

Chapter 3 Placemaking, Regeneration & Urban Living

“To develop the urban and rural settlements of the county as vibrant, connected and serviced locations that are attractive places to live, work and visit in a sustainable manner, based on the principles of placemaking, compact growth, high quality public realm where residential developments are connected to services and employment locations”.

3.1 Introduction

The network of towns and villages across the county have always played an important function in providing people with a place to live, do business, retail, leisure, hospitality and other amenities. Therefore, each town and village has played a central role in generating economic activity across the County. The Settlement hierarchy as outlined in *Chapter 2 Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy* of this plan has categorised the settlement types within the county into seven levels in accordance with their role and function as identified by the Core Strategy. Each settlement has a unique role and set of circumstances that require consideration from a placemaking and regeneration perspective. The provisions of this chapter are applicable to settlements identified as 1-6 in *Chapter 2*.

Through good placemaking and regeneration, towns and villages will enhance their attractiveness and improve their vibrancy and vitality for individuals and businesses alike. The principles of good placemaking will be applied within the county to build sustainable communities along with supportive economic activity as outlined in *Chapter 5 Economic, Enterprise and Retail Development*.

Quality housing development that accords with compact living and placemaking will be encouraged in the correct locations as identified within the settlement hierarchy. The appropriate densities will be applied that respects the principles of compact living and placemaking. It is considered that the existing character and appearance of each individual town and village should be considered as part of any developments and accord with proper planning and sustainable development. Housing will be promoted in sustainable locations where good placemaking principles have been employed and a have access to suitable infrastructure and services. The benefits of good placemaking are far reaching. It ensures the creation of towns and villages across the county that are attractive and well serviced, feel safe and are attractive locations for people to live, work, invest and visit.

Chapter 4 Rural Living and Development addresses rural living and the villages that fall within this category of the settlement hierarchy, but the principles contained in this chapter would be considered especially in relation to placemaking. *Chapter 5 Economic, Enterprise and Retail Development* sets out the economic aspirations for the towns and villages. It is anticipated that the application of good placemaking principles will be of economic benefit to these locations around the county.

3.2 Strategic Aims

Galway County Council shall work with the appropriate stakeholders and agencies in relation to placemaking in our towns and villages quality housing and regeneration in the appropriate locations and settings will also be considered. This will accord with the following strategic aims:

- To promote town and village centre living in a high-quality environment with good connectivity and access to local services;
- To reinforce the vitality and future of urban and rural settlements and recognise the role that they play in a wider social and economic context;
- To facilitate town and village centre public realm improvement works, regeneration and infrastructure upgrades as deemed appropriate;

- To support and promote the sustainable social and economic development of urban and rural settlements;
- To ensure the delivery of good quality public open space of varying scales for use by inhabitants and visitors;
- To encourage a mix of house types and sizes, enable homeowners to modify their properties to facilitate modern living as their needs change.

3.3 Strategic Context

This chapter has been prepared in the context of the following National and Regional Plans, Policies and Guidelines:

Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities (2007)
Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities (2007)
Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2007)
Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)
Urban Design Manual A Best Practice Guide (2009)
Government Policy on Architecture (2009)
Public space lessons - Designing and planning for play, CABE Space (2008)
Ready, Steady, Play! – A National Play Policy, National Children’s Office (2019)
Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects – Guidance for Planning Authorities (2009)
Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018)

3.3.1 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) places a considerable emphasis on the role of urban and rural settlements in delivering high quality housing and jobs. It is closely linked to sustainability and reducing car reliance. This aspiration will be delivered through a series of measures. These measures relate to regeneration, public realm improvements, a high standard of placemaking, high-quality design and active land management. It promotes the development of brownfield and infill developments in settlements. These parameters are centred on a compact growth agenda which is set out as a key National Strategic Outcome in the Framework. NPO 32 of the NPF sets an ambitious national housing target of 550,000 up to 2040. The county has an important role to play in this regard.

Emphasis is being placed on the towns and villages as they can provide for a form of compact development that is sustainable for larger populations. They can provide residential development and employment development in close proximity to each other which facilitates sustainable mobility. Servicing employment and residential areas with facilities for community use, infrastructure such as wastewater and water supply can be delivered to serve a consolidated population rather than a dispersed population.

3.3.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) places a similar emphasis on the revitalisation of urban and rural settlements as attractive and vibrant places to live and work with high quality services and facilities including integrated public transport. The provision of high-quality housing in a variety of sizes and styles also contribute to good placemaking and making an area attractive.

It is considered that attractive places will draw companies and larger employers to a settlement therefore it is important to enhance the quality of our settlement network with high quality housing,

public realm, accessibility, services, green spaces and regeneration as necessary. Shorter commuter patterns to employment areas are supported in the RSES which contribute to a healthy, attractive and climate friendly region in accordance with RPO 6.51.

