

# Enniskillen Place Shaping Plan 2035

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council  
November 2022



**ENNISKILLEN  
ISLAND TOWN**  
NATURALLY WELCOMING



Fermanagh & Omagh  
District Council

Comhairle Ceantair  
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí



FutureAnalytics



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**"True placemaking is not just about the creation of places where we want to go and spend our time. It's about creating communities that have a greater capacity to self organise - to pilot their own destinies, to express outrage, solidarity or celebration, to exchange and innovate and include new ideas"**  
**Fred Kent Founder Project for Public Space**







# Chapter one Introduction



# Introduction

## 1.1 Enniskillen

Enniskillen, Ireland’s only island town, is a highly scenic and strategic location between Upper and Lower Lough Erne and is a key regional & cross-border hub. It is a town of great beauty as well as being historic importance, with many buildings of architectural merit. The new A4 Enniskillen Southern Bypass will reroute traffic away from the town centre, reducing traffic congestion in the town and will create potential for improved active travel opportunities. Enniskillen, the County Town of Fermanagh, must avail of current trends to reposition town centres as vibrant, less car-dominated, and thriving hubs for communities, hubs that serve a range of uses and encourage people to visit and stay longer.

Enniskillen has a unique attribute as Ireland’s only island town. While the town historically evolved from trade associated with its position on the waterways, this location has provided the basis for tourism development with a range of water-based activities on offer. Enniskillen is a economic, educational, and public services hub. The new South West College, Erne Campus, occupies a key site to the north of the town, while the Erneside Shopping Centre hosts a range of larger stores. The town centre core is home to a range of independent traders, churches and historic bars, adding to the character of the town. The South West Acute Hospital is located outside the town on the Irvinestown Road.

In common with many other similar size towns in Northern Ireland, and perhaps to a greater degree due to the layout of the town, Enniskillen would benefit from a reset. This reimagining of the way in which the town functions, will encourage residents and visitors to stay longer in the town centre and boosting the vibrancy of the island. There are several large opportunity sites, such as the visually dominant former South West College building which require an evolution of purpose, contributing to the revitalisation of Enniskillen.

'Place shaping - Rarely, before has the citizen had such a chance to reshape the city, and to make it the kind of city that he likes and that others will too... Designing a dream city (town) is easy, rebuilding a living one takes imagination' Jane Jacobs

## 1.2 Purpose

In recent years Enniskillen has benefited from investment in the town centre and the new South West College Erne Campus. This Place-Shaping Plan, commissioned by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, seeks to build on these strong foundations, providing a pragmatic pathway for Enniskillen’s future.

Place Shaping looks at how we can make our communities stronger and more resilient in the future through understanding what we have in terms of assets, i.e. our buildings, our green spaces, our skills & knowledge, our community groups, and our public services.

We want to build on our history, our strategic geographic and economic location, and our tourism potential to secure sustainable social, economic and physical regeneration over the lifetime of this plan.

## 1.3 Approach

The Place Shaping Plan considered a range of key local plans which include those in Table 1.

The goal for this plan is to inform future decision making to position Enniskillen as a vibrant town for current and future generations. In doing so, consideration will be given to the town centre and environs; impacts on communities; the connectivity around the town and imaginative identification of new, viable and sustainable opportunities. As such it is an informed guide, with our best ideas for creating the pathway to a more vibrant and prosperous Enniskillen.

*'If you plan cities (towns) for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you get people and places.'* Fred Kent, project for Public Space

Table 1-1 Key Policy Documents Reviewed

Scale	Policy Document
International	The 2030 Agenda – UN Sustainable Development Goals
United Kingdom	Levelling Up the United Kingdom
	UK Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener
Northern Ireland	Northern Ireland Economic Recovery Action Plan
	Northern Ireland Domestic Tourism Strategy 2020
Regional	Regional Development Strategy 2035
	MSW Regional Economic Strategy
	DfI Strategic Planning Policy Statement
	High Street Task Force – Delivering a 21st Century High Street
	Regional Strategic Transportation Strategy 2002-2012
District	Regional Transportation Network Plan 2015
	FODC 2030 Community Plan
	FODC 2030 Community Plan – 2020 Update
	FODC Climate Change and Sustainable Development Strategy 2020-2030
	FODC Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024
	Visitor Experience Development Plan for Fermanagh Lakelands and Omagh and the Sperrins
	Local Development Plan 2030
Local	FODC Events and Festival Strategy
	Enniskillen Town Centre Masterplan 2012
	Angling Development Report and Action Plan for the Erne System (Draft)
	Experience Enniskillen: BID Business Plan 2022-2027





# Chapter two Current Situation



# Current Situation

## 2.1 Introduction

This section provides a high-level summary of a detailed report provided to Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and the Project Steering Group. The baseline review has been facilitated primarily through desktop-based research, supplemented by consultation activities and field surveys that were undertaken in mid-2022. A baseline analysis has been undertaken to understand and contextualise the local community, economy and spatial characteristics within Enniskillen town and more broadly across Fermanagh and Omagh, drawing on lessons from across the island of Ireland. This comprehensive review strengthens our understanding of latest performance, dynamics and developments which are of relevance to place-shaping and the sustainable development of the town.





## 2.2 Geographic Context

Enniskillen is located along the River Erne, between Upper and Lower Lough Erne. Due to the natural assets of the town and its surrounding catchment area, the town hosts a variety of nearby attractions and amenities, such as Enniskillen Castle and Museums, Forthill Park, Castle Coole, Florence Court, UNESCO status Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark, (home to Marble Arch Caves and the world's first cross border geo-park) Portora Castle, Necarne Castle and Monea Castle, while also benefitting from natural amenities such as Lower and Upper Lough Erne, the River Erne and their associated attractions.

The town also benefits from its position near the UK and Republic of Ireland border, with cross-border trade generating significant economic activity for the town and wider economy. Despite the absence of a rail line serving Enniskillen and indeed a wider rail network in Fermanagh & Omagh District, the town's strategic spatial advantages are supplemented by an extensive network of roads serving Enniskillen. This road network includes the A4 route towards Portadown and Belfast to the east and Sligo to the west, the A32 towards Omagh and the A509, which connects to the M3 motorway to Dublin.



## 2.3 Historic Context

Enniskillen (or Inis Ceithleann, meaning 'Island of Kathleen') was the site of the ancient stronghold of the Maguires, the prominent family in the Fermanagh area, who were chiefs from the 13th to the 17th Centuries. Strategically placed to guard one of the narrowest crossing points on the River Erne, Enniskillen Castle was built for the Maguires in the early 15th century, with the first-known reference to the castle appearing in the Annals of Ulster in 1439. Today the castle includes the medieval vaults, the oldest surviving rooms in Enniskillen.

Following the "Flight of the Earls" in 1607 and the subsequent Plantation of Ulster under King James I, the town of Enniskillen was established by charter in 1612/13. Almost one hundred years later, Enniskillen played an important role in the Williamite Wars; the town's two famous regiments, The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and The Royal Inniskilling Dragoons, originated in regiments raised at this time. In the following centuries, Enniskillen developed as County Fermanagh's principal market and garrison town.

The town continued to grow in the 19th and 20th Centuries, seeing the expansion of key buildings such as the completion of a larger church for St Anne's, St. Macartin's Cathedral, in 1842; the dedication of St Michael's Church on St Patrick's Day, 1875 and the opening of a new Town Hall in 1901.

The latter half of the 20th Century saw residential housing, including the area often referred to as the 'back streets', move from the island, 'between the bridges', into areas located outside the boundaries of the town centre, such as Coles Hill, Cornagrade, Hillview, Kilmacormick, and Moneynoe Glebe/Chanterhill.

The quality of Enniskillen's public amenities has been significantly improved in recent years. Facilities such as the Fermanagh Lakeland Forum, public spaces such as the Buttermarket and attractions such as the Enniskillen Castle Museums all aim to improve the quality of life for those living in Enniskillen and to improve the experience of those visiting the town, both foreign and domestic alike.

## 2.4 Demographic Profile

The overall analysis of key demographic data for Enniskillen, points to a stagnating population that has gone through a number of cycles since 2001, including strong growth from 2005-2013, a sharp decline between 2013-2015, and a small recovery from 2015-2020 (if estimates are correct). Furthermore, analysis of historic data and projections suggests an increasingly ageing population with a declining level of young people which is reflective of many similar sized towns across Northern Ireland.

For instance, from 2001 to 2020, the proportion of the population of Enniskillen under 15 years decreased by 2.6%, while those aged 16-39 years decreased by 5.9%. Those aged over 65 years increased by 5.4% during this period, followed by the 40 - 64 years cohort increasing by 3.2% during that time. In relation to health, in the 2011 Census, 78.24% of the population within Enniskillen town identified their health status as 'very good' or 'good' (slightly below the NI average of 79.4%) with just 5.21 % overall identifying as 'bad' or 'very bad' (lower than the NI average of 5.6%). Similarly, findings from the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council 2021 Resident Survey, found that 79% of respondents in Enniskillen identified their health status as "very good or good" while 5% identified their health as bad or very bad.

The town has a beautiful natural setting for its residents and visitors alike, with a number of areas scoring highly in relation to the physical environment. However, despite the very positive attributes of the town, deprivation is also evident in certain areas. Therefore, as the town moves towards 2035, consideration should be given to enhancing services and supports to those that need it while also promoting and enhancing the town's positive attributes. In doing so, Enniskillen can look to support and grow its current population while creating a more sustainable and resilient town.





"Overall analysis of the demographic profile of Enniskillen town points to slow population growth with an increasingly ageing population..."



# Vacancy and Dereliction Survey of Enniskillen Town



## 2.5 Spatial Analysis

Enniskillen, the second largest settlement in the Fermanagh and Omagh District is identified as a main hub and inter-regional gateway to Ireland's Northwest in the Regional Development Strategy 2035. It plays an important role as an educational, economic and public services hub for its residents as well as its surrounding catchment areas and benefits from its proximity to the border in relation to cross-border trade.

Despite being serviced by the A4 route towards Portadown and Belfast to the east and Sligo to the west, the A32 towards Omagh and the A509; the location does not benefit from enhanced accessibility, with a lack of access to rail and motorways evident. Furthermore, like many towns it experiences issues with the movement of people and traffic around the settlement and has clusters of commercial vacancy in the town centre with a number of opportunity sites also identified. Despite this, these constraints have the potential to provide opportunities regarding the improvement of the town centre, its accessibility and social and economic vibrancy.

