



# Paulstown

Masterplan



Rialtas na  
hÉireann  
Government  
of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann  
Project Ireland  
2040



Lár Bailte ar dTús  
Town Centre First

Ár dTodhchaí  
Tuaithe  
Our Rural  
Future



Kilkenny County Council  
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh

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Acronyms	
ACA	Architectural Conservation Area
c.	Circa (Approximately)
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DHC	Department of Health and Children
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
HSE	The Health Service Executive
K	Thousand
KCC	Kilkenny County Council
KCDP	Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027
km	Kilometres
LAP	Local Area Plan
m	Meters
M	Motorway
NDF	Project Ireland 2040: National Development Plan
NPF	Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework
No.	Number
Ref.	Reference
R	Regional
RSES	Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy
SRA	Southern Regional Assembly

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## Vision

“The vision for Paulstown is to become a vibrant, attractive, and sustainable place to live, work and visit, capitalising on its sense of community, natural and built heritage and strategic links to Carlow, Kilkenny and beyond.”



# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Masterplan for Paulstown

Kilkenny County Council appointed Turley in association with a multi-disciplinary team (see Section 1.3) to prepare a Masterplan for the town of Paulstown, Co. Kilkenny.

The purpose of the Masterplan is to guide the development of Paulstown into the future and to influence and deliver on real change for the town to make it a more attractive destination in which to live, work, visit and do business.

Paulstown is a town located in the eastern part of Co. Kilkenny, c.19km east of Kilkenny City, an area which is predominantly rural in character. By virtue of its location proximate to the M9 motorway and the Junction 7 turn off, along with regional access roads such as the R712 and R448, the town has the potential to fulfil a more significant role and it is envisaged that this Masterplan will guide development and re-imagine Paulstown so that it can ultimately realise its full potential.

The Masterplan sets out an overall vision, strategy and most significantly, commitment for the proper planning and sustainable development of Paulstown. A multi-disciplinary integrated approach bringing together the development of places using co-design, urban design, transport planning and landscape architecture were used to develop the Masterplan for the town.

## 1.2 Context

The Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 (KCDP). The Plan came into effect on the 15th October 2021. Section 4LA of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 stipulates

*“To develop a set of criteria and a programme to carry out an analysis of the Smaller Towns and Villages (Tier 4) to consider:*  
*a The provision of zoning maps where appropriate (particularly for Ballyragget, Mooncoin, Paulstown, Piltown, Kilmacow and Urlingford)*

*b Developing specific objectives for core areas, focal spaces, amenities and opportunity sites etc.,*  
*c Identify land with development constraints.*  
*This programme to be commenced within 12 months of the coming into effect of the Plan.”*

### Our Emphasis

Section 4.6 of the KCDP highlights the needs of smaller towns and villages within the County to strengthen their provision of local services while respecting their existing character. The Council explicitly supports the development of economic activity, services and infrastructure provision in the smaller towns and villages of the county and allow for town renewal and serviced site housing provision in smaller towns which is proportionate, in order to sustain and renew population and services in these areas.

The Government supports the development of existing urban areas. This is expressed in the National Planning Framework’s commitment to compact development and the Town Centre First Policy (February 2022) which is a major new policy that aims to tackle vacancy, combat dereliction, and breathe new life into town and village centres. The policy lays the foundation for towns to develop a tailored plan by a Local Authority in collaboration with a Town Team. The policy is underpinned by a multi-billion-euro investment programme spread across Government schemes.

The Paulstown Masterplan will subsequently provide a basis for the town to seek support from funding streams such as the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, and Town Renewal Scheme, Active Travel Fund and Historic Towns Initiative.



The plan is developed within the context of national, regional, and local policy and through careful consideration of best practice publications.

## 1.3 Multi-disciplinary Team

The Masterplan is visionary, ambitious, and creative in the design of new propositions for Paulstown. A multi-disciplinary integrated approach bringing together the development of places and destinations, transport planning, urban design, mixed use architecture and landscape design were used to develop the Masterplan strategy. The Masterplan is holistic and addresses a range of short- and long-term challenges facing the town. As such, Kilkenny County Council commissioned a multi-specialist team which included the following:

- **Turley** – planning, urban design, landscape architecture, economics, and strategic communications consultancy services.
- **RSK** – Environmental and ecology.

**Design Team**



Turley  
4 Pembroke Street Upper  
Dublin 2  
D02 VN24

RSK  
Bluebell Business Centre  
Old Naas Road  
Bluebell  
Dublin 12





Figure 1.1: Paulstown Settlement Boundary as per Figure 4.21 of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021 – 2027.

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1.4 Project Objectives

The aim of this Masterplan is to ensure that Paulstown has the right objectives and projects in place to tackle issues of dereliction, vacant properties, and above all, to become a better place to live, work and run a business, ensuring the vitality and vibrancy of the town into the future.

To achieve this aim, the following objectives were set:

- Positively address key issues and challenges in Paulstown.
- Embrace the power of urban design in reimagining the plan area so that it can ultimately realise its full potential.
- The vision for Paulstown must look beyond its form, to the wider rural context and connectivity to provide a holistic design approach from the outset.
- The Masterplan will provide public realm enhancement and town centre design, ensuring that Paulstown is supported to realise its full potential.
- Provide longer-term adaptability and, robustness to support changing economic and social conditions

1.5 Methodology

The methodology for the project is informed by the established double-diamond design methodology as developed by the UK Design Council in 2005. The Double-Diamond methodology is a four-stage innovation process which captures the divergent and convergent nature of design, and offers flexibility as a foundation to designers, allowing shifts to the model to fit the specific needs of a project. Typically, the four phases are:

- Discover phase (divergent): exploration of brief and hypothesis, contextual research and definition of project participants or communities.
- Define phase (convergent): designing and conducting engagement and feasibility studies.
- Develop phase (divergent): development of a number of ideas through co-creation and design ideation processes.
- Deliver phase (convergent): selection of ideas to take forward and delivery of outputs in the form of prototypes, services ideas, or guidance.

Importantly, this is not a linear process as the arrows on the diagram show. The two diamonds indicate that a divergent and convergent creation process happens twice; once to define the problem (and in this case provide preliminary options – i.e., Stage 1) and once to create the solution (i.e., provide for design development and the preparation of a Masterplan – i.e., Stage 2).

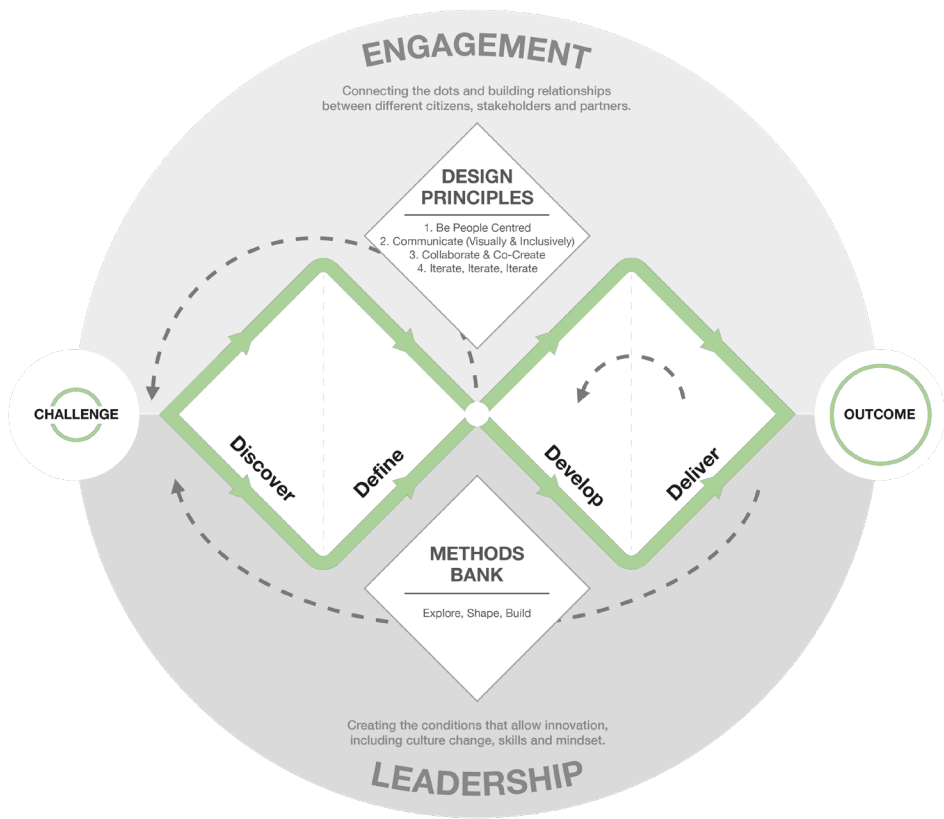


Figure 1.2: Design Council's Double Diamond Approach



# 1.6 Stages of the Masterplan

Working closely with the local community is a vital component of the plan process. The programme comprised of six key stages. Taking account of feedback received from the local community, it identifies opportunities for improvements by proposing strategies and projects in the short, medium, and long term.

KCC, in collaboration with the local community, will use the plan to implement improvements and seek funding to deliver positive change.





# 2.0 The Town

## 2.1 Town Context

Paulstown is a rural town located in east Co. Kilkenny, c.19km east of Kilkenny City.

The small town has a large amount of businesses and amenities includes (but not exhaustive) a newsagents, two pubs, a primary school, a health centre, a GAA club / community centre, two churches (a Catholic and a Church of Ireland church), a bicycle shop, a hair salon, a creche and a childrens playground.

To the north of the town lies the grand and imposing Shankill Castle and Gardens which once formed part of the Butler family’s estate. It is now a key tourist asset of the area with guided tours of the house and gardens and a coffee shop attracting locals and visitors alike. Paulstown Castle, to the south of the settlement boundary, is another building of archaeological, architectural, historical, and social interest, but has been vacant since 1973 and has fallen into a state of disrepair.

Paulstown benefits from its strategic location, given its easy access to the M9 motorway which links with the M7 between Naas and Newbridge. The town is c.20min drive time (c.19km) from Kilkenny City Centre and Carlow town; c.45min drive time to Waterford

City; c.1.5hrs drive time to Limerick; and c.1.5hrs to Dublin Airport via the M9 Motorway. The bus stop at ‘Applegreen Service Station’ provides a bus service to Dublin Airport (No. 738) and Waterford / Athlone (No. 73). In line with modern working practices, this brings major cities of Dublin, Limerick, and Waterford within reach of the town, within a c.2hr travel time.

Both Paulstown’s rural setting and its strategic location providing connectivity to the wider country, makes it an attractive place to live and work for many residents.

While Paulstown’s built heritage features add to the attractiveness of the area, they also present challenges including connectivity between residential communities and their local services, particular by walking or cycling, designated parking areas and lack of signage / indication.

Due to the town’s strategic position within the country and its strong transport connections, combined with its rich natural and built heritage, Paulstown is recognised as presenting a truly unique and exciting opportunity for furthering its development and potential.

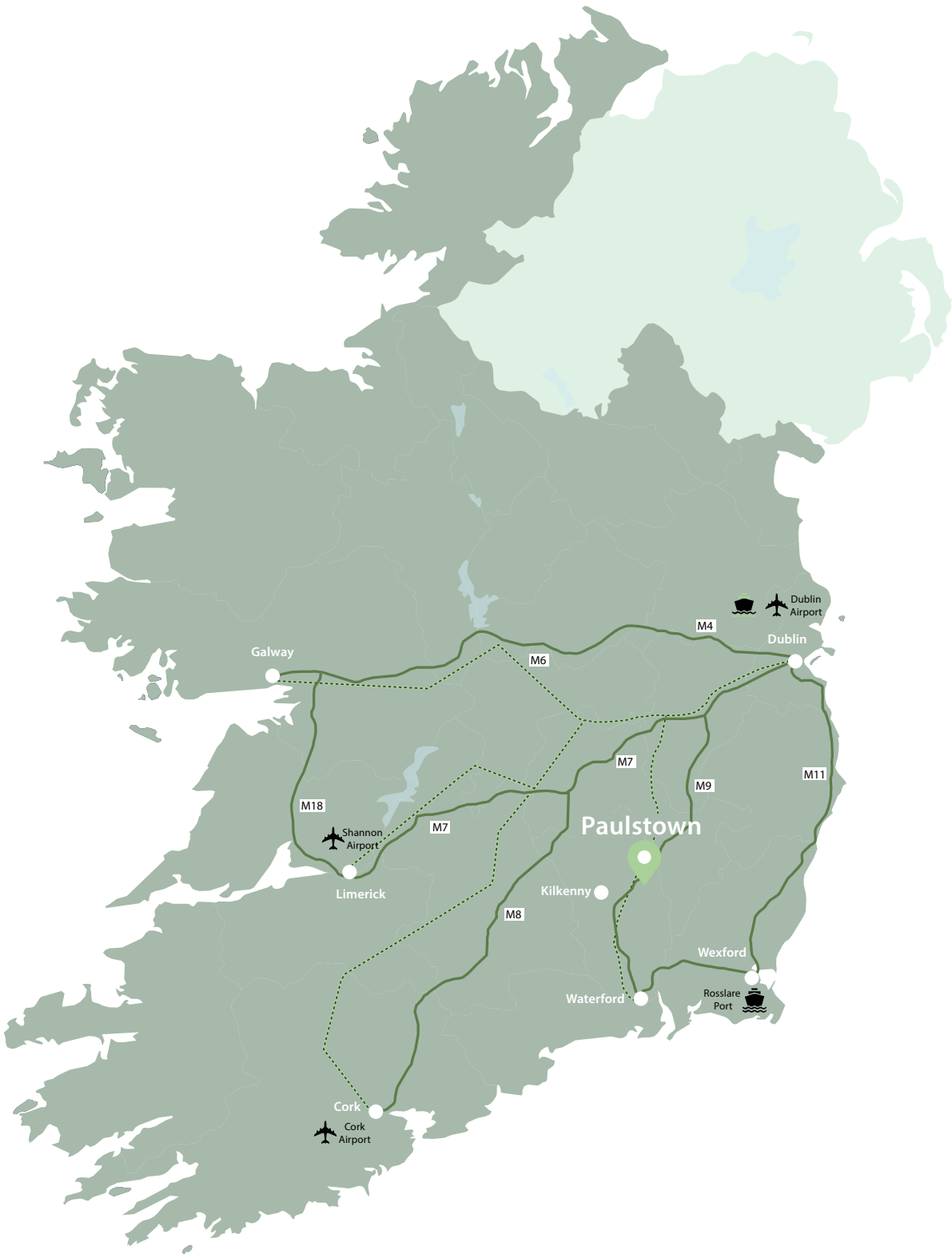


Figure 2.1: Town Location



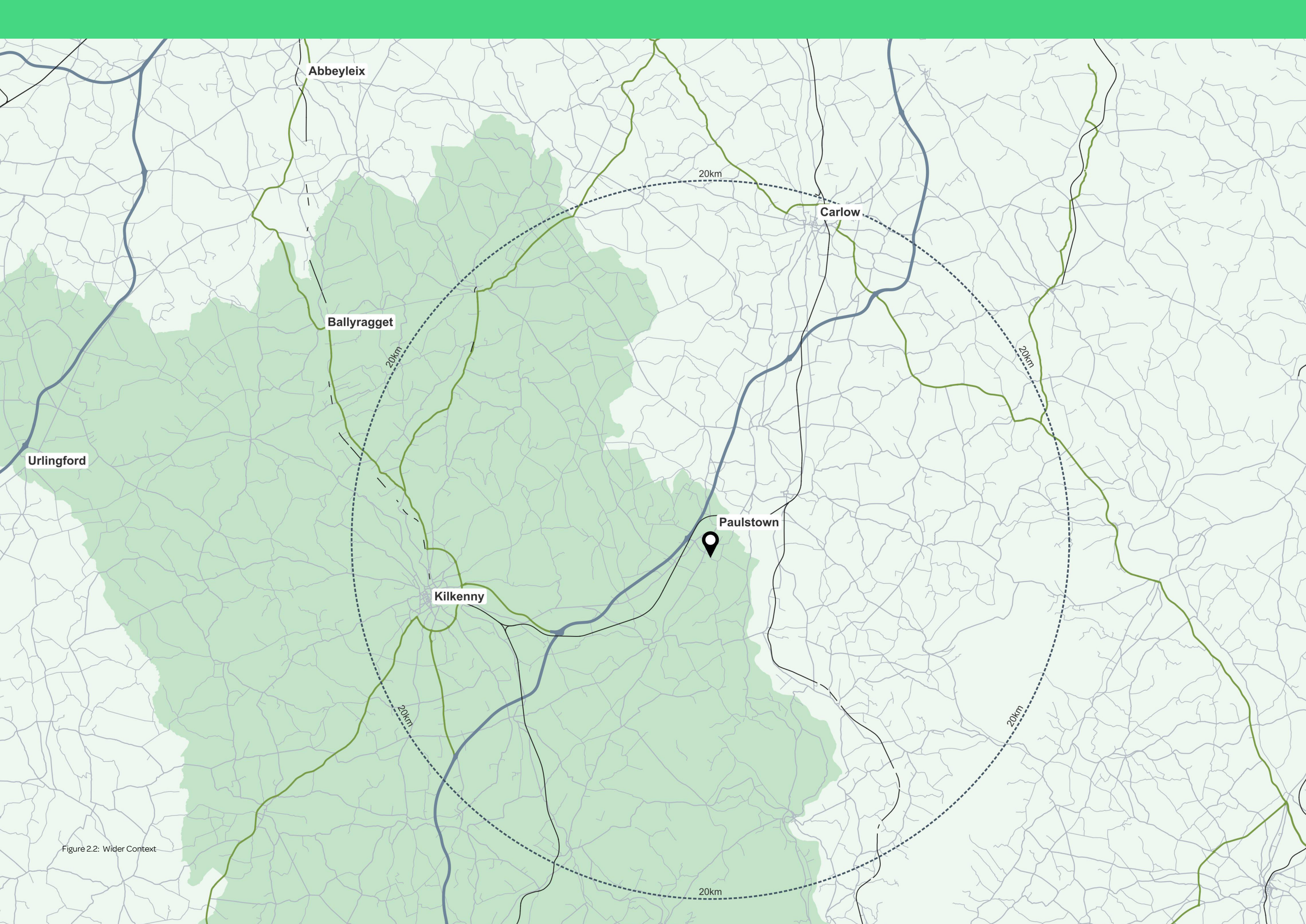


Figure 2.2: Wider Context



2.2 Historical Development

The settlement of Paulstown, previously also know as Whitehall, is a town rich in history. There are theories as to how the town got the name Paulstown. One is that the name comes from one of 3 brothers Paul, John & Thomas who decided to call those 3 towns in Kilkenny after themselves. Another theory is that the town was named after Sir Richard Butler of Poolstown, part of the Butler family, to commemorate his death.