The regeneration of towns and villages has been referenced in the RSES as a major priority action for the region as reflected in RPO 3.4 which supports regeneration and renewal. This will be achieved through the sufficient supply of housing and jobs to the settlements which will be partly delivered through the utilisation of existing buildings, along with brownfield and infill developments. RPO 3.2 makes reference to the delivery of housing of brownfield sites.

A range of settlements have been targeted for population and employment growth over the plan period which is reflective of RPO 3.13 which requires that the role of smaller and medium sized towns be supported which demonstrates an important role in terms of service provision and employment.

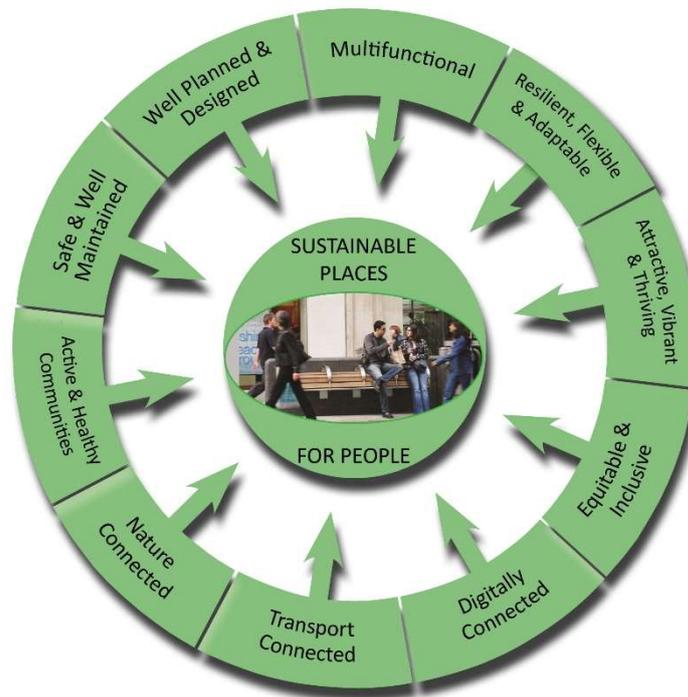
3.4 Climate Change

An important component to successful placemaking, regeneration and delivery of urban housing requires a strong emphasis on climate change and transitioning to a low carbon climate resilient society. The urban settlements of County Galway must continue to overcome the challenges posed by climate change. These areas play a pivotal role in providing housing and services for residents now and into the future. Within the county some of the urban and rural areas are susceptible to the effects of climate change such as flooding given their proximity to coastal waters and rivers. There are a number of policy objectives that are included in this plan to mitigate against the impact of climate change which include ensuring that flood plains remain as such or as open space. The plan requires the incorporation of adaptable multi-functional and sensitive design solutions that support the transition to a low carbon climate resilient society *Chapter 14 Climate Change, Energy and Renewable Resource* addresses this important issue and what role the county plays in mitigating against climate change.

3.5 What is Placemaking?

Placemaking is a holistic approach to the planning, design, management and use of our shared environment to improve the quality of peoples' lives. Within the planning system this can be delivered through the application of certain interventions that make a place attractive for people to live work, visit and invest. It is not simply an aesthetic exercise, but one that considers all the social, environmental, and economic characteristics and opportunities specific to the place to shape an integrated response. Good placemaking can be delivered by applying a range of suitable placemaking principles which are outlined below. These can include public realm improvements, good access to open space, high quality design and good access to a range of local services. With a focus on people and the environment in which they live, successful placemaking combines the key factors from understanding peoples' needs to influence responses that deliver better outcomes for them now and for the future. The plan will seek to deliver enhanced placemaking to the towns and villages across the county up to 2028 and beyond. Urban Framework Plan (UFP) areas have been prepared in Garraun and Briarhill which are centred around the principles of good placemaking. For example, in the case of Garraun, the UFP is centred around Oranmore Train Station which is a sustainable public transportation corridor while the Briarhill UFP has developed with pedestrian and cycle connections to Parkmore as the primary means of travel to that employment site. *Chapter 15 Development Management Standards* sets out further steps to be taken to achieve good placemaking.

Convergence of what makes great places



3.5.1 Benefits of Placemaking for County Galway Towns and Villages

There are a wide range benefits to be derived from good placemaking practices. The role of settlements has evolved into service centres that must compete globally and be attractive places for people to live and employers to locate to. There is a clear link between good placemaking standards and levels of employment investment, this is discussed further in *Chapter 5 Economic, Enterprise and Retail Development*.

Good placemaking requires close monitoring of human behaviour and patterns of change utilising opportunities where necessary for example such as the roll out of working hubs and home working which can contribute in an economic and social perspective to the towns and villages This shift in working patterns mean increased daytime activities within the towns and villages which is a clear departure from a dormitory style living arrangement. Good placemaking practices set out below will contribute to the positive growth and prosperity for the settlements.

