

# LIVING IN CARLINGFORD - VISITING CARLINGFORD RRDF

## Part 8 Planning Report



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17 April 2023

## Part 8 Planning Report

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

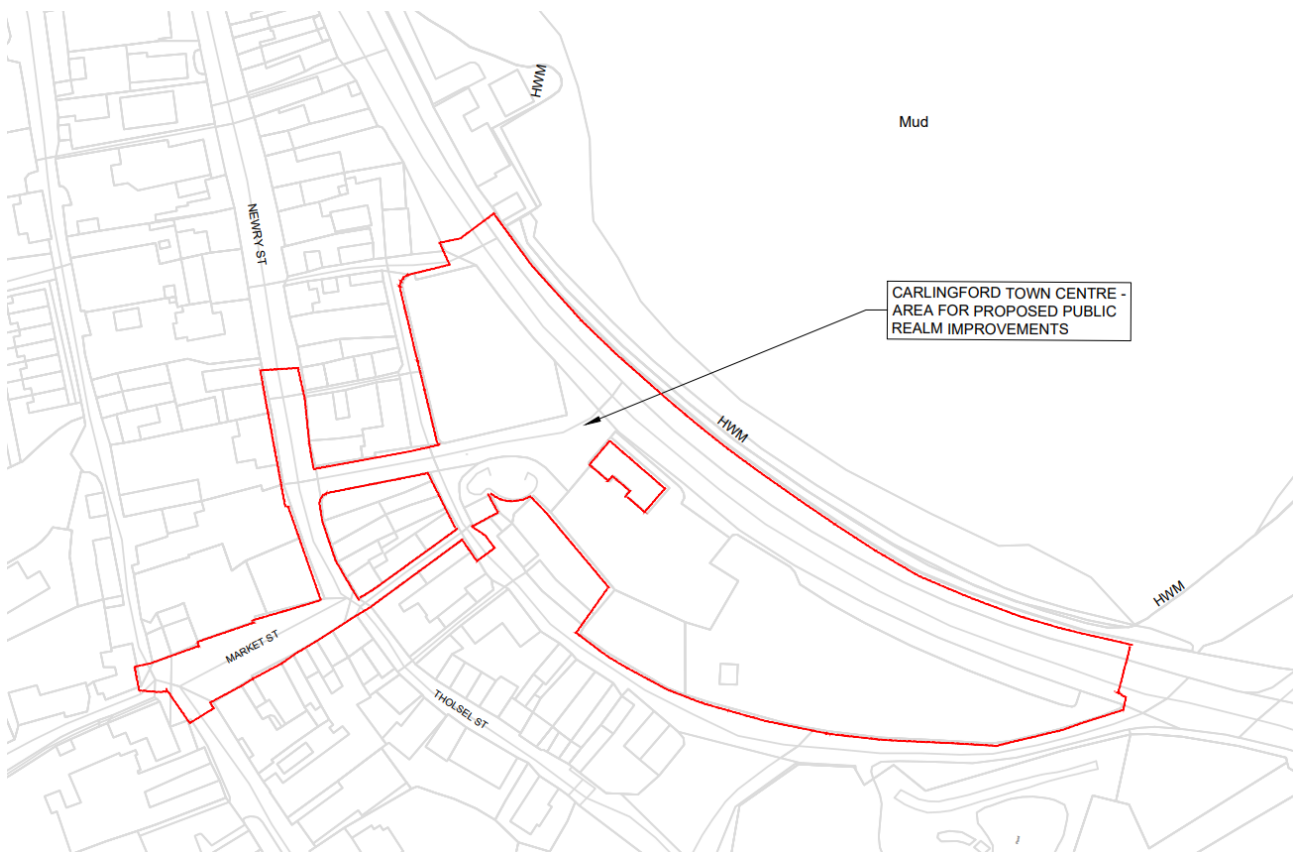
This report supports a Part VIII application for the Living in Carlingford – Visiting Carlingford RRDF project which proposes a range of enhancements to the existing public realm within Carlingford Town, a new car park and tennis court area to the south of the town. The nature and extent of the proposed works and the design proposals are described herein.

A location map for the town is located in **Appendix A**.

Detailed drawings of the proposed Works are included in **Appendix B**.

## 1.1 Extent of Works

The proposed development works outlined in Figures 1.1 and 1.2 below aspire to meet the short-term objectives of improving the physical and spatial quality of the streets and spaces in the Carlingford town centre area. The proposed works will be carried out within the existing footprint of the Carlingford urban area and a green field site along the R176 to the south of the town. A location map of the proposed extents of works is shown on Drawing No. IX0001 in Appendix A.



