



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

rps

PORTUMNA

Public Realm Enhancement Scheme



An Ciste um Athghiniúint
agus Forbairt Tuaithe
Rural Regeneration and
Development Fund

Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithe
Our Rural
Future



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**Public
Consultation**

**Closing Date for Submissions
December 23rd 2022**

**Enquiries:
regeneration@galwaycoco.ie**



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Introduction



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A Key Hub in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands

Portumna represents a key access point to Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and is central to the delivery of the Discovery Zone of the Lower Shannon. It also acts as an important local commercial centre; with various businesses support the local economy including cafes, restaurants, pubs and boutique accommodation offerings.

This project is being developed with the support of funding under the **Rural Regeneration and Development Fund**. The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) is a commitment of €1 billion by government to be invested in rural Ireland over the period 2019 to 2027. The purpose of the fund is to support job creation in rural areas, address depopulation of rural communities and support improvements in our towns and villages.

What is the Public Realm?

Generally, all areas to which the public has access (such as roads, streets, lanes, parks, squares and footpaths) make up the 'public realm'. These public spaces play a vital role in how Portumna functions and its attractiveness to those who live in, work or visit the town. In addition, it is proposed to develop a wayfinding project to provide easy to follow directions and orientation to the many local visitor attractions Portumna has to offer.

How can you get involved?

This first consultation consists of introducing the project and asking you for your views of how we as a project team can make Portumna's public realm more comfortable, inclusive and user friendly. The people of Portumna best understand its issues, so we are eager at this early stage to gather as much feedback from you as possible to assist in the design process.

Let us have your feedback by:

- Make a submission and fill out the survey online at ... <https://consult.galway.ie/>
- Send us an email to, regeneration@galwaycoco.ie
- Make a written submission to Regeneration Team, Economic Rural and Community Development, Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway.





Primary Goals of the Portumna Public Realm Enhancement

- **High quality Public Realm and Wayfinding improvements** in Portumna that will deliver an engaging experience for locals and visitors.
- A well considered scheme of solutions that are attractive; that have touch points of interest which draw the interest of visitors; that address the dominance of vehicles on the streets of Portumna town centre and **facilitate increased ease of pedestrian movement and enjoyment of cycle culture.**
- Delivers **distinct experiences providing a sense of arrival at key entry points** to the town; that **celebrates the town's history, culture, tourist, arts, and natural features** in a manner that engages the curious and encourages visitors to stop and enjoy the streetscapes.
- Make it **easy for locals and visitors to navigate around the town and discover the routes that lead to and reveal all the points of local interest and the outdoor activities**, to learn and respect what the town and region have to offer and deliver a real sense of place that Portumna is and can be, as a destination as well as a hub for the region.

Scheme Objectives

- **Improve the pedestrian experience** by enhancing the public realm, reducing the dominance of vehicles and parking while promoting a **sense of place** in the character and appearance of Portumna Town Centre.
- Create a **sense of arrival** with high quality public realm interventions at gateway locations.
- **Engage** constructively with the local community throughout the project delivery.
- Incorporate **inclusive and age friendly design** into the scheme.
- Design **attractive green spaces** for local residents' enjoyment and improve soft landscaping in a coherent and consistent manner.
- **Enhance biodiversity** where possible.
- Extend **pavements** providing outside spaces for businesses to operate.
- Provide **quality lighting** through the town centre opening up the towns night-time economy in a pleasant and innovative manner.
- Establish a strategic **cycling hub** with bike parking and support facilities.
- **Improve pedestrian routes** from the town centre to adjacent recreation and tourist assets.

