

ABBEY QUARTER DRAFT MASTERPLAN GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

ACCOMPANYING MANUAL TO
2015 ABBEY QUARTER MASTERPLAN +
2018 URBAN DESIGN CODE

OCTOBER 2023



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How to read this document

Section 1.0

1.1 CONTEXT OF THIS REVIEW:

TIMELINE TO DATE

Since its adoption in 2015 The Abbey Quarter Masterplan has been progressing. Early investment in Public Open Spaces has been enthusiastically received by the public and the first buildings fully occupied.

1.2 CONTEXT OF THIS REVIEW:

ABBAY QUARTER DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS

Highlights:

- The Brookhouse has been awarded BREEAM LEED Gold office space.
- The Mayor Library is meeting completion in 2023.
- The Brookhouse apartment (P4) 7 has been approved planning permission.
- 2.8 hectares of public realm has been delivered - including Home Barrack Lane, Riverside Garden Park, Urban Park - Wood Lane House.

The document is divided into three sections;

Section 1.0

This section, with pink banners and titles, explains the context of The Abbey Quarter Masterplan and the 2022/2023 Review. This includes a timeline of how both the documents and development blocks have been progressing. It also explains the reasons why a review is being done now. The 2015 Masterplan is still the main document and only certain aspects are being reviewed. These are summarised on page 4.

Section 2.0

National Policy/ Parent Guidance (key quotes/ graphics) Overview of study undertaken (plain text summary) Impact of this review on the Abbey Quarter (bullet points) Key recommendations (blue box)

2.3 CLIMATE ACTION POLICY: OVERVIEW

The Climate Action Plan (CAP) is a White Paper of Government for Ireland to fulfil commitments in the Programme for Government and the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2021 to achieve a 36% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050. The CAP is a living document and is updated annually to reflect progress made. The CAP 2023 update is the first to implement carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings as agreed by the Irish Government in 2022. The CAP commits Ireland's public sector to lead by example in reducing carbon and greenhouse gas emissions. Local authorities are to play a key role in this transition.

"Local authorities, in particular, have a pivotal role to play in the decarbonisation transition, including through spatial planning, the provision of public housing and transport infrastructure, and the maintenance of urban form."

The CAP highlights the important role spatial and planning policy will play in reducing carbon emissions and achieving our emissions targets. In line with policy direction established under the NFP, it promotes compact growth and high-density residential development in towns & urban settlements to encourage active and people friendly environments that reduce travel time and encourage active and sustainable modes of travel.

The CAP also highlights decarbonisation targets for our construction sector and built environment in terms of new construction. The CAP seeks to achieve a decrease in embodied carbon of 10% by 2025 and 20% by 2030. This is to be achieved through reducing the carbon content of concrete to reduce its carbon intensity without compromising its integrity, and by further supporting the uptake of alternative construction materials such as timber.

The revised Nearly Zero Energy Building (NZEB) Regulations introduced in 2021 set a target for the residential sector that all new residential buildings and buildings to be built in 2025 will achieve a NZEB standard and that by 2030 all new dwellings will achieve a Zero Emission Building standard.

The CAP also provides enhanced support for social and affordable housing development and aims to deliver an average of 10,000 new social homes per annum up to 2030. It includes the National First Home with an Affordable Housing Fund to support the delivery of 54,000 affordable homes in the period up to 2030.

Climate Action Plan (2021)

2.3 CLIMATE ACTION POLICY: RECOMMENDATIONS

Abbey Quarter Masterplan - Sustainability

The 2015 Masterplan set out ambitions for Sustainability under the themes: Density and Mixed Uses; Transport; Environmental Quality; Energy Strategy; Zero Carbon Homes; Water Conservation; 100% Funding and Capital Development. These themes are all appropriate and relevant. Updated guidance would recommend that each theme go further in its ambition and targets. Furthermore, these ambitions should be embedded into the planning approval process for all new developments.

Kilbenny A Sustainable City

As one of the best-planned residential towns in Ireland, well-served by rail and air and having an enviable local climate, Kilbenny is competing at an international scale as an ambassador of excellence in sustainable communities. The City offers all the benefits of economic clustering in a walkable, green, safe and inclusive setting.

The Abbey Quarter makes up a large proportion of the City open. Policy mostly within the boundaries of the original settlement, the new fringe has supported fast growing and industry for hundreds of years. Whilst the urban morphology of the area is well established, the appropriate support and guidance the Quarter could become a Discouragement Zone or otherwise, potentially generating a net energy absorbing carbon from its surrounding area and supporting any number of progressive sustainable new technologies and systems.

City's sustainable trajectory towards becoming a national leader. The Brookhouse refurbishment has achieved LEED Gold standard, setting a benchmark for future development in the area. Other local authorities support and guidance the Quarter could become a Discouragement Zone or otherwise, potentially generating a net energy absorbing carbon from its surrounding area and supporting any number of progressive sustainable new technologies and systems.

Meeting our Climate Action Plan Ambitions:

The ambition is to grow the City to achieve the targets set out under the National Planning Framework (NPF) through:

- a compact form of development;
- the 4 neighbourhood model & City centre;
- the 10 minute city concept;

Section 2.0

This section, with blue banners and titles, works through each aspect of the Review that was studied by the consultant team. Each two-page spread includes (from left to right) relevant policy or guidance, a summary of the review undertaken with key outcomes and in the blue box to the right of each spread a list of the changes being recommended to the Abbey Quarter Masterplan. The blue box is the key information and everything else is explaining how and why these changes were reached.

Section 3.0

VISION:

Abbey Quarter Masterplan Vision

To plan the use of & manage the development of the Abbey Quarter in a way that is sustainable, resilient and inclusive. This involves the delivery of a high quality, vibrant and inclusive community that is resilient to change and able to adapt to the needs of the future. The development of the area will focus on enhancing the active outdoor and built heritage, whilst promoting the development of the local economy and research university led & third sector systems, supporting growth in employment, 100% funding and capital development, 100% BREEAM LEED Gold standard and achieving economic activity in a sustainable and resilient manner. The area will be a permeable extension of the city for pedestrians and cyclists which creates opportunities for active travel.

Approved by Kilbenny County Council on Friday 21st July 2023

5.1 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT:

5.2 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT:

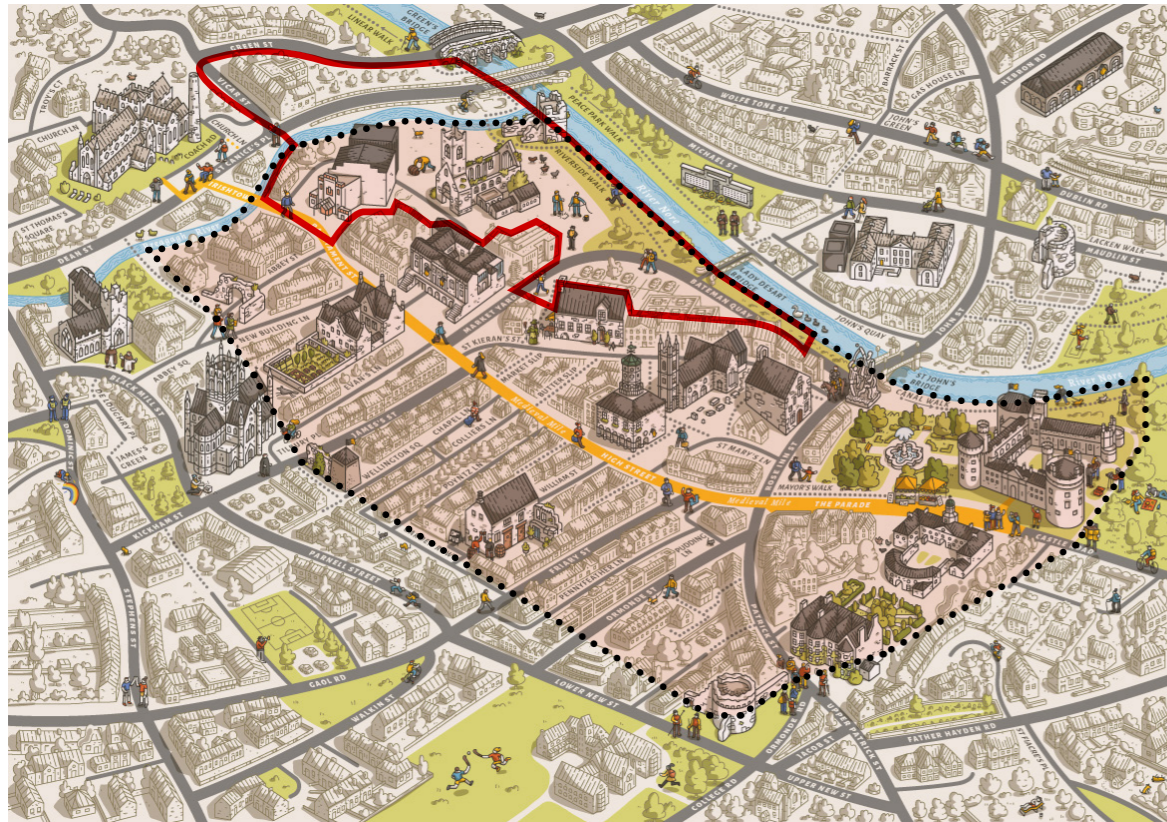
The Abbey Quarter Vision can be supported through the Sustainability Venn Diagram, bearing the objectives under the three themes. These objectives are a mix of aspirational and measurable. While some objectives must take precedence, the integrated ambition will support a sustainable new urban form, in line with international best practice.

Theme	40 Vision Objective	Target Monitoring
Social	An inclusive place for an intergenerational community	20-35% of built floor area to be residential, incorporating a range of typologies, linked to the diversity of needs of the City population
Economic	Provide active travel routes through the quarter, including on-street pedestrian and cyclist routes, Kilbenny Driveway, Lady Street Bridge etc.	Provide active travel routes through the quarter, including on-street pedestrian and cyclist routes, Kilbenny Driveway, Lady Street Bridge etc.
Economic	Provide a seamless complement to the residential city	Provide adequate flexibility for support and safeguarded typologies uses, aligned with the wider aspirations of the City
Economic	Provide for a broad range of uses	Establish minimum thresholds for identified uses classes: Residential, Commercial, Retail, Cultural
Development	Focus on enhancing the area's historic, cultural and built heritage, whilst recognising the benefits of the built form and landscape	Identify opportunities to further leverage public realm enhancements to date, including access to the 'New' and 'Old' streets
Development	Advancing economic activity in a sustainable and resilient manner where innovation can flourish	Promote market leading sustainability credentials proportionate to the location and uses, with net zero/ energy positive buildings
Development	Enable travel principles will apply throughout	Provide support active travel measures with appropriate level of parking provision within the plan area in the context of the anticipated shift to sustainable transport modes and the outcomes of the SUMP

Section 3.0

The final section, with green banners and titles, summarises the outcomes of the review and transforms them into a plan of action. You can skip to this section to understand what the implications are on the 2015 Masterplan document and the 2018 Urban Design Code. This section also includes an updated sequencing plan, specific Development Management criterion and a summary of all the Recommendations from Section 2.0.

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The study area in context of the medieval city, city walls, River Nore.

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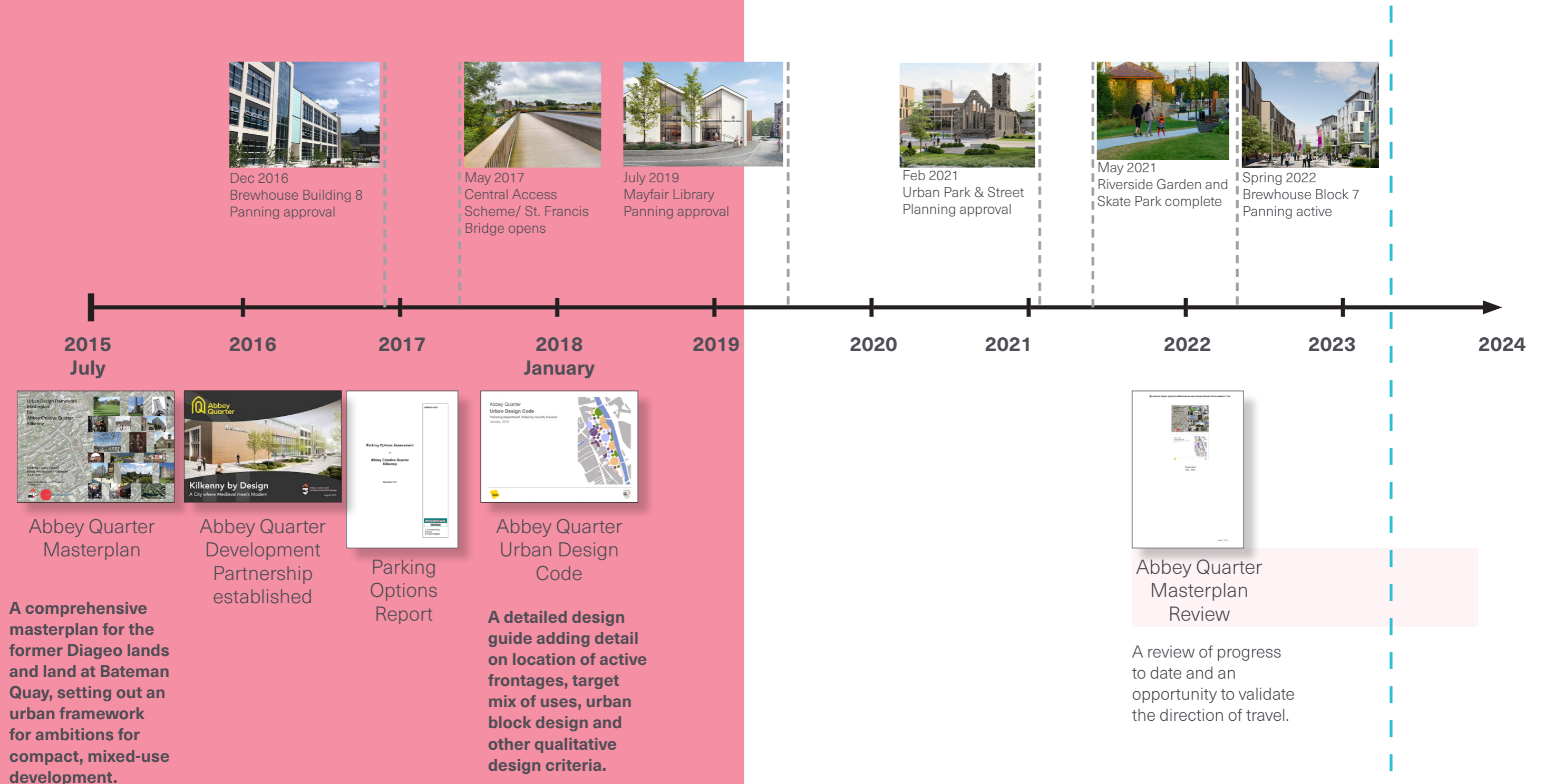
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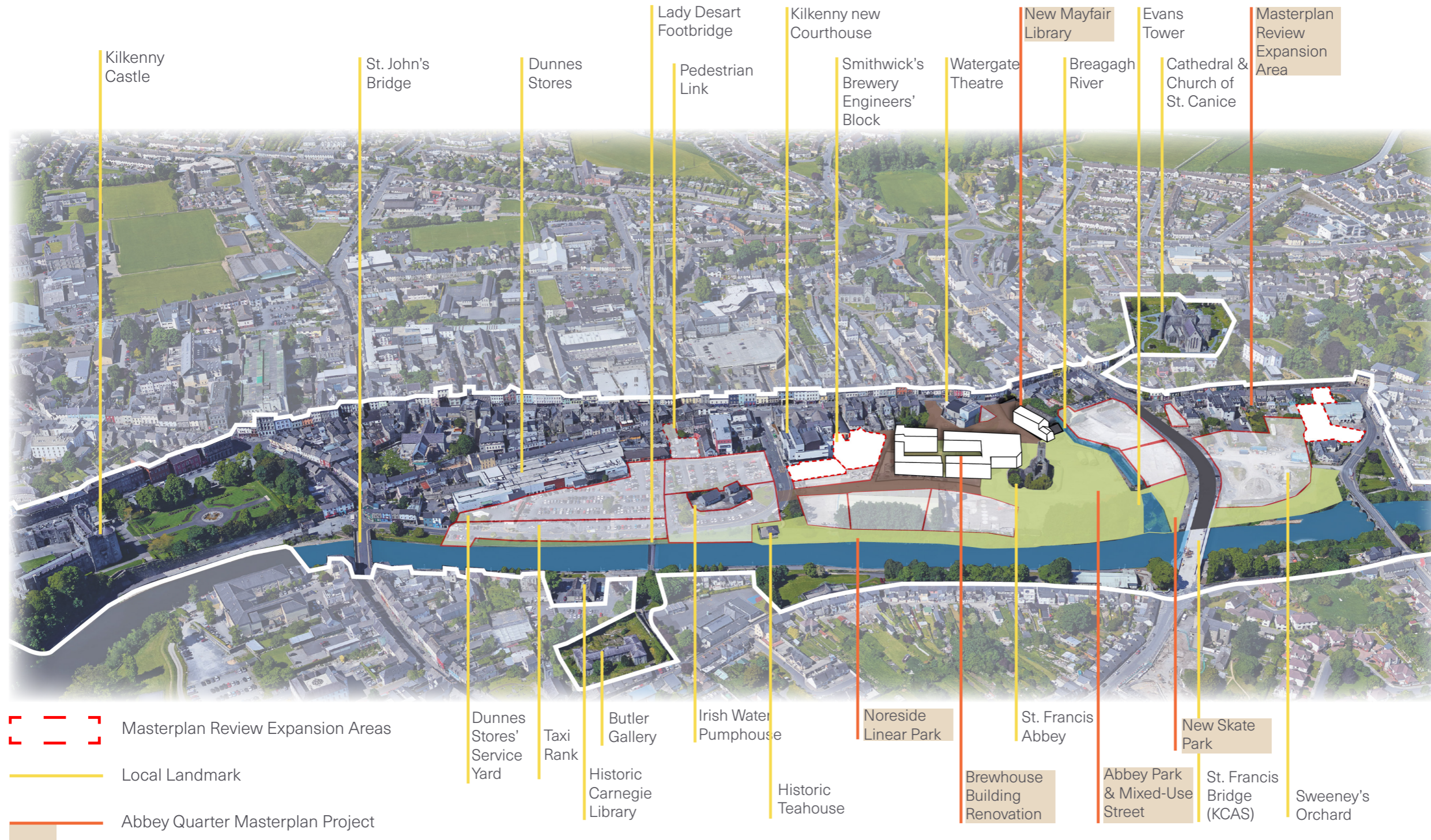
1.1 CONTEXT OF THIS REVIEW: TIMELINE TO DATE

Since its adoption in 2015 The Abbey Quarter Masterplan has been progressing. Early investment in Public Open Spaces has been enthusiastically received by the public and the first buildings fully occupied.



We are here

1.2 ABBEY QUARTER DEVELOPMENT: PROGRESS TO DATE



Highlights:

- The Brewhouse has been renovated to 6,500sqm LEED Gold office space.
- The Mayfair Library is nearing completion in 2023.
- The Brewhouse expansion (Plot 7) has been approved planning permission by Kilkenny County Council (currently under appeal to An Bórd Pleanála).
- 2.6 hectares of public realm has been delivered/ is progressing to construction; Horse Barrack Lane, Riverside Garden Park, Urban Park + Mixed-Use Street.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THIS REVIEW

This Review of the Abbey Quarter Masterplan was undertaken to interrogate the following themes* (more detail under each heading in Section 2.0):

- **Extend** the masterplan area - include properties on Vicar Street, Greens Bridge Street, Sweeney's Orchard and the Engineers' Block (to the rear of the Smithwick's Experience).
- Incorporate updated National and Local **Policy** Guidance - particularly the impact of ;
 - **Climate Action** and
 - **Housing**.
- Consult with the public and other stakeholders - assess **sentiment** on the appropriateness and progress of the Vision and development to date.
- Review the 2018 Urban Design Code in the context of development to date;
 - Building form,
 - **Mix of uses**, taking account of economic viability.
 - Frontages and Amenity,
- Review **mobility** and access - in the context of above policy and sentiment.
- Review and update **phasing** - taking account of progress to date.
- Introduce Development Management requirements to accommodate **Housing** delivery, **Climate Action** policies and any other targets as recommended.
- Consolidate all relevant information for design proposals into one Draft **Masterplan Guidance Document** (this document).

