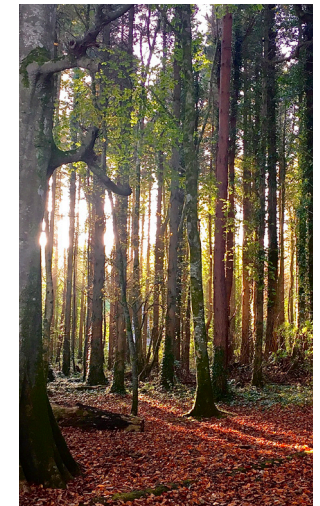
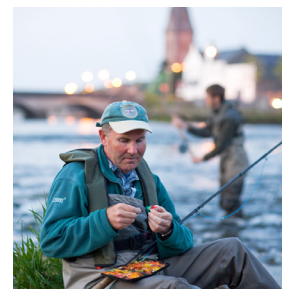
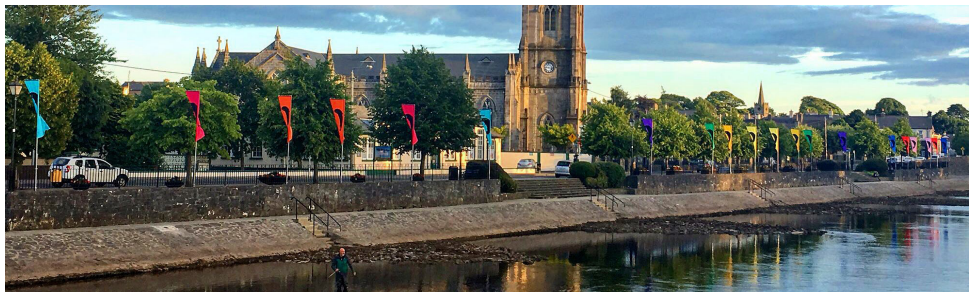




BALLINA

COLLABORATIVE Town Centre HEALTH CHECK

2020



RGDATA
LOCAL SHOPS - LOCAL COMMUNITIES

An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithé agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development

**Ballina
Chamber**
Advancing business together

GMIT
INSTITIÚD TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA NA GAILLIMHE-MAIGH EÓ
GALWAY - MAYO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

SALMON CAPITAL OF IRELAND
BALLINA

MAYO.IE

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council

An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

REDC

**ATM
Purple
Flag**



Top:

View of Ballina and the River Moy, image courtesy of *Western People* (Archives)

Bottom left:

