

**Offaly County Council**

**Urban Regeneration and Development Fund**  
**Tullamore Urban Regeneration and Development Call 2**  
**URDFOff002**

**Tullamore Regeneration Framework**

**Public Consultation**  
**Report on Submissions**

**October 2024**

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## 1. Introduction

The Tullamore Urban Regeneration and Development Fund 2020 (URDF 2) Project incorporates six individual projects building on the successful completion of the Tullamore Street Enhancement project funded under URDF 1.

The URDF 2 Project will continue to build on the success of URDF 1. Each of the six projects, as listed below, are straightforward and deliverable in the short to medium term however will bring advantages to the town beyond their individual scope and represent value for money and a good return on the investment.

A: O'Connor Square to Church Street, Urban Garden, Civil Building / RW Hub

B: High Street to Tanyard New Street Link

C: Meath Lane Civic Space

D: Tullamore Regeneration Framework

E: Tullamore Harbour Development Options and Viability Appraisal

F: Acres' Folly Enhancements

Project D, Tullamore Regeneration Framework (TRF), a placemaking strategy, is an objective for Town Centre Renewal in the Eastern and Midlands RSES which identifies Tullamore as a Key Town.

The TRF proposes a framework for delivering future integrated urban developments for Tullamore by both the public and private sectors.

In line with National Planning Framework objectives and the RSES section on Tullamore Regeneration, the TRF will aim to assist by setting the vision for the development of a number of key opportunity sites, potentially to be primed by the public sector but delivered largely by the private sector. A strong suite of regeneration sites, delivered to complement each other will make for a strong town centre and the mainstay of a strong key town.

The TRF will deliver:

- Vision for Tullamore to 2040
  - A Public Realm Framework for Tullamore
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- A Regeneration & Renewal Framework
- Strategy for Sustainable Access & Permeability

Brady Shipman Martin and Faulkner Browns were appointed as the Consultancy Design team for the TRF following open competition advertised on etenders, in September 2022.

The TRF positions Tullamore Town Centre at the forefront of the town's future development. It aims to serve as a model for regeneration, promoting compact growth, creating healthy and appealing public spaces, enhancing urban resilience, improving permeability, fostering vibrancy, and encouraging sustainable mobility.

The multi-disciplinary consultancy team in Brady Shipman Martin and Faulkner Browns delivered the TRF to act as a main driver for compact mixed-use urban development within the town centre of Tullamore and seeks to establish a vision for the development of several key opportunity sites.

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## 2. Public Consultation

The first public consultation was held in May & June 2023 as an online survey for the purposes of gathering information and feedback from all stakeholders in Tullamore and environs. The information from the survey informed the development of the TRF.

The public consultation for the draft TRF commenced on 13th of June 2024 for 4 weeks to 11th July 2024 with two weeks for submissions closing on 25th July 2024. The PC was advertised with a press release in the local newspaper and on social media.

The TRF was available for inspection in the offices of Offaly County Council, Áras an Chontae, Tullamore Municipal District, Tullamore Library during normal office hours.

A presentation was given to the elected members of OCC and Stakeholders on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024. An open day was held in Tullamore Library on 20th June from 12pm to 7pm.

The TRF was available on [www.Offaly.ie](http://www.Offaly.ie) and links to the website were accessible from the Council's social media on Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn.

The public were invited to make submissions on the TRF in writing to Tullamore Municipal District, Town Hall, Cormac Street, Tullamore or submitted via email to [tullamoremd@offalycoco.ie](mailto:tullamoremd@offalycoco.ie) by 26<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

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### 3. Submissions

The public were invited to make submissions on the TRF in writing to Tullamore Municipal District, Town Hall, Cormac Street, Tullamore or submitted via email to [tullamoremd@offalycoco.ie](mailto:tullamoremd@offalycoco.ie) by 26<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

Each of the submissions were acknowledged by return email on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024. The List of Persons and Bodies who made Submissions or Observations are shown in Table 1 below.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date Received</b>	<b>Content</b>
Individual	17/6/2024	Ideas from Christchurch, New Zealand
Individual	21/6/2024	Harbour Street & Gas House Lane Traffic Management
Individual	24/6/2024	O'Connor Square parking and OS4
Individual	14/7/2024	Supporting the Framework
BDP	22/7/2024	Consultants for OS2 Town Densities lower than guidelines
Grapemont Ltd	25/7/2024	Existing planning permission on OS6
ODEN	25/7/2024	Lack of reference to disability & universal design
Tullamore Chamber of Commerce	25/7/2024	
Individual	25/7/2024	Park facilities

**Table 1 List of Persons and Bodies who made Submissions or Observations**

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#### 4. Review and Response to Submissions

Each of the submissions received have been reviewed by the project team in Offaly County Council and Brady Shipman Martin / Faulker Brown and summarised below. The response to each submission has been included in the sections below. The final draft of the TRF has been amended to reflect the same where appropriate as shown below.

##### **Individual 17/6/2024**

The submission suggested examples of ideas that worked well in Christchurch New Zealand:

1. 7-day Indoors farmers market & destination boutique shopping experience
2. Boutique Art House Cinema
3. Utilising Laneways
4. Children's playground in town centre
5. Street Art

**Response:** Proposals presented in the Regeneration Framework are preliminary design and illustrative subject to further investigation prior to detailed design, traffic studies, technical consideration, engagement with private landowners/stakeholders and planning and environmental consent. The proposals in the TRF will be further expanded upon. Additional projects/ideas are very welcomed. We welcome these suggestions and have incorporated a number already into the framework.

1. Business plan would be required to test feasibility
  2. Boutique Art House Cinema could be located at Site 02 or 04
  3. Ideas proposed in Section 'Town Centre Laneways', p. 164-5
  4. This could be incorporated into Site 04
  5. Noted in Chapter: 'A Beautiful and Characterful Town Centre, Public Art Installations'
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**Individual 21/6/2024**

The submission welcomed the TRF and highlighted the current dangers to pedestrians walking along Harbour Street, Tullamore on the south footpath towards Henry Street (O'Carroll street). Pedestrian risk, public realm suggestions to Harbour Street/Gas House Lane.

**Response:** Referenced Harbour Street / Gas House Lane proposals presented in the TRF are preliminary design and illustrative subject to further investigation prior to detailed design, traffic studies, technical consideration, engagement with private landowners/ stakeholders and planning and environmental consent.

**Individual 24/6/2024**

The submission congratulated the TRF and focused on the relationship between the proposed layout for Opportunity Site 4 and O'Connor Square that might be reassessed. In its present state the Square is not fulfilling its appropriate civic role. Pages 64 and 74 reference is made to the 'greening potential to replace existing car park' and 'potential for car park reduction' but these ideas are not explored any further in the document. The layout and uses suggested for Opportunity Site 4 might be reviewed to accommodate replacement off street parking.

**Response:** Proposals presented in the TRF are preliminary design and illustrative subject to further investigation prior to detailed design, traffic studies, technical consideration, engagement with private landowners/ stakeholders and planning and environmental consent. Parking in Opportunity Site 4 and O'Connor Square will be reassessed during detail design stage as funding becomes available.

A note has been made in the report to acknowledge that in future detailed development of Site 04, it may be designed to relocate number of parking spaces from O' Connor Square. This would support the continued enhancement of the civic quality of O'Connor Square while providing necessary.

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**Individual 14/7/2024**

The submission thanked the opportunity to get acquainted with the future plans about Tullamore and for the opportunity to express opinion about these plans.

**Response:** General message of support notes and welcomed.

**BDP 22/7/2024**

BDP have been working in Tullamore on the Texas lands opportunity site over the past numbers of years. A draft working document released by Offaly County Council (OCC) in June 2018 titled 'Texas Site Tullamore – New Urban Quarter' that identified higher densities with diversity of use. Significantly diluted ambition for the towns development in terms of achieving sustainable growth in line with national policy. Tullamore, as a significant town in Offaly, should adhere to these principles to ensure its regeneration plan aligns with broader regional goals.

The recently released Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines (2024) sets out policy and objectives on Settlement Density on pg.24 Table 3.3 that a Metropolitan town with a population greater than 1,500 should have a residential density in the range of 50dph to 150dph in town centres. The proposed density of 27 units per hectare is significantly lower than the guidelines set forth in the National Planning Framework (NPF).

The current proposal fails to align with these objectives (NPF), proposing a density that is not conducive to the vibrant, economically viable town centre that Tullamore deserves. In line with the national policy mentioned above that the DPH for the only two identified sites in the whole of Offaly should be aspiring to achieve a target of 150dph, which is over x5 higher.

The current development plan has suggested height of 6 stories on these sites but this appears to be reduced in draft proposals referring to heights of 2-5 stories. Stronger vision for the town that aligns with national policy and the principles of sustainable development and urban intensification that is economically viable and beneficial to the towns businesses and residents.

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To date historic poor local planning has led to business and retail being sprawled outside of the town centre, this should be discouraged. The question of viability is crucial, given the scale and location of the proposed regeneration development. The current plan, while having some attractive qualities, does little to address the town's real needs. There is an urgent need for a step change to rejuvenate Tullamore's town centre. The limited number of available sites must be leveraged to their full potential, ensuring they serve as catalysts for comprehensive regeneration.

These draft proposals are significantly limiting the potential for these sites in terms of placing constraints on density, height and quantum of public space. The plan should incorporate elements that create a pull factor for both visitors and future inhabitants, such as mixed-use developments that combine retail, residential, and recreational spaces. There is increased demand for a larger retail space which the existing town does not allocate for. These contemporary retail spaces need to be provided for within the two remaining opportunity sites and shouldn't lead to further retail sprawl to out of town locations.

The Offaly County Council has previously set out a brilliant vision and ambition for the townland and its opportunity sites. However, the current proposal dilutes this vision.

In Summary:

1. Plot densities too low for site 02,04,06 (50dph to 150dph in town centres as per guidelines)
2. Building heights should be higher than 2-5 storeys
3. Large retail in 2 remaining sites
4. More 'ambitious' / dense

**Response:**

Point 1

According to the 2024 Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities, for a Key Town the guidelines state that residential densities in the range 40 dph-100 dph shall generally be

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applied in the centres and urban neighbourhoods. A note has been added in the report to recommend this density for the site.