3.5.2 Context Understanding The Place

The success of proposals in delivering the most attractive, sustainable and resilient outcomes relies heavily on the understanding of context as the starting point for good placemaking and urban design. Context comprises all the social, environmental and economic characteristics that define the existing condition and distinctive spirit and atmosphere of the place. It requires those engaged in the planning, design or management of proposals to understand the characteristics of their site and consideration of the area beyond the red line boundary to identify the key drivers that should shape proposals and ensure they make a meaningful and positive contribution to the overall place. This is particularly important for urban and rural centres in need of regeneration, where the proposed development can have a positive impact on the town or village to achieve improvement in the quality of place. The principles that should be followed to ensure this context is achieved is outlined in *Chapter 15 Development Management Standards*.

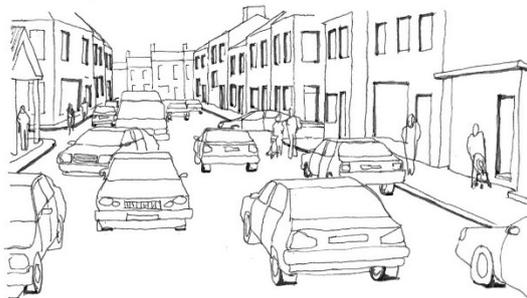
3.5.3 Access and Movement

The planning and design of access and movement networks has implications for the physical outcome of development of all scales. The impact it has on the environment and the quality of peoples' lives. A sustainable access and movement strategy is intrinsically linked to the location of the facilities and services that people need. This is important to consider from a strategic and neighbourhood and individual site perspective in placemaking.

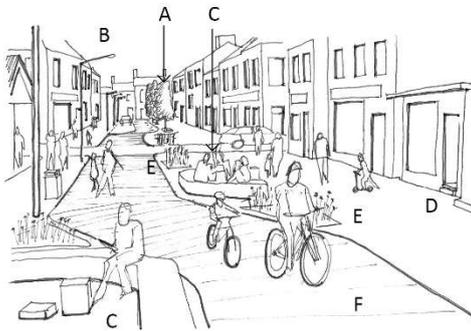
The development of towns and villages of all scales as compact, walkable neighbourhoods providing a diverse mix of uses will be essential to reduce pressure on existing and planned strategic infrastructure. This will contribute to the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society.

The location of proposed development should be at or close to the services that people will rely on to support sustainable living. The planning and design of access and movement networks at individual sites should ensure that it promotes sustainable modes of transport as the preferred choice. This is particularly important for development located on the edge of towns and villages which can lead to a significant proportion of short trips by private car. Measures should include the creation of routes that are attractive for pedestrians and cyclists.

A key part of creating a successful walkable neighbourhood is to ensure that there is a sufficient frequency of connections to enable people to move easily between different parts within the settlement.



A typical car dominated street in a market town. Narrow footpaths and difficult for people to cross. A hard environment with little greenery a loud and hostile place for many people.



A. New street trees add greenness, improve micro-climate and add secondary enclosure.

B. Consistent alignment of street furniture, including lighting and litter bins creates and uncluttered route for people.

C. More space for on street seating areas for people to meet and relax

D. Wider foot-way for ease of movement.

E. Opportunities for sustainable drainage, such as rain gardens, adding space for nature.

F. Narrower shared surface carriageway with a defining finish and with kinks in the route, taking away vehicle priority and creating a safer street for non car users.

3.5.4 Inclusivity

Placemaking will ensure that towns and villages are inclusive for everyone. A sustainable place is an equitable one and good planning and design should demonstrate how inequalities have been identified, prioritised and the specific interventions proposed to resolve them.

It is especially important to prioritise socio-economic inequalities.

People should have the option to live their whole life in one place. This is important for the creation of well balanced, integrated, and functioning communities. It supports intergenerational structure of families, reinforces community bonds and economic viability of places.

The supporting infrastructure including community buildings, open space, streets and squares should be planned and designed to enable people of all ages, ability, disability, cultural, social and economic groups to access and use them. The provision of community facilities is set out in greater detail in *Chapter 11 Community Development and Social Infrastructure*.

3.5.5 Health and Wellbeing

A key indicator of the success of a place is the health and wellbeing of its people. The evidence linking the value and importance of our shared environment to our mental and physical health is growing.

Good placemaking in the planning, design and management of towns and villages enables all these goals to be achieved simultaneously by providing the essential services integral to health and wellbeing. This includes assets such as parks, both useable and incidental greenspace, greenways, active travel and recreational routes.

