



County Development Plan Review

Retail

Part B: Town Centre Study – Volume 2

November 2012

Planning Policy Unit
Cork County Council

Retail in Non-Metropolitan Towns and Town Centres – Section 11 Background Paper

These background papers set out some of the factual, contextual information and sets out some of the issues in relation to both town centres and retailing which have been used to inform the Section 11 Consultation Document and forms part of the process of preparing the forthcoming Draft County Development Plan.

The background papers are composed primarily of 2 parts:

Part A – Non-Metropolitan Retail Background Paper – This document is primarily composed of an assessment of the key facts and figures (where available) and some suggestions in relation to the approach to retail in non-metropolitan Cork. The Metropolitan area (Cork City, Suburbs and Metropolitan Towns) has been excluded at this stage and is the subject of the Cork Joint Retail Study currently being prepared by the Consultants John Spain and Associates as is a requirement of the Retail Planning Guidelines (2012). This will inform the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan in due course.

Part B – Town Centre Review (Volumes 1 & 2) - This is the full review and report on 12 Town Centres in the County prepared which was presented to Planning Policy Group in May 2012. It remains in Draft format. The towns studied were chosen generally based on their size of population (> 5000) and their representative geographical spread. The individual surveys looked in detail at two key Town Centre Health Check Indicators (also known as Vitality and Viability Indicators) i.e. Diversity of use and Vacancy while it also gave some consideration to other issues.

Note: Although November 2012 is the cover date on this document the data used to inform the document was largely collected in late 2011 and throughout 2012 as indicated above.

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Ballincollig Town Centre Diversity of Use/Vacancy Survey:

Census 2011 Population: 17,368

Survey Date: 14th February 2012

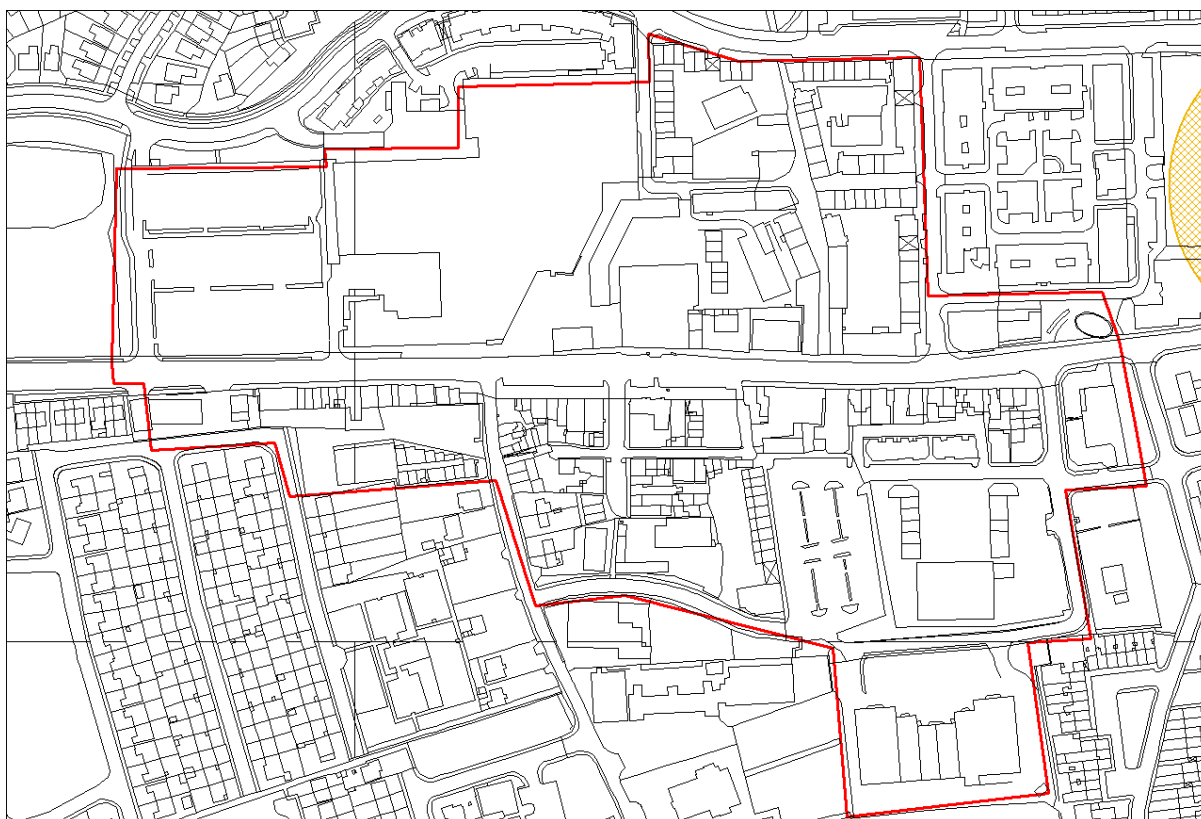
Surveyed by: M. Quinn (EP) and Lorraine Kennedy (SEP)

Weather Conditions: Light wind and sunny (Approximately 9 degrees)

The survey methodology:

The Use Survey recorded uses in 208 units within an area which could be considered the identifiable town centre/retail core. There were a number of uses occurring on streets just outside of this area in particular in the complex around the Old Barracks. Primarily these are office based uses. Surveys of the town centre indicate a wide range of different uses and types of property within the town centre (as mapped in this study). Ballincollig Town Centre accommodates a range of retail facilities and an additional range of non-retail facilities and activities.

Map 1 - Identified Survey Retail Core (red) – Ballincollig Town Centre Survey Area



Further information on the retail mix is set out below but it is notable that the town centre has 124 no. Retail, Retail Service and Leisure Service businesses within the town centre boundary. Table 1 below demonstrates that the dominant uses within Ballincollig Town Centre are comparison shops

and services. There are 53 comparison goods retail units (e.g. clothing; footwear, electrical goods, etc) and a further 30 are classified as retail services (e.g. hairdressers, beauticians, travel agents). A smaller proportion of units are for convenience goods (e.g. supermarkets, grocery stores, etc) but these include 3 significant supermarkets (Dunnes Stores, Aldi and Supervalu), butchers and other convenience uses.

Table 1 - Summary of Ballincollig Diversity of Uses Survey (February 2012)

Type of Use	No. of Outlets
Comparison	53
Convenience	12
Retail Service	30
Leisure Service	29
Other Retail Service	-
Financial & Business Service	16
Health & Medical	5
Public Service	3
Religious Service	-
General Office Use	-
Overall Vacancy	60
Total	208

Retail and Retail Services Vacancy rates can be defined as either the number of units or amount of vacant floorspace not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total number of units (vacant and occupied) in a centre. The total number of vacant retail units in the town in the categories of General Retail, Retail Service, Leisure Service and Financial & Business Service are combined and measured against the total number of uses evident in these categories i.e. $60/200 \times 100 = 30\%$ vacancy. Although this has one of the highest levels of vacancy recorded of the survey towns the result must be taken in context and is skewed by the very high vacancy level in the recently completed Old Quarter development.

There are no notably high profile vacant units within the town indeed the Main Street is still occupied relatively well given the overall high level of vacant units in the town.

In relation to Main Street which is the Primary Street in the town there were 7 of 71 units vacant or 10%. Secondary Streets demonstrated a level of vacancy of 19% or 10 of 53 units. The Old Quarter Area had a vacancy of 36 of 40 units or 90% vacancy rate.

Use	Total No.
Hairdressers/Barbers	13
Restaurants	8
Fast Food	7
Ladies Wear & Accessories	6
Cafes	5
Financial Services	5
Building Societies/Banks	5
Jewellers	5
Health & Beauty	5
Repair Alterations & Restoration	5
Chemists and Drugstores	4
Casino & Betting Offices	4
Toys, Games & Hobbies	4
Property Services	3
Sport's, Camping and Leisure Goods	3
Bars	3
Footwear	3
Supermarkets	3
Menswear & Accessories	3
Business Goods & Services	2
Photographic	2
Telephones & Accessories	2
Butchers	2
Florists	2
Dry Cleaners	2
Doctor's Surgery	2
Off Licence	2
Booksellers	2
Children's Wear	2
Textiles & Soft Furnishings	2

Units independent in nature	89
Regional Multiples	7
National Multiples	24
Irish/UK Multiples	9
International Multiples	13

The town centre has a good predominance of independent stores and the strongest proportion of national/international multiples (franchises or chains) of the surveyed towns. The modern Ballincollig Shopping Centre complex predominantly attracts a mix of National and International

Multiples while the majority of Independent Stores are located in the more established areas of the town.

Priority Questions:

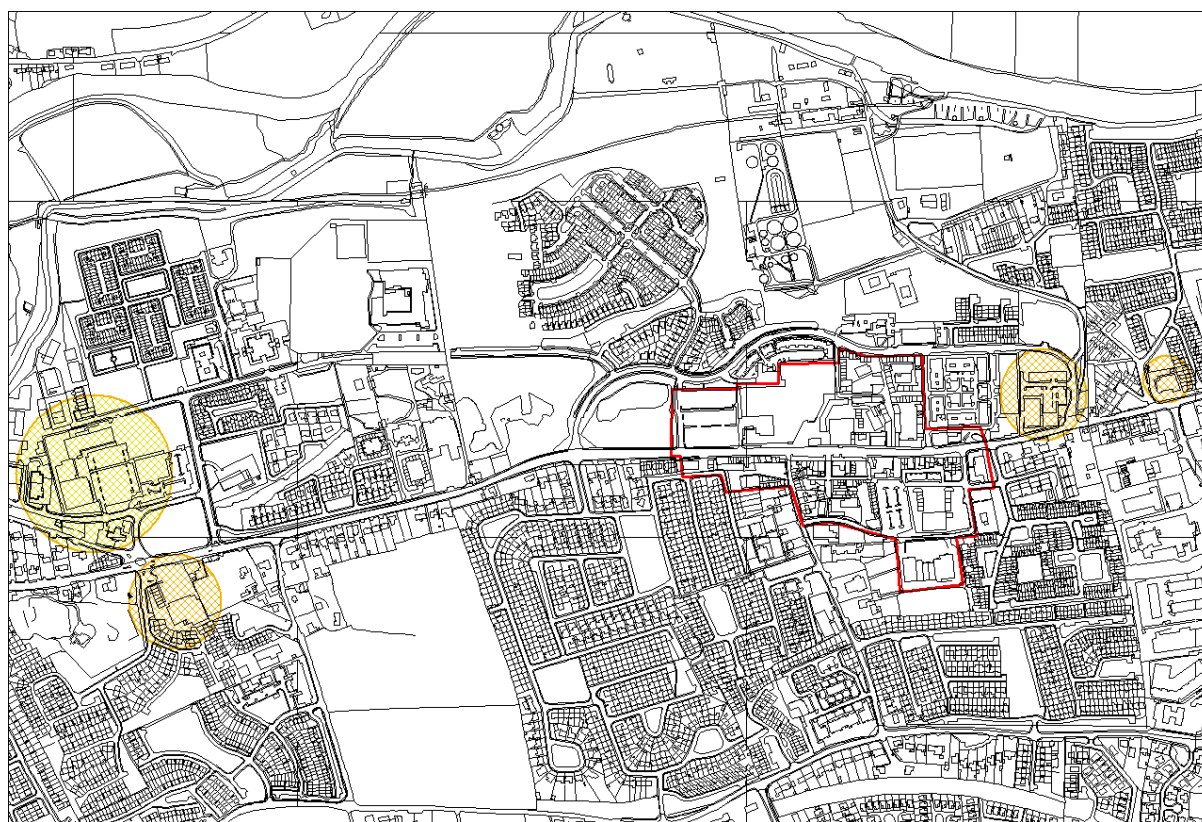
Is there any edge or out of centre retail/other development to date? What other retail uses are outside town boundary and where?

The primary location for out of centre retailing is at West Village Ballincollig where a neighbourhood centre including Supervalu is located. The Supervalu here is also complemented by 6 other small units which contain a pharmacy, betting office, Threshold shop, Chinese restaurant, Newsagent and Shoe Repairs.

Across the road from this in the enterprise park at Inishmore is located a Lidl (convenience retailer) alongside EMC (offices), Right Price Cars (Car showrooms) and a large vacant unit. To the rear of this are some commercial units involving catering uses, An Post, picture framing and 2 religious uses. Some of these uses might be more appropriately located within the town centre and their location should be reviewed.

The adjoining business park includes a mix of office and warehouse units including Eircom, SWRA, VEC, Cold Storage and Council Offices.

Map 2 - Significant Edge and Out of Centre Retail (yellow hatched) - Ballincollig



To the east of the retail core (edge of the town centre) is another Aldi. There is also a neighbourhood centre nearby which involves a Centra and 3 other uses (Pharmacy, Betting Office and Blinds Shop).

To the South East of the town centre is a very large area of employment and commercial uses (Westpoint Business Park). This area involves over 50 uses including a number of light industrial uses, retail warehousing, workshops, Class 3 type offices (where services provided might not ordinarily include visits from members of the public). It also includes uses such as fitness centres, martial arts, DIY and builders providers. Some of the uses located within this area might be more appropriately located within the town centre.

There is a small local neighbourhood centre at Classes Lake Ballincollig based around a petrol forecourt, some convenience shopping and some neighbourhood units. This is located approximately 2km from the town centre and generally serves the needs of local residents in this area.

Are there any obvious significant opportunity sites within/adjoining the town centres?

The town would benefit from further regeneration of the area to the south of the Main Street (Time Square) and associated streets. Within the defined survey area there are no obvious opportunity sites besides. The town centre zoning includes additional lands to the west of Dunnes Stores car park which is an obvious opportunity for additional town centre uses. Planning ref 11/4633 (currently on appeal to An Bord Pleanala) includes provision for an additional anchor retail store at this location to the west of the Ballincollig Shopping Centre.

Identify number of and review the main public and private car parks within proximity to the town centre.

The car parking is reviewed later in this report.

Identify main bus/rail stop location

There is a bus stop on either side of the main street with modern bus shelter and adequate set down area for buses with services to Cork City and other areas.

Overall physical condition and appearance:

The recent redevelopment and upgrading of the main street has been a major improvement for the public realm of Ballincollig on what was previously a traditional village main street. From the perspective of the pedestrian the town has benefitted significantly from traffic calming, elimination of parking, widening of paths and other such improvements. The wide footpaths offer a safe environment for the pedestrian and street user to stop and talk and generally use the urban space. There is attractive planting, seating, lighting and other street furniture.

The recent development of the Old Quarter and the Ballincollig Shopping Centre has been the main contributor and catalyst for much of this modern public open space. The Old Quarter development contains a network of pedestrian streets and squares which link neatly through to the Ballincollig Shopping Centre (mall) and onto Main Street. It offers strong linkages and pedestrian permeability

from adjacent private parking areas both adjoining the Shopping Centre and in the multi-storey to the rear of the Old Quarter.

This major redevelopment of lands to the north of the Main Street has benefitted the town substantially in terms of modern shopping and commercial use provision and aesthetically the area looks very positive.

Lands to the south of the Main Street on the other hand have a very dated overall appearance in comparison to the new developments to the north. Development in this area has evolved in a more haphazard manner while lands to the north had the benefit of an overall planned scheme.

Time Square and the area in the vicinity of the Reel Cinema are of dated and shabby appearance and generally of low architectural value. This is in direct contrast to the much higher standard of architecture set to the north of the town.

In terms of Litter and General Cleanliness the town has a very positive overall appearance. This is reflected in its high Tidy Towns score of 288 for a Category G Town for which it won a Silver Medal in 2011 an improvement from its 2010 score of 283. The overall national winner in this category was Kilkenny with a score of 308.

Ballincollig Street Review:

Main Street:

The main street in Ballincollig is a good example of a modern street where the pedestrian has been put to the forefront in the redevelopment of a street. The Main Street has been overhauled in the last number of years with some very positive results. The street now has a good selection of high quality pedestrian friendly public spaces and linkages into additional public spaces and pedestrian streets to the north of the town. Surfacing and street furniture appear to be of high quality and generally, robust and vandal proof.

The recent additions and major improvements to the town centre are a great opportunity for the town to become a success story as a town with a strong emphasis on pedestrian priority. Generally the Main Street looks well visually and has a relatively low vacancy rate of 10%.

The street provides a good template of how the public realm can be improved in favour of the pedestrian. Pavements are generally clutter free and the presence and condition of street furniture and trees is positive and generally well thought out.

The street is generally very clean and well maintained. There is some on street parking but not overly so.

Secondary Streets:

Secondary Streets and backlands are more haphazard in nature and are a combination of pedestrian areas, laneways and civic space (Time Square) around the Reel Cinema. Much of this area is located to the south of the Main Street, is dated in appearance and more haphazard than the redevelopment which has occurred more recently to the north of the town.

There is intense competition in some areas for parking with the majority being on street. An overall improvement and regeneration of this area would be of considerable benefit to the town.

Ballincollig Car Parking:

A sign on the approach to the town advertises over 2000 free car parking spaces in Ballincollig. There are no known charges for parking. There is 1 hour free car parking on the Main Street 8am-6pm Monday to Saturday.

The Car Park in the Old Quarter north of the Main Street is the largest car park in the town. It offers both surface and multi-storey access to the town centre. Signage into the car park is generally good. This car park offers direct access to the town and shopping centre.

There is one significant area of public parking in the town. This is located to the south of the Main Street to the West of Time Square (The Reel Cinema). This is a substantial area of free car parking with a time limit of 3 hours. There is a signpost on the main street directing traffic into this car parking area. The area is easily accessed from the town centre but is open and not very well overlooked in general.

There is another small car park located around the Ballincollig Public Library and Family Resource Centre which has a limited number of spaces and is small scale.

Notes:

- Ballincollig has one of the highest levels of vacancy of the surveyed towns. The majority of this vacancy is within the recently developed Old Quarter much of which presently remains unoccupied due to current economic circumstances.
- Main Street is a very good example of how the public realm in a town can be improved in favour of the pedestrian. It could be considered as a template for the regeneration of similar towns. The Main Street has a reasonably good level of occupancy with vacancy at approximately 10%.
- The town presents a positive experience generally with ample space for pedestrians to move freely around the town centre with wide footpaths, good urban spaces and good linkages to key parking areas, etc. The core area of the town centre has benefitted significantly in visual terms from its recent regeneration.
- The area south of the main street is somewhat disorganised and haphazard in nature. It is considered that it would benefit from refurbishment and upgrading.
- Some of the uses located in the Westpoint Business Park and surrounding area might be more suitably located within the Town Centre (for example in the Old Quarter commercial units). In particular uses such as gyms could be more appropriately located in the town centre where people live and work.
- The Old Quarter development has significantly increased the supply of modern apartment accommodation particularly in the town centre. Complemented by nearby office uses it offers a positive example of more sustainable urban living options.
- The town has a very positive overall appearance in terms of general cleanliness particularly around the newly developed and refurbished town centre.
- Historic and modern elements have been well integrated in the new Old Quarter development.
- The new Ballincollig Shopping Centre offers a more modern shopping experience with many of the shops one might expect to locate in similar shopping centres elsewhere in the county. Primarily the uses include a mix of national and international multiples.
- The actual zoned area for the town centre is considerably larger than the area that might be considered the retail or core town centre.
- A general improvement in shopfronts and signage would be a positive addition to the town.

Bandon Town Centre Diversity of Use/Vacancy Survey:

Census 2011 Population: 6,640

Survey Date: 15th March 2012

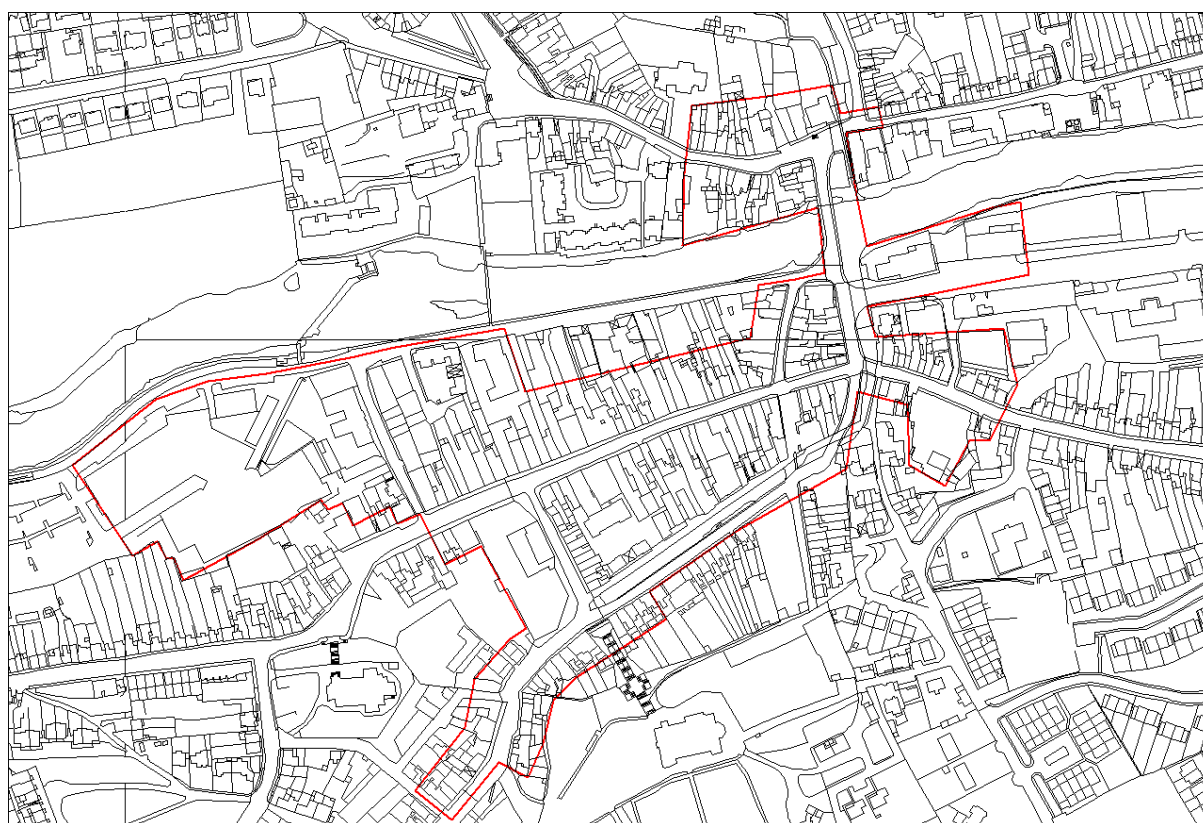
Surveyed by: M. Quinn (EP)

Weather Conditions: Dry and Dull (Approximately 13 degrees)

The survey methodology:

The Use Survey recorded uses in 220 units within an area which could be considered the identifiable town centre/retail core where the majority of commercial uses occur. Surveys of the town centre indicate a wide range of different uses and types of property within the town centre (as defined in this study). Bandon Town Centre accommodates a range of retail facilities and an additional range of non-retail facilities and activities.

Map 1 - Identified Survey Retail Core (red) – Bandon Town Survey Area



Further information on the retail mix is set out below but it is notable that the town centre has 139 no. Retail, Retail Service and Leisure Service businesses within the town centre boundary. Table X below demonstrates that the dominant uses within Bandon Town Centre are comparison shops and in particular leisure services. There are 69 comparison goods retail units (e.g. clothing; footwear,

electrical goods, etc). Leisure and Retail Services make up a significant number of uses while there is also a substantive share for convenience goods.

Type of Use	No. of Outlets
Comparison	69
Convenience	17
Retail Service	23
Leisure Service	30
Other Retail Service	-
Financial & Business Service	16
Health & Medical	6
Public Service	6
Religious Service	2
General Office Use	-
Overall Vacancy	51
Total	220

Retail and Retail Services Vacancy rates can be defined as either the number of units or amount of vacant floorspace not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total number of units (vacant and occupied) in a centre. The total number of vacant retail units in the town in the categories of General Retail, Retail Service, Leisure Service and Financial & Business Service are combined and measured against the total number of uses evident in these categories i.e. $51/206 \times 100 = 24.7\%$ vacancy.

Many of the vacant units are towards the eastern end of the Main Street in particular. This may be due to flooding events which have affected the town in the recent past. A number of these units are undergoing renovation presently.

On the Primary Street (South Main Street) the vacancy level is 21% (16 of 77) while on more secondary streets the vacancy is up to 27% (30 of 112). Vacancy within the malls (Riverview Shopping Centre/Old Market Mall) is 16% (5 of 31).

Table 2 - Bandon Space in Use: Predominant Uses	
Use	Total No.
Ladieswear	11
Hairdressers/Barbers	10
Fast Food	6
Bars	6
Cafes	8
Restaurants	3
Menswear & Accessories	2
Property Services	6
Repair Alterations & Restoration	3
Financial Services	4
Building Societies/Banks	4
Jewellers	4
Health & Beauty	3
Chemists and Drugstores	6
Casino & Betting Offices	3
Sport's, Camping and Leisure Goods	3
Charity Shops	4
Confectionary, Tobacconist & Newsagent	4
Advice Centre	3
Grocery Store	6
Hardware & Household Goods	4
Telephones & Accessories	4
Dental Surgery	3
Footwear	3
Off-Licence	3
Sport's and Leisure Facilities	2
Toys, Games and Hobbies	3
Vehicle Accessories	2
Art & Art Dealers	2
Bakers & Confectioners	2
Butchers	2
Child & Infants Wear	2
Opticians	2
Place of Worship	2
Post Office	2
Dry Cleaners	2

Of the surveyed units noted as vacant in this 2012 survey only 7 would appear to be in the long term vacant category.

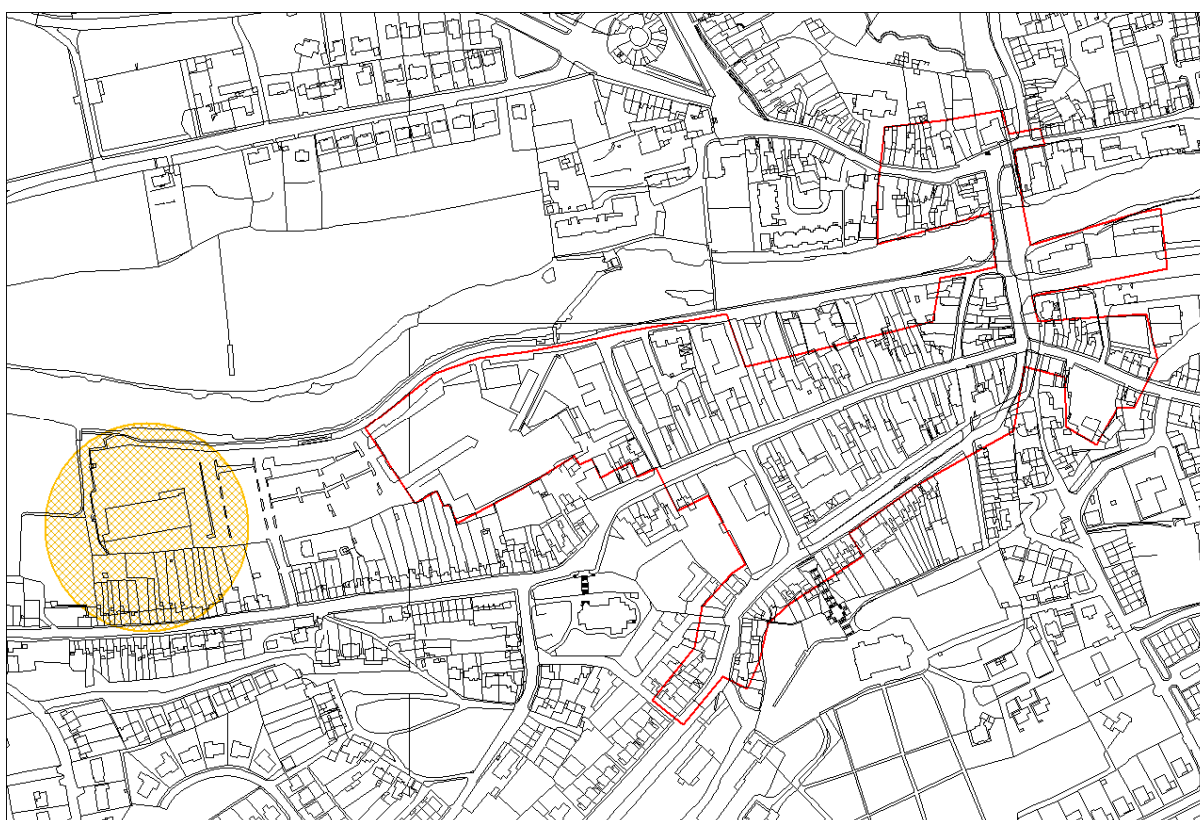
Table 3 - Characteristics of Uses in Bandon:	
Units independent in nature	120
Regional Multiples	8
National Multiples	21
Irish/UK Multiples	5
International Multiples	1

There is a high predominance of independent units and a reasonable number of national multiples with some international multiples.