**Figure 1.1: Extent of Proposed Public Realm Works shown bound in Red**

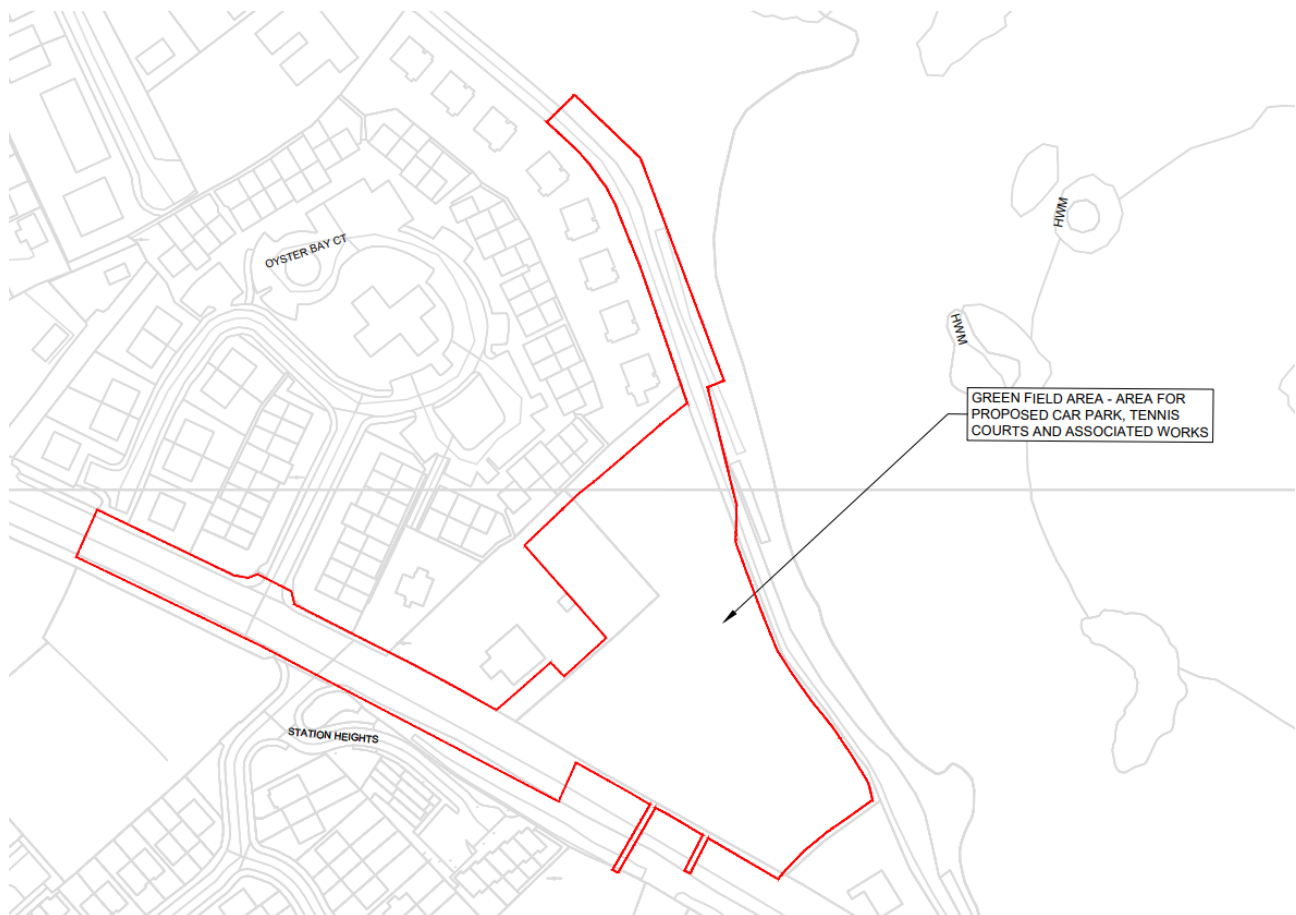


Figure 1.2: Extent of Proposed Car Park and Tennis Courts Works shown bound in Red

## 1.2 Objectives of Works

The Guiding Objectives of this project are;

- Deliver a sustainable regeneration of the town that will assist a low carbon lifestyle
- Deliver a transformative change for the town that will have social and economic benefits for the community which will act as a catalyst for increased activity for both the residents and visitors to the town
- Create a townscape that will continue to attract visitors and locals that will assist the local economy post Brexit.
- Deliver key objectives of the National Planning Framework (NPF) including compact growth, strengthened rural economies and communities and sustainable mobility
- Deliver key objectives of the Local Economic Community Plan to empower inclusive communities through enabling well-being, providing more pleasant pedestrian/cycle movements within and between key heritage assets and beyond
- Providing a new traffic management plan that aims to rationalise vehicular movements and reduce congestion
- Implement best practice design for all abilities to create an environment that can be enjoyed by all

The Living in Carlingford – Visiting Carlingford RRDF proposes to develop a strategy for enhancing the quality of the village of Carlingford for existing residents and promoting economic and employment opportunities by creating a sustainable tourism strategy also. This will be achieved with focus on 5 main objectives;

1. Improving the key area of arrival in Carlingford;
2. Public realm improvements to streets and spaces within the historic wall townscape;
3. The development of a traffic management plan;
4. Development of a cohesive signage and orientation plan;
5. and the development of a plan for accommodation and management of casual traders in the medieval town.

### 1.3 Key Themes and Urban Design Approach

The design of the proposed urban realm enhancements will adopt best practice and promote a high quality and inclusive environment for all. It will recognise the importance and diversity of its users and seeks to create an attractive, open, and user-friendly environment for the streets and spaces and how they are experienced.

The proposed urban design proposals are constrained physically by the medieval character of the narrow streets and built environment at Carlingford, the need to maintain some level of traffic flow and the requirements set out in The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS). The proposed urban realm improvements are illustrated in the General Arrangement Drawing No. 2391.1.03.

The selection of proposed materials for use in the enhancement will complement the existing historical context of Carlingford taking cognisance of the surrounding heritage and seeks to enhance this through the use of themes, creation of space, colour scheming and enhancement of vistas.

Natural stone paving is proposed throughout the scheme. The benefit of using a natural stone product over other products is that it relates to the overall visual quality / aesthetics of the improved streetscape and character of Carlingford. Natural stone paving is generally more robust in terms of general wear and tear and therefore likely to last longer when compare with a concrete product.

Important views to the historical landmark structures in Carlingford will be maintained and improved where possible through removal of clutter e.g., overuse of signage etc and appropriate tree planting ensuring no physical impact on any existing heritage features.

The maintenance and durability of selected materials will be considered to ensure that they are fit for purpose and their intended use. Kerbing and tactile paving will be used on footpaths and at crossings to assist partially sighted users.

The use of wayfinding signage and plaques inset to paving will be used to create a heritage trail which will lead visitors to the existing heritage sites and attractions in Carlingford.

The soft landscaping elements will comprise tree planting, raised planters and grass selected to reflect the coastal location and local environment. It is proposed to use a mix of moveable tree planter boxes and fixed tree planting in purpose-built tree pits strategically located throughout the town.

Services and charging points to facilitate events in new and existing civic spaces will be provided, including pop up power supplies.

### 1.4 Supporting Background Work to Date

#### 1.4.1 Option Selection

Prior to developing Options for urban realm improvements, RPS's team of Landscape Architects carried out a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis during a site walkover. This SWOT analysis was the foundations for preparing options to create a better urban realm environment. Three Options for urban realm improvements were developed based on the findings of the SWOT Analysis and themes associated with the Carlingford area. These Options are described in the following sections.