#### Point 2

Given the history of height to the north of Site 02, the suggested building height range has been revised to 2-7 storeys.

#### Point 3

The mix for the Framework was developed in collaboration with the team economists Colliers and the Destination Developers. Large retail is already designated for the north portion of Site 02, and is proposed to the south of Site 06 as part of the Framework. This is deemed sufficient large retail provision in order to allow for diverse range of uses to creating active and vibrant places, in line with the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements guidelines.

#### Point 4

We kindly refer to the ambition of the Report which includes placemaking, creation of high-quality public space for gathering, living and showcasing the heritage of the town, as well as designing sustainable transport strategies for a climate resilient, accessible and healthy town.

The TRF team acknowledge the density (27dph) on Site 02 has been reduced due to northern half of site being removed from development scope. The submission received from BDM refers to Table 3.3 of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines (2024) stating that a Metropolitan town with a population greater than 1,500 should have a residential density in the range of 50 dph to 150 dph in town centres. It should be noted however that Tullamore is not designated a 'Metropolitan Town' in the EMRA RSES but rather a 'Key Town' (Table 4.2 Settlement Hierarchy, p.44). It should be noted also that based on its population (15,598, Census 2022) in accordance with the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines, residential densities in the range of 40 to 100 dwellings per hectare are to be applied in the centre and urban neighbourhoods of Key Towns and Large Towns (5,000 + population) such as Tullamore.

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## Key Towns and Large Towns (5000+ population) Tullamore, Edenderry, Portarlinton

Key Towns / Large Towns – Centre and Urban Neighborhoods	40-100 dph (net)
Key Towns/Large Towns – Suburban / Urban Extension	30-50 dph (net) – suburban Up to 80 dph – accessible suburban/urban extension i.e. according to Table 3.8: lands within 500m (i.e. 5-6 min walk) of existing or planned high frequency (i.e. 10 min peak hour frequency) urban bus services.

National Guidelines indicate 6 stories as a guide but also state that these cannot represent 'one size fits all' – even for a single site and that the context of the site and its environs is of great importance. Taller Building Guidelines state a taller building is 6 stories or more, and the CDP says assessment of same be carried out at application stage for the Texas and Grand Canal Harbour site.

The TRF team agree that the TRF and future detailed design should incorporate elements that create a pull factor for both visitors and future inhabitants, such as mixed-use developments that combine retail, residential, and recreational spaces.

The TRF team agree there is increased demand for a larger retail space which the existing town does not allocate for. Large retail has been allocated to Opportunity Site 2 and south of Opportunity Site 6 in in line with development guidelines for compact development and active streets.

The ambition of the report includes placemaking, creation of high-quality public space for gathering, living and showcasing the heritage of the town, designing sustainable transport strategies for a climate resilient, accessible and healthy town.

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**Grapemont Ltd 25/7/2024**

It is noted that the Regeneration Framework does not acknowledge the extant planning permission for retail-led development (approx. 14,000 sq m total (open) retail floorspace) at Opportunity Site 6 (reference ABP-306395-20 (19/96)).

It is noted that the Framework contains an entire section on 'understanding the town', but the Framework appears to not have actually achieved that.

It is considered that all relevant information should have been assessed and discussion should have been held with the landowner prior to any information being publicly issued to ensure that the community can have confidence that the Framework would be a robust document to guide future development and growth of the town. It is significantly lacking at this time and should be revised to accommodate accurate information.

The delivery of development at any site can only proceed if supported by the landowner, and accordingly the Framework can only be a successful mechanism to guide development and growth if it has the support of key landowners. A residential use is shown in the Framework, but there has been no approach to or discussion with the landowner.

**Response:** The TRF team reviewed the entire Opportunity Site 6 anew to offer an ambitious and long term strategy for the site that aligns with ambitions of the development plan regarding town centre housing. Note the site boundary of this development does not match that designated as Opportunity Site 6 and this retention planning expires in two years.

The planning permission will be acknowledged in the TRF.

<https://www.eplanning.ie/OffalyCC/AppFileRefDetails/1996/0>

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**ODEN 25/7/2024**

There is a lack of reference throughout the TRF to disability and the lived experience of disability. Disability and the lived experience of disability is not reflected in the language used in the report.

The TRF considers most if not all aspects of design and development but Universal Design which addresses accessibility for people with disabilities is only referenced and considered in the context of transport.

The socio-demographic profile makes no reference to disability, although "disability, health and carers" is a standard profile in the national census and 14% of the population of Offaly, or 11,154 people have at least one disability.

The foundational analysis, developed in accordance with national, regional and local policies makes no reference to national and local housing disability policies and strategies.

The survey of parking facilities did not include disabled car parking spaces either on or off street and this raises the question as to whether the importance of disabled parking spaces was considered? We are concerned that the proposed plans to rationalise parking may reduce necessary disabled parking options across the town.

A deficit, clearly identified through consultation in the Accessible Offaly Project 2023, is the need to provide a fully accessible public toilet called a 'Changing Place' in Tullamore, available and maintained 24/7.

Without the deliberate consideration of access and inclusion for disabled people as a shared priority the law of unintended consequences can mean that project aims and actions will have the potential to disadvantage or discriminate against disabled people. (see UNCRPD)

We hope that the aims and measures proposed, to encourage active travel, encourage walking and cycling and reduce reliance on motor vehicles will not

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negatively impact those who because of limited mobility or sensory or intellectual disability are reliant on cars for ease of access or direct access, to places and services

ODEN asks that planning and development of local services be carried out in consultation with disabled people who have lived experience of the local issues and understand how the decisions and outcomes can affect their day to day lives.

To support inclusive consultation, it is important that the framework information and documents are available in fully accessible formats and time is allowed for people who may need support to take part in the consultation process.

In Summary:

1. Lack of reference in report to disability and the lived experience of disability
2. Include mention of disabled parking spaces
3. Provide a Changing Place in Tullamore

**Response:** The intention of this framework is to provide both a high-level vision and number of illustrative proposals to showcase creative designs for regeneration of Tullamore Town Centre.

Proposals presented in the TRF are preliminary design and illustrative subject to further investigation prior to detailed design, traffic studies, technical consideration, (including for those with disabilities), engagement with private landowners / stakeholders and planning and environmental consent.

The TRF team acknowledge that there is a lack of reference throughout the TRF to disability and the lived experience of disability and is not reflected in the language used in the report. The final TRF will be adjust the language of themes and opportunities throughout the document to reference disability and the lived experience of disability more.

At the detail design stage, any appointed designer should consider all mentioned in the submission strategies and guidelines, particularly "Building for Everyone: A

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Universal Design Approach" which is the best practice guidance on how to design, build and manage buildings and spaces so that they can be readily accessed and used by everyone, regardless of age, size ability or disability.

Rationalised parking should not reduce necessary disabled parking options across the town. Additional age-friendly parking spaces should be considered as part of parking typologies.

A fully accessible public toilet or Changing Place is included in the proposed Church Street Enterprise Hub. This project is funded under URDF2 Project A currently at preliminary design stage and in preparation for Part 8 Planning. OCC will consult with ODEN as a stakeholder before finalising the drawings for Part 8 planning.

#### **Tullamore Chamber of Commerce 25/7/2024**

Establish an innovation and enterprise zone to attract cutting-edge businesses, support local startups, and create high-quality jobs, driving economic growth and fostering a culture of entrepreneurship.

Enhance the tourism sector by leveraging the unique cultural and historical assets, creating new attractions, and improving visitor experiences to boost local revenue and global appeal.

Invest in state-of-the-art digital infrastructure, including high-speed broadband, to ensure seamless connectivity for residents, businesses, and educational institutions, positioning Tullamore as a digital hub.

Develop sustainable transport solutions such as improved public transport networks, pedestrian-friendly streets, and extensive cycling paths to reduce traffic congestion and promote environmentally friendly mobility.

Expand and enhance the green infrastructure, including parks, community gardens, and green corridors, to improve environmental quality, promote biodiversity, and offer recreational spaces for all.

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Implement renewable energy projects, such as solar and wind farms, to reduce the carbon footprint, lower energy costs, and create a sustainable energy future for Tullamore

Develop diverse and affordable housing solutions to meet the needs of all residents, ensuring that everyone has access to safe, quality homes.

Enhance and future proof health and education facilities to provide top-tier services, fostering a healthy, well-educated population ready to meet future challenges.

The regeneration framework proposals indicate that the Railway opportunity site would be primarily residential development which suggests Tullamore is a residential commuter town. Tullamore Railway Station and surrounding lands presents a unique opportunity not to be overlooked. TCOC propose the expansion of the Tullamore Railway Station site and surrounding lands to incorporate a state-of-the-art exhibition centre and an adjoining hotel. This visionary suggestion aims to transform Tullamore into a premier destination for business, tourism, and community events, significantly enhancing the local economy and quality of life.

Site 1 Grand Canal Harbour: The proposals put forward for the Harbour are exciting for the development of Tullamore and will be a major attraction for the town. However it is TCOC opinion that Opportunity Site 1 should include the entire block up to the Grand canal to include the parish car park, parochial house and other adjoining sites. If this entire block is explored as part of the Harbour Plan it would present a more cohesive approach to this exciting site.

Site 2 Former Texas Site: 22 Apartments (page 6) is a totally insufficient ambition for a site of this size and importance in the Town Centre. Developers in outer urban sites are being told to achieve a density of 35units/Ha which is inappropriate for housing schemes in Tullamore. Density should be graduated from the centre out with 50 plus units/Ha in town centre falling to 25/HA further out where apartments are inappropriate. 26% residential is insufficient (p7/91) The density proposed for this site is 27units per Ha with a total of only 22 apartments. This is completely insufficient and disingenuous to other developers

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who are struggling to comply with the national guidelines. Where is parking replaced when it is lost off this site?

Site 4 Lands South of O'Connor Square Option A: Another public square proposed, and offices form 75% of the mix and the parking has been removed? What is the vision for back-lands parking similar to the Westport Model. Are OCC going to acquire more lands for back-lands parking. Again 2-3 storey shows little ambition for this town centre site. How can we build density?

Option B east: The high-density housing of 4-6 storeys here is welcomed but unlikely to be delivered in this location due to ownership and existing apartment building. Parking removed again so the question is where is the counterbalance. We know from previous experience that developments with removal of parking are unpalatable and both A and B propose the loss of very important town centre parking.