3.5.6 Character and Identity

The distinctive character of our urban and rural settlements varies as they have grown and evolved over time. Their settlement pattern responds to a range of factors including physical geography, their history, function, economic activity and the surrounding area. This is reflected in the pattern of streets, spaces, built form and plots which are distinctive to each place. Recognising this reinforces character and identity, ensures the proposals work with the context of the place and the aim of connectivity are more easily achieved.

Well planned and designed development should take the opportunity to design urban form to retain visual connections with landmark features where possible within the settlement. The relationship of settlements to their wider landscape is also an important defining feature of the identity of places. The built form and landscape of the towns and villages are characterised by distinctive materials which combine with colour, tone and texture to reinforce visual and tactile identity. The Council encourages innovation in construction and encourages creative design solutions that achieve innovation whilst respecting the materials (hard and soft), colours, tones and textures that are positively associated with the identity of the place.

3.5.7 Vitality

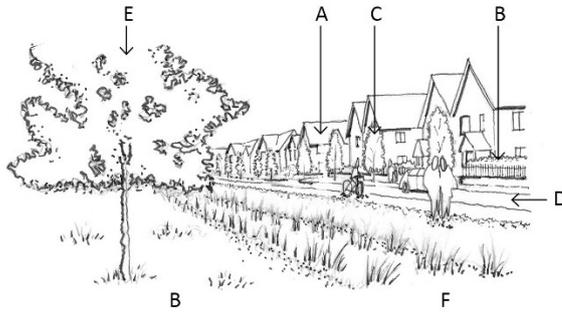
The walkable neighbourhood concept directs a response to placemaking and urban design that will drive vitality in our towns and villages. With the emphasis on people, these locations will become places of social, cultural and economic exchange that sustains their attractiveness to investment. In accordance with the ability to walk to the range of services which sustain a good quality of life is at the core of the walkable neighbourhood concept. The specific needs and market demand in the place will shape the appropriate mix of uses and their location to support the overall placemaking and vitality aims. Well planned and designed neighbourhoods should aim to deliver higher density development at an appropriate scale and location, coordinated with use mix, to support an increase in the permanent population of the town and village centre, sustain intensity, vibrancy, and economic viability. Compact growth is promoted in suitable locations in the settlements.

3.5.8 Design Quality

Attractive and liveable places need to also achieve good design standards. The quality of design will inform the perception of a place. To achieve good design, it must be applied in a holistic manner. It must relate to buildings, streets and public spaces as well as our homes and workplaces. Well-designed towns and villages result in increased economic activity as people spend time in places that are pleasant.

Design guidance is provided in the Urban Design Manual which forms part of the *Guidelines for Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*. The Manual sets out 12 design criteria which set our good design criteria for three key areas – Neighbourhood, Site and Home. The three areas that inform the 12 design criteria inform the design of residential, mixed use and commercial development in a town or village.

Chapter 15 Development Management Standards set out the 12 design criteria referenced above. It is anticipated that this chapter and chapter 15 would inform designers in relation to their approach to the design of new developments and potential uses in the towns and villages. The incorporation of Design Statements is also encouraged as a means to consider good placemaking principles and good quality design for residential, commercial and mixed-use schemes.



A. Consistent built form, scale, set back and rhythm along the street.

B. Consistent boundary treatment.

C. Consistent rhythm of trees providing significant greening of the street.

D. Well overlooked street providing direct and attractive link for cyclists and pedestrians through the development.

E. Cohesive green area with space to plant specimen trees to grow to a substantial size.

F. Integration of sustainable surface water drainage as a natural feature of the street.

Policy Objectives Placemaking

PM 1 Placemaking

To promote and facilitate the sustainable development of a high-quality built environment where there is a distinctive sense of place in attractive streets, spaces, and neighbourhoods that are accessible and safe places for all members of the community to meet and socialise.

PM 2 Regeneration

To prioritise projects and proposals which will result in both social and economic rejuvenation and regeneration within towns and villages. The Council will leverage the variety of funds available including LIHAF, Urban and Rural Regeneration and Development Funds, Climate Activation Fund and Disruptive Technologies Fund in pursuance of this objective.

PM 3 Town and Village Centre Management Plans

To promote the preparation of town and village centre management plans across the county that accord with proper planning and sustainable development.

PM 4 Sustainable Movement within Towns

It is a policy objective of the Council to encourage modal shift in our towns to more sustainable transport alternatives through mixed use development that enables local living and working which is well connected to sustainable transport infrastructure such as walking, cycling, public bus and rail transport.

PM 5 Sustainable Transport

Promote sustainable transport options as an alternative to the private car for people to access local services which will facilitate the transition to a low carbon climate resilient society.