### 1.4.1.1 Option 1

Option 1 used Carlingford's Heritage as a theme as a means to promote tourism in the area. Key features of this Option are as follows;

- Axis focused on King John's Castle to link it with new civic space emphasised by paving & lighting
- Rill water feature along Market Square, River Lane to River Street
- Heritage themed Artwork
- Central parking area realigned with river garden SUD's system
- Themed paving and bespoke street furniture e.g. An Tain Trail
- Informal play/open space suitable for events
- Market Square – widened footpaths/shared space; no parking with disabled parking on Dundalk Street

### 1.4.1.2 Option 2

Option 2 used Carlingford's Outdoors activity opportunities as a theme as a means to promote tourism in the area. Key features of this Option are as follows;

- Focus on active spaces celebrating outdoor activities and uses
- Incorporate cover structures themed on ship sails
- Covered events area; seating/eating areas; play area/elements
- Interactive sculptural forms
- Programmable water feature
- PODs/Kiosks – temporary/permanent structures to create active frontage for picnics, cafes/food/markets etc
- Market Square – widened footpaths/shared space; disabled parking only; canopies for seating etc

### 1.4.1.3 Option 3

Option 3 amalgamated features from Options 1 and 2 to create a blend of themes. Key features of this Option are as follows;

- Axis focused on King John's Castle to link it with new civic space emphasised by paving & lighting
- Covered events area; seating/eating areas; play area/elements
- Interactive sculptural forms
- Programmable water feature
- Themed paving and bespoke street furniture e.g. Train Trail
- Informal play/open space suitable for events
- Market Square – widened footpaths/shared space; with disabled parking



### 1.4.1.4 Evaluation of Options

Each of the options listed above were appraised under the following criteria in order to choose a preferred option to be brought forward to Part 8 Planning;

- Level of service provided for pedestrians and vulnerable road users
- Level of service for cyclists
- Sustainability
- Cost
- Perceived Attractiveness to End User

Following the appraisal of the three proposed Options, it was recommended that Option 3 be brought forward to planning. The details of the Options appraisal are included in the Concepts/Feasibility and Options Report carried out by RPS for Louth County Council (LCC). This Report can be requested from LCC.

### 1.4.2 Traffic and Parking Impact

#### 1.4.2.1 Parking

RPS commissioned parking occupancy surveys in Carlingford on behalf of LCC in order to quantify the number of existing parking spaces within the town area and the demand for these spaces. These surveys were carried out over the Saturday and Sunday (31/07/2021 and 01/08/2021) of the August Bank Holiday so as to capture and measure seasonal challenges. The August Bank Holiday is recognised as a very busy period in the town.

The impacts on existing parking by the proposed Options for public realm improvements described in Section 1.5 were then assessed and potential mitigation proposed in the form of new car parking locations. A total of 11 new car park locations were assessed as potential sites to mitigate the reduction of parking within the town. The proposed car park proposed as part of this development was one of these 11 sites.

#### 1.4.2.2 Traffic

Traffic flows were recorded during the same period as the parking survey described in Section 1.5.2.1. The flows were recorded using a combination of junction turning counts and pneumatic tubes. The purpose of these surveys was to gather information for the production of a traffic management strategy for Carlingford. The aim of this strategy as defined in the Project Brief is;

*“The removal of congestion in Carlingford and delivering more rationalised vehicular movements and parking plan within the village that will promote innovation and build innovation capacity within the village and its hinterland particularly with Omeath and Greenore”*

The proposals in this scheme do not alter the current traffic flows within Carlingford but do alter the streetscape through the narrowing of road carriageways and use of materials other than standard asphalt to allow for future alterations to traffic flows and pedestrianisation of streets.

The details of the parking and traffic analysis are included in the Parking and Traffic Management Strategy Report carried out by RPS for LCC which is included within the Part 8 documentation.

## 2 PROPOSED WORKS

### 2.1 Description of the Works

Detailed drawings of the proposed Works are included in **Appendix B**. The proposed development works will comprise the following works:

- Upgrade of footpath materials and widths to give greater comfort to pedestrian traffic
- Trader Facilities;
- Upgrade of traffic and pedestrian management within the town to give greater emphasis to pedestrians and create a clear hierarchy that puts pedestrians before vehicular traffic within the town centre This will be achieved by reducing road carriageway widths, widening footways, creating shared surfaces and inclusion of tactile paving at crossing points.
- Resurfacing of existing pavements
- New railings and bollards to discourage illegal parking
- Bicycle parking
- Street furniture including bins and seats
- Traffic calming ramps, pedestrian crossings
- New trees and vegetation
- New signage and an evaluation of existing signage with an aim to remove unnecessary signage or relocate signage.
- New / replacement of functional street lighting. New feature lighting in the form of strip lighting to be introduced to some pedestrian areas and tall feature lights will be used in a functional manner at the civic and park areas
- Removal of some existing car parking and provision of 63 car parking spaces, of which a minimum of 5% will be accessible parking bays i.e. a reduction (by 57 no. spaces) in car parking within the town centre area;
- New utility services /upgrading of existing services (if required), including watermains, foul, storm and water drainage, ESB services, WiFi and Broadband and also the undergrounding of existing overhead cables where possible.
- A new car park facility to the south of the town with formal bus parking facility
- Removal of existing public tennis courts and associated walls;

It is estimated that the proposed work will take approximately 12 months to complete on site. The proposed works will take place within an existing area that is predominantly hard surface. It is the intent of this project to create areas that will improve the landscape for pedestrians and visitors to the town.

### 2.2 Public Realm Design

The design of the proposed public realm enhancements adopts best practice and promotes a high quality and inclusive environment for all. It recognises the importance and diversity of its users and seeks to create an attractive, open, and user-friendly environment for the streets and how they are experienced.

For example, trees, lighting poles and seating are placed at strategic locations to define pedestrian movement through the street. The maintenance and durability of the materials has been considered to ensure that they are fit for purpose. Kerbing and tactile paving will be provided at suitable locations to assist partially sighted users.

The colour scheme of the proposed materials has been chosen to complement the existing historical backdrop of Carlingford, specifically the King Johns Castle and Taaffe's Castle. The vistas towards these historical structures will also be improved through the provision of additional public realm space and the channelling of views towards them without obstruction. There will be no physical impact on heritage features.

It is noted that this scheme and the proposed enhancements are constrained by the existing built form within Carlingford, the need to maintain traffic flows and the requirements set out in The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS). The design has taken cognisance of the surrounding heritage and seeks to enhance this through the use of themes, creation of space, colour scheming and enhancement of vistas.

