ASHBOURNE

PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY

comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

BSM
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Built.
Environment.

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CONTENTS

1

INTRODUCTION AND VISION

VISION FOR ASHBOURNE TOWN CENTRE

Ashbourne has its origins as a 'service stop' or 'travellers' rest on the Dublin-Belfast coach road. Until the 1970s, Ashbourne had a small population living mostly along Frederick Street. In the last 50 years however, with private transport and new road infrastructure, Ashbourne has taken advantage of both its proximity to Dublin and its location on the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor and expanded in all directions to become the second largest town in County Meath. The scale of Ashbourne has changed immensely - both within the town centre and in the wider town.

Frederick Street, once the only street in Ashbourne, is now one of a network of streets that form the town centre. While Frederick Street still incorporates many of the original buildings that defined Ashbourne, including the Ashbourne House Hotel the Church and Parish Hall, the Old School and Hunters Moon, refurbishment, infill development and new development is such that its heritage is not immediately apparent to those visiting the town. The newly expanded town centre to the west along Killegland Street, is of a higher density and of taller and more contemporary buildings. Much of the car parking in the town is within the expanded town, with the effect that many people 'arrive' in the new town having passed by Frederick Street.
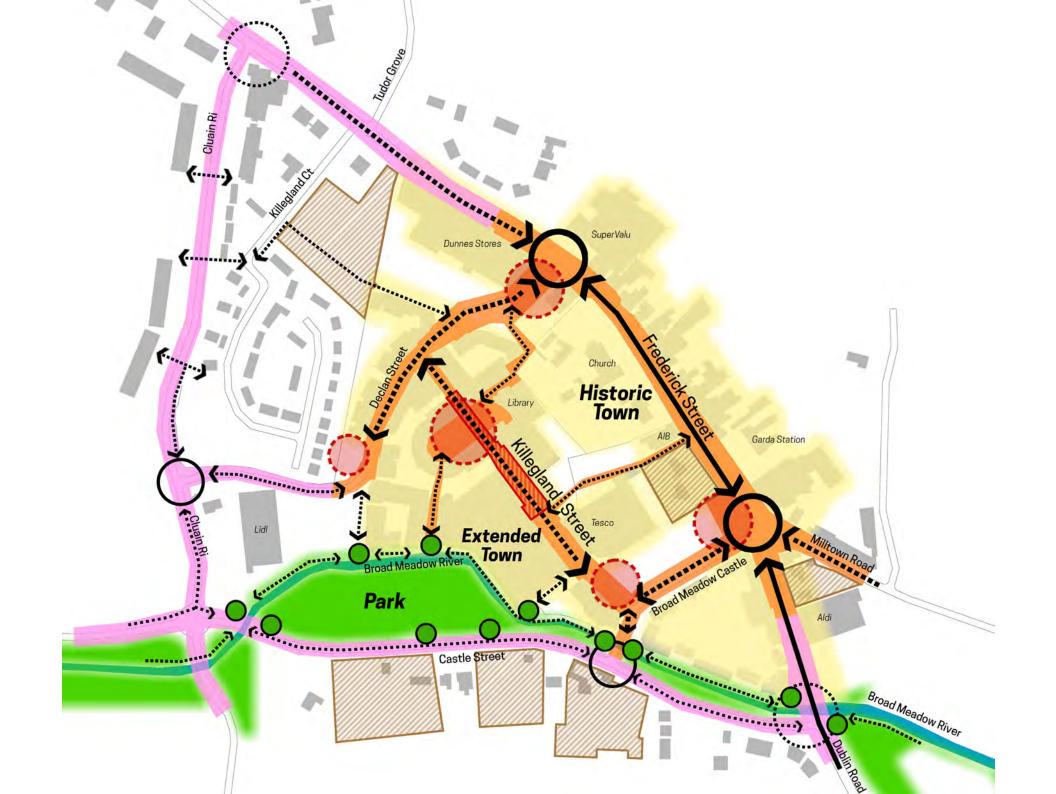
Frederick Street generally offers pubs and restaurants, the hotel, banks, and community services around the Church and school. Killegland Street principally offers retail, commercial, restaurant and residential uses, and includes the Ashbourne Library. There is a 'disconnect' between Frederick Street and Killegland Street that is manifest in both the 'look and feel' and the 'offer' of both streets, but also exacerbated by the lack of physical connection between them. This disconnection is felt by many who visit the town who are not sure where to go and who find it difficult to navigate the town centre.

Ashbourne has a strong heritage and culture, a vibrant and multi-cultural community, and a wealth of sporting, commercial and amenity assets. It also enjoys proximity to Dublin to the south and convenient access to the wider landscape and cultural heritage of County Meath and the Boyne Valley to the north.

This Public Realm Strategy is an opportunity to establish the overall town centre as a more cohesive and appealing town centre, building on its heritage, its location, and the newer assets of the town, and where all parts work more effectively together to create an economically and socially vibrant town centre. The town centre should be a strongly people focussed centre for the local community, but also a distinctive and memorable place for visitors.

The Vision for the Public Realm is to develop a high quality, attractive and coherent town centre, reflecting the heritage of the town and its people; where streets and spaces of the town centre are distinctive and contribute to sense of place; and where the town centre presents a clear and legible streetscape in which pedestrian and vehicular access is convenient and self-evident.

A strong people focussed public realm that connects the streets, spaces and facilities of the town centre, will underpin the long term social and economic vitality of Ashbourne.

Map labels:

- Cluain Ri
- Tudor Grove
- Killegland Ct
- Dunnes Stores
- SuperValu
- Declan Street
- Church
- Library
- Historic Town
- AIB
- Garda Station
- Frederick Street
- Killegland Street
- Lidl
- Extended Town
- Tesco
- Broad Meadow Castle
- Milltown Road
- Broad Meadow River
- Park
- Aldi
- Castle Street
- Dublin Road
- Broad Meadow River

ASHBOURNE
TOWN AND
ENVIRONS

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN AND STUDY AREA

Meath County Council is promoting a public realm strategy for the town of Ashbourne. Its purpose is to guide the enhancement and vitality of the town as great place to live, work and visit, and also to facilitate and foster growth in the town.

This Public Realm Strategy is informed by a comprehensive assessment and analysis of the existing town centre, and also by a process of consultation and engagement between 2017 and 2018 that has included elected members, stakeholders, interest groups and the local community. This process facilitated the establishment of a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of Ashbourne, and has led to the identification of a range of potential opportunities for the town centre.

The Public Realm Strategy presents a suite of recommendations and potential public realm projects with the aim of improving the physical fabric of the town, and enhancing the experience of the town centre. The overarching objective is to guide the establishment of a strong and cohesive public realm – one that makes it a more appealing, distinctive and memorable place for residents and visitors alike, and underpins the social and economic vitality of Ashbourne.

This document has been prepared for Meath County Council by Brady Shipman Martin; urban designers, masterplanners and landscape architects.

PUBLIC REALM : WHAT IS IT AND WHY IT MATTERS

Public realm is the 'space between buildings'. It includes streets, laneways, civic and open spaces, building frontages that define these spaces, and a host of other elements such as lighting, seating, paving, planting, signage and public art that contribute to the appeal, experience and identity of a town.

The quality of the public realm will greatly influence the overall presentation and experience of a town, and will underpin its long term social and economic vitality. It can contribute greatly to the establishment of the town centre as a destination for tourism and investment.

The public realm of Ashbourne town centre is an arena for the day-to-day life of the town and its community. It is for living, for business and shopping, for gathering and recreation, and for celebration. It is also where the community and visitors can come together to participate in public activities of all types - from weekly farmers' markets to seasonal and one-off events and festivals. It is a place for individuals, families and visitors to enjoy.

The public realm should be people and experience focussed, with generous footpaths and spaces that allow easy access, movement and connections throughout the town, and also allow retail units and cafés to open onto the streets to bring life and animation to the street. Greater movement and experience will increase footfall - benefiting the businesses in Ashbourne and encouraging community

interaction. Importantly, it will provide visitors with an enjoyable and memorable experience of the Ashbourne, and encourage return visits.

There must be an appropriate balance between pedestrian and vehicular movement, with convenient and flush access for pedestrians throughout, including at crossings. The public realm should be a safe place to be, and be comfortable for users of all ages.

If carefully considered and well-designed, the public realm will be distinctive and convey a 'sense of place' or 'identity' of the town and its culture. Signage, gateways, street furniture, information panels and other elements can incorporate the 'brand' of the town as appropriate, and information panels in particular can incorporate the 'story' of the town. These can be accessed either casually as people move about the town, or formally as part of an overall heritage trail. Either way, they serve to provide locals and visitors with a sense of the heritage and modern day offer of the town.

