



University College Dublin

School of Architecture, Planning & Environmental
Policy



‘Pilot’ Town Centre Health Check

Key Findings and Lessons Learned from Monaghan

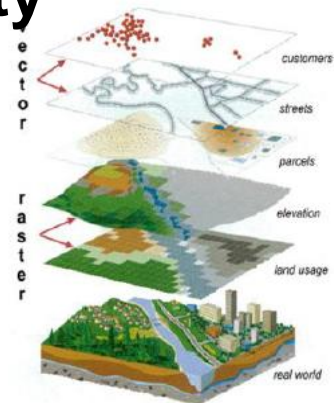
Dr. Luke Kelleher (UCD)

Máire Cullinan (Monaghan County Council)



Context

- **GIS Planning Project Module** - 2nd year undergraduates
- 12 week - 5 credit module designed for students with little or no previous GIS experience
- Great opportunity offered by **The Heritage Council/RGDATA** to incorporate Monaghan Town Centre Health Check into the curriculum
- Final Module Assessment designed to satisfy both Module learning objectives and **Monaghan County Council's** requirements



UCD Working in Partnership with Monaghan County Council and Heritage Council



Integrated Approach

- Identify/Gather relevant GIS OSI materials through Monaghan County Council GIS Department
- Town Centre Health Check Workshop Naas, 29th September
- October 6th Meeting between UCD and Monaghan County Council - generated a mutually agreed Action Plan
- October 26th 2016 Monaghan County Council and The Heritage Council lecture at UCD- generated interest amongst students
- November 5th UCD Planning Students fieldtrip to Monaghan – working along with Monaghan County Council Staff

