



Slane

Draft Public Realm Plan
January 2022

Produced by

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1.0

Executive Summary

1.1 Executive Summary

The Slane Public Realm Plan sets out the future approach to the streets and spaces of the village.

Slane sits amongst a wealth of natural and built assets. Located adjacent to the River Boyne, the village is in close proximity to an area of outstanding natural beauty and a gateway to the World Heritage Site, Brú na Bóinne. The village also sees visitors to annual concerts at Slane Castle and the Slane Distillery. These attractions can greatly increase a sense of place for locals and visitors. Currently there are poor links between these elements.

One of the main aspirations of the plan is to link these sites as well as local community / commercial sites via recreational and direct links at strategic points throughout the village. Particular focus should be given to connections to the future Boyne Greenway scheme. Though further consideration from landowners in this area will be required, the potential to having linking spaces along the river and the benefits of such interventions should not be underestimated.

The ambition of the public realm strategy is to offer solutions to reorganise the street layout across the village centre and to the south along Dublin Road to create a functional yet pleasant environment to move around, shop and interact. The proposal includes the redesign of the junction on the square, the creation of a new village square, the general reorganisation of the two main roads crossing the village and finally the creation of more pedestrian friendly and improved recreational connections along the southern approach of the village.

Over a number of chapters, this plan includes an understanding of the existing, influencing factors; a series of objectives; feedback received through engagement with stakeholders; and proposed interventions to achieve the vision for Slane. The N2 going north-south through Slane carries significant volumes of local and long distance traffic, causing congestion and delays, safety concerns and having a negative impact on

the village. The project of a N2 by-pass to solve this issue is underpinned by local, regional and national policies. Meath County Council and Transport Infrastructure Ireland identified a preferred option for the by-pass layout, which will also allow the redesign of the N2-N51 junction in Slane. Chapter 3 of this report explores the future public realm in Slane with and without the by-pass improvements.

Chapter 6 explores interventions to achieve the rejuvenation of the street layout, pleasant public spaces and improved links to the area beyond. Site specific design considerations have been established to bring Slane in line with the needs of modern living. These include issues such as accessibility and pedestrian movement that are in accordance with current building regulations and best practice. The plan objectives also seek to be sustainable and promote measures to combat climate change.

Potential enhancements identified in this report look to address vehicular domination and pedestrian permeability in the village. The Plan proposes a number of measures which can only be delivered in the event of the construction of the N2 Slane Bypass. The planning application for the bypass scheme will also comprise of some of the public realm enhancement measures which are identified in this plan.

Consultation

A virtual public consultation event for this plan took place with invited stakeholders online on the 28th of January 2021. A summary of the event and points raised can be found in the Appendix in Chapter 9. The objectives that were developed are as follows:

Public Realm Plan Objectives

1. **Improve continuity and quality of footpaths to increase pedestrian and cyclist comfort and safety.**
2. **Create safe and regular pedestrian crossing points.**
3. **Create a village garden as a new focus to the village centre with new public open space.**
4. **Reduce carriageway width where suitable and improve its definition.**
5. **Redesign the Square and the junction to improve its general setting and associated movements.**
6. **Preserve and enhance the architectural value in compliance with the ACA Character Statement by improving the quality of the public realm.**
7. **Rationalise and unify street furniture including lighting and remove street clutter.**
8. **Enhance the general character of the area by implementing a greening strategy in appropriate locations.**
9. **Promote new pedestrian and cycling recreational links to the main cultural heritage in the area with opportunity to link the village to the Boyne Greenway.**
10. **Enhance the character of the village by under-grounding services.**
11. **Encourage active travel with more opportunities for cycle parking and use of public transport.**
12. **Environmental improvements due to proposed greening interventions and reduction in air pollution and noise levels.**

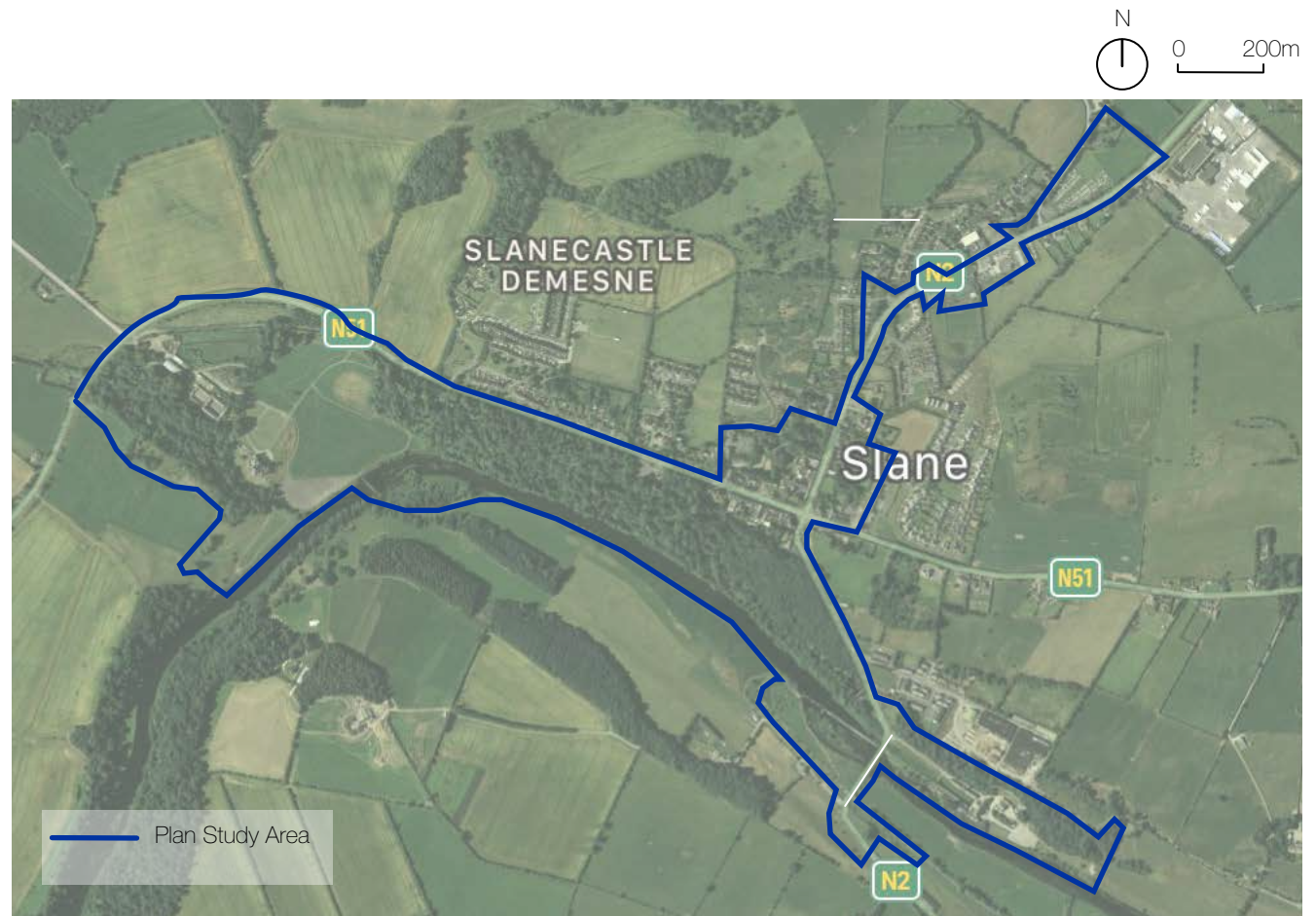
Three specific projects are identified in the Plan, namely Project 01-The Square, Project 02 The Village Garden and project 03 Slane Bridge. Refer to Chapter 6 for Further Details.

Planning Policy Context

Project Ireland was launched on the 16th February 2018 is a high-level document that provides the framework for future development and investment in Ireland. It includes a detailed capital investment plan for the next ten years, the National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030, and the National Planning Framework (NPF) which outlines the broader policy principles and priorities in planning for future population and economic growth to 2040. Public Realm Improvements, placemaking and brownfield development are central tenants of the National Planning Framework (NPF). The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) forms part of Project Ireland. They support ambitious and strategic projects which contribute to sustainable rural regeneration and development. The proposals put forward in this Plan adhere to and strive to implement the principals of the National Planning Framework, 'Our Rural Future', and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES).

A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been prepared for the Plan. All Proposals outlined in the plan will be subject to the mitigation measures recommended in the NIS Report. Further assessments will be carried out as appropriate.