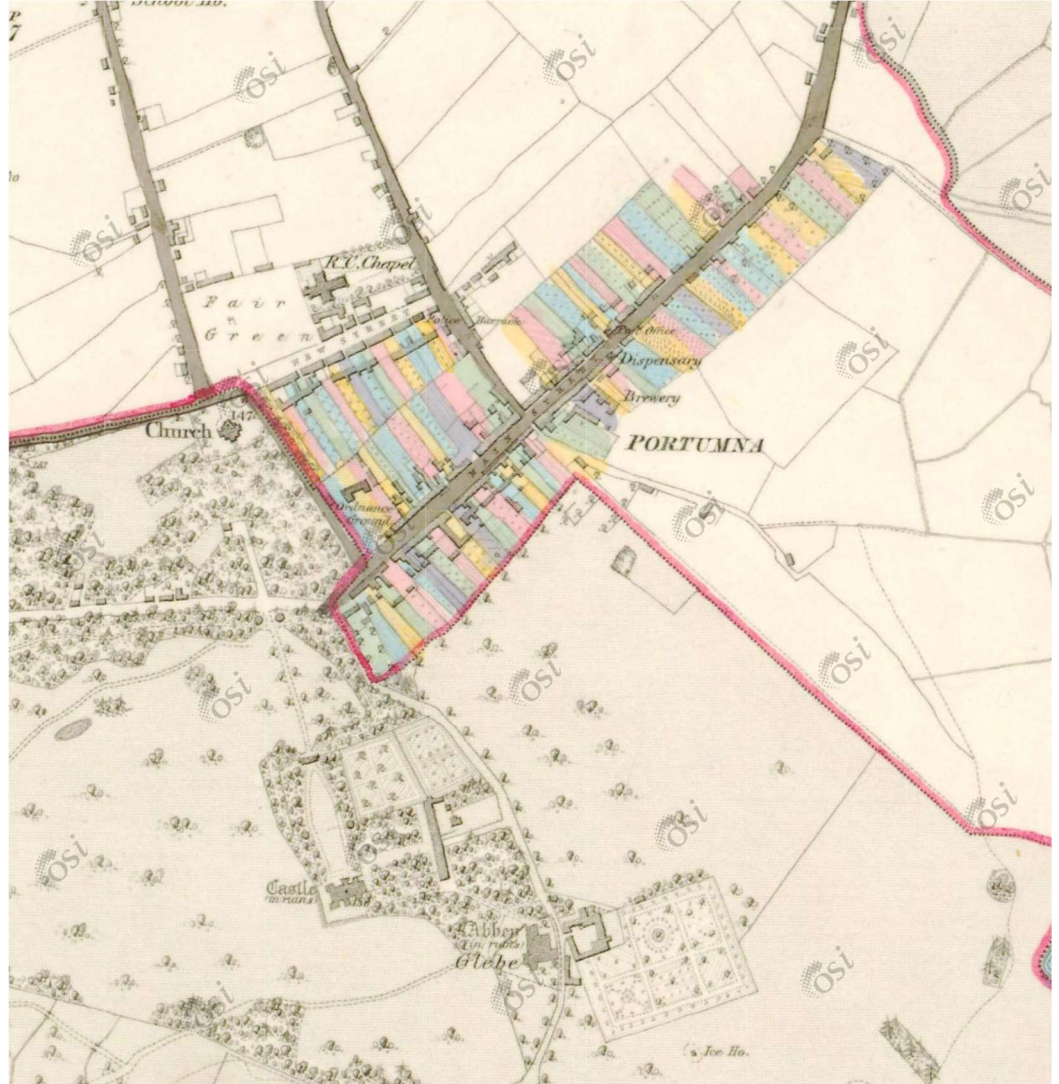
Portumna History



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The Irish Workhouse Centre opened to visitors in 2011 and today staff provide tours of the building and share the story of the workhouse poor. **Portumna Castle**, dating to the 17th century has undergone significant restoration work in recent years and is now a major tourist attraction within Irelands Hidden Heartlands.



Portumna derives its name from the Gaelic 'Port Omna' meaning the landing place of the oak tree and it developed as a monastic settlement in the thirteenth century. The topography and natural features of the area have also influenced the pattern and form of development in the town over the years. Portumna is bounded by the River Shannon to the east, Lough Derg to the south and Portumna Forest Park to the south-west.



Portumna Heritage



A Quality Built Environment The townscape of Portumna is an important part of its visual amenity and the protection and enhancement of the townscape, streetscapes and historic street patterns need to be considered with respect to the future development of the town. The vast majority of buildings span the late 18th to late 19th centuries and share many characteristics. Surviving traditional shopfronts are important features and significantly enhance the local streetscape.



The designation of the historic town centre as an **Architectural Conservation Area** and the associated management of both individual buildings and the public realm in this area will significantly enhance the quality of the local environment. Portumna's principal significance lies in the combination of its street pattern, plot sizes and architectural coherence. The reopening of Portumna courthouse as a multi purpose venue will add greatly to enhancing the current streetscape.