Paulstown has been home to notable Kilkenny families since the 1700s, and this is reflected in the architecture and social history of their houses.

Shankill Castle was originally a tower-house built during the medieval period for the Butler family, near the ruins of an old church. In 1708, the house was rebuilt by Peter Aylward who bought the land from his wife’s family, the Butlers. The new Shankill Castle and Gardens was constructed as a Queen Anne house. In the 1820s, the house was enlarged and castellated into the style we know today. The stableyard and the castellated entrance to the demesne were further built in 1850 and are attributed to Daniel Robertson.

Paulstown Castle, a three-storey country house over raised basement was built in 1828. The -style home with a unique appearance is believed to have been built from plans created by William Robertson (1770–1850). The home continues to be significant due to its historical ties to firstly the Flood family, including Henry Flood; and the Healy family who were formerly estate agent for the Floods, who bought Paulstown Castle in 1892. Paulstown Castle has been vacent since 1973 and is now ruinous .

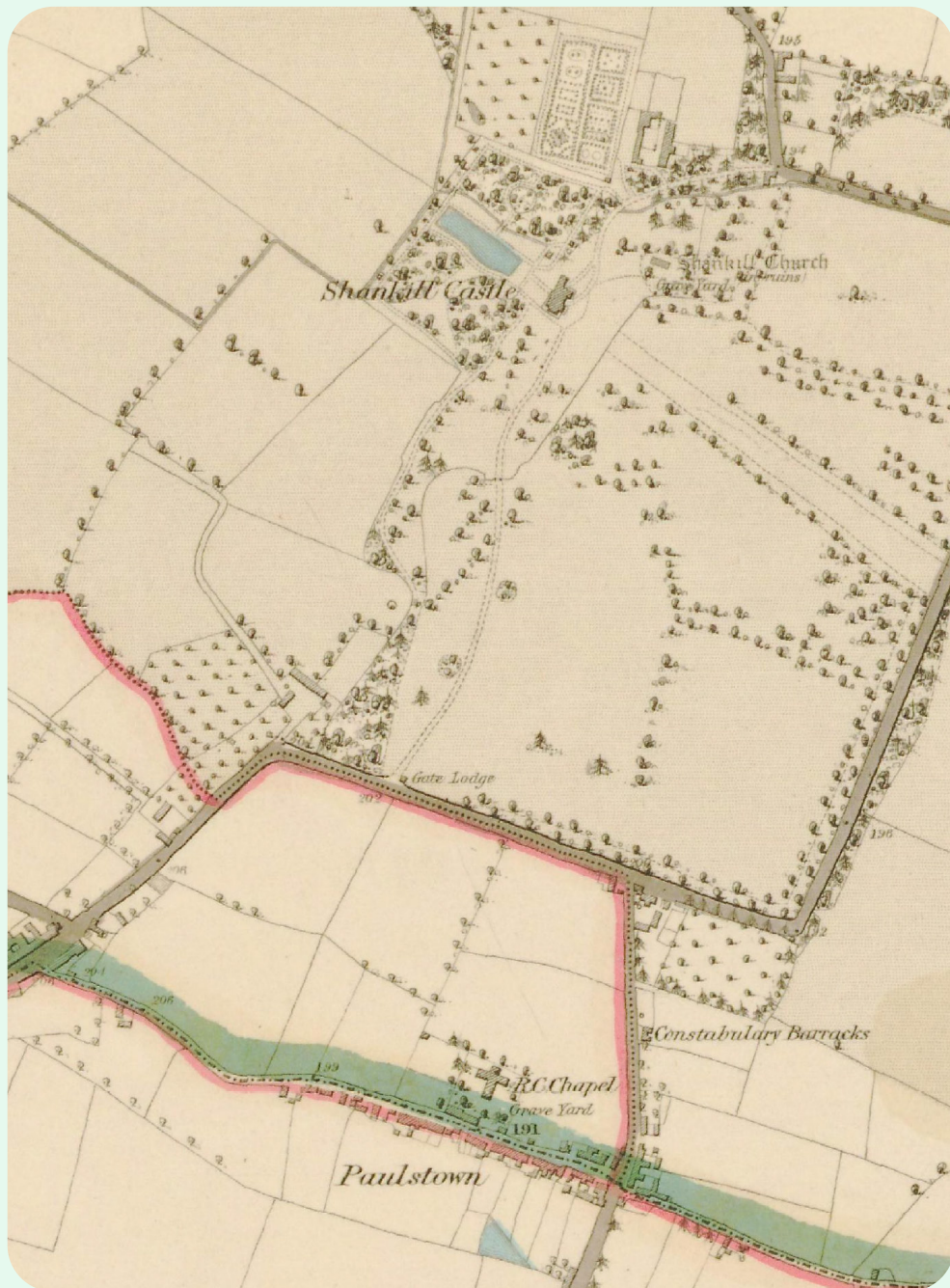
Summary of The Town Chapter

Paulstown’s history is reflected in its built environment. The modest structures on Main Street and within the town’s centre were, and continue to be the social and economic hub of the community. The town’s structures are contrasted by the grand Shankill Castle and Grounds which displays intricate historical architecture and lush grounds, and is certainly an asset to the town’s identity and offering as a destination.

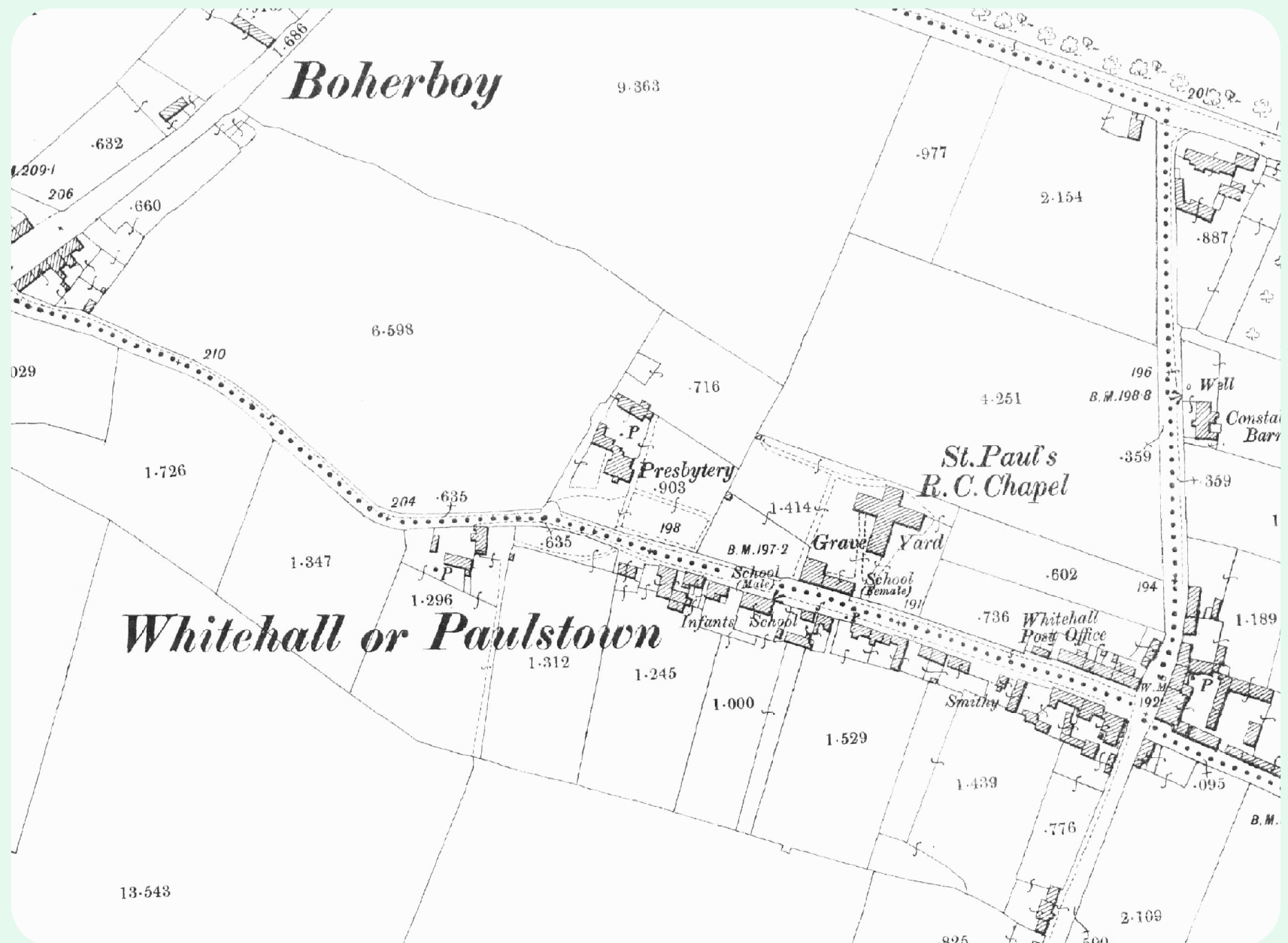


Figure 2.3: Shankill House Gates





Historical First Edition OSI Map - Paulstown 1829-41 (colour)



Historical Second Edition OSI Map - Paulstown 1897-1913

# 3.0 Analysis

## 3.1 Policy Context

Paulstown Masterplan has been developed within the national, regional, and local policy context and therefore aligns with these planning policy documents. The key policy documents are set out below. The Masterplan is an evidence based, non-statutory document and does not form public policy. The plan has been developed in collaboration with the Paulstown local community and all other stakeholders.

It is intended that the strategy for development, and the key proposals as set out in the Masterplan, will enable Kilkenny County Council, in collaboration with the local community, to leverage funding in order to implement the key actions for delivery as set out in Section 5 of the Masterplan.

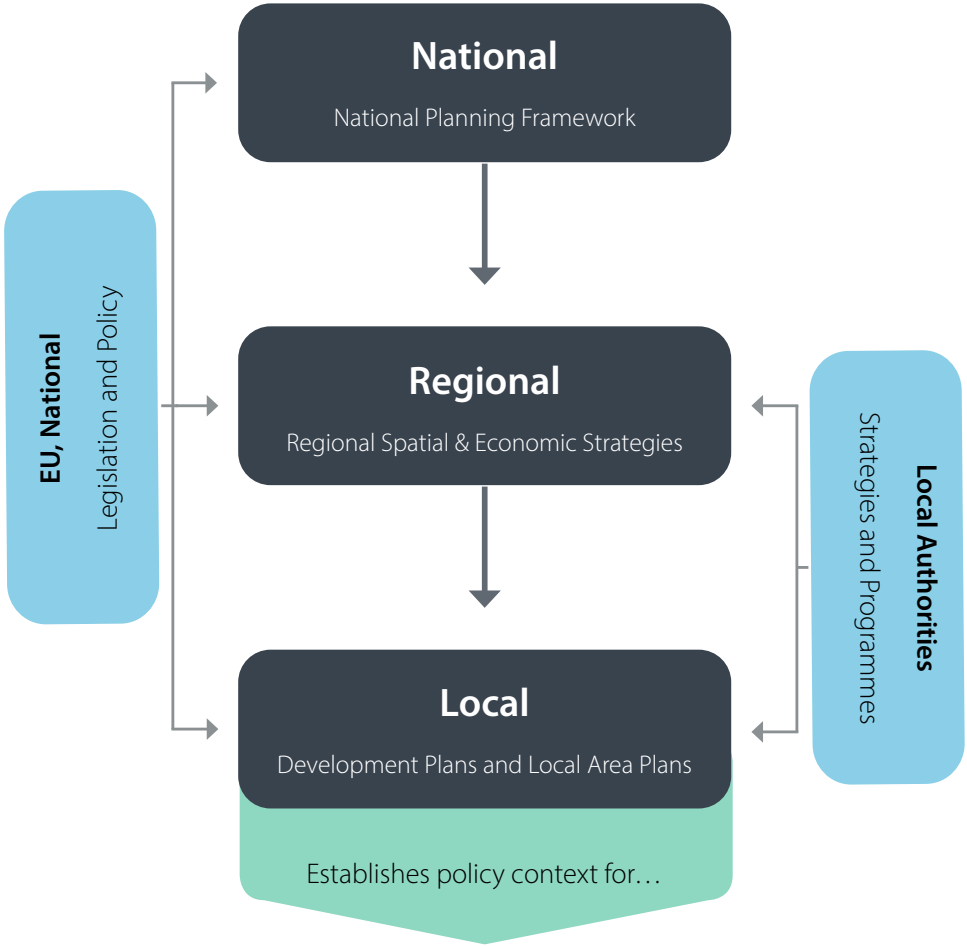


Figure 3.1: Planning Policy Hierarchy in Ireland.

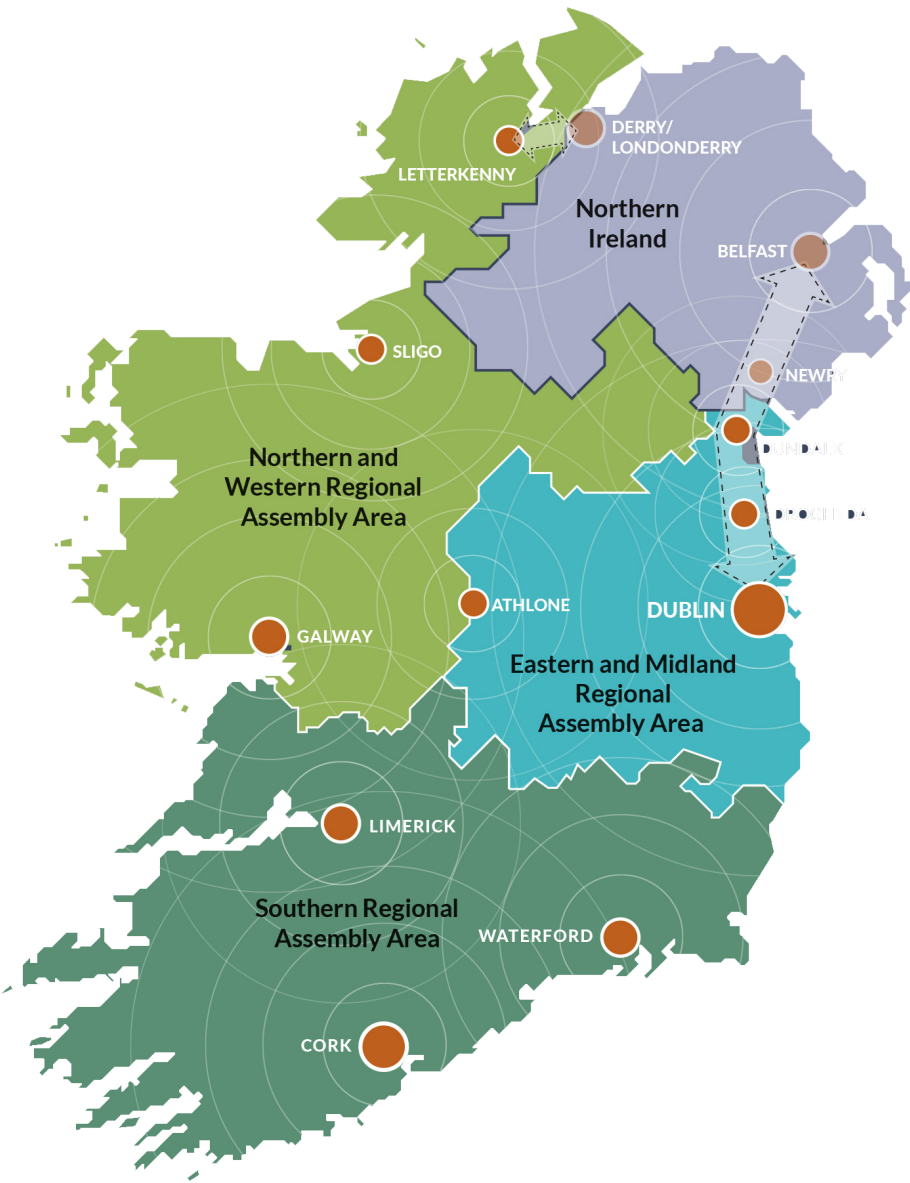
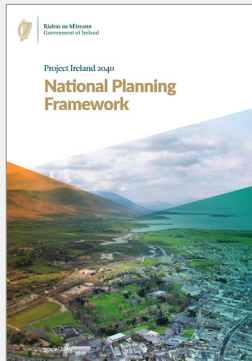


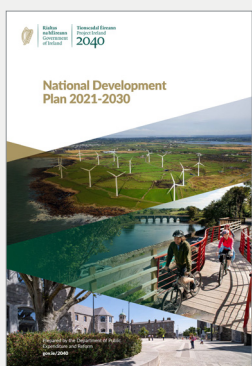
Figure 3.2: Diagram extracted from the National Planning Framework





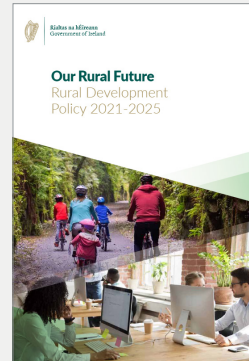
### 3.1.2 Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework

The Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework (NPF) is a strategic framework to guide public and private investment, and to protect and enhance the environment. It sets out a spatial hierarchy of urban centres that are in line for significant population and economic growth over the period of the plan. It also sets out the key principles that will guide future development across the country, addressing issues such as compact growth, making stronger urban places, creating strong and vibrant communities, and ensuring a healthy, liveable environment. This will be achieved through 10 National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) and priorities for every community in the country.