The recent global health crisis has influenced how we think about outdoor public space. The Resilience and Recovery 2020-21: Plan for Living with COVID-19 highlights that outdoor spaces are safer than indoor spaces, in terms of being less susceptible to high transmission rates of Covid-19. The vision and objectives of this plan remain applicable in how the public realm of Slane should be treated and where enhancement should be pursued. The interventions of these plans include enhancements to outdoor public spaces and amenities. They will better accommodate the recent changes to our behaviour in how we use our streets and towns and enjoy open space.



2.0 Introduction



View of Slane Castle (2019)

2.1 Introduction

BDP have been appointed by Meath County Council to produce a public realm plan for Slane village centre. This plan considers:

- Placemaking to improve the image, user experience and perception of the village centre.
- The potential of the village as a destination for visitors and tourists.
- What improvements can be made to the public realm in the existing village centre with the introduction of a north south vehicular bypass (N2).



3.0 Planning Policy and Context

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Meath County Development Plan 2021-2030

The Slane Public Realm Plan adheres to the relevant planning policy, vision and objectives outlined in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2030.

It is envisaged that the proposals in this plan will work with the CDP to achieve the vision which is:

'To enhance and protect the historic character of Slane Village while providing for the needs of the local community, businesses and visitors; and, to support the village's role as a gateway to the Boyne Valley, cultural tourism and artisan food hub in Meath'

Relevant Village Development Policies and Objectives

SLN POL 1

To consolidate and strengthen the commercial and residential village centre of Slane, and encourage development which will contribute to the character and structure of the village core and to preserve and enhance the quality of the village's attractive built and natural environment, while catering for the needs of all sections of the local community to ensure that the village develops in a sustainable manner, as an attractive place to live, work, recreate and visit.

SLN OBJ 11

To seek to introduce efficient traffic calming measures along the main village roads and at the key locations to reduce traffic speeds and improve pedestrian safety.

SLN OBJ 12

To protect the landscape setting of the village.

SLN OBJ 13

To require the preservation and reinstatement of traditional details and materials on existing buildings and the streetscape where improvements or maintenance works are being carried out.

SLN OBJ 14

To support the community and all key stakeholders in the implementation of the Slane Community Biodiversity Plan 2016-2020 and any revisions thereof.

SLN OBJ 15

To require that all development proposals within or contiguous to the Architectural Conservation Area be sympathetic to the character of the area, that the design is appropriate in terms of height, scale, plot density, layout, materials and finishes and is appropriately sited and designed in accordance with advice given in Slane Architectural Conservation Area Character Statement.

SLN OBJ 19

To introduce consistent village branding/presentation at the village entry points and along main streets in form of high quality signage, tourism information, public art and consistent village type lighting standards which would strengthen Slane's identity.

SLN OBJ 20

To encourage the removal of visually intrusive elements such as overhead cables and inappropriate signage.

DM POL 1

To support, be proactive and implement the objectives, actions, and recommendations of the Public Realm Plans as completed.

DM OBJ 1

To prepare an implement Public Realm Strategies, throughout the County where appropriate, liaising closely with residents, community and local business groups and other relevant stakeholders.

3.2 N2 Slane By Pass and the Public Realm Enhancement Scheme

N2 Slane By-Pass and Public Realm Enhancement Scheme

The N2 north-south through Slane carries significant volumes of local and long distance traffic, causing congestion and delays, can create safety concerns and has a negative impact on the village. The project of a N2 by-pass to solve this issue is underpinned by local, regional and national policies. Meath County Council and Transport Infrastructure Ireland have identified a preferred option for the bypass layout, which will facilitate the delivery of significant elements of the public realm plan. It is anticipated that a planning application for the N2 Slane Bypass and Public Realm Enhancement Scheme will be lodged with An Bord Pleanála in 2022.

4.0 Existing Situation and Opportunities

4.1 Slane today - Sites of cultural & archaeological significance



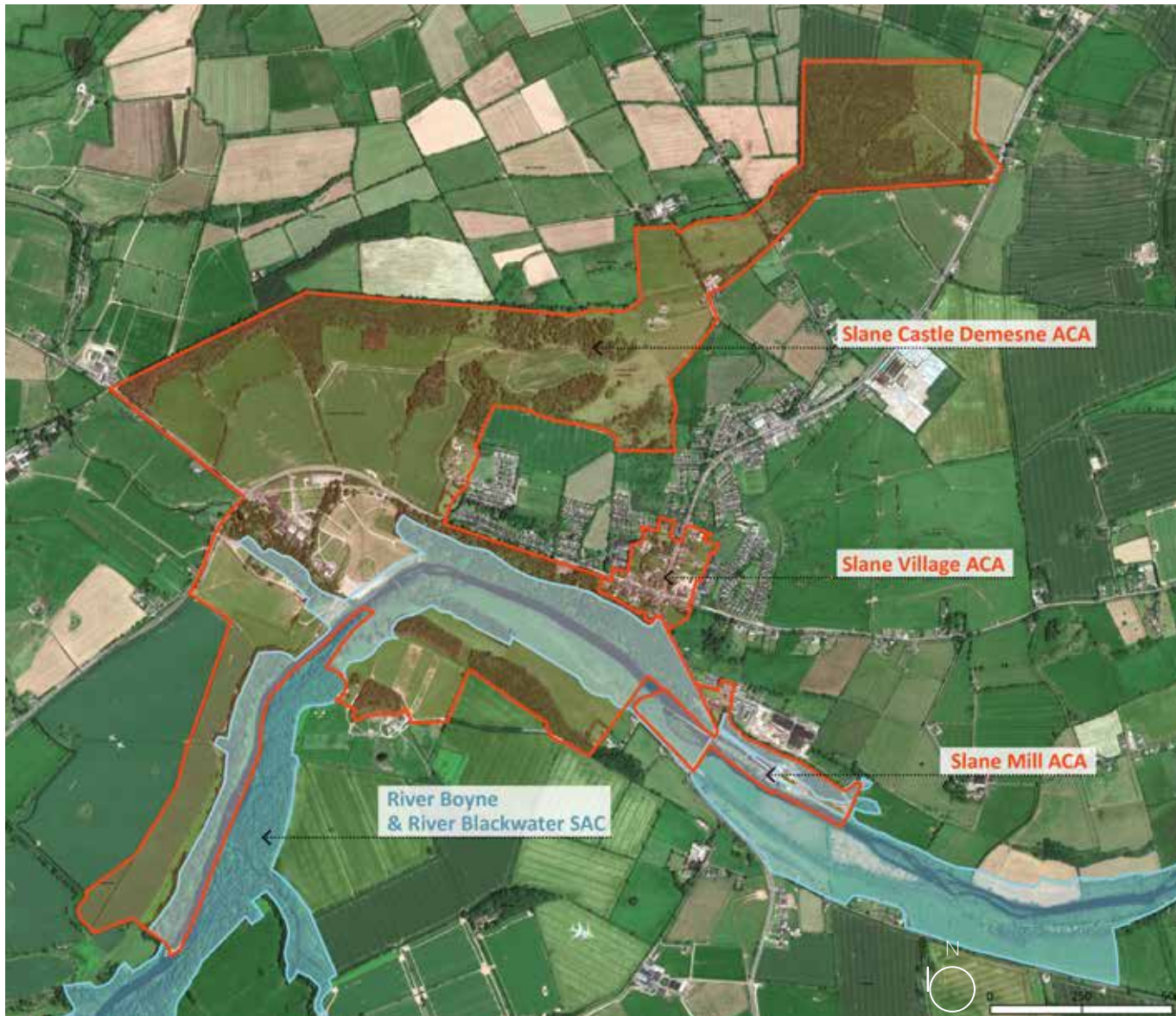
- ① Slane Castle.
- ② Hill of Slane.
- ③ Francis Ledwidge Cottage Museum.
- ④ The Millhouse.
- ⑤ Fennor Castle.

4.1 Slane today - Sites of cultural & archaeological significance



- ① Slane Castle.
- ② Hill of Slane.
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- ④ The Millhouse.
- ⑤ Fennor Castle.

4.2 Slane today - ACA Character Statement and SAC Designated Areas



The public realm plan aims to enhance the public realm in compliance with the principles stated in Slane ACA Character Statement:

- Careful positioning of new tree planting not to obstruct views on valuable façades.
- Under-grounding of overhead services throughout Slane Village ACA Character Statement.
- Materials, furniture and lighting proposals considerate of the character and heritage in the village.
- Comply with principles of the ACA Character statements that are yet to be prepared for Slane Mill and Slane Castle.

4.3 Slane today - Significant Views and Vistas



- ① View on approach road to the village from the western end of Church Street.
- ② View across the Square looking westwards down Church Street.
- ③ View from Chapel Street towards the Square, with the Boyne River Valley in the distance.
- ④ View down Mill Hill along N2 towards the Boyne Valley.
- ⑤ View across Slane Bridge towards Mill Hill, Boyne River Valley, Slane village centre and Demesne plantations.