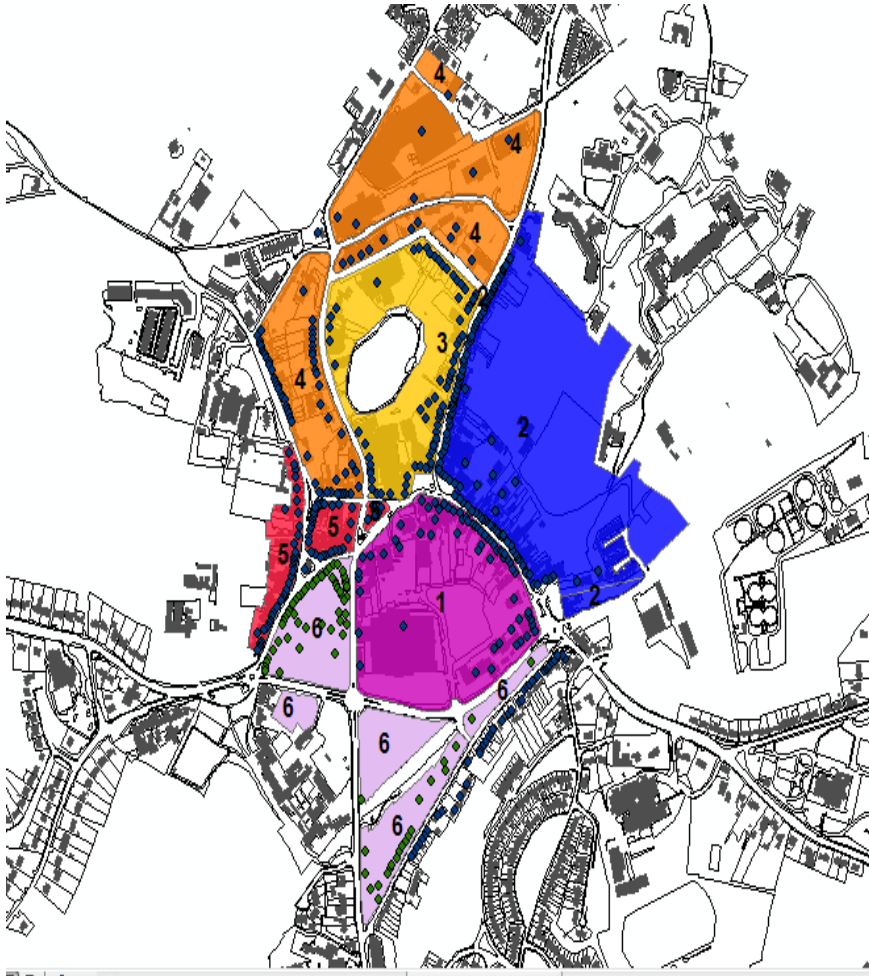


UCD Field trip to Monaghan Town Centre – Saturday 5th November 2016



Town Centre Divided into 6 Survey Zones

Working along with Monaghan County Council Staff

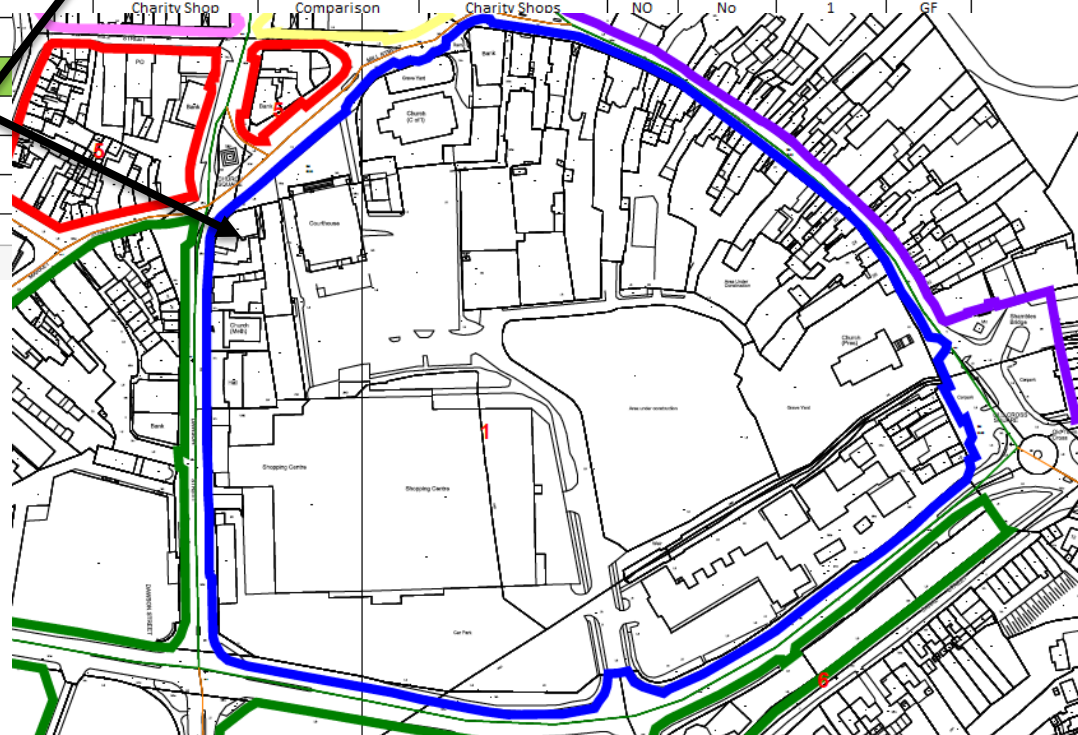


Field trip - Methodology

OS Map, Record Sheet, GOAD Classification



Survey Zone	Building Code	Name	Street No	Street	Retail Centre Property	Key Activity	GOAD Sub Class	GOAD Primary Activity & (Code)	Vacant Dwelling	Photograph taken	Trading Floors	Floor Level
3	1.	Caffe Nero	1	Mill Street		Coffee Shop	Leisure Services	Cafes	NO	No	1	GF
3	2	Yorkshire Bank	11	Smithy Row	Exchange Arcade	Bank	Financial & Business Services	Retail Banks	NO	No	1	GF
3	3	M S R Newsgroup	13	Mill Street		Newsagent	Comparison	Newsagents & Stationers	NO	No	1	GF
3	4	Warehouse	10	North Road	Exchange Arcade	Ladies Wear	Comparison	Ladies Wear & Accessories	NO	No	1	GF
3	5	Moss	16	Glasgow Street		Mens Wear	Comparison	Mens Wear & Accessories	NO	No	1	GF
3	6	Karen Millen	9	North Road	Exchange Arcade	Ladies Wear	Comparison	Ladies Wear & Accessories	NO	No	1	GF
3	7	Twenty Eight	32	Glasgow Street		Hairdressing	Retail Service	Health & Beauty	NO	No	1	GF
3	8	Nottingham Tourism Centre	1-4	North Road		Tourist Information	Public Services	Information & Advice Centres	NO	No	1	GF
3	9	Barnardo's	15	Mill Street		Charity Shop	Comparison	Charity Shops	NO	No	1	GF
