



Understanding Tullamore

Tullamore's Town Role

Tullamore (Irish: Tulach Mhór, meaning 'great mound') is the county town of County Offaly in Ireland. It is on the Grand Canal, in the middle of the county, and is the fourth most populous town in the midlands region, with 15,512 inhabitants at the 2022 census.

Tullamore plays an important regional role in several key aspects:

ADMINISTRATIVE HUB:

Tullamore serves as the administrative centre for County Offaly. It is the location of Offaly County Council, which is responsible for local government services and decision-making within the county. This makes Tullamore a significant administrative hub for the region.

COMMERCE AND RETAIL:

Tullamore acts as a retail and commercial centre for not only County Offaly but also the surrounding areas. It boasts a range of shops, restaurants, and services that draw people from nearby towns and rural areas. This economic activity contributes to the overall prosperity of the region.

HEALTHCARE AND EDUCATION:

Tullamore is home to Midland Regional Hospital, one of the major healthcare facilities in the Midlands region. The town also hosts educational institutions, including schools, Tullamore Further Education & Training Centre and the Tullamore College. These institutions serve the educational and healthcare needs of the region.

TRANSPORTATION:

Tullamore's location on the Galway to Dublin railway line makes it an important transportation hub, connecting the region to the capital city, Dublin, and other towns and cities. Its transport infrastructure and road networks play a vital role in facilitating the movement of people and goods within the Midlands and beyond.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL CENTRE:

Tullamore hosts various cultural and social events and festivals, contributing to the cultural vibrancy of the region. These events can draw visitors and participants from nearby areas, enhancing the social and cultural life of the region.

AGRICULTURE:

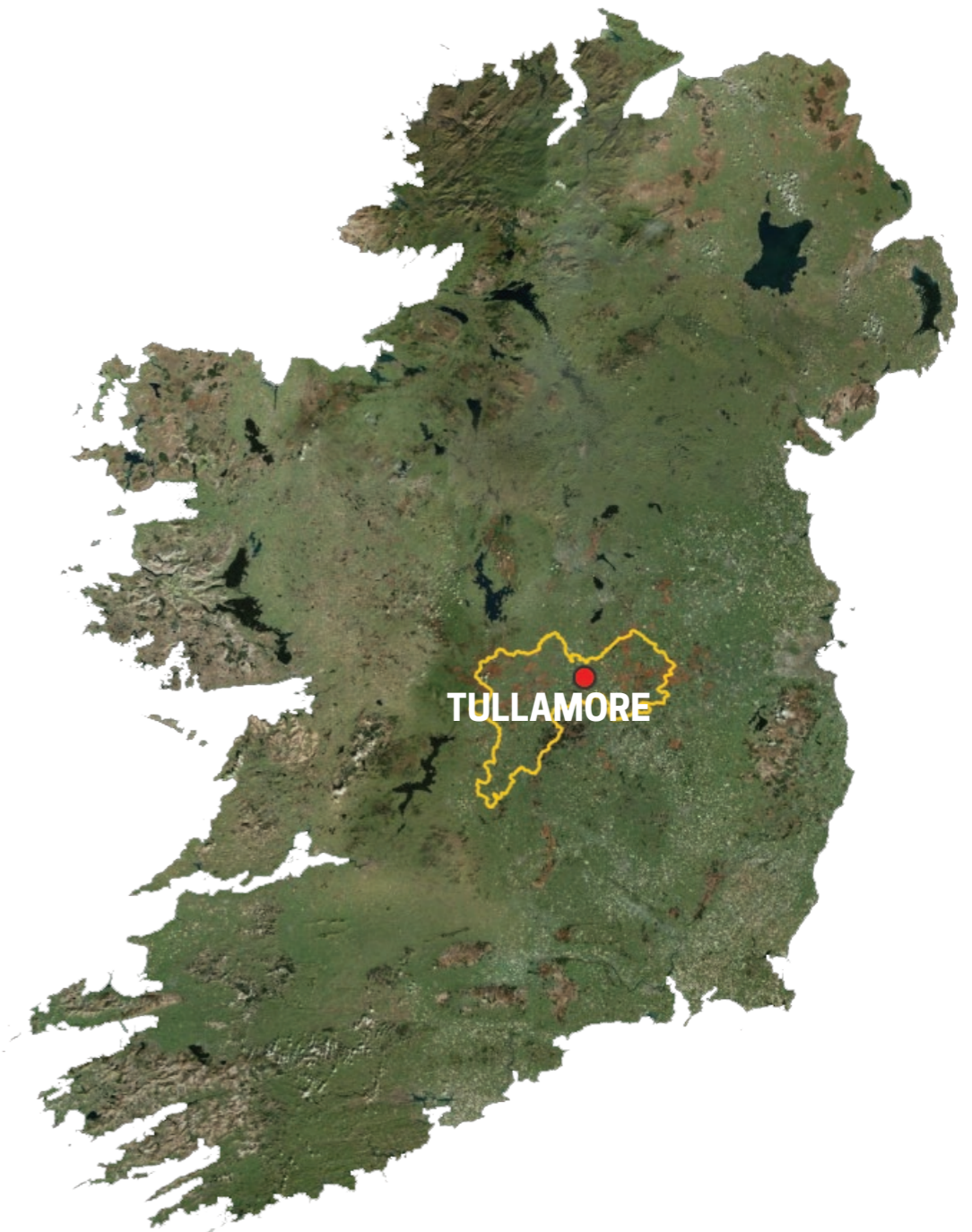
Agriculture is a significant part of the economy in County Offaly. Tullamore's role in the region includes providing agricultural services, such as farm supply stores and markets, which are essential to the local farming community.

TOURISM:

Tullamore is known for attractions like the Tullamore Distillery Visitor Centre and Charleville Castle. These sites, along with the town's central location, make it a tourism hub in the region. Tourism contributes to the local economy and helps to promote the region's heritage and history.

GATEWAY TO THE MIDLANDS:

Geographically, Tullamore is often seen as the gateway to the Midlands region of Ireland. It is strategically located, making it a natural starting point for those exploring the Midlands and its many attractions.



Location

LOCATION



Overview:

- Strategically located in the middle of the County
- Strategically located as inter-regional portal to the Northern and Western and Southern regions.
- Located in between Kilbeggan and Portlaoise on the N52.
- Approximately 103km from Dublin’s City Centre, or an hours drive accessed by the M4 and M6.
- Tullamore’s neighbouring settlements include Athlone, Newbridge, Mullingar and Portlaoise.

Wider Landscape & Heritage

30 MIN DRIVE RANGE DESTINATIONS



Key Observations:

- Well-connected to a mix of natural and built heritage assets within the hinterlands as well as the network of midlands towns.
- Multiple offerings for those travelling from the east of Ireland to the west.
- Variety of assets ranging from the mesolithic period to quality 18th & 19th century houses.



Lough Boora



Clara Bog



Birr Castle



Charleville Castle



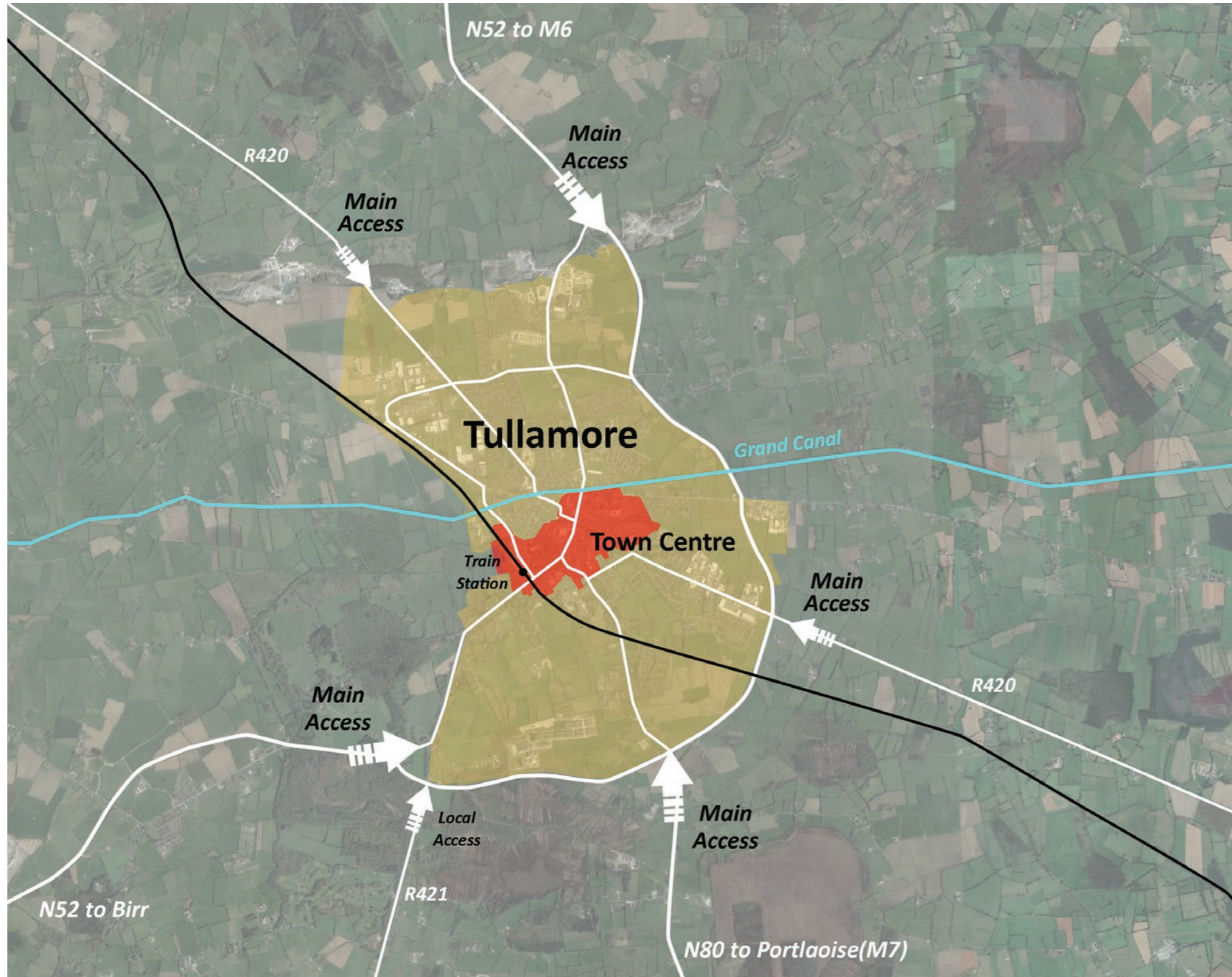
Tullamore Distillery



Cathole Falls

Town Access

TOWN ACCESS



Overview:

- Served by Rail providing access to rail destinations such as Dublin Heuston, Galway, Westport and Ballina, and Limerick.
- Tullamore is the connection point between Dublin and the River Shannon, providing access to a number of towns and villages including Cloghan, Edenderry, Robertstown, Sallins and Naas before Dublin.
- Main road access from the north is provided by the M6 via N52 or R420. Access from the south is provided by the M7 via N80 or N52 with local access via R421.
- Public Bus routes provide access from locations such as Kinnegad, Portlaoise, Banagher and Dublin City Centre.

Socio-Demographic Profile

TULLAMORE

This overview of Tullamore’s population has been compiled using both the results of the 2016 census from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and the latest available data from the 2022 census.

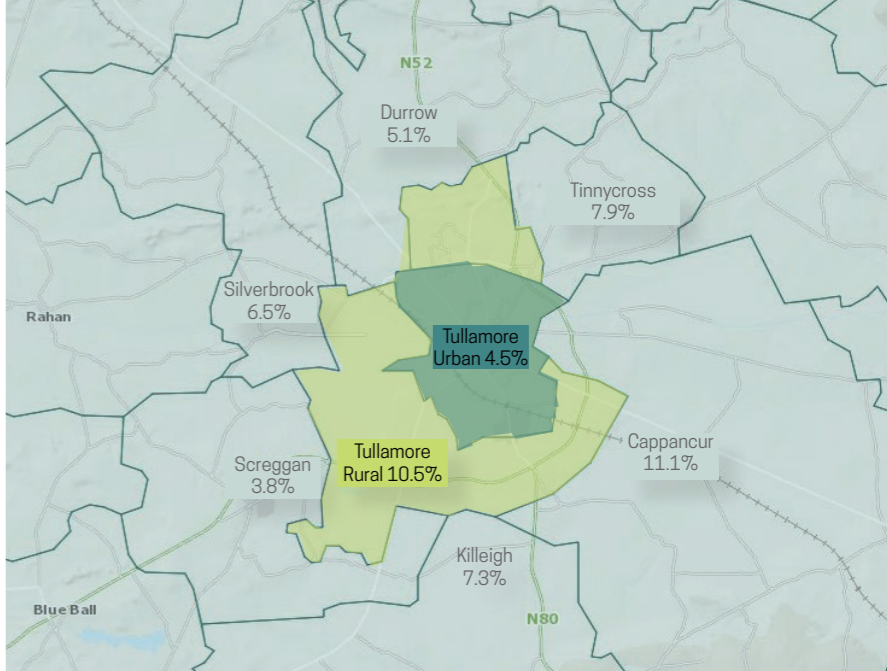
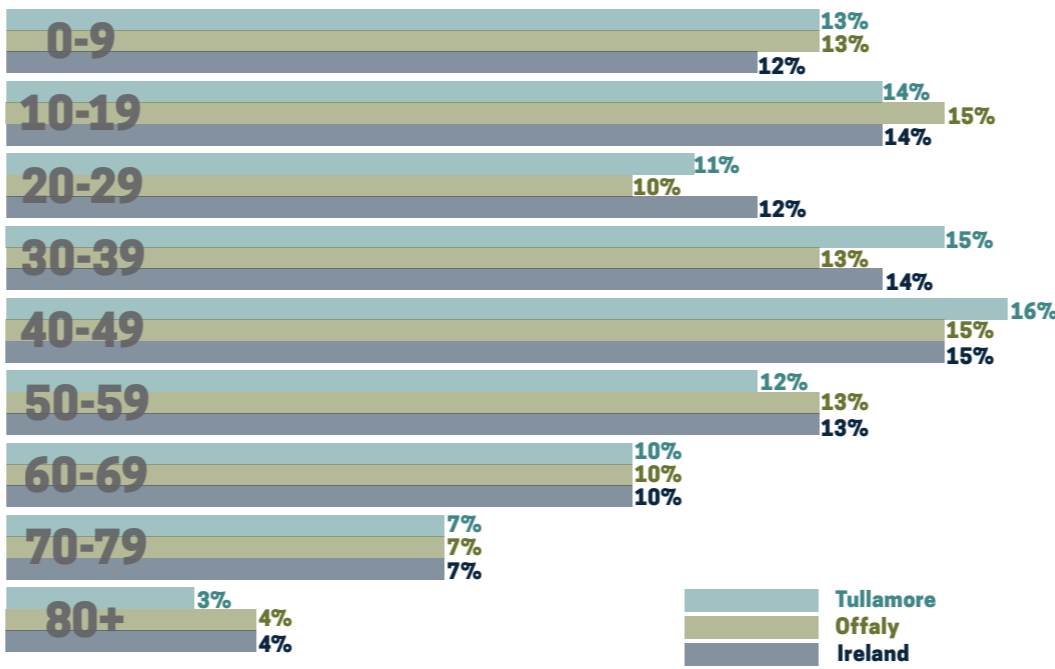
Tullamore is divided between two Electoral Districts (ED), Tullamore Urban and Tullamore Rural. The rate of population change between 2016 and 2022 in Offaly was 6.7%. The differing rate of population growth between Urban Tullamore (4.5%) and Rural Tullamore (10.5%), especially when coupled with the high growth rates of neighbouring EDs such as Cappancur (11.1%), suggests a sprawled growth pattern as the growing population is being accommodated outside of Tullamore’s urban centre.

The population distribution of Tullamore is well aligned with both the National and county-level distribution of ages.

In 2016, the Age Dependency ratio in Urban Tullamore was 53.1% and 56.3% in Rural Tullamore with a National Age dependency ratio of 52.7%. The higher rate of dependents in Rural Tullamore suggests that age-inclusive living opportunities and youth services will be required.