The public realm plan aims to protect and enhance these designated views through:

- Careful positioning of new tree planting not to obstruct key views.
- Removal of traffic gantries along N2.
- Under-grounding of overhead services throughout Slane Village.
- Conservation and enhancement of key viewing points such as the lay-by along the N2 opposite Fennor Castle.

4.4 Slane today - Existing Condition

Slane is a village situated to the east of county Meath located in the heart of the Boyne Valley. The village centre acts as a crossroad between the N2 and the N51 and extends along these 4 radiating roads. It enjoys a picturesque and unique setting and has a particular wealth of cultural heritage.



4.5 Slane today - Vehicular Access



4.6 Issue with the Existing Public Realm

There are a number of factors that contribute to a negative experience of the public realm in the area. Below are listed some of the issues encountered that the redesign proposes to solve, along with some of the opportunities which the redesign aims to enhance.

The issues in Slane's village centre are:

- Congestion throughout the village centre.
- Speed of vehicles during non-peak hours.
- Vehicle dominated public realm, not pedestrian friendly.
- Narrow footways and lack of pedestrian crossings. Though there are crossings in place at the main junction, it can take a long time to cross.
- The comfort of all users including pedestrians and cyclists.
- Lack of vegetation and tree planting in the village centre.
- Absence of pedestrian connection to the surroundings of the village e.g. riverside, key archaeological sites, woodlands, and community facilities.
- Air and noise pollution.

The opportunities in Slane's village centre are:

- Pivotal location in the east of Ireland, close proximity to destination places.
- Rich architecturally.
- Natural environment in close proximity to River Boyne.
- Potential for significant enhancement of active travel and cycling throughout the village to connect to key tourist, community and recreation destinations.
- Potential for Slane to become a hub destination on the Boyne Greenway.
- Potential to significantly enhance the character of the north south roads which pass through the village centre as they will have considerably reduced traffic volumes in the event of the by-pass being in place.

5.0 Plan Objectives

5.1 Objectives of the Public Realm Plan

1

Improve continuity and quality of footpaths to increase pedestrian and cyclist comfort and safety.

2

Create safe and regular pedestrian and cyclist crossing points.

3

Create a village garden as a new focus to the village centre with new public open space.

4

Reduce carriageway width where suitable and improve its definition.*

5

Redesign the Square and the junction to improve its general setting and associated movements.*

6

Preserve and enhance the architectural value in compliance with the ACA Character Statement by improving the quality of the public realm.

7

Rationalise and unify street furniture including lighting and remove street clutter.
Removal of traffic gantries.*

8

Enhance the general character of the area by implementing a greening strategy in appropriate locations.

9

Promote new pedestrian and cycling recreational links to the main cultural heritage in the area with opportunity to link the village to the Boyne Greenway.

10

Enhance the character of the village by undergrounding services.

11

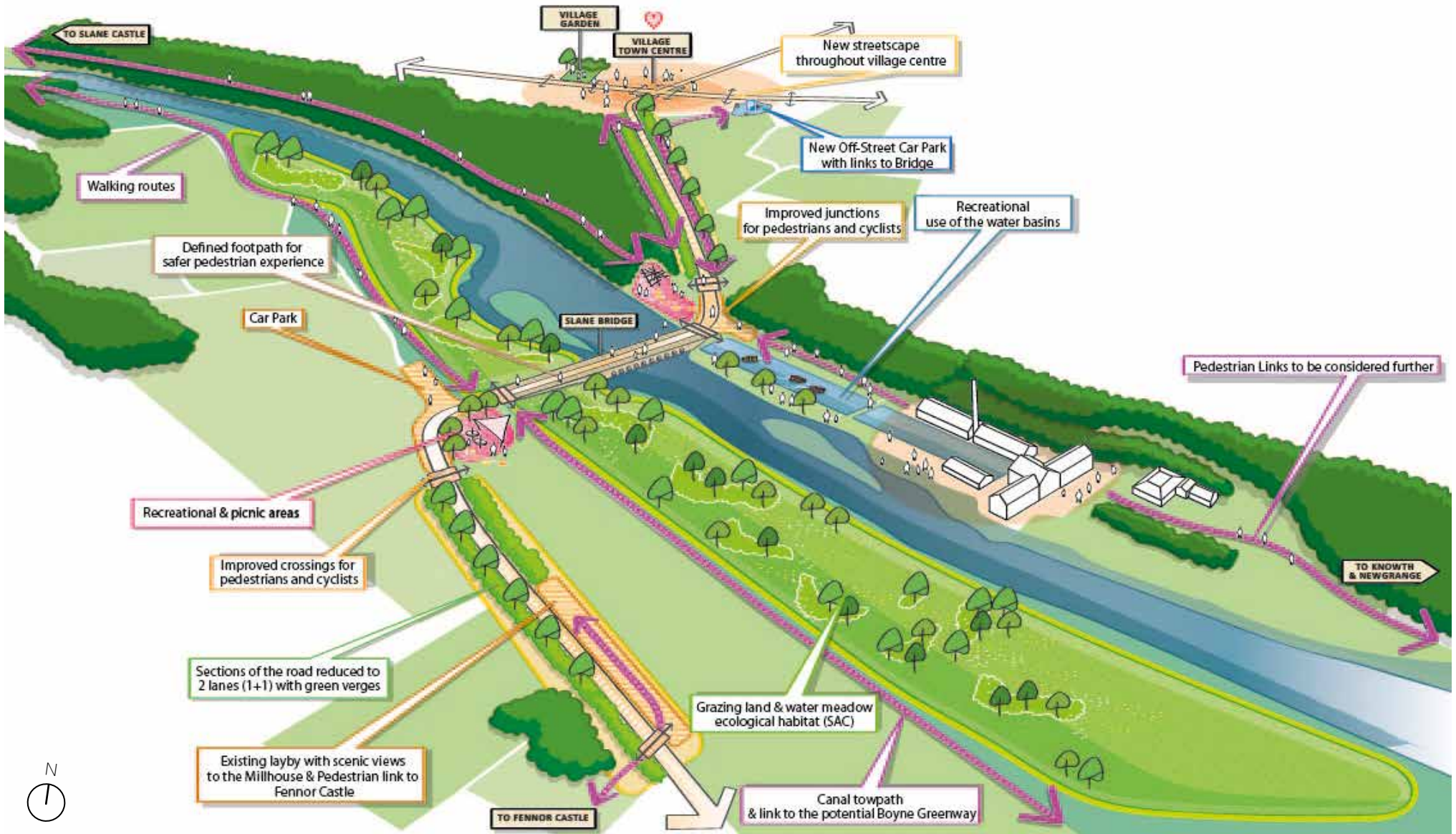
Encourage active travel with more opportunities for cycle parking and use of public transport.

12

Environmental improvements due to proposed greening interventions and reduction in air pollution and noise levels.

*denotes objectives that cannot be delivered without the delivery of the by pass.

5.2 Overall Vision for the Area



5.3 Connectivity to Historic Sites and Visitor Attractions

Slane sits amongst a wealth of natural and built assets. These attractions can greatly increase a sense of place for locals and visitors. Currently there are poor links between these elements. One of the main aspirations of this plan is to link these sites via recreational and direct links at strategic points throughout the village. Particular focus should be given to connections to the future Boyne Greenway scheme and by extending the village footpath network along the N2 and N51. Though further consideration from landowners in this area will be required, the potential to having linking spaces along the river and the benefits of such interventions should not be underestimated.

Greenway



Southern Approach



5.4 Approach to Travel and Circulation

Street Hierarchy, Key Spaces and Gateways

Gateways

Speed reducing measures coupled with signage and material changes at specific entry points to the village to promote a sense of arrival.

Primary Roads*

Crossing points are required along Main Street, Chapel Street and at the N51 / N2 Junction to enhance pedestrian movement. The carriageway should be reduced where feasible to calm traffic speeds and improve the village centre for pedestrians and cyclists.

Secondary Routes*

These routes can better accommodate pedestrian and cycling movement with improved crossings and wider footpaths where possible.

Key Spaces*

The core village area can be enhanced through the narrowing of carriageways, widening of footpaths, and better links to public open space. Connections can also be improved to local community and visitor destinations.

Movement, Access, Parking and Circulation

Priority Vehicle Flow*

Future consideration must be given to the priority vehicular flow through the village. The introduction of the by-pass will be a significant factor in determining the best solution.