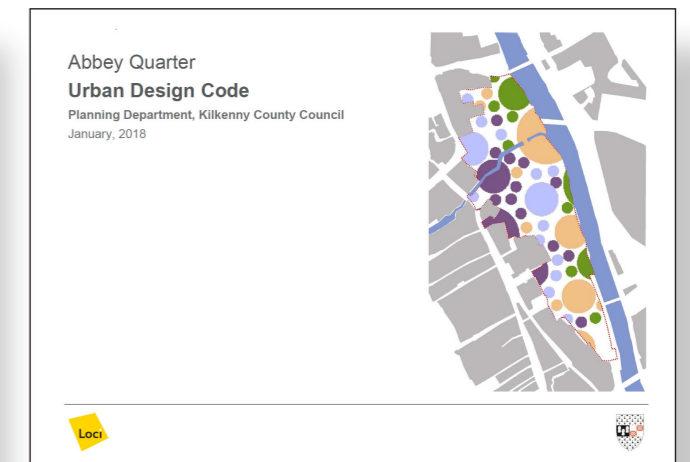
The 2015 Masterplan and 2018 Urban Design Code still apply.

In the event of conflicting recommendations this User Guide shall take precedence.

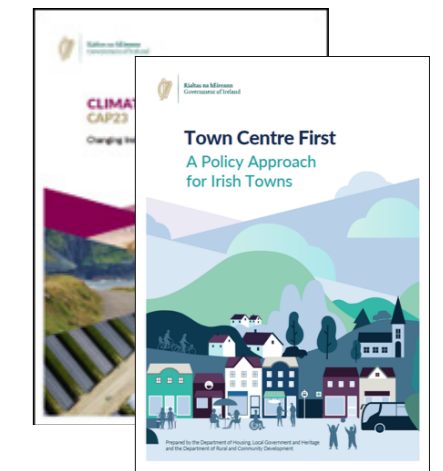
* See <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/0a863-abbey-quarter-project-kilkenny/>



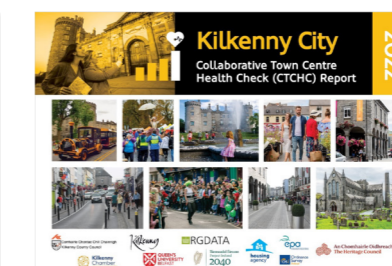
2015 Abbey Quarter Masterplan



2018 Abbey Quarter Urban Design Code

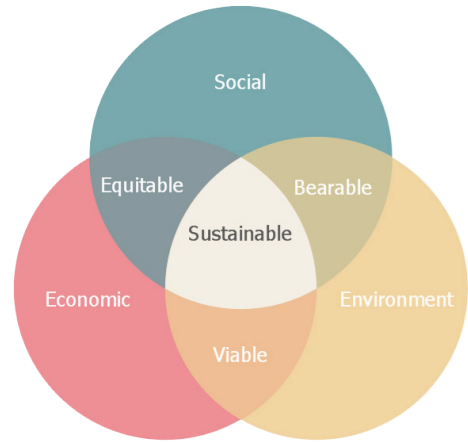


National & Local Policy updates since 2015/ 2018



Ongoing and Completed Public Engagement

1.4 ABBEY QUARTER VISION



Sustainability Venn Diagram: The achievement of sustainability requires a balance between economic, environmental and social concerns in equal harmony (from 2015 Abbey Quarter Masterplan).

Abbey Quarter Masterplan Vision:

'To plan the area as a seamless complement to the medieval city as an inclusive place for an inter-generational community to work, live, visit and play with St. Francis Abbey at its core. The regeneration of the area will focus on embracing the sites' natural, cultural and built heritage, whilst maximising the benefits of the rivers Nore and Breaghagh, providing for a broad range of uses, sustaining growth in employment, 3rd & 4th level education and advancing economic activity in a sustainable and energy efficient fashion where innovation can flourish. The area will be a permeable expansion of the city for pedestrians and cyclists where smarter travel principles will apply throughout.' *

Approved by Kilkenny County Council on Friday 31st July 2015

*See page 16 for Public Sentiment on Abbey Quarter Vision Statement



1.5 Environmental Considerations and Assessments

This Draft Masterplan Guidance Document has been prepared in a way that ensures that the protection and management of the environment afforded by the existing planning framework (including both the current City and County Development Plan and the current Masterplan), which has already been subject to detailed environmental assessment, is retained.

This Draft User Guide will be updated following public display to take account of the findings of the public consultation exercise. It will then be used to inform a review of the Council's policy with respect to the proper planning and sustainable development of the Abbey Quarter – this will include a Proposed Variation to the current City and County Development Plan. This review, including the preparation of the Proposed Variation, will be subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment and Screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment. More detail is provided in Appendix I "Statement on Environmental Considerations and Assessments". The Screenings will determine whether or not full assessments are required for this review and will be undertaken with in consultation with the prescribed environmental authorities.

SECTION 2.0 DETAIL OF THE REVIEW

2.1 EXTENDED MASTERPLAN: OVERVIEW + OPPORTUNITIES



Green's Bridge



The Engineers' Block at The Smithwicks Experience



Market Square 3D Visualisation

Green's Bridge:

Green's Bridge itself is regarded as one of Ireland's finest Georgian bridges and considered of national architectural and technical significance.

Green Street:

There may be opportunities to improve access to the northern end of the Abbey Quarter from Green St.

Vacant Properties:

Some vacant or underused plots (lilac) could possibly be considered for redevelopment and regeneration, as part of a holistic placemaking initiative.

Land Swap:

The northern end of the Masterplan (known as Sweeney's Orchard) has been rationalised through land swap to support a more efficient development plot.

Engineers' Block at The Smithwick's Experience:

This structure is vacant and an important piece of the route linking new developments seamlessly into the city. Activation of this block will add active frontage to a new pedestrian link from Horse Barrack Lane into new the mixed-use street.

Country Market:

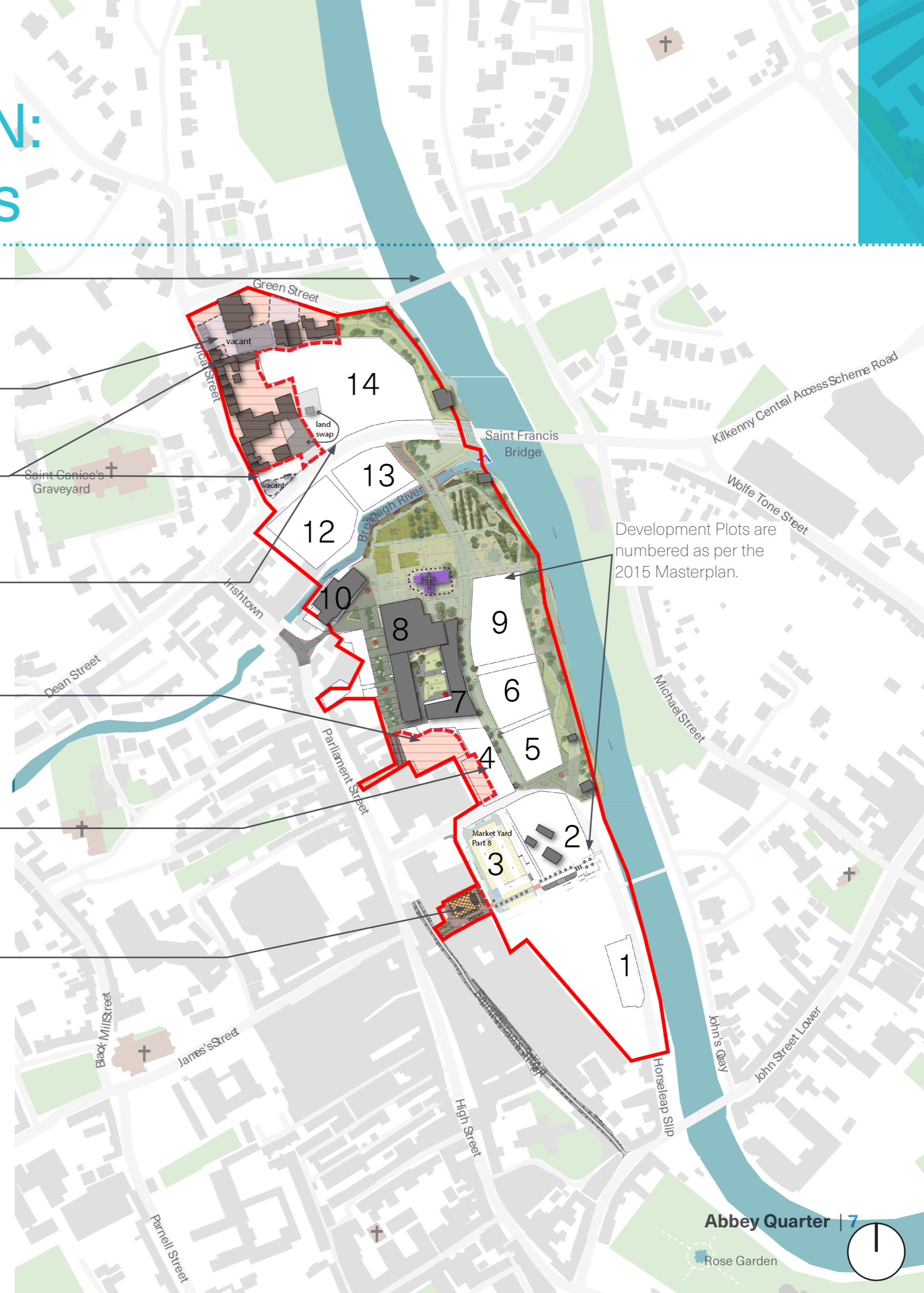
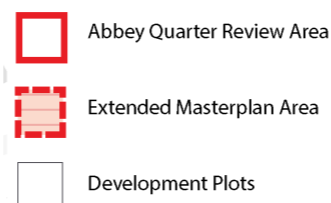
This plot adjacent to the Courthouse which is used periodically as a small market. The plot has potential for redevelopment and the Market function could be relocated into the new public realm.

New public space between Market Yard and St. Kieran Street:

This public space received planning permission through the Part VIII process in November 2022.

Diagram shows;

Updated Abbey Quarter Redline,
Development progress to date,
Remaining development plots.

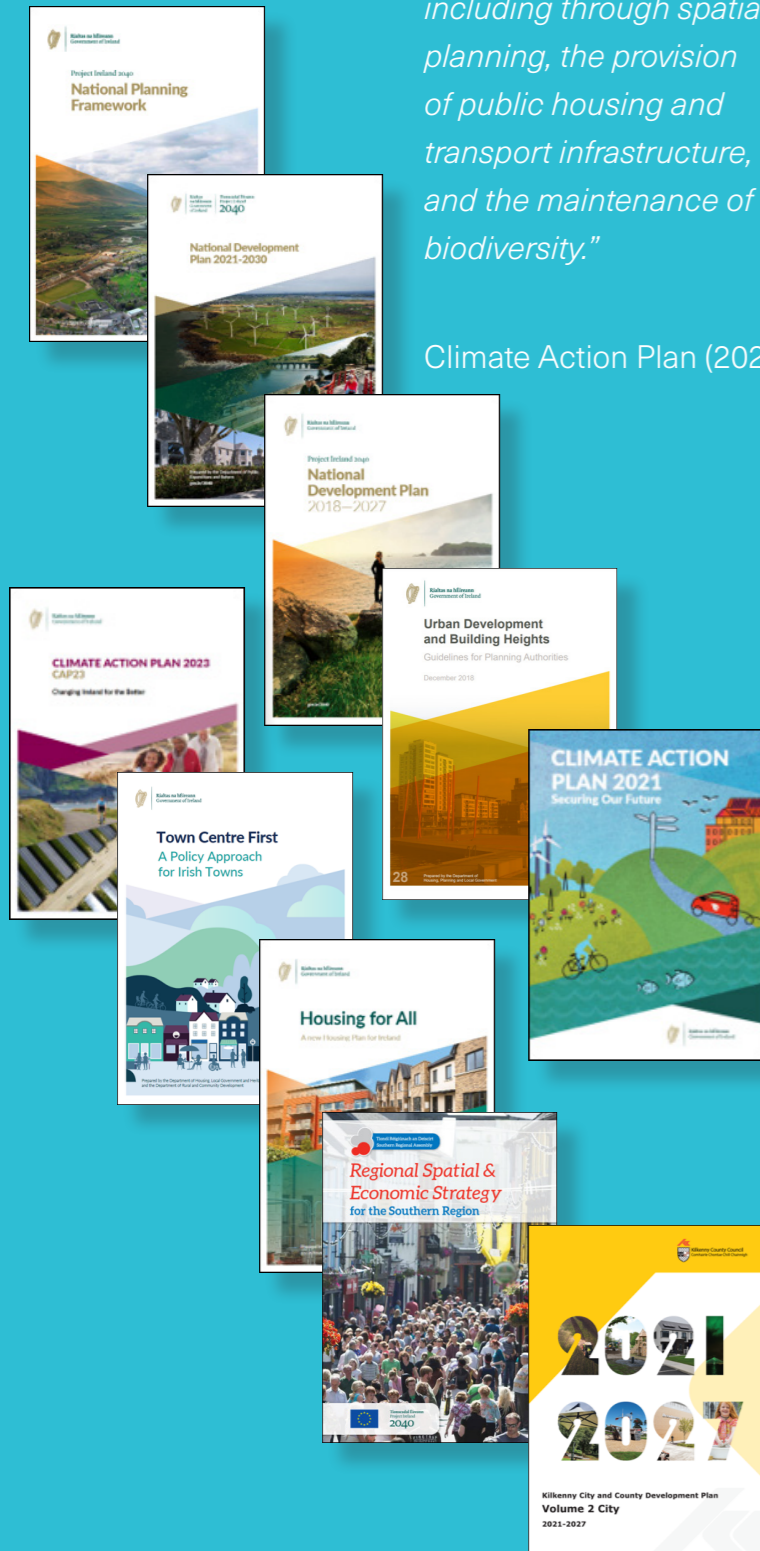


Development Plots are numbered as per the 2015 Masterplan.

2.2 POLICY UPDATES: OVERVIEW

“Local authorities, in particular, have a pivotal role to play in the decarbonisation transition, including through spatial planning, the provision of public housing and transport infrastructure, and the maintenance of biodiversity.”

Climate Action Plan (2021)



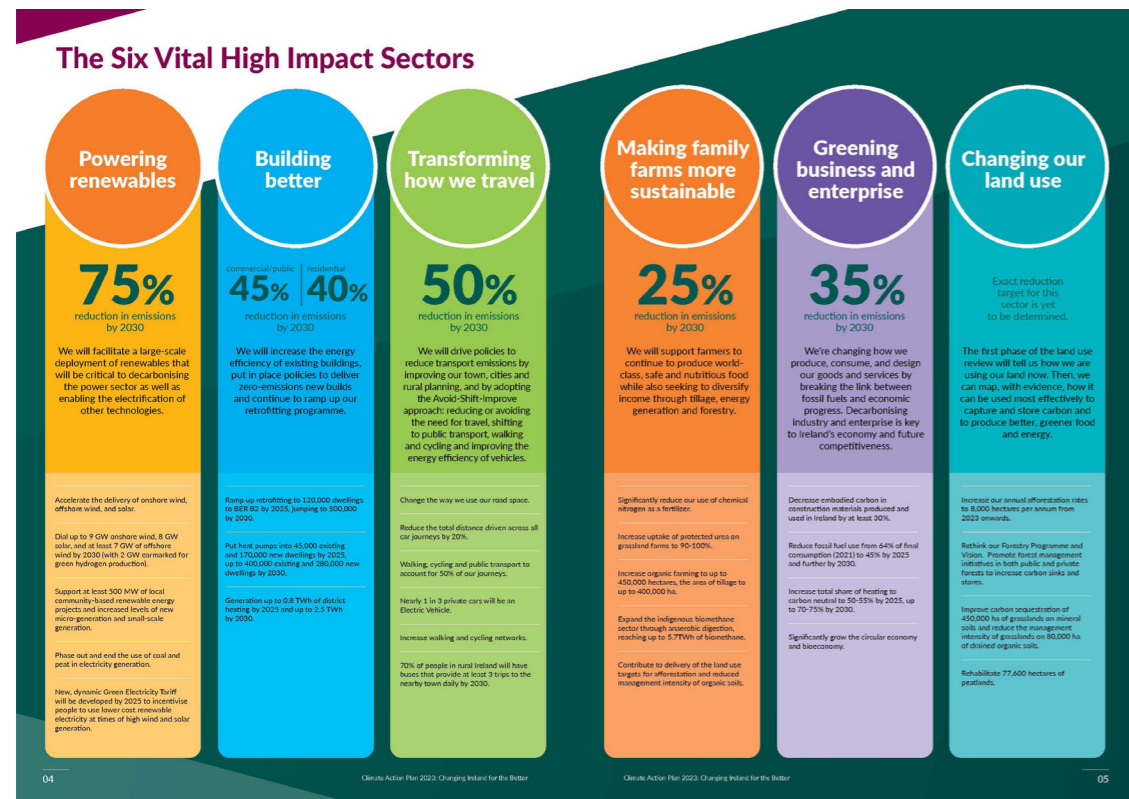
The Original Masterplan for the Abbey Creative Quarter was published in 2015, with the subsequent Urban Design Code published in 2018. Since the publication of the original masterplan the strategic planning context in Ireland has changed dramatically. The publication of the National Planning Framework in 2018 has established a concerted and coherent focus on compact and sustainable development, with subsequent policy and guidance incorporating decarbonisation, sustainable mobility, accelerated housing delivery and urban renewable and regeneration.

Echo, positive energy building, TU Delft



- The **National Planning Framework (2018)** is a high-level document that establishes an overarching framework for Ireland's growth and development up to 2040. It marks a shift from an uncoordinated “business as usual” approach to development and prioritises the compact growth and development of Ireland's existing settlements in a coordinated and sustainable manner.
- The **National Development Plan (2018)** has established national program of public investment to underpin the implementation of the NPF and support development in Ireland up to 2030. It has introduced several new funding mechanisms for public investment, with the **Urban Regeneration and Development Fund** playing a key role in driving the renewal and regeneration of Ireland's urban centres.
- The **Building Heights Guidelines** introduced in 2018 encourage the provision of increased building heights in appropriate urban locations and introduce a shift from generic building height limits previously applied in some Local Authority Development Plans to a criteria-based approach to evaluate building heights relative to their urban context.
- The **Climate Action Plan (2021)** is a Whole-of-Government plan for Ireland achieve a 51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050. The CAP highlights the important role that planning policy will play in reducing carbon emissions and further promotes compact growth and higher density residential development in Ireland's urban settlements to create vibrant and people-focused environments that reduce travel time and encourage active sustainable modes of travel. It also sets out targets to reduce carbon emissions in the construction sector and our built environment.
- The **Town Centre First Policy (2022)** aims to support the development of Ireland's town centres as attractive and functional locations in which people can live, work and visit. The TCF policy reflects lessons-learned during the COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions, highlighting the role of town centres as local service providers and the importance of accessible public spaces for socialisation and recreation.
- **Housing for All** is the Government's ambitious plan for housing delivery up to 2030. It sets a target to deliver 33,000 new homes per annum, with over 300,000 homes to be delivered up to 2030. It formally introduces the Local Authority Affordable Purchase Scheme and Cost Rental Tenure to the Irish market to help ensure the delivery of new affordable homes to purchase and rent.
- The **Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (2020)** recognises Kilkenney as a Key Town for the region, and seeks to strengthen the role of Kilkenney City as an economic driver for the region.
- The **Kilkenney City and County Development Plan 2021-2027** establishes the detailed policy framework for growth and development control in Kilkenney. It identifies key strategic priorities for the City's development, including delivering 30% of new growth within the City's existing urban footprint and continuing to support urban regeneration through investment in the Abbey Quarter.

2.2 POLICY UPDATES: RECOMMENDATIONS



Key Policy Themes to Interrogate

4.1 Climate Action Policies

see pages 10-11

and

4.2 Housing Policies

see pages 12-13

Emerging Policy Guidance

- **Compact Growth** within the existing built footprint of the City
- Consolidate and Strengthen Kilkenny as a **self-sustaining mixed-use Key Town**
- Investment in **Sustainable Mobility** and the '10-minute city' concept
- Enhanced **Amenity and Heritage**, realising the full potential of existing assets
- Protect and **enhance our environment** whilst combatting climate change
- Support **Economic growth and Enterprise** in appropriate locations
- Economic prosperity and **improved quality of life** for all
- Support **home-ownership and increase affordability**, through increased supply and choice of tenure
- Eradicate homelessness and support **Social Inclusion**
- Address vacancy and efficient use of stock, including identifying **public land** for housing
- Potential for limited **height increases** in appropriate locations
- All residential must meet NZEB by 2025 and **Zero Emission Standard by 2030**.
- Non-domestic embodied carbon reduction of 60% and min. 20% of energy need from renewable sources*.

