



Fermanagh & Omagh Draft Plan Strategy - Counter Representations Form

Hard Copies of the Draft Plan Strategy, all Representations received and our 'Guidance note for Making Counter Representations' are available for inspection during normal opening hours at the Council's offices at: 7 Shore Road, Enniskillen, BT74 7EF; Strule House, 16 High Street, Omagh BT78 1BQ; The Grange, Mountjoy Road, Lisnamallard, Omagh, Co Tyrone, BT79 7BL and; Townhall, 2 Townhall Street, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh, BT74 7BA or may be viewed at <https://www.fermanaghomagh.com>

How to make Counter Representations

You can make counter representations by completing this form, by email to developmentplan@fermanaghomagh.com or by post to: Local Development Plan Team, Strule House, 16 High Street, Omagh BT78 1BQ.

For further assistance contact: developmentplan@fermanaghomagh.com or Tel: 0300 303 1777.

All Counter Representations must be received by Thursday 11th April 2019 at 5pm.

SECTION 1. Contact Details

Agent or Personal Submission - Are you submitting on behalf of someone or in an individual capacity?

☐ Individual ☐ Organisation ☒ **Agent** (complete with your client's contact details first)

First Name	David	Ken
Last Name	Worthington	Moore
Job Title (Where relevant)	Director	Partner
Organisation (Where relevant)	Pragma Planning	Studio 44
Address	Scottish Provident Building	44a New Street
	7 Donegall Square West	Enniskillen
Postcode	Belfast, BT1 6JH	BT74 6AH
Telephone Number	028 9091 8410	028 6632 8088
Email Address	admin@pragmaplanning.com	

If you are an Agent, acting on behalf of an Individual or Organisation, please provide your contact details below. (Please note you will be the main contact for future correspondence).

First Name	Jonathan
Last Name	Styles
Job Title (Where relevant)	
Organisation (Where relevant)	Enniskillen Business Partnership
Address	c/o T A Mercer, 5 High Street, Enniskillen
Postcode	BT74 7DQ
Telephone Number	028 6632 2119
Email Address	time@tamerccer.com

SECTION 2. Counter Representation

Have you submitted a representation to the council regarding the Draft Plan Strategy?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, please provide the Reference Number of your representation and a summary of the issue raised in your representation below.

See attached report

Details of Your Counter Representation

Please provide the reference number of the site-specific representation to which your counter representation relates to:

DPS 011

Please give reasons for your counter representation having particular regard to the soundness test(s) identified in the above referenced site-specific representation. Please note that your counter representation must not propose any new changes of the draft Plan Strategy.

See attached report

SECTION 3. Data Protection and Consent

Data Protection

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council has a duty to protect any information we hold on you. The personal information you provide on this form will only be used for the purpose of Plan Preparation and will not be shared with any third party unless law or regulation compels such a disclosure. It should be noted that in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, the council must make a copy of any counter representation available for inspection. The Council is also required to submit the counter representations to the Department for Infrastructure and they will then be considered as part of the Independent Examination process. For further guidance on how we hold your information please visit the Privacy section at www.fermanaghomagh.com/your-council/privacy-statement/

By proceeding and submitting this representation you confirm that you have read and understand the privacy notice above and give your consent for Fermanagh and Omagh Council to hold your personal data for the purposes outlined.

Consent to Publish Response

The Council is required by law to publish your representation and make it available for inspection. Unless otherwise stated by yourself, this will include your name and postal address. Your personal telephone number, personal email address and signature will not be published.

If you do not wish for your name and postal address to be published please tick the box below.

☐ **Please do not publish my name and postal address**

Please note: Even if you opt for your details to be published anonymously, we will still have a legal duty to share your contact details with the Department for Infrastructure and the Independent Examiner/Authority they appoint to oversee the examination in public into the soundness of the plan. This will be done in accordance with the privacy statement above.

Signature

	
---	--

Date

26 June 2019

Enniskillen Business Partnership

Fermanagh and Omagh Local Development Plan
Plan Strategy

Counter-Representation



Pragma Planning & Development Consultants Ltd.
Scottish Provident Building
7 Donegall Square West
Belfast, BT1 6JH

June 2019

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Appointment Brief	1
Scope and Purpose of Report	2
Counter-Representation Context	3
Evidence Base – Nexus Report	7
Inaltus Representation	9
Other Representations	17

Introduction

Pragma Planning and Development Consultants Limited has prepared this counter representation in conjunction with Studio 44 Town and Country Planning on behalf of the Enniskillen Business Partnership and Business Improvement District.

Enniskillen Business Partnership is a small business grouping with interests in promoting and growing the town centre of Enniskillen. The Business Improvement District is an area in which the businesses work collectively to improve the area in which they trade.

Pragma was established in 1998, its directors have collective experience of over 30 years in retail and town centre development planning.

Studio 44 are professional planning consultants with over 35 years experience.

Appointment Brief

A representation made by Inaltus on behalf of Elm Grange Limited containing a series of objections to the draft Plan Strategy was submitted to the Council, dated 18 December 2018. This representation was given the reference: DPS011.

Enniskillen Business Partnership on reading the objection realised that it sought changes to the strategy that were unsound and unsuitable and consequently sought the assistance of a practice with expertise in retail planning.

Pragma widened the scope of the brief to examine all the representations made to the Council in respect to the town centre; in particular:

- Gravis Planning on behalf of Erneside Shopping Centre ref: DPS104
- Jigsaw Planning on behalf of ASDA ref: DPS005
- MBA Planning on behalf of LIDL ref: DPS121

Scope and Purpose of Report

The report addresses the site specific issues raised in the representations above, it is structured to provide a context to the counter representation followed by examination of each objection in terms of its soundness and suitability and its effect on the potential soundness of the final Development Plan Document.

In brief terms the issues raised by the various representations include:

1. Inaltus [ref DPS011]:
 - The DPD is obligated in regional policy to identify land for district centres;
 - The town can support significantly more retail development than is set out in the evidence base;
 - The town centre should be reduced in size; and
 - A district centre should be designated at the former Uni-pork factory site on []
2. Gravis Planning [ref DPS104]:
 - The exclusion of Erneside Shopping Centre from the Primary Retail Core does not reflect other plans policies and strategies and is unsound; and
 - The threshold of 500 square metres of additional floorspace above which retail impact and needs assessment are required for development proposals within the town centre is contrary to policy in the SPPS and is unsound
3. Jigsaw Planning [ref DPS005]:
 - The exclusion of the ASDA store from the Town Centre is not reflective of planning policy in the SPPS; and
 - The ASDA store is functionally part of the Town Centre as it is easily accessed from the centre and its car park facilitates linked trips
4. MBA [ref DPS121]:
 - The requirement of a needs assessment is out of step with the SPPS, which only requires need where an LDP is up to date;
 - Use of gross external area as the trigger for retail impact assessment is inappropriate as it fails to take account of actual selling space and would also capture extensions that were for storage

Counter-Representation Context

Soundness and Suitability of the DPD

The Plan Strategy is mandated by Section 8 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 to have regard to the Regional Development Strategy and to any policy or advice issued by the Department for Infrastructure.

The RDS and the SPPS therefore form the primary context of the DPD.

Tests of Soundness

The LDP Plan Strategy is required to be sound (Section 10(6) of the Act). Its soundness is tested under procedural, consistency, and coherence and effectiveness tests (SPPS paragraph 5.31). The Council has set out its tests of soundness accordingly. Each of the representations below is a site specific objection; they relate to the tests of soundness as follows: -

- Inaltus:

C3 Did the Council take account of policy and guidance issued by the Department?

CE2 Are the strategy, policies and allocations realistic and appropriate having considered the relevant alternatives and are founded on a robust evidence base?

- Gravis Planning:

C4 Has the plan had regard to other relevant plans, policies and strategies relating to the council's district or to any adjoining district?

CE2 Are the strategy, policies and allocations realistic and appropriate having considered the relevant alternatives and are founded on a robust evidence base?

- Jigsaw Planning:

CE 2 Are the strategy, policies and allocations realistic and appropriate having considered the relevant alternatives and are founded on a robust evidence base?

- MBA:

C3 Did the Council take account of policy and guidance issued by the Department?

CE2 Are the strategy, policies and allocations realistic and appropriate having considered the relevant alternatives and are founded on a robust evidence base?

Enniskillen Business Partnership Plan Strategy - Counter Representation

Although the representations relate to the same three aspects of the soundness tests they take differing views when considered in detail and their objections relate to different aspects of these same tests and as a result Gravis and Jigsaw seek expansion of the Primary Retail Core and Town Centre respectively while Inaltus seeks a reduction in the Town Centre.

Primary Context - RDS and SPPS

Under Section 8 of the Act the DPD must have regard to the RDS and to the SPPS and any other relevant policy or guidance issued by the Department.

While none of the representations contained an objection based on soundness test C1 (whether the Council took account of the RDS) the RDS nonetheless forms part of the context as overarching strategy informing the SPPS.

Regeneration is central to create more accessible and vibrant town and city centres and support the Urban Renaissance (RG 7). This means concentration of retail and town centre uses in order to secure regeneration.

Although it is not statutory document, the Master Plan prepared by URS on behalf of the former Fermagh District Council and Department for Social Development demonstrates how through intervention regeneration can be achieved. For intervention to make sense, however, concentration of retail and town centre uses is necessary.

The SPPS develops the RDS's broad thrust into a town centre first approach and obligates the Council to the following in preparing the DPD: -

- A town centre first approach for retail and main town centre uses (paragraph 6.273);
- An assessment of need or capacity for retail and other main town centre uses and regularly reviewed town centre health checks (paragraph 6.274);
- A strategy for for town centres and retailing (paragraph 6.275);
- Retention and consolidation of existing district and local centres (paragraph 6.276);
- Identify and define: a network and hierarchy of centres; the spatial extent of town centres and primary retail cores; policies making clear what types of retailing will be acceptable at each level in the hierarchy; provision for a diverse range and mix of uses reflecting local circumstances and allocation of a range of suitable sites (paragraph 6.277);
- Policy and proposals for villages and small settlements to be consistent with the overall plan aims, objectives and policy approach for town centres (paragraph 6.278);
- Policy to resist retail and town centre development in the countryside, subject to certain exceptions (paragraph 6.279);

Enniskillen Business Partnership Plan Strategy - Counter Representation

- A sequential test for applications as follows (paragraph 6.281): -

1. Primary Retail Core
2. Town Centre
3. Edge of centre
4. Out of centre where accessible by a choice of public transport modes

(It should be noted that paragraph 6.280 controls the circumstances in which the sequential test is applied, it is operational and has no role in LDP preparation)

- Engage with town centre stakeholders in LDP preparation (paragraph 6.284);
- Town centre health checks are part of the evidence base of LDPs and will contain information on a range of indicators (paragraph 6.285);
- A call for sites to inform allocations (paragraph 6.286);
- Give preference to edge of Town Centre over out of Town Centre locations (paragraph 6.287); and
- Allocate sites on the basis of sustainably and objectively assessed need during the plan period (paragraph 2.88).

Policy Proposals in the DPD

The Draft Plan Strategy proposals address the majority of the elements of the SPPS set out above. In effect the proposed strategy and the policies that flow from it deal with all the main points, we have set out below the key SPPS obligations with the strategy, policy or paragraph in the Draft Plan Strategy in which they are addressed.

SPPS Provisions	Draft Plan Strategy Provisions
Para 6.273 Adopt a town centre first approach	Paras 4.27, 4.31 and Draft Policy TCR01 set out the Town Centre first approach
Para 6.274 An assessment of need and capacity and town centre health checks are carried out to inform the draft plan strategy	Paras 4.30 and 4.35 refer to both the town centre health checks and the Fermanagh and Omagh retail and Commercial Leisure Needs Assessment of March 2017 by Nexus planning (the Nexus Report)
Para 6.275 A strategy for town centres and retailing containing policies and proposals that promote town centres first	The strategy is set out in paras 4.31 to 4.34 and Table 6 with the accompanying maps and the online interactive map. In particular paras 4.27, 4.31 and Draft Policy TCR01 set out the Town Centre first approach
Para 6.276 Retain and consolidate existing district and local centres	There are no existing district and local centres in Enniskillen and accordingly the Draft Plan Strategy does not contain any policy to address this point.

Enniskillen Business Partnership Plan Strategy - Counter Representation

SPPS Provisions	Draft Plan Strategy Provisions
<p>Para 6.277 LDPs should also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define a network and hierarchy of centres - town, district and local centres, acknowledging the role and function of rural centres; • Define the spatial extent of town centres and the primary retail core; • Set out appropriate policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in the hierarchy of centres and other locations, and the factors that will be taken into account for decision taking; • Provide for a diverse offer and mix of uses, which reflect local circumstances; and • Allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and form of retail, and other town centre uses 	<p>The Draft Plan Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines a network and hierarchy of centres in paras 4.31, 4.33 and Table 6; • Defines the spatial extent of town centres and the primary retail core in paras 4.31, 4.32 and in the maps (including the interactive map); • Sets out policies on permitted uses and factors to be taken into account in decision making in paras 4.31, 4.34, Table 6, Draft Policies TCR 01, TCR02, TCR03, TCR04 and the accompanying paragraphs from 4.35 to 4.40 • Provides for a diverse range of uses in draft policies TCR01, TCR02 and Table 6 • Does not allocate a range of sites - it is assumed that these will form part of the Sites and Policies Document
<p>Para 6.278 Policies and proposals for villages and small settlements consistent with the aims and objectives of the plan strategy</p>	<p>Table 6, Draft Policy TCR04 and paras 4.33 and 4.40 provide for villages and small settlements consistent with the plan strategy.</p>
<p>Para 6.279 Policy for rural shops</p>	<p>Draft Policy TCR05 allows petrol filling stations to be located in the countryside subject to restrictions on location. Table 6 allows small local shops, farm shops, craft shops and shops incidental to tourism only outside settlements.</p>
<p>Para 6.281 A sequential test for all applications as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Primary Retail Core 2. Town Centre 3. Edge of centre 4. Out of centre where accessible by a choice of public transport modes 	<p>Draft Policy TCR01 includes the sequential test</p>
<p>Para 6.284 Engagement with town centre stakeholders</p>	<p>There is no evidence of town centre stakeholder engagement in the draft plan strategy.</p>
<p>Para 6.28 Town centre health checks will form part of the evidence base of the Draft Plan Strategy and will contain information on a range of indicators</p>	<p>Para 4.30 indicates that health checks have been integrated into the Draft Plan Strategy.</p>
<p>Para 6.286 A call for sites is undertaken as part of the process identifying sites to be allocated</p>	<p>No sites have been incorporated in the Draft Plan Strategy. It is assumed that these will be included in the Sites and Policies Document.</p>
<p>Para 6.287 Preference given to edge of Town Centre over out of Town Centre sites</p>	<p>The sequential test is included in Draft Policy TCR01.</p>
<p>Para 6.288 Allocation of sites on the basis of sustainably and objectively assessed need</p>	<p>No sites have been incorporated in the Draft Plan Strategy. It is assumed that these will be included in the Sites and Policies Document.</p>

Enniskillen Business Partnership Plan Strategy - Counter Representation

A number of these items are addressed in more detail in the sections below; however, in general we consider that the draft Plan Strategy has responded appropriately to its primary context and to the SPPS in particular.

Our response to the various representations is made in the context above, that the Draft Plan Strategy has taken account of Departmental policy and guidance such that C3 has been satisfied.

Evidence Base - Nexus Report

This part of the counter-representation examines the evidence base in relation to CE2. The site-specific representations are considered in terms of the rest of CE2 in the subsequent sections.

Section 4 of the Retail and Commercial leisure Needs Assessment produced by Nexus Planning (the Nexus Report) for Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (FODC) sets out the basis of the study area and includes on page 37 a map of that study area. The study area was defined as being principally the Council's geographical area together with an additional area to the north to take account of Omagh's geographical pull and the proximity of other retail destinations to the north and allow an area within the Republic of Ireland.

This study area is a robust one because it includes the area within which shoppers are likely to originate from and recognises an element of cross border activity without placing excess emphasis on that as it is prone to fluctuation particularly so in light of the impending Brexit situation which could significantly impact on the level of cross boarder trade in either a positive or negative manner, until that effect is established it is robust to apply only limited weight to it.

Any suggestion that the study area should be expanded further would need to be based on sound evidence that trips would be generated from outside the study area. That appears to us to be unlikely given the proximity of other main settlements to the north and east in the form of Derry/Londonderry, Magherafelt, Cookstown, Dungannon and Armagh all of which offer a high quality range of retail facilities to the resident populations of those areas and indeed may attract shoppers out of the study area. The inclusion of an element of cross border trade without over estimating the level of that trade is equally robust as the precise level of that trade is subject to local fluctuations particularly around price, taxation differentials in the two jurisdictions and availability of alternative facilities outside the control of FODC. Any suggestion that higher levels of cross border trade are likely needs to be based in sound evidence and the limited weight attributed to that simply makes the Nexus report more robust.

Enniskillen Business Partnership Plan Strategy - Counter Representation

The study area is then broken down into 5 zones in Northern Ireland and 1 zone in the Republic of Ireland and then further by postcode sector where possible. This methodology is exactly that which we would expect to have been used and creates a robust knowledge base based on the postcode sectors.

The study area population is then calculated using the latest available mid year estimates based on 2016 population data for each zone utilising Experian Micromarketer G3. The population has then been grown by Nexus utilising NISRA data to result in a population growth of around 5.7% over the plan period to 2030. The total population increase is therefore a modest 7,233 over a 14 year period.