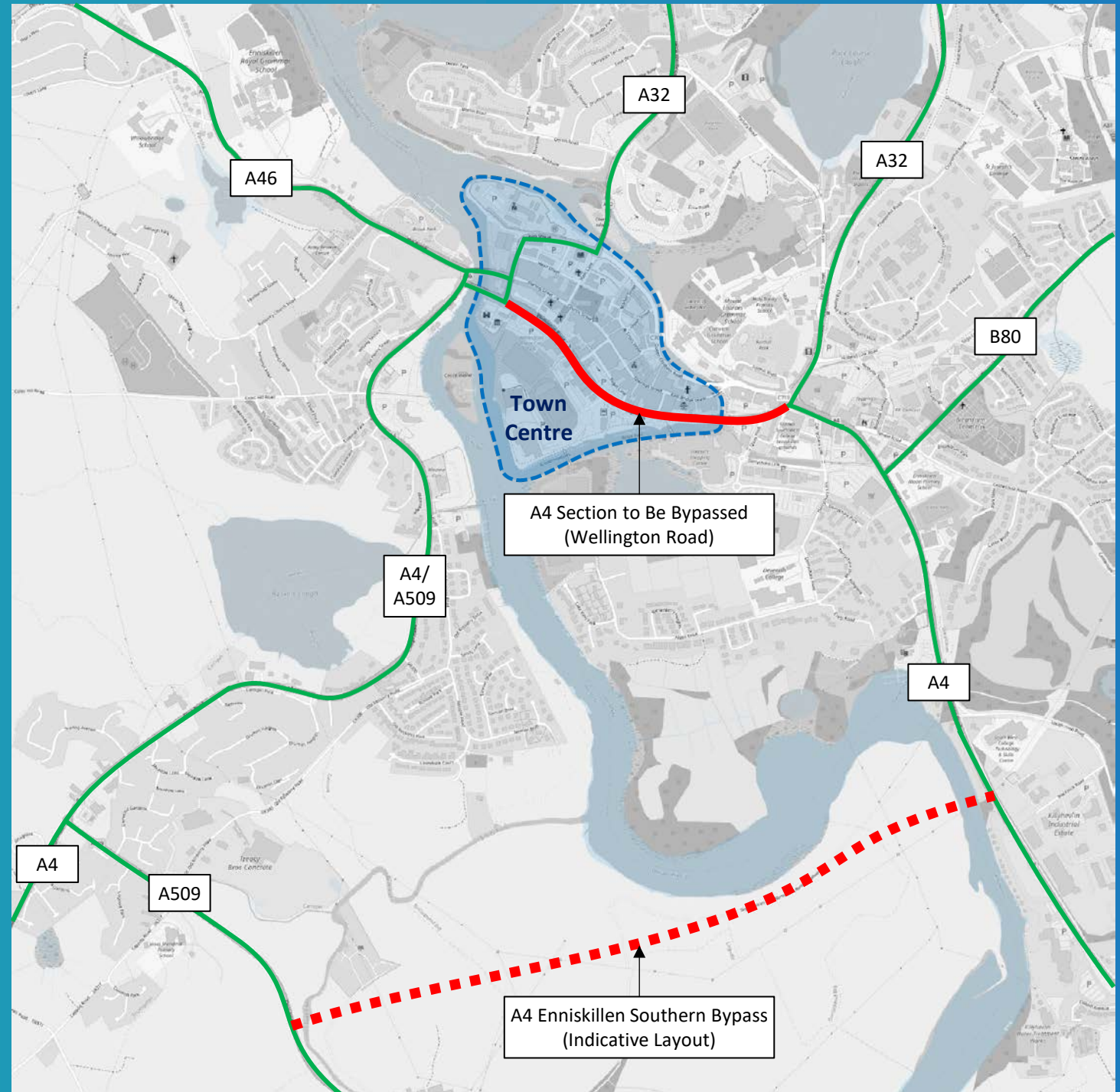
## 2.6 Transport and Access

Enniskillen, while serviced by a number of A-class roads, lacks access to rail and motorways and has a limited accessible, affordable and frequent public transport to meet the needs of its people. However, analysis of the permeability and accessibility of the town indicates that it is conducive to walking and cycling due to its relatively compact nature. Yet the potential for this type of mobility is curtailed due to a lack of sufficient walking and cycling infrastructure. Furthermore, the town suffers from traffic congestion due to the significant volume of through traffic it experiences and bottleneck points in the town centre.

It is expected that the planned A4 Enniskillen Southern Bypass should result in traffic being rerouted away from the town centre, reducing traffic congestion. As such, there is an opportunity to enhance the wellbeing of the town's residents by providing a cycling and walking infrastructure and promote active mobility which in turn should further reduce traffic congestion and contribute to a more appealing and healthier town centre.



# Enniskillen Southern Bypass





# Public Off-Street Car Parks in Enniskillen Town Centre

## LEGEND

● Enniskillen Town Centre  
(Town Hall)

## Walking time to the Town Centre

■ 5 minutes  
■ 10 minutes

## Off-Street Car Parks

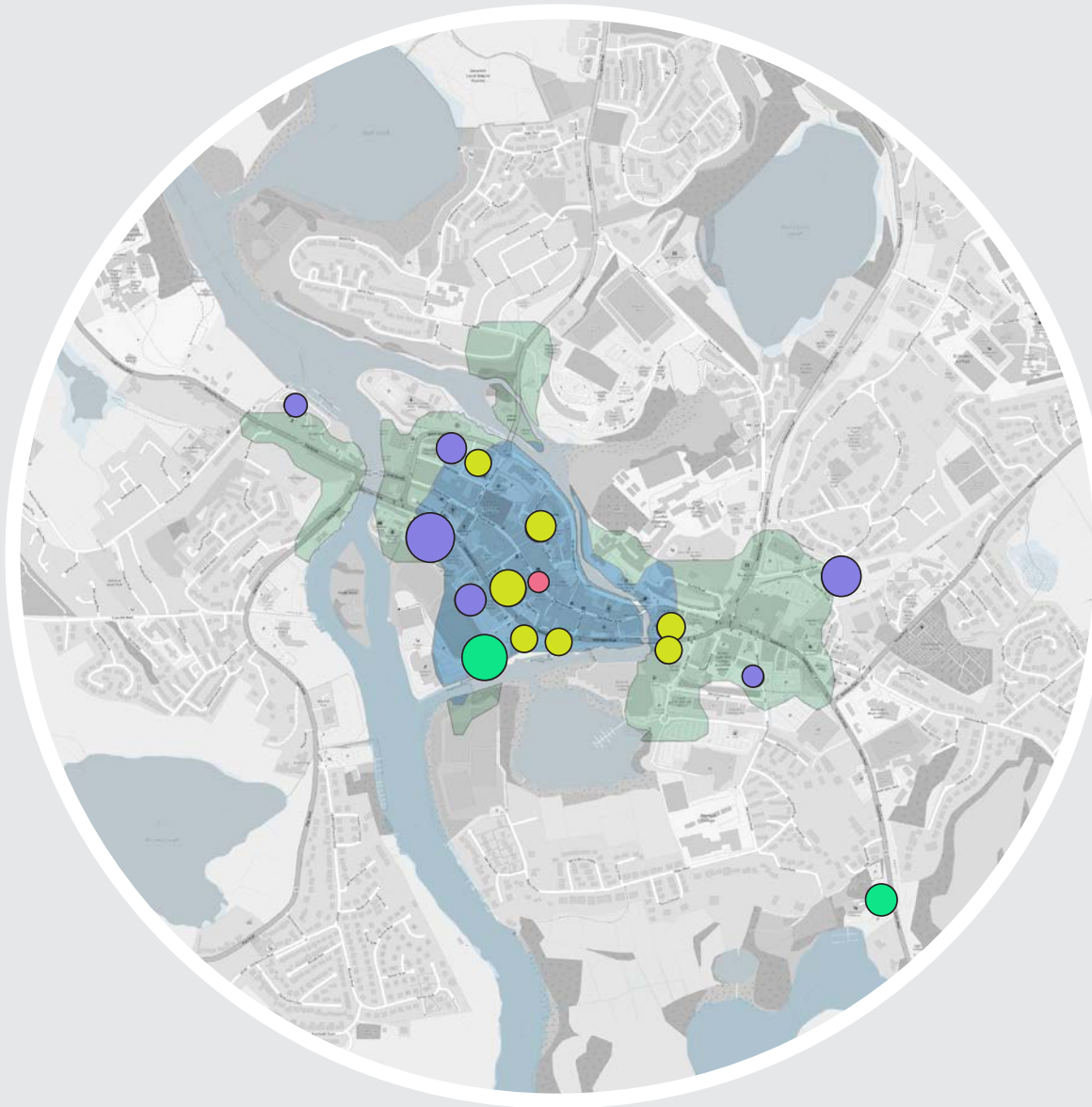
● Free  
● Free for Customers  
● Pay and Display

## Ownership

● Council-Operated  
● Private

## Capacity (No. Spaces)

● 317  
● 300  
● 200  
● 100



Enniskillen is well served by parking provision.



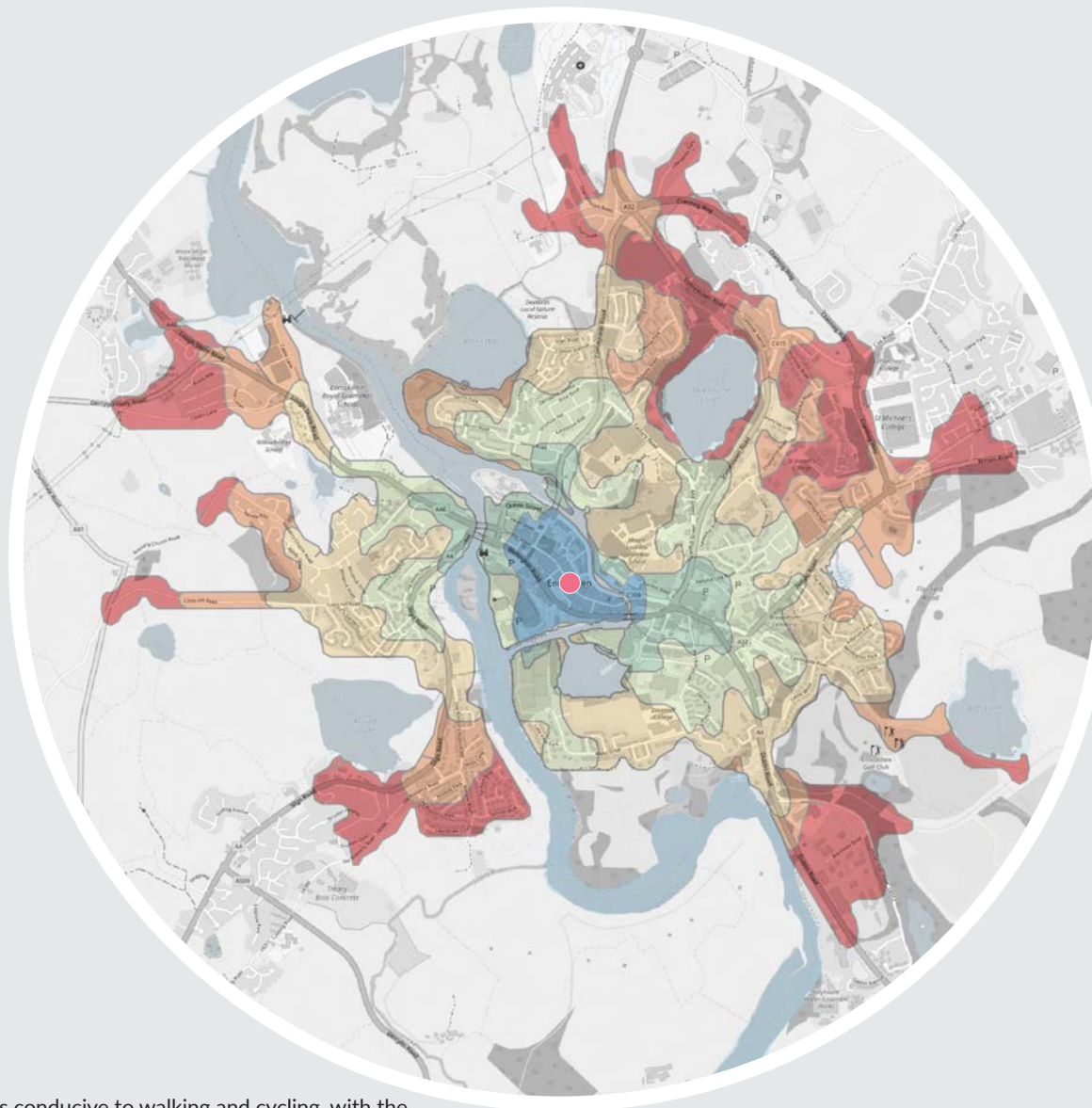
## Walking Time from Enniskillen Town Centre