Give Way Flow / Secondary Routes

Like the Main Street, pedestrian movements along secondary routes can be enhanced by introducing a more consistent palette of materials.

Time Restricted Parking in the Village Centre

The plan has identified that short-stay on-street parking will be in demand and necessary for shops, businesses and allowing for a functioning high street. With many cars parked on the Main Street for long periods of time, time restricted parking in tandem with off street car parking would open the village up to more users per day, help local businesses and potentially increase trading in the core village centre.

Unrestricted Parking

Unrestricted timed parking will still be provided for those who need longer durations of parking. This can be visitors, tourist coaches or traders and their staff. This should be accommodated on a suitable site in close proximity to the core village centre.

Cycling*

Having reviewed segregated and integrated options for cycling, it has been determined that due to the space available, segregated cycle lanes will not be feasible. To improve the current situation,

the design of the streets in the village centre should help minimise vehicle speeds and make for a more comfortable cycling environment. Cycling is shared on the carriageway which will be reduced in width. Crossing points will be improved with increased provision of cycling parking facilities.

Pedestrian Crossings

Additional pedestrian crossings will make pedestrian movement more comfortable for users of all ages and abilities.

Future Boyne Greenway Scheme

The Boyne Greenway scheme will attract more pedestrian and cyclists to the area. Recreational cycle links will become a better alternative to the carriageway and should be promoted. Visitors will be able to park in a future long-stay car park that will have a defined link to the river.

*denotes objectives that cannot be delivered without the delivery of the by pass.

6.0

Projects

Project 01 The Square

Project 02 Village Garden

Project 03 Slane Bridge

Artist's Impressions of Village Centre Approach Roads

6.1 Project 01 - The Square - Existing Photos

1 Existing junction- Northern Arm



2 Existing junction- Southern Approach



3 Existing junction- Eastern Arm



4 Existing junction- Northern Approach



5 Existing junction- Southern Arm



6 Existing junction- Western Arm



7 Existing junction- Approach from Main Street



6.1 Project 01 - The Square - Indicative Proposed Overall Layout for Village Centre



- ① New junction design including reorganised traffic lanes, carriageway tightening, pedestrian crossings on raised tables, resurfacing and planted verges.*
- ② Resurfaced raised tables with pedestrian crossings and tightening of the carriageway as traffic calming measures.
- ③ Carriageway narrowed to 6.5-7m with pockets of parallel parking.*
- ④ Carriageway narrowed to 6.4-7m with pockets of parallel parking.*
- ⑤ New village garden across from the Conyngham Arms with new tree planting, vegetation and furniture. Flexible central space for possible local events.
- ⑥ New tree planting to enhance the character of the streetscape and reduce air pollution.
- ⑦ Southern approach road reduced to two traffic lanes (1+1), wider pavements for improved pedestrian movements, narrower carriageways to reduce speeds and promote safer cycling, removal of traffic gantries and introduction of new planted verge.*
- ⑧ Removal of existing lighting columns throughout the village centre, replaced with appropriate low-level conservation lighting columns, under-grounding of overhead services.
- ⑨ Bus stop provision.

*denotes objectives that cannot be delivered without the delivery of the by pass.

6.1 Project 01 - The Square - Option 01

This illustrative masterplan is based on Ordnance Survey information only and the final positions of all components is subject to detailed survey and design.

- ① Road realigned and tightened to between 6.4 and 7m.
- ② Pedestrian crossings on raised tables.
- ③ Road realigned, resurfaced and tightened to between 6.4m and 7m.
- ④ Widened, resurfaced & continuous walkway.
- ⑤ Planted verges protecting pedestrian areas.
- ⑥ Potential Site for Off-Street Parking.
- ⑦ Bus stop provision.



6.1 Project 01 - The Square - Option 02

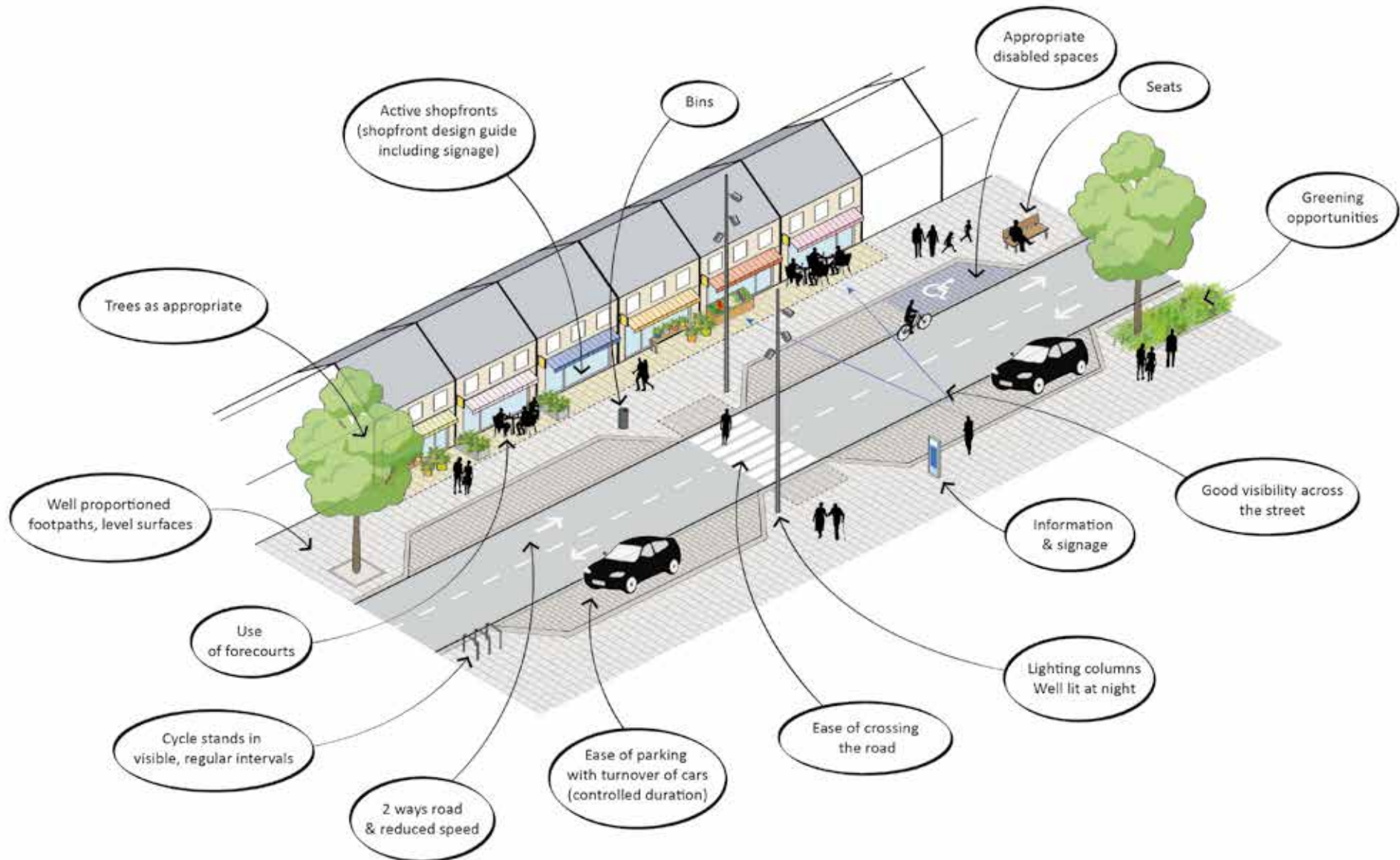
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- ③ Road realigned, resurfaced and tightened to 6.4 and 7m.
- ④ Widened, resurfaced & continuous walkway.
- ⑤ Planted verges protecting pedestrian areas.
- ⑥ Pockets of planting in front of heritage buildings.
- ⑦ Potential site for off-street parking.
- ⑧ Bus stop provision.



6.1 Project 01 - Design Principles for the N2 and N51

WHAT MAKES A GOOD HIGH STREET?



6.1 Project 01 - The Square - Artist's Impression

This illustrative masterplan is based on Ordnance Survey information only and the final positions of all components is subject to detailed survey and design.



6.2 Project 02 - Village Garden - Existing Photos

① Existing Village Garden



② Existing Village Garden



③ Existing Village Garden



④ Existing Village Garden- Eastern Side



⑤ Existing Village Garden- Western Entrance



⑥ Existing Village Garden- Raised Planting



6.2 Project 02 - Village Garden Design Principles

An enhancement of the existing Slane Village Garden. Users will be afforded more open public space to dwell and spend time in.