The retail expenditure data has been sourced from Experian Micromarketer G3 a robust source of population and expenditure data that is widely used. The forecasting has been carried out using Experian Planner Briefing Note 14. The Nexus Report was published in March 2017 following the publication of FODC's preferred options paper and informed the Plan Strategy of the LDP which was published in October 2018. It fits within that sequence of events and at the time of publication of both the Nexus Report and the Plan Strategy utilised the most up to date version of the Experian Planner Briefing Note as the subsequent Briefing Note (Briefing Note 16) was not published until December 2018 after the publication of both Nexus and the Plan Strategy.

The Nexus report reiterates that long term forecasts should be treated with caution and have erred on that side - convenience goods expenditure growth rates are predicted as being only around 0.1% with falls of -0.2% and -0.9% in 2017 and 2018 respectively. Predicted growth rates in comparison expenditure are higher at around 3.0 - 3.2%. These low levels erring on the side of caution are also a more robust method of prediction.

Special forms of trading (SFT) have been predicted again using Briefing Note 14 and have been 'stripped out' to ensure they are removed from the expenditure predictions which is again a robust and sound mechanism for modelling the study area.

Convenience goods expenditure taking account of SFT are predicted to grow from £269.9m in 2016 to £278.7m in 2030 a modest growth of just £8.7m over the plan period of 14 years. Comparison goods expenditure is predicted to grow from £358.1m in 2016 to £540.4m in 2030 a growth of £182.3m over the 14 year plan period. The split in convenience goods expenditure between main food shopping and top up shopping is provided as being a ratio of 77.2%:22.8% and is based on the NEMS household Survey.

Enniskillen Business Partnership Plan Strategy - Counter Representation

The use of NEMS and a bespoke household survey is also a robust mechanism of establishing a broad representative indication of the market shares of retail destinations and of shopping habits patterns and flows within the study area. A total of 606 shopper interviews were undertaken both by telephone and by door to door interviews. In order to minimise any statistical error the results have been weighted. Linked trips have also been considered.

In summary therefore the Nexus report is considered on the whole to be a robust and sound assessment on which to base retail planning policy over the plan period.

The base information utilised is the most up to date available at the time the report was written which must be remembered to be prior to the publication of Briefing Note 16.

We consider that the projections utilised for growth in population and expenditure to be conservative and not overly optimistic as they are based on available up to date data sources and find that this ensures that the plan is robust and sound on the basis of the evidence base.

With respect to accommodating additional retail floorspace identified there is a negative capacity for additional convenience floorspace in the FODC area on the basis that there are four committed development sites within the district. We note that these permissions are relatively historic and some may now have expired through the passage of time we would therefore urge for a review of these commitments to be undertaken as part of the adoption process to ensure the robustness of the evidence base is secured.

Inaltus Representation

In relation to the two tests of soundness that the Inaltus representation relates to: C3 Did the Council take account of policy and guidance issued by the Department?; and CE2 Are the strategy, policies and allocations realistic and appropriate having considered the relevant alternatives and are founded on a robust evidence base? It has been established that the Draft Plan Strategy took account of policy and guidance as required. In relation to CE2, we have considered the evidence base in the preceding section and consider it to be robust. As regards the remainder of CE2, we address it below.

Enniskillen Business Partnership Plan Strategy - Counter Representation

The Inaltus submission is based in the misrepresentation that the client's lands have a valid planning fall back in the form of planning permission for retail development. Whilst it is true that these lands benefited previously from planning permission these were approved under the previous planning policy regime (PPS5) and have now lapsed without implementation. It is incorrect therefore to state that their clients "have a particular interest in the retailing environment of Enniskillen and have planning permission . . . for a retail park". On this basis as they do not have planning permission for a retail park they can have no interest in the retailing environment of Enniskillen. Recently a Section 54 application (LA10/2018/0124/F) was returned as invalid as the planning condition it sought to vary was a condition of a lapsed planning permission; hence there is no valid planning permission on this site at Cornagrade Road. If there were to be such a permission there would be no need for an objection to the LDP Plan Strategy.

The Inaltus submission is flawed in that it seeks to promote the creation of a new district centre in an out of centre location contrary to the prevailing regional planning policy of town centre first as set out in the SPPS. Additionally it seeks to restrict the size of the town centre inappropriately again contrary to planning policy and the town centre first approach.

The Inaltus submission is further flawed in that it fails to provide any evidence base for its assertions or proposals and seeks to discredit the Nexus Report without any contrary evidence base to support the objections and assertions it promotes.

There are three grounds for objection stated under point 3 of the Inaltus submission, the first of these seeks the designation of the white land site at Cornagrade Road as a district centre; the second seeks the restriction of the town centre boundary to assist in the delivery of the designation of the Cornagrade Road site through a manipulation of the Council's need/capacity assessment and the removal of an available alternative site that is sequentially superior to the Cornagrade Road site; and the third reason is the assertion that the Nexus Report is unsound.

Paragraph 6.271 sets out the Regional Strategic Objectives for town centres and retailing which include securing a town centre first approach; the adoption of a sequential approach; ensure a robust and up to date evidence base; protection and enhancement of diversity in town centre uses that are appropriate to their role and function; promote high quality design and maintain and approve accessibility to and within the town centre.

Enniskillen Business Partnership Plan Strategy - Counter Representation

The paragraphs which follow 6.271 set out the Regional Strategic Policy, some of which apply to the preparation of LDPs and some of which apply to the determination of planning applications, some also apply to both scenarios. The Inaltus submission appears to be confused over which apply to both or either one or the other of these scenarios.

Point 7 refers to paragraph 6.277 of the SPPS and implies that the draft Plan Strategy is unsound because it does not include any district centres; does not define the spatial extent of town centres; and does not allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and form of retail and other town centre uses.

The draft Plan Strategy does define a network and hierarchy of centres - it refers to them slightly differently than set out in the SPPS but the definitions are not mandatory requirements. The draft Plan Strategy must define a network and hierarchy it does not have to include all of the specific terms in order to be robust and for the avoidance of doubt has in Table 6 on page 103 of the draft Plan Strategy set out the network and hierarchy of centres with the role and functions of each identified.

The spatial extent of the town centres are also defined both on the pages beneath Table 6 and on the interactive maps available to view through the GIS system.

Finally in relation to this point the Inaltus submission seeks to remove a site from the town centre that could assist in meeting the scale and form of retail or other town centre uses suitable to Enniskillen. The inclusion of the railway yard site within the town centre boundary but not zoning it for any particular purpose provides flexibility as does the same policy allocation over other sites including the bus station, police station and other lands within the northern boundary of the town centre where retail or other town centre uses could be located.

Point 8 of the Inaltus submission refers to paragraph 6.280 which refers only to planning applications which the submission does not form a part of. This process is the adoption of an LDP and not a planning application and paragraph 6.280 is not relevant.

Point 10 of the Inaltus submission refers to paragraph 6.287 and implies that because the FODC has not set a threshold for edge of centre sites that it is somehow not robust; however the term used in 6.287 is "Councils may set other thresholds" and hence this is optional because a default distance of 300m is set in the SPPS which has been deemed appropriate by FODC.

Enniskillen Business Partnership Plan Strategy - Counter Representation

Point 11 stops short of the crucial part of paragraph 6.288 which indicates that "It will be important to regularly monitor and review retail and town centre development and trends", the review of these plans will ensure that any deficiencies are picked up at the review point and amendments to the development plan brought forward. The draft Plan Strategy highlights at paragraph 4.30 that there is a need to manage and closely monitor the provision in the town centre to ensure its future attractiveness, viability and vitality.

Point 13 lists alleged deficiencies which Inaltus claim to have found in the Nexus Report but provides absolutely no evidence base for the assertions it makes; in particular we would comment on the points raised (using the alpha numerical system in the Inaltus report) as set out below:

- d. "the catchment is too narrow and should include areas to the north and east and yet it fails to identify those areas, geographically or to include any evidence of population of those areas and why they should be included in the study area." This point then also seeks to set out a different method of calculating population growth based on the proposed housing allocation of the draft Plan Strategy. This is not the recognised way of predicting population growth in respect to retail planning and no evidence is included in the Inaltus submission as to why that method should be used in this instance.
- e. This is a cheap point that shows a lack of appreciation of the time periods within which the draft Plan Strategy was produced and the sequence of events leading up to the publication. Inaltus state that Briefing Note 16 was issued in December 2018, two months after the date of publication of the draft Plan Strategy and 21 months after the publication of the Nexus Report. It is ludicrous to suggest that the Nexus report should've used Briefing Note 16.
- f. No counter evidence has been provided by Inaltus to provide a level of spending applicable to Zone 6. The Nexus report included door to door surveys which themselves indicated only minimal cross border trade takes place and as such it is robust to exclude that particularly in light of the impending Brexit scenario where the outcome is at best unclear. The exclusion of zone 6 makes the Nexus report more robust and not less.
- g. Again Inaltus seek to justify a very high level of cross border trade without providing any evidence whatsoever to justify that conclusion. They claim that everyone knows there are high levels of cross border trade but unfortunately for them can provide no substantive evidence to support that position. They reference the strength of the euro against the pound and differing taxation regimes both of which are subject to fluctuations and rapid

Enniskillen Business Partnership Plan Strategy - Counter Representation

and unpredictable change and hence the exclusion of trade from zone 6 makes the Nexus Report more robust.

- i. Again this point references cross border trade without any substantiation of the levels.
- J. Again this references cross border trade without substantiation and goes on to claim that Brexit will increase the levels of cross border trade again with no substantiation. Brexit may impact cross border trade in any number of ways, it might be positive as Inaltus suggest but equally it could be catastrophic and the exclusion of zone 6 simply makes the Nexus Report more robust not less as Inaltus claim.
- q. Inaltus claim that the turnover figures are “completely unrealistic and a gross over estimate” and yet they are based on publicly available turnover figures for the type of retailing proposed. Additionally Inaltus do not provide any justification for this comment or any alternative evidence to substantiate it.

Point 17 states that leaving the town centre at its proposed size will mean that it would not have altered since 1997. This does not make the plan unsound and in fact the Inaltus objection seeks to make the town centre smaller and therefore less robust whereas a more robust response would be to increase the size of the town centre to include the two main food stores (Tesco and Asda) thereby making the town centre more robust and allow a range of flexibility to develop these stores and the land at and around Tesco and Asda.

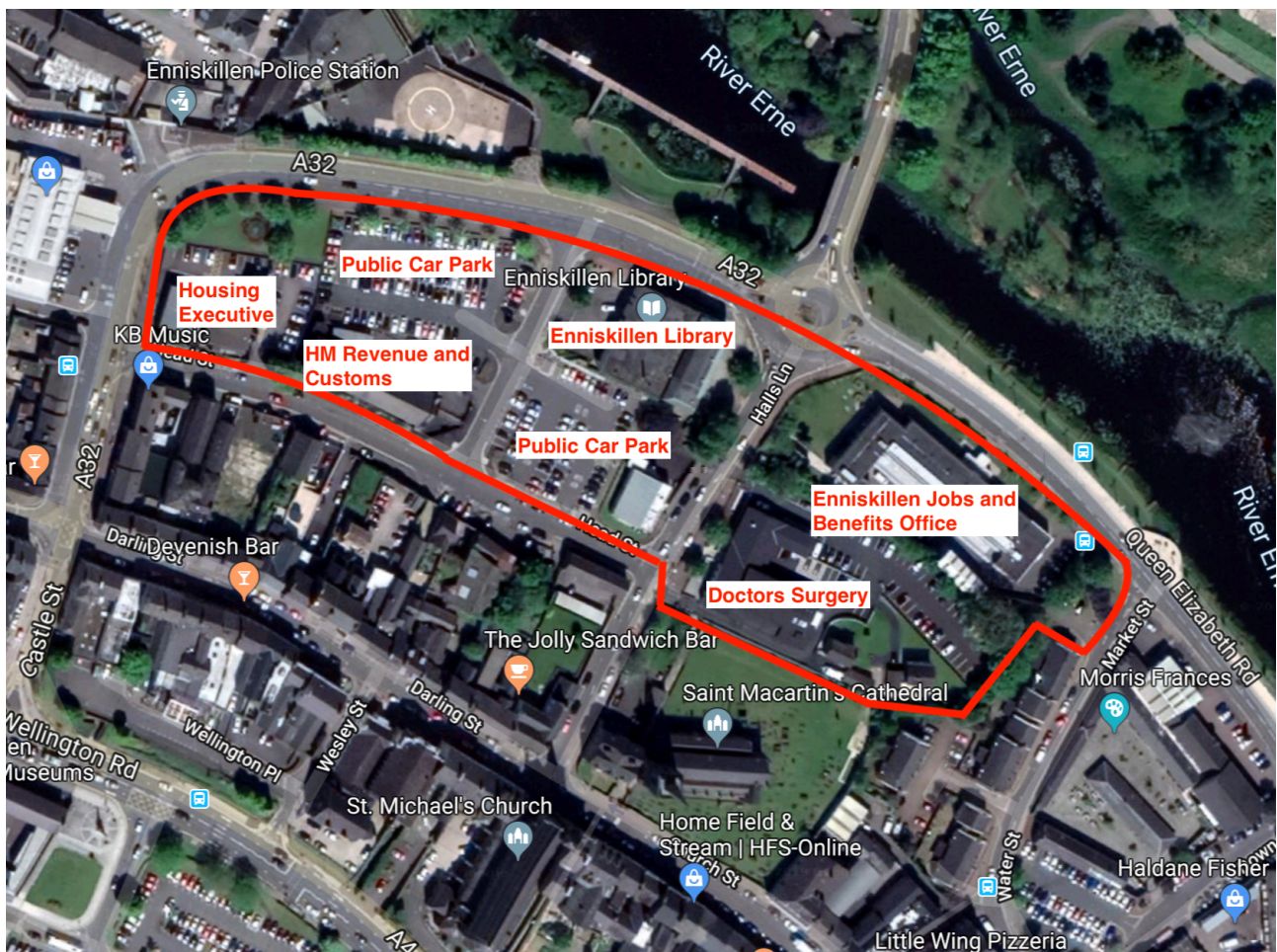
Point 17 continues to state that all the opportunity sites that can be developed have already been developed which does not mean that there are no opportunity sites within the town centre that could be brought forward with assistance from the Council to ensure the town centre can attract high quality multiple retailers into the town centre. Some of these are set out below, a number of them are evidenced by the DSD Enniskillen Town Centre Masterplan (contained in Appendix 1); the master plan provides a framework under which these sites can be developed, including vesting if required and these sites must be considered as being deliverable within the lifetime of the LDP.

South West Regional College - This building is soon to become vacant as a new third level educational campus is currently being developed and would be capable of accommodating a range of public sector bodies within a single building in the town centre where they would continue to be accessible to the whole of the population and by a range of means of transport.

For instance on the north side of the town centre are a range of public services including the Housing Executive, Enniskillen public library, Enniskillen Jobs and Benefits office and a doctors surgery together with several public car parks. This land is within the town centre and could be

Enniskillen Business Partnership Plan Strategy - Counter Representation

masterplanned to bring forward retail proposals of sufficient scale to attract the very retailers Inaltus claim are seeking entrance to Enniskillen. The existing uses could be relocated into a refurbished SW Regional College building and retained within the town centre and relocated closer to the towns main bus station thereby improving accessibility. This land is illustrated below. The benefit of redeveloping all of part of the lands illustrated below for retailing is that it would act as a second focus point for retailing in the town centre at the opposite end of an axis formed with the shopping centre thereby pulling footfall between the shopping centre and this location (and vice versa) through the town centre, increasing footfall within the town centre to the benefit of the wider public and the town centres vitality and vibrancy. The area is highly accessible from the A32 - Queen Elizabeth Road/Castle Street as well as by Halls Lane and is within 10 minutes walk of the bus station and 15 minutes walk of the shopping centre.



Tile 1 - Proposed Site to accommodate future retail development

Land to the rear of South West Regional College - This land is comprised of the development opportunity site 05 in the Fermanagh Area Plan (and as such it is incorrect for Inaltus to claim that all of the development opportunity sites have been developed) land adjacent that was proposed for a car park, and a row of small retail warehouses. These lands could also be reimagined through a masterplanning process to encourage the development of the vacant sites and redevelopment

Enniskillen Business Partnership Plan Strategy - Counter Representation

of the rather down at heel retail warehouses that front onto Derrychara Link and back onto the main car park of Asda. The redevelopment of these sites in a comprehensive manner to an agreed masterplan would have the added advantage of improving visibility to the Asda store and linking it (and Tesco) into the town centre irrespective of whether the town centre boundary is altered or not.

This site, illustrated below would also be capable of attracting the retailers Inaltus claim are seeking entrance into Enniskillen but ensuring that they are accommodated within the Town Centre thereby increasing its robustness, vitality and viability.



Tile 2 - Proposed Site to accommodate future retail development

These sites are both easily accessible by both private and public transport, they are relatively flat and level and are capable of being developed for large scale retail uses, the site in Tile 2 is outside the conservation area whilst that in Tile 2 is within but is currently occupied by buildings that are modern two to three storey buildings that do not make a material contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area and in that regard are capable of demolition to facilitate new modern retail development.

Enniskillen Business Partnership Plan Strategy - Counter Representation

Points 18 - 20 seek to claim that the town centre is restricted to such an extent that retail development cannot be accommodated which as evidenced above is not factually correct. It is accepted that these sites require work and in all probability public sector intervention, however that is not justification for not pursuing them through the development plan in the first instance which should seek to provide security for prospective developers that development of these sites for large scale retail development is possible through zonings and/or designations in the plan and masterplanning them post development plan adoption.

