



WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL
Local Authority Development

Mullingar Municipal District

Enhancement of Mullingar Town Centre Civic Areas

File Ref. LA(M)111

**Planning Report in Accordance with Section 179 of the Planning and
Development Act 2000 – 2014 and Part 8 of the Planning and
Development Regulations**

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1. Introduction:

EU Structural Funds Programme 2014 – 2020 offered grant assistance through the Northern & Western Regional Assembly in 2015 for designated growth centres (Gateways). The assistance was indicated to be for designated urban centres to submit capital projects which fit with their integrated strategies to tackle the social, economic, environmental, climate and demographic challenges affecting them. The objective of this Designated Urban Centres Grant Scheme is to contribute to improvement in the development potential of Irish urban centres by investing in, and enhancing their economic, social and environmental conditions.

Westmeath County Council submitted an application for grant assistance to the Northern & Western Regional Assembly for the Enhancement of Mullingar Town Centre Civic Areas.

The grant assistance project focused on the primary public spaces in the centre of the Town: Pearse Street-Castle Street Junction; Market Square/House; Dominick Square; and linkages between these spaces to public car parks serving the town. All these junctions currently are designed and laid out primarily to cater for vehicular traffic which had to come through the centre of the town. With the development of orbital routes all completed, the opportunity now presents itself to enhance the urban environment and to provide for improved pedestrian movement in these busy town centre locations. Consistent with adopted policies for the town centre, the proposed scheme seeks to create vibrant and sustainable urban spaces. This revitalisation will enhance the sense of pride and ownership of the area, underpin retail and economic activity in the town centre and provide opportunities for increased residential use.

As part of the design of the scheme to improve the public realm for the pedestrian it was considered essential that the design would also need to include provision for vehicular traffic visiting and servicing the core of the town. As a consequence this scheme includes amendments to other junctions to facilitate the movement of vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian traffic.

2. Site /Location & Context:

The eight sites subject of the current proposal are located within town centre of Mullingar. Running from west to east the sites are as follows:

Site 1: The Green Bridge signalised junction including sections of Patrick Street, the Green Road, Dominick Street and the Railway Station roadway.

Site 2: The junction of Dominick Street and Grove Street.

- Site 3: Dominick Square (including sections of Dominick Street, Mary Street and Oliver Plunkett Street) onto Dominick Place, Blackhall Place (including sections of Grove Street and Blackhall Street) onto the northern portion of Blackhall car park together with the Blackhall Place Car Park through road that runs in a north south direction leading from Blackhall Street running along the side the Department of Social Protection building until it meets the roadway constructed to the south of County Buildings (including a section of Mount Street Gardens).
- Site 4: Market Square (including sections of Oliver Plunkett Street, Martins Lane and Pearse Street) and Mount Street (including a section of its junction with Blackhall Street).
- Site 5: The junction of Pearse Street, Church Avenue and Castle Street.
- Site 6: Bleach Yard at the junction of Jail Hill, Mount Street with Blackhall Place Car Park through road, Sundays Well Road and the Lynn Road.
- Site 7: Coynes Corner at the junction of Austin Friars Street, McCurtain Street and Millmount Road.
- Site 8: The Dublin Bridge signalised junction including Austin Friars Street, Delvin Road and Dublin Road.

The majority of the sites lie within, partially within or adjacent to the Architectural Conservation Area of the town centre. Similarly the majority of the sites lie within, partially within or adjacent to the town centre Zone of Archaeological Potential. A number of structures surrounding the sites are listed on the Record of Protected Structures.

Site 2 contains a protected structure (RPS 019-065) being a section of limestone kerbing and is of regional importance. Site 3 contains a protected structure (RPS 019-195) being a monument/sculpture commemorating the effects of The Great Famine and is rated as being of regional importance. Site 7 contains a protected structure (RPS 019-122) cast-iron pillar box and is also rated as being of regional importance.

Site 3 contains a recorded monument (WM019-089004) being described as a Religious House – Dominick Friars. Site 6 contains a recorded monument (WM019-089014) being described as a Ford.

3. Description of nature and extent of the proposed development:

Site 1:

- The installation of Intelligent Traffic Signals in place of existing traffic signals in order to enhance the efficiency and capacity of the junction.

Site 2:

- A right turn lane for vehicles turning right from Dominick St. to Grove St.; and
- Right turn from Grove St. to Dominick St. to be banned

Site 3:

- Reduce the inscribed circle diameter of the existing roundabout at Dominick Square to create a larger civic area and create wider footpaths;
- Reverse the existing one-way system along Dominick Place from south to north, to north to south to aid the flow of traffic following the creation of the one-way system from south to north along Mount St;
- Re-orientate the existing parking along Dominick St. to be parallel. This will create safer parking and allow for the increase in footpath width;
- Construct new pedestrian crossings at each of the roundabout junction arms;
- Widen footpaths along Blackhall Place Roundabout;
- Change all footpath paving in favour of new footpath; and
- Brick pave Dominick Place road carriageway and the new roundabout carriageway for aesthetic purposes
- The provision of new and improvement to existing road markings within Blackhall Place Car Park in order to better define the existing road.
- The installation of Intelligent Traffic Signals in place of existing traffic signals in order to enhance the efficiency and capacity of the junction
- Assessment of and provision of pedestrian infrastructure along the through road in Blackhall Place Car Park

Site 4:

- Reduce the road carriageway width to 6.5m and widen footpaths;
- Create a one-way system along Mount St. flowing from south to north in order to facilitate footpath widening along Mount St.;
- Change all footpath paving in favour of new;
- Install brick paving at the Mount St./Market Square junction carriageway for aesthetic purposes;
- Retain signalised junction arrangement and construct new pedestrian crossings on each junction arm; and
- Plant new trees for aesthetic purposes.

Site 5:

- Remove existing roundabout and construct a signalised junction arrangement in its place;
- Minor footpath widening to all footpaths on each of the junction arms;
- Change all footpath paving in favour of new;
- Construct new pedestrian crossings at each junction arm; and
- Plant new trees for aesthetic purposes.

Site 6:

- Assessment of and provision of pedestrian infrastructure

Site 7:

- The installation of Intelligent Traffic Signals in place of existing traffic signals in order to enhance the efficiency and capacity of the junction

Site 8:

- The installation of Intelligent Traffic Signals in place of existing traffic signals in order to enhance the efficiency and capacity of the junction

Details reported on:

Drawing no.s: MGT0339DG0016-01 (revP01)
MGT0339DG0016-02 (revP01)
MGT0339DG0016-03 (revP01)
MGT0339DG0016-04 (revP01)
MGT0339DG0016-05 (revP01)
MGT0339DG0016-06 (revP01)
MGT0339DG0016-07 (revP01)
MGT0339DG0016-08 (revP01)
MGT0339DG0016-09 (revP01)
MGT0339DG0017-01 (revP01)
MGT0339DG0018-01 (revP01)
MGT0339DG0018-02 (revP01)

Enhancement of Mullingar Town Centre Civic Areas, Part 8 Planning Report, *RPS*, 30.06.17

Enhancement of Mullingar Town Centre Civic Areas, Screening for Appropriate Assessment, *RPS*, 27.06.17

Enhancement of Mullingar Town Centre Civic Areas, Feasibility and Constraints, *RPS*, 28.06.17

Enhancement of Mullingar Town Centre Civic Areas, Traffic Modelling Report, *RPS*, 30.06.17

Archaeological Screening Assessment of the Enhancement of Mullingar Town Centre, IAC Archaeology, October 2016

4. Planning Histories

- 98/1286** THE MINISTER FOR ARTS, GAELTACHT, AND THE ISLANDS ERECT PEDESTRIAN RAILING AND ERECT MESH PANELS ALONG THE EXISTING POST AND BOLLARDS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BRIDGE GREEN BRIDGE,, MULLINGAR CONDITIONAL
- 98/832 *** TELECOM EIREANN DOUBLE TELEPHONE KIOSK ON PEDESTAL THE SQUARE, DOMINICK STREET/, OLIVER PLUNKETT ST., MGAR CONDITIONAL
- 96/1013 *** DEPARTMENT OF ARTS, CULTURE AND THE GAELTACHT, WATERWAYS SERVICE CONSTRUCTION OF A REPLACEMENT BRIDGE MORAN'S BRIDGE,, BELLVIEW ROAD,, MULLINGAR CONDITIONAL
- 81/759** CHARLES MULLIGAN ERECT SIGN AT DOMINICK STREET, MULLINGAR. APPLICATION FINALISED

5. Policies/Objectives

Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014-2020

4.5 TOWN CENTRE POLICIES

It is a policy of the Council:

P-TC1	To adopt a design led strategy in assessing the impact of development on the Town Centre, in accordance with Guidelines issued to Planning Authorities by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009.
P-TC2	To require new development to positively contribute to a network of streets and spaces, in terms of infill additions to the streetscape, or by creating links through sites where opportunity exists.
P-TC3	To require applications for significant development in the Town Centre to be accompanied by Design Statements, which should demonstrate how the proposal adheres to the design principles as specified in Development Management Standards chapter.
P-TC4	To apply Traffic Management measures to the Town Centre area which are in accordance with 'Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets' (2013).