3	10	McDonald's	7	Mill Street								
3	10	Archies	7	Mill Street								
3	11	Nando's	12	Mill Street								
3	12	Zara	2a	High Street								
3	13	Pit & Pendulum	17	Glasgow Street								
3	14	VACANT	18	Mill Street								



Retail Part B: Town Centre Study - Volume 1 Background Paper

November 2012

GOAD Sub-Class Classification:	
GOAD Sub-Class	Primary Activity (Code)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dental Surgery (HMS 2) Doctors surgery (HMS 3) Health Centre/HMS 4) Nursing Home (HMS 5) Osteopath (HMS 6) Other Health & Medical Service (HMS 7) Rest Home (HMS 8) Veterinary Surgeon (HMS 9)
Public Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice Centre (PS1) Community Centre (PS2) Council Offices (PS3) Educational Establishment (PS4) Emergency Services (PS5) Information Centre (PS6) Kindergarten (PS7) Library (PS8) Museum & Art Gallery (PS9) TA/Cadet Centre (PS10) Tourist Information (PS11)
Religious Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place of Worship (REL)
Vacant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacant Shop (VAC 1)

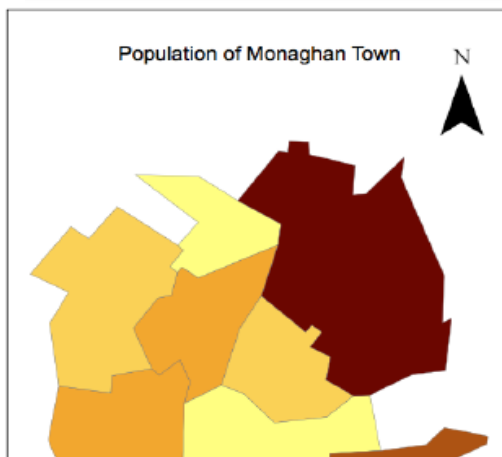
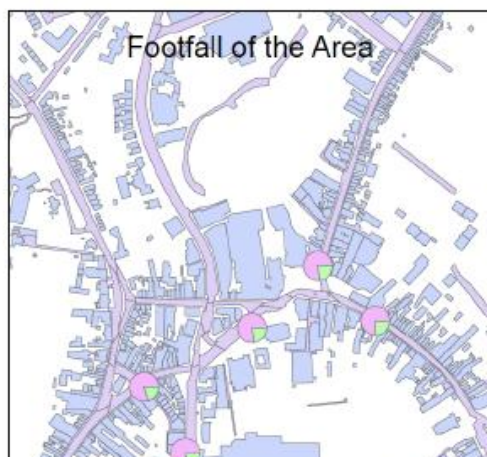
Field trip – Student Engagement

6 Groups of 4 Students



GIS Planning Project Module

Student Project Outputs



6 Group Projects

- Socio - Economic Profile of the Town
- Land Use Survey
- Vacancy Rate Survey
- Footfall Survey

