

wicklow town

PUBLIC REALM PLAN

Prepared for Wicklow Town Council
& The Heritage Council

June 2008



WICKLOW HISTORIC TOWN PUBLIC REALM PLAN

prepared for
wicklow town council and
the heritage council

by
the paul hogarth company and
erm ireland limited

with
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& elspeth wills



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June 2008





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Round Ireland Yacht Race 2004 Photographs (© Wicklow Film Commission), with thanks





1 INTRODUCTION

The town of Wicklow is rich in history and character, with narrow winding streets, fine buildings and spaces, all set within a dramatic natural landscape of hills that roll down towards the Leitrim River and Irish Sea beyond.

However, like many towns in Ireland, change is on the horizon. Improved transport connections have prompted the planning of substantial urban expansion, which will significantly increase the mass and population of Wicklow, changing the way in which it functions physically and economically. Whilst such growth and prosperity are to be encouraged, it can have both positive and negative impacts on a historic town.

Within this context of forthcoming change, it is therefore an appropriate point in time for Wicklow to consider how best to protect and enhance its many existing qualities.

This important process can help to strengthen its unique 'sense of place' and identity and bring social and economic benefits to the town and its people.

This plan seeks to contribute to such a process through enhancements to the public realm of Wicklow.

"Public Realm can be best described as the form and use of outdoor areas and spaces that are accessible to the public. This includes many familiar types of place, such as streets, squares, parks, car parks and beaches, as well as the physical and visual connections between them, and with buildings. Quality public realm can provide the venue for multiple activities, including commerce, recreation, education and of course, fun and enjoyment for residents and visitors alike."

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public Realm Plan has been developed to assess the quality of Wicklow's public spaces and landmarks and to propose a series of coordinated initiatives by which they can be improved. In doing so, a positive impact can be made to the way in which Wicklow both looks and functions, with benefits for local residents, businesses and visitors.

This Public Realm Plan is the first of its kind for Wicklow Town and was jointly commissioned in late 2007 by Wicklow Town Council and The Heritage Council.

It was undertaken over a six month period by Landscape Architects and Urban Designers, The Paul Hogarth Company and Environmental Consultants, ERM Ireland Ltd. with input from Economic Consultants, Fitzpatrick Associates and Interpretation Consultant, Elspeth Wills.

The process involved desktop research, site appraisals and public consultation, to arrive at a concept and series of proposals by which improvements to the town's public realm can be guided.

The analysis of data gathered, found that Wicklow is a town of many physical qualities, contained in both its built and natural landscapes. However, significant improvements to its public realm were required to fully realise the potential benefits that these can bring to local people, business and tourists.

In addition, the public realm can play an instrumental role in underpinning the strength of the town centre in the context of substantial new residential and commercial development.

Based on these findings, 4 principal aims for the public realm were identified as follows:

A Enhance the environmental quality of Wicklow for the benefit of local residents, businesses and visitors

B Strengthen the physical, social and economic identity of Wicklow Town by fully maximising existing assets

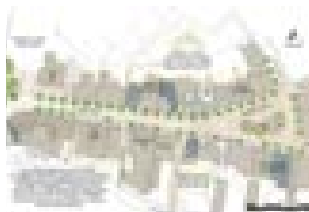
C Provide a positive physical framework for future development, complimentary to the existing historic urban core

D Strengthen the role of Wicklow Town as a tourism destination

These aims were then met by the preparation of a physical and economic concept for the town, resulting in the identification and description of 14 "Specific Initiatives" for the town, outlined on the opposite page.

specific initiatives - the public realm plan consists of 14 specific initiatives and a supporting economic and tourism strategy

high quality streetscapes



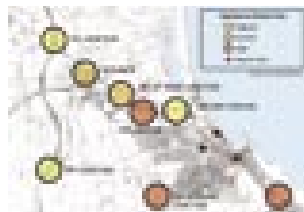
- improvements to the look and function of historic central streets
- use of high quality materials such as natural stone, bespoke street furniture and public art
- rationalisation of car parking and loading arrangements

town centre frontage programme



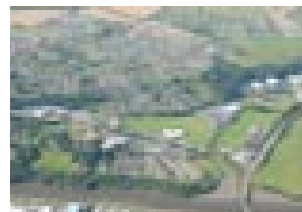
- co-ordinated improvements to prominent street frontages
- improved architectural detailing including windows, doors, colouring and visible guttering
- review of signage to achieve a balance between visual prominence, scale and character

gateways



- identification of key gateways to the town of wicklow
- co-ordinated environmental improvements to each area including surfacing, planting, lighting and public art

dublin road (+ approach roads)



- environmental improvements to dublin road and other approach roads into wicklow
- structural planting to improve visual character of large commercial areas

marlton road linkage



- landscape and potential development proposals to establish a strong physical connection between new marlton road development and the existing town centre

church lands



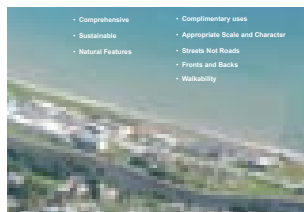
- feasibility study with close co-operation of churches to explore potential increased public access to open spaces
- scope for educational and recreational roles to be developed

harbour + bay area



- phased environmental improvements to the harbour area
- improved design and management of south quay area
- focused redevelopment of vacant and under used buildings

the murrrough



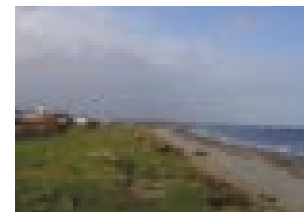
- continuation of established masterplan process
- guidance on public realm component of the above to encourage good quality new development and open spaces

leitrim river + broad lough corridor



- improved planting and natural habitat
- increased pedestrian access, including west bank of river, extending to broad lough
- enhanced setting, access and interpretation of the round mound

seafront enhancement



- sensitive improvements to cliff top pathways
- establishment of a town seafront along the murrrough with new development, high quality open spaces and opportunities for events and activities

interpretation + orientation strategy



- co-ordinated implementation of directional signage
- interpretation of Wicklows historic features and stories

lighting strategy



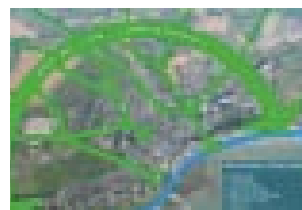
- strategic review of lighting provision to ensure safe night time environments
- feature lighting to accentuate landmark features

open space + linkage strategy



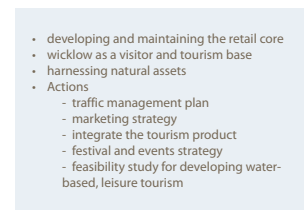
- development of a strategy to review the use, function and design of small neighbourhood open spaces
- close involvement of local residents

hill to sea greenways



- long-term objective to increase public access to hill top areas
- improved natural habitat

economic + tourism strategy



- developing and maintaining the retail core
- wicklow as a visitor and tourism base
- harnessing natural assets
- Actions
 - traffic management plan
 - marketing strategy
 - integrate the tourism product
 - festival and events strategy
 - feasibility study for developing water-based, leisure tourism

Fig. 1: Specific Initiatives

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Location

The town of Wicklow is located on the East coast of Ireland and is on the main road and rail transport corridor linking Dublin (55 km) with the southern town and city of Wexford (100 km) and Waterford (130 km) respectively. It is the principal town of Wicklow County and therefore home to the County Council, as well as that of the Town Council. Nearby towns and villages include Rathnew, Rathdrum, Arklow, Newcastle and Rosslare Harbour.

To the south of the river opening, the coastline changes dramatically in character, with steep cliffs and rocky inlets continuing southwards to Wicklow Head, the most easterly point of the country.

3.2 Geography

Wicklow is situated on the eastern slopes of the Wicklow Hills as they descend towards the Irish Sea. Agriculture, with very limited public access, is the predominant land-use in the Wicklow Hills. The town is located at the mouth of the Leirim River, which flows southwards from the scenic Broad Lough. Between the river and the sea is a peninsula known locally as The Murrough, flanked by pebbled beaches and areas of grassland.



Photo 2: View of Leirim River & Stone Bridge

3.3 Cultural Heritage

St. Patrick, Chieftains and Vikings, rebels and revolutionaries, pirates and highwaymen – Wicklow's long and sometimes bloody history has the ingredients of a story that will engage and inspire current and future generations.

The town's history predates the landing of St. Patrick. Undeterred by losing his teeth as a result of the hailstorm of stones thrown by locals, one of the Saints followers opened his church and set about converting the locals. The bones of the local ruler may lie under the Round Mound which the first wave of Viking invaders may have later fortified. The later Norman invaders preferred a strategic location with views both out to sea and inland to their pillaging grounds.

By 1000 AD natives and Vikings had settled and intermarried. A small town of farmers, fishermen and craftsmen grew up around the mound and along the river banks. By the 1170's, Wicklow belonged to the Norman King Henry II of England. He granted the land to Strongbow who built a stone castle on the site of the Vikings' vantage point.

Locals christened it the 'Black Castle' because of the dark deeds that took place around it. Monks set up religious houses and places of worship backed by the strong arm of the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles. There were regular burnings, sieges and battles as the locals refused to submit to English Authority. As a result, Wicklow was the last district of Ireland to be created a county with its County Town only granted borough status in 1613.

Rebellion and bloodshed continued as Civil War in England was fought on Irish soil. Melancholy Lane recalls the massacre of citizens who sought sanctuary in a church and a local priest was banished for murder, after he set fire to and later destroyed the Castle.

Peace finally arrived in the 18th Century. A stone bridge was constructed allowing farmers to graze their animals on the Murrough, as was a new town hall and a gaol where several United Ireland rebel leaders swung from a noose.

Seafaring was the town's life blood. Sailors carried local holy well water as a token of 'God's Speed'. The wild coast provided a haven for smugglers, wreckers and pirates. For centuries ships loaded and landed goods in Wicklow Harbour. Many people emigrated in the 'coffin ships' after the famine years, when County Wicklow lost ten thousand people to disease and hunger. Development of the harbour into a hub of industrial activity sheltered by breakwaters helped those who stayed to find work in the late 19th Century. Wicklow's fighting spirit remained true in the struggle for national independence. Erskine Childers had many connections with the town.

Improved transport strengthened links with Dublin and brought holidaymakers and more recently commuters to the town.



Photo 3: Statue of Billy Byrne

3.4 Policy Context

This section reviews briefly the existing national, regional and local policy documents in relation to the development of Wicklow Towns' public realm. As already established, our understanding of the public realm can be very subjective, and, in order to achieve good public realm, it is essential that we look at policy and relevant stakeholders for its delivery. This requires a review of the major planning and development documents, which will direct development and ultimately influence Wicklow Town's Public Realm.

National Context

The *National Spatial Strategy* (NSS) 2002-2020 (supported under the *National Development Plan* (NDP) 2007 - 2013), provides a framework to guide future policies, programmes and investment across the State, so as to achieve balanced sustainable development throughout the country. Wicklow has been identified as the 'County Town' as well as a 'Primary Development Centre' for County Wicklow within the Greater Dublin Area (GDA).

It is recognised within the NSS that the future role of the Town needs to take account not just of its relationship with Dublin, but also its role and function in the development and servicing of the catchment area around the Town and its relationship with other adjoining areas.

Regional Context

The *Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area* (GDA) 2004 -2016, compliment and build on the recommendations of the NSS and provide a strategic planning framework for the development of the GDA. Wicklow is identified as a 'Large Growth Town 1'. The Guidelines define these settlement types as having a future population range between 25,000 - 40,000 people, accessible via a junction of major radial and orbital multi-modal transport corridors (for Wicklow Town this centres on the N11), with an economic function as a 'main attractor for major investment with strong international marketing.'

Therefore, the future for Wicklow in achieving this function will see many changes in the development of the town and its public realm.

'Along with the requirements of the legislation, it should be a policy of all Development Plans to take a holistic and integrated approach to heritage and protect all relevant aspects of national heritage, including cultural and linguistic heritage'.



Fig. 2: National Development Plan Logo



Fig. 3: Regional Planning Guidelines (front cover)



Fig. 4: Wicklow County Development Plan (front cover)

County Context

The *Wicklow County Development Plan 2004 -2010*, further embeds the national and regional policy context in the future planning for the County.

“The Primary Development Centre of Wicklow is envisaged to grow in such a manner that its population is self sustaining and does not threaten the role of other settlements and regions.” (Pg. 11)

With respect to the future development of Wicklow Town and Environs, Strategic Policy SS2 applies. This states that the County Council will liaise with the Town Council where development is taking place in the environs and specifically within a Local Area Plan. With respect to contributing to urban design/public realm the County Council has detailed policy and guidance in Chapter 5 of the County Development Plan, this includes;

- guidance ensuring new developments plan for ‘places for people’
- enrich exiting environments

- making connections both visually and physically

- design for a changing future

- use indigenous materials in developing a mixture of land uses and land forms while respecting the intrinsic natural landscape value

These are supported within the public realm plan and it is proposed to build on these urban design principles through the identification of specific projects/ initiatives.

The aim of the *County Wicklow Heritage Plan 2004 - 2008* (Wicklow Heritage Forum, 2002) is to conserve the natural, built and cultural heritage of the county, and to increase awareness and enjoyment of the heritage aspects by the people of Wicklow. It recognises that the heritage of Wicklow Town is capable of developing a ‘sense of place’, thereby improving the quality of life of its residents, while supporting the economic well-being of the community. It places great importance on the value of the heritage stock, recommending preservation and conservation.

The County Wicklow Heritage Plan was developed in accordance with the objectives set out by the ten-year strategic plan for County Wicklow, Outlook (Wicklow County Development Board, 2002).

With regards to its objectives, it maintains that comprehensive heritage appraisals be undertaken by Wicklow Town Council and that the enhancement and protection of the natural and the built heritage be supported by the development management process. Information on the heritage of Wicklow needs to be amassed so that it can help guide sustainable planning and development. It also seeks to improve the access to heritage through the development of walking routes and trails, signage and interpretation material. The County Wicklow Heritage Plan realises that the input from local organisations, Tidy Towns Groups and Residents Associations will be fundamental to the promotion of the natural and built heritage in the long term. The partners of the plan will be able to provide assistance in funding the various actions outlined by the plan.

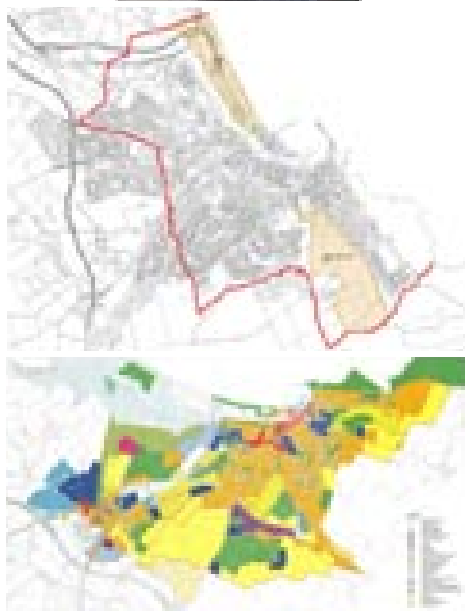
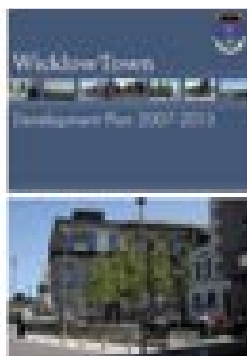


Fig. 5: Wicklow Town Development Plan
(front cover and maps)

Local Context

Wicklow Town Development Plan 2007-2013, sets the strategic aims, policies and objectives of the Town Council to support the national and regional strategy in the development of Wicklow town and its environs.

Census figures between 2002 and 2006 indicate that the Town experienced a decline in population of 1.4%. During the same period, the Wicklow town rural area experienced an increase of 35.1%.

The existing compact form of Wicklow permits walking and cycling around the Town, however it is recognised that the existing volume of vehicular traffic in the town centre acts as a disincentive for people to consider using these low cost and cleaner modes of transport. It should be noted that much of the land within the Town boundary is currently developed. However, there still remains some large strategic land banks within the plan area, namely to the north and south of the town centre area.

The Murrough area is identified for re-development through an Action Area Plan (AAP) no. 1 and the Convent lands are similarly identified through AAP no. 2 (shown in map adjacent). These are the two primary undeveloped lands in the town where future development, is likely to occur. There are also a number of regeneration sites identified within the area, all of which provide great opportunity in contributing to the enhancement of the town's public realm.

Wicklow Environs/Rathnew Draft Local Area Plan 2008 -2014 (LAP)

It is recognised that Wicklow Environs and Rathnew will develop into a primary settlement and development centre in east Wicklow supporting Dublin City while acting as a commuter settlement area. The sustainable development of the Town and environs is based on both the Town and County Council working together to facilitate the balanced economic, social and environmental development of the area, and supporting infrastructure that is developed in the interests of the community. The LAP targets for an overall future population of 22,500 people by 2016. The incoming population will be accommodated in existing and newly zoned residential lands (246ha undeveloped zoned land). Within this land, there are 10 Action Areas (AA) proposed with specific objectives relating to the development of each of the areas outlined in the Plan. The most significant of these is AA no. 6 (Marlton lands) which has since been subject to an individual Action Area 6 Local Area Plan 2006-2012 outlining the need for a detailed Masterplan to be prepared for the lands.

There are a number of heritage and amenity sites identified in the environs area. The incorporation of these features of the natural and built environment should be completed in such a manner so as to respect the existing environment while contributing to the new urban landscape and public realm. Consideration should be given to displaying items of cultural heritage that may be uncovered in the area within the town making history a part of peoples everyday lives. The Action Areas and zoned lands should not be planned for in isolation; connectivity and permeability to other residential areas and facilities needs to be promoted, and this will require the Town and County Council to work in partnership with developers so as to create open, active and healthy communities rather than closed, cul-de-sacs evident in our recent past. All development should seek to integrate housing with transport provision, appropriate design and scale and encourage infill in built up areas supported by community facilities.

Summary

Wicklow Town is in a strategic location within the GDA and the overall policy plans for the growth of the town from 10,070 inhabitants in 2006 to 22,500 inhabitants in 2016. It's economic and tourism potential as a place for investment, while also serving as a commuter town to Dublin, will put pressure on the development and management of the town and its assets. It is important that 'public realm' is considered at an early stage in the continued development and maintenance of the town and its environs.

Policy requires an integrated approach in order to safeguard the town's natural and built heritage assets, while creating an attractive, active town environment that supports the social and economic capacity of the town, as it grows.

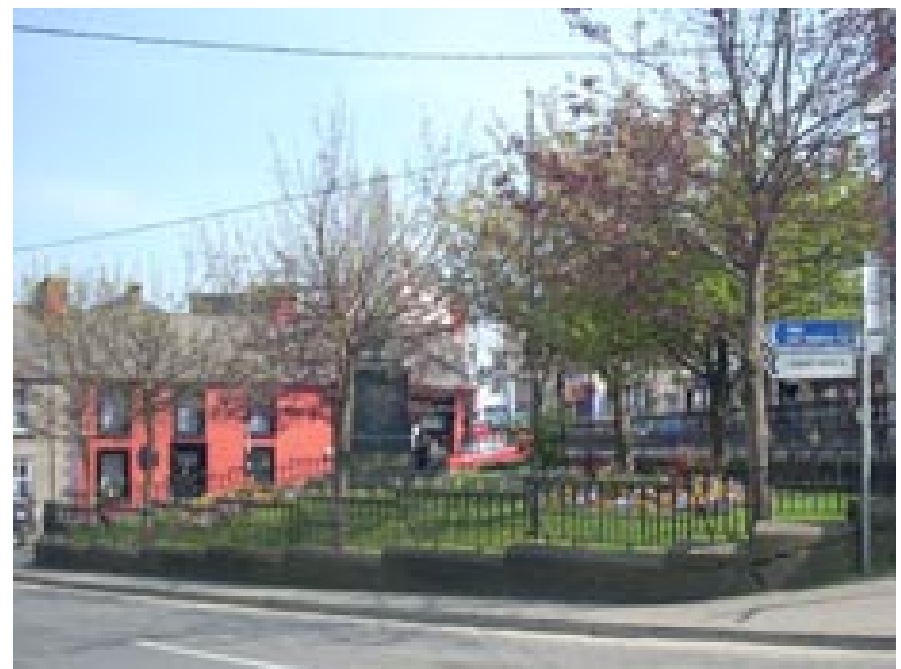


Photo 4: Fitzwilliam Square

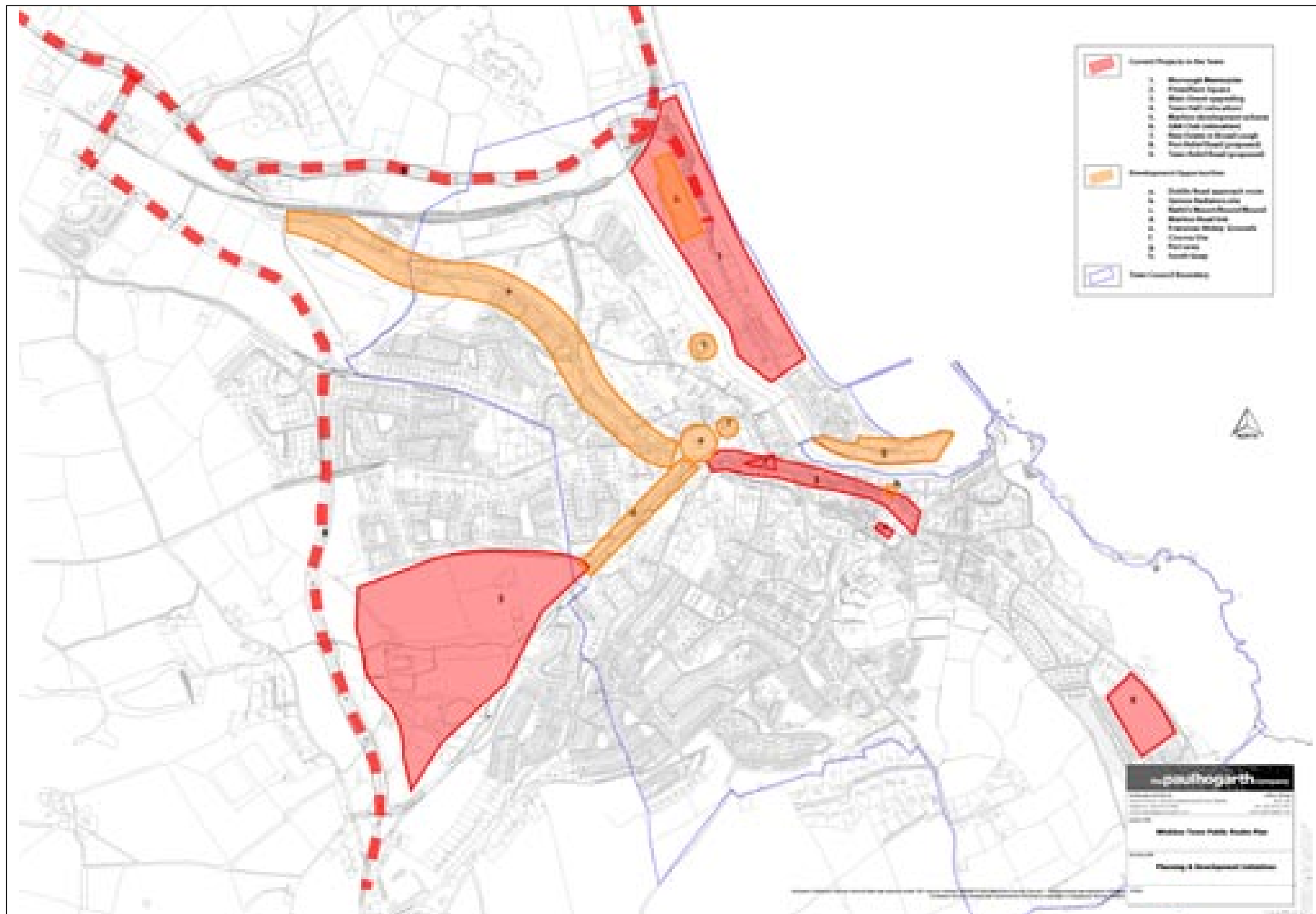


Fig. 6: Planning & Development Initiatives

3.5 Ongoing Initiatives

At the time of writing (June 2008), there were a number of ongoing planning and development initiatives of relevance to the public realm of Wicklow and it is therefore important that the Public Realm Plan takes these into consideration.

The current projects include;

- 1 Murrough Masterplan – planning and design of new development opportunities on The Murrough.
- 2 Fitzwilliam Square – public realm proposals to redesign the look and function of this town centre public space.
- 3 Main Street upgrading – works to improve footpath design and surfacing for aesthetic and accessibility purposes
- 4 Town Hall (relocation) – proposed relocation of Wicklow Town Council administrative functions to a new facility located on Kilmartin Hill.
- 5 Marlton Development Scheme – planning and design of potential major mixed used development on Marlton Road.
- 6 GAA Club– proposed relocation of GAA facilities to an alternative location further out of the town centre.
- 7 New Estate in Broad Lough – proposed housing development in the north of the town, towards Broad Lough
- 8 Port Relief Road – proposed road infrastructure project to establish a new route for heavy vehicles to and from the port, thus avoiding the town centre.
- 9 Town Relief Road – proposed road infrastructure project to access western areas of the town, thus relieving town centre congestion and opening up access to zoned development lands.
- Access Audit - planned assessment of the towns accessibility, including an audit of external environments.