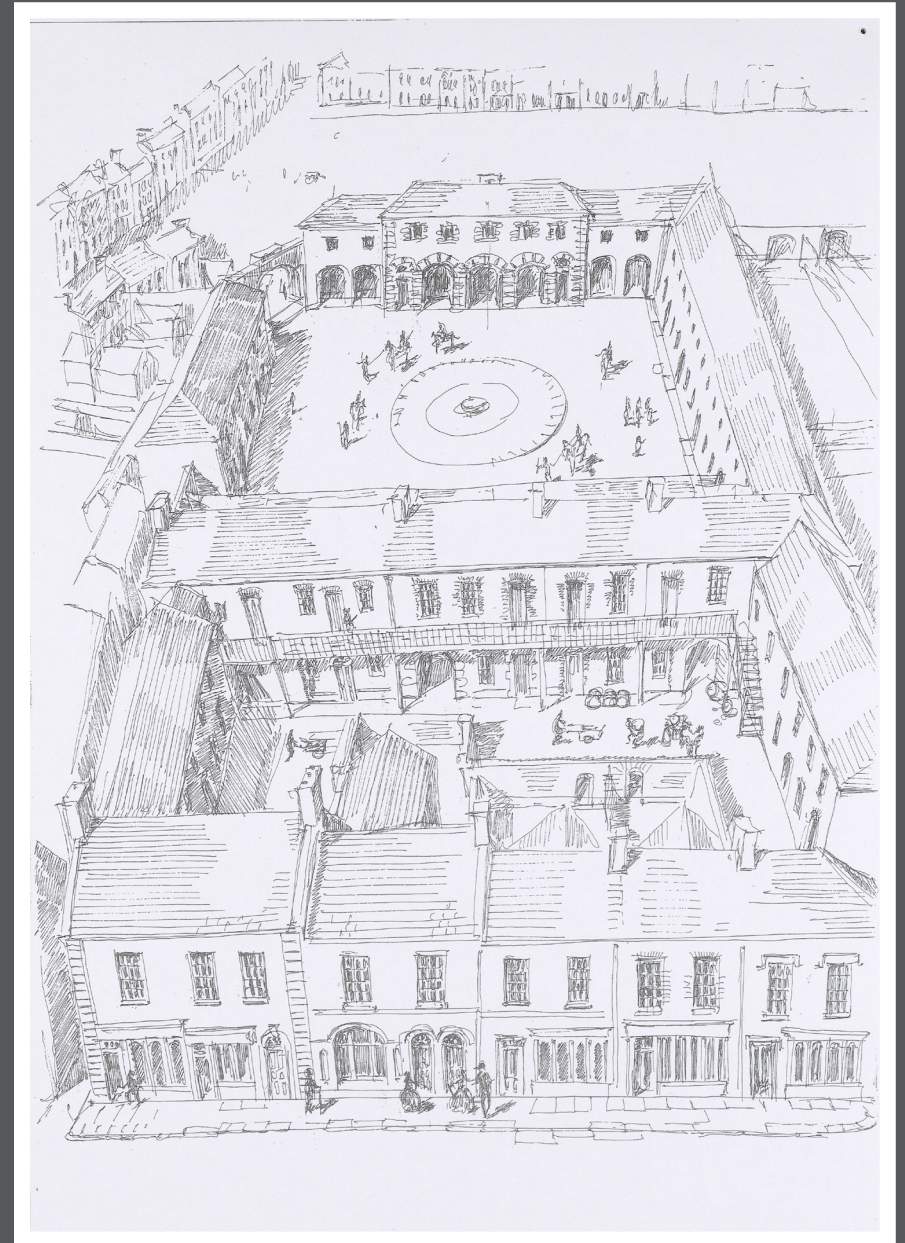
Knox Street Lower, Ballina, image courtesy of *Western People* (Archives)

Bottom right:

Aerial view of Ballina

Right:

Ballina Barracks, drawing by Jeremy Williams, Jeremy Williams Collection, Irish Architectural Archive



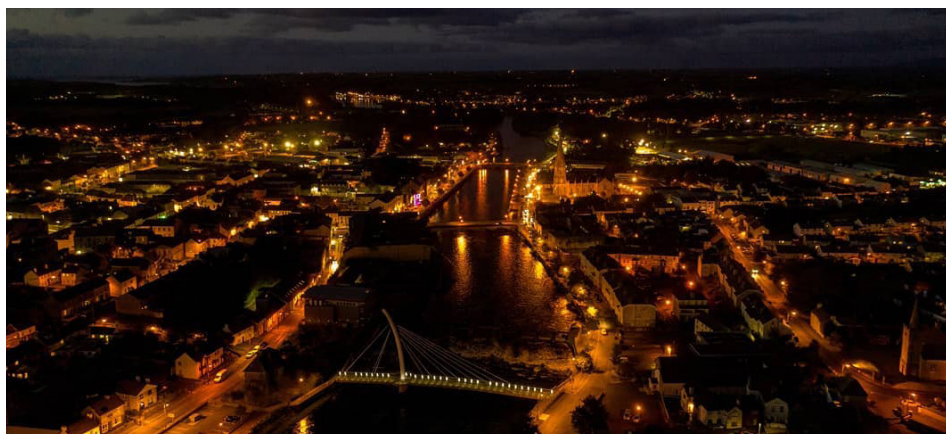
Ballina Collaborative Town Centre Health Check

Introduction

Ballina (Béal an Átha) is located at the mouth of the River Moy. The current layout of the streets was designed by Lord Tyrawley in 1723, on an older settlement. The town soon became an important trading centre. Ballina has been designated the salmon capital of Ireland, and is world renowned for its famous angling, particularly on the Ridge Pool of the River Moy. Today, Ballina has 10,200 inhabitants, and is the largest town in north Mayo. A key stop on the Wild Atlantic Way, Ballina has a rich heritage with the ruins of the Augustinian Abbey, St Muredach's Cathedral, the Jackie Clarke Collection, the Mary Robinson Centre and the annual Ballina Salmon Festival.