Point 22 claims that PPS 5 had a sequential test which is not the case - paragraphs 38 and 39 of PPS5 simply stated that town centre sites were to be assessed and in practice the other tests of paragraph 39 were utilised to justify out of centre retailing except where the proposals were for non-bulky comparison goods. Paragraph 41 permitted out of centre food stores and paragraph 42 ensured that bulky comparison goods were specifically directed out of town centres. It is on this basis that the development at Cornagrade road was originally granted planning permission and then altered.

Point 26 indicates that the LDP process is the appropriate process to designate centres, which is correct, however, the SPPS indicates that the LDP should define a network and hierarchy of centres. The FODC draft Plan Strategy defines a network and hierarchy of centres taking account of the special circumstances of FODC in table 6 on page 103. It may not utilise the precise terms used in the SPPS but it is a clear network and hierarchy and is therefore in accordance with paragraph 6.277 of the SPPS and is robust and sound.

As set out above the content of the Inaltus representation incorrectly seeks to direct the LDP towards the creation of an out of centre retail destination contrary to the town centre first approach as established by the SPPS it therefore seeks to make the draft Plan Strategy less robust and less sound, on the basis that it would be less compliant with Departmental policy and guidance (C3) and should be rejected on this basis alone. However, the Inaltus submission does not stop there it then also seeks to reduce the size of the town centre to make it less robust by excluding a potential retail development site from its boundary, this is proposed in order to create an artificial need for additional retail floorspace. Again this simply makes the plan less robust and less sound and should the Inaltus submission be adopted the plan would be based on less sound evidence and would contain allocations that are less appropriate (CE3).

Other Representations

We have examined the other representations from Gravis Planning, MBA Planning and Jigsaw Planning identified above. These representations also refer to CE2; however, they do so in a manner substantively different to that of Inaltus as they seek to enhance the vitality of the town centre and incentivise retail activity to locate there by, collectively, expanding the PRC and town centre boundaries taking account of the practical relationships between the traditional core, the shopping centre and the food stores while simultaneously reducing the cost and complexity of making planning applications in appropriate, town centre, locations.

Accordingly we do not consider it appropriate or necessary to raise counter objections to these representations.

Appendix - DSD Enniskillen Town Centre Master Plan

Enniskillen

Town Centre Masterplan

URS for the Department for Social Development
and Fermanagh District Council

Final Report
November 2012



Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction	1	6.0 Public Realm	27	List of figures	
1.1 Background	1	6.1 Existing and Potential Opportunities	27	Figure 1.1 The Study Area	1
1.2 What is the Masterplan about?	1	6.2 Buttermarket Square	28	Figure 2.1 Potential Development Site Locations	10
2.0 Context	5	6.3 Public Realm Approach	30	Figure 5.1 The Masterplan Proposals	17
2.1 Introduction	5	6.4 Island Town Gateways	30	Figure 5.2 Main Interventions	19
2.2 Planning Policy	5	7.0 Transport	31	Figure 5.3 Major Opportunity Sites Key Plan	20
2.3 Property Market	6	7.1 Issues	31	Figure 5.4 Proposed Public Realm Enniskillen Town Centre	22
2.4 Retail and Commercial Leisure Capacity Study	6	7.2 Options for Environmental Improvements to Through Routes	31	Figure 5.5 Sketch View of Potential Development Scenario for Police Station Site	23
2.5 Townscape and Landscape Assets	8	7.3 Parking	32	Figure 5.6 Sketch View of Potential Development Scenario for Buttermarket (and Environs)	24
2.6 A Town Rich in Opportunity	9	8.0 Tourism	33	Figure 5.7 Sketch View of Potential Development Scenario for Bus Station Site	25
2.7 Potential Development Sites	10	8.1 Themes	33	Figure 6.1 Potential Public Realm Improvement Areas	27
2.8 Responding to Context - Masterplan Aims and Objectives	11	8.2 Potential Opportunities	33	Figure 6.2 Buttermarket Square Potential Public Realm Improvements	28
3.0 Consultation	13	8.2 Challenges	34	Figure 6.3 Sketch View of Buttermarket Square	29
3.1 Introduction	13	8.4 Masterplan Tourism Proposals	35	Figure 7.1 Options for Environmental Improvements to Through Routes	31
3.2 Visioning Workshop	14	9.0 Delivery	37	Figure 7.2 Existing Parking Provision	32
3.3 Public Consultation Process and Methodology	14	9.1 Introduction	37	Figure 7.3 Proposed Parking Provision	32
3.4 Feedback Received	14	9.2 A Challenging Economic Climate	37	Figure 8.1 Key Interventions/Attractions	36
4.0 The Vision and Goals	15	9.3 Early Wins	37		
4.1 Masterplan Vision	15	9.4 The Erne Hospital Site	37		
4.2 Regeneration Goals	15	9.5 Delivering the Masterplan	38		
5.0 The Masterplan	17	9.6 Roles and Responsibilities	38		
5.1 The Masterplan Concept	17	9.7 Sustainable Regeneration	38		
5.2 Main Interventions	20	10.0 Summary and Conclusion	41	Table 9A Delivery Plan for Enniskillen	39-40
5.3 Major Opportunity Sites	20	10.1 Summary	41		
5.4 Environmental Improvements	21	10.1 Conclusion	41		
5.5 Other Opportunities	26				

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Department for Social Development, working with Fermanagh District Council, has asked a team of specialists, led by URS, to produce a Regeneration Masterplan for Enniskillen Town Centre. The Masterplan provides guidance on the location and form of development in the town centre over the next 20 years. It will help to direct public and private investment to those areas that will most benefit local people, support local business and commerce and contribute to long term viability and vitality.

Having reviewed the available evidence and analysed the issues facing the town centre, URS worked with local organisations to formulate a set of proposals showing how and where development opportunities might be realised. These were then subject to public consultation, providing local people and groups with the opportunity to provide ideas of the kind of development that might happen.

1.2 What is the Masterplan about?

The two pages that follow distil the essence of what this Masterplan is all about.

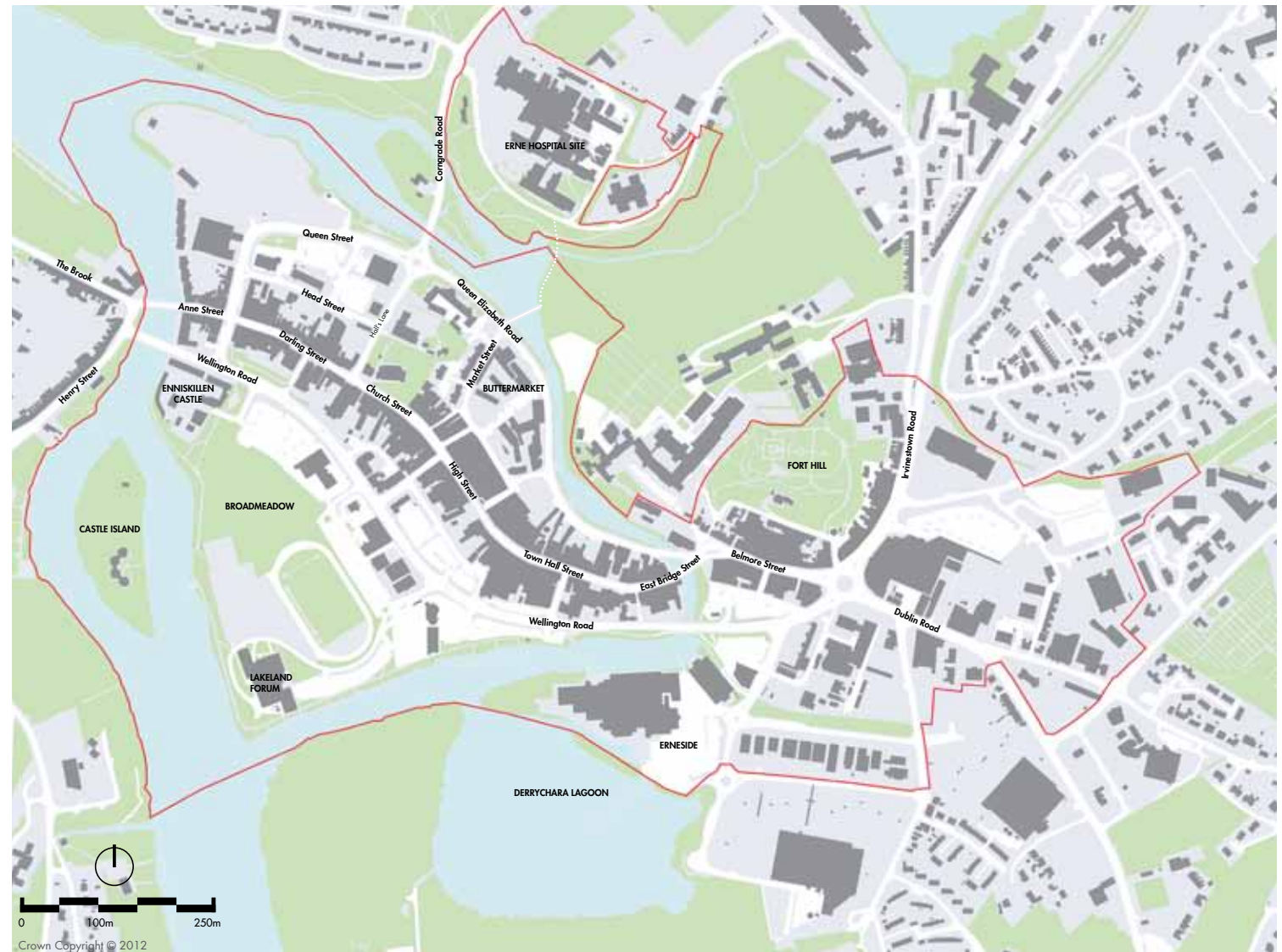


Figure 1.1 The Study Area

1

The Masterplan is about people

The Masterplan is for the people of Enniskillen - each detailed proposal has been assessed and considered in terms of what benefits it might bring to the town centre, the wider town and the community as a whole. It is a 'live' document, one that can be re-assessed on a regular basis to ensure that it continues to meet the changing needs of the people of Enniskillen.



2

The Masterplan is about making the good things better

Enniskillen is already a relatively successful town, and the Masterplan is focused on retaining those things which already work and adding new elements that complement and strengthen the town's existing social, economic and environmental assets. Sometimes this may mean major change being delivered, but sometimes it may simply be a case of maintaining existing quality and ways of doing things.



3

The Masterplan is about making good places

Enniskillen has a lot of high quality architecture and built heritage. Development proposals based on the opportunities identified in the Masterplan should seek to reflect, respect and enhance the existing qualities of the town - but that should not always mean a restrictive palette of 'heritage' materials or design language. Good design works, regardless of style or fashion.



4

The Masterplan is about doing simple things well

There are a number of opportunities in the town centre to create high quality public spaces that will add to the character of the town and make it more attractive as a destination. It is important that environmental improvements in these areas are simple, robust and properly installed and maintained. Simple, high quality materials and detailing for furniture is the preferred approach.



5

The Masterplan is about the future

The proposals set out in this presentation are intended to deliver a significant improvement in the quality of the town centre over the medium to long-term (up to 20 years). However, there are opportunities for some things to happen now, or in the short-term, which would provide immediate benefits and, importantly, lay the foundations for future improvements.



This page left blank

2.0 Context

2.1 Introduction

The Enniskillen Masterplan updates and takes over from the previous 2001 plan for Enniskillen, 'Enniskillen – The Island Town Integrated Development Plan'. The Enniskillen Masterplan is now agreed as the way forward for future strategies and development in Enniskillen town centre, with Central and Local Government working together to achieve shared goals.

The current economic conditions mean that the Masterplan has been prepared at a time when town centres across Northern Ireland are under threat of increased vacancy and dereliction. In this context there is a very real need for a robust, deliverable action plan that will facilitate the regeneration of Enniskillen Town Centre over the next 15-20 years. Understanding the context is fundamental to formulating Masterplan proposals that are realistic and achievable. The context will provide the various delivery partners – Fermanagh District Council, The Department for Social Development, the Enniskillen Business Partnership and other stakeholders – with an evidence base for a programme of interventions and set a benchmark against which the future success of the Masterplan can be measured.

As part of the evidence base used to inform the development of Masterplan options, URS, alongside McConnell Chartered Surveyors and Tom Phillips Associates, prepared the following documents:

- Enniskillen Retail and Commercial Leisure Capacity Study – November 2010
- Enniskillen Town Centre Health Check – November 2010
- Enniskillen Town Centre Masterplan, Baseline Report – September 2010

These studies enabled URS to arrive at a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of Enniskillen town centre, in its current form, as well as identifying the key opportunities for regeneration interventions, their locations, scale, nature and potential impact on the quality of the town centre and its economic performance. The context outlined in this document fall under the following areas;

- Planning Policy;
- Property Market;
- Retail and Commercial Capacity Study; and
- Townscape and Landscape Assets

2.2 Planning Policy

This section briefly summarises a selection of the policies, strategies and reports that will guide the regeneration of Enniskillen Town Centre.

Shaping our Future, the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025

The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) provides an overarching economic framework to help achieve a strong spatially balanced economy, a healthy environment and an inclusive society.

The RDS emphasises the need to sustain attractive, vibrant town centres that perform a multi-functional role for retail, services, administrative, leisure and cultural facilities. Enniskillen is identified as a main hub which has an important role to play in the life and economy of rural Northern Ireland. Its strategic importance as a gateway town is noted.

Fermanagh Area Plan 2007

The Fermanagh Area Plan was adopted in March 1997 with the aim of guiding development in the District Council area up to 2007. This Plan has yet to be superseded, therefore remains the current Plan for the area.

The Plan refers to Enniskillen Town Centre as being 'an attractive retail, tourist and general service centre' and sets out a range of objectives and policies that have been taken into account in the preparation of this Masterplan.

Policy TC17 designates seven Opportunity Sites within the town centre. Five of these are now developed but two of them - Johnston Basin and land adjoining Fermanagh College of Further Education - remain undeveloped.

Policy TC18 designates four Policy Areas within the town centre, namely:

- Castle Barracks (Listed Building) - encourage the future development of this area as a major tourist attraction in Enniskillen and protect the site and setting.
- Extended Buttermarket Area (Boston Quarter) - encourage the consolidation and development of the area for cafes, restaurants and tourist attractions.

- Land to the North of Dublin Road/ Tempo Road - area of mixed uses with opportunities for redevelopment for mixed business purposes. Consideration should be given to the possible impact on both the town centre and residential amenity.
- Derrychara Industrial Estate - encourage consolidation of this area for small scale retail warehousing, light industrial or commercial units.

Enniskillen - the Island Town Integrated Development Plan

Published by Fermanagh District Council in 2001, the Island Town Plan is a precursor to this Masterplan. It sets out a Vision for Enniskillen, which has been used as the starting point for the updated Vision in Chapter 4 below, and several proposals, projects and strategies which, again, have strongly influenced the preparation of this Masterplan.

Local Economic Development Strategy 2008-2013

Fermanagh District Council's Local Economic Development Strategy identifies a range of actions grouped under four themes: Enterprise, Skills, Infrastructure and Tourism. A number of the actions are pertinent to this Masterplan, particularly those relating to infrastructure and tourism. It will be necessary for economic development actions to be implemented alongside

the more physical recommendations of the Masterplan.

Enniskillen Traffic Management Plan

This ten-year plan was published by Fermanagh District Council in 2009. Based on an analysis of existing conditions and development proposals, a range of proposals to improve the situation are put forward. The success of this Masterplan is in part dependent on the success of the Traffic Management Plan. Key proposals include:

- Supporting pedestrians by improving walking routes, narrowing roads/ widening pavements, providing additional crossings;
- Completing commuter cycling routes and improving facilities;
- Promoting public transport with new bus stops, park and ride, shuttle buses and trialling a water taxi service during the tourist season;
- Providing additional car parks, introducing on street parking charges to discourage circulating traffic and providing coach parking;
- Introducing and improving signage to aid car circulation, and
- Various improvements to local and strategic roads and junctions.

2.3 Property Market

An analysis of the local property market was undertaken to inform the preparation of this Masterplan.

Retail and Leisure

From a retail perspective, Enniskillen Town Centre is in good health, with the main retail pitches busy from visitor, local and cross-border traffic. At the time of our survey, the primary shopping centre, Erneside, was fully let and there were very few vacant shop units on the main retailing streets within the Town Centre.

Demand from major national multiple retailers not present was noted, despite the difficult economic conditions. Independent retailers are strongly represented. See the summary of the Retail and Commercial Leisure Capacity Study below for more information on this sector.

Offices

In common with most provincial towns across Northern Ireland, demand for offices is currently muted. The majority of town centre office occupiers are solicitors, estate agents, accountants and similar professional firms requiring small office premises.

We are aware of no major private sector office requirements. There are a number of Government offices present, but public sector demand for offices

throughout Northern Ireland has been dramatically reduced and we are unaware of any current requirements for Enniskillen.

It seems unlikely that developers would contemplate any major speculative office development in the current market.

Residential

Not untypically in Northern Ireland, there are few residential properties in the Town Centre. There is some living above shops and small pockets of traditional housing.

Some river facing apartments have been developed along the waterfront in the vicinity of Cornagrade Road/Queen Street and there would appear to be considerable potential to capitalise on the attraction of the river with further residential development.

2.4 Retail and Commercial Leisure Capacity Study

A Retail and Commercial Leisure Capacity Study was undertaken to inform the Masterplan.

As part of the Study, a Town Centre Health Check was undertaken. The Health Check confirmed that Enniskillen is a vibrant retail centre with a low vacancy rate and an attractive environment.

