

Revitalising Ireland's Towns

A collaborative initiative by



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Gnóthaí Réigiúnacha, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta
Department of Arts, Heritage,
Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs



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Department of Housing, Planning,
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National 'Pilot' Town Centre Health Check (TCHC) Training Programme

'Pilot' Training Workshop No.1 (1 of 2), 29th September 2016, Naas Town Hall

NAAS WORKSHOP FEEDBACK REPORT

OCTOBER 2016



In partnership with



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Report written by Ali Harvey

Photo credits: Naas TCHC Workshop photographs by Trevor Keppel (Heritage Council) and Eoghan Lynch (Offaly County Council).

1. Introduction to Revitalising Ireland's Towns – 'Pilot' Town Centre Health Check (TCHC) Training Programme 2016–2017

The Heritage Council of Ireland, RGDATA and the Retail Consultation Forum, in collaboration with the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DoHPLG), the Irish Planning Institute (IPI), the Irish Landscape Institute (ILI), the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) and third-level institutes (north and south), are developing a 'pilot' trans-disciplinary National Town Centre Health Check (TCHC) Training Programme consisting of two workshops in September 2016 and February 2017 with surveys/mentoring period taking place during October–December 2016. The training will support the creation of robust Town Centre Health Checks for 10 no. Irish towns, which are linked to the statutory planning system, through the review of county development plans (CDPs) and Local Area Plans (LAPs).

This innovative national 'Towns' capacity-building programme is designed by, and for, Local Authorities, town centre businesses and local citizens/community groups, with close mentoring support from government departments and agencies, and professional practitioners and academics who are experienced in town centre revitalisation, urban design, and planning, heritage and environmental management in Ireland and elsewhere. There are four key pillars to the collaborative 'pilot' Town Centre Health Check training programme:

- 1. Local Authorities;**
- 2. Chambers of Commerce;**
- 3. Local Civic Groups; and**
- 4. Third Level Institutes – north and south.**

'Pilot' Aims and Objectives

A key aim of the 'pilot' TCHC Training Programme is to raise awareness, understanding and appreciation of the critical role that our historic town centres play and the wide-ranging impacts that their *vitality*, *vibrancy* and *viability* have on overall socio-economic, environmental and cultural growth and development, and on quality of life for citizens and visitors alike.

Town Centre Health Checks (TCHCs) are commonly undertaken in many EU countries on an annual basis, for example through the Association of Town and City Management in the UK (including Northern Ireland). This collaborative training programme will develop an innovative town centre-led commercial, cultural heritage and tourism baseline, which will be driven forward by all the project partners. It is envisaged that this 'pilot' training programme will be recognised internationally as a best practice collaborative model for town centre management and revitalisation.

Collaborative training through workshops, surveys and on-going professional/academic mentoring will build upon Town Centre Health Check (TCHC) projects already undertaken by the Heritage Council and Partners including Fingal County Council/Balbriggan Chamber of Commerce in Balbriggan in 2010 and Clare County Council/Kilrush Tidy Towns, in Kilrush in 2012¹. The workshops aim to identify current 'gaps' in undertaking TCHCs in Ireland, in order to inform the design and implementation of a new collaborative TCHC National Investment Programme to support various government policy initiatives including the implementation of the *National Landscape Strategy (NLS)* and the preparation and implementation of the *National Planning Framework (NPF)*. The pilot also supports the Heritage Council's *Policy Proposals for Ireland's Towns* (2015²). Additional key aims of the TCHC training programme are to establish the following:

- *An All-island Town Centre Management Network; and*
- *A National Town Centre Management Policy Research Programme.*

A detailed *Project Charter*, which was prepared by the Heritage Council in partnership with RGDATA and agreed by all Project Partners, is also available, if required. Based on discussions which took place between the Heritage Council and Local Authorities during the summer of 2016, the 10 no. towns meeting the criteria set out in the approved Project Charter endorsed by all partners involved (e.g. LAP review pending), and which are taking part in the 'pilot', are listed below:

1. **Ballina**
2. **Cashel**
3. **Ennis**
4. **Dundalk**
5. **Monaghan Town**
6. **Naas**
7. **Rush**
8. **Sligo (deferred until 2017)**
9. **Tralee**
10. **Tullamore**

Participating Local Authorities were then invited by the lead partner – the Heritage Council – in the late summer to put forward names of representatives from the four pillars in the towns taking part to attend the first training workshop in Naas on the 29th September. The Project Partners highlighted from the outset that the first training workshop in Naas Town Hall is a 'pilot', which seeks to enable and encourage the setting up of new networks, structures and processes relating to town centre management in Ireland – **overall, the 'pilot' seeks to encourage experimentation and innovation in this emerging sector.**

1

http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/Planning/Kilrush_Report/Kilrush_Town_Centre_Health_Check_Final_Report_1.pdf

² http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/Towns_pubs/Policy_document_web.pdf

The Key Aim of Naas TCHC Workshop is to empower all attendees to embrace the concepts of:

COLLABORATION + CO-OPERATION + CO-ORDINATION

Purpose of TCHC Workshop Feedback Report

This draft report summarises the **Q&A/group discussions, group exercises and feedback** from the workshop participants held in Naas Town Hall and includes a summary of **common themes and required actions** that emerged during this first national meeting of the nine ‘pilot’ towns. The report has been circulated to all attendees from the participating towns to ensure that it is an accurate record of the workshop’s proceedings – the TCHC Workshop Programme (Naas Town Hall, 29th September) is provided at *Appendix A* and a list of workshop participants (approx. 70 no. people) is provided at *Appendix B*. In addition, a Briefing Note for partner Third-level Institutes is provided at *Appendix C*.

N.B. All the above documents are contained in the ‘*Pilot*’ *TCHC Workshop Pack* (30 pages), which was prepared and circulated by the Heritage Council (Lead Partner) to workshop participants prior to the event in Naas Town Hall. The TCHC Workshop Pack is available to download from the Heritage Council’s website – under ‘Planning’.

