Appendices

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APPENDIX 1
A. ARCHAELOGICAL ASSESSMENT

1.0 METHODOLOGY

The archaeological assessment of the following strategy is conducted in two phases:

(1) A paper survey of all available archaeological, historical, and cartographic sources; and,

(2) A field inspection of the study area.

The following provides details on the methodology of the research within these two phases.

1.1 PAPER SURVEY

- Record of Monuments and Places for County Laois;

- Sites and Monuments Record for County Laois;

- National Monuments in State Care Database;

- Preservation Orders List;

- Topographical files of the National Museum of Ireland;

- Cartographic and written sources relating to the study area;

- Laois County Development Plan, 2017-2023;

- Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan, 2018-2024;

- Aerial photographs; and

- Excavations Bulletin (1970-2019).

Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) is a list of archaeological sites known to the National Monuments Section, which are afforded legal protection under Section 12 of the 1994 National Monuments Act and are published as a record.

Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) holds documentary evidence and field inspections of all known archaeological sites and monuments. Some information is also held about archaeological sites and monuments whose precise location is not known e.g., only a site type and townland are recorded. These are known to the National Monuments Section as 'un-located sites' and cannot be afforded legal protection due to lack of locational information. As a result, these are omitted from the Record of Monuments and Places. SMR sites are also listed on a website maintained by the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage (DoHLGH) - www.archaeology.ie.

National Monuments in State Care Database is a list of all the National Monuments in State guardianship or ownership. Each is assigned a National Monument number whether in guardianship or ownership and has a brief description of the remains of each Monument.

The Minister for the DoHLGH may acquire national monuments by agreement or by compulsory order. The state or local authority may assume guardianship of any national monument (other than dwellings). The owners of national monuments (other than dwellings) may also appoint the Minister or the local authority as guardian of that monument if the state or local authority agrees. Once the site is in ownership or guardianship of the state, it may not be interfered with without the written consent of the Minister.

Preservation Orders List contains information on Preservation Orders and/or Temporary Preservation Orders, which have been assigned to a site or sites. Sites deemed to be in danger of injury or destruction can be allocated Preservation Orders under the 1930 Act. Preservation Orders make any interference with the site illegal. Temporary Preservation Orders can be attached under the 1954 Act. These perform the same function as a Preservation Order but have a time limit of six months, after which the situation must be reviewed. Work may only be undertaken on or in the vicinity of sites under Preservation Orders with the written consent, and at the discretion, of the Minister.

The topographical files of the National Museum of Ireland are the national archive of all known finds recorded by the National Museum. This archive relates primarily to artefacts but also includes references to monuments and unique records of previous excavations. The find spots of artefacts are important sources of information on the discovery of sites of archaeological significance. Cartographic sources are important in tracing land use development within the development area as well as providing important topographical information on areas of archaeological potential and the development of buildings. Cartographic analysis of all relevant maps has been made to identify any topographical anomalies or structures that no longer remain within the landscape.

- William Petty, Down Survey, Barony of Portnahinch, c. 1655

- Plott of the towne of Port Arlington (BLI 21F55), 1678

- George Taylor and Andrew Skinner, Road Maps of Ireland, Map 160 - Road from Portarlington to Killeagh, 1777

- Ordnance Survey maps of County Laois, 1838-1908

Documentary sources were consulted to gain background information on the archaeological, architectural, and cultural heritage landscape of the proposed development area.

Development Plans contain a catalogue of all the Protected Structures and archaeological sites within the county. The Laois County Development Plan, 2017-2023 and Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan, 2018-2024 were consulted to obtain information on cultural heritage sites in and within the immediate vicinity of the proposed development area.

Aerial photographic coverage is an important source of information regarding the precise location of sites and their extent. It also provides initial information on the terrain and its likely potential for archaeology. A number of sources were consulted including aerial photographs held by the Ordnance Survey, Google Earth, and Bing Maps.

Excavations Bulletin is a summary publication that has been produced every year since 1970. This summarises every archaeological excavation that has taken place in Ireland during that year up until 2010 and since 1987 has been edited by Isabel Bennett. This information is vital when examining the archaeological content of any area, which may not have been recorded under the SMR and RMP files. This information is also available online (www.excavations.ie) from 1970-2019.

1.2 FIELD INSPECTION

Field inspection is necessary to determine the extent and nature of archaeological and historical remains and can also lead to the identification of previously unrecorded or suspected sites and portable finds through topographical observation and local information. The archaeological field inspection entailed:

- Walking the proposed development and its immediate environs.

- Noting and recording the terrain type and land usage.

- Noting and recording the presence of features of archaeological or historical significance.

- Verifying the extent and condition of any recorded sites.

- Visually investigating any suspect landscape anomalies to determine the possibility of their being anthropogenic in origin.

2.0 RESULTS OF DESKTOP STUDY

2.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The town of Portarlington, County Laois, was established during the mid-17th century and named after its founder Sir Henry Bennet, Lord Arlington. The original settlement was located on the northern county boundary, with Offaly to the immediate west. The River Barrow flows around the town on the western, northern and eastern sides. More recently the town has expanded into County Offaly to the west. The zone of archaeological potential for the historic town of Portarlington (LA005-031) extends through the northern half of the Portarlington Urban Regeneration scheme and is a recorded monument (Figure 1). There are a further eight individual recorded archaeological sites contained within the scheme extents.

A. PRE-HISTORIC PERIOD

Mesolithic Period (6000–4000 BC)

Until recently the Mesolithic period was believed to have been the earliest time for human occupation of the island of Ireland; however, recent research suggests there may have been human activity in the southern half of Ireland as early as the Upper Palaeolithic (Dowd and Carden 2016). The Mesolithic period is still accepted as the first time there is evidence for widespread occupation in Ireland, as a large portion of the north of the country would have been beneath extensive glaciation earlier than this. During the Mesolithic Period, people lived transient lives, hunting, fishing, and foraging for subsistence. Coastal and riverine resources, such as the River Barrow, were of key importance to these communities. As a result of this mobile lifestyle, there is little settlement evidence in the archaeological record from this period. Often the only trace of these groups are lithic scatters and shell middens. There is no direct evidence for Mesolithic activity within the site or surrounding landscape.

Neolithic Period (4000–2500 BC)

During the Neolithic period communities became less mobile and their economy became based on the rearing of stock and cereal cultivation. This transition was accompanied by major social change. Agriculture demanded an altering of the physical landscape. Forests were rapidly cleared, and field boundaries constructed. There was a greater concern for territory, which saw the construction of large communal ritual monuments called megalithic tombs, which are characteristic of the period.

The earliest evidence for human activity within the landscape surrounding Portarlington dates back to the Neolithic period. Whilst there are no recorded sites of this date within the vicinity of the town, several artefacts of Neolithic date have been recovered from the River Barrow. These include four polished stone axes (NMI 1933:232, 233, 234, 1943:199).

Bronze Age (2500–800 BC)

The Bronze Age was marked by the widespread use of metal for the first time in Ireland. As with the earlier Mesolithic-Neolithic transition, the Neolithic–Bronze Age transition was accompanied by significant change in material culture and society. The construction of megalithic tombs ceased after the wedge tombs of the early Bronze Age with a focus on individual burials emerging. Bronze Age burials occurred in subterranean cist or pit burials that were either in isolation or in small cemeteries. These burials contained inhumed or cremated remains and were often accompanied by a pottery vessel (Buckley and Sweetman 1991).

A common prehistoric site dating to the Bronze Age is the Fulacht Fiadh. These are also commonly referred to as burnt mounds and are one of the most common field monuments found in the Irish landscape. The last survey, carried out over a decade ago, recorded over 7,000 burnt mound sites and in excess of 1,000 sites have been excavated in recent years through development led archaeological investigations. In spite of this no clear understanding of the precise function of these sites has been forthcoming. Burnt mound sites are typically located in areas where there is a readily available water source, often in proximity to a river or stream, like the River Barrow, or in places with a high-water table. In the field burnt mounds may be identified as charcoal-rich mounds or spreads of heat shattered stones, however, in many cases the sites have been disturbed by later agricultural activity and are no longer visible on the field surface. The closest sites of this type to the town of Portarlington are located over 7km to the southeast; however, it is likely that a large number of prehistoric sites survive within the landscape that have yet to be recorded.

A bronze ring was recovered during an underwater inspection of the River Barrow upstream of the Spa Bridge (LA005-031008) that has the potential to date from the late Bronze Age (Bennett 1998:369).

Iron Age (800 BC-AD 500)

Compared to the rest of Irish prehistory, there is very little evidence in Ireland as a whole, representing the Iron Age. As in Europe, there are two phases of the Iron Age in Ireland; the Hallstatt and the La Tène. The Hallstatt period generally dates from 800BC onwards and spread rapidly from Austria, across Europe, and then into Ireland. It saw the rise and fall of elite hierarchical dynasties that derived their wealth from control of trade with the Mediterranean. It is only represented in Ireland by a small number of bronze swords and other items of Hallstatt type (Raftery 1994, 107).

The later Iron Age, or La Tène, also originated in Europe during the middle of the 5th century BC, so called after the site of a significant votive deposit on Lake Neuchâtel in Switzerland. For a number of centuries, the La Tène Celts were the dominant people in Europe, until they were finally overcome by the Roman Empire. La Tène art is defined by its curvilinear design, which has flowing abstract compositions. There are no confirmed Iron Age sites within the vicinity of Portarlington.

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B. Early Medieval Period (AD 500–1100)

The early medieval period is depicted in the surviving sources as entirely rural characterised by the basic territorial unit known as túath. Byrne (1973) estimates that there were probably at least one hundred and fifty kings in Ireland at any given time during this period, each ruling over his own túath. During this sometimes-violent period, roughly circular defensive enclosures known as ringforts were constructed to protect farmsteads. Although most of the ringforts that have been excavated are shown to date to this period, some have earlier origins and may have been originally constructed during the Iron Age, or even earlier.

The ringfort or rath is considered to be the most common indicator of settlement during the early medieval period. The most recent study of the ringfort (Stout 1997) has suggested that there are a total of 45,119 potential ringforts or enclosure sites throughout Ireland. They are typically enclosed by an earthen bank and exterior ditch and range from 25m to 50m in diameter. The smaller sized and single banked type (univallate) were more likely to be home to the lower ranks of society while larger examples with more than one bank (bivallate/ trivallate) housed the more powerful kings and lords. When the radiocarbon and dendro-chronological dates from ringfort excavations are compared (Stout 1997, 22-31), not only is the ringfort clearly an early medieval phenomenon, but a strong case emerges for dating the phase of ringfort construction to a period between the 7th and 9th centuries AD. The most common structures found within ringforts, usually through excavation, are the remains of buildings, generally houses, either circular or rectangular. The closest recorded ringfort (LA005-001) to the proposed development area is located c. 180m to the east.

C. Medieval Period (AD 1100-1600)

The arrival of the Welsh Norman Knights headed by Robert de Clare, Earl of Pembroke (more commonly referred to as Strongbow) on the coast of Wexford 1169 marked the beginning of the Norman invasion of Ireland. Strongbow and his small but well-armed and disciplined force had swift successes after some initial problems. He then aligned himself to succeed the Dermot MacMurrough as King of Leinster by marrying his daughter Aoife. As a result, Henry II became concerned about his growth of power and set out for Ireland to establish his authority arriving in Waterford with a large force in 1171.

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The district now forming the Queen's County (the former name of County Laois) was known by the name of Glenmaliere and Leix. Leix was made a county platine and on the division of the immense possessions of William, Earl Marshal, between his five daughters, it was allotted to the youngest. This daughter married William de Braosa, Lord of Brecknock and their daughter Maud married Roger Mortimer, Lord of Wigmore. From this connection the imperial house of Austria and the royal families of Great Britain, France, Prussia, Denmark, Holland, Sardinia, and Saxony, derive their descent. Mortimer, preferring to reside on his English estates, employed one of the O'Mores to defend and manage his Irish property; however, within 20 years, O'More had become so powerful that he held the property by himself and became one of the most turbulent opponents of the English settlers in that part of the Pale.

The townland containing Portarlington was previously known as the town of Cooletodderie and is mentioned in a 1571 Elizabethan land grant to Owen mac Hugh O'Dempsie. In a 1617 inquisition it is described as containing '80 acres, which lieth southwest from the River of the Barough, and abutteth upon the town and lands called Bracklone East'. The name for the settlement is derived from the Irish, Cúil an tSúdaire, which translates to 'nook of the tanner' suggesting it was primarily known for its tanning industry at this time (a tannery is marked on the first edition Ordnance Survey map in the mid-19th century). The Down Survey map of c. 1655 depicts a representation of the settlement of Cooletodderie in the approximate location of Portarlington. During this period the medieval settlement of Lea (LA005-006003), built around the 13th century Anglo-Norman Lea Castle (LA005-006), c. 2.4km to the east, was the centre of medieval activity. Closer evidence of medieval activity to Portarlington is represented by the presence of a double motte and bailey (LA005-004), c. 660m to the east.

D. Post-Medieval Period (AD 1600-1900)

In 1666 Charles II granted large tracts of O'Dempseys land to Sir Henry Bennett, Lord Arlington, which formed the manor of Portarlington and created the borough with a corporation, weekly market and two-yearly fairs (RMP file, LA005-031). Lord Arlington built his new town, named Portarlington after him, on the earlier settlement at Cooltedery mentioned in 1571. The town grew rapidly and formed its basic layout by 1678 (see Figure 3). The town was laid out by George Rawdon and was fortified with a moat that enclosed the town and was surrounded on all sides by water. From the market square in the centre of the four main roads radiated out, two of which crossed the River Barrow in a northerly and westerly direction at Spa Bridge and Barrow Bridge (LA005-031008, LA005-031002/ OF034-010). The southern road, Main Street, was carried over the moat by New Channel Bridge (LA005-031009), the remains of which may still survive beneath the road surface. There are no upstanding remains of the town defences within Portarlington (LA005-031001); however, archaeological excavations in 1999 identified the possible remains of the demolished ramparts along French Church Street (Licence 99E0281 ext., Bennett 2001:719).

Portarlington changed hands a number of times in the later 17th century, the most significant owner at that time being General Ruvigny, one of the most important commanders in William of Orange's army at the Battle of Aughrim. Ruvigny had been deputy general of the Huguenots at the court of Louis XIV in France, where the Huguenots, or French Protestants, had the benefit of the Edict of Nantes, which was issued in 1598, giving them religious freedom in a predominantly Catholic France. In 1685, Louis XIV revoked the edict, resulting in the large-scale emigration of Huguenots, many of them to England and Ireland. Ruvigny was created Viscount Galway and took the opportunity to provide a settlement for his Huguenot compatriots at Portarlington, arranging the reconstruction of the town, which was completed in 1698.

This included establishing an 'English' church as well as a 'French' church. The English church (LA005-031006), St. Michael's, located on the east side of Market Square, was replaced by the present building in 1832 (Bradley 1986, 42). There is no attached graveyard as the parishioners used the graveyard at the old church at Lea just outside the town. The French church (LA005-031004) was located along the road leading west across the River Barrow and replaced by the current church in 1857. By 1702 around 500 Huguenots had settled in Portarlington and the town was known as the 'Paris of the Midlands' and the French language was commonly spoken among the Huguenots (Lewis 1837; Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan, 2018-2024).

From a promising beginning, the Huguenot colony in Portarlington did not survive for long. Comparatively early in the 18th century the numbers began to dwindle, and over the rest of the century the numbers of French surnames in the town reduced. Portarlington itself survived as a market town, although without any significant trade or manufacturing. In the late 18th century, a spa was discovered within the town, which helped to develop it as a resort for the nobility and gentry.

The 18th century witnessed a more pacified Ireland and the political climate settled; this saw a dramatic rise in the establishment of large residential houses around the country. This was largely due to the fact that after the turbulence of the preceding centuries, the success of the Protestant cause and effective removal of any political opposition, the country was at peace. The large country house was only a small part of the overall estate of a large landowner and provided a base to manage often large areas of land that could be dispersed nationally. During the latter part of the 18th century, the establishment of a parkland context (or demesnes) for large houses was the fashion. Although the creation of a parkland landscape involved working with nature, rather than against it, considerable construction effort went into their creation. Major topographical features like rivers and mountains were desirable features for inclusion into, and as a setting, for the large house and parkland. The first edition OS map depicts two shaded demesne landscapes to the immediate southeast of the Portarlington Urban Regeneration boundary, known as The Elms and Kilnacourt on subsequent OS mapping.

2.2 SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK

A review of the Excavations Bulletin (1970–2019) has revealed that there have been sixteen archaeological investigations within the Portarlington Urban Regeneration boundary. These are summarised below.