The Study Area

The map below outlines the extent of the study area which is being reimagined as part of this enhancement project. The following information boards provide additional visual information to help you consider what changes you might like to see within the study area and why.

The current streetscape in Portumna includes a mixture of material finishes and colours, street furniture and signage. These changes which occur over time in an ad hoc fashion can detract from the heritage and architectural merit of the town streetscape due to its lack of consistency. By introducing a high quality, complimentary palette of materials, decluttering the existing streetscape and emphasising the existing heritage assets, Portumna's sense of place can be restored while promoting civic pride and connection to one's community.



St. Brendan's Street

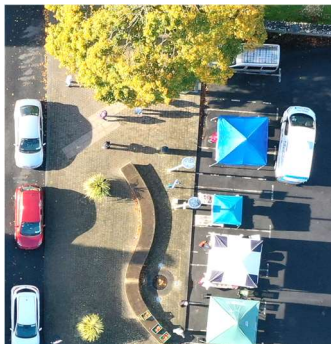
the town gateway

This area is, for the majority of visitors the first point of arrival of the town and as such needs to create a memorable impression. It can be considered to be the threshold of the historic core of Portumna where the streetscape reflects the rich built heritage.



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Above Portumna Town Centre Aerial Photograph 2021



St. Brendan's Street

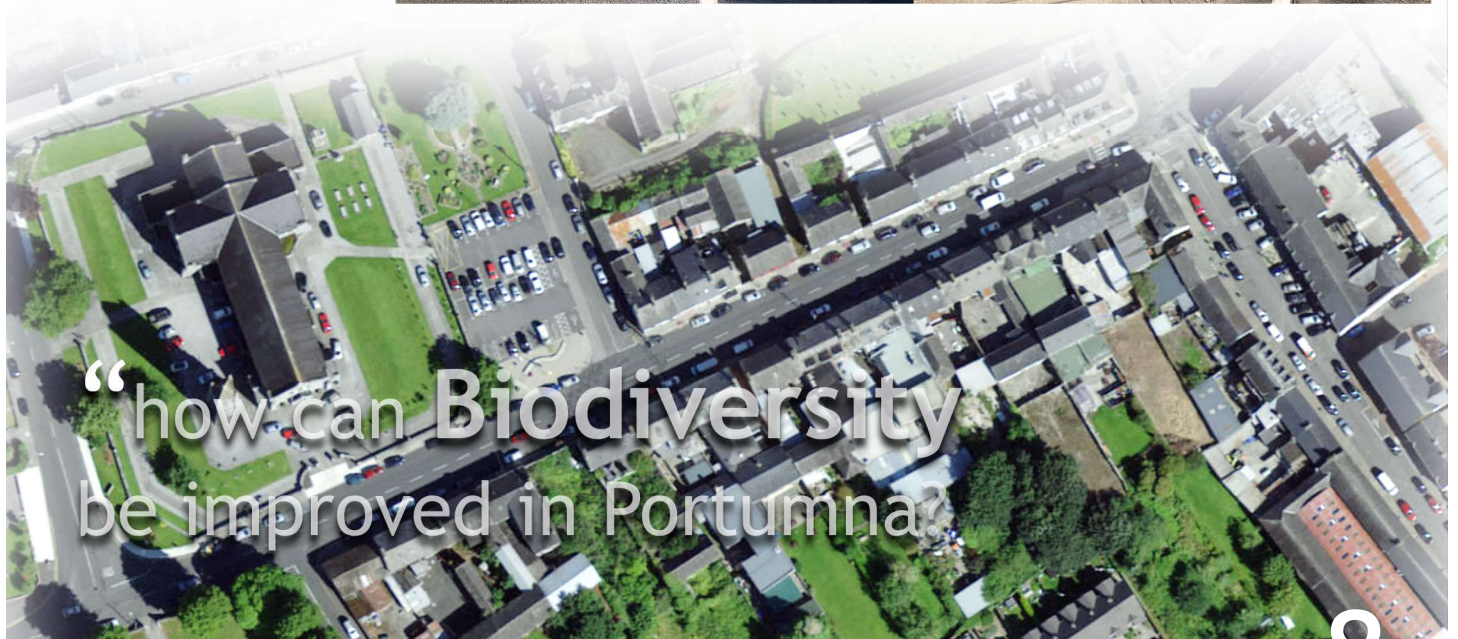
the retail core



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St. Brendan's Street is the main thoroughfare through the town catering for a high volume of through traffic including heavy goods vehicles. The street is home to a number of fine traditional shopfronts ensuring Portumna retains it's link to its past rich heritage.



