18.5% of the total number of available ground floor units. The majority of these retailers were located on the primary shopping streets of O'Connell Street (43%), Lower Market Street (40%), Abbey Street (39%) and Parnell Street (28%). Vacancy on the ground floor accounted for approximately 15% of the overall total units.

Many of the retail and commercial units in the Town Centre can be characterised as 'small sized units' ranging from 20m² to 100m² and are often irregular in shape and layout with little room for expansion due to the restrictions of historic structures or plots. These units present little or no scope to accommodate medium sized units (MSUs) characteristic of most high streets that range from 500m² to 2,000m² or larger anchor units that can require a retail floorplate in excess of 2,000m². As a consequence, this specific retail offer is largely missing from Ennis at present resulting in expenditure leakage of this nature to Limerick and Galway.



Primary Outcomes

PO 1: Retention of comparison expenditure in the town that is currently being leaked

County Clare experiences high levels of expenditure leakage in the area of non-bulky comparison goods. The vast majority of the available expenditure leakage goes to Limerick, which attracts 38% of the total generated expenditure in County Clare on non-bulky comparison goods. The Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 projects that Ennis will require an additional 5,924m² of non-bulky comparison goods floor space to 2029.

The area of non-bulky comparison retailing that is currently lacking from the Town Centre and where expenditure is being leaked is medium sized units and anchor stores. Such units are characteristic of most high streets and form an integral part of the retail offer of vibrant Town Centres. This strategy provides for the location of these types of middle to higher order comparison retailers in the heart of the Town Centre, in line with the Sequential Approach.

PO 2: More sustainable retail mix with better covenants and increased rental viability

Middle to higher order stores are a format that is currently largely absent from the retail mix of Ennis. This type of retail offer is not only required to address current expenditure leakage to Limerick but is necessary to create a sustainable retail mix that provides greater consumer choice and complements the existing specialised retail offer.

The spin-off benefits, including the increase in retail expenditure and the consumer draw of such stores, will deliver increased rental viability for existing units on surrounding streets. In addition, a vibrant Town Centre that attracts increased expenditure in conjunction with evolving retail formats such as 'personalisation' or retail to include classes, courses and workshops, where floorspace requirements are more fluid, present new opportunities for the utilisation of these historic smaller retail units. The realisation of such opportunities would further enhance the retail mix of the Town Centre and would bring back into active use vacant units within the Town Centre and improved covenants.

Secondary Outcomes

Greater potential for inflow of available expenditure

Provides greater consumer choice and complements the existing specialised retail offer (e.g. Boutiques)

Creates employment across a broad range of age cohorts

Supports the tourist industry and ambition of longer stays in Ennis

Reduces carbon emissions as demand is met at source (i.e. reduced car trips to Limerick)

Better quality of life and place which is attractive to industry and talented people

An Accessible Place of Quality

Action 20

Promote quality of place through high quality, person-centred buildings, world class public spaces, green and blue infrastructure, recreational and exercise/ outdoor activities and maintenance.

Ennis as a place has much to promote, from its rich history as a settlement, still legible in its distinct medieval heart, to its high quality of life and rich cultural heritage, specifically its strong tradition as a venue for Irish music. Ennis also benefits from its location with direct access to the high amenity countryside of County Clare, with recreational facilities such as Ballyalla Lake on the town's doorstep.

As a place, Ennis offers residents and visitors a range of options for employment, entertainment, recreation and living. These existing qualities of place need to be maintained and extended through high quality, person-centred buildings, world class public spaces, recreational and exercise/outdoor activities and maintenance.

High-quality urban design is central to the quality of Ennis' public spaces, built environment and amenity facilities and is key to the innovative and creative re-use of heritage places and buildings. Ennis 2040 promotes the application of best practice urban design principles and guidelines when assessing the design and built form of buildings, public spaces, amenity areas and infrastructure to deliver a quality place that is:

- Person centered, accommodating people of all abilities and ages
- Representative of Ennis' historical, cultural and natural heritage
- Accessible, safe and legible
- Inviting, engaging and easy to navigate

As part of the promotion of quality of place through the delivery of high-quality urban design the Local Authority can lead by example in their own projects, specifically public realm upgrades and new developments, and as part of the procurement process by ensuring that quality design is a consideration from the initial stages.



Primary Outcomes

PO 1: Ensures a quality built environment for residents and visitors alike

The promotion of high-quality urban design within Ennis through the application of best practice urban design principles and guidelines will strengthen the design quality of public spaces and the interfaces between the public realm and private development. This will enhance the quality of the built environment that can be enjoyed by all within the town.

Improvements to public spaces, reuse of heritage assets and the considered integration of new development can also make a measurable difference to the economic vitality, amenity and the cultural offer of Ennis for both residents and tourists.

Promotion of a quality built environment will help strengthen Ennis' distinctive feel and identity, differentiating it as a location, attracting more people to live and supporting the tourist industry.

PO 2: Allows for the greater exposure of the River Fergus and recognition of its importance as a blue and green infrastructural resource for Ennis

The River Fergus has shaped the development of Ennis and is a key recreational, amenity and environmental resource for Ennis, which at present is underutilised. The active planning, design and management of public spaces promoted under this strategy presents the opportunity to expose the River and integrate it back into the public realm as part of a network of amenity areas within and surrounding the town.

Furthermore, by enhancing the River, combined with decreased pollution, there will be ecosystem improvements which will benefit the local environment and contribute to the wider green infrastructure network within and surrounding Ennis.

Secondary Outcomes

Creates opportunities for Town Centre parks and recreational areas that enhance ecological connectivity in and around the town

Presents opportunities for recognition nationally, e.g. Tidy Towns, as well as internationally

Supports tourist industry

Improves health and well-being

| An Accessible Place of Quality

Action 21

Showcase the unique heritage and architecture of Ennis, market individual and collective achievements of the people and support adaptive reuse of existing older buildings to exemplify and showcase reuse of buildings and achieve circular economy at local scale.

The unique heritage and architecture of Ennis is one of its competitive strengths, contributing to its distinctiveness as a place, its quality of life and attracting new residents, visitors and investors. While heritage and architecture are important components of Ennis' tourist offer, there is further scope to showcase these to the benefit of the town and its economy.

Innovative approaches to the re-use of heritage places and the adaptive regeneration of heritage assets will protect and conserve the unique architectural and heritage qualities of Ennis. This will also ensure that these assets retain their prominence in the built environment and continue to be notable features of the town and a means of showcasing its identity and distinctiveness.

The individual and collective achievements of the people of Ennis are also fundamental to the heritage of the town. From the town's connections to the War of Independence and its ties to key figures, to its association with Michael Cusack, a founding member of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) Ennis has a rich cultural heritage. Marketing Ennis' connections with these significant individuals as well as the collective achievements of the people, such as the success in a diversified range of Tidy Town categories, will further solidify a distinct identity for Ennis, that is of Ennis and can only be experienced by visiting Ennis.



Primary Outcomes

PO 1: Capitalises on and creates exposure for its significant architectural, cultural and historic heritage

While the rich architectural, cultural and historic heritage of Ennis is one of the town's competitive strengths, at present this is not showcased to its maximum benefit. An example of this is the many buildings, features and artefacts that remain within the Town Centre that indicate its medieval early origins and retains a unique archaic character. In particular the Lanes and Bow-Ways are a unique feature of Ennis, as it is not believed to have been a walled town. While these are protected under the designated Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) in recent years some have fallen into a poor condition.

Adaptive regeneration will not only showcase the unique heritage and architecture of Ennis but provides an opportunity for the town to capitalise on its existing assets as a means of creating exposure for itself as a destination. In this regard the regeneration of the Lanes and Bow-Ways has been planned by the Local Authority and funding secured from the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF). Works once completed will revitalise the Lanes and Bow-Ways encouraging increased pedestrian activity, contributing to a high quality public realm, reinforcing the heritage character of the Medieval Town Centre and delivering a distinct feature which can be capitalised on as a key attraction in the town.

They will also create exposure for Ennis as a Purple Flag town by delivering an extensive pedestrian network at the heart of the Town Centre that contributes to both day and night time uses. In addition, by showcasing the Lanes and Bow-Ways and capitalising on them as a tourist resource this will act as a catalyst to the private sector to invest in their properties to further support this important asset.

The Lanes and Bow-Ways are but one example of the opportunities that exist to capitalise on and expose the significant architectural, cultural and historic heritage of Ennis through innovative approaches to the re-use of heritage places and the adaptive regeneration of heritage assets. Such exposure is central to the creation of a distinctive feel and identity for the town that differentiates it as a location and attracts tourists. Towns such as Westport, Killarney and Kinsale have all been successful in showcasing their assets and utilising them to create a unique sense of place that can be capitalised on as a tourist attraction.

As heritage is one of Ennis' competitive strengths it must start to compete with other successful heritage town in terms of showcasing and marketing its assets as means of creating exposure for the town as a tourist destination.

Secondary Outcomes

Greater diversification in the town's economic offer

A driver of economic development in its own right and enhances the tourist offer

"You can't rely on bringing people downtown, you have to put them there" - Jane Jacobs



6. Mobility and Infrastructure

SO 4: A '10-Minute Town'

The importance of a clear and concise strategy towards future pedestrian, cycling and vehicular mobility will be key to the success of Ennis and the implementation of the transformation projects as part of the strategy. The '10 Minute Town' concept is one which provide a focus for this part of the strategy.

A '10-Minute Town'

Ennis is recognised as a key asset for driving economic growth in the Mid- West. As the largest town in County Clare, and the sixth largest town in Ireland, and with a growing population, Ennis' strategic location and existing transport assets have informed the development of a mobility and infrastructure plan that sets out to achieve a '10 Minute Town'

The proposed mobility and infrastructure element of the strategy will help to strengthen Ennis as a first-class regional town, driving sustainable economic growth and supporting the transition to a low carbon '10-Minute Town'. Achieving the '10-Minute Town' status requires that public transport infrastructure is strong and of high quality not only within the town but between the town and other centres. For people to be encouraged to use forms of transport other than the car on their shorter journeys, they also need to be able to use them on their longer ones.

Ennis' location at the heart of the Galway – Ennis – Limerick – Cork link along the Atlantic Economic Corridor offers huge potential for the town as a place where economic activity can grow and prosper. Its proximity to Limerick, Shannon and Galway and its accessibility to the M18 can enable the development of new employment and enterprise zones that improve the town's vibrancy and sustainable prosperity.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) includes a specific focus to target growth within existing settlements. The NPF identifies that it is essential that transport connectivity between the two cities of Limerick and Galway is improved to facilitate growth. Ennis, as a key transport node between these two cities, is well placed to benefit from these improvements. The strengthening of this transport link has an important national context, as it forms part of a wider transport strategy known as the 'Atlantic Corridor', which runs from Letterkenny in the northwest, to Waterford in the southeast.



Map 4 Ennis' Connectivity

Ennis' strategic connectivity also offers opportunities to explore 3rd level education and research growth with adjacent cities (e.g. Galway and Limerick), while its location near to Shannon Foynes Port provides international freight connections and employment opportunities.

Building on its proximity to Shannon Airport and the Wild Atlantic Way's 'Cliff Coast', Ennis also has the potential to be an international base and gateway for tourists for the whole region and a key centre for leisure and heritage tourism in its own right.

A well performing transport network underpins the economic, spatial, social and environmental success of Ennis and facilitates the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient local economy. Failure to deliver an efficient transport network that supports sustainable travel would act as a barrier to economic growth, reduces quality of life and have a negative impact on the environment.

The Mobility and Infrastructure plan protects and enhances the role of Ennis as a key regional driver of sustainable growth. It will deliver low carbon travel choices that improve the quality of lives and journey experiences for all those who live, work and visit Ennis, with the proposed connectivity improvements enhancing the town's ability to attract new employment and enterprise.

Building on Ennis' strategic transport location and existing assets, the prioritisation of integrated land use and investment in public transport, walking and cycling networks will improve people's travel choices and support safe, sustainable and healthy lifestyles – while recognising the key role of car park management in facilitating a viable and thriving Town Centre.

A '10-Minute Town'

Action 22

Improve public transport connectivity for Ennis both regionally and locally

Central to Ennis' future success will be the creation of a high quality public transport network connecting people to key destinations within the town in a reasonable travel time. By providing residents with a choice of travel options, this will help reduce the dependency on private car travel and support healthier lifestyles. This in turn will help create a vibrant town and strong local economy, attractive to young professionals and families.



Urban Bus Service

To ensure an efficient and reliable bus system is provided for Ennis, provision is made as part of the strategy, for the delivery of an urban bus network serving the town and its environs. Through work undertaken by the National Transport Authority (NTA) it has been determined that there is already a demand for regular public transport within Ennis which is currently not met by a coherent public transport offer. The forecast population and employment growth for Ennis will further enhance the delivery of an effective public transport system, with future development sites centred in the Town Centre or along public transport corridors.

The most effective way to deliver public transport in Ennis will be to focus on the provision of cross-town services operating at a high frequency. Utilising the regional road network radiating from the Town Centre, the services will connect existing and future residential populations to places of attraction, including schools, places of employment healthcare, community facilities and recreational areas.

Operating cross-town services at a relatively high frequency will facilitate passenger interchange with other local and regional services within the Centre, thereby enabling those without access to a car to reach all destinations within the town.

The NTA have identified two new local bus service routes to be delivered in the immediate future and a further potential service subject to demand from future development. The following bus routes are proposed in the Ennis Local Transport Plan (LTP):

- NS1: Connecting Clarecastle to the Town Centre via the Clare Road (R458), before heading northwards to Ballymaley Business Park along the Gort Road. This route will directly link the populations of Clarecastle and Ennis to employment opportunities in Clarecastle, the Town Centre and Gort Road Industrial Estate, as well as Our Lady's Hospital,

Ennis Hospital and St. Flannan's College.

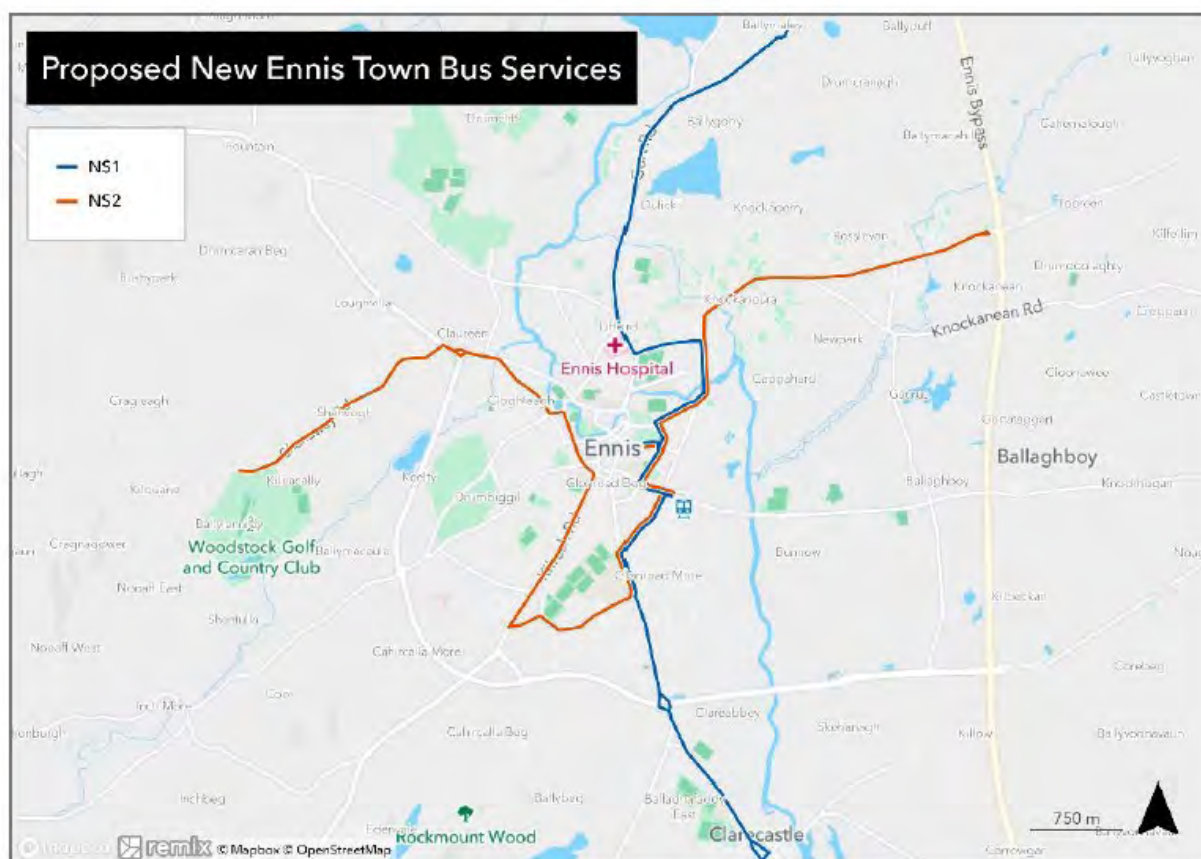
NS2: This route will run between the Shanaway Road and Tulla Road. The eastbound route will begin on the Shanaway Road, travelling inbound past Shanballa before turning south along Cloughleigh Road passing Scoil Chríost Rí. It will travel along Carmody Street, Kilrush Road and Clon Road to the Town Centre before continuing east on the Tulla Road where it will terminate at the M18. This route will connect Ennis town centre, education sites and retailers to several large residential areas

NS3 (Future Route): This potential route would begin along the Lahinch Road towards the town centre via Cusack Road, Harmony Row and New Road. The route would then follow the same route as NS1 and NS2 to serve Temple Gate and the Railway Station before continuing east along the Quin Road to terminate at Doora Industrial Estate.

Given the prevailing widths of the regional roads entering Ennis, it will not be practical or necessary to provide dedicated bus lanes, however, traffic management measures will be considered in the Town Centre which support sustainable modes as part of the future public realm enhancements.

It is envisioned that the Ennis bus network will be a Public Service Obligation (PSO), i.e. fully subsidised by the State. The urban style bus service will utilise wheelchair accessible low floor buses operating at the highest environmental standards. To serve the wide-ranging needs of the town, it is planned that a regular minimum service level would be established with weekend and late-night services provided.

The urban bus service will operate a simple, affordable fares system which enable transfers between services without unnecessary penalty. An easy-to-use cashless payment system, similar to the LEAP card system used in Dublin, will be available to passengers.



Regional Public Transport

The National Planning Framework sets out a number of strategic outcomes to enable the sustainable growth of the country over the next 20 years. This includes for the development of compact urban centres with residential and employment growth centred on cities and large towns, as well as enhanced regional accessibility, providing stronger links between our regions and urban areas. This is underpinned by a commitment to invest in the safety, efficiency and attractiveness of the inter-urban rail network, as well as regional/national network of bus routes.

Project Ireland 2040 includes for a 50% growth in population in the regional cities of Cork, Limerick and Galway, supported by substantial investment in transport infrastructure within these cities and along the western corridor. The RSES for the Southern Region also note the need for enhanced public transport services, to attract and enable ease of movement around the region by tourists and visitors.

The recommendations contained in this Plan align with these national and regional policy documents and are as follows:

Enhance the Ennis, Shannon Airport, Shannon Free Zone, Limerick Commuter Corridor through the provision of direct and increase frequency bus services

- Increased bus services on the Limerick to Galway corridor operating via Ennis.
- Upgrades to the bus and train stations in Ennis to maximise opportunities for transfer between rail and local / regional bus services.
- Improve sustainable linkages to the bus and train stations through the provision of enhanced cycle facilities and cycle parking.
- Enhance coach parking facilities to support Ennis' plans to develop tourism related activities.
- Provision of high quality bus stops and bus shelters with Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI).
- Expansion of the Rural Transport Programme and enhanced local transport integration.

Primary Outcome

PO 1: Better connectivity with key regional and local destinations – offering enhanced public transport access to the Town Centre and to employment, education, retail and leisure opportunities

The provision of a dedicated town bus service, supported by enhancements to regional bus and rail commuter services will improve resident's access to key employment opportunities and essential services such as education and

healthcare. This will also give those without access to a car, the freedom to travel around Ennis, thus improving quality of life.

The provision of a town bus service will also improve retail footfall, thus supporting the economic vibrancy of the Town Centre. Over time, the expansion of the public transport offering will reduce the demand for travel by private car to the Town Centre, thereby reducing congestion levels and improving the experience for pedestrians.

Secondary Outcomes

Reduced car usage decreases peak time and 'School Run' congestion and carbon emissions

Reduced car use within the Town Centre improves quality of life and place

Quality public transport offering enhances Ennis' attractiveness to new businesses and enterprise, supporting staff recruitment and retention

Quality public transport offering improves access and transport choices for tourists visiting Ennis

Quality public transport offering enhances Ennis' attractiveness to 3rd level institutions, supporting student recruitment and retention

A '10-Minute Town'

Action 23

Delivery of a sustainable transport network that underpins the spatial, social and economic expansion of Ennis

A well performing transport system is essential to the function of society and the economy. Failure to deliver an efficient transport network that supports sustainable travel acts as a barrier to economic growth, reduces quality of life and has a negative impact on the environment. This strategy sets out the policies and measures proposed for travel within the wider Ennis area to enable the sustainable growth of the town.



Development of a Coherent Roads and Street Hierarchy

Ennis currently has defined transport routes which if supported with the right sustainable policies and transport interventions, could accommodate significant additional growth in population, employment and education along these corridors delivering sustainable mode shares. To support the ease of movement within the town for all transport modes, this strategy defines the following requirements for the hierarchy of transport routes:

National Roads: The primary function of National Roads is to serve vehicular traffic travelling longer distances between towns in a safe and efficient manner. In the context of Ennis, the M18 serves as an eastern bypass to the town, providing strong connectivity to Galway to the north and Limerick to the south. The N85 forms an orbital route around the south west of Ennis, connecting the N68 and other Regional Road links to Ennis and its wider hinterland. The strategy acknowledges the strategic importance of these national routes, and therefore supports policies and initiatives which strengthen the national road links to regional centres by maintaining an appropriate level of service and development control measures along these corridors.

Regional Roads: Ennis is served by a number of strong regional road corridors connecting Ennis and its environs to the Town Centre. At present these roads primarily cater for the needs of vehicular traffic with limited space or priority afforded to public transport, cyclists or pedestrians. Without interventions along these corridors, peak hour congestion will worsen over time as the town expands. It is thus essential that the resilience of the transport network is improved. In this regard, the strategy promotes the creation of multi-modal movements along the regional roads through the implementation of continuous cycle lanes, improved pedestrian paths and crossing facilities and a dedicated town bus service.

Town Centre Circulation Route: A key aim of the strategy is to provide efficient access to the Town Centre for all transport modes whilst reducing the demand for unnecessary vehicular movements through the heart of the town. To achieve this, a clearly defined orbital route is proposed around the edge of the town which will facilitate efficient access from the regional road corridors to the Town Centre from all directions. The proposed Town Centre Circulation Route would consist of Clon Road, Lifford Road, Gort Road, Highfield Park, Mill Road, Carmody Street and Clare Road. To maximise the efficiency of this orbital route for all transport modes, it is recommended that the main regional road intersections along this route be upgraded to signalised junctions incorporating enhanced crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclist. Traffic signals should be linked as part of an Urban Traffic Control System to reduce delays and improve circulation for public transport and vehicular traffic.