### LEGEND

● Enniskillen Town Centre  
(Town Hall)

### Walking time to the Town Centre

- 5 minutes
- 10 minutes
- 15 minutes
- 20 minutes
- 25 minutes
- 30 minutes



Enniskillen is conducive to walking and cycling, with the majority of the town accessible within 10 minutes.





2.7 Economy and Employment

Enniskillen has a multifunctional role as an economic, educational and public services centre and is a main hub and inter-regional gateway in the FODC area. As such, the town is an important driver of the economy and employment across the wider District and beyond. The town has several significant employers and sectoral clusters, with tourism an important contributing element to the local economy.

However, when compared to 2011 data, there appears to have been a decline in the number of employee jobs (-5.3%). Similarly, at a district level, economic activity rates are also below the NI average, although this may be partly attributed to early retirees and a lack of affordable childcare. As such, to enhance the economy and employment opportunities, Enniskillen needs to build upon its identified strengths and clusters, attract investment, support local businesses and SMEs, and fully capitalise on its immense tourism potential. Retaining and attracting people of working age is critically important.



2.8 Community Infrastructure

Enniskillen is home to a range of community services and supports as well as amenities and infrastructure that contribute to the overall wellbeing of residents and communities in its wider catchment area. Findings from the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council 2021 Resident Survey highlight that 22% of residents in Enniskillen identified themselves as regularly taking part in local groups or community activities and 15% of those surveyed in Enniskillen identified as having volunteered in the last 12 months.

A Social Infrastructure Audit (SIA) of Enniskillen Town was also undertaken to record the social infrastructure contained within the town centre boundary. Seven categories were used which are outlined in the table below. The results from this SIA recorded a total of 379 social infrastructure facilities and amenities within Enniskillen.



Table 2-1 Social Infrastructure Categories

Category	Facility Type
Healthcare Services	Health Centres, General Practitioner (GP) Practices, Dental Practices, Physiotherapist, Pharmacies, Nursing Homes and Specialist Services.
Education and Training	Primary Schools, Post-Primary Schools, Further Education and Training Facilities, Childcare.
Community and Civic Services	Credit Unions, Post Offices, Community Facilities, Emergency Services, Police Stations, Fire Stations and Libraries.
Open Space, Sports and Recreation	Parks, Playgrounds, Dedicated Public Open Space and Amenity Areas, Sports Centres and Formal Club Facilities, Green Corridors, Natural / Semi Natural Green Spaces and Other Open Spaces.
Religious Institutions and Burial Sites	Churches/Places of Worship, Burial Grounds.
Arts, Cultural and Tourism	Theatre, Museum, Performance and outdoor events spaces, Music, Speech / Drama and Dance, Tourism Amenities, Tourist Accommodation.
Retail Centres and Services	District, town, neighbourhood, and local retail shops and services





2.9 Education

In Enniskillen, a strong education provision is evident with a significant level of educational infrastructure present in the town. This includes pre-school, primary, post-primary, and further and higher educational facilities, with the town acting as an educational hub for the surrounding area. Notable facilities include the South West College's Erne Campus which was the world's first and largest educational building to achieve Passive House Premium Status and the BREEAM Outstanding certification for sustainable design. It is also home to CAFRE Enniskillen Campus which hosts the widest range of equine courses in Ireland. In relation to education outcomes, a particularly strong performance was recorded in 2019/2020 school leaver year in relation to achievement and the town is consistently above average for school leavers entering higher education. However, it should be noted that as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic examinations across Northern Ireland were cancelled in 2020 with student grades being calculated by their schools. This resulted in record levels of achievement particularly in relation to the highest grades when compared to 2019.<sup>1</sup>

When achievement and qualification attainment is considered over the longer-term a degree of underachievement is evident with levels significantly and consistently below the NI average. Given the high level of school leavers entering higher education, the relatively lower levels of qualification attainment identified below may be reflective of a significant level of educated young people leaving the town to access higher education and related employment opportunities. Overall, Enniskillen education outcomes have been improving, but there is work to be done to bring achievement in line with NI averages and ensure the workforce and town remain competitive to 2035.

Table 2-2 Educational attainment within the working age population over time in the Fermanagh 1992 LGD area

	Achieved NVQ Level 4 And Above (%)	Achieved Below NVQ Level 4 (%)	No Qualifications (%)
2011	18.5	52.4	29.1
2012	18.6	58.2	23.2
2013	17.9	63.4	18.7
2014	21.8	60.9	17.3
2015	24.2	62.5	*
2016	28.4	58.8	*
2017	30.5	48.1	21.4
2018	32.3	54.1	*
2019	26.0	49.4	24.5
* Too small for a reliable estimate			



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-58152067>



# Chapter three Participative Engagement & Involvement





# Participative Engagement and Involvement

## 3.1 The Process Outlined

Participative engagement and involvement of citizens, businesses, community and voluntary sector, public sector organisations and key statutory partners underpins the development of the Plan.

Ensuring a collaborative approach, identifying the key themes and priorities at the start of the process and encouraging continuous inclusive communication throughout has been paramount. This approach has informed the plan content but also ensured that those who will benefit from the plan, as well as support its implementation.

With its purpose and focus informed by a strong evidence base, and by the knowledge of the local people, the plan is achievable, realistic and will contribute to the improved quality of life for all who live, visit or work in the town.

## 3.2 How we did it

To ensure involvement of a wide spectrum of our communities we used a variety of communication tools and methods. These included:



### SOCIAL MEDIA

Utilisation of Social Media platforms of Community Planning Partners



### EMAILS

Through access to Council & Community Planning Partner databases



### COUNCIL WEBSITE

Profiled on Council Website – through a dedicated Place Shaping section



### STEERING GROUP

Ongoing Engagement with Steering Group,



### LOCAL PAPERS

Public Notices in all local papers



### ONLINE SURVEYS

Online surveys targeted at key groups inc. public, children and young people, businesses and community and voluntary sector



### DROP IN SESSION

In Erne Shopping centre and Agricultural Show



### STRATEGIC CONVERSATIONS

With key stakeholders



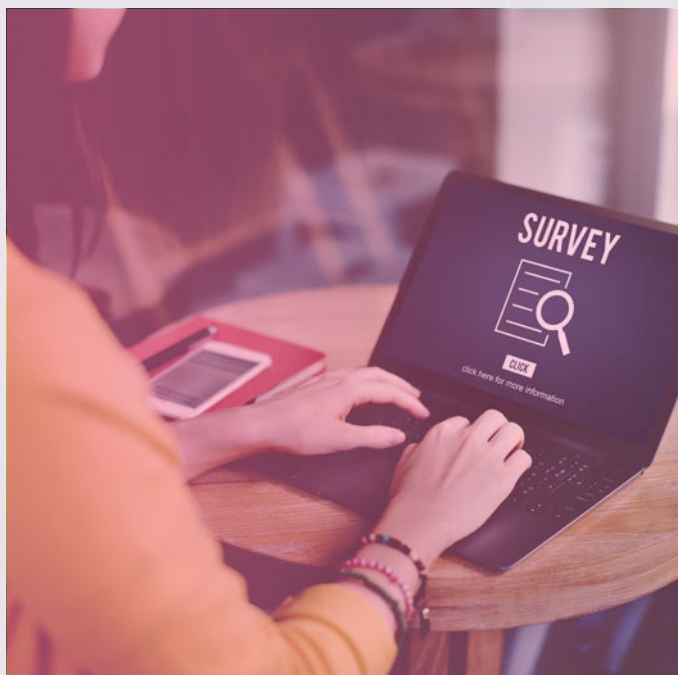


## Participative Engagement and Involvement

### 3.3 Online survey approach

An extensive bottom-up approach to community consultation and engagement exercise was undertaken to capture the views and comments from a wide range of stakeholders associated with Enniskillen town.

To seek the input of communities, businesses, the community/ voluntary sectors, children and young people; surveys were issued in June 2022 for a period of ten weeks. Responses demonstrated a range of issues alongside possible interventions required. A significant number of strategic conversations were also held.



### 3.4 Survey Summary

#### Public Survey

**400** responses



- » Almost two-thirds (**61.3%; 190 respondents**) of respondents considered Enniskillen's greatest asset to be its local and natural environment (i.e., the lakes)
- » The most frequently cited **challenges** were employment opportunities, town centre vacancy rates and lack of leisure opportunities
- » The top **priorities** to generate growth in Enniskillen were attracting more business to the area, attracting more visitors/tourists to the area and enhancing local services and facilities (such as health, education and transport)
- » The top priorities to improve the **town centre** were improving access to the waterfront and lakes walks, enhancing the waterfrontages (i.e., the lakes) and accessible, affordable car parking.

#### Business Survey

**36** responses



- » While many respondents described Enniskillen's business environment as being good, solid or vibrant, almost half (**44.8%; 13 respondents**) of respondents felt **Enniskillen's business environment could be improved significantly** to enable enterprise growth
- » **The most frequently cited priorities** to help drive economic development in Enniskillen were providing the necessary infrastructure for business to succeed, promoting a pro-business culture and providing enterprise support services to SMEs and micro companies
- » **Enniskillen's main strength as a place to do business** as outlined by respondents was the quality-of-life which Enniskillen offers

#### CVS Survey

**34** responses



- » Almost half (**50%**) of respondents felt that Enniskillen offered some services/opportunities for their organisation/membership base, while **21.4% (6 respondents)** of respondents felt that Enniskillen offered poor services and opportunities for their organisation and membership base..



