



**IRISH PLANNING
INSTITUTE**

Institiúid Pleanála Na hÉireann



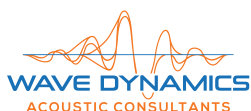
PLANNING AWARDS 2023

September 2023

Sponsored by:



**An Roinn Tithíochta,
Pleanála agus Rialtais Áitiúil**
Department of Housing,
Planning and Local Government



**Oifig an
Rialaitheora Pleanála**
Office of the
Planning Regulator

President's Welcome



The Irish Planning Awards acknowledges a diverse range of projects and plans taking place at county and regional levels in complex and dynamic environments. The awards provide an excellent opportunity to reflect and promote the contribution of planning to society and highlight the positive work being carried out across the sector and the role of planning in delivering quality and sustainable development. Raising the profile of planning and celebrating our achievements, diversity, successes and potential has been a priority for me in my term as President and I am delighted to be able to do this with this year's President's Awards category in particular.

This year organisations and projects from across the island - encompassing Dublin, Kildare, Limerick, Cork, Antrim, Tipperary, Meath, Clare, Louth, Galway, Offaly and Donegal -

were submitted for the Irish Planning Awards, with 48 entries in total. The standard and quality of entries for this year's awards were very high, and the judging panel had a very tough task to produce a shortlist. I would like to thank all those who entered and congratulate those whose achievements are being recognised tonight.

I would also like to thank our sponsors, the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage, Wave Dynamics Acoustic Consultants, Uisce Éireann, FuturEnergy Ireland and the Office of the Planning Regulator as without their support the awards scheme would not be possible.

Mary Mac Mahon MIPI
President

Our Judges

This year's judging panel comprises

Mary Mac Mahon *MIPI*
(Irish Planning Institute President),

Charlotte Sheridan *MIPI*
(RIAI President),

Henk van der Kamp
FIPI (Secretary General of the ECTP-CEU, the umbrella organisation for spatial planning institutes in Europe and past president of the IPI),

Terry Prendergast *MIPI*
(former board member of An Bord Pleanála)

and

John O'Hara *MIPI*
(former Dublin City Council Planning Officer).

With Thanks to our Sponsors



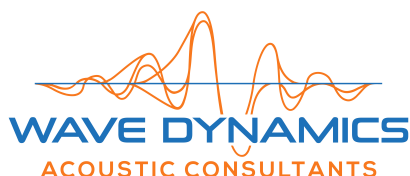
**An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht**
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's mission is to support the sustainable and efficient delivery of well-planned homes and effective local government.



Uisce Éireann

Uisce Éireann is Ireland's national water utility responsible for providing water and wastewater services throughout Ireland.



Wave Dynamics Acoustic Consultants

Wave Dynamics are a leading provider of acoustic consultancy services. Their team provide specialist design, engineering and consultancy for building acoustics, planning, environmental noise, industrial noise, and vibration. They work across the full spectrum of projects in the built environment, industrial and environmental sectors. They have offices in Dublin and Wexford and their team have extensive experience in undertaking noise impact assessments for planning.



FuturEnergy Ireland

In November 2021, Coillte and ESB joined forces to launch their joint venture company FuturEnergy Ireland. Combining the Irish State's strongest assets and expertise in renewable energy development, FuturEnergy Ireland's mission is to maximise the potential of our unique wind and land resources and accelerate Ireland's transformation to a low carbon energy economy.



**Oifig an
Rialaitheora Pleanála**
Office of the
Planning Regulator

Office of the Planning Regulator

The Office of the Planning Regulator's role is to ensure that local authorities and An Bord Pleanála support and implement Government planning policy. They also implement planning research, training and public awareness in order to promote the public's engagement in the planning process and to enhance knowledge and public information about planning in Ireland.

Plan Making Category

Entries in this category should:

- Demonstrate excellent practice in plan making which went above and beyond statutory requirements and/or is unique
- Consideration of climate action, active travel, sustainability and the circular economy etc.
- Deliverability and implementation should be considered
- Plans may include public or privately funded projects including development plans, local area plans, regeneration plan, public realm plans and masterplans.
- Public participation and engagement will form part of the assessment criteria.
- Projects must have been undertaken since March 2020

Shortlisted entries in this category are:

- **Limerick City and County Council** -
Young Person Participation in Land Use Planning
- **Kildare County Council** -
The Athy Local Area Plan 2021-2027 and the Development of a New Generation of Local Area Plans for Kildare
- **South Dublin County Council** -
South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028
- **Meath County Council** -
Flower Hill and Abbeylands Urban Design Plan 2021
- **Uisce Éireann** -
Uisce Éireann (Irish Water) National Water Resources Plan - Framework Plan
- **KPMG Future Analytics (with Fingal Co Co)** -
KPMG Future Analytics (joint submission with Fingal County Council as lead applicant)
- **Downey** -
Killaloe-Ballina Town Enhancement and Mobility Plan
- **Clare County Council** -
Shannon Town Centre Masterplan
- **South Dublin County Council and Dublin City Council** -
City Edge Strategic Framework

- Limerick City and County Council - Young Person Participation in Land Use Planning

Limerick City and County Council have formulated, trailed and implemented a schools consultation programme to engage young people in the preparation of the development plan and local area plan processes. The programme allows for consultation with young people as an integral part of the plan-making process and central in shaping the future of Limerick. The programme was originally developed in conjunction with teaching staff to ensure that both planning and curriculum objectives were met and as a way to maximise the willingness of schools to participate. The programme has been developed in two strands for both primary and secondary schools and has been formulated having regard to the school curriculum in each strand. The programme includes the delivery of a classroom based exercise and this is supported with an interactive mapping tool allowing students to get out on-the-ground themselves and with the online mapping tool, follow their location, marking what issues/concerns and ideas they have to make their local area better and influence the plan making process. In addition, school children are encouraged to make formal submissions to the plan-making process.

Since 2020, over 1,370 students have engaged with the Forward Planning team and have influenced the future development of their local area. Primary School Consultation Programme Outline (Approx. Time 45 mins):



- Target classes: 3rd to 6th
- Presentation by planning staff (what a planner does, what is a land use plan and engagement with basic principles of development)
- Travel Survey (an up-to-date travel survey is undertaken within the school to ascertain current modal split with results influencing LAP Preparation)
- Breakout groups, led by planning staff with each group assigned a map of LAP boundary, school as centre

point. A 1km radius, around the school, prompts students to what facilities/services are within this radius (relating to the 10-minute town concept).

- The programme discussion follows with questions such as: - Location of facilities/services/areas of historical importance - Mark on map the facilities/services historical buildings/where they play/locations that the students like/do not feel safe/what can you add to your map that will improve the environment and protect against climate change. - Identify enhancements to their settlement. - Present their work, suggestions and map to their class and/or a Planning Officer with group discussion. Post Primary Consultation Programme Outline (Approx. Time 1 hour):
- Target years: 4th – 6th year
- Presentation by planning staff, in-depth look at zoning map, student travel survey.
- Breakout groups, led by planning staff with each group assigned a map of LAP boundary, school as centre point and 1km radius. Each group assigned a different theme(s) to discuss based on the future development of their local area including: - Vision and Identity - Climate Change - Environment - Economy - Social and Community
- Students present their findings/ideas around future plans for their area.
- Students are asked to utilise the online mapping tool survey of their town using school tablets/personal phones (an additional on-the-ground method to gather information) in their own.

Kildare County Council - *The Athy Local Area Plan 2021-2027 and the Development of a New Generation of Local Area Plans for Kildare*

The Athy Local Area Plan 2021–2027 was the first statutory plan that was published by Kildare County Council on foot of the integration of the provisions of the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy into the Kildare County Development Plan.

Whilst such an evolving policy background presented challenges, it also offered the council an opportunity to forge a new and innovative approach aimed at creating a more robust and data-driven process for the making and implementation of local area plans.

Whilst the primary purpose of every statutory land use plan is to set out an overarching strategy to guide and manage the proper planning and sustainable development of a defined area, the planning department from the outset, sought to establish a broader set of aims and objectives that it

hoped to achieve in developing the Athy Local Area Plan (LAP). This was on foot of a far-ranging review of the methodologies and approaches employed as part of the preparation of previous local area plans, which had been the subject of a number of ministerial directions and judicial reviews.

In seeking to overcome the difficulties of the past it was considered that the purpose of the LAP was not just to act as a land use plan for Athy, rather it was also to represent a new vision for developing and delivering local area plans across County Kildare. Accordingly, the Plan was envisaged to act as a statement of intent on behalf of the council, effectively setting out the planning authority's overarching approach in applying an integrated, evidence-led and place-based methodology to sustainably developing Kildare's most important economic, social, environmental and heritage assets; its 12 largest settlements. In order to achieve such an outcome, the planning department embarked on a process of engagement and collaboration with key stakeholders both within and outside the organisation and with the public. The result was the production of a series of nine documents (four of which were prepared in-house) to support various aspects of the Plan.

Whilst working within the constraints of national and regional policy, the strategic and inclusive approach taken in preparing the LAP demonstrates the value of how a tailored and evidence-based approach can be applied in a meaningful way to overcome the current developmental challenges affecting Athy and also to assist and contribute to a model of low carbon development which will deliver a climate resilient, healthier and more inclusive settlement. In this regard, the Athy LAP has achieved a great manner of success to-date.

Not only is its provisions being implemented on a day-to-day basis, with its regeneration priorities being delivered in the town and the supporting documents providing crucial support in assisting decision making, it is increasingly being viewed as an exemplar plan within the local authority sector, providing a model for other planning authorities to follow and cited as a best practice approach to local area plan-making by a number of organisations, including the Office of the Planning Regulator.



South Dublin County Council

- South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028

In planning for the future, we impact on how people move within and around an area through the types of environments we create. The County Development Plan sits at the core of all development functions of a County, providing the land use framework which guides future development. In its simplest form it must focus on the current and future places people live in, work in and how they interact and move between these places while protecting the environment.

Central to this process is developing an understanding of what has happened in the past and developing new evidenced based ways of thinking in order to create a shared vision, policies and a strategy that facilitates investment and the delivery of sustainable communities. Building on extensive desktop research and first-hand market segmentation which identified the needs and wants of the public, stakeholders, public and private practitioners and elected members, the South Dublin Development Plan has been presented and structured in a manner which provides for a logically layered approach to delivering development within the County.

The introductory section sets out the role of the Plan, its statutory basis, strategic vision and how the cross-cutting theme of climate action has been integrated not just as an isolated chapter but stitched throughout as a key component of each chapter.

The Core Strategy sets the parameters within which the settlement strategy for the future growth of the County has been developed ensuring consistency with the National and Regional Spatial Strategies. Natural, Cultural and Built Heritage alongside Green Infrastructure set the baseline environment for the County with policies and objectives for the preservation, protection and enhancement of the County's heritage contributing towards climate action, improved biodiversity and placemaking.

Delivering the strategic vision in a manner which recognises this baseline environment within the County, the plan places a strong emphasis on Quality Design and Healthy Placemaking and adopts a South Dublin specific 'Plan Approach' for the delivery of successful and sustainable neighbourhoods. This provides a holistic approach to the delivery of sustainable communities in the form of housing, connected neighbourhoods with tailored sustainable transport mode targets, community and open space infrastructure, employment opportunities and the promotion of sustainable energy and environmental services.

An Implementation and Monitoring section sets out the development standards and safeguards that are required to secure the policies and objectives set out in the Plan. It also identifies monitoring mechanisms which will inform future reviews and the next County Development Plan.

Given the complexities of a Development Plan the 'Our Neighbourhoods' section seeks to engage the public from project inception right through to adoption, implementation and monitoring grounding the plan at a local level by setting out what is planned and how each neighbourhood is developing towards the delivery of compact, sustainable and connected neighbourhoods throughout the life of the plan such that; In 2028 South Dublin will be a place that our communities are proud of, that our businesses can thrive in and that will help us to live greener and healthier lives'



Meath County Council -

Flower Hill and Abbeylands Urban Design Plan 2021

Meath County Council in conjunction with The Paul Hogarth Company prepared an Urban Design Plan for lands at Flower Hill and Abbeylands in Navan. This Plan was drafted in response to the recognition that Flower Hill, once a thriving, vibrant area had, as a result of population decline, vacancy, dereliction and anti-social behaviour, become an undesirable place to live, work and invest. The Plan was prepared by a multidisciplinary team of Planners, Landscape Architects, Urban Designers, Ecologists and jointly shaped by the local community, other stakeholders and the Elected Members.

Flower Hill is an historically important part of the town of Navan. It once was an energetic, proud and well populated community, home to a well-established furniture industry. In recent years Flower Hill had experienced a significant period of decline with the closure of many of the furniture factories. Vacancy, dereliction and population decline followed compounding the undesirability of the area.

The Plan sought to address the significant aforementioned issues which are viewed as blockages to the redevelopment and regeneration of this area and restore Flower Hill and Abbeylands to the vibrant community it once was. The Urban Design Plan sets out a positive road map for the regeneration of the area. A key part of the Urban Design Plan involved developing a 'Shared Vision' with the local community and other stakeholders for the future identity of Flower Hill. This vision is supported by a sequence of strategic aims that were developed with the intention of helping translate the vision into clear themes for project delivery.

Four key aims of the Plan (identified in response to the analysis and engagement) are;

- Restoring and celebrating our heritage.
- Bringing together a vibrant community.
- Reconnecting with the river and town.
- Creating new opportunities for the area.

The subsequent outworking of these aims created 5 Projects:

- Flower Hill - The Street
- Abbeylands - A New Urban Quarter
- Blackwater - The River Park
- Rebuilding Flower Hill
- Our Flower Hill - Our Community Each project is supported by a collection of well-considered and targeted interventions.