Aim of Report

This report summarises the key findings of the data collected through the 15-step process developed as part of the Collaborative Town Centre Health Check (CTCHC) Training Programme developed by the Heritage Council and its partners.



The findings of the CTCHC report will inform plans and strategies in relation to the following:

- Arts, Heritage and Culture
- Climate Change Adaptation
- Commerce/eCommerce and Enterprise
- Cultural Tourism, e.g. music, food, etc
- Living in the Town Centre
- Public Realm, e.g. historic streetscapes, parks and public spaces
- Renewable Energy/Energy Harvesting
- Strategic Planning and Placemaking

Process

Representatives from Mayo County Council, the Heritage Council, Ballina Chamber of Commerce and Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) have engaged in a collaborative programme to achieve the goals set out by the National Collaborative Town Centre Health Check 15-step assessment process.



Launch of the Ballina Town Centre Consumer Survey. Left to right: Ali Harvey, Deirdre Cunningham, Minister Michael Ring, Virginia Teehan and Peter Hynes

This report presents the results of this analysis of Ballina Town Centre with regard to:

- Land use in the historic town centre
- Consumers' opinions and attitudes
- Business owners' attitudes towards the town centre
- Footfall in the historic town centre
- Movement and accessibility

Survey Methodology

The vitality and vibrancy of our historic town centres is challenged by new forms of consumption and travel but data is lacking on these new trends. To address this lack of data, this report summarises an extensive analysis of Ballina Town Centre, providing baseline data. These key findings will inform policies and actions to help build a network of sustainable and future-proof towns in Ireland.

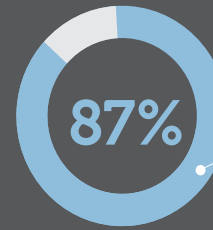
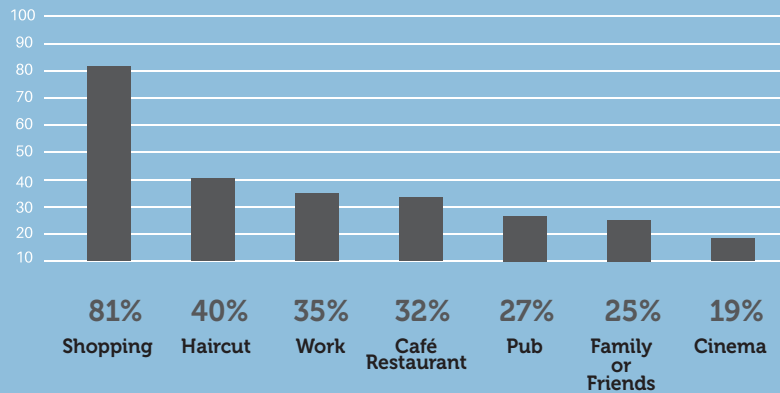
The area surveyed covers the centre of Ballina, including Pearse Street and Tone Street, and is delimited by Kevin Barry Street and Teeling Street to the west, Humbert Street and Dillon Terrace to the north,

Cathedral Close and Plunkett Road to the east and James Road to the south. A footfall survey was conducted in November 2016 by students from GMIT and 408 questionnaires were then administered by Red C as part of the consumer survey in October/November 2018. The consumer survey questionnaire was based on previous CTCHC surveys in Ireland, allowing for the integration of data under the CTCHC programme. A land use survey was conducted in June 2019 by Dr Luke Kelleher from UCD and the results were classified using the GOAD land use classification and the associated colour code developed by the Heritage Council. The business survey was administered in February/March 2020 just before businesses closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of the survey reflect the uncertainty around business trading conditions in the first half of 2020.

Consumers' Opinions of Ballina Town Centre

Throughout this section of the report, the answers to a number of questions asked in the RED C survey may add to more than 100%. This is because these were multi-code questions, meaning respondents were able to select more than one answer.