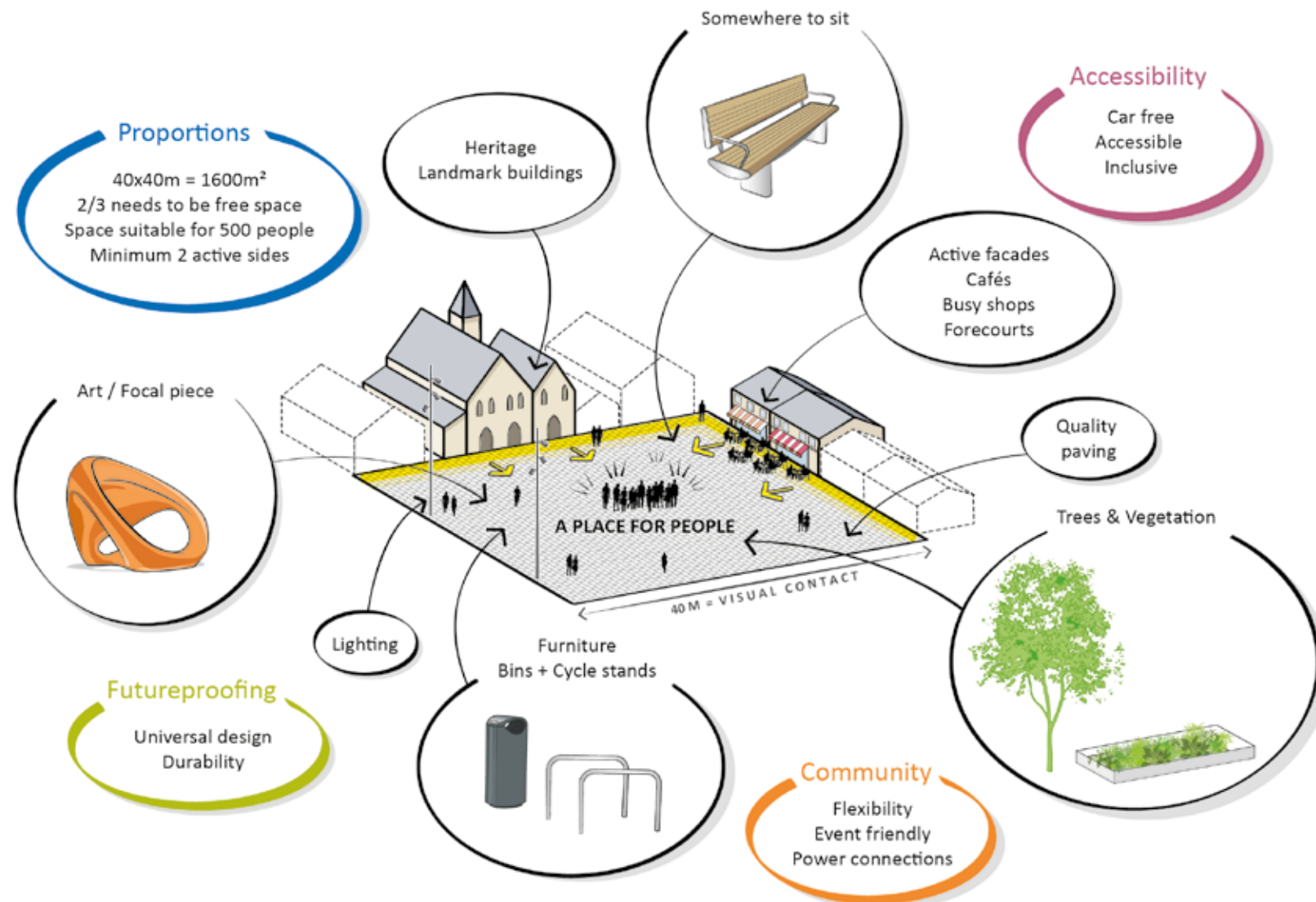
The overarching objective is to create a garden area that instils a sense of place for locals and visitor.

Features of the garden will comprise of the following:

- A high quality paved space that is universally accessible.
- Seating opportunities that are age friendly with armrests and backrests.
- Cycle parking opportunities.
- Links to nearby shops and cafés.
- Increased local biodiversity through the planting of native and naturalised trees, shrubs and herbaceous planting.
- Appropriate lighting.
- The installation of a public art piece.

The space should be flexible to allow for seasonal events or pop-events to take place.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD VILLAGE SQUARE?



6.2 Project 02 - Village Garden - Before

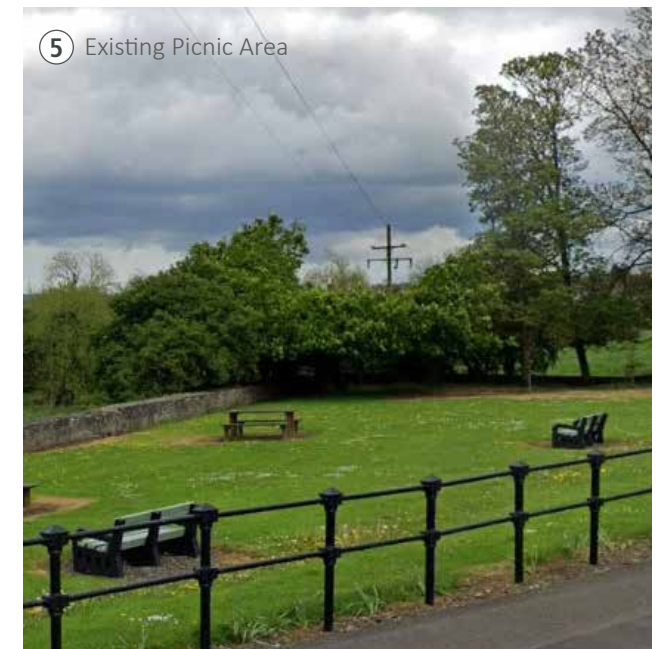
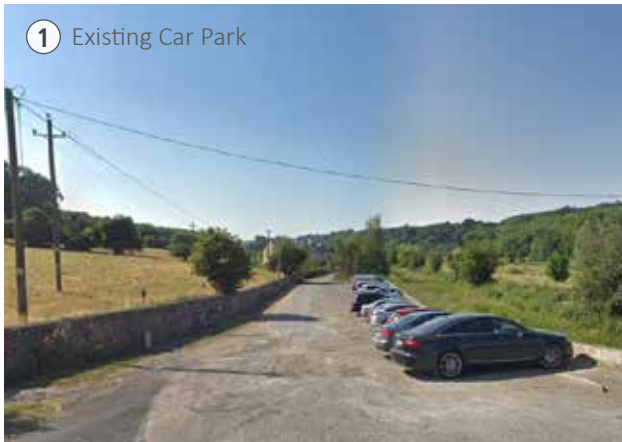


6.2 Project 02 - Village Garden - After

Indicative Artist's Impression



6.3 Project 03 - Slane Bridge - Existing Photos



6.3 Project 03 - Slane Bridge - Design Principles



- ① Reorganised carriageway along N2 from the Square to Slane Bridge, including*:
 - Carriageway width reduced to 6.4m with two lanes of traffic (1+1).
 - Wide footpath on northern and sides to improve pedestrian movements and encourage walking.
 - Planted verges with low vegetation on both sides to create a pedestrian friendly environment and reduce air pollution.
 - New planting on northern side to enhance the character of the approach to the village.
 - Removal of traffic gantries.
 - Enhanced public lighting.
- ② Pedestrian crossings to improve linkages between the village and amenity sites including the River Boyne. Indicative locations shown.
- ③ Defined pocket space at the entrance of the Millhouse.
- ④ Resurfaced Slane Bridge and replaced lighting columns, defined footpaths and crossing points.
- ⑤ Existing anglers car parking resurfaced and retained.
- ⑥ Improved access and signage to towpath recreational link.
- ⑦ Picnic and Recreational area.

*denotes objectives that cannot be delivered without the delivery of the by pass.

6.3 Project 03 - Slane Bridge - Before



6.3 Project 03 - Slane Bridge - After

Indicative Artist's Impression



6.4 Sketch View of Chapel St. - Before



6.4 Sketch View of Chapel St. - After

Indicative Artist's Impression



6.5 Sketch View of N51 Eastern Approach - Before



6.5 Sketch View of N51 Eastern Approach - After

Indicative Artist's Impression



6.6 Sketch View of N2 Northern Approach - Before



6.6 Sketch View of N2 Northern Approach - After



Indicative Artist's Impression

6.7 Sketch View of Main St. Approach - Before



6.7 Sketch View of Main St. Approach - After



Indicative Artist's Impression

6.8 Sketch View of Western Gateway - Before



6.8 Sketch View of Western Gateway - After



Indicative Artist's Impression

6.9 Sketch View of Southern Approach - Before



6.9 Sketch View of Southern Approach - After



ssion

7.0 Public Realm Design Principles

7.1 Anti Air Pollution Planting

General benefits of anti air pollution planting:

- Planting contributes to the reduction of the 'heat island effect' and of the ambient temperature in urban areas.
- Urban planting contributes to placemaking and offers more pleasant urban environments.
- Anti-pollution planting promotes healthier living spaces by delivering greener urban space.
- Planting and vegetation help in the reduction of respiratory diseases.
- Anti pollution planting helps lessen the impacts of climate change and promotes the future-proofing of urban spaces.
- Planting improves comfort for pedestrians in urban environment.



