Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028

Reference number 300748/BLTP/01

**27/05/2022**

# **BALLINASLOE** LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

# GALWAY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-2028

BALLINASLOE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

| IDENTIFICATION TABLE | |
|---|---|
| **Client/Project owner** | Galway County Council |
| **Project** | Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 |
| **Study** | Ballinasloe Local Transport Plan |
| **Type of document** | Final Report |
| **Date** | 27/05/2022 |
| **File name** | Ballinasloe LTP Final V3.docx |
| **Reference number** | 300748/BLTP/01 |
| **Number of pages** | 118 |

| APPROVAL | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Version** | **Name** | | **Position** | **Date** | **Modifications** |
| **1** | Author | CD/EJ/HM | Consultant / Principal / Associate | 16/08/2021 | 1st Draft (WIP) |
| | Checked by | HM | Associate | 16/08/2021 | |
| | Approved by | AA | Director | 16/08/2021 | |
| **2** | Author | CD/EJ/HM | Consultant / Principal / Associate | 21/09/2021 | 2nd Draft |
| | Checked by | HM | Associate | 21/09/2021 | |
| | Approved by | AA | Director | 21/09/2021 | |
| **1** | Author | CD/EJ/HM | Consultant / Principal / Associate | 21/10/2021 | Final V1 |
| | Checked by | HM | Associate | 21/10/2021 | |
| | Approved by | AA | Director | 21/10/2021 | |
| **2** | Author | CD/EJ/HM | Consultant / Principal / Associate | 15/12/2021 | |
| | Checked by | HM | Associate | 15/12/2021 | Final V2 |
| | Approved by | AA | Director | 15/12/2021 | |
| **3** | Author | CD/EJ/HM | Consultant / Principal / Associate | 27/05/2022 | Final V3 |
| | Checked by | HM | Associate | 27/05/2022 | |
| | Approved by | AA | Director | 27/05/2022 | |

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## LIST OF FIGURES

## LIST OF TABLES

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Overview of LTP

1.1.1 Galway County Council (the Council) is developing a new Transport Study for the county alongside Local Transport Plans (LTPs) for the towns of Tuam and Ballinasloe. The Galway County Transport and Planning Study (GCTPS) has been completed and has recently been subject to public consultation alongside the Galway County Development Plan (2022-2028). The GCTPS was formally adopted in June 2022.

1.1.2 SYSTRA Ltd (SYSTRA) has been commissioned by the Council to support the development of the GCTPS and the LTPs for Tuam and Ballinasloe. Through this work, SYSTRA has identified a range of measures and options suitable for the context of Galway County relating to the pedestrian, cycle, public transport and road networks. This LTP extends this process to the town of Ballinasloe and seeks to determine how the transport needs of the town and its visitors can be met in a manner which reflects and builds upon the wider measures set out in the GCTPS, and the policies within the County Development Plan 2022-2028 (CDP). The measures will build upon the existing investment of approximately 8 million Euros within the Ballinasloe area.

## 1.2 Report Structure

1.2.1 This document has been prepared in accordance with the Area-Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) guidance issued by the National Transport Authority (NTA).

1.2.2 Following this introductory section, the LTP is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides an examination of relevant National, Regional and Local Policies, and sets out how these are applicable to the preparation of the Ballinasloe LTP;
- Section 3 presents a series of baseline information and analysis of local data to provide a suitable context for the consideration of transport options;
- Section 4 examines the objectives for the LTP which have been determined from consideration of policy, transport baseline and demand information;
- Section 5 describes the Option Development process and the identification of travel routes which should be enhanced in order to meet policy objectives;
- Section 6 presents the results of the Option Appraisal exercises, which have been undertaken to compare the benefits and impacts of different options against policy requirements;
- Section 7 sets out recommendations with regard to the combination of transport measures which the LTP will seek to promote and implement (with engagement and assistance from other parties such as the NTA where appropriate); and

- Section 8 provides a summary and conclusion to the report.

# POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

## 2.1 Overview

2.1.1 This section provides an overview of policy and guidance at a national, regional and local level that has been utilised to inform development of the Ballinasloe LTP and measures identification and appraisal process

## 2.2 National and Regional Policies

### Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework (NPF)

2.2.1 The NPF is a long-term strategic development plan for Ireland, setting out planning policy up to 2040. The NPF outlines key national strategic outcomes and priorities, as identified in **Figure 1.** These are designed to guide public and private investment into the county and help shape future growth. The NPF seeks to enable all parts of Ireland (rural and urban) to "*successfully accommodate growth and change, by facilitating a shift towards Ireland's regions and cities other than Dublin*" (Chapter 2.1).

**Figure 1. NPF National Strategic Outcomes**


2.2.2 Transport and connectivity are key to a number of National Strategic Outcomes detailed in the NPF, and the Ballinasloe LTP seeks to respond to these.

2.2.3 **National Strategic Outcome 1 (Compact Growth)** looks to create more attractive places to live by ensuring sustainable growth. In doing so it promotes a shift towards sustainable modes of travel (walking, cycling and public transport) at all levels, including urban cities, smaller towns, villages and rural areas.

2.2.4 **National Strategic** Outcome **3 (Strengthened Rural Economies & Communities)** recognises the importance of Ireland's rural areas and

the role transport can play in supporting these. It seeks to ensure regional and local roads are maintained, with strategic road improvement projects undertaken in rural areas where necessary to ensure access to critical services (such as education, healthcare and employment), whilst also promoting a '*nationwide community-based public transport system in rural Ireland which responds to local needs under the Rural Transport Network and similar initiatives*'

2.2.5 **National Strategic Outcome 2 (Enhanced Regional Accessibility)** incorporates improved connectivity and accessibility between key urban centres of population and their regions, and between major cities. Transport sits at the heart of this outcome, with a range of measures identified including:

1. Maintaining strategic capacity and safety of the National Road Network;
2. Planning future capacity enhancements;
3. Improving average journey times;
4. Enabling effective traffic management, including the reallocation of road-space in appropriate locations to favour public transport services and walking / cycling facilities;
5. Advancing orbital traffic management solutions such as the Galway City Ring Road;
6. Upgrading sections of the N17 northwards to facilitate development of the Atlantic Economic Corridor from Galway; and
7. Strengthening public transport connectivity between cities and large growth towns, improving services and journey time reliability.

2.2.6 **National Strategic Outcome 4 (Sustainable Mobility)** highlights that the overall objectives of the NPF are supported through 'a well-functioning, integrated public transport system' and enabling sustainable mobility choices. It notes that that large parts of Ireland are heavily dependent on vehicular travel, resulting in increased congestion, whilst the inter-city rail network is integral in offering sustainable travel alternatives.

2.2.7 As such, it looks to expand the public transport offer as a way of discouraging car use, reducing congestion, improving air quality and supporting sustainable population and employment growth. This will be done through the delivery of key bus-based projects in identified cities and towns, providing public transport infrastructure and services to meet the needs of smaller towns and rural areas, and development of a comprehensive network of safe cycling routes in metropolitan areas, towns and villages where appropriate.

2.2.8 **National Strategic Outcome 7 (Enhanced Amenities & Heritage)** notes that attractive places provide easy access to amenities and services through an integrated transport network and sustainable travel infrastructure, such as pedestrian and cycling facilities. It stresses that focus is required on improving walking and cycling routes and measures targeted at enhancing permeability and connectivity.

2.2.9 Chapter 6.2 (Healthy Communities) recognises that ability to access services and amenities is a key component in the population's quality of life and notes an increasing dependency on the car and reduced levels of physical activity. Communities should be designed to support physical activity, for example through '*generously sized footpaths, safe cycle lanes and accessible recreation areas*'. Wider

economic benefits are also recognised. National Policy Objective 27 responds to this:

> *'Ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments, and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages'.*

2.2.10 Future homes should be located in areas that can support sustainable development, with efficient provision of infrastructure, easy access to a range of local services and opportunities for sustainable travel modes including public transport, walking and cycling.

2.2.11 The NPF commits to climate action, with targets to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 80% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050 across the transport, electricity and built environment sectors. National Policy Objective 64 commits to improving air quality, including through sustainable development that supports public transport use, walking and cycling.

2.2.12 Through the NPF, the government will support energy-efficient development through housing and employment space located along public transport corridors, enabling an increase in public transport use and a reduction in car dependency. The NPF aims to assist in reducing emissions and supporting public transport, walking and cycling as more favourable modes of transport in favour of private car use (Chapter 9.4).

**NPF SUMMARY**

Responding to the NPF, the Ballinasloe LTP seeks to:

- Promote sustainable growth through improving public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure in appropriate locations;
- Commit to reducing emissions and become climate resilient by encouraging sustainable travel uptake and decreasing dependency on single car trips through improved accessibility to sustainable transport modes;
- Improve connectivity to and from key services and amenities within Ballinasloe between residential and employment zones within the town;
- Promote sustainable development through an integrated approach to transport and land use, including suitable relationship between public transport connections and housing / employment growth.

Project Ireland 2040 – National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2027

2.2.13 The NDP identifies investment priorities that underpin the spatial strategy and implementation of the NPF over its first ten years. Major investment projects underway set out in the NDP that seek to support the National Strategic Outcomes set out in the NPF include:

- **Compact Growth: Housing & Sustainable Investment Development (€14.5bn):**
  - Development of high density cities is a key priority with over 50% of future housing to be located in cities and 30% in other regions. This growth will be supported through investment in high quality public and sustainable transport systems.
  - A reserve of development land is needed to achieve this objective. €2bn has been allocated to the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund to support the growth enablers in the five cities identified in the NPF, including a regeneration plan for Galway City.
- **Enhanced Regional Accessibility: Regional Roads Network & Accessibility to the North – West (€7.3bn):**
  - Improvement to road linkages, particularly in the north-west region. A high quality road network is envisioned to ensure all areas are linked to Dublin and to one another.
  - Priority is placed on delivery of the Atlantic Corridor, improving connectivity between Cork, Limerick, Galway and Sligo. Whilst this route does not directly connect with Ballinasloe, is approximately 35km to the west of the town accessible via the M6 which then connects to the M17/M18 to allow north to south connectivity to these connected destinations.
  - Prioritise funding to enhance the existing inter-urban rail network, including improved journey times and connectivity on the Dublin to Galway route, which routes via Ballinasloe. Improved frequencies and journey times will help to encourage the uptake of rail usage to and from Ballinasloe. A programme of introduction of new diesel, electric trains in 2022 is planned, enhancing the rail fleet through provision of approximately 300 new carriages.
- **Sustainable Mobility: Public Transport (€8.6bn):**
  - Delivery of high quality and integrated public transport, with the aim of reversing current congestion issues through improving transport offer.
  - Public transport investment includes towards bus and rail fleet, delivery of the BusConnects programme, transition to use of low emission buses including electric buses, provision of Park & Ride facilities in strategic locations, delivery of improved walking and cycling networks, supporting rail and bus station improvements, and providing electric vehicle charging infrastructure where required.

- **Transition to a Low-Carbon and Climate Resilient Society (€21.8bn):**
  - Implementation of a new renewable energy support scheme by 2030, enabling a move towards green energy use. Transport-related NDP objectives that respond to the climate challenge include increased uptake in electric vehicles and provision of supporting charging infrastructure; implementation of the BusConnects programme; transition to electric buses; and provision of comprehensive walking and cycling networks.

**NDP SUMMARY**

The NDP presents a variety of projects and funded schemes which seek to ensure that the National Strategic Outcomes in the NPF are delivered. The Ballinasloe LTP will:

- Promote sustainable development through ensuring linked journeys with public transport are provided through the provision of a multi-modal hub and improvement walking and cycling connections to key public transport services;
- Connections will be suitably located to serve housing and employment zones;
- Make improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure to promote uptake in sustainable travel; and
- Give consideration to ways of promoting and encouraging sustainable transport usage, such as parking rationalisation and other traffic management measures.

### National Climate Action Plan (NCAP) 2019

2.2.14 As a member state of the European Union, Ireland became a signatory of the Paris Agreement in 2015. This aims to limit global warming to below two degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels and temperature increase to 1.5 degrees. To contribute to the achievement of this, Ireland is required to deliver a 30% reduction (relative to 2005 levels) in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

2.2.15 Transport was responsible for 20.1% of Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions in 2018, and was second only to agriculture in terms of emission share by sector. Road transport accounted for the majority of these emissions, with private cars accounting for 40%, Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) 14% and Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs) 6%, with public and private buses accounting for less than 3% of emissions.

2.2.16 The NCAP sets out targets, measures and actions for a range of sectors to facilitate the level of decarbonisation required to achieve 2030 targets for carbon emissions and create a pathway towards achieving net zero emissions by 2050. Decarbonising transport is a key tenet of the NCAP, and requires a significant modal shift from private car use towards public transport and active travel, as well as a significant uptake of electric vehicles and increased use of biofuels.

2.2.17 The NCAP seeks to promote:

- Sustainable growth that is less transport intensive through efficient planning, remote and home-working and modal shift towards public transport;
- Accelerated uptake of electric cars and vans so as all new cars and vans are electric by 2030; and
- Conversion of public transport fleets to zero carbon alternatives.

2.2.18 It is supported by measures set out in Project Ireland 2040 that seek to enable climate-friendly development, including increased electric vehicle use, additional charging infrastructure to cater for planned growth, no new non-zero emissions vehicles to be sold beyond 2030 and delivery of the BusConnects programme, which targets a 50% increase in bus passenger numbers over the lifetime of the project in major cities.

2.2.19 Chapter 10 of the NCAP details targets and actions specific to transport. A range of targets are identified, including reducing transport-related carbon dioxide emissions by 45% to 50% (relative to 2030 pre-NDP projections); increasing electric vehicle use, including cars, vans and buses; provision of a supporting charging network and fast-charging infrastructure; and implementing changes to blend proportions of biofuels in road transport to 10% in petrol and 12% in diesel.

2.2.20 To achieve these targets, a suite of measures are identified; these centre on providing high-quality public transport, cycling and walking infrastructure to reduce private car dependency and associated congestion. Measures focus on:

- **Modal Shift**: Implementation of major sustainable-mobility projects, expansion of cycling and walking networks, promotion of compact growth and integration of land use and transport policies development of an overall Park & Ride Implementation Plan, and consideration of local travel planning / behavioural change programmes;
- **Public Fleet Conversion**: Transition to LEVs including electric buses, creation of a roadmap for transition to LEVs for all public urban bus fleets by 2035, and passing legislation to enable Local Authorities to introduce low- and zero-emission zones; and
- **Electric Vehicles**: Expansion of the EV charging network, delivery of charging infrastructure under the Climate Action Fund, requirement for new non-residential buildings with more than 10 parking spaces to provide at least one recharging point, and securing public investment to drive confidence in the availability and reliability of public charging infrastructure.

**NDP SUMMARY**

The NDP presents a variety of projects and funded schemes which seek to ensure that the National Strategic Outcomes in the NPF are delivered. The Ballinasloe LTP will:

- Promote sustainable development through a package of local measures to support connectivity to and from key residential zones within Ballinasloe to amenities and services; and

- Give consideration to ways of promoting and encouraging sustainable transport usage, such as local behaviour change campaigns, encouraging flexible and remote working where possible and improving the walking and cycling connections to onward public transport services to support both internal journeys within the town as well as longer distance trip making.

Northern & Western Regional Assembly, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2020-2032

2.2.21 The RSES provides a development framework for the Northern and Western Region over the 12 year period from 2020 to 2032, supporting effective implementation of the NPF alongside relevant Government economic policies and objectives.

2.2.22 The RSES is bespoke to the Northern & Western Region (encompassing Galway alongside Cavan, Donegal, Leitrim, Mayo, Monaghan, Roscommon and Sligo) and is centred around the National Policy Objectives and National Strategic Outcomes of the NPF, responding through a series of Regional Policy Objectives (RPO).

2.2.23 The overall strategic vision of the RSES is:

*'To play a leading role in the transformation of this region into a vibrant, connected, natural, inclusive and smart place to work and live'.*

2.2.24 Five Growth Ambitions are detailed and 'Connected Ambition' recognises the role transport plays in promoting the region's economic competitiveness and attractiveness for living and visiting, and commits to supporting investment in sustainable transport measures.

2.2.25 The region is highly dependent on private car use, with 2016 Census data confirming 70% of commuter trips are made by private car. In response, whilst there are limited opportunities for use of sustainable transport modes in parts of the region, the RSES identifies four high-level transport principles:

- Improving strategic and local connectivity;
- Improving access to public transport facilities;
- Catering for the role of the car within the region; and
- Ensuring sustainable development to cater for long-term growth through reducing levels of traffic congestion.

2.2.26 The RSES recognises the significant influence Galway has in the development of the region, including the extent of the region from which employees commute to the city centre. This extends beyond Tuam to the north, Clifden to the west, towards Ballinasloe in the east and beyond Gort to the south.

2.2.27 Section 3.8 of the RSES set outs priorities for Key Towns within the region and Ballinasloe is included within this classification. Key Towns are defined as 'regionally strategic employment centres of significant scale that have the potential to accommodate a significant level of growth in population and employment through appropriate investment in infrastructure, support services and placemaking initiatives'.

2.2.28 Ballinasloe, located close to the border with Roscommon, is noted as 'an anchor for employment in east Galway'. It is located on one of the County's Strategic Development Corridors and benefits from its strategic location in terms of access to the rail and road (M6 motorway) network. Three key future priorities for the town relate specifically to transport:

- Promoting sustainable land use and transport solutions, whilst capitalising on the opportunity presented by the railway service and the M6 Motorway, so that sustainable travel, including walking and cycling, and integrated land use and transportation become central to the development of new neighbourhoods and the future development of Ballinasloe.
- Support the delivery of sustainable transport solutions including the improvement of rail facilities and services serving Ballinasloe, including any future expansion of the railway station for passengers and freight as required.
- Encourage and support the development of a series of cycle and pedestrian routes in the Ballinasloe area and in accordance with the Galway to Dublin Cycle Route and the Townspark Relief Road where feasible and in a sensitive manner, incorporating the streams, rivers, woods, and canal.

2.2.29 The RSES advises the preparation of Local Transport Plans (LTP) for identified key towns to support compact growth and sustainable mobility. LTPs should identify and prioritise objectives in relation to sustainable travel infrastructure and plan for the efficient movement of people within and outside of the area served by the LTP, which should deliver appropriate measures to promote walking, cycling and public transport use to create accessible spaces (RPO 6.29).

2.2.30 Section 5.8 details development priorities in relation to walking and cycling networks. A 'Strategy for Future Development of National and Regional Greenways' has been developed, providing a framework for the future development of Greenways. This includes provision of a Dublin to Galway National Greenway, which subject to routing options may connect with Ballinasloe and the Conamara Greenway, alongside the international Eurovelo Routes 1 and 2. In addition, the RSES supports the development of Blueways along existing and disused waterways (RPO 5.20). Identified routes include the Lough Derg Blueway, extending from Portumna to Killaloe / Scarriff.

2.2.31 Sections 6.2 and 6.3 of the RSES set out challenges, opportunities and investment priorities related to transport. Identified outcomes from this investment include strengthening public transport, walking and cycling accessibility within Galway City and surrounding areas, improving public transport reliability and journey times to Dublin and other regional cities and protecting road capacity. Key transport investment priorities within the RSES include:

- **Road Network**: RPO 6.5 states that the capacity and safety of the region's road networks will be maintained, managed and enhanced to ensure optimal use, with future capacity enhancements planned where appropriate. RPO 6.6 states that investment commitments such as delivery of the Galway City Ring Road will be secured by 2027.
- **Rail Network**: Improvements should be made to service frequencies, travel time reductions and the integration of

local transport services. Key priorities include dualling the track between Athlone, Athenry and Galway to increase service frequency which will provide a significant benefit for rail journeys to and from Ballinasloe (RPO 6.12), completion of a review of the Western Rail Corridor proposals to link Limerick, Galway and Sligo, including Phases 2 (Athenry to Tuam) and 3 (Tuam to Claremorris) for passenger and freight movement (RPO 6.11), and pre-appraisal and early planning of a rail line between Athenry, Tuam, Claremorris and Sligo (RPO 6.13).

- **Bus Network**: Improvements should be focused on the connectivity between regional areas, with RPO 6.20 stating how transport network reviews should be undertaken to identify where additional regional support is required. RPO 6.21 discusses how bus services, including rural programmes, will need to provide a better connected pubic transport service. Key interchange facilities should also be provided were necessary, with improved passenger information services. There is a commitment to using low emission bus fleets.
- **Rural Transport**: Rural bus services are provided through the Transport For Ireland (TFI) Local Link programme, meeting the needs of communities outside larger settlement areas. Sustainable travel modes should continue to be provided in rural areas, supported by walking and cycling infrastructure (RPO 6.23).
- **Walking & Cycling**: There is move to increase sustainable travel in favour of private car use. RPO 6.26 notes walking and cycling infrastructure and networks should be improved through the implementation of Local Transport Plans for the Galway Metropolitan Area and further regional growth areas and key towns (including Ballinasloe and Tuam).
- **Electric Vehicles**: There is move to reduce dependency on fossil fuels in favour of alternative fuels for transport. RPO 6.34 notes that safe recharging points should be provided across the region, including in public parking and employment spaces.

2.2.32 To support the creation of healthy places and a healthy environment, RPO 7.9 supports the promotion of high quality and accessible public open spaces, including prioritising access to walking and cycling networks. RPO 7.12 seeks to ensure local housing and transport accessibility is developed to meet the needs of an aging population, those with disabilities and younger people.

**RSES SUMMARY**

The RSES provides a provides a development framework to support effective implementation of the NPF. The Ballinasloe LTP will:

- Ballinasloe is identified as a Key Town and the development of the LTP will look to support compact growth and sustainable mobility, capitalising on the towns strategic location in terms of access to rail and road;
- Improve local connectivity through provision of a multi-modal hub allowing for improved access to bus services

and walking and cycling infrastructure, allowing for connecting trips across multiple modes;

- Cater for long-term growth in the area through encouraging a modal shift away from private car use with the framework of measures developed as part of the Ballinasloe LTP looking to help achieve this; and
- Prioritise objectives in relation to sustainable transport infrastructure and plan for the efficient movement of people for internal and external trips within and to and from Ballinasloe.

**Strengthening the Connections in Rural Ireland – Plans for Restructuring the Rural Transport Programme**

2.2.33 The NTA has produced a policy document and guidance on how they intend to revise the current Rural Transport Programme (RTP). At present, the RTP is implemented via 35 Rural Transport Groups (RTGs), which deliver services in the form of Demand Responsive Transport (DRT), Scheduled Fixed Transport (i.e. services which operate in the same manner as traditional bus services) and Scheduled Flexible Transport (i.e. services which have fixed start and end points, but which will adjust their routes within an area of operation to serve people and locations as required by passengers on a given service).

2.2.34 The restructuring proposals have been put forward and assessed against their ability to improve the value for money offered by the current available funding and its uses, their potential to reduce overheads and administrative costs within the RTGs, and to better support and provide evidence of increased mobility for passengers, particularly those without recourse to alternative means of travel.

2.2.35 The proposed new structure of the RTP will result in a decrease in the number of regional groups to 18; Galway County will fall into the new "region 5" which will be created from the amalgamation of three existing RTGs. This presents both opportunities to tap into the new combined resources of the group, but also presents a challenge in ensuring that Ballinasloe and its surrounding hinterlands are correctly recognised for their importance as a centre for local services (commercial, retail, education, health and social).

2.2.36 As it is planned that Local Authorities will "host" the new units (utilising grants from the NTA for this purpose), new opportunities will arise for increased engagement and joint working between the regional groups and local authority officers. Application of these principles is discussed later in this document with regard to the provision of public transport and related demand-management services.

## 2.3 Local Policy

### Galway County Development Plan (2022-2028)

2.3.1 The current County Development Plan (CPD) sets out the strategy and methods through which future planning and sustainable development of the county will be achieved for the period to 2028. Preparation of the CDP commenced in June 2020, with the first of three public consultation periods running between June and September 2020.

2.3.2 Chapter 6 (Transport& Movement) sets out the ways in which appropriate provision for the safeguarding and upgrading of existing transport infrastructure will be ensured. It seeks to build on the existing strengths within the county while also addressing deficiencies in a sustainable manner, including through taking account of climate change and creating more sustainable communities.

2.3.3 The CDP looks to:

> '*encourage investment and improvements across all sectors of transport that will support targeted population, economic growth and more sustainable modes of travel including, walking, cycling and public transport*'.

2.3.4 Certain strategic aims and associated policy objectives within the Transport Chapter will have applications specifically within Ballinasloe; these are briefly summarised below.

2.3.5 The Strategic Aims set out within Chapter 6 which are considered directly relevant to the Ballinasloe LTP are:

- To support the Galway County Transport & Planning Study (GCTPS) and the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS);
- To support the sustainable modes of transport and the transition to a low carbon economy
- Promote development on serviced lands in towns and villages, particularly those located along public transport corridors in accordance with the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines (2009), having regard to existing settlement patterns; and
- To promote and support the expansion of County-wide and national Cycling infrastructure.

2.3.6 The policy objectives for Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning require the production of Local Transport Plans, with Ballinasloe specifically named within policy ILUTP 2. The more general policy of ILUTP 1 makes it clear that the transition toward sustainable and low carbon modes of transport should be the focus of Local Transport Plans and treated as one of the highest priorities when the LTPs are being prepared.

2.3.7 The Walking and Cycling polices indicate that the provision of improved cycle facilities (including cycle parking) should be integrated alongside general improvements for pedestrians, with a focus on connections to new development sites. This is considered to be an important aspect for the Ballinasloe LTP to address.

2.3.8 The Public Transport objectives are defined generally in terms of "traditional" bus services, rural services delivered via the Local Link

programme, and train services. Ballinasloe is currently served by all of these public transport types and it is recognised that the LTP should address how each of these can develop during the lifetime of the plan in order to support the overarching strategic objectives outlined above, as well as increasing choice and convenience for residents and visitors to Ballinasloe.

2.3.9 Car Parking is specifically addressed through policy NNR 8, and states that parking facilities (should be provided) in towns and villages in a manner which supports policies relating to promotion of sustainable transport choices and modal shift.

Galway County Transport and Planning Study (2022-2028)

2.3.10 The Galway County Transport and Planning Study (GCTPS) sets out the key policies and objectives for Galway County to support the forecast level of growth up to 2028. The plan sets out the key transport requirements and aspirations in order to facilitate growth in a sustainable manner but improving connectivity to key destinations within the region as well as enhancing connectivity to rural zones of the county.

2.3.11 A key theme of the identified objectives includes facilitating sustainable transport options, supporting major upgrades to public transport upgrades and enhancing new and existing walking and cycling networks as the first choice for local journeys, all of which have been reflected in the development of measures within the Ballinasloe LTP.

2.3.12 The GCTPS includes the following policy objectives:

- **GCTPS 1 Galway County Transport & Planning Study and Galway Transportation Strategy**

2.3.13 It is a policy objective of Galway County Council to support and facilitate the implementation of the Galway County Transport & Planning Study and Galway Transport Strategy across all modes of transport.

- **GCTPS 2 Integrated Approach to Land Use & Transportation**

2.3.14 Galway County Council will pursue a fully integrated approach to land use and transportation, actively supporting measures which facilitate and attract developments to locations with high levels of sustainable transport provision (or which can achieve such provision as a result of the development in question).

- **GCTPS 3 Sustainable Transport**

2.3.15 The County will seek to support a variety of measures which will reduce car dependency for residents, and will specifically seek to improve access to sustainable transport choices (including responsive and “flexible” modes) for those residents in rural areas of the County.

- **GCTPS 4 Walking and Cycling**

2.3.16 Support for, and enhancement of, existing and new walking and cycling networks as the “first choice” for shorter local journeys and to link settlements within the County and to Galway City.

- **GCTPS 5 Upgrade to Public Transport Networks**

2.3.17 Support any proposed major upgrades to the public transport networks, including the Western Rail Corridor and the dual tracking between Galway City and Athlone, which will be beneficial for journeys to and from Ballinasloe.

- **GCTPS 6 Road-Based Public Transport**

2.3.18 The County will seek to maintain and enhance infrastructure for road-based public transport, and to increase access to existing services (though provision of new stops and improved access via the pedestrian and cycle networks).

- **GCTPS 7 Improvements to Road Network**

2.3.19 The County will manage and maintain the efficient and safe operation of the road network under its control, and will work with TII and NTA to identify locations on the national network where targeted improvements may be required to address specific issues.

