



## CASE STUDY 3 : ROSCOMMON – BALANCING URBAN AND RURAL ISSUES

MARY GRIER  
SENIOR PLANNER  
ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL



## SETTING THE SCENE

- County Roscommon – key facts
- County Roscommon – urban v rural development in recent decades
- The challenges of reconciling urban and rural development in County Roscommon
- County Roscommon – the current situation; revitalisation in the early stages
- County Roscommon – the future, a more sustainable approach





## COUNTY ROSCOMMON – KEY FACTS

- 2,548 km<sup>2</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> largest county in the state;
- 25 persons per square km – 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest population density in the state;
- 74% of the population live in rural areas (3<sup>rd</sup> most rural county);
- 0.6% population increase from 2011-2016 census (64,065 to 64,436).



## MAIN SETTLEMENTS

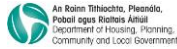




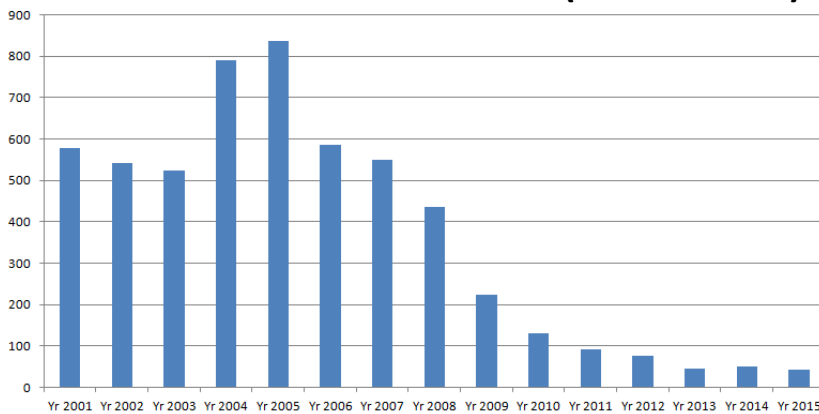
## POPULATION CHANGE IN THE TOWNS OF COUNTY ROSCOMMON

DED	2011	2016	% CHANGE
Roscommon Urban	1701	1723	1.3%
Roscommon Rural	4782	4916	2.8%
Boyle Urban	1459	1501	2.9%
Boyle Rural	1533	1595	4.0%
Castlerea	3077	2970	-3.5%
Ballaghadereen	2768	2651	-4.2%
Monksland (Athlone West Rural)	4450	4960	11.5%
Strokestown	1003	1049	4.6%

Source : CSO 2016 – preliminary results, per District Electoral Division



## PLANNING PERMISSIONS FOR ONE OFF HOUSES IN CO. ROSCOMMON (2000 – 2015)



## CHALLENGES

- Additional costs of physical and social infrastructure provision to dispersed rural developments, including
  - roads;
  - water and wastewater facilities;
  - electricity
  - broadband;
  - education facilities;
  - community and recreation facilities.
  
- Environmental impacts :
  - groundwater pollution;
  - visual amenity and landscape impacts;
  - energy usage due to vehicle dependency.



## INEFFICIENT USE OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

- **32 settlements have public wastewater treatment facilities**  
– all have adequate capacity to accommodate growth
- V
- **Proliferation of private wastewater treatments systems.**
- 14,355 private wastewater treatment systems registered –  
thought to represent over 90% of the overall number;

### National Septic Tank Inspection Plan

- 2013-2014 = 64% failure rate
- 2015 = 79% failure rate
- 2016 = 57% failure rate to date





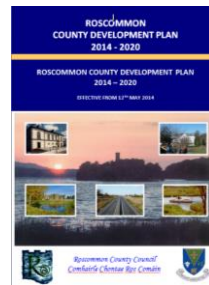
## WHY DO WE NEED TO REVITALISE OUR TOWNS NOW?

- Arrest the decline of towns;
- Make towns an attractive lifestyle choice;
- Rejuvenate town centres – visually, socially and economically;
- Encourage the refurbishment and occupancy of vacant properties;
- Create vibrant places, capable of encouraging inward investment and new enterprise.