## Participative Engagement and Involvement

### 3.4 Survey Summary (Cont.)

#### Student Survey – 116 responses

The youth and students of Enniskillen considered that the three biggest challenges, issues or concerns for the future development of Enniskillen for their cohort were employment opportunities, retail and shopping opportunities and housing/accommodation availability. While employment opportunities were outlined as the town's greatest challenge, **almost two-thirds (62.9%; 44 respondents)** of respondents described Enniskillen as offering some or significant employment opportunities for young people.

#### Primary School Children – 4 responses

Due to the timing of the consultation, it was not possible to collect a comprehensive response from children. The limited numbers did reference the lakes/water as Enniskillen's greatest asset and wanted to see Enniskillen as a busy, clean and vibrant and relaxing place. A further opportunity to consult with children will take place in the next phase of engagement.





# Participative Engagement and Involvement

A workshop was held with the members of the Enniskillen Place-Shaping Plan Steering group in Fermanagh House.

The key points identified were....

## 3.5 Steering Group Workshop Summary

### KEY THEMES



#### LOCATION

Capitalise on Enniskillen's unique feature as an island town and waterfront location ....



#### HISTORY AND HERITAGE

Maximise its history, heritage, and attractive public spaces, hosting events and celebrations which will...



#### TOWN CENTRE

Bring vibrancy to this historic market and county town while...



#### TOURISM

Help strengthen tourism and elongate the tourism season while...



#### ACCOMMODATION

Providing more housing for local residents and a broader range of tourism accommodation will...



#### INFRASTRUCTURE

Investing in roads, water treatment and water infrastructure, broadband, public transport, cycling and walking paths ...



#### ECONOMIC GROWTH

Contributing to more new businesses and new jobs at the same time as...



#### INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Ensuring inclusive growth for all.



# Participative Engagement and Involvement

## 3.6 Strategic Conversations

### OVERVIEW

Series of one-to-one consultations held with consultees ranging from Councillors to key stakeholders in statutory organisations, CVS representatives and local business representatives.



### TOURISM

- » Enhance the tourism offering, but in a sustainable manner
- » Encourage tourists to stay longer and spend more locally
- » Develop the tourism infrastructure, including more accommodation and information points
- » Extend the tourism season
- » Make it easier for tourists to navigate around through improved signage and marketing of tourism assets
- » Encourage SMEs to collaborate, providing a critical mass offering (to tourists)



### ECONOMIC GROWTH

- » Invest in the local infrastructure and connectivity
- » Build on services offered at the South West Acute Hospital (SWAH)
- » Ensure training and skills opportunities linked to current and future skills opportunities
- » Have greater linkages with schools, their careers education teams and local employers
- » Tackle workforce availability challenges



### HERITAGE AND NATURAL ASSETS

- » Maximise assets including access to the waterways, the Buttermarket and the Castle, and host more events at these locations.
- » Maximise the potential of the newly refurbished Enniskillen Workhouse.
- » Ensure more development at and increased use of open spaces including Forthill Park and Round O



### OPPORTUNITY SITES

- » Maximise current sites for housing, enterprise and economic development as well as tourism potential




### TOWN CENTRE

- » Focus on small quirky independent shops to attract footfall
- » Do more to increase town centre footfall in the evenings
- » Trial more people friendly spaces and reduce cars/ town centre congestion
- » Tackle vacancy rates







# Chapter four Analysis



# Analysis

## 4.1 SCOT Analysis – key points

STRENGTHS	CONSTRAINTS
Strategically located in Fermanagh and recognised as a main hub and inter-regional gateway to Ireland's Northwest in the Regional Development Strategy 2035.	Traffic congestion and bottlenecks in the town centre detracting from the town's beautiful location. Town centre is often congested with cars seeking spaces to park in close proximity to shops – leading to negative impacts on the town centre in terms of visual impact, noise impact and air quality.
Strong education infrastructure across the town including in Further and Higher Education with two SWC campuses and a CAFRE campus. This includes a growing reputation for sustainable development with the South West Erne Campus and CREST Centre.	Stagnation in population growth in recent years with a decrease of approximately 1% in the last 10 years.
Several areas in the town rank very strongly for their outdoor physical environment, with good amenities such as the Marina, Forthill Park and Ardhowen Theatre.	Despite strong performance in educational achievement for school leavers in 2019/2020, longer-term trend shows more modest achievement levels which are often below the NI average.
Enniskillen has a multifunctional role as an economic, public service and educational hub for a wide catchment area. Significant employment through the FODC, Waterways Ireland, South West Acute Hospital (SWAH) and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).	Residents of the Fermanagh and Omagh District fall below the Northern Ireland average for employment and economic activity, where employment levels appear to have decreased since 2011.
Recent investment in SWAH and provision of modern facilities for health care needs.	NI Water have identified waste-water treatment works capacity issues in Enniskillen, this has the potential to constrain growth and impact on water quality.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Work to attract further investment and promote and support the development of SMEs and entrepreneurship to increase employment opportunities in the area and enhance the town's attractiveness as a place to live and work.	The opportunity sites, should some of them remain vacant, may threaten the vibrancy of the town centre and fall into dereliction.
Capitalise on opportunities for green growth and development of associated skills through South-West College. Re-Development of the Fermanagh Lakeland Forum site to provide town centre leisure and well-being hub.	Traffic congestion detracting from the town centre's sense of place and beautiful natural setting, could also contribute to poorer health outcomes.
Extension of town centre public realm work and adjacent laneways and wider inclusion of greenery across the island town. Enhance connections between the town centre, the waterfront, associated amenities and sites of interest.	Commercial vacancy has remained above pre-pandemic levels in contrast to other similar sized settlements, and appears to have increased in 2022, which threatens the vibrancy of the town centre and could contribute to economic decline. Staffing shortages as result of the EU exit could also impact key sectors in Enniskillen including manufacturing, hospitality, retail and agri-business.
Providing a broader range of things to see and do, in tandem with an enhanced accommodation offer, and better linkages of attractions further enhancing and capitalising upon Enniskillen's immense tourism potential in a sustainable manner that benefits the entire community.	Decreasing levels of young people and stagnated growth could lead to economic decline, disproportionately impacting on already disadvantaged areas.
The opportunity sites represent great potential for further development of Enniskillen through repurposing and in some cases redevelopment of sites that could enhance and contribute to a vibrant town centre.	Failure to recruit to key posts in the SWAH and associated impact on the profile of hospital services.
	Economic volatility.

A photograph of two women in a workshop or laboratory setting. The woman on the left has blonde hair in a ponytail and is wearing a black and white polka-dot shirt. The woman on the right has brown hair in a bun, wears glasses, and a black long-sleeved shirt with a name tag that reads 'BILLYE GUNN'. They are both smiling and looking at a small, clear, rectangular object that the woman on the right is holding. The background is a blurred workshop with various equipment and materials.

# Chapter five Inspired by Enniskillen



# Enniskillen, The Island Town - Naturally Welcoming

## 5.1 The Ambition

This plan is about shaping a better place to be, positioning Enniskillen for the future as a more sustainable, attractive, vibrant, town. The aim is to increase the resilience of the local community and economy and provide for an enhanced, accessible, inclusive, and healthy urban environment.

Towns are continually evolving and never complete. Enniskillen deserves to be reimagined as a vibrant and dynamic place, one that fulfils the potential of the town's history, location and people.

The FODC Community Plan 2030 sets out our vision for the District, which is of *"a welcoming, shared and inclusive Fermanagh and Omagh district, where people and places are healthy, safe connected and prosperous, and where our outstanding natural, built and cultural heritage is cherished and sustainably managed"*.

Building on this vision, and based on research and collaborative engagement undertaken for this project, a draft ambition for the future of Enniskillen town centre can be described as:

*"A restorative reset will seek to re-establish a sense of Enniskillen as a naturally welcoming & beautiful island town linked to the water. Targeted collaborative investment will position Enniskillen as a healthy, people-first, connected and sustainable town, a vibrant community, enterprise, and tourism hub for Fermanagh."*

## 5.2 Key Themes

To support working towards the realisation of the ambition over the next 10–15-year period six themes have been identified for Enniskillen, aligned to the population indicators identified in the Fermanagh Omagh Our Community Plan 2030, and based on the research and engagement undertaken for this plan.



These are:

### Island Town

Reinforcing connections between Enniskillen town centre and the River Erne to restore a sense of an island community.

### Destination Town

Capitalising on Enniskillen's location and celebrating heritage with a focus on regenerative tourism.

### Thriving Town

Creating a more vibrant town centre through growth in town centre footfall and fostering a vibrant business and community environment.

### Connected Town

Improving connectivity and accessibility throughout the town, with linkages to surrounding places, and a people first approach.

### Healthy and Inclusive Town

Ensuring Enniskillen is an inclusive town with a prosperous, well educated, and healthy community.

### Opportunity Town

Establishing a pathway for activating the many opportunity sites located in and around the town.





### 5.3 Actions

The actions outlined in the previous section have been informed by thorough research and extensive engagement with key stakeholders. The goal is to bring tangible and effective change for Enniskillen.