PM 6 Health and Wellbeing

Promote the development of healthy and attractive places by ensuring:

- (a) Good urban design principles are integrated into the layout and design of new development;
- (b) Future development prioritises the need for people to be physically active in their daily lives and promote walking and cycling in the design of streets and public spaces
- (c) New schools and workplaces are linked to walking and cycling networks
- (d) The provision of open space considers different types of recreation and amenity uses with connectivity by way of safe, secure walking and cycling routes.
- (e) Developments are planned for on a multi-functional basis incorporating ecosystem services, climate change measures, Green Infrastructure and key landscape features in their design.

PM 7 Inclusivity

To ensure our urban settlements are inclusive and welcoming to all people of all ages regardless of their physical ability ensuring that they have access to the services available in the towns and villages across the County.

PM 8 Character and Identity

Ensure the best quality of design is achieved for all new development and that design respects and enhances the specific characteristics unique features of the towns and villages throughout the County.

PM 9 Vitality in Towns and Villages

(a) To provide an appropriate mix of uses and densities in settlements that are responsive to the needs of people and market demand to support delivery of sustainable, viable and thriving walking neighbourhoods;

(b) To encourage a greater usage of backland areas and to promote the redevelopment of sites in the town or village centre where development will positively contribute to the commercial and residential vitality of the town or village settlement.

PM 10 Design Quality

To require that new buildings are of exceptional architectural quality, and are fit for their intended use or function, durable in terms of design and construction, respectful of setting and the environment and to require that the overall development is of high quality, with a well-considered public realm.

PM 11 Details of Materials

To ensure that the appearance of buildings, in terms of details and materials (texture, colour, patterns and durability), is of a high standard with enduring quality and has a positive impact on the visual quality of the area.

3.6 Compact Growth and Regeneration

Compact Growth is set out as the first NSO in the NPF. It calls for the sustainable growth of towns and villages as a means to add value and create more attractive places for people to live and work. Compact growth can only be delivered where there is a streamlined and co-ordinated approach to development. Enabling infrastructure, services and supporting amenities must be delivered alongside compact growth in our towns and villages.

There is a renewed emphasis on regeneration which requires a proactive approach to address adverse effects on amenity. The purpose of regeneration is to improve quality of place. Regeneration can be delivered in tandem with good placemaking and quality design. A range of measures have been put in place to address regeneration in our towns and villages. These include funding along with the Vacant

and Derelict Site Registers which aim to encourage and deliver regeneration and sustainable development. The smaller rural villages will also be required to consider the aspirations of compact growth and regeneration within an appropriate scale. *Chapter 4 Rural Living and Development* provides further guidance and detail relating to these locations.

3.6.1 Vacant Sites

The provision of the Vacant Site Levy (VSL) is set out within the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 which aims to incentivise the development of vacant or idle sites in certain residential and regeneration land in towns and villages. The Council has adopted a strategy of active land management in this regard and detailed guidance on appropriate development is set out in this chapter and in *Chapter 15 Development Management Standards* to incentivise development in appropriate locations. The purpose of the Levy is to assist in delivering compact growth and the regeneration of under-utilised lands, which should assist in meeting the housing need requirements of the county.

The Council will deliver the aspirations of the VSL through the identification of eligible sites for entry onto the Vacant Site Register in accordance with the criteria set out in the Act.

For the purposes of the 2015 Act, a site is vacant if

- (a) In the case of residential land the site is in an area in which there is a need for housing, is suitable for the provision of housing and is, or the majority of the site, is vacant or idle.
- (b) In the case of regeneration land, the site or the majority of the site is vacant or idle and the site being vacant or idle has adverse effects on existing amenities or reduces the amenity provided by existing public infrastructure and facilities in the area in which the site is situated or has adverse effects on the character of the area.

The implementation of the Vacant Site Levy requires the Council to identify sites in the county which are vacant and come within the scope of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended). Any sites identified are to be entered on a Vacant Sites Register that is to be monitored by the Council. The approach to the VSR is informed by the findings of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) and Housing Strategy as outlined in *Chapter 2 Core Strategy Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy* (see Appendix 2) which identifies the areas in the county with demand for housing. The VSR will be an evolving document that will be updated continually as circumstances change.

3.6.2 Derelict Sites

The Derelict Site Act 1990 (as amended) requires owners or occupiers of any land to take reasonable steps to ensure the land and any structure within, does not become or continue to be a derelict site. Derelict sites include buildings or land that are detracting from the amenity, character or appearance of land in the neighbourhood of the land. It is considered that the implementation of the Derelict Sites Act will assist in the preservation of amenity in our towns and villages.

3.6.3 Density and Typology

Compact Growth is a key component of the growth agenda in Ireland up to 2040. This requires careful consideration pertaining to the level of residential density to apply across the County during the lifetime of the Plan. Higher densities are to be provided along sustainable transport corridors such as railway lines. It provides for a more sustainable form of development where people have a viable alternative to the private car. However, there are parts of the County that do not have high quality public transport links, therefore, a balance will have to be struck in applying a fair and realistic level of density that is in keeping with the character of the surrounding area and meets the needs of its

residents. It is envisaged that a Density Typology Study will be carried out to establish a strategy for applying the appropriate level of density across the county.