Priority Questions:

Is there any edge or out of centre retail/other development to date? What other retail uses are outside the town boundary and where?

Directly to the West of the River View Shopping Centre (the more modern retail mall format in the town) is Lidl convenience supermarket with adjoining car park. Although this area is within the zoned town centre in the Bandon Local Area Plan it is not considered to be within the core retail area, not being contiguous to it, and as such its edge of centre location does not feature in the surveyed area.

Map 2 - Significant Edge and Out of Centre Retail (hatched yellow) - Bandon

A feature of the town from the western and eastern approaches along the N71 (National Route) is the number of car showrooms and ancillary uses. With the current economic decline a number of these premises are now vacant. Potentially this could pose a threat to the vitality of the town centre if uses were to relocate and a cautious approach should be adopted in this regard.

There is also further risk to the town centre with the nature of uses beginning to occur along the Southern Relief Road including evidence of smaller units containing fish shop, chocolate shop, dry cleaners, etc which might be more appropriately located in town centre locations. There are also some outlet stores occurring in these areas. These are more general issues which may need to be addressed by the local authority regarding regulation of uses and accordingly in the protection of the town centre.

Are there any obvious significant opportunity sites within/adjoining the town centre?

There are a number of sites close to or adjoining the town centre which offer potential for redevelopment. To the north of the river there is a prime derelict site with an aspect onto the river. Other possible sites include lands zoned T-04 in the current 2011 Bandon LAP which is a linear brownfield site with redevelopment potential to the west of the retail core.

There are also a number of other smaller sites where infill development or amalgamation of sites for more comprehensive development may be possible.

The Bandon Action Programme 2008 identified a number of positive improvements to the town that can be pursued.

Identify the number of and review the main public and private car parks within proximity to town centre.

Car parking is reviewed later in this report.

Identify main bus/rail stop location and train station:

A bus stop and shelter exists at Kellehers DIY (on both sides of street) adjacent to the bus depot on the Glaslinn Road. A regular bus service which takes approximately 45 minutes to Cork City is available from here. It also serves West Cork. There does not appear to be a similar bus stop and shelter provided directly within the heart of the town.

Overall physical condition:

The town has a rich architectural and built heritage. Although an attractive composition of buildings occurs along the main streets there are a significant number which need to be upgraded and have signage improved. The appearance and overall physical condition of the town is also affected by the relatively high level of vacancy which is not helpful in portraying a positive image of the town.

In terms of Litter and General Cleanliness the town has a positive overall appearance generally. This is reflected in its high Tidy Towns score of 275 points for a Category E town an improvement from its 2010 score of 272. The overall national winner was Westport in this Category with a score of 309.

Bandon Street Review:

South Main Street – Primary Street

This is the Main Shopping Street in the town. The street is wide to the west and becomes more constricted to the east. The street is one-way in terms of traffic with parking on both sides of the street in the wider parts and reduced to single side on narrower parts to the east. The condition of paths is generally good but widths could be improved substantially in favour of the pedestrian particularly in the narrower parts toward the eastern portion of the street.

Some street trees exist towards the western part of the street. Generally these are in poor/average condition. Attractive features such as historic water pump and bollard are positive heritage elements on the street. Street generally is attractive. Some properties would benefit from repainting. Overall quality of shopfront signage could be improved. Eastern end of the street has a higher level of vacancy and neglect so the improvement needs to be focussed in this area.

North Main Street/Bridge Place – Secondary Street

This street is a fairly heavily trafficked street and is the main through route to Dunmanway (R586). Parking is limited on the street due to its function and the resulting traffic has created a somewhat unpleasant environment for any significant footfall in this location. Paths are narrow and could be more generous but are adequate as pedestrian flow on street is likely to be low due to impact of 2-way through traffic until an alternative route is realised. Paths could be improved in places and upgraded.

Bridge Street contains a small incidental reflective space with seating, shrubs and tourist signage. Presence of significant passing traffic is likely to lead to poor usage. Pocket park is dated with elements such as benches requiring upgrade. Additional protection from traffic could be afforded to monument at intersection of North Main Street and Bridge. A number of buildings are facing future dereliction or are vacant on these streets.

St. Patrick's Quay – Secondary Street

Priority on this street seems to be to funnel traffic as efficiently as possible through town. It is considered that this street represents a partial missed opportunity as it includes very attractive street trees along a waterside location. Kerbing and upgrading around trees could be improved widened and enhanced to allow for enjoyment of features. Aesthetically planters & kerbing/surfacing need renewal and an overall facelift is required. Riverside seating could be a possibility. Trees have been topped although are renewing and in summer months are no doubt attractive. Path is very narrow and parking is along the roadside. Market Quay is located opposite Patrick's Quay and although not unattractive with its location facing the river displays a high proportion of vacancy in its commercial units.

Market Street – Secondary Street

Market Street is an important street in the town taking 2-way traffic. It's paths are narrow but this is a necessity due to its 2-way function. Condition of paths are good with some good quality seating

and heritage features including signage, old water pump, small street trees and seating in areas where reflection is possible. Overall physical appearance of the street is generally attractive and well maintained.

Weir Street – Secondary Street

This is a street which opens to the Riverview Shopping Centre. Generally this is a relatively quiet street with narrow paths and parking on one-side of the street. Street contains a range of voluntary, governmental services and alternative enterprises. Width of paths could be enhanced easily.

Bandon Car Parking Review:

Much of the parking in the town is on street parking. Disc display is required in most central areas in the town. Short term (30 minutes is free), long term is 80 cent for 90 minutes, maximum stay is 3 hours €1.60. Restrictions apply from 9am to 6pm. There are ample parking machines in operation throughout the town. There are also a number of car parks within the town both public and private.

Car Park 1 – Opposite Kellehers – Garden/DIY

This car park is located on the eastern approach. Signage into the car park is satisfactory as the car park is visible on a main route into town.

Overall accessibility by car is difficult as the access point is constricted meaning turning movements into the car park are particularly challenging. In addition there is only one entrance/egress point into the car park.

The car park is somewhat distant from the major footfall in the town (perhaps over 300 metres) and likely functions for daytime workers in the town. Surfacing in the car park is poor with presence of potholes. Car park accommodates approximately 30-40 cars. A second sister car park lies directly south of this car park which accommodates approximately 30 cars and also has only one access/egress. Neither car park are overlooked and would in general serve a day time function. Car parking in these car parks is free of charge due to their peripheral location.

Car Park 2 – St. Patrick's Hill Car Park

This car park is very accessible to the town centre. The quality of the car park is generally good with ample ticket machines, etc. The car park is accessible on arrival or when passing through the town. There may be some security issues associated with night time parking at this location as the car park is not particularly well overlooked but primarily the car park would serve a daytime function. Pedestrian crossing or appropriate surface treatment could be provided to allow for better permeability for pedestrians en route to town centre.

Car Park 3 – Old Market Car Park

This car park serves a particular function associated with the Old Market and shop units located within. Car park is privately supervised and parking is €1.20 per hour with clamping in operation. Access into the car park is reasonable although there is only one point of access/egress. It offers direct accessibility to the town and the Old Market Centre. Some security cameras exist in the car park to discourage any undesirable activity. Car park also offers some permeability to adjoining car park to the north.

Car Park 4 – Car Park at Supervalu/Lidl

This is a large car park with a specific function to serve the RiverView Shopping Centre and Lidl. Car park is at some distance from the town centre but is directly accessible to the shopping centre. Overall quality of the car park is reasonable.

Car Park 5 – Cathedral Car Park

This is a large car park specifically catering for the Cathedral. It is somewhat removed from the town centre and its elevated location and use for religious activities mean it is unlikely to be used for significant shopping trips.

Notes:

- Bandon is an attractive town with a rich built heritage. Despite its riverside location it is only in recent years that the town has sought to capitalise on this important natural asset. Resulting from this legacy South Main Street has long held sway as the Primary Street and heart of the town from where it is complemented by a number of secondary streets and to the west by a modern indoor shopping centre.
- South Main Street is the Primary Street and heart of the town and is complemented by a number of secondary streets. It contains a high quantity of banks (4 banks) with 3 ATM's located directly on the street. Other more secondary streets do not have the same higher order function but nonetheless make an important retail & commercial contribution to the town centre. The Southern bank of the Bandon River although central within the town includes warehousing former mill buildings, etc. This area does not attract the same footfall as other streets due to the absence of retail units and is in effect outside the retail core.
- The town has a very attractive heritage in the architectural reference of many of the buildings. Appropriate heritage referenced elements such as street lighting provide unusual features and incidental conversation points not always present in other towns. Railings, street furniture are also positive with some very attractive examples of wrought iron work. It is apparent that there is some signage clutter on gables in the town which is not always appropriate or attractive. Signage needs more careful consideration and regulation.
- The town has an increasing problem with vacancy which is of particular concern on the Primary Street (South Main Street) at over 20%. The survey work actually demonstrates that the indoor malls (Riverview Shopping Centre/Old Market Mall) are performing more successfully with less vacancy (16%).
- A feature of the town from the western and eastern approaches along the N71 (National Route) is the number of car showrooms and ancillary uses. With the current economic decline a number of these premises are now vacant. Potentially this could pose a threat to the vitality of the town centre if uses were to relocate and a cautious approach should be adopted in this regard. These are more general issues which may need to be addressed by the local authority regarding regulation of uses with a retail element outside of the retail core and correspondingly in the protection of the town centre.
- North Main Street/Bridge Place are heavily influenced by two way traffic which dominates the street en route to Dunmanway. The impact of heavier traffic in a Westward direction toward Clonakilty is lessened by the relief road which runs to the south of the town although a significant quantity of traffic would appear to still use the town during off peak hours in particular. Town continues to have a considerable amount of through traffic but no longer the extent of heavy goods vehicles previously witnessed.
- There are a number of small areas of incidental public space/squares within the town such as at Bridge Place, around St. Finbarr's Place (2), at junction of Bridge Lane/South Main Street, at junction of St. Patricks Quay/New Road, etc. There are also ample areas alongside

built and natural features where there are presently options for reflection/recreation and other areas which have future potential for such. This network of open spaces could be managed and developed as part of an overall open space network in the town.

- Width of paths in the town in general could be improved (see street survey notes) thus contributing to and improving the experience of the pedestrian and the overall pleasantness of the town. Paths along MacSwiney Quay could be improved and widened to enhance the route as a promenade.
- Recent recreational initiatives such as the development of a riverside amenity walkway including outdoor circuit training accessories to the rear of Kellehers are positive additions to the town and are welcomed.
- Overall the town gave the impression of being quite busy and vibrant on the morning and lunchtime of the day of survey.
- It is understood that a Bandon Farmers Market occurs on Saturday Mornings at Old Market Garden Car Park which is one of the more central locations in the town.
- The Riverview Shopping Centre is the main modern indoor shopping mall within the town. The anchor tenant is the supermarket Supervalu. There are a number of other uses within and contiguous to the shopping centre. 10 of these uses could be considered to be in the multiple category (franchises and chains). Uses are similar to other shopping centre malls in the County such as those in Midleton and Ballincollig.

Bantry Town Centre Diversity of Use/Vacancy Survey:

Census 2011 Population: 3,348

Survey Date: 12th March 2012

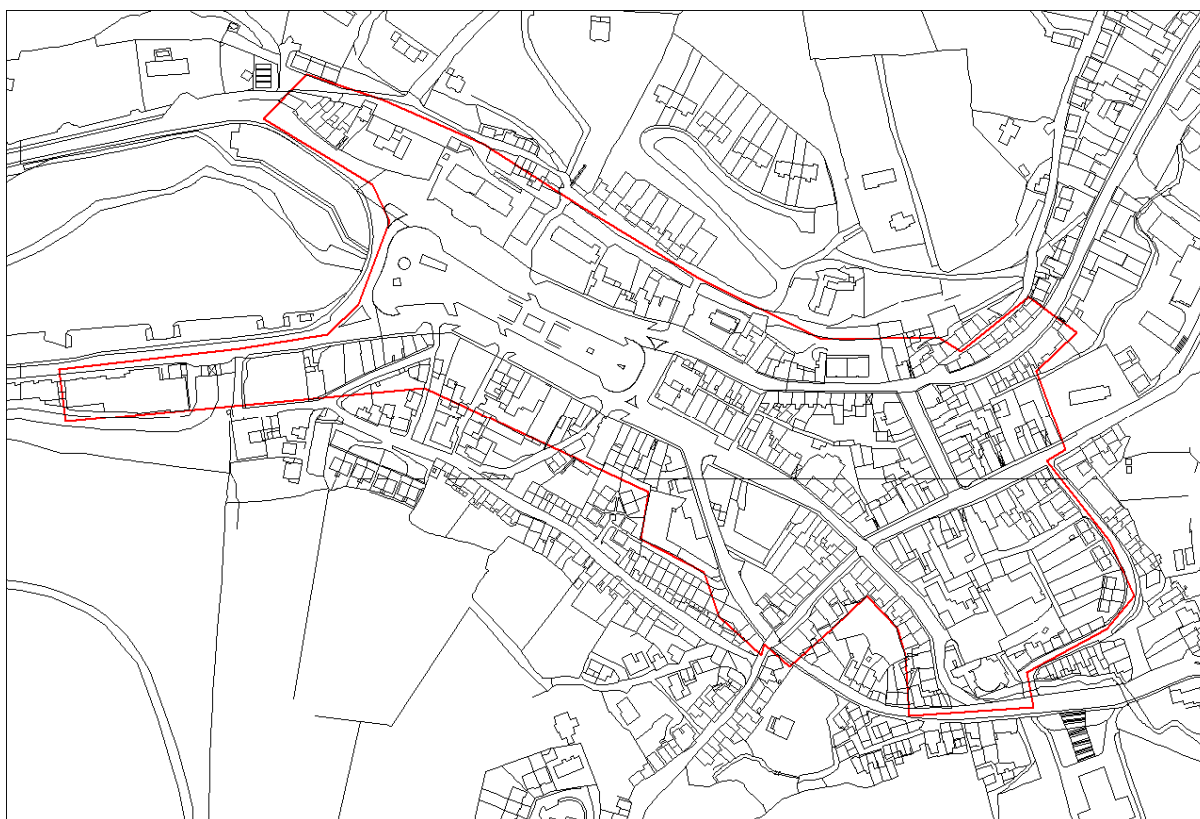
Surveyed by: M. Quinn (EP)

Weather Conditions: Cool, overcast and dry (Approximately 10 degrees)

The survey methodology:

The Use Survey recorded uses in 176 units within an area which could be considered the identifiable town centre/retail core. Surveys of the town centre indicate a wide range of different uses and types of property within the town centre (as defined in this study). Bantry Town Centre accommodates a range of retail facilities and an additional range of non-retail facilities and activities.

Map 1 - Identified Survey Retail Core (red) – Bantry Town Survey Area



Further information on the retail mix is set out below but it is notable that the town centre has 113 no. Retail, Retail Service and Leisure Service businesses within the town centre boundary. Table 1 below demonstrates that the dominant uses within Bantry Town Centre are comparison shops and in particular leisure services. There are 52 comparison goods retail units (e.g. clothing; footwear, electrical goods, etc). Leisure and Retail Services make up a significant number of uses (29 and 22

respectively). A smaller proportion of units are for convenience goods. The town centre also contains quite a high number of public services (17).

Table 1 - Summary of Bantry Diversity of Uses Survey (March 2012)

Type of Use	No. of Outlets
Comparison	52
Convenience	10
Retail Service	22
Leisure Service	29
Other Retail Service	-
Financial & Business Service	20
Health & Medical	4
Public Service	17
Religious Service	1
General Office Use	-
Overall Vacancy	21
Total	176

Retail and Retail Services Vacancy rates can be defined as either the number of units or amount of vacant floorspace not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total number of units (vacant and occupied) in a centre. The total number of vacant retail units in the town in the categories of General Retail, Retail Service, Leisure Service and Financial & Business Service are combined and measured against the total number of uses evident in these categories i.e. $21/154 \times 100 = 13.6\%$ vacancy.

From the Survey Work of the 21 vacant units approximately 7 are considered to be in the long term vacant category.

On the Primary Streets i.e. Wolfe Tone Square and New Street the vacancy level is reasonably good being only 8% and these are the best performing streets. Secondary Streets overall have a much higher level of vacancy at 15%. Marino Street has the highest level of vacancy in the town at 22% with some buildings facing dereliction. Main Street has 16% vacancy and Barrack Street has 13% vacancy.

Use	Total No.
Bars	11
Hairdressers/Barbers	9
Advice Centre	9
Ladieswear & Accessories	6
Restaurants	5
Hotel & Guest Houses	5
Crafts, Gifts, China & Glass	5
Property Services	4
Repair Alterations & Restoration	4
Charity Shops	4
Health & Beauty	3
Legal Services	3
Hardware & Household Goods	3
Fast Food	3
Butchers	3
Cafes	2
Menswear & Accessories	2
Financial Services	2
Building Societies/Banks	2
Jewellers	2
Printing & Copying	2
Chemists and Drugstores	2
Casino & Betting Offices	2
Mixed Clothing	2
Electrical & Other Durable Goods	2
Florists	2
Footwear	2
Toys, Games & Hobbies	2
Music & Musical Instruments	2
Supermarkets	2
Booksellers	2
Travel Agents	2
Council Offices	2
Emergency Services	2
Department & Variety Stores	2
DIY & Home Improvement	2

Units independent in nature	121
Regional Multiples	2
National Multiples	8
Irish/UK Multiples	1

International Multiples	0
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There is a very high predominance of independent units and a few national multiples (franchises or chains). The presence of UK/International Multiples is generally absent perhaps due to the overall size of the town.

Priority Questions:

Is there any edge or out of centre retail/other development to date? What other retail uses are outside the town boundary and where?

Biggs Supervalu is the primary convenience supermarket offer in the town. It is located on New Street directly within the town centre. There is no significant other convenience retailing located outside the town centre.

The Bantry Business Park (approximately 2km to the West of the town) also contains some uses consistent with retail warehousing and the sale of bulky goods. These include Kelly & Co (furniture and carpets), Bantry Bath & Tile Ltd, Thornhill Bros (Electrical & Furniture) and Budget Priced (kitchens & wardrobes). At least 6 or 7 of the units in the park are vacant and the overall nature of the Business Park has an unfinished look. It is questionable given the distance from the town centre whether this location might be the most suitable location for retail warehousing.

There are a number of small neighbourhood convenience retail units on offer elsewhere outside of the town centre including retail within petrol forecourts.

Are there any obvious significant opportunity sites within/adjoining the town centre?

There are a number of potential opportunity sites within the town or close to the town centre. In particular these include lands adjoining the Harbour to the West of Wolfe Tone Square. This site is currently in use as car parking. Lands around the Boys Club also offer an opportunity for redevelopment for town centre uses while Marino Street is in need of an overall upgrading. Elsewhere there are smaller infill opportunities.

Identify the number of and review the main public and private car parks within proximity to town centre.

Car parking is reviewed at the end of this report.

Identify main bus/rail stop location and train station:

Transport to and from Bantry is provided by a bus service which operates to Cork City and Glengarriff with approximately 5 or 6 services per day.

Overall physical condition:

Marino Street is witness to an element of dereliction likely due to the impact of through traffic on a narrow street in the town in the absence of a bypass. A number of properties on this street are

currently on the market for sale while the occupancy level of both residential and commercial premises seems to be quite low. There are a number of other streets in the town which could be improved by addition of better quality shopfronts and repainting of premises. In particular these include New Street, Main Street and Barrack Street.

Overall cleanliness of the town is generally good. In terms of Litter and General Cleanliness the town has a positive overall appearance generally. This is reflected in its high Tidy Towns score of 297 points (Silver Medal Winner) for a Category D town an improvement from its 2010 score of 292. The overall national winner was Clonakilty in this Category with a score of 306.

Bantry Street Review:

Wolfe Tone Square – Primary Street:

This is the main focal square in the town. It's central feature is a large square bounded by some of the more historic buildings in the town. The western extent of the square opens with expansive views of the bay. Being such a large square and so centrally located within the town parking makes up a substantial proportion of space there and in the nearby harbour area.

Generally the architecture in the Square is visually pleasing and buildings are overall well maintained. Pavements on the square outside of commercial premises are generally narrow and could be more generous particularly when the scale of surrounding space is so large. Potential conflict exists between loading/unloading vehicles, congestion created by street furniture and signage, etc.

The centre of the square has been positively redeveloped in recent times and offers a pleasant if somewhat exposed public space with seating, 2 x public toilets, etc. It offers an area in the town for public markets, recreation, etc and overall is generally well maintained.

Parking is front end on the square separated by 2 lanes of traffic on both sides of the square. Consideration could be given to removing some of this parking or reverting to parallel parking which would use up less space and allow for footpath widths to be expanded. In one example a tree (photographed) competes for a car parking space.

Marino Street – Primary Street:

This is a typically narrow street in Bantry. Its composition is of a mixed commercial/residential street with a high proportion of unoccupied premises many facing possible future dereliction. The street is a pinch point for through traffic in the town (being two-way) with resultant narrow footpaths, lack of space for on-street parking, etc. There are a minimum of 4/5 properties in poor condition on this street and it is the worst example of this in the town. The Northern side of the street in particular displays the greatest proportion of vacant properties. As it nears the Glengarriff Road the street widens with wider footpaths and a scattering of Artisan shops and more relief from the traffic.

New Street – Secondary Street:

This is one of the key commercial streets in the town. It is one-way for vehicles. It starts wide coming east from Wolfe Tone Square but narrows considerably heading further east towards Bridge Street. Much of the street (western end) contains front end parking which is space hungry removing considerable space from the pedestrian. Footpaths are very narrow in parts along the street especially further eastwards and could be substantially increased in width to allow for better pedestrian flow and footfall.

The central build-out in the street although small is an important space for casual meetings, lingering, etc and adds to the overall dynamic of the street. If it were complemented with increased footpath widths to the northern side of the street this would significantly enhance the public realm and potential of the street. Where paths are already somewhat wider in places it has already

afforded food premises some opportunities to have al fresco areas especially on the northern side of the street.

Some of the shopfront signage on the street could be improved but also some good examples of more traditional and complementary shopfronts exist.

Main Street – Secondary Street:

This is another significant commercial street in the town. It is one-way for vehicles. Parking is parallel on the street and generally occurs on both sides of the street. Pavements are in general narrow but somewhat wider than on other streets. Widths could be improved.

Some wider parts of the street have already availed of informal outdoor seating.

Some of the properties have a shabby appearance. Many would benefit from repainting. Shopfronts are perhaps not as impressive or as well maintained as other streets.

Barrack Street – Secondary Street:

This is a short street linking Main Street and Marino Street. Wide street with parking on both sides and allows for two way traffic. Laneway from Warner Centre opens onto this street. Upgrading of some shopfronts repainting of premises would be of benefit to some buildings on the street.

Bantry Car Parking Review:

Much of the parking in the town is on street (parallel or front end depending on the width of the street). There are a few smaller grouped clusters of parking associated with the Supervalu in the town while considerable and large areas of parking exist to the west of Wolfe Tone Square adjoining the harbour.

Car parking restrictions apply in the town. Generally there is a 2 hour maximum parking limit. There are no paid parking charges.

Car Park Chapel Street

This car park is reserved for shoppers of the Supervalu on New Street. It takes approximately 30 spaces. It is relatively accessible to its target i.e. Supervalu. Access to the car park is somewhat challenging for vehicles being located on a somewhat steep hill with only one way traffic and with a narrow entrance. Pedestrian access from the supermarket to the car could be challenging considering that trolleys need to be pushed uphill when filled with goods. This car park is closed overnight.

Car Park Bridge Street

It is unclear but signage in this car park states that it is for customers of Supervalu and presumably the adjoining Biggs premises (Catering Supplies). This car park accommodates in the region of 20-30 cars. It is directly accessible to the town centre. The quality of the car park is average and security could be an issue at night however the car park is gated and closed at 6pm.

Harbour Area/Wolfe Tone Square Car Parks

The area around Wolfe Tone Square and the Harbour provides the bulk of car parking for the town. In particular there are 2 grouped car parks one opposite the Harbour View and the second adjoining the ESB substation (west). These car parks are accessible although somewhat peripheral to the town centre. They have an important function in particular in catering for the casual visitor or tourist to town and would unlikely suit persons intending to carry out a large convenience shop. These car parks are relatively clearly identifiable being located in an open harbour area. Additionally there is no 2 hour car parking limit. The more peripheral of these car parks is relatively remote and safety concerns may be an issue regarding night time usage.

Notes:

- Bantry functions as an important market town providing commercial, retail and tourist facilities to an extensive coastal and inland catchment. In the town centre Wolfe Tone Square is a dominant public space and the most important townscape feature. The contrast between this expanse of open space, its setting and the close knit Georgian and Victorian streets to the east give the town a special character and charm. The N71 National Route which passes through the settlement has a major impact on the town while the topography dictates that much of the commercial development has traditionally been retained and concentrated on the tight knit town centre.
- Through traffic is having a significant impact on the town centre in particular affecting the potential of streets such as Marino Street where the narrow street is heavily trafficked by cars and particularly HGV's passing through the town in close proximity to building frontages. The street has a somewhat negative residential/commercial environment and it appears that many of the residential properties on the street were unoccupied.
- The attractive and historical laneways are a particularly attractive feature of the town. Some have been upgraded or have plans for upgrading. The area around the Warner Centre (including laneway) is an area with immense potential and it is understood that the area has plans for redevelopment. Repaving and refurbishments have already contributed in this regard.
- One way traffic circulation exists in much of the town. This is not necessarily a disadvantage as the curvatures of the narrow meandering streets don't necessarily permit rapid vehicular movement that might otherwise be evident on one way streets.
- Bantry Tidy Towns has a novel system of identifying premises which have excelled in terms of their contribution. This may not be unique to Bantry but is something that should be considered in other towns.
- Given the relatively low level of vacancy in the town it is somewhat unusual that the former Spar premises (located adjoining the Garda Station) is now vacant.
- Wolfe Tone Square contains 2 blocks of public toilets to the east and west of the square. These are a particularly important facility for visitors to the town and could be enhanced and upgraded.
- Pedestrian crossings in the town seem to be well laid out and are in desirable locations.
- The majority of parking in the town is centred on the square due to its central location in the town. There was no evidence of any traffic parking enforcement in the town although there seemed to be ample parking availability on the day of the survey.
- A feature of Bantry is the subtle network of spaces where there exist opportunities to sit, recreate and enjoy the town. For example it is possible to move from the large open space in Wolfe Tone Square to a smaller built out space along New Street where there is an area of seating and landscaping. Further along Bridge Street the area around the Old Mill Wheel at the library has another area of public seating. If such areas could be complemented by the addition of semi-public seating areas provided by bars, cafes or restaurants on wider paths then the ambience of the town could be changed considerably from the car dominant experience that currently prevails.

- Many of the buildings in the town are in need of upgrading, modernisation and strengthening of their heritage value as appropriate.
- Town is quite low in presence of multiples with over 90% of uses in the town being of an independent nature.
- There is a sense with the town that it has an unrealised potential. The intimate streets broadening out into a square with some of the most dramatic vistas is something special in itself and yet the congestion of the town and the space devoted to parking seems to take from the overall charm and potential of the place. Striking a more appropriate balance may be something needing consideration.
- The relatively small size and constricted nature of the town centre mean that it can be difficult to accommodate the larger modern format. Creativity needs to be exercised in this regard and an appropriate balance is needed which seeks to maintain the vibrancy and vitality of the town centre while sustainably providing for the needs of the town and its hinterland.