Public realm investment in Ashbourne in recent years include Frederick Street and parts of Killegland Street, and plans are developing for improvement of the linear park along Broadmeadow River. There is still considerable scope for further improvements, and this Public Realm Strategy sets out recommendations and potential projects that could guide future investment in the town centre.

IDENTITY

INTERACTIVE

ENGAGING

ADAPTABLE

ANIMATED

FUN

2

APPRECIATING THE CONTEXT

PLANNING OVERVIEW

A Public Realm Plan is a non-statutory plan which is intended to put in place the broad principles to develop and deliver the most effective presentation management and development of the town's public realm.

Ashbourne Local Area Plan 2009-2015

The current Local Area Plan sets out the policy framework for the future growth of Ashbourne. It consists of a written statement accompanied by a land use zoning objectives map. The Council have a key role in ensuring that policies and objectives contained in the Local Area Plan are achieved.

The following objectives are relevant to this plan:

As per Section 3.3: Settlement Strategy, it is an objective of the Council:

SS OBJ 4: To encourage and promote integration and consolidation of the old and new sections of Ashbourne town centre.
SS OBJ 5: To promote the public realm and amenities of Ashbourne so that the quality of life for residents can be improved.

Section 7.4 Keeping the Streets Clean
In respect of litter control, the Planning Authority believes that litter greatly reduces the appeal of a town and discourages people from making return trips. Any such litter bins shall be in keeping with the character of the area by means of appropriate design and styling to be agreed with the Planning Authority.

Therefore, it is the policy of the Council
INF POL 19
To require the provision of public litter bins where there is a risk in the opinion of the Planning Authority that a development would result in increased levels of litter on the public road or street.

Meath Development Plan 2013-2019

5.10 Sporting and Leisure Facilities/Recreation/ Open Space and 5.10.2 Public Open Space

Public open space is a critical element to the creation of a quality and distinctive urban environment, offering opportunities for both passive and active recreation, contributing to the quality of life of residents and visitors alike and offering environmental and ecological benefits. Private open space provision is a fundamental tenet of residential amenity, offering the resident an opportunity for safe and private recreation.

SOC OBJ 7
To examine existing public open spaces and carry out improvements where necessary to increase their usefulness as recreational spaces.

Chapter 6: Transport
One of the strategic aims of the Development Plan is to co-ordinate transport and land use planning. The concept of an integrated transport policy encompasses not only integration within and between different modes of transport, but also integration with environmental, social, recreational, economic, educational and health

policies and objectives. Therefore, the provision of transport facilities be no longer be considered or decided upon in isolation.
To facilitate this integration, it is a policy of the Council to promote the sustainable development of walking, cycling, public transport and other more sustainable forms of transport.

TRAN SP 2
To promote the sustainable development of walking, cycling, public transport and other more sustainable forms of transport as an alternative to the private car, together with the development of the necessary infrastructure and promotion of the initiatives contained within 'Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future 2009 – 2020'.

TRAN SO 1
To prepare local transport plans for Navan, Drogheda Environs, Dunboyne, Kells, Trim, Ashbourne and Dunshaughlin, in accordance with the NTA's draft Transportation Strategy, in consultation with the NTA.
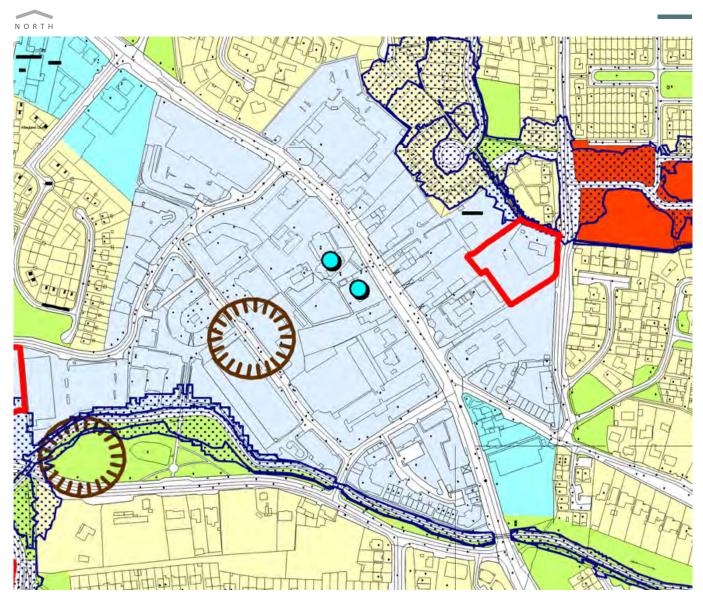
Cycling
Meath County Council recognises the importance of having a public realm plan that incorporates elements of 'Smarter Travel' whereby an emphasis on promoting sustainable transport, including making developments easily accessible for pedestrian and cyclists, reducing the need to travel and the distance of journeys.

As per Section 11.9.2: Cycle Parking of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019,

"Cycle parking facilities should be conveniently located within a populated, well-supervised area, and monitored by CCTV where possible. Moreover, weather protected facilities should be considered where appropriate. All long-term (more than three hours) cycle racks shall be protected from the weather."

NORTH

Extract: land use zoning objectives map (Meath County Development Plan 2013-2019)

KEY

- To protect, provide for and / or improve town and village centre facilities and uses
- To provide for and facilitate mixed residential and business uses
- To protect and enhance the amenity of developed residential communities
- Protected structures
- Sites and monuments

PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The Public Realm Strategy has been informed through analysis of the town centre, but also through consultation with local interest groups, private and commercial stakeholders, and the public. A schedule of consultations is provided on the following pages.

A public consultation event, held on 16th January 2018, presented the emerging draft public realm strategy and associated projects, and sought the response and input from local residents and business operators who attended the event. A series of exhibition boards were placed on display in the Ashbourne Library and complimented by a presentation made by the project team. The exhibition boards were left in place in Ashbourne Library between 24th January and 23rd February 2018.

Attendees and visitors to the exhibition, were asked to complete a feedback form (opposite) and to record their thoughts. Over 300 responses were received in total and a summary of these responses is provided on the page opposite. A number of formal submissions were also received from local business and stakeholders and are also summarised on the page opposite.
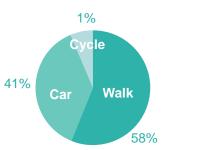
Public consultation feedback form

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY
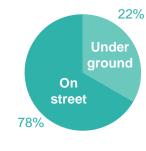
Sample of public consultation exhibition boards

PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Travel to Ashbourne by:

- Cycle 1%
- Car 41%
- Walk 58%

Park in Ashbourne:

- Underground 22%
- On street 78%
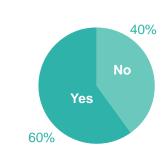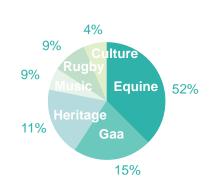
Ashbourne is easy to get around?

- No 40%
- Yes 60%

The identity of Ashbourne is:

- Culture 4%
- Rugby 9%
- Music 9%
- Heritage 11%
- Equine 52%
- Gaa 15%
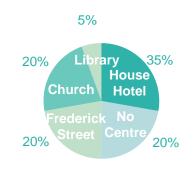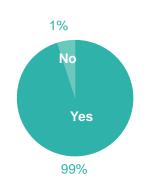
The centre of Ashbourne is identified as:

- Library 5%
- House Hotel 35%
- Church 20%
- Frederick Street 20%
- No Centre 20%

Would enhanced open spaces / civic spaces bring value to the town?

- Yes 100%

Would way-finding / interpretative mapping be important?