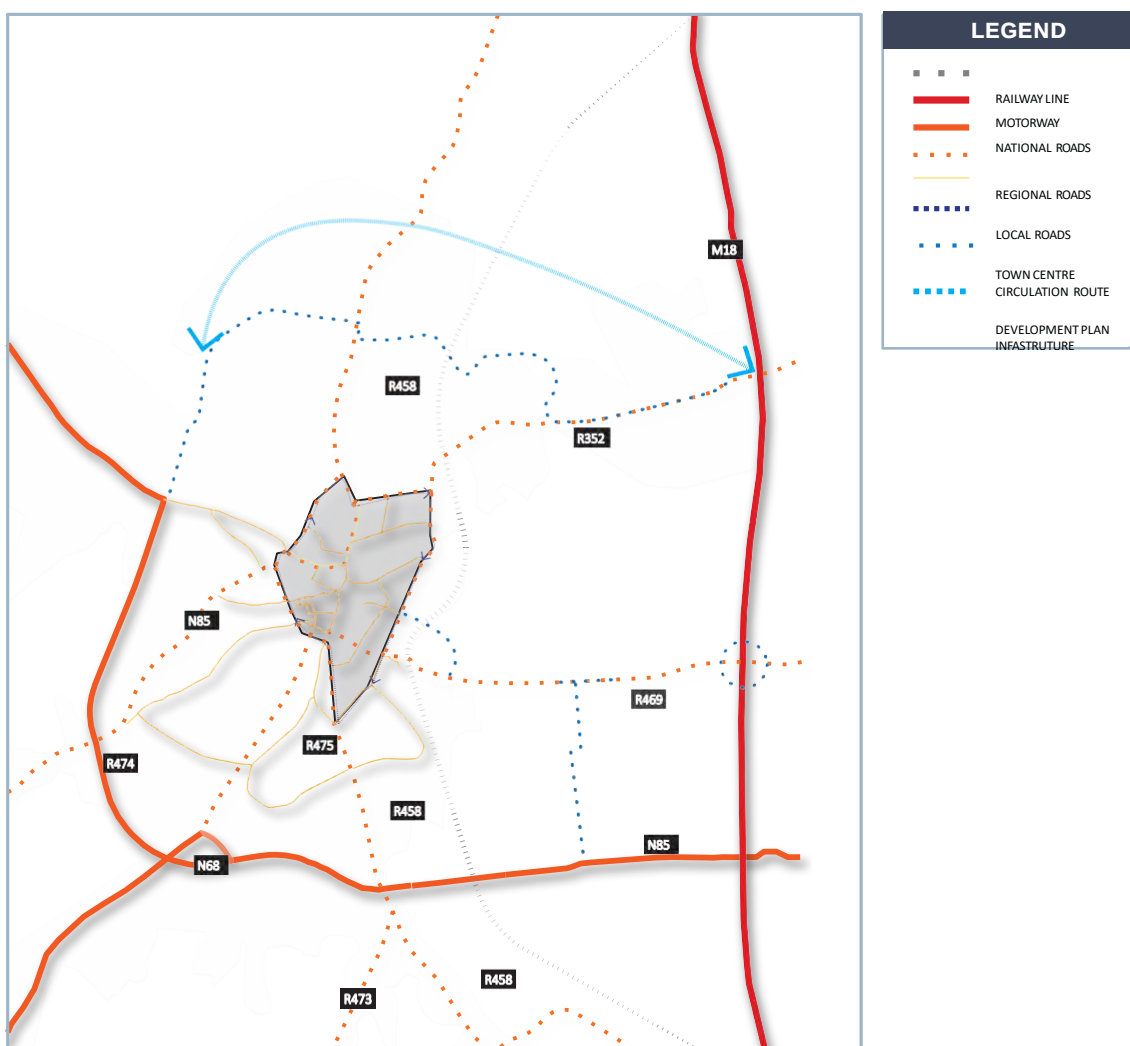
- **Town Centre Streets:** The implementation of the Town Centre Circulation Route will, over time, enable the removal of non-essential motorised traffic from the Town Centre Core. This will provide a more pleasant and calmed environment for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as a strong foundation for the planned public realm improvements and redevelopment of key Town Centre sites for transformational projects. Further details on the Town Centre access plans are contained in the following actions;
- **New Roads:** Whilst this strategy seeks to make best use of existing infrastructure, provision for some new roads infrastructure is envisioned during the lifetime of the strategy to facilitate access to development lands, alleviate congestion and support improved access for all modes. Key Routes include:
 - * **Northern Inner Relief Route:** In keeping with the infrastructure objectives set out in the Clare County Development Plan, 2023-2029, it is recommended to reserve the various road corridors linking the Drumcliff Road to Tulla Road via the Lahinch Road, and Gort Road. The

purpose of this route will be to provide relief to the radial routes through facilitating orbital movements to the north of the Town Centre and to gain access to new development lands. The design of this road, and all new roads in Ennis, will need to facilitate safe access for pedestrians and cyclists and be undertaken in accordance with the design principles set out in the Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport's (DTTas) 'Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets'.

- * Northern Bypass: Whilst it is not envisioned that it will be required in the lifetime of the Ennis 2040 strategy, it is recommended that a corridor be reserved for the completion of the Ennis bypass

connecting the N85 Roundabout on the Lahinch Road to the M18 intersection with the R458 at Barefield.

- * Town Centre East: Link Road connecting Clon Road (R871) to the Quin Road to provide relief to the east of the Town Centre and gain access to future development lands.
- * Skehanagh Arterial Road: Connecting Skehanagh Roundabout (N85) to the Quin Road (R469). This will provide direct access from the Quin Road to the N85 without the need to drive into the Town Centre, as well as providing access to substantial development lands set out in this strategy.



Map 6 Roads and Streets Hierarchy

Cycle Provision

Ennis has a relatively flat topography and is a compact settlement well suited to cycling. However, the existing cycling facilities within the town are fragmented. This has resulted in a low percentage of residents cycling, with approximately 2% identifying cycling as a mode of travel in the 2022 Census. This compares to the national target of 10% set out in DTTAS's 'Smarter Travel: National Policy Cycle Framework'.

A key objective of the strategy is the development of more sustainable communities within Ennis, with an emphasis on encouraging active travel to reduce car dependency. This will be achieved through investment in active travel infrastructure and adopting consistent approaches to local area planning which prioritise development opportunities that support sustainable travel. This strategy supports the implementation of the active travel initiatives outlined in the Ennis LTP including;

Radial Connectivity – Core: Ennis has developed around key radial and orbital routes, that have significant potential to become key active travel links in the short or longer term. These routes provide access to key trip attractors including employment zones, retail areas, education services and rapidly growing residential areas. The key proposed radial and orbital active travel links are set out below;

- * Gort Road (R458) & Highfield Park
- * Tulla Road Corridor
- * Clare Road (R458)
- * Kilrush Road
- * Drumbiggle Road
- * Lahinch Road/Cusack Road/Cloughleigh Road/Circular Road
- * Quin Road (R469)

Other Off-Road Active Travel Routes and Greenways

The proposed strategic greenway routes shall provide segregated connectivity to the town centre and key trips attractors of schools and

employment zones while also serving as recreational/leisure routes for residents and visitors. The proposed segregated active travel routes include;

- * Inch River Greenway
- * Cornmarket Street
- * Drumbiggle Road to Kilrush Road
- * River Fergus Greenway

Improvements to Permeability

A number of permeability enhancements are proposed to shorten travel distances and improve access to core active travel and public transport routes. Some of the key permeability links proposed include;

- * a link to Ennis Railway Station from College Park
- * A number of links are proposed around Tobairteascáin to reduce active travel distances for short trips in this area.
- * A link from Woodhaven to Cnoc na Scoile and onto Ennis National School is proposed through Westgate Business Park
- * A number of links through the Showgrounds are proposed which will improve access to/from the town centre and improve connections between Drumbiggle Road and Kilrush Road.

Map 7 in this Strategy illustrates the proposed active travel links set out in the Ennis Local Transport Plan

Pedestrian Provision

Whilst often underfunded, investment in pedestrian infrastructure provides the greatest return in terms of modal shift. An evaluation of Census 2022 data on the current travel patterns within Ennis indicate that 13% of work and education trips are made on foot. As a compact walkable town, Ennis is ideally placed to build upon this promising base and foster a culture of walking within the town.

While the majority of footpaths within Ennis are of a reasonable quality, there are a number of locations where the pedestrian infrastructure is limited, with narrow or missing footpaths, wide

pedestrian crossings and obstructing street furniture, affecting the quality of the pedestrian environment, particularly for those with mobility impairments. Key aims of the walking strategy include:

- Provide a safer, more comfortable and more convenient walking environment for those with mobility, visual and hearing impairments.
- Improve footpaths by widening them where appropriate, resurfacing where necessary and removing unnecessary poles, signs, advertising and other clutter.
- Revise road junction layouts, where appropriate, to provide dedicated pedestrian crossings, reduce pedestrian crossing distances, provide more direct pedestrian routes and reduce the speed of turning traffic.
- Reduce waiting time for pedestrians at crossings in the Town Centre.
- Deliver better pedestrian information and wayfinding signage in the Town Centre to support tourism.

Where appropriate, seek the introduction of lower speed limits on residential streets

Primary Outcome

PO 1: Improves quality of place and life, provides choice, connects places and encourages social interaction

The alignment of future development with an integrated transport network supporting safe and efficient access by walking, cycling, and public transport will provide opportunities to reduce dependency on car travel. The delivery of enhanced active travel and public transport infrastructure shall yield considerable benefits in terms of reduced congestion and harmful vehicle emissions, as well as encourage healthier and active lives for the existing and future residents of Ennis.

The delivery of the green infrastructure network in tandem with proposed enhancements to the public realm will help achieve an improved pedestrian experience in Ennis town centre, supporting tourism and providing an invaluable resource for the residents of Ennis.

Secondary Outcomes

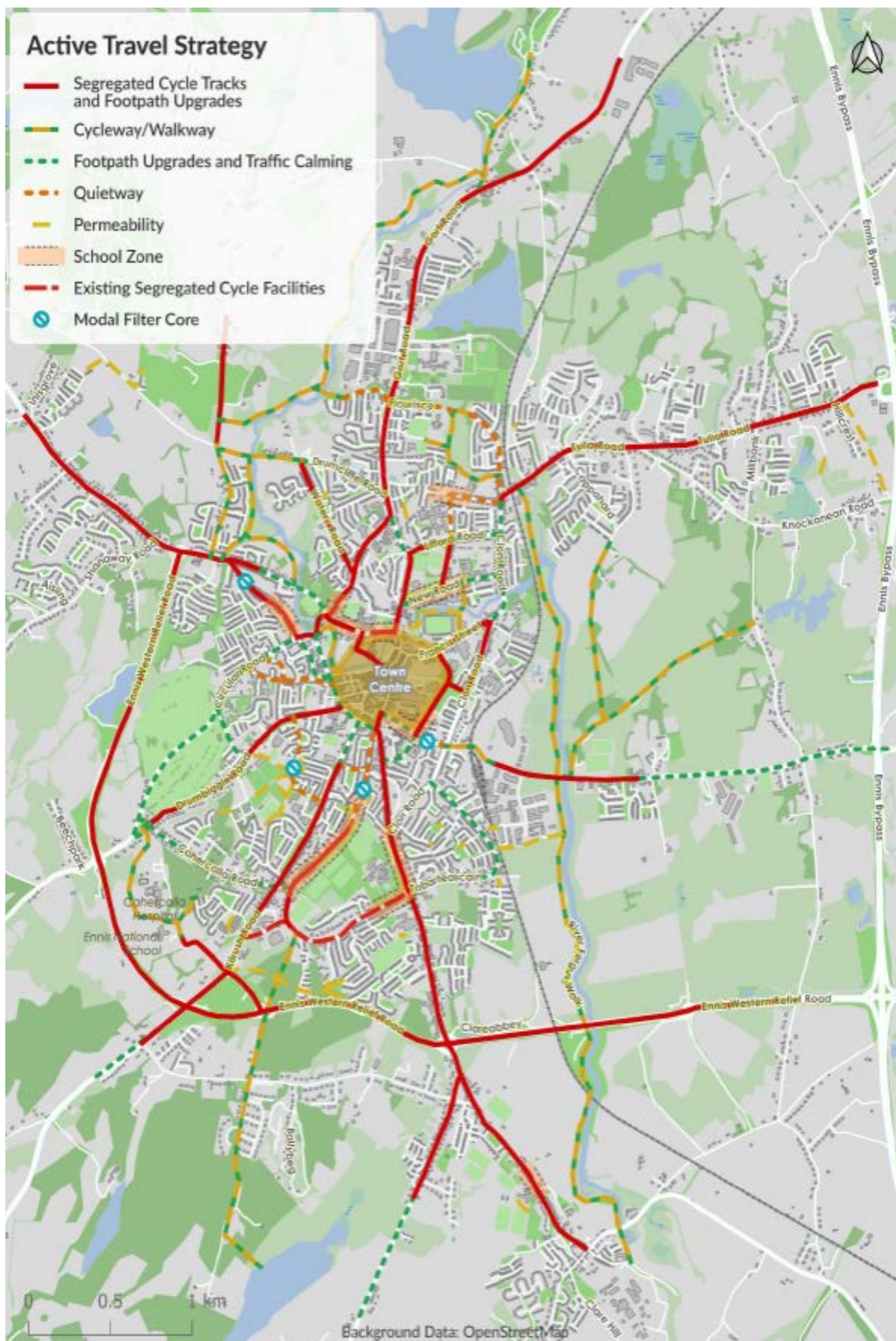
Supports existing and new communities in a compact manner that reduces the need to travel by car to access key services

Delivers more efficient use of public investment in services and facilities

Encourages existing business to develop and attracts new economic activity

Reduces carbon emissions

Improves access to and use of the public realm, promoting walking and cycling and encouraging healthier lifestyles



Map 7 Active Travel Links proposed in Ennis Local Transport Plan

A '10-Minute Town'

Action 24

Creation of a vibrant Town Centre through the delivery of an enhanced public realm with improved accessibility for sustainable transport modes and will demonstrate good practice in relation to urban greening measures and green /blue infrastructure.

The Vision for Ennis 2040 places the Town Centre at the heart of the revitalised Ennis, focusing on the need for retail, residential, commercial, educational, leisure and cultural growth. The strategy also recognises that the future success of Ennis is dependent upon investment in its public realm to create attractive meeting places, supported by ease of access for all transport modes.

Whilst Ennis is undoubtedly a thriving market town, the current heavy presence of vehicular traffic along its narrow streets can overshadow the visual experience for visitors and residents alike, as well as impede movements for pedestrians and cyclists.

To deliver on the strategy of creating an enhanced public realm with improved accessibility for sustainable transport modes, the Town Centre access strategy contains a number of interrelated components



Vehicular Access

As previously presented, enhancements to the regional road network and the creation of the Town Centre orbital route will provide motorists with efficient access to the Town Centre. In order to create a calmed environment with reduce traffic flows within the Town Centre, the following measures are proposed:

- Town Centre Gateways: Positioned on the radial road corridors on crossing of the Town Centre circulatory route. These will predominantly offer a public realm function, discreetly notifying drivers of their entrance to the historic centre of Ennis. Signage and choice of materials to be carefully selected to be sympathetic and reflective of the historic and heritage attributes of Ennis.
- 30 KPH Zone: A 30kph speed limit restriction on the streets within the Town Centre. The limiting of speeds where there are high levels of interaction between vehicular traffic and vulnerable road users has obvious benefits for the safety of all road users. By reducing speeds, the risk of accidents and the severity of those accidents are greatly decreased, with the improvement in safety making the area more attractive for walking and cycling. Lowering speeds in areas where on-street parking, set down parking and deliveries are in competition for space with pedestrians and cyclists will result in reduced levels of conflict and hazard for all road users. Lower speed also has associated environmental benefits such as reduced traffic noise which benefits the local environment.
- Traffic Management: To reinforce the use of the Town Centre circulatory route and reduce unnecessary through traffic, it is recommended to implement changes to the traffic circulation within the Town Centre to restrict through movements from Abbey Street and Francis Street to O'Connell Street. This can be achieved whilst retaining efficient access for private cars and delivery vehicles to Town Centre commercial premises and parking areas. This could initially be introduced on a temporary basis to enable monitoring of its effectiveness,

before potentially being implemented on a permanent basis.

- Parking: The parking strategy seeks to locate future long stay/commuter car parking provision in areas that minimise the need for unnecessary car journeys through the Town Centre core. In line with the anticipated growth in population and increase in economic activity, the strategy will provide additional parking facilities on the periphery of the Town Centre and adjacent to key radial routes. These locations will be within 5 minutes' walk of the Town Centre. Further details on the parking plan are contained in the following strategy.
- Public Realm Enhancements: Clare County Council are presently delivering a number of public realm improvement schemes in the Town Centre, including:
 - Works to enhance Parnell Street along with the 29 no. Lanes and Bow-Ways within the medieval core.
 - Public realm enhancements to Barrack Square and Old Barrack Street and O'Connell Square and High

Whilst these enhancements are not contingent on the delivery of the above Town Centre access measures, the traffic solutions will complement the objectives of the public realm schemes, by delivering a balance between the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, as well as supporting commercial activity in the Town Centre.

Cyclists

The NTA's 'National Cycle Manual' adopts a hierarchal approach to the delivery of cycle measures, seeking to firstly reduce the volume and speed of motorised traffic to provide an attractive and quiet environment suitable for cycling. Only when this cannot be achieved, should designers look to provide dedicated cycle infrastructure.

The implementation of the strategy for the Town Centre will substantially reduce traffic volumes and speeds within the heart of Ennis, creating an environment where cyclist can safely share the road space with general traffic.

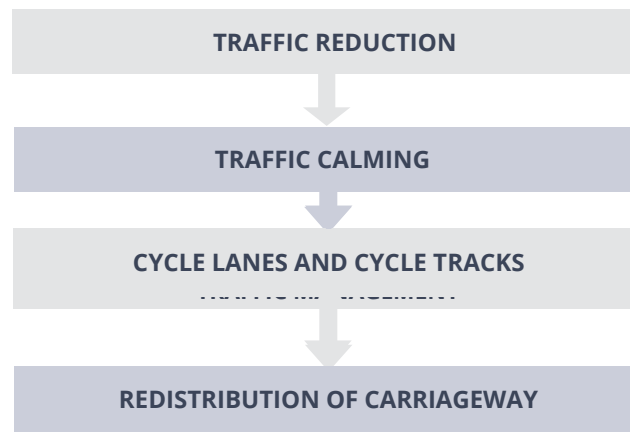
This will remove the need for specific cycle lanes / tracks within the Town Centre, thereby enabling further enhancements to pedestrian infrastructure.

focus on improving and prioritising the pedestrian network to accommodate the needs of all visitors, ensuring all new schemes cater for universal access.

To support access for cyclists, additional cycle parking will be needed at a number of destinations throughout the Town Centre.

Pedestrians

Within the Town Centre there will be a continued



Public Realm Barrack Street.

Primary Outcome

PO 1: More attractive, pedestrian friendly and vibrant Town Centre

The adoption of an integrated transport strategy that removes through traffic and reduces vehicle speeds in the Town Centre will create the necessary environment to enhance the public realm, thereby strengthening the vision for Ennis as a vibrant, walkable town.

The delivery of a comprehensive network of walking and cycling routes within the Town Centre will encourage healthier lifestyles and create opportunities for social interaction for residents. The network would also increase the attractiveness of Ennis to tourists, helping to showcase the town's rich and diverse natural and built heritage.

Secondary Outcomes

Improves quality of place and life, provides choice, connects places and encourages social interaction

Reduced car usage, decreases congestion and carbon emissions

Improves road safety for vulnerable road users

Quality public realm offering improves attractiveness of Ennis for tourists

Improves access to and use of the public realm, promoting walking and cycling and encouraging healthier lifestyles

A '10-Minute Town'

Action 25

Implement a car parking management plan that supports the economic growth of the Town Centre and encourages travel by sustainable means

Parking spaces are a valuable resource that needs careful management to protect the economic viability of the commercial core of the town. A well-functioning Town Centre car parking system contributes to the local economy, helps enhance the public realm and improves accessibility for all transport modes. Parking is an effective tool in managing travel demand which helps encourage modal shift and reduces the impact of congestion on the network.

Supporting the place and movement objectives established for the Town Centre, the key objectives for the delivery of an effective parking management plan for Ennis are to:

- Provide easily accessible parking spaces to retain commercial competitiveness
- Cater for various user needs including long-term commuter parking, short-term commercial trips and tourist visits.
- Locate future car parking provision in areas that minimise the need for unnecessary car journeys through the Town Centre core.
- Provide a suitable level of parking to accommodate future growth yet at the same time encourage sustainable travel choices.
- Reduce levels of on-street car parking to provide space for improvements to the public realm.
- Ensure parking fare structures do not undermine investment in public transport or discourage commercial activity



The car parking management proposals made as part of this strategy are as follows:

Short Stay Parking

It is widely acknowledged that shoppers and short-stay parkers are less sensitive to price (within reason) than the availability of parking spaces close to their destination. This is particularly the case in terms of convenience shopping, where the duration of the trip is short. Conversely, staff and long-stay parkers are sensitive to price and relatively less sensitive to walking distances between their car and their destination. As such, the implementation of a parking strategy which ensures that parking spaces in the most convenient Town Centre locations are reserved for shoppers/tourists and related users has many benefits.

Ensuring that the most conveniently located parking spaces are reserved for short-stay users, who have a greater potential spend, stimulates commercial activity and increases the vitality and attractiveness of the Town Centre. It is therefore, recommended that the parking tariff structure be reviewed for the Town Centre in terms of permissible duration and hourly charge. This will support investment in public transport, limit long-term parking in the Town Centre core and help stimulate commercial activity through a higher turnover of spaces in these areas.

Park and Stride

Whilst the strategy seeks to optimise the use of the existing public parking stock within Ennis, the forecast growth for Ennis in terms of population and employment will result in an increased demand for travel to the Town Centre. The strategy sets out a range of public transport, cycling and walking measures aimed at increasing sustainable travel to the Town Centre, however,

increase levels of parking, particularly supporting the needs of commuters, will be required.

This strategy supports the implementation of the Ennis Local Transport Plan which seeks to provide a number of park and stride locations at the periphery of the town including;

Ennis Mart
Ennis Train Station
Showgrounds
Cloughleigh Road
College Road
Clare County Council Offices

As illustrated in Map 8, the recommended additional parking locations are on the periphery of the Town Centre. Conveniently accessed from the Town Centre through active travel links, these will provide motorists with efficient access to parking without the need to traverse the Town Centre's narrow streets.



Map 8 Proposed Park and Stride Locations

Public Realm Enhancements

With regard to areas benefitting from public realm enhancement plans, it is recommended to reduce the on-street car parking provision to accommodate pedestrian/cyclist facilities and public spaces.

Adequate quantum of on-street electric vehicle charging, disabled parking and parent and child parking will need to be provided, as well as set down, taxi and loading bay parking.

Wayfinding

On approach to Ennis Town Centre, directional signage to car parks is currently provided on a site-by-site basis with limited information given as to

the most appropriate for motorists to take. This can be confusing for first time visitors, detracting from their arrival experience to the town.

As part of the parking strategy, it is recommended that a car park guidance system be implemented to provide information for drivers travelling towards the Town Centre on the main car park locations and parking availability. This will enhance the experience of visitors coming to Ennis by minimising time spent navigating the town and finding parking spaces. This in turn will help reduce congestion on the network and will contribute to a more efficient use of the available parking stock.

The car park guidance system will consist of a series of static information signs as well as

variable message signs (VMS) to alert drivers of the availability of parking in key off-street parking locations. The signs would be located on key decision points on the radial road routes on approach to the Town Centre where there is an opportunity to influence the route taken to the Town Centre car parks. The VMS signs will include a real-time count of the number of car parking spaces available in the key public off-street car parks.

The use of smart parking management technologies, such as mobile Apps could be employed to further enhance the visitor experience, notifying visitors of available parking opportunities, safe and secure paperless payment methods and alerts to notify remaining parking times.

Primary Outcome

PO 1: More attractive, pedestrian friendly and vibrant Town Centre

The parking strategy for Ennis is an integral part of the wider integrated transport plan for the town. The strategy will support the economic vitality of the Town Centre, by enabling efficient access for all transport modes whilst reducing the need for through movements in the Town Centre.

The repositioning of long stay car parks on the periphery of the Town Centre, will help reduce the dominance of cars which in turn will enable the reallocation of road space for pedestrian and

public realm uses. This will deliver a safe and attractive environment for pedestrians which fosters increase levels of social interaction.

The reduction in traffic volumes and speeds within the Town Centre will also reduce noise levels and vehicle emissions, helping to create a healthier and less stressful environment for walking and cycling.