Site 6 Coen Site: Proposals go beyond Coen boundary to demolish Coughlan Engineering and sterilise private lands as green space on a large unsupervised block behind the retail centre, surely a wider continuous strip of green all along the river would be more appropriate. No account is taken of existing retail at the frontage or granted permission for retail. This site could deliver a lot more to Tullamore as a Mixed-use development and there are no impediments to taller buildings of 3-5/6 stories so why is such a valuable opportunity lost?

Site 3 Lands Behind High Street / O'Moore Street: As with sites 2 and 4 there is a loss of yet another back land car park. Could the team explore the provision of new back land parking in appropriate locations or perhaps consider retaining some of these valuable car parks. We cannot be proposing pedestrianised streets if there are no parking provisions off street. Is there an opportunity here to get a connection for pedestrians to the Tanyard/Roselawn? Residential and Senior Living suggestions should be welcomed.

Site 5 Railway Lands: This is the only site proposing more than 6 storeys is on the edge of town and adjoining existing 2 storey residential with a proposed 255 units in total, does this suggest that Tullamore should be a commuter town? Surely an

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office/mixed use development could present a more sustainable scenario where employees from out of town could come to work at this hub? Could a mix be considered? Could it be a convention space or Expo space with a hotel possibly be of more benefit to the town?

Could the green space to the front of the station not be put to better use as a multi storey car park to serve the town and the station? Do we need another park at the train station when there is one across the road through Scoil Mhuire?

Offaly County Council offices are creaking at the seams, surely an expansion of the OCC offices onto this site would be sustainable?

Potential for this site to allow for a fully redeveloped commercial centre with a station spanning the rail tracks, a large bus hub and if necessary, expanding potentially into the Charleville lands.

Site 7 Lands behind the Court: residential here is appropriate but could it also accommodate offices to offer some additional space to the courts?

Site 8 Tanyard Lands: proposals here are logical expansion of existing commercial and also Arbutus Court. As with Site 3 are there any opportunities to create pedestrian linkages to either O'Moore Street or Bachelor's Walk?

Public Realm Project 1 Market Square: It is agreed by all that Market Square needs a major facelift and the proposals are attractive, however as with the Opportunity Sites, parking loss needs more consideration, perhaps compensate with additional parking at the Parish Centre Car Park becoming a multi storey with development above. The Market Square proposal is a superb project for the Town.

Public Realm Project 2 O'Carroll Street: This project could be transformative and really enhance this very wide approach into the town centre. Excellent and this is an easy one that could be implemented.

Public Realm Project 3 Harbour Street: Important as a continuation of O'Carroll Street into the town centre

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Public Realm Project 4 Church Street: This street is really in need of upgrade and renewal and will become an important pedestrian link from Coens / Lidl to the Town Centre.

Public Realm Project 5 Convent Road: The change to one way here allows for the allocation of surplus road space to a two-lane cycleway and other improvements. This is a low traffic road and can cope with the change to reduce road width for better uses.

Public Realm Project 12 Bridge Street: The bridge street proposals for pedestrianisation and limited vehicular access are very attractive, however could anything this be achieved without a one-way traffic system? There is merit in exploring this perhaps as part of a Town Centre one way traffic study but not as a single proposal.

**Response:** Proposals presented in the TRF are preliminary design and illustrative subject to further investigation prior to detailed design, traffic studies, technical consideration, engagement with private landowners/ stakeholders and planning and environmental consent.

The TRF team acknowledge the density (27dph) on Opportunity Site 02 has been reduced due to northern half of site being removed from development scope. Tullamore is not designated a 'Metropolitan Town' in the EMRA RSES but rather a 'Key Town' (Table 4.2 Settlement Hierarchy, p.44). Based on the population (15,598, Census 2022) in accordance with the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines, residential densities in the range of 40 to 100 dwellings per hectare are to be applied in the centre and urban neighbourhoods of Key Towns and Large Towns (5,000 + population) such as Tullamore.

National Guidelines indicate 6 stories as a guide but also state that these cannot represent 'one size fits all' – even for a single site and that the context of the site and its environs is of great importance. Taller Building Guidelines state a taller

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building is 6 stories or more, and the CDP says assessment of same be carried out at application stage for the Texas and Grand Canal Harbour site.

#### Site 02

According to the 2024 Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities, for a Key Town the guidelines state that residential densities in the range 40 dph-100 dph shall generally be applied in the centres and urban neighbourhoods. A note has been added in the report to recommend this density for the site.

Parking - please refer to pg. 181 Wider Tullamore Transport Improvements Car Parking Management for displaced car parking and proposed strategy. Site 02 car park is no longer in use.

#### Site 03

Please refer to section '6.4 Meeting Future Parking Demand' which demonstrates that the "*proposed future provision of car parking within the town centre core is sufficient to meet the overall projected future demand, allowing for some relocation of parking activity from on-street locations to off-street car parks.*"

#### Site 04

As per Response 3 of Submission 5, the mix was developed in collaboration with our team economist. Residential use was not deemed a feasible option for all sites. Commercial was also a desired use and given the proximity of Site 04 to the existing footfall from the commercial units and library at O'Connor Square, was deemed a suitable location for expanded retail and office use .

#### Site 05

The location of a commercial centre to offer a meeting and working space close to the train station is a positive suggestion, and has been incorporated into the Framework Report. Site 05 proposal now includes a commercial centre at ground and first floor, with co-working space, office space and conferencing facilities. Levels 4-8 above area residential in use.

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### Site 06

As per response to Submission 6, reference has been made in the report to the extant planning application. While the proposal indicated is illustrative in nature, a note has been added to suggest the site is suitable to be developed to a density of approximately 50 - 80 dph, to ensure suitable open space can be allocated to dwellings and to acknowledge the more peripheral town centre location.

### Site 07

A smaller portion of commercial office could be located at this site should the case be made in a development proposal once it is incorporated appropriately.

### Site 08

Pedestrian link to Bachelors walk via residential area, was deemed undesirable by residents but can be reviewed with OCC.

### Public Realm Project 1

Additional potential multi-storey carpark shown on page 74 with the note regarding private ownership of the lands.

### **Individual 25/7/2024**

25% of the population have or will have mobility issues. The TRF must make provision to meet their needs. Spaces need to be reserved for elderly drivers in addition to those designated for disabled drivers and people with children.

The bus service to/from Birr needs to be upgraded to the same frequency as the service to / from Edenderry. Two "park and ride "facilities should be provided with a bus service serving them and various stops in town. Two bus routes would be adequate.

**Response:** At the detail design stage, any appointed designer should consider "Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach" which provides comprehensive best practice guidance on how to design, build and manage buildings and spaces so that they can be readily accessed and used by everyone, regardless of age, size ability or disability.

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Rationalised parking should not reduce necessary disabled parking options across the town. Additionally age-friendly parking spaces should be considered as part of parking typologies.

Bus Services/ Park & Ride proposals are part of Local Transport Plan study and only referenced in regeneration framework.

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## **5. Environmental Assessments**

Brady Shipman Martin (BSM) were appointed by Offaly County Council to carry out screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and a screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) in respect of the Draft Tullamore Regeneration Framework (TRF).

The SEA Screening Report and AA Screening Report documents the screening exercise for SEA/AA in respect of the Framework for the purposes of consultation, in accordance with Article 9(7) of S.I. 435 of 2004 (the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011. Both reports are included in Appendix B.

### **5.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment**

The Tullamore Regeneration Framework is a non-statutory land use plan. The Framework aims to serve as a model for regeneration, promoting compact growth, creating healthy and appealing public spaces, enhancing urban resilience, improving permeability, fostering vibrancy, and encouraging sustainable mobility.

As a non-statutory land use plan, the TRF document has been screened for the requirement for SEA under the requirements of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011. The TRF has been considered in respect of the SEA screening criteria set out in Schedule 1 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, and the findings are set out in the report. It is considered, on the basis of this exercise, that the implementation of the TRF has no real likelihood of having likely significant negative effects on the environment.

In accordance with Article 9(7) of S.I. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011, Offaly County Council will notify the SEA environmental authorities of its Determination that SEA is not required, and place a copy of its Determination on public display together with this SEA Screening Report and associated documentation relating to the TRF.

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## **5.2 Appropriate Assessment**

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report to determine the effects on European sites, of the implementation of the Tullamore Regeneration Framework. European sites are also known as Natura 2000 Sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)) and are designated for nature conservation. The requirements for an Appropriate Assessment are set out under Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), transposed into Irish law through the European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

A comprehensive study has been undertaken and the potential impacts on European sites, both as a result of the implementation of the TRF and in combination with other plans and projects, are appraised in the report.

The Screening Report has determined that no significant effects are likely to arise on any European sites as a result of the Tullamore Regeneration Framework and Grand Canal Harbour Masterplan, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects. The TRF does not accordingly require the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement.

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## **6. Conclusion & Recommendation**

The Tullamore Regeneration Framework is a placemaking strategy which identifies Tullamore as a Key Town. The TRF proposes a framework for delivering future integrated urban developments for Tullamore by both the public and private sectors.

The TRF is a high level framework that seeks to establish a vision for the development of the Town. Each plan and project will be developed further as funding or investment becomes available with planning, design and public consultation as required.

Each of the submissions received have been reviewed by the project team in Offaly County Council and Brady Shipman Martin / Faulker Brown and summarised in Section 4.

The response to each submission has been included in this report and where appropriate the final draft of the TRF has been amended to reflect the same. The rationale and decision to amend the final TRF has been included in Section 4.

The SEA Screening Report and AA Screening Report conclude that the implementation of the TRF has no real likelihood of having likely significant negative effects on the environment. The TRF does not require SEA, Appropriate Assessment nor the preparation of a Natura Impact Report.

It is recommended to publish the final Tullamore Regeneration Framework.

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**Appendix A**  
**Submissions**

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**From:**  
**To:**  
**Subject:** Ideas for the the new plans for Tullamore  
**Date:** Monday 17 June 2024 23:55:57

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Good Afternoon,

I am emailing from Christchurch New Zealand but I will be moving back to Tullamore permanently at the end of this year.