The projects involve a complete reconstruction of the streetscape, installation of a community and cultural facility, upgrading of frontage on existing buildings and a very exciting riverbank project which will link Blackwater Park to Flower Hill, all of which will completely transform this run-down area. Following its approval, the Plan has formed the basis of a successful URDF application where €7.66m has been awarded, providing national endorsement and the single biggest investment in an area of Navan, ensuring that the Plan, its vision and objectives are realised.

Uisce Éireann

- Uisce Éireann (Irish Water) National Water Resources Plan - Framework Plan

Uisce Éireann (UÉ) developed a National Water Resource Plan (NWRP) to identify how the organisation can provide a safe, sustainable, secure and reliable water supply to our customers for now and into the future. The plan which was published in Spring 2021 following extensive public consultation is the first plan for the entire public water supply in Ireland, it allows UÉ to support sustainable growth and economic development whilst safeguarding the environment. The plan provides a 25-year strategy for Ireland's water assets and sets out how we will balance the supply and demand for safe drinking water over the short, medium and long term.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment Statement (SEA) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) were undertaken in respect of the Plan. Effective water services, including both the delivery of a sustainable and reliable clean water supply, and the safe disposal of wastewater, are essential. Being able to understand and estimate how much water is required, where it is required, and when it is required, is essential to plan appropriately for Ireland's future.

The NWRP identifies deficiencies and needs across the country's water supply network, allowing plan level capital and operational solutions to be determined which can then address these issues. It allows UÉ to integrate Government Policy, Legislation and external factors that have the potential to impact our water supplies.

The NWRP will:

- Ensure that our water supplies can support national targets on growth and economic development and climate change adaptation
- Enable Uisce Éireann to address needs across our water supplies in the most effective way over time, through the regulated investment cycles;
- Ensure that there is a transparent framework to develop the most appropriate projects/programmes to meet statutory obligations in relation to water supply;
- Provide a framework to track outcomes, allowing interventions to be prioritised in order to bring water supply up to the required standards in the shortest possible timeframe; and
- Deliver a plan to ensure that all of our customers have access to safe, secure, reliable and sustainable water supplies, wherever they live.

To ensure broad public and stakeholder engagement, and due to the enormity of the task, the first NWRP is being delivered in two Phases.

Phase 1: A Framework Plan, published in Spring 2021.

Phase 2: four Regional Water Resource Plans (RWRP). The status of each of these plans are as follows:

- RWRP Eastern and Midlands – Adopted 2022
- RWRP South West – Adopted 2022
- RWRP North West – Consultation complete, preparation ongoing
- RWRP South East - Consultation complete, preparation ongoing The Framework Plan includes an assessment of needs across each of the 539 public water supplies nationally, in terms of:
 - o Water Quantity that UÉ can provide;
 - o Water Quality that UÉ can provide; and
 - o Performance and operational efficiency of UÉ's Asset Base.

The NWRP will be reviewed on a cyclical basis, every 5 years, to take account of new information, data, policies and legislation. Used as case study of best practice by EPA.

KPMG Future Analytics (with Fingal Co Co)

- KPMG Future Analytics (joint submission with Fingal County Council as lead applicant)

The Sustainable Swords project is the largest and most in-depth analysis undertaken of any urban settlement in Ire-

land. It took two years to complete. Outputs included a town health check for Swords and Public Realm and Transport Strategy, which together formed an evidence base for the Sustainable Swords strategy. Swords is a dynamic town that has rapidly grown in recent decades. This growth is anticipated to continue.

The strategy focuses specifically on placemaking within the town centre; aiming to reverse the historic shift away from Main Street that commenced in the early 2000s to facilitate better placemaking and a more resilient town centre. The Sustainable Swords project seeks to facilitate a sustainable approach to development and placemaking in Swords.

This is about making a better place to live, work and visit, positioning Swords for the future as a more attractive, vibrant, and resilient town.

The purpose of Sustainable Swords is to produce a place-making strategy focused on the strategic regeneration and compact, sustainable development of Swords. The goals are to increase the resilience of the local economy and to provide for an enhanced, accessible, inclusive, age friendly and healthy urban environment. The ambition for Sustainable Swords is to form a coordinating device for measures and projects that are prioritised, programmed, and impactful, and critically will enable coordination of investment and decision-making across multiple stakeholders, maximising private sector engagement and identifying synergies and opportunities.

The aim is to identify a coordinated range of 'pipeline' projects that can be funded as part of the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) and other appropriate funding streams. A town is never complete, and it never stops changing. The challenge is to ensure the change that happens within Swords is a positive process that makes Swords a better place to live, work and visit, a more vibrant town for all and a good practice example of a more sustainable approach to urban development.



There are several aspects that make this project unique:

- The investment by Fingal County Council in a significant project to identify pragmatic interventions that can make Swords a more sustainable community.
- The carefully designed methodology which ensured there was an extensive body of evidence upon which to base recommendations and actions.

- The involvement of a wide range of consultants which enabled a focus on their respective core areas, for example DBFL focusing on innovative approaches to urban development, building on best practice elsewhere, such as home zones and Quietways, as well as extensive traffic modelling. Green Schools team focusing on walkability and cyclability analysis and engaging with school children. Create who prepared a branding for the Sustainable Swords project, and a range of assets which enabled the profile of the project, and therefore engagement with it to be elevated.
- The iterative feedback loop which ensured that the resident and business community of Swords were given many opportunities to engage with the project.

Downey

- Killaloe-Ballina Town Enhancement and Mobility Plan



The "Killaloe-Ballina Town Enhancement and Mobility Plan" is a non-statutory Plan which seeks to facilitate a comprehensive coordinated guidance to improve transportation and mobility management, as well as to stimulate the sustainable development and enhance the public realm within Killaloe in County Clare and Ballina in County Tipperary, underpinned by a cohesive, collaborative vision for these linked settlements.

With an overarching focus on balanced development, this coherent vision draws on the unique and special character of the area with 2 towns, but essentially 1 people working and living closely together. This is achieved through specific measures, designs, and schemes which promote their complementarity, and create an overall perception of them being as one town in terms of their functionality and aesthetics.

The Plan capitalises on the towns' strengths, assets, and opportunities to collectively boost the local businesses by animating the public realm, increasing footfall, reimagining the towns and expanding the tourism product, and maximising local economic benefits. However, central to all future de-

velopments in the linked settlements is the Killaloe Bypass, Shannon Bridge Crossing and R494 Improvement Scheme (now commenced), which will provide a western bypass for Killaloe town and a new bridge crossing of the River Shannon, changing travel and mobility patterns into and around both settlements.

By utilising a proactive, plan-led approach, the implementation of the Plan and setting the scene for the existing community, the Killaloe-Ballina Town Enhancement and Mobility Plan sets the objectives and/or interventions pre- and post-operation of the bypass. In collaboration with Mesh Architects, Curtins, and CAAS Ltd., DOWNEY led and coordinated this multi-disciplinary design team in liaison with Clare County Council and Tipperary County Council. Donal Duffy, Director of Planning and Project Manager in DOWNEY with over 15 years of post-graduate experience, acted as the project manager and single point of contact between the design team, the Steering Group, both County Councils, and a wide array of stakeholders. The provided services ranged from a thorough policy review to a comprehensive background study of Killaloe and Ballina comprising of desktop study and site surveys. This is reflected in various data layers of the towns, including demographic profile, built environment, community amenities, heritage and historic environment, transport and mobility, pedestrian and cycle accessibility, green and blue infrastructure, views and vistas, and opportunity sites.

To facilitate the participatory approach of the Plan, DOWNEY carried out extensive series of public consultation with the local community, business owners, and various stakeholders throughout pre-draft and draft stages of the Plan.

The Plan is represented in a standard report format accompanied by maps, figures, graphs, and CGIs prepared by DOWNEY. The Killaloe-Ballina Enhancement and Mobility Plan was adopted at the Council meetings of Clare County Council and Tipperary County Council in December 2021. The commencement of the construction of the bypass in November 2022 now enables this Plan to bring forward these planned improvements and opportunities for the linked towns of Killaloe-Ballina.

Clare County Council - *Shannon Town Centre Masterplan*

Shannon holds a unique and special place in the town planning history of Ireland, as virtually all of it has been built in the past sixty years and it is home to Ireland's only planned New Town. A 'new town' is a term in urban planning to define a new separate settlement which was planned and built at once. Many New Towns were built in the United States and Britain in the 1950s, and would eventually become known as the 'garden city for the motor age'.

Shannon, one of its kind in Ireland, was planned and developed in the 1960's based on the 'Radburn style' - a city in New Jersey designed in 1928 as the first town for the motor

age". Shannon developed with a limited amount of housing, in the form of apartments on Drumgeely Hill, directly adjacent to the Airport, followed by low-rise detached houses built for new industrialists and workers in the new Shannon International Airport and Shannon Development Industrial Zone. The planned New Town of Shannon was fundamentally different to other towns in Ireland. Whilst the Radburn design had major advantages, the design also brought challenges.

Fundamentally there was no focus for a town centre, no traditional streetscape nor a civic or community focus in the town whilst commercial activity was dispersed on the periphery. In addition, due to control of planning and governance of the town by Shannon Development, there was no significant spatial planning or plan-led on the emerging spatial or community development of Shannon, until that remit was transferred to the Local Authority in 2004.

In 2020 following an unsuccessful URDF application by the community for a The Venue Theatre Clare County Council Planning Department successfully advocated for a Masterplan for the Town Centre to be prepared to provide a holistic spatial, social and mobility masterplan approach to be undertaken, rather than focus on one site.

The Masterplanning process sought to examine growth potential, use of derelict and vacant sites within the town centre, development potential of key sites at the entrance points from the road network and create a vibrant place for people to meet, recreate and connect with their area. It is intended that the Masterplan would enable the delivery of a high-quality town environment through sustainable economic growth catering for an expansion of services, retail and residential demand to meet the growth that the National Planning Framework have identified for Shannon. This masterplan was partially funded by the URDF Project Ireland 2040.

The Planning Department also responded to the need to ensure the Masterplan was influenced and guided by economic realities and viability. Looking at Best Practice across the Ireland and UK an Economic Viability Assessment was undertaken in parallel with, and informed the Masterplan process. In addition due to the need to respond to a range of stakeholders and previous disquiet from the community significant public participation was undertaken throughout all stages of the Masterplanning process. Accordingly the proposed project is the Shannon Town Centre Masterplan and Process.

South Dublin County Council and Dublin City Council - *City Edge Strategic Framework*

The City Edge Project is a transformative initiative to reimagine the Naas Road, Ballymount and Park West areas of Dublin as a new urban Quarter providing up to 40,000 homes and 75,000 jobs (Strategic Framework - Summary

Booklet - The City Edge Project). The City Edge lands straddle the South Dublin County Council (SDCC) and Dublin City Council (DCC) functional areas and the project is a partnership between the two local authorities in a collaborative effort to deliver this large-scale transboundary regeneration scheme.

At 700 Hectares, the scale of the project makes it unique in Ireland and one of the largest redevelopment opportunities in Europe. The brownfield lands are located at the western edge of Dublin City, within the M50 and only 15 minutes from the City Centre, creating a unique opportunity for sustainable compact growth. The area as now envisaged has the potential to make a significant contribution to the delivery of much needed new homes and jobs, while also generating significant economic, climate and social benefits for the country.

The project was awarded URDF funding for the preparation of a Strategic Framework published in August 2022, which sets out a high level vision for the regeneration of the area to 2070 (City-Edge-Strategic-Framework-August-2022-Final.pdf (cityedge.ie)) The City Edge project has a range of ambitious Strategic Objectives at its core including:

- The creation of a liveable quarter based on 15-minute city principles
- The creation of a resilient and diverse employment offer
- The accommodation of a variety of new homes to create mixed and balanced communities
- A 50% green cover target for recreation, biodiversity, and climate resilience
- Ensuring transport-oriented development by focussing new mixed-use and compact urban development on enhanced active travel and public transport corridors
- Knitting new development into existing neighbourhoods
- Supporting community needs through timely provision of facilities
- Fast-track to zero carbon and zero waste
- Creating a deliverable and credible framework.

It was decided at the outset that to realise the scale of ambition of City Edge, it was essential to have oversight and high-level representation from key stakeholders. A City Edge Steering Group was established including the Chief Executive of SDCC and Deputy Chief Executive of DCC, and representation from state agencies including the Department of Housing, Local Government Heritage, the National Transport Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Irish Water and the Land Development Agency.

The involvement of key stakeholders at this level facilitates

co-ordination and implementation of vital infrastructure and policy requirements and the unity of purpose needed to realise a project of this scale. The Strategic Framework is a high-level vision for the future up to 2070. We are currently progressing a shorter-term statutory plan to be incorporated as proposed variations to the SDCC and DCC Development Plans.

City Edge is a unique opportunity to achieve Government policies of compact growth and transport-oriented development at scale, to reach our climate targets, and to make a significant contribution to resolving the housing crisis, while also generating substantial employment opportunities.

Employment and Enterprise Category

Entries in this category should:

- Promote and support a successful prosperous economy
- Projects could include but not limited to:
 - Economic plans by local authorities, community groups, private and commercial entities in which the role of planning and the planner is demonstrated
 - Work hubs developed by local authorities or private and commercial entities
 - Office or retail developments by any entity in which the role of planning and the planner is demonstrated
- Deliverability and implementation should be considered particularly for plans
- Consideration of climate action, active travel, sustainability and the circular economy etc.
- Projects must have been undertaken since March 2020

Shortlisted entries in this category are:

- **County Kildare Leader Partnership CLG** – Barrow Blueway Economic Plan
- **South Dublin County Council** - From Big Box to Green Scene

County Kildare Leader Partnership CLG – Barrow Blueway Economic Plan

A Blueway is defined as: “A network of approved and branded multi-activity recreational trails and sites, based on, and closely linked with the water, together with providers facilitating access to activities and experiences” The Barrow Blueway concept was initially developed as a 115km route from Lowtown to St. Mullins in Co. Carlow.

