2020

Cork County Development Plan Review

Urban Capacity Study

(2019)

Background Document No. 5

Planning Policy Unit
Cork County Council
12th March 2020

Document Structure

Section 1: Background and Methodology

URBAN CAPACITY STUDY (2019)

1.1 Section 1 Introduction

1.1.1 The focus of this study is to investigate the potential for additional housing units within the area zoned "Town Centre" and the "built up area/ established areas" of the 9 former Town Council towns within County Cork. The following towns form part of this study: Mallow, Midleton, Youghal, Fermoy, Skibereen, Macroom, Cobh, Kinsale and Clonakilty. The analysis and findings can contribute to the delivery of Compact Growth and Smarter Growth Initiatives advocated in the National Planning Framework and the Regional Guidelines.

1.1.2 Bantry Town was used as a pilot study to assist in the formulation of our survey approach, data gathering and housing yield outcomes.

1.2 Urban Capacity Methodology

1.2.1 The project team was tasked with providing a methodology for the assessment of existing land zoned built up area, special policy areas and town centres to provide additional housing capacity within the settlement network of the County. Pilot towns to be examined include Mallow, Midleton, Youghal, Fermoy, Skibereen, Macroom, Cobh, Kinsale, Clonakilty and Bantry.

1.3 Background:

1.3.1 There is a range of national guidance available on the recommended approach to optimising the capacity of housing delivery in an urban context, most notably Sustainable Urban Housing Guidelines. Other sources which have contributed to this proposed methodology include U.K documents "*Tapping the Potential – Best Practice in assessing urban housing capacity*" (1999) as an important toolkit, the Urban Design Compendium (English Partnership) and various local plans.

1.3.2 The initial assessment has four distinct stages:

1. Listing the capacity sources;
2. Surveying to identify opportunities (living over the shop, vacant buildings, intensification of uses, assessing character to inform density);
3. Assessing the potential housing yield (density multiplier or a design based approach to explore more efficient land-use options) and;
4. Discounting constraints (flooding, local character, contamination etc).

1.4 Urban capacity sources & surveying approach:

1.4.1 In considering the remit of urban capacity, the scope of the study should be as broadly focussed as possible. In this context the following are all considered an important source of generating additional housing capacity:

- Town centre - encouraging living over the shop can contribute to the vitality of the core and extend activity beyond business hours;

- Built-up area within development boundaries – these can provide opportunities for infill schemes; larger parcels in transitional zones between the town centre and residential areas can provide opportunities for mixed use schemes or higher density housing developments subject to respecting local character;
- Regeneration sites - those identified in LAP plus additional opportunities. Small plots can often deliver high density infill schemes. In larger sites a design-led approach should be considered to test outcomes;
- Residential sub-division/ intensification – Many historic towns contain large houses on relatively extensive sites whose conversion into multiple dwellings can be easily achieved without a dramatic alteration to the character of the area. Other considerations include mews developments in dwellings with long gardens and additional houses in corner sites with larger gardens;
- Bringing vacant homes back into use – there will always be an element of vacancy due to various factors but where there are obvious local black spots outside the national average that should be examined.
- Institutional Lands – where site is within large open space setting it is recommended to concentrate increased densities in selected areas and retain some of the open character of the lands (net densities of 35-50 dwellings per ha).

1.5 Assessing the potential capacity:

1.5.1 Having identified the different sources and where to look for them, the next step is to quantify each of these individual sources. This requires analysis of a number of sources:

- Comprehensive surveys (identifying priority areas especially transitional zones with good accessibility, institutional lands/ windfall sites etc);
- Defining priority areas within the walkable catchment of the centres (pedshed);
- Defining character areas where different densities and/or mixed use schemes are achievable;

- Living over the shop: Cork City Council has had reasonable success in reversing upper floor vacancy in the historic centre of the City. One of the key factors in this success is the provision of separate access to the upper floors. The City Plan 2015 states "*The existence of separate building frontage (or side) access multiplies the re-use options available for buildings. The reinstatement of upper floor access will be sought where this is feasible based upon an assessment of the quality of the ground floor (e.g. commercial) unit configuration and frontage*". This factor should be recorded during survey work. Survey work will require recording on town centre blank maps. For living over the shop it will be important to record the presence of a second access to upper floors or opportunity to insert same. The town centre spine will require multiple mapping to identify ground & upper floor uses. Appendix A contains an appraisal inventory that can help inform density/ capacity.

1.6 Determining yield:

1.6.1 Having surveyed the area and identified the opportunities for additional housing the next stage is to assess the number of units achievable on site or through intensification of use within existing building stock. This needs to go beyond the application of density multipliers but should include testing several design options to optimise efficiency in larger sites.

Density

1.6.2 The use of densities in an urban context can often be a blunt and ineffective tool. Smaller sites will typically make use of existing roads and facilities and here yields can be easily ascertained using a density multiplier. Larger sites, however, need to make provision for roads, open space and childcare facilities etc. and so distinguishing between gross and net densities here is critical. Research by URBED in the U.K. has concluded the differential between gross and net densities in sites of varying size as per the table below:

Gross to net ratios for different site sizes	
Up to 0.4ha	100% gross to net ratio
0.4-2 ha	75-90% gross to net ratio
Over 2ha	50-75% gross to net ratio

Design-led approach

1.6.3 This has several advantages and is the most effective of all the yield assessment methodologies. Typical sites are selected and subjected to design exercises. These can then be used to explore different policy (mixed-use/ single use) and density scenarios with regard parking provision and layout. This would require a multi-disciplinary approach. Larger sites may require design briefs/ additional guidance to optimise housing delivery.

Living over the shop

1.6.4 As schemes tend to be small and the potential capacity can be difficult to measure on a site by site basis a yardstick can be useful. In an English Local Authority study, an assumption was made that one third of retail floor area was suitable for housing and one third of this figure would be suitable for living over the shop apartments.

Subdivision of existing housing

1.6.5 Detailed surveys of the existing stock are the best way to provide thorough and accurate assessment of potential from residential subdivision. Dwelling size and/or information regarding "under occupation" are important considerations in this regard. Older and larger properties within historic County Towns should be closely analysed in this context, subject to Conservation Officer inputs.

Institutional Lands/Windfall Sites

1.6.6 Within many towns there may be opportunities for conversion of former institutional buildings and/or development opportunities within their curtilage subject to satisfying national guidance on public open space, amenity etc.

Intensification

1.6.7 Not all towns may lend themselves to intensification opportunities, however, urban areas with housing on large gardens may allow mews developments for example.

1.7 Discounting measures

1.7.1 There will be good reasons why a proportion of the capacity identified earlier in the study will not come forward for development or may not be capable of development immediately. These issues include:

- Infrastructure capacity (wastewater constraints, access);
- Physical constraints on development (flood risk, contamination);
- Market viability;
- Local character;
- Planning standards (heritage, parking, contribution barriers?);
- Land ownership

1.8 PILOT STUDY: BANTRY

Pre Site Work

1.8.1 Data gathering including mapping of town centre streets & preparation of survey template packs for the survey team.

1.8.2 Investigation of built-up area lands from aerial photography with SEP team member to assess lands with potential for housing delivery.

On site survey work

1.8.3 A team of 4 planners undertook survey work of 28 streets and laneways within the area zoned "Town Centre" (2 north & 2 south) in Bantry. This involved identifying uses of all floors, recording whether a separate access was available to the upper floors & noting the building condition (See template in Appendix A). Each building/ street was photographed to provide a snap shoot of the study area. Separate notes were taken on the condition of the public realm & street activity.

1.8.4 A team of 2 planners undertook survey work of the areas identified in the "Built Up Area" and "Special Policy Areas" where opportunities may exist to deliver further housing. (See templates in Appendix B).

Post Survey Work Analysis

1.8.5 An excel table was prepared for each street. This included the following categories: Land Use per floor (general & specific); Upper Floor Access (Yes/ No); Building Condition. A separate column was also included to allow comparative analysis with survey work undertaken in 2012/ 2013.

1.8.6 ***Land Use:*** The broad use categories were noted (See attached Town Centre template) and sub classes of each use category recorded. This can provide information on the broad spectrum of uses within the town but also more in-depth knowledge on the specific land-use mix at a micro street by street level. These uses are all linked to MapInfo using an Excel table and so land –use maps can be generated on this basis. Where "*Opportunity/ Infill Sites*" were identified, a potential housing yield was allocated.

1.8.7 **Upper Floor Access:** Within the Excel Table results from the Survey work recorded whether "Access to the Upper floors" was available per building/ unit. This is a critical tool to establish a baseline of upper floor residential use within the town and/ or the potential to increase this baseline figure going forward.

1.8.8 ***Building Condition:*** Each building was allocated a classification of Good, Poor or Derelict. Guidance was given in the template to ensure consistency in the classification process. A predominance of derelict properties in the results can also inform classifying a street/ site as a Regeneration Area/ Opportunity Site in future Plans.

1.8.9 ***Comparative Retail Analysis***: The excel table included a question whether the street was surveyed previously as part of an extensive county-wide Retail Analysis of retail cores in 2012/2013. Although this will only allow comparisons with ground floor uses within the defined Retail Core it is a useful tool to ascertain changes in the town centre. Awaiting mapping of data to interrogate information.

1.8.10 A separate Excel table was produced compiling information from the Built Up Area/ Special Policy Area Survey work. A number of sites were discounted due to topographical issues. Sites where additional units could be accommodated were inputted into an Excel Table which allocated a unique ID & a potential housing yield. The overall urban capacity of lands surveyed in Bantry highlighted the potential of an additional 190 units within the built up area and 104 units on lands zoned Special Policy Area. This combined total alone (288 units) represents 23% of the total future housing requirement for the town in 2020 as defined in the County Development Plan 2014. Further infill opportunities, vacant housing units and vacant upper floors within the existing building stock bring the overall capacity identified as 371 additional future units.

Key Questions to be answered?

Establish the land use profile of the town centre;

Record the level of vacancy;

Identify the vertical mixed-use profile of the town (i.e. existing living over the shop figures/ use of upper floors for commercial purposes);

Identify the potential to increase the % of residential use in Upper floors (using bar stick in methodology & separate access data);

Identify the potential yield from Infill/ Opportunity Sites.

Note areas of dereliction – inform zoning of Regeneration Areas/ Opportunity Sites.

Comparative Retail Analysis with 2012/2013 baseline (vacancy/ retail mix etc).

Compile the yield of additional units from built up area/ Special Policy Area survey work

Total urban capacity to be established (Built up area/ Special Policy Area + LOTS + Infill/ Opportunity Sites).

Streetscape analysis / activity can provide a public life baseline & ascertain links between vacancy/ inactivity within the town. In future it will allow us track whether future investment in buildings/ public realm is having a positive or negative effect (i.e. are there increased footfall levels etc).

Section 2: Town Profiles

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Section 2.1 **Bantry**

1 Section 2.1 Bantry

1.1 Part A Introduction

Bantry in context

1.1.1 Bantry is an attractive coastal market town overlooking Bantry Bay and a series of small off-shore islands. The town benefits from being a key destination along both the Wild Atlantic Way and Beara Way touring routes. Bantry Bay host a growing number of cruise ships which are bringing a growing number of high-end tourists to the region and Bantry is in a key position to benefit from this.

1.1.2 The town's population fell from 3,348 in 2011 to 2,722* in 2016. The town has a population target of 5,484 for 2022 which will generate an increase of 1,080 households in the town, equating to 1,241 new units. Under the 2017 Local Area Plan there is a net residential land supply of 101.3ha with the capacity to provide approximately 1,334 units to facilitate the target growth. (*population change reflects CSO boundary change in Bantry).

1.1.3 There are 68 Protected Structures within the town and 3 Architectural Conservation Areas.

1.1.4 The number of units and category of use per floor in this survey was ascertained by visual assessment only. Upper floor residential use confirmation was cross-referenced with the number of doorbells/ letterboxes visible on the building's 2nd "private" access.

1.1.5 The classification of uses followed the GOAD Sub- Class Classification system and also recorded the primary activity within each land-use as per the 2013 Town Centre Review Paper (See Appendix A).

1.2 Town Profile – Survey Results & Analysis

Town Centre

1.2.1 A total of 426 buildings were surveyed by a team from Planning Policy Unit on November 30th 2017 within the area zoned town centre as per the West Cork Municipal District Local Area Plan 2017. The Retail Core is focused around Wolfe Tone Square and a number of adjacent Secondary Streets (See figure 1.4). Bantry has a broad range of uses within the town centre, reflecting its importance as a Sub-Regional Large County Town. Figure 1.3 illustrates the spatial breakdown of the ground floor landuse mix within the town centre. The associated pie chart (Figure 1.2) demonstrates the percentage of these uses. The survey utilises the GOAD Sub- classification of uses which are included in the key of the map & pie-chart. The primary activity within the land-use sub-class is also recorded and details of these are discussed under the Primary Activity breakdown.

1.2.2 The predominant land use is residential (house) which represents over a third (35%) of the building stock and are largely located in clusters on the fringes of the town centre. Retail Comparison is the second predominant landuse (16%) recorded and is largely focussed on the Primary and Secondary Streets of the Retail Core (i.e. Wolfe Tone Square South, New Street, Main Street, Bridge Street, High Street, Barrack Street).

1.2.3 The town has a strong Leisure Services sector (9%) reflecting its tourism function within the Beara and Sheeps Head Peninsulas. Retail Services represent 8% of the ground floor uses. Financial and Business Services represented 7% of the town centre land use mix.

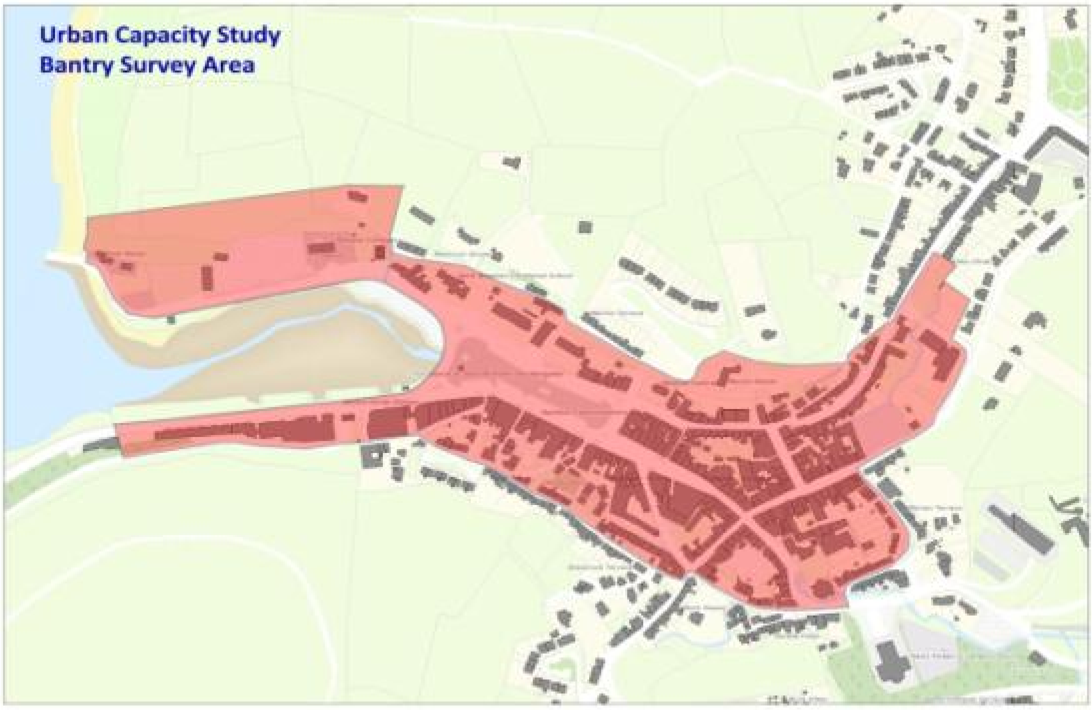


Figure 1.1: Extent of town centre, Bantry

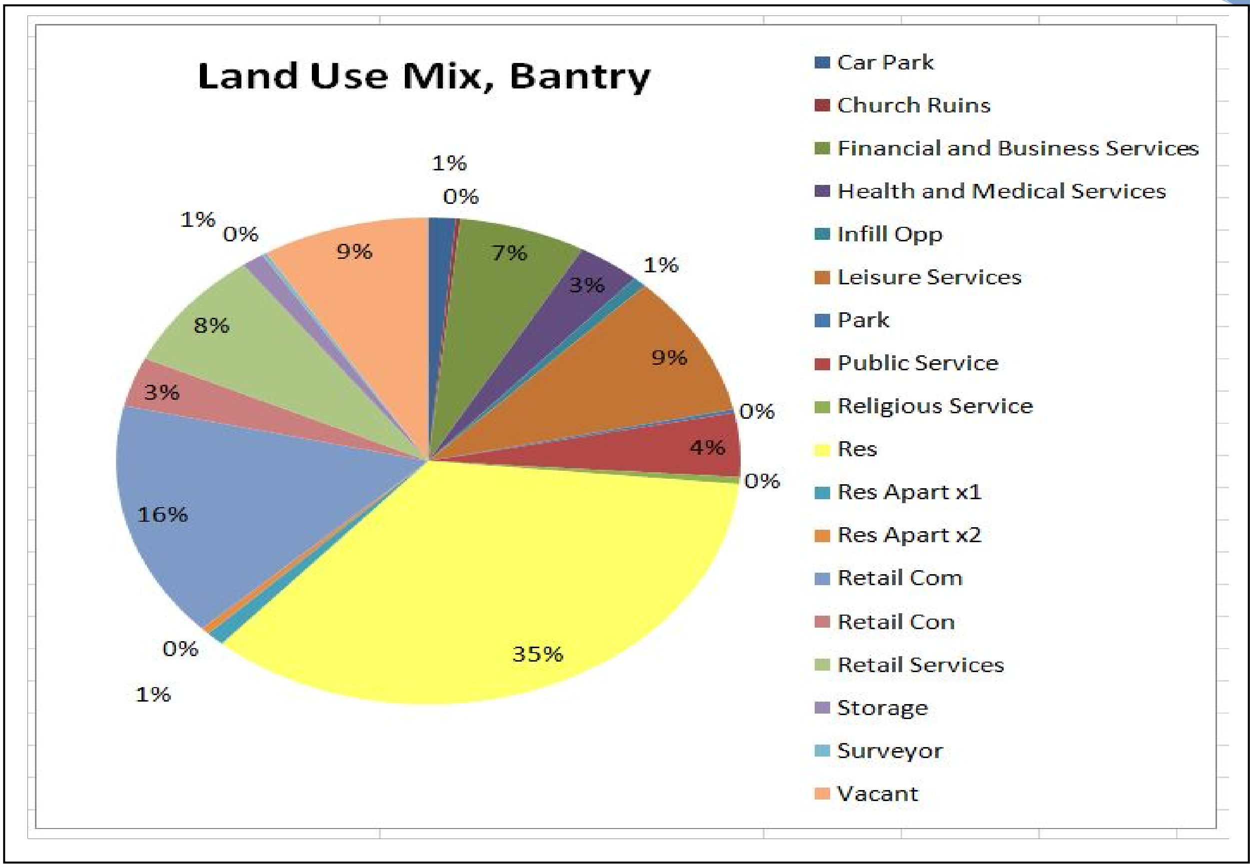


Figure 1.2: Pie Chart of ground floor land-use mix

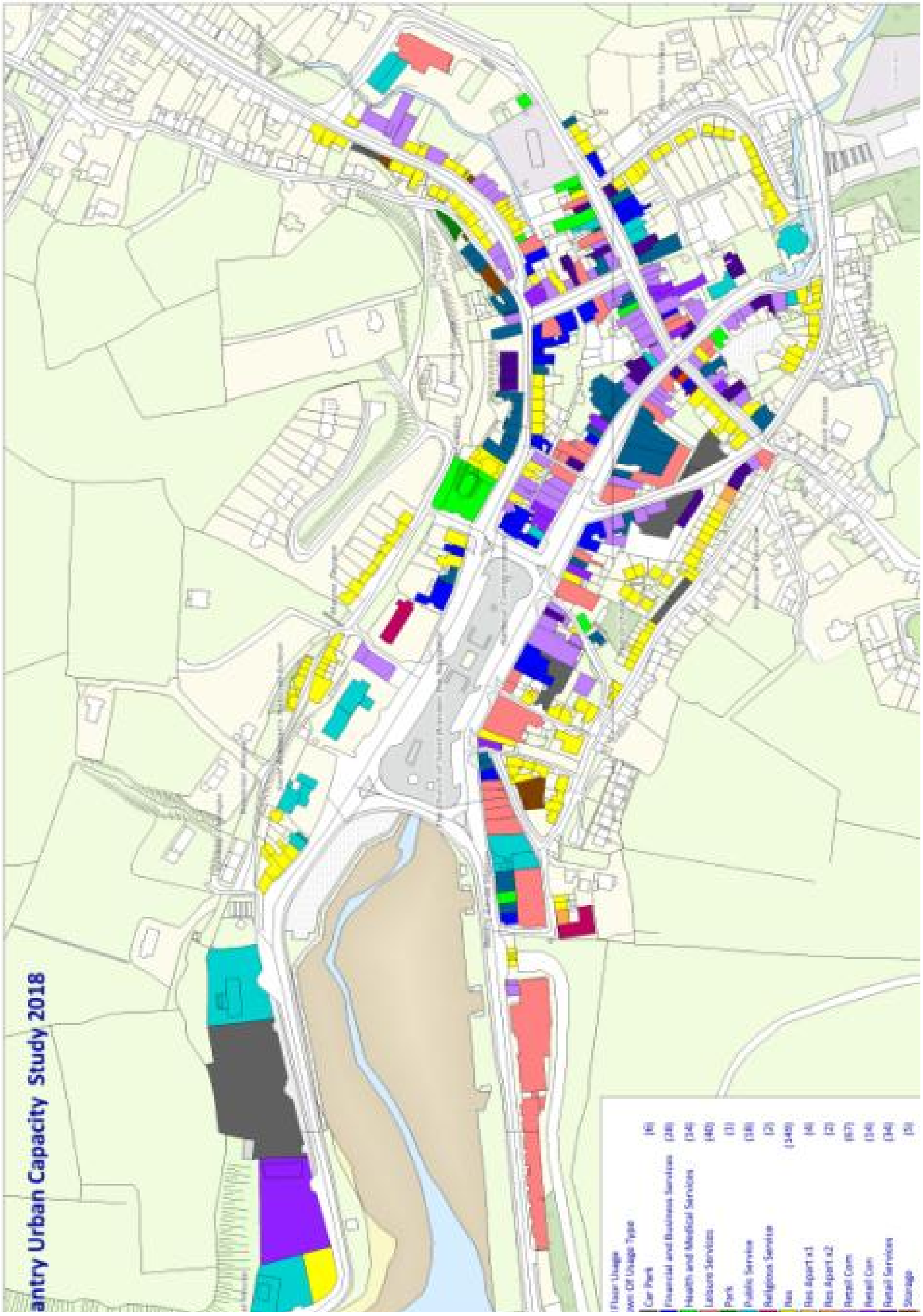


Figure 1.3: Ground floor land use mix, Bantry

Retail Core Trends

1.2.4 Table 1.1 illustrates changes in the commercial land use mix in the Retail Core of the town between 2013 and 2017. These figures reflect the diversity of uses within properties on the Primary and Secondary Streets of the Retail Core (figure 1.4) only. These streets include Wolfe Tone Square, Church Road, New Street, Marino Street, William Street, The Quay, Bridge Street, Main Street, Barrack Street, Glengarriff Road (west) and Market Street.

1.2.5 There has been a clear contraction in the Retail Comparison Sector since 2013, possibly reflecting the growing trends in online shopping. While these figures do not deal with the amount of floorspace available it does show a clear change in the commercial profile. In the same period there were positive trends in the Retail Convenience, Leisure Services, Financial and Business Services and Health and Medical Services sectors. There are marked losses in the number of Public Services.

Table 1.1: Comparative Diversity of Uses (Retail Core), Bantry

Use	2013	2017	Change
Retail Comparison	52	37	-15 (-29%)
Retail Convenience	10	12	+2
Retail Service	22	23	+1
Leisure Services	29	33	+4
Financial & Business Services	20	22	+2
Health & Medical Services	4	8	+4
Public Service	17	6	-11 (-65%)
Religious Service	1	2	+1
Total			

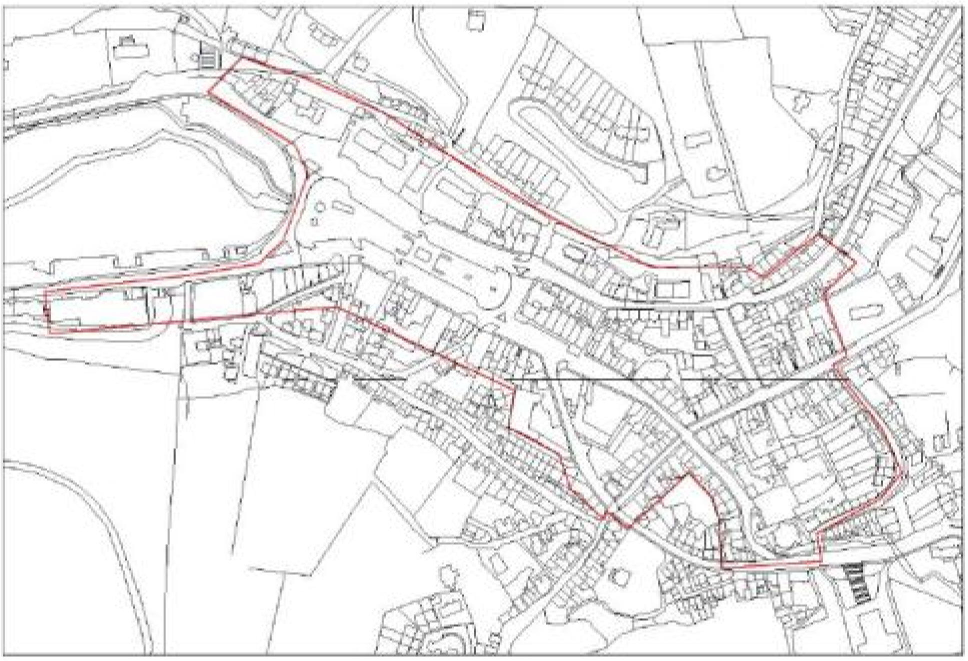


Figure 1.4: Extent of Retail Core

1.3 Primary Activity Break-down

Retail Convenience

1.3.1 The retail convenience distribution within the town is illustrated in Figure 1.5 below. Convenience, groceries and frozen food stores were the principle primary use within this sub class (6 units). There are 2 butchers, 2 off licences and 2 confectionary, tobacconist and newsagents. Bantry is served by 1 no. supermarket (Supervalue) within the town centre and 1 Fish Market. There is a further discount retailer outside the area zoned town centre.

1.3.2 A Farmers Market operates within the town square on a weekly basis but this is not included in the “Markets” count as it was not evident on the day. There is also a recently opened discount retailer outside the retail core which has extended the retail offer within the town.

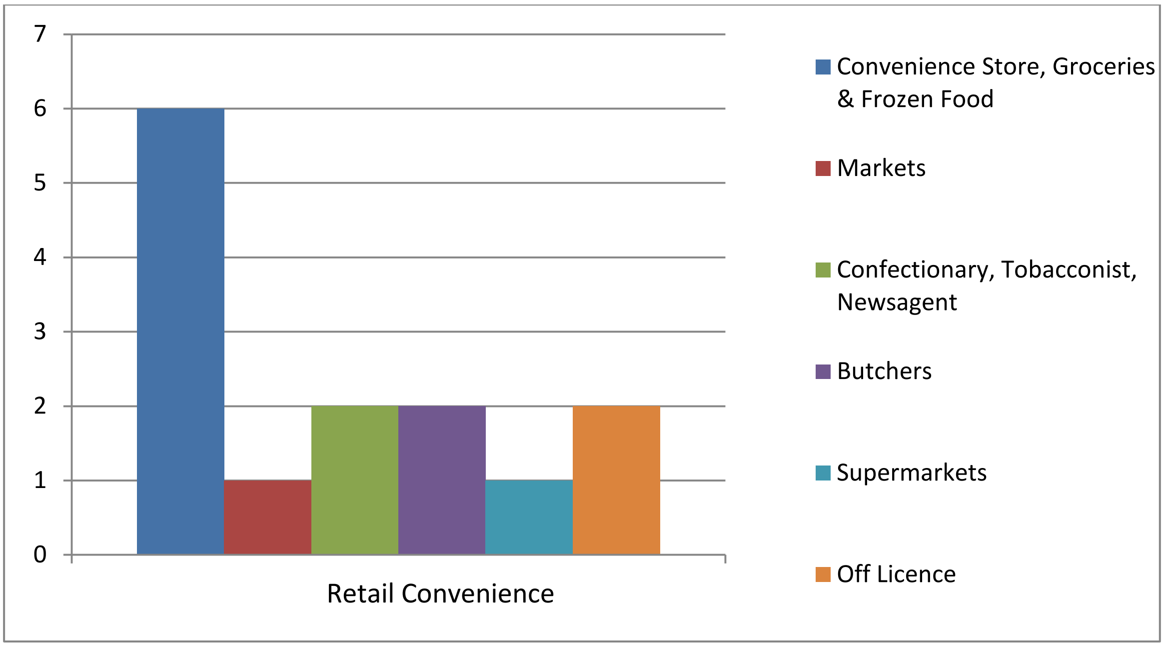


Figure 1.5: Bar Chart showing Retail Convenience

Retail Comparison

1.3.3 Figure 1.6 illustrates the Retail Comparison breakdown in Bantry. The town has a broad range of retail comparison offer which are represented across 16 categories. The predominant category is Ladies Wear (11 units), followed by Charity Shops (8 units). There are 6 units selling Hardware & household goods in the town. Craft, Gifts, China and Glass retail units were strongly represented (5 units) reflecting the tourism function of the town. The town has 3 Department and Variety Stores. This category can include both high end and low value uses. In Bantry it included a mix of both (e.g. Quills, Euro Smart).

1.3.4 The proliferation of Charity Shops is of concern. The provision of further high value uses and additional craft/ artisan uses which can showcase the strong local artistic and specialised food producers of the area should be encouraged. There is an opportunity to expand these sectors linked to the growing number of cruise visitors.

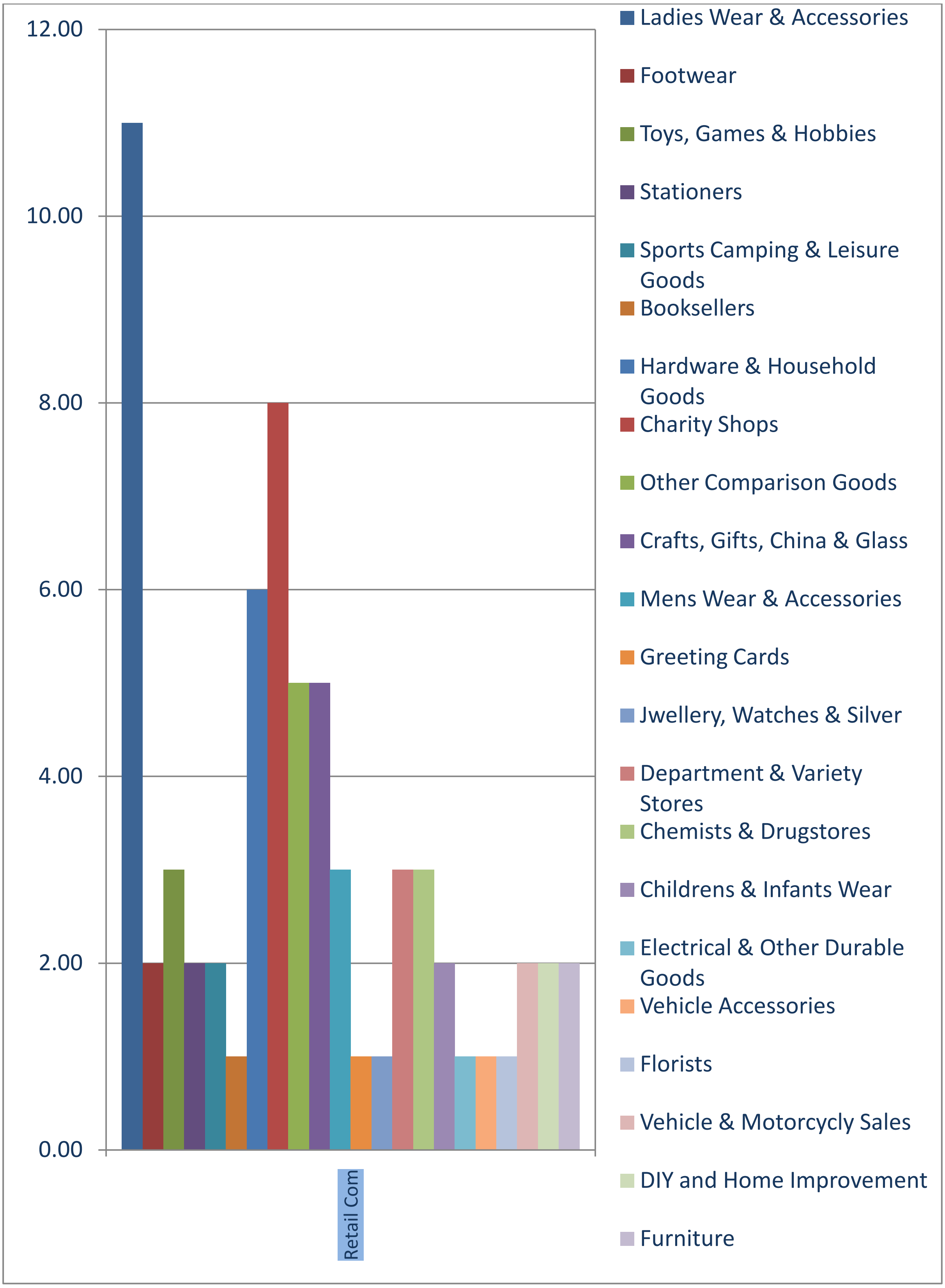


Figure 1.6: Bar Chart showing Retail Comparison distribution

Leisure Services

1.3.5 The Leisure Services sector reflects the important tourist and service role of the town to the Penninsulas and wider rural area. Bantry House and Gardens is an important tourist attraction but the town may need to consider additional local tourism activities to boost the day-trip and short-stay sector of the market. Bantry is well placed to be an outdoor leisure hub within the County given its proximity to both marine and mountainous terraine and this should be explored.

1.3.6 The predominant use is Bars, Wine Bars & Public Houses (16 units) followed by restaurants (9 units). A total of 5 cafes and 3 fast food take-aways were recorded in the town centres. The town is served by 2 no. centrally located hotels and Guesthouses. There is 1 cinema (Cinema, theatre & concert halls), 1 Bingo hall (Bingo and arcade) and 1 no betting office (Casino & betting office).

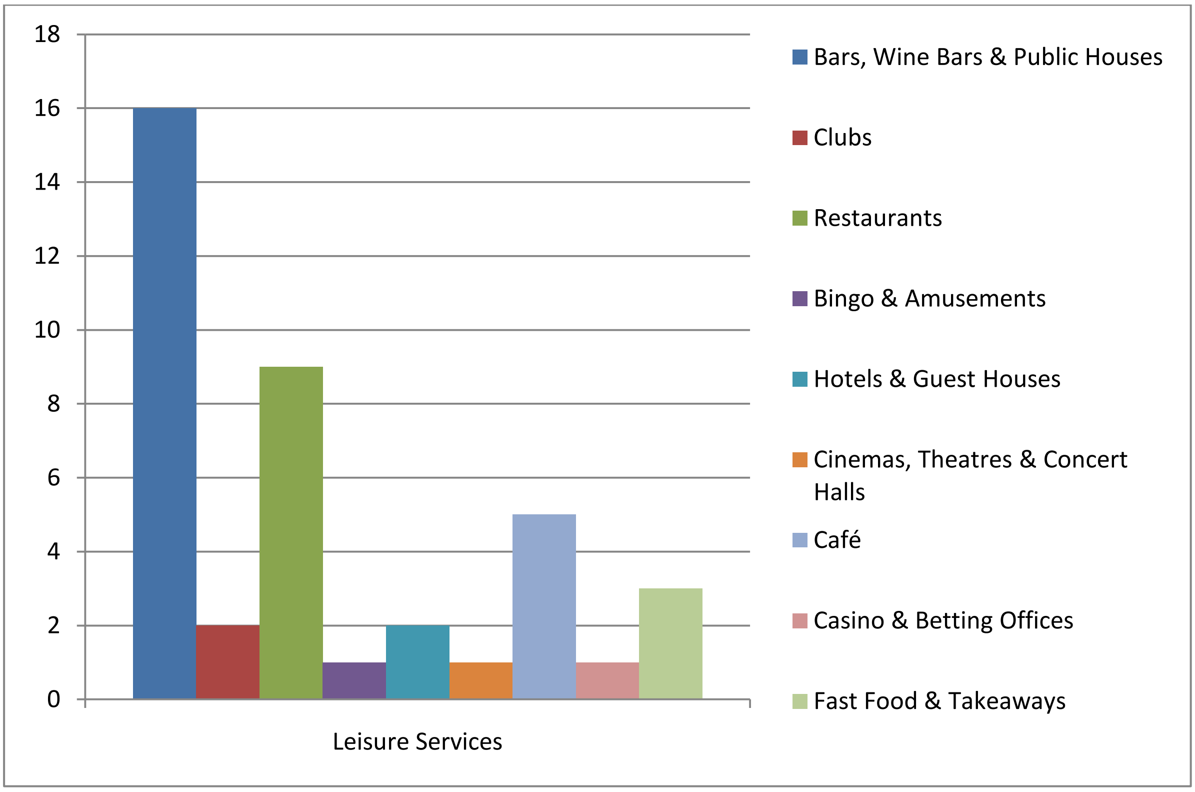


Figure 1.7: Bar Chart showing Leisure Services distribution

Financial and Business Services

1.3.7 This sector represents 7% of the town centre land use mix. The Bar Chart (Fig 1.8) illustrates the primary activity break-down of the Financial and Services Sector within the town. Property Services is the pre-dominant activity (7 recorded) which includes Auctioneers, architectural services. Legal services (6 identified) are also strongly represented in the town, reflecting the towns function as a seat for the district and circuit court. A total of 5 units were providing Financial Services and 3 units were providing Business Goods and Services. Two Retail Banks were recorded in the town centre.

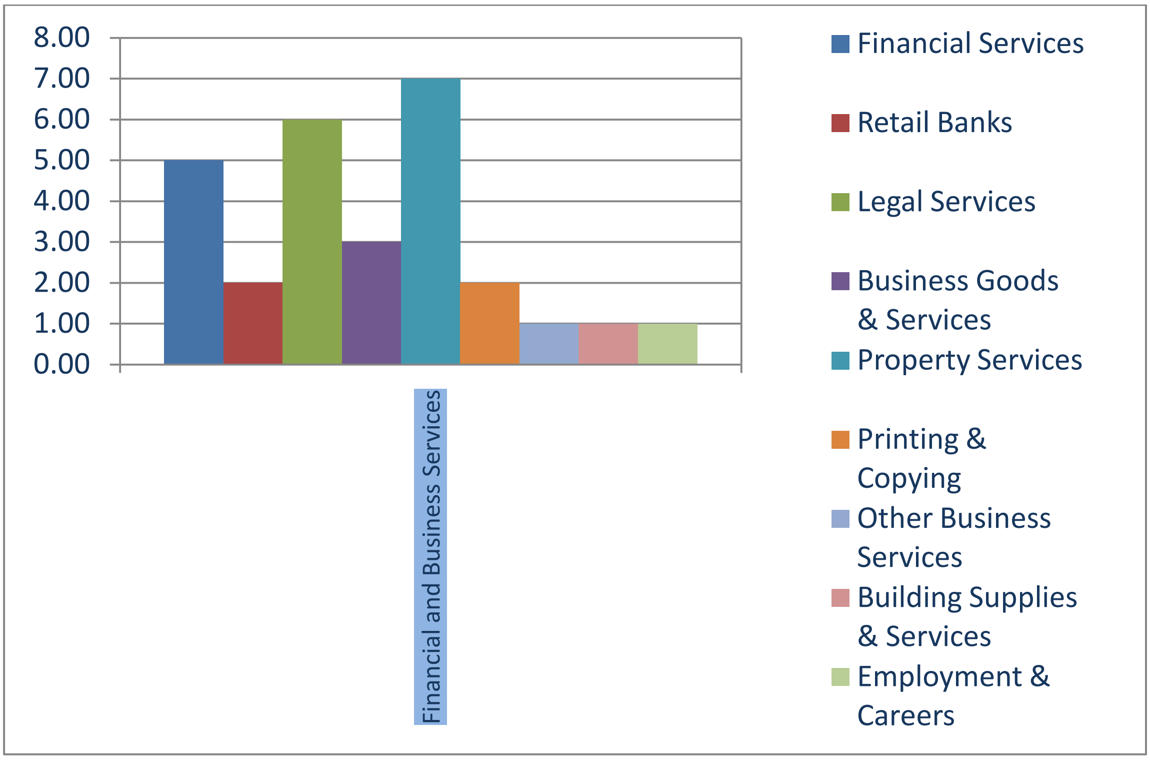


Figure 1.8: Bar Chart showing Financial & Business Services

1.4 Vacancy

1.4.1 Vacancy rates have been defined as the number of units not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total amount of units (vacant and occupied) in the town centre. In Bantry vacancy stands at 9% within the town (37 units of 426 units). This falls just outside the normal range limits within a functional market (5-7%).

1.4.2 Of the 261 commercial units surveyed, 26 were vacant representing 10% of the commercial town centre building stock. A cluster of commercial vacancy is evident on New Street including the former Supervalue premises (which has relocated to Harbour Road). This Windfall site has the potential to operate as an indoor market showcasing local artisan foods and crafts. There is also a large vacant property directly opposite (formerly Vickerys Inn) which could facilitate a number of small commercial units at ground floor level and residential overhead or could be suitable for a Hotel. The latter has been subject to a series of planning applications.

1.4.3 Of the 165 residential units, 11 units were vacant or 7% of the town centre residential building stock. There is a cluster of vacant residential units at the western end of Marino Street at a pinch-point of a very busy National Secondary Route (N71) and principle northern access/ exit route to the town.

Figure 1.9: Vacant building, New Street (North)

Figure 1.10: Windfall Site, New Street (South)

1.4.4 The survey identified 4 infill brownfield Opportunity Sites, all located along the laneways. These could generate a total of 9 small, infill residential units, suitable for sheltered/ starter housing.

1.4.5 From the 426 buildings surveyed, 261 were classified as having a commercial ground floor and 165 were classified as residential houses within the town. Recent exemptions now allow a change from commercial to residential use, subject to limitations.

1.5 Residential Uses

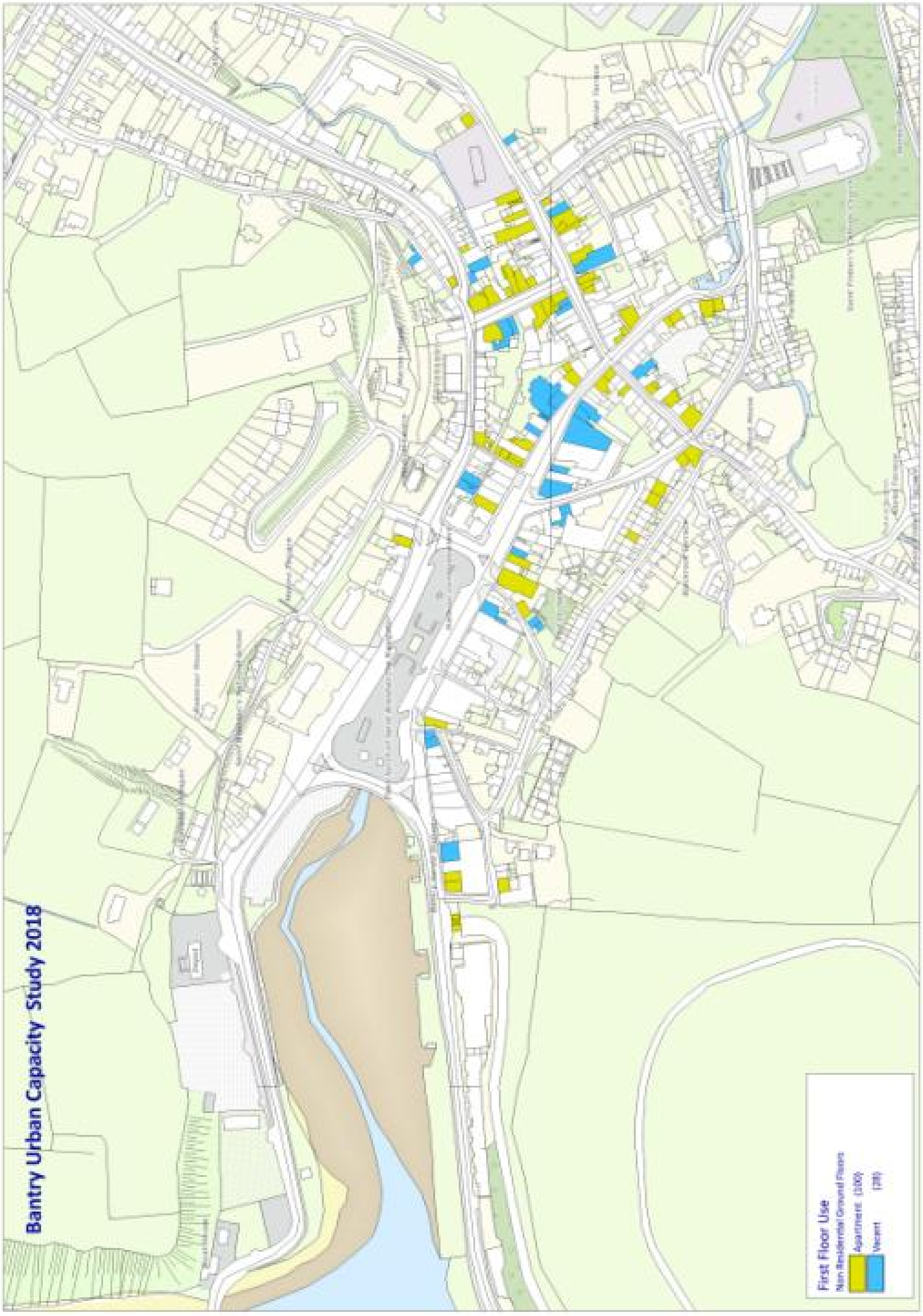
1.5.1 Residential use (house) represented the largest land use category within the town centre (35%) and is predominantly located on the peripheral streets of the area zoned town centre. Within the upper floors of the building stock a total of 264 residential units were noted across the 1st and 2nd floors. These are largely on the secondary streets of the Retail Core.

1.5.2 A total of 154 units had a separate access to the upper floors which is a key ingredient in securing upper floor usage. The figure represents 36% of the town centre building stock or 59% of the commercial stock. The majority of these 2nd access points were on the street but a small number were via a separate access within a shared foyer.

1.5.3 A total of 28 vacant 1st floors and 24 vacant 2nd floors were recorded. The survey work confirmed that upper floor use was predominantly one residential unit (apartment) per floor. On this basis a total of 52 additional residential units could be theoretically accommodated within the vacant upper floors, subject to Building and Fire regulation compliance.

Figures 1.11: Examples of Separate Access to Upper Floors

Figure 1.12: Upper Floor Use



1.6 Building Condition

1.6.1 Building condition was largely good (91%). A total number of 31 were considered poor (7%) and a further 3 were recorded as derelict.

1.7 Existing Built Up Area

1.7.1 A total of 36 plots were surveyed from the existing built up area. Most of these were small, grass plots adjacent to established residential areas. Plots surveyed ranged in size from 0.15ha to 2.64ha. Of the 36 plots analysed, 11 sites were discounted because of access, topography or servicing issues. The remaining 25 plots have the cumulative capacity to deliver 190 units, mostly of detached, semi-detached or terraced form. A proportion of this capacity could offer an alternative to one-off housing demands in the unserviced rural area outside Bantry.

1.8 Special Policy Areas

1.8.1 There are 2 Special Policy Areas zoned in the Bantry land use plan 2017. The vacant Convent building (X-01) has the capacity to accommodate approximately 25 units within the existing structure.

1.8.2 Lands zoned X-03 consist of a 10.4 ha site which is an important backdrop to the town. Part of the site (3.85ha) is considered suitable for housing and could potentially deliver 79 units.

1.8.3 The combined Urban Capacity of lands zoned Special Policy Area in Bantry is 104 units.

1.9 Regeneration Area/ Opportunity Sites

1.9.1 Two sites on New Street have been identified as Opportunity Sites. These are separate vacant clusters of 2-4 storey buildings capable of accommodating a number of small commercial units at ground floor with residential overhead or a larger anchor tenant. The site north of the street would also be suitable for a boutique hotel/ guest accommodation.

1.10 Overall Urban Capacity

Table 1.2: Bantry Urban Capacity Table		
Source	Number	Comment
Vacant Housing	12	Architects Dept. working on Marino Street scheme.
Living Over The Shop (LOTS)	52	New Policy Required
Infill Opportunity Sites	9	Laneway/mews guidance required
Special Policy Areas	104	Greater emphasis on housing incorporated into text of policy.
Built Up Area	190	Re-classify/ incorporate into existing land supply?
Regeneration Area/ Windfall site	4	Possible new designation category?
Total	**371 units**	

1.10.1 The cumulative urban capacity from the various sources in Bantry amount to 371 units. These all have a part to play in addressing the various housing needs of the town. It is clear that the infill opportunity sites and vacant upper floors in the existing building stock can satisfy the demand for smaller 2-3 bed units for rental, start-up/ step-down homes and also can satisfy holiday home demands in the town.

1.10.2 Within the built up area there is clear capacity for a mixture of larger family homes and even self-build opportunities as an alternative to one-off housing demands in the unserviced rural hinterland.

1.11 Street Analysis:

1.11.1 The term Urban Structure refers to the pattern or arrangement of development blocks, streets, buildings, open space and landscape which make up our diverse network of towns. Understanding each town's individual urban structure allows us to protect the key features that help define it's unique sense of place and provides the tools to guide future development response to local distinctiveness.

1.11.2 In Bantry there is a formal perimeter block structure evident within the town characterised by a variety of block sizes and shapes which have responded to the town's coastal location and steeply sloping topography. The Urban Block is the foundation of optimising enclosure to a street and generating active frontages with frequent windows and doors. The largely consistent building line makes clear differentiation between public fronts and private space to the rear.

1.11.3 The cartographic analysis also shows Bantry has a clear hierarchy of streets and buildings. The primary streets facing Wolfe Tone Square have larger building plots within a rectangular block and are transacted by a series of laneways. The secondary streets have a finer urban grain and smaller block sizes. Access to the interior of the block is also achieved via covered laneways or pends (passageway allowing vehicular access from street to a rear courtyard) within the street.

1.11.4 The survey work identified good activity throughout the day within the primary and secondary streets of the town centre, despite poor weather conditions (wet and cold).

1.11.5 Wolfe Tone Square within the town has seating and tables and offers a visual connection to Bantry Bay and Whiddy. The square is the focus of a weekly farmer's market. The area is detached from the adjacent streets, however, and surrounded by busy traffic lanes. The redesign of this public space as part of the streetscape would provide more opportunities for optimising its usage throughout the day/night and create a more pleasant environment.

Figure 1.12: Perimeter Block & Urban grain of town

Figure 1.13: Pend allows vehicular access to the rear, Barrack Street.

1.12 Key Considerations:

1.12.1 Bantry's peripherality within the County is also its strength. The town has a large number of Public, Health and Medical Services reflecting its importance as a community focus for a large rural hinterland. The importance of tourism in the local economy is reflected by the changing land-use profile which has seen strong growth in Leisure Services.

1.12.2 Bantry's location at the mouth of Bantry Bay and surrounded by a series of mountains provides an opportunity to market the town as an outdoor leisure service hub/ extreme leisure hub, which is a growing tourism sector.

1.12.3 The further expansion of the cruise and marine leisure sector within Bantry Bay would help reverse the recent contraction of the Retail Comparison Sector. There is an opportunity to showcase the local craft and artisan food industries within the town and this would appeal to the growing tourism numbers visiting the town.

1.12.4 Wolfe Tone Square has provided an important market function for the town over the past 20 years. There is an opportunity to redesign and update this space, reintegrating it with the south side of the street (Wolfe Tone Square South) which would offer a more pedestrian-friendly space. This could aid more extensive spill-out spaces for the adjacent hotels and bars and provide a more interesting space to sit and linger for the community and visitors alike.

1.13 Town Specific Priorities:

1.13.1 **Town Centre Retail Priorities:** Windfall sites identified as opportunity sites. Guidance on the mix of uses, design parameters to be outlined;

1.13.2 Significant reduction in number of Retail Comparison units since 2012 reflecting wider trends in the sector. This issue is exacerbated by a high number of Charity Shops. The provision of further high value uses and additional craft/ artisan uses which can showcase the strong local artistic and specialised food producers of the area should be encouraged to reverse these trends.

1.13.3 **Vacancy Priorities** - 26 vacant commercial units out of 261 surveyed (10% of commercial stock). A cluster of commercial vacancy is evident on New Street including the former Supervalue premises (which has relocated to Harbour Road). 11 Residential units were recorded as vacant - understanding the cause of the issue is important to solving the problem long term.

1.13.4 **Residential Priorities:** Strong usage of the upper floors for residential purposes (264 units) to be protected. Peripheral sites suitable as alternatives to one-off housing in unserviced rural area. Further potential of vacant upper floors to fulfill residential/ tourist accommodation needs within the compact core. Infill sites along the laneways appropriate for sheltered/ start-up housing units. Only 3 Derelict properties recorded.

1.13.5 **Infrastructure & Investment Priorities:** Transport & Public Realm: A multi-disciplinary approach required to update town square, address traffic pinch points and provide a more pedestrian friendly core in combination with delivery of Outer Relief Road.

1.14 County Development Plan Policy Response required on the following:

Protecting the town's urban structure (perimeter blocks – see similar policy at link below):
https://www.wexfordcoco.iesites/default/files/content/Planning/DraftGoreyLAP17-23/UrbanDesignGuidelinesandNeighbourhoodFramework.pdf

Retaining the 2nd own door access in each building & requiring a 2nd access in new development in the town centre - see similar policy at link below;
http://www.www.corkcity.ie/corkcitydevelopmentplan2004/Chapter11_DevelopmentControlStandards.pdf

Development guidance required for laneways (see similar policy at link below – RES11 Mews Lane Housing);
http://www.dlrcoco.iesites/default/files/atoms/files/chapter5_0.pdf

Clonakilty

URBAN CAPACITY STUDY (2019)

Section 2.2 **Clonakilty**

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Town profile – Survey Results & Analysis

2.3 Primary Activity Breakdown

2.4 Vacancy

2.5 Residential

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Section 2.2 Clonakilty

2 Part A Introduction

2.1 Clonakilty in context

2.1.2 Clonakilty has evolved over the years as a historic port town in the western division of the County. is It is a planned market town of important townscape value, which comprises a series of formal blocks which radiate from a central Georgian Square (Emmet Square). Buildings are generally 2-4 storeys high, of various widths and largely demonstrate a consistent frontage.

2.1.3 The area zoned as Town Centre (CK-T-01, CK-T-02 & CK-T-03) under the Draft West Cork Local Area Plan 2016 includes a mix of traditional commercial units in the Primary Streets and some larger stand-alone retailers at edge of the town centre locations including Supervalu and Lidl. Dunnes Stores is located outside the Town centre in an edge of town site.

2.1.4 The town's population fell from 4,721 persons in 2011 to 4,592 in 2016. This is a result of a change in the boundary and does not reflect actual population trends in the town. Clonakilty has a population target of 7,218 for 2022 which equates to a requirement of about 1,500 new units. Under the Clonakilty Town Plan and West Cork Local Area Plan 2017 there is a net residential land supply of 94.53ha with the capacity to provide approximately 1,600 new units to facilitate the target growth.

2.1.5 There are 206 Protected Structures within the former town council area and a large area of the town centre is designated as an Architectural Conservation Area given there are significant groupings or concentrations of heritage structures in this area. Some small peripheral areas are also designed as Architectural Conservation Areas.

2.1.6 Study Methodology

2.1.7 The study area focussed on the area zoned "Town Centre" as per the Draft West Cork Local Area Plan 2016 (See Figure 1.1). A land-use and photographic survey was undertaken of each building and space within the study area by a team from the Planning Policy Unit on the 14th February 2018. The number of units and category of use per floor in this survey was ascertained by visual assessment only. Upper floor residential use confirmation was cross-referenced with the number of doorbells/ letterboxes visible on the building's 2nd "private" access.

2.1.8 The classification of uses followed the GOAD Sub- Class Classification system and also recorded the primary activity within each land-use as per the 2013 Town Centre Review Paper (See Appendix A).

2.2 Town Profile – Survey Results & Analysis

2.2.2 Town Centre

2.2.3 A total of 371 buildings were surveyed within the area zoned town centre as per the (Draft) West Cork Municipal District Local Area Plan 2016. The Retail Core is focused around Pearse Street (Primary Street) and the Secondary Streets of Ashe Street, Connolly Street and Rossa Street.

2.2.4 Clonakilty has a strong mix of commercial uses within the town centre, reflecting its importance as a service centre for a wide rural catchment in West Cork. Figure 1.2 illustrates the spatial breakdown of the ground floor land-use mix within the town centre. The associated pie chart (Figure 1.3) demonstrates the percentage of these uses. The survey utilises the GOAD Sub- classification of uses which are included in key of the map & pie-chart. The primary activity within the land-use sub-class is also recorded and details of these are discussed below.

2.2.5 The predominant land use is shared between Residential and Retail Comparison, representing 34% and 20% of the building stock respectively. The Residential uses are largely located on the north-western and southern eastern peripheries of the town centre. Retail Comparison uses are highly concentrated in the Retail Core with some prevalence throughout the town.

2.2.6 Leisure Services are the next most predominant land use at 14%. This is not surprising owing to the well established tourism function of the town, both locally, nationally and internationally.

2.2.7 Financial and Business Services represent 7% of the town centre uses reflecting its importance as a centre of trade to a wider population base in West Cork. Retail Convenience represented 4% of the ground floor uses. The retail convenience sector comprises a good mix of larger national multiples such as Supervalu and Dunnes along with smaller independent stores mainly located along Main Street. Lidl has a store on the Inchydoney Road.

2.2.8 Vacancy is relatively low in the town at 10%. There is a cluster of vacant units south and west of Pearse Square. There are a number of large vacant sites on the eastern periphery of the town overlooking the River. These will be dealt with in a separate section.

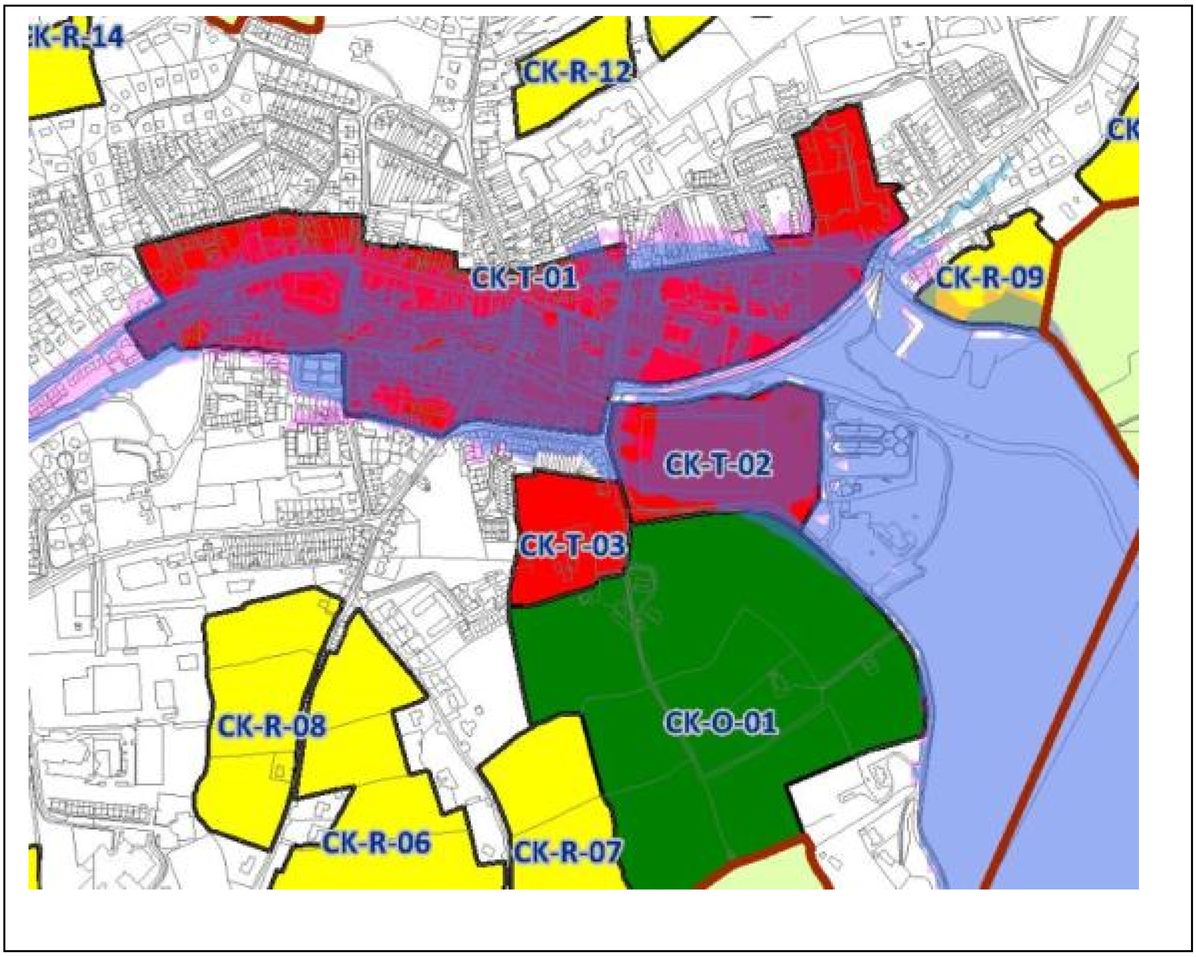
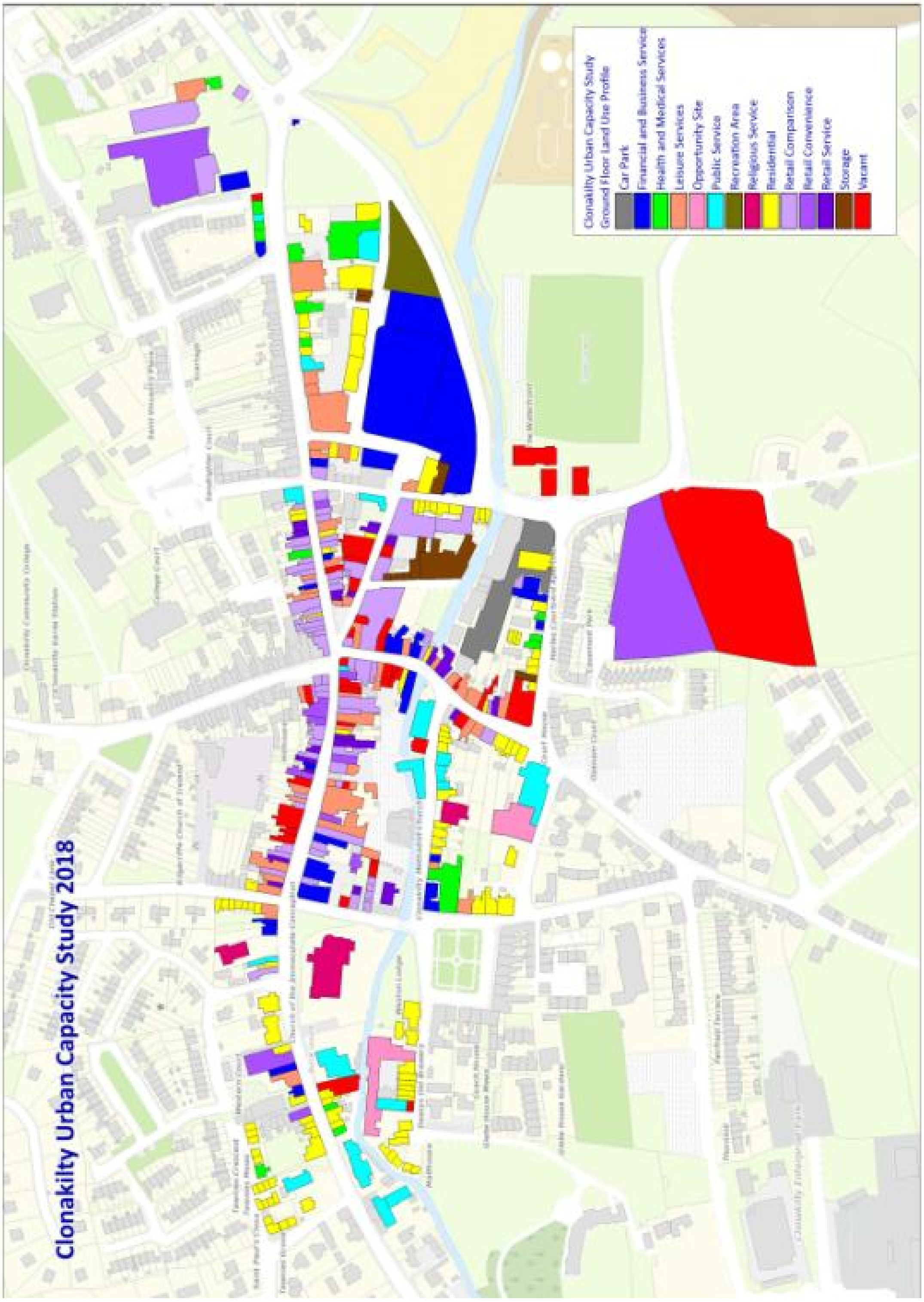


Figure 2.1 Clonakilty Town Centre (Draft West Cork Local Area Plan, 2016)

Figure 2.2: Ground floor land use mix, Clonakilty



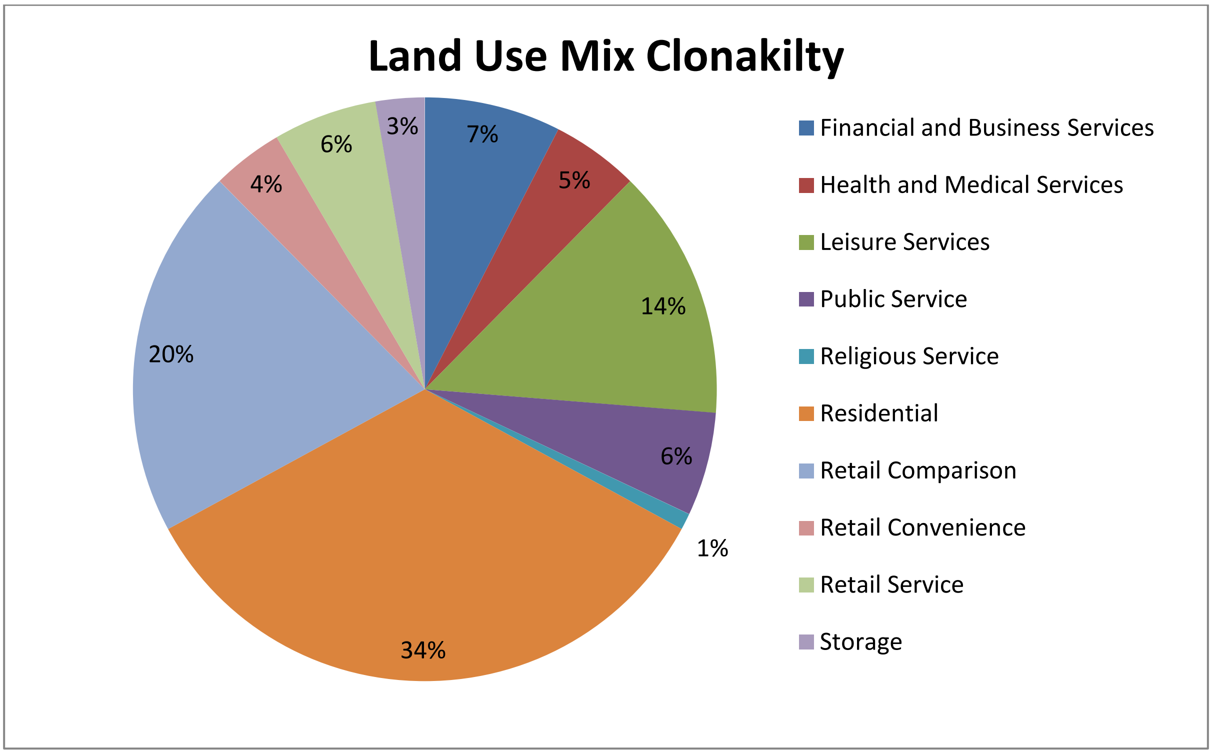


Figure 2.3: Ground floor land use mix, Clonakilty

2.2.9 Retail Core Trends

2.2.10 Table 1.1 illustrates the trends in the commercial land use mix in the Retail Core of the town between 2011 and 2018. These figures reflect the diversity of uses within properties on the Primary and Secondary Streets of the Retail Core (figure 1.4) only. These streets include Pearse Square, Mc Curtain Street, St. Patrick's Street and the quays adjoining the Square.