Internet access improved greatly in Tullamore between 2016 and 2022, improving from 70% to 93% of households having broadband. The improved levels of broadband access in residences in Tullamore is an opportunity to facilitate flexible working practices such as working from home.

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION OF TULLAMORE, OFFALY AND IRELAND IN 2022



Population Growth Rates between 2016-2022 census by Electoral Division (ED)

Tullamore’s Young & Prosperous Population

In 2022, the average age for women was 38.9 years old. The average age for men was 37.3 years old.

Between 2016 and 2022, urban Tullamore’s Population grew by 4.5% compared to rural Tullamore’s population growth of 11.1%

54.7% of the population in Tullamore was below 14 years or above 65 years in 2016 and dependent on the working population. This is comparable to the National dependency ratio of 52.7% dependent.

In 2016, 70% of Tullamore residents had internet access. This increased to 93% by 2022.

Socio-Demographic Profile

DEMOGRAPHICS & SOCIO-ECONOMICS

Drawing on the census 2016 results, the Pobal HP Deprivation Index shows relative affluence and deprivation in Ireland. In 2016, urban Tullamore was considered to be Marginally Below Average, whereas rural Tullamore was considered Marginally Above Average.

The known working labour force of Tullamore in 2022 was mostly comprised of professional occupations (21%), skilled trades (13%) and elementary occupations (11%). Dominant employment industries included Professional Services (27%) and Commerce & Trade (22%).

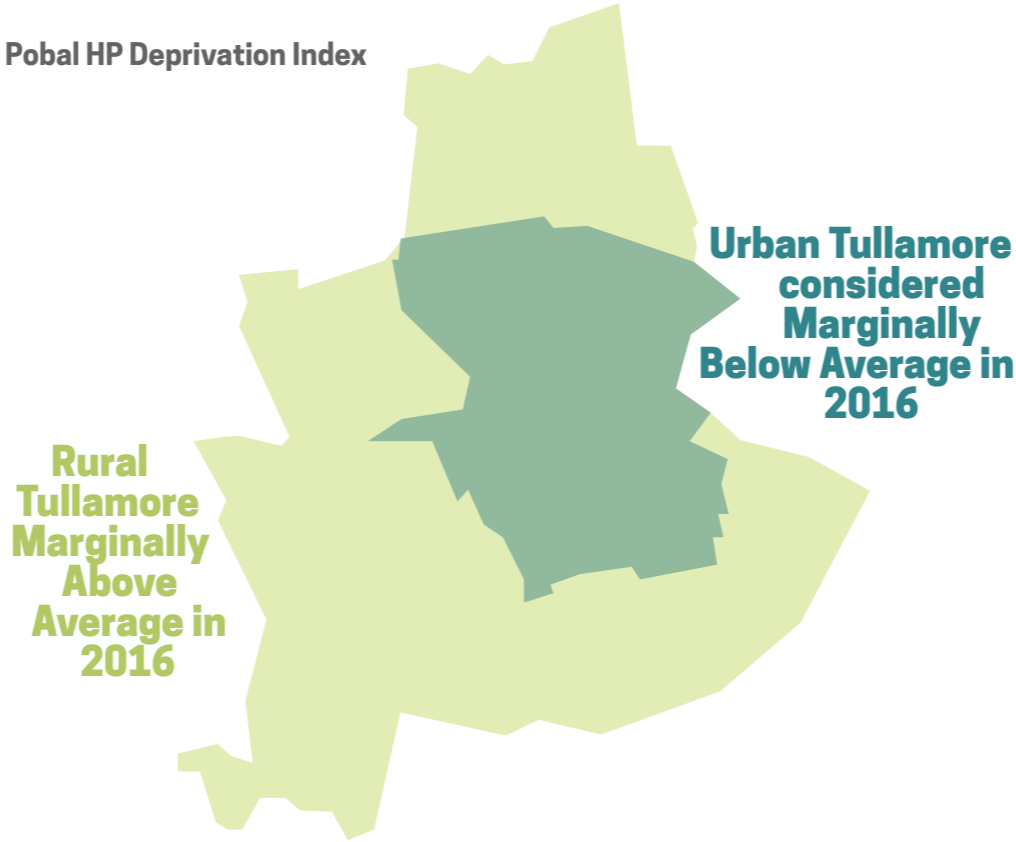
SOCIAL CONTEXT

As the County Town for Offaly, Tullamore is well served by a range of healthcare, educational, community, ecclesiastical, recreational facilities, and emergency response services.

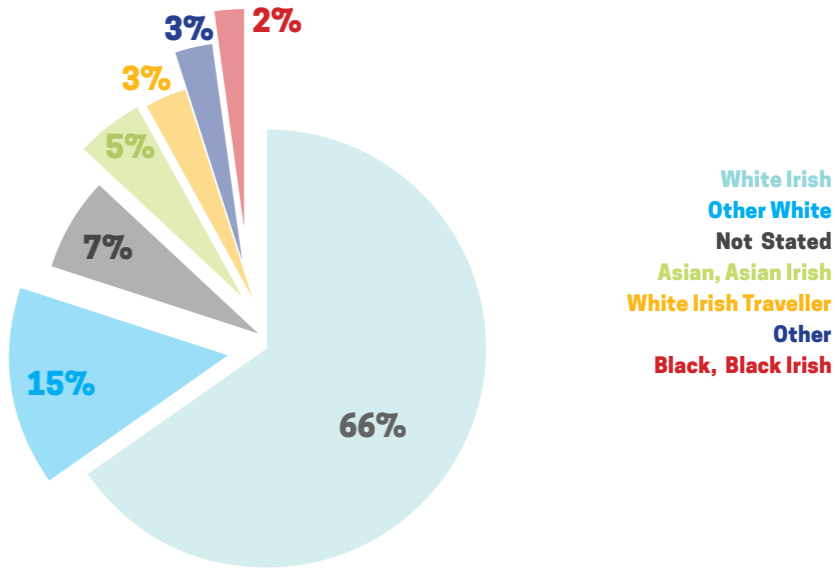
Tullamore has become synonymous with the Midlands Regional Hospital Tullamore (MRHT) as a healthcare and education facility for the Midlands. The MRHT serves the populations of Offaly, Tullamore, and Westmeath. Increasingly, the MRHT serves populations further afield such as Tipperary, Galway, Roscommon and Kildare.

Offaly's public library service's headquarters are located in Tullamore Town Centre. The recently opened Esker Arts Centre offers a diverse range of theatre, exhibition musical entertainment, and studio space to the town.

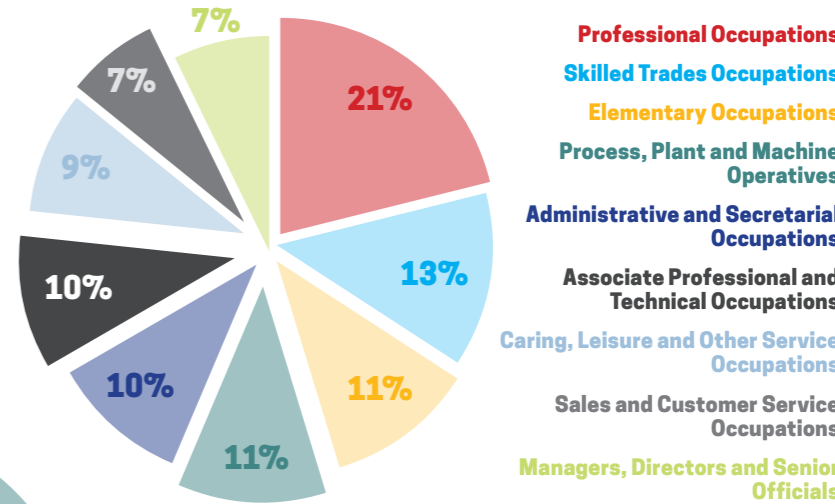
Pobal HP Deprivation Index



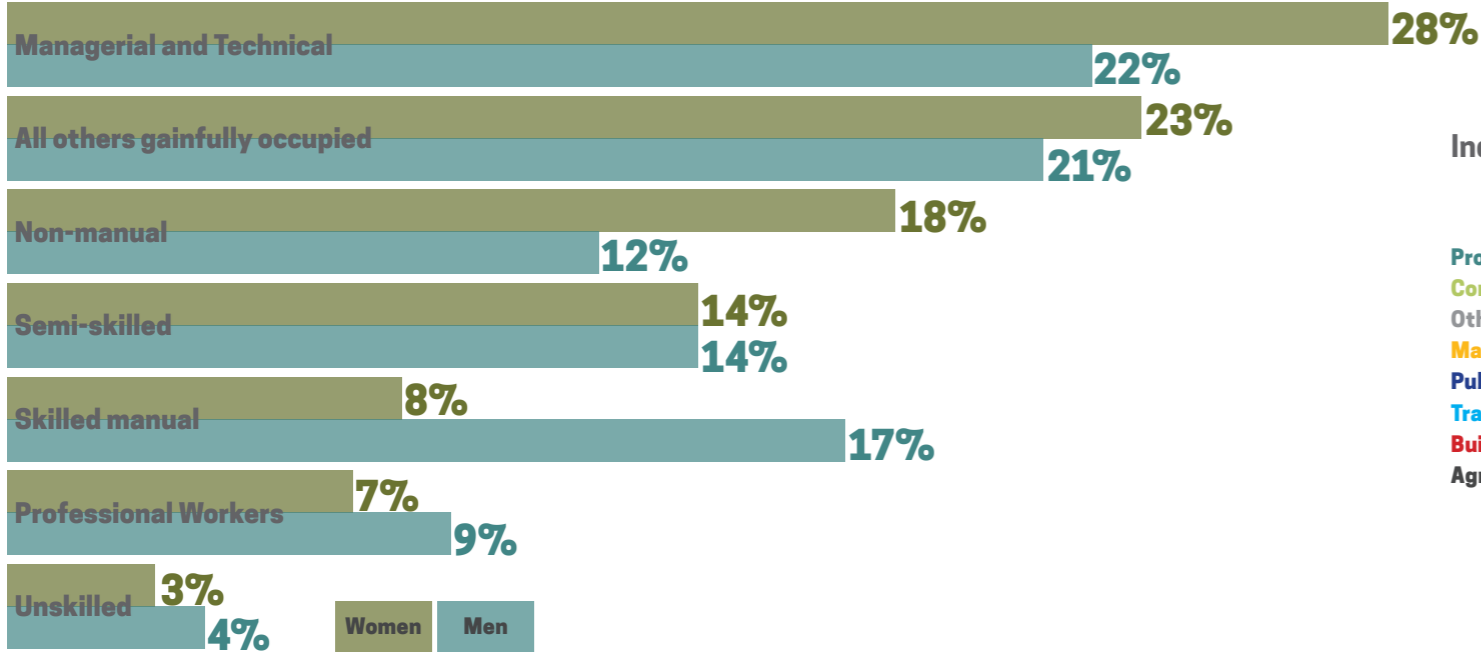
Ethnic & Cultural Backgrounds in Tullamore, 2022