However, planning permission was not granted for a section of the route due to SAC designation, and the programme of works covers a 46km route from Lowtown in Co. Kildare, through Vicarstown, Co. Laois to Athy, Co. Kildare.

Waterways Ireland is currently developing the infrastructure for the Blueway by resurfacing the existing towpath to create a 2.5m wide traffic free multi use route. The Local Authorities are providing pedestrian crossings where the route crosses roads and a number of lowered jetties are being put in place to enable easy access and egress for paddlesports.

The announcement of the programme of works usually comes after a plan is developed. However, in this case, the development was just the beginning. It provided an opportunity to positively manage the development of the Blueway concept and associated economic development for the towns, villages, and countryside along the route and in its environs.

The Barrow Blueway Economic Plan is a shared vision and plan for a positive visitor experience grounded in the sustainable economic development of the Barrow Blueway. Spurred on by the construction of the Barrow Blueway, the purpose of the plan is to inform, guide and encourage economic development initiatives that will bring the experience of the Blueway to life for local people and visitors to the area. It created an evidence base for such initiatives in terms of the very latest market intelligence on Blueway users; building awareness of related developments along the route and hearing first-hand from all those wanting to develop their ideas has been the driving force for our work.

In presenting this plan-led approach, the project team were mindful to ensure that the activation of the Blueway will be in keeping with the area's distinctive sense of place; will align with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development and will result in benefits not only for those keen to be involved in its development but also for Canal-side communities up and down the Barrow Line of the Grand Canal.

This project received grant aid from Kildare Local Community Development Committee and support from County Kildare LEADER Partnership financed by the Irish Government under the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas. It was delivered by Louise Browne (MRUP) Associates Consultant Team. The project has a dedicated webpage where the plan can be viewed/downloaded <http://www.countykildarelp.ie/bbep>

South Dublin County Council - *From Big Box to Green Scene*

Traditionally, large-format buildings associated with low-intensity employment and dedicated to enterprise uses tended towards the generic with long elevations, boxy shapes sitting on large carpets of impermeable tarmac with

relief only from an occasional opportunistic buddleia plant sitting in the gutter or a self-sown sycamore in a neglected corner.

Warehousing as a building-type underpins a modern and prosperous economy. Alongside other building typologies, it must also play its part in responding to the challenges of climate change and sustainability. On the policy side, the development and adoption of an innovative tool known as the Green Space Factor (GSF) and a suite of policies for Space-Extensive Enterprise Uses as part of the County Development Plan (CDP) 2022-2028 has precipitated a change in the type of warehouse buildings that South Dublin County Council (SDCC) is inviting. On the development management side, it has been our experience that large corporates want to be on the right side of these policies for their own green credentials.

We have had positive engagement with developers about these policy requirements at pre-planning meetings. We provide expert multi-disciplinary technical advice at an early stage in the interests of efficiency, as well as positive outcomes. We are in the early stages of CDP Implementation. Nevertheless, planners are affecting a meaningful uplift in the quality of warehouse-type buildings permitted in South Dublin County Council. This change is embodied in the bones of how these buildings function, as well as the finishing touches of how they appear. Worked example – planning application reference SD22A/0290 - Warehouse, ancillary staff and office accommodation with GFA of 11,691 sq m on 2.56ha site at Kingswood Road and Kingswood Avenue, Citywest Business Campus, Dublin 24.

This application was shaped by the new requirements of the County Development Plan 2022-2027 and from the get-go included some green infrastructure proposals such as green walls and permeable paving in response to the new CDP. A request for additional information looked for more robust and meaningful green infrastructure proposals, as well as sustainable travel measures. The applicant stepped up with revised proposals including more extensive green walls, above-ground attenuation, and extensive biodiversity-friendly planting as well as more consideration of sustainable travel. These revisions were tested against policy and then permitted. They have not yet been built-out.

This positive outcome is planner-led in terms of both plan-making and development management decisions.

However, it also involved a multi-disciplinary approach with Parks Superintendents, Drainage Engineers and Transport Engineers being vital to the process. There is wide scope for the replication of this new typology of warehouse buildings across the Country.



Urban Regeneration and Heritage Category

Entries in this category should:

- Recognise town renewal schemes and infill developments bringing brownfield lands and/or heritage buildings back into use
- Deliverability and implementation should be considered, particularly for plans, as should integration with the existing neighbourhood/streetscape and permeability and mix of use
- Consideration of climate action, active travel, sustainability and the circular economy etc.
- Projects must have been undertaken since March 2020

Shortlisted entries in this category are:

- **South Dublin County Council** -
The Street - Kick starting the Tallaght Innovation Quarter
- **Donegal County Council** -
Ballyshannon Historic Towns Initiative Project
- **Tipperary County Council** -
Activating Cahir's Town Centre Regeneration Strategy
- **Downey** -
Portarlinton Urban Regeneration Strategy 2030
- **Land Development Agency** -
St. Kevin's Cork

South Dublin County Council - The Street - Kick starting the Tallaght Innovation Quarter

The Architectural Conservation Area of Tallaght Village emerged in the 8th Century around St. Maelruain Church, but it was not until the 1890's, with a tram connecting Tallaght to Dublin that sparked the initial evolution of Tallaght as a new residential area. Tallaght's second evolution began in the 1990's, with its designation as the County Town for South Dublin, the relocation of the Council offices, the opening of the Square shopping centre and the construction of the Luas Red Line that spurred a number of mixed use and cultural developments.

However, over the last 20 years growth has stalled and further ambitious interventions are needed. With the goal of tackling stagnation, the Council adopted the Tallaght Local Area Plan (2020).

Based on the principles of compact growth, the plan promotes the intensification of underused brownfield land and identifies the potential for up to 12,000 homes and 15,000 jobs. One issue repeatedly raised by residents during discussions and at public consultation, is the concern regarding the disconnect between existing and future communities. This is confounded by the physical make-up of Tallaght where an oversized, impermeable and illegible road network disconnects the regeneration lands from surrounding communities.

In response the Local Area Plan identifies a new and improved street network. The most exciting aspect of our plan for Tallaght is the role the Council has set for itself. Tallaght Innovation Quarter (IQ) marks the third evolution of Tallaght's growth. Tallaght IQ includes a set of proactive interventions to address the challenge of Place Making on brownfield land.

The interventions seek to support the growth of a place through easy physical and social connections, underpinned by the following:

- Innovation
- Connecting Tallaght, encouraging ease of movement and social interactions
- Providing much needed new homes and workspace
- Bolstering Tallaght as a destination

The catalyst for Tallaght IQ is 'The Street'. At 3.5km long, The Street will provide a safe, legible route that encourages physical and social connection. The Street connects the existing residential communities of Kiltipper in the south, through the Tallaght Town Centre, into the regeneration lands of Cookstown and on to the existing communities of Belgard. Along The Street, the Council is using its land, skills and funding to hang a network of projects that will not only meet community needs but will animate the place and bring confidence to communities and private landowners.



Tallaght IQ includes;

- 133 cost rental homes;
- 81 new elderly homes;
- a new secondary school;
- a new supported workspace building for c.70 start-up businesses;
- a 4th stand for Tallaght stadium;
- community sports pitches;
- enhancements to Tallaght library;
- a new heritage centre celebrating the evolution of the County;
- a programme of cultural events;
- and a low carbon district energy network.

The Street unlocks this network of projects and itself includes seven connected stages that are being progressed jointly by the Council's planning, active travel and architects' departments. Works are already on site for the early stages with design work well underway for the later stages.

Donegal County Council - *Ballyshannon Historic Towns Initiative Project*

Ballyshannon, one of Ireland's oldest towns, provides one of the best historic and heritage environments in the country; it is designated as a strategic service, enterprise and tourism centre as well as a Heritage Town in the County Development Plan. Despite this, Ballyshannon has one of the highest vacancy and dereliction rates in the region and its built fabric has experienced significant decline in recent years.

The Historic Towns Initiative is an innovative public-private partnership project between Planning Services, Culture Division Services, Ballyshannon Regeneration Group, the local community and Dedalus Architecture. The project follows Town Centre First policy and supports heritage-led regeneration. An opportunity for funding came up under the 'Historic Towns Initiative' (HTI) where Local Authorities could apply to The Heritage Council in respect of one town in their functional area. In response, the partnership team designed a large-scale urban regeneration project focusing on existing individual historic buildings to reverse the effects of neglect and advancing decay in the town centre.

The project was carried out in two phases in 2021 and 2022 and used targeted repairs to sustain and reuse nineteen separate privately-owned buildings. The first phase concentrated on thirteen structures along The Mall and a dangerous building on Upper Main Street. The second-year works

concentrated on five key landmark buildings around The Diamond. The programme was funded by The Heritage Council and Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Donegal County Council and private leverage from property owners.

The implementation of the HTI works was focussed on regeneration through repair of historic residential and commercial buildings that were underused or for which new uses needed to be found. A prioritised schedule of building envelope repairs (including works to the roofs, rainwater goods, chimneys, windows/doors, render, structural repairs and painting schemes) was prepared for each building specifying the work to be undertaken. This document formed part of a linked spreadsheet used to estimate, plan, tender and value the works at each stage of the project.



Creative Ireland Programme provided funding for specialist items such as hand-painted signs, murals, three 'meanwhile' shopfront uses and artisan metal work. The project was designed to complement a draft RRDF project which re-imagines the adjacent river edge. Other funding opportunities were identified; including input from HSF and BHIS grant schemes. Four local building contractors and five different joiners were employed to undertake the work.

Whilst experienced, none were specialist conservation contractors, and their involvement has increased the capacity for traditional building skills to be found locally for use in future projects. The visual transformation of the town has been remarkable increasing public confidence and creating a new sense of civic pride and wellbeing amongst residents. The example set has provided impetus for other property owners to follow. This overall transformation has assisted economic regeneration to the benefit of local businesses who strongly supported the project and has allowed for retention/repurposing of accommodation in Ballyshannon's historic core. Restoring the attractiveness of Ballyshannon's unique built heritage has maximised the tourism potential of this historic town.

Tipperary County Council - *Activating Cahir's Town Centre Regeneration Strategy*

This project demonstrates how community ambition, translated into plan-making contributed to the awarding of just under €12 million in category 1 RRDF funding for a multi-faceted town centre regeneration project in Cahir.

Successive Cahir Local Area Plans (LAP) set out objectives for the delivery of public realm enhancements on the Square and the redevelopment of Cahir's prominent Market House. Public consultation during the preparation of the current Cahir LAP identified that these ambitions had solidified and that an implementation plan was required.



A four-pillar strategy for the regeneration of Cahir was prepared and included in the LAP:

- Pillar 1: Cahir Business Development Centre
- Pillar 2: Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement
- Pillar 3: River Suir Blueway Destination Point Enhancement
- Pillar 4: A Living Town Centre

A category 2 RRDF application was prepared for the planning and design of pillars' 1 and 2 which was awarded €632,987 in funding. A subsequent category 1 application was submitted for capital works and received confirmation of funding last year for the following aspects of the regeneration plan:

- The delivery of a Business Development Centre in Market House
- The relocation of the public library to the Granary and upgrading of services
- Public realm enhancements on the Square and traffic recirculation
- Land activation and delivery of a new off-street carpark to facilitate displaced parking from the Square

The project will be delivered in partnership with Cahir Development Association (CDA) in the management and operation of the Business Development Centre with support from the Local Enterprise Office, South Tipperary Development Company and with Tipperary Energy Agency assisting in the delivery of a low carbon project.

Downey - *Portarlington Urban Regeneration Strategy 2030*

"Portarlington Urban Regeneration Strategy 2030" is a heritage-led, community-driven strategy seeking to define the role and future development of Portarlington Town Centre, whereby conservation and re-purpose of the Market House forms the core element of the Strategy, catalysing revitalisation of the town centre, sustained through local community mobilisation.

The Market House, built around 1740-1750, also functioning as the Town Hall and essentially the centre of the town's life through 19-20th centuries, lost its relevance in the mid-20th century by the consolidation of court functions and changes to the way farm produce was traded. Around 1990, the structure was converted into a motor repair shop on the ground floor with living accommodation above, and it has remained the same over the last three decades.

In July 2020, Laois County Council secured a long-term lease of the Market House with a vision for revitalisation of the town centre, commissioning DOWNEY in October 2022 to carry out the Strategy. Led and coordinated by DOWNEY, the multi-disciplinary design team comprised of Mesh Architects, Wilson Architects, TOBIN Engineers, and Irish Archaeological Consultancy working with Laois County Council.

Donna Ryan, Associate Director and Project Manager in DOWNEY with over 18 years of post-graduate experience, acted as project manager, community liaison officer, and the single point of contact between the design team, the Steering Group and Laois County Council. Capitalising on the historical role of Market House perceived as a civic landmark by the community of Portarlington, situated at the heart of the town, the design team developed proposals for the re-use of the Market House as a multi-purpose community hall and art exhibition space.

The participatory plan-making process embedded within the Strategy led to community buy-in and ultimately the creation of "Portarlington Community Development Association" comprising of local community groups and businesses. Building upon the social capital of Portarlington, the Strategy seeks to enhance the town image by animating the town centre, consolidating both sides of the River Barrow, and re-connecting the historic core of the town to its adjacent amenities, to maximise the potential the town has to offer



for the local community.