4.8 CHARACTER AREAS POLICIES & OBJECTIVE

It is a policy of the Council:

P-CA1	To protect and enhance the existing streetscape including the historic core of the Town, its built form, development pattern and laneways.
P-CA2	To promote high quality urban design which responds positively to the town's historic character and architectural heritage.
P-CA3	To have regard to the qualities and established and distinctive Character Areas within the Town Centre in the assessment of development proposals within these areas.
P-CA4	To retain the residential base within the Town Centre and protect the residential amenities of existing property.

4.12 PUBLIC SPACE POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:

P-PS1	To support the organisation and operation of events and markets within the Town Centre core, utilising streets and public spaces.
P-PS2	To continue to enhance the environmental quality of the Town Centre and the creation of a network of civic spaces including places for civic gatherings and community activity.

It is an objective of the Council:

O-PS1	To provide a network of interconnected pedestrian routes and alleyways through the Town Centre which link the town core, Cathedral, Town Park, Railway Station and primary public spaces.
O-PS2	To progressively upgrade and enhance primary public space areas in the Town Centre, applying Urban Design principles of shared space usage, subject to Architectural Heritage protection.
O-PS3	To examine the feasibility of enhancing the Public Space Area in front of the main Post Office and reconfiguration of existing pedestrian access arrangements.
O-PS5	To provide enhanced public space areas for public events and markets.

4.14 ACCESS & CONNECTIVITY POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:

P-AC1	To adopt an integrated design approach to transportation management, street and public space design in the Town Centre area in accordance with "Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets", Department of
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	Environment, Community and Local Government and Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, (2013).
P-AC2	To create an environment in the Town Centre in which vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians can safely co-exist and share public space.
P-AC3	To minimise vehicular traffic volumes in the Town Centre through traffic management measures.
P-AC4	To secure the creation of a safe walking and cycling environment in the Town Centre and to limit the impact of vehicular traffic on the Town Centre environment.

It is an objective of the Council:

O-AC1	To provide parking areas for bicycles within the Town Centre, subject to architectural and townscape character protection.
O-AC2	To maintain reduced car parking requirements for Town Centre areas in accordance with Development Management Standards contained in Chapter 9.
O-AC3	To provide enhanced pedestrian spaces and connectivity in the Town Centre including widened footpaths and well designed crossings and public spaces.

4.17 INFILL & REDEVELOPMENT POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:

P-IR1	To require all new development to draw on the intrinsic qualities of Mullingar's urban environment and add to the local distinctiveness and sense of place that forms the basis of the town's unique character and attractive urban form.
P-IR2	To ensure high quality open spaces are provided and maintained to create vibrant civic spaces for a wide range of active and passive activities.

It is a policy of the Council:

P-DU4	To promote the use of upper floors of Town Centre properties for residential use and the provision of residential accommodation in all Town Centre redevelopments on mixed use zonings.
P-DU5	To encourage culture and entertainment uses within the Town Centre and other uses that support the evening economy.
P-DU6	To protect existing residential amenity from the undue encroachment of commercial uses in the Town Centre.
P-DU7	To provide for consolidation of the Town Centre area by prioritising the development of underutilised/ brownfield sites and key infill sites.
P-DU8	To curtail the number of take aways and betting offices in the Town Centre.
P-DU9	To seek the renewal of derelict, underutilised and vacant properties within the Town Centre.
P-DU10	To support and strengthen the Retail Core by providing for a diversity of shops and businesses to ensure vitality of the Town Centre.

It is an objective of the Council:

O-DU1	To prepare a Town Centre Management Strategy in consultation with all relevant stakeholders within the Town Centre. The Strategy shall be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment.
O-DU3	To undertake a health check of the Town Centre, identifying occupancy levels, variety of uses and the vitality of the Town Centre, within two years of adoption of the plan.
O-DU4	To prepare and implement a Public Realm Strategy for the Town Centre area incorporating the creation of a network of interconnected civic spaces.

7.11 BUILT HERITAGE POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:	
P-BH1	To protect and conserve buildings, structures and sites contained in the Record of Protected Structures and to resist the demolition of such structures, in accordance with 'Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2004).
P-BH2	To prevent forms of development that would be injurious to the town's architectural and archaeological heritage.
P-BH3	To preserve and protect Mullingar's built environment in terms of streetscapes, individual buildings and features of historical, architectural or artistic interest.
P-BH4	To resist the demolition of vernacular architecture of historical, cultural and aesthetic merit, which make a positive contribution to the character, appearance and quality of the local streetscape.
P-BH7	To protect the character of designated Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) including the public realm area associated therewith and to resist inappropriate development that would detract from the heritage value of these areas.

6. Observations/Submissions:

The application was advertised in the Westmeath Examiner on 08.07.17 and site notices were erected dated 04.07.17.

The proposal was considered with regard to statutory consultees as required under Article 82 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001(as amended) and referrals sent to:

- Department of Environment Heritage & Local Government (Built and Natural Heritage)
- An Taisce
- Irish Water Planning Notifications
- The Heritage Council
- Waterways Ireland
- Failte Ireland
- Inland Fisheries
- Office of Public Works

Observations and submissions have been received from:

Patrick Street Traders

Non provision of works/improvements to Patrick Street

Chief Executive's Response

It is acknowledged that other streets and public areas within the town would benefit from an enhancement scheme, the choice of areas to invest the grant funding has however been determined by the Mullingar Local Area Plan Objective O-PS2 which seeks to progressively upgrade and enhance primary public space areas

James Maher

Querying the extent of the proposed works

Chief Executive's Response

The extent of the works are clearly shown in the part VIII documents. Public meetings were held to explain the extent of the works and answer queries. Staff were available in the County Buildings to answer specific queries raised.

Eddie King, King Auctioneers

- 3.1 Objects to creating a cul de sac at Martins Lane – outlines current users and resulting difficulties
- 3.2 Suggests creating a one way roadway from College Street to Penney's roundabout.
- 3.3 Requests details of a comparison town that has implemented a radical change

Chief Executive's Response

- 3.1 The objective to extinguish the south access from Martins Lane was focused on the principle to maximise the Market House Junction capacity and ensure pedestrian safety. WCC have reviewed the proposed design and incorporated the submissions into the design of the junction.
- 3.2 Traffic model clearly outlines there is sufficient capacity in the existing road network.
- 3.3 Westport and Portadown.