### 3.1.3 National Development Plan 2021–2030

Aligned with the NPF, the National Development Plan 2021–2030 sets out the government’s overarching investment strategy and budget for that period, enabling delivery of the NSOs and priorities set out in the NPF. This significant funding source will support both urban regeneration and rural rejuvenation through a €3 billion Regeneration and Development Fund.



### 3.1.4 Our Rural Future - Rural Development Policy 2021-2025

Our Rural Future - Rural Development Policy 2021-2025 represents a blueprint for the post-COVID recovery and development of rural Ireland. It contains key commitments that deliver on the government’s aim to support the regeneration, re-population and development of rural towns and villages to contribute to local and national economic recovery, and to enable people to live and work in a high quality environment.



### 3.1.5 Town Centre First - A Policy Approach for Irish Towns

The Town Centre First policy (2022) approach seeks to support and complement a wide range of government policies impacting on towns and is central to the vision of Our Rural Future. It is a core policy objective of Town Centre First to “create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community”. The policy lays the foundation for towns to develop their own planned path forward through a tailored Plan. The policy is closely aligned with many National Strategic Outcomes such as Compact Growth, Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities, Sustainable Mobility, Enhanced Amenities and the Transition to a Low Carbon Society.



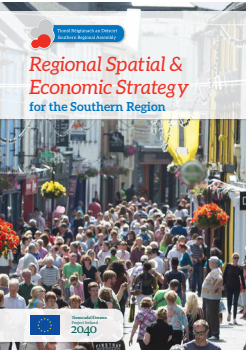
### 3.1.6 Climate Action Plan 2024

The Climate Action Plan 2024 (CAP24) is the third annual update to Ireland’s Climate Action Plan. The Climate Action Plan 2024 sets out a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve Ireland’s emissions by net by 2030 and to reach net zero by 2050. It further sets out how Ireland can accelerate the actions that are required to respond to the climate crisis. The compact growth agenda outlined in the National Planning Framework is reinforced which promotes extensive retrofitting of existing premises and housing stock and the prioritisation of brownfield and compact development. Actions in CAP24 strongly align and support the regeneration and revitalisation of Ireland’s towns, including through reducing demand for travel by car, sustaining economic and social activity at street level and increasing access to shops, employment, and amenities by sustainable transport modes.



### 3.1.7 Heritage Ireland 2030

Heritage Ireland 2030 is built around a vision of our heritage being at very centre of discourse, valued by all and cared for and protected for future generations. At the heart of this framework are three themes: communities, leadership and partnerships, reflecting the importance of ongoing collaboration between government and communities, heritage organisations, individuals and local authorities in caring and planning for our shared heritage.



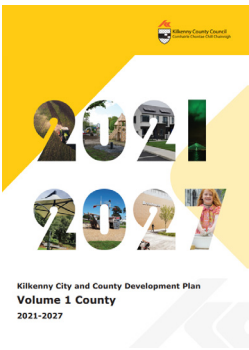
**3.1.8 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region**

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES) provides a long-term, strategic framework for future physical, economic and social development and seeks to determine at a regional scale how best to achieve National Strategic Outcomes of the NPF and NDP. To this end, the RSES sets out 11 Strategy Statements which are aligned with international, EU and national policy and which in turn set the framework for Development Plans and Local Economic and Community Plans.

Although the RSES does not specifically reference Paulstown, it acknowledges that:

*“There is evidence of significant decline in some smaller towns and villages in the Region. Investment and policy support is urgently needed to bolster and consolidate these vital settlements to arrest the decline and the consequent depletion of the physical fabric and provision of services in these areas”.*

Table 3.2 of the RSES, entitled ‘Settlement Typology’, identifies Kilkenny City as a ‘Key Town’. Kilkenny City is described as being the fourth largest settlement in the Region and it is identified as being centrally located within the Region with good road and rail links to Dublin and elsewhere.



**3.1.9 Kilkenny City and County Development Plan**

The Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Kilkenny for six years whilst aligning with longer term national and regional objectives. As part of the Development Plan Core Strategy, Paulstown is identified as a Rural Town within the Settlement Hierarchy (Table 4.3).

*“To develop a set of criteria and a programme to carry out an analysis of the Smaller Towns and Villages (Tier 4) to consider:*

*(a) The provision of zoning maps where appropriate (particularly for Ballyragget, Mooncoin, Paulstown, Piltown, Kilmacow and Urlingford) (b) Developing specific objectives for core areas, focal spaces, amenities and opportunity sites etc., (c) Identify land with development constraints.*

*This programme to be commenced within 12 months of the coming into effect of the Plan.”*

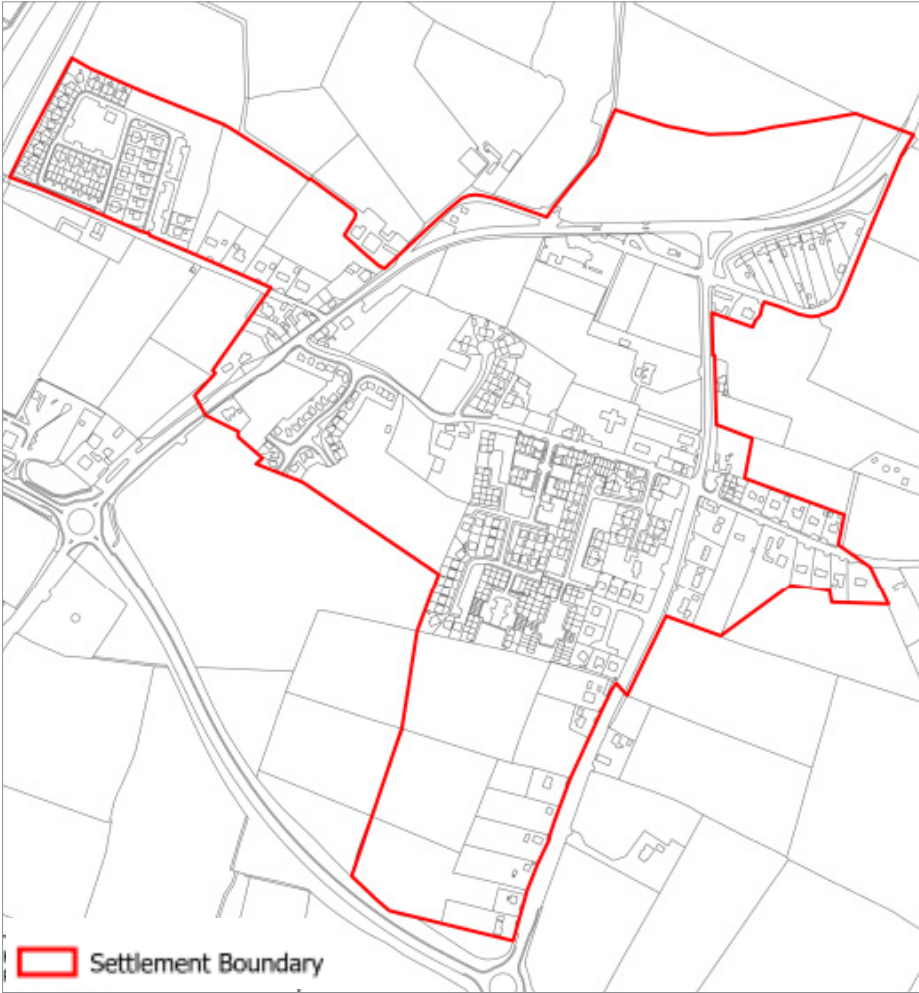


Figure 3.3: Settlement Boundary for Paulstown (Source: Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027).



3.2 Socio-Economic Analysis

Growth has slowed since the 2006 Census which saw an effective doubling of the population from 2002 (292 residents) to 2006 (598 residents). From 2011 onwards, population growth reduced from 32% growth from 2006 to 2011 (598 to 791 residents), to 14% growth from 2011 to 2016 (791 to 905 residents) to 1.5% growth from (905 to 919 residents). Based on the growth between 2016 and 2022, the population projection for Paulstown in 2027 is 975-1000 no. residents representing a 1.5%-2% increase from the 2022 total population.

The age profile of the town is younger compared to the national average distribution. The average age in Paulstown is 33 years old, whilst across the state it is 38.8 years old. It is noted that Ireland has a comparatively youthful population to other European Union member states, with just under half (44%) of residents under the age of 25 years old. According to the 2022 Census, 69% of the population of Paulstown are under the age of 44 years old, with only 7% of the population over the age of 65 years old, which is much lower than the national average of 15.1%.

At the time of the 2022 Census, the majority of the population claimed Irish citizenship (89%), with a small proportion originating from the UK (3%), Poland (2%) and India (1%).

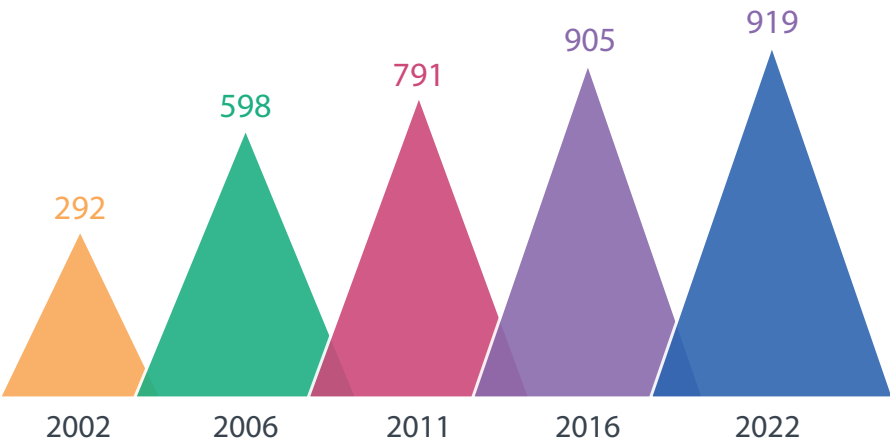


Figure 3.4: Population of Paulstown 2002-2022 (Central Statistics Office, Census 2022)

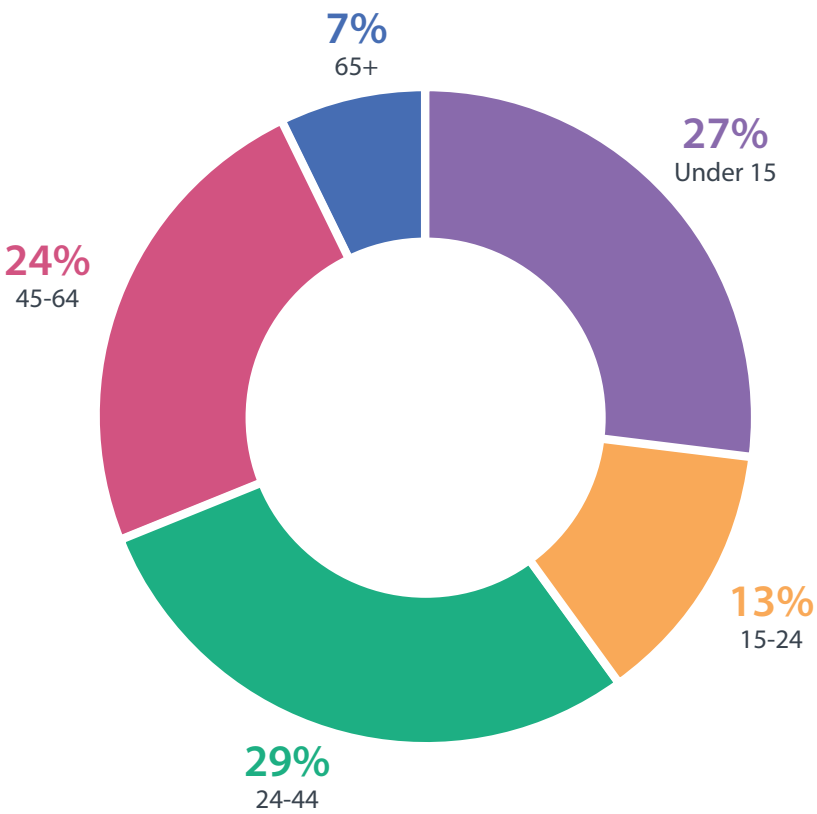


Figure 3.5: Age Groups of Paulstown in 2022 (Source: CSO Census Data 2022)

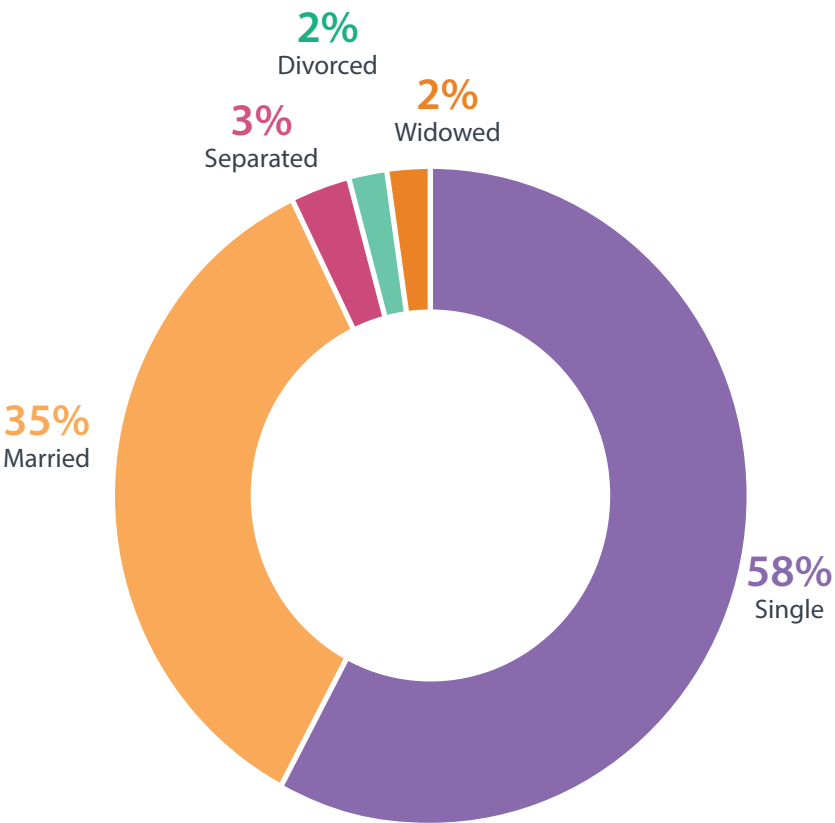


Figure 3.6: Marital Status of Paulstown in 2022 (Source: CSO Census Data 2022)

3.2.1: Housing

The total population of Paulstown in 2022 stood at 919 no. residents rising from 905 no. residents from the 2016 Census (+14 no.; +1.5%). Figure 3.7 confirms that the lowest proportion of the population of Paulstown live in 1-person households (5%), followed by 14% in 2-person households, 26% in 3-person and in 4-person households and 28% in 5 person + households.