Table 1.1: Comparative Diversity of Uses (Retail Core), Clonakilty

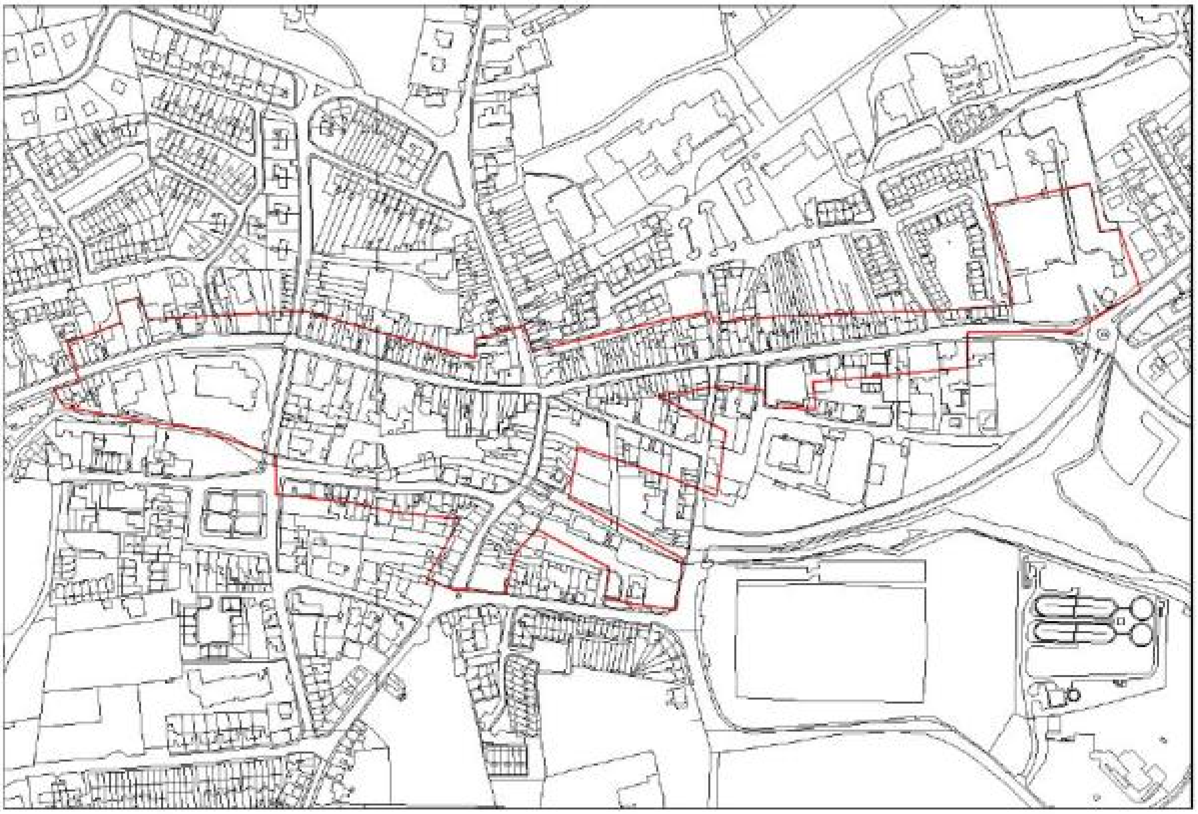
Use	2011	2018	Change
Retail Comparison	69	68	-1
Retail Convenience	14	13	-1
Retail Service	21	19	-2
Leisure Services	42	46	+4
Financial & Business Services	23	25	+2
Health & Medical Services	8	16	+8
Public Service	12	19	+7
Religious Service	3	3	--

2.2.11 While these figures do not deal with the amount of floorspace available in the town it does highlight some trends. In general the overall outlook from the previous survey in 2011 is very positive. Most of the sectors have increased with a significant increase in the Health and Medical Services (+8), Public Service (+7) and Leisure Services (+4).

2.2.12 While the Retail Comparison and Retail Convenience sectors have only lost 1 unit each since 2011.

2.2.13 Similarly, there was a relatively small decrease in Retail Services with a reduction of 2 units since 2011.

Figure 2.4: Extent of Retail Core surveyed in 20111



2.3 Primary Activity Break-down

Retail Convenience

2.3.2 The retail convenience distribution within the town is illustrated in Figure 1.5 below. The offer is quite good. Butchers and Convenience Store, Groceries and Frozen Food are the most prevalent primary use within this sub class (4 units). Supermarkets are the second predomiant sub-class with 2 represented. Bakers and Confectioners, Health Food Stores, Confectionary, Frozen Food, Off Licence and Shoe Repairs all have 1 no. unit each within the town. There are no Fishmongers recorded.

2.3.3 The town also benefits from a weekly Market in the town centre (Pearse Street) on Fridays from 8am to 2pm to showcase local produce and crafts from the region.

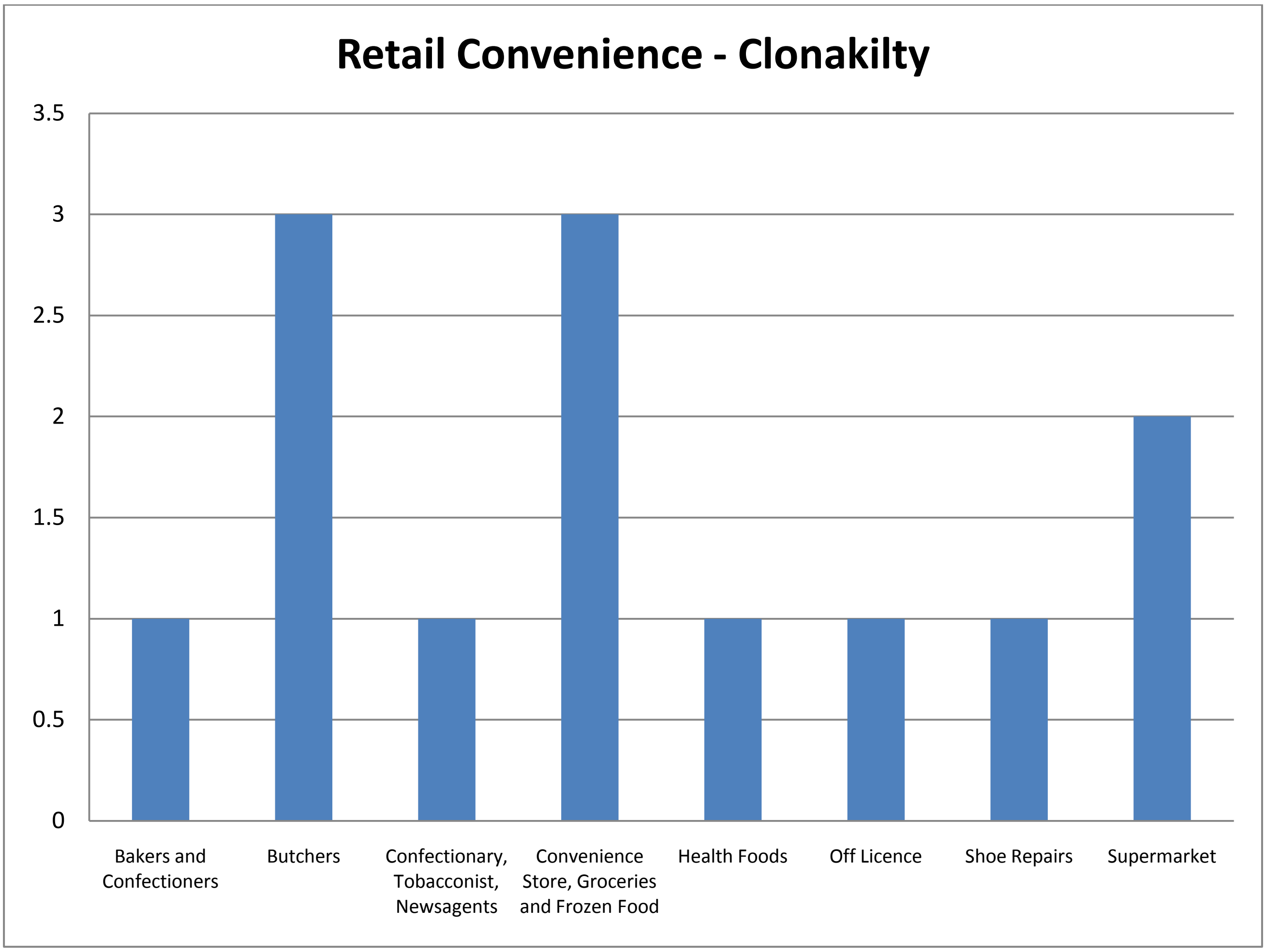


Figure 2.5: Bar Chart showing Retail Convenience in Clonakilty

Retail Comparison

2.3.4 The town has a broad range of retail comparison stores which are represented across most sub-categories. There is a significant proportion of shops selling Ladies Wear and Accessories (11 units) providing niche clothing offer within the town and wider West Cork area.

2.3.5 The second predominant use is Chemists and Drugstores (9 units). Similarly, there are 7 units selling Toys, Games and Hobbies and an additional 6 charity shops in the town.

2.3.6 There are 5 units selling Furniture. All other uses are in the 1-3 unit range.

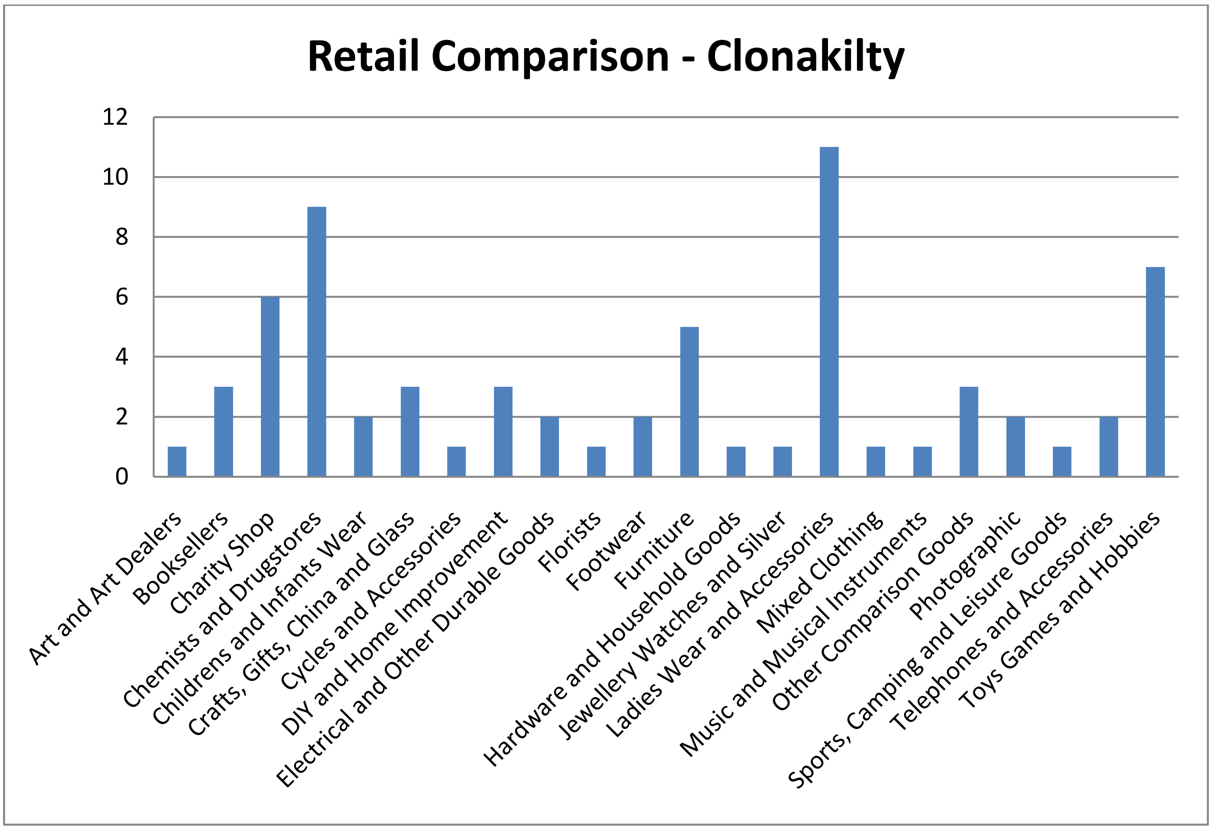


Figure 2.6 Illustrates the Retail Comparison breakdown in Clonakilty

Leisure Services

2.3.7 The town has a buoyant Leisure Services sector reflecting its growing tourism and service function. The predominant uses are Restaurants (13 units) and Bars, Wine Bars and Public House (12 units) including The Galley Bar and An Sugán on Main Street. The choice of more informal eateries is very strong with 10 cafes recorded. These are the second and third strongest sub-category within this use class.

2.3.8 Unsurprisingly the accommodation sector is well represented within the town at 5 Hotels and Guest Houses including the two Hotels within the town.

2.3.9 There were 2 Fast Food and Takeaway outlets. All other categories have 1 unit each.

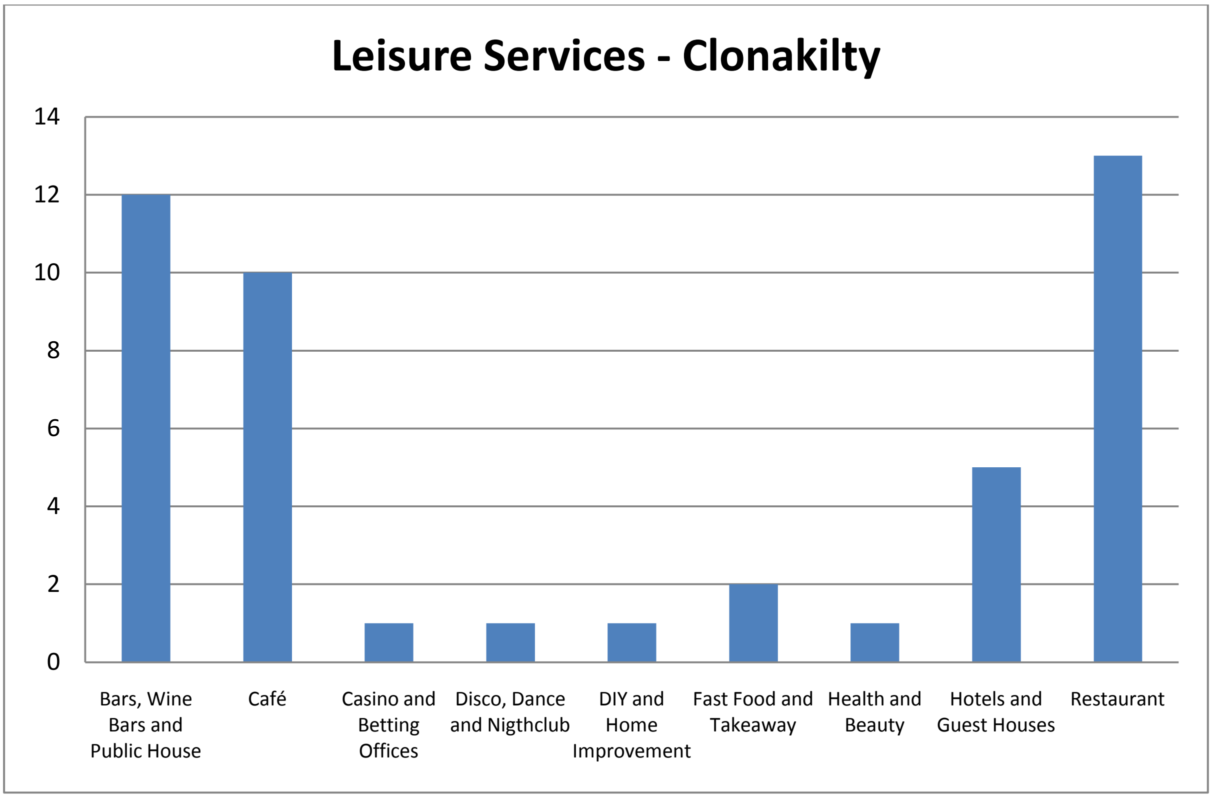


Figure 2.7 Illustrates the Leisure Services breakdown in Clonakilty.

Financial and Business Services

2.3.10 The Bar Chart (Fig 1.8) illustrates the primary activity break-down of the Financial and Services Sector within the town. The category 'Other Business Services' is by far and away the most popular in this category of use (9 units). These other uses include the Clona Dairies Milk Production Complex. Financial Services (which includes Accountants and Insurance services) and Property Services (Estate Agents mostly) are the next most popular with 4 units each. There are three Retail Banks (AIB, Bank of Ireland and Permanent TSB) and one building society. Legal Services and Employment and Careers all have 2 units each.

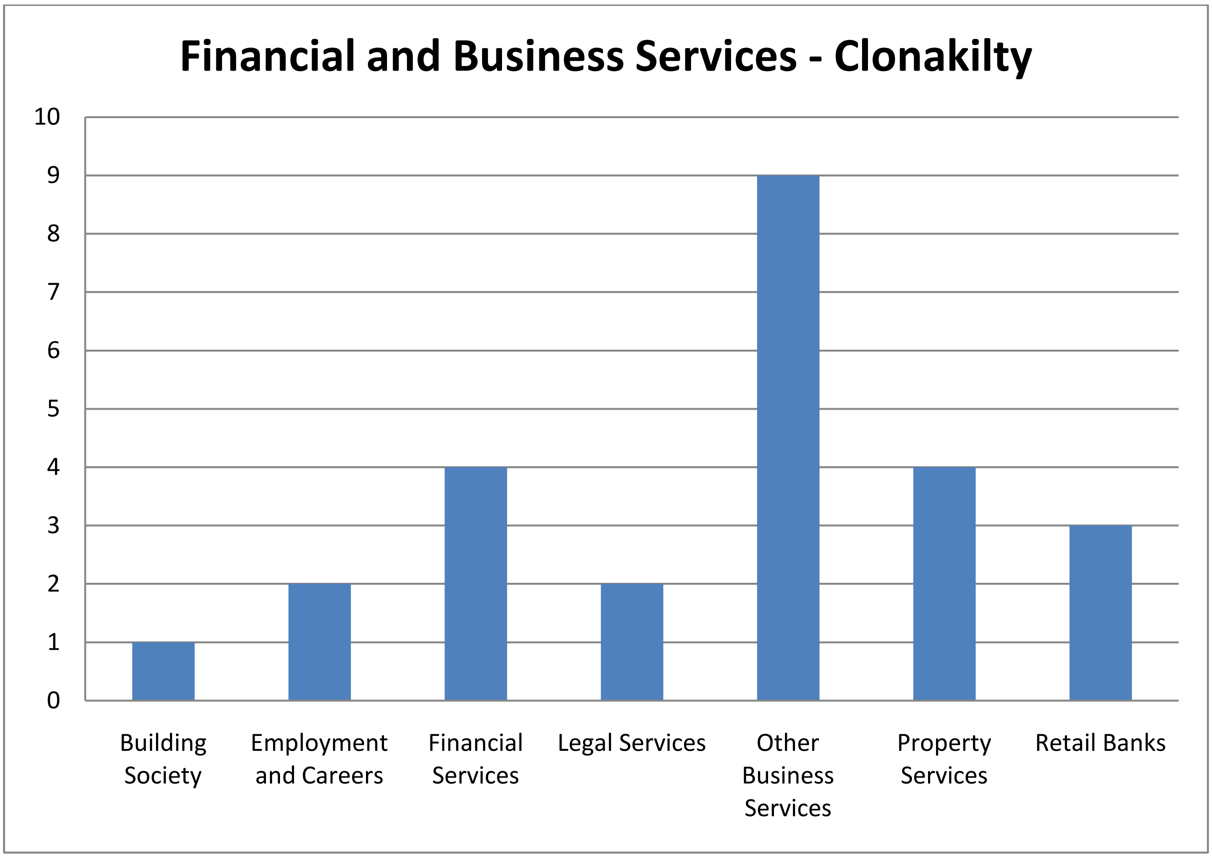


Figure 2.8: Bar Chart showing Financial & Business Services in Clonakilty

2.4 Vacancy

2.4.2 Vacancy rates have been defined as the number of units not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total amount of units (vacant and occupied) in the town centre. In Clonakilty vacancy stands at 10% within the town (36 units of 371 units). This falls just outside the normal range limits within a functional market (5-7%).

2.4.3 Of the 256 commercial units surveyed, 35 were vacant representing 14% of the commercial town centre building stock. There are some clusters on the Inchydoney Road and on Main Street.

2.4.4 Of the 113 residential units, 1 unit was vacant or 1% of the town centre residential building stock.

Figure 2.9: Vacant ground floor retail unit, Pearse Street, Clonakilty

2.4.5 From the 371 buildings surveyed, 256 were classified as having a non-residential ground floor and 113 were classified as residential houses within the town.

2.5 Residential Uses

2.5.2 Residential uses (both houses and apartments) account for 31% of ground floor units within the Town Centre. These are predominantly located on Tawnies Mews, Oliver Plunkett Street and Old Brewery Lane.

2.5.3 A total of 169 residential units were recorded within the upper floors of the town centre. This included 111 units at first floor level, 45 residential units at second floor level and 13 at third floor level. Of the 169 units at first floor level a total of 53 had retained the traditional family living quarters over the shop (i.e. 2 or more living floors over a ground floor commercial unit). These were located on Pearse Street and Connolly Street.

2.5.4 A total of 257 commercial units 214 had a separate access to the upper floors which is a key ingredient in securing upper floor usage, representing 83% of the town centre commercial building stock. These 2nd access points to the upper floors were achieved via a mixture of a second door within the façade of the building (See image left below), via a separate side lane or internally within a foyer (See image right below).

2.5.5 A total of 33 vacant 1st floors, 44 vacant 2nd floors and 2 vacant 3rd floors were recorded. The survey work confirmed that upper floor use was predominantly one residential unit (apartment) per floor. On this basis a total of 79 additional residential units could be theoretically accommodated within the vacant upper floors, subject to Building and Fire regulation compliance.

Figure 2.10: Example of Separate Access to Upper Floors in Clonakilty

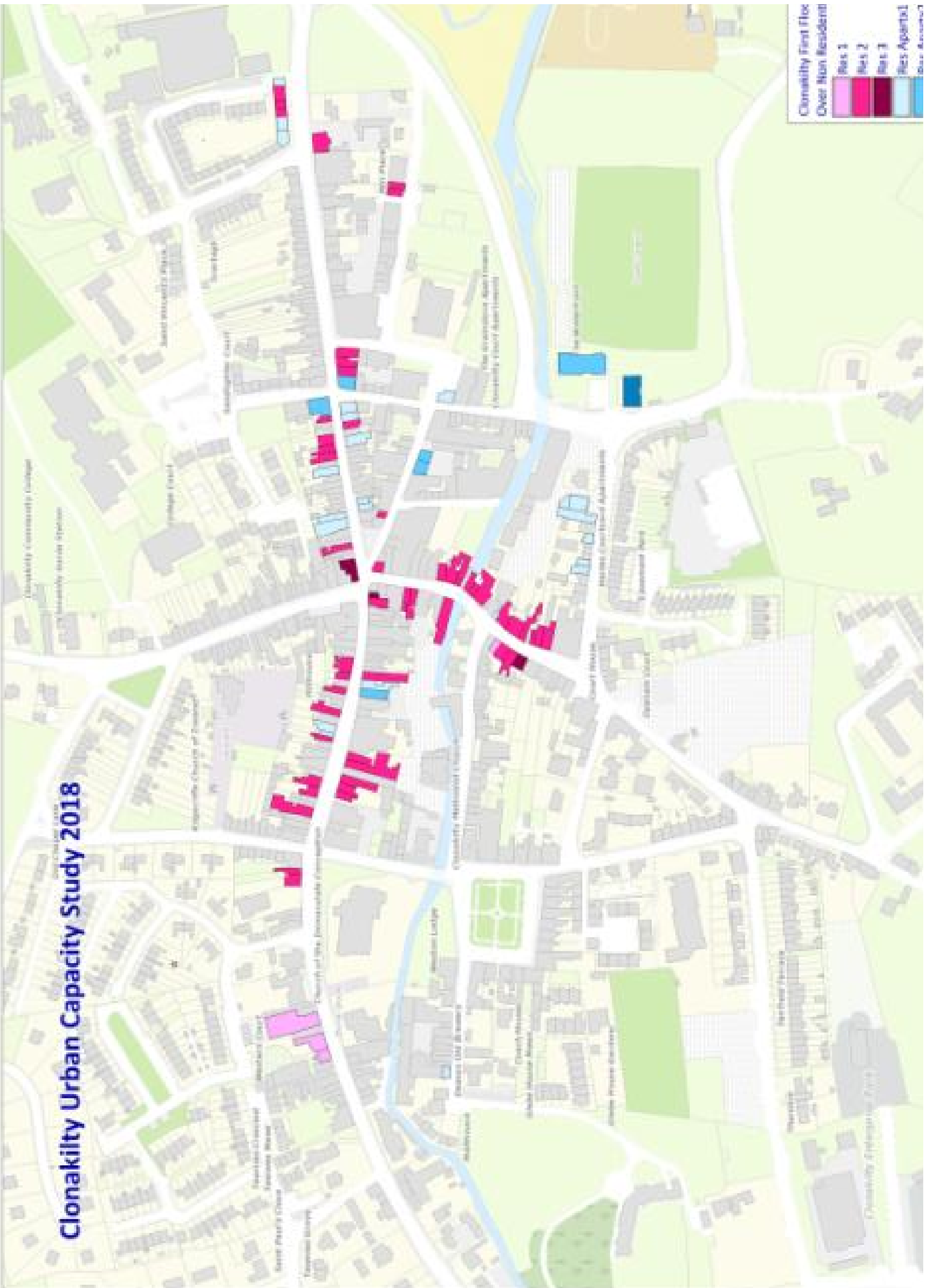


Figure 2.11: First Floor Residential Use

Figure 2.12: Second Floor Residential Use

2.6 Building Condition

2.6.2 Building condition was predominantly good at 95%. A total number of 17 units were considered poor and only 3 units were recorded as derelict.

Figure 2.13: Example of colourful historic streetscape, Clonakilty

2.7 Existing Built Up Area

2.7.2 A total of 15 plots were surveyed from the existing built up area of the town plus the large Convent complex which is currently zoned as Institutional/ Civic/ Educational in the Clonakilty Town Development Plan. A total of 6 plots were discounted because of access issues, topography, flood risk and use of the site as a carpark.

2.7.3 The remaining sites comprised of large Institutional buildings, backland plots, infill plots and potential mews developments in rear gardens. A number of the plots surveyed were identified as potential Regeneration Areas in the future review of the County Development Plan. The overall capacity from the built up area and Convent amount to 203 units.

2.8 Special Policy Areas

2.8.2 There was no Special Policy Areas zoned in the Draft West Cork Local Area Plan 2016.

2.9 Regeneration Area/ Opportunity Sites

2.9.2 There were no Regeneration Areas identified in the Draft West Cork Local Area Plan 2016. Deasys Brewery maybe suitable as a potential Opportunity Site/ Regeneration Site but due to its location within a flood risk zone would not be suitable for housing.

2.9.3 A further Infill Opportunity Site was identified on Lamb Street which could potentially accommodate 5 units, possibly suitable for start-up/ sheltered housing units.

2.10 Overall Urban Capacity

Table 2.2: Clonakilty Urban Capacity Table

Source	**Number**	**Comment**
Vacant Housing	1	Refer to Municipal District office
Living Over The Shop (LOTS)	79	New Policy Required
Infill Opportunity Sites	5	Laneway/mews guidance required
Special Policy Area	0	
Built Up Area	203	Revised zoning required for Convent to allow housing?
Regeneration Area/ Windfall site	0	
Total	**288 units**	

2.10.2 The cumulative urban capacity from the various sources in Clonakilty amounts to 288 units. These all have a part to play in addressing the various housing needs of the town. It is clear that the vacant upper floors in the existing building stock and infill opportunities can satisfy the demand for smaller 2-3 bed units for rental, start-up/ step-down homes.

2.10.3 Within the built up area there is capacity for a mix of small residential schemes or self-build opportunities as an alternative to one-off housing demands in the unserviced rural hinterland. The Convent building and its curtilage also offers potential for including a residential element in any future zoning approach.

2.11 Street Analysis:

2.11.2 The term Urban Structure refers to the pattern or arrangement of development blocks, streets, buildings, open space and landscape which make up our diverse network of towns. Understanding each town's individual urban structure allows us to protect the key features that help define it's unique sense of place and provides the tools to guide future development response to local distinctiveness.

2.11.3 The cartographic analysis illustrates the planned and formal urban structure of the core which centres on the main commercial spine of Pearse Street and Ashe Street. Here buildings have wider plot widths, contrasting with the tighter urban grain of the Secondary Streets. Emmett Square is an excellent example of a formal Georgian residential square. Access to the interior of the block is achieved via covered archways (pends) or laneways within the streetscape.

Figure 2. 14: Urban Grain, Clonakilty (blue dots identify Protected Structures)

2.11.4 The survey work identified good activity throughout the day within the primary and secondary streets of the town centre. There are good opportunities for people to sit and linger throughout the town centre, especially at Astna Square, Emmet Square and along Pearse Street. The town is an excellent example of a vibrant Market centre with pedestrian priority at its heart. There is a weekly market which adds to the vibrancy of the town centre retail experience.

2.12 Key Considerations:

2.12.2 Clonakilty continues to function as a desirable Market town in which to live, work and visit. The town's attraction is underpinned by its broad range of goods and services on offer, coastal landscape setting and proximity to Cork City. In order for the town to continue to grow in a sustainable manner the following considerations are highlighted:

2.13 County Development Plan Policy Response required on the following:

Protecting the town's urban structure (perimeter blocks – see similar policy at link below) including laneway access & pend access to interior of the block:
https://www.wexfordcoco.iesites/default/files/content/Planning/DraftGoreyLAP17-23/UrbanDesignGuidelinesandNeighbourhoodFramework.pdf

Retaining the 2nd own door access in each building & requiring a 2nd access in new development in the town centre - see similar policy at link below;
http://www.www.corkcity.ie/corkcitydevelopmentplan2004/Chapter11_DevelopmentControlStandards.pdf

Development guidance required for laneways (see similar policy at link below – RES11 Mews Lane Housing);
http://www.dlrcoco.iesites/default/files/atoms/files/chapter5_0.pdf

New designation to be included to address priority/ opportunity sites within the "Existing Built Up Area" as part of CDP Review;

Town Specific:

Town centre – some adjustment to the town centre zoning recommended to omit exclusively residential areas.

Regeneration/ Opportunity Sites identified at Deasys Brewery and Convent to be given consideration as part of Town Development Plan Review.

Vacancy – potential of upper floors to be encouraged for residential use;

Other Town Specific Considerations: Mews potential identified – zoning approach to be considered.

Cobh

URBAN CAPACITY STUDY (2019)

Section 2.3 **Cobh**

3 Cobh

3.1 Part A Introduction

3.1.1 Cobh in context

3.1.2 Cobh is a historic 19th century port town situated on the southern coast of Great Island within Cork Harbour. The town developed as a significant British naval base and a passenger terminal during a period of mass emigration in the 19th century. The townscape qualities of attractive terraces and large villas stacked on the steep hillsides and interspersed by the commanding spire of Cobh cathedral creates a stunning coastal setting.

3.1.3 Cobh is a “Large Metropolitan Town” under the County Development Plan 2014 has been identified as a principle location of employment within the Greater Cork Area. The economic base of the town is narrow and the only industrial lands are located in Rushbrooke. The tourism sector is growing as a result of passenger embarkation to Spike Island and a growing number of tourist attractions in the town. The town also has a growing number of Cruise ships berthing at its dedicated cruise dock and disembark the ship for a number of hours. Plans to open a second cruise terminal at Lynch’s Dock will help enhance the expansion of the tourism product within the town as it will include passenger embarking facilities which may encourage a greater number of visitors to stay locally before or after their cruise.

3.1.4 The town’s population grew from 12,347 in 2011 to 12,800 in 2016. The town has a population target of 14,543 for 2022 which will generate an increase of 1,625 households in the town, equating to 1,778 new units. Under the 2017 Local Area Plan there is a net residential land supply of 72ha with the capacity to provide approximately 1,570 units to facilitate the target growth. A series of Strategic Lands are being considered to offset the shortfall over the plan period.

3.1.5 There are 370 Protected Structures within the town and 5 Architectural Conservation Areas reflecting the important heritage value within the town.

3.1.6 The number of units and category of use per floor in this survey was ascertained by visual assessment only. Upper floor residential use confirmation was cross-referenced with the number of doorbells/ letterboxes visible on the building’s 2nd “private” access.

3.1.7 The classification of uses followed the GOAD Sub- Class Classification system and also recorded the primary activity within each land-use as per the 2013 Town Centre Review Paper (See Appendix A).

3.2 Town Profile – Survey Results & Analysis

3.2.1 Town Centre

3.2.2 A team from Planning Policy Unit surveyed a total of 229 buildings/spaces on 21st February 2018 within the area zoned town centre as per the Cobh Town Development Plan, including a secondary neighbourhood centre at Midleton Street. These are illustrated in Figures 1.1. The Retail Core is focused between Westbourne Place, Casement Square, Pearse Square, East Beach and West Beach. Cobh has a broad range of uses within the town centre, although its retail convenience offer is limited as it is catered for at Ticknock. Figure 1.3 illustrates the spatial breakdown of the ground floor landuse mix within the town centre. The associated pie chart (Figure 1.2) demonstrates the percentage of these uses. The survey utilises the GOAD Sub- classification of uses which are included in the key of the map & pie-chart. The primary activity within the land-use sub-class is also recorded and details of these are discussed further in the document.

3.2.3 The predominant land use is residential (house) which represents over a quarter (28%) of the building stock and are located largely on Rahilly Street and Harbour Hill/ East Beach. Vacancy is the second largest category (18%) and this will be dealt with separately later in the document. The town has a strong Leisure Services sector (16%) reflecting its growing tourism function as a Cruise port and exit point for Spike Island. These uses are largely concentrated along the Waterfront. Retail Comparison is the fourth predominant landuse (15%) recorded and is largely focussed on West Beach within the Retail Core.

3.2.4 Retail Services represent 7% of the ground floor uses and Financial and Business Services represent 5% of the town centre land use mix respectively. Public services represent 4% of the town centre including a Garda Station, Municipal District Office and Art Galleries. The Retail Convenience offer stands at only 3% and includes one small Convenience store and smaller independent outlets.

Figure 3.1: Extent of town centre (CH-T-01 at Waterfront and CH-T-02 at Midleton Street, Cobh)

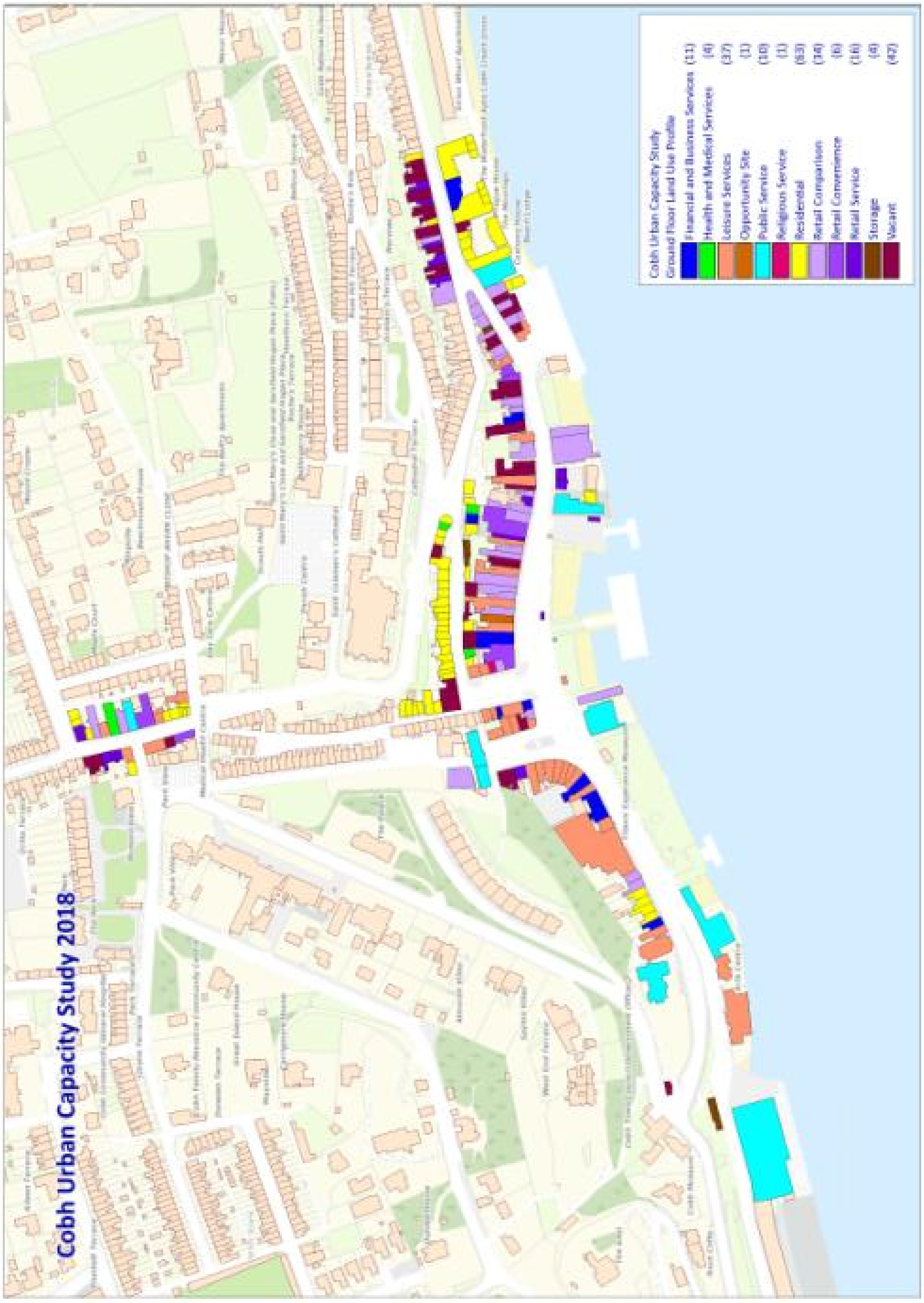


Figure 3.2: Ground floor land use mix (CH-T-01 and CH-T-02), Cobh

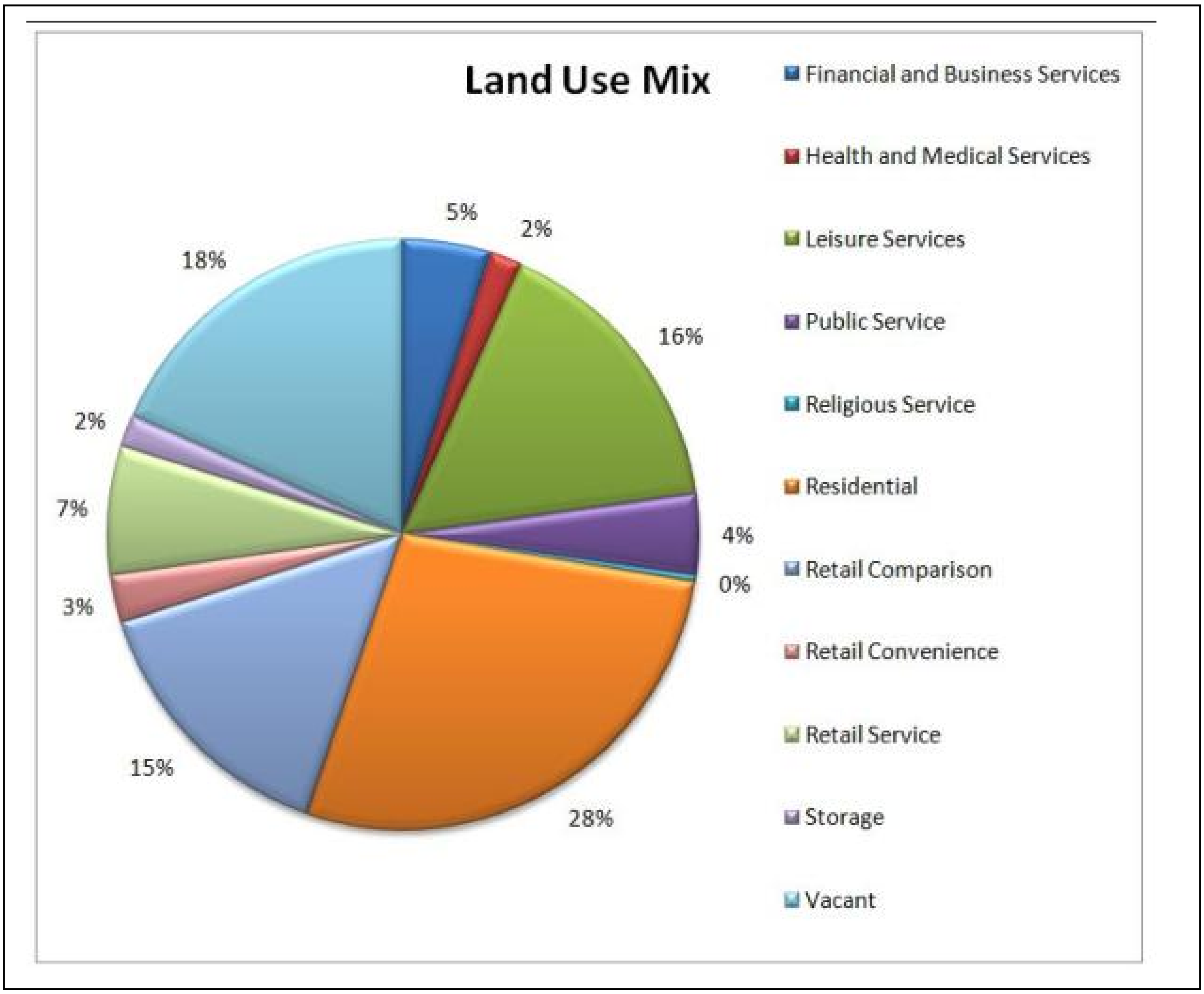


Figure 3.3: Pie Chart of ground floor land-use mix

3.2.5 Retail Core Trends

3.2.6 Table 1.1 illustrates changes in the commercial land use mix in the Retail Core of the town between 2013 and 2018. These figures reflect the diversity of uses within properties on the Primary (Westbourne Place, West Beach, East Beach, Casement Square, Pearse Square) and Secondary Streets (Midleton Street) of the Retail Core only (figure 1.6).

3.2.7 Unlike other towns, there has been a strong expansion in the Retail Comparison Sector, reflecting the growing visitors and tourism function of the town in selling craft, clothing and other goods. The majority of the use categories remain unchanged since 2013 (Financial and Business, Health and medical, Public Service and Religious Service). There is no Health and medical use within the area zoned town centre which is quite unusual. The Retail Convenience sector has contracted further since 2013. The Retail Service sector also saw a slight decline.

3.2.8 The increase in the amount of total uses within the same town centre area is possible due to subdivision of properties/units. While these figures do not deal with the amount of floorspace available it does show a clear local trends in the commercial profile of the town.

Table 3.1: Comparative Diversity of Uses (Retail Core), Cobh

Use	2013	2018	Change
Retail Comparison	23	31	+8
Retail Convenience	6	4	-2
Retail Service	15	12	-3
Leisure Services	26	27	+1
Financial & Business Services	10	10	-
Health & Medical Services	0	0	-
Public Service	4	4	-
Religious Service	1	1	-

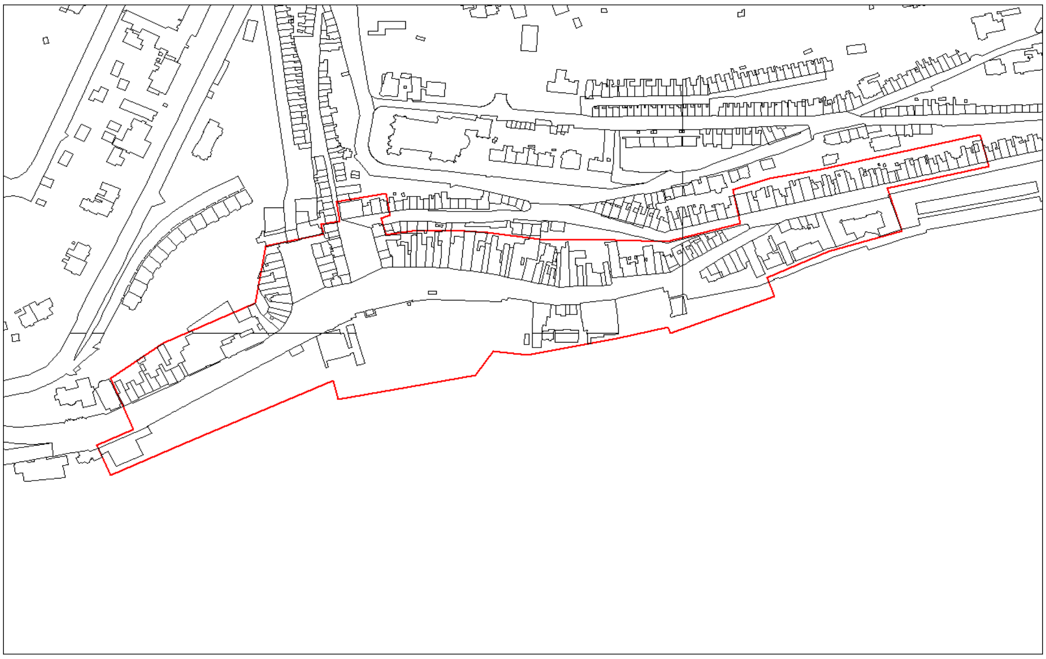


Figure 3.4: Extent of Retail Core, Cobh

3.3 Primary Activity Break-down

Retail Convenience

3.3.1 The limited retail convenience distribution within the town is illustrated in Figure 1.5 below. Convenience store, Groceries and Frozen Food were the principle primary use within this sub class (2 units). The principle Retail Convenience needs in the town are met in Ticknock where Aldi and Supervalue are based. There is 1 Butcher, 1 Market, 1 Off Licence and 1 Shoe Repairs. There is no Bakers, Delicateessen, Fishmonger, Health Food shop or Confectionaery store, some of which you would expect in a town of this size.

3.3.2 There is an ad hoc Farmers Market within the town during times of cruise visites.

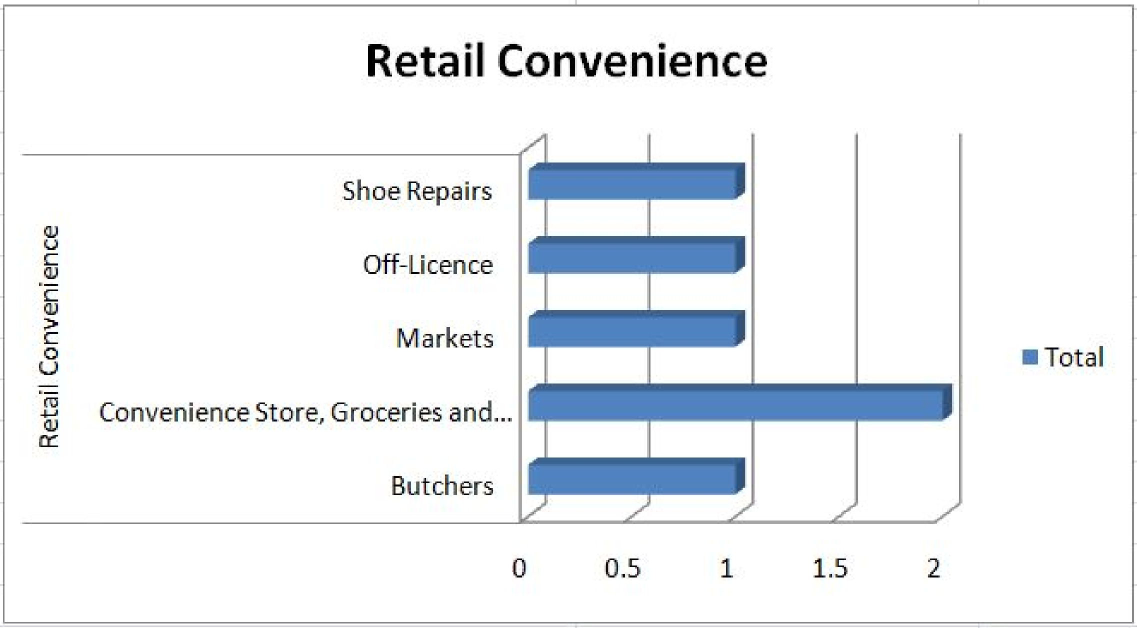


Figure 3.5: Bar Chart showing Retail Convenience

Retail Comparison

3.3.3 Figure 1.6 illustrates the Retail Comparison breakdown in Cobh. The town has a broad range of retail comparison offer which are represented across all categories. The predominant categories are Chemists and Drugstores, Textiles and Soft Furnishings, Ladies Wear and Accessories and Craft, Gifts, China and Glass which are all represented by 3 units each. DIY and Home Improvement, Mixed Clothing, Charity Shops, Sports, Camping and Leisure Goods, and Jewellery, Watches and Silver all have 2 units each. All other Primary activities were represented (1 units).

3.3.4 These are positive trends within the town and reflect the growing confidence and visitor numbers which are sustaining growth in the Retail Comparison sector.

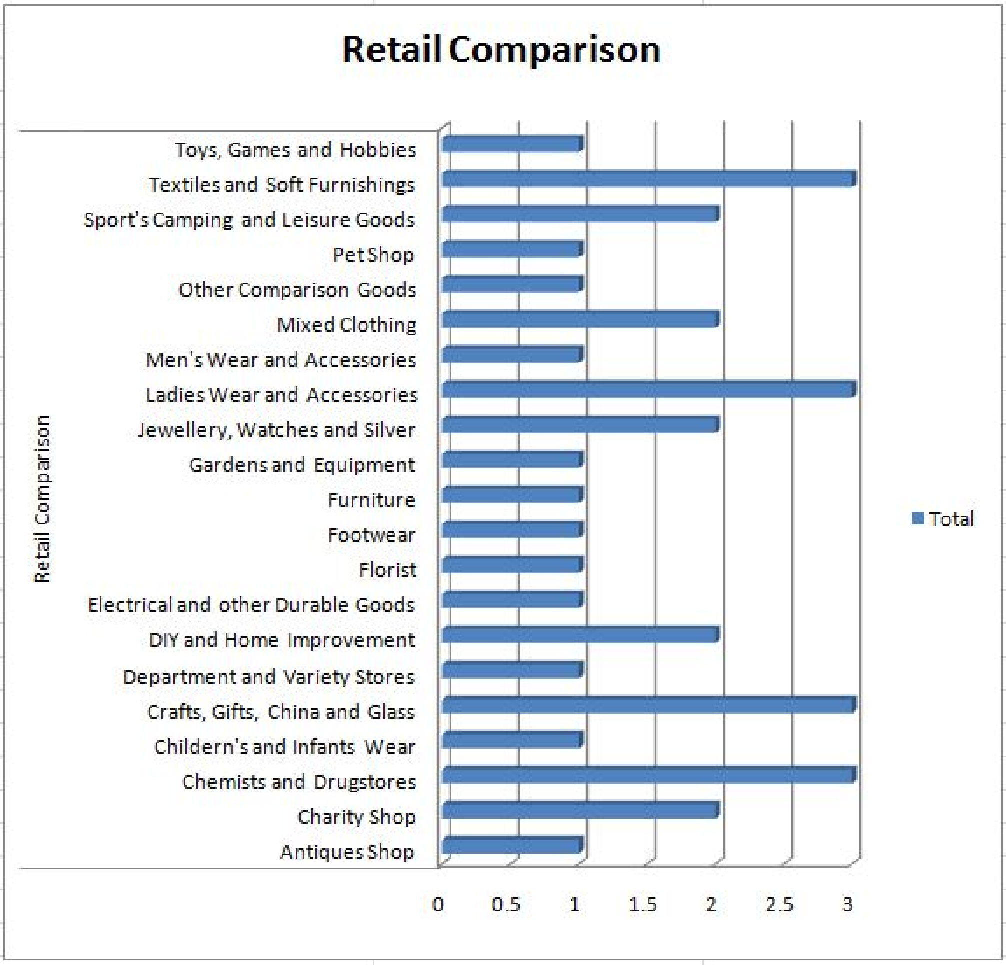


Figure 3.6: Bar Chart showing Retail Comparison distribution

Leisure Services

3.3.5 The Leisure Services sector reflects the important tourist and service role of the town. The town has a number of tourist attractions such as Titantic Experience, Cobh Heritage Centre, is the access point to Spike Island and has a growing number of cruise ship visitors which have steadily increased the number of day trippers to the town.

3.3.6 The predominant use is Bars, Wine Bars & Public Houses (14 units) followed by Fast Food and Takeaways (7 units). A total of 6 cafes and 4 Restaurants were recorded in the town centres. The town is served by 3 no. hotels and Guesthouses, including the Commodore Hotel on Westbourne Place. There is 1 no betting office (Casino & betting office).

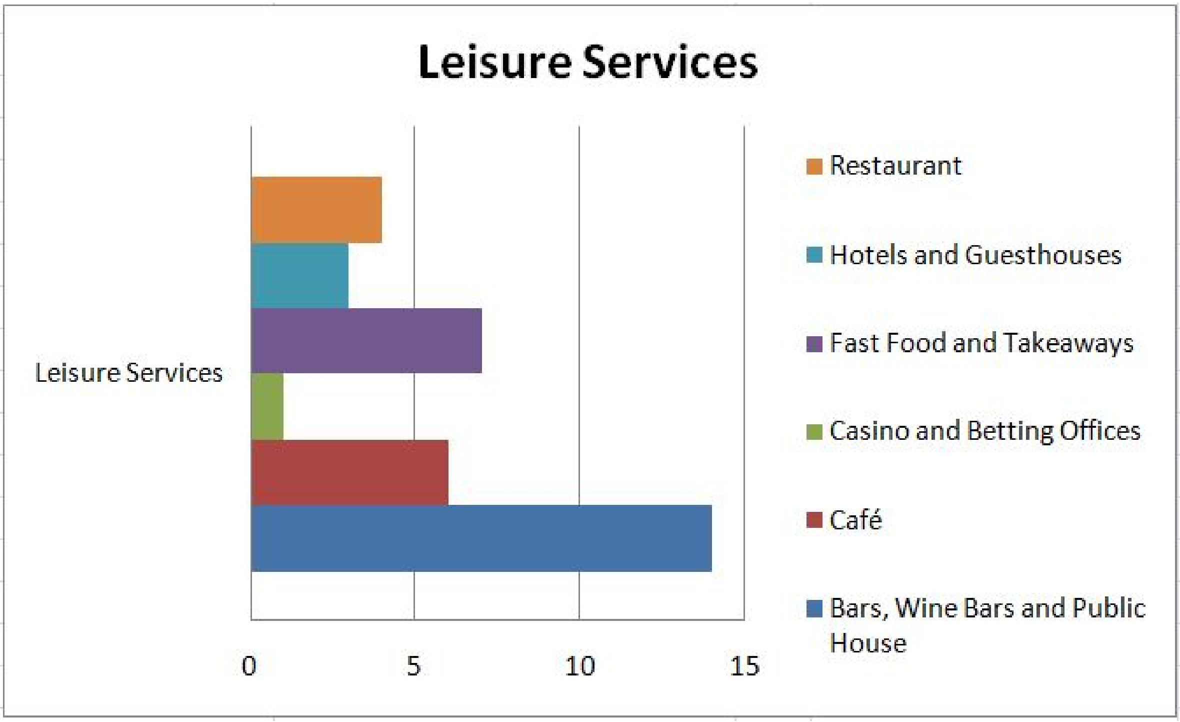


Figure 3.7: Bar Chart showing Leisure Services distribution

Financial and Business Services Sector

3.3.7 The Bar Chart (Fig 1.8) illustrates the primary activity break-down of the Financial and Business Services Sector within the town which is quite narrow. Retail Banks, Property Services and Legal Services all have 3 units recorded each. A total of 2 units were recorded providing Financial Services. There are no Business Goods and Services within the area zoned town centre.

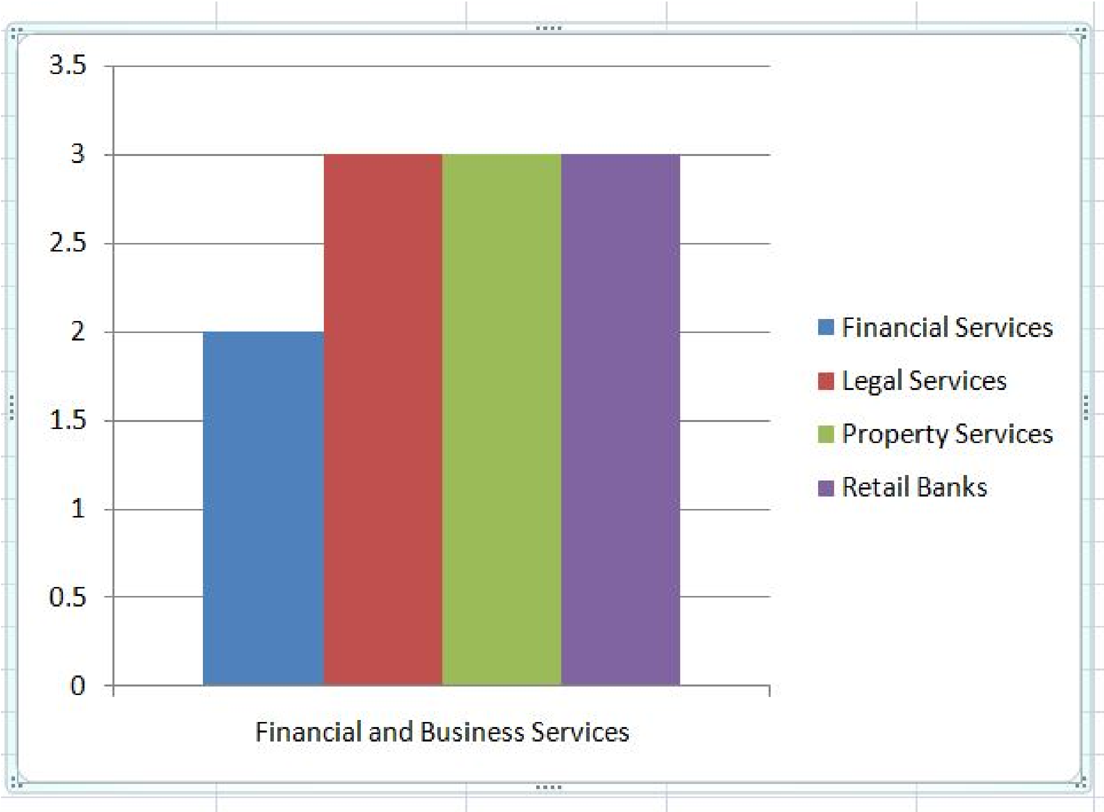


Figure 3.8: Bar Chart showing Financial & Business Services

3.4 Vacancy

3.4.1 Vacancy rates have been defined as the number of units not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total amount of units (vacant and occupied) in the town centre. In Cobh vacancy stands at 18% within the town (42 units of 229 units). This falls outside the normal range limits within a functional market (5-7%). Of these 39 were vacant buildings, with the remaining vacant sites/ infill opportunities.

3.4.2 Of the 161 commercial units surveyed, 34 were vacant representing 21% of the commercial town centre building stock. There are evident blackspots of vacancy on the northern side of Harbour Hill, West Beach and the north of Pearse Square.