*See Appendix 2: Summary of Policy Updates

2.3 CLIMATE ACTION POLICY: OVERVIEW



Key relevant Policy Documents; National Development Plan and Climate Action Plans

There is an opportunity in the Abbey Quarter lands to promote a net zero / energy positive quarter, as development comes on line over time. This is in line with National Policy and County level obligations to identify Decarbonization Zones.

“By 2030, the government aims to achieve the following:

- cutting greenhouse gas emissions by at least 30%
- reaching a target of at least 32.5% energy efficiency
 - delivering 70% renewable electricity”

- Dept Environment, Climate and Communications, June 2020

National Development Plan 2021-2030

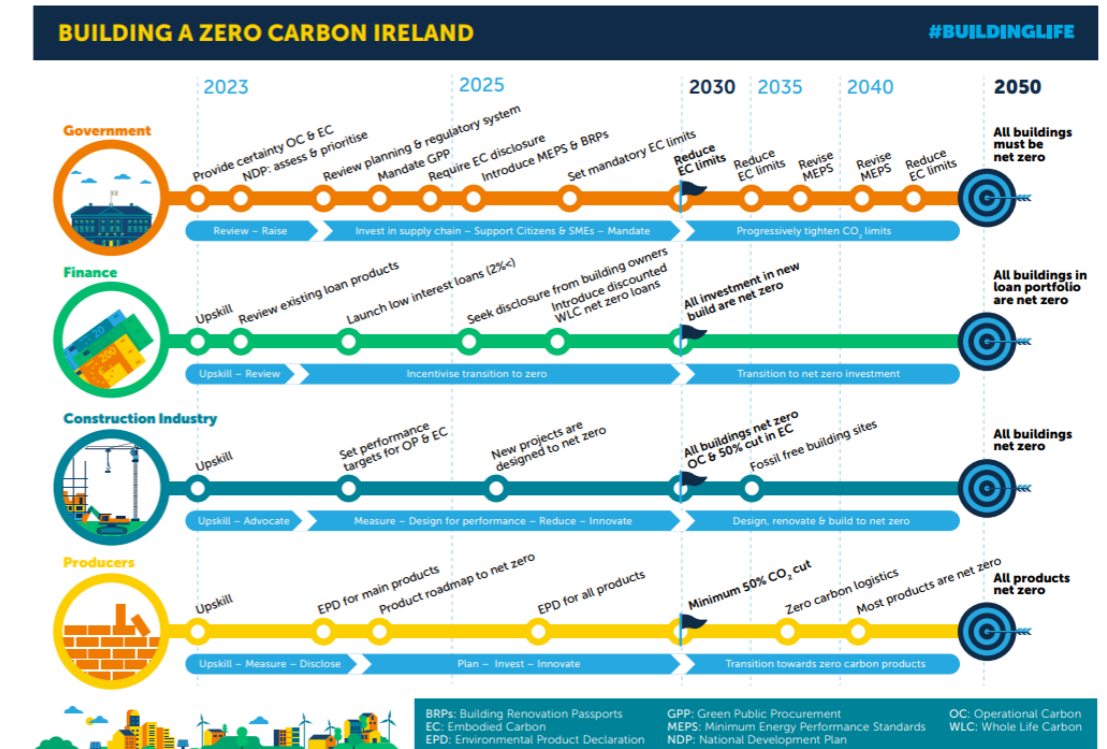
The National Development Plan (NDP) sets out a national program of public investment to underpin the implementation of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and support development in Ireland. The NDP introduced four national funds to help support delivery the NPF:

- Rural Regeneration and Development Fund – to promote rural renewal and the regeneration of rural towns and villages.
- Urban Regeneration and Development Fund – to support major development and regeneration projects in Ireland’s urban centres.
- Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund – to develop Ireland’s innovation ecosystem.
- Climate Action Fund – to support the transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient society.

The NDP 2021-2030 sets out the next stage of €165 billion of public investment to underpin the implementation of the NPF up to 2030.

The NDP also provides enhanced support for social and affordable housing development and aims to deliver an average of 10,000 new social homes per annum up to 2030. It replaces the Serviced Site Fund with a Affordable Housing Fund to support the delivery of 54,000 affordable homes in the period up to 2030.

Distinct from previous URDF funding calls, the third round of funding (January 2023) will be specifically designed to address long term vacancy and dereliction across our URDF cities and towns and the acceleration of the provision of residential accommodation. This approach will ensure the projects supported by the URDF align with the current objectives of other government policies such as Housing for All and Town Centre First.



‘Building a Zero Carbon Ireland’ Infographic from “A Roadmap to decarbonise Ireland’s Built Environment across its Whole Life Cycle” by IGBC, 2022

For context to the direction and timeline issues around our National targets; LCA Hub - Irish Green Building Council (igbc.ie)

Climate Action Plan (2021)

The Climate Action Plan (CAP) is a Whole-of-Government plan for Ireland to fulfil commitments in the Programme for Government and the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2021 to achieve a **51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050**. The CAP is a living document and is updated annually to reflect progress made.

The CAP highlights the important role spatial and planning policy will play in reducing carbon emissions and achieving our emissions targets. In line with policy direction established under the NPF, it promotes compact growth and higher density residential development in Ireland’s urban settlements to create vibrant and people-focused environments that reduce travel time and encourage active sustainable modes of travel.

2.3 CLIMATE ACTION POLICY: RECOMMENDATIONS

Abbey Quarter Masterplan - Sustainability

The 2015 Maserplan set out ambitions for Sustainability under the themes; Density and Mixed Uses, Transport, Environmental Quality, Energy Strategy, Zero Brown Waste, Water Conservation, R&D Funding and Exemplar Developments. These themes are still appropriate and relevant. Updated guidance would recommend that each theme go further in its ambition and targets.

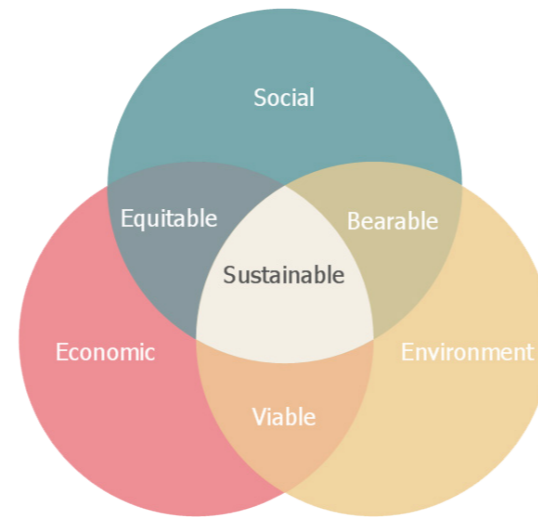
Kilkenny: A Sustainable City

As one of the best-preserved medieval towns in Ireland, well-connected by road and rail and boasting an enviable local climate, Kilkenny is competing at an international scale as an attractor of employers looking to differentiate themselves. The City offers all the benefits of economic clustering in a walkable, green, safe and historic setting.

The Abbey Quarter makes up a large proportion of the City core. Stradling the fortifications of the original settlement, the river frontage has supported food growing and industry for hundreds of years. Whilst the urban morphology of narrow east-west slips continues through the quarter, its historic uses never developed the tight grained urban form typical of the city. This allows the Quarter to continue this role as supportive to the city core, whilst also different.

Under the principles of Town Centre First Policy (2022) The Abbey Quarter is an opportunity to consolidate the city's urban form in a sustainable location. New developments can meet the needs of a new market; modern, ESG compliant (meeting the Environmental, Social and Governance standards required of larger companies), universally accessible, homes, offices, shops and cultural amenities. The Abbey Quarter is an opportunity to demonstrate best practice place-making and leadership, by delivering a truly mixed-use and sustainable community.

The Abbey Quarter is a once in a generation opportunity to support the sustainable evolution of Kilkenny City. With almost 7 hectares of public-owned land, the scale and potential of this opportunity has the potential to positively shift the City's sustainable trajectory towards becoming a national leader. The Brewhouse refurbishment has achieved LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold standard, setting a benchmark for future development to meet or exceed.



Sustainability Venn Diagram: The achievement of sustainability requires a balance between economic, environmental and social concerns in equal harmony.

Meeting our Climate Action Plan Ambitions:

The ambition is to grow the City to achieve the targets set out under the National Planning Framework(NPF) through:

- a compact form of development
- the 4 neighbourhood model & City centre
- the 10 minute city concept

* Whole Life-Cycle Carbon emissions are the carbon emissions resulting from the materials, construction and the use of a building over its entire life, including its demolition and disposal. A Whole Life Cycle Carbon assessment provides a true picture of a building's carbon impact on the environment

Climate Action Recommendations

National Development Plan 2021-2030

- Continue to maximise opportunities for grant funding through the URDF (Urban Regeneration Development Fund), Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund and Climate Action Fund.
- Investigate opportunities to assess vacant/ derelict site aquisition by the Local Authority.
- Investigate opportunities to deliver Affordable Housing.

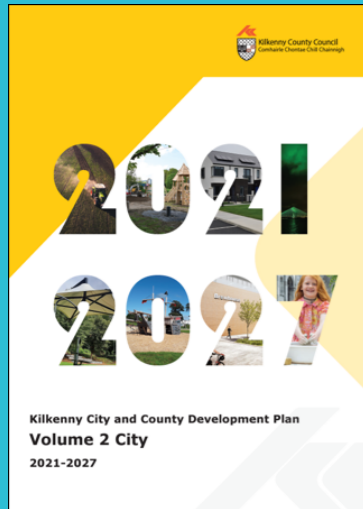
Climate Action Plan

- Promote market leading sustainability credentials proportionate to the locations world class setting.
- All development should aim for net zero/ energy positive buildings.
- Where feasible investigate district heating/ energy capture and sharing/ heat exchange or other innovative solutions.
- Promote reduced vehicle parking ratios alongside enhanced cycle paths, cycle parking and changing facilities within new developments in accordance with the emerging SUMP process.
- Promote Whole Life Carbon (WLC*) studies as part of the Planning process.
- Aim for a fully decarbonised district, as part of the KCC objectives under CAP.

Abbey Quarter Masterplan Review

- **Density and Mixed Uses;** maximise efficiency of all development plots through flexibility in application of the Urban Design Code.
- **Transport;** set out a phased path to reaching the transport targets of the CAP in advance of the 2030 deadline (20% reduction in car journeys distance, 50% reduction in emissions etc. See pg 8).
- **Environmental Quality;** high quality public realm can entice people towards more sustainable behaviours including walking, cycling and shopping locally.
- **Energy Strategy;** Support opportunities for local or community-based renewable energy projects/ micro-generation and small-scale generation.

2.4 HOUSING POLICY: OVERVIEW



City Population to increase by 5,000 by 2040 (from 2016 figure)

Sustainable **economic and physical development** of the city in a compact form, combined with **efficient transport** links between the various land uses such as employment, education and residential, with strong policies for the conservation and protection of the natural and built environment and ensuring a **good quality life** for its inhabitants.

The population targets for the City are set by the Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. The objective is to **grow the population of the City by 35% to 2040** [from 2016 base].

Kilkenny City and County Development Plan (2021-2027)



Town Centre First (2022)

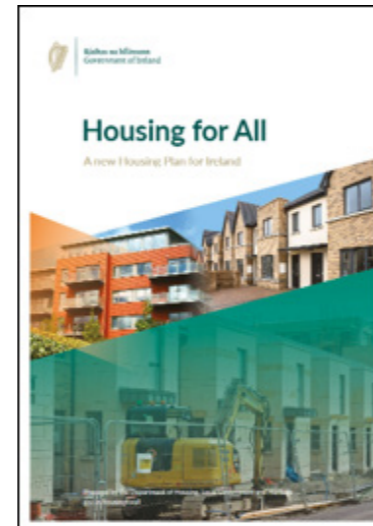
Ireland's Town Centre First (TCF) policy aims to support the development of town centres that are attractive and functional locations in which people can live, work and visit, with an emphasis on new homes within Towns.

"The Town Centre First policy aims to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community"

This framework for town centre development and revitalisation is based on four key pillars:

- Building capacity at the local level to drive town centre revitalisation forward.
- Improving the quality and availability of data on towns to lead to better understanding and development.
- Developing TCF Plan's that evaluate the current position of a town and outline a vision for its future.
- The implementation of funding instruments and interventions to support town centre investment.

The TCF documents highlights Kilkenny's Abbey Quarter as a positive example of town centre regeneration, creating a vibrant new urban quarter that links with Kilkenny's existing medieval core.



Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland

Housing for All is the Government's ambitious plan for the development and delivery of housing in Ireland up to 2030. Housing for All establishes a target to deliver 33,000 new homes per annum, with over 300,000 homes to be delivered up to 2030. This target is to be achieved through four primary pathways that address different elements of Ireland's housing sector.

1. Supporting Homeownership and Increasing Affordability
2. Eradicating Homelessness, Increasing Social Housing Delivery and Supporting Social Inclusion
3. Increasing New Housing Supply
4. Addressing Vacancy and Efficient Use of Existing Stock

Pathway 1 sets targets for the delivery of affordable housing by Local Authorities, Approved Housing Bodies, the Land Development Agency and the State that will be made available to purchase or rent. The Plan sets a target for the delivery of 36,000 affordable purchase homes by 2030.

Pathway 2 of Housing for All also emphasises the commitment to deliver 90,000 social housing units by 2030.

Housing for All – 2023 Update

In April 2023 the Irish Government introduced additional measures to bolster the delivery of housing under the Housing for All and help meeting annual targets for housing delivery. This suite of measures aims to address viability and affordability by reducing costs and improving supports for the refurbishment of existing units and the delivery of new housing at scale.

- To reduce costs and incentivise new housing development, development levies are to be suspended for a period of 12 months. Such levies are normally paid to the relevant local authority to help contribute to roads, water services and other underlying infrastructure. Their suspension is expected to save up to an average of €12,650 per new home. [With an average home size of 100sqm in Kilkenny City this would equate to a waiver of approximately €2,500].
- The support available under the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant scheme is to be expanded. The grant value is increased from €30,000 to €50,000 for vacant properties and from €50,000 to €70,000 for derelict properties. Eligibility for the scheme is extended to cover houses built up to the year 2007, and to include both owner-occupied and rental properties.
- A limited-time subsidy is being introduced to accelerate the delivery of new affordable housing under the Cost Rental system. Up to €750 million will be administered through the Land Development Agency and other housing providers to target affordable Cost Rental housing that has received planning permission but which have not yet commenced.

2.4 HOUSING POLICY: RECOMMENDATIONS

Abbey Quarter Masterplan - Housing

The Abbey Quarter Urban Design Code identified a target of 30-35% of all development to be Residential. This applies to the entire Masterplan area. No targets were set for number of new homes, typologies (apartments, duplexes etc), or target population (down-sizers, young professionals etc). The described development from the original Masterplan could result in 50,000 - 75,000 sqm of total development, if applied as described in the Urban Design Code (4 storey blocks, some additional height at corners, podium style developments with mixed-use plan) resulting in a potential for 150 - 250 new homes.

In this review the lands in the extended area have been analyzed. The area at Sweeney's Orchard is already identified as a Housing Delivery site for the City, with capacity for 50-75 units (Kilkenny County Council Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022 -2026). These homes are a minimum potential for this site.

Housing Typologies

A variety of typologies will be appropriate throughout the Abbey Quarter, to accommodate a diverse population, which will be reflected in the identified housing need (see pg 20 for more detail).

Sweeney's Orchard

The lands at Sweeney's Orchard benefit from extension and rationalisation in this review. These changes to the 'redline' should support the most efficient and appropriate development of this site.

Whilst this site is ideally suited to housing development, an important factor in its design and development will be its successful integration with the wider Quarter and City Centre. The intensification of housing in this location offers the co-benefits of a new population in the City, bringing footfall and activity, whilst also supporting expanded employment opportunities.

Phasing

Sweeney's Orchard in particular benefits from excellent accessibility and visibility. There are technical and funding challenges which will determine the phasing of the lands in public ownership. It is an objective of the Local Authority to deliver housing on this site in particular. The entirety can proceed in one phase, or multiple phases, depending on funding, design and other external inputs.



Precedent image; Housing for Older Women, Barnet, London

Housing recommendations:

Town Centre First

- Opportunities to bring surrounding buildings into residential use will support the Abbey Quarter - vacant, derelict or empty upper floors.
- Funding instruments should be explored to support housing delivery and viability in the Quarter.

Housing For All

- Smaller infill sites within the Quarter should be considered for small scale residential opportunities.
- The 'Sweeney's Orchard' / The Gardens site should be developed for housing in the first phase of development.
- Homes should include a diversity of typologies and tenures, suited to the diversity of needs of the City population

Abbey Quarter Masterplan Review

- The original objective of 30-35% of all development to be housing within the entire Abbey Quarter.
- Innovative approaches to housing delivery should be supported, subject to best practice design.
- Flexibility should be encouraged to support housing development that aligns with the vision of the Abbey Quarter and meets best practice placemaking.
- Housing should be included in all phases of development and all character areas of the Abbey Quarter where possible/ viable.
- The successful delivery of housing should be reviewed alongside the Development Plan (2027).

2.5 PUBLIC SENTIMENT: OVERVIEW

Other Public Engagement



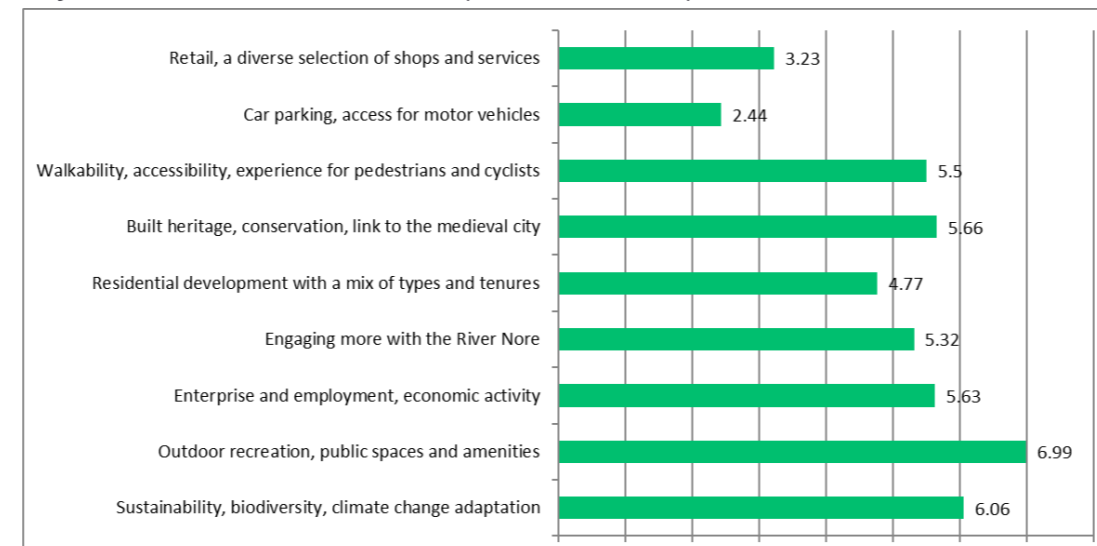
Separate and parallel to this review of the Abbey Quarter Masterplan several other streams of public engagement have been started or completed. These include the ongoing Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) and the 2022 Collaborative Town Centre Health Check (CTCHC). Where feasible congruence has been taken of these complimentary processes.

As part of the Abbey Quarter Masterplan review a series of public engagement events were undertaken, to allow the public an opportunity to reflect on progress to date and the ongoing appropriateness of the masterplan. The Public Engagement was well attended and the comments were very welcome. Where possible the County Council have incorporated as many ideas as possible e.g. aspiration for the third level institution etc. and these are also being addressed through the Development Plan.

Key notes on the 2022 Public Sentiment Survey:

- 274 surveys were completed (268 online and 6 paper)
- 73.75% of participants did not previously engage with the public consultation for the Abbey Quarter
- Almost 60% of participants felt the 2015 vision was still relevant

Key themes and their relative importance to the public



Sample Quotes from the Public

Spaces for Artists e.g. studios, galleries, exhibition spaces - 17 call outs

"I would like to see the communal art open studio spaces like many other models in Ireland's city's like - spacecraft in Limerick, Complex and Temple Bar gallery and studios etc."

"Kilkenny needs artist studios. And creative workspace. Abbey quarter would be the perfect place."

"The availability of workspace for Kilkenny's professional arts community is severely limited. The extensive development of a new Abbey Quarter provides a unique once in a generation opportunity to include artistic workspace provision in the plans of a major urban renewal project."

Outdoor Performance Space - 4 call outs

"I believe we should open up to the river and have a permanent accessible to all performance space. I think the idea of putting corporate offices and retail in the space is shortsighted and not the best use of the space."