3.6.4 Buildings Heights

A greater level of development with higher building heights is promoted in sustainable locations such as towns that have supporting infrastructure in place. They can facilitate a more efficient use of land and achieve much higher densities. This is a more sustainable development pattern than urban sprawl and taller buildings can enable transport, employment and other development types can achieve the desired level of intensity for sustainability.

The *Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities* set out the scope to consider general building heights in appropriate locations. In order for a site to be deemed suitable for accommodating a tall building, it must comply with the highest standards of placemaking and good design. *Chapter 15 Development Management Standards* sets out further requirements for tall building proposals.

3.6.5 Town and Village Centres

Town and village centres and their purpose has changed quite dramatically in recent years. The role of retail in these locations has also been subject to change due to a variations in consumer spending patterns and habits, such as online retailing. This creates a challenge for the settlements which calls for the drop-in footfall and increasing vacancy rates to be addressed. This should be done in partnership with good placemaking practices. To combat these challenges the plan will take cognisance of this evolving retail environment and adopt a multi-faceted strategy that will re-energise the towns and villages, enabling them to once again become vibrant locations.

The temporary use of space for a wide range of potential occupiers and uses such as creative markets, and work spaces provide opportunities to explore potential uses and add vibrancy to an area. In certain circumstances where there is no viable prospect of commercial activity in a vacant building, residential uses will be considered at ground floor level. Residential development will only be appropriate where it would accord with proper planning and sustainable development and it would make a positive contribution to the town/village centre as a focal point providing services for the local population. Further guidance and detail concerning development within the rural villages is set out in *Chapter 4 Rural Living and Development*.

3.6.6 Public Realm and Regeneration

A high quality public realm must be delivered across the towns and villages. Public realm relates to the public outdoor spaces including squares, open spaces along with pavements and streets. Public realm influences perception of a place and encourages people to live work and invest in these locations.

With the correct investment in the various settlements across the county these locations will become enterprising places that have thriving commercial activity, provide opportunities to local entrepreneurs and businesses to be an integral part of the community and have a visible presence. The services and utilities infrastructure that is available, its condition and capacity to support additional development will be an important factor influencing the priority locations for investment. Of critical importance is the provision of broadband internet to support people living and working in our settlements. Town and village centre strategies should include proposals to work with national government strategies for the roll out of broadband and infrastructure support.

3.6.7 Town Centre Infill and Brownfield Sites

A number of settlements in the county offer brownfield development opportunities that could deliver the aspirations of Placemaking and Compact Growth. They are very often serviceable and located along existing public transport corridors and their re-development would improve the quality public realm in a place. In accordance with the NPF and RSES it is anticipated that a substantial portion of development will be delivered on brownfield and infill sites.

3.6.8 Opportunity Sites

A range of Opportunity sites have been identified in the settlements across the county and are contained in Volume 2 of this plan. They have been selected on the basis of the contribution that they could make to their respective town and village centres. Their re-development would be sustainable, in close proximity to local services and local infrastructure which is supported in national policy. They would also contribute to the aspirations of the Placemaking section outlined earlier.

3.6.9 Funding

Two funds were established under Project Ireland 2040 to support and deliver the aspirations of the NPF. The funds seek to further drive the delivery of sustainable homes and jobs in attractive and vibrant settlements across Ireland. The fund can be used to address an area in need of regeneration. It can also include public realm improvement works or proposals pertaining to delivering a low carbon climate resilient society. It is anticipated that funding in various urban locations will stimulate growth and investment.

Policy Objectives Compact Growth and Regeneration

CGR 1 Compact Growth

To require that all new development represents an efficient use of land and supports national policy objectives to achieve compact growth in towns and villages. Development of lands with no links to the town or village centre will be discouraged.

CGR 2 Regeneration

To promote the redevelopment and renewal of areas in towns and villages that are in need of regeneration.

CGR 3 Vacant Sites Register

To use specific powers, such as the Vacant Sites Register as provided for under the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015, to address under-utilisation of lands in towns and villages. The Council will examine and identify sites on these lands in order to facilitate regeneration and to increase the supply of housing.

CGR 4 Derelict Sites

To implement the provisions of the Derelict Sites Act and encourage and facilitate the redevelopment of derelict sites to bring them back into productive use and address environmental and visual amenity concerns.

CGR 5 Typology Study

Prepare a Density Typology Study as considered appropriate within the lifetime of the Development Plan as resources permit.

CGR 6 Density

Promote the provision of higher density development in close proximity to sustainable transport corridors such as train stations.