2. Feedback from Session 1 – Understanding the Form and Fabric of Towns + Q&A

The first-ever Town Centre Health Check (TCHC) training workshop in Ireland was opened by Peter Carey, Chief Executive of Kildare County Council, who highlighted the need for a co-ordinated approach to town regeneration by all partners, including national and local government, and welcomed everyone from the participating towns around the country, speakers and project partners to the historic building of Naas Town Hall.

Photograph 1: Peter Carey, Chief Executive, Kildare County Council welcomes participants to Naas Town Hall



Overview of Irish Towns⁴ – Understanding and collectively assessing Form and Fabric (micro)

A short animated film (approximately seven minutes long) entitled - TOWN⁵ - by Orla Murphy MRAI introduced workshop participants to the key trends and issues facing Ireland's rural towns today, as follows:

- *1 in 3 people in Ireland live in a rural town;*
- *Over the last fifty years there has been increased urban sprawl due to higher levels of car ownership leading to an increased pattern of roads rather than streets and places for people;*
- *System of streets, plots and buildings was introduced by the Normans;*
- *Systems of exchange used to be local, now they are international and on-line;*
- *The 'theatre' of urban life needs to be understood, appreciated and nurtured; and*
- *Flexible occupation and temporary uses such as markets should be encouraged in town centres.*

⁴ Unfortunately, Dr David Meredith was unable to present at the workshop due to a serious cycling injury the week of the workshop.

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-GuiZ2bd9g&feature=youtu.be>

Photograph 2: TCHC Workshop participants watch Orla Murphy's film – TOWN



Presentations (15 mins each) were then made by **Martin Colreavy** (Principal Advisor, DoAHRGA) entitled: *Shaping the Future of Irish Towns – Developing Adaptive Policies and Investment Programmes*; **Paul Keogh** (Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland): *Reading the Urban Landscape (I): Understanding Townscape and Streetscape – valuing our built and cultural heritage*; and **Richard Butler** (Irish Landscape Institute) entitled: *Reading the Urban Landscape (II): The landscape and streetscape setting of towns and villages – Opportunities for improving urban spaces, introducing Green Infrastructure (GI) and valuing cultural/natural Heritage*. (N.B. all presentations are available to view on the Heritage Council's website).

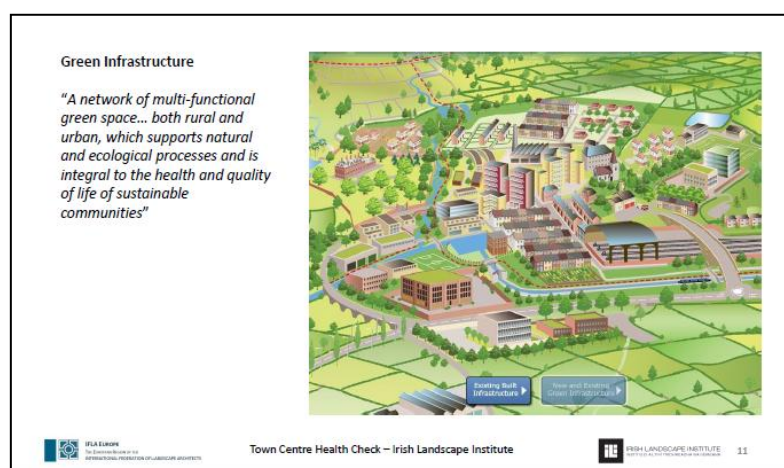
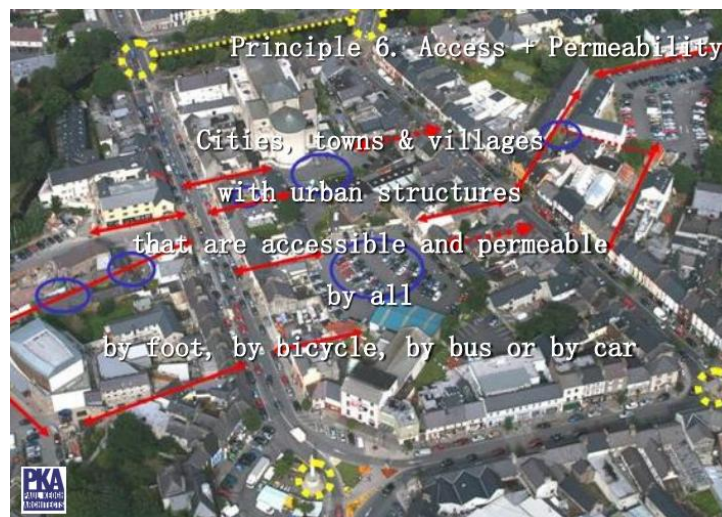
Photograph 3: Martin Colreavy's overview of National Policies and Investment Programmes



Session 1 Q&A (Facilitator Tara Buckley): The Q&A session focused on the need for ‘quick wins’ in the pilot towns – cleaning and painting of buildings, particularly vacant buildings, was highlighted as a useful action in the short term. The issue of parking also came up – is parking even in the right location in town centres? Who decides? It was highlighted that all traders (not just retail) need to take a collaborative approach to managing parking – on-street and off-street. It was also highlighted that one of the issues is that traders and shoppers like shoppers to park as near to the shop as possible. Need action to change this behavioural pattern in order to upgrade the public realm.

Accessibility needs to be addressed at a strategic town centre-level in collaboration with LA roads engineers who need to be bit more receptive to accommodating pedestrian and other non-car activity in town centres, in order to encourage greater footfall and vitality.

There was a lively discussion in relation to Green Infrastructure (GI) and the need to include this sustainable approach within overall urban design and town centre management in Ireland. The group agreed that this was a welcome approach and was relevant to the vast majority of the towns involved in the pilot.