Carrigaline Town Centre Diversity of Use/Vacancy Survey:

Census 2011 Population: 14,775

Survey Date: 24th January 2012

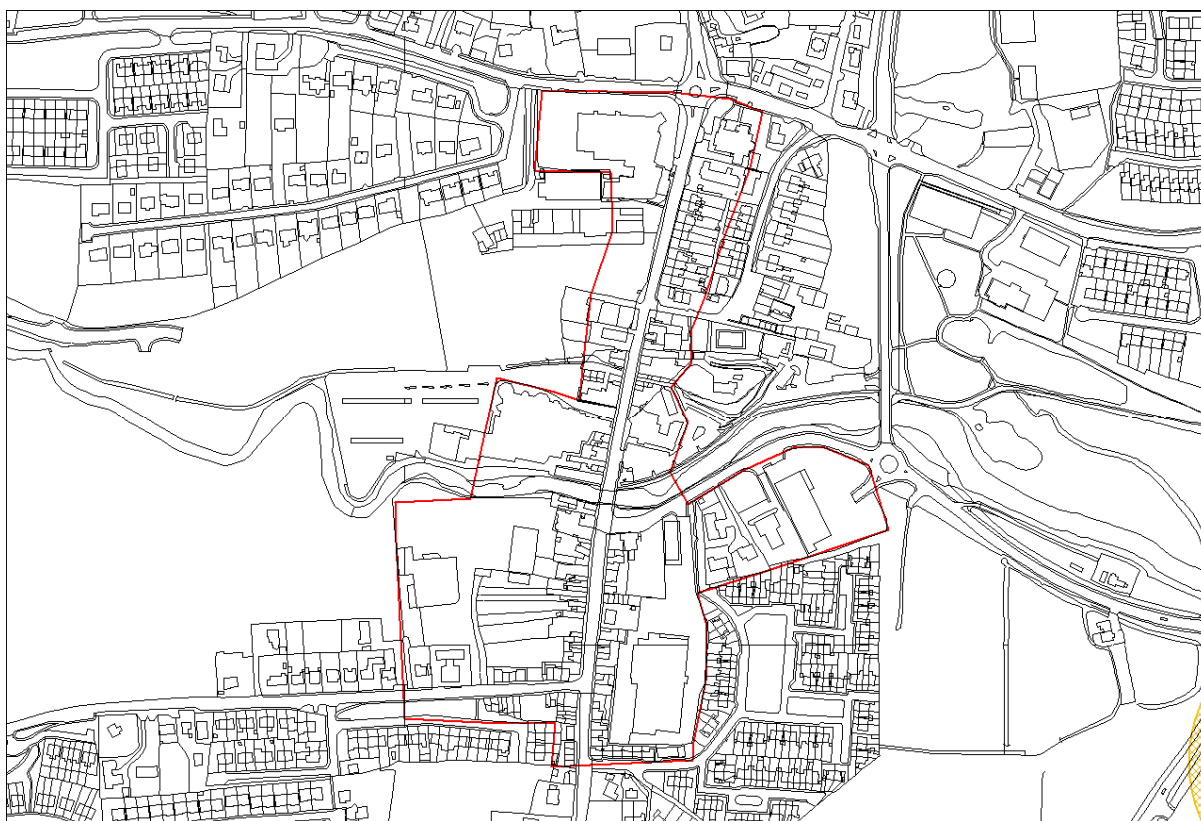
Surveyed by: M. Quinn (EP) & Lorraine Kennedy (SEP)

Weather Conditions: Dry, overcast some sunny spells (Approximately 13 degrees)

The survey methodology:

The Use Survey recorded uses in 126 units within an area which could be considered the identifiable town centre/retail core. The survey indicates a wide range of different uses and types of property within the town centre (as defined in this study). Carrigaline Town Centre accommodates a range of retail facilities and an additional range of non-retail facilities and activities.

Map 1 - Identified Survey Retail Core (red) – Carrigaline Town Survey Area



Further information on the retail mix is set out below but it is notable that the town centre has 84 no. Retail, Retail Service and Leisure Service businesses within the town centre boundary. Table 1 following demonstrates that the dominant uses within Carrigaline Town Centre are comparison shops and services. The relative amount of comparison uses seems to be much lower than in some other surveyed centres however. There are 31 comparison goods retail units (e.g. clothing; footwear, etc) and a further 21 are classified as retail services (e.g. hairdressers, beauticians, travel

agents). A smaller proportion of units are for convenience goods and include supermarkets, butchers and other convenience uses.

Table 1 - Summary of Carrigaline Diversity of Uses Survey (January 2012)

Type of Use	No. of Outlets
Comparison	31
Convenience	12
Retail Service	21
Leisure Service	19
Other Retail Service	1
Financial & Business Service	9
Health & Medical	7
Public Service	8
Religious Service	1
General Office Use	n/a
Overall Vacancy	17
Total	126

Retail and Retail Services Vacancy rates can be defined as either the number of units or amount of vacant floorspace not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total number of units (vacant and occupied) in a centre. The total number of vacant retail units in the town in the categories of General Retail, Retail Service, Leisure Service and Financial & Business Service are combined and measured against the total number of uses evident in these categories i.e. $17/110 \times 100 = 15.5\%$ vacancy.

A number of the notable vacancies within the town could be considered to be in the long term vacancy category (approximately 3 or 4). Vacant buildings of note include the old library building to the rear of the AIB. There are a number of derelict sites in the town. These include the site of the Old Carrigaline Pottery business between AIB and the Carrigaline Court Hotel.

The Primary/Main Street has a vacancy rate of 12% while there is a much higher rate of vacancy (exceeding 20%) on those units just off of the Main Street. Certain parts of the town in particular around the Kilmoney Road/Church Road Area and between the AIB and the Carrigaline Court Hotel are visually neglected and detract from the overall appearance of the town and Main Street.

Use	Total No.
Hairdressers/Barbers	8
Fast Food	7
Bars	6
Advice Centre	4
Building Societies/Banks	4
Chemists and Drugstores	3
Supermarkets	3
Dry Cleaners	3
Footwear	3
Property Services	3
Dental Surgery	3
Casino & Betting Offices	3
Butchers	2
Jewellers	2
Opticians	2
Health & Beauty	2
Repair Alterations & Restoration	2
Hardware & Household Goods	2
Confectionary, Tobacconist, Newsagent	2
Chiropodist	2
Health Centre	2
Emergency Services	2
Cafes	2
Ladies Wear & Accessories	2
Convenience Stores	2
Restaurants	2
Other Comparison Goods	2

Units independent in nature	75
Regional Multiples	5
National Multiples	8
Irish/UK Multiples	3
International Multiples	8

The town centre has a strong predominance of independent stores and some national and international multiple uses (franchises and chains).

Priority Questions:

Is there any edge or out of centre retail/other development to date? What other retail uses are outside town boundary and where?

Many of the main multiples are represented including modern supermarkets with significant floorspace. These include Dunnes Stores, Supervalu and Lidl. Of the 3 main players, the Supervalu located in the Carrigaline Shopping Centre contributes most to the town centre. This shopping centre has its own off street parking. It is the only one of the main convenience players offering direct access onto the main street and into the core retail area. This shopping centre is modern and pleasant internally and offers a number of different shops.

The other main retail multiples (Lidl and Dunnes Stores) are somewhat isolated from the main street. Lidl is located at the Strand Road Roundabout where it is accessed directly by car. Dunnes Stores is a large modern store within the town, but the security fencing around the car park is discouraging and the development represents a missed opportunity to enable pedestrian access into the town centre. This would have offered permeability and potentially increased footfall to the town centre.

The real potential of the town centre is being somewhat undermined by uses which are occurring in the Carrigaline Industrial Estate (1.6km) and to a certain extent in the Kilnaceay Business Park (700m) which occur on the Crosshaven Road. Neither can be accessed directly by public transport or are accessible to residential areas and are therefore car dependent. Although the predominant uses in the Carrigaline Industrial Estate are primarily industrial/warehousing a number of enterprises have begun to include retailing elements which now attract visits from ordinary members of the public including a framing gallery, hamper and gifts store, uniform shop, cafe, fish shop store, plant/garden store, cork meat centre. These are now serving customers who might otherwise carry out business in town centres. Such patterns of development if unregulated have the potential to further undermine the potential of the town centre.

The Kilnaceay Business Park which is closer to the town is a somewhat dated business park which contains Window, tiles and bathrooms, tool hire, Pet essentials, Tru colours, Auto centre, Rothar (cycles) and Fruit and Veg. North of the town includes 2 petrol stations with some element of forecourt retailing.

Are there any obvious significant opportunity sites within/adjoining the town centres

There exists substantial opportunity for redevelopment of areas around the town centre including lands to the rear of AIB on the Main Street i.e. between the Carrigaline Court Hotel and the Carrigaline Shopping Centre/Supervalu carpark.

In relation to dereliction there is a substantial problem around the corner of Kilmoney Road/Church Hill with 3 substantial derelict sites in this area. This area is in need of future investment. An additional site along the Kilmoney road has a rebuild occurring (opposite Cahill's Menswear).

Identify the number of and review the main public and private car parks within proximity to town centre.

The car parking is reviewed later in this report.

Identify main bus/rail stop location.

There is a regular bus service which operates along the main street (generally half hourly) serving Cork City, Crosshaven, Camden and Fountainstown.

There are clearly demarcated set down areas for the bus stop and a bus shelter one at the bridge and the other outside the Carrigaline Court Hotel.

Overall physical condition and appearance:

Overall the development of Carrigaline has occurred in a somewhat haphazard manner likely due to the rapid evolution of the town from small village in the 1970's to the much larger settlement it is today. Traditionally the focus of the town has been the Main Street and this has in general persisted however additions to the original Main Street (which was much shorter) have not always been done in a sensitive and respectful manner with the result that there has been fragmentation of the town with uses pepper-potted in various locations around the settlement core. For example lands along the Old Waterpark Road to east of the main street offer a disjointed mix of residential, commercial and retail units.

Adjoining the Carrigaline Court Hotel there are a number of very dated outbuildings and units which would be more appropriately located in the Carrigaline Industrial estate. This area would be more suited to retail warehousing given its edge of centre location.

In terms of Litter and General Cleanliness the town has a very positive overall appearance generally despite some neglected areas. This is reflected in its high Tidy Towns score of 274 points (Bronze Medal Winner) for a Category G town an improvement from its 2010 score of 271. The overall national winner was Kilkenny in this Category with a score of 308.

Carrigaline Street Review

Unlike other towns and perhaps due to its enhanced status and relatively recent growth over the past decades a pronounced hierarchy of streets in Carrigaline is less evident than other towns surveyed. The majority of consolidated retail and related development occurs either on or within the vicinity of Main Street. While there are comparison and convenience uses along other routes these are not considered typical streets and are in the main identified as roads (Strand Road, Old Waterpark Road, Kilmoney Road).

Main Street

- Main Street is overly dominated by parking. Generally this is on one side of the street but occurs on both sides further northward. There is also some evidence of illegal parking at various points along the street.
- Footpaths are generally narrow which makes passing more constrained, particularly where there are obstacles such as bollards, bins or telegraph poles. Continuity of surface is an issue in some parts e.g. around AIB where there is no path. Paths are a little more generous in width along the southern extent of the Main Street but width in this area could also be improved substantially.
- Carrigaline is a main street which is dominated by traffic and car parking. Carriageway width for vehicular traffic is extremely generous with relatively narrow paths for pedestrians by comparison. This balance needs to be redressed in favour of the pedestrian. Only 2 crossing points exist along the entire street and these are within a few hundred metres of each other so pedestrians are encouraged to run the risk of crossing a busy street where traffic can reach relatively high speeds.
- The overall design reference of buildings along the street is mixed. In general the traditional form of the streetscape is respected however there are some unusual and poor quality design examples. A lot of signage clutter, overhead wires, and utilities dominate the front facades of buildings leading to visual clutter along the street which, when considered in addition to the traffic dominance, contributes negatively to the overall appearance and environmental character of the town.
- The industrial/commercial units located alongside the Carrigaline Court Hotel are cluttered with signage and as an entry point to the town centre create a poor overall impression of the town. Similarly the Kilmoney Road/Church Hill entrance points to the town could be improved.
- There is a small ceremonial type space laid out at the bridge at junction of Main Street and Strand Road which includes a small seating area, tourist signage, etc. This area is reasonably pleasant and attractive although its location at a heavily trafficked junction mean it is unlikely to be used significantly.

Carrigaline Car Park Review

Overall car parking directional signage within the town is considered to be poor. The main car parks in the town are primarily private car parks associated with the larger convenience retail operators. Along the Strand Road this includes the Dunnes Stores and Lidl car parks and along the Kilmoney road the parking associated with the Co-op Superstore. Off the Main Street there is also a significant car park associated with the Supervalu and Carrigaline Shopping Centre.

The Millhouse Lane Car Park is the only publicly operated car park in the town. This is a large car park with direct access on a through route from Main Street to the R612. Although the car park is spread out along the length of Millhouse Lane it is divided up into 2 areas (a) the area closest to the Main Street which has approximately 85 car parking spaces associated with a small neighbourhood centre and (b) a separate area closer to the R612 which has another 55 spaces and includes a bring centre.

The overall visual quality of the car park is good. The benefits of its riverside location ensure the amenity of the car park is retained in mature trees and hedging which lessen the overall visual impact of the parked vehicles. The car park is suitably supervised where it is located adjoining Main Street and the units within the neighbourhood centre. The more remote parts of the car park would be less suitable and too distant for usage during evening and night-time hours.

At the time of the survey there are no charges or parking restriction in operation in the town or along the Main Street.

Notes:

- The Town Centre remains the heart of the town in Carrigaline although it is perhaps not realising its full potential with regard to social and civic functions as do other town centres. There is little pedestrian relief or car free space within the town core and the town does not contain any pocket park or other such formal spaces.
- The primacy of the Main Street in the town is evident in Carrigaline. Other streets need to be given enhanced status/recognised/targeted for future development.
- Parking signage and directional signs to parking areas could be improved significantly.
- The diversity and quantity of comparison retailing does not appear to be as advanced as other towns and overall the level of comparison as a percentage of uses was one of the lowest.
- For the size of the population in the hinterland the number of uses in terms of quantity in the town centre (retail core) can be considered significantly less in comparison to other town centres.
- There is no formal regular outdoor farmers market within the town. To encourage increased footfall it would be important to identify/devote a focal central space/street within the town to a market e.g. Millhouse Lane car park.
- Overall visual impression (unity and coherence) of the town could be significantly improved. See earlier comments.
- Significant improvements could be made to Main Street in order to enhance the pedestrian experience. Town remains overly dominated by traffic.

Clonakilty Town Centre Diversity of Use/Vacancy Survey:

Census 2011 Population: 4,721

Survey Date: 22nd March 2012

Surveyed by: M. Quinn (EP) & Lorraine Kennedy (SEP)

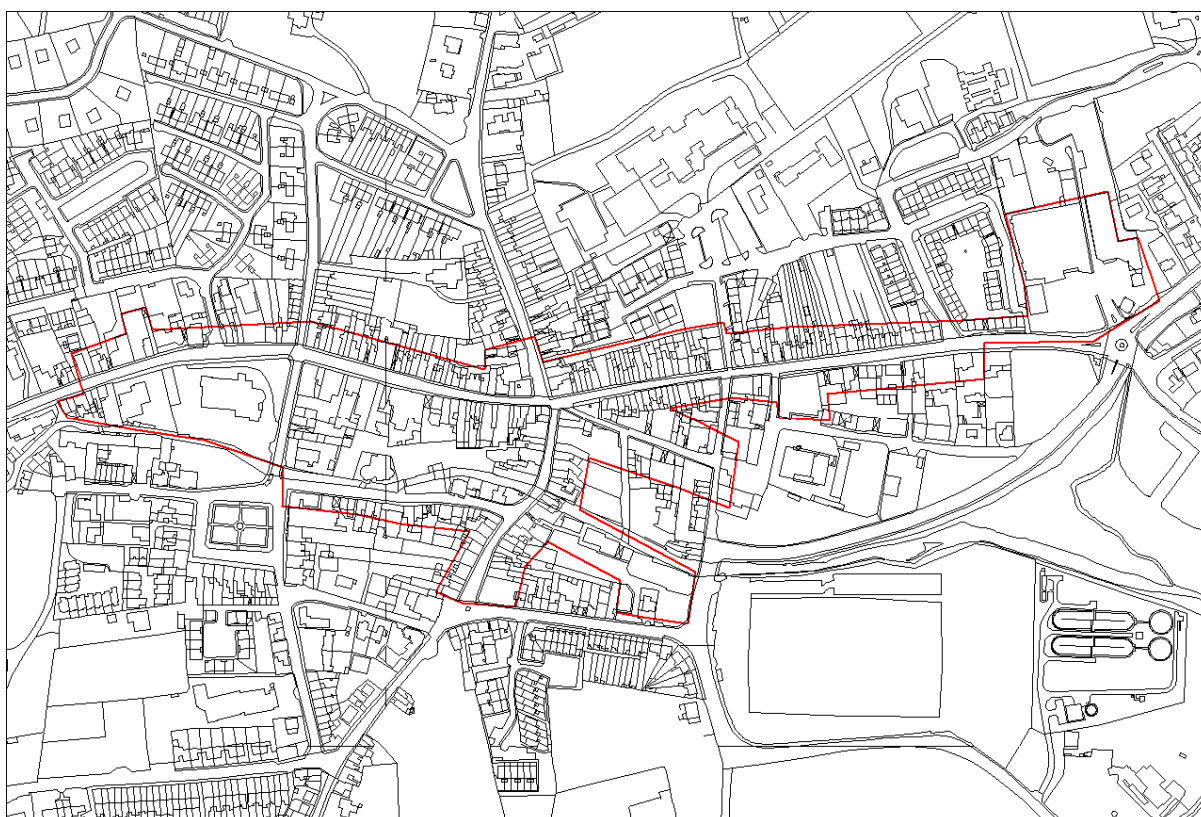
Weather Conditions: Cool. Dull. Threat of Rain (Approximately 9 degrees)

The survey methodology:

The Use Survey recorded uses in 217 units within an area which could be considered the identifiable town centre/retail core.

Surveys of the town centre indicate a wide range of different uses and types of property within the town centre (as defined in this study). Clonakilty Town Centre accommodates a range of retail facilities and an additional range of non-retail facilities and activities.

Map 1 - Identified Survey Retail Core (Red) – Clonakilty Town Survey Area



Further information on the retail mix is set out below but it is notable that the town centre has 146 no. Retail, Retail Service and Leisure Service businesses within the town centre boundary. Table 1 following demonstrates that the dominant uses within Clonakilty Town Centre are comparison shops and in particular leisure services. There are 69 comparison goods retail units (e.g. clothing;

footwear, electrical goods, etc) and a further 21 are classified as retail services (e.g. hairdressers, beauticians). A smaller proportion of units are for convenience goods. Leisure Services make up a significant proportion of uses.

Type of Use	No. of Outlets
Comparison	69
Convenience	14
Retail Service	21
Leisure Service	42
Other Retail Service	-
Financial & Business Service	23
Health & Medical	8
Public Service	12
Religious Service	3
General Office Use	-
Overall Vacancy	25
Total	217

Retail and Retail Services Vacancy rates can be defined as either the number of units or amount of vacant floorspace not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total number of units (vacant and occupied) in a centre. The total number of vacant retail units in the town in the categories of General Retail, Retail Service, Leisure Service and Financial & Business Service are combined and measured against the total number of uses evident in these categories i.e. $25/194 \times 100 = 12.8\%$ vacancy.

On the primary streets i.e. Pearse Street, Ashe Street and Connolly/Rossa Street the vacancy rate overall is 12% (14 of 121). Secondary Streets have a similar rate of 12% (10 of 84) while backland and lanes although low numerically are also strong in terms of their vitality with a low vacancy rate of 8% (1 of 12).

Use	Total No.
Ladieswear	15
Bars	15
Hairdressers/Barbers	9
Restaurants	8
Cafes	7
Health & Beauty	6
Chemists and Drugstores	6
Fast Food	5
Charity Shops	5
Financial Services	5
Advice Centre	4
Dental Surgery	4
Footwear	4
Supermarkets	4
Hotels & Guesthouses	4
Property Services	4
Crafts, Gifts, China & Glass	3
Sport's, Camping and Leisure Goods	3
Furniture	3
Confectionary, Tobacconist & Newsagent	3
Building Societies/Banks	3
Booksellers	3
Legal Services	3
Toys, Games and Hobbies	3
Child & Infants Wear	3
Place of Worship	3
Dry Cleaners	2
Bakers & Confectioners	2
Butchers	2
Council Offices	2
Department & Variety Stores	2
Doctors Surgery	2
Information Centre	2
Printing & Copying	2
Textiles & Soft Furnishings	2
Repair, Alterations & Restoration	2
Casino & Betting Offices	2

Units independent in nature	149
Regional Multiples	1
National Multiples	15

Irish/UK Multiples	2
International Multiples	2

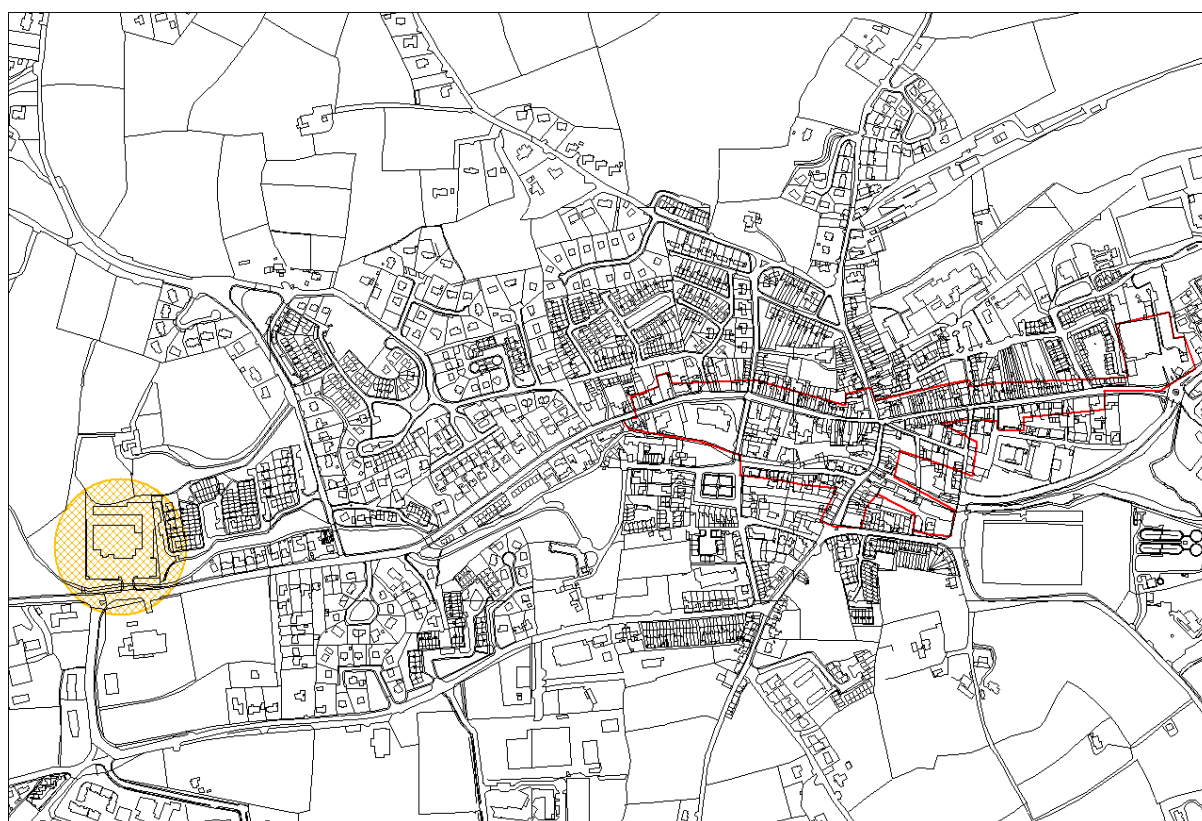
There appears to be a very high predominance of independent units and a few national multiples in the town.

Priority Questions:

Is there any edge or out of centre retail/other development to date? What other retail uses are outside the town boundary and where?

Traditionally the focus of retailing and commercial activity in Clonakilty has been within the heart of the town however in recent years perhaps due to the constricted nature of the narrow streets in the town centre, the small retail floorspace options or the lack of suitable sites retailing and commercial uses have increasingly sought to relocate towards the edges of and in more peripheral locations from the town centre.

Map 2 - Significant Edge and Out of Centre Retail (yellow hatched) - Clonakilty



The larger supermarket convenience options within the identified retail core are Eurospar and Supervalu. Dunnes Stores is located on a stand alone site approximately 1km west of the town centre while the Eurospar and Supervalu are part of larger edge of centre individual complexes with ancillary units (within the survey boundary).

At a smaller scale there are petrol forecourts either side of the town which include some provision of forecourt retailing (Maxol to the West of the town and Texaco to the east of the town).

The Clonakilty Industrial Estate located to the West of the town primarily contains premises associated with construction supplies and some retail warehouse type uses (tile/kitchen centre).

In general retailing within the town is compact and primarily located within the retail core unlike some of the other towns surveyed.

Are there any obvious significant opportunity sites within/adjoining the town centre?

There are limited opportunity sites within or adjoining the town core due to the compact nature of the town. Some of the larger vacant units present themselves as opportunities and would benefit from reoccupation. Construction has ceased on a large site adjoining the Supervalu complex and the site presently remains an eyesore and is boarded up. The ground floor of the adjoining building, which is part of this complex, also remains closed and unused to date. Uptake of such sites will be critical in the future consolidation of the town.

Identify the number of and review the main public and private car parks within proximity to town centre.

Car parking is reviewed later in this report.

Identify main bus/rail stop location and train station:

Clonakilty is served by frequent public transport en route from Cork to the West. There is a bus shelter and set down located at the junction of the Croppy Acre and Clarke Street.

Overall physical condition:

Clonakilty is one of the best examples of a town that has capitalised on and sought to preserve its tradition and heritage in its town centre. The quality of its heritage shopfront range can be considered almost unparalleled when compared with other similarly sized towns in the county and in general its building stock are well maintained. In comparison to many of the other towns surveyed the rate of vacancy is low demonstrating the relative attractiveness and vitality of the town centre.

Footpaths and streets appear to be regularly maintained and improved with some evidence of recent repaving.

In terms of Litter and General Cleanliness the town has a very positive overall appearance which has been recognised at a national level. Its Tidy Towns score of 306 for a Category D Town was an improvement from its 2010 score of 305 and Clonakilty was the overall winner in this category nationally. This is a title it has retained for a number of years.

Clonakilty Street Review:

Pearse Street – Primary Street

This is the central street in the town. It is a one-way street. Generally the street is very well maintained and pleasant but there remains room for building improvement on a case by case basis. In terms of cleanliness and maintenance the street is very well maintained with evidence of recent upgrading. While the condition of footpaths is generally good they are very constricted in places especially towards the eastern half of the street. The wider part of the street allows for extended footpath widths particularly to the southern side. There are no examples of street furniture, street trees. More build outs of footpaths allowing areas for increased pedestrian interaction and flow would be a positive addition.

Ashe Street – Secondary Street:

This is a very attractive and colourful street in the town. The character of the street is provided in the dense concentration of commercial premises over a small area. The street has high quality shopfronts and heritage style lighting. Generally the condition of paths is good although these streets are very narrow. An obstruction is provided at one point by a litter bin.

Cleanliness and maintenance of the street was generally good. Parking is on-street on one side of the street. This is a one-way street. There is an attractive small public space around the memorial at the junction with Pearse Street.

Connolly Street/Rossa Street – Secondary Street:

This is a physically attractive street the overall quality of which is good. It is one-way on Rossa Street and 2-way on Connolly Street (Southern Portion). Shopfronts overall are of a very high quality. Lighting and other street furniture are appropriate to the heritage context of the town. Condition of paths are generally good. Footpath widths are average but could be made more generous. Pavements are in general clutter free but a litter bin in the centre of the narrow path is an obstruction at one point. Parking is on one side of the road.

Clonakilty Car Parking Review:

Much of the parking in the town comes in the form of on street parallel parking. There are also a number of car parks close to the town core. Parking within the town is free with a limit of 2 hours from Monday to Saturday 8.30am to 6pm.

In general the main car parking areas are well signposted on entrance routes into the town. The issue is whether these car parks have the capacity to accommodate vehicular parking particularly during busy periods in which case more peripheral car park areas will need to be better promoted.

Car Park 1 - College Grove Car Park (North East of town centre)

This is a well-located car park which provides relatively easy access for pedestrians to the main shopping streets. Signage into the car park is good and it is easily located when entering the town from the East along Wolfe Tone Street. There does not appear to be any time constraints in relation to parking. The overall quality of the car park is good. It is passively overlooked by the adjoining residential area. Potential conflicts possibly exist in the use of the car park by multiple users including adjoining residents, town centre visitors and in relation to activities associated with the school. It is possible that the car park is running at full capacity much of the time.

Car Park 2 – Larkin Street Car park (South of town centre)

This is one of the largest and one of the more peripheral public car parks. Its relative accessibility is challenged by the necessity for pedestrians to traverse the busy N71 which runs south of the town core. Its more remote location means it is more appropriate for longer term stays in the town with no time limit restrictions (unlike those in existence in the town centre). The car park is not particularly well signposted and this could be improved with regard to directing visiting motorists to the town. The vehicular access could also be improved. The car park at the time of the site visit was not laid out adequately due to recent resurfacing. The car park is not overlooked and can be gated after opening hours. It now includes a recently added recreational all weather pitch.

Car Park 3 – Kent Street Car Park (Adjoining Council Offices)

This is the most central and a very popular car park in the town. It provides direct pedestrian access to the town centre. Signage from the town when coming from the Western approach is generally good and well visible. A 2 hour limit applies. A big disadvantage in the car park is the challenging nature of vehicular access and egress and its relative size.