However, a number of issues were identified which detract from the current and future potential of the Town Centre to act as a successful retail and commercial leisure centre; a relatively low level of commercial leisure provision; ongoing traffic and accessibility, and the risk of separation between newer retail areas and the traditional retail core.

In terms of estimating retail need, the Study recommends a balanced approach to accommodating retail growth that both recognises the potential benefits of cross border trade but guards against over supply and competition from out of town development. It proposes that the Masterplan seeks to accommodate 2000-3000 square metres of convenience floorspace and 4000-7000 square metres of comparison floorspace.

The final amount of additional floor space will be determined by the opportunities available, their location in relation to the existing retail core, and compliance with prevailing regional planning policies and the Fermanagh Area Plan.

The Study findings indicate significant potential for future commercial leisure expansion in the Town Centre underpinned by a significant pool of available leisure spend.

Given the existing level of commercial leisure floorspace provision in Enniskillen Town Centre, projections of available leisure spend and the current location of key commercial leisure uses in non-town centre locations (e.g. cinema/theatre), capacity exists for restaurants, wine bars/bars and cafes. In addition, indoor non-amusement type entertainment facilities (e.g. ten pin bowling, indoor children play zones) could be provided as part of wider schemes in the town centre area.

These types of facilities could play a key role in expanding evening/night time activity in Enniskillen Town Centre in addition to ensuring a diversification of the overall offer of the wider town centre area.

2.5 Townscape and Landscape Assets

The character of a place is best described as the combination of all aspects that make the place distinct from any other place. When related to the concept of townscape, we mean those elements that make up the physical expression of the town: its buildings, parks, streets, pavements, landform and landscape.

The main site of high quality townscape is the area focused on the historic core, principally the main thoroughfare and the Square. This is an area with several buildings which are of individual significance and interest. More importantly the wider built fabric has a consistent quality and character that makes the area readily identifiable. Although there are some buildings that might detract from the overall character, the townscape in the area is typically 18th and 19th century, with a variety of modifications and refurbishments to individual buildings that can either add or detract from the quality of the townscape. The main thoroughfare in particular is an important part of the townscape quality, while the Town Hall and churches are the most significant buildings in the whole of the Town Centre.

Beyond these areas, much of the townscape in Enniskillen Town centre is relatively poor. In part this is a product of those areas of poorer quality being former backlands, which have never been subject to positive development. Instead they have served as car parks or latterly, locations for modern commercial developments which, unfortunately rarely adds to the townscape in a positive manner.

The key to understanding the existing context for development - and future opportunities in Enniskillen - lies in the relationship between town and countryside. The town has a most attractive setting, generally, with the landscape of Fermanagh providing a wonderful backdrop to the town. The town centre, in particular, has the benefit of the River Erne, which surrounds the core of the town almost as a moat does a castle. This relationship between the built and natural environments is certainly rare, if not unique, and provides Enniskillen with a working capital, in terms of development opportunities, that many towns would be delighted to possess.



Main Thoroughfare



River Erne



Buttermarket



PSNI Site



Enniskillen Castle



Independent Retail



Countryside and Hinterland



Heritage and History

2.6 A Town Rich in Opportunity

Enniskillen has a number of assets that might be considered as opportunities to be exploited in an effort to restore the vitality and long term stability of the town centre. These, generally, fall into two categories:

- Assets that might be enhanced and restored (such as the Castle or the Buttermarket), and
- Assets which might be regenerated and reinvigorated (such as the development opportunities along Queen Street and the Police Site).

However the town centre's assets are defined, it is important that they are considered in terms of their place in an overall development framework and the role that they might play in complementing and supporting a strategic approach to improving the quality of place, character and economic performance of Enniskillen Town Centre.



Enniskillen has a tradition of local, independent retail in the Town Centre - a major asset and an attraction for both local people and those visiting the town as tourists



The Buttermarket could become a key asset, focused on tourism, local produce and culture



Streetscape improvements are planned for the Main Thoroughfare, the aim being to make a more attractive, pedestrian friendly space



Head Street is a potential secondary destination, and might also provide much needed parking and town centre living opportunities



There are a number of commercial activities in key locations which might be relocated, thus freeing up land for development



The existing South West College site might provide a valuable development opportunity



The Town Centre's built heritage is one of its most striking features and should be protected - new development must respect the existing character and quality



A number of institutional uses might move out of the Town Centre, freeing up valuable development land and providing the opportunity to create a more coherent structure with complementary uses



A Shared Service Centre on the Erne Hospital Site may well release other Town Centre sites for redevelopment.

2.7 Potential Development Sites

There are a number of potential development sites across the town centre, of varying size and complexity. Some of these sites are already the subject of planning applications or have, at the very least, had proposals prepared to show how they might be developed.

Erne Hospital Site

The Erne Hospital Site in Enniskillen has been declared surplus by the Western Health and Social Care Trust/DHSSPS and has been vacated.

The site presents a rare and potentially significant opportunity to provide a more effective, efficient and better co-ordinated public service provision for Enniskillen and Fermanagh in general.

If services currently occupying sites within Enniskillen Town Centre were to be released as a result, they could be considered for residential or commercial development. The redevelopment of the Erne Hospital site as a shared services facility is, therefore, an important consideration for the Masterplan to address.

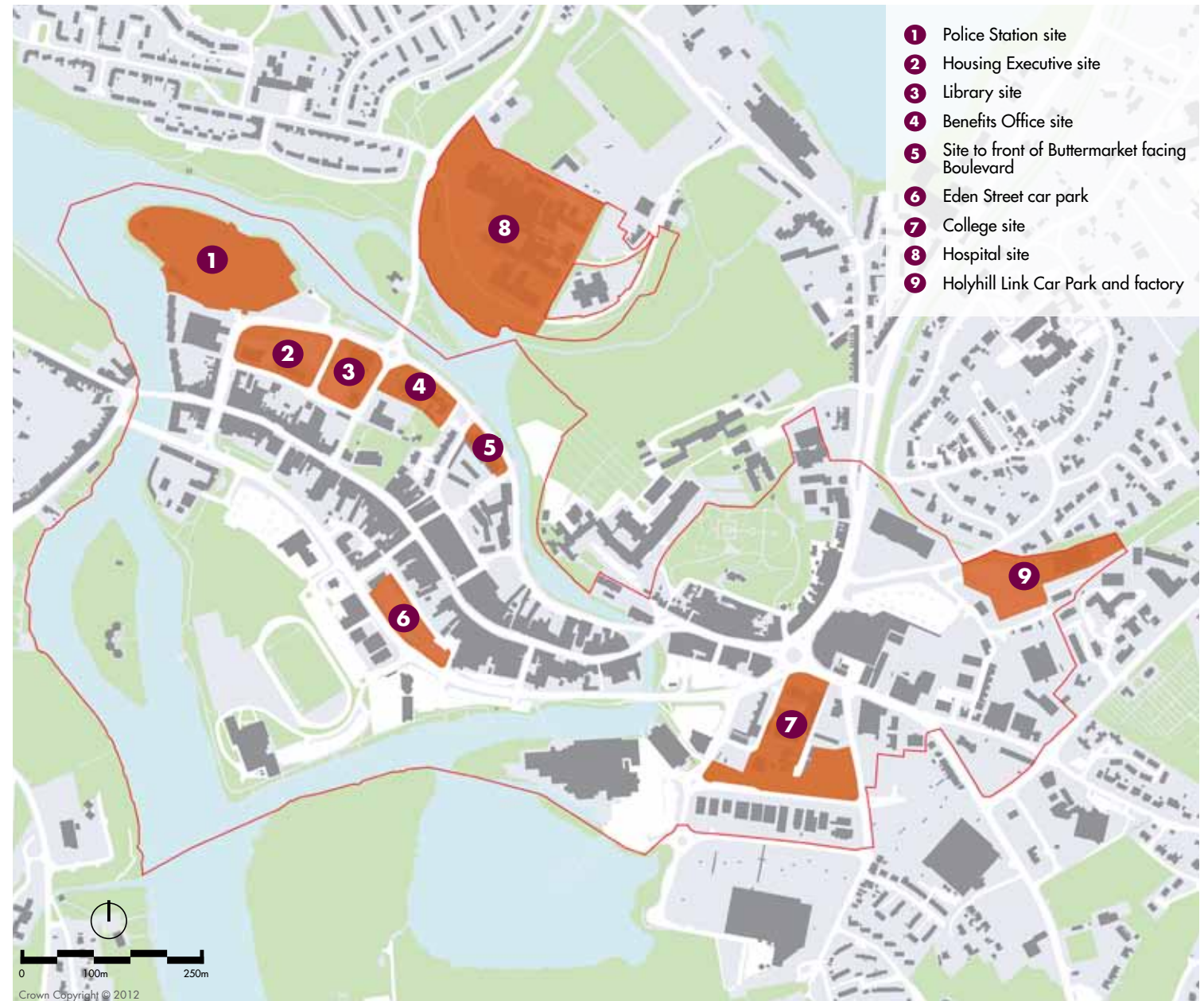


Figure 2.1 Potential Development Site Locations

2.8 Responding to Context - Masterplan Aims and Objectives

The Enniskillen Masterplan seeks to maximise the opportunities provided by this unique and high quality town and its hinterland, and the opportunities for growth highlighted in this chapter.

The plan emphasises the town's existing strengths and assets and seeks to maximise their potential from a tourism and commercial perspective.

The key aims and objectives of the masterplan are set out opposite. It is these objectives which inform the proposals outlined within the masterplan.

- 1** Promote and strengthen the town's strong independent retail offering
- 2** Maximise the town's tourism potential, making the most of its physical assets and geographical location
- 3** Develop the town's leisure and cultural offering
- 4** Promote the town's unique identity as an Island town
- 5** Increase the town's domestic and international tourist figures
- 6** Provide more opportunities for living on the Island
- 7** Reduce traffic congestion within the town centre



This page left blank

3.0 Consultation

3.1 Introduction

The draft proposals for Enniskillen were developed over a two year period in order to facilitate the preparation of a review of development options for a shared services facility on the former Erne Hospital site. On completion of this report the draft proposals were developed to take account of the impact the development of a shared services facility could have on Enniskillen Town centre.

The draft proposals consultation boards were displayed in Enniskillen Town Hall for a twelve week period and also online, during which time interested parties could view the plans and provide feedback.

Alongside the formal consultation period, a presentation was made to the Enniskillen Business Partnership where traders were given an opportunity to provide feedback. In addition, the survey work carried out in the preparation of the Retail Capacity Study and Town Centre Health Check also provided evidence as to shopping habits and how shoppers and visitors perceived the town.



Feedback and fine tuning of the draft proposals was made through meetings with the project steering group, made up of representatives from the Department for Social Development, Fermanagh District Council, local traders, statutory agencies and the Western Health and Social Care Trust.

3.2 Visioning Workshop

As part of the masterplan information gathering stage, a Vision Workshop was held in Enniskillen Town Hall on the 5th of October 2010. Key stakeholders were invited to attend this event as well as an open invitation being placed in the local press.

At the workshop, initial baseline findings were presented to the group which introduced some of the key themes and provided the basis for further ideas and thoughts on what people wanted the masterplan to address.

Working within groups, people were asked to identify what they saw as the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to Enniskillen. (SWOT analysis)

Using maps of the town centre, people were asked to identify the specific sites and locations where change could take place. This ranged from development sites, to locations for events to take place, to locations for new signage.

Following the workshop, the findings of the SWOT analysis were collated to highlight the key issues, as highlighted by the stakeholders, as well as updating Enniskillen's previous Vision Statement from the Integrated Development Plan dated 2001, much of which is still relevant today.

3.3 Public Consultation Process and Methodology

The Draft Enniskillen Town Centre Masterplan was put on display in Fermanagh District Council offices, Enniskillen for twelve weeks from 6 March 2012. The Masterplan was also available to view on both the DSD and Fermanagh District Council websites during this time and until the end of the public consultation period on 1 June.

To encourage quantitative feedback and a standard format of responses to the consultation a questionnaire on the Draft Masterplan was developed. The questionnaire was hosted on SurveyMonkey and copies were also available at the display and from the websites previously mentioned. In the questionnaire respondents were asked to give their views on the vision and proposals included in the draft Masterplan.

A total of 19 responses were received to the consultation. This included 17 responses in questionnaire format and two open responses.

3.4 Feedback Received

A full analysis of the feedback received is included as Appendix A. This section summarises the key over-arching findings. Feedback relating to specific proposals in the Draft Masterplan is also included in the relevant sections below.

The Draft Masterplan was generally well received. Of the 25 individual proposals that comments were sought on, 23 were liked by at least 65% of respondents, and 10 were liked by at least 80% of respondents.

The most popular proposals were the following:

- Enniskillen Castle to become the hub for cultural, tourist and heritage initiatives (this proposal had near-unanimous support);
- A new waterside Leisure Park and conference facility, with cafe and restaurant set within the new town park;
- Buttermarket becoming a focus for tourists (emphasis on local arts and crafts, food and beverage), and
- Enhanced riverside walk connecting Enniskillen Castle, Erneside and Derrychara Lagoon

Proposals for the town centre opportunity sites were generally supported. None of the six proposals received more than one 'dislike' response.

Public realm and transport proposals were also well-received. There was particularly strong support (88% of respondents liked) for using good quality materials in key locations to improve streetscape, tree planting in certain spaces, and street furniture.

With the exception of the proposals to reposition town centre retail and to locate a hotel on the site of the PSNI complex, all of the proposals relating to tourism were popular. The largest support was given to the proposals to protect and enhance waterside vistas and to introduce walking and cycling trails around Enniskillen Island, beginning and ending at Enniskillen Castle. Proposals to make more use of the water, such as a marina close to the town centre and a jetty for boat trips to Devenish Island, were also well-liked.

In addition, a number of new suggestions and comments were made. These have informed this final draft of the Masterplan. On the whole, though, the consultation served to confirm that the Draft Masterplan was generally along the right lines and that those who responded (albeit a relatively small number) were buying into the emerging proposals.

4.0 The Vision and Goals

4.1 Masterplan Vision

The Masterplan Vision, which was agreed with stakeholders at the Visioning Workshop, is that:

Enniskillen 2025 will be a bustling, thriving town with an excellent reputation for high quality retail and as a premier tourist destination. The town will make the most of its quality townscape, attractive courtyards and alleys, and boast a bold water front with a strong recreational emphasis. By day and night, the town will be a place that is proud of its history and welcoming to its renaissance as a lively place to live, work and visit without the constraint of traffic congestion. Its marina will be the hub for boating events in the region and a focus for social activities. It will be easily accessed by a network of walking and cycling routes throughout the town.

4.2 Regeneration Goals

Ten Regeneration Goals form the link between the Vision and the proposals that are set out in this Masterplan. Each proposal has been formulated to help achieve one or usually more of the Goals, in doing so helping to ensure that the Vision is achieved.

The Regeneration Goals are as follows:

- Ensure the unique identity of the Island town is retained and further developed with high quality activities developed around the Erne.
- Diversify the town centre offering, providing office, leisure, retail and residential space.
- Expand the evening economy to provide an improved tourism offer.
- Ensure accessibility, yet deliver a people friendly town centre with high quality public realm and a new public square.
- Strengthen the retail core, developing both the quality independent offering alongside high quality multi-national retailers.
- Increase visitors' dwell time within Enniskillen Town Centre.
- Build on and enhance the provisions for indoor/wet weather tourist activities.
- Provide high quality new development in keeping with the historic form and character of Enniskillen.
- Turn Enniskillen firmly towards the water – connecting it with its greatest asset, the River Erne.
- Eventually enable boat traffic to circumnavigate the town.

This page left blank

5.0 The Masterplan

5.1 The Masterplan Concept

The Masterplan proposals are intended to provide the town centre with a framework that will shape development over the next 15-20 years. Consequently, not all of the development proposals shown in the drawings will happen immediately. Some of the opportunities may have the potential to be delivered quickly, either because they are part of existing programmes of work or they have been identified in recent initiatives, such as the Castle Basin Masterplan. Other opportunities may take longer to come forward, once land is freed up or other developments, such as the A4 southern by-pass, permit changes in the structure of the town and the movement of traffic.