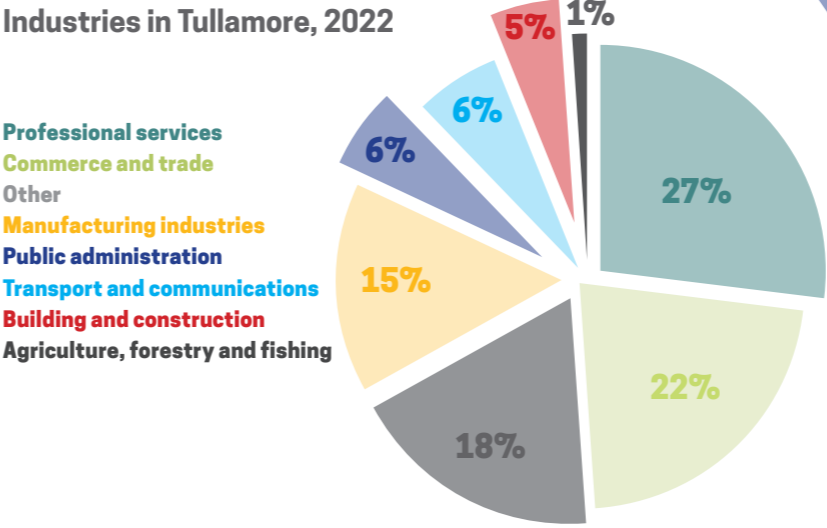
Occupations in Tullamore, 2022



Socio-Economic Groups of Tullamore in 2022

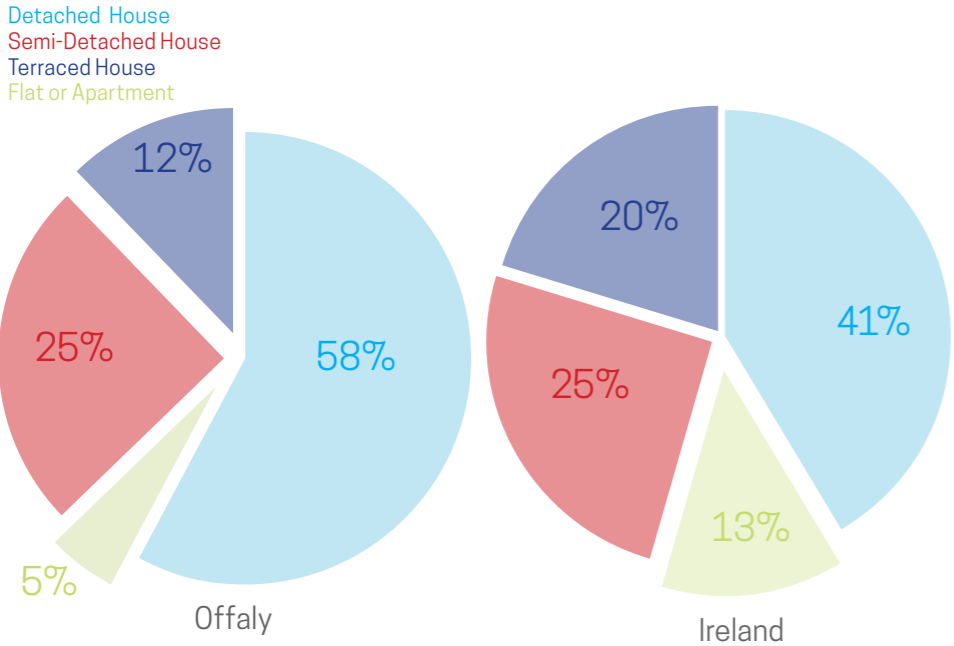


Industries in Tullamore, 2022



Socio-Demographic Profile

Composition of housing stock in Offaly and the State, 2022



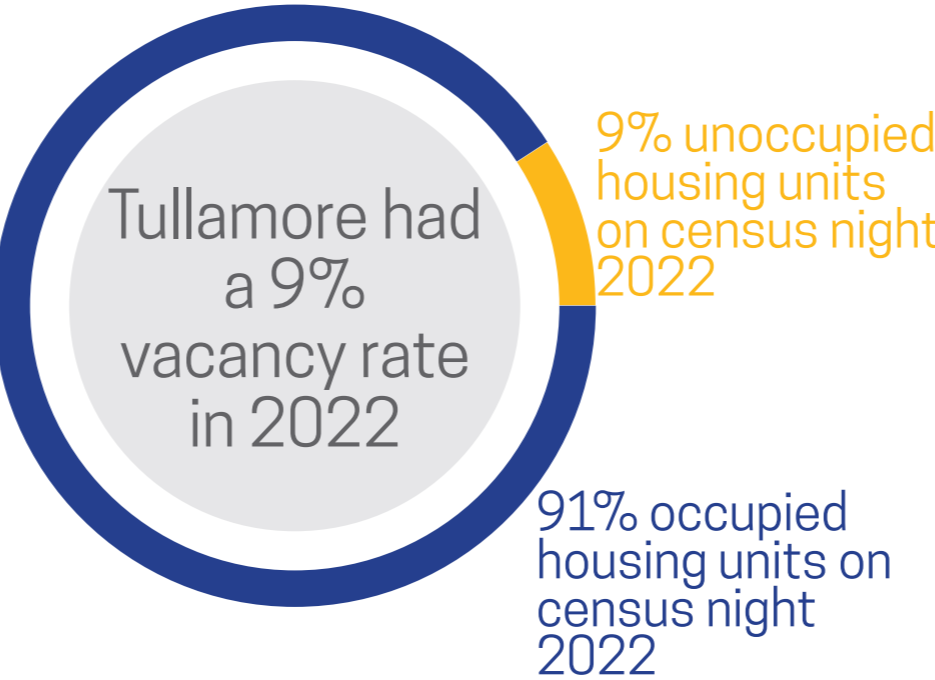
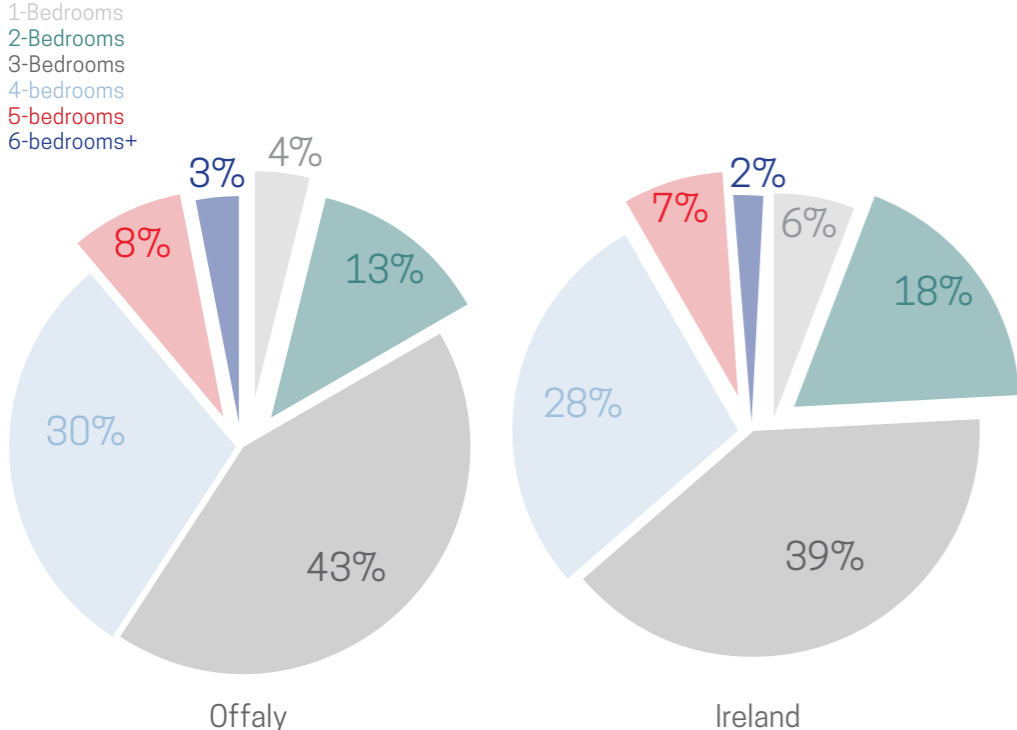
HOUSING

Housing output has been slower than population growth in Offaly in the period between 2016 and 2022. Housing growth stood at 3.6% whilst the increase in population was 6.7%.

Offaly's housing stock in 2022 was composed mainly of 3-bedroom units (43%), 4-bedroom units (30%) and 2-bedroom units (13%). The dominant housing typologies included detached houses (58%), semi-detached houses (25%) and terraced houses (12%).

Offaly had the **7th** highest number of persons per household in the State (2.84), compared to the National average of 2.74.

Number of bedrooms in all households in Offaly and the State, 2022



Housing in Tullamore

15,512

people in Tullamore in 2022

5,567

permanent private households.

6.7%

growth in population in Offaly between 2016-2022

3.6%

housing growth in Offaly from 2016-2022, compared to 5.41% growth in the State.

Socio-Demographic Profile

Employment and Travel Patterns

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAVEL IN TULLAMORE

Tullamore has a strong economic function. The total jobs to resident ratio indicates the economic function of a settlement. A total jobs to resident workers ratio of 1.0 indicates that there is one job for every resident, a higher number indicates that commuters are accessing this location for employment whereas a lower ratio indicates that the location is dependent on neighbouring centres for employment. Tullamore has a strong total jobs to resident workers number of 1.48, the average for the EMRA is 0.82. A ratio of above 0.7 in the EMRA indicates a strong economic function.

The Labor Force Participation (LFP) rate indicates the number of people above 15 who are engaged in the labor force. In 2022, the national LFP was 61.2%, and Offaly's LFP was slightly lower at 59%.

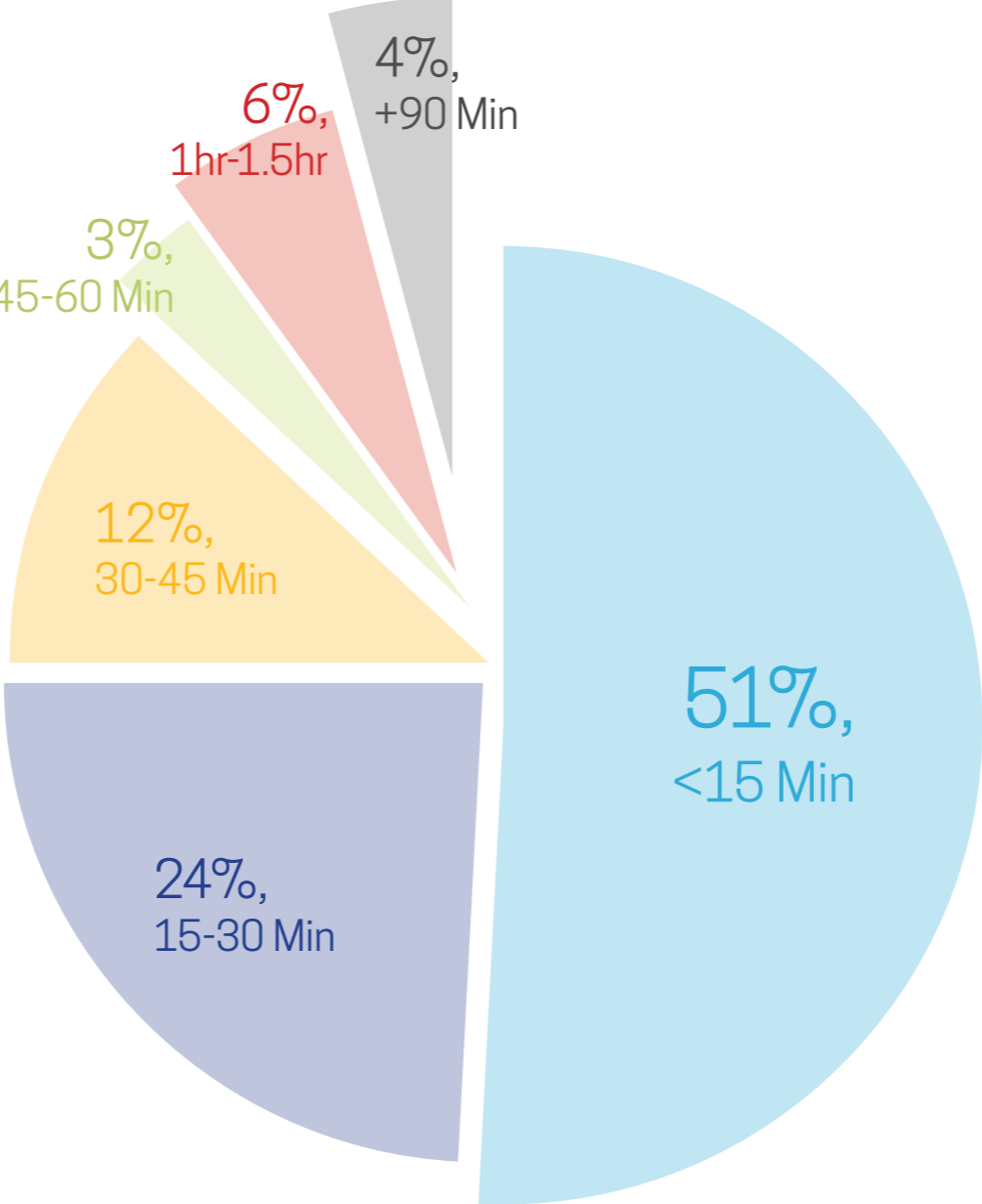
51% of the population in Tullamore was able to access work, school or college in under 15 minutes in 2022.

Only 0.8% of workers were in computers and information services in Offaly in 2016.

155 workers out of 5026 in Tullamore cycled to work in 2016, only 3%.

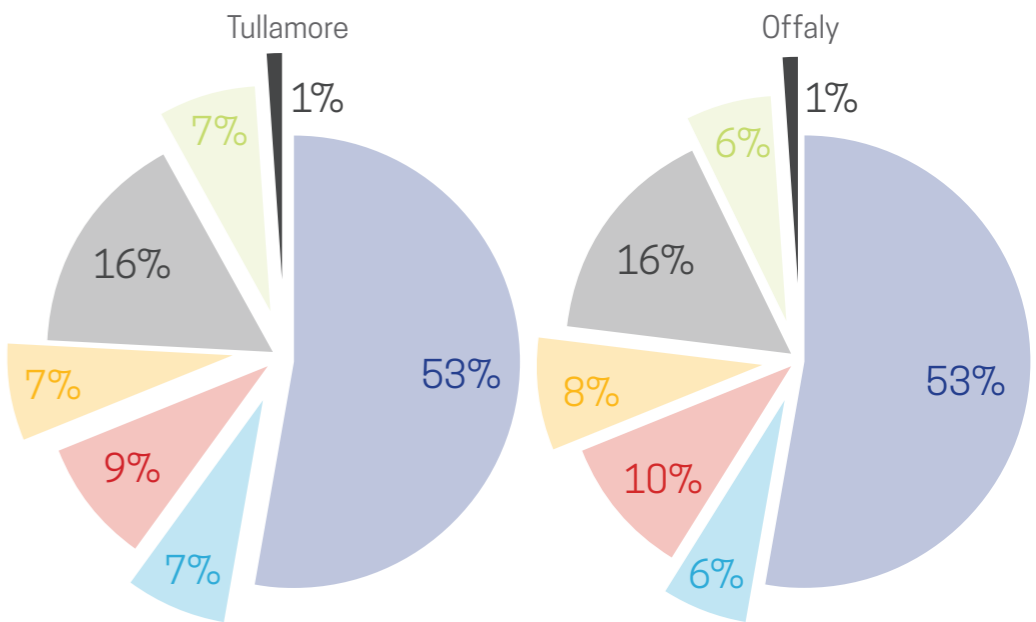
9.4% unemployment in Offaly in 2022 with 59% labor force participation.

Known time spent travelling to work/school/college for those in Tullamore, 2022.



1,150 active businesses within 5Km of Tullamore employing nearly **8,260** people in 2016.

Principle economic status above 15 years old, 2022



At work
Unemployed
Student
Looking after home/family
Retired
Unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability
Other

Planning Context

NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING CONTEXT

The Tullamore Town Centre Regeneration Framework represents a momentous leap towards revitalizing and transforming the heart of the town. Developed in accordance with national, regional, and local policies, this comprehensive plan is designed to align seamlessly with the wider planning objectives set forth by key policy documents. By synergizing our efforts with these influential policies, we aim to create a vibrant, sustainable, and prosperous town centre that caters to the needs and aspirations of the community.

NATIONAL PLANNING CONTEXT

- Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework
- Our Rural Future (2021-2025)
- Town Centre First
- National Smart Specialisation Strategy (2022-2027)
- Climate Action Plan (2023)
- 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023–2030

REGIONAL PLANNING CONTEXT

- Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly

LOCAL PLANNING CONTEXT

- Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027
- Offaly Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029
- Draft Offaly Biodiversity Plan 2024 - 2030
- Draft Tullamore Transport Plan 2024
- Local Area Plan 2024 – 2030 (under development)
- Tullamore Grand Canal Harbour Masterplan 2024 (Opportunity Site 1)



Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework

Project Ireland 2040 aims to prepare Ireland for the future through two key plans: the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan Framework (NDP). These plans set out infrastructural and regional development priorities with a focus on wellbeing, equality, and opportunity. The NPF acknowledges that three-quarters of new growth in Ireland will occur outside of Dublin, with 50% of the projected population growth planned for towns, villages, and rural areas.

The NPF, along with the ten-year National Development Plan, serves as the national planning policy document and provides a framework for future development and investment in Ireland. It seeks to align regional and county plans through strategic outcomes. Chapters 4 and 5 of the NPF outline objectives for Ireland's urban and rural fabric, including reversing population decline in towns and villages, supporting sustainable growth in rural communities, and improving local connectivity.

The NPF identifies centres of scale such as Tullamore as having the potential to provide for regional growth. Tullamore is part of the Eastern and Midland Region (EMRA), which includes both urban and rural areas. The region faces challenges related to the economic pull of Dublin, rising housing costs, and transport pressures along commuter routes. Key priorities for the EMRA include coordinated development aligned with existing transport infrastructure; strategic planning for centrally located areas; sustainable development along economic corridors; addressing local needs in rapidly growing areas; tourism development; harnessing renewable energy; leveraging greenways and blueways for economic diversification and sustainable travel. The economic pull of Dublin combined with rising housing costs is a significant issue for the whole region as transport corridors are under considerable pressure while other EMRA towns face challenges regarding economic opportunities to sustain communities.

Overall, Project Ireland 2040 aims to guide Ireland's future development by prioritizing regional growth, improving connectivity, and addressing the needs of both urban and rural areas.



Our Rural Future 2021-2025

Our Rural Future aims to provide a framework for developing rural Ireland towards 2025, addressing both challenges and economic opportunities to ensure rural places thrive. In recent years rural Ireland has experienced unprecedented levels of investment into town and village regeneration, road network improvements, tourism enhancements, rural heritage and cultural projects, improving local transport and climate action. The policy is underpinned by principles such as

- People-centred: people and communities are central to achieving progress.
- Sustainable: the promotion of rural areas' capability to support climate action requirements for Ireland such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Participative and Inclusive: tackling social and economic exclusion and rural isolation by fostering social cohesion.
- Progressive: Building on existing progress whilst taking a flexible approach to emerging challenges or opportunities.
- Rural-urban independence: recognising and nurturing the relationship between Ireland's rural and urban spaces, reframing rural Ireland as integral to economic and social development.

Policies for consideration in relation to Tullamore include

- Optimising Digital Connectivity Policy 7, Provide financial support to Local Authorities to bring vacant properties in town centres back into use as Remote Working Hubs.
- Revitalising Rural Towns and Villages, Policy 53, Enhance the powers of Local Authorities to offer commercial rates-based incentives for businesses, targeting the re-use of vacant commercial units.
- Revitalising Rural Towns and Villages Policy 57, Expand the Town and Village Renewal Scheme as an enabler to bring vacant and derelict buildings and sites back into use as multi-purpose spaces and for residential occupancy.

Planning Context



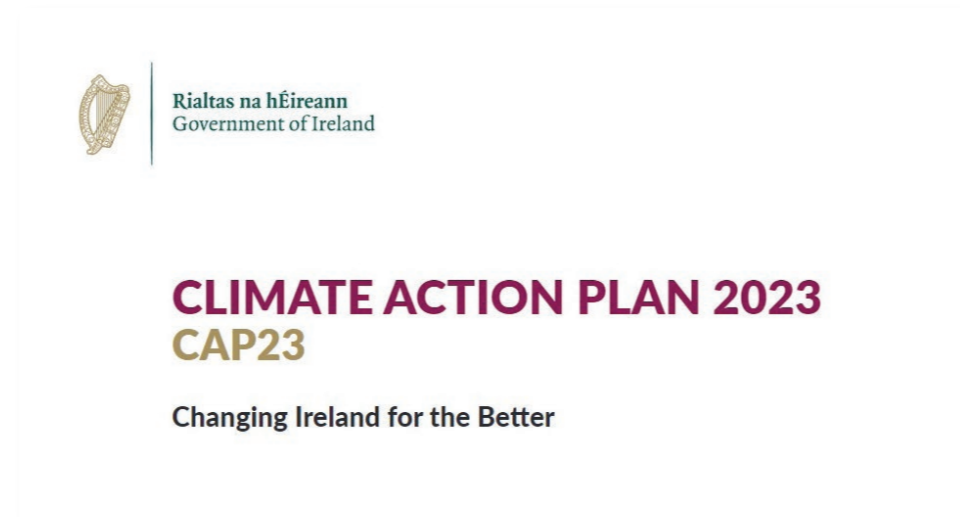
Town Centre First

Launched in 2022, the Town Centre First (TCF) policy aims to create towns and villages that are attractive, viable and thriving centres capable of supporting sustainable communities and sustaining rural futures. Informed by Project Ireland 2040 and Our Rural Future, the Town Centre First Policy approach sets out the role of existing built-up towns and villages in addressing Ireland's climate action requirements whilst focusing on building the capacity of local communities.