Car Park 4 – Eurospar and Adjoining Car Park

This is a car park adjoining Eurospar and serving a number of other premises based around a centralised space. Ease of pedestrian access from this car park to the town centre is reasonable however the car park primarily functions to serve the businesses overlooking it and the adjoining

Eurospar. This is a relatively small car park and does not have a major parking function in the town. Access and manoeuvrability within the car park are challenging.

Car Park 5 – Supervalu Car Park

This car park is located to the east of the town and primarily functions in catering for shoppers using the supermarket and other commercial premises here. There is a 2 hour parking restriction. The car park includes both surface level (limited amount) and multi-storey block. It is more peripheral than the other car parks and does not have the same connectivity to the town core.

Car Park 6 – Church of Immaculate Conception

Car park located close to the town core with primary function to cater for those attending activities at Church.

Notes:

- Clonakilty is a colourful, vibrant town and gateway to the tourist region of West Cork. The town is strongly influenced by arts, culture and has a rich built and historic heritage. The most important streets of the town include the main spine streets of Pearse Street and Ashe Street. The town is recognised for its intimate and narrow meandering streets with colourful buildings and shopfront.
- Clonakilty has a strong emphasis on the promotion and retention of its colourful heritage. There is a very diverse variety in the type of shops present. Streets in general are very attractive with some very high quality examples of heritage shopfronts. Probably the best examples of such in the county.
- The Town is considerably boosted during the summer months in particular by visiting tourists, musicians, etc who contribute to the added vibrancy of the town.
- A regular market takes place in Clonakilty on Friday mornings near O’ Donovan’s Hotel as well as a smaller market on Thursday mornings.
- The quality and heritage value of shopfronts for a town of its size appears to be unparalleled in the county.
- The density of historic colourful premises on Ashe Street is a fascinating characteristic of this street.
- Although there is a lack of centralised car parking space in the town the compact nature of the town centre mean that many of the car parks are directly accessible and complemented by the forgiving topography in the town.
- The streets in the town are very narrow and generally quite intimate but dominated by traffic. Could consideration be given to pedestrianise one of the town’s streets? This could significantly enhance public space in town.
- There are some attractive although small passive public areas in the town. Emmet Square is an attractive public park but is somewhat peripheral from the retail core. A larger more centralised pedestrian priority public space within the town could be of benefit to the town.
- Town has a very vibrant feel and one of the lower levels of vacancy of surveyed towns. It has an evident strong tourist role being a gateway to West Cork.
- A substantial amount of premises in the town remain to this day in the hands of independents (almost 90% of premises). Owners names are generally displayed prominently on shopfront signage often more prominently than the products being sold. This enhances the sense of character of the place with local pride dominating over more commercial brands.

- The strong proportion of Leisure services (bars, restaurants, cafes, etc) are indicative of the role the town plays as a strong tourist destination. In particular the high number of Ladieswear shops show that the town is an important destination for female Comparison Shopping although Menswear seems to be less well developed in the town.
- The town frequently is the recipient of national and european awards demonstrating a strong local participative community in combination with its evidently quality product. It frequently wins Tidy Towns Awards. In recent times it was the first Irish town to win the European Destination of Excellence. It has also recently won a Cittaslow designation being the first Irish town to win a prestigious award as a ‘slow destination’ an award that recognises traditional values.
- Although there are relatively few large scale vacant units in the town, the former Mace unit on Pearse Street is a relatively large building which requires a new use. Other examples include premises on Astna Street as well as some of the units around the Supervalu complex to the West of the town (now boarded up).
- Vacancy in Clonakilty is one of the lowest measured in the larger towns within the County. The rate of vacancy is also quite evenly spread between Main Streets and Secondary Streets demonstrating that there are many streets spread geographically across the town which are performing relatively well. This demonstrates the attractiveness of the town as a place to visit, carry out business and trade.
- Clonakilty is also particularly recognised for its vibrant nightlife and music. The impact that the attraction of the evening economy makes to the town should not be understated.

Cobh Town Centre Diversity of Use/Vacancy Survey:

Census 2011 Population: 12,347

Survey Date: 6th February 2012

Surveyed by: M. Quinn (EP)

Weather Conditions: Overcast with spots of drizzle (Approximately 12 degrees)

The survey methodology:

The Use Survey recorded uses in 117 units within an area which could be considered the identifiable town centre/retail core. An area outside of this (part of Harbour Row) was excluded to the east due to the high level of vacancy in this area and its relatively peripheral location to the town centre.

Surveys of the town centre indicate a wide range of different uses and types of property within the town centre (as defined in this study). Cobh Town Centre accommodates a range of retail facilities and an additional range of non-retail facilities and activities.

Map 1 - Identified Survey Retail Core – Cobh Town Centre Survey Area



Further information on the retail mix is set out below but it is notable that the town centre has 70 no. Retail, Retail Service and Leisure Service businesses within the town centre boundary. Table 1 below demonstrates that the dominant uses within Cobh Town Centre are comparison shops and in particular leisure services. There are 23 comparison goods retail units (e.g. clothing; footwear, electrical goods, etc). Leisure and Retail Services make up a significant number of uses. A smaller proportion of units are for convenience goods.

Type of Use	No. of Outlets
Comparison	23
Convenience	6
Retail Service	15
Leisure Service	26
Other Retail Service	-
Financial & Business Service	10
Health & Medical	-
Public Service	4
Religious Service	1
General Office Use	-
Overall Vacancy	32
Total	117

Retail and Retail Services Vacancy rates can be defined as either the number of units or amount of vacant floorspace not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total number of units (vacant and occupied) in a centre. The total number of vacant retail units in the town in the categories of General Retail, Retail Service, Leisure Service and Financial & Business Service are combined and measured against the total number of uses evident in these categories i.e. $32/117 \times 100 = 27.35\%$ vacancy. Note: if the remainder of Harbour Row is included the overall level of vacancy for the town is increased up to 32% meaning that the town would have the highest level of vacancy in the County of those surveyed.

There are few derelict sites in the town core but a significant quantity of units which are currently vacant (as is evident from the survey work). One of the most notable derelict sites is an infill site located along West Beach waterfront between the Taste Cafe and Sports Shop.

On the Primary Streets and Squares (Westbourne Place, West Beach, Pearce Square and Casement Square) the vacancy level is 23% while on more secondary streets such as Harbour Row and East Beach the vacancy is up to 34%. Outside of the town centre area surveyed and further east along Harbour Row it is estimated the vacancy could be in the range of 50% upwards evident from walking this street.

Use	Total No.
Hairdressers/Barbers	6
Fast Food	6
Bars	6
Cafes	5
Restaurants	4
Hotel & Guest Houses	3
Menswear & Accessories	3
Property Services	3
Repair Alterations & Restoration	3
Financial Services	3
Building Societies/Banks	3
Jewellers	2
Health & Beauty	2
Chemists and Drugstores	2
Casino & Betting Offices	2
Sport's, Camping and Leisure Goods	2
Charity Shops	2
Crafts, Gifts, China & Glass	2
Mixed Clothing	2
Convenience Store	2
Confectionary, Tobacconist & Newsagent	2
Advice Centre	2

Of the surveyed units noted as vacant in this 2012 survey only 3 would appear to be in the long term vacant category which would appear to indicate that the town has suffered a lot of closures in recent years.

Units independent in nature	70
Regional Multiples	3
National Multiples	11
Irish/UK Multiples	1
International Multiples	0

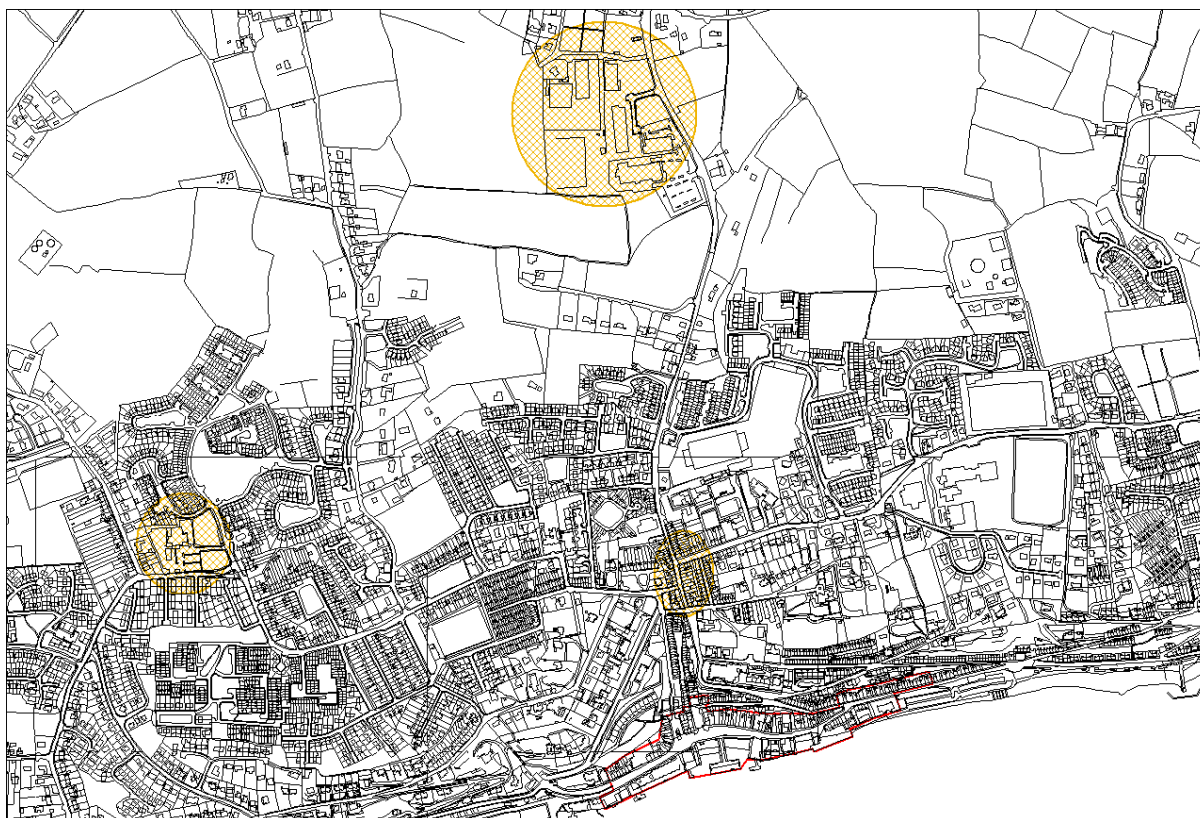
There is a high predominance of independent units and some regional/national multiples. The presence of UK/International Multiples is absent.

Priority Questions:

Is there any edge or out of centre retail/other development to date? What other retail uses are outside the town boundary and where?

Centra is the main convenience supermarket option in the town core and contains 25 car parking spaces in their car park and home delivery service.

At the top of the town/crest of the hill Midleton Street (outside of the area of this survey) is a major commercial entry point to the town. Uses have congregated in this area due to its location convenient to and within walking/cycling distances of residential areas with less severe topography. Of over 25 uses along this street premises include: Fastfood and takeaways (5), Public Houses (4), Medical and Public Services (3), Hairdressers/Barbers (2), Bookmaker, Convenience Store, Cab Office, Eye Clinic, Off-Licence, Bakers & Confectioners, Tattoo Parlour, Laser Print, Computer Services and one vacant unit.

Map 2 - Significant Edge and Out of Centre Retail (hatched yellow) – Cobh

The primary location for out of town retailing is at Ticknock. Development at this location which is remote from the town centre (1.2km) involves 3 (one national and 2 international multiples) convenience retailers competing for the Cobh convenience retail spend. Each of these supermarkets have their own individual allocation of private parking. The Supervalu in particular carries some comparison goods and includes within a butcher, baker, off-licence. Within the Supervalu complex there are 6 other units posing a threat to the viability and vitality of similar uses already in existence

in the town centre. All 6 are occupied and include a possible Pharmacy, Cafe, Toymaster, Beauty Salon, Opticians and Hair Stylist.

It is recognised that the scale of convenience development which has occurred at Ticknock may have been difficult to accumulate in the town centre however it is the comparison uses associated with the anchor which have in particular created a rival destination to the town centre.

The Aldi and Lidl in the nearby 'Cobh Commercial/Retail Park' are severed from the Supervalu complex by a high retaining wall and there are no links between the two contributing to the car dependant nature of the associated developments. There are also 7 retail warehouse units located within this commercial park of which 3 are occupied with 4 remaining vacant. The occupied units include An Post Delivery Services Unit, Cobh DIY (Arro) and Carley's Electrical.

At 2pm on the Monday of the survey only 30 cars were present in the Supervalu car park, the Lidl car park contained only 9 cars, Aldi car park only 15 cars while the retail warehouse/commercial area also had 15 cars. Is it possible that out of town convenience retailing in Cobh is now reaching saturation point?

Outside of this area there is also a Londis (convenience supermarket) at Newtown which has a small number of units including a pharmacy, petrol station, hairdressers, beautician and Chinese takeaway as part of a neighbourhood centre.

Are there any obvious significant opportunity sites within/adjoining the town centre?

On the day of the survey there would appear to be no clearly visible large scale opportunity sites in the town centre of Cobh. The high level of vacancies in the town centre present themselves as opportunities with little larger sites available. Backland redevelopment or appropriate internal amalgamation of units may be in many instances the only solution to allow for larger retail or commercial formats. It is understood that the Cobh Urban Design Feasibility Study prepared in 2009 identifies potential sites within the town for redevelopment with more detailed proposals and should be consulted.

Identify the number of and review the main public and private car parks within proximity to town centre.

Car parking is reviewed at the end of this report.

Identify main bus/rail stop location and train station:

There is a private bus service (Barry's) within the town which serves the town internally. Transport to and from Cobh is provided by the rail service which operates a half hourly and hourly service.

Overall physical condition:

While the town is architecturally attractive in terms of the design and composition of buildings, it is let down to some extent by the uses and functions occurring at street or ground level. The dominance of car parking at the expense of the public space, the high vacancy levels, the poor

quality of many shopfronts and the shabby appearance of certain areas, particularly some buildings and elements along the waterside are all contributory factors.

In general the town has a good proportion of litter bins. Cleanliness is generally of good standard. There are ample seating areas along the waterfront catering for passive recreation and heritage tourist signage is generally in good supply which is also welcomed.

There are many signs that there are positive improvements being made to the town centre particularly associated with the Titanic year (2012) but there is also scope for significant improvement. The Titanic Experience is open since 1st February 2012 in the former White Star Line building which should be a significant attraction on the waterfront.

In terms of Litter and General Cleanliness the town generally has a positive overall appearance. This is reflected in its high Tidy Towns score of 286 points (Bronze Medal Winner) for a Category F town an improvement from its 2010 score of 277. The overall national winner was Killarney in this Category with a score of 310.

Cobh Street Review:

Cobh has its own unique Genus Loci and offers something very different to other towns in the County with its dramatic location.

Westbourne Place – Primary Street

This street has some very attractive buildings which are generally in good condition. A high level of vacant shopfronts is discouraging however. Overall the cleanliness and maintenance of the street is good. Pavements are generally wide and well maintained. The width of the street offers further potential to extend footpaths particularly around the town park on the Waterfront/Promenade. The waterfront park is a very attractive community and tourist asset fronting the sea and is a popular recreation area during the summer months.

Casement Square & Pearse Square – Primary Street

These 2 squares are attractive features of the townscape in Cobh. In Casement Square, although architecturally attractive, the square is dominated by cars and their ancillary road markings and segregation which reduce the sense of place of the square. Presently there are many obstacles including bollards which segregate pedestrians and traffic. Priority in this square should be considerably rebalanced toward the pedestrian. While the condition of the current pavement is good a uniform paving for the entire square removing road markings associated with traffic movements would create enhanced uniformity thus complementing the architectural features of the squares.

Consideration should be given to the elimination of 2-way traffic and further pedestrianisation of the square. Parking could be removed entirely which would contribute to civic space in the town. At present the square only takes up 10 parking spaces the loss of which to the town would not be considered detrimental.

Similarly Pearse Square is an attractive square but dominated by the amount of space dedicated for vehicular purposes. The area primarily functions as a taxi rank with up to 12 cars waiting at the time of survey work. Could taxis be relocated to a more suitable less visually prominent location? Street trees on the square are a positive element in lessening the impact of the car parking however.

Harbour/Waterside – Primary Street

The Harbour area including heritage elements associated with the Titanic could be improved significantly and would be a further attraction to the town. Presently it looks shabby. Repainting or removing white paint off harbour walls (now turned green) would contribute in this regard. Rusty railings in the area and around the Centra car park need improving. The present and ongoing works associated with the Titanic site are a step in the right direction but further progress needs to be made in enhancing the overall attractiveness. Floral arrangements/planting are attractive but can be complemented by a general upgrading of the harbour.

West Beach/East Beach – Primary/Secondary Streets

Given its central location fronting the water West Beach offers the potential for outdoor cafe seating opportunities a limited number of which have been availed. The front end car parking arrangement reduces the potential for the pathway to contribute further to the life of the street. When segregated seating areas are provided it restricts ease of pedestrian flow leading to cluttered pavements between al fresco areas and front of vehicles. Overall the cleanliness and maintenance of the street is generally good. While the upper floors of many buildings contribute well to the overall aesthetics it is some of the shopfronts here in particular which detract from the aesthetic of the town centre. Higher quality appropriate shopfronts should be provided for in such an Historic town.

Harbour Row – Secondary Street

The two way traffic and the parallel parking make this street a traffic bottleneck. The street avails of fantastic views to Spike Island and Cork Harbour and is a mix of both residential and commercial uses although much of the commercial uses are in the long term vacant category and given the distance of the street from the heart of the settlement the street displays a high level of commercial vacancy overall. Some of the premises require upgrade and refurbishment. The street has a good wide footpath while signage and lighting are generally respectful of the character of the town.

Dog fouling seems to be an issue although there is a notable presence of signage up as a deterrent. Generally the street is clean. Many shops were closed at 10.30 on Monday but perhaps open in afternoon or later in week. Likely much congestion on this street at peak times during the year due to width of carriageway which is mostly inadequate for 2 cars to pass.

Cobh Car Parking Review:

Much of the parking in the town is on street (parallel or front end depending on the width of the street). There are a few smaller grouped clusters of parking often of less than 20 spaces. On the Waterfront, Centra has its own car park (25 spaces) as does Wan-Fu Chinese (20 spaces) both restricted from the general public. Use of these spaces for parking is not perhaps the best use of these sites.

Car Parking restrictions apply over much of the town centre area. First hour is free with a charge of 1 euro per hour thereafter. There is however only one grouped area of free public parking (100 spaces) within somewhat direct proximity to the town (300mts) at the Cathedral. Another large linear car park is available at Whitepoint Moorings which is 500 metres from the town. Both car parks are remote from core commercial/retail uses.

The Cathedral Car Park, although well signposted on arrival into the town, is disadvantaged by its relatively remote location from shops and services and its overall size. The car park primarily serves the area around the Cathedral and is of average quality. It's overall accessibility by car is reasonable given the topographical constraints in Cobh however the street entry/access to the southern side could be a challenge to less able drivers.

In terms of accessibility on foot the location of the car park in relation to the town centre could be considered very challenging for those hoping to visit the town centre. The car park is not overlooked and is contained within high walls. Security cameras are of some assistance but overall the area would not be considered desirable for evening/night parking.

Notes:

- Cobh is a very colourful town and because of its dramatic topography and location presents itself in a manner that is very unique and dramatic in comparison with other Irish towns. The arrival into the town from the Ticknock direction over the hill along Midleton street is a very attractive entry point with framed and more expansive views of the harbour.
- Aesthetically the composition and architectural quality of buildings could be considered to be of a higher standard and more grandiose than many other towns surveyed. Buildings are generally well maintained however the high level of vacancy evident in Cobh is a critical issue.
- The town centre is very compact generally being clustered towards the water and harbour area where the gradient is more favourable and access to the water is available. The steeper hills have dictated the suitability of streets for retail/commercial purposes in the majority of the town.
- Cobh is not as influenced by passing trade as other towns surveyed as it is not on any through route but rather a destination in itself. On the day of the survey the town had the appearance of being quieter than other towns in terms of lunchtime activity. Comparison during the tourist season may likely be quite different for this historic seaside town.
- Streets to East such as Harbour Row suffer due to the manner of circulation of traffic in the town. North and West are key entry points into the town.
- Topography while being advantageous in terms of sense of place and spectacular location are also to some extent a dis-advantage to the town. A key challenge for the town exists in the difficulty of finding sites where modern retailing formats can work effectively. Creativity needs to be exercised in this regard. Backland redevelopment or internal amalgamation of units may be the only solution to allow for larger retail or commercial formats. Vacancies in the town present themselves as opportunities with little larger sites available.
- Cobh is a designated Historic Town. The town needs to further capitalise and realise the potential of this designation.
- Overall shopfront signage needs better regulation. There are some nice examples of good quality shopfronts but a lot of poorer quality shopfronts particularly in key tourist areas. Outside of the core of the settlement and the primary streets the town is in parts much shabbier with a higher proportion of run-down or vacated buildings.
- Cobh town centre is dominated by traffic and parking often given priority over the pedestrian. The elimination of some parking and improvement of pedestrian priority would be very beneficial to the public realm overall. Grouped parking should be provided within the town removing the necessity for much of the on street parking.
- There exists opportunities to provide for cycle parking and provide safe cycle routes linking into the Passage West cycle way running to Cork City.
- Along with other constraints the potential for the town centre to compete regarding convenience shopping would seem to have been jeopardised by the significant level of retail development that has occurred at Ticknock. The current commercial core may be hampered by its relatively large size for which there is no longer the demand considering development at Ticknock and its proximity to the city of Cork.

- The town contains lots of good quality tourist informational signage, etc. Town needs overall management and co-ordinated approach to market it along with the wider harbour. Titanic year offers significant opportunities for Cobh to mark its place in the tourist product of the region and develop a vision/brand for the town.
- The image of the town needs to be improved in the type of uses occurring particularly those locating directly along the waterside with the overall aim to improve the calibre/quality of uses and make the town a more attractive destination in this regard for visitors e.g. there is only one Ladieswear shop of note in the town.

Fermoy Town Centre Diversity of Use/Vacancy Survey:

Census 2011 Population: 6,489

Survey Date: Thursday 1st December 2011

Surveyed by: M. Quinn (EP) & Lorraine Kennedy (SEP)

Weather Conditions: Dry, overcast, cold (Approximately 6 degrees)

The survey methodology:

The Use Survey recorded uses in 181 units within an area which could be considered the identifiable town centre/retail core. There were a number of uses occurring on streets just outside of this area including the lower end (east) of Patrick Street which includes approximately 5 solicitor's offices and the Courthouse/Council Offices. The uses on Connolly Street have not been recorded but may be added to this record at a later date.

Map 1 - Identified Survey Retail Core(red) – Fermoy Town Centre Survey Area



Surveys of the town centre indicate a wide range of different uses and types of property within the town centre (as defined in this study). Fermoy Town Centre accommodates a range of retail facilities and an additional range of non-retail facilities and activities.

Further information on the retail mix is set out below but it is notable that the town centre has 126 no. Retail, Retail Service and Leisure Service businesses within the town centre boundary. Table 1 below demonstrates that the dominant uses within Fermoy Town Centre are comparison shops and services. There are 56 comparison goods retail units (e.g. clothing; footwear, electrical goods, etc) and a further 22 are classified as retail services (e.g. hairdressers, beauticians, travel agents). A smaller proportion of units are for convenience goods (e.g. supermarkets, grocery stores, etc) but these include one significant supermarket (Centra), butchers and other convenience uses.

Type of Use	No. of Outlets
Comparison	56
Convenience	16
Retail Service	22
Leisure Service	31
Other Retail Service	1
Financial & Business Service	15
Health & Medical	2
Public Service	5
Religious Service	1
General Office Use	0
Overall Vacancy	32
Total	181

Retail and Retail Services Vacancy rates can be defined as either the number of units or amount of vacant floorspace not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total number of units (vacant and occupied) in a centre. The total number of vacant retail units in the town in the categories of General Retail, Retail Service, Leisure Service and Financial & Business Service are combined and measured against the total number of uses evident in these categories i.e. $32/173 \times 100 = 18.5\%$ vacancy.

A number of the notable vacancies within the town could be considered to be in the long term vacancy category (approximately 5/6). A number of other units were currently being fitted out for new uses (approximately 3). Vacant buildings of note include the old Co-op Superstore (Patrick Street) and an old garage site (McCurtain Street). In relation to Primary Streets i.e. McCurtain, Patrick Street and Pearse Square there were 19 of 123 units vacant i.e. 15% while on Secondary Streets this increased to 13 of 59 units or 22%. Despite this there is however no overall feel of vacancy or dereliction within the town. Vacant units are predominantly small scale and dispersed and many have attractive shopfronts.

Use	Total No.
Bars	10
Hairdressers/Barbers	7
Cafes	6
Chemists and Drugstores	6
Ladies Wear & Accessories	6
Convenience Stores	6
Footwear	5
Fast Food	5
Restaurants	5
Business Goods & Services	4
Financial Services	4
DIY and Home Improvement	4
Other Comparison Goods	4
Casino & Betting Offices	3
Photographic	3
Telephones & Accessories	3
Butchers	3
Crafts, Gifts, China & Glass	3
Building Societies/Banks	3
Charity Shops	2
Florists	2
Furniture	2
Jewellers	2
Sport's, Camping and Leisure Goods	2
Opticians	2
Bakers & Confectioners	2
Supermarkets	2
Dry Cleaners	2
Health & Beauty	2
Repair Alterations & Restoration	2

Units independent in nature	126
Regional Multiples	2
National Multiples	11
Irish/UK Multiples	6
International Multiples	3

The town centre has a strong predominance of independent stores and some national multiple uses. There are also relatively few International Multiples (franchises or chains).

There were only 3 Shopfronts within the town which were considered to be of a very poor quality. The majority (160) were considered to be of good quality while the survey team considered that over 40 units had a possible heritage value. Note: This was the only town for which such a detailed observation in relation to shopfronts was made by the team.

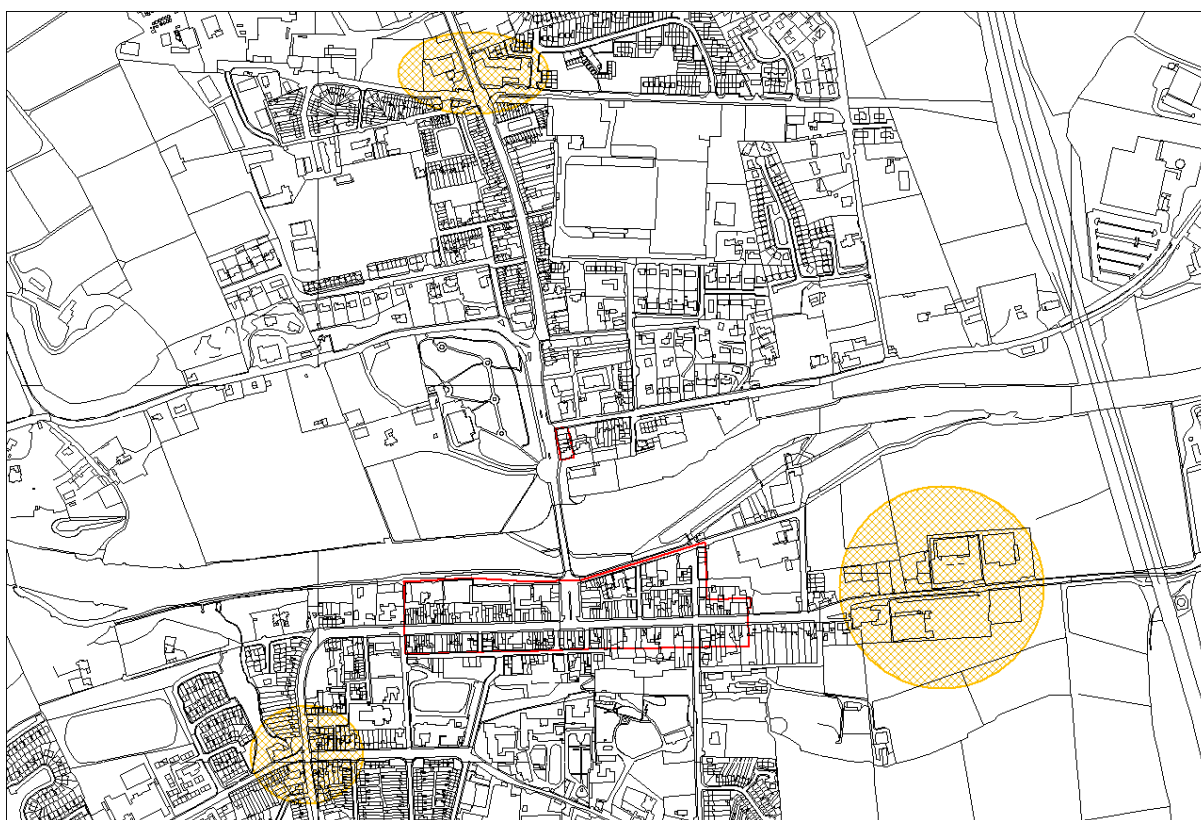
A number of premises while not currently functioning as shops are presently being used for display purposes. This is a useful way of maintaining an attractive shopfront to create interest for the passer-by thus contributing a much more positive presence on the street than an otherwise vacant unit might have.