According to the 2022 Census, 99% of households live in a house or bungalow, with only 1% living in apartments, compared to the national average of 82% of the population living in houses or bungalows while 18% live in apartments. The level of home ownership in Paulstown (72%), either with a mortgage/loan, or owned outright is significantly higher than the national average (59%) Similarly, there is a lower combined representation of those renting accommodation (22%) from a private landlord, local authority, or voluntary body, than at national level (36%).

Significantly, the Census 2022 data reveals that 69% of Paulstown’s housing stock was developed between 2001 and 2010. This demonstrates the volume of new house building which occurred in the settlement in a comparatively short amount of time and is just under double of the national level. Housebuilding in the town from 2011 to now has been relatively limited (2%), reflective of the population growth of the town.

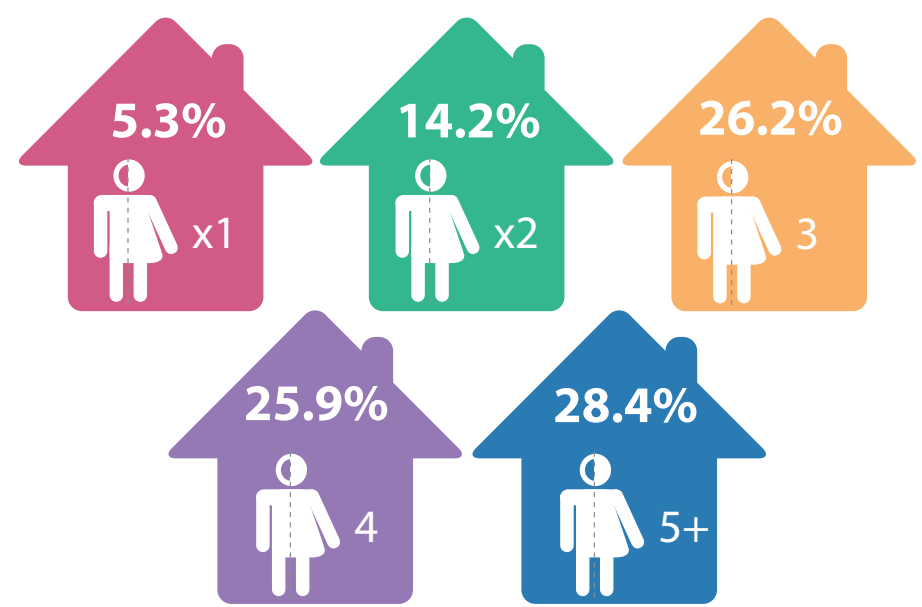


Figure 3.7: Person per Household in Paulstown in 2022 (Source: Central Statistics Office, Census 2022)

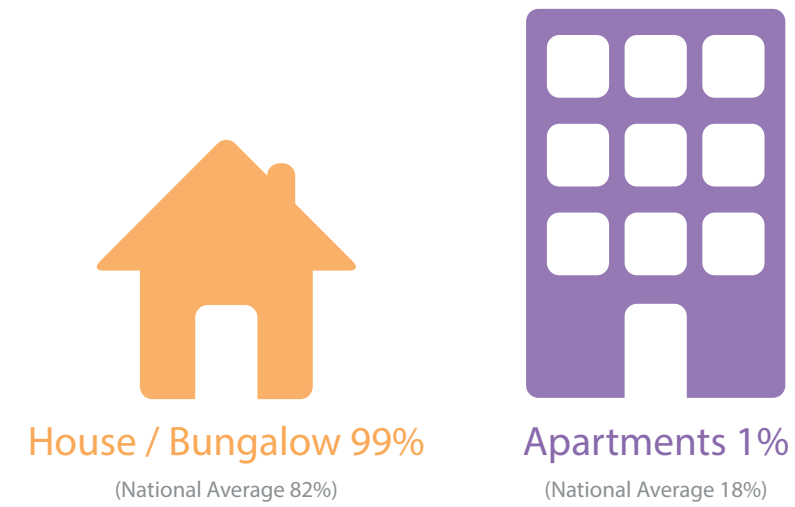


Figure 3.8: Type of Household Occupied in Paulstown in 2022 (Source: Central Statistics Office, Census 2022)

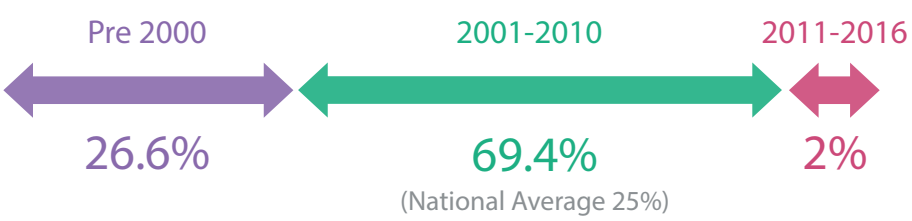


Figure 3.9: Age of Housing Stock in Paulstown in 2022 (Not Stated 2.0%) (Source: CSO Census Data 2022)

	Paulstown	Nationally
Owned with mortgage or loan	54%	33.9%
Owned outright	18%	25.2%
Rented from private landlord	13%	22.4%
Rented from Local Authority	9%	11.3%
Rented from voluntary/co-operative housing body	0%	2%
Occupied free of rent	1%	1%
Not stated	5%	4.2%

Table 3.2: Types of Occupancy in Paulstown and Ireland (Source: CSO Census Data 2022)



3.2.2: Education and Employment

According to the 2022 Census, residents of Paulstown have average levels of education comparative to national levels. The Census 2022 reveals that 12% the population had left school aged 16, slightly lower than the national average (13%). A total of 31% of the Paulstown population completed a Bachelor’s Degree or a Doctorate compared to 35% at state level.

As shown in in Figure 3.10, the 2022 Census results reveal that 65% of the Paulstown population aged 15 or over were working compared to 56% of the population at state level. The data shows that unemployment was comparative to the national average with 5% in Pausltown and 6% across the state. Only 4% of Paulstown residents were described as unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability, similar to the national average (5%).

As Shown in Table 3.3, the highest representation of socio-economic group in Paulstown based on the Census results is non-manual at 41%, higher than the national average for this group (36%). The second highest group was employers and managers (17%), higher than the national average of 14%.

Socio-economic Group	Paulstown %	National %
A Employers and managers	17%	14.4%
B Higher professional	1%	1.6%
C Lower professional	2%	7.2%
D Non-manual	41%	36.4%
E Manual skilled	10%	8.3%
F Semi-skilled	8%	8.1%
G Unskilled	1%	3.2%
H Own account workers	6%	3.7%
I Farmers	1%	0.4%
J Agricultural workers	0%	0.5%
Z All others gainfully occupied and unknown	13%	16.3%

Table 3.3: Employment in Paulstown in 2022 (Source: CSO Census Data 2022)

The data reveals that the main industries of employment for Paulstown are commerce and trade (27%) followed by professional services (23%).

### Summary of Socio-Economic Trends

The total population of Paulstown in 2022 stood at 919 no. residents rising from only 905 no. residents from the 2016 Census (+14 no.; +1.5%). Growth has slowed since the 2006 Census which saw a near doubling of the size of the village. Based on the growth between 2016 and 2022, the population projection for Paulstown in 2027 is 975-1000 no. residents representing a 1.5%-2% increase from the 2022 total population.

The profile of the area in terms of social, economic, housing and employment, highlights the promising potential of Paulstown as an attractive place to move to, visit and do business.

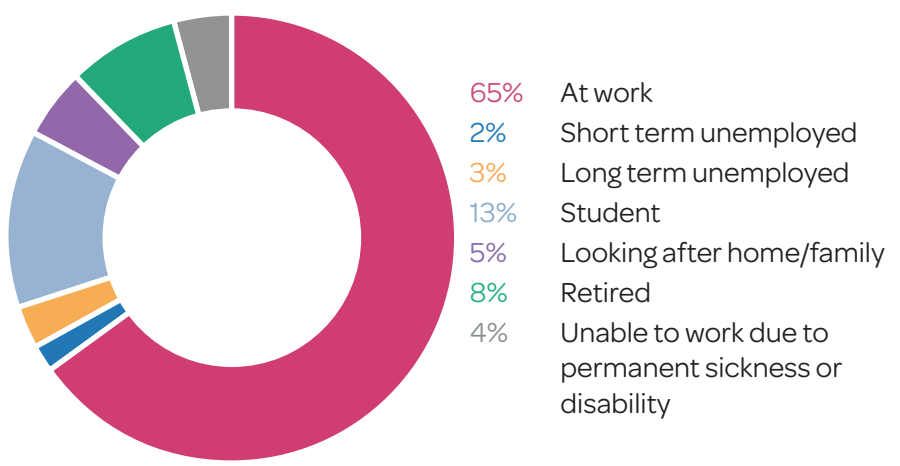


Figure 3.10: Principle Economic status of Population in Paulstown in 2022 (Source: CSO Census Data 2022)

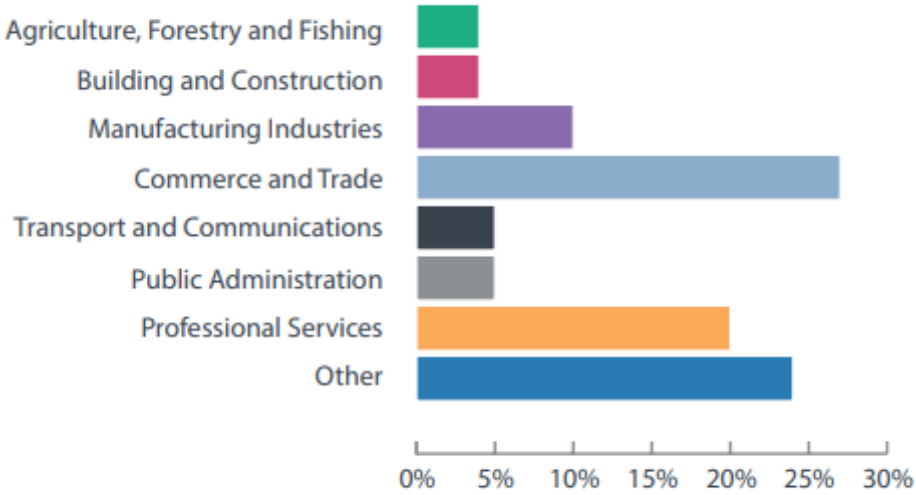


Figure 3.11: Persons at Work by Industry in Paulstown in 2016 (Source: CSO Census Data 2022).

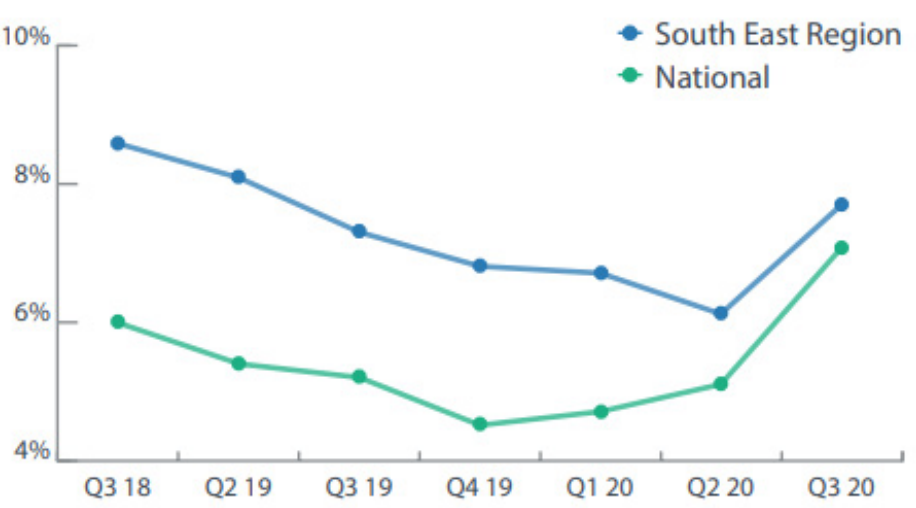


Figure 3.12: Levels of Unemployment across the Southeast Region and Nationally (Source: CSO 2022 Census Data)

### 3.3 Urban Analysis

#### 3.3.1 Appreciating Paulstown

Paulstown is a small town within a rural area east of Kilkenny City, on the border with Co. Carlow. Paulstown is a proud community full of local knowledge and spirit. It provides unique natural and heritage assets, including Shankill Castle and Gardens and Paulstown Castle, adding to its identity. By virtue of its location proximate to various national and regional access roads, the town has the potential to fulfil a more significant function. This Masterplan is designed to unlock funding resources that will not only benefit the town but also the surrounding rural areas.

#### 3.3.2 Built Environment: Character Areas

Paulstown provides three separate character areas:

- Main Street: Paulstown has developed between and along R448 and R712. The town has mostly developed between those two regionals roads, which also give access to the town. The retail / commercial area of Paulstown has mainly developed along Main street, and at its junction with both regional roads. Main street is a two-way street with paths on either side. R712 offers on-street parking at the intersection with Main street, as well as pedestrian crossing. Overall, there is a lack of urban structure in the town with a dense urban area along Main Street, and at its extremity, and a built environment way more scattered in the rest of the town. Most retail and commercial units are primarily located at the ground floor level. Retail and commercial units include convenience stores, and pubs. Residential developments are characterised by semi-detached bungalows and 2 storey houses with private gardens and public open space within cul-de-sac streets, which are primarily located along Main Street, Goresbridge Road and An Choill Rua.

- Shankill Castle and Gardens: Shankill Castle and Gardens is considered considered as key buildings in the town, as they contribute to tourism and recreational aspects of the settlement. Shankill Castle and Gardens can be visited, with tourists and residents invited to walk in the grounds and gardens, with guided tours of the house on offer. Recreational activities are also on offer throughout different times of the year.
- The GAA Club: The GAA club is located in the north of Paulstown along the R712 and offers a selection of recreational facilities to residents. The site also accommodates the community hall of the rural town.



Figure 3.13: Main Street, Paulstown



Figure 3.14: Shankill Castle and Gardens southern entrance.



Figure 3.15: GAA Pitch



3.3.3 Architectural Heritage

Paulstown has a strong architectural heritage, which is reflected by Shankill Castle and Gardens, originally a Butler tower-house built in 1708, near the ruins of an old church, and by Paulstown Castle, a three-storey over raised basement country house, built in 1828. This middle-sized home with a unique appearance was allegedly built from plans created by William Robertson (1770–1850). The home continues to be significant due to its historical ties to the Healy family, the Flood family, who owned View Mount House nearby, and Sir Pearse Butler.

The key focal point within the town is Main Street. However, as mentioned previously, the lack of urban structure, identity, and designated areas have led to an unattractive and uninviting space. It is also noted that apart from the Church of Assumption, Main Street does not offer any amenities / facilities for residents or visitors. In fact, we note the presence of facilities / amenities at both extremity of the street, but none in the middle.

Landmark buildings, such as the Church of Assumption, Shankill Castle, and Gardens, and Paulstown Castle are considered as key buildings in the town. While those key buildings shall contribute to the tourism and recreational aspects of the settlement, we note that apart from Shankill Castle, they do not offer designated parking areas, or they lack from signage / indication.

Other notable spaces within the town include Paulstown Cemetery, the primary school ‘Scoil Bhride Paulstown’, and several houses recorded in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. Nevertheless, despite the unique character and design of these buildings / areas, the lack of urban structure and permeability within the town undermines their potential to act as spaces that prioritise active travel.



Figure 3.16: Church of the Assumption.



Figure 3.17: Shankill castle and gardens.



Figure 3.18: Brigidine Convent, Paulstown



Figure 3.19: Heritage plan

Protected Structure	Description	Location
Vernacular House	Four bay, two-storey house	Between R448 and St. Enda's Terrace
Gateway	Gateway, c. 1825. comprising elliptical-headed carriageway with wrought iron double gates; (ii) attached single-bay two-storey limestone ashlar gate lodge, pre-1840 to east with single-bay full height canted bay to front,	To the south of Shankill Demesne.
Gateway	Gateway, c. 1725, comprising pair of rusticated limestone ashlar piers, iron flanking railings. Originally marking the midway point of an avenue or axis between Shankill Castle and a monument or statue identified on archival editions of the Ordnance Survey,	To the east of Shankill Demesne, fronting onto the R448.
Catholic Church	T-shaped barn style, c1840, modernised	North of Main Street

Table 3.3: TPPaulstown Record of Protected Structures from Kilkenny City and County Development Plan



3.3.4 Land Use

Paulstown remains mostly residential. Retail and commercial units are primarily located at the ground floor level of residential properties along main street and include convenience stores, and pubs.

Landmark buildings, such as the Church of Assumption, Shankill Castle, and Gardens, and Paulstown Castle are considered as key buildings in the town. In terms of public services and facilities, Paulstown benefits from a school, namely ‘Scoil Bhride’ and a creche, namely ‘Step by Step Crèche & Montessori’. The school is located close to the north-junction, and the creche is located within the residential development along Main street.

Apart from the retail / commercial units located along Main street and its extremity, we note the location of a service station, namely ‘Applegreen’, located in the south-west of the town. The petrol station serves drivers using the M9 motorway and can be used as a resting point.



Figure 3.20: Scoil Bhride Paulstown Primary School.