TCF provides a co-ordinated framework for tackling challenges and seizing opportunities facing rural towns and villages in Ireland today. Common challenges include unsustainable population growth or decline in rural areas, high commercial or residential vacancy rates with pressure to urbanise and poor levels of community cohesion and social resilience. The policy recognises towns as national assets and living representations of our history, heritage and living communities.

Common aspects of the TCF approach include

- Collaborative and vision-led plans based upon qualitative and quantitative analysis of the town's current situation.
- Prioritising buy-in from the community and local business within the plan-led approach as well as the implementation process.
- A strong local governance approach with dedicated local champions of projects. This most commonly takes the form of a 'Town Team' of multi-sectoral stakeholders supported by the Local Authority.
- TCF plans are to be matched with an economic assessment of business plan to examine risks, opportunities, perform cost-benefit analysis or long-term
- Tangible implementation plans and funding models to deliver plans and investments made.



Climate Action Plan

The Climate Action Plan (CAP 23) sets ambitious targets for carbon reduction in Ireland, aiming to cut emissions by 50% by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. The Climate Action Plan, updated yearly, sets out measures for each sector to achieve statutory national climate objectives as stipulated by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2021. CAP 23 aligns with the NPFs goal of compact development, aiming for 50% of future growth in Ireland's cities. Aligning the future development of Tullamore with the key measures of CAP 23 will depend upon achieving modal shifts in transport systems with compact development and the retrofitting of buildings.

Actions proposed include reducing travel distances and promoting walking and cycling, increasing urban density to support sustainable public transport, and encouraging higher-density residential development.

Tullamore, as a Midlands town, can benefit from government resources and carbon tax revenues to support the region's transition away from peat extraction. Actions to facilitate a just transition in the Midlands include supporting the development of walking and cycling infrastructure, decarbonizing rural bus routes, and installing fast-charging infrastructure.

Building retrofitting and energy efficiency improvements are emphasized as crucial opportunities for carbon reduction, with a target of achieving a B2 energy rating for 500,000 homes by 2030. Tullamore has been identified as the decarbonisation zone for Offaly, providing an opportunity for collaborative efforts in carbon reduction and biodiversity gains.

Overall, the Climate Action Plan outlines specific actions to achieve carbon reduction goals, promote sustainable transport and building practices, and support the transition to a low-carbon economy in Tullamore and the wider Midland Regional Assembly.



National Smart Specialisation Strategy for Innovation

Smart Specialisation is a concept for developing regions in a co-ordinated manner utilising their strengths to promote economic growth and prosperity. The National Smart Specialisation Strategy for Innovation 2022-2027 sets out a plan to address regional disparities and economic challenges to deliver a better quality of life for all through a bottom-up, place-based process for a regional approach to research development and innovation challenges in Ireland.

Challenges for this region are borne from distinctive contrasts between the Greater Dublin Area and the rest of the region. The EMRA is the main driver of growth for the national economy, providing 51% of Ireland's employment base in 2021. However, interregional disparity levels are high with the Midlands relying on lower-value activities such as agriculture, accommodation and food services.

Sectoral strengths for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly include

- ICT
- Biopharma/life sciences
- Audio-visual
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Engineering
- Financial services/ Fintech, Food/ Aggrotech

Planning Context



Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030

National Biodiversity Action Plan (2023-2030)

Ireland's Fourth National Biodiversity Action Plan is a strategic framework that outlines the country's objectives and actions to conserve and enhance biodiversity. It aims to address the ongoing decline of biodiversity in Ireland by implementing measures to protect species, habitats, and ecosystems. The plan focuses on various areas such as habitat restoration, species conservation, sustainable land management, and public awareness initiatives. It also emphasizes the importance of collaboration between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the public to achieve its goals.

The 4th NBAP strives for a: *"Whole-of-Government, Whole-of Society" approach to the governance and conservation of biodiversity. The aim is to ensure that every citizen, community, business, local authority, semi-state and state agency has an awareness of biodiversity and its importance, and of the implications of its loss, whilst also understanding how they can act to address the biodiversity emergency as part of a renewed national effort to act for nature*".

This approach is to be achieved through the pursuit of 5 high level objectives.

- *Objective 1: Adopt a Whole-of- Government, Whole- of-Society Approach to Biodiversity.*
- *Objective 2: Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs.*
- *Objective 3: Secure Nature's Contribution to People.*
- *Objective 4: Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity.*
- *Objective 5: Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives.*



Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly

Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy

2019-2031

Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly

The Regional Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES) is a strategic plan and investment framework that outlines the future development of the Eastern Midlands Regional Area (EMRA) until 2031 and beyond. The region faces diverse challenges, including urbanization pressures in larger towns and Dublin due to population growth, while other areas experience population decline and economic changes.

Tullamore, located in the Midlands, benefits from a high-quality environment, excellent connectivity, and a strong economic profile in manufacturing. The RSES envisions creating a sustainable and competitive region that provides quality housing, travel, and employment opportunities for all.

The RSES sets out functional areas including the Dublin Metropolitan Area, the Core Region, and the Gateway Region. The eastern side of the county is within the core region with Tullamore belonging to the Gateway Region. Tullamore is designated as a Gateway Region Key Town in the RSES due to its potential to accommodate population and employment growth, its strategic location and profile of existing infrastructure. Tullamore provides crucial inter-regional linkages to motorways, the Regional Growth Centre Athlone, key towns such as Portlaoise, Mullingar and Longford. The town serves as an important employment centre, offering a high quality of life and access to natural heritage assets. Economic development priorities for Tullamore include town centre development, road improvements, wastewater and cycle infrastructure enhancements, and the development of tourism opportunities.

Regional Policy Objectives for Key Towns Include:

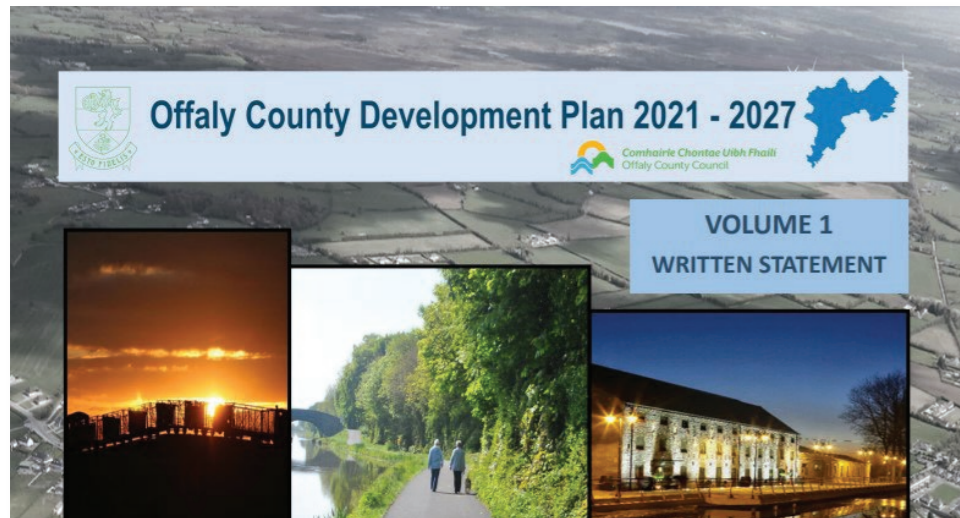
- RPO 4.26, Core strategies in local authority development plans shall support objectives to achieve a minimum of 30% of housing in Key Towns by way of compact growth through the identification of key sites for regeneration.
- RPO 4.27, Key Towns shall act as economic drivers and provide for strategic employment locations to improve their economic base by increasing the ratio of jobs to workers.

This settlement typology is further differentiated between three spatial scales. Tullamore is lowest on this hierarchy of Key Towns, designated as a Gateway Region Key Town.

Regional Policy Objectives for Tullamore Include:

- RPO 4.68, Support Tullamore's role as a tourism hub and development as a Tourism Destination Town having particular regard to its distilling heritage and industry and accessibility to key tourist destinations, natural amenities and recreational opportunities including the Grand Canal Greenways, Lough Boora Discovery Park, Slieve Bloom Mountains and peatlands. This is coupled with support for Tullamore as a service hub for the 'Midlands Cycle destination – Offaly' and the recognition of the settlement's potential as a conferencing and event hub, given the town's central location, accessibility and experience of event provision.
- RPO 4.69, Support the role of Tullamore as a major employment centre with key assets being its existing positive jobs-to-resident employee ratio, excellent quality of life and future strategic development sites, with support for the provision of enabling and facilitative infrastructural development to complement this role.
- RPO 4.70, To examine the need for complementary third-level outreach educational facilities at Tullamore, particularly with regard to support for Tullamore Regional Hospital and where appropriate, its continued development as a Teaching/University Hospital, together with potential for linkages to existing and new med-tech businesses and research facilities.

Planning Context



Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Development Plan forms the basis of decision-making, reference for policymakers and development in the county. Significantly, in the absence of a Local Area Plan (LAP) for Tullamore, the current Development Plan's objectives (including zoning objectives), policies and standards apply to Tullamore and form the basis of all decision-making.

The town has undergone relatively sustainable levels of growth in recent decades with a sustainable balance of employment and population growth. Increases in permitted densities for higher-order settlements such as Tullamore are part of Offaly County Council's approach to realising compact growth and fulfilling Offaly's NPF requirements.

The Function of Tullamore

Tullamore is described as a key employment driver and economically active town, complemented by high-quality transport links. There is the potential to accommodate future growth along public transport corridors in line with existing services, amenities and sustainable transport options. Tullamore Town Centre is the location for sustainable, compact, sequential growth and urban regeneration.

The core strategy ensures that the Development Plan and its objectives are in line with national and regional development objectives. The settlement strategy further recognises Tullamore's regional role as providing key employment and services for its extensive hinterlands.

- SSP-07 - require sustainable, compact, sequential growth and urban regeneration in Tullamore.

The development and regeneration of Key Towns such as Tullamore is in pursuit of effective regional development, the town serving a wider strategic purpose in conjunction with Dublin and the Regional Growth Centre Athlone).

Core Strategy Objective CSO-04 pertains to the creation of a Local Area Plan (LAP) for Tullamore and Birr, stating that until an LAP has been adopted the Development Plan shall apply.

Economic Development

Offaly is well positioned in the centre of Ireland with existing transport links, an attractive natural environment and infrastructural development to attract enterprise and employment. Tullamore plays a crucial role in County Offaly's employment and enterprise strategy, acting as a major employment hub for the Midlands. The town benefits from assets such as the Midlands Skills centre and the Junction Business Innovation Centre which offers co-working facilities. At present the high jobs-to-resident workers ratio (1.48), the high quality of life and the delivery of future 'strategic employment zones' are key assets of the town.

The largest industries in the town include Professional Services, Manufacturing and Engineering with an increasing cluster of medical-tech and biopharma companies located there due to the Midlands Regional Hospital. The presence of the hospital further spring-boards linkages to third-level educational institutions as well as new med-tech business and research facilities. Policy ENTP-37 supports the examination of complementary third-level outreach facilities in Tullamore, particularly in relation to the Midland Regional Hospital developing as a Teaching/University hospital.

26% of the 1,150 businesses in Tullamore are in less conventional sectors such as Med-Tech, FinTech, ICT, Engineering employers, with a growing hub of the food & Drinks sector. Green opportunities are eclipsing the town's traditional employment in peat extraction, today key economic pillars include professional services, scientific activities and public sector providers.

Desirable economic investment for Tullamore would be in the form of green jobs and green technologies, innovation, digital technologies, circular bioeconomy, food and beverage (in particular due to its distilling heritage), advanced manufacturing, tourism, recreation and amenity and high-quality town centre retail development.

Policies for Tullamore include

- ENTP-11 It is Council policy to strengthen and channel development into Tullamore the primary driver for economic development within the county, which is designated as a Key Town in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.
- ENTP-12 It is Council policy to promote Tullamore as a key location for economic development supporting the provision of increased employment through the expansion of the existing enterprise ecosystem in the town and smart specialisation and support the provision of physical infrastructure and zoned lands to realise the delivery of strategic employment lands in central accessible locations
- ENTP-13 It is Council policy to support infrastructural development in Tullamore to facilitate the development of Strategic Employment Zones.
- LUZO-15 Support the development of Strategic Employment Zones in Tullamore at;
 - (a) Ardan Road to cater for the expansion of Midland Regional Hospital Tullamore and its continued development as a Teaching/University Hospital, and/or a Med or BioTechnology Park with linkages to the Hospital; and
 - (b) Ballyduff for a Business and Technology Park.
- LUZO-16 Planning applications for Strategic Employment Zones shall be brought forward in the context of a masterplan for the subject lands as detailed in Development Management Standard 72. The design and siting of individual units within Strategic Employment Zones shall comply with the principles of any Design Statement prepared as part of the masterplan for the overall site.

Retail

Tullamore offers a diverse retail offering and it suitable for all types of retail according to the Development Plan, benefiting the wider region. The town is suitable for a range of retailing activities, namely comparison shopping.

Tullamore is promoted as a retail centre by policy RTCP-02, stating

- RTCP-02 It is Council policy to promote Tullamore, a Key Town, as the main retail centre in the county and to ensure that the retail quantity, quality and range is of a standard that contributes to the strengthening of the retail economy within Tullamore Town, the county and the region as a whole.

Town Centre Strategy and Regeneration

Tullamore's opportunity sites are outlined in Chapter 7.2 of the Development Plan. These sites were chosen due to their prominence, underutilisation and potential to be redeveloped and deliver regeneration and enhancements to the town.

Regarding taller buildings and densification to avoid sprawling development, as per the RSES taller buildings are acceptable at Tullamore where the highest standard architectural quality, urban design and place-making is demonstrated.

There are two sites permitted for taller buildings, Grand Canal Harbour site and the Texas site. The Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities (December 2018) states that it would be appropriate to support the consideration of building heights of at least 6 storeys at street level.

- RP-11, It is Council policy to facilitate, promote and encourage the re-development of Opportunity Sites identified in Volume 1 and Volume 2 of the County Development Plan and Local Area Plans for appropriate development that contributes positively to the character of the settlement. Any proposal brought forward on Opportunity Sites shall be in accordance with the Development Principles for Opportunity Sites as set out in section 7.2.4 of the County Development Plan, with the inclusion of an urban design statement and masterplan and shall demonstrate the rationale for the proposal and how it will interact within its context and the wider urban area.
- RP-12, It is Council policy to consider the development of taller buildings on the 'Harbour site' and 'Texas site' in Tullamore as identified in Figure 7.8 of the County Development Plan...

Planning Context

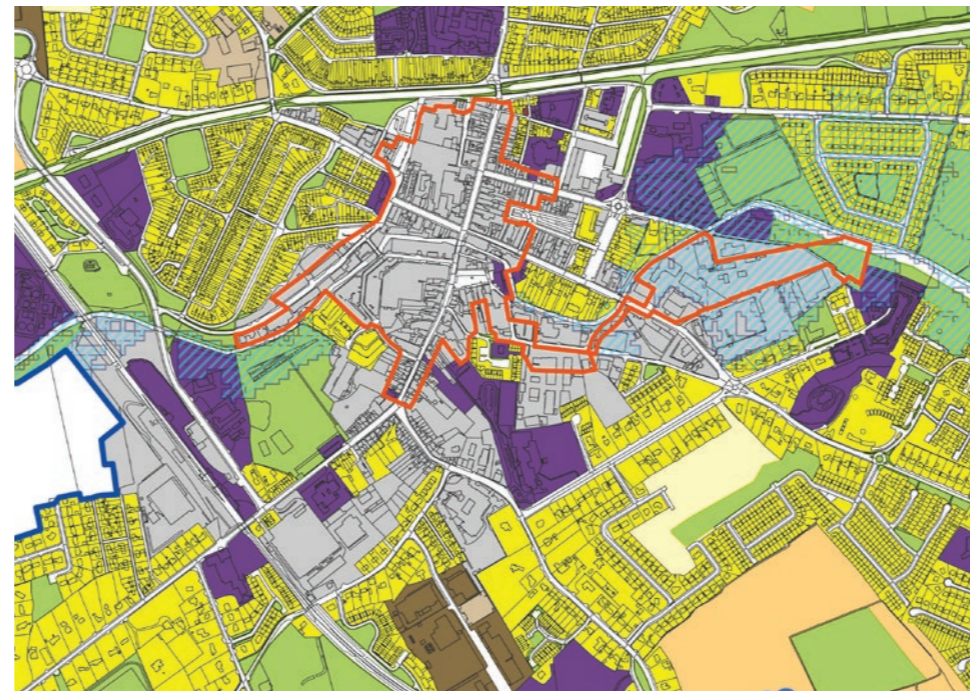
Sustainable Transport Strategy

The development plan recognises the interplay between land use and transport system use and advocates for effective spatial policies to be formulated to reduce carbon emissions and congestion. Tullamore's rail linkage to Athlone (a Regional Growth Centre) is a major asset to the town and the Iarnród Éireann Strategy 2027 sets out plans to upgrade the existing rail link. Part of this is the opportunity to develop Tullamore train station and adjoining lands to become a transport (bus/rail) node and integrate the local bus service with the rail service.