4 ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

A process of assessment and analysis of Wicklow's existing public realm is a vital part of establishing a firm foundation upon which improvement and enhancement can be built. The consultant team spent two months collating information on Wicklow Town, via desktop research, multiple site visits and studies, as well as consultation with Council officials, project Steering Group, key stakeholders and the wider community. This chapter outlines the findings of this process, set out under the following thematic sections.

- Regional Context
- Topography / Natural Landscape
- Built Form / Heritage
- Building Uses
- Significant Features
- Landmarks and Views
- Green Open Space
- Access and Circulation
- Detailed Design
- Stakeholder Consultation



Fig. 7: Assessment & analysis



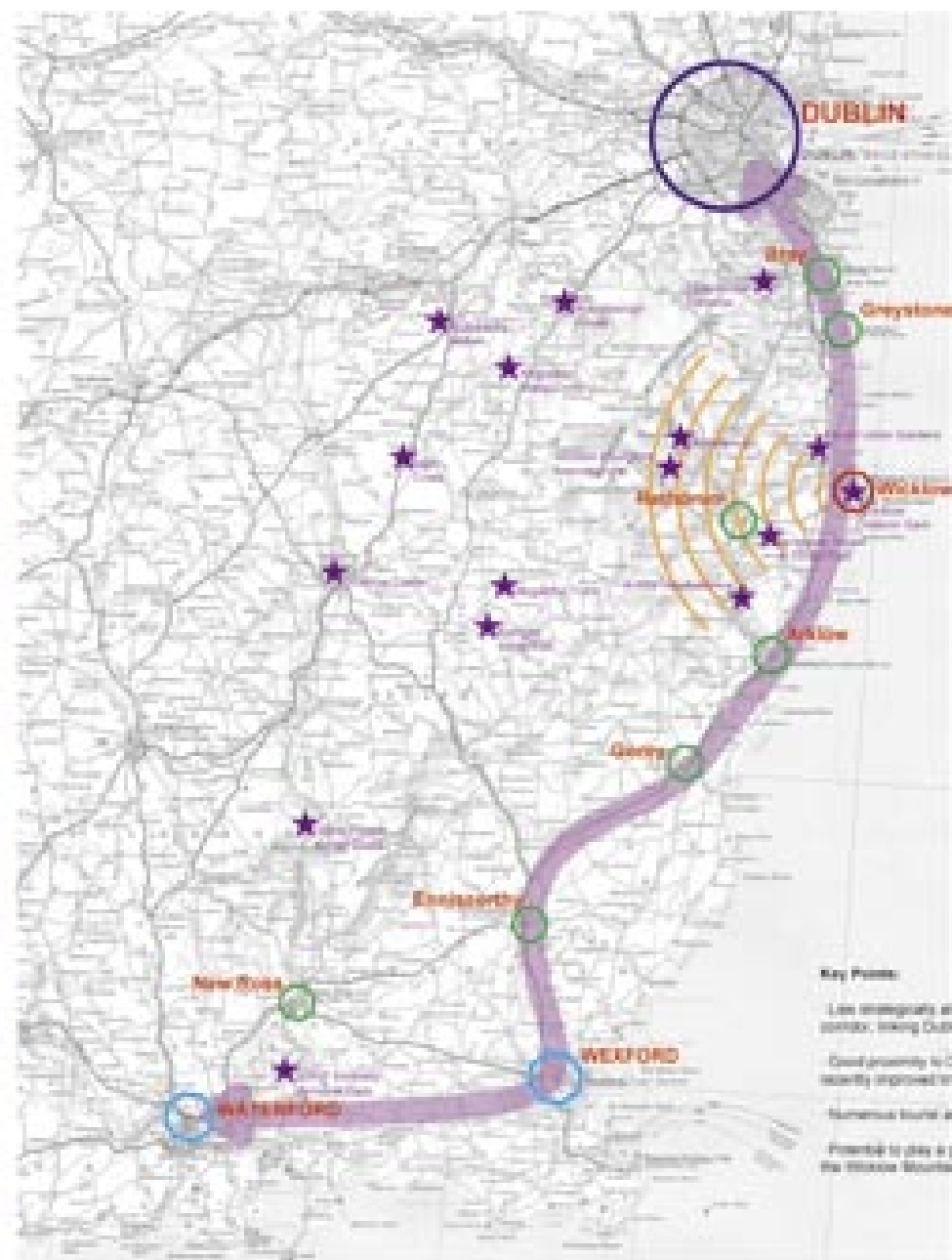
Aerial view of Wicklow Town from Arklow Bay



Glendalough, Co. Wicklow



St Patrick's Church (RCL), Wicklow Town



- KEY**
- Wicklow
 - Capital City - Dublin
 - Regional Centre
 - Local Centre
 - ★ Eastern Coastal Corridor
 - ★ Attractions
 - ✈ Airport
 - ⚓ Ferry Port
 - Potential Tourism Movement

Routes to Wicklow

From Dublin

Wien via M11 and R150. Arrive into town via Dublin Road (R150) and Abbey Street

From Arklow

Possible route (i): Wien via R150, M11 and R150. Arrive into town via Dublin Road (R150) and Abbey Street

Possible route (ii): Wien via R150. Arrive into town via Dublin Road (R150)

From Wexford

Wien via R150, M11 and R150. Arrive into town via Dublin Road (R150) and Abbey Street

From Waterford

Wien via N25, N50, M11 and R150. Arrive into town via Dublin Road (R150) and Abbey Street

Key Points:

- Line integrates along a major southeast coastal corridor, linking Dublin with Wexford and Waterford
- Good proximity to Dublin Road and need to improve security improved through
- Numerous tourist attractions within vicinity of the town
- Potential to play a greater role as tourist gateway for the Wicklow Mountains and wider County

| Wicklow Town Road | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| Location | Wicklow Town | County | Wicklow |
| Category | Wicklow Town | Category | Wicklow Town |
| Priority | Wicklow Town | Priority | Wicklow Town |
| Notes | Wicklow Town | Notes | Wicklow Town |

Fig. 8: Regional context plan

4.2 Regional Context

Prior to a detailed assessment of Wicklow's public realm, it is helpful to consider the regional context of the town and how this relates to its potential role in the future. This is particularly relevant to economic opportunity, including tourism for which Wicklow has a recognised potential.

Wicklow's proximity to Dublin is a significant asset that continues to influence much of life and commerce in the town. This has been bolstered by recent upgrades to the N11 motorway, meaning that the capital city is now only 45 minutes away by car. Such ease of access increases the attractiveness of Wicklow as a commuter destination, providing the context for urban expansion of the town.

Wicklow is also fortunate to be located upon the rail network, with regular services to Dublin, as well as Wexford and the port of Rosslare. It is noted, however, that journey times to Dublin are now 20 minutes longer than that of the car, which combined with relatively infrequent services has an impact on the amount of rail use.

This can in turn affect levels of car use and associated congestion and pollution.

Improved road and rail linkage in addition to benefiting commuters, would influence the potential for tourists to visit the town, be it as a day trip from Dublin or as part of a wider journey. It is therefore important that Wicklow seeks to encourage continued improvement of such connections with Dublin. However, it also of vital importance that the town works hard to welcome those who come to Wicklow, so to increase the potential for them to stay longer and / or to come back again. This is closely related to the public realm via the provision of directional signage, the physical quality of the arrival experience into the town, as well as the environmental quality and attractiveness of the town centre itself.

Wicklow's position along the eastern seaboard is also of significance, as the town is one of several seaside locations with historic and recreational interest.

Opportunity exists for Wicklow to increasingly operate as part of a network of attractive seaside towns, carving out a niche of character and attractions that compliment those provide by towns such as Bray, Greystones and Arklow.

The name Wicklow is synonymous with that of the county – internationally associated with the Wicklow Mountains and its reputation as the “Garden of Ireland.” At present, however, visitors to the Wicklow Mountains rarely have Wicklow Town on their itineraries, concentrating mostly on the National Park area of Glendalough. Opportunity exists for the relationship of the town and the mountains to be strengthened, so that Wicklow can realise greater benefits from visitor numbers.



Fig. 9: Topography plan

4.3 Topography / Natural Landscape

The natural landscape of Wicklow is a particularly striking aspect of its overall visual character. Contrasting environments of hillside, river basin, beach and cliff-top converge upon the town, providing a diversity of visual, ecological and recreational value.

The preservation and enhancement of natural habitats (both terrestrial and aquatic) is central to the sustainability of the area's bio-diversity. Whilst active conservation is evident in areas such as the Broad Lough, other important environments such as hilltop moorlands and the small rivers that flow from them, should not be overlooked. This will be particularly relevant with the onset of increased development and highlight the importance of safeguarding ecologically sensitive locations. The educational and recreational value of such conservation works are an important aspect with potential for the greater involvement of schools and local people.

The visual prominence of the surrounding landscape within the town is largely due to its topography, with numerous views to the landscape presented at different parts around the town.



Photo 6: Aerial of Wicklow Town & Environs

A disadvantage of pronounced topography, however, is its impact on mobility. This is mostly applicable to the extensive areas of housing located on the hillsides to the south and west. Steep gradients can discourage walking, particularly amongst those who have impaired mobility. Whilst this feature of the natural landscape is unchanging, it focuses the need for footpath connections to be well provided for, designed and maintained to counter natural disincentives to walk.

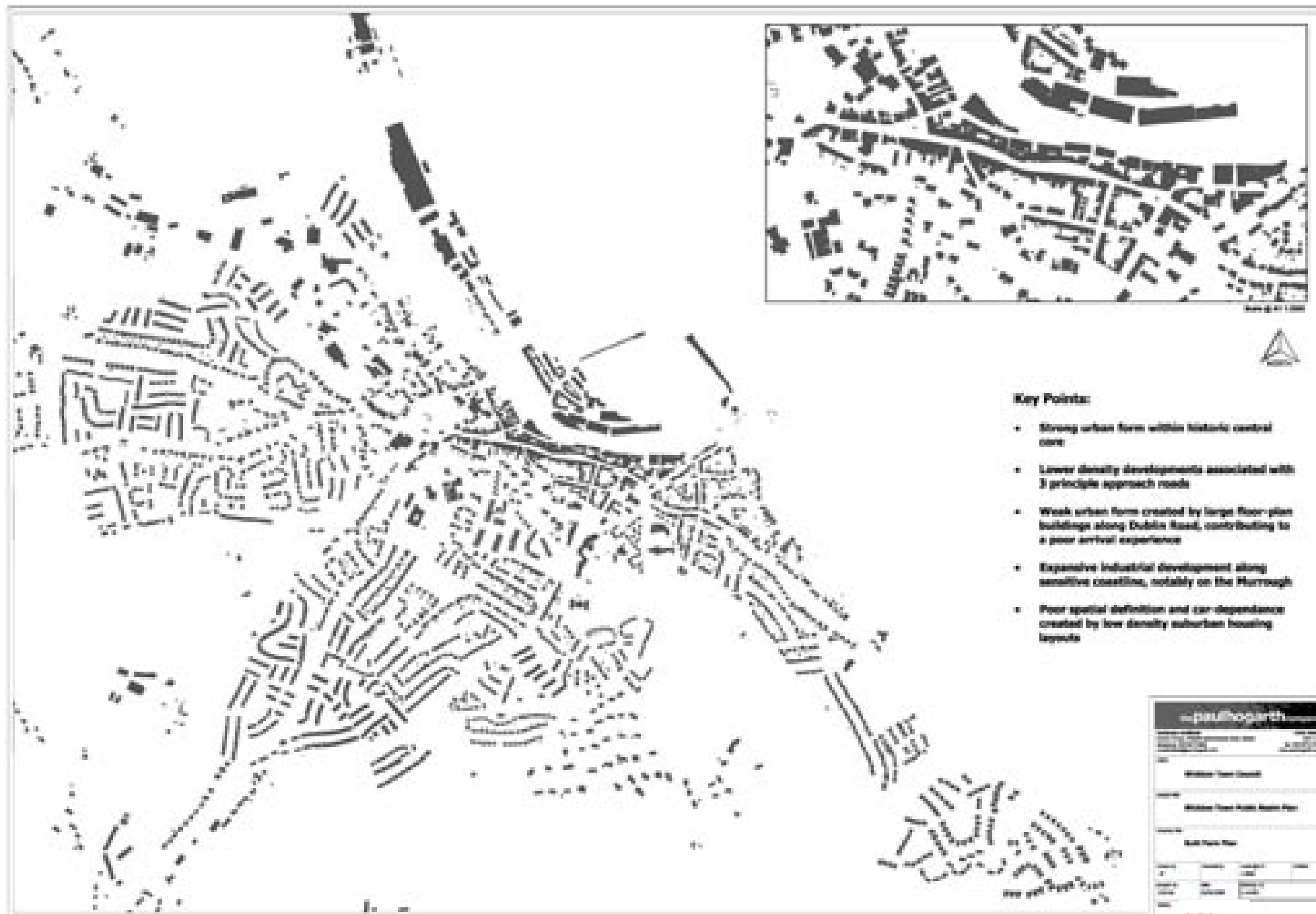


Fig. 10: Figure ground plan

4.4 Built Form / Heritage

The buildings of any town have a direct influence on its public realm as they provide the spatial definition to streets and spaces. The adjacent study of Wicklows Built Form clearly illustrates contrasting areas, reflective of the era during which they were built and the distribution of uses around the town.

The historic town centre of Wicklow is compact and densely developed, with continuous frontages and narrow, clearly pronounced streets and spaces. This generally creates a good scale of space for pedestrians, but can easily become cluttered and congested when cars and stationary objects are introduced.

Outer areas of Wicklow that were constructed in the 20th century are of a much lower density. Due the era's departure from more traditional urban forms, these areas have less clearly defined streets and open spaces. This is notable along the three main approach roads to the town and within housing areas to the south and west.



Photo 7: The Mall, Wicklow Town

Large building footprints are particularly evident along Dublin Road and The Murrough, reflective of modern day commercial and industrial uses. By the nature of their use requirements (vehicular access and parking, etc.), such areas often exhibit poorer quality of public realm.

The plan clearly shows, that in Wicklow these uses are located in two very sensitive locations;

1. along the main arrival route into the town
2. along its expansive seafront.

Consequently, the environmental quality of these important areas is presently poor.

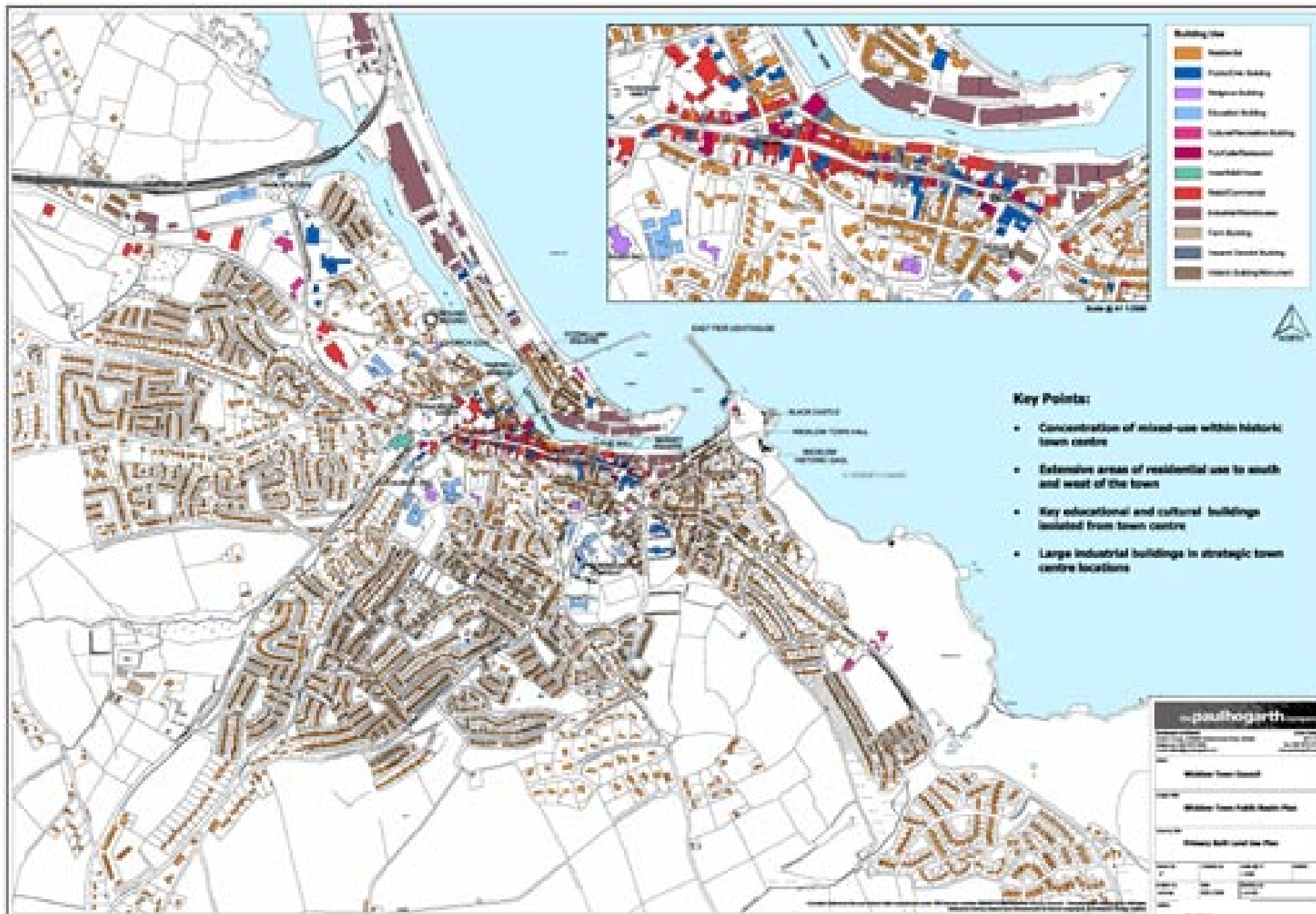


Fig. 11: Building use plan

4.5 Building Uses

Different building uses have different relationships with the public realm, determined by their requirements for access, visual prominence, privacy, etc. By mapping ground floor uses, it is possible to understand how the public realm is influenced by adjacent uses and where levels of animation are likely to be concentrated.

The historic core of Wicklow has a good mixture of retail, leisure and cultural buildings, that are densely concentrated within a compact central area. This, along with the fact that there are few vacant or derelict buildings, is evidence that many of the buildings have an active relationship with the public realm and help to generate active and safe environments. The exception to this is where ground floor offices are located on main streets, thus contributing little vitality to the street outside.



Photo 8: The Mall, Wicklow Town

Mapping building uses in Wicklow also highlights some important cultural and educational facilities (such as the school on the Murrough and the County Council Offices) that are some distance from the town centre. The importance of good pedestrian linkages to these buildings are therefore accentuated by their distance from the town centre.

4.6 Significant Cultural Heritage Features

Wicklow has a relatively wide spread of significant cultural features (tourist attractions and cultural buildings) rather than a concentration in its central core. This in itself is unlikely to be problematic, but again focuses a need for clear, good quality walking routes between them to encourage walking over car use.

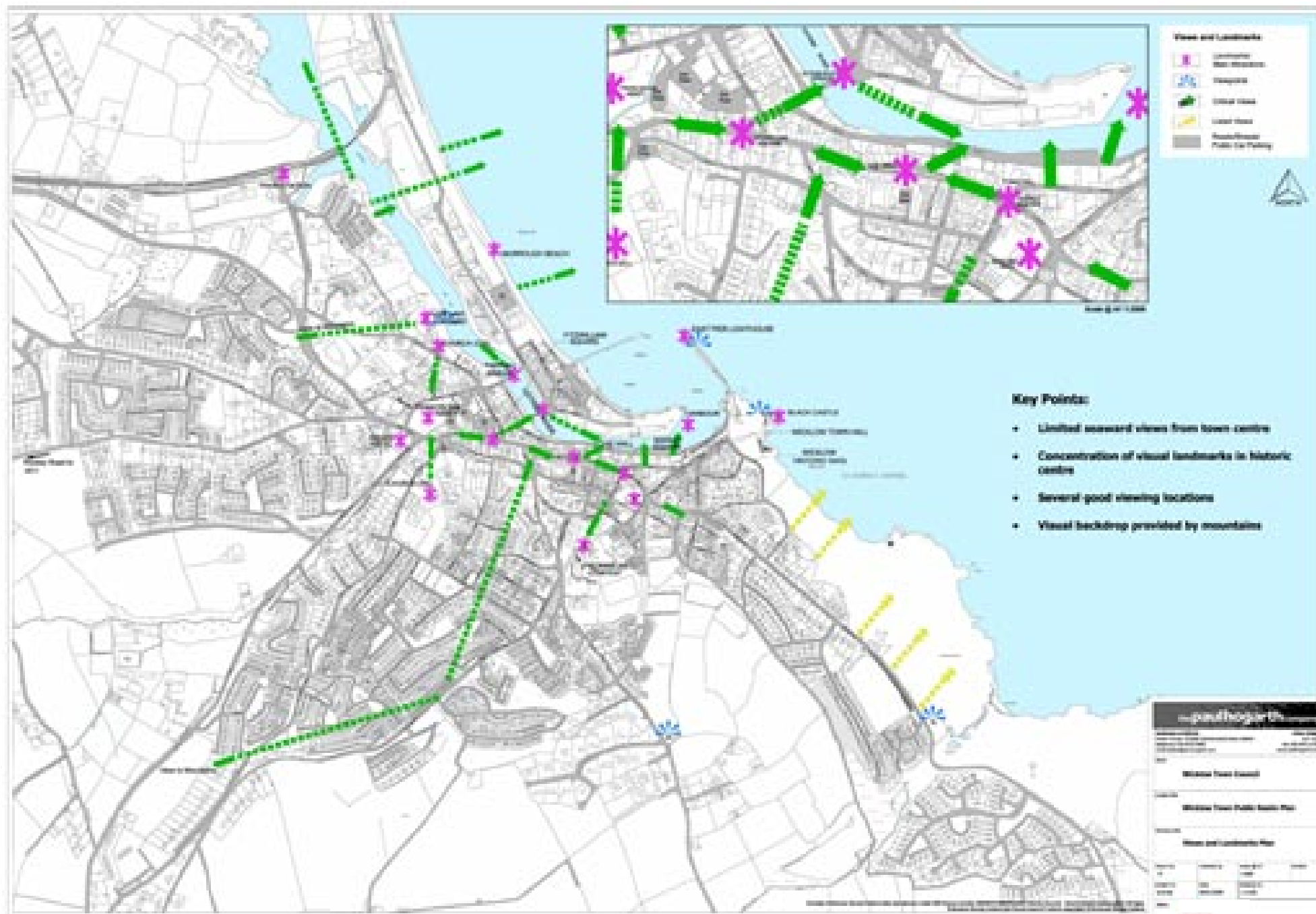
The wide distribution of tourist attractions can be a positive aspect in 'spreading' the movement and potential economic activity of visitors around the town. However, it also places an importance of good signage to direct them and prevent visitors being disorientated or lost.

Two of the town's most well known attractions are Wicklow Gaol and the ruins of Black Castle. The restoration of the Gaol has been highly successful, helping to establish the facility as a lynchpin in the tourism offer of the town. Scope exists to expand on this success with improvements to the setting and spaces around the Gaol and the potential for opening hours to be extended.



Photo 9: Black Castle

Black Castle is an atmospheric ruin set upon a dramatic seaside promontory. At present the town has little in the way of encouragement to visitors to go the castle and once there, despite the view, its physical setting and interpretation is relatively poor.



4.7 Landmarks and Views

Wicklow's topography, combined with a rich built and natural environment, mean that the town is rich in landmarks and views. Understanding the locations and relationships of these is an important part of the process of safeguarding them for future generations.

Views to the hills and sea are good from many areas and should be safeguarded where possible against new obstructive development.