Creative Industries - 2 call outs

"The creation of an ambitious multipurpose arts production space would add vibrancy and enhance quality of life, sustainable cultural tourism and urban regeneration for artists, citizens and visitors alike"

Residential - 11 call outs

"Further office space will leave the area dead at night. Residential space is essential along with public open space and engagement with the river."

"Residential is essential to make City Core a 'living' City again"

"A vibrant quarter needs residence. It should be a village inside the city."

Residential for the Elderly - 2 call outs

"Kilkenny city would benefit from four additions to its facilities: a multi-storey residential nursing home with lift; a city and county archive; more trees and green space; physical access to the bank of the river Nore."

2.5 PUBLIC SENTIMENT: SUMMARY + RECOMMENDATIONS

Active Travel - 12 call outs

"A sustainable, walkable, cyclable mix of housing and education with the Nore and brewery at its core"

"No cars! Prioritise cycling and walking. Perhaps bus route"

"Put a narrow cobbled street from the new bridge to Bateman Quay to ease traffic congestion. Open pedestrian and cycle access from the new bridge."

Dunnes Car Park -3 call outs

"Free up more space by removing some surfaceparking from market yard car park with new underground car park. In Spain they put car parks underground and public spaces above ground. It makes amazing community spaces."

Retail -4 call outs

"The Abbey Quarter needs to link with the City providing more commercial, economic and retail services including restaurants and creating a space for the public to use and utilise and congregate socially and for more car parking in the vicinity".

Cafes / Restaurants - 2 call out

"Some cafes and restaurants facing river. Low cost rental for new cafes/restaurants".

"Cafes in river walk with protected seating and a continued boardwalk".

Gaelteacht - 2 call outs

"I would like to see the local authority develop an Irish language quarter, considering that the development is located in the Irish Town area of the city and perhaps a tourist office."

Public Open Space - 8 call outs

"Open public space for use by all"

"A public area which is equivalent to the castle park whereby the locals are very proud to say this is are city and national and international tourists have it on their must do list."

Playground - 3 call outs

"This area of the city NEEDS a playground. "

Universal Design - 4 call outs

"The redevelopment of the Abbey Quarter provides creative opportunities to develop both the urban landscape and the buildings as inclusive places to live, work and visit. For example the implementation of the Braille Trail and other universal design solutions provides a starting point for the continued development of accessibility throughout the area and the broader city."

Community space - 3 call outs

"Dedicated community hub"

River Nore - 8 call outs

"Make more use of the River - no connection with the river at the moment, not much happening on the river where there could be. Kayaking, boating, stand-up paddle boarding"

University - 9 call outs

"I believe the focus should be on economic activity and also a third level institution which Kilkenny badly needs"

"Approaches should be made to the National College of Art & Design (NCAD), which is scattered across a number of sites in Dublin, to come to a purpose-built campus in the Abbey Quarter as their main campus."

Conservation - 4 call outs

"The most important thing is to create an area that embraces the existing rich heritage of the city and exploit this to the full. This could be achieved by using an imaginative approach combining the historical and contemporary."

Other Proposed Uses

"I would like to see an indoor amenity such as a science museum for Children"

Public Sentiment Commentary:

The vision of the masterplan is for an area that is to be "a seamless complement to the medieval city" whilst maximising the benefits of the Rivers Nore and Breagadh.

It is an objective of the City and County Development Plan Vol 2 (objective C6K) "To secure the development of a third and/or fourth level campus(es) within Kilkenny city as part of the development of a Technological University for the South East".

Support for Creative and Artistic uses is part of the Local Authority's function. The former squash court has been reserved for a supporting use for the Arts and Culture sector. In addition, the design of the public park around St Francis' Abbey has made provision for the use of the space for outdoor events.

The City and County Development Plan align with much of the aspirations of the community. The overall policies and objectives are broadly aligned with public views already.

2.6 ACCESS + PARKING : OVERVIEW

Mobility Hierarchy, DMURS

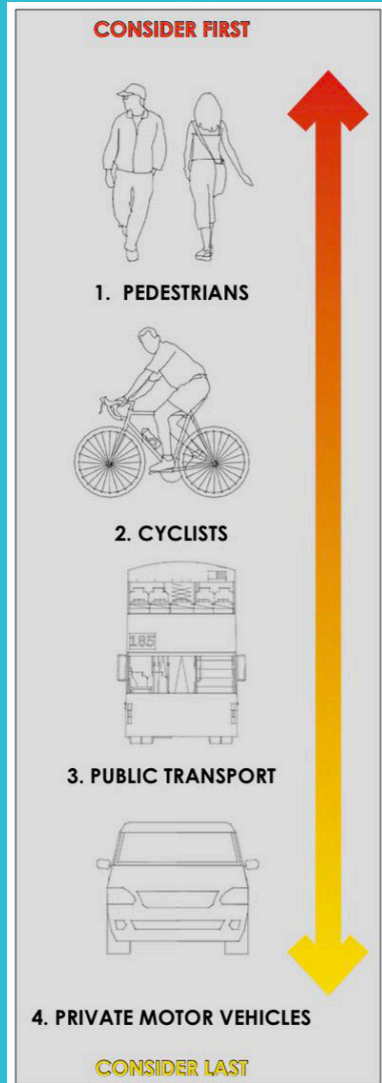


Figure 3.1: DMURS (Table 2.21) user hierarchy that promotes and prioritises sustainable forms of

Mobility Approach

The Abbey Quarter will play an important role in shifting Kilkenny towards a more sustainable future and transport will be an important piece of this puzzle. Whilst the quarter will necessarily generate some new vehicle trips and parking requirements, restrictive and ambitious car-parking ratios over time should be endorsed. These will be developed as part of the current SUMP program, which is active at the time of this review.

An approach of attracting people to move actively - whether walking, cycling or scooting - or to use public transport, through investment in public realm is recommended. This 'positive push' can support a sustainable shift of habits. A holistic approach, incorporating the principles of compact development and the 10-minute city is necessary. This approach considers;

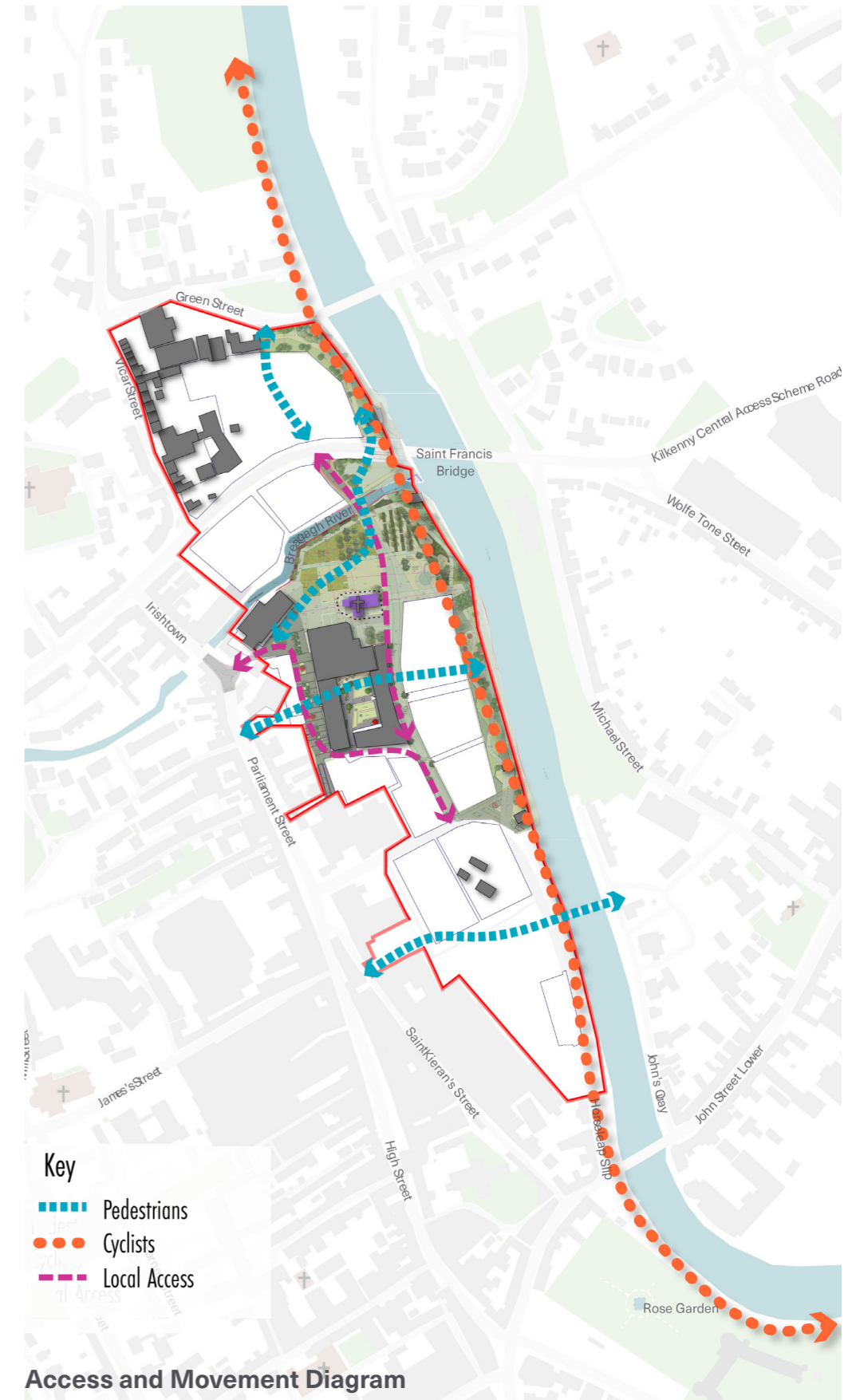
- **Accessibility;** are all the places people need to visit within walking distance?
- **Safety;** is the route safe, direct, well lit, level and accessible for the full family?
- **Pleasure & Convenience;** is the route convenient and pleasant? Will walking be a more enjoyable way to get to the destination, and will people be able to connect onto further cycle lanes/ bus routes to complete the next leg of their journey?

This approach to holistic mobility focuses on the quality of environment and experience as motivating factors for sustainable switches, rather than punitive measures. Through switching the narrative in this way we can retain the required accessibility for the most vulnerable groups, who would be more severely impacted by lack of parking or vehicle access. These might include, non-exhaustively, people with disabilities, carers with small or vulnerable charges, marginalised groups/ females travelling after dark or in quieter hours, the delivery vehicles required to support a car-free lifestyle and many others.

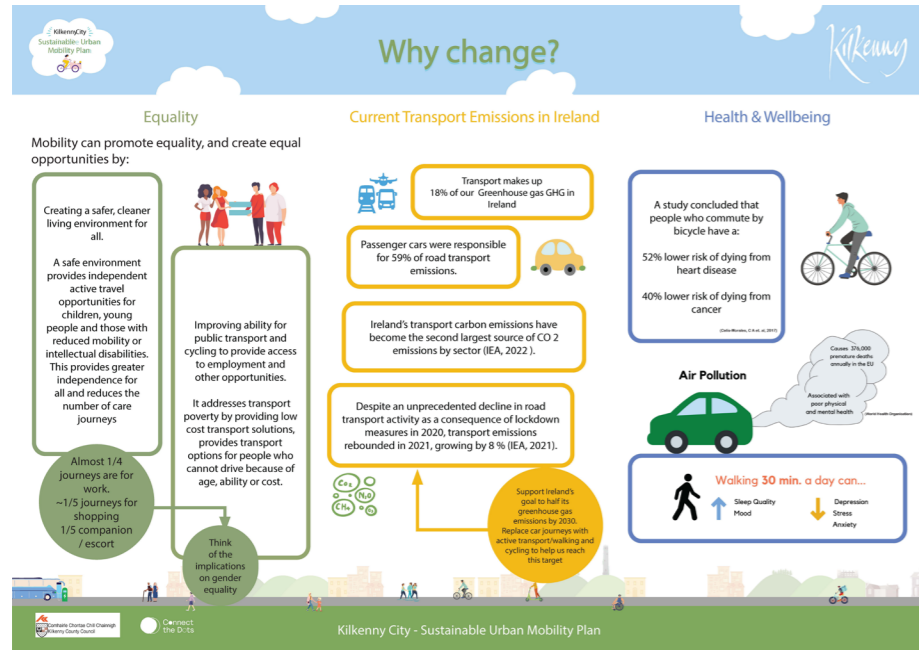
Flexibility will be needed in the application of any access or parking standards, to ensure a tailored and equitable response can be applied.

Extended Masterplan Area

Notwithstanding the approach set out above, and having regard to the fact that the city is at the early stages of transitioning in modal shift to more sustainable forms of transport, it is considered appropriate and necessary to provide car parking in the Sweeney's Orchard area. The topography of the area will lend itself to the provision of undercroft parking spaces as a minimum. Parking provision in this location could increase, depending on detailed design options. Car parking at this location will, in the interim, provide for limited spaces to serve new developments within the Abbey Quarter area, such as the proposed housing and office/ commercial developments.



2.6 ACCESS + PARKING: RECOMMENDATIONS



The total amount of development proposed will generate a parking demand in excess of any provision, even allowing for modal shift and a general reduction in car trips, following on from the provisions of the SUMP process. As phases roll out over time and development moves to phase 4 (along Bateman Quay, see Section 3.0), it is envisioned that the car parking at Sweeney's Orchard would facilitate a reduction in the surface parking for Phase 4. The provision of undercroft parking will help to limit the landtake requirement for parking.

Left; Presentation board from Kilkenny SUMP consultation, Q1 2023. See; <https://consult.kilkenny.ie/>

Parking - General Car parking within the Quarter should be considered through:

1. International, National and Regional policy context (UN Sustainable Development Goals, NPF / NDP, Climate Action Plan, RSES etc) that looks to reduce the negative impacts of transport on the environment. Policy is pushing strongly to promote active and sustainable travel and to reduce the negative impacts of single occupancy car journeys. The availability or otherwise of car parking plays an important role in managing the impact of car based trips.
2. The current Kilkenny County Development Plan (2021-2027), Section 12.12 Table 12.3 provides maximum car parking rates for developments. These rates are for all developments at a county wide level and apply to Kilkenny City. Based on these standards and using the potential development described in this document, (up to 110,000 gfa) would result in a maximum of c3697 in car parking demand. Such a level of car parking is not achievable in terms of land take, viability, cost, and policy context.
3. There is significant public and private car parking (4419 spaces) within Kilkenny City and its immediate environs both on and off street. This includes 425 spaces on Bateman Quay surface car parks and 120 temporary parking spaces in the Brewery Quarter. In the context of a move to more sustainable transport modes car parking tariffs are low. This needs to be addressed in the context of modal shift targets through appropriate mechanisms by the Council but is directly outside the remit of this masterplan.

* See https://kilkennycoco.ie/eng/news/press_releases/proposal-for-temporary-parking-on-the-abbey-quarter-site.html

Mobility Hub

The city centre in itself is a mobility hub and the Abbey Quarter forms part of this hub that facilitates active travel and public transport and private car and delivery access. The city centre incorporates bus routes and access to bus services the latter consisting of appropriately located bus stops that optimise access to the city bus services. Public bus services run adjacent to/ through the masterplan lands providing wider connections and access. Public cycle parking forms a core element of the city centre mobility hub and should be spread across the city centre and masterplan lands in order to provide pockets of cycle parking located close to the multitude of destinations on the city centre including retail, employment, leisure, community, and public parks.

Parking Recommendations

Parking - General

- Parking provision associated with new development within the masterplan area should be reflective of emerging policy to significantly limit car trips to and from the masterplan area and city centre generated by its redevelopment.
- The SUMP should look to develop maximum car parking rates appropriate for Kilkenny City. These rates should then be adopted for development across the masterplan lands and City generally.
- The SUMP should develop a public car parking management strategy that addresses the quantum and location of parking and pricing structure for city parking.
- Where new car parking is proposed for the Masterplan lands appropriate level of EV charging spaces should be provided based on the appropriate policy standard
- The masterplan development should provide appropriate levels of cycle parking for those uses in accordance with the appropriate policy standards.

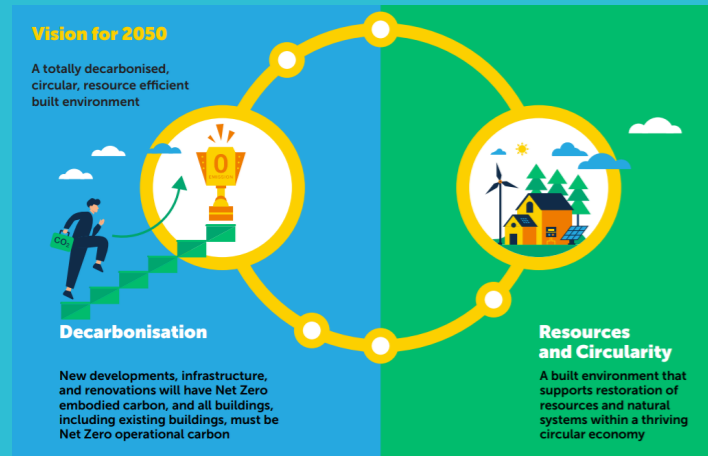
Car Parking for the Masterplan Lands

- The range of land uses within the masterplan lands will require an appropriate level of parking to serve these uses. Car parking ratios should be minimised to support the emerging policy to significantly reduce car trips to and from the masterplan area and city centre.
- Car parking should be consolidated within a number of discrete car parking blocks in order to limit the land take requirements for parking provision.
- The design and location of consolidated car parking should be designed to capture car movements at the periphery of the masterplan lands to limit through car movements and reduce impacts on the street network.
- Some limited incidental on-street car parking can be provided on masterplan lands where appropriate to ensure access for all is achieved.
- No residential visitor car parking should be separately facilitated as this can be accommodated in the public parking provision in the masterplan and wider city centre area. This same principle would apply to visitor parking for employment land uses.
- Non-residential Masterplan car parking should be dual purpose available for other users. For example, office car parking typically used Monday to Friday 08:00 -18:00 would be available in evening time, weekends and public holidays for other public users.

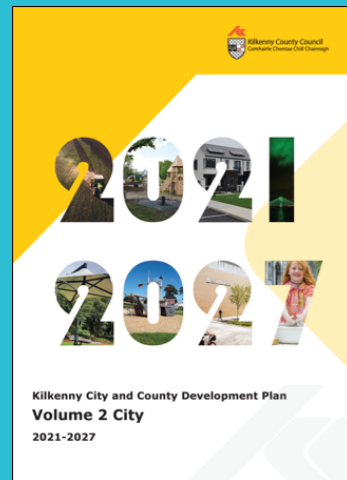
Public Parking within the Masterplan Lands

- The level of car parking within the masterplan area should be decided by the overall parking strategy that will emerge from the SUMP process and in line with the associated car parking management strategy. Public parking tariffs should be reflective of any emerging parking strategy as outlined above and developed by the SUMP.
- No dedicated coach parking facility to be accommodated on masterplan lands. If required a coach set down facility could be provided.
- Any car parking proposal should remain under the control of the Local Authority.

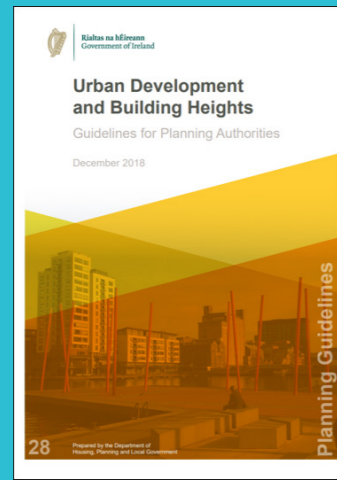
2.7 BUILT FORM: OVERVIEW



Vision 2050 from Climate Action Plan and IGBC



Key relevant Policy Documents; Kilkeny Development Plan, Urban Development and Building Heights



Kilkeny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Kilkeny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027 establishes a detailed direction for the spatial and economic development of Kilkeny City and County and identifies key strategic priorities for the city's development, including:

"To consolidate and strengthen the role of Kilkeny City as a self-sustaining Key Town and regional economic driver

To deliver compact growth in the expansion of the City with a minimum of 30% of the growth within the existing built up footprint of the City

To support urban regeneration through investment in the Abbey Quarter & other initiatives to improve the public realm and regenerate underused land and buildings in the City.

To deliver investment in sustainable transport measures through a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan including continued development of the city bus services with walking and cycling infrastructure in support of the compact '10-minute city' concept."