Sustainable mobility policies for Tullamore include,

- SMAP-12 It is Council policy to support the pedestrianisation and permeability of town and village centres where appropriate, in order to create accessible, attractive, vibrant and safe places. In doing this the Council will strive to support the;
 - i. Provision of 'cycle friendly' towns and villages;
 - ii. Provision of key cycling routes through larger towns;
 - iii. Potential for a walking and cycling route around Tullamore incorporating the Grand Canal, the banks of the Tullamore river and inside the barriers of the Tullamore bypass.
- SMAP-16 It is Council policy to co-operate with and encourage Iarnród Éireann to
 - i. secure the upgrading of the existing rail linkages between Athlone, Clara, Tullamore and Portarlinton
 - ii. improve the frequency of trains between Athlone and Dublin and
 - iii. ensure that train stations in County Offaly are manned and have frequent services.
- SMAP-17 It is Council policy to promote and facilitate, in co-operation with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, Iarnród Éireann and adjoining local authorities, the provision of a second rail line between Portarlinton and Athlone. In conjunction with this there is an opportunity for:

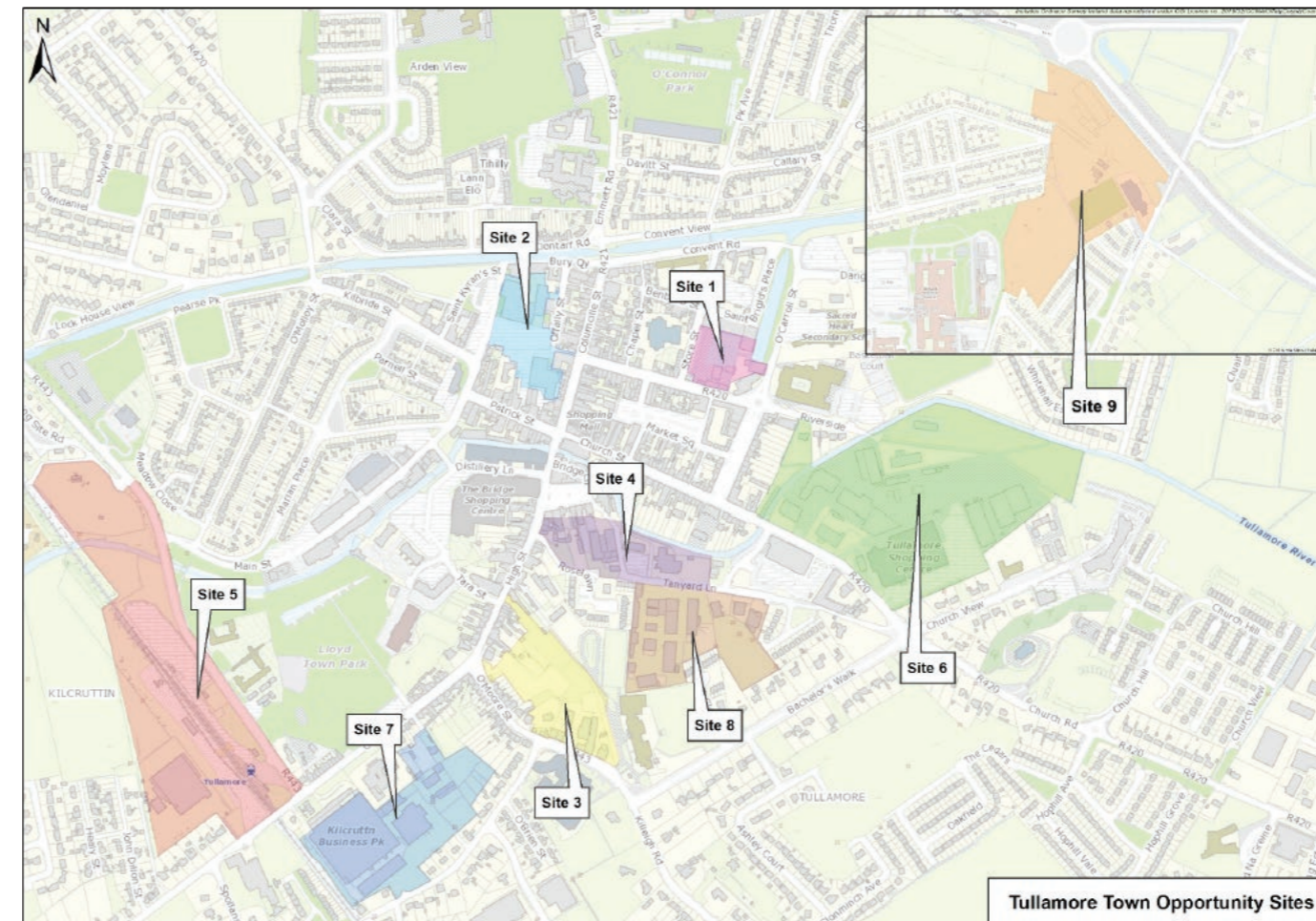
Tullamore Train Station and adjoining lands to be developed as a transport (bus/rail) node with possible integration of local bus services to serve the town and catchment area.



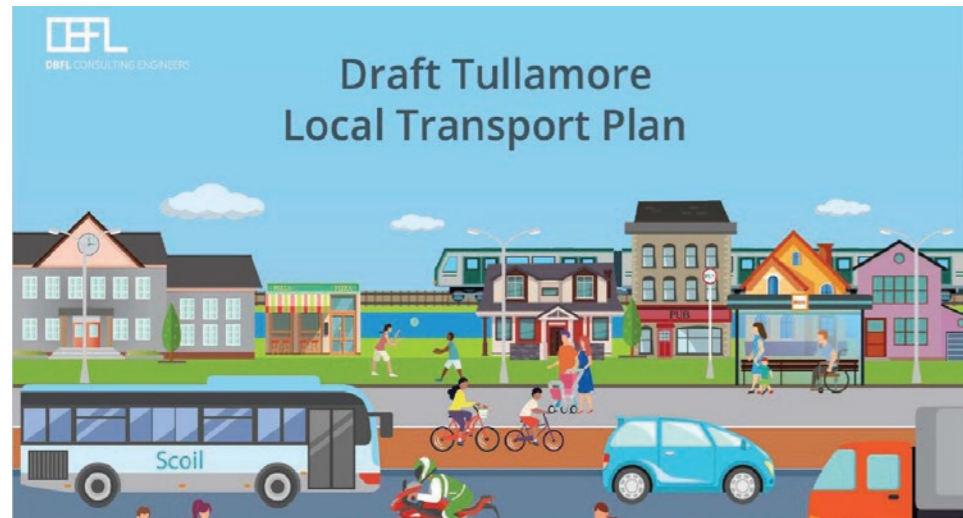
Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027
(Tullamore Town Plan)

Legend

- Open Space, Amenity and Recreation
- Business or Technology Park
- Industrial and Warehousing
- Enterprise and Employment
- Community Services/Facilities
- Strategic Community Services/Facilities Reserve
- Existing Residential
- New Residential
- Strategic Residential Reserve
- Town Centre/Mixed Use
- Neighbourhood Centre
- Constrained Land Use
- Retail Core
- Development Boundary
- Strategic Employment Zones
- Proposed Western By Pass (Indicative)
- Strategic Distributor Network And Linkages



Planning Context



Draft Tullamore Local Transport Plan 2024

The Draft Tullamore Transport Plan (LTP) is designed to support the ongoing development of Tullamore by prioritizing the assessment of transport needs and their effects on future growth. By aligning with national, regional, and local planning policies, the plan aims to promote Tullamore's evolution into a more compact, self-sufficient town. Furthermore, it seeks to elevate Tullamore's significance as a leading catalyst for employment and economic advancement across the broader Midlands region.

This comprehensive plan details every aspect of the transport assessment process and proposes interventions across all modes for each scenario evaluated along with an associated implementation plan.

Draft LTP works in coordination with the Town Centre Regeneration Framework being developed by Offaly County Council.



Draft Offaly Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030

Offaly County Council is commencing its preparation of its Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan (LABAP). It is a requirement by government under our National Biodiversity Action Plan that all local authorities and government departments have Biodiversity Action Plans in place by the end of 2026.

The Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan (LABAP) offers a systematic approach to conserving biodiversity at the local level. It delineates objectives, strategies, and actions required to safeguard and enrich biodiversity within the jurisdiction of each local authority. Developed in accordance with national and international biodiversity commitments, as well as regional and local policies, the plan is informed by extensive consultation and complies with existing environmental legislation. By providing a framework for collaboration with local communities, agencies, NGOs, and landowners, the LABAP facilitates the implementation of projects aimed at documenting and preserving local biodiversity within broader regional and national contexts. Until 2024, biodiversity initiatives were integrated into the Offaly Heritage Plans. With the appointment of a dedicated biodiversity officer in March 2023 and increased resources, there is now a concerted effort to develop a comprehensive plan to address the biodiversity crisis.

Offaly County Council has commenced the process and plans to finalise the plan by the end of 2024.



Offaly Climate Action Plan 2024 - 2029

The Offaly Climate Action Plan 2024-2030 is a strategic document developed by Offaly County Council that outlines the county's approach to addressing climate change. It sets out specific goals, targets, and actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enhance resilience to climate impacts, and transition to a low-carbon, sustainable future.

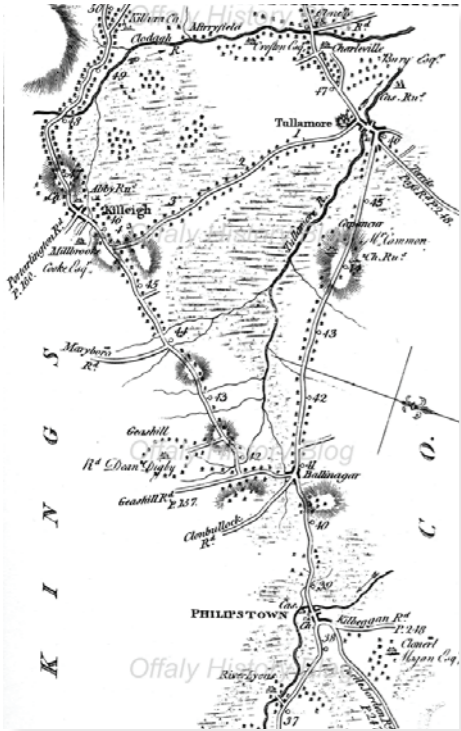
The plan covers various sectors such as energy, transport, agriculture, waste management, and adaptation measures. It aims to engage stakeholders, raise awareness, and mobilize resources to achieve its objectives over the specified timeframe.

Offaly Climate Action Plan plan sets out more than 100 actions for the council directly, and it also outlines a role for the council to lead, support and advocate for climate action across broader society.

Historic Context

THE STORY OF TULLAMORE:

ORIGINS OF THE TOWN



- 1556 - Tullamore formed as part of the Plantation of Offaly under Queen Mary I in response to rebellions from the O Moores and O Connors.
- Subject lands were divided, Offaly became King's County and Laois became Queen's County

Down Survey of Ireland, Offaly (Source: National Library of Ireland)

18TH & 19TH CENTURY EXPANSION

- 1728 - Tullamore appears in the Moll Atlas as a distinctive townland.
- 1785 - the Great Fire of 1785 caused nearly a hundred houses and offices to be burnt following the release of a fire balloon.
- Rebuilding programme began under Charles William Bury's direction and is later described in the Statistical Survey of the King's County as having "risen phoenix-like from its ashes to its present pre-eminence. It is certainly the best town in the county, and bids fair to be little inferior to any town in Ireland." Tullamore's gridded street network today is considered to be a result of this extensive rebuilding programme.
- 1798 - the Grand Canal is completed in Tullamore and acts as the terminus until the line is extended to Shannon Harbour in 1804. Tullamore experienced increased prosperity due to the enhanced connection to Dublin and the Shannon Rivers.
- The town centre is largely formed and today still resembles that as in William Larkin's map of 1809. The industries of Tullamore are noted in 1801 to be distilling, brewing and linen manufacturing.
- Town experiences urbanisation and industrialisation as the economy experiences a boost from brewing activities.
- 1835 - Tullamore becomes the County Town Replacing Daingean.
- 1840-60 - the town receives improvements such as the implementation of a footpaths and sewer network, street lighting.
- 1854 - Tullamore railway station is opened and improves the position of the town.



Section of William Larkin's Map of 1809, (Source: Offaly History Blog)

Historic Context

THE STORY OF TULLAMORE:

20TH C, PLANNING THE TOWN

- 1920 - County name changed from King's County to Offaly
- 1950 - Frank Gibney completes the first non-statutory plan for the town. Housing areas are zoned for expansion to the north and south, in yellow.
- Six town plans drive the formation of Tullamore Town.
- 1903 - Low cost housing provided for the first time, by 1938 almost 350 houses were built. 1903, Emmet Terrace was completed, 1907 Davitt Street completed, 1914 Convent View and O'Brien Street completed 1914.
- 1913 - The Council first explore the creation of a Town park. The site formerly known as Lloyd's Field was acquired by Offaly County Council in the 1980s and was designed by Brady Shipman & Martin in the same decade as a Special Youth Employment Scheme Project.



Frank Gibney Tullamore Town Plan Map, (Source: The Civic Visions of Frank Gibney, Fergal MacCabe)

2000, RAPID EXPANSION



- Tullamore experiences rapid growth and urbanisation with residential development and infrastructural upgrades.
- 2000 - Tullamore Distillery Heritage Centre opened in the original warehouse.
- 2002 - Tullamore receives 'Gateway' status within the Midlands
- 2009 - Saints and Scholars Tullamore Bypass completed including the construction of five river crossings, a Grand Canal crossing, railway crossing, two underpasses and two bridges.
- 2000 to 2008 - Public facilities advanced in the areas of education, recreation, social infrastructure and healthcare.
- 2005 to 2008 - Lyoyd Park extensively redesigned to include buildings such as Acres Hall, the Folly on the Hill and the Old Kilcruttin Cemetery.
- 2012 - Tullamore Central Library is opened.