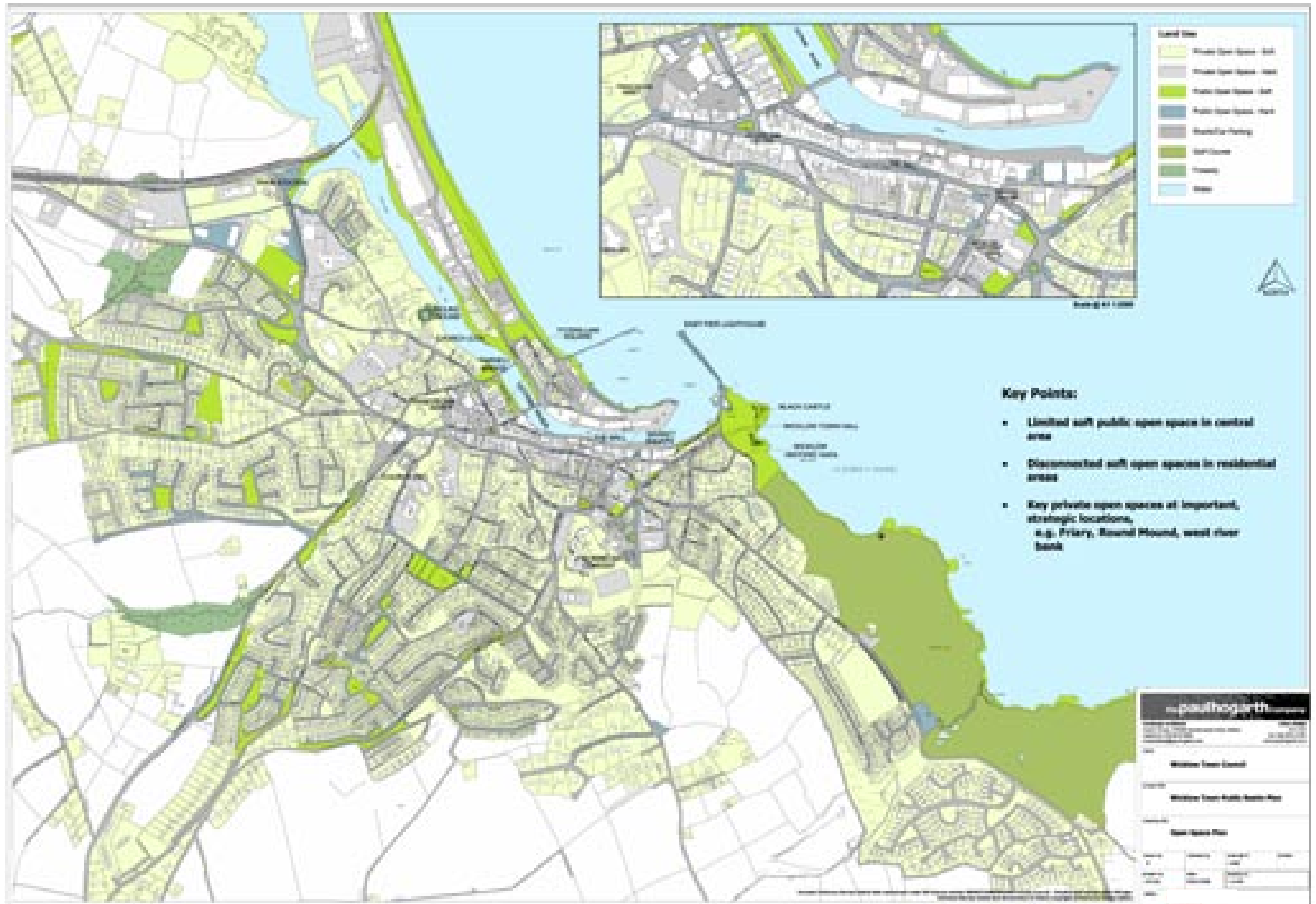
The ability to view the town and its surroundings from many locations is a major asset that sets Wicklow apart from many urban areas built on flatter ground.

Interestingly, however, outward views are most limited along Abbey Street and Main Street, thus visually disconnecting the core of the historic town centre from the river and the seafront. Whilst there is little that can be done to change this age old dynamic, the importance of signage and existing linkages between these areas is increased.



Photo 10: Leirtrim River & The Murrough

The skyline of Wicklow is punctuated by its two attractive churches that sit upon their own hilltops. This charming and symbolic physical relationship is most noticeable from high ground and made even richer when the bells of both churches sound together. Any new development in this area must respect these views and opportunities for visitors to share them should be sought.



4.8 Green Open Space

The distribution of green open space in Wicklow is clearly related to the density of its built form, as shown on the adjacent map. The compact historic centre has few green open spaces, where as the lower density suburban areas beyond a much greater provision. Many of these spaces appear to be scattered with little physical relationship to one another. Quantity, however, does not necessarily equate to quality and increased provision of green open space can also increase the burden on its maintenance.

The provision of sports facilities is an important consideration for the public realm of Wicklow Town. These facilities should be in easy walking distance from the town centre with good pedestrian and cycle links. Retaining good linkages to the existing active open spaces (i.e. tennis courts and football pitches) will strengthen the towns existing walking network and encourage access by foot.

The plan clearly shows that the most substantial areas of public open spaces in Wicklow at present are on The Murrough.



Photo 11: Fair Green

Another key observation from this particular mapping exercise is the distribution of private open space in comparison to that of public. At present some of the most interesting features of the town are located either on or adjacent to large areas of private land, including the Round Mound, the Abbey ruins and the golf course.

4.9 Access and Circulation

Access and circulation routes in Wicklow town centre are largely defined by the historical development of the town and its relationship with the lie of the land.

One consequence of this is that there are few east / west connections due to constraints of topography. This puts an emphasis on the central route of Abbey Street and The Mall as a vehicular thoroughfare, which contributes to congestion and will influence any decisions to potentially reduce traffic levels in the historic town.

The plan also indicates the routes of proposed relief roads to the west and north. These are likely to have a positive impact on the town centre, with the removal of heavy vehicles from key public spaces such as Fitzwilliam Square. However, as large pieces of transport infrastructure, care must also be taken to ensure that these roads do not create hostile environments to pedestrians and cyclists. This will be most critical in the urban section of the proposed expansion and on The Murrough.



Photo 12: Traffic in the town centre

Pedestrian movement from the town to the Murrough and the sea is also restricted by the River and the Golf Course, which act as barriers. As increased development of The Murrough is envisaged, the need to provide additional linkages across the river is likely.

It is important that the public realm is as inclusive as possible to all users. Some of Wicklow's footpaths and streets are at present unsuitable for wheel or push chair users. Rectifying this should be part of a broader redesign of these areas.

The safety of pedestrians must be considered in relation to traffic and personal safety, particularly along walking routes to and from schools, sports facilities and other public facilities.

Congestion of the town's central areas is further compounded by servicing and deliveries to its shops throughout the day. Whilst this activity is essential for the functioning of these premises, scope exists for the coordinated management of servicing to minimise impact on the main shopping area at peak times.



Photo 13: Shop frontage



Photo 14: Signage



Photo 15: Street layout

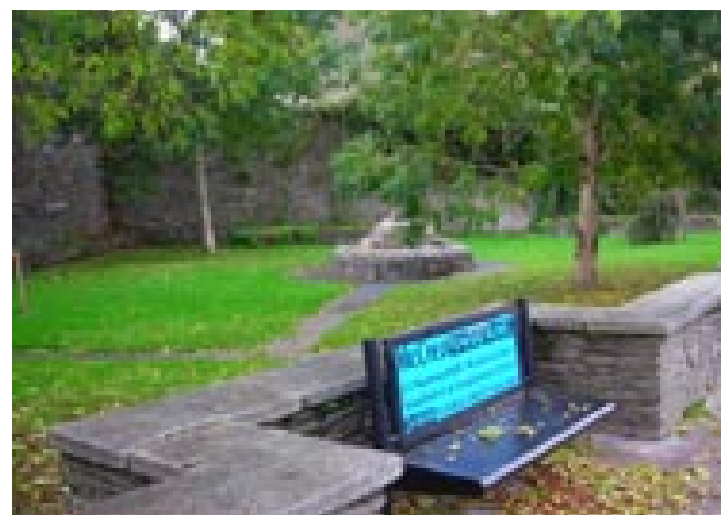


Photo 16: Existing street furniture

4.10 Detailed Design

Site visits to Wicklow revealed some key aspects of its existing public realm that are less easily mapped and more detailed in nature.

Narrow streets, such as those in central Wicklow, present both charms and challenges. Their scale is ideally suited to the pedestrian, with similarly dimensioned streets a popular feature of tourist destinations throughout Ireland and Europe. However, limited dimensions also put pressure available space and narrow streets can become physically and visually cluttered very quickly.

Efforts to facilitate the passage of vehicles has meant that pavements on several of Wicklows streets are very narrow or in places, non-existent. This affects the quality of the shopping experience and can have serious implications for those who use wheelchairs or push buggies. Wicklow has resisted a temptation to introduce one-way streets and this should be upheld, as they can generate more traffic and negatively effect retail footfall. However, shared surfacing is uncommon in Wicklow, but may provide a solution to this problem.

Circulation space and visual clutter is also impacted upon by elements that take up pavement space. Whilst some items of street furniture are unavoidable, light columns and telegraph poles, for example, can be replaced with wall mounted fittings and the burying of cables below ground.

A lack of consistency of materials also greatly contributes to visual clutter and in this is evident in the number of surfacing and street furniture styles currently present in Wicklow.

Finally, it should also be remembered that the public realm “sends out a message” to those who use it. Whilst Wicklow is a friendly place, some of the signs and messages contained within its public realm are less so. Multiple no entry signs and advertising panels on benches, for example, do little to welcome people to the town.



Pedestrian Access - Signage - Tourism
& Attractions - Identity - Public Realm
Materials - Maintenance - Activities &
Play - Traffic - Transport Network
Parking - Buildings - Sculptures &
Memorials - Environment - Education
Housing - Lighting - New Development
Shopping - Safety & Security

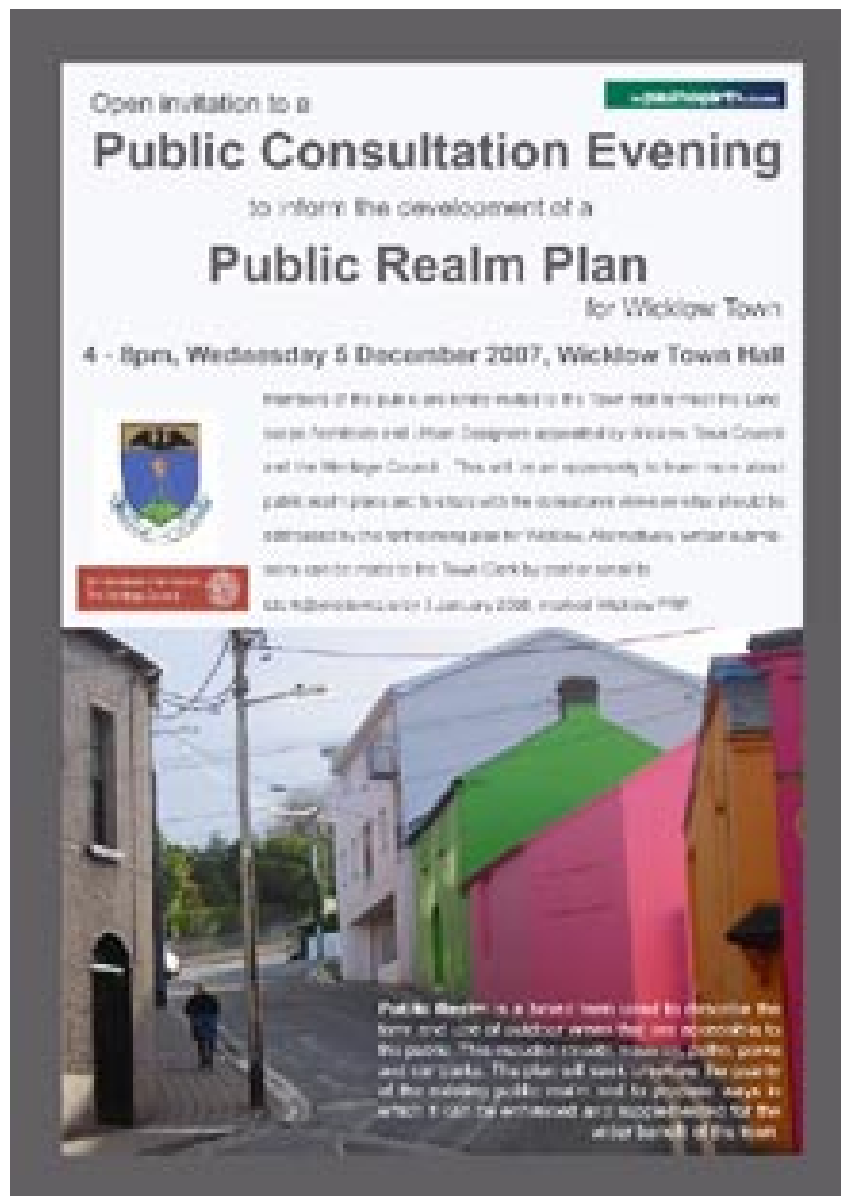


Fig. 16: Flyer for public consultation evening

4.11 Stakeholder Consultation

In addition to desktop research and site appraisals, consultation with local stakeholders and the community was a central component to the development of the Public Realm Plan.

A series of stakeholder meetings and an open public consultation event were held at the Town Hall on 5 December 2007. This provided an opportunity for local people to learn about the public realm plan process and to raise any issues that they felt should be taken into consideration by the plan. This was also accompanied by an opportunity for written submissions to the Council.

The consultation process was considered to be successful with a range of important issues raised, that were in turn fed into the development of the plan. The project consultants found a general enthusiasm for the historic character and landscape of the town with recognition of its potential to be improved both as a place to live and as a destination for tourists. Primary concerns were raised in relation to the maintenance of the open spaces beyond the town centre, the provision of sports and play facilities, the impact of traffic and of potential impact of new development and the existing character of the town. The general themes of all feedback are listed opposite and a full account of consultation responses contained in Appendix A of this document.

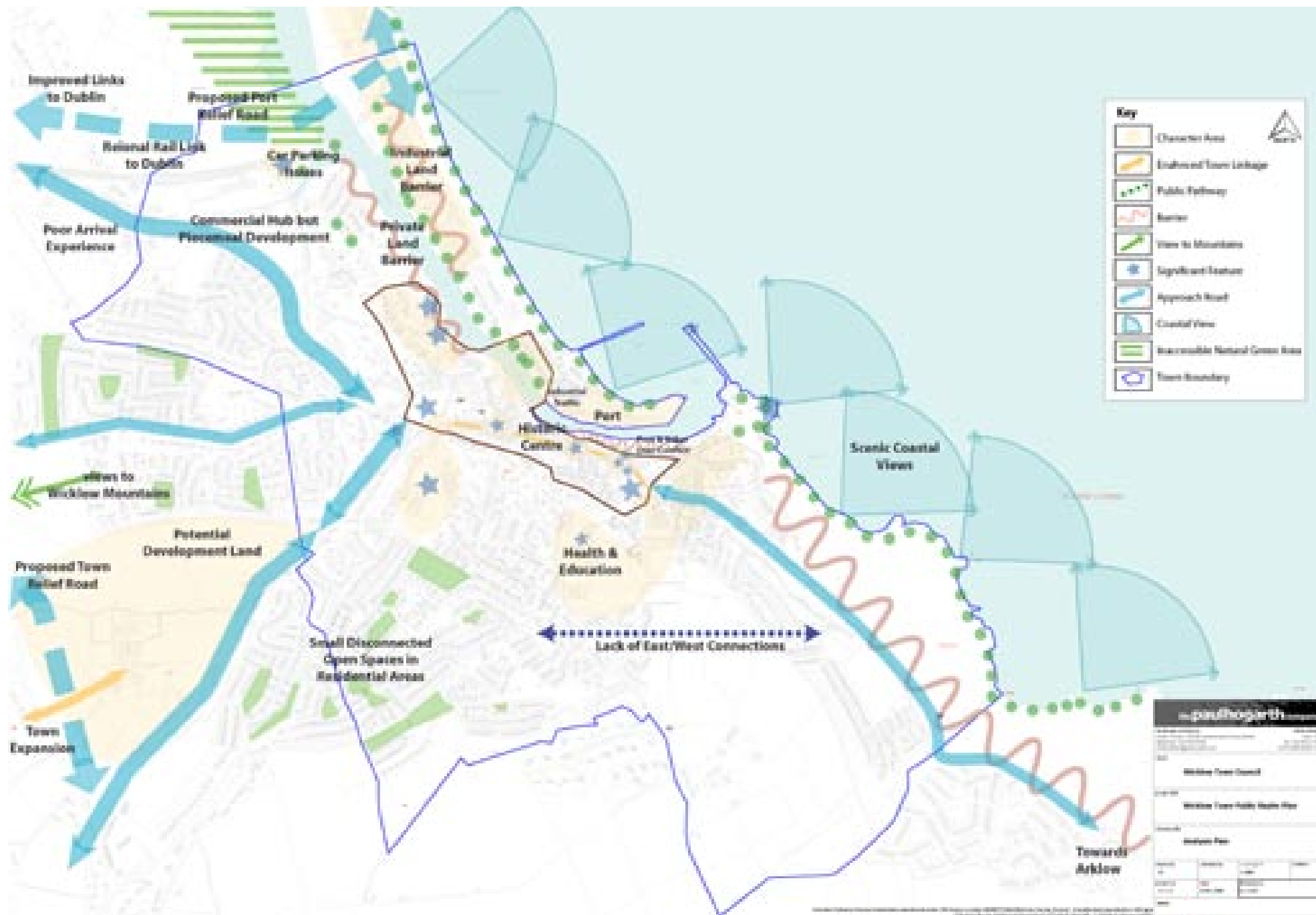


Fig. 17: Analysis plan

4.12 Analysis Conclusion

The assessment and analysis has recognised a number of substantial physical qualities that exist in Wicklow Town, including the charm and character of its historic streets, individual attractions such as the Wicklow Gaol and Black Castle and the dramatic beauty of its natural landscape. Enhancement of these existing qualities can be achieved through their associated public realm with regard to their quality of design, materials and maintenance as well as improved access and interpretation.

In addition, a number of significantly under exploited opportunities exist within the town, including features such as the Round Mound and the Murrough coastline. Through carefully considered public realm initiatives, scope exists for them to greatly add to the quality of life in Wicklow and to enhance its value as a tourist destination.

Finally, extensive development of the town should make a positive contribution to its environment. This will require adequate investment in the public realm, accompanied by good design and maintenance.

5 THE CONCEPT

5.1 Shared Vision

Wicklow Town will be a rich, diverse, attractive and fun place in which to live, work, visit and play. Its historic streets and squares will be alive with people, creating a safe and friendly atmosphere. Such liveliness will be generated by numerous high quality places at which to shop, eat and drink, as well as the many events and activities that take place there. Tourist attractions, such as Wicklow Gaol and Black Castle, will welcome visitors from both near and far, who are encouraged to stay in the town, learn about its history and explore its many charms. And Wicklow's natural landscape will never be far away, with its attractive river, coast and hills on its doorstep, making the town an excellent place from which to explore the region.

5.2 Aims & Objectives

Based on the Public Realm Plan brief and the findings of the information gathering and analysis process, the following aims and objectives are proposed for the Wicklow Public Realm Plan.

A Enhance the environmental quality of Wicklow for the benefit of local residents, businesses and visitors

- (i) Improve the quality of green spaces for passive and active recreation
- (ii) Improve the physical quality of the shopping and business environment
- (iii) Improve foot and cycle connections through the town
- (iv) Support and increase biodiversity

B Strengthen the physical, social and economic identity of Wicklow Town by fully maximising existing assets

- (i) Improve arrival experience from all directions, including the definition of town boundaries and gateways
- (ii) Establish a socio-economic vision for the historic town in the context of extensive new retail development nearby
- (iii) Reinforce the strong identity of areas within the town, such as the harbour, riverside, Church Hill etc.
- (iv) Encourage new development to compliment and enhance identity of the town

C Provide a positive physical framework for future development, complimentary to the existing urban core

- (i) Physically integrate new urban areas, individual developments and associated infrastructure with the existing town and landscape
- (ii) Ensure that a high quality of public realm is integral to all new developments

D Strengthen the role of Wicklow Town as a tourism destination

- (i) Improve the quality of regional connections to and from Wicklow to establish the town as a gateway to the county.
- (ii) Support and enhance the quality and role of existing tourist attractions
- (iii) Realise the potential of new tourist attractions in the town
- (iv) Provide a context for increased visitor accommodation
- (v) Improve the overall tourist experience through good information provision



Fig. 18: Concept plan

5.3 The Public Realm Concept

Welcome to Wicklow!

It is essential that Wicklow Town makes a positive first impression upon visitors, be they tourists or potential investors, in what is essentially a competitive global marketplace. Considerable scope exists for the arrival experience to Wicklow to be improved, starting well beyond the town itself at approaches such as the N11 and associated junctions. The public realm has a critical role to play in this process, by ensuring that publicly accessible spaces (either physically or only visually accessible) send out a positive and welcoming message.

This should be complimented by other measures, including branding and promotion of the town and coordinated improvements to hospitality and service provision. To be successful, this will require a partnership approach from both the public and private sectors, neighbouring towns such as Rathnew and the people of Wicklow themselves.

Fulfilling Potential

Wicklow's historic town centre has abundant qualities including many of its buildings and the urban streets and spaces they form. The town must build upon these existing assets to raise the overall quality of its public realm. Introducing high quality public realm materials, lighting and signage will be a long-term investment in the overall environmental quality of Wicklow, providing the context for improved business and retail opportunities. In addition, Wicklow's "dormant assets" such the Round Mound, The Murrough Seafront and the Hills, should be 'reawoken' and be given a new lease of life to serve as a catalyst for the associated regeneration of their vicinities, including economic and tourism opportunities.

Integrate New Development

Considerable new development is planned for Wicklow, which has the potential to add greatly to the quality of the towns overall physical environment. New urban areas must be 'locked' into the existing town via good vehicular, cycle and pedestrian connections, appropriate density and form of development, good architecture (particularly in landmark locations) and attractive new public spaces that have a clearly defined role to play.



6 ECONOMIC AND TOURISM STRATEGY

6.1 Background

Economically, Wicklow is a vibrant and compact town, which has already established itself as a tourist destination for both overseas and domestic visitors and which also has a well established local retail and services sector. It does not have a significant manufacturing or light industrial base, and development in this area is limited by a lack of available space. However, the Town is also home to a busy commercial port, which equally plays an important role in the economic life of the Town.

The purpose of a public realm plan is to review the quality of the existing public realm and to propose ways in which it can be enhanced and supplemented for the wider benefit of the Town.

The economic and tourism strategy underlying any such plan should therefore support and enhance the core aims of developing and implementing improvements to the public realm. This will also apply to the tourism and economic strategy underlying the Public Realm Plan for Wicklow Town, including a particular focus on how the public realm interacts with the retail and tourism offers in the town.

6.2 Economic and Tourism Objectives

Against this background, the economic and tourism strategy for the Public Realm Plan is guided by a number of key objectives, which complement the wider over-arching aims and objectives of the Plan. These key objectives include:

- Developing and maintaining the retail core of the town centre in ways that both enhance the public realm and complement the development of retail activity in the wider area;
- Further developing Wicklow as a major visitor and tourism base for both excursionist and overnight visitors;
- Better harnessing the natural assets available in Wicklow and their potential for developing tourism and leisure activities.
- Addressing transport issues that pose a threat to the long-term development of the town

6.3 Developing and Maintaining the Retail Core

Wicklow is recognised as an important retail centre for its surrounding area. It is a vibrant and compact town centre with a range of comparison stores, although these are primarily local independents with few national multiples. It also has a number of specialist shops catering for the tourist market, and an increasing number of coffee shops and restaurants on and around the edge of the town centre.

It has also been designated as a key centre for future retail development in County Wicklow and the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). The Retail Planning Strategy for the GDA, for example, has designated Wicklow as a Level 2 County Town Centre, i.e. one of the most important retail centres outside Dublin city centre. As a Level 2 Centre, Wicklow should *'...tend to serve catchment areas well beyond (its) immediate locality, (it) should have the potential for significant comparison floorspace...including higher order shopping and offer a wide range of non-retail services'*. Local policy, as espoused in the Wicklow Town Development Plan, is therefore to support the continuing role of the town centre as the focus for a range of higher order comparison and niche retail facilities.

However, the development of the Town faces a number of challenges if it is to develop as a Level 2 Centre. Firstly, the Town is deficient in higher order comparison retail outlets, and it will need to improve the scale and quality of its retail offer if it is to become a Level 2 Centre. Secondly, the core retail area in the Town provides few opportunities for expansion of retail floorspace, which means that it will be necessary to provide for retail development on edge of and out of centre sites. Policy is therefore committed to promoting and encouraging major expansion of the town centre to enhance its role and importance as a Level 2 Centre in the GDA.

Expansion of the town centre in this way should of course greatly increase the scale and quality of retail available in Wicklow, and planning permission is currently being sought for a major new retail centre at Marlton, which is just on the edge of the town centre. However, there is also some concern that such development will impact negatively on the existing core retail area by diverting trade away from existing retailers.



Photo 19: Traditional frontage



Photo 20: Visitor information

Therefore, it is important to try to ensure that the strategy underlying the Public Realm Plan develops this area in ways that will complement other retail development within the Town.

The Public Realm Plan can help to do this by further enhancing the existing core retail areas in ways that help to make this part of the Town an 'attraction' for people to visit. This will in many ways be tied closely to the development of Wicklow as a tourism centre, with retail being very much part of the tourism offering, and it might include initiatives such as:

- investigation of ways in which links could be established between retail operators and tourist attractions in the area, e.g. joint promotions, joint marketing, use of vouchers for special events, etc.
- investigation of ways in which improved traffic management, including pedestrianisation, could help to improve the retail experience for visitors in the core area
- co-operation between the public and private sectors in further marketing Wicklow and its retail, entertainment and leisure offering
- enhancement of streetscapes and shopfronts in the core retail area, which add to the visual appeal for visitors and enhance the niche appeal of speciality retailers.
- continued ongoing efforts to prevent impediments to visual appeal such as growth in litter and graffiti
- further development of entertainment and leisure uses in the core retail area (bars, restaurants, hotels etc.) as a means of attracting people to the area and increasing their dwell time, including outside normal business hours

Taking such steps could help to both reduce expenditure leakage from the core retail area and indeed attract new expenditure from people who might not otherwise have visited the town, e.g. people who might use a new retail centre at Marilton instead of established centres in Dublin or Bray.

6.4 Wicklow as a Visitor and Tourism Base

As noted earlier, Wicklow has already emerged as a popular destination for both overseas and domestic visitors, but especially day visitors who frequent the Town's numerous attractions, such as Wicklow Gaol or the Black Castle. To date it has developed its own visitor and tourism economy by capitalising on its qualities as a cultural destination and an area of local distinctiveness.