- No 1%
- Yes 99%

Any other comments:

+ Town lacks character due to dominance of the private car;
+ Lack of street names is a real issue;
+ Fear of evening time anti-social issues;
+ Which is the High Street, Frederick Street or Killegland Street?;
+ Desire to integrate heritage features into project opportunities;
+ Retail streets are too car orientated;
+ Parking enforcement is needed, particularly in pedestrian areas;
+ Desire for more pedestrian crossings;
+ Desire for better pedestrian orientated links between housing estates and the town centre;
+ A very walkable town but no proper
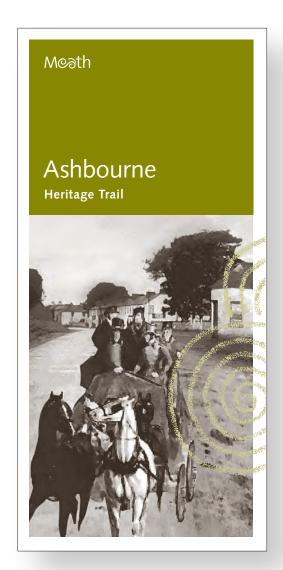
pedestrian / cycle links to facilitate this / poor permeability;
+ Link Frederick Street and Killegland Street via pedestrian routes;
+ Additional central play spaces are needed;
+ Broadmeadow River bank needs enhancement;
+ Enhance gateways into the town;
+ More bus shelters are required;
+ Disabled parking desired in close proximity to retail offerings;
+ Ensure seamless cycle connectivity throughout the town; and
+ Issues with car parking restrictions along main retail streets.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

A series of Stakeholder Engagement meetings were also held during 2017 and 2018 including:

16 Jan 2017	Ashbourne Municipal District
02 Feb 2017	Elected Members
19 June 2017	Ashbourne Municipal District
30 June 2017	Oliver Russell and Niall Barrett (regarding AIB lane project)
06 July 2017	CBRE Aidan Grimes (receivers of lands at Ashbourne)
07 July 2017	Fr. Derek Darby and Liam Mulvihill (Church grounds)
14 July 2017	Joe Giltinane, Ashbourne Chamber.
11 Dec 2017	Ashbourne Municipal District

The Ashbourne Historical Society engaged with BSM during the process and a Heritage Trail Brochure, see below, was submitted to inform the design strategies as presented earlier.

Cover page of Ashbourne Historical Society Heritage Trail Brochure

LOCATION OVERVIEW

COUNTY SCALE

Ashbourne is located on the Dublin to Belfast economic corridor, in close proximity to Dublin, and with convenient access via the M2 motorway to Dublin and Dublin Airport, and northwards towards Belfast. Ashbourne also enjoys convenient access to the wider towns and landscapes of County Meath, including the internationally renowned Boyne Valley.

Ashbourne is the second largest urban centre in County Meath. It is convenient to Dublin while retaining the appeal and advantages of a rural town. Ashbourne has a strong relationship with Dublin, with a substantial proportion of its population commuting to Dublin for work and third level education.

TOWN SCALE

Ashbourne has a compact town centre that is essentially contained between Frederick Street and the Broadmeadow River. The town includes Frederick Street of the 'old town' and Killegland Street of the 'new town, and together, they incorporate a range of retail, commercial, pubs, restaurants and community facilities that serve the local community. The Broadmeadow River defines the southern boundary of the town centre, and provides an opportunity to establish connections between the built town centre and the natural river corridor.

ORIGINS OF ASHBOURNE

Killegland Castle

Killegland Castle

Ashbourne in 1837 and original location of Killegland Castle

The origins of Ashbourne can be traced back to medieval times, and the area around of the town was known for many centuries as Killegland. A Norman tower house, Killegland Castle, was built in the 14th century on the banks of the Broadmeadow River just south of the town centre. The castle was built by the Wafre family, and in time passed to the Seagrave and Carter families. By the 18th century however, it had fallen into disrepair and was ultimately demolished for building stone.

In the early 19th century, a Mr. Frederick Bourne purchased the lands of Killegland and financed the construction of a ten mile section of road from Killegland to Dublin, collecting revenue from tolls from travellers on the mail coach road to Derry and Belfast. He built a small village near the ten mile tollbooth as a service stop for travellers and built an inn, a hotel and other small businesses. He named his village Ashbourne, and the main street was called Frederick Street.

Ashbourne grew quickly to a population of just over 400, expanding principally along Frederick Street, and as far as Ashbourne Bridge at the end of Bridge Street. Although the population declined during the famine, it grew again and stabilised at around 400 until the 1970's.

ASHBOURNE TODAY

Population growth in Dublin, combined with increasing popularity of the private car, resulted in rapid expansion of satellite towns and villages around Dublin, including Ashbourne. During the 1970s, while the village core of Ashbourne remained as a single street, a series of housing estates were developed in surrounding lands to the "Garden City" model. The role of Ashbourne as a commuter town began, and the population grew rapidly from only 400 in the early 1970s to over 5,000 by the year 2000.

Intense economic and physical growth during the early 2000's saw the continued development of housing estates and apartments around Ashbourne, but also the significant expansion of the original village core beyond Frederick Street. The street network was expanded westwards from the backs of properties along Frederick Street over fields leading to Broadmeadow River. High density mixed used buildings incorporating basement and multi-storey car parking were developed along a major new street running parallel to Frederick Street. This new main street took the historical townland name and was called Killegland Street.

The population of Ashbourne is now over 14,000, and will continue to grow as Ashbourne takes maximum advantage of it proximity to Dublin and Dublin Airport, and also the economic opportunity of its location on the Dublin-Belfast corridor.

NORTH

Ashbourne in 1995

Ashbourne in 2017

Ashbourne House Hotel

Out of town residential development

High density residential development

Civic space, Killegland Street

Killegland Street

ASHBOURNE TOWN CENTRE ASSETS

Ashbourne is a rural town with a significant, engaged and multi-cultural community that has strong ties with Dublin. Ashbourne enjoys easy access to Dublin and Dublin Airport via the M2 motorway, making it highly accessible town both nationally and internationally. Ashbourne also enjoys convenient access to the wider towns and landscape of County Meath including the internationally renowned heritage of the Boyne Valley.

Quality homes and a wide range of retail, community, educational, sporting and recreational facilities underpin the appeal of Ashbourne as an attractive place to live. Ashbourne is projected to grow significantly in the coming years.

KEY

◌ Walking distance

▢ Town Centre Fabric

▨ Core Retail Spine

■ Public Realm Improvement Area

■ 'Green' Public Realm

○ Gateways

◌ Arrival Point

● Existing Linear Park Access Points

◉ Re-invented Space/Focal Area

▣ Bus Stops

📍 Retail Anchors

📍 Community / Social Anchors

The town centre has a wealth of established assets and attractors, which include:

+ A compact, walkable town centre;
+ Well established public transport services;
+ A rich heritage background;
+ A contrasting urban grain, street structure and vernacular architecture with interesting streets and spaces offering potential for enhancement and connectivity;
+ Civic spaces positioned in the heart of the town centre;
+ Ample car parking;
+ Substantial retail and commercial space along Killegland Street and Frederick Street;
+ An attractive balance of smaller retail units in the heart of the town with larger anchor units generally towards the edge of the town;
+ Recent streetscape enhancement along Frederick Street; and
+ A linear park and river with potential to link seamlessly with the town centre.

These town centre assets, supported by a wealth of established leisure, sporting and amenity facilities around the town, are the starting point for the establishment of a public realm strategy for Ashbourne town centre. This strategy will build on these assets and bring them together in a meaningful manner, so that they work together to enhance the identity, vitality, economy and overall experience of the town for residents and visitors.

Focal point on Frederick Street

Green and blue assets north of Castle Street

Killegland Ct

SuperValu

Dunnes Stores

P

P

Declan Street

P

P

P

Church

Frederick Street

P

Historic Town

Library

250m

Cemetary

AIB

Garda Station

P

Cluain Ri

Lidl

P

Killegland Street

Tesco

Extended Town

P

Broad Meadow Castle

Milltown Road

Broad Meadow River

P

Park

Aldi

Playground

Castle Street

P

Dublin Road

Broad Meadow River

Linear Park

PUBLIC REALM : ISSUES AND WEAKNESSES

No sense of arrival into the town centre

Unused green spaces

Bollard dominated streetscape

Illegible and fragmented connectivity to civic spaces

Car orientated streetscape

Illegible public space

PUBLIC REALM : OPPORTUNITIES AND POTENTIALS
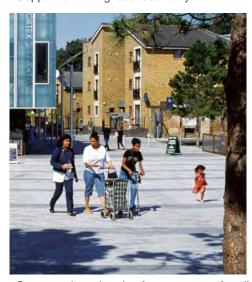
Provide streetscape variety

Support a thriving local economy

Provide adaptable spaces

Create interactive spaces

Provide an activated streetscape

Create a shared and safe streetscape for all

Create a vibrant streetscape with social opportunities

3

PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY

OBJECTIVES FOR A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC REALM

The primary objectives of this strategy are to guide the creation of an enhanced and robust public realm in Ashbourne - a realm that is people and experience focussed and enlivens and animates the town centre; is welcoming, engaging and distinctive; is characterful and reflects the culture of the town; and is an arena for the day-to-day life of the town and its community and visitors:

Identity
+ Reflect the historical and contemporary identity of Ashbourne in the streets, spaces, street furniture and other streetscape elements to create meaningful and distinctive sense of place for locals and visitors alike;
+ Engage the community in determining what the identity should be, and develop a brand that can be used appropriately at gateways, on signage and on interpretive information around the town centre that tells the story of Ashbourne;
+ Consider the appropriateness of street names and whether any modifications street names could aid understanding and way-finding of the town.