Figure 3.21: Applegreen Petrol Station



Figure 3.22: Paulstown Health Centre



Figure 3.23: Scoil Bhride



### 3.3.5; Vehicular Network and Parking

The main roads running through Paulstown are R712 (Kilkenny to Dublin) to the west, and R448 to the east (Waterford to Dublin). As explained before, the urban environment of the town has developed within and along those two regional roads.

Paulstown was bypassed with the new M9 Dublin to Waterford motorway now running to the west of the town, parallel to the railway line. This primary axis is a high-speed motorway for two-way traffic.

The primary roads – R448 and R712 – and secondary roads within the town are for two-way traffic, with no designated cycle routes being provided in the rural town. Main street, the key focal point of the town, intersects both regional roads at its extremity. Other secondary roads include Goresbridge Road and An Choill Rua. There are also several residential roads that intersect the primary and secondary roads that end in cul-de-sacs.

Designated on-street parking is provided along R712, more precisely at the junction of R712 and Main Street. This is the only area which provides designated on-street parking. All roads are for two-way traffic, with no designated cycle routes and no designated on-street parking. However, off-street parking is provided at several points, including along Main street, at the north-junction of R448 and R712, and next to the petrol station located at the south-west of the town.

Traffic management measures, including central islands are in place along R712, at the north entrance of the town, as well as at the south-west entrance. There is only one traffic light within the town, located at the junction of Main Street and R712. We note that most of the intersections within the town do not offer a pedestrian crossing.

Traffic movements within the town are primarily focused along both regional roads. This, the presence of the M9 motorway, and the lack of traffic management measures have led to a town that serves vehicles and not the walking and cycling needs of residents.



Figure 3.24: Traffic lights along the R712



Figure 3.25: Pedestrian crossing on Main Street.



Figure 3.26: The M9 Motorway from the An Choill Rua Bridge



### 3.3.6 Public Transport, Pedestrian and Cycle Links

Paulstown is served by 2 no. bus stops namely 'Applegreen Service Station' and 'Paulstown' which provide bus service nos. 736 (Dublin Airport to Tramore), and 73 (Waterford to Athlone). All of these bus routes stop at numerous town and towns along their route, providing connectivity from the wider area to Paulstown along arterial routes.

Paulstown is a small town, easily accessible by foot and by bike. However, we note that there are significant physical barriers within the town which reduce pedestrian / cyclist permeability and comfort, including the lack of urban structure leading to major issues such as lack of connectivity between residential developments and local amenities / facilities.

While there are footpaths on either side of R712 and Main Street, they are narrow at points reducing the potential for street furniture or people friendly meeting spaces. Furthermore, as stated previously, it is highlighted that most of the intersections within the town do not offer a pedestrian crossing.

With regards to cycling, there are no designated cycle routes within the town.

It is evident that Paulstown requires the provision of additional traffic measures, enhanced public realm and landscape improvements, the provision of priority signalised junctions and upgraded public lighting.



Figure 3.27: Applegreen Bus Stop



Figure 3.28: Paulstown Bus Stop



Figure 3.29: Dublin-Waterford Railway line running along the western boundary of Paulstown



Figure 3.30: Road Sign on R712



### 3.3.7 Recreational/Leisure

Paulstown benefits from a selection of recreational amenities and facilities with the Barrow Rangers GAA Club located in the north, along R712. Barrow Rangers GAA Club also accommodates Paulstown's community hall, which provides a range of recreational activities in addition to the GAA Club.

A playground is provided to the western part of Main Street. This large green open space remains the only designated public open space of the town.



Figure 3.31: Paulstown Boxing Club next to the GAA club.



Figure 3.32: Paulstown playground.



3.3.8 Public Realm

A playground is provided to the western part of Main Street. This large green open space remains the only designated public open space of the town, with the playground being a key amenity within the town.

Apart from the playground, the rural town lacks public open spaces for its residents and visitors. As highlighted before, there is a lack of designated pedestrian crossings in the town. In addition, there are no designated cycle routes within the town.

The materials and street furniture used in the public realm of Paulstown varies significantly but remains poor within and surrounding the town.

As previously noted, there are several significant physical barriers within the town which reduce pedestrian / cyclist permeability and comfort, including the linear settlement pattern, and the lack of connectivity between residential developments and local amenities / facilities.

It is evident that Paulstown requires the provision of additional traffic measures, enhanced public realm and landscape improvements, the provision of priority signalised junctions and upgraded public lighting. Those assets remain essential to provide a stronger connectivity for the town for walking, cycling, and enhancing the local community.



Figure 3.33: Pavement disappears along An Choill Rua



Figure 3.34: Streetscape along R712



Figure 3.35: Walkway from Shankill Castle to town centre without dedicated walkway



Figure 3.36: Lack of suitable active transport infrastructure along the R448.

3.3.9 Landscape and Green Infrastructure

In terms of landscape character, Paulstown remains mostly rural. The town is surrounded by agricultural and greenfield lands.

There are no open green parks, aside from the children’s playground, within the town is primarily provided within residential developments. While these open spaces are well maintained, they offer little in terms of facilities or amenities for their residents. They are lawned areas with little planting, poor lighting, basic or no street furniture and no play equipment.

In terms of greenery, trees and hedgerows are unequally spread within the town, with the majority being located within residential developments.



Figure 3.37: Agricultural fields along the R448.



Figure 3.38: Few along the R712



### 3.3.10 Employment

In terms of industrial areas, Paulstown benefits from 'Kilkenny Limestone Limited' which is a quarry located at the western part of the town.

Kilkenny Limestone's Kellymount site measures c.29.5ha and provides an annual extraction of c.25,000m<sup>3</sup>. The production hub is for Irish Blue Limestone slabs and paving for Irish and European markets.

There are a wide variety of businesses throughout the town and environs including service providers such as tilers, plasterers, accountants, child minders, timber products, general contractors, artists, shot and sand blasting to name but a few.

### 3.3.11 Environmental

A Strategic Level Flood Risk Assessment was carried out as part of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027, which identified the settlement is not located within any Flood Zones.

Construction of a new Water Treatment Plant for Paulstown has recently commenced and it is expected that spare capacity will become available in Q4 2025.

The upgrade to the Wastewater Treatment Plant will be undertaken under the Small Towns & Villages Growth Programme (STVGP). Whilst there is presently no completion date for this, it will be expected to be at least 5 years i.e. the end of 2029.

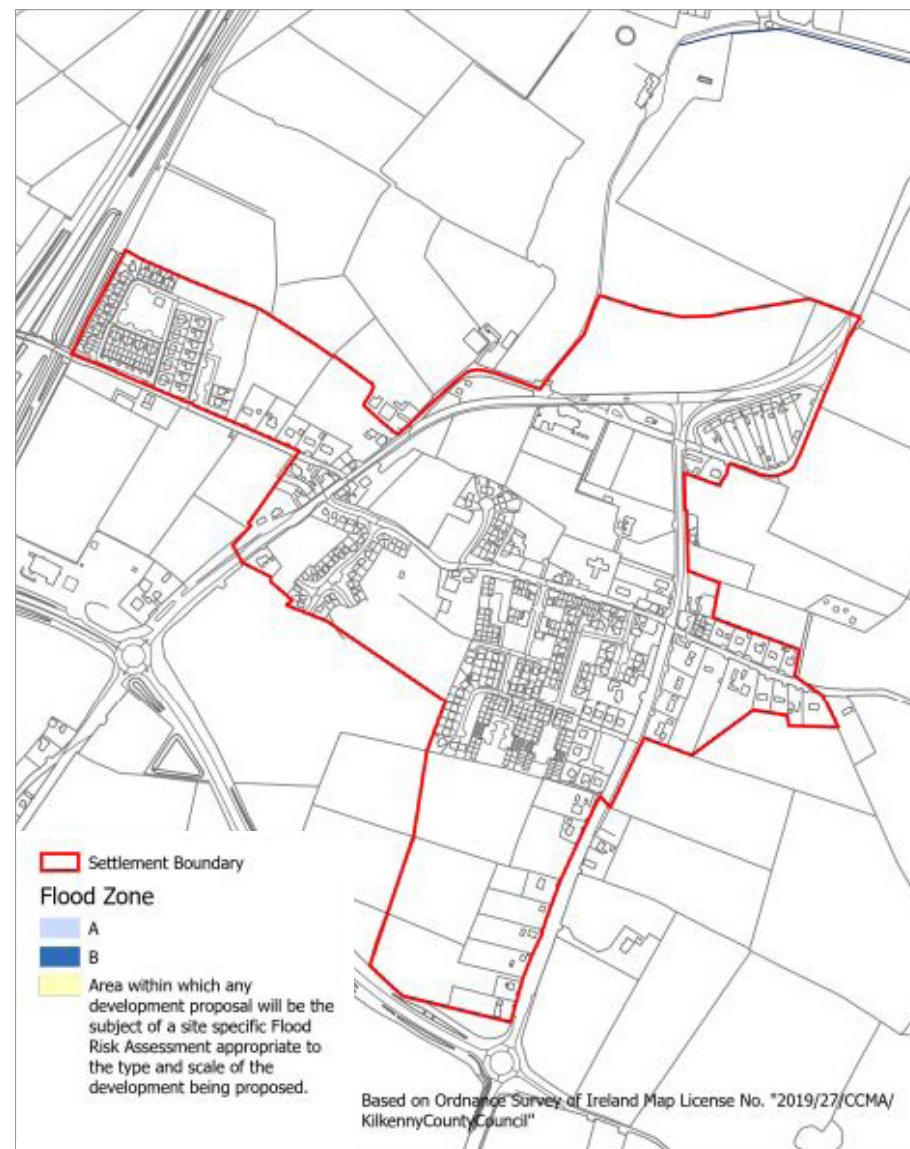


Figure 3.39: Flood Risk Assessment Map (Source: KCDP 2021-2027)

## Summary of Urban Environment

Paulstown is a historic town, home to a range of destinations such as the Shankill Castle and Gardens and the Applegreen Service Station on the M9 junction. The streetscape of the town centre between the R172 and R448 is made up of both 18th, 19th Century and contemporary structures, many of which have been finely preserved, however some have been neglected or their historical architecture has been tampered with.

The town is set within a rural context within the east of Co. Kilkenny and enjoys easy access to Kilkenny City and Waterford City, via its close access to the M9. The Dublin-Waterford railway also abuts the western boundary between the town and the M9 motorway and could be further utilised. The creation of more walkways and more pathways for pedestrians and cyclists would promote active travel within Paulstown, such as pedestrian crossings and cycle lanes.

As is typical of rural Irish towns, there are a number of vacant buildings within the town centre, most notably along Main Street and the R172. Despite this, many of the building uses within the town promote active use and represent positive uses of the built environment.

# 4.0 Engagement

## 4.1 Overview

A stakeholder workshop took place on Wednesday, 18 January 2023 from 18:30 – 20:30, in Paulstown Community Hall. The workshop was an opportunity to gather the views of local people on how Paulstown should develop.

The following sections provide an overview of the workshop structure, a summary of the key points raised, followed by a more details record of the feedback received during the workshop exercises.

The workshop was open to the entire community to attend and was advertised widely to encourage attendance. A total of 31 no. local people participated in workshop discussions.

### Workshop Structure

Following a presentation of the proposed interventions, delivered by Turley, participants were asked to undertake a ‘dream and draw’ exercise in small groups. This involved:

- Identifying spaces within the town that should be considered by the Masterplan proposals.
- Drawing on ideas for interventions.
- Highlighting priority areas for development.

The second exercise involved two parts. In the first, we asked participants to identify opportunities and challenges presented by the Paulstown Masterplan. These were to be written on post-it notes and stuck to the desk in front of them. For the second part of the exercise, participants were asked to pick one for the challenges they had identified and come up with a proposed solution to this. These included:





# Challenges and Opportunities

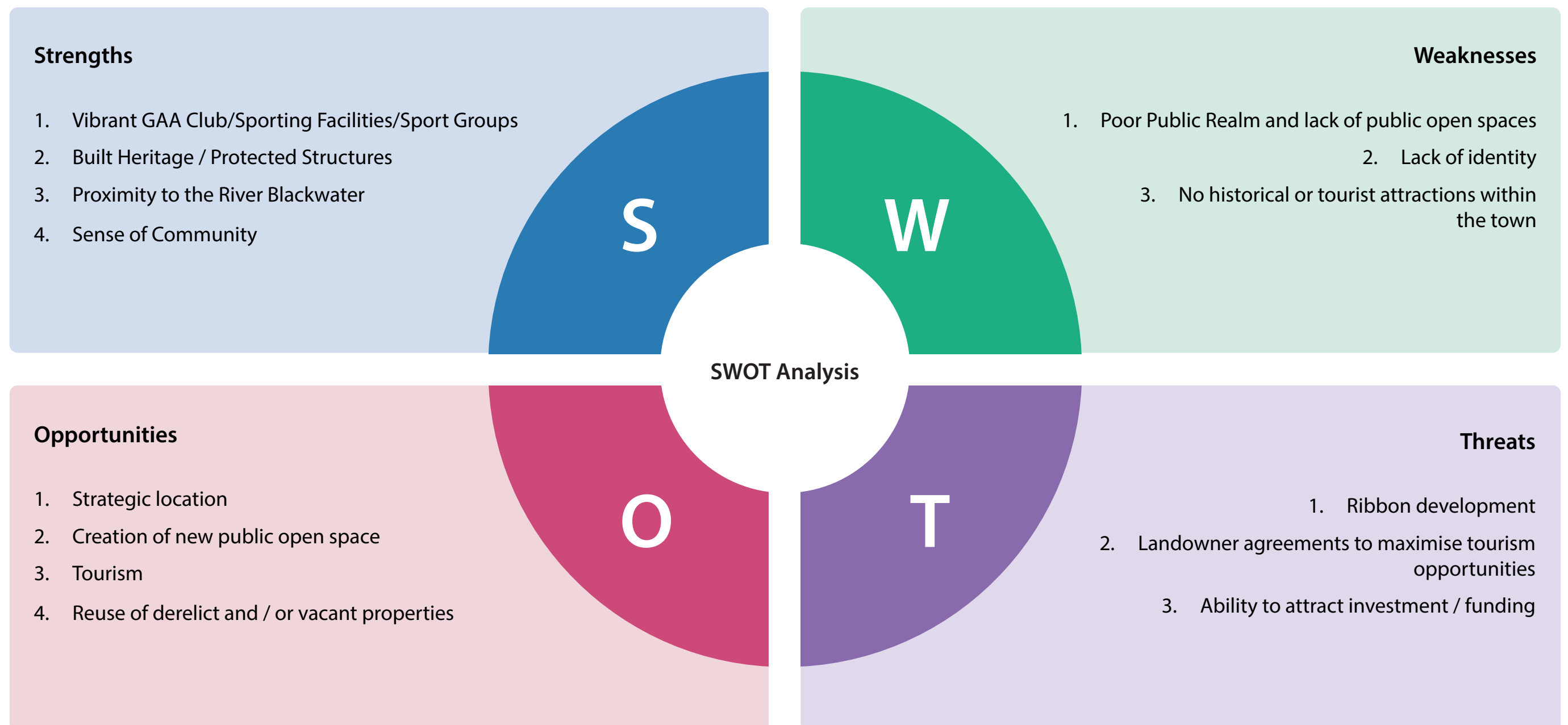
A summary of key challenges and opportunities identified by stakeholders is provided below:

Challenges	Opportunities
<b>Lack of green space</b> It was felt that the town lacked green spaces – with the exception of the GAA ground.	<b>Landscaping Interventions</b> Participants highlighted that there were a number of places within the town that could benefit from decorative features such as small fountains, gardens, sculptures, and other public art. Additional trees and planting were also called for throughout Paulstown.
<b>Essential Services</b> Utilities infrastructure was highlighted as a challenge – particularly waste disposal / recycling, water, and sewerage.	<b>Broadband provision</b> The Masterplan will aim to look at local services provision including broadband.
<b>Flooding and Drainage</b> Some participants highlighted flooding in the northern part of the town as a challenge.	
<b>Lack of Identity</b> Participants highlighted their concern that the town did not have pre-existing identity that was sufficiently distinctive.	<b>Urban design and cohesion</b> Looking at urban design mechanisms that encourage community cohesion and identify.  <b>Central Electronic Community Sign</b> One group felt that the town could benefit from an electronic sign, which could be used to inform the community about upcoming events.
<b>Traffic and Car Parking</b> Traffic in Paulstown was felt to be both too heavy and at times, too fast, while available car parking was felt to be insufficient.	<b>Train Station / Halt</b> Participants in several groups felt that Paulstown would benefit from a station or halt on the adjacent railway line.  <b>Bus Services</b> A bus loop service was proposed by one group of participants, to connect Paulstown with nearby Bagenalstown and Gowran. It was suggested this would be a benefit to both young people and older people in the town
<b>Lack of Services</b> The lack of local services was mentioned by several groups who called for reinstatement of key services including a post office, pharmacy, and local doctor surgery.	<b>Addressing Dereliction</b> Participants highlighted dereliction within the town as a key challenge, suggesting that the Council or central funding might be available to address this.
<b>Lack of Employment Opportunities</b> It was felt that Paulstown didn't offer sufficient employment opportunities to retain young people	<b>Excellent Pubs</b> Paulstown's pubs were felt to be a strength.
<b>Schooling and Activities for Children</b> Residents said that the local school was at capacity and there was not sufficient playground space for young children.	<b>Sports / Tourism Amenities</b> Participants felt that the town had untapped potential as a sporting or tourism destination, sectors that could be encouraged.