KEY:

- Proposed New Development
- Existing Buildings
- Proposed New Park/Open Space
- Gardens (Public and Private)
- Environmental Improvements to Main Thoroughfare (Anne St, Darling St, Church St, High St, Town Hall St, East Bridge St and Belmore St)
- Streetscape Improvements outside Town Centre Core Area
- Key Public Realm Improvements
- New/Improved Parking
- New Tree Planting

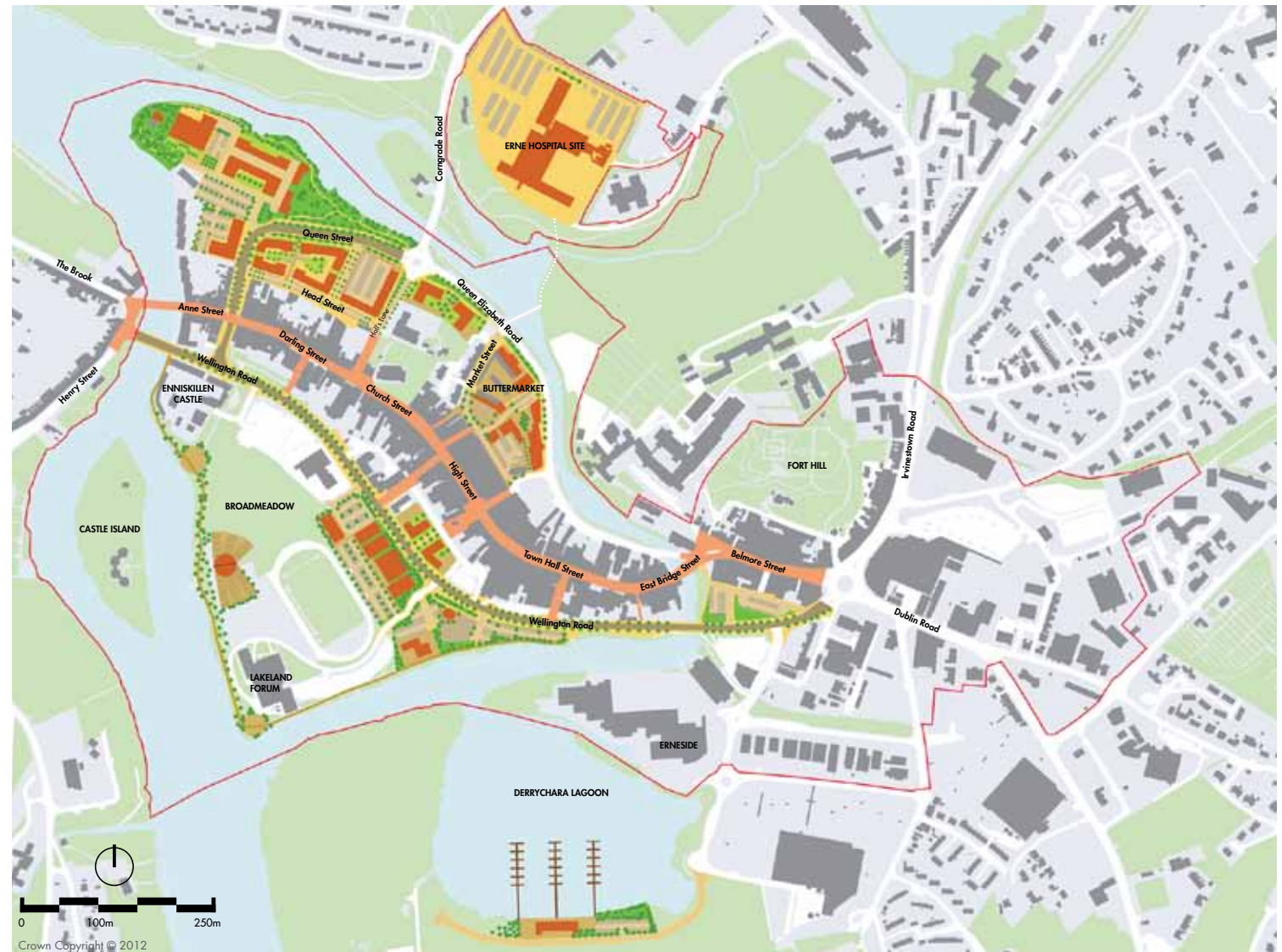
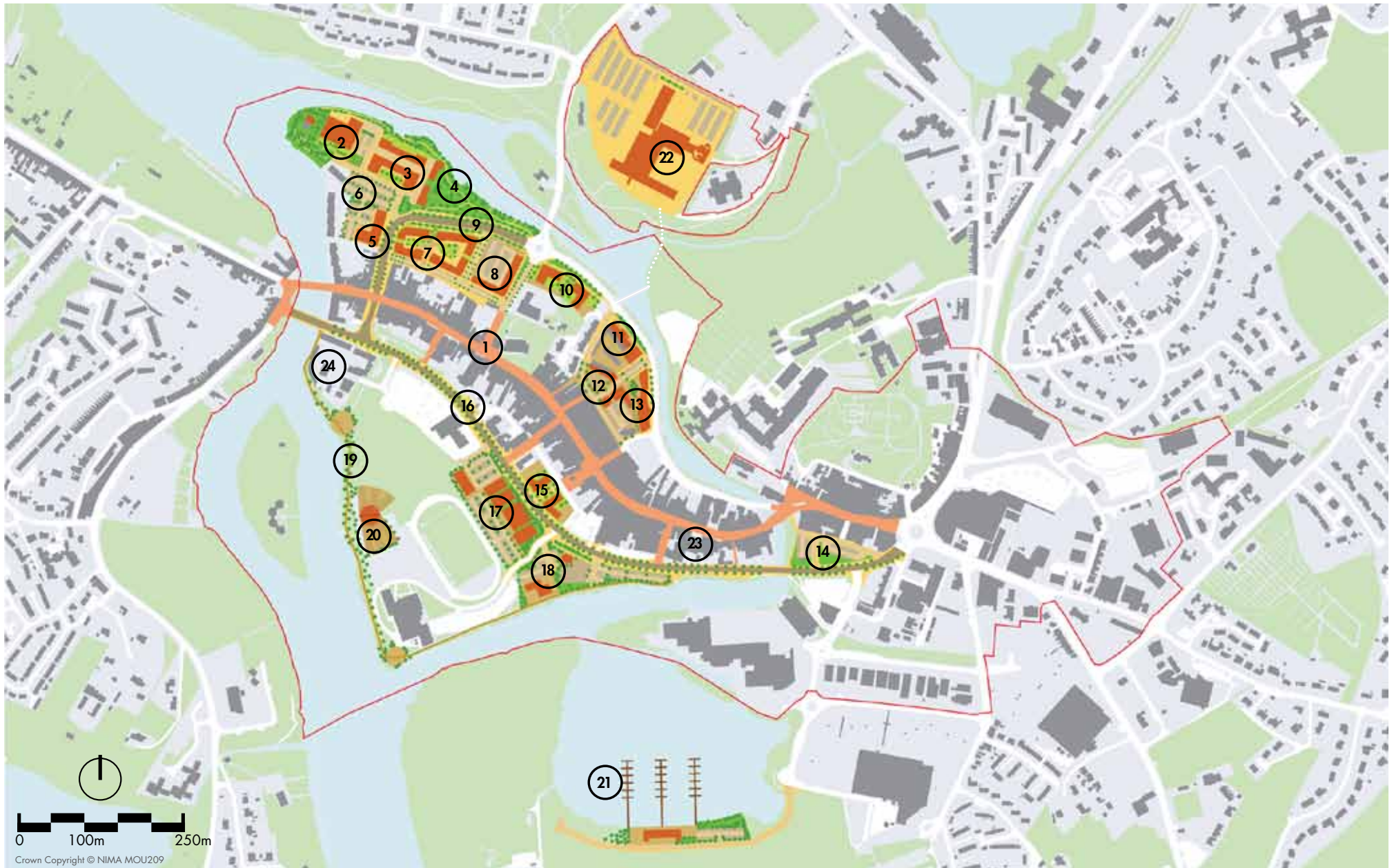


Figure 5.1 The Masterplan Proposals

5.2 Main Interventions

Figure 5.2 opposite maps the main interventions that will combine to make the Vision for Enniskillen a reality.

1. The proposed Environmental/ Streetscape improvements on the main thoroughfare to be implemented and extended, wherever possible, to link in with public realm and development proposals set out in this masterplan. For example, side streets and connecting routes (Hall's Lane, Wesley Street, etc.) might be included in an extended environmental improvement scheme, providing connections between the various opportunity sites via a network of pedestrian friendly, safe and attractive public streets and squares.
2. A new waterside leisure and conference facility, with cafe and restaurant set within the new town park
3. Town centre hotel, 100 bed 4 star, with associated spa, dining and leisure facilities.
4. A new town park providing a waterside public space surrounding the exhibition and conference centre and hotel.
5. Mixed use development, with the potential for retail on the ground floor and residential/commercial above
6. Parking shared among sites 2, 3, 4 and 5.
7. Mixed residential development with commercial (food and drink, retail, leisure and services) at ground floor, in particular along Head Street.
8. Multi-storey car park (2/3 floors = up to c. 300 spaces), with single skin of development along Head Street and Hall's Lane (comprising residential and commercial uses).
9. Potential for Queen Street to be re-modelled, making it narrower with slower vehicle speeds and more and better crossing opportunities for pedestrians. The aim is to make for a more attractive and pedestrian friendly space and this solution might also be extended along Queen Elizabeth Road. This intervention is dependent on the A4 southern by-pass being delivered, thus reducing the amount of through traffic and making it possible to down-grade the existing four lane road.
10. Residential development facing onto River Erne (site currently occupied by Jobs and Benefits offices)
11. Buttermarket becomes focus for tourist activity with emphasis on local arts & crafts and produce/food & beverage. Existing commercial buildings to north west (along Queen Elizabeth Road) to be replaced by new development that is aesthetically and functionally complementary to the main Buttermarket complex.
12. Buttermarket Square is re-modelled to become a multi-functional space. Parking provision is retained, but the streetscape is re-designed to allow the space to be used for events, such as specialist and Farmers' markets.
13. Commercial premises adjacent to Buttermarket to be remodelled (with some demolition and new build) to create a complex which complements the existing offer. Emphasis on providing restaurants and small scale retail spaces, with potential for parking (possibly multi-storey) behind.
14. New riverside space created, together with coach parking facilities to better accommodate day visitors.
15. Eden Street Car Park to be re-developed, in part, for residential uses, with integral, private parking and some public parking provision retained.
16. Potential for Wellington Road to be re-modelled in the same way as Queen Street, on the basis that the southern by-pass will result in less traffic, allowing for a down-grading of the existing road.
17. Development opportunity, for example, for commercial leisure and indoor sports facilities to complement the existing provision of the Broadmeadow.
18. The existing bus station site to be rationalised and the garage facilities moved to a less central location. The newly available land to be developed for water-based recreation and sports (boat house, training facilities, storage, etc.), plus car parking.
19. Enhanced riverside walk connecting Enniskillen Castle with Erneside and Derrychara Lagoon.
20. New performance space, with multiple events spaces, including a smaller, more intimate space adjacent the Lakeland Forum and a more extensive, 'festival' type space opening out onto the main open space on Broadmeadow.
21. Derrychara Lagoon to be the focus for a new water-based tourism hub, with marina, maritime services and some commercial leisure development.
22. Erne Hospital to be the site of a new public services hub, thus freeing up development opportunity sites in the town centre.
23. The existing Court House converted for commercial or other use.
24. Enniskillen Castle to become the hub for a whole myriad of cultural, tourist and heritage initiatives.

**Figure 5.2 Main Interventions**

5.3 Major Opportunity Sites

There are a number of opportunity sites located within the town centre study area. These sites are, or may in the future become, available for development. The Masterplan has identified these sites as being important for the wider regeneration of the town centre, as they offer a different sort of opportunity - one where large scale development might be delivered. This is an important asset for Enniskillen, as historic towns do not often have large tracts of land potentially available for re-development. As a consequence of Enniskillen having these opportunity sites, the Masterplan envisages the potential for different types of development opportunity:

- Comprehensive Redevelopment: where a previous user leaves and the site is then substantially redeveloped for new uses.
- Sensitive Redevelopment of Heritage Asset: where much of the built fabric is retained, but with new development that revitalises the existing uses.
- Rationalise Existing Use: the existing user might remain on site, but will rationalise their activities and land take, freeing up land for development.

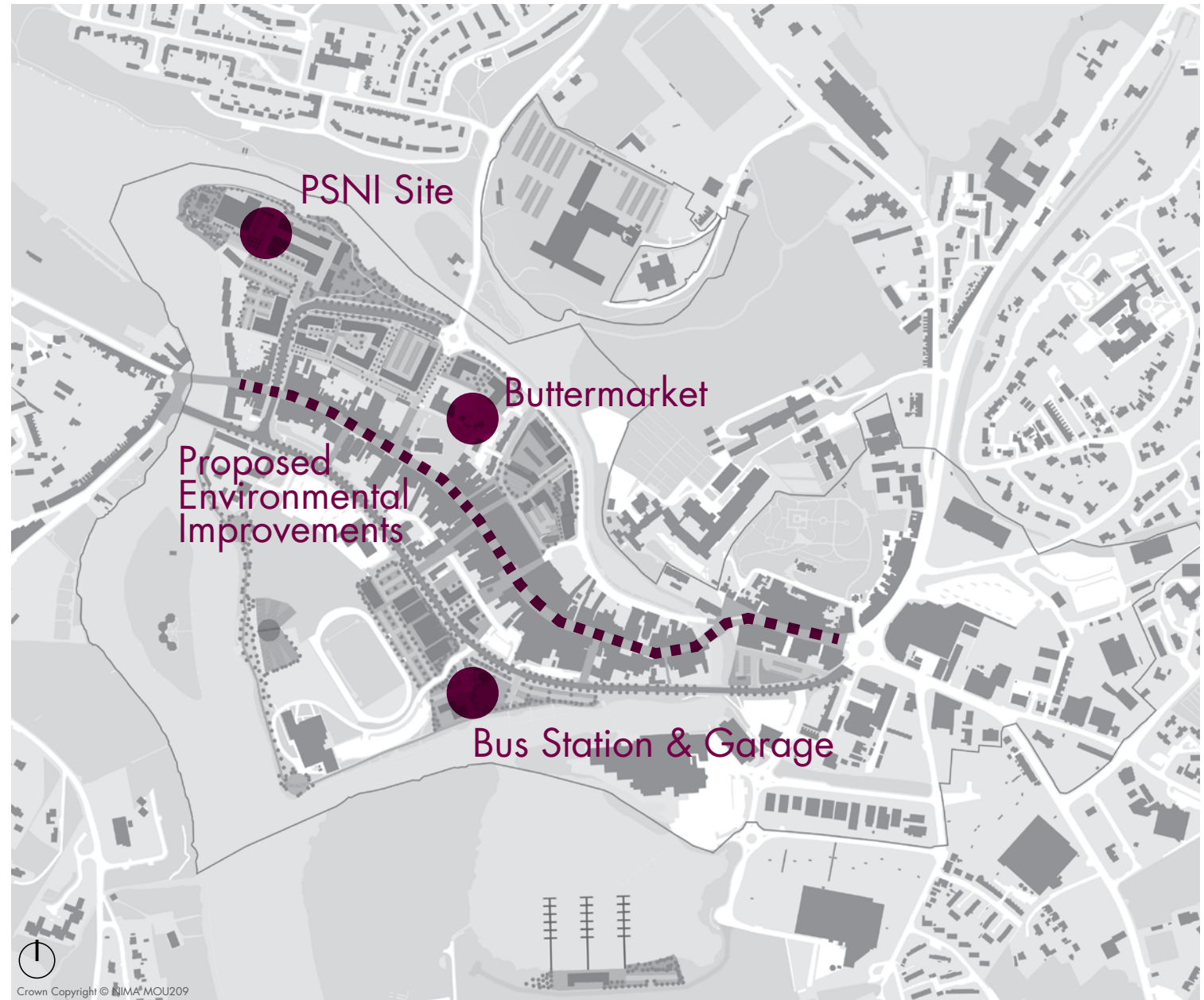


Figure 5.3 Major Opportunity Sites Key Plan

5.4 Environmental Improvements

An Environmental Improvement scheme for the main thoroughfare in Enniskillen is currently at Economic Appraisal stage. The Masterplan identifies potential extensions to the original scheme such as the creation of a new high quality public space abutting the Buttermarket. The level of funding available will dictate the extent of the first phase of works to be implemented but construction is due to commence early in the Masterplan period. The proposed public realm improvements will make a significant improvement to the shopper and visitor experience in Enniskillen as is long overdue. The town boasts some stunning buildings and high quality shops which are currently let down by sub standard paving, railings and signage. The creation of a high quality environment within the town centre is vital to attract visitors and shoppers with the increased competition from out of town and edge of town developments.