Main reason for visiting Ballina Town Centre

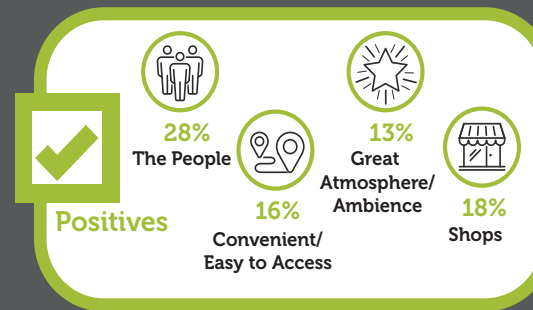


Visit Ballina Town Centre at least once a week

There is little retail leakage out of Ballina to the competing towns of Sligo, Castlebar, Dublin and Galway, which are generally visited less than once a month

Thoughts about Ballina Town Centre

What do people like about Ballina Town Centre?



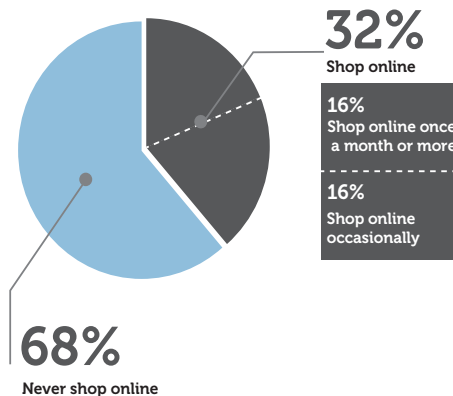
What do people dislike about Ballina Town Centre?



Favourite online stores

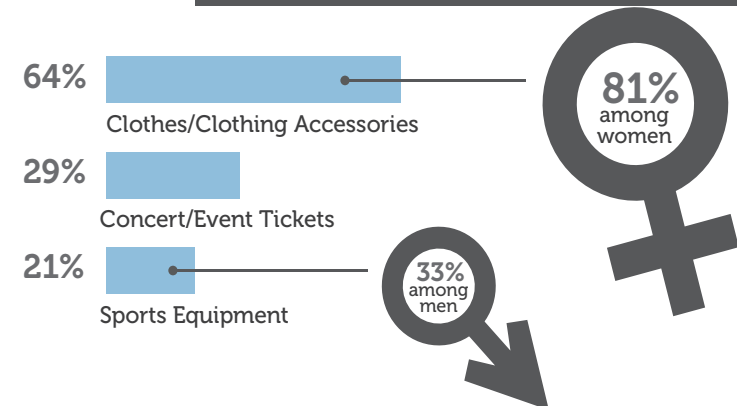


The selection of shops and goods is the primary reason for shopping online.



Clothes account for most of online shopping

Of those who buy clothes online, 68% do so for at least half of their purchases



Consumers' Opinions of Ballina Town Centre cont'd

Reasons why people shop in Ballina Town Centre

People shop in Ballina out of habit, for the range of shops but also to support local businesses

73% Have always shopped there

70% Selection of shops/range of shops

58% Quality of a shop

28% Like to support local businesses

Supermarkets are by far the most visited shops

57% of customers shopped in supermarkets during their visit in the town centre



On average, people have been to 3 Ballina events in the last year.



2 in 3 had been to the Ballina Salmon Festival and March Madness (St Patrick's Weekend)



Nearly half of the consumers would appreciate being able to shop later on Friday nights

| | | |
|-----|----------|--------------|
| 10% | Thursday | 6:00-9:00pm |
| 24% | Sunday | 12:00-6:00pm |
| 24% | None | |
| 42% | Friday | 6:00-9:00pm |

85%

of consumers had paid for car parking



76% of consumers prefer to park in a surface car park.