### 2.2.1 Design Theme/Ethos

### 2.2.2 Market St.

The proposed alterations to Market St. will aim to recharacterise the street from a car dominated area to a pedestrian friendly area with widened footpaths to encourage shop spill out, outdoor dining and comfortable congregation. To achieve this, the following interventions will be required;

- Reduction of traffic lanes from two to one lane
- Creation of a shared surface area, achieved by the changing of road materials from asphalt to block paving and reduction of kerb heights to create a flush surface between road and footpath. Tactile paving will be provided to assist partially sighted users to navigate the area
- Reduction of parking to gain additional footpath space. Proposed parking provided will comprise two disabled parking bays at the existing pharmacy location
- Upgrading of public lighting to include feature lighting and more aesthetically pleasing lighting columns



**Figure 2.1: Market St. Existing and Proposed Layout**

### 2.2.3 Link from R173 to Market St.

The proposed alterations to the street linking the R173 to Market St. will aim to create a pedestrian friendly linkage. To achieve this, the following interventions will be required;

- Creation of a shared surface area, achieved by the changing of road materials from asphalt to block paving and reduction of kerb heights to create a flush surface between road and footpath. Tactile paving will be provided to assist partially sighted users to navigate the area
- Reduction of road carriageway width to promote lower driving speeds, discourage illegal parking and e use by vehicular traffic.
- Upgrading of public lighting to include feature lighting and more aesthetically pleasing lighting columns

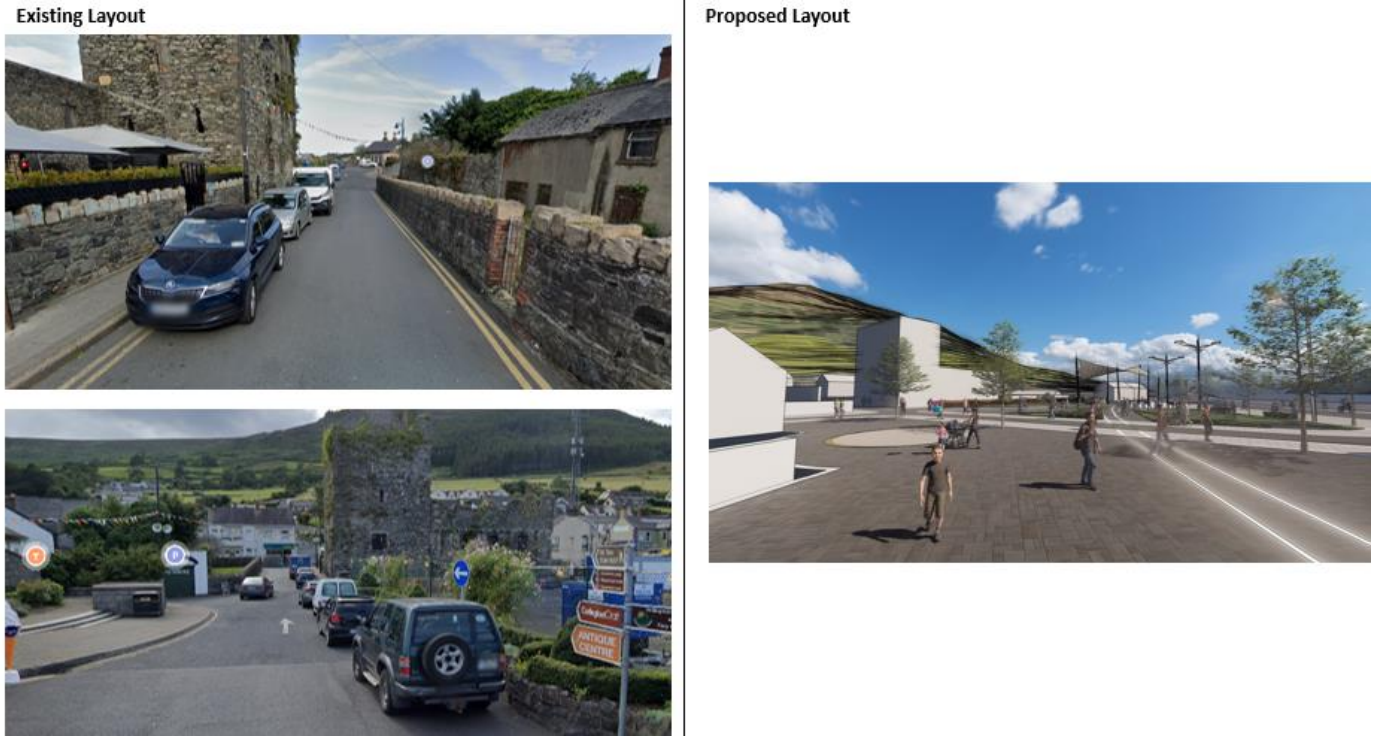


Figure 2.2: Link from R173 to Market St. Existing and Proposed Layout

### 2.2.4 New Public Realm Area

It is proposed to create a new public realm area at the location of the existing tennis courts area. The tennis courts will be moved to a location to the south of the town as part of this proposed scheme.

The new public realm area will provide a new location for people to gather and will provide opportunity to host outdoor events such as markets and open-air concerts. This transformative proposal for this area will include;

- Creation of a public realm area, achieved by the changing of materials from asphalt to block paving and reduction of kerb heights to create a flush surface between road and footpath. Tactile paving will be provided to assist partially sighted users to navigate the area
- Provision of street furniture to create a place for people to spend time and rest while enjoying views of Carlingford Lough and King Johns Castle
- Planting is proposed to soften the colour scheme of the area
- Removal of the boundary wall to the tennis courts to open this new public realm area towards the waterfront area and promote linkage between the town centre and the waterfront. Part of the wall that runs adjacent to the rear access road to the properties to the north of the proposed new public realm area will be retained as it is a protected structure. This access road will be paved in the same material as the road carriageways along Market St. The link between the R173 and Market St. will be a shared surface area.
- The public lighting will be upgraded to include feature lighting and more aesthetically pleasing lighting columns
- A new water feature will be provided to strengthen the link to the waterfront

Existing Layout



Proposed Layout



Figure 2.3: New Public Realm Area Existing and Proposed Layout

## 2.2.5 Public Realm Area to Rear of Tourist Office and Green Area

It is proposed to create a new public realm area to the rear of the tourist office. This public realm area will replace the existing car park which will be moved to the south of Carlingford Town Centre. The aim of this public realm area will be to provide space for local vendors to utilise and remove the car dominance from the town centre.