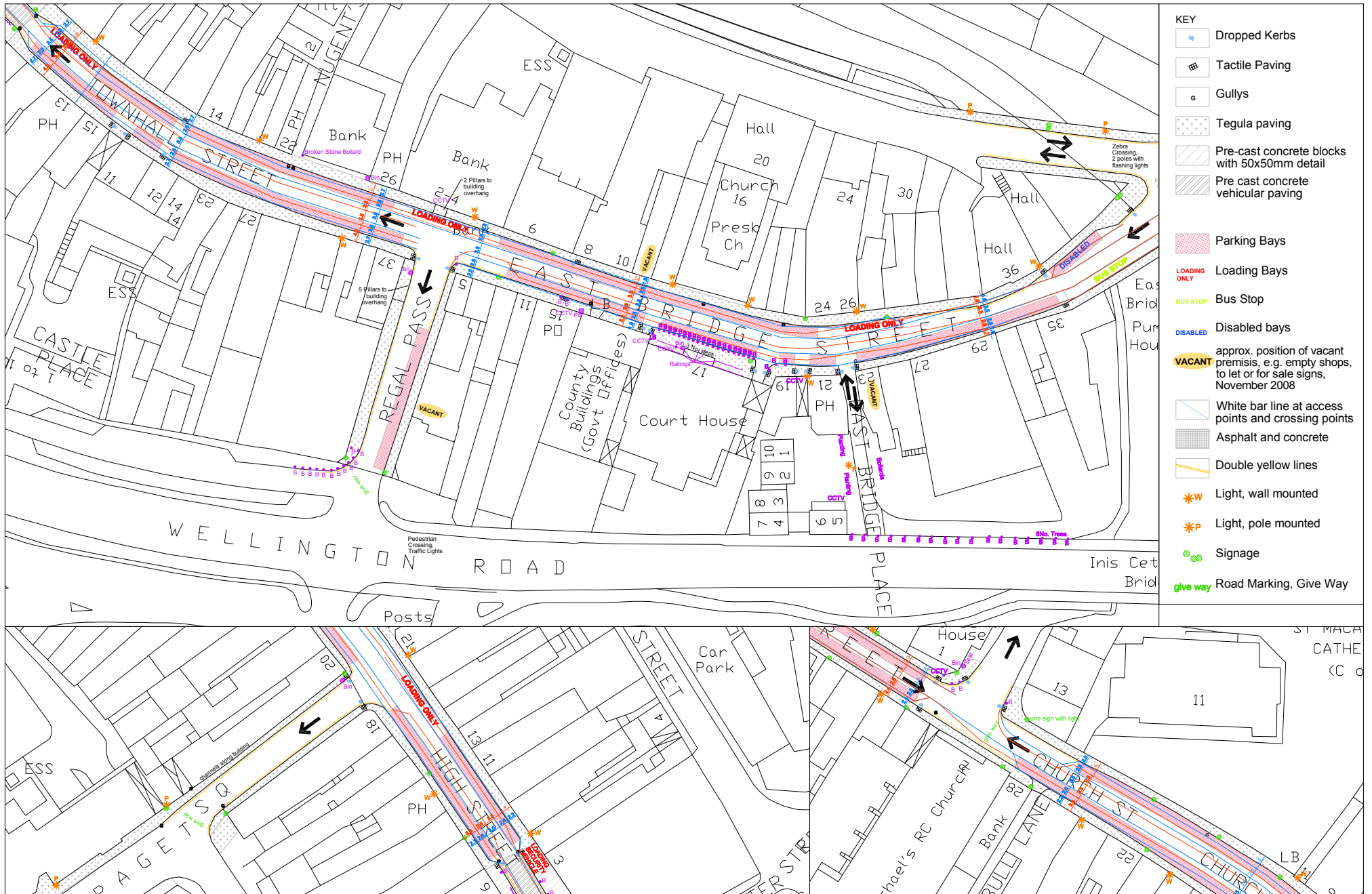


Figure 5.4 Proposed Public Realm Improvements for Enniskillen Town Centre (plans prepared for DSD)

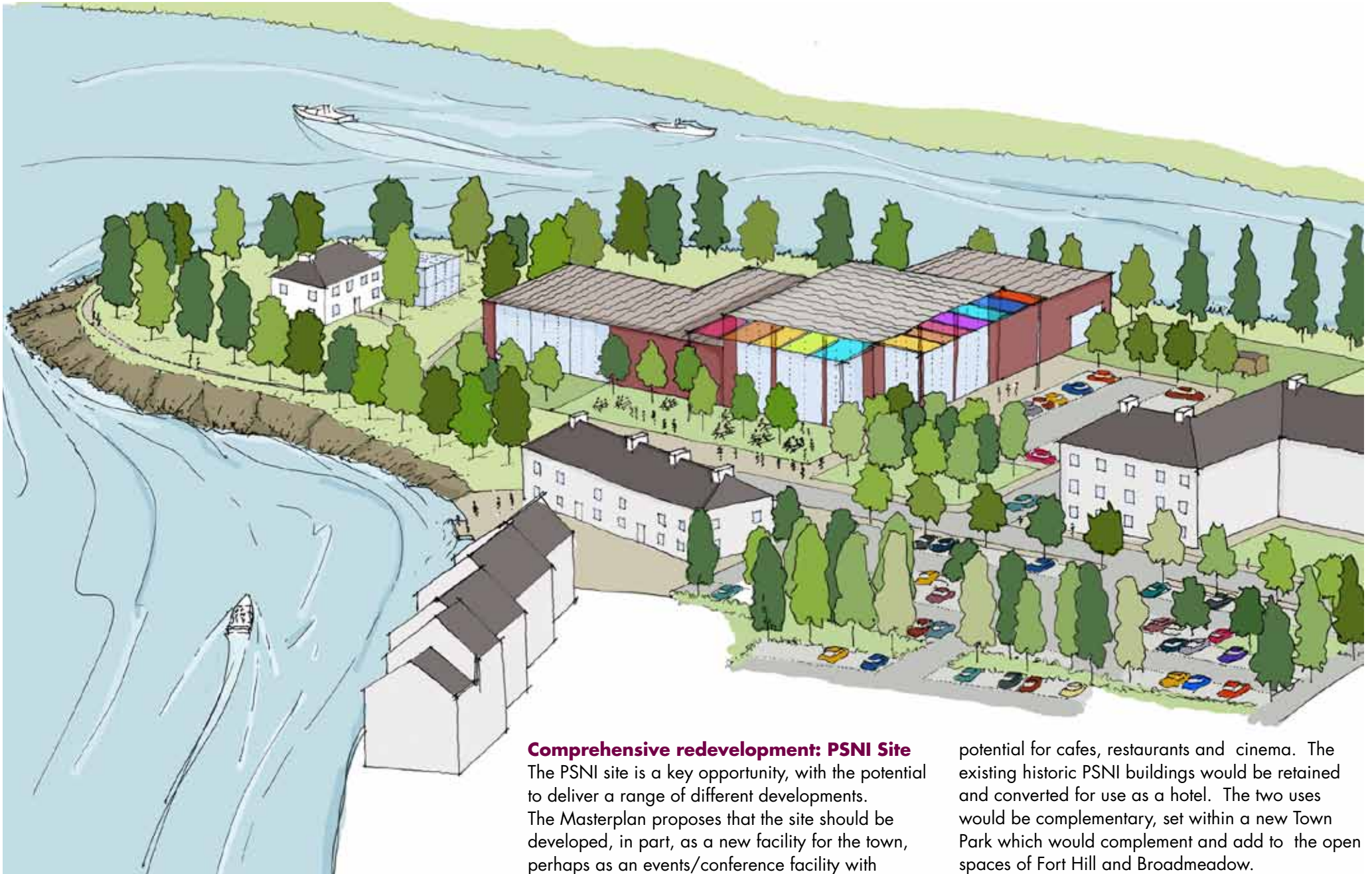


Figure 5.5 Sketch View of Potential Development Scenario for Police Station Site

Sensitive redevelopment of Heritage Asset: Buttermarket

The Buttermarket offers an opportunity to create a hub of complementary uses and activities, focused on local produce, local arts and crafts and tourism. By creating a new, multifunctional public space, specialist markets could be held, adding to the interest and vitality of the town centre. Parking provision would also be made

and would occupy the space, as a rule, except on those days when events are planned. The existing commercial site, opposite, might also be developed partly for uses that complement the Buttermarket and partly for parking (perhaps in a multi-storey car park).



Figure 5.6 Sketch View of Potential Development Scenario for Buttermarket (and Environs)

**Rationalise existing use: Bus Station**

By rationalising the bus station, and moving the garage facilities to a less central location, a number of benefits might be achieved. The bus station would be remodelled while the vacated bus garage site, adjacent to Broadmeadow, would be available for development. The Masterplan shows commercial leisure and sports facilities, on the site of the bus garage, perhaps related to water-based sports, but there is flexibility as to an actual end use. The re-modelled bus station would include enhanced passenger waiting and transfer facilities, making for a better experience for users and improved safety and circulation for buses.

Figure 5.7 Sketch View of Potential Development Scenario for Bus Station Site

5.4 Other Opportunities

In addition to the main development opportunity sites, there are a number of other opportunities which do not involve comprehensive redevelopment. These opportunities relate to existing buildings which might be refurbished or have a change in use, or might happen earlier, and bring immediate benefit to the town centre.



The Court House could be converted to others uses, bringing this important social facility into the heart of the town.



Shop front improvement schemes are often very successful in raising the profile of an area. This is especially true where there is an historic town core with many fine buildings that have not been as well maintained as they might have been.



Enniskillen tends to face 'inwards' towards the main thoroughfare, but there are a number of locations where rear building facades and back court areas can become part of the overall town centre experience. Alleyways leading to small courtyards, with shops, cafes and restaurants can add considerable charm to the town centre.



If the Fire Service moves to a new campus facility at Erne Hospital, the fire station site would be available for redevelopment. One potential solution might be for mixed use development, with retail/commercial on the ground/lower floors and residential above.

6.0 Public Realm

6.1 Existing and Potential Opportunities

There are already proposals for public realm improvements to the main thoroughfare within the town centre, with works programmed from Darling Street in the west through to Belmore Street. In addition to these works, however, there are a number of other key locations where significant public realm improvements might be delivered.

In doing so, the aim is that these works should provide a pleasant environment within which visitors can enjoy their time in Enniskillen - shopping, discovering the town's built and natural heritage or investigating new places to dine.

Some of the public realm opportunities relate to high profile set-piece squares and public spaces, such as the area around the Buttermarket, while others are more low key, but no less important in terms of their impact, such as the enhancement of the riverside walk, especially to the west, adjacent to the Broadmeadow.

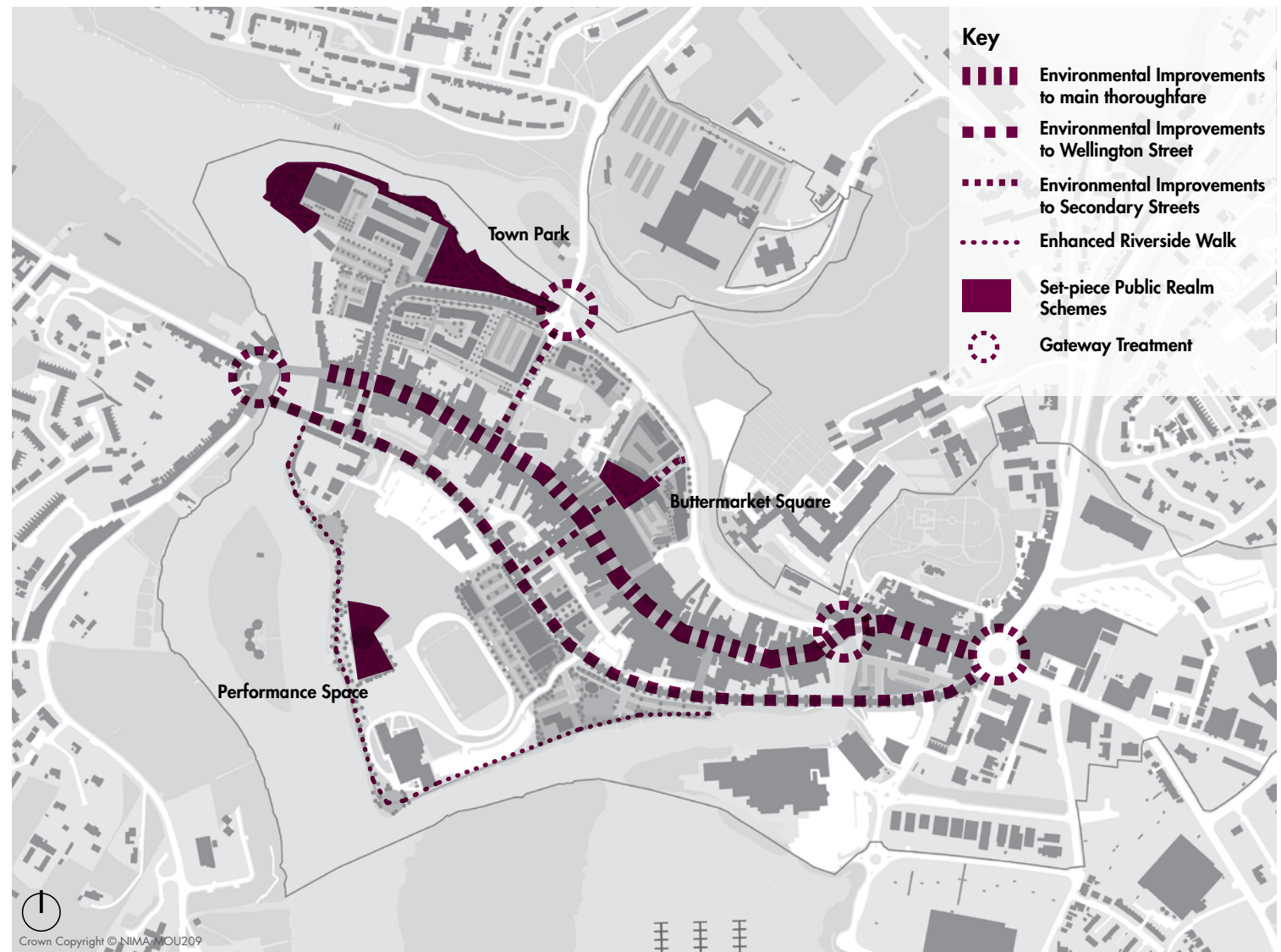


Figure 6.1 Potential Public Realm Improvement Areas

6.2 Buttermarket Square

One of the key public realm opportunities relates to the Buttermarket and its adjoining open space. Enniskillen does not have a traditional market square, but the car park located to the south of the Buttermarket (at the junction of Down Street, Market Street and Cross Street) has the potential to become an important public space. Its location, immediately to the north of the main thoroughfare (specifically, the Diamond and the Town Hall), further enhances the potential of the space, making it a linking space between two of the more important destinations in the town centre.

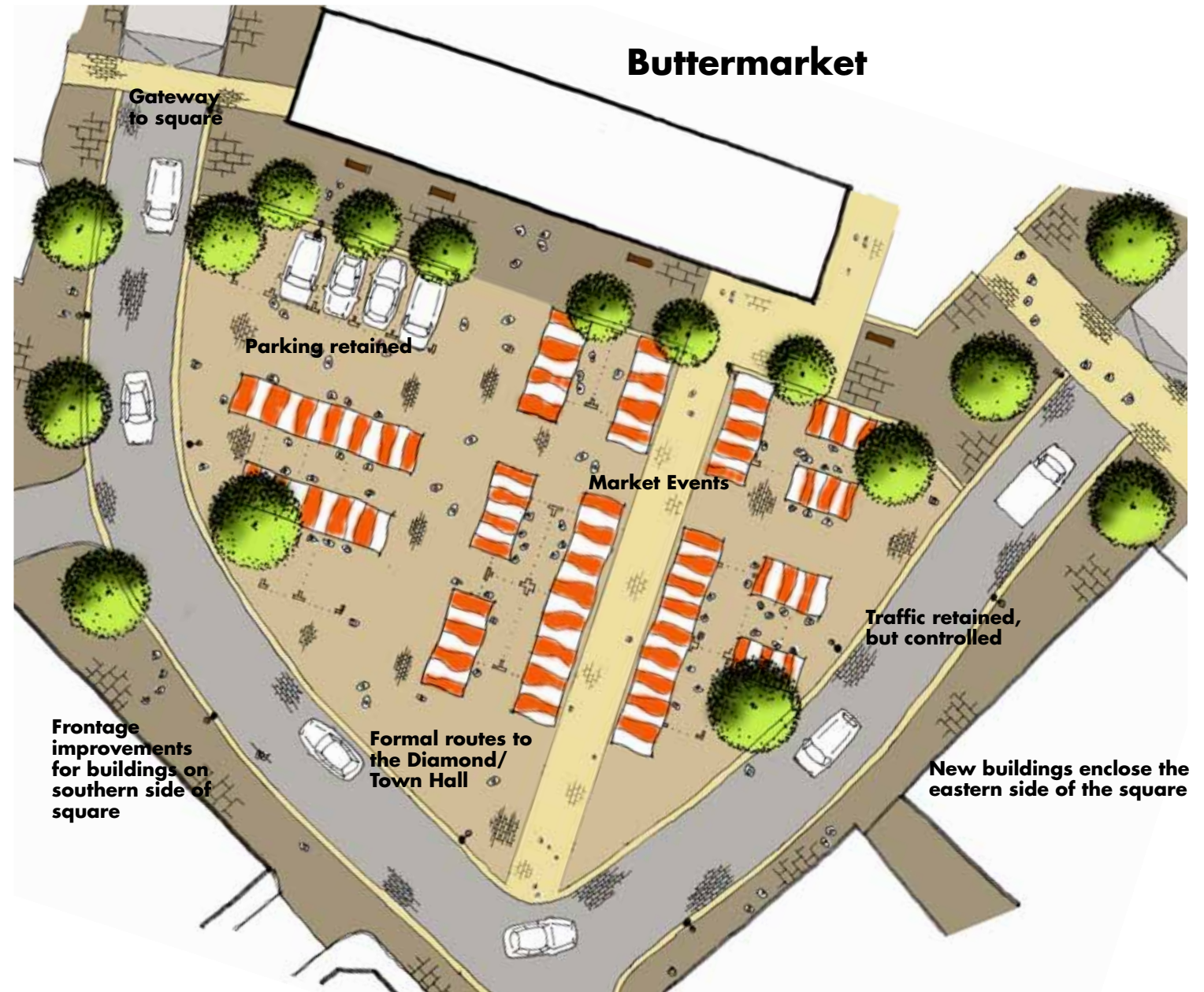


Figure 6.2 Buttermarket Square Potential Public Realm Improvements

The proposal is that the car parking should be retained, but with changes to the design of the space, making it better able to accommodate other uses, such as public events and markets.

The parking would occupy the space for the majority of the time and would only be re-located, temporarily, on specific event days.



Figure 6.3 Sketch View of Buttermarket Square



Parking bays marked out with granite setts



Shared surface in an historic town centre



Busy farmers' market



Existing building frontage improvements in Enniskillen

6.3 Public Realm Approach

Detailed design for public realm improvements will need to follow the Masterplan on a site by site, opportunity by opportunity basis. But these designs will be expected to adhere to a general approach based around:

- Good quality materials in key locations
- Decorative lighting
- Public art
- Clear signage
- Tree planting
- Street furniture

6.4 Island Town Gateways

One of the ways in which the public realm might contribute to the aims of the Masterplan is the creation of 'gateways' at key locations. Given that Enniskillen Town Centre sits on an island, the bridge connections onto the island would seem to be the most logical locations (see Figure 6.1, above).