# Enniskillen 2035 Strategic Framework

## ENNISKILLEN 2035 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

*“A regenerative reset will seek to re-establish a sense of Enniskillen as a naturally welcoming & beautiful island town linked to the water. Targeted collaborative investment will position Enniskillen as a healthy, people-first, connected and sustainable town, a vibrant community, enterprise, and tourism hub for Fermanagh.”*

KEY THEMES	2030 COMMUNITY PLAN POPULATION INDICATORS	ACTIONS
<b>1. Island town</b> – Reinforcing connections between Enniskillen town centre and the River Erne to restore a sense of an island community	5e: Tourism expenditure 1e: Recommended physical activity levels	Action 1 Create new water-front recreational amenities to encourage use by local residents and visitors Action 2: Commission and implement an Enniskillen Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy Action 3: Seek to position Enniskillen as a Destination of Angling Excellence
<b>2. Destination Town</b> – Capitalising on Enniskillen's location and celebrating heritage with a focus on regenerative tourism	5e: Tourism expenditure 5a: The number of jobs 6b: Heritage at risk 3h: People engaged in culture and/or arts	Action 4: Create compelling visitor experiences in Enniskillen Action 5: Buttermarket carpark and Market Review Action 6: Encourage a more vibrant visitor economy in Enniskillen Action 7: Seek to enhance the appearance of Enniskillen by building on Enniskillen's success as the 2022 Best Kept Town in Ireland
<b>3. Thriving Town</b> – Creating a more vibrant town centre through growth in town centre footfall and fostering a vibrant business and community environment.	5a: The number of jobs 5b: Economic inactivity 5c: The number of businesses 5d: Wage levels 5h: Commercial vacancy rates 6c: Street cleansing	Action 8: Position Enniskillen as an increasingly attractive place to invest and work Action 9: Encourage increased town centre footfall and vibrancy
<b>4. Connected Town</b> - Improving connectivity and accessibility throughout the town, with linkages to surrounding places, and a people first approach	5g: Length of motorways, dual carriageways and 'A' roads 6d: Journeys made on public transport and active travel 5e: Tourism Expenditure 3d: KSI in road traffic collisions 1e: Recommended physical activity levels 2e: People aged over 65 who can get to all the areas in their locale that they want (ASCOT)	Action 10: Enniskillen Island Town traffic management and active travel study to be undertaken Action 11: Develop and implement an Enniskillen Signage Strategy Action 12: Enniskillen Greenways Pre-Feasibility Study
<b>5. Healthy and Inclusive Town</b> – Ensuring Enniskillen is an inclusive town with a prosperous, well educated, and healthy community	1a: Gap in life expectancy 1c: SPR – Mood and Anxiety Disorder 1e: Recommended physical activity levels 2b: People aged over 65 in good health 3g: Life satisfaction of people with disabilities 4a: School leavers with 5 GCSEs	Action 13: Enniskillen for all Action 14: Reimagining Enniskillen's Parks to encourage greater use
<b>6. Opportunity Town</b> – establishing a pathway for activating the many opportunity sites located in and around the town	5a: The number of jobs 5c: The number of businesses 5h: Commercial vacancy rates	Action 15: Work collaboratively with partner organisations to realise the redevelopment and alternative uses of current and future vacant sites

# Enniskillen Town Project Map











## ACTION 1:



*Reinforcing connections between Enniskillen town centre and the River Erne to restore a sense of an island community*

**Action 1:** Create new water-front recreational amenities to encourage use by local residents and visitors

### **Best Idea 1: Transformative redesign of the Fermanagh Lakeland Forum and outdoor recreation, waterfront and open space into a major well-being hub to act as a key attraction for the town**

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council has advanced plans for a new Leisure Centre on the site of the existing Fermanagh Lakeland Forum. The Lakeland Forum redevelopment will deliver a wide range of indoor and outdoor leisure and recreation facilities, promote health and wellbeing and increase access to the Lough. The facility will provide family experiences, enable water activities and provide an indoor wet-weather alternative. The development will include an Activity Park that will be sympathetically designed to complement and

enhance the natural and historical landscape and increase biodiversity. The Lakeland Forum's inclusive intergenerational offer will promote community engagement, physical activity, healthier lifestyles, and positive mental wellbeing. Designed to Passive House standards and promoted as an exemplar for sustainable development and accessibility, this landmark facility will be a point of civic pride.

The development is a bold statement in advancing the Council's regeneration and sustainability ambitions. As a high-quality visitor attraction, the facility and Activity Park will increase dwell time in Enniskillen, enhancing links between the site and the retail core positively contributing to place-shaping, town centre regeneration, and the local tourism offer. New cycling and walking routes will improve its connection to the town centre, facilitating movement and active travel.

The wider water-based recreational offer in Enniskillen will be considered as part of the redesign of Fermanagh Lakeland Forum. This could include for example the provision of further marina facilities and additional jetty facilities in key locations. Further financial and technical feasibility would be required to identify the most suitable sites and their operation

### **Best Idea 2: Develop an Enniskillen Island Walk**

It is not currently possible to walk around the edge of the island upon which the town centre of Enniskillen sits. This means there is a lack of sense of an island place for visitors to the town, and a recreational amenity is lacking for those living, working and studying in the town, that engages people with the water.





This project envisages development Enniskillen Island Walk pathway that runs around the island's edge. This pathway route to include linkages to key sites such as Inis Ceithleann a new pedestrian bridge from Enniskillen Island to South West College, and linkages to out of centre locations along the riverside. This is envisaged to include enhanced water taxi infrastructure such as jetties at key locations. This intervention is envisaged to need a cantilevered walkway at Portora Wharf and a progressive approach to the PSNI site. It will also include suitable bat friendly lighting to ensure safety and perception of safety, as well as mechanisms to overcome anti-social behaviour and littering.

### **Best Idea 3: New pedestrian bridge from Market Street to South West College**

Development of a new pedestrian bridge between Market Street and South-West College would enhance people pedestrian movement and footfall in the town centre. Associated promotional activity could seek to encourage SWC students and staff into the town centre.

A new pedestrian bridge will further enhance connectivity between the town centre and Brewster Park and Cornagrade.





## ACTION 2:



**Action 2:** Commission and implement an Enniskillen Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy



### **Best Idea 1: Enniskillen Blue and Green Infrastructure Plan**

In tandem with the completion of a Pitches Strategy for Enniskillen a new blue and green infrastructure plan would consider all parks and open spaces on land and on-water in the town. The aim should be to encourage greater use of open spaces in support of wider health and well-being objectives. This to include engagement with sports organisations and other providers to avoid duplication of provision.

Enhanced blue and green infrastructure will bring socio-economic benefits for the town through increased engagement with the natural environment. Engagement with partners will be essential to ensure ongoing sustainable funding/ investment in such infrastructure.







## ACTION 3:

**Action 3:** Seek to position Enniskillen as a Destination of Angling Excellence

### Best Idea 1: Seek to enhance water quality

Good water quality is critical to ensuring angling continues to play a role in the economy of Enniskillen and the wider area. This envisages seeking a commitment by NI Water to invest appropriately in necessary infrastructure to enhance water quality. Ongoing lobbying on the part of elected representatives and other lobby/advocacy groups will be required.

### Best Idea 2: Review of bankside angling infrastructure

It is important that infrastructure is in place to meet the needs of match and leisure anglers. This project includes a review of current assets and potential development sites including angling stands/accessible angling stands, and access. This extends to the wider Lough Erne area.

### Best Idea 3: Work with key partners to deliver on an angling strategy for the Erne system

Work is ongoing to finalise an angling strategy for the River Erne system. This includes a range of recommendations to support the angling sector in Enniskillen such as development of infrastructure, support for events such as the Classic, local capacity building and further research. It is important that partners work together to identify a sustainable funding model for the Fermanagh Classic Fishing Festival, given its popularity, as a best-in-class experience. The event brings considerable economic benefit to Fermanagh and the wider area through hospitality spend and increased bed-nights.



## ACTION 4:

*Destination Town – Capitalising on Enniskillen's location and celebrating heritage with a focus on regenerative tourism*

**Action 4:** Create compelling visitor experiences in Enniskillen

### **Best Idea 1: Review of Enniskillen Castle building accommodation use**

The historic Enniskillen Castle represents an important part of Fermanagh's rich history and heritage. Enniskillen Castle hosts the visitor information centre which enables visitors to find out about things to see and do in the area. The Castle benefited from a significant £3.5m upgrade in 2016 including a new Visitor Information Centre, galleries and exhibition space. Enniskillen Castle is proposed as the Enniskillen Destination Town Hub in the Fermanagh Lakelands & Omagh and The Sperrins Visitor Experience Development Plan 2022-2032, which envisages Enniskillen Castle being the primary destination and information hub for visitors to Fermanagh Lakelands. The historic courtyard of the building provides significant opportunities for events such as Halloween and Christmas seasonal festivals. Enniskillen Castle should increasingly be seen as the heritage gateway to Fermanagh, signposting other attractions and activities in the area.

There is potential to build on the investment by reviewing the use of castle buildings and courtyard accommodation to determine if the optimum use is being made of this iconic building. For example, other locations could suit existing users better and new visitor attractions could in turn be relocated to the castle, creating a more wide-ranging visitor hub.

This could also consider optimum use for the Castle Courtyard, for example for seasonal markets. Enniskillen Castle courtyard has considerable potential to act as a flag-ship space for the town, this could include hosting the Enniskillen International Market, music events and cultural events.

### **Best Idea 2: Devenish Island Visitor Experience Feasibility Study**

Devenish Island is one of the most beautiful and important heritage sites on the Erne system. Imagery of the island, ecclesiastical ruins and the Round Tower are used around the world to attract attention, to promote the beauty and history of Ireland and to encourage visitors to come to Fermanagh. It is the most important ecclesiastical site in County Fermanagh, and one of high significance in an island-wide context. It plays a key role in depicting Enniskillen as a history and tourism rich town. The island can be accessed through several water transport providers. There is an opportunity to capitalise on the proximity of Devenish Island to Enniskillen and create a visitor attraction based around the island's natural, built and cultural heritage.





In 2018, the Council, in partnership with Waterways Ireland, Tourism Northern Ireland and the Historic Environment Division commissioned a feasibility study to examine how to maximise Devenish as a visitor experience and a marketing lever for the broader destination. Based on a similar approach to that taken by Clare County Council and Failte Ireland to Inis Cealtra in Lough Derg i.e., a two-centre attraction linked by ferry, with most of the interpretation housed in a separate visitor centre off the island. This could potentially be located at the Castle, reinforcing it being the primary destination and information hub for visitors to Fermanagh Lakelands.

A Conservation Management Plan will form part of the next steps for Devenish, directing a heritage focused regenerative tourism approach. This will build on current work being undertaken to facilitate visitor access and would provide an additional reason for visitors to Enniskillen to experience the area from a water-based perspective.

### **Best Idea 3: Ardhowen Theatre redevelopment**

The Ardhowen is home to theatre performances, comedy, music, dance, workshops, small scale exhibitions, and more recently the venue has hosted weddings. The much-loved listed venue will undergo an £8 million refurbishment which will update the 36 year old facility to meet contemporary standards, increase accessibility and improve environmental sustainability by becoming a Nearly Zero Energy Building (NZEB). The refurbishment will also exploit the stunning Erne side location by maximising outdoor space and access to the venue for boats and cruisers using the jetty, delivering a unique experience for visitors.

There is a further opportunity for the theatre and Castle Coole to collaborate on joint ventures. The planned improvements will transform the Ardhowen into a vibrant regional theatre, a creative and community-focused, accessible and inclusive venue, that delivers high-quality performances and experiences that positively contribute to the cultural, social and economic outcomes of the area.



## ACTION 5:

### Action 5: Buttermarket Car park and Market Review

This project will contribute to encouraging wider use of the town centre, as well as opportunities to provide local economic opportunities. This part of the town has significant potential to play a key role in enhancing the vibrancy of the town centre. There is potential to link the area to the new SW College campus via a new pedestrian footbridge. Enniskillen has a long history as a market town where food has been produced and traded. Food and craft markets provide an opportunity to showcase local products and to stimulate entrepreneurship in this sector of the economy, with the existing Enniskillen Taste Tour helping to animate this sector.