A Question-and-Answer section took place to give participants an opportunity to comment on ideas, which are summarised below:

Theme	Comments
Parking	<p>“You’d need parking for the Church”</p> <p>“If we are going to come to the town, you need parking”.</p> <p>“Lots of people park at the graveyard to commute further afield”</p> <p>“There are two car parking areas behind the shops on Main Street, but people don’t even know they are there”.</p>
Diocesan Land	<p>“Green space beside the playpark is diocesan land, so there is potential to bring it back into use”.</p> <p>“Housing for older people is necessary in the town – there had previously been proposals to use the diocesan land for this”.</p>
Using community land	<p>“The GAA Pitches are community land, but the GAA club is building a new facility nearby. What will happen to the pitches when the club moves on? Can they become all weather pitches for community use, for instance?”</p>
Re-routing HGVs	<p>“HGV traffic should be forced to go around the town – it would be important to widen footpaths on the Gowran Road to make walkers feel safe”.</p>
Lack of space on Main Street	<p>“Where are the civic spaces going to go?”</p>
Street nomenclature	<p>“Could we consider naming Main Street to Chapel Street? Every town has a Main Street, but that street used to be Chapel Street – it would be something different”.</p>





## 5.0 Masterplan

### 5.1 Vision for Paulstown

The vision for Paulstown is to re-frame the town around the Main Street, linking the existing loop walk into the centre of the town, in order to promote and encourage an active and attractive Main Street that creates a sense of place and identity,

This Masterplan will show how we can create inclusive places that are successful and popular, how we can bring landscape and nature into our town centres, and how we can live and work in the future, whilst maintaining and strengthening community.



## Vision

“The vision for Paulstown is to become a vibrant, attractive, and sustainable place to live, work and visit, capitalising on its sense of community, natural and built heritage and strategic links to Carlow, Kilkenny and beyond.”





## 5.2 Key Spatial Elements

The spatial framework informing the Masterplan comprises three key elements set out below.



### Key Arterial Routes

Main Street is connected to both regional roads, R712 and R448, representing the main access of the town. Main Street, the key focal point of the town, intersects both regional roads at its extremity. Other secondary roads include Goresbridge Road and An Choill Rua. This road structure will be maintained as part of the Masterplan.



### Shankill Woods / Castle

New walking routes through the Shankill Woods will act as a secondary spatial element, the form of which will be informed by the location of Shankill Castle. The walking routes will create new, safe access routes for children and churchgoers, away from busy roads. They will also serve as a tourism asset promoting active tourism and enabling visitors to explore the town's rich built and natural heritage, whilst supporting the health and well-being of residents.



### Key Nodes

Community buildings, heritage assets, Main Street, entrances to the towns and other focal points will act as key nodes within the town. Key nodes are the strategic foci into which the observer can enter, and which are the intensive foci to and from which one is travelling. These may be primarily junctions, places of a break in transportation, a crossing or convergence of paths.



5.3 Guiding Principles

The aim of this Masterplan is to ensure that Paulstown has the right objectives and projects in place to tackle issues of urban form and structure, identity, and dynamic, and above all, to become a better place to live, work and run a business, ensuring the vitality and vibrancy of the town into the future.

Considering the Development Plan Objectives for the town, our baseline analysis and the feedback received from the local community, we have developed a set of principles to help guide the ideas, actions, and strategies for the Masterplan. These are:

- Streets and Public Spaces** – Consider the potential which could be harnessed by upgrading the public realm and creating attractive public amenity spaces.
- Movement** – connectivity with Main Street and its surrounding areas is the golden thread which helps connect where we live, work and play and in turn supports the economic health of the town
- Heritage and identity** – celebrate the culture and heritage of Paulstown, defining its image and making it a destination for visitors.
- Built Form and Use** – Reuse of existing vacant / derelict buildings to provide new community facilities and / or tourism offerings.
- Vitality and Vibrancy** – ensure Paulstown is an economically viable community with the capacity to generate income and employment necessary to maintain or improve the town.
- Sustainability and Climate Resilience** – Resilient towns and towns promote sustainable development, well-being, and inclusive growth.

Streets and Public Spaces

1. Paulstown will be characterised by an attractive public realm (streets, spaces, and public open space) that is designed to invite people to meet, mingle and dwell. The public realm will be carefully designed to serve the whole community, performing multiple roles as places to rest, meet, play, exercise, or host community events.
2. Explore the potential of new walking routes through the town, which will serve as a tourism asset, promoting active tourism and enabling locals and visitors to explore the town's rich heritage and biodiverse hinterlands. The new walkway could enhance the relationship with Main Street and improve permeability within the town.
3. Enhance connectivity of streets and places to encourage active travel by walking or cycling for short journeys, reducing car dominance.
4. Ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to street furniture and materiality, including street lighting and signage, within the public realm.
5. Provide a network of public and green spaces at different scales to foster social cohesion and strengthen community ties for all. Make available space for activities and events, and improve the health and well-being of the community and visitors.

Movement

1. Manage traffic speeds through the town by the introduction of traffic calming measures such as speed ramps, and new pedestrian crossing points at intersections of the town to ensure pedestrian safety.
2. Provide a network of streets to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists, to promote sustainable travel to, from and around the town centre. The new network will allow for public realm enhancement and link to Shankill Castle and gardens .
3. Develop additional parking at the Cemetery, to facilitate resident and visitor parking.
4. Create a new rail halt with easy pedestrian links into the town, to support active travel choices by walking and cycling and reducing car dominance.
5. Create an accessible and inclusive streetscape, supporting ease of movement for children travelling to the nearby school, through minimising uneven pavements and reducing clutter.



## Heritage and Identity

1. Tackle dereliction and improve the appearance of buildings, particularly façade improvements to buildings within Paulstown to improve the overall attractiveness.
2. Identify, adapt, restore and / or reuse vacant, derelict and / or historic buildings for the benefit of the local community, creating a more inclusive, attractive environment, building on the strong community spirit.
3. Celebrate the town's heritage and history through signage, wayfinding, trails, events, and festivals, highlighting the historic assets with possible interventions including lighting, greening, and access.
4. Define Paulstown's image as an alluring town which embraces its enduring character and treasures its rich built and natural heritage, whilst adapting to meet current needs as a destination in which to live, work and do business.

## Built form and Use

1. Make effective use of existing derelict / vacant building stock within the Town to provide new spaces for the use of the local community.
2. Enhance community facilities to provide a range of public and community spaces, to provide activities for the young and old, contributing to a more inclusive community and adding to the health and well-being of residents' and visitors.
3. Explore opportunities for the repurposing of the existing community centre should a new site / property be identified within the centre of the town for a new purpose built / retrofitted community building.
4. Explore the possibility of visitor accommodation in the town with a view to attracting more visitors to stay in the area.

## Vitality and Vibrancy

1. Paulstown will provide attractive vibrant places for enterprises to grow and develop. It will provide opportunities for jobs and enterprise, including working hubs, to increase its self-containment.
2. Create an attractive and welcoming environment for the local community and visitors, through the provision of well-designed and considered planting, street furniture, lighting, signage, and wayfinding.
3. Create branded signage and install at key entrances to the town with additional landscaping and potential art sculpture dedicated to the town's history, which will create a sense of arrival and promote the town's identity. Consider installation of heritage plaques to identify historic and Protected Structures.

## Sustainability and Resilience

1. Paulstown will provide opportunities for the amenity, health and well-being of residents, workers, and visitors.
2. Introduce additional planting and greening, with sustainable drainage, particularly at the proposed new area of public open space, to create an attractive environment, enhance biodiversity and to mitigate against flooding and climate change.
3. Ensure Paulstown has an urban framework and infrastructure that will support the anticipated population growth, in the most sustainable way.

5.4 Plan Framework

This overall plan drawing brings together opportunities for investment, improvement, and development across a wide range of potential locations. The plan is not a blueprint, rather than a flexible framework which seeks to set out how opportunity sites might come forward in a manner which responds positively to context and creates good quality, connected and integrated places. Some particular ideas and opportunities are highlighted across the following two pages before the individual plan project ideas are outlined for the town.

- 1

Public Realm Enhancement
- 2

New Natural Walkway
- 3

New Public Amenity
- 4

Road and Footpath Improvements
- 5

Cycling and Walking
- 6

Rail Halt
- 7

Façade Improvements
- 8

Celebrate Heritage
- 9

Signage and Wayfinding
- 10

Community Hall
- 11

Diocese Grounds
- 12

Feasibility – independent living facilities
- 13

Programme to tackle vacancy and dereliction
- 14

Broadband
- 15

Visitor Accommodation
- 16

Landscaping
- 17

EV Charging



## Plan Framework



Masterplan Interventions

Streets and Spaces

1

Public Realm Enhancement

2

New Natural Walkway

3

New Public Amenity

Movement

4

Road and Footpath Improvements

5

Cycling and Walking

6

Rail Halt

Heritage and Identity

7

Façade Improvements

8

Celebrate Heritage

9

Signage and Wayfinding

Built Form and Activity

10

Community Hall

11

Diocese Grounds

12

Feasibility – independent living facilities

Vitality and Vibrancy

13

Programme to tackle vacancy and dereliction

14

Broadband

15

Visitor Accommodation

Sustainability and Resilience

16

Landscaping

17

EV Charging



5.5 Interventions toolkit

The interventions toolkit has been arranged to align with the six placemaking themes (guiding principles), under which there are a broad range of intervention opportunities.

Within the following section are a series of ideas to reinforce these placemaking pillars, with a focus on physical enhancements to the public realm alongside opportunities for events, activation, and branding.

5.5.1 ‘Physical Enhancement’ vs ‘Activation Interventions

All the projects are identified as either a ‘physical enhancement’ project or an ‘activation’ project.

**Physical Enhancement:** will typically be interventions comprising physical development in the built or natural environments (e.g., public realm enhancement, a public park, or a new building.).

**Activation:** will typically be interventions that do not result in changes to the physical environment per se but play an important role in supporting effective land use and activities in the town (e.g., events coordination, business development or feasibility studies.).



Masterplan Interventions

# Streets and Spaces

01. Public Realm Enhancements

02. New Natural Walkway

03. New Public Amenity



# 01

## Public Realm Enhancement

There is an opportunity to enhance the public realm within Paulstown through the preparation of a comprehensive public realm enhancement scheme.

The scheme will include new, level pavements which will support active travel choices and will serve the community.

Any public realm improvements must take heed of the Councils' Disability Inclusion Strategy and any guiding national documents.

### Key features:

- Improve the balance of quality of public spaces through enhanced public realm
- New car parking will be facilitated at the Cemetery.
- High quality materials (local materials e.g., limestone paving and sets) and high-quality detailing.
- Widening of footpaths and resurfacing where applicable to ensure accessibility for all residents' and visitors (level access).
- Introduction of new street lighting along all roads to support safe and active travel.
- Consistent approach to public realm to ensure continuity throughout the town, in terms of seating, bins, lighting columns etc.

### Short Term Interventions

- Additional landscape features should be added throughout the town and at key nodes – tree planting in selected locations, raised planters, and raised planters with benches, or colourful plant pots, to create a vibrant and attractive town.

### A good example...



### Abbeyleix

Abbeyleix demonstrates the value of strategic infrastructure investment, including public realm enhancement, acting as a catalyst for regeneration. In 2009, Laois County Council began initiatives to address challenges to the vitality and viability, of Abbeyleix, including depopulation of the urban core, traffic congestion and limited car parking provision.

Laois County Council commissioned the adaptation of the market house into a new Library. Subsequently, a strategic plan was prepared for the town. The Plan highlights the importance of a sense of place, respect for the environment and a high quality public realm in the creation of sustainable communities. It also recognises the value of heritage – both in terms of historic buildings and public spaces – as a resource to be conserved, both for its own sake and to revitalise the town centre and its economy.



Figure 5.1: Gowran Road – landscaping interventions.



Figure 5.2: Roundabout approaching Paulstown from the M9 Motorway.



## 02

## New Natural Walkway

A new natural walkway between Main Street and Scoil Bhride to improve permeability within the town, providing safe access to the school from the residential developments along Main Street. In turn, this will also reduce traffic within the area. In addition, a combination of the proposed interventions (including No. 3, No. 5 and No. 8) will also create new tourism opportunities, increase biodiversity, provide new green public spaces and a focus on heritage.

## Key features:

- A new natural walkway with dedicated areas for rest and relaxation.
- Links to the proposed Shankill Forest with potential heritage trails and potential natural play equipment.
- Links to the proposed area of public amenity space adjacent to the existing playground, improving permeability within the town.
- Seating areas, landscaped areas, and lighting to be included, to provide an attractive area for rest and relaxation.
- Supports the health and well-being of residents and visitors.

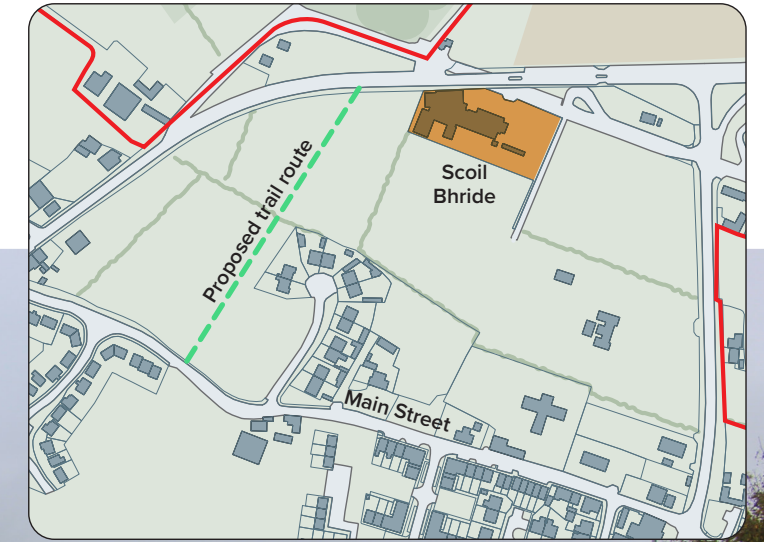


Figure 5.3: Scoil Bhride walkway



# 03

## New Public Amenity

New areas of public amenity space located on lands surrounding the existing playground at Whitehall.

### Key features:

- C. 2.25 hectares of new green space, with dedicated pedestrian and cycle trails, providing active travel choices.
- Connection to the Shankill Forest and Castle
- New space for new recreational activities – potential to include a skate park for older children and outdoor gym equipment.
- Scope to extend the existing playground to incorporate additional play equipment with new public realm interventions such as lighting, seating, and additional landscaping measures.
- Addition of a fountain /small pond / public art to create a focal point within this new space, with a bandstand area to provide shelter for inclement weather.

### Key Actions:

- Kilkenny County Council to explore the potential to acquire additional lands to provide public / community open space.
- Explore potential to create a focal point – signage and / or art sculptures on entry points.
- Careful landscaping interventions could be introduced such as formalised planting, raised planters, picnic benches and high-quality seating.



Figure 5.4: Carpark at Paulstown Health Centre - Landscaping Intervention



Figure 5.5: Create a public park C. 2.25 hectares of new green space along Whitehall.

Masterplan Interventions

# Movement

- 0.4 Road and Footpath Improvements
- 0.5 Cycling and Walking
- 0.6 Rail Halt



# 04

## Road and Footpath Improvements

Feedback from stakeholders and a site visit revealed whilst there are footpaths on either side of the R712 and Main Street, these could be improved.

The introduction of pedestrian crossings and signalised junctions, for example, at the crossroads between Main Street, Goresbridge Road and the R448, has the potential to improve vehicular and pedestrian safety and circulation.

### Key features:

- Any materials should be sympathetic to the rural setting.
- The introduction of raised tables and reduced speed limits during school hours, will help to regulate traffic speeds.
- Clear signage should be employed throughout the town e.g., school warnings, later living etc.
- Liaise with Kilkenny County Council Roads Design Section and Area Engineer to explore the opportunity to widen footpaths where possible in conjunction with the proposed public realm upgrades.
- Combined with public realm improvements and a new rail halt, residents will benefit from improved linkages to An Choill Rua, providing a more permeable environment.
- Examine the feasibility to complete the footpath between the Gowran Road roundabout and the village centre.



Figure 5.6: Narrow Footpaths along the R712.



Figure 5.7: Footpath disappears along An Choill Rua



Figure 5.8: Narrow footpaths along Main Street



Figure 5.9: No Footpath along the R448



# 05

## Cycling and Walking

One of the popular themes which emerged from the stakeholder engagement was a requirement for better walking routes and infrastructure, including the creation of new routes.

In July, 2024, Scoil Bhride, Paulstown was accepted for Round 3 of the Safe Routes to School programme.