A. SPA BRIDGE

An underwater inspection of the River Barrow in advance of works at Spa Bridge (LA005-031008) recovered a bronze ring of possible late Bronze Age date upstream from the bridge (Bennett 1998:369).

B. SPA STREET

Testing was undertaken within a property on the east side of Spa Street in the north eastern quadrant of the historic town (Licence 01E0777; Bennett 2001:720). Four test trenches revealed that a rubble fill was present across the site. This sealed an earlier soil horizon in three of the test trenches, apparently the pre-fill topsoil layer. This sealed sand and gravels and nothing of archaeological significance was noted.

Archaeological testing at another site on the east side of Spa Street indicated that the ground had been considerably disturbed in recent times (Licence 02E0063; Bennett 2002:1046). It was noted that the ground level had been raised due to the threat of flooding from the River Barrow.

C. LINK ROAD (R419-R420)

Pipe laying within the existing road was subject to archaeological monitoring (Licence 18E0001; Bennett 2018:310). This location was within the zone of archaeological potential around the medieval town of Portarlington (LA005-031). Nothing of archaeological significance was noted.

The area to the north and east of the link road has been the subject or previous investigation which included a series of test trenches opened up close to a number of features visible on the 25-inch Ordnance Survey map that may have related to the potential 17th century defensive structures around the town (Licence 07E0929; Bennett 2007:1054). The report on the excavation (Corcoran 2007) describes a number of 4-5m wide linear cuts identified in the test trenches that had been infilled since 1900. These appear to correspond to those shown on the 25-inch map. The report does not indicate if they were fully excavated.

D. MAIN STREET

Testing and an impact assessment were carried out at a property on Main Street where five test trenches were excavated and nothing of archaeological significance noted (Licence 04E0995; Bennett 2004:0943).

Testing was undertaken within a property to the rear of Main Street and Link Road (Licence 06E0708; Bennett 2006:1186). Five test trenches were excavated and revealed nothing of archaeological significance.

E. PARK LANE

Testing was undertaken within a property at the junction of Park Lane and Link Road extending to the rear of Austen House on Main Street (Licence 03E0518; Bennett 2003:1087). Test trenches revealed nothing of archaeological significance.

Testing was undertaken within a property on Park Lane and extending to the rear of Dunnes Stores on Main Street (Licence 05E1364; Bennett 2005:908). Test trenches revealed nothing of archaeological significance.

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Testing was undertaken within a property on Park Lane and extending to the rear of Dunnes Stores on Main Street (Licence 05E1364; Bennett 2005:908). Test trenches revealed nothing of archaeological significance.

F. FRENCH CHURCH STREET

A programme of archaeological testing was carried out at the site of a proposed apartment development on French Church Street (Licence 99E0281 ext., Bennett 2001:719). This identified that there was between 0.05m and 1.4m of modern fill present overlying an earlier topsoil horizon with a depth of 0.15m. This had been used to level up ground that sloped down towards the river. The earlier topsoil horizon, in turn, overlay a layer of sand and gravel that had been deposited on top of a soil layer that contained post-medieval finds and appeared to fill a cut feature. This cut potentially relates to the construction of the rampart of Portarlington's defences in the 17th century. A deposit of possibly levelled rampart material associated with the 18th century removal of the town's defences was also encountered upslope of the cut feature. Subsequent monitoring of construction work did not reveal anything further of archaeological significance (Licence 03E0518; Bennett 2003:1087).

Testing was undertaken within a property on French Church Street (Licence 07E0587; Bennett 2007:1070). Three archaeological test trenches were excavated and revealed nothing of archaeological significance.

Testing was carried out at the original entrance to St. Paul's Church (LA0005-031004) in advance of the erection of a toilet block connecting to the town's sewerage scheme (Licence 07E0128, Bennett 2007:1071). Archaeological investigations determined that there was 0.70m of made-up ground present, deposited at an unknown date. This undated fill contained a small amount of animal bone, no other archaeological features were exposed.

Pipe laying within the existing road at French Church Street was subject to archaeological monitoring (Licence 18E0001; Bennett 2018:310). Nothing of archaeological significance was noted.

The following 13 licences tabulated below did not identify anything of archaeological significance within the study area of the Portarlington Urban Regeneration scheme.

LICENCE NO.	REFERENCE	LOCATION
01E0777	Bennett 2001:720	Spa Street
02E0063	Bennett 2002:1046	Spa Street
02E0063	Bennett 2002:1047	Spa Street
03E0518	Bennett 2003:1087	French Church Street
04E0995	Bennett 2004:0943	Main Street
051328	Bennett 2005:907	Link Road/ Park Lane
05E1364	Bennett 2005:908	Park Lane
06E0708	Bennett 2006:1186	Main Street/ Link Road
07E0929	Bennett 2007:1054	Cooltederry (riverbank)
07E0587	Bennett 2007:1070	French Church Street
08E0691	Bennett 2008:749	Main Street
10E0365	Bennett 2010:432	Main Street
18E0001	Bennett 2018:310	Link Road, French Church Street, Rosecourt housing estate

Table 1. Licences of no archaeological significance

2.3 CARTOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

This map was compiled prior to the establishment of the town of Portarlington; which is not indicated on the map with the closest marked features being the River Barrow and Castle Lea.
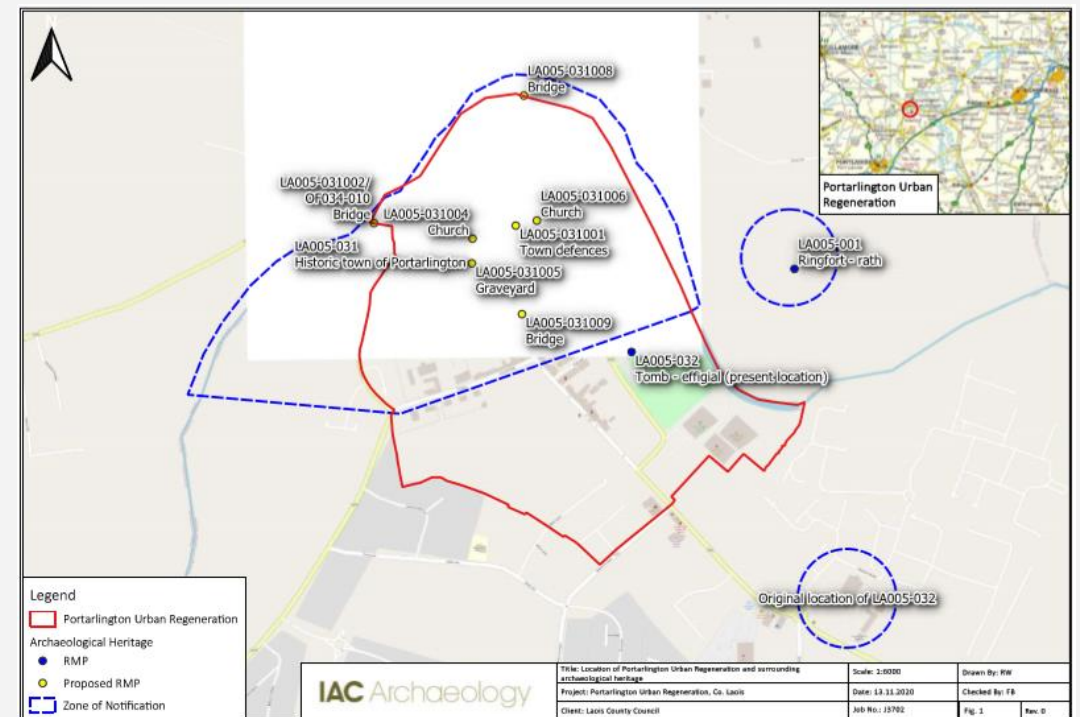

Figure 1. Ancient Map of Leix, Ofaly, Irry, Clanmalier, Iregan, and Slievemargy preserved in the British Museum, .c1563

This map was compiled just prior to the establishment of the town of Portarlington; however, one small structure is shown within a parcel of land named 'Cultudrey'. This is likely to represent the small settlement that existed at the site prior to the foundation of Portarlington. The name of the land parcel relates to the current townland name of Cooltedery. The River Barrow is shown as skirting the settlement to the west, north, and east. The land to the immediate north of the river is annotated as 'under wood' and a timber wood is marked along the south bank of the river to the west.

Figure 2. William Petty, Down Survey, Barony of Portnahinch, c. 1655

This map depicts the central market square with roads laid out from the centre of each side. There are bastioned outer defences fronting on to the Barrow depicted within the map. Regular land plots are laid out to reflect the geometry of the main square and roads, although in the north-western quadrant the plots are at a slight angle and narrow from north-south to both accommodate the line of the Barrow and to keep them of equal size. The plots front on to the four roads, except the road to the east (later Church Lane, originally James Street).
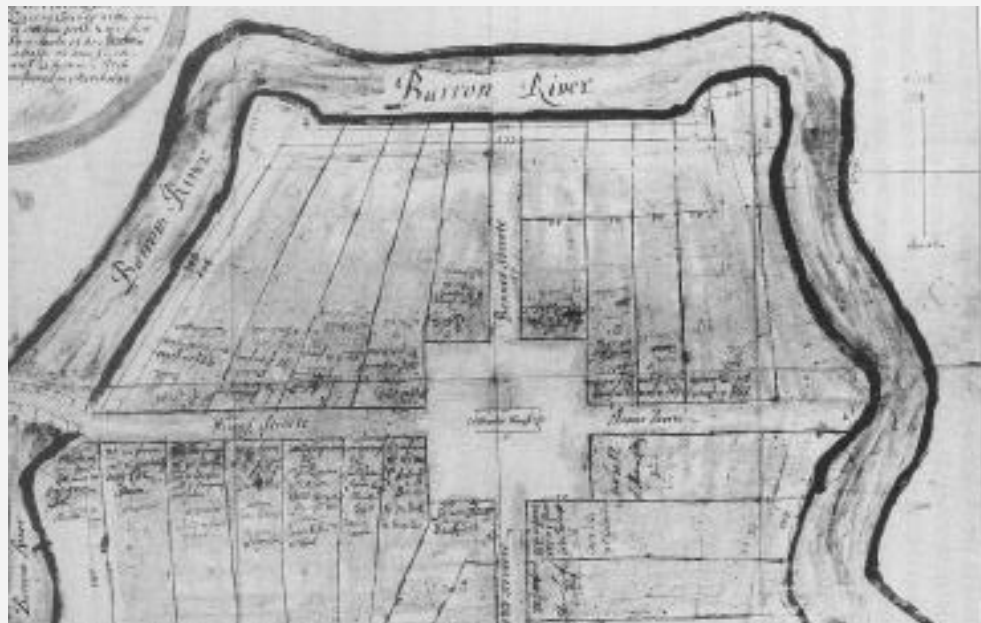

Figure 3. Plott of the towne of Port Arlington (BLI 21F55), 1678

The central square appears to contain a tower. Bradley, in the Portarlington section of the Urban Archaeological Survey, notes that there are a number of references to where a building could be located within Portarlington, including 'on either side of the way leading from the New Channel Bridge to Katherine's tower' and 'without the fortification on the East side, which shall front towards the new channel'. Katherine's tower may refer to this tower within the square, while this would further identify the southern town defences as the 'new channel'. The central square appears to contain a tower. Bradley, in the Portarlington section of the Urban Archaeological Survey, notes that there are a number of references to where a building could be located within Portarlington, including 'on either side of the way leading from the New Channel Bridge to Katherine's tower' and 'without the fortification on the East side, which shall front towards the new channel'. Katherine's tower may refer to this tower within the square, while this would further identify the southern town defences as the 'new channel'.

This map depicts the main roads of Portarlington, and the River Barrow is indicated surrounding the town. The settlement has developed on the south bank of the river. The exception to this is along Patricks Street, which traverses the river to the west of the Portarlington Urban Regeneration boundary at the Barrow Bridge (LA005-031008). Another road is marked traversing north across the river at the Spa Bridge (LA005-031008).

Figure 4. George Taylor and Andrew Skinner, Road Maps of Ireland, Map 160 - Road from Portarlington to Killeagh, 1777

This is the first accurate historic mapping coverage of the area containing the Portarlington Urban Regeneration scheme.

The northern end of Portarlington contains a square containing a Market House in the centre with four roads. The northern road (Spa Lane), leads to Spa Bridge (LA005-031008) and the western road (French Church Street), to Barrow Bridge (LA005-031002/ OF034-010).

The eastern road (Church Lane), leads to the riverbank and the southern road (Main Street), extends through the remainder of the proposed scheme area.

Figure 5. First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1838-41, scale 1:10,560

The Foxcraft Lane diverts west-southwest off the Main Street in the southern half of the scheme, two unnamed houses with designed gardens front onto the lane. The square and all of the roads are lined with a number of buildings, the majority of which have long linear plots. These plots are apparent throughout the entire town and are likely to date to the mid-17th century when the town was established. The plots depicted on the first edition OS map likely reflect the position of the putative rampart that lay between the town and the River Barrow.

An east-west water feature, which is visible on the first edition OS map (and clearer on the 25-inch map) and other artificial water courses shown to the south of the town appear to include angled-bastion like features, which may be part of defensive features designed for the town in the 17th century.

St. Michael's Church (LA005-031006) is depicted on the eastern side of the square and St. Paul's Church (LA005-031004) is depicted on the south side of French Church Street. Arlington Castle is depicted at the west end of French Church Street. The demesne of an unnamed house borders the Portarlington Urban Regeneration boundary to the southeast and an open area, Critchley's Close, borders it to the west.
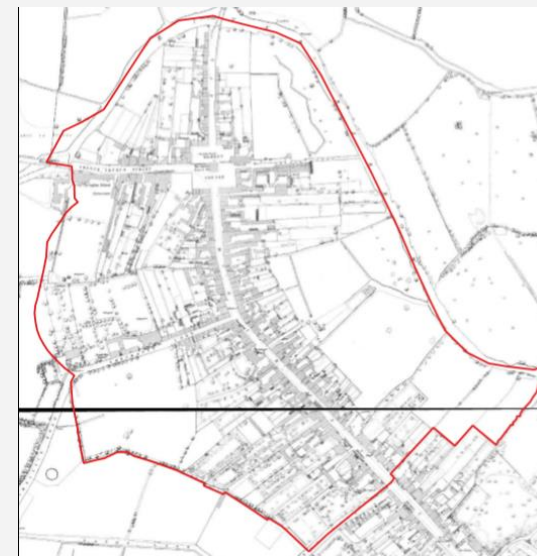

Figure 6. Ordnance Survey Map, 1889-90, scale 1:1,560

There has been additional development within the town and minor changes to the structures and layout of the linear plots within the scheme boundary by the time of this map. A burial ground is annotated to the rear of the French Church, St. Paul's, which has been rebuilt (LA005-031004/5) and the structure at the centre of Market Square is annotated as a Market and Court House. The demesne of the house bordering the scheme to the southeast on the 1838-41 OS map is annotated as 'The Elms'. Arlington Castle, visible on the previous map, has been replaced by Arlington School and its associated gymnasium and ball court. One of the unnamed houses at Foxcraft Lane is named Foxcraft House on this map. There are two hotels, a bank, and a house, Bernere, depicted along the Main Street within the scheme.

By the time of this edition a number of changes have occurred within the scheme boundary. St. Michael's church (LA005-031006) is now marked as a parish hall. Rose Court is annotated for the first time at Foxcraft Lane and one of the hotels at the Main Street has been converted into a rectory. Arlington School has been replaced by Arlington House.
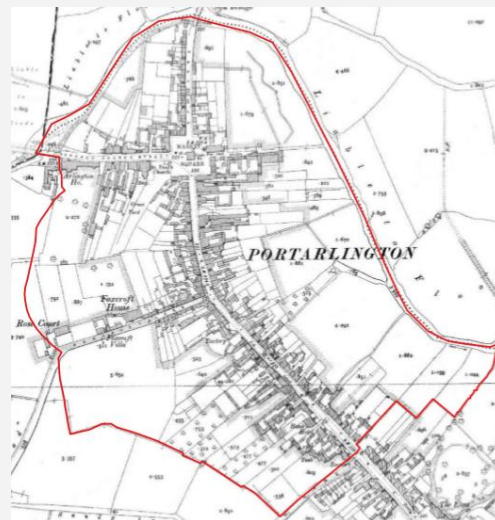
The next map is the third edition Ordnance Survey Map (1906-7) drawn in the scale of 1:10,560. There are no changes of note within the scheme boundary on this mapping.