Pearse Street businesses

- 4.1 Welcomes opportunity to comment
- 4.2 Recognise that an initiative of this nature will require co-operation of many stakeholders, including business owners
- 4.3 Recognise that the plan is aimed at changing travel patterns
- 4.4 Recognise that the plan is formulated within a challenging business and retail environment
- 4.5 Consider that a consultation framework would have been beneficial prior to the preparation of the proposed plan
- 4.6 Request a consultation so that other options could be presented and a range of alternatives be considered and evaluated
- 4.7 No impact statement detailing the need for the proposal and impacts that it will have on businesses has been prepared
- 4.8 Concern raised with regard to more limited vehicular access and parking, including the removal of a roundabout, changes to footpath and carriageway widths and restrictions on Martin's Lane
- 4.9 Concerns on shunting of vehicles from the town centre to Blackhall and impact on businesses
- 4.10 Concern – absence of a shared spatial/temporal analysis where streets have different uses depending on the day/time of day
- 4.11 Questions whether further input from business owners will be sought
- 4.12 Request daily free parking period of two hours between noon and 2pm
- 4.13 Commends WCC on seeking ways to improve the fabric of the town but requests mitigation measures to avoid/ameliorate negative impacts on businesses

Chief Executive's Response

- 4.1 Noted
- 4.2 Noted
- 4.3 Noted
- 4.4 Noted
- 4.5 & 4.6 The project has fully complied with the planning process including consultation.
- 4.7 The improved public realm will have a positive effect on businesses as footfall will be increased. The proposals are in line with European National and local policies, Environmental and Traffic Impact reports formed part of the application.
- 4.8 There is no proposal to limit vehicular access, all carriageway widths and modifications to junctions are designed in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets. The objective to extinguish the south access from Martins Lane was focused on the principle to maximise the Market House Junction capacity and ensure pedestrian safety. WCC have reviewed the proposed design and incorporated the submissions into the design of this specific junction.
- 4.9 Maximising the use of existing car parks while encouraging a modal shift to increase pedestrian activity will lead to a significant increase in footfall past businesses doors.
- 4.10 The urban improvement project will increase public use of areas and will enhance spatial/temporal changes in the public realm.
- 4.11 The project has fully complied with the planning process including consultation. All submissions will be fully evaluated and incorporated into the final scheme design.
- 4.12 WCC currently have a 'business parking permit' scheme.

4.13 Noted

Mullingar Town Team

- 5.1 Welcomes funding for the project
- 5.2 Concern raised over loss of parking and the potential to push customers to use other retail centres
- 5.3 Lack of consultation and a framework plan
- 5.4 Recommends that the scheme is aligned to the Westmeath Retail Strategy with plans for improving shop fronts and occupying vacant premises and residential premises and Tourism Plan.
- 5.5 Considers that the following are positive aspects of the scheme – intelligent traffic lights; wider footpaths with better paving; footpath surfaces free of slopes and water pools; seating and table facilities
- 5.6 Concerns raised on the following aspects: parking reduction; currently poor quality car parks, too far from shops, badly sign posted;
- 5.7 will increase taxi fares;
- 5.8 current lack of loading bays creates traffic problems – not addressed; 5.9 Closing Martins Lane will cause traffic problems on Bishopsgate Street;
- 5.10 Piecemeal plan with no long term vision – what happens if temporary car parks are lost?;
- 5.11 no cost benefit analysis;
- 5.12 plan appears ambitious for short time frame;
- 5.13 questions advantage of making Mount Street one way south to north as opposed to an opposite flow;
- 5.14 requests footpaths on Mount Street to be of equal width;
- 5.15 Loss of right turn lane from Austin Friars Street into Millmount Road will cause traffic congestion;
- 5.16 Banned right turn from Railway into Dominick Street will cause unnecessary hardship;
- 5.17 the proposal for cycling lanes is unclear;
- 5.18 sewage and water issues in Bishopsgate Street, Harbour Street need to be addressed;
- 5.19 eliminating filters at Castle Street and Mary Street will cause traffic chaos;
- 5.20 Timing of traffic survey;
- 5.21 aim to reduce traffic volumes in the town and encourage use of bypasses.
- 5.22 Suggestions to create various museums; external lift to Market House; portable Band Stand; covered walkways from car parks to shops; signage indicating routes to shops;
- 5.23 customer car parking at the top rows of the Blackhall Car Park; reduced cost for employees at the lower end of the Blackhall Car Park; free parking until 12 noon on Saturdays;
- 5.24 parking app;
- 5.25 consider providing car park at the back of Heatons;
- 5.26 organise intelligent traffic signals for Martins Lane;
- 5.27 angled parking for Dominick Street instead of parallel;
- 5.28 consider impact on night life of town;
- 5.29 provide shuttle buses;
- 5.30 routes from College Street to the Fair Green;
- 5.31 invest money in Marketing Mullingar;
- 5.32 recommend bringing a delegation of WCC and business reps to other towns;

- 5.33 invest money in clearing skyline in Austin Friars Street and Patrick Street;
- 5.34 were emergency services consulted;
- 5.35 questions cost of various elements;
- 5.36 what plans are there to attract people to the squares;
- 5.37 suggests trial run of making Mount Street one way;
- 5.38 are there plans to increase the numbers of disability parking spaces?;
- 5.39 If phase one goes ahead is phase two automatic?;
- 5.40 what plans are there to improve lighting and security of Blackhall car park

Chief Executive's Response

5.1 Noted

5.2 Reduction in on street car parking spaces is 17. Off Street Car parks have surplus capacity to allow for loss of on street parking. The improved public realm will have a positive effect on businesses as footfall will be increased.

5.3 The project has fully complied with the planning process including consultation and the framework plan has been determined by the Mullingar Local Area Plan.

5.4 The development accords with the Development Plan, of which the other plans mentioned form part.

5.5 Noted

5.6 Reduction in on street car parking spaces is 17. Off Street Car parks have surplus capacity to allow for loss of on street parking. New signage will be installed.

5.7 It is not anticipated that the proposed changes will have any significant increase in taxi fares.

5.8 New set down area will be provided on Mount St

5.9 The objective to extinguish the south access from Martins Lane was focused on the principle to maximise the Market House Junction capacity and ensure pedestrian safety. WCC have reviewed the proposed design and incorporated the submissions into the design of the junction.

5.10 Outside the scope of the project 5.11 The increased footfall should have a positive effect on businesses opportunity for "impulse" buying increases

5.12 Noted

5.13 Traffic model clearly outlines this is maximising the traffic movement while also maximising the potential to increase the public realm within Market House.

5.14 This is proposed.

5.15 This is not proposed in this part VIII.

5.16 The proposal to extinguish the right turn manoeuvre from Railway Row onto Dominick Street was focused on the principle of maximising the efficiency of Railway Row vehicular traffic movement. WCC have reviewed the proposed design and incorporated the submissions into the design of the junction, the difference in total journey time will be extended but not to a significant degree.

5.17 Cycle lanes are not being provided due to insufficient space to accommodate parking. Shared surface for vehicles and cyclists are proposed and are in accordance with the national cycle manual.

5.18 Will be referred to the appropriate department.

5.19 Traffic model shows no negative impact as a result of removing these filters. All traffic proposals together will reduce traffic congestion as per the model results.

5.20 The date of the traffic counts was chosen to reflect a busier traffic day than normal in order to produce a robust traffic model.

- 5.21 The objective of the plan is to make the town centre more attractive. The purpose of this project is not to discourage people from Mullingar, the traffic survey outlined that circa 9000 vehicles pass through Mullingar without stopping. The plans are aimed to encourage these motorists to stop and do business in our town or alternatively use the orbital routes if there is no intention to stop. Encouraging (not forcing) this specific (category) traffic to use the bypass will create a less congested, less polluted town centre.
- 5.22 It is acknowledged that other streets and public areas within the town would benefit from an enhancement scheme or works, the choice of areas to invest the grant funding has however been determined by the Mullingar Local Area Plan Objective O-PS2 which seeks to progressively upgrade and enhance primary public space areas.
- 5.23 WCC currently have a 'business parking permit' scheme.
- 5.24 This is currently being considered by WCC as a separate matter
- 5.25 This is outside the scope of the project
- 5.26 see 5.9
- 5.27 This is outside the scope of the current project
- 5.28 The increased footfall should have a positive effect.
- 5.29 Noted
- 5.30 Traffic model clearly outlines there is sufficient capacity in the existing road network.
- 5.31 This falls outside the scope of the grant funding
- 5.32 This is proposed.
- 5.33 It is acknowledged that other streets and public areas within the town would benefit from an enhancement scheme, the choice of areas to invest the grant funding has however been determined by the Mullingar Local Area Plan Objective O-PS2 which seeks to progressively upgrade and enhance primary public space areas.
- 5.34 Emergency Services were consulted.
- 5.35 A schedule of costs is supplied in the part VIII documents
- 5.36 The objective of the plan is to make the town centre more attractive, to increase the public realm available to the pedestrian and other civic uses.
- 5.37 Traffic model clearly outlines there is sufficient capacity in the existing road network.
- 5.38 No alterations are proposed in this project
- 5.39 This Part VIII process covers part 1 of the project only
- 5.40 All proposed works are outlined on the part VIII drawings and details

Terry Toal, Rosa Villa, Harbour Street

- 6.1 No adequate consultation with stakeholders
- 6.2 traffic plan based and not true enhancement – will cause congestion and negative traffic flow
- 6.3 Lack of strategic analysis for the whole town centre
- 6.4 Suggests other projects could benefit from the funding such as Harbour Street Public Realm Enhancement Plan

Chief Executive's Response

- 6.1 The project has fully complied with the planning process including consultation
- 6.2 Traffic model clearly outlines this is maximising the traffic movement while also maximising the potential to increase the public realm.

