

Westgate 2040 Regeneration

Access & Active Travel Management Strategy

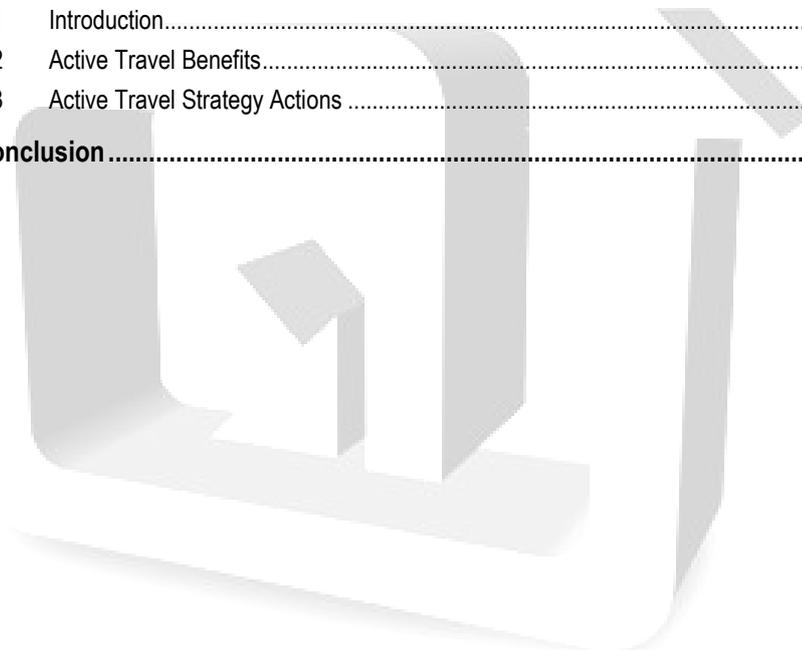
December 2023



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1 Introduction

Hegsons Design Consultancy Ltd have prepared an Access & Active Travel Management Strategy on behalf of Louth County Council in respect of a planning application for public realm regeneration works within the Westgate Vision Area of Drogheda in County Louth.

This Strategy should be read in conjunction with all plans and particulars accompanying the planning application package including the Design Statement, Planning Statement and Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

The overall objective of the project (known as the ‘Westgate 2040 Project’) is to act as a catalyst to support positive regeneration, compact growth and sustainable development in the Westgate Vision Area and the broader Drogheda Town Centre. The proposed development consists of the following:

- (1) Public realm improvement works comprising: new hard landscaping including resurfacing, soft landscaping including new tree planting, a water feature channel with stepped concrete elements and integrated landscaping, a Corten steel ground insert delineating the location of the former medieval town wall, a wayfinding Corten steel ground insert, Corten steel signs, Corten steel walkways, street furniture, new pedestrian connections, a SUDS rainwater retention pond, cycle lanes, pedestrian footpaths, external steps, tactile paving, road signs, cycle parking stands and provision of new railings;
- (2) Public realm improvement works will also include the creation of a new urban plaza gateway/arrival area at Georges Square and a new enhanced public amenity area adjacent the River Boyne riverfront including a new pedestrian wooden deck promenade/boardwalk;
- (3) Demolition of the existing public toilet block at George’s Square (between the junctions of George’s Street/Fair Street and George’s Street/West Street), a section of boundary wall located between Old Abbey Lane and Father Connolly Way and a section of wall located between Dominick Street and Dominick Street car park;
- (4) A new raised, free-standing, curved walkway located between the R132 and the existing Medieval Wall to provide a universally accessible connection from West Street to the River Boyne riverfront;
- (5) A new freestanding Corten steel pavilion located adjacent the River Boyne riverfront to create a new mixed use/public space;
- (6) A new freestanding Corten steel canopy located within, and offset from, the remains of the Old Abbey (being a Protected Structure – ID No. DB-187 and a recorded monument - RMP No. LH024-041011) to create a new flexible community and cultural space;

(7) Two freestanding Corten steel structures located at the junction of West Street and the R132/George's Street to mark the location of the former medieval West Gate;