Figure 7. Ordnance Survey Map, 1906-8, scale 1:2,500

2.4 LAOIS COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN, 2017-2023

The Laois County Development Plan, 2017-2023 recognises the statutory protection afforded to all Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) sites under the National Monuments Legislation (1930–2014) as does the Portarlington Joint Local Area Plan, 2018-2024.

There are ten archaeological sites within a 500m radius of the Portarlington Urban Regeneration boundary, three of which are recorded monuments and seven of which are scheduled for inclusion on the RMP at its next revision (Table 2). The zone of archaeological potential for the historic town of Portarlington (LA005-031) extends through the northern half of the boundary and there are another eight archaeological sites within the boundary all within the townland of Cooltederry. None of these sites are National Monuments or under preservation orders.

The effigial tomb (LA005-032) was originally situated St. Mary's Church, Carlow (CW007-018007) before being moved to Kilnacourt House c. 170m to the southeast of the Portarlington Urban Regeneration boundary. The tomb was later relocated to its present location within a public park within the boundary.

RMP NO.	LOCATION	CLASSIFICATION	DISTANCE FROM SCHEME
LA005-031	Cooltederry	Historic town of Portarlington	0m
LA005-031001	Cooltederry	Town defences of Portarlington	0m
LA005-031002/ OF034-010	Cooltederry	Barrow Bridge	0m
LA005-031004	Cooltederry	St. Paul's Church	0m
LA005-031005	Cooltederry	St. Paul's Graveyard	0m
LA005-031006	Cooltederry	St. Michael's Church	0m
LA005-031008	Cooltederry	Spa Bridge	0m
LA005-031009	Cooltederry	New Channel Bridge	0m
LA005-032	Cooltederry	Tomb - effigial (present location)	0m
LA005-001	Droughill	Ringfort - rath	c. 180m east

Table 2. Recorded Archaeological Sites

2.5 STRAY FINDS WITHIN THE SURROUNDING AREA

Information on artefact finds from the study area in County Laois has been recorded by the National Museum of Ireland since the late 18th century. Location information relating to these finds is important in establishing prehistoric and historic activity in the study area.

MUSEUM NO	TOWNLAND	PARISH	BARONY	FIND	FIND PLACE	DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE
2009:192	Cooltederry	Lea	Portnahinch	Brass lid	No details as to find place.	Ornately decorated brass lid found during metal detecting.	NMI Topographical Files
1933:23, 233, 234	Kilmalogue	Lea	Portnahinch	Polished stone axe	No details as to find place.	Polished stone axes.	NMI Topographical Files
1943:199	Droughill	Lea	Portnahinch	Polished stone axe	No details as to find place.	Polished stone axes.	NMI Topographical Files

Table 3. Strays Found within the Surrounding Area

2.6 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Inspection of the aerial photographic coverage of the proposed development area held by the Ordnance Survey (1995-2013), Google Earth (2005-2020), and Bing Maps (2020) did not identify any previously unknown archaeological sites within the boundary of the scheme.

2.7 FIELD INSPECTION

The field inspection sought to landscape contained within the scheme boundary, its previous and current land use, the topography, and any additional information relevant to the report.

The area is bounded by the River Barrow on the east and northwest, then south from French Church Street along the R419 as far as the junction with Foxcroft Street where it extends to the southeast along the limits of open green space and then extends as far as the line of Crowe Lane where it cuts back to the northeast to the River Barrow at the southern end of the Peoples Park. This largely corresponds to several major blocks, the 17th century planned town (as far as the site of its southern defences), and the area outside the town.

The field inspection only considered archaeological aspects of the built heritage as the upstanding buildings will be the focus of a separate report. It should be noted, though, that in some locations fragmentary upstanding remains were visible which may be deemed to be of no architectural value but may have archaeological significance, such as a fragment of exposed masonry opposite St Paul's Church on French Church Street (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Exposed masonry on French Church Street

The study area is characterised by a post-17th century urban development created within a meander of the River Barrow. The area incorporates the southern bank of the River Barrow, which was prone to flooding in the past, with the survival of woodlands along the portion of the bank either side of the western end of French Church Street. There are two bridges present Bradley (in the Urban Archaeological Survey), suggests an earlier Barrow Bridge lay further to the east of the current bridge although nothing is currently visible. As the Barrow was navigable to Portarlington it was likely the focus of water traffic, ferries (prior to the construction of the bridges) and other activity. A shallow cut into the banks of the River Barrow is almost all that is visible of the southern town defences, behind the modern fire station (Figure 9). The corresponding end of the defences lies outside the study area, to the south of Rose Court housing development (opposite the entrance to the Supervalu car park. There it is visible as a substantial canal, 4-5m in width with the northern back faced in rubble (see Figure 10).

Figure 9. Possible cut for southern town defences on the River Barrow

Figure 10. Southern town defences south of Rose Court

A number of extensive green areas are present within the study area, although not all were fully accessible during the field inspection. Other areas (such as the block to the west of Spa Street) have been surfaced in recent years. Areas to the south of Foxcroft Street, the Peoples Park and to the north of Link Road were inspected. The features noted in each relate to the 17th century town, or later, and are discussed below.

The general topography of the town is still visible in the layout of Main Street. The line of Main Street changes direction slightly at two locations. The first corresponds to the base of a gentle decline in elevation that begins at the square (at the north end of Main Street). Where Main Street changes in direction it also then begins to rise slightly in height towards the south. This low point is where there is a clear east-west linear division in property boundaries on the historic mapping. Just outside the study area, the 4-5m wide canal, faced on the northern side in stone, corresponds to the eastern end of this line. The western end corresponds to a slight cut into the bank of the River Barrow (see Figure 10). These features appear to relate to the remains of the southern defences of the 17th century town.

A. 17th Century Portarlington (LA005-031)

The central square is still largely intact as an urban space with only the addition of Link Road to the north-east. The centre is dominated by the market house building dating to the mid-18th century. The tower indicated at this location in 1678 seems to have been demolished prior to the construction of the market house and may have been known as 'Katherine's tower.'

The southern bank of the River Barrow, to the north of the Link Road, is largely open green space fenced off to the south. It is heavily overgrown with rough grass and it is not possible to differentiate any surface features due to the amount of vegetation. A badly overgrown riverside path extends south behind the various properties although it is too overgrown to walk continuously. Where it is possible to examine the ground levels, the formation level of buildings on Link Road and further west around the main square is noticeably higher than the ground which slopes down to the riverbank. At the southern end of the open area, an open space marks the former route of Church Lane, which was laid out in the 17th century. The two bridges are recorded as LA005-031002 (the Barrow Bridge on French Church Street) and LA005-031008 (the Spa Bridge on Spa Street). Both are largely 18th century in date.

The area between Main Street and Link Road has been filled in with urban developments, likely including 17th century fabric. Church Lane survives as a poorly maintained alleyway to the east of the main square and now superseded by Link Road. On the northern side of Church Lane is the site of a 17th century church St Michaels (LA005-031006) which was rebuilt in 1832 (Figure 11). There is no clear trace of the earlier building visible. The southern part of this block is the laneway alongside the Centra Store and opposite Whelan's Electrical store (on the west side of Main Street). This corresponds to the former route of the canal that marked the towns southern defences (apparently known as the 'new channel'). As this is visible as a 4-5m wide canal elsewhere, it is likely it was either in-filled or is culverted beneath the current buildings. It also appears to have been bridged at this location on Main Street prior to 1678.

Figure 11. St Michael's Church (LA005-031006)

Figure 12. St Paul's Church (LA005-031004)

The southern west block lies to the west of Main Street and runs from the line of the 17th century defences on the south as far as French Church Street to the north. This includes St Paul's Church (LA005-031004), founded in the 17th century, and its graveyard to the rear (LA005-031005)(Plates 12 and 13). This was the only plot available for inspection but was completely overgrown. The graveyard includes a variety of burial monuments including table tombs. Arlington House lies on the southern side of French Church Street on a location named as 'Arlington Castle' on the first edition Ordnance Survey map (this appears to be the earlier name of Arlington House although there is no suggestion of a pre-1696 building) (Plate 14).

Figure 13. St Paul's Church graveyard (LA005-031004)

The north-western block is the area to the north of French Church Street and west of Spa Street and is built over at the frontages with an open space to the rear that is currently surfaced with exposed areas of vegetation along the riverbank. Bradley (in the Urban Archaeological Survey) mentions that there is an extant section of parallel stone walls with the interior space filled to a depth of 2m. This potential rampart or defensive wall is not currently identifiable and may lie within a property not accessible during the field inspection.

B. Outside 17th Century Portarlington

The area outside the 17th century town can be divided into several blocks: the area to the north of Foxcroft Street; the area to the south of Foxcroft Street; the built-up areas either side of Main Street; and the Peoples Park. The block to the north of Foxcroft Street includes a number of enclosed green spaces that were not fully inspected, viewed from outside they appear to be expanses of grassland with some surviving rubble garden walls.

The area to the south of Foxcroft Street includes a substantial area of open grassland with a number of mature trees that appears to dip, or have been scarped, towards the southeast. The south-eastern and south-western boundaries includes surviving sections of a 4-5m wide ditch (Figure 14) similar in scale to the canal that marks the southern town defence in the 17th century (although without the inner facing of stone). The southwest corner of the field includes two angles, one of which has been partly built over. This includes a slight rise on the inside, alongside the 4-5m wide ditch.

Figure 14. Arlington Castle/Arlington House

It is possible that this is a surviving outwork from the 17th century defensive system. A number of fields are present within this block, mainly enclosed by substantial rubble walls of unknown date.

The frontages and plots off Main Street are almost all currently built over. The area of the Peoples Park, to the east, runs along the south bank of the River Barrow. It includes a 16th century effigial tomb (LA005-032), which originally came from Carlow (Figure 15). The park has been developed and maintained as a public space with pathways and various features.

The inspection has revealed that there are a number of distinct areas of archaeological potential within Portarlington, including the numerous sites included in the RMP. The main designation for the historic town (LA005-031) applies to the majority of the area that is to be focus of the Urban Regeneration Strategy.

Figure 15. 16th century Effigial Tomb (LA005-032)

3.0 CONCULSION

In the Urban Archaeological Survey for Laois, John Bradley describes Portarlington as "…important to archaeological research as a fine example of a 17th century town founded on virgin soil. Despite the fact that it was established in the second half of the 17th century little is known of the appearance of the town prior to 1700. The form of its housing at this period remains uncertain… The course of the town defences needs to be checked by excavation to determine its exact course."

The town was formally laid out after 1666, although earlier mapping suggests that there was some form of 16th or early 17th century settlement of unknown form, possibly related to an earlier bridge site. The nature and location of this earlier settlement is unknown and remains associated with it have yet to be archaeologically recorded. Bradley notes that there were numerous advertisements suggesting the houses built just after 1666 were substantial structures of stone. It is possible that remains of these buildings have been incorporated into the fabric of the post-1696 Hugenots buildings or survive as fragmentary remains with no architectural value but of archaeological significance within the historic town.

The 1678 map depicts substantial defensive structures surrounding the town, which are protected as LA005-031001 although that designation does not define the individual elements. These appear to include 4-5m defensive ditches, a rampart and other outworks. Field inspection for this assessment suggests that the extent and nature of the 17th century defences in Portarlington are still poorly understood and significant elements may be incorporated into the current urban landscape as boundaries or have been infilled and are no longer visible in areas where historic mapping suggests they may be present. This includes areas to the south of current limits of LA005-031001, where additional defensive structures may have been erected, such as to the south of Foxcroft Street.

At least one area of demolished rampart was discovered during archaeological investigations, inside the line of a substantial ditch feature. Other similar features were also noted. A number of 4-5m wide ditch sections in the area to the north of Link Road may correspond to features clearly indicated on the 25-inch Ordnance Survey mapping and may also relate to the remains of defensive features. Archaeological investigations to the west of Spa Street and to the north of Link Road have indicated that some infilling of the ground has taken place, creating a level surface centred on the central square and then dropping off by 1m or more towards the river on its margins. Since ground levels have been raised, there is significant potential for archaeological remains to have been buried and built over, rather than completely removed, particularly in properties around the main square.

The development of an Urban Renewal Strategy may require further information on the nature and extent of surviving elements of the 17th century defences and town. It is clear from the results of this assessment that the town contains high archaeological potential in terms of the 17th century settlement, its potential defences and potential earlier settlement remains.

4.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION STRATEGY

Impacts can be identified from detailed information about a project, the nature of the area affected, and the range of archaeological resources potentially affected. Archaeological sites can be affected adversely in a number of ways: disturbance by excavation, topsoil stripping; disturbance by vehicles working in unsuitable conditions; and burial of sites, limiting access for future archaeological investigation. Upstanding archaeology can be affected adversely by direct damage or destruction arising from development, from inadvertent damage arising from vibration, undermining etc. and also by indirect impacts to a building's visual setting, view, or curtilage.

B. SMR/RMP SITES WITHIN THE SURROUNDING AREA

SMR NO.	LA005-031
RMP STATUS	RMP
TOWNLAND	Cooltederry
PARISH	Lea
BARONY	Portnahinch
I.T.M.	Various
CLASSIFICATION	Historic town of Portarlington
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	0m
DESCRIPTION	Town of Portarlington was previously known as the town of Cooletodderie as mentioned in 1571 Elizabethan land grant to Owen mac Hugh O'Dempsie and described as containing 80 acres, which lieth southwest from the River of the Barough, and abutteth upon the town and lands called Bracklone East' (O'Flanagan 1933, vol. 2, p. 51) The town is named after its founder Sir Henry Bennet, lord Arlington (Bradley et al. 1986, p. 42). In 1666 Charles II granted large tracts of O'Dempseys land which formed the manor of Portarlington and created the borough with a corporation, weekly market and two yearly fairs (Cal. State Papers, 1666-9, pp. 220-2). This new town may have been superimposed on an earlier settlement at Cooltedery mentioned in 1571. The town grew rapidly and formed its basic layout by 1678 when it is shown in a map now in the National Library of Ireland (Feehan 1983, p. 393). There is a market square in the centre of the town out of which the four main roads radiated out from the market square. Market House stood in the centre of the market square. The four streets radiating out from the market square were called King Street running westwards towards the bridge over the Barrow River, Bennet street ran North from the square, James Street ran out Eastwards and Queene Street that ran out southwards. Around 1696 two churches were established at Portarlington, St. Michael's and St. Paul's for the English and French settlers respectively and also two schools (Bradley et al. 1986, p. 42). According to the Calendar of State Papers Ireland 1666-69 'every house to be built within the fortification is to be built at least fifty feet in front, the walls to be made of good lime and stone or mortar and stone, rough cast, and every house to be one storey and a half high at least, and every storey to be nine foot deep from floor to floor, the houses to be roofed with shingles, tiles or slates, and to have dormant windows to the streets' (CSP, p. 259-61).

Houses on the east side of the town leading from New Channel bridge to Katherines tower and on either side of the road leading from the great bridge to Charlestown. These houses were to be 'at least forty feet in front, the walls to be of stone and lime or mortar and stone, and to be ten feet high from the ground to the eves at least; and the house to have a good stone chimney (CSP 1666-9, pp. 259-61).