Bringing Streets to Life
+ Create a distinctive, vibrant and appealing town centre by establishing people focussed streetscapes and public spaces with high quality paving, seating, street furniture and lighting;
+ Create an environment within the town centre that is conducive to an attractive, memorable and authentic town centre destination for residents and visitors.

Connections and Movement
+ Establish new pedestrian links within the town centre that facilitate 'connection' of Frederick Street, Killegland Street and the Broadmeadow River, encouraging greater footfall and social interaction within the town centre;
+ Adjust the pedestrian to vehicular balance of streets where appropriate so as to provide a stronger and safer pedestrian environment around the town centre.

Welcome and Legibility
+ Establish distinctive gateways and arrival points to the town centre that reflect the brand and create a sense of arrival and welcome;
+ Provide clear directional signage from the gateways through to key town centre destinations and facilities, including parking and public transport, as well as retail, commercial, civic and amenity destinations;
+ Provide clear town mapping at key locations to facilitate way-finding and easy exploration around the town.

Welcoming

People Focussed

Connected and Safe

Legible

Identity

Appealing and High Quality

PUBLIC REALM

PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The public realm strategy for Ashbourne builds upon existing assets of the town, its unique characteristics, its heritage and its location. Building on these to create an enhanced public realm in Ashbourne, four key themes are the drivers for the public realm strategy.

PUBLIC REALM THEMES

Identity
To establish an identity for Ashbourne that is distinctive and authentic.

Connections and Movement
To reinforce the streetscapes and enhance pedestrian connectivity throughout the town centre.

Welcome and Legibility
To create legible and attractive entry points to the town centre that provide strong first impressions.

Bringing Streets to Life
To create animated streetscapes and a connected town centre whereby people's experiences of the town are enhanced.
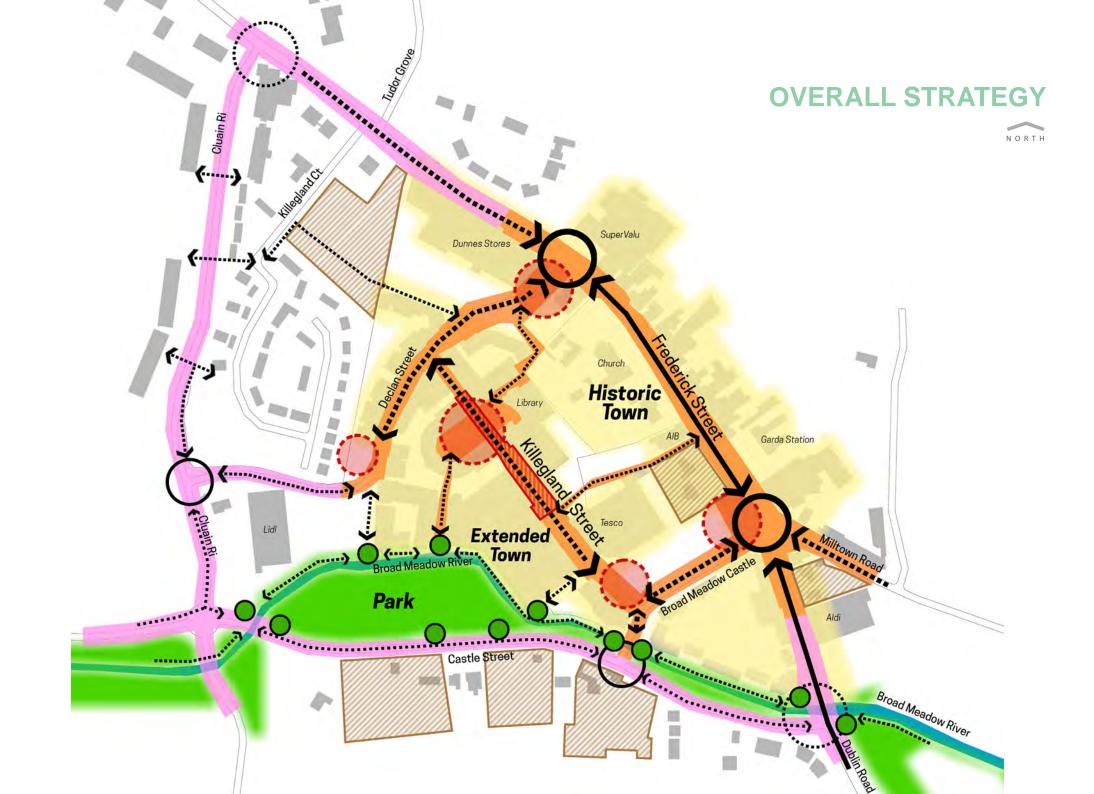
PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY

The overall public realm strategy builds upon and ties the four themes together to create an integrated town centre where a sense of arrival is created at clearly defined gateways and where key public realm spaces and streetscapes are connected. The natural environment along the Broadmeadow River is stitched into the town centre through a series of pedestrian routes and crossings.

The following pages explain in further detail how the overall strategy will be facilitated, under the headings of Identity, Connections and Movement, Welcome and Legibility, and Bringing Streets to Life.

KEY
- Town Centre Fabric
- Key Public Realm
- Town Centre Access Routes
- 'Green' Public Realm
- Gateway
- Arrival Point
- Access Point
- Improved/New Linear Park Access
- Re-invented Space/Focal Area
- Potential/Improved Links
- 1-Way Section of the Road
- Opportunity Site

NORTH

Tudor Grove

Cluain Rí

Killegland Ct

Dunnes Stores

SuperValu

Church

Historic Town

Library

Declan Street

Frederick Street

AIB

Garda Station

Killegland Street

Tesco

Lidl

Extended Town

Broad Meadow River

Broad Meadow Castle

Milltown Road

Park

Aldi

Cluain Rí

Castle Street

Dublin Road

Broad Meadow River

IDENTITY

Ashbourne is a rural town that has its origins as a 'travellers rest' or 'service stop' on the Dublin-Belfast coach road. Modern day Ashbourne still leverages advantage from its location along the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor and benefits from its proximity to Dublin Airport and access to the M2 motorway.

Ashbourne has grown significantly as a town and community, and has developed strong associations with other activities including sporting, equine, heritage and music. It is also a convenient location from which to access the wider landscape heritage of County Meath including the Boyne Valley. All of these associations are substantial assets that should contribute to the establishment of a strong identity for Ashbourne – both as a settlement and a destination.

It is a recommendation of this Public Realm Strategy that a strong and meaningful identity for Ashbourne be established through collaboration and consultation with the local community and other stakeholders. It may be informed by a combination of the strong associations it has with sport and culture, but also by the heritage of the town and the names that were important to the town throughout its history.

In considering the identity and brand, it may also be timely to review the street and place naming of the town. While the official name of the old main street is Frederick Street, it is frequently referred to a Main Street, Dublin Road, High Street and even Killegland Street. Similarly, Killegland Street, which is named after the historic townland despite being the main street in the new part of the town centre, is often referred to as Main Street, High Street or Killegland Road. Other streets also have uncertain naming, and this ambiguity undermines the legibility and identity of the town centre.

A comprehensive review of street and place names, potentially including historical names that are not currently in use, could be beneficial in aiding legibility of the town and also telling the story of Ashbourne.

MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

The connections and movement strategy for Ashbourne town centre has been informed by analysis of existing patterns of pedestrian, cycle and vehicular movement in and around the town centre, and through discussion with local stakeholders.

People arrive in the town centre by car or bicycle, by foot, and by public transport. In all cases, once they have arrived, they become pedestrians for the remainder of their visit. In order for the town centre to be a positive experience for visitors, there must be a strong pedestrian focus, with convenient, direct and safe access throughout the centre. This should not be to the exclusion of vehicular traffic which must be able to access and exit the car parking facilities.

Opportunities exist to provide a people focussed streetscape within the town centre where walking, cycling, services vehicles and the private car can seamlessly move along the streetscape and provide a more comfortable, connected and safe environment.