The Strategy takes a proactive approach in plan-making, whereby it goes beyond rehabilitation of the Market House, putting under-utilised heritage buildings forward for development, all stitched up with the existing amenities and via a network of pedestrian and cycle linkages, as well as blue ways and green corridors which expand past the spatial scope of the project linking to Derrycastle Trails and Lakes, Lea Castle, Carrick Woods, and Emo Court.

The Strategy is innovative in terms of bringing natural heritage and intangible assets of the town into the plan-making process, creating a low-carbon zone in the town centre, and celebrating heritage within the town. The interim report of the Strategy was instrumental in securing RRDF funding of over €1 million for Laois County Council. The shopfronts enhancement scheme, re-design of Market Square, upgrade of Main Street, and townscape enhancement through undergrounding cables is a non-exhaustive list of actions driven by the Strategy.

Land Development Agency - St. Kevin's Cork

After a period of vacancy, the St. Kevin's site fell into dereliction, which was exacerbated by fire damage in 2017.

Subsequently, the site was earmarked for redevelopment by the Land Development Agency upon its establishment. The LDA achieved a Strategic Housing Development planning permission for residential development on a 5.7 ha site, located 2.5 km west of Cork City Centre, on the former St. Kevin's Hospital and grounds, Shanakiel, Cork.

The LDA has commenced the transformation of the derelict former Victorian Mental Asylum lands into a new vibrant residential community, consisting of 266 affordable new homes, a creche, an Enterprise Centre, and public open space. This underutilised site, on the south facing Shanakiel Ridge, overlooking the River Lee, will be an exemplar housing development providing a mix of town houses, duplexes, and apartments, in a variety of tenures.

This includes the stabilisation, conversion, renovation, and internal reordering of the former St. Kevin's Hospital (Protected Structure RPS Ref. PS620) building to provide 60 no. apartments and a creche. The chapel building will also be converted to a new Enterprise Centre. What is the level of engagement with economic section of Council on enterprise centre? The SHD planning application file can be reviewed at <https://stkevinsshd.com/>



Climate Action and Biodiversity

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Climate Change is the greatest challenge facing us and there is greater awareness now of the necessity to link planning and climate change if it is to be effectively addressed. The potential type of projects/plans for this category can include mitigation measures, education, flooding energy, transport, adaptive reuse, green infrastructure, climate adaptation and resilience or biodiversity. Projects must have been undertaken since March 2020.

Shortlisted entries in this category are:

- **EirGrid** -
The Celtic Interconnector - Good Practice linking Planning, the Planner & Climate Change
- **Irish Water** -
Uisce Éireann (Irish Water) Biodiversity Action Plan
- **South Dublin County Council**
- South Dublin's Green Space Factor
- **KPMG Future Analytics (with Fingal Co Co)**
- Sustainable Swords

EirGrid - The Celtic Interconnector - Good Practice linking Planning, the Planner & Climate Change

The Celtic Interconnector can be considered as the most important infrastructure project under development in Ireland. It connects the Irish grid with continental Europe for the first time, by means of a 575km long 700MW subsea cable, associated DC-AC electricity converter stations in Ireland and France, associated onshore cables, and connection points to the Irish and French National Grid.

The Interconnector represents a step-change in terms of achieving a low-carbon island as it will play a key role in the deployment of increasing amounts of renewable generation on the Irish power system. In particular the interconnector will facilitate the export of excess electricity generated by renewable sources where supply exceeds demand.

Conversely, it will reduce reliance on conventional generation, as it will allow for import of electricity at times where demand exceeds supply.

The strategic importance of the project has been recognised

by the European Union with a grant of €530 million, and designation as a Project of Common Interest (PCI). There is no doubt that proper planning, the planning professional and this project of climate change were inherently linked to ensure the ultimate successful and sustainable outcome that has occurred. A key challenge of the project was obtaining multiple consents, authorisations and licenses necessary for the surveying, construction, testing and operation of the interconnector from the relevant authorities and bodies across 3 jurisdictions (Ireland, UK and France) in a coordinated and timely manner.

The EirGrid Planning team directly led this aspect of the project. Over 30 consents, authorisations, or licenses were obtained. These were a mix of consents for development on land and at sea, licenses for marine and land surveying activities, and authorisations for construction and operation of the electricity infrastructure. In leading the consenting and licencing element, the Planning Team has implemented EirGrid's award winning six step Framework for Grid Development. This Framework covers the lifecycle of a project from the initial identification of need, to energisation.

This approach led by Des Cox MIPI and a team of no. 6 IPI accredited planners guided how EirGrid engaged with stakeholders and communities, exploring potential options and making more-informed planning and environmental decisions. The team worked closely with local communities, using innovating engagement techniques during COVID restrictions, to ensure their understanding of the need for the project in terms of climate change and transition to renewable energy, and to understand how EirGrid could locate and design the project to minimise local impacts. It is incumbent on infrastructure developers to facilitate a transparent approach as the role of communities in the evolution of the energy/climate future becomes increasingly intertwined.

All decisions were made public in the interests of openness and transparency. This approach was highly successful; this is evident, for example, by the fact that the SID application for the Ireland Onshore element of the project generated only 37 no. submissions to An Bord Pleanála, the majority of these being from Prescribed Bodies.

Additionally, no legal challenges have been brought against the granting of any consents for the project.



Irish Water -

Uisce Éireann (Irish Water) Biodiversity Action Plan

Uisce Éireann (formally known as Irish Water) is Ireland's national water utility, responsible for providing water and wastewater services throughout Ireland. Uisce Éireann's mission is to ensure all customers receive a safe and reliable supply of drinking water and have their wastewater collected and safely returned to the environment. The organisation is one of the largest infrastructure providers in the state with a responsibility to provide clean safe drinking water and return treated wastewater safely to the environment. We interact with a broad range of natural habitats across the country. Given the scale and distribution of our work, UÉ is aware that there is great potential for us to make a positive contribution to tackling the national and global climate and biodiversity emergency. In response to this emergency, UÉ has developed its own Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) to address the decline of biodiversity and to put in place measures to mitigate the effects of works being carried out by and on behalf of UÉ. The BAP is aligned to policy, including the National Biodiversity Action Plan and the EU Biodiversity Strategy. The BAP was created to help manage existing UÉ sites in a way that will enhance biodiversity within those sites, and includes a commitment to ensuring that there is no net loss of biodiversity arising from new infrastructure projects. This approach requires the early involvement of ecological experts, in both the delivery of new assets and the provision of tailored biodiversity enhancement measures on a site-by-site basis at existing UÉ sites. This approach reduces overall greenhouse gas emissions and has the additional benefit of reducing operations costs. The BAP has 7 key objectives that are being implemented across all UÉ sites;

Objective 1: All UÉ sites have a set of measures that will enhance and protect biodiversity. UÉ site operators have access to a clear set of resources that support the enhancement and management of biodiversity on their sites.

Objective 2: Raise awareness and provide educational supports to UÉ staff and partners. The emphasis is on empowering others to act in a way that will better support nature and benefit wider communities.

Objective 3: Ensure "no net loss" of biodiversity when carrying out our activities, plans or projects, to ensure biodiversity is protected across all new developments.

Objective 4: Implement actions from the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan across all UÉ sites to support and increase our pollinator population. This in turn will aid the greater natural environment.

Objective 5: Promote the use of nature-based solutions for water protection and wastewater treatment.

Objective 6: Management of invasive alien species on UÉ sites to increase the biodiversity on our sites and reduce risks to our assets.

Objective 7: Collaborate with key internal and external stakeholders and the wider community, in protecting and enhancing biodiversity. This will enable UÉ to share and develop in other areas, ensuring the most appropriate and efficient actions are implemented.

South Dublin County Council - *South Dublin's Green Space Factor*

One of the innovations of the South Dublin Development Plan 2020-2028 is its approach to how plan making can successfully integrate climate actions. Green Infrastructure (GI) plays a key role in climate adaptation and mitigation.

To this end, a chapter of the 2022 Plan sets out the GI Strategy for the County, setting objectives from strategic level to local case studies. The multi-faceted nature of GI is co-ordinated through objectives for five distinct themes – biodiversity; surface water management; climate resilience; recreation and amenity (human health and wellbeing); and landscape, natural, cultural and built heritage.

It was recognised by the planning team that the implementation of green infrastructure can be difficult to assess and integrate at a site level for the applicant and the planner. In the knowledge that this had been tackled by other jurisdictions it was decided to introduce a Green Space Factor (GSF) to apply to planning applications in South Dublin.

The GSF is a score-based system that establishes minimum standards for listed GI interventions in new developments, based on the five GI themes set out in the Development Plan. At pre-planning stage, the developer can be guided as to which GI interventions best align with the GI Strategy having regard to the type of development proposed. This is an initiative that has not been tried to date in Ireland. The planning team, in collaboration with the public realm section of the local authority and with consultants employed to progress the GI Strategy, spent significant time testing and developing a green space factor scoring mechanism that would work best in South Dublin.

This measurement comprises a ratio that compares the amount of green space to the amount of impermeable 'grey' space in a subject site. As a planning tool, this ratio is used to assess both the existing green cover within a site and the impact of new development, based on the quantity and quality of the GI interventions proposed. By ensuring that new development meets minimum standards for the provision of GI, the Green Space Factor aims to secure a positive contribution to biodiversity, amenity, air quality, water management, temperature regulation and other ecosystem services.

The Development Plan requires every planning application of two or more residential units or 1000 sqm or more of commercial space to meet a minimum GSF score. The score is assessed based on a minimum score for each zoning type, achieved through the inclusion of defined GI interventions.

The introduction of the GSF is creating change in how developers approach planning applications. GI becomes embedded into development, carefully considered and integrated from the outset. This new approach is welcomed by many developers as progressive, helping them to meet climate change targets and their ESG requirements. For developers who are finding the change more challenging, the planning and public realm teams work with them to achieve the minimum score. GSF as a tool will evolve with lessons learned but the outcome is better quality of life through positive climate actions in urban.

KPMG Future Analytics (with Fingal Co Co) – *Sustainable Swords*

The Sustainable Swords project is the largest and most in-depth analysis undertaken of any urban settlement in Ireland. It took two years to complete. Outputs included a town health check for Swords and Public Realm and Transport Strategy, which together formed an evidence base for the Sustainable Swords strategy. Swords is a dynamic town that has rapidly grown in recent decades. This growth is anticipated to continue. The strategy focuses specifically on placemaking within the town centre; aiming to reverse the historic shift away from Main Street that commenced in the early 2000s to facilitate better placemaking and a more resilient town centre. The Sustainable Swords project seeks to facilitate a sustainable approach to development and placemaking in Swords. This is about making a better place to live, work and visit, positioning Swords for the future as a more attractive, vibrant, and resilient town. The purpose of Sustainable Swords is to produce a placemaking strategy focused on the strategic regeneration and compact, sustainable development of Swords. The goals are to increase the resilience of the local economy and to provide for an enhanced, accessible, inclusive, age friendly and healthy urban environment. The ambition for Sustainable Swords is to form a coordinating device for measures and projects that are prioritised, programmed, and impactful, and critically will enable coordination of investment and decision-making across multiple stakeholders, maximising private sector engagement and identifying synergies and opportunities. The aim is to identify a coordinated range of 'pipeline' projects that can be funded as part of the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) and other appropriate funding streams. A town is never complete, and it never stops changing. The challenge is to ensure the change that happens within Swords is a positive process that makes Swords a better place to live, work and visit, a more vibrant town for all and a good practice example of a more sustainable approach to urban development.

There are several aspects that make this project unique:

- The investment by Fingal County Council in a significant project to identify pragmatic interventions that can make Swords a more sustainable community.
- The carefully designed methodology which ensured there was an extensive body of evidence upon which to base recommendations and actions.

- The involvement of a wide range of consultants which enabled a focus on their respective core areas, for example DBFL focusing on innovative approaches to urban development, building on best practice elsewhere, such as home zones and Quietways, as well as extensive traffic modelling. Green Schools team focusing on walkability and cyclability analysis and engaging with school children. Create who prepared a branding for the Sustainable Swords project, and a range of assets which enabled the profile of the project, and therefore engagement with it to be elevated.
- The iterative feedback loop which ensured that the resident and business community of Swords were given many opportunities to engage with the project.

Sustainable Communities and Placemaking

Residential and community-based projects which contribute to the establishment of strong communities and placemaking.

Entries in this category should:

The projects should help address local needs and be in locations that have access to infrastructure and facilities for communities. In the case of residential developments, they should also offer a range of tenures and demonstrate the high-quality design of buildings and place, consideration of climate action, active travel, sustainability and the circular economy.

Residential development should demonstrate sustainable residential densities appropriate to their location. Possible projects may include residential developments by LAs, AHBs, semi state, private entities or public private partnerships between any of the above, or a community project by any entity. Deliverability and implementation should be considered. A large scale and small scale award may be presented if appropriate. Projects must have been undertaken since March 2020

Shortlisted entries in this category are:

- **South Dublin County Council**
- Adamstown SDZ - Airlie Park, Tandy's Lane Park and Adamstown District Centre Plaza
- **South Dublin County Council** -
Kilcarbery-Grange in South Dublin
- **Meath County Council** -
Kilcloon Community Development
- **MKO Ltd** -
Creggs Village Plan
- **Land Development Agency** -
Colbert Quarter Spatial Framework

South Dublin County Council

- Adamstown SDZ - Airlie Park, Tandy's Lane Park and Adamstown District Centre Plaza

Adamstown SDZ was primarily envisioned as a residential development area with a strong emphasis on community, placemaking and sustainable design. The objective of South Dublin County Council was to deliver not only housing, but also the essential infrastructural requirements needed for future residents.