Historic Context

TOWN EVOLUTION



HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHY



William Street around 1914



Charleville Square between ca. 1865-1914



Grand Canal 1947

Town Centre Heritage & Natural Assets

TOWN CENTRE HERITAGE



Key Observations:

- Historic Town Core
- Strong presence of the Grand Canal at the centre of town. Lesser presence of the Tullamore River which is often hidden in the town centre.
- Large amount of well preserved historic and protected structures and buildings
- Green spaces throughout the town centre lacking connectivity
- Historic Walking Route through Town Centre Core

- Historic Town Core
- Blue Corridors
- Green Network
- Historic Walking Route
- Protected Structures

Town Centre Heritage Assets

TULLAMORE HERITAGE



P. H. Egan Ltd., Maltsters



Whitehall Bridge



O'Connor Square



Tullamore Courthouse



Tullamore Gaol



Tullamore Methodist Church



Tullamore Town Hall



Former Distillery Water Mill



Church of the Assumption

Town Centre Natural Assets

GRAND CANAL



Grand Canal @ Kilbride Park

TULLAMORE RIVER



Tullamore River @ Lloyd Town Park

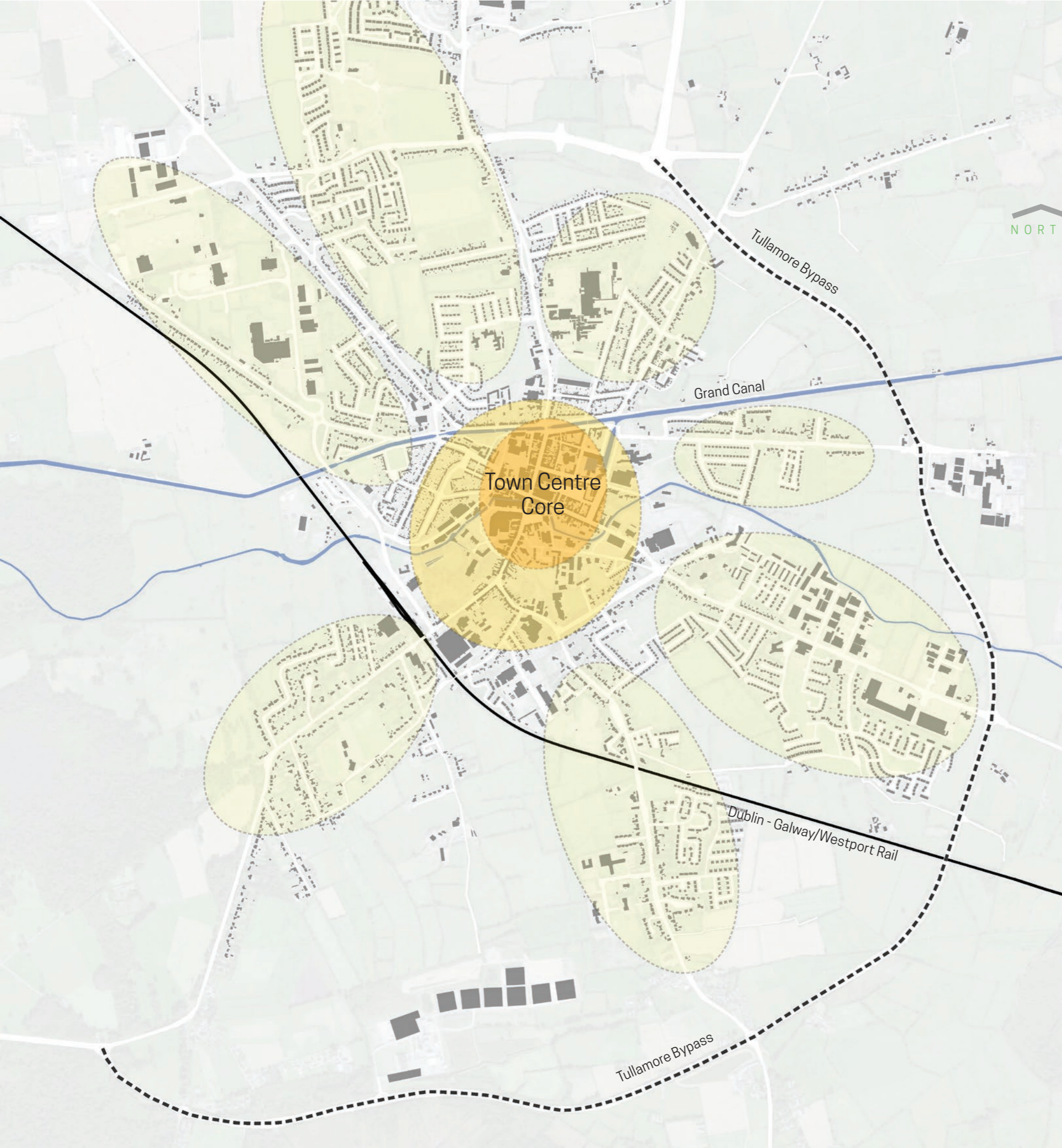


Grand Canal @ Cox's Bridge



Tullamore River @ Riverside

Town Urban Form

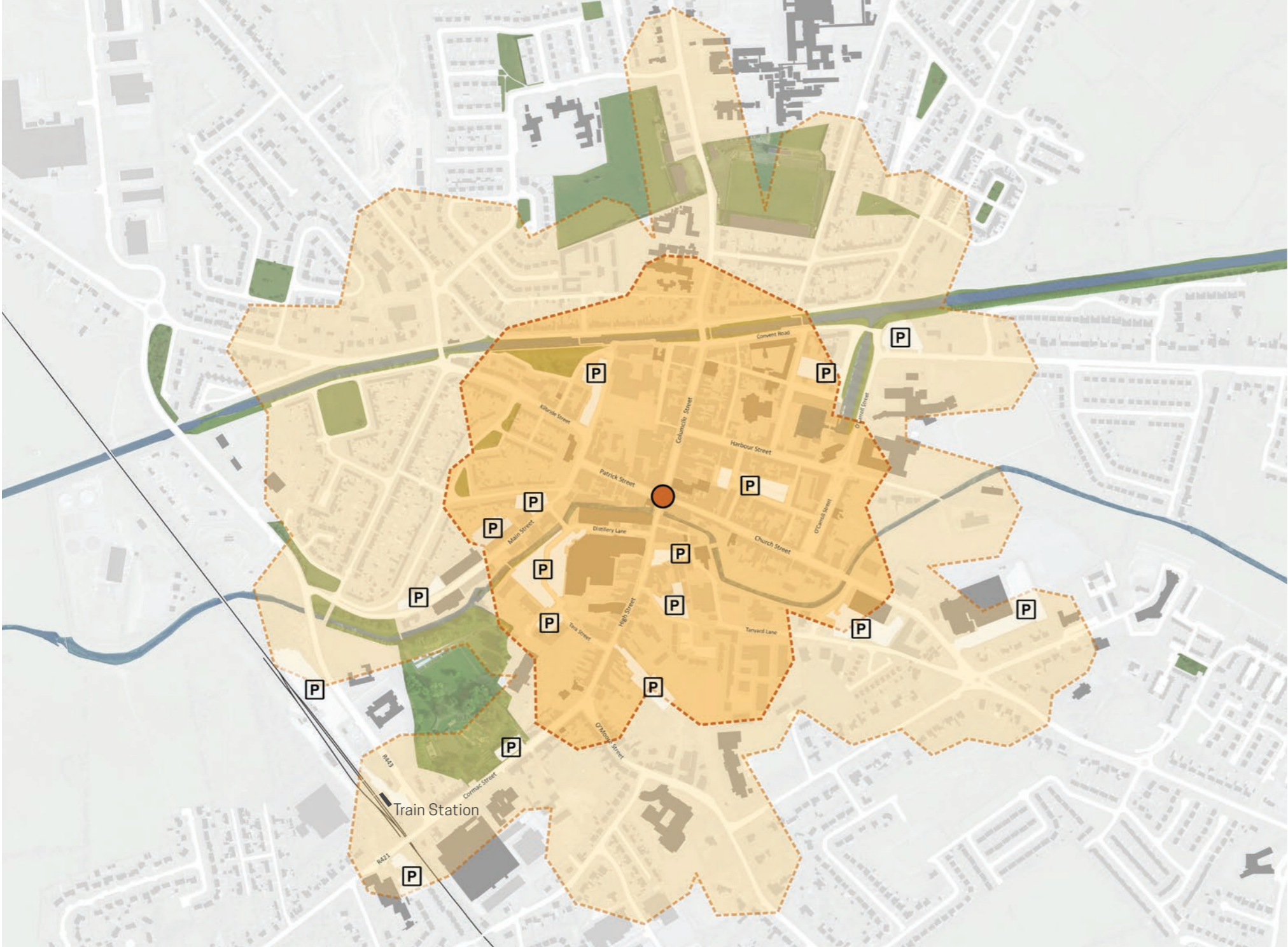


Key Observations:

- Concentrated urban centre with dispersed suburban development, warehousing and industrial uses.
- Compact core with a loosely gridded street network with fine urban grain.
- Periods of development have occurred along the radial pattern of the road network. Key post-industrial additions are suburban developments to the north and south of the town core, additional commercial and retail uses to the east and industrial uses on the approach to the town.
- Suburban style additions to the town's form break from the traditional street patterns with curvilinear street layouts and monofunctional uses.

10-minute Walkable Town Centre

WALKING RANGE



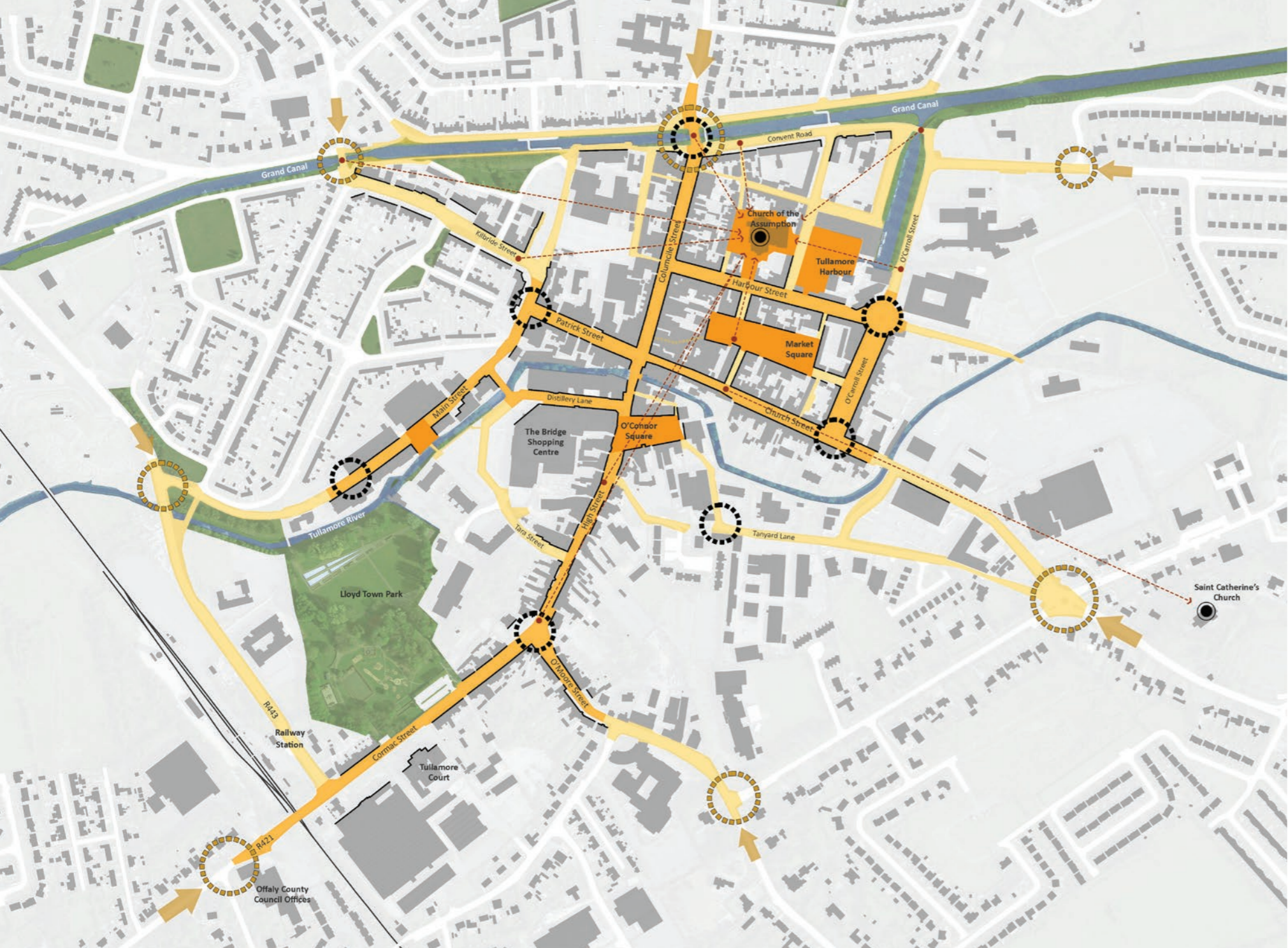
Key Observations:

- Compact town with transport infrastructure, key destinations and community uses all in walking distance of town centre.

- 10 min Walking Distance
- 5 min Walking Distance
- Key Carparks

Town Centre Urban Structure

URBAN FORM



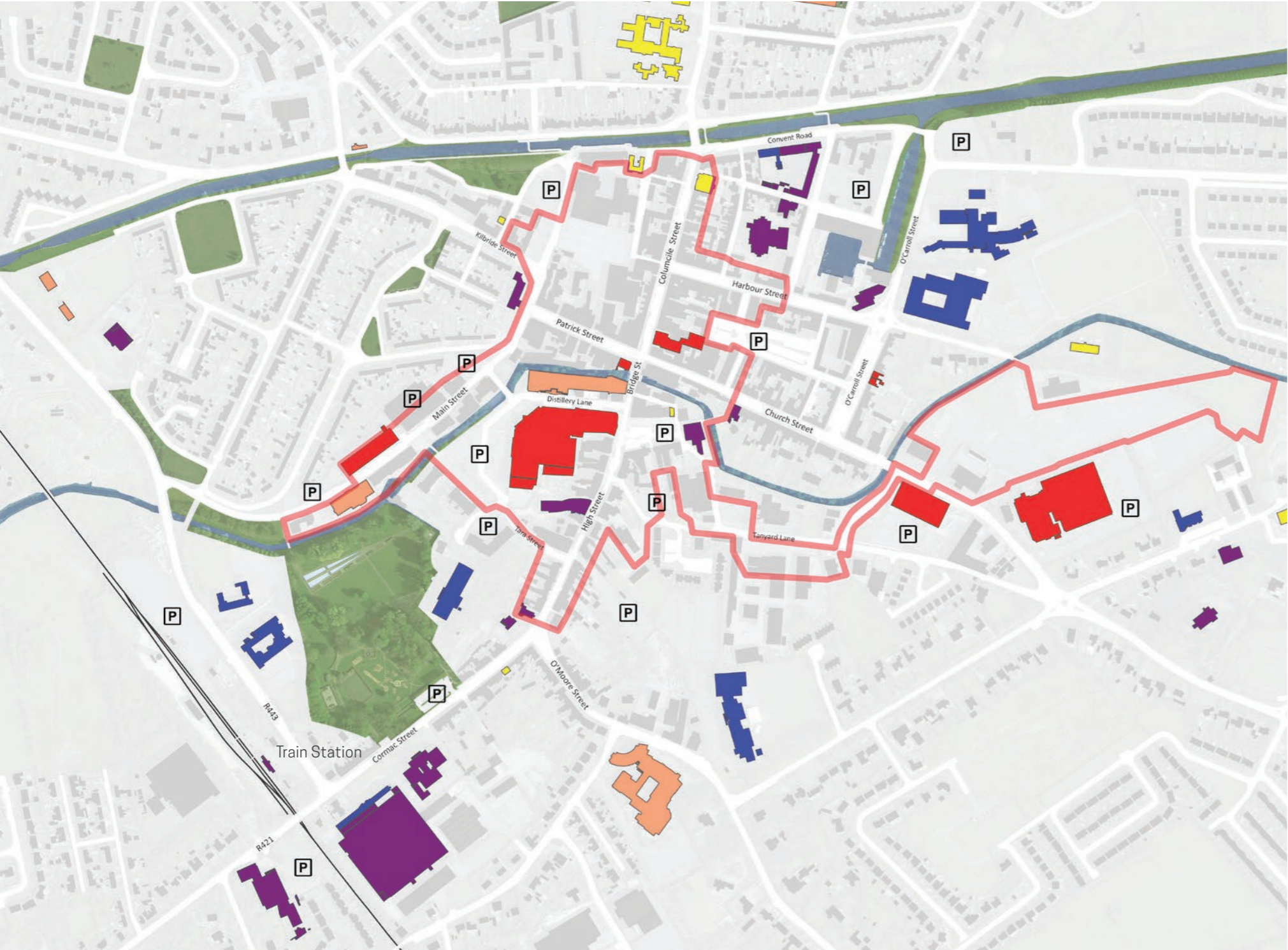
Key Observations:

- Urban structure concentrated around gridded street network of High Street, Columcille Street, Church Street, Harbour Street and O'Connell Square.
- Street pattern today was largely established between the 1780s and the 1950s.
- Strong frontages facing onto historic streets,
- The Church of the Assumption local landmark connects much of the town through key vistas and offers a visual anchor.
- St. Catherine's Church, the second local landmark, is removed from the town centre
- Tullamore River meanders through the Town Centre
- Grand Canal as strong asset to the north edge of the Town Centre

- Key Urban Spaces
- Key Streets
- Secondary Streets / Laneways
- Blue Network
- Green Spaces
- Primary Frontages
- Local Landmarks
- Strong Vistas
- Town Centre Core Gateways
- Town Centre Entry Points

Key Attractors & Destinations

ESTABLISHED DESTINATIONS



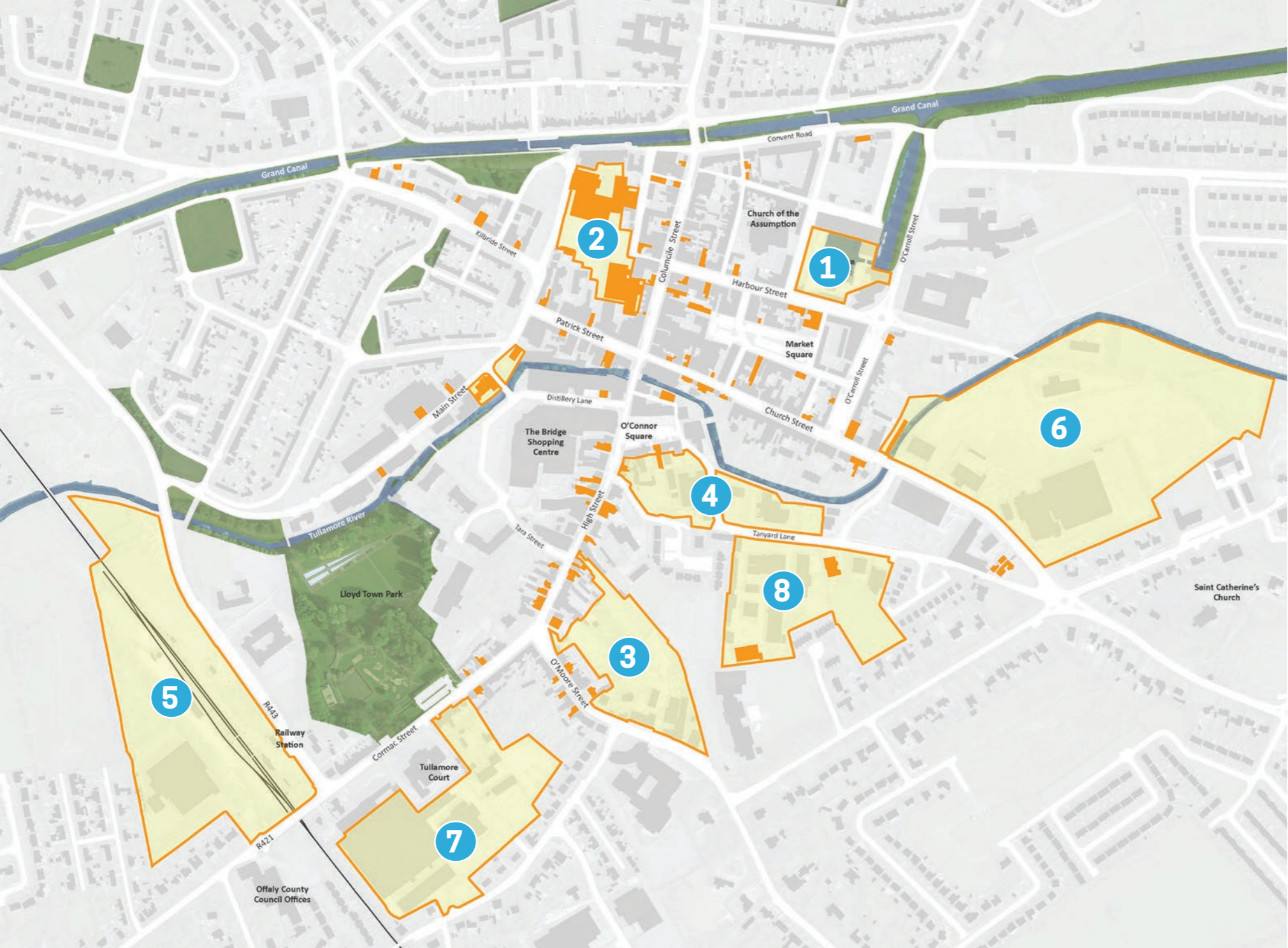
Key Observations:

- Central cruciform of streets represents the main retail zone and destinations. Retail destinations to the east detract from the centre, fulfilling mostly food shopping needs.
- Educational facilities are located along the periphery of the town and well positioned at town centre entry points or core gateways.
- The primary civic functions of the town are clustered at north and south, edge of centre.
- Extensive surface car parking situated throughout the town as well as immediately beside major destinations and attractors.

- Retail Core (County Development Plan 2021-2027)
- Key Retail Anchors/ Destinations
- Community/Public
- Education
- Leisure
- Health & Medical
- Recreational / Amenity
- P Key Carparks

Vacancy & Opportunity Sites

EXTENT OF VACANCY & OPPORTUNITY SITES



Key Opportunity Sites:

- 1 Grand Canal Harbour - 0.834ha
- 2 Texas - 1.475ha
- 3 Lands behind High Street/ O'Moore Street- 2.349ha
- 4 Lands South of O'Connor Square - 1.984ha
- 5 Railway Lands - 9.921 ha
- 6 Coen - 9.815ha
- 7 Lands Behind the Court - 4.055ha
- 8 Tanyard Lands - 2.994ha

Vacant Buildings (Jan 2023)
 Opportunity Sites

Potential Opportunities

UNLOCK OPPORTUNITY SITES



Grand Canal Harbour Site



Texas Site



Railway Lands

IMPROVE GRAND CANAL & TULLAMORE RIVER WATERFRONT



Grand Canal at Bury Quay



Grand Canal at Convent Road



Tullamore River at Riverside

Potential Opportunities

TACKLE VACANCY & DERELICTION



Former grain mill distillery



Harbour Street



Church Street

IMPROVE QUALITY OF STREETScape & GREENING



Church Street



Church Street



Water Lane

Potential Opportunities

RE-EXAMINE VEHICULAR SPACE ALLOCATION, IMPROVE WALKING & CYCLING



Church Street



Harbour Street



R443

PROVIDE MISSING LINKS, POTENTIAL NEW COMMUNITY SPACES AND IMPROVE LANEWAYS



Bridge Shopping Centre carpark



Market Square



Offaly Street



Durrow Lane

SCOT Analysis

STRENGTHS

The features of the town are successful and set it apart from others

- County Town
- A strong Midlands location
- Fourth most populous town in the midlands region
- Historic character, features and assets
- Tullamore River and Grand Canal
- On the rail network
- Midlands Regional Hospital
- Walkable town centre
- Lloyd Town Park
- Good selection of schools
- High levels of footfall on High Street/ Columcille Street
- Well-established local community with steady population growth
- Strong growth potential with number of opportunity sites identified
- Diverse range of uses in the town centre
- Quality public realm at High Street/ Columcille Street
- A diverse population with broad range of skillsets available locally
- Good sports clubs and facilities in the town
- Town Events
- Healthy base of retail and trade
- Tullamore Distillery
- Active local business community
- Esker Arts Centre

CHALLENGES

The aspects of the town that puts it at a disadvantage and could be improved

- Vacancy
- Dereliction
- Large empty sites in the middle of Town Centre
- Dominance of vehicles
- Cycle accessibility and safety
- Limited public transport options
- Underperforming commercial core in terms of its retail offering
- Lack of quality affordable shopping/retail flagship stores
- Pedestrian safety and accessibility
- Quality of shopfronts
- Street clutter, esb poles, bollards, etc.
- Lack of greenery in public realm
- Evening, night and weekend time economy is limited
- Parking management and behaviours across the town
- A lack of housing choice in the Town Centre
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Limited disabled/ e-charge parking

OPPORTUNITIES

What can be changes an how can the strengths of the town be built upon

- Activate key opportunity sites
- Re-purpose vacant and underutilized buildings
- Promote a diverse range of town centre uses
- Improve retail offering and housing options in the town centre
- Enhance connectivity and reduce walking and cycling distances
- Enhance the quality of the pedestrian and cycling environment
- Prioritize the transition to active travel and eliminate traffic dominance
- Create an accessible and inclusive streetscape
- Regenerate the Town Centre Public Realm
- Enhance and diversify public and green spaces
- Introduce greening, planting, and sustainable drainage measures
- Implement sustainable mobility measures
- Incorporate high-quality energy systems
- Capitalize on the Tullamore River and Grand Canal as valuable assets
- Create and improve walking and cycling routes along Tullamore River and Grand Canal
- Create legible and attractive entry points to the town centre
- Enhance the town's program of events and activities
- Achieve a better balance between public space and road space

THREATS

What external factors could impede the success of the town

- External economic factors, inflationary pressures and risk of recession on businesses and the community
- Business/employment/tourism competition from nearby towns
- Online retail continues to overtake local businesses
- Lack of engagement from land owners could negate attempts to tackle vacancy and dereliction
- Poor maintenance of historic structures
- Potential concerns/resistance about reducing on-street car parking
- Lack of funding opportunities
- Climate change impacts and associated weather event



Public Engagement

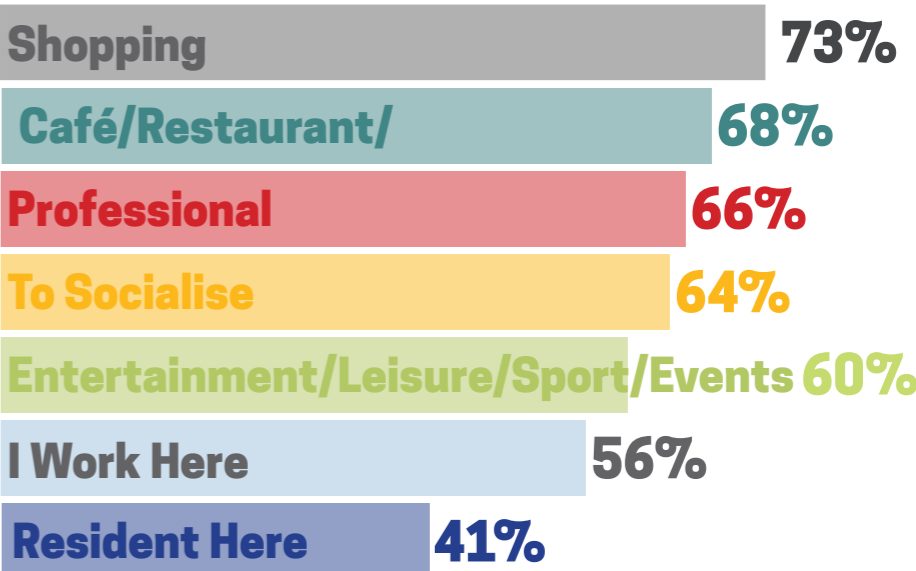
Community Survey Highlights

PUBLIC SURVEY SYNOPSIS

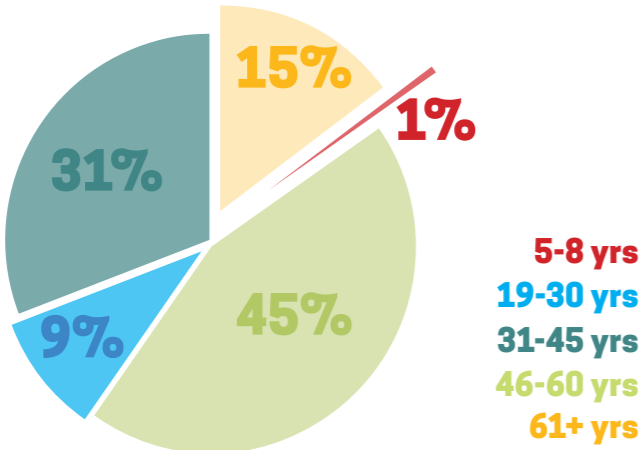
Our online public survey had 182 respondents and asked about the people of Tullamore, the Town Centre's strengths, what required improvement, the people's aspirations and desires for the town. This survey was advertised through Offaly County Council's website, local news outlets, and local radio service. The findings of this survey have informed the Project Team's outlook and approach to regeneration within the town.

182 Online Responses

Why respondents visit Tullamore Town Centre



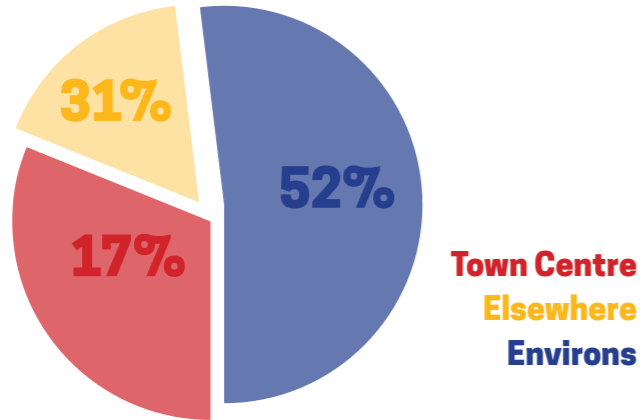
Age Profile of Survey Respondents



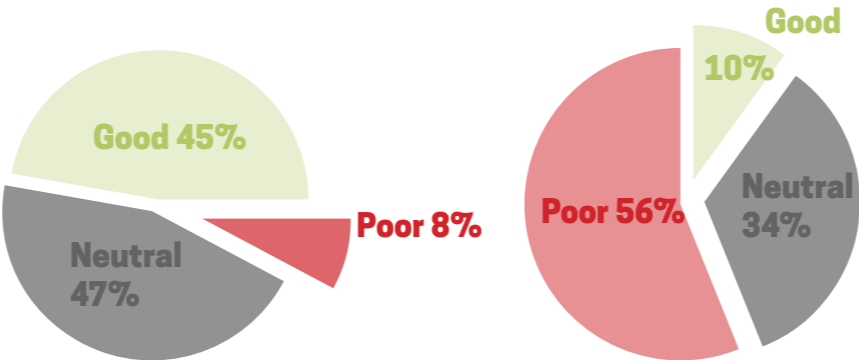
Finding Parking in Tullamore is?



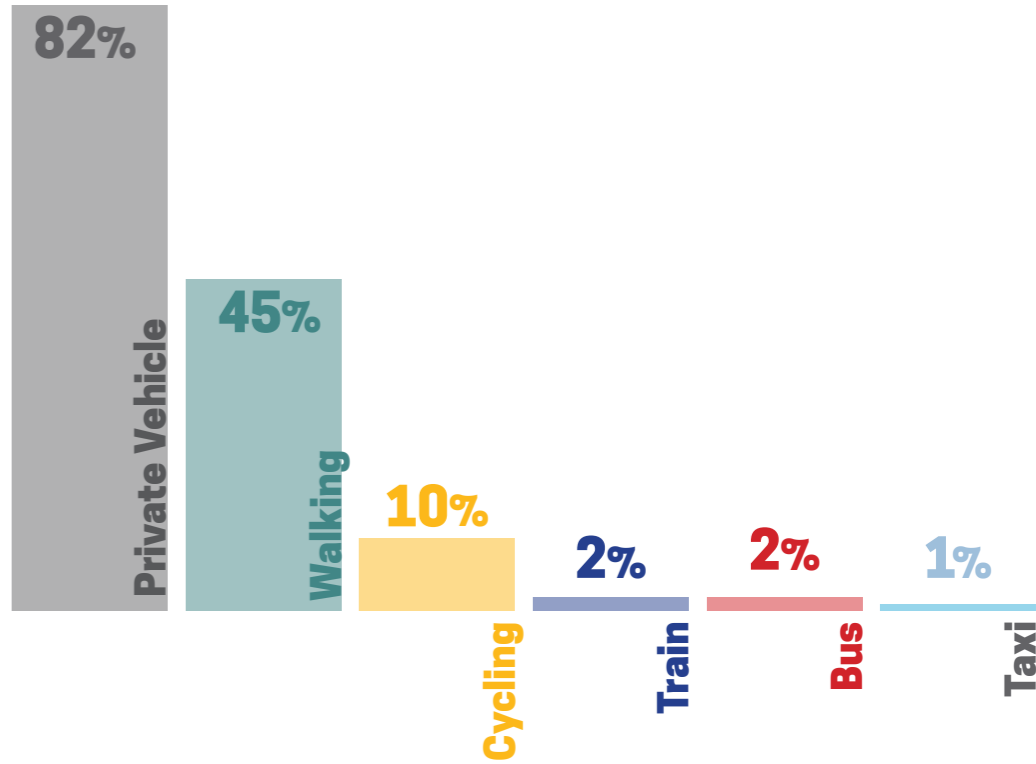
Where Respondents Live?