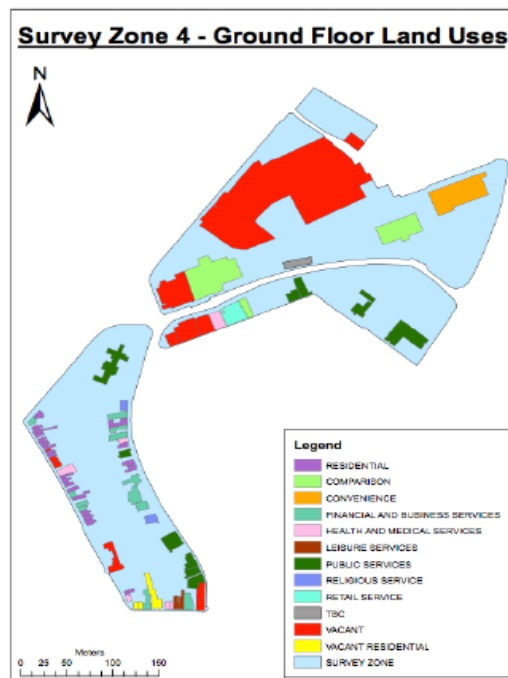
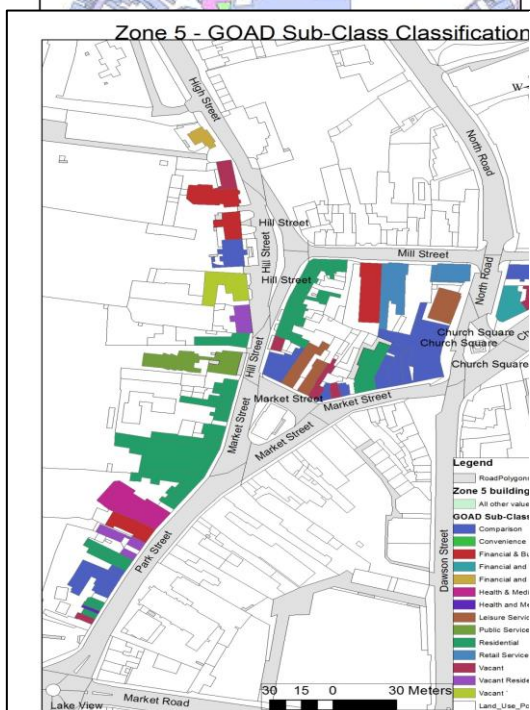