From a tourism perspective, Wicklow has a number of strengths. Firstly, it is an historic town, with a built heritage and suite of attractions that would be attractive to large segments of the tourist market. Secondly, it is close to the Wicklow Mountains, which are a heavily used tourism, recreational and leisure resource both among tourists and residents within the GDA. Thirdly, it is also close to Dublin, which is Ireland's premier destination for overseas visitors and which therefore places Wicklow within easy reach of a large tourism market.

At the same time, Wicklow also faces a number of challenges if it is to be further developed as a major destination for visitors. For example, its location to the south of the Wicklow Mountains puts it somewhat 'off the beaten track' and makes it a less obvious base for people who are using the Wicklow Mountains resource. Also, most importantly, it has relatively little visitor accommodation stock, and an obvious shortage of hotel stock, which means that the town has little capacity at present to become an overnight base for tourists. Allied to this, its proximity to Dublin, which already has a very large and continuously growing accommodation stock, means that visitors have a readily available choice of accommodation nearby.



Photo 21: Lighthouse on Wicklow Pier



Photo 22: Example of courtyard

The Public Realm Plan for Wicklow Town can help to enhance the tourism sector in Wicklow in a number of ways. Worthwhile initiatives in this regard might include:

- protection of the visual and historical character of Wicklow, which will be crucial to the tourism offer in the town;
- improvements to the physical entrance to the town as a means of enticing casual visitors to engage with the town and its attractions;
- streetscape enhancement, including an investigation of the potential for pedestrianisation, which could help to improve the attractiveness of Wicklow for visitors;
- development of designated walking routes, which would help visitors to better understand and interpret the cultural and built heritage in the town;

- further development of the tourism product in Wicklow, including the development of festivals and events, which have become a major source of tourism and visitor revenue in towns throughout Ireland;
- development and enhancement of public spaces with the potential to host such festivals and events, such as the space available at Market Square or Wicklow Gaol;
- enhancement of the retail offer in the town, including speciality or niche retailing and commercial leisure, as an important component of any tourism offer,
- co-operation between the public sector and private sector in marketing the attractions of Wicklow and its qualities as a place to visit, eat, drink or shop.

The Wicklow Town Development Plan also has a strategic aim to better integrate Wicklow with the tourism and heritage infrastructure of the surrounding county. Links between the town and the county's wider profile as a tourist destination and 'Garden County' should therefore be strengthened by promoting and developing the town's heritage assets in tandem with other established attractions in the county, e.g. Wicklow Mountains, Glendalough, Avondale. This would require co-operation between Wicklow Town Council, Wicklow Co. Council, Fáilte Ireland and individual tourist attractions to see what initiatives can be developed, e.g. joint marketing, joint ticketing. In addition, high quality directional signage will have a role to play in this regard.

6.5 Harnessing Natural Assets

Another key tourism asset in Wicklow that has not been discussed above is the natural assets that Wicklow has at its disposal, and in particular the water-based assets that are provided by the town's harbour and river. As a town, Wicklow is steeped in maritime heritage, but it has to a large degree failed to embrace this asset for tourism and leisure purposes. As a result, the Town largely turns its back on what was a key economic driver over the centuries. However, there should be scope for this to be addressed if the Public Realm Plan is fully implemented.

While the harbour is still operated as a commercial port, there may nonetheless be potential to develop water-based leisure activities alongside the port. Wicklow Town Council, in the Wicklow Town Development Plan, has also adopted a policy to promote the expansion of leisure uses in the port area. The harbour's natural advantages make it suitable to accommodate at least some forms of water-based activities, and the town is also close to other key water-based leisure destinations such as Greystones, Dún Laoghaire or Malahide.

Further investigation is therefore recommended into the feasibility of developing such activities in the harbour. This might include, for example, the further development of Wicklow as a berthing point for both resident and visiting yachts, which add to the 'necklace' of moorings along the Irish east coast, and whether such a development should incorporate a marina, pontoon or mooring set-up.

In addition, there is a need to give the waterfront a more focal point in the economic and social life of the town. In this regard, a masterplan or vision should be prepared for the quays, which might focus on retail and leisure potential and on enhanced linkage to the core retail area.

6.6 Transportation

Traffic congestion and lack of parking, which contribute to a poor trading environment, pose a threat to the long-term development of the town, including its retail and tourism sectors. Comprehensive traffic management planning and arrangements will be needed to address this.

Both the Port Relief and Town Relief Roads will have an impact on traffic movement in the town. with the Port Relief Road, particularly beneficial as it will remove all port related traffic from the historic town centre.

The provision of car parking in the town centre should be considered more closely. It is important to strike a balance between adequate parking provision and retaining the environmental quality and historic character of the town centre. A detailed analysis of this will be required through a transport strategy.

The opportunity to remove traffic from the town central area must be explored in conjunction with the provision of alternative routes.

Alternative modes of transport to the motor car should be encouraged such as cycling, public transport and walking. Facilities for these sustainable modes of transport should be at as high a standard as possible. Increased cycle usage is important with provision of cycle lanes and stands where possible.



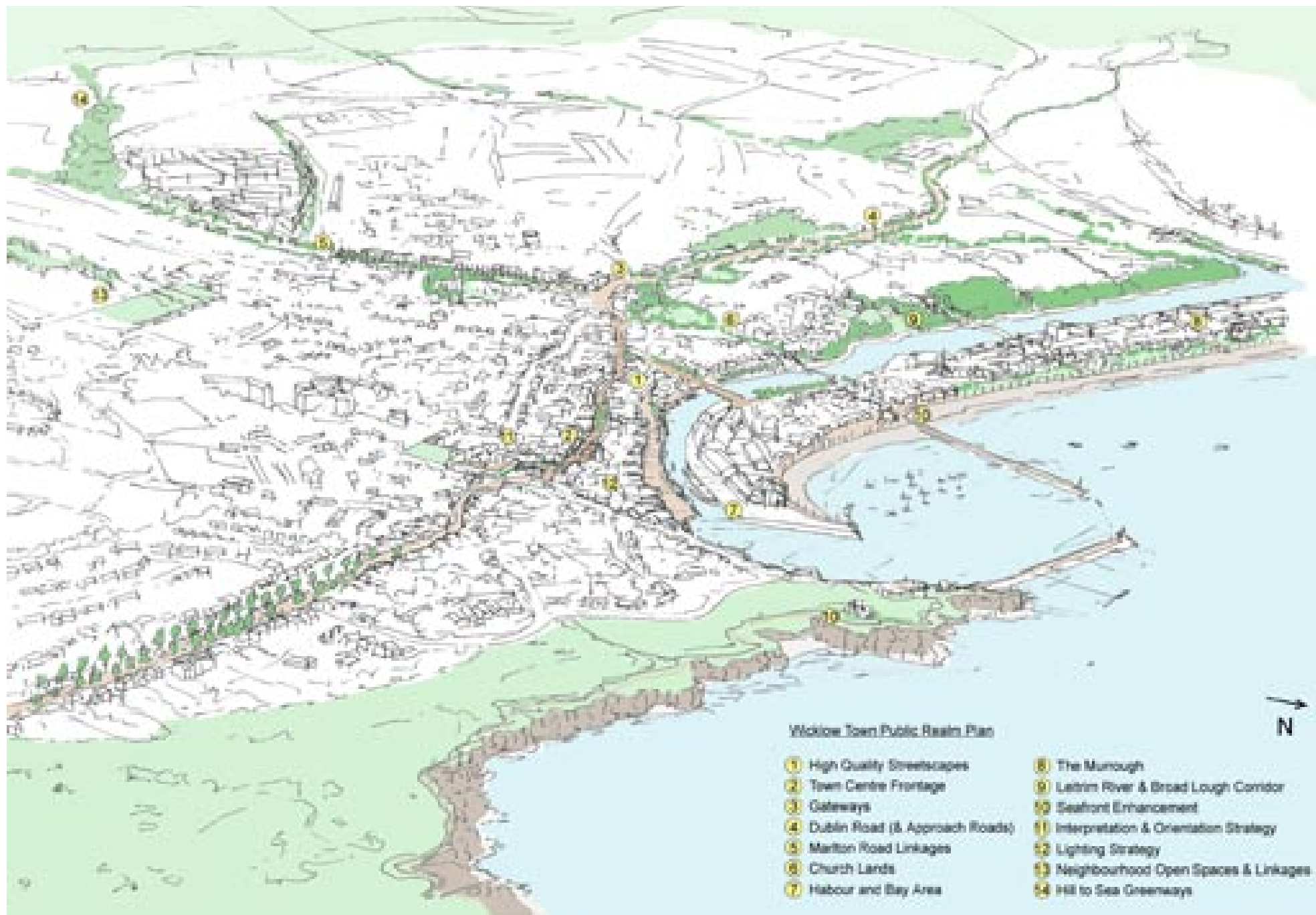
Photo 23: Building Frontage

6.7 Other Key Considerations

- The private sector impact on the public realm cannot be underestimated. Businesses in Wicklow have already made a substantial investment in the area and will continue to do so. The Council has a role to play in providing the necessary leadership to the private sector, but equally there is a responsibility on the Council to make sure that local business is embedded in the development planning of the town.
- Co-operation among all key stakeholders will be crucial if the aims and objectives of the Public Realm Plan are to be realised. This includes Wicklow Town Council, Wicklow Co. Council, state agencies and the private sector.
- It is essential that public realm is part of a wider socio-economic development process, which itself becomes the platform for further improvement of the public realm. This will require an ongoing programme of delivery, including the specific initiatives identified in this plan.
- It is advocated that an Architectural Conservation Area must be the most effective means by which to conserve the historic quality of the town therefore it should be pursued

6.8 Actions

1. Develop an integrated traffic management plan for the town, including an investigation of the potential for promoting pedestrianisation in the core retail area.
2. Develop a marketing strategy for Wicklow in conjunction with all key stakeholders.
3. Develop ways to better integrate the tourism product in Wicklow, including links between retailers and tourism operators as well as links to other tourism attractions in Co. Wicklow.
4. Prepare a strategy for the further development of festivals and events in Wicklow as a means of attracting increased retail and tourism activity in the core retail area and Town centre.
5. Conduct a feasibility study on the potential for developing water-based tourism and leisure activities in the Wicklow Harbour area.
6. Murrough Masterplan – planning and design of new development opportunities on The Murrough.
7. Fitzwilliam Square – public realm proposals to redesign the look and function of this town centre



7 PUBLIC REALM PLAN & SPECIFIC INITIATIVES

7.1 Introduction

This chapter of the plan outlines proposed improvements to the Public Realm of Wicklow Town. These are set within the strategic framework of the Public Realm Plan and extrapolated as a series of “Specific Initiatives” that can be designed and delivered on an individual basis, in line with their importance, complexity and availability of funding.

To deliver these Initiatives in full, specific consultation with relevant stakeholders and additional detailed design will be required.

The Public Realm Plan proposes a total of 14 Specific Initiatives:

1. High Quality Streetscapes
2. Town Centre Frontages
3. Gateways
4. Dublin Road (& Approach Roads)
5. Marlton Road Linkage
6. Church Lands
7. Harbour and Bay Area
8. The Murrough
9. Leirim River & Broad Lough Corridor
10. Seafront Enhancement
11. Interpretation & Orientation Strategy
12. Lighting Strategy
13. Neighbourhood Open Space & Linkages
14. Hill to Sea Greenways



Fig. 21: Public realm plan (zoomed in)

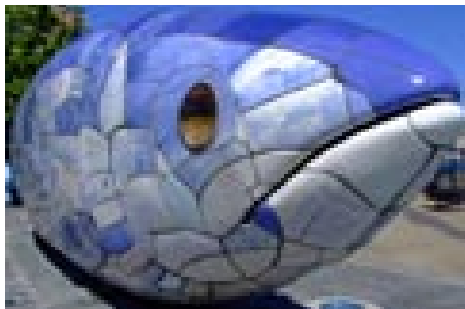


Photo 24: Arrival/ Gateway



Photo 25: Public Art



Photo 26: Orientation



Photo 27: Interpretation



Photo 28: High Quality Streetscapes & Laneways



Photo 29: Shared Surfacing

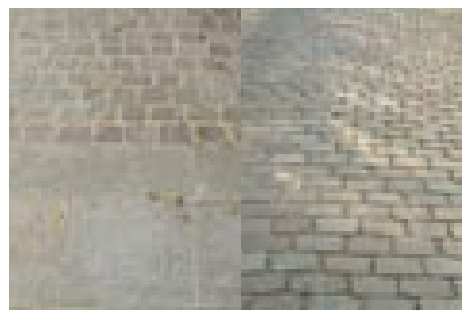


Photo 30: Natural Stone Slabs/ Salvaged Cobble



Photo 31: Junction/ crossing improvements

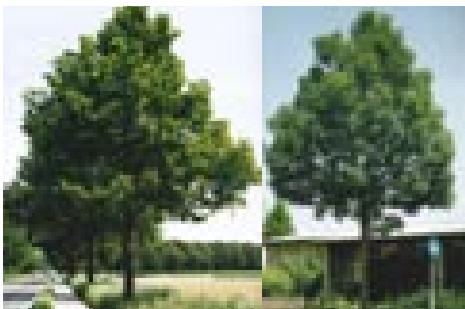


Photo 32: Quercus robur Fraxinus excelsior



Photo 33: Tilia cordata



Photo 34: Sorbus aucuparia



Photo 35: Pinus sylvestris

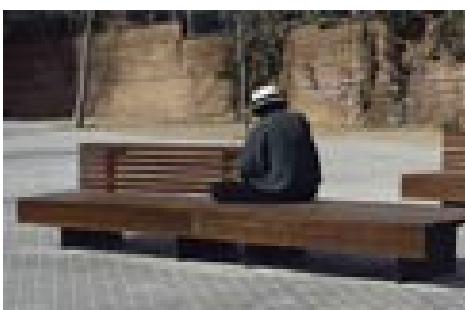


Photo 36: Street Furniture

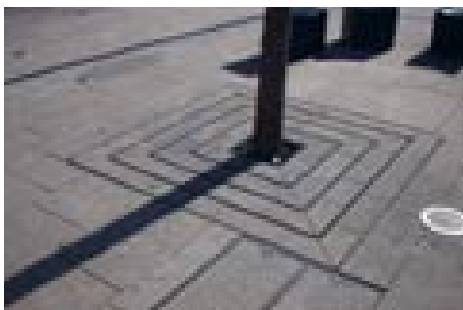


Photo 37: Tree Grilles- maximise pedestrian space

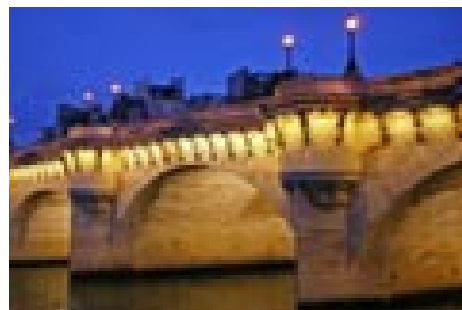


Photo 38: Feature Lighting



Photo 39: Catenary Lighting

7.2 High Quality Streetscapes

The historic streets of Wicklow Town centre are a very valuable asset, establishing a unique and attractive character of value to residents, businesses and tourists. It is therefore proposed that all streets within the centre undergo high quality streetscape projects to ensure that they both look and function as well as possible for the long term.

At the time of writing, Wicklow Town Council has begun a programme of such works, with the refurbished Market Square an award winning public space. This specific initiative is designed to guide and complement these ongoing works.

All Public Realm improvements should be seen as investment in the long term quality of a place. This is particularly relevant to the streets of Wicklow, that received heavy footfalls and are required to perform a number of different functions. The quality of their design, materials and workmanship is therefore of critical importance.

The adjacent photographs illustrate some appropriate public realm materials for use in Wicklow Town, including locally sourced stone surfacing and bespoke designed street furniture. Such good quality materials will add to the unique character of the town and if constructed well, last much longer than lower costing alternatives.

As noted in the analysis section “Detailed Design”, the narrowness of Wicklow’s old streets required physical and visual clutter to be kept to a minimum. The choice of materials used should be kept to a minimum range, complementary to one another in style and colour. Street furniture elements such as seats and bins should only be used where appropriate in relation to available space. Light columns and telegraph poles should be replaced by wall mounted fittings and underground cabling. Road signs should be kept to the necessary minimum, with posts being shared for different signs and other uses.

Pavements surfacings are required to be designed for all users, including those who are mobility and / or visually impaired. Pavement widths should accommodate wheelchairs and push buggies and tactile surfacing indicate all road crossing points.

Opportunities exist for the planting of street trees in key areas, favouring the use of native tree species were possible.

The following plans illustrate the potential redesign of the following streets in Wicklow Town centre. These are indicative only and would require detailed consultation with local residents, businesses and other stakeholders to finalise.

- Abbey Street
- Main Street & The Mall
- Fitzwilliam Square
- Bridge Street
- Church Street
- Kilmantin Hill & Wicklow Gaol



Fig. 22: Location plan - streetscapes

Specific Action Points

- high quality streetscape projects for all town centre streets
- good quality materials to complement the unique character of the town
- reduce visual clutter
- pavements and streets designed to accommodate all users (children, the elderly, the mobility & visually impaired)



Fig. 23: Sketch plan - Abbey Street



Fig. 24: Sketch plan - Abbey Street



Fig. 25: Sketch plan - Abbey Street & Fitzwilliam Square

It is Town Council policy (Objective TC3) to consolidate and enhance Fitzwilliam Square as a 'key public open space, with hard and soft landscaping and high quality street furniture'. Fitzwilliam Square to the Middle of Main Street represents the Towns 'Core Shopping Area' as defined in the Wicklow Draft County Retail Strategy.