Clonfert Avenue



Clonfert Avenue retains a mixture of uses including traditional banking, retail and a pedestrian entrance to a large supermarket. This in turn generates a large amount of pedestrian crossing movements. 2023 will also see the vacant courthouse restored to its former glory and begin a new life as a community driven multi purpose space catering for exhibitions, events and remote working opportunities.



The design team are particularly keen to have the public's view of how best to maximise the areas within the curtilage of the Courthouse to benefit the public realm in this area.



St. Patrick's Street

St Brigid's Road



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“how can St. Patrick's Street be improved?”

St. Patrick's Street is an important link road within the town centre and contains both parallel and perpendicular parking. An existing restaurant has also during the pandemic invested in the introduction of an outdoor dining area. At it's most southerly extent the street narrows to form a crossroads with Abbey Street which generates a significant number of turning movements. St. Brigid's Road forms an important link to the Irish Workhouse Centre and local educational institutions.



Horans

Bank of Ireland

10

Above Clomert Avenue/St. Patrick's Street, Photograph

Abbey & Dominic Street

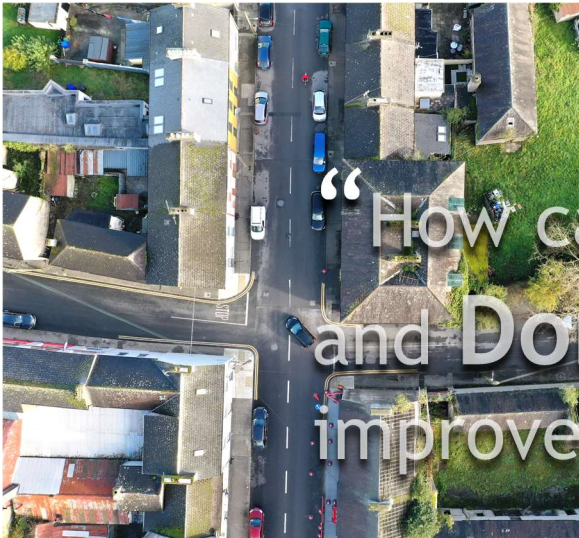


Abbey Street and Dominic Street combined traditionally to form the original 'main street' of Portumna and consists of a mainly terraced attractive streetscape, increasing in width upon the approach to the Castle gates on Abbey Street. The busy crossroads also provides access to the popular bathing area. While mainly residential in use the street is home to a boutique accommodation provider where bicycle hire is also available.



“How can Abbey Street and Dominic Street be improved?”