## COUNTY WIDE INITIATIVES – 2014 TO THE PRESENT

- May 2014 – Adoption of the *Roscommon County Development Plan 2014 – 2020*;
- Autumn 2014 : introduction of the Town Revitalisation Team Initiative
- 2015 : establishment of Town Teams in Roscommon, Boyle, Castlerea, Ballaghaderreen, Monksland and Strokestown



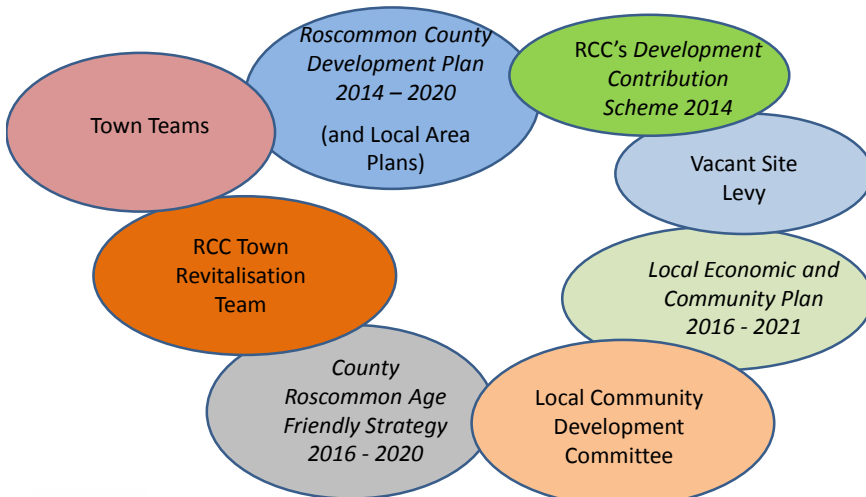


## COUNTY WIDE INITIATIVES (continued)

- 2015 – 2016 : Funding provision and organisation of enhancement works in various towns
- Summer 2016 : Selection of Boyle as a pilot town for an age friendly initiative (Boyle Age Friendly Town Programme)
- Summer 2016 : Assignment of dedicated RCC staff to town revitalisation / urban regeneration activity
- September 2016 : Selection of two pilot projects (Boyle and Monksland) for Town Revitalisation / Urban Design Frameworks



## INTERLINKED INITIATIVES AND PLANS







## TOWN TEAMS

- Strategic action by RCC to support the revival and re-branding of six towns;
- RCC commitment to a five year development process.
- Funding provided by RCC - allocations in 2015 and 2016;
- Initial funding supported the establishment of six Town Teams, and enabled the teams to undertake small scale initial enhancement works in each town.

- Roscommon      - Boyle      - Castlerea  
 - Ballaghaderreen   - Strokestown   - Monksland

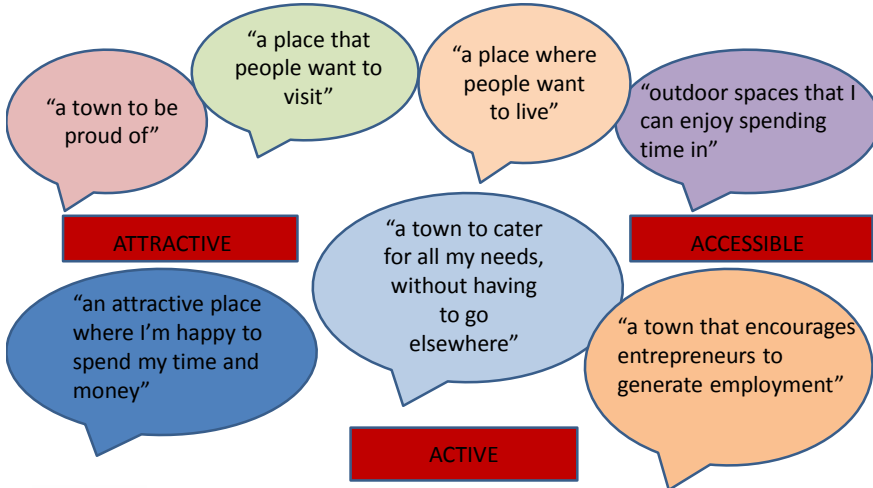


## AIM OF THE TOWN TEAM INITIATIVE

- To energise and reinvigorate towns through a strong the collaboration of retailers, consumers, local communities and the local authority;
- To create jobs, facilitate start-up businesses and re-instil pride in the town.



## EMERGING CONCEPTS AND ASPIRATIONS



## EXAMPLES OF EARLY PHASES OF WORK DELIVERED BY TOWN TEAMS

### Example : Boyle



- Power washing of local monuments;
- Display of scenic murals / window graphics on vacant buildings;

- Provision of plants for Boyle Tidy Towns;
- New additions to Christmas lights;
- Funding of the Christmas ‘shop local’ campaign.