- **GCTPS 8 Enhancement of National Networks**

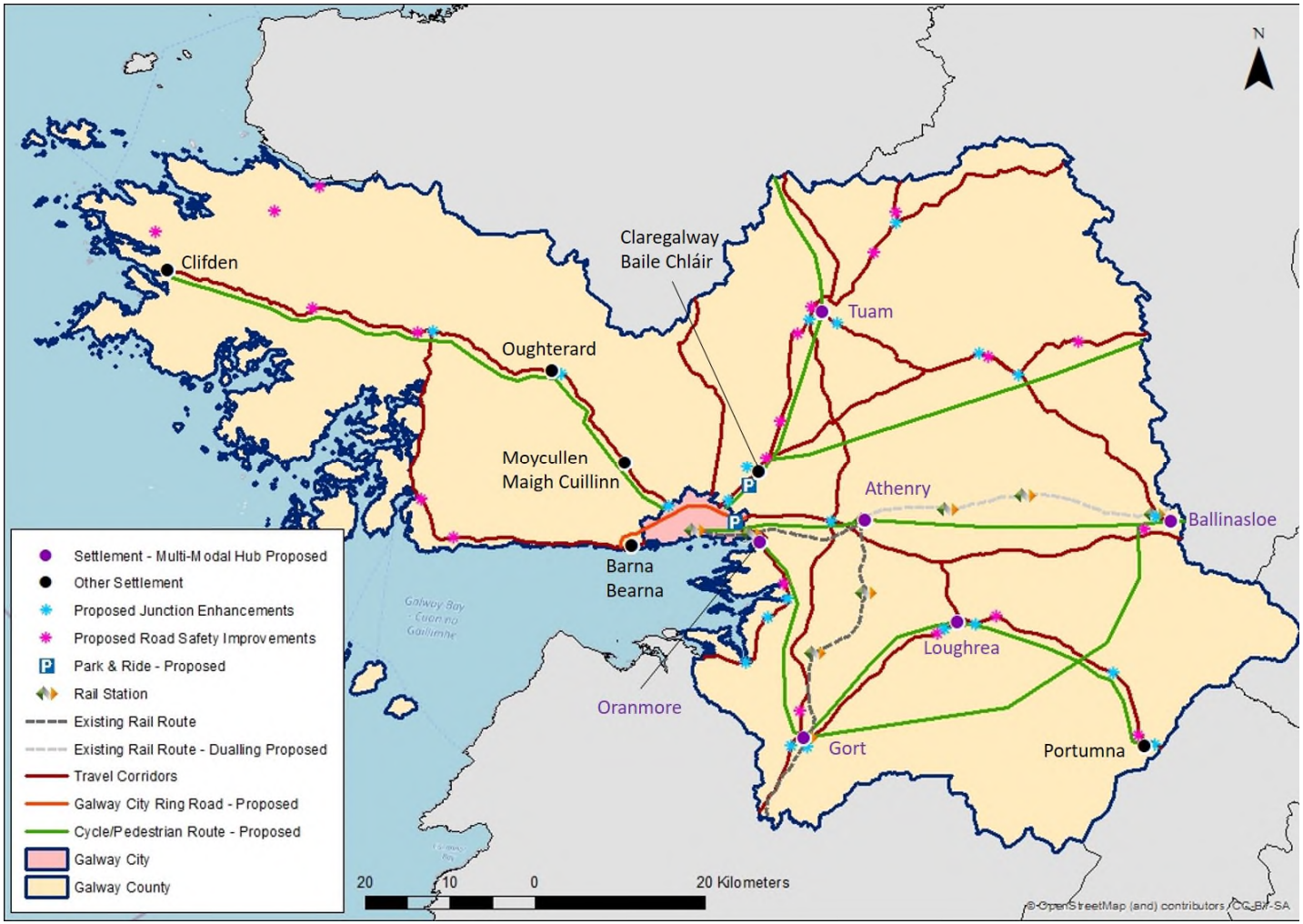
2.3.20 The County will co-operate with TII and the NTA with regard to the maintenance and enhancement of national networks for longer-distance and cross-country travel and movement of through-traffic including freight.

- **GCTPS 9 Collaboration with Galway City in the delivery of the GTS**

2.3.21 The Council will collaborate with Galway City Council as appropriate to bring forward transport proposals and measures which will enhance travel to and from Galway City in a manner which is compatible with the Galway Transport Strategy 2016 (GTS) and GCTPS, and where possible maximises the benefits to both areas from this approach.

2.3.22 Key travel corridors and a summary of identified measures within the GCTPS are shown on **Figure 1.**

Figure 2. GCTPS Summary – Key Travel Corridors and Measures Identification



2.3.23 The GCTPS identifies thirteen key travel corridors across the county, of which Ballinasloe forms a key node for a number of these corridors including Ballinasloe to Galway via Athenry and Ballinasloe to Tuam.

2.3.24 The GCTPS proposes a range of measures, including transport infrastructure upgrades, support for service enhancements, and supporting activities, which will collectively deliver enhancements and changes in travel behaviour within the County which adhere to the policy objectives of both the GCTPS and the CDP.

2.3.25 The GCTPS sets out a data driven approach to identifying transport needs along travel corridors, looking at movement patterns from future forecasts from the NTA Western Regional Model for the area. A summary of the proposed measures outlined in the GCTPS and forecast benefits is outlined within **0** below.

Table 1. GCTPS Summary – Proposed Measures and Forecast Benefits

| PROPOSED MEASURES | FORECAST BENEFITS |
|---|---|
| Safety-Led Improvements (incl. pedestrian / cycle safety measures, changes to traffic speeds, enhanced signage, traffic calming measures) | Address identified safety concerns within identified Travel Corridors; improve road user safety, including vulnerable road users; reduce frequency and severity of traffic collisions. |
| Demand Management Improvements (incl. junction layout amendments, additional capacity for sustainable modes) | Improvement to conditions for vehicular based travel, with resultant benefits in terms of congestion and delay; manage demand throughout identified Travel Corridors. |
| Multi-Modal Hubs | Encourage modal shift; reduce vehicle congestion; improve overall public realm; facilitate easy access between transport modes; secondary benefits to cyclists (e.g. improved safety). |
| Public Transport Infrastructure Improvements (e.g. Bus Stop Improvements in Centres and on local routes), in conjunction with NTA | Promote improvements to bus stops and facilities, and recommend locations of new bus stops to bridge gaps in network to enhance public transport connectivity and accessibility. |
| Support Rail Dualling (between Ballinasloe, Athenry & Galway City) | Increased service frequency and journey times, enhanced public transport offer. |
| Support Western Rail Corridor Proposals (subject to outcome of Government Rail Review) | Expansion of sustainable mode choices for travel on the Western rail corridor, including connectivity between Athenry and Tuam. |
| Local Walking / Cycling Routes | Improved connectivity for cyclists; enhanced safety for cyclists and other road users; wider benefits to bus journey times; encourage cycling uptake; contribute to rural development; enhance linkages with local rural routes. |

| | |
|---|---|
| National Cycle Routes (between Dublin, Ballinasloe, Galway City and Clifden) | Improved connectivity for cyclists; enhanced safety for cyclists and other road users; benefits to bus journey times (through the removal of cyclists from bus lanes which can reduce bus speeds and increase delay). |
| Support for Park & Ride Provision (e.g. near M6 / N6 junction at Ardaun) | Reduced congestion upon approach and within Galway City by reduction of private vehicle trips improving journey times, wider benefits to journeys to and from Galway City. |
| Support for Electric Vehicles | Increased use of electric vehicles and gradual reduction in petrol / diesel vehicles for personal use. |

2.3.26 The GCTPS and the CDP, in tandem with the GTS, are key strategy documents designed to work together to maximise the potential benefits of growth for the transport networks, and to protect the efficient and safe operation of these networks for both existing and future residents of Galway County, and those who visit for work and leisure purposes.

2.3.27 Section 11 of the GCTPS outlines that the Ballinasloe Local Transport Plan will provide a framework for delivery of the key transport measures identified as part of Travel Corridor optioneering. It will seek to promote sustainable transport as a means of supporting internal growth within the town as well as encouraging connectivity to/from the surrounding rural areas to promote a thriving and attractive place to live and work. Promotion of a multi-modal hub within the Town Strategy, will be key to encourage active modes for first and last mile trips, allowing for seamless connections onto onwards public transport journeys via rail or bus, as well as facilitate a favourable environment for walking and cycling for shorter journeys within the town and from nearby settlements. These measures will look to create a vibrant town which favours walking and cycling over private vehicle for internal trips.

2.3.28 The delivery of the Galway to Dublin cycleway will support the Town Strategy through increased leisure cycle tourism through Ballinasloe and enhance connectivity between rural destinations along this key east to west route, having positive impacts on local businesses and growth opportunities.

2.3.29 These recommendations have been considered during the development of measures within the Ballinasloe LTP.

**CDP/ GCTPS SUMMARY**

The CDP and GCTPS provides a clear set of objectives, key travel corridors and framework of measures at a countywide level to support growth ambitions. The Ballinasloe LTP will:

- Build upon key recommendations within the CDP and GCTPS to deliver a framework of local measures to support modal shift for internal journeys and promote

connectivity to public transport services through the provision of a multi-modal hub to allow for seamless connections and encouraging active modes for first and last mile journeys;

- Consider key connections within the town and develop infrastructure to improve these linkages to existing amenities and facilities;
- Consider improvements to support the identification of key corridor movements from Ballinasloe identified within the GCTPS including connections to Galway via Athenry and to Tuam.

### Ballinasloe Local Area Plan (2022-2028)

2.3.30 The Ballinasloe Local Area Plan (LAP) sets out how the policies and objectives from the CDP will be applied to the Ballinasloe area. To assist with this, a series of local Policy Objectives have been prepared; several of these relate to transport and movement. The relevant policies are reproduced below.

### BKT 10 Town Centre Management

2.3.31 Subject to appropriate resources, the Council in collaboration with local stakeholders shall prepare town centre management plans for Ballinasloe as necessary.

2.3.32 The Management Plans will consider some or all of the following:

- Public realm improvement works;
- Upgrade of public lighting;
- Connectivity between the town centre and the wider fringes of the towns;
- Shop front design/improvement of the town centre;
- Upgrade and improvement of street furniture;
- Provision of appropriate quality soft landscaping and planting as well as functional public spaces;
- Car parking management;
- Consideration of reuse of backlands within the town centre for civic space/other uses.

### BKT 24 Universal Access

2.3.33 Ensure that housing developments, community facilities, public spaces, public roads, public footpaths and transport services give due consideration to the needs of disabled or mobility impaired people and the requirements of the Disability Act 2005, the Council's Disability Action Plan 2007-2015 (and any updates to this document), the Traffic Management Guidelines 2003, the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) and National Disability Authority (NDA) advice notes titled Access: Improving the Accessibility to Historic Buildings and Places 2011 (and any subsequent reviews/updates to these documents).

### BKT 31 Local Transport Plan

2.3.34 Support the implementation of the Local Transport Plan as set out in Section 3 in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development. Galway County Council will apply the mitigation measure in the SEA and AA of the above Local Transport Plan.

### BKT 32 Transportation Infrastructure

2.3.35 Facilitate the provision and maintenance of essential transportation infrastructure. This shall include the reservation of lands to facilitate public roads, footpaths, cycle ways, bus stops and landscaping together with any necessary associated works, as appropriate.

### BKT 33 Pedestrian and Cycle Network

2.3.36 Encourage and support the development of a series of cycle and pedestrian routes in the Ballinasloe area and in accordance with the Galway to Dublin Cycle Route and the Townspark Relief Road where feasible and in a sensitive manner, incorporating the streams, rivers, woods, and canal. Indirect impacts on built heritage, natural heritage and designated conservation areas arising from such recreational activities should be duly considered and addressed as part of any proposal.

2.3.37 Ensure that in particular that all such developments shall not adversely affect habitats and species protected by Article 10 of the Habitats Directive and any other sites that maybe considered in support of European sites.

### BKT 34 Public Transport & Integrated Transportation Location

2.3.38 Promote Ballinasloe as an integrated transportation location, which supports the provision of improved and enhanced public transport services and facilities, including rail, bus services, the Rural Transport Programme, park and ride/park and stride facilities and all associated ancillary requirements in consultation with the relevant transport providers and with the NTA.

- In consultation with the relevant agencies, investigate the potential of developing a Public Transport Node/Hub in the town, or other suitable location/s, to provide a facility for transferring between one transport service to another.
- Seek to enhance access along the Sarsfield Road to the Railway Station, upgrade connectivity with existing parking facilities to the northeast of the railway station/Sarsfield Road to the proposed location for the public transportation hub/node including any ancillary park and ride facilities, as appropriate.
- Implement the national design standards outlined in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) for urban streets and roads within the 50/60kph zone.

### BKT 35 Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) and Road Safety Audits (RSA)

2.3.39 Require all significant development proposals to be accompanied by a Road Safety Audit and Traffic & Transport Assessment carried out by suitably competent consultants, which are assessed in association with their cumulative impact with neighbouring developments on the road network, in accordance with the requirements contained within the TII's Traffic & Transport Assessment Guidelines (PE-PDV-02045) 2014 (including any updated/superseding document) and 'Road Safety Audit' (GE-STY-01024) December 2017.

#### BKT 36 Preservation of Routes, Road Upgrades & Infrastructure Provision

2.3.40 Prohibit development on lands which are reserved for proposed road/street corridors and associated buffers and where development would affect a route, line, level or layout of any proposed new roadway or any junction required between a proposed and existing road.

#### BKT 37 Reservation of Access Points

2.3.41 Reserve access points for future development and the development of backlands that may be identified for reservation by the Planning Authority during the plan period, to ensure adequate vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access to backlands, in order to facilitate efficient development of these lands and to ensure connectivity and accessibility to lands with limited road frontage. Filtered permeability, pedestrian and cycle-only access points should be considered as part of this process, with reference made to the NTA's *Permeability Best Practice Guide* as appropriate.

#### BKT 38 Road Junction Improvements

2.3.42 Continue to carry out road junction improvements at the following locations:

- River Street and Main Street (adjacent to the Bank of Ireland);
- Harris Road and R446/Dunlo Street;
- Dunlo Street and R446/Dunlo Hill;
- Complete Works on Relief Road and proposed Link Road at Dunlo.

2.3.43 The provision of the above listed road junction improvements shall be in compliance with the EU Habitats Directive and The Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) (as updated).

#### BKT 39 Ballinasloe Relief Road

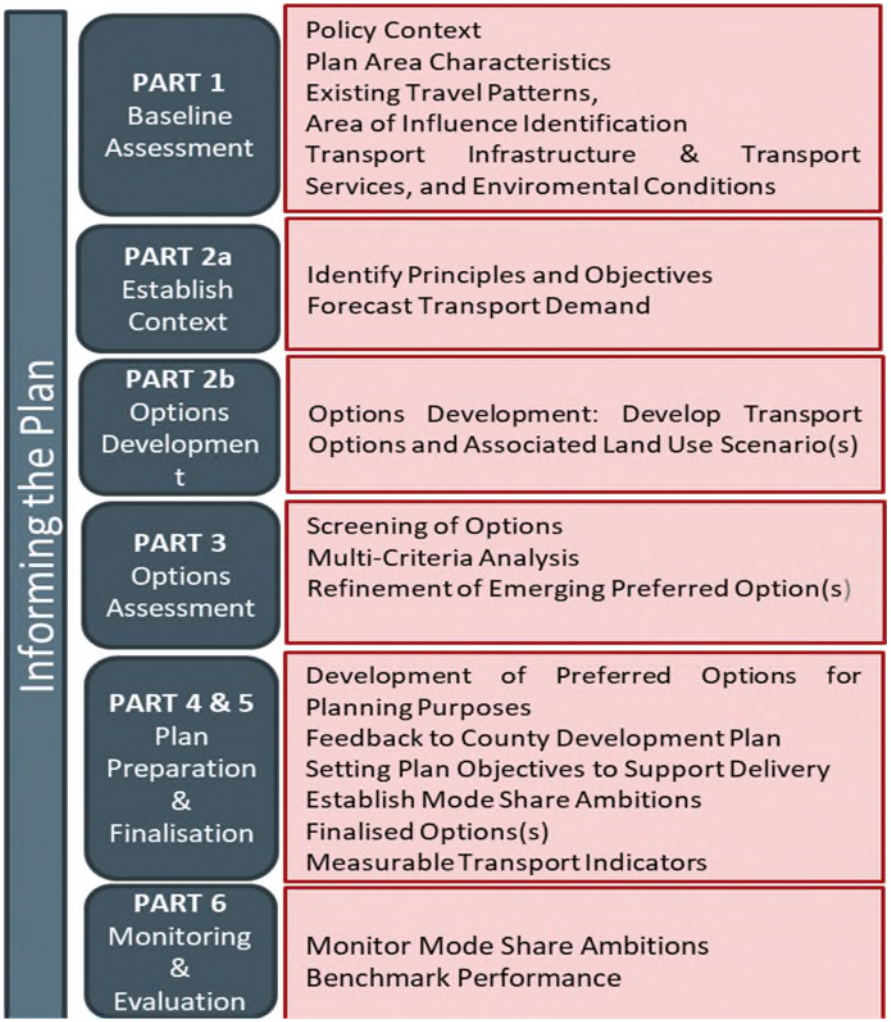
2.3.44 To support the delivery of the Ballinasloe Relief Road.

## 2.4 Guidance

#### Area-Based Transport Assessments (ABTA)

2.4.1 The National Transport Authority (NTA) has issued guidance which recommends that Local Transport Plans should be based around an approach known as Area-Based Transport Assessments (ABTA). The structure of a typical ABTA is presented below.

Figure 3. ABTA Structure




2.4.2 The Ballinasloe LTP has been prepared in accordance with the general ABTA structure and principles, with a particular focus on the needs of local residents and town visitors, and specific consideration of how wider policies and objectives within the emerging CDP (2022-2028) will influence development of the town during the plan period.

### Spatial Planning and National Roads: Guidelines for Planning Authorities

2.4.3 Spatial Planning and National Roads: Guidelines for Planning Authorities sets out planning policy considerations relating to development affecting national primary and secondary roads, including motorways and associated junctions, outside the 50-60 km/h speed limit zones for cities, towns and villages.

2.4.4 The guidelines aim to facilitate a well-informed, integrated and consistent approach that affords maximum support for the goal of achieving and maintaining a safe and efficient network of national roads in the broader context of sustainable development strategies, thereby facilitating continued economic growth and development throughout the country. The following key principles have informed these guidelines:

- Land-use and transportation policies are highly interdependent.
- Proper planning is central to ensuring road safety.
- Development should be plan-led.
- Development management is the key to plan implementation.
- Planning Authorities and the National Roads Authority and other public transport bodies must work closely together.

### National Cycle Manual

2.4.5 The National Cycle Manual follows the principles of Sustainable Safety and provides guidance on integrating cycling in the design of urban areas, and seeks to challenge planners and engineers to place more emphasis on incorporating cycling within transport networks.

2.4.6 Sustainable Safety consists of five key principles; functionality, homogeneity, legibility, forgivingness and self-awareness and meeting the five needs of cyclists; road safety, coherence, directness, attractiveness and comfort. The Manual sets out best practise as well as current legislation and policy for all elements of cycle infrastructure designs and planning, including standards for managing potential conflict, quality of infrastructure such as surface, link and crossing types, and segregation / interaction. All aspects of the Manual are underpinned by the Principles of Sustainable Safety. The Manual sets out the steps for accommodating cycling on the transport network:

- Legislation and Policy – this sets out the main statutory, and non- statutory provisions regarding cycling, as well as current policy;
- Planning for the Bicycle – this covers actions to promote and deliver for cycling, including urban design, traffic managements and facilities development, as well as overall cycle network planning;
- Designing for the Bicycle – sets out the design process for determining appropriate infrastructure including crossings, links, roundabout and turns;
- Getting the Details Right – sets out further detail following design of cycle infrastructure, including lighting, drainage, and cycle parking;
- Maintenance – sets out roles and responsibilities for ensuring cycle facilities can be used and their purpose fulfilled through continued inspection and maintenance.

### Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets

2.4.7 The *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* (DMURS) sets out design standards for urban roads and streets promoting an integrated design approach within urban areas (cities/towns/villages). It balances the place function (i.e. needs of residents and visitors) and the transport function (i.e. needs of pedestrians, cyclists, public transport, cars and goods vehicles).

2.4.8 By utilising the Manual, the end goal is that well-designed streets are placed at the heart of sustainable communities to promote access to walking, cycling and public transport. The standards, approaches and principles set out in this Manual apply to the design of all urban roads and streets (where speed limit is 60kmph or less) except for Motorways and, in exceptional circumstances, certain urban roads and streets which have provided written consent from Sanctioned Authorities.

2.4.9 The Manual itself is underpinned by a holistic design-led approach based upon a collaborative and consultative design process. The Manual recognises the importance of creating secure and connected places that work for all, characterised by creating new and existing streets as attractive places which prioritise access from pedestrians

and cyclists whilst also balancing the available for access from appropriate vehicular access and movement.

2.4.10 The following four principles are presented within the manual which help to achieve a more place-based and integrated approach to road and street design. These are:

- Connected networks – support to create street networks which promote high levels of permeability and legibility for all, with a particular emphasis on more sustainable forms of transport.
- Multi-functional streets – promoting multi-functional, place based streets which balance the needs of all users in self-regulating environment.
- Pedestrian focus – quality of street is measured by the quality of environment user, with pedestrians and cyclists the preferred users.
- Multi-disciplinary approach – greater co-operation between design professionals through the promotion of a plan-led, multidisciplinary approach to design.

**Permeability – A Best Practice Guide**

2.4.11 The National Transport Authority's (NTA) Permeability: A Best Practice Guide provides guidance on how best to facilitate demand for walking and cycling in existing built-up areas. This relates to the retention and creation of linkages within the urban environment for people to walk and cycle from their homes to shops, schools, local services, places of work and public transport stops and stations. In the latter case, by providing connections to existing public transport services, access to these services will be improved and increased levels of use may be expected.

2.4.12 The guidance provides a basis for the delivery of sustainable mode choice in existing built-up areas by promoting permeability for pedestrians and cyclists, whilst also addressing the legacy of severance inherent in the recent expansions of Irish towns and cities. Characteristics of a permeable environ are, in turn, highlighted as:

- Interconnected pedestrian and cycle street network.
- Absence of high walls and fences segregating housing areas and local/district centres.
- Absence of cul-de-sacs for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Secure, well-lit, overlooked pedestrian and cycle links between housing areas and between housing and local/district centres.

2.4.13 The next section of this LTP report presents analysis of baseline transport information and data for Ballinasloe and its immediate area, before addressing matters of transport context and forecast transport demands.

# BASELINE ASSESSMENT AND TRANSPORT CONTEXT

## 3.1 Overview

3.1.1 This section describes the baseline assessment, to identify existing opportunities and constraints in the Ballinasloe area.

3.1.2 The baseline assessment includes the following:

- Information relating to residents with a focus on elements which may impact on trip-making, such as age profiles, car ownership and employment;
- Identification of key trip generators (i.e. residential areas) and attractors (employment locations and schools) within the study area which drive trip-making;
- Identification of physical constraints such as topography or other natural features which may impact on travel choices and travel patterns for residents and visitors to the area.

## 3.2 Demographic Profile

### Population Data

3.2.1 Data from the Irish Census (2016) has been extracted to understand the existing patterns of population and employment within Ballinasloe.

### Residential

3.2.2 The total residential population of Ballinasloe was 6,660 at the time of the most recent Census survey in 2016. A significant proportion of the residential population are located on the eastern side of the town, both to the north and south of the R446 (Church Street). It is noted that given the varying geographic scales of the Census geographic zones the smaller zones to the east include a more dense residential population, than zones on the western side of the town.

Table 2. Population structure

| | TOTAL POPULATION | <=15YO (%) | 16-64 YO (%) | >=65 YO (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ballinasloe | 6660 | 23.8% | 59.6% | 16.6% |
| National | 4761865 | 22.4% | 64.2% | 13.4% |

3.2.3 Compared to the national average, people of 15 years old or less and 65 years old or more are overrepresented in Ballinasloe.

3.2.4 As a result, in proportion, there are less people between 16 and 64 years old in Ballinasloe than the national average (59.6% vs 64.2%). This age category is the most likely to be part in the active population.

*Employment*

3.2.5 A total of 3,838 jobs are identified within Ballinasloe from the Census 2016 workplace zones dataset, with the distribution shown on **Figure 3** below. It is noted that the workplace zone boundaries do not correspond to the census small output zones and therefore the northwest and southwest zones extend beyond the Ballinasloe boundary, however the extension covers largely rural areas which are not anticipated to be employment generators and it is therefore reasonable to assume that these jobs are within the Ballinasloe boundary.

3.2.6 It is noted that due to the varying geographic scales of the Census geographic zones the smaller zones in the central town have a higher density of jobs, such as the central zones including supermarkets. A notably dense area of jobs is located in the zone where Ballinasloe Portiuncula University Hospital is located. The eastern zone includes the Ballinasloe Business and Technology Park and St Brendan's Hospital Nursing Home to the north, increasing the job numbers within these zones.

**Table 3. Activity Structure in Ballinasloe**

| EMPLOYED PEOPLE | JOB ATTRACTION | RATIO (JOB ATT/EMPLOYED) |
|---|---|---|
| 2275 | 3065 | 1.35 |

3.2.7 Among the inhabitants of Ballinasloe, 2,275 were employed in 2016.

3.2.8 3.065 people were working in Ballinasloe in 2016, this figure includes non-residents.

3.2.9 In Ballinasloe, there are more jobs than employed people (1.35 jobs per employed people). Therefore, there are more people coming from the neighbouring settlements in Ballinasloe to work, than residents of Ballinasloe leaving the town to go working.

*Car ownership*

**Table 4. Car ownership**

| | % OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO CAR |
|---|---|
| Ballinasloe | 22% |
| National | 15% |

3.2.10 While on average, in Ireland, only 15 % of Households do not own a car, this is the case for 22% of Ballinasloe households.

## 3.3 Trip Generators and Attractors

3.3.1 To set out the locations of local trip generators and attractors, maps showing the town's distribution of population and employment, by 2016 Census Small Area, are shown below in **Figure 3** and **Figure 4** respectively.