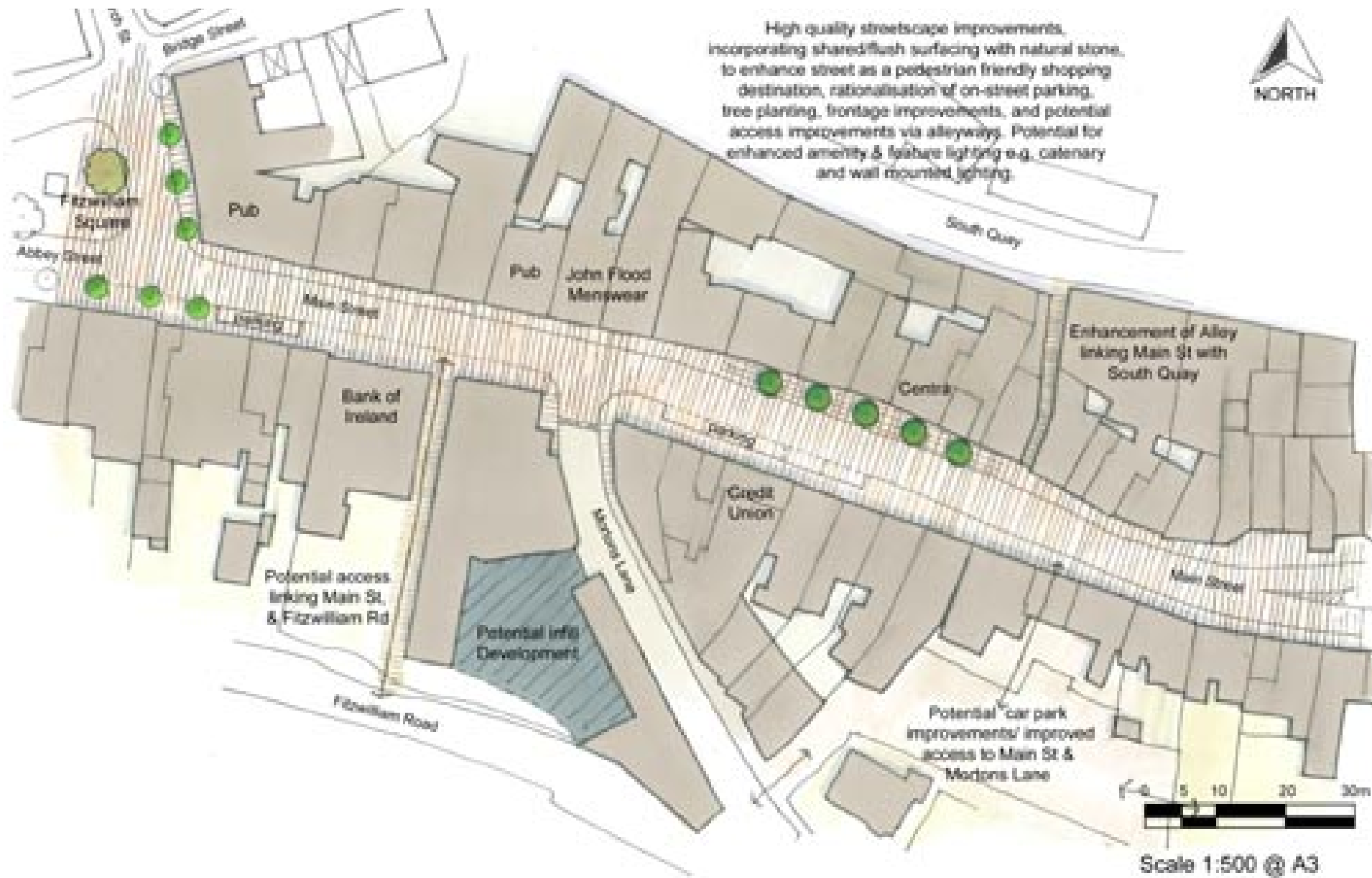


Fig. 26: Sketch plan - Main Street & The Mall

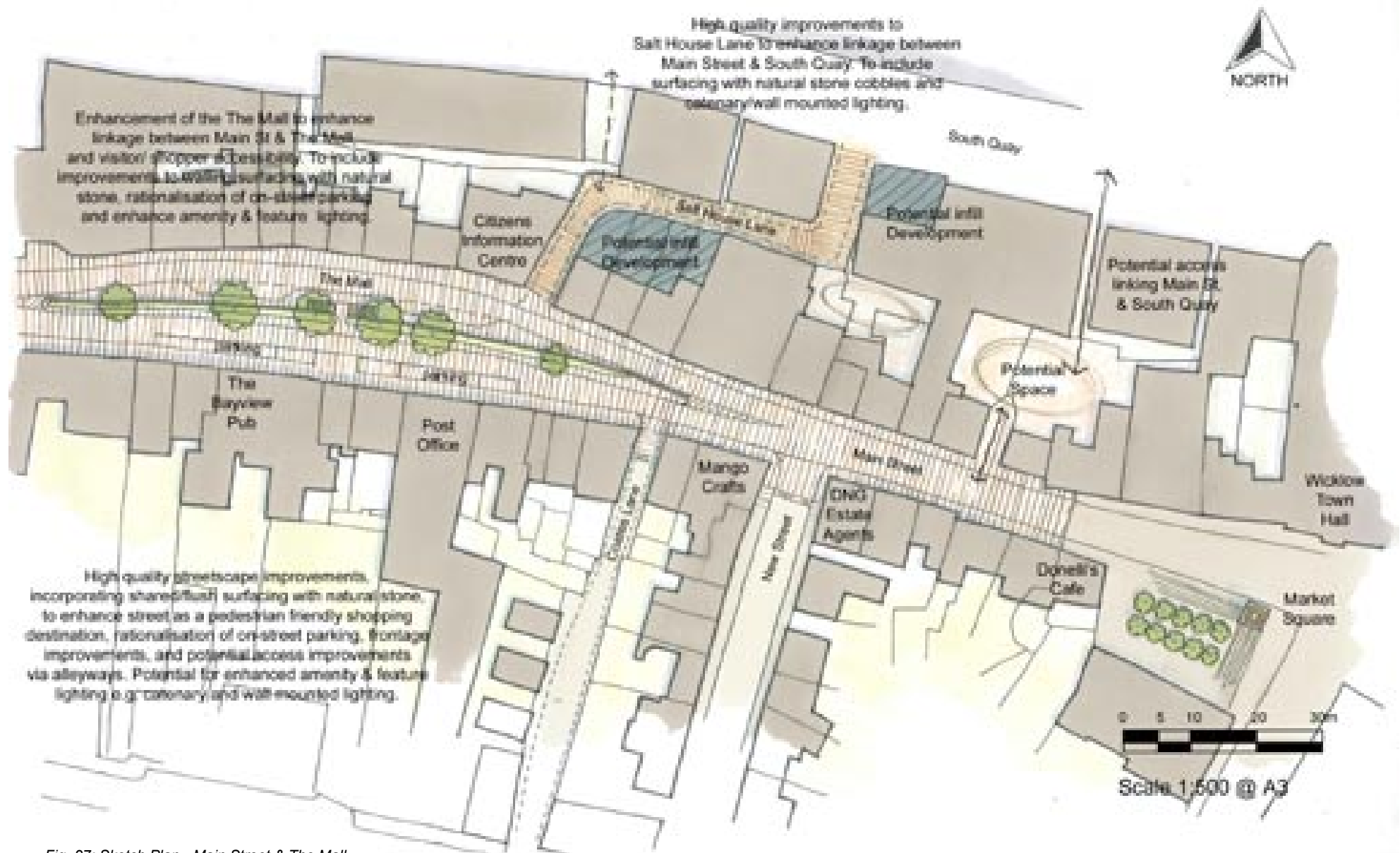


Fig. 27: Sketch Plan - Main Street & The Mall

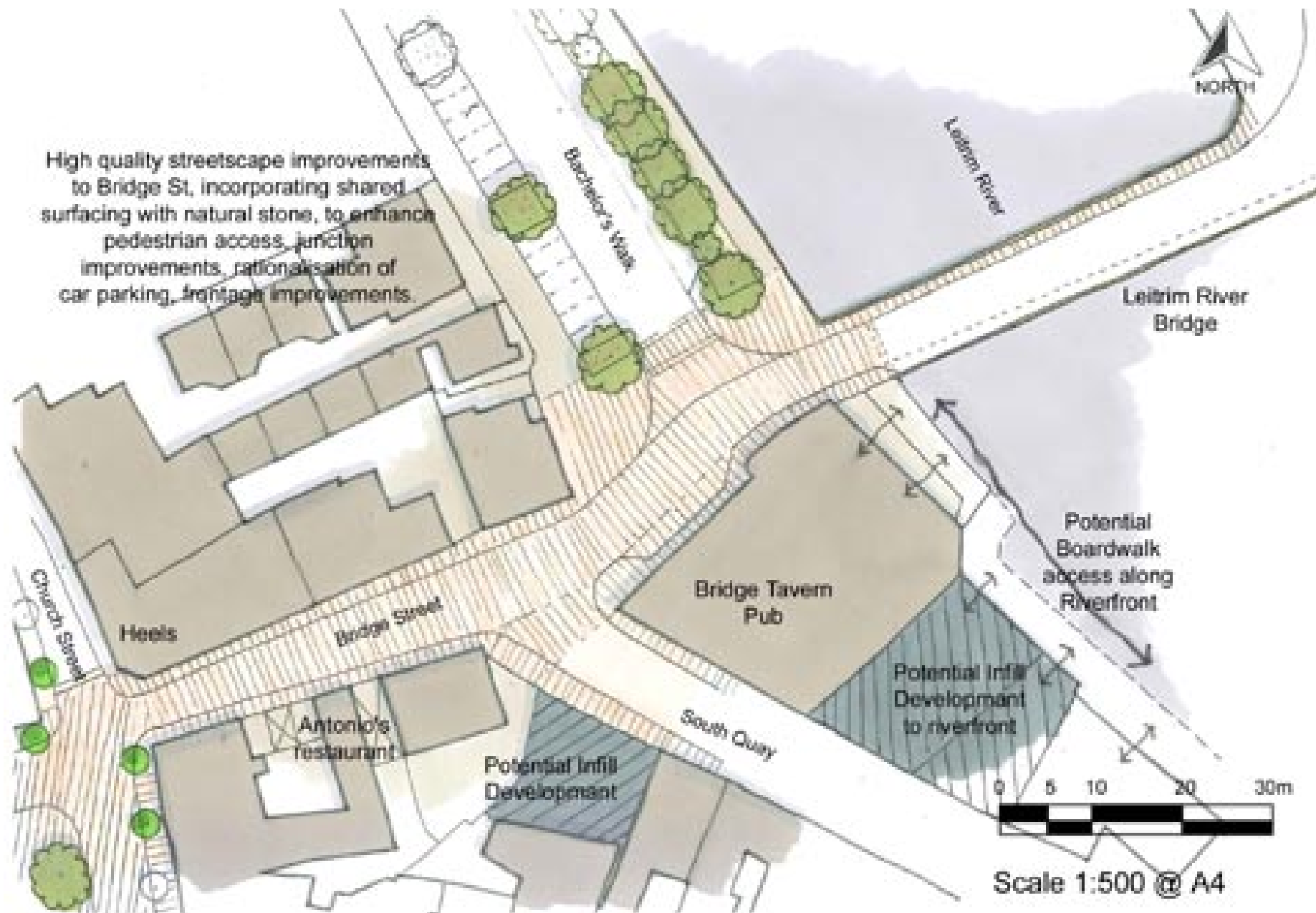


Fig. 28: Sketch plan - Bridge Street



Fig. 29: Sketch plan - Church Street

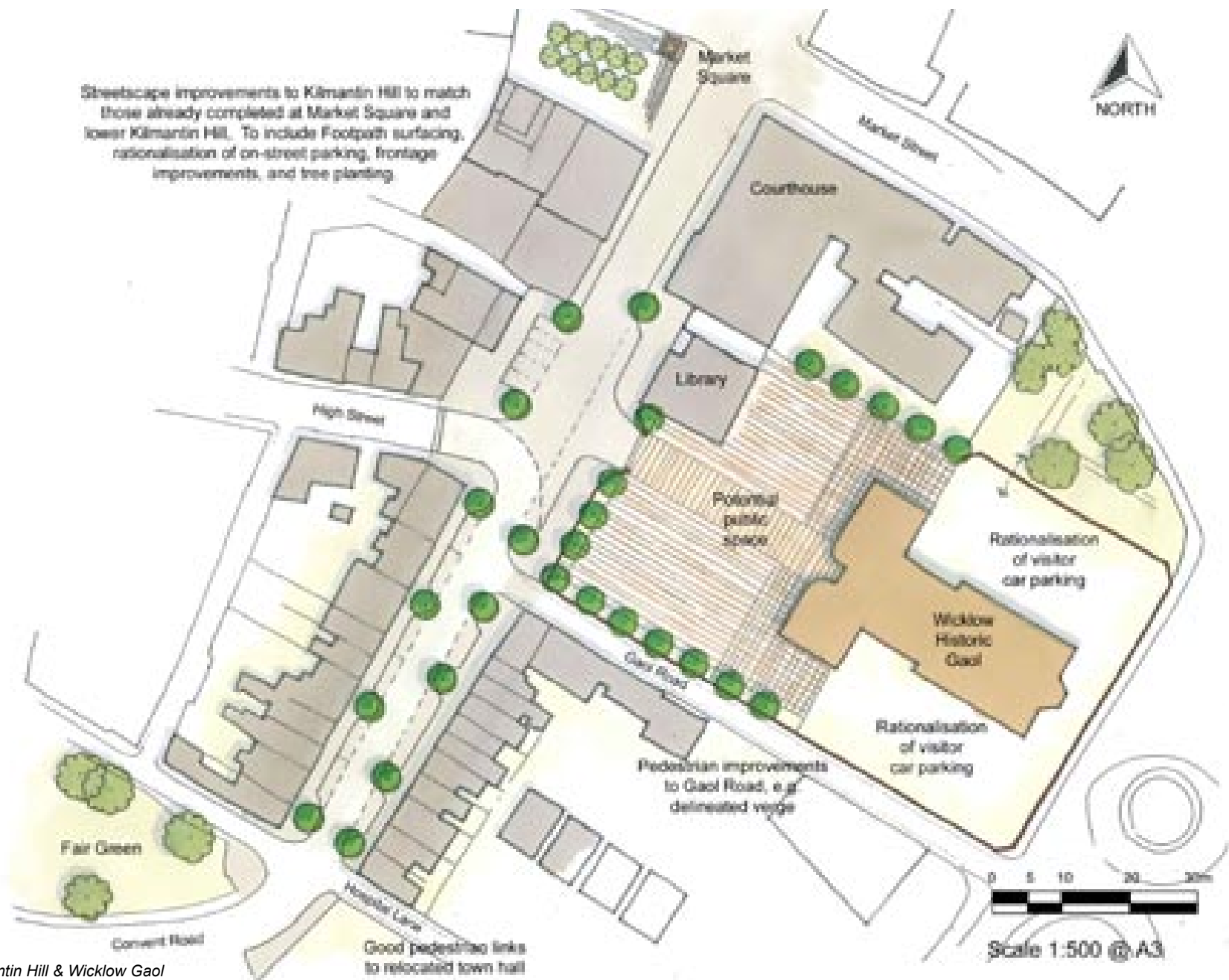


Fig. 30: Sketch plan - Kilmantin Hill & Wicklow Gaol





Photo 41: Shop frontage

7.3 Town Centre Frontage Programme

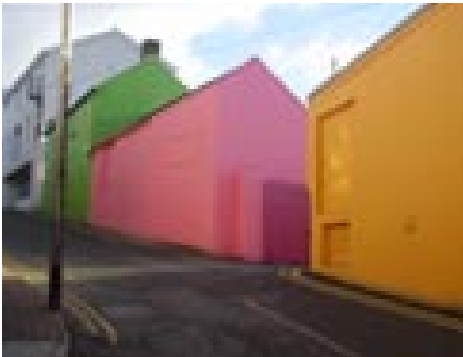


Photo 42: Shop frontage

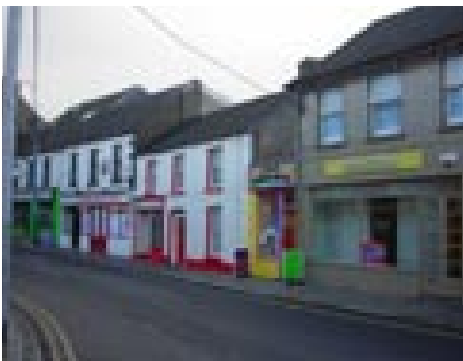


Photo 43: Shop frontage

The quality of Wicklow's public realm is greatly influenced by the design, character and quality of its buildings. This is particularly evident on densely packed streets, such as the Mall, where many narrow frontages adjoin one another in close proximity to publicly accessible areas. Individual buildings make their own contribution to the overall quality of the street, be it a positive or indeed a negative one.

Given the identified importance of Wicklow town centre's attractiveness as a destination for shopping and leisure, it is proposed that a programme of town centre frontage improvements be introduced. This should aim to enhance the contribution buildings make to the streets upon which they are located, with the view that many small improvements can have a significant overall impact.

The programme should be based on an detailed analysis of the architecture of Wicklow Town Centre, identifying key characteristics to be retained and enhanced. This will include the distribution, proportion and detailing of windows, doors and other fittings such as pipework. It should also consider the types of materials used with a view to establishing a palette of materials appropriate for new buildings in sensitive historic locations. The colour of buildings can also be given consideration, with potential for a palette of colours to be identified.

Signage plays a major role in the visual appearance of buildings at street level. It is proposed that measures are introduced to manage retail and other signage in the town centre to minimise any detrimental impact without affecting the operations of businesses.

All frontage programme proposals must be developed with the close cooperation of building owners and tenants.



Fig. 31: Location plan - Town Centre

Specific Action Points

- enhance the contribution buildings make to the streets upon which they are located
- carry out a detailed analysis of the architecture of Wicklow Town Centre
- measures introduced to manage retail and other signage in the town centre



7.4 Gateways



Photo 44: Abbey Street (Grand Hotel) gateway



Photo 45: Railway station gateway

Gateways can be defined as prominent locations that act as transition points from one place or area to another. Consequently they play an important role in defining the identity and geographic boundaries of that place and influencing first impressions upon arrival. In the case of Wicklow, there are several important gateways that mark arrival to the town and there are others that mark arrival to the historic centre. Both types of gateway are important components of Wicklow's public realm. However, the strength and overall physical quality of these gateway locations varies greatly, with some requiring much greater physical definition and design in order to function as positive gateways or 'front doors' to the town. In fact in some areas, such as the Dublin Road, it is difficult to know the point at which one has arrived in Wicklow Town.

It is therefore proposed that Wicklow's gateway locations are the subject of focused public realm projects to reinforce the role they play as transition points into the town.

Through the process of the public realm plan, these have been identified as the following locations:

Town Gateways

- N11 junction
- Rathnew Roundabout
- Dublin Road Railway Bridge / Relief Road junctions
- Port Relief Road Murrough landing
- Railway Station
- Southwest Relief Road junction
- Dunbur Road / Southern town expansion

Historic Centre Gateways

- Abbey Street (Grand Hotel)
- Castle / Market Streets (Rear of Gaol)
- Harbour Entrance



Fig. 33: Location plan - gateways

Specific Action Points

- strengthen the physical quality of Wicklow's gateway locations
- focused public realm projects to reinforce the role that gateways play as transition points into the town



7.5 Dublin Road (and Approach Roads)

The quality of the arrival experience to Wicklow from the N11 to the North is an important aspect of the town's identity and potential as a tourist attraction. At present the Dublin Road (R750) is of a generally low environmental quality, with a mixed array of building forms and scales along its length, visually dominant car parks and a variety of landscape treatments (in public and private ownership) with varying degrees of maintenance. It is also noted that the route is undergoing further transformation, construction of housing underway on less developed stretches. It is therefore proposed that the Dublin Road route be subject to a coordinated process of environmental improvement.

At the time of writing, both the Town and County Councils have plans in place to address the engineering of the road. This will improve the functioning of junctions, footpaths, parking, servicing and introduce cycle ways. These measures are to be welcomed and will make a direct impact on the way in which the route functions and to an extent, looks.

In addition, it is proposed through the Public Realm Plan, that a series of Landscape Architectural proposals compliment the engineering works to even further enhance the look and feel of the route for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. For example, existing vegetation along the route should be managed, enhanced and where need be protected. New stretches of street tree planting would help to reinforce the spatial structure of the road in places where car parks and other spaces leave it feeling open and exposed. Larger, structural planting of semi mature trees could help to define spaces and boundaries, helping to reduce the physical scale of large commercial buildings and spaces. Fences, walls and railings should be looked at together, with a view to improving their quality and maintenance in a coordinated manner that contributes to the route as a whole. And creative touches with the use of lighting, signage and public art could help to bring life and interest along the route.

It also advocated that a longer term vision for the Dublin Road area is needed so that future development of the area can be guided in a manner conducive to good quality public realm. What should be the scale and character of new buildings along the route be and how can they relate to one another? What should be the distribution of uses in this area be and how will this affect their physical relationship with adjacent public space? These and other questions should be addressed through a collaborative masterplan process, that involves all stakeholders along its route, including town and county councils, land and business owners and residents from both Wicklow and Rathnew.

Similar initiatives for the other approach roads to Wicklow from the South and West should also be considered in the future.

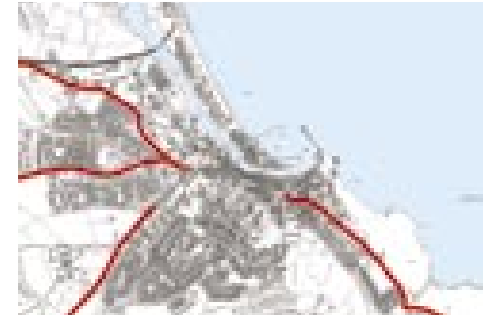


Fig. 34: Location plan - approach roads

Specific Action Points

- coordinated process of environmental improvements along Dublin Road and approach roads
- a series of landscape architectural proposals to compliment the engineering works along the approach roads
- devise a long-term vision for the Dublin Road to guide future development in a manner conducive to good quality public realm



Fig. 35: Sketch of Marlton Road linkage

7.6 Marlton Road Linkage

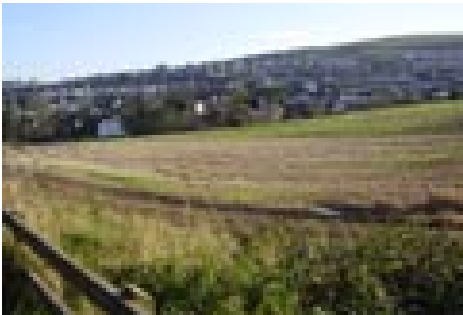


Photo 47: Marlton Development Site



Photo 48: Marlton Road

As identified in the Wicklow and Environs plan a sizeable piece of land on the Marlton Road has been zoned as the commercial core of a substantial urban expansion, proposed to the west of the town.

It is of importance that the existing town centre of Wicklow responds proactively to the forthcoming economic and social change brought about by any development of this substantial area, quite literally on its doorstep. In particular, the quality of physical links between the two retail centres will be critical, to ensure that the new development feels and functions as part of the town centre. This will be achieved by encouraging as much pedestrian movement between them as possible and introducing, where possible, built form to reinforce the spatial structure of the route. Effectively, it is proposed that Marlton Road is steadily transformed from being an out-of-town road, to a town centre street.

It is proposed that a combination of public realm works and complementary development occur along Marlton Road to establish this link.

Footpath implementation and widening on both sides will be key to this, to encourage a safe and comfortable walking environment. It is likely that on some narrow sections of the route, this will require excavation and the use of retaining structures. Cycle routes should also be implemented where space permits and good street lighting introduced.

Along the route there is potential in places to create both green open space and buildings with frontage. Spaces along the route, such as car parks and flat areas of grass should be considered for potential buildings that can provide additional frontage onto the street.

To the south of Marlton Road, areas of woodland along the line of the stream should be managed to enable supplementary planting, introduction of pathways and seating, as well as the improvement of wildlife habitat. Recent works the garden of the Old Forge bar are a good example of how buildings can related to the watercourse in a positive manner.



Fig. 36: Location plan - Marlton Road linkage

All of the works will require a coordinated and cooperative approach by stakeholders and landowners in the area.

Enhanced provision of public transport services in this area will be required to mitigate against increased traffic problems addressed by a transport strategy.

Specific Action Points

- combination of public realm works and complementary development to ensure a high quality physical link
- footpath implementation and widening
- implement cycle routes where space permits
- enhance building frontage
- introduce supplementary planting, pathways and seating in new green open spaces, as well as the improvement of wildlife habitat



Photo 49: Dominican Convent



Photo 50: Saint Patrick's Catholic Church



Photo 51: Church of Ireland



Photo 52: Aerial of Abbey Grounds

7.7 Church Lands

Wicklow's churches and religious buildings have long played a central role in the life of the town. In addition to their religious and pastoral activities, the church buildings and associated open spaces have an important physical presence within the centre of the historic town. Site appraisal and community consultation revealed a recognised opportunity within the town for these spaces to play a greater role in the provision of public space in the town. These include the ruins of the Franciscan Friary on Abbey Street, the Dominican Convent on Bayview Road, the Church of Ireland grounds on Church Hill and the gardens of St. Patrick's Roman Catholic church.

It is proposed that the feasibility of increased public access to these open spaces be explored by the Council in close partnership with the custodians of these spaces. Potential exists for members of the public to be welcomed into these gardens and graveyards to learn about the work of the churches, to learn about the history of the buildings and spaces, or to simply relax and enjoy their beauty.

Management of this process would require detailed discussion, but could include restricted opening times, shared management responsibilities and the provision of signage and interpretation material.



Photo 53: Church of Ireland grounds



Fig. 37: Location plan - church lands

Specific Action Points

- explore the feasibility of increased public access to church lands
- provision of signage and interpretation material on these spaces



7.8 Harbour and Bay Area

Ever since the first settlement at Wicklow, its harbour and bay have played a central role in the life of the town. Such is this importance that its future design, development and use will remain a critical component of Wicklow for years to come.

At present the busy operational port, commercial businesses and residential properties generate moderate levels of activity, particularly along the South Quay. To an extent, such physical animation is a sign of economic activity in the area and should be maintained and supported where appropriate. However, given the relatively limited space available in the area, conflicts of use are apparent, most notably related to the many different vehicular movements that occur there. This has a direct impact on the safety and comfort of pedestrians in the area.

Related to this, the visual quality of the area is affected by the extent of stationary vehicles and also the condition of some buildings that require maintenance and general upkeep. These factors combine to reduce the environmental quality of the area and in turn, limit its potential for recreational and tourist activity.

It is proposed that a series of relatively short-term environmental measures are needed to improve the way in which the South Quay area both functions and looks. This would be of direct benefit to those of who use the congested area, but also of wider benefit to the town's people and visitors.

Surfacing should be upgraded to a high quality stone material that is durable and historically appropriate for a quayside environment. Any existing stone sections of paving should be retained and restored where possible. Given such limited dimensions, shared surfacing to be used by both pedestrians and vehicles is likely to be appropriate. All fixtures and fittings, such as railings, bollards, light columns and mooring points should also be either restored if of historic and / or aesthetic value or replaced with more appropriate alternatives. The feasibility of removing unsightly crash barriers along the quayside should be explored with urgency.

Should their role be still deemed necessary, then more sensitively designed structures should be implemented. Improved lighting and signage should also be introduced to

the area as part of the wider town wide strategies proposed by this plan. This will also include opportunities to share with locals and visitors the rich and fascinating history of the port, from the Viking era through to Captain Halpin and onto the present day.

Car parking and loading arrangements require to be organised so that designated spaces are provided and more easily managed.

Detailed consultations with adjacent landowners and users will be needed to resolve this in a mutually agreeable manner.



Fig. 38: Location plan - harbour and bay area

Specific Action Points

- rationalisation of car parking and loading arrangements
- surfacing and structures upgrade
- co-ordinated upgrade of vacant and poorly maintained buildings
- provision of interpretation material and signage narrating the history of the harbour area
- construction of a marina for leisure craft should also be considered
- establish an overall long-term vision for the harbour area via a masterplan approach



Photo 55: Example of building on South Quay



Photo 56: South Quay

The expansion and continued use of the Port area for commercial activities is supported by the Town Council. It also supports the 'expansion of leisure and marine tourism uses in the Port and Quayside area' (*objective EE5*). This provides opportunities for public realm, specifically those buildings that present a poor visual water frontage. Enhancement of existing buildings and streetscape in the Port area is supported by the Council in *Objective PQ 3*.

The diversification of waterbased activities in the area of the harbour and bay could bring social and economic benefits to the town. In outer areas this could include the extension of existing watersports such as yachting, waterskiing and diving, as well as the potential for boat trips for sightseeing, wildlife watching and fishing. Scope for the construction of a marina for leisure craft should also be considered. This would require to be planned in close cooperation with port authorities to ensure the continued efficient operation of the port, the safety of all potential users and the minimisation of any environmental impact.

In addition, the town council and other stakeholders such as the Harbour Commission should seek to work with the owners of vacant and poorly maintained buildings in the vicinity.

A regime for the cleaning and painting of buildings facades should be introduced, with the potential for partial financial assistance sought to this regard. However, longer term objectives to redevelop vacant or underused properties in the area of the harbour should also be explored, requiring the involvement of landowners, private developers and local planning authorities. Significant potential exists for buildings of merit to be renovated and others in the area to be redeveloped to create an exciting and dynamic waterfront area.



Fig. 40: Location plan - harbour and bay area

The extent and timing to which this can occur will depend on the business plans of individual landowners in the area, including the port authority itself. However, it is vital that the substantial opportunities for development are proactively guided to ensure any individual developments are beneficial to the area and the town as a whole. This would include establishing an overall vision of the area via a masterplan approach and determining an appropriate mix of uses, as well as the scale and character of buildings and public spaces.



Photo 57: Port activity

- **Comprehensive** – as a single, distinct geographic entity, a masterplan for the Murrough should ensure that it is comprehensive in the area that it addresses. This will ensure that the location and character of existing buildings to be retained, movement routes and linkages are all taken into full consideration as new urban layouts are proposed.

- **Sustainable** – an overarching issue for all new development is sustainability. This applies to environmental considerations the approaches to coastal erosion as well as the potential for the use of environmentally sound technologies and energy creation. Sustainability must also apply to social and economic aspects of development as well, ensuring that proposals consider deliverability and long-term impact on the rest of the town and its residents.

- **Natural Features** – The Murrough has a unique natural setting of value to the town as a whole. Any new development proposals for this area should respect any existing views to and from the Murrough as much as possible, giving consideration to their visual impact from key locations. Considerable scope also exists for new developments to benefit from this unique natural setting as well.

- **Complimentary uses** – the current combination of uses on The Murrough is somewhat unusual and has potential to create conflicts between users (e.g. heavy industrial traffic vs school play areas). A masterplan for the site is an opportunity to resolve these problems and should clarify the relationships of adjacent uses as well as those in the town centre. Cognisance should be given to the accepted fact that mixed use developments make a positive contribution to the sustainability of communities. As part of this, potential exists to provide improved school facilities within the area.

- **Appropriate Scale and Character** – the visual prominence of The Murrough and the qualities of its adjacent historic core mean that the scale and character of proposed buildings and spaces requires careful consideration. New urban areas should seek to make a positive contribution to Wicklow's townscape, giving the area its own identity, with relevance to the urban context within which it is located.

- **Streets Not Roads** – The Murrough should be designed as an extension of Wicklow Town and not a separate industrial or housing estate. This should mean the creation of new streets with height to width ratios appropriate to Wicklow. Whilst the Port Relief Road will be required to handle volumes of traffic, opportunity exists for it be designed as a boulevard to maximise the quality of its immediate environment and prevent it becoming a barrier to cross movement by pedestrians.

- **Fronts and Backs** – new developments should adopt the principles of good urban design and landscape architecture to create safe and attractive public spaces. All buildings should front onto public spaces (including streets) and private spaces / service yards, etc. should be located to the rear of properties.

- **Walkability** – The Murrough is centrally located and must therefore be designed in a manner to actively encourage walking, cycling and public transport use and discourage the use of cars for short journeys. This is particularly relevant to its linkage with the existing town centre, to and from which a choice of safe and well-designed routes should be provided.



7.9 The Murrough

Located between the Leitrim River and the Irish Sea is The Murrough, a unique feature of Wicklow's landscape and its urban area. The near Murrough, closest to the town currently contains a somewhat eclectic mix of uses, ranging from residential to heavy industrial and including government offices and a school, whilst also serving a recreational role via the extensive beach and coastal park to the East, and the riverside pathway to the West.

At the time of writing The Murrough is at a critical point in time for 2 principal reasons. Firstly concern exists over the impact of coastal erosion on the land and secondly, significant development opportunity has been released in the wake of departing industries, including the extensive Quinn Radiator Factory to the North.

It is recognised in the current Development Plan that the Murrough has the potential to improve the towns frontage 'by improving the architectural quality of buildings, landscaping and street furniture'. However, the Murrough also faces challenges in terms of its connectivity with the existing town. The development of the Port Access Road will help in this regard however, it is important that the development of the proposed Action Area and its community is integrated via pedestrian links and cycle-tracks to the existing Town centre and its facilities.