CGR 7 Building Heights

It is a policy objective of the Council to identify appropriate locations for increased building heights which will be considered as appropriate in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

CGR 8 Town and Village Centre

To encourage and support a range of appropriate uses in town and village centres that will assist in the regeneration and reuse of vacant and under-utilised buildings and land and will re-energise the town and village centres, subject to a high standard of development being achieved.

CGR 9 Delivering Improved Public Realm

Provide for a high-quality public realm and public spaces in towns and villages by promoting quality design that accommodates creative patterns of use having regard to the physical, cultural, and social identities of individual settlements.

CGR 10 Public Realm Strategy

Consider the preparation of a Public Realm Strategy for County Galway within the lifetime of the Development Plan as resources permit.

CGR 11 Strategic Sites

It is a policy objective of the Council to establish a database of strategic brownfield and infill sites so that brownfield land re-use can be managed and co-ordinated across multiple stakeholders as part of an active land management process.

CGR 12 Opportunity Sites

It is a policy objective of the Council to facilitate, promote and encourage the re-development of Opportunity Sites identified in Volume 2 of the Plan and Local Area Plans for appropriate development that contributes positively to good placemaking within the settlement.

3.7 Urban Living

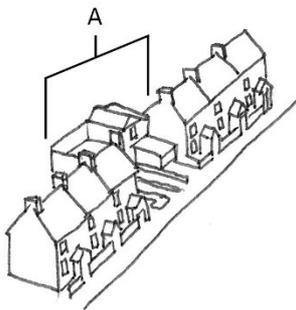
This section of the chapter covers urban living and presents an overview of the types of residential development that is likely to occur in the towns and villages to support modern living. It is clear that residential areas need good connectivity to local services; however, good layout, modernisation and other upgrades of existing residential properties is also required to ensure areas remain attractive to potential inhabitants, meeting their current and future needs. These residential areas are an important component of the towns and villages in which communities develop over time.

3.7.1 Infill Sites

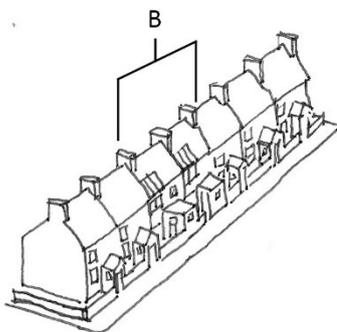
Infill sites are located in settlements within residential areas and are capable of accommodating a limited number of residential units. As with brownfield development they are supported in the NPF

given their typical proximity to existing services and infrastructure. Therefore they are a more sustainable means of development. Infill development is only permitted in the existing built up area. Sub-division of sites within towns can also be permitted in certain circumstances where the character of an area or residential amenity is not adversely affected. Sub-division of sites will only be supported where it accords with proper planning and sustainable development and the appropriate minimum standards.

Corner sites and backland sites in existing built-up areas can also provide for new residential development. They can potentially make a positive contribution to the regeneration of an area as contemporary and innovative design approaches may be utilised. Certain settlements and Local Area Plans have identified a variety of infill sites which may be suitable for single residential development as an alternative to single rural housing.



A poor design response to a gap site. Built from does not respect the built frontage line or architecture of the street. It also puts parking on plot creating a potential conflict with pedestrians.



A good design response to a gap site. Built from does respects the built frontage line scale and rhythm of the street, even though it is a more contemporary design.

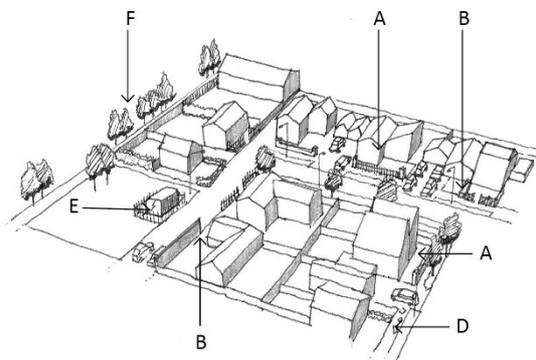
3.7.2 Layout and Design

National policy and guidance advocate compact growth for sustainable neighbourhoods. Along with efficient use of land, high quality living environment with good access to infrastructure is also promoted and this is reflected in this chapter. Neighbourhoods must be attractive, safe and vibrant for people to live there.