The cruciform axis of the seventeenth century town still survives in Spa Street, Church Lane, French Church St. and the northern portion of Main St. The market place was a square at the intersection of these streets in which there was a centrally placed Market House. A printed memorandum of c. 1666 refers to the intention of building houses to the south of the town. This is probably to be identified with Foxcroft St. and the section of Main St. between its junction with Foxcroft St. and the line of the defences (Bradley et al. 1986, 43). |
| REFERENCE | www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file |

SMR NO.	LA005-031001
RMP STATUS	Proposed RMP
TOWNLAND	Cooltederry
PARISH	Lea
BARONY	Portnahinch
I.T.M.	654199-712681
CLASSIFICATION	Town defences of Portarlington
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	0m
DESCRIPTION	The town was laid out by George Rawdon and was fortified with a moat that enclosed the town and was surrounded on all sides by water. The River Barrow enclosed three sides of the town from W through N to E and by a moat on the south side. The plan of the town shows triangular shaped bastions on the NE and NW angles of the town suggesting that the town was enclosed by a earthen fort with angle bastions similar to a star-shaped fort. One of these angle towers may have been known as 'Katherine's tower', one seventeenth century account from 1666 describes that houses shall be built 'without the fortification on the East side, which shall front towards the new channel, on either sides of the way leading from New Channel Bridge to Katherine's tower and on either side of the road leading from the great bridge to Charlestown' (Bradley 1986, p. 43). No surface remains of town defences survive.
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	LA005-031002/ OF034-010
RMP STATUS	Proposed RMP
TOWNLAND	Cooltederry
PARISH	Lea
BARONY	Portnahinch
I.T.M.	653970-712685
CLASSIFICATION	Barrow Bridge
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	0m
DESCRIPTION	This seventeenth century bridge has been replaced by a later bridge of 18th century date. Seventeenth century account from 1666 mentions the 'great bridge' and describes it as ' on either sides of the way leading from New Channel Bridge to Katherine's tower and on either side of the road leading from the great bridge to Charlestown' (Bradley 1986, p. 43). Remains of this bridge may still survive in the bed of the River Barrow underneath the present Barrow bridge. This was one of three bridges the other two being the New Channel Bridge and the Bridge over the River Barrow where the Spa Bridge is located today.
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	LA005-031004
RMP STATUS	Proposed RMP
TOWNLAND	Cooltederry
PARISH	Lea
BARONY	Portnahinch
I.T.M.	654129-712660
CLASSIFICATION	St. Paul's Church
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	0m
DESCRIPTION	Around 1696 two churches were established at Portarlington, St. Michael's and St. Paul's for the English and French settlers respectively and also two schools (Bradley 1986, p. 42). The church of Ireland church known as St. Paul's church was built in 1857 on the site of the above-mentioned St. Pauls church that was originally built for French settlers, earliest memorial in graveyard dates to 1737 (Bradley 1986, p. 45).
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	LA005-031005
RMP STATUS	Proposed RMP
TOWNLAND	Cooltederry
PARISH	Lea
BARONY	Portnahinch
I.T.M.	654128-712620
CLASSIFICATION	St. Paul's Graveyard
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	0m
DESCRIPTION	Around 1696 two churches were established at Portarlington, St. Michael's and St. Paul's for the English and French settlers respectively and also two schools (Bradley 1986, p. 42). The church of Ireland church known as St. Paul's church was built in 1857 on the site of the above-mentioned St. Pauls church that was originally built for French settlers, earliest memorial in graveyard dates to 1737 (Bradley 1986, p. 45). 19th century church located in SW angle of Market Square in centre of Portarlington town with large narrow irregular shaped graveyard around the church.
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	LA005-031006
RMP STATUS	Proposed RMP
TOWNLAND	Cooltederry
PARISH	Lea
BARONY	Portnahinch
I.T.M.	654233-712689
CLASSIFICATION	St. Michael's Church
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	0m
DESCRIPTION	Around 1696 two churches were established at Portarlington, St. Michael's and St. Paul's for the English and French settlers respectively and also two schools (Bradley 1986, p. 42). The English church or St. Michael's now acts as a badminton hall and is located on Church lane at the NE angle of the square. The present building was constructed in 1832 on the site of the earlier seventeenth century church built for English settlers (Bradley 1986, p. 42). There is no attached graveyard as the parishioners used the graveyard at the old church at Lea just outside the town.
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	LA005-031008
RMP STATUS	Proposed RMP
TOWNLAND	Cooltederry
PARISH	Lea
BARONY	Portnahinch
I.T.M.	654212712891
CLASSIFICATION	Spa Bridge
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	0m
DESCRIPTION	This seventeenth century bridge has been replaced by a later bridge of 18th century date. Seventeenth century account from 1666 mentions the 'great bridge' and describes it as ' on either sides of the way leading from New Channel Bridge to Katherine's tower and on either side of the road leading from the great bridge to Charlestown' (Bradley 1986, p. 43). Bennet Street ran northwards from the market square and traversed the River barrow where the Spa Bridge is located today Possible that remains of this bridge may still survive in the bed of the River Barrow underneath the present Spa bridge. This was one of three bridges the other two being the New Channel Bridge and the Great Bridge over the River Barrow where the Barrow Bridge is today.
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	LA005-031009
RMP STATUS	Proposed RMP
TOWNLAND	Cooltederry
PARISH	Lea
BARONY	Portnahinch
I.T.M.	654209-712538
CLASSIFICATION	New Channel Bridge
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	0m
DESCRIPTION	This seventeenth century bridge has been replaced by a later bridge of 18th century date. Seventeenth century account from 1666 mentions the 'great bridge' and describes it as ' on either side of the way leading from New Channel Bridge to Katherine's tower and on either side of the road leading from the great bridge to Charlestown' (Bradley 1986, 43). The New Channel Bridge was located at the S end of Queene Street that radiates out S from Market Square. Possible remains of this bridge may still survive underneath main street running S from the Market square where it crosses the old moat known as the New Channel in the seventeenth century. This was one of three bridges, the other two being the Great Bridge located today where the Barrow Bridge is and the Spa Bridge that also crosses the River Barrow to the North of the town. Although only one bridge is depicted on the 1678 map there were probably others such as the new Channel bridge that were left off the manuscript map of the town.
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	LA005-032
RMP STATUS	RMP
TOWNLAND	Cooltederry
PARISH	Lea
BARONY	Portnahinch
I.T.M.	654386-712477
CLASSIFICATION	Tomb - effigial (present location)
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	0m
DESCRIPTION	Effigial tomb of Sir Robert Hartpole of Shrule Castle (LA032-012001-), dating to 1594, was originally from St Marys church, Carlow (CW007-018007-). The effigial tomb was broken up, the top with the effigial figure was brought to Kilnacourt House, Portarlington, Co. Laois and the side panels appear to have been broken and thrown into the River Barrow (APMD1 1909, 251-2). Some pieces were recovered (CW002-013----) and were recorded as being at Oak Park in 1909, though they could not be located in 1988 (Brindley). The effigy consists of a recumbent armoured knight on a rectangular limestone slab with his now broken hands resting on his chest. Knights head missing and arms and legs damaged. Part of inscription on dexter side of knight and his feet are placed on a dog which is also missing its head. (JKAS 1904 Vol. IV, 223-6, 304; JKAS 1916 Vol. VIII 221-2) Latin Inscription translated reads; Here lies Robert Hartpole, constable of Carlow, more than a septuagenarian, he died on the 3rd day of October 1594. The effigy (LA005-032----) was subsequently moved from Kilnacourt House to the public park at Portarlington where it was placed on top of a concrete plinth on public display.
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	LA005-001
RMP STATUS	RMP
TOWNLAND	Droughill
PARISH	Lea
BARONY	Portnahinch
I.T.M.	654649-712611
CLASSIFICATION	Ringfort - rath
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	c. 180m east
DESCRIPTION	Situated on slight rise in low-lying area E of the River Barrow. A dished area (max. diam. c. 30m N-S) surrounded by a possible degraded bank, most pronounced at S, defines the site. The N side is cut into the natural rise. Visible on aerial photo (CUCAP, BDL 3), possibly a ringfort.
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

C. LEGISLATION PROTECTING THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

A. PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

The cultural heritage in Ireland is safeguarded through national and international policy designed to secure the protection of the cultural heritage resource to the fullest possible extent (Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht, and the Islands 1999, 35). This is undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valletta Convention), ratified by Ireland in 1997.

B. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

The National Monuments Act 1930 to 2014 and relevant provisions of the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997 are the primary means of ensuring the satisfactory protection of archaeological remains, which includes all man-made structures of whatever form or date except buildings habitually used for ecclesiastical purposes. A National Monument is described as 'a monument or the remains of a monument the preservation of which is a matter of national importance by reason of the historical, architectural, traditional, artistic or archaeological interest attaching thereto' (National Monuments Act 1930 Section 2). A number of mechanisms under the National Monuments Act are applied to secure the protection of archaeological monuments. These include the Register of Historic Monuments, the Record of Monuments and Places, and the placing of Preservation Orders and Temporary Preservation Orders on endangered sites.

C. OWNERSHIP AND GUARDIANSHIP OF NATIONAL MONUMENTS

The Minister may acquire national monuments by agreement or by compulsory order. The state or local authority may assume guardianship of any national monument (other than dwellings). The owners of national monuments (other than dwellings) may also appoint the Minister or the local authority as guardian of that monument if the state or local authority agrees. Once the site is in ownership or guardianship of the state, it may not be interfered with without the written consent of the Minister.

D. REGISTER OF HISTORIC MONUMENTS

Section 5 of the 1987 Act requires the Minister to establish and maintain a Register of Historic Monuments. Historic monuments and archaeological areas present on the register are afforded statutory protection under the 1987 Act. Any interference with sites recorded on the register is illegal without the permission of the Minister. Two months' notice in writing is required prior to any work being undertaken on or in the vicinity of a registered monument. The register also includes sites under Preservation Orders and Temporary Preservation Orders. All registered monuments are included in the Record of Monuments and Places.

E. PRESERVATION ORDERS AND TEMPORARY PRESERVATION ORDERS

Sites deemed to be in danger of injury or destruction can be allocated Preservation Orders under the 1930 Act. Preservation Orders make any interference with the site illegal. Temporary Preservation Orders can be attached under the 1954 Act. These perform the same function as a Preservation Order but have a time limit of six months, after which the situation must be reviewed. Work may only be undertaken on or in the vicinity of sites under Preservation Orders with the written consent, and at the discretion, of the Minister.

F. RECORD OF MONUMENTS AND PLACES

Section 12(1) of the 1994 Act requires the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht, and the Islands (now the Minister for the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage) to establish and maintain a record of monuments and places where the Minister believes that such monuments exist. The record comprises a list of monuments and relevant places and a map/s showing each monument and relevant place in respect of each county in the state. All sites recorded on the Record of Monuments and Places receive statutory protection under the National Monuments Act 1994. All recorded monuments on the proposed development site are represented on the accompanying maps.

Section 12(3) of the 1994 Act provides that 'where the owner or occupier (other than the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands) of a monument or place included in the Record, or any other person, proposes to carry out, or to cause or permit the carrying out of, any work at or in relation to such a monument or place, he or she shall give notice in writing to the Minister of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands to carry out work and shall not, except in case of urgent necessity and with the consent of the Minister, commence the work until two months after giving of notice'.

Under the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 2004, anyone who demolishes or in any way interferes with a recorded site is liable to a fine not exceeding €3,000 or imprisonment for up to 6 months. On summary conviction and on conviction of indictment, a fine not exceeding €10,000 or imprisonment for up to 5 years is the penalty. In addition, they are liable for costs for the repair of the damage caused.

In addition to this, under the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989, Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) are required for various classes and sizes of development project to assess the impact the proposed development will have on the existing environment, which includes the cultural, archaeological, and built heritage resources. These document's recommendations are typically incorporated into the conditions under which the proposed development must proceed, and thus offer an additional layer of protection for monuments which have not been listed on the RMP.

G. THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000

Under planning legislation, each local authority is obliged to draw up a Development Plan setting out their aims and policies with regard to the growth of the area over a five-year period. They cover a range of issues including archaeology and built heritage, setting out their policies and objectives with regard to the protection and enhancement of both. These policies can vary from county to county. The Planning and Development Act 2000 recognises that proper planning and sustainable development includes the protection of the archaeological heritage. Conditions relating to archaeology may be attached to individual planning permissions.

H. LAOIS COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN, 2017-2023

It is an objective of the Council to:

OBJ1: Secure the preservation (in-situ or by record) of all sites and features of historical and archaeological interest;

OBJ2: Secure the preservation (in situ) of existing archaeological monuments including the integrity of town defences, town walls, embankments, town gates, bastions or ancillary fortifications or portions thereof. Preservation by record may also be appropriate in some circumstances [as determined by the Planning Authority] in accordance with Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage;

OBJ3: Ensure that development in the vicinity of a site of archaeological interest shall not be detrimental to the character of the archaeological site or its setting by reason of its location, scale, bulk or detailing;

OBJ4: Achieve a satisfactory buffer area between the development and town defences in order to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the amenity associated with the presence of town defences within the historic urban pattern;

OBJ5: Have regard to the preservation and enhancement of the line of town defences when considering development proposed in their vicinity. Disturbance, removal and alteration of the line of town defences shall not be considered appropriate within the historic cores of Ballinakill, Castletown, Dunamaise, Killabban, Portarlington and Portlaoise;

OBJ6: Retain the existing street layout, historic building lines and traditional plot widths where these de rive from medieval or earlier origins;

OBJ7: Require the preparation and submission of an archaeological assessment detailing the potential impact of any development on both upstanding monuments, and buried structures and deposits. The report will also include a visual impact assessment to ensure adequate consideration of any potential visual impact the proposed development may have on any upstanding remains;

It is the policy of the Council to:

ARCH5: Ensure protection of Zones of Archaeological Potential, as identified in the Record of Monuments and Places;

ARCH6: Have regard to archaeological heritage when considering proposed infrastructure developments (including transport, telecommunications, sewerage and water) located in close proximity to Recorded Monuments or Zones of Archaeological Potential;

ARCH7: Ensure that all archaeological excavations are undertaken to the highest standard and the resultant information made publicly available. Developers will be required to have regard to Archaeology and Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers (ICOMOS, 2000) in planning and executing development in sensitive areas;

I. PORTARLINGTON JOINT LOCAL AREA PLAN

It is the Objective of both Laois and Offaly County Council to:

BH O2: Conserve, protect and enhance the built heritage of Portarlington, including all Protected Structures and attendant grounds, Recorded Monuments and Places in accordance with best conservation practice.

BH O11: No development in the vicinity of a feature included in the Record of Monuments & Places (RMP) will be permitted which seriously detracts from the setting of the feature or which is seriously injurious to its cultural or educational value.

BH O12: Ensure archaeological assessment is carried out as required and promote 'preservation in situ' of archaeological remains and settings in developments that would impact upon archaeological sites and/or features.

BH O13: Protect previously unknown archaeological sites and features, including underwater sites, where they are discovered during development works.

BH O14: Facilitate public access to National Monuments in State or Local Authority care

D. IMPACT ASSESSMENT & THE CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCE

A. POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL REMAINS

Impacts are defined as 'the degree of change in an environment resulting from a development' (Environmental Protection Agency 2017). They are described as profound, significant, or slight impacts on archaeological remains. They may be negative, positive, or neutral, direct, indirect, or cumulative, temporary, or permanent.

Impacts can be identified from detailed information about a project, the nature of the area affected, and the range of archaeological and historical resources potentially affected. Development can affect the archaeological and historical resource of a given landscape in a number of ways.

- Permanent and temporary land-take, associated structures, landscape mounding, and their construction may result in damage to or loss of archaeological remains and deposits, or physical loss to the setting of historic monuments and to the physical coherence of the landscape.

- Archaeological sites can be affected adversely in a number of ways: disturbance by excavation, topsoil stripping and the passage of heavy machinery; disturbance by vehicles working in unsuitable conditions; or burial of sites, limiting accessibility for future archaeological investigation.

- Hydrological changes in groundwater or surface water levels can result from construction activities such as de-watering and spoil disposal, or longer-term changes in drainage patterns. These may desiccate archaeological remains and associated deposits.

- Visual impacts on the historic landscape sometimes arise from construction traffic and facilities, built earthworks and structures, landscape mounding and planting, noise, fences, and associated works. These features can impinge directly on historic monuments and historic landscape elements as well as their visual amenity value.

- Landscape measures such as tree planting can damage sub-surface archaeological features, due to topsoil stripping and through the root action of trees and shrubs as they grow.

- Ground consolidation by construction activities or the weight of permanent embankments can cause damage to buried archaeological remains, especially in colluviums or peat deposits.

- Disruption due to construction also offers in general the potential for adversely affecting archaeological remains. This can include machinery, site offices, and service trenches.

Although not widely appreciated, positive impacts can accrue from developments. These can include positive resource management policies, improved maintenance and access to archaeological monuments, and the increased level of knowledge of a site or historic landscape as a result of archaeological assessment and fieldwork.

B. PREDICTED IMPACTS

The severity of a given level of land-take or visual intrusion varies with the type of monument, site or landscape features and its existing environment. Severity of impact can be judged taking the following into account:

- The proportion of the feature affected and how far physical characteristics fundamental to the understanding of the feature would be lost;

- Consideration of the type, date, survival/condition, fragility/vulnerability, rarity, potential and amenity value of the feature affected;

- Assessment of the levels of noise, visual and hydrological impacts, either in general or site-specific terms, as may be provided by other specialists.

E. MITIGATION MEASURES & THE CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCE

A. POTENTIAL MITIGATION STRATEGIES FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE REMAINS

Mitigation is defined as features of the design or other measures of the proposed development that can be adopted to avoid, prevent, reduce, or offset negative effects.

The best opportunities for avoiding damage to archaeological remains or intrusion on their setting and amenity arise when the site options for the development are being considered. Damage to the archaeological resource immediately adjacent to developments may be prevented by the selection of appropriate construction methods. Reducing adverse effects can be achieved by good design, for example by screening historic buildings or upstanding archaeological monuments or by burying archaeological sites undisturbed rather than destroying them. Offsetting adverse effects is probably best illustrated by the full investigation and recording of archaeological sites that cannot be preserved in situ.