It is council policy MAA02 to 'develop a landscaped linear public park along the coastal edge of the Murrough connecting to the Murrough Wetlands/ Broad Lough'.

Accordingly, a number of initiatives have now been instigated by Wicklow Town and County Councils to address these pressing issues.

A study has been commissioned to assess the impact of coastal erosion along the Murrough and the extent of necessary mitigation measures, and a masterplan has been commissioned to assess how this, integration of a new port relief road and development of former industrial sites can be realised.

The public realm plan supports the urgent need for these pieces of work to safeguard The Murrough's physical condition and to guide its future development for the benefit of residents, businesses and the town as a whole.

With regards to the public realm, it is advocated that the aspects shown in the diagram to the left are brought into consideration, noting that public realm proposals for Leitrim River and the Waterfront are detailed under separate Specific Initiatives.

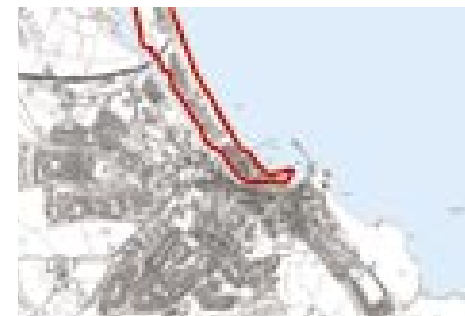


Fig. 41: Location plan - The Murrough

Specific Action Points

- address the impact of and combat coastal erosion
- the Public Realm Plan supports a masterplan to guide high quality future development on the Murrough
 - comprehensive plan
 - sustainable development
 - protection of natural features
 - rationalisation of land use
 - appropriate development scale and character
 - streets not roads
 - adopt principles of good urban design
 - enhanced walkability



7.10 Leitrim River and Broad Lough Corridor

The Leitrim River and the Broad Lough from which it flows are special parts of the landscape of Wicklow. They provide vital habitat for birds and other wildlife and accordingly, recreational opportunities for people of the area. The river, as it flows through the town, forms an important open space, with a pathway that extends along its eastern bank as far as the railway bridge. The River also plays a visual role as a setting for the town, with areas such as Leitrim Terrace of particularly fine quality.

And hidden amongst the vegetation of its western bank, behind the Church of Ireland, lies the Round Mound or Nathi's Mount. Thought to be an ancient burial site, it is currently inaccessible to the public.

Greater opportunity exists to enhance the role of the river and Broad Lough for all its users, thus underpinning it as the principal green open space within the town.

It is proposed that a primary objective should be to establish a pathway along the western bank of the river, thus creating a loop between the bridges and enabling access to the Round Mound, the Railway Station and adjacent housing areas. It is noted that some stretches of land in this area appear to be under private ownership. Should this be the case, The Town Council and other stakeholders would therefore be required to enter into discussions with landowners to establish access rights, management responsibilities and potentially ownership of pathways into public hands.

It is crucial that any development is sensitive to the fragile habitat and natural environment along the west bank of the river. Enhanced public access along the west bank and Round Mound must not be detrimental to the existing natural landscape.

The Round Mound itself has the potential to be a must-see attraction for visitors to the town. Archaeological excavations should be encouraged to determine more about the history of the site and any findings displayed locally within the town. Following such works and under the direction of an archaeologist, selected vegetation on and around the Mound should be cleared and path access to it established to allow public access to the site. This would in turn be accompanied by interpretative boards that explain the significance of the Mound and to tell some of the stories associated with it.



Fig. 42: Location plan - Leitrim River & Broad Lough

Specific Action Points

- establish an environmentally sensitive pathway along the western bank of the river
- encourage archaeological excavations to determine more about the history of Round Mound
- enable pedestrian access to the Round Mound accompanied by interpretative measures
- a new foot and cycle bridge across Leitrim River to link new development on the Murrough with the town centre
- enhancement of remaining riverside areas via a series of environmental improvement measures
- sensitive steps to improve access to Broad Lough for wildlife observation

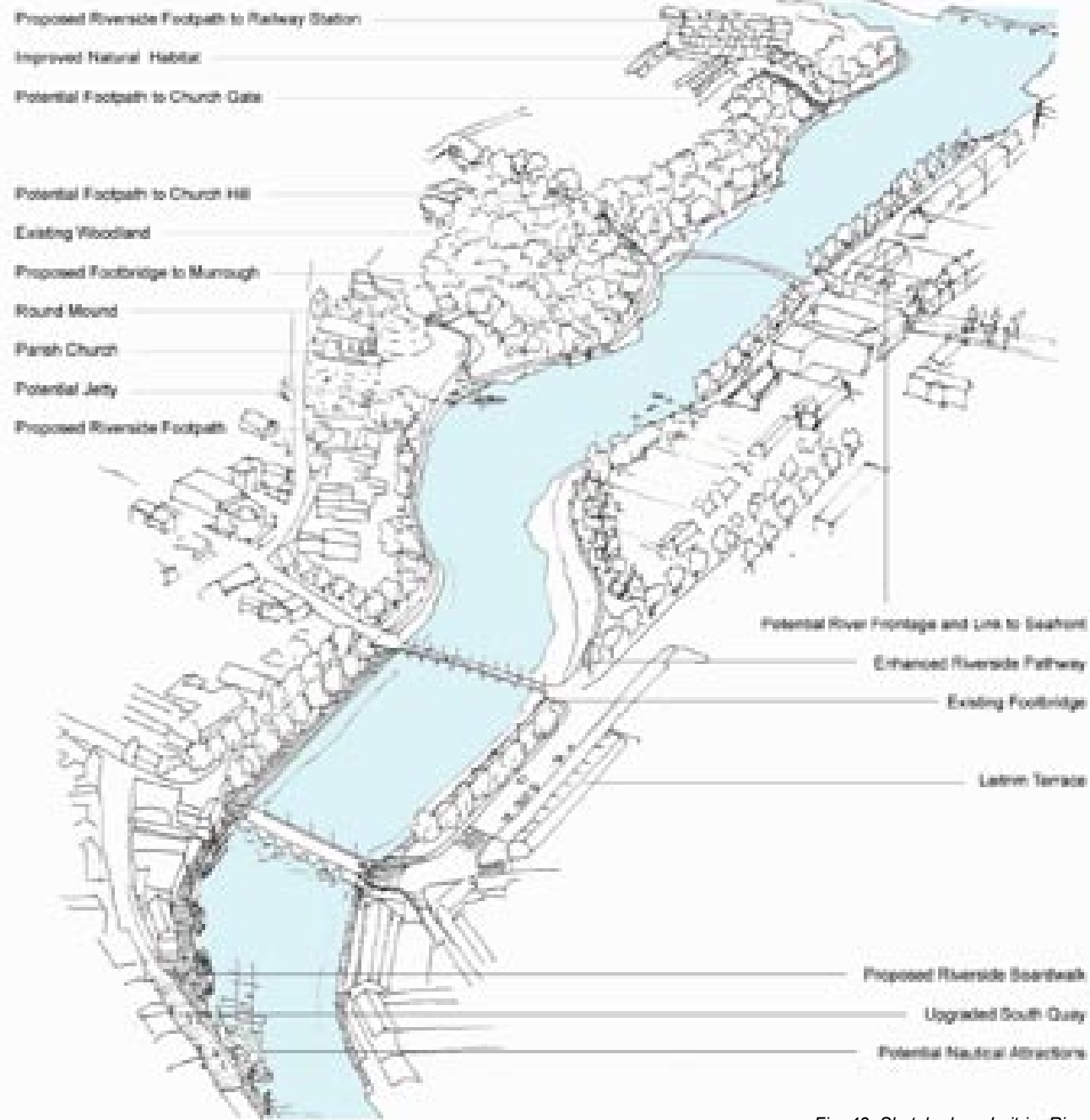


Fig. 43: Sketch plan - Leirrim River



Photo 60: Leitrin River & Broad Lough

It is recognised in the Development Plan that the area in the vicinity of Leitrin River and Broad Lough (Special Protection Area) is likely to come under development pressure, therefore the protection and enhancement of the natural environment and designated sites and landscapes in the area is supported by the Town Council namely in Objective NE1, NE2, MAAP and Strategic Aim 5 of its Development Plan.

The coast, Leitrin River and the hills frame (to the west) provide a spectacular backdrop to the Town and should continue to do so during the development of the town and its environs.

It is also Council policy to protect the 'The Round Mound' overlooking the River, it is also proposed through Objective TS6 'to promote the development of natural tourism activities on the Leitrin River such as bird watching, walkways and flora and fauna trails', these objectives should be considered when developing detailed plans relevant to the public realm.



Fig. 44: Location plan - Leitrin River & Broad Lough

It is proposed that a new foot and cycle bridge connection be established across the Leitrin River to link both sides of the river and to tie in with the proposed redevelopment of the Murrough. The bridge should be simple and unobtrusive in character, so not to detract from the setting of the Round Mound.

It is proposed that the public realm of remaining riverside areas should be enhanced via a series of environmental improvement measures. These should include improved surfacing of pathways, a planting scheme to supplement and improve existing vegetation, provision of good seating and other street furniture, improvements to boundaries of adjacent properties, lighting and signage.

The Broad Lough is a valuable natural habitat and its continued conservation and habitat improvement should be a priority. In addition, its rich wildlife should be viewed as an educational resource and accordingly, sensitive steps to improve access and facilities for observing wildlife should be pursued. This could include paths and boardwalks, bird hides and possibly a small visitor facility. Linkage to the River Path network would be vital as well as physical connection to the Railway Station to encourage public transport use.



7.11 Seafront Enhancement

Wicklow's seafront is arguably its finest asset, with vast stretches of pebbled beaches to the north, the sweeping expanse of Wicklow Bay, overlooked by Blacks Castle to the East and meandering cliff top walks from there to the South.

To attract visitors and maximise the value such an asset can bring to the town, it is essential that the quality of the public realm in these seafront areas is as high as possible. At present, open space associated with the seafront is relatively limited to open grass, concrete paths and car parks. In addition, the historic development of the Wicklow has meant that relatively few buildings face onto the seafront itself, meaning that somewhat ironically, it can feel as though the sea is at the back of the town, rather than the front.

It is therefore proposed that investment is required to greatly enhance the public realm of Wicklow's seafront areas to maximise its role in the life of the town.

The seafront of Wicklow should be effectively celebrated through increased access, the design of good buildings and public spaces, and the increased usage of its shoreline and adjacent areas for leisure and cultural purposes. Public realm can have a central role to play in this process by raising the level of environmental quality in the area and creating the context for new, more appropriate seafront development in the future.

Such an approach is mostly applicable to the seafront environment upon The Murrough, stretching from the port northwards, as this is where the town of Wicklow meets the sea itself.

It is proposed that the seafront walkway be formalised as a seafront promenade, with greatly enhanced and widened surfacing, lighting and seating. This would encourage further use of the shoreline for a number of activities such as walking, dog walking, jogging, roller-blading / skating and cycling.

Accompanied by suitable development, it has the potential to become like many urban seafronts in the summer months, where activity levels are such that people watching is the most popular pastime. Open spaces inland of the seafront promenade should be used to greater effect as parkland with scope for a variety of diverse spaces such as public gardens, play areas and sports courts / fields and venues for events, such as fairgrounds and open air performances.

To support these, small and well-designed buildings or pavilions could feature along its length, providing space for cafes, restaurants, toilets and changing rooms. The potential contribution that a rejuvenated seafront could make to Wicklow Town should not be underestimated at a time when the design of the nearby Murrough is under major examination.



Fig. 45: Location plan - seafront

Specific Action Points

- increase access to seafront areas
- design of high quality waterfront development and public spaces
- increase usage of the seafront for leisure and cultural purposes
- formalise the seafront walkway as a high quality seafront promenade
- improve safety on coastal pathways
- pathway enhancement - localised resurfacing, natural planting, seating and interpretive signage
- public realm improvement works to protect and improve Black Castle and surrounding parkland
- examine lighting to underpin the castle's role as an atmospheric landmark in the hours of darkness



Fig. 46: Sketch of enhanced seafront



Photo 62: Wicklow Cliffs



Photo 63: Signage on beach

The coastal public realm to the south of Wicklow Bay, however, requires a different and more environmentally sensitive approach. The character and charm of its pathways should not be lost through substantial redevelopment, when focused remedial works could more than suffice. It is understood that the structural integrity of stretches of coastline are currently of concern and rightly, as the safety of path users is a priority. Resolving this will require detailed assessment of all problem areas, followed by engineering solutions to make cliffs and escarpments safe. Such work should, however, be carried out with care, so to minimise the visual and environmental impact on the areas in question.

Once this has been achieved, localised resurfacing of pathways and the long-term management of natural planting and habitat should be accompanied by the introduction of unobtrusive seating and signage.

Wicklow Golf Course is an important asset of the town, that brings many visitors from afar to play its course with spectacular views of the bay and town. It does in places, however, also present a physical barrier to movement between the town and its coast. Whilst this issue is unlikely the change in the foreseeable future, opportunities to facilitate access movement and views between the town and coast in this area should be explored.

Black Castle and its associated parkland is a significant point of interest along Wicklow's coastline. Its ruins present a fascinating perspective on the town's history, as well as an excellent point from which to view the sea and the town. Public Realm works to improve this area should focus on underpinning these core qualities. The castle structure itself must be safeguarded against any further erosion, with an assessment of its structural integrity and condition.

The Town and County Council have various policies and objectives relating to the protection, promotion and development of the seafront area. These should be consulted during the development of detailed plans for the area in order to contribute to the enjoyment of the seafront for locals and tourists alike at all time of the day and night.



Fig. 47: Location plan - seafront

The castle's story should also be communicated to visitors, with scope for improved interpretation panels and programmes centred on the Castle. Lighting should also be examined, with scope to underpin the castle's role as an atmospheric landmark in the hours of darkness. Parkland surrounding the castle has scope to be improved with some naturalised planting of maritime grasses and low shrubs, as well as improved pathway surfacing and furniture.



Photo 64: Wicklow town & Church of Ireland

7.12 Interpretation and Orientation Strategy

Links between interpretation and the public realm

Interpretation is integral to the public realm. It allows visitors to understand, appreciate and enjoy the town – its layout, history, people, buildings, natural assets and culture.

The challenge for interpretation within the wider public realm is to reunite the town with the sea and with its hinterland of hills.

Interpretation not only tells the story directly but contributes to other elements of public realm. It informs, for example, the chosen unique identity of the town expressed in the design of its gateways. It provides an underpinning context and storyline for public artwork which often, by being treated in isolation, fails to engage.

Telling the town's story is much more than panels which should be used sparingly to avoid increasing street clutter.

Interpretation can be delivered through ‘software’ ranging from specialist walking trails that appeal to specific markets from children to wildlife, to events like a Viking winter festival or a seaside fun weekend.

What makes for effective interpretation?

Interpretation is the end point in a visitor journey that starts with the websites and guidebooks which feed into the decision to visit. Visitors need the welcome of gateways to the town and its historic core; the reassurance of directional signing to arrival points and a guide through the town to key destinations such as the Gaol and the seashore. Thematic storylines underpin interpretation whether delivered within attractions, on the streets or in support ‘software’ like audio tours so that visitors start to put together for themselves the complex jigsaw of the past and make the connections that present the town as a coherent whole.

Effective interpretation starts with what the visitor sees and draws on their own experience, curiosity and knowledge rather than on detailed history which is best conveyed through guidebooks and websites. It answers the basic question – how has this town come to look like it does today? Visitors using the web might assume that Wicklow’s history ended in 1900. Especially for younger independent visitors, the more recent history of the town – its characters, its customs, what makes it tick today need more emphasis. Interpretation should be seen only if you want to see it. At key arrival points visitors are given pointers as to what to look for. Interpretation panels should be accessible, engaging and light on words, using images and illustrations to reinforce content and stimulate the imagination.

In conjunction with orientation signing and maps, interpretation can help visitors not only to find key destinations but also the special and unexpected places largely known only to local people – the best viewpoints, the monkey pole, where to find the plant that took root from a Viking invader. It is these special places and views that people remember as if they had discovered them for themselves. They photograph them and tell their friends.

Interpretation helps to people the past and to make individual buildings and views come alive. What ships might have tied up in the harbour in 1800, whose bones might lie under the round mound? Stories about local characters and personal reminiscence gives visitors a sense of sharing the life of the community.

Wicklow’s assets for interpretation

- A seaside town with a fascinating maritime past and an active port
- A castle, a cluster of religious buildings and a heritage centre as key building blocks
- A sense of the past expressed in the streetscapes of the compact central core
- A wide variety of experiences from bird watching and hill walking to strolling the beach or shopping
- Potentially strong links between the town, the coast and the country.

Specific Action Points

- establish a detailed interpretation plan for the town
- Research key storylines and identify individual stories
- develop present and future visitor markets
- exploit attractions that encourage both tourist and professional visitors to the town
- Research key storylines and identify individual stories

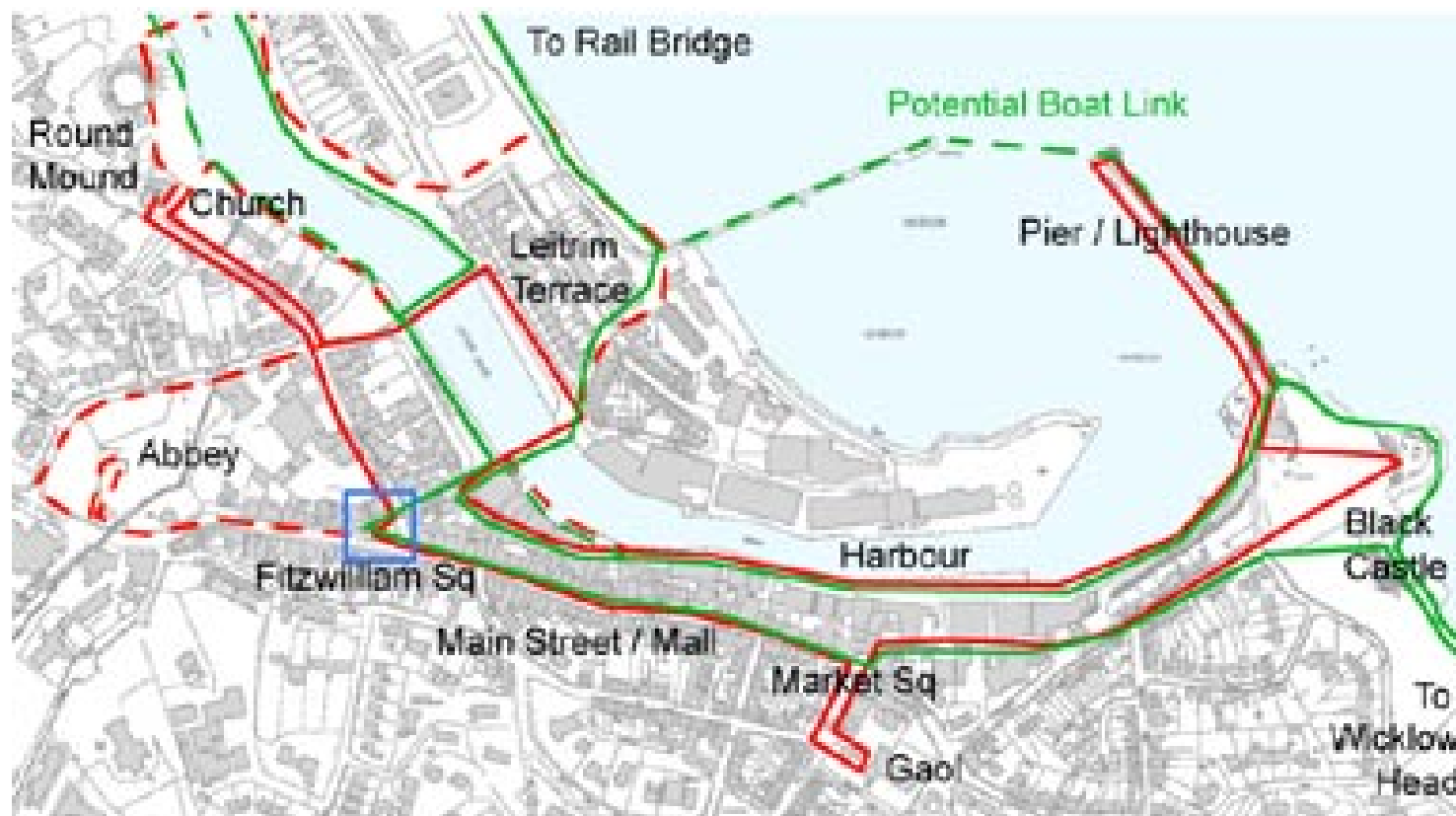


Fig. 48: Interpretation & orientation strategy



Suggested thematic approach

Wicklow has a number of key assets from cliffs and wetlands to historic streetscapes and seafaring associations. If treated in isolation each asset has competitors. It is the sum of the parts that makes Wicklow special. If brought together through physical improvements, interpretation and marketing Wicklow can offer a powerful and motivating product.

Possible storyline themes include:

Maritime town – the round mound, port, trade, seaside, cliffs, etc.

County town – last in Ireland, St. Patrick and the churches, buildings and townscape

Rebel town – the castle, the gaol, fire and blood

Green town – the Murrough, the hill walks, wildlife

Suggested interpretative initiatives

These ideas are simply tasters to demonstrate the potential benefits to Wicklow of creative and engaging interpretation and how it fits within the wider public realm proposals.

Wicklow at present is poorly served on the web. There is a need to develop a dedicated and professional visitor website that motivates and informs. Such a site can also act as a vehicle for distributing information to those with more specialist interests such as wildlife and history.

The town has a strong and multi-faceted history. Working in association with the Gaol and heritage groups ways should be explored to tell more of the town's story – within the Gaol, through living history events and festivals and by producing a short and accessible guide book. The town at present has very limited orientation and interpretation on the streets. The centre lacks landmarks, notably views to the sea. A pedestrian signage system should be developed to enhance or create routes that link the town much more strongly to the port, the river and the coast.

Discreet but imaginative interpretation, from plaques on individual historic buildings to orientation and interpretation boards at the entrance to wildlife rich areas, helps to draw together the strands of the visitor offering.. Much more could be made of significant viewpoints - over the port and out from the castle - by identifying, landscaping and interpreting specific locations.

Interpretation should be integral to the development of the seafront initiative. There is space for large-scale public art. Artworks should be fun and child-friendly to encapsulate the spirit of the seaside and add interest to a stroll. Interpretation can be as simple as marking the size of the Wicklow whale on grass for children to run round, small boards at specific locations themed on 'who was sailing in the bay' or evocative quotations about seafaring set in paving slabs.

There may be the potential to develop a new visitor attraction based on the castle or the round mound, given the strength of their stories. The former is dependent on addressing safety issues and the latter on the findings of a major archaeological dig: both would also require a feasibility study to determine

whether such a major investment can be justified. In the short term we suggest simple interpretation on both sites. The mound could also be the subject of a Time Team type dig to generate publicity for the town. In the short to medium term, the most deliverable way of enhancing the visitor product through a new attraction is a small visitor centre with bird hide on the wetlands.

Unlike most towns Wicklow has a walking trail delivered by 21st century media. This initiative could be built on by producing variant versions of the walk – one for children and one for international visitors whose understanding of Irish history is much more limited than the present tour assumes. Other initiatives such as Slí na Sláinte should be tied into this, adding health benefits into the walking strategy

The many strands of Wicklow's past and present, people and wildlife merit much stronger linkages as a way of suggesting different experiences and encouraging repeat visits to the town. There is the potential to extend the approach to religious buildings outlined in this report to the port, the seashore and the river, with the town centre as a starting point.