Summary of Key Messages from Session 1 were as follows: *Urbanisation, National Partnership, Strategic Planning and Investment, Assessing Townscapes/Streetscapes, Character and Distinctiveness, Cultural Identity, Sense of Place, ‘Time-depth’, Collaborative Place-making.*

3. Feedback from Session 1, Group Exercise 1 – SWOT of ‘Pilot’ Towns focusing mainly on ‘Strengths’

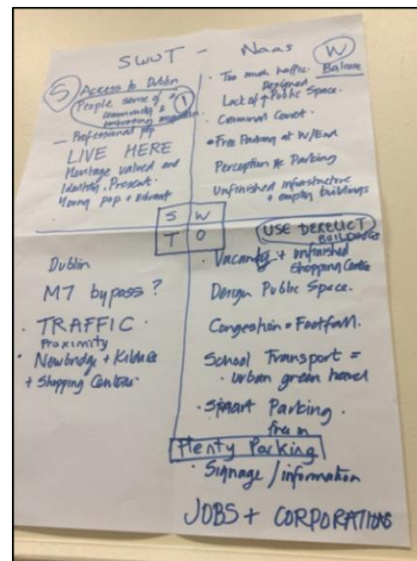
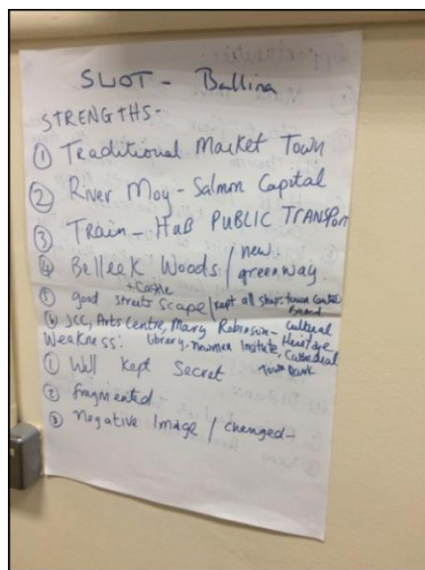
Group Exercise 1, 25mins (Facilitator: Ali Harvey) the SWOT focused on identifying the *Key Strengths* (cultural, natural, commercial, etc.) of the Pilot towns. The speakers from Session 1 joined the town teams to assist discussions. The focus on identifying ‘Strengths’ at this stage was to enable participants to explore where their teams could identify extra support and resources in the short term – e.g. co-ordinate efforts at a macro-level and to help identify common themes, which could be addressed through shared learning through the ‘pilot’ training process. (A number of towns also identified Opportunities and Weaknesses.) Group feedback is summarised in *Table 1* below:

Table 1: Feedback from group highlighting ‘Strengths’ (Towns to build on)

Town	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities
1. Ballina	Traditional market town River Moy – salmon capital, Train – hub public transport, Belleek Woods & Castle - new greenway, Good streetscape – kept all shops town centre- based, JCC, Arts Centre, Mary Robinson library, Newman Institute, cultural heritage – cathedral and town park.	Well kept secret, fragmented – negative image – changed. Distance, main road into town – N26 – no direct motorway – very parochial.	Make more of the river – start from scratch to develop the tourism product/ enhance the town centre, hub town for north Mayo (cater for Killala, Enniscrone, etc..) Wider choice of things to do in Ballina – walking, greenway, kayaking, heritage – move away from fishing.
2. Cashel	Rock of Cashel, Cashel Palace Hotel, strong tourism and heritage brand, location – central, motorway – 3 exits. Strong community – good shopping base.	Disconnect between Rock and town and town centre, no river.	Link Rock to the town – redevelopment of Cashel Palace Hotel by Coolmore Stud.
3. Dundalk	Historic format – wide streets/ streetscape, architecture and buildings, DKIT, Dundalk Market – civic space, Earl Street pedestrian linkages, natural assets – GI – SAC/SPA Demesnes/parks/ linkage potential, easy access at all entry points to town, Dundalk Port, rail network, town centre CIE bus connectivity – Castle Town River connect...	N/A	Potential connectivity from out/edge of town to traditional centre, Upgrade of Clanbrassil Street.
4. Ennis	Historic and quaint landscape/streetscape – tourist offering in the locality and wider area, strategic location between Limerick and Galway, 6 th largest town in country,	N/A	River and Green Infrastructure, cultural heritage, re-brand, integration- improved pedestrian priority, working groups needed – more integration, Friar’s Walk and Gardens, New covered market,

	retail mix is unique, compact town centre, calendar of festivals, good transport links, good restaurants – great place to live!		improved public realm, Bogs national, Rowan tree site and Post Office Field – public realm?
5. Monaghan	Car parking, greenway, a lot of money in town, canal – geographical location.	Traffic flow, low town population, town is physically split, communication, vulnerability to Brexit, bed space deficiency.	Improved communication between consumer, retailers and council, vacancy should be an opportunity for change, potential of canal, a lot of wealth in the town, rich heritage.
6. Naas	Access to Dublin, people's sense of community and embracing migration, professional population, Live here! – heritage valued and identity, present – young population and vibrant.	Too much traffic, lack of designed public space, criminal court, free parking at weekend, negative perception re. parking, unfinished infrastructure and empty buildings.	Use derelict buildings in town centre, utilise vacant and unfinished shopping centre, design public space, congestion and footfall, school transport = urban green travel, plenty of parking, signage and information, jobs and corporations.
7. Rush	Small village, close to Dublin City, natural assets and cultural heritage – coast, harbour, beaches, Martello Towers. Sports clubs – golf, sailing. Three schools. Space & vibrant young community.	Water pollution	Green and blue infrastructure.
8. Tralee	Capital town for the region – international Rose of Tralee competition, retail capital, rich heritage – Georgian buildings and listed buildings, Green Infrastructure, tourism infrastructure, renewal of town centre/public space, Tidy Towns Gold Medal.	N/A	Activate and promote use of town centre public spaces, more champions of town centre involved in town centre management – needs to be a collaboration, Youth activities, re-activate upper floors – incentives needed.
9. Tullamore	Park and canal, green spaces, location and transport, compact and walkable, built heritage, wide streets and squares, space available, Tullamore Dew, tourism closeby, Greenway and cycle paths, hotels, friendly people, river and arts centre.	N/A	Rich built, cultural and natural heritage. Local people are an asset.