Secondary Outcomes

Improves quality of place and life and encourages social interaction

Delivers a suitable level of parking to accommodate future growth yet at the same time encouraging sustainable travel

More attractive to tourists

Reduced carbon emissions and less car congestion which supports Town Centre living (which in itself reduces the need to drive in the Town Centre)

Reduced Local Authority maintenance cost in the Town Centre

A '10-Minute Town'

Action 26

Develop a road map for New Mobility solutions in Ennis, preparing for the advent of:

- Electric Vehicle uptake
- Mobility as a Service
- Autonomous and Connected Vehicles

Future proof improved connectivity for people living, working and visiting Ennis by maximising the opportunities of new and emerging technologies and mobility services, supporting sustainable business, residential and tourism growth while reducing car dependency and vehicle emissions.

This strategy focuses on developing a strategic road map to maximise Ennis' future ability to benefit from new and emerging transport technologies and mobility services. This New Mobility road map will enable Ennis to plan for the future, ensuring it maximises the opportunities to enable low carbon, healthy and accessible transport choices for all, improving quality of life and mitigating against the potential unintended consequences of the development of new technology.

The road map will build resilience into Ennis' future transport network, by identifying and understanding the potential impacts of emerging mobility trends, and developing a proactive plan to maximise the opportunities that these future developments offer the town. The high-level overview of these key future transport trends are addressed in this strategy.



Electric Vehicle Uptake

The take up of Hybrid and Electric cars in Ireland is increasing from its relatively small base, with more than 100 types of electric vehicles now available on the Irish market. Vehicle manufacturers are making advancements in battery technology to combat 'range anxiety' and some are committing to switching to only manufacturing electric vehicles. With transport accounting for one third of Ireland's energy requirement and energy related CO2 emissions, there is a national road map to support Electric Vehicle (EV) take up, including grants for Electric Vehicles and Home Chargers for individuals and taxi fleets. It is a target that by 2040, all cars in Ireland will be electric.

Key considerations for this growing low-carbon mobility option for Ennis include the availability and location of EV charging points (including fast charging points) within public car parks, taxi-ranks, on-street car parks, employment and education sites, residential areas and leisure and commercial premises. The use and expected uptake of EVs for Local Authority owned fleets along with community and school minibuses will need to be factored into strategic plans for local EV charging infrastructure. A corresponding EV parking and recharging pricing strategy will also

need to be developed for Ennis to support the use of and take up of EVs for shared, freight and personal vehicles, catering for the range of short-term and long-term charging demands.

The role of electric bikes, both personal and shared, and of electric scooters as future mobility options for Ennis also require consideration.

This includes the positive benefits, e.g. enabling those who are less physically active to trial cycling; providing 'last kilometre' solutions, and the issues associated with these options, e.g. current legislative restrictions on electric scooters; the demand for and the infrastructure required for an electric bike hire scheme; and the road safety considerations for vulnerable road users interacting with electric bikes and scooters.

Mobility as a Service

'Shared mobility' can be defined as any transport service that is shared by users, where the user can access the service on a short-term basis but the vehicle isn't owned by the user, and payment is on a subscription or pay-as-you-go basis. Examples include public transport, demand responsive bus services, bike and scooter hire, car-sharing, car-clubs and taxis.



Mobility as a Service (MaaS) is an approach that is being developed in a number of towns and cities, e.g. Whim in Helsinki, where a range of 'shared mobility' options are available to individuals to encourage them to reduce their car dependency and use more sustainable travel options, thereby reducing congestion and carbon emissions. Another benefit of MaaS is that it has the potential to free up the need for car parking, both on-street and off-street, and release land for other uses thereby enhancing place-making and creating better, more liveable places.

Typically, users access these services via an App and can book the travel option they require. Personalised journey planning in real time provides advice on which is the optimum travel choice based on an individual's journey at a particular time of day. Payment is either on a pay-as-you-go basis or via a bundled subscription package.

MaaS models work best where a range of transport options exist, and where transport operators offer smartcard or e-ticketing payments, are willing to share data and are open to third parties selling their services. MaaS has not yet been deployed in Ireland, however, new developments such as the 'Free Now' app and 'Go Car' indicate that there is an appetite for this type of App-based mobility option.

Although Ennis may not currently be in a position to trial a MaaS approach to encouraging sustainable travel, it is recommended that its future application should be considered as part of the development of a 'New Mobility' road map for Ennis 2040.



Autonomous and Connected Vehicles (CAV)

Increasingly, automated vehicles are now a way of life and fully autonomous vehicles are coming. AV solutions are currently being trialled in different parts of the world for individual car drivers, as shared shuttle bus or Pod solutions, and for freight purposes. Connected vehicles, vehicle to vehicle; vehicle to infrastructure; vehicle to the cloud, are already a reality in many places, enabling Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) to efficiently manage the transport network in real

time. Advances in this technology are developing all the time, with the potential for vehicles to become sophisticated mobile sensors and benefit from information gathered elsewhere on a digitally connected transport network.

Connected transport networks offer a range of benefits including:

- Improved real-time road management and response to live incidents
- Informed personalised trip making
- Optimised route choices

- Improved air quality through smoother traffic flows and reduced congestion
- Better road asset maintenance via on-vehicle sensors detecting road surface quality issues
- Enhanced understanding of future transport impacts related to land use planning.

Such networks also pose a number of risks including:

- Reduced access to transport for the digitally excluded
- Data privacy and cyber security
- Unintended consequences for public transport, cycling and walking if the focus is too heavily weighted towards vehicle-based connectivity at the expense of more sustainable and healthy travel choices.

Autonomous Vehicles (AV) can offer advantages in terms of improved road safety and more efficient use of road space. Shared AV minibuses have the future potential to offer on-demand transport choices in place of private car ownership. AV solutions are also being trialled for first/last km vehicle journeys, for freight and logistics purposes and for passengers as 'last mile driverless pods', e.g. connecting railway stations to employment centres.

Emerging AV 'self-parking' concierge solutions also have the potential to reduce the width of parking bays and aisles, increasing density and reducing the space needed for parking thereby releasing land for new amenity use. AV also offers opportunities for the increased automation of service vehicles, such as street cleaning, refuse collection and delivery vehicles, offering potential operating efficiencies for Local Authorities and the private sector.

The Department for Transport, Tourism and Sport is currently working on Guidelines for testing autonomous vehicles on public roads, which will be supported by a National Connected and Autonomous Vehicle (CAV) roadmap and plan, as well as a national strategy for Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS). This national road map can be used to shape Ennis' own road map and plan for emerging 'New Mobility' options.

There will be a need to understand where CAV would be of greatest value within the Ennis transport network. It will also be key for Ennis to manage any newly released road capacity brought about through CAV, developing a business model that incentivises shared use AV and active travel choices, rather than allowing it to be reabsorbed exclusively by single occupancy car journeys.

Primary Outcome

PO 1: Supports the delivery of safe, easy to use, sustainable transport choices that the travelling public choose to use, can access, afford and trust

The integration of various forms of transport into a single Mobility Service will provide residents, visitors and businesses with the freedom to travel within Ennis and neighbouring urban centres without the need to own a car. By providing a realistic alternative to the private car, a host of benefits can be realised for the individual and wider community.

For the individual, this includes:

- Substantially reduced travel costs, e.g. no car purchase or insurance
- Increase convenience to travel, for those who do not have access to a car
- Opportunities to lead more active lifestyles.

For Ennis, this can lead to a reduction in congestion on narrow Town Centre streets, reduce demand for parking and fewer constraints in overall transport capacity.

Secondary Outcomes

Future proof improved connectivity for people living, working and visiting Ennis by maximising the opportunities of new and emerging technologies and mobility services – supporting sustainable business, residential and tourism growth while reducing car dependency and vehicle emissions

Plan for a future that delivers high quality, connected and attractive experiences for all transport users – enhancing access to amenities while prioritising healthy, efficient and low-carbon transport options

Maximises efficient use of transport assets and operational services

Improves the quality of life and town centre vibrancy by maximising the value and potential of Places through integrated land use and efficient connectivity

*"Cultures and climates
differ all over the world,
but people are the same.
They'll gather in public if
you give them a good place
to do it." - Jan Gehl*



7. Spatial Implementation Plan

Building on existing assets and informed by national policy guidance Ennis 2040 sets out the long-term Economic and Spatial Strategy for Ennis, focusing on the economic future and spatial pattern to 2040.

It seeks to protect and enhance the unique characteristics of Ennis that contribute to its sense of place while addressing key challenges in the areas of employment, housing, accessibility and climate change.

Delivering the Actions and the associated outcomes contained in the strategy is critical to achieving the Vision and Strategic Objectives for Ennis. At the core of implementing Ennis 2040 are the 7 no. transformational projects that provide the framework through which many of the strategy actions can be realised.

Delivering Ennis 2040

The key to the success of Ennis 2040 will be its implementation, the strategy has been structured to facilitate this, with 26 no. Actions at its core that will drive Ennis as a competitive, liveable and sustainable place. Delivering these actions is the first step in implementing the strategy and will result in multiple outcomes to meet the strategic objectives. In total Ennis 2040 identifies 139 no. outcomes that will result from the implementation of these actions and acknowledges that there is potential for many more spin-off outcomes as the strategy is enacted.

The Spatial Implementation Plan is required to give spatial expression to the economic activities proposed, matching investment opportunities with a plan for physical development and strategic sites. In this regard, 7 no. transformational projects provide a context for the potential long-term land activation strategy for Ennis to 2040. These projects directly align with the Actions contained in the Strategy and provide the framework through which they can be realised. Whilst not limited to these projects, the transformational projects can be delivered over the short, medium or long term, to 2040, presenting the opportunity for the early achievement of multiple outcomes and phasing of more complex projects.

Putting the Strategy into Action

Each of the transformational projects has an accompanying timeline, indicating the length of time realistically required to deliver the project. The indicative timeframes are as follows:



Where it is considered that the characteristics of a project, such as landownership, may facilitate its early delivery the project is identified as having a range of timeframes e.g. Short/Medium Term.

Each project is assigned lead partners responsible for its delivery. Due to landownership, funding, core responsibilities or area of expertise, many of the projects have several identified partners who will have to work together to achieve its delivery. Other stakeholders will also be involved in delivering the transformational projects as Ennis 2040 is implemented.

The Transformational Projects

The Spatial Implementation Plan centres on the delivery of the 7 no. transformational projects that directly align with the Actions contained in the strategy and which will provide a spatial expression to the economic activities proposed.

In line with the compact growth of Ennis, these projects have the potential to deliver significant investment, job creation, regeneration, improved accessibility and enhanced recreational facilities primarily focused on the Town Centre. The transformational projects are as follows:

- Former Ennis National School
- Cornmarket Precinct
- Friars Walk
- Wetland and Enterprise Area
- Roche Site, Clarecastle
- Clare Technology Park
- Date Centre (Toureen)

Each project has been considered and is brought forward in the context of the environment and area within which it is located. Those within the Town Centre respect and seek to showcase the architectural, cultural and historic heritage of Ennis while enhancing vitality and viability. The Wetland and Enterprise Area will work with the existing natural environment in identifying medium to long term opportunities for climate adaptation,

nature based solutions to water management and economic development.

The realisation of the transformational projects will deliver inter alia, a conference hotel, modern office facilities, appropriate retail floorplates, an educational campus and Town Centre residential accommodation which will diversify the economic base of Ennis, making it more resilient to external shocks. In addition, the Wetland and Enterprise Area has the potential to place Ennis at the forefront of climate adaptation at a town level, while also delivering a biodiverse and eco- friendly landscape attractive to both national and international business.

The significant number of the transformational projects can be delivered in the short to medium term, to 2035 presenting the opportunity for early realisation of multiple outcomes which in turn will build investor confidence in Ennis. Key to this will be the Local Authority taking the lead through investment and progressing the early delivery of projects on lands in its ownership, e.g. Former Ennis National School. The transformational projects that deliver entirely new areas and opportunities for economic activity, as well as improvements in, and accessibility to, recreational facilities, have a long term timeline for delivery but will require immediate action in producing detailed Plans for their progression.

Implementation Strategy

Development Process

Securing the delivery of the transformational projects requires a clear and coherent development process. Since development will take place over a considerable period of time, during which the performance of external factors such as the broader economy can change, this process must be efficient, robust and transparent from the out-set.

The development process can be sequentially divided into eight main stages as follows:

- **Market Analysis:** The perception and estimation of effective demand for new developments of different types. This is fundamental as it establishes the market for a

development.

- **Site Identification:** The identification and securing of sites to construct buildings to meet the identified demand.
- **Feasibility/Development Appraisal:** The completion of a development appraisal to ascertain viability.
- **Permissions:** The obtaining of permissions. These include planning permission and any other building consent.
- **Design and Costing:** The design and costing of development to meet the demand on the site identified.
- **Finance:** The arrangement of development finance to fund site acquisition and construction.
- **Managing Construction:** The management of design and construction.
- **Letting and Disposal:** The letting and management of the completed development.

While the above provides an overview of the main stages in the development process, specific project characteristics may result in alterations to the stages or their sequencing.

Delivering the transformational projects on the ground will be key to demonstrating that Ennis is a proactive town, which backs itself to deliver its strategy for growth and economic development. This in turn will build investor and developer confidence in Ennis and stimulate demand for further investment in line with the strategy.

Leadership Approach

The implementation of Ennis 2040 takes a public sector led, partnership approach through the establishment of an 'Implementation Committee'. This committee will be comprised of Local Authority representatives, private sector, state and semi-state bodies and other organisations such as the Ennis Chamber of Commerce. Specific Local Authority Departments will play a role depending on the nature and scale of particular projects.

The responsibility of the committee will be the identification of outcomes and the co-ordination of national and regional agencies and bodies, local businesses, community organisations, landowners, investors and developers. The Implementation Committee will need to take a pro-active lead

Partnerships for Ennis 2040

Ennis 2040 will contribute to the strengthening of the town's role as a key regional economic driver in the Mid-West. Ennis will utilise and enhance its existing assets in the delivery of a distinctive, environmentally adaptive place, with a focus on quality of life, that is attractive as a place to work, live, invest in and visit.

Led by a new partnership/co-funding approach to projects at the national level, Ennis 2040 will require engagement with government departments and agencies, businesses, landowners and the community in delivering a robust strategy for the achievement of the outcomes and transformational projects and the securing of funding.

in the delivery process to guarantee all the key stakeholders come together and that there is a clear and common understanding of the outcomes sought.

Given the long-term duration of the strategy, an appropriate spatial implementation programme should be established based around the delivery of the short to medium term transformational projects and the realisation of the potential of the longer term developments.

Key to the realisation of the Spatial Implementation Plan is the establishment, within the Local Authority, of a dedicated team that will work on the implementation of the strategy on a day to day basis, engaging with the various stakeholders, progressing projects, establishing a business plan, compiling funding proposals, monitoring progress etc. As an early step this Implementation Team should seek to engage senior Local Authority officers as well as targeted business representatives, higher education institutes, transport bodies and tourism and enterprise agencies. The knowledge, support and buy-in from these stakeholders will be crucial in the delivery and success of the strategy.

One project that will require the specific attention of the overall Implementation Committee from the outset is the Wetland and Enterprise Area. This transformational project presents a significant opportunity for Ennis to lead the way as a climate adaptive town but requires further feasibility work and a detailed area specific plan for its future development. The project concept presented in this strategy should be rapidly advanced by the Implementation Team to not only secure Ennis' position as a leader in this field but to maximise

opportunities for securing funding.

The Implementation Team will be responsible for the progression of the Marketing strategy, setting up the necessary structures, delivering and promoting brand Ennis and selling it as a destination locally, nationally and internationally. While the delivery of this strategy will take time, its success will be reliant on the Implementation Committee acting as the lead advocate.

Monitoring Progress

Another core function of the Implementation Team will be the monitoring and reporting on the progress of the delivery of Ennis 2040, its actions, outcomes and transformational projects. Annual reporting should be undertaken to include updates on the advancement and delivery of projects, changes to timeframes for completion, funding secured and implementation partners or lead agencies. The annual reporting also presents the opportunity for the Local Authority to address new actions it is leading in delivering the strategy.

An 'Actions and Outcomes Report' published every 3 years would provide a detailed analysis of the success of the actions and the achievement of the outcomes to date and could make recommendations, if so required. The implementation of Ennis 2040 should be fully reviewed every 5 years, or as required, to update and revise proposed actions and outcomes where necessary. It is acknowledged that not all outcomes may be realised and that new outcomes may also emerge over the lifetime of Ennis 2040. New outcomes that contribute to the delivery of the Ennis 2040 Vision can be added as part of the review process.

Lead Agents

Clare County Council will take the lead in implementing Ennis 2040, with the establishment of a dedicated Implementation Team. The Council will be open to working with development partners and proactive in securing such partnerships. Early and targeted engagement with the agencies, organisations and bodies such as Ennis Chamber of Commerce, Government Departments and Agencies (IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Irish Water) and HEIs (LIT, UL, GMIT and NUIG) will be essential in progressing the delivery of the transformational projects. The private sector must also be engaged both in terms of retaining and promoting existing businesses in Ennis and in relation to the potential for new investment and development.

The Implementation Team must look to put in place supports, in the form of policies, initiatives and incentives, to facilitate and encourage the realisation of the strategy, specifically the transformational projects. As a landowner and development agent, the Local Authority will also have to buy-into and invest in the delivery of the projects and the supporting infrastructure. This is not only fundamental to securing the achievement of strategy outcomes but will be key to building investor confidence in Ennis.

Given the range of stakeholders involved in the delivery of the transformational projects, the Implementation Team would also act as a medium through which stakeholder's voices could be unified. This will facilitate the timely delivery of projects and ensure that the projects result in the securing of the maximum number of outcomes to the benefit of Ennis.

Local Government Partnerships

Ennis' strategic location between Limerick and Galway Cities is a key asset which has been considered in the making of and incorporated into the actions contained in Ennis 2040. The delivery of the outcomes and the transformational projects will be influenced by the strengthening of the physical, social and economic links with Limerick and Galway. Clare County Council will build on existing partnerships with Limerick City and County

Council, Galway City Council and Galway County Council. While each Local Authority will be seeking to advance development and growth within their own functional area, working together allows for opportunities to be identified that are specific to each location and which will contribute to their individual development.

National and Regional Partnerships

The delivery of Ennis 2040 will occur within a network of interconnected long-term strategies and guidelines as outlined in Section 2, 'Strategic Policy Context'. This includes the National Development Plan 2026-2035 that underpins the implementation of the NPF through a total estimated €275.4 billion.

Ennis 2040 has been produced in this context having specific regard to the 10 no. NSOs contained in the NPF, the national and regional growth strategies and the priority infrastructure projects identified in the NPF and the RSES. This ensures that implementation of the strategy aligns with the long-term plan for growth outlined in these strategic documents which is a key requirement in securing Government funding.

Private Sector

Much of the success of the implementation process will be dependent on the Local Authority working in partnership with the private sector from landowners to investors, to business owners. The requirement for these partnerships is a direct result of the drive for compact growth and the delivery of such partnerships is a key criterion in attaining funding through the Urban Regeneration Development Fund.

3 of the 7 transformational projects are located within the Town Centre of Ennis on sites which are currently underutilised and where intensification of use can be accommodated. Bringing these sites forward can in some instances be facilitated by the Local Authority but in most cases will require Clare County Council to work in partnership with the private sector, with several projects requiring coordination with and buy-in from multiple partners, as well as investors. The Implementation Team will be central to coordinating this process to ensure the timely delivery of projects.

Funding

Substantial funding, coming from a range of sources including public sector, private sector and European, will be required to deliver the Economic and Spatial Strategy. Investigation of more innovative funding mechanisms such as area-based economic vehicles should also be progressed. Clare County Council will have a role to play in balancing risk to enable investment to happen. This may be in the form of the use of Local Authority and/or public sector property, the waiving or deferral of a land value to the Local Authority /public sector and using public sector tenancy to strengthen and underpin investments.

The NDP is the primary mechanism through which public funding is currently being distributed, with a total estimated €275.4 billion available. The NDP includes four funds designed to stimulate renewal and investment, the environment and innovation as follows:

- €2 billion Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF);
- €1 billion Rural Development Fund;
- €500 million Climate Action Fund;
- €500 Disruptive Technologies Fund.

Ennis being a large town with a population of more than 10,000 persons comes within the remit of the URDF, a competitive, bid-based exchequer grant programme.

Key to securing funding under the URDF is the ability to demonstrate how the project supports the NPF NSOs, specifically NSO 1 'Compact Growth'. The production of Ennis 2040 has been guided by the NPF, delivering on multiple NSOs, and the RSES for the Southern Region, with achievement of compact growth at the core of the Spatial Implementation Plan. This will facilitate the strategy being leveraged to secure funding for its delivery, and specifically the transformational projects, under the URDF grant programme.

The URDF bid process also considers the ability of a project to leverage co-funding, either from the public sector or from private sector sources, as

well as the extent of leveraging of wider, indirect private sector investment. Having a Spatial and Economic strategy in place that sets out the long-term future growth of Ennis, provides a clear programme of action and demonstrates a commitment by the Local Authority will help build the investor confidence required to secure such co-funding. Given the uplift in the economy and the opportunities presented by the on-going calls for funding under the URDF process, current economic conditions are supportive for potential investors in Ennis. Co-funding as part of the URDF process will also help balance risk when investing. Potential investors should be engaged as soon as practically possible, building upon the relationships established as part of the engagement process for Ennis 2040.

In addition to the URDF, the NDP also provides for funding as part of the Climate Action Fund, with a total of €500 million allocated to same. Ennis 2040 embraces the long-term challenge to transition to a low carbon, climate adaptive society, supporting nature-based solutions to carbon reduction and water management. The proposals included in this strategy for the Wetland and Enterprise Area will not only benefit the natural environment and biodiversity of Ennis but will have positive effects on water management for the wider Shannon basin area. The Climate Action Fund has specifically been put in place to support such projects and should be pursued as a source of funding in the advancement of the Wetland and Enterprise Area.

Consideration should also be given to European funding sources. Examples of sources range from 'LIFE', the European Union's financial instrument supporting environmental and nature conservation projects, to Horizon 2020 the new EU funding programme for research and innovation with a €80 billion budget. The European funding opportunity will be dependent on the project being brought forward and the specifics of the grants available. For example, the LIFE programme for the 2014-2020 funding period includes two sub- programmes, one for the environment and one for climate action. The environment strand of the new programme (75 % of the budget) covers three priority sectors:

- Environment and resource efficiency
- Nature and biodiversity

- Environmental governance and information

The climate action strand (25 % of the budget) covers:

- Climate change mitigation
- Climate change adaptation
- Climate governance and information

These programmes offer funding opportunities through grants, with the Commission also organising procurement tenders. As the Wetland and Enterprise Area could deliver both climate change mitigation and adaptation the LIFE programme is also a potential funding stream at European level.

Securing funding for the implementation of Ennis 2040 will be a core function of the Local Authority Implementation Team, which must seek to understand the multiple and wide ranging funding opportunities available at a European level, changes in funding structures, timings of calls for tenders, requirements relating to funding proposals etc. Applying for funding, especially at a European level, is a fluid process that will be dependant on the opportunities available at the time and progression of a specific project in line with the funds/programmes requirements.

Outside of national and European funding, there are other mechanisms through which the implementation of Ennis 2040 can be funded. Public land will be central to the successful implementation of Ennis 2040 with section 1.4 outlining the role of such land in the establishment of area-based economic vehicles, which can be public, public/private, public/semi state, public/institutional etc., to purchase, hold and manage land/floorspace from an early stage in the development cycle with a focus on opportunity areas/strategic sites. Appropriate sites must be carefully selected and the development partnering process thought through and planned.

Another option, which is more commonly progressed in larger urban areas, are tax incentives. In the Irish context these have had mixed success due to a lack of detailed consideration regarding their implementation and their long term implications. Notwithstanding this, a well-considered and bespoke tax incentive

regime for Ennis may have a role to play in delivering Ennis 2040. In this regard incentives focused on the delivery of transformational projects may increase opportunities for co-funding and in turn access to national and European funding. Central to the adoption of such a regime would be the provision of a clear definition of where tax incentives would be deployed geographically, the type of project that would qualify and the monitoring/management of the implementation process. Within such tax incentive regimes separate mechanisms can be employed to different areas to achieve specific outcome e.g. the Wetland and Enterprise Area to encourage enterprise development and job creation.