Customers were asked to rank key aspects of Ballina Town Centre. The feeling of safety and security in the town during the day, as well as the café and restaurant choice and quality ranked highly.

| | |
|--|-----|
| Feeling of safety and security during the day | 82% |
| Café/restaurant choice | 81% |
| Café/restaurant quality | 81% |
| Standard of service in shops | 79% |
| Value for money of cafés/restaurants | 78% |
| Feeling of safety and security at night | 77% |
| General attractiveness of the town centre | 76% |
| Pavement cleanliness | 75% |
| General feeling of vibrancy | 74% |
| Quality of shops | 74% |
| Variety of goods available in shops | 74% |
| Range of events | 73% |
| Value for money of shops | 72% |
| Variety/range of shops | 72% |
| Pavement quality | 71% |
| Attractions in the town centre other than shopping | 68% |
| General ease of getting around | 67% |
| Parks and green space | 63% |
| Seating and areas to congregate | 55% |
| Parking | 50% |
| Traffic flow | 49% |

Consumers would like to see more events taking place in Ballina Town Centre



54%

Christmas events



52%

Music events



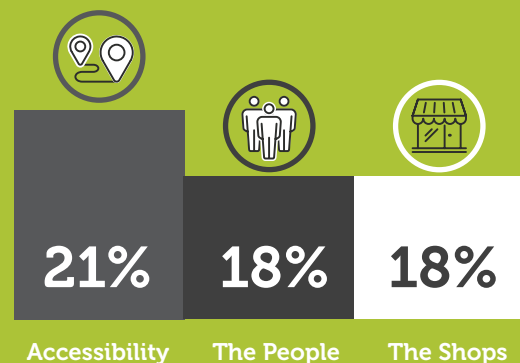
43%

Beer festival/
Oktoberfest

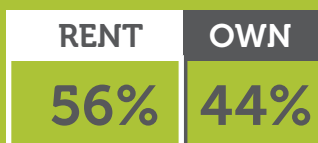
Business Owners' Opinions of Ballina Town Centre

Castlebar and Sligo are seen as the primary competition for Ballina.

Main strengths of Ballina Town Centre



Less than half the businesses own their premises



Two main improvements were suggested by business owners

- 29% Address vacant buildings
- 19% Improve traffic flow



57% of businesses had invested in refurbishment in the last 5 years and 48% had a refurbishment planned.



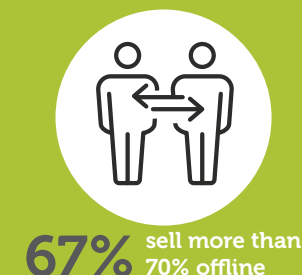
Pre-COVID-19 half of business owners had positive trading expectations:

49%
expected improvement

24%
expected decline

27%
expected no change

A large proportion of businesses are present online and on social media



Pre-COVID-19, 62% saw music events as a great way to increase the number of visitors to the town centre

78% were willing to help organise events.



Footfall in Ballina Town Centre

A footfall survey was conducted in five locations in the town centre, at various time intervals, on November 4th and 5th, 2016.

| | TIME | Humber Street | Tone Street | Tolan Street | Emmet Street | O'Rahilly Street | HOURLY TOTAL |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| 4th NOVEMBER | 11-12 | 104 | 672 | 500 | 96 | 340 | 1712 |
| | 13-14 | 168 | 1916 | 924 | 112 | 568 | 3688 |
| | 15-16 | 88 | 1204 | 420 | 76 | 148 | 1936 |
| | 16-17 | 208 | 1024 | 648 | 80 | 444 | 2404 |
| | TOTAL FRIDAY | 568 | 4816 | 2492 | 364 | 1500 | 9740 |
| 5th NOVEMBER | 11-12 | 72 | 460 | 400 | 52 | 268 | 1252 |
| | 13-14 | 100 | 756 | 688 | 88 | 348 | 1980 |
| | 15-16 | 100 | 756 | 1040 | 152 | 284 | 2332 |
| | 16-17 | 44 | 644 | 468 | 92 | 324 | 1572 |
| | TOTAL SATURDAY | 316 | 2616 | 2596 | 384 | 1224 | 7136 |

Key Findings

- Friday is busier than Saturday
- Tone Street is the busiest street on both days
- Footfall decreases after 4.00pm on Saturdays

Pearse Street

Mayo County Council installed an automatic footfall counter on Pearse Street and data was collected for the period July to November 2016. 20% of the weekly footfall happens on Fridays

Annual Salmon Festival

- 200,000 visitors in one week
- 48,000 people in the town centre on the busiest day
- 9,248 footfall on Pearse Street during the busiest day of the festival