Figure 3.9 cluster of ground floor vacancy, Harbour Hill

Figure 3.10 Vacant unit, Harbour Hill

3.4.3 Of the 68 residential units, 5 units were vacant or 7% of the town centre residential building stock. There is a cluster of vacant residential units at the northern side of Harbour Hill.

3.4.4 The survey identified 3 infill brownfield Opportunity Sites on West Beach/ East Beach and 2 on Harbour Hill. These could generate approximately 6 residential units including a proportion suitable for sheltered/ starter housing.

3.4.5 From the 229 buildings surveyed, 161 were classified as having a commercial ground floor and 68 were classified as residential houses within the town. Recent exemptions now allow a change from commercial to residential use, subject to limitations.

3.5 Residential Uses

3.5.1 Residential use (house) represented the largest land use category within the town centre (28%) and is largely located on the northern and eastern fringes of the area zoned town centre. Within the upper floors of the building stock a total of 137 residential units were noted across the upper floors. These were largely on the eastern spine of the Retail Core (West Beach) and on Midleton Street. There was a significant number (67 units or 49% of the upper floor residential count) of the traditional family units evident within the upper floors of the building stock (i.e. single residential unit above 2 or more levels). The majority of these were a single residential unit over 2 upper floors. The remaining 51% of the upper floor residential stock were single apartments per floor or multiple units per floor in purpose built apartment blocks.

3.5.2 A total of 112 units had a separate access to the upper floors which is a key ingredient in securing upper floor usage. The figure represents 49% of the town centre building stock or 75% of the commercial stock. The majority of these 2nd access points were on the street but there was a evidence of certain buildings were designed with a shared separate access within an internal foyer.

3.5.3 A total of 35 vacant 1st floors, 26 vacant 2nd floors and 15 vacant 3rd floors were recorded. The survey work confirmed that upper floor use was predominantly one residential unit (apartment) per floor. On this basis a total of 76 additional residential units could be theoretically accommodated within the vacant upper floors, subject to Building and Fire regulation compliance.

Figure 3.11 Examples of Separate Access to Upper Floors

Figure 3.12 Examples of town centre housing

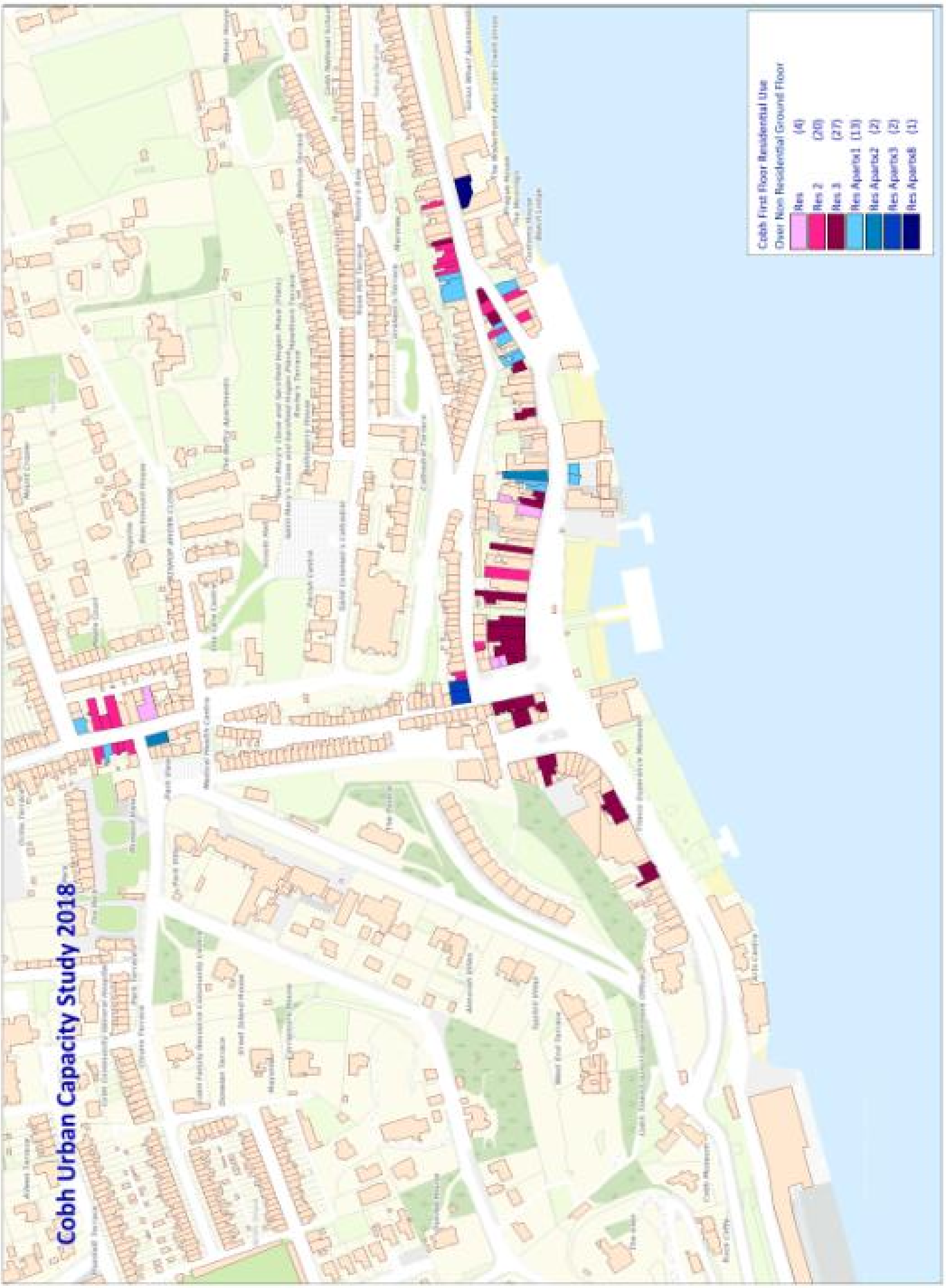


Figure3.13: Upper Floor Use

3.6 Building Condition

3.6.1 Building condition was largely good 204 out of 229 properties (89%). A total number of 21 (9%) were considered poor and a further 4 were recorded as derelict.

3.7 Existing Built Up Area

3.7.1 Within the “existing built up area” a total of 3 plots were surveyed. These included large gardens within the grounds of protected structures and an area at Ticknock (X-01 in the Cobh Local Area Plan 2017). The large gardens associated with large villas were discounted because of their contribution to the setting and cartilage of the protected structure. The site at Ticknock was the only plot which was considered suitable for residential potential and is discussed below.

3.8 Special Policy Areas/ Regeneration Areas

3.8.1 The Cobh Plan identified one site in Ticknock as a Special Policy Area. The 5.7ha plot at Ticknock is designed for mixed use development (excluding retailing) and the provision of a Primary Healthcare Centre. Based on the application of a density multiplier using Medium A ranges it is considered there is capacity to deliver approximately 140 units, apartments units as part of a mixed-use scheme. The figures arrived at use a density multiplier and so may under or over estimate the potential housing capacity. It would be useful for a multi-disciplinary team to provide a design-led evaluation on the potential of these lands to deliver a mixed use scheme with a commercial ground floor and residential overhead. This would confirm the real potential of these lands in terms of housing capacity and provide leadership and certainty for prospective developers of other similar lands within the town.

3.9 Overall Urban Capacity

Table 3.2: Cobh Urban Capacity Table		
Source	Number	Comment
Vacant Housing	5	
Living Over The Shop (LOTS)	76	New Policy Required
Infill Opportunity Sites	6	Laneway/mews guidance required
Special Policy Areas	0	
Built Up Area/ Regeneration Area	140	Re-classify/ incorporate into existing land supply?
Total	**227 units**	

3.9.1 The cumulative urban capacity from the various sources in Cobh amounts to 227 units. These all have a part to play in addressing the various housing needs of the town and wider Municipal District. It is clear that the infill opportunity sites and vacant upper floors in the existing building stock can satisfy the demand for smaller 2-3 bed units for rental, start-up/ step-down homes and also can address holiday home demands in the town.

3.9.2 Consideration also needs to be given to the growing tourism needs in the town which may lead to competing demands with the needs of owner-occupiers for space in the town centre especially. A new policy approach may be required to identify opportunities where tourism accommodation can be delivered in tandem with the growth of permanent residential family housing in the town.

3.10 Street Analysis:

3.10.1 The term Urban Structure refers to the pattern or arrangement of development blocks, streets, buildings, open space and landscape which make up our diverse network of towns. Understanding each town's individual urban structure allows us to protect the key features that help define it's unique sense of place and provides the tools to guide future development response to local distinctiveness.

3.10.2 In Cobh the steeply sloping topography has created a unique urban response to the townscape structure. Buildings are largely stacked in linear forms as they rise on the hillside, including a striking crescent (just outside the area zoned town centre).

3.10.3 The cartographic analysis also shows Cobh has a clear hierarchy of streets, squares and buildings. The primary streets facing the Harbour have deep plots, building heights of up to 4 storeys and of 2-3 bays, transacted by laneways or pends to the rear yards. The secondary streets have a tighter urban grain and building heights to between 2-3 storeys.

3.10.4 The survey work identified good activity throughout the day within the primary and secondary streets of the town centre, despite cold weather conditions. There has been positive heritage-led public realm upgrades throughout the town linking the core to the waterfront. The main challenge is to continue to build on the town's growing tourism sector and ensure the associated accommodation demands can be achieved in a sustainable way.

3.11 Key Considerations:

3.11.1 Cobh's history, heritage and townscape offer a world class visitor experience. The expansion of tourism attractions and cruise ships to the town has significantly increased the numbers of day trippers to the town. The challenge will be to retain a portion of these visitors on a short-stay basis. There is currently 1 town centre hotel and a number of B&Bs to satisfy these needs but plans to expand the cruise terminal will create additional demands that will need to be considered going forward.

3.11.2 Within the land use mix there are clear indicators of success and decline since the 2013 survey. Cobh continues to broaden its tourism offer and this growth is reflected in the expansion of the Retail Comparative sector. The very narrow retail convenience offer is a disadvantage and while Ticknock provides the base for supermarket shopping, smaller specialist convenience outlets (delis, bakers etc) should be encouraged within the town centre.

3.12 Town Specific Priorities:

3.12.1 **Infrastructure & Investment Priorities:** Waterfront Strategy: Programme to rehabilitate the piers, quays walls, slips and other priorities identified in Scott Tallon Walker Study should be prioritised;

3.12.2 **Town Centre Retail Priorities:** The Comparison sector has seen strong growth since 2012 which should be highlighted and continually supported;

3.12.3 The convenience retail sector is very limited within the town. Targets needed to introduce additional convenience retailers, especially niche traders and higher value uses;

3.12.4 Leisure Services sector has a high number of Fast Food and Takeaways (7 units). Policy may be require to manage further proliferation of these uses.

3.12.5 Financial and Business Services sector is quite weak.

3.12.6 **Tourism Accommodation:** Need to identify opportunities within the existing building stock and/or Opportunity Sites for additional tourism accommodation as the tourism base of the town continues to grow;

3.12.7 **Vacancy Priorities**: High rate at 18%. A total of 34 commercial units vacant. Blackspots evident on Harbour Hill and West Beach.

3.12.8 **Residential:** Focus on providing high quality family housing within historic building stock within the town centre;

3.12.9 Retaining the strong multiple storey residential uses within the upper floors (49% of upper floor residential units) at West Beach and Midleton Street should be encouraged.

3.12.10 Basements are a feature in some elements of the building stock. Policy guidance on encouraging their use as additional town centre floorspace should be considered.

3.12.11 A total of 4 properties recorded as Derelict.

3.13 County Development Plan Policy Response required on the following:

Protecting the town's urban structure (linear form unique within County Cork):

Retaining the 2nd own door access in each building & requiring a 2nd access in new development in the town centre - see similar policy at link below;
http://www.www.corkcity.ie/corkcitydevelopmentplan2004/Chapter11_DevelopmentControlStandards.pdf

Development guidance required for basements;

Fast food takeaways – Mallow Plan;

Greening town centres.

2020

Fermoy

URBAN CAPACITY STUDY (2019)

Section 2.4 **Fermoy**

4 Section 2.4 Fermoy

4.1 Part A Introduction

4.1.1 Fermoy in context

4.1.2 Fermoy is a planned market town of important townscape value, which evolved at an historic bridging point over the River Blackwater in the northern division of the County. The traditional town centre comprises of a series of formal blocks which converge on Pearse Square, south of the bridge. Buildings are generally 2-4 storeys high, of various widths and largely demonstrate a consistent frontage.

4.1.3 The area zoned as Town Centre (FY-T-01) under the Draft Fermoy Local Area Plan 2016 includes a mix of traditional commercial units in the Primary Streets and some larger stand-alone retailers at edge of town locations including Lidl and the Co-op. To the north of the town centre, a new cluster of retailing has emerged including Aldi, 2 large service stations with a retailing element, Iceland and a series of smaller retailers on lands zoned “Existing Built Up Area”.

4.1.4 The town’s population grew from 6,489 persons in 2011 to 6,585 in 2016. The town has a population target of 7,589 for 2022 which equates to a requirement of about 932 new units. Under the Fermoy Town Plan and Fermoy Local Area Plan 2017 there is a net residential land supply of 94.56ha with the capacity to provide approximately 1,601 new units to facilitate the target growth.

4.1.5 There are 224 Protected Structures within the former town council area and a large area of the town centre is designated as an Architectural Conservation Area given there are significant groupings or concentrations of heritage structures in this area.

4.2 Study Methodology

4.2.1 The study area focussed on the area zoned “Town Centre” as per the Draft Fermoy Local Area Plan 2016 (See Figure 1.1). A land-use and photographic survey was undertaken of each building and space within the study area by a team from the Planning Policy Unit on the 18th April 2018. The number of units and category of use per floor in this survey was ascertained by visual assessment only. Upper floor residential use confirmation was cross-referenced with the number of doorbells/ letterboxes visible on the building’s 2nd “private” access.

4.2.2 The classification of uses followed the GOAD Sub- Class Classification system and also recorded the primary activity within each land-use as per the 2013 Town Centre Review Paper (See Appendix A).

4.3 Town Profile – Survey Results & Analysis

4.3.1 Town Centre

4.3.2 A total of 296 buildings were surveyed within the area zoned town centre as per the (Draft) Fermoy Municipal District Local Area Plan 2016. The Retail Core is focused around the Primary Streets of Mc Curtain Street, Pearse Square and St. Patrick's Street and a series of quayside Secondary Streets including Ashe Quay and O' Neill Crowley Quay.

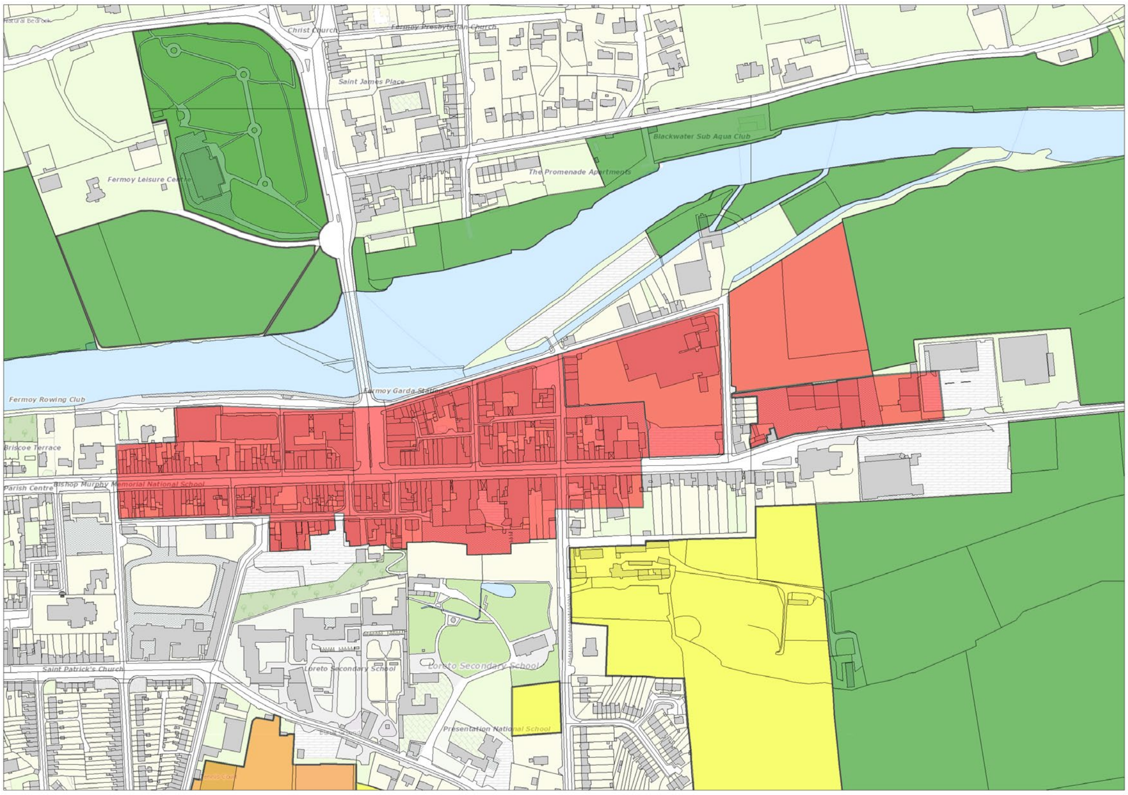
4.3.3 Fermoy has a strong mix of commercial uses within the town centre, reflecting its importance as a service centre for a wide rural catchment in North Cork. Figure 1.2 illustrates the spatial breakdown of the ground floor land-use mix within the town centre. The associated pie chart (Figure 1.3) demonstrates the percentage of these uses. The survey utilises the GOAD Sub- classification of uses which are included in the key of the map & pie-chart. The primary activity within the land-use sub-class is also recorded and details of these are discussed seperately.

4.3.4 The predominant land use is shared between Residential and Retail Comparison, both representing 20% of the building stock. The Residential uses are largely located on the north-western and south eastern peripheries of the town centre. Retail Comparison uses are highly concentrated in the Retail Core with some prevalence throughout the town.

4.3.5 Vacancy is the second predominant landuse category at 16%. There is a cluster of vacant units south and west of Pearse Square. There are a number of large vacant sites on the eastern periphery of the town overlooking the River. These will be dealt with in a separate section.

4.3.6 Leisure Services and Retail Services both contribute 10% to the land use mix. Financial and Business Services represent 7% of the town centre uses reflecting its importance as a centre of trade to a wider population base in North Cork. Retail Convenience represented 4% of the ground floor uses. The retail convenience sector comprises a good mix of larger national multiples such as Supervalue and Centra along with smaller independent stores such as Season's Foodmarket, O' Crualaoi and D & M Fruit and Veg Shop. Lidl, Iceland and Aldi are located outside the town centre.

Figure 4.1 Fermoy Town Centre (Draft Fermoy Local Area Plan, 2016)



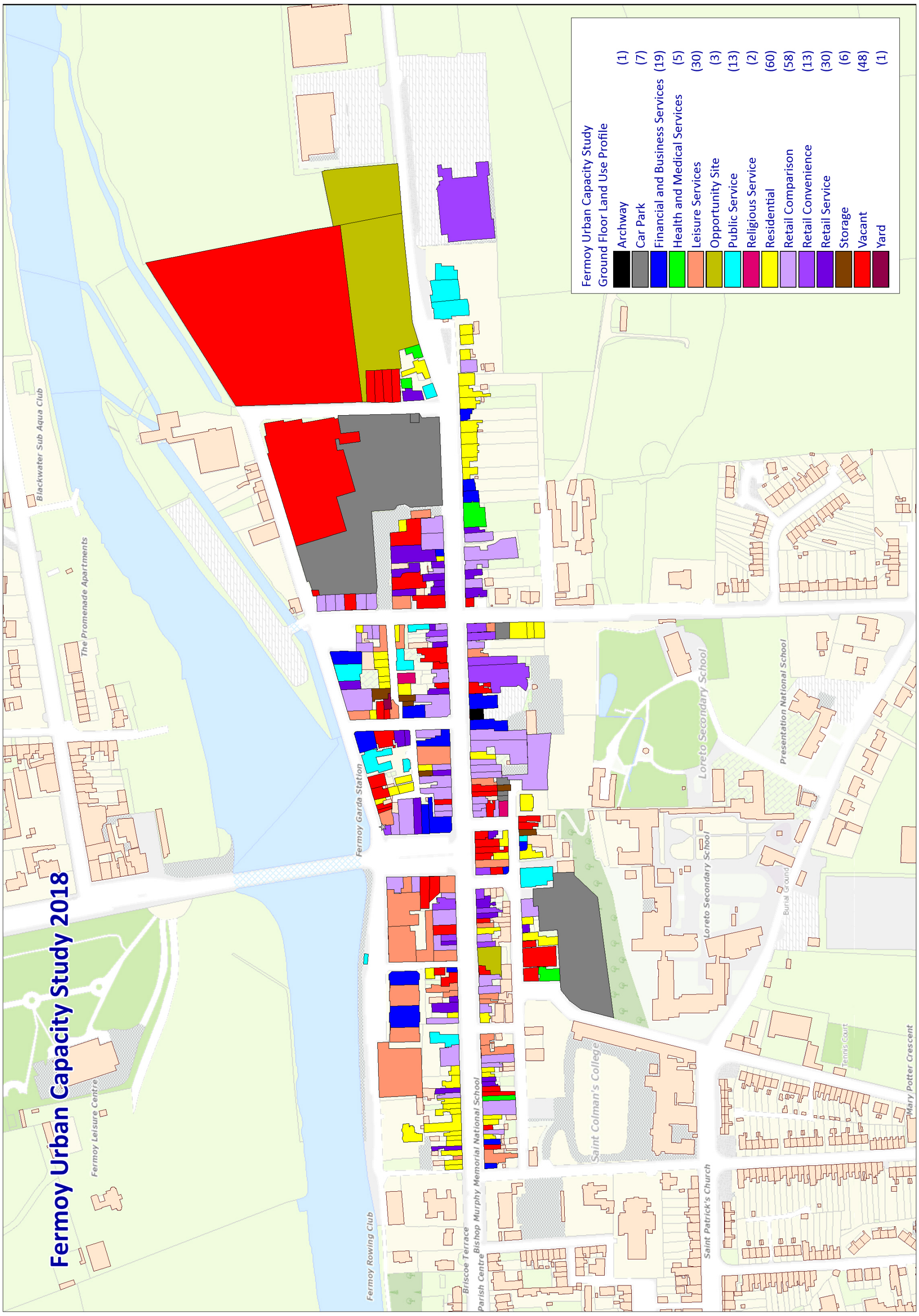


Figure 4.2: Ground floor land use mix, Fermoy

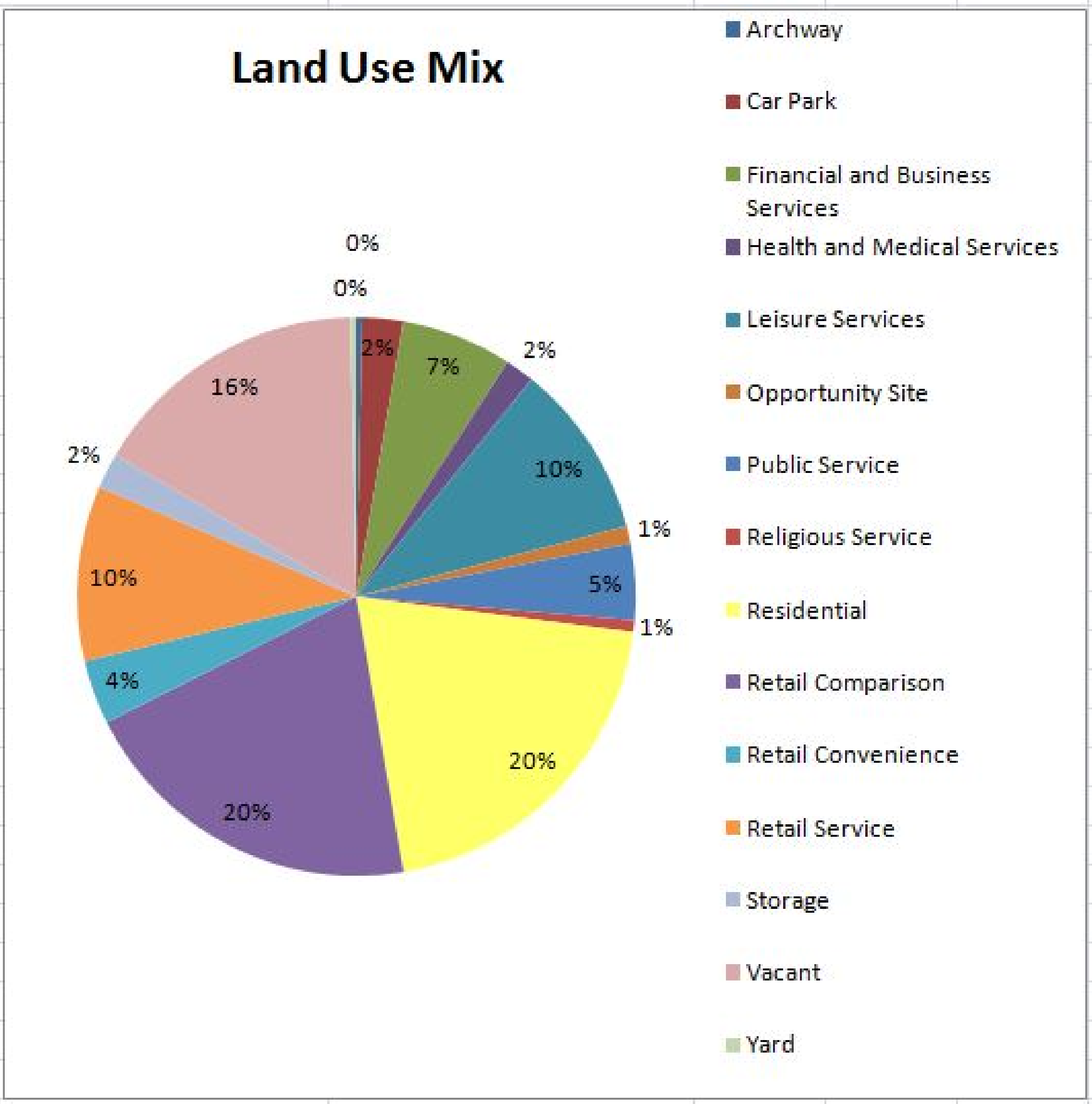


Figure 4.3: Ground floor land use mix, Fermoy

4.3.7 Retail Core Trends

4.3.8 Table 1.1 illustrates the trends in the commercial land use mix in the Retail Core of the town between 2011 and 2018. These figures reflect the diversity of uses within properties on the Primary and Secondary Streets of the Retail Core (figure 1.4) only. These streets include Pearse Square, Mc Curtain Street, St. Patrick's Street and the quays adjoining the Square. The area north of Fermoy Bridge was excluded as it did not form part of the "Town Centre" extents.

Table 4.1: Comparative Diversity of Uses (Retail Core), Fermoy

Use	2011	2018	Change
Retail Comparison	56	55	-2%
Retail Convenience	16	12	-25%
Retail Service	22	27	+23%
Leisure Services	31	30	-3%
Financial & Business Services	15	15	-
Health & Medical Services	2	1	-50%
Public Service	5	7	+40%
Religious Service	1	2	+50%

4.3.9 While these figures do not deal with the amount of floorspace available in the town it does highlight some positive trends. Strong growth was recorded across the Retail Service sector, increasing from 22 units in 2011 to 27 in 2018.

4.3.10 The Retail Comparison sector is strong with 55 premises recorded, 1 less than in 2011. Similarly, the Leisure Services are well represented with 30 uses prevalent, 1 less than 2011.

4.3.11 A slight decline in the number of Retail Convenience units was recorded from 16 in 2011 to 12 in 2018. There were 2 more public service facilities (+40%) available in the town centre compared to 2011.

Figure 4.4: Extent of Retail Core

4.4 Primary Activity Break-down

Retail Convenience

4.4.1 The retail convenience distribution within the town is illustrated in Figure 1.5 below. The offer is quite limted. Butchers are the most prevalent primary use within this sub class (4 units). This includes Fitzgerald's Butchers and O' Crualaoi's. Supermarkets are the second predomiant sub-class with 3 represented. This includes Supervalue and Centra. Butchers, Health Food Stores, Confectionary stores, Delicatessen and Markets all have 1 no. unit each within the town. There are no Fishmongers or Convenience Stores recorded.

4.4.2 The town would benefit from a weekly Market in the town centre to showcase local produce and crafts from the Blackwater Valley.

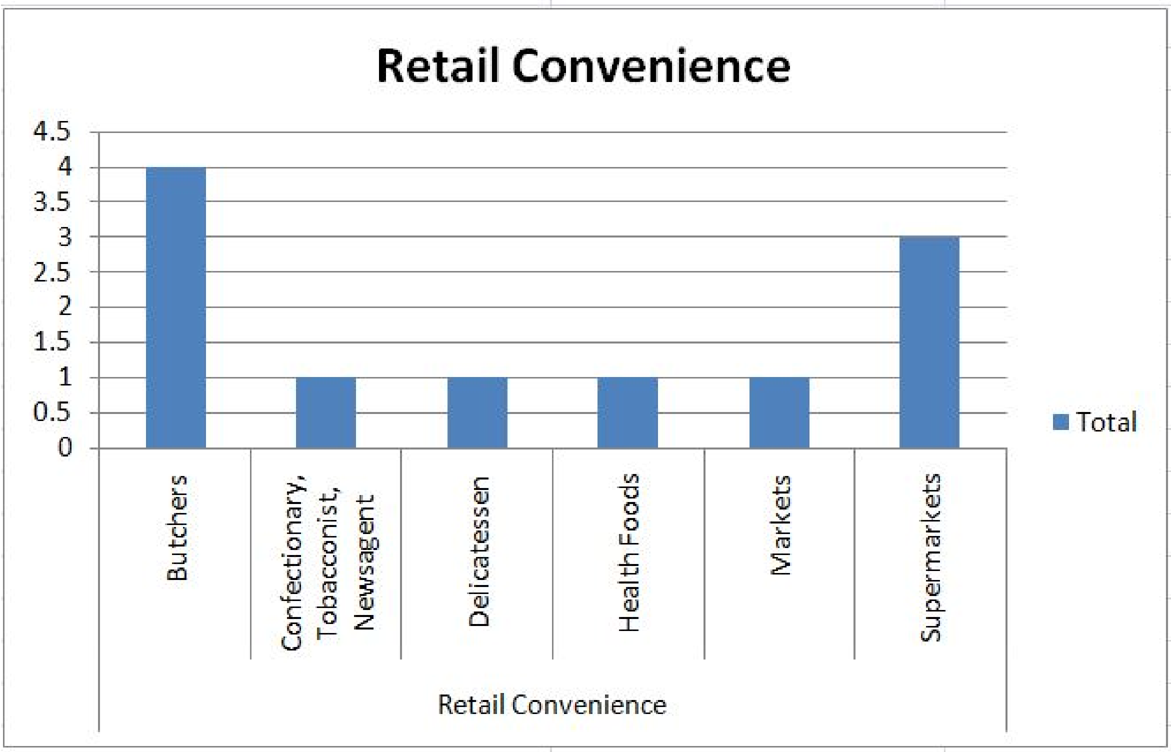


Figure 4.5: Bar Chart showing Retail Convenience

Retail Comparison

4.4.3 The town has a broad range of retail comparison stores which are represented across most sub-categories. There is a significant proportion of shops selling Ladies Wear and Accessories (10 units) providing niche clothing offer within the town and wider North Cork area.

4.4.4 The second predominant use is Chemists and Drugstores (6 units). Similarly, there are 5 units selling Furniture.

4.4.5 There are 4 units selling Telephones and Accessories. All other uses are in the 1-3 unit range. This includes Department Stores such as Shaws which is an important local anchor.

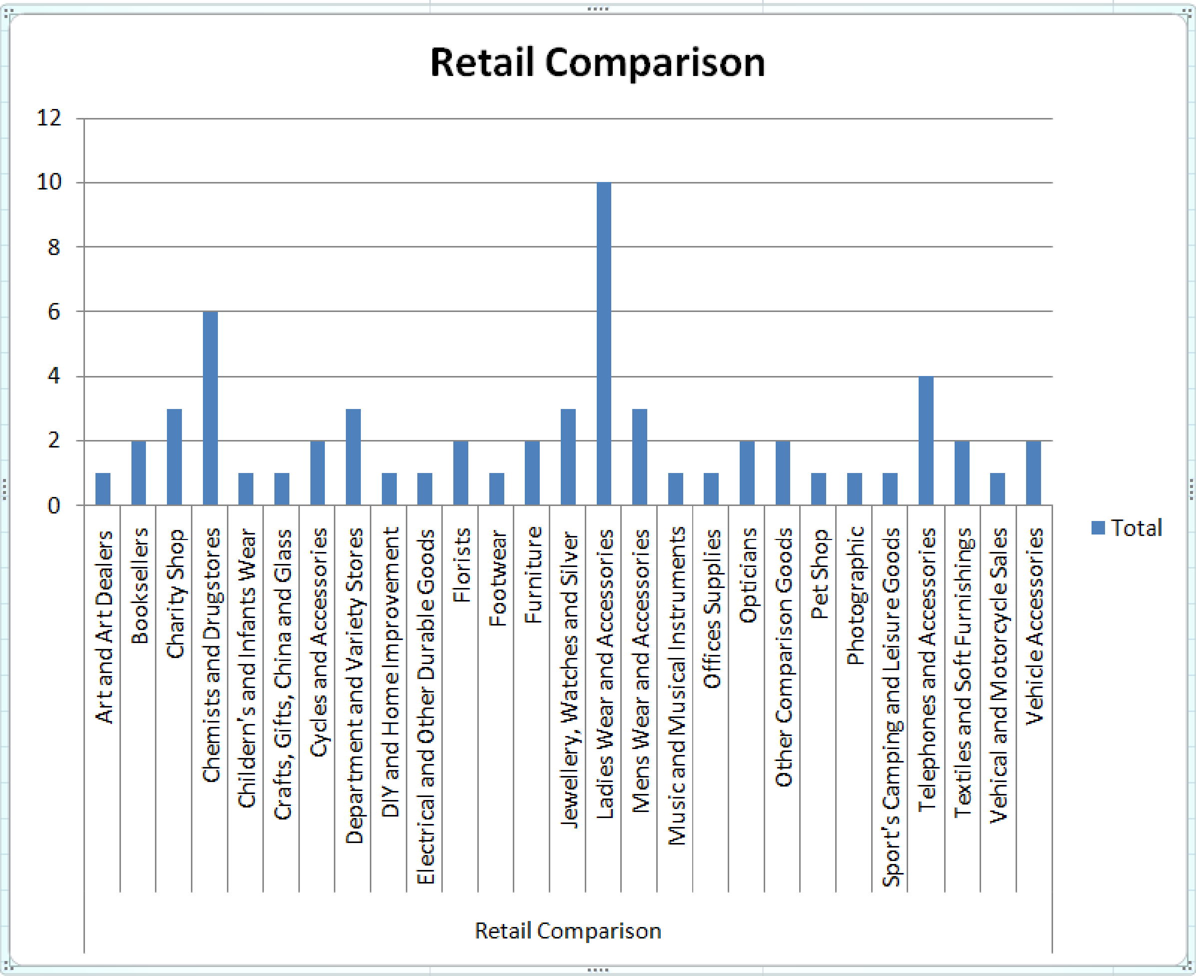


Figure 4.6 Illustrates the Retail Comparison breakdown in Fermoy.

Leisure Services

4.4.6 The town has a buoyant Leisure Services sector reflecting its growing tourism and service function. The predominant use is Bars, Wine Bars and Public House (8 units) including Cheers, Fitzgibbons and Abbey Bar. The choice of eateries is very strong with 7 Restaurants and 5 cafes recorded. These are the second and third strongest sub-category within this use class.

4.4.7 There were 2 Sports and Leisure and 2 Casino and Betting Offices. All other category has 1 each represented. This included 1 hotel (The Grand Hotel).

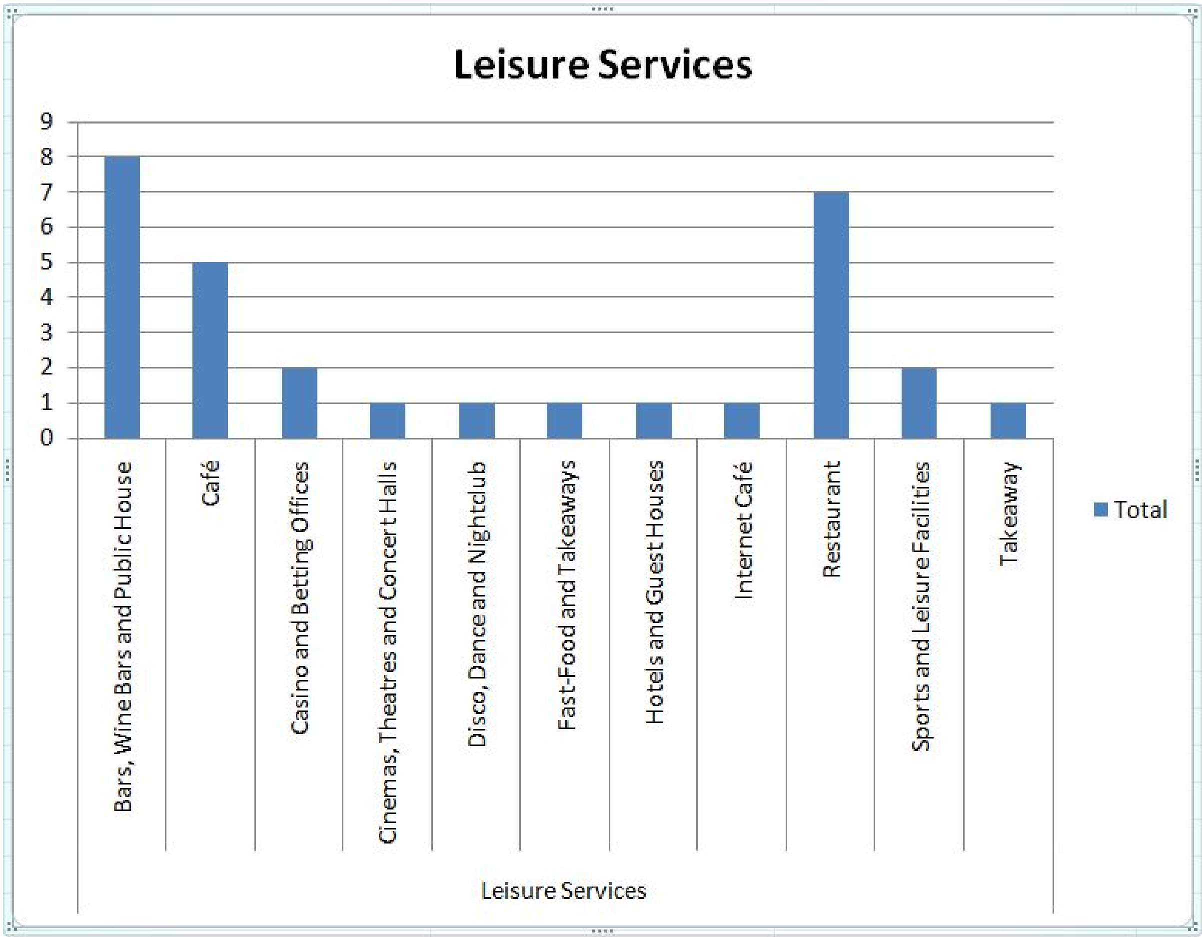


Figure 4.7 Illustrates the Leisure Services breakdown in Fermoy.

Financial and Business Services

4.4.8 The Bar Chart (Fig 1.8) illustrates the primary activity break-down of the Financial and Services Sector within the town. Financial Services is the pre-dominant activity (6 recorded) which includes Accountants and Insurance services. Legal Services were also well represented (4 units) reflecting the active Family, District and Circuit Court services operating in Fermoy which generate support services.

4.4.9 There are 4 Retail Banks in the town reflecting its strong commercial function for the wider North Cork area. This included AIB (in 2 adjoining units), Bank Of Ireland and Ulster Bank.

4.4.10 There were 3 units offering Property Services. All other services were represented between 1 – 3 unit range.

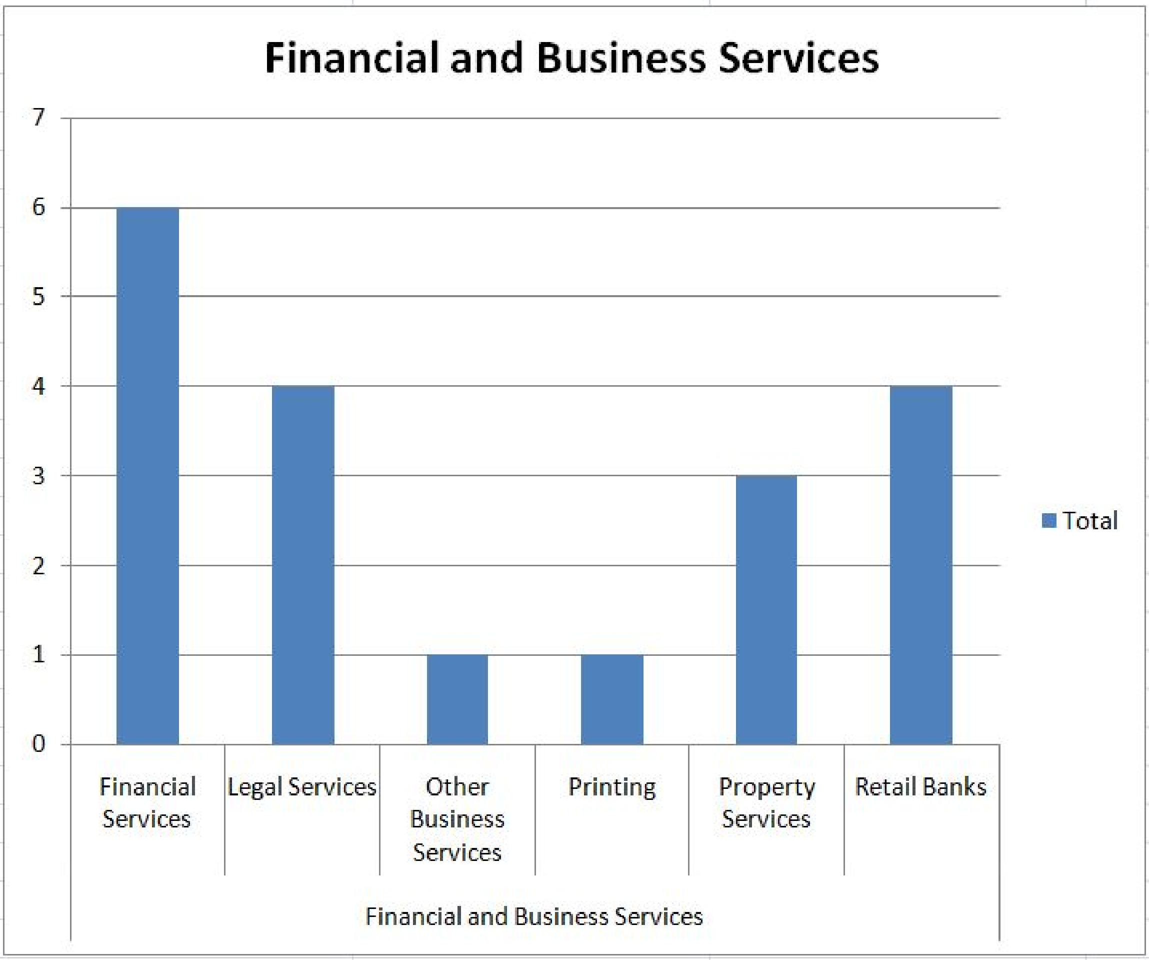


Figure 4.8: Bar Chart showing Financial & Business Services

4.5 Vacancy

4.5.1 Vacancy rates have been defined as the number of units not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total amount of units (vacant and occupied) in the town centre. In Fermoy vacancy stands at 16% within the town (48 units of 296 units). This falls outside the normal range limits within a functional market (5-7%).

4.5.2 Of the 223 commercial units surveyed, 36 were vacant representing 16% of the commercial town centre building stock. There are some clusters on Pearse Square (South and West) and the Mill Road where 2 large vacant sites are prevalent. Most streets in Fermoy have some vacancy, although Ashe Quay has no vacancy and O' Rahilly Row (south) has only 1 vacant unit.

4.5.3 Of the 73 residential units, 12 units were vacant or 16% of the town centre residential building stock.

Figure 4.9: Vacant building, Pearse Square, Fermoy

4.5.4 From the 296 buildings surveyed, 223 were classified as having a commercial ground floor and 73 were classified as residential houses within the town.

4.6 Residential Uses

4.6.1 While Commercial uses account for 75% of the ground floor premises within the Town Centre, residential uses (both houses and apartments) account for 25% of ground floor units. These are predominantly located on Mc Curtain Street (north) and O' Rahilly Row.

4.6.2 A total of 171 residential units were recorded within the upper floors of the town centre. This included 89 units at first floor level, 63 residential units at second floor level and 19 at third floor level. Of the 176 units at first floor level a total of 21 had retained the traditional family living quarters over the shop (i.e. 2 living floors over a ground floor commercial unit). These were located on Mc Curtain Street, Elbow Lane and Kent Street.

4.6.3 The survey noted 125 commercial units had a separate access to the upper floors which is a key ingredient in securing upper floor usage. The figure represents 42% of the town centre building stock or 56% of the commercial stock. These 2nd access points to the upper floors were achieved via a mixture of a second door within the façade of the building (See image left below), via a separate side lane or internally within a foyer (See image right below).

4.6.4 A total of 47 vacant 1st floors, 35 vacant 2nd floors and 10 vacant 3rd floors were recorded. The survey work confirmed that upper floor use was predominantly one residential unit (apartment) per floor. On this basis a total of 92 additional residential units could be theoretically accommodated within the vacant upper floors, subject to Building and Fire regulation compliance.

Figure 4.10: Example of Separate Access to Upper Floors in Fermoy

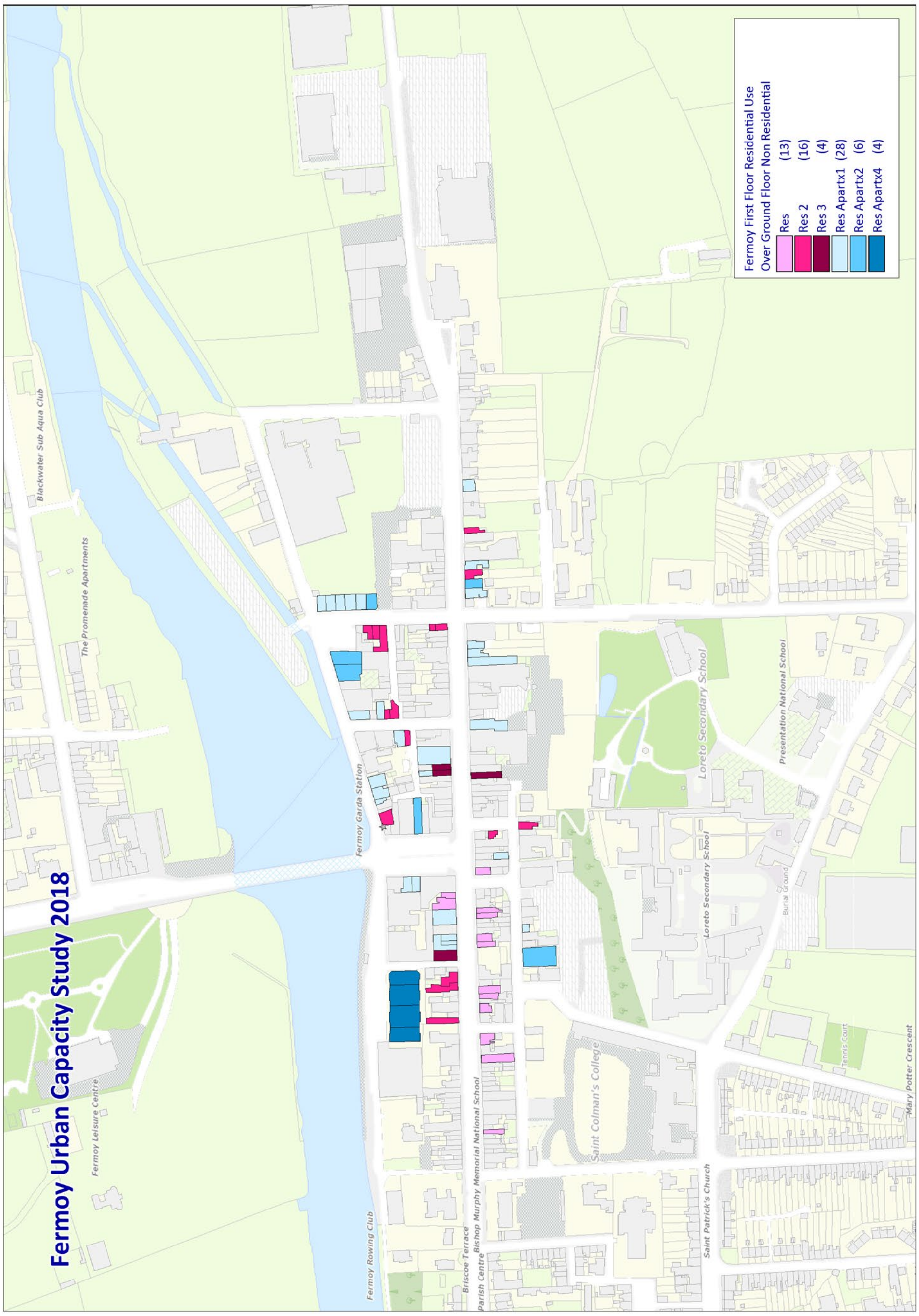
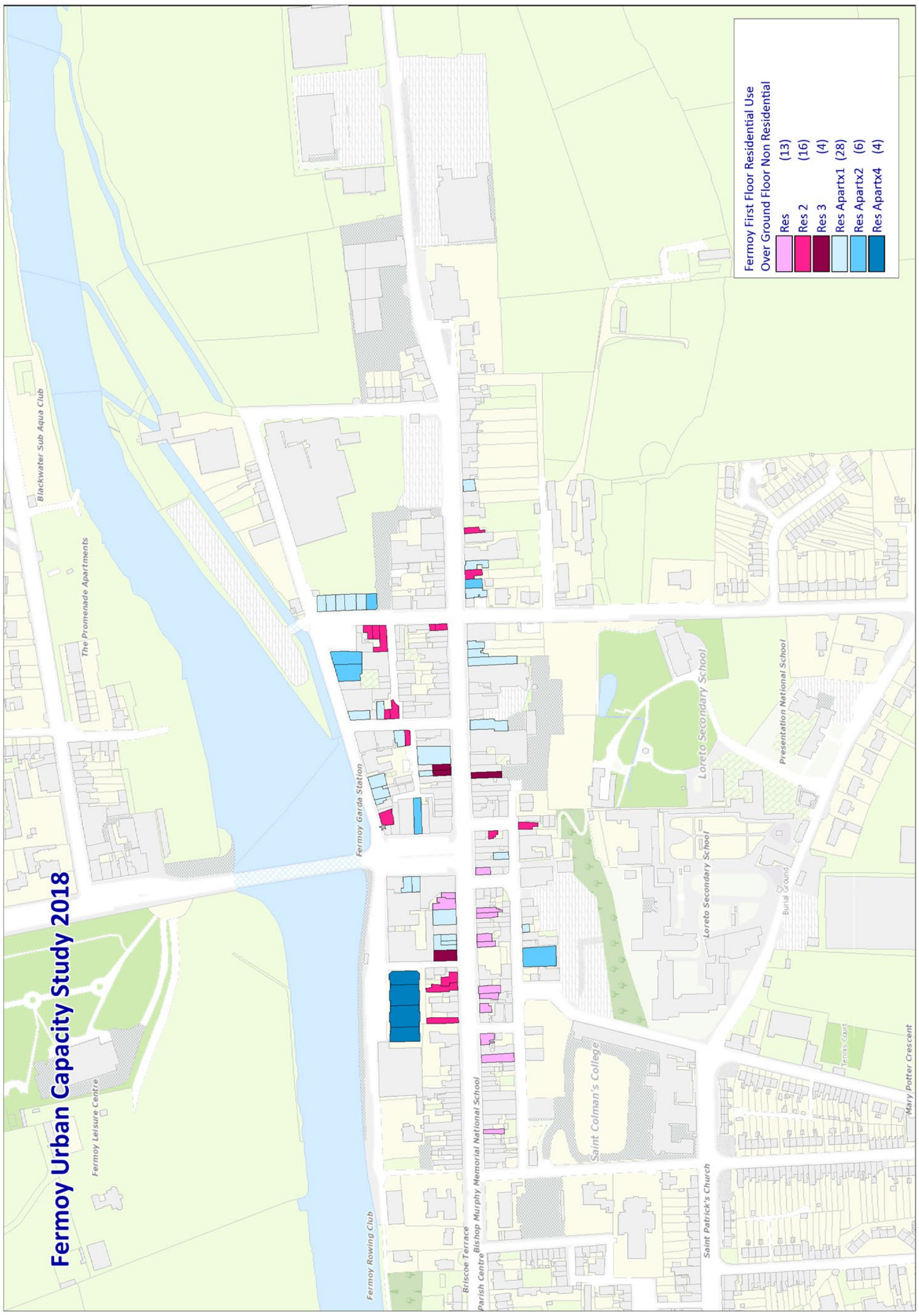


Figure 4.11: First Floor Residential Use

Figure 4.12: Second Floor Residential Use



4.7 Building Condition

4.7.1 Building condition was predominantly good at 95%. A total number of 14 units were considered poor and only 1 unit was recorded as derelict.

Figure 4.13: Example of a number of historic buildings merged to create a larger footprint, Fermoy

4.8 Existing Built Up Area

4.8.1 A total of 2 plots were surveyed from the existing built up area of the town. One of these plots was identified as a Regeneration Area in the Draft Plan (EBUA-03/FY-RA-02) and will be dealt with below. The remaining site comprises of lands directly east of the Loreto Secondary School Convent site (EBUA-01). The area is a designated Architectural Conservation Area and contains a number of important protected structures. Given the site's sensitivity it is considered that only limited housing would be appropriate at this location. A maximum of 10 units may be achievable.

4.9 Special Policy Areas

4.9.1 There was no Special Policy Areas zoned in the Draft Fermoy Local Area Plan 2016.

4.10 Regeneration Area/ Opportunity Sites

4.10.1 Two Regeneration Areas and one Opportunity site were identified in the Draft Fermoy Local Area Plan 2016. The Regeneration Areas included the former Mart Site (FY-RA-01) and lands fronting onto Courthouse Rd (FY-RA-02) which are directly east of the town centre and partly within a flood risk zone. These plots are located adjoining each other and adjacent to a number of vacant properties. This block would benefit from a design-led framework on the potential land-use mix and capacity of these buildings. All of these lands are located in the flood plain which precludes vulnerable uses such as residential. There are further lands to the north which includes a vacant Mill building that should be incorporated into any further development framework for this significant under-utilised section of brownfield land. Part of these lands would be suitable as a market space/ community space in the town.

Figure: 4.14: Former Mart site, Fermoy (FY-RA-01)

4.10.2 Opportunity Site (FY-SPA-01) north of the town centre was surveyed but included a wider remit of adjacent commercial lands. The area is within a designated Architectural Conservation Area and includes a number of attractive railway buildings. The analysis noted part of the site was under-utilised and approximately 0.38ha of the site was suitable for housing. This could deliver approximately 9-10 dwelling units, appropriately designed and scaled to its historic setting.

4.10.3 Another site on Mac Curtain Street (currently the location of the Men’s Shed) has been identified as a potential opportunity site. This is a large, underutilised property within the Retail Core which could provide an excellent mixed use, infill opportunity. This could deliver approximately 4 residential units (over a commercial base).

Figure 4.15: Opportunity site (Men’s Shed), Mc Curtain Street.

4.11 Overall Urban Capacity

Table 4.2: Fermoy Urban Capacity Table

Source	**Number**	**Comment**
Vacant Housing	12	Refer to Municipal District office
Living Over The Shop (LOTS)	92	New Policy Required
Infill Opportunity Sites	0	Laneway/mews guidance required
Special Policy Area	0	
Built Up Area	10	Sensitive response required to ACA location and setting of adjacent Protected Structures.
Regeneration Area/ Windfall site	14	Multi-disciplinary approach required at FY-SPA -01
Total	**128 units**	

4.11.1 The cumulative urban capacity from the various sources in Fermoy amounts to 128 units. These all have a part to play in addressing the various housing needs of the town. It is clear that the vacant housing units and vacant upper floors in the existing building stock can satisfy the demand for smaller 2-3 bed units for rental, start-up/ step-down homes.

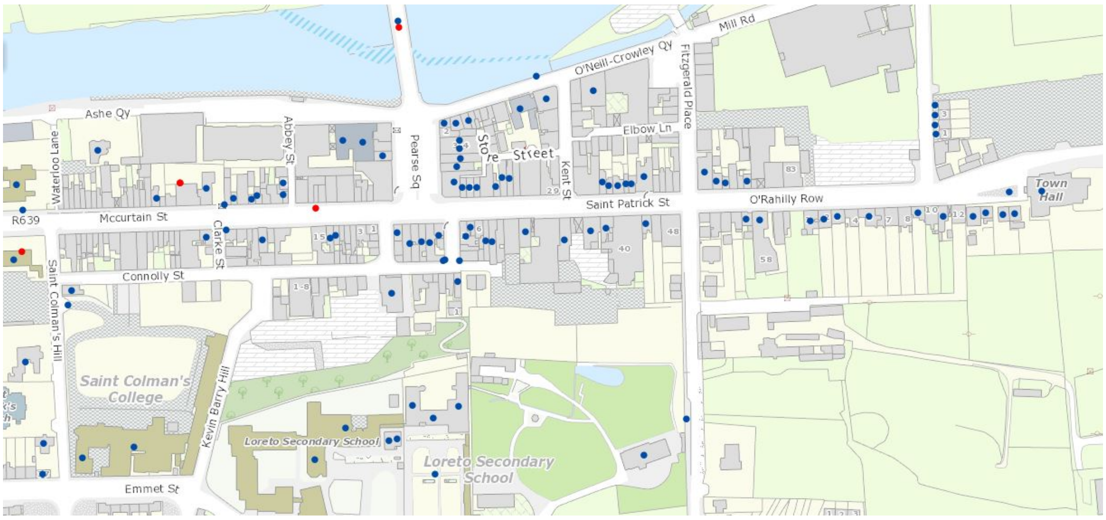
4.11.2 Within the built up area there is only limited capacity for a small residential schemes or self-build opportunities as an alternative to one-off housing demands in the unserviced rural hinterland.

4.12 Street Analysis:

4.12.1 The term Urban Structure refers to the pattern or arrangement of development blocks, streets, buildings, open space and landscape which make up our diverse network of towns. Understanding each town's individual urban structure allows us to protect the key features that help define it's unique sense of place and provides the tools to guide future development response to local distinctiveness.

4.12.2 The cartographic analysis illustrates the planned and formal urban structure of the core which centre around Pearse Square and is an intrgral part of the town's historic military function. Buildings on the main spine (Mc Curtain Street/ Patrick Street / The Quays) have wider plot widths, contrasting with the tighter urban grain of the Secondary Streets. Pearse Square and Mc Curtain Street/ Patrick's Street remains the commercial heart of the town. Access to the interior of the block is achieved via covered archways (pends) or laneways within the streetscape.

Figure 4. 16: Urban Grain, Fermoy



4.12.3 The survey work identified good activity throughout the day within the primary and secondary streets of the town centre. There are opportunities for people to sit and linger throughout the town centre, especially along the Riverside which is very welcome. Traffic volumes within the town are still quite intrusive and detract from the pedestrian environment. Additional crossing points would be helpful and traffic calming measures on the Square would make the town centre a more attractive retail destination.

4.13 Key Considerations:

4.13.1 Fermoy continues to function as a desirable Market town in which to live, work and visit. The town's attraction is underpinned by its broad range of goods and services on offer, landscape setting and proximity to the motorway network.

4.13.2 Recent permissions for retail units outside the town centre are having an impact. It is important that any future retailing needs of the town are met in the existing building stock where possible or town centre opportunity sites identified as part of the survey work.

4.13.3 In order for the town to continue to grow in a sustainable manner the following considerations are highlighted:

4.14 Town Specific Considerations:

4.14.1 **Town Centre Priorities** – urban framework required for multiple brownfield blocks to the east of the town which can deliver compact growth.

4.14.2 There is a significant proportion of shops selling Ladies Wear and Accessories (10 units) providing niche clothing offer within the town and wider North Cork area.

4.14.3 The town would benefit from a weekly Market in the town centre to showcase local produce and crafts from the Blackwater Valley, the Opportunity sites to the east could perform this function.

4.14.4 **Residential Priorities**: Clusters of residential on the periphery may require protection.

4.14.5 **Vacancy Priorities**: the rate stands at 16% (48 units of 296 units). Of the 223 commercial units surveyed, 36 were vacant, including a cluster of vacant units south and west of Pearse Square. Action required to understand underlining use.

4.14.6 Local Authority to continue leadership in reinforcing the role of the town centre as the principle shopping and services centre. The permission of town centre uses outside this zone is weakening the core and contributing to vacancy.

4.14.7 Only 1 derelict property in the town.

4.15 County Development Plan Policy Response required on the following:

New policy required on the following:

Protecting the town's urban structure (perimeter blocks – see similar policy at link below) including laneway access & pend access to interior of the block:
https://www.wexfordcoco.iesites/default/files/content/Planning/DraftGoreyLAP17-23/UrbanDesignGuidelinesandNeighbourhoodFramework.pdf

Retaining the 2nd own door access in each building & requiring a 2nd access in new development in the town centre - see similar policy at link below;
http://www.www.corkcity.ie/corkcitydevelopmentplan2004/Chapter11_DevelopmentControlStandards.pdf

Development guidance required for laneways (see similar policy at link below – RES11 Mews Lane Housing);
http://www.dlrcoco.iesites/default/files/atoms/files/chapter5_0.pdf

2020

Kinsale

URBAN CAPACITY STUDY (2019)

Kinsale

5 Section Kinsale

5.1 Part A Introduction

Kinsale in context

5.1.1 Kinsale is a medieval walled town with a fine urban grain and a multi-layered urban morphology set around an attractive working harbour. The traditional town centre largely comprises of a long, narrow “Main Street” laid out on a north-west/south-east axis. Buildings are generally 2-3storeys high, of various widths and largely demonstrate a consistent frontage. Buildings have largely retained their historic fenestration detailing, slate hung frontage and are colourfully painted. The narrow, winding Medieval streetscape creates an inviting and intimate town centre and is very permeable, linked by a series of streets, stepped accesses and laneways to nearby residential areas. The town successfully exploits its’ maritime location, varied topography, rich built environment and unique cultural heritage to provide an attractive environment for both residents and visitors alike.

5.1.2 The town’s population grew from 4,893 in 2011 to 5281* in 2016. The town has a population target of 5,722 for 2022 which equates to a requirement of about 714 new units. Under the 2017 Local Area Plan there is a net residential land supply of 38.7ha with the capacity to provide approximately 835 units to facilitate the target growth. (*population change reflects CSO boundary change in Kinsale).

5.1.3 There are 49 Protected Structures within the town and most of the town centre itself is designated as an Architectural Conservation Area.

Study Methodology

5.1.4 The study area focussed on the area zoned “Town Centre” in the Draft Bandon Kinsale Local Area Plan 2016 (See Figure 1.1). A land-use and photographic survey was undertaken of each building and space within the study area by a team from the Planning Policy Unit on the 13th March 2018. The number of units and category of use per floor in this survey was ascertained by visual assessment only. Upper floor residential use confirmation was cross-referenced with the number of doorbells/ letterboxes visible on the building’s 2nd “private” access.

5.1.5 The classification of uses followed the GOAD Sub- Class Classification system and also recorded the primary activity within each land-use as per the 2013 Town Centre Review Paper (See Appendix A).