6.3 The Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014-2020 outlines the strategy for the town centre and this scheme adheres to the objectives of this plan.

6.4 It is acknowledged that other streets and public areas within the town would benefit from an enhancement scheme, the choice of areas to invest the grant funding has however been determined by the Mullingar Local Area Plan Objective O-PS2 which seeks to progressively upgrade and enhance primary public space areas.

Des Walsh, 14 Oliver Plunkett Street

7.1 Traffic management plan

7.2 No report on how the works will attract people and business to Mullingar

7.3 No cost benefit analysis

7.4 Retail strategy should be considered in conjunction with the enhancement plan

7.5 Lack of consultation with all key stakeholders

7.6 Differences between draft plans and final plan pointed out (car parking)

7.7 Parking is a benefit to shoppers – main street parking necessary for town centre businesses to survive

7.8 Questions parking provision for the town if Blackhall place car park is redeveloped

7.9 Requests that phase 2 is removed

7.10 Loss of filter lanes at junctions for school traffic

7.11 Making Martins Lane a cul-de-sac – blind exit onto Bishopsgate Street

7.12 Changing the direction of Mount Street would not force traffic to use back streets, why was north direction chosen?

7.13 Questions whether vehicles will be able to exit Church Avenue to the east

7.14 Construction works could prejudice businesses in the town centre, requests retailer meetings with construction workers to address this

7.15 Suggests other streets that could benefit from enhancements, installing a lift in the Market House, requests old style public lights and signposting, remove over head cables in Austin Friars Street and Patrick Street, promote Royal Canal cycle way and Old Rail Trail with signage for the town centre, incentivise re-using vacant over the shop properties would rejuvenate town centre, use money to acquire Column Barracks.

7.16 install vehicle bridge beside Carey Bridge,

7.17 Visit towns where improvements have occurred – Castlebar, Edenderry, Drogheda

7.18 Questions who will manage cyclists riding on pavements

7.19 Have Gardai and Ambulance Service been consulted?

7.20 Taxis from waiting area on Railway Row will not be able to turn right to main taxi rank in Dominick Street

7.21 Will parking on Grove Street be banned?

7.22 Is right turn into Grove Street sufficient to accommodate additional traffic

7.23 Traffic lights did not work previously at the junction of Castle Street and Pearse Street.

7.24 Has the initial no right turn from Austin Friars Street into Millmount Road been removed from the scheme?

7.25 What facilities have been made for delivery vehicles

7.26 How long will cobbles last with heavy truck use?

7.27 If footpaths are widened will shops be allowed to put out tables and chairs without extra charges?

7.28 Request that retail strategy is published.

7.29 Requests details of examples of town where such works have been a success and brought business benefits.

7.30 Is WCC trying to close down Mullingar?

Chief Executive's Response

7.1 As part of the design of the scheme to improve the public realm for the pedestrian it was considered essential that the design would also need to include provision for vehicular traffic visiting and servicing the core of the town.

7.2 & 7.3 The general principle of the scheme is fully supported and funded through the ERDF. There is two key principle involved in the project a) Enhancement of public realm b) modal shift. The proposal is in full compliance with the overall objectives. From European and National perspectives the citizens and by direct correlation business benefit from urban enhancements. WCC application for the funding and its successful receipt of funding directly reflects the merits of the project design. Motorists are encouraged to use car parks and walk around town, this will increase footfall past businesses doors. Traffic model shows Traffic model clearly outlines this is maximising the traffic movement while also maximising the potential to increase the public realm.

7.4 This scheme reflects the current retail strategy

7.5 The project has fully complied with the planning process including consultation

7.6 Noted

7.7 Reduction in on street car parking spaces is 17. Off Street Car parks have surplus capacity to allow for loss of on street parking. New signage will be installed

7.8 The development of any private land holding will fall under the planning process and the current policy/objectives if the MLAP

7.9 Boundary of the Project is clearly outlined.

7.10 Traffic model clearly outlines there is sufficient capacity and proves no negative impact as a result of removing these filters

7.11 The objective to extinguish the south access from Martins Lane was focused on the principle to maximise the Market House Junction capacity and ensure pedestrian safety. WCC have reviewed the proposed design and incorporated the submissions into the design of the junction

7.12 Traffic model clearly outlines this is maximising the traffic movement while also maximising the potential to increase the public realm within Market House

7.13 Yes

7.14 Contract document will reflect these concerns and minimise the impact. Through the Chambers of Commerce consultation will take place.

7.15 It is acknowledged that other streets and public areas within the town would benefit from an enhancement scheme, the choice of areas to invest the grant funding has however been determined by the Mullingar Local Area Plan Objective O-PS2 which seeks to progressively upgrade and enhance primary public space areas.

7.16 Noted

7.17 Westport and Portadown

7.18 This is a policing issue

7.19 The project has fully complied with the planning process including consultation

7.20 The proposal to extinguish the right turn manoeuvre from Railway Row onto Dominick Street was focused on the principle of maximising the efficiency of Railway Row vehicular traffic movement. WCC have reviewed the proposed design and incorporated the submissions into the design of the junction, the difference in total journey time will be extended but not to a significant degree.

- 7.21 Not part of the scheme.
- 7.22 Traffic model shows no negative impact as a result of this change.
- 7.23 Traffic model shows no negative impact as a result of this change Apart from the installation of new intelligent signals there is NO alteration to the existing movements at this junction
- 7.24 Not proposed in this part VIII
- 7.25 Additional set down area provided on Mount Street
- 7.26 The design specification will reflect the proposed use
- 7.27 Street trading will be encouraged subject to licence.
- 7.28 This is relevant to planning department
- 7.29 Westport and Portadown.
- 7.30 Traffic model clearly outlines this is maximising the traffic movement while also maximising the potential to increase the public realm

Siobhan McCarthy, 16 Lynn Heights

- 8.1 Traffic Management Plan not Civic Enhancement
- 8.2 No consideration given to elderly, disabled, visually impaired, parents with babies and toddlers or residents.
- 8.3 Concerned with increased congestion on road during school runs periods
- 8.4 Loss of disabled parking spaces
- 8.5 What type of delineation will be used to define the paths from roads
- 8.6 Provision of loading bays
- 8.7 Concerned with increase in traffic flow in Blackhall Car Park
- 8.8 Concerned with increase in taxi fares
- 8.9 Questions provision of access links from Blackhall Car Park to town during winter
- 8.10 No consideration given to cyclists who wish to cycle through the town. The reduction in width of the roads will make it more dangerous for cyclists
- 8.11 What will the carbon footprint be as a result of these measures
- 8.12 Access of buses into town?
- 8.13 Traffic congestion leading to pollution.
- 8.14 If this is meant to be Civic enhancement why is 2.4million being spent on two junctions in the town

Chief Executive's Response

- 8.1 As part of the design of the scheme to improve the public realm for the pedestrian it was considered essential that the design would also need to include provision for vehicular traffic visiting and servicing the core of the town.
- 8.2 Enhancements proposed include widening of footpaths; this will assist people with disabilities and prams. Tactile paving is to be enhanced also to assist visually impaired
- 8.3 Traffic model shows no negative effect
- 8.4 The level of disabled parking spaces is not proposed to be altered
- 8.5 Kerbs will be used to define paths from roads
- 8.6 Additional set down area provided on Mount Street
- 8.7 Traffic model shows no negative effect
- 8.8 It is not anticipated that the proposed changes will have any significant increase in taxi fares.
- 8.9 Works to improve pedestrian links are proposed
- 8.10 Cyclists are catered for by means of a shared surface between vehicles and cyclists.