The greatest apparent demand in Ashbourne is for connections between Frederick Street and Killegland Street that will allow pedestrians to come and go more freely between both streets and to avail of the services on both. Two potential pedestrian connections are indicated on the accompanying map, and their implementation will be subject to detailed design and consultation with the relevant stakeholders.

Other options for improving the pedestrian offer in the town is to re-balance certain streets to provide wider pavements that will provide more generous and safer pedestrian space, and reduce the perceived dominance of vehicular traffic. There is also potential to strengthen existing public spaces and to establish new ones. On Killegland Street in particular, and by virtue of the relative locations of car parking access points, it would be possible to convert the middle section of the street to one-way traffic for a short length without precluding access to the car parks. This would have the advantage of retaining on-street parking while greatly enhancing the pedestrian space, which in turn would have a beneficial effect on the street as a strong pedestrian street. This option, and a suite of other potential projects, are set out in Section 4 Public Realm Projects.

Additionally, the establishment and reinforcing pedestrian connections between the town centre and the Broadmeadow River would make the playground and linear park more accessible to pedestrians from the town centre. Additional connections would also enhance the appeal of walking into town from the residential areas to the south of the town – reducing car dependency and encouraging community interaction.

At grade pedestrian crossing

Shared streetscape

NORTH

Dunnes Stores

SuperValu

P

P

Church
Grounds

Cluain Ri

Declan Street

Access

P

1-Way

Exit

1-Way

Library

Killegland Street

Frederick Street

Graveyard

AIB

Garda Station

Service Access/Exit

Tesco

Hotel

Lidl

P

P

Broad Meadow Castle

P

Access

McDonald's

Park/Playground

Hotel

Aldi

P

Castle Street

KEY

▬ ▬ Primary vehicular routes

▪ ▪ Secondary vehicular routes

▬ ▬ Enhanced Pedestrian connectivity

P Parking

▬ Key public spaces

◯ Proposed Linear Park Access crossings

← Reorientated flow and direction of vehicular and
→ cycle movement along Killegland Street

WELCOME AND LEGIBILITY

The Welcome and Legibility strategy for Ashbourne is provided in response to strong local demand to provide a clear and effective signage system for people visiting the town centre. Easy navigation will encourage people into Ashbourne, and also to spend more time enjoying the streets, shops, restaurants, pubs, cafés and spaces on offer.

The Welcome and Legibility strategy spans the entire town centre, and includes the following hierarchy of features that will assist any visitor to Ashbourne:

1.   Gateway 'welcome' points at the northern and southern entry points approaching Frederick Street.
2.   Directional signage providing clear directions to car parking and other key destinations.
3.   Information points at key public spaces and junctions that includes town mapping.
4.   Legible street name plaques
5.   Interpretive information – either in conjunction with information panels or as stand-alone components of a heritage trail.

All components of the welcome, signage and information infrastructure must be easy to see, distinctive and co-ordinated, and incorporate the Ashbourne 'brand'. Each element should contribute to the creation of a mental map of the town centre for all visitors, and provide the appropriate level of information at each stage of the visit.

Way-finding

Information

Street naming

NORTH

KEY

🛡 Welcome to Ashbourne

⌐ Directional / way-finding

🛈 Information

P Parking

● Street naming

▨ Key public realm / destination

▪▪ Potential / improved pedestrian links

▪ Key public spaces

BRINGING STREETS TO LIFE

Bringing streets to life is the ultimate objective of a Public Realm Strategy. Bringing streets to life incorporates the identity, connectivity, and signage elements, but goes further by ensuring that presentation and quality of streets and spaces, and the experience of those streets and spaces, provides people with an engaging, comfortable and memorable experience of the town.
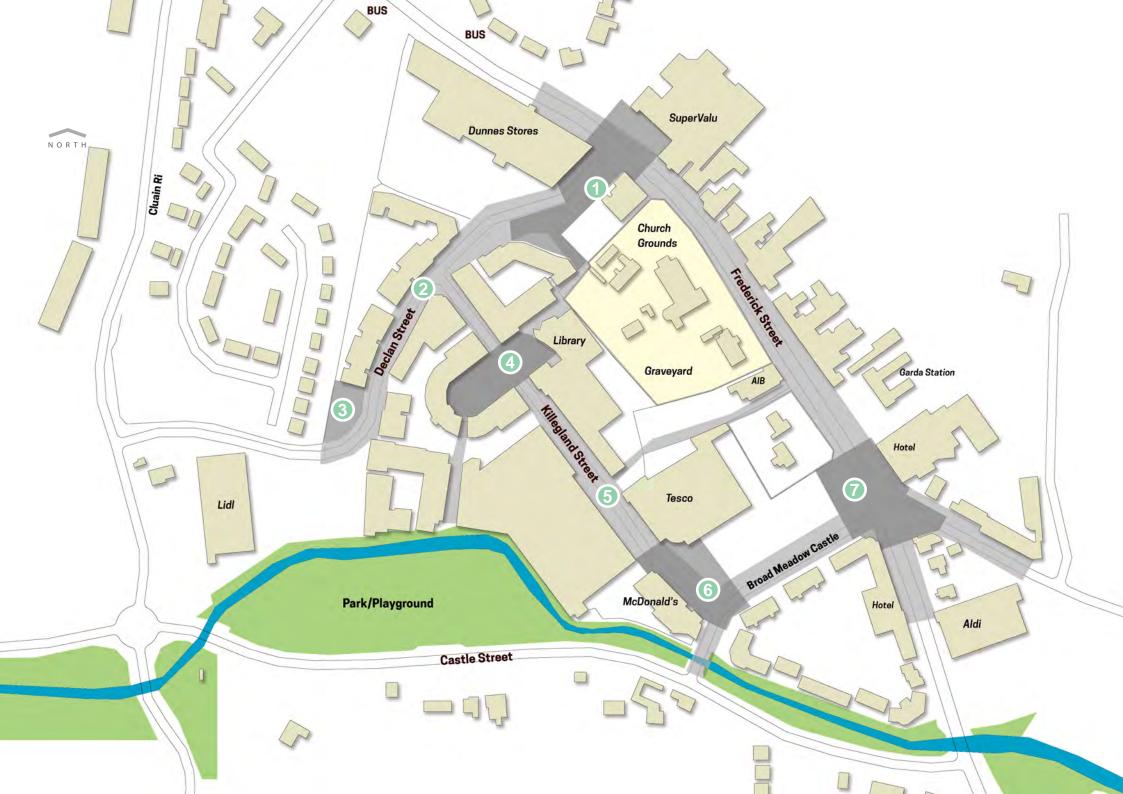
Bringing streets to life involves physical improvements to streetscapes and spaces. It includes consideration of the detailed and 'human' scale of spaces, materials, lighting, seating, paving, planting, signage and public art. The ground surfaces people move along; the spaces they can spend time in; the provision and quality of seating; the comfort and adequacy of lighting; the ease of access and separation from vehicles; the use of colour and planting – all of these, together with the retail and other experiences on offer, contribute to the quality and character of streets, and to the sense of place and ultimate enjoyment of that place.

The range of facilities and events also plays an important role. Public spaces can play host to a wide range of one-off and regular events, including farmers' markets and book stalls, buskers and music festivals, parades and other community gatherings. Public spaces should be easily adaptable and have the capacity to accommodate different events within the town centre.

The strategy for bringing streets to life in Ashbourne centres on a suite of related potential projects that enhance existing streets and spaces and establish or expand others. All of these projects are located within the town centre and are connected to each other by previous public realm improvements or other potential projects. Together, they provide a strong pedestrian focussed network of streets and spaces within the core of Ashbourne town centre.

Bringing streets to life in Ashbourne is demonstrated through the suite of potential projects identified on the accompanying map. Each project is further detailed in the following Chapter 4: Public Realm Projects.