Priority Questions:

Is there any edge or out of centre retail/other development to date? What other retail uses are outside town boundary and where?

There is a small recently constructed neighbourhood centre (Blackwater Shopping Centre) to the north of the town. This consists of 6 units. Only one of these is currently in use as a Betting Shop. The other units have not been fitted out to date and overall the building is beginning to become neglected and showing evidence of some vandalism.

Map 2 - Significant Edge and Out of Centre Retail (yellow hatched) – Fermoy



The crossroads at Emmet Street/Dunthane Road also contain a number of retail units which primarily service the southern part of the town and some passing trade and include a number of

bars, beauty salons and convenience shops. These have not been surveyed individually as they are considered to be outside the retail core.

The Dublin Road has a number of commercial uses dotted out along the road. Primarily this route out of the town is residential in nature. The primary uses along this outward stretch include the Amber Service Station (which includes a Costcutter convenience store, service pumps, car wash, etc), the large Blackwater Motors Complex and large Co-op Superstore (which has relocated from the Town Centre). The route also includes some uses such as a convenience shop/post office, takeaway, pubs and some doctor's surgeries.

There is an industrial estate to the north west of the town. Predominantly this is light industrial in nature although there are a number of uses such as a boxing club and kid fitness/play centre. Such uses would be more appropriately located within the town centre.

To the east of the town centre beyond the Council Offices and Courthouse are a number of retail type uses. These include the convenience retail supermarkets Supervalu, Lidl and a large DIY/electrical premises (Toss Bryan). In the context of the town of Fermoy these could be considered edge of centre uses.

The Cork road contains Texaco service station and John McCarthy Motors.

Are there any obvious significant opportunity sites within/adjoining the town centre?

There are a number of sites within the town centre which have obvious potential for redevelopment. These include the large Mart Site, the site of an old garage to the South of the Main Street (adjoining D & M Fruit and Veg). This is a current eyesore for which painting would help. There is also the site of the now vacant 'Session bar' and the site of the Co-op Superstore (now relocated outside the town centre).

Identify the number of and review the main public and private car parks within proximity to town centre.

The car parking is reviewed later in this report.

Identify main bus/rail stop location and trail station.

The bus stop is located along the main street (Mc Curtain Street) and includes pick ups for buses going to both Dublin and Cork. There is a clearly demarcated set down area and appropriate signage.

Overall physical condition:

While the overall quality of the town is considered positive generally it is considered that the town could benefit from the addition of further public space or positive expansion of the public realm. While the River Blackwater is an important amenity area for the town it could be complemented by some additional small scale civic space.

In terms of Litter and General Cleanliness the town has a very positive overall appearance. This is reflected in its high Tidy Towns score of 268 points for a Category D town an improvement from its 2010 score of 259. The overall national winner was Clonakilty in this Category with a score of 306.

Fermoy Street Review

Mc Curtain Street – Primary Street

Parking Disc required 9am to 6pm. Limit 1 hour. Paths recently paved on both sides of the street. New kerbing and concrete setts. Shopfronts and buildings are generally in good condition. The western end of the street contains a strong residential element which is well kept and maintained and adds diversity to the Main Street. Footpaths on the northern side of the street are a good width and offer more space for pedestrian flow and potential outdoor seating. Parallel parking on both sides of street is clearly demarcated. Bus stop is also clearly demarcated and well observed. Street contains modern litter bins and parking meters.

Patrick Street – Primary Street

Generally pavements and footpaths are in very good condition. Southern pavement has some issues with congestion due to its narrow width and especially where ‘sandwich board’ signage has been placed on the street or goods are left on display on street. 1hr parking restrictions. Also some disabled parking areas on the street.

Pearse Square – Primary Street:

Paths are average/good but could be considered for widening on one side in order to create a better urban space and improve pedestrian flow. Presently overly dominant with parking/traffic. Generally clutter free pavements.

Fitzgerald Place – Secondary Street:

For a secondary street this is quite a wide street. It has on street parking on both sides and 1 hour parking. There is potential for a farmers market (planned by Avondhu Blackwater Partnership) at the corner of the street. It is considered that removing 8/9 spaces either side of main street as provided in Avondhu plans could be reasonable. Footpaths are generally reasonable quality. Cleanliness and overall physical appearance are good.

O’ Neill Crowley Quay – Secondary Street:

Footpath is quite narrow (especially river side). Consider for widening. Condition is good. Overall cleanliness is excellent. On street parallel parking (southern side). Complementary attractive historic and modern buildings adjoin.

Ashe Quay – Secondary Street:

Overly car dominant but wide street width with path conditions average/good. Path narrow between river and trees. Lower paving and seats flooded at time of survey. Space around trees could be widened or path enhanced/extended. Public toilets at this location. Access to amenity area/walks and riverside. Generally location is well maintained/clean. Pedestrian priority public realm in this area could be enhanced.

Kent Street – Secondary Street:

One way street. Paths are of good quality but could be widened. A suggestion could be to remove parking on one side (approximately 10 cars) and to improve pedestrian flow and public realm. Cleanliness is good. On street parking on both sides of this street has led to a dominance of cars on the street. Physical appearance of the street is generally good and it is well maintained.

Connolly Street – Tertiary Street

Street located to the rear (south) of the Primary Streets. Street is relatively quiet with regard to pedestrian footfall. Spaces for on-street demarcated parking on one side of the street only. Paths to the northern side of the street have been newly surfaced with bollards to prevent inappropriate parking. More modern developments are re-orientating themselves with rear of premises now beginning to have a dual frontage. A number of office uses have also begun to occur on this street. Uses located along this street (not noted in survey) include mechanics, FCI Ireland (office), Social Welfare Office, Surgery, Print/Design, Fashion, Picture framing, Charity Shop, Library, Financial Centre and 2 vacant units.

Abercromby Place – Secondary Street:

Good quality wide paths. Ample bins. Good street furniture. Cleanliness and maintenance is very good. Front end parking but the overall width of the road is positive. Overall physical appearance of this street is generally good.

Fermoy Car Park Review

On Street Parking is 70c per hour with 1 or 2 hour limit dependant on the location. Off street car parks in general have a rate of 50c per hour.

Ashe Quay Car Park – This car park contains approximately 90 spaces including on street parallel parking. This is a high profile visible car park but not particularly well signposted. It is very accessible to the town centre. In terms of security the car park is well overlooked by adjoining buildings.

Kevin Barry Hill/Connolly Street Car Park (Library Car Park) – Car park is reasonably well signposted and located just off the main street. This is a 2 level car park. Upper has approximately 40 spaces. Lower has approximately 80 spaces. The lower car park is particularly accessible to the town centre on foot while the upper car park is more challenging. This is a good quality car park which is well lit and has ample payment machines.

(a) Old Co-Op Superstore Car Park: Now closed. Approximately 25 spaces (b) Centra Car Park: Paid private parking associated with Centra Supermarket. Approximately 20 spaces.

Fitzgerald Place Car Park – Car park contains approximately 20 spaces and is very accessible to the Town Centre. The car park is not particularly well signposted but it is a small car park so this is unnecessary. Suitably supervised by adjoining buildings. Car Park may not be the best use of this site as the area is already overly dominated by car parking. Location is site of Old Hay Market.

Mill Road/Riverside Car Park – This large car park contains approximately 130 spaces. It provides relatively easy access to the town centre however the linear form of the car park means that some areas are a little remote. Quality of the car park is generally good. Security palisade fence around car park is somewhat of an eyesore. Car park has adequate lighting, good tourist signage and paid parking machines. Rates are €3.50 per day or €15 per week.

O’Rahilly Row Car Park – This is a car park of approximately 70 spaces. It directly adjoins Patrick Street but is poorly accessible and poorly signposted for visitors. Car park itself is pleasant and well maintained. There are approximately 25 other spaces on the approach to the car park at Market Place.

Notes:

- Trucks and vehicular through traffic into the town avoiding the toll on the M8 motorway is still a persistent problem for the Town.
- Between 'on street' and other car parks (public and private) there appears to be ample car parking within the town.
- Generally there is little dereliction within the town. Buildings are well maintained and of good character with some particularly notable buildings of architectural heritage.
- Day of Survey (Thursday 1st December) found the general ambience of the town to be vibrant. Weather was reasonable. Dry cloudy day.
- Town streets well maintained and clean. Very little litter. Surfaces generally in good condition. Ample ticket machines for parking. Parking signage and directional signs to parking areas could be improved significantly. Library car park appeared to be the only car park with clear signage.
- Riverside Area could be improved by extending the level of pedestrian prioritised area.
- Sandwich Board Signs may be an issue on some pavements especially narrower ones on the Main Street.
- A number of Vacant Units were being used for attractive displays which was considered positive in relation to the overall appearance of the street.
- A number of units have informal outdoor seating areas. It is considered that this could be expanded or further improved in the town.
- Parking is generally well observed. It was noted that wardens were present on the day of the survey work.
- Town Centre remains the heart of the town in Fermoy, still it is the focus for the social and commercial life of the town. Future development should in general be directed towards the town centre which needs to be retained as the primary focus of the town.
- It is understood that there are no farmers markets at present. Avondhu Blackwater Partnership have plans for possible future at Fitzgerald Place. (www.bordbia.ie)

Mallow Town Centre Diversity of Use/Vacancy Survey:

Census 2011 Population: 11,605

Survey Date: 11th April 2012

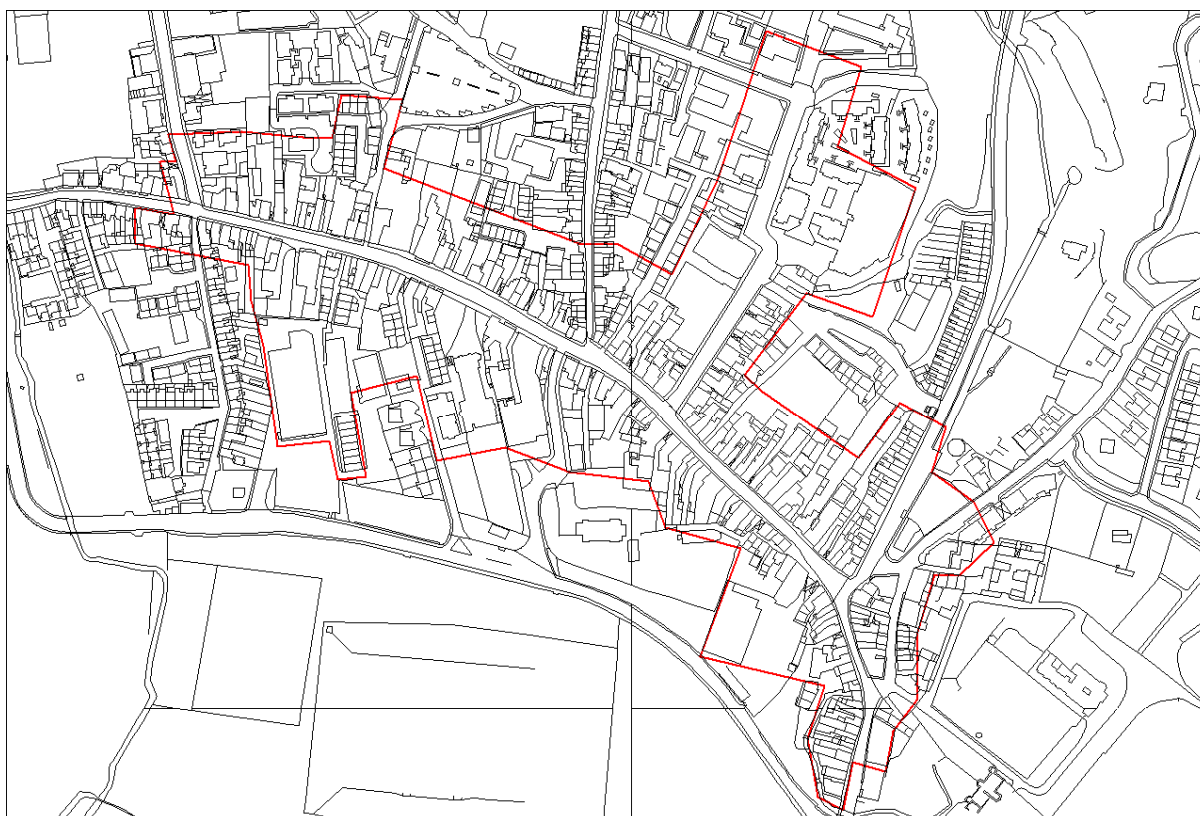
Surveyed by: M. Quinn (EP) and Lorraine Kennedy (SEP)

Weather Conditions: Sunny with some showers (Approximately 11 degrees)

The survey methodology:

The Use Survey recorded uses in 291 units within an area which could be considered the identifiable town centre/retail core. Surveys of the town centre indicate a wide range of different uses and types of property within the town centre (as defined in this study). Mallow Town Centre accommodates a range of retail facilities and an additional range of non-retail facilities and activities.

Map 1 - Identified Survey Retail Core (red) – Mallow Town Survey Area



Further information on the retail mix is set out below but it is notable that the town centre has 189 no. Retail, Retail Service and Leisure Service businesses within the town centre boundary. Table 1 below demonstrates that the dominant uses within Mallow Town Centre are comparison shops and services. There are 94 comparison goods retail units (e.g. clothing; footwear, electrical goods, etc) and a further 35 are classified as retail services (e.g. hairdressers, beauticians, travel agents). A smaller proportion of units are for convenience goods (e.g. supermarkets, grocery stores, etc) but

these include 4 significant supermarkets (Dunnes Stores, Tesco, Lidl and Centra), butchers and other convenience uses.

Type of Use	No. of Outlets
Comparison	94
Convenience	17
Retail Service	35
Leisure Service	43
Other Retail Service	-
Financial & Business Service	35
Health & Medical	6
Public Service	11
Religious Service	2
General Office Use	-
Overall Vacancy	48
Total	291

Retail and Retail Services Vacancy rates can be defined as either the number of units or amount of vacant floorspace not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total number of units (vacant and occupied) in a centre. The total number of vacant retail units in the town in the categories of General Retail, Retail Service, Leisure Service and Financial & Business Service are combined and measured against the total number of uses evident in these categories i.e. $48/272 \times 100 = 17.6\%$ vacancy.

In relation to Bank Place/Main Street, the Primary Streets in the town, there were 15 of 115 units vacant or 13%. Secondary Streets demonstrated a level of vacancy of 21% or 29 of 133 units. Surprisingly many of the laneways displayed a relatively low level of vacancy, possibly because they function as through routes from parking areas onto the main shopping streets and have a relatively high footfall.

Table 2 - Mallow Space in Use: Predominant Uses	
Use	Total No.
Hairdressers/Barbers	18
Ladies Wear & Accessories	17
Bars	11
Fast Food	9
Advice Centre	7
Chemists and Drugstores	7
Property Services	7
Dry Cleaners	7
Legal Services	7
Financial Services	6
Restaurants	6
Cafes	5
Casino & Betting Offices	5
Building Societies/Banks	5
Supermarkets	4
Charity Shops	4
Children & Infants Wear	4
Crafts, Gifts, China & Glass	4
Furniture	4
Health & Beauty	4
Supermarkets	4
Telephones & Accessories	4
Textiles & Soft Furnishings	3
Bakers & Confectioners	3
Confectionary, Tobacconist & Newsagent	3
DIY & Home Improvement	3
Electrical & Other Durable Goods	3
Footwear	3
Grocery Stores	3
Jewellers	3
Sports, Camping and Leisure Goods	3
Toys, Games & Hobbies	3
Butchers	3
Chiropodist	2
Department & Variety Stores	2
Educational Establishment	2
Florists	2
Menswear	2
Opticians	2

Table 3 - Characteristics of Uses in Mallow:	
Units independent in nature	179
Regional Multiples	-
National Multiples	34
Irish/UK Multiples	7
International Multiples	10

The town centre has a strong predominance of independent stores and a significant number of national multiple uses. It also seems to have a stronger representation of Irish/UK and International Multiples than other towns.

Priority Questions:

Is there any edge or out of centre retail/other development to date? What other retail uses are outside town survey boundary and where?

Retail:

In terms of convenience retailing there are 4 significant retailers operating within the identified town retail core (Dunnes, Tesco, Lidl and Centra). Aldi, Supervalu and Centra are additional convenience operators operating within the wider town and environs. In terms of the town centre Dunnes is the most recent retail addition within the Market Square development to the north of the town centre.

Outside of the centre survey area there is a large modern Supervalu with associated pharmacy and hair salon located at Bellevue to the South of the River.

The Ballydaheen Road is an extension of Bridge Street from the town centre in a southerly direction. Primarily it is a residential street/road with some established commercial uses including shops and pubs. Towards the end of the Ballydaheen Road at the junction of the Cork Road and the Old Cork Road there is a cluster of uses primarily focussed around a neighbourhood centre (including a Dry Cleaners, barbers, butcher, beautician, newsagent, credit union). At the junction there is also an Amber Filling Station, Spar Express and a separate off-licence while nearby on the Cork Road is a Ford car-sales depot. The nature of the development around this junction presents confusion both visually and physically from a vehicular and pedestrian perspective with turning movements, traffic lights, different accesses, etc.

Map 2 - Significant Edge and Out of Centre Retail (yellow hatched) – Mallow

Further along the Old Cork Road (South of the town) is the Aldi Supermarket another modern addition to convenience retailing in the town.

To the north of the town other significant convenience is found in the Centra Supermarket located on the Spa Glen Road.

The Co-Op Superstore which is a large DIY, garden supplier store is located to the west of the town over 500 metres from the town centre. The Co-op has a very large car park. A Farmers market takes place here on Fridays 10am-1pm but the location offers poor connectivity to the urban fabric of the existing town particularly from the perspective of the pedestrian.

Business Parks/Industrial Estates:

In general the Business Parks and Industrial Estates in Mallow have little retail type uses. The Quartertown Industrial Estate has a range of uses including bathroom and tiles, DIY, fish delivery company, car showrooms, car repairs, engineering companies and OPW depot. Some of these uses have a retailing element. Clyda Business Park (opposite) is a relatively new business and technology park which still has unoccupied vacant units.

The Majestic Business Park on the Cork Road (R620) contains uses such as a radio station, Little Rascal's funworld, JMR (Paint, decor, DIY). It is questionable whether a children's play centre is an appropriate use in such a location particular where vehicles are loading/unloading bulky goods and the dangers associated with their associated turning movements, etc.

The Mallow Business & Technology Park is a campus style park which is primarily reserved for engineering, technology and businesses.

Are there any obvious significant opportunity sites within/adjoining the town centres?

There are no readily identifiable large scale opportunity sites directly within or adjoining the town centre. There are some areas where an alternative use could be considered e.g. redevelopment of the Carmichael Lane Car Park. Other sites which may have potential for some development or re-use include the site of the former Top petrol filling station on Spa Walk, the burntout hotel site on Main Street and a derelict site adjacent to Discount World on Main Street. Small scale infill opportunities arise elsewhere. To the West of the survey area there is a 'greenfield' site enclosed on 2 sides by the Park Road. Potential for the town centre to grow in this direction should be considered particularly as it is located in the direction of the train station.

Identify number of and review the main public and private car parks within proximity to the town centre.

The car parking is reviewed later in this report.

Identify main bus/rail stop location

Mallow is served by a regular train service on the primary Cork to Dublin route. This is located approximately 600-700 metres from the town centre. The bus service serving Cork - Limerick is located to the south of the town centre at the Town Park on the Park Road. This has a permanent bus shelter and both public and private operators work from this location.

Overall physical condition and appearance:

The overall appearance of the town centre in general is positive. There are some places where it appears shabby with shopfronts in need of upgrading, replacement or repainting. Key derelict or vacant sites need to be targeted for renewal including the old hotel site.

The Market Square complex is a good example of a modern development linked into the town centre however there is evidence that some of the finishes and detailing are dating badly already and this will need to be improved in order to enhance the image of the development. Landmark buildings in this area such as the now vacant Pizza Hut premises will need to find a new use.

In terms of Litter and General Cleanliness the town has a generally positive appearance. There were some incidental examples of littering or neglect but the presence of a mobile path sweeper on the survey day is a positive indication of routine cleaning. In the nationwide Tidy Towns competition Mallow had a score of 244 for a Category E Town in 2011, an improvement from its 2010 score of 238. The overall national winner in this category was Westport with a score of 309. A significant improvement will be needed if Mallow is to attain a similar standard.

Mallow Street Review:

Bank Place/Main Street – Primary Street:

This street is one way in its entirety. Condition of footpaths is generally very good with evidence of recent repaving particularly towards the eastern end of Main Street. There are some areas which need attention or repair. The width of footpaths is intermittent and could be increased overall particularly as there is no pedestrian civic space in the town centre offering relief from parked cars or traffic. Pavements overall are generally clutter free. Some of the street furniture needs repainting particularly the older bollards and railings. Other sections of the Main Street especially to the east have good examples of modern steel bollards and bins. There is also a good presence of parking machines, etc.

The street is generally well maintained. Parking is generally on-street and on both sides of the road. Nearby parking areas are accessed via laneways which serve the Main Street. There are also 2 sheffield stands on the street which cater for bicycle parking. Provision of good quality bicycle parking is something which is more exceptional than norm in many of the survey towns.

The overall physical appearance of the street is cluttered with a lot of wiring and signage at first floor level detracting from the overall visual appearance of the street. Many of the buildings on the street are positive examples of the architectural heritage of the town and there are some attractive compositions. In some instances detailing and finishes could be improved. Some of the vacant/derelict units could be improved or need to be redeveloped.

Bridge Street - Secondary Street:

This street is a narrow two way street forming part of the N72 National Route which runs to the east of the town centre. The narrow nature of the street and the presence of passing 2 way traffic, notably HGV's, is not conducive to the creation of a positive and vibrant streetlife for the pedestrian. While the condition of footpaths is in general quite good the narrow width is an issue. Bollards to prevent parking, display evidence of collisions with passing traffic as do street signs. No parking is permitted on this narrow through route.

The overall physical appearance of the street can be considered somewhat grimy and a little run down likely due to heavy traffic volumes, relatively high vacancy and some examples of poor quality or under maintained shopfronts. The higher numbers of vacancies are present in particular on the more constricted portion of this street. Vacancy on this street runs at 27%.

William O'Brien Street - Secondary Street:

This is a wide 2-way street with a relatively steep gradient. To the top of the street is the Market Square Shopping Centre, a modern shopping complex with retail, cinema and apartments while the Court House around the corner to the west is another important landmark to the top of the street.

The condition of footpaths on this street are good overall. Generally they are wide enough for pedestrian flow. There is some physical clutter in evidence particularly to the lower half of the street where a tree, phone box, post box, litter bin and pole convene.

Public Space just off this street makes an important contribution to the street and the town generally. This includes a good public space at the entry to Market Square and another small pedestrian street to west of the street containing urban street benches. There is also some outdoor seating within the market square development around a centralized outdoor plaza. Overall the street has some good examples of modern street furniture particularly the elements associated with the Market Square development.

Parking is on street and on both sides of the road. Generally the overall physical condition of the street is positive. Vacancy on this street is approximately 26%. A significant proportion of this vacancy is in the recent modern development adjoining and opposite the Courthouse.

Mallow Car Parking Review:

Much of the parking in the town is on street parking as well as grouped car parking areas which are served by laneways onto the Main Street.

Disc display is required in the majority of the town area. Main Street and other streets have a minimum fee of 20cents for 15 mins. 1 hour fee is 80c. Maximum stay is one hour 8.30-17.30 with the aim evidently to discourage long term parking on the streets. During the survey work there was visible evidence of a traffic warden enforcing parking restrictions on the town streets.

The only free car park in the identified retail core is within the Market Square development which allows for 3 hours free parking to customers.

On the day of the survey it took a considerable time to find parking in one of the grouped car parks in the town. The Bowling Green Car Park was full. On main arrival to the town centre from the N22 roundabout the first signpost on the left directs traffic along Shortcastle Street where parking is on-street and not a formalised car park. The next directional sign for traffic directs traffic up Chapel Lane to the Bowling Green Car Park.

Many of the car parks are not directly evident to those visiting the town for the first time and the one way traffic system could contribute to extended and possibly frustrating journeys for those unfamiliar with parking arrangements. Signage directing visitors to the town to appropriate car parks needs to be improved.

Market Square Shopping Centre Car Park:

This is a substantial underground car park with parking for the Market Square Complex (located to the north of the town centre). It provides direct access to retailing, cinema and apartments within the development. The overall quality of the car park is good and it is the only covered parking available within the town. At the time of the survey work there was a high level of space occupancy evident in the car park. This may be due to the fact that it is the only free car park in the town.

Carmichael Lane Car Park:

This car park is located directly off Main Street and is supported by two laneway accesses leading South. It has approximately 75 car parking spaces. The car park also has a commercial element and includes some uses along the laneways and within the car park. The rear of some residences also overlook onto this public car park. The car park is somewhat difficult to locate for the visitor to the town. Its overall quality is reasonable but could be improved especially considering its commercial function and direct links onto the main street.

Bowling Green Car Park:

This is an attractive and well presented car park in the town. It offers direct accessibility to the Main Street down Chapel Lane. Signage into the car park is reasonable. Trees and premises looking directly onto this open car park make it a good option for early evening parking for nearby hotel and other leisure services. Bowling Green Car Park is 0.70c per hour or €3 per day.

Deal Yard Lane/Hibernian Way Car Park:

This car park is located to the south of Davis Street/Main Street. It is accessed via both Deal Yard Lane/Hibernian Way. It is a very accessible car park and offers good pedestrian permeability to the town centre. It is somewhat challenging to locate however. Car parking is paid and costs €5 per day. Overall it is a good quality car park containing approximately 80 cars and also functions to serve the McDonalds Drive Thru Restaurant. The car park is parallel to the Tesco car park to the west.

Tesco Car Park:

This is a private car park generally provided for the customers of Tesco and its associated retail outlets. It also allows for pedestrian access via Deal Yard Lane to the town centre. The overall quality of the car park is good and it is directly visible from the road. The car park is patrolled by ticket inspector who enforces parking restrictions. It is estimated that the car park caters for over 125 cars. Tesco parking is €1.30 per hour with a maximum stay of 2 hours allowable. Parking fee is waived for those shopping in the Tesco supermarket.

Lidl Car Park (Park Road):

This is a private car park for the use of Lidl customers. This is somewhat unfortunate as it is located to the rear of the modern Mallow Library. There is a nearby car park to the east of the Lidl car park which caters for car parking for members of the public. It is estimated that this Lidl car park accommodates approximately 60 cars.

Car Park East of Lidl (Park Road):

This is a modern car park with approximately 40 car parking spaces. It is reasonably well laid out and well spaced.

Muddy Hill Car Park:

This is a small car park on Muddy Hill. The car park is a little remote from the town centre itself but useful for the agile local. The overall quality of the car park is reasonable. Its accessibility is challenging for pedestrians. Street lighting ensures the approach to the car park is suitably lit and has reasonable security. The car park has approximately 35 spaces.

Bridge Street:

This is a small car parking area with less than 15 spaces on Bridge Street. Entrance to the car park could present challenges given its location on a busy route.