In delivering the Spatial Implementation Plan it is recognised that different areas within Ennis and its environs, including Clarecastle, have varying levels of scope for physical change and development.

This is because some areas are already performing well, other areas have specific physical, historical or environmental constraints, while plans are already in place and in the process of being delivered for other areas.

At a strategic level the physical change and development proposed for each location has been tailored to the characteristics and features of that area. Specifically, those within the Town Centre seek to work with and showcase the significant architectural, cultural and historic heritage of Ennis.

Areas within the environs that are less well utilised or failing to deliver the quality and scale of activity expected have been identified for appropriate opportunities. There are also areas where the strategic location of the site and its setting can deliver projects of a transformational nature. It is recognised that many projects will come forward up to 2040 and beyond but to create momentum 7 no. key projects have been chosen for the implementation of the strategy, described here as transformational projects.

While all of the transformational projects have an important role to play in providing a spatial expression to the economic activities proposed, the timeline for delivery of the projects will vary. Town Centre based projects will be progressed in the shorter term to ensure its ongoing vitality and viability and its ability to compete with other centres.

Transformational projects within the environs or in areas where the established use is being expanded have a medium term timeline for delivery.

Transformational projects, that deliver entirely new areas and opportunities for economic activity, as well as improvements in and accessibility to recreational facilities and climate adaptation measures have a medium/long term timeline for delivery.

Cornmarket Precinct

The introduction of new or regenerated mixed use quarters is crucial to patterns of compact growth. Such interventions offer the opportunity to not only use land more efficiently but also to introduce a range of residential and employment uses with supporting service facilities. The Cornmarket area is a unique opportunity which not only achieves a mixed-use form of development on brownfield lands but also enhances the amenity and economic contribution of the area. In this regard the important elements are:

- The manner in which the River Fergus is addressed.
- The creation of a legible building frontage which respects the existing urban fabric

- The introduction of much needed Hotel and conferencing facilities
- The provision of Town Centre living

Being a Town Centre location offers the opportunity for a variety of uses that will enhance the overall attractiveness of the core area that offers options for living and working in Ennis. The proposal as set out aligns with national and regional land use and transportation policy and is the form of development which meets key funding criteria at both a National and EU level

Friar's Walk

The entrance to a Town Centre is important so as to ensure a visually pleasing experience and also to help people orientate themselves and create a sense of arrival. Often the opportunities for improvements can be delivered in tandem with development of infill and underutilised sites. In addition, by their nature the arrival point is the start of an experience and can potentially be suitable for landmark buildings, uses that are best suited at Town Centre edge locations and parking.

The Friar's Walk area of the town is currently a heavily used arrival point due to its direct accessibility by car, uses such as Glor and the Templegate Hotel, parking provision and proximity to the Town Centre. In maximising this potential in this part of the town the intervention will:

- Create a greater sense of arrival into the Town Centre through introduction of a mix of residential, community and educational blocks
- Build on the success of Glor, the new County library and County Museum
- Introduce a new multi-storey car park designed and screened so as to knit into its urban setting
- Establish a new public plaza at the bus terminus
- Promote walking and cycling and better linking neighbourhoods to the east to the Town Centre

Utilising the established pattern of arrival the proposal manages parking more efficiently to service the whole town, introduces new and complementary uses, adds greater building definition and enhances the public realm. Together these improvements will create a better experience for visitors, vibrancy and a more community focused quarter within the Town Centre

Wetlands and Enterprise Area

Seeking out and managing significant tracts of land that may have been historically overlooked as being too difficult to develop or without potential is an important strategic step in delivering a sustainable settlement. Such areas within a town require innovative ideas and new approaches which do not just focus urbanity/built forms but also consider the need for a proposal that can contribute to the overall area.

For Ennis the critical move is to establish a design concept and investment plan for the 'Wetlands' area to the east of the Town Centre that will:

- Allow land parcels to be managed through nature based solutions in a setting noted for its sylvan quality, parkland character and wetlands
- Change the trend on climate adaptation through progressive measures that are proactive rather than reactive
- Promote health and well-being through its recreation and amenity offer to include walking and cycling along with water based activities
- Showcase historic features (e.g. Clare Abbey)
- Provide direct routes to the Town Centre and access to the M18
- Allow land that is not vulnerable to flooding to be utilised for employment activities in areas such as logistics (proximate to the M18), Life Sciences and Technology

Environmental protection is a key aspect of the concept for this area, and it is vital to ensure that measures relating to climate adaptation are enforced to enable the use of the land for various amenity, recreation and leisure activities. The implementation of nature based solutions instead of harder forms of management within the area will need to happen from the outset and will be cost-effective while simultaneously providing environmental, social and economic benefits that help build resilience. Enterprises can grow out of such innovative solutions in areas such as the life sciences and research technology. The role of Ennis on the Atlantic Economic Corridor, its proximity to Limerick and Galway and its accessibility off the M18 presents an opportunity for the development of a modern Enterprise Zone along the eastern boundary of the Wetlands area that can be developed over a 20 year period and is capable of responding to the demands of today and also future needs, many of which are unknown.

Former Ennis National School

A town often has a series of sites that are peripheral to the retail core but strategically very important to the development of the Town Centre. Their potential and availability can be linked to their historic use, such as institutional or industrial, no longer being required or provided elsewhere. Such sites can be relatively unconstrained for a Town Centre setting and capable of providing primarily new residential accommodation with sufficient lands for recreation and amenity along with some employment and educational where appropriate. In addition, due to their likely site size and location these sites can accommodate larger floorplate retailers that do not fit on the core retail area but seeking edge of centre opportunities.

The above-mentioned criteria can be best evidenced in Ennis by the former Ennis National School site which could:

- Provide a range of residential typologies to meet the changing needs of town residents
- Allow for supporting community, sport and recreational facilities
- Deliver a generous public realm for visitors and residents who will also benefit from areas of private and semi-private open space
- Provide a range of local services for those residing in this quarter of the town
- Offer the potential for larger floorplate convenience retailers to locate at an edge of centre location as part of a mixed use scheme that integrates with the residential element

Taking advantage of the brownfield lands within the built up area for mixed or residential purposes in a more densified format will ensure proper utilisation of land. In addition, the scale of the site allows for a substantive residential component which will inter alia accommodate older people wishing to downsize and move closer to the Town Centre for greater accessibility. This approach would reinforce this part of the town as a residential led quarter with a strong urban character and represent an exemplar of the best of urban living in a sensitive context.

Roche Opportunity Site

Historical patterns of development not only give rise to areas/features for protection but also opportunities for redevelopment/regeneration. Where this occurs with site of scale it can be a significant asset but also a challenge in terms of deciding on use, scale, phasing and infrastructural investment.

The Roche site at Clarecastle has long been an important economic asset but advancements and changes in the market, now mean that there is a need for the area to be reimagined with new development solutions for the lands. It is envisaged that the land could:

- Be subject to a separate Masterplan which takes full advantage of the existing site use (e.g. infrastructure)
- Have a clear employment focus and be attractive to National Agencies due to its scale
- Have a new 'front door' to the town and 'front room' to the River Fergus
- Provide linkages into and around Clarecastle and along the River Fergus
- Maximise the potential for diversity of use

The redevelopment of the Roche opportunity site is likely to be medium to long term and therefore has a key role to play over the next 14 years to 2040. Its scale allows for some of the lands to be phased so as to cater for uses and opportunities

in the future which we don't know about today. It will be important to continue the Employment/Enterprise Park use of this site while also maintaining certain parameters such as existing building heights, the waste water treatment plant and other key infrastructural aspects. In addition, the waterfront portion could deliver a mixed recreational led scheme with visitor accommodation, permanent residential, water activities and a strong walking/cycling link along the River Fergus to Ennis Train Station and Town Centre.

Clare Technology Park

Building on existing strengths is equally important as introducing a new offer to a town and achieving a constant blend which seeks to intensify existing uses is central to a sustainable economic proposition. The established employment uses not only signify a particular economic activity but are also generate a set of skills within the workforce which respond to the needs of particular enterprises. Maintaining the jobs for these workers is important and opportunities for expansion at established locations should be encouraged. The Clare Technology Park has such potential and will:

- Be subject to a separate Masterplan which takes full advantage of the residual lands
- Have a clear employment focus
- Introduce other uses, where appropriate
- Link to the surround area

Significant scope exists both within the Clare Technology Park and its environs for employment related developments in the short to medium term. This would provide commercial floorspace that could accommodate both start up enterprise and SME's looking for modern facilities to build their business in Ennis. This area of the town may also accommodate residential uses at increased densities.

Data Centre (Toureen)

The strategy envisages a data centre campus arrangement that can allow for future growth and the delivery of premises that may need to differ from normal commercial developments due to the changing nature of IT and data centre services. Data centre occupiers, whether enterprise and/or operators, are sensitive to project certainty and as such the scheme will be implemented early to attract potential tenants to the location.

Having regard to the Government Statement on The Role of Data Centres in Ireland, which in particular recommends having a plan-led approach to data centres, this 55ha site has been identified and zoned as Enterprise (45ha) and Buffer (10ha) with a specific use for a Data Centre Campus due to:

- Its proximity to the electricity sub-station
- Its proximity to the M18 motorway and adjoining regional road network
- Its location relative to the Gas Pipeline
- Its access to available Dark Fibre

Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework sets out the strategic importance of data centres in Ireland's Enterprise strategy. This proposal offers great potential in the short to medium term and can accommodate the economic activities required to grow Ennis as a location for significant employment.

Map 10 Transformational Project





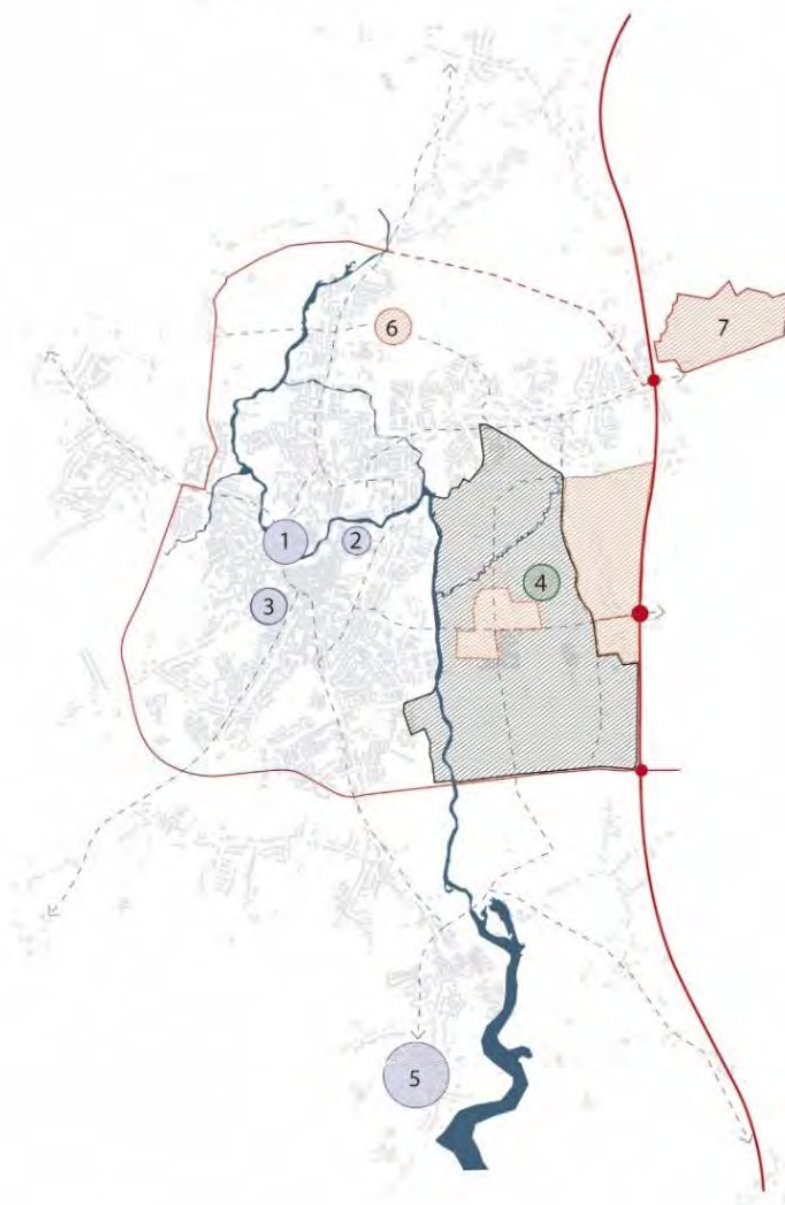
CO. CLARE IN IRELAND



ENNIS IN CLARE



ENNIS AND SURROUNDING AREA



Key:

- 1 CORNMARKE PRECINC
- 2 FRIARS WALK
- 3 FORMER ENNIS NATIONAL SCHOOL
- 4 WETLANDS AND ENTERPRISE AREA
- 5 ROCHE SITE
- 6 CLARE TECHNOLOGY PARK
- 7 DATA CENTRE

-  WETLAND AREA
-  INDUSTRY (BUSINESS, TECHNOLOGY)
-  MIXED USE DEVELOPMENTS (RESIDENTIAL, RECREATION, RETAIL)

-  CIRCULATION
-  M18
-  CIRCULAR ROAD
-  CIRCULAR ROAD EXTENSION
-  RIVER FERGUS

The 7 no. transformational projects as set out in the Spatial Implementation Plan have a central role in delivering the actions outlined in the strategy and realising the Spatial Implementation Plan. They have been carefully considered and chosen not only in the context of the future spatial and economic development of Ennis but in terms of their adherence to and compliance with long-term national and regional planning policy guidance.

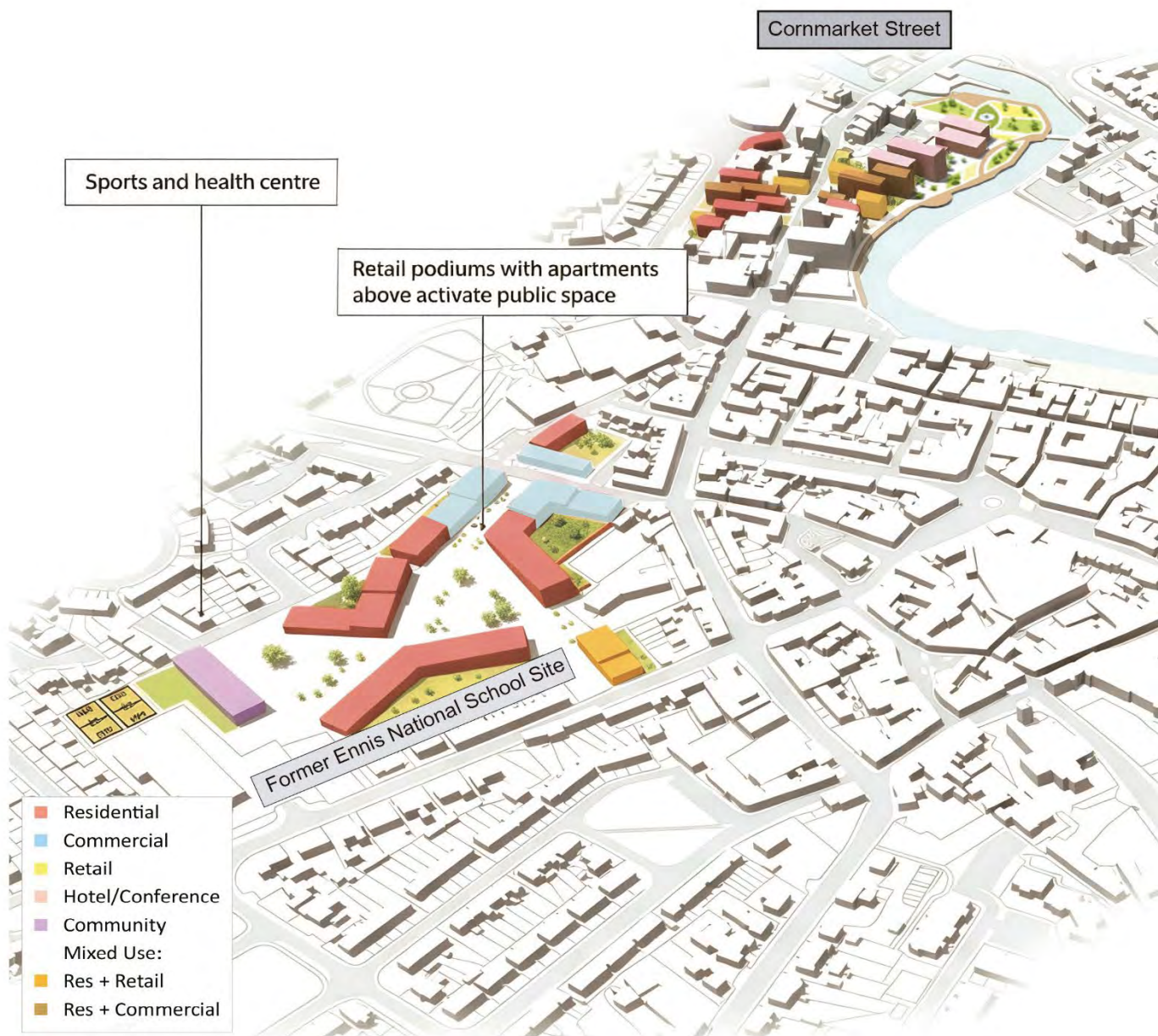
The NPF sets out the long-term vision for future development in Ireland, with its implementation underpinned by 10 no. NSOs. These NSOs in turn form the basis of the strategy for the Southern Region and its 11 no. actions/outcomes, as outlined in the RSES. As these are the documents that will guide the future development of Ireland in the long-term, and given that investment through the NDP will be based on projects that underpin the successful implementation of the NPF, the table opposite demonstrates the multiple ways in which each transformational project aligns with both the NPF and the RSES.

Given the remit of Ennis 2040 which focuses on the spatial and economic development of Ennis and its immediate environs, the transformational projects do not directly address certain NSOs such as 'Enhanced Regional Accessibility' and 'High Quality International Connectivity'. It is envisaged, however, that the long-term growth of Ennis under this strategy will have positive impacts on the region, including its connectivity and rural economies, in line with these NSOs.

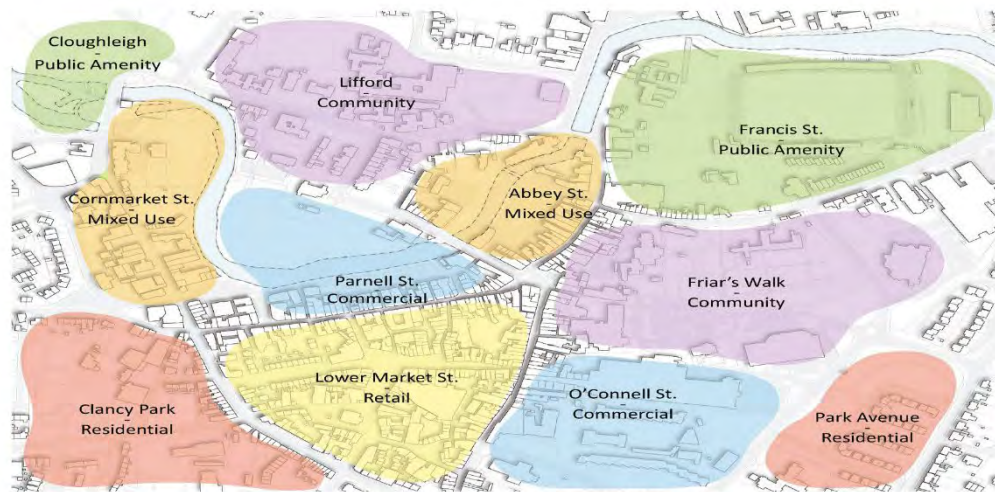
As demonstrated by the table opposite at the heart of all the transformational projects is the realisation of the compact growth of Ennis, the achievement of sustainable mobility and the delivery of access to quality childcare, education and health services. These in combination are the basis for and key to Ennis leading the way as Ireland's first '10 Minute Town' and along with the delivery of multiple other NSOs ensure that the transformational projects are funding ready under the NDP.

NPF - NSOs		Summary of RSES
	1. COMPACT GROWTH	STRENGTHEN AND GROW CITIES AND METROPOLITAN AREAS, BUILDING ON THE STRONG NETWORK OF TOWNS.
	2. ENHANCED REGIONAL ACCESSIBILITY	ENHANCED REGIONAL ACCESSIBILITY.
	3. STRENGTHENED RURAL ECONOMIES & COMMUNITIES	STRENGTHEN THE ROLE AND IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE REGION'S DIVERSE RURAL PLACES AND VALUE OUR RURAL REGION.
	4. SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY	TRANSFORM OUR TRANSPORT SYSTEMS TO AN INTEGRATED PUBLIC TRANSPORT, WALKING, CYCLING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLES
	5. A STRONG ECONOMY SUPPORTED BY ENTERPRISE, INNOVATION & SKILLS	BUILD A COMPETITIVE, INNOVATIVE & PRODUCTIVE ECONOMY
	6. HIGH-QUALITY INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY	OPTIMISE INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY THROUGH INVESTMENT, INCREASED CAPACITY AND PROVISION OF HIGH QUALITY DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY
	7. ENHANCED AMENITY & HERITAGE	STRENGTHEN AND PROTECT THE DIVERSE CULTURE, RECREATION, BIODIVERSITY AND NATURAL AND BUILT HERITAGE
	8. TRANSITION TO A LOW CARBON & CLIMATE RESILIENT SOCIETY	SAFEGUARD AND ENHANCE OUR ENVIRONMENT THROUGH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, TRANSITIONING TO A LOW CARBON AND CLIMATE RESILIENT SOCIETY
	9. SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER, WASTE & OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES IN A SUSTAINABLE, PLAN AND INFRASTRUCTURE LED MANNER TO ENSURE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES
	10. ACCESS TO QUALITY CHILDCARE, EDUCATION AND HEALTH SERVICES	ACHIEVING IMPROVED ACCESS TO SERVICES AND FACILITIES FOR ALL CITIZENS
		BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE OUTWARD LOOKING INTERNATIONAL REGION ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

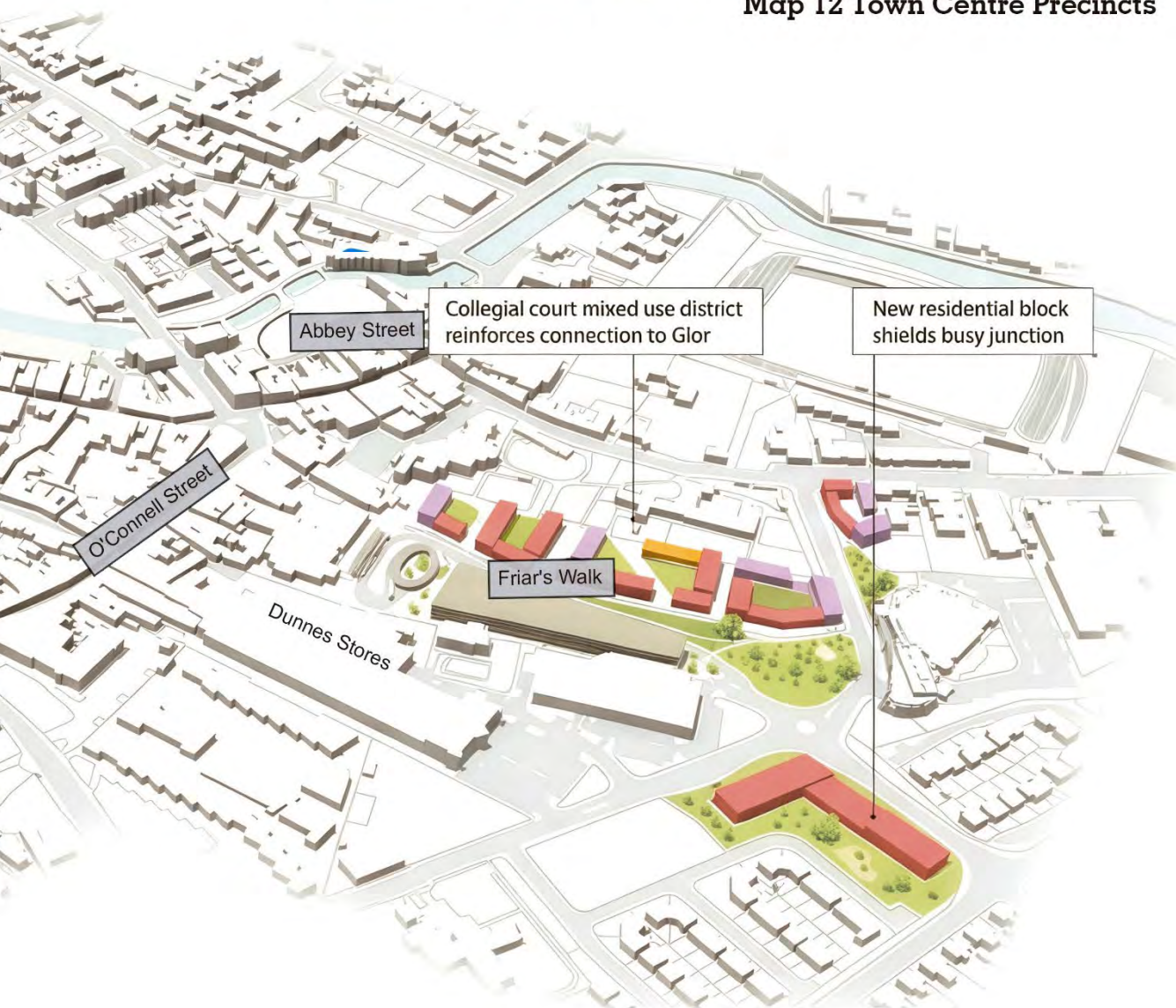
Transformational Projects						
Cornmarket	Friars Walk	Former Ennis National School	Wetland and Enterprise Area	Roche Opportunity Site	Clare Technology Park Opportunity Site	Data Centre (Toureen)
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
						✓
				✓		
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
					✓	✓
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
			✓			
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



Map 11 Axonometric of Town Centre Transformational Projects



Map 12 Town Centre Precincts







Cornmarket Precinct

Concept

Cornmarket Street will be redeveloped into a vibrant mixed-use area that both supports the town's economy and enriches the range of amenities available to residents and visitors. The bustling new district along the River Fergus will comprise of a new hotel/ conference centre to support both business and recreational visitors, new retail/ residential/ commercial and mixed use space within a riparian setting.