#### Best Idea 1: Significant intervention/complete redesign of existing car park adjacent to Buttermarket to enable market activities

The Buttermarket at Enniskillen includes nineteen art and craft units along with a coffee shop housed within a 19th century market building. There is potential for extension of markets to the neighbouring car parks. It is envisaged that this space would be used for specialist markets and events at weekends, with use as a car park retained during the week if required. The project would require a phased redesign and reimagining of the carpark to include resurfacing, landscaping and new infrastructure to facilitate market stalls. It would become a multi-functional space, a public square for Enniskillen that would link the Diamond and the Buttermarket.

Development of a multi-purpose space may encourage building owners to create cafes, restaurants and bars that open onto this new public square, animating the wider area. This would contribute to objectives for a lively evening economy in Enniskillen.





## ACTION 6:

### Action 6: Encourage a more vibrant visitor economy in Enniskillen

Fostering a more vibrant visitor economy in Enniskillen town centre will contribute to wider goals of supporting businesses in the town. The Events and Festivals Strategy 2021-2026 defines Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's role and ways it will support a program of events and festivals. Increased provision of cultural events in the town will encourage more people to spend time in the town centre. This is closely linked to providing a greater range of attractive spaces where evening events can take place. In addition, further promotion of water-based activities will help to increase the perception of Enniskillen as an island town.

Events have several inter-related benefits. They enhance a sense of place by animating public spaces. They provide an opportunity for local people to interact with others from the local area and for visitors to meet local people, adding to their experience.

### Best Idea 1: Support increased range and promotion of town centre events and activities

Support implementation of the Events and Festivals Strategy 2021-2026 (and subsequent review) with a focus on town centre events and water-based activities (e.g. canoeing, paddle boarding etc.). This could include development of the night-time economy by encouraging all premises (especially non-licensed & mixed retail) to open after 6pm to increase footfall in town centre and work with local businesses to build on the innovation and collaboration to date by offering linked promotions, discount and offers by the hospitality and retail sector. Recognising this does not appeal to all business owners, this could be trialled on a number of agreed pilot days.

## ACTION 7:

Action 7: Seek to enhance the appearance of Enniskillen by building on Enniskillen's success as the 2022 Best Kept Town in Ireland

Enniskillen was awarded Ireland's Best Kept Town and the Best Overall, all-Ireland titles in Ireland's Best Kept competition in June 2022, the only town to have won these titles twice. The awards are testament to hard work over many years and a strong sense of civic pride.

### **Best Idea 1: Further investment in street planting**

This project will contribute to the vision of Enniskillen as a greener and more eco-friendly town by progressively increasing the number of trees and pollinator friendly planting in the town, both of which can enhance the appearance of the town and contribute to wider biodiversity objectives. This builds upon similar initiatives including biodiversity initiatives at Racecourse Lough and other locations.

### **Best Idea 2: Softening/removal of security structures at key buildings**

Some buildings have a form that is now perhaps outdated and reflects the legacy of the past. This includes security features such as fencing and high walls. Softening the appearance of selected buildings, such as the British Telecom building and the PSNI site, would in turn enhance the appearance and welcoming aspect of the town.





### **Best Idea 3: Laneway and Building Enhancements**

The aim of this project is to enhance and continue the revitalisation work in the town centre through re-surfacing and new artwork for all laneways off Main Street, and enhancement of the rear of buildings along the south side between the town to Wellington Road, and on the north side of the town towards Queen Elizabeth Road. The goal is to encourage greater use of these laneways by businesses, and ultimately to encourage re-use of buildings for residential accommodation, increasing town centre residential density – with more people living on the island.

### **Best Idea 4: Undertake Town Centre Lighting Strategy**

Significant lighting works were completed in the town centre during the Public Realm. This project will include a review of which buildings are already lit and to what degree of success. For example, the range of key historic buildings, laneways and other key buildings that have feature lighting. Recognising the need to conserve energy and the perception of energy conservation this could be for a limited number of hours in the evening and using low energy lighting systems.







## ACTION 8:



**Action 8:** Position Enniskillen as an increasingly attractive place to invest and work

This action seeks to enhance the business ecosystem within Enniskillen and the wider District. This is based upon encouraging businesses to invest in the town, particularly those focused on a core theme of sustainable development.

### Best Idea 1: Encourage investment in Enniskillen

This will involve inclusion of the town within a wider Fermanagh and Omagh Investment Prospectus, as well as an Enniskillen success stories campaign. Collaboration and partnership between industry and academia will be essential, while a key focus will be the attraction of start-ups, and SMEs as part of a business ecosystem focused on alternative energy. This will contribute to the growing activity cluster for this form of enterprise in Enniskillen and be supported by the CREST Centre for renewable energy and sustainable technologies.

### Best Idea 2: Examine opportunities for additional workspace in Enniskillen

Building on the experience of Fermanagh Enterprise Agency in developing workspace/units and the Enniskillen Workhouse Project Provision of space to work in an attractive environment encouraging younger people to stay in Enniskillen, rather than moving away to another location to work. Ideally facilities would also encourage those who have left Enniskillen to return, with quality of life seen as a key motivator as well as encourage more young people to stay.

**"Creating a more vibrant town centre through fostering a vibrant business environment and encouraging growth in town centre footfall"**



## ACTION 9:



**Action 9:** Encourage increased town centre footfall and vibrancy

This action aims to progressively increase town centre footfall by increasing the number of people living in the town centre, providing more reasons for people to visit the town centre, promote the ongoing revitalisation of shops fronts, thus enabling a more attractive and healthier environment in the town centre.

A broader town centre visitor accommodation offer would encourage increased footfall in the town, particularly in the

evenings, supporting businesses such as bars and cafes, contributing to the evening economy. Diversifying the visitor accommodation offer could include exploring opportunities to enable motorhomes to stay overnight near the town centre, and encouraging cruise hire companies to consider shorter hires, particularly in shoulder season months.

### **Best Idea 1: Re-use of vacancy upper floors in town centre buildings (Vacant Unit Pilot Study) to increase town centre residential density**

Building on best practice elsewhere (High Streets Taskforce, Scotland's Towns Partnership, Town Centre Synthesis Study in Ireland) to examine opportunity for increasing occupancy of upper floors of town centre buildings to increase residential density in the town centre, footfall and vibrancy. To include identification of meanwhile use opportunities for existing key vacant buildings and sites (public-private-community partnership) such as community use, pop-up shops, markets or other recreational or environmental use. Upper floors of buildings or vacant sites could be used for permanent residential development and/or for temporary visitor use.

The overall aim is to increase the number of people living in the town centre, which in turn contributes to objectives regarding sustainability and active travel as more people would live closer to amenities and infrastructure, reducing the need to travel by car.

### **Best Idea 2: Enniskillen Food Market/events**

It is proposed that an annual 'Flavour of Fermanagh' event be held with Enniskillen as a focal point, where the various agri-businesses and local agriculture producers showcase their produce. This could also include a weekly Enniskillen Farmer's Market (April-Sep) using a reimagined carpark adjacent to the Buttermarket, or Castle Courtyard.

### **Best Idea 3: Phased/trial people first town centre days**

Phased/trial people first days which would see the heart of Enniskillen become a more attractive and vibrant place, encouraging people to stay longer, enabling a more enjoyable experience, encouraging increased town centre footfall and catalysing the evening economy. This could coincide with street animation e.g. a cultural/music/community/food market event. This initiative is linked to the overall culture change of promoting health and well-being and supporting climate related objectives.

### **Best Idea 4: Motorhome Hub Feasibility Study**

There has been a significant increase in the number of motorhomes both in private ownership and leased from hire companies on the roads around the island of Ireland, particularly so in the last three years. This growth brings challenge and opportunity, with negative impacts required to be mitigated and economic opportunities harnessed. Provision of a dedicated site or sites for short-term use by motorhomes within walking distance of Enniskillen town centre could bring benefit for town centre businesses. A feasibility study could consider potential sites, best practice, and opportunities to work with the private sector and public sector.



"Connected Town – Incorporating more active and sustainable forms of connectivity, improving linkages to surrounding places, and a people first approach"

## ACTION 10:



*Capitalising on Enniskillen's location and celebrating heritage with a focus on regenerative tourism*

**Action 10:** Enniskillen Island Town traffic management and active travel study to be undertaken

Enniskillen town centre can be accessed on foot from a significant proportion of the Enniskillen built-up area, except for the suburbs further afield. The compact nature of Enniskillen is deemed conducive for the use of active modes as a means of daily travel; however, the existing infrastructure may discourage residents and visitors from sustainable modal choices, in particular from cycling.

The lack of dedicated cycling infrastructure and a discontinuous network of shared walking and cycling facilities affect the attractiveness of Enniskillen town centre as walking and cycling environment. This is compounded by the congestion on key town centre roads and lack of counterflow cycle lanes on one-way roads in the town centre core, both of which may discourage cycling due to the resulting safety concerns and circuitous routing. The development of walking and cycling infrastructure will be defined by a new Enniskillen Walking & Cycling Study, which is currently being prepared.

### **Best Idea 1: Rationalisation and Re-design of Wellington Road and Queen Street**

Wellington Road is an example of strategic traffic planning from a different era; a four-lane carriageway in a town centre, which has negative impacts upon health and the visual environment. With the expected significant reduction in through-traffic due to opening of the A4 Southern Bypass, there are opportunities for road space re-allocation in the town centre, (as also recognised in earlier planning documents such as the Enniskillen Town Centre Masterplan 2012)

Rationalisation and redesign of Wellington Road to create a more walk and bicycle friendly place would encourage a modal shift to active travel, link the town centre to the water, and reduce town centre air pollution. Together this would enhance the appearance of the town and encourage greater use of a more attractive place.

Queen Street is currently an unattractive, congested and at time dangerous stretch of carriageway. As with Wellington Road, the opening of the A4 Southern Bypass will reduce through traffic. This is an opportune time to remodel this road, making it narrower with slower vehicle speeds and more and better crossing opportunities for pedestrians, and segregated cycle paths. This intervention should extend along Queen Elizabeth Road as part of a whole island approach.

### **Best Idea 2: Closure of Erne Bridge to motor traffic and creation of an island town gateway**

Linked to the rationalisation and re-design of Wellington Road and Queen Street, and as part of a wider traffic management study, there is a clear opportunity to close the historic Erne Bridge to motor traffic i.e. walkers and cyclists only. For example, this could include traffic entering the island from the west (A46 and A4/509) using Castle Bridge and continuing west along





Wellington Road or turning left towards the PSNI station. The aim would be to facilitate foot and cycling traffic to access the town centre more safely, and to create a pleasant viewing area over the river.

### **Best Idea 3: Trialling 'safe speed zones' in town centre**

This would aim to reduce the average traffic speed in the town centre and include narrowing of streets to prioritise walking/cycling modes of travel. This initiative further supports objectives with regards to, tourism, health and well-being and supporting climate change objectives.