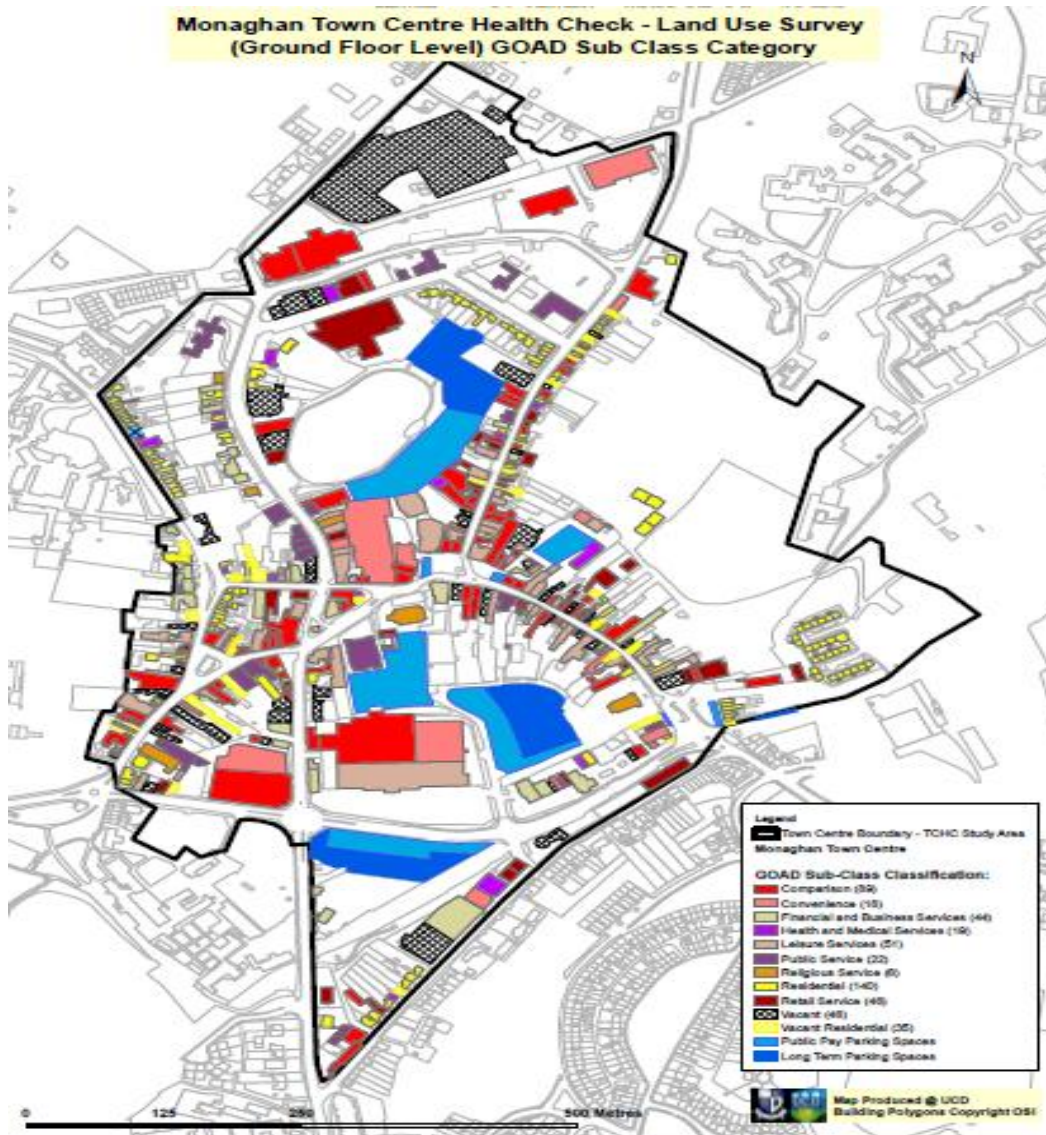
Figure 2. Ground Floor Land Uses

Group Project Final Output

Land Use Survey Key Findings



Monaghan Town Centre Health Check - Land Use Survey
(Ground Floor Level) GOAD Sub Class Category



All Buildings (Ground Floor only)	Number of Buildings	Percentage
Comparison	89	17.2%
Convenience	18	3.5%
Financial and Business Services	44	8.5%
Health and Medical Services	20	3.9%
Leisure Services	51	9.8%
Public Service	22	4.2%
Public Transport Facility	1	0.2%
Religious Service	6	1.2%
Residential	140	27.0%
Retail Service	45	8.7%
Vacant Other	46	8.9%
Vacant Residential	36	6.9%
Total	518	100.0%