Pedestrian area newly planted with avenue of trees- Germany



Sequence of two areas planted with evergreen species



Parallel planting stripes including evergreen species



Green wall community project in a school

7.2 Anti Air Pollution Planting

Air pollution is an environmental public health problem. Some plants can play a role in mitigating and phytoremediating pollutants: well planted gardens and tree-lined pedestrian streets can have significantly lower levels of pollution than busy traffic intersections.

How do plants reduce air pollution?

1. DISPERSION: Urban vegetation can greatly reduce the amount of emissions people are exposed to. It does this by changing the speed and distance pollutants travel before they reach people. The further the distance the more the pollution is diluted with cleaner air – this process is known as dispersion. Shrubs, hedges and structural planting areas are active in this process.

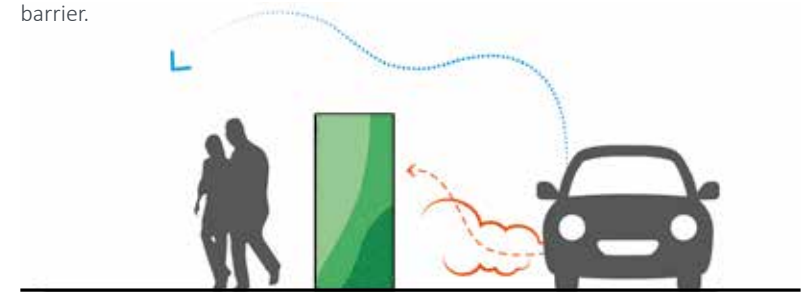


2. DEPOSITION: Urban vegetation typically removes a few per cent of emissions by a process called deposition. This refers to when pollution lands on the surface of the leaf and is removed from the air. Selecting the appropriate species of trees and plants will maximise the efficiency of this process.

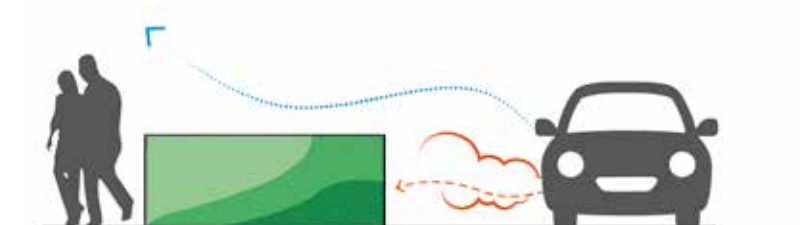


Typical anti-air pollution planting typology

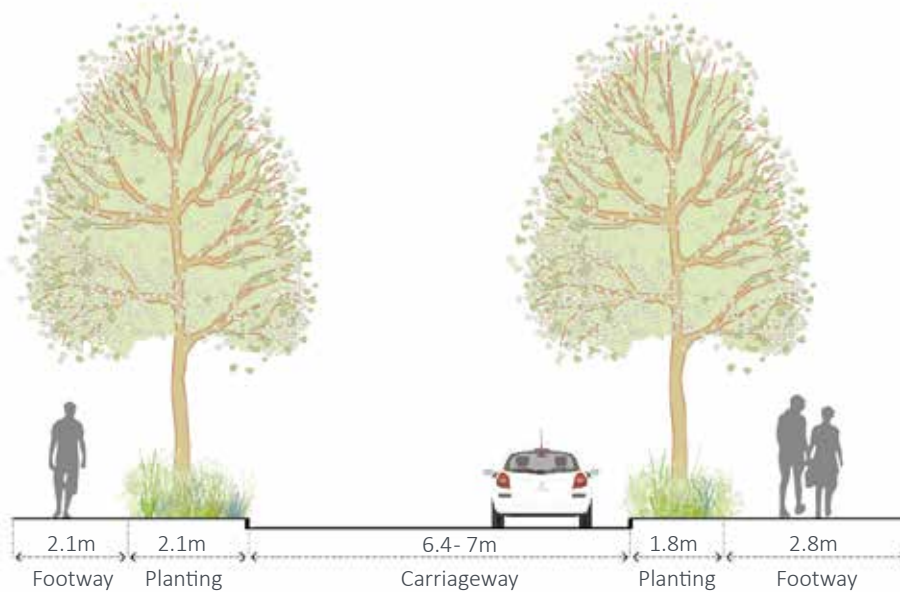
Hedges form a barrier to street level air pollution: it forces the flow of air over and around the barrier. This creates a sheltered area of air behind the barrier.



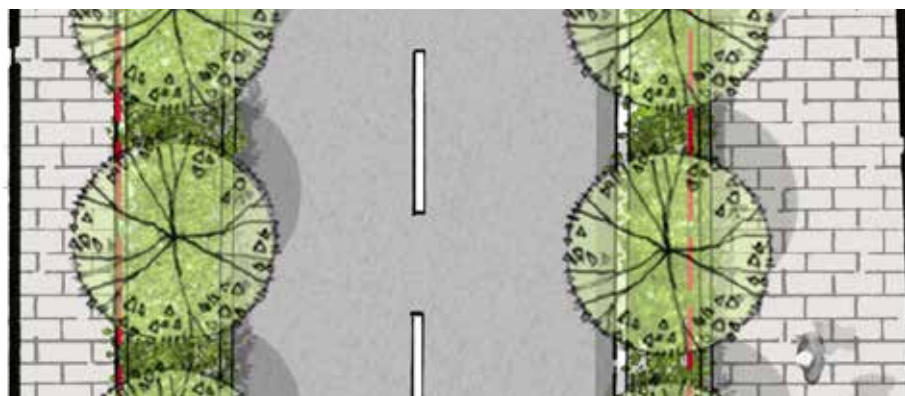
Wide planted areas increase the pathway from source to receptor and offer better chances of dispersion, whilst presenting a large surface for pollutant deposition.



7.3 Typical Verge Layout

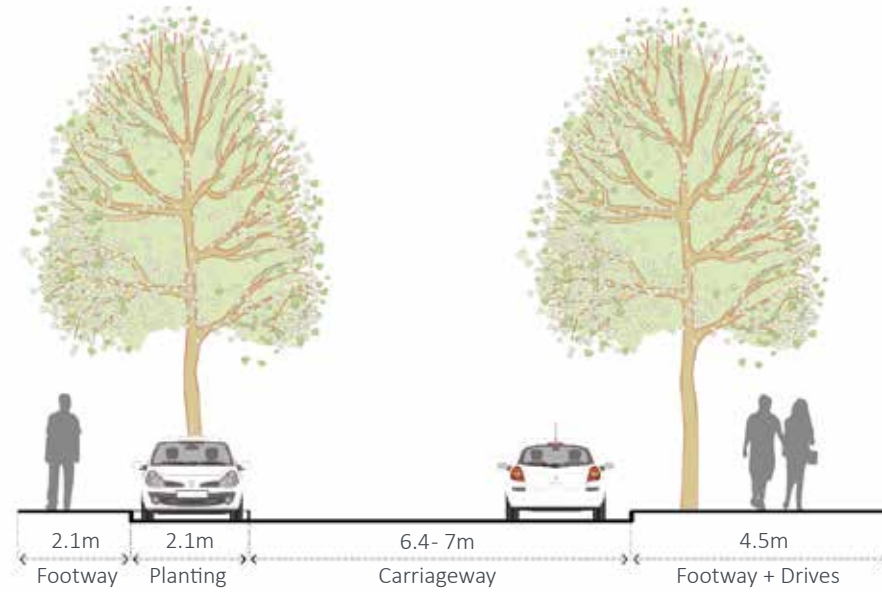


Section

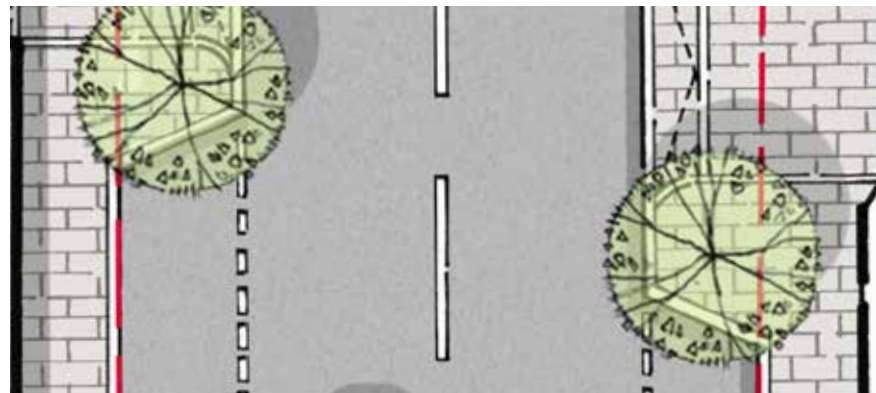


Plan

7.4 Typical Integrated On-Street Parking Layout



Section



Plan

7.5 Approach to Paving

A holistic approach to all hard landscape materials that is sympathetic to the existing heritage found in Slane.