This proposal for this area will include;

- Creation of a public realm area, achieved by the changing of materials from asphalt to block paving and reduction of kerb heights to create a flush surface between road and footpath. Tactile paving will be provided to assist partially sighted users to navigate the area
- Provision of areas for street vendors to use
- Planting is proposed to soften the colour scheme of the area
- Relocation of car park
- Upgrading of public lighting to include feature lighting and more aesthetically pleasing lighting columns
- Locations will be provided for art sculptures
- Relocation of playground area and upgrading of equipment
- Relocated toilet block

Existing Layout



Proposed Layout



Figure 2.4: Public Realm area to rear of Tourist Office and Green area Existing and Proposed Layout

## 2.2.6 R173/Waterfront Area

Along the section of the R173 at the waterfront area of Carlingford it is proposed to;

- Narrow the road carriageway to increase footpath space
- Enhance crossing points
- Reorientate parking and remove parking along the waterfront
- Provide planting to soften the colour scheme of the area
- Upgrade the public lighting to include feature lighting and more aesthetically pleasing lighting columns



Figure 2.5: R173/Waterfront Area Existing and Proposed Layout

## 2.3 Impact on Parking

The Traffic and Parking Management Plan recorded 120 parking spaces within the extents of the proposed public realm improvements. The public realm improvements described in this Report will result in a reduction in parking numbers in the town centre of 57no. This leaves a remaining 63no. parking spaces within the town centre, excluding 21 spaces in the Tholsel Car Park and on-street parking along Newry St. and Dundalk St.

Parking within the town centre will be located as shown in the below Figure 22 and listed below

- 12no. existing parking spaces retained along the southbound lane of the R173
- 11no. parking spaces along the northbound lane of the R173, including 2no. disabled parking bays
- 38 new parking spaces within the proposed relocated town centre car park, including 2no. disabled bays
- 2no. disabled parking bays along Market St.

The total disabled parking bay provision throughout the town is 6, which is greater than the 5% required in the Louth County Development Plan 2021 -2027

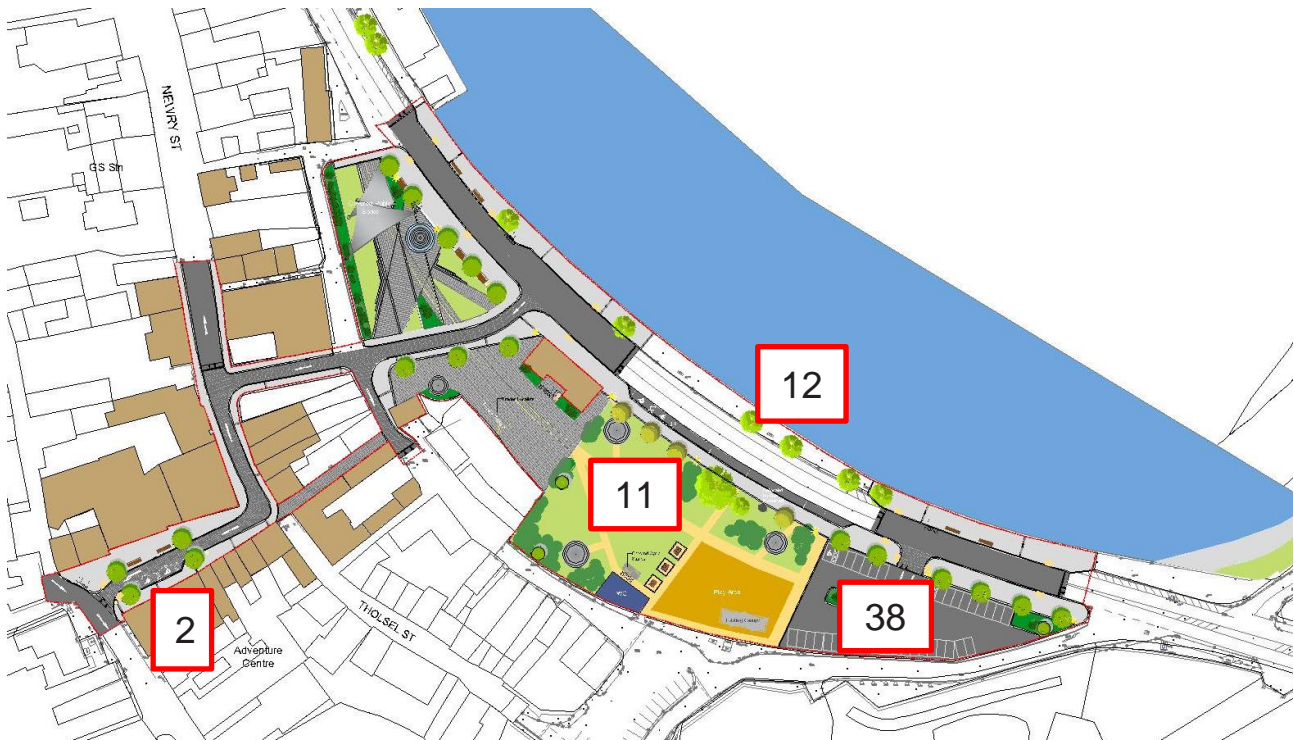


Figure 2.6: Town Centre Parking Layout

## 2.4 Car Park and Tennis Court Design

The public realm improvements within the town centre area of Carlingford result in a reduction of car parking spaces and the change of use of the existing asphalt tennis court area to a new public realm focal point. To mitigate the potential negative impacts of these changes, LCC are proposing to construct a new car park facility and tennis courts on a greenfield site located between the Ghan Road and the Greenore Road immediately to the southeast of the town centre. The proposed car park and tennis courts will comprise,