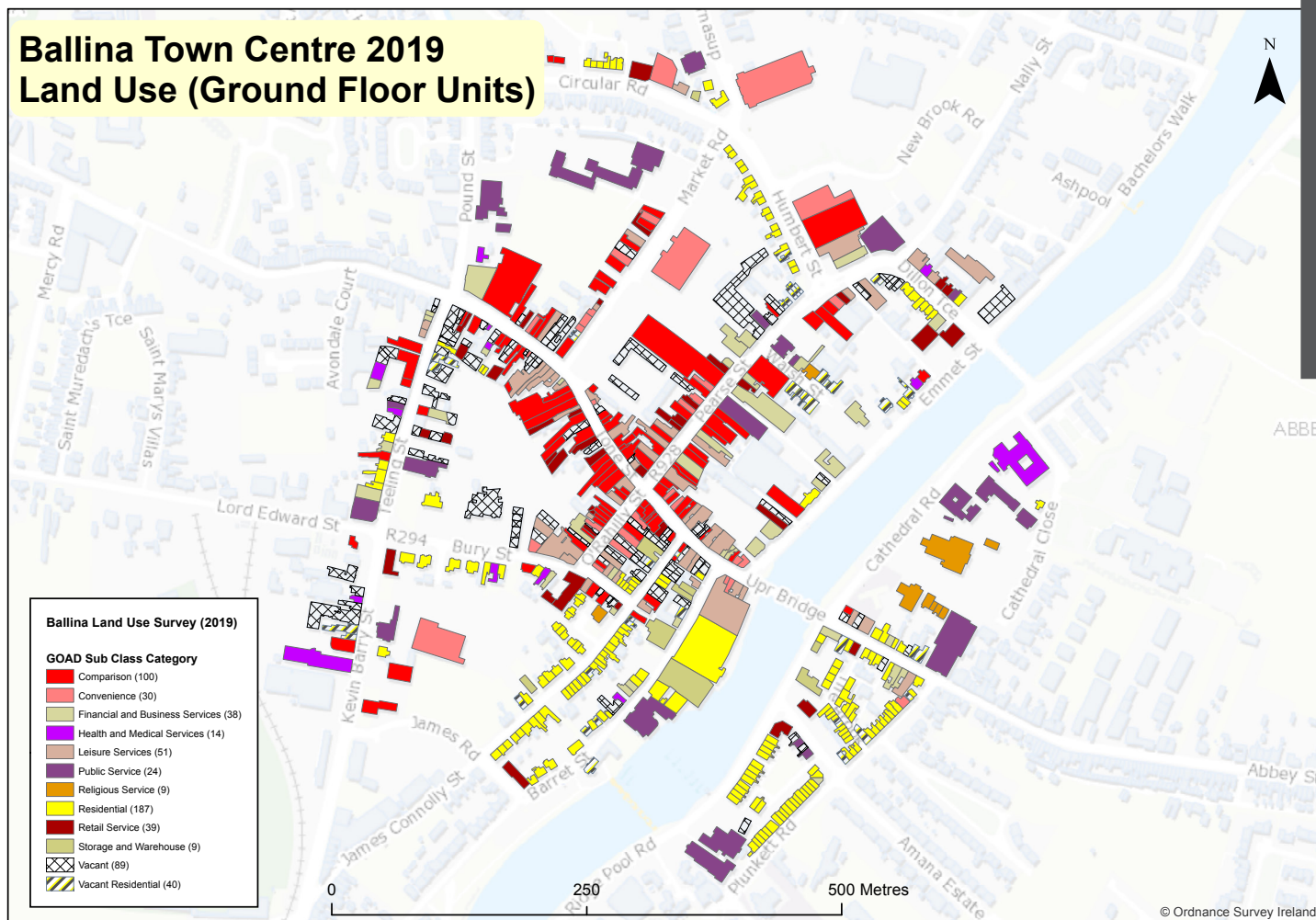
Survey of Land Use in Ballina Town Centre

A land use survey of Ballina Town Centre was conducted in 2016, and updated in July 2019. The map shows the land use of Ballina Town Centre using the GOAD classification and the colour coding developed by the Heritage Council CTCHC programme, in collaboration with Kerry County Council.