B. DEFINITION OF MITIGATION STRATEGIES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

The ideal mitigation for all archaeological sites is preservation in situ. This is not always a practical solution. Therefore, a series of recommendations are offered to provide ameliorative measures where avoidance and preservation in situ are not possible.

Archaeological Test Trenching can be defined as 'a limited programme of intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. If such archaeological remains are present field evaluation defines their character, extent, quality, and preservation, and enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate' (CIfA 2014a).

Full Archaeological Excavation can be defined as 'a programme of controlled, intrusive fieldwork with defined research objectives which examines, records and interprets archaeological deposits, features and structures and, as appropriate, retrieves artefacts, ecofacts and other remains within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. The records made and objects gathered during fieldwork are studied and the results of that study published in detail appropriate to the project design' (CIfA 2014b).

Archaeological Monitoring can be defined as 'a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive (CIfA 2014c).

Underwater Archaeological Assessment consists of a programme of works carried out by a specialist underwater archaeologist, which can involve wade surveys, metal detection surveys and the excavation of test pits within the sea or riverbed. These assessments are able to access and assess the potential of an underwater environment to a much higher degree than terrestrial based assessments.

APPENDIX 2
A. CONNECTIVITY & TRANSPORT REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

TOBIN Consulting Engineers Ltd have been appointed by Laois County Council, to prepare a report to assess heritage led Urban Regeneration in Portarlington, Co. Laois with recently acquired Market House and Market Square. In preparing this report, TOBIN Consulting Engineers has referred to:

- National Planning Framework (www.npf.ie).

- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (https://emra.ie/final-rses/).

- Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023 (www.laois.ie).

- Laois Heritage Plan (laois.ie/departments/heritage/heritage-plan/)

- Laois County Council, Portarlington Local Area Plan 2018-2024 (https://laois.ie/departments/planning/development-plans/portarlington-local-area-plan/); and

- Section 28 Guidelines as issued by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of this report is to consider several key components to ensure the proper planning of a successful strategy for the town centre of Portarlington. These components are:

- A vision for the public realm and the historic Market Square, Main Street, Spa Street and French church street detailing how these can be central to the regeneration of the historic core of the town, leading to urban regeneration in the surrounding modern areas.

- Appropriate conservation of the Market House (a protected structure RPS 113, NIAH 12900209) and its setting in the Market Square Area.

- The creation of linkages from the Market Square and Main Street to adjoining amenities (e.g., River Barrow, People's Park, Leisure Centre and playgrounds) and the possibility of links between the town centre and Derryounce Bog - Trails and Lakes and the Barrow Blueway.

- Traffic management including proposals to look at potential for pedestrianisation within the town centre.

- Connectivity with the Train Station and the development of the walking and cycling infrastructure within the town centre.

- The potential for provision of enterprise and economic development within the town centre.

- The area improvements which need to be created both in the built environment and in the hard and soft landscaping.

- Assessment of the impacts of proposed development on the built and cultural heritage of the town, and on designated Natura 2000 sites and other habitats within the study area.

- The potential to connect with tourism sites within the catchment, such as Emo Court, Derryounce Lakes and Trails and Carrick Woods.

3.0 SITE LOCATION

Portarlington town is located on the border of County Laois and County Offaly with the River Barrow forming the border of Portarlington town. The study area for the urban regeneration is shown in Figure 1.
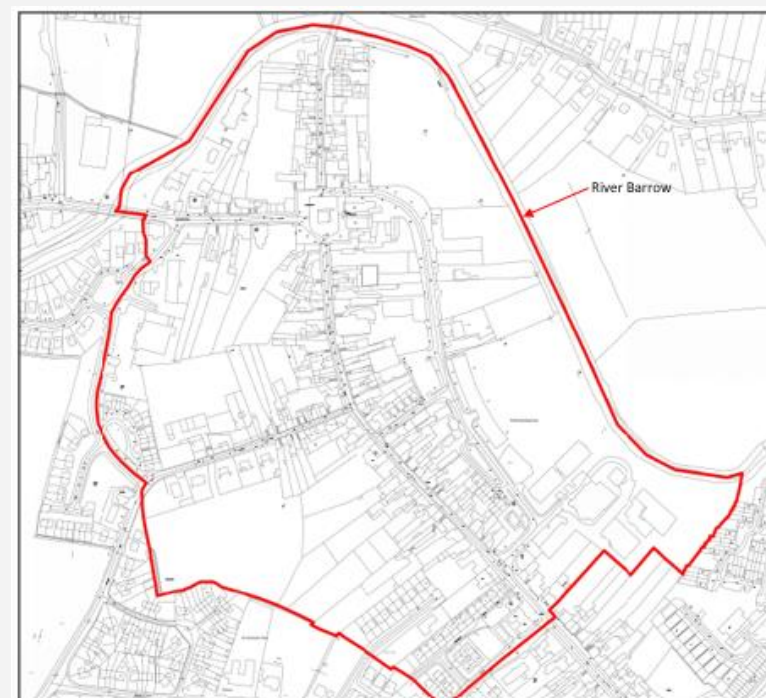

Figure 1. Portarlington - Study Area

4.0 SUSTAINABLE URBAN MOBILITY PLAN FOR PORTARLINGTON

A Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan defines a methodical process of consultation and analysis that looks at a broad range of issues which effect the mobility of a town or city at a local level. The process fits well with the Portarlington Local Area Plan both in terms of its vision and objectives and the following report goes through the process of how such a plan can be developed for Portarlington.

The first step requires the developing authority to look beyond both the physical area of the urban agglomeration and the other stakeholders and sections who are required to develop the plan. The size and location of the physical perimeter of the plan will change as scenarios are identified and measures implemented. Commuting patterns, employment centres, education centres, traffic patterns, critical mass etc. all have an influence on the size of the area which should be considered. Integration with the long-distance transport system is also important. Portarlington has a very defined core around the Market Square with Main Street acting as a spine around which the town has developed over the years. Services and Residential Areas are dispersed widely around this centre core. In order to generate a successful mobility plan, it would be reasonable to develop the centre of the town to accommodate multi modal mobility and then focus on providing the infrastructure to connect to these residential areas and services.

4.1 STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Developing all the elements of the Strategy will involve a wide range of stakeholders. Initial public consultation was carried out by Laois County Council to identify the current situation and identify issues, but this approach will require further consultation as the process develops.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Let us look at the current situation. A simple SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) can be carried out both from information already available and information gleaned from the recent public consultation.

Strengths:

- Access to a Railway line
- Bus service connections to Dublin, Kildare, Monasterevin, Portlaoise, Tullamore and Rathangan
- A lot of amenities within an easy walk of the town centre
- The River Barrow provides a scenic backdrop to the town
- There are several carparking opportunities just outside the town centre
- The majority of Portarlington's population lives within 1.5km of the centre

Weaknesses:

- Traffic Congestion on Patrick Street/ French Church Street
- Limited opportunity to increase traffic capacity due to only two bridges on the River Barrow
- Railway Station is a distance outside the town centre (2km)
- Cars are parked all the way along the main street
- There is poor provision for pedestrians and cyclists
- There is no ring road around the town
- Spa street is too narrow for HGV traffic
- The town seems prone to flooding
- Bus Stops are sporadic, hard to find and without facilities.
- No National Road within 10km
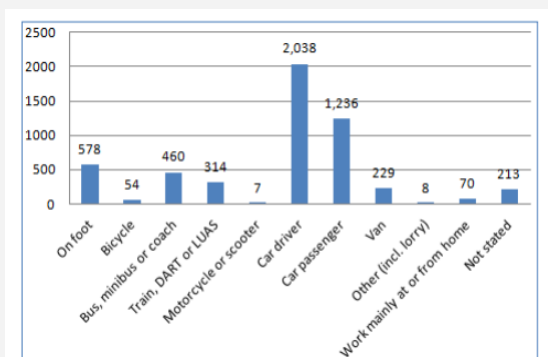- Current Traffic Patterns are reliant on motorised vehicles as shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Transport Modal Share

- The current road network is substandard in terms of structure and needs major repairs.
- Current Ironwork (Gullies in particular) are a hazard to cyclists.

Opportunities:

- The majority of Portarlington's population lives within 1.5km of the centre
- The River Barrow provides opportunity for walking amenities
- There is a circulatory route around the town
- There is a historical core to the town from which visitors and inhabitants can radiate to nearby amenities
- Market Square can be developed into a central meeting place
- About half of commuting car journeys are single passenger
- There have been some pedestrian collisions in the Town Centre which could be reduced considerably if appropriate facilities are provided.
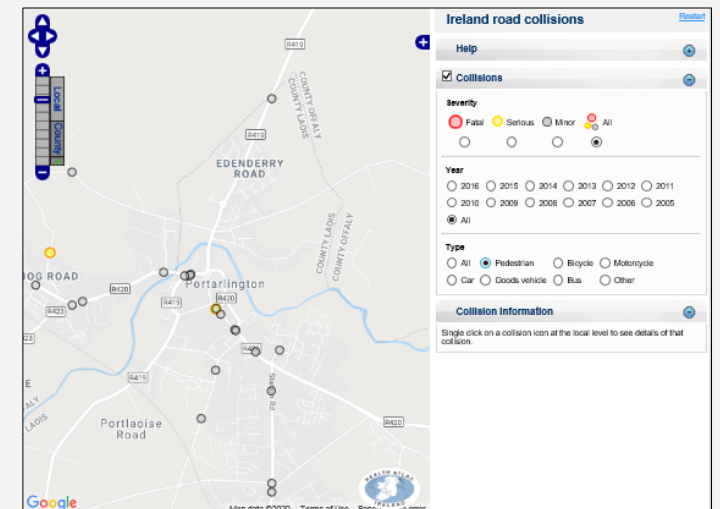- A number of relief roads have been planned for the town.

Figure 3. Pedestrian Collisions in the Town Centre

Threats:

- Perceived disruption to business by changing traffic and parking arrangements
- Narrow Streets
- Overhead Services and Poles
- Agreement on the use of Private Property
- Flooding of the River Barrow reduces the scope for provision of walkways
- Traffic collisions mainly happen on the main street and Patrick Street

4.3 DEVELOP SCENARIOS

There are three main scenarios for investigation within the study area (Figure 4) in relation to transportation:

Scenario 1 - Development of the Town Centre

Scenario 2 - Removal of Parking from the Town Centre / Market Square Area
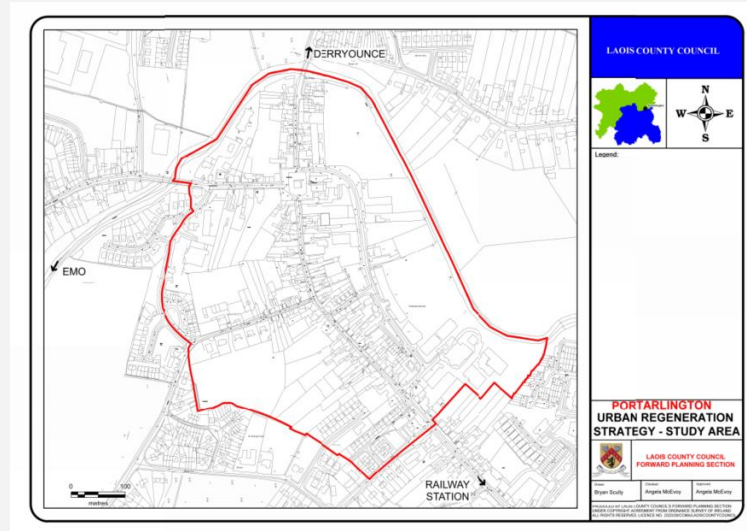
Scenario 3 - Pedestrianisation of the Market Square Area

Figure 4. Urban Regeneration Strategy - Study Area

A. Scenario 1: Development of Town Centre

Public Realm improvements are highlighted elsewhere in the strategy and are central to making the Market Square area more attractive to vulnerable road users. It is proposed to create a shared space which includes street furniture, tree-planting, improved street lighting, new paving of shared space, redevelopment of the Market House, undergrounding of services etc. A number of these improvements are imminent or currently underway. The Area Office of Laois County Council are currently carrying out the following (Figure 7):

- Undergrounding existing telecommunication and electricity services on Main Street and Foxcroft Street.

- Providing ducting for future services

- Replacing this existing concrete footpath with stone paving slabs and limestone kerbs on Main Street and Foxcroft Street. The width of the footpath is not being altered.

- Provision of new public lighting similar to Figure 5 Proposed Public Lighting below.

The Area office also intends to carry out structural repairs and improvements to the existing road carriageway on Main Street in 2022. Discussions are ongoing with the National Transport Agency on proposals for the provision of two bus stops on the link road. These proposals are at an advanced stage and are shown in Figure 6 Proposed Bus Stops.
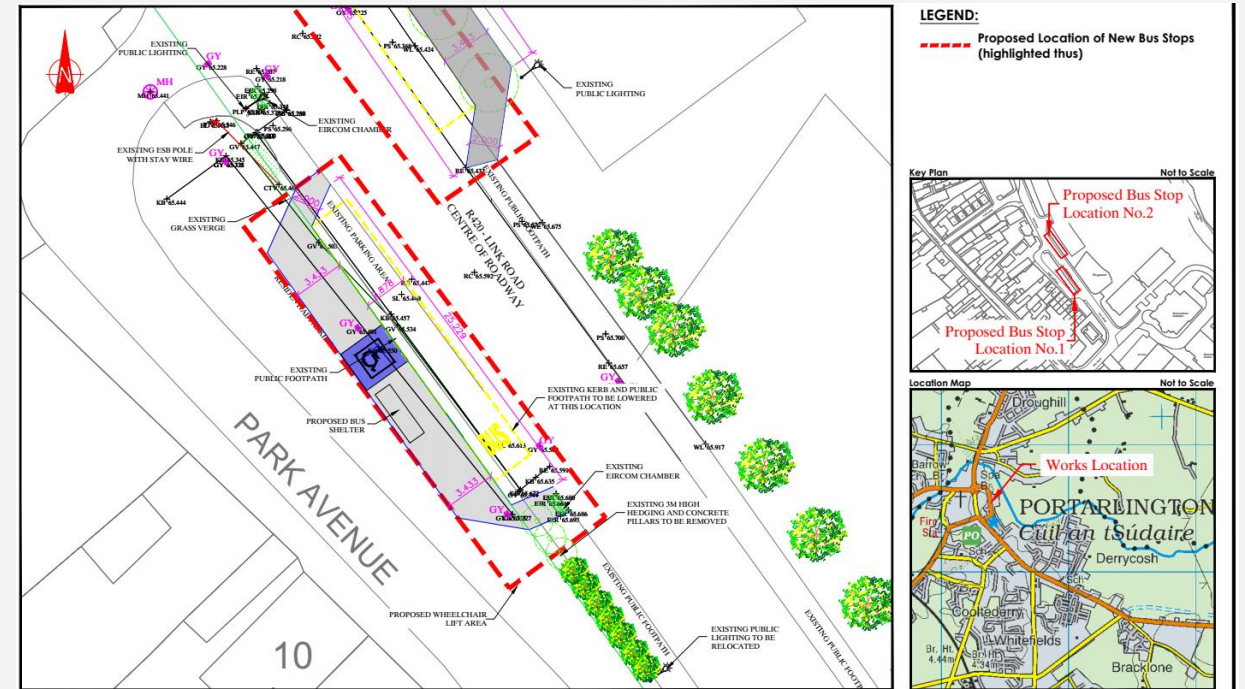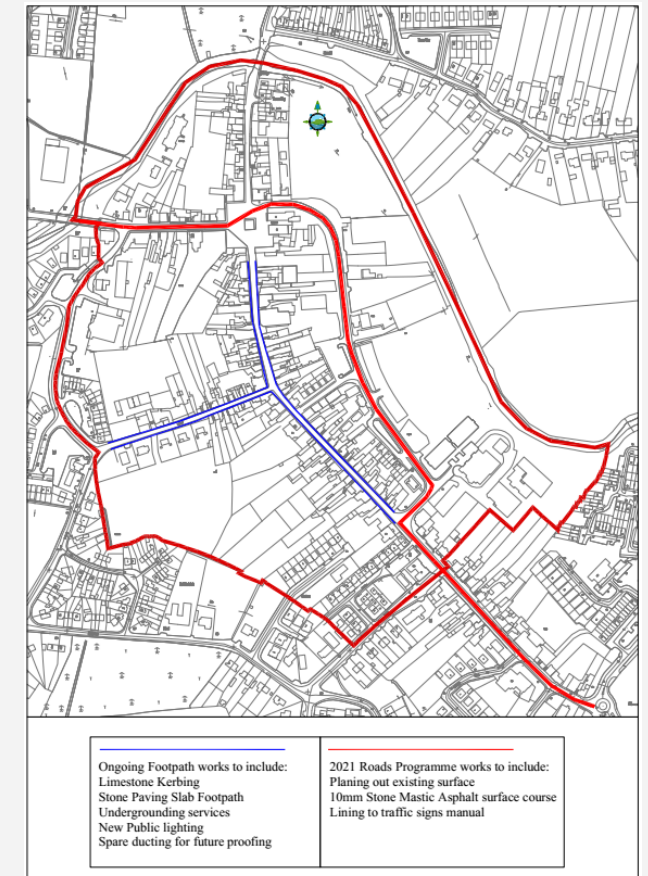

Figure 6. Proposed Bus Stops

Figure 7. 2021 Works around Portarlington

Figure 5. Proposed Public Lighting

B. Scenario 2: Removal of Parking from the Town Centre

This scenario complements scenario 1 but requires a number of measures to be delivered. In developing these measures, cognisance needs to be taken of the requirements for replacing the parking spaces within easy reach of the town centre, allowing for deliveries and providing for vulnerable road users in the new space created. Attractive links from the town centre to the new parking is also important.

