

Banagher Marina & Environs Masterplan



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INTRODUCTION



Royal Shannon Hotel (NIAH) Recorded in 2004

1.1 Background

PLACE + Urbanism and CHL Consulting were appointed by Offaly County Council to prepare an Architectural and Tourism Masterplan for the Banagher Marina and Environs Area in Banagher. It is Offaly County Council's vision to utilise and enhance the unique character and location of the Banagher Marina and Environs to create a walkable, attractive and active area, better linked to the wider town centre, with planned new civic, residential, amenity and recreational assets.

The process of achieving this vision, is twofold. Firstly to identify the areas that the community see as priorities to be addressed within Banagher, which would make Banagher more attractive as a whole to both residents and visitors. Secondly once these areas had been highlighted, to address each with design concepts by both Place + Urbanism and CHL Consulting, working in partnership with Offaly County Council and a broad Steering Group of stakeholders.

In addition, we have identified projects associated with each area that will improve the built fabric, waterways access and green infrastructure, as these feed life into the spaces and complete the scene set by the marina and surrounds.

The aim of the Masterplan study is to identify actions and build a network of experiences that includes other attractions in the urban area of Banagher, to support new tourism development and facilitate compact growth. In addition, the Masterplan proposals will strengthen the local economy and community, through the promotion of tourism and by encouraging innovative mixed use / cultural / tourism development in this town centre location.

The primary purpose of this project is to develop a comprehensive Masterplan for Banagher, that will act as a catalyst, and be a transformative town-centre regeneration project, and which will drive the sustainable tourism, social and economic development of Banagher into the future in line with the aspirations of Ireland 2040.



Figure 1.1 Study Area in Context

1.2 Policy, Guidelines and Plans

In recent years, Banagher has been the subject of several important studies. As part of the Masterplan process, PLACE + Urbanism and CHL undertook a comprehensive review of relevant plans, policies and strategies, and the below captures the main themes arising from this guidance:

- Available amenities, both generally and from a tourism perspective, vacancy rates, locations and causes, opportunity sites and heritage buildings of note, the conservation special interests in the town and conservation principles to apply in any proposed development and the history of the town
- The socio-economic profile of Banagher, relevant and applicable local, regional and national planning policy
- The key location of Banagher in the context of the Shannon Tourism Masterplan
- Relevant and applicable tourism policy, in particular the potential of tourism to contribute to the economy of the County, the physical facilities serving tourism, Banagher as a recreational 'asset' and as well-positioned to maximise the new marketing proposition in Hidden Heartlands
- Also to give expression to its promise, as a town on the Shannon to offer "smaller scale seasonal facilities, offering high quality services and activities adjacent to waterways"
- Particular projects, including solid suggestions from a tourism perspective, including trails and new uses for buildings/spaces and interesting social and architectural heritage that could be integrated into an interpretative approach to the town as a whole
- Innovative projects including a community and enterprise digital/incubator hub that will facilitate remote working, community-run accommodation, an advice workshop on retrofit and a living over the shop example

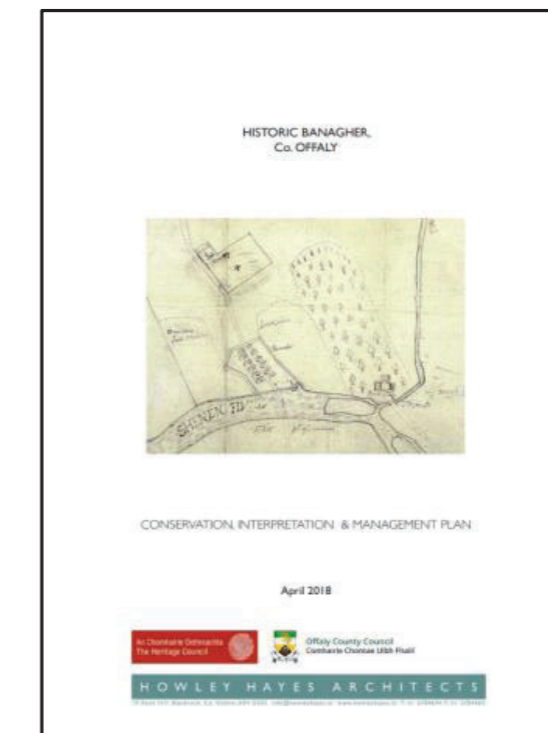
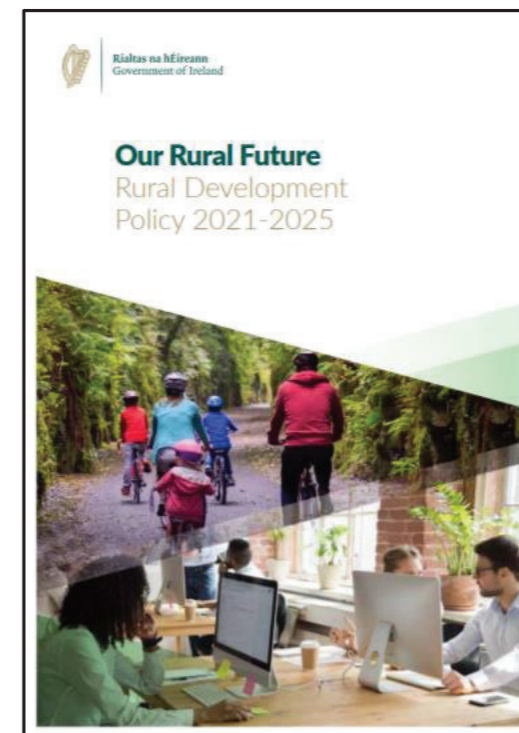
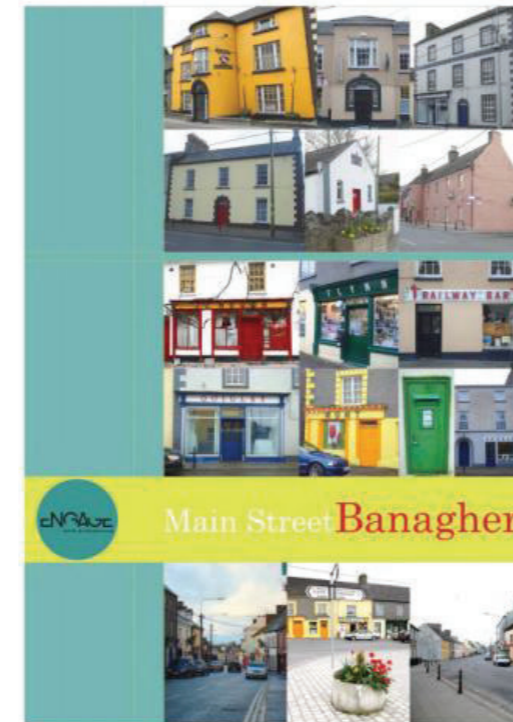


Figure 1.2 Guideline Documents

LOCATION & SITE ASSESSMENT

02



2.1 Location and Site Assessment

Located within the Birr Municipal District, the market town of Banagher is situated on the banks of the River Shannon in west County Offaly, 12km northwest of Birr and 37km west of Tullamore. The harbour and marina area is an important focus of tourism activity, while the Main Street running uphill from the bridge hosts the commercial and retail core of the town. The town acts as a service town for the surrounding rural hinterland – which includes west Offaly but also stretches into rural east Galway.

The M6 from Dublin to Galway runs to the North of Banagher, and the M7 from Dublin to Limerick is located to the South of Banagher. Fig. 2.1 illustrates the distance traveled by car in an hour from Banagher. Areas within this band are Galway City, Killaloe, Athlone, Tullamore, and just on the border of this zone is Shannon airport. Banagher is also connected to Lough Derg via the Shannon, to the South of Banagher, and Lough Ree to the North. Fig. 2.2 illustrates the main Activities and Links within 10, 20 and 30kms of Banagher.

Banagher has a population of 1,907 (Census 2022). Banagher has many waterways (Shannon, Brosna, Little Brosna, Grand Canal) on its doorstep, with many opportunities for outdoor pursuits. The area has high amenity and natural heritage value; the Shannon Callows is nearby; a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Special Protection Area (SPA) and two Natural Heritage areas (NHA) lie to the north-west and south-west.

Banagher has many heritage buildings of note, with links to Saint Rynagh, who founded a monastery in Banagher. The town is located close to many early monastic sites in the mid-Shannon region. The location of Banagher in a strategic position on the Shannon generated many thriving businesses in the town in the past, and today, the town has good local employment in several key enterprises such as Banagher Concrete and several cruise-liner and outdoor adventure businesses at the local marina. The town has a core of well-functioning services, including two well-established schools (a primary school of 250 pupils, a secondary school of almost 600), a bank, credit union, post office, supermarket, and library.

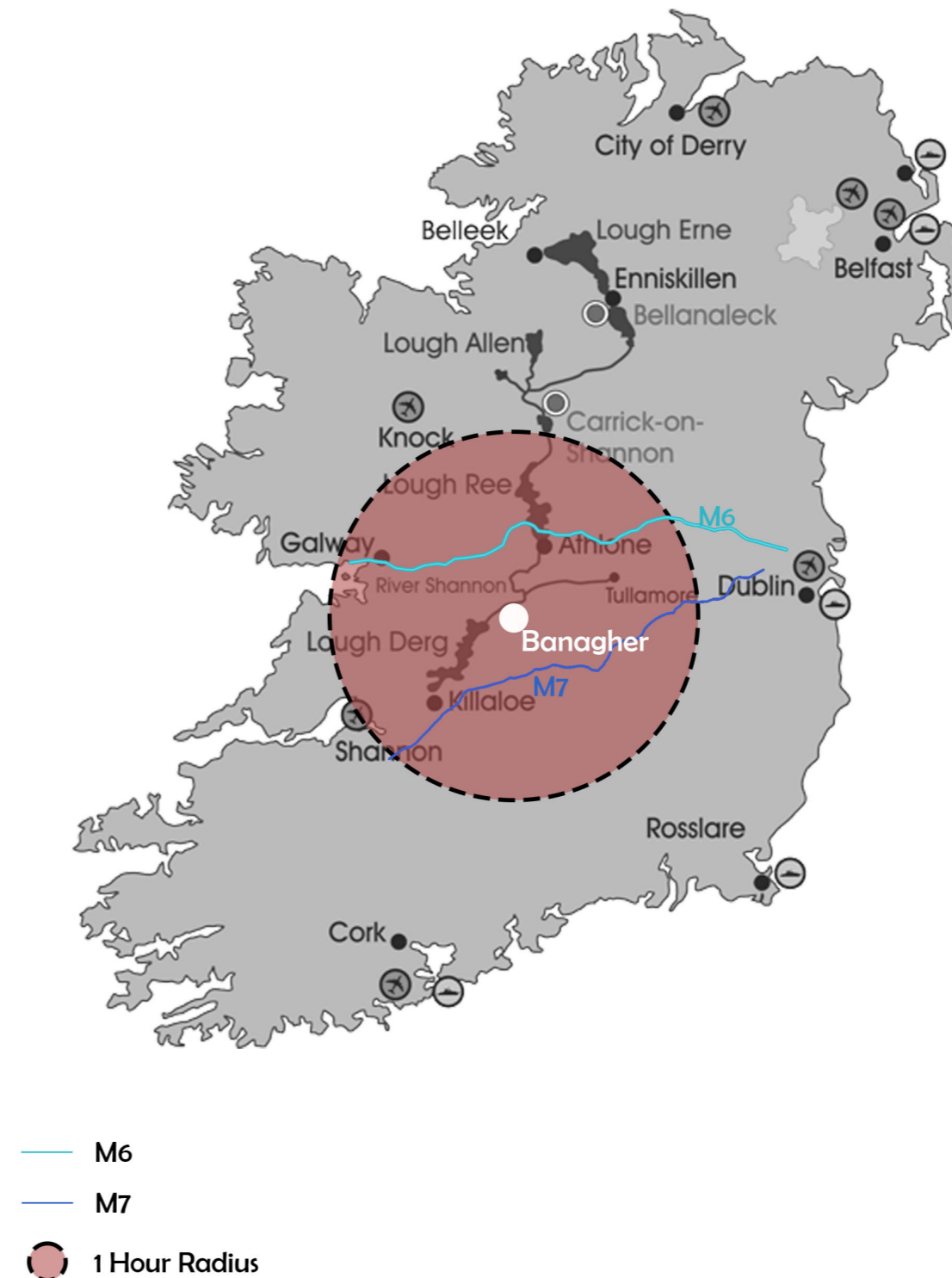


Figure 2.1 Banagher - Central Location

Banagher Broader Context:

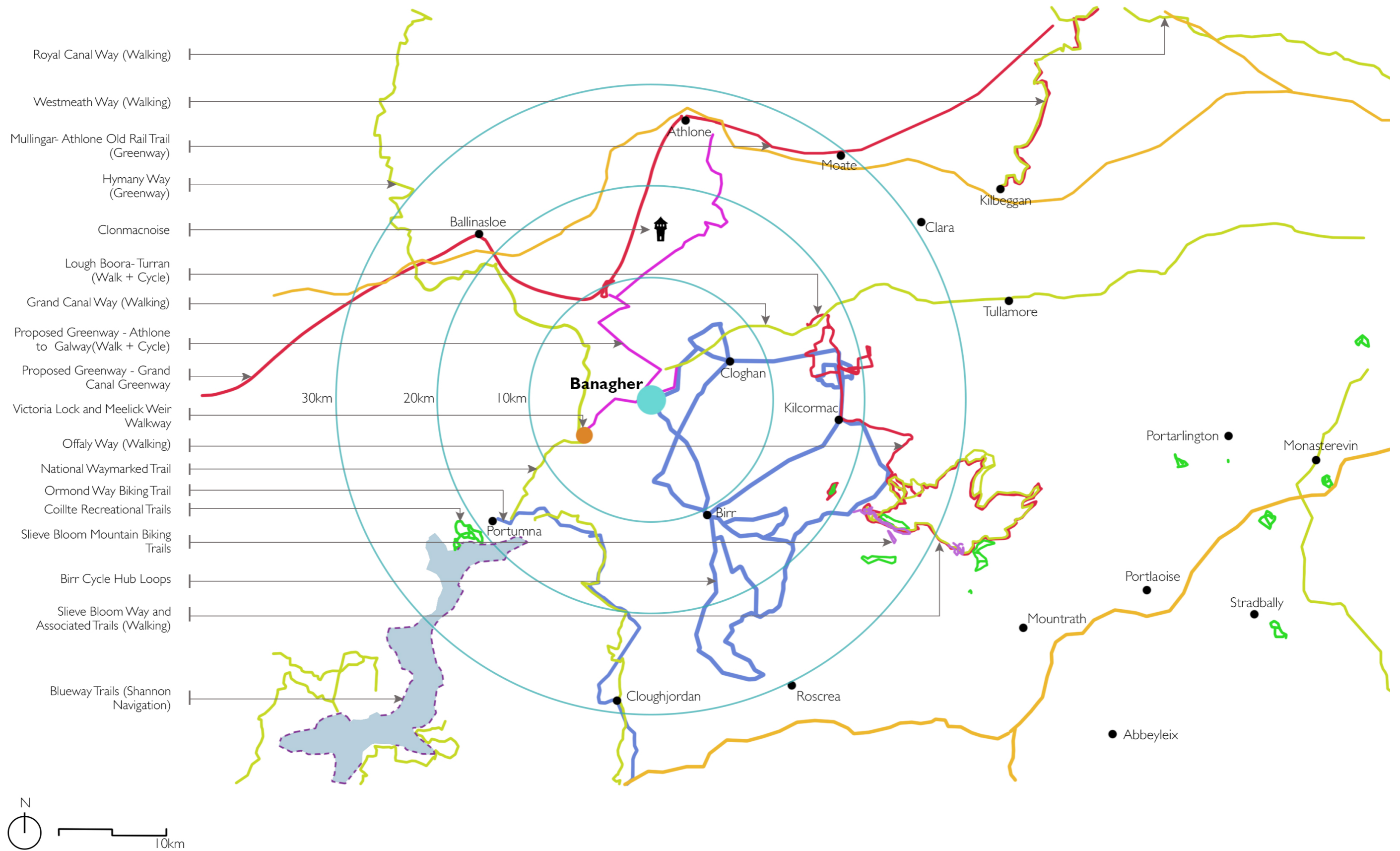
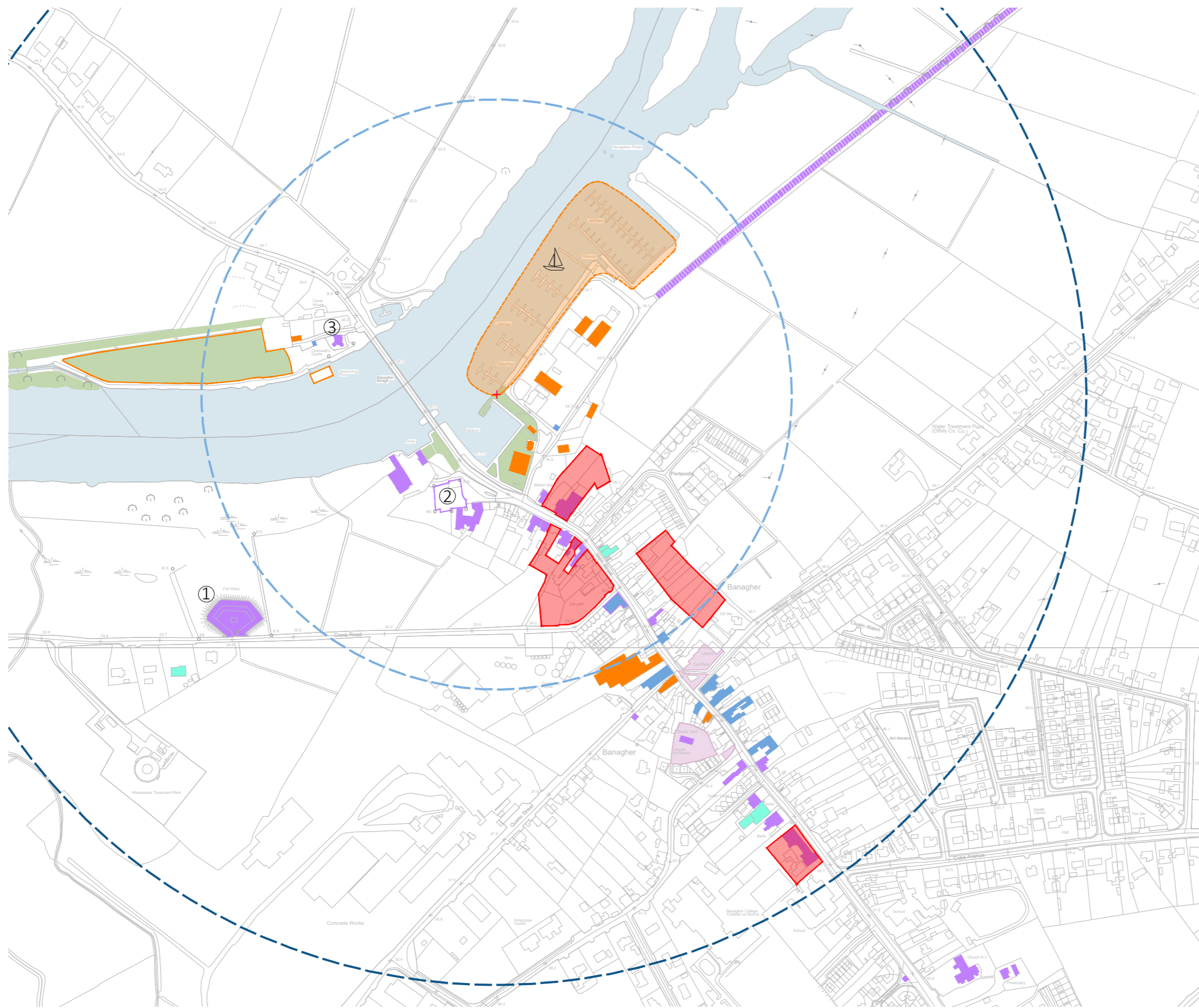


Figure 2.2 Context - Activities and Links

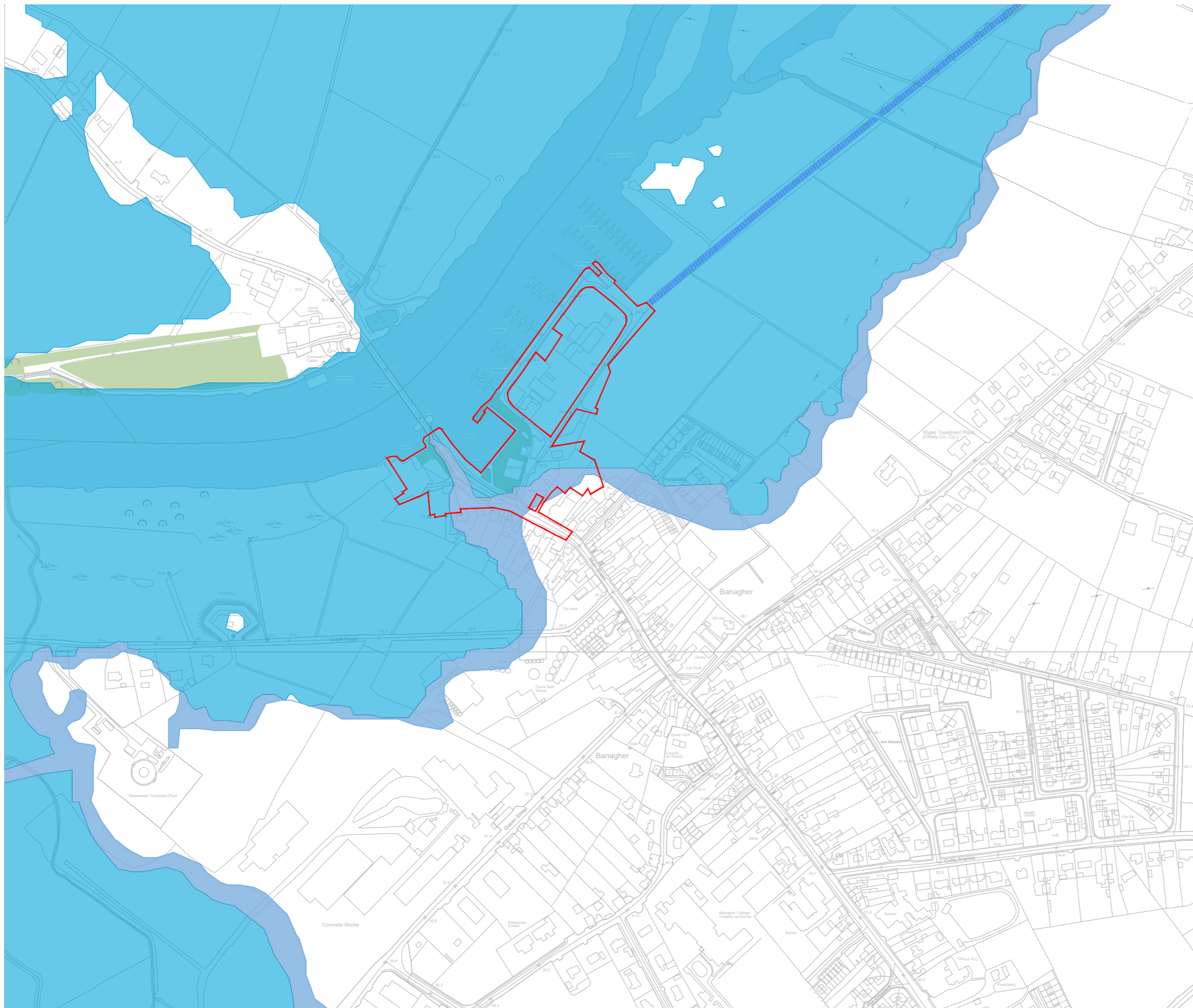


Key:

- Walking Radius 400m 800m
- Opportunity Sites [Red Box]
- Park/ Green Areas [Green Box]
- Marina: 250 Boats [Orange Box with Sailboat Icon]
- Key Buildings [Purple Box]
- Facilities [Blue Box]
- Dining [Cyan Box]
- Public Spaces [Pink Box]
- River [Light Blue Box]
- Accommodation [Light Cyan Box]
- Old Railway Line [Purple Dashed Line]
- ① Fort Eliza
- ② Military Barracks
- ③ Cromwell's Castle



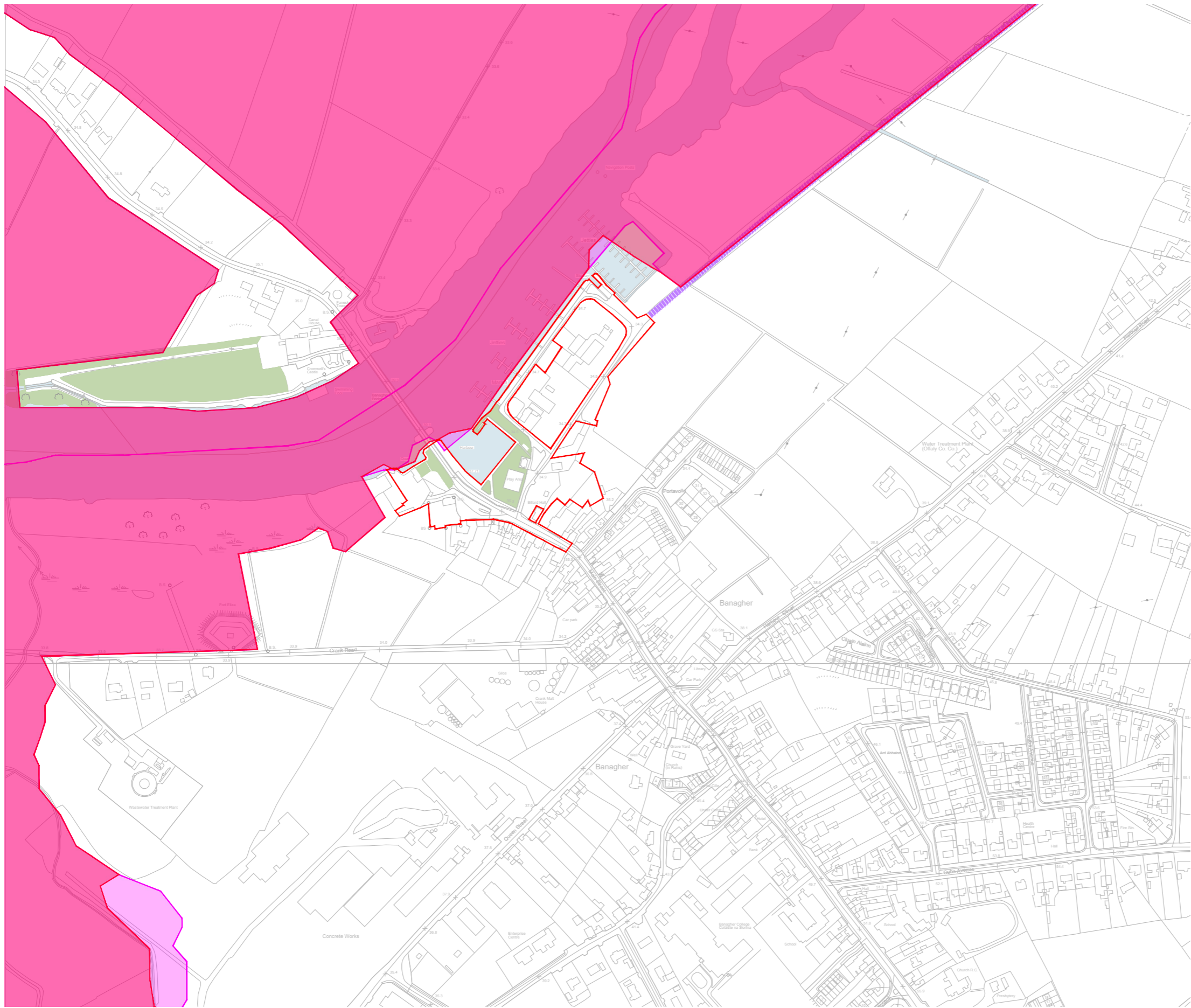
Figure 2.3 Masterplan Site Context



Key:

- River
- Park/ Green Areas
- Future Flooding Possibility (Medium)
- Future Flooding Possibility (Low)

Figure 2.4 Context & Location- Flooding



- SAC
- SPA
- River
- Park/ Green Areas



Figure 2.5 Context & Location - Heritage



2.2 Banagher Economic Profile

An analysis of the Census 2022 data provides the following statistics for Banagher:

- The town's population has grown from 1,760 in 2016 to 1,907 in 2022, an increase of 8.4% which compares favourably to the national average of 8% growth for the same period;
- The largest cohort of the town's population is in the 40-49 age bracket, which is consistent with the state population;
- Average household size in Banagher is reported as 2.6 which is slightly below the national average of 2.7;
- 49.7% of the population over 15 years of age is employed (either full- or part-time), which is comparatively lower than the national figure of 56.1% in employment;
- Banagher has a relatively high jobs to resident workers' ratio of 0.809, noting that a ratio of 0.7 and above indicates a strong economic function;
- Of the persons at work, the greatest proportions are involved in 'Professional Services' (28%), Manufacturing Industries (22%), 'Other' (19%) and Commerce & Trade (13%);
- 58% of Banagher's population aged 5+ years commute to work/school/college by car/van and 28% of the population aged 5+ years commute to work/school/college by more sustainable modes of transport (on foot, bicycle, bus, minibus, coach etc.);
- 58% of Banagher's population aged 5+ years travel time to work/school/college is under 30 minutes;
- Banagher has 812 no. permanent dwellings, of which 721 no. (89%) were occupied on Census 2022 night, and 74 no. (9%) were vacant (excluding unoccupied holiday homes and temporarily absent dwellings); and
- Broadband is available to 73% of households in the town, an increase in coverage of some 15% since the 2016 Census.

2.3 Strategic Aims for Banagher

This Settlement Plan for Banagher takes an asset based approach to the future spatial development of the town focusing primarily on the consolidation, revitalisation and regeneration of the town and its sequential expansion, subject to the availability of necessary infrastructure and services. Future growth shall be in line with the town's position on the Settlement Hierarchy and population allocation set out in the Core Strategy of the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027. This holistic approach aims to enhance the attractiveness, viability and vibrancy of Banagher as a place to live, work and visit, and aims to achieve more sustainable patterns and forms of development.

2.4 Demand Side Analysis

In order to grow as a community and as a tourism destination, Banagher needs to be able to draw on consumers from a number of different sources for its businesses and services. These are primarily:

- the catchment population
- domestic and international tourism markets
- special interest visitors

The scale and characteristics of each of these is important in determining the potential direction and nature of future developments in the town.

2.5. The Catchment Population

Banagher town has a small population of just over 1,900 which limits its ability to provide a significant market to sustain local businesses. More widely, Banagher is within approximately a half hour's drive of a number of larger towns and villages, including Birr (4,370), Ballinasloe (6,662), Tullamore (14,607) and Athlone (21,349). However, a key consideration in trying to attract consumers from surrounding towns is the availability of competing 'offerings' at other towns in the area, including Portumna, Shannonbridge, Shannon Harbour and Athlone itself.

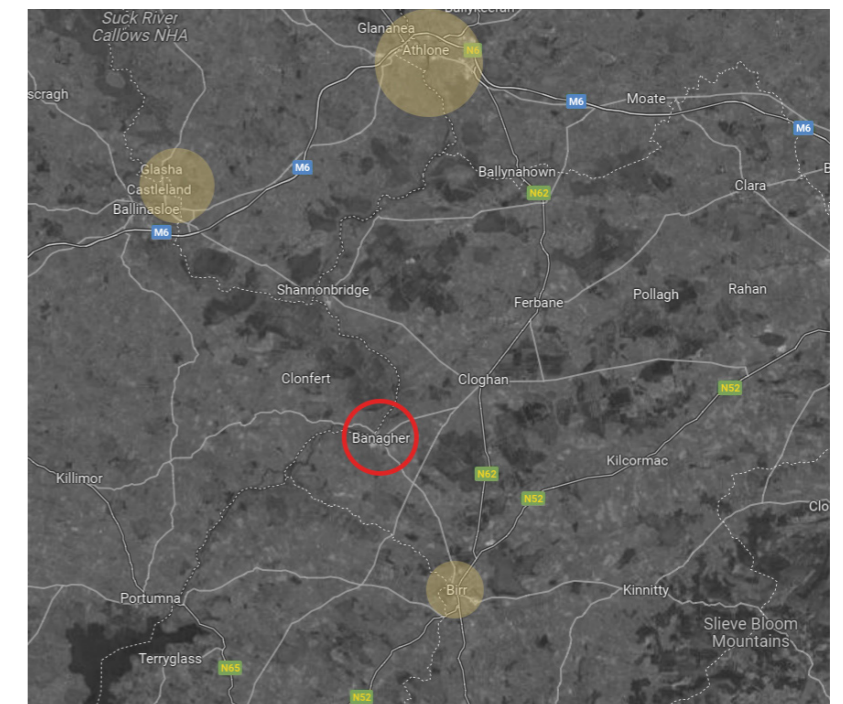
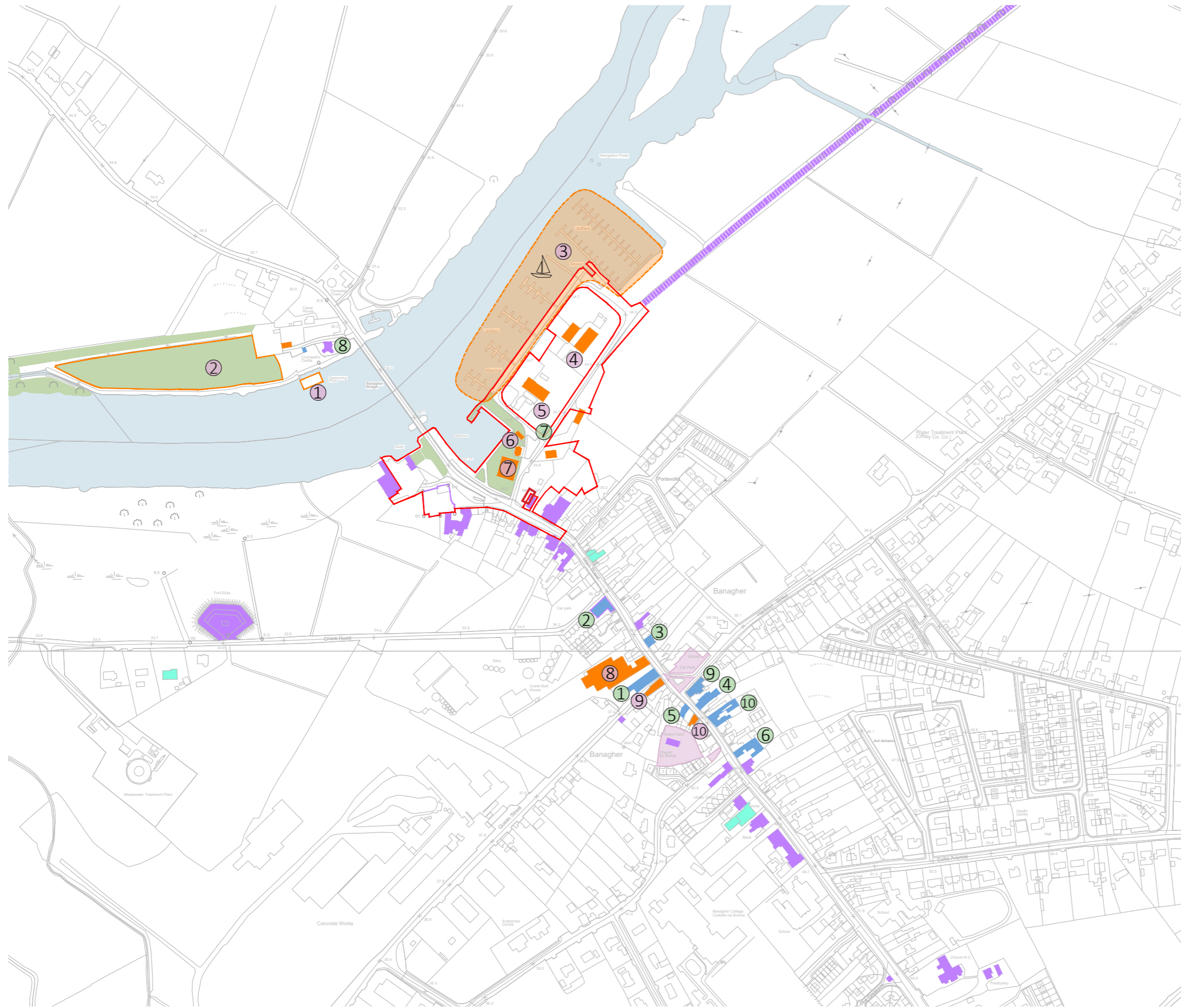