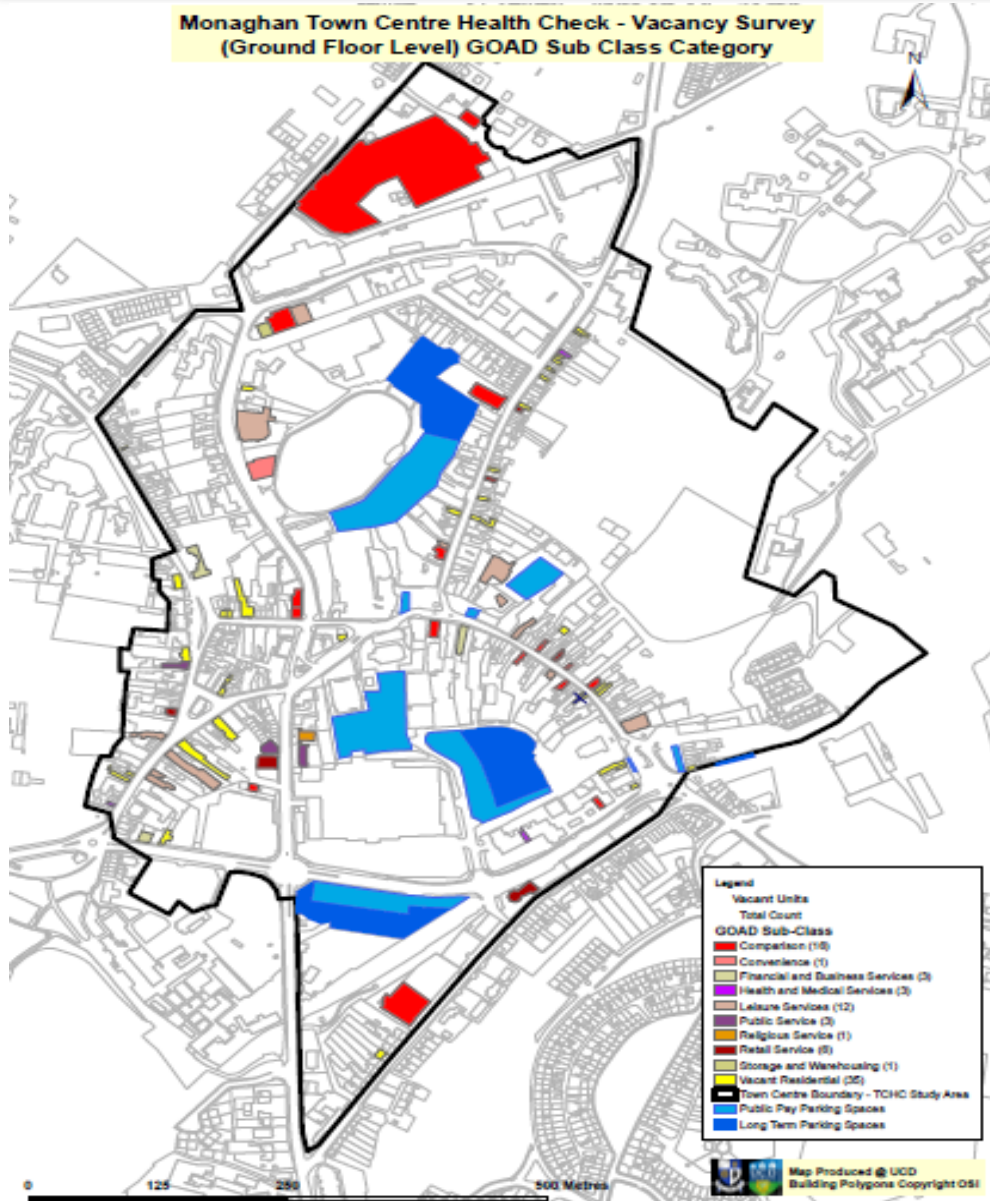


Group Project Final Output

Vacancy Survey Key Findings



Monaghan Town Centre Health Check - Vacancy Survey
(Ground Floor Level) GOAD Sub Class Category



Retail Vacancy Rate	Number of Buildings	Percentage
Comparison	89	45%
Convenience	18	9%
Retail Service	45	23%
Vacant Retail	46	23%
Total Retail Only	198	100%

Residential Vacancy Rate	Number of Buildings	Percentage
Residential	140	80%
Vacant Residential	36	20%
Total Residential only	176	100%



TCHC– UCD Lessons Learned



Co-operation between Council and 3rd Level Institution

- Requirement for OSI data agreement

Requirement of Accurate Data Collection in the Field

- GOAD Classification Issues
- Creation of an Irish Town Centre Health Check Landuse Classification – GIS requirements
- Necessary to be close to assigned town-for QA purposes
- Data Cleaning Process

Surveying Landuse/Vacancy Rates above Ground Floor

- Resource and time intensive

Multi-Disciplinary Research Approach Required

- GIS and Planning
- Students' engagement-positive feedback



Local Planning Module

Building on the GIS data



This semester the same students are undertaking preparation of a local development plan for Monaghan Town:

- **Scoping exercise** of the local context
- **Physical analysis** of Monaghan Town Centre, applying principles of urban analysis of the physical urban form, townscape analysis and land-use and urban character surveys. *Field trip: Saturday 25th February.*
- **A SWOT** (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) **analysis** of Monaghan and a vision for future development.

Students will develop site-specific proposals and priorities for the future development of Monaghan Town Centre.

Due for completion May 2017.