80% occupancy rate
19% retail vacancy
20% complete vacancy
27% of surveyed units were classified as retail

Breakdown of activities in Ballina Town Centre

30% Residential
27% Retail
20% Vacant
8% Leisure Services
6% Financial and Business Services
4% Public Service
2% Health and Medical Services
1% Religious Service
1% Storage and Warehouse



Key Considerations and Opportunities

Ireland's Programme for Government and the CTCHC Programme

The CTCHC programme has been pushed forward as one of the cornerstones of the new Programme for Government: Our Shared Future, published in June 2020. Under the mission of Improving Quality of Life, the Town Centre First initiative will use the CTCHC as a framework to gather data and inform actions throughout the country. As part of the CTCHC programme, Ballina Town Centre will benefit from enhanced national focus and support in its revitalisation.

In 2019, Mayo County Council secured an investment of €3.2 million from the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund for the transformation of Ballina's 1740s military barracks into a digital hub and innovation quarter. 'Ballina 2023' is a year-long celebration planned to mark the 300th anniversary of the official recognition of Ballina as a town. In 2020, Ballina won the Begin Together Award in the population category 7,000-14,000, and it aims to become Ireland's Greenest Town by 2025. Along with the forthcoming publication of a Public Realm Plan and a Ballina Economic and Spatial Plan by Mayo County Council, these projects will promote Ballina as a vibrant centre for Mayo, north and south, and will contribute to the economic and social innovation and sustainability of the town.

Attracting Ballina's Young Population

Ballina's population is younger than the national average, with a growing 25-35 age cohort. Yet, consumers cite a lack of shops in the town centre dedicated to this age group, particularly in terms of clothing. Clothing accounts for 70% of online shopping by 18-34-year-olds. Therefore, there is strong potential for Ballina Town Centre to increase its appeal to this age group by attracting new clothes shops dedicated to the 18-34 age cohort.

Vacant Properties

20% of units in Ballina town centre are empty, which tends to diminish the public realm quality and vitality of the town centre. However, a Vacancy and Dereliction Task Force has been set up to address the issue of vacancy.

Regional Development

The Regional and Economic Strategy (RSES) adopted in January 2020 by the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) identifies Ballina as a Key Town, with the aim of delivering significant compact growth. The consolidation of Ballina's vibrant town centre will be key in achieving this goal. Ballina is an independent town, sole driver of its economic success, with a strong enterprise-base in its town centre. The RSES seeks to enhance that business base by improving the area around Market Square, the Military Barracks and the riverside of the Moy, creating the right conditions for businesses to thrive.

The team will identify vacant properties and propose temporary or permanent uses, in accordance with the retail needs of the town centre.