Purpose

This Economic and Spatial Strategy has identified a range of measures that are required in order to allow Ennis to grow its population and economy, and to fulfil a more prominent role in the region. The Cornmarket Transformational Project will support a range of these measures by:

- Creating a mixed use precinct that will provide additional floorspace for a range of different users
- Facilitate job creation in the town through the provision of additional commercial and retail facilities
- Provide additional residential units of a type that meets the changing requirements of the population
- Provide additional retail floorspace at a quantum that serves local needs and helps to enliven the area without detracting from core town centre shopping areas
- Improve the amenity of the River Fergus by providing a key component of the overall approach to showcasing it as a key feature of the town.

Description

The proposal seeks to transform the Cornmarket area by encouraging the redevelopment of key strategic sites which are currently underutilised, while retaining existing built form elements that contribute to the unique character of the area. A new building form will be created along the river front, influenced by mill buildings and the traditional pitched roofs in the area. The hotel and commercial/ residential mixed uses will take full advantage of the waterfront location. Key features of the project are as follows:

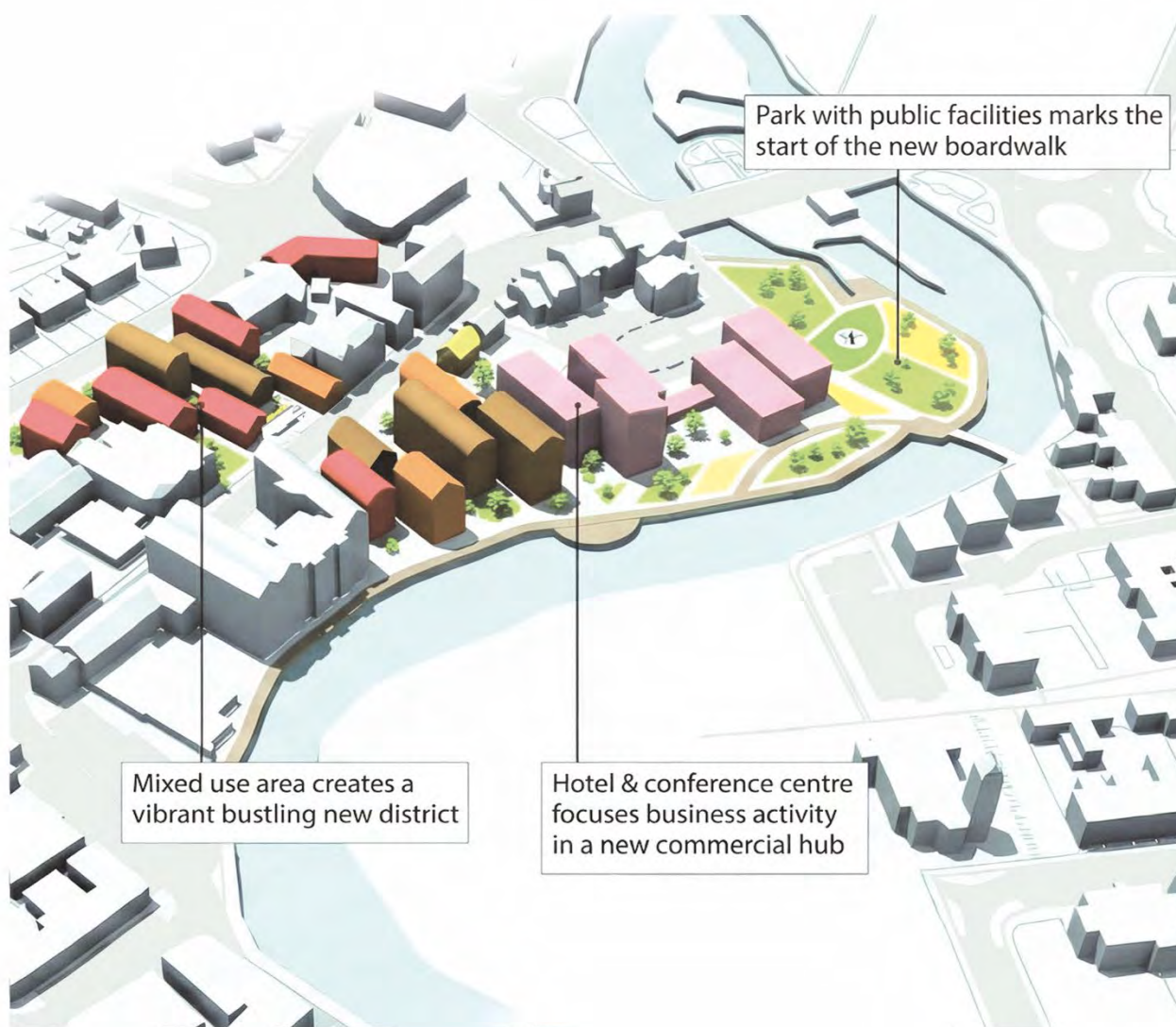
- Mixed use buildings with predominately residential uses above ground on both sides of the R458.
- Ground floors primarily consist of retail and/or commercial uses to activate the street.
- A Hotel & Conference Centre to focus business activity in a new commercial hub. The proposed hotel will overlook the river Fergus with a highly landscaped Riverside Park with appropriate street furniture to be located between the hotel and river.
- Heights to range up to 7 storeys adjacent to the river, with lesser heights to address the R458.

Residential and Commercial Floorspace - Capacity to provide 17,000 sqm floorspace within the Town Centre



Plan Actions	Multiple
Timeframe	Medium
Lead Agency	Clare County Council
Implementation Partners	Private Land Owners

Residential
Commercial
Retail
Hotel/Conference
Community
Mixed Use
Res + Retail
Res + Commercial



Implementation Strategy

The delivery of all of the transformational projects set out herein will require the support of a range of stakeholders as well as a key champion/ organisation to drive the identified projects forward. The particular arrangements may differ for each project, however, the creation of a specific development vehicle may be required. The following high level elements/steps have been identified for the implementation of the Cornmarket Precinct project:

- Engage with relevant landowners including Ennis Tennis & Badminton Club.
- Secure alternative accommodation/site for tennis club.
- Agreement of development structure which will be used, likely a combined partnership.
- Assess market demand and carry out feasibility study on viability of new hotel and conference facilities as well as for other mixed uses proposed.
- Secure finance to fund site acquisition and construction.
- Obtain necessary planning permissions.
- Secure contractor and begin construction.
- Letting and managing of the development, secure hotel tenant/purchaser.
- Potential to secure some of the residential accommodation as social and affordable housing options.

Features and Uses



Modulated heights and roof forms to create visual interest. A variety of uses to encourage activity throughout the day and evening.



Riparian setting



Mixed-Use



Public Open Space



Vibrant and bustling



Additional Residential uses



Connected to the town centre

Sustainability Principles

- Increased utilisation of Town Centre site with a high level of accessibility
- Proposed connection to pedestrian and cyclist network
- Town Centre parkland setting to support biodiversity
- Mix of uses to facilitate living and working in the same area and resultant reduction in requirement to commute

Cornmarket Precinct



Encouraging the redevelopment of key strategic sites into a vibrant mixed-use area that supports the town's economy.



Wetlands and Enterprise Area

Concept

The role of Ennis on the Atlantic Economic Corridor, its proximity to Limerick and Galway and its accessibility to the M18 presents an opportunity for the development of a modern Enterprise Zone, which can be developed over a 20 year period. The Wetland and Enterprise Area offers the potential in the medium to long term to accommodate the economic activities required to grow Ennis as a location for significant employment.

Additionally, its proximity to the train station will allow for a mixed use approach incorporating new neighbourhood centres and the adjacency with the Town Centre will encourage workers to travel to the core area during weekdays. The location adjacent to the River Fergus, along with the natural wetlands in the area, will enable the creation of new nature walks and parkland to support the new economic and residential development in the area.

Purpose

The project forms a key part of the economic expansion proposals for Ennis and a substantial proportion of the overall additional commercial floorspace will be delivered in this area. A minimum of 20,000 sqm commercial floorspace should be delivered, which would have the potential to increase significantly to a multiple of that figure if a multi-national company were to invest and/or if a substantial Business and Technology Park were constructed with a range of small- medium sized users. As the transformational project develops over time, a shift in the competitive context of the region will occur, with

Ennis increasing its profile vis-a-vis other locations. As a number of new businesses locate in the town, a critical mass of both people and employment will reinforce the case for further investment.

Description

This transformational project will involve the expansion of Ennis to the east, into the lands between the existing town and the M18 and will also comprise the following:

- An upgrade of the R469 and a new junction onto M18 from R569 creating a new connection to the M18.
- Three new neighbourhood centres consisting of mixed use developments.
- Village centre with mixed use developments incorporating high quality housing tenures and commercial/retail uses.
- Enterprise zones alongside new junction to M18, incorporating light industry, business hubs, and enterprise uses.
- Public open space along River Fergus, with the creation of boardwalks and nature paths.
- A managed Wetland park.
- Forest park with recreational play spaces and MTB trails.
- Sports pitches, community gardens, allotments and amenity areas.
- Greater pedestrian and cyclist linkages created to Clarecastle and the town centre.

1 Million sqm Wetlands - Environmental protection and delivering measures relating

to climate adaptation will enable the use of the land for various amenity, recreation and leisure

Plan Actions

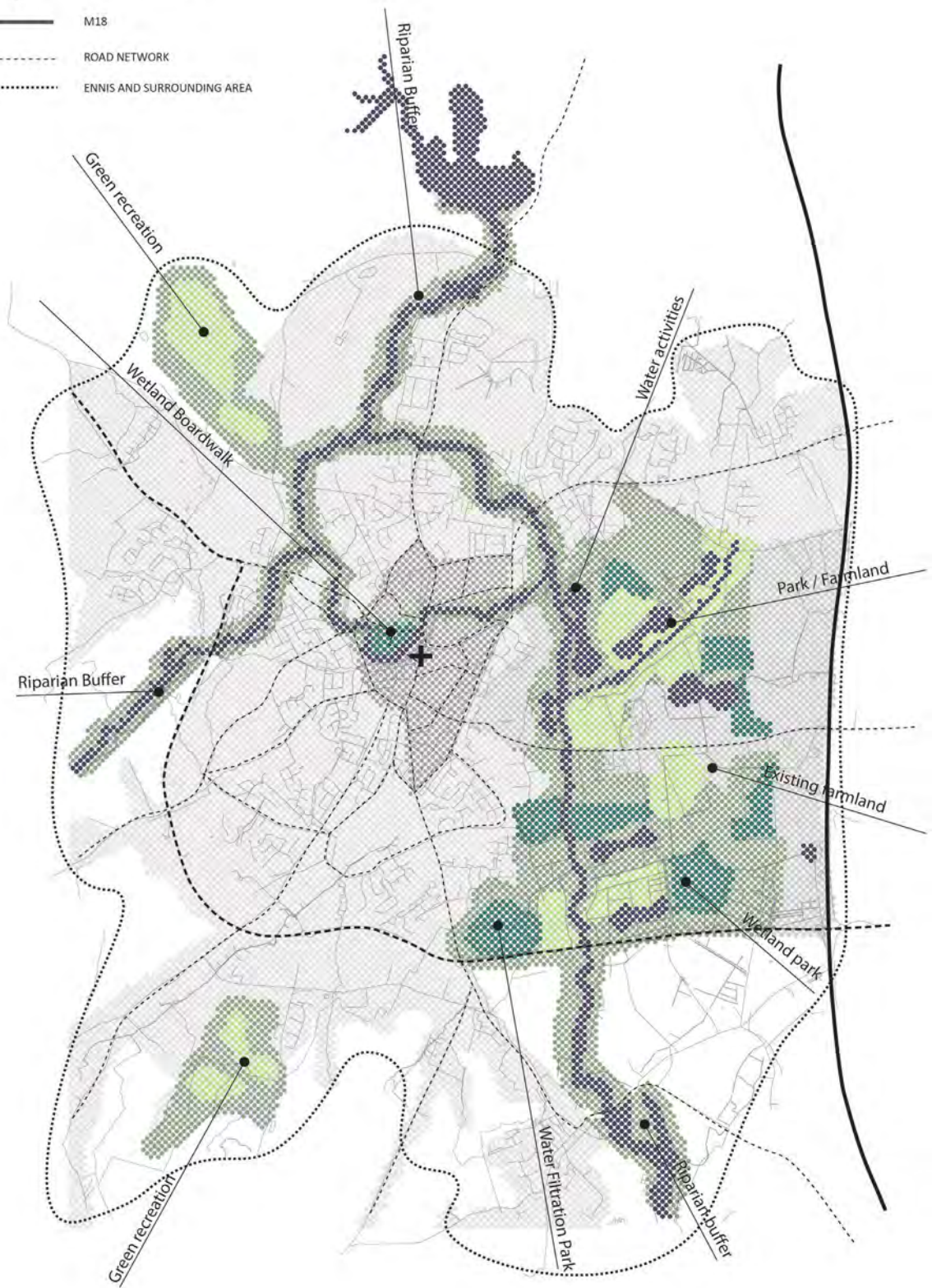
Multiple

Medium/Long

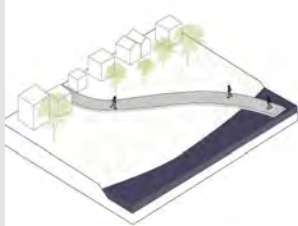
Lead Agency

Clare County Council

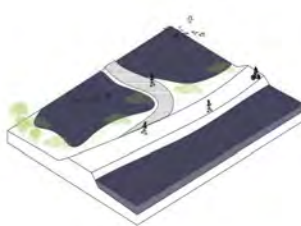
-  ENNIS TOWN CENTRE
-  M18
-  ROAD NETWORK
-  ENNIS AND SURROUNDING AREA



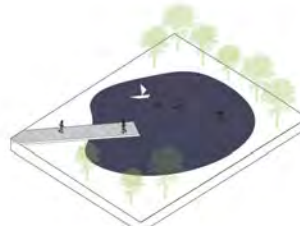
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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| URBAN CENTRE | NEW INDUSTRY | URBAN AREA | FARMING / RECREATION | EXISTING GREEN AREAS & BOGLAND | WETLAND AREAS | WATER BODIES |



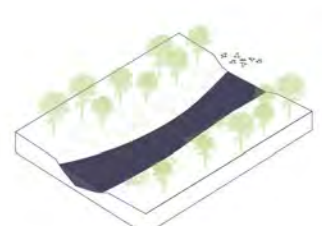
URBAN WETLAND WALKWAY



WETLAND PARK



WATER ACTIVITIES



RIPARIAN BUFFER



Extract from Seven Lochs Exemplar

Implementation Strategy

The delivery of all of the transformational projects will require the support of a range of stakeholders as well as a key champion/ organisation to drive the projects forward. The particular arrangements may differ for each project, however, the creation of a specific development vehicle may be required.

The Wetland and Enterprise Area has a longer-term timeframe for implementation due to the scale and complexity of the project. The Wetlands will be a transformational project that will deliver

new opportunities for economic activity as well as improving access and providing for recreational facilities and residential accommodation. As such, a medium to long term timeline for delivery is expected. Initially, the critical step will be to establish an overall design concept and investment plan that will allow for various land parcels to come forward for development on a phased basis.



Features and Uses



Wetlands



Commercial



Additional Residential uses



Proximity to Airport



Sustainability Principles

- Sensitive redevelopment of a low lying area to incorporate extensive open space to support local biodiversity
- Mix of uses to facilitate living and working in the same area and resultant reduction in requirement to commute

| Wetlands and Enterprise Area



The expansion of Ennis to the east to deliver additional commercial floorspace, the upgrade of the M18 and a managed Wetland Park.



THE SEVEN LOCHS WETLAND PARK - MASTERPLAN AND VISIONING STUDY

The lochs and wetlands within the Gartloch and Gartcosh area are one of Glasgow and Clyde Valley's hidden treasures. The Seven Lochs Wetland Park vision and masterplan details proposals for the creation of a new wetland park of national, and indeed, international significance. It sets out a clear vision and identity for the park, defines its physical extent and proposes well defined phases of work for the creation and on-going development of the Park.

The Seven Lochs Wetland Park provides an opportunity to recognise and promote the unique character of the area; protect and enhance the existing heritage and natural heritage; and consider the area as a whole in terms of its hydrology, heritage and recreational importance.

The guiding principles for the creation of the Seven Lochs Wetland Park, which are considered to be directly applicable to the development of the Wetland and Enterprise Area, are:

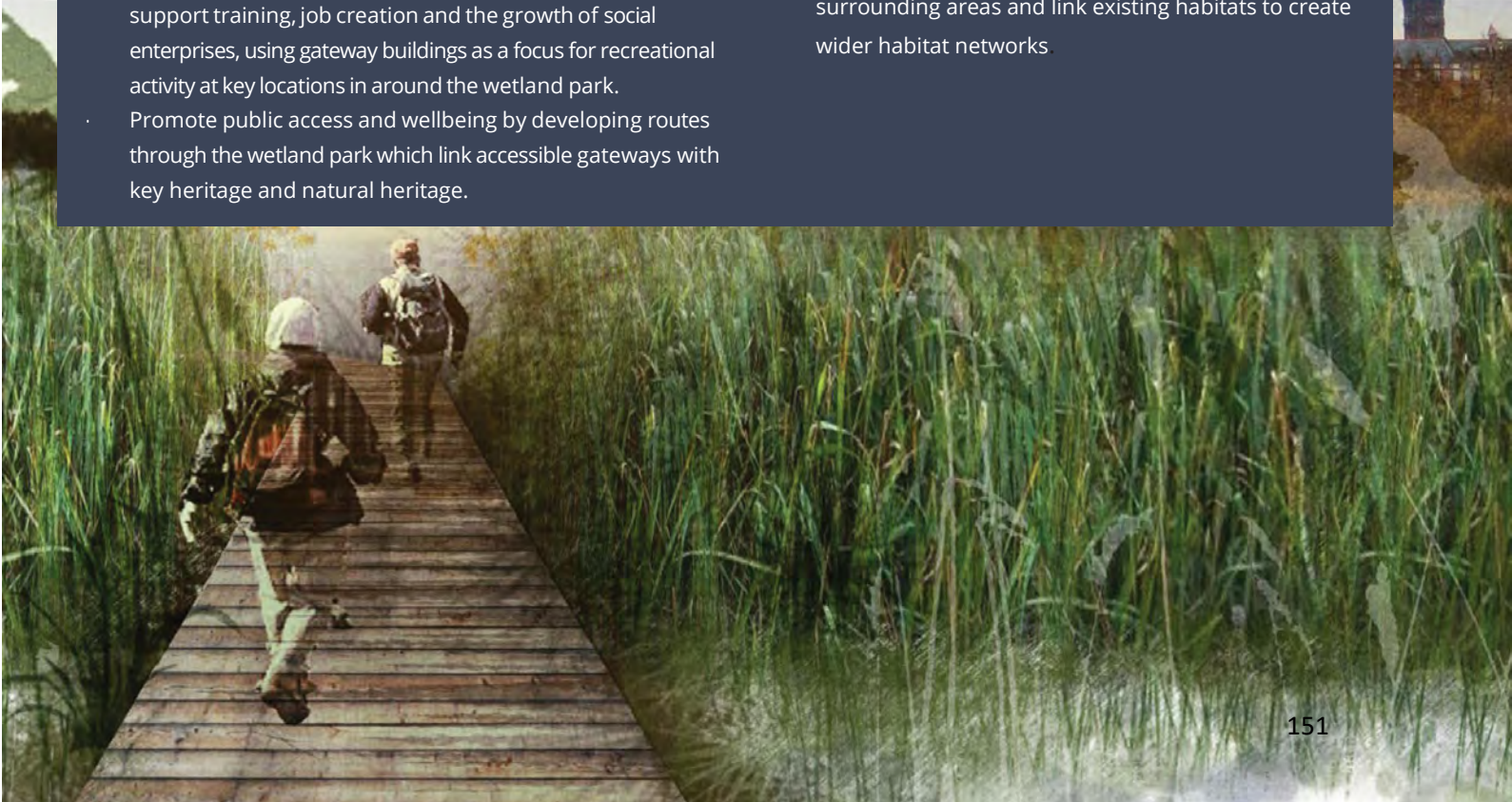
- Integrate a strategy for current and future water management into the creation and management of the wetland park, with an emphasis on flood risk mitigation and improving water quality.
- Support regeneration and the creation of better places by integrating new development into the wetland park and linking the park with neighbouring communities through a network of high quality, accessible greenspaces.
- Co-ordinate environmental enhancement across the area, protecting and enhancing existing landscapes, and creating new water bodies, wetlands and other habitats to expand existing habitat networks.
- Plan for the future by identifying, protecting and enhancing vital ecosystem services and integrating climate change adaptation and mitigation into the park plan.
- Encourage education, enjoyment, and participation, and support training, job creation and the growth of social enterprises, using gateway buildings as a focus for recreational activity at key locations in around the wetland park.
- Promote public access and wellbeing by developing routes through the wetland park which link accessible gateways with key heritage and natural heritage.

features and encouraging connectivity.

Identify specific zones within the park which relate to surrounding communities, and propose site specific interventions and focal points to encourage park interaction.

As with the development of the Wetland and Enterprise Area, the success of the Park will be dependent upon a number of key factors including:

- Its creation and management must link with ongoing regeneration activity in surrounding communities, ensuring that it is recognised as an important local resource and is well used.
- A strong 'heritage and nature' identity must be established for the park, attracting visitors from further afield, and helping to protect the area from over-development.
- Sustainable management of water and land must support and enhance vital ecosystem services.
- New development within and around the park must be based on sensitive and innovative design that uses new integrated green infrastructure to strengthen the edges of the park, provide routes into the park from surrounding areas and link existing habitats to create wider habitat networks.