The Adamstown Planning Scheme (2014, as amended) outlines two key high-level areas of focus which are integral to the overall design and guiding principles of the SDZ. The first is urban design, with the aim of creating an attractive, safe, walkable and vibrant urban environment with a strong sense of identity in a traditional town and village format. The second is community development, which seeks to facilitate a mix of land uses to provide amenities, facilities, services, and employment opportunities, all of which are within short walking distances, that enable the community to thrive locally and sustainability.

This approach has been focused around the '10-minute settlement concept, whereby 'a range of community facilities and services are accessible in short walking and cycling timeframes from homes or accessible by high quality public transport to these services in larger settlements' as set out in the Eastern Midland Regional Assembly's Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031 and a key policy objective of the South Dublin County.

With this aim in mind, the following are those projects the Planning team have been proactively progressing.

Adamstown District Centre Plaza is located in the heart of Adamstown District Centre. The Plaza includes a key pedestrian route from Adamstown Station to the wider SDZ, thoughtfully designed hard and soft landscaping, areas of play and key design features such as a rain garden. This development has facilitated not only an urban plaza but unlocked 16 small retail units and 2 larger stores (now open), in addition to the delivery of residential units within the district centre.

The delivery of this project has been facilitated via the Urban Regeneration Development Fund, with phase 1 of the Plaza opened by Minister O'Brien in February 2023. Airlie Park is the largest park within Adamstown SDZ. The Park is located within the centre of the SDZ and contains a full-size 3G GAA/soccer pitch, a full-size cricket ground with practice areas, three tennis courts, one basketball court, three children play areas, a pavilion building with changing rooms and a café, pedestrian bridges, soft landscaping with wildflower seeds, shrubs, trees, and wetland areas, and hard landscaping which cater to the needs of all age groups and a variety of sports and cultures.

The park has been delivered solely by SDCC via Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Funding and was recently visited and opened by Minister O'Brien in February 2023.

Tandy's Lane Park is located to the east of the SDZ and is an informal linear park. The Park contains a large sports pitch, two playgrounds with a teen space, a small MUGA, fitness equipment for older users, scenic and wildflower landscaping, hedgerows, woodland/orchard, swales, and wetland features, as well as picnic benches. The park was opened by Minister O'Brien, February 2023.

South Dublin County Council - Kilcarbery-Grange in South Dublin

Kilcarbery-Grange is a new sustainable community of 35 hectares located in west Clondalkin that, on completion, will provide a mixed-tenure residential development of over 1000 new homes with community facilities and retail services.

The Guiding Principle of the '10 minute' settlement concept, a key policy objective of the RSES and South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028 is a reality in the Kilcarbery-Grange project.

Its strategic location beside Corkagh Park, with its 120 hectares of parklands and recreational amenities and an important Green Corridor, allows residents of Kilcarbery-Grange to walk and cycle off road, through a parkland setting to access schools, shops, jobs and other services in nearby Clondalkin village. High quality, segregated two-way cycletracks on the R136 directly link to the Grand Canal greenway and into the City Centre. Linking by cycle paths, Kishogue train station, opening this year, is 1.5km away providing high frequency services on the Kildare line. There are also high quality cyclepaths connecting Kilcarbery to the employment area of Grange Castle Business Park to the west.

Dublin Bus provides services to the City Centre and wider County including the Red Cow Luas station. Placemaking in Kilcarbery-Grange is heavily influenced by the significant amount of existing mature trees, hedgerows and drainage ditches that have been integrated in the development scheme based on a concept of 'Biophilic Design'. The design is based upon the creation of distinct character areas with formal and local streets and public realm areas that incorporate and enhance pedestrian and cycle connections to the surrounding road network and to Corkagh Park.

Sustainable Community development was also achieved through the ambitious financing and funding model which included the following:

- The lands at Kilcarbery-Grange were provided by SDCC.
- SDCC masterplanned the lands 'in-house' using a multidisciplinary team that included Architects, Planners, Landscape Architects and Engineers.
- SDCC successfully nominated part of the Masterplan lands for inclusion in 'Bundle 1', an initiative of central

government where a number of projects were awarded to a single contractor - in this case Comhar Housing - to implement and deliver a number of social housing projects in one bundle. This facilitated the speedier delivery of units on multiple sites. At Kilcarbery-Grange 109 units were delivered under this PPP model

- For the remainder of the lands, SDCC entered into a joint development venture with contractor Adwood Limited to deliver 1034 units (ABP Ref. SHD3ABP-305267-19) in accordance with the masterplan.
- SDCC made a successful bid under LIHAF for funding of €4.39 million to provide key infrastructure within the site which reduced the overall cost of delivering the development.

Kilcarbery-Grange will be completed by 2025, only four years since commencement in 2021, with nature based design and walking and cycling at its heart, inclusive and accessible by reason of its flexible mix of tenure, affordability and typology, is exemplary in terms of its Masterplanning, Detailed Design, Financing and Funding Mechanisms, and the speed of its delivery and is worthy of the IPI Sustainable Communities and Placemaking Award.

Meath County Council - Kilcloon Community Development

Kilcloon/ Coill Chluana, (woodland of the meadow) is a small rural settlement located in south County Meath. The area is home to a vibrant rural community involved in sports, drama, dancing, yoga, etc. The Kilcloon Community Centre Committee has as its priority for circa 30 years, the development of a community centre which would be a focal point for the community in the heart of the village. A site in the centre of the village was purchased to accommodate the centre. The need to source funding for the building project was identified as a key issue.

This project has a dual focus:

- The provision of dedicated community centre building, playground and village plaza which would be the focal point in the heart of Kilcloon addressing the need for community facilities.
- Identification of a source of revenue to fund the construction of the community centre.

A key priority for Meath County Council is the efficient use of a fully serviced village centre site for plan led development. Meath County Council in collaboration with Ger Fahy Planning prepared a masterplan for the lands.

The masterplan, in addition to the community centre and a playground, proposed housing in a clustered or "clachan style".

The sale of housing sites would generate funds for the building of the centre and also provide housing in a fully serviced village centre location. Full planning permission was granted for the community centre, playground, the internal road and ancillary works and outline permission was granted for 13 dwellings in 2020.

An agreed design statement addressed building line, landscaping, boundary treatment and the form and shape of the residential development. Applications for permission consequent on outline are required to comply with the Meath Rural Design Guide and the agreed design statement. At time of writing planning permission has been granted for 9 dwellings, 1 application is being assessed. Six dwellings are under construction, two are shortly to be occupied.

MKO Ltd

- Creggs Village Plan

MKO was appointed by Creggs Rural Development Company Limited in September 2020 to conceive a community-led strategy which sought to gather, organise and set out a plan and report the community's vision for the future of the village. A Steering Group of local community representatives was established in association with the Creggs Rural Development Company Ltd to oversee the project. The Creggs Village Plan was delivered in February 2021 and was publicly launched on the 17th February 2022 at Creggs National School. The launch has been hailed as "a night of celebration" by the chairperson of Creggs Rural Development Company, Sean Beirne.



The Plan was officially launched by Peter Keaveney, Cathaoirleach of Galway County Council. The objective of the Creggs Village Plan (CVP) was to:

- Take cognisance of enabling legislation regarding planning, environmental, climate change, heritage, etc.
- Propose a range of costed projects which could be implemented over the short, medium, and long term.
- Provide guidance to a number of different stakeholders in different ways:
- Assist local authority planners, architects, and others in determining future development policy by providing local knowledge and guidance.
- Inform the developer of appropriate design solutions and ensure that future developments and changes add to local distinctiveness and character.

- Raise community awareness about their surrounding landscape and heritage assets and provide a basis for community-led projects and initiatives.

The project methodology has had regard to 'The Community-Led Village Design Statement Toolkit' launched by The Heritage Council in 2012, which sets out a step-by-step guide to undertaking a Community-led Village Design Statement. The CVP has been produced through an extensive community consultation programme combined with village visits and desk-based studies.

The project began with a full review of the baseline information, including a review of existing reports, studies and initiatives already undertaken in Creggs. The baseline evidence and potential opportunities within the Village were discussed and consulted with the Steering Group through a series of presentations and workshops.

Further consultation also took place with the wider community through a series of phone calls and emails along with engagement with Creggs National School. This enabled residents, community groups and organisations to engage and contribute to identifying areas of opportunity and to provide crucial local knowledge to the baseline evidence.

Prior to the launch of this plan, exciting developments are taking place in the village, with progress visible in terms of walking infrastructure and sporting infrastructure at both Creggs RFC and Creggs GAA. Not so visible is the work that has been done in terms of bringing high-speed fibre broadband to the village, and work is now ongoing on creating a remote working hub in the Parnell Historical Centre.

Land Development Agency

- Colbert Quarter Spatial Framework

The LDA was created in September 2018 with the purpose of opening up state owned land for residential-led development. With its national focus, the LDA is currently active on sites that will deliver around 6,000 homes. The LDA works with local authorities and public bodies to strategically assemble land for the delivery of more compact city cores, through integrated urban brownfield regeneration.

Under the government's housing policy "Housing for All", a number of State lands have been identified for transfer to the LDA with potential to deliver up to 15,000 homes. These lands include CIÉ and HSE lands in the environs of Colbert Station in Limerick. Limerick City and County Council is another significant public sector landowner in the area.

The LDA has named this area The Colbert Quarter, an area of almost 70ha in the heart of Limerick City comprising of almost entirely publicly owned land, which offers the potential to truly transform underutilised, brownfield, areas into a vibrant, liveable, mixed use and compact urban quarter.

The Colbert Quarter Spatial Framework is a spatial plan for the area produced by the LDA, which covers a 20-year period from 2022-2042 and is supported by the public sector landowners involved – Limerick City and County Council, CIÉ and the HSE. It sets out a long-term vision for how the area will be redeveloped and provides principles to guide and support the delivery of objectives and policies embedded in the Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028.

It also supports and aligns with the ambitious growth plans for Limerick for compact urban growth and improving and enhancing brownfield land as set out in the National Planning Framework.

For various reasons, there is a history of under delivery in Limerick, with local communities feeling disenfranchised.

By producing a long-term spatial plan for the public lands that are due to transfer to the LDA for redevelopment, and by continuing to engage with stakeholders as the Framework moves from vision through to delivery, the aim is that the existing community will support the project.

The Framework seeks to provide for transport orientated, residential-led, development that achieves a vibrant mix of tenures including affordable homes, landmark buildings, unique pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, employment space, new parks and play areas and the prioritisation of active mobility. The Framework area has the potential to deliver up to 2,800 new homes, 16,000 sqm of civic and leisure use space and up to 10,000 jobs. Following public consultation, the Framework was adopted by the LDA in 2022.

Progress continues with delivering on the Framework's vision this year as the LDA produces an infrastructure delivery and phasing plan to underpin the principles established in the Framework, and a masterplan for part of the Framework area, the St. Joseph's Hospital site. The hospital site is identified for transfer to the LDA in Housing for All.

The LDA is also undertaking feasibility work for a site at Lower Carey's Road, another part of the Framework area intended to be developed in partnership with LCCC.



Research and Innovation

Sponsored by the Office of the Planning Regulator



Oifig an
Rialaitheora Pleanála
Office of the
Planning Regulator

Entries in this category should:

- Recognising research projects undertaken by any individual or organisation relevant to planning. Research should contribute to the planning profession and is not confined to academic researchers. Projects must have been undertaken since March 2020.

Shortlisted entries in this category are:

- **EMRA on behalf of the Three Regional Assemblies of Ireland** - Regional Development Monitor (RDM)
- **TU Dublin**
- TU Dublin - DLRCoCo Covid Mobility Research Project
- **South Dublin County Council**
- Instantaneous Data;
- A South Dublin Approach to Active Land Management
- **University of Galway**
- Promoting spatial planning through school/university project exchange
- **Land Development Agency**
- The Register of Relevant Public Lands
- **South Dublin County Council and Dublin City Council**
- City Edge Strategic Framework
- **Tom Phillips + Associates**
- SHDs & SDZzz

EMRA on behalf of the Three Regional Assemblies of Ireland

- Regional Development Monitor (RDM)

The Regional Development Monitor (RDM) is a modern data hub made by the planning profession for the planning profession and beyond. Harmonising and consolidating the wealth of relevant planning, socio-economic and environmental data sets in a central location allows, for the first time, access to data from key authoritative publicly available sources in one seamless experience that is presented in an accessible and engaging way making data easy to understand.

A first for Ireland, the publicly accessible online tool is updated at regular intervals, providing near real time data, enabling easy visualisation and analysis of recent trends using interactive online dashboards that collate data from across a wide variety of authoritative data sources from national agencies. This collaborative project between the Regional Assemblies of Ireland (EMRA, NWRA and SRA), the All-Island Research Observatory (AIRO) at Maynooth University and Tailte Éireann (formerly Ordnance Survey Ireland- OSI), provides a highly visual and interactive dashboards hub with user-friendly mapping tools to visualise a range of social, economic and environmental indicators for regional and local authorities in Ireland.

The RDM is the largest open-source data hub in the state and was added to the Register of Official Statistics by the CSO in January 2023. It is hosted on the GeoHive Hub, which is the National Geospatial Data Hub, and is designed to provide easy discovery, evaluation and access to authoritative geospatial data produced by Public Sector Bodies (PSBs). The RDM is therefore firmly embedded with the State's geospatial infrastructure.

Designed initially to serve as a key monitoring resource for the Regional Assemblies, to assist in the evaluation and development of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, the RDM also enables local authorities in the preparation and implementation of City and County Development Plans and many other local plans and policies. It will also prove a vital reference and information tool for all Government departments, public bodies, the education sector, community groups, business and industry, as well as members of the public and the media, who are seeking accurate information on national and regional trends across a range of economic, social and environmental categories, that are used to inform the Planning Sector.