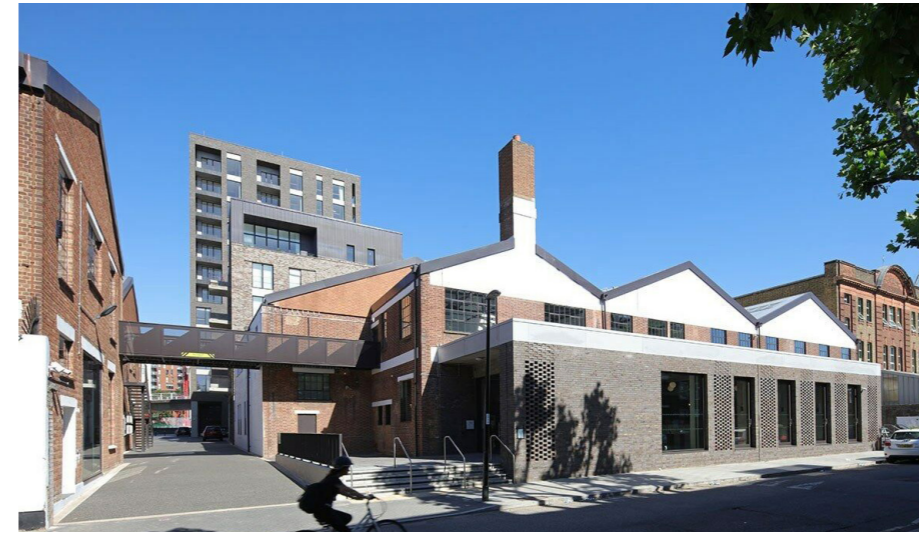
The objectives and provisions of the Kilkeny CCDP have informed the masterplan review, and will directly inform the evaluation of future development proposals for the Abbey Quarter.

Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines (2018)

The Urban Development and Buildings Heights Guidelines were published by DHLGH in 2018 to support the delivery of objectives under the NPF for the compact and sustainable growth of our towns and cities. The Guidelines encourage the provision of increased building heights in appropriate urban locations to help accommodate the needs of Ireland's growing population.

The Guidelines promote a criteria-based approach to evaluate building heights relative to their urban context. It is recommended that proposed developments with greater building heights must enhance the character of the existing public realm, in a manner that respects local culture and built heritage.

This review of the Abbey Quarter Masterplan has accounted for and incorporated these criteria for greater building heights into recommended objectives and design proposals (see overleaf).



Faircharm Creative Quarter, Lewisham; includes adaptive re-use of historic warehouses alongside appropriately scaled and finished modern buildings.

Urban Design Code (2018): Building Form Key Principles

The Urban Design Code promoted a vibrant and mixed-use Quarter through the following mechanisms;

- Make use of backlands to support legibility and efficiency of blocks.
- New developments to be in perimeter blocks with active ground floor uses, concealed services within podiums and moderate scale development above.
- Support active streets through a continuous built edge.
- Develop streets with appropriate enclosure for the context.
- To provide for a mix of uses, with active ground floors.
- Support rich and vibrant streets.
- To provide an element of passive supervision to the street.
- To provide for flexibility in the use of the block.
- Deliver pedestrian lanes and slips of the style familiar to the city.
- To protect and enhance the character and integrity of the built heritage and archaeology, in particular the Abbey.
- To support theatre, the arts and cultural uses within the Quarter.
- Building heights of 3-4 storeys as a baseline for the quarter.
- Building heights of 5-6 storeys at prominent frontages to expansive urban spaces or at important corner locations.
- Both vertical (over different floors) and horizontal (adjacent at street level) mix of uses is endorsed.

2.7 BUILT FORM: RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Principles

The review has found that the aspirations of the 2018 Urban Design Code are robust (summarised on previous page), whilst the prescription in the application has reduced flexibility and has generated some impediments to development. The Urban Design Code applies to the entire Masterplan area and the following updates are recommended, along with a general loosening of prescriptive guidance in favour of best practice.

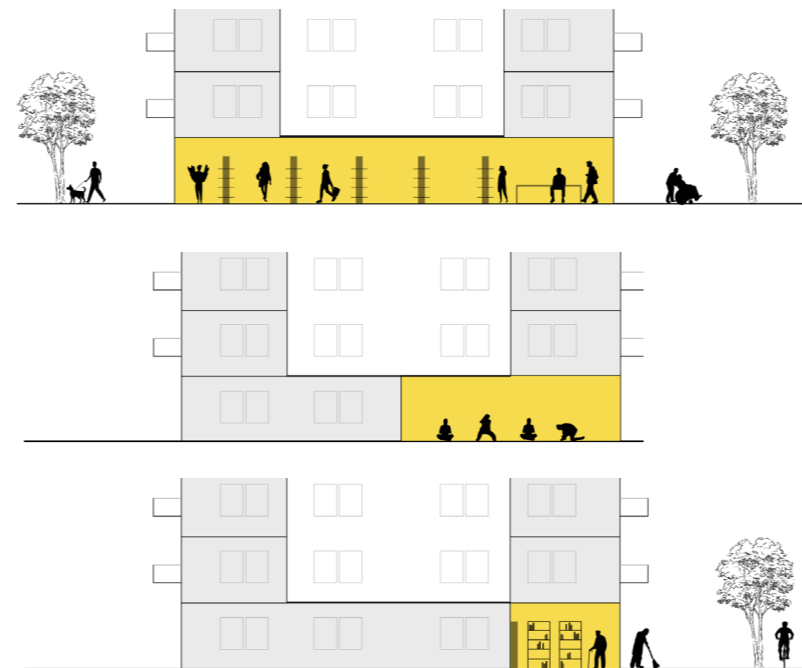
Building Height

Rules regarding building heights have been relaxed throughout the country since the Masterplan was developed. Nonetheless, the sensitive context, combined with physical constraints from the river and archaeology, limit the relevance of this relaxation. In practice 4 storeys tends to be a lower threshold for economically viable modern buildings, to obtain an efficient level of usable floor area alongside the required lifts, structure, plant etc.

Where street widths allow, and subject to appropriate roof pitch/ set-back upper floors/ local context, a baseline of 4-5 storeys are appropriate across most of the Quarter. Equally, height uplift of 6-7 storeys may be achievable without undue negative impact to the public realm, in locations of larger open space (Abbey Park, Market Yard, River Nore etc), wider roads (Saint Francis Bridge) or local context (level difference, taller adjacent buildings, ground conditions).

Mixed Section

The benefits of a mixed-use section are mostly focussed on the activity of ground floors and the subsequent pedestrian experience, safety and perception. This positive effect can be achieved with a relaxation of strict controls over prescriptive sections. In this historic context, with high potential for archaeology below ground, piles will be the preferred choice for foundations. This could cause structural limitations that may limit the potential for a mixed-section. Equally, different uses at upper floors will require separate access and circulation cores and servicing at ground floor, including post boxes, bin stores, plant rooms etc. Each core and service area will further reduce the available ground floor area for active uses. In the case of smaller plots in particular the activation of the public realm, with passive supervision from upper floor windows should be prioritised.



Illustrative examples of full podium, partial podium and shallow active uses at ground floor level. The pedestrian experience is equivalent in all case whilst internal layouts can support a diversity of end users.

Perimeter Blocks

Building plots within the quarter are already defined, as the public realm has been delivered in the earliest phases, reducing potential for flexibility. The benefit of prescribing perimeter blocks is not clearly evident. Best practice developments will optimise daylighting, activity on key frontages and the pedestrian realm. Ground floors must accommodate plant, access cores, fire escapes, refuse storage, lobbies etc. Upper floors of any format - perimeter or otherwise - will impact daylighting at street level to the same extent.

The Abbey Quarter is an opportunity to deliver best-in-class development that exceeds minimum standards of climate targets, livability and usability. The safeguarded east-west slips enshrine an appropriate urban grain. Flexibility within development plots above ground level may support attractiveness to new employers, hoping to move to the location, and bound to ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) standards.

Built Form Recommendations:

- Building heights of 4-5 storeys as a baseline, whilst maintaining a non-linear roof profile over long blocks.
- Building heights of 6-7 storeys at prominent frontages to expansive urban spaces or at important corner locations.
- New block typologies, including larger floorplate retail or commercial uses, should not be seen as contrary to the appropriate development of the Quarter, subject to overall best practice design and placemaking.
- Materiality and appropriateness should be considered above prescriptive height or form - eg. careful use of selected brick to match the context, verticality in the detailing of a facade to break up the articulation of large internal floorplates.
- Prescriptive mixed sections, recommended for all blocks in the Urban Design Code, should be removed in favour of identified important active frontages.
- Lengths of blocks and key active frontages can be prioritised, whilst allowing flexibility internally, supporting more potential occupiers and internal layouts.

Key active frontages diagram (see section 3.0 for more detail):



2.8 BUILT FORM: HOUSING TYPOLOGIES

Housing Ambition

The ambition for 30-35% of all development to be residential from the 2018 Urban Design Code remains. This applies to the entire masterplan area. This proportion is considered an appropriate and achievable target, strongly supported by both National Policy and public engagement.

The described development format - perimeter blocks, 4-5 storeys in heights, with potential podiums and localised height at corners - can be expected to generate in the region of 50,000 - 75,000 sqm of development, resulting in a potential for 150 - 250 new homes. This is a benchmark figure, applying average unit sizes and mix. As development continues key items to monitor will include;

- Aggregate development of all types; to date 30% of the total land has been developed as public open space (including approvals due for construction in 2023) and 12,000sqm of mixed-use has been built or approved (Plots 7, 8 and 10 - Brewhouse, Brewhouse extension and Mayfair Library). No housing has been delivered or approved. An audit of the roll out of development across the Quarter will be undertaken on a yearly basis or as development proposals emerge.
- Removing barriers to delivery; a flexible and project-based approach to applying the urban design code should be taken, applying the principles of a mixed-use quarter, without undue burden or barrier to delivery (eg prescriptive requirements for activity or uses within blocks). Where the principles and vision of the quarter can be safeguarded, innovation can be encouraged.
- Housing typologies; housing delivery can be measured in different ways - no. of homes, no. of population or floor area. Where innovative typologies are developed to support reduced cost - walk-up style units, townhouses, deck-access or other non-traditional approaches - these should be considered in light of the pedestrian and resident experience, the overall mix of homes being developed and the target market for the development. The provision of appropriate housing units for all levels of ability, including older people, would be examined in the design and layout of housing proposals



Aerial view of the former brewery before redevelopment began

Sample Housing Typologies to Consider



Denser apartments adjacent to public open space, amenity and views



Age-friendly accessible homes



Student friendly housing



Infill townhouses suitable for families



Live-work units with frontage



Adaptive re-use of historic structures

2.9 BUILT FORM: EXTENDED MASTERPLAN AREA

Extended Masterplan Area - Sweeney's Orchard

The plan area now encompasses Green Street, Vicar Street and St Francis Bridge. The area includes a significant level difference. This provides an opportunity to include some parking at the lower level without incurring significant excavation costs. However, this level will overlook the new public realm to the river, so consideration should be given to the activity and attractiveness of this frontage.



Potential for limited additional height on the riverfront as a result of level differences within the site

St Francis Bridge has been developed with a wide carriageway and footpaths. Any design proposals should be careful to include appropriate frontage, crossing and materials to link this site back into the overall Quarter, thereby developing an appropriate street frontage of human scale.

There is potential for a high quality pedestrian and cycle link through this site at the level of St Francis Bridge (in addition to existing links at the lower level alongside the river). With appropriate street crossing this is an important access point into the city and Abbey Quarter for commuters and leisure cyclists.

Previous Design Study: 2016 (top right)

- 74 Units; 57 apartments and 17 townhouses
- 0.9Ha site
- 82uph
- 45 parking spaces
- approx 5m wide pedestrian street

Proposed Urban Framework

(see diagram, right)

Frontages

1. **The River Nore Linear Park;** to the east has already delivered high quality public space, linking to the Diageo lands under St. Francis Bridge. This frontage would benefit from formal or informal, leisure focused, active frontage, overlooking and passive surveillance, subject to detailed design and with consideration to the flood wall.
2. **St. Francis Bridge;** this new road includes wide footpaths and would benefit from some enclosure and activity. The width of the road should not feel like a barrier to pedestrians. This could be mitigated through level crossing, materials and appropriate lines of sight.

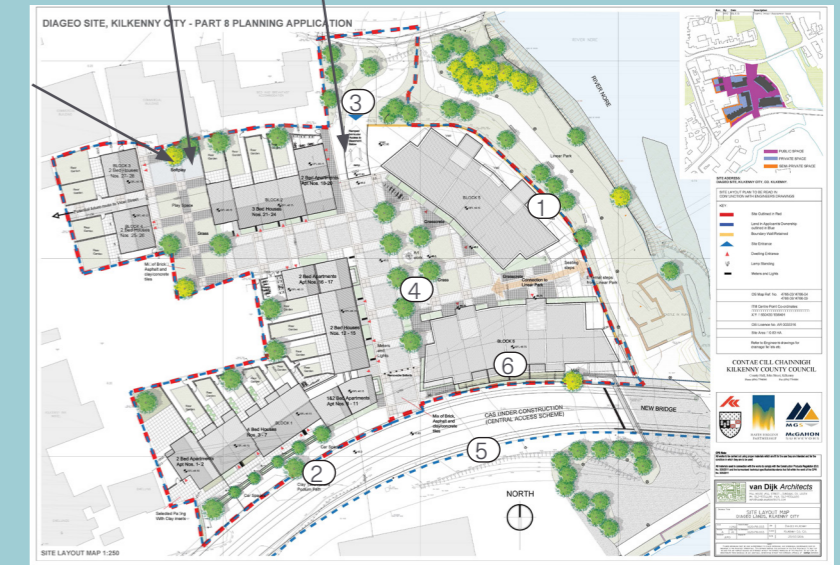
Vehicle and Pedestrian Access

3. Residential vehicle access, to accommodate deliveries, short stay visitors, servicing and parking, is possible from both the north and south. Detailed designs should carefully consider the balance between accessibility and creating an appropriate, safe and accessible residential environment.
4. A level difference within the site may support undercroft parking. Parking provision in this location would ideally provide limited car parking for the new uses within the masterplan area.
5. The delivery of a new street linking St Francis Bridge and New Street is an objective of this plan.

Accessibility

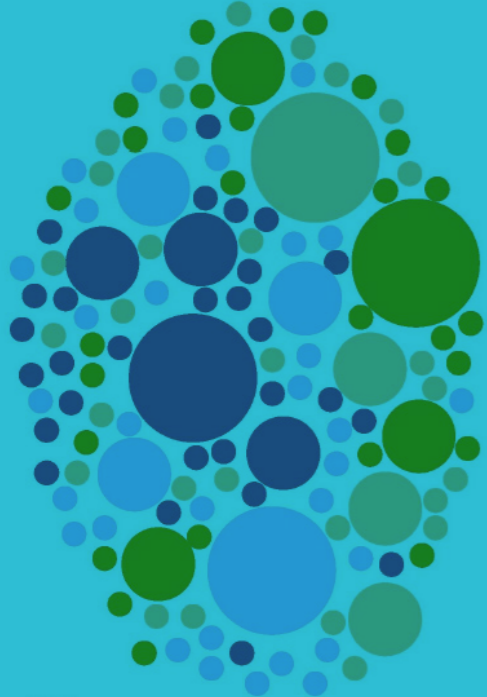
6. New homes should respond to this central location - with a preference for denser development. All homes should be designed with maximum accessibility in mind. The local authority may be able to adopt incentives to support downsizers, releasing larger housing stock and offering lifestyle improvements. There is limited potential for increased height to the eastern edge, away from sensitive views of the City's heritage assets.

Extended Masterplan Area - Built Form Recommendations:



- Delivery of housing is a priority on the eastern side of the block.
- Delivery of a street connecting Green Street and St Francis Bridge.
- Potential access points shown from Green Street.
- Access to St Francis Bridge to maximise to potential of housing and allow for continuity in building form along the street, taking account of already permitted development.
- It is an objective of the Local Authority to resolve the poor urban design of Vicar Street and Green Street.
- It is an objective of the Local Authority to resolve the vacant property at the corner of Vicar Street and St Francis Bridge with an appropriate urban design solution.
- It is an objective of the Local Authority under this masterplan to encourage and promote the redevelopment of the existing industrial style buildings and surface car parking along Green Street.
- It is an objective of the Local Authority to seek regeneration and/or redevelopment of vacant properties.
- Investigate the potential for pedestrian and/ or cycle connections directly through to the new street within the block from Vicar St.
- Ensure connectivity to the River Nore Linear Park at the street access to green Street.
- It is an objective to incorporate a "changing places" facility into the design proposal for the development within Sweeney's Orchard.

2.10 MIX OF USES: OVERVIEW



2018 Urban Design Code mixed-use conceptual diagram and target mix of uses.

Broad land use category	Target
Creative and KIBS	At least 10%
Retail and services	Between 15% and 20%
Residential	Between 30% and 35%
Other uses including commercial, education, boutique hotel, social and civic uses, or, additional creative and KIBS and/or residential use.	The remainder

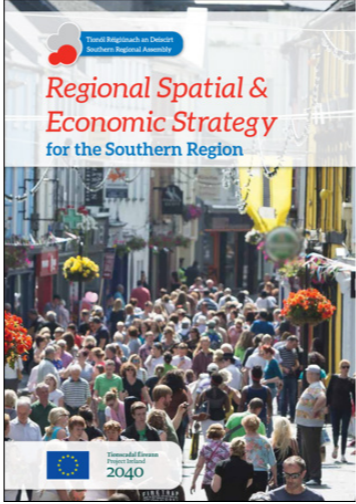
Table 2.1: Target land use mix

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (2020)

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region is a 12-year high-level plan that supports the implementation of the NPF by providing a strategic planning and economic framework for sustainable growth and development at the regional level.

The Vision for the RSES is to:

- “Nurture all our places to realise their full potential;
- Protect and enhance our environment;
- Successfully combat climate change;
- Achieve economic prosperity and improved quality of life for all our citizens;
- Accommodate expanded growth and development in suitable locations; and
- Make the Southern Region one of Europe’s most creative, innovative, greenest and liveable regions.”



The RSES recognises Kilkenny as the fourth largest settlement in the southern region and a Key Town in the regions settlement hierarchy, i.e. a “Large population scale urban centre functioning as self-sustaining regional drivers.”

Under Regional Policy Objective 12 it seeks “To strengthen the role of Kilkenny City as a self-sustaining regional economic driver...” and to “To support urban generation through investment in the Abbey Quarter & other initiatives to improve the Public Realm and regenerate underused land in the City”.

Abbey Quarter Masterplan - Commercial Review

A Commercial input was incorporated as part of the review of the Masterplan for the Abbey Quarter site in Kilkenny City Centre. The optimum approach for a commercial point of view is to have single-use urban blocks. These would allow for most efficient and flexible use of floorplates and support easy sale/ lease to occupiers. The Urban Design Code, on the other hand, promotes many mixes of uses throughout the floors of the building. This is to enshrine mixed-use in the Quarter.

The resolution recommended is to support both placemaking and viability, by facilitating character areas, with predominant uses in upper floors and a diversity of uses at active ground floor, key corners and overlooking public realm. This will support a diverse public environment whilst allowing large and efficient use of spaces above.

Urban Design Code (2018): Mix of Uses

The Urban Design Code, which applied to Character Areas 2, 3, 4 (see below), set out a target mix of uses. This mix is based on floor area. No baseline levels of development were specifically identified. As such, no target housing provision was established. More importantly, no mechanisms were identified to ensure the delivery of housing within the Quarter. It will be important to ensure the housing is delivered on an appropriate phased basis, through all phases of development and all areas of the Quarter. When the form of development described in the Urban Design Code is applied to the Plots defined in the 2015 Masterplan they generate 50-75,000sqm of development. With the use-mix applied the below table is an approximation of the level of development anticipated.

Anticipated Development Quantum + Mix of Uses (2015 Masterplan + 2018 Urban Design Code)					
	Creative + KIBS	Retail + Services	Residential	Other: Commercial, Education, Hotel, Civic etc	Total GFA
AREA	11,250	15,000	24,000	24,750	75,000
	15%	20%	32%	32%	100%
			approx 240 homes		

Character Areas

1. Sweeney’s Orchard (The Gardens)
2. Breagadh North (Mills & Industry)
3. The Brewery
4. The Market Yard



2.10 MIX OF USES: RECOMMENDATIONS

Mix of Uses: Recommendations

The proposed mix of uses is considered appropriate by all stakeholders. This review would primarily suggest amending the language to terms more readily understood (see Recommendation box).

Quantum of Development: Recommendations

Given the recommendations set out on previous pages around efficient use of land, climate focussed design and the form of development appropriate for this location, an uplift of total built area in the Quarter can be anticipated. This uplift may be in the range of 10-15%. This would result in a consequent uplift in housing and residential uses.