Figure 4. Ballinasloe Population by Small Area

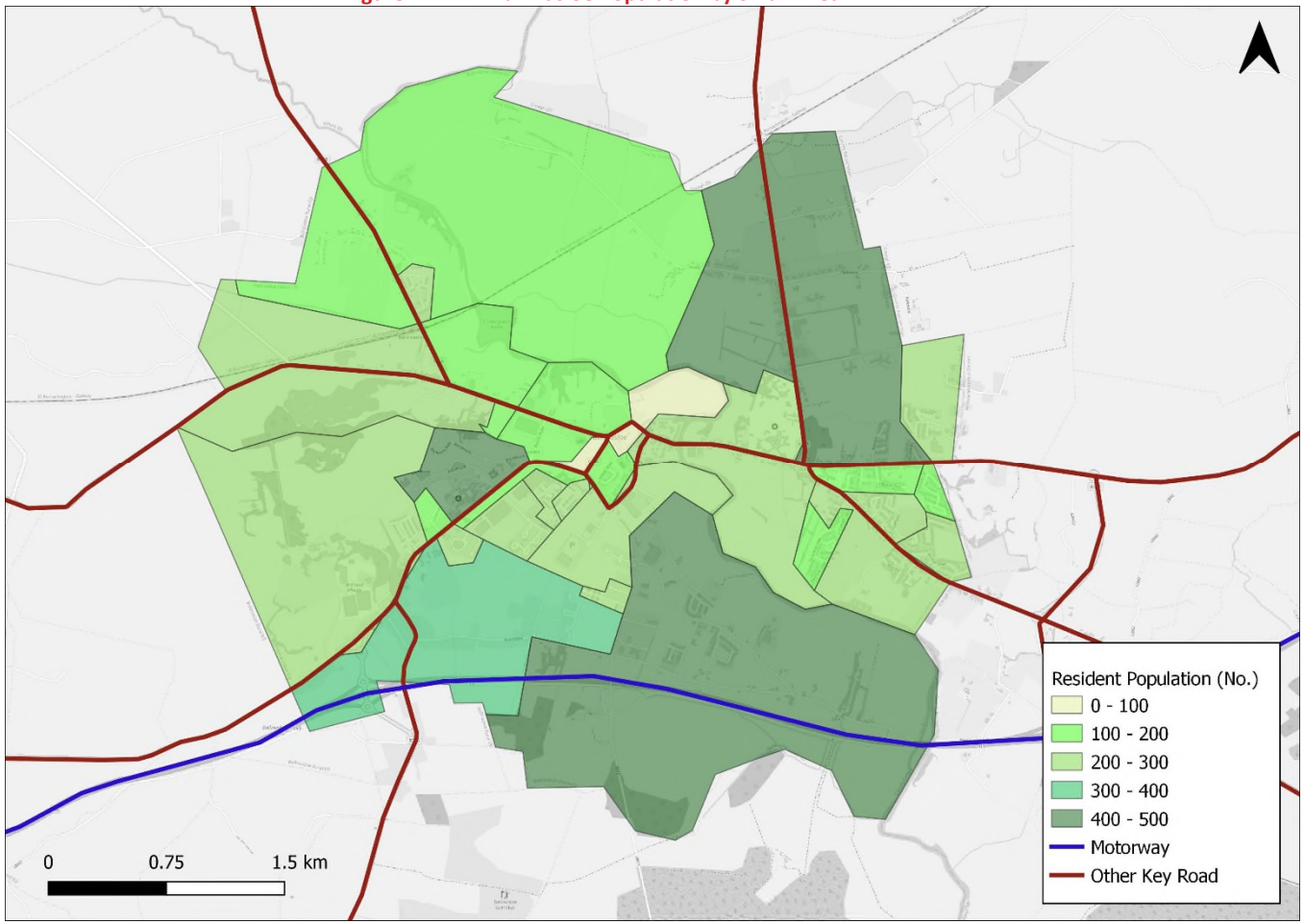
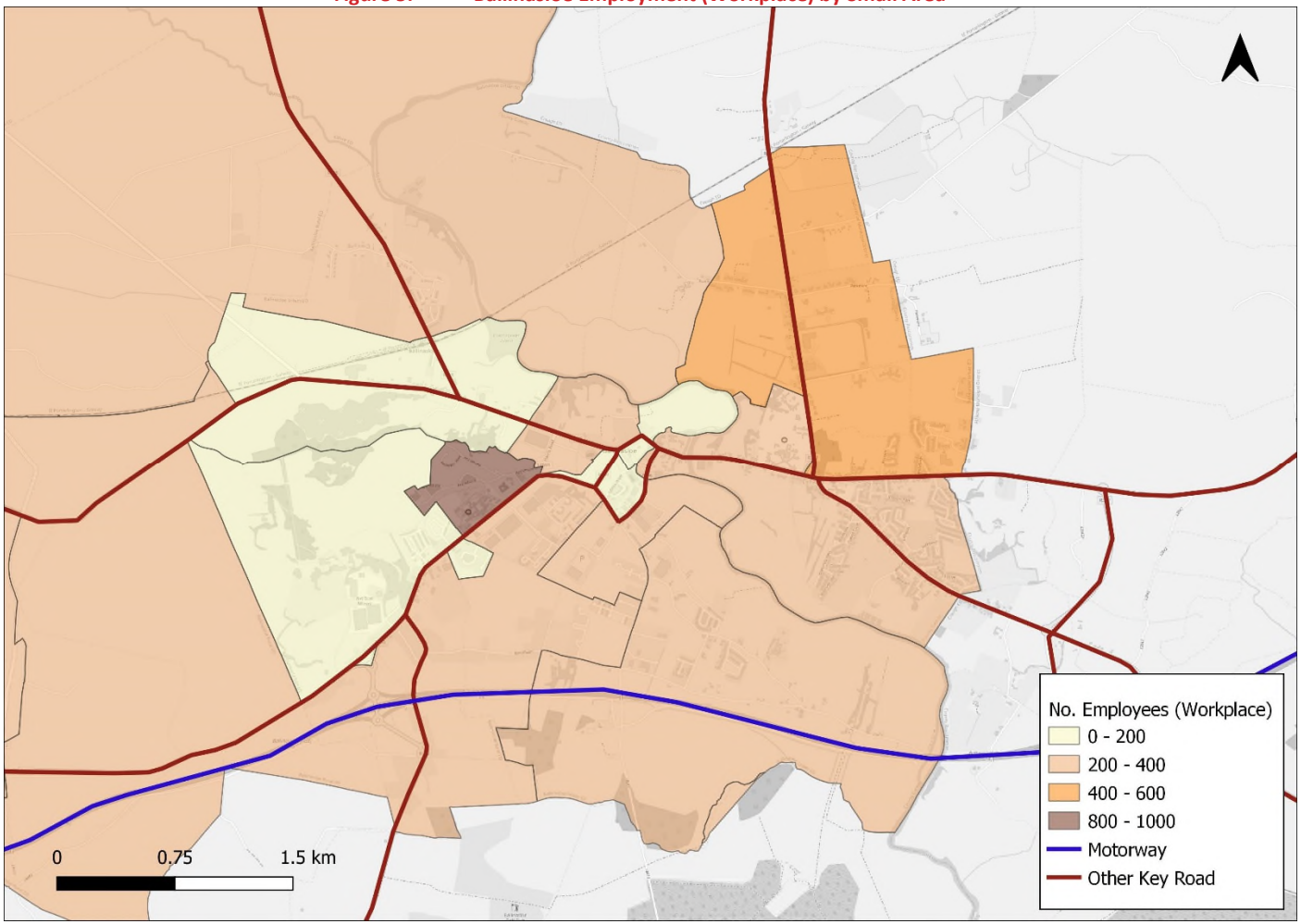


Figure 5. Ballinasloe Employment (Workplace) by Small Area

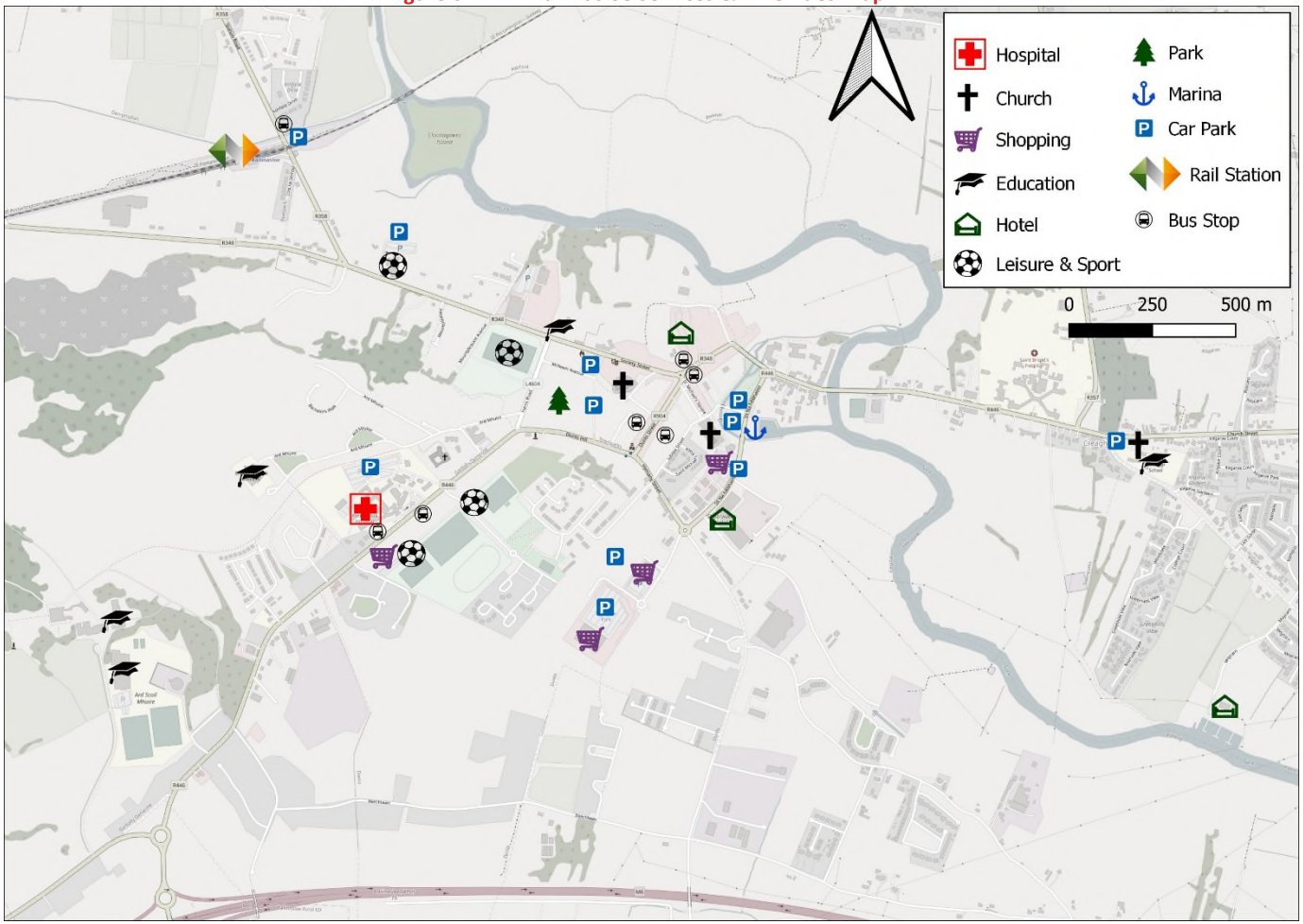


3.3.2 The areas of Ballinasloe with the highest concentration of population are to the north east and south east of the town centre, with an additional area to the south west. It is noted that the only route available to access the town centre from the north east and south east areas is Bridge Street (R446).

3.3.3 The areas of Ballinasloe with the highest concentration of employment are to the north east and south east of the town centre.

3.3.4 Services and Amenities within Ballinasloe are presented in **Figure 5**:

Figure 6. Ballinasloe Services & Amenities Map



3.3.5 The rail station is located to the north west of the town, a distance of approximately 1.5km from the town centre.

3.3.6 The town's Showgrounds and leisure centre are located to the west of the town centre.

3.3.7 The hospital is located on the south west outskirts of the town, a distance of approximately 1.1km from the town centre. The town's GAA and Association Football clubs are located nearby. A cluster of schools (two secondary, one primary) is located further south west from the hospital.

3.3.8 Two large supermarkets (Tesco and Aldi) are located to the south of the town centre, with parking facilities provided at each. A third supermarket (Lidl) is located on the eastern fringe of the town centre, in close proximity to the Marina and two of the town's key car parks. A further supermarket (Supervalu) is located to the south west of the town at Brackernagh.

3.3.9 The main car parks in Ballinasloe are both located on the eastern fringe of the town centre. Additional public parking facilities are available at St Michael's Square and the Fair Green Park, to the west of the town centre.

3.3.10 Two churches (St John's and St Michael's) are located on the western and south eastern fringes of the town centre respectively. St John's faces the Fair Green Park and St Michael's borders St Michael's Square. A third church (Our Lady of Lourdes) is located in the Creagh area of the town, a distance of approximately 1.4km to the east of the town centre.

**ATOS Mapping**

3.3.11 ATOS data has been obtained from the NTA for the Ballinasloe area; the ATOS software enables the travel times on foot and by cycle between locations such as residential areas and key destinations (including significant employment sites, primary and secondary schools, GP surgeries, supermarkets and parks) to be calculated and compared.

3.3.12 A typical ATOS calculation will assess the number of locations (defined as a 100m square area) within an area of search which can reach one or more instances of a selected key destination by the chosen mode within a given time frame – for the Ballinasloe assessments this has been selected as 15 minutes. The software calculates the average journey time for all 100m squares which are within this range, and then calculates values for all other 100m squares within the selected study area relative to this average. Each square is then assigned a value from A to E dependent on its "individual" travel time relative to the average travel time; "A" corresponds to the shortest journey times (i.e. better than the average) with E corresponding to the longest journey times.

3.3.13 It is important to note that ATOS maps are not intended to show actual journey times; rather, they are used to show which parts of a given study area have good or bad accessibility to key destinations relative to others. This enables any significant geographical differences in accessibility to particular services to be clearly identified, so that in turn the causes of this discrepancy can be investigated. A selection of ATOS maps for the Ballinasloe area have been produced and are presented at **Figures 7 to 10** below.

**Figure 7. ATOS Mapping – Walking times to Employment Destinations**

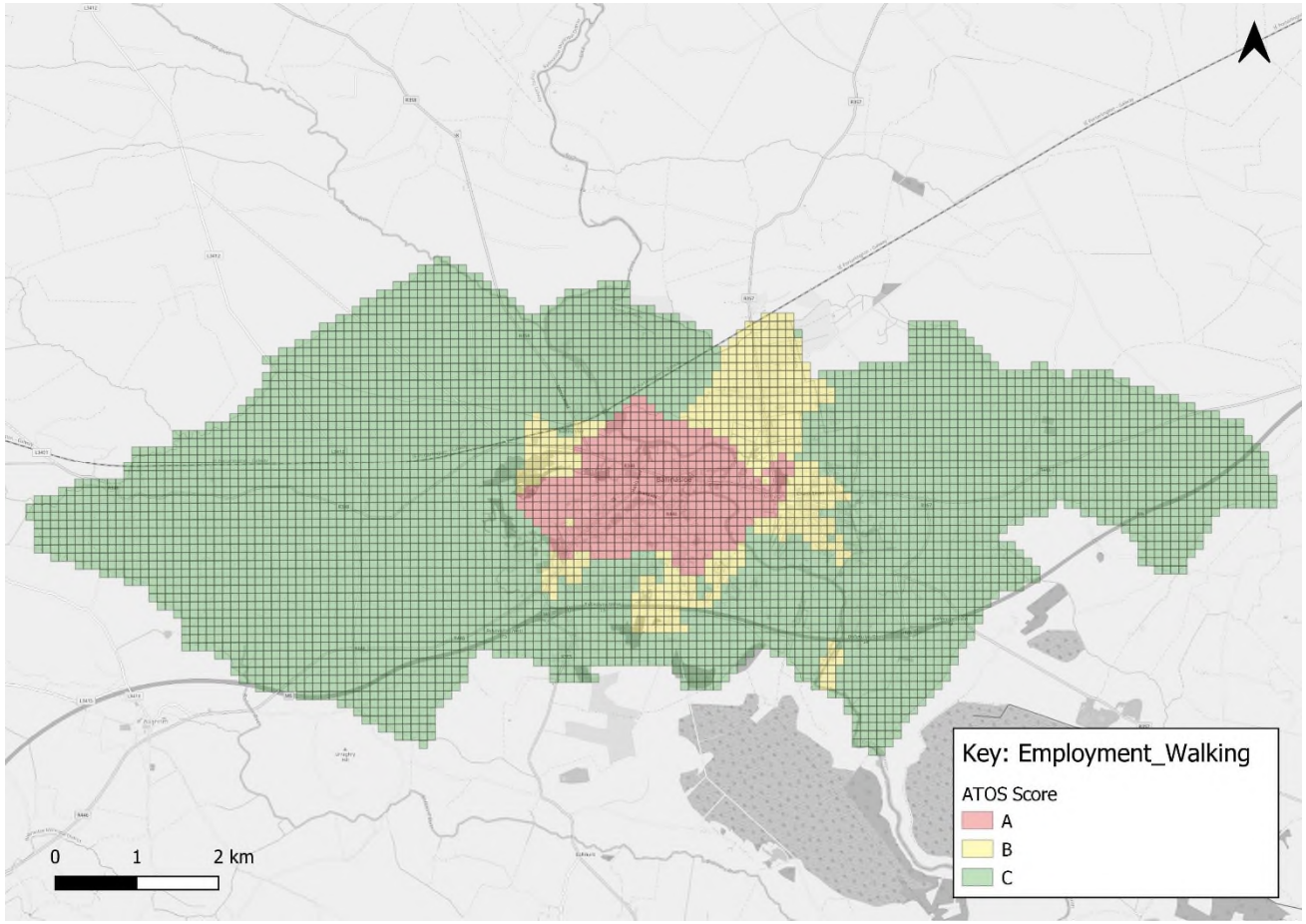


**Figure 8. ATOS Mapping – Cycling times to Employment Destinations**

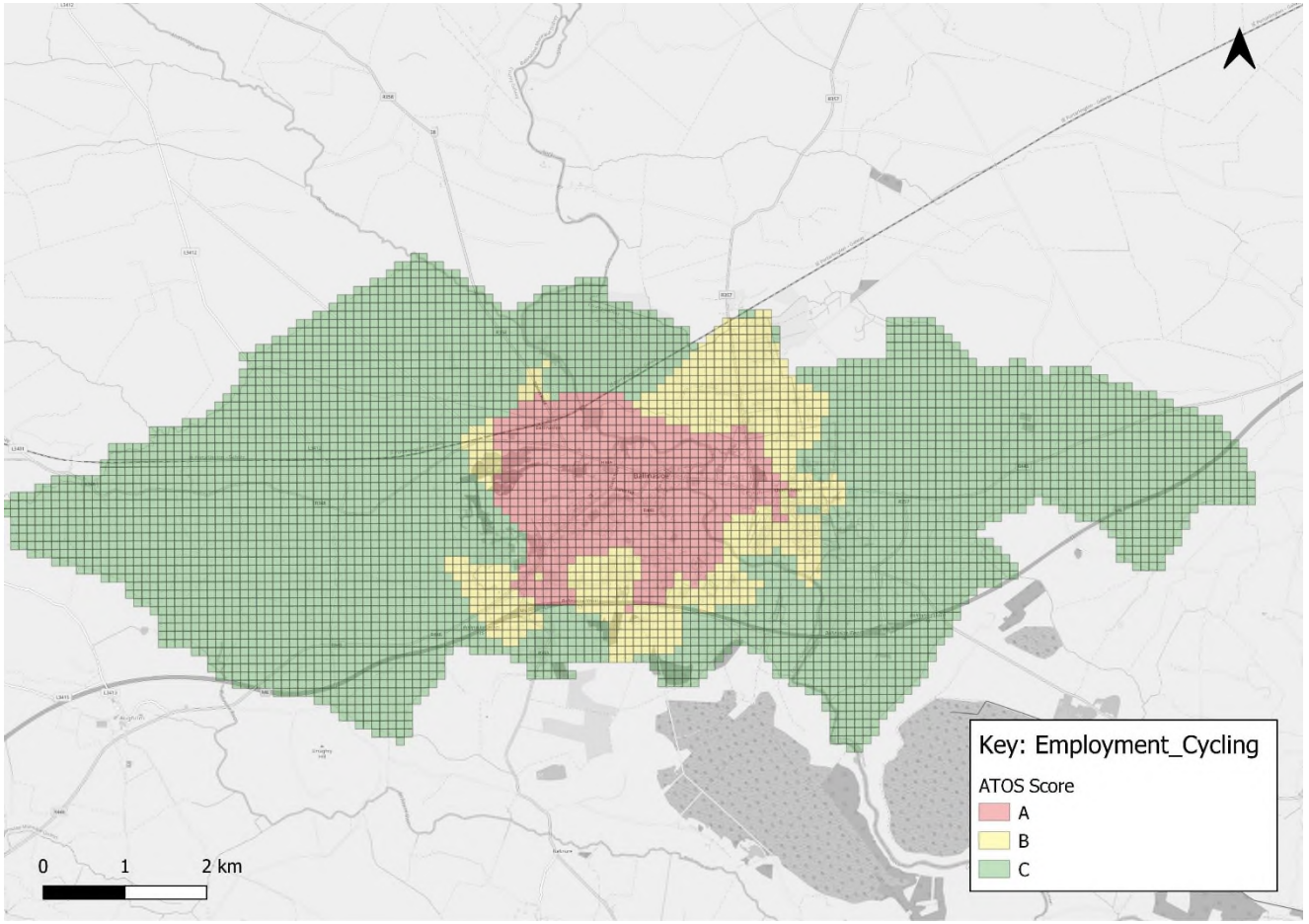


Figure 9. ATOS Mapping - Walking Times to Primary Schools

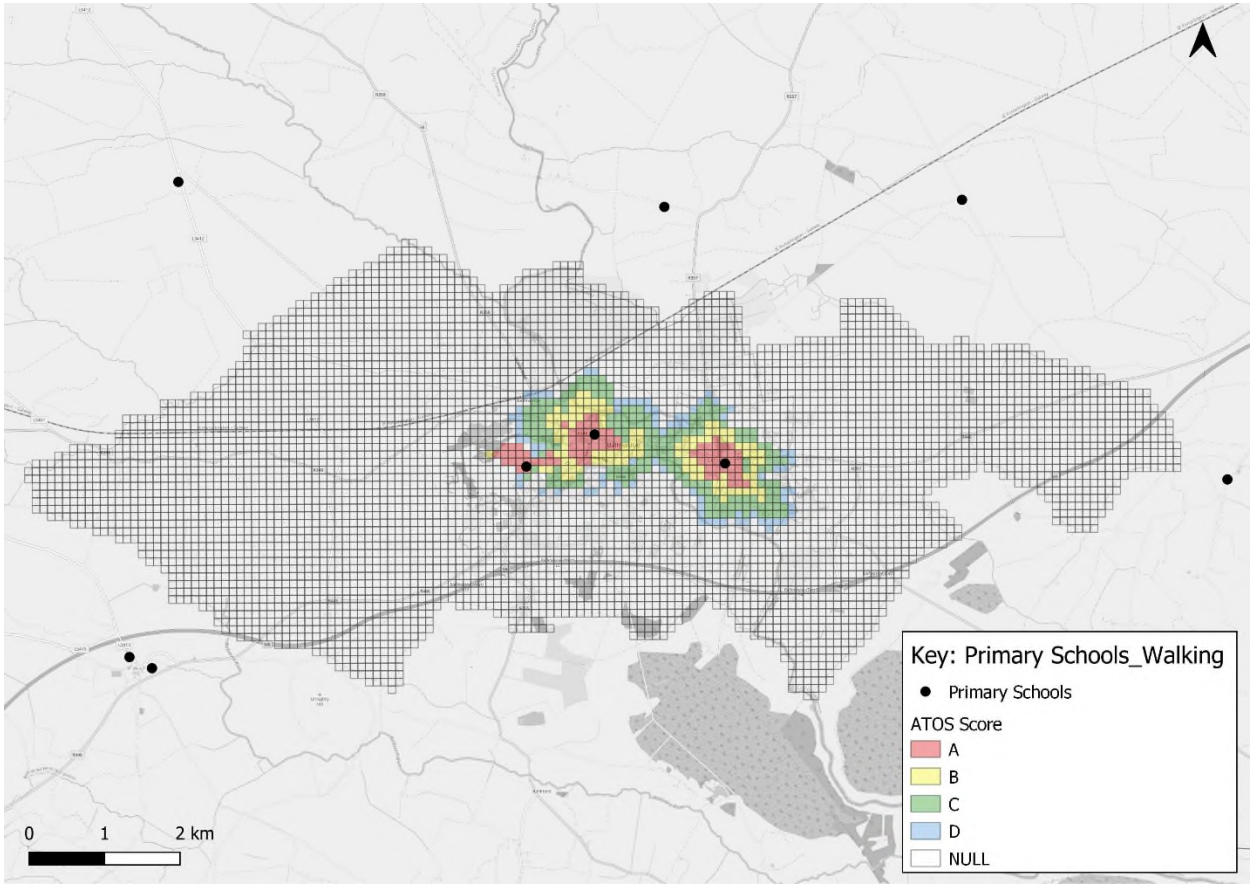
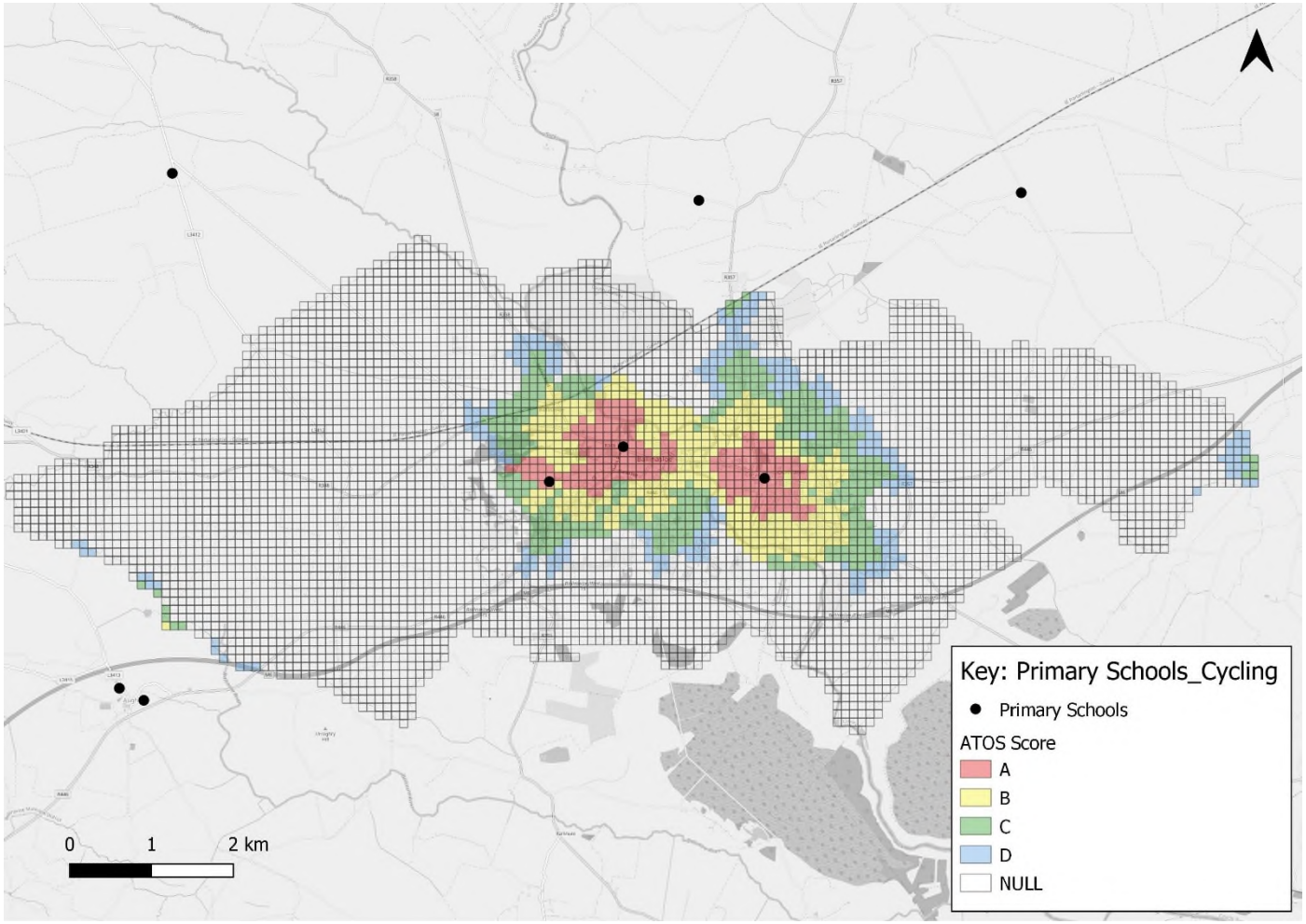


Figure 10. ATOS Mapping – Cycling Times to Primary Schools



## 3.4 Travel Patterns

### Existing Trip Distribution Profile

3.4.1 A map which summarises the current trip-making patterns into and out of Ballinasloe (taken from the 2016 Census) is shown in **Figure 11**; this data is also shown in tabular form.

3.4.2 Mode shares for journeys to work by residents of Ballinasloe (taken from 2016 Census information) are summarised in the table and graph below. (It is noted that this includes all trips to work by Ballinasloe residents, whether to destinations within Ballinasloe itself or elsewhere).