A treatment that is one consistent detail between all gateways of the village should be adopted. Consistency will improve the legibility of the village for daily users and visitors. Paved areas should be natural stone, granite or similar, laid on a rigid concrete base with mortar bedding and joints. Small unit slabs are suggested for ease of use, weight and cost for such areas. Where natural stone is being used in near driveways, thicker setts should be used.

The choice of natural stone is made for the following reasons:

- Appropriate to the heritage of the area.
- Durability - when laid on a concrete base, it will achieve a long lifespan with minimal maintenance.
- Stone products appreciate in value with natural weathering.
- Depending on colour and source, the material cost difference to concrete products is minimal.

Raise tables constructed with smaller and thicker natural stones sets are proposed at raised crossings and raised tables. The small unit slabs or setts allow ease of laying and achieving levels tying in to both thresholds and crossing points without the need for triangular cuts, which should be avoided. All paving falls are to be compliant with Building Regulations and universal design standards.

Clanbrassil Street & St. Nicholas Quarter, Dundalk



For areas within the public realm that are off the main streets, a resin bond surface is proposed. This surface provides aesthetically pleasing, weather resistant solution that is also more cost efficient than natural stone. A resin bond surface is long lasting, durable and can have permeable options.

The vehicular carriageway should be a high quality asphalt laid between granite kerbs. Kerbs should be a maximum 100mm high, lowering to a minimum 50mm where a shared environment is more appropriate. It is essential to use radius sections, quadrants and dropped kerbs within the design.

Drainage units, manhole covers and other components in the paving should be flush with surrounding areas. They should be integrated within the design to avoid trip hazards.

7.6 Approach to Street Furniture

All elements of street furniture in Slane should be designed into the public realm and not as an afterthought. Coordination and combination between elements should be considered, to avoid visual clutter. Contemporary materials such as stainless steel are to be avoided with timber and neutral colours preferred.

Generally all items of street furniture should be from a standard palette and neutral in design – the exception being when singular items of street furniture are considered as art and are site-specific. Sockets should be used where possible to allow for ease of maintenance and replacement if required.

Seating: A variety of seating options should be incorporated, including benches with armrests and backs, benches as seating platforms, ledges and steps. Seating must not impede natural movement, while seating arrangements should encourage social interaction - especially where traders introduce forecourt seating. Materiality and context should be considered when selecting seating.

Outdoor Dining: In line with current Fáilte Ireland Guidelines, outdoor seating should be encouraged in an organised manner that doesn't detract from the spatial quality of the village. It should be reserved for defined areas where minimum dimensions for circulation are maintained.

Bins: Should be located at key junctions and spaced at regular intervals along the streets. They should be neutral in design and part of a coordinated street furniture palette.

Bollards: The use of bollards should be avoided wherever possible. Where necessary, they should be 1.1m high, slender and coordinated with other pieces of street furniture.

Cycle stands: Should be located at regular intervals along the street and be a standard metal hoop.

Public Art: The introduction of a bespoke piece of public art can greatly enhance a sense of place and should be considered as part of the overall enhancement works

A Coordinated Arrangement of Street Furniture



Street Furniture located away from footfall areas



Seating Incorporated in Raised Planters

7.7 Approach to Vegetation

The village centre should be influenced by its natural surroundings. This can be achieved with the introduction of street trees and planting that provide seasonal variation and greenery where deemed appropriate. This will also increase biodiversity levels where vegetation is lacking.

Following an appraisal of the existing street trees and considering the opportunities for an increase in vegetation, the proposals below are to be considered:

- Street Trees - these are to be introduced in order to 'green' the village centre and provide vitality to spaces that is currently lacking. A full appraisal of the existing trees should be undertaken to determine the current health of existing trees and what trees may need to be replaced as part of any future work.
- Planted ledges / boxes - these must be integrated with building façades and only used where they will further enhance both the building and street scene.
- Shrubs and flowers in appropriate contained areas can provide seasonal interest and variety throughout the year.

Consideration is needed for locating trees

- Where possible plant trees, of an appropriate species, in ground, in suitably created tree pits and ground conditions on both sides of the road.
- Utilise trees to aid in wayfinding and to create identity to spaces by selecting different species for each type of space; significant streets; nodes and green spaces.

Appropriate Window Boxes



Street Trees



- Tree locations should be carefully considered in order to complement adjacent buildings and spaces, and so as not to block or hinder views, or obstruct CCTV.
- Trees should have a clear stem of 2.2m and reach a mature height of 10-15m with a uniform canopy.
- Trees should be planted in tree pits that are specifically detailed to accommodate street trees and to better tolerate village centre conditions with root barriers to protect underground utilities.
- Trees should be in groups of the same species.
- Trees should not impede pedestrian movement or visibility for motorists.

Suitable Suggested Street Tree Species

- *Tilia cordata* 'Streetwise' / 'Greenspire'.
- *Carpinus betulus* 'Streetwise' / 'Fastigiata Frans Fontaine'.
- *Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer'.
- *Gleditsia triacanthos*.
- *Prunus avium* 'Plena'.
- *Acer campestre* 'Elsrijk'.
- *Sorbus aucuparia* 'Asplenifolia'.

Below-ground Soil Cells



7.8 Approach to Lighting

The lighting strategy for Slane should be carefully considered to enhance spaces, increase their time of use and provide a feeling of safety. Lighting can also be used to create a character that is sympathetic to natural and heritage setting that exists in the village.

To achieve the above, consideration should be given to the following:

A standard palette should be agreed to provide ambient light to prescribed lighting levels. This being a column or wall mounted fitting which is neutral in design so as to not compete with the existing architecture. New light columns should also be used to absorb other requirements such as CCTV provision, festive lighting and Wi-Fi requirements if deemed necessary as part of any future works. Contemporary features are to be avoided along with materials such as stainless steel.

Subtle character changes along streets and within key spaces should be incorporated within an overall masterplan. This can emphasise focal points along the main streets, pedestrian open spaces and gateways and provide interest while moving through the village.

Lighting the streets

High-level building mounted luminaires where appropriate - these provide ambient light levels and should be discreetly positioned on buildings with respect to the architecture and only used where appropriate.



Uplighters to Trees



Unobtrusive Luminaires

Columns - where new columns are required, these will need to be carefully positioned and blend into the street scene. They will add interest and scale in appropriate locations whilst ensuring they must not impede pedestrian movement or block key views. A neutral style of column and luminaire is proposed appropriate to the setting and context.

Architectural lighting of selected buildings

Slane has a number of buildings with interesting façades worthy of lighting. This can either be with integrated fitting on the façades itself where appropriate or from nearby columns.

Standard Light Columns of Neutral Design



Feature lighting

Feature lighting can help define the public realm at night. The value of this needs to be considered on a case by case basis in line with the Council's Energy Action Plan. Provision for festive lights should also be made throughout the village centre.

7.9 Approach to Wayfinding and Signage

Opportunities to introduce a range of signs providing direction, natural amenity interpretation and heritage information in Slane should be promoted. These should be strategically placed throughout the village to enhance the public realm and experience.

Directional Signage

To maintain a minimal theme that is in keeping with the wider plan for the village, directional signage should be minimal with a careful choice of materials that do not compete with items of historical significance in the area such as the Mill, Slane Castle and other buildings of significance. It is important to identify starting points from which pedestrian visitors are most likely to begin walking through the village and then where the main routes for pedestrians will be. Directional signage can then be placed at points that meet or where there is a change in direction. Starting points or destinations might include:

- Tourist information points.
- Bus stop.
- Future public car parks.
- Slane Millhouse.
- Slane Castle.
- Historic buildings.
- The Boyne Valley.
- Interpretation Points.
- Future Boyne Greenway.