A blend of specially chosen streetscape materials and furniture with some form of public art intervention would create a real sense of arrival and convey, to visitors, the notion that they are now entering, the 'Island Town' of Enniskillen.

Some ideas for the types of public art that might be used are shown opposite.



Good quality materials in key locations, creating a streetscape that is well appointed, easy to the quality of the surrounding built environment.



Signage, often with maps and directories explaining where various attractions are located, is very useful for visitors and residents alike.



A range of elements might be used to signify gateways onto the 'Island Town'. For example, the Corporation Dragons, in the City of London.



Decorative lighting as part of traditional lamp standards, feature lighting (trees and buildings) or lighting in the ground, can make spaces appear more vibrant, attractive and safer.



Tree planting, using the right species in the right place, can make a space more attractive, add character and provide shade and shelter.



The Tinnies, Strabane



Public art is a good way of creating interest within a space, as well as creating landmarks which can help with orientation and direction.



Street furniture helps characterise the town centre and should complement the prevailing character of the built environment.



A monumental use of stone and steel sculpture in Ellesmere Port.

7.0 Transport

7.1 Issues

Transport issues are of vital importance to the successful delivery of the Masterplan, in particular, the management of vehicle movements through the town centre.

There are proposals to build a southern by-pass for the A4, which would help alleviate the current high levels of vehicles forced to travel through Enniskillen on their way to somewhere else. This traffic rarely stops in the town centre, and contributes little to either the economy or the quality of place. While the by-pass proposal is outside the remit of the Town Centre Masterplan, the consequences of it being delivered are considerable.

The main opportunity delivered by the by-pass is that the roads to the northern and southern edges of the island (Queen Street, Queen Elizabeth Road and Wellington Road) might all be the subject of Environmental Improvement schemes.

The focus would be on creating spaces that are less dominated by traffic with more space for pedestrians - wider pavements, more crossings, tree planting and seating areas. The existing boulevard improvement works to Queen Elizabeth Road provide a good working template for these works, in terms of the types of materials, street furniture and quality of workmanship and finish.



Views of Queen Elizabeth Road Boulevard Treatment



7.2 Options for Environmental Improvements to Through Routes

The two street sections below show a sample of the current situation (A) and an option based on less traffic allowing the possibility of reducing road widths (B) to improve the environment for users not in motor vehicles. Roads Service would have to be satisfied that future demand and road safety would not be compromised before any roads were narrowed and any proposals for doing so would have to be rigorously tested.

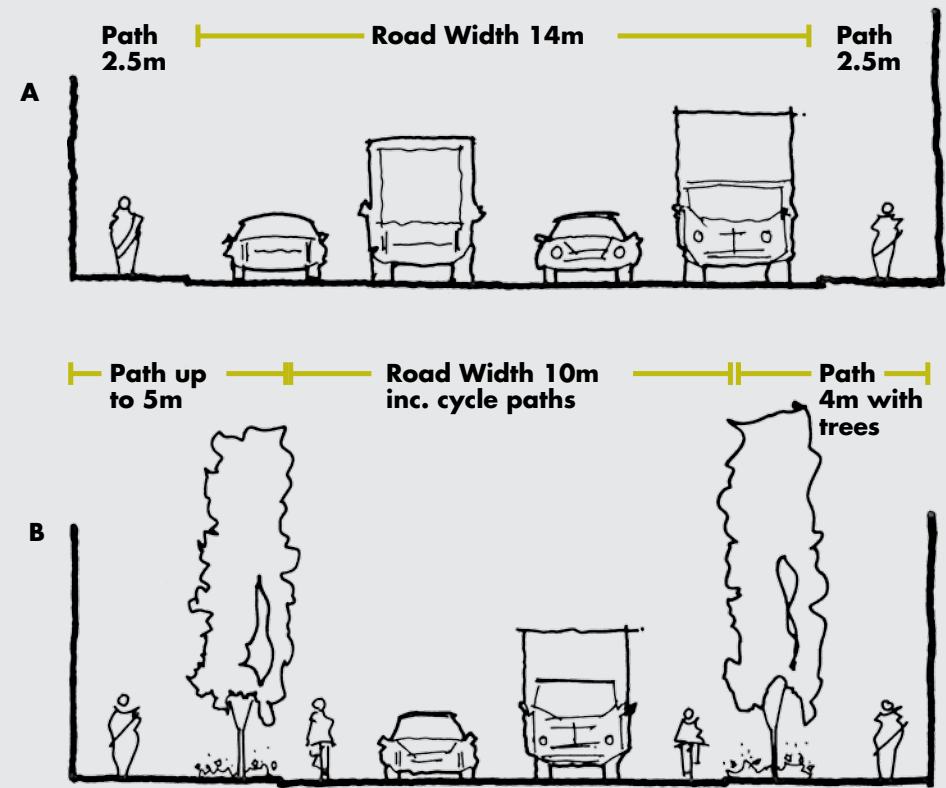


Figure 7.1 Options for Environmental Improvements to Through Routes

7.3 Parking

Parking is one of the most important transport issues to be addressed in Enniskillen. Given the geographical spread of those who come to the town to use the facilities and services, and the relatively low levels of public transport provision, it is vital that people are able to drive to the town centre, park and then walk, in comfort and safety, to their destinations.

There is already a significant provision of parking (both public and private) and the Masterplan aims to ensure that levels of parking continue to meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors. However, the current arrangement of parking, both in terms of its location and the fact that it is all surface level provision, is an issue that must be considered by the Masterplan.

There is only a limited amount of land within the town centre, and the Masterplan seeks to maximise the potentially developable land that is available for business, services, amenities and homes. To achieve this, the Masterplan identifies locations where new parking might be located and existing parking provision improved.

One way to maximise development opportunity and provide the requisite levels of parking is to look at the potential of multi-storey facilities.

Multi-storey parking might be delivered further along the Masterplan development process, but provision can be made at an early stage. For example, surface level provision is provided on the understanding that when the development opportunity presents itself a more efficient, multi-storey facility, with attendant enabling development (i.e., development on part of the former surface car park that can help pay for the new facility).



Wrapping multi-storey car parks with development can make them better neighbours and also more self-funding.



Figure 7.2 Existing Parking Provision



Figure 7.3 Proposed Parking Provision

8.0 Tourism

8.1 Themes

Enniskillen Town Centre has all the ingredients to make a very attractive urban destination in the heart of Lough Erne and Fermanagh. It has the unique position of being surrounded by water, as well as being home to the nationally significant Enniskillen Castle and a gateway to Lough Erne, Devenish Island and Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark.

To capitalise on its natural and man-made assets, a number of key themed approaches are proposed, each one intended to take advantage of the physical development opportunities identified by the Masterplan:

- Varied programme of events
- Built heritage
- Gastro-tourism
- Heart of the Lakes

8.2 Enniskillen Tourism Strategy

The Destination Fermanagh Tourism Strategy identifies the need to diversify and enhance the tourism products and packages. Themes and initiatives the Tourism Strategy identified as being specific targets included:



A full programme of events, with different target audiences, would extend the tourist season either side of the peak period.



Enniskillen's rural hinterland, excellent produce and pivotal location in the Lakes makes it ideally placed to become a gastro-tourist destination - perhaps at the regional scale to begin with, but later on...



The town's fine built heritage and character is a major asset, providing an attractive setting for many different initiatives and activities.



Finally, the town's central location in the heart of the Lakes, is a major asset and one that could be a driver of other forms of tourism as it already attracts many people to the region.

Urban tourism – utilising the historic settlement of Enniskillen, in addition to the rural settlements of Irvinstown and Lisnaskea, as a means of attracting urban-based short-break visitors through cultural heritage, events, food, drink and entertainment;

Activities tourism – developing known popular activities such as golf, walking, cycling and canoeing as a means of complementing existing water and land-based activities; and

Ecotourism – building upon the success of ecotourism elsewhere in the region (i.e. through The Green Box Initiative) as a means of encouraging sustainable tourism and more rewarding, locally-derived visitor experiences.

The masterplan seeks to build on each of these three targets, promoting new activities, events and facilities which are in keeping with Urban tourism, Activities tourism and Ecotourism. The Strategy also recommends creating a regular programme of events as being critical to the future success of the wider Lough Erne and Fermanagh area, within which Enniskillen is identified as a potential focal point. The masterplan seeks to promote this idea within the context of the town centre, increasing events and festivals in order to bring people into the centre of Enniskillen.

Urban tourism within Enniskillen is regarded as a priority within the masterplan and is a major tourism opportunity given the strong market for urban and cultural tourism. Its unique 'Island' setting and built heritage assets are regarded as its main strengths.

Further development opportunities still exist. The use of The Broadmeadow as an events venue has long been heralded, with further elaboration on this premise now presented in the Castle Basin Masterplan. The Castle Basin Masterplan suggests that the events stage requirements would be met by land previously used as the basketball court, adjacent to the existing children's play area. The use of temporary stages is envisaged which means it will be a flexible space that could be utilised for a variety of small and larger scale carnivals, concerts and theatrical performances. The size of the venue means that each performance could attract up to 5,000 spectators, with events that have strong visitor appeal identified as being a music festival, a major sporting event (e.g. triathlon/Ironman competitions) and a major arts/street festival.

8.3 Challenges

It is clear that Enniskillen is an under-utilised resource from a tourism perspective. However, it is important that the markets channelled to the town are of an appropriate scale and character to its setting. There is certainly a danger when directing new developments toward defined markets that the 'sustainability' edict to ensure a balance between economic, social, cultural and environment parameters within the destination is overlooked. Given the spatial constraints of the town centre caused by its island setting, the environmental and cultural sensitivities of the destination need to be considered of critical concern.

A key aspect of the Enniskillen Masterplan in terms of tourism is ensuring that the proposals identified are focussed on development that will deliver markets that are appropriate in number, character, and composition to the carrying capacity of the town centre and wider Lough Erne setting. The options will also be rationalised against the historic and environmental character of Town Centre; and give consideration to the existing and future capacity of the town to support the level of visitors that each development could attract.

Enniskillen Town Centre has all the ingredients to make a very attractive urban destination in the heart of Lough

Erne and Fermanagh. It has the unique position of being surrounded by water, as well as being home to the nationally significant Enniskillen Castle and a gateway to Lough Erne, Devenish Island, and the Marble Arch Caves. The town itself has a traditional High Street character and already includes an arts and crafts workshop/retail area in The Buttermarket.

The latest Destination Fermanagh Tourism Strategy still identifies Enniskillen Town Centre as being a critical tourism hub, yet it is one that still has not fulfilled its inherent potential. Critical issues include the fact that the urban form and the waterscape of the town centre are not fully integrated from a visitor's perspective. Physical connections are constrained because of the road network coupled with a lack of signage directing visitors between the two. The visual connections are restricted due to the various structures that present a visual barrier. And, although there are some water-based activities accessible from the town centre (e.g. Moorings, Waterbus, Lakeland Canoe Centre, and Angling), these are not as strong as they could be. Another issue facing the town centre is the lack of accommodation stock in the centre itself, although there is provision elsewhere in the town. It is with these issues in mind the tourism proposals have been developed within the Masterplan.

8.4 Masterplan Tourism Proposals

1. The provision of a dedicated marina close to the town centre would reinforce Enniskillen's role as a hub for water-based tourism. Two potential locations are evident, either at Derrychara Lagoon or adjacent to the re-developed PSNI site. Further financial and technical feasibility is required to identify the most suitable site and its operation.
 2. Waterside access presents opportunities for encouraging a variety of water-based activities close to the town centre and in the wider area. Given the location and setting of the Lakeland Forum, there is a clear opportunity to associate the leisure centre with water-based leisure and recreation opportunities that will appeal to a range of visitors. In addition to existing provision (Lakeland Canoe Centre), other activities such as rowing boat hire might also be considered at Regal Pass or a jetty for boat trips to Devenish Island, for example.
 3. An opportunity exists to provide walking and cycling trails which circumnavigate the whole of Enniskillen island. The Castle Basin Masterplan identifies the need for an interpretative riverside walk along The Broadmeadow waterfront. This should be extended so that improvements continue around the entire island. Interpretation should be enhanced with information boards, signage and hard-copy guides available in key locations or on the Internet. The waterside trail should begin and end with the Enniskillen Castle as a recognisable landmark close to car parking and could ultimately be extended to link into a wider network of trails linking upper and lower Lough Erne.
 4. Starting at Enniskillen Castle, there is an opportunity to provide a heritage trail, which would link the various heritage features of the town centre with its unique retail opportunities.
 5. Existing waterside vistas should be protected and, where possible, enhanced to ensure they are attractive and readily accessible. The most attractive vistas at present are those towards Enniskillen Castle and the pedestrian pathway to the north and north-east. It is important that the character and setting of these vistas are protected from further encroachment by development and that new viewing points are created (for example, on the promontory adjacent to the police station).
 6. Bringing the Tourist Information Centre into the Castle would encourage longer durations of stay and potentially greater use of the museums, cafes and other facilities.
- The Destination Fermanagh Tourism Strategy highlights this as a key opportunity.
7. Events and Festivals are crucial to the vitality of the tourism strategy for Enniskillen and the town centre, in particular. The Castle Basin Masterplan highlights various potential events associated with the Broadmeadow, but it is crucial to integrate events and festivals with the town centre core. Consequently, we propose a wider programme that makes the most of all the strengths of Enniskillen including sporting/water-based, heritage, musical/dramatic arts and food/produce.
 8. An opportunity exists to investigate a water taxi system devised on the principle of a 'park and ride' system that allows users to hop-on/hop-off at certain points around the island.
 9. Enniskillen Town Centre presents a characterful, traditional form of retail experience that contrasts with the more uniform and less coherent surroundings of modern retail outlets. There is an opportunity to build on the niche retail tourism market, which has been exploited by many other urban-based tourism destinations in the UK and Europe. In this respect, some subtle repositioning of the town centre retail offer towards one or a series of niche, but high quality, retail offers would redefine the shopping experience for the town centre.
 10. The opportunities and proposals identified within this Masterplan aim to encourage the visitor to spend more time in Enniskillen. Assuming growth in the tourism sector over the plan period, there needs to be suitable accommodation available within the town centre to accommodate demand. The most obvious location for a hotel would be close to the waterside, for example, on the site of the PSNI complex.
 11. The evening and night time economy is an integral part of any visitor experience, with the emphasis on providing the opportunity to investigate and enjoy locally sourced produce from the town's rural hinterland. Enniskillen's recent award of 'Purple Flag' status, which recognises the quality of the town's evening and night time economy, shows that much has already been achieved. However, there is still much more that might be done to make Enniskillen a destination on a par with those towns that are famous for their restaurants and food culture. Enniskillen is well placed to seek to generate the same sort of reputation, regionally, as a centre of gastronomic excellence, with Lough Erne and the surrounding countryside being a key source of produce.

8.5 Potential Opportunities

Figure 8.1 shows the town centre buildings, sites and locations that best represent Enniskillen's tourism offer, alongside some proposals for action.

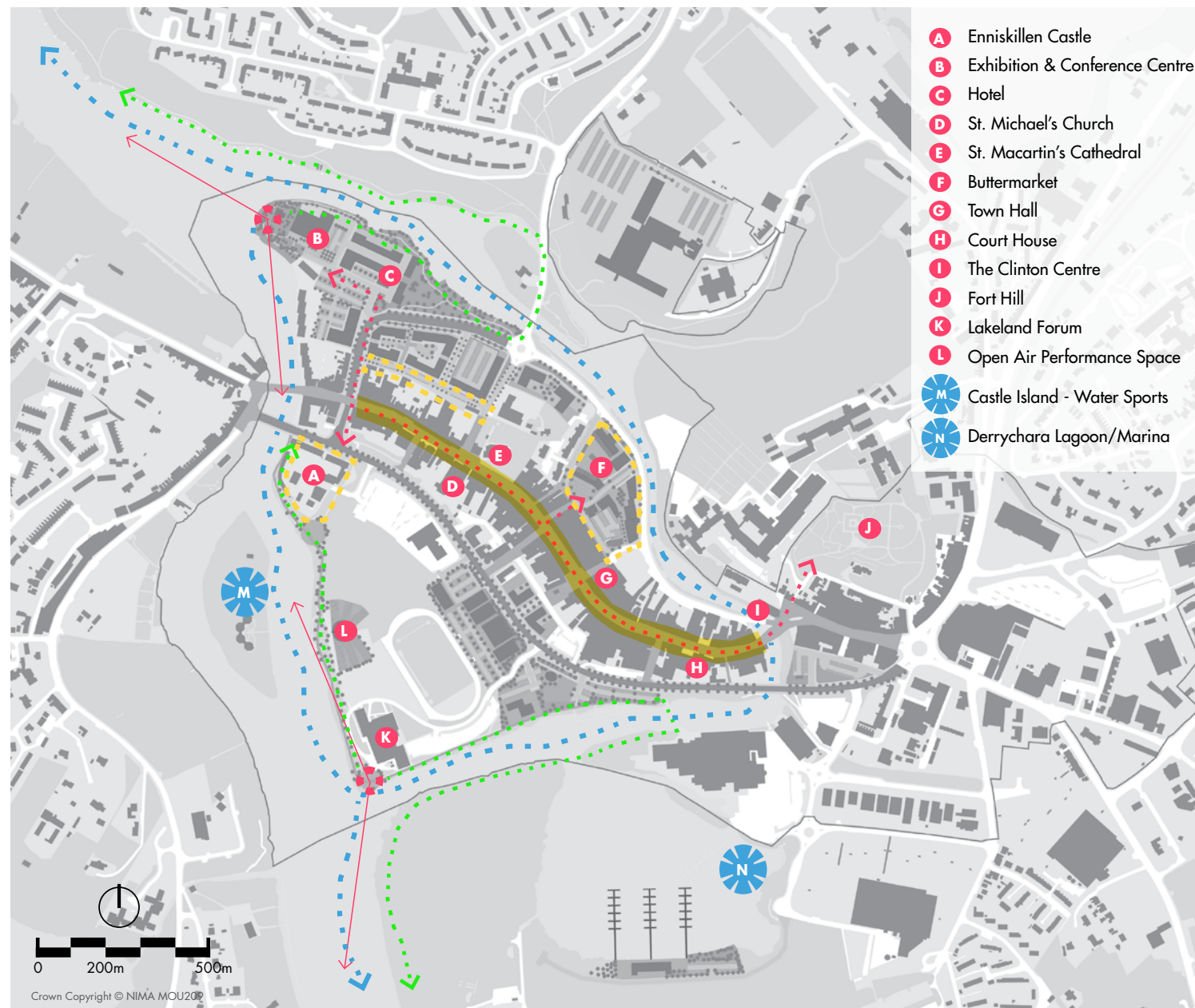
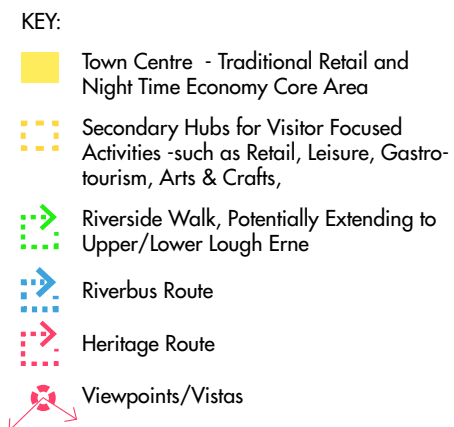


Figure 8.1 Key Interventions/Attractions

9.0 Delivery

9.1 Introduction

Although the Masterplan is a non-statutory document it provides an important tool for future decision making on development and economic issues as well as the promotion and marketing of the town and its hinterland.