C. Scenario 3: Pedestrianisation of the Main Street/Market Street

This is a scenario that would completely alter the dynamic of traffic in Portarlington. Detailed traffic studies and analysis would be required to assess link and junction capacity. The scenario would effectively introduce a one-way system around the town centre. The public consultation carried out so far did identify traffic congestion as a problem at peak times. The proposal would also require the implementation of scenarios 1 and 2. Figure 8 shows the proposal and notes the considerations required to fully analyse it. This scenario may be a long-term vision following the implementation of Scenarios 1 and 2 but it has strong merits in prioritising vulnerable road users within the town centre. The measures proposed will address the implementation of Scenarios 1 and 2 in the short to medium term.
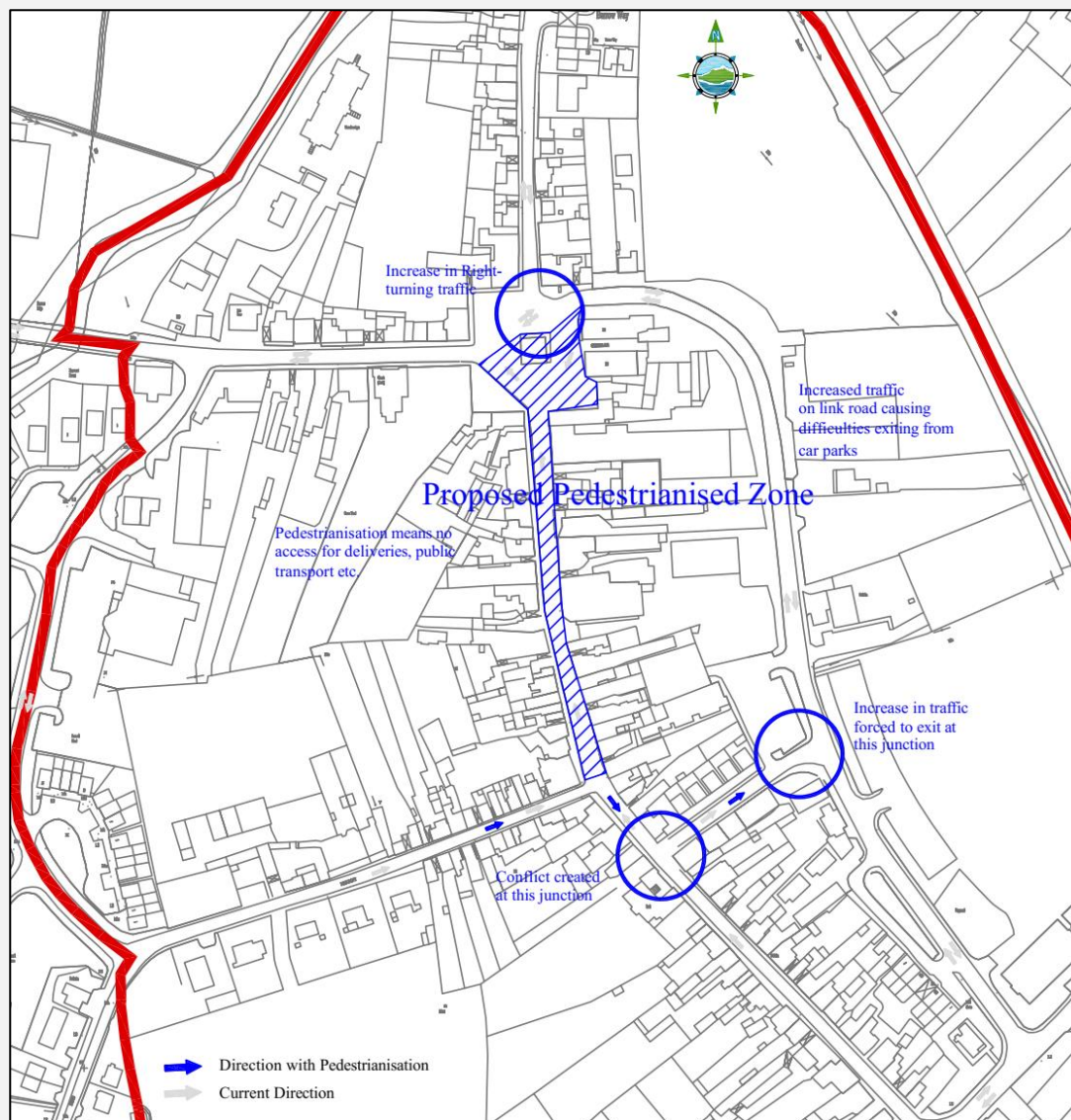

Figure 8. Pedestrianisation Proposal for Main Street

5.0 RATIONAL AND TRANSPARENT GOAL SETTING

5.1 COMMON VISION OF MOBILITY

Laois County Council have included a strategic aim for Transport and Movement which could be adopted as the vision of mobility for the town. Transport and Movement Strategic Aim:

"*To promote and facilitate a sustainable transport system that prioritises and provides for walking, cycling and public transport facilities while ensuring sufficient traffic management.*"

5.2 PRIORITIES FOR MOBILITY

The vision encourages a modal shift to more sustainable transport modes while maintaining capacity for traffic free flow. This would be an idealised but can be broken down to smaller elements to deliver on the vision.

1. Safety is a major concern in the town centre with numerous pedestrian collisions.

2. Promotion of the town Centre as a safe environment to walk for all ages

3. Removal of traffic from the town centre

4. Provide alternative parking arrangements for cars accessing the town centre

5. Generate a modal shift for people commuting from the town

6. Provide for permeability from the town centre to the amenities around the town centre

7. Provide for sustainable transport links from the centres of population to services for all ages and abilities. This starts with the town centre.

8. Provide for access to amenities such as the River Barrow and local walks.

While these elements are not in any priority order, they are the building blocks for the Sustainable Mobility Plan.

5.3 SMART TARGETS

In developing SMART targets for the SUMP, all the previous steps of the process must be considered. Having carried out the SWOT analysis, identified scenarios and developed the vision, it is time in the process to determine how this vision can be realised. While the vision included strategic aims, this next step is more specific and quantitative. This process will need stakeholder interaction, input and general approval. These stakeholders could include local business, the local authorities, Gardai, cycle groups, walking clubs and the public.

Taking the broad aims outlined above, specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound targets can be set. These could include:

1. No collisions in the town centre

2. Increased footfall in the town centre to a measurable degree

3. Reduced traffic volumes in the town centre to a measurable degree

4. Increased number of cars using the car parks to the east of the town centre

5. Measurable modal shift for the next census

6. Length of new footpaths provided within the study area

Length of cycleway, number of bus stops, speed of cars could all be used as measures of how the proposed plan is working.

6.0 IDENTIFY MEASURES

It is important that a considered rational approach to measure selection is taken or individual measures could work against each other. This leads to looking at packaging measures to ensure the correct synergy is created. In simple terms, measures incorporated into a typical SUMP can include more cycle tracks, car-sharing schemes, traffic information systems, smart technology for traffic lights, park and ride facilities, car park management and pedestrianised city centres. It is the mixture of these elements in the correct locations that will achieve the smart targets from Section 5.3. The following measures are proposed to be incorporated into an integrated planning strategy as part of Scenarios 1 and 2 from Section 4.3.

6.1 Development of the Town Centre

There are several issues with the town centre (which includes Market Square and Main Street). Appendix A includes a drawing of the town centre improvements proposed. The design will comply with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets and provide for a shared space along Main Street and Market Square with improved landscape and visual amenity. It will provide for a higher quality of infrastructure within the town centre. This higher quality street environment will attract pedestrians and cyclists and promote the use of more sustainable forms of transport. It will provide for an integrated arrangement where traffic and people mix on a more equitable basis. This will also future proof for when cars could be excluded from the town centre in Scenario 3.

6.2 Remove all parking except for deliveries from the town centre.

The current situation is such that the majority of the main street of Portarlington is given over to vehicular traffic. The parking arrangement restricts the width of the footpath available for pedestrians, restricts visibility for both pedestrians and motorists and gives a feeling that priority is given to the motorist (Figure 9). The current infrastructure is in poor condition structural failures in the carriageway and footpath.

Figure 9. Parking on Main Street

The proposal will involve a realigned carriageway of 4m wide to provide for one-way traffic towards the Market Square. Each side of the carriageway will be newly paved with a 40mm upstand on the kerb. There will be ramped and paved courtesy crossings at regular intervals (say 50m) to give priority to the pedestrian and slow traffic down. Figure 10 shows a recently completed public realm project which achieves many of the objectives of the proposed Portarlington plan.
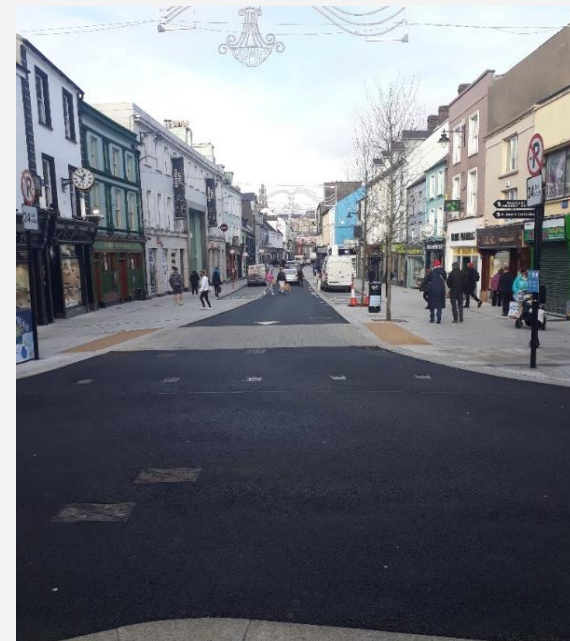

Figure 10. O'Connell Street, Sligo

Figure 11. Street Furniture in Drogheda

Figure 11 shows street furniture providing a functional role and a pedestrian friendly streetscape. Given the extra width of the footpath provided by the proposal, this is now possible.

6.3 Alternative Public Car Parking

If car parking is to be removed to facilitate the Town Centre Upgrade, alternative parking arrangements must be put in place if the plan is to gain stakeholder support. There is significant potential for off street carparking around the town centre not only to replace spaces that were removed from the centre but to increase the overall provision.

Figure 12 shows the existing and proposed availability of space for carparking within easy walking distance of the town centre. It also shows an approximate existing capacity.

The following actions are required in terms of parking:

• Ownership and access to be established for each location

• Each location to be surveyed and designed to maximise capacity and safety

• Parking for the town centre to be considered in the planning and development of the opportunity sites within the study area.

• In so far as possible, the surface and pedestrian facilities are improved to make them as appealing as possible to the stakeholders.

• In so far as possible, existing on-street parking for residents is maintained outside of the town centre. This parking should be parallel to the road in line with policy the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

• Temporary parking arrangements for special occasions could be arranged on the Market Square to facilitate local stakeholders.
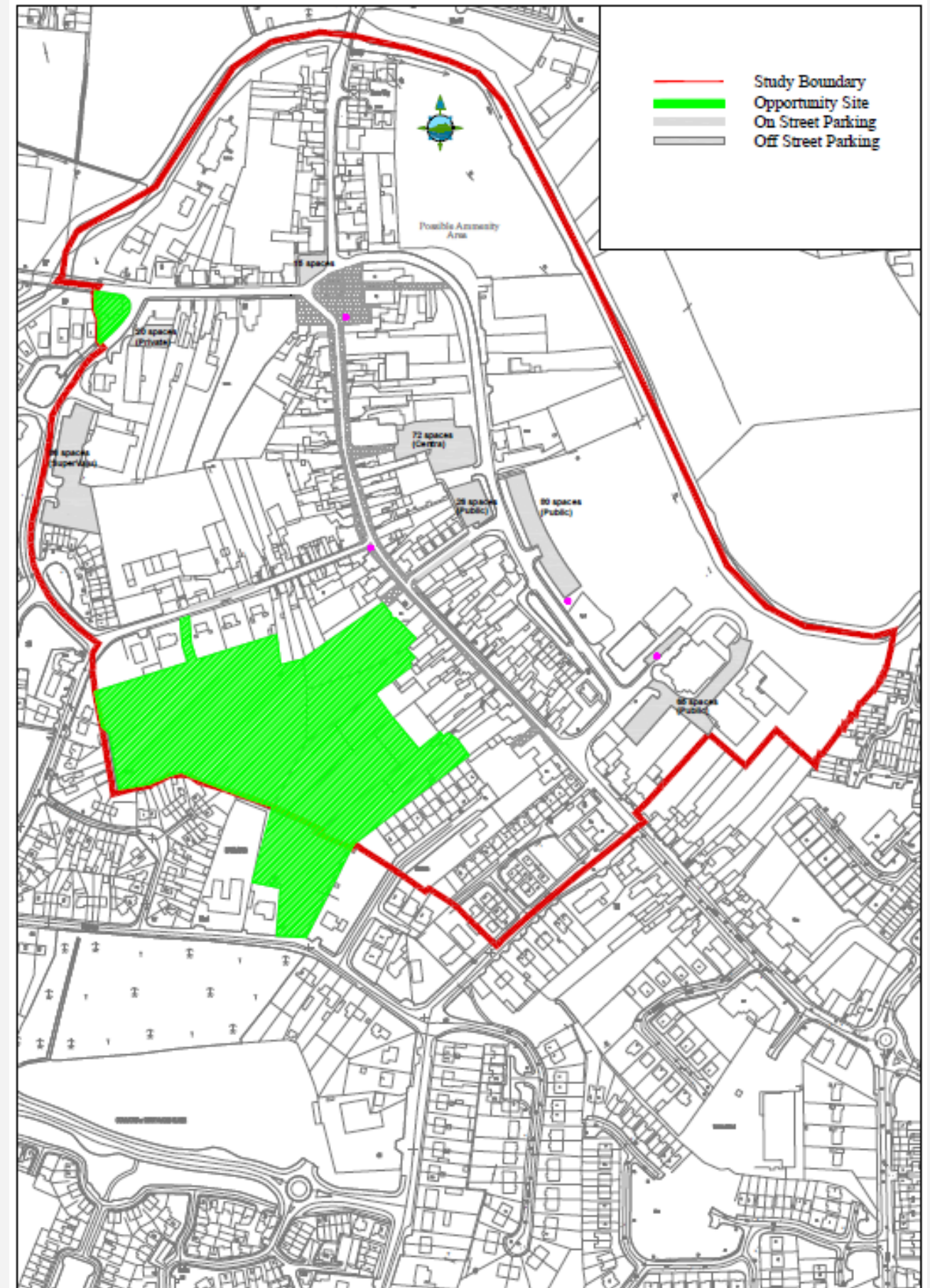

Figure 12. Car-Parking

6.4 Links from Parking to Town Centre

Pedestrian links from parking areas to the town centre need to be provided and upgraded to increase the appeal to the stakeholders.

- Church lane: historical old lane which should be linked directly from the revitalised Market Square to the Link Road.

- Centra Lane: An existing access lane between Centra and a car park. This should be linked with the Main Street upgrade and made more pedestrian friendly. Figure 14 shows its current condition.

- Park lane is a one-way trafficked street with pedestrian facilities on each side in good condition. The junction with Main Street should be upgraded as shown in Appendix A.

- Potential lane 1: As shown in Figure 15, this would link Main Street with the opportunity site at the back of the streetscape.