5.2 Town Profile – Survey Results & Analysis

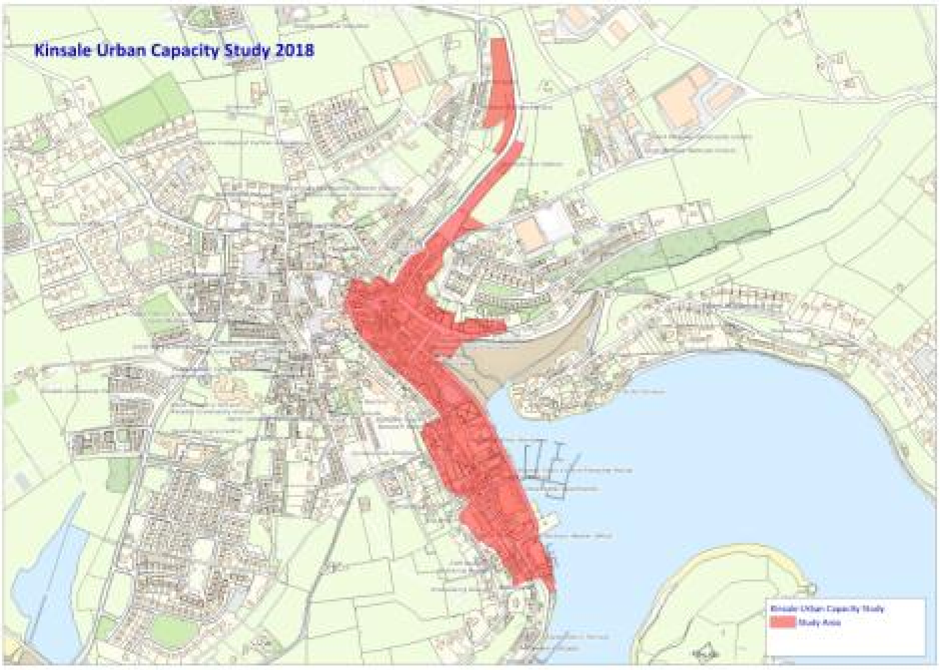
Town Centre

5.2.1 A total of 311 buildings were surveyed within the area zoned town centre as per the (Draft) Bandon – Kinsale Municipal District Local Area Plan 2016. The Retail Core is focused around Main Street, Pearse Street and a number of adjacent Secondary Streets (See figure 1.4). Kinsale has a broad range of uses within the town centre, reflecting its importance role as a "Principle Tourist Attraction" and Ring Town. Figure 1.2 illustrates the spatial breakdown of the ground floor landuse mix within the town centre. The associated pie chart (Figure 1.3) demonstrates the percentage of these uses. The survey utilises the GOAD Sub- classification of uses which are included in key of the map & pie-chart. The primary activity within the land-use sub-class is also recorded and details of these are discussed below.

5.2.2 The predominant land use is residential (house) which represents about a quarter (26%) of the building stock, largely located in a cluster on the southern fringe of the town centre along Pier Road. The Shearwater Apartments also account for a large block of ground floor residential use in this quarter of the town. Leisure Services are the second predominant landuse with (22%) recorded. Aside from the two main hotels located on Pier Road (Actons and the Trident Hotels) there are a large number of boutique hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs in the town.

5.2.3 The town also has a strong Retail Comparison sector (19%) reflecting its tourism function and these are largely focussed on the Primary and Secondary Streets of the Retail Core (i.e. the Main R600, R605, Main Street, Market Lane and Market Square). Retail Services represent 7% of the ground floor uses. Financial and Business Services represented 7% of the town centre land use mix.

Figure 5.1 Kinsale Town Centre



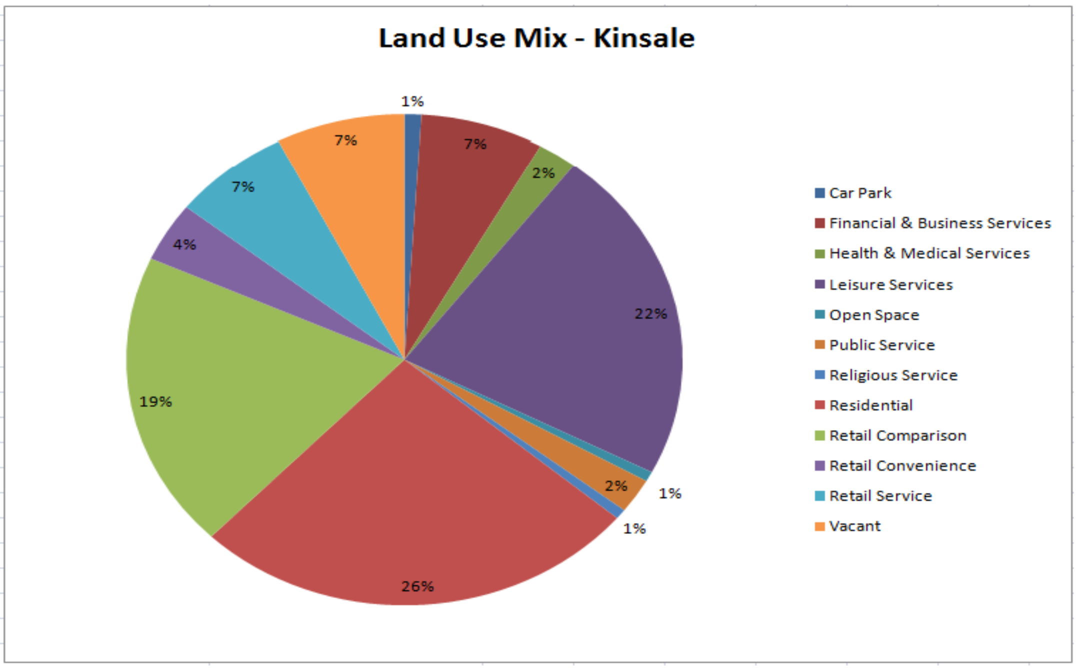


Figure 5.3: Pie Chart of ground floor land-use mix

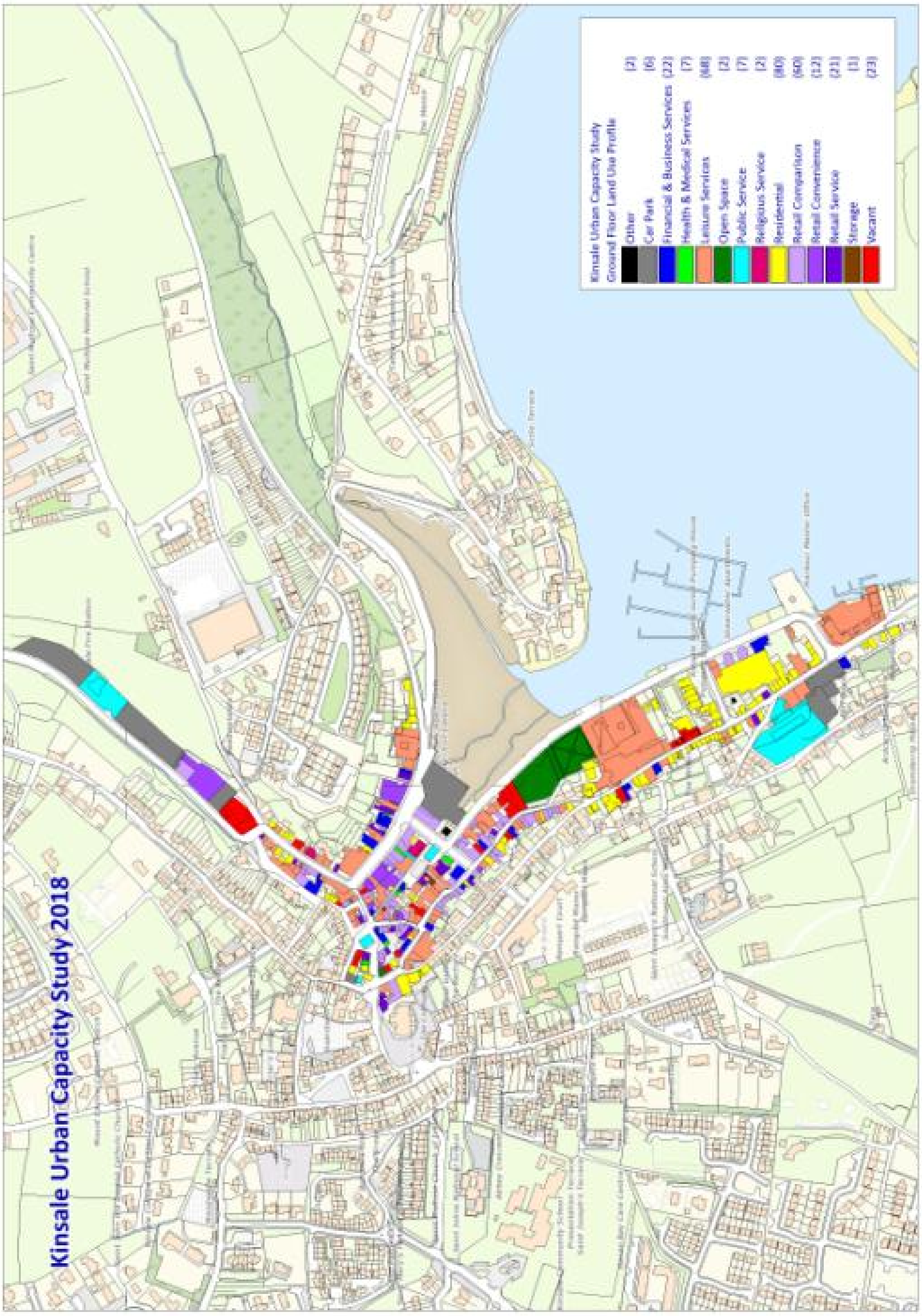


Figure 5.4: Ground floor land use mix, Kinsale

5.2.4 Retail Core Trends

5.2.5 Table 1.1 illustrates the positive nature of the commercial land use mix in the Retail Core of the town between 2013 and 2018. These figures reflect the diversity of uses within properties on the Primary and Secondary Streets of the Retail Core (figure 1.4) only. These streets include Main Street, Emmet Place, Pearse Street, Market Quay, Haydon's Lane, Began's Lane, Market Street, Guardwell, Market Square, Church Street, Marian Terrace, Milk Market and The Glen to the bottom of Barrack Hill.

Table 5.1: Comparative Diversity of Uses (Retail Core), Kinsale

Use	2013	2018	Change
Retail Comparison	47	53	6
Retail Convenience	13	11	-2
Retail Service	20	19	-1
Leisure Services	53	60	7
Financial & Business Services	17	19	2
Health & Medical Services	2	7	5
Public Service	10	5	-5
Religious Service	1	2	1

5.2.6 While these figures do not deal with the amount of floorspace available in the town it does highlight some positive trends in terms of the retail comparison offering in the town, with little change in the retail convenience offering. During the same period there was an increase in the leisure services within the town owing largely to its tourism function and possibly to an increase in cafes. Notably there was a drop in public services within this part of the town. There was no change in the Financial and Business Services sector and the Health and Medical Services sectors saw an increase during this period.

Figure 5.5: Retail core, Kinsale

5.3 Primary Activity Break-down

Retail Convenience

5.3.1 The retail convenience distribution within the town is illustrated in Figure 1.5 below. Supermarkets come out on top as the principle primary use within this sub class (4 units). Convenience, groceries and frozen food stores, together with butchers, account for 2 units each and all of the other sub uses within this category, off licences, bakers and confectionary, fishmonger, health foods and off licence come in at one unit each.

5.3.2 A Farmers Market operates within the town square on a Wednesday between 9.00am and 2.30pm, it is not included in the “Markets” count as it was not evident on the day. Supervalu which had been located on Pearse Street has moved out to a larger site close to the town centre on New Road.

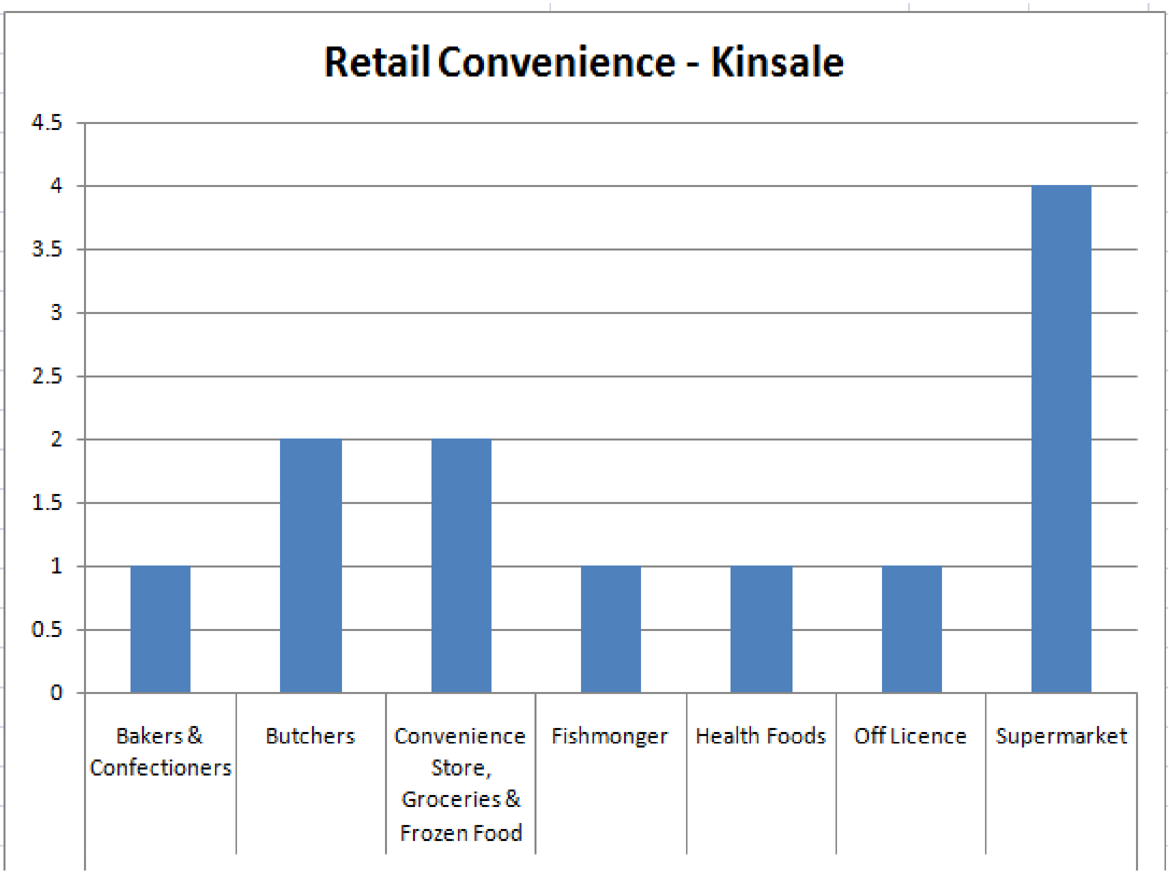


Figure 5.6: Bar Chart showing Retail Convenience

Retail Comparison

5.3.3 It is evident that Kinsale unlike many other towns has a substantial proportion of uses associated with its important tourist role. There is a significant proportion of shops selling art, crafts, gifts and high end goods which are primarily aimed at the tourist market while there are a large number of leisure services such as bars, cafes, restaurants and tourist accommodation.

Figure 5.7 Illustrates the Retail Comparison breakdown in Kinsale.

5.3.4 The bar chart highlights the broad range of retail comparison stores which are represented across all 20 sub-categories. Unlike practically all of the other towns surveyed, the predominant sub-category is Craft, Gifts, China and Glass retail units which were strongly represented (11 units) with Ladies Wear and Accessories (9 units), followed by Art and Art Dealers (7 units) reflecting the very strong tourism function of the town. All of the other comparison stores, with the exception of the chemist and drugstore are in the 1-3 unit region. It is interesting also to note that there is only one charity shop in the town centre.

Leisure Services

5.3.5 The Leisure Services sector reflects the long established importance of tourism to the economy of Kinsale, unsurprisingly the predominant use is Bars, Wine Bars & Public Houses (21 units) followed by restaurants (14 units) highlighting the cluster of high quality culinary venues in the town.

5.3.6 A total of 10 cafes and 4 fast food takeaways were recorded in the town centre. The town is served by 2 no. centrally located hotels, however the availability of a large number of B&B, Boutique Hotels and Guesthouses allows for an extended stay rather than the day-trip.

5.3.7 Other leisure services include casino and betting offices at 3 units and sports, camping and leisure goods also at 3 units.

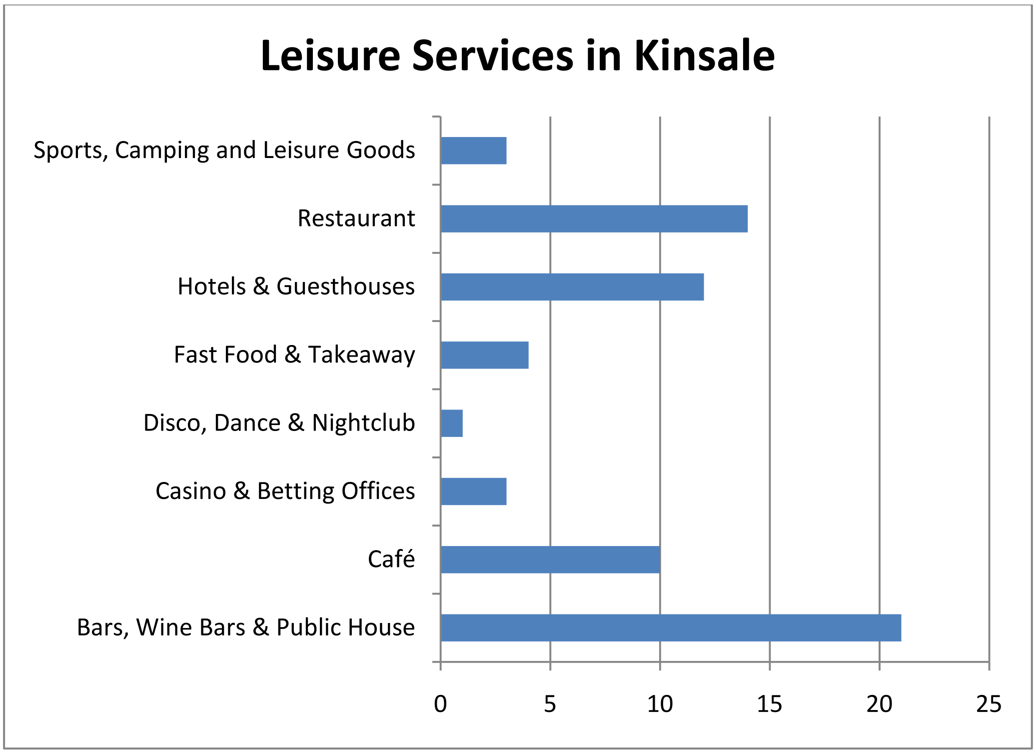


Figure 5.8 Illustrates the Leisure Services breakdown in Kinsale.

Financial and Business Services

5.3.8 The Bar Chart (Fig 1.8) illustrates the primary activity break-down of the Financial and Services Sector within the town. Property Services is the pre-dominant activity (7 recorded) which includes Auctioneers, architectural services. Legal services (5 identified) are also strongly represented in the town. A total of 3 units were providing Financial Services and 2 units were providing Business Goods and Services. Three Retail Banks were recorded in the town centre.

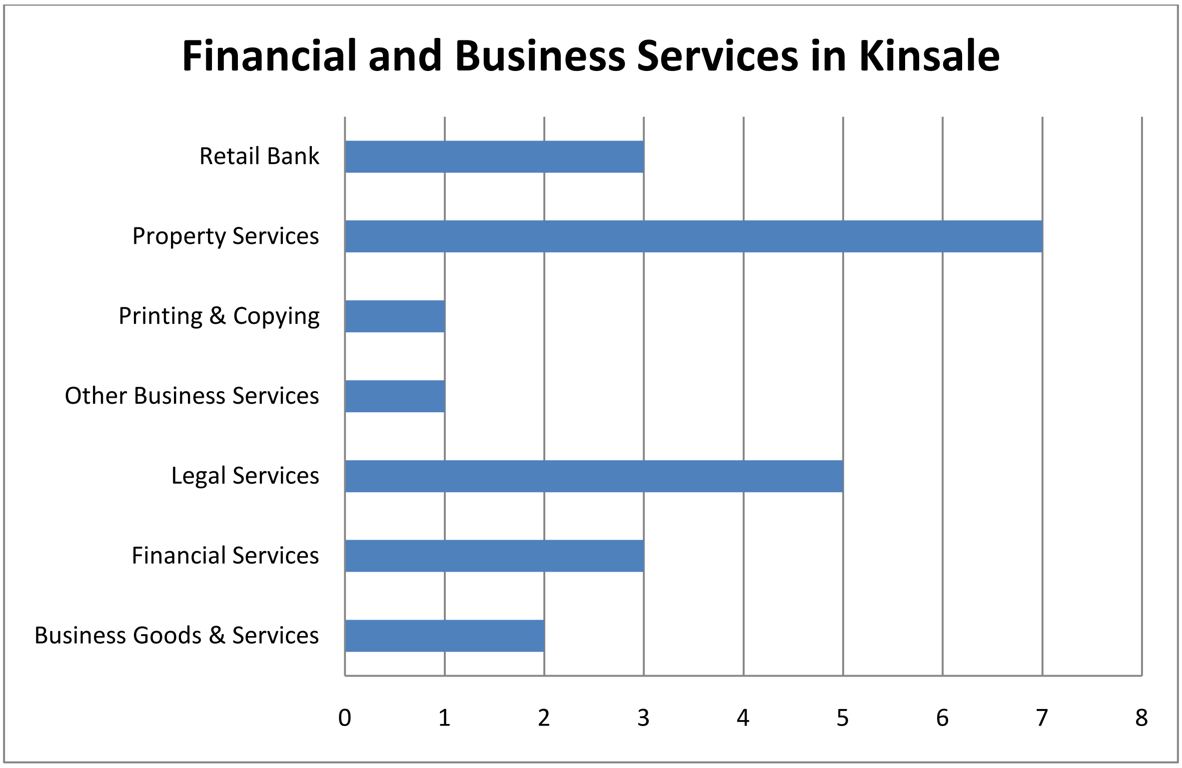


Figure 5.9: Bar Chart showing Financial & Business Services

5.4 Vacancy

5.4.1 Vacancy rates have been defined as the number of units not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total amount of units (vacant and occupied) in the town centre. In Kinsale vacancy stands at 7% within the town (23 units of 311 units). This is the only town in the County to fall within the normal range limits within a functional market (5-7%).

5.4.2 Of the 230 commercial units surveyed, 22 were vacant representing 10% of the commercial town centre building stock. A cluster of commercial vacancy is evident on Lower O'Connell Street (10 units), Market Quay – Emmet Place (7 units) and Main Street Lower (4 units). All streets in Kinsale have some vacancy with the exception of Market Street. The remaining streets have relatively low levels of vacancy with one or two premises vacant.

5.4.3 Of the 80 residential units, 1 unit was vacant or 1% of the town centre residential building stock.

Figure 5.19: Vacant building, Kinsale

Figure 5.11: Vacant building, Kinsale

5.4.4 The survey identified a total of 4 infill (brownfield) Opportunity Sites in the town. These include sites on Pier Road, New Road, The Glen and Lower O' Connell Street. These could generate a total of 22 small, infill residential units, suitable for sheltered/ starter housing.

5.4.5 From the 311 buildings surveyed, 230 were classified as having a commercial ground floor and 80 were classified as residential houses within the town. The remaining spaces and structures include car parks, open spaces, public services (including community centres, educational establishments, emergency series, libraries, etc) storage facilities and vacant properties.

5.4.6 Recent exemptions now allow a change from commercial to residential use, subject to limitations.

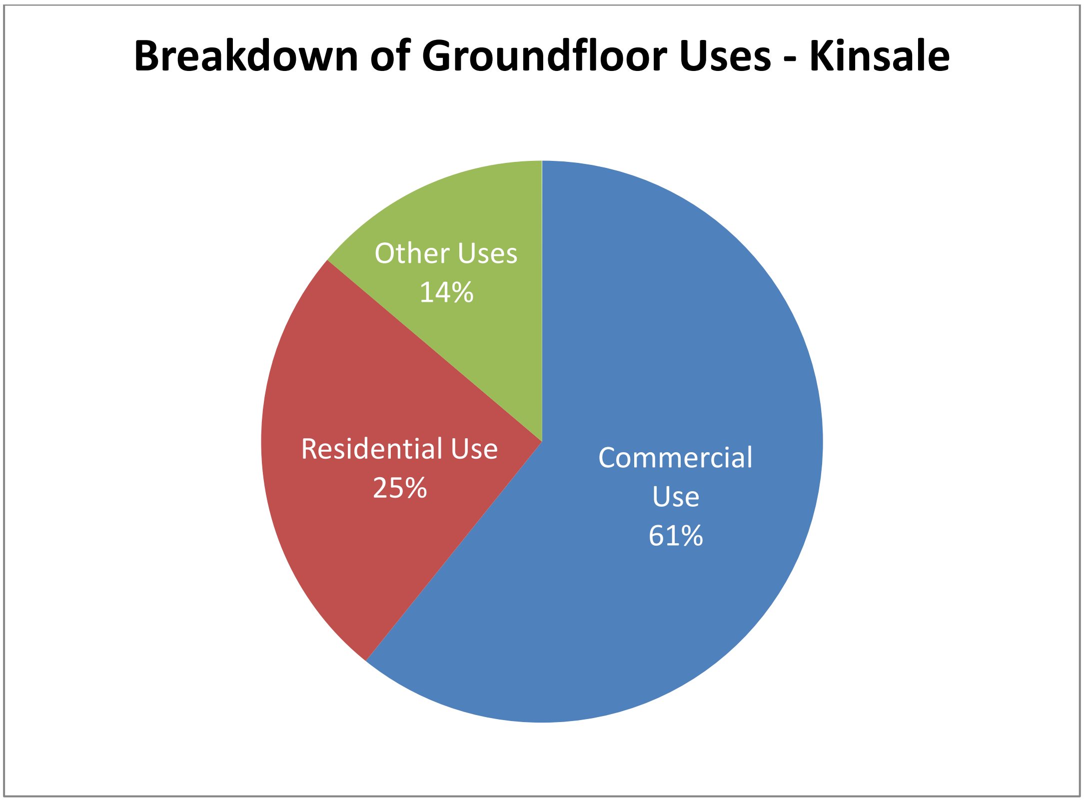


Figure 5.12: Bar Chart showing broad Land Use breakdown

5.5 Residential Uses

5.5.1 While Commercial uses account for 61% of the ground floor premises within the Town Centre, residential uses both houses and apartments account for a significant 25% of ground floor units and are predominantly located at Pier Street / Worlds End to the south of the town taking advantage of this spectacular location looking out over Kinsale harbour. Upper floor residential is more scattered within the core of the town centre as expected in this busy tourist driven market town 116 units recorded at first floor level, 61 at 2nd floor level and 18 at 3rd floor.

5.5.2 A total of 164 units had a separate access to the upper floors which is a key ingredient in securing upper floor usage. The figure represents 53% of the town centre building stock or 87% of the commercial stock. The majority of these 2nd access points were on the streets or lanes but a small number were via a separate access within a shared foyer (shared access).

5.5.3 A total of 38 vacant 1st floors and 16 vacant 2nd floors were recorded. The survey work confirmed that upper floor use was predominantly one residential unit (apartment) per floor. On this basis a total of 54 additional residential units could be theoretically accommodated within the vacant upper floors, subject to Building and Fire regulation compliance.

Figure 5.13: Examples of Separate Access to Upper Floors in Kinsale

Figure 5.14: Example of Upper Floors Residential Use in Kinsale

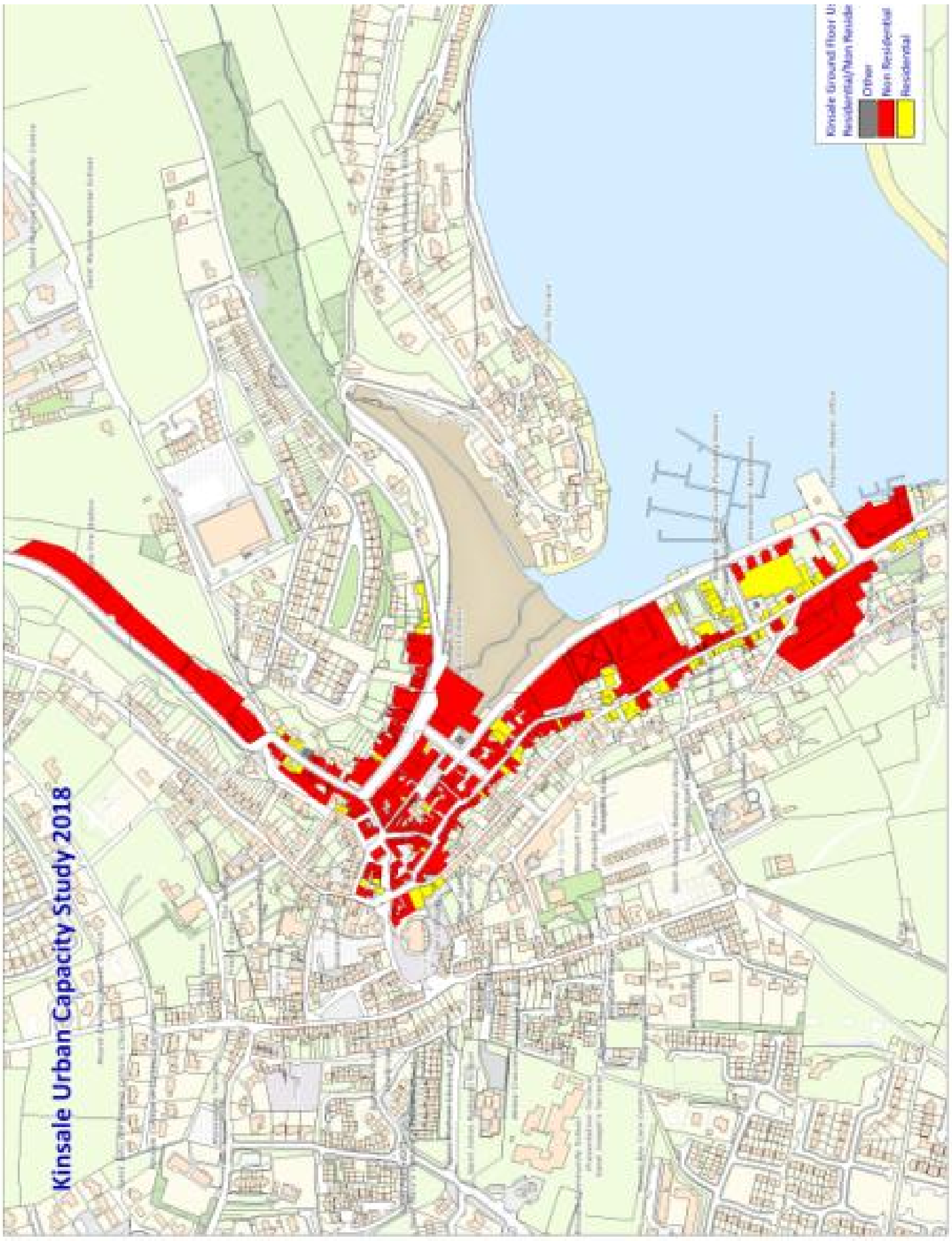


Figure 5.15: Ground Floor Use

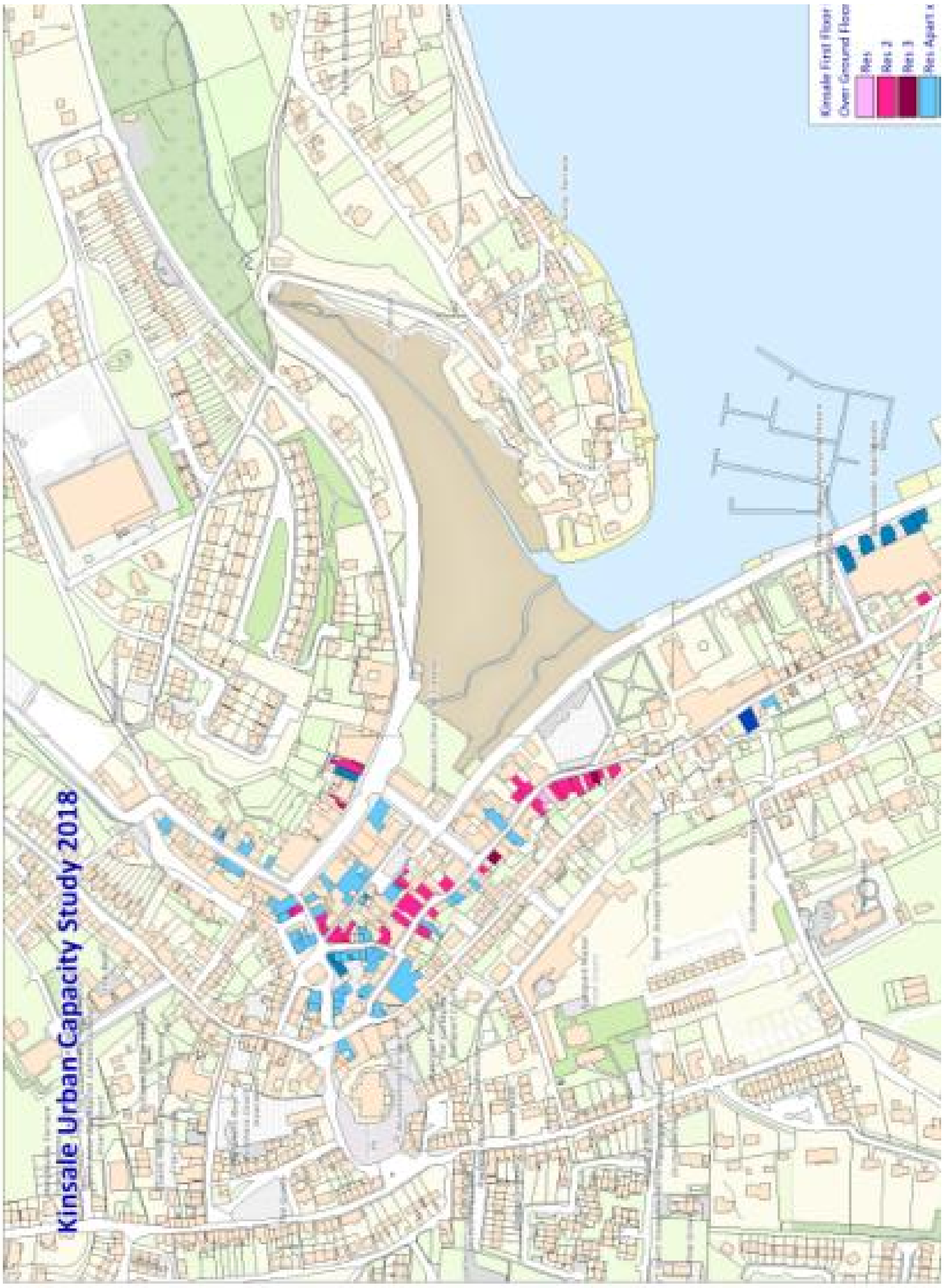


Figure 5.16: First Floor Use

5.6 Building Condition

5.6.1 Building condition was largely good at 92%. A total number of 22 were considered poor and a further 3 were recorded as derelict.

5.7 Existing Built Up Area

5.7.1 A total of 7 plots were surveyed from the existing built up area. Most of these were small to established residential areas. Plots surveyed ranged in size from 0.63ha to 3.12ha. Of the 36 plots analysed, 11 sites were discounted because of access, topography or servicing issues. The remaining 25 plots have the cumulative capacity to deliver 190 units, mostly of detached, semi-detached or terraced form. A proportion of this capacity could offer an alternative to one-off housing demands in the unserviced rural area outside Kinsale.

5.8 Special Policy Areas

5.8.1 There are no Special Policy Areas zoned in the Kinsale Town Plan.

5.9 Regeneration Area/ Opportunity Sites

5.9.1 Four sites on Pier Road, New Road, The Glen and Lower O' Connell Street have been identified as Opportunity Sites. The site on Pier Road was identified as a Regeneration Site (KS-RA-01) in the Draft Bandon Kinsale Local Area Plan and is a high profile site which extends to Main Street. The remaining sites are either small infill sites or vacant buildings at prime locations capable of accommodating a number of small commercial units at ground floor with residential overhead.

5.10 Overall Urban Capacity

Table 5.2: Kinsale Urban Capacity Table		
Source	Number	Comment
Vacant Housing	14	Refer to Municipal District office
Living Over The Shop (LOTS)	54	New Policy Required
Infill Opportunity Sites	12	Laneway/mews guidance required
Special Policy Areas	0	Greater emphasis on housing incorporated into text of policy.
Built Up Area	190	Re-classify/ incorporate into existing land supply?
Regeneration Area/ Windfall site	10	Possible new designation category?
Total	**284 units**	

5.10.1 The cumulative urban capacity from the various sources in Kinsale amounts to 284 units. These all have a part to play in addressing the various housing needs of the town. It is clear that the vacant housing units and vacant upper floors in the existing building stock can satisfy the demand for smaller 2-3 bed units for rental, start-up/ step-down homes. It is not clear how much the existing town centre building stock satisfies holiday home demands in the town but this is another factor that impacts on the numbers of housing units available on a permanent basis within the town.

5.10.2 Within the built up area there is clear capacity for a mixture of larger family homes and even self-build opportunities as an alternative to one-off housing demands in the unserviced rural hinterland.

5.11 Street Analysis:

5.11.1 The term Urban Structure refers to the pattern or arrangement of development blocks, streets, buildings, open space and landscape which make up our diverse network of towns. Understanding each town’s individual urban structure allows us to protect the key features that help define it’s unique sense of place and provides the tools to guide future development response to local distinctiveness.

5.11.2 The cartographic analysis illustrates the tight urban grain and informal urban structure of the Medieval core which contrasts with the later larger block and plot sizes of Pearse Street and New Quay. Main Street remains the commercial heart of the town. Access to the interior of the block is achieved via laneways in the Medieval core and via pends within the post-Medieval streetscape.

5.11.3 The survey work identified good activity throughout the day within the primary and secondary streets of the town centre, despite cold Spring weather conditions (showers and cold). There are issues with the width of the pavements within the Medieval core which are often too narrow for a wheelchair user or buggy and forces vulnerable users onto the roadway. A shared surface would be welcome within the Medieval core.

5.11.4 There are good opportunities for people to sit and linger throughout the town and some business owners have been very inventive in creating seating within the fabric of their buildings facade. There are limited formal opportunities, however, to enjoy the stunning Marina due to the arrangement of parking and high traffic volumes. A comprehensive public realm strategy is recommended for the Waterfront and Medieval core to consider long term options to improve the pedestrian experience within the town and minimise conflicts between the Marine-based uses and tourism uses.

5.12 Key Considerations:

5.12.1 Kinsale continues to function as a desirable, coastal town in which to live, work and visit. The town's attraction is underpinned by its marine location, historic townscape and range of high end goods and services on offer. The survey work confirms the town's success as a living town with low vacancy and a good vertical mix of uses within the building stock. The town's success has also presented a number of movement challenges for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles that need consideration.

5.12.2 Within the town centre pavements are narrow and unable to accommodate a buggy and wheelchair in places, forcing vulnerable users onto the carriageway. In peak summer months, traffic congestion is an issue with the combination of high traffic volumes generated from beach-goers and tourists visiting the historic town. The planned Relief Roads would greatly aid this issue.

5.13 Town Specific Priorities:

5.13.1 Infrastructure & Investment Priorities: Transport & Public Realm: A multi-disciplinary approach required to address the Medieval core and Waterfront area, address traffic/ pedestrian conflicts and provide a more pedestrian friendly core in combination with delivery of the Northern and Western Relief Roads.

5.13.2 Residential Priorities: Peripheral sites suitable as alternatives to one-off housing in unserviced rural area. There is also a high proportion of houses within the town centre which may require protection as demands for additional commercial space becomes more intense.

5.13.3 Infill Opportunities should be directed as achieving age-friendly step-down units within the town.

5.13.4 Vacancy Priorities: Although the town has a low vacancy level (7%), there are a small number of long-term vacant units within the town which require attention and may benefit from additional guidance on the range of uses/ design approaches required in any future redevelopment;

5.13.5 Other Town Specific Considerations: The town has a comprehensive mix of uses, both vertically and within the street. Protecting this mix within the compact core is essential to retain the town's vibrancy and is a great example of a living town.

5.14 County Development Plan Policy Response required on the following:

Protecting the town's urban structure (perimeter blocks – see similar policy at link below):
https://www.wexfordcoco.iesites/default/files/content/Planning/DraftGoreyLAP17-23/UrbanDesignGuidelinesandNeighbourhoodFramework.pdf

Retaining the 2nd own door access in each building & requiring a 2nd access in new development in the town centre - see similar policy at link below;
http://www.www.corkcity.ie/corkcitydevelopmentplan2004/Chapter11_DevelopmentControlStandards.pdf

Development guidance required for laneways (see similar policy at link below – RES11 Mews Lane Housing);
http://www.dlrcoco.iesites/default/files/atoms/files/chapter5_0.pdf

2020

Macroom

URBAN CAPACITY STUDY (2019)

6 Macroom

6.1 Part A Introduction

Macroom in context

6.1.1 The town of Macroom has long been an important seat of power and milling due to its location on the Sullane River and geography between Cork and Killarney. Macroom Castle is a striking Gothic fortification, an important landmark within the town. Macroom is served by a single historic narrow bridge within the town which leads to traffic congestion, a poor pedestrian environment and tailbacks on both the eastern and western approach roads. The Macroom By-Pass is planned to be completed by 2023 and this will provide opportunities to create a more-pedestrian-friendly town centre.

6.1.2 The urban structure of the town today has 18th and 19th century origins with an attractive urban square at the Castle entrance. Buildings are largely 3-4 storeys adjoining the square with 2 storey properties on the adjacent streets. The Main Street is transacted by a series of laneways and pends to large tracts of under-utilised backlands.

6.1.3 The areas zoned as Town Centre in the Macroom Town Plan comprises of the traditional commercial core around the Square and lands north and south of New Road (west of the Bridge). These are outlined in Figure 1.1.

6.1.4 The town's population fell from 3,879 persons in 2011 to 3,765 in 2016 (loss of 114 persons). The town has a population target of 4,536 for 2022 which equates to a requirement of about 468 new units. Under the Macroom Town Plan and Blarney Macroom Local Area Plan 2017 there is a net residential land supply of 60.90ha with the capacity to provide approximately 1,184 new units to facilitate the target growth.

6.1.5 There are 53 Protected Structures within the town as identified in the Macroom Town Development Plan 2009 (as amended). The ACA within Macroom extends from New Street to the Bus Depot and takes in the areas of Castle Street, Market Square, North Square, South Square, Sleveen Lane and Main Street.

Study Methodology

6.1.6 The study area focussed on the area zoned "Town Centre" as per the Macroom Town Plan 2009 (as amended - See Figure 1.1). A land-use and photographic survey was undertaken of each building and space within the study area by a team from the Planning Policy Unit on the 11th April 2018. The number of units and category of use per floor in this survey was ascertained by visual assessment only. Upper floor residential use confirmation was cross-referenced with the number of doorbells/ letterboxes visible on the building's 2nd "private" access.

6.1.7 The classification of uses followed the GOAD Sub-Class Classification system and also recorded the primary activity within each land-use as per the 2013 Town Centre Review Paper (See Appendix A).

6.2 Town Profile – Survey Results & Analysis

Town Centre

6.2.1 A total of 344 buildings were surveyed within the area zoned town centre in the Macroom Town Plan 2009 (as amended). Areas identified as Regeneration Areas/ Opportunity Sites are dealt with in a separate section. The Retail Core is focused around an east-west spine of streets including Railway View, Main Street and Castle Street. Macroom has a broad range of uses within the town centre, reflecting its importance as a Ring Town within the Greater Cork Ring Area. Figure 1.2 illustrates the spatial breakdown of the ground floor landuse mix within the town centre.

6.2.2 The associated pie chart (Figure 6.3) demonstrates the percentage of these uses. The survey utilises the GOAD Sub-classification of uses which are included in key of the map & pie-chart. The primary activity within the land-use sub-class is also recorded and details of these are discussed below.

6.2.3 Within this area, the predominant land use is Residential which represents about over a third (38%) of the building stock, largely located in clusters on the approaches to the town from the east and west on the N22.

6.2.4 The town has a strong retail comparison sector and it is the second most predominant landuse with (13%) recorded. Retail Services represent 6% of the ground floor uses with leisure services at 7%. Retail Convenience is somewhat low at 3% but consistent with rates elsewhere in the County. The Financial and Business Services represented 5% of the town centre land use mix.

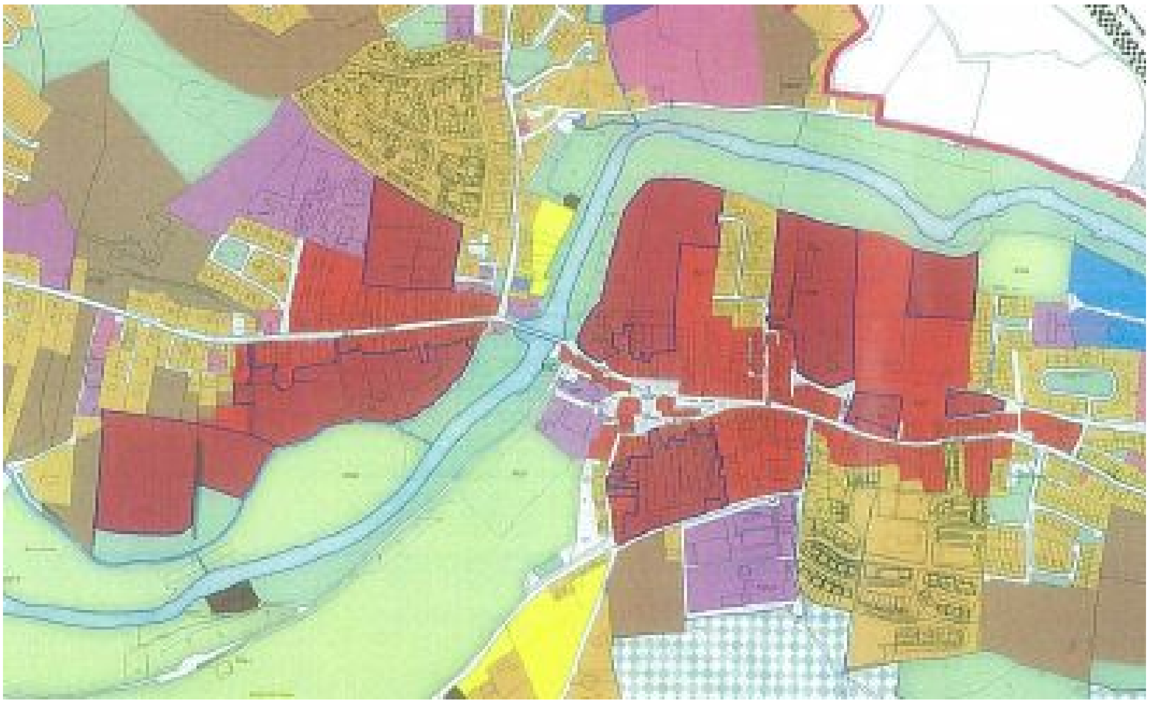


Figure 6.1: Extent of town centre (TC-01), Macroom

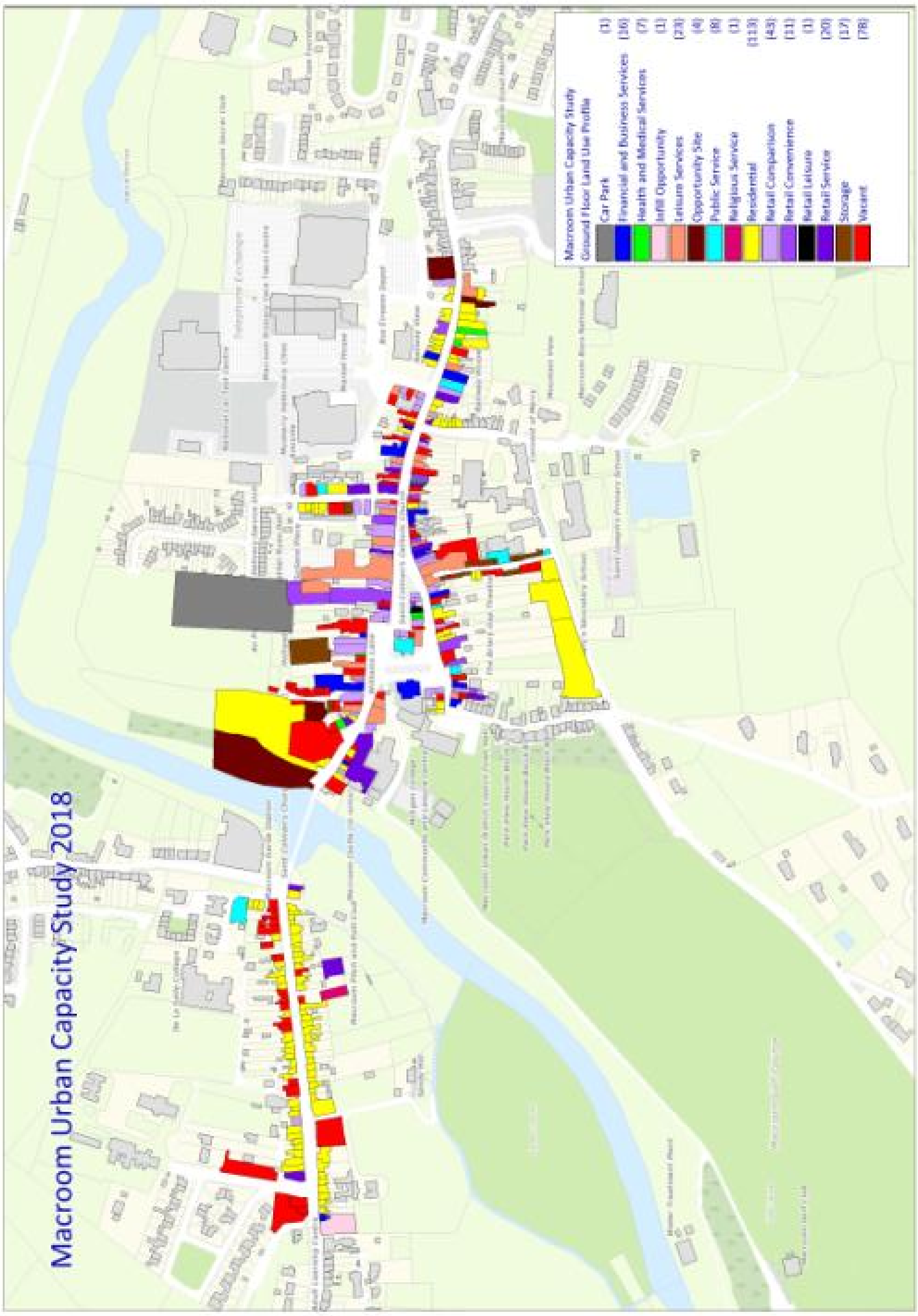


Figure 6.2: Ground floor land use mix, Macroom

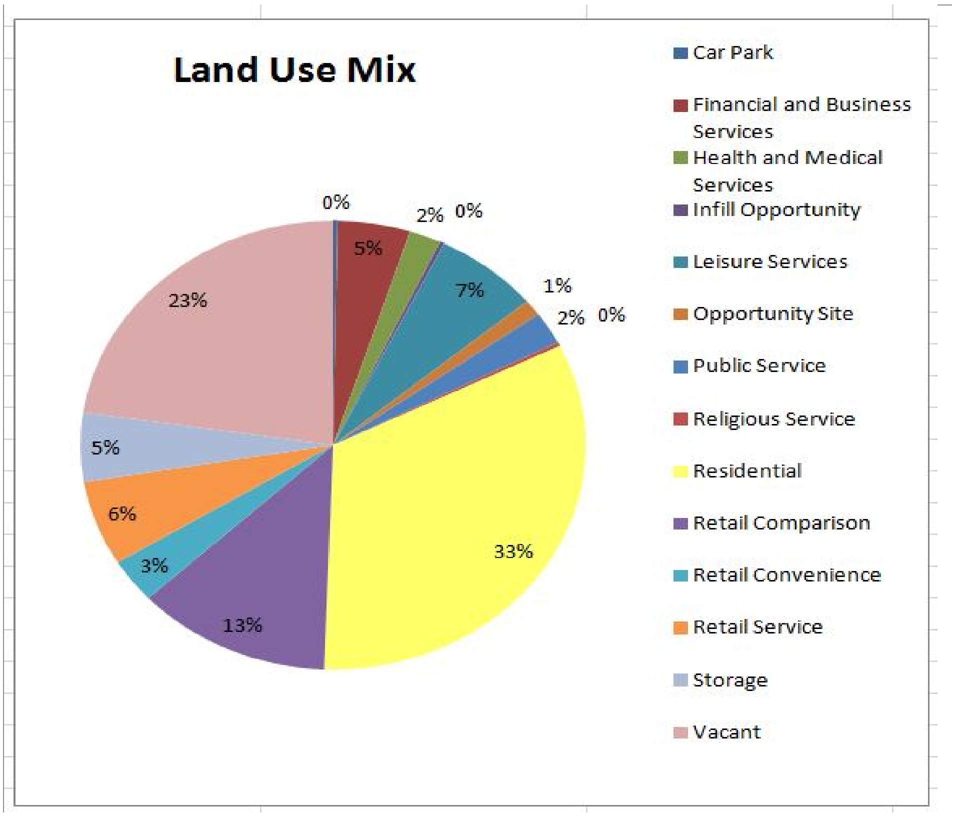


Figure 6.3: Ground floor land use mix, Macroom

Retail Core Trends

6.2.5 Table 6.1 illustrates the degree of change within the commercial land use mix in the Retail Core of the town between 2013 and 2018. These figures reflect the diversity of uses within properties on the Primary Street of the Retail Core (figure 6.4) only. These streets include Railway View, Main Street and Castle Street.

Table 6.1: Comparative Diversity of Uses (Retail Core), Macroom

Use	2013	2018	Change
Retail Comparison	35	40	+5
Retail Convenience	11	11	-
Retail Service	15	16	+1
Leisure Services	24	22	-2
Financial & Business Services	15	15	-
Health & Medical Services	8	7	-1
Public Service	3	4	+1
Religious Service	0	0	0

6.2.6 While these figures do not deal with the amount of floorspace available in the town it does highlight some interesting trends. The area is generally stable with some positive increases in terms of the retail comparison offering in the town. No change was recorded in the retail convenience offering. During the same period there was a decrease in the leisure services within the town. Notably there was an increase in public services within this part of the town. There was no change in the Financial and Business Services sector and the Health and Medical Services sectors saw a small decrease during this period.

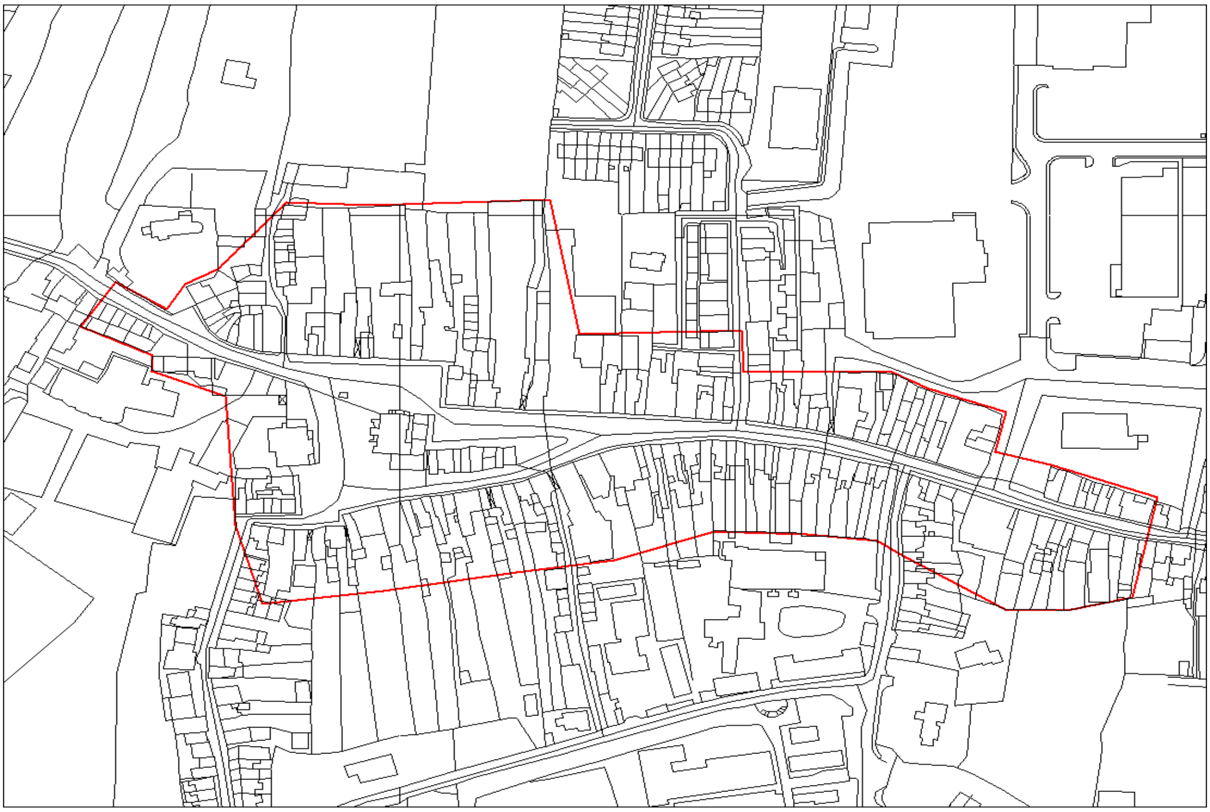


Figure 6.4: Outline of previous Macroom study carried out in 2013

6.3 Primary Activity Break-down

Retail Convenience

6.3.1 The retail convenience distribution within the town is illustrated in Figure 1.5 below. Convenience, groceries and frozen food stores, came out on top with 4 units. Butchers came out with 2 no units and all of the other sub uses in this category, bakers and confecctioners, confectionary tobacconist, newsagent, fishmonger, health foods and shoe repairs account for 1 unit each.

6.3.2 A Farmers Market operates within the town square on a Tuesday between 9.00am and 2.00pm, it is not included in the "Markets" count as it was not evident on the day.

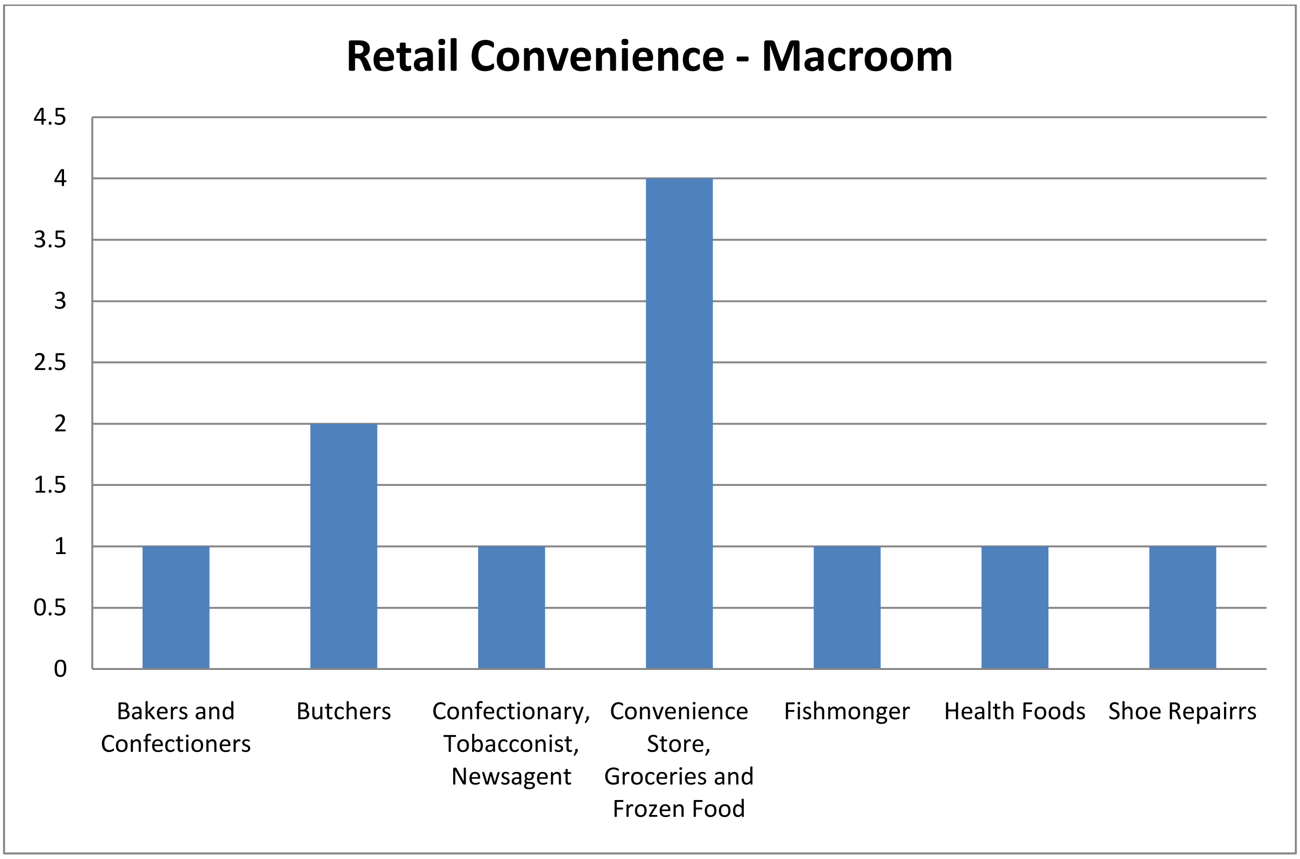


Figure 6.5: Bar Chart showing Retail Convenience - Macroom

Retail Comparison

6.3.3 The following graph sets out the retail comparison offer in Macroom. It is clear that the town has a broad range of retail comparison stores which are represented across all 22 sub-categories.

6.3.4 The predominant sub-category is the 'Chemists / Drugstores' and 'Charity Shops' category which were strongly represented (4 units) with 'Telephones and Accessories' and 'Men's Wear and Accessories' the next most popular (3 units each). All of the other comparison stores range between 1 and 2 units.