Fig 2.6 Banagher Location & Context



Key:

- Facilities
 - ① Swimming Pool
 - ② Park
 - ③ Marina: 250 Boats
 - ④ 2 No. Cruise Hire
 - ⑤ 2 No. Water Adventure Hub
 - ⑥ Cycle Hire
 - ⑦ Playground
 - ⑧ Flynn's SuperValu
 - ⑨ Convenience Store
 - ⑩ Convenience Store
- Amenities
 - ① Flynn's Shop
 - ② Crank House- Tourist Office
 - ③ J.J Houghs Pub
 - ④ Takeaway
 - ⑤ Takeaway
 - ⑥ Takeaway
 - ⑦ Pop-Up Coffee
 - ⑧ Pop-Up Coffee
 - ⑨ Corrigan's Bar
 - ⑩ Simons Lyons Bar
- River
- Park/ Green Areas
- Public Spaces
- Key Buildings

Figure 2.7 Context & Location - Activities & Facilities

2.6 Opportunity Sites

A number of key opportunity sites were outlined by Offaly County Council at the beginning of the Masterplan process and were considered in developing subsequent proposals. Fig 2.7 highlights other facilities and amenities, and key buildings/ spaces in Banagher. The key Opportunity Sites identified in Banagher are:

1. Banagher Marina
2. Royal Shannon Hotel
3. Old Military Barracks/ Fort Faulkland
4. Fort Eliza
5. Crank House



Figure 2.7.1: Banagher Marina



Figure 2.7.2: Royal Shannon Hotel



Figure 2.7.3: Old Military Barracks/ Fort Faulkland



Figure 2.7.4: Fort Eliza



Figure 2.7.5: Crank House

2.7 Vacancy

The vacancy rate in Banagher is 15%(2020). The Town Plan summarises that there is a notable level of vacancy, both in new and old buildings, with a concern remaining that such buildings may be allowed to deteriorate in the coming years, particularly on Main Street. This street forms the commercial and retail core of the town, but its high level of vacancy has a negative impact on the streetscape. Visitors coming from the West and from the Marina get their first impression of the town as they travel up Main Street.

There are a significant number of vacant premises within the town core, with the highest concentration identified along lower Main Street, between the Marina and the Town Square. Vacant properties include a number of ground floor retail units, upper floor residential, derelict hotel and a three storey building adjacent to the Town Square. Offaly County Council are committed to supporting applications for the redevelopment and re-use of such buildings, particularly where they contribute to the economic revitalisation of Banagher.

The report on the Town Centre Living Initiative 2020 also addressed vacancy, and summarised that Main Street is a mix of commercial, residential and community uses with some vacant landmark buildings. For buildings with long-term vacancy, most will require complete renovation.

The Royal Shannon Hotel, a Protected Structure located on Main Street immediately adjoining the Banagher Marina and Environs Masterplan site is a key building which has been vacant and semi-derelict for years. It has recently been acquired by Offaly County Council and is the subject of a separate Conservation Masterplan to determine how best to protect, conserve and re-develop the building to align with the overall aims of the Banagher Marina and Environs Masterplan.



Figure 2.8 Royal Shannon Hotel Interior

2.8 Banagher Marina and Surrounding Context

In addition to the Marina area itself, there are some interesting buildings in the surrounding area. The Royal Shannon Hotel as highlighted above, is situated on the main street to the East of the Marina. The old Army Barracks, an existing walled area is located directly opposite the Marina area. Surrounding this Army Barracks there are a number of old buildings in disrepair, and a public open space fronting onto the river Shannon.

The river is an important attribute providing historical context and potentially attractive linkages with other parts of the town - allowing the possibility for a river walk that would link the Marina area to the wider town of Banagher. A river walk/ board walk would also allow for the linkage between the Marina area/ riverside to Fort Eliza, a historic site on the outskirts of Banagher - subject to detailed design, the necessary consents and flood impact assessments.

The possibility exists to link various sites surrounding the Marina, thereby creating an interesting public realm. However, the current emphasis on the roads/ routes needs to be changed to allow for the main users of these spaces around the Marina/ public space, to be pedestrians.

On the opposite side of the river to the Banagher Marina there is a public park, and a public swimming pool located in the River Shannon. 'Cromwell's Castle' is also located in the park.

Attention is particularly required to consider traffic management, public realm, house/shop fronts and lighting. Finally, engaging the existing building owners/business operators in the area in a shared vision will assist in aligning the physical assets and services.



Figure 2.9.1 Banagher Marina and Surrounding Context



Figure 2.9.2 Banagher Marina and Surrounding Context



Figure 2.9.3 Banagher Marina and Surrounding Context



Figure 2.9.4 Banagher Marina and Surrounding Context

2.9 Location and Site Assessment: Key Conclusions

- Relatively small town population and relative lack of affluence suggest the need to create something meaningful in order to attract visitors from elsewhere if commercial activity is a goal. However, there is a reasonably sized population in the County with a young bias which suggests that there is potential for experiences that would be attractive to younger catchment audiences, e.g. outdoor activities, entertainment, young family activities
- Good access from surrounding urban centres could provide audiences for new experiences in Banagher
- There is scope for substantial design in the surrounding areas of Banagher Marina and Environs, generating a new space for both visitors and the local community. The possibility to upgrade the general area surrounding the Marina provides a good base for other interventions around Banagher
- There is potential for development of the streetscapes, waters-edge and existing historic buildings in the area around the Marina and main street which can contribute to the creation of a pleasant tourism experience for the area
- Walkability will be a key consideration as the area around the Marina is mostly public open space which would be better explored on foot
- The proximity of the river, as well as its historic importance in relation to the town, offers other routes to bring pedestrian and cycling visitors to the Marina area - making it accessible from a variety of directions and increasing the sense of exploration



Figure 2.10 Banagher Marina and Environs - Aerial View

STRATEGIC CONCEPTS

03

3.1 Strategic Concepts

A comprehensive Public Consultation Process was undertaken by the design team at the outset of the Masterplan process, to ascertain the views of a wide range of project stakeholders. The following key priorities were identified by the community as part of the initial consultation process:

- Provide for more of the basics e.g. toilets, seating, signage, lighting, bins, changing facilities, life guarding
- Address parking issues, traffic congestion and slipway etiquette at peak times
- Ensure the Marina and access to water are 'fit for purpose'
- Develop walk/cycle paths linking to wider area e.g. Meelick to Banagher to Shannon Harbour
- Improve the overall appearance of the town
- Provide more accommodation of different types
- Support casual trading including mobile/outdoor and indoor dining
- Provide more water and land based activities and spaces for them to take place
- Options are being explored through the Galway County Council, including developing the pool and surrounding area

Following the initial consultation process, a long list of possible interventions was assembled. This was further refined by the Design Team to develop a series of recommendations, based on the principles of Enable, Entice and Enhance.

These three principles were developed to give a graduated approach to assessing all the options for development within the Marina area and the surrounding context. ENABLE is a first response and addresses immediate actions that could be undertaken to make the area fit for purpose. ENTICE seeks to build on any works completed as a first response and in so doing looks at what actions and interventions would make Banagher more appealing to visitors. ENHANCE is the culmination of all the previous actions and is geared towards delivering a unique vision for Banagher.

1. ENABLE: Making Fit for purpose:

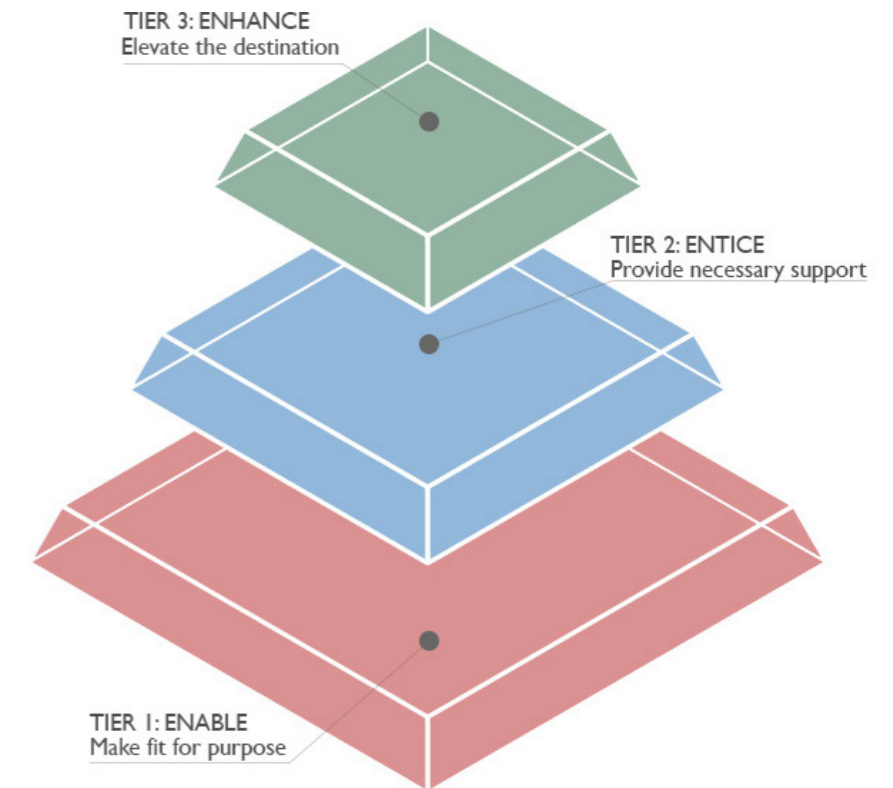
- These are proposals and works required to make Banagher fit for purpose; both to live in and to visit/attract visitors. These are about getting basic infrastructure right (e.g. slipway, toilets, parking).