- 148 car parking spaces. This parking is, made up of; 8 disabled parking bays, 10 potential electric car charging parking bays (with potential to expand), 9 parent and child parking bays and 121 standard parking bays. This increase in car parking capacity will increase the parking capacity of Carlingford by 91 spaces.
- 2 no. new porous asphalt tennis courts complete with lighting. Tennis court drainage to consist of filter drain system connecting to closed pipe network
- New gully and pipe drainage network tying into the existing network on Ghan Road
- Permeable paving SuDS used in parking bays to reduce surface water run-off
- New ESB substation, comprising of an above ground steel cabinet of dimensions approx. 2.6m x 2.2m x 2.0m;
- Ducting for communications and electrical services requirements
- Public lighting, ducting for communications and electrical services requirements;
- Pedestrian network including concrete footpaths connecting to the existing footpath network on the Ghan Road. A linkage to the existing footpath network along the R176 will be provided and a proposed new pedestrian crossing point to provide a continuous linkage for pedestrians into Carlingford town centre from the proposed car park along this route;
- Internal asphalt road network with road markings
- Bus parking set down bays and campervan



- Landscaping

The layout of the proposed new car park and tennis courts are shown in Figure 2.7 below and in Appendix B



Figure 2.7: Proposed New Car Park and Tennis Courts Layout



Figure 2.8: New footpath linkage and Pedestrian Crossing on R176

## 3 POLICY CONTEXT

### 3.1 Louth County Development Plan 2021 - 2027

The Louth County Development Plan 2021 -2027 sets out strategies and objectives for growth and preservation of the county. Within this development plan, Carlingford is described as a 'Self Sustaining Town' that requires investments in services, employment and infrastructure whilst balancing housing growth. This proposed development supports this through its objective to *"Deliver a transformative change for the town that will have social and economic benefits for the community which will act as a catalyst for increased activity for both the residents and visitors to the town"*

The Development Plan has a Policy Objective: TOU 16 *"To support and promote existing festivals and sporting events to increase the cultural, heritage and lifestyle profile of the county, and where appropriate to promote and facilitate the development of new events and venues to host these events."* The creation of new public realm space supports this objective by creating a space for existing festivals to utilise and new festivals to grow.

The Development Plan supports the proposed car park through Policy Objective: ENV 61 *"To support proposals that improve access to marine and coastal resources for tourism activities and sport and recreation, where appropriate, at the applicable scale."*

The Development Plan supports the development of the tennis courts through Spot Objective Number: 9 *To support any proposal for a community or recreational facility on these lands subject to any development being of a high quality architectural design, scale and layout that will support the preservation and enhancement of the environmental quality of this sensitive landscape."* The location of the proposed tennis courts has been strategically chosen at the rear of the existing fire station and tower to reduce negative visual impact.

Within the Louth County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 there is a Statement document that sets out Policies and Objectives targeted at Carlingford solely.

### 3.2 Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly – Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)

The RSES is a strategic plan which identifies regional assets, opportunities and pressures and provides appropriate policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives. At this strategic level it provides a framework for investment to better manage spatial planning and economic development to sustainably grow the Region to 2031 and beyond.

The RSES provides a:

- Spatial Strategy – to manage future growth and ensure the creation of healthy and attractive places to live, work, study, visit and invest in.
- Economic Strategy – that builds on our strengths to sustain a strong economy and support the creation of quality jobs that ensure a good living standard for all.
- Metropolitan Plan – to ensure a supply of strategic development areas for the sustainable growth and continued success and competitiveness of the Dublin Metropolitan Area.
- Investment Framework – to prioritise the delivery of key enabling infrastructure and services by government and state agencies.
- Climate Action Strategy – to accelerate climate action, ensure a clean and healthy environment and to promote sustainable transport and strategic green infrastructure.

The principal statutory purpose of the RSES is to support the implementation of Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework and National Development Plan 2019-2027 and the economic policies of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the Regions.

The RSES will be implemented by way of a review by local authorities of all development plans and Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs). Key state agencies and sectoral bodies will also consider their

strategies and investment plans, post adoption of RSES, to support the achievement of National and Regional Strategic Outcomes set out in the NPF and RSES.

### 3.2.1 Project Ireland 2040

Project Ireland 2040 is the government's long-term overarching strategy to make Ireland a better country for all and to move towards more sustainable future.

#### 3.2.1.1 National Planning Framework

**National Policy Objective 4:** *Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being.*

**National Policy Objective 6:** *Regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages of all types and scale as environmental assets, that can accommodate changing roles and functions, increased residential population and employment activity and enhanced levels of amenity and design quality, in order to sustainably influence and support their surrounding area.*

**National Policy Objective 7:** *Reversing the stagnation or decline of many smaller urban centres, by identifying and establishing new roles and functions and enhancement of local infrastructure and amenities.*

**National Policy Objective 12:** *The Government will establish a National Regeneration and Development Agency to work with local authorities, other public bodies and capital spending departments and agencies to co-ordinate and secure the best use of public lands, investment required within the capital envelopes provided in the National Development Plan and to drive the renewal of strategic areas not being utilised to their full potential. The Government will consider how best to make State lands available to such a body to kick-start its development role and to legislate for enhanced compulsory purchase powers to ensure that the necessary transformation of the places most in need of regeneration can take place more swiftly and effectively.*

**National Policy Objective 52:** *The planning system will be responsive to our national environmental challenges and ensure that development occurs within environmental limits, having regard to the requirements of all relevant environmental legislation and the sustainable management of our natural capital.*

## 4 DESIGN STANDARDS AND APPROACH

### 4.1 Design Standards

The design standard adopted for this scheme follows the requirements of the Design Manual for Urban Streets (DMURS) (version 1.1 – 2019).

Other guidance documents which are relevant to this scheme include;

- Smarter Travel A Sustainable Transport Future (2012)
- The National Cycle Manual (2011)
- The National Cycle Policy Framework. (2009)

### 4.2 Design Approach

The project is currently at Preliminary Design Stage. Detailed design of the scheme will be undertaken on successful approval of the Part VIII application and in accordance with any conditions imposed.

#### 4.2.1 Junctions & Accesses

Corner radii have been designed in accordance with guidance set out in DMURS and following the swept path analysis previously described.

All existing accesses will remain in place. No new accesses are proposed.

#### 4.2.2 Drainage

Currently there are foul and storm sewers present. There are no known issues with the existing sewer network and no increase to sewer capacity is anticipated.

Where required new storm water sewers will be installed, and surface water gullies connected to it. It is anticipated that no new sewer system will be required to be installed within the town centre but will be required within the proposed car parks and tennis courts. New gullies will be required as the streetscape changes.