Figure 11. Trip into and out of Ballinasloe

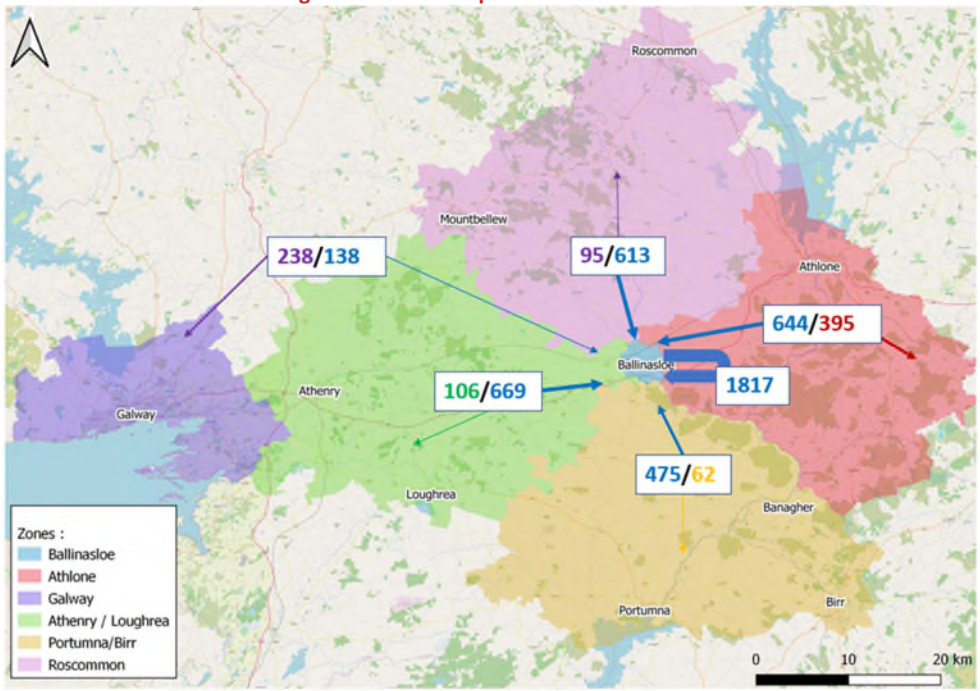


Table 5. Trip movements in and out of Ballinasloe

| FROM\TO | BALLINASLOE | ROSCOMMON | PORTUMNA / BIRR | ATHENRY / LOUGHREA | ATHLONE | GALWAY AREA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Ballinasloe** | 1817 | 95 | 62 | 106 | 395 | 238 |
| **Roscommon** | 613 | 6742 | 61 | 245 | 1719 | 917 |
| **Portumna / Birr** | 475 | 32 | 5436 | 465 | 422 | 647 |
| **Athenry / Loughrea** | 669 | 403 | 182 | 8441 | 316 | 6098 |
| **Athlone** | 644 | 326 | 334 | 53 | 14108 | 429 |
| **Galway Area** | 138 | 64 | 50 | 1013 | 222 | 50613 |

3.4.3 The maps shows the geographical location of the zones listed in the corresponding table. Trips made in and out of Ballinasloe during the AM Peak are shown on the map. The trips towards Ballinasloe are shown in blue; the trips from Ballinasloe are shown in the colour of the destination zone.

3.4.4 The table refers to the number of Daily trips made during the AM peak between, and within, the different zones.

3.4.5 A key observation from the data is that 1,817 daily trips are made within the town of Ballinasloe. People from the town are twice as likely to have made a trip within the town than anywhere else in the 5 other zones shown in the table.

3.4.6 The destination with the second highest number of trips made by Ballinasloe residents is Athlone (395 trips).

3.4.7 For trips made into Ballinasloe, demand is relatively evenly spread between the surrounding area. All four zones north, south, east and west of Ballinasloe generate a similar number of trips during the AM peak (from 475 for the Portumna / Birr area to 669 for Athenry / Loughrea area). Galway is the area from where the fewest trips

originate, but as it is also the furthest distance from Ballinasloe, this is not unexpected.

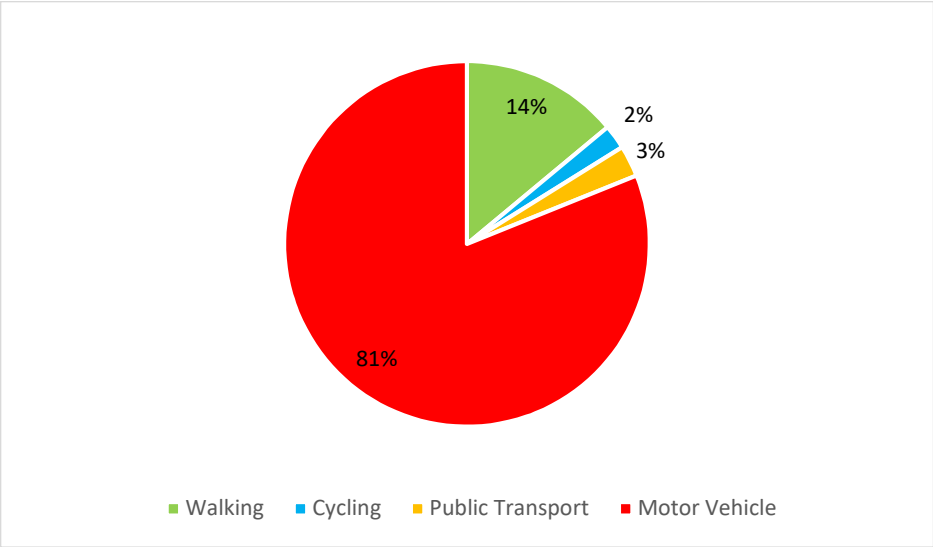
### Mode Shares (Work and Education)

3.4.8 Mode shares for journeys to work by residents of Ballinasloe (taken from 2016 Census information) are summarised in the table and graph below. (It is noted that this includes all trips to work by Ballinasloe residents, whether to destinations within Ballinasloe itself or elsewhere).

Table 6. Mode shares - Commuting to work

| | WALKING | CYCLING | PUBLIC TRANSPORT | CAR AND MOTORCYCLE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ballinasloe | 14% | 2% | 3% | 81% |
| National | 10% | 3% | 10% | 77% |

Figure 12. Mode Share – Trips to Work (Ballinasloe Residents)




3.4.9 Ballinasloe residents make significantly fewer public transport trips for their commuting journeys relative to the national average. (3% of the workers vs 10% nationally).

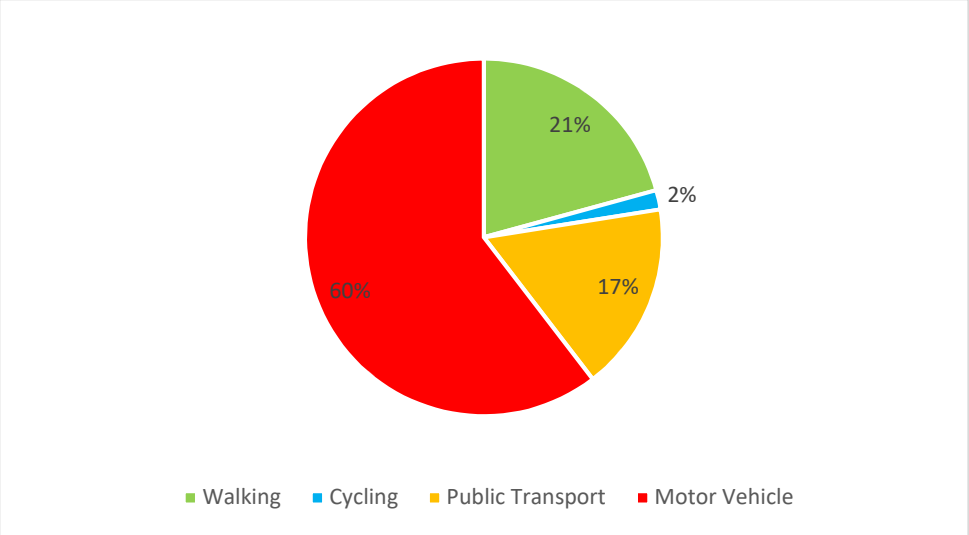
3.4.10 However, they tend to walk to walk more (14% vs 10%) and to use a car, or another private motor vehicle, more often (81% vs 77%).

3.4.11 The same analysis for education trips by Ballinasloe residents is presented adjacent.

Table 7. Mode shares – Trips to school (Ballinasloe Residents)

| | WALKING | CYCLING | PUBLIC TRANSPORT | CAR AND MOTORCYCLE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ballinasloe | 21% | 2% | 17% | 60% |
| National | 24% | 2% | 21% | 52% |

Figure 13. Mode Share – Trips to School (Ballinasloe Residents)



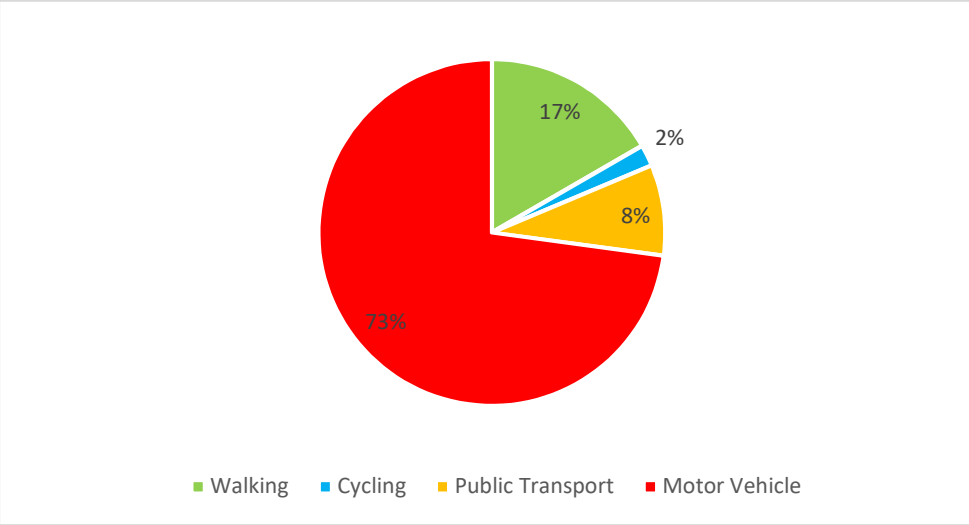

3.4.12 As opposed to commuting trips, trips to school are less frequently made on foot in Ballinasloe compared to Ireland in general (21% vs 24%). Pupils in Ballinasloe also use public transport less often (17% vs 21%).

3.4.13 Private motorised vehicles remain the most common mode for the trips to school in Ballinasloe (60% vs 52% nationally).

Table 8. Mode shares - Total

| | WALKING | CYCLING | PUBLIC TRANSPORT | CAR AND MOTORCYCLE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ballinasloe | 17% | 2% | 8% | 73% |
| National | 15% | 3% | 14% | 68% |

Figure 14. Mode Share – All Commuting and School Trips – Ballinasloe Residents




3.4.14 Overall, current mode choices for work and education in Ballinasloe differ from the national average by way of a higher use of private vehicles (73% vs 68% nationally), and by a lower use of public transport (8% vs 14% nationally).

## 3.5 Transport Network

### Walking and Cycling Infrastructure

3.5.1 Walking buffer maps for the town centre and eastern residential areas are shown below in **Figures 15 and 16.** (Walking speed is assumed as 3mph / 4.8km per hour).

Figure 15. Five and Ten Minute Walking Buffers

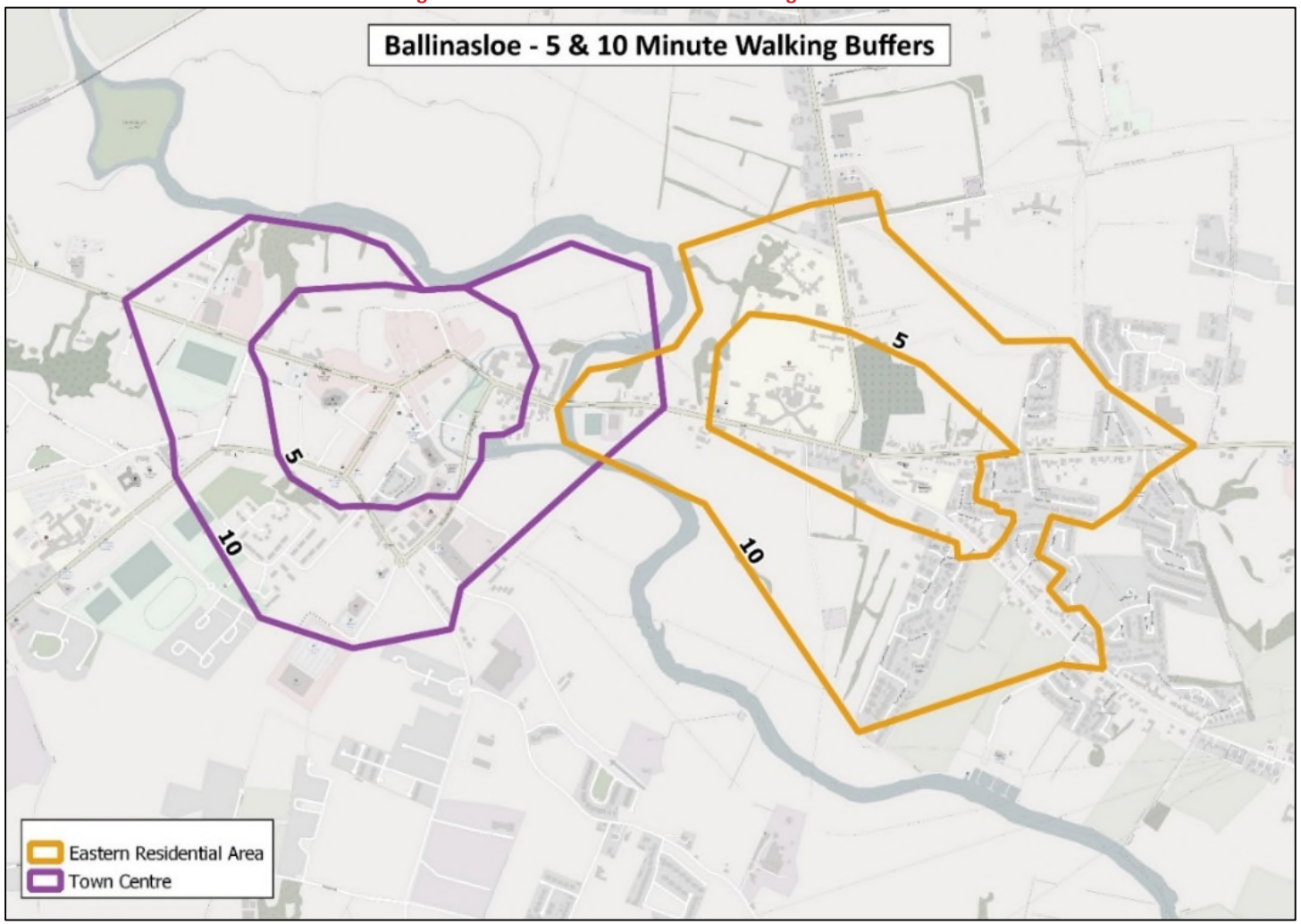
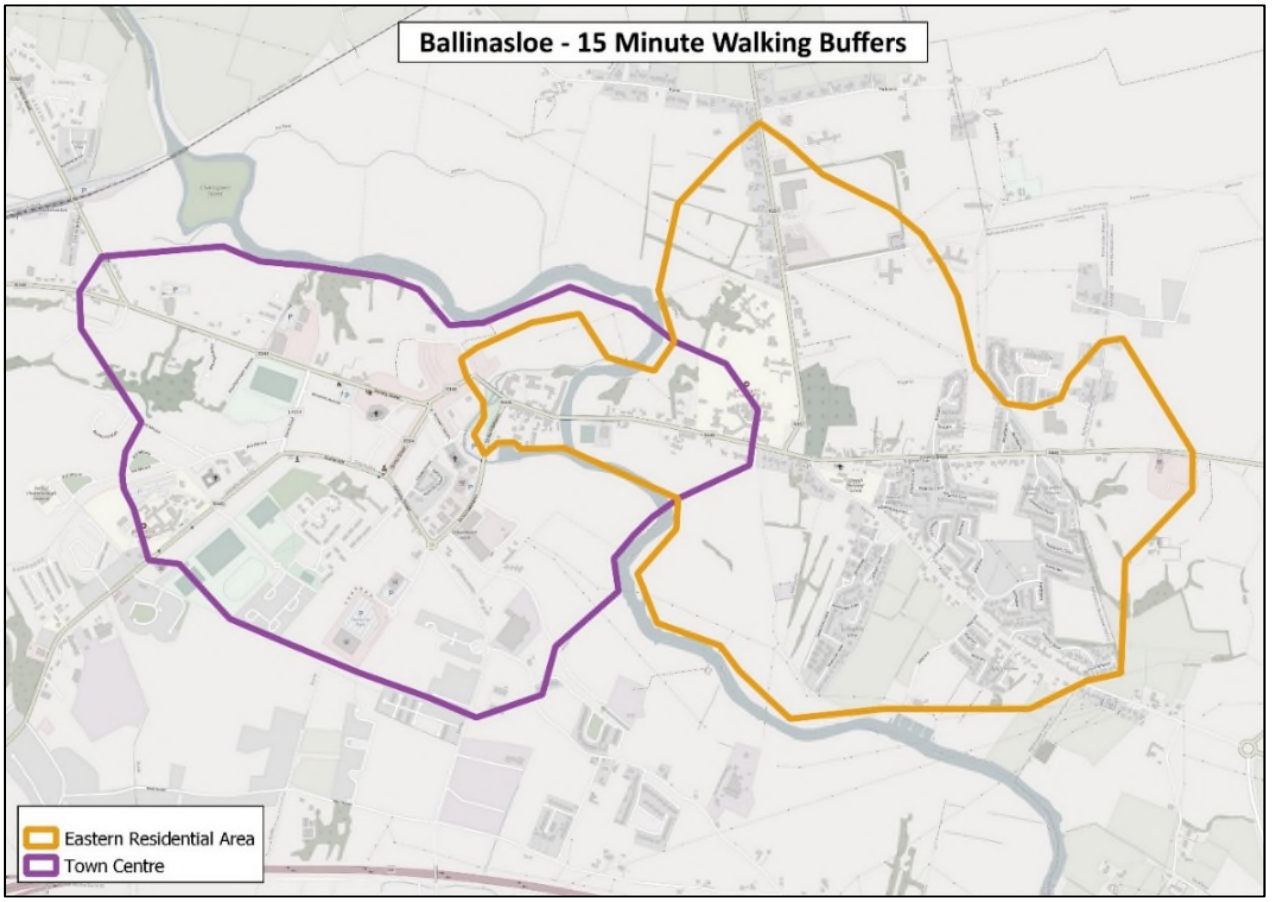


Figure 16. Fifteen Minute Walking Buffers



3.5.2 It can be seen that the majority of the town's services and amenities are located within walking distance of the town centre. Almost all of the eastern residential area is located outside of the town centre's ten minute walking buffer, with an approximate walking time of 15-20 minutes to the town centre.

3.5.3 As shown in **Figure 16** above, a high proportion of Ballinasloe town is within a 0-15 minute walking distance on street, with the furthest extremities of the town approximately a 20 minute walking distance between each other. These trip distances are therefore suitable for encouraging mode shift to active modes through walking and cycling improvements, better connections to residential areas including footway improvements and junction improvements, addition of pedestrian crossings and the removal of parking to support this modal shift.

3.5.4 A high proportion of the residential population is based on the eastern side of the town and therefore it is considered that this Local Transport Plan for Ballinasloe should seek to provide a package of local measures to support a significant mode shift for internal journeys. It is noted that these measures will also benefit visitors to the area, creating a town centre which is conducive to walking and cycling as well as supporting linked trips with public transport for longer-distance journeys.

### Public Transport

3.5.5 Ballinasloe rail station is located on the Galway Ceannt to Dublin Heuston route, with direct connections to Galway (City), Athenry, Athlone and Dublin. Ten westbound (towards Galway) and nine eastbound (towards Dublin) services per day call at Ballinasloe.

3.5.6 Bus stops are located in the town centre of Ballinasloe, on Society Street and Dunlo Street. Additional bus stops are present on Dunlo Hill and Brackernagh, serving the hospital. A pair of stops is also located on Dublin Road (R446) within Roscommon County, by the service station; additional bus stops are proposed adjacent to the marina on the R446. The existing bus stops themselves are generally of good quality, but not all have seating and real-time information is not provided.

3.5.7 A detailed list of bus services in the Ballinasloe area can be seen in **Table 9**.

**Table 9. Bus Services in Ballinasloe**

| ROUTE | OPERATOR | MAX NO. WEEKDAY SERVICES | MAX NO. WEEKEND SERVICES |
|---|---|---|---|
| 763 (Galway – Athenry – Ballinasloe – Dublin) | Citylink | 8 westbound, 10 eastbound | 8 westbound, 10 eastbound |
| 706X (Galway – Dublin) | Aircoach | 4 (both directions) | 4 (both directions) |
| 547 (Ballinasloe – Portumna) | Transport for Ireland | 4 (both directions) | 4 (both directions) |

3.5.8 Up to 12 services per day provide a link from Ballinasloe to Galway (City) with up to 14 services per day linking to Dublin.

3.5.9 It is noted that Ballinasloe was previously served by an additional bus route (route 20) which has now been discontinued. It has been recognised locally that this loss of the service is disappointing and does not reflect wider aspirations within Ballinasloe to encourage use of sustainable modes of travel; it is suggested that dialogue should be undertaken with the NTA on this point to understand the reasons for the discontinuation of the service and to establish what alternatives may be feasible to develop as part of the LTP's implementation.

### Road Network

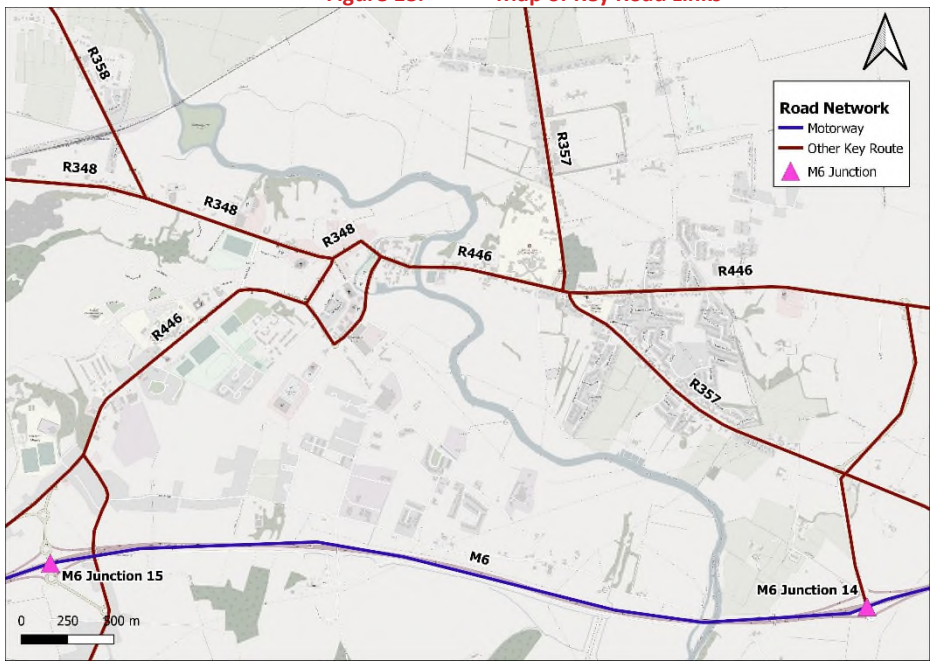
3.5.10 Ballinasloe's road network consists of two main through-routes (the R446 and R348) with the eastern area of the town also having a connection to the R357.

3.5.11 The R446 connects to Junction 15 of the M6 to the south-west of the main town, with the R446 then running north-east and circling around the southern and eastern edges of the town centre area before proceeding eastwards to the boundary with Roscommon County. A second interchange onto the M6 (junction 14) is provided to the east of the town with access provided from the R357. At the north-eastern edge of the town centre area, the R446 connects to the R348, which runs through the northern part of the town centre area and then westwards to the rural areas surrounding the town; a short link (the L4604) provides an additional connection between the R446 and R348 to the west of the town centre area, allowing traffic to avoid the centre of Ballinasloe if its destination is not within the town itself.

3.5.12 All of these routes have multiple junctions with local roads and direct access for properties and servicing activity; the main routes are also of sufficient width to allow large vehicles to pass without difficulty. As such, there are not presently any significant issues observed with regard to highway capacity or congestion on these routes.

3.5.13 A map of the key road routes is shown at **Figure 18**.

Figure 18. Map of Key Road Links




### Parking

3.5.14 A high level count of the available public car parking spaces has been undertaken to understand the level of existing provision in Ballinasloe.

3.5.15 Approximately 760 marked public parking spaces are provided within Ballinasloe, this includes approximately 400 within public car parks and 360 in marked bays on street. Approximately 90% of these spaces are pay and display, during operational times and 10% are free parking. An additional level of non-marked on-street parking is available within Ballinasloe however this is fairly limited, although it is noted that a high volume of vehicles park on street in undesignated bays along the southern end of the R446 towards Brackernagh. The level of available parking is expected to be a contributing factor to the high percentage mode share of internal trips which are undertaken by vehicle.

## 3.6 Identification of Areas of Influence

3.6.1 SYSTRA has identified areas likely to attract a relatively high number of internal trips within Ballinasloe. These comprise of the following:

- The Town Centre – encompassing Society Street, St Michael's Square, Dunlo Street and Main Street;
- The Shopping and Leisure Area – encompassing the Marina, Shearwater Hotel and the three supermarkets located to the south and south east of the town centre; and
- The Healthcare and Sports Area – encompassing the Portiuncula University Hospital as well as the GAA and Association Football clubs. (This area also includes an additional supermarket on Brackernaugh, south-west of the Hospital site).

3.6.2 The identified "Areas of Influence" (plus key employment and education destinations) are shown in **Figure 19**.

Figure 19. Identified “Areas of Influence” in Ballinasloe

3.6.3 The baseline analysis shows that the eastern portion of the town, across the River Suck from the town centre, contains the areas with the highest number of residents. With only one crossing of the river in the local area, the Bridge Street (R446) route is key to enable access to the local services and amenities, almost all of which are located within the town centre or on the western fringes of the town.

## 3.7 SWOT Analysis

3.7.1 A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) exercise has been undertaken for the Ballinasloe area; this analysis is based upon all of the data and other information which has been collated and reported in sections 2 to 3 of this LTP document.

3.7.2 The SWOT analysis is presented in tabular format below.

Table 10. Ballinasloe SWOT Analysis

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| • Vibrant historic town centre enhanced by recent high-quality streetscape improvements<br>• Adjacent to the National Road network providing strong connectivity East to West via M6, and north to south via M17/M18<br>• Rail service connecting Ballinasloe to Galway, Athlone & Dublin<br>• Good quantum of conveniently located off-street parking serving town centre needs<br>• Efficiently operating road network with few delays to vehicular traffic<br>• Accessible and centrally located schools and key services (e.g. Portiuncula University Hospital)<br>• Natural amenities offered by River Suck and adjoining town parks<br>• Recent investments improving footpath connections in the town | • Town centre and adjoining areas prone to periodic flooding<br>• Lack of cycle facilities linking outlying residential areas to town centre and key amenities<br>• Wide and straight aspect of some streets leading into town centre results in high traffic speeds<br>• Lack of safe and direct pedestrian crossing facilities at some key locations in town centre and on approach<br>• Train Station remote from town centre and much of residential population<br>• On-Street parking in some areas of the town centre limits space for other street activities / infrastructure |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| • Potential routing of national greenway linking Dublin to Galway through Ballinasloe would provide valuable amenity and possible active travel spine through town<br>• Wide aspect of radial streets could accommodate improvements for walking and cycling<br>• Build upon natural amenities offered by town with stronger walking and cycling connections<br>• Creation of central civic space supporting events<br>• Increase in accessibility of buses, including interchange opportunities<br>• To further enhance town's rail and bus connectivity | • Need to manage more severe flooding events in future and impact on local amenities<br>• Desire to retain on-street parking in certain locations may limit ability to deliver improved connectivity for pedestrian and cyclists or enhanced public realm<br>• Sufficient funding to deliver necessary improvements |

3.7.3 The SWOT analysis has sought to take account of the recent improvements to streetscape and road layout within the centre of Ballinasloe, and to build from these in terms of how movement within the town can be further enhanced for sustainable modes.

3.7.4 It is recognises that Ballinasloe does not have any “headline” issues with transport which dominate local discussions; it is also recognised, however, that sustainable growth of the type which is described within the CDP and underpins its core policies will require consistent and sustained efforts to make active travel and public transport choices more numerous and convenient, whilst continuing to respect the functions of the town for its hinterland and surrounding smaller settlements, for whom access by car will continue to be important.

3.7.5 The next section of the LTP considers the wider transport context for the LTP strategy, and its corresponding objectives.

# LTP OBJECTIVES AND FUTURE DEMAND FOR TRAVEL

## 4.1 Overview

4.1.1 The Ballinasloe LTP is required to demonstrate how measures to improve transport provision within the town (and for trips made to and from the town by visitors) will align with the wider objectives and principles within the CDP and CGTPS. This section of the report presents analysis of how this can be achieved in principle, by defining objectives for the LTP itself and comparing these to expected future demands for travel to, from and within Ballinasloe; section 5 of the report subsequently applies these findings to a corresponding process of option development.