Above Dominic Street 2022



11 Above Abbey Street

Castle Avenue

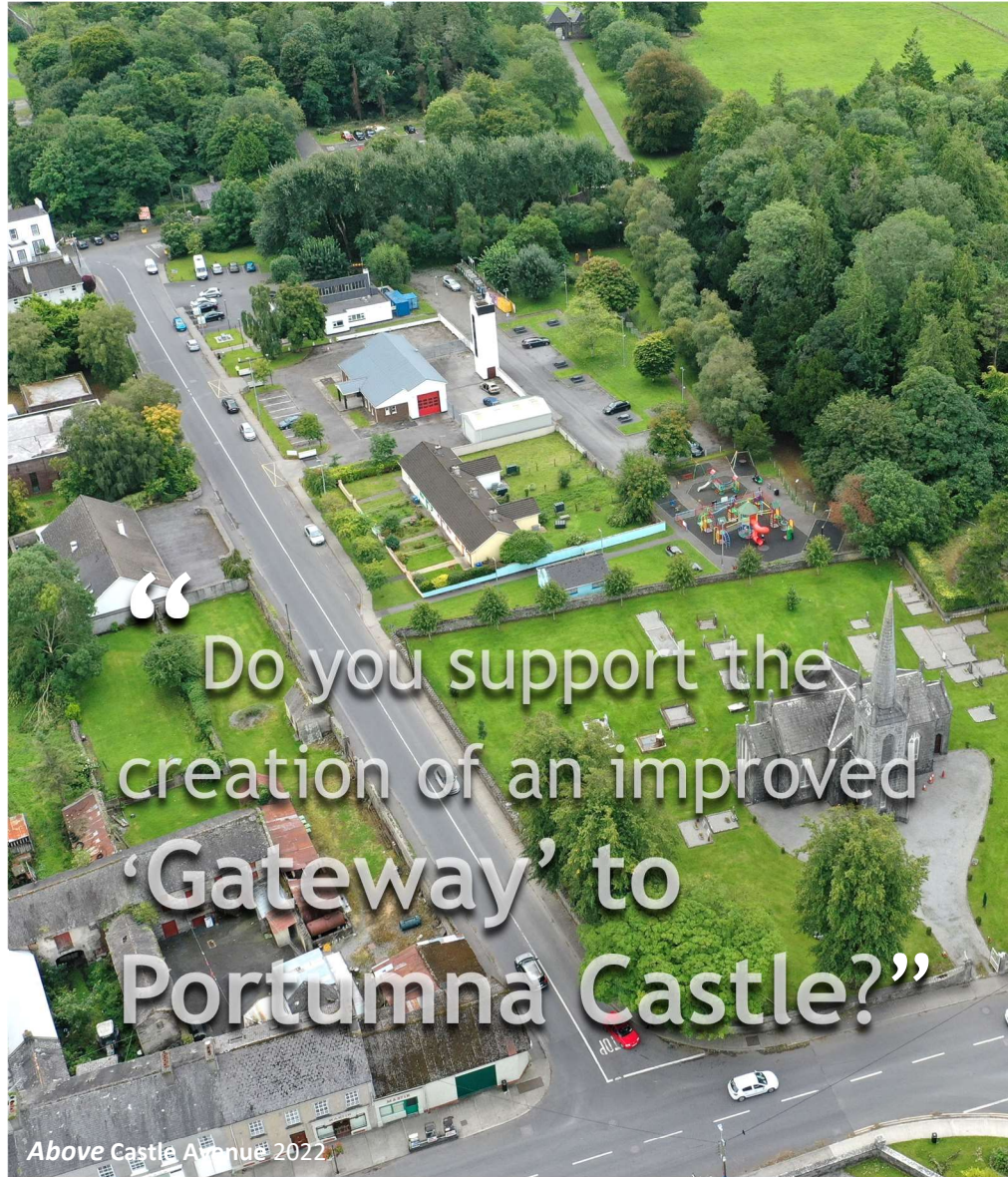
link to heritage and the great outdoors

The avenue is a major visual and physical link between the Castle, the town and the point of arrival into Portumna. An attractive approach that encourages cycling and walking is crucial. Managing potential conflicts between road users at pinch points is also critical.



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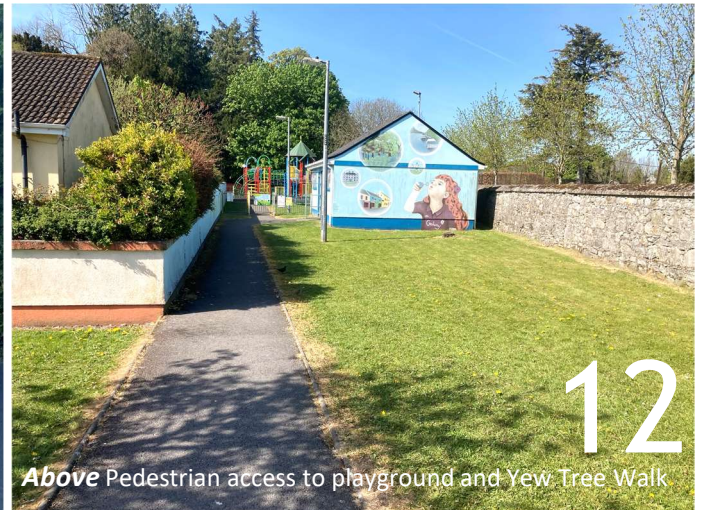


“Do you support the creation of an improved ‘Gateway’ to Portumna Castle?”