An Taisce will arrange to meet with the school and other stakeholders in late 2024 to prepare a delivery plan. Once agreed, the delivery plan and proposed works will be submitted to the NTA for funding. It is anticipated that works will commence in Paulstown as soon as the existing schemes being worked on in Kilkenny city are complete.

**Key features:**

- Introduction of cycle infrastructure along the R448 and R712, with links to the proposed new public open space and Shankill Forest, will encourage active travel choices
- The introduction of new walking spaces will contribute to the health and well-being of residents and visitors.
- New walking and cycling routes will promote permeability throughout the town.
- The Council will work with An Taisce and Scoil Bhride, to prepare a delivery plan and establish proposed works under the Safe Routes to School Programme, to improve traffic and pedestrian movement in this area of Paulstown.



Figure 5.10: Abrupt end of footpath towards the Primary School along the R712



Figure 5.11: Narrow footpath along the R712. No cycle lanes.



Figure 5.12: Walking / cycling spaces



# 06

## Rail Halt

Participants in several groups at the engagement event felt that the town could benefit from the creation of a halt along the railway line.

### Key features:

- Would enhance connectivity between Paulstown and neighbouring towns, with landscaped walkway to the halt, with appropriate lighting.
- Would support sustainable travel choices by public transport and increase visitor potential – c.10–15-minute walk from Main Street.
- A high quality attractive public realm scheme with select small, landscaped areas.
- Building to be made with sympathetic materials given its rural location.



Figure 5.13: Railway along the western boundary of Paulstown.





# 07

## Façade Improvement

Vacancy and dereliction have been highlighted as an issue within the town

The quality and appearance of buildings is important to ensure they contribute positively to the historic streetscape.

### Key features:

- Undertake heritage survey to identify those assets in need of sensitive refurbishment.
- Work with local businesses and property owners to explore options for improvement.
- Ensure any proposed works comply with Heritage Policies and Objectives set out by Kilkenny County Council.
- Support business owners to secure grant funding or implementation.



Figure 5.14: Derelict building on Main Street.



Figure 5.15: Building along Main St.



Figure 5.16: Derelict heritage farmhouse on intersection between St. Enda's terrace and R448.



Figure 5.17: Facades along R712



# 08

## Celebrate Heritage

The town has untapped potential to become a tourist destination, particularly in relation to Shankill Castle and its associated lands and forest.

### Key Actions:

- Explore potential to enhance Shankill Castle's tourism reach.
- Promote an understanding of the town's heritage through online platforms and printed resources in conjunction with existing websites and Paulstown Development Association.



Figure 5.18: Shankill Castle. (Source: Placeholder)



# 09

## Signage and Wayfinding

Several participants at the engagement event highlighted the lack of a distinct identity for Paulstown, on both the approach to the town and within the town.

The introduction of wayfinding signage for visitors, both on foot and car, in conjunction with proposed tourism initiatives to create a sense of place.

### Key features:

- Branded signage at key nodes to the entrance of Paulstown to create a sense of arrival.
- Introduce signage to assist with identification and location of heritage assets.
- Installation of public art with branded signage at the roundabout on the main road from Kilkenny.



Figure 5.19: Road Sign to mark the entrance into Paulstown



Figure 5.20: Sign along the western entrance of Paulstown



Figure 5.21: Community Noticeboard in Paulstown

Masterplan Interventions

# Built Form and Activity

- 10. Community Hall
- 11. Diocese Grounds
- 12. Feasibility – Independent Living Facilities



# 10

## Community Hall

The community hall is located at the GAA Club, which is on the periphery of Paulstown. The proposal to relocate the community hall to the centre of the town will bring the facility into the heart of the town and ensure that all members of the community can access community facilities.

### Key Actions:

- Work with Kilkenny County Council to secure suitable site or building for a new community hall.
- Include provision for remote working with kitchen facilities.
- Opportunity to have CPD events / local courses / further education events, increasing the potential for residents to obtain further educational qualifications.
- Repurpose the existing community hall to provide additional changing facilities to support the local GAA Club or repurpose for additional sporting activities to cater for all age groups.
- Consideration will be given to a business hub in Paulstown, possibly with it being integrated into any new community centre in the town.



Figure 5.22: Paulstown Community Centre

# 11

## Diocese Grounds

The Diocese Grounds present an opportunity to enhance the public amenities and facilities within Paulstown.

### Key Actions:

- Explore opportunities to purchase or rent land to use for community benefits.
- Work with residents to ascertain what additional facilities could be provided.
- Consider proposed new community asset – a local library / post office, or day nursery, as based on feedback, the current creche is oversubscribed.



Figure 5.23: Diocese Grounds to Cemetery

# 12

## Feasibility – Later Living Accommodation

A feasibility study should be carried out to explore the potential to provide later living accommodation on lands south of the R712.

### Key Actions:

- Liase with Kilkenny County Council to ascertain whether funding could be provided to deliver later living accommodation.
- Undertake a feasibility study to assess local provision and future demand.

Masterplan Interventions

# Vitality and Vibrancy

- 13. Programme to Tackle Vacancy and Dereliction
- 14. Broadband
- 15. Visitor Accommodation



# 13

## Programme to Tackle Vacancy and Dereliction

Feedback from the local community revealed that vacancy and dereliction were a significant issue within the town. This issue is also a key priority within the National Town Centre First Policy Framework.

### Key Actions:

- Identifying owners of vacant and derelict properties
- Engaging positively with building owners, landowners to discuss issues in restoring the life of vacant / derelict properties and to develop a plan to reactivate properties with the potential for commercial, heritage and / or community use.
- Explore the potential of various uses for vacant and derelict buildings.
- Liaise with Kilkenny County Council to identify any financial support for restoration works.

# 14

## Broadband

A small number of residents said they would like to see improvements in broadband connections. Improving local connectivity is essential to promote new economic opportunities arising from digital connectivity.

### Key actions:

- Work with residents to survey requirements for upgraded broadband provision.



Figure 5.24: Network construction

# 15

## Visitor Accommodation

Paulstown presently has a limited offer of visitor accommodation. Additional visitor accommodation is proposed to support the town to complement its built heritage, landscape setting and location along the strategic road network.

### Key actions:

- Engage with local stakeholders to understand what level of accommodation could support the local tourism initiatives.
- Undertake a feasibility study to assess local provision of visitor accommodation and future demand for varying types of accommodation.





# 16

## Landscaping

Additional landscaping measures throughout the town in conjunction with other interventions, particularly in the short term, will not only contribute to the biodiversity of the town, but will enhance the overall appearance, making it an attractive destination town.

### Key actions:

- Short-term interventions to include introduction of decorative flower beds and planted pots at key nodes.
- Ensure overgrown hedges and trees are maintained so not to obstruct traffic or become an eyesore.
- Landscaping measures to be introduced during public realm works to ensure coordinated approach and reduce the impact of works on residents.

# 17

## EV Charging

EV charging should be considered in new development proposals going forward.



Figure 5.25: EV Parking Space in Paulstown Applegreen

# 6.0 Implementation

## 6.1 Delivery Action Plan

‘Enabling the Place’ is focused on prioritising investment and improvement opportunities. Kilkenny County Council will use the Action Plan matrix outlined below to help them coordinate their work programme and organise resources.

The majority of projects will require funding of some description to support delivery. The wide range of potential funding sources are reviewed, and the action plan highlights individual funding streams for individual projects.

The Delivery Action Plan strategy will be a tool for the Council to manage and keep under review.

Each of the identified projects in presented in the Plan Delivery Action Plan below. The projects are organised by theme and priority.

Additional funding streams that align with and support the delivery of these actions may arise over time and will be considered by the Council. The final part of the Action Plan links each project back to the objectives under each theme. This highlights how some projects will deliver benefits not only across multiple objectives, but sometimes across multiple themes.

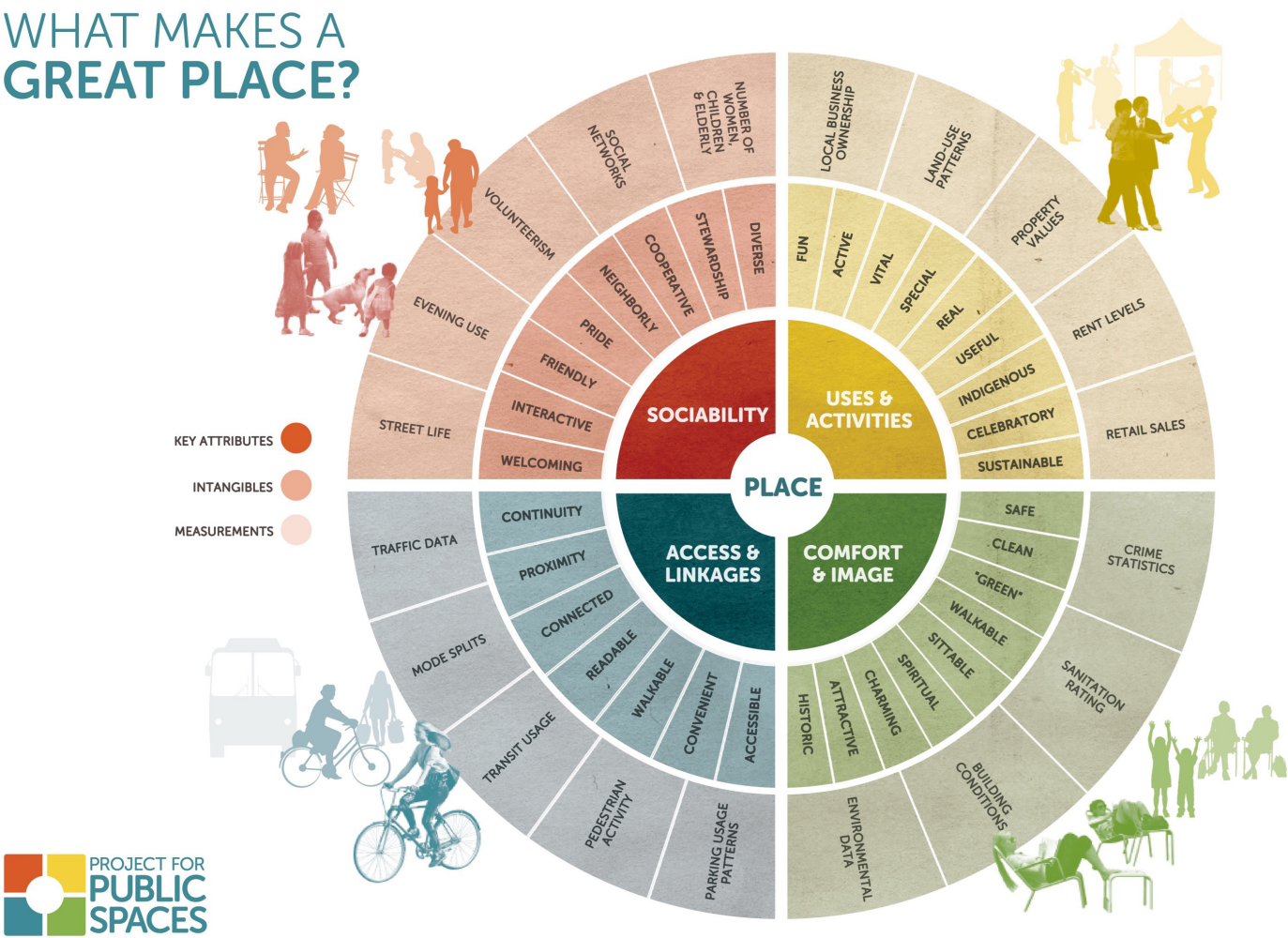


Figure 6.1: Implementation Graphic (Source: Placeholder)



Priority

●○○ Lower priority desirable but not critical  
●●○ Medium priority - an important local project  
●●● High priority - a project of strategic importance to the town

Placemaking Theme	ID	Project	Description	Priority
Streets and Public Spaces	1	Public Realm Enhancements	Preparation of a comprehensive public realm enhancement scheme to provide an attractive Town centre. The scheme will include new level pavements, widened pavements where applicable, street lighting and a series landscaping intervention.	●●●
	2	New Natural Walkway	Creation of a new natural walkway between Main Street and the School, to improve permeability within the town, with connection to the area of new public amenity space and the Shankill Forest, which will support the health and well-being of residents.	●●●
	3	New Public Amenity Space	Creation of a new public amenity space to the rear of the existing playground, with connections to the new natural walkway and Shankill Forest, encouraging new recreational activities and contributing to the health and well-being of residents and potential visitors.	●●●
Movement	4	Rail Halt	Creation of a new rail halt with landscaped pathways providing connection to An Choill Rua and Main Street, linking to the new public open spaces, encouraging, and supporting sustainable active travel choices.	●●●
	5	Road and Footpath Improvements	Install traffic calming measures along with signalised junctions and / or raised tables, with additional pedestrian crossing points and road signage, to support pedestrian safety and promote active travel choices.	●●●
	6	Cycling and Walking	Create a new footpath along the R448 to complete a loop of the town, with cycle infrastructure to be included on main roads, with links to new areas of public amenity spaces and trails in the Shankill Forest. These measures will support the health and well-being of residents.	●●
Heritage and Identity	7	Façade Improvements	Carry out façade improvements utilising government supports and funding.	●●●
	8	Celebrate Heritage	Explore the town's potential to expand and enhance on Shankill Castle's tourism reach, with the inclusion of new Forest trails.	●
	9	Signage and Wayfinding	Create branded signage to establish a town identity and install signage on the town gateway points to create a sense of arrival. Consider inclusion of sculpture at the main roundabout to contribute to the sense of arrival.	●
Built Form and Activity	10	Community Hall	Relocate the existing community centre to the centre of the town, to ensure all residents have access to amenities. Repurpose existing community hall into additional sports facilities to cater for all age groups, or upgrade to additional changing facilities to support the existing GAA Club.	●●●
	11	Diocese Grounds	Explore the potential to purchase these lands or rent, to create additional community facilities such as allotments. Explore and consider proposed new community asset – a local library / post office, or day nursery, as based on feedback, the current creche is oversubscribed.	●●●
	12	Feasibility – independent living facilities	A feasibility should be undertaken to explore the potential to provide later living units, which will benefit from the new rail halt and connections to Main Street.	●
Vitality and Vibrancy	13	Programme to tackle vacancy and dereliction	A key priority under the Town Centre First Policy. Feedback from community engagement revealed this is a priority for residents who live and work in the town.	●●●
	14	Broadband	The installation of Fibre Broadband in the town is essential in promoting new economic opportunities and facilitating remote working.	●●●
	15	Visitor Accommodation	Engage with local stakeholders to understand what level of accommodation could support the local tourism initiatives. Undertake a feasibility study to assess local provision of visitor accommodation and future demand for varying types of accommodation.	●
Sustainability and Climate Resilience	16	Landscaping	Introduce new landscaping throughout the towns to create an attractive and vibrant streetscape. New landscaping will promote biodiversity, contribute to the health and well-being of residents, and ensure Paulstown is an attractive place to live.	●●●
	17	EV Charging	EV charging infrastructure should be considered in any public realm enhancements. Charging points should be installed in car parking areas such as the GAA Club and Community Hall.	●

Table 6.2: Overview of Key Town Centre First Funding Options

# Funding

## Introduction

Town Centre First Policy is supported by a targeted investment programme. This includes the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, a dedicated fund committed by the Government in Project Ireland 2040 and through funding streams within government programmes. This report reviews funding options which may be targeted to support delivery of the plan proposals.

### 1. Key Town Centre First Funding Options

Key funding options identified in the Town Centre First Policy document that can deliver impactful change are as follows:

#### Rural Regeneration and Development Fund

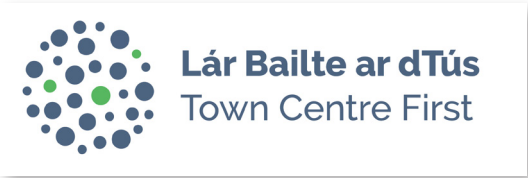
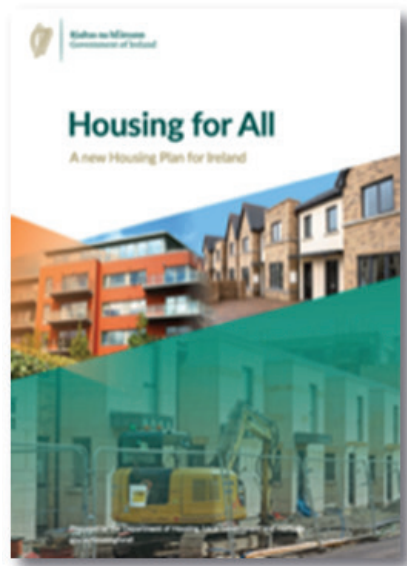
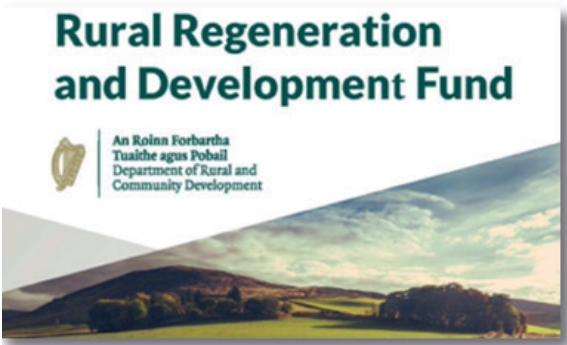
The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) supports the regeneration and development of rural towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000. The fund is administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development, with a commitment of €1 billion in funding up to 2027. Funding is awarded by a competitive bid process. The RRDF supports ambitious investments of scale to deliver town centre regeneration including projects which aim to repurpose derelict, disused or heritage buildings, deliver remote working and enterprise spaces, build or transform libraries, deliver tourism infrastructure and generally support greater activity, footfall, business and residency.