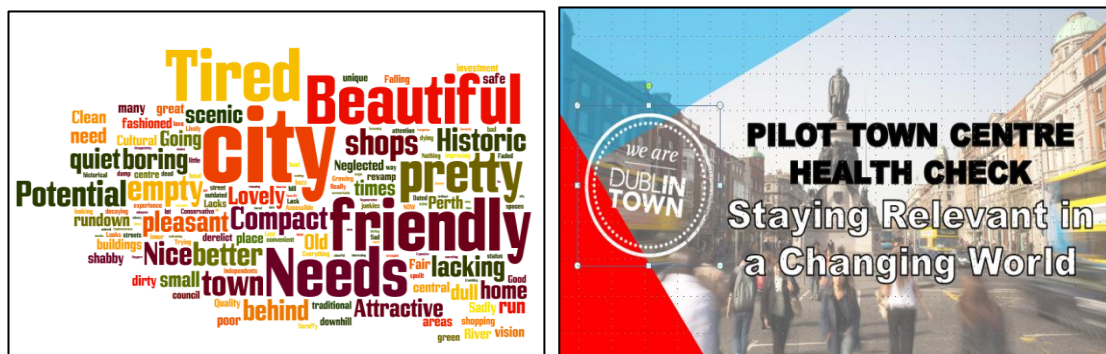
Photographs 4 and 5: Feedback from Ballina and Naas



Common Themes from Group Exercise 1:

- Importance of strategic location and connectivity and accessibility by air, sea, road, rail and by bicycle – links to other towns and cities are important – strategic linkages could be mapped – perceived and actual;
- All are historic towns with rich form and fabric, townscape and streetscapes – wealth of unique built, cultural and natural heritage – are these assets surveyed and mapped – what is the perception of locals – what do they ‘value’ – are they asked?;
- Innovative thinking needed by all to bring vitality back into town centres – re-activate upper floors and vacant buildings – incentives needed for all sectors and stakeholders – potential to link to overall environmental management and sustainability indicators;
- Importance of designed landscapes/demesnes, landmark buildings and monuments – need to be strategically managed as part of overall form and fabric of town;
- Importance of green and blue infrastructure – need for new audits/surveys in this area in order to inform strategic planning – see the town centres holistically;
- Need for improved connectivity, accessibility and permeability – audits and strategic planning – collaboration involving all sectors particularly the local community – understand movement around each town centre – explore existing, perceived and potential;
- Need for greater co-ordination, communication and integration on national and local town centre management issues – need to improve management structures and ‘processes’ – need to create networks at all levels;
- Need to invest in the public realm in all our historic town centres;
- Town centre management should fundamentally involve the local community and local people – of all ages.

Presentations (20mins) were made by **Leigh Brown**, Perth Town Centre Manager (Scotland): *Creating Synergy and Energy?* and **Richard Guiney**, CEO DublinTown: *Staying Relevant in a Changing World!*



Presentations were then made by **Terry Sheridan**, Principal Officer, DoHPLG: *Focusing on Vacancy – statutory instruments in Ireland – existing and emerging tools*; and **Philip Crowe**⁶, Reusing Dublin: *Using GIS and Mapping Vacancy – Geo-referencing + Crowd-sharing*



⁶ Unfortunately Aoife Corcoran was unable to take part in the TCHC workshop (with her colleague Philip Crowe) due to commitments associated with the submission of her PhD Thesis.

Session 2 Q&A Session (Facilitator Ali Harvey): There was a lot of discussion on the general lack of reliable and up-to-date floorspace data in Ireland compared to the information and data sets that were presented in relation to Scotland. Also, what are the mechanisms to capture information on vacant buildings and sites? Who is responsible and who updates the information? All speakers had highlighted the need for reliable data.

A number of participants were keen to highlight that the government needed to be more about the carrot than the stick, when it came to encouraging the reuse of vacant buildings and sites in town centres, through various legal provisions. Participants were informed that ‘incentives’ are currently being developed by relevant government departments and that hopefully these will be announced before the end of 2016 – watch this space!

Summary of Key Messages from Session 2 – *Partnership and Collaboration, Community Intelligence, Place Management, TCHC, Culture=Digital, Surveys/Indicators/GIS, analysis (GIS), Survey/Plan/Monitor/ Adjust, Action-based Management.*

5. Feedback from Session 2, Group Exercise 2 – Required Actions

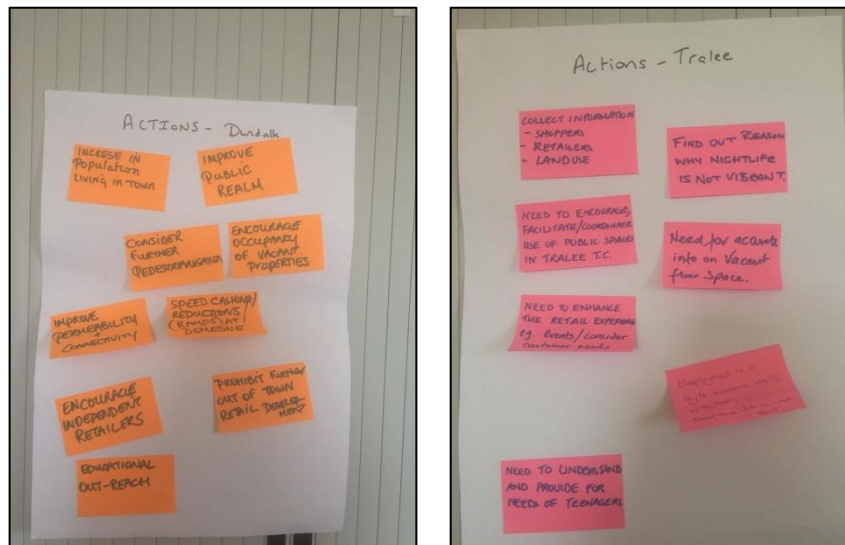
Following Session 2's presentations, it was extremely important to identify the needs and aspirations in relation to actions required in 'pilot' towns – these were highlighted and recorded for the 'TCHC Workshop Feedback Report' (**Facilitator: Ali Harvey**). Participants from each town were asked to consider what actions were now needed to assist in the revitalisation of their town centres. The ideas and recommendations put forward are summarised in *Table 2* below:

Table 2: Feedback from group highlighting Actions required for revitalising Ireland's Towns

Town	Actions Required
1. Ballina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private and public co-operation in town centre management • Continued streetscape throughout the town i.e. remove vacancy • Encourage Over the Shop uses • Improve broadband service • Develop Market Square into beautiful place to enjoy • All-day long vibrancy! • Road improvement into town N26 and ring road • Town centre dwelling space/residential use • Encourage Pop-up shops and other temporary uses • Improve pedestrian linkages and permeability
2. Cashel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop national data collection methodology • Increase residential use/living over the shop in the town centre • Improve retail offering in the town centre • Improve traffic management in town centre • Increase parking offering/alternatives in the town centre • Decrease vacancy in the town • Improvements to the public realm including street furniture • Improve permeability and connectivity • Improve pedestrian linkages with The Rock of Cashel
3. Dundalk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase population living in town • Improve public realm in town centre • Encourage occupancy of vacant properties • Consider further pedestrianisation • Improve permeability and connectivity • Speed calming reductions - ramps at demesne • Encourage independent retailers • Prohibit further out of two retail development • Educational outreach needed in relation to town centre management
4. Ennis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relax building control legislation in relation to use of first floors work with Fire Officers to encourage uses • Support updated Retail Strategy for the county • Target retail/hospitality mix in town centre • Undertake pedestrian survey, street furniture audit, lighting and signage audit • Prepare a street furniture pavement, design strategy • Undertake a GI plan and tree survey – plan for greater greenery • Continue to work with Chamber of Commerce to focus on retail mix in Ennis

5. Monaghan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sort out traffic management • Funding for access roads to unlock lands • Incentives required to renovate derelict property • Encourage housing in-fill developments in town centre • Encourage population growth in town centre • Encourage employment growth in town centre to support an increase in population
6. Naas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection and analysis • Enhance public realm • Undertake traffic management plan involving all sectors • Encourage retail and commercial mix • Permeability planning – connections and movement grid • Support Above the Shop living – identify suitable locations and incentives • Identify the town's unique selling point(s) – USP • Identify the historic core – map assets • Allocate time to Blue Sky thinking for team!
7. Rush	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous collection of data • Development plan for Rush • Upgrade of streets especially Main Street • Develop Heritage Trail – involve local community • Access to sea for all sports and development of water sports • Enhance shop fronts in the town centre
8. Tralee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect information from shoppers, retailers and land-use as soon as possible • Need to encourage, facilitate and co-ordinate use of public space in Tralee town centre • Find out reason why nightlife/evening economy is not vibrant – plan for enhanced activity • Need for accurate information on vacant floorspace • Support updated Retail Strategy for the county • Need to enhance the retailer experience – e.g. events and consider customer needs • Employment is a key to economic viability in the town - need more jobs in rural towns • Need to understand and provide for needs of teenagers
9. Tullamore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinated investment in the public realm needed • Funding for new pedestrian and cycle routes • Invest in Green and Blue infrastructure • Need for updated Retail Strategy for the county • Need for accurate floorspace data in Irish town centres

Photographs 6 and 7: Feedback from Dundalk and Tralee



The Top 10 most commonly recommended Actions by all the TCHC 'pilot' town (in no particular order) are as follows:

- 1. Encourage co-operation of all sectors in a town centre in relation to town centre health checks;**
- 2. Undertake permeability planning and investment in town centres;**
- 3. Investment needed in public realm and main streets in town centres;**
- 4. Investment needed in Green and Blue Infrastructure in town centres;**
- 5. Need for updated Local Authority Retail Strategies;**
- 6. Need for accurate/robust floorspace data and information on a continuous basis (linked to LA Retail Strategies above);**
- 7. Incentivise use of vacant property and sites;**
- 8. Encourage Living Above the Shop and Over the Shop uses – need for population growth in town centres;**
- 9. Encourage retail and commercial mix – ensure daytime and evening economies are both vibrant;**
- 10. Collect survey information/data from shoppers and commercial traders/retailers and undertake analysis on a regular and continuous basis.**

6. Feedback from Site Visit to Naas Town Centre (and Monread Road)

Following a catered lunch in Naas Town Hall, hosted jointly by the Heritage Council and Kildare County Council, workshop participants undertook a site visit around Naas Town Centre – the site visit was hosted by Michael Kenny from Kildare County Council and Mary Keane from EU URBACT. The site visit also included a coach trip to the outskirts of Naas, specifically to highlight an out-of-town retail centre (known as Monread Road Shopping Centre) and the new Kerry Group HQ, with the aim of enabling participants to consider how such developments might impact on town centre vitality and viability, their interrelationship and connectivity with the traditional town centre, and how they could review and assess the same issues and impacts in their own towns.

After the coach trip, participants then walked the main street of Naas Town Centre and were asked to undertake the ‘First Impressions Exercise’, devised by the Association of Town and City Management (ATCM, UK), as a tool for assessing how visitors and residents might view and perceive the town centre. Feedback from participants included:

- *Naas is excellently located on the road network;*
- *Naas Town Hall is a wonderful building and amenity for local people;*
- *Green infrastructure (GI) could be an asset with the canal, etc.*
- *Significant number of large corporations creates a strong economic base for the area – do they shop in the town centre – it would be interesting to find out?;*
- *Traffic and parking appears to be an issue in the town;*
- *Unfinished shopping centre is a bit of a letdown and an eyesore;*
- *Out-of-town shopping centre is not ideal;*
- *Nice feel about the traditional town centre;*
- *Good shops in the town centre – e.g. ladies shops and boutiques.*

Photograph 8: Workshop Participants visit Monread Road Shopping Centre near the N/M7



Following the feedback on the site visit, the TCHC Workshop moved onto a session entitled *Next Steps*, which is summarised in the following section.