## EMERGING IDEAS

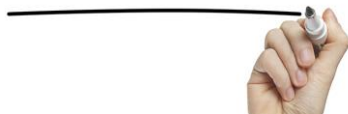
- Clear understanding of objectives;
- Identification of successful rural towns to emulate;
- Developing a vision for the town over the next 10 years.



## TOWN TEAMS – ON-GOING AND FUTURE WORK

- Production of a 5 year Action Plan for each of the six towns
  - identification of projects;
  - step by step approach to the achievement of each project;
  - clear timelines for the completion of each project;
  - creation of smaller working groups with responsibility for individual projects.

**ACTION PLAN**



## WORK OF RCC'S TOWN REVITALISATION UNIT

- Assist in delivering the goals of the *Local Economic and Community Development Plan* and implementing all levels of planning policy from national level to Local Area Plan policies;



- Complement and assist the work of Town Teams :

- Attending and advising at Town Team Meetings;
- Identifying and explaining town centre revitalisation concepts;
- Preparation of urban design frameworks.

## TOWN CENTRE FIRST APPROACH

### Market Town – Evolution and Characteristics

- Formation of strong town centres in the Georgian era;
- Tight urban grain;
- Mixed town centre uses, including a significant proportion of residential;
- Public spaces and landmarks bounded by active frontages



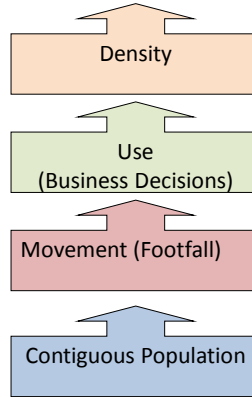


Comhairle Contae  
Ros Comáin  
Roscommon  
County Council

# TOWN REVITALISATION - PLANNING PRINCIPLES

## Use and Movement

- Town centre first principles;
- Increase residential use;
- Evening uses;
- Town centre communities.



Comhairle Contae  
Ros Comáin  
Roscommon  
County Council

# URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORKS (UDF)

## Initial Pilot Projects



- Boyle – Town Revitalisation Plan / Urban Design Framework



- Monksland – Urban Design Framework

- UDF's to be prepared for four other towns in due course.

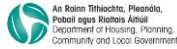




Comhairle Contae  
Ros Comáin  
Roscommon  
County Council

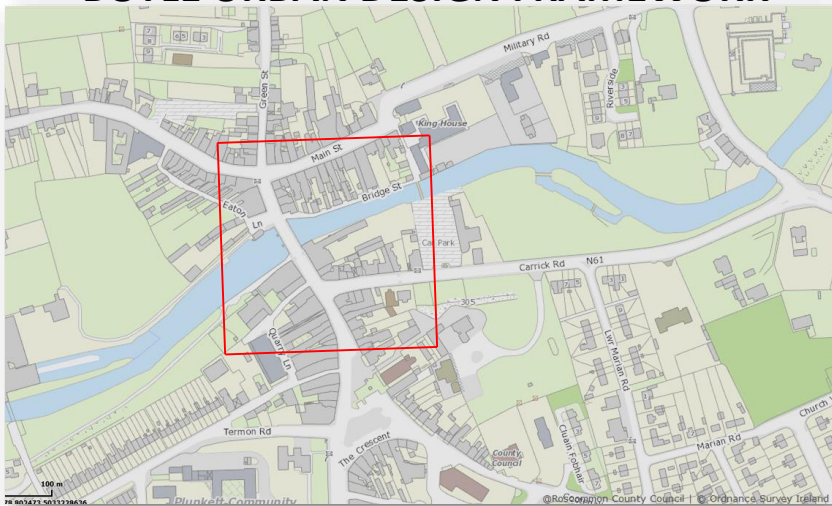
## URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORKS – GENERAL CONCEPTS

- Focus on key regeneration areas;
- Broad town enhancement principles;
- Recommendations for environmental improvements;
- Appreciation of the public realm;
- Working with the urban grain;
- Active frontage to define the public realm and streetscape.



Comhairle Contae  
Ros Comáin  
Roscommon  
County Council

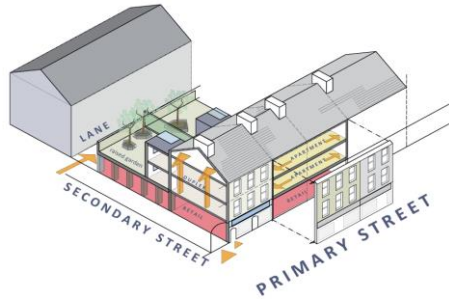
## BOYLE URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK





# BOYLE UDF - CHALLENGES

- Flood zone;
- Architectural heritage protection – Boyle Architectural Conservation Area and several Protected Structures;
- Backland accessibility;
- Redundant configurations;
- Altering perceptions of town centre residential use;
- Potential for traditional buildings to accommodate larger floorplates to meet modern commercial demands.