Zone Locations - Relates to the way the park is used by local residents on a daily basis

The Plan identifies five 'Community Growth Areas', setting out the range of uses to be accommodated on each, how they connect to and integrate with the park areas and where they will provide retention areas for flooding. Features of specific

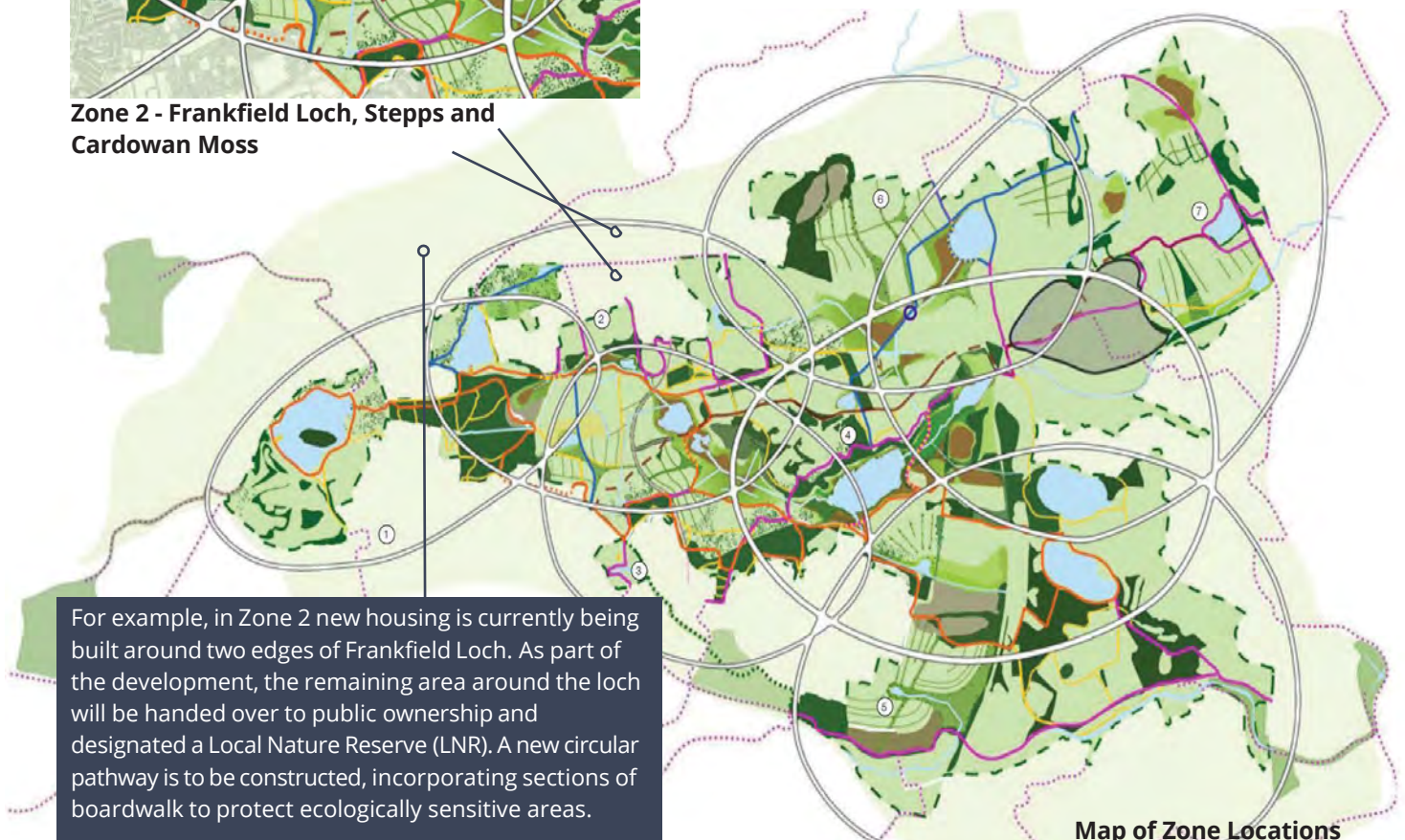
areas include *inter alia* swales and green fingers for pedestrian routes, new pedestrian and habitat corridors and allotments for local community use

Proposals by zone - Each zone includes one of the Seven Lochs, and one of the proposed seven gateways into the Park. They are designed to cater for park users, with the circular walk around each of the seven clusters ensuring all residents can access an existing, refurbished, or new community facility, helping to create a link between community and the park. Certain gateways are specifically community orientated and will enhance community links with the Park, building a relationship that encourages community interaction with and an appreciation of the educational and recreational benefits that the Park can provide.



Zone 2 - Frankfield Loch, Stepps and Cardowan Moss

For example, in Zone 2 new housing is currently being built around two edges of Frankfield Loch. As part of the development, the remaining area around the loch will be handed over to public ownership and designated a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). A new circular pathway is to be constructed, incorporating sections of boardwalk to protect ecologically sensitive areas.



Map of Zone Locations

Friar's Walk

Park & Stride Spaces - Delivered as part of a multi-use building, this will improve the vitality

Concept

The Friar's Walk Transformational Project seeks to substantially intensify the use of the land attached to the Poor Clare Monastery, a strategic underutilised land bank located along Francis Street as well as the surrounding area. The proposed new mixed use district will reinforce a connection to Glór and new County library, while also delivering high quality housing of a typology that will respond to the needs of the town in the future. New residential development will provide an urban edge to the junction, while a multi-storey car park and bus shelter will provide for increased public transport usage, helping Ennis to become a more sustainable community.

Purpose

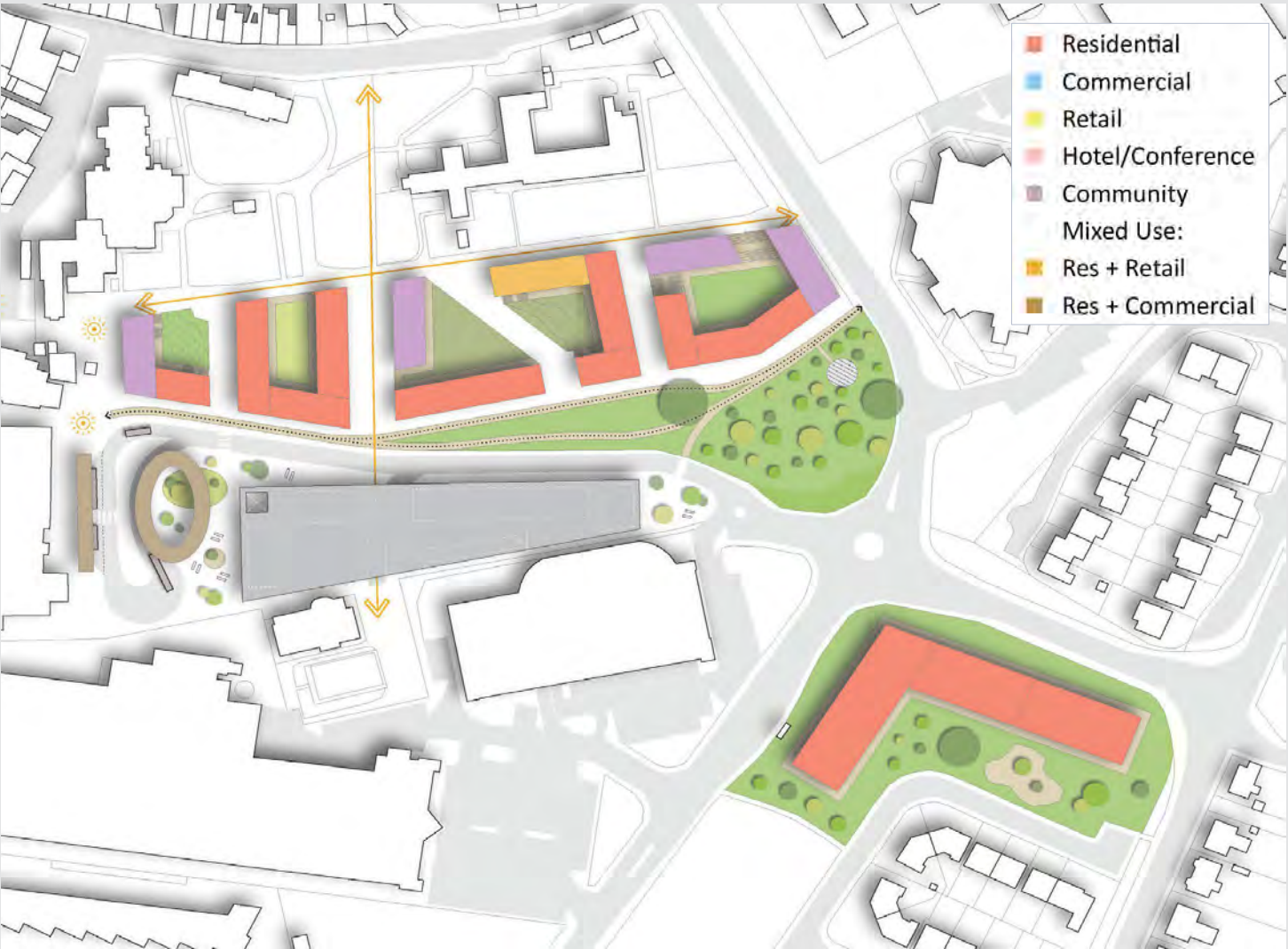
In order to achieve the broader vision for Ennis articulated herein, including an expanded population and economy, it is necessary to identify underutilised sites within the town. A key part of this approach is ensuring that the town is adequately catered for in terms of commercial, residential and transportation infrastructure. The Friar's Walk project will contribute significantly in terms of the above, particularly with regard to the town's residential and transportation requirements.

While this strategy seeks to further promote sustainable modes of transport including walking and cycling, parking requirements also need to be catered for. The provision of a new parking structure at this location will enable those visiting the town to leave their car in a location that will enable access to the Town Centre on foot and reduce the need to bring the car further into the Town Centre.

Description

The Friar's Walk Transformational Project seeks to coherently knit together a number of underutilised sites, creating a reinvigorated quarter adjacent to the Poor Clare Monastery. Key features of the project are as follows:

- Residential blocks to provide a mix of unit types at heights of 2-4 storeys.
- Blocks to be arranged around a courtyard setting, which is well supervised and overlooked.
- Pedestrian permeability around/through blocks.
- Community development to support, enhance and expand existing uses in the locality.
- Residential block to form an urban edge to the roundabout.
- Proposed public open space to enhance amenity and be overlooked by residential uses.
- A multi-storey car park to provide for travel to the town centre, alongside a new bus shelter to promote and provide for public transport infrastructure.



Plan Actions	Multiple
	Medium
Lead Agency	Clare County Council



Implementation Strategy

The delivery of all of the transformational projects set out herein will require the support of a range of stakeholders as well as a key champion/organisation to drive the identified projects forward. The particular arrangements may differ for each project, however, the creation of a specific development vehicle may be required. The following high level elements/steps have been identified for the implementation of the Friar's Walk project:

- Engagement between the Local Authority and the Poor Clare Monastery, the landowners of the site.
- Agree a development structure, likely to be a private-led partnership or combined
- 44partnership with community and residential development proposed.
- Undertake market analysis and assess feasibility of mixed use development envisaged.
- Identify development design, obtain relevant permissions and secure finance.
- Manage construction and the letting/sale of the completed development.
- Engage with relevant stakeholders such as Bus Eireann and the NTA in relation to the provision of the bus shelter/depot.
- Agree a development structure and secure relevant funding/finance.
- Secure relevant permissions for bus shelter and multi-storey car park.



Features and Uses



Mixed-Use



Public Open Space



Transport Hub



Additional Residential uses



Sustainability Principles

- Transport interchange to facilitate bus access
- Open space incorporated into development blocks
- Heights and orientation designed to maximise access to natural light and reduce requirements for heating and cooling
- Mix of uses to facilitate living and working in the same area and resultant reduction in requirement to commute

Friar's Walk



Proposed new mixed use district seeking to substantially intensify the use of the land attached to the Poor Clare Monastery.



Former Ennis National School

Concept

The Former Ennis National School Intervention seeks to provide additional residential uses as well as improving the health and well-being of the population, through the provision of recreational facilities and a leisure centre to add a focal point to the area. Capable of accommodating residential development, the former national school site aims to provide a range of uses. Active public open space and retail services will also be provided.

Purpose

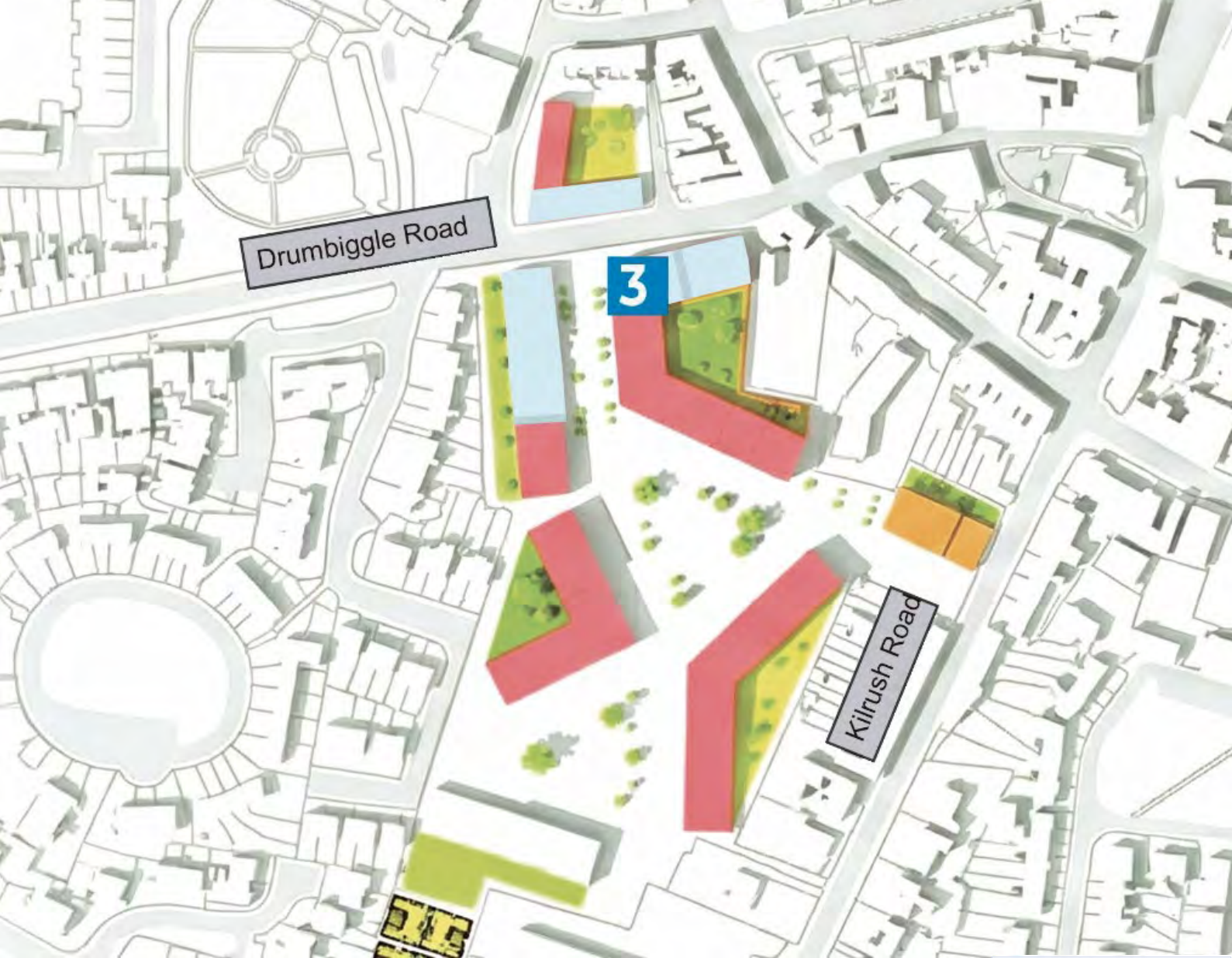
A key aspect of the economic expansion of Ennis is the provision of additional sites to accommodate a range of uses in the town centre. Indeed, the availability of accessible, suitable accommodation is a key consideration for those considering investing in a given location.

The redevelopment of the Former National School site to provide both residential, retail and community uses will not only provide additional accommodation but will also promote the liveability of the area through the provision of leisure uses and quality open space.

Description

The project area consists of large block located between the Kilrush Road and Drumbiggle Drive, as well as a smaller site bounded by Butter Market Street to the east. The proposal is for a mixed-use development, the key features of which are the following:

- A generously proportioned central public space, surrounded by ground floor retail uses to activate the space.
- The proposed public space to be high quality and carefully landscaped in order to be able to accommodate a range of occasional uses.
- High quality blocks, ranging from 3-5 storeys in a landscaped setting, with lesser heights to the west of the site adjoining existing residential development.
- A leisure centre.
- Retail services are to be provided at ground floor level to provide for the day to day needs of the surrounding population, without seeking to compete with the core Town Centre area.
- Offer the potential for larger floorplate convenience retailers to locate at an edge of centre location as part of a mixed use scheme that integrates with the residential element



Plan Actions	Multiple
	Short
Lead Agency	Clare County Council

- Residential
- Commercial
- Retail
- Hotel/Conference
- Community
- Mixed Use:
- Res + Retail
- Res + Commercial

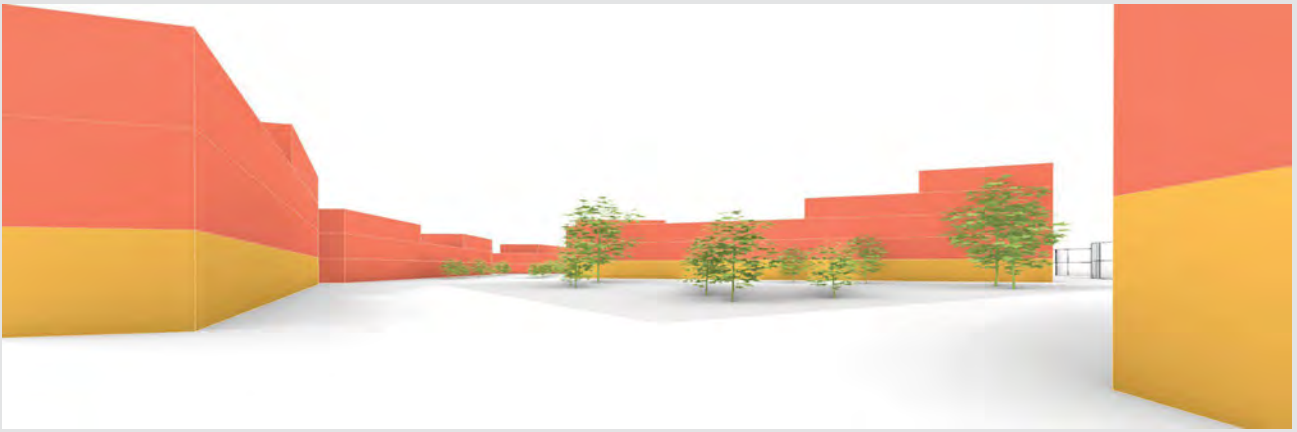


Heights are modulated to increase visual interest and reduce overshadowing of the space

Implementation Strategy

The delivery of all of the transformational projects set out herein will require the support of a range of stakeholders as well as a key champion/ organisation to drive the identified projects forward. The particular arrangements may differ for each project, however, the creation of a specific development vehicle may be required. The following high level elements/steps have been identified for the implementation of the Former National School project:

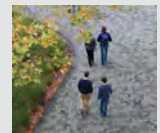
- Engage with relevant landowners and residents in the surrounding area.
- Undertake market analysis for the demand for housing and housing types.
- Undertake feasibility study to ascertain viability of proposed residential development at this location.
- Agreement of development structure and securing of necessary finance.
- Obtain necessary permissions and management of construction.
- Letting/managing of completed development.
- Secure partner/occupier for leisure centre.



Ground floor retail to activate the public space with residential above.



Features and Uses



Public Open Space



Community Uses



Additional Residential uses



Retail

Sustainability Principles

- Redevelopment of an important opportunity site to include high levels of open space
- Residential accommodation provided in a location that would enable residents to walk/ cycle to the Town Centre for employment

Roche Opportunity Site

Concept

A site of scale, like the Roche site at Clarecastle, can be a significant asset but also a challenge in terms of deciding on use, scale, phasing and infrastructural investment.

The redevelopment of this opportunity site is likely to be medium to long term and therefore has a key role to play over the next 14 years to 2040. Its scale allows for some of the lands to be phased so as to cater for uses and opportunities in the future which we don't know about today.

It will be important to continue the Employment/Enterprise Park use of this site while also maintaining certain parameters such as existing building heights, the waste water treatment plant and other key infrastructural aspects. In addition the waterfront portion could deliver a mixed recreational led scheme with visitor accommodation, permanent residential, water activities and a strong walking /cycling link along the River Fergus to Ennis' Train and Bus Stations and the Town Centre.

Purpose

Job creation near to where people live is crucial to the success of Ennis going forward. It not only benefits the

local economy but also supports more sustainable modes of transport and creates the potential for other new associated business and enterprise.

The Roche site offers the potential to support the economy over a long period of time and respond to differing commercial needs over time. The preparation of a Masterplan to guide this process will be an important first step and ensure that the opportunity is maximised.

Description

The Roche site at Clarecastle has long been an important economic asset but advancements and changes in the market place now mean that there is a need for the area to be reimaged with new development solutions for the lands. It is envisaged that the land could:

- Be subject to a separate Masterplan which takes full advantage of the existing site use (e.g. infrastructure)
- Have a clear employment focus and be attractive to National Agencies due to its scale
- Have a new 'front door' to the town and 'front room' to the River Fergus
- Provide linkages into and around Clarecastle and along the River Fergus
- Maximise the potential for diversity of use



Plan Actions

Multiple

Medium/Long

Lead Agency

Clare County Council

Clare Technology Park

Concept

Building on existing strengths is equally important as introducing a new offer to a town and achieving a constant blend which seeks to intensify existing uses is central to a sustainable economic proposition.

The established employment uses not only signify a particular economic activity but are also generate a set of skills within the workforce which respond to the needs of particular enterprises. Maintaining the jobs for these workers are important and opportunities for expansion at established locations should be encouraged.

Purpose

Significant scope exists both within the Clare Technology Park and its environs for employment related developments in the short to medium term. This would provide commercial floorspace that could accommodate both start up enterprise and SME's looking from modern facilities to build their business in Ennis. This area of the town may also accommodate residential uses at increased densities.

Description

The Clare Technology Park has such potential and will:

- Be subject to a separate Masterplan which takes full advantage of the residual lands
- Have a clear employment focus
- Introduce other uses where appropriate
- Link to the surrounding area through residential zoned land by the provision of a railway bridge



Plan Actions

Multiple

Short/Medium



Lead Agency

Clare County Council

Data Centre (Toureen)

Concept

Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework sets out the strategic importance of data centres in Ireland's Enterprise strategy. This proposal offers great potential in the short to medium term and can accommodate the economic activities required to grow Ennis as a location for significant employment.

The strategy envisages a data centre campus arrangement that can allow for future growth and the delivery of premises that may need to differ from normal commercial developments due to the changing nature of IT and data centre services. Data centre occupiers, whether enterprise and/or operators, are sensitive to project certainty and as such the scheme will be implemented early to attract potential tenants to the location.