Notes:

- Mallow is a very important service centre and market town for a large agricultural hinterland in North Cork. Its importance is heightened by its location along the N20 Cork to Limerick National Route Atlantic Corridor and as its designation as a hub town in the National Spatial Strategy.
- Mallow town has an important historic past and a long tradition as an established town for commerce. There are some fine examples of different architectural styles within the town.
- Of the survey towns Mallow has the highest overall number of recorded uses within the town core survey area. Mallow is the only town in which all the significant convenience operators are present (within and outside survey boundary) which demonstrates the importance of the town as a commercial centre in the County.
- A characteristic of the town are the large number of laneways present serving car parks and backland commercial areas to the main streets. In this way it has similar characteristics to the town of Middleton. The historic laneways could be improved and enhanced and marketed given the important role they play in bringing pedestrian flow into the heart of the town.
- The Main Street contains 2 derelict sites which include Bank Place (former derelict hotel burnt down) and an additional site on Main Street (site adjoining Discount World). Both sites are now screened with large canvas/timber advertisement hoardings which portray images of elements of heritage in the town. This is a useful temporary way of screening the dereliction until such time as regeneration takes place. There is also one boarded up premises on Davis Street.
- There is only one formal pedestrian crossing point on the entire Main Street. Consideration needs to be given to improving pedestrian crossing options in order to favour pedestrians. The raised table top/shared surface that enhances pedestrian priority on the route uphill to Market Square Shopping Centre from William O' Brien Street is a good example.
- All the public car parks within the town centre require paid parking. The Tesco and Aldi car parks are specifically for customers only while the large Market Square Shopping Centre car park offers free car parking for 3 hours. It was evident that there was a high level of usage of this car park perhaps on account of the lack of charge. It needs to be assessed whether this offers it a disproportionate advantage over other car parking options in the town?
- A Mallow Historic Rebel Trail has been developed by the Mallow Development Partnership. The trail is promoted by fixed interpretative signage, marked red line route on the footpath and an audio tour. This is a very positive and innovative model which could be developed in

other towns. When compared to the more attractive fixed signage the quality of the footpath route was substandard (painted) and needing improvement.

- The town demonstrates noticeable evidence of a developed arts, theatre and community scene which is a positive attraction for the town.
- The library window display advertises a Town Public Realm Project part of which involves getting primary school students involved in a 'Streetscape Colour Scheme'. Painted montages of the Main Street (children's work) were on display. This appears to be a very positive initiative to develop the interests of children and engage the general public. It is understood that Spa Square and area surrounding the Clock House are in line for renovation and detailed proposals will be available in the near future.
- The N72 National Route which runs through the south east of the town centre links traffic from Dungarvan via Fermoy (East) to Killarney (West). This brings significant traffic through the town centre including a notable number of HGV's. The resultant heavy traffic is not conducive to the creation of a positive and vibrant street life and contributes to a somewhat run down character of adjoining streets. This is particularly an issue as one of the most important heritage landmarks in the town (the clock tower) is on this street. Traffic arrangements around the Clock House junction and Main Street are presently unclear due to inadequate road markings. Layout of the junction needs to be reconsidered.
- Of the surveyed towns Mallow has the highest concentration and number of uses and the second largest identified retail core survey area of the towns surveyed.
- Mallow seems to underperform in the Tidy Towns Competition in comparison to similar sized towns. The reasons for this underperformance need to be considered.
- Mallow, like many other towns, has a Shopping Arcade with a number of smaller units. It is of small scale and generally dated in appearance. This is a feature of many towns in this overall town survey.
- The visual clutter caused by wiring, first floor protruding signage and excessive dominance of parking and traffic on Main Street, does little to promote the visual quality of certain elements of the streetscape particularly views down Main Street eastwards towards the Clock House building. This needs to be addressed in a targeted manner to improve the overall aesthetic of the town. The east of Main Street is particularly traffic dominated (with parking on both sides of the street) and can be both visually and physically cluttered at the street level particularly during busy periods.
- Many premises on William O' Brien Street need re-use particularly around the Market Square Shopping Centre.

- Many positive improvements to footpaths (especially resurfacing) in the town have occurred in recent years however there are additional opportunities for widening and rebalancing the streets in the town in favour of the pedestrian.
- Positive attempts at improving/promoting heritage of town are evident e.g. Mural on gable of Fitzpatrick's Jewellers on Main Street showing representation of early 20th Century Mallow.
- During the survey some buildings displayed evidence of moss/grass on eaves/roofslates with repair of slates or re-roofing required on certain buildings. There were also parts of the street where there were grass/weeds evident in places.
- There were a number of examples of illegal parking. The former Top Garage Site on Spa Walk is currently being used in a haphazard manner for car parking. Evidence appears to demonstrate that paid parking is being avoided including the evidential popular usage of the free Market Square Shopping Centre car park.
- The quality of some buildings could be substantially improved and mediocre or neglected buildings should be targeted. The Clock House is currently for sale and this is an iconic building in the town whose re-use needs to be prioritised.
- Up to 150 metres along the northern side of Bank Place and Main Street is reserved for taxi parking with up to 15 cars parked at the time of various site visits. This appears to be somewhat excessive and takes up substantial space on the Main Street with cars stationary for long time periods
- To the South of the town centre along the Park Road are located two recreational green areas with both active and passive recreational functions. One is a children's playground and the other is a small park with recently installed outdoor gym equipment. These outdoor gymnasiums are becoming a feature of many town parks in the county. Further south across the Park Road is a larger Memorial Park for the town complete with playing pitches, etc.
- A Farmers market takes place in the Co-op car park on Fridays 10am-1pm. It is unfortunate that this does not have a more centralised location within the town centre. Could a designated space in the town centre be considered or alternatively pedestrianising an area for one half day per week to allow for the Farmer's market?
- Dairygold is a significant contributor to the economy of the area and is synonymous with the town. The factory premises still remains an integral part of the town and is a major employer. There is a large staff car park for Dairygold located on the Park Road.

Midleton Town Centre Diversity of Use/Vacancy Survey:

Census 2011 Population: 12,001

Survey Date: Tuesday 20th December 2011

Surveyed by: M. Quinn (EP)

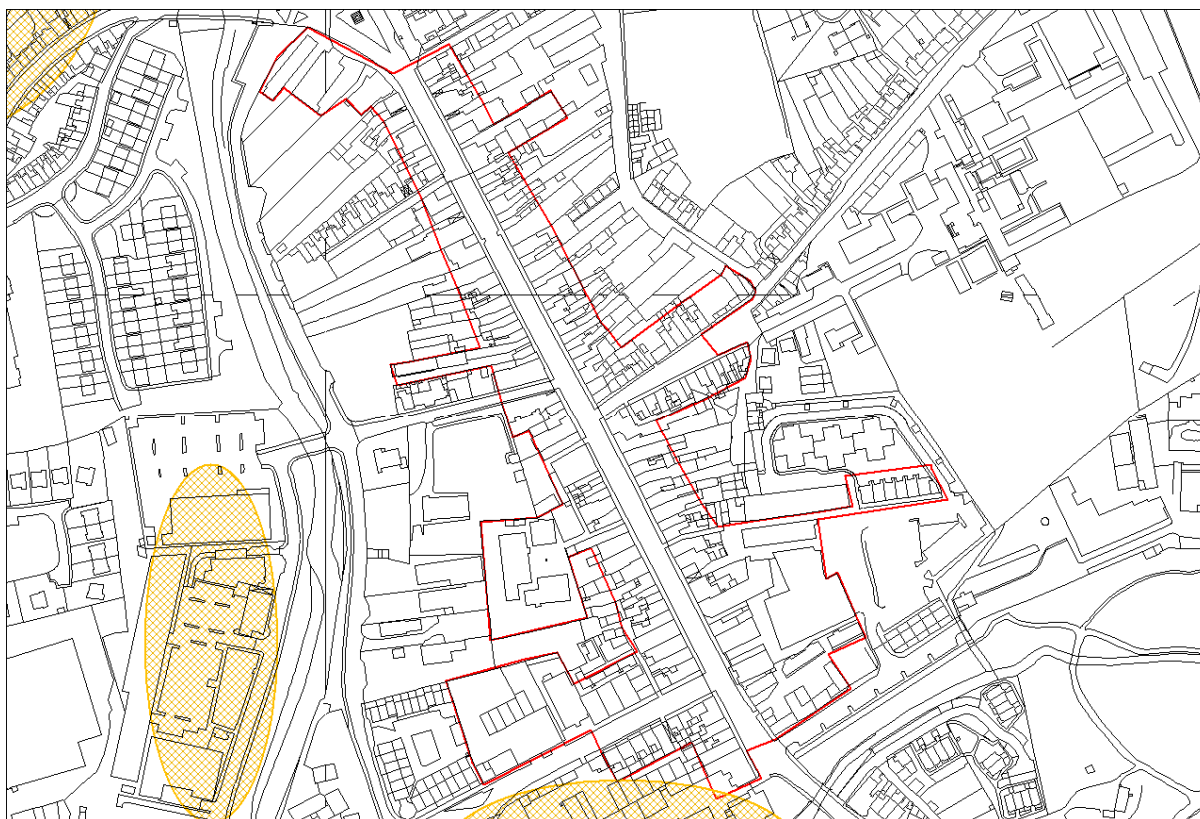
Weather Conditions: Dry & overcast (Approximately 10 degrees)

The survey methodology:

The Use Survey recorded uses in 218 units within a mapped area which could be considered the identifiable town centre/retail core. There were a number of uses occurring just outside of this area. These have been noted later in the commentary and described where appropriate.

Surveys of the town centre indicate a wide range of different uses within the town centre (as defined in this study). Midleton Town Centre accommodates a range of retail facilities and an additional range of non-retail facilities and activities.

Map 1 - Identified Retail Core (red) – Midleton Town Centre Survey Area



Further information on the retail mix is set out below but it is notable that the town centre has 161 no. Retail, Retail Service and Leisure Service businesses within the town centre boundary. Table 1 below demonstrates that the dominant uses within Midleton Town Core are comparison shops,

retail and leisure services. There are 77 comparison goods retail units (e.g. clothing; footwear, electrical goods, etc) and a further 29 are classified as retail services (e.g. hairdressers, beauticians, travel agents). A smaller proportion of units are for convenience goods (e.g. supermarkets, grocery stores, etc).

Type of Use	No. of Outlets
Comparison	77
Convenience	18
Retail Service	29
Leisure Service	37
Other Retail Service	n/a
Financial & Business Service	25
Health & Medical	3
Public Service	4
Religious Service	n/a
General Office Use	n/a
Overall Vacancy	25
Total	218

Retail and Retail Services Vacancy rates can be defined as either the number of units or amount of vacant floorspace not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total number of units (vacant and occupied) in a centre. The total number of vacant retail units in the town in the categories of General Retail, Retail Service, Leisure Service and Financial & Business Service are combined and measured against the total number of uses evident in these categories i.e. $25/211 \times 100 = 12\%$ vacancy.

A relatively small number of units within the survey area can be considered to be in the long term vacant category. Few were heading towards dereliction. This would appear to be indicative of the strong demand within the town centre for retail/commercial units. Vacant premises of note include the old Cinema Site on Broderick Street and Cuddigan's yard which requires redevelopment. In relation to Primary Streets i.e. Main Street there were 11 of 121 units vacant i.e. 9% while on Secondary Streets this increased to 10% or 5 of 49 units. Lanes and backlands surveyed demonstrated 9 of 48 vacancies or 19% however many of the vacant units were constructed in the last 3-5 years primarily as part of a single scheme and have never been occupied to date due to economic circumstances. The town generally gives no overall impression of vacancy or dereliction which is in line with the data presented.

Table 2 - Middleton Space in Use: Predominant Uses	
Use	Total No.
Ladies Wear & Accessories	18
Hairdressers/Barbers	10
Restaurants	10
Convenience Stores	9
Property Services	9
Health & Beauty	8
Bars	8
Fast Food	7
Cafes	7
Other Comparison Goods	7
Children's Wear	6
Crafts, Gifts, China & Glass	6
Jewellers	6
Legal Services	6
Chemists and Drugstores	5
Financial Services	5
Casino & Betting Offices	5
Other Retail Outlets	5
Sport's, Camping and Leisure Goods	4
Hardware & Household Goods	4
Menswear	3
Footwear	3
Charity Shops	3
Telephones & Accessories	3
Butchers	2
Building Societies/Banks	2
Opticians	2
Repair Alterations & Restoration	2
Travel Agents	2
Creche	2
Carpets & Flooring	2
Confectionary, Tobacconist, Newsagent	2
Other Business Services	2

Table 3 - Characteristics of Uses in Middleton:	
Units independent in nature	161
Regional Multiples	4
National Multiples	10
Irish/UK Multiples	10
International Multiples	2

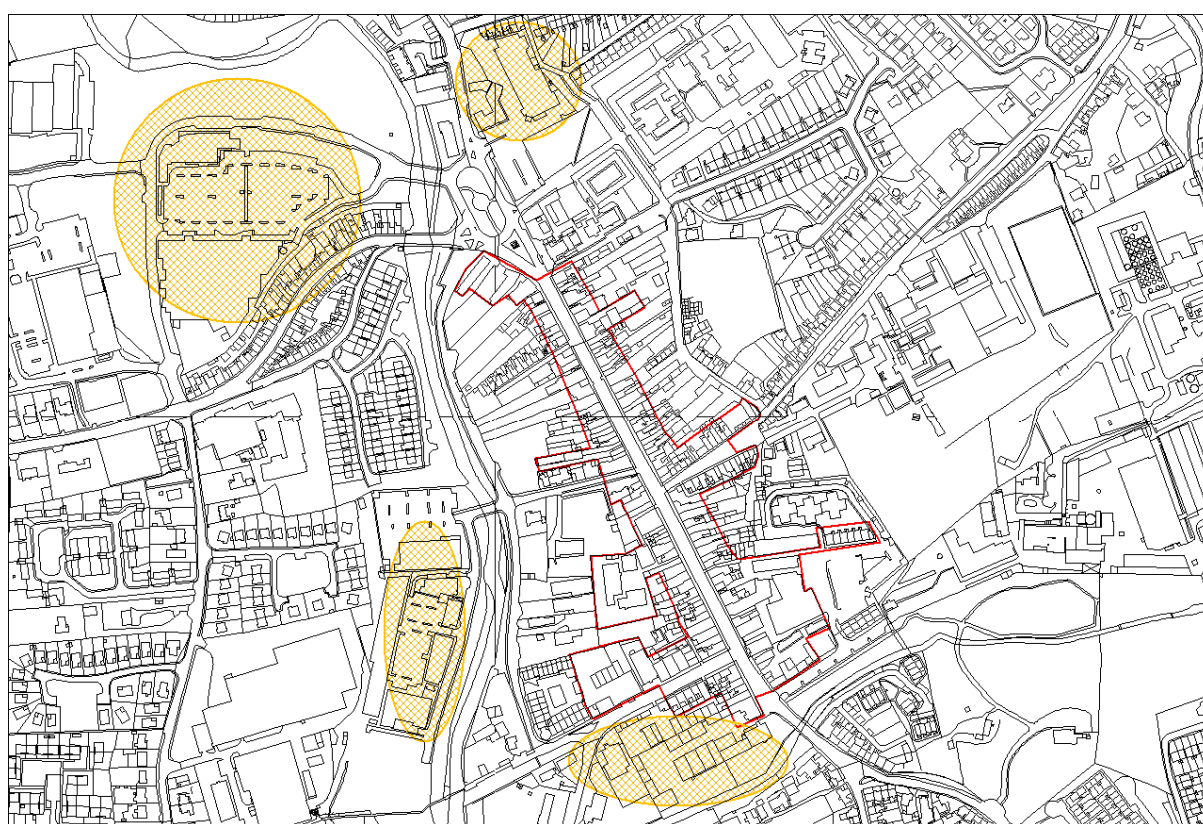
The town centre has a strong predominance of independent stores and some national multiple uses. There are also relatively few International Multiples (franchises or chains) within the town core although the Market Green Retail Park (edge of centre) has a more plentiful supply of such uses.

Priority Questions:

Is there any edge or out of centre retail/other development to date? What other retail uses are outside town boundary and where?

The following is a map which indicates the significant edge or out of centre areas where retail development in the town occurs.

Significant Edge and Out of Centre Retail - Middleton



North West:

The most significant edge of centre development in terms of retail is the Market Green Retail Park. This is located to the North West of the town centre approximately 300 metres from the edge of the retail core.

This edge of centre development consists of large area of surface car park and 2 large retail blocks. Block A is a covered shopping mall and is composed of an anchor retail tenant (Tesco) and approximately 12 other units including Heaton's, Homefront, (Healthy Days) Health Shop, Cafe, Jeanius (menswear), Euro's (stationery), E-mobile, D2 (ladieswear), Specsavers (opticians),

SamMcCauley pharmacist, Sky Shop and barbers. At the time of the survey work there were no vacant units in this block.

Block B of the retail park contains the Gate Cineplex (cinema), Subway, Welch Sports, Wiser Recycling, Chris Keating (Beds and Kitchen Design), Game Stop. 3 of the units are presently vacant.

North:

The Riversdale Shopping Centre to the North of the defined retail core is essentially a neighbourhood type centre in an edge of centre location. Uses at this location include an Esso forecourt garage, off licence, pharmacy, beauty salon, Spar Express and Children's clothes shop. Directly alongside this is a large and popular supermarket (Supervalu) with own car park.

The Mill Road is increasingly witness to retail/commercial developments perhaps due to its location en route to the recently reopened rail station. The ground floor residential/commercial mix is about 60:40 at present along the lower part of the Mill Road leading to the station.

West:

To the West of the town is the recently constructed Water's Edge Development. This is a mixed use development involving a mixture of residential, commercial and retail uses. Located in this area are 2 convenience retail supermarkets Aldi and Lidl (International Multiples) and a further international fast food chain (McDonalds). 5 of 6 other units in this complex remain vacant at the time of the survey. Aldi has a large car park which may be shared with adjoining apartments. The edge of centre location, which is slightly remote and somewhat inaccessible from the rest of the town may be one of the factors in the relative under performance of this development to date as well as economic circumstances.

South:

Cuddigan's Yard, an old Mill complex with heritage potential, is located directly to the south of the town centre and includes some retail warehousing and enterprise units. The overall nature of this area is run down with vacancies high. Presently the layout contains uses such as a secondhand furniture store, Glass and Glazing, Kitchens while approximately 7 units remain vacant. Although with significant potential the area remains neglected and represents a significant eyesore within the town. These lands are a major opportunity area for investment directly located with ease of access to the town centre and the potential to complement the Midleton Distillery. Proposals are now in place (planning approved) for a mixed use development including retail, office and residential on this site. Future investment in this area will be required.

Other:

Other retail/commercial areas expanding outwards from the town centre include the Business Park on the Bailick Road. This involves primarily light industrial/manufacturing uses e.g. Riverside Acupuncture and Sports and Injury clinic and gym, Property Management, Bailick Blinds and Curtains, etc. Generally the area is neglected and entire area would benefit from redevelopment in the future.

The extension of the Market Green Retail Park further beyond its edge of centre location includes uses such as a Kids activity fun centre, Minogue furniture, World of Wonder, Nursery Boutique and Army Surplus Warehouse. The surrounding retail area includes a Co-op Superstore, Maxi Zoo and Instore. Care must be taken that uses in such areas are predominantly associated with the sale of bulky goods in instances where development is considered appropriate.

Are there any obvious significant opportunity sites within/adjoining the town centre?

There are a number of sites within the town centre which have obvious potential for redevelopment. These are the Old Cinema site including Broderick Street Car Park, Cuddigans yard and Riverside Way Area and are further described later in this report.

Identify the number of and review the main public and private car parks within proximity to town centre.

The car parking is reviewed linked in this report.

Identify main bus/rail stop location and train station.

The train station is located to the north of the town centre with trains serving Cork City. Bus stops are located along Main Street of which there are two designated set down areas. Buses serve Cork, Youghal, etc.

Overall physical condition:

The overall quality of the town is considered positive generally but improvements could be made in future development of amenity along the waterside including the Riverside Way Area. There are also opportunities for improvement around the Distillery Walk while small environmental improvements to Connolly Street, etc could be possible. Identified opportunity sites (noted later) would benefit from renewal.

In terms of Litter and General Cleanliness the town has a generally positive appearance. This is reflected in its Tidy Towns score of 259 points for a Category E town an improvement from its 2010 score of 252. The overall national winner was Westport, Co. Mayo in this Category with a score of 309.

Midleton Street Review

Main Street – Primary Street:

The Main Street of the town is the natural home for trade and activity in the town. It is wide with parallel parking on both sides for cars. The street has a 2 hour parking time limit Monday to Saturday. Path surface is generally in good condition and footpaths are sufficiently wide for ease of pedestrian flow, although any further proliferation of sandwich board signage could become a problem. Paths could be further widened. Overall the street is clean and well maintained. Generally buildings on the street have a good physical appearance. There are a small number of units which would benefit from some refurbishment or repainting. The southern end of the street has front end parking with some unusual parking arrangements such as a disabled car parking space located on a corner. A feature of the main street are its laneways linked to backland car parks footfall from which contributes to the overall attractiveness and vibrancy of the town. The Main Street could benefit from the addition of heritage style lighting evident on other streets in the town such as Broderick and Connolly Street.

Broderick Street – Secondary Street:

This is a wide street. It contains pollarded trees to the northern side which have been somewhat crudely pruned. The street is framed to the south by 3 storey Georgian style residential/office use buildings while to the north it is predominantly single storey buildings. The street has a strong building line towards the east but the sense of enclosure is lost moving in a westerly direction primarily caused by reduction in building heights and excessive set back of buildings. The site of the old Ormonde Cinema is a substantial opportunity site and currently presents itself as an eyesore to the town. Beyond this 6 single storey commercial units set back from the main street are dated and the area is overly dominated by car parking contributing little to the sense of enclosure or sense of place in this part of the town. This area could benefit from redevelopment. Street has attractive heritage type street lighting.

Connolly Street – Secondary Street:

This is the main route outwards from the town centre to Dungourney. The street is constricted towards the main street and widens moving eastwards. Haphazard parking arrangements including illegal parking appear to be a feature of the street. Street could benefit from footpath widening and reorientation/improvement of public space perhaps as a presentational market space towards the front entrance of Midleton College. Street has attractive heritage type street lighting.

Distillery Walk - Secondary Street:

Distillery Walk has a notable presence of food premises, perhaps a reflection of its location near a significant national heritage attraction (The Midleton Distillery). Complementing the Distillery are some attractive heritage buildings and historic features. The street could be enhanced with some footpath widening, the benefits of which can already be seen in the outdoor seating used in some of the food premises. Tourist signage is modest, traditional and appropriate. The street contains front end parking associated with the Distillery on the southern side of the road. The potential of the street to include the riverside and small park is not being realised by the current street arrangement

as both are obscured from vision and access by existing stone walls to the north and south. Potential to open up the amenity of both parks by creating further accesses should be examined.

Church Lane - Secondary Street:

This is a narrow one way street and historic lane of heritage value. A quiet street which assists in the permeability of movement through the town.

Laneways:

The historical laneways of Midleton are an attractive feature of the town and provide direct pedestrian access to the main shopping street to those arriving to town from peripheral car parks. This pattern of development has meant that many of the laneways in themselves have become attractive commercially and different uses are prevalent along the lanes which are attractive to passing pedestrians.

Many of the laneways have a commercial function while others are almost semi-private, some are residential. Others are specialist with crafts, etc. Many of the laneways are shut at night most likely for security reasons.

Established laneways such as ‘the Mall’ which links the Main Street to the Riverside Way Car Park show high levels of occupancy and diversity of use. Other smaller lanes such as Sage Lane provide specialist uses of an artistic nature such as a ceramic studio, craft shop, silversmith, etc.

Access from Distillery Walk Car Park to Main Street is punctuated by a number of laneways and recent redevelopment of this area has sought to capitalise on this pedestrian flow through the area. Although the Beorg scheme has many merits and has created a range of new car free pedestrian friendly spaces within the town it has not been as successful as envisaged with high vacancy due to the present economic climate. Unlike some other laneways in the town this area is not gated. With proactive management and occupancy of units the potential of this area may be realised in the coming years.

‘The Square’ to the West of the town is linked via a laneway to a small car park. The scheme is pleasant and based around a small pedestrian square capitalising on a through route to the car park. It includes a cafe with outdoor seating area and a range of other uses.

Midleton Car Park Review

The Midleton Traffic and Transportation Study of 2009 noted that there were approximately 505 on-street parking spaces in Midleton, of which 120 were located on the Main Street. The study noted that there were some issues between parking capacity and demand at peak times.

Riverside Way Car Park:

Public Car Park. Approximately 85 spaces. 2 hour parking limit. Quality of the car park is reasonable. Convenience of location is the most attractive feature of this car park. It is central and both accessible to the town centre and Water's Edge. Although not substantially overlooked the car park due to its open nature ensures that it is less vulnerable to security issues than other more enclosed spaces. The laneways to the main street are closed at night and the car park has a predominantly day time function. Vehicular access to the car park is poorly signposted while access for vehicles needs to be improved. There is no pedestrian crossing to the west which means pedestrians must traverse a busy road to access the Water's Edge Development (which includes Lidl/Aldi/McDonalds)

Lidl Car Park:

Private Car Park associated with Lidl (Water's Edge). Approximately 130 spaces. This car park is pleasant and well landscaped and within relatively easy access of the town centre on foot. On the day of the survey there were approximately 35 cars at 11am. There is a somewhat awkward turning movement into the car park from the road.

The Square Car Park:

Private Car Park. Approximately 80 spaces. 3 hour limit in car park. Car park location provides relatively easy access to the town centre. This car park is enclosed by high walls and is in general poorly overlooked with no CCTV. Security at night could be an issue. Car park is poorly signposted.

Broderick Car Park:

Private Car Park. Approximately 60 spaces. Surface car park which is in general poorly overlooked. Car park is associated with nearby retail units. Pedestrian permeability to town core is poor. A better use of this space overall is possible.

Distillery Walk Car Park:

Public Car Park. Approximately 155 spaces. Area is well signposted for car parking as it is associated with the Distillery. Car park is generally of good quality and is easily accessed by laneways to the town centre. Generally the car park is open in nature and reasonably well supervised from adjoining buildings.

Beorg Multi-Storey Car Park:

Private Multi-Storey Car Park with 260 spaces. Beorg car park is closed and is currently for rent.

The Green Car Park:

Public Car Park. Approximately 60 spaces. Good quality public toilet. Mechanically operated 25c. Car park is accessible on foot to the town centre, the Market Place Park and SuperValu. It is visible and permeable for pedestrians. Pleasantly landscaped.

Market Green (Tesco)

Private car park. 270 parking spaces. Free for 2 hours. Well used. Covered Walkway. Access from here to the town core is via the Gyrotory park.

SuperValu Car Park

Private Car Park with approximately 50 spaces. A new car park to the north of this also has approximately 140 spaces. Secure with CCTV. Purpose built for popular SuperValu supermarket. Disabled & Mother and Child parking spaces. Good Accessibility to SuperValu with pedestrian crossings clearly demarcated.

Notes:

- The retail core of the town of Midleton is composed of a centralised Main street with associated secondary streets and laneways serving the street from nearby car parks and residential areas. The pedestrian laneways punctuating the main street are a particular characteristic of the town and many have a commercial role complementary to the main street.
- Town has a high order commercial function based on its proximity to Cork City combined with its location adjoining a national route and strong public transport links (rail and bus). The complexities of the town as an urban centre are displayed by the amount and type of uses located off the main street and expanding outwards from the retail core.
- In general units on laneways have a high occupancy rate. Some of the laneway developments around Beorg and The Square however display a higher level of vacancy. In general vacant units within these schemes have never been occupied which is likely due to the present economic climate.
- In recent years the town has seen a rebalancing towards the north in the direction of the recently reopened rail station. This could be considered the most logical and appropriate direction for any future expansion of the town.
- Whilst not all included in the documented survey it is notable that there are a significant number of viable modern format vacant units (up to 20) within the Water's Edge Development, the Beorg development, Market Green Retail Park and other schemes close to or adjoining the town centre. Care must be exercised to ensure that future retail and commercial development is firstly directed towards these vacant units which are within the town core or edge of town centre locations.
- Many of the existing car parks could be improved and their use reconsidered in terms of their overall aesthetic and contribution to the regeneration of the town.
- Approach roads directly adjoining the town are witness to some pressure for commercial development on existing residential stock particularly those to the south and east.
- Evidence exists both anecdotal and formally (Census) that the town is home to a high proportion of Eastern Europeans. Evidenced in the number of Polish shops in the town (3)
- Town contains only one pedestrian crossing along the entire length of the main street. Pedestrians traverse the main street freely with traffic which is potentially a safety concern.
- The area around the Jameson Midleton Distillery is particularly attractive, nicely landscaped and well presented. It could be complemented by further linkages into adjoining lands thus enhancing the overall tourism and amenity product.
- Tannoy system on Main Street playing Christmas music at time of survey. Is this contributing to the enhancement of the overall town centre experience?
- The town also has a popular weekly food market which takes place on Saturday mornings and is well established in the region.
- Opportunities identified in this report including the Riverside Way Area Development Framework prepared in 2009 by Midleton Town Council should be prioritised as areas for future regeneration of the town core.
- It is noteworthy that although there is not a high proportion of Irish/UK Multiples in the town core that such multiples have located in the more peripheral Market Green Retail Park.