Above Castle Avenue 2022



Above Avenue access to Castle and Marina



Above Pedestrian access to playground and Yew Tree Walk

Leading the Way

wayfinding and orientation



“ Do you think that



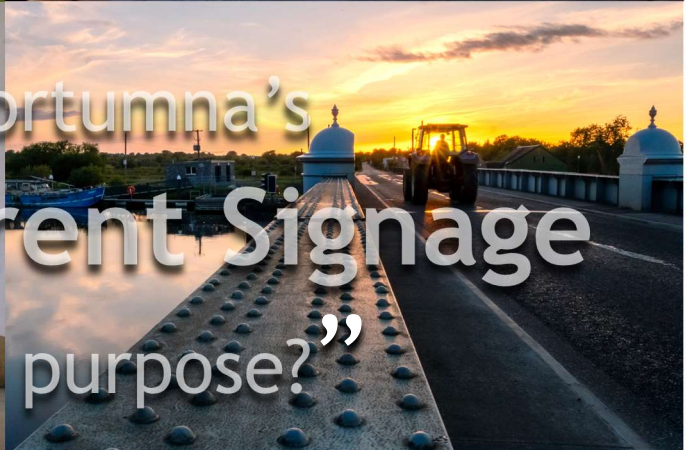
Portumna's Attractions
can be better
Signposted?”



Portumna Blueway to be completed by Summer 2023 in partnership with Waterways Ireland



“ Is Portumna's
Current Signage
fit for purpose?”



.....a visual illustration of the wide variety of materials and colours to be found on existing signage.



New Approaches



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The past number of years have seen an increasing number of our towns engage in public realm enhancement schemes to deliver more people orientated spaces. A sample of such projects are highlighted below where there is a strong focus on placemaking principles to encourage dwell time, footfall and increased visitor numbers which in turn support the local economy.



New Paving

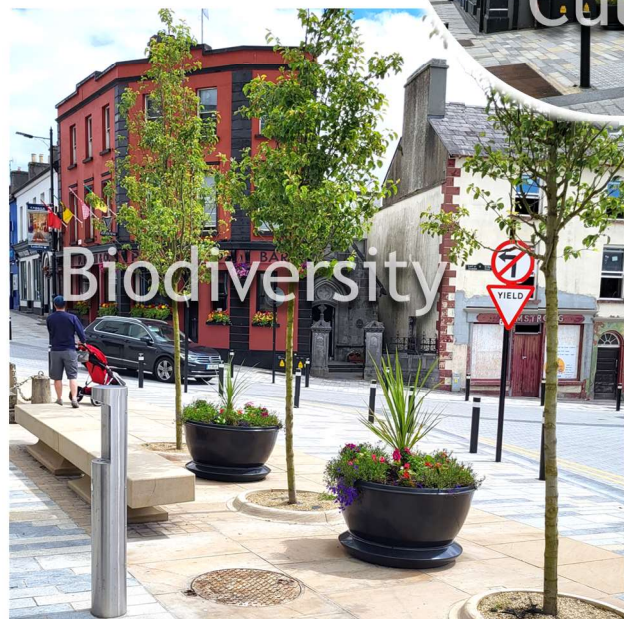
The recently completed **Carrick on Shannon** project focused on the delivery of a high quality public realm with an enhancement of key gateways to improve the attractiveness of the town centre.



The vision for the area was to create areas less dominated by traffic and friendlier for pedestrians. The project delivered de-cluttering, high quality surfacing, new street trees and distinctive street furniture and murals.



Culture



Biodiversity



Street Dining

New Approaches



At Grade Finishes

Roscommon has recently undergone Phase 1 of its transformation of its town centre through investment in its public realm with the primary objective of making Roscommon a more attractive place to live, visit, work, shop and invest.



Street Trees



Murals



Seating

A short selection below of previously delivered wayfinding solutions in a sample locations from heritage sites, to woodlands and urban town centres. Increasingly information is being provided on digital platforms to allow for self guided touring with traditional totem units provide an excellent opportunity to communicate bespoke local content.



Modern Signage

PORTUMNA TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC REALM SCHEME FEEDBACK FORM

Q1 The need for improvements

Do you agree that a Public Realm Scheme will improve Portumna Town Centre?