Character Areas

Character Areas from the 2015 Masterplan still apply. A clustering of uses can be associated with each area, to support cross-pollination, whilst maintaining mixed active uses at street level.

Abbey Quarter Masterplan Character Areas and their predominant uses;

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 1. Sweeney's Orchard (The Gardens) | - Residential with Leisure/ Amenity/ Other |
| 2. Breagadh North (Mills & Industry) | - Education/ Cultural/ Mixed Uses |
| 3. The Brewery | - Commercial and Civic/ Cultural/ Residential |
| 4. The Market Yard | - Retail with Residential/ Other Commercial |



The overall recommendation is to utilise the Abbey Quarter to deliver a mix of uses adjacent to the City Centre. The recommendation considers the uses in the context of not only the Abbey Quarter site but of the Kilkenny City Centre and Environs. The recommendation aims to group uses for the purpose of establishing hubs within the Abbey Quarter with the overall goal of creating an ecosystem that enjoys a mutually beneficial relationship with the City Centre.

- Abbey Quarter Review 2023

Mixed-Use Recommendations:

Mix of Uses

- The Abbey Quarter Review continues to recommend 30-35% of built floor area as Housing, across the entire area.
- Housing within the extended masterplan area (Sweeney's Orchard) should be considered uplift.
- Develop mechanisms to safeguard the delivery of housing in all phases and areas of the Quarter - including annual review of development progress.

- The names of uses should be updated to standard language;

KIBS*	=	Commercial
Retail and Services	=	Retail, Food and Beverage
Residential	=	Residential
Other Uses**	=	Other Uses (Hotel, Civic, Social, Education)

*Knowledge Intensive Business Services

**including commercial, office, education, boutique hotel, social and civic uses, or, additional creative and KIBS and/or residential use

Economic Recommendations:

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

- Support new job growth in this central location.
- Help support the Southern Region's ambition to lead as a creative, innovative and liveable region.
- Continue to leverage the investment in public realm upgrades.

Abbey Quarter Masterplan Review

- Relax prescriptive design restrictions (building form, parking etc) to support the broadest range of potential occupiers - .
- Allow for localised clustering of uses as the major occupier of buildings, whilst maintaining a mixed-use and active public realm.

Projected Development Quantum + Mix of Uses					
	Commercial	Retail, Food & Beverage	Residential (approx 385 homes)	Other: Hotel, Civic, Social, Education	Total GFA
AREA	16,500	22,000	38,500	33,000	110,000
	15%	20%	35%	30%	100%

2.11 AMENITY + PUBLIC REALM: OVERVIEW

Public Realm

Public Open Space makes up nearly 30% of the Masterplan area, with major new open spaces at St. Francis's Abbey, the River Nore Linear Park and the skatepark by St. Francis Bridge. These spaces have been readily adopted by the city population and begin to link external amenity spaces through the city core.

The Public Realm becomes a sequence of outdoor rooms, linked through engaging and interactive, high quality active travel routes (see concept diagram, below). Each space can take on a different and complimentary character; leisure uses connect northwards through Sweeney's Orchard and the skate park, cultural and events can make use of the hard landscaped urban park at St Francis Abbey, weekly or markets can begin to cluster in a new Market Yard (between the pumphouse and the River Nore).

Public Realm Delivery

The public realm works have been developed by the Local Authority in several packages;

1. Horse Barrack Lane: Delivered
2. Riverside Garden Park: Delivered
3. Urban Park + Mixed-Use Street: Approved, funded and delivery in 2024.
4. The Kilkenny Central Access Scheme (St. Francis Bridge): Delivered

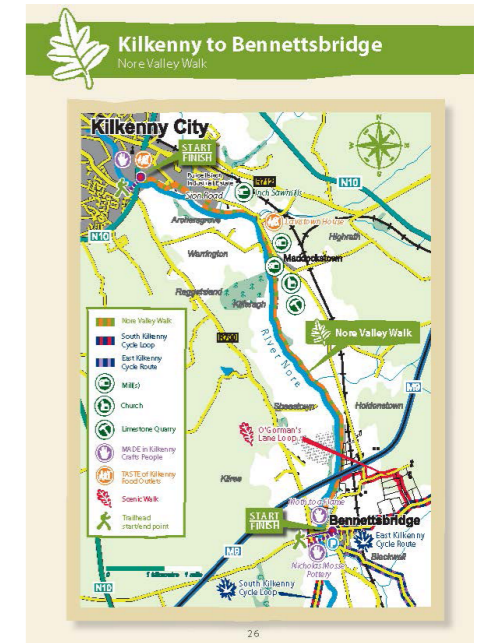
Circulation and Access

There are a number of new traffic management measures being considered as part of the SUMP process to improve circulation and access for the city centre. During the SUMP process these traffic management measures will be developed and an agreed strategy to improve access for the Kilkenny City will be adopted that may or may not involve or require changes or access to the masterplan lands.

River Nore: Greenway

This greenway is a central tenet of active travel provision within the city and will also form a link in a wider regional greenway network. It is therefore critical that the current provision of the greenway within the developed linear park along the river edge is extended southwards along Bateman Quay to link to the active travel route along the river and canal commencing at Canal Square. In order to facilitate this continuous provision, it is envisaged that the southern end of Bateman Quay adjacent to the Rose Inn Street junction will need to be reconfigured to allocate additional space/priority to the greenway

The 2015 Masterplan also highlighted this aspiration to complete the Noreside Green Route through the City. (diagram from 2015 Abbey Quarter Masterplan, right).



The Noreside Linear Park has been very positively received by the public. (images by Mitchell + Assoc)

2.11 AMENITY + PUBLIC REALM: RECOMMENDATIONS

Amenity + Public Realm: Recommendations

Early investment in public realm has been very positively received and successful at setting the tone of a high quality new urban quarter. With approximately one quarter of the area already in use as public realm, parks and spaces, the focus should shift to programming and overlooking. Development should cluster around open spaces, with active frontages and passive supervision prioritised around those larger spaces.

Nodal buildings/ views can be used to structure and inform the pedestrian experience; a short walk with a clear landmark in mind does not necessarily require active frontage along its entire length. Informal seating areas, play for all age groups - including teenagers and older people - can be incorporated.

Where residential developments are planned community gardens or fruiting trees can add diversity and joy (management of fruiting trees should be identified in advance to avoid drop and/or rotting). Active management, including events programming, of reserve sites and/or open spaces can draw footfall into the quarter in all seasons.

River Nore: River Access

Access to the river for swimming, boating and fishing has been identified by the public as an aspiration. However, due to the environmental protection afforded to the river in this location, in combination with the shallow depth adjacent to the Quarter, this may not be possible.

Kilkenny County Council has secured funding from Failte Ireland to build a Water Based Activity Hub to access the River Nore from the grounds of County Hall.



Maximise active use of public realm already in place
Above; Kings Cross
Below; Wild Mile, Chicago



Amenity Recommendations:

River Nore Greenway

- Masterplan lands must ensure the provision of a high quality continuous river greenway is provided from Greens Bridge to Canal Square as this is part of a larger regional greenway strategy and will provide for a river access amenity for all users. This greenway should provide both cycling and pedestrian connections via a linear park through the masterplan lands.
- To facilitate the continuous greenway it is envisaged that the southern end of Bateman Quay adjacent to the Rose Inn Street junction will need to be reconfigured to allocate additional space/priority to the greenway, subject to detailed design and planning consent.

Circulation and Access

- Based on current Kilkenny transport movement patterns the Abbey Quarter Street should operate as shared urban street with limited local access only.

3.0 BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

3.1 MIXED-USE URBAN DESIGN VISION

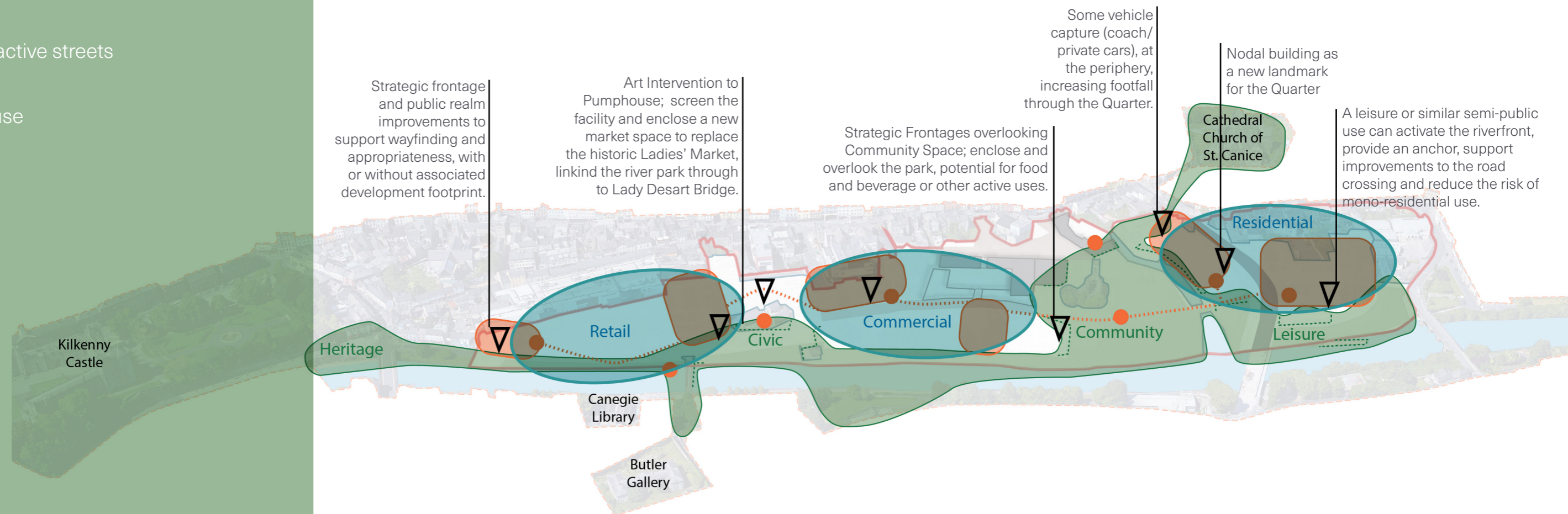


Coordinated Recommendations + Vision

- Day to night active streets
- Mixed-use
- Adaptive re-use

Overview of the key ideas and recommendations emerging from the comprehensive review:

- Leverage the good work already achieved; high quality public realm, successful office cluster, sustainability-led, adaptive re-use and new build.
- Prioritise Housing delivery throughout the Quarter and find mechanisms to support a diversity of new homes.
- Embrace this opportunity to move the City towards a sustainable and green future through world class sustainability credentials.
- Support flexible application of the UD Code design guidance, to allow best practice placemaking in line with the overall vision.
- Identify key frontages, nodes and gathering spaces for targeted active frontages, allowing secondary spaces support access and servicing.
- Focused 'nodal points' to help people navigate; not every building needs to be special, the key is legibility and functionality.
- High quality, permeable and enjoyable active travel links as the easiest way to navigate through the quarter, vehicles to the periphery.
- Support the Medieval City with a different, complimentary, form of development; larger floorplates, flexible internal layouts, controlled environments.
- Set the stage for Kilkenny City to become a National leader in decarbonisation, low emissions, sustainable town-centre living and positive urban infill.



3.1 MIXED-USE URBAN DESIGN VISION

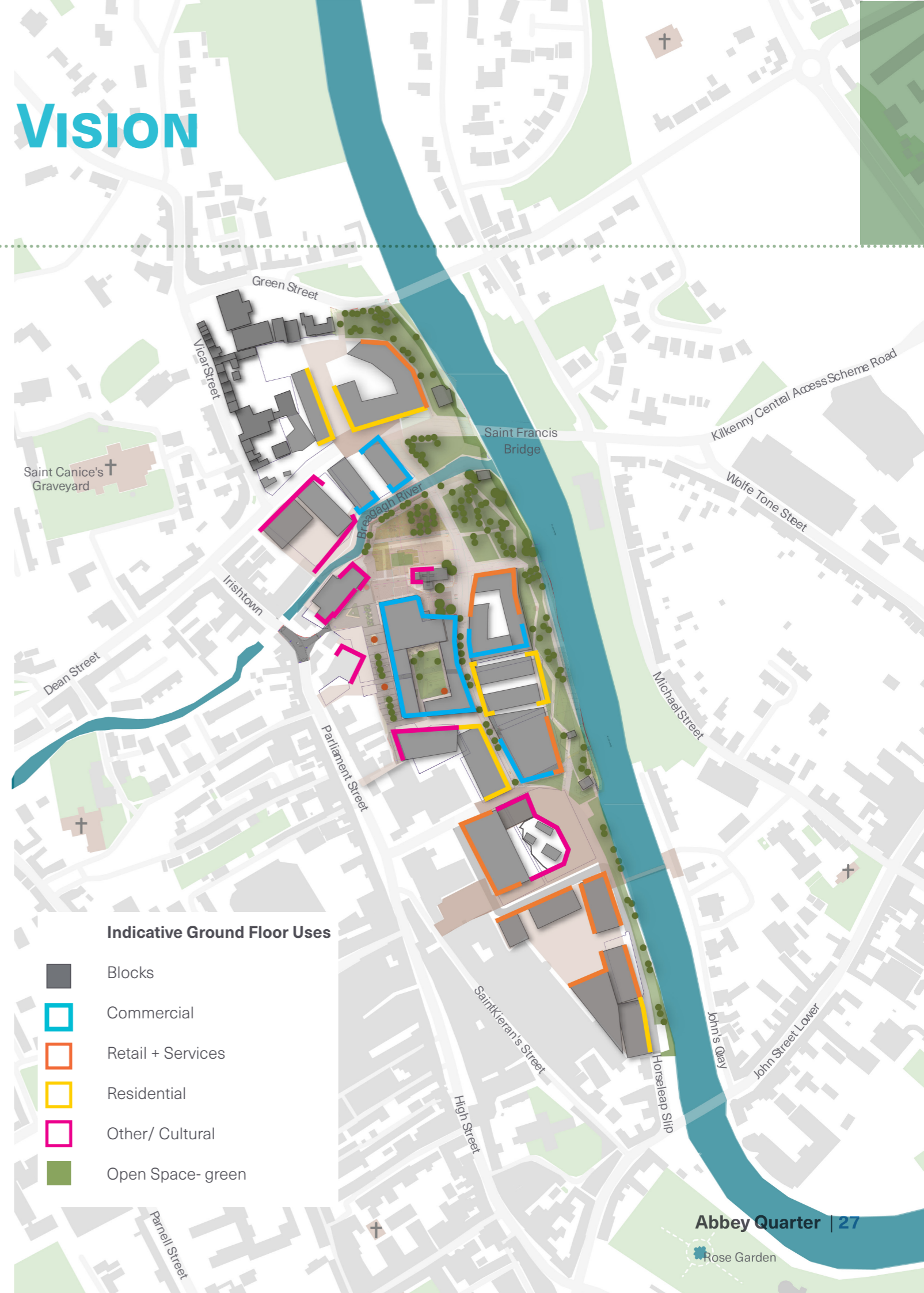
The Abbey Quarter can be a seamless extension to the medieval city core. New-build blocks allow for sustainability-led, modern spaces. These can support the City Centre by bringing diversity to the market. The mix of uses will support activity at all times of day and night. More than 30% public open space can support cultural programming in the heart of the city.

A sustainable mix of uses, allowing the market to mature. By focusing on placemaking, reserve development sites can be identified, and the risk of medium-term dereliction managed. These sites safeguard future opportunities (3rd level education, private housing) that are not market-ready in the early phases.



Above; concept precedent images; active streets, adaptive re-use of industrial heritage, appropriate and sympathetic new build.

Right; Illustrative diagram of the Abbey Quarter, showing potential ground floor active uses around key open space.



3.2 SEQUENCING

A Place-Led Sustainable Development



Outdoor Cultural Space:
An enclosed hard landscaped space ideal for events, including spillout from surrounding buildings.



Leisure Focused Riverfront:
Activated frontages, play for all ages, (potential) river access, a walking-trail with informational signage, urban nature walk.



New Market Yard:
A new City Square can replace the functionality of the Ladies' Market and include activation of the screened IW Pumphouse



Diagram shows indicative Active Frontages in key locations:

- Blocks
- Active Frontage

A Place-Led, Seamless Expansion to the Medieval City

The proposed sequencing is indicative and sets out the potential sequenced delivery of development around public open spaces. This allows development to make best use of investment to date.

The vision is flexible, allowing opportunities to come forward in earlier phases. By clarifying the nature and sequence of public spaces, the investment in public realm to date can be maximised and enhanced, with opportune developments incorporated seamlessly.

(numbers indicate suggested sequencing of spaces).

3.21 | Early Stage

A Seamless Expansion of the Mixed-use Urban Core

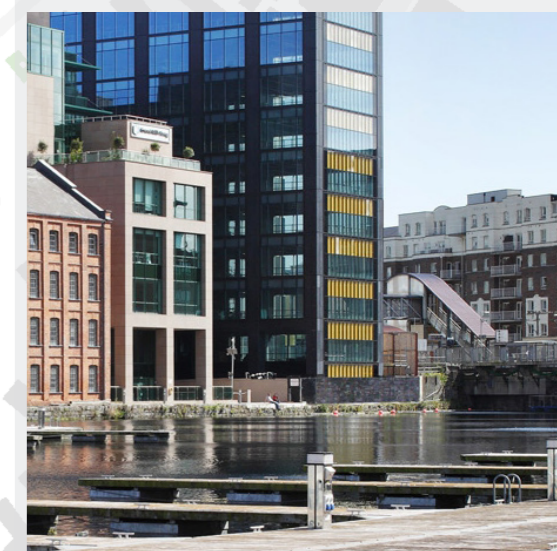
- Consolidate emerging commercial cluster.
- Enclose and overlook Abbey Park.
- Deliver a mix of housing, balancing development to date.
- Infill Sweeney's Orchard/ The Gardens.
- Complete link through Horse Barrack Lane.
- Development flows from Parliament Street towards the river, and from Sweeney's Orchard southwards.




Modern, ESG compliant, office space with appropriate aesthetic and urban context: the pedestrian experience flows seamlessly



River frontage with activity + high-value residential site above



A mid-range Hotel can offer a landmark for tourists arriving in the city. Potential locations identified with 

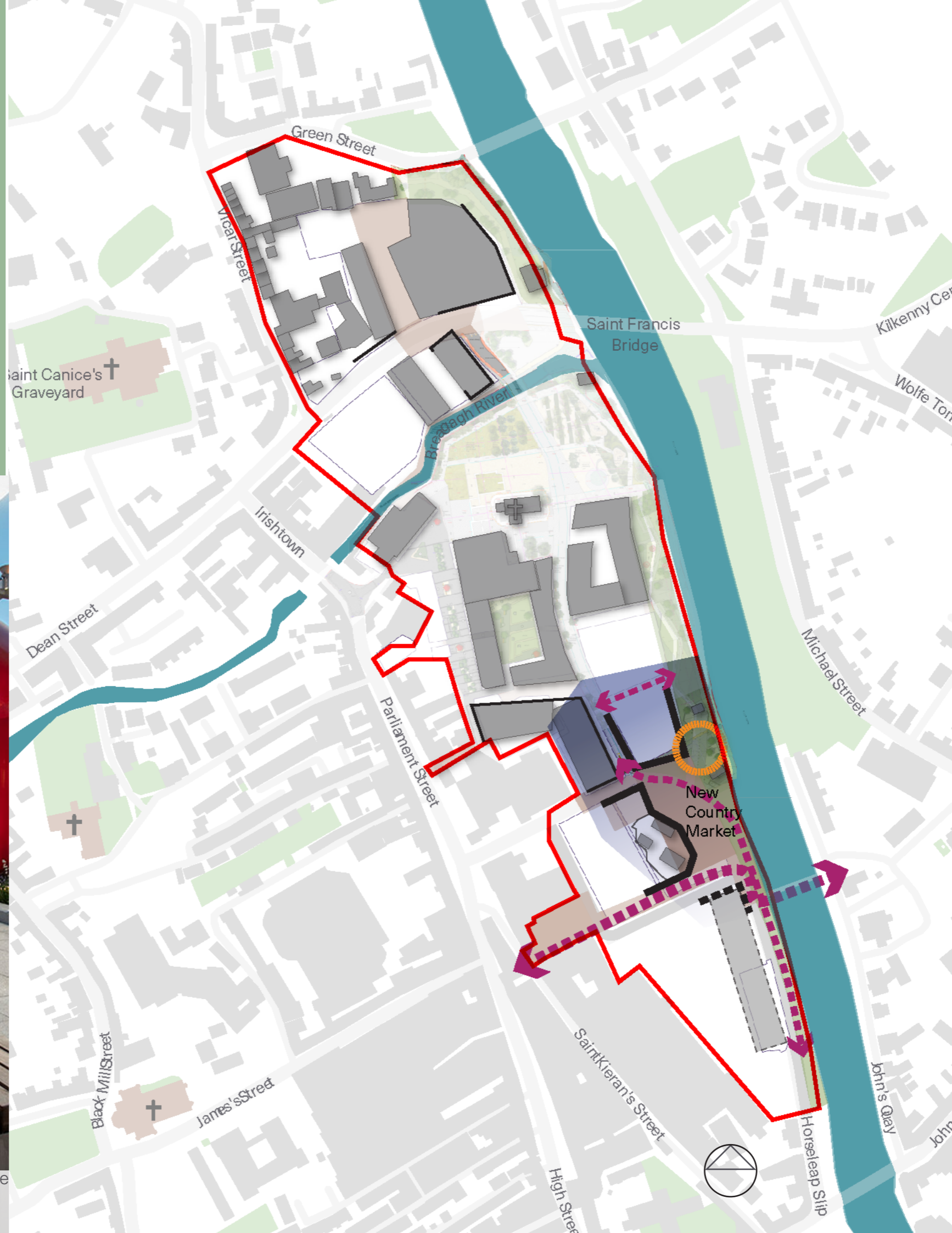
3.22 | Midterm Stage

Migrating south to Market Yard

- Wrap the pumphouse with new uses and art installation, enclosing a new Market Space, focusing on the river and completing the chain of spaces and cycleway through the city.
- infill development in the Market Yard will begin to feel inevitable, begin with public owned infill and public realm upgrades.