Purpose

Data centres directly contribute to job creation and generate added economic benefits which extend to related industries and services both locally and further afield. This project will:

- Allow the town to be recognised as contributing to the digital economy and a location for investment

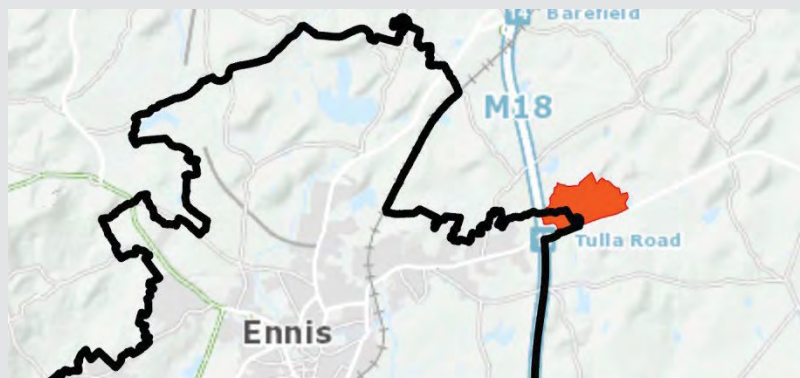
Promote technological entrepreneurship across a range of activities

- Support regional development in the tech industry
- Contribute to job creation in the tech sector
- Tie in with the Programme for Government for a National Digital strategy

Description

Having regard to the Government Statement on The Role of Data Centres in Ireland, which in particular recommends having a plan-led approach to data centres, this 55ha site has been identified and zoned as Enterprise (45ha) and Buffer (10ha) with a specific use for a Data Centre Campus due to:

- Its proximity to the electricity sub-station
- Its proximity to the M18 motorway and adjoining regional road network
- Its location relative to the Gas Pipeline
- Its access to available Dark Fibre
- Its proximity to Shannon International Airport and Ennis town



Plan Actions

Multiple

Medium

Lead Agency

Clare County Council



Business Strategy

Innovation
Branding
Solution
Marketing
Analysis
Ideas
Success
Management

23:35:60
Business Strategy
Innovation
Branding
Solution
Marketing
Analysis
Ideas
Success
Management



Enterprising open uNique Intact Sustainable

8. Marketing Strategy

Ennis: *Untapped Potential - A Real Opportunity*

Introduction

The purpose of the Marketing Strategy is to provide a framework for presenting the overall Ennis 2040 strategy and its component parts, which naturally connects Ennis' assets effectively. It will provide the theme for communications materials, graphic design, advertising and marketing going forward.

The Marketing strategy will include and support the place branding of Ennis, based on a recognisable brand that is 'of Ennis'.

Rationale and Aims

'Place branding goes beyond mere slogans or old-fashioned ad campaigns; it involves more than gloss or spin or the placing of a territory on the map as an attractive tourist destination.' - Peter Van Ham, The Netherlands Institute of International Relations

This strategy seeks to facilitate a consistency of message and positioning for Ennis with local, national and international audiences. A number of different 'tag lines' currently exist, including 'The Friendliest town in Ireland' (Visit Clare) and 'Old town, New Stories' (Visit Ennis). Both are appropriate as marketing tools and help to capture how the town sees and represents itself.

It should however be recognised from the outset that branding is a long term proposition while marketing is short term with ever changing platforms and purposes. Establishing the brand platform for Ennis as a place will thus precede and form the basis of the future marketing of the town.

Ennis has many positive assets, such as its people, culture and history, which successfully serve as the basis for several promotional campaigns and initiatives, such as those mentioned previously. However, while there is value to one-off campaigns, they need to be set in the context of a strong, consistent, long term strategy and proposition.

Specific campaigns and events programmes can then build off and reflect this proposition with the opportunity being to create a rolling strategy, where campaigns and events are anchored in the proposition and over time, have a genuine impact on changing perceptions of the town both

internally and externally.

The main marketing challenges for Ennis are considered to be as follows:

- Establishing a consistent message
- Differentiating Ennis from other towns/settlements
- Competing in a strong field of settlements/attractions along the Wild Atlantic Way and nationally
- A lack of awareness of what the town has to offer
- Ennis' marketing should be defined with a new Ennis Marketing Plan - 'brand Ennis' and place marketing strategy. Over time, the marketing plan, aligned with the physical and economic proposals set out in the Economic and Spatial Strategy will ensure that the tourism, event, investment and business marketing will increase in impact.

The proposed aims of the marketing plan are:

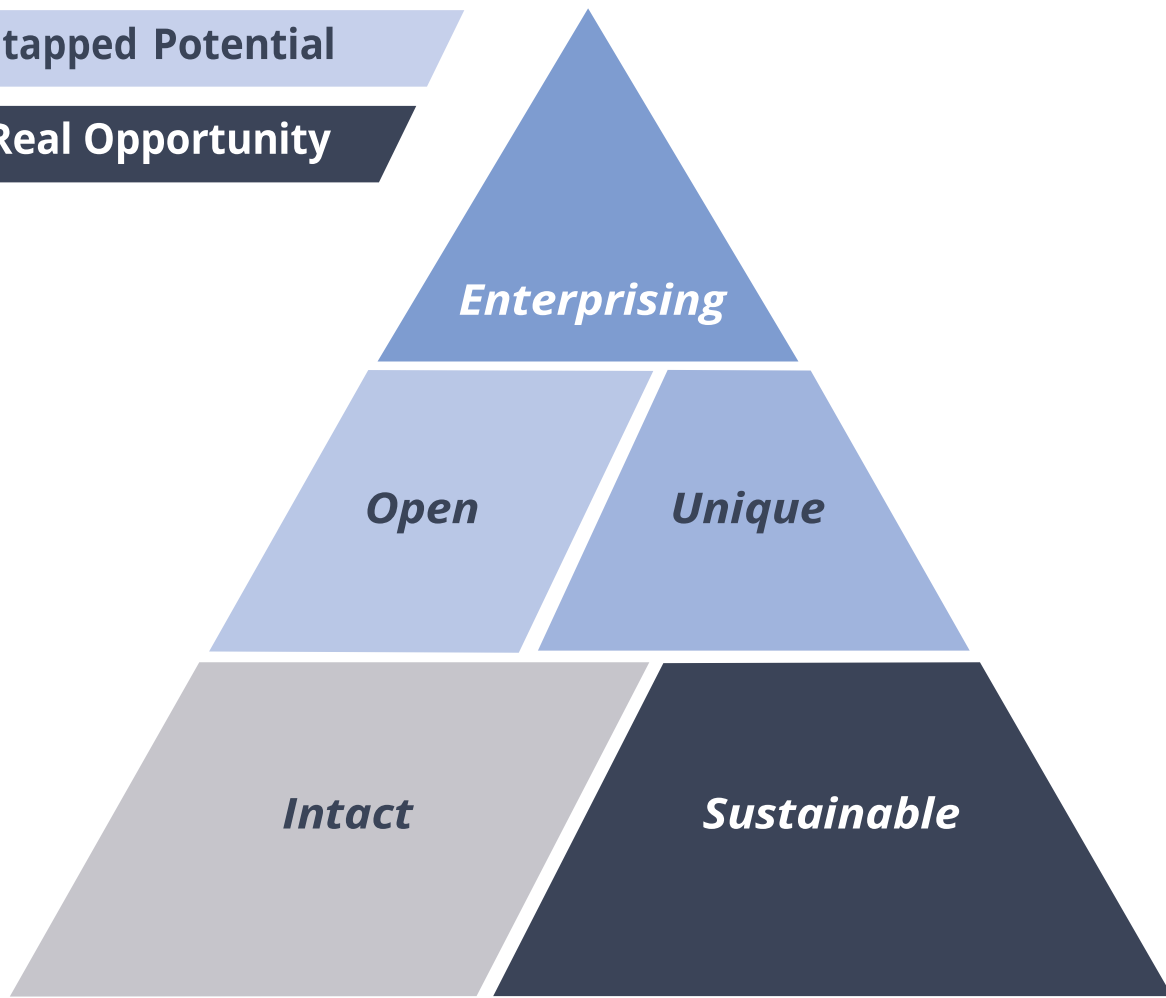
- To promote a positive reputation for Ennis with regional and national Irish audiences;
- To unify messaging regarding Ennis;
- To develop more local resident and business confidence;
- To achieve greater value and consistency from existing marketing and promotion;
- To attract more people to experience the town;
- To support job creation and the ambitions of the economic strategy.
- To cater for a destination marketing plan to be developed for Ennis.

'Untapped Potential - A Real Opportunity'

is a statement of possibilities. In essence, it's saying that something has been missed by 'the crowd' and that real opportunities exist for the savvy early adopter.

Untapped Potential

A Real Opportunity



‘Brand Ennis’

The new ‘brand Ennis’ is based on a central idea and five associated ‘cornerstones’ which together form the new ‘brand Ennis’. The proposition is then used to inform, direct and align activity to provide consistency of place message and communications. It can additionally be used to help inform the wider aspects of place experience including the physical environment (public realm etc), the products/services (businesses, attractions etc) and behaviour (welcome, etc).

It should be recognised from the outset that branding is long term while marketing is short term with ever changing platforms. Establishing the brand platform for Ennis as a place will thus precede and form the basis of it’s future marketing.

A place’s brand stems from a variety of factors

and cannot simply be ‘invented’. It stems from the place’s character, reputation, and from people’s experience of the place. It is more than a logo or a marketing strategy. Through the course of the preparation of the Economic and Spatial Strategy for Ennis, people have been engaging with the process and their opinions and experience of Ennis has fed into this concept.

The Five ‘Cornerstones’ of Brand Ennis

The five ‘cornerstones’ identify the most important assets and strengths, as well as future ambitions and aspirations. In relation to Ennis, this leads to our recommendation of the following ‘cornerstones’:

- Enterprising
- Open
- Unique
- Intact
- Sustainable

The central idea links the 'cornerstones' together and defines what Ennis is, what it means to be part of Ennis and the promise of Ennis to its various audiences. This is not intended to be a strap-line or a marketing slogan, but a strategic, motivational and inspirational statement of intent.

Enterprising

Craft and Indigenous Industries

The potential of Ennis' craft and indigenous industries were highlighted throughout the consultation process. Participants saw this as a key part of what Ennis has to offer going forward.

Town Centre

This Economic and Spatial Strategy sets out a number of proposals for the enhancement of the town centre area and to attract additional employment.

Wetland and Enterprise Area

The proposed expansion area to the east of the town will facilitate further enterprise and employment growth and will be suited to large format employers.

Climate Adaptive town

Ennis' commitment to become a climate adaptive town is a huge challenge, but also an economic opportunity. Following Copenhagen's

commitment to become the world's first carbon neutral city, the Lord Mayor said:

"In Copenhagen, green transformation goes hand-in-hand with job creation, a growing economy and a better quality of life".

Similarly, 'green growth' will be the approach in Ennis.

Unique

Distinctive

The differentiation of Ennis compared to other locations is a cornerstone of the strategy to raise the town's profile and attracting visitors and investment. However, the brand must be 'true' in the sense that it must match the experiences that people have in Ennis.

Another way to think about distinctiveness is to ask the question; What makes Ennis memorable? Ennis' distinctiveness is based around, its history, culture, people and intact town centre.

Identifiable

The main identifiable traits of a place are the aspects of that place which make it unique, such as a place's atmosphere. Something that cannot be found anywhere else.



Ennis' medieval layout, lane ways and bow ways, attitude of its people, and traditional culture combine to make a unique, identifiable place.

Open

Friendly

The friendly and hospitable nature of Ennis and its people are a key part of the towns identity. This is a factor that will be central not only to attracting tourism, but also to retaining younger people in the town and attracting new inhabitants.

Forward Looking

Ennis is also 'open' in the sense of being forward looking. In a rapidly changing national and global environment, the town is redefining its role in the region and at the national level. This is reflected in its commitment to become a 'Climate Adaptive Town'

Connected

Ennis is located between Limerick and Galway with excellent access to the M18. Its proximity to Shannon further enhances its geographical connectivity. However, Ennis is also connected in the sense that it is a part of the Wild Atlantic Way, connecting it perceptually to settlements and attractions up and down the coast.

Intact

Town Centre

Ennis benefits from a highly intact town centre. Where many town centres have been undermined by large out of town shopping facilities, the retail and cultural heart of Ennis is still very much in its town centre.

Heritage

Ennis benefits from a significant architectural, cultural and historic heritage. Indeed, one of the town's distinguishing features is its natural environment, rich history, cultural heritage, and Laneways and Bow-ways that date from the medieval period. These features must be utilised and showcased as part of 'brand Ennis'. Innovative approaches to the re-use of heritage places and adaptive regeneration of heritage assets will facilitate the showcasing of these features.

Culture

Securing Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann 2016 and 2017 provided an opportunity for Ennis to showcase its rich cultural and musical tradition, which may be one of the most 'intact' in Ireland. Ennis is where an intact traditional culture sits comfortably beside new ideas and new thinking.

Sustainable

Climate Adaptive Town

Ennis has set out the ambitious goal of becoming a 'Climate Adaptive Town'. Climate change is the process by which the climate, over a prolonged period, both warms and changes leading to an increase in the severity of weather events, e.g. higher water levels during flooding events or longer periods without sufficient rainfall. The challenge to address climate change is twofold:

1. To reduce the amount of carbon and other greenhouse gasses that are emitted as well as other forms of environmental waste;
2. To adapt the existing settlement to be better able to cope with the changes associated with climate change, some of which are already 'locked in' even if carbon emissions were to be immediately reduced, due to the carbon that has already been emitted to the atmosphere.

While this is clearly a bold ambition and a very significant challenge that will require huge



commitment and work, it is a challenge that will ultimately need to be taken up across the nation. Ennis is putting itself forward to lead the way.

Sustainable Tourism

Tourism is an important part of the economy in the West of Ireland and responsible tourism will be a key component of the employment makeup going forward. Ennis is well placed to improve tourist related employment, both as an attraction in itself and as a staging point to a variety of surrounding attractions. In order to be sustainable, tourism also has to be responsible in order to preserve the attractions that will attract visitors into the future. Ennis is well placed to act as a staging centre from which tours can visit attractions including the Burren National Park, Bunratty, Doolin, Lahinch, the Cliffs of Moher, and the Arran Islands.

Green and Sustainable

Low carbon development is an important part of the new economic strategy and Ennis should rapidly exploit the fact that it is 'well placed' to grow this aspect of the economy as a mainstay for enterprise and entrepreneurship. Whilst sustainability is now a critical strategy for all settlements, Ennis should work extra hard to ensure that it exploits its credentials for the benefit of the economy and the quality of life for residents.

Untapped Potential - A Real Opportunity

'Untapped Potential - A Real Opportunity' is a statement of possibilities. In essence, it's saying that something has been missed by 'the crowd' and that real opportunities exist for the savvy early adopter. In explaining the idea, there is a need to consider the assets and credentials of Ennis such as:

- An authentic place of substance with an impressive town centre and historic heritage;
- A place of authentic people – genuine, welcoming, friendly, leaders and achievers;
- A place that has a progressive outlook to knowledge and innovation;
- A place that continues to exploit its natural resources with progressive ambition – low carbon economy, enhancing its green credentials.

An effective branding proposition is embedded in the essence of Ennis as a place from its niche industries and enterprises to its areas that have particular artistic, creative, cultural and/ or specialist enterprises and the strategy for change. It is this marketing plan which sets out the proposition and is a starting point for establishing a successful brand and marketing campaign.

It is not about just developing a logo or slogan but rather a recognisable brand that is 'of Ennis'. This place branding will be supported by the marketing plan that will identify target audiences, highlight key messages, identify and show how to utilise key assets, demonstrate an understanding of the key quarters and their stories and deliver the new marketing 'message' for Ennis.

Establishing the 'Brand' Proposition

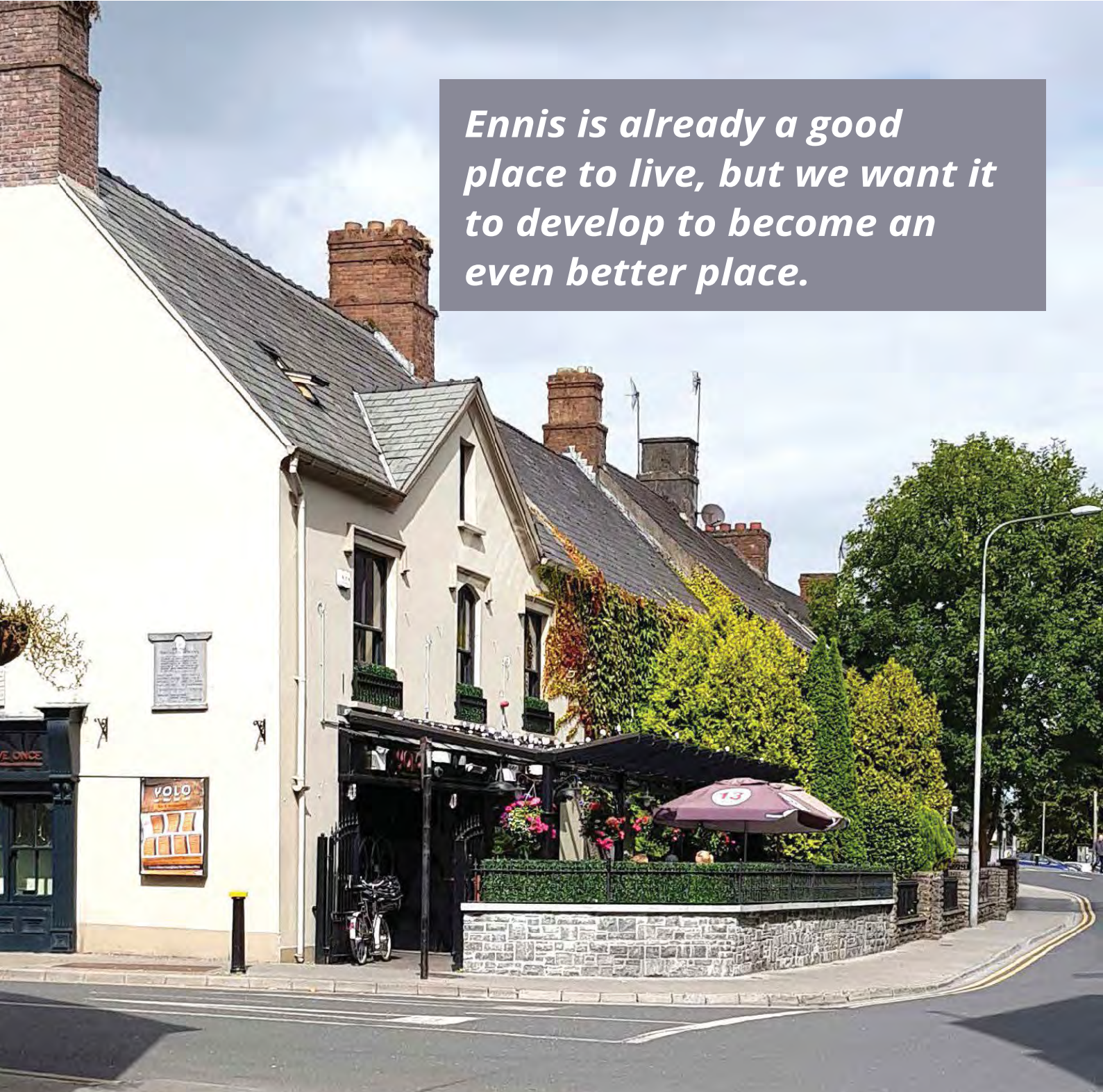
In order to deliver an effective branding proposition, the brand must be 'of Ennis'. To ensure this, certain questions need to be considered from the outset such as:

- What does Ennis want to be known for?
- How can Ennis stand out from the crowd and be more competitive?
- What thoughts and feelings do we want to come to mind when people are exposed to the name?
- How can results from resources be improved?

In answering these questions, the brand development process must engage a range of stakeholders and ensure that ideas and themes are developed in close collaboration and as part of a visioning exercise. The brand proposition should define the shared vision for the future of the town.

As part of the plan making process the key factors that will influence the brand of Ennis have been researched, this was done through targeted and public engagement in addition to workshops between the Project Team and Local Authority representatives. The latter included a dedicated marketing stream that assessed the current positioning and perceptions of Ennis.

Both the research and consultation revealed that residents, business owners, local



Ennis is already a good place to live, but we want it to develop to become an even better place.

organisations and education providers all have a sense of pride in Ennis and are committed to its future growth and development. However, there is an appreciation by stakeholders of the requirement to work collectively and that a more coherent message can harness the collective influence of the many local businesses, organisations and institutions who act as ambassadors for Ennis.

While Ennis is viewed as possessing many positive and unique attributes, these need to be set in the context of a clear, consistent, long term strategy and proposition for Ennis. The proposition should focus on goals to be achieved and challenges to be overcome and should strengthen the unique and positive characteristics of Ennis.

Once the brand proposition is established specific campaigns and events programmes can then build on and reflect this proposition with the opportunity to create a rolling strategy. The proposition will anchor campaigns and events which over time will present and promote a clear brand for Ennis.

The main marketing challenge currently facing Ennis is a lack of awareness despite its position relative to major tourist attractions and high amenity areas within County Clare. It is proposed that the existing gap in Ennis' marketing be filled with a new Marketing Plan including 'brand Ennis' and place marketing strategy for Ennis.

The adoption of the new Marketing Plan in conjunction with the physical and economic development set out in the Economic and Spatial Strategy will ensure that the tourism, event, business and investment marketing that already happens and is delivered through a range of different partners, will start to achieve increased impact.

It is essential that the place branding proposition for Ennis is authentic and genuinely reflects its positive attributes. The place marketing strategy must effectively promote Ennis and its environs. This proposition must tell the story of Ennis; highlighting its unique medieval history and cultural heritage, that informs peoples views of Ennis as a place in which to live, visit and invest.

The proposition must be aligned to the physical and economic development set out in the Economic and Spatial Strategy and the quality of life and place that are among Ennis' key attributes and which potential visitors and investors will seek. The proposition will inform all kinds of communications activities and concrete actions.

The consistent use across all place promotional activities, by a range of partners will, over time, create an awareness of and buzz around Ennis, its attributes and assets, and make it a more interesting place to live, work, visit and invest

Ennis' Story

- *Ennis benefits from a range of valuable assets, including its people, place and culture.*

- *Ennis is already a good place to live, but we want it to develop and become an even better place.*

- *Investors have 'missed a trick' and major opportunities exist, especially for those who get in early.*

- *Ennis is a place where a rich traditional culture sits comfortably beside new ideas and new thinking.*

- *A new plan has been prepared to leverage Ennis' assets and potential.*

- *People are getting behind the plan and its implementation means that Ennis is set to experience significant growth, fuelled by a suite of identified projects.*

- *In addition to retaining our own young talent, Ennis is 'open' and we want to attract people who have the passion to innovate and take Ennis to new heights.*

- *Ennis is looking to the future and in so doing, is seeking to address both opportunities and challenges by becoming a climate adaptive town*

Clarity and consistency of the Marketing Plan for Ennis, supported and proactively promoted by stakeholders and partners will be a key factor to the future successful development and growth of Ennis. In this context the Marketing Plan, including 'brand Ennis' and marketing strategy, must deliver the following:

- To build an awareness of Ennis, its unique history, cultural heritage and quality of life with regional, national and international audiences;
- To provide a clear and consistent proposition for Ennis that gives stakeholders and organisations a shared sense of place and purpose;
- To attract more people, many of whom already visit attractions within the County, to experience Ennis both as a destination and as a staging point to visit a range of attractions in the region;
- To develop greater confidence amongst local residents and businesses;
- To support job creation and the ambitions of the Economic strategy;
- To achieve greater consistency and exposure from existing marketing and promotion.

Story and Key Messages

It will be critical that the new 'Brand Ennis' is disseminated and shared widely amongst key stakeholders in Ennis, across the region. In particular, delivery of the proposed Marketing Plan requires engagement with stakeholders to identify opportunities for alignment of messaging and activity. This can only be achieved if organisations have a thorough understanding of why the new proposition has been developed, what it means to them and how they can use and apply it in their own activity.

In order to facilitate the sharing of the proposition, a narrative has been developed which has been formed into the 'Ennis Story'. Producing, publishing and circulating this as the first piece of collateral to support the new place marketing strategy. This approach has many benefits, not least that it ensures that everyone has the same context and view of why Ennis needs to manage its reputation and of the most important messages to use to contribute to this.