7. Next Steps – Outline of Survey and analysis work to be undertaken and Building the ‘Irish Town Centre Partnership Network’

The next steps for workshop participants cover the period from October–December 2016 – a proposed work programme (**15 no. Steps**) was included in the TCHC Workshop Pack, which was circulated prior to the event (and is available on the Heritage Council website) and is reproduced at *Appendix C*. Towns were asked to discuss the proposed work programme with their voluntary Third-level support at the workshop, if they had not already done so. In addition, the Pilot Co-ordinator will allocate voluntary *Project Mentors* from the three partner institutes (i.e. IPI, ILI and RIAI), where possible. It is envisaged that inception meetings with all the partner groups in each of the towns will take place after the Naas Town Hall workshop. For example, the following team meetings have been confirmed, as of the 19th October 2016:

- **Ballina** – Team meeting of all partners in Ballina held on Thursday 13th October;
- **Cashel** – Team meeting to be confirmed by County Council asap;
- **Dundalk** – Team meeting and briefing meeting with Louth County Council and QUB students in Dundalk – 19th October;
- **Ennis** – Team meeting held on Friday 14th October (am) in Ennis;
- **Monaghan** – Team meeting and briefing meeting with MCC and UCD students at UCD – to be held on the 26th October;
- **Naas** – Team meeting held on Thursday 20th October in Naas;
- **Rush** – Team meeting to be confirmed by County Council asap;
- **Tralee** – second Team meeting held on afternoon of 14th October – including briefing meeting with IT Tralee students and presentation on progress to date; and
- **Tullamore** – Team meeting held on Thursday 20th October.

In addition, it was highlighted by the Workshop Co-ordinator (Ali Harvey) that a draft *Workshop Feedback Report* would be prepared and circulated for comment by participants as soon as possible. Planning for ‘Pilot’ TCHC Workshop No. 2 in early 2017 will also commence as soon as the work programmes are underway in each ‘pilot’ town. The structure of the second TCHC training workshop will support the issues raised and actions and recommendations set out in this feedback report.

For further information in relation to this draft TCHC *Workshop Feedback Report*, the agreed *October-December Work Programme* and/or planned *TCHC Workshop No. 2 (in 2017)*, please contact **Ali Harvey, ‘Pilot’ Town Centre Health Check (TCHC) Co-ordinator, Heritage Council** on M. 087 49 3458 -aharvey@heritagecouncil.ie.

Appendix A: Revitalising Ireland's Towns: 'Pilot' Training Workshop No.1

29th September 2016, Naas Town Hall

- 9.45am** **Registration and Tea/Coffee on arrival in Naas Town Hall**
- 10.00am** **Welcome from hosts Kildare County Council (Chief Executive) Peter Carey – Ground Floor**
- 10.10am** Introduction/outline to training day, packs and structure of training programme, i.e. creating a national partnership network and the role of partners including: LAs, Local Chambers, Civic groups and Third-level Institutes/students – Ali Harvey and Tara Buckley – 'Workshop Programme'.

Session 1: Overview of Irish Towns – Trends and Patterns at a global and national level (macro) plus an introduction to understanding and collectively assessing *Form* and *Fabric* (micro):

- 10.20am** **TOWN – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-GuiZ2bd9g&feature=youtu.be> by Orla Murphy, UCD**
- 10.30am** **Martin Colreavy**, Principal Advisor, DoAHRRGA: *Shaping the Future of Irish Towns – Developing Adaptive Policies and Investment Programmes*
- 10.45am** **Dr David Meredith**, Teagasc: *Towards an Understanding of the Changing Socio-economic Context of Towns in Contemporary Ireland*
- 11.00am** **Paul Keogh**, RIAI: *Reading the Urban Landscape (I): Understanding Townscape and Streetscape – valuing our built and cultural heritage*
- 11.15am** **Richard Butler**, ILI: *Reading the Urban Landscape (II): The landscape and streetscape setting of towns and villages – Opportunities for improving urban spaces, introducing Green Infrastructure (GI) and valuing cultural/natural Heritage*

Q & A (5 mins – from 11.30am)

Summary of Key Messages from Session 1 – *Urbanisation, National Partnership, Strategic Planning and Investment, Assessing Townscapes/Streetscapes, Character and Distinctiveness, Cultural Identity, Sense of Place, 'Time-depth', Collaborative Place-making*

- 11.35am** **Group Exercise I (25 mins)** – Identifying Key Strengths and Weaknesses (cultural, natural, commercial, etc.) in Pilot towns – highlighted and recorded for 'Workshop Report' – summary of exercise in afternoon – Facilitator: Ali Harvey

Session 2: Overview Town Centre Management and Town Centre Health Checks (TCHCs) – Surveys and Analysis and a Focus on Vacancy:

- 12.00pm** **Leigh Brown**, Perth Town Centre Manager, Scotland: *Creating Synergy and Energy?*
- 12.20pm** **Richard Guiney**, CEO DublinTown: *Staying Relevant in a Changing World!*

Q & A (5 mins)

12.40pm **Terry Sheridan**, Principal Officer, DoHPLG: *Focusing on Vacancy – statutory instruments in Ireland – existing and emerging tools*

12.55pm **Aoife Corcoran and Philip Crowe**, Reusing Dublin: *Using GIS and Mapping Vacancy – Geo-referencing + Crowd-sharing*

Q & A (5 mins)

Summary of Key Messages from Session 2 – *Partnership and Collaboration, Community Intelligence, Place Management, TCHC, Culture=Digital, Surveys/Indicators/GIS, analysis (GIS), Survey/Plan/Monitor/ Adjust, Action-based*

1.15pm **Group Exercise II (15 mins)** – Identifying needs and aspirations re Actions required in pilot towns – highlighted and recorded for ‘Workshop Report’ – Facilitator: Ali Harvey

1.30pm Lunch – *tea/coffee and sandwiches in Naas Town Hall – boards displayed with group names by TCM theme for site visit around Naas Town Centre with 3rd Level Leaders – packs*

Demonstration by PAVANU Mobility – <http://www.pavanu.com/> – CEO Natalia Shiel

2.15pm **Session 3: Understanding Town Centres – Groups undertake site visit around Naas – understanding form and fabric and using TCM techniques. Key Themes – relationship with surrounding area, streetscape and land uses/mix, public realm, transport, green infrastructure, evening economy, etc.:**