KEY

1. Declan Street / Frederick Street Park
2. Declan Street
3. Declan Street Pocket Park
4. Killegland Street Square & Crescent
5. Killegland Street
6. Killegland Street South
7. Frederick Street / Broadmeadow Castle

BRINGING STREETS TO LIFE

KEY

1 Declan Street / Frederick Street Park
2 Declan Street
3 Declan Street Pocket Park
4 Killegland Street Square & Crescent
5 Killegland Street
6 Killegland Street South
7 Frederick Street / Broadmeadow Castle

43

4
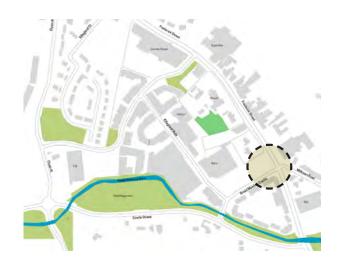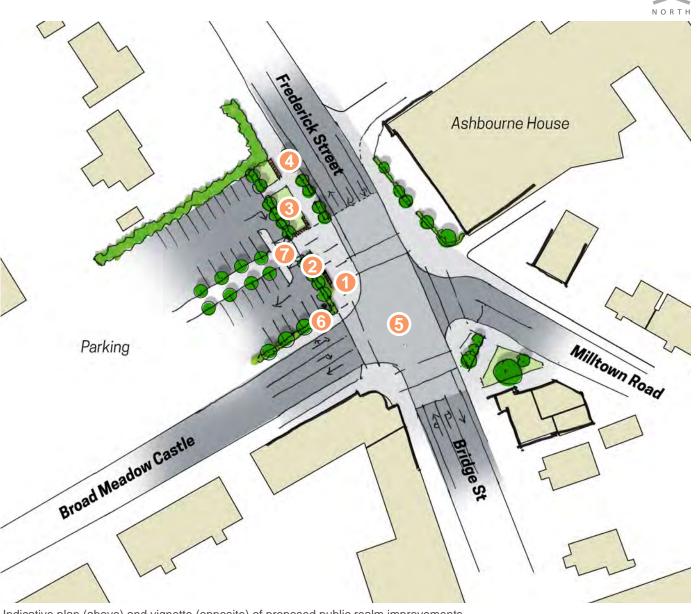
PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS

FREDERICK STREET / BROADMEADOW CASTLE

NORTH

KEY

1 Civic space at town entrance with seating, lighting and information/ way-finding signage

2 Hedges and trees to screen prominence of parked cars

3 Potential prominent re-location for Arkle sculpture at entrance to town

4 Street planter with high canopy trees

5 Raised table junction with high quality pedestrian crossings

6 Advertisement signage location

7 Raised table pedestrian crossing

46

Indicative plan (above) and vignette (opposite) of proposed public realm improvements

BEFORE

AFTER
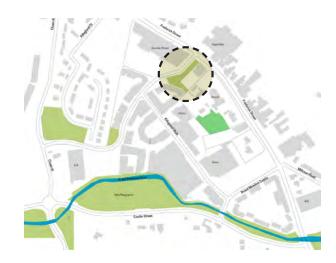
OPPORTUNITIES:

+ To create sense of arrival and a strong civic focal point at the town centre;
+ To optimise pedestrian space by de-cluttering;
+ To enhance presentation using high quality paving, lighting, street furniture and trees;
+ To incorporate civic art, integrated directional signage, and interpretive information; and
+ To visually reduce the prominence of road surfaces and traffic.
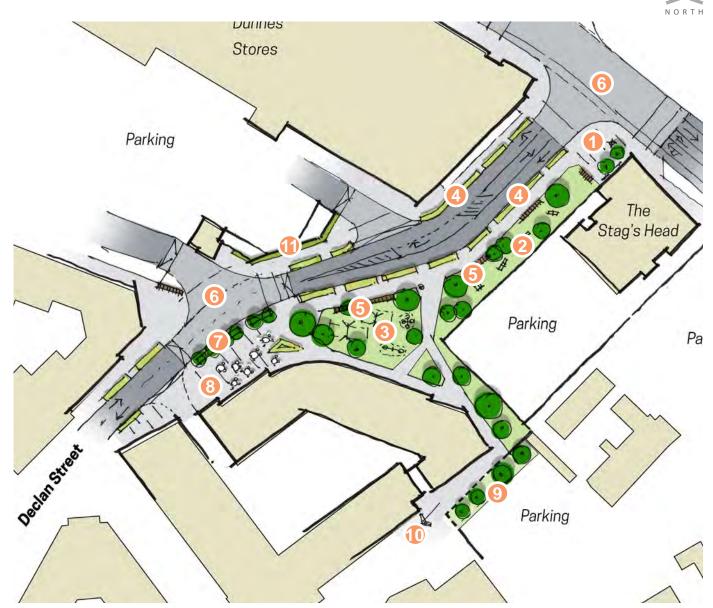
RECOMMENDATIONS:

+ Establish an arrival point and civic space at this junction as a welcoming and focal point;
+ Provide strong definition of the streetscape space and pedestrian environment;
+ Create a visual boundary to adjacent car parking, and possible expansion of pavement space;
+ Provide a raised table junction treatment and surface material to differentiate space from carriageways;
+ Rationalise traffic management infrastructure, including bollards;
+ Distribute public art at entrances to the town;
+ Provide welcoming, directional and way-finding signage can be provided that connects appropriately with existing signage;
+ Provide soft landscape, quality paving, seating and lighting; and
+ Soften the hard landscape, de-clutter bollards.

47

DECLAN STREET / FREDERICK STREET PARK

NORTH

KEY

1　Civic space with seating, trees and information / way-finding signage

2　Pocket park with outdoor gym equipment

3　Playground

4　Street planter

5　Seating

6　Raised table junction / crossing

7　Street planter with high canopy trees

8　Outdoor seating area (cafe / restaurant)

9　Potential green buffer zone to Church car park

10　Pedestrian link to Library Square

11　Pergola / hedge screening

Indicative plan (above) and vignette (opposite) of proposed public realm improvements

BEFORE

AFTER
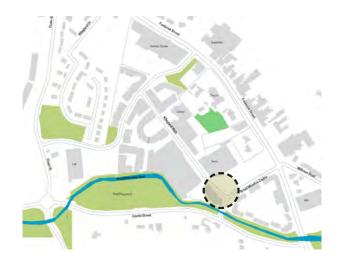
OPPORTUNITIES:

+ To create a civic space as an arrival point to the town centre that is pedestrian focussed;
+ To utilise the green space for visual and pedestrian amenity;
+ To establish a sense of 'street' rather than 'road';
+ To enhance presentation using high quality paving, lighting, seating, trees and landscape;
+ To integrate directional signage, and interpretive information; and
+ To improve pedestrian crossing facilities, existing and new.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

+ Establish a civic space at the gable of The Stag's Head as an arrival and focal point, and connecting to a high quality landscaped green space;
+ Potential to provide sculpture installation(s) appropriate to town at civic space;
+ Provide integrated welcoming, directional and way-finding signage;
+ Provide a raised table junction with crossings, differentiated from carriageway, at Frederick Street and Dominick Street;
+ Provide a pocket park with seating, outdoor gym equipment and small playground;
+ Potential for a pedestrian link through to Library Square, subject to agreement with stakeholders;
+ Streetscape enhancement opportunity using high quality paving, lighting, and street furniture coherent with Frederick Street; and
+ Replace bollards with combined planters, lighting and seating.

49

KILLEGLAND STREET SOUTH

KEY

1. Civic space with seating and information signage
2. Pedestrian zone with seating
3. Landscaped area with tree planting and seating
4. Bicycle parking
5. Raised table pedestrian crossing
6. Planting to screen the car park
7. Way-finding
8. Raised table junction with pedestrian crossing
9. River walk potential access point
10. Street planters

NORTH

Indicative plan (above) and vignette (opposite) of proposed public realm improvements

50

BEFORE

AFTER

OPPORTUNITIES:

+ To create a pedestrian focussed public space;
+ To enhance presentation using high quality paving, lighting, seating, trees and landscape;
+ To optimise the layout and elements of pedestrian spaces;
+ To incorporate civic art, integrated directional signage, and interpretive information; and
+ To improve pedestrian crossing facilities, existing and new.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

+ Establish a civic space at this location as an arrival and focal point;
+ Provide strong definition of the streetscape space and pedestrian environment;
+ Provide a visual boundary to adjacent car parking, and possible expansion of footpath dimension;
+ Provide a raised table junction treatment and surface material to differentiate space from carriageways;
+ Provide integrated information, directional and way-finding signage;
+ Provide soft landscape, quality paving, seating and lighting;
+ Soften the hard landscape;
+ Replace bollards with combined planters, lighting and seating;
+ Reduce carriageway widths where possible to ensure comfortable footpath space;
+ Remove traffic island at current pedestrian crossing opposite McDonald's and introduce additional crossings at Broad Meadow Castle/ Killegland Street junction; and
+ Explore potential of River Walk pedestrian access point.