Next step

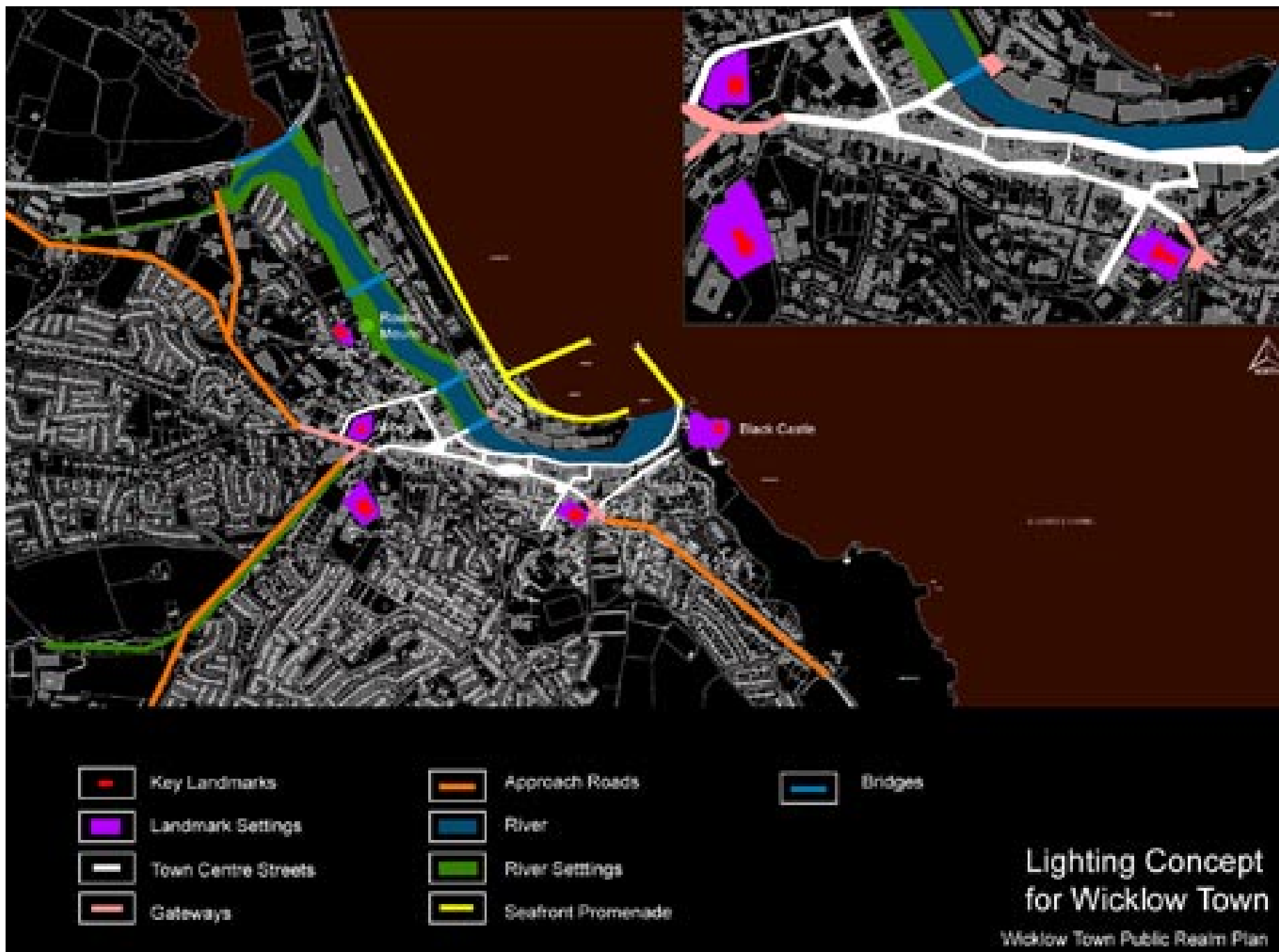
A detailed interpretation plan for the town is key to shaping and delivering specific initiatives within the overall public realm strategy from identity and gateways to the enhancement of specific locations. The tasks involved in preparing such a plan include:

Developing a deeper understanding of present and future visitor markets and how they are addressed.

Visiting the town to experience it both from a tourist and professional viewpoint, to review existing assets and consult with local interest groups. Assets include the 'software' on which interpretation draws such as oral history and image collections

Researching the town's history and wildlife to flesh out key storylines and identify individual stories.

Drawing together a detailed interpretation plan with recommendations for deliverables in the short, medium and longer term.



7.13 Lighting Strategy

The quality of Wicklow's public realm must be considered beyond daylight hours to the evenings and night-time as well as winter mornings and afternoons. Lighting has a direct impact on the safety of public spaces and must therefore be of sufficient quality to allow people to navigate in safety, to facilitate visual recognition of features and faces and to discourage antisocial behaviour. Whilst real levels of crime and disorder in Wicklow may be comparatively low, people's perception of safety is also a critical element in their decision to spend time in a place, be it for shopping or recreational purposes. Lighting also has a major role to play in highlighting the presence of physical landmarks and special features, with potential for it to be used to powerful and indeed, beautiful effect. This opens up greater potential for the town to maximise the social and economic benefits of its physical assets, encouraging visitors to spend longer in the town. It also greatly adds to the attractiveness of Wicklow for good of local residents.

It is therefore proposed that Wicklow Town commissions a lighting strategy to compliment other works to its public realm. This would focus on ensuring that light levels on its streets and public spaces are sufficient to make them safe and feel safe, to encourage greater pedestrian usage. The strategy would also identify the most appropriate means by which to light the town's landmark buildings, structures and spaces in a manner that respects the historical character of the town, whilst adding dynamism, vitality and even mystical qualities to its night-time environment. Additionally, scope exists for Wicklow to consider the hosting of Son et Lumiere events such as those common in historic towns in France. These shows combine coloured lighting with music and other effects to tell stories of a historic, mythical or theatrical nature. Blacks Castle and Wicklow Gaol would be particularly suited to such events.

Careful consideration should be given to the most appropriate light fittings and lighting types used throughout the town. Wall mounted or canteenary light systems (suspended above streets), should be used on narrow streets to remove the need for light columns that contribute to physical and visual clutter.

It is advised the central areas should be lit using 'white' light (as opposed to yellow sodium lighting). This creates a brighter and safer environment, whilst highlighting the colours of buildings and features. Low energy solar components should be used to contribute to the environmental performance of lighting. The lighting strategy will identify areas which should not be lit and advise the use of low energy lighting to mitigate against Skyglow (light pollution).

The following points underline the principles of Dark Sky Policy:

- All high level pole mounted and wall mounted fittings should illuminate downwards
- The illumination or floodlighting of buildings is to be restricted to buildings of local cultural or historical importance.
- Backlit signage should be avoided
- Neon should not be used externally except where considered a part of the heritage of Protected Structures.

Specific Action Points

- focused lighting strategy on Wicklow's streets and public spaces
- identify appropriate means to light the major landmarks in the town
- careful consideration should be given to appropriate light fittings and lighting types to be used



Fig. 50: Neighbourhood open space & linkage strategy



Photo 65: Residential neighbourhoods



Photo 66: Neighbourhood open spaces



Photo 67: Aerial of residential areas

7.14 Neighbourhood Open Space and Linkage Strategy

Much of Wicklow's public open space occurs within the expansive housing areas located to the south and west of the historic town centre. Often consisting of grass and occasional shrubs or trees, these spaces vary in their quality of design and maintenance and are often rarely used by those who live nearby.

In addition, the cul-de-sac layout of many housing areas in Wicklow, combined with steep gradients of the hills, mean that there is a lack of direct walking routes to the town centre or other housing areas. The result of this fragmented urban form, is that walking to the shops, for example, becomes a relatively difficult exercise, thus encouraging residents to drive short distances instead. This in turn impacts on traffic, parking and pollution levels in the town.

These two factors facing many of the town's housing areas has led the public realm plan to propose a coordinated approach to the improvement of open spaces and linkages in neighbourhood areas. This would involve all of Wicklow's small open spaces being examined on an individual basis, to assess the quality of their design, maintenance and their function, as well as the views of adjacent residents. This would also be accompanied by a study of residents walking habits to establish where people walk, when and why.

Once such information is gathered, then it will be possible to establish the best future role for all of the town's small spaces, together with where new pedestrian routes should be created.

For example, an area of underused grassland could be better served as a play area, a wildlife garden, a series of allotments or the setting for a sculpture. And a potential may exist for direct connection to be made between cul-de-sacs by creating pathways connecting the two. Agreement to the future role and locations of these spaces would then enable them to be redesigned and managed accordingly.

By adopting a strategically coordinated approach to localised public realm issues, the quality of Wicklow's important neighbourhood spaces can be greatly improved. This would be most effective with close involvement of the community in each stage of the process, tying in with and building upon the work of local schools.



Fig. 51: Location plan - Neighbourhood open space

The Council has various standards and guidelines relating to the development of private and public open space (See Chapter 9 and 16 of the Development Plan). It is the effective linkage of these spaces and future spaces in the environs area that is required in order to maximise their contribution to the enjoyment of the town for the community and visitors to the Town.

Specific Action Points

- examine all open spaces throughout the town
- establish pedestrian routes and other links where appropriate to connect and utilise these open spaces



Fig. 52: Hill to Sea Greenways

7.15 Hill to Sea Greenways

The hills that surround Wicklow town are a wonderful asset, fundamental to its physical character and identity. It is important that they are safeguarded for future generations, particularly at a time when extensive expansion of the town is imminent.

Inspired by the concept proposed as part of Wicklow 2000+ Millennium Project (University College Dublin), the public realm plan therefore proposes the establishment of greenways that connect the hills to one another, as well as to the sea.

This would involve establishing publicly accessible open spaces that are linked by pedestrian routes, cycle ways and possible bridlepaths. The result of this process would be a significant contribution to the open space provision in the town of Wicklow, of use to local residents, as well as visitors.

It would also be an excellent opportunity to improve the biodiversity of the area, with enhanced wildlife habitats on the hills and the watercourses that flow from them towards the sea. The planting of native vegetation will be an important part of this process. Key locations along the greenway would be identified as viewing points, where seating / picnic tables could be provided.

The implementation of such a greenway system would require to be a gradual medium to long term process, dependent on the cooperation of landowners, requisite planning processes and a spirit of partnership between all stakeholders involved.



Fig. 53: Location plan - Hill to sea greenways

Specific Action Points

- establish greenways that connect the hills to one another, as well as to the sea
- establish publicly accessible open spaces that are linked by pedestrian routes, cycle ways and possible bridle-paths
- excellent opportunity to improve the biodiversity of the area
- the planting of native vegetation along these greenways would be an important part of this process
- establish viewing points at key locations along the greenway

| WICKLOW TOWN PUBLIC REALM PLAN | | STREETSCAPES | TOWN CENTRE FRONTAGES | GATEWAYS | DUBLIN ROAD | MARLTON ROAD LINKAGE | CHURCH LANDS | HARBOUR & BAY AREA | THE MURROUGH | LEITRIM RIVER & BROAD LOUGH CORRIDOR | SEAFRONT ENHANCEMENT | INTERPRETATION & ORIENTATION STRATEGY | LIGHTING STRATEGY | NEIGHBOURHOOD OPEN SPACE & LINKAGE STRATEGY | HILL TO SEA GREENWAYS | INTEGRATED TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PLAN | MARKETING STRATEGY FOR WICKLOW | FESTIVALS STRATEGY | FEASIBILITY STUDY OF INCREASED WATERBASED ACTIVITIES |
|--------------------------------|--|--------------|-----------------------|----------|-------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|---|-----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| A | Enhance the environmental quality of Wicklow for the Benefit of local residents, businesses and visitors | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 1 | Improve quality of green spaces for passive & active recreation | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2 | Improve physical quality of shopping and business environment | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | | |
| 3 | Improve foot & cycle connections through the town | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| 4 | Support & increase biodiversity | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| B | Strengthen the physical, social & economic identity of Wicklow Town by fully maximising existing assets | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 1 | Improve arrival experience from all directions, including the definition of town boundaries & gateways | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 2 | Establish a socio-economic vision for the historic town in the context of extensive new retail development nearby | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 3 | Reinforce the strong identity of areas within the town, such as the harbour, riverside, Church Hill etc. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 4 | Encourage new development to compliment & enhance identity of the town | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | |
| C | Provide a positive physical framework for future development, complimentary to the existing urban core | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| 1 | Physically integrate new urban areas, individual developments & associated infrastructure with the existing town & landscape | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| 2 | Ensure that a high quality of public realm is integral to all new developments | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| D | Strengthen the role of Wicklow Town as a tourism destination | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 1 | Improve the quality of regional connections to & from Wicklow to establish the town as a gateway to the county | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 2 | Support & enhance the quality & role of existing tourist attractions | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 3 | Realise the potential of new tourist attractions in the town | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 4 | Provide a context for increased visitor accommodation | | | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 5 | Improve the overall tourist experience through good information provision | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | |

Fig. 54: Analysis of specific initiatives with aims & objectives

7.16 Conclusion

The 14 Specific Initiatives outlined in this chapter can have a significant impact on the environmental quality of Wicklow Town, as well as its economic and tourism performance.

The adjacent table summarises each Initiative and Economic & Tourism Actions against the project Aims and Objectives outlined in Section 5.2.



8 DELIVERING THE SHARED VISION

8.1 Delivering the Shared Vision

The delivery of the various specific initiatives outlined in this Plan is a central feature to achieving a sustainable approach to the development of the Town and its environs. It will be therefore be critical that the Council and its Partners in the Town and County follow, in full, the proposed initiatives set out in the Plan. This will allow the community, and the Town's businesses, to derive the benefit that having a high quality public realm brings to an area, whilst also maintaining Wicklow's rich heritage and natural environment. In addition, an important aspect of the Plan is that the main players responsible for its delivery are identified. This section

acts as a starting point in taking the various specific initiatives forward for delivery. It also outlines some of the existing funding mechanisms available to the Council, and its partners, in protecting, preserving and developing the historic seaside town of Wicklow and its environs.

As discussed, in the Policy Context Section 3.4, national, regional and local policy guides the future development of the Town and its environs. A number of stakeholders have and will continue to have a role in the delivery, management and maintenance of the public realm. These include; Wicklow Town Council, Wicklow County Council, The Heritage Council, Wicklow Chamber of Commerce, Wicklow County Development Board, Wicklow County

Enterprise Board, The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Fáilte Ireland, the incoming Wicklow Local Development Agency which is being established with the support of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs; Wicklow Port Company, the National Roads Authority; Wicklow community groups; the Churches, sports groups in the Town, and the wider community and interest groups. A firm commitment to implementing the Plan by these stakeholders will be vital to the success of the Plan.

Wicklow Town Council

Wicklow Town Council is the primary decision maker regarding the future development of the Town. Development pressure around the Town is a constant feature, however, that must be managed jointly by the Town Council and the County Council. This is important to ensure that such development compliments the existing natural and heritage resources of the area and builds on the strength of the Town centre commercial activity. Therefore, the County Council through the County Development Plan and Local Area Plan must direct and manage its development strategies in a co-ordinated manner throughout the Town's environs and neighbouring Rathnew. It is therefore recommended that the objectives and actions of the Public Realm Plan are included as a variation to the Wicklow Town Development Plan and the Wicklow Town and Environs LAP. It is considered that the aims and objectives of the Public Realm Plan are generally in line with the existing County Development Plan, but it is further recommended that the Development Plan and specifically

the LAP to go further in ensuring that the Public Realm Plan initiatives are developed and that the broad principles of the Plan are brought forward in any new developments proposed for the Town and surrounding area.

Ensuring and enforcing high quality design and the maintenance of existing and future physical elements of Wicklow and its public realm should be a central feature to the implementation of the LAP. The appropriate development of the Action Areas and regeneration sites is further supported and the Council should ensure that all development, no matter how significant, can contribute, and is seen to contribute, to the overall historical nature of the town's public realm. While the policies in the Development Plan and LAP are succinct, it is the application of those policies which is key to achieving a built environment that provides balance between the heritage of the town and its central role in the local area to the economic and social well-being of the community. The Town Council has a number of enforcement powers which should be used when required to maintain and control developments.

The public also has rights in this regard and can highlight to the Council where they believe enforcement is required.

The use of pre-planning meetings with the County Council is one method of ensuring cognisance is taken of existing and recommended policies and standards relating to the various aspects of developing and designing specific sites in the Town. The creation of a sustainable, high quality and integrated

public realm should be a consideration at all times when reviewing planning applications in both the Town and the County Councils administrative areas. In that regard therefore, it is important that the Councils actively engage with potential developers to ensure they understand the expectations of the Councils as set out in the Development Plan and environs LA and the Public Realm Plan.



Photo 69: Parnell Bridge



Photo 70: Rear of Gaol

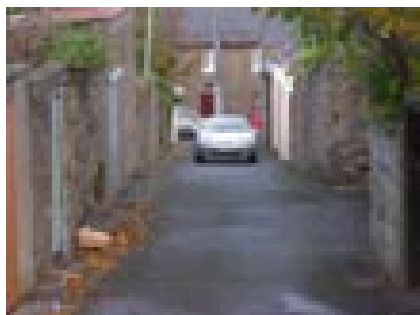


Photo 71: Narrow streets

Wicklow County Development Board

Wicklow County Development Board is responsible for the drafting, planning and implementation of strategies to deal with economic, social and cultural development within the County. The CDB is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that there is integration and co-ordination of activities between both statutory and non-statutory organisations and has a variety of multi-sectoral objectives that will underpin development of the Town if fully applied. The Board of the CDB includes representatives from the Wicklow Local Authorities, the local development agencies, state agencies with local interests and social partners from both the voluntary and community sectors. The Wicklow CDB is supported in its role by the Office of Community and Enterprise.

Wicklow CDB is currently implementing its strategy, Outlook, (2002) this Strategic Plan sets plans for the needs of the population of County Wicklow from a social, economic and cultural perspective. The plan focuses its actions within three integrated thematic

areas: 'urban shadow': (includes actions with regard to the physical and built environment. It is mainly concerned with pressures on housing and infrastructure; tourism; environment; and community development, arts and sport.); 'sustainable communities'; and 'social Inclusion through all sectors of society. The actions detailed in the document require efficient delivery, multi-party and multi-sector co-operation and minimum overlap which is what is required in delivering the specific initiatives proposed in the Plan. It is essential that co-operation and communication is achieved so as to provide an integrated approach to the Town and environs public realm.

Existing management standards and guidelines are required to be adhered to in the development and delivery of the specific initiatives. It may be necessary for the Town Council to consider existing public realm maintenance regimes being delivered in the town and may need to adjust such services if the Public Realm Plan is to sustain a long term impact on the Town. These include control of litter and graffiti. Equally the rigorous application of development

controls in line with the national planning guidelines and the new draft planning guidelines on sustainable residential development in urban areas (Sustainable Urban Housing, DoEHLG, 2007) will be necessary if the historic core of the Town is to attract investors and permanent populations into the core area.

Finally, it is essential that the elected members of Wicklow Town Council and Wicklow County Council both endorse the Public Realm Plan.

The People of Wicklow

It is important to adopt a positive and collaborative approach with the public concerning delivery of the plan. Design competitions for the design of finishes throughout the town would give the people of Wicklow a real opportunity to put forward their recommendations for public realm design.

8.2 Funding mechanisms

There are various funding mechanisms available in order to aid and support the various initiatives. These and other sources need to be monitored by the Town Council and County Council in providing funding for improvements, community facilities, heritage and physical improvements over the long-term development and management of the Town.

The Town and County Council already provide information to individuals and communities in County Wicklow on sources of funding available to them from the local and national levels. These include funding for Communities and heritage; (Wicklow Community, Heritage and Cultural Awards Scheme); Grants for the conservation of Protected Structures; Environmental Partnership Fund; Tree Planting Grant Scheme; Tidy Estates and Main Streets Competition; Graveyards grants; At National level there is the Heritage Council Grant Scheme and the Vodafone & Conservation Volunteers Ireland Nature Fund. All of these sources of funding can have a contribution on the public realm and should be promoted by the Council in order to leverage funding.



Photo 72: The Mall

In addition there are a number of national development agencies and programmes that can make funds available to the town in order to improve its public realm discussed below.

National Development Plan 2007-2013

The National Development Plan – Transforming Ireland – A Better Quality of Life for All (NDP) is the Government's new seven year investment plan. The strategic direction for the Plan was set in the National Spatial Strategy. The NDP proposes to invest some €184 billion in Ireland's economic and social infrastructure, the enterprise, science and agriculture sectors, education, training and skills base, and environmental services. The new plan will be almost completely funded by domestic sources, the vast bulk of it by the Central Exchequer. A total of €800m is to be made available to tourism development in Ireland under the National Development Plan.

Investment in the public realm is recognised in the NDP as 'a key element of the overall urban fabric, and an important contributor to visual

amenity, safety and a sense of place.' (P.228 NDP). Investment in urban renewal under the new NDP will have a strategic and highly visible impact, reinforcing the sense of place, identity and attractiveness of each location concerned. This is a feature of the recommendations set out in the Public Realm Plan for Wicklow. The Town Council must work with the County Council and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to ensure that the funds available under the NDP are made fully available to the Town.

The Heritage Council

The Heritage Council has been a pioneer for the identification, protection, preservation and enhancement of the National Heritage. It is taking a central role in facilitating the Town Council prepare this Public Realm Plan. Its continued role, direction and guidance in this regard, will be invaluable. It is recognised that Wicklow Town needs to continue to develop and grow while respecting its rich historic, cultural and natural assets. The Heritage Council has policies and guidance spanning a range

of different sectors from development and management of walks and greenways; to marine development and coastal zone management; to planning and development and architectural heritage to name but a few areas. The Wicklow Heritage Plan is one such document which has been developed in accordance with Guidelines produced by the Heritage Council.

The Wicklow Heritage Plan aims to protect and enhance the natural and built heritage of the County; encourage interest and knowledge through education and training, and to integrate heritage conservation into Local Authority actions.

Fáilte Ireland

Fáilte Ireland is working towards the implementation of its Product Development Strategy and has received €137million under the NDP Tourism Product Development Sub-Programme to do so. Funding will be provided for a number of key elements of the tourism product over the Plan period. 'At the outset a major emphasis will be placed on supporting local authorities and other

key infrastructure providers to develop a set of facilities for tourists. While the Infrastructure sub-programme will continue over the lifetime of the Plan, in 2008 and later years the focus will move to reinvestment in Visitor Attractions and the expansion of various commercial Visitor Activities' which will have a direct benefit for the Town. This is dependant on meeting the objectives/requirements of Fáilte Ireland in order to leverage funding from this and other sources.

The Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism, the parent Department of Fáilte Ireland, has the responsibility for policy matters relating to the areas of tourism, sports, and recreation. The Department occasionally allocates funding to arts, tourism and culture and should be considered along with other departments in the implementation and guidance of tourism initiatives.

Development Contributions

The Wicklow Contributions Scheme provided under Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, is funded by financial contributions from

private developers. The funds generated by the Scheme are put towards the capital expenditure required to facilitate the development and management of works including community related facilities in the County and Town. This fund is a primary source of funding that could be called upon in order to implement various aspects of the Public Realm Plan. These works include; traffic management, footpaths, cycle-paths, parking facilities, drainage, water services and open space provisions. The Council should consider the objectives of the Public Realm Plan when allocating funds under the existing 2008 Contributions Scheme. In addition, when the Scheme is put forward for review, the Council should ensure that provision is made for the aims and specific initiatives of the Public Realm Plan with a view to releasing funds for all aspects of the Plan.

In addition, the Council may consider it appropriate to consider the use of Section 109 of the Local Government Act, 2001, to put in place a Community Fund to underpin the development of facilities in the area.

Information on Government Grants

Information regarding grants available from Wicklow Town and County Council and Heritage Council for built heritage improvements through the exchequer and the NDP should be made available to local landowners, in particular for those sites that are falling into disrepair. The Rural Development Programme will also be another source of funding that should be researched by specific landowners through the Wicklow Local Development Agency that is currently being established with the support of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

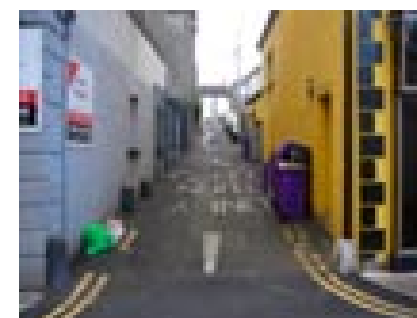


Photo 73: Narrow Streets

8.3 Summary and Conclusion

It may be necessary to change the current local authority policy context to ensure the implementation of the Public Realm Plan. Equally the Public Realm Plan needs to be realistic to ensure that its recommendations can be applied within the financial and other resources of the community and Council. In that regard the Plan is seeking to build on the current context with the objective of enabling the resourcing of actions recommended in the Plan being delivered within an appropriate time frame.

It is important to take stock and review, update and revise, where necessary Development Plans and their associated policies and objectives. In Objective RA8 (Wicklow Town Development Plan 2007) this objective provided the 'possibility' of providing a public realm strategy for Wicklow Town. This has now become a reality and it is recommended that the Development

Plan should be amended so as to ensure implementation of the strategy over the lifetime of the Development Plan. It may be necessary for the Councils, in general, to take stock of their delivery of their policies and objectives so that responsible sections within the Councils are made aware of their responsibilities as set down within the existing plans during the life-time of the relevant Plans.

It is critical that the Heritage Council, Wicklow Town and County Council and its partners, plan for local investments logically. It is recognised that progress has been made in Wicklow however there is need to sustain and build on this progress by targeting funding for the necessary research, management and physical upgrades relevant to the iconic attractions of the Town. It is recommended that funding mechanisms such as those listed above are monitored over the long-term by the

various stakeholders in order to achieve the maximum aid in developing the various projects and initiatives. There is little point in investing in the public realm if it is not to be part of a wider socio-economic development process, which itself becomes the platform for further improvement of the public realm. This will require an ongoing programme of delivery, including actions identified in this plan.

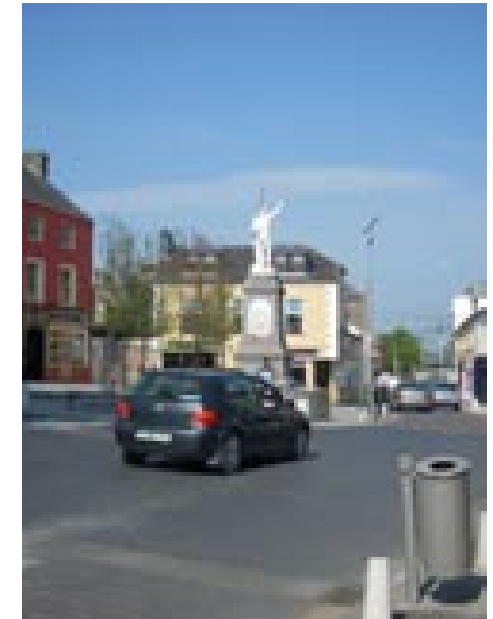


Photo 74: Billy Byrne in Market Square



Photo 75: Leitrim River



Photo 76: View from St Patrick's Catholic Church

Recommendations

1. The various parties to the Plan, exchange as appropriate, memorandums of understanding with regard to their respective roles, ensuring that each has the capacity to fulfil the objectives of the Plan. They will work through a collaborative process in leveraging funding from the various sources available and therefore will not compete for funds against each other. The Agencies should seek to align their business plans, and, where possible and having regard for national accountability, their budgets in regard to underpinning the development of the Town generally. The County Development Board could provide the necessary consultative framework to ensure the Public Realm Plan's successful implementation in the context of re-aligned budgets.