There will be no increase to hard standing/impermeable areas within the town centre area as a consequence of these works.

SuDS elements are proposed where space permits, in the form of Hydro Planters. These planters take surface run-off from roads and footpaths and use it to irrigate plants. A gap is left in kerbing, either from the road or in a built surround from the footpath which allows water seep into the Hydro Planter. The Hydro Planter stores this water and uses it to irrigate plants. The unit then discharges excess water to the sewer networks (Refer **Figure 4-1**)

Car parking bays, where site conditions allow, will be constructed of permeable paving block sets. The proposed tennis court area will be constructed of porous asphalt, draining to a filter drain system that will connect to a new closed sewer network that will outfall to an existing manhole on Ghan Road as shown on proposed drawings no. DG0006.



**Figure 4-1 SuDS - Hydro Planter (source: Greenleaf Urban Tree Systems)**

Roof run-off from downpipes can also be used as SuDS features where individual shop owners agree and is architecturally suitable. An example of this type of feature is shown in Error! Reference source not found.



**Figure 4-2 SuDS Feature to Capture Roof Run-off from Building Down Pipes**

### 4.2.3 Watermains

The watermains shall be upgraded if required based on Irish Water commitment or approval at detailed design stage. Consultation will also be required with Irish Water to assess the need for future requirements.

### 4.2.4 Road Pavement

The level of pavement construction will be dependent on-site investigation results. Site investigations will be carried out prior to the detailed design of the scheme. Road pavement will consist of either natural stone paving or asphalt depending on site and budget constraints.

### 4.2.5 Footways Pavement

Footways throughout will be paved in a natural stone paving on a mortar bed with an approximate foundation depth of 150mm in areas where pedestrian activity is envisaged and an approximate foundation depth of 225mm in areas where there is or likely to be vehicle usage. An 80mm depth paver will be used in areas where pedestrian activity is envisaged and a 150mm paver where there is likely to be vehicle usage. The additional paver and foundation depth in vehicle areas will ensure robustness.

### 4.2.6 Other Utilities

All overhead cables and lines will be relocated underground, and poles removed where possible. Consultations to date with utility providers have not recognised any need for additional supplies. This will be re-visited during detailed design stage of this project. Any additional service needs identified will be catered for and installed during the construction phase.

### 4.2.7 Other Works

All other works will be designed in accordance with TII Publications and the Specification for Roadworks suite of documents.

## **5 CONSULTATION**

### **5.1 Presentation of Options**

RPS and LCC carried out an initial public consultation event online and in person at the Four Seasons Hotel in Carlingford on 3rd November 2021. This public consultation involved the presentation of high-level concepts for the town as well as the SWOT Analysis carried out. Members of the public were invited to give feedback both online and in person. The feedback from both the online and in person consultation was collated and examined by ROS and LCC and where possible has been incorporated into the proposals in this Part 8 Application.

The presentation of the proposed development will be carried out again during the Part 8 Planning process.

### **5.2 Presentation of Preferred Option to Louth County Council**

Following the development of the emerging preferred design option, a presentation was given by RPS to LCC Senior Management. Where appropriate the feedback from these parties has been considered and addressed in the proposals within this Part 8 Application.

### **5.3 Statutory Bodies**

The following statutory bodies shall be notified of this Part 8 application in accordance with Article 82 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended:

- Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government
- The Heritage Council
- An Taisce
- Minister for Arts, Heritage & Gaeltacht
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland
- Minister for Communications, Energy and National Resources
- Irish Water
- Failte Ireland
- The Office of Public Works
- An Chomhairle Ealaíon



## 6 ARCHITECTURAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

### 6.1 Architectural Heritage

#### 6.1.1 Town Centre Area

An Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment was carried out by Consarc Conservation in March 2023 for the Carlingford town centre area shown in Figure 1-1 previously. This assessment and its mitigation measures are summarised below. A full copy of this assessment has been submitted with this application

##### 6.1.1.1 Impact Assessment

As the works of this project are related to Public Realm Street Improvements, it is not assumed that there will be any harm to the Protected Structures or indeed any other buildings which line the streets.

It is assumed that the proposed Public Realm works will serve to enhance the buildings providing an improved setting for them using appropriate traditional quality materials.

Any works to the site should be carried out in accordance with best conservation practice, as defined by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in the Venice Charter of 1964 and subsequent charters.

As the works are for Public Realm works rather than to buildings, it is anticipated that the impacts on the Protected Structures will not be significant and will be largely positive upon completion.

The Design works have been assessed in heritage terms to the following streets within the Public realm Proposal which all lie within the Architectural Conservation Area.

##### 6.1.1.2 Conclusions

The Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment report concludes;

*“The summary of the Conservation Architects Comments is that the works will improve and enhance the setting of the ACA and the Protected Structures by the introduction of more high-quality traditional materials. These both improve the physical setting and allow the pedestrian visitor to more easily appreciate the heritage at close quarters.”*

##### 6.1.1.3 Car Park and Tennis Court Area

The proposed car park and tennis courts were introduced to this project to offset the loss of car parking and the loss of the two tennis courts located in the town centre. The car park and tennis courts were added to the project after the Architectural Impact Assessment was completed. As such, the report does not address these areas. LCC have assessed these areas internally with regards architectural impact and have no concerns with regards any negative impact. Should this Part 8 application be successful, these areas will be included in further architectural impact assessment.