I am been looking with interest and excitement at the new proposed Tullamore Regeneration Framework and Grand Canal Harbour Masterplan Framework. Having lived in Christchurch for over 20 years and watched a city that was destroyed by a catastrophic earthquake there has been so many really interesting and beautiful buildings and outdoor spaces created here and I wanted to suggest some of the ideas that work here as possible ideas for Tullamore.

1. One of the most successful new ventures here is Riverside. **In the heart of the CBD, overlooking the Avon River we proudly bring you Riverside Market, a 7-day indoor farmers' market selling local produce, meat, seafood, baked goods, coffee and more. Alongside the market is Riverside Lanes, a destination boutique shopping experience with major fashion brands confirmed and even more dining options to add to those at the market.** Riverside is always busy and bustling and I think something like this would be great for Tullamore.
2. One thing I feel is really lacking in Tullamore is an art house cinema. The current cinema is shabby and unkept and has really bad reviews. Here in Christchurch we have a huge selection of small luxurious boutique type cinemas which are really popular. These are some examples <https://www.silkyotter.co.nz/> <https://www.deluxecinemas.co.nz/> <https://www.artfilms.co.nz/> I think Tullamore would really benefit from a cinema like these and bring revenue and people to the town centre.
3. The other idea I had was really utilising the laneways. It has really revitalised Christchurch similar to Melbourne. <https://riverside.nz/lanes> Tullamore has lots of unutilised laneways which could be developed.
4. Another big thing here is outdoor spaces and parks etc. I know there is the Lloyd town park but also I think some children's small playground in the centre with greenery seating, coffee cart etc would be really good and add to the appeal for parents to come into the town centre. Lloyd Town park is at the end of the town and there are no other play areas in the centre that I know of. There is a large playground in Christchurch called Margaret Mahy which is also near the river Avon which is the one that runs through Christchurch. Something on a smaller scale would be great for the town centre. <https://ccc.govt.nz/news-and-events/running-an-event/central-city-event-venues-map/margaret-mahy-playground>
5. My final idea is Street Art which is really lacking in Tullamore. I believe it would really improve the appeal and aesthetics of the town centre. Get local artists to decorate



buildings with ideas relevant to Tullamore's history and ecology. Christchurch has a vibrant street art scene and after the earthquakes it really made a massive difference and people come just to see the amazing murals. Some examples here.

<https://www.misstravelclogs.com/christchurch-street-art-new-zealand/>

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to give some ideas. I am very excited for this new phase for Tullamore.

---

From: [redacted]  
Sent: Friday, June 21, 2024 1:05 PM  
To: Tullamore Municipal District <tullamoremtd@tullamore.ie>  
Subject: Re: Tullamore Regeneration Public Consultation: Danger of Gas Lane Exit to Harbour Street Pedestrians

Hi, (I have fixed the previous errors in what I wrote. This will teach me to properly read what was written...)

The Tullamore Regeneration and Tullamore Harbour plans are very welcome for the town. They will be fantastic when they come to fruition.

I would like to draw attention to the current dangers to pedestrians walking along Harbour Street, Tullamore (on the south footpath towards Henry Street (O'Carroll street).

Everyone is effectively blind here. Pedestrians cannot see cars exiting from Gas House Lane. If a careless driver (which there are many) doesn't pay attention, a pedestrian could easily be killed. The motorists can't see pedestrians coming from the left side of their car as they exit and the pedestrians can't see the cars coming from the footpath.

Now, I understand why it is desirable to have one-way streets/lanes from the northern entrances into Market Square and why you have chosen to have cars enter from Market Square and exit through Gas House Lane, as you don't have to cross the other lane of traffic to park. In an ideal world, cars would exit via the Market Square road and enter from Gas House Lane - but I acknowledge that is less than optimal.

Instead I would suggest that the footpath be widened at the intersection between Harbour Street and Gas House Lane and an obstacle such as an attractive black fence be placed between the wall of that derelict house/former shop about 1m or thereabouts out onto the path. The path would need to be widened at that point to prevent the fence becoming a bottleneck.

I have provided a drawing to better highlight what I'm talking about. It should also illustrate the present danger to pedestrians from motorists exiting. These minor alterations to the existing layout/future layout in tandem with steeply raising the road crossing for pedestrians so that cars have to slow down as they near the ramp (make sure to have a proper ramp for cars so that they really have to slow down otherwise it becomes moot) would make it much safer than the present predicament.

**From:** [Tullamore Municipal District](#)  
**To:**  
**Subject:** Tullamore Regeneration Framework (PUBLIC CONSULTATION)  
**Date:** Monday 24 June 2024 15:42:53

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A Chara

I have examined the above proposals and attended the public information day on the 20th June.

I congratulate the Council on its visionary appointment of Brady Shipman Martin and FaulknersBrown whose analysis and range of options are imaginative but realisable and provide a firm basis for the debate which now commences. In particular, their proposal for a pedestrian/cycle route linking the principal public spaces of the town and along the riverside is a very worthy project whose implementation would greatly improve pedestrian safety and civic/environmental amenity around the town generally. Hopefully this proposal will be actively pursued by the Council.

Possibly in the context of the public debate around the many admirable proposals emerging from the consultants detailed study, the relationship between the proposed layout for Opportunity Site 4 and O'Connor Square might be reassessed.

O'Connor Square by virtue of its location, history, and many Protected Structures is far and away the principal public space of Tullamore, indeed of Offaly, and is deserving of a dominant role in any plans for the town centre.

It is also, despite its recent part pedestrianisation, in land use and visual appearance, still predominantly a convenient and very busy car park as well as an essential vehicular link via the Tanyard to the eastern side of the town. I submit that in its present state the Square is not fulfilling its appropriate civic role.

I note that at pages 64 and 74 reference is made to the 'greening potential to replace existing car park' and 'potential for car park reduction' but these ideas are not explored any further in the document. However, the soon to be constructed road between the Tanyard and High Street will provide the opportunity to relocate some or all of the remaining on street parking in the Square. Accordingly the layout and uses suggested for Opportunity Site 4 might be reviewed to accommodate replacement off street parking. I firmly believe that the further increase and enhancement of the public realm of O'Connor Square should be a primary objective in any future plans for the town centre.

Once again, I look forward to the public debate around these exciting plans and the implementation of some, if not all, of their well considered proposals.

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**From:**

**Sent:** Sunday, July 14, 2024 6:08 PM

**To:** Tullamore Municipal District <tullamoremd@offalycoco.ie>

**Subject:** Tullamore Masterplan Framework and Grand Canal Harbour Masterplan framework

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is and I am delighted to find out that the projects of the Tullamore Regeneration Framework and Grand Canal Harbour Masterplan Framework are available for the public discussions, submissions or observations.

I graduated from Ukrainian Lviv Polytechnic University, course Architecture. And I am planning to continue my education at LOETB FETCH courses in Construction Technology - Renewable Energy Systems (QQI 5M5010) in September.

I study with an interest offaly history blog News and updates on current Offaly History projects.

That is why I am very interested in such initiatives as Tullamore Regeneration Framework and Grand Canal Harbour Masterplan Framework projects.

I appreciate the policy of controlling the floors and visual silhouette of the city.

I think it's very important for the mental health and for the mood of the inhabitants.

The level of the project's presentation is very high and in a form accessible to non-specialists.

Plans worked out in details.

All historical natural landscape and ecosystem nuances have been taken into account.

Plans are simple, even graphically.

I am sure, all will have been done in the most qualitative way.

So, thanks a million for the opportunity to get acquainted with the future plans about Tullamore and for the opportunity to express my opinion about these plans.

Here's hoping your hard work and dedication pay off. You've worked tirelessly to get to where you are today, and I have no doubt that your efforts will be rewarded. Best of luck to you all!

**From:**

**Sent:** Monday, July 22, 2024 4:52 PM

**To:** Tullamore Municipal District <[tullamoremd@offalycoco.ie](mailto:tullamoremd@offalycoco.ie)>

**Subject:** Submission with respect to the proposed Tullamore Regeneration Framework and Grand Canal Harbour Masterplan Framework

Dear Sir/ Madam

**Please find attached a submission in regards to the proposed Tullamore Regeneration Framework & Grand Canal Harbour Masterplan Framework by BDP Architects & Urbanists.**

Regards,

**BDP**

Blackhall Green  
Dublin 7, D07 V0RF  
Ireland

[www.bdp.com](http://www.bdp.com)

[Email Disclaimer](#)

Date: 22/07/2024

Address:

Planning Department  
Offaly County Council  
Áras an Chontae,  
Charleville Road,  
Tullamore,  
Co. Offaly,  
R35 F893

The logo for BDP (Building Design Partnership) is displayed in a large, bold, red sans-serif font.

Dear Sir/Madam

**SUBMISSION:**

Tullamore Draft Regeneration Framework and Grand Canal Harbour Masterplan

BDP have been working in Tullamore on the Texas lands opportunity site over the past numbers of years. We have brought our expertise in developing and delivering successful regeneration to towns and cities in Ireland, including Galway, Sligo, Shannon & Dundalk. We have gained local knowledge through extensive public engagement carried out with the public and local business owners. This informs our knowledge of the needs of the community and the economics required to create successful town regeneration.

We were encouraged by the Draft Working Document released by Offaly County Council (OCC) in June 2018 titled 'Texas Site Tullamore – New Urban Quarter' that identified higher densities with diversity of use. This draft report also referenced two of our successful urban regeneration master planning projects, Victoria Square in Belfast and Liverpool One. Since then, we have seen significantly diluted ambition for the towns development in terms of achieving sustainable growth in line with national policy. It appears that OCC are seeking to attain the status quo in the town as a whole, with little real ambition shown in our mind. This is in stark contrast to the guidance of national policy.

**Comparison with National and Regional Policies – Town Densities**

The National Framework Plan advocates for compact urban growth to maximise the use of existing infrastructure and services. Similarly, the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) emphasizes the need for higher density development in key towns to stimulate economic growth and enhance liveability. The RSES outlines that higher densities are required in towns to promote sustainable travel patterns, increase economic viability, and provide a critical mass to support public services. Tullamore, as a significant town in Offaly, should adhere to these principles to ensure its regeneration plan aligns with broader regional goals.