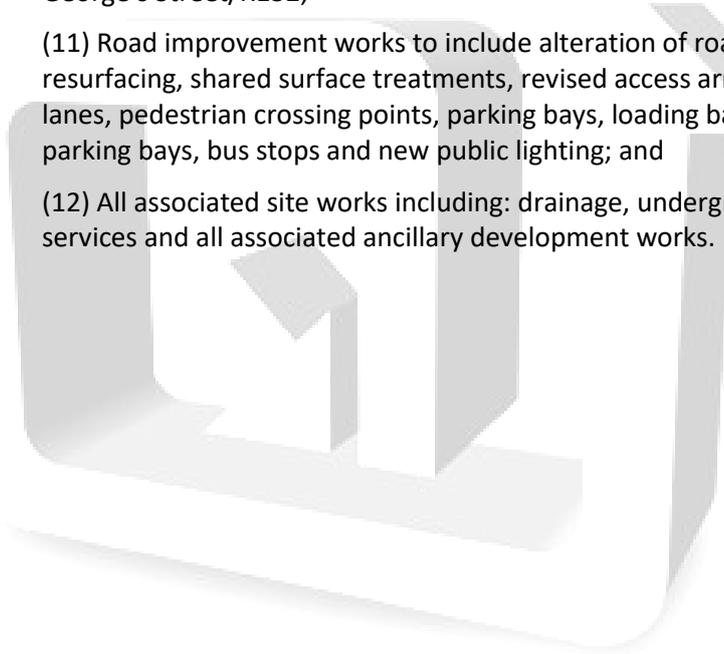
(8) Repair and restoration of the old Medieval Wall located adjacent the R132/George's Street (being a Protected Structure – ID No. DB-188 and a recorded monument - RMP No. LH024-041014);

(9) Repair and restoration of the Old Abbey (being a Protected Structure – ID No. DB-187 and a recorded monument - RMP No. LH024-041011) including the west gable of its north aisle located within Old Abbey Lane;

(10) Reprioritisation of traffic and movement patterns for the streets/roads/lanes/footpaths within the application site to accommodate the proposed public realm improvement works and integrate with the Council's emerging Active Travel projects to the north and south of George's Street/R132;

(11) Road improvement works to include alteration of road alignment, resurfacing, shared surface treatments, revised access arrangements, cycle lanes, pedestrian crossing points, parking bays, loading bays, accessible parking bays, bus stops and new public lighting; and

(12) All associated site works including: drainage, undergrounding of services and all associated ancillary development works.



2 Proposed Development

2.1 Aims & Objectives

A number of principles, aims and objectives have been identified in relation to improving connectivity and access to/from and within the Westgate area of Drogheda.

- Introduce clear, direct pedestrian and cycle routes in and around the town.
- Improve the pedestrian and cyclist experience by reducing barriers to pedestrian and cycle flows through the Westgate.
- Encourage pedestrian and cycle activity through the town via new and improved pedestrian and cycle links.

International best practice and national guidance in relation to traffic management in our towns and cities has brought a shift in thinking away from a car-centred to a pedestrian and cyclist-centred approach. The interventions contained in these proposals will facilitate the implementation of a more pedestrian and cycle-friendly environment within the Westgate area of Drogheda.

2.1.1 Louth County Development Plan

Chapter 7 of the LCDP relates to pedestrian and vehicular movement. The LCDP sets out a number of policy objectives which are of relevance for the proposed development. These are set out and discussed below.

Sustainable Transport

The following 'Sustainable Transport' policy objectives are of note with respect to the proposed development:

- *MOV 1: To work with national transport agencies in supporting the delivery of a high quality, climate resilient and sustainable transport network in the County.*
- *MOV 2: To support the implementation of the 'National Climate Action Plan' 2019, and any subsequent plans, and in particular the measures included that will assist in achieving the target of CO₂ emissions reduction by 2030 in the transport sector as set out in Section 10.2 of the Climate Action Plan;*
- *MOV 6: To promote and support the principles of universal design ensuring that all environments are inclusive and are accessible to and can be used to the fullest extent possible by all users regardless of age, ability or disability.*

- *MOV 7: To support a modal shift away from the private car to more sustainable forms of transport, such as public transport, cycling and walking and the attainment of any national targets relating to modal change published during the life of this Plan.*
- *MOV 9: To support investment in sustainable transport infrastructure that will make walking, cycling or public transport more attractive and appealing, and facilitates accessibility for all, regardless of age, physical mobility, or social disadvantage.*
- *MOV 14: To encourage a modal shift from use of the private car towards more sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling, and public transport.*