Mitchelstown Town Centre Diversity of Use/Vacancy Survey:

Census 2011 Population: 3,677

Survey Date: 29th February 2012

Surveyed by: M. Quinn (EP)

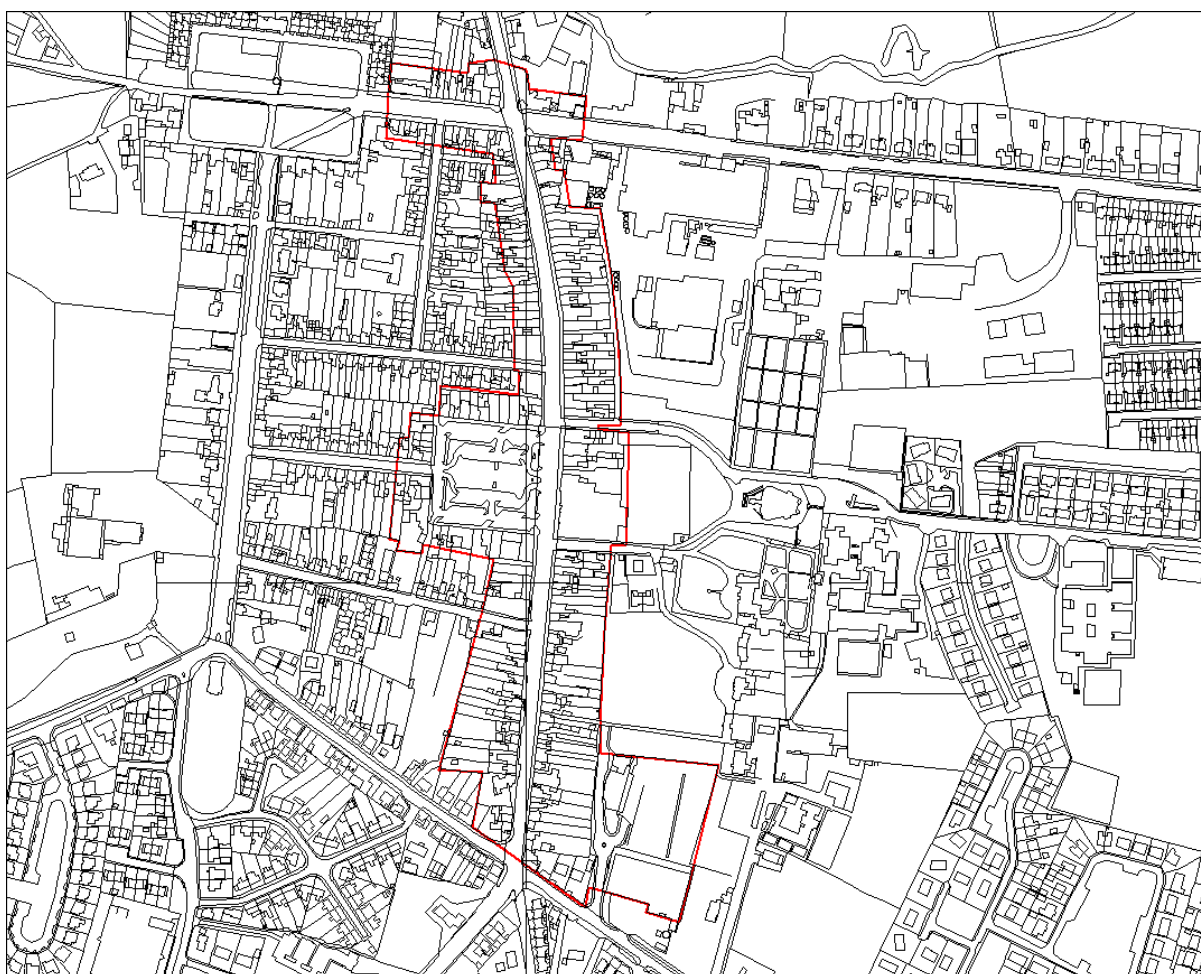
Weather Conditions: Dry. Dull (Approximately 12 degrees)

The survey methodology:

The Use Survey recorded uses in 144 units within an area which could be considered the identifiable town centre/retail core.

Surveys of the town centre indicate a wide range of different uses and types of property within the town centre (as defined in this study). Mitchelstown Town Centre accommodates a range of retail facilities and an additional range of non-retail facilities and activities.

Map 1 - Identified Survey Retail Core (red) – Mitchelstown Town Centre Survey Area



Further information on the retail mix is set out below but it is notable that the town centre has 95 no. Retail, Retail Service and Leisure Service businesses within the town centre boundary. Table 1 below demonstrates that the dominant uses within Mitchelstown Town Centre are comparison shops and in particular leisure services. There are 41 comparison goods retail units (e.g. clothing; footwear, electrical goods, etc) and a further 16 are classified as retail services (e.g. hairdressers, beauticians). A smaller proportion of units are for convenience goods (e.g. supermarkets, grocery stores, etc) but these include 2 significant supermarkets (Supervalu & Tesco) butchers and other convenience uses.

Table 1 - Summary of Mitchelstown Diversity of Uses Survey (February 2012)

Type of Use	No. of Outlets
Comparison	41
Convenience	9
Retail Service	16
Leisure Service	29
Other Retail Service	-
Financial & Business Service	19
Health & Medical	4
Public Service	3
Religious Service	-
General Office Use	-
Overall Vacancy	23
Total	144

Retail and Retail Services Vacancy rates can be defined as either the number of units or amount of vacant floorspace not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total number of units (vacant and occupied) in a centre. The total number of vacant retail units in the town in the categories of General Retail, Retail Service, Leisure Service and Financial & Business Service are combined and measured against the total number of uses evident in these categories i.e. $23/137 \times 100 = 16.7\%$ vacancy.

There are no derelict sites in the town core but one or two buildings in need of upgrade/refurbishment particularly to the southern side of New Square.

On the primary street and square i.e. Lower Cork Street, Upper Cork Street and New Square the vacancy rate overall is 14%. When divided into Upper and Lower Cork Street including New Square there is a rate of 31% vacancy in Upper Cork Street and a rate of only 8% in Lower Cork Street/New Square. Lower Cork Street and New Square are the main commercial and retail core within the town and where the lowest levels of vacancy are found.

Use	Total No.
Bars	12
Hairdressers/Barbers	8
Fast Food	6
Property Services	5
Ladieswear & Accessories	5
Cafes	4
Financial Services	4
Mixed Clothing	4
Legal Services	4
Building Societies/Banks	3
Footwear	3
Chemists and Drugstores	3
Casino & Betting Offices	3
Convenience Store	3
Vehicle Accessories	3
Restaurants	2
Menswear & Accessories	2
Repair Alterations & Restoration	2
Jewellers	2
Sport's, Camping and Leisure Goods	2
Charity Shops	2
Printing & Copying	2
Post Offices	2
Butchers	2
Supermarkets	2
Crafts, Gifts, China & Glass	2
Cycles & Accessories	2
DIY and Home Improvement	2

Of the surveyed units noted as vacant in this 2012 survey only 2 or 3 would appear to be in the long term vacant category.

Units independent in nature	94
Regional Multiples	3
National Multiples	14
Irish/UK Multiples	4
International Multiples	2

There is a high predominance of independent units and some regional/national multiples. There are some UK/International Multiples (franchises or chains).

Priority Questions:

Is there any edge or out of centre retail/other development to date? What other retail uses are outside the town boundary and where?

Generally the convenience retailing that is located within the town is within the town centre area (in particular Supervalu, Centra and Tesco). While Supervalu and Centra are located in the heart of the town (retail core), the Tesco Shopping Centre, although located contiguous to the Main Street, is a little removed and peripheral from the town core. This area includes the main anchor store Tesco and 7 other units in an adjoining building. All of these units are occupied with the exception of one. This area is located near the south eastern part of the town centre on lands to the rear of the Main Street.

The remainder of the towns convenience retailing is provided by the convenience stores of Aldi to the North of the Town and Lidl to the South of the Town. Both are located in very much edge of town centre locations. There is also some ancillary retailing associated with the Primary Healthcare Centre including a chemist (Boots), nutrition store and gymnasium located opposite Lidl to the south of the town. The approaches from both north and south of the town are visually impacted by petrol filling stations.

Map 2 – Significant Edge and Out of Centre Retail (yellow hatched) - Mitchelstown

Are there any obvious significant opportunity sites within/adjoining the town centre?

There are limited large scale opportunity sites within or adjoining the town core. A number of infill and refurbishment possibilities exists which are in need of reuse/refurbishment particularly buildings

to the south of New Square. Land to the North of the Tesco Shopping Centre will have a significant role to play in the future consolidation of the town and can be considered to be a key site for future development.

Identify the number of and review the main public and private car parks within proximity to town centre.

Car parking is reviewed at the this report.

Identify main bus/rail stop location and train station:

Mitchelstown is served by frequent public transport en route from Cork to Dublin. There are clearly demarcated bus set down areas on either side of the Main Street on the Main Square including bus shelter.

Overall physical condition:

Some of the buildings in the town are in a neglected state and would benefit from repainting or re-use. In particular there are some examples of this on New Square and on Upper Cork Street. Further detail is provided in the Street Review.

The town and New Square contain some good examples of sculpture/urban design. This is something which could be further capitalised on. The town also has good quality and appropriate tourist and heritage signage.

In terms of Litter and General Cleanliness the town has in general a reasonable overall appearance although there is considerable room for further improvement. Its Tidy Towns score of 258 for a Category D Town was an improvement from its 2010 score of 251 however the overall national winner in this category was Clonakilty with a score of 306. The standard needs to be further improved if this level is to be attained.

Mitchelstown Street Review:

The hierarchy of Primary and Secondary Streets is not so evident in Mitchelstown when compared with other towns. Cork Street and New Square are the main focal streets in the town and where much of the commercial activity takes place. In general footpaths are of a reasonable width. Given the width of the streets in the town, unlike other towns surveyed, Mitchelstown has had the opportunity to be more generous with footpath widths which is of considerable benefit to pedestrian flow.

Cork Street – Primary Street

- Footpaths particularly along Main Street (Lower Cork Street) to the north of the Main Square have good widths. On Upper Cork Street footpath widths are also reasonable but surface underfoot is in poorer condition. Poor quality bollards and old petrol filling pumps are an inconvenience and eyesore at this location. Upgrading of footpaths on Upper Cork Street should be prioritised.
- The Quality of the paving on Lower Cork Street is very good showing evidence of recent renewal being composed of Limestone slab paving and setts. Low bollards to the edge of the paving ensure that the pedestrian is protected from the car. Surfaces are treated differently at laneway edges and overall it is a very good example how pedestrian surfaces should be treated appropriately.
- The overall physical appearance of Cork Street particularly Upper Cork Street could be improved. There are a number of buildings which require refurbishment and may be threatened by dereliction in the coming years.

New Square:

- New Square is the main focal point and public space in the town. There are some seating areas and a large pedestrian space to the centre which can function as a multi-use space for markets, etc. New Square has well maintained public toilets. Much of the top of the square (western side) has a more residential character while the northern side contains the greatest quantity of commercial uses due to its positive aspect. The southern or north facing side of the square contains a hotel while the south western corner contains neglected and vacant premises which if not refurbished may be facing dereliction in the coming years. Recent tree planting in the square will be an asset to the town in the coming decades. It is understood that a Farmers Market takes place in the New Square on Saturday mornings 9am-1pm.

Mitchelstown Car Parking Review:

Much of the parking in the town comes in the form of on street parallel parking. The significant width of the main street (Cork Street) and large New Square provide ample options for parking within the town core. Parking in the town is clearly lined out per space.

Parking on the Main Street is free with a limit of 2 hours from Monday to Saturday 8.30am to 6pm.

New Square provides a lot of parking within the heart of the town. It is popular due to its convenience. Signage into the car park is generally clear but signage is not of major concern due to its central visible location. Overall the quality of parking is good and well supervised due to the passive surveillance offered by its centralised overlooked location.

Supervalu supermarket also provides private car parking for its customers with approximately 150 spaces. It provides direct access in particular to shoppers using the supermarket. The overall quality of this car park is adequate although security fencing enclosing is visually crude.

The Tesco Shopping Centre contains a car park which primarily serves shoppers using the centre. It is accessed off the Brigown Road. This car park is also enclosed with secure fencing and has little passive surveillance.

Some smaller private backland car parks in the town also exist which are associated with some of the businesses in the town.

Notes:

- Many of the streets particularly those off the Main Street have a strong residential element. The hierarchy of Primary and Secondary Streets is not so evident in Mitchelstown when compared with other towns due to the dominance of Cork Street. Some commercial uses do occur on the more residential streets but generally these are exceptional and long established commercial uses.
- The eastern side of the town in general does not have the same architectural character as the planned area to the west which complements the historical site of Mitchelstown Castle. The Clonmel Road for instance is composed of industrial workshops and other commercial uses.
- The Town is considerably boosted by the presence of a major employer Dairygold which in recent decades has had a significant impact on the physical (historic skyline) and social landscape of the town.
- Mitchelstown is a historically well planned and ordered town. Its layout is grandiose based on street axis. Its planned geometrical grid is linked to the historical site of Mitchelstown Castle. The commercial heart of the town today is focused around a central square. Street widths are wide due to their planned nature and as a result it lacks perhaps in the intimacy which is a feature of other more medieval towns which are of a finer grain.
- Town functions as an important service town to its agricultural hinterland and villages and in the past functioned as a service town for passing traffic associated with the national route to Dublin. This role is no longer present as a result of the M8 motorway bypass of the town. The traditional agricultural service role today is still evidenced by the large tractors and trailers passing through the town on business errands.
- A characteristic of this planned town is the number of laneways. Primarily they serve the rear of premises and feed onto the Main Streets.
- Many of the streets particularly those off the Main Street have a strong residential element. The hierarchy of Primary and Secondary Streets is not so evident in Mitchelstown when compared with other towns and Cork Street dominates as the main street. Lower Cork Street in particular is the key commercial street in the town. Some commercial uses do occur on the more residential streets but generally these are exceptional and long established commercial uses.
- Lower Cork Street is where the primary footfall in terms of commercial activity occurs and has the least level of vacancy in the town. Evidence exists of recent investment in the upgrading of this area. Upper Cork Street is somewhat more neglected with a higher level of vacant units.
- The Town has very good tourist heritage signage with maps of the historical town including features demonstrated with images.
- Some of the shopfront signage in the town is of poor quality and considering the heritage status of the town could be improved.
- A number of premises in the town would benefit from refurbishment and regeneration particularly key premises on Cork Street and New Square.
- George's Street to the West of the town offers some commercial activity although the area is primarily residential in nature. The old Mart site is located in this area. This site in recent

years was subject to a large scale planning application for a retail development which was refused by the local authority.

- Pedestrian Priority and Permeability - Pedestrian crossings are available at lights on junction of Lower Cork Street /Clonmel Road, Cork Street and New Square, Upper Cork Street/Church Street with one table top at the laneway which accesses Tesco and the Secondary College. Permeability could still be improved in the town however.
- The Tesco Shopping Centre which is located reasonably centrally offers poor permeability to the town core. It is not accessed directly off the Main Street by vehicles but accessed off a secondary street (Brigown Road). A narrow laneway is the only indication of available pedestrian access to the shopping centre and would not be evident to the casual passerby. This access, which is gated at night, also facilitates access to the Secondary School and in general is poorly overlooked and unsupervised. It is understood that the shopping centre was to be part of a larger community scheme for which funding is no longer available. This would have involved bringing a new single access road onto the Main Street and resultantly enhance permeability.
- It is understood that a Farmers Market takes place in the New Square on Saturday mornings 9am-1pm.

Skibbereen Town Centre Diversity of Use/Vacancy Survey:

Census 2011 Population: 2,670

Survey Date: Wednesday 11th January 2012

Surveyed by: M. Quinn (EP)

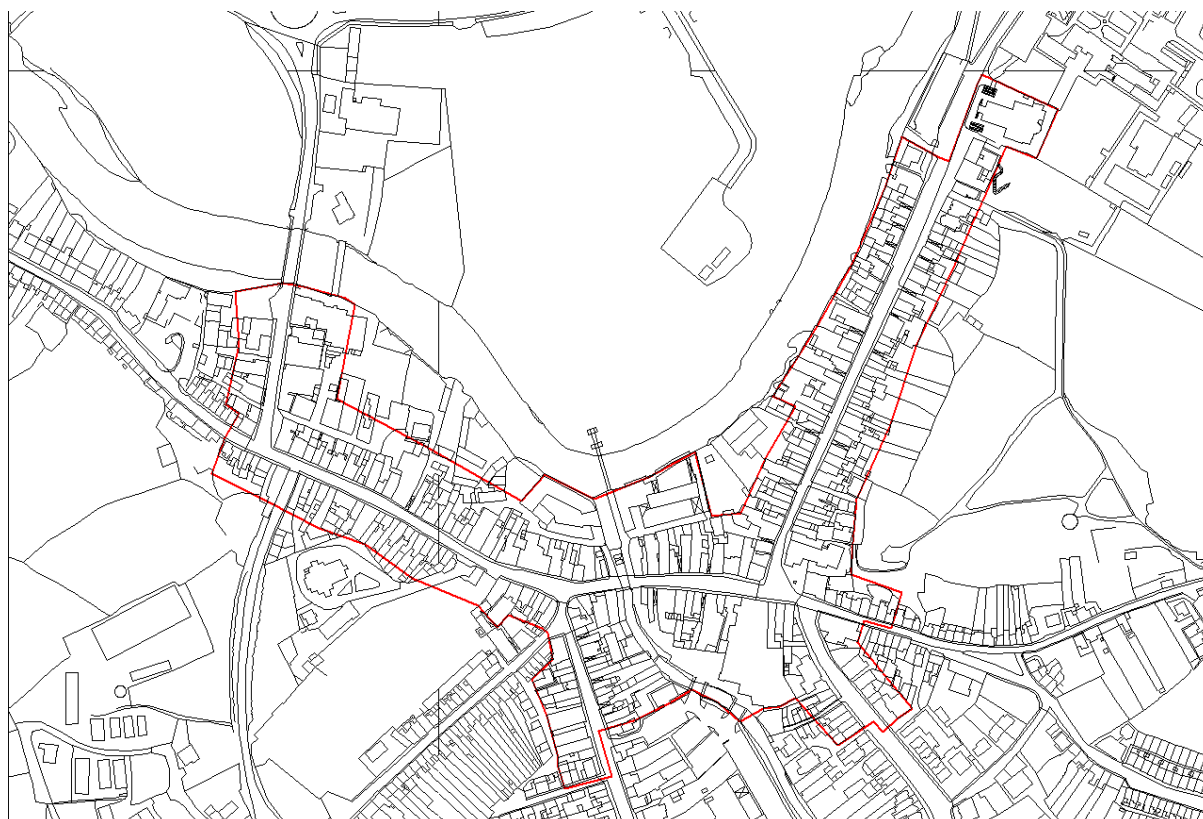
Weather Conditions: Dry and bright (Approximately 12 degrees)

The survey methodology:

The Use Survey recorded uses in 216 units within an area which could be considered the identifiable town centre/retail core.

Surveys of the town centre indicate a wide range of different uses and types of property within the town centre (as defined in this study). Skibbereen Town Centre accommodates a range of retail facilities and an additional range of non-retail facilities and activities.

Map 1 - Identified Retail Core (red) – Skibbereen Town Centre Survey Area



Further information on the retail mix is set out below but it is notable that the town centre has 118 no. Retail, Retail Service and Leisure Service businesses within the town centre boundary. Table 1 below demonstrates that the dominant uses within Skibbereen Town Centre are comparison shops and Leisure Services. There are 54 comparison goods retail units (e.g. clothing; footwear, electrical

goods, etc) and a further 36 are classified as retail services (e.g. hairdressers, beauticians, travel agents). A smaller proportion of units are for convenience goods (e.g. supermarkets, grocery stores, etc) but these include one significant supermarket (Supervalu), butchers and other convenience uses.

Table 1 - Summary of Skibbereen Diversity of Uses Survey (January 2012)

Type of Use	No. of Outlets
Comparison	54
Convenience	12
Retail Service	16
Leisure Service	36
Other Retail Service	-
Financial & Business Service	25
Health & Medical	6
Public Service	8
Religious Service	3
General Office Use	-
Overall Vacancy	56
Total	216

Retail and Retail Services Vacancy rates can be defined as either the number of units or amount of vacant floorspace not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total number of units (vacant and occupied) in a centre. The total number of vacant retail units in the town in the categories of General Retail, Retail Service, Leisure Service and Financial & Business Service are combined and measured against the total number of uses evident in these categories i.e. $56/199 \times 100 = 28\%$ vacancy.

In Skibbereen a number of the notable vacancies within the town (approximately 17) could be considered to be in the long term vacancy category. Vacancy rates are particularly high on Bridge Street, Ilen Street and Townshend Street closely followed by North Street. Bridge Street and North Street in particular had a high level of properties in the longer term vacant category. Bridge Street has some properties which are facing dereliction and a number of the shops and buildings along this street in particular could benefit from refurbishment/upgrading. North Street has a significant number of properties in the long term vacant category and also a high number of charity shops. Main Street generally has a low level of vacancy although it is relatively small scale. Overall the quality of shopfront could be improved in the town.

Table 2 - No. of vacant retail/commercial units per street surveyed:

Street Name	Number
Ilen Street	3 of 8 (37%)
Bridge Street	20 of 55 (36%)
Main Street	3 of 38 (7%)
North Street	14 of 64 (21%)
Townsend Street	10 of 21 (47%)

The considerable number of units away from Main Street which are unoccupied is indicative of a problem in the overall visual appearance of the town and correspondingly impacts on the vitality and viability of the town.

Table 3 - Skibbereen Space in Use: Predominant Uses	
Use	Total No.
Hairdressers/Barbers	11
Bars	9
Ladies Wear & Accessories	8
Legal Services	7
Fast Food	6
Restaurants	6
Financial Services	6
Cafes	5
Charity Shops	5
Confectionary	4
Hotel and Guest Houses	4
Telephones & Accessories	3
Electrical & Other Durable Goods	3
Hardware & Household Goods	3
Building Societies/Banks	3
Place of Worship	3
Repair Alterations & Restoration	3
Convenience Stores	3
Chemists and Drugstores	2
Footwear	2
Business Goods & Services	2
Property Services	2
Casino & Betting Offices	2
Men's Wear & Accessories	2
Mixed Clothing	2
Furniture	2
Jewellers	2
Doctors Surgery	2
Supermarkets	2
DIY and Home Improvement	2
Chemists and Drugstores	2
Children's and Infants Wear	2
Toys, Games & Hobbies	2
Booksellers	2
Supermarkets	2

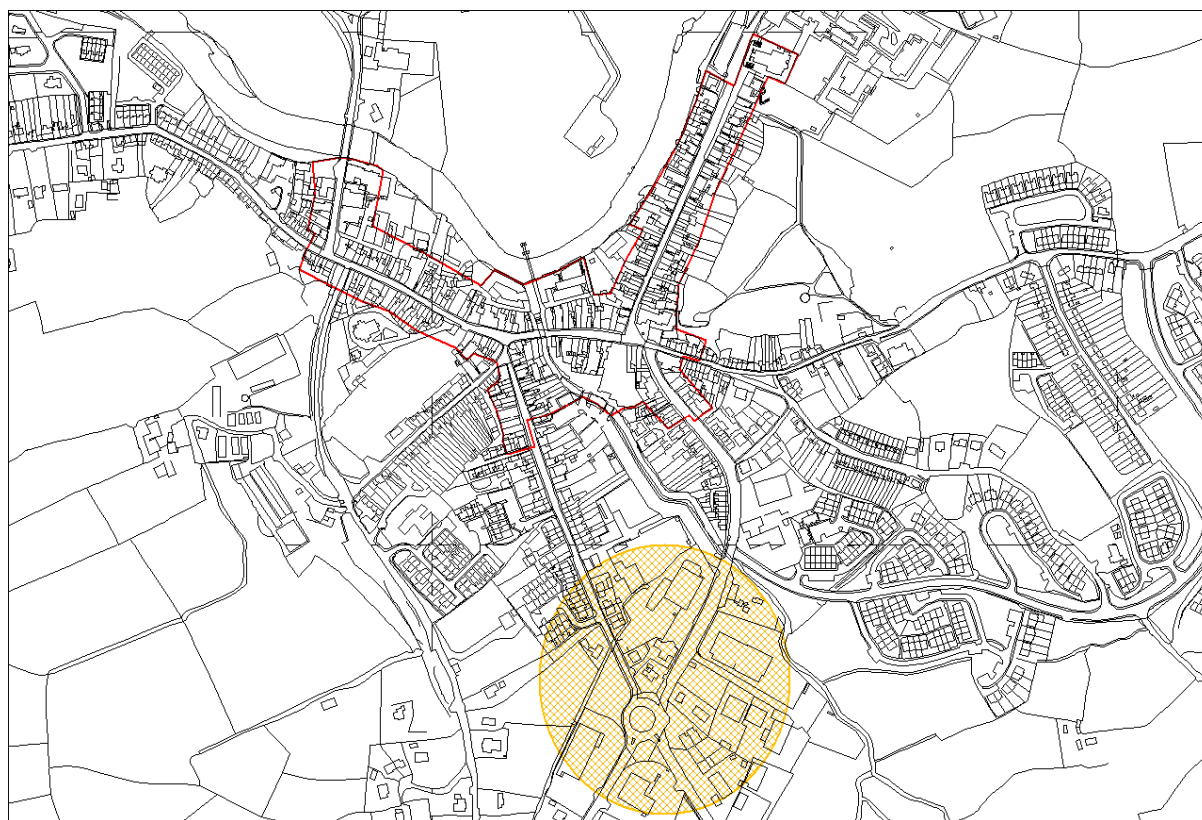
Table 4 - Characteristics of Uses in Skibbereen:	
Units independent in nature	136
Regional Multiples	1
National Multiples	10
Irish/UK Multiples	-
International Multiples	2

The town centre has a very strong predominance of independent stores and some national multiple uses. There are very few International Multiples located within the town centre and in the wider town generally perhaps due to its more peripheral geographical location within the county.

Priority Questions:

Is there any edge or out of centre retail/other development to date? What other retail uses are outside town boundary and where?

Outside of the surveyed area (retail core) the mixed use commercial area primarily extends in a southern direction and clusters around the Castletownsend/Baltimore Road roundabout junction. This area comprises a mixture of light industrial, retail and retail warehousing with car showrooms taking advantage of the visually prominent position located off the R595 Baltimore Road. To the East is the Drinagh Co-op Stores while to the West is the Lidl supermarket (convenience). To the north located between Market Street and Townshend Street there is a diverse mix of commercial activity including a medical centre, Builder's Providers, Spar Supermarket (convenience), car parking and some potential opportunity sites. This area forms a natural extension of the town centre, but future development in this location needs to be carefully considered to ensure continued protection of the retail core.

Map 2 - Significant Edge and Out of Centre Retail (yellow hatched) - Skibbereen

Commercial features to the north of the town include petrol filling stations which include limited forecourt retailing. Some of the industrial lands further north include uses of a retail warehouse nature and in general this practice should be discouraged in favour of more central locations.

Are there any obvious significant opportunity sites within/adjoining the town centre?

There are a number of sites within the town centre and adjoining the town centre which would merit regeneration. In particular these include the old mill site opposite the West Cork Hotel. This is a gateway site within the town and needs to benefit from redevelopment/refurbishment.

The high level of vacancy and dereliction along Bridge Street in particular are potential opportunities for redevelopment. A more appropriate commercial use for the Fair Field Car Park could be sought than its current use as surface parking in order to maximise its location and to contribute to the overall regeneration of Bridge Street. This would have the further benefit of drawing footfall back towards the main streets and town centre.

There are numerous outbuildings and backland areas with potential access to the main streets if creative solutions to their redevelopment are employed. The river, as a significant amenity feature in the town, has to date been largely ignored however there exists immense potential to reorientate the town to take advantage of its riverside location while recognising that there have been historical flood risk issues in the town. Some recent developments have sought an orientation toward the river which is a step in the right direction however more progress in this area can be continued.

Other sites such as the old Field's bakery on Townshend Street provide small scale opportunities for redevelopment.

The area to the rear of the Supervalu (rear of Main Street) also offers potential for a rethought as it is at present overly dominated by car parking.

As highlighted later in this report the area around the kiosk on Levi's Quay is an opportunity site which would benefit from regeneration and could be a flagship project for the town.

Identify the number of and review the main public and private car parks within proximity to town centre.

The car parking is reviewed later in this report.

Identify main bus/rail stop location and train station.

There are clearly designated bus set down areas on Bridge Street. Buses serve Baltimore, Goleen and Cork (via Clonakilty).

Overall physical condition:

There are improvements which could be made in the overall physical appearance of the town. Many buildings would benefit from painting, refurbishment and improved shopfront signage. There are also many examples of buildings however which are very attractively finished and well maintained. Narrow footpaths are also an issue for the pedestrian. Backlands and opportunity sites would benefit from renewal.