The Masterplan should be used as a reference point when forming policies surrounding investment within the town. It should also inform public/private partnerships which may need to be developed in order to deliver strategic development projects highlighted within the masterplan. The plan should also be used by Fermanagh District Council in support of or to object to future planning applications within the town depending on their strategic fit with the masterplan objectives.

Enniskillen is a town steeped in history with a high quality built environment. The masterplan seeks to ensure that future development complements and does not detract from the quality already present. Poor quality development will not be accepted in Enniskillen as it builds on its considerable assets in order to attract investment and visitors to the town.

9.2 A Challenging Economic Climate

An important piece of context is the current economic climate. The recession has put an end to a period of property investment that helped to regenerate areas suffering from market failure in a number of town centres across Northern Ireland. The boom times also caused significant damage to our town centres, with a number of out of town developments receiving approval which have now diluted the available spend even further at a time when people have less money to spend.

The pressure on developers and lack of available funding mean that the delivery model for regeneration schemes will take on a different form with the public sector having to take a bigger role. This at a time when public spending is also under significant pressure and major cuts have been made in public spending. Under the Review of Public Administration (RPA), Fermanagh District Council may need to consider alternative funding tools in order to achieve its regeneration goals.

Across the UK a range of innovative delivery approaches and financial mechanisms have been considered

and developed in recent years (e.g. Urban Regeneration Companies, Business Improvement Districts, Local Asset Backed Vehicles), and new ones continue to emerge to respond to changing circumstances (e.g. Accelerated Development Zones).

A number of delivery options exist and include:

- Mainstream Council delivery;
- Informal partnerships;
- Contractual partnerships; and
- Corporate partnerships (including Special Purpose Vehicles).

9.3 Early Wins

Public Realm Scheme

The early delivery of this major Environmental Improvement scheme (as set out in Section 5) would be a significant early win for Enniskillen and act as a catalyst for further development identified within the Masterplan. The scheme would will also provide investors with confidence that the public sector is investing in the future of Enniskillen which would in turn attract further investment from the private sector.

9.4 The Erne Hospital Site

The potential for public sector office relocation from the town centre to the former Erne hospital site opens up significant development opportunities within Enniskillen. Fermanagh District Council is the potential facilitator of this project, acting as an intermediary between the various stakeholders.

The new shared services campus on the former hospital site could be privately funded and therefore prove more attractive to the public sector agencies involved. The relocations have the potential to 'free up' the following sites within the town centre:

- South West College;
- Library;
- Jobs and Benefits;
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive;
- Police Service of Northern Ireland;
- Courts and Tribunals Service, and
- Fire Station.

The total site area which could be released through public sector relocations for development within the town centre totals 12 acres. The proximity of a number of these sites within the North West Quarter of the town offers a significant opportunity for regeneration and investment in Enniskillen.

9.5 Delivering the Masterplan

Fermanagh District Council, in partnership with the Department for Social Development, is likely to lead the Masterplan delivery team and will be responsible for inviting appropriate partners from both the statutory agencies and the private sector.

9.6 Roles and Responsibilities

Public Sector

Even with additional functions being transferred to the Council under RPA, there will be many public services and functions that will remain with public bodies outside the Council. Many of these bodies will have a role to play in the regeneration of the Enniskillen town centre and should therefore be engaged in the delivery structures. As well as engaging these bodies in the structures, the Council and other public bodies should also seek to align their mainstream service delivery and policies with the objectives of the Enniskillen Masterplan. The importance placed on developing the tourist market in Enniskillen within the masterplan highlights the key role that the Northern Ireland Tourist Board should play within the delivery structure in the future. Not only in the promotion and marketing of the town but also in an advisory role as to the type of leisure and commercial development which will benefit tourism.

Private Sector

A significant element of the Masterplan will need to be delivered by the private sector. It is therefore essential that the private sector have a central and influential role to play in any delivery structures or organisations. Private sector representation within specific delivery organisations can be a powerful tool. Specifically, it can act at times as a counterbalance to the political pressures that such organisations can and often do face. Moreover, depending on the strength and quality of the individuals concerned, the private sector can be particularly helpful in keeping such organisations focused on tasks and outcomes, bringing particular skills and expertise from business or other backgrounds. It is vital that private sector organisations are encouraged and supported by the public sector in this process in order to encourage development and investment. The private sector will bring a clear, commercial thinking which is often needed to ensure proposals are commercially viable and realistic.

Community Sector

Community involvement has emerged as a key requirement of success in regeneration delivery structures. This is about more than consultation and instead reflects an organisational commitment to working with local people and businesses.

In Enniskillen, it will be particularly important to engage local traders and the community in relation to the Environmental Improvement Scheme. The scheme should

reflect the needs of the people who use the town and be something which they are proud of and take ownership of.

9.7 Sustainable Regeneration

Sustainability is the key element of any regeneration scheme. The funding and resources required to support delivery may come from within mainstream services and budgets, which are 'ring-fenced', redirected or 'top sliced', or it may require the procurement of additional resources. Whatever the source and approach, funding should ideally be secured (and earmarked specifically for implementing the Masterplan) for as many of the initial years as possible. This will help to generate sufficient momentum to deliver the plan. If possible, the delivery structure should be developed and enabled to generate and capture funding and value as a part of the process of delivering the Masterplan. Not only will this help to sustain the structure, but it can also act as an incentive to deliver.

Ref	Project	Lead Delivery Agency / Agencies	Priority	Timeframe	Indicative Cost	Other Delivery Agencies	Related Projects	Public Sector Actions
1	Environmental Improvements on the Main Thoroughfare	DSD, FDC, DRD	High	1-3 years	£5M	EBD, RS, PS, NITB	11,12,19	Currently at economic appraisal stage. Consultants to be appointed to achieve full planning prior to appointment of contractor
2	New Waterside Leisure and Conference Facility	DSD, FDC, Private Sector	Medium	4-8 years	Subject to design development	PSNI, PS, RS, NITB, Private Sector	3,4,22	FDC leading the promotion of new shared services hub on former Erne Hospital site which would free up PSNI site.
3	Town Centre Hotel	DSD, FDC, Private Sector	Medium	4-8 years	Subject to design development	PSNI, PS, RS, Private Sector	2,4,22	FDC leading the promotion of new shared services hub on former Erne Hospital site which would free up PSNI site. Market site to potential hoteliers to deliver project.
4	Town Park	DSD, FDC	Medium	4-8 years	Subject to design development	PS, RS	2,3,22	FDC leading the promotion of new shared services hub on former Erne Hospital site which would free up development sites. Progress design of Town Park.
5	Mixed Use Development on Queen Street	DSD, FDC, Private Sector	Medium	4-10 years	Subject to design development	PS, RS, Private Sector	22	FDC leading the promotion of new shared services hub on former Erne Hospital site which would free up development sites. Development sites marketed to private sector. Potentially sold with development brief attached.
6	Parking Facilities Serving Opportunities 2-5	DSD, FDC, Private Sector	Medium	4-10 years	Subject to design development	PS, RS, Private Sector	2,3,4,5	Site disposed of with development brief attached to ensure appropriate design and sufficient car parking.
7	Mixed Use Development along Head Street	DSD, FDC, Private Sector	Medium-Low	6-12 years	Subject to design development	PS, RS, Private Sector	8	Masterplan delivery team to engage with private sector and statutory agencies to ensure design is appropriate.
8	Multi-storey Car Park on Head Street	DSD, FDC, Private Sector	Medium-Low	6-12 years	Subject to design development	PS, RS, Private Sector	7	Masterplan delivery team to engage with private sector and statutory agencies to ensure design is appropriate.
9	Re-modelling of Queen Street	DSD, FDC, RS	Medium-Low	8-12 years	Subject to design development	PS	16	Traffic modelling of town centre with remodelling proposals developed.
10	Residential Development on Jobs & Benefits Office Site	DSD, FDC, Private Sector	Medium-Low	4-10 years	Subject to design development	PS, Private Sector	22	FDC leading the promotion of new shared services hub on former Erne Hospital site which would free up Jobs and Benefits site. Development sites marketed to private sector. Potentially sold with development brief attached.
11	Buttermarket Re-generation scheme	DSD, FDC, Private Sector	High-Medium	4-8 years	Subject to design development	PS, RS, NIEA, NITB	12	Consult with Buttermarket owners on opportunities for development.
12	Buttermarket Square Public Realm Improvements	DSD, FDC, RS	High-Medium	4-8 years	£2M	PS, NIEA, NITB	1, 11	Engage with Roads Service on opportunities to redesign parking arrangements into shared spaces. Develop design of scheme and opportunity to link to main thoroughfare Environmental Improvement scheme.

Table 9A Delivery Plan for Enniskillen

Ref	Project	Lead Delivery Agency / Agencies	Priority	Timeframe	Indicative Cost	Other Delivery Agencies	Related Projects	Public Sector Actions
13	Redevelopment of premises on Cross Street (inc Multi-storey Car Park)	DSD, FDC, Private Sector	Medium-Low	8-14 years	Subject to design development	PS, RS, Private Sector		Engage with land owner on potential for future redevelopment.
14	New Riverside Space, plus Coach Parking	DSD, FDC	Medium-Low	8-14 years	Subject to design development	PS, RS, WI		Develop design proposals for redeveloped space and parking.
15	Eden Street Car Park Re-development Scheme	DSD, FDC, Private Sector	Medium-Low	8-14 years	Subject to design development	PS, RS, Private Sector		Re-assess potential to dispose of publicly owned land with development brief when market conditions improve.
16	Re-modelling of Wellington Road	DSD, FDC, RS	High-Medium	6-10 years	Subject to design development	PS, RS	9	Traffic modelling exercise of town centre and remodelling options developed.
17	Commercial Leisure Development along Southern Edge of Wellington Road	DSD, FDC, Private Sector	Medium-Low	8-14 years	Subject to design development	PS, RS, Private Sector		Engage with current landowners on future potential for redevelopment
18	Bus Station Development Scheme	DSD, FDC, Translink	Medium	4-8 years	Subject to design development	PS, RS, Private Sector		Engage with Translink on potential to relocate garages to out of town location, freeing up waterside site.
19	Enhanced Riverside Walk	DSD, FDC	Medium	4-8 years	Subject to design development	PS, RS, WI, Sustrans	21	Develop waterside path proposals around the Island Town.
20	New Performance Space	DCAL, DSD, FDC	Medium	4-8 years	£1.5M	PS, WI, AC	21	Develop design and cost new performance space.
21	Derrychara Lagoon Tourist Development	DSD, FDC, NITB	Medium	4-8 years	£2M	PS, WI, Private Sector	20	Source funding opportunities to realise proposals within Castle Basin Masterplan.
22	Erne Hospital Public Services Hub	FDC, DSD, DFP	High-Medium	4-8 years	£20M	WHSCT, PSNI, NIHE, SWRC, LNI, CTS, AS, SSA, FS	2,3,4,5	FDC leading the promotion of new shared services hub on the site. Will be necessary to achieve full buy in from public sector stakeholders.
23	Court House Re-development Scheme	DSD, FDC	Medium-Low	5-10 years	Subject to design development	PS, CS, NIEA, Private Sector	22	Potential to relocate into shared services hub on former Erne Hospital site.
24	Enniskillen Castle Cultural Hub	FDC	Medium	3-5 years	Subject to design development	NITB	19,20	Assess potential to develop cultural activities, events and exhibitions at Castle.

KEY

AC = Arts Council; AS = Ambulance Service; CTS = Courts and Tribunals Service; DCAL = Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure; DFP = Department of Finance and Personnel; DSD= Department for Social Development; FDC = Fermanagh District Council; FS = Fire Service; LNI = Libraries Northern Ireland; NIEA = Northern Ireland Environment Agency; NIHE = Northern Ireland Housing Executive; SSA = Social Security Agency; NITB = Northern Ireland Tourism Board; PS = Planning Service; PSNI = Police Service of Northern Ireland; RS = Roads Service; SSA = Social Security Agency; SWC = South West College; WHSCT = Western Health and Social Care Trust; WI = Waterways Ireland

Table 9A Delivery Plan for Enniskillen (cont.)

10.0 Summary and Conclusion

10.1 Summary

The Island Town of Enniskillen benefits from its stunning setting within the Fermanagh Lakes. The town centre has a reputation for locally distinctive independent retailing, characterful pubs, and attractive restaurants and cafes. In addition, there are other attractions for visitors, such as the local arts and crafts studios and shops located in the Buttermarket.

Enniskillen benefits from a number of significant assets which are the envy of many town centres in Northern Ireland, but the quality of the town's public realm has suffered from under-investment, an issue that needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Currently, the public realm detracts from Enniskillen's overall visual quality and character and it is clear that there is considerable scope to complement the town's many attractive buildings with new and enhanced public spaces. Evidence from other towns, such as Newcastle and Armagh, would suggest that improvements to the public realm have the potential to considerably increase footfall within the town centre.

Although the historic core of Enniskillen has not changed significantly for many years, it is vital that Enniskillen positions

itself now as a modern town centre, one that will continue to develop and attract shoppers and visitors for the next 100 years. The potential public sector office relocation to the former Erne Hospital site provides a major opportunity to revitalise the town centre, creating modern retail units, residential development, leisure, hotel and workspace all within the town's core area.

The current economic conditions, coupled with cuts in public spending, will make regeneration more difficult in the short term. However, the strong base from which Enniskillen is starting, the opportunities created by the former hospital site and the plans for a major investment in the public realm should ensure that it is capable of attracting investment from the private sector. It is vital that the Masterplan implementation team forms close links with the private sector, creating a partnership to ensure that when money does become available, from whichever source, it is targeted in those areas that will bring maximum benefit to the town.

While Enniskillen is already a vibrant town centre, there are opportunities to build on some assets that may not have been properly developed or

exploited. For example, better use of the Buttermarket area as a hub of cultural and leisure activity would benefit a number of sectors of the local economy, while providing the people of Enniskillen, as much as visitors to the town, with a cultural destination that would be unique to the western part of Northern Ireland. The Buttermarket has the potential to become the new heart of the town centre where festivals, markets and events all take place on a regular basis.

10.2 Conclusion

There is no doubt that Enniskillen Town Centre will face increased competition from neighbouring towns and out of town developments and, therefore, it is vital that its future is managed and that the Masterplan Vision for Enniskillen is delivered in a strategic manner. This Vision, developed with stakeholders from the public and private sectors, highlights the importance of building on the town's strengths, diversifying and strengthening the economy of the town.

By developing and enhancing its own assets, while drawing on the wider tourist offering of the Fermanagh Lakes, the Masterplan envisages Enniskillen as a tourist destination in its own right

and not simply as a retail hub within the County, or a gateway to the Lakes. The Masterplan is designed as a strategy for the next twenty years and identifies short, medium and long-term projects. That said, the success of the Masterplan and those who are tasked with its implementation will, in all likelihood, only be properly understood in 50 or 100 years from now. Over that time horizon, the aim should be for Enniskillen to retain its character and identity, while developing as a destination where people choose to come to shop, work, live, visit and take their leisure.

To achieve this, the Masterplan proposes, a suite of realistic, achievable and innovative capital investment proposals to revitalise, modernise and sustain the core of Enniskillen over the next 15-20 years.

Fermanagh District Council

Townhall, Enniskillen,
Co. Fermanagh, BT74 7BA
Northern Ireland

T: (028) 6632 5050

DSD Regional Development Office

Western Division- Kevlin Buildings
47 Kelvin Avenue
Omagh, BT78 1ER

T: (028) 8225 5501

URS Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited

Beechill House, Beechill Road
Belfast, BT8 7RP
Northern Ireland

T +44 (0)2890 705 111