- 8.11 The scheme aims to improve the public realm for the pedestrian and cyclist which will in turn reduce the carbon footprint of the town.
- 8.12 Bus access will not be restricted
- 8.13 The installation of Intelligent Traffic Signals will reduce traffic congestion and assist traffic flow through the town.
- 8.14 The choice of areas to invest the grant funding has been determined by the Mullingar Local Area Plan Objective O-PS2 which seeks to progressively upgrade and enhance primary public space areas.

Eoin Walsh, 14 Oliver Plunkett Street

- 9.1 Objected to the exclusion of right turning manoeuvre from Pearse Street into Church Avenue together with removal of roundabout resulting in increased travel time for taxis returning to rank
- 9.2 Objected to the extension of footpath in Church Street outside Just books – reduce parking spaces for Taxis, lack of visibility to Pearse Street taxi rank
- 9.3 Objected to one-way traffic in Mount street heading north - increase travel time for taxis and increased fares
- 9.4 Objected to reversal of traffic flow and shared pavement in Dominick Place – increase conflict between pedestrian and vehicles
- 9.5 Has concerns with regard to phase 2 of the plan but will detail at a later stage

Chief Executive's Response

- 9.1 The amendments to this junction will facilitate a right turn manoeuvre from Church Avenue into Pearse Street which does not currently exist. This allowance will reduce travel time for traffic exiting and entering the taxi rank. It is not anticipated that the proposed changes will have any significant increase in taxi fares.
- 9.2 No decrease to taxi parking is proposed. Visibility will be maintained.
- 9.3 It is not anticipated that the proposed changes will have any significant increase in taxi fares.
- 9.4 Traffic model shows no negative effect. Late night behaviour issues are enforcement issues and will not be exacerbated by this scheme.
- 9.5 Noted

Paul Murtagh, 9 Newbrook Drive

- 10.1 Concerned that the proposed works will restrict traffic movement especially during school run period
- 10.2 Would like to see a trial run of the proposals

Chief Executive's Response

- 10.1 Traffic model clearly outlines there is sufficient capacity and proves no negative impact as a result of these works
- 10.2 Traffic model clearly outlines there is sufficient capacity and proves no negative impact as a result of these works, a trial run would require significant temporary construction works such as relocation of a roundabout at Dominick Square and installation of Intelligent Traffic Signals.

DNG

- 11.1 Welcomes scheme but it must not negatively affect footfall
- 11.2 Proposed minimal reduction of parking spaces
- 11.3 Objected to parallel parking in Dominick Street – 45% diagonal parking with taller kerbs
- 11.4 Proposed traffic study on Blackhall detailing impact of traffic flow and parking if shopping centre development is implemented
- 11.5 Proposed decreased footpath width in Dominick Street for diagonal parking to work
- 11.6 Objected to the removal of left turning lane from Dominick Street to Mary Street
- 11.7 Objected to the elimination of right turn from Railway Row into Dominick Street

Chief Executive's Response

- 11.1 This scheme is designed to increase footfall
- 11.2 Max reduction in car parking spaces is approx. 17. Car parks have sufficient capacity to allow for loss of on street parking. New signage will be installed.
- 11.3 This falls outside the current proposal
- 11.4 The development of any private land holding will fall under the planning process and the current policy/objectives if the MLAP
- 11.5 This falls outside the current proposal
- 11.6 Traffic model clearly outlines there is sufficient capacity and proves no negative impact as a result of removing these filters
- 11.7 The proposal to extinguish the right turn manoeuvre from Railway Row onto Dominick Street was focused on the principle of maximising the efficiency of Railway Row vehicular traffic movement. WCC have reviewed the proposed design and incorporated the submissions into the design of the junction, the difference in total journey time will be extended but not to a significant degree.

Niall Weir, Weirs Pharmacy

- 12.1 Observes the changes in the town over the previous 10 years and outlines reasonings for decline, welcomes investment
- 12.2 Objected to making Mount Street one way since it is one of major exit from town centre.
- 12.3 Objected to extending square as it sit naturally in front of Market House
- 12.4 Objected to the proposed paving on vehicular routes with past experience of same being damaged by vehicles
- 12.5 Objected to the closing of Martin Lane: used as a southerly exit from Bishopgate Street and accesses parking; will result in two way traffic on narrow road – inadequate turning radius for delivery vehicles
- 12.6 Observes that provision of roundabout on Pearse Street/Castle Street junction improved traffic flows, why revert to traffic lights
- 12.7 Objects to wider footpaths as will result in loss of car parking, will obstruct traffic flows and questions aesthetic benefits
- 12.8 Questions validity of traffic survey and timing
- 12.9 Observes there is no traffic problem in Mullingar

- 12.10 Considers scheme is contrary to the policies of the County Development Plan UA2, GR1, GR2, UA3 and UR3
- 12.11 Suggests other projects to undertake
- 12.12 Questions value for money and costs of specific elements

Chief Executive's Response

- 12.1 noted
- 12.2 Traffic model shows no negative effect
- 12.3 Mullingar Local Area Plan Objective O-PS2 seeks to progressively upgrade and enhance primary public space areas of which Market Place is one.
- 12.4 The design specification will reflect the proposed use
- 12.5 The objective to extinguish the south access from Martins Lane was focused on the principle to maximise the Market House Junction capacity and ensure pedestrian safety. WCC have reviewed the proposed design and incorporated the submissions into the design of the junction.
- 12.6 Traffic model shows no negative effect to vehicles and positive impact on pedestrians
- 12.7 Max reduction in car parking spaces is approx. 17. Car parks have sufficient capacity to allow for loss of on street parking. New signage will be installed.
- 12.8 The date of the traffic counts was chosen to reflect a busier traffic day than normal in order to produce a robust traffic model. The traffic survey was undertaken in a professionally recognised method with the assistance of local knowledge.
- 12.9 Mullingar Local Area Plan Objective O-PS2 seeks to progressively upgrade and enhance primary public space areas. The improved public realm will have a positive effect on businesses as footfall will be increased. The proposals are in line with European National and local policies, Environmental and Traffic Impact reports formed part of the application.
- 12.10 It is considered that the scheme is consistent with the Development Plan which include these policies and is in accordance with the specific objective O-PS2 which seeks to progressively upgrade and enhance primary public space areas.
- 12.11 It is acknowledged that other streets and public areas within the town would benefit from an enhancement scheme, the choice of areas to invest the grant funding has however been determined by the Mullingar Local Area Plan Objective O-PS2 which seeks to progressively upgrade and enhance primary public space areas.
- 12.12 Costings for the works are included in the part VIII documents

Brendan Wallace, Wallace Diesel Electric, 6 Grove Street

- 13.1 No traffic problem exists and there is no need for a traffic management plan
- 13.2 Objected to the increased traffic flow into Grove Avenue- negative impact on business
- 13.3 Objected to the removal of left turning lane from Dominick Street to Mary Street
- 13.4 Objected to increase in Dominick Square to the benefit of pubs
- 13.5 Objected to the Loss of parking on Dominick Street
- 13.6 Objected to the closure of Martin Lane – no turning radius for delivery vehicles
- 13.7 Recommends improving sewage treatment plant and other infrastructure to prepare for growth