2. ENTICE: Providing the necessary facilities to support tourism.

- Providing the necessary facilities and amenities to support and entice a visitor, eg. Accommodation, signage, improve derelict sites. Includes what is needed, and for who – the community of Banagher and tourists – both infrastructure supports (e.g. meeting space for outdoor groups) and business supports (e.g. Outdoor equipment shop).

3. ENHANCE: Elevating Banagher as a Destination

- Additional attractions other places wouldn't have. Promotes liveliness and elevates the destination e.g. catering for different boat owners from locals to cruise hire companies, and private tourists on overnight stays.



Three Tiers - Building Blocks for Banagher

Figure 3.1 Building Blocks for Banagher

3.2 Tier 1 - ENABLE

The results of the public and stakeholder consultation were mapped and presented graphically, to assist the design team and others, in more easily interpreting the outcomes and myriad of proposals.

The mapping series starts with 'ENABLE', highlighting the key suggestions from the public consultation process, and mapping them to show their location in relation to each other.

By collating this information in map format it is clear which areas have the most requirements, and potential for development or change.

This series of project maps was used to inform design decisions in each respective area, being sensitive through design to the issues that were raised by the community in Banagher, and the Steering Group.

Proceeding forward to Enhance, and Entice, two further maps used the base information from Enable, to form a professional judgement on what is needed in certain areas of Banagher.

Refer to Figure 3.2 Banagher- ENABLE Proposals

3.3 Tier 2 - ENHANCE

Tier 2 - ENHANCE illustrates the range of projects and actions that will contribute to providing a better quality environment, townscape, public realm and tourist facilities.

Building on the essential works set out in Enable, they represent the next step in a sequential approach to delivering improvements in the Banagher Marina and Environs.

These were initial concepts setting out what the project stakeholders and community believed were needed in different areas of Banagher, but they created a clear narrative that informed the design decisions.

By organising feedback in this way it provided a visual illustration of the scope of the desired work in this area, showing that there were wider links envisioned in relation to this Masterplan. This promotes a better basis for living, commercial, and tourism/ leisure within the existing buildings, and spaces of Banagher.

Refer to Figure 3.3 Banagher- ENHANCE Proposals

3.4 Tier 3 - ENTICE

Tier 3 - ENTICE illustrates the range of projects and actions that will elevate Banagher as a Destination Town and encourage longer stays by tourists.

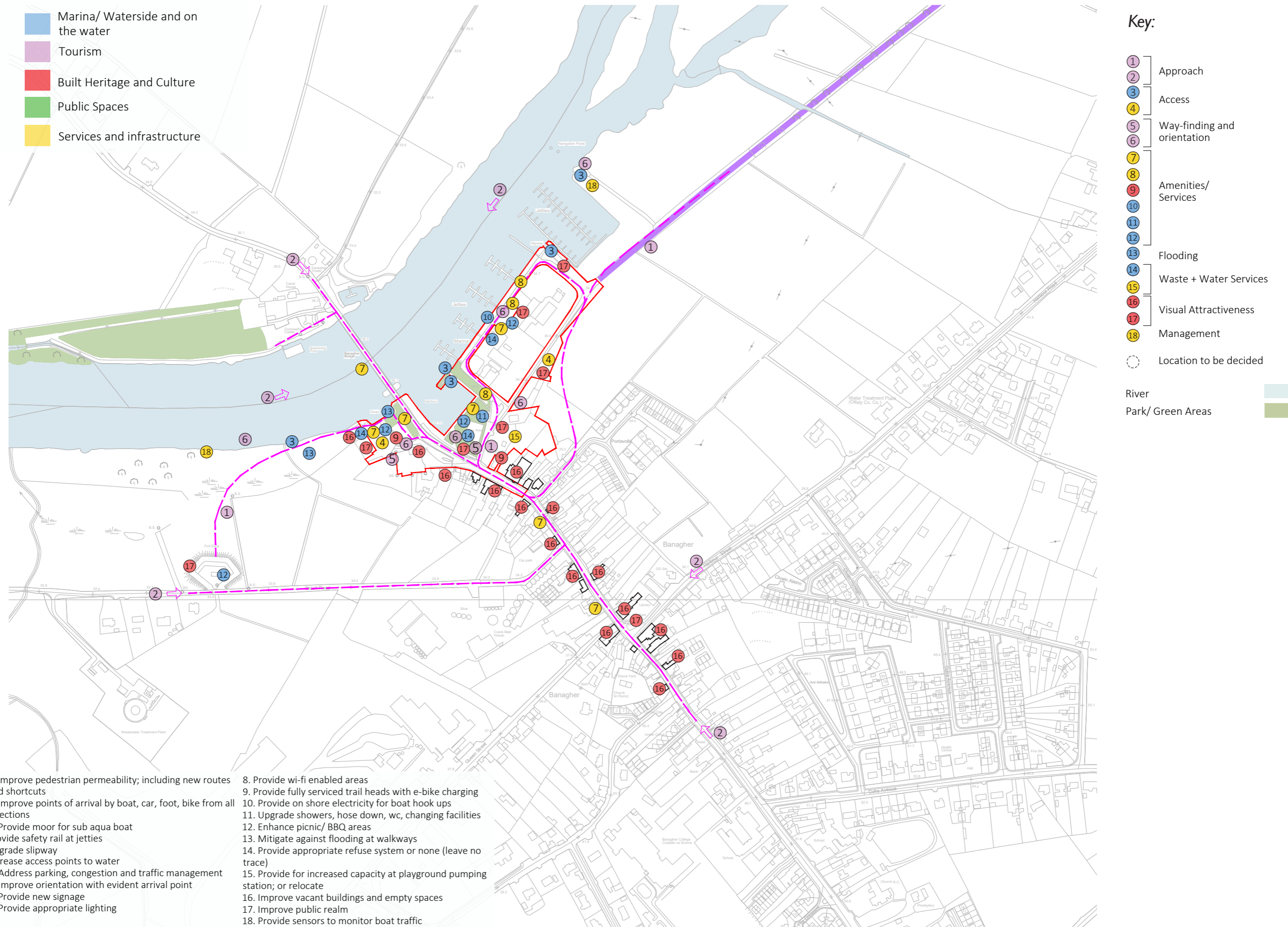
As a result of the extensive public consultation, and the recording of this data through mapping, it has been possible to clearly determine where the main focus of proposals should be.

It is clear from the mapping process that there is an overlay of information for a number of spaces such as the Marina itself, the The Royal Shannon Hotel building and surroundings, the Old Army Barracks and its surroundings, and the main streetscape of Banagher town.

The consultation, analysis and mapping process led to the creation of four main focus areas for further development in the Masterplan as follows:

- Trailhead
- Public Realm
- The Marina
- Gateway

Refer to Figure 3.4 Banagher- ENTICE Proposals



- Marina/ Waterside and on the water
- Tourism
- Built Heritage and Culture
- Public Spaces
- Services and infrastructure

- Key:**
- 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5
 - 6
 - 7
 - 8
 - 9
 - 10
 - 11
 - 12
 - 13
 - 14
 - 15
 - 16
 - 17
 - 18
 - Location to be decided
- River
- Park/ Green Areas

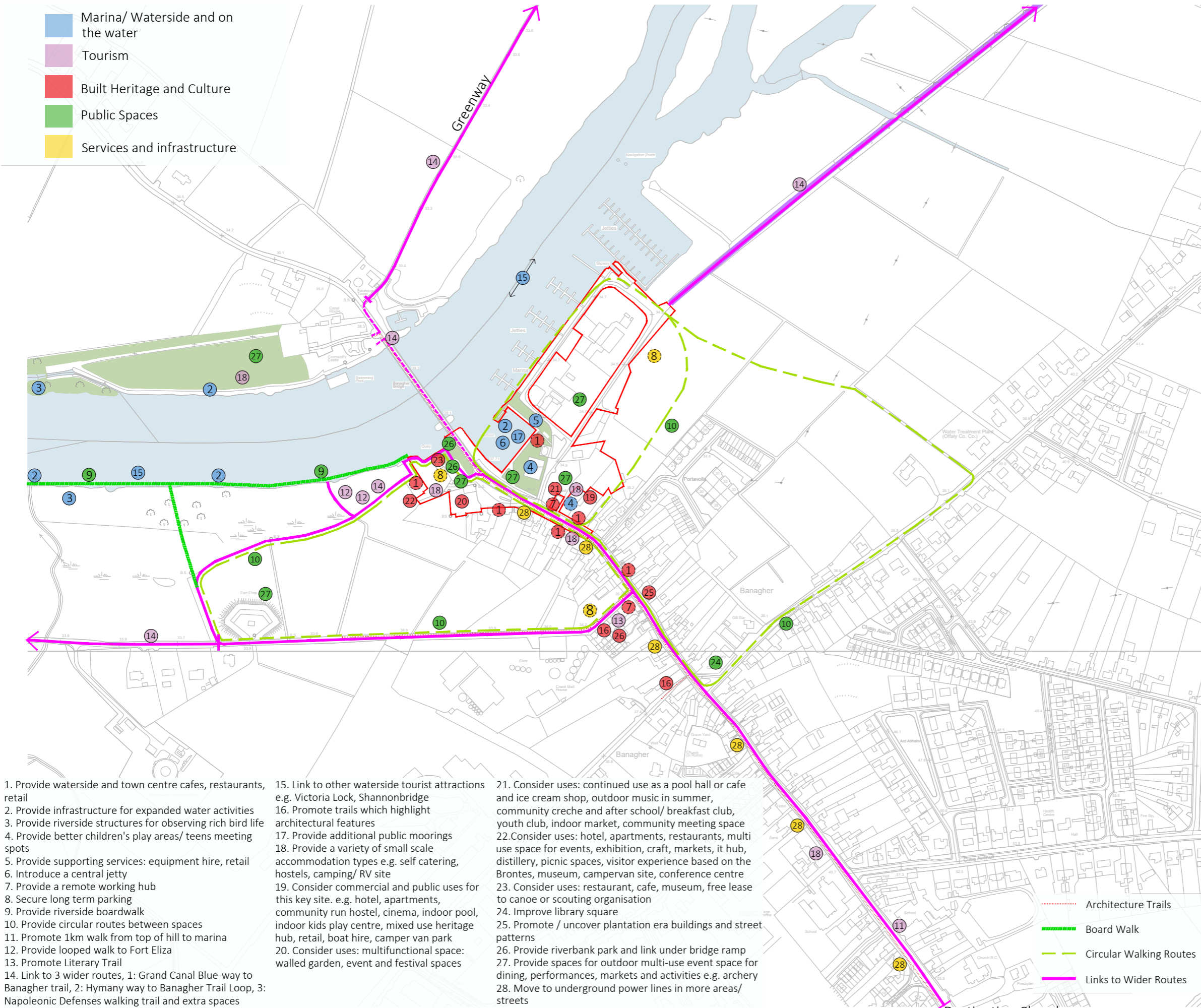
- 1. Improve pedestrian permeability; including new routes and shortcuts
- 2. Improve points of arrival by boat, car, foot, bike from all directions
- 3. Provide moor for sub aqua boat
Provide safety rail at jetties
Upgrade slipway
Increase access points to water
- 4. Address parking, congestion and traffic management
- 5. Improve orientation with evident arrival point
- 6. Provide new signage
- 7. Provide appropriate lighting