The RDM presents a series of indicators using visualisation and mapping tools as analytic/reporting solutions across the following themes;

1. Our People and Places Documenting indicators related to demographic change, housing completions and vacancy, housing supports, transport, health
2. Our Green and Sustainable Future Documenting indicators related to renewable energy developments, GHG emissions, water quality and wastewater compliance
3. Our Region's Economy Documenting indicators related to labour force statistics, foreign direct investment, life-long learning, affluence and disadvantage
4. Our All-Island Perspective Documenting Indicators as an All-Island Census Atlas The first phase of the RDM was launched in November 2022.

Additional phases are expected to be launched in 2023 (relating to smart specialisation and an All-Island Census Atlas update) and in the forthcoming years as needs and demands for evidence driven decision making are identified.

TU Dublin

- TU Dublin - DLRCoCo Covid Mobility Research Project

TU Dublin was engaged in 2020 by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council (DLRCoCo) to independently examine the impact and reaction to public realm changes they initiated during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. The research team, led by Dr Sarah Rock MIPI, of the School of Architecture, Building and Environment, have released a series of research studies evaluating the impact and effectiveness of works completed along Blackrock Main Street and the Coastal Mobility Route, a dedicated, segregated, temporary cycle path from Seapoint to Sandycove, Co. Dublin.



The findings have demonstrated that:

- There are high levels of support from businesses and the community for the temporary redesign and reallocation of road space along Blackrock Main Street and a strong desire to retain the public space gains in the future.
- Considerable improvements in the provision and quality of cycling infrastructure within the study area have been realised, leading to a significant increase in the number and range of people cycling.
- The Coastal Mobility Route is the highest-performing cycle route within the DLR county area and is one of the best performers across Dublin.
- Mobility patterns continue to be influenced by pandemic legacy impacts, with public transport usage still in a state of recovery but with trips by bike significantly increased through the provision of quality cycle infrastructure.
- Most businesses and business groups interviewed along the Coastal Mobility Route were either positive or value-neutral regarding the route's economic impact and had an associated acceptance or support for its ongoing presence.

The research notes that DLRCoCo's approach to stakeholder engagement has largely been atypical within an Irish context through its focus on speed, direct on-the-ground engagement and collaboration, and also one where lessons for the future have been learned.

The research welcomed this evident willingness to experiment and innovate. TU Dublin also advises that safe and connected walking and cycling facilities will remain particularly important as we transition out of COVID-19 to facilitate the modal shift from vehicles to sustainable modes, such as public transport and active travel.

The study recommends greater development of the network of protected cycle routes to further increase participation among women, teenagers, children, older people and those with additional needs; and the maintenance and development of a strong public transport network in the area.

Based on the success of the temporary works, the researchers at TU Dublin recommended that a permanent regeneration plan be developed for Blackrock Village in consultation with residents, businesses and other stakeholders.

In April 2023, the local authority published a Part 8 Scheme for “Living Streets Blackrock Village” including a high- quality permanent design solution considering many of TU Dublin’s findings and recommendations.

South Dublin County Council

- *Instantaneous Data;*

- *A South Dublin Approach to Active Land Management*

What is Active Land Management Active Land Management (ALM) is a proactive rather than reactive planning approach which aims to address the systematic issues which have led to the current housing crisis. To facilitate an effective ALM approach, speed of access to real time data and information which provides a strong evidence basis to support the development or regeneration of particular sites is essential.

In this regard, SDCC have used the requirements of the Residential Zoned Land Tax as an opportunity to develop an innovative approach to the area of ALM. There are two main projects that define this within the scope of this submission.

Project 1: RZLT Map Viewer The RZLT process offered an opportunity to improve the volume of information available by not just providing the baseline minimum but examining what can be achieved through forward thinking and prediction of future needs. Prior to the instigation of this project, geospatial sources were limited to data captured through APAS and Oasis systems. Through an ALM approach, it was possible to identify ways of adding value to this project by expanding its remit and sequestering information that could be used as an evidence-based platform. The team understood the importance of collating data sets in an often-arduous manual process at the start of the project to create something that could be automated, built upon and used for various processes and departments. A ‘live’ RZLT map viewer is the manifestation of this labour which provides huge swathes of data at the user’s fingertips including a spatial view of the land parcels in interchangeable base layers, infrastructure assessments, site information, house counts

and much more.

Project 2: Land Assembly The Land Assembly project was borne from the success of the RZLT Map Viewer and further developed the concept of utilising collated data to inform decision making. Sites identified with the RZLT Map Viewer as having potential for development were further analysed to assess the short- and long-term delivery potential for housing within the County. Each site has its own report which is accessible through the Land Portfolio Viewer and delves further into the site conditions, access to public and smarter transport provisions, proximity to education and employment opportunities and provides a sustainable planning score, potential housing output as well as likelihood for development within the current CDP timeframe.

Conclusion: The initial focus of this project team was to meet the statutory requirements of the RZLT. Whilst many see this as an additional demand on an already thinly resourced department, the planning team embraced the opportunity to produce unique, effective, user-friendly instantaneous data and map viewers which are multifunctional and futureproofed. SDCC now have a complete suite of information that provides evidence-based site data that sets us apart from other councils. The creation of this systematic, live dataset is ALM at its core level, supporting the fulfilment of national and local policies and objectives whilst rejecting archaic paper based manual collation in favour of a more dynamic process.

University of Galway

- *Promoting spatial planning through school/university project exchange*

In February of this year a joint initiative on spatial planning and education took place between higher and second level institutions and local authority planning departments, north and south. The partners were: University of Galway (Geography - Masters in Rural Futures Planning & Innovation); Queen’s University Belfast (Geography Planning, MSc in Planning & Development); Presentation College Athenry; Holy Rosary College Mountbellew; New-Bridge Integrated College, Loughbrickland, Banbridge; Royal School, Armagh; Forward Planning Unit, Galway County Council; Planning Department, Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council. It was funded by SCOTENS- the Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South, under its Seed Funding Scheme.



The project's aim was to link spatial planning as a statutory exercise conducted by local authorities to second and third level teaching (Geography and Planning). The objectives were as follows:

- Enhance knowledge among younger people about the importance of spatial planning and its role in local place-making;
- Encourage them to take an active interest in spatial planning activities in their own localities – the notion of active citizenship linked to an awareness of spatial planning and development - and to realise how their opinions matter.
- Provide second level teachers with a 'toolkit' to link spatial planning to Geography as a subject, as a means to enhance interest in planning as a career choice.
- Support third/higher level teachers to enhance Masters students' capacities in planning practice, setting them to work directly with secondary school students and teachers, and local authority planners.
- Enable local authorities to develop new and innovative forms of engagement with different societal groups especially younger people, to enhance public participation in planning and heighten public awareness of the opportunities to engage with and influence the planning process.

The project was based on two exchange visits (south-north/north-south), and centred on students reviewing the spatial planning of the towns where the secondary schools were located or were close to: Mountbellew, Athenry, Loughbrickland and Markethill. The Galway delegation travelled north (31/1-2/2 2023) and featured students and staff from Mountbellew and Athenry schools and University of Galway with planning staff from Galway County Council.

They met their counterparts from Queens University Belfast, Armagh, Banbridge Craigavon Borough Council, New-Bridge Integrated College, and Royal School. The return trip to the south by the northern group took place on the 23-24 February to Athenry and Mountbellew.

Working in groups, the students' exercise was to adopt the role of spatial planners, to explore their assigned town and how it was planned, to offer their own opinions on what they felt worked well and what they would change. They spent Day 1 in the town centres making observations and recording evidence. They also administered a short survey to members of the public on their opinions of the towns' planning. On Day 2, the groups and staff based themselves in the respective secondary schools for a series of workshops. Here, the students reviewed their evidence, and prepared new maps illustrating where existing planning worked well, and what they felt.

Land Development Agency - *The Register of Relevant Public Lands*

The Register of Relevant Lands (the Register) is a publicly available strategic mapping tool that shows the extent of lands owned by public bodies throughout Ireland. The Land Development Agency's (LDA) purpose is to maximise the supply of affordable and social homes on public land in a financially sustainable manner, supporting the creation of thriving communities and delivering ongoing positive social impact.

The LDA's vision is for the provision of affordable and social housing to meet the needs of the nation, delivering a social return from developments and renewal of communities and a stable, national capacity to support sustainable, inclusive and vibrant communities. One of our most important assets is public land, and a better understanding of the extent and potential for public lands is vital for the LDA to deliver on this vision. The LDA developed the Register to support the LDA purpose.

This is the first time such a map has been developed showing all public land and benefits include:

- use as a strategic mapping tool that supports land management.
- building an understanding of the extent and locations of public lands.
- support spatial planning and urban rejuvenation.
- enhancing transparency regarding public lands interests.
- identifying contiguous public lands to strategically look at larger areas for greater delivery of housing.

Within the Register there are two maps, the Register, and the State Lands Database. These provide supporting functions which assist in highlighting where lands owned by a public body is located and how these lands are being used. All users of these maps can now see how public lands are utilised in the public interest and help inform a conversation around how to optimise best use of public lands.

The Register has been designed to comply with Section 50 of the LDA Act, and highlights all public lands within our 48 towns and cities over 10,000 in population. A requirement of the Register is to highlight all lands which are subject to Part 9 of the LDA Act (the affordability clause) which will be used by each planning authority to condition planning applications for residential development (that meets the criteria) on public lands to support increased levels of social and affordable housing.

The State Lands Database shows all public lands throughout the country and includes many additional layers of data to help all users review and assess public lands in their spatial context. The additional data provides information on all

building uses and neighbourhood buildings to highlight where public lands are supported by essential services, planning information such as zoning and past planning applications, some natural and environmental layers, such as special protection areas, areas of conservation and national monuments, and some CSO population statistics. This provides a spatial overview and helpful for strategic planning as a tool and source to provide greater insight and support consideration of how best public lands could be used and developed for the benefit of the state.

South Dublin County Council and Dublin City Council - City Edge Strategic Framework

The City Edge Project is a transformative initiative, re-imagining the Naas Road area in Dublin to create a new urban quarter, with potential for 40,000 homes and 75,000 jobs. As City Edge represents a unique project with respect to regeneration, bespoke and innovative research was required to inform the vision and approach.

The City Edge Project research explored best practice and an evidence base for the Strategic Framework. International Best Practice Housing Review (April 2022) The Review provided an evidence base for supporting the City Edge Framework's approach to fostering diverse sustainable communities. It comprised an original piece of research, with key learnings gleaned from an analysis of international best practice precedents at neighbourhood and building scale including tenure and mix size targets; spatial principles of mix; and tenure blind principles, all of which contributed to the approaches set out in the Framework.

Economic Strategy (May 2022) The Economic Strategy examined a resilient and diverse employment concept for City Edge, underpinned by high value employment opportunities, within a re-purposed economy evolving from a traditional industrial/commercial area to a new mixed-use urban neighbourhood. The Strategy detailed the economic vision for the area, including, a gradual transition towards urban industry and innovation, within a globally shifting economic landscape and the need to retain meaningful employment as part of redevelopment so that Dublin can continue to be supported by a functioning and proximate industrial base.

Climate Action Study (June 2022) The approach of the Climate Action Study was to support the long-term, resilient regeneration of City Edge in the context of national and European objectives regarding climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Study examined the five new districts of City Edge, based on 15-minute city principles, in the context of existing natural infrastructure, and the opportunities to meet shared climate challenges through the proposed network of biodiversity rich parks, public transport, local high streets, community facilities and energy networks. The Study reviewed risks from climate change and key climate hazards facing European cities; made recommendations regarding energy planning, building energy efficiency, heat, electricity, transport, and socio-economic elements; and de-

tailed mitigation opportunities for the City Edge area.

Academic Research – 2ha Journal (December 2022) SDCC engaged with academic research in UCD through funding research focussed on a type of suburban form known as 'edge city'. The academic research investigated how the edge city can be defined and identified; the scale at which urban designers can most meaningfully intervene; and ways in which emerging edge city locations can be reimagined. The findings were published in Issue 16 of 2ha, a journal focussed on suburban landscapes and design.

International Conference on Regeneration (September 2021) The City Edge Project held an international conference on Regeneration with particular focus on Delivering Regeneration and Placemaking. The Conference was online and open to the public and featured a range of high profile Irish and international speakers from Dublin, London, Amsterdam, Copenhagen and Singapore, all of whom have been involved in significant and successful urban regeneration projects.

Tom Phillips + Associates - SHDs & SDZzz

TPA undertook a detailed review of Ireland's 11 No. Strategic Development Zones (SDZ) and compared them with Strategic Housing Development (SHD). The result of the analysis was a publication published on 28 May 2021, with the byline Fast-track planning in Ireland, and other oxymorons. As the Practice Member of Property Industry Ireland that initially conceived the concept of SHD (in discussions with a developer as to whether the lessons of Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) that has been in use since 2006 could be applied to the delivery of residential development), we wanted to assess the assessment of SHD in light of sustained - and for the most part, critical - planning, media and political commentary.



As noted in the introduction of our study, we observed that the general thrust of media commentary to date on SHD had in our opinion been largely critical of the process, often relying on subjective opinions of those opposed to it in general and/or in respect of specific schemes. We also wanted to review the Court Decisions spurred in particular by one case in which the Judge questioned the strategic nature of SHD. We noted that in contrast to the sustained commentary on SHD, commencing on its introduction, there appeared to be no central monitoring of Strategic Development Zones, most notably no calculation of the

number of residential units that had been facilitated and then delivered in the 20 years since its introduction.