Chief Executive's Response

- 13.1 The scheme is designed to improve the public realm and prioritise the pedestrian it was considered essential that the design would also need to include provision for vehicular traffic visiting and servicing the core of the town.
- 13.2 Traffic model shows no negative effect
- 13.3 Traffic model shows no negative effect
- 13.4 Street trading will be subject to licence.
- 13.5 Max reduction in car parking spaces is approx. 17. Car parks have sufficient capacity to allow for loss of on street parking. New signage will be installed.
- 13.6 The objective to extinguish the south access from Martins Lane was focused on the principle to maximise the Market House Junction capacity and ensure pedestrian safety. WCC have reviewed the proposed design and incorporated the submissions into the design of the junction.
- 13.7 Grant funding does not cover infrastructural works such as this

Dominick Street Traders and Residents Association

- 14.1 Congratulates the initiative
- 14.2 Dominick Square layout welcomed: provides a focal point and event place – but filter to Mary Street should remain to prevent congestion
- 14.3 Objected to the reversal of traffic flow in Dominick Place and therefore resulting in the loss of passing trade on Dominick Street
- 14.4 Proposed fixing of foul and surface water sewers as part of project
- 14.5 Provide for street traders (Fish Monger)
- 14.6 Provide lighting upgrade
- 14.7 Move Taxi overflow rank to Blackhall and provide loading bay
- 14.8 Provide pedestrian crossing at Symth/Rotchfort
- 14.9 Provide 45° parking on Dominick Street as opposed to parallel
- 14.10 Widen roadway at rear of Smyths to allow space for vehicles
- 14.11 Requests signage in Blackhall to advertise Dominick Street
- 14.12 Welcomes additional planting

Chief Executive's Response

- 14.1 Noted
- 14.2 Traffic model shows no negative effect
- 14.3 The improved public realm will have a positive effect on businesses as footfall will be increased.
- 14.4 This has been passed onto Water Services
- 14.5 The Casual Trading Licence will be honoured and managed
- 14.6 Lighting will be included in the scheme
- 14.7 Outside the scope of the project
- 14.8 Outside the scope of the project
- 14.9 Outside the scope of the project
- 14.10 Traffic model shows no negative effect
- 14.11 Signage is included in the scheme
- 14.12 Noted

Mullingar Chamber of Commerce

- 15.1 Endorsed the project
- 15.2 Emphasises on the importance of enhancing the public realm
- 15.3 Requests strategy to co-ordinate the delivery and approach to works
- 15.4 Requests Town Centre Management Plan

Chief Executive's Response

- 15.1 Noted
- 15.2 Noted
- 15.3 This is part of the project brief
- 15.4 Noted

Brian Aherne, The Grange, Sundays Well Road

- 16.1 Objected to traffic management focus solving a problem that does not exist
- 16.2 Objected to removing traffic from the town centre
- 16.3 Objected to the reduction of parking spaces of main street parking
- 16.4 Objected to the reversal of traffic flow in Dominick Place
- 16.5 Objected to making Mount Street one way since it increase traffic travelling through town
- 16.6 Proposed the upgrade of shop facade, street lighting, opening up public buildings, incentivising events

Chief Executive's Response

- 16.1 The scheme is designed to improve the public realm and prioritise the pedestrian, it was considered essential that the design would also need to include provision for vehicular traffic visiting and servicing the core of the town
- 16.2 The objective of the plan is to make the town centre more attractive. The purpose of this project is not to discourage people from Mullingar, the traffic survey outlined that circa 9000 vehicles pass through Mullingar without stopping. The plans are aimed to encourage these motorists to stop and do business in our town or alternatively use the orbital routes if there is no intention to stop. Encouraging (not forcing) this specific (category) traffic to use the bypass will create a less congested, less polluted town centre.
- 16.3 Max reduction in car parking spaces is approx. 17. Car parks have sufficient capacity to allow for loss of on street parking. New signage will be installed.
- 16.4 Reversal of traffic flow forms part of the overall proposal to reduce traffic congestion. Overall proposal should decrease congestion by approx. 8%
- 16.5 Making Mount St one way gives significant space to increase footpath space and forms part of the overall proposal to reduce traffic congestion. Overall proposal should decrease congestion by approx. 8%
- 16.6 It is acknowledged that other projects within the town would benefit from an enhancement scheme, the choice of areas to invest the grant funding has however been determined with reference to the Mullingar Local Area Plan Objective O-PS2 which seeks to progressively upgrade and enhance primary public space areas.

Carmel Hickey, 25 Dominick Street

- 17.1 Objects that there will be no direct access to Dominick St from Grove St
- 17.2 Does the taxi rank need so many spaces, is there a better place for it
- 17.3 More car parking spaces are needed, not less

Chief Executive's Response

- 17.1 Direct access is provided via Railway Row
- 17.2 This is outside the scope of the project
- 17.3 Max reduction in car parking spaces is approx. 17. Car parks have sufficient capacity to allow for loss of on street parking. New signage will be installed.

James Buckely of Buckleys Supervalu

- 18.1 Scheme will be to the detriment of commercial sustainability
- 18.2 Objected to the reduction of parking spaces in the main street parking
- 18.3 Objected to the restriction of vehicle access through town encouraging town peripheral development
- 18.4 contrary to policies P-UA2 and P-GR2

Chief Executive's Response

- 18.1 The scheme is designed to improve the public realm and prioritise the pedestrian. Increased space for pedestrians should increase pedestrian traffic and footfall outside of businesses. This should have a positive effect on businesses opportunity for "impulse" buying increases
- 18.2 Max reduction in car parking spaces is approx. 17. Car parks have sufficient capacity to allow for loss of on street parking. New signage will be installed.
- 18.3 No peripheral development is proposed and any such development would be assessed in accordance with the policies contained within the Development Plan
- 18.4 10 It is considered that the scheme is consistent with the Development Plan which include these policies and is in accordance with the specific objective O-PS2 which seeks to progressively upgrade and enhance primary public space areas.

Michael Muldoon, St Oliver's, Rhode Village

- 19.1 Objected to the reduction of parking spaces in the main street parking
- 19.2 Needs Assessment for the project
- 19.3 Cost Benefit for the project
- 19.4 Object to the introduction of traffic lights as these slow down traffic
- 19.5 Disagrees with Transport policies, too small to affect climate change and outlines alternative viewpoints to same
- 19.6 loss of parking and inappropriate weather for modal shift
- 19.7 compares works carried out in Edenderry
- 19.8 Use money for road maintenance

Chief Executive's Response

- 19.1 Max reduction in car parking spaces is approx. 17. Car parks have sufficient capacity to allow for loss of on street parking. New signage will be installed.
- 19.2 Mullingar Local Area Plan Objective O-PS2 which seeks to progressively upgrade and enhance primary public space areas
- 19.3 The increased footfall should have a positive effect on businesses opportunity for “impulse” buying increases
- 19.4 Traffic model shows a reduction in queuing as a result of installing traffic lights
- 19.5 Noted
- 19.6 Max reduction in car parking spaces is approx. 17. Car parks have sufficient capacity to allow for loss of on street parking.
- 19.7 Noted
- 19.8 Grant funding does not cover infrastructural works such as road maintenance

Rosaleen Coates, Coralstown

- 20.1 Proposed monthly farm market at Market Square

Chief Executive’s Response

- 1.1 Noted

P Murphy

- 21.1 Pedestrianise Martin Lane

Chief Executive’s Response

- 1.2 The objective to extinguish the south access from Martins Lane was focused on the principle to maximise the Market House Junction capacity and ensure pedestrian safety. WCC have reviewed the proposed design and incorporated the submissions into the design of the junction.

Annette and James Wallace, Mount Street

- 22.1 Objected to Widening one side of Mount Street

Chief Executive’s Response

- 22.1 Part VIII drawings propose this

Eleana Shaw, PW Shaw, 36 Pearse Street

- 23.1 Safety Concern on Dominick Square and Blackhall Roundabout due to increased traffic volume and more traffic directed through Blackhall Car Park
- 23.2 Signage needed for pedestrians from car parks

Chief Executive’s Response

23.1 Traffic model shows no negative effect. Scheme has been designed in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets. A full road safety audit will be undertaken before and after the scheme.