#### Housing for All Crói Cónaithe (Towns) Fund

Housing for All aims to improve Ireland’s housing system and deliver more homes of all types for people with different housing needs. There are two schemes under the Housing for all Crói Cónaithe (Towns) Fund to support housing delivery which are managed and administered by Local Authorities on behalf of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant provides people with a grant to support the refurbishment of vacant properties. Under the Ready to Build Scheme, Local Authorities make serviced sites available at a discounted rate to individuals who want to build their own home.

#### European Regional Development Fund

The European Regional Development Fund 2021–2027 programmes set out an investment strategy for €853 million, of which €396 million is financed by the EU. Funding is managed by Regional Assemblies to ensure alignment with Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and to support Local Authorities in delivering the sustainable regeneration of towns and urban centres. The fund aims to address regional imbalance, sustainable economic development, environmental sustainability and build low carbon and climate resilient communities. Tackling vacancy and dereliction in towns, in support of the TCF approach is a particular emphasis of this fund.





# Funding

## Active Travel Grants Programme

The Active Travel Grants Programme administered by the National Transport Authority supports strategic pedestrian and cyclist routes, access to schools, permeability links, urban greenways, minor public transport improvement projects, dedicated infrastructure schemes such as the Safe Routes to School Programme and behavioural change programmes such as Green Schools. In 2022 the programme allocated €289 million funds to Local Authorities for over 1200 walking and cycling infrastructure projects nationally.

## Town and Village Renewal Scheme

The Town and Village Renewal Scheme provides grant funding to support the economic and social recovery of rural towns with a population of less than 10,000. Applications are submitted to the Department of Rural and Community Development though Local Authorities and the scheme focuses on projects that have a positive impact in terms of place making and town centre regeneration. Projects funded have included the regeneration of banks, courthouses, cinemas and halls for community use, the development of public plazas, town parks, playgrounds, community gardens and dog parks. The scheme also funds projects at pre-development stage and the acquisition of suitable vacant or derelict properties that could be taken into public ownership and converted for community use. It has also provided specific funding to enhance streetscapes and shopfronts under the streetscape enhancement initiative.

## Climate Adaptation/Retrofitting Initiatives

The government’s commitment to climate action is supported by funding to meet 2030 and 2050 climate targets. For example Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland provide sustainable energy grants to help homeowners, business owners, communities and industry reduce energy costs and greenhouse emissions. Local Authorities are funded in undertaking a programme of insulation retrofitting of the least energy efficient social homes. The Regional and Local Road Grant Programme support the maintenance of public roads in towns. The Active Travel Grants programme also provide supports for more sustainable travel modes to local schools, residential areas and places of employment.

## Historic Towns Initiative

The Historic Towns Initiative is a joint undertaking by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the Heritage Council, it aims to promote the heritage-led regeneration of historic town centres. The initiative has two streams of funding: Capital works to repair and enhance the heritage of town through heritage-led regeneration projects that address dereliction and residential vacancy, the conservation of landmark buildings, streetscape and public realm conservation led projects; Funding for heritage-led regeneration plans to determine conservation focused interventions for a town.

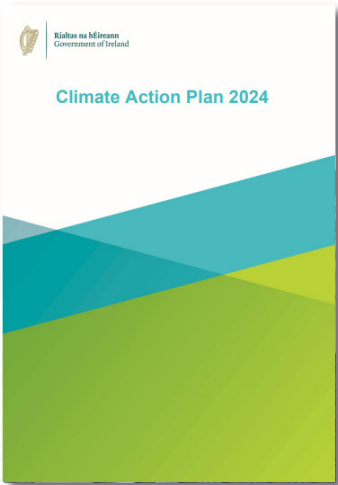


Table 6.1: Overview of Key Town Centre First Funding Options

Fund	Lead	Area of focus	Funding Level	Operation	Fund	Lead	Area of focus	Funding Level	Operation
Rural Regeneration and Development Fund	Department of Rural and Community Development	Vacancy, dereliction, town centre residency, enterprise development	€500,000 minimum for projects. Up to 80% of the total project value. Contributions by applicants	Grant	Town and Village Renewal Scheme	Department of Rural and Community Development	Place making, town centre regeneration	€20,000 to €500,000 under main scheme	Grant, 90% of the total cost of a project, the remaining 10% by Local Authority and/or community and/or Philanthropic contributions
Housing for All Crói Cónaithe (Towns) Fund	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Vacancy, dereliction, housing delivery	€30,000- €50,000 under the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant  Up to €30,000 under the Ready to Build Scheme	Grant  Local Authorities make serviced sites available at a discounted rate				Up to €400,000 under building acquisition measure  €100,000 to each town selected under streetscape enhancement initiative	Grant, 100% of purchase cost  Grant
European Regional Development Fund	Regional Assemblies	Regional imbalance, sustainable regeneration, environmental sustainability, low carbon and climate resilient communities	Determined on a case by case basis	EU funding matched by a set percentage of national funding.					
Active Travel Grants Programme	National Transport Authority	Active travel	Determined under various programmes	Grant	Climate Adaptation/ Retrofitting Initiatives	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, Local Authority, National Transport Authority	Climate adaptation	Determined under various programmes. Up to 100% of project value	Grant
					Historic Towns Initiative	Heritage Council, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Heritage-led regeneration	€150,000 - €250,000 for stream 1 heritage led regeneration projects  Up to €40,000 for heritage-led regeneration plans	Grant, match funding of 20% by Local Authority or owners  Grant, match funding of 20% from Local Authority

Note: Table is based on current programmes as of November 2023. Objectives and funding levels can vary per call for applications.



6.2 Other Finding Supports

There are a wide range of government schemes, many of which are administered at local level, that can provide investment and support the Town Centre First approach. These are advertised as they come available during the year. Key schemes administered or supported by the Local Authority are outlined in **Table 2**.

Local Authority resource allocations from its annual budget can support the plan and the Local Authority Development Contribution Scheme can provide contributions for public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area. Specific state grants to Local Authorities by various government departments for particular services such as for roads or recreation facilities can, subject to availability, support the plan **(Table 2)**.

Work with partners such as the Heritage Council, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, National Transport Authority, Fáilte Ireland, LEADER and initiatives such as Tidy Towns, Pride of Place can also support the delivery of the plan in collaboration with the community **(Appendix 1)**.

Table 6.2: Overview of Other Funding Supports

Fund	Details	Lead
Repair and Leasing Scheme	The Repair and Leasing Scheme provides upfront funding of up to €60,000 per unit (including VAT) for any works necessary to bring privately owned property up to standard and in return the property owner agrees to lease the dwelling to the Local Authority or an Approved Housing Body.	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Buy and Renew Scheme	The Buy and Renew Scheme supports Local Authorities and Approved Housing Bodies in purchasing and renewing housing in need of repair and makes them available for social housing use. It is a complementary initiative to the Repair and Leasing Scheme.	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund	The Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund provides public off-site infrastructure to relieve critical infrastructure blockages. This is to enable the delivery of housing on key development sites and in urban areas of high demand for housing. Funding is provided on a matched funding basis, with the exchequer providing 75% of the cost of the infrastructure and the Local Authority providing the other 25%.	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Serviced Sites Fund	The Serviced Sites Fund provides key facilitating infrastructure on public lands to support the delivery of affordable homes to purchase or rent.	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Community Enhancement Programme	The Community Enhancement Programme provides small grants to community groups to enhance facilities in disadvantaged areas. It is managed by the Local Community Development Committee.	Department of Rural and Community Development

Fund	Details	Lead
Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme	The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme provides funding to tackle poverty and social exclusion through local engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. It is co-funded by the government and European Social Fund Plus and managed by the Local Community Development Committee.	Department of Rural and Community Development
Outdoor Seating and Accessories for Tourism and Hospitality Business Scheme	This scheme provided a level of financial support to tourism and hospitality businesses to purchase or upgrade equipment to provide additional outdoor seating in 2021.	Fáilte Ireland
Regional Festival and Event Fund	The Regional Festival and Event Fund supports festivals and participative events. The events must help to drive domestic and international tourism arrivals, win bed nights, stimulate local economic activity, and help to improve the visitor experience. The fund has qualifying conditions and is evaluated on a competitive basis.	Fáilte Ireland
Destination Towns	The Destination Towns initiative seeks to develop the tourism potential of towns and to create a sense of place in towns, attracting visitors to the area and helping to provide the necessary infrastructure to support regional growth in the tourism industry. Fáilte Ireland's Development Guidelines for Tourism Destination Towns provides a practical aid to guide the development of a destination town.	Fáilte Ireland
Community Centre Investment Fund	This fund supports community groups to upgrade and develop their community centre facilities. The scheme is administered directly by the Department of Rural and Community Development. Grants were available under 3 categories in 2022: Small scale projects/improvements to facilities €10,000 to €25,000; Larger scale projects €25,001 to €100,000; Major projects €100,001 to €300,000. A minimum contribution of 5% of the total project costs was required from applicants own funds for category 2 and 3.	Department of Rural and Community Development

Fund	Details	Lead
Sports Partnership	Funding provided through Sports Partnership includes for the provision of sports equipment such as kits for school children. In 2023, €10,365,000 was allocated to Local Sport Partnerships nationally.	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
Arts Programme	The Arts Office sets out a programme for funding, developing and promoting the arts in County Kilkenny. Opportunities for funding arise throughout the year, as government departments offer funding schemes.	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media  Arts Council
Creative Ireland Projects	Creativity in the Community projects enable local community engagement with creativity to support individual and community well-being, social cohesion, and economic development. Place-making is central to the initiative. Grants range between €500 to €2,000 under the 2023 scheme.	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media  Creative Ireland
Built Heritage Investment Scheme	The Built Heritage Investment Scheme assists owners of heritage structures, including those on the Record of Protected Structures and in Architectural Conservation Areas, to conserve and repair historic structures by providing match-funded grants. The 2023 scheme awarded up to €15,000 for a standard project and up to €20,000 for a thatched structure project.	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Historic Structures Fund	The Historic Structures Fund aims to conserve and enhance heritage structures and historic buildings, in both private and public ownership, for the benefit of communities and the public. Grants in 2023 were offered under three streams. Stream 1 offered grants from €15,000 up to €50,000, with a maximum of 80% awarded relative to eligible costs; Stream 2 offered grants from €50,000 up to €200,000 for larger enhancement, refurbishment or reuse projects, with a maximum of 50% awarded relative to eligible costs. Stream 3 offered grants of between €5,000 to €10,000 to support conservation repairs and small capital works to vernacular structures.	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage



Fund	Details	Lead
Heritage Council Community Grant Scheme	Local Authorities support and facilitate community groups in their applications to the Heritage Council Community Grant Scheme. The aim of the scheme is to support capital projects that improve access and inclusion to heritage sites; that apply good heritage practice to the management of places, collections, or objects (including buildings). The scheme also supports the purchase of essential equipment. This scheme is intended to enable communities and heritage non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to continue their work or to start new initiatives. The Heritage Council allocated in the region of €1.5 million to the 2023 scheme.	Heritage Council
Climate Action and Retrofitting Initiatives	Climate Action and Retrofitting Initiatives includes the target to upgrade 500,000 homes to a Building Energy Rating of B2 / cost optimal equivalent or carbon equivalent by 2030. Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland provide grants to help upgrade homes and Local Authorities are undertaking programmes to retrofit least energy efficient social homes.	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland  Local Authority
Biodiversity Action Plan Grant Scheme	This scheme to Local Authorities supports biodiversity projects and the implementation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans that align with actions under the National Biodiversity Action Plan. €3m was made available to the 2023 scheme nationally.	National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Community Monuments Fund	The Community Monuments Fund aims to protect and promote archaeological heritage, supporting community development, traditional skills, jobs, tourism, regional and rural development. €6m was made available for the 2023 fund nationally.	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Sustainable Mobility Investment Programme	The Sustainable Mobility Investment Programme includes support for the rapid roll out of new and improved active travel infrastructure in towns and villages.	Department of Transport
Development Contribution Scheme	The Local Authority Development Contribution Scheme enables contributions to be levied on new development and provides funding towards capital work programmes on a range of services, including roads, amenity, community, recreation and parking.	Local Authority

Fund	Details	Lead
Local Enterprise Office	The Local Enterprise Office provides training, mentoring programmes and a range of financial supports designed to assist with the establishment and/or growth of businesses including the LEO Client Stimulus Fund, LEAN Micro, feasibility grants and business expansion grants.	Department of Rural and Community Development  Enterprise Ireland
Social Enterprise Capital Grants Scheme	The Social Enterprise Capital Grants Scheme benefits smaller or start-up social enterprises which do not necessarily have the capacity to compete for larger grants, but which nonetheless have a need for upgraded/additional equipment to help them to deliver their services. It is managed by the Local Community Development Committee. In 2022 approximately €30,000 was awarded to social enterprises.	Department of Rural and Community Development

Fund	Details	Lead
Heart of the Community Fund 2023	The Heart of the Community Fund is for not-for-profit organisations delivering vital services/support that promote and support peace, culture, education and community development. Grants between €5,000 and €25,000 were available in 2023. The fund also provides organisational investment grants.	The Ireland Funds
Community Water Development Fund	The Community Water Development Fund is open to community and voluntary groups to assist in the protection and management of water quality. Examples of projects funded include feasibility studies, surveys and plans, biodiversity signage, water conservation measures, invasive species control, riparian management and planting, training workshops and citizen science initiatives. The fund is administered by LAWPRO on behalf of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. €500,000 was available under the 2023 fund.	Local Authority Waters Programme
Play and Recreation Funding Scheme	The Play and Recreation Funding Scheme supports the refurbishment of existing play and recreation facilities and new play and recreation facilities. Under the 2023 scheme Local Authorities could nominate one project for funding and funding was capped at €18,000 per project. The award of funding was contingent on the Local Authority match funding at least 25% of the amount provided by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Fund	Details
Rural Development Programme (LEADER)	The Rural Development Programme, widely known as LEADER, provides capital funding for rural development and job creation, with a focus on climate change and sustainability of the rural environment. The programme applies to designated LEADER areas.
Dormant Accounts Fund	The Dormant Accounts Fund can support the development of services to support the personal and social development of persons who are economically or socially disadvantaged; the educational development of persons who are educationally disadvantaged; persons with a disability.
Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways	Funding under this strategy to Local Authorities and state agencies aims to integrate Greenways into town centres by ensuring funded projects bring access from a Greenway to places of education, employment and entertainment in town centres.
Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme	The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme supports the provision of outdoor recreation infrastructure in the countryside that contributes to healthy active lifestyles and the economic and tourism potential of the area for both local communities and tourist visitors alike. In particular, the scheme provides funding for trails, cycleways, greenways, blueways, bridleways, as well as outdoor amenities located near rivers, lakes and beaches. The scheme is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development in partnership with Fáilte Ireland. Approximately €15 million was available under the 2022 scheme, with funding provided under four categories based on the size of the investment requirement.
Work with Fáilte Ireland	As the National Tourism Development Authority, Fáilte Ireland’s role is to assist the long-term sustainable growth of tourism and to help develop destinations. It also provides consumer and buyer insights, mentoring, business initiatives and training programmes and buyer platforms to help tourism businesses innovate and grow.
Tidy Towns	The Local Authority works with community groups and Tidy Towns to enhance the environment and make it a safe, clean and greener place, facilitating knowledge sharing, expertise led insights and coordinates actions to support Tidy Towns groups.



## 6.3: Environmental Assessments

### Appropriate Assessment

Under Council Directive 92/43/EEC (The Habitats Directive), where it cannot be excluded that a project or plan, either alone or in-combination with other projects and plans, would have a significant effect on a European Site, the same shall be subject to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. The Masterplan is not directly connected with, or is necessary for, the management of any European Site, and consequently was subject to the Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening process.

The findings of the AA Screening were presented following the European Commission's Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2001) and Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018) as well as the Department of the Environment's Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2010).

It was considered that the Paulstown Masterplan will not give rise to any potential for significant effects on European Sites, primarily due to its consistency with the policy objectives and environmental protective objectives contained within the Kilkenny County Development Plan 2021-2027, and associated assessments, including a full Appropriate Assessment. Therefore, a full Appropriate Assessment for the Masterplan is not required.

All future projects and developments arising from the implementation of the Masterplan will be subject to the Appropriate Assessment process to ensure they will not adversely affect the integrity of these European Sites.

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report for the Masterplan was prepared. The Screening Report had due regard to the criteria contained within Schedule 2A Criteria for determining whether a plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The SEA Applicability Assessment was undertaken in consideration of the findings contained within the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report.

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