Unauthorised signs should not be allowed on any directional sign posts. Directional signage in general should be kept to a minimum to avoid clutter.

Contemporary materials such as stainless steel should be avoided. All signage must fit in with an overall colour and material palette that is in harmony with other items such as lighting, benches, litter bins etc.

Historically Appropriate Finger-post Sign



www.faitteireland.ie

Interpretation Signage

Signage used for interpretation should be from one coherent family. Like directional signage, it should be minimal in appearance and consistent throughout the village. A variety of installation types include installing interpretation signage in-ground, on buildings or on posts where necessary.

All interpretation signs should be kept simple and clear. Clutter and over-use of interpretation signage should be avoided.

Meath County Council Policy on Shop Fronts

When considering shop fronts, traders should be encouraged to reference policies outlined in the 'Shop Front and Signage Guidelines' document produced by Meath County Council.

This document encourages shop-owners and traders to use hand-painted fascia lettering and logos in a style and colour that harmonises with the shop. Such signage should also help to portray its use. The installation of roller shutters located behind the line of glazing in shop fronts is also suggested by the guidelines.

Commemorative In-Ground Signage



geograph.ie

Wayfinding Signage



www.wayfound.com.au



8.0 Conclusion and Implementation

8.1 Conclusions and Next Steps

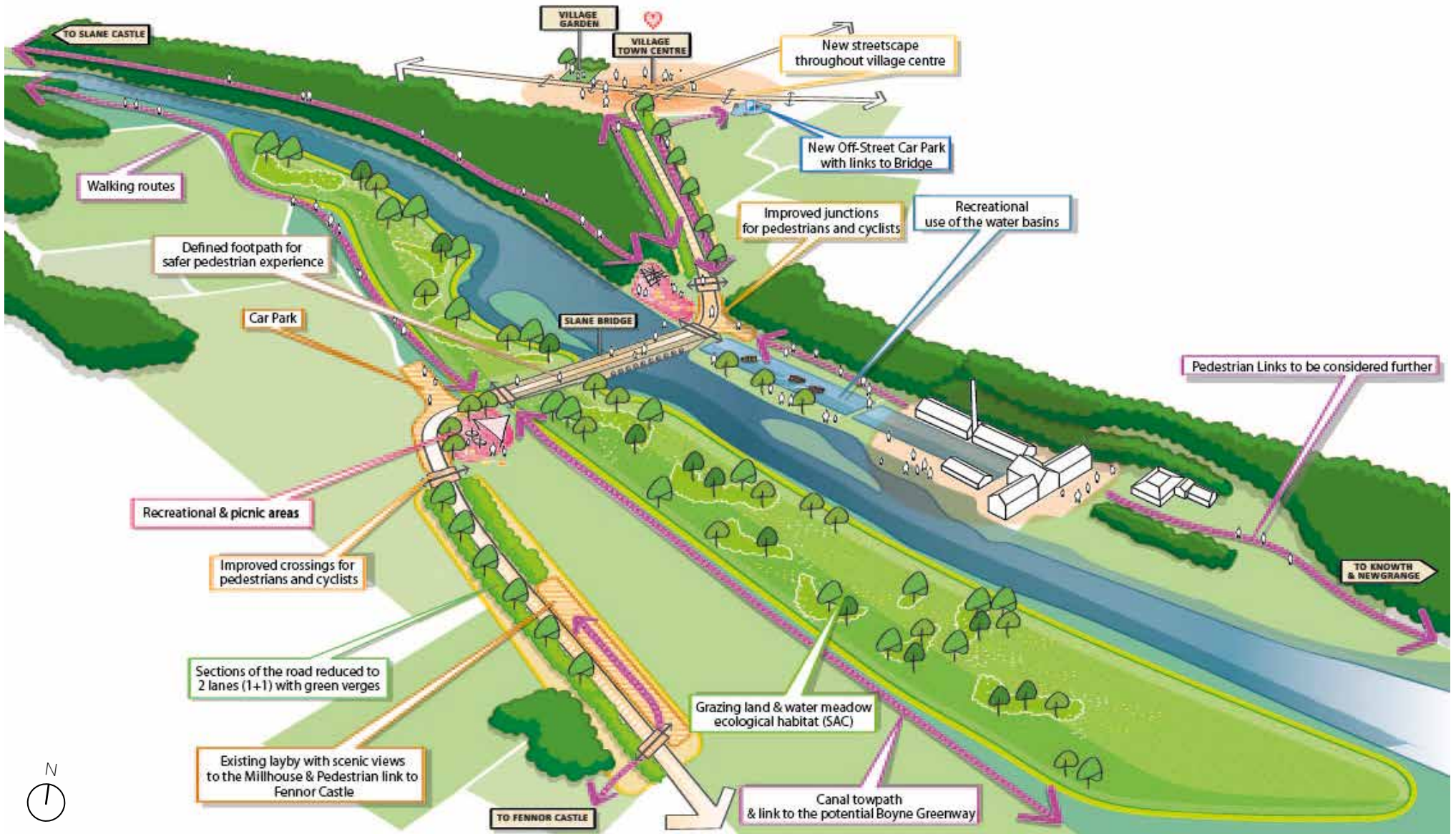
The process for every individual public realm project is complex and unique to each location. It is dependent on the site constraints, engagement, approvals and ease of change. These all need to be carefully considered with each and every proposed intervention.

This guide is a first step towards improving the public realm in Slane. It needs to be embraced and followed to encourage positive change in the village centre. In order for this plan to succeed in its implementation, close cooperation and coordination is vital between Local Community Groups, the Local Business Community, landowners, the general public and Meath County Council.

The key steps are as follows:

- **Programme:** It is suggested that a five-year programme is put in place to ensure momentum and achieve the overall goal of making improvements to the public realm in the village centre. This should identify the process and identify tasks against target dates. This will likely be subject to the programme for the delivery of the bypass. The proposed N2 Slane Bypass and Public Realm Enhancement Scheme has a number of the objectives of this plan that cannot be implemented in the absence of the delivery of the N2 Slane Bypass.
- **Identify sources of funding:** Project Ireland is a clear source of funding which supports ambitious and strategic projects which contribute to sustainable rural regeneration and development. Other sources will include The Heritage Council, 'Our Rural Future' 2021, Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF) and the Town and Village Renewal Schemes.
- **Ongoing review of change in line with the Public Realm Plan:** The public realm plan provides a guide to all interventions within the public realm for both the Council and 3rd parties. All changes should be reviewed to ensure they are in line with the aspirations and further detailed design.
- **Design:** It is fundamental that all public realm schemes are design - led with integrated engineering, not the reverse. Design quality must be paramount and suitable consultants must be procured from inception. Some of the projects within this plan do not require the by pass to be implemented in order to proceed and therefore should do so. If going ahead, they should be developed so that they will be feasible with and without the implementation of the by pass.
- **Delivery:** The process of delivering public realm is complex and involves many stakeholders. Schemes need to be budgeted properly, resourced by an experienced team and delivered to specification.

8.2 Overall Vision for the Area



9.0 Appendix

9.1 What People Have Told Us - Stakeholder Consultation - 28th January 2021

Attendees

Local Traders
Local Community Representatives
Local Councillors
Local Residents

Comments Raised

Traffic

- There are traffic issues in the village currently. HGV traffic can create a negative experience of the village.
- Traffic calming should be incorporated.
- Congestion at Mines / Newgrange shop should be addressed.
- There is a balance needed between introducing traffic calming and not creating congestion issues.
- The streets must still allow for necessary HGV movements.

Footpaths

- Lack of footpaths that are wide enough.

Pedestrian Crossings

- Improve crossing points to create a better environment for pedestrians.
- Having more crossings will de-escalate speeds.

Street furniture

- Having more places to sit and dwell would be positive.

Trees and Greenery

- There should be more vegetation in the village.
- The plan should be ambitious in this regard.
- Commitment is needed to enhancing local biodiversity in Slane.

Parking

- There is a lack of sufficient parking in the centre of the village. This is a problem for residents and people visiting. Designated off-street parking provision should be created.
- Having lines of cars parked on the streets detracts from the positive experience of Slane.
- Timed restrictions to increase turnover should be explored with long-term parking moved to off-street parking .

Future Projects

- The potential Boyne Greenway project has the potential to be a game changer and transformative for the area.
- There should be more connectivity between Slane Castle and the potential new greenway.

Cycling

- The village needs to be cycle-friendly.
- There needs to be more provision for cycle parking.

Heritage

- Interpretation and more signage needed.
- Ledwidge cottage / Museum never going to reach potential without parking.

BDP.

Blackhall Green

Stoneybatter

Dublin

D07 V0RF