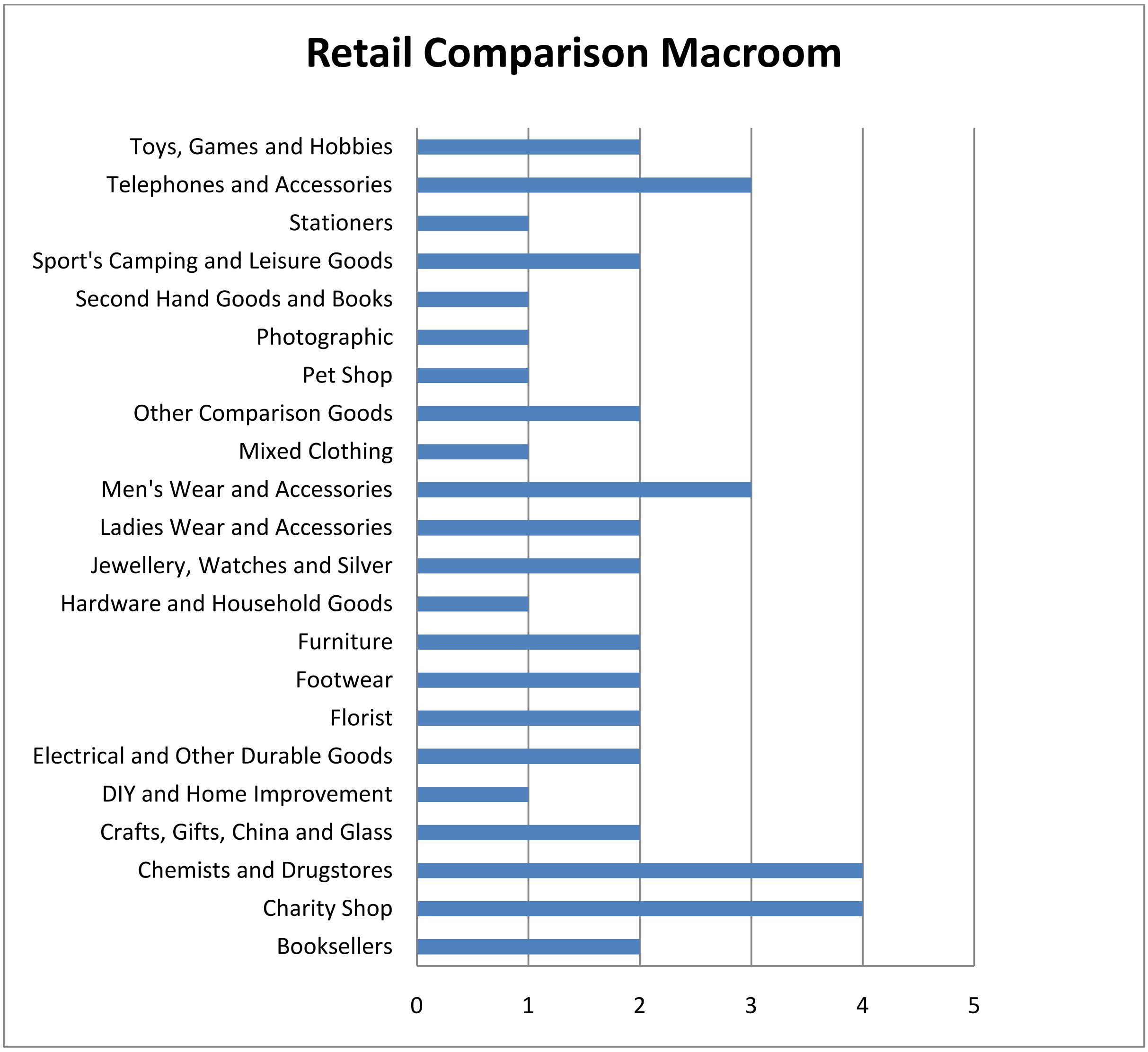


Figure6.6 Illustrates the Retail Comparison breakdown in Macroom

Leisure Services

6.3.5 The Leisure Services sector reflects the long established importance of Macroom as a service centre for a large rural hinterland. The predominant use is Bars, Wine Bars & Public Houses (8 units) followed by 4 cafes and 4 fast food takeaways were recorded in the town centre. The town is served by 1 centrally located hotel with a further guest house bringing the total in this sub category to 2.

6.3.6 Other leisure services include 'casino and betting offices', 'sports, camping and leisure goods' and 'cinemas, theatres and concert halls' all at 1 unit each.

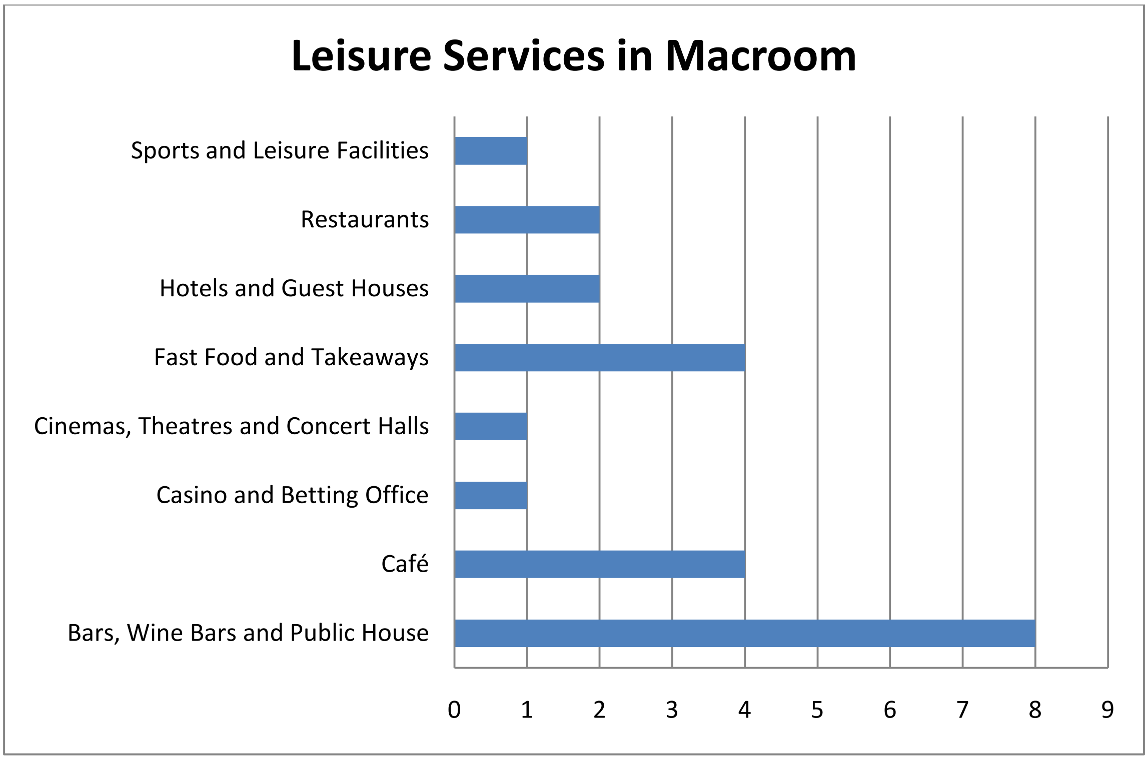


Figure 6.7 Illustrates the Leisure Services breakdown in Macroom

Financial and Business Services

6.3.7 The Bar Chart (Fig 1.8) illustrates the primary activity break-down of the Financial and Services Sector within the town. Property Services and Legal Services are the pre-dominant activities with 4 of each recorded). A total of 3 units are providing Financial Services and a further 3 units providing retail banking services, again highlighting the strong service centre function of the town. There is one Building Supplies and Services centre in the town.

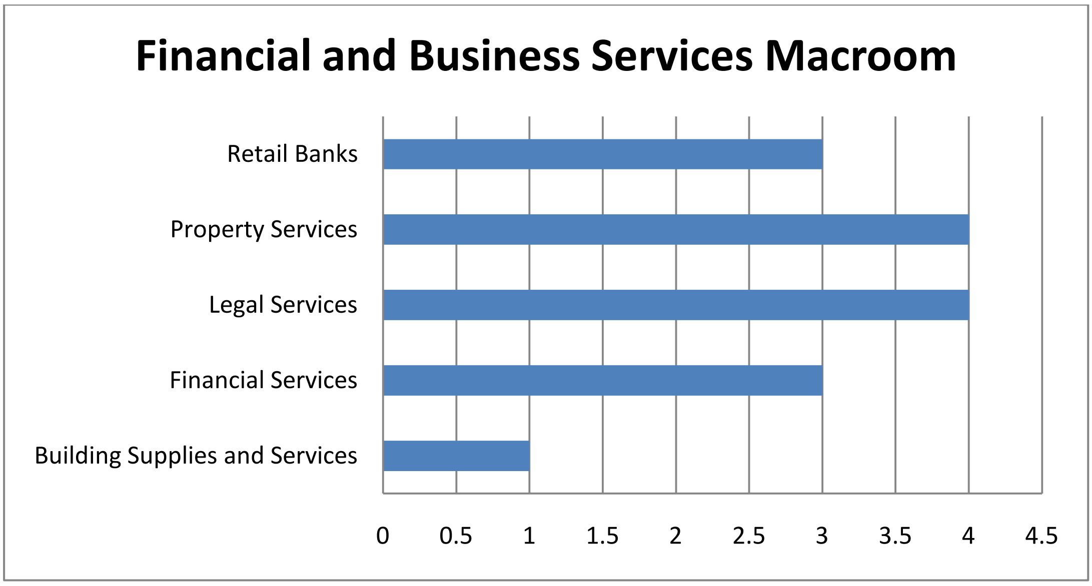


Figure 6.8: Financial and Business Services - Macroom

6.4 Vacancy

6.4.1 Vacancy rates have been defined as the number of units not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total amount of units (vacant and occupied) in the town centre. In Macroom vacancy stands at 23% within the town (78 units of 344 units). This is exceptionally high and falls well outside of the normal range limits within a functional market (5-7%).

6.4.2 Of the 223 commercial units surveyed, 63 were vacant representing 28% of the commercial town centre building stock. A cluster of commercial vacancy is evident on Cashe Street / North Square (16 units), Main Street North (11 units), Main Street South (8 units) and New Street (North) (12 units). It is interesting to note the large amount of dereliction in the core shopping area or the main streets of Macroom.

6.4.3 Of the 121 residential units surveyed, 15 units were vacant or 12% of the town centre residential building stock.

Figure 6.9: Vacant premises, Macroom

Figure 6.10: Vacant building, Macroom

6.4.4 The survey identified a total of 4 infill (brownfield) Opportunity Sites in the town. These include sites on Railway View and Cashe Street / North Square. The site on Railway View is 0.1 ha and could accommodate about 10 units. The site on Cashe Street (North Square) immediately adjacent to the River Sullane is also identified as an opportunity site, however this site is subject to flooding and therefore residential development would not be considered appropriate. The other site located just off Bridewell Lane is about 0.08 ha and is contiguous to the Saint Colman's Church of Ireland (disused). This site could accommodate about 6 units. There is a further infill opportunity site located at New Street which is about 0.1 ha in size. It could potentially accommodate about 8-10 units. These sites combined, could generate a total of 25 small, infill residential units, suitable for sheltered / starter housing.

6.4.5 From the 344 buildings surveyed, 223 were classified as having a Non- Residential ground floor and 109 were classified as residential houses within the town. The remaining spaces and structures include car parks, open spaces, public services (including community centres, educational establishments, emergency series, libraries, etc) storage facilities and vacant properties.

6.4.6 Recent exemptions now allow a change from commercial to residential use, subject to limitations.

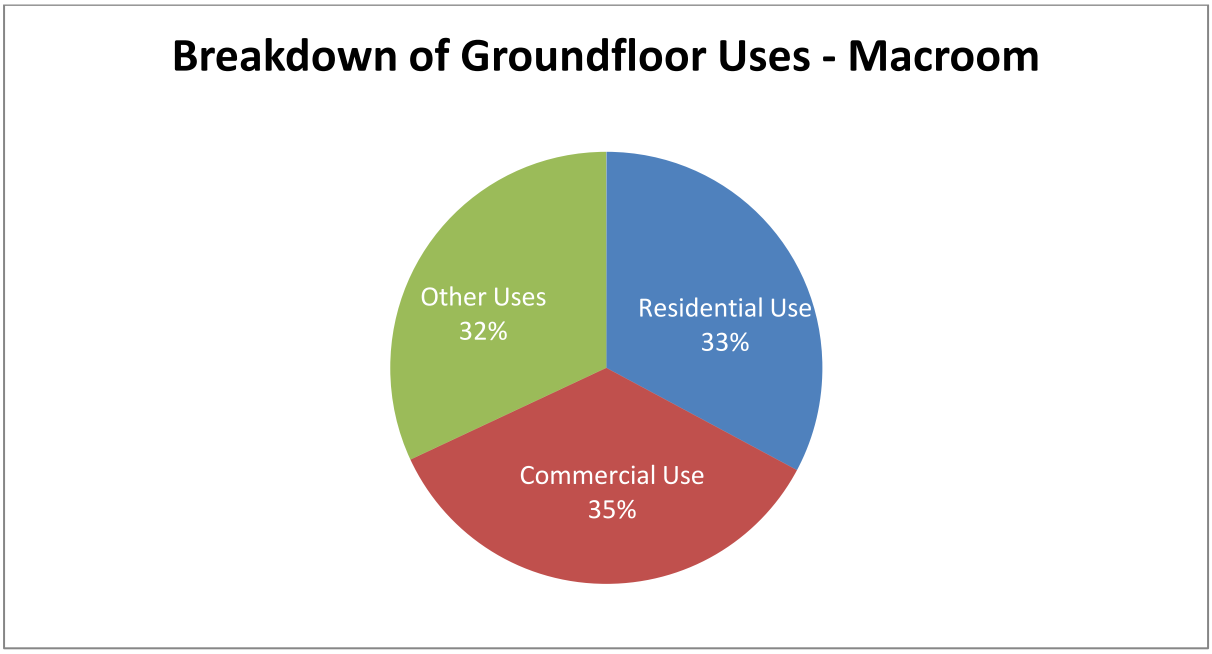


Figure 6.11: Breakdowon of Groundfloor Uses in Macroom

6.5 Residential Uses

6.5.1 While Commercial uses account for 35% of the ground floor premises within the Town Centre, residential uses both houses and apartments account for a significant 33% of ground floor units and are predominantly located at New Street (North) and (South) and Railway View. Upper floor residential is more scattered within the core of the town centre with 68 units recorded at first floor level (See figure 1.15) and 10 units recorded at 2nd floor level.

6.5.2 A total of 93 units had a separate access to the upper floors which is a key ingredient in securing upper floor usage. The figure represents 27% of the town centre building stock or 77% of the commercial stock. The majority of these 2nd access points were on the streets or lanes but a small number were via a separate access within a shared foyer (shared access).

6.5.3 A total of 59 vacant 1st floors and 27 vacant 2nd floors and 1 vacant 3rd floor were recorded. The survey work confirmed that upper floor use was predominantly one residential unit (apartment) per floor. On this basis a total of 87 additional residential units could be theoretically accommodated within the vacant upper floors, subject to Building and Fire regulation compliance.

Figure 6.12: Examples of Separate Access to Upper Floors (Residential) in Macroom

Figure 6.13: Example of Upper Floors in Macroom

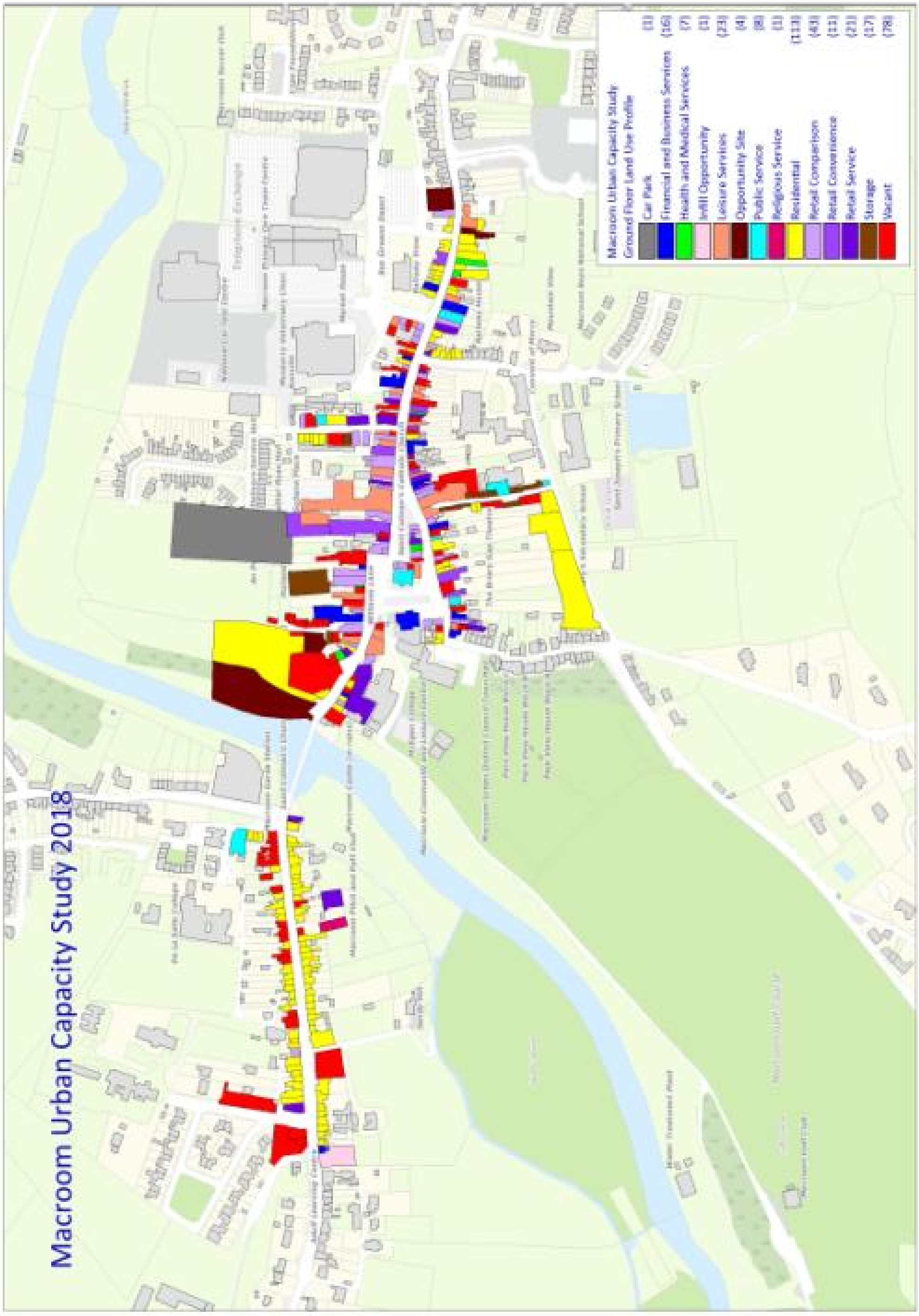


Figure 6.14: Ground Floor Use in Macroom

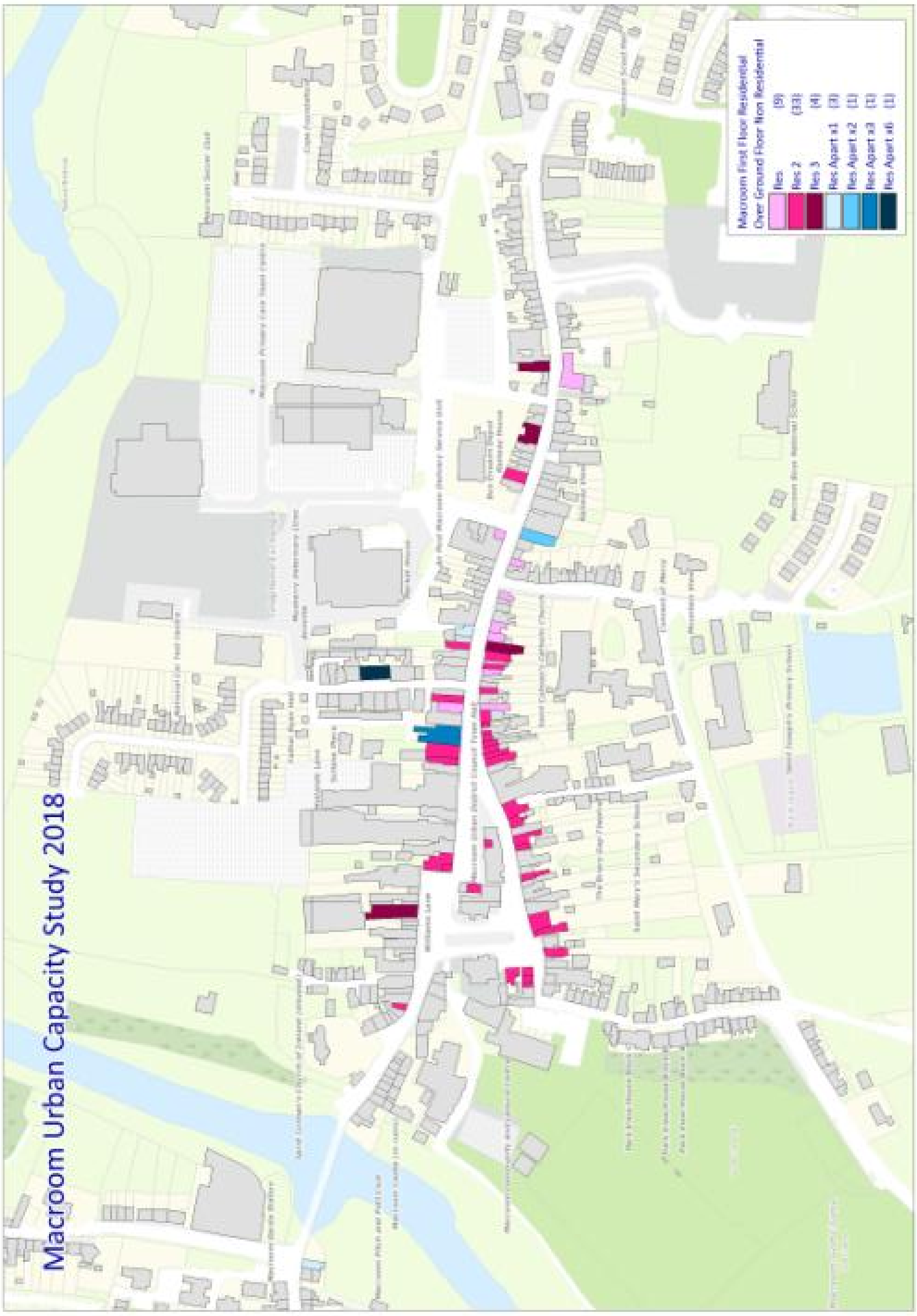


Figure 6.15: First Floor Use - Macroom

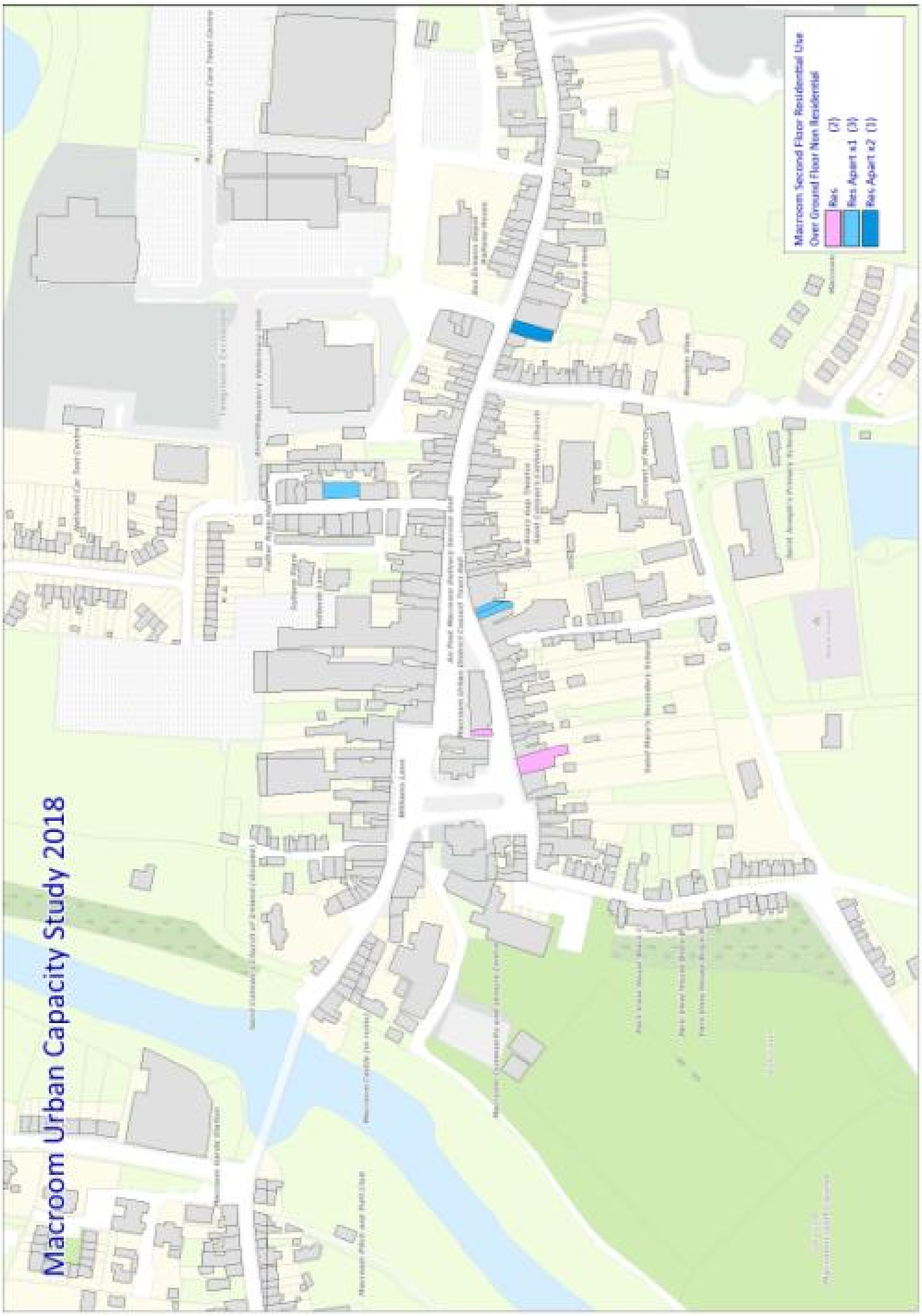


Figure 6.16: Second Floor Use - Macroom

6.6 Building Condition

6.6.1 Building condition overall in the town was largely considered to be ‘good’ with 306 out of 344 properties surveyed accounting for this building condition category (89%). A total number of 22 (6%) were considered poor and a further 11 were recorded as derelict. It is noteworthy that 2 of these derelict properties are used as storage facilities and the other 9 are vacant.

6.7 Existing Built Up Area

6.7.1 A total of 11 plots were surveyed from the existing built up area. Most of these were small plots in established residential areas. Plots surveyed ranged in size from 0.1ha to 4.8ha. Of the plots surveyed, 1 site was discounted because of access, topography or servicing issues. The remaining 10 plots have the cumulative capacity to deliver 209 units, mostly of detached, semi-detached or terraced form. The figures arrived at used a density multiplier and so may under or over estimate the potential housing capacity, although it should be noted that 6 of the sites are only suitable for limited housing with yields in the region of 1-7.

6.7.2 It would be useful for a multi-disciplinary team to select one of these proposed regeneration sites and provide a design-led evaluation on the potential of these priority sites to deliver a mixed use scheme with a commercial ground floor and residential overhead. This would confirm the real potential of these lands in terms of housing capacity and provide leadership and certainty for prospective developers of other similar lands within the town and in addition, a proportion of this capacity could offer an alternative to one-off housing demands in the unserviced rural area outside Macroom.

6.8 Special Policy Areas

6.8.1 There are no Special Policy Areas zoned in the Macroom Town Plan.

6.9 Regeneration Area/ Opportunity Sites

6.9.1 Five of the six sites identified as Opportunity Sites in the Draft Blarney – Macroom Municipal District Local Area Plan are identified in the Macroom Town Development Plan 2009 as Potential Infill / Development Sites. These areas are identified as character areas and include the Mart Area, the Market Square and the River Quarter. These are, due to their location proximate to the Main Street, high profile sites within the town centre built footprint. The remaining sites are either small infill sites or vacant buildings at prime locations capable of accommodating a number of small commercial units at ground floor with residential overhead.

6.10 Overall Urban Capacity

Table 6.2: Macroom Urban Capacity Table		
Source	**Number**	**Comment**
Vacant Housing	**15**	Refer to Municipal District office
Living Over The Shop (LOTS)	**87**	New Policy Required
Infill / Opportunity Sites	**25**	Laneway/mews guidance required
Special Policy Areas	**0**	Greater emphasis on housing incorporated into text of policy.
Built Up Area/Regeneration Area	**209**	Re-classify/ incorporate into existing land supply?
Total Units	**336**	

6.10.1 The cumulative urban capacity from the various sources in Macroom amounts to 308 units. These all have a part to play in addressing the various housing needs of the town. It is clear that the vacant housing units and vacant upper floors in the existing building stock can satisfy the demand for smaller 2-3 bed units for rental, start-up/ step-down homes. It is not clear how much the existing town centre building stock satisfies holiday home demands in the town but this is another factor that impacts on the numbers of housing units available on a permanent basis within the town.

6.10.2 Within the built up area there is clear capacity for a mixture of larger family homes and even self-build opportunities as an alternative to one-off housing demands in the unserviced rural hinterland.

6.11 Street Analysis

6.11.1 The term Urban Structure refers to the pattern or arrangement of development blocks, streets, buildings, open space and landscape which make up our diverse network of towns. Understanding each town's individual urban structure allows us to protect the key features that help define it's unique sense of place and provides the tools to guide future development response to local distinctiveness.

6.11.2 The architecture of Macroom is typical of an Irish market town. It also contains a number of fine specimen heritage buildings including the town hall, buildings associated with the castle, historic commercial buildings, etc. These add considerably to the attractiveness and interest within the town. The height and sophistication of buildings around Castle Street is enhanced. Material such as stone and brick are more evident in many buildings in this area.

6.11.3 Although the original streetscape and layout of the town is still very much intact and the character has in general been retained there are in recent years some examples of shop front additions and renovations of buildings which have not been so sympathetic to the vernacular of the town. In particular addition of dormer windows into the streetscape is something not in harmony with the character of the area. In some instances a proliferation of signage is an issue.

6.11.4 A significant problem for the town is the atmospheric pollution caused by HGV's (noise and emissions) and as well as the feeling of safety. This major issue for the town will be improved significantly upon the completion of the proposed Macroom By-pass in 2023. Main Street remains the commercial heart of the town with access to the interior of the block achieved via laneways and pends within the streetscape.

6.11.5 The key amenities that exist in Macroom are the Market Square, Castle Demesne, Town Park, River Sullane, Bealick Mill and Mount Massey House. Currently the majority of these amenities provide facilities that are essential to the town's recreational and cultural functioning.

6.11.6 Macroom possesses a rich and varied architectural heritage. Due to the fact that it was planned in a coherent manner throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, it remains today a town of strong historical character, retaining many of its original buildings and functions.

6.11.7 The survey work identified good activity throughout the day within the primary and secondary streets of the town centre, despite cold spring weather conditions there are issues with the width of the pavements within the core which are often too narrow for a wheelchair user or buggy and forces vulnerable users onto the roadway. A shared surface would be welcome within the core.

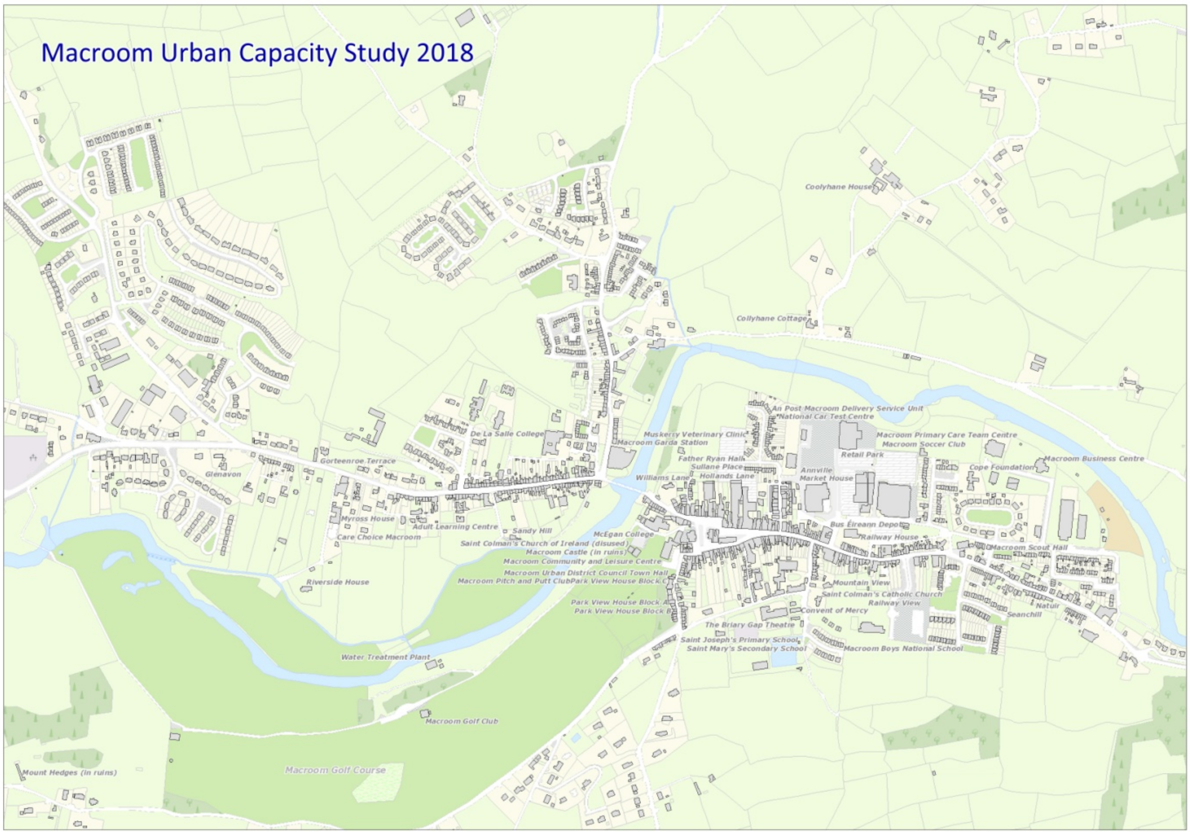


Figure 1.17: Macroom Urban Grain

6.12 Key Considerations:

6.12.1 Macroom's strategic location between cork City and Killarney makes it an important transport corridor and service centre within Mid-West Cork. The long-term affects of traffic congestion with its associated noise and vibration is having a direct negative impact on the town centre environment. The town has the highest vacancy rate in the County Towns surveyed and a high rate of derelict properties.

6.12.2 The delivery of the planned Motorway is a significant opportunity to tackle the poor town centre environment and reverse the negative vacancy trends in the town.

6.13 Town Specific Priorities:

6.13.1 **Infrastructure Priorities:** Preparation of a Traffic and Public Realm Enhancement Plan to provide a coherent movement and town centre improvement strategy once the By-Pass is in place;

6.13.2 **Retail Priorities:** Contraction of the western extents of the town centre of the Macroom Town Plan 2009 recommended given level of vacancy and predominantly residential character of the street – this will focus town centre uses within the compact core of the town;

6.13.3 **Residential Priorities:** Significant environmental improvements that will result from the completion of the Macroom By-pass will make the re-use of vacant residential units in the town centre more attractive;

6.13.4 The delivery of additional residential uses as part of future mixed use schemes on brownfield land should be a priority as part of achieving compact growth in our urban centres;

6.13.5 Support the retention of existing upper floor residential uses and identify means to incentise further up-take of vacant upper floors;

6.13.6 Second access point lowest in County – need to avoid further losses and ensure new development includes a second access point;

6.13.7 **Vacancy Priorities:** Vacancy levels in the town are the highest in the County (28%) with 63 vacant commercial units recorded;

6.13.8 There is also a significant number of potential "Regeneration Sites" within the town and adjoining the Main Street which require an integrated multidisciplinary approach to maximise benefit to the town both commercially, socially and environmentally in delivering a new urban quarter.

6.13.9 11 Derelict Properties – consider use of Compulsory Purchase Orders and Vacant Site levy to address the issue.

6.14 County Development Plan Policy Response required on the following:

Protecting the town's urban structure (perimeter blocks – see similar policy at link below): https://www.wexfordcoco.iesites/default/files/content/Planning/DraftGoreyLAP17-23/UrbanDesignGuidelinesandNeighbourhoodFramework.pdf

Retaining the 2nd own door access in each building & requiring a 2nd access in new development in the town centre - see similar policy at link below; http://www.www.corkcity.ie/corkcitydevelopmentplan2004/Chapter11_DevelopmentControlStandards.pdf

Development guidance required for laneways (see similar policy at link below – RES11 Mews Lane Housing); http://www.dlrcoco.iesites/default/files/atoms/files/chapter5_0.pdf

Greening town centres **–** ways of introducing appropriate planting in an urban environment – links to mental health and the urban environment research and climate change.

2020

Mallow

URBAN CAPACITY STUDY (2019)

Section 2.7 **Mallow**

7 Mallow

7.1 Part A Introduction

Mallow in context

7.1.1 Mallow is a historic 13th century walled town situated on the River Blackwater. The town developed as a significant Spa tourism destination in the 18th century benefitting from visiting rail based tourists from Cork City and beyond. The town has retained its Medieval streetscape and unique 1st floor box dormers which make a positive contribution to the street.

7.1.2 The town has been identified as a significant sub-regional hub under the National Spatial Strategy with a growth of 20,000 people envisaged by 2022. Significant infrastructure challenges have constrained the growth of the town in recent years, however, namely delays in the planned motorway linking the town to Limerick and Cork Cities and wastewater issues associated with water quality impacts affecting the Natura 2000 site within the River Blackwater.

7.1.3 The town's population grew from 11,605 in 2011 to 12,459 in 2016. The town has a population target of 20,000 for 2022 which will generate an increase of 4,154 households in the town, equating to 4,552 new units. Under the 2017 Local Area Plan there is a net residential land supply of 339.93ha with the capacity to provide approximately 6,961 units to facilitate the target growth.

7.1.4 There are 116 Protected Structures within the town and 3 Architectural Conservation Areas focussed in the historic town, at Mallow Castle and Bearforest.

7.1.5 The number of units and category of use per floor in this survey was ascertained by visual assessment only. Upper floor residential use confirmation was cross-referenced with the number of doorbells/ letterboxes visible on the building's 2nd "private" access.

7.1.6 The classification of uses followed the GOAD Sub- Class Classification system and also recorded the primary activity within each land-use as per the 2013 Town Centre Review Paper (See Appendix A).

7.2 Town Profile – Survey Results & Analysis

Town Centre

7.2.1 A total of 499 buildings and spaces were surveyed within the area zoned town centre as per the Draft Kanturk Mallow Local Area Plan 2016. These are illustrated in the map in Figures 1.1. The Retail Core is focused between Thomas Davis Street, Bank Place, William O' Brien Street and Bridge Street. Mallow is the largest County Town outside Metropolitan Cork and accordingly has a broad range of uses within the town centre to serve its large rural hinterland. Figures 1.3 illustrates the spatial breakdown of the ground floor land use mix within the town centre. The associated pie chart (Figure 1.2) demonstrates the percentage of these uses. The survey utilises the GOAD Sub- classification of uses which are included in the key of the map & pie-chart. The primary activity within the land-use sub-class is also recorded and details of these are discussed further in the document.

7.2.2 The predominant land use is residential (house) which represents almost a third (28%) of the building stock and are located in small clusters at West End and on the Secondary streets north of the retail core. Vacancy is the second predominant category at 17% followed by Retail Comparison (16%) which is largely focussed on the Primary Streets of the Retail Core.

7.2.3 The town has a strong Financial and Business Services sector (10%) reflecting its important role as a business hub for the wider north cork region. Leisure Services represent 8% of the ground floor uses which includes Bars, Restaurants and Hotels. Public Services, Health and Medical Services and Retail Convenience all have equal representation (3%) of the town centre stock. The retail convenience offer includes both large supermarkets (Dunnes Stores, Tesco, Lidl and Centra) and small independent newsagents and butchers.

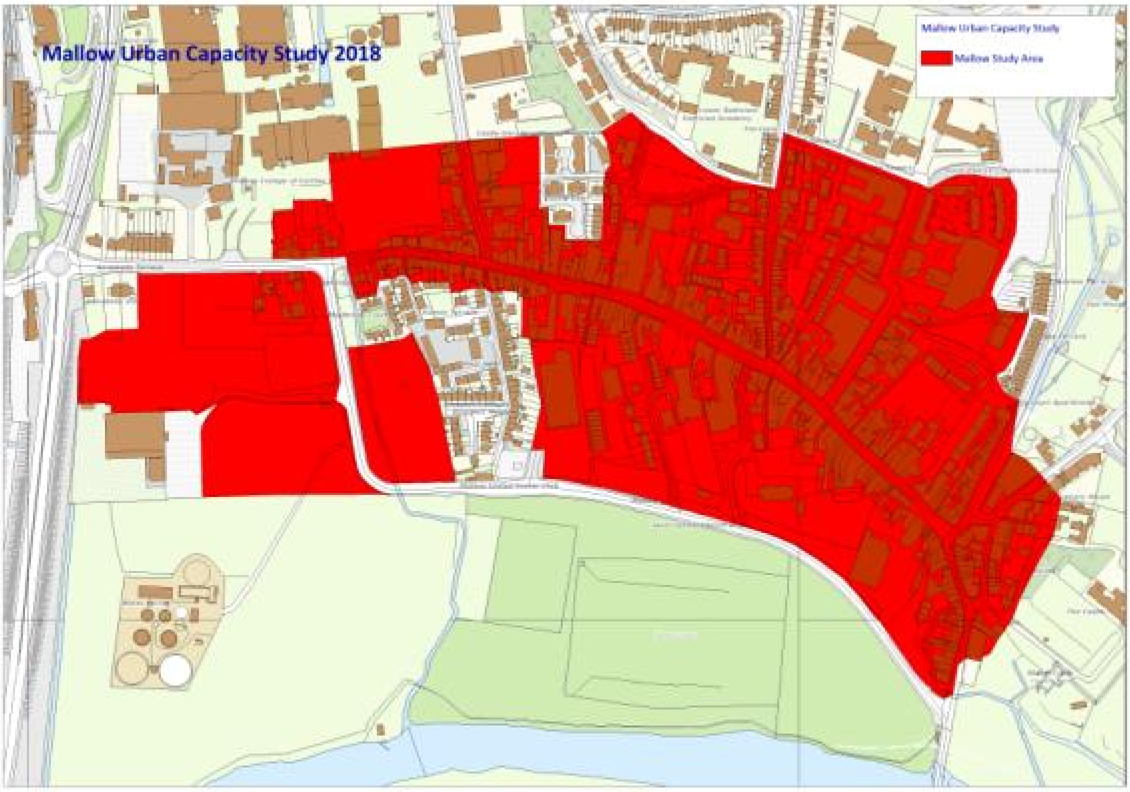


Figure 7.1: Extent of town centre

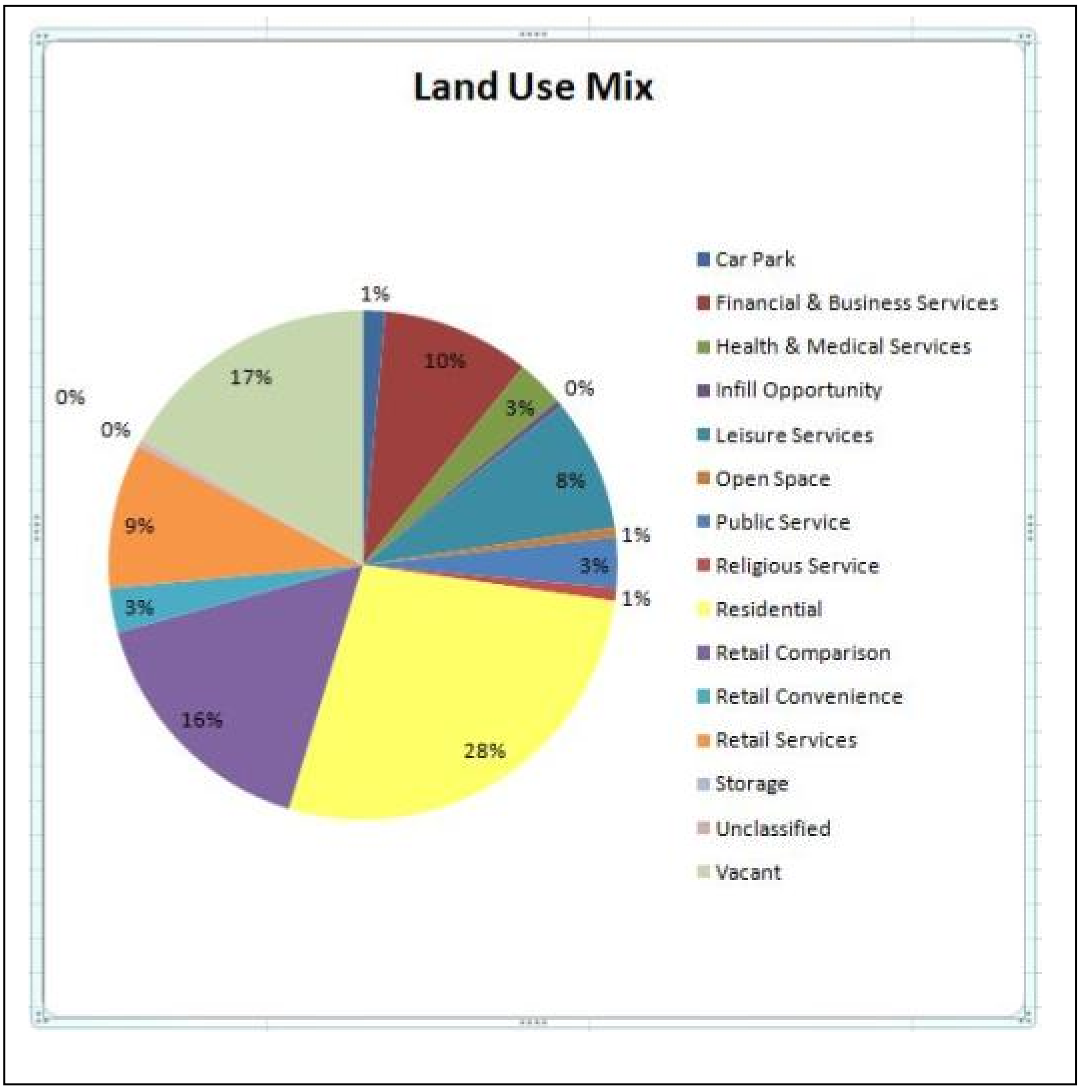


Figure 7.2: Pie Chart of ground floor land-use mix

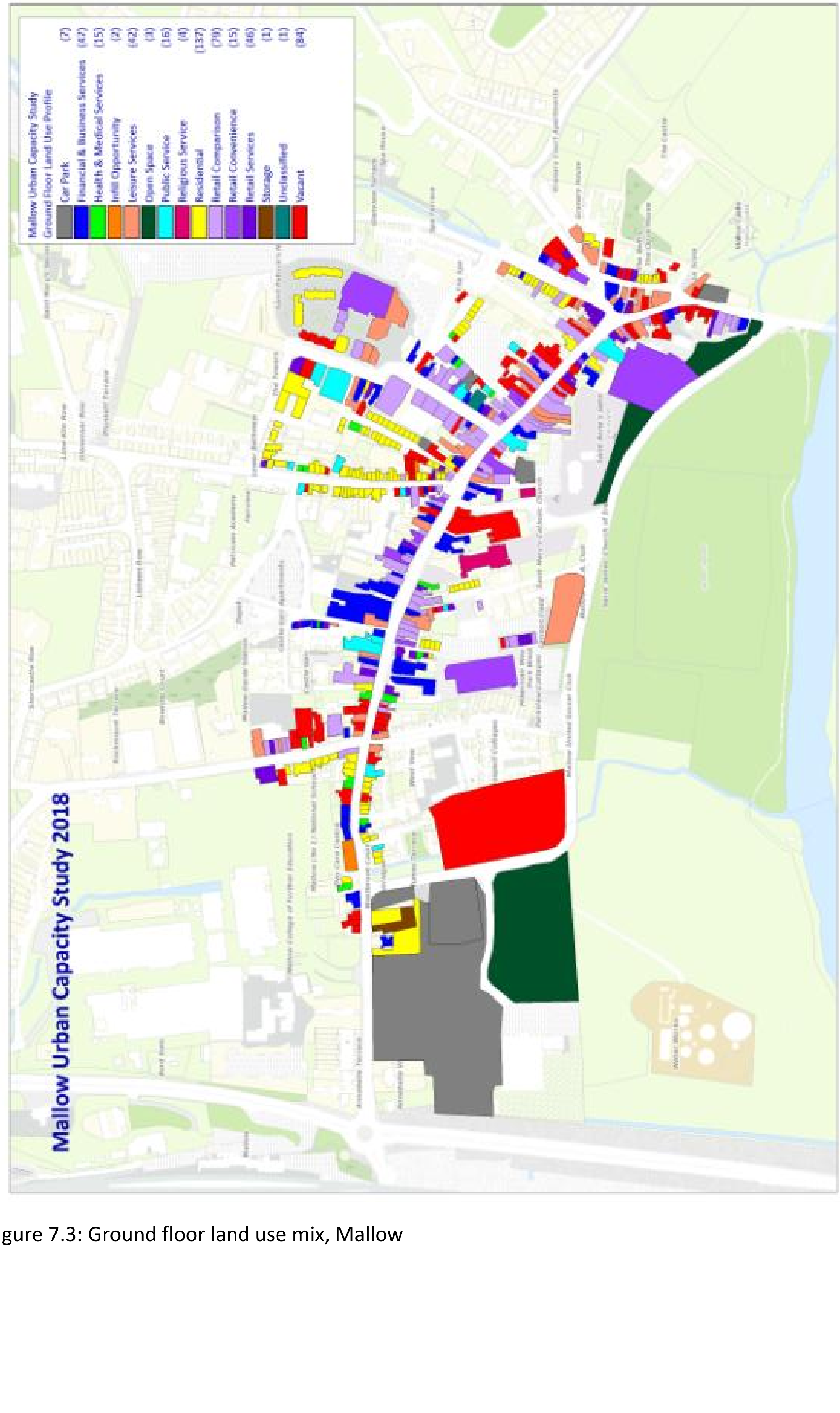


Figure 7.3: Ground floor land use mix, Mallow

Retail Core Trends

7.2.4 Table 1.1 illustrates changes in the commercial land use mix in the Retail Core of the town between 2013 and 2017. These figures reflect the diversity of uses within properties on the Primary (Thomas Davis Street, Main Street and Bank Place) and Secondary Streets (William O' Brien Street and Bridge Street) of the Retail Core only (figure 1.4).

7.2.5 Similar to other towns surveyed, there has been a significant contraction in the Retail Comparison Sector, reflecting the growing competition from online shopping. The Leisure Services sector (which includes Bars, Restaurants and cafes) has also shown a decline. There are 2 less retail convenience stores than in 2013.

7.2.6 There have been positive trends, however, evident across the Retail Services (Hairdressers, beauticians, dry cleaners, repair & alterations services) and Financial and Business Services Sectors. While these figures do not deal with the amount of floorspace available it does show clear local trends in the commercial profile of the town.

Table 7.1: Comparative Diversity of Uses (Retail Core), Mallow

Use	2013	2017	Change
Retail Comparison	94	72	-23
Retail Convenience	17	15	-2
Retail Service	35	40	+5
Leisure Services	43	37	-6
Financial & Business Services	35	40	+5
Health & Medical Services	6	6	-
Public Service	11	12	+1
Religious Service	2	3	+1

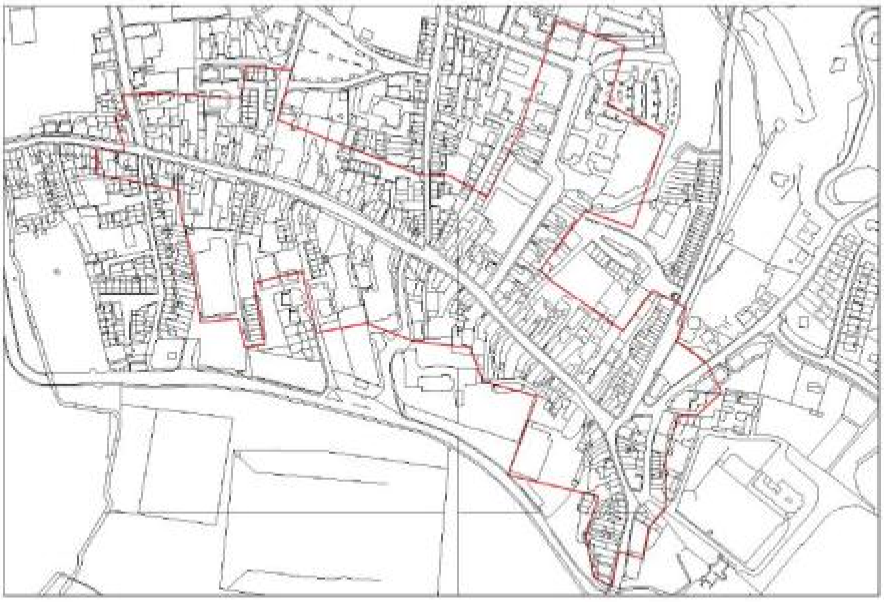


Figure 7.4: Extent of Retail Core, Mallow

7.3 Primary Activity Break-down

Retail Convenience

7.3.1 The retail convenience distribution within the town is illustrated in Figure 1.5 below. Supermarkets were the principle primary use within this sub class (4 units). Theee include Dunnes Stores, Tesco, Lidll and Centra and are all located in a central position with good car parking access and pedestrian linkages to the Main Street. There were 3 properties recorded as “Confectionart, Tobacconist, Newsagent” and ewre all independent stores. There were 2 “bakers and confectioners” stores and 2 “convenience stores” within the town reflecting the traditional, local, independent stores are still represented, although in a small degree. There are only 1 of all other primary activities, including a butchers. The domiance of the large supetmarkets appears to have impacted on the prevalence of smaller independent butchers and specialist food stores within the town.

7.3.2 A Farmers Market is present in the Co-op on a weekly basis but is peripheral to the town centre. There are multiple opportunities to identify suitable buildings (Former Hotel) and/or outdoor locations in the town core (The Plaza) to facilitate such a use which would add to the town’s attractiveness as a retail destination.

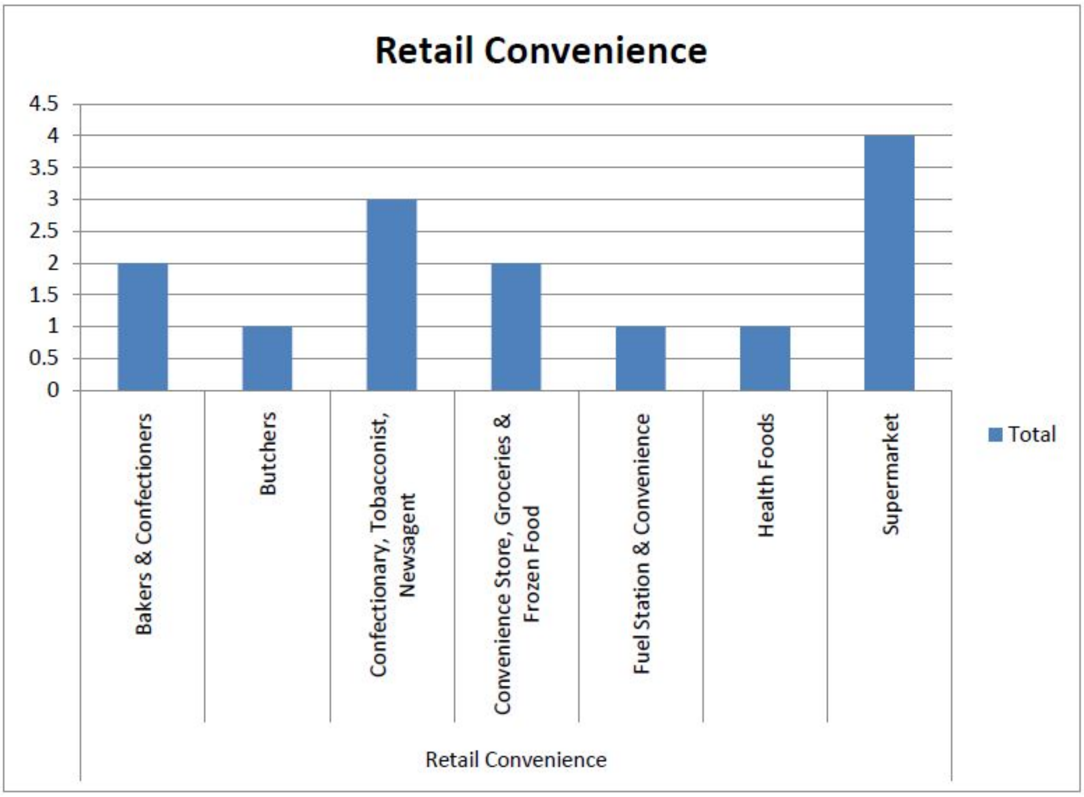


Figure 7.5: Bar Chart showing Retail Convenience

Retail Comparison

7.3.3 Figure 1.6 illustrates the Retail Comparison breakdown in Mallow. The town has a broad range of retail comparison offer which are represented across 25 categories. The predominant category is Ladies Wear and Accessories (15 units), followed by Chemist and Drugstore (4 units each). There were 5 each of Footwear stores, Furniture stores, Hardware and household goods, Sports, Camping and Leisure Goods, Telephones and Accessories and Charity shops. There are only 3 shops selling Ladies Wear, 2 mixed clothing and none dedicated to Menswear or Childrens wear. The town has no Department and Variety Stores.

7.3.4 The provision of further high value uses, niche clothing and additional craft/ artisan uses which can showcase the local artistic and specialised food producers of the wider Blackwater Valley should be encouraged. There is an opportunity to expand these sectors linked to the growing number of tourists accessing the Waterford Greenway and Ancient East Touring Route.

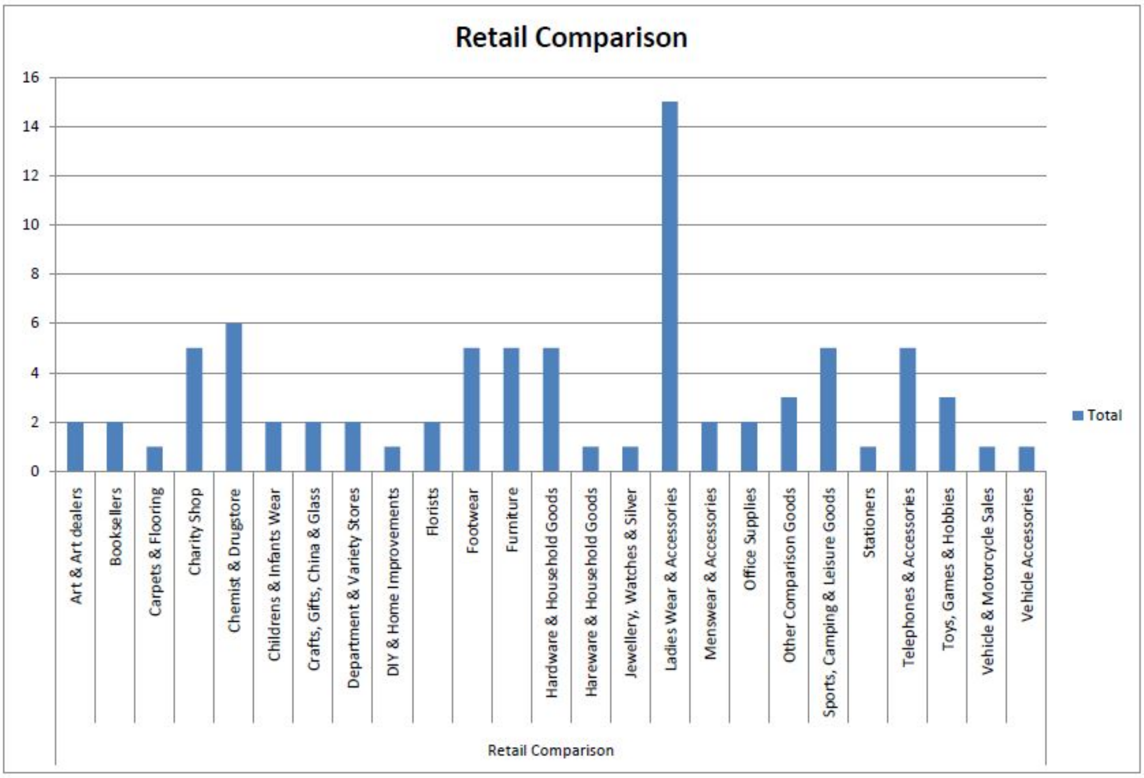


Figure 7.6: Bar Chart showing Retail Comparison distribution

Leisure Services

7.3.5 The Leisure Services sector reflects the important service role of the town to the wider rural area. Mallow Castle is a growing festival and cultural venue in the town may need to consider additional local tourism activities to boost the day-trip and short-stay sector of the market and take advantage of its location on the Ancient East Touring route and proximity to the Waterford Greenway.

7.3.6 The predominant use is Bars, Wine Bars & Public Houses (12 units) followed by Fast Food & Takeaways (9 units). A total of 7 restaurants and 6 cafes were recorded in the town centres. Sports and Leisure Facilities were well represented with 4 units recorded. The town is only served by 2 no. hotels, The Hi B and a vacant hotel on Thomas Davis Street. There is 1 multi-screen Cinema and 1 no betting office (Casino & betting office).

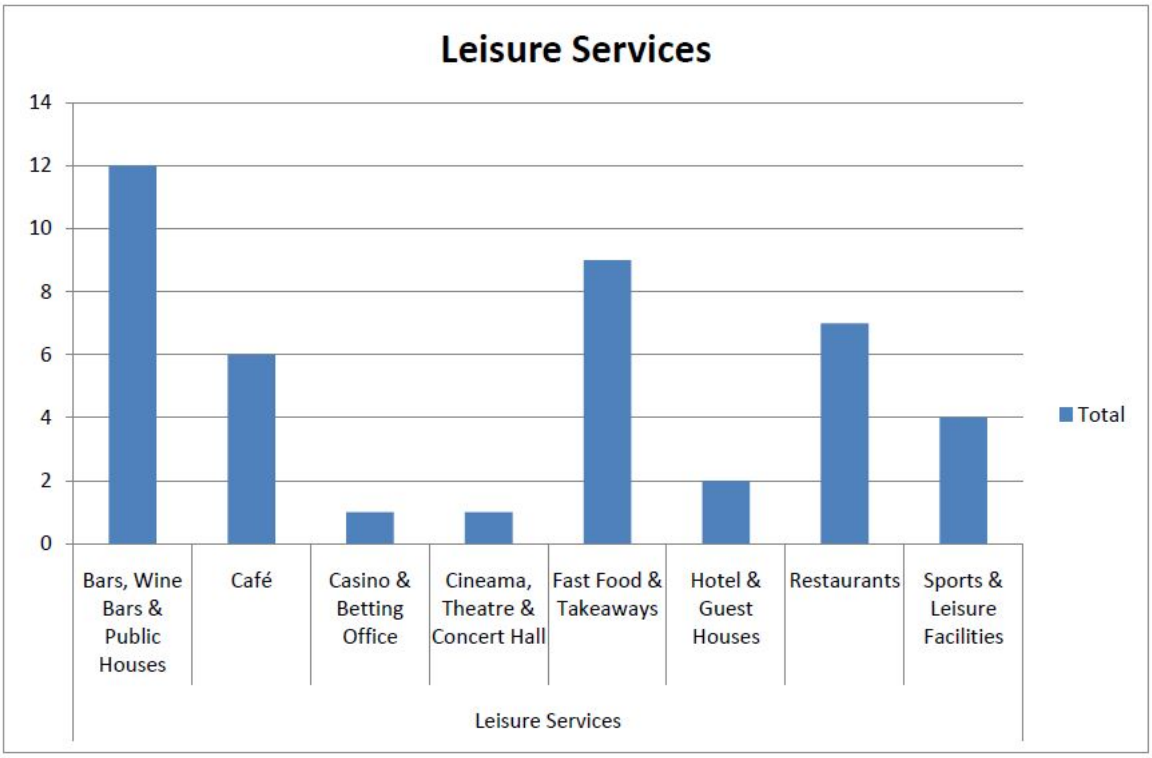


Figure 7.7: Bar Chart showing Leisure Services distribution

Financial and Business Services Sector

7.3.7 The Bar Chart (Fig 1.8) illustrates the primary activity break-down of the Financial and Business Services Sector within the town. Property Services is the pre-dominant activity (11 recorded) which includes Auctioneers, architectural services. Legal Services were strongly represented (9 units) reflecting the presence of the court service within the town. There was strong Financial Services (8 no. units) and 8 no. Business Goods and Services within the town. A total of 4 Retail Banks were recorded in Mallow. Some 5 units were classified as "Other Business Services" and 2 no. provided a printing and copying service.