Heritage Assets - Built, Cultural and Natural

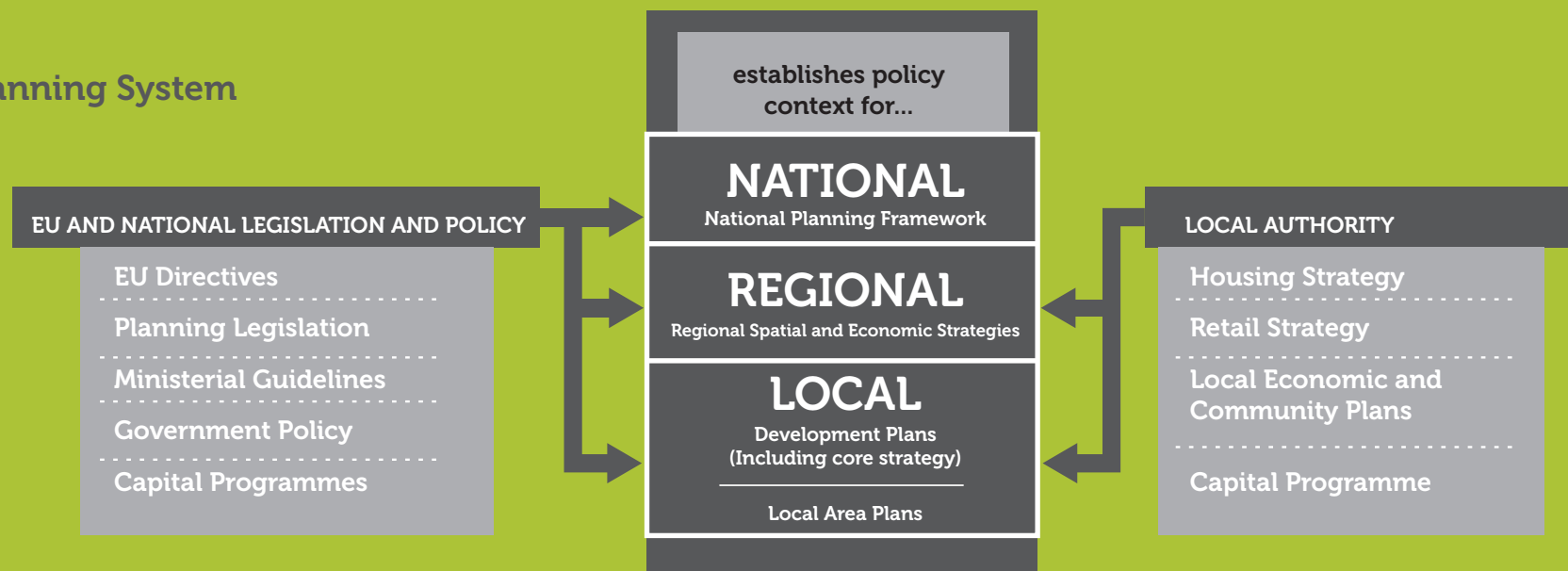
Ballina can take pride in its rich natural, built and cultural heritage. Current projects aim to build on this heritage, and include creating a greenway alongside the River Moy estuary and the transformation of Mary Robinson's childhood home into The Mary Robinson Centre, a visitor centre and academic research facility, focused on human rights and women's leadership. Conservation works to several architecturally significant buildings are being undertaken under the

Historic Towns Initiative (HTI). A joint programme of the Heritage Council and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the HTI aims to promote heritage-led regeneration.



Artist's impression of the new Mary Robinson Centre

Irish Planning System



Stakeholders and Project Team

The Ballina CTCHC project team is a partnership between the Heritage Council and local stakeholders.

A number of partners came together in 2016 to form the Ballina CTCHC Project Team. The members of the project steering group:

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Carmel Austin | Mayo County Council |
| Deirdre Cunningham | Mayo County Council |
| Dette Cunningham | Mayo County Council |
| Alan DiLucia | Mayo County Council |
| Mags Downey-Martin | Ballina Chamber of Commerce |
| Ali Harvey | The Heritage Council |
| Michael Hogan | Ballina Tidy Towns |
| Kevin O'Callaghan | Galway - Mayo Institute of Technology |

Thanks to BA (Hons) Outdoor Education and Heritage students from GMT (Mayo Campus); Tom Gilligan, Marie Crowley, Kevin Keegan, Orla Bourke (Ballina Municipal District), John McMyler and Paula Connaughton, Mayo County Council; Luke Kelleher, UCD; and Ballina Tidy Towns Committee

If you would like to get involved in the renewal of Ballina Town Centre, please contact:

Mayo County Council

The Architects Department, Mayo County Council
Email: architectssection@mayococo.ie
Tel: 094 906 4590/4588

Ballina Chamber of Commerce

Mags Downey Martin, Office Manager, Ballina Chamber of Commerce and Ballina Tourist Office
Email: chamber@ballina.ie

For information on the Collaborative Town Centre Health Check (CTCHC) Training Programme, please contact:

Ali Harvey, MIPI, The Heritage Council
Email: aharvey@heritagecouncil.ie
Tel: +353 87 419 3458

The Heritage Council

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web | www.heritagecouncil.ie

Mayo County Council

Aras an Chontae, Castlebar, Co. Mayo

tel | 094 9064000

web | www.mayo.ie

Ballina Chamber of Commerce

Pearse Street, Ballina, Co. Mayo

tel | 096 72800

web | www.ballina.ie



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#towncentresfirst

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