The recently released Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines (2024) sets out policy and objectives on Settlement Density on pg.24 Table 3.3 that a Metropolitan town with a population greater than 1,500 should have a residential density in the range of 50dph to 150dph in town centres. With Tullamore exceeding this population significantly and with good public transport links it would be assumed that the upper range of this target should be achieved on prime opportunity sites.

The proposed density of 27 units per hectare is significantly lower than the guidelines set forth in the National Planning Framework (NPF). According to the NPF, urban areas should aim for higher density to support sustainable development and efficient land use. The NPF advises that delivering compact growth in cities, towns, and villages will be a key mechanism to ensure that our urban places become more attractive and liveable. The current proposal fails to align with these objectives, proposing a density that is not conducive to the vibrant, economically viable town centre that Tullamore deserves. We would expect in line with the national policy mentioned above that the DPH for the only two identified sites in the whole of Offaly should be aspiring to achieve a target of 150dph, which is over x5 higher.

### **Historical Context and Potential**

These two identified opportunity sites within Tullamore have existing and now part demolished warehouses and industrial buildings/ heritage of a substantial scale and height, rising to five and six stories. The current development plan has suggested height of 6 stories on these sites but this appears to be reduced in draft proposals referring to heights of 2-5 stories. Successful regional towns like Athlone, Mullingar and Drogheda have made significant strides in their development by adopting higher-density, mixed-use developments.

### **Vision for Growth and Success**

We would be encouraged by a stronger vision for the town, that aligns with national policy and the principles of sustainable development and urban intensification that is economically viable and beneficial to the towns businesses and residents. To date historic poor local planning has led to business and retail being sprawled outside of the town centre, this should be discouraged. The vision needs to identify how these opportunity sites can identify and drive economic success for Tullamore.

### **Viability and Economic Realities**

The question of viability is crucial, given the scale and location of the proposed regeneration development. The current plan, while having some attractive qualities, does little to address the town's real needs. There is an urgent need for a step change to rejuvenate Tullamore's town center. The limited number of available sites must be leveraged to their full potential, ensuring they serve as catalysts for comprehensive regeneration. SSP-07 of the Development plan states that *"It is Council policy to require sustainable, compact, sequential growth and urban regeneration in Tullamore by consolidating the built-up footprint through a focus on regeneration and development of town centre infill and brownfield sites, and encouraging regeneration of underutilised, vacant and derelict lands for residential development and mixed use to facilitate population growth"*. (Offaly County Development Plan, p. 53)

These draft proposals are significantly limiting the potential for these sites in terms of placing constraints on density, height and quantum of public space. This may substantially restrict the viability of developing and delivering these opportunity sites. The harbour site has indicated a very modest quantum of development along with a very significant quantum of public realm space that will have a significant cost that would require funding. Typically, in development led regeneration the public space would be provided in line with providing a larger quantum commercial or residential development. Has an economic appraisal been produced for the Harbour Masterplan and is it viable? How will this small quantum of development on the Harbour Site bring intensification, regeneration, or vitality to the site? From our experience this would appear to be vastly underestimated. It is all too easy to present new high quality public spaces to the public, but it must be achievable and deliverable.

### **Responding to Changing Retail Landscape**

Retail is evolving rapidly, and Tullamore's regeneration plan must reflect this shift. The traditional retail model is giving way to more integrated, leisure and experience-driven environments. The plan should incorporate elements that create a pull factor for both visitors and future inhabitants, such as mixed-use developments that combine retail, residential, and recreational spaces. There is increased demand for a larger retail space which the existing town does not allocate for. These contemporary retail spaces need to be provided for within the two remaining opportunity sites and shouldn't lead to further retail sprawl to out of town locations.

### **Historical and Cultural Significance**

Tullamore is a historical market and industry town, once a cultural nodal point. The Offaly County Council has previously set out a brilliant vision and ambition for the townland and its opportunity sites. However, the current proposal dilutes this vision. To deliver real change, the town center must become an attractive, vibrant hub that supports economic and social activities.

## **Conclusion**

We feel that both the Tullamore Draft Regeneration Framework and Grand Canal Harbour Masterplan need to account for the current national policies on density and should not limit the potential of the sites for increased height and varied building uses. We would like to see greater vision in ensuring the principle of good sustainable design and compact growth are set out in both of these important town centre sites. We are apprehensive that these non-statutory frameworks studies which have been produced may be used as a basis for the development of a Local Area Plan for Tullamore which we understand is underway. We would be worried that the low level of aspiration identified in these studies would set poor principles for Tullamore urban regeneration of these opportunity sites.

We urge the council to reconsider the proposed density and scale and adopt a more visionary approach that will truly regenerate Tullamore and make it a vibrant, liveable town once again.



**From:**  
**To:** [Tullamore Municipal District](#)  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Grapemont Ltd Submission - Tullamore Regeneration Framework  
**Date:** Thursday 25 July 2024 10:46:23  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[Grapemont Ltd Submission - Tullamore Regeneration Framework.pdf](#)

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To whom it may concern,

Enclosed please find Submission on behalf of Grapemont Ltd regarding the Tullamore Regeneration Framework.

I would appreciate if you could confirm receipt of enclosed.

Kind regards,



25<sup>th</sup> July 2024

## Tullamore Regeneration Framework

### Submission on Behalf of Grapemont Ltd

1 It is noted that the Regeneration Framework does not acknowledge the extant planning permission for retail-led development (approx. 14,000 sq m total (open) retail floorspace) at Opportunity Site 6 (reference ABP-306395-20 (19/96)). For clarification, Offaly County Council issued a Notification to grant permission for this development, which was affirmed with modification and granted permission by An Bord Pleanála on 10 May 2021 following 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> party appeal. Offaly County Council is fully aware of the extant permission, which is fully compatible with the site's zoning as Town Centre / Mixed Uses in the Core Retail Area as defined in the recently approved County Offaly Development Plan. This designation was affirmed by specific decision by Offaly County Councillors. The site is without constraint for commercial development. There is a realistic potential that the site will be brought forward for commercial development in the near future, in accordance with the permission, which remains extant for another 2 years.

2 As this information is in the public domain, there can be no transparent reason why this current status has been overlooked in the preparation of the Regeneration Framework document. It is noted that the Framework contains an entire section on 'understanding the town', but the Framework appears to not have actually achieved that. Retail is seen as one of the town's weaknesses and it is acknowledged that it is important to expand the retail offer within the town, for economic and social reasons. However, as the document does not give any consideration to or assessment of this important permission on this available opportunity site, the main means to deliver such important growth to the town is overlooked. It is considered that all relevant information should have been assessed and discussion should have been held with the landowner prior to any information being publicly issued to ensure that the community can have confidence that the Framework would be a robust document to guide future development and growth of the town. It is significantly lacking at this time and should be revised to accommodate accurate information.

3 The delivery of development at any site can only proceed if supported by the landowner, and accordingly the Framework can only be a successful mechanism to guide development and growth if it has the support of key landowners. A residential use is shown in the Framework, but there has been no approach to or discussion with the landowner. This draft discussion document has introduced uncertainty and could be a deterrent to commercial development in the town, which will impact upon the town's vitality and viability particularly when there are potentially competitive proposals, in out of centre locations, which also ignore the valid and important permission. As there are intentions to deliver commercial development at the site in the near future, the Framework can only ever have insignificant weight in guiding development in the town as it will be out of date even before adoption (if adopted in its current form).

8 Cormac Street, Tullamore,  
Co. Offaly, Ireland, R35 K236.



Tel: (057) 9321319/9321550  
email: [info@trp.ie](mailto:info@trp.ie) web: [www.trp.ie](http://www.trp.ie)

Member of the Tullamore Rental Properties Group.

4 Accordingly, to ensure that the Framework document has credibility over the short and medium terms, Offaly County Council is urged:

- To reconsider its approach to the Framework,
- To take full recognition of extant permissions for development which have a realistic potential for implementation, and
- to actively engage with and to work in a collaborative manner with landowners which have control over the delivery of land, particularly those which are actively seeking development which accords with the development plan.

It is requested that this representation is acknowledged and that Offaly County Council approaches Grapemont Ltd at the earliest opportunity to discuss intentions for the land.

**From:**  
**To:** [Tullamore Municipal District](#)  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Tullamore Regeneration Framework 2024 - ODEN Submission  
**Date:** Thursday 25 July 2024 14:27:10  
**Attachments:** [Tullamore Regeneration Framework 2024 - ODEN Submission 25th July 2024.pdf](#)  
[ODEN Accessible Offaly Report and Plan 2023 - 2025.pdf](#)

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Dear Team at Tullamore Regeneration Framework Project,  
Please find attached the Offaly Disability Equality Network (ODEN) submission on the Tullamore Regeneration Framework.  
Also attached is the ODEN Accessible Offaly Report 2023 which informed the ODEN submission.

ODEN particularly asks that the planning and development of local services is carried out in consultation with disabled people who have lived experience of the local issues and understand how the decisions and outcomes can affect their day to day lives. ODEN members would like the opportunity to meet directly with the planners and decision-makers at each stage of the regeneration process.

I can be contacted at this email address or please contact if there are any questions in relation to the submission or to arrange to meet with ODEN members in relation to the project.

Offaly Disability Equality Network.

# Public Consultation on Tullamore Regeneration Framework 2024



Submission by  
**Offaly Disability Equality Network**

## About Offaly Disability Equality Network - ODEN

Established in 2018, Offaly Disability Equality Network (ODEN) is a network of disabled people, people without disability, disability and educational services, public services, NGOs and business and arts communities in Offaly. ODEN formed as a forum for the voice of disabled people and works to identify barriers and campaign for better accessibility and inclusion for disabled people in Offaly.