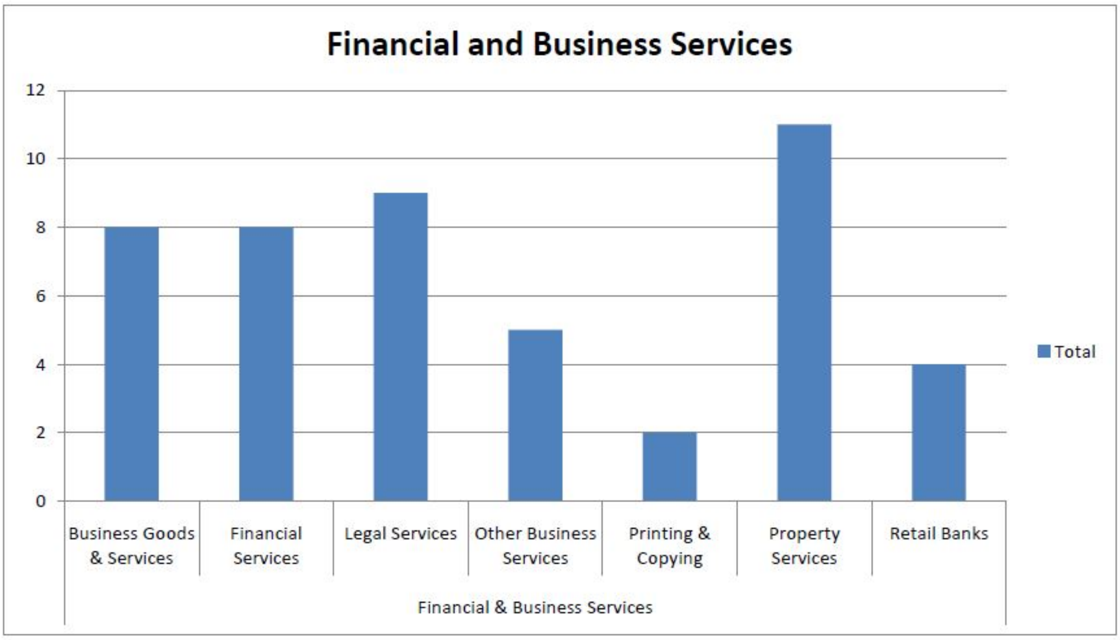


Figure 7.8: Bar Chart showing Financial & Business Services

7.4 Vacancy

7.4.1 Vacancy rates have been defined as the number of units not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total amount of units (vacant and occupied) in the town centre. In Mallow vacancy stands at 17% within the town (84 units of 499 units). This falls outside the normal range limits within a functional market (5-7%).

7.4.2 Of the 359 commercial units surveyed, 74 were vacant representing 21% of the commercial town centre building stock. Commercial vacancy is evident throughout the town core with no obvious blackspots or trends evident.

7.4.3 Of the 137 residential units, 10 units were vacant or 7% of the town centre residential building stock. There is a cluster of vacant residential units at the southern end of the town and principle southern access/ exit route to the town.

Figure 7.9a: Vacant Commercial Unit, Youghal

Figure 7.9b: Vacant building

7.4.4 The survey identified 4 infill brownfield Opportunity Sites within the town centre streets of Thomas Davis Street, Spa Square/ Bridewell Lane, Shoulder's Lane and Carmichael Lane. These are a mix of yards, infill sites and a large disused building. These could generate a total of 20+ residential units including a proportion suitable for sheltered/ starter housing. Some of these sites would benefit from a multi-disciplinary Council team providing a design-led response to quantify the number of residential units achievable on one of these complex urban sites.

7.4.5 From the 499 buildings surveyed, 359 were classified as having a commercial ground floor and 140 were classified as residential houses within the town. Recent exemptions now allow a change from commercial to residential use, subject to limitations.

7.5 Residential Uses

7.5.1 Residential use (house) represented the largest land use category within the study area (28%) and is interspersed in the area zoned town centre. Within the upper floors of the building stock a total of 268 residential units were noted across the upper floors. These were largely on the eastern end of the Retail Core near Bridge Street and in purpose built apartments at Market Square. There was a very limited number (4 units of the upper floor residential count) of the traditional family units evident within the upper floors of the building stock (i.e. single residential unit above 2 or more levels).

7.5.2 A total of 184 units had a separate access to the upper floors which is a key ingredient in securing upper floor usage. The figure represents 37% of the town centre building stock or 51% of the commercial stock. The majority of these 2nd access points were on the street but a small number were via a separate access within a shared foyer.

7.5.3 A total of 68 vacant 1st floors and 54 vacant 2nd and 8 3rd floors were recorded. The survey work confirmed that upper floor use was predominantly one residential unit (apartment) per floor. On this basis a total of 130 additional residential units could be theoretically accommodated within the vacant upper floors, subject to Building and Fire regulation compliance.

Figure 7.10 Examples of Separate Access to Upper Floors

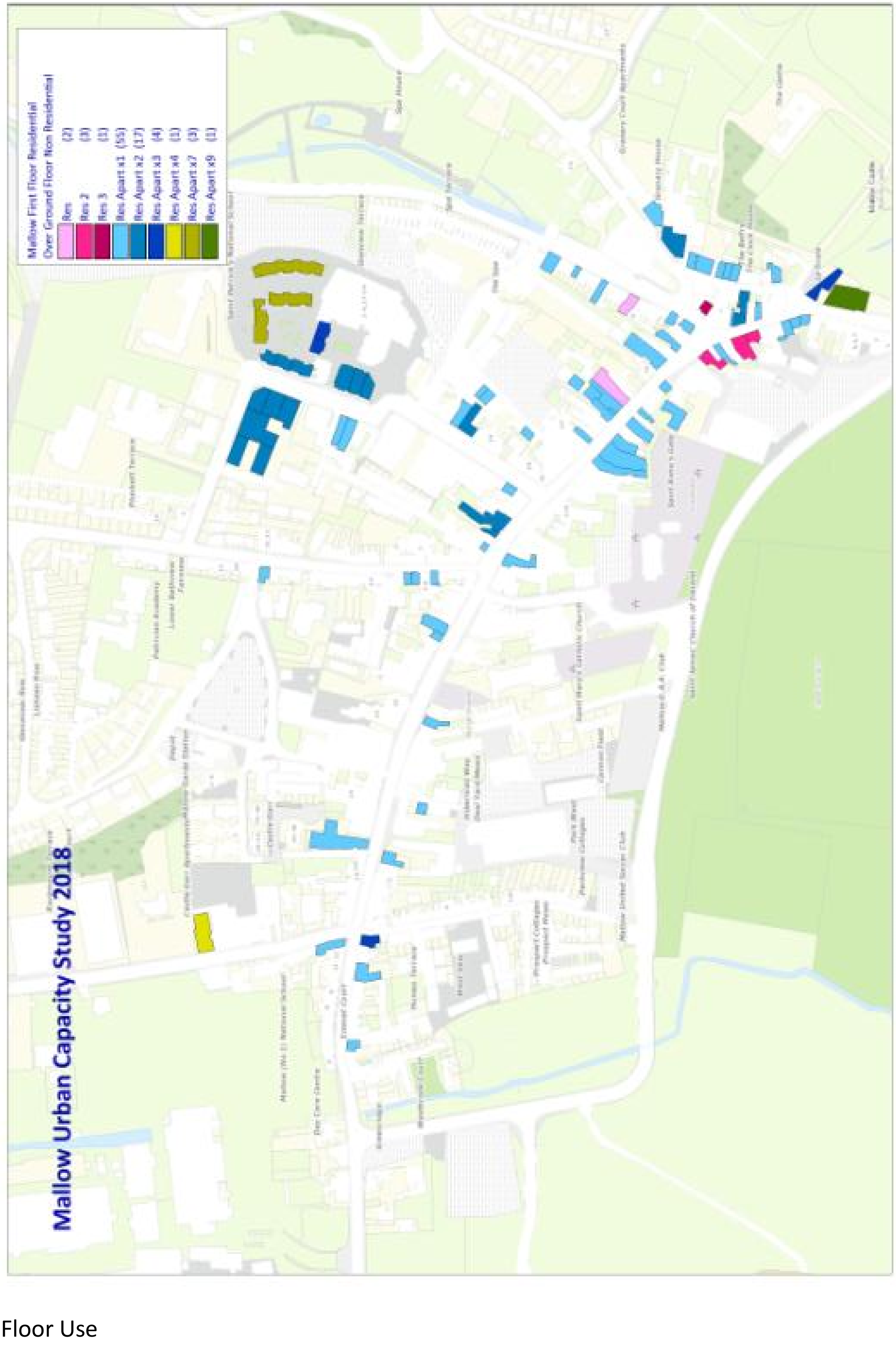


Figure 7.11: Upper Floor Use

7.6 Building Condition

7.6.1 Building condition was largely good 428 out of 494 properties (87%). A total number of 59 (12%) were considered poor and a further 6 were recorded as derelict.

7.7 Existing Built Up Area

7.7.1 Within the “existing built up area” a total of 24 plots were surveyed which were identified within the “Existing Built Up Area” of the town. Sites ranged in size from small infill plots to large Greenfield plots part of unfinished estates (Castlelands). Of the 24 plots analysed, 10 sites were discounted because of flood risk issues, access or impacts on a designated Architectural Conservation Area (Bearforest).

7.7.2 The remaining 14 plots have the cumulative capacity to deliver 451 units, mostly of terraced house types or as apartments as part of potential mixed-use redevelopment schemes. The figures arrived at used a density multiplier and so may under or over-estimate the potential housing capacity.

7.8 Special Policy Areas

7.8.1 While there were no special policy areas identified in the Town Plan a total of six Regeneration / Opportunity Sites were identified in the Draft Mallow-Kanturk Municipal District Local Area Plan 2016 for the town of Mallow. These are summarised as follows:

Table 7.2 Regeneration/ Opportunity Sites

Regeneration Area	Description	Potential Number of Units
Carmicheal Lane Car Park (between Davis Street and Muddy Hill)	Located north of Thomas Davis Street these lands offer the opportunity to consolidate the prime retail area by redeveloping backland Areas and the existing surface car park to provide new retail Floor space with office / **Residential uses** and car parking above ground floor level. Existing laneways provide ready access points to Thomas Davis Street. An urban design Framework to guide development of the area, which is within an Architectural Conservation Area, is considered appropriate.	25 units
Central Hotel Site	Key site within the town centre With frontage to Thomas Davis Street and St James Avenue. Any redevelopment proposal must have regard to the Protected structure status of the property and its context within the Architectural Conservation Area and contribution to the overall streetscape.	10 Units

Table 7.2 Regeneration/ Opportunity Sites		
Regeneration Area	**Description**	**Potential Number of Units**
West of Shortcastle Street/ North of West End.	Gateway regeneration site. Development proposals will be expected to maintain a strong building line/urban edge and a high design quality which will contribute to the definition of the street. The site is zoned as town centre given its location adjoining the retail core with frontage onto West End and is suitable for a mix of town centre uses, including modern offices suitable sympathetic rejuvenation of the existing building stock adjoining the site will also be welcomed, particularly of those buildings which no longer have an active use. Proposals will be required to have a strong emphasis on design which respects and complements the character and heritage of this area. Any proposals should have regard to its context within the Architectural Conservation Area.	6 units
Corner site southside of Bridge Street (junction Of Mill Street and Ballydaheen Road)	This is an important brownfield Corner site at a key entry point to the town from the south. The site is in a visually prominent and sensitive location close to the Blackwater River and Mallow Castle and requires regeneration as it presently constitutes an eyesore. Appropriate design treatment will be essential with a strong Street frontage/urban edge. A portion of the site is affected by flood risk and less vulnerable uses such as retail or commercial are likely to be the most appropriate on This part of the site. **Residential uses** may also be considered on part of the site subject to flood risk assessment.	12 units
South of West End	This is a landmark site to the west of the town centre bounded by the N20, West End and Park Road. The northern portion of the Site is located within the designated Architectural Conservation Area and adjoins a Number of protected structures. These lands provide A significant development opportunity for the town, especially in terms of the provision of modern office space, retail warehousing as well as **residential uses on the upper levels.** An element of convenience retailing may also be appropriate.	25 units
Site east of Shortcastle Street (Chadwicks)	Opportunity to redevelop existing site on Shortcastle Street. Uses appropriate to the site,	12 units

Table 7.2 Regeneration/ Opportunity Sites		
Regeneration Area	**Description**	**Potential Number of Units**
	which is located within walking distance of the town centre could include offices or hotel use.	

7.9 Overall Urban Capacity

Table 7.3: Mallow Urban Capacity Table		
Source	**Number**	**Comment**
Vacant Housing	10	
Living Over The Shop (LOTS)	130	New Policy Required
Infill Opportunity Sites	25	Laneway/mews guidance required
Special Policy Areas	90	
Built Up Area/ Regeneration Area	451	Re-classify/ incorporate into existing land supply?
Total	**706 units**	

7.9.1 The cumulative urban capacity from the various sources in Mallow amounts to 706 units. These all have a part to play in addressing the various housing needs of the town and wider Municipal District. It is clear that the infill opportunity sites and vacant upper floors in the existing building stock can satisfy the demand for smaller 2-3 bed units for rental, start-up/ step-down homes. The take-up of this capacity, however, will need to be met with a new vision and investment programme in the town to broaden its economic base and build on its strengths as a strategically located historic town with a unique mix of opportunity sites that can appeal to a wide range of commercial needs.

7.10 Street Analysis

7.10.1 The term Urban Structure refers to the pattern or arrangement of development blocks, streets, buildings, open space and landscape which make up our diverse network of towns. Understanding each town's individual urban structure allows us to protect the key features that help define its unique sense of place and provides the tools to guide future development response to local distinctiveness.

7.10.2 The most identifiable physical feature of the central area is the elongated and curved building form presenting of a visually sticking and compact streetscape extending along the main through fare of the town from the West End along David Street to the Clock Tower. This area comprises predominantly three story buildings of varying architectural style including Georgian, Tudor, 19th Century and modern architecture. Secondary streets and alleyways radiate north and south from Davis Street and provide greater variety in scale, form, appearance and use. These physical, natural and visual features can individually or collectively contribute to the unique character setting and visitor experience of Mallow as can be seen on the map below. It is clear that the more dense urban form evident in the town itself and the lanes with various forms of residential development to the north contrast sharply with the less dense housing developments to the east of the town.

Figure 7.12: Urban Grain

7.10.3 Figure 7.12 is a map showing the Perimeter Block and Urban Grain of Mallow and the more recent housing developments to the east of the town.

7.10.4 The redevelopment of the identified Regeneration Areas should follow the perimeter block structure and ensure buildings follow the established rhythm and solid to void relationship evident in the streetscape.

7.10.5 In some cases particularly along the main street, access to the interior of the block is achieved via covered laneways or pends1 within the street. These important established features, aside from providing a context to a particular streetscape also perform an essential function in accessing of street /courtyard development.

Figure 7.13 Examples of a Pends on Thomas Davis Street North and South

7.10.6 Another interesting feature of Mallow’s urban grain is the presence of basements particularly, on the western approach to the town along Thomas Davis Street, many of which are in active use, either, financial and business services, health and medical services, leisure services, and public services. Car parking is also most evident along William O’Brien Street / New Road.

[1] A ‘pend’ is a Scottish term used to describe a **passageway allowing vehicular access from street to a rear courtyard.**

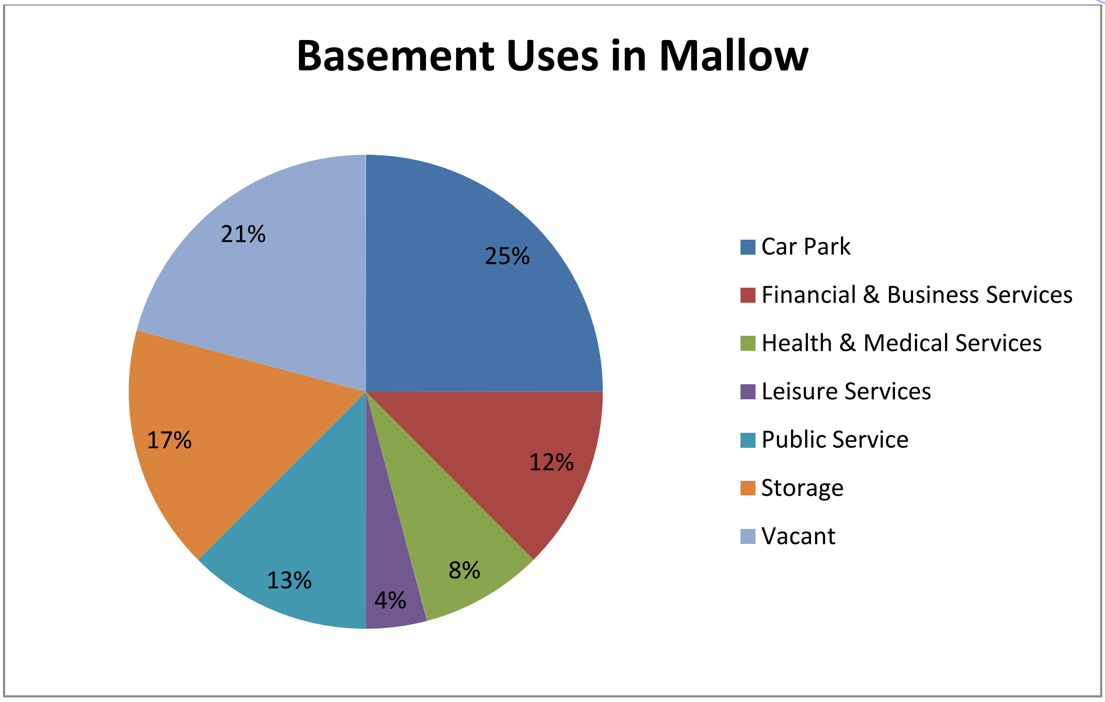


Figure 7.14 Breakdown of uses within basements

7.11 Key Considerations

7.11.1 Mallow's town centre continues to struggle with high vacancy rates. There are notable blackspots on the eastern and western approaches into the town at Shortcastle Street and Bridge Street where high volumes of HGV traffic were notable.

7.11.2 The survey work also recorded a high proportion of buildings in poor condition (59 ranked as poor & 6 derelict). This detracts from the retail experience within the town. Measures to target poor maintenance and inappropriate use of low quality shopfronts and signage should be a priority within this historic town.

7.11.3 While the number of units increased in most sectors within the Retail Core since 2012, there were marked losses in Retail Comparison (94 to 80 units) and Retail Convenience sectors.

7.11.4 There is opportunities to build on the growth in the Tourism sector. The Blackwater Valley is an international fishing destination and opportunities should be explored to use Mallow as a base for day trippers and fishing services.

7.11.5 There is significant capacity within the existing building stock and urban fabric of the town to deliver additional residential uses which can reinforce the delivery of a compact town centre.

7.12 Town Specific Priorities

7.12.1 **Town Centre Retail Priorities**: Opportunity sites identified as priority areas for future retailing. Additional guidance on the mix of uses, design parameters to be outlined;

7.12.2 Significant reduction in number of Retail Comparison units since 2012 reflecting wider trends in the sector. The provision of further high value uses and additional craft/ artisan uses which can showcase the strong local artistic and specialised food producers of the area should be encouraged to reverse these trends;

7.12.3 Relocation of the Farmers Market from the Co-OP to a more central town centre site would add to the attractiveness of the town as a retail destination.

7.12.4 **Vacancy Priorities** – 17.5% vacancy rate including 74 vacant commercial units;

7.12.5 A cluster of vacancy is evident on Bridge Street and West End and some high profile sites in the Retail Core;

7.12.6 10 Residential units were recorded as vacant - understanding the cause of the issue is important to solving the problem long term;

7.12.7 **Residential Priorities**: Strong usage of the upper floors for residential purposes (268 units) to be protected;

7.12.8 Some of the peripheral sites suitable as alternatives to one-off housing in unserviced rural area;

7.12.9 Further potential of vacant upper floors to fulfill residential accommodation needs within the compact core;

7.12.10 Infill sites along the laneways appropriate for sheltered/ start-up housing units.

7.12.11 A total of 6 Derelict properties recorded.

7.12.12 **Infrastructure & Investment Priorities**: Protection of the towns historic laneways a priority. The delivery of the motorway will allow additional public realm enhancement measures to be delivered and create a more pedestrian priority core.

7.13 County Development Plan Policy Response required on the following:

Protecting the town's urban structure (perimeter blocks – see similar policy at link below):
https://www.wexfordcoco.iesites/default/files/content/Planning/DraftGoreyLAP17-23/UrbanDesignGuidelinesandNeighbourhoodFramework.pdf

Retaining the 2nd own door access in each building & requiring a 2nd access in new development in the town centre - see similar policy at link below;
http://www.www.corkcity.ie/corkcitydevelopmentplan2004/Chapter11_DevelopmentControlStandards.pdf

Development guidance required for laneways (see similar policy at link below – RES11 Mews Lane Housing);
http://www.dlrcoco.iesites/default/files/atoms/files/chapter5_0.pdf

Midleton

URBAN CAPACITY STUDY (2019)

Midleton

Section 2.8 **Midleton**

8 Midleton

8.1 Part A Introduction

8.1.1 Midleton in context

8.1.2 Midleton is a planned market town of important townscape value, located strategically between Cork City and Youghal, hence its name a derivative of “Middle town”. The traditional town centre largely comprises of a long, wide “Main Street” laid out on a north/south axis and intersected by a series of laneways. Buildings are generally 2-3 storeys high, of various widths and largely demonstrate a consistent frontage.

8.1.3 There are a number of adjacent areas zoned as Town Centre under the Draft Plan which were included in this study area. This includes “The Market Green” (MD-T-03 and MD-T-06) which functions as a hub of larger stand –alone retail uses within walking distance of the town centre. Supervalue (MD-T-02) is a large Retail Convenience store and home of the famous weekly Farmers Market Retail Core. Riverside Way (MD-T-04) includes a discount retailer and mixed-use scheme west of the traditional town core.

8.1.4 The town’s population grew from 12,001 persons in 2011 to 12,496 in 2016. The town has a population target of 21,576 for 2022 which equates to a requirement of about 5,243 new units. Under the Midleton Town Plan and East Cork Local Area Plan 2017 there is a net residential land supply of 186 ha with the capacity to provide approximately 5,255 new units to facilitate the target growth.

8.1.5 There are 51 Protected Structures within the town and a number of streets in the town are designated as an Architectural Conservation Area.

8.1.6 Study Methodology

8.1.7 The study area focussed on the area zoned “Town Centre” as per the Draft East Cork Local Area Plan 2016 (See Figure 1.1). A land-use and photographic survey was undertaken of each building and space within the study area by a team from the Planning Policy Unit on the 21st March 2018. The number of units and category of use per floor in this survey was ascertained by visual assessment only. Upper floor residential use confirmation was cross-referenced with the number of doorbells/ letterboxes visible on the building’s 2nd “private” access.

8.1.8 The classification of uses followed the GOAD Sub- Class Classification system and also recorded the primary activity within each land-use as per the 2013 Town Centre Review Paper (See Appendix A).

8.2 Town Profile – Survey Results & Analysis

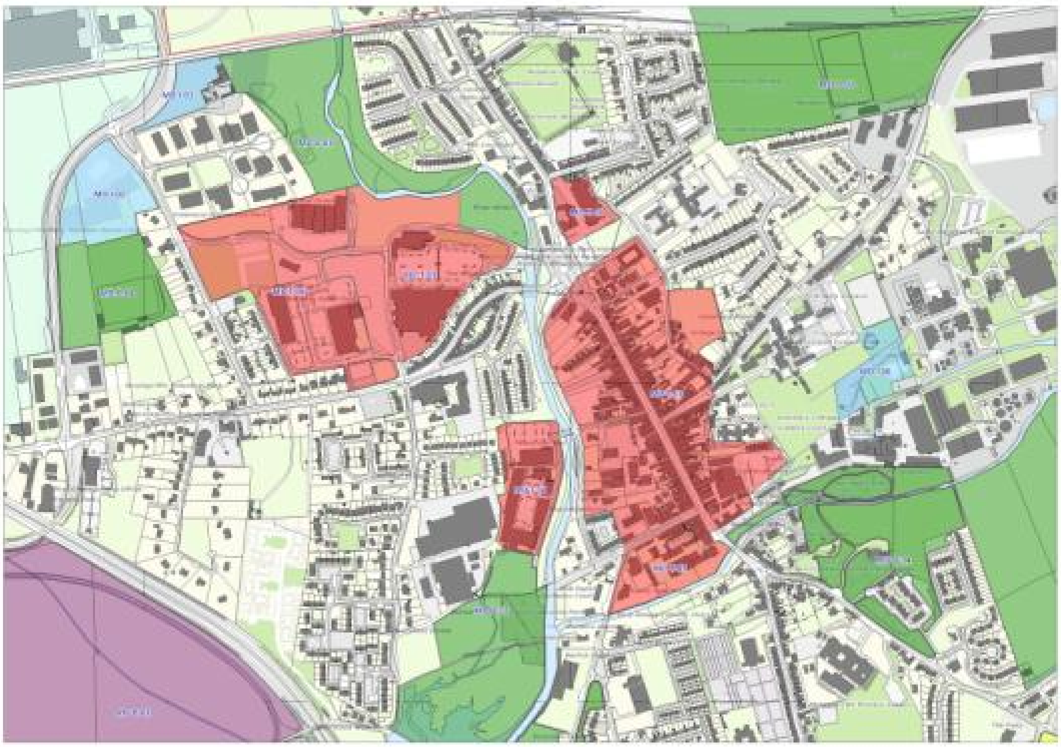
8.2.1 Town Centre

8.2.2 A total of 383 buildings were surveyed within the area zoned town centre as per the (Draft) East Cork Municipal District Local Area Plan 2016. The Retail Core is focused around Main Street, and a series of Secondary Streets and laneways including Broderick Street, Connolly Street, Distillery Walk and Church Lane. Midleton has a strong mix of commercial uses within the town centre, reflecting its importance as a Metropolitan Town within the Cork Gateway. Figure 1.2 illustrates the spatial breakdown of the ground floor land-use mix within the town centre. The associated pie chart (Figure 1.3) demonstrates the percentage of these uses. The survey utilises the GOAD Sub- classification of uses which are included in key of the map & pie-chart. The primary activity within the land-use sub-class is also recorded and details of these are discussed below.

8.2.3 The predominant land use is Retail Comparison which represent almost a quarter (24%) of the building stock, largely located on the Main Street of the town centre and at Market Green. Residential represent the second predominant landuse with (13%) clusters of residential properties evident on the peripheral laneways of the town centre. Retail Services and Leisure Services both represent 12% of the land use profile.

8.2.4 Financial and Business Services are strongly represented (9%) reflecting its importance as a centre of trade to a wider population base in East Cork. These are largely focussed on the Primary Street of the Retail Core (i.e. Main Street). Retail Convenience represented 5% of the ground floor uses. The retail convenience sector comprises the large multiples of Tesco, Dunnes Stores, Supervalue, Iceland, Aldi and Lidl.

Figure 8.1 Midleton Town Centre (Draft East Cork Plan 2016)



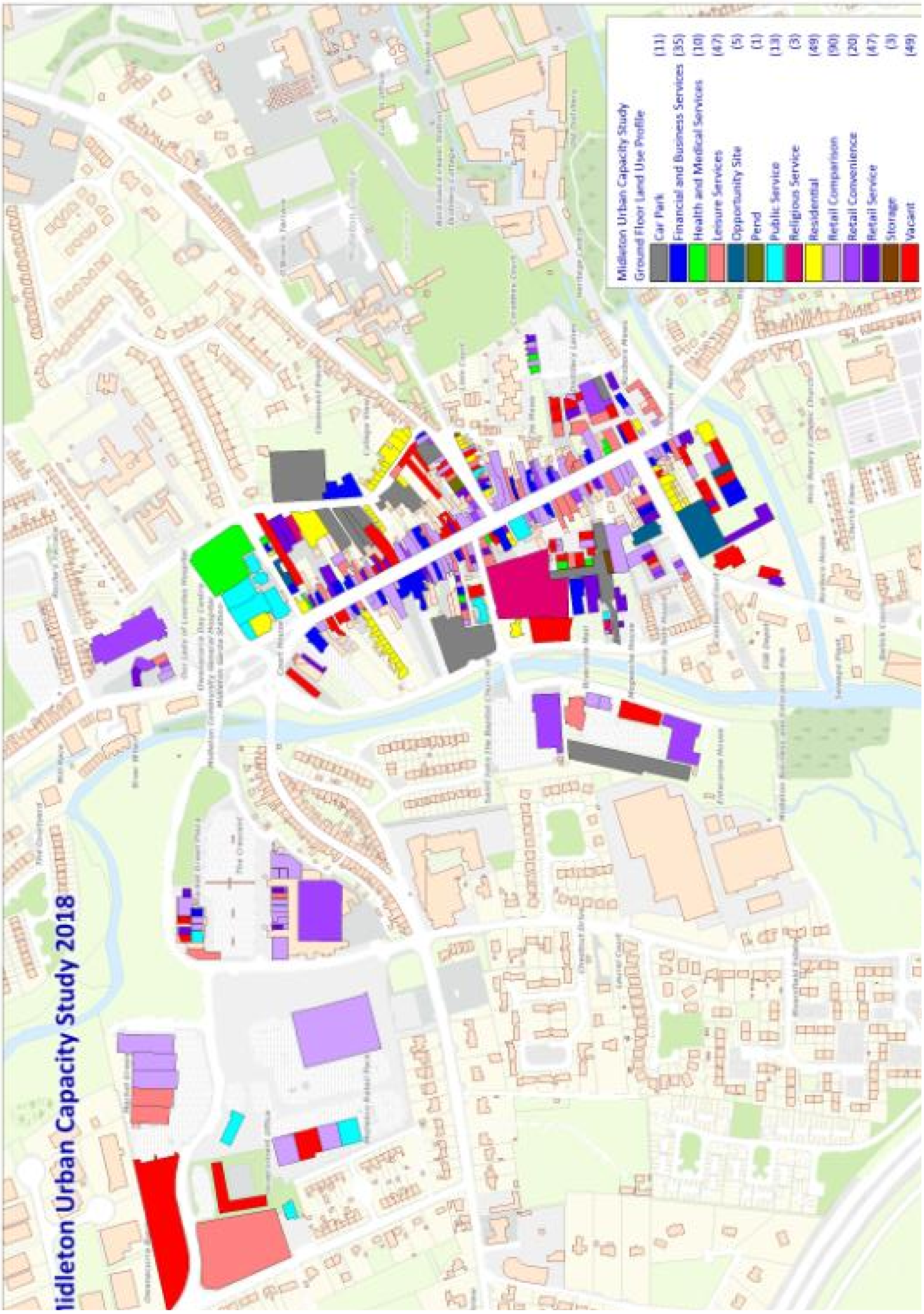


Figure 8.2: Ground floor land use mix, Midleton

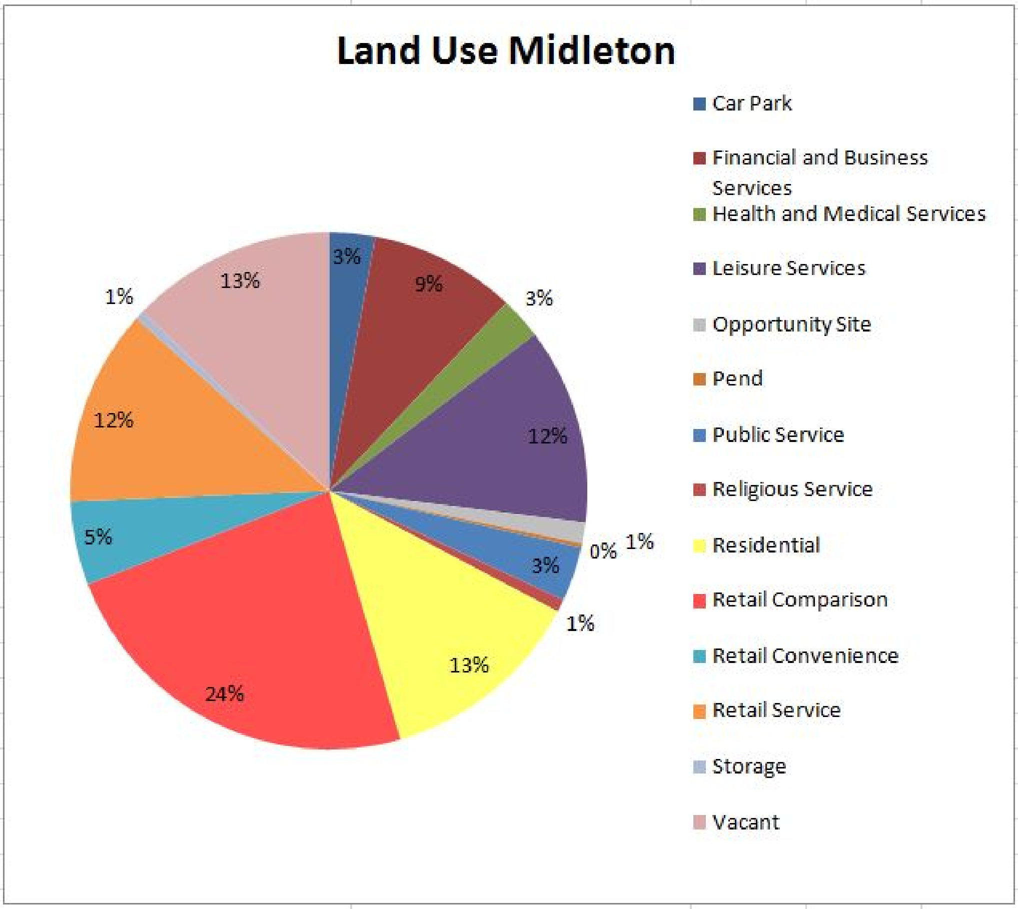


Figure 8.3: Ground floor land use mix, Midleton

Retail Core Trends

8.2.5 Table 8.1 illustrates the trends in the commercial land use mix in the Retail Core of the town between 2013 and 2018. These figures reflect the diversity of uses within properties on the Primary and Secondary Streets of the Retail Core (figure 8.4) only. These streets include Main Street, Broderick Street and Part of Connolly Street, Church Lane, Distillery Lane and Oliver Plunkett Street.

Table 8.1: Comparative Diversity of Uses (Retail Core), Midleton

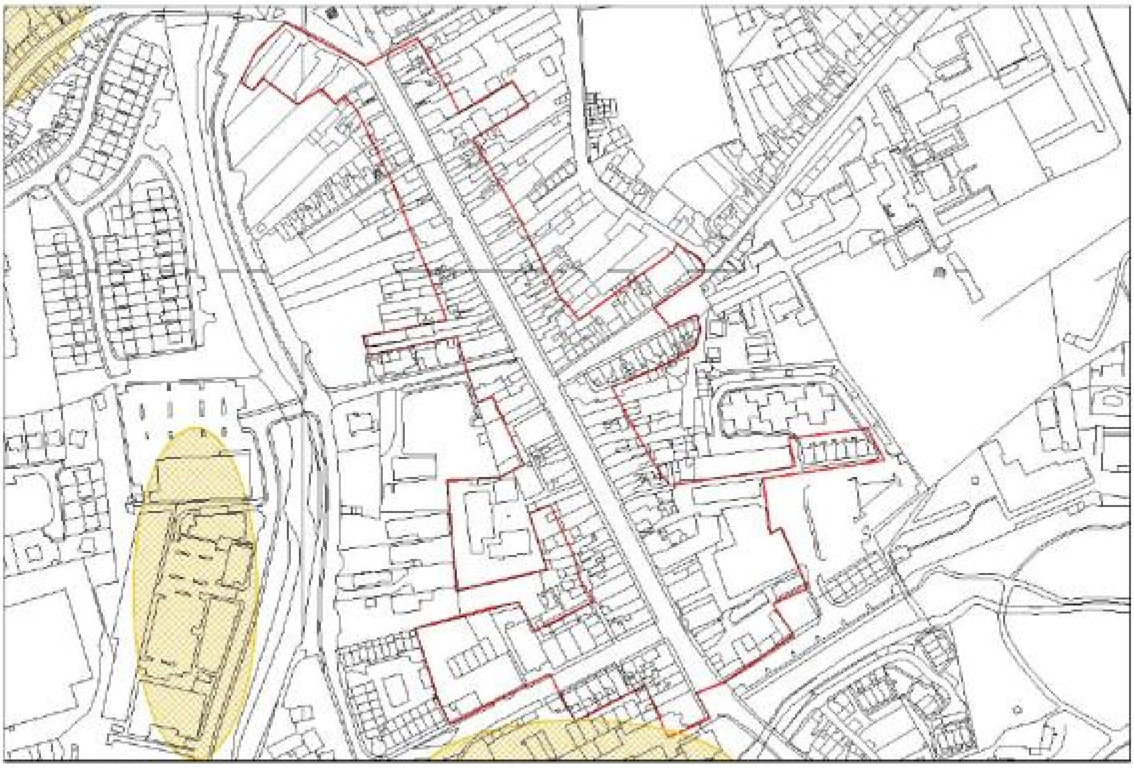
Use	2013	2018	Change
Retail Comparison	77	60	-22%
Retail Convenience	18	13	-28%
Retail Service	29	32	+10%
Leisure Services	37	38	+3%
Financial & Business Services	25	28	+12%
Health & Medical Services	3	6	+100%
Public Service	4	2	-50%
Religious Service	0	0	-

8.2.6 While these figures do not deal with the amount of floorspace available in the town it does highlight some trends. Losses were recorded in the Retail Comparison (-22%) and Convenience (-28%) sectors, however, the overall totals represented in 2018 are strong in comparative terms. Losses may be explained by a prevalence of vacant properties throughout the town or the relocation of uses to more peripheral locations. There were 2 less public service facilities (-50%) available in the town centre compared to 2013.

8.2.7 During the same period there were positive trends in the Retail Service (+10%) and Leisure Services (+3%) sectors reflecting global trends of town centre becoming increasingly important as social and service hubs.

8.2.8 The Financial and Business Services sector (+12%) and the Health and Medical Services (+100%) both recorded strong growth within the town centre land-use mix.

Figure 8.4: Extent of Retail Core



8.3 Primary Activity Break-down

Retail Convenience

8.3.1 The retail convenience distribution within the town is illustrated in Figure 1.5 below. Convenience, groceries and frozen food stores account for 5 units which are dispersed throughout the Main Street. Supermarkets are the second most prevalent primary use within this sub class (4 units). This includes Tesco and Supermarket to the north of the retail core and Aldi and Lidl to the west at Riverside Mall. Butchers, Health Foods and Off Licence premises have 2 no. units each within the town. All of the other sub uses within this category including Bakers, Confectionary stores, Delicatessen and Fishmongers are each represented by a single premises.

8.3.2 A weekly Farmers Market operates within the Supermarket carpark on a Saturday morning between 9.00am and 2.30pm. It is not included in the "Markets" count as it was not evident on the day.

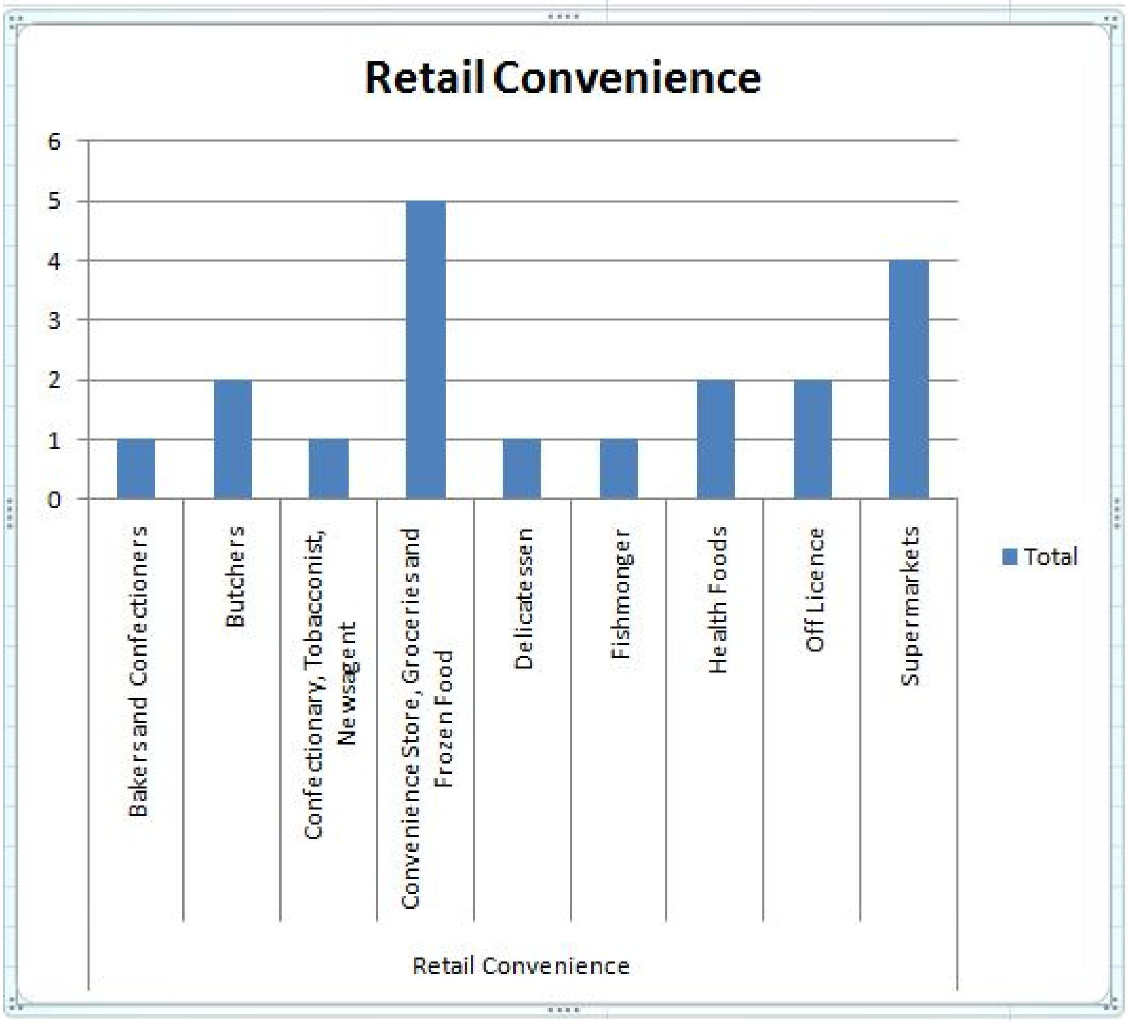


Figure 8.5: Bar Chart showing Retail Convenience

Retail Comparison

8.3.3 The town has a broad range of retail comparison stores which are represented across all 20 sub-categories. It is evident that Midleton has a strong Retail Comparison offer. There is a significant proportion of shops selling Ladies Wear and Accessories (14 units) providing niche clothing offer within the town and wider East Cork area.

8.3.4 There are 9 chemists and drugstores and 6 Department and Variety Stores. The Variety Stores recorded include Mr. Price, Euro-giant and Dealz which are primarily aimed at offering lower order goods.

8.3.5 There are 5 units each providing Footwear, Sports, Camping and Accessories and Telephone products. All of the other comparison stores are in the 1-3 unit range.

Figure 8.6 Illustrates the Retail Comparison breakdown in Midleton.

Leisure Services

8.3.6 The town has a buoyant Leisure Services sector reflecting its long established reputation as a dining destination. The predominant use is Restaurants (17 units) including Sage, Saffron, Leonardos Bistro and Chopsticks. The second most prominent sector was Bars, Wine Bars and Public House (9 units) including Coppingers, The Maple Leaf and Murphys all located on the Main Street.

8.3.7 A total of 8 cafes and 7 fast food takeaways were recorded in the town centre. Midleton has 1 Guesthouse within the town centre (An Slor Midleton Townhouse) which is complemented by Midleton Park Hotel and other guesthouses outside the town core.

8.3.8 There are 4 sports and leisure services within the town centre including Jungle World and For 4 Less. There were 2 betting offices recorded within the town (Paddy Power and Bruce Betting).

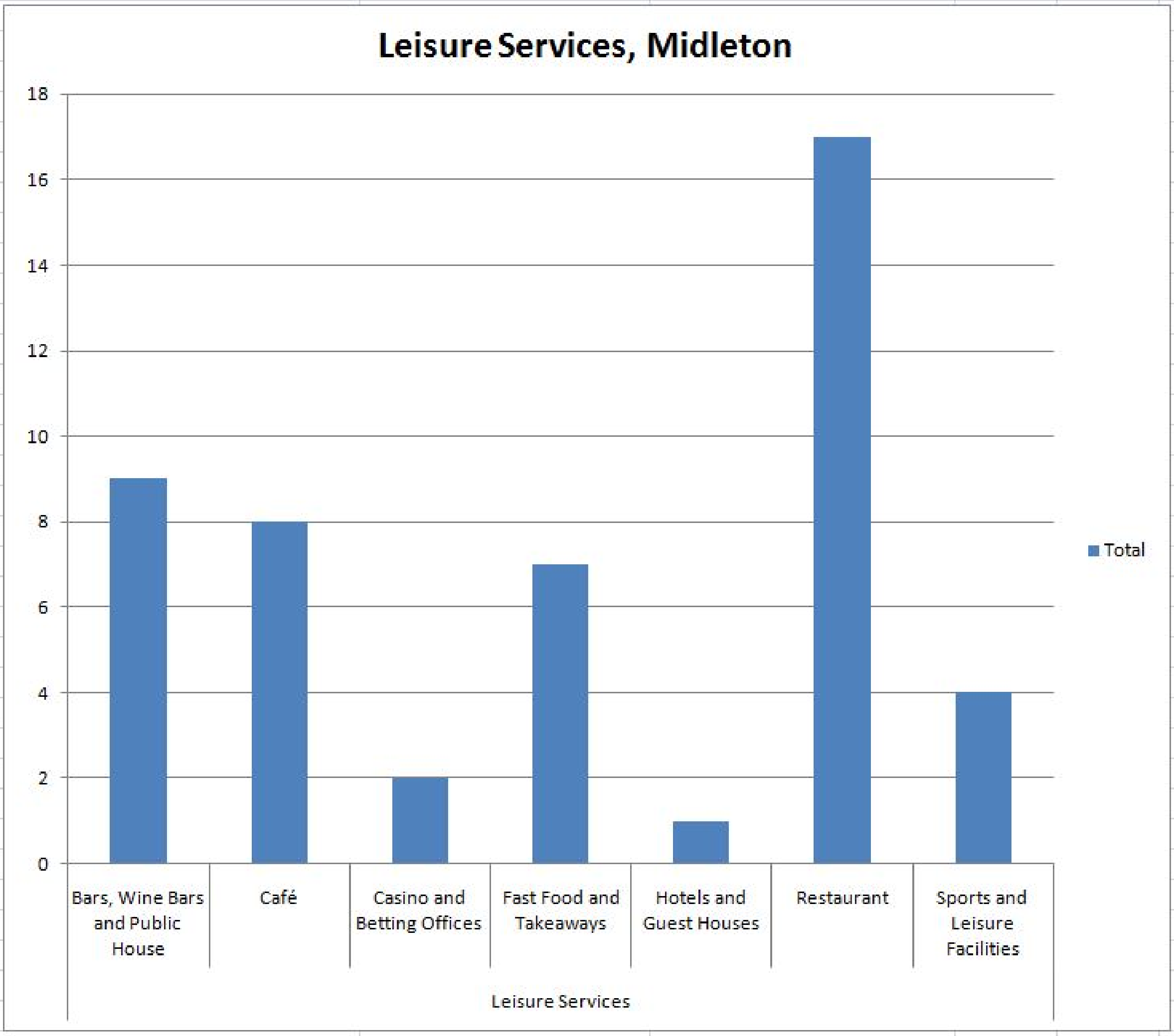


Figure 8.7 Illustrates the Leisure Services breakdown in Midleton.

Financial and Business Services

8.3.9 The Bar Chart (Fig 1.8) illustrates the primary activity break-down of the Financial and Services Sector within the town. Property Services is the pre-dominant activity (10 recorded) which includes Auctioneers and architectural services. Legal Services were also well represented (6 units) reflecting the active Family, District and Circuit Court services operating in Midleton which generate support services.

8.3.10 There were 5 Retail Banks and 5 Financial Services operators clustered predominantly on the Main Street. All other services were represented between 1 – 3 unit range.

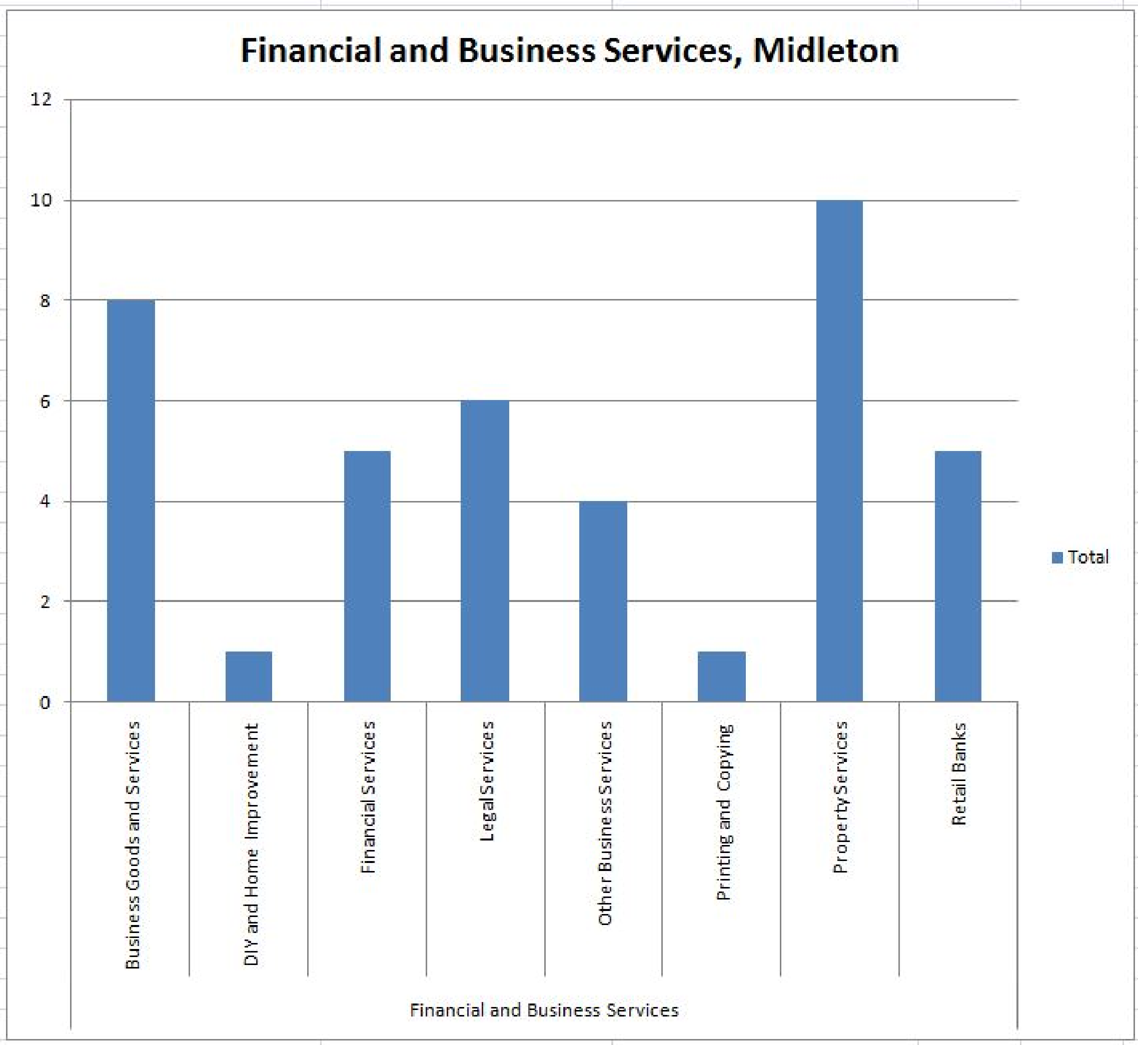


Figure 8.8: Bar Chart showing Financial & Business Services

8.4 Vacancy

8.4.1 Vacancy rates have been defined as the number of units not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total amount of units (vacant and occupied) in the town centre. In Midleton vacancy stands at 13% within the town (49 units of 383 units). This falls outside the normal range limits within a functional market (5-7%).

8.4.2 Of the 331 commercial units surveyed, 48 were vacant representing 15% of the commercial town centre building stock. A small number of commercial units are vacant north of the Main Street. There are some clusters evident on the backland laneways and at the Riverside Mall.

8.4.3 Of the 52 residential units, 1 unit was vacant or 2% of the town centre residential building stock. This highlights the demand in the local property market.

Figure 8.9: Vacant building, Midleton

8.4.4 The survey identified a total of 5 infill (brownfield) Opportunity Sites in the town. These include 2 small infill sites on Oliver Plunkett Place and 3 on or adjacent to Broderick Street (including a Mill and former cinema). These plots could generate a total of c. 35 residential units, suitable for a mixture of family and sheltered/ starter housing.

8.4.5 From the 383 buildings surveyed, 331 were classified as having a commercial ground floor and 52 were classified as residential houses within the town. The remaining spaces and structures include car parks, open spaces, public services (including community centres, educational establishments, emergency series, libraries, etc) storage facilities and vacant properties.

8.4.6 Recent exemptions now allow a change from commercial to residential use, subject to limitations.

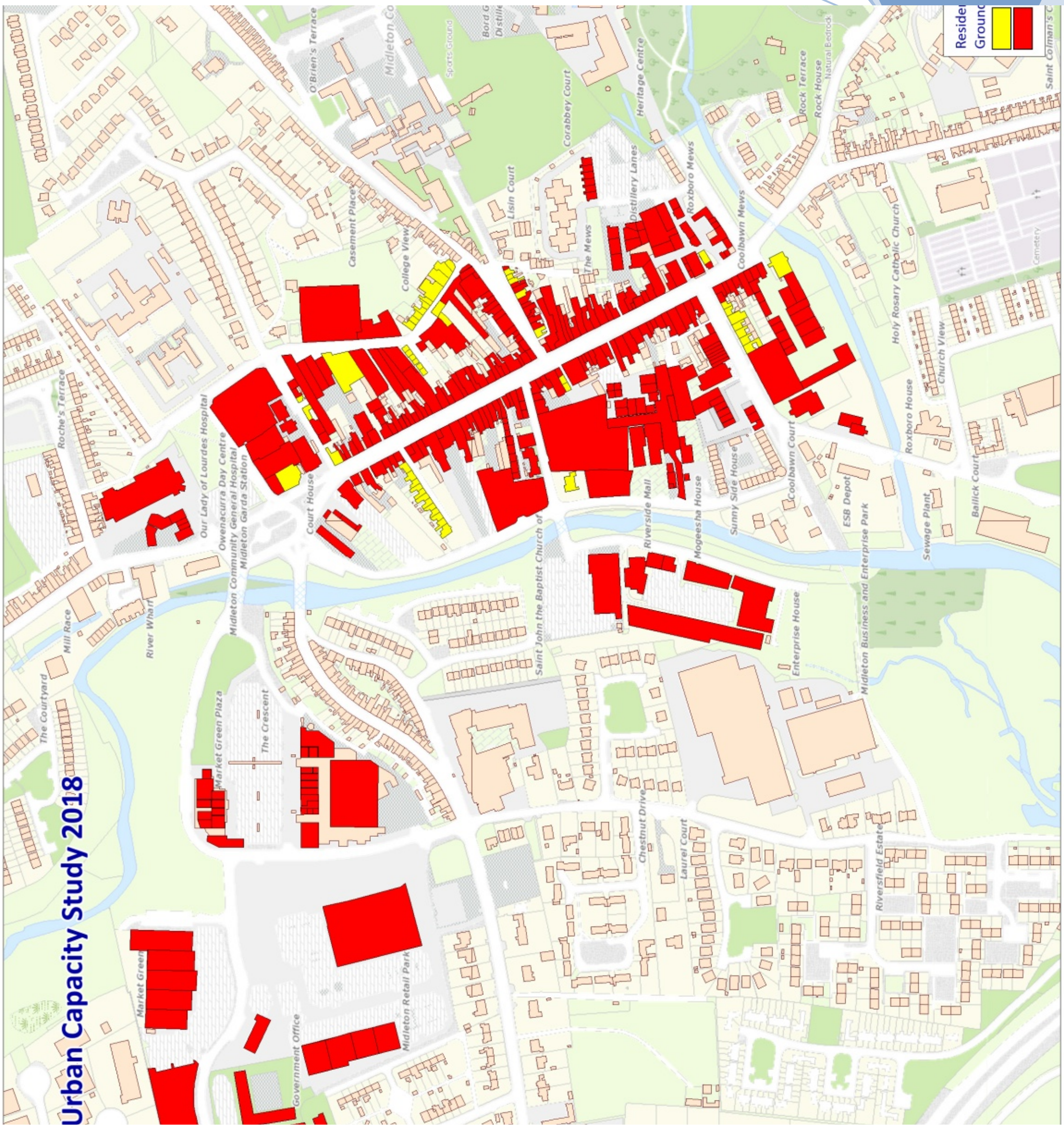


Figure 8.10: Res and Non-Res ground floor uses

8.5 Residential Uses

8.5.1 While Commercial uses account for 87% of the ground floor premises within the Town Centre, residential uses (both houses and apartments) account for only 13% of ground floor units. These are predominantly located to the south of Broderick Street, Drurys Avenue and Thomas Street (north).

8.5.2 A total of 146 residential units were recorded within the upper floors of the town centre. This included 96 units at first floor level, 35 residential units at second floor level and 15 at third floor level. Of the 96 units at first floor level a total of 51 had retained the traditional family living quarters over the shop (i.e. 2 living floors over a ground floor commercial unit). These were all located on Main Street.

8.5.3 A total of 154 commercial units had a separate access to the upper floors which is a key ingredient in securing upper floor usage. The figure represents 40% of the town centre building stock or 45% of the commercial stock. These 2nd access points were achieved via a mixture of a second door within the façade of the building, via a separate side lane or rear access to the upper floors.

8.5.4 A total of 34 vacant 1st floors and 25 vacant 2nd floors were recorded. The survey work confirmed that upper floor use was predominantly one residential unit (apartment) per floor. On this basis a total of 59 additional residential units could be theoretically accommodated within the vacant upper floors, subject to Building and Fire regulation compliance.

Figure 8.11: Examples of Separate Access to Upper Floors in Midleton

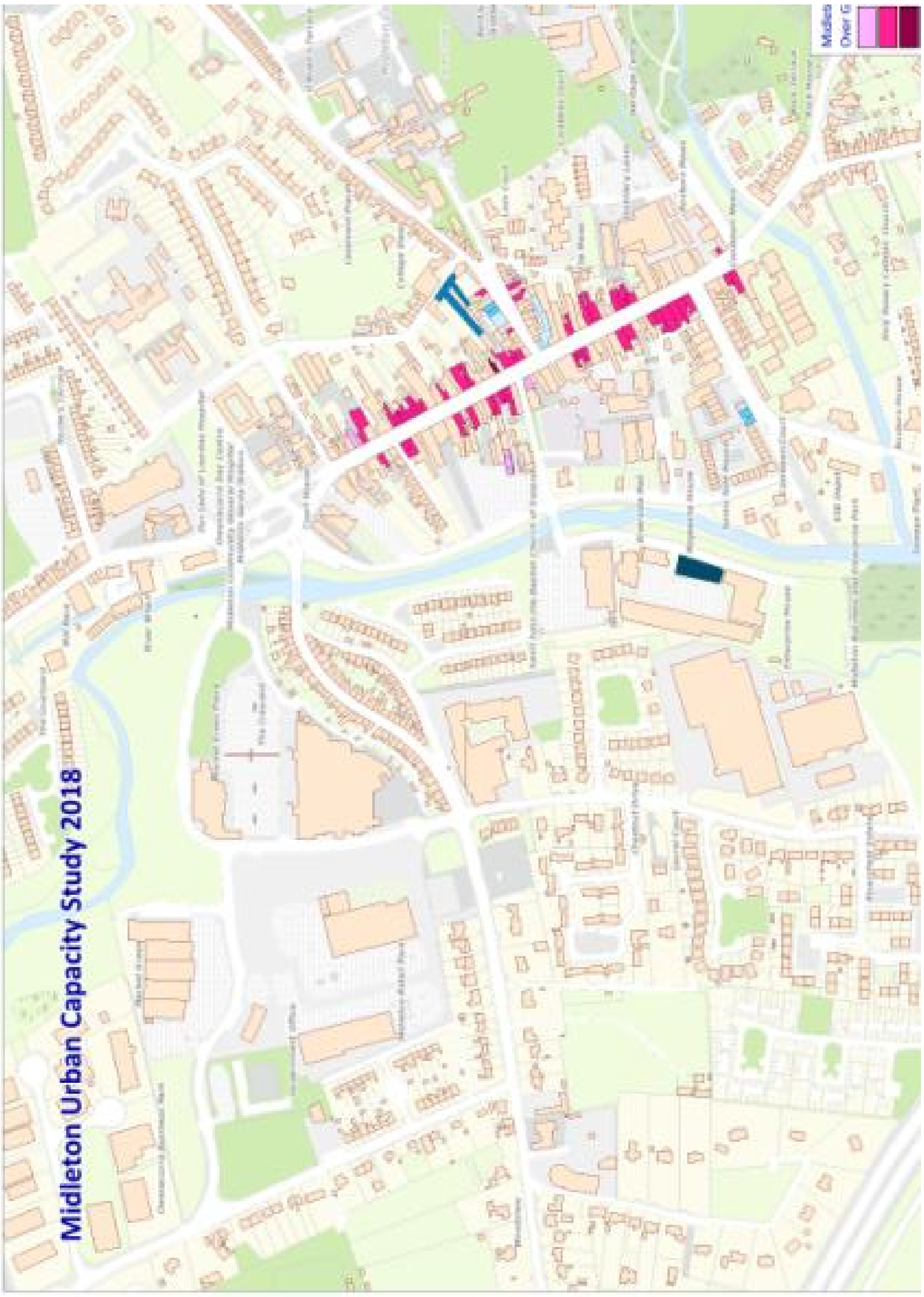


Figure 8.12: First Floor Residential Use

Figure 8.13: Second Floor Residential Use

8.6 Building Condition

8.6.1 Building condition was largely good at 90%. A total number of 25 were considered poor and a further 8 were recorded as derelict.

8.7 Existing Built Up Area

8.7.1 A total of 10 plots were surveyed from the existing built up area of the town. Most of these were adjacent to established residential areas. Of the 10 plots analysed, 4 sites were discounted because of their location within the curtilage of a protected structure, access, topography or servicing issues. The remaining 6 plots have the cumulative capacity to deliver c. 90 units based on previous permissions and site sizes. The largest site (MD-EDUA -02) has permission for 88 units and MD-EDUA 07 has permission for 33 units including apartments and conventional houses. The remaining sites would mostly be of detached, semi-detached or terraced form. A proportion of this capacity could offer an alternative to one-off housing demands in the unserviced rural area outside Midleton.

8.8 Special Policy Areas

8.8.1 There was one Special Policy Areas zoned in the Draft East Cork Local Area Plan 2016. This 5.7ha site adjoining the railway line and north of the town centre was zoned for a mix of small scale retail, office and residential. A design-led approach would be helpful on site. Based on the site size approximately 20 units could be achieved overhead. This may be conservative.

8.9 Regeneration Area/ Opportunity Sites

8.9.1 A total of 9 Regeneration Areas were identified in the Draft East Cork Local Area Plan 2016. The majority of these are within the town centre and so formed part of the detailed survey work here.

8.9.2 Midleton Business and Enterprise Park (MD RA-2) was identified as a Regeneration Area in the Draft Local Area Plan. The site is a large complex adjacent to the town centre with a number of large-scale under-utilised and vacant premises. It was identified as a Regeneration Site (RA-01) in the Draft East Cork Local Area Plan. This could act as a mixed use town centre expansion area given its proximity to the core. A key issue would be addressing connectivity to the adjacent T-04. This site would benefit from a design-led approach to address connectivity and set out a framework for the mix of uses and density possible. It is possible 50 residential units could be achieved on this flat site.

8.9.3 The remaining sites are either small infill sites or vacant buildings at prime locations capable of accommodating a number of small commercial units at ground floor with residential overhead.

8.10 Overall Urban Capacity

Table 8.2: Midleton Urban Capacity Table		
Source	**Number**	**Comment**
Vacant Housing	1	Refer to Municipal District office
Living Over The Shop (LOTS)	59	New Policy Required
Infill Opportunity Sites	35	Laneway/mews guidance required
Special Policy Areas	20	Greater emphasis on housing incorporated into text of policy.
Built Up Area	136	Re-classify/ incorporate into existing land supply?
Regeneration Area/ Windfall site	50	Possible Town Centre expansion area.
Total	**301 units**	

8.10.1 The cumulative urban capacity from the various sources in Midleton amounts to 301 units. These all have a part to play in addressing the various housing needs of the town. It is clear that the vacant housing units and vacant upper floors in the existing building stock can satisfy the demand for smaller 2-3 bed units for rental, start-up/ step-down homes.