Place Marketing Strategy

The successful place marketing of Ennis will require:

- Leadership – both civic and wider place leadership with key senior figures and ambassadors publicly working to build profile and inform people of what is going on. This is reflected in Ennis' ambition to become a climate adaptive town.
- Partnership – organisations (both public and private) collaborating and cooperating to promote the town through a similar message. Ennis' commitment to become a climate adaptive town is an ambition that will require partnerships with other town's, cities, and organisations that are leading the way in this respect, as well as with all levels of government. This approach will also help to leverage funding.
- Clarity – a clear, confident proposition told by everyone, which focuses on a small number of key points.
- Consistency – alignment of place messages, regardless of which organisation is speaking with messages anchored around the proposition to reinforce key messages.
- Reference Material - ensuring organisations have access to and use tools to support the town including photography, copy, materials etc.
- Commitment – resources to support the marketing of Ennis with the understanding that this is a project that will continue over the long-term.



Marketing Principles

The approach to the marketing of 'Brand Ennis' is based on the following principles:

- Gain buy-in and encourage a sense of ownership and responsibility from all major partners and organisations and enable them to use the proposition and align activity and materials as part of their own communications, marketing and promotion through the provision of appropriate tools, encouragement and support.
- Champion Ennis - Develop proactive ambassadors for Ennis within key organisations, the Ennis diaspora and wider place alumni, providing them with relevant information, news and tools to enable them to speak up for Ennis through their own networks and relationships.

Target audiences

Ennis engages with a wide range of audiences on a daily basis, but it is important to prioritise the specific audiences that Ennis needs to influence in order to achieve the maximum benefit and return on resources.

The proposed principal target audiences are:

- Residents and businesses - Ennis, Clare, the wider region and nationally.
- Tourist visitors to the west coast – domestic, European and International, who should be encouraged to comment on their experiences through social media and travel websites.
- Potential economic investors and corporate transfers, as part of inward investment strategies.
- Opinion formers in the local and National media.

Place Marketing Objectives

The specific objectives of the place marketing strategy are:

- To obtain buy-in and support from key organisations and stakeholders to the aims and objectives of the place marketing plan;
- To positively influence the perceptions, views and opinions of Ennis by targeting audiences through direct marketing activity, media management and active social media management;
- To directly influence the future communications of organisations to deliver a consistent and coherent message about Ennis;
- To develop and maintain an Ennis 'toolbox' of materials, messages and collateral for distribution to and use by stakeholders;
- To create and empower a network of active individual and organisational place ambassadors;
- To ensure partner collateral and messaging relating to inward investment and tourism is aligned behind 'Brand Ennis';

Bringing 'Untapped Potential - A Real Opportunity' to life will require new thinking and to some extent new behaviour. It will therefore be important that early activity provides exemplars of how this should be done, providing a benchmark for others.

Such early win opportunities will be presented in the development of the Place Marketing Toolkit and through alignment of partner activity and communications, as identified through discussions with partners.

Reference Materials

Ennis' current image and brand is communicated through a range of mediums. This includes:

- Formal promotional material produced by inward investment and tourism agencies for the city and its region;
- Promotional material produced by cultural institutions, hotels and retailers as part of ongoing marketing;
- Media messaging through county and national government;
- Civic, business and government leadership presentations in individual and group settings.

A number of different 'tag lines' currently exist, including 'The Friendliest Town in Ireland' (Visit Clare) and 'Old town, New Stories' (Visit Ennis). Beyond these headline strap-lines, the image and brand of Ennis is set by conditions and perceptions on the ground.

The Rough Guide tourist website describes Ennis as follows:

"With a population of around twenty-five thousand, ENNIS is by far and away Clare's largest town. It began its life in the thirteenth century as a small settlement grouped around a long-disappeared O'Brien castle. Nowadays, it's a buzzing town, set on both sides of the River Fergus, and still largely based around its medieval street pattern and the central, often traffic-clogged artery, O'Connell Street. Though there's little to see here apart from the ruins of a medieval friary to the north of O'Connell Street, the town is thoroughly enjoyable in its own right, with plenty of decent restaurants and, above all, a thriving traditional music session scene."

The Lonely Planet website carries the following description:

"Clare's charming commercial hub, Ennis (Inis), lies on the banks of the fast-moving River Fergus, which flows east, then south into the Shannon Estuary.

The town's medieval origins are recalled by its irregular, narrow streets, but the most important surviving historical site is Ennis Friary, founded in the 13th century by the O'Briens, kings of Thomond, who also built a castle here in the 13th century. Much of the wooden town went skywards in a 1249 fire, and Ennis was then razed by one of the O'Briens in 1306.

Today formal sights are few, but the town centre, with its narrow, pedestrian-friendly streets, is enjoyable to wander. Handily situated 23km north of Shannon

Airport, it makes an ideal base for exploring the county: you can reach any part of Clare in under two hours from here."

A targeted campaign is required to seek publishers of such guides to increase the extent and sophistication of coverage, as well as influencing the opinion of contributors. Ennis' commitment to become a climate adaptive town should be at the centre of the message, as should any associated activities that are developed in this regard over time.

Why does Ennis Need a Story?

Ennis has an attractive and impressive waterside setting on the River Shannon, a rich and proud heritage as part of Ireland's history, an envied higher education offer, a vibrant cultural and sporting offer and sits in the heart of the lush countryside of County Ennis.

However, over the years, the town has failed to attract its fair share of tourism and investment. In order to overcome this, Ennis must have a clear proposition and offer that defines why it is special, what it has to offer and why it should be considered and chosen as a place to live, work, visit, and invest.

It is everyone's responsibility to be an ambassador for Ennis; no single organisation has the right or the resource to be accountable for developing Ennis' reputation – it is all of our responsibilities. So, this new proposition must be understood and owned by the people who matter most to Ennis – its residents, businesses and organisations so that it can then be communicated to the new people and businesses Ennis hopes to attract.

The story of Ennis is a narrative focused on what makes the place distinctive, the opportunities that exist, and how Ennis wants to be known and seen in the future.

This story will complement the planned physical changes and developments envisaged in the Economic and Spatial Strategy and will provide the basis to deliver a consistent and positive positioning of Ennis which over time will improve and reflect Ennis' true image and reputation.

Making Ennis the Hero

A successful Ennis is one that can attract people to live in the area, encourage those here already to stay, persuade investors and developers to see Ennis as a place worth investing in, create and attract new jobs whilst keeping existing, and increasing the number of people visiting.

At the same time, it is important to raise ambition and aspiration amongst local residents, young people and businesses. Ennis' success will be determined by the choices people make about the town and we need to encourage them to view it in a positive light by explaining why it is special, how it is improving, and what the plans are for the future. Ennis needs to get on peoples 'short list' of places to consider and build investment momentum. Of course, many other places are doing the same, so we will have to work smarter, differently and in partnership to be successful.

It is important to remember that a person considering visiting or investing in a place usually has a number of options in mind. Before they add Ennis to their list, they need to have a good feeling of what the place is all about, what sort of reputation it has, what it is known for, what experience they might have there and what's different to do and see. Because it's people who are making these choices, and the decision is often as much about emotion as facts, it's important to ensure that they have a good 'feel' about Ennis as a place.

For Ennis, quality must be our watchword in everything we do. We're competing nationally and globally in many things and the standards we set, the experience we provide, the facilities we develop and the services we deliver must be comparable with the best. If we are to thrive and provide all the people in the region with a better life experience, we need to recognise that those looking to invest, visit, or live have a choice and we have to 'up our game' to get on their shortlist.

This compelling idea of 'Untapped Potential - A Real Opportunity' is supported by five 'cornerstones' that illustrate how we are different and articulate reasons why we should be chosen as a place.

This is an Ennis that is more confident and looking to its future. It is a place that is proud of its illustrious past, and wants to build upon that legacy to create an exciting tomorrow.

Where do we go from here?

Having taken a long hard look at Ennis, its surrounding area and future opportunities, the 'Ennis Story' articulates what's special and different about it. It helps to make the place the hero, captures the essence of our place and is at the heart of how Ennis can get itself 'on the map' for the right reasons.

It is easy to take these positive things for granted and not 'talk up' Ennis, but people need to be much more active and assertive in presenting the new Ennis story. By including Ennis' positive attributes in websites and brochures when describing the area, adding subtle references about Ennis in PR, and including Ennis as part of standard presentations, it will gradually start to change people's perceptions of the town.

The 'new story' will help everyone to be clear about what Ennis has to offer and what areas need to be focused on to become better known and chosen by more people.

Ennis is now looking forward with confidence and enthusiasm. It has an exciting opportunity to develop and a real desire to encourage and welcome development and business. Ennis is a place that wants to reach its full potential, offer a great experience and show a united front.



Appendix I - Summary of Actions & Outcomes

Location for Investment

ACTION	1	2	3
	Set out economic activities to prioritise and target sustainable economic activity at a local level by focusing on existing assets and creating a competitive offer unique to Ennis.	Develop networks in high end manufacturing, enterprise, education and research with the aim of attracting inward investment and talent.	Utilising Local Authority assets (e.g. land) and access to funding sources (e.g. URDF) to establish an Ennis specific investment fund that accelerates and supports the provision of new forms of mixed residential and productive employment development by the private sector.
OUTCOMES	Primary	Primary	Primary
	Greater economic activity in the town with increased population by 2040	Collaboration with educational institutes and scope for 3rd level satellite presence Potential to attract at least one large multinational employer by 2025	Smoothing of investment curve and de-risking projects by balancing up front infrastructural or land costs Building confidence in the market Greater potential for Government and EU funding allocation
	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary
	More diverse employment base with significant additional jobs by 2040 More available expenditure to support the towns service industry Reduced reliance as event/ destination location to support the economy	Greater potential for indigenous industries and growth in the SME sector Support in the form of additional revenue for both the existing and proposed expansion of town centre amenities, including retail	Potential for a revolving fund of scale Encouraging secondary investment activity in new/ existing businesses/ industries Improving Ennis' profile in the region and nationally Making investment in Ennis an 'easy' decision

4

Establishing area-based economic vehicles (can be public, public/private, public/semi state, public/institutional etc.) to purchase, hold and manage land/ floorspace from an early stage in the development cycle with a focus on opportunity areas/ strategic sites

Primary

Potential for public involvement early in projects when values are lowest

Greater potential for delivering economic ambition and associated infrastructure.

Secondary

Potential for an additional source of revenue once the vehicles and enterprises are established

The potential emergence of economic vehicles that are focused on achieving primarily social outcomes

Build relationships with real estate and lettings agencies within the town

5

Realise the delivery of seven transformational projects (buildings, public realm, transport etc.) that demonstrate a range of economic and social activity.

Primary

Regeneration of the physical and economic environment

Builds confidence for investors

Secondary

Greater utilisation of sustainable modes of transports

Social benefits in terms of access to facilities and quality of life

6

Build on Clare's unique tourist attributes to create an offer of Ennis as a gateway and a location in its own right that competes nationally and internationally.

Primary

Delivery of modern conference facilities

An increase in the number of nights people stay in Ennis

Secondary

Improved viability for hotels, guesthouses, hostels etc.

Increased numbers to tourists facilities, heritage assets etc.

Greater exposure and showcasing of Ennis

Enhanced consumer demand for shopping, leisure and food/ beverage facilities

7

Ensure integration of employment land and identified strategic sites with transport improvement measures (public transport, walking/cycling routes, parking etc.).

Primary

Less car usage and increased levels of walking, cycling and public transport usage

Secondary

More sustainable employment offer for former commuters

Reduced carbon emissions

Healthier lifestyles

Appealing to talented people as an attractive location to live and work

8

Utilise the strategic location of Ennis to explore 3rd level opportunities with adjacent cities (i.e. Galway and Limerick)

Primary

Satellite 3rd level presence in Ennis

Direct and indirect job creation and increased levels of start – up enterprises

Secondary

Enhanced research facilities working with 3rd level institutes, business, international partners and the community

Greater levels of innovation and supports life long learning and personal development

9

Address policy gaps in national and regional strategies that are suboptimal for Ennis' competitiveness and development

Primary

Recognition nationally that Ennis is a viable alternative to the established Cities for job creation and associated population growth

Secondary

The RSES will recognise that the role of Ennis regionally and nationally is greater than other similar sized towns due to its strategic location, unique assets and quality of life and place

Greater recognition by bodies such as the IDA and Shannon Group

10

Invest and improve IT infrastructure continuously to deliver high speed access.

Primary

Promotes economic activity and opportunities to secure 'big businesses'

Provides access to global markets and supports the tourist industry

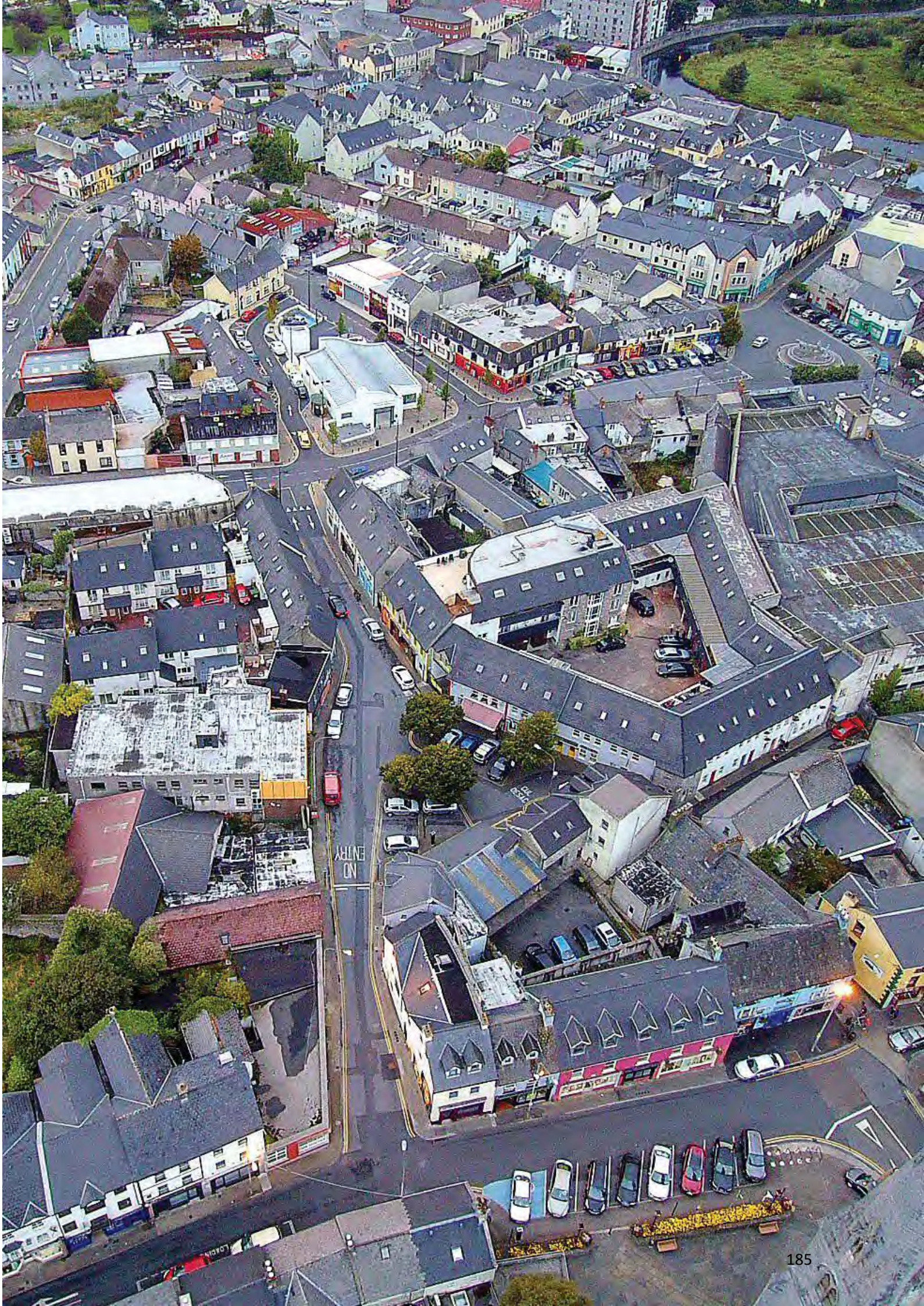
Attracts talented people in the tech sector

Secondary

Essential to establishing a greater 3rd level presence

Improves quality of life

Reduces demand on support services (e.g. health)



Climate Adaptation

11

Reduce resource consumption and transition to a low carbon society with appropriate climate change mitigation and adaptation measures

Primary

Efficient uses of resource

Transition to a low carbon society

Protection and enhancement of Ennis' important biodiversity and landscape

Improved health and well-being

Builds relationships with other (global) locations with similar civic responsibilities

12

Take actions to become resilient to climate change and mitigate against natural hazards

Primary

Better and more robust flood management measures that incorporate nature based solutions at landscape scale

13

Facilitate appropriate and well designed access to natural spaces, features and landscapes

Primary

Greater understanding of the natural environment and an increase in its use

14

Maintain, enhance and protect healthy air and water and enhance biodiversity resources

Primary

Better quality of life with improved health and well-being

Significant overall environmental co-benefits

Secondary

Attractive to business

Attractive environment for talent, particularly in the tech, energy, life science etc. sectors

Secondary

Opportunities for alternative sources of funding

Better environment for residents

More streamlined implementation of national and EU policies and directives

Secondary

Increased access to diverse and ecologically designed amenity areas for residents

Improved health and well-being

Attractive to tourists

Secondary

Reduced emissions that adversely affect population, human health and all environmental resources

ACTION	15	16
	Investment in sustainable water services with innovative solutions for particularly flood management that can be in partnership with the private sector where appropriate.	Promote energy generation and the delivery of energy efficient buildings, sustainable energy measures for the public realm and encourage innovative solutions from the private sector.
OUTCOMES	Primary	Primary
	Alleviates flooding issues	Reduced carbon footprint
	Secondary	Secondary
	Ensures sufficient and clean water supply and appropriate wastewater treatment	Greater scope to avail of sources of funding
	Encourages private sector investment	Better quality of life and place
	Offers the opportunity to develop innovative solutions in partnership with the private sector	Reduced operating costs
	Improves efficiency and level of public sector expenditure per capita	Enhanced energy security
		Improvements in public health
		Opportunities for growth of the local economy

An Accessible Place of Quality

ACTION	17	18	19
	Implement the hierarchy of place to deliver compact growth through Town Centre brownfield sites and strategic expansion areas that demonstrate an economic and/or social contribution to the town.	Realise the land uses, intensity and high level phasing of development to be directed towards identified strategic sites.	Deliver modern retail floorplates within the Town Centre to accommodate middle to higher order comparison retailers and destination brands in small to mediums sized units and anchor stores.
OUTCOMES	Primary	Primary	Primary
	Provides the strategic roadmap for the long-term economic future Defines a spatial pattern for Ennis town and a role for its environs, Clarecastle and Barefield Provides the strategic land use framework for the delivery of quality housing in the right location and access to social and recreational facilities	Ennis becomes a regional benchmark for orderly long term sustainable planning that differentiates it from other similar sized urban areas nationally Quantifies at a high level the scale and nature of the economic opportunity thereby allowing for <i>inter alia</i> the implementation of transport initiatives, greater certainty for financial planning, opportunities for public sector involvement, delivery of housing and investment in the public realm	Retention of comparison expenditure in the town that is currently being leaked More sustainable retail mix with better covenants and increased rental viability
	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary
	Creates a framework for future more detailed localised plans that will contribute to the delivery of Ennis 2040 Supports the concept of neighbourhoods with local day to day services easily accessible by sustainable modes of transport (particularly walking) Ensures the efficient use of land, enhanced legibility and improved wayfinding Facilitates choice of working and living, where employment, amenities and activities are accessible Supports and provides a rationale for investment in public transport Reduces the carbon footprint of Ennis	Sets out an approach to spatial distribution that will facilitate the coordination of land use, infrastructure, connections and service planning Ensures availability of sites to accommodate purpose built type developments such as educational, multinational companies, start-ups and modern retailers Delivers a housing/accommodation mix that responds to the Towns needs in the future (e.g. elderly people downsizing to Town Centre locations) Creates the conditions for affordability to prevail	Greater potential for inflow of available expenditure Provides greater consumer choice and complements the existing specialised retail offer (e.g. Boutiques) Creates employment across a broad range of age cohorts Supports the tourist industry and ambition of longer stays in Ennis Reduces carbon emissions as demand is met at source (i.e. reduced car trips to Limerick) Better quality of life and place which is attractive to industry and talented people

20

Promote quality of place – through high quality, person - centred buildings, world class public spaces, recreational and exercise/outdoor activities and maintenance

Primary

Ensures a quality built environment for residents and visitors alike

Allows for the greater exposure of the River Fergus and recognition of its importance as a blue and green infrastructural resource for Ennis.

Secondary

Creates opportunities for Town Centre parks and recreational areas that enhance ecological connectivity in and around the town

Presents opportunities for recognition nationally (e.g. tidy towns) and internationally

Supports tourist industry

Improves health and well-being

21

Showcase the unique heritage and architecture of Ennis, market individual and collective achievements of the people and support adaptive reuse of existing older buildings to exemplify and showcase reuse of buildings and achieve circular economy at local scale

Primary

Capitalises on and creates exposure for its significant architectural, cultural and historic heritage

Secondary

Greater diversification in the Towns economic offer

A driver of economic development in its own right and enhances the tourist offer

A '10-Minute Town'

ACTION	22	23	24
	Improve public transport connectivity for Ennis both regionally and locally	Delivery of a sustainable transport network that underpins the spatial, social and economic expansion of Ennis	Creation of a vibrant Town Centre through the delivery of an enhanced public realm with improved accessibility for sustainable transport modes and will demonstrate good practice in relation to urban greening measures and green/blue infrastructure
OUTCOMES	Primary	Primary	Primary
	Better connectivity with key regional and local destinations – offering enhanced public transport access to the Town Centre and to employment, education, retail and leisure opportunities	Improves quality of place and life, provides choice, connects places and encourages social interaction	More attractive, pedestrian friendly and vibrant Town Centre
	Secondary	Secondary	Secondary
	Reduced car usage decreases peak time and 'School Run' congestion and carbon emissions Reduced car use within the Town Centre improves quality of life and place Quality public transport offering enhances Ennis' attractiveness to new businesses and enterprise, supporting staff recruitment and retention Quality public transport offering improves access and transport choices for tourists visiting Ennis Quality public transport offering enhances Ennis' attractiveness to 3rd level institutions, supporting student recruitment and retention	Supports existing and new communities in a compact manner that reduces the need to travel by car to access key services Delivers more efficient use of public investment in services and facilities Encourages existing business to develop and attracts new economic activity Reduces carbon emissions Improves access to and use of the public realm, promoting walking and cycling and encouraging healthier lifestyles	Improves quality of place and life, provides choice, connects places and encourages social interaction Reduced car usage, decreases congestion and carbon emissions Improves road safety for vulnerable road users Quality public realm offering improves attractiveness of Ennis for tourists Improves access to and use of the public realm, promoting walking and cycling and encouraging healthier lifestyles

25

Implement a car parking management plan that supports the economic growth of the Town Centre and encourages travel by sustainable means

Primary

More attractive, pedestrian friendly and vibrant Town Centre

Secondary

Improves quality of place and life and encourages social interaction

Delivers a suitable level of parking to accommodate future growth yet at the same time encourages sustainable travel

More attractive to tourists

Reduced carbon emissions and less car congestion which supports Town Centre living (which in itself reduces the need to drive in the Town Centre)

Reduced Local Authority maintenance cost in the Town Centre

26

Develop a road map for New Mobility solutions in Ennis, preparing for the advent of:

- Electric Vehicle uptake
- Mobility as a Service
- Autonomous and Connected Vehicles

Primary

Supports the delivery of safe, easy to use, sustainable transport choices that the travelling public choose to use, can access, afford and trust

Secondary

Future proof improved connectivity for people living, working and visiting Ennis by maximising the opportunities of new and emerging technologies and mobility services – supporting sustainable business, residential and tourism growth while reducing car dependency and vehicle emissions

Plan for a future that delivers high quality, connected and attractive experiences for all transport users – enhancing access to amenities while prioritising healthy, efficient and low-carbon transport options

Maximises efficient use of transport assets and operational services

Improves the quality of life and town centre vibrancy by maximising the value and potential of Places through integrated land use and efficient connectivity



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