## ODEN Submission – Key Points

1. When consulted by ODEN in 2023 as part of the Accessible Offaly Project (see report attached) a significant majority of disabled people in Offaly said they experience difficulties accessing public and other important services. The Tullamore Regeneration Framework report has many commendable aspirations. If progressed, they can address many of the access and inclusion concerns raised by disabled people in Offaly
2. There is a lack of reference throughout the Tullamore Regeneration Framework Report to disability and the lived experience of disability.
3. Disability and the lived experience of disability is not reflected in the language used in the report.
4. The Tullamore Regeneration Framework considers most if not all aspects of design and development but Universal Design which addresses accessibility for people with disabilities is only referenced and considered in the context of transport.
5. The socio-demographic profile makes no reference to disability, although “disability, health and carers” is a standard profile in the national census and 14% of the population of Offaly, or 11,154 people have at least one disability. [Disability Federation Ireland – Offaly Profile](#)
6. The foundational analysis, developed in accordance with national, regional and local policies makes no reference to national and local housing disability policies and strategies.
7. The survey of parking facilities did not include disabled car parking spaces either on or off street and this raises the question as to whether the importance of disabled parking spaces was considered? We are concerned that the proposed plans to rationalise parking may reduce necessary disabled parking options across the town.
8. A deficit, clearly identified through consultation in the Accessible Offaly Project 2023, is the need to provide a fully accessible public toilet called a ‘Changing Place’ in Tullamore, available and maintained 24/7.
9. Without the deliberate consideration of access and inclusion for disabled people as a shared priority the law of unintended consequences can mean that project aims and actions will have the potential to disadvantage or discriminate against disabled people. ([see UNCRPD](#))
10. We hope that the aims and measures proposed, to encourage active travel, encourage walking and cycling and reduce reliance on motor vehicles will not negatively impact those who because of limited mobility or sensory or intellectual disability are reliant on cars for ease of access or direct access, to places and services
11. ODEN asks that planning and development of local services be carried out in consultation with disabled people who have lived experience of the local issues and understand how the decisions and outcomes can affect their day to day lives.
12. To support inclusive consultation, it is important that the framework information and documents are available in fully accessible formats and time is allowed for people who may need support to take part in the consultation process.

## Introduction

When consulted through the 2023 ODEN Accessible Offaly Project\*, 3 out of 4 disabled people living in Offaly said they experience difficulties accessing public and other important services in Offaly. 1 in 3 disabled people reported a lot of problems with access.

The greatest difficulties accessing places and spaces is due to illegal parking and other obstacles on footpaths, steps at entrances, a lack of disabled parking and busy roads and streets.

Disabled people highlighted the need to

- Repair broken and uneven footpaths and widen footpaths too narrow to pass when using a wheelchair.
- Provide accessible footpaths at popular locations and amenities.
- Dip footpaths to allow access from roads and all disabled parking bays.
- Provide pedestrian crossings on the main streets, at key locations and amenities in towns.
- Stop people blocking footpaths with cars, vans, bins, signs, furniture and other obstacles

Those who expressed the greatest level of difficulty were autistic people and people with difficulty learning or remembering for whom busy roads and streets are a particular challenge (65%). People who are blind or vision impaired also reported a lot of difficulties, particularly with illegal parking and other obstacles on streets.

Disabled people identified the need for clear, easy to understand signs in public buildings, hotels and shops, and the need for clearly marked disabled parking bays and signposting for carparks with disabled parking bays.

The Tullamore Regeneration Framework report has many commendable aspirations. If progressed, they can address many of the access and inclusion concerns raised by disabled people in Offaly

We welcome the broad aims -

- to create a more sustainable local economy by enhancing the accessibility and diversity of essential services and retail options.



- to create an accessible and inclusive streetscape that promotes ease of movement for various demographics, including .... older individual and people with reduced mobility
- to create a safe and convenient environment for all pedestrians.
- to prioritise accessibility, ...through fostering inclusivity and enhancing the overall experience of navigating the streets, benefiting residents of all ages and abilities.

However, there is a lack of reference throughout the report to disability and the lived experience of disability. The aims set out in the report are determined by many important priorities such as sustainable development, economic growth, housing, transport, tourism, climate action, biodiversity etc. But without the deliberate consideration of access and inclusion for disabled people as a **shared priority** the law of unintended consequences can mean that project aims and actions can have the potential to disadvantage or discriminate against disabled people.

### Overall review- Language

There is an emphasis throughout the report on active travel. This is reflected in language.

- The phrase active travel (walking and cycling) is found 23 times. The word pedestrian (a person walking or a person on foot) is found 214 times.
- The words disabled/disability/disabilities are found 4 times in total, only once in reference to future aims and plans, specifically in relation to street furniture having arm rests.
- The word wheelchair is not found. The phrase used in the report "reduced mobility" is found once.

### Overall review – Universal design

[Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach](#) is the National Disability Authority best practice guidance on how to design, build and manage buildings and spaces so that they can be readily accessed and used by everyone, regardless of age, size, ability or disability. The guide contains **10** booklets covering all aspects of design including External environment and approach, Entrances and horizontal circulation, Internal environment and services, Sanitary facilities, Facilities in buildings, building types, Building management and Planning and policy. Although the Tullamore Regeneration Framework considers most if not all these aspects of design and development, Universal Design is only referenced and considered in the context of transport, as set out in the Sustainable Access section.



## Section Review – Understanding Tullamore

When consulted through the 2023 ODEN Accessible Offaly Project\*, 6 out of 10 disabled people said the most important issue for housing is being close to services and amenities. This is particularly the case for people with an intellectual disability, autistic people and people who are blind or vision impaired. The next most important matter is fully accessible housing. Housing is not just shelter, but basic to independent living and being part of the community.

The Tullamore Regeneration Project is an opportunity to provide accessible homes and development at the heart of Tullamore, close to community services and amenities

Unfortunately, in **Understanding Tullamore** the socio-demographic profile makes no reference to disability, although “disability, health and carers” is a standard profile in the national census and 14% of the population of Offaly, or 11,154 people have at least one disability.

In Understanding Tullamore the foundational analysis, developed in accordance with national, regional and local policies makes no reference to -

[Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland](#)

[The National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 - 2027](#) which seeks to facilitate disabled people to live independently with the appropriate choices and control over where, how and with whom they live.

[Offaly County Council Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2022-2027.](#)

[Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach](#) – the NDA best practice guidance on how to design, build and manage buildings and spaces so that they can be readily accessed and used by everyone, regardless of age, size ability or disability.

## Section Review - Building on the Success

There is much that is positive in this section.

We welcome the aims to -

- Create a more sustainable local economy by enhancing the accessibility and diversity of essential services and retail options.
- Re-purpose vacant and underutilised buildings by reusing them for various purposes, including homes, remote working hubs, local shops and cultural or community uses
- Create an accessible and inclusive streetscape that promotes ease of movement for various demographics, including children travelling to school, older individuals, and people with reduced mobility.
- Minimise uneven surfaces and reduce street clutter to ensure a safe and convenient environment for all pedestrians.
- Prioritising accessibility ..... to foster inclusivity and enhance the overall experience of navigating the streets, benefiting residents of all ages and abilities
- Significantly increase in raised table pedestrian crossings
- Implement smart parking systems that guide drivers to available parking spaces,

In the absence of reference to or consideration of disability matters we have concerns in relation to the proposals to

- prioritise the transition to active travel and eliminate traffic dominance in the Town Centre.
- create a pedestrian-friendly environment, encouraging walking and cycling while reducing reliance on motor vehicles,
- Create pedestrian-friendly areas in the town centre, restricting car traffic and promoting walking as a sustainable mode of transport,

Such measures raise concerns for those who because of limited mobility or other sensory or intellectual disability are reliant on cars for ease of, or direct access, to places and services.

We have concerns about the proposed actions for the full pedestrianisation of areas and a significant reduction or loss of on street parking and parking in general including -

- Tanyard Lane – potential for full pedestrianisation – *Tanyard Lane is the location of an education and training centre for people with a disability and a day service for adults with an intellectual disability.*

- O'Connor Square Greening – car parking reduction – *Designated disabled parking spaces in O'Connor Square are key for access to the library, post office and several banks, retail outlets and restaurants.*
- Patrick Street – potential segregated cycle ways in place of on street parking on both sides – *Designated disabled parking spaces on Patrick Street support access to the Credit Union, Pharmacy, Opticians and retail outlets and restaurants on the street.*
- Harbour Street – cycle track on northside in place of on street parking – *parking on Harbour Street serves access to the church, funeral parlour, retail outlets and restaurants on the street.*

We hope that the welcome aims to prioritise accessibility and promote ease of movement for people with reduced mobility are not negated by the measures proposed to encourage active travel, encouraging walking and cycling while reducing reliance on motor vehicles.

We also ask that -

- Smart parking systems that guide drivers to available parking spaces also guide to designated disabled parking spaces
- Wayfinding and signposting will incorporate visual images or icons to improve information access.
- Electric car charging points have wider parking bays to allow access to spaces for drivers who use a wheelchair or mobility aid.

### **Section Review - Opportunity Sites**

*All proposals shown in this chapter are illustrative only.*

On Site 5 - Railway Lands we note that the proposed pedestrian priority zone and planting adjacent to the station building appears to replace all disabled parking spaces. There is no indication of alternative disabled parking spaces on site.

On Site 4 – Land south of O'Connor Square - Option B proposes a residential scheme to the east by the river with the existing educational centre relocated to a commercial volume to the west of the site. The educational centre referred to is an education and training centre for people with a disability and a day service for adults with an intellectual disability.

## Section Review - Public Realm Projects

*All proposals shown in this chapter are illustrative only.*

As in previous sections, we welcome actions to improve accessibility including widened and upgraded pavements, upgraded junctions and crossings etc. but again have concerns about suggested plans for rationalised parking that may reduce necessary disabled access and parking options across the town.

## Section Review - Sustainable Access (Transport)

The Sustainable access section has many excellent aims and proposed actions.

It is positive that in preparing the transport strategy, CS Consulting has referred to the NDA: Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach. We welcome the proposal that all changes to the public realm within Tullamore town centre are to be designed with regard to the principles of Universal Design, ensuring the public realm is as accessible as possible to all users including:

- Providing sufficient footpath widths and avoiding street furniture clutter.
- Ensuring appropriate transitions (e.g. dropped kerbs) at changes of level.
- Providing tactile paving at crossing/hazard locations, and auditory signals at signal-controlled crossings.
- Avoiding excessive gradients on footpaths and cycle facilities.
- Ensuring that parking for adapted vehicles (including non-standard cycles) is catered for.
- Effectively using surface materials, signage, and other design aspects to ensure that pedestrian and cyclist routes are clear and legible.
- Providing comprehensive and good quality public lighting.
- Providing raised tables at junctions and at crossings, to reduce vehicle speeds and to emphasise pedestrian priority.