- Potential lane 2: The potential for provision of this link should be investigated as it would provide the only pedestrian dedicated link from the east side of the town to the town centre. Figure 16 shows the exit onto main street.
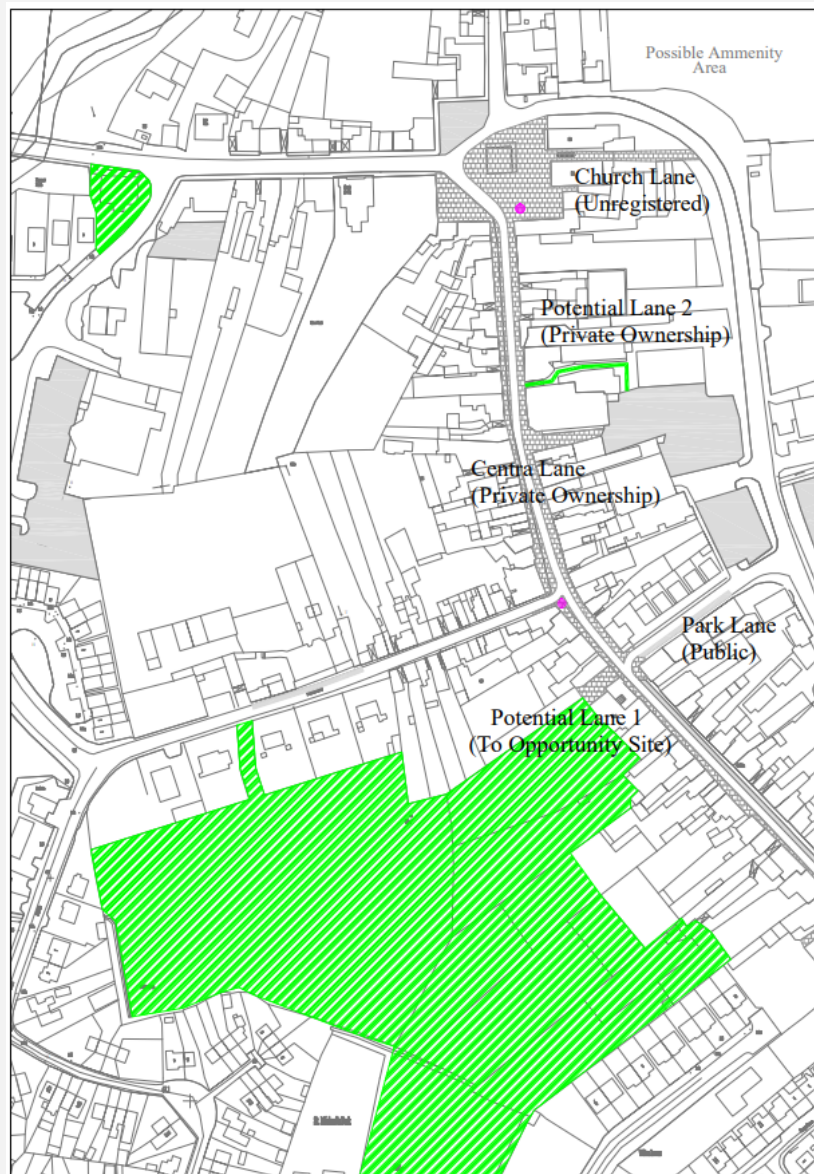

Figure 14. Centra Lane

Figure 15. Potential Lane 1

Figure 16. Potential Lane 2

Figure 17. Structural Failures

6.5 Structural Improvements

Both the footpaths and road pavement of the existing town centre are sub-standard. Figure 17 shows an example of pavement and footpath failure and dangerous drainage infrastructure. The County Council Area Office has included structural repairs and renewal in their roads programme with the Link Road being done in 2021 and Main Street in 2022. The following actions are required:

- A thorough structural inspection and survey is required to determine the structural repairs and overlay requirements for the main street.

- All footpaths should be replaced to facilitate the new look town centre.

- All overhead cables should be ducted underground.

- A new public lighting design is required.

- A drainage design is required.

- Existing services should be formalised with extra ducting provided to ensure the new surfaces remain intact.

Figure 13. Pedestrian Links

6.6 Allow for on street dining / trading / street furniture

This recommendation involves the following measures to be put in place:

- Provide a shared space with a sense of safety within the town centre - The reduced provision for motorised vehicles provided for in the new design will increase the space to provide opportunity for on-street activity such as dining and trading. On street furniture should be incorporated to help provide an active streetscape.

- Provide Bus Facilities and cycle parking facilities within the town centre - Cycle parking facilities should be provided within the town centre at several locations. It may be possible to provide for a dedicated bus stop on main street given the extra space created from the removal of parking. The current proposal is that Bus Stops are provided either side of the link road and the Area Office of Laois County Council has sourced funding from the National Transport Agency to achieve this end. The linkage from these stops to the town centre and other amenities must be improved if people are to be encouraged to use public transport. Regardless of the location, proper covered bus stops should be provided to make them as attractive as possible to stakeholders.

Figure 17. On-Street Dining

6.7 Integrated Packages of Measures

Consultation should be undertaken with stakeholders on these range of measures to establish their viability and acceptance. Input from the relevant stakeholders at this stage generates an ownership of the project and increases acceptance of any less popular measures such as parking restrictions etc.

When these measures are accepted and implemented, the broader town can be integrated into the plan. Measures can be broadened out to the wider area to connect with the town centre. Appendix B shows a high-level plan of what measures should be included. Priorities should include:

- Intermobility is vital for the success of the project so quality cycle, pedestrian and bus links from the centre to the Railway station should be prioritised

- Connectivity of sustainable transport modes from centres of population to services such as schools. This starts with the provision of facilities at the service destination such as cycle parking, covered bus stops, maybe shower facilities.

Once these facilities are in place, appropriate links can be developed. These links will involve improved footpath facilities and cycle lanes / ways. The provision of this cycle infrastructure will depend on a number of factors:

- Space to provide the infrastructure: Portarlington has narrow streets and narrow footpaths on almost all approaches.
- Consistency of approach
- Safety: Particularly looking at the interaction with motorised vehicles
- The speed of motorised vehicles on the links
- Land availability

- Measures should be integrated into national policy in so far as to follow the guidelines of the National Cycle Manual and Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets.

- The broader transport situation such as commuters to Dublin should also be considered at this point. Park and Ride and Park and Share facilities could be developed at main bus stops and the train station.

- Innovative smart technology can easily be integrated into the plan having information on public transport, traffic, cycle facilities etc. easily accessible via internet.

7.0 ELABORATING THE PLAN

Given the integrated approach undertaken for this plan, stakeholder input will be required prior to advancing the design and implementation of the sustainable urban mobility plan for Portarlington. This report outlines the high-level thought process involved in preparing the SUMP and as the consultation stages progress more detailed interventions can be identified and specified. This could include for an action and budget plan for the delivery of the broad scheme. This would require interdepartmental and intercounty cooperation between Offaly and Laois County Councils to identify their agreed priorities for the town and the scenarios which are most likely to advance and be incorporated into the plan.

It is also important that any measures forming this strategy be incorporated into the local areas works programme so that the measures can be implemented on a planned basis. The package of measures forming part of the plan can then be tailored to the scenarios chosen. The SUMP process is a cycle and on completion of a package of measures, the process starts again by assessing the revised situation etc.

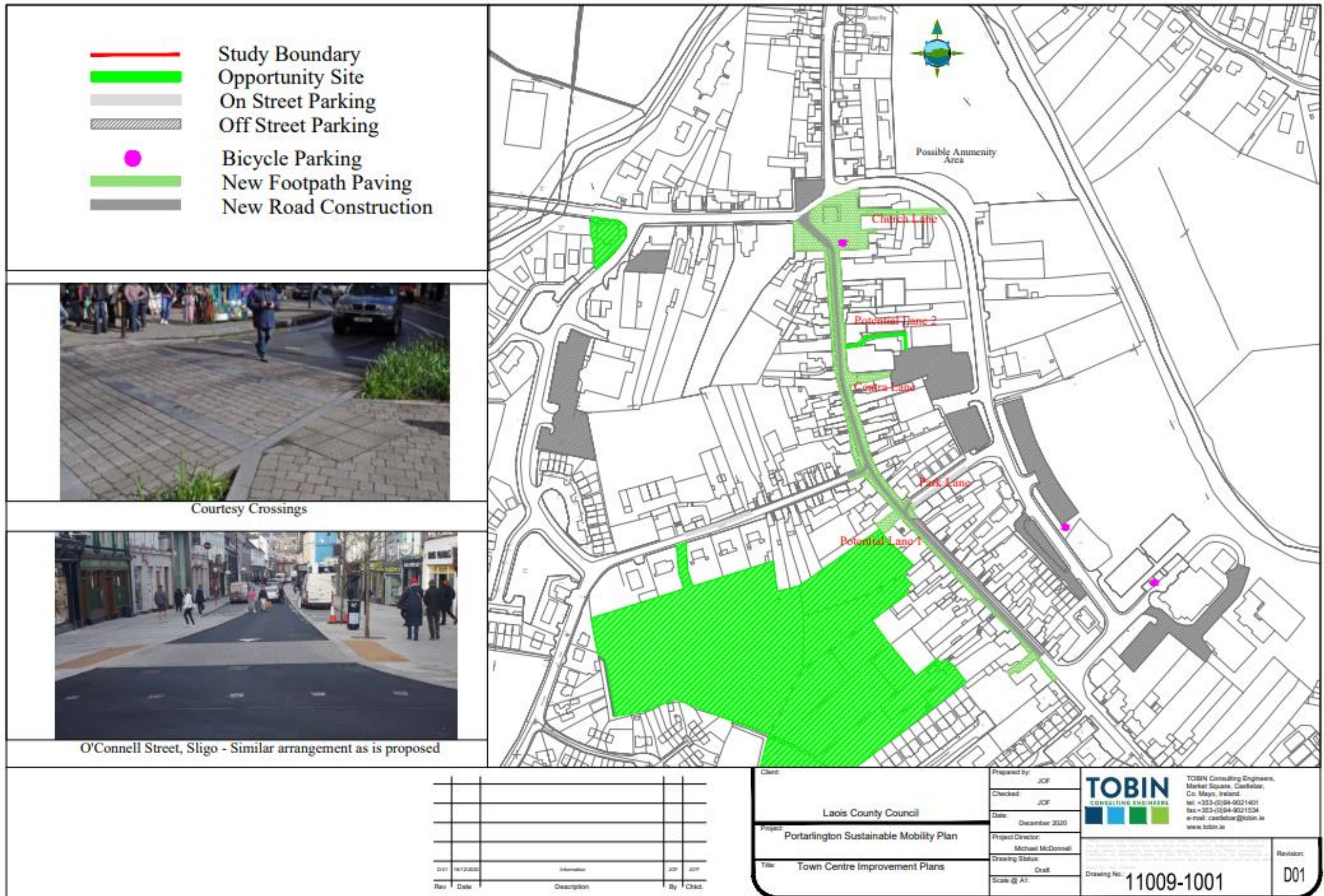## 8.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 CONCLUSION

A Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan as part of an integrated Urban Regeneration Strategy for Portarlington would deliver significant improvements to the town relation to safety, visitor comfort, business and the environment. The development of this plan will be required significant stakeholder engagement. Having assessed the current mobility situation in the town, eight specific measures are proposed.

8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

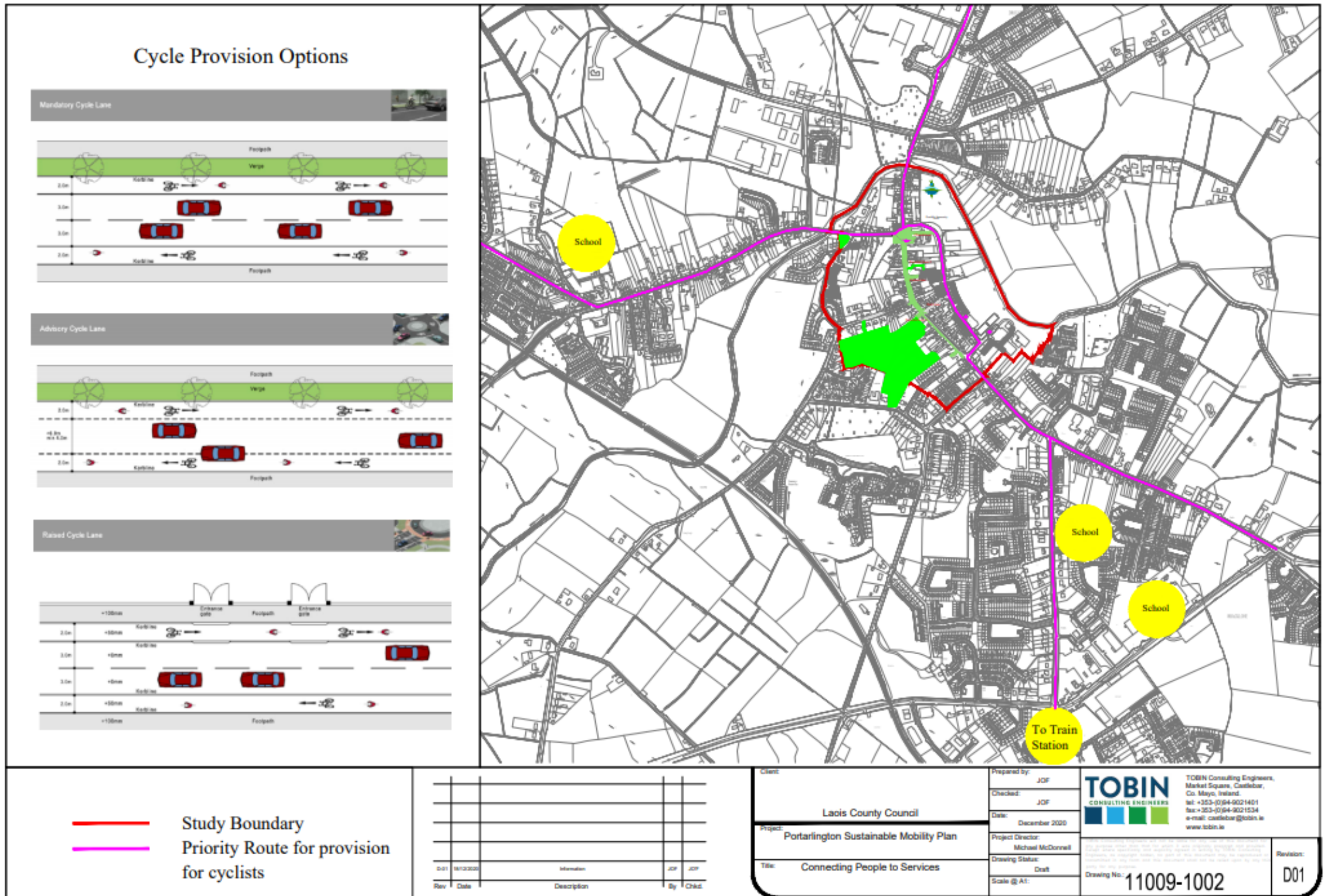This report recommends that:

- Consultation be held with relevant stakeholders to determine the viability of the proposed measures.

- A preliminary design is advanced for the measures proposed in 6.0 .

- Preliminary Plans are prepared to integrate the town centre measures with the wider area and works currently being carried out.

- An action and budget plan are put in place to advance the plan.