- Briefing of Naas Town – Michael Kenny/Karen Kenny (Kildare County Council)
- Health and Safety Statement – Alison’s mobile No. 087 419 3458
- Groups form for site visit with Reps from third-level institutes
- Groups leave Naas Town Hall on site visit (Depart Town Hall at 2.30pm) – coach to take people up to/back from Monread Road – HC high vis vests for all

3.40pm **Session 4: Feedback by Themes/Groups – return to Naas Town Hall:**

- Groups provide feedback on Naas Town Centre – key features/assets, issues and opportunities – required Actions – applying TCM
- Summary of Group Findings – will form Workshop No.1 Report including Key Actions – to be circulated after the workshop for sign-off by attendees

Group Discussion – 30 mins

4.40pm **Final Session: Next Steps – Outline of Survey and analysis work to be undertaken – ‘Mentoring Period’ – building the ‘Irish Town Centre Partnership Network’**

- Next Steps – October–December 2016
- Preparation of Report for Workshop No. 2 – January 2017 – Using the Info and Data – Building a Partnership and Formulating a TCM Strategy including an Investment Plan
- Workshop No.1 – Certificates to follow and Thank you!
- Feedback Forms for Workshop Evaluation – box available

5.00pm Workshop No. 1 Ends + Networking

Appendix B: List of TCHC Workshop Attendees:
'Pilot' Towns, Speakers and Guests

Training Team:

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Name</i>
1 <i>Heritage Council</i>	Alison Harvey
2 <i>RGDATA</i>	Tara Buckley
3 <i>DoAHRGA</i>	Martin Colreavy
4 <i>Teagasc</i>	Dr David Meredith
5 <i>RIAI</i>	Paul Keogh
6 <i>ILI</i>	Richard Butler
7 <i>Perth TCM, Scotland</i>	Leigh Brown
8 <i>DublinTown</i>	Richard Guiney
9 <i>DoHPCLG</i>	Terry Sheridan
10 <i>Reusing Dublin</i>	Aoife Corcoran
11 <i>Reusing Dublin</i>	Philip Crowe
12 <i>Kildare County Council</i>	Michael Kenny
13 <i>Kildare County Council</i>	Karen Kenny
14 <i>Heritage Council</i>	Anne Barcoe
15 <i>Heritage Council</i>	Trevor Keppel

Attendees:

Pilot Towns

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Name</i>
Ballina	1 <i>Mayo County Council</i> Dr Deirdre Cunningham
	2 <i>Mayo County Council</i> Bernadette Cunningham
	3 <i>Chamber of Commerce</i> Mags Martin
	4 <i>Civic Groups – Rep</i> Michael Hogan
	5 <i>GMIT</i> Kevin O'Callaghan
	6 <i>GMIT</i> John Scahill
Cashel	7 <i>Tipperary County Council</i> Marion Carey
	8 <i>Chamber of Commerce</i> Declan Burgess
	9 <i>Civic Groups – Rep</i> Paul Monks
	10 <i>Civic Groups – Rep</i> Patrick Downey
	11 <i>LIT Thurles</i> Ciaran Lynch
Ennis	12 <i>Clare County Council</i> Brian McCarthy
	13 <i>Chamber of Commerce</i> Jean McCabe
	14 <i>Civic Groups – Rep</i> Carmin Cronin
	15 <i>Limerick IT</i> Katherine Maughan
Dundalk	16 <i>Louth County Council</i> Brendan McSherry
	17 <i>Louth County Council</i> Marguerite Quinn
	18 <i>Chamber of Commerce</i> Martin McElligott
	19 <i>Civic Groups – Rep</i> Fiona Cunningham
	20 <i>QUB</i> Dr Neil Galway
Monaghan Town	21 <i>Monaghan County Council</i> Shirley Clerkin
	22 <i>Monaghan County Council</i> Trevor Connolly

Naas	23	<i>Monaghan County Council</i>	Maire Cullinan
	24	<i>Monaghan County Council</i>	Donal McElwain
	25	<i>Town Team</i>	<i>awaiting info from CoCo</i>
	26	<i>UCD</i>	Luke Kelleher
	27	<i>Kildare County Council</i>	Sonya Kavannagh
	28	<i>Kildare County Council</i>	Bridgit Loughlin
	29	<i>Kildare County Council</i>	Bebhinn O'Shea
	30	<i>Chamber of Commerce</i>	John O'Reilly
	31	<i>Chamber of Commerce</i>	Gerry Prendergast
	32	<i>Civic Groups – Rep</i>	Alice Fennelly
Rush	33	<i>Waterford IT</i>	Miriam Fitzpatrick
	34	<i>Fingal County Council</i>	Dr Gerry Clabby
	35	<i>Chamber of Commerce</i>	<i>awaiting info from CoCo</i>
	36	<i>Civic Groups – Rep</i>	<i>awaiting info from CoCo</i>
Tralee	37	<i>DIT</i>	Ciaran Cuffe
	38	<i>Kerry County Council</i>	T.J. Mahony
	39	<i>Chamber of Commerce</i>	Kieran Rutledge
	40	<i>Kerry County Council</i>	Noreen O'Mahony
Tullamore	41	<i>IT Tralee</i>	Martha Farrell
	42	<i>Offaly County Council</i>	Eoghan Lynch
	43	<i>Chamber of Commerce</i>	John Leavey
	44	<i>Civic Groups – Rep</i>	Ray Carroll
	45	<i>Athlone IT</i>	Eoin Langan
Total =	45	Attendees	
Guests:			
	46	Professor Mark Boyle	NUI Maynooth
	47	Lorraine O'Connor	Longford County Council
	48	Natalia Shiel	PAVANU
	49	Mary Keane	EU URBACT
	50	Jacqui Donnelly	Dept of Arts, Heritage...
	51	Aoife Nicaoidh	QUB
	52	Robert Newell	Infrastructure NI
	53	Stephen Coyne	Liberties Dublin
Total:			
Training Team	15		
Attendees/Guests	53		
AV Guy	1	Dave from Stagetek http://www.stagetek.ie/	
Total:	69	People	