We have concerns in relation to the suggested plans for the re-organisation of car parking within the town, with a reallocation of parking space from on-street locations to off-street areas. Rationalised parking may reduce necessary disabled parking options across the town.

The survey of parking facilities did not include disabled car parking spaces on and off street and this raises the question as to whether the importance of disabled parking spaces is considered? Participants in the ODEN Accessible Offaly research last year said that more disabled car parking spaces are needed, at large car parks, at key locations and near services important for disabled people.

As recommended by NDA Universal Design guidelines, where public car parking is provided, several car-parking spaces for people with disabilities should be provided on a proportional basis. At least 6% of the total number of spaces should be designated car-parking spaces, with a minimum provision of at least one such space in each public car park. There should be on-street designated parking, including larger bays for people who use larger vehicles such as vans with rear hoists that enable wheelchair users to travel while seated in their wheelchair. Designated disabled parking should be proximate to local services and amenities.

Sustainable Access proposes the implementation of a town bus service, to provide reliable public transport connectivity between the town centre, outlying areas, and railway station, also Park and Ride facilities at the town periphery, to allow car journeys into Tullamore to be completed as public transport, cycling, or walking trips. Unfortunately, many existing town bus services are not fully accessible. Some local buses are not wheelchair accessible and those that are wheelchair accessible may not carry electric wheelchairs due to their size and weight. There are also challenges with the lack of safe accessible bus stops and bus shelters and a lack of accessible information on bus schedules, ticketing information and real time bus schedule information at bus stops.

## Tullamore Regeneration Framework Report – Universal Design Sanitation

**A deficit, clearly identified through consultation, is the need to provide a fully accessible public toilet called a Changing Place in Tullamore.**

A Changing Place that is -

- Central, convenient, and at a secure location,
- publicly accessible 24/7 and 365 days per year,
- publicly managed and maintained by/for Offaly County Council,
- easily accessed by radar/specialist key/swipe card or local keyholder arrangement.

### The case for a public Changing Place in Tullamore

A Changing Place toilet facility is accessible for people with disabilities who need extra space, equipment, or support. The Changing Place toilet facility has extra space for the person using it and up to 2 assistants. There is a changing bench that is adult sized. There is a hoist on the ceiling that can go around the whole room. The toilet has space on both sides for assistants.

Standard disabled accessible toilets do not meet the needs of all people with complex disabilities. For example, individuals with conditions such as Cerebral Palsy, Spina Bifida, Multiple Sclerosis, and older people with physical disabilities may need extra equipment facilities to enable them to use the toilet, maximising independence, and comfort. Many people with disabilities are severely limited in terms of their access to everyday places and activities including for example employment or education; or must go through the indignity and unhygienic option of being changed on the floor of a public toilet as the correct facilities are not available in public places.

Changing Places toilet facilities allow people with disabilities to leave home, to get out and do things they want to do and access everyday places such as work, education, leisure, retail etc. A Changing Place will support community, social, leisure, commercial and cultural activity, and the right to travel away from home.

### Human Rights

Many articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) are relevant to Changing Places toilet facilities, particularly Article 9 on accessibility. It outlines the State's responsibility in taking action to make sure people with disabilities have the same access as other people to services and spaces which includes accessible toilets such as Changing Places.

## Statistics

The National Disability Authority (NDA) estimates that from 17,100 to 37,700 people, or 1 in 291 to 1 in 132 people in Ireland directly require access to a Changing Place Toilet Facility. The NDA advises planning for the upper end of the range of the estimated number of potential users of Changing Places Toilet Facilities. Based on these numbers there are over 600 people in Offaly who require access to a Changing Place Toilet Facility. These numbers do not include others who will also be impacted by the provision of the facility, for example family members and carers. It also does not factor in the wider circle of people in any given person's life.

There is 1 Changing Place Facility currently in Tullamore, at the Primary Care Centre. It is a fantastic facility, a key initiative by the HSE in making the Health Centre fully accessible. It is also of great benefit to proximate services including local disability services. However, in isolation and due to restricted opening hours, it cannot support people with disabilities to partake in activities, particularly social, retail, leisure, and cultural activities or to travel, in the evenings and through all of night-time, at weekends and during holiday periods.

## Geography

The Changing Place, centrally located and fully accessible, in Tullamore will serve the town and, by necessity due to lack of facilities, probably a large part of North Offaly.

The next registered Changing Place when you leave Tullamore is in

- Newbridge, Co. Kildare (53 km/55 minutes)
- Athboy, Co. Meath (59 km/69 minutes),
- Roscommon town (70 km /1 hr 12 min),
- Naas, Co. Kildare (74 km/1 hr 5 min)
- Tallaght Town Centre (101km/1hr 11min) and
- Limerick City (116 km / 1 hr 41 min).

There is no Changing Place on the M6 from Dublin to Galway and no Changing Place on the M7 between Dublin and Limerick. Both motorways pass through and link to towns and communities in Offaly. The Lough Boora Discovery Park, with over 100,000 visitors per year, does not have a Changing Place.

## **Tullamore Regeneration Framework – Consultation with people with disabilities**

“When persons with disabilities participate in decision-making processes, it provides strong support towards ensuring that policies, strategies, programmes and operations to be more effective in addressing barriers to inclusion and more relevant in supporting their full and equal participation. Persons with disabilities have first-hand experience of the challenges they face and know better what can be done to enhance their rights and wellbeing.”

[United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy.](#)

ODEN asks that planning and development of local services be carried out in consultation with disabled people who have lived experience of the local issues and understand how the decisions and service outcomes can affect their day to day lives.

It is important that disabled people are consulted when regeneration plans are being prepared and decided on. To support consultation, it is important that the framework information and documents are fully accessible, available in easy to read, and audio/video formats as needed, and that enough notice and time is allowed at each stage (4-6 weeks) for people who may need support to take part in the consultation process.



**From:**  
**To:** [Tullamore Municipal District](#)  
**Subject:** Submissions  
**Date:** Thursday 25 July 2024 14:46:23  
**Attachments:** [Tullamore Chamber Submission- Regeneration Framework-2024.07.22.pdf](#)  
[Tullamore Chamber Submission- Harbour Masterplan-2024.07.22.pdf](#)

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Please find attached our submissions in relation to the following:

- Tullamore Regeneration Framework;
- Tullamore Grand Canal Masterplan.

Please revert if you need any further information.

Kind Regards,

**Tullamore & District Chamber of Commerce**

# **TULLAMORE & DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

## **STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE**

### **SUBMISSION ON TULLAMORE REGENERATION FRAMEWORK**

**JULY 2024**

#### **Introduction:**

The Framework plan is a fantastic working plan for the development of Tullamore over the next 25 years. To ensure Tullamore not only keeps pace with but leads the way into the future, our feedback incorporates several critical strategic suggestions:

We welcome the opportunity to present our feedback proposal for the regeneration of Tullamore, a strategic initiative designed to catapult our town into a prosperous and sustainable future. This ambitious plan aims to transform Tullamore into a beacon of innovation, resilience, and community spirit, positioning us as a leader in rural regeneration in the Midlands of Ireland.

Tullamore boasts a rich history and a strong sense of community, yet like many rural towns, it faces challenges that require bold, forward-thinking solutions. Our regeneration plan is not only about revitalising our town's infrastructure but also about creating a vibrant, future-ready community that can thrive in an ever-evolving world.

#### **Key Objective suggestions:**

1. **Economic Transformation:**
  - **Innovation and Enterprise Zone:** Establish an innovation and enterprise zone to attract cutting-edge businesses, support local startups, and create high-quality jobs, driving economic growth and fostering a culture of entrepreneurship.
  - **Tourism and Heritage Development:** Enhance our tourism sector by leveraging our unique cultural and historical assets, creating new attractions, and improving visitor experiences to boost local revenue and global appeal.
2. **Critical Infrastructure Development:**
  - **Digital Connectivity:** Invest in state-of-the-art digital infrastructure, including high-speed broadband, to ensure seamless connectivity for residents, businesses, and educational institutions, positioning Tullamore as a digital hub.
  - **Transport and Mobility:** Develop sustainable transport solutions such as improved public transport networks, pedestrian-friendly streets, and extensive cycling paths to reduce traffic congestion and promote environmentally friendly mobility.
3. **Sustainable Living and Environment:**
  - **Green Infrastructure:** Expand and enhance our green infrastructure, including parks, community gardens, and green corridors, to improve environmental quality, promote biodiversity, and offer recreational spaces for all.
  - **Renewable Energy Projects:** Implement renewable energy projects, such as solar and wind farms, to reduce our carbon footprint, lower energy costs, and create a sustainable energy future for Tullamore.
4. **Community Empowerment and Well-Being:**

- **Affordable Housing:** Develop diverse and affordable housing solutions to meet the needs of all residents, ensuring that everyone has access to safe, quality homes.
- **Health and Education Facilities:** Enhance and future proof our health and education facilities to provide top-tier services, fostering a healthy, well-educated population ready to meet future challenges.

### **Catapulting into the Future:**

To ensure Tullamore not only keeps pace with but leads the way into the future, our plan incorporates several critical strategies. The regeneration framework proposals indicate that the Railway opportunity site would be primarily residential development which suggests Tullamore is a Residential commuter town.

Tullamore Railway Station and surrounding lands presents a unique opportunity not to be overlooked.

We propose the expansion of the Tullamore Railway Station site and surrounding lands should incorporate a state-of-the-art exhibition centre and an adjoining hotel. This visionary suggestion aims to transform Tullamore into a premier destination for business, tourism, and community events, significantly enhancing the local economy and quality of life.

### **Project Overview:**

The proposed development would include:

1. **State-of-the-Art Regional Exhibition Centre:**
  - **Facilities:** A multi-functional exhibition hall, conference rooms, meeting spaces, and adaptable event areas designed to host a variety of events including trade shows, cultural exhibitions, business conferences, major concerts and community gatherings.
  - **Technology:** Cutting-edge audio-visual equipment, high-speed internet access, and modern amenities to support a wide range of events and ensure a seamless experience for organizers and attendees.
2. **Adjoining Hotel:**
  - **Accommodation:** A high-quality hotel with a range of rooms and suites to cater to business travellers, tourists, and event attendees.
  - **Amenities:** On-site dining, fitness center, business services, and dedicated event support to provide a comprehensive and convenient experience for guests.