- 8. Provide wi-fi enabled areas
- 9. Provide fully serviced trail heads with e-bike charging
- 10. Provide on shore electricity for boat hook ups
- 11. Upgrade showers, hose down, wc, changing facilities
- 12. Enhance picnic/ BBQ areas
- 13. Mitigate against flooding at walkways
- 14. Provide appropriate refuse system or none (leave no trace)
- 15. Provide for increased capacity at playground pumping station; or relocate
- 16. Improve vacant buildings and empty spaces
- 17. Improve public realm
- 18. Provide sensors to monitor boat traffic

Figure 3.2 Banagher - ENABLE Proposals



Figure 3.3 Banagher - ENHANCE Proposals



- Marina/ Waterside and on the water
- Tourism
- Built Heritage and Culture
- Public Spaces
- Services and infrastructure

Key:

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12345678910111213141516171819202122232425262728 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities + Amenities Access Trails + Walks Accommodation Key Building: Shannon Hotel Key Building: Fort Faulkland Key Building: Billiard Hall Key Building: Old Mill Building/ Malt House Key Building : Steam Packet Building Visual Attractiveness Events Underground power lines Location to be decided | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> |
|--|--|--|

River
 Park/ Green Areas

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>1. Provide waterside and town centre cafes, restaurants, retail</p> <p>2. Provide infrastructure for expanded water activities</p> <p>3. Provide riverside structures for observing rich bird life</p> <p>4. Provide better children's play areas/ teens meeting spots</p> <p>5. Provide supporting services: equipment hire, retail</p> <p>6. Introduce a central jetty</p> <p>7. Provide a remote working hub</p> <p>8. Secure long term parking</p> <p>9. Provide riverside boardwalk</p> <p>10. Provide circular routes between spaces</p> <p>11. Promote 1km walk from top of hill to marina</p> <p>12. Provide looped walk to Fort Eliza</p> <p>13. Promote Literary Trail</p> <p>14. Link to 3 wider routes, 1: Grand Canal Blue-way to Banagher trail, 2: Hymany way to Banagher Trail Loop, 3: Napoleonic Defenses walking trail and extra spaces</p> | <p>15. Link to other waterside tourist attractions e.g. Victoria Lock, Shannonbridge</p> <p>16. Promote trails which highlight architectural features</p> <p>17. Provide additional public moorings</p> <p>18. Provide a variety of small scale accommodation types e.g. self catering, hostels, camping/ RV site</p> <p>19. Consider commercial and public uses for this key site. e.g. hotel, apartments, community run hostel, cinema, indoor pool, indoor kids play centre, mixed use heritage hub, retail, boat hire, camper van park</p> <p>20. Consider uses: multifunctional space: walled garden, event and festival spaces</p> | <p>21. Consider uses: continued use as a pool hall or cafe and ice cream shop, outdoor music in summer, community creche and after school/ breakfast club, youth club, indoor market, community meeting space</p> <p>22. Consider uses: hotel, apartments, restaurants, multi use space for events, exhibition, craft, markets, it hub, distillery, picnic spaces, visitor experience based on the Brontes, museum, campervan site, conference centre</p> <p>23. Consider uses: restaurant, cafe, museum, free lease to canoe or scouting organisation</p> <p>24. Improve library square</p> <p>25. Promote / uncover plantation era buildings and street patterns</p> <p>26. Provide riverbank park and link under bridge ramp</p> <p>27. Provide spaces for outdoor multi-use event space for dining, performances, markets and activities e.g. archery</p> <p>28. Move to underground power lines in more areas/ streets</p> |
|---|--|---|

- Architecture Trails
- Board Walk
- Circular Walking Routes
- Links to Wider Routes

Figure 3.4 Banagher - ENTICE Proposals

MASTERPLAN CONCEPTS



4.1 Masterplan Concept Areas

Four key conceptual areas were examined in detail to determine what improvements and facilities should be considered to deliver on the Enable, Entice and Enhance concept for Banagher. The following key attributes are proposed for each of the four key areas:

Trailhead:

1. Event Space
2. Public Open Space
3. Coach Parking/ car parking
4. Heritage Boat Berths
5. Connection to Marina

Public Realm

1. Gateway / Trailhead
2. Open to public realm
3. Re-located Playground
4. Relocated IW Pumps
5. Improved Public Realm
6. Additional Facilities
7. Royal Shannon Hotel Site

Marina:

1. One Way Traffic system
2. Access for Commercial users and pleasure
3. Riverside Public Realm pedestrian priority
4. Additional parking for boat trailers

Gateway

1. Public plaza
2. Key building (Royal Shannon Hotel)
3. Sionn Mhara Boathouse

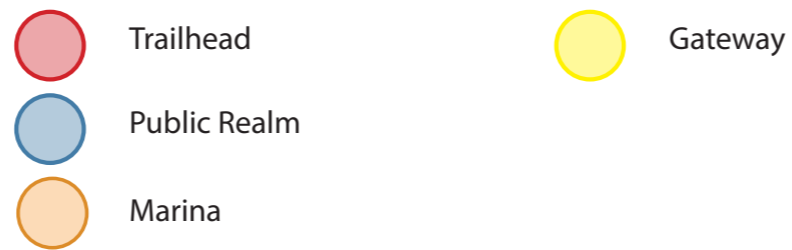



Figure 4.1 Masterplan Concepts

| Proposal | Intervention Description |
|------------------|---|
| 01- Trailhead | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upgrade planting to Old Army Barracks surrounds - Improve circulation to Public Realm, and Marina site - Provide coach parking and car parking - Improve existing public space - Fence in edge of water that is not to be used for boat moorings - Upgrade surface materials to improve universal access and site aesthetic - Ensure site is safe for access (secure loose materials on structure etc.) - Provide events/ market space in Old Army Barracks - Develop elevated walkway along the river side, joining to fort Eliza - Opportunity for retail, and self catering shops in the area |
| 02- Public Realm | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restrict motorised traffic access - Improve public realm surfaces, public lighting - Additional trees and planting - Relocate play area, and create seating area/ picnic area in main green space - Improve bathroom facilities/ changing facilities - Provide tourism information board, focal area - Improve ground surface and materials for ease of access |
| 03- Marina | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incorporate public toilets, and small public spaces along waters edge - Space provided for a dedicated management at boat launch area/ business opportunity - Provide public moorings - Provide parking spaces, and car and trailer parking - Remove parking along waterside, pedestrian access allowed - Improve ground surfaces along jettys, for pedestrian access - Potential for expansion in boat hire yard - Develop existing marina with new board walk for barge/ tour boat access - Install seasonal barriers (barriers that will be open during a certain time of year & closed at others for vehicular access) at entrance to parking/ boat launch area |
| 04- Gateway | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key building Royal Shannon Hotel - Pedestrian links/ road crossings to Old Army Barracks - Public plaza to be located behind the Royal Shannon Hotel - Sionn Mhara Boathouse to be provided in the area behind the Royal Shannon Hotel - Playground to be relocated beside the public plaza - Paved area to link to the rest of the public realm proposed for Banagher - IW Pumping station to be relocated. |

Table 4.1 Key Masterplan Interventions

| Theme | Detail |
|--|---|
| Built Fabric Improvements | |
| Building Frontage Improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Painting facades, possibly to an agreed palette - Removing and/or replacing low-quality signage - Replacing commercial unit blanked out windows with displays - Adding planters and sandwich boards outside commercial premises - Improving quality of doors and fenestration, replacing with materials appropriate to the architectural heritage |
| Property Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing sites to accommodate mixed uses, including commercial and residential |
| Public Realm Improvements | |
| Planting Design | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adding new planting areas to streets to enhance the environment for humans, support sustainable drainage and create pockets of biodiversity value - Adding new areas of habitat planting to extend and connect existing habitats |
| Public Realm Lighting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving the quality of light and of light fixtures along streets in the area - Additional public lighting to under lit areas in the pedestrian network - Street lighting to improve ambiance in areas intended to support street life after dark |
| Public Realm Surfaces | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Devising a consistent palette of materials to use in accordance with a hierarchy of street importance - Materials palette to be sympathetic to wider Banagher materials - Engineering build-up to support different unit sizes and layouts to minimise maintenance and prolong life cycle |
| Street Trees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Devise a palette of street trees of different mature sizes and qualities to enhance streets in the area - Add some large specimen trees to highlight the importance of key nodes and landmarks |
| Universal Access | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve pedestrian experience by widening footpaths and increasing traffic-free and low-speed traffic zones across the area - Improve conditions underfoot for all users through surface design - Add dedicated and well-designed crossing points within the network to enhance safety of pedestrians |
| Pedestrian Network Improvements | |
| New Pedestrian/ Cycle Bridge/ Raised walkway | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create new pedestrian and cycle routes along the River Shannon to improve permeability, walk-ability and add attractive experiences for the area |
| New Pedestrian/ Cycle Route | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create new pedestrian and cycle routes through existing areas to improve permeability and therefore walk-ability in the area - This will improve connection to the wider Banagher Town, better integrating the Marina and Environs |
| Traffic Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduce vehicular permeability to the area to encourage slower traffic speeds and reduce the dominance of the car over pedestrian realm |
| Waterways Interventions | |
| Boating Marina | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Renovate existing mooring facility encouraging more engagement with the River Shannon |

Table 4.2 Interventions and Actions

 Pedestrian Priority Areas

4.2 Masterplan Concepts - Pedestrian Access

There is a strong emphasis in the Masterplan proposals on creating a safe space for people to explore on foot, with routes being established in order to promote walking. Limited parking is to be situated within the red zone shown in Fig 4.2, allowing visitors to park and access Banagher by walking. The public realm space is orientated to incorporate and consolidate these pedestrian routes.

This will be achieved by upgrading the footpath surfaces and materials, establishing routes between spaces, and the use of seasonal bollards to control the amount of traffic entering these areas.

The marina itself, situated in front of the existing cruise hire buildings had previously been used for parking, with minimal space remaining for pedestrians / cyclists to pass. This has been addressed by providing dedicated parking spaces in a safe area, implementing a one-way system and restricting vehicular access to the marina area, through the use of seasonal bollards.

Accessible spaces are provided closer in proximity to the Public Realm, with level access to facilities.

There is a possibility to promote a further link under the existing bridge, linking the Marina to the public open space, and market space in the Old Army Barracks.

The river water swimming pool is due to be upgraded, and is surrounded by a public park. There is scope to upgrade the pedestrian pathways across the bridge to link the park and facilities, to the wider Banagher Public Realm.



Figure 4.2 Pedestrian Priority Areas

Masterplan Proposals



Figure 4.3 Banagher Marina & Environs Masterplan Proposals

01 - Trailhead

4.4 Masterplan Concepts 01-Trailhead

The trailhead area, located West of the Marina, could provide an area where walking and cycling trails start /culminate. A potential link to a raised walkway for pedestrians, linking Banagher to the wider area could be developed. This also has the possibility to link to Fort Eliza to the Southeast, subject to a Flood Impact Assessment, NIS and required consents from Waterways Ireland and others.

It is proposed that an events / market space would be located within the walls of the existing Old Army Barracks. This would bring prominence back to a building which is going into disrepair, and make it useable again for a variety of public and commercial uses.

There is the possibility of creating a link under the existing bridge to join to the Marina on the other side. This would promote the movement of pedestrians in the area linking the two spaces, and ensure a safer pedestrian environment for all. It is proposed to upgrade the public green space, with appropriate planting, trees and seating and provide limited bus parking area for visitors.

Vacant buildings along the road to the South of the Trailhead area could be re-purposed and used for retail, or self catering accommodation. The adjoining Malt House, whilst beyond the scope of this Masterplan, could be conserved and refurbished to provide for a variety of uses and facilities to support and encourage tourism.