### **Best Idea 4: Optimisation of Enniskillen Car Parks**

Rationalisation of Parking Charges: Both paid and free-of-charge car parks are currently available in the town centre core, potentially resulting in increased vehicle roaming and enabling

long-stay parking. It is recommended that consistent tariffs and duration of stay limitations are introduced in the town centre area with cheaper or free parking spaces being provided at the edges of this area. The applicable tariffs should reflect the prioritisation of walking and cycling in the town centre core.

Car Parking Relocation/Redevelopment: The importance of parking to the vitality and viability of the town centre is acknowledged. It is proposed that some of the existing town centre car parks are relocated to less prominent locations and/or redeveloped for more appropriate uses, so that the associated traffic movements are removed from the most sensitive areas and opportunities for further people friendly spaces are opened up. In doing so, provision should be made for retaining blue badge spaces near the town centre core. It is recommended that car parking demand in the key area be managed by increased charges rather than increased capacity. An objective will be to deter long stay and facilitate those staying 1-2 hours for shopping and leisure.

### **Best Idea 5: Enniskillen integrated active travel network**

This would include an integrated active travel network to include radial and town centre segregated/phased cycle network to increase modal share of active travel. As part of this a walking and cycling campaign would encourage active and healthy mobility (An effective campaign, #andshecycles<sup>2</sup>, particularly targets girls in secondary schools.). This could be linked to signage which indicates route distance/duration, linkages to water-side walking and cycle routes, linkages to SW College, and Ardhowen Theatre

<sup>2</sup> <https://ibike.sustrans.org.uk/and-she-cycles/>




## ACTION 11:



**Action 11:** Develop and implement an Enniskillen Signage Strategy

### Best Idea 1: Enniskillen signage strategy

- » Directional signage to direct people to points of interest such as Enniskillen Castle, the newly restored Enniskillen Workhouse, Forthill Park, Enniskillen Island Walk, Round O, Castle Coole.
- » Orientation signage at key visitor touch points to create a sense of welcome, for example Enniskillen Castle, Enniskillen Bus Station, The Buttermarket, Lakeland Forum.
- » Interpretative signage on walking and cycling routes to provide information on Enniskillen's natural, built and cultural heritage. This could include historic walks or nature walks.

Walking trail interpretation will tell the Enniskillen story through interactive signage erected at key locations, to enhance visitor experience and reinforce a sense of place for the town.

Effective signage will also encourage the visitor to use Enniskillen as a base to visit the attractions within twenty minutes of the town centre, creating enough to do in Enniskillen for more than a one-night stay, and thus improving visitor experience and increasing visitor spend, and thereby benefiting the local economy.

There are opportunities to provide smart signage which can include footfall tracking, push notifications and digital signage where appropriate.





## ACTION 12:



### Action 12: Enniskillen Greenways Pre-Feasibility Study



To create regional linkages and to enhance the tourism offer of Enniskillen two potential linkages are recommended.

#### **Best Idea 1: Enniskillen Castle to Castle Coole protected cycle route**

This would create an opportunity for bike hire enterprise at Enniskillen Castle and enable visitors, and members of the local community to cycle the 15 minutes journey between Enniskillen Castle and Castle Coole in safety

#### **Best Idea 2: Phase 2 Enniskillen-Sligo town greenway from Enniskillen-Kesh (NE side of Lough Erne)-Belleek-Bundoran-Sligo.**

This would create 220k loop route in tandem with Phase 1 via Belcoo. With feasibility analysis currently underway on the potential of a greenway from Enniskillen to Clones (which could then link to the Ulster Canal), this would help to create an Erneside network.

## "A Healthy and Inclusive Town – Ensuring Enniskillen is an inclusive town with a prosperous, well educated, and healthy community"

### ACTION 13:



#### Action 13: Enniskillen for all

##### Best Idea 1: More inclusive urban design and dementia friendly town

Future plans to be considered in the context of providing for all ages and abilities. This to include play parks catering for younger children and children with disabilities; urban architecture that takes account of, for example, wheelchair users, older vulnerable people with mobility and/or confusion issues by providing safe seating areas; age-friendly pedestrian crossings with extended crossing light periods.

##### Best Idea 2: Enniskillen Autism/Dementia Friendly Town interventions

This could include for example, training for businesses such as creating quiet spaces or no-hurry queues and to trial 'autism friendly' shopping hours, i.e., low lighting, low/zero music, lower till scan sounds, priority queueing, assistance/working dogs permitted, as well as education for the community about what is dementia and how to be dementia friendly. It could for example, include sensory gardens. This would build on existing complementary initiatives such as The Reminiscence Trail at Broadmeadow.

##### Best idea 3: Delivering a healthy community

Work with WHSCT and Dept of Health to maximize the opportunities for delivery of services at the SWAH.







## ACTION 14:



**Action 14:** Reimagining Enniskillen's Parks to encourage greater use

### Best Idea 1: Inis Ceithleann

The eponymous island from which Enniskillen or 'Inis Ceithlean' originates has a comparatively hidden location and would benefit from a significant upgrade. Traditionally the Ceithleann of Inis Ceithleann is thought to be the wife of the giant Balar, who swam for refuge to the island on which Enniskillen stands after inflicting fatal wounds on the King of the Tuatha Dé Danann at the battle of Moytirra in Sligo.

Enhancement of Inis Ceithlean Park should include commissioning of accessible landscape design to include enlargement of the park. This would include new planting, surfacing, seating, lighting, enhanced linkage to the water, interpretation of the story of the island and orientation signage. This project is linked to development of a signage strategy, a round island path, and to facilitating access for all. This project would contribute to reinforcing a sense of place for the town and enable access to the water.

### Best Idea 2: Round O Park

Brook Park on the River Erne, known locally as the 'Round O', has an attractive location and is well used. This plan should consider commissioning of landscape design for the Round O to include new planting, surfacing, seating, and lighting. There may be additional potential to extend the park to better cater for angling related vehicles and other parking.

### Best Idea 3: Forthill Park

There is potential to enhance Forthill Park and linkages between the park, town centre and neighbouring retail areas through considering an opportunity to develop a new entrance. This would require the acquisition and demolition of vacant / derelict property on Forthill street. This could be combined with further investment in the built heritage of the park, building on good work completed in recent years. The view from the Cole's Monument viewing platform enables visitors to view Enniskillen's location in context with beautiful views over the waterways and lakes.





## ACTION 15:



*Capitalising on Enniskillen's location and celebrating heritage with a focus on regenerative tourism*

**Action 10:** Enniskillen Island Town traffic management and active travel study to be undertaken

The town centre of Enniskillen currently has several large vacant sites and derelict properties. Large sites include the former South-West College, the vacant site at Sligo Road, and Devenish college site. Significant vacant buildings include the former Café Cellini building. A key potential site is the current PSNI station.

Building on the transformative, sustainable and energy efficient developments constructed at the new SWC and proposed at the Forum and Ardhowen - new proposals coming forward on opportunity sites must follow the principles of sustainability and high-quality design and energy efficient standards in all developments to assist with meeting climate change targets and incorporate SuDS. This will be required as part of the new LDP. This will build Enniskillen as an exemplar eco-friendly and sustainable town. This will contribute to the overall ambition for Enniskillen as a centre of sustainability excellence and a vibrant hub.

### **Best Idea 1: Former South-West College**

This site needs to be sold to offset the capital cost of the building the new South West College building. However, if there is no private sector interest then demolition is recommended. Given the considerable capital costs required for this, a business case would be required to be presented to the Department for the Economy. A meanwhile use (or uses) could be identified in the short-medium term to maximise use and avoid vacancy and potential dereliction. An example could be a public services hub, call centre and/or business support. It could also house the library while their existing building is redeveloped. It is recommended that a long-term vision for the site be identified as part of a business case/development brief. For example, this could include site clearance, and redevelopment as a business park focussed on the tech sector, with an objective of driving employment growth in higher paid roles that would in turn attract greater numbers of young people to live in Enniskillen.

There are several listed buildings on site, such as the former jail, infirmary and library. It is recommended that a feasibility study be undertaken in partnership with the local community to consider restoration costs, and potential uses.

### **Best Idea 2: PSNI Station**

While the site is currently in use by the PSNI who do not currently have plans to relocate, this is considered a key site in Enniskillen with significant potential for a mixed-use tourism, recreational and leisure proposal that capitalises on the site's key location and water connectivity. This should include retention of heritage buildings, permeable public access, and a waterside pathway. There is potential for linkages with the new Lakeland Forum Leisure Centre and the new SW College. There should be ongoing engagement with the PSNI re its future plans.



**"Opportunity Town – establishing a pathway for activating the many opportunity sites located in and around the town"**



### **Best Idea 3: Café Cellini building**

While this site is currently in private ownership it occupies a key position which could be linked to Inis Ceithleann and waterways connections, given a dual waterway aspect. Potential future uses could include cafe, restaurant, youth hostel style accommodation. Given this building's waterside location there is a clear opportunity to link to a round-the-island walk.

### **Best Idea 4: Vacant site at Sligo Road**

This strategic site offers significant potential for tourism/ recreational based development, closely linked with the Forum, subject to private sector interest. The focus for this site could be more towards provision of visitor accommodation, given that Enniskillen Castle is identified as the appropriate tourism hub for the town in the Fermanagh Lakelands Visitor Experience Development Plan, and the Round O Park (and potentially the PSNI site) can provide a focus on water-based recreation.

### **Best Idea 5: Devenish College site**

While re-use of this site would depend on Department of Education priorities, the location of this site in close proximity to a reimagined Forum would mean that tourism accommodation or recreation development could suit the site. There is further potential to clear the site for use as a community park.

### **Best Idea 6: Concept plan for the former telephone exchange to be developed.**

The former telephone exchange building located in close proximity to the Buttermarket occupies a key site. The building is in private ownership but has been vacant for over 20 years. The objective would be to see the building brought back into use contributing to the vibrancy of the town and perhaps to include small enterprise space.

### **Best Idea 7: Enniskillen Centre of Sustainability Excellence**

There is a clear opportunity to build upon the good work of South West College, of its Erne Campus and the CREST Centre on renewable energy and sustainable technologies as part of an Enniskillen Centre of Sustainability Excellence. These may present an opportunity for development of the vacant site adjacent to Enniskillen Workhouse for further incubation units



An aerial photograph of Enniskillen, Ireland, showing the town's layout, the River Black, and surrounding greenery. A large white graphic element, consisting of two overlapping circles and a teal swoosh, is positioned on the left side of the image. The text 'Chapter six Place Shaping Delivery' is overlaid on the bottom right of the image.