### **Benefits to Tullamore and the Midland Region**

1. **Economic Growth:**
  - **Job Creation:** The construction and operation of the exhibition centre and hotel will create numerous jobs, from construction workers to hospitality staff, stimulating the local economy.
  - **Increased Revenue:** Attracting national and international events will bring visitors to Tullamore, increasing revenue for local businesses, including restaurants, shops, and service providers.
2. **Community and Cultural Development:**
  - **Event Hosting:** The exhibition centre will provide a venue for local cultural events, community activities, and educational programs, enriching the cultural fabric of our town.

- **Social Hub:** The new facilities will serve as a social hub for residents and visitors, fostering a sense of community and providing new opportunities for social engagement.
- 3. **Sustainable Development:**
  - **Eco-Friendly Design:** Incorporating sustainable building practices and energy-efficient technologies to minimise the environmental impact of the new development.
  - **Public Transport Access:** The location adjacent to the railway station promotes the use of public transport, reducing traffic congestion and lowering the town's carbon footprint.

### Strategic Advantages:

1. **Enhanced Connectivity:**
  - **Accessibility:** The proximity to the railway station ensures easy access for visitors from across the region and beyond, making Tullamore a convenient and attractive destination for events.
  - **Transportation Hub:** Strengthening the railway station as a central transportation hub will enhance overall connectivity and support further regional development.
2. **Tourism Boost:**
  - **Destination Appeal:** A state-of-the-art exhibition centre and hotel will position Tullamore as a key destination for business and leisure tourism, attracting a diverse range of visitors.
  - **Extended Stays:** With quality accommodation on-site, visitors are likely to extend their stay, exploring more of what Tullamore and the region has to offer, benefiting local attractions and businesses.

### Conclusion:

The proposed expansion of the Tullamore Railway Station site to include a state-of-the-art exhibition centre and hotel represents a transformative opportunity for our town. This project will drive economic growth, enhance community life, and position Tullamore as a leading destination for events and tourism. This development should meet the highest standards of sustainability and community benefit, and the positive impact it will have on our town's future.

### Opportunity Sites:

Overall, the proposals are to be welcomed as a strategy for the development of these sites. We would make the point that we shouldn't rush into solving today's housing problems and lose sight of longer term objectives of creating other attractions or enhancing the offer of food, beverage and retail uses.

#### Site 1- Grand Canal Harbour

The proposals put forward for the Harbour are exciting for the development of Tullamore and will be a major attraction for the town. However it is our opinion that Opportunity site 1 should include the entire block up to the Grand canal to include the parish car park, parochial house and other adjoining sites. If this entire block is explored as part of the Harbour Plan it would present a more cohesive approach to this exciting site.

#### Site 2- Former Texas Site

22 Apartments (page 6) is a totally insufficient ambition for a site of this size and importance in the Town Centre. Developers in outer urban sites are being told to achieve a density of 35 units/Ha which is inappropriate for housing schemes in Tullamore. Density should be graduated from the centre out with 50 plus units /Ha in town centre falling to 25/Ha further out where apartments are inappropriate. 26% residential is insufficient (p7/91) The density proposed for this site is 27 units per Ha with a total of only 22 apartments. This is completely insufficient and disingenuous to other developers who are struggling to comply with the national guidelines. Where is parking replaced when it is lost off this site?

#### **Site 4- Lands South of O Connor Square**

##### **Option A**

Another public square proposed, and offices form 75% of the mix and the parking has been removed? What is the vision for back-lands parking similar to the Westport Model. Are OCC going to acquire more lands for back-lands parking.

Again 2-3 storey shows little ambition for this town centre site. How can we build density?

##### **Option B east**

The high-density housing of 4-6 storeys here is welcomed but unlikely to be delivered in this location due to ownership and existing apartment building. Parking removed again so the question is where is the counterbalance. We know from previous experience that developments with removal of parking are unpalatable and both A and B propose the loss of very important town centre parking.

#### **Site 6- Coen Site**

Proposals go beyond Coen boundary to demolish Coughlan Engineering and sterilise private lands as green space on a large unsupervised block behind the retail centre, surely a wider continuous strip of green all along the river would be more appropriate. No account is taken of existing retail at the frontage or granted permission for retail. This site could deliver a lot more to Tullamore as a Mixed-use development and there are no impediments to taller buildings of 3-5/6 stories so why is such a valuable opportunity lost?

#### **Site 3- Lands Behind High St/ O'Moore St**

As with sites 2 and 4 there is a loss of yet another back land car park. Could the team explore the provision of new back land parking in appropriate locations or perhaps consider retaining some of these valuable car parks. We cannot be proposing pedestrianised streets if there are no parking provisions off street. Is there an opportunity here to get a connection for pedestrians to the Tanyard/Roselawn? Residential and Senior Living suggestions should be welcomed.

#### **Site 5- Railway Lands**

This is the only site proposing more than 6 storeys is on the edge of town and adjoining existing 2 storey residential with a proposed 255 units in total, does this suggest that Tullamore should be a commuter town? Surely an office/mixed use development could present a more sustainable scenario where employees from out of town could come to work at this hub? Could a mix be considered? Could it be a convention space or Expo space with a hotel possibly be of more benefit to the town?

Could the green space to the front of the station not be put to better use as a multi storey car park to serve the town and the station? Do we need another park at the train station when there is one across the road through Scoil Mhuire?

Offaly County Council offices are creaking at the seams, surely an expansion of the OCC offices onto this site would be sustainable?

Potential for this site to allow for a fully redeveloped commercial centre with a station spanning the rail tracks, a large bus hub and if necessary, expanding potentially into the Charleville lands.

### **Site 7- Lands behind the Court**

Residential here is appropriate but could it also accommodate offices to offer some additional space to the courts?

### **Site 8- Tanyard Lands**

Proposals here are logical expansion of existing commercial and also Arbutus Court. AS with Site 3 are there any opportunities to create pedestrian linkages to either O Moore St or Bachelor's Walk?

## **Public Realm Projects:**

### **Project 1- Market Square**

It is agreed by all that Market Square needs a major facelift and the proposals are attractive, however as with the Opportunity sites, parking loss needs more consideration, perhaps compensate with additional parking at the Parish Centre Car Park becoming a multi storey with development above. The Market Square proposal is a superb project for the Town.

### **Project 2- O'Carroll Street**

This project could be transformative and really enhance this very wide approach into the town centre. Excellent and this is an easy one that could be implemented a.s.a.p.

### **Project 3- Harbour Street**

Important as a continuation of O'Carroll Street into the town centre

### **Project 4- Church Street**

This street is really in need of upgrade and renewal and will become an important pedestrian link from Coens/Lidl to the Town Centre.

### **Project 5- Convent Road**

The change to one way here allows for the allocation of surplus road space to a two-lane cycleway and other improvements. This is a low traffic road and can cope with the change to reduce road width for better uses.

### **Project 12- Bridge Street**

The bridge street proposals for pedestrianisation and limited vehicular access are very attractive, however could anything this be achieved without a one-way traffic system? There is merit in exploring this perhaps as part of a Town Centre one way traffic study but not as a single proposal.

## **Conclusion:**

The regeneration of Tullamore is a bold and transformative initiative aimed at creating a dynamic, future-ready town. By focusing on critical infrastructure development, sustainability, and community empowerment, we are poised to catapult Tullamore into a new era of prosperity and innovation. This is an exciting endeavour, working together to build a resilient, vibrant, and forward-looking community that will serve as a model for rural regeneration across Ireland and beyond.

## **TULLAMORE & DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

### **STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE**

### **TULLAMORE HARBOUR MASTERPLAN**

**JULY 2024**

#### **Introduction:**

This Strategic Policy committee of Tullamore and District Chamber of Commerce have campaigned for more than 10 years for the redevelopment of Tullamore Harbour recognising its unique characteristics as a large body of water in an urban setting that presents endless possibilities to create amenities and more importantly attractions that would benefit the region once the site is opened up to the public.

Its is also recognised the potential presented when engaging award winning Architects with origins in the Town to prepare this masterplan.

#### **Opportunity Sites:**

##### **Site 1- Grand Canal Harbour**

The proposals put forward for the Harbour are exciting for the development of Tullamore and will be a major attraction for the town. The proposals put forward for phasing of the redevelopment are particularly welcomed with the first phase a mere opening of the harbour site to be enjoyed by the community. The various further phases of development including the refurbishment of the dry dock, the creation of a feature building at the end of the approach canal and the creation of a new building on the site of the lock workshop are all attractive and exciting proposals.

However it is our opinion that Opportunity site 1 has been restricted by limiting its potential to the waterways Ireland land ownership, thus in effect 3 of the 4 side of the Harbour have a vision for the future but no indication of a compatible fourth side to the waterfront.

The proposal also includes arbitrary proposals for the waterways Ireland warehouse on Convent Road as part of the plan. Surely it would have been more logical to either exclude this building from the proposals, or more sensible to include the entire block as part of the masterplan. The "Opportunity" is not limited to the waterways site, it extends along the canal approach, store street and st brigids place and includes underutilised sites such as the Parish Car park.

Would it not be better for Tullamore to have a vision for the entire canal "quarter" and not just the waterways Ireland ownership.

We believe that OCC and Waterways Ireland should include the entire block up to the Grand canal to include the parish car park, parochial house and other adjoining sites, so that the design team could present a coherent overall vision for this strategic block of Tullamore Town.



**Conclusion:**

This submission in summary welcomes the long awaited proposals presented by the design team, but requests that the entire opportunity be explored in full to inform future decision making on the Canal Quarter.

**From:**  
**To:** [Tullamore Municipal District](#)  
**Subject:** re: Submission to Tullamore regeneration  
**Date:** Thursday 25 July 2024 22:40:46

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I wish to comment on the above.

25% of the population have or will have mobility issues. The PLAN must make provision to meet their needs. Spaces need to be reserved for elderly drivers in addition to those designated for disabled drivers and people with children.

The bus service to/from Birr needs to be upgraded to the same frequency as the service to/from Edenderry

Two "park and ride "facilities should be provided with a bus service serving them and various stops in town. Two bus routes would be adequate.

**Appendix B**  
**Environmental Assessments**

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