2. It is recommended that both the Town Council and County Council actively engage in property portfolio management in regard to regeneration sites and opportunity sites that exist within the Town and its Environs. This

can help improve the sustainable development of Wicklow and the current and future public realm in line with the specific initiatives of this Plan.

3. Elected members of Wicklow Town Council and Wicklow County Council are recommended to fully endorse the Public Realm Plan.

4. Delivery of the plan is also required and a co-ordination and/or implementation body is required in order to monitor and review the Plan and its aims and objectives.

Action Plan for Delivery

The following Action Plan for Delivery details each of the Specific Initiatives and Actions in relation to associated stakeholders, a suggested prioritisation and timeframe. This table should be considered a 'live' document that is regularly updated in line with changing conditions and opportunities, including additional public realm initiatives where appropriate.



Action Plan for Delivery (For Consultation) – Wicklow Town Public Realm Plan

| Specific Initiatives for the Public Realm | | Key Stakeholders | Priority | Timeframe | Notes |
|---|---|------------------------|------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Streetscapes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> high quality streetscape projects for all town centre streets good quality materials to complement the unique character of the town reduce visual clutter pavements and streets designed to accommodate all users (mobility & visually impaired, children and the elderly) | | | | |
| | - Abbey Street | WTC, WCC, NRA | High | 2009 - 2010 | Subject to Port Relief Road |
| | - Fitzwilliam Square | WTC, WCC, NRA, HC | High | 2009 - 2010 | Subject to Port Relief Road |
| | - The Mall | WTC, WCC, NRA | High | 2008 - 2009 | |
| | - Market Street | WTC, WCC, NRA | Medium/Low | 2012 - 2014 | |
| | - Alleyways and Linkages | WTC, WCC, NRA | High | 2008 - 2009 | |
| | - Bridge Street | WTC, WCC, NRA | Medium | 2010 - 2012 | |
| | - Church Street | WTC, WCC, NRA | Medium | 2010 - 2012 | |
| | - Kilmartin Hill & Wicklow Gaol | WTC, WCC, NRA | Medium | 2010 - 2012 | |
| 2 | Town Centre Frontage Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enhance the contribution buildings make to the streets upon which they are located carry out a detailed analysis of the architecture of Wicklow Town Centre introduce measures to manage retail and other signage in the town centre | WTC, HC, CC, Priv | High | 2008 - 2018 | Rolling Programme |
| 3 | Gateways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> strengthen the physical quality of Wicklows gateway locations focused public realm projects to reinforce the role that gateways play as transition points into the town | WTC, WCC, HC, FI, Priv | High | 2008 - 2018 | Related to associated development |
| 4 | Dublin Road <ul style="list-style-type: none"> co-ordinated process of environmental improvements along Dublin Road and approach roads a series of landscape architectural proposals to compliment the engineering works along the approach roads devise a long-term vision for the Dublin Road to guide future development in a manner conducive to good quality public realm | WTC, WCC, CC, Priv | High | 2008 - 2018 | Related to associated development |
| 5 | Marlton Road Linkage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> combination of public realm works and complementary development to ensure a high quality physical link footpath implementation and widening implement cycle routes where space permits enhance building frontage introduce supplementary planting, pathways and seating in new green open spaces, as well as the improvement of wildlife habitat | WTC, Priv | Medium | 2009 - 2012 | Related to associated development |
| 6 | Church Lands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explore the feasibility of increased public access to church lands provision of signage and interpretation material on these spaces | WTC, Priv | High | 2008 - 2018 | Long term objective |

| | | | | | |
|----|--|-------------------------------|------|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| 7 | <p>Harbour and Bay Area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> rationalisation of car parking and loading arrangements surfacing and structures upgrade co-ordinated upgrade of vacant and poorly maintained buildings provision of interpretation material and signage narrating the history of the harbour area construction of a marina for leisure craft should also be considered establish an overall long-term vision for the harbour area via a masterplan approach | WTC, WCC, WPC, Priv | High | 2008 - 2018 | Related to Port Activities |
| 8 | <p>The Murrough</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> address the impact of and combat coastal erosion the Public Realm Plan supports a masterplan to guide high quality future development on the Murrough <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehensive plan sustainable development protection of natural features rationalisation of land use appropriate development scale & character streets not roads adopt principles of good urban design enhanced walkability | WTC, WCC, WPC, Priv | High | 2008 - 2012 | Related to associated development |
| 9 | <p>Leitrim River and Broad Lough Corridor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establish an environmentally sensitive pathway along the western bank of the river encourage archaeological excavations to determine more about the history of Round Mound enable pedestrian access to the Round Mound accompanied by interpretative measures a new foot and cycle bridge across Leitrim River to link new development on the Murrough with the town centre enhancement of remaining riverside areas via a series of environmental improvement measures sensitive steps to improve access to Broad Lough for wildlife observation | WTC, WCC , WPC | High | 2008 - 2012 | |
| 10 | <p>Seafront Enhancement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increase access to seafront areas design of high quality waterfront development and public spaces increase usage of the seafront for leisure and cultural purposes formalise the seafront walkway as a high quality seafront promenade improve safety on coastal pathways pathway enhancement - localised resurfacing, natural planting, seating and interpretive signage public realm improvement works to protect and improve Black Castle and surrounding parkland examine lighting to underpin the castles role as an atmospheric landmark in the hours of darkness | WTC, WCC , WPC, HC, FI | High | 2008 - 2018 | Related to associated development |

| | | | | | |
|----|---|--------------------------|--------|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| 11 | Interpretation and Orientation Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establish a detailed interpretation plan for the town research key storylines and identify individual stories develop present and future visitor markets exploit attractions that encourage both tourist and professional visitors to the town research key storylines and identify individual stories | WTC, WCC , HC, FI | High | 2008 - 2010 | |
| 12 | Lighting Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> focussed lighting strategy on Wicklows streets and public spaces identify appropriate means to light the major landmarks in the town careful consideration should be given to appropriate light fittings and lighting types to be used | WTC , WCC, Priv | Medium | 2009 - 2012 | Related to associated development |
| 13 | Neighbourhood Open Space and Linkage Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> examine all open spaces throughout the town establish pedestrian routes and other links where appropriate to connect and utilise these open spaces | WTC , WCC, Priv | Medium | 2009 - 2018 | |
| 14 | Hill to Sea Greenways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establish greenways that connect the hills to one another, as well as to the sea establish publicly accessible open spaces that are linked by pedestrian routes, cycle ways and possible bridle-paths excellent opportunity to improve the biodiversity of the area the planting of native vegetation along these greenways would be an important part of this process establish viewing points at key locations along the greenway | WTC, WCC , FI | Medium | 2009 - 2018 | |

| Supporting Economic & Tourism Actions | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|--------|-------------|--|
| A | Integrated traffic management plan | WTC, WCC , NRA | High | 2008 µ 2009 | |
| B | Marketing strategy for Wicklow | WTC , WCC, HC, FI | High | 2008 µ 2009 | |
| C | Festivals strategy | WTC , WCC, HC, FI, CC | Medium | 2009 | |
| D | Feasibility study of increased water based activities | WTC , WCC, WPC | Medium | 2009 | |

Key to Proposed Stakeholders (lead stakeholder shown in **bold**)

WTC - Wicklow Town Council
WCC - Wicklow County Council
WPC - Wicklow Port Company
CC - Chamber of Commerce

HC - The Heritage Council
FI - Failte Ireland
Priv - Private Sector
NRA - National Roads Authority

Fig. 55: Action plan for delivery



9: CONCLUSION

This Public Realm Plan has demonstrated that the historic town of Wicklow has a tremendous opportunity to underpin its existing qualities via improvements to its public realm. Not only can this process help to strengthen Wicklow's standing as a tourist destination, but it can have a direct and positive impact on its business environment and perhaps most importantly, on the quality of life for all who live in the town.

The challenge now is for delivery of this vision. This will require bold leadership from the town's key stakeholders, it will require partnership between the public and private sectors and it will also require a flexible approach, responsive to opportunities as they arise.

Realisation of the shared vision for Wicklow Town can allow a dynamic and prosperous town to flourish, whilst preserving the richness of its heritage and natural landscape for future generations.



Photo 78: Yachts in Wicklow Port (2004) © Wicklow Film Commission

APPENDIX

Wicklow Steering Committee Members

Wicklow Steering Committee Members

Michael Brady (Fáilte Ireland)

Deirdre Burns (WCC)

Alison Harvey (HC)

Bernadette Harvey (WTC)

John Hodgins

Hugh Levins

Cara Murray (WCC)

Helen Purcell (WTC)

Donald Sheane

Denis Teevan (WTC)

APPENDIX B

Wicklow Public Realm Plan Consultation Report

- 18 January 2008

Wicklow Public Realm Plan Consultation Report - 18 January 2008

Introduction

In addition to guidance of the project steering group, consultation to inform the development of the Wicklow Public Realm plan took three forms. Firstly individual meetings between the consultants and invited stakeholders were arranged. (5/12/2007) Following this, an open evening at the Town Hall was hosted by the Town Council (5/12/2007). This enabled members of the public speak to the consultants and council officers in relation to the public realm and to give their views. Thirdly, written feedback was invited from the public, to be sent to Town Council by 3/1/08.

The following notes record those who participated in the consultation process and a summary of the key points raised. The following views are entirely those of participants and not of the consultant or client teams.

Stakeholder Interviews - 5 December 2007

1. Daniel Haskins (Wicklow Educate Together)
2. John Hodgins (Chamber of Commerce)
3. Linda Saunders (Dublin Transport Office)

Recorded Attendees to Public Event - 5 December 2007

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. | Delphine Geoghegan | Icon Architecture |
| 2. | Philip Geoghegan | Icon Architecture |
| 3. | John Barlow | Wicklow Port Co. |
| 4. | Ray Tumulty | Wicklow Port Co. |
| 5. | Kathleen Bushe | Marlton Co. |
| 6. | Ray Bushe | Marlton Co. |
| 7. | John Hodgins | |
| 8. | Richard Nairn | Natura Environmental Consultants |
| 9. | Al Lause | |
| 10. | Simon Hopkins | Hopkins |
| 11. | Jean Hodgins | John P. Hopkins and Son |
| 12. | Sye Delahunt | S.V. Delalunt & Co |
| 13. | M. Conway | |
| 14. | Judy Osborne | |
| 15. | Joan Hastings | |
| 16. | Paddy Hooper | |
| 17. | Colette Henry | |
| 18. | John O'Sullivan | |
| 19. | Helena Coghlan | |
| 20. | Stephen McCarthy | |
| 21. | Aine O'Leary | |
| 22. | T. Long | |
| 23. | Tom Delahoyde | |
| 24. | John Clarke | |
| 25. | Alf McClean | |
| 26. | Anne Waldek | |
| 27. | Michael Brown | |
| 28. | Paddy O'Flaherty | |

Written Submissions Received

| | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|--|
| John O'Sullivan | Resident | 4 December 2007 5 December 2007 11 December 2007 |
| Rev John Clarke | Church of Ireland | 5 December 2007 |
| Anne Waldek | Resident | 5 December 2007 |
| K & O Healy | Residents | 5 December 2007 |
| Mark Doyle | Resident | 6 December 2007 |
| Linda Saunders | DTO, Resident | 17 December 2007 18 December 2007 |
| A & S Groome | Resident | 1 January 2008 |
| Daniel Haskins | Wicklow Educate Together | 1 January 2008 |
| Alan Cox | East Glendalough School | 2 January 2008 |
| Joan Hastings | Resident | 2 January 2008 |
| K & P Cullinan | Residents | 3 January 2008 |
| Catherine Murphy | Resident | 3 January 2008 |

Summary of All Issues Raised (ordered by theme, but not by significance)

1. Pedestrian Access

Pedestrianisation Scheme: Pedestrianisation of the central area between Fitzwilliam Square and Market Square was put forward by several consultees, including retailers, as an approach worth consideration. Gradual implementation of this could begin with trial closures of the road for special events.

Access to historical/cultural sites: Increased public access to the Franciscan Abbey, The Priests Garden and the Church of Ireland graveyard were forwarded.

Access to River: Access to the River and Seafronts should be improved, as should the quality of these environments, including South Quay and the Promenade.

Walking Routes: The need for designated walking routes within the town was highlighted. Further to this issue was the necessity to implement pedestrian way-finding signage to create comfortable walking areas and promote healthy living. This should build on routes already identified by locals.

Fitzwilliam Square: This Square was highlighted during the consultation event

as an unattractive and uneasy environment for pedestrians due to the significant traffic congestion and narrow footpaths. A cast iron fence and gates, enclose the central green area within the Square, thus restricting pedestrian access and movement. Pedestrians are forced to use the narrow footpaths around the central area and from these footpaths negotiate with the heavy traffic. Before pedestrian access into this central area was restricted it was associated with antisocial behaviour. The area is also negatively impacted by heavy vehicles to and from the port.

2. Signage

Shop front signing: Upgrading of existing signage and shop frontages to create and maintain a high quality, consistent shop frontage style.

Regional Signage: Signage along the N11 by-pass and at other gateways into Wicklow should be installed to illustrate the assets in the town and encourage visitors into the town

Town Signage: Needed to Tourist Information Office, Gaol, Abbey, Ecology Centre, Market Quarter, Park & Ride, Railway and Bus Stations.

3. Attractions

Tourism: The community highlighted how the town should exploit the potential to become a destination for short stay trips. An opinion was raised that the town tourism office in Fitzwilliam Square should strive to further advertise the tourism potential of the town.

Enhance critical views: Consultation acknowledged the lack of views from the main street to the river, harbour area and sea.

Town Minutes: A member of the public commented that the town minutes sourcing from the 1600's should be on public display.

Black Castle: Identified as an important asset for the town, but concerns exist over its current condition and levels of maintenance

Attractions: Base plan on Wicklow's Unique Selling Points (USPs)

4. Identity

The Murrough: The consultation raised that, with the proposed arrival of the port relief road, this stretch of land will grow in significance as an important gateway into Wicklow.

Branding: Develop 'Wicklow's identity as a promotable brand

Gateways: An iconic Long Boat sculpture was proposed for the Rathnew / Wicklow Roundabout

Potential Urban Quarters: Scope to develop identifiable quarters in the town.

- o The Market Quarter – Old Town Hall to Dominican Ecology Centre
- o The Harbour Quarter – Black Castle to Quaysides
- o Ecology Quarters – River Vartry, The Murrough

5. Public Realm Materials

Main Street: Consultation highlighted the necessity of preserving the traditional streetscape of the main street. The importance of preserving the traditional Victorian streetscape was noted.

Surfacing: The public identified that the paving throughout the town is of a poor quality and lacks consistency. The use of different colours of tarmac contributes to a cluttered feel.

Use of local materials: i.e. Wicklow Granite, etc.

Street Furniture: The street furniture should complement the existing streetscape.

Quality: Need to ensure high quality materials public realm materials used

6. Maintenance

Green Space / Parks: The community raised the issue that the current green space and community parks in the town lack appeal and attractiveness.

Beach Improvements: Potential to improve the quality of the beachfront was raised

Management & Maintenance: Key to success of Plan

Urban Realm Liaison Officer: Proposal for a coordinator of Public Realm improvement and maintenance

Dogs Control: Many respondents complained about the impact of dog faeces, notably on the Murrough. Suggestions include assigning "dog free areas", particularly where children are likely to be.

Litter: One suggestion forwarded for litter Wardens

7. Activities & Play

Food: The community recognised the potential for more restaurants and cafes in the town.

Permitted uses in the Town Centre: It was proposed that within the Town Centre office uses on the ground floor should be prohibited to prevent dead frontages at weekends and evenings. Instead office uses should be located on the first and second floors

Sports Provision: Current zoning in the town involves the loss of several sports pitches. Some members of the community highlighted concern at the decline in sport facilities and the necessity to relocate these play areas should development occur.

Sport / Leisure: The idea of fitness trail between Wicklow and Rathnew was suggested

Youth club: activities needed for young people

Play Areas: Dunbur Park play facilities in very poor condition

Events: The Public Realm should be designed to encourage greater number of events.

8. Traffic

Traffic Congestion: Significant traffic congestion occurs along the town's main street and it was felt that a major contributor to this was the movement of the heavy port related traffic through the town.

Fitzwilliam Road: Identified as a traffic problem, with a lack of free flowing movement

Road Safety: Suggestion for a Pedestrian Crossing around Earls, Removal of planting at Friars Hill and Traffic Lights at crossroads at Heels Shoe shop

Church Hill: Suggestion for a one-way system to improve safety

9. Transport Network

Street Naming: It was proposed that a competition should run to choose the best names for the proposed new roads in the town, i.e. the town and port relief roads.

Commuter Potential: The train station requires improvement to encourage tourism and promote the commuter potential of the town.

Bicycle Provisions: Cycle racks needed at railway station

Boat Park: Potential for a boat park at the Burroughs Car Park

10. Parking

Paid Parking: The retail committee are in favour of paid parking as this encourages a higher turnover of customers.

Car Parking: One suggestion to removed parking from centre all together

Parking: Expressed view that there is a lack of information on parking policy

Parking: One suggestion of increased parking for housing estates

11. Buildings

Building facades: preservation of facades and traditional shop fronts is an important part of the town's character, with some shops having a negative impact on the look of the town.

Colours: There is scope for adding colour and brightening up the Main Street and the availability of grants should be examined.

12. Sculptures & Memorials

War Memorial: It was noted that a group is hoping to fund a war memorial in the town to commemorate those who fought in both world wars.

Billy Byrne: Concern over statue blocking sightlines for drivers

13. Environment

Erosion: Major concerns over erosion of the Murrough

Renewable Energy: Suggestion of implementing river turbines

Botanical Link: Consultation raised a fascinating and specifically unique botanical link between the flora along the mouth of the Leitrim River and the flora of Scandinavia, as a result of Viking practice.

Allotments: Suggested for the good of the towns residents

14. Education

Provision of educational facilities: The provision of land for educational purposes was raised as an important issue for the town, with several schools currently located on restricted sites.

Wicklow Educate Together: Continued renewal of licence to use the school play area was requested.

15. Housing

Housing: A lack of connecting through routes in residential areas was noted.

16. Lighting

Artistic Lighting: Potential to add "vivacity, verve and vitality" at night-time

Street lighting: A need for improved lighting was identified for links between Main Street and South Quay, the river footbridge and Crinion Park.

Levels: One suggestion to reduce light levels to limit light pollution

17. New Development

Marlton Development Scheme: Concern was highlighted that the development could become a stand-alone centre and somewhat isolated from the town centre. The economic impact of this development was also raised in relation to existing retail units in the town centre. Traffic impact and new signalling should also be carefully considered.

Quinn Factory: A number of consultees asked about development plans for the former Quinn factory.

Hotel: It was raised that there was a need for a new hotel in the town to attract further tourism and investment. The Murrough was mentioned as a possible locality.

Future development: Future development in the town should not impinge on the visual and historical character of the town.

Relocation of port: This option was put forward as a possibility. The current port would be relocated northwards in tandem with the relocation of the Dublin Port with the current port transformed into leisure port.

Gaol: Design and use of the gaol's exercise yard should be given consideration.

Co-ordinated development of the town centre: The various landowners should be collectively involved to drive the scheme forward and ensure consistency of development. A public gain is necessary for landowners to co-operate

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Suggested that the plan become planning guidance.

Design Guides: Suggested to guide future development in the town

18. Shopping

Shop Leases: Leases on shop units are currently 4 years and 9 months. This was cited by several respondents as a deterrent to investment.

Glass Arcades: One proposal to encourage shopping in poor weather conditions

19. Safety & Security

Antisocial Behaviour: Cited as a problem in some parts of the town, specifically the Ball Alley to rear of the Gaol and Ballynerrin Playground.

APPENDIX

Consultation Notice & Display Boards

Draft Public Realm Plan



Plan on View: 6 March - 3 April 2008, Town Hall, Wicklow

Members of the public are invited to view the Draft Public Realm Plan for Wicklow Town at the Town Hall or online at www.wicklow.ie/publications/planning/development_plans

The Public Realm Plan has been developed to assess the quality of Wicklow's public spaces and landmarks and to propose a series of coordinated initiatives by which they can be improved. In doing so, a positive impact can be made to the way in which Wicklow both looks and functions, with benefits for local residents, businesses and visitors.

The plan was compiled over a 4 month basis by The Paul Hogarth Company and ERM Ireland Ltd. It was based on a process of site appraisals, research and consultation with local residents and stakeholders.

To ensure the final plan is as representative as possible of the views of local people, comments upon the draft plan are welcomed. This can be submitted either in writing to The Town Clerk by 3 April or in person at the Public Open Day on Thursday 20 March 2008, where the consultants will be in attendance.

Public Open Day

3pm - 7pm

Thursday 20 March 2008

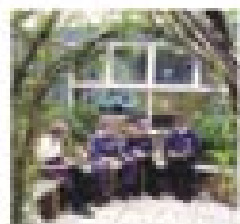
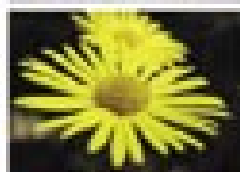
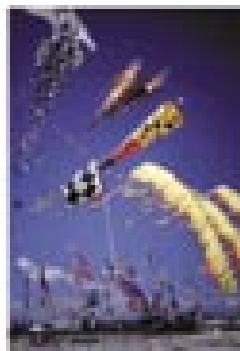
Town Hall, Wicklow



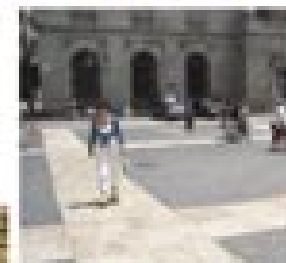
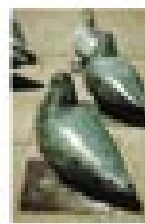
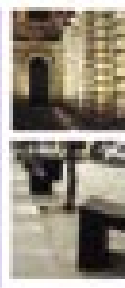
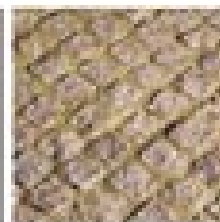
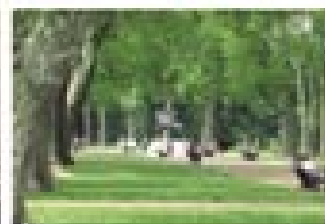
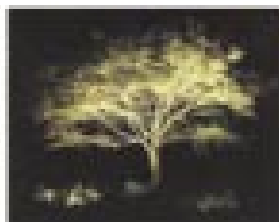
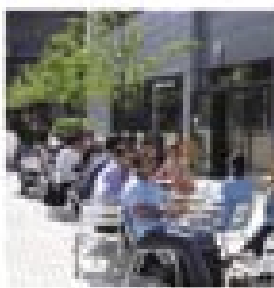
Wicklow Town



Public Realm Plan



"Public Realm - the form and use of outdoor areas that are accessible to the public."



Streets
Parks
Squares
Footpaths
Car Parks
Play Areas
Lighting
Seating
Planting
Paving
Street Furniture
Signs
Public Art
Interpretation
Landmarks

Public Realm

Wicklow Town Council

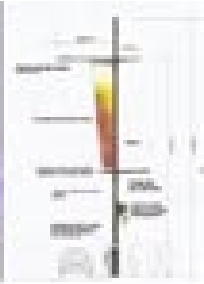
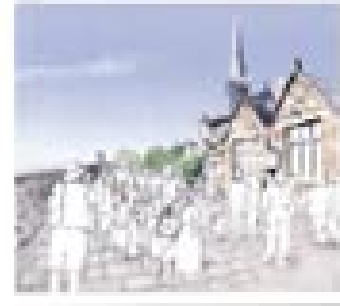
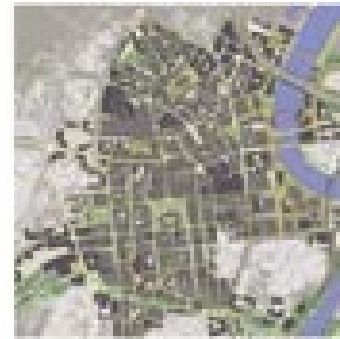




Public Realm Plan

Process

- 1 Data Collection
- 2 Site Appraisal
- 3 Consultation
- 4 The Vision
- 5 Concept
- 6 Draft Plan
- 7 Draft Initiatives
- 8 Consultation
- 9 Public Realm Plan
- 10 Specific Initiatives
- 11 Action Plan



Process

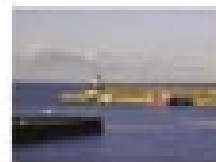
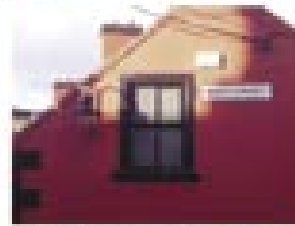
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Wicklow Town

Public Realm Plan



Wicklow

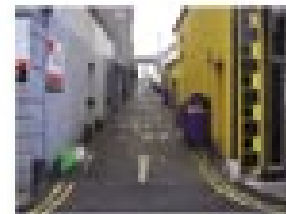
Wicklow Town Public Realm Plan





Wicklow Town

Public Realm Plan



Wicklow

Wicklow Town Council