51

KILLEGLAND STREET

NORTH

KEY

1 One-way vehicular section of the street; car park access from either end of street

2 Two-way section of the street

3 Pedestrian build-outs, with planting and seating, to increase pedestrian amenity

4 Street planter with high canopy trees

5 Two-way cycle access

52

Indicative plan (above) and vignette (opposite) of proposed public realm improvements

BEFORE

AFTER

OPPORTUNITIES:

+   To improve the legibility of the street through integrated design (high quality paving, lighting, street furniture and planting);

+   To activate street frontages to increase activity and diversity from day through to evening;

+   To improve street footpaths that can facilitate stronger retail, social and creative uses of the street and enhance urban life of the town;

+   To create potential one-way vehicular section for enhanced pedestrian space and realm; and

+   Provide a contra-flow cycle track.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

+   Introduce a short one-way vehicular section, maintaining two-way cycle access and access to car parks and deliveries. Retain on-street parking;

+   Widen pavement widths to provide more comfortable pedestrian space, encourage passive amenity and increase retail space;

+   Remove concrete bollards and soften the highly engineered road edges by introducing street planters and enclosed seating areas;

+   Provide appropriate planting in number of locations;

+   Use high quality paving, lighting, and street furniture coherent with Frederick Street;

+   Provide a raised paved carriageway along the one-way section to reinforce the visual appeal of the street and to clearly signal the pedestrian nature of the street;

+   Re-configure selected on-street parking spaces to optimise footpath widths and pedestrian space at key locations where appropriate;

+   Facilitate on street loading and disabled parking bays;

+   Minimise street signage and footpath clutter; and

+   Introduce polycarbonate multicolour panels or similar to multi-storey car park facade.
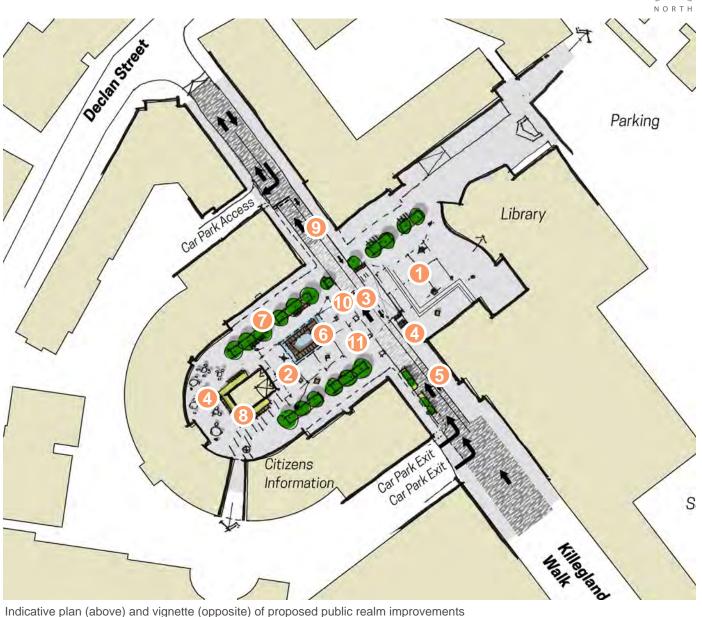
KILLEGLAND STREET SQUARE AND CRESCENT

KEY

1. Library square with rearranged steps and seating
2. Crescent square
3. Raised table at Killegland Street, connecting the squares and facilitating drop-off
4. Seating area
5. Street planter with high canopy trees
6. Sheltered seating area
7. Planter with high canopy trees and seating
8. Planters around car park pedestrian exit/ entrance
9. Two-way cycle access
10. Feature paved road surface
11. Catenary feature lighting over the public space

NORTH

Indicative plan (above) and vignette (opposite) of proposed public realm improvements

BEFORE

AFTER

OPPORTUNITIES:

+ To reinforce as a pedestrian focussed public space and connect the two public spaces visually and functionally;

+ To enhance presentation using high quality paving, lighting, seating, trees and landscape;

+ To encourage/accommodate street frontages to increase activity and diversity from day through to evening;

+ A potential to develop daytime street performance; and

+ A potential to introduce a one-way vehicular section of street and two way contra flow cycle track.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

+ Join the two public spaces' for an enhanced streetscape and improved pedestrian experience;

+ Provide a one-way vehicular section, retaining two-way cycle access, maintaining service and access to car parks, rationalising on-street parking, and increasing pedestrian / retail space;

+ Provide a raised table paved carriageway to connect both sides of the square, increase pedestrian priority, and reinforce the visual appeal of the combined street and public space;

+ Facilitate on street loading and drop-off bay;

+ Use high quality paving, lighting, seating, trees in planters and landscape and soften the hard landscape;

+ Replace bollards with combined planters, lighting and seating;

+ Consider catenary lighting over the space to create unique character;

+ Introduce covered shelter around car park vent;

+ Provide integrated information and way-finding signage; and

+ Re-arrange steps at the Crescent Square to create larger usable area for street performances etc.

DECLAN STREET

NORTH

KEY

1. Raised table junction
2. High canopy trees
3. Raised table vehicular access
4. Street planter
5. Street planter with seating

Indicative plan (above) and vignette (opposite) of proposed public realm improvements

BEFORE

AFTER

OPPORTUNITIES:

+ To establish a sense of 'street' rather than 'road';
+ To enhance presentation using high quality paving, lighting, seating, trees and landscape;
+ To encourage/accommodate street frontages to increase activity and diversity from day through to evening;
+ To improve and widen street footpaths mainly by removing unused cycle track that can facilitate stronger retail, social and creative uses of the street and enhance urban life of the town;
+ To create a low speed street for cyclists and other road users; and
+ To improve pedestrian crossing facilities, existing and new.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

+ Improve the streetscape by using high quality paving, lighting, and street furniture coherent with Frederick Street;
+ Create a shared surface street environment and provide a comfortable pavement space;
+ Replace bollards with combined planters, lighting and seating;
+ Provide a number of raised tables crossings to enhance pedestrian movement, slow traffic speeds and encourage cyclist use of the street; and
+ Introduce a raised table junction at Declan Street/ Killegland Street.

57

DECLAN STREET POCKET PARK

NORTH

KEY

1. Amenity space with seating
2. Planting area
3. Raised table pedestrian crossing
4. Street planters with high canopy trees
5. Raised table vehicular access
6. Screen planting
7. Pedestrian link to park
8. Rearranged parking to provide pedestrian link

Declan Street

Lidl

Parking

Indicative plan (above) and vignette (opposite) of proposed public realm improvements

BEFORE

AFTER

OPPORTUNITIES:

+   To create a pedestrian focussed public space;
+   To utilise the green space for visual and pedestrian amenity;
+   To enhance presentation using high quality paving, lighting, seating, trees and landscape; and
+   To improve pedestrian crossing facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

+   Redesign space as a pocket park for improved visual amenity and pedestrian activity;
+   Improve streetscape through use of high quality paving, lighting, planters and street furniture coherent with proposals for Declan Street
+   Introduce a raised table pedestrian crossing; and
+   Introduce climbers to boundary walls to create an attractive setting for the pocket park.

59

5

IMPLEMENTATION

PUBLIC REALM ACTION PLAN

The enhancement of the public realm in Ashbourne town centre can be facilitated in a number of way and approaches, in addition to the opportunity projects presented in Chapter 4. The following are steps and recommendations by which Meath County Council can begin to deliver in the short to medium term:

+ Establish a Public Realm Stakeholder forum, including private and commercial stakeholders and the local community;
+ Facilitate a public and stakeholder consultation to consider the appropriate identity and brand of Ashbourne, and in parallel, undertake a detailed review of the street and place names in the town centre;
+ Commission and install distinctive welcome features at the gateways to the town that incorporate the Ashbourne brand;
+ Install clear directional signage at key locations to guide people to key town centre destinations and facilities, including retail, commercial, civic and amenity destinations, car parks and public transport;
+ Commission and install bespoke street name plaques on the streets, laneways and public spaces;
+ Provide clear way-finding mapping at key locations in the town centre to facilitate orientation and exploration;
+ Allow for the installation of interpretive (heritage, tourist, cultural) information boards that provide information and also contribute to the quality of the streets;

+ Provide high quality street planting to provide visual variety;
+ Provide high quality paving, seating, street furniture and lighting on a street by street and / or space by space basis;
+ Establish and promote a year round programme of events and festivals;
+ Maintain communications and engagement with stakeholders and residents; and
+ Ensure continuity of design intent as presented in the public realm projects (see chapter 4).

MATERIALS PALETTE

The appropriate selection and quality of materials, together with development of well informed and considered design solutions, is essential to the success of the public realm strategy and its implementation.