A new Ladies's Market/ Civic space on the river; the pumphouse will recede with appropriate screening, focusing on the pedestrian experience and journey.



Through focusing on the most easily accessed and well-served sites first, the external edges and public-front of the Quarter will begin to fill out. Sites awaiting later phases can be engaged in temporary uses and a programme of events, allowing market testing and establishing momentum.

- Important Frontage
- Nodal Point/ Height
- Key Link
- Flow of Development
- Complete Buildings

The mixed-use street and riverfront fill out with food and beverage opportunities



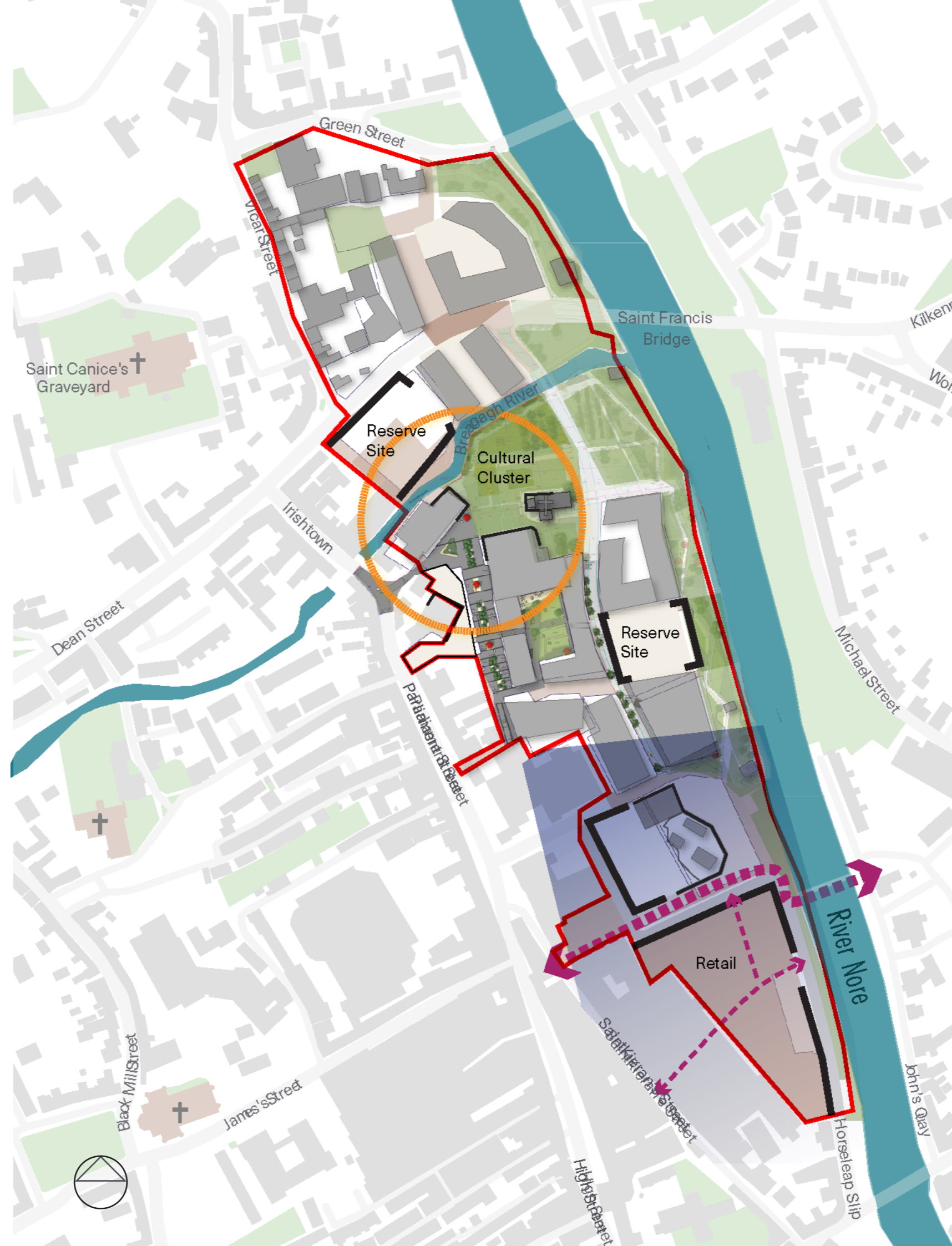
3.23 | Maturity

Expand South with Retail focussed Development

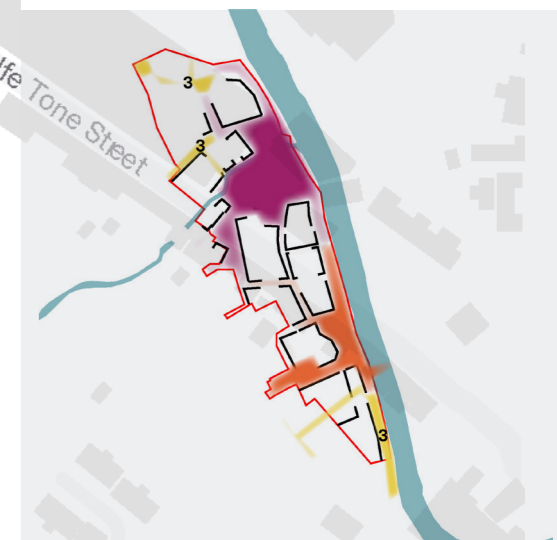
- Reserved sites can infill with Educational/Community uses.
- Infill housing completes the Urban Street.
- A retail hub in the Market Yard can provide a natural extension to shopping on St. Kieran Street and High Steet.
- A Cultural Hub can develop around the. Mayfair Library and Watergate Theatre,



A residential population helps activate the quarter in all seasons and all times of day. Quality of life and convenience.



Reserved site overlooking Cultural Space available for Educational User with important Park Frontage



- Important Frontage
- ☀ Nodal Point/ Height
- Key Link
- Flow of Development
- Complete Buildings



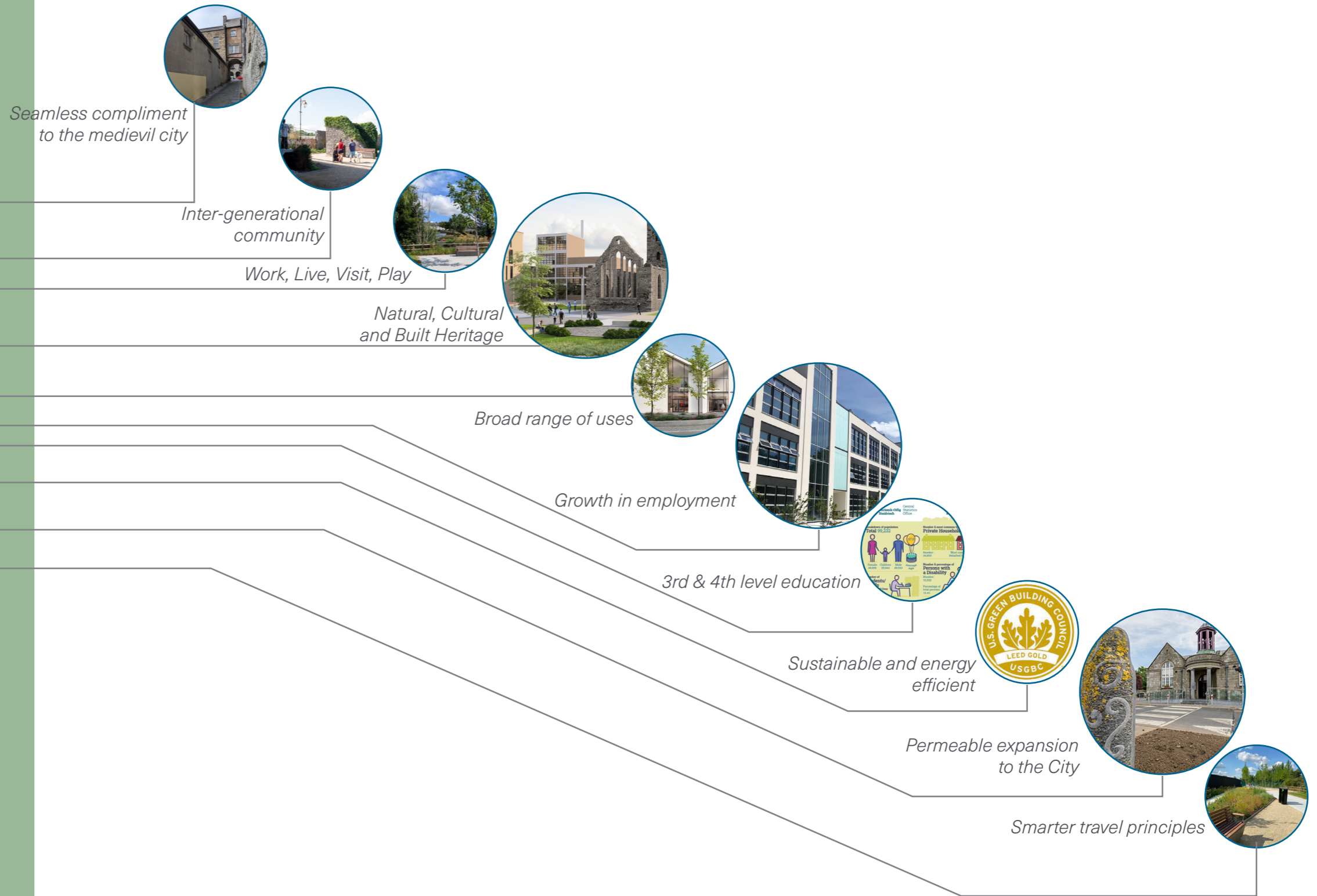
Retail focussed development will fill out the south of the quarter, reinforcing and supporting existing retail on High St and St Kieran St.

3.3 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT: TARGETS + MONITORING

Abbey Quarter Masterplan Vision

'To plan the area as a seamless complement to the medieval city as an inclusive place for an inter-generational community to work, live, visit and play with St. Francis Abbey at its core. The regeneration of the area will focus on embracing the sites' natural, cultural and built heritage, whilst maximising the benefits of the rivers Nore and Breagagh, providing for a broad range of uses, sustaining growth in employment, 3rd & 4th level education and advancing economic activity in a sustainable and energy efficient fashion where innovation can flourish. The area will be a permeable expansion of the city for pedestrians and cyclists where smarter travel principles will apply throughout.'

Approved by Kilkenny County Council on Friday 31st July 2015



3.3 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT: TARGETS + MONITORING

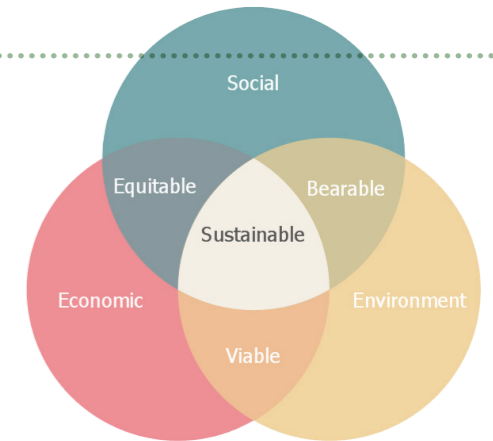
Social

The Abbey Quarter Vision can be organised through the Sustainability Venn diagram, breaking into 9 objectives under the the three themes. These objectives give a structure for measuring and monitoring progress. Whilst some objectives must take precedence, the integrated ambitions will support a sustainable new urban quarter, in line with international best practice.

Economic

Environment

Sustainability Venn Diagram: The achievement of sustainability requires a balance between economic, environmental and social concerns in equal harmony (from 2015 Abbey Quarter Masterplan).



	Theme	AQ Vision Objective	Target/ Monitoring
	Social	An inclusive place for an intergenerational community	30-35% of built floor area to be residential throughout the full masterplan area, incorporating a range of typologies, suited to the diversity of needs of the City population
		[A place to] work, live, visit and play with St. Francis Abbey at its core	Prioritise active frontages and activity around key public open spaces, alongside incidental play/ rest opportunities on connecting routes
		The area will be a permeable expansion of the city for pedestrians and cyclists	Prioritise active travel modes through the quarter, focussing on stitching together external links; Kilkenny Greenway, Lady Desart Bridge etc
	Economic	Plan the area as a seamless complement to the medieval city	Describe key paramaters for built form; height, activity, proportions, materials, as appropriate
		Sustaining growth in employment, 3rd & 4th level education	Support adequate flexibility to support and safeguard keystone uses, aligned with the wider ambitions of the City
		Providing for a broad range of uses	Establish minimum thresholds for identified use classes; Residential, Commercial, Retail, Cultural
	Environment	Focus on embracing the sites' natural, cultural and built heritage, whilst maximising the benefits of the rivers Nore and Breagagh	Identify opportunities to further leverage public realm enhancements to date, including access to the Nore river
		Advancing economic activity in a sustainable and energy efficient fashion where innovation can flourish.	Promote market leading sustainability credentials proportionate to the locations world class setting; aim for net zero/ energy positive buildings
		Smarter travel principles will apply throughout	Actively support active travel measures whilst applying an appropriate level of parking provision within the plan area in the context of the anticipated shift to sustainable transport modes and the outcomes of the SUMP.













3.4 CONSOLIDATED RECOMMENDATIONS

Theme	AQ Vision Objective	Target/ Monitoring	Relevant Review Recommendations
Social	An inclusive place for an intergenerational community	30-35% of built floor area to be residential, incorporating a range of typologies, suited to the diversity of needs of the City population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate opportunities to deliver Affordable Housing. The 'Sweeney's Orchard'/ The Gardens site should be developed for housing in the first phase of development. Homes should include a diversity of typologies and tenures, suited to the diversity of needs of the City population The original objective of 30-35% of all development to be housing within the plan, throughout the full masterplan area. Innovative approaches to housing delivery should be supported, subject to best practice design. Funding instruments should be explored to support housing delivery and viability in the Quarter. Some limited incidental on-street car parking can be provided on masterplan lands where appropriate to ensure access for all is achieved. It is an objective to incorporate a "changing places" facility into the design proposal for the development within Sweeney's Orchard.
	[A place to] work, live, visit and play with St. Francis Abbey at its core	Prioritise active frontages and activity around key public open spaces, alongside incidental play/ rest opportunities on connecting routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexibility should be encouraged to support housing development that aligns with the vision of the Abbey Quarter and meets best practice placemaking. Housing should be included in all phases of development and all character areas of the Abbey Quarter where possible/ viable. Non-residential Masterplan car parking should be dual purpose available for other users . For example, office car parking typically used Monday to Friday 08:00 -18:00 would be available in evening time, weekends and public holidays for other public users. Delivery of housing is a priority on the eastern side of Sweeney's Orchard. It is an objective of the Local Authority to resolve the poor urban design at the corner of Vicar Street and Green Street.
	The area will be a permeable expansion of the city for pedestrians and cyclists	Prioritise active travel modes through the quarter, focussing on stitching together external links; Kilkenny Greenway, Lady Desart Bridge etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate opportunities to access vacant/ derelict site aquisition by the Local Authority. The design and location of consolidated car parking should be designed to capture car movements at the periphery of the masterplan lands to limit through car movements and reduce impacts on the street network. No dedicated coach parking facility to be accommodated on masterplan lands. If required a coach set down facility could be provided. Delivery of a street connecting Green Street and St Francis Bridge. Access to St Francis Bridge to maximise the potential of housing and allow for continuity in building form along the street, taking account of already permitted development. Allow for localised clustering of uses as the major occupier of buildings, whilst maintaining a mixed-use and active public realm. Investigate the potential for pedestrian and/ or cycle connections directly through to the new street within Sweeney's Orchard. Ensure connectivity to the River Nore Linear Park at the street access to green Street. Based on current Kilkenny transport movement patterns the Abbey Quarter Street should operate as shared urban street with limited local access only.

Theme	AQ Vision Objective	Target/ Monitoring	Relevant Review Recommendations
Economic	Plan the area as a seamless complement to the medieval city	Describe key parameters for built form; height, activity, proportions, materials, as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Density and Mixed Uses; maximise efficiency of all development plots through flexibility in application of the Urban Design Code. Opportunities to bring surrounding buildings into residential use will support the Abbey Quarter - vacant, derelict or empty upper floors. Building heights of 4-5 storeys as a baseline, whilst maintaining a non-linear roof profile over long blocks. Building heights of 6-7 storeys at prominent frontages to expansive urban spaces or at important corner locations. New block typologies, including larger floorplate retail or commercial uses, should not be seen as contrary to the appropriate development of the Quarter, subject to overall best practice design and placemaking. Materiality and appropriateness should be considered above prescriptive height or form - eg. careful use of selected brick to match the context, verticality in the detailing of a facade to break up the articulation of large internal floorplates. Prescriptive mixed sections, recommended for all blocks in the Urban Design Code, should be removed in favour of identified important active frontages. Relax prescriptive design restrictions (building form, parking etc) to support the broadest range of potential occupiers.
	Sustaining growth in employment, 3rd & 4th level education	Support adequate flexibility to support and safeguard anchor uses, aligned with the wider ambitions of the City, including a reserve site for a Further Education facility and the provision of Student Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is an objective of the City and County Development Plan Vol 2 (objective C6K) "To secure the development of a third and/or fourth level campus(es) within Kilkenny city as part of the development of a Technological University for the South East". Support for Creative and Artistic uses is part of the Local Authority's function. The former squash court has been reserved for a supporting use for the Arts and Culture sector. In addition, the design of the public park around St Francis' Abbey has made provision for the use of the space for outdoor events. Help support the Southern Region's ambition to lead as a creative, innovative and liveable region.
	Providing for a broad range of uses	Establish minimum thresholds for identified use classes; Residential, Commercial, Retail, Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller infill sites within the Quarter should be considered for small scale residential opportunities. The successful delivery of housing should be reviewed alongside the Development Plan (2027). The range of land uses within the masterplan lands will require an appropriate level of parking to serve these uses. Car parking standards should be minimised to support the emerging policy to significantly reduce car trips to and from the masterplan area and city centre. The car parking provided on plots is temporary only and should be removed over time and consolidated as part of the overall car parking strategy. Car parking should be consolidated within a number of discrete car parking blocks in order to limit the land take requirements for parking provision. Lengths of blocks and key active frontages can be prioritised, whilst allowing flexibility internally, supporting more potential occupiers and internal layouts. No residential visitor car parking should be separately facilitated as this can be accommodated in the public parking provision in the masterplan and wider city centre area. This same principle would apply to visitor parking for employment land uses. Develop mechanisms to safeguard the delivery of housing in all phases and areas of the Quarter - including annual review of development progress - including annual reviews of development progress. Support new job growth in this central location. The names of uses should be updated to standard language; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIBS* = Commercial Retail and Services = Retail, Food and Beverage Residential = Residential Other Uses** = Other Uses (Hotel, Civic, Social, Education)

Theme	AQ Vision Objective	Target/ Monitoring	Relevant Review Recommendations
Environment	Focus on embracing the sites' natural, cultural and built heritage, whilst maximising the benefits of the rivers Nore and Breagagh	Identify opportunities to further leverage public realm enhancements to date, including access to the Nore river	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to maximise opportunities for grant funding through the URDF (Urban Regeneration Development Fund), Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund and Climate Action Fund. • The vision of the masterplan is for an area that is to be “a seamless complement to the medieval city” whilst maximising the benefits of the Rivers Nore and Breagadh. • It is an objective of the Local Authority to resolve the vacant property at the corner of Vicar Street and St Francis Bridge with an appropriate urban design solution. • It is an objective of the Local Authority under this masterplan to encourage and promote the redevelopment of the existing industrial style buildings and surface car parking along Green Street. • Continue to leverage the investment in public realm upgrades. • Masterplan lands must ensure the provision of a high quality continuous river greenway is provided from Greens Bridge to Canal Square as this is part of a larger regional greenway strategy and will provide for a river access amenity for all users. This greenway should provide both cycling and pedestrian connections via a linear park through the masterplan lands. • To facilitate the continuous greenway it is envisaged that the southern end of Bateman Quay adjacent to the Rose Inn Street junction will need to be reconfigured to allocate additional space/priority to the greenway, subject to detailed design and planning consent.
	Advancing economic activity in a sustainable and energy efficient fashion where innovation can flourish.	Promote market leading sustainability credentials proportionate to the locations world class setting; aim for net zero/ energy positive buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote market leading sustainability credentials proportionate to the locations world class setting. • All development should aim for net zero/ energy positive buildings. • Where feasible investigate district heating/ energy capture and sharing/ heat exchange or other innovative solutions. • Promote Whole Life Carbon (WLC*) studies as part of the Planning process. • Aim for a fully decarbonised district. • Any car parking proposal should remain under the control of the Local Authority. • Energy Strategy; support grouping of blocks to share energy peaks and troughs. Maximise solar gain within the Quarter.
	Smarter travel principles will apply throughout	Actively support active travel measures whilst applying an appropriate level of parking provision within the plan area in the context of the anticipated shift to sustainable transport modes and the outcomes of the SUMP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Quality; high quality public realm can entice people towards more sustainable behaviours including walking, cycling and shopping locally. • Promote reduced vehicle parking ratios alongside enhanced cycle paths, cycle parking and changing facilities within new developments. • Transport; set out a phased path towards a transport neutral quarter. • Parking provision associated with new development within the masterplan area should be reflective of emerging policy to significantly limit car trips to and from the masterplan area and city centre generated by its redevelopment. • The SUMP should look to develop maximum car parking rates appropriate for Kilkenny City. These rates should then be adopted for development across the masterplan lands and City generally. The SUMP should develop a public car parking management strategy that addresses the quantum and location of parking and pricing structure for city parking. • Where new car parking is proposed for the Masterplan lands appropriate level of EV charging spaces should be provided based on the appropriate policy standard • The level of car parking within the masterplan area should be decided by the overall parking strategy that will emerge from the SUMP process and in line with the associated car parking management strategy. Public parking tariffs should be reflective of any emerging parking strategy as outlined above and developed by the SUMP. • The masterplan development should provide appropriate levels of cycle parking for those uses in accordance with the appropriate policy standards.