The output of the study was the calculation that only some 6,000 No. residential units of the 45,000 No. facilitated by the ten residentially-related SDZs (i.e. excluding Ireland West Airport at Knock) in two decades, SHD had permitted 60,639 No. residential units in the three years since the first SHD Permission. We also sought to redress the criticism of collective and individual An Bord Pleanála Inspectors who could not respond to media criticism. We noted that despite commentary of rubber-stamping, SHD had a 78:22 grant:refuse ratio, comparable to conventional appeals.

We also noted that the Board accepted the recommendations of its Inspectors on SHDs in some 92% of cases, higher than that observed in conventional appeals at 87%.

The Report also touched on the growth of Judicial Reviews, attributed by many to the principle of SHD. Having regard to what we submitted was an uncritical eye on SDZs, we commented that more permitted homes delivered under SHD (c.7,000 No.) had been quashed by JR than had been built in 20 years under SDZ legislation. Interestingly, despite being designated by Government as being of economic or social importance to the State, six of the 11 No. SDZs had any form of development undertaken, and few amendments had succeeded. In the interests of openness, the Report notes that TPA was involved in several SHD Applications and also several SHDs, including authoring that for Grangegorman, which was awarded the RTPI's International Award for Planning in 2014.

Planning Workplace of the Year

This category is to celebrate planning authorities, consultancies and in house planning teams which support and contribute to the professional development of their teams and the wider profession. This should include showing how they support and develop young planners in their career development and also address diversity and inclusion.

Shortlisted in this category are:

- **South Dublin County Council**
- #Making it Work @ SDCC_Planning
- **Fingal County Council**
- This is Fingal – The place to Live Work Visit and do Business
- **Louth County Council**
- Louth County Council Planning Workplace
- **Brock McClure**
- Brock McClure Planning & Development Consultants

- **Cairn Homes**
- Cairn Homes Planning Team
- **Tom Phillips + Associates**
- Tom Phillips + Associates

South Dublin County Council - #Making it Work @ SDCC_Planning

The Breath of Opportunity Our planning team is a busy and dynamic place to work. Staff are given the opportunity to work across a range of areas and in 2022 alone the team progressed;

- Our County Development Plan (2022-28) with strategies in GI, SuDS and building heights;
- 2050 vision for City Edge;
- Non-material amendment Clonburris SDZ;
- Local Area Plan Clondalkin;
- Commenced a review of our Development Contribution Scheme and of Heritage Plan;
- Secured €230million of URDF and LIHAF funding for Adamstown and Clonburris SDZ's and progressed planning applications and delivery of several strategic infrastructure projects
- Supported the planning work for several Tallaght Innovation Quarter projects;
- Determined 839 planning applications; resolved 343 planning enforcement cases
- 1450 homes granted so far in 2023

As planning continues to change we have also been progressive. In 2020, we restructured and introduced a new Delivery Team, allowing us to focus a third of our planners onto the innovative area of Delivery. This puts proactive implementation on an equal footing with the more traditional arms of planning. Planners in the Making Taking a proactive approach requires a team willing to innovate. We help our people at all stages of their career and ensure people are given the opportunities to grow and develop their skills, to enjoy their work and to learn.

- We have a paid summer placement programme for student planners. We work with TUD and UCD to place three student planners and give each the opportunity to work across a range of planning areas. Our Executive Planners lead the interview process and line manage students which helps bolster their management skills.
- We have a Graduate Planner programme with three

Graduate posts. Staff are given three-year contracts and during this time work across all aspects of planning.

- In 2019 we agreed our own Planning Mobility Guide. This sets out how planning staff will be facilitated to move between the different planning teams. After 3 years of working in one area, requests for redeployment to another, are favourably considered in the interests of career development. Since 2019 we have moved several team members.

Staying Curious Our CPD committee champions a Culture of Learning and this is run by our mid-level planning staff. In 2022 the committee hosted 17 training and learning events and in the last year, we hosted visits from Waterford Council, the Department and the Minister. We toured Sandyford with DLRCOCO and visited Mullingar to see e-planning in action. SDCC pays 50% of membership fees for IPI/RTPI, pays for staff to attend CPD events and operates a Staff Assistance Scheme for undertaking diploma/degree courses. All-Comers Welcome Among 34 planners there is a 50:50 split of women and men with this split replicated at the most senior grades. Our staff complement includes people born outside Ireland, people who have worked abroad and people who have come to planning as a second career. This diversity enriches our decision making and planning service.

Fingal County Council

- *This is Fingal*

- *The place to Live Work Visit and do Business*

SUPPORTING PROFESSIONAL & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT Fingal County Council provides a stimulating, supportive work environment and commitment to the welfare of planning staff.

This includes: Wellbeing - The Fingal wellbeing programme that includes seminars with the first theme of 2023 being mental health

This included workshops on mental health, building resilience and managing stress. The recordings are also available to watch online. Staff wellbeing packs were issued to every member of staff. A number of staff, including planners, are Wellbeing Champions who support the wellbeing programme across our teams. See attached a sample of the wellbeing and awareness training and supports for staff.

Training and Education - Fingal is incredibly supportive of continuing professional development and investing in people. Fingal supports Irish Planning Institute membership and offer excellent opportunities for training and development. The Chief Executive Innovation Awards scheme also gives staff the opportunity to bring ideas to life, improve our work and profession. Annually, the PSI Department, in conjunction with the Active Travel Department, provide for planners to visit the Netherlands / Denmark to see best practice in sustainable design with walking and cycling infrastructure

at its centre and the political, planning and cultural environment which has enabled this. The learnings have been applied to our own projects e.g. front loading of cycling and pedestrian infrastructure in Churchfields housing project and the creation of Ireland's first cycle friendly roundabout which is modelled on the Dutch version. Planners have successfully completed accredited courses in the areas of leadership, planning enforcement and planning and environmental law with six planners accredited in this latter course in 2022. This is supported by senior management within the planning department and includes financial support to pay for courses in full, workload balance and exam/training leave. In addition to mandatory training, Fingal also provides regular in-house training ranging from those areas relevant to the profession such as Climate Action, Green Infrastructure and SUDs, to much broader skillsets such as communication and social media training, effective writing, minute taking, time management skills, maximising excel and using MS Teams. Future planned in-house training includes procurement, leadership training and a module on urban design and density in 2023.

Diversity and the Next Generation - Fingal has a diverse population which is reflected in our workforce. Our planning staff is multicultural, comprising several nationalities including Spanish, French, Chinese, Indian, Nigerian and Lithuanian. Fingal prides itself in providing a helping hand to the next generation of planners. In addition to the LGMA graduate programme, Fingal's PSI Department works closely with planning schools like TU Dublin. Annually, we take in students and provide them with a fully immersive experience in planning - from administration to report writing, council meetings and mentoring. Students are remunerated as we know the cost of living as a student can be challenging. We have several graduate planners on our team, who bring fresh thinking and energy to the organisation. We have recently developed a strong relationship with Queens University School of Planning.



- Louth County Council Planning Workplace

Louth County Council provides a diverse range of services across a unique geographic landscape from the mountainous area in the Cooley area north of the county, the coastal areas to the east and the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Buffer zone and Monasterboice tentative World Heritage Site to the south of the County.

Louth is the only County to have two designated regional growth towns – Drogheda and Dundalk- along the M1 corridor between which, there are two self sustaining growth towns – Ardee and Dunleer. Key service areas include housing delivery, community services and facilities, encouraging economic development through foreign direct investment, the Local Enterprise Office supporting business start-ups, emergency services, infrastructural upgrades and projects (road improvements, public realm).

Louth County Council is a large employer with in excess of 750 employees of which there are 17 professional planning posts across three different directorates, demonstrating the value placed on multi-disciplinary teams and collaboration across the organisation. The responsibilities of the organisation are wide ranging and play an important role in promoting economic development, providing sustainable and attractive communities with the social and physical infrastructure that makes Louth a great place to live and work. The geographical location of the County combined with the strong urban structure, the multi-disciplinary team approach and collaboration evident across the organisation makes Louth County Council an attractive and interesting workplace for planners.

We believe that Louth County Council is worthy of the Workplace of the Year Award for 2023 given the advancements within the organisation in technology, level of recruitment and commitment shown by Management to improve business processes and employee welfare over the last two years. The work environment including the introduction of blended working has resulted in high staff satisfaction rates, a well-motivated, ambitious and integrated planning workforce and demonstrates dedication to the advancement of the planning profession and to the wider Corporate goals of the Council. While working in planning has its challenges, on the whole Louth County Council planning section is a great place to work and the contribution of each individual within the planning team is what makes it a unique and dynamic place to work!

Brock McClure

- Brock McClure Planning & Development Consultants

Brock McClure Planning & Development Consultants was established in 2012 by Laura Brock and Suzanne McClure and is now the town planning firm of choice for a diverse range of clients and a leading planning consultancy in the Republic of Ireland. We are clear that the key to our success is built on the quality of our people, who are Proactive, Col-

laborative, Creative, Professional, and committed to the success of our clients; our culture of learning; and our focus on quality and results.

Brock McClure is committed to excellence and since its foundation in 2012, Laura and Suzanne have recruited and nurtured a team of like-minded planning professionals that share our core values and are wired to deliver successful outcomes. Their determination as a team ensured continued growth of the firm, and new areas of expertise, including a new Mayo-based team and office in 2016, which ensures a fully nationwide service offer.

Recognition of the company's contribution to the planning field is evidenced through the receipt of several awards in the Mayo Business Awards in 2017, Brock McClure was crowned Winner of 'Best Small Business' at the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Chamber Business Awards in 2018 and Laura and Suzanne were finalists in PWC's Image Businesswoman of the Year Awards in 2019 in the Management Professionals of the Year category.

Our team at Brock McClure has a diverse age profile and are a multidisciplinary group of Planners from various backgrounds and previous experience ranging from Property Economics and Surveying, Psychology, Sociology, Environmental Policy and Local Authority involvement which gives us a broader perspective on appropriate planning strategies. Currently, we employ 5 recently graduated young planners and a student planner that bring bounds of enthusiasm and fresh outlooks to the workplace and are eager to learn new skills and gain experience through access to approachable and supportive senior staff members at all times.

Throughout the years, Brock McClure has always offered a professional learning experience and practical work for Student Planners. In conjunction with UCD and TU Dublin's Master's Planning degree, Brock McClure now offers a formalised Graduate and Internship Programme for postgraduates and students.



Employee development is crucial to the operation of our

private practice business given the continued publication of new guidelines, planning law and initiatives in the field. We empower our employees to continue their professional development and progress in their careers by encouraging attendance at external training sessions, seminars and webinars and in-house lunchtime learn sessions by sharing of experience or project updates. Our employees have access to endless opportunities to expand their knowledge base and improve their skills.

Brock McClure, a female founded Consultancy, is committed to creating a more diverse employment environment and are proud to be an equal opportunities employer.

Inclusivity is an integral part of our workplace culture and we, at Brock McClure ensure that everyone, regardless of who they are or what they do for the business, feel equally involved in and supported in all areas of the workplace.

Cairn Homes

- Cairn Homes Planning Team

Since beginning our journey in 2015 Cairn has grown from a small start up to a major employer with over 330 people directly employed and over 3,000 indirectly through our subcontractors helping to deliver almost 7000 new homes to date. The planning team has grown from one person to a team of 7 who are an integral part of the overall Cairn team. A great place to work cares about and supports its employees while also challenging them to mature and develop individually whilst also growing as a company. The Cairn planning team is a reflection of this with all staff progressing to more senior roles within the company. At Cairn we are committed to supporting and facilitating the continued learning, development, and education of our employees across all role types. We believe that supporting employees to develop new skills, knowledge and behaviour will improve their performance at work, enhance their career development, increase the organisation's capacity to adapt and grow, and increase employee satisfaction and engagement.

Accreditation: employees are encouraged and supported to achieve their accreditation/chartership in their respective professional bodies including the IPI and RTPI. Each team has programmes in place to motivate and support employees in advance and during this process.

Professional development: employees are encouraged and supported to participate in ongoing CPD through their professional bodies, such as the IPI, and to seek out further education opportunities to upskill and gain additional qualifications in line with their chosen profession.

Technical development: employees are supported to build skills and capabilities specific to their role and function through participation in in-house forums on topics such as innovation and sustainability.

Personal development: includes a Leaders Program, Man-

ager Development Program, Mentoring Program or the Personal Impact Effectiveness (PIE) programme. To ensure Learning & Development (L&D) is a continued and ongoing focus through the year and tailored to individual needs, employees must include one L&D objective in their annual personal objectives.

At Cairn, we are committed to building a diverse workforce which is representative of wider society supported by the following initiatives: Signatory of the Elevate Pledge which helps to support us as a business to build a more inclusive workplace.

Partnership with the Irish Centre for Diversity whose aim is to work with companies to help embed Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in the business.

Attained the Investors in Diversity Silver mark by the Irish Centre for Diversity, which certifies how we have embedded Inclusive practices throughout our business as well as developed and fostered a sense of fairness and belonging among our team.



Taking a more long-term view, another key objective for us is to create a diverse and inclusive STEM talent pipeline.

We are facing a skills shortage across the built professions, including planning, as an industry leader we need to encourage more young people to consider planning as a career.

Cairn work with a number of schools and education partners to help promote STEM careers, particularly for women, and further education opportunities for those from DEIS schools.

Tom Phillips + Associates

- Tom Phillips + Associates

The Practice of Tom Phillips + Associates celebrated its 21st birthday in April. In those years, the Practice has grown from an initial compliment of seven planners to a Practice of over 30 people. The Practice operates from a very hands-on and open door collaborative ethos that encourages discussion, debate and differing views, but with the common thread of

a passion for what we do.