The strategy proposes to build upon existing elements in the town that are successful. In this regard, the materials of both the architectural heritage and of the more recent public realm interventions are the starting point and will inform the material palettes.

Surface materials and finishes

Mixture of light & dark grey setts along Frederick Street

Enhanced footpaths and materials, Frederick Street

Visual contrast created through material variety and tree planting

Streetscape furnishings, Frederick Street

MATERIALS PALETTE

Typical Street Furniture

Sample of street lamp

Sample of tree grilles

Sample of timber seating and tables

Black litter bin

Sample of quality black street litter bins

Sample of quality black bicycle racks

Sample of timber seating and tables

Black bollards (heritage style if required)

MATERIALS PALETTE

Typical Street Planting

Dual purpose planters / seating examples

Interactive street planting

Adds variety and colour

Adds visual contrast

6

APPENDICES

POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Framework

One of the national strategic outcomes of the National Planning Framework (NPF) is for enhanced amenities and heritage and to offer a good quality of life. The aim seeks to deliver investment in well-designed public realm, which includes public spaces, parks and streets, as well as recreational infrastructure. This outcome ties in with the objective of compact growth to create 'liveability place'.

Design Manual for Urban Roads & Streets (2013)

The Design Manual for Urban Roads & Streets (DMURS) provides guidance relating to the design of urban roads and streets. It presents a series of principles, approaches and standards.

One aspect fundamental to the success of a public realm strategy relies in part to street networks and way finding. As identified by the DMURS document, Street Networks should be designed to maximise connectivity between destinations to promote higher levels of permeability and legibility for all users, in particular more sustainable forms of transport. This will allow people to move from place to place in a direct manner with greater route choice. The movement towards more integrated and sustainable forms of development will result in a shift away from dendritic street layouts to highly connected networks which maximise permeability, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

In addition, way finding is an important factor. There are many tools that designers can use to provide a series of design cues by which people can orientate themselves. For example, changes in building height and form, materials and finishes and landscape features.

Materials & Finishes

Another fundamental aspect of a public realm plan relies on the use of materials and finishes. This is one of the most defining elements of a street particularly where it is used to define the levels of segregation and integration within a street. The material palette can define space, calm traffic and improve legibility, reducing the need for barriers, signage and line marking in favour of texture and colour.

In this case, Ashbourne Public Realm Plan could utilise the benefits associated with different materials and finishes as a way to reduce clutter on the street and promote legibility in a subtle more powerful way.

A number of other plans that have informed this plan including:

+ Smarter Travel - A Sustainable Transport Future : A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020
+ Urban Design Manual (2009)- A companion document to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas
+ Manual for Local Area Plans - A companion document to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Local Area Plans (2013).

TOWN CENTRE CHARACTER AREAS

NORTH

KEY

- Historic town
- Killegland new quarter
- Linear park
- Residential
- Retail core

URBAN STRUCTURE

NORTH

Residential

Residential

Residential

Residential

KEY

○ Gateway

○ Focal point

● Building / space with high visual value

▬ Well defined frontage

■ Green area

● Tree

■ Water bodies

■ Open area

■ Cemetery

●● Bollards

Tudor Grove

Cluain Rí

Killegland Ct

Frederick Street

SuperValu

Dunnes Stores

Church

Library

Killegland Walk

Cluain Rí

Lidl

Tesco

Frederick Street

Broad Meadow Castle

Milltown Road

Broad Meadow River

Park/Playground

Castle Street

Aldi

Dublin Road

Broad Meadow River

Focal point on Frederick Street

Well defined frontage

Green area north of Castle Street

Southern gateway from Dublin Road

Open area along Killegland Street

BUILDING USE

N O R T H

Residential

Residential

Residential

Residential

Tudor Grove

Cluain Ri

Killegland Ct

Frederick Street

Dunnes Stores

SuperValu

Church

Library

Kingsland Walk

Frederick Street

Milltown Road

Broad Meadow River

Broad Meadow Castle

Park/Playground

Castle Street

Broad Meadow River

Dublin Road

KEY

- ■ Residential
- ■ Retail
- ■ Commercial
- ■ Community
- ■ Hotel
- ■ Pub / restaurant
- ■ Health
- ■ Car park
- ☐ Derelict / vacant

ROADS HIERARCHY

NORTH

Residential

Residential

Residential

Residential

Tudor Grove

Cluain Ri

Killegland Ct.

Frederick Street

Dunnes Stores

SuperValu

Church

Library

Killegland Walk

Frederick Street

Cluain Ri

Lidl

Tesco

Broad Meadow River

Broad Meadow Castle

Milltown Road

Aldi

Park/Playground

Castle Street

Dublin Road

Broad Meadow River

KEY

▮▮ Primary strategic vehicular link

▪▪ Secondary strategic vehicular link

▪▪ Link routes

▪▪ Access roads

BUILDING HEIGHTS

NORTH

Residential

Residential

Residential

Residential

Tudor Grove

Cluain Ri

Killegland Ct.

Frederick Street

Dunsree Stores

SuperValu

Killegland Walk

Library

Church

Store

Frederick Street

Cluain Ri

Broad Meadow River

Park/Playground

Castle Street

Broad Meadow Castle

Milltown Road

Aldi

Dublin Road

Broad Meadow River

KEY

■ 1 storey
■ 2 storeys
■ 3 storeys
■ 4 storeys

PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE ACTIVITY

NORTH

KEY

- - - Low level of pedestrian activity / offer
- - - Moderate level of pedestrian activity / offer
- - - High level of pedestrian activity / offer
- Trip destination
- Cycle lane / track
- - - Heritage trail
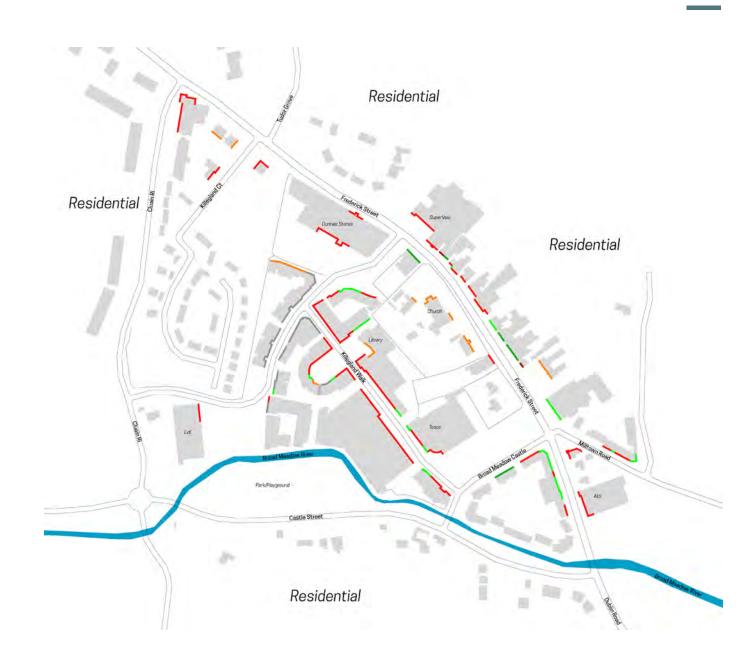- Pedestrian crossing
- Bus stop

PARKING PROVISION

NORTH

Residential

Residential

Residential

Residential

Tudor Grove

Cluain Rí

Killegland Ct

Frederick Street

Dunnes Stores

SuperValu

Church

Library

Killegland Walk

Cluain Rí

Lidl

Broad Meadow River

Park/Playground

Castle Street

Tesco

Frederick Street

Broad Meadow Castle

Milltown Road

Aldi

Dublin Road

Broad Meadow River

KEY

■ Large multi-storey car park
■ Public / retail parking
■ Large underground car park
■ Private parking
— On-street parking

ACTIVE FRONTAGES

Residential

Residential

Residential

Residential

Tudor Grove

Chain Rd.

Killegland Cr.

Frederick Street

Donnes Stores

SuperValu

Church

Library

Killegland Walk

Frederick Street

Chain Rd.

Lidl

Broad Meadow River

Park/Playground

Tesco

Broad Meadow Castle

Milltown Road

Aldi

Castle Street

Broad Meadow River

Dublin Road

KEY

- ■ Retail / commercial
- ■ Community / health
- ■ Restaurant / fast food
- ■ Pub
- ■ Vacant retail / commercial

BSM | **Brady Shipman Martin**

Built.
Environment.

Est.
1968