3.5 APPROXIMATE TARGET DEVELOPMENT YIELD & TYPOLOGIES

	Commercial	Retail, Food and Beverage	Residential	Other	Total GFA
	Office and employment		Mix of tenures and typologies	Hotel, Civic, Social, Education etc	
Sample Typologies					
					
					
Delivered	10,000	400	0	1,500	11,900
New over multiple phases	10,000	14,600	35,000	28,500	88,100
Description	Employment hub generating new jobs	Retail hub around Market Yard, linked to St Kieran St & High St	300+ new homes, nursing home, student housing. Potential population of 700	SETU or similar Educational Occupier	Mixed-use, sustainable new City Quarter
Total	20,000	15,000	35,000	30,000	100,000
	20%	15%	35%	30%	100%

APPENDIX 1:

STATEMENT ON ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS

The Draft Abbey Quarter Masterplan Guidance Document makes a number of recommendations to the original 2015 Abbey Quarter Masterplan on foot of a review. The Draft User Guide has been prepared in a way that ensures that the protection and management of the environment afforded by the existing planning framework (including both the current City and County Development Plan and the current Masterplan), which has already been subject to detailed environmental assessment, is retained.

The Draft User Guide will be updated following public display to take account of the findings of the public consultation exercise. It will then be used to inform a review of the Council's policy with respect to the proper planning and sustainable development of the Abbey Quarter – this will include a Proposed Variation to the current City and County Development Plan. This review, including the preparation of the Proposed Variation, will be subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment¹ and Screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment². The Screenings will determine whether or not full assessments are required for this review and will be undertaken with in consultation with the prescribed environmental authorities³.

Signatory:

Date:

¹ The European Habitats Directive provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the “favourable conservation status” of habitats and species of European Community Interest. These habitats and species are listed in the European Habitats and Birds Directives with Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them. These two designations are collectively known as European sites (also known as Natura 2000 sites). The River Nore at the Abbey Quarter is designated an SPA and is also part of the River Barrow and Nore SAC.

Appropriate Assessment (AA) is a focused and detailed impact assessment of the implications of a plan (or variation/amendment to a plan), alone and in combination with other plans and projects, on the integrity of a European Site (in view of its conservation objectives).

The European Habitats Directive has been transposed into Irish legislation through the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011, as amended) and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (SI No. 30 of 2000, as amended).

² Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan (or variation/amendment to a plan) before a decision is made to adopt it. SEA aims to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute towards the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development. Environmental components covered comprise biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.

Requirements relating to SEA are provided by the European SEA Directive, transposed into Irish legislation through the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 435 of 2004, as amended) and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 436 of 2004, as amended).

³ These are currently the Environmental Protection Agency (in all cases), the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage (all cases), the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage (where there might be significant effects on architectural or archaeological heritage or nature conservation), the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine and Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications (where there might be significant effects on sea fisheries or the marine environment) and any adjoining planning authority whose area is contiguous to the area of the planning authority. The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's website (<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/3539d-strategic-environmental-assessment-sea/>) provides the most up-to-date contact details for the environmental authorities that must be consulted during various stages of the SEA (including scoping), taking into account transfers of functions between Ministers since the SEA Regulations first identified the environmental authorities.



APPENDIX 2:

SUMMARY OF POLICY UPDATES

National Planning Framework (2018)

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is a high-level document that establishes an overarching framework for Ireland’s growth and development up to 2040. The NPF reflects lessons learned from the implementation of the previous National Spatial Strategy 2002-2022. It represents a shift from an uncoordinated “business as usual” approach to development and prioritises the compact growth and development of existing settlements in a coordinated and sustainable manner.

As a national framework document the NPF establishes a coherent direction for planning and development across Ireland. The NPF sets out 10 National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) to guide development and investment across the next two decades. Subsequent regional and local planning documents and strategies must have regard to these NSO’s and related policy objectives under the NPF. The provisions of the Masterplan align with and address these strategic outcomes.



Of particular relevance are the principles of compact growth, sustainable mobility, enhanced amenity and heritage and economic growth and enterprise.

National Development Plan 2021-2030

The National Development Plan (NDP) sets out a national program of public investment to underpin the implementation of the NPF and support development in Ireland. The first NDP for 2018-2027 provided for an investment of €116 billion in capital spending to support development across different sectors. The NDP introduced four national funds to help support the delivery of objectives under the NPF:

- Rural Regeneration and Development Fund – to promote rural renewal and the regeneration of rural towns and villages.
- Urban Regeneration and Development Fund – to support major development and regeneration projects in Ireland’s urban centres.
- Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund – to develop Ireland’s innovation ecosystem.
- Climate Action Fund – to support the transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient society.

The NDP 2021-2030 sets out the next stage of public investment to underpin the implementation of the NPF up to 2030. It provides for €165 billion in funding to address issues around housing, urban and rural development, health and climate action and address new challenges and opportunities arising from COVID-19.

The 2021 NDP extends the URDF to 2030, providing additional investment to further support the compact growth and regeneration of Ireland’s towns and cities. This reflects Ireland’s experience of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has highlighted the importance of the quality of our urban living spaces and the URDF’s role as a catalyst for the economic recovery and social renewal of our towns and cities.

The NDP also provides enhanced support for social and affordable housing development and aims to deliver an average of 10,000 new social homes per annum up to 2030. It replaces the Served Site Fund with a Affordable Housing Fund to support the delivery of 54,000 affordable homes in the period up to 2030.



Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines (2018)

The Urban Development and Buildings Heights Guidelines were published by DHLGH in 2018 to support the delivery of objectives under the NPF for the compact and sustainable growth of our towns and cities. The Guidelines encourage the provision of increased building heights in appropriate urban locations to help accommodate the needs of Ireland’s growing population.

The Guidelines promote increased building heights in Ireland’s cities and town centres and encourage a shift from generic building height limits previously applied in some Local Authority Development Plans to a criteria-based approach to evaluate building heights relative to their urban context. It is recommended that proposed developments with greater building heights must enhance the character of the existing public realm, in a manner that respects local culture and built heritage. They

should create visual interest, help create and enhance public spaces and contribute to an appropriate mix of building uses and typologies. Further, the form, massing and height of proposed development should maximise access to natural daylight and minimise overshadowing.

This review of the Abbey Quarter Masterplan has accounted for and incorporated these criteria for greater building heights into recommended objectives and design proposals.

Climate Action Plan (2021)

The Climate Action Plan (CAP) is a Whole-of-Government plan for Ireland to fulfil commitments in the Programme for Government and the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2021 to achieve a 51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050. The CAP is a living document and is updated annually to reflect progress made. The CAP’s 2023 update is the first to implement carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings as agreed by the Irish Government in 2022.

The CAP commits Ireland’s public sector to lead by example in reducing carbon and greenhouse gas emissions. Local authorities are to play a key role in this transition:

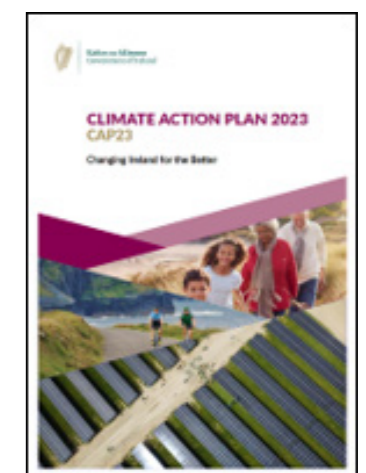
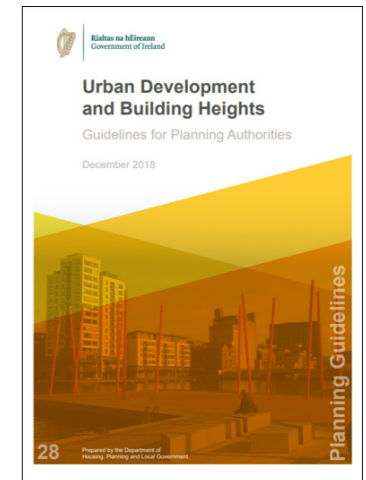
“Local authorities, in particular, have a pivotal role to play in the decarbonisation transition, including through spatial planning, the provision of public housing and transport infrastructure, and the maintenance of biodiversity.”

The CAP highlights the important role spatial and planning policy will play in reducing carbon emissions and achieving our emissions targets. In line with policy direction established under the NPF, it promotes compact growth and higher density residential development in Ireland’s urban settlements to create vibrant and people-focused environments that reduce travel time and encourage active sustainable modes of travel.

The CAP also highlights decarbonisation targets for our construction sector and built environment. In terms of new construction, the CAP seeks to achieve a decrease in embodied carbon of 10% by 2025 and 30% by 2030. This is to be achieved through reducing the clinker content of cement to reduce its carbon intensity without compromising its integrity, and further supporting the uptake of alternative construction materials such as timber.

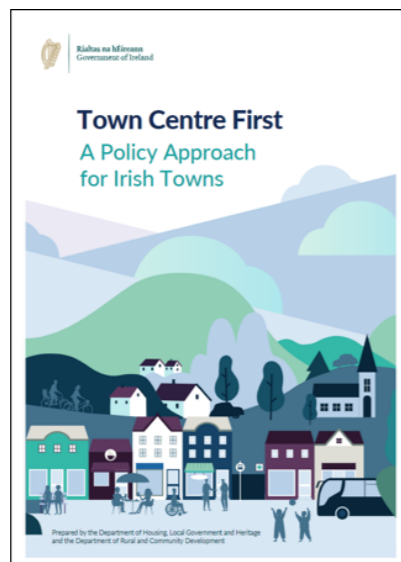
The revised Nearly Zero Energy Building (NZEB) Regulations introduced in 2019 will continue to drive the decarbonisation for Ireland’s built environment. The CAP establishes a target for the residential sector that all new dwellings designed and constructed to 2025 will achieve a NZEB standard, and that by 2030 all new dwellings will achieve a Zero Emission Building standard.

For non-domestic buildings, new builds are now required to achieve a reduction in carbon emissions of 60% compared to previous standards, and to meet at least 20% of their energy need through renewable sources.



Town Centre First (2022)

Ireland's Town Centre First (TCF) policy aims to support the development of town centres that are attractive and functional locations in which people can live, work and visit. The TCF policy reflects lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions, which highlighted the role of town centres as local service providers and the importance of accessible public spaces for socialisation and recreation. It presents a strategic framework to help Ireland's towns become vibrant and sustainable hubs for social, economic and cultural activity.



“The Town Centre First policy aims to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community”

This framework for town centre development and revitalisation is based on four key pillars:

- Building capacity at the local level to drive town centre revitalisation forward.
- Improving the quality and availability of data on towns to lead to better understanding and development.
- Developing TCF Plans that evaluate the current position of a town and outline a vision for its future.
- The implementation of funding instruments and interventions to support town centre investment.

The TCF documents highlights Kilkenny's Abbey Quarter as a positive example of town centre regeneration, creating a vibrant new urban quarter that links with Kilkenny's existing medieval core.

Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland

Housing for All is the Government's ambitious plan for the development and delivery of housing in Ireland up to 2030. It is a multi-annual, multi-billion-euro plan that seeks to accelerate housing delivery and address issues around availability and affordability in Ireland's housing sector.

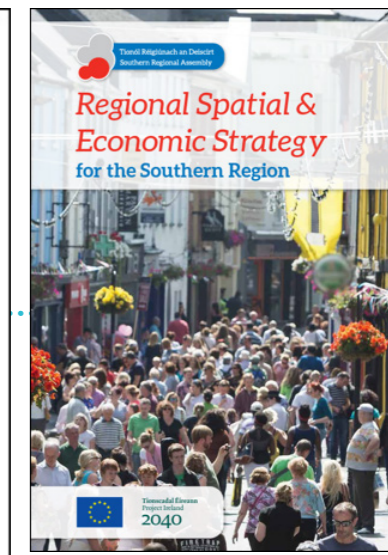
Housing for All establishes a target to deliver 33,000 new homes per annum, with over 300,000 homes to be delivered up to 2030. This includes both social and affordable housing units by public bodies, as well as private units delivered by the commercial sector. This target is to be achieved through four primary pathways that address different elements of Ireland's housing sector.

1. Supporting Homeownership and Increasing Affordability
2. Eradicating Homelessness, Increasing Social Housing Delivery and Supporting Social Inclusion
3. Increasing New Housing Supply
4. Addressing Vacancy and Efficient Use of Existing Stock

Pathway 1 sets targets for the delivery of affordable housing by Local Authorities, Approved Housing Bodies, the Land Development Agency and the State that will be made available to purchase or rent. The plan introduces the 'Local Authority Affordable Purchase Scheme'. Targeted primarily at first time buyers, this scheme seeks to make homes available at a reduced price by way of Local Authorities taking an equity stake in the home that is equivalent to a reduction from the prevailing market price for the property. The Plan sets a target for the delivery of 36,000 affordable purchase homes by 2030.

Housing for All also sees the formal introduction of 'Cost Rental' housing to the Irish market. This is a form of public housing tenure that is targeted at households that are above the social housing income limits but require some support in accessing viable and secure long-term rental options. Under Cost Rental tenure the rents charged will be set to cover the cost of financing, managing and maintaining the home. As such, rents will be lower than those in the private rental sector. The Plan sets a target for the delivery of 18,000 cost rental homes by 2030.

Pathway 2 of Housing for All also emphasises the commitment to deliver 90,000 social housing units by 2030. This will be facilitated through funding under the NDP, partnerships between Local Authorities and Approved Housing Bodies and Public Private Partnerships for new housing delivery.



Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (2020)

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region is a 12-year high-level plan that supports the implementation of the NPF by providing a strategic planning and economic framework for sustainable growth and development at the regional level.

The Vision for the RSES is to:

- “Nurture all our places to realise their full potential;
- Protect and enhance our environment;
- Successfully combat climate change;
- Achieve economic prosperity and improved quality of life for all our citizens;
- Accommodate expanded growth and development in suitable locations; and
- Make the Southern Region one of Europe's most creative, innovative, greenest and liveable regions.”

The RSES recognises Kilkenny as the fourth largest settlement in the southern region and a Key Town in the regions settlement hierarchy, i.e. a “Large population scale urban centre functioning as self-sustaining regional drivers.”

Under Regional Policy Objective 12 it seeks “To strengthen the role of Kilkenny City as a self-sustaining regional economic driver...” and to “To support urban generation through investment in the Abbey Quarter & other initiatives to improve the Public Realm and regenerate underused land in the City”.

Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Kilkenny City and County Development Plan (CCDP) 2021-2027 establishes a detailed direction for the spatial and economic development of Kilkenny City and County. The CDP reflects national priorities for compact growth, housing delivery, sustainable mobility and decarbonisation and translates these into detailed policy objectives for Kilkenny's development.

The CCDP comprises of two volumes.

Volume 1 sets out the overarching policy direction for the county as whole. Volume 2 provides granular detail on the context, ambitions and policy direction for Kilkenny City itself.

The CCDP identifies several key strategic priorities for the city's development, including:

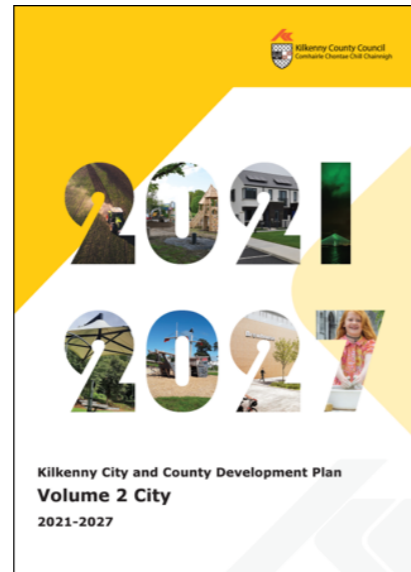
“To consolidate and strengthen the role of Kilkenny City as a self-sustaining Key Town and regional economic driver

To deliver compact growth in the expansion of the City with a minimum of 30% of the growth within the existing built up footprint of the City

To support urban regeneration through investment in the Abbey Quarter & other initiatives to improve the public realm and regenerate land and buildings in the City.

To deliver investment in sustainable transport measures through a Local Transport Plan including continued development of the city bus services with walking and cycling infrastructure in support of the compact '10-minute city' concept.”

The objectives and provisions of the Kilkenny CCDP have informed masterplan review, and will directly inform the evaluation of future development proposals for the Abbey Quarter.



Draft Planning Bill

In December 2022 the Government approved the Draft Planning and Development Bill 2022. Ireland's planning system is built on the Planning and Development Act 2000. Adopted in 2000, the Act has incorporated a number of amendments over the last two decades to reflecting changing priorities and legal obligations. The 2022 Bill aims to introduce changes that, if adopted, will overhaul Ireland's planning system. The Bill aims to bring greater clarity and certainty to Ireland's planning system, making it both more coherent and more user-friendly to prospective applicants and the general public.

The Bill includes several proposals and provisions that will impact planning and development in Ireland. Some key provisions include the following:

Extending the timeframe of City and County Development Plans from six to ten years, with a review to be undertaken after five years. There are also revised requirements for how such Plans are prepared, and they will have to provide greater detail and certainty as to what is planned and proposed for specific areas.

Giving enhanced legal footing to Ministerial Guidelines (such as the Building Heights Guidelines and policy directives. These will be updated to form 'National Planning Policy Statements', and there will be a material requirement for other plans to comply with their provisions.

The introduction of statutory mandatory timelines for all consent processes.

The restructuring of An Bord Pleanála, Ireland's national independent planning body, to better distinguish between its decision-making and corporate roles. The restructured organisation will be renamed An Coimisiún Pleanála.

The Bill will be brought before the Houses of the Oireachtas in 2023 before being considered for adoption.

The Abbey Quarter Masterplan provides a coherent but flexible framework for the development of the Abbey Quarter. Its implementation under KCCC will comply with anticipated changes under the Draft Planning and Development Bill 2022.