Figure 4.4.1 Trailhead - Public Space and Link to Marina

- 1 Link to elevated walkway
- 2 Fenced area
- 3 Potential link
- 4 Improved public space
- 5 Coach parking
- 6 Events/ market
- 7 Retail/ self catering
- 8 Malt House Building



Figure 4.4.2 Trailhead Area

01 - Trailhead

4.4.1 Trailhead and Surrounds - Precedents

Fig 4.4.3 illustrates some examples of the types of interventions that may be incorporated into the Public Realm spaces. They are not presented as precise visuals of the space, but are similar to the type of design to be achieved in this Trailhead Area.

Shown are precedents and materials palette for seating, planting, surfaces and kiosks for various uses.



Figure 4.4.3 Trailhead Area - Precedent Images

02 - Public Realm

4.5 Masterplan Concepts 02 - Public Realm

The area to the East of the bridge and South West of the Marina has been identified as having the potential to create a very attractive Public Realm. The proposals for this area seek to capitalise on its waterfront location, existing facilities and the opportunity to link disparate elements. Within the public realm there are numerous alterations and design additions proposed as part of this Masterplan. Primarily, the space is to be opened up visually, to provide a clear view into the public realm from the road.

The stone faced harbour area to be upgraded with a new board walk around the perimeter, providing for increased berths. The harbour area needs to be de-silted to remove a buildup of peat at the entrance. This currently restricts water depth to 1m, significantly less than the 1.8m required for safe navigation.

The ground surface is to be upgraded for pedestrian use, and further links for pedestrians are to be provided.

An Information Kiosk is proposed to be located on the site of the former railway turntable, providing essential information for visitors whilst also creating a strong focal point in this area. The addition of further bathroom/ changing facilities will help in delivering facilities for water based tourists and operators alike.

It is proposed that the playground be relocated from the main green space to an area behind existing buildings, further opening up the green space for picnic/ seating areas and waterside activity. The existing Uisce Eireann foul sewer pumping station is to be relocated to the area at the rear of the Royal Shannon Hotel.

Improved and safer facilities for canoe, kayak and SUP launching, are to be provided as part of Waterway's Ireland's plans to upgrade the Harbour area and expand the infrastructure for existing and future water based activities in Banagher.

- 1 Improve WC/ changing room
- 2 Board walk/ Jetty
- 3 Visually opened up space
- 4 Relocated play area
- 5 Information kiosk
- 6 The Royal Shannon Hotel
- 7 Relocated pumping station
- 8 Billiard Hall

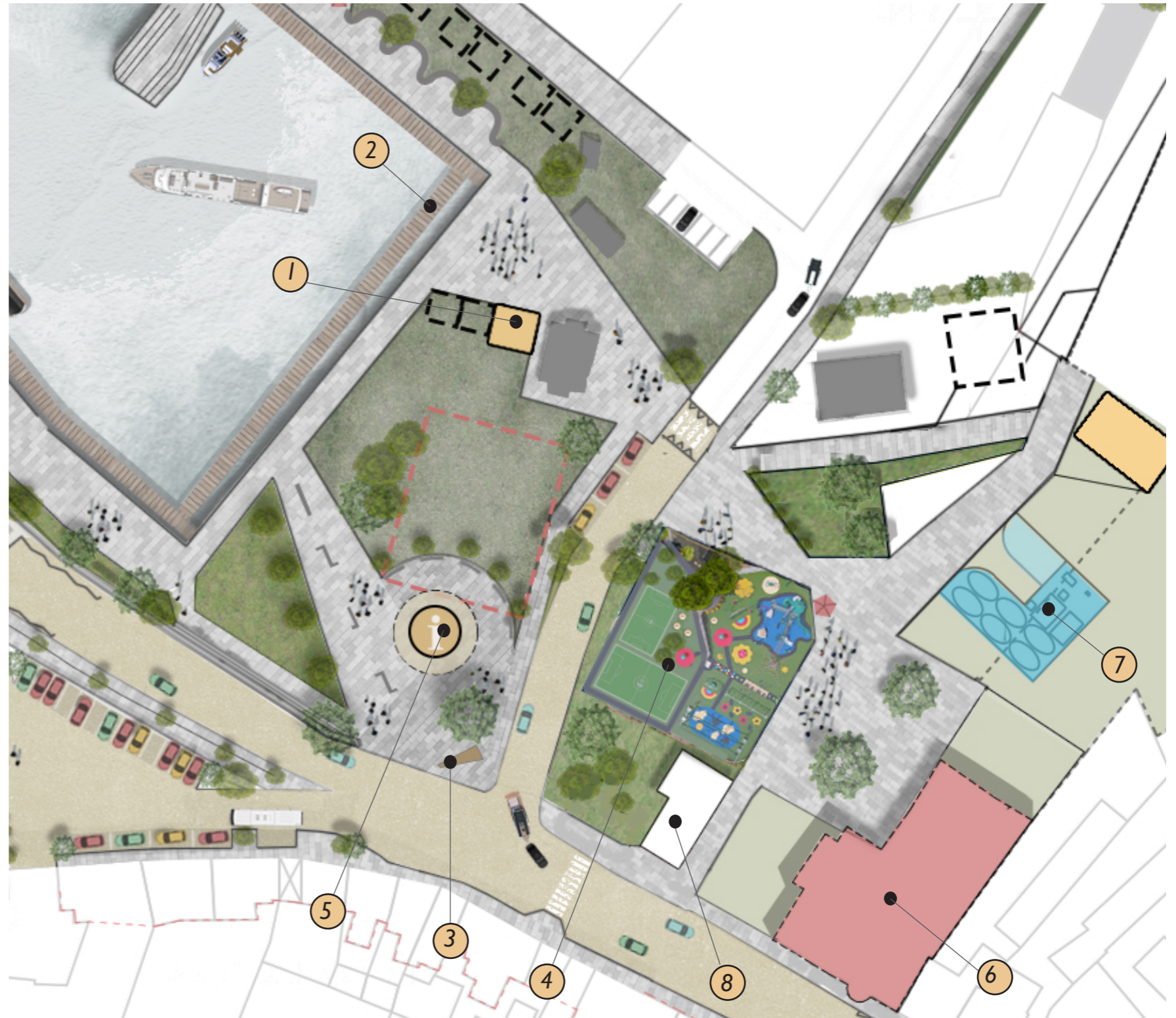


Figure 4.5 Public Realm Proposals



Figure 4.5.1 Public Realm Aerial View



Figure 4.5.2 Public Realm Information Kiosk View



Figure 4.5.3 Public Seating and Marina Edge

02 - Public Realm

4.5.1 Public Realm - Precedents

Fig 4.5.4 illustrates some examples of the types of interventions that are envisaged to be incorporated into the Public Realm spaces. It will be important to ensure consistency of materials and surfaces to provide a clear identity for the public realm areas.

Illustrated are precedents of seating, planting, surfaces and kiosks for various uses.



Figure 4.5.4 Public Realm Precedents

03 - The Marina

4.6 Masterplan Concepts 03 - The Marina

Proposals for the Marina area have taken into consideration the fact that this is a working marina with boatyards, providing a base for two long-standing cruise hire companies and two water based activity centres, whilst also needing to provide for access to the water for individual boat owners.

A key objective of this Masterplan is to reduce the extent of vehicular circulation and thereby create a more pedestrian friendly environment beside the river Shannon. Key to achieving this will be the implementation of a One Way system along the river front, with Two Way traffic to the 'rear' of the Marina only.

The ground surface along the Marina is to be upgraded for pedestrian priority and landscaped along the river's edge. Parking is to be eliminated from the Marina frontage itself, apart from limited temporary parking for cruise hire customers, to facilitate set down and drop off / collection. Limited access for all operators in the Marina would be provided for service vehicles / bulk fuel supply / deliveries etc. through access control measures and seasonal traffic bollards.

Parking will be provided for both single vehicles and cars with boat trailers to the 'rear' of the marina, thereby facilitating increased use of the overall Marina by private boat owners.

Seasonal bollards will be in operation at the entrance to the parking, and at the entrance to the pedestrian priority route along the Marina.

This is in order to reduce the number of vehicles in these areas in the busier months of the year, whilst maintaining access for visitors and locals throughout the winter months.

The above proposed measures are intended to balance the requirements of existing commercial operators with the need to create a more pedestrian friendly environment, making the marina area a destination in its own right.

- 1 One Way Access Road
- 2 Seasonal bollards
- 3 Two Way Access Road
- 4 Parking spaces
- 5 WC/ opportunity for business
- 6 Proposed Public Parking
- 7 Boat Trailer Parking



Figure 4.6 Marina Proposals



Figure 4.6.1 Proposed Aerial View of Marina Area

03 - The Marina

4.6.1 Marina - Precedents

Fig 4.6.2 illustrates some examples of the types of interventions that could be incorporated into the Marina area. They are not exact visuals of the space, but similar to the type of design that may be achieved in this area.

Shown are precedents of kayak & canoe launches, steps, toilet facilities, and waterway activation.

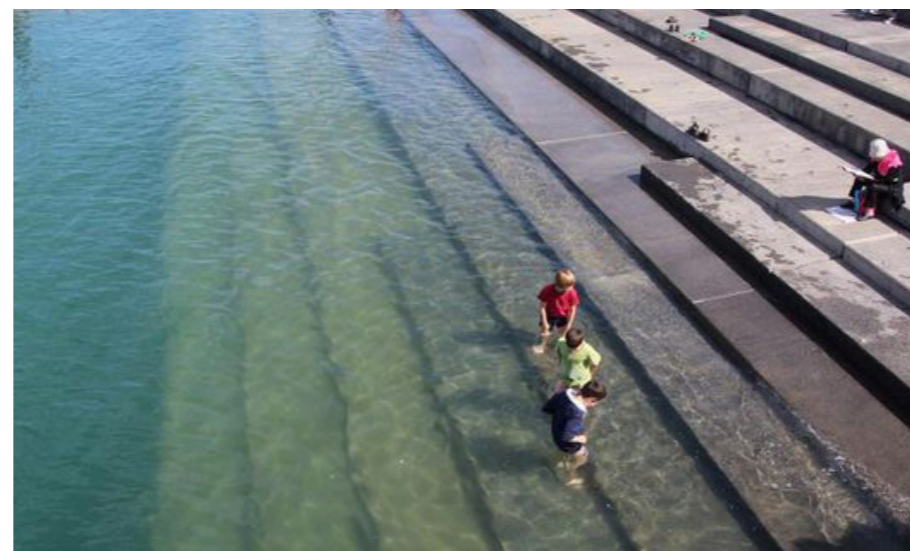
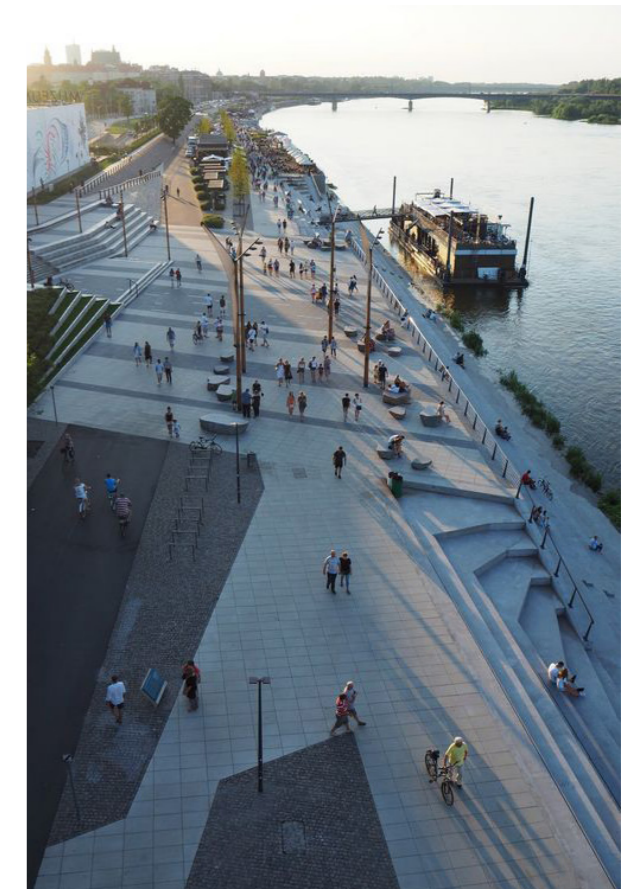


Figure 4.6.2 Marina Precedents

04 - Gateway

4.7 Masterplan Concepts 04 - Gateway

In addition to the Public Realm improvements there is an opportunity to create a Gateway or threshold as people enter the Marina area. The Gateway is seen as an opportunity to open up and showcase all that the Marina area has to offer. Closely linked to the Public realm improvements, there are a number of specific interventions that will help to create a gateway and sense of arrival.