23.2 Signage forms part of the project

Ian Kerr, Curraghmore

24.1 Objecting to the removal of left turning lane on Pearse Street junction with Castle Street

Chief Executive's Response

1.3 Traffic model shows no negative effect

V Conlon, Mount Street

1.4 Question whether Blackhall is suitable to accommodate increase in traffic flow

Chief Executive's Response

25.1 Traffic model shows no negative effect

Maureen O'Hehir

26.1 Supported the Plan and less parking in main street

26.2 Concerned with unoccupied buildings

Chief Executive's Response

26.1 Noted

26.2 Outside of the scope of this project

Alice & Joe McDonnell, 4 Auburn Avenue

27.1 Objected to increased traffic flow, speeding traffic, road crossing not fit for purpose and lack of parking in Sunday Well road

Chief Executive's Response

1.5 Traffic model shows no negative effect

Damian McCarthy, 16 Lynn Heights

28.1 Concerned with traffic impact to CBS

28.2 Concerned with increase of traffic flow into narrow roads in Blackhall due to reversal of flow in Dominick Place

28.3 Proposed more sitting places on widened pavements

28.4 Proposed more trees on narrowed roads

28.5 Proposed defined edges to pavements for people hard of sight and the elderly

- 28.6 Not an enhancement plan but is a traffic management plan
- 28.7 Questions routes to south of town from Dominick Place

Chief Executive's Response

- 28.1 Traffic model shows no negative effect
- 28.2 Traffic model shows no negative effect
- 28.3 Scheme proposes this
- 28.4 Scheme proposes this
- 28.5 Tactile paving will be upgraded and enhanced as part of this project
- 28.6 The scheme is designed to improve the public realm and prioritise the pedestrian it was considered essential that the design would also need to include provision for vehicular traffic visiting and servicing the core of the town
- 28.7 Traffic model shows no negative effect

Valerie King, King Auctioneers

- 29.1 Objected to the closure Martin Lane- no turning radius for delivery vehicles – traffic safety issues
- 29.2 Proposed additional disabled parking spaces
- 29.3 Suggests trial run

Chief Executive's Response

- 29.1 The objective to extinguish the south access from Martins Lane was focused on the principle to maximise the Market House Junction capacity and ensure pedestrian safety. WCC have reviewed the proposed design and incorporated the submissions into the design of the junction.
- 29.2 The level of disabled parking spaces is not proposed to be altered
- 29.3 Traffic model clearly outlines there is sufficient capacity and proves no negative impact as a result of these works, a trial run would require significant temporary construction works such as relocation of a roundabout at Dominick Square and installation of Intelligent Traffic Signals.

Anne Horan

- 1.6 Proposed Traffic Calming measure to slow traffic approaching pedestrian crossing in Harbour Street

Chief Executive's Response

- 30.1 outside the scope of this project

John McGrath, Enterprise Centre, Bishopsgate Street

- 31.1 Objected to the closing of Martin Lane - no turning radius for delivery vehicles – traffic safety issues
- 31.2 Object to the removal of left turning lane from Dominick Street to Mary Street

31.3 Better return if project was to underground wires in Austin Friars Street and Patrick Street

Chief Executive's Response

31.1 The objective to extinguish the south access from Martins Lane was focused on the principle to maximise the Market House Junction capacity and ensure pedestrian safety. WCC have reviewed the proposed design and incorporated the submissions into the design of the junction.

31.2 Traffic model shows no negative effect

31.3 It is acknowledged that other projects within the town would benefit from an enhancement scheme, the choice of areas to invest the grant funding has however been determined with reference to the Mullingar Local Area Plan Objective O-PS2 which seeks to progressively upgrade and enhance primary public space areas.

Bernie and Tommy Frayne, 7 Mount Street

1.7 Proposed loading bays for business on one way Mount street

Chief Executive's Response

32.1 New set down area will be provided on Mount St

Sheryl Forbes, 10 Newballinderry

33.1 Objected to the rerouting of traffic out of the town centre

33.2 Objected to the closure of Martins Lane

33.3 Objected to the reduction of parking space in town centre

33.4 Proposed the introduction of E-Parking

33.5 Proposed the upgrade of both sides of Mount Street

33.6 Proposed more lighting near Joe Dolan Statue

33.7 Parking should be restricted to follow traffic flow

Chief Executive's Response

33.1 The objective of the plan is to make the town centre more attractive. The purpose of this project is not to discourage people from Mullingar, the traffic survey outlined that circa 9000 vehicles pass through Mullingar without stopping. The plans are aimed to encourage these motorists to stop and do business in our town or alternatively use the orbital routes if there is no intention to stop. Encouraging (not forcing) this specific (category) traffic to use the bypass will create a less congested, less polluted town centre.

33.2 The objective to extinguish the south access from Martins Lane was focused on the principle to maximise the Market House Junction capacity and ensure pedestrian safety. WCC have reviewed the proposed design and incorporated the submissions into the design of the junction.

33.3 Max reduction in car parking spaces is approx. 17. Car parks have sufficient capacity to allow for loss of on street parking. New signage will be installed.

33.4 This is currently being considered by WCC as a separate matter

33.5 Part VIII drawings show this

- 33.6 Lighting is included within the scope of the scheme
- 33.7 Outside the scope of this project

Mark Ahern, Independent People with Disabilities (IPWD)

- 34.1 Proposed the provision of Wheel Car Parking Space
- 34.2 Proposed the improved access from footpath into premises (Dalys Pub, Senjoy Esmoking etc)
- 34.3 Proposed widening of footpath to improve manoeuvring of wheel chairs – Newbury/Green Bridge Area
- 34.4 Highlighted the lack of standard wheelchair accessible car parking at 30% longer than the standard parking space

Chief Executive's Response

All proposed works will be fully compliant with part M of the Building Regulations

35 Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

35.1 The extent/depth of groundworks proposed in the scheme is unclear. Recommends that the Consultant Archaeologist should consider the finalised plans for the development and propose archaeological mitigation for the project which shall be agreed by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

Chief Executive's Response

35.1 This is proposed as part of the project and will be agreed with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

7. Issues

The Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014 acknowledges that there are “several urban spaces within the town which have significant potential for enhancement. These comprise primary Public Spaces located at Market Square, Dominic Street, Castle Street and Mount Street which contribute to the distinctive townscape character of the town.” It is considered appropriate to commence enhancement of the town in the primary public spaces in accordance with the development plan for the area.

It is recognised that a substantial street enhancement scheme is required to address the deficiencies of the primary civic spaces in Mullingar in terms of pedestrians, other vulnerable road users, economic regeneration and links from the car parks to the commercial areas.

The overall objective for the proposed enhancement works is to help make the core of Mullingar town a more attractive destination where people will want to live, work, visit, shop and socialise, supporting a diversity of uses and activities during the day, evening and night, in a safe and inclusive environment.

Case study evidence suggests that such investment in the public realm can:

- (i) Boost footfall and trading by providing an attractive, more inclusive and safer pedestrian environment;
- (ii) provide a competitive return compared to other transport projects;

- (iii) Support existing businesses and promote investor confidence in an area;
- (iv) Attract more visitors and increase tourism;
- (v) Enhance people's perceptions of attractiveness of an area, contributing towards their quality of life and influencing where they shop;
- (vi) Enhance overall image and community pride.

The focus of this initiative is to make the town centre a distinctive and attractive place to live and work. It is an objective of the County Development Plan to provide for increased residential use within this area, while at the same time providing for further economic activity, including an evening and night time economy. The primary sites lie within the Purple Flag designated area of the town.

A quality built environment provides the basis for an attractive and distinctive town. The built environment includes the buildings that frame the streets and urban spaces. The urban spaces within the town include the streets, parks, trees, squares, pedestrian and cycle ways, natural features and landmarks within the town. The quality of these urban spaces is important for those that visit and live in the Town Centre.

Urban Design is defined as "places for people". Places where people have a sense of belonging and where they feel comfortable and safe walking to employment, services, public transport or other destinations; and in so doing meet their neighbours and the wider community.

The Council aims to achieve the following in relation to Urban Design in the town:

- To promote quality of the public realm: public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all in society, including people with disabilities and elderly people.
- To promote ease of movement: accessibility and local permeability; by making places that connect with each other and are easy to move through, putting people before traffic and integrating land uses and transport.
- To promote legibility through development that provides recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks to help people find their way around.
- To promote adaptability through development that can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions.
- To promote diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs.
- To promote continuity and enclosure; the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space by development which clearly defines private and public areas.
- To promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, land use, culture and built form.