Generally the town was well maintained regarding cleanliness on the day of the survey. In terms of Litter and General Cleanliness the town has a positive overall appearance reflected in its Tidy Towns score of 282 points for a Category C town an improvement from its 2010 score of 275. The overall national winner was Lismore, Co. Waterford in this Category with a score of 308.

Skibbereen Street Review

Main Street – Primary Street

2hr Limit Monday to Saturday 8am-6pm. Parking is on both sides of the street and is very dominant in the streetscape. Condition of footpaths is generally good but could be improved. The overall width of footpaths could be improved to increase the pedestrian emphasis on the street. No footpath exists along the tributary feeding into the Ilen River at the corner accessing parking/Field's Supervalu.

The Square at the intersection with Main Street remains a focal point and information hub in the town today and accommodates the Town Hall. It is somewhat overly dominated by through traffic as it is small and intersected by 4 roads.

There is an opportunity to create a pedestrian friendly public space around the square at the kiosk (Levi's Quay). This could involve pedestrianisation and repaving of this small square and to remove from it the dominant parking clutter that exists. It would also complement the possible future opening of the pedestrian bridge and nearby vacant development.

Regeneration of this area would have the considerable advantage of opening up the town towards the River Ilen and projecting a positive image towards the river and accentuating public space in this area. As the town is dominated by a predominantly narrow elongated street network there is little relief in terms of public urban space and an opportunity could be provided at this location by provision of a transitional space between the street and the river.

Main Street is one directional with 2 lanes. There may be an opportunity to facilitate the redevelopment of this area by omitting or partially omitting one of the lanes which could contribute to enhancing the pedestrian emphasis of this area and substantially increasing footpath widths.

It is unfortunate that the relatively new mixed use development along the Ilen River (Levi's Quay) remains to date unoccupied at the ground floor level. A lack of maintenance is reflected in its appearance. It has some attractive features including a pedestrian bridge and cantilevered boardwalk overlooking the river which to date have not realised their potential.

Secondary Street – North Street

2hr Limit for car parking. Condition of the footpaths is inconsistent. In particular there are areas of kerbing which could be improved for aesthetic and pedestrian safety. This is important as this is the primary entry route into the town from the Cork City direction. The footpaths are wide in parts, particularly around the Catholic Church, but begin to narrow as the town core is approached. Opportunities exist to widen footpaths substantially and to enhance overall pedestrian priority in the area.

Overall cleanliness is generally good. Parking is generally 'on street' and on both sides of the road but narrows to one side of the road as the commercial core is approached. The appearance of the

street is characterised by a high number of vacant units. In particular there are a significant amount of charity shops. Premises on the street are generally small.

Secondary Street – Townshend Street

2hr Limit for car parking. Footpaths are generally well maintained if somewhat narrow. The lanes off this street offer pedestrian permeability which could be better promoted.

Parking is parallel 'on street' on one side of the road. The street also offers access to off street parking which is signposted. The overall physical appearance of the street is reasonable. It includes a number of derelict properties on the West Side (larger units especially).

Secondary Street - Bridge Street

2hr Limit for car parking. Footpaths are generally well maintained although they could be more generous in width. The cleanliness and maintenance of the street is generally very good. It has good road surface. Parking is on street (one side) and 'off street' in a large car park which is signposted.

Overall physical appearance of the street is generally ok. There are some groups of run-down/derelict buildings towards Main Street. Improvements could be made.

Secondary Street - Ilen Street

2 hr Limit for car parking. This is a gateway street to the town. It could be improved especially if the old mill building could be refurbished to complement the West Cork Hotel opposite. Condition of footpaths is reasonable but needs some improvement in places. Bollards and double yellow lines prevent illegal parking.

Street furniture where applicable is generally good and appropriate. Parking is parallel and on both sides of the street.

Skibbereen Car Park Review

Skibbereen has provision for free on-street and off-street parking in the town centre. All streets in the town centre have parallel parking on one or both sides of the road. There are off street car parking facilities on the Fair Field to the rear of Bridge Street and Mardyke Street, on lands between Townshend Street and Market Street and just beyond the Town Council offices between North Street and the river. The current town plan notes that the provision of off street parking is a priority in the plan and a new car park providing in excess of 200 car parking spaces is proposed in the Marsh area. This car park will effectively link with the town centre via a pedestrian bridge over the river at Levi's Quay which has already been constructed.

Opportunities may also exist to open up some areas of backland off the main street for further car parking provision in order to reduce the impact of car parking on the town's streets.

The town plan suggests that to further encourage the use of existing and proposed off street car parking, improved signage needs to be employed and consideration given to charging for on-street parking and the introduction of waiting time restrictions, in conjunction with increased enforcement of parking contraventions.

Car Park 1 – Adjoining Town Council

Car park is located adjoining the Catholic Church, town council offices and library. The car park is small and can cater for approximately 40 cars. It is somewhat remote or inaccessible from the town centre main street and primarily functions to serve the nearby attractions in this area such as the church/council offices.

Car Park 2 – Fair Field Car Park

This is the largest single grouped car park in the town. It provides relatively good ease of access for the pedestrian to the town centre and offers pedestrian permeability via narrower streets and lanes to the main shopping streets. Signage into the car park is adequate but could be improved further. The overall quality of the car park is very basic and the car park is not particularly well overlooked being located on backlands. The car park offers relatively easy vehicular access and egress although the entrances could be improved. There are additional lands adjoining the car park which could function as part of overall wider proposals for the redevelopment of this area to include parking. A farmer's market takes place in this car park on Saturday's.

Car Park 3 – Lands between Townshend Street and Market Street

This is a popular car park within the town centre being associated with a long established convenience supermarket Supervalu. The northern portion of this car park in particular is directly accessible to the core town centre. The car park is busy and the unusual parking configuration/lack of enforcement of illegal parking contributes to a haphazard feel to the area. In general the area is overly dominated with car parking and hard surfacing and amenity could be enhance. The car park also functions as an access road or through route between Townshend Street and Market Street with front end parking on both sides of this route. The route is cluttered with shopping trolley's and delivery trucks lending itself to the confusing nature of the area. The arrangement could be

improved and the area would benefit from an overall rethink particularly taking advantage of the amenity offered by the riverside location. There is ample permeability offered by this car park via lanes and access points to adjoining streets and the town centre. There is a notable presence of some retail/commercial units which have located in the car park taking advantage of its popularity within the town.

Car Park 4 – Marsh Area Car Park

A car park has been proposed in this location but has not been completed to date. It is intended that it be accessed via pedestrian bridge to Levi's Quay.

Notes:

- Generally there is a positive ambience to the town with quite an intimate atmosphere. The town was witness to a significant traffic through flow during the time of the site survey. Traffic and parking have a dominant and disproportionate priority over the pedestrian in the town. Paths tend to be narrow while priority is given to the road vehicular carrying capacity. There are opportunities for increasing path widths which would also contribute to traffic calming within the town.
- The town centre would benefit from relief from traffic. There are few areas within the town centre where the public can recreate freely away vehicles.
- There are few street trees in Skibbereen and little street furniture. Significant potential in this area exists. By increasing path widths opportunities to insert street furniture/street trees could emerge and overall footfall and pedestrian amenity could accordingly be increased.
- The Heritage Centre is a particularly attractive feature in the town and could be complemented by adjoining riverside redevelopment of the old mill building located between it and the West Cork Hotel.
- Some recent redevelopments including the West Cork Hotel have sought to reorientate/address themselves towards the Ilen River. This is to be welcomed and policy should continue this direction in the town centre into the future.
- Farmer's Market takes place every Saturday morning from 9.30am to 1.30pm at the Fairfield car park in the town. <http://www.skibbereenmarket.com/>
- There are a number of opportunity sites (identified in this report) directly adjoining or within the existing town core which have the potential for redevelopment and could contribute positively towards the economic vibrancy and vitality of the town.
- The 2009 Town Plan noted the high level of vacancy within the town centre (from a survey carried out in 2008). This survey in 2012 demonstrates that the situation has disimproved further since and the number of vacancies has increased with vacancy in the town centre nearing approximately 30%.
- Sites within or adjoining the town centre should be prioritised for redevelopment and other sites considered on a sequential basis.

Youghal Town Centre Diversity of Use/Vacancy Survey:

Census 2011 Population: 7,794

Survey Date: 4th April 2012

Surveyed by: M. Quinn (EP)

Weather Conditions: Cold. Windy and Sunny (Approximately 7 degrees)

The survey methodology:

The Use Survey recorded uses in 189 units within an area which could be considered the identifiable town centre/retail core. There were many other streets which could have been considered for inclusion and have some elements of commercial activity but historically the nature of such streets continues to be residential in nature.

Map 1 - Identified Survey Retail Core (red) – Youghal Town Survey Area



Surveys of the town centre indicate a wide range of different uses and types of property within the town centre (as defined in this study). Youghal Town Centre accommodates a range of retail facilities and an additional range of non-retail facilities and activities.

Further information on the retail mix is set out below but it is notable that the town centre has 125 no. Retail, Retail Service and Leisure Service businesses within the town centre boundary. Table 1 below demonstrates that the dominant uses within Youghal Town Centre are comparison shops and in particular leisure services. There are 46 comparison goods retail units (e.g. clothing; footwear, electrical goods, etc) and a further 16 are classified as retail services (e.g. hairdressers, beauticians). A smaller proportion of units are for convenience goods. Leisure Services make up a significant proportion of uses.

Type of Use	No. of Outlets
Comparison	46
Convenience	14
Retail Service	16
Leisure Service	35
Other Retail Service	-
Financial & Business Service	14
Health & Medical	8
Public Service	13
Religious Service	-
General Office Use	-
Overall Vacancy	43
Total	189

Retail and Retail Services Vacancy rates can be defined as either the number of units or amount of vacant floorspace not in occupation expressed as a percentage of the total number of units (vacant and occupied) in a centre. The total number of vacant retail units in the town in the categories of General Retail, Retail Service, Leisure Service and Financial & Business Service are combined and measured against the total number of uses evident in these categories i.e. $43/168 \times 100 = 25.5\%$ vacancy.

On the primary street (North Main Street) vacancy rate is 20.5% (24 of 117) while on secondary streets including South Main Street vacancy rate is 26.9% (17 of 63).

Use	Total No.
Bars	13
Hairdressers/Barbers	8
Restaurants	8
Advice Centre	6
Financial Services	5
Footwear	5
Property Services	5
Cafes	4
Chemists and Drugstores	4
Fast Food	4
Butchers	4
Ladieswear	3
Health & Beauty	3
Charity Shops	3
Hotels & Guesthouses	3
Crafts, Gifts, China & Glass	3
Building Societies/Banks	3
Bakers & Confectioners	3
Casino & Betting Offices	2
Art & Art dealers	2
Florists	2
Jewellery	2
Mixed Clothing	2
Grocery Store	2
Delicatessen	2
Chiropodist	2
Emergency Services	2

Units independent in nature	114
Regional Multiples	1
National Multiples	13
Irish/UK Multiples	2
International Multiples	1

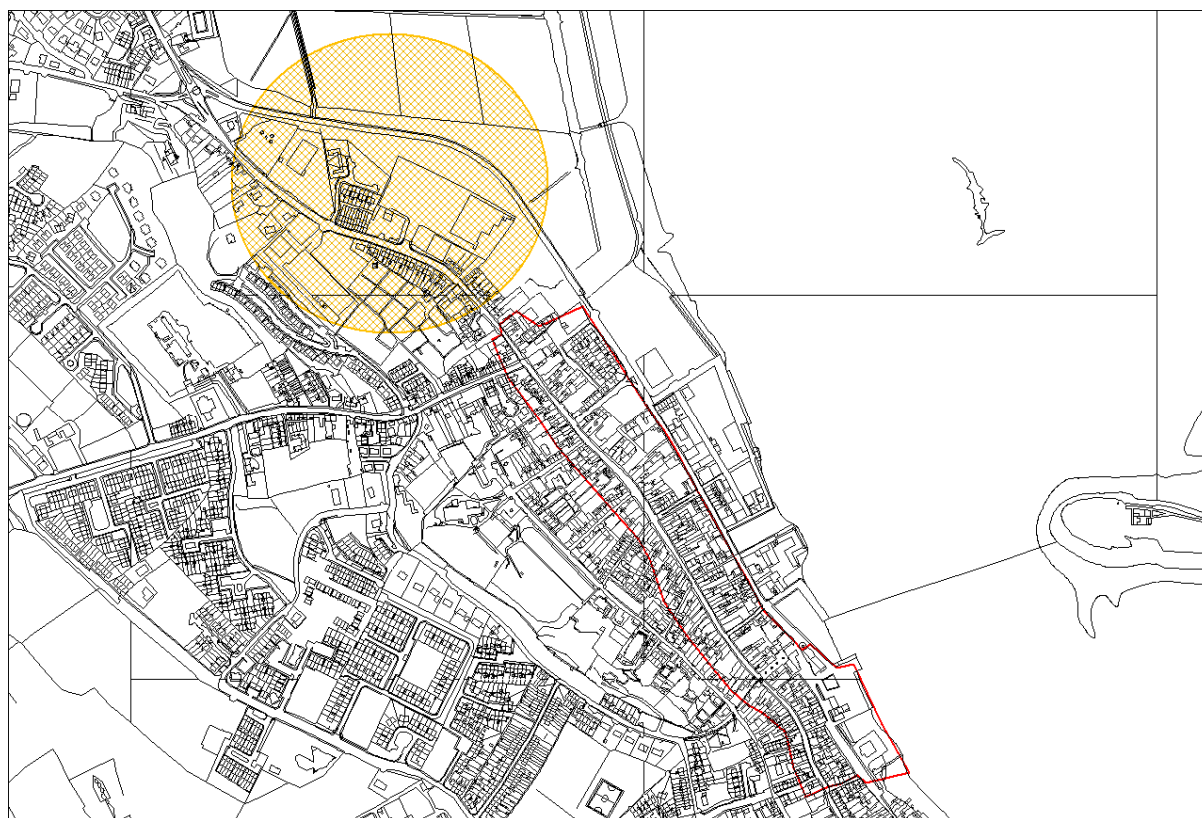
There appears to be a very high predominance of independent units and a few national multiples (franchises or chains) in the town.

Priority Questions:

Is there any edge or out of centre retail/other development to date? What other retail uses are outside the town boundary and where?

There are 3 significant supermarket convenience offerings in the town. Supervalu is the primary town centre located supermarket in Youghal. This is served directly by a small car park to the front and via a laneway to a larger public car park to the north. Its town centre location means that flexibility is required on the part of the shopper but the store still seems to remain popular with customers.

The primary focus for edge of centre/out of centre retailing is an area to the north of the town centre. This area contains a significant portion of the convenience retailing of the town with 2 modern supermarket formats Tesco and Lidl.

Map 2 - Significant Edge and Out of Centre Retail (yellow hatched) – Youghal

Outside of the retail core as defined in this study Tesco is the next closest supermarket to the town. It is located within 300 metres of the Town Centre Study area. The Tesco store consists of a large convenience supermarket and ancillary cafe. As with many such modern supermarkets it contains bakery, butchers, etc. It is estimated that over 20% of the store floorspace may also be devoted to comparison items including birthday cards, computer parts, tableware, etc. In essence it offers a one-stop shop for many retail needs and from this perspective could be competing with other comparison uses in the town centre. Its edge of town centre location is relatively good being located adjacent to adjoining residential areas and offering relatively easy access. It is also complemented with a well laid out and accessible car park, which considerably heightens its advantage over

alternative town centre options. The overall layout of the development has created a modern pleasant and visually attractive public space towards the front with seating, paved area and semi-mature trees. Overall this complex presents itself as an attractive and accessible destination for retailing with a number of advantages over Main Street option particularly for shoppers utilising a car.

A little further north, over 400 metres from the retail core as defined in this study, is Lidl convenience supermarket. This is another modern pleasant convenience retailer with in store bakery, ample parking, etc.

Other notable uses with a retailing element include the Foxhole Industrial Estate/Youghal Commercial Business Park. This is located almost 2km from the town centre and contains a number of uses with a retail component. Many of these would be more appropriately located in a town centre or edge of town centre location. In one example a Seafood company are trading to the public out of the industrial estate while there is no dedicated fish shop within the town centre despite the number of vacant premises. Such trends can only serve to undermine the town centre.

Another commercial business park is located on the Park Mountain Road. Similarly uses in this location should not undermine the town centre.

The lengthy approach roads into Youghal also contain individual bars, restaurants and other individual convenience stores a result of the seasonal tourist function of the town and its environs. The Seafield Business Park includes Perks Amusement Arcade, a commercial furniture store and other vacant units.

Future development proposals in areas removed from the town centre must be handled carefully to avoid further undermining of a town centre which is evidently under threat.

Are there any obvious significant opportunity sites within/adjoining the town centre?

There are limited opportunity sites within or adjoining the town core due to its compact, linear and elongated nature and the heritage sensitivities of the town. Some of the larger vacant units present themselves as opportunities and their reoccupation would benefit the town.

The Port site has immense potential if port related uses are exhausted. Consideration should be given to development of a strategy for the entire waterside area to allow the town centre to expand in this direction.

To the south of the town centre (approximately 250 metres) the old Devonshire Arms Hotel and adjoining Esso Petrol Station both remain vacant and represent a significant opportunity for sensitive redevelopment. The old Regal Cinema and contiguous site also offer potential for future regeneration.

Over 450 metres from the edge of the study area is a large site opposite Lidl which has potential for re-use and could be a possible location for edge of centre retail/retail warehousing, etc. Visual sensitivity of the site would need to be addressed however.

Identify the number of and review the main public and private car parks within proximity to town centre.

Car parking is reviewed later in this report.

Identify main bus/rail stop location and train station:

There is a very regular bus service to Cork City. There is a bus shelter at Dominic Collins Place and another bus shelter in town in front of RNLI on the Waterfront for buses travelling West towards Cork City. Buses going east have no recognisable bus shelter although there is a stop located on North Main Street opposite Collins Deli.

Overall physical condition:

It is evident that there has been investment in some of the streets around Youghal especially those which have strong links to particular heritage landmarks e.g. around Emmet Place/Church Lane where major high quality resurfacing and shared surface schemes have occurred. Similarly some of the laneways which lead from the Main Street to the port have also seen recent regeneration.

By comparison the Main Street and some other routes towards the harbour are more dated in some cases being composed of inappropriate brickwork or concrete surfaced footpaths some beyond their lifespan and are uneven/fractured. The tarmacked road surface on Main Street by comparison is in prime condition.

In general street furniture is in good condition and has a strong heritage value. Generally it is modern and well maintained.

The appearance of the streets could also be improved. The relatively high level of vacancy on Main Street particularly to the Northern/Southern ends does little to improve the image of the town. Some buildings have a shabby overall appearance. Buildings of significant heritage value appear to be best maintained perhaps at the expense of lesser-valued ones which are just as important to the overall composition of the street.

In terms of Litter and General Cleanliness the town has a very positive overall appearance which has been recognised at a national level. Its Tidy Towns score of 284 for a Category E Town won it a bronze medal in 2011 and was an improvement from its 2010 score of 279. Dalkey was the overall winner in this category nationally with 288.

Youghal Street Review:

On the primary street (North Main Street) vacancy rate is 20.5% (24 of 117) while on secondary streets including South Main Street vacancy rate is 26.9% (17 of 63).

North Main Street

This is the principle street in the town. Almost the entire length of the street is one-way. Footpaths on the street are reasonable to good quality with some areas requiring attention. Overall widening to enhance the pedestrian experience would be positive and should be investigated. Footpaths range from wide to narrow along this lengthy street (1.4km). Conflict is presented in some areas along the street where the sandwich board signs and pedestrians compete for surface.

Little space exists for street furniture or al fresco dining areas the potential of which should be explored. Overall cleanliness and maintenance is good. The street has a fine collection of buildings but vacancy and neglect continues to be an issue and take from the overall aesthetic of the street.

Parking is parallel and predominantly on street generally to one side of the street. Where feasible parking has been incorporated on both sides of the street and at one point along the street is front end and parallel on either side. Evidence of illegal parking was also in evidence on day of site visit.

South Main Street:

This street leads onto North Main Street. It is also one directional with and contains the Clocktower which is the gateway onto North Main Street. Parking is also parallel. Street suffers in terms of appearance having a higher level of evident vacancy.

There is evidence of long term and persistent vacancy on this street which is a focal entrance to the town with a number of premises boarded up. A number of vacant units on Friar Street (including the old cinema and Devonshire Arms hotel) approach also contribute poorly to the entrance to the town.

Youghal Car Park Review:

A substantial amount of the car parking in Youghal is on-street car parking. Youghal is somewhat unusual in that all its public car parks are free while the Main Street and other streets have a charge of €1 per hour. Main Street is free from 1-2pm. In general there are ample and prominent ticket machines located around the town. Signage to the various car parks in the town could be improved. The harbour area and its surrounds account for a substantial element of car parking in the town.

Car Park 1:

This is a small car park to the rear of Denis Broderick Hardware. It serves approximately 20-25 spaces. It is relatively peripheral to the town centre but has an important and convenient purpose for local business nonetheless.

Car Park 2: Dominic Collins Place

This is a poorly overlooked car park with only 40-50 spaces. This car park has good tourist information and a public toilet. Would a small public space here around bus shelter/set down be appropriate? Consideration could also be given to encouraging some frontage onto space.

Car Park 3 – Supervalu Area

a) Dolphin's Place - This car park offers reasonable access to the town centre and in particular to the Supervalu supermarket. The overall quality of the car park is ok. The car park is visible and open from a number of key streets for passing vehicles and as a result can be considered to be quite accessible. The open nature of the car park and the fact that it is overlooked by some adjoining residences improve its security. Access to Supervalu car park is via a local laneway.

b) This car park directly serves Supervalu and is accessed directly from the Main Street. It accommodates approximately 30 cars. It can be considered inadequate in terms of the size of the supermarket and many shoppers use the adjoining car park which is accessed by the laneway to the north.

Car Park 4 – This is a relatively central car park in the town. It has approximately 40 car parking spaces. It offers reasonable access to the town centre shopping area. The overall quality of the car park is good and it is well maintained. The car park has two separate entrance and access points which is good. The car park is enclosed with large walls and as such supervision particularly associated with parking at night could be an issue.

Car Park 5 (Harbour car park) - A lot of parking occurs around the harbour area including this large somewhat informal car park. The surface is neglected and needs repair. The car park is exposed to the elements and poorly laid out. It is estimated that this car park could take up to 150 units. Its location although not directly adjoining the town centre shopping area could certainly be considered positive as an overspill car park for the wider town.

Notes:

- Over the course of its history, Youghal has gone through a number of cycles of economic prosperity and decline and back again. The town was once one of the most popular seaside resorts on the south coast with a train link to Cork City which brought thousands of day trippers and with it economic success. The closure of the train and the arrival of the motorcar was to have a significant impact on the landscape of the town.
- The history of the town can be traced through its buildings, from the medieval centre overlooking the sheltered harbour to the Victorian villas which look out to the open sea. The linear form of the town has been determined by the challenging topography flanked by the sea.
- The town has been suffering in recent years with the closure of more traditional stores such as Merricks Department Store and Beechers Supermarket combined with substantial loss of jobs in industry.
- Historically the town of Youghal is a fascinating place from the medieval heritage of the town walls, to the bell tower, etc. The legacy of this fine compact medieval grain has been to make it challenging to plan for more modern development particularly those associated with the development of the motorcar. The town would appear to have a much more significant heritage component than other towns surveyed.
- The town has a strong emphasis on tourist related commerce with a strong quantity of shops offering household and gift items including a good selection of leisure services including restaurants, cafes, etc.
- Unusually in comparison to other towns the town seems to have a low prevalence of shops catering for Ladieswear and Accessories. While there are a significant and diverse range of other uses many are singular in nature.
- Vacancy in the town generally is quite high while vacancy on the Main Street is over 20% in particular.
- Port site has immense potential if port related uses are exhausted. Much of the port area consists of old industry, vehicle repairs, carpet warehouses, vacant commercial units and tax break apartments. The area is generally neglected with litter and waste and not well maintained. Consideration should be given to development of a strategy for the entire waterside area to allow the town centre to expand in this direction. Further expansion of commercial activity and retailing in a more linear fashion will only serve to undermine the town centre and it is now appropriate that consolidation of the existing town centre occurs.
- The town is lacking in any significant centralised car free public space. An opportunity could exist to explore possibilities for pedestrianisation of a street within the town centre. It might also be possible to create a small public space around the bus stop shelter at Car Park 2.

- The benefits of creating pedestrian priority space are evident in the surfacing renewal that has occurred on Church Lane, a historic alleyway in the town. This is now a very pleasant pedestrian priority area albeit with a lower footfall than the Main Street. It offers an attractive escape from the traffic dominant Main Street. The high quality surfacing materials used are to be welcomed.
- Overall the town has some very good examples of heritage friendly information signage which are some of the best examples to be seen in the county.
- Pavement widths along the Main Street where the majority of footfall takes place range from quite narrow to reasonable and can change at varying intervals. There exist opportunities to substantially increase footpath widths and enhance the public realm from the perspective of the pedestrian.
- The town has no indoor shopping centre although the dated River Gate Mall consists of a small indoor mall off North Main Street containing a small number of units.
- Traversing the Main Street can be difficult or challenging. On the day of site visit there was evidence of people gesturing cars to slow down in order to cross. There appears to be only one prioritised crossing point on the street. With such an extended Main Street consideration should be given to additional crossing points or shared surface areas where pedestrian can cross more comfortably.
- Evidence exists of frequent traffic queuing, as streets are narrow, one way in a northerly direction for the most part. Pedestrians crossing and parking manoeuvres lead to frequent backlogs.
- On the day of the survey there was some evidence of illegal parking.
- Although outside of the town centre, and not necessarily within the remit of this study, there are a significant amount of industrial/commercially zoned lands which have dereliction or vacancy issues. Care must be exercised that these areas do not become the focus for uses which would be more appropriately located in the town centre which would undermine the town centre potential further.
- A recent report prepared by Youghal Town Council 'Investing in Heritage – A Heritage Led Regeneration Strategy for Youghal 2005-2012' although not extensively consulted in the time available in this report is an important and detailed document which deserves further consideration in relation to issues for Youghal.
- The town of Youghal in the past number of years has been witness to some media exposure in relation to the economic issues facing the town. A 2011 documentary film 'Town out of Time' and recent profiling article in the Irish Times have further highlighted these issues at the national level. Note: See extract from article to rear of this report.

- It is suggested that the existing town centre zoning may be too large and the aim should be to compact the town centre and give consideration to returning former or underused commercial areas/streets to residential use.
- Consideration could be given to the provision of a bus stop shelter in a northerly direction through the town.
- There exists evidence that a farmers market was trialled in the town in Dolphin Square to take place on Friday mornings. It is unclear however if the market still exists and there is seemingly no information online to this effect.

Recent Extract from Irish Times Article

IT'S A SAD, GREY morning in Youghal. As you walk along the town's main street you pass Merricks department store, once the oldest in Ireland, which is lying empty after the last retailer moved out of the store's former building a few months ago. Farther along is the Regal Cinema, which shut last year after 74 years in operation. The Devonshire Arms, one of two large hotels in the town, is hard to miss: it's had its windows boarded up for months. The town has dozens more empty shopfronts, with dusty windows and peeling

"Youghal's town centre is dying. Unemployment has soared with the closure of old industries, and the economic centre of the town is in danger of collapse. Young people are leaving in search of work elsewhere. Poor planning decisions at the height of the boom have also left it with unsightly and largely empty apartment blocks.

The downward spiral of a town like Youghal is only a single tragedy in a much larger story. Crippling unemployment, financial insecurity and emigration are exacting a heavy toll on towns like it across the country. Statistics and indicators of economic growth or joblessness tell you only so much. They don't show the carnage that results from the collapse of industries, or the shattering experience of joblessness.

Towns like Youghal are filled with the stories of people struggling to find work, or battling to hold on to it, of families under strain or torn apart by emigration, of generations-old family firms biting the dust.

What is worse is that the decline of these communities isn't just explained by the sad and inevitable legacy of history. There is a sense of neglectful, or indeed deliberate, public policies by local and national government that squandered opportunities and laid the foundation for their decline.

Yet there are also stories of hope, of new businesses setting up in the teeth of the recession, of jobless people retraining and carving out opportunities for themselves, and of towns rediscovering a resilience that few realised they had.

The future of these towns is uncertain, though one thing is clear: with the Government's coffers empty, and increasing uncertainty about our ability to lure foreign investment, they will need to draw on their inner strengths to remake themselves and prosper once again."

"Youghal's town centre is dying. Unemployment has soared with the closure of old industries, and the economic centre of the town is in danger of collapse. Young people are leaving in search of work elsewhere. Poor planning decisions at the height of the boom have also left it with unsightly and largely empty apartment blocks.

Carl O'Brien – Irish Times