A major factor in TPA's growth and longevity has been its strong link with the Schools of Architecture, Planning and Environment Policy at UCD, where Tom Phillips has been a lecturer and latter an Adjunct Associate Professor since 1993. Every year since its establishment - including during the Recession years - the Practice has employed planning graduates, and is understood to be the largest employer of UCD graduates. The Practice's three shareholders are graduates of that School, as are many staff. Other staff studied elsewhere and the Practice has also encouraged strong links with the Planning Schools in TUD and UCC. TPA was instrumental in encouraging UCD to introduce the 10-week Intern Programme for UCD Second Year MRUP Students. TPA pays Interns during their time with the Practice.

Prior to the advent of the Covid pandemic, TPA had introduced a structured WFH policy, which allowed the Practice to adapt quickly to the initial lockdown. All staff were equipped with parallel computer equipment and where requested furniture to facilitate such bi-location. Apart from Reception, Cleaning and the Office Manager, an exception to that is the Managing Director who does not on principle WFH, so that he is available to staff in the office.

Education plays a major part in the Practice, with regular Lunch; Learn; sessions presented by internal speakers as well as by consultants from related disciplines from ecology to archaeology to finance as well as by Clients. Other sessions have been hosted on topics such as fitness and nutrition.

The Practice is also a member of Ibec, and all staff are reminded of that organisation's wellness facilities.

To celebrate its 20th Anniversary, the Practice hosted a long weekend for all staff (including Administration and Cleaning colleagues) in Copenhagen that was both educational and social.

The Practice has a balanced male:female ratio, including at senior level, and has a diverse staff complement from a number of countries. Diversity and inclusion are encouraged. The Practice operates the planning workload across a number of Teams managed by the four technical directors. All junior staff are mentored individually by a more senior colleague, with clear paths to advancement monitored throughout one's progression.

In response to a colleague's concern about the difficulty of securing and then, during the Covid lockdown, maintaining accommodation in Dublin, the Practice opened an office in Cork in 2021. That Office has now grown to seven fulltime planning staff, with more anticipated. Staff work across the two offices in joint teams to avoid a them-and-us scenario. TPA realises that, on occasion, valued colleagues move on. The Practice maintains a strong connection with alumni.

President's Award

This category is for intended to highlight the twin focus of the term of office for Mary Mac Mahon's presidency – practice and engagement. Its purpose is to highlight examples of excellent public participation and to showcase best practice. The intention is to turn a spotlight on areas which otherwise might get overlooked within the broader aims of the individual categories. It ensures that the diverse nature of planning practice is recognised and appreciated.

- Limerick City and County Council

- Young Person Participation in Land Use Planning

- Downey

- Portarlington Urban Regeneration Strategy 2030

- Quintain

- The Crossings, Adamstown

- Statkraft Ireland

- Moanvane Wind Farm

- Virtus

- Virtus

Limerick City and County Council

- Young Person Participation in Land Use Planning

Limerick City and County Council have formulated, trailed and implemented a schools consultation programme to engage young people in the preparation of the development plan and local area plan processes. The programme allows for consultation with young people as an integral part of the plan-making process and central in shaping the future of Limerick. The programme was originally developed in conjunction with teaching staff to ensure that both planning and curriculum objectives were met and as a way to maximise the willingness of schools to participate. The programme has been developed in two strands for both primary and secondary schools and has been formulated having regard to the school curriculum in each strand. The programme includes the delivery of a classroom based exercise and this is supported with an interactive mapping tool allowing students to get out on-the-ground themselves and with the online mapping tool, follow their location, marking what issues/concerns and ideas they have to make their local area better and influence the plan making process. In addition, school children are encouraged to make formal submissions to the plan-making process.

Since 2020, over 1,370 students have engaged with the Forward Planning team and have influenced the future development of their local area. Primary School Consultation Programme Outline (Approx. Time 45 mins):

- Target classes: 3rd to 6th
- Presentation by planning staff (what a planner does, what is a land use plan and engagement with basic principles of development)
- Travel Survey (an up-to-date travel survey is undertaken within the school to ascertain current modal split with results influencing LAP Preparation)
- Breakout groups, led by planning staff with each group assigned a map of LAP boundary, school as centre point. A 1km radius, around the school, prompts students to what facilities/services are within this radius (relating to the 10-minute town concept).
- The programme discussion follows with questions such as: - Location of facilities/services/areas of historical importance - Mark on map the facilities/services historical buildings/where they play/locations that the students like/do not feel safe/what can you add to your map that will improve the environment and protect against climate change. - Identify enhancements to their settlement. - Present their work, suggestions and map to their class and/or a Planning Officer with group discussion. Post Primary Consultation Programme Outline (Approx. Time 1 hour):
- Target years: 4th – 6th year
- Presentation by planning staff, in-depth look at zoning map, student travel survey.
- Breakout groups, led by planning staff with each group assigned a map of LAP boundary, school as centre point and 1km radius. Each group assigned a different theme(s) to discuss based on the future development of their local area including: - Vision and Identity - Climate Change - Environment - Economy - Social and Community
- Students present their findings/ideas around future plans for their area.
- Students are asked to utilise the online mapping tool survey of their town using school tablets/personal phones (an additional on-the-ground method to gather information) in their own.

Downey

– Portarlington Urban Regeneration Strategy 2030

“Portarlington Urban Regeneration Strategy 2030” is a heritage-led, community-driven strategy seeking to define the role and future development of Portarlington Town Centre, whereby conservation and re-purpose of the Market House forms the core element of the Strategy, catalysing revitalisation of the town centre, sustained through local commu-

nity mobilisation.

The Market House, built around 1740-1750, also functioning as the Town Hall and essentially the centre of the town’s life through 19-20th centuries, lost its relevance in the mid-20th century by the consolidation of court functions and changes to the way farm produce was traded. Around 1990, the structure was converted into a motor repair shop on the ground floor with living accommodation above, and it has remained the same over the last three decades.

In July 2020, Laois County Council secured a long-term lease of the Market House with a vision for revitalisation of the town centre, commissioning DOWNEY in October 2022 to carry out the Strategy. Led and coordinated by DOWNEY, the multi-disciplinary design team comprised of Mesh Architects, Wilson Architects, TOBIN Engineers, and Irish Archaeological Consultancy working with Laois County Council.

Donna Ryan, Associate Director and Project Manager in DOWNEY with over 18 years of post-graduate experience, acted as project manager, community liaison officer, and the single point of contact between the design team, the Steering Group and Laois County Council. Capitalising on the historical role of Market House perceived as a civic landmark by the community of Portarlington, situated at the heart of the town, the design team developed proposals for the re-use of the Market House as a multi-purpose community hall and art exhibition space.

The participatory plan-making process embedded within the Strategy led to community buy-in and ultimately the creation of “Portarlington Community Development Association” comprising of local community groups and businesses. Building upon the social capital of Portarlington, the Strategy seeks to enhance the town image by animating the town centre, consolidating both sides of the River Barrow, and re-connecting the historic core of the town to its adjacent amenities, to maximise the potential the town has to offer for the local community.

The Strategy takes a proactive approach in plan-making, whereby it goes beyond rehabilitation of the Market House, putting under-utilised heritage buildings forward for development, all stitched up with the existing amenities and via a network of pedestrian and cycle linkages, as well as blue ways and green corridors which expand past the spatial scope of the project linking to Derrycastle Trails and Lakes, Lea Castle, Carrick Woods, and Emo Court.

The Strategy is innovative in terms of bringing natural heritage and intangible assets of the town into the plan-making process, creating a low-carbon zone in the town centre, and celebrating heritage within the town. The interim report of the Strategy was instrumental in securing RRDF funding of over €1 million for Laois County Council. The shopfronts enhancement scheme, re-design of Market Square, upgrade of Main Street, and townscape enhancement through undergrounding cables is a non-exhaustive list of actions driven by the Strategy.

Quintain

- The Crossings, Adamstown



When Quintain Ireland commenced development in Adamstown we set a goal of delivering the urban village for the residents. However, we understood to achieve this we needed to get more residents into the area needed to sustain the urban village and open the land bank to infrastructure.

In tandem, we needed to isolate and address the negative connotations associated with the area from the financial crash. We commenced developing (in conjunction with other landowners) the low-density tiles to the north of the scheme which naturally progressed to medium density all reflective of the market appetite at the time. Our approach has now paid off as we are on site commencing this new urban quarter after eight years of development in Adamstown.

The masterplan, now known as The Crossings (Adamstown Station in the planning scheme) is divided into four quarters by a north / south route and an east/west route. Within each quadrant further subdivisions occur to produce a series of smaller development areas of an appropriate scale for individual buildings. There are eight development plots in total, which are sub divided into five character areas/phases;

Phase 1: Block B, E and F (residential and commercial)

Phase 2: Block G (residential)

Phase 3: Block A,C and D (residential)

Phase 4: No. 1 Adamstown Boulevard

Phase 5: Block H (residential, commercial and civic/ community uses)

The development provides a mix of tenure from studio, 1 bed, 2 bed and 3 bedroom apartments which complement the existing housing stock in Adamstown (largely characterised by family homes). In addition to the residential buildings is 11,700 sqm of retail space and 3,500 sqm of commercial space which provides for anchor food stores, a multi storey car park and ancillary retail.

Statkraft Ireland

- Moanvane Wind Farm

Moanvane Wind Farm is a 12-turbine wind project being constructed by Statkraft Ireland in Co. Offaly. Statkraft, Europe's largest generator of renewable energy, entered the Irish market in 2018 after it acquired the Irish and UK wind development businesses of the Element Power Group. Since then, Statkraft Ireland has almost tripled its workforce and tripled its development portfolio.

Moanvane was among the projects being proposed by Element Power when it was acquired by the Norwegian State-owned company. When operational, this 57.6MW project – which has been in construction since 2022 – will deliver a significant amount of renewable energy on to the Irish grid. The wind farm consists of turbines with a tip height of up to 169 metres as well as all associated foundations and hardstanding areas. The project also includes the provision of new access tracks and the upgrading of existing access tracks and associated drainage; an onsite electrical substation; a borrow pit; a temporary construction compound; all associated underground electricity cabling connecting the turbines to the proposed onsite substation; minor alterations to lands adjacent to the public road for the delivery of turbines to the site (turbine delivery route), and all associated site development works including tree felling.



The proposed development also comprises the development of a recreational amenity trail, based on feedback and ideas from the area's residents. The trail, which will offer additional opportunities for biodiversity enhancement in the area, forms part of a benefits package developed in conjunction with the community.

Other benefits include a Community Benefit Fund for local organisations and projects as well as a direct benefit for households located within one kilometre of the wind farm.

The Moanvane Wind Farm Recreational Amenity Trail is located to the south-east of the proposed wind farm in the townlands of Bogtown, Kilcappagh and Moanvane, approximately 2.3 kilometres north of Cloneygowan village, Co. Offaly.

The amenity trail will consist of a looped trail approximately six kilometres in length which will be open to the public as a walkway. The trail will be located on the wind farm access roads and on existing forest tracks which will be upgraded where required. The trail will be suitable for several activities including walking, bird watching, nature and wildlife exploration and will include signage and information boards displaying information on the trail's points of interest, including the local flora and fauna and the wind farm project. The trail will also include picnic areas and onsite parking. Access to the trail will be from the local road at Bogtown and will be free of charge throughout the year. The trail will serve the catchment of the settlement of Cloneygowan while it is also intended to serve the population of the village as well as those living in its hinterland.

Virtus - Virtus

Virtus is a young and vibrant planning consultancy. Established in 2016, and forming part of a wider company which principally provides project management services, the town planning arm of Virtus was established by Robert Keran.

With careful recruitment and expansion over the past 7 years, the planning team has grown to 5 no. full time permanent fully qualified planners, plus one graduate currently on work experience. The planning team is now led by Robert Keran and Brian Coughlan, each having in excess of 15 years experience in planning. At Virtus we have a particular focus on the role young planners. We firmly believe that we offer a workplace which fosters and promotes the growth of young planners.

Our key principles are as follows:

- Virtus takes great pride in ensuring that it is an excellent place to work for all staff through all stages in their career. Key to this is ensuring our staff gain experience in a wide range of excellent projects and can see a clear path to career progression within the company, have access to and are facilitated in membership of professional bodies, and are encouraged to continue their education and professional development throughout their career.
- Our culture and workplace is based on trust. We provide our planners with the tools and confidence needed to perform the assigned role, and we then trust them to perform the role to the best of their ability. We provide appropriate checks and balances, including regular interaction with and access to senior staff, for the necessary support network and quality control.

- Provide a workplace which fosters trust in young planners. We do this through an open and inclusive environment where there is open dialogue and discussion – both through formal in-house meetings and ad-hoc discussion in the workplace, which is actively encouraged.
- Encourage all of our planners to fully engage in continuous professional development, including attendance at key IPI events.
- Encourage active engagement in the IPI. Our Assistant Planner, Robert Molloy, is an active member of the Young Planners Network. We strongly encourage and promote this activity.
- We seek to expose all of our planners to all aspects of the planning profession. At Virtus, we have a wide range and scale of planning projects, from one-off housing, to large scale residential development, from small commercial projects to forward planning proposals and submissions. Our clients also vary greatly, from individual persons, to corporate bodies. We firmly believe that this diversity of project and client is key to a healthy, happy and vibrant workplace.
- Expose our planners to 'life beyond planning'. Our separate project management expertise in Virtus offers our planners a valuable insight in to other aspects of the development industry. We deliberately expose our planners to elements of the project management role, particularly during planning stage of a project management project, to provide our planners with a more rounded and holistic insight in to the industry.





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