Yes/No

Q2 Current issues Portumna Town Centre

Do you have any concerns about the existing streets and open spaces in Portumna Town Centre that need addressed as part of the proposed Public Realm Scheme? **Yes/No**

If Yes please identify which of the following reflect your concerns (Select all that are appropriate)

Pavement Surfaces

Street Clutter

Lighting

Pedestrian Access/Safety

Traffic

Wayfinding Signage

Other (Please specify):

Other (Please add comments):

.....
.....

Q3 The Design

Are there things you would like to see included in the designs for the proposed Portumna Town Centre Public Realm Scheme? **Yes/No**

If Yes please identify which of the following reflect your ideas (Select all that are appropriate)

Better/ Even Surfacing

Improved Lighting

Better / more Seating

Improved Parking

Improved Pedestrian Access / Safety

Improved facilities for events

Other (Please Specify):

Other (Please ad comments):

.....
.....

Q4 CONSULTEES

Please let us know if you are responding as a:

Resident

Property Owner

Business Owner/Representative

Member of Local Group

Visitor

Other (Please add comments):

.....
.....

Q5 The Information Presented

Do you agree that the information presented has enhanced your understanding of the proposed project?

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Disagree Strongly

Other (Please add comments):

.....
.....

Thank you for taking the time to submit your comments

The information you have provided forms part of the information gathering exercise for the Portumna Town Centre Public Realm Scheme.

Note: It is important to note that any comments you make to us during this process do not affect your statutory rights to make further representations to the Council whenever the planning application has been submitted.

**HAVE
YOUR
SAY**

Your Town, Your Say

To help make the best possible plan for Portumna it is important that we as a design team hear your thoughts, ideas and any concerns. Please take some time to read through the information boards and contact us by any of the means shown below.

Complete the survey online at:
<https://consult.galway.ie/en/browse>

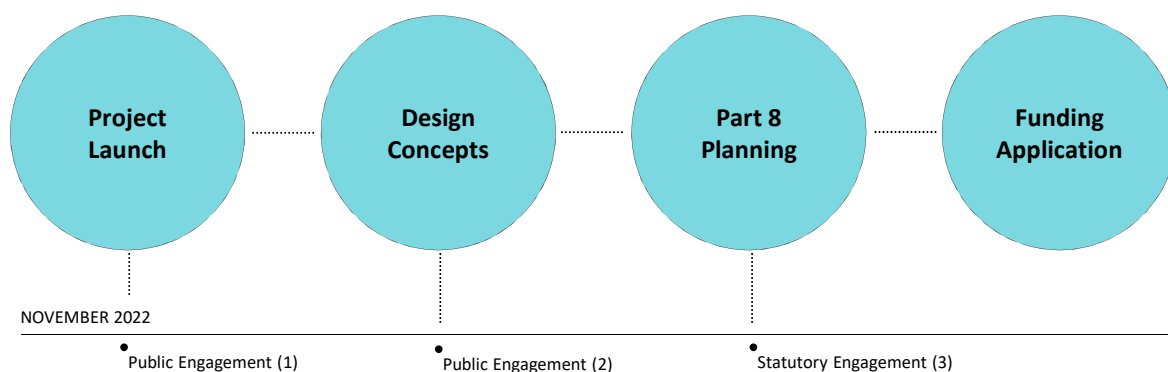
More detailed comments to:
regeneration@galwaycoco.ie
Regeneration Team, Economic Rural & Community Development Section, Áras and Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway.

What's Next ?

Thank you for taking time to review the consultation material. The Design Team would be very grateful if you can provide as much feedback as possible through any of the available means highlighted.

Once this consultation has been completed we will consider all feedback and how it may be used in developing design options for Portumna's Public Realm Enhancement Scheme.

A second public consultation event will be arranged to allow feedback to be provided on the emerging preferred design plans.





Portumna Public Realm - Boundaries Extents
 Rural Regeneration and Development Fund



Name: Plan of SVA for the Public Realm of Portumna
 as approved by the Local Enterprise Agency
 on 15/05/2023

PROJECT INFORMATION:
 Project Name: Portumna Public Realm
 Project Location: Portumna, Co. Wick
 Project Start Date: 2023
 Project End Date: 2025

DATE	BY	FOR
2023-05-15	J. O'NEILL	LOCAL ENTERPRISE AGENCY
2023-05-15	J. O'NEILL	DEPARTMENT OF RURAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
2023-05-15	J. O'NEILL	RURAL REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT FUND