## 4.2 LTP Objectives

4.2.1 It is noted that, via the SWOT analysis and dialogue with GCC Officers, the following points have been identified as being of relevance to the development of LTP objectives:

- The road networks serving Ballinasloe (both within the town itself and those which connect to the wider local and strategic road networks) do not presently suffer from any significant issues with regard to traffic volumes or congestion. Further, analysis carried out as part of the GCTPS has not indicated that such issues are expected to arise as a result of the developments proposed to form part of the wider CDP. As such, development and appraisal of improvement options will consider any impacts to drivers and/or "drop off" activity, but will not specifically seek to identify or give weight to proposals which would result in a general increase in vehicular capacity on the road network.
- Similarly, the present volume of car parking provision within Ballinasloe (including both on- and off-street provision) is considered to be sufficient to serve both local needs and those of visitors. Proposals for new or expanded general car parking are therefore not considered to be required or indeed compatible with wider transport policy objectives and have not been included in the objective development process. (Proposed measures which would re-locate or otherwise rationalise parking provision have been identified in terms of their impacts to different groups within the wider Ballinasloe resident and visitor populations).

4.2.2 The following are therefore proposed as the objectives for the Ballinasloe LTP:

- **LTP 1**: Support and implement transport measures which improve general provision for, and accessibility to, sustainable transport modes for residents of Ballinasloe and visitors (including those visiting for work, education and leisure purposes).
- **LTP2**: Support and enhance existing and new walking infrastructure provision within Ballinasloe and encourage active travel choices, including through joint working with the NTA where possible. This will include strengthening of walking infrastructure within and around Ballinasloe town centre and other measures to increase footfall in areas of economic activity.

- **LTP3**: Seek to improve provision for cycling within Ballinasloe, both for residents and for those travelling to and from surrounding areas. This will include consideration of existing barriers to cycling and how these can be reduced.
- **LTP4**: Maintain and enhance facilities and infrastructure for road-based public transport within Ballinasloe. This will include work to bring forward a mobility hub as defined within the GCTPS.
- **LTP5**: Seek to support and expand road-based public transport services, both through joint working with the NTA and regional Local Link / Rural Transport strategy bodies, and where feasible through direct engagement with operators and other public and demand-led transport providers.
- **LTP6**: Support and implement measures to improve access to Ballinasloe Railway Station.

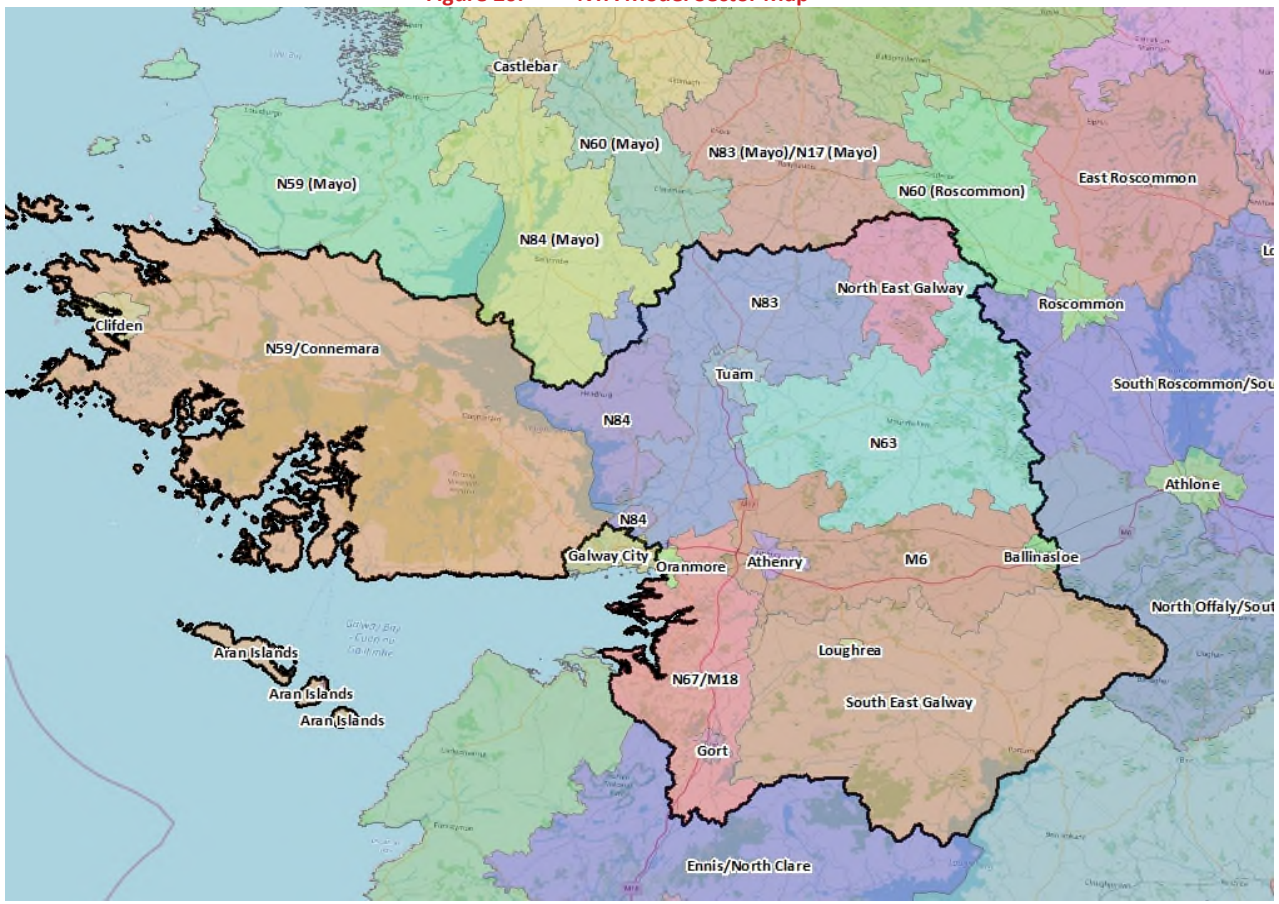
## 4.3 Future Demand for Travel

4.3.1 Existing data sources have been reviewed in order to understand the baseline characteristics of Ballinasloe town as well as the future forecast travel trends from outputs from the NTA Western Regional Model (WRM). This provides valuable information on the current and future travel patterns including origins, destinations and key demand routes. It is noted that the WRM is a strategic model which divides Galway County (as well as the remainder of the country) into a number of sectors, from which trips originating and finishing are identified. A total of 16 sectors are located within Galway County, including standalone sectors for key towns and larger sectors covering more rural areas of the county.

4.3.2 Ballinasloe is represented as a single model sector, allowing for extraction of key origin and destination data to and from the town. The data extraction provides a strategic overview of the key demand routes between model zones and the proportion of internal zone trip making.

4.3.3 Model sectors are shown in **Figure 20** and summarised in **Table 11** for information.

Figure 20. NTA Model Sector Map



4.3.4 The WRM presents data for a base and future year scenario, with a linear pattern of growth incorporated:

- **2016**: Baseline; and
- **2039**: Future Year, aligned to the National Planning Framework growth forecast.

### Key WRM Data Trends

4.3.5 The key data outputs for Ballinasloe from the WRM outputs are summarised in Error! Reference source not found. below. The AM scenario is presented given that this accounts for the greatest demand peak period, capturing both work and education based trips, some of which may be linked trips.

**Table 11. 2016 and 2028 – Total Volume of trips originating in Ballinasloe**

| SCENARIO | TOTAL VOLUME OF TRIPS ORIGINATING IN BALLINASLOE | BALLINASLOE INTERNAL TRIPS | % OF TRIPS INTERNAL TO BALLINASLOE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2016 AM | 5873 | 4450 | 76% |
| 2028 AM | 7231 | 5486 | 81% |

4.3.6 In the AM baseline model scenario (2016) a total of 5873 trips are forecast to originate in Ballinasloe, of these 4450 (76%) are expected to be internal trips with an origin and destination within Ballinasloe. By 2028 there is a forecast 23% increase in AM trips originating within Ballinasloe, increasing to 7,231 of which 81% are internal trips.

4.3.7 In both the baseline and future scenario, the mode split for internal journeys within Ballinasloe is 67% by car (2,960 trips), 32% by active modes including walking and cycling (1,441) and 1% by Public Transport (49).

4.3.8 Based on the WRM data for the 2016 and 2028 models, over two-thirds of journeys internal to Ballinasloe are undertaken by vehicle in the current and future scenarios.

4.3.9 The next section of the LTP seeks to identify and develop a wide range of potential options for transport improvements which can contribute to the successful delivery of the LTP objectives, and cater to the expected future travel demands arising from Ballinasloe during the plan period.

# OPTION DEVELOPMENT

## 5.1 GIS Analysis

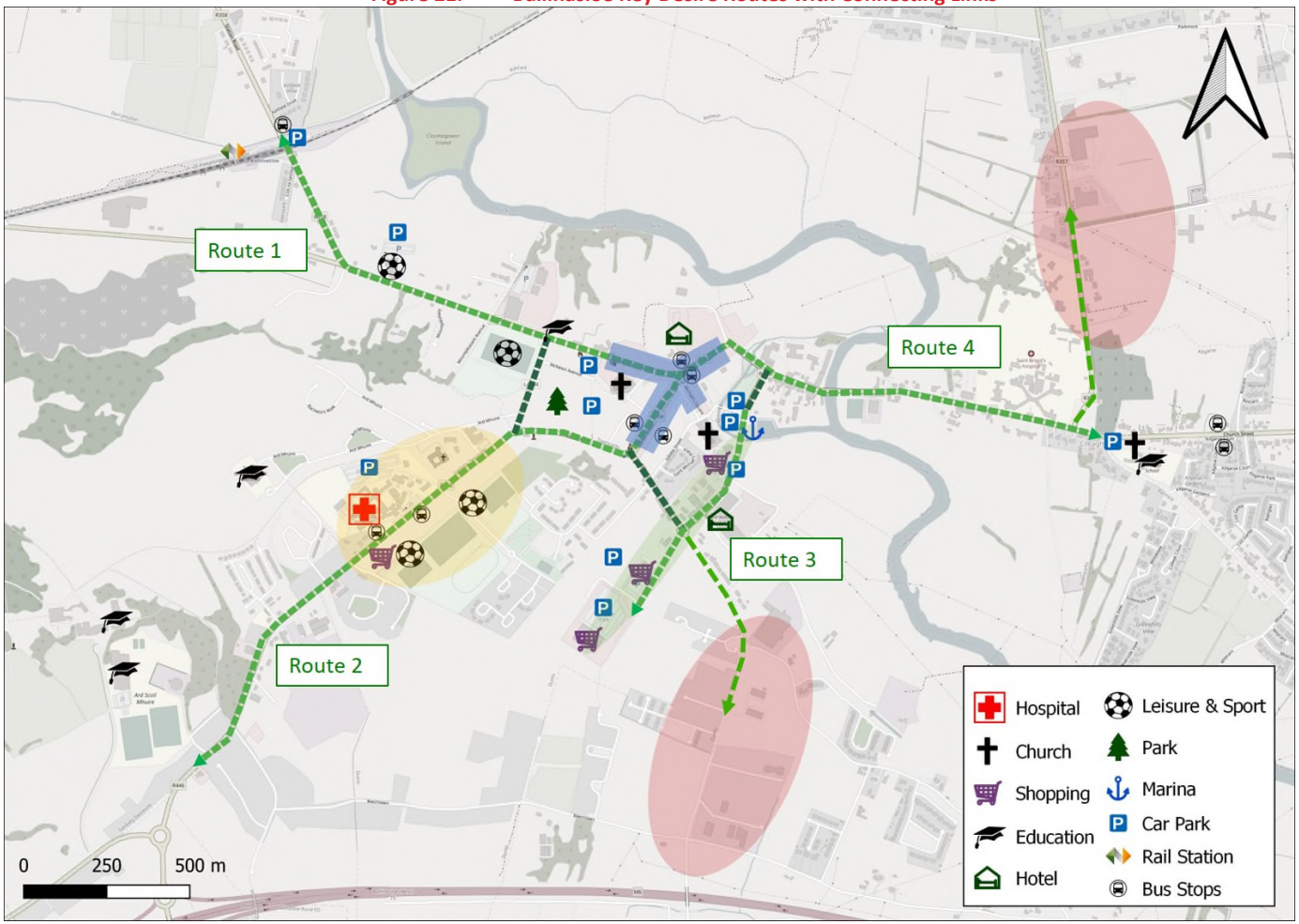
5.1.1 The starting point for option development for the Ballinasloe LTP has been the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to combine data from the sources reported in earlier sections and identify those physical and "soft" measures which have potential to tackle one or more of the identified issues from the SWOT analysis within the CDP period.

5.1.2 It should be noted that the options identified as part of these exercises constitute an initial "long list" of possibilities; refinement of these options is discussed within Section 6 of this report.

5.1.3 The key areas of population, services and amenities within Ballinasloe, along with "Areas of Influence" have been previously identified in the Baseline Information section.

5.1.4 With the locations of these in mind, key desire routes have been plotted, linking the "Areas of Influence", as well as the majority of the services and amenities within the town. These routes are shown below in **Figure 21**.

Figure 21. Ballinasloe Key Desire Routes with Connecting Links



5.1.5 The key routes consist of the following:

- **Route 1:** Connects town centre to National School, St John's Church, Showgrounds, Ballinasloe Leisure Centre, with a potential future extension to station;
- **Route 2:** Connects town centre to Fair Green Park, GAA & football facilities, Portiuncula Hospital, with a potential future extension towards the schools;
- **Route 3:** Connects town centre to Marina, St Michael's Church, Shearwater Hotel, Aldi, Tesco, Lidl supermarkets; and
- **Route 4:** Connects town centre to the residential areas to the east of the river.

5.1.6 Additional connector links have been added, consisting of the following:

- **Harris Road:** Access to Showgrounds and Fair Green, has the potential for a high quality walking and cycling route due to green space and trees lining both sides;
- **Harbour Road:** Connects Dunlo Street with the supermarkets, forms a more direct route towards the supermarkets and the Shearwater Hotel for parts of the town centre; and
- **R446, between Bridge Street and Marina:** Connects Route 4 with the Marina and supermarkets and enables a "ring road" of options to be developed.

5.1.7 The routes have been calculated in order to maximise the opportunity to improve the public realm primarily for pedestrians. The most direct routes from bus stops to certain areas have also been included to improve the experience for those visiting the town from outside.

5.1.8 Taking into account the key routes outlined, areas along each route have been analysed further to identify transport-related issues.

## 5.2 Town Centre & Desire Route 1

### Society Street, Main Street & Dunlo Street

5.2.1 Society Street, Main Street and Dunlo Street all form part of the town centre, branching north east, west and south west respectively off the central Society Street/Dunlo Street/Main Street roundabout. Recent works have upgraded the footways, added trees and rationalised the car parking, with bays clearly delineated and positioned so that the parking dominates the street to a lesser degree than previously.

**5.2.2** The Society Street/Dunlo Street/Main Street junction consists of a three-arm mini roundabout and acts as the focal point for the town centre. A pedestrian crossing is located on each arm, a short distance away from the roundabout itself.

**5.2.3** Main Street forms the eastern section of Desire Route 1, connecting the town centre to the rail station.

**5.2.4** The roundabout is considered to be relatively wide given its location in the heart of the town centre. A more compacted roundabout or signalised junction with accompanying footway build-out would benefit pedestrian connectivity through this junction.

**5.2.5** Railings are located on all footways approaching the junction, which create a sense of domination of the vehicle traffic over pedestrians and add to the street clutter in the vicinity. Removing the railings or replacing with less intrusive objects would improve the public realm; additionally, provision of pedestrian crossings at the junction along the key desired lines would significantly improve the pedestrian experience of this space.

5.2.6 It is considered that these three streets would benefit from additional pedestrian crossings midway along the street to improve accessibility for pedestrians on the street. Conversion of additional on-street spaces to outdoor seating for local businesses or "parklets" would reduce the sense of vehicle domination even further.

5.2.7 A change in road paving style to create a sense of entering a "gateway" to the town centre and naturally encouraging slower vehicle speeds would benefit the far ends of all three streets. This will particularly benefit Main Street which was noted to be a relatively wide and straight road, lending itself naturally to higher vehicle speeds.

**5.2.8** An image of the roundabout junction, with the Society Street crossing and railings can be seen in **Figure 22**. Images of Society Street, Dunlo Street and Main Street are shown in **Figures 23 to 25.**

**Figure 22. Society Street/Dunlo Street/Main Street Junction (Facing West)**

Figure 23. Society Street (Facing West)


Figure 24. Dunlo Street (Facing South)

Figure 25. Main Street (Facing West)


5.2.9 Drawing **300740-SKE-01_P0** (included at Appendix A) provides an example of how the proposed improvements at this location could be implemented in practice. The design sketch includes a number of existing examples of similar infrastructure, to show how the proposed changes could appear in physical terms, as well as an indicative layout for the junction and provision for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.

### St Michael's Square

5.2.10 St Michael's Square branches south off Dunlo Street connecting to Bolger's Lane and forms part of the most direct pedestrian route between the town centre and the Marina and supermarkets. Two roads are present (one for each direction of travel), which are separated by two rows of parking and a central footway, with a further row of parking on the outer edge of each road. St Michael's Square provides an attractive backdrop towards St Michael's Church, enhanced by the presence of multiple trees with accompanying benches on the central footway.

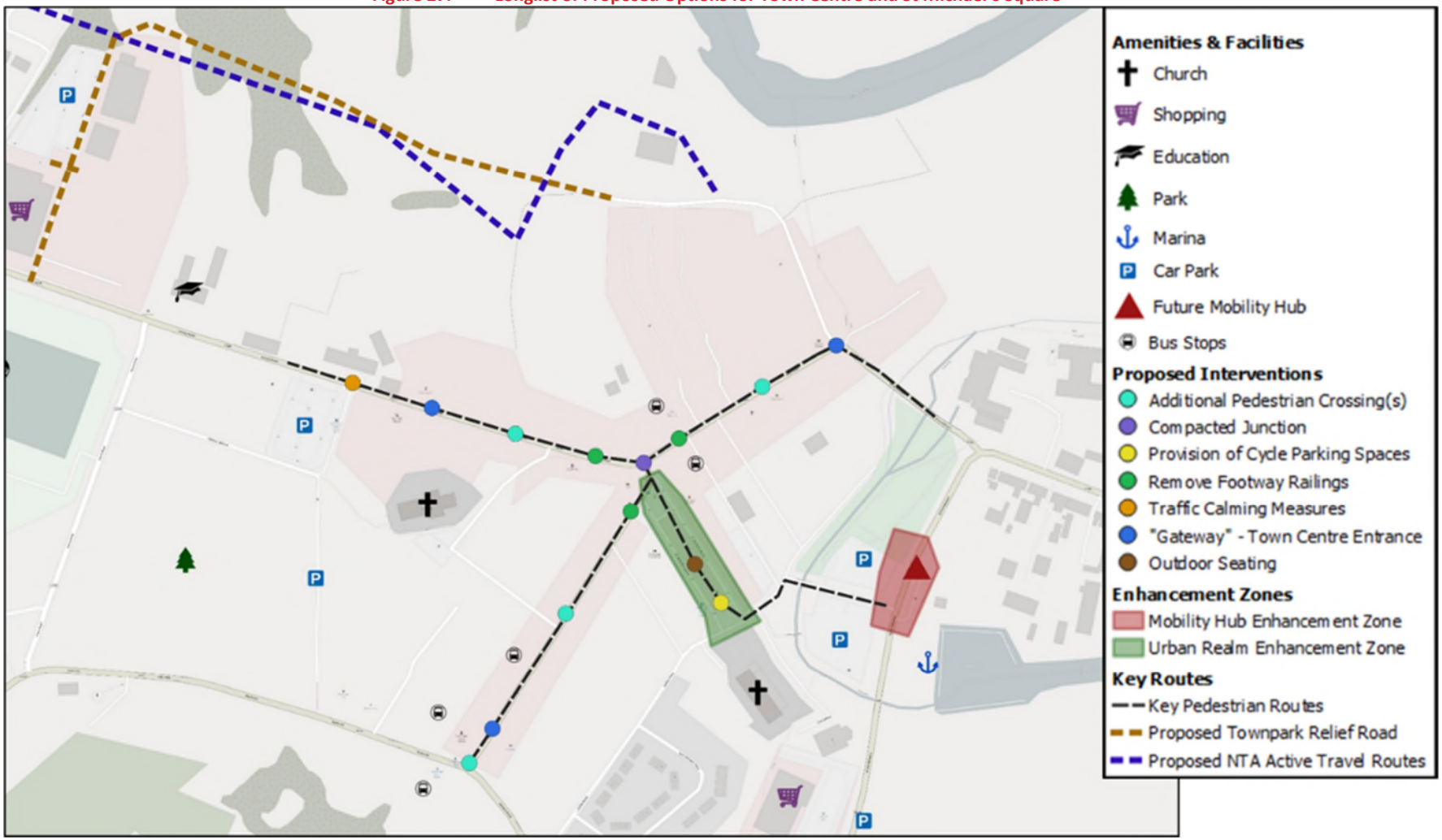
5.2.11 It is considered that St Michael's Square could form part of a high quality pedestrian route between the town centre and multiple amenities that the town has to offer. Rationalising the car parking provision in favour of pedestrians and cyclists would significantly improve the public realm; this would be expected to have positive impacts on pedestrian footfall and the overall economic regeneration of the town centre. This would in turn introduce additional flexibility for occasional events to take place within the square itself.

5.2.12 An image of St Michael's Square is shown in **Figure 26.**

Figure 26. St Michael's Square (Facing South)

5.2.13 A longlist of options for the town centre and St Michael's Square areas is shown in **Figure 27**. Key pedestrian routes through the town centre connecting to the desire routes have been marked.

Figure 27. Longlist of Proposed Options for Town Centre and St Michael's Square



5.2.14 Drawing **300740-SKE-02_P0** (included at Appendix A) demonstrates some possible options for amending the layout of the square; these all retain significant volumes of marked parking, but also show how additional pedestrian space could be created in different ways, varying between flexible space and a greater amount of dedicated pedestrian footway. It is intended that the eventual choice of layout would be subject to further technical work and consultation; however, for the purposes of the LTP it is noted that the concepts of improvement can be delivered through a variety of layout options.

## 5.3 Desire Route 2

### Harris Road

5.3.1 Harris Road forms a connection between Desire Routes 1 and 2, dividing the town's Fair Green Park and the Showgrounds. The presence of trees and open green space on both sides create a visually attractive route. The recent upgrade works have added a footway on the eastern side.

5.3.2 The layout of Harris Road is relatively wide and straight, naturally encouraging higher vehicle speeds. The implementation of traffic calming measures would improve vehicle and pedestrian safety on this link.

5.3.3 The addition of pedestrian crossings on Harris Road would serve the natural desire line between Fair Green Park and the Showgrounds entrance.

5.3.4 An image of Harris Road is shown in **Figure 28**.

Figure 28. Harris Road (Facing North)

## Brackernagh

5.3.5 Brackernagh forms the south west section of Desire Route 2, connecting Dunlo Hill with Portiuncula University Hospital and the two sports clubs. Three schools are also located within close proximity to this route. Improving pedestrian and cycle links would therefore encourage active travel to these facilities.

5.3.6 The layout of Brackernagh relatively wide and straight, resulting in long crossing distances for pedestrians and relatively high vehicle speeds on approach to the junction. The implementation of traffic calming measures would improve cyclists and pedestrian safety on this link, without unduly impeding vehicular access.

5.3.7 The junction with Harris Road features a particularly wide layout for the Harris Road arm, with no dropped kerbs present. This encourages high vehicle speeds through the junction and presents difficulties for pedestrians trying to cross Harris Road.

5.3.8 One pedestrian crossing is present on Brackernagh, located adjacent to the hospital. Additional crossings, particularly in the vicinity of the junction with Harris Road, would improve pedestrian connectivity.

5.3.9 Vehicles were observed parked on the footway, leading to a sense of vehicle domination on this link whilst presenting difficulties for pedestrians. Formally marking the bays, in a similar fashion to how they are marked in the town centre, would formalise the parking spaces and avoid footway encroachment.

5.3.10 Yellow hatched markings were observed near the junction with John Dunne Avenue. Replacing these with footway build-out and dropped

kerbs would improve pedestrian links through the area; removal of the left slip lane would also potentially contribute to these efforts.

5.3.11 An image of the junction with Harris Road is shown in **Figure 29**.

Figure 29. Brackernagh/Harris Road Junction (Facing South West)

5.3.12 Drawing **300740-SKE-03_P0** (included at Appendix A) presents a more detailed view of the Brackernagh / Harris Road junction and the lead-in; the drawing has specifically tested how better pedestrian footpaths and marked on-street parking bays can be implemented without compromising the road space for vehicles (including larger vehicles and HGVs. A carriageway width of 3.2m is maintained along the length of Brackernagh and the wide turning space at Harris Road is also maintained, whilst the provision of a modest pedestrian build-out makes the junction less intimidating for both pedestrians and cyclists.

### Dunlo Hill

5.3.13 Dunlo Hill forms the eastern section of Desire Route 2, connecting the town centre with Brackernagh (this section of road is located to the east of the section discussed above).

5.3.14 The layout of the road was considered to be overly wide and straight, naturally encouraging vehicle speeds. The implementation of traffic calming measures would improve vehicle and pedestrian safety on this link.

5.3.15 One pedestrian crossing is present on Dunlo Hill, located on the southern edge of the Fair Green Park. Additional crossings, particularly in the vicinity of the junction with Harris Road, would improve pedestrian connectivity.

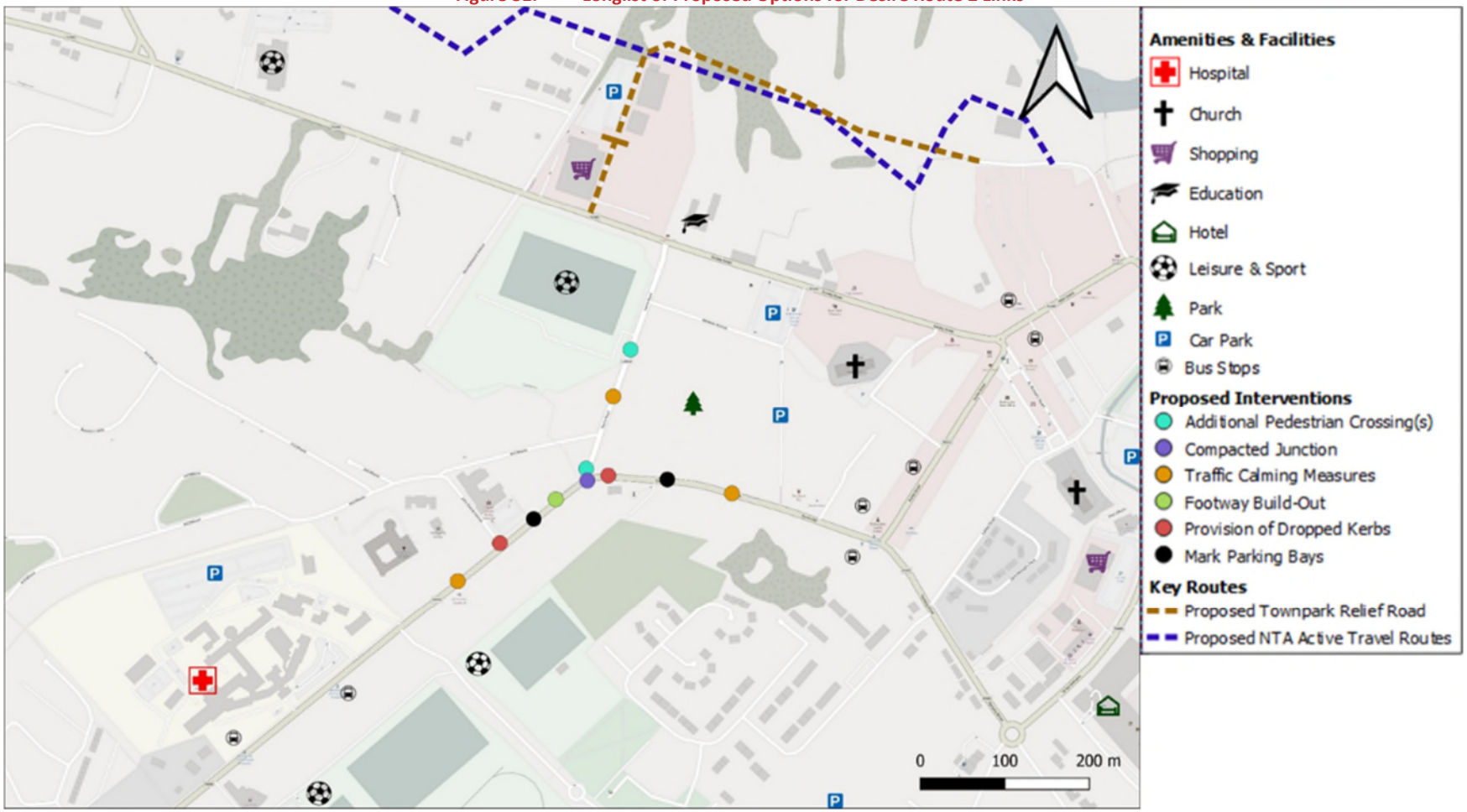
5.3.16 As on Brackernagh, vehicles were observed parked on the footway, leading to a sense of vehicle domination on this link whilst presenting difficulties for pedestrians. Sufficient space exists to formally mark the bays, in a similar fashion to how they are marked in the town centre, in order to formalise the parking spaces and avoid footway encroachment.