# Chapter six Place Shaping Delivery



# Place Shaping Delivery

## 6.1 Introduction

This chapter forms the roadmap to realise the ambition for place-shaping in Enniskillen. The aspiration is for all actions to be completed within the lifetime of the plan; however, it is acknowledged that some actions are ongoing, and that many will require a partnership approach to deliver. The actions outlined are ambitious yet achievable. Ensuring adequate resourcing, as well as a focus on internal and external collaboration, is key to the success of the Enniskillen Place Shaping Plan.

## 6.2 Collaborative Approach

This plan is for the town of Enniskillen, for those living, working, studying in and visiting the town. The goal is to make Enniskillen a better, more vibrant, more attractive place.

Collaboration is essential to enable this ambition to be achieved. While Fermanagh and Omagh District Council will lead implementation of the plan, the roadmap for delivery outlined in the coming pages includes many partners, each of which are deemed to be essential for success.

## 6.3 Review and Monitoring

This plan covers a 12-year period until 2035. Two years ago, we were not aware of the joint Covid-19 and Ukraine crises and there are likely to be many further economic and social changes over the coming years. It is critical that Enniskillen is positioned for change and becomes more resilient. In turn it is essential that this plan is flexible and takes account of change. For that reason, it is proposed that this be a live document and that a mid-point review is undertaken.

## 6.4 Action Plan

The sections outlined on the coming pages identify, for each action and associated best ideas the key support partners, timescales for delivery and suggested key milestones. The impact of each action will be monitored through identified performance measures.

A timeframe is provided for actions in terms of Short (2023- 2024), Medium (2025-2028) and Long (2029-2035).

## Abbreviations

FODC: Fermanagh and Omagh District Council

DE: Department of Education

PSNI: Police Service of Northern Ireland

DfI: Department for Infrastructure

DfC: Department for Communities

DoH: Department of Health

EA: Education Authority NI

HED: Historic Environment Division

SWC: South West College

INI: Invest NI

TNI: Tourism NI

WI: Waterways ireland

FLT: Fermanagh Lakeland Tourism

DAERA: Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

BID: Enniskillen Business Improvement District

NIHE: Northern Ireland Housing Executive

ACTIONS AND BEST IDEAS	LEAD PARTNER(S)	TIMELINE	KEY MILESTONES
<b>Island town</b> – Reinforcing connections between Enniskillen town centre and the River Erne to restore a sense of an island community.			
<b>Action 1: Create new water-front recreational amenities to encourage use by local residents and visitors</b> Best Idea 1: Transformative redesign of the Fermanagh Lakeland Forum and outdoor recreation, waterfront and open space into a major well-being hub to act as a key attraction for the town Best Idea 2: Develop an Enniskillen Island Walk. Best Idea 3: New pedestrian bridge from Market Street to South West College	FODC DfC DfI TNI FLT WI	Short – studies Medium - medium /Long	Redesign and redevelopment of Fermanagh Lakeland Forum completed  Enniskillen island Walk completed  Pedestrian bridge completed between Enniskillen Island and South West College
<b>Action 2: Commission and implement an Enniskillen Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy</b> Best Idea: Enniskillen Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy	FODC DfC DfI WI	Short – studies Medium - Implement	Enniskillen Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy commissioned and completed
<b>Action 3: Seek to position Enniskillen as a Destination of Angling Excellence</b> Best Idea 1: Seek to enhance water quality Best Idea 2: Review of bankside angling infrastructure Best Idea 3: Work with key partners to deliver on an angling strategy for the Erne system	FODC WI DAERA TI FLT	Short – studies Medium - Implement	Water quality progressively improved  Bankside angling infrastructure reviewed and enhanced  Angling Strategy completed



ACTIONS AND BEST IDEAS	LEAD PARTNER(S)	TIMELINE	KEY MILESTONES
<b>Destination Town – Capitalising on Enniskillen's location and celebrating heritage with a focus on sustainable tourism.</b>			
<b>Action 4: Create compelling visitor experiences in Enniskillen</b> Best Idea 1: Review of Enniskillen Castle building accommodation use Best Idea 2: Devenish Island Visitor Experience Feasibility Study Best Idea 3: Ardhowen Theatre redevelopment.	HED FODC TNI DfC DfI FLT	Short – studies Medium - Implement	Utilisation review of Enniskillen Castle accommodation completed, and recommendations implemented  Devenish Island Visitor Experience Feasibility Study commissioned and implemented  Ardhowen Theatre redeveloped
<b>Action 5: Buttermarket Car park and Market Review</b> Best Idea 1: Significant intervention/complete redesign of existing car park adjacent to Buttermarket to enable market activities	FODC DfC	Short – studies Medium /Long	Buttermarket car-park redesigned and implemented
<b>Action 6: Encourage a more vibrant visitor economy in Enniskillen</b> Best Idea: Support increased range and promotion of town centre events and activities	FODC DfC Tourism NI FLT	Ongoing	Increased range of Enniskillen town centre events and activities
<b>Action 7: Seek to enhance the appearance of Enniskillen by building on Enniskillen's success as the 2022 Best Kept Town in Ireland.</b> Best Idea 1: Further investment in street planting Best Idea 2: Softening/removal of security structures at key buildings Best Idea 3: Laneway and Building Enhancements Best Idea 4: Undertake Town Centre Lighting Strategy	BID FODC DfC DfI	Ongoing	Street planting enhanced  Engagement with building owners to remove soften and/or remove security structures  Laneway ad building enhancements completed  Town centre lighting strategy commissioned and implemented

ACTIONS AND BEST IDEAS	LEAD PARTNER(S)	TIMELINE	KEY MILESTONES
<b>Thriving Town – Creating a more vibrant town centre through fostering a vibrant business environment and encouraging growth in town centre footfall</b>			
<b>Action 8: Position Enniskillen as an increasingly attractive place to invest and work</b> Best Idea 1: Encourage investment in Enniskillen Best Idea 2: Examine opportunities for additional workspace in Enniskillen	FODC Invest NI DfE SWC	Short-Medium	Investment encouraged with a focus on sustainable enterprise  Opportunities for additional workspace reviewed
<b>Action 9: Encourage increased town centre footfall and vibrancy</b> Best Idea 1: Re-use of vacant upper floors in town centre buildings (Living over the shop Pilot Study) to increase town centre residential density Best Idea 2: Enniskillen Food Market/events Best Idea 3: Phased/trial people first town centre days Best Idea 4: Motorhome Hub Feasibility Study	FODC Tourism NI Waterways Ireland DfC & NIHE	Medium /Long	Decrease in upper floor vacancy with increase in town centre residency New Enniskillen food market events Phase/trial people first town centre days Motorhome hub feasibility study commissioned and implemented
ACTIONS AND BEST IDEAS	LEAD PARTNER(S)	TIMELINE	KEY MILESTONES
<b>Connected Town - Improving connectivity and accessibility throughout the town, with linkages to surrounding places, and a people first approach.</b>			
<b>Action 10: Enniskillen Island Town Traffic management study to be undertaken</b> Best Idea 1: Rationalisation and Redesign of Wellington Road and Queen Street Best Idea 2: Closure of Erne Bridge to motor traffic and creation of an island town gateway Best Idea 3: Trialling 'safe speed zones' in town centre Best Idea 4: Optimisation of Enniskillen Car Parks Best Idea 5: Enniskillen integrated active travel network	FODC DfI Sustrans	Short – studies Medium /Long	Rationalisation and Redesign of Wellington Road and Queen Street completed as part of a Enniskillen Island Town Traffic management study
<b>Action 11: Develop and implement an Enniskillen Signage Strategy</b> Best Idea: Enniskillen signage strategy	FODC DfC DfI	Short – studies Medium - Implement	Enniskillen signage strategy commissioned and implemented
<b>Action 12: Enniskillen Greenways Pre-Feasibility Study</b> Best Idea 1: Enniskillen Castle to Castle Coole protected cycle route Best Idea 2: Phase 2 Enniskillen-Sligo town greenway from Enniskillen-Kesh (NE side of Lough Erne)-Belleek-Bundoran-Sligo.	FODC DfI Sustrans	Short – studies Medium /Long	Greenway feasibility studies commissioned and implemented subject to landowner agreement



ACTIONS AND BEST IDEAS	LEAD PARTNER(S)	TIMELINE	KEY MILESTONES
<b>Healthy and Inclusive Town – Ensuring Enniskillen is an inclusive town with a prosperous, well educated, and healthy community.</b>			
<b>Action 13: Enniskillen for all</b> <b>Best Idea 1: More inclusive urban design and dementia friendly town</b> <b>Best Idea 2: Enniskillen Autism/Dementia Friendly Town interventions</b>	FODC DfC CVS Forum	Short-Medium	Enniskillen for all approach to inform place-making decisions
<b>Action 14: Reimagining Enniskillen's Parks to encourage greater use</b> <b>Best Idea 1: Inis Ceithleann</b> <b>Best Idea 2: Round O Park</b> <b>Best Idea 3: Forthill Park</b>	FODC DfC DfI	Short – studies Medium - Implement	Parks landscape strategy commissioned and recommendations implemented
ACTIONS AND BEST IDEAS	LEAD PARTNER(S)	TIMELINE	KEY MILESTONES
<b>Opportunity Town – establishing a pathway for activating the many opportunity sites located in and around the town.</b>			
<b>Action 15: Work collaboratively with partner organisations to realise the redevelopment and alternative uses of current and future vacant sites</b> <b>Best Idea 1: Former South-West College</b> <b>Best Idea 2: PSNI Station</b> <b>Best Idea 3: Café Cellini building</b> <b>Best Idea 4: Vacant site at Sligo Road</b> <b>Best Idea 5: Devenish college site</b> <b>Best Idea 6: Concept plan for the former telephone exchange to be developed</b> <b>Best Idea 7: Enniskillen Centre of Sustainability Excellence</b>	FODC DE PSNI EA SWC Landowners NIHE	Medium-Long	Opportunity sites activated



# Appendix 1- Consultees



## Appendix 1: Strategic Engagement

KPMG Future Analytics engaged with a wide range of individuals, companies and agencies to inform the preparation of this plan between May and September 2022.

We would like to sincerely thank all of those who engaged in discussion. These conversations provided a wide range of valuable insights which have helped to shape and provide context for recommendations.

Organisation
Community Voluntary Sector
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
Councillors (CCLA; DUP; SDLP; SF; UUP)
Department for Communities
Department for Infrastructure
Department of Education
Enniskillen BID
Enniskillen Town Centre Forum (business owner)
Erne Water Taxi
Fermanagh Enterprise Centre
Fermanagh Lakeland Tourism
FODC, Community Services Team
FODC, Parks, Estates, Property Team
FODC, Place Shaping Team
FODC, Planning Team
FODC, Strategic Planning & Performance Team
GAA
Invest NI
National Trust
NIHE
Smyth Leslie & Co Estate Agents
South West Regional College
The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Tourism NI
Western Health and Social Care Trust
Enniskillen Hotel
Waterways Ireland
Public Health Agency