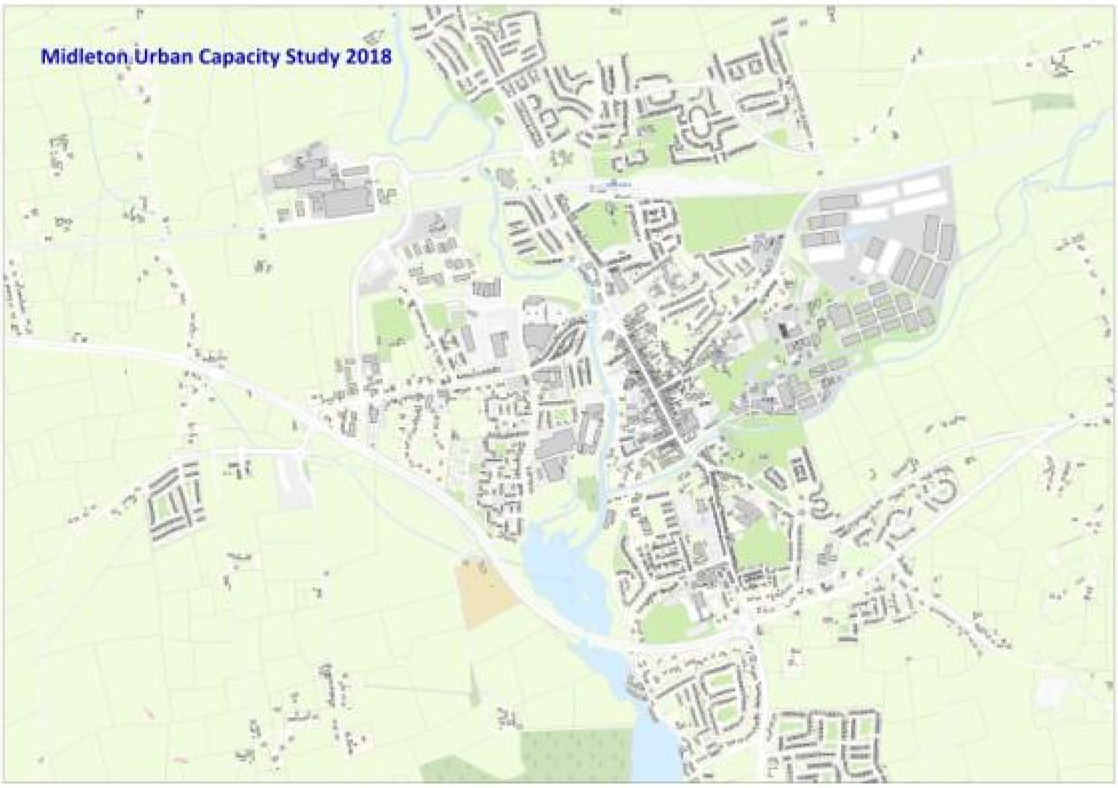
8.10.2 Within the built up area there is clear capacity for a mixture of larger family homes and even self-build opportunities as an alternative to one-off housing demands in the unserviced rural hinterland.

8.11 Street Analysis:

8.11.1 The term Urban Structure refers to the pattern or arrangement of development blocks, streets, buildings, open space and landscape which make up our diverse network of towns. Understanding each town's individual urban structure allows us to protect the key features that help define it's unique sense of place and provides the tools to guide future development response to local distinctiveness.

8.11.2 The cartographic analysis illustrates the planned and formal urban structure of the core which contrasts with the more organic urban structure of the perimeter. Main Street remains the commercial heart of the town. Access to the interior of the block is achieved via laneways and via pends within the streetscape.

Figure 8.14: Urban Grain



8.11.3 The survey work identified good activity throughout the day within the primary and secondary streets of the town centre, despite cool Spring weather conditions. There are not many opportunities for people to sit and linger throughout the town centre. Additional measures to encourage more sit and enjoy social contact in the core would add to the vibrancy of the centre.

8.12 Key Considerations:

8.12.1 Midleton continues to function as a desirable Market town in which to live, work and visit. The town's attraction is underpinned by its broad range of goods and services on offer and proximity to Cork City. In order for the town to continue to grow in a sustainable manner the following priorities are highlighted.

8.13 Town Specific Priorities:

8.13.1 **Town Centre Retail Priorities**: Town centre expansion area identified at Midleton Business and Enterprise Park. Guidance on the mix of uses, design parameters to be outlined;

8.13.2 Significant reduction in number of Retail Comparison units since 2012 (77 to 60 units) reflecting wider trends in the sector. Monitoring required.

8.13.3 **Vacancy Priorities** – 13% rate including 48 vacant commercial premises.

8.13.4 **Residential Priorities**: Only 1 vacant house. Low vacancy figures may put pressure on adjacent established residential areas which may dilute the vibrancy of the town centre. Residential protection zone policy required a strategic locations.

8.13.5 Good usage of the upper floors for residential purposes (146 units) to be protected;

8.13.6 Further potential of vacant upper floors to fulfill residential accommodation needs within the compact core;

8.13.7 Infill sites along the laneways appropriate for sheltered/ start-up housing units.

8.13.8 8 Derelict properties recorded – action required to incentivise re-use through Derelict Sites Act or Vacant Site levy.

8.14 County Development Plan Policy Response required on the following:

Protecting the town's urban structure (perimeter blocks – see similar policy at link below):
https://www.wexfordcoco.iesites/default/files/content/Planning/DraftGoreyLAP17-23/UrbanDesignGuidelinesandNeighbourhoodFramework.pdf

Retaining the 2nd own door access in each building & requiring a 2nd access in new development in the town centre - see similar policy at link below;
http://www.www.corkcity.ie/corkcitydevelopmentplan2004/Chapter11_DevelopmentControlStandards.pdf

Development guidance required for laneways (see similar policy at link below – RES11 Mews Lane Housing);
http://www.dlrcoco.iesites/default/files/atoms/files/chapter5_0.pdf

Skibbereen

URBAN CAPACITY STUDY (2019)

Section 2.9 **Skibbereen**

9 Skibbereen

9.1 Part A Introduction

Skibbereen in context

9.1.1 Skibbereen is a planned market town of important townscape value, located in the western periphery of the County. The traditional town centre largely comprises of a series of intersecting streets which converge in the Market Square. Buildings are generally 2-3 storeys high, of various widths and largely demonstrate a consistent frontage.

9.1.2 The area zoned as Town Centre (SK-T-01) under the Draft West Cork Local Area Plan 2016 includes a mix of traditional commercial units in the Primary Streets and larger stand-alone retailers at edge of town locations (Aldi). A weekly Farmers Market is held every Saturday located in the former Mart Site, within the town centre.

9.1.3 The town's population grew from 2,670 persons in 2011 to 2,778 in 2016. The town has a population target of 3,035 for 2022 which equates to a requirement of about 332 new units. Under the Skibbereen Town Plan and West Cork Local Area Plan 2017 there is a net residential land supply of 75.33 ha with the capacity to provide approximately 1,300 new units to facilitate the target growth.

9.1.4 There are 163 Protected Structures within the town and the jurisdiction of the former town council area is a designated Architectural Conservation Area.

Study Methodology

9.1.5 The study area focussed on the area zoned "Town Centre" as per the Draft West Cork Local Area Plan 2016 (See Figure 1.1). A land-use and photographic survey was undertaken of each building and space within the study area by a team from the Planning Policy Unit on the 28th March 2018. The number of units and category of use per floor in this survey was ascertained by visual assessment only. Upper floor residential use confirmation was cross-referenced with the number of doorbells/ letterboxes visible on the building's 2nd "private" access.

9.1.6 The classification of uses followed the GOAD Sub- Class Classification system and also recorded the primary activity within each land-use as per the 2013 Town Centre Review Paper (See Appendix A).

9.2 Town Profile – Survey Results & Analysis

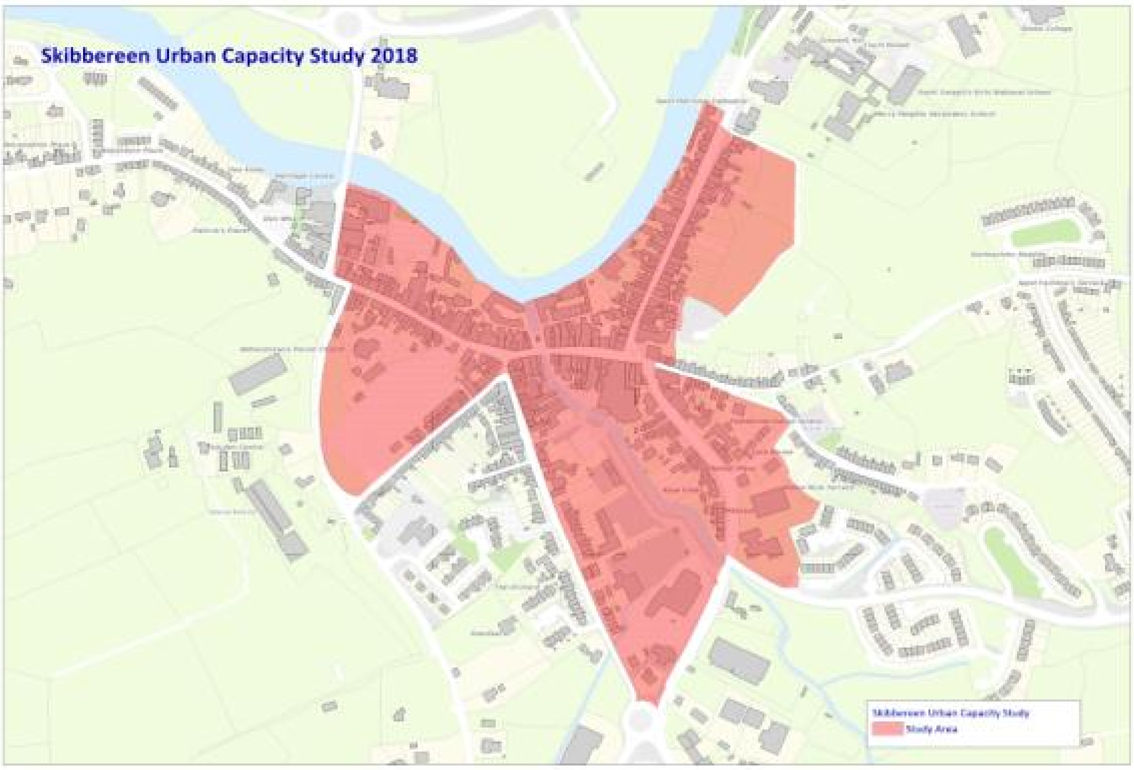
9.2.1 Town Centre

9.2.2 A total of 343 buildings were surveyed within the area zoned town centre as per the (Draft) West Cork Municipal District Local Area Plan 2016. The Retail Core is focused around Main Street and a series of Secondary Streets including North Street, Bridge Street and part of Townsend Street. Skibbereen has a strong mix of commercial uses within the town centre, reflecting its importance as a service centre for a wide rural catchment. Figure 1.2 illustrates the spatial breakdown of the ground floor land-use mix within the town centre. The associated pie chart (Figure 1.3) demonstrates the percentage of these uses. The survey utilises the GOAD Sub- classification of uses which are included in the key of the map & pie-chart. The primary activity within the land-use sub-class is also recorded and details of these are discussed below.

9.2.3 The predominant land use is Residential which represents almost a third (32%) of the building stock. These are largely located on the peripheral arteries of the town centre including Mardyke Street (north), Townsend Street (east), the R595 (west), The Still Mill and interspersed throughout North Street. Vacancy is the second predominant landuse category at 17%. Retail Comparison is strong at 16% and is followed by Leisure Services sector which represents 9% of the land use profile.

9.2.4 Financial and Business Services and Retail Services are both equally represented (7%) reflecting the town's importance as a centre of trade to a wider population base in West Cork. These are largely focussed on the Primary Street of the Retail Core (i.e. Main Street). Retail Convenience represented 3% of the ground floor uses. The retail convenience sector comprises of Field's Supervalue, Eurospar and Aldi. Lidl is located just outside the town centre on the Baltimore Rd.

Figure 9.1 Skibbereen Town Centre (Draft West Cork Plan 2016)



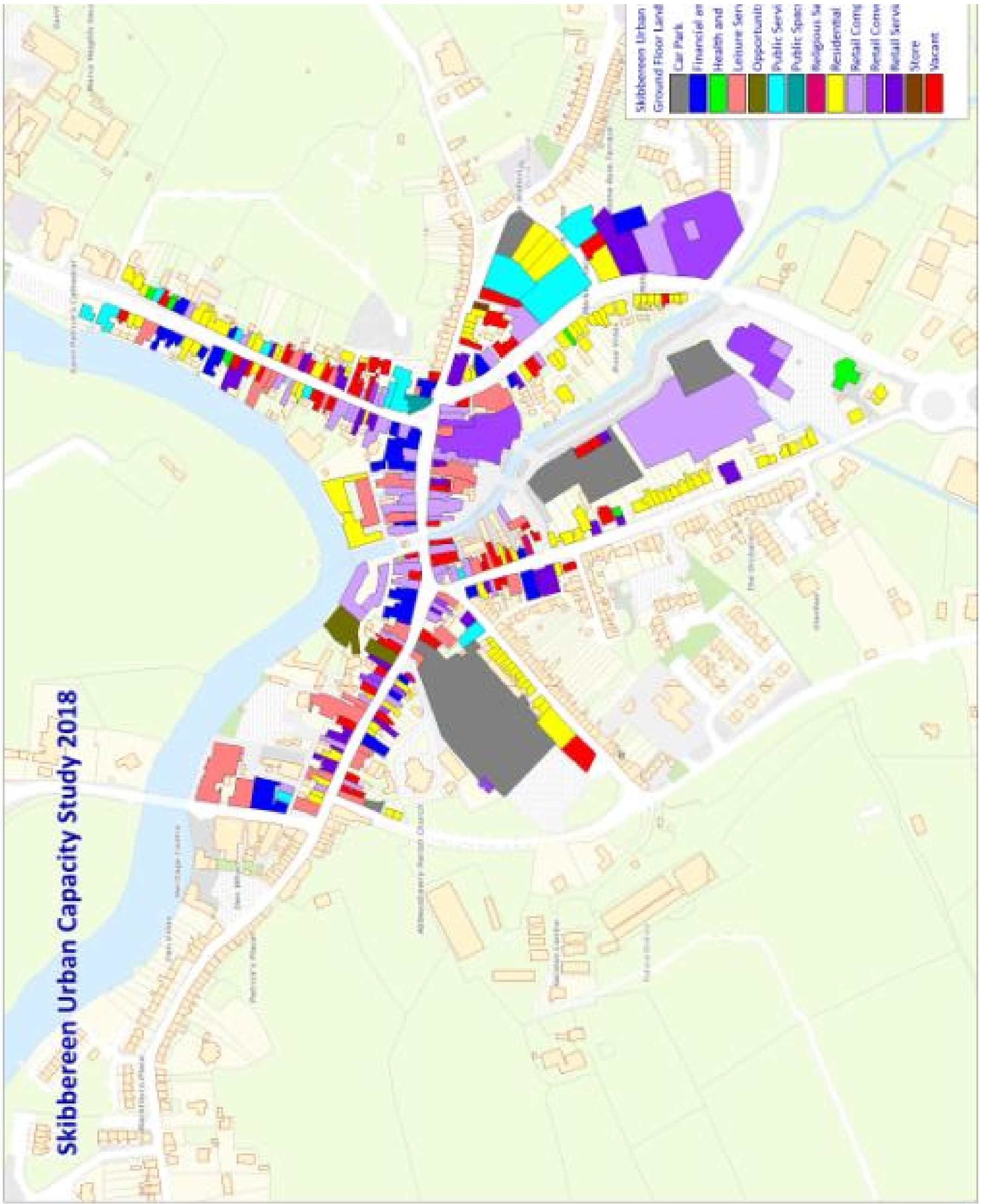


Figure 9.2: Ground floor land use mix, Skibbereen

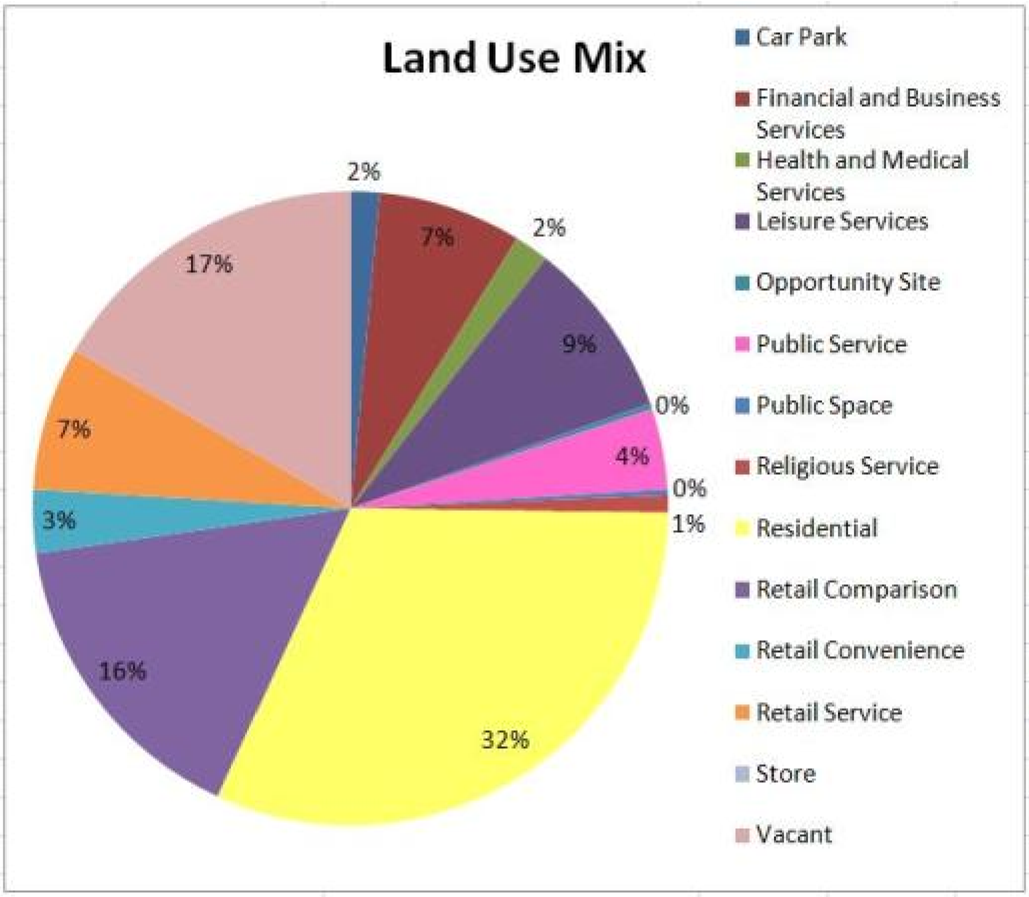


Figure 9.3: Ground floor land use mix, Skibbereen

Retail Core Trends

9.2.5 Table 1.1 illustrates the trends in the commercial land use mix in the Retail Core of the town between 2013 and 2018. These figures reflect the diversity of uses within properties on the Primary and Secondary Streets of the Retail Core (figure 1.4) only. These streets include Main Street, Bridge Street, North Street and part of Townsend Street.

Table 9.1: Comparative Diversity of Uses (Retail Core), Skibbereen

Use	2013	2018	Change
Retail Comparison	54	40	-26%
Retail Convenience	12	4	-66%
Retail Service	16	14	-12.5%
Leisure Services	36	22	-39%
Financial & Business Services	25	21	-16%
Health & Medical Services	6	3	-50%
Public Service	8	11	38%
Religious Service	3	1	-67%

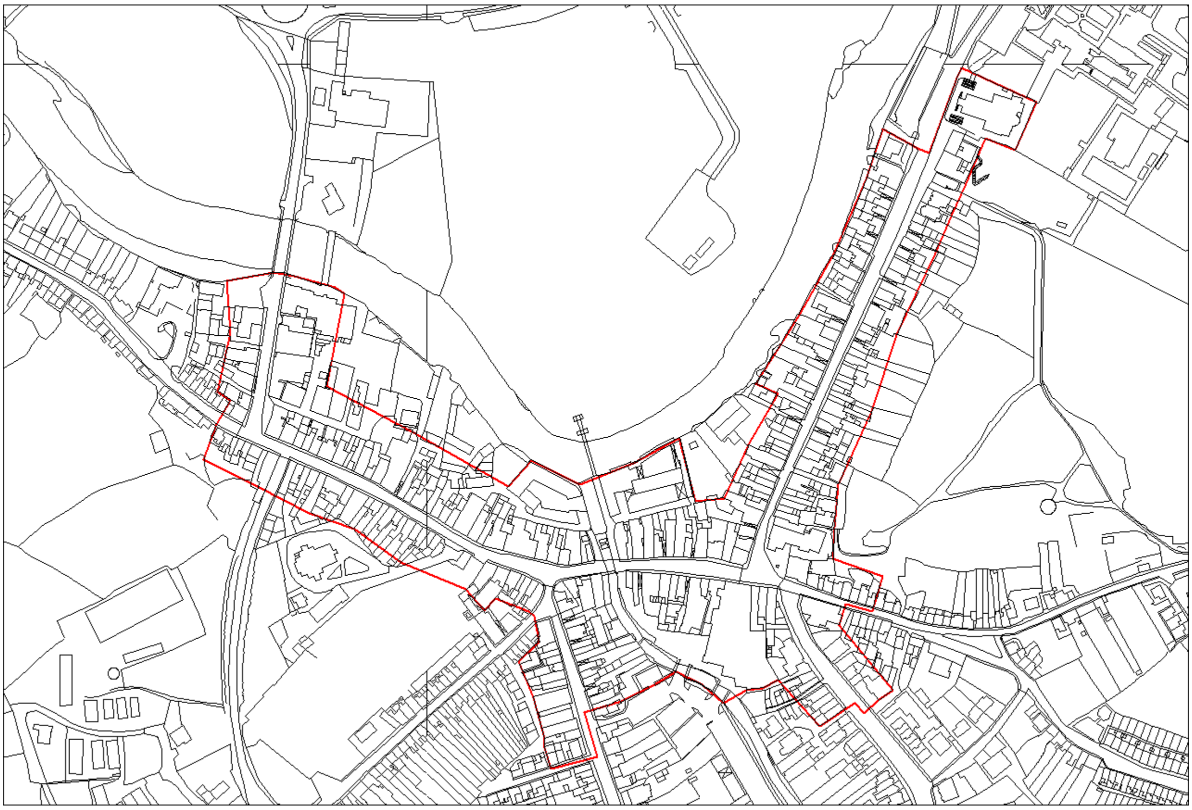
9.2.6 While these figures do not deal with the amount of floorspace available in the town it does highlight some concerning trends. Losses were recorded across almost all sectors. This downward trend may be explained by a prevalence of vacant properties throughout the town, the merging of units for a single use or the relocation of uses to more peripheral locations.

9.2.7 Retail Comparison recorded a loss of 14 units which reflects wider trends across most of the towns surveyed.

9.2.8 A marked decline in the number of Retail Convenience units from 12 in 2013 to 4 in 2018 is an issue and requires monitoring. This may be because Field's Supermarket offers a bakery, butchers, deli and fishmongers within its complex.

9.2.9 There were 3 more public service facilities (38%) available in the town centre compared to 2013.

Figure 9.4: Extent of Retail Core



9.3 Primary Activity Break-down

Retail Convenience

9.3.1 The retail convenience distribution within the town is illustrated in Figure 1.5 below. The offer is quite limted. Supermarkets are the most prevalent primary use within this sub class (3 units). This includes Field's Supervalue, Aldi and Eurospar. Butchers, Health Foods and Convenience Stores all have 2 no. units each within the town. All of the other sub uses within this category including Bakers, Confectionary stores, Delicatessen and Fishmongers are each represented by a single premises.

9.3.2 A weekly Farmers Market operates within the former Mart site on a Saturday morning between 9.00am and 2.30pm. It is not included in the "Markets" count as it was not evident on the day.

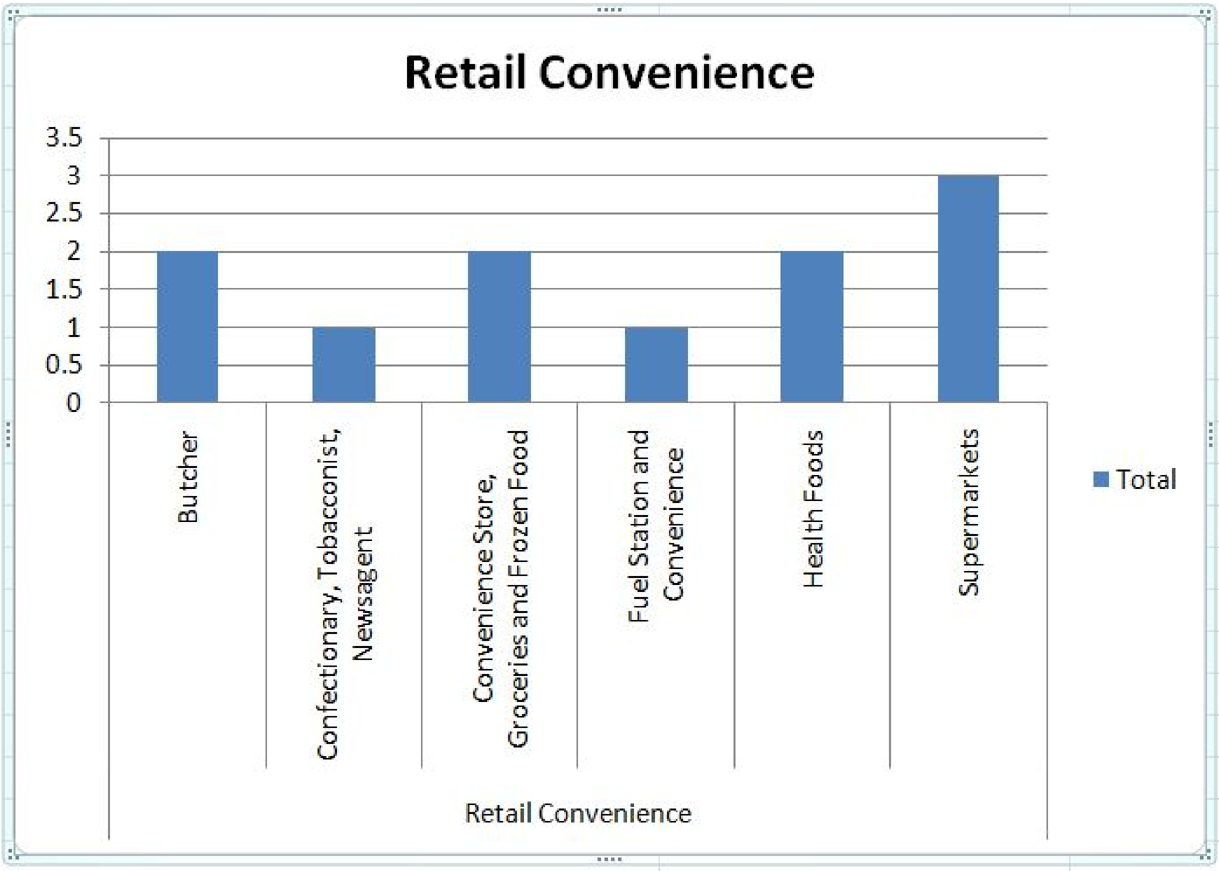


Figure 9.5: Bar Chart showing Retail Convenience

Retail Comparison

9.3.3 The town has a broad range of retail comparison stores which are represented across all 20 sub-categories. It is evident that Skibbereen has a strong Retail Comparison offer. There is a significant proportion of shops selling Ladies Wear and Accessories (8 units) providing niche clothing offer within the town and wider West Cork area.

9.3.4 There are 5 units selling Crafts, Gifts, China and Glass reflecting the strong craft base and tourism function of West Cork. This includes Higgildy Piggildy, Wish and Designs. Similarly, there are 5 units selling Furniture. This strong niche reflects the positive aspects to the town's isolation and diminished influence from national and international furniture stores within Metropolitan Cork.

9.3.5 There are 4 units each providing Electrical and Other Durable Goods and 4 Charity Shops. All of the other comparison stores are in the 1-3 unit range.

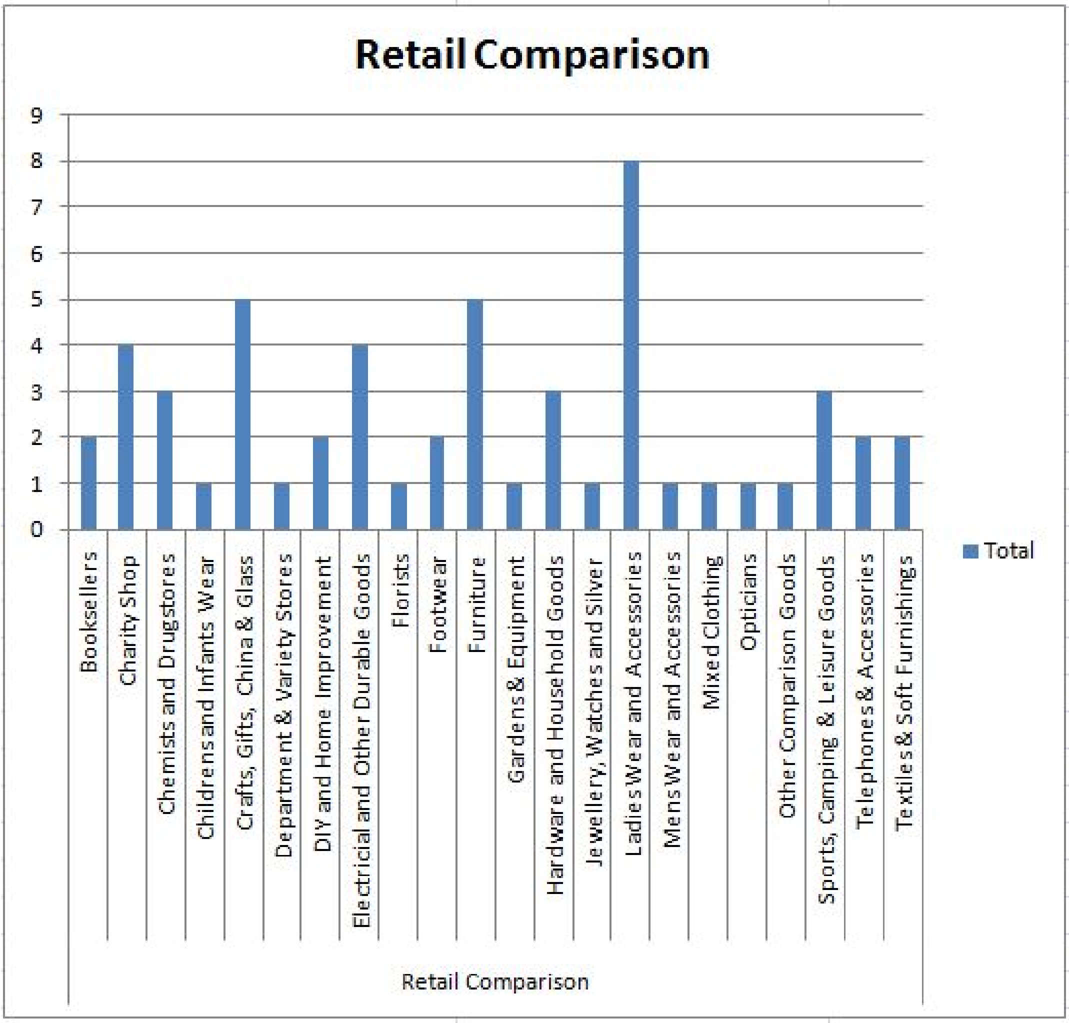


Figure 9.6 Illustrates the Retail Comparison breakdown in Skibbereen.

Leisure Services

9.3.6 The town has a buoyant Leisure Services sector reflecting its tourism and service function. The predominant use is Bars, Wine Bars and Public House (9 units) including Kearney's Well, O' Brien's Corner House and An Goban Saor. A total of 8 cafes were recorded in the town centre. This represented the second predominant sub-category within the Leisure Services sector.

9.3.7 There were 4 Hotels and Guesthouses recorded including the West Cork Hotel, The Eldan Hotel and Bridge House Guest Accommodation. There were a similar amount of Restaurants (4 units) including The Church and Dynasty Chinese Restaurant.

9.3.8 All other sub-class uses were in the 1-2 range including Casino and Betting (2 units), Clubs (1 unit), Fast Food and Takeaway (2 units) and Sports and Leisure Facilities (1 unit).

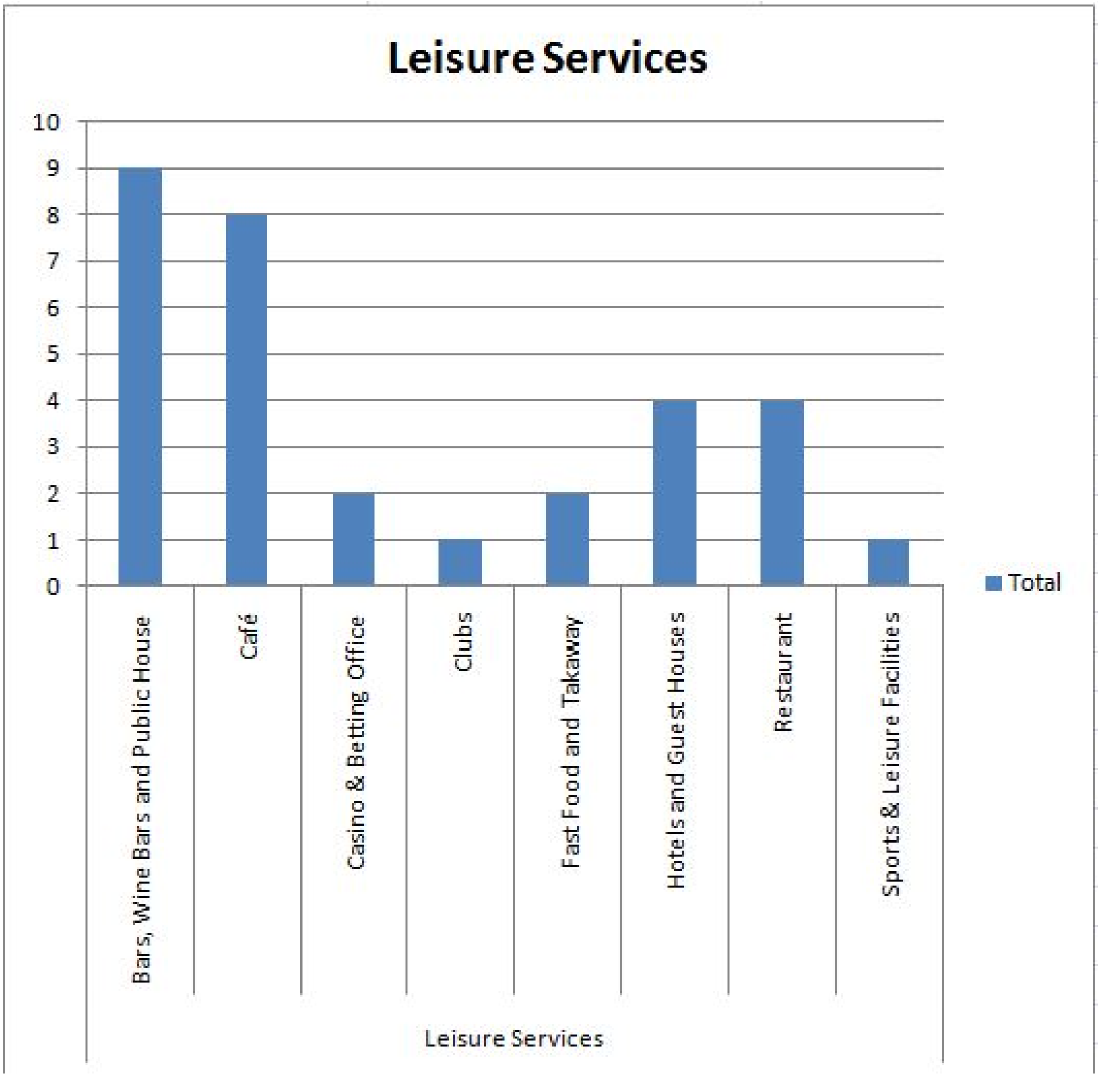


Figure 9.7 Illustrates the Leisure Services breakdown in Skibbereen.

Financial and Business Services

9.3.9 The Bar Chart (Fig 1.8) illustrates the primary activity break-down of the Financial and Services Sector within the town. Financial Services is the pre-dominant activity (11 recorded) which includes Accountants and Insurance services. Legal Services were also well represented (4 units) reflecting the active Family, District and Circuit Court services operating in Skibbereen which generate support services.

9.3.10 There were 3 units offering Business Goods and Services and 3 units on property services. There were 2 Retail Banks recorded including AIB and Bank of Ireland. All other services were represented between 1 – 3 unit range.

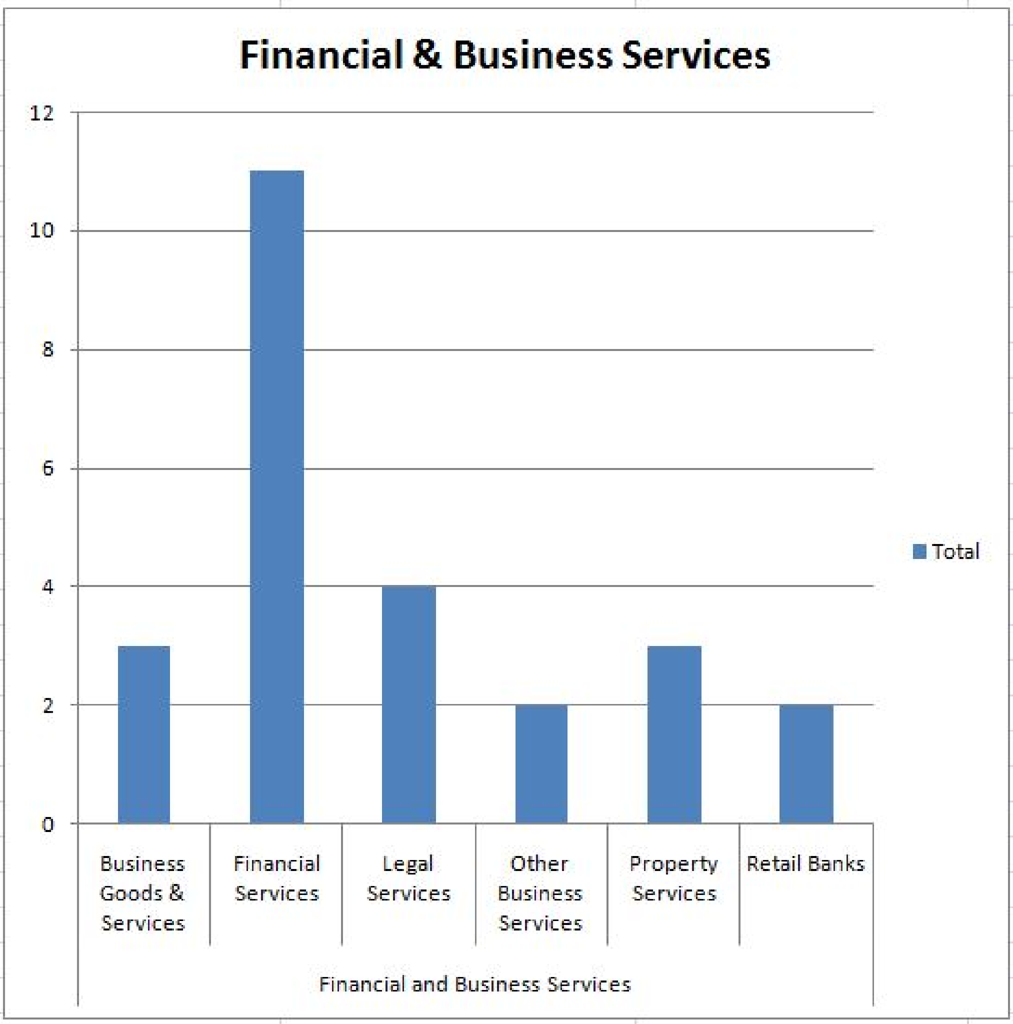


Figure 9.8: Bar Chart showing Financial & Business Services

9.4 Vacancy

9.4.1 Vacancy rates have been defined as the number of units not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total amount of units (vacant and occupied) in the town centre. In Skibbereen vacancy stands at 17% within the town (57 units of 341 units). This falls outside the normal range limits within a functional market (5-7%).

9.4.2 Of the 222 commercial units surveyed, 46 were vacant representing 21% of the commercial town centre building stock. There are some clusters on North Street and the northern end of Townsend Street. All streets in Skibbereen have some vacancy, although the streets adjacent to the Square are relatively low where footfall is greatest.

9.4.3 Of the 119 residential units, 11 units were vacant or 9% of the town centre residential building stock.

Figure 9.9: Vacant building, North Street, Skibbereen

9.4.4 The survey identified a total of 2 brownfield, Opportunity Sites in the town. These include a 3 storey derelict mill in the backlands of Upper Bridge Street overlooking the River and a large derelict infill 2 storey property on Upper Bridge Street. These plots are located adjacent to each other and would benefit from a design-led framework on the potential land-use mix and capacity of these buildings. The building fronting onto Upper Bridge Street could accommodate 2 units over a commercial ground floor. The historic building could accommodate a mix of uses or exclusively residential delivering c. 10 residential units.

Figure 9.10: Derelict infill site, Upper Bridge Street.

9.4.5 From the 343 buildings surveyed, 222 were classified as having a commercial ground floor and 119 were classified as residential houses within the town. The remaining spaces and structures include Opportunity Sites.

9.4.6 Recent exemptions now allow a change from commercial to residential use, subject to limitations.

9.5 Residential Uses

9.5.1 While Commercial uses account for 68% of the ground floor premises within the Town Centre, residential uses (both houses and apartments) account for 32% of ground floor units. These are predominantly located on Mardyke Street, Townsend Street, east of the R596 and intermittently on North Street.

9.5.2 A total of 150 residential units were recorded within the upper floors of the town centre. This included 96 units at first floor level, 52 residential units at second floor level and 2 at third floor level. Of the 96 units at first floor level a total of 44 had retained the traditional family living quarters over the shop (i.e. 2 living floors over a ground floor commercial unit). These were located on Upper Bridge Street (north of street) and North Street.

9.5.3 A total of 148 commercial units had a separate access to the upper floors which is a key ingredient in securing upper floor usage. The figure represents 43% of the town centre building stock or 67% of the commercial stock. These 2nd access points to the upper floors were achieved via a mixture of a second door within the façade of the building (See image left below), via a separate side lane or internally within a foyer (See image right below).

9.5.4 A total of 47 vacant 1st floors and 31 vacant 2nd floors were recorded. The survey work confirmed that upper floor use was predominantly one residential unit (apartment) per floor. On this basis a total of 78 additional residential units could be theoretically accommodated within the vacant upper floors, subject to Building and Fire regulation compliance.

Figure 9.11: Examples of Separate Access to Upper Floors in Skibbereen

Figure 9.12: First Floor Residential Use

Figure 9.13: Second Floor Residential Use

9.6 Building Condition

9.6.1 Building condition was largely good at 92%. A total number of 22 were considered poor and a further 5 were recorded as derelict.

9.7 Existing Built Up Area

9.7.1 A total of 2 plots were surveyed from the existing built up area of the town. One was detached from established residential areas and was deemed unsuitable due to topography and access. This would be more appropriately zoned "Open Space". The second plot analysed was located close to Skibbereen Nursing home, adjacent to established low density dwellings and could offer an alternative to one-off housings needs in the unserviced rural area. This site could achieve c. 5 dwellings subject to service availability.

9.8 Special Policy Areas

9.8.1 There was one Special Policy Areas zoned in the Draft West Cork Local Area Plan 2016. The Former Convent of Mercy Site (SN-RA-01) comprises of a 0.92ha complex of historic buildings and its curtilage located in a prominent town centre site. An application for a cinema and 50 apartments was permitted in 2006 and extended under 12/57004 but the arrival of the recession meant the works on site ceased leaving a partly finished development. Based on the planning history, it is considered c. 50 units could be achieved on site.

Figure 9.14: Former Convent

9.9 Regeneration Area/ Opportunity Sites

9.9.1 One Regeneration Areas was identified in the Draft West Cork Local Area Plan 2016 which was also a Special Policy Area (Former Convent of Mercy) and is discussed already.

9.9.2 A further educational site, adjoining this complex is now available after a secondary schools amalgamation within the town. The site of the former Convent School is now vacant and has been subject to vandalism. This is a sloping and elevated mature site within walking distance of the town centre and suitable for a mix of house types. Any proposal will need to respect the setting of the adjoining Protected Structure and maximise connectivity to the town core. It is possible to achieve a mix of house types and sizes within this site. Approximately 20 units are capable of being achieved on site.

Figure: 9.15: Vacant school complex, Skibbereen

9.10 Overall Urban Capacity

Table 9.2: Skibbereen Urban Capacity Table		
Source	**Number**	**Comment**
Vacant Housing	11	Refer to Municipal District office
Living Over The Shop (LOTS)	78	New Policy Required
Infill Opportunity Sites	12	Laneway/mews guidance required
Special Policy Area	50	Site also a Regeneration area – levy may incentivise redevelopment.
Built Up Area	5	Offers alternative to one-off housing in the hinterland.
Regeneration Area/ Windfall site	20	Possible Town Centre expansion area?
Total	**176 units**	

9.10.1 The cumulative urban capacity from the various sources in Skibbereen amounts to 176 units. These all have a part to play in addressing the various housing needs of the town. It is clear that the vacant housing units and vacant upper floors in the existing building stock can satisfy the demand for smaller 2-3 bed units for rental, start-up/ step-down homes.

9.10.2 Within the built up area there is clear capacity for a mixture of larger family homes and even self-build opportunities as an alternative to one-off housing demands in the unserviced rural hinterland.

9.11 Street Analysis:

9.11.1 The term Urban Structure refers to the pattern or arrangement of development blocks, streets, buildings, open space and landscape which make up our diverse network of towns. Understanding each town's individual urban structure allows us to protect the key features that help define it's unique sense of place and provides the tools to guide future development response to local distinctiveness.

9.11.2 The cartographic analysis illustrates the planned and formal urban structure of the core. Buildings on Main Street have wider plot widths, contrasting with the tighter urban grain of the Secondary Streets. Main Street remains the commercial heart of the town. Access to the interior of the block is achieved via covered archways (pends) within the streetscape.

Figure 9. 16: Urban Grain, Skibbereen

Figure 9. 17: Pend access to rear of block, Main Street, Skibbereen

9.11.4 The survey work identified good activity throughout the day within the primary and secondary streets of the town centre. There are not many opportunities for people to sit and linger throughout the town centre. Additional measures to encourage more social interaction in the core would add to the vibrancy of the centre address age-friendly objectives in the Council’s wider Age Friendly.

9.12 Key Considerations:

9.12.1 Skibbereen continues to function as a desirable Market town in which to live, work and visit. The town’s attraction is underpinned by its broad range of goods and services on offer and proximity to the attractive coastal landscape. In order for the town to continue to grow in a compact and sustainable manner there is a need to tackle highly visible clusters of vacancy within the town and ensure any new town centre uses are directed to the existing vacant units and/or Opportunity Sites identified in the survey work.

9.12.2 There are further opportunities to provide comprehensive guidance for development within the laneways and northern backlands of the Retail Core. A multidisciplinary approach is recommended in this regard.

9.13 Town Specific Priorities

9.13.1 **Town Centre Retail Priorities:** Addressing the significant number of vacant buildings/ sites is a priority to address housing and commercial needs of the town and deliver compact growth;

9.13.2 Significant reduction in number of Retail Comparison units since 2012 reflecting wider trends in the sector;

9.13.3 Potential for the laneways/ backlands to provide further town centre capacity going forward.

9.13.4 **Vacancy Priorities** - 46 vacant commercial units out of 222 surveyed (21% of commercial stock)

9.13.5 11 Residential units were recorded as vacant - understanding the cause of the issue is important to solving the problem long term.

9.13.6 **Residential Priorities**: Strong usage of the upper floors for residential purposes (148 units) to be protected;

9.13.7 Peripheral site suitable as alternatives to one-off housing in unserviced rural area.

9.13.8 Further potential of vacant upper floors to fulfill residential/ tourist accommodation needs within the compact core;

9.13.9 Infill sites along the laneways appropriate for sheltered/ start-up housing units.

9.13.10 A total of 22 buildings were considered "Poor" and 5 deemed "Derelict".

9.14 County Development Plan Policy Response required on the following:

New policy required on the following:

Protecting the town's urban structure (perimeter blocks – see similar policy at link below):
https://www.wexfordcoco.iesites/default/files/content/Planning/DraftGoreyLAP17-23/UrbanDesignGuidelinesandNeighbourhoodFramework.pdf

Retaining the 2nd own door access in each building & requiring a 2nd access in new development in the town centre - see similar policy at link below;
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Development guidance required for laneways (see similar policy at link below – RES11 Mews Lane Housing);
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Youghal

URBAN CAPACITY STUDY (2019)

Section 2.10 **Youghal**

10 Youghal

10.1 Part A Introduction

10.1.1 Youghal in context

10.1.2 Youghal is a historic 13th century walled port town situated at the mouth of the River Blackwater. The town developed as a significant Victorian holiday destination in the 18th century benefitting from visiting rail based tourists from Cork City and beyond. The town has a unique mix of simple Medieval properties along with elegant and grand Victorian terraces and villas set within a beautiful coastal setting.

10.1.3 The economic base of the town has contracted significantly over the past number of decades. The East Cork Local Area Plan 2017 noted that the unemployment rate in 2011 was 29.3% (CSO) compared to a national average figure of 19%. The town benefits from being on the Ancient East touring route and needs to explore ways of capturing additional inward investment into the town to reverse economic trends.

10.1.4 The town's population grew from 7,794 in 2011 to 7,963 in 2016. The town has a population target of 9,115 for 2022 which will generate an increase of 999 households in the town, equating to 1,037 new units. Under the 2017 Local Area Plan there is a net residential land supply of 104ha with the capacity to provide approximately 1,993 units to facilitate the target growth.

10.1.5 There are 252 Protected Structures within the town and 3 Architectural Conservation Areas.

10.1.6 The number of units and category of use per floor in this survey was ascertained by visual assessment only. Upper floor residential use confirmation was cross-referenced with the number of doorbells/ letterboxes visible on the building's 2nd "private" access.

10.1.7 The classification of uses followed the GOAD Sub- Class Classification system and also recorded the primary activity within each land-use as per the 2013 Town Centre Review Paper (See Appendix A).

10.2 Town Profile – Survey Results & Analysis

Town Centre

10.2.1 The study area focussed on the area zoned "Town Centre" as per the Draft East Cork Local Area Plan 2016 (See Figure 1.1). A land-use and photographic survey was undertaken of each building and space within the study area by a team from the Planning Policy Unit on the 7th February 2018. A total of 390 buildings were surveyed within the area zoned town centre, including a secondary neighbourhood centre at the southern gateway of the town (near Seafield). These are illustrated in two separate maps (See Figures 1.1 and 1.2).

10.2.2 The Retail Core is focused between North Main Street and Mall Lane (off South Main Street). Youghal has a broad range of uses within the town centre, reflecting its importance as a Ring Town for a wide rural hinterland, extending beyond the county boundary. Figures 1.4 and 1.5 illustrate the spatial breakdown of the ground floor landuse mix within the town centre. The associated pie chart (Figure 1.3) demonstrates the percentage of these uses. The survey utilises the GOAD Sub- classification of uses which are included in the key of the map & pie-chart. The primary activity within the land-use sub-class is also recorded and details of these are discussed further in the document.

10.2.3 The predominant land use is residential (house) which represents over a third (37%) of the building stock and are located in small clusters throughout the town and on the southern fringes of the town centre (lands zoned YL-T-01). Retail Comparison is the second predominant landuse (12%) recorded and is largely focussed on the Primary Streets of the Retail Core (i.e. North Main Street and Mall Lane).

10.2.4 The town has a strong Leisure Services sector (10%) reflecting its tourism function along the Ancient East touring route. Retail Services represent 6% of the ground floor uses. Both Retail Convenience and Financial and Business Services represent 5% of the town centre land use mix. The Retail Convenience offer includes a diversity of Supermarkets (Tesco, Supervalue and Lidl) and smaller independent outlets.

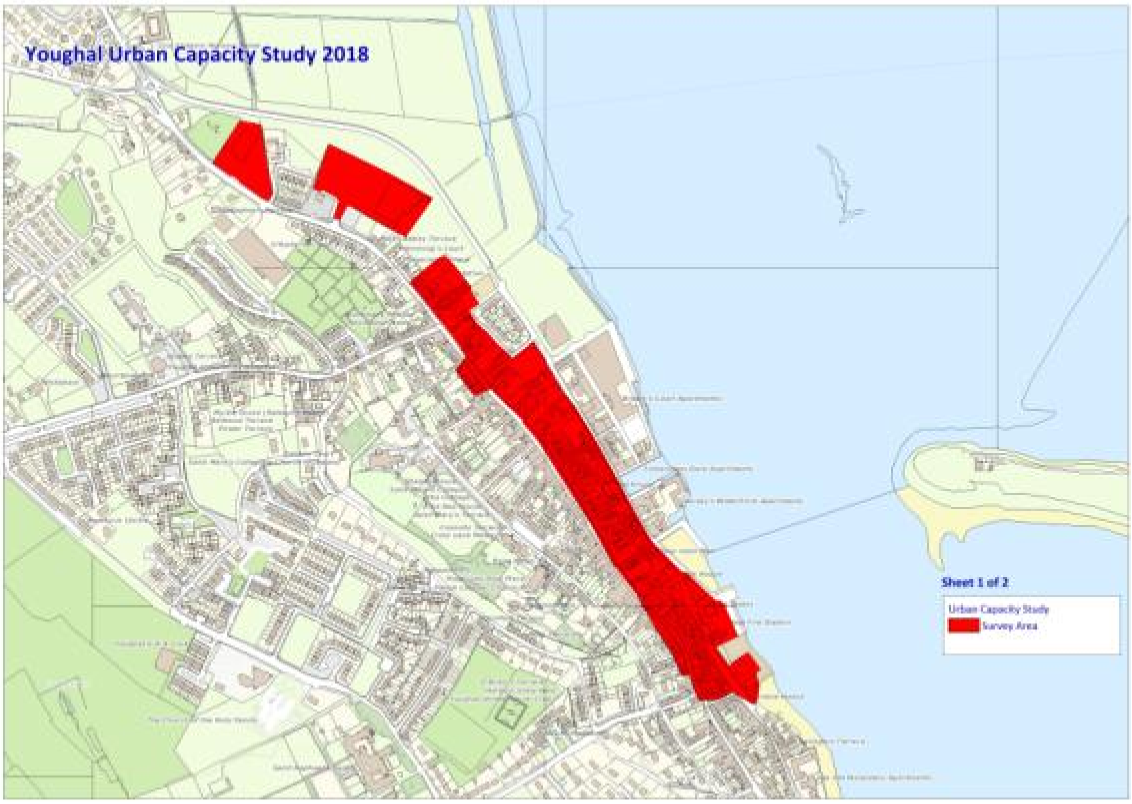

Figure 10.1: Extent of town centre (YL T-01 –YL T-03, Youghal)

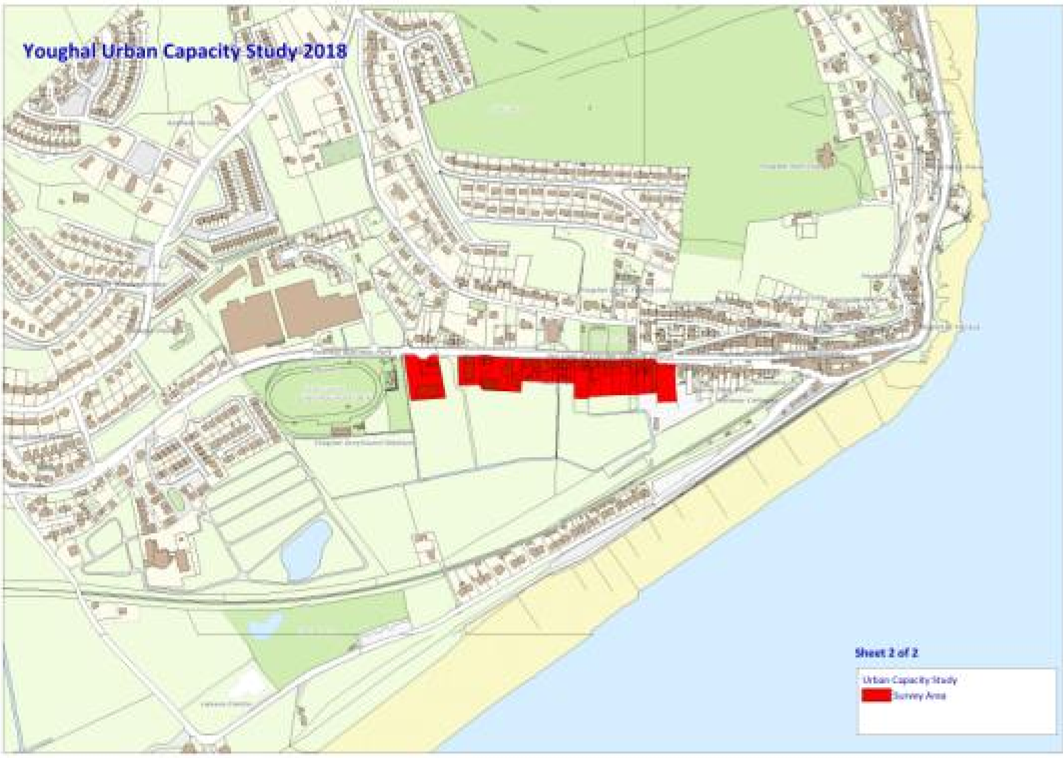

Figure 10.2: Extent of town centre (YL T-04 neighbourhood centre), Youghal

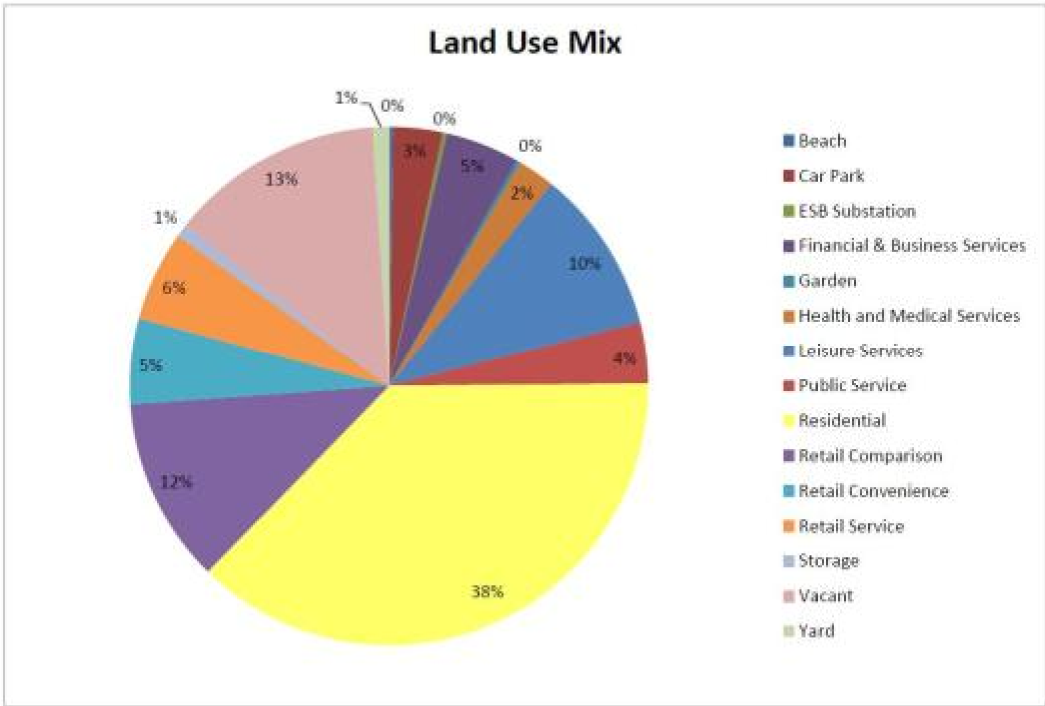

Figure 10.3: Pie Chart of ground floor land-use mix

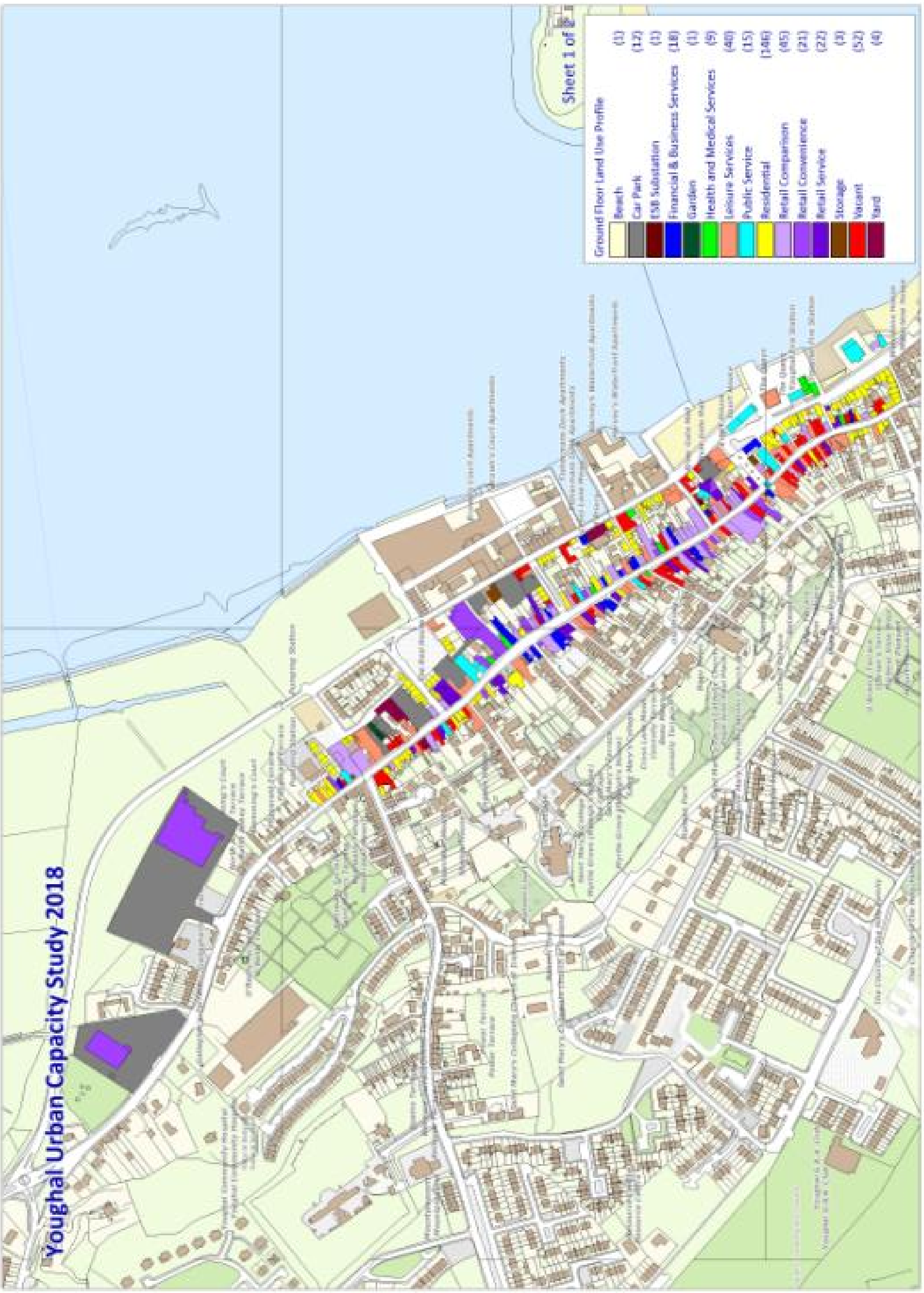

Figure 10.4: Ground floor land use mix (YL-T-01 - 03), Youghal

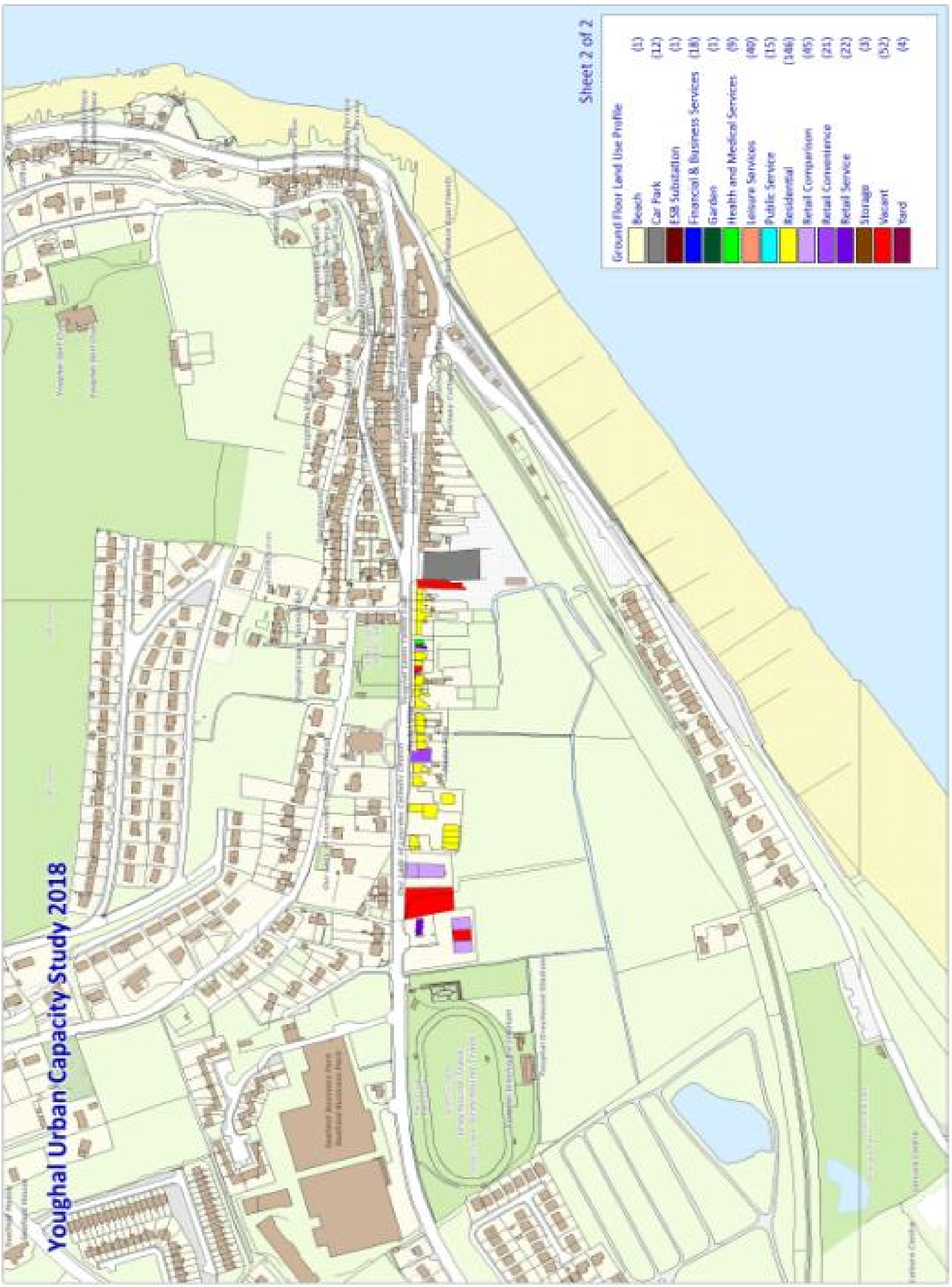

Figure 10.5: Ground floor land use mix (YL-T-04), Youghal

Retail Core Trends

10.2.5 Table 1.1 illustrates changes in the commercial land use mix in the Retail Core of the town between 2013 and 2017. These figures reflect the diversity of uses within properties on the Primary (North Main Street) and Secondary Streets (South Main Street) of the Retail Core only (figure 1.6).