5.3.17 An image of Dunlo Hill is shown in **Figure 30.**

Figure 30. Dunlo Hill (Facing East)

5.3.18 A longlist of options for the links forming Desire Route 2 is shown in **Figure 31**.

Figure 31. Longlist of Proposed Options for Desire Route 2 Links



## 5.4 Desire Route 3

### Bolger's Lane

5.4.1 Bolger's Lane forms part of the most direct route between the town centre, St Michael's Square and the Marina. The street features narrow footways which are further obstructed by bollards, widening these footways would improve the pedestrian links through the area.

5.4.2 An image of Bolger's Lane from the site visit is shown in **Figure 32**.

Figure 32. Bolger's Lane


### R446 (Marina)

5.4.3 The section of the R446 running alongside the Marina, forms the core of Desire Route 3, connecting the eastern fringe of the town centre with the Marina, Shearwater Hotel, as well as the three large supermarkets. It also forms part of an orbital route to the town centre.

5.4.4 A future potential location of a new transport and mobility hub is on this link adjacent to the Marina, highlighting the importance of pedestrian links in the vicinity.

5.4.5 A wide area of hatching separates both traffic flow directions. The pedestrian environment would be improved with footway build-out for what could become an area of high footfall. Alternatively, cycle lanes are a consideration to link to the future potential mobility hub; it is considered that a longer-term proposal within the LTP should be the creation of an east-west cycle corridor to enhance the attractiveness and ease of cycle movement within the town as a whole, and between the eastern residential areas of the town and the western education, employment, and health locations.

5.4.6 Pedestrian islands are present on this link adjacent to the Marina and to the Shearwater Hotel. Upgrading these facilities to zebra crossings as well as adding dropped kerbs to the car park access road would enhance pedestrian priority.

5.4.7 An image of the R446 adjacent to the Marina is shown in **Figure 33**.

**Figure 33. R446 (Marina) Facing North**

## Harbour Road & Hymany Street

5.4.8 Harbour Road and Hymany Street form a connection between Desire Routes 2 and 3, as well as consisting of part of the route orbiting the town centre. This route provides a more direct link between the Marina and Hospital than via the town centre.

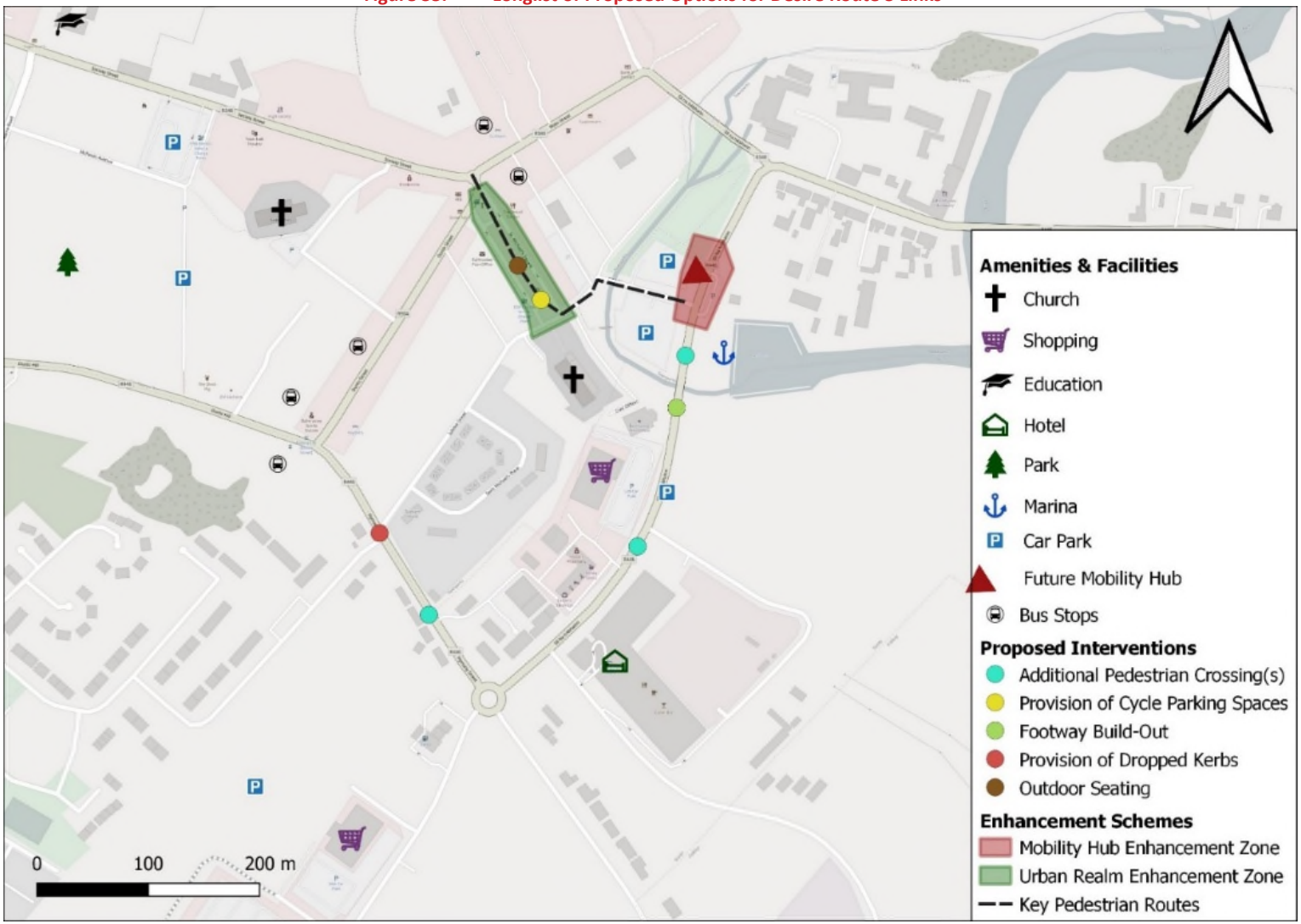
5.4.9 A wide area of hatching separates both traffic flow directions, as shown in **Figure 34**. Replacing the unused space with footway build-out or cycle lanes would improve active travel links in the immediate area; as noted previously, this could contribute to the eventual creation of an east-west cycle link.

5.4.10 A pedestrian island with dropped kerbs is present between the junctions with Dunlo Hill and Jubilee Street, although no dropped kerbs are present on the Jubilee Street arm. The addition of dropped kerbs and a further crossing east of the junction with Jubilee Street would enhance pedestrian connectivity.

**Figure 34. Hymany Street (facing North West)**


5.4.11 A longlist of options of the links forming Desire Route 3 is shown in **Figure 35**.

Figure 35. Longlist of Proposed Options for Desire Route 3 Links



## 5.5 Desire Route 4

### Bridge Street and Church Street (R446)

5.5.1 Bridge Street and Church Street form Desire Route 4 and are part of the regional R446 route. Desire Route 4 extends eastwards from the town centre to the residential areas on the far side of the river.

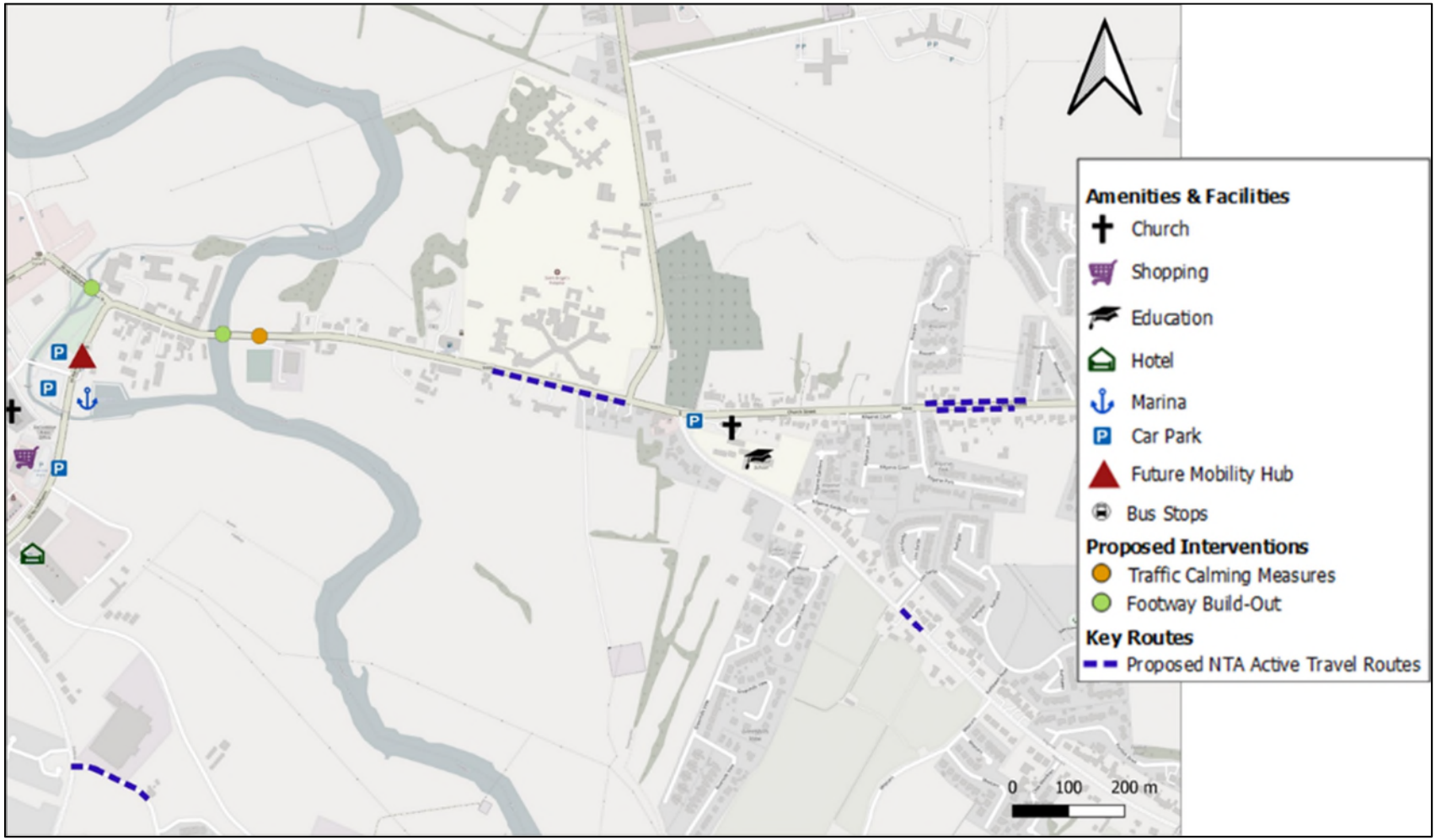
5.5.2 Notable pinch points were observed at the two river crossings, as shown in **Figure 36**, with the footway present on one side of the road at both crossings. East of the River Suck, the footway is present on the north side only for limited stretches. It is noted that providing a continuous footway on both sides of the road or a cycle link would likely require widening of the existing bridges or a new structure entirely.

5.5.3 The layout of this link was considered to be overly wide and straight, naturally encouraging vehicle speeds. The implementation of traffic calming measures would improve vehicle and pedestrian safety on this link.

Figure 36. Bridge Street (Facing East)


5.5.4 A longlist of options of the links forming Desire Route 4 is shown in **Figure 37.**

Figure 37. Longlist of Proposed Options for Desire Route 4 Links



## 5.6 Ballinasloe Station

5.6.1 Ballinasloe rail station is located north west of the town, approximately 1.5km walking distance or 19 minutes walking time from the town centre. Its location and the status of the connecting route contribute to a sense of disconnection with the town itself.

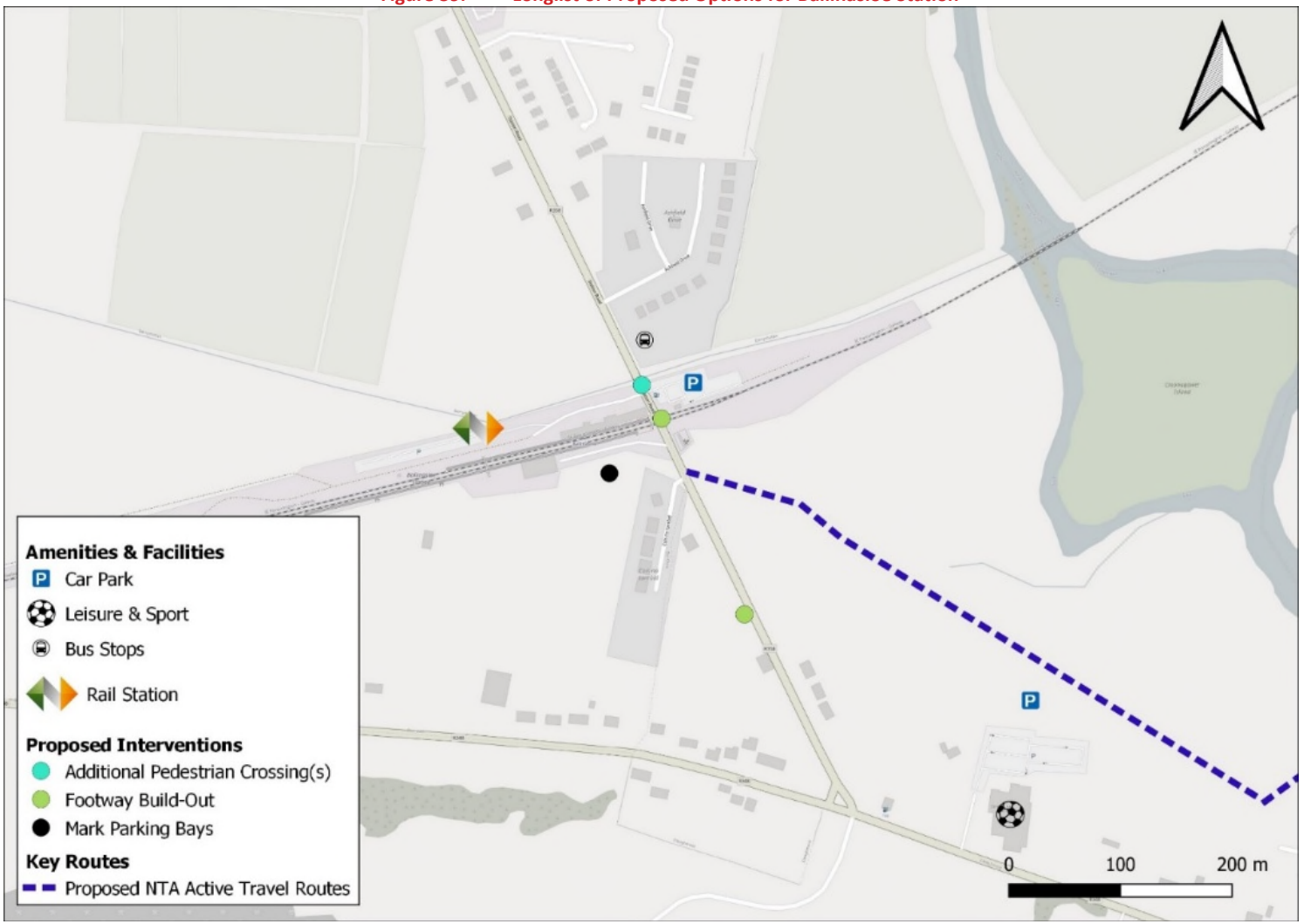
5.6.2 A footway is not provided on the western side of Sarsfield Road, on the section between the station and the junction with the R348 route. Providing a footway on both sides would enhance the link with the town.

5.6.3 The footway is also not present on the section through the level crossing, with pedestrians sharing the road space with vehicles. In addition, there are no crossing facilities between the main station car park and the station buildings, as shown in **Figure 38**. Providing a dedicated crossing and a separate footway would improve pedestrian safety in the immediate vicinity of the station.

Figure 38. Ballinasloe Station (Facing North)


5.6.4 A longlist of options of the links forming Desire Route 4 is shown in **Figure 39**.

Figure 39. Longlist of Proposed Options for Ballinasloe Station



## 5.7 Town-wide Potential Measures

5.7.1 Alongside the analysis of site-specific measures, it is recognised that there are a series of options for more general interventions as part of the LTP. These relate to elements such as public and demand-responsive transport provision, bus stop provision, integration with Greenway proposals, potential for "park and stride" activity, general cycle parking and interactions with the wider national road network.

5.7.2 Specific measures which have been identified in this regard include:

- Joint working with the NTA to improve bus services to and from Ballinasloe, both for longer-distance trips (such as to Athlone and Galway, building on existing service patterns) and via the Local Link network and the new Rural Transport "Region 5" body. The latter is considered to be particularly important in terms of serving Ballinasloe residents without access to a car, and those living in the areas around Ballinasloe where "fixed" public transport is not viable as a long-term option for sustainable transport provision.
- Enhancement of bus stops throughout the town (i.e. other than the proposed mobility hub upgrades) to connect with proposed walking infrastructure improvements and facilitate more local trips by these modes.
- Integration with the developing proposals for the Greenway routes as described in Section 2.
- Encouragement of informal "park and stride" activity by Ballinasloe residents and visitors to make greater use of existing car parking facilities on the edge or outside of the town centre; this will encourage greater physical activity and reduce the impact of parked cars on the town centre itself, whilst recognising and accommodating the continuing need for car usage for particular trip types. Park and Stride will also be supported and encouraged in connection with school travel and other amenity destinations within the town, and is recognised to have potential to greatly increase the safety and convenience of active modes for travel to, from and in the vicinity of these areas.
- Introduction of new east-west cycle links to help connect the major residential areas, commercial areas and community/education/health services within the town, by adding to and expanding upon current NTA cycle link proposals (further details are provided in section 7.4 of this plan).
- The LTP will seek to help protect the safety and function of the national road networks by encouraging trip-making by sustainable modes, and will work jointly with the Ballinasloe LAP to facilitate development in locations where sustainable transport options are both available and attractive, and where additional demand for long-distance travel by car is minimised.

5.7.3 Additionally, the measures identified above will be considered against the aims of the NTA's "Connecting Ireland" programme as they are brought forward for implementation.

5.7.4 Further analysis of each of the identified routes and the town-wide measures, including a Measures Analysis (MA), is presented in Section 6 of this LTP report.

# OPTION APPRAISAL

## 6.1 Option review Vs. SWOT

6.1.1 The SWOT analysis initially presented in section 3 has been used to undertake the first element of the Option Appraisal process. The improvement options which have been generated as a result of the previous site, desk-based and GIS exercises have been compared to the identified "strengths" and "weaknesses" within the SWOT table.

## 6.2 Measures Analysis

6.2.1 A Measures Analysis (MA) table has been developed for the purpose of assessing the impacts and benefits of the individual improvement measures which have identified from the option generation process.

6.2.2 The MA presents a series of five broad policy objectives which reflect those found within the Transport Chapter of the CDP and the LTP objectives defined within section 4 of this document. These are:

- Multi-modal Transport Network – represents policies designed to support sustainable mode choices and accessibility.
- Integrated Transport Network - supports integration between land use planning and transport infrastructure, local connectivity.
- Environmental Effects – represents policies which seek to manage impacts from existing and future development to air quality, noise and other environmental factors.
- Safe Transport Network – represents policies which seek to reduce and mitigate impacts to vulnerable road users and encourage active travel.
- Public Realm – represents policies which promote enhancements to streets and public spaces, and flexible or multiple uses of public space where appropriate.

6.2.3 Within each objective, a series of criteria have been defined which seek to demonstrate how far each of the proposed individual measures is able to support the policy objective in question. It should be noted that the intention is not to assess "competing" packages of options, but to identify those which have the greatest potential benefits in delivering either individual policy objectives, or to provide more general support to a larger number of objectives.

6.2.4 For each MA table, a matrix is created which allows the expected performance of each individual measure to be rated on a five-point scale, illustrated by shading within the MA grid. The definitions of each point on the scale are presented overleaf.

Figure 40. MA Definitions

| Assessment Key | |
|---|---|
| Major Beneficial / Positive Impact | Would strongly encourage desirable behaviours and/or contribute materially to one or more CDP / LTP objectives. |
| Minor Beneficial / Positive Impact | Would have a small positive impact upon desired behaviours or make small contribution to one or more CDP / LTP objectives. |
| Neutral Impact | Would not result in a material change in behaviours or impacts from the current baseline. |
| Minor Negative Impact | Would have a small negative impact on desirable behaviours and/or run counter to one or more CDP / LTP objectives. |
| Major Negative Impact | Would actively discourage desirable behaviours or strongly negatively affect one or more user groups. |

6.2.5 MA tables are presented below for each of the routes discussed in the preceding sections of the LTP, alongside commentary on how the proposed measures would potentially be integrated along each identified route.

### Town Centre Area

6.2.6 The town centre MA matrix is shown in **Figure 41** below.

Figure 41. Town Centre MA Matrix

| | | Proposed Interventions | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective to be tested** | **Measurement of Performance** | Pedestrian Crossings | Compact Junction(s) | Additional Cycle Parking | Car Parking Rationalisation | Removal of footway railings | Traffic Calming measures | "Gateway" Features | Footway build-outs | Additional Seating | Mobility Hub |
| Multi-modal Transport Network - supports sustainable mode choices and accessibility | Public transport accessibility (coverage of stops / PT routes) | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Presence / quality of cycle facilities | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Facilities for walking (pavement quality, dropped kerbs, crossings) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Integrated Transport Network - supports integration between land use planning and transport infrastructure, local connectivity | Alignment with identified development sites (CDP) | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Effects on local walking connectivity | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Effects on local cycling connectivity | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Effects on Transport Interchange | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Effects on Car Parking | | | | | | | | | | |
| Environmental Effects - impacts to air quality and noise | Anticipated change on PT mode shares | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Anticipated change on walking / cycling mode shares | | | | | | | | | | |
| | "Greening" / other Environmental benefits | | | | | | | | | | |
| Safe Transport Network - impacts to vulnerable road users and encourages active travel | Safety benefits to pedestrians | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Safety benefits to cyclists | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Facilitates active travel modes | | | | | | | | | | |
| Public Realm - enhancements to streets and public spaces, | Attractive street environment | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Flexible use of street space | | | | | | | | | | |

6.2.7 The matrix as a whole indicates that all of the proposed measures would have at least a minor positive impact across the range of objectives which are considered via the MA. Of the town centre measures, the introduction of additional pedestrian crossings, traffic calming measures, and the creation of a mobility hub are considered to have the strongest positive benefits to multiple objectives; these measures would address both active and sustainable modes and would bring benefits to both local journeys made by residents of Ballinasloe, and those of visitors.

6.2.8 The potential location of a mobility hub to serve the town centre has been considered separately against criteria including existing public transport service routing, access between the hub and the town centre, and availability of space for elements such as high-quality cycle parking. The proposed location is considered to represent the best balance of these requirements and would build upon recent improvement works undertaken in the area for the provision of new bus stop infrastructure.

## Route 2

6.2.9 The Route 2 MA Matrix is shown in **Figure 42** below.

**Figure 42. Route 2 MA Matrix**

| | | Proposed Interventions | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective to be tested** | **Measurement of Performance** | Pedestrian Crossings | Additonal dropped Kerbs | Compact Junction(s) | Additional Cycle Parking | Parking bay markings | Removal of footway railings | Traffic Calming measures | "Gateway" Features | Footway build-outs | Additional Seating |
| Multi-modal Transport Network - supports sustainable mode choices and accessibility | Public transport accessibility (coverage of stops / PT routes) | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Presence / quality of cycle facilities | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Facilities for walking (pavement quality, dropped kerbs, crossings) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Integrated Transport Network - supports integration between land use planning and transport infrastructure, local connectivity | Alignment with identified development sites (CDP) | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Effects on local walking connectivity | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Effects on local cycling connectivity | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Effects on Transport Interchange | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Effects on Car Parking | | | | | | | | | | |
| Environmental Effects - impacts to air quality and noise | Anticipated change on PT mode shares | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Anticipated change on walking / cycling mode shares | | | | | | | | | | |
| | "Greening" / other Environmental benefits | | | | | | | | | | |
| Safe Transport Network - impacts to vulnerable road users and encourages active travel | Safety benefits to pedestrians | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Safety benefits to cyclists | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Facilitates active travel modes | | | | | | | | | | |
| Public Realm - enhancements to streets and public spaces | Attractive street environment | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Flexible use of street space | | | | | | | | | | |

6.2.10 Route 2 encompasses the southern part of Dunlo Hill, the R446 (Brackernagh) and the L4604 connection between Dunlo Hill and Society Street. These route dually provide access to a major concentration of education and health facilities, whilst also forming the main vehicular route into the town centre from the M6 to the south.

6.2.11 In assessing the proposed options for improvements in this area, it is recognised that the existing street layouts, whilst ensuring excellent access for all vehicle types, do not necessarily encourage other modes of travel. In particular, the lengthy and straight nature of the road links within this route could be seen to facilitate faster vehicle speeds than is desirable. It is worthwhile to clarify that it is not proposed to materially alter vehicular capacities on this route, but rather that certain measures be taken to make these routes more attractive for active modes. Actions such as providing clear markings and road space for on-street parking bays would have a key role to play in these efforts and would echo the similar changes which have already been made in the town centre.

## Route 3

6.2.12 The Route 3 MA Matrix is shown in **Figure 43** below.

Figure 43. Route 3 MA Matrix

| | | Proposed Interventions | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective to be tested** | **Measurement of Performance** | Pedestrian Crossings | Additonal dropped Kerbs | Compact Junction(s) | Additional Cycle Parking | Parking bay markings | Removal of footway railings | Traffic Calming measures | "Gateway" Features | Footway build-outs | Additional Seating | Urban Realm Enhancement Zone |
| | Public transport accessibility (coverage of stops / PT routes) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Multi-modal Transport Network | Presence / quality of cycle facilities | | | | | | | | | | | |
| supports sustainable mode | Facilities for walking (pavement | | | | | | | | | | | |
| choices and accessibility | quality, dropped kerbs, crossings) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Alignment with identified development sites (CDP) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Integrated Transport Network - | Effects on local walking connectivity | | | | | | | | | | | |
| supports integration between | Effects on local cycling connectivity | | | | | | | | | | | |
| land use planning and transport | Effects on Transport Interchange | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Infrastructure, local connectivity | Effects on Car Parking | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Anticipated change on PT mode shares | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Anticipated change on walking / cycling mode shares | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Environmental Effects - Impacts to air quality and noise | "Greening" / other Environmental benefits | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Safe Transport Network - | Safety benefits to pedestrians | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Impacts to vulnerable road users | Safety benefits to cyclists | | | | | | | | | | | |
| and encourages active travel | Facilitates active travel modes | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Public Realm - enhancements to | Attractive street environment | | | | | | | | | | | |
| streets and public spaces, | Flexible use of street space | | | | | | | | | | | |

6.2.13 Route 3 primarily serves the retail areas to the south-east of the town centre; it also includes the links between the proposed mobility hub, the council offices, and existing visitor car parking areas to the town centre via St Michael's Square. The proposed improvements in and around the square have been packaged together as an "Urban Realm Enhancement Zone"; details of these proposals are set out in Section 5 of the LTP

6.2.14 The area around St. Michael's Square is currently used primarily for vehicular parking, with other activities such as a local market also taking place from time to time. Analysis of the current uses, plus examination of existing car parking provision, have shown that there is potential to further enhance the flexibility of this space so that it is able to accommodate a wider variety of events, and for movement by active modes to be made more convenient and attractive.