The play area is to be relocated to the area beside the Royal Shannon Hotel, to allow for the main green space to be optimised.

The Royal Shannon Hotel is a key opportunity site, and should be considered in terms of developing a civic function and/or accommodation. A separate Conservation Masterplan and Feasibility Study has been commissioned by Offaly County Council to examine this key building and the contribution that it can make to the Marina and Environs.

It is proposed to re-locate the Uisce Eireann foul sewer pumping station further away from this key entrance area, and in so doing allow the existing playground to be moved to a more suitable location.

Sionn Mhara Boathouse - new proposed building for storage of the Sionn Mhara with routes to the Marina area through proposed public realm.

New public plaza, incorporating the Royal Shannon Hotel as a gateway into this new space. The space incorporates planting, seating and new ground surface to promote pedestrian use.

Proposed crossing point allows for the safe movement of pedestrians to the Trailhead area to the West.

- 1 Relocated Play area
- 2 Royal Shannon Hotel
- 3 Relocated pumping station
- 4 Sionn Mhara Boathouse
- 5 Public plaza
- 6 Pedestrian crossing point
- 7 Billiards Hall
- 8 Gateway Arch



Figure 4.7 Gateway Proposals



Figure 4.7.1 Public Plaza Sketch Layout



Figure 4.7.2 Proposed Gateway Entrance - Banagher Marina

4.7.2 Gateway - Precedents

Fig 4.7.3 illustrates examples of the types of interventions that will be incorporated into the Gateway area.

Shown are precedents of gateway types, public plaza seating, landscaping, and ground surface treatment.

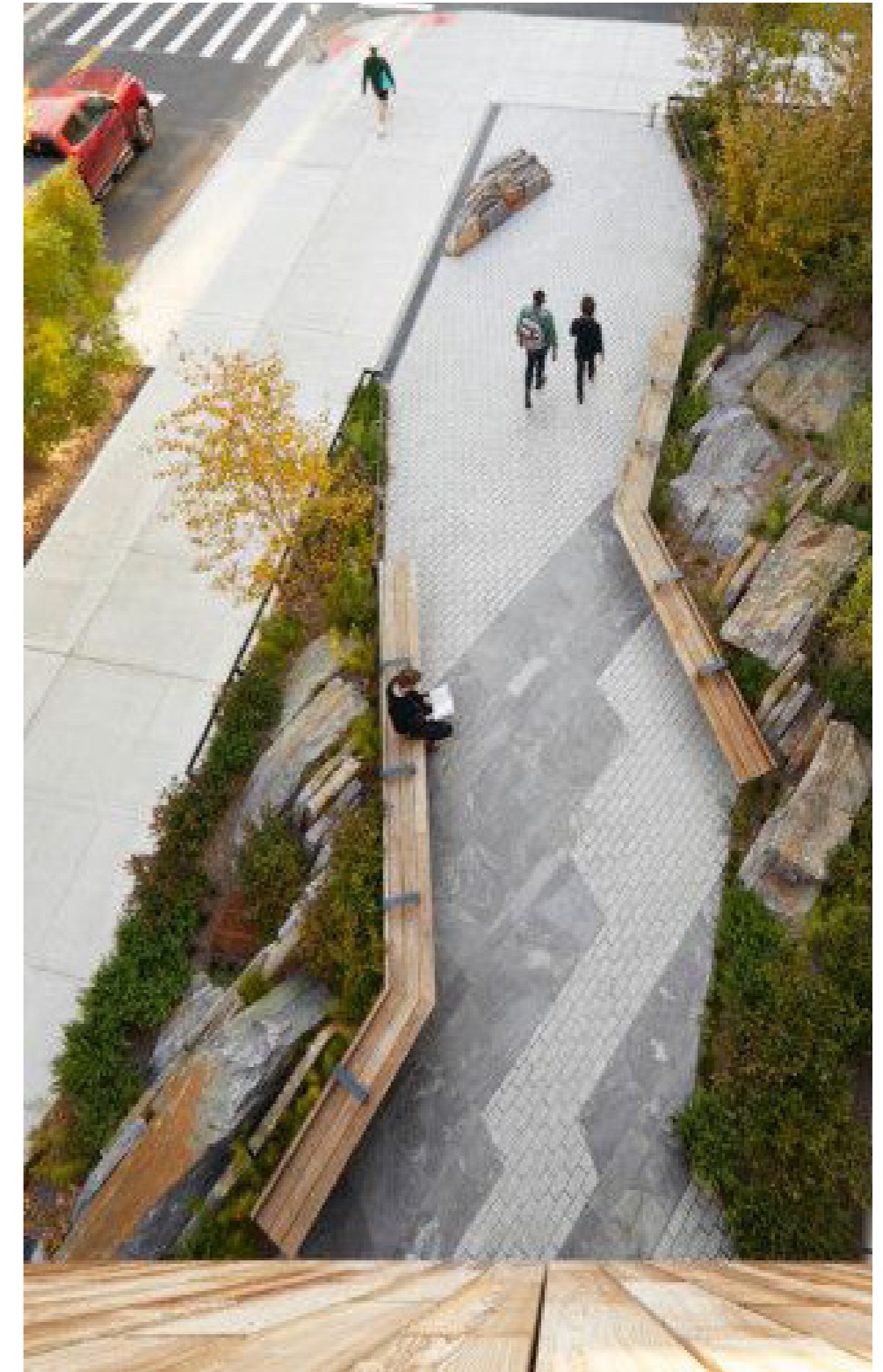


Figure 4.7.3 Gateway Precedents

4.8 Action Plan - Masterplan Projects

| Project | Theme | Project Delivery | Timeframe | Cost | Funding Options | Consultees |
|--|---------|------------------|-----------|---|------------------------------|--|
| Trailhead | | | | | | |
| Upgrade Planting to Old Army Barracks and Surrounds. Public Realm improvements to existing open space and safety fence to water's edge. Ensure site is safe for access and secure loose materials on structures. | Enable | OCC | Short | <€500k | RRDF, TVR, ORIS, LEADER, JTF | OCC, Local Community Groups |
| Improve Universal Access and overall aesthetic. Provide Bus Parking and Car Parking. | Enable | OCC | Medium | <€500k | RRDF, TVR, JTF | OCC, Residents, Local Community Groups |
| Provide events / market space in Old Army Barracks. | Enhance | OCC | Medium | <€500k | TVR, LEADER, RRD, ORIS, JTF | OCC, Local Community Groups, FI, Local Businesses, Residents |
| Develop elevated boardwalk along river edge. | Entice | WI,OCC | Longterm | €500k / €1m | ORIS, LEADER, RRDF, JTF | WI, OCC, FI, Local Community Groups |
| Pedestrian / cycle link beneath existing bridge. | Entice | OCC | Longterm | €500k / €1m | ORIS, LEADER, RRDF, JTF, AT | WI, OCC, Local Community Groups |
| Marina | | | | | | |
| Remove parking along waterfront and create pedestrian access. Restrict motorised traffic in the area. | Enable | WI,OCC | Short | <€500k | RRDF, TVR, AT, JTF | WI, OCC, Cruise Hire Businesses, Water Adventure Businesses, Residents |
| Provide additional parking and boat trailer parking spaces. | Enhance | OCC,WI | Medium | <€500k | RRDF, AT, ORIS, JTF | OCC, Water Adventure Businesses, Cruise Hire Businesses, WI, Local Businesses, Local Community Groups |
| New jetty in existing harbour area. Provide additional public moorings. | Entice | WI | Medium | €1m / €5m | RRDF, FI, JTF | OCC, FI, Cruise Hire Businesses, Water Adventure Businesses |
| Install seasonal barriers at entrance to parking / boat launch area. Incorporate public WCs and small public spaces along water's edge. Kiosk for dedicated boat launch management. | Enhance | OCC,WI | Medium | <€500k | RRDF, WI, ORIS, JTF | OCC, Water Adventure Businesses, WI, Cruise Hire Businesses |
| New Canoe / Kayak / SUP launch. | Enable | WI | Short | <€500k | RRDF, ORIS, LEADER, JTF | Water Adventure Businesses, FI, OCC, Cruise Hire Businesses, Local Community Groups |
| Public Realm | | | | | | |
| Relocate Playground and create seating area. Improve public realm surfaces and public lighting. Additional trees and planting. Entrance 'gateway'. | Enhance | OCC | Medium | €500k / €1m | LEADER, RRDF, ORIS, TVR | OCC, Water Adventure Businesses, Cruise Hire Businesses, Residents, Local Community Groups, Offaly Local Development Company |
| Improve bathroom and changing facilities. Provide Tourism Information kiosk. | Enable | OCC | Short | <€500k | LEADER, ORIS, JTF, RRDF | FI, WI, Local Community Groups, Water Adventure Businesses, Cruise Hire Businesses |
| Improve surface materials for Universal Access. | Enable | OCC | Short | €500k / €1m | RRDF, TVR, JTF, AT | OCC, Water Adventure Businesses, Local Community Groups, Cruise Hire Businesses |
| Gateway | | | | | | |
| Conservation Masterplan for Royal Shannon Hotel regeneration and development. | Enhance | OCC | Short | <€500k | RRDF | WI, Local Community Groups, Local Businesses, UE, FI, Cruise Hire Businesses, Water Adventure Businesses |
| Pedestrian links / road crossings from Trailhead to Marina area. | Entice | OCC | Medium | €500k / €1m | AT, RRDF | OCC, Residents, Local Businesses, Local Community Groups |
| Redevelopment of Royal Shannon Hotel and Public Plaza area. | Entice | OCC | Longterm | €1m / €5m | RRDF, JTF | UE, WI, FI, Local Community Groups, Local Businesses, Water Adventure Businesses, Cruise Hire Businesses |
| Provision of Sionn Mhara Boathouse. | Enhance | OCC | Medium | <€500k | LEADER, TVR, ORIS, RRDF, JTF | OCC, Local Community Groups, Offaly Local Development Company |
| Relocate Uisce Eireann Pumping Station. | Enable | UE | Medium | €500k / €1m | UE, RRDF | OCC, Residents, Local Businesses |
| RRDF - Rural Regeneration and Development Fund / TVR - Town & Village Renewal / AT - Active Travel / JTF - Just Transition Fund / UE - Uisce Eireann / ORIS - Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme | | | | OCC - Offaly County Council / UI - Uisce Eireann / WI - Waterways Ireland / FI - Failte Ireland | | |

Table 4.3 Action Plan - Masterplan Projects