### 6.2 Archaeological Heritage

#### 6.2.1 Town Centre Area

An Archaeological Assessment was carried out by IAC Archaeology in November 2021 for the Carlingford town centre area. This assessment and its mitigation measures are summarised below. A full copy of this assessment has been submitted with this application

### 6.2.1.1 Impact Assessment

- *“Whilst it is clear that the proposed scheme footprint has been subject to development and disturbance during the post-medieval and modern periods it is not clear how this disturbance may have affected the archaeological resource.*
- *With such a significant amount of medieval fabric surviving throughout the streetscape of Carlingford, there is high potential for any ground works to have an adverse impact on any surviving below ground archaeological remains.*
- *The southern return wall to Taaffes Castle (CH25) would originally have crossed the footpath and the road to the south may survive at a shallow depth beneath these modern surfaces.*
- *Carlingford retains most of its historic character. The town displays a large number of jostle stones to buildings which are located on corners. Their purpose was to divert the wheels of horse drawn carriages around the sharp corners of the buildings. Any form of ground works around these may dislodge, damage or remove them from their original location and should be avoided as they form integral elements of the streetscape.*
- *As such, any ground disturbances below the modern road levels and footpaths, such as the excavation of service diversions or pits for tree planting etc, may have an adverse impact on previously unrecorded archaeological features or deposits that have the potential to survive beneath the current ground surface level.”*

### 6.2.1.2 Mitigation

- *“Reconstruction works should be sympathetic to the historic character that the town of Carlingford possesses.*
- *It is recommended that all ground disturbances that result in excavations which are associated with the proposed scheme be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist. If any features of archaeological potential are discovered during the course of the works further archaeological mitigation may be required, such as preservation in-situ or by record. Any further mitigation will require approval from the National Monuments Service of the DoHLGH.”*

## 6.2.2 Car Park and Tennis Court Area

A review of the National Monuments Service Historic Environment Viewer shows no significant archaeological features within this site. Prior to detailed design, a full desktop and on-site archaeological review of the site will be carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist and mitigation measures, if required will be put in place to protect any potential archaeological finds within the site.

## 7 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT/CONSIDERATIONS

### 7.1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment

RPS carried out a Report to inform Screening for Appropriate Assessment as part of this planning application. This Report is included within the Planning Documents. This Report concluded that;

*“Through an assessment of the source-pathway-receptor model, which considered the zone of influence of effects from the proposed development and the potential in-combination effects with other plans or projects, the following findings were reported:*

- *The proposed development is not predicted to result in any Likely Significant Effects on any European site(s) within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.*

*In conclusion, it is the opinion of RPS that AA (‘Stage 2’) is not required.*

*As per Article 42(7) of the EU Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011-2015:*

*“Appropriate Assessment of a plan or project is not required ...if it can be excluded on the basis of objective scientific information following screening under this Regulation, that the plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site”.*”

### 7.2 EIAR Screening Report

RPS carried out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report as part of this planning application. This Report is included within the Planning Documents. This Report concluded that;

*“This EIA Screening Report has considered the proposed development in terms of (i) Characteristics of Proposed Development, (ii) Location of Proposed Development and (iii) Characteristics of Potential Impacts, in accordance with the DEHLG Guidance Document, Schedule 7 of the EIA Regulations in determining whether the development would or would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment. Following the sub-threshold assessment outlined in Section 5, it is considered that there are no likely significant environmental effects from the proposed works. As such, it is concluded that EIA is not required.”*

### 7.3 Flood Risk Assessment

RPS assessed flood risk for the proposed car park and tennis courts and the town centre area as part of this planning application. The Flood Risk Assessment Report for the car park and tennis courts is included within the Planning Documents. This Report concluded that;

#### **Car Park and Tennis Courts:**

The site is identified to be at flood risk from coastal flooding, placing the majority of the site within Flood Zone A, with flood depths on-site of up to 1m predicted for the 0.5%AEP coastal flood event. The site is zoned within the Louth County Development Plan for ‘Tourism and Leisure’, and is the only land zoned for this purpose within the Carlingford Town settlement. The proposed development of the site for tennis courts and associated parking is considered a water compatible land use and is therefore an appropriate development of the site without need of the Justification Test, in accordance with the Planning Guidelines for Flood Risk Management (DoEHLG 2009). As the source of flooding will be coastal sea level, flood risk is managed through the provision of safe egress from the facilities via Greenore Road on the inland boundary of the site. As required within the objectives of the Louth CDP, on-site attenuation of surface water flows will be provided using SuDs measures through permeable paving and infiltration should detailed site investigations and testing results allow.

#### **Town Centre area;**

A Justification Test satisfied the criteria set out in the Guidelines for the provision of “inappropriate developments”. The proposed development agrees with the land zoning as part of the LCC development Plan 2021-2027. The proposals will not increase flood risk to the site or elsewhere. Greenspace will be provided to replicate existing conditions so as to not increase impermeable areas and surface water runoff. The residual flood risks to the area are the same for existing condition and proposed development. The

proposed works will promote growth in Carlingford as a self-sustaining town as per the LCC Development Plan 2021-2027.

Mitigation for the proposals include the provision of green space similar to the existing scenario, minimizing the increase in hard-surface areas that would otherwise pose a risk to flooding due to increased load on the existing stormwater network. It is recommended that the development design and the choice of materials be cognizant of the potential effects of the marine environment and also of potential flooding at the site. No drainage improvement works are proposed as part of this scheme and so will remain as per the existing condition. Tide levels should be considered during the construction phase in case of water ingress into any excavation required as part of the development.

## 8 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report demonstrates:

- The proposed development are in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, and relevant policy documents including the Louth County Development Plan, Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly – Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) and the National Planning Framework.
- The project will contribute to Carlingford Town`s competitiveness and liveability both by influencing the image of the town outside the county and by transforming Carlingford into a more attractive and vibrant place.
- The proposed development will cater for increased footpath width, and improve the streetscape for vulnerable road users, and will enhance urban realm space in Carlingford and make Carlingford more aesthetically appealing.
- The proposed development will provide safer road crossings and conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, and more attractive pedestrian links to off-street car parking facilities.
- The proposed development will substantially improve the quality of the public realm and pedestrian and cyclist provisions in the centre of Carlingford Town

It is envisaged that, should the proposals set out in this report be approved, they will;

- Transform Carlingford to make it more attractive to its population and citizens for the next 50 years
- Showcase existing historical buildings through the use of complimentary coloured materials. This is seen as a way of protecting and enhancing the heritage of the town within the project brief.
- Provide a new 21<sup>st</sup> century canvas upon which retail and other urban uses appropriate to modern requirements can be enabled to flourish, develop and progress
- Create a new town centre environment which is significantly attractive to residents, visitors, businesses, and tourists
- Retain as many shoppers and recreational users as possible, and maximising this to the greatest possible extent
- Create new opportunities for businesses – including new event spaces, new eating and socialising spaces, new pop upmarket spaces etc

It is recommended that the scheme as described in this Part 8 Report and accompanying Drawings be approved by Louth County Council and be brought forward for detailed design and construction.