6.2.15 It is proposed that some careful rationalisation of the existing space could be undertaken to provide more dedicated space for pedestrians, potentially building on the existing seating and planting within the centre of the square, or alternatively re-arranging the space next to existing properties fronting the square to make this space more usable for pedestrians, cyclists, and business owners. This would produce either modest or strong benefits across all five of the identified objective types and contribute toward a corresponding range of policies.

6.2.16 Elsewhere within Route 3, the enhancement and/or addition of pedestrian crossings, and corresponding adjustments to certain larger junctions within the area of interest, would be expected to work together to enhance connectivity within this area and around the eastern and southern parts of the main vehicular "loop" around the town centre. It is noted that traffic calming associated with these measures would be targeted at moderating driver speeds and enhancing driver awareness rather than representing a "hard" constraint on vehicular movements and capacity.

### Route 4

6.2.17 The Route 4 MA Matrix is shown in **Figure 44** below.

Figure 44. Route 4 MA Matrix

| | | Proposed Interventions | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective to be tested** | **Measurement of Performance** | Pedestrian Crossings | Compact Junction(s) | Additional Cycle Parking | Removal of footway railings | Traffic Calming measures | "Gateway" Features | Footway build-outs | Additional Seating |
| Multi-modal Transport Network - supports sustainable mode choices and accessibility | Public transport accessibility (coverage of stops / PT routes) | | | | | | | | |
| | Presence / quality of cycle facilities | | | | | | | | |
| | Facilities for walking (pavement quality, dropped kerbs, crossings) | | | | | | | | |
| Integrated Transport Network - supports integration between land use planning and transport infrastructure, local connectivity | Alignment with identified development sites (CDP) | | | | | | | | |
| | Effects on local walking connectivity | | | | | | | | |
| | Effects on local cycling connectivity | | | | | | | | |
| | Effects on Transport Interchange | | | | | | | | |
| | Effects on Car Parking | | | | | | | | |
| Environmental Effects - impacts to air quality and noise | Anticipated change on PT mode shares | | | | | | | | |
| | Anticipated change on walking / cycling mode shares | | | | | | | | |
| | "Greening" / other Environmental benefits | | | | | | | | |
| Safe Transport Network - impacts to vulnerable road users and encourages active travel | Safety benefits to pedestrians | | | | | | | | |
| | Safety benefits to cyclists | | | | | | | | |
| | Facilitates active travel modes | | | | | | | | |
| Public Realm - enhancements to streets and public spaces, | Attractive street environment | | | | | | | | |
| | Flexible use of street space | | | | | | | | |

6.2.18 The interventions relating to route 4 overlap to a certain extent with those proposed for the town centre and route 3. The main proposals within the route 4 analysis relate to the enhancement of connectivity between the primarily residential areas in the east of the town and the main commercial, employment, education and healthcare facilities within the western areas.

6.2.19 It has been identified that, at present, the river crossing which links the two main areas of Ballinasloe together is constrained in terms of the space available to different modes. It is recognised first and foremost that the existing bridge is a historical structure and as such any options which would require major structural change to the bridge itself have been ruled out. However, it is considered that a cantilevered addition to create a new dedicated route for pedestrians and cyclists would enable the quality of this link for walking and cycling trips to be significantly improved.

6.2.20 Discussions with GCC have confirmed that, at present, the existing bridge link is not considered to be inadequate in principle. However, in terms of wider aspirations to encourage the uptake of sustainable and active travel modes, it is anticipated that demand for use of the bridge by pedestrians and cyclists will increase if the stated aims of the transport policies set out in the CDP are successfully met. As such, giving early consideration to how such desired increases can be supported is considered to be worthwhile and appropriate for this LTP.

### Station Access

6.2.21 The Station Access MA Matrix is shown in **Figure 45** below.

Figure 45. Station Access MA Matrix

| | | Proposed Interventions | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective to be tested** | **Measurement of Performance** | Pedestrian Crossings | Parking bay markings | Footway build-outs |
| Multi-modal Transport Network - supports sustainable mode choices and accessibility | Public transport accessibility (coverage of stops / PT routes) | | | |
| | Presence / quality of cycle facilities | | | |
| | Facilities for walking (pavement quality, dropped kerbs, crossings) | | | |
| Integrated Transport Network - supports integration between land use planning and transport infrastructure, local connectivity | Alignment with identified development sites (CDP) | | | |
| | Effects on local walking connectivity | | | |
| | Effects on local cycling connectivity | | | |
| | Effects on Transport Interchange | | | |
| | Effects on Car Parking | | | |
| Environmental Effects - impacts to air quality and noise | Anticipated change on PT mode shares | | | |
| | Anticipated change on walking / cycling mode shares | | | |
| | "Greening" / other Environmental benefits | | | |
| Safe Transport Network - impacts to vulnerable road users and encourages active travel | Safety benefits to pedestrians | | | |
| | Safety benefits to cyclists | | | |
| | Facilitates active travel modes | | | |
| Public Realm - enhancements to streets and public spaces, | Attractive street environment | | | |
| | Flexible use of street space | | | |

6.2.22 The location of Ballinasloe station to the north-west of the main town centre area means that there are challenges with regard to increasing its accessibility for residents and encouraging use of train services by visitors. Nonetheless, it has been identified that the town centre itself is reachable within a 10 to 15-minute walking time, and therefore the proposed improvements with regard to pedestrian crossings and footway build-outs would make such journeys on foot easier and more convenient.

6.2.23 The next section of the report sets out the prioritisation of options which have been identified as a result of the option appraisal process.

# PRIORITISATION OF OPTIONS

## 7.1 Method of Prioritisation

7.1.1 The Options Appraisal process has compared a number of potential measures for each of the assessed routes within Ballinasloe which would collectively be able to address the transport objectives which have been established through the CDP (2022 – 2028) and the GCTPS. This section of the report uses the results of the Option Appraisal to define the priorities for those schemes and measures which comprise the proposed transport improvements within Ballinasloe.

7.1.2 The options have been assembled into a table and accompanying maps for ease of reference; the maps and table are presented overleaf.

Table 12. Prioritisation of Options – Reference Table

| ID | LINK | MEASURE NAME | TYPE | TIMEFRAME | LAP OBJECTIVES | COMMENTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | St Michael's Square | Town Square Enhancements | Town Square Enhancements | Medium | BKT8, 28, 30 | Measures include: widening of existing paved areas providing additional space for walking and cycle parking; rationalisation of existing parking to allow greater flexibility of activity; examination of potential to provide additional outdoor facilities such as power outlets for temporary uses; and a review of current lighting within the square and on key approaches |
| 2 | River Street | New Bus Stops | Public Transport Improvements | Short - Medium | BKT28, 29, 31 | Measures could include some or all of the following: expansion of facilities serving bus passengers (seating, shelter upgrades), provision of cycle parking (designed for longer stays and connections to bus services); public information / tourist boards; and wayfinding information (including route to/from Train Station) |
| 3 | Town Centre Roundabout | Removal of Footway Railings | Pedestrian Improvements | Short | BKT8, 21, 28, 30 | The roundabout is considered to be relatively wide given its central location. A more compacted roundabout or signalised junction with accompanying footway build-out would benefit pedestrian connectivity |
| 4 | Town Centre Roundabout | Compacted Junction with Footway Build-Out | Pedestrian Improvements | Short-Medium | BKT8, 21, 28, 30 | The roundabout is considered to be relatively wide given its central location. A more compacted roundabout or signalised junction with accompanying footway build-out would benefit pedestrian connectivity |
| 5 | Main Street | Additional Pedestrian Crossing | Pedestrian Improvements | Short | BKT8, 21, 28, 30 | |
| 6 | Main Street | "Gateway" Road Surfacing | Vehicular Improvements | Short-Medium | BKT8, 28 | A change in road paving style to create a sense of entry to the town centre and naturally encouraging slower vehicle speeds would improve safety |

| ID | LINK | MEASURE NAME | TYPE | TIMEFRAME | LAP OBJECTIVES | COMMENTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Society Street | Additional Pedestrian Crossing | Pedestrian Improvements | Short | BKT8, 21, 28, 30 | |
| 8 | Society Street | "Gateway" Road Surfacing | Vehicular Improvements | Short-Medium | BKT8, 28 | A change in road paving style to create a sense of entry to the town centre and naturally encouraging slower vehicle speeds would improve safety |
| 9 | Society Street | Traffic Calming Measures | Vehicular Improvements | Short | BKT28 | The layout of this link is relatively wide and straight, naturally encouraging higher vehicle speeds. Implementing traffic calming measures such as narrowing road space or traffic islands would improve safety |
| 10 | Dunlo Street | Additional Pedestrian Crossing | Pedestrian Improvements | Short | BKT8, 21, 28, 30, 35 | |
| 11 | Dunlo Street | "Gateway" Road Surfacing | Vehicular Improvements | Short-Medium | BKT8, 28 | A change in road paving style to create a sense of entry to the town centre and naturally encouraging slower vehicle speeds would improve safety |
| 12 | Bolger's Lane | Footway Build-Out | Pedestrian Improvements | Short | BKT8, 21, 28, 30 | |
| 13 | River Street | Footway Build-Out | Pedestrian Improvements | Short | BKT21, 28, 30 | |
| 14 | River Street | Additional Pedestrian Crossing | Pedestrian Improvements | Short | BKT21, 28, 30 | |

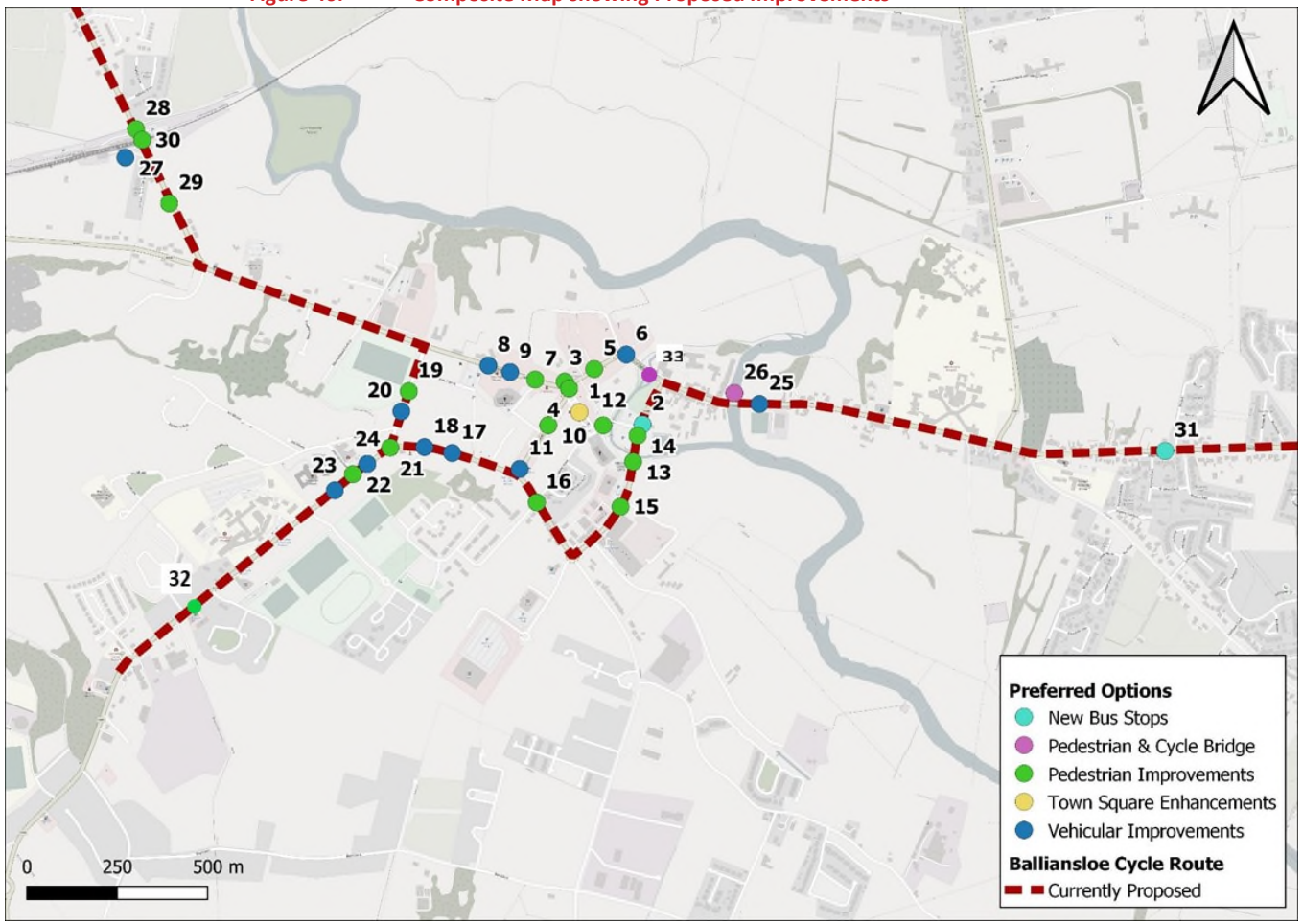
| ID | LINK | MEASURE NAME | TYPE | TIMEFRAME | LAP OBJECTIVES | COMMENTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | River Street | Additional Pedestrian Crossing | Pedestrian Improvements | Short | BKT21, 28, 30 | |
| 16 | Hymany Street | Provision of Dropped Kerbs | Pedestrian Improvements | Short | BKT21, 28, 30 | |
| 17 | Dunlo Hill | Traffic Calming Measures | Vehicular Improvements | Short | BKT28 | The layout of this link is relatively wide and straight, naturally encouraging higher vehicle speeds. Implementing traffic calming measures such as narrowing road space or traffic islands would improve safety |
| 18 | Dunlo Hill | Rationalisation of Parking Bays | Vehicular Improvements | Short | BKT28 | Clearly marking parking bays would reduce informal parking and improve the use of space for pedestrians |
| 19 | Harris Road | Additional Pedestrian Crossing | Pedestrian Improvements | Short | BKT21, 28, 30 | |
| 20 | Harris Road | Traffic Calming Measures | Vehicular Improvements | Short | BKT28 | The layout of this link is relatively wide and straight, naturally encouraging higher vehicle speeds. Implementing traffic calming measures such as narrowing road space or traffic islands would improve safety |
| 21 | Dunlo Hill/Harris Road Junction | Compacted Junction with Footway Build-Out | Pedestrian Improvements | Short-Medium | BKT21, 28, 30, 35 | |
| 22 | Brackernagh | Provision of Dropped Kerbs | Pedestrian Improvements | Short | BKT21, 28, 30 | |

| ID | LINK | MEASURE NAME | TYPE | TIMEFRAME | LAP OBJECTIVES | COMMENTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23 | Brackernagh | Traffic Calming Measures | Vehicular Improvements | Short | BKT28 | The layout of this link is relatively wide and straight, naturally encouraging higher vehicle speeds. Implementing traffic calming measures such as narrowing road space or traffic islands would improve safety |
| 24 | Brackernagh | Rationalisation of Parking Bays | Vehicular Improvements | Short | BKT28 | Clearly marking parking bays would reduce informal parking and improve the use of space for pedestrians |
| 25 | Bridge Street | Traffic Calming Measures | Vehicular Improvements | Short | BKT28 | The layout of this link is relatively wide and straight, naturally encouraging higher vehicle speeds. Implementing traffic calming measures such as narrowing road space or traffic islands would improve safety |
| 26 | Bridge Street | Pedestrian/Cycle Bridge | Pedestrian & Cycle Improvements | Long | BKT21, 28, 29, 30 | Provision of a cantilevered structure crossing the River Suck to provide a high quality walking and cycle route |
| 27 | Ballinasloe Station | Rationalisation of Parking Bays | Vehicular Improvements | Short | BKT28 | Clearly marking parking bays would reduce informal parking and improve the use of space for pedestrians |
| 28 | Ballinasloe Station | Additional Pedestrian Crossing | Pedestrian Improvements | Short | BKT21, 28, 30, 31 | |
| 29 | Ballinasloe Station | Footway Build-Out | Pedestrian Improvements | Short | BKT21, 28, 30, 31 | |
| 30 | Ballinasloe Station | Footway Build-Out | Pedestrian Improvements | Short | BKT21, 28, 30, 31 | |

| ID | LINK | MEASURE NAME | TYPE | TIMEFRAME | LAP OBJECTIVES | COMMENTS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 31 | Bridge Street | New Bus Stops | Public Transport Improvements | Short | BKT28, 29, 31 | Additional bus stops to serve the eastern areas of the town will increase accessibility to public transport services. |
| 32 | Brackernagh | Additional Pedestrian Crossing | Pedestrian Improvements | Short-Medium | BKT 21, 28 and 30 | To be sited between St. Joseph's Walkway and Former Quinn's Shop area. |
| 33 | Bridge St West | Additional pedestrian & cycle bridge | Pedestrian Improvements | Short-Medium | BKT 21, 28 and 30 | To be sited at adjacent bridge to west of Bridge St. |

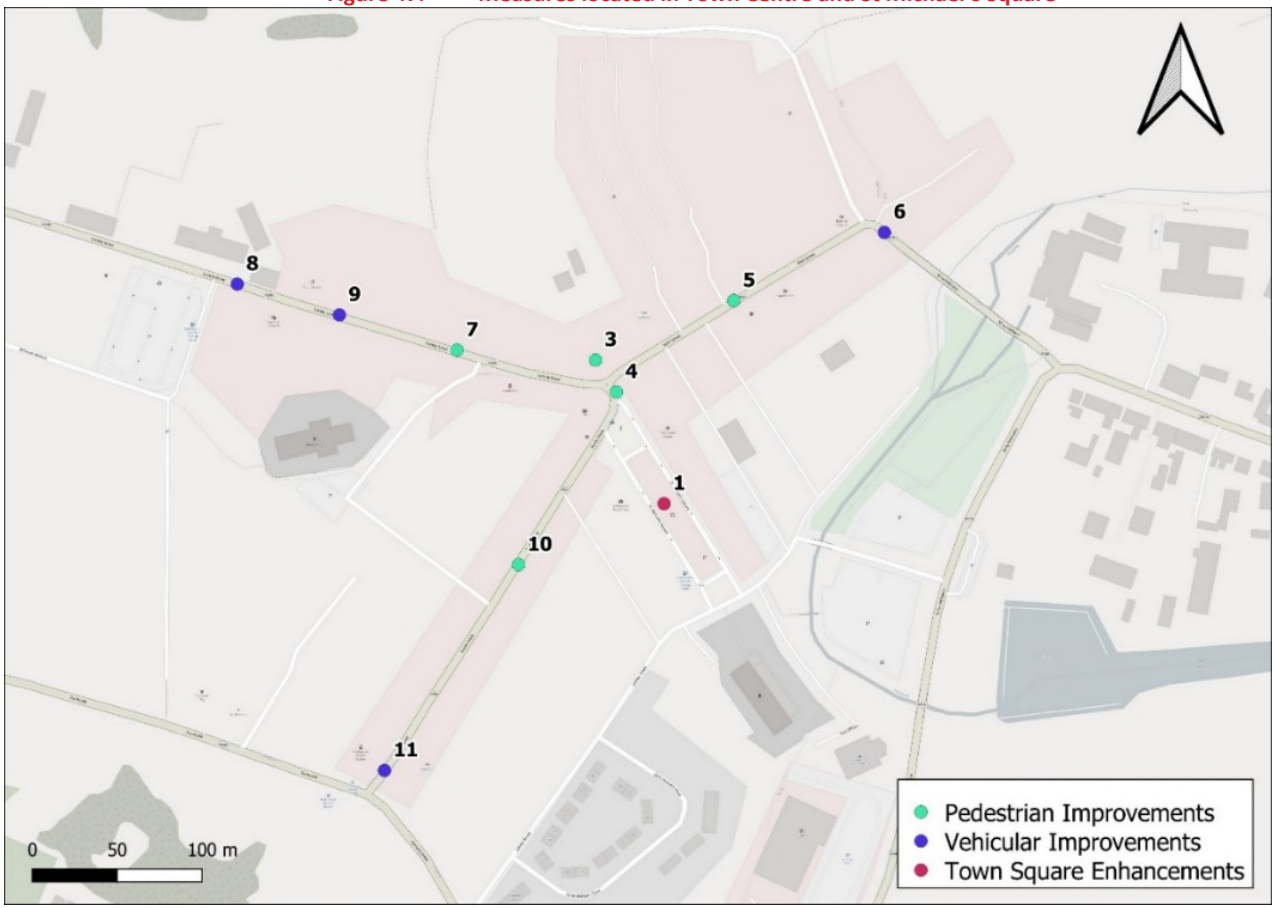
**33**

Figure 46. Composite Map showing Proposed Improvements



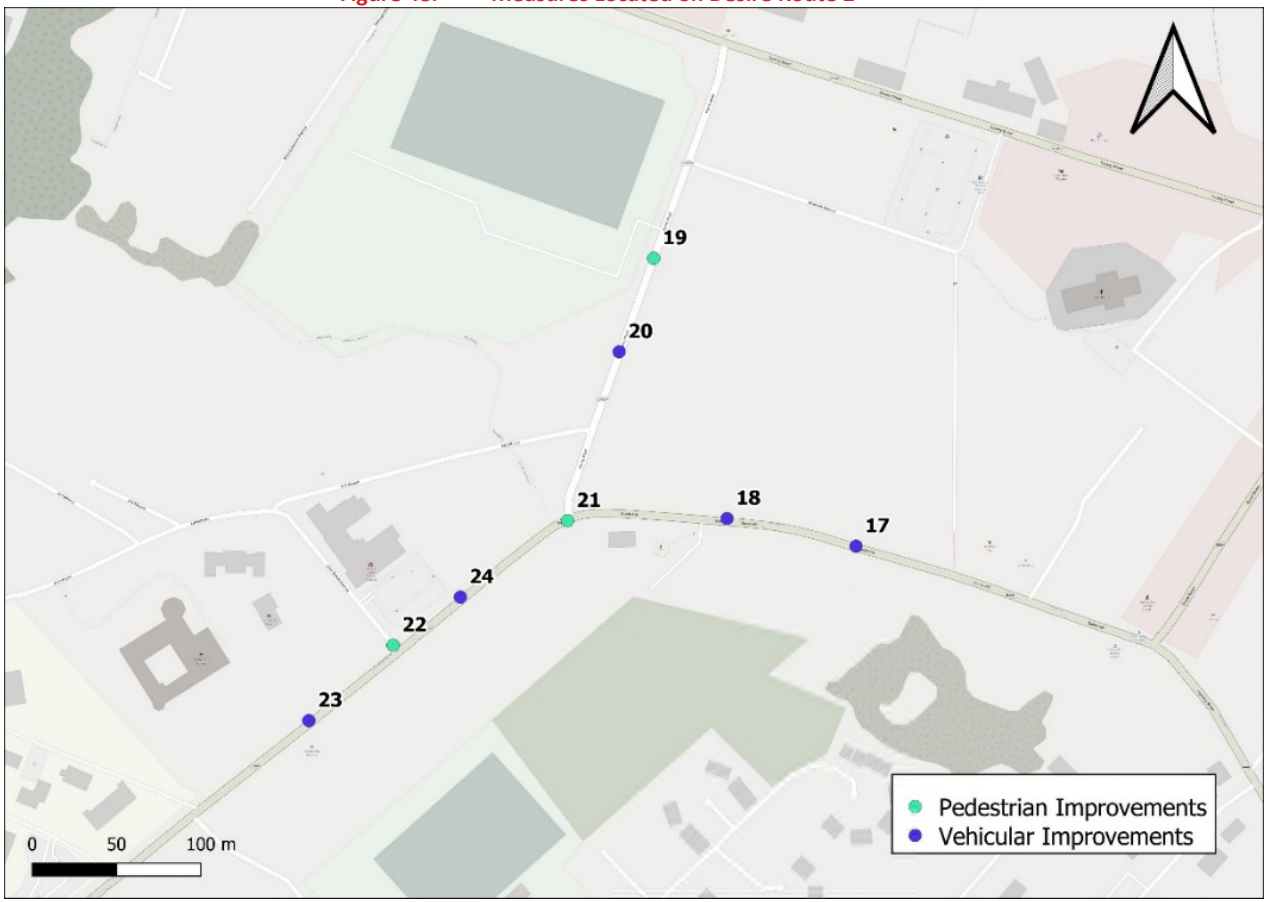
7.1.3 The measures located in the town centre and St Michael's Square are shown in **Figure 47.**

Figure 47. Measures located in Town Centre and St Michael's Square



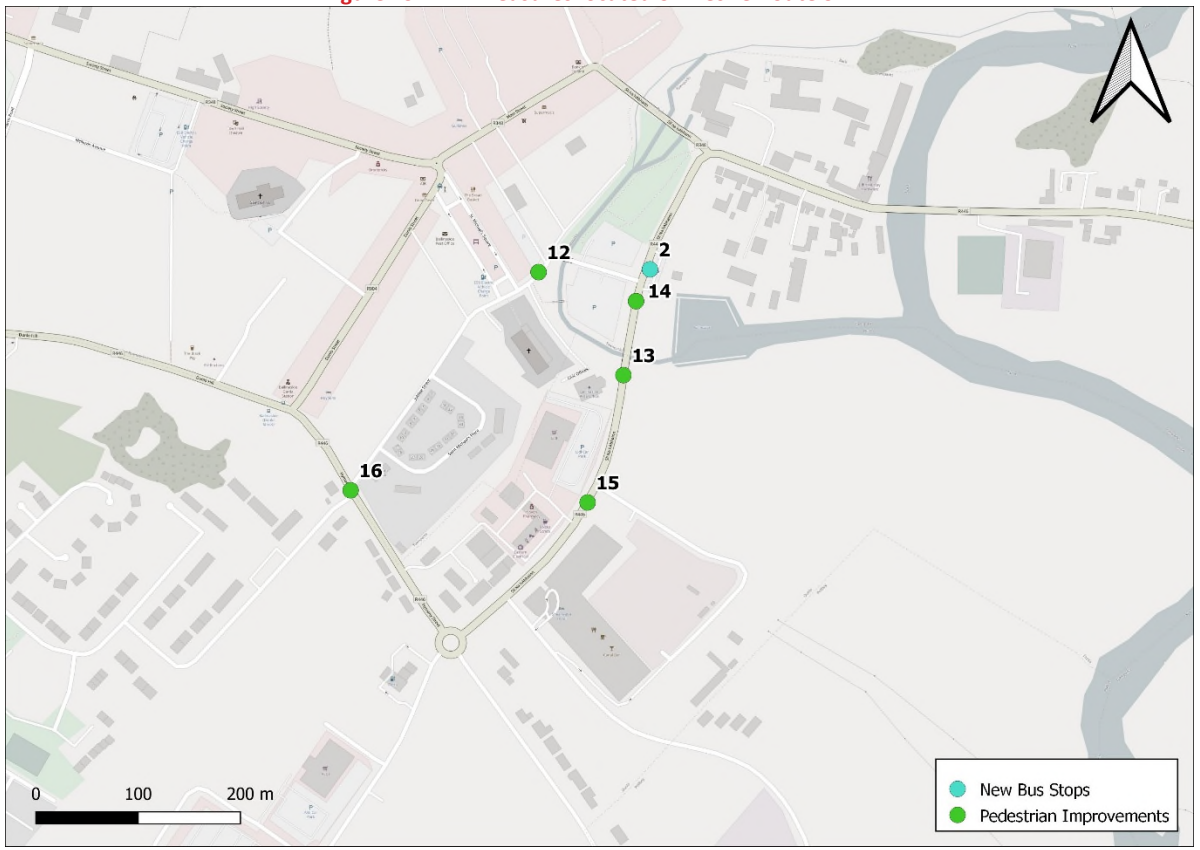
7.1.4 The measures located within Desire Route 2 are shown in **Figure 48.**