Appendix A. TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Legend:
- Study Boundary
- Opportunity Site
- On Street Parking
- Off Street Parking
- Bicycle Parking
- New Footpath Paving
- New Road Construction

Courtesy Crossings

O'Connell Street, Sligo - Similar arrangement as is proposed

Possible Ammenity Area

Church Lane

Potential Lane 2

Coghra Lane

Park Lane

Potential Lane 1

Client: Laois County Council

Project: Portarlington Sustainable Mobility Plan

Title: Town Centre Improvement Plans

Prepared by: JOF
Checked: JOF
Date: December 2020
Project Director: Michael McDonnell
Drawing Status: Draft
Scale @ A1:

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Revision: D01

Appendix B. CONNECTING PEOPLE TO SERVICES

APPENDIX 3
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

| Portarlington Regeneration - Public Transport					
Buses:					
Map Legend	Company	Route #	Service	Days of service	No. of services per day
🟩	Slieve Bloom Coaches Ltd / Town Link	829	Portlaoise - Portarlington - Tullamore	Monday - Friday	3
🟦	Local Link Laois Offaly	548	Garryhinch - Portarlington	Thursday	1
		549	Bracknagh - Portarlington	Friday	1
		560	Portarlington	Wednesday	1
		2328	Bracknagh - Cushina - Portarlington	Tuesday & Thursday	1
		2330	Coolagary - The Forge - Walsh Island - Portarlington	Wednesday & Friday	1
		2343	Borris In Ossory - Pike of Rushall - Castletown - Mountrath - Portlaoise - Mountmellick - Portarlington - Walsh Island - Mount Lucas	Monday - Friday	1
🟥	Dublin Coach	816	Portarlington - Monasterevin - Kildare Village	Monday - Sunday	16
Trains:					
	Iarnrod Eireann		Dublin - Portarlington - Galway	Monday - Sunday	9 x Mon - Sat 8 x Sunday
			Portarlington - Dublin	Monday - Sunday	
			Portarlington - Portlaoise	Monday - Sunday	32 x Mon - Sat 16 x Sunday
			Portarlington - Limerick Junction & Ennis	Monday - Sunday	3 x Mon - Sat 7 x Sunday
			Dublin - Portarlington - Tralee	Sunday	1
			Dublin - Portarlington - Cork (direct)	Sunday	1
			Dublin - Portarlington - Cork (intermediate stops)	Sunday	2
			Dublin - Portarlington - Westport	Monday - Sunday	3
			Dublin - Portarlington - Limerick Colbert	Monday - Sunday	3
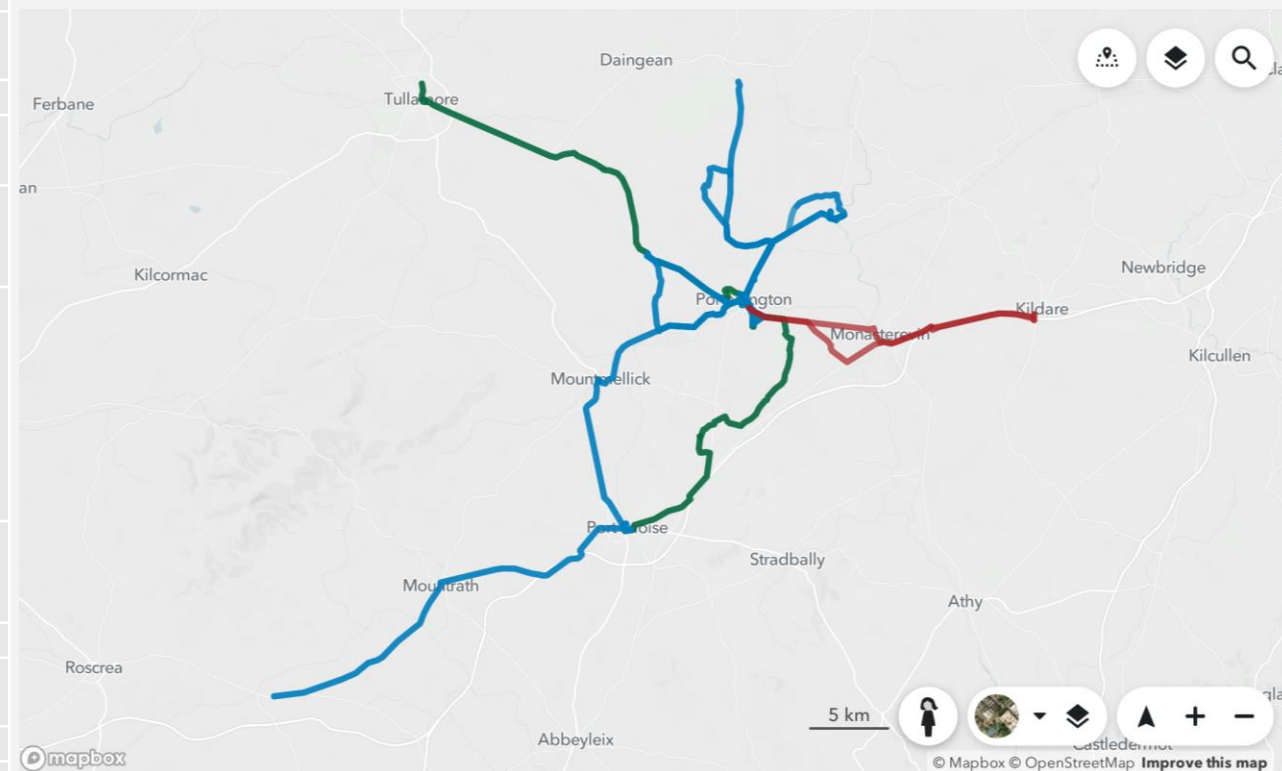
Figure 1. Bus Service Network Connecting Portarlington to Neighbouring Destinations

APPENDIX 4
PUBLIC CONSULTATION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Highlighted issues via survey, which are less of a descriptive nature, have been analysed respective of the questions. Using the survey monkey as an online tool to capture the voices and opinions of a more diverse range of residents, the results are summarised and presented in the form of graphs and word clouds as the following.

1.1 Best Assets of the Town

As it can be seen in the figure, the Derryounce, River Barrow, Train Station, Leisure Centre, and People's Park were identified as the best assets of the Town by the participants.

1.2 Vision for Market House and Market Square

As it can be seen in the figure, the Derryounce, River Barrow, Train Station, Leisure Centre, and People's Park were identified as the best assets of the Town by the participants.


1.3 Needed Improvements in Portarlington

As it can be seen in the figure, there is a need for better lighting of the Town, improved pedestrian linkages, better cycling facilities, river-related activities and amenities, enhanced public realm of the Main Street were repeated the most among people's ideas for improving the Town.

1.4 Issues in Portarlington

As it can be seen in the figure, the Derryounce, River Barrow, Train Station, Leisure Centre, and People's Park were identified as the best assets of the Town by the participants.
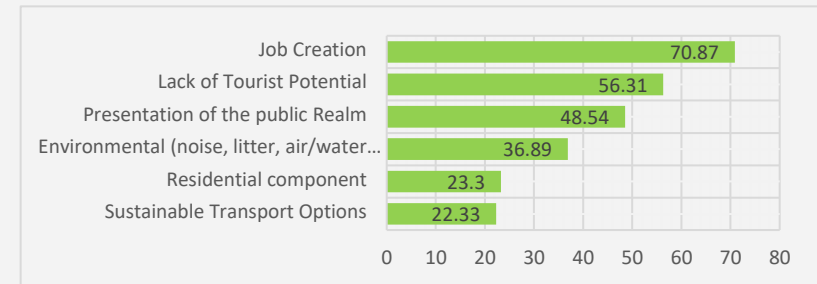
In terms of other issues in the Town, derelict sites, poor maintenance, old buildings, lack of attractive activities in the Town Centre, poor quality of public realm, disproportionate growth of population and commercial sector, need for greater investments on the developing shopping centre/areas, lack of joint thinking between the two Authorities, and anti-social behavior and vandalism were identified by the participants.

## 1.5 Opportunities for Improvements

- Re-using the Market House providing for attractive activities and businesses incorporating art and history of the place
- Using innovative ideas and incorporating technology within the re-development of the Town Centre to being people together and to the Town Centre such as working hubs, community centre, etc.
- Improving the quality of pedestrian experience in the Town Centre with an improved footpath, street furniture, safe pedestrian crossings, plants, etc.
- Re-branding the Town as a commuter town to an attractive lively place for living
- Using the historical background, heritage of the Town, and proximity to the River Barrow to promote tourism
- Providing more community amenities, greater shopping outlets, and sporting/Leisure facilities for younger age cohorts to make the Town a place to stay
- Creating more jobs and encouraging businesses to keep people in the Town
- Re-using the derelict sites/building specifically along main streets and roads within the Town

1.6 Portarlington Safety for Living

The local see Portarlington as a safe place to live in general, though there are issues which needs to be addressed to provide for a better quality of living, including street lighting, pedestrian footpath width and condition, pedestrian crossings, traffic condition, anti-social behavior and vandalism. Growing drug dealing problems, misuse of alcohol, and need for a better policing were also mentioned by some of the respondents. One respondent mentioned the proximity of the Town to Portlaoise prison and HSE re-housing certain individual adversely affecting the feeling of safety in the Town.
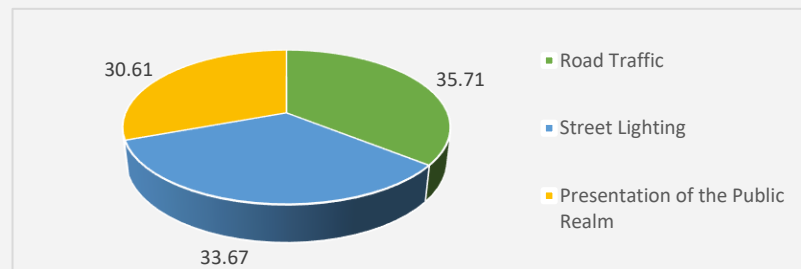
1.7 Access through Portarlington

Portarlington residents are hugely reliant on car and only 21% are walking to their destinations.

Pie chart data: 0.96, 0, 21.15, 77.88
Legend: By Rail, By Foot, By Car/Van/Lorry, By Bicycle
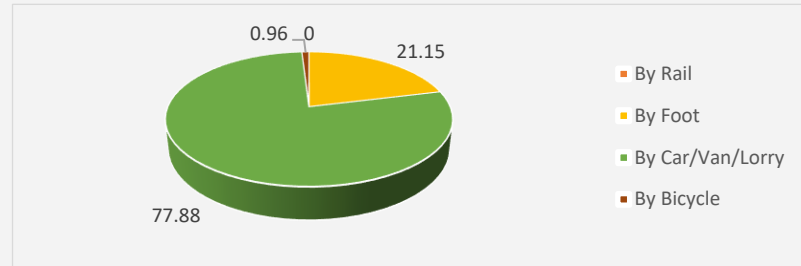
1.8 Accessibility and Safety Concerns

And other issues being mentioned include: a second link road across the barrow other than French church is needed, the condition of many buildings within the centre of town is extremely poor, Businesses should be encouraged, incentivised or compelled to improve the standard, heavy traffic of commuting needs to be resolved, footpaths needs to be enhanced and utilised to street lighting, more pedestrian safety measurements needs to be taken, derelict sites need to be addressed, parking issues needs to be solved.

Pie chart data: 30.61, 35.71, 33.67
Legend: Road Traffic, Street Lighting, Presentation of the Public Realm

1.9 Promote Walking and Cycling in Town

Survey results show providing a comprehensive and safe cycling network throughout the Town, improving the accessibility for pedestrian through well-connected improved footpaths and safe pedestrian crossings, providing adequate car parking spaces and reducing the on-street parking in the Town Centre and close to the schools, and integrating the green/blue infrastructure within the pedestrian linkages of the Town are proposed to promote walking and cycling in the Town.

1.10 To Improve Connectivity and Transport for All

- By providing bus service with clearly designed bus stops and timetables for frequently used destinations within the Town, such as Market Square to Train Station
- By providing more bus services to the neighboring towns including Portlaoise, Tullamore, Kildare having a night-link option
- By providing multiple means of transport, to specifically promote walking and cycling
- By supporting cycling through safe cycle lanes, and bike racks throughout the Town
- By developing a network of designed footpaths connecting frequently used destinations in the Town
- By an integrated planning of transport and schools, such as providing car park for school pick ups
- By supporting electric car travel through providing more electric car charging points
- By providing a more affordable public transport, which in this case is the rail service
- By building a bypass linking the Tullamore, Mountmellick, Portlaoise, Monasterevin and Edenderry roads with bus routes and having stops along the way coupled parking/charging zones at each major access point to the town
- By integrating green/blue infrastructure within the pedestrian network through developing trails and canal walkways

## 1.11 Adequacy of Retail in the Town

As illustrated in the figure, the local do not evaluate the level of retail services as adequate in the Town, specially that they must commute to neighboring towns for shopping or leisure activities.

Pie chart data: 21.9%, 78.1%
Legend: Yes, No
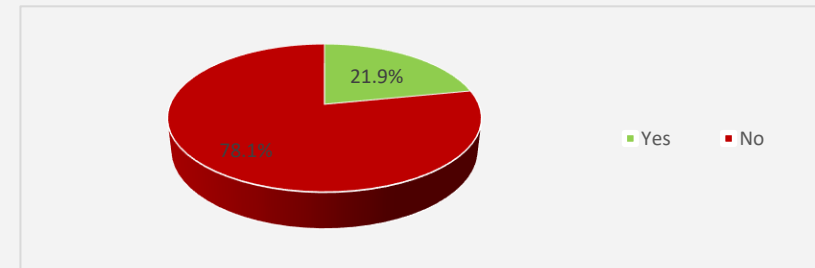
People want to see more investments in the Town Centre to encourage local businesses, a decent shopping centre to play an anchor point brining footfall to the Town Centre, cinema, more cafés and dining places, a range of small traders such as bookstores, clothes shops, butchers, bakers, etc., more leisure-related retails

1.12 Adequacy of Local Services

Unlike the retail sector, as illustrated in the figure, the local believe there is adequate local services including GP, dentist, etc. in Portarlington.

Pie chart data: 21.1%, 78.9%
Legend: Yes, No
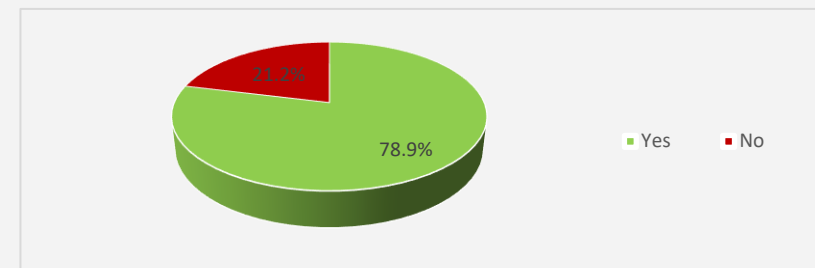
1.13 Greatest Need of Portarlington in 5 Years

The most frequent needs of Portarlington in 5 years from people's standpoint include job creation and employment locally, more investments in the Town Centre and a need to encourage local businesses, an improved level of retail and leisure-related activities to activate Town Centre and keep people in place, improved connectivity and access throughout the Town, an efficient parking management plan, improved community facilities with an inclusive approach specifically for younger age cohorts, and planning to move from a commuter town to a quality town for stay all integrated within a cohesive plan.

Word cloud: amenities shopping centre road lighting new secondary school retail secondary school bring better Portarlington shops Employment people square needs improve town Open Jobs local community lot main street development businesses sports parking Job creation teenagers centre

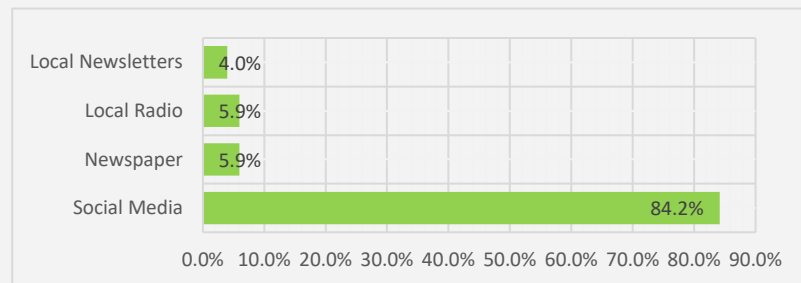## 1.14 Greatest Opportunity within 5 Years

The greatest opportunities identified by the local for Portarlington within the next 5 years include re-using derelict buildings and regenerations of the Market Square, the remote working as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic presenting an opportunity for attracting people to the local services and developing work/study hubs within the town, the present population providing the opportunity to foster a vibrant social community, the rail way services connecting the town to the wider surrounding, the historical background and assets of the Town, proximity to River Barrow, Derryounce lakes, and environmental heritage of the Town establishing the opportunity for a tourist town, and Re-branding the town to attract the community and Becoming more than a dormitory town

1.15 Proposed Climate Action Measures

- By facilitating public transportation around the Town to cut down on the vehicular traffic
- By promoting walking and cycling through providing the proper and inclusive infrastructure
- By promoting the green infrastructure throughout the Town and planting more trees
- By structural improvements to encourage better respond to waste issues, including illegal dumping and improved waste separation for re-use and recycling
- By banning non-local delivery HGV's within the Town like Galway County Council
- By providing alternative energy options such as turbines or geothermal options for the locals by the County Council
- By a comprehensive flood management plan and introducing flood relief measures
- By a focus on educational measures and promoting the public awareness
- By harvesting rainwater from public buildings for tidy towns
- By a greater focus on the biodiversity of the Town
- By supporting electric car travels through providing facilities such as electric car charging points
- By providing more public bins and enforcement measures to stop littering

1.10 Popular Ways of Getting Community News

As illustrated in the figure, the most popular means of getting the community news in Portarlington is social media (Facebook, twitter, etc.) followed by newspapers and local radio stations.