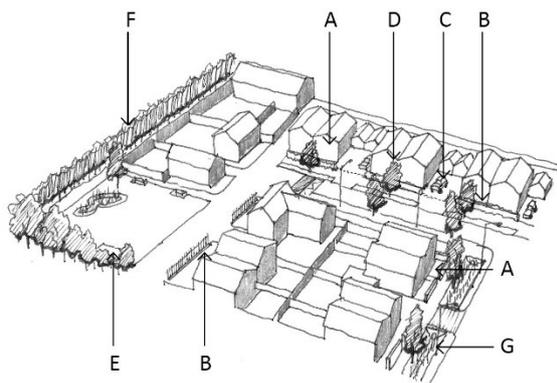
Future development proposals will be required to ensure that:

- The principles good placemaking are adhered to as set out in this chapter;
- While residentially zoned areas are intended primarily for housing development, a range of other uses, particularly those that have the potential to foster the development of new residential communities may be considered e.g. crèches, schools, nursing homes or homes for older persons, open space, recreation and amenity uses;

- Development proposals must comply with the set out within the *Development Management Standards set out in Chapter 15*;
- Proposed developments must have regard to the relevant policy objectives set out within the plan.



- A. Random array of built form with inconsistent set back from street.
- B. Inconsistent boundary treatment
- C. Car parking over pedestrian path
- D. Services poorly coordinated in the path
- E. Sub station located in a conspicuous place undermining the quality and functions of the open space.
- F. Existing hedgerow removed and left with gaps.



- A. Consistent built form, scale, set back and rhythm along the street.
- B. Consistent boundary treatment.
- C. Car parking contained on plot.
- D. Consistent rhythm of lighting and street trees.
- E. Sub station located in an inconspicuous place allowing multiple uses of the open space.
- F. Existing hedgerow retained and enhanced as a continuous green corridor along the edge of the development.
- G. Sustainable surface water drainage integrated into the street.

3.7.3 Housing Types/Design Mix

As outlined in *Chapter 2 Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy* of the plan, the average household size has been identified as 2.5 persons per residential unit.

The mix of house types in the County is influenced by a range of factors including:

- The findings of the HNDA and the Housing Strategy
- The Core Strategy
- The Settlement Strategy
- The existing housing stock in the County
- The preferred mix to benefit the wider community and future population
- Provision of a range of housing types and tenures to meet demand
- Provide a variety of house types that cater for people of various ages with varying degrees of mobility.

Good placemaking in the towns and villages across the County can be delivered if the neighbourhoods offer a good mix of unit types that are attractive to inhabitants. The completion of unfinished housing estates will be supported to enable continued housing in the towns and villages.

3.7.4 Public and Private Open Space

The importance of well-planned and considered public and private open space provision in an area is key to providing a high-quality residential environment for residents and visitors alike. Residential areas should have a suitable mix of both types. The amount of open space, where it is located and the benefits it provides people are the key attributes that all proposed development should ensure is addressed. Development proposals should consider the specific open space needs of an area, the priorities to be addressed and the actions that will be implemented as part of a development proposal. The provision of open space will vary in scale from large regional parks to pocket parks close to people's homes.

It is acknowledged that the specific characteristics of a place may make it difficult or impossible to meet specific elements of the provision and location standards. The Plan allows for a flexible approach and will encourage creative responses to deliver the open space policy objectives through well-coordinated open space strategies that work at scale and across sectors in a collaborative partnership approach.

The provision of open space must be planned in a coherent manner. It is not sufficient to provide left over residual piece of land after a site has been designed.

The standards pertaining to the provision of private, semi-private and communal open space for residential development is set out in *Chapter 15 Development Management Standards*.

3.7.5 Extension to a Dwelling House

Alterations and extensions to existing dwelling houses within the county to improve living standards for occupants will generally be encouraged as it is a more sustainable option than a newly built structure. The layout, size and design of extensions should have regard to the character of the existing properties in the vicinity and the impact that any extension would have on residential amenity. In particular any compromise to sunlight, daylight, overshadowing or privacy should be avoided.

3.7.6 Sub-Division of a Dwelling

Sub-division of existing residential properties into multiple units can in some cases lead to an over intensification of residential activity to the detriment of neighbouring amenity. Generally sub-division of a dwelling into multiple residential units will be discouraged. However, exceptions will be made for

large dwelling units with a large plot size that are well served by infrastructure including public transport.

Policy Objectives Urban Living

UL 1 Infill Sites

To encourage and promote the development of infill, corner and backland sites in existing towns and villages in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

UL 2 Layout and Design

To comply with the principles of good placemaking in delivering residential developments within the towns and villages of the county.

UL 3 Housing Mix

To promote a mix of house types and sizes that appeal to all sectors of the community and contribute to a healthy neighbourhood.

UL 4 Unfinished Housing Estates

In order to address housing supply, public safety and environmental improvement within unfinished housing estates, the Council will continue to work with developers and residents of private residential developments where possible.

UL 5 Open Space

To provide well planned and considered open space that is of sufficient size and in locations that respond to the identified needs of people in accordance with best practice and the scale and function of the surrounding area.

UL 6 Extensions to Residential Units

To encourage sensitively designed subservient extension to existing dwelling houses which do not compromise the quality of the surrounding environment, residential amenity or the character of the surrounding area.