Urban areas are engines of growth and hubs for creativity and innovation. The urban core of a modern successful town is to be a place of safety and human scale, free of the barriers created by traffic congestion and delivered back to the pedestrian in such a way that provides sustainable streets and places, that provide a balance between the demands of commercial realities and the need for calmed places for people to meet, carry out their business affairs and avail of the amenity that civic places, squares, and greens can provide.

Urban Enhancement and environmental improvements are key tools in the delivery of this vision, which are reflected in the Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014-2020. The proposed works

seek to revitalise, regenerate and improve the urban environment along the principal shopping street and within the primary civic spaces in the town core.

Built Heritage:

The primary areas subject of this scheme lies within a designated Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), being a place, area, group of structures or townscape that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or value, or contributes to the appreciation of protected structures which may be included in a Development Plan where it is considered necessary to preserve its character. The proposal takes full account of this status and the works involved will enhance the setting of both the protected structures and the ACA. There are no works proposed to the protected structures that lie within the sites.

Archaeological Heritage:

The proposed development will be undertaken under the supervision of an Archaeologist and in agreement with the Department of Culture, Heritage and Gealtacht to ensure the continued preservation (either *in situ* or by record) of places, caves, sites, features or other objects of archaeological interest.

Community / Social Benefits:

The proposal is designed to realise the social benefits of the enhancement of public spaces in an urban setting. Public spaces are socially inclusive spaces, accessible to all. Larger public spaces which are used in conjunction with festivals and events, or which are used for recreation promote social inclusion. Enhanced public realm and attractive urban environments facilitate social interaction, inclusiveness and sense of community. Well designed and accessible public spaces greatly enhance sense of pride and ownership by all. Open access areas that cater for all levels eg. mobility impaired, parents with buggies, enhance the attractiveness and utility of the open environment. Public spaces strengthen the sense of community and increase sense of civic pride. The creation of a high quality urban environment where the balance of transport and pedestrian movement, retail shopping, residential and recreational amenity can be supported and enhanced in a safe and accessible way is a key objective of this application. The proposal takes account of the historical urban environment, the urban fabric, conservation objectives and economic opportunities presented by the development of the evening economy.

Tourism & Economic development:

The Council regards tourism as a key economic driver for Mullingar and the wider region. The town of Mullingar has significant visitor attractions, recognised both locally and nationally. The historic urban fabric of the town, including Belvedere House on the outskirts and the medieval street pattern, is the main attraction within the core area and the important retailing role of the town adds to the profile. The town's setting adjacent to the Royal Canal and proximity to Lough Ennell and Lough Owel add to its' attractiveness as a tourist location. This proximity has ensured a consistent influx of water enthusiasts including those who participate in sailing, cruising, wind surfing and canoeing. The town also hosts a number of annual festivals and cultural events.

The Council can continue its contribution to the tourism potential of Mullingar through a variety of different synergistic measures including improved accessibility throughout the town, environmental regeneration of specific areas, completion of the Westmeath part of the National Cycle Network which traverses the town centre core, the provision of recreation and amenity areas, facilitation of the development of visitor attractions and protection of the natural and built heritage and enhancement of public spaces.

The strategic emphasis will continue to be on increasing the numbers of visitors to Mullingar; but it will be the development of further quality and sustainable tourism products that will ultimately provide the long-term returns. The development of Mullingar as a premier tourism destination, with a diverse and innovative range of tourism products; in a way that is

environmentally, socially and economically sustainable can only be achieved in co-operation and collaboration with relevant agencies including Fáilte Ireland and Waterways Ireland.

Economic Activity and Leveraging:

The role of Town Centres as a hub for commerce and trade is recognised as an important facet of the economic development of the town. The proposed scheme through enhancement and prioritisation of pedestrian movement will contribute very positively to the vitality of the town centre.

In common with many other towns, Mullingar has experienced a downturn in economic activity, evidenced by an increase in instances of vacancy and the introduction of lower order retail uses on the primary shopping streets. The proposed scheme focuses on enhancement of the public realm and pedestrian movement in the creation of a series of connected public spaces with access of to off-street car parking. This public investment will act as a stimulus for further private sector development and economic activity in the town centre area eg utilisation of vacant or under-utilised properties, refurbishment of existing premises and enhanced public spaces for commercial purposes, cultural events and the broadening of the night time economy. Experience to date in relation to the Purple Flag Initiative in Mullingar has demonstrated that attractive and pedestrian friendly public spaces within the town centre add significantly to the vitality and viability of the town centre. The success of this initiative will be empirically measured through the use of indicators such as retail turnover, reduction of vacant properties, increased level of private sector investment and visitor numbers.

Social Capital; Community and Design:

The role of "social capital" in addressing broad goals such as community development, social inclusion and quality of life is increasingly being recognised both internationally and in Ireland. The term social capital describes "important social processes and relationships – informal social support networks, friendships, neighbourhood generosity, interpersonal trust and voluntary activity – and also aspects of community development, public private voluntary partnerships and civic spirit". Social capital draws on processes which are crucial in community development and well being and the functioning of a democratic, inclusive and cohesive society.

The importance of social space in the building of social capital cannot be understated. Well designed and accessible public spaces are an important resource which amongst others can be used to support interrelated and overlapping key dimensions including community development, social inclusion and community engagement norms, trust, participation and citizens engagement, crime prevention and informal sociability. The NESF Report "*Policy Implications of Social Capital, National Economic and Social Forum, Forum Report No.28*"; (Government publications Sales Office, Dublin June 2003) highlights the importance of supporting and developing social capital at local level as the most appropriate one "*to consider initiatives, measures and responses which strengthen network ties and tap into shared norms of co-operative behaviour*".

Social Capital and Urban Design:

The report identifies the importance of spatial planning to support social capital. The report strongly recommends that social capital concerns should be more to the fore in the design and layout of the built environment – "*especially with reference to village and neighbourhood focal points or the use of pedestrian-friendly space through traffic scheming*". Crucially the report recognises the role design can play in opportunities for social interaction and contact; "*public spaces such as parks, village's squares and other areas – cultivating places where people can spontaneously meet – are important for the creation and development of social capital*" and further adds "*these are some of the enclaves where information is shared and people connect*".

An important consideration is the opportunity for meeting. The report notes the likely marginalisation effects of low density and poorly-integrated cities and towns where people with disabilities, women and parents with young children are frequently at a disadvantage. Investment in and incentives for greater use of shared public spaces should be a priority for action by public authorities.

This proposal to enhance the public realm in Mullingar through the creation of more social space will deliver significant social and community benefits including increased residential use and community interaction.

8. Evaluation of consistency with the proper planning and development of the area having regard to the provisions of the Development Plan.

The proposal, subject to further archaeological assessment and mitigation as necessary, is consistent with the policies and objectives in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020.

9. Appropriate Assessment:

An Appropriate Assessment is now a standard legal requirement for all plans and projects likely to have a significant impact on European sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Area (SPA).

It is considered that the proposal would not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any nearby Natura 2000 sites having regard to their conservation objectives.

10. Recommendation

It is considered that, subject to the following modifications, that the proposal is consistent in principle with the provisions of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020 and therefore accords with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

1. The Consultant Archaeologist shall consider the finalised plans for the development and propose archaeological mitigation for the project which shall be agreed by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
2. The south bound exit from Martins Lane to be maintained with a right turn only into Oliver Plunkett Street.
3. The right turn exit shall remain from Railway Row turning into Dominick Street.
4. A set down/loading bay to be provided along the south east side of Mount Street.

5. The overflow taxi parking along Railway Row shall be converted to parking/loading bay whilst facilitating geometric improvements to the junction.
6. Whilst ensuring that pedestrian safety/crossings is to the required standard an examination of the proposed layout to enhance the capacity of the left turning lane from Dominick Street to Mary Street shall be undertaken.

LA(M)111:

Signed:



Deputy Chief Executive

Date:

20/10/17