**Appendix C: 'Pilot' TCHC Work Programme – Briefing Note for Third-level Institutes,
October-December 2016 – Issued in September 2016 as part of Workshop Pack**

<i>Proposed Work Programme for Third-Level Institutes during October–January/early February 2016</i>		
	<i>Action/Task</i>	<i>Deliverable and Deadline</i>
1	<p>Confirm Town Centre Health Check study area boundary with local authority (and Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DoHPLG), if required) – ideally area should be based on statutory development plan – proposed changes to the boundary should be discussed and agreed by all at the outset – reduce potential project risks.</p> <p>Briefing/Inception Meeting to be held with Third-level institute/organisation, Local Authority (LA), Chamber of Commerce, Civic sector reps and Heritage Council at outset of the process (i.e. after the workshop in Naas). Work programme to be discussed and agreed by all partners. Gaps to be identified and communicated to Heritage Council in order to communicate them to government as part of the pilot process – i.e. gaps in all towns.</p> <p>Undertake socio-economic assessment of contextual and regional arrangements – where is the town located in the regional hierarchy – ‘Street to Region Concept’. Map relationships with other towns – connections by road, rail, cycleway, etc. What is the function of the town? What is its historic role? Feed into overall approach. Undertake SWOT analysis.</p>	Early October 2016
2	<p>I. Landuse Survey (ground floor plus other floors, where possible) of Town Centre study area and production of GIS map using GOAD classification system – in order to establish the overall vacancy rate in the town centre (%) and the specific ‘retail’ vacancy rate (%) (e.g. vacant retail units/total vacant retail units).</p> <p>Examine crowd sharing as tool for information/data gathering – see Reusing Dublin – http://www.reusingdublin.ie/. Explore potential links to social enterprises in the locality.</p> <p>Other vacancy rates can be established including public houses, residential, etc. Photographic record to be linked to GIS map, where possible. Designations to be included on map layers – Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), etc. Protected Structures and records of monuments and places (RMP) to be included in mapping exercise. See relevant databases – www.myplan.ie – www.heritagemap.ie etc.</p>	During October–November 2016

	<p>Assessment of overall historic form and fabric. Identify areas experiencing transition.</p> <p>Land ownership to be explored and discussed with Local Authority – see below.</p> <p>Analysis – identify character areas and key ‘anchors’ – retail, leisure, civic, etc. Identify core locations for day-time and evening economies. Identify patterns in land use clustering, etc. Assess links and permeability between and within various core areas – walkability – time and ease.</p> <p>Examine landuse patterns between existing historic core and edge and out-of-town developments. Revisit SWOT analysis.</p> <p>Landuse Survey analysis to be checked by Local Authority.</p>	
3	<p>Footfall/Pedestrian Survey – based on findings of the landuse survey and discussions with the LA, Pedestrian count to be undertaken in Town Centre on two days (preferably):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday • Saturday <p>Team of six to eight field workers required, depending on resources – survey points to be recorded on GIS map. Handheld clickers to be supplied by the Heritage Council. 15 minute surveys on each side of the street on each day – use clipboards – suggested times, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.15-1.30pm • 3.15-3.30pm • 5.15- 5.30pm 	October–November 2016
4	<p>Business/Retailer Surveys (see below) – undertaken, data input and analysis – SPSS. Template provided – towns to amend and develop, as required. Consider focus groups with specific sectors – go beyond retail – leisure, civic in the surveys.</p>	November 2016
5	<p>Shoppers Surveys – undertaken, data input and analysis – SPSS. Consider focus groups, particularly with young people – explore potential for parallel social media campaign.</p>	October–November 2016
6	<p>Rental Survey – establish various rent levels for units in town centre – identify key pitch and ‘anchors’ for town centre in various land uses.</p>	End of October 2016
7	<p>Ownership Map – to be added to GIS, where possible.</p>	End of October 2016
8	<p>Vehicle Count – boxes in the town centre – source from Local Authority engineers. Compare with footfall survey.</p>	End of October 2016
9	<p>Car parking – collect information re on and off street car parking. Include in GIS mapping – examine links from car parks</p>	End of October 2016

	to town centre.	
10	Accessibility Audit – to be added to land use survey/GIS layer. See PAVANU demonstration.	End of October 2016
11	Survey of natural ‘Desire Lines’ in main street – identify pedestrian crossings and map desire lines compared to crossings.	November 2016
12	Environmental Quality – noise and pollution readings/data for the town centre? Quality of rivers, canals, coasts, etc.?	November 2016
13	Crime figures – number of break-ins or serious crimes taking place in the town centre? Map on GIS – analyse patterns, hot spots and impact of improved urban design measures?	November 2016
14	II. Further analysis of land use survey using all the information and data collected above. Report Writing and presentation of TCHC results (baseline) – to be overseen by each Local Authority TCHC Project Manager and input provided by Heritage Council’s TCHC Co-ordinator. Presentation to TCHC Partners.	December 2016 – for presentation in early January 2017
15	TCHC Presentation of Findings, Exchange and Sharing. Drafting of National TCHC Action Plan – TCHC Workshop 2 (location to be decided). TCHC Workshop 2 will look at how to use the TCHC baseline and present results of Gap Analysis re TCHCs in Ireland for partners.	January–February 2017

Monitoring and Reporting: All of the above to be presented by the Third-level Institutes to the TCHC Teams (four pillars) in early January 2017. Local Authority PMs to provide short fortnightly progress reports to Heritage Council – to be circulated by email. Progress Reports to be in bullet point format, structured as follows:

1. **Tasks undertaken in last two weeks;**
2. **Problems encountered – blockages and delays;**
3. **Tasks to be undertaken in weeks ahead;**
4. **Potential risks/delays during this period.**

Heritage Council Co-ordinator to liaise with relevant government departments to ensure ‘pilot’ blockages are removed/mitigated.

Evaluation: these collective progress reports will feed into the overall evaluation of the ‘pilot’ and inform policy-makers of where blockages and risks occur during the TCHC process in Ireland.

Methodology prepared by Ali Harvey MIPI, for ‘Pilot’ TCHC Workshop on 29th September 2016.