Town Centre quality and safety for pedestrians is?

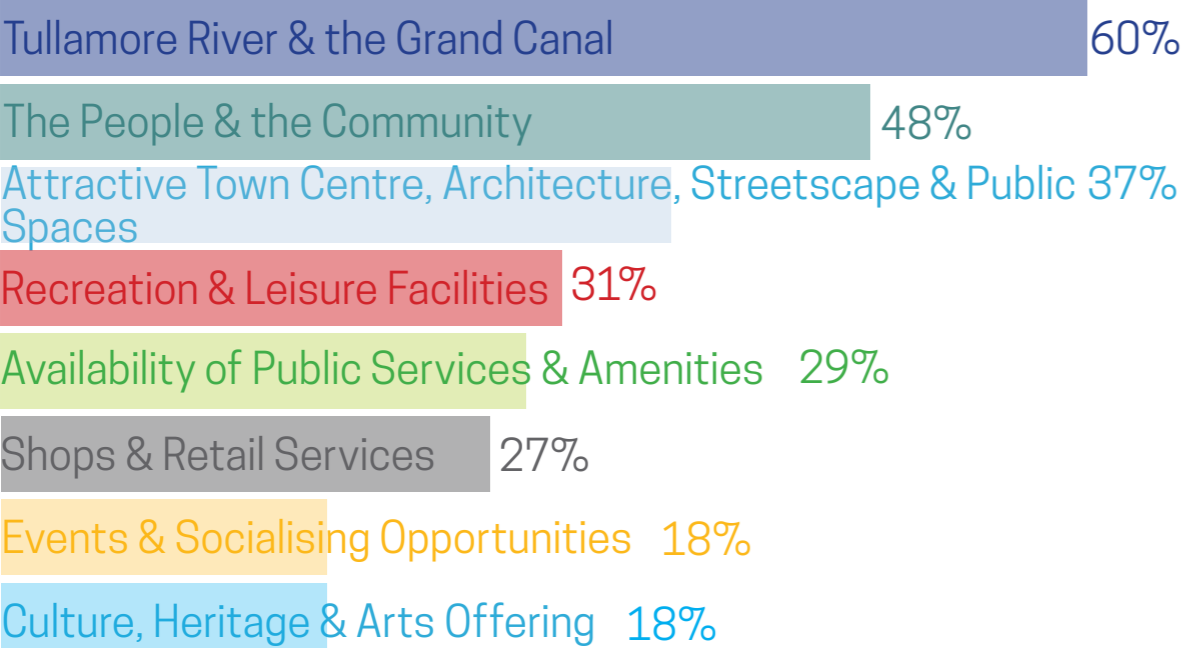


How respondents usually get to Tullamore Town Centre



Community Survey Highlights

What are Tullamore's 3 greatest assets?

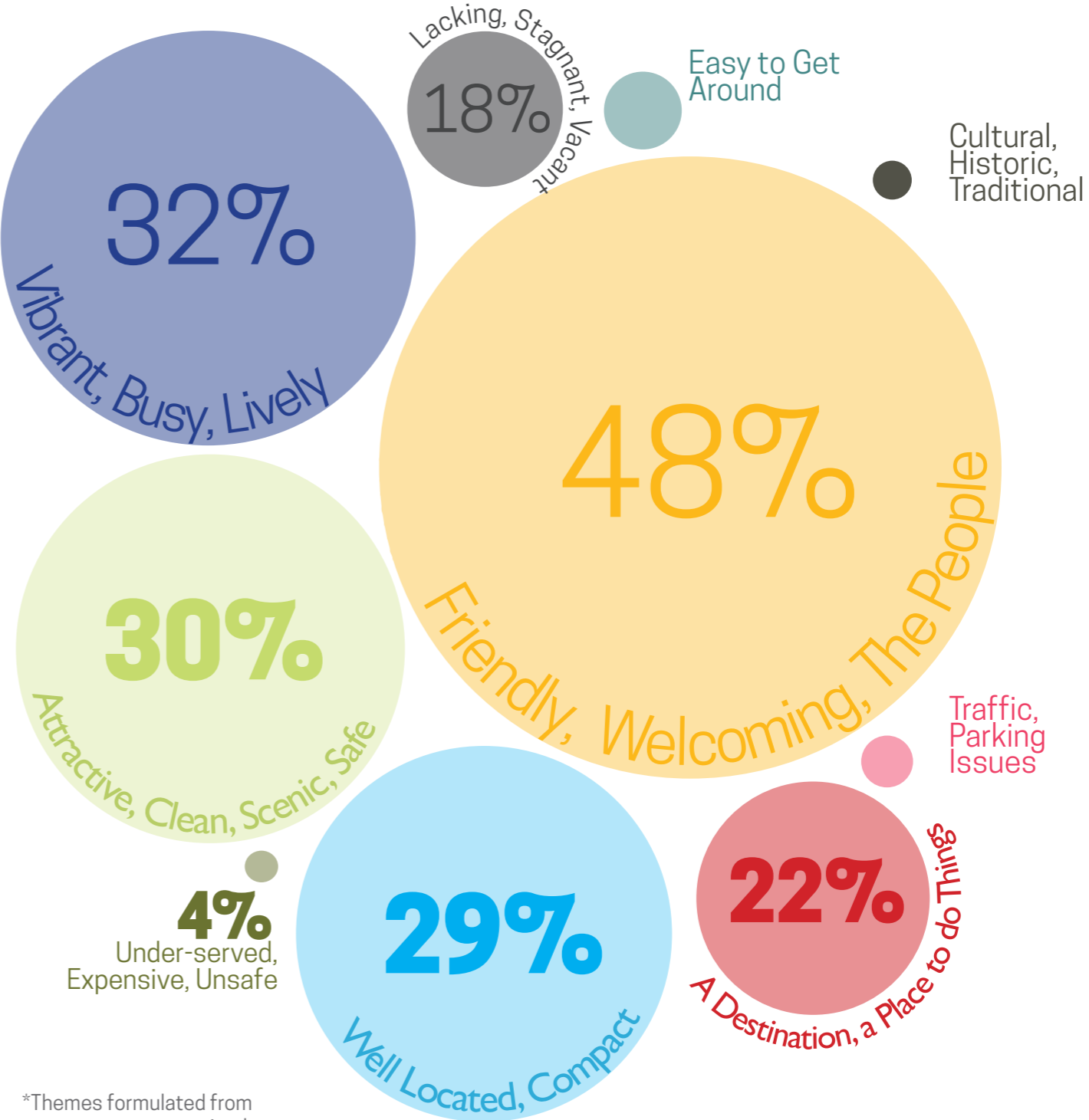


How respondents describe Tullamore:



Community Perceptions

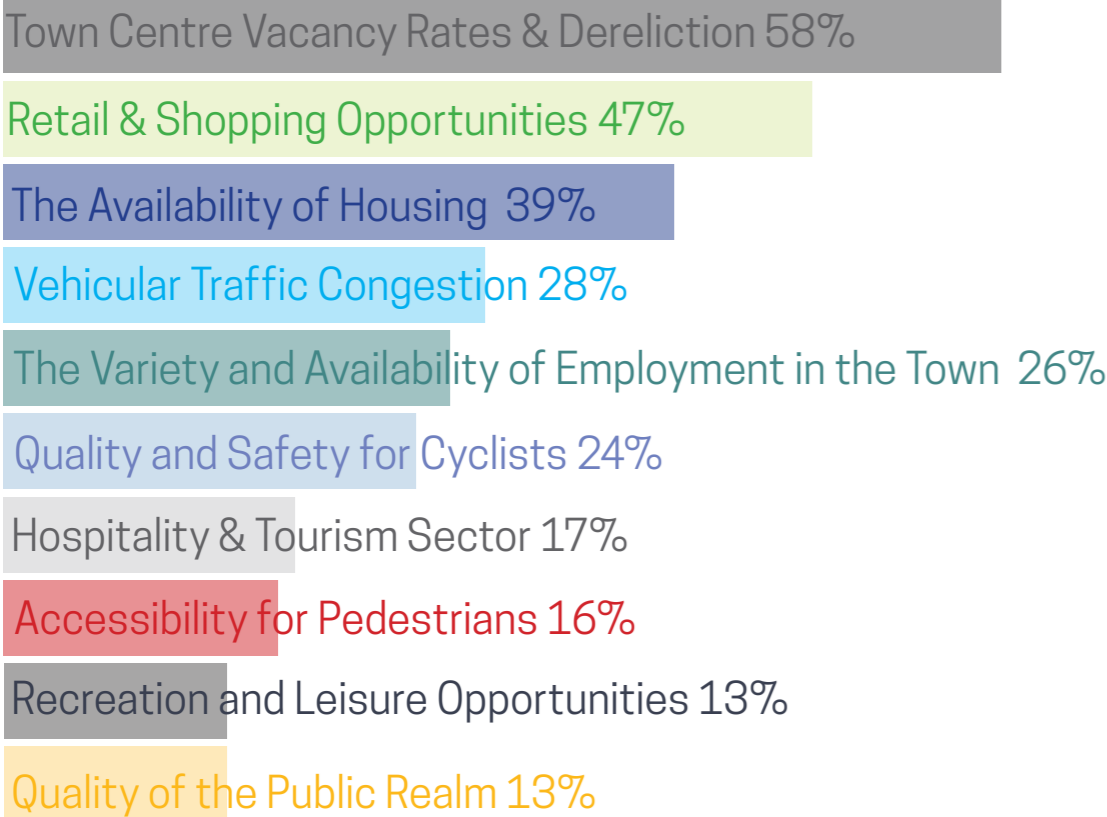
How respondents describe Tullamore*



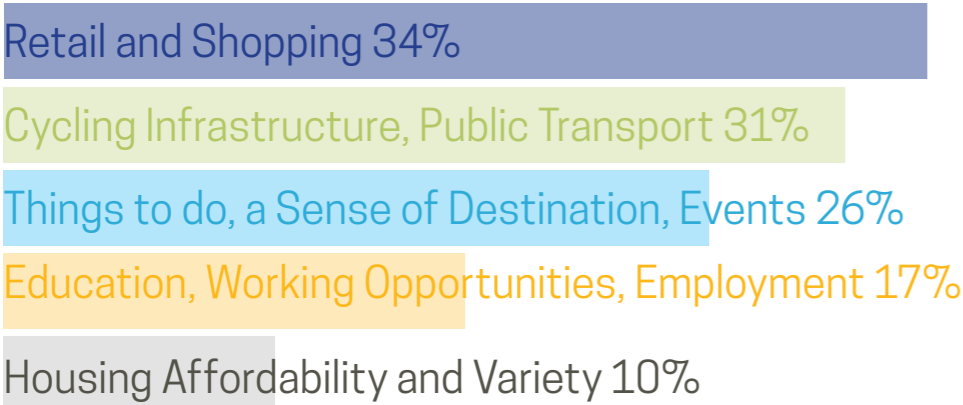
*Themes formulated from responses received.

Community Survey Highlights

What are the 3 biggest challenges to Tullamore’s future growth



What respondents thought Tullamore is missing



The above 5 themes were identified amongst responses received

What is Tullamore Missing?

*Online survey responses received when asked 'What is Tullamore Missing in Your Opinion?'

“Better facilities for people walking, especially people with additional needs or who need assistance...”

“Tullamore is suffering in its core from larger retail stores being located in the retail park... There is a lack of business diversity in the Town Centre..”

“...Student accommodation for students on clinical placement in the hospital, doctors on rotation and students going to college in Athlone. Keep people in the town, affordable good accommodation serving across multiple groups...”

“The town is missing focal points telling locals and visitors about our history...”

“Many buildings are run down, vacant and derelict and the town has great potential for business and housing opportunities”

“I welcome the shared bike scheme that has been brought in, however... it would have been better to have protected bike infrastructure in place prior to the bike scheme... there is no protected cycling infrastructure and it would deter me from using the facility”

“...Tullamore’s strengths are the welcome from its residents, its accessibility by bicycle, boat, foot and train its location close to green areas and in the middle of Ireland’s ‘heartlands’. It has all the components to grow as a thriving centre for locals and tourists of all ages and abilities by upgrading its heritage facilities, building eco housing without high rise stress and pressure, creating car parks on the outskirts and hop on/off buses into the centre...”

Community Survey Highlights

Your Ideas for the Town Centre Regeneration

What 3 things respondents thought would most improve Tullamore

- Tackle Town Centre Vacancy Rates and Dereliction 59%
- Enhance River and Canal Access and Frontages 34%
- Expansion of Retail Space and Offer in the Town Centre 31%
- Enhance the Public Realm, Streets and Spaces for People 30%
- Develop Underutilised Areas to Broaden Town Centre Offering 30%
- Improve Connectivity within Town Centre and Beyond 26%
- Introduce Town Centre 'Greening' Opportunities 18%
- Reduce the Impact of Private Vehicles on the Public Realm 18%
- Reinforce Sense of Arrival and Enhance 'Welcome' Experience 16%
- Preservation and Conservation of Historical Assets 15%

Urban Greening & Green Space Enhancements 15%

"I believe town centre greening opportunities, such as e.g. community orchard, rewilded green spaces, the introduction of bee bricks in all new builds... could help create a sense of community whilst mitigating the impact of climate"

"Tullamore is a lovely town needing TLC. Walking from Cormac St. Down to the canal the number of closed/empty/dilapidated buildings creates a false impression of the town"

Address Vacancy & Dereliction 15%

"More housing needed for families, singles and older people"

Affordability & Variety of Housing 13%

Improved Cycling & Pedestrian Movement 38%

"It's impossible to get in and out of town if you've no car..."

"Negotiate with transport systems to enhance trains and buses stopping in Tullamore and the people will come and you won't have to worry about extra parking and it will help to reduce climate change"

"Tullamore needs more public transport as we don't want to walk 25 minutes into town but always using a car feels crazy for such a short distance"

"Need to reduce car dominance within ad around the town centre and cycle facilities need to be drastically improved"

"Sustainable transport links but still maintain its community feel"

"Pedestrian safety on footpaths in the Town Centre and the environs. I walk with a young adult with a disability"

"Unlike many towns in Ireland, it has a road structure already in place and a train station linking it with cities around Ireland. With the addition of hop-on/off small buses, the town could be car-free and be a welcoming place for boaters, cyclists, walkers arriving along the Grand Canal ad for those arriving by car and train to its outskirts"

"Improve segregated cycle lanes and remove a significant amount of car parking from Market Square and O'Connor Square"

Activities & Things to Do 32%

Address Traffic & Parking Issues 19%

"Co-ordination of traffic lights and parking to stop the town being snarled up with traffic. Reduce on-street parking by having better, cheaper car parks adjacent to the main streets..."

"Local electric bus service that can be used along all school routes to reduce school traffic"

"Continue encouraging outdoor seating for cafes and expand where possible"

"Make O'Connor Square fully pedestrianised with rates and incentives for outdoor dining establishments to breathe a bustle in the square"

"Promote the creation of more public realm spaces, better access or connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists around town and surrounding amenities..."

Improved Public Realm 25%

"The first-floor balcony area of the town library is a lost opportunity to develop an elevated live stage arena...set around O'Connor Square. A live stage, in the centre of Tullamore, with proper sounds and lights, elevated above the crowd in a council controlled building... the opportunity to showcase Tullamore"

"There is an open flat area at the bottom of the hill in the park where the surface would just need smoothing out to accommodate roller skating... a great opportunity to develop this underused space and bring our wider community together and have a beautiful plaza to host visitors."

"Improve social aspects like public picnic areas, tourist attractions, better retailers, better usage of canal, better public space like a square, modern shopping centre, outdoor experience like fishing and mountainbiking. I love this town but it could be so much better with some changes."