10.2.6 Similar to other towns, there has been a contraction in the Retail Comparison Sector, reflecting the growing competition from online shopping. There have been positive trends, however, evident across all other sectors. While these figures do not deal with the amount of floorspace available it does show a clear local trends in the commercial profile of the town.

Table 10.1: Comparative Diversity of Uses (Retail Core), Youghal

Use	2013	2018	Change
Retail Comparison	46	41	-5
Retail Convenience	14	15	+1
Retail Service	16	19	+3
Leisure Services	35	39	+4
Financial & Business Services	14	17	+3
Health & Medical Services	8	8	-
Public Service	13	15	+2
Religious Service	0	0	-

Figure 10.6: Extent of Retail Core, Youghal

10.3 Primary Activity Break-down

Retail Convenience

10.3.1 The retail convenience distribution within the town is illustrated in Figure 1.7 below. Butchers were the principle primary use within this sub class (5 units). There are 3 Supermarkets (Supervalue, Lidl and Tesco) and 3 bakers and confectioners within the town reflecting a strong mix of both multiples and independant stores. There are 2 newsagents and 1 of all other primary activities.

10.3.2 A Farmers Market is not present within the town and there are multiple opportunities to identify suitable buildings and/or outdoor locations at the waterside to facilitate such a use which would add to the town as a retail destination.

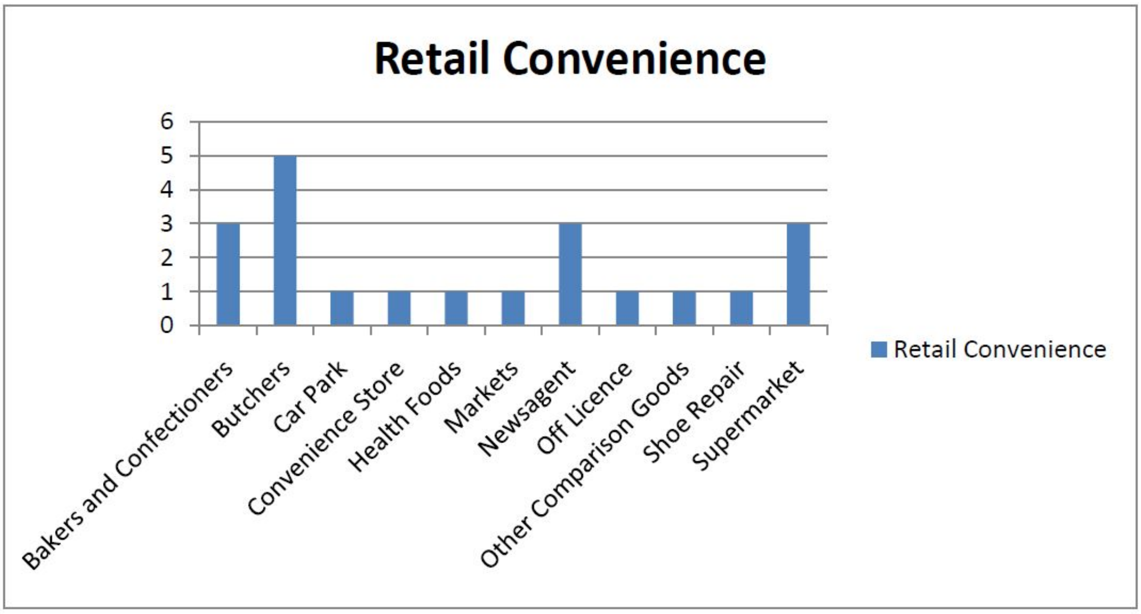

Figure 10.7: Bar Chart showing Retail Convenience

Retail Comparison

10.3.3 Figure 1.8 illustrates the Retail Comparison breakdown in Youghal. The town has a broad range of retail comparison offer which are represented across all 20 categories. The predominant category is Chemists and Drugstores (5 units), followed by Charity Shops, Crafts, Gifts, China and Glass and DIY and Home Improvement (4 units each). There were very limited boutiques/ niche clothing within the town. There are only 3 shops selling Ladies Wear, 2 mixed clothing and none dedicated to Menswear or Childrens wear. The town has no Department and Variety Stores.

10.3.4 The provision of further high value uses, niche clothing and additional craft/ artisan uses which can showcase the strong local artistic and specialised food producers of the wider Blackwater Valley should be encouraged. There is an opportunity to expand these sectors linked to the growing number of tourists accessing the Waterford Greenway and Ancient East Touring Route.

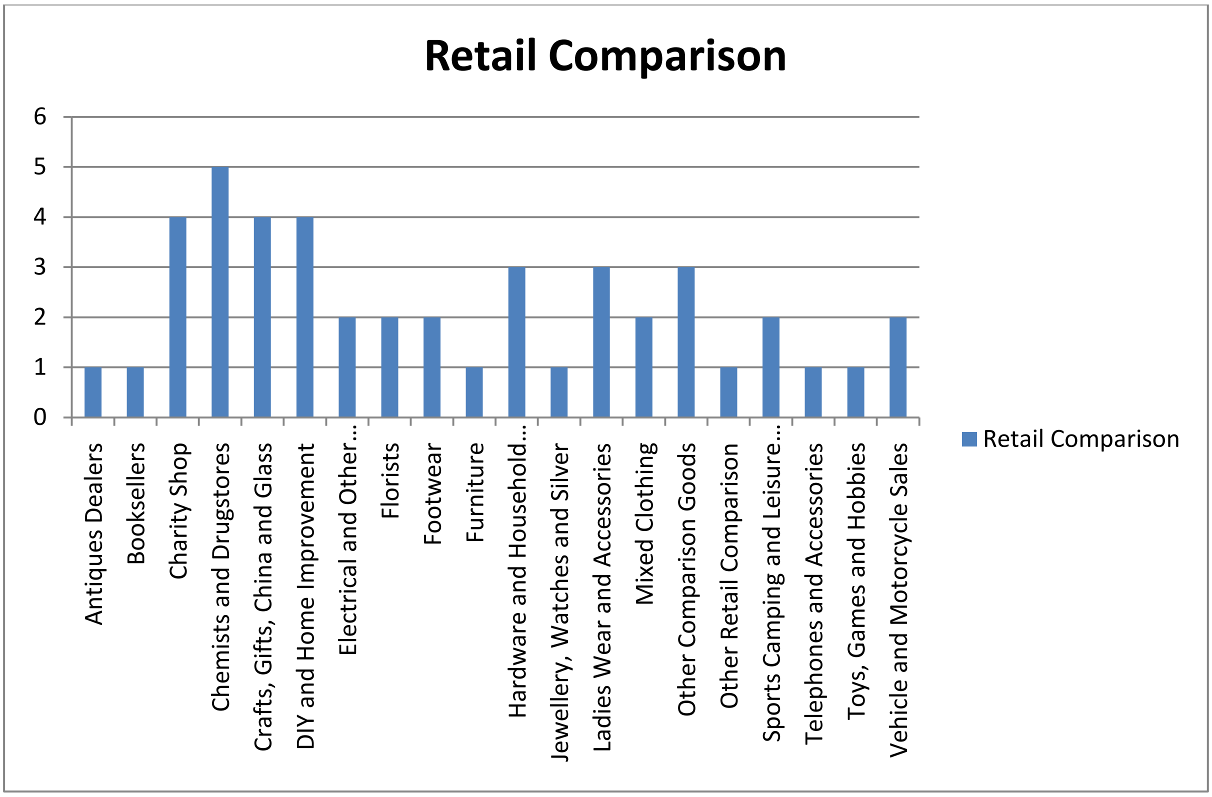

Figure 10.8: Bar Chart showing Retail Comparison distribution

Leisure Services

10.3.5 The Leisure Services sector reflects the important tourist and service role of the town to the wider rural area. The Clockhouse is an important tourist attraction but the town may need to consider additional local tourism activities to boost the day-trip and short-stay sector of the market and take advantage of its location on the Ancient East Touring route and proximity to the Waterford Greenway.

10.3.6 The predominant use is Bars, Wine Bars & Public Houses (14 units) followed by restaurants (10 units). A total of 5 cafes and 6 fast food take-aways were recorded in the town centres. The town is served by 3 no. centrally located hotels and Guesthouses on North Main Street. There is 1 Yoga Centre (Sports and Leisure Services) and 1 no betting office (Casino & betting office).

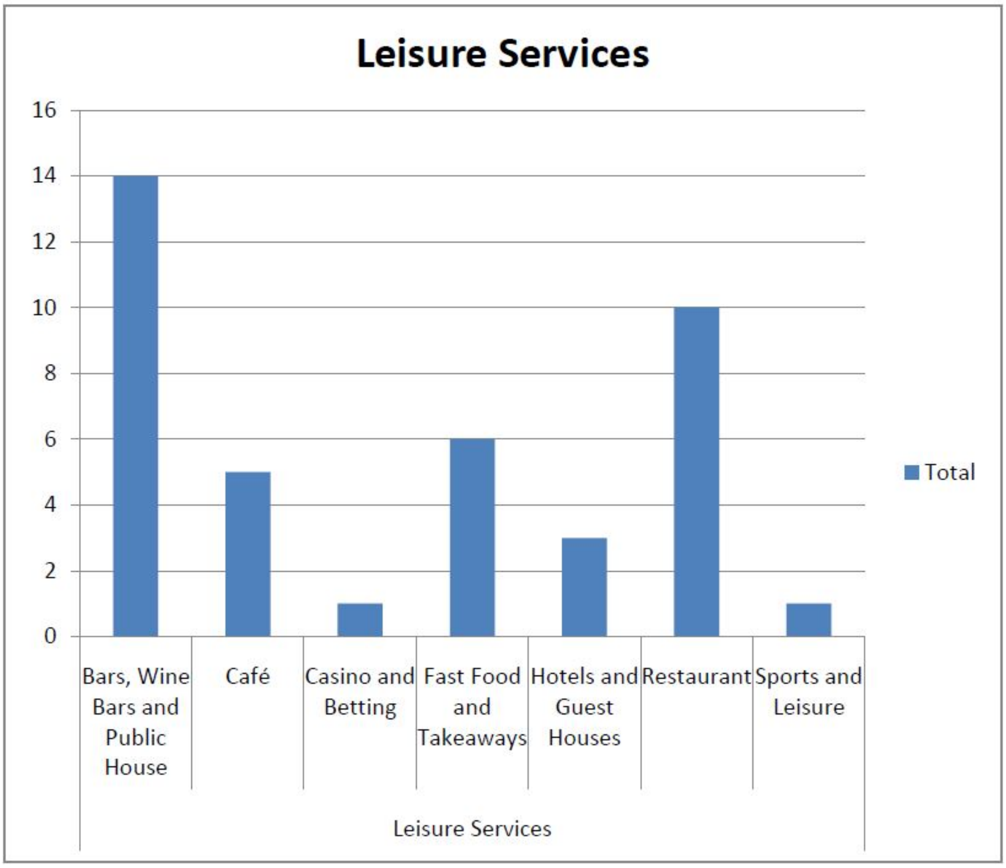

Figure 10.9: Bar Chart showing Leisure Services distribution

Financial and Business Services Sector

10.3.7 The Bar Chart (Fig 1.8) illustrates the primary activity break-down of the Financial and Business Services Sector within the town. Property Services is the pre-dominant activity (7 recorded) which includes Auctioneers, architectural services. Legal services (6 identified) are also strongly represented in the town, reflecting the towns function as a seat for the district and circuit court. A total of 5 units were providing Financial Services and 3 units were providing Business Goods and Services. Two Retail Banks were recorded in the town centre.

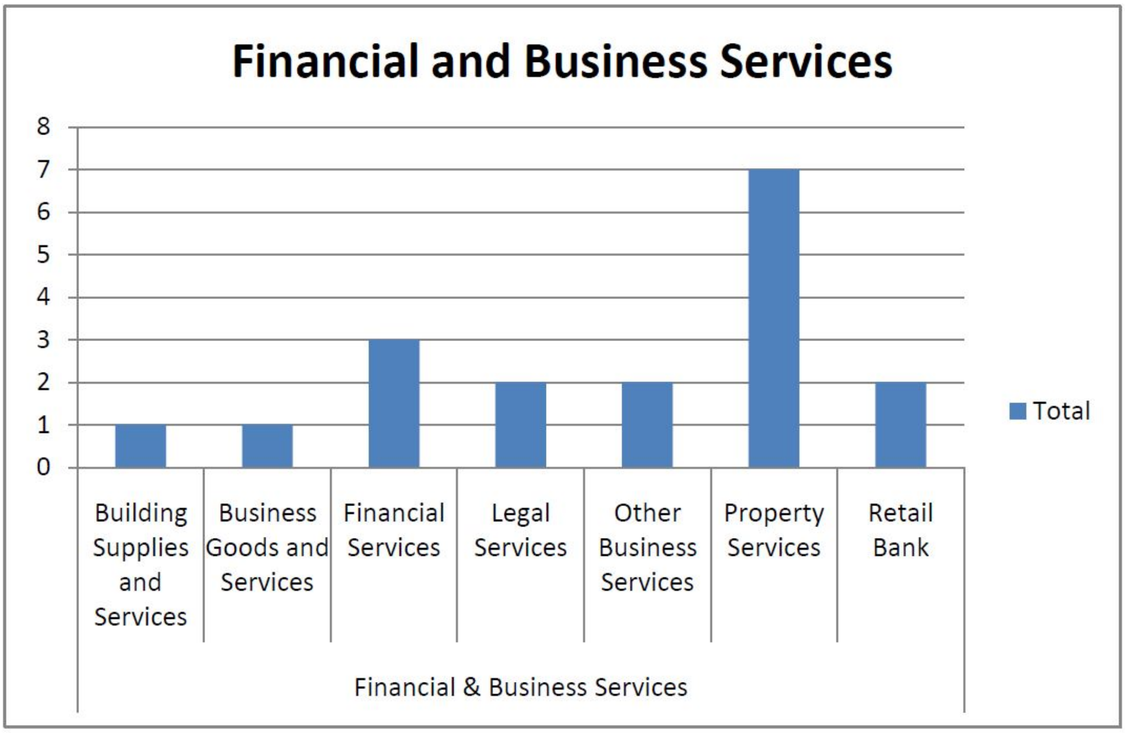

Figure 10.10: Bar Chart showing Financial & Business Services

10.4 Vacancy

10.4.1 Vacancy rates have been defined as the number of units not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total amount of units (vacant and occupied) in the town centre. In Youghal vacancy stands at 13% within the town (52 units of 390 units). This falls outside the normal range limits within a functional market (5-7%).

10.4.2 Of the 244 commercial units surveyed, 44 were vacant representing 18% of the commercial town centre building stock. Commercial vacancy is evident throughout the town core with no obvious blackspots or trends evident.

10.4.3 Of the 146 residential units, 8 units were vacant or 5% of the town centre residential building stock. There is a cluster of vacant residential units at the southern end of the town and principle southern access/ exit route to the town.

10.4.4 Outside the town core there are a high concentration of large disused industrial buildings, dilapidated quayside areas and vacant sites currently zoned as "Existing Built Up Area" which will be dealt with later in the report under Section 1.2.7 of this Report. The degree of vacancy highlighted above is therefore misleading as the there is a clear level of decay within the fabric of the historic town which needs urgent attention.

Figure 1.11a: Vacant Commercial Unit, Youghal

Figure 1.11b: Vacant building

10.4.5 The survey identified 7 infill brownfield Opportunity Sites within the town centre streets of North Main Street, South main Street, Upper Strand Road and Meat Shambles Lane. These are a mix of yards, infill sites and a large disused Mill on Meat Shambles Lane. These could generate a total of 20+ residential units including a proportion suitable for sheltered/ starter housing. Some of these sites would benefit from a multi-disciplinary Council team providing a design-led response to quantify the number of residential units achievable on one of these complex urban sites.

10.4.6 From the 390 buildings surveyed, 244 were classified as having a commercial ground floor and 146 were classified as residential houses within the town. Recent exemptions now allow a change from commercial to residential use, subject to limitations.

10.5 Residential Uses

10.5.1 Residential use (house) represented the largest land use category within the town centre (37%) and is interspersed in the area zoned town centre. Within the upper floors of the building stock a total of 114 residential units were noted across the upper floors. These were largely on the western spine of the Retail Core. There was a significant number (49 units or 43% of the upper floor residential count) of the traditional family units evident within the upper floors of the building stock (i.e. single residential unit above 2 or more levels). The majority of these were a single residential unit over 2 upper floors. The remaining 62% of the upper floor residential stock were single apartments per floor.

10.5.2 A total of 200 units had a separate access to the upper floors which is a key ingredient in securing upper floor usage. The figure represents 51% of the town centre building stock or 70% of the commercial stock. The majority of these 2nd access points were on the street but a small number were via a separate access within a shared foyer.

10.5.3 A total of 89 vacant 1st floors and 25 vacant 2nd and 3rd floors were recorded. The survey work confirmed that upper floor use was predominantly one residential unit (apartment) per floor. On this basis a total of 42 additional residential units could be theoretically accommodated within the vacant upper floors, subject to Building and Fire regulation compliance.

Figure 10.12 Examples of Separate Access to Upper Floors

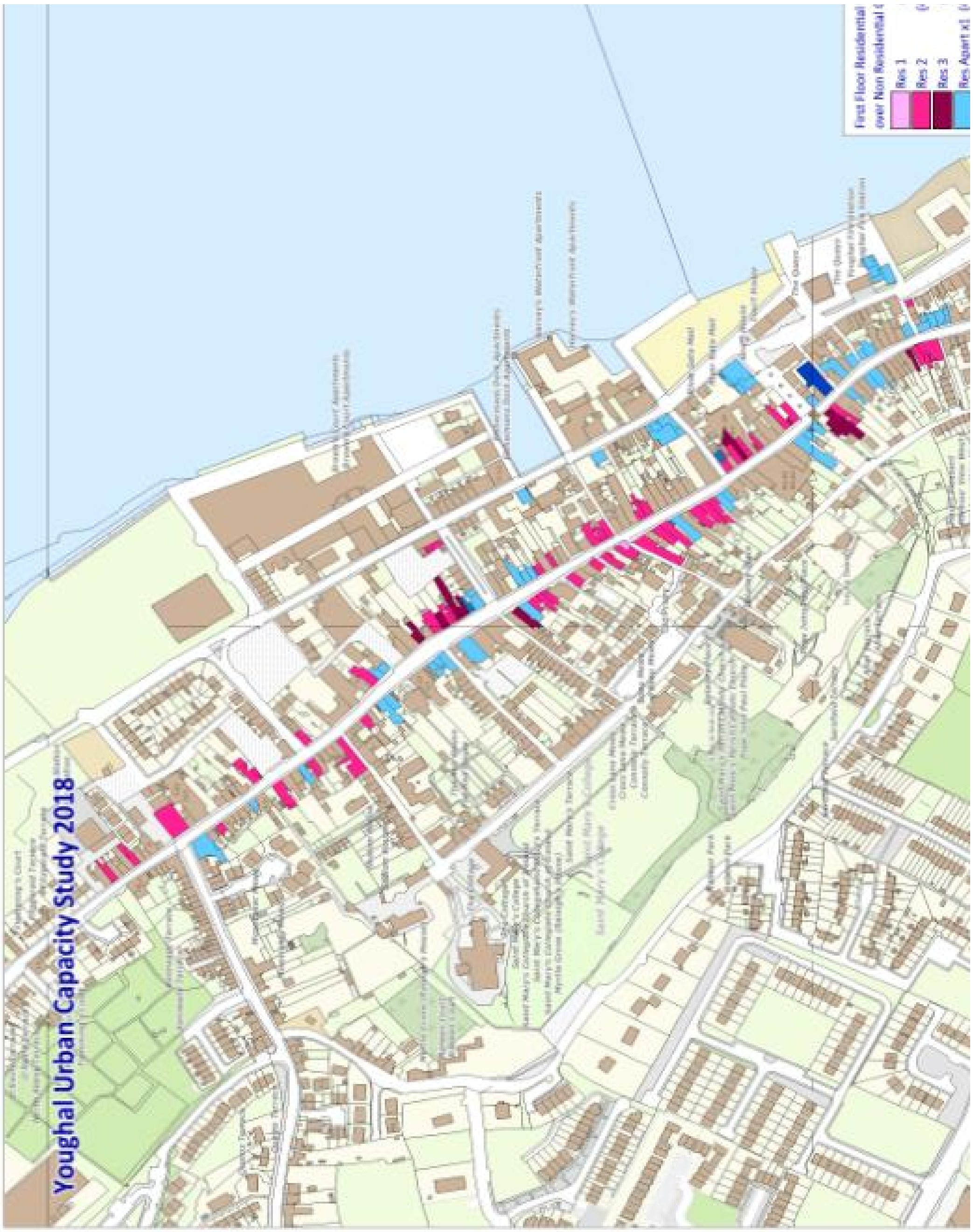

Figure 10.13: Upper Floor Use

10.6 Building Condition

10.6.1 Building condition was largely good 340 out of 390 properties (87%). A total number of 30 (8%) were considered poor and a further 5 were recorded as derelict.

10.7 Existing Built Up Area

10.7.1 Within the "existing built up area" a total of 11 plots were surveyed which were identified as Regeneration Areas in Draft East Cork Local Area Plan (November 2016). These are largely disused tracts of brownfield lands adjacent to the town centre or former industrial buildings at gateway locations within the development boundary of the town. Sites ranged in size from 0.16ha to 2.21ha. Of the 11 plots analysed, 2 sites were discounted because of flood risk issues and a further 2 currently function as important town centre car parks.

10.7.2 The remaining 7 plots have the cumulative capacity to deliver 194 units, mostly of terraced house types or as apartments as part of potential mixed-use redevelopment schemes. The figures arrived at use a density multiplier and so may under or over estimate the potential housing capacity. It would be useful for a multi-disciplinary team to select one of these proposed Regeneration sites and provide a design-led evaluation on the potential of these priority sites to deliver a mixed use scheme with a commercial ground floor and residential overhead. This would confirm the real potential of these lands in terms of housing capacity and provide leadership and certainty for prospective developers of other similar lands within the town.

10.7.3 A proportion of this capacity could also meet any additional tourism accommodation needs within the historic town.

10.8 Special Policy Areas

10.8.1 The Draft Plan identified one site in Youghal as a Special Policy Area (YL-X-01) which has a Business Use classification and hence did not form part of the Urban Capacity Study.

10.9 Overall Urban Capacity

Table 10.2: Youghal Urban Capacity Table

Source	Number	Comment
Vacant Housing	8	
Living Over The Shop (LOTS)	114	New Policy Required
Infill Opportunity Sites	40	Laneway/mews guidance required
Special Policy Areas	0	
Built Up Area/ Regeneration Area	194	Re-classify/ incorporate into existing land supply?
Total	**356 units**	

10.9.1 The cumulative urban capacity from the various sources in Youghal amounts to 356 units. These all have a part to play in addressing the various housing needs of the town and wider Municipal District. It is clear that the infill opportunity sites and vacant upper floors in the existing building stock can satisfy the demand for smaller 2-3 bed units for rental, start-up/ step-down homes and also can address holiday home demands in the town. The take-up of this capacity, however, will need to be met with a new vision and investment programme in the town to broaden its economic base and draw on its strengths as a historic, coastal settlement with a unique mix of opportunity sites that can appeal to a wide range of commercial needs.

10.10 Street Analysis:

10.10.1 The term Urban Structure refers to the pattern or arrangement of development blocks, streets, buildings, open space and landscape which make up our diverse network of towns. Understanding each town's individual urban structure allows us to protect the key features that help define it's unique sense of place and provides the tools to guide future development response to local distinctiveness.

10.10.2 In Youghal there is a formal perimeter block structure evident within the town characterised by a variety of block sizes and shapes which have responded to the town's coastal location and steeply sloping topography. The Urban Block is the foundation of optimising enclosure to a street and generating active frontages with frequent windows and doors. The largely consistent building line makes clear differentiation between public fronts and private space to the rear.

Figure 10.14: Urban Grain, Youghal

10.10.3 The cartographic analysis also shows Youghal has a clear hierarchy of streets and buildings. The primary streets facing North Main Street have deep plots and buildings of 2-3 bays within a rectangular block, transacted by a series of laneways. The secondary streets have a tighter urban grain and smaller block sizes. Streets facing the quayside have a less defined urban structure because of the more haphazard placing of larger stand-alone industrial and marine buildings here. The redevelopment of the identified Regeneration Areas should follow the perimeter block structure and ensure buildings follow the established rhythm and solid to void relationship evident in the streetscape.

10.10.4 Access to the interior of the block is achieved via covered laneways or pends (passageway allowing vehicular access from street to a rear courtyard) within the street.

10.10.5 The survey work identified good activity throughout the day within the primary and secondary streets of the town centre, despite poor weather conditions (wet and cold). There has been some positive heritage-led public realm upgrades throughout the town linking the core to the waterfront. The main challenge is to find a new vision for the town which can build on its strengths as a historic coastal retreat.

10.11 Key Considerations:

A comparative analysis can be drawn with Margate, England. This was similarly a former Victorian sea-side town where vacancy and dereliction prevailed. However, its recovery through the arts is a story of hope and success which Youghal can learn from. The town's Victorian architecture and coastal setting were deemed the perfect location to attract artists who could use the expansive coastal landscape and cheaper, historic properties as an alternative life-style choice to London. The

Turner Contemporary Arts Museum was a catalyst in the town's revival and acted as a symbol of national leadership together with a package for future investment in public spaces and buildings.

This certainty created a new confidence and an arts-led regeneration of the town centre followed. A programme of converting historic properties to family homes was also a key consideration.

See: https://www..local.gov.uk/role-heritage-regeneration-margate

https://www..turnercontemporary.org/COaST%20Turner%20SROI%202015-2016%

10.11.1 National and local Leadership can be achieved by exploring:

- Providing an outreach programme with Crawford College of Art to bring artists to the town;
- Using the town as a showcase/ base for accessing products and activities from the wider Blackwater Valley (fish/ artisan products/ crafts);
- Focussing on providing high quality family homes within the historic building stock and vacant units.
- Providing more activities within the town to boost day trippers and short-stays.

10.12 Town Specific Priorities:

10.12.1 **Town Centre Priorities:** Town Centre: Continued Local Authority leadership required on defining a long term vision for the town – consider arts-based regeneration based on the town's coastal and historic assets, Blackwater Valley and capture tourists along the Ancient East touring route and nearby Waterford Greenway. (See comparative regeneration links for Margate above).

10.12.2 National funding and investment programme urgently required to re-establish confidence in the town including considering possible new Educational Campus to attract new population profiles and inject additional disposable income to support commercial core.

10.12.3 **Waterfront Strategy**: Consider a new redevelopment strategy for the marine interface of the town including market places for fish/ local artisan foods, seating areas and additional waterfront activities serving the region.

10.12.4 **Regeneration sites**: Multi-disciplinary approach to explore design-led approach for one or 2 priority sites setting out a mix of uses and design parameters which could inform other similar town sites.

10.12.5 **Vacancy Priorities** - 44 vacant commercial units out of 244 surveyed (18% of commercial stock). The mix of vacant properties/sites of varying sizes would appeal as artist studios/ cultural centres centred around a new arts and cultural vision for Youghal.

10.12.6 **Retail Priorities**: The comparative retail sector is very weak within the town. Targets needed to introduce additional comparative retailers, especially niche traders and higher value uses. The strong proliferation of butchers and bakeries illustrate the strength in the traditional, local convenience sector which should be promoted and protected. High instances of fast food takeaways noted (6 units) – monitoring required.

10.12.7 **Residential Priorities**: Focus on providing high quality family housing within historic building stock within the town centre. Retaining the strong upper floor traditional residential unit an important consideration. Further potential of vacant upper floors to fulfill residential/ tourist accommodation needs within the compact core. Infill sites along the laneways appropriate for sheltered/ start-up housing units. Survey identified 30 buildings categorised as "Poor" and 5 categorised as "Derelict" – incentives to target poor building quality required.

10.13 County Development Plan Policy Response required on the following:

Protecting the town's urban structure (perimeter blocks – see similar policy at link below):
https://www.wexfordcoco.iesites/default/files/content/Planning/DraftGoreyLAP17-23/UrbanDesignGuidelinesandNeighbourhoodFramework.pdf

Retaining the 2nd own door access in each building & requiring a 2nd access in new development in the town centre - see similar policy at link below;
http://www.www.corkcity.ie/corkcitydevelopmentplan2004/Chapter11_DevelopmentControlStandards.pdf

Development guidance required for laneways (see similar policy at link below – RES11 Mews Lane Housing);

http://www.dlrcoco.iesites/default/files/atoms/files/chapter5_0.pdf*Infrastructure & Investment Priorities:*

Town centre investment programmes needed to focus on new self-sufficient industries in the town including the arts;
Explore links to Waterford Greenway;

Investment in Cultural assets (music/ theatre venues/ waterfront outdoors spaces/ high quality residential & tourism accommodation).

Survey Findings and Recommendations

URBAN CAPACITY STUDY (2019)

Section 3 – Survey Findings and Recommendations

Part A Town Profile - Survey Findings and Comparative Analysis

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This Urban Capacity Study has involved land use surveys of the town centre areas and part of the existing built up area of ten towns - the nine former town Council towns of Clonakilty, Cobh, Fermoy, Kinsale, Macroom, Mallow, Midleton, Skibbereen and Youghal, and the town of Bantry.

1.1.2 In all data in relation to 3,524 units/plots across 10 town centres has been recorded - over 70,000 data entries which are available to be shared with internal Cork County Council Departments.

1.1.3 In light of the National Planning Framework requirement of accommodating 30 % of all future new housing units within the existing built up area of our towns and villages, a key objective of the study was to investigate the potential for additional housing units within the core of these towns. The survey focused on the former town council towns as the development plans for these towns are currently being reviewed as part of the review of the County Development Plan. Ideally, a similar exercise is required for the other towns in the county.

1.1.4 The survey work also provides an up to date snap-shot of the land-use profiles, vacant units and dereliction within each town centre which allows comparative analysis to be undertaken and trends to be established. A photographic record is now available for each building and street within the study areas.

1.2 Town Centre - Overview

1.2.1 Table 3.1 illustrates the overall land-use mix across all 10 towns at ground floor level. The predominant use in almost all towns was Residential, which in most cases accounted for at least one quarter to one third of the buildings surveyed. The main exception to this trend was Midleton, where residential uses within the town centre zoned area accounted for only 13%. This may be a reflection of the strength of Midleton's commercial base and the demand for commercial uses at ground floor level. Fermoy is also lower than the others at 20%, while Youghal had the highest Residential proportion at 38%.

Table 3.1: Town Centre Ground Floor Profile

Town	Units Surveyed	Pop 2016	Retail Comp	Retail Conv	Retail Service	Leisure Service	Financial & Business Service	Health & Medical Service	Public Service	Residential	Other Uses	Vacancy
Bantry	358	2,722	16%	3%	6%	9%	7%	3%	4%	35%	8%	9%
Clonakilty	371	4,592	18%	4%	5%	12%	7%	4%	5%	30%	5%	10%
Cobh	229	12,800	15%	3%	7%	16%	5%	2%	4%	28%	2%	18%
Fermoy	296	6,585	20%	4%	10%	10%	7%	2%	5%	20%	6%	16%
Kinsale	311	5,281	19%	4%	7%	22%	7%	2%	2%	26%	4%	7%
Macroom	344	3,765	13%	3%	6%	7%	5%	2%	2%	33%	6%	23%
Mallow	499	12,459	16%	3%	9%	8%	10%	3%	3%	28%	3%	17%
Midleton	383	12,496	24%	5%	12%	12%	9%	3%	3%	13%	6%	13%
Skibbereen	343	2,778	16%	3%	7%	9%	7%	2%	4%	32%	3%	17%
Youghal	390	7,963	12%	5%	6%	10%	5%	2%	4%	38%	5%	13%

1.2.2 Retail Comparison is the next most prominent sector in most towns within the commercial stock of the town centre area. Youghal (12%) and Macroom (13%) have the lowest representation in this sector while Midleton has a strong comparative retail sector at 24%, reflecting key niches such as Ladies Wear. Fermoy (20%) and Kinsale (19%) also do well in this sector.

1.2.3 Retail Service and Leisure Services generally share similar proportion each of the town centre mix. Retail Services which includes Dry Cleaners, Post Offices, Hairdressers/Barbers and Health and Beauty premises account for 6-12% of the town centre mix.

1.2.4 The Leisure Services sector is a good barometer of a town's vitality and evening economy. Uses include Bars, Restaurants, Cafes and Hotels/ Guesthouses and provide 7-22% of the ground floor town centre building stock. Kinsale performed the strongest in this category, representing 22% of the overall town centre mix. This reflects the town's strong tourism offer and its reputation as a food destination. The towns with the highest Leisure Services sector (Kinsale 22%; Cobh 16%) both have an important tourism role.

1.2.5 Within the Leisure Services sector most towns had a strong representation of Bars, Wine Bars and Public houses within the Retail Core (Kinsale 21; Bantry 16; Cobh 14; Youghal 14; Clonakilty 12 and Mallow 12). Fermoy and Macroom had the lowest representation of Bars, Wine Bars and Public houses with 8 units recorded each. Midleton and Skibbereen had 9 units each. Midleton had the highest number of restaurants at 17 reflecting its food centred economy, followed by Kinsale (14 restaurants) and Clonakilty (13 restaurants).

1.2.6 Financial and Business Services remains a fundamentally important aspect to the attraction of town centres as places to do business. Mallow is the strongest performing town in this sector, closely followed by Midleton, both in terms of the town centre and number of units within the Retail Core.

1.3 Retail Core Trends

1.3.1 Table 3.2 illustrates the trends in the commercial land use mix in the Retail Core of the 10 towns between 2011/2013 and 2017/2018. The retail core comprises the primary and secondary shopping streets only of the town. These figures reflect the diversity of uses within that area.

Table 3.2: Comparative Diversity of Uses (Retail Core)

Use Class	Retail Comparison (no. of units)		Retail Convenience (no. of units)		Retail Service (no. of units)		Leisure Services (no. of units)		Financial & Business Services (no. of units)		Health & Medical Services (no. of units)		Public Service (no. of units)	
Settlement	**2012 / 2013**	**2017 / 2018**	**2012 / 2013**	**2017 / 2018**	**2012 / 2013**	**2017 / 2018**	**2012 / 2013**	**2017 / 2018**	**2012 / 2013**	**2017 / 2018**	**2012 / 2013**	**2017 / 2018**	**2012 / 2013**	**2017 / 2018**
Bantry	52	37	10	12	22	23	29	33	20	22	4	8	17	6
Clonakilty	69	68	14	13	21	19	42	46	23	25	8	16	12	19
Cobh	23	31	6	4	15	12	26	27	10	10	0	0	4	4
Fermoy	56	55	16	12	22	27	31	30	15	15	2	1	5	7
Kinsale	47	53	13	11	20	19	53	60	17	19	2	7	10	5
Macroom	35	40	11	11	15	16	24	22	15	15	8	7	3	4
Midleton	77	60	18	13	29	32	37	38	25	28	3	6	4	2
Mallow	94	80	17	14	35	46	43	42	35	47	6	15	11	16
Skibbereen	54	40	12	4	16	14	36	22	25	21	6	3	8	11
Youghal	46	41	14	15	16	19	35	39	14	17	8	8	13	15

1.3.2 Comparative work with survey results in 2012/2013 show the Retail Comparative sector is under the greatest threat in most towns. Towns experiencing marked losses in this sector include Bantry, Midleton, Mallow and Skibbereen. This may be a result of growing influences from online shopping and uncertain economic outlook as a result of Brexit and other external factors. Cobh, Kinsale and Macroom are the exception to this trend. Strong growth in Cobh may reflect the expansion of the tourism sector attracting increased footfall in the town which is supporting a growing commercial base.

1.3.3 The Retail Convenience Sector has recorded small growth in Bantry and Youghal, remains the same in Macroom and has declined in all other towns. This may be a result of the relocation of convenience uses (supermarkets) to locations outside the core Retail Area.

1.3.4 Retail Services which includes Dry Cleaners, Hairdressers, Health and Beauty and Travel Agents are an important element to the range of services on offer in town centres, representing 6% -12% of the overall town centre mix. Mallow has the highest number of units within the Retail Core (46 units) with growth of 9 units recorded since 2012. Cobh had the lowest number of units (12 units, down 3 units since the last Retail Survey).

1.3.5 The Leisure Services sector appears the most stable since the last survey, with mostly minor increases and decreases across the board. Kinsale has the highest number of Leisure Services (60 units), almost 3 times the amount of the lowest performing towns. Macroom and Skibbereen have the lowest representation of units in the Retail Core, both with 22 each.

1.3.6 Financial and Business Services remains a fundamentally important aspect to the attraction of town centres as places to do business. Mallow is the strongest performing town in this sector, with growth in the number of units from 35 to 47. This sector appears relatively stable, with losses only recorded in Skibbereen. It is noted that there are clear links between the provision of certain Public Services within a town (e.g. Court Services) that create a multiplier effect of supporting Financial and Business Services (e.g. Legal Services) which are co-dependant and essential to the vitality of the town centre.

1.4 Residential Use and Opportunities

1.4.1 Residential use in town centres continues to be an essential ingredient in supporting town centre shops and services, achieving passive supervision, activity beyond business hours and maintaining vibrancy. In terms of ground floor uses, Youghal has the highest Residential proportion within its town centre at 38%, followed by Bantry at 35%. The town with the lowest residential element at ground floor level was Midleton at 13%.

1.4.2 Upper floor residential uses are also a key feature of town centre uses as they can be located within the core of the town centre, complementing commercial uses at ground level. Table 3.3 highlights the survey results for residential use within the upper floors of the town centre building stock. A total of 1,692 residential units were evident across all towns which is a very positive finding. Traditionally, buildings were designed with a separate access to the upper floors either from the street or internal foyer to allow this vertical mix of uses.

1.4.3 Kinsale had proportionally the highest number of upper floor residential units, reflecting the demand for tourism, rental and family accommodation within the compact core of the town. Youghal had the highest proportion of traditional family units (i.e. 2 storey upper level residential unit) above the ground floor retail unit and this positive characteristic should be protected and acknowledged as part its unique urban characteristics. Youghal also had the highest number of units with a separate access to the upper floor.

Table: 3.3 Living over the shop – Upper floor Residential Use

Settlement	No of Upper floor units	Comment
Bantry	264	Largely located on the secondary streets of the Retail Core.
Clonakilty	169	53 units were noted as being classified as traditional family quarters (2 + floors over commercial base)
Cobh	137	67 units were noted as being classified as traditional family quarters (2 + floors over commercial base) and clustered at West Beach and Midleton Street.
Fermoy	171	Upper floor residential use clustered at Mc Curtain Street, Elbow Lane and Kent Street.
Kinsale	195	Scattered throughout the core & largely 1 unit per floor.
Macroom	78	Scattered throughout the core
Mallow	268	Very limited traditional unit remains (4 only).
Midleton	146	Mains Street remains good representation of upper floor use.
Skibbereen	150	44 units were noted as being classified as traditional family quarters (2 + floors over commercial base) at Upper Bridge Street and North Street.
Youghal	114	49 units were noted as being classified as traditional family quarters (2 + floors over commercial base).
Total	**1692**	

1.4.4 Survey work highlighted main opportunities within the towns to promote the re-use and rehabilitation of the existing building stock, including the upper floors, for residential use.

1.5 Vacancy and Dereliction

1.5.1 Table 3.4 details vacancy (ground floor) and dereliction levels in the towns. Town centre vacancy rates across all uses in the 10 towns range from 7% in Kinsale to 23% in Macroom.

1.5.2 When residential uses are excluded, the vacancy rates amongst the remaining business premises are higher, ranging from 10% in Kinsale and Bantry, to over 20% in Cobh, Skibbereen and Mallow, with a high of 28% in Macroom. A report by the Chartered Surveyors of Ireland in 2018 references the national commercial vacancy rate in Ireland as being 13.3% in 2018 with an average figure of 12% recorded in Cork. Save for Bantry and Kinsale, all other towns have higher than average non residential vacancy rates.

1.5.3 It is important to understand that there is always some level of vacancy in town centres (lease changes etc) and there can be complex reasons why properties remain vacant or fall derelict long term. Above average vacancy levels can be symptomatic of a complex set of issues, some arising from local factors such a contracting local employment base, contracting retail base or traffic congestion reducing the attractiveness of a location for local shopping trips. During the survey work it was evident that in some areas, like Macroom and in parts of Mallow, that high levels of through traffic, with associated noise and vibration impacts, can lead to an unpleasant town centre environment and can be a contributing factor in depressing demand for space in some areas.

1.5.4 Given the number of premises surveyed, the number of derelict properties is generally quite low. Macroom has the most at 11 units, followed by Midleton at 8 units. The size of vacant and derelict premises varies from individual small town centre units to larger commercial or institutional buildings / sites. The buildings recorded as "poor" are, however, another consideration as these are most likely to become at risk of dereliction in the future. This combined group of properties should become the focus of our future actions through use of our statutory powers. Council owned assets should be the initial target followed by third party owners.

Table 3.4: Comparative Town Centre Vacancy (Ground Floor) & Derelict Units

Settlement	**Town Centre Vacancy 2017/2018 (All uses)**	**Non Residential Uses Vacancy 2017/2018**	**Derelict Units 2017/2018**		**Vacancy Levels (Retail Core) 2012/2013**	**Vacancy Levels (Retail Core) 2017/2018**
Bantry	9%	10%	3		14%	16%
Clonakilty	10%	14%	3		13%	10%
Cobh	18%	21%	4		27%	23%
Fermoy	16%	16%	1		18%*	15%
Kinsale	7%	10%	3		10%	8%
Macroom	23%	28%	11		17%	25%
Mallow	17.5%	22%	6		17%	18%
Midleton	13%	15%	8		12%	11%
Skibbereen*	17%	21%	5		26%*	18%
Youghal	13%	18%	5		25%	14%

*Skibbereen data relates to slightly different survey areas - not comparable

Retail Core Vacancy Trends

1.5.5 Table 3.4 also illustrates vacancy trends in the Retail Core since between 2012/2013 and 2017/2018. It is clear that most towns have experienced a reduction in retail core vacancy levels as the economy recovers with Youghal and Skibbereen having a very significant recovery.

1.5.6 However some towns have experienced increased levels of vacancy, most notably Macroom. In the case of Macroom, three of the main supermarkets in the town – Dunnes Stores, Aldi and Lidi are located outside the retail core to the east of the town centre and may be drawing trade to that area (which is also zoned for town centre uses in the Town Development Plan). Bantry has also recorded a small increase in vacancy levels.

Residential Vacancy

1.5.7 Residential vacancy varies across all towns as evident in Table 3.5. Kinsale and Midleton have the lowest levels of vacant ground floor residential units (1% and 2% respectively). Fermoy has the highest level of residential vacancy proportionally at 16% or 5 units. Geographically, these are clustered in at the eastern end of the town centre near the former mart site and Mc Curtain Street. Macroom has the highest number of vacant houses amounting to 15 units).

1.5.8 In total, 68 vacant housing units were recorded across the 10 towns.

Upper Floor Vacancy

1.5.9 Upper floor vacancy is also an important consideration in all towns. There is considerable capacity within the under-utilised building stock of the town centre to accommodate residential and small commercial uses. The survey work has identified a potential residential capacity of **781** units within the upper floors of the existing building stock. A range of policy initiatives need to be considered to attract investment to revitalise the upper floors of our town centres' building stock and align with the National Planning Framework's objectives of achieving compact growth, place-making and our transition to a low carbon economy.

Table: 3.5 Residential Vacancy (Town Centre)		
Settlement	**% Residential Vacancy 2017/2018**	**Estimated Residential Unit Capacity of Vacant Upper Floors (units) 2017/2018**
Bantry	7% (11 units)	52
Clonakilty	1% (1 unit)	92
Cobh	7% (5 units)	76
Fermoy	16% (12 units)	92
Kinsale	1% (1 unit)	54
Macroom	12% (15 units)	87
Mallow	7% (10 units)	130
Midleton	2% (1 unit)	59
Skibbereen	9% (11 units)	78
Youghal	5% (8 units)	114
Total	**68**	**781**

1.6 Infill/ Opportunity/ Regeneration Sites

1.6.1 The survey work identified a series of sites in each of the towns surveyed capable of delivering additional housing and commercial uses. Sites ranged from small infill plots capable of delivering a limited number of residential units to large tracks of backlands capable of creating new mixed use urban quarters in some of our historic County Towns. The total estimated capacity from these sites amounts to **2,090** units as outlined in Table 3.6. A more detailed breakdown on these sites is provided in Table 3.7.

1.6.2 Most of our towns have small urban infill opportunity sites on laneways and under-utilised section of street (e.g. derelict garages, sheds etc) which can perform an important function of accommodating small starter/ age-friendly homes at the heart of the community close to key facilities. A total of **189 additional units** were identified from this source.

Table 3.6 Estimated Residential Capacity of lands within Urban Core		
Settlement	**Smaller Infill Opportunity Sites (potential units)**	**Built Up Area / Backlands / Regeneration Area/ Special Policy Areas (potential Units)**
Bantry	9	298
Clonakilty	25	203
Cobh	6	140
Fermoy	0	24
Kinsale	12	200
Macroom	25	209
Mallow	25	541
Midleton	35	206
Skibbereen	12	75
Youghal	40	194
Total	**189**	**2,090**

Table 3.7 Future capacity Source by site (Infill/ Regeneration/ Special Policy Area/ Built Up Area)		
Town	**Site Location**	**Description**
Bantry	New Street	Windfall Site (former Supervalue site)
		Vacant building
	Blackrock Lane, Tower Street, Tower Lane, Old Barrack Rd.	Infill Opportunities
Clonakilty	Lamb Street	Infill housing
	Convent Site	Redevelopment/ re-use of vacant buildings/ sensitive new build in curtilage may be possible.
Cobh	West Beach/ East Beach/ Harbour Hill	Infill housing
	Ticknock	Housing
Fermoy	Convent Lands	Sensitive response required in ACA.
	St. Bernard’s Place (FY-SPA-01)	Opportunity Site comprising of railway buildings in ACA
	Mc Curtain Street	Infill Opportunity
Kinsale	Pier Road	Regeneration Site
	Lower O’ Connell Street	Infill housing
Macroom	Backlands (north of Main Street)	Significant brownfield land capable of delivering new urban quarter reinforcing the urban core.
Mallow	Thomas Davis Street/ Car Park	Derelict Site including large backland

Table 3.7 Future capacity Source by site (Infill/ Regeneration/ Special Policy Area/ Built Up Area)		
Town	**Site Location**	**Description**
		opportunity site & laneway
Midleton	Midleton Business & Enterprise Park	Large under-utilise/ brownfield site
Skibbereen	Upper Bridge Street	Derelict Property & vacant Mill in backlands.
	North Street	Backlands to west of street have potential
Youghal	Shambles Lane	Vacant Mill building
	North Main Street	Infill Sites
	South Main Street	Infill Sites
	Upper Strand Rd.	Infill Sites
	Meat Shambles Lane	Infill Sites
	Courtisan Carpets Site; Breton Rd (adjoining Tesco site); Dolphins Square; Catherine Square/ O' Neill Crowley St.; Catherine Street/ Waterfront	Regeneration Areas
Youghal	South Cross Lane/ Friar Street; Devonshire Arms Hotel; Loreto Convent and Marymount/Ashton Court; Seafield	Regeneration Areas

1.7 The Urban Block/ Streetscape Analysis

1.7.1 The analysis of the urban grain across all 10 towns has demonstrated common threads within the urban structure of our towns. The historic origin of the towns surveyed have an impact on their morphology. Earlier walled Medieval towns such as Kinsale and Youghal have a tighter urban grain at their core with a less formal and more intimate streetscape. Later Victorian and Georgian extensions to the town have a formal block layout with wider blocks and wider plots.

1.7.2 Later planned towns such as Bantry, Fermoy and Midleton have a more structured perimeter block layout, intersected by laneways and pends[1] giving access to the interior. Streets have a consistent building line and the placement of windows and doors create a rhythm in the street. It is important that infill development and new urban block additions are mindful to the local urban structure in both the layout and design of new buildings. Where large opportunity sites have been identified in towns such as Macroom and Youghal detailed guidance would help deliver an appropriate response.

[1] A pend is an archway access point in a building frontage, giving access to the rear of the building or to an internal courtyard.

1.7.3 The structure of our historic towns has delivered high density, sustainable living environments where people largely lived, worked and socialised within their local area. Many towns have successful examples of three and four storey buildings which provide good examples of how new development could deliver compact growth and more sustainable densities within the towns.

1.7.4 Over time the permeability of the town cores have been compromised in places by the loss of laneways and closure of pends. It is desirable to protect and reinforce the permeability of our towns as it allows direct pedestrian flow which increases activity and supervision within the street. A policy response in the County Development Plan Review is recommended in this regard.

1.8 Key Outputs

1.8.1 The study provides useful practical information on the current land use profile of the ten town centres areas surveyed and a valuable insight into the commercial vitality of the town centres. A database of the information and associated mapping is available from the planning policy unit and can be shared with each Directorate as required.

1.8.2 The information has already been used to inform a number of successful Cork County Council funding applications under:

(a) the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (2018)

(b) the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (2018)

(c) recent EIB and CEB funding applications to progress significant infrastructural projects within the County.

(d) other Domestic Funding Bids (e.g. Heritage/ Conservation/ Urban Renewal projects).

(e) Town and Village Renewal Scheme

1.8.3 In line with the original objectives, the survey work provides valuable information to inform the land use strategy for the ten towns surveyed in terms of the new policies and objectives to be considered for these towns as part of the CDP review including:

(a) Review of areas zoned for town centre uses.

(b) Vacant / Derelict / Opportunity Sites suitable for new uses / regeneration/ new zoning approach and active land management.

(c) Opportunities for intensification though better use of upper floors.

(d) Data in relation to the potential capacity for development within the “existing built up area” of the towns which will inform the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan.

(e) Up-to-date data for the Retail Strategy (County and Metropolitan);

(f) Approach to new policy formulation for town centres and placemaking. Data gathered has identified the need for new policies on “own door access”, protecting the structure of the urban blocks including “pend” access to the rear etc.

1.8.4 A selection of sites/ properties could be explored further as part of a pilot project to act as a tool of engagement with landowners and incentivise the regeneration of key town centre priorities as part of our Active Land Management toolkit.

Section 3

Part B Recommendations / Next Steps

1.9 Vacancy / Opportunity sites

1.9.1 Vacancy within our town centres represents a missed opportunity for growth, prosperity and stronger communities. Finding new uses for vacant units brings new people and opportunities back into our towns and allows everyone to benefit from the financial investment that has already taken place in public infrastructure.

1.9.2 With a few exceptions, Commercial Vacancy levels in the town centres surveyed remain high. The Annual Commercial Property Review and Outlook (2018) by the Chartered Surveyors of Ireland recorded a national commercial vacancy figure in 2018 of 13.3% with Cork recording a 12% vacancy rate. Areas of vacancy blackspots have been identified in the individual town profiles and this information has been mapped and can be shared with other responsible Directorate/ Municipal District offices.

1.9.3 Consideration is needed at the MD level as to what practical initiatives the Council could take to address vacancy. Proactive engagement with property owners, similar to that underway for getting vacant houses back into use, should be considered on a town by town basis, together with a cross Directorate approach to assessing the potential of the available building stock in each town:

Table 3.8 Future Actions & Responsibilities	
Recommendations	**Responsible Directorate**
The study has identified the significant potential for delivering additional residential uses within the ten town centres surveyed, namely via the revitalisation of existing vacant houses (68 units), the re-use of the existing upper floors (781 units) and via a series of small infill (189 units) and larger opportunity and regeneration sites (2,090 units). Residential use is not the only use that these buildings or sites could be used for - other commercial, employment or community uses may also be appropriate. (a) The potential of these units/sites to deliver new social or affordable housing stock should be explored in detail by the Housing Directorate and the Approved Housing Bodies operating in the Cork market. The Council should proactively seek to be meet a specific portion of its housing requirement from the existing	Housing Directorate

Table 3.8 Future Actions & Responsibilities	
Recommendations	**Responsible Directorate**
building stock / brownfield land on an annual basis. Sites units may also be suitable for other employment or community uses.	Municipal Districts Economic Development
(b) A list of priority sites could be selected for proactive intervention similar to that undertaken for the Strategic Land Reserve Sites, for example, in order to kick start development of brownfield land. See Appendix.	Planning Municipal Districts
(c) Addressing vacancy, dereliction and securing redevelopment of regeneration / opportunity sites should be a core task of the Active Land Management Team, in addition to pursuing the development of greenfield land.	Planning Municipal Districts
(d) Council could provide soft supports in the form of multidisciplinary advice (planning, fire, conservation, architectural, legal etc) in a targeted way to owners of specific sites in order to reduce the challenge faced by the private sector in taking on some of the challenges of brownfield development.	Planning Architects Fire Officers Engineers Law Department Economic Development
(e) In support of (d) above there may be opportunities to use funding from the Economic Development Fund / Community grant funding or other funding streams in a strategic way to target specific initiatives within towns to deal with vacancy, dereliction or regeneration. The Beacon Retail Initiative for example, was used to support and mentor town centre retailers in the past. A similar type of scheme could be aimed at building owners / small local developers to provide them supports in redeveloping town centre sites.	Economic Development Municipal Districts Planning
(f) The LEOs and Economic Development Section may be able to link smaller	Economic Development Municipal Districts

Table 3.8 Future Actions & Responsibilities	
Recommendations	**Responsible Directorate**
business start ups with suitable town centre premises - other Ludgate type initiatives or pop up shops for the new food producers the Council supports to sell their products – an alternative to the farmers market. Council's current strategy seems to focus on greenfield sites / industrial estates whereas they may also be suitable sites for light industrial uses within the built up area of the towns.	Economic Development Municipal Districts
(g) As part of its tourism / economic development strategy the Council could seek to raise awareness of the potential for more tourism services in the towns - small scale tourist accommodation, pop up shops (seasonal or otherwise) etc. Council could seek to highlight the commercial potential of increased visitor numbers in an area.	Municipal Districts
(h) Address wider town centre issues where relevant (congestion/ public realm/ safety).	Municipal Districts Property Section
(i) Proactively include sites on vacant /derelict sites register to encourage redevelopment and be proactive about acquiring sites to clear title and selling on where feasible.	Municipal Districts Economic Development
(j) Council should engage with local Chambers of Commerce / business group to develop joint initiatives to support retail uses within the towns.	Housing Municipal Districts Economic Development
(k) In all Council activities the potential of existing building stock / vacant sites should be considered above greenfield options.	Planning
(l) Development Plans / Local Area Plans can be used to give a statutory footing to the development strategy for key vacant / regeneration sites as such plans come up	

Table 3.8 Future Actions & Responsibilities	
Recommendations	**Responsible Directorate**
for review.	

1.10 Planning Policy

1.10.1 There are a number of areas where planning policy may need to be changed to adapt to changing town centre environments and the recommendations in this regard are as follows:

(a) The role of town centres is changing and the Retail Comparison sector is contracting in most towns in response to the growth of on-line shopping and other factors. The policy response in the County Development Plan will need to ensure the greatest level of flexibility in the town centre as new community/employment/cultural/residential trends emerge in lieu of a smaller Retail Comparison sector. This may also mean encouraging the merging of buildings to create larger commercial footprints, such as in Hannahs', Fermoy.

(b) Policies to encourage a greater proportion of Retail Convenience in the town centre would benefit residents and visitors alike. This may include smaller Convenience formats (e.g. Tesco Express, local Delis) or the merging of a number of smaller units to achieve larger footprints to avoid further car based dependency in the town.

(c) The survey work identified gaps in our policy approach to certain important urban characteristics that help maintain sustainable and high density town centres which need to be addressed as part of the CDP review, including the following:

- Urban Blocks – protecting the permeability, structure and morphology of the perimeter block.
- Own Door Access – protecting separate access to the upper floor & requiring new development to include separate own door access.
- Infill development – design requirements to ensure successful integration with the urban context.
- Mews development – policy to encourage mews development at appropriate locations
- Basements – policy to encourage use of basements for appropriate town centre uses
- Fast food takeaways – policy to ensure the management and operation does not impinge on residential uses within the town.
- Greening Town Centres – policy to ensure town centres are adaptable to climate change

- Opportunity Sites – sets out the Council future development priorities per town.

- Density – encouragement of high densities through optimisation of existing building stock and rejuvenation of brownfield sites.

1.11 Next Steps

1.11.1 The data has provided detailed analysis on the health of the town centres surveyed and arising from this there are clear actions necessary to address issues raised, opportunities identified and creating stronger cross-sectoral Local Authority networks to respond to the often complex issues facing our County Towns.

1.11.2 The key next steps are summarised below. These need to be channelled to the appropriate Directorate/ section as highlighted throughout the document. Critical themes to be addressed are as follows:

- Need for continued Local Authority leadership and greater collaboration to address the changing town centre environments;
- Greater use of statutory tools to target dereliction and properties at risk of becoming derelict across the towns. Targeting Local Authority assets and private sector to address building stock.
- Tailored plan-led responses to address the diverse and complex issues and opportunities arising;
- Enhancement of the public realm to create a more attractive, people-friendly destination;
- Use of incentives and disincentives for encouraging new business, community facilities and homes (Flexibility by use of rates/ development contributions and taxes; grants, CPOs, targeted budget allocation);
- Enhance a sense of place by attracting/ protecting niche traders, local food producers, local artists;
- Add vibrancy through calendar of events/ festivals to draw footfall & mix of uses
- Marketing and promotion by supporting digitisation of local retailers and marketing the town's unique selling point;
- Continued monitoring

Appendices

URBAN CAPACITY STUDY (2019)

APPENDIX A

Town Centre Survey

Town:	***Surveyor:***				***Date:***	
Building Audit						
	***Use* Category:** Retail Convenience (R Con); Retail Comparison (R Com); Retail Services (RS); Leisure Services (RL); Financial & Business Services (C);	Health & Medical Services (HMS); Public Service (PS); Religious Service (RS); Residential (Res); Car Park (CP); Vacant (V)		**Access** Is there a separate access to the upper floors? If **No** is there potential for one to the side/rear?		****Condition*** Good (G); Poor (P); Derelict (D).
Street Name/ Building Name:	***Ground Floor Use***	***First Floor Use***	***Second Floor Use***	***Yes***	***No - Comment***	
No. 1						
No. 2						
No. 3						
No. 4						
No. 5						
No. 6						

Street Name/ Building Name:	***Ground Floor Use***	***First Floor Use***	***Second Floor Use***	***Yes***	***No - Comment***	****Condition*** Good (G); Poor (P); Derelict (D).
No. 7						
No. 8						
No. 9						
No. 10						
No. 11						
No. 12						
No. 13						
No. 14						
No. 15						
No. 16						
No. 17						
No. 18						
No. 19						
No.20						

<table>
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Good (G);
Poor (P);
Derelict (D).</th></tr>
<tr><td>No. 21</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>No. 22</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>No. 23</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
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<tr><td>No. 25</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>*Building Condition Criteria</td><td colspan="6">Good: Habitable & well maintained
Poor: Habitable but in need of some maintenance
Derelict: Unhabitable (no roof/ no windows/ no door and/or structurally unsound)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="7">Street Audit:
Weather Condition:</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td>Number of people?
(Gender/ age profile)</td><td></td><td>Condition of street?
(Width satisfactory for push chair/ wheelchair; paving even/uneven)</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Places to sit & linger?
(public spaces; outdoor dining; benches etc.)</td><td></td><td>Do I feel safe?
(overlooked/ activity on street)</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Additional comments/ observations:</td></tr>
</table>

APPENDIX B

Built Up Area Survey		
Town:		
Surveyor:	***Date:***	
Existing Built-Up Area	*Site Description (including photographic record):* *(Checklist: Aspect, Topography, % suitable for housing, Potential housing yield, House Type, Access*	*Surrounding Area Description* *(Checklist: Building height; urban grain; predominant use)*
Site Code (e.g. BT –EBUA -01 with map)		
Site Code		

Existing Built-Up Area	*Site Description (including photographic record):* *(Checklist: Aspect, Topography, % suitable for housing, Potential housing yield, House Type, Access*	*Surrounding Area Description* *(Checklist: Building height; urban grain; predominant use)*
Site Code		
Site Code		

Existing Built-Up Area	*Site Description (including photographic record):* *(Checklist: Aspect, Topography, % suitable for housing, Potential housing yield, House Type, Access*	*Surrounding Area Description* *(Checklist: Building height; urban grain; predominant use)*
Site Code		
Site Code		

Existing Built-Up Area	*Site Description (including photographic record):* *(Checklist: Aspect, Topography, % suitable for housing, Potential housing yield, House Type, Access*	*Surrounding Area Description* *(Checklist: Building height; urban grain; predominant use)*
Site Code		
Site Code		