Monaghan County Council

‘Pilot’ Town Centre Health Check

Key findings and lessons learned from Monaghan

Máire Cullinan (Monaghan County Council)



County Monaghan – background issues



Dispersed rural population between 5 towns, villages and countryside

County pop. 60,483

Monaghan Town & environs pop. 7,452 (Census 2011)

Tradition of small farm holdings and diversification into agri-food and engineering (employment is dispersed)

Challenge of building critical mass in our towns (population and employment base)

Resilient Border communities - currency differential resulted in cautious business investments

BREXIT - unprecedented uncertainty – 600+ pieces of legislation for UK to look at competitive advantage

Local Authority has a role in making our towns attractive to live in and to entice investment



Role and function of our Town



Monaghan: employment/retail/administrative

What's good? - Historical character, urban form, strategic location between Belfast, Dublin and the NW, quality and choice of secondary schools, quality of life, variety of non-branded retail outlets, car parking, amenity, friendly, night life

What's missing? – youth population, highly skilled graduate job opportunities, health care, third level education, large scale private investment, range of services, bed night space, connectivity

Need to grow to sustain services



Regeneration in our Towns



Vacancy levels: 2016 Census figure for vacant dwellings 20.6% (Monaghan Urban)

TCHC findings - 20% vacant residential, 23% vacant retail

Urban Regeneration – to breathe life back into the towns (existing infrastructure, roads, water, heritage, amenities, shopping, services and communities)

IT MAKES SENSE - ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL and there is **CAPACITY IN OUR TOWNS**

Renewal – change in use patterns of town centres – less traditional retail, more social activity?

Consolidate/redefine our town centres to incorporate more living:

- investigate models for this (back lands, narrow plot)
- accommodate ageing population / families
- look at incentivising supports to property owners
- look at supports to Councils for land assembly and funding mechanisms
- review the thresholds for vacant site levy (0.05 ha)



Need for effective baseline data



A limited in-house vacancy survey carried out in November 2013 (identified 83 vacant commercial premises in Monaghan Town centre)

-not prepared in the context of overall land use survey or as a percentage of overall commercial premises

UCD has provided a quantitative land use survey that can be incorporated into Council's GIS and;

- ✓ provides a database that can be reviewed annually
- ✓ allows for analysis of land use activity
- ✓ inform the review of the county development plan
- ✓ focus on areas for renewal
- ✓ evidence-based approach to regeneration

'Pilot' warmly welcomed by Monaghan, opportunity for collaborative approach and to deliver baseline of data

Monaghan Town Team and residents had a warm welcome for and were delighted to see students taking an interest in their town

Using the data



Benefit of rollout of the TCHC programme in a number of towns: compare and contrast data



An opportunity to benchmark against similar sized towns: are there types of retail businesses and services in other towns that Monaghan should reasonably expect for their own town? (Opportunity for Town Team to follow up)



Dublin Street regeneration plan: data currently being used by consultants to inform their report



Continuing the cooperation with UCD



2nd semester (Spring 2017) students project – addressing urban form and public realm

- Analysing their primary land use data along with other primary data collected through other Monaghan County Council projects e.g. traffic and parking surveys
- Looking in more detail at specific town centre areas
- Good to have other perspectives on our Town and an opportunity for students to apply their planning knowledge



Lessons Learned



Good relationship with UCD to deliver land use survey and on-going public realm

Importance of effective GIS resource in Local Authorities (worked well in Monaghan)

Constraints of project – resource-laden: no budget within Council to deliver shopper surveys (€15,000+) and retailer surveys (not delivered by UCD due to time and distance constraints)



Data unavailable at local town level e.g. retail rental yields, that is available to larger urban centres

Examine ways of delivering on the constraints: technology, central resource base, particularly for smaller towns with ineffective budgets

Benefits of collective approach of ten pilots: learning and benchmarking



Opportunity to work together again with Third level would be warmly welcomed

And finally....



A word of appreciation to Ali in the Heritage Council and Tara in RGDATA for their leadership in the 'pilot' programme

Bringing together the four pillars:

- ✓ Local Authorities
- ✓ Third Level
- ✓ Town Teams/Chambers
- ✓ Local civic groups e.g. Tidy Towns

Highlight the need for effective town centre management to achieve revitalisation

Effective town centre management can only be achieved through collaboration, and, a good evidence based baseline of data is essential



Thank you



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