Figure 48. Measures Located on Desire Route 2



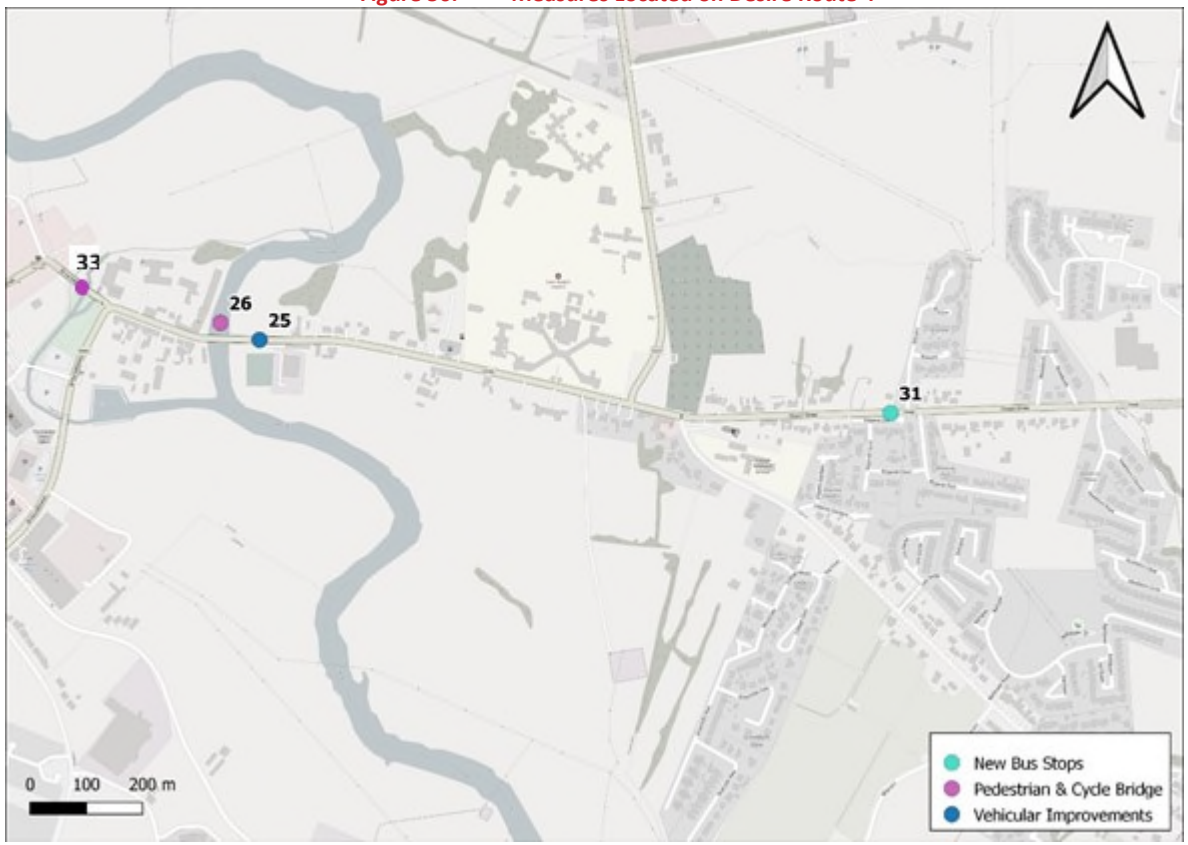

7.1.5 The measures located within Desire Route 3 are shown in **Figure 49**.

Figure 49. Measures located on Desire Route 3



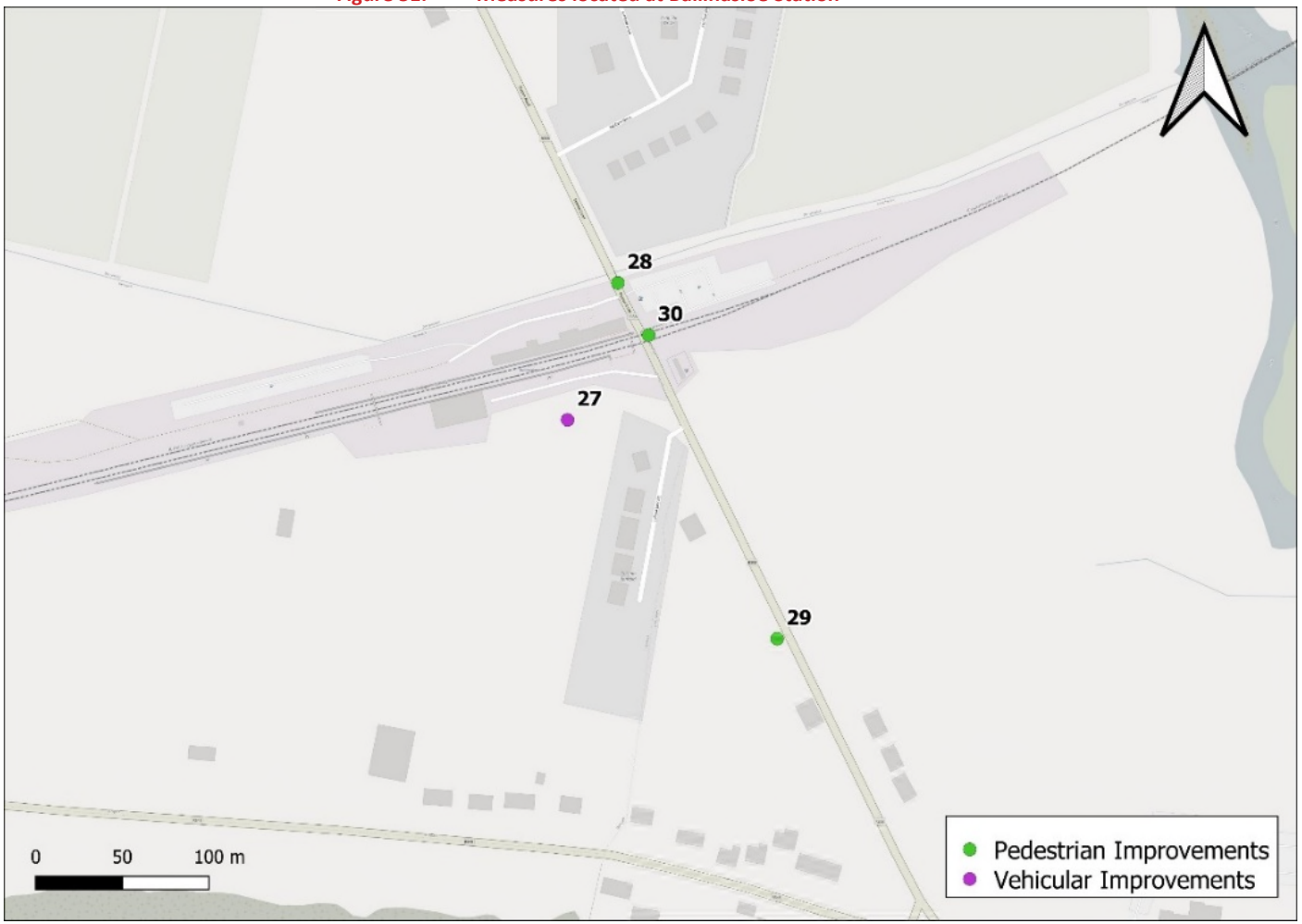

7.1.6 The measures located within Desire Route 4 are shown in **Figure 50**.

Figure 50. Measures Located on Desire Route 4




7.1.7 The measures located at Ballinasloe Station are shown in **Figure 51.**

Figure 51. Measures located at Ballinasloe Station



7.1.8 Further explanation and details relating to the measures which make up the selected improvement options are set out below. The improvements are presented for the two defined enhancement areas and then for individual modes, with references to the corresponding routes within Ballinasloe as appropriate. These can also be cross-referenced to the table and maps above as necessary.

## 7.2 St Michael's Square

7.2.1 The proposed improvement scheme for St Michael's Square takes the form of a package of linked improvements to the current public space, to include the following:

- Widening of existing paved areas on one or both sides of the square to provide additional space for walking and cycle parking
- Rationalisation of existing marked parking bays to allow greater flexibility of activity outside of car parking
- Examination of the potential to provide additional facilities such as accessible power outlets for temporary uses
- Review of current lighting within the square itself and on key approaches

7.2.2 The components of the scheme are intended to work together to firstly encourage movement through the square by active modes on a general basis, and secondly to allow the space to function more easily for events. It is recognised that this needs to be balanced with the day-to-day operation of the square as a town centre car parking area, and the option development work which has been undertaken has sought to address the multiple uses of this area.

## 7.3 Pedestrian / Walking Improvements

7.3.1 The proposed improvements within Ballinasloe to support pedestrian activity are broadly those which will complement the improvement works recently undertaken within the main town centre area. As has been described within the option development and appraisal sections of the LTP, the proposed walking improvements are focused on provision of additional pedestrian crossings, measures to protect existing pedestrian space, removal of extraneous guard railing and targeted build-outs and resurfacing / gateway features to enhance driver awareness of pedestrian activity. These measures are intended to support residents and visitors in making more short trips on foot and thus relying less on private car travel for local journeys.

7.3.2 In the longer term, the LTP schemes include investigation into the potential to improve pedestrian (and cycle) access across the river via provision of a cantilevered structure to provide a high quality walking and cycle route. It is recognised that any proposals will need to respect the historical status of the existing bridge and that the current provision for pedestrians is not seen as actively discouraging walking activity; however, in terms of making the route between the east and western sides of the town more directly attractive for active modes, it is considered that a scheme of this type has the potential to encourage modal shift for trips within the town, which in themselves make up a very substantial percentage of vehicle trips within the peak hours.

## 7.4 Cycling Improvements

7.4.1 The promotion of cycling and improvement of the street environment for cyclists has previously been identified as a priority for meeting wider transport objectives within the CDP and GCTPS documents. Within Ballinasloe, the layout of the road networks and the role of the different routes within and connecting the town means that the encouragement of cycling activity can be best achieved through managing the behaviour of vehicular traffic (without unnecessarily impeding access or appropriate vehicular capacity), specifically addressing perceived and actual vehicle speeds and making better provision for vehicle parking where this currently acts as a deterrent to cycle activity, and by improving the quantity and quality of available cycle parking so that travel by cycle becomes genuinely attractive, particularly for shorter journeys, and directly contributes to a reduction in reliance on private car travel for these journey types. This approach is considered to be compatible with, and to build upon, current observed cycling activity within the town.

7.4.2 The proposed cycle improvements area therefore intrinsically linked with the pedestrian proposals, particularly measures to examine more compact junction forms, remove extraneous guard railing, and the creation of “gateway” features to clearly signal to road users that they are entering areas where pedestrians and cyclists will be commonly encountered. The use of build-outs to manage vehicle speeds is also considered to represent an important tool in facilitating greater cyclist confidence.

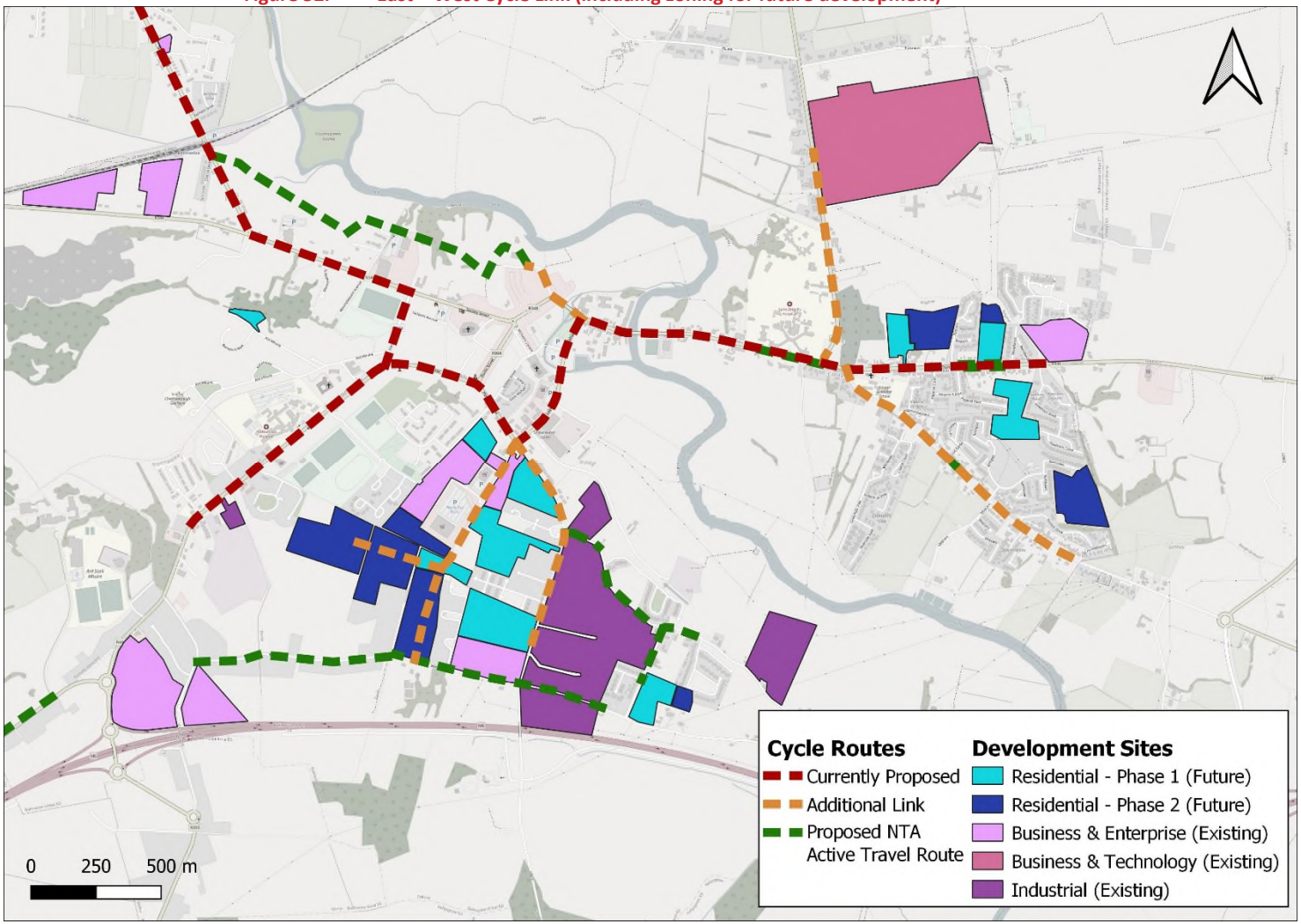
7.4.3 With regard to the currently developing proposals for the County cycle route, it is understood that consideration of potential route

options is ongoing; the LTP will seek to integrate with the eventual selected route as appropriate.

7.4.4 Over the longer term, the LTP aspires to bring about improvements which are able to connect together to create a new "east-west" cycle link through the town, such that the road networks forming the link are sufficiently "cycle friendly" to actively encourage cycle travel between the different areas of the town. This will include not only the specific preferred options set out in the table above, but will also be explored further (potentially in conjunction with the NTA and their programmes).

7.4.5 The identified route for a separate east-west cycle link through Ballinasloe is shown below in **Figure 52**.

Figure 52. East – West Cycle Link (including zoning for future development)



## 7.5 Public Transport Improvements

7.5.1 Improvements to public transport can be divided into two broad types: improvements to infrastructure (including connectivity schemes to link public transport stops and stations to residential, employment, and other areas of interest) and service improvements.

7.5.2 The Ballinasloe LTP option appraisal process has largely considered infrastructure improvement measures. This is because the implementation of such measures can be directly facilitated by GCC, and various sources of funding are available for projects of this type.

7.5.3 The proposed measures to support public transport infrastructure schemes build upon the options examined within the Town Centre MA assessment and are proposed to include some or all of the following:

- Provision of expanded facilities to serve bus passengers (seating, shelter upgrades)
- New cycle parking (designed for longer stays and connections to bus services)
- Public Information / Tourist boards
- Wayfinding information (including route to/from Train Station

7.5.4 The measures will include the creation of new bus stops adjacent to the marina and on Bridge Street in the eastern part of the town, further improvement works in the direct vicinity of Ballinasloe Train Station, and general upgrades to other bus stop infrastructure (to include seating and cycle parking where feasible). The general distribution of bus stop infrastructure within the town is considered to be sensible and offers good coverage for general access to bus services for residents, as well as providing good access for those using bus services to reach Ballinasloe from outside of the town. Through the option appraisal process and discussions with stakeholders, it has been determined that investment in multiple bus stops is preferable to a single "hub" location.

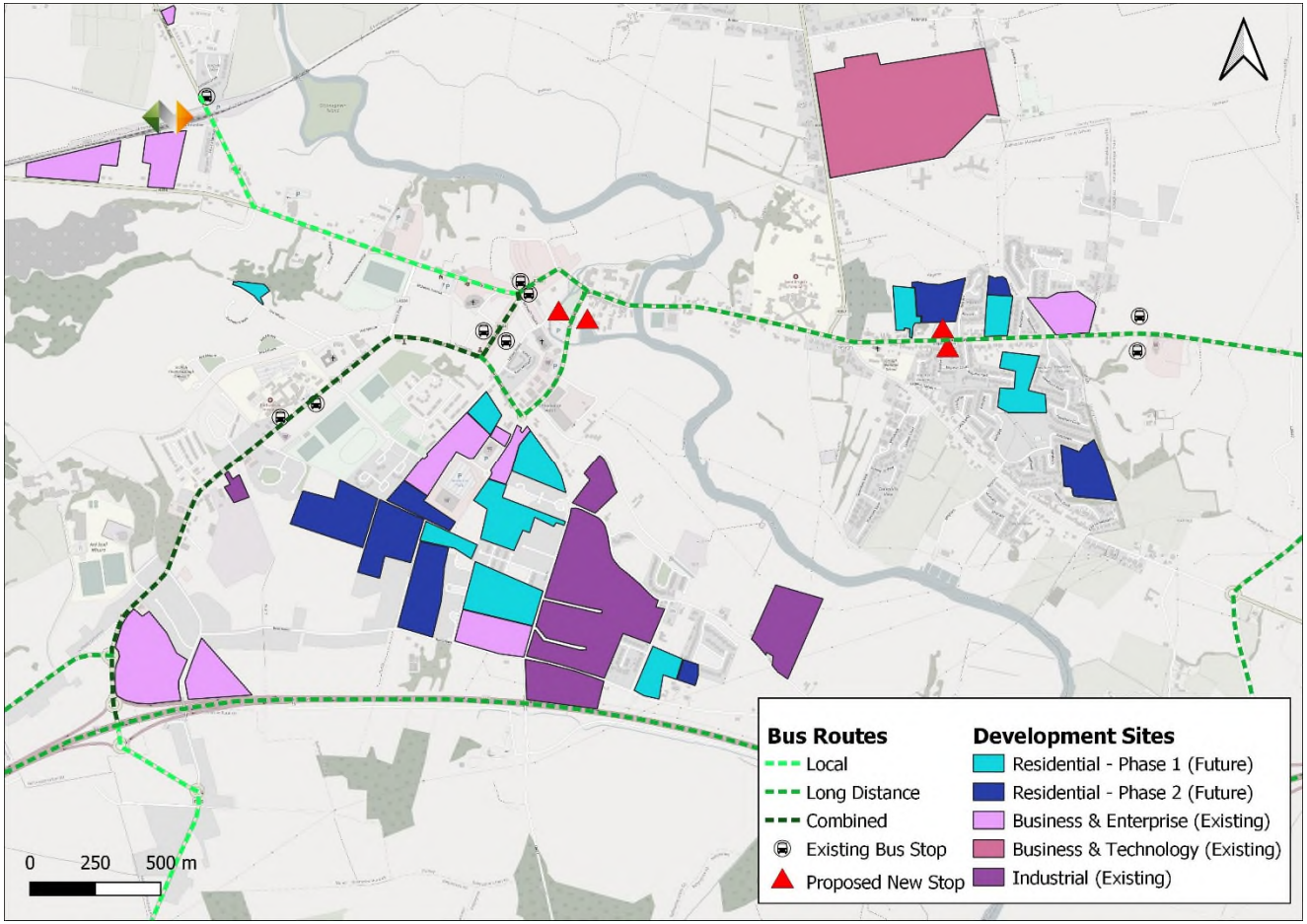
7.5.5 In terms of service provision (routes and frequencies), the proposed public transport improvements will be centred on dialogue with the NTA and local operators. The NTA is supportive of additional services to and from Ballinasloe as part of its active travel programme. Analysis of local trip-making information has shown that, whilst public transport currently accounts for only a small percentage of total trips, this has potential to increase.

7.5.6 It is considered that the most appropriate approach for these potential public transport service improvements is to firstly consider if and how services on the current established Galway - Athenry – Ballinasloe – Dublin and Ballinasloe – Portumna routes can be strengthened, as analysis of trip data has shown that these routes serve the external destinations which have the highest number of existing trips made to them. Secondly, it is considered that further analysis and consideration should be given to how Ballinasloe's hinterland could be served by demand-responsive or "community" travel initiatives, as these locations are essentially car-dependent at present and there would be clear benefits in seeking to open up sustainable travel options for those who have less or no access to car travel.

7.5.7 It is noted that, although consideration has been given to the possibility of a direct bus link between Ballinasloe train station, the town centre and the areas to the east of the town, it is not anticipated that there would be enough regular demand to make such a service viable. However, combining this type of service with a wider "community" remit and possibly links to the key employment sites to the south of the town may in future make a trial of such a connection a viable prospect. It is proposed that further discussion will be held with the NTA on how their programmes could support such a scheme in future.

7.5.8 **Figure 53** shows existing and potential future bus stop locations alongside existing public transport routes, and the location of zoning for residential and employment land within the Ballinasloe LAP.

Figure 53. Public Transport Routes and Stops (including zoning for future development)



## 7.6 Other Road / Vehicular Transport Improvements

7.6.1 It has been recognised as part of the option development and appraisal process that at present Ballinasloe does not suffer from any significant issues with general traffic capacity or specific delays within its road network. It has been further recognised that the current layout of the town contributes positively to this situation, with car parking spread across a number of locations and a clear circulatory route for vehicles which need to access the town centre. The importance of access by car for those who are resident in the smaller settlements and dispersed dwellings of the town's hinterland (including those across the border in Roscommon County) is appreciated, and the measures which are supported to enhance accessibility by sustainable and active modes are designed to do so in a manner which will result in balanced provision for sustainable and vehicular modes. It is envisaged that the provision of improved infrastructure for sustainable modes of travel, and corresponding improvements to scheduled and community public transport services, will facilitate a greater percentage of trips to, from and within the town to be undertaken by sustainable modes; as progress is made in this regard, it is expected that the road networks and car parking provision will adjust over time to consolidate these changes in behaviour, including adjustments to town centre (on-street) parking and allocation of road space.

7.6.2 It is further noted that plans have existed for some time in relation to the Townpark relief road, which in its most recent proposed form would connect from the existing River View residential access route, via a new link to the north of the existing R348, connecting back to R348 Society Street. From the perspective of this LTP, whilst the principle of a new road link is not inherently contradictory to wider sustainable transport policy, it is understood that there is no direct requirement for this road to be completed in order to facilitate development in Ballinasloe as envisaged in the current CDP. Further development of the proposals for the road, including its potential role in delivering new open space and opening up access to the lands north of the town centre, is therefore recommended so that the scheme which is ultimately taken forward is supportive of, and contributes to, the wider aims of the Ballinasloe LTP and the CDP.

## 7.7 Note on Detailed Design

7.7.1 The Ballinasloe LTP has been prepared in order to support the preparation and subsequent implementation of the Ballinasloe Local Area Plan (LAP). It is recognised that the policies contained within the LAP will form the basis for bringing forward improvement schemes, which will then be subject to assessment via the relevant guidance (including the Public Spending Code (PSC) and the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

7.7.2 It should also be noted that individual projects (which may be assembled from different elements of the preferred options as outlined above) will be subject to relevant statutory procedures, public consultation, and (where appropriate) environmental and heritage studies, and consultation with relevant statutory stakeholders.

## 7.8 Ballinasloe Traffic Management Plan

7.8.1 The current Ballinasloe Traffic Management Plan was prepared in 2005, and sets out the parking restrictions which are currently in

place within the area defined as the town of Ballinasloe. (The restrictions and other provisions are separated into five schedules, and came into effect on 26th July 2005).

7.8.2 It is proposed that any changes to the street layouts within Ballinasloe which may be developed and implemented as part of the delivery of schemes set out within this LTP should be included within an updated version of the Traffic Management Plan. This updated plan will need to be prepared in accordance with current relevant legislation and guidance.

7.8.3 It is further recommended that an updated version of the Traffic Management Plan should include schedules to record any public Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and the location of private hire / taxi pick-up and waiting locations.

## 7.9 Monitoring Strategy and LTP Review

7.9.1 It is noted that the Ballinasloe LAP may be reviewed during its lifetime; should this occur, it is recommended that the LTP should be revisited in parallel, with any potential amendments identified where this will assist in meeting new or revised LAP objectives.

7.9.2 It is further recommended that the LTP should be reviewed approximately 3 years into the period of the LAP, in order for progress toward LAP and LTP objectives to be gauged. This review may include the following:

- Progress on implementation of preferred options by transport mode
- Cross-check of assumptions, including availability of new traffic survey or strategic model data
- Appraisal of development which has taken place in Ballinasloe and whether this is consistent with the assumptions made in the Ballinasloe LAP.

7.9.3 The performance of the LTP will be judged against progress made towards policy objectives, and evidence of increased use of sustainable modes of transport, as well as evidence of reduced reliance on private car travel.

7.9.4 The reviews should seek to adapt the LTP and the preferred options to observed conditions (plus any notable changes in national or regional policy). Such changes may, depending on their extent, need to be fed back into the LAP.

7.9.5 It is recognised that there is considerable uncertainty around how travel patterns will change in the near future as a result of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. The proposed 2-year review will provide an opportunity to specifically identify and address these effects where they differ from what has been assumed for the purposes of preparing this LTP.

# SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1.1 Galway County Council (the Council) is developing a new Transport Study for the county alongside Local Transport Plans (LTPs) for the towns of Tuam and Ballinasloe. The Galway County Transport and Planning Study (GCTPS) has been completed and has recently been subject to public consultation alongside the Galway County Development Plan (2022-2028).

8.1.2 SYSTRA Ltd (SYSTRA) has been commissioned by the Council to support the development of the GCTPS and the LTPs for Tuam and Ballinasloe. Through this work, SYSTRA has identified a range of measures and options suitable for the context of Galway County relating to the pedestrian, cycle, public transport and road networks. This LTP has extended this process to the town of Ballinasloe and the resulting strategy set out how the transport needs of the town and its visitors can be met in a manner which reflects and builds upon the wider measures set out in the GCTPS, and the policies within the County Development Plan 2022-2028 (CDP).

8.1.3 A series of objectives have been determined for the Ballinasloe LTP, as follows:

- LTP 1: Support and implement transport measures which improve general provision for, and accessibility to, sustainable transport modes for residents of Ballinasloe and visitors (including those visiting for work, education and leisure purposes).
- LTP2: Support and enhance existing and new walking infrastructure provision within Ballinasloe and encourage active travel choices, including through joint working with the NTA where possible. This will include strengthening of walking infrastructure within and around Ballinasloe town centre and other measures to increase footfall in areas of economic activity.
- LTP3: Seek to improve provision for cycling within Ballinasloe, both for residents and for those travelling to and from surrounding areas. This will include consideration of existing barriers to cycling and how these can be reduced.
- LTP4: Maintain and enhance facilities and infrastructure for road-based public transport within Ballinasloe. This will include work to bring forward a mobility hub as defined within the GCTPS.
- LTP5: Seek to support and expand road-based public transport services, both through joint working with the NTA and regional Local Link / Rural Transport strategy bodies, and where feasible through direct engagement with operators and other public and demand-led transport providers.
- LTP6: Support and implement measures to improve access to Ballinasloe Railway Station.

8.1.4 The technical analysis undertaken to support the LTP has identified a number of potential improvements and other transport measures which would be capable of fulfilling the LTP objectives. These have been developed initially as a longlist, and then assessed via Measures Analysis (MA) to determine which measures (and combination of measures) will have the greatest benefits, both for specific modes of travel and for different journey types.

8.1.5 The LTP therefore proposes a series of interlinked measures which are designed to address key “desire routes” within and through the town, to connect the town centre with the rail station, key education and health services, employment areas and the residential part of town. There are three individual schemes – a proposed new mobility hub, improvements to St Michaels Square, and creation of a new cantilevered bridge extension to the existing main river crossing – which it is envisaged would be brought forward as key projects during the lifetime of the LTP and County Development Plan, which would address multiple LTP objectives and make a significant contribution to the accessibility of the town by sustainable modes of travel.

**SYSTRA provides advice on transport, to central, regional and local government, agencies, developers, operators and financiers.**

**A diverse group of results-oriented people, we are part of a strong team of professionals worldwide. Through client business planning, customer research and strategy development we create solutions that work for real people in the real world.**

**For more information visit www.systra.ie**

SYSTRA