Comhairle Contae  
Ros Comáin  
Roscommon  
County Council



Comhairle Contae  
Ros Comáin  
Roscommon  
County Council



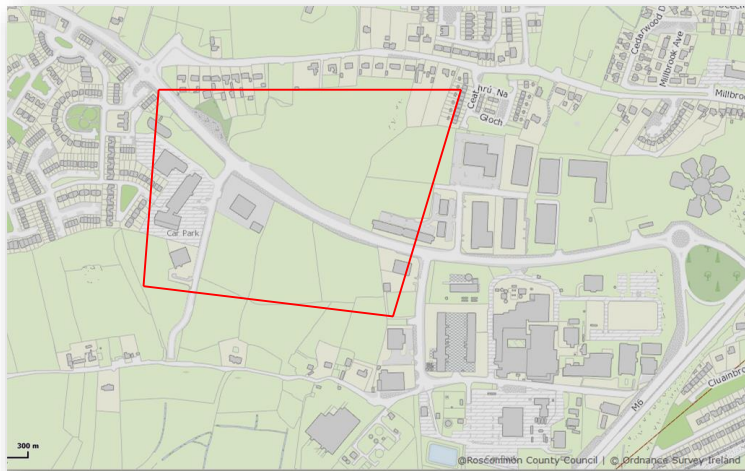


Comhairle Contae  
Ros Comáin  
Roscommon  
County Council

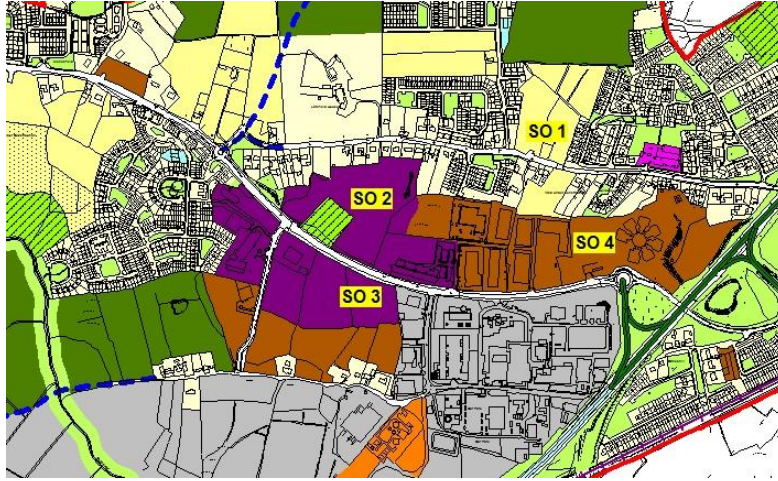


Comhairle Contae  
Ros Comáin  
Roscommon  
County Council

# MONKSLAND URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK







Extract from the current Land Use Zoning map, *Monksland / Bellanamullia (Athlone West) Local Area Plan 2016 - 2022*





## MONKSLAND UDF - CHALLENGES

- Newer settlement, lacking in a traditional urban grain;
- Significant growth over the past two decades – less than optimum co-ordination;
- Geographic area and community are in need of a central core – land identified in the current LAP as a ‘District Centre’;
- ‘District Centre’ lands separated by a regional road;
- Success in developing a ‘District Centre’ is dependent on the co-operation of many landowners and developers.





Comhairle Contae  
Ros Comáin  
Roscommon  
County Council



Comhairle Contae  
Ros Comáin  
Roscommon  
County Council







Comhairle Contae  
Ros Comáin  
Roscommon  
County Council



Comhairle Contae  
Ros Comáin  
Roscommon  
County Council







Comhairle Contae  
Ros Comáin  
Roscommon  
County Council



Comhairle Contae  
Ros Comáin  
Roscommon  
County Council





## KEY FEATURES OF MONKSLAND UDF

- Layout and design guidance;
- Fine grained urban development;
- High architectural merit;
- Continuity between existing and new development;
- Public park to form a central feature of the 'District Centre';
- Park = high quality public realm, mix of hard and soft landscaping;
- Mixed use – residential and commercial (local level services & retailing)
- Less car dominant;
- Pedestrian friendly.



**THANK YOU**