An overall objective and key design principle of the proposed development is to encourage/support alternative and active modes of transport. This objective /principle will be achieved through a number of proposed interventions including: prioritising the pedestrian and cyclist in the design approach; providing universally accessible routes/connections; integrating George’s Street/R132 with wider active travel schemes in Drogheda; reprioritisation of roads / junctions / parking / footpath areas; incorporating shared spaces; and provision of new cycle parking infrastructure.

It is considered that the proposed development will align with the Sustainable Transport policy objectives of the LCDP.

Bus Services

The following ‘Bus Services’ policy objective is of note with respect to the proposed development:

- *MOV 20: To support the National Transport Authority (NTA) and other stakeholders and community groups in improving bus services and infrastructure in the County.*

Consultation was undertaken with the NTA and LCC’s Active Travel section during the concept development stage of the proposed development to appropriately inform the design approach with bus stops/infrastructure and integration of alternative transport modes.

The proposed development seeks to accommodate existing bus stop facilities and to improve these facilities where possible. A bus lay-over area at the southern side of Father Connelly Way will be removed to provide a 2.0m wide cycle lane, footpath and enhanced hard and soft landscape areas as part of the River Boyne riverfront area. The existing bus lay over area along the western side of Dominick Street will be retained to provide bus parking and drop off/set down services for local bus and tour operators.

It is considered that the proposed design approach will facilitate safer pedestrian, cycle and public bus access and will ultimately support and improve bus services/infrastructure in the area.

Cycling and Walking

The following 'Cycling and Walking' policy objectives are of note with respect to the proposed development:

- *MOV 25 - To support the retrospective provision of walking and cycling infrastructure in existing settlements, where feasible, to achieve growth in sustainable mobility and strengthen and improve the walking and cycling network.*
- *MOV 28 - To promote walking and cycling as a safe, convenient, healthy, efficient, and environmentally friendly mode of transport for all age groups.*
- *MOV 29 - To continue to work and engage with the National Transport Authority, the Department of Transport, any other agencies in developing a modern network of walking and cycling infrastructure in the County.*
- *MOV 31: To encourage the provision of secure bicycle parking facilities in town and villages in the County.*

A key design principle and objective of the proposed development is to promote cycling and walking within and throughout the Westgate area. The proposals include design features and interventions to assist with prioritising the pedestrian and cyclist, including: new Part M compliant routes/connections; cycle lanes; pedestrian walkways; level shared surfaces; cycle parking; improvements to the quality of the streetscape; and new pedestrian crossing points.

Public Realm Improvements

The following 'Public Realm Improvements' policy objective is of note with respect to the proposed development:

- *MOV 40: To support the design and implementation of public realm projects in town and villages throughout the County that will make these locations more attractive and liveable spaces which are climate resilient and facilitates accessibility for all, regardless of age, physical mobility, or social disadvantage*

The proposed development is a public realm/urban regeneration project and has been carefully designed to accommodate persons of all ages and mobility and so by its nature will align with and support this policy objective of the LCDP.

Car Parking

Section 13.16.11 of the LCDP entitled 'Parking Standards that Reflect the Demand and Location' states that *"It is considered appropriate that the car parking requirement in the towns and villages in the County should be reflective of the anticipated parking demand"*.

Table 13.11 of the LCDP entitled 'Car Parking Standards' sets out the car parking standards for various land uses. It is noted that no provision has been assigned to public realm works in a town centre location and none of the development types listed in Table 13.11 are representative of the proposed development.

The proposed development will not incorporate any new or additional building floorspace and so there is no specific requirement to provide additional parking as part of the development.

A number of car parking spaces and a bus lay-over area are to be removed from the application site to facilitate the proposed public realm proposals and achieve the project design ambitions/principles. See Section 2.4 Parking & Servicing Provision below for further details.

However, 36 no. new bicycle parking facilities (capable of accommodating approx. 72 no. parked bicycles) will be provided within the application site at accessible locations to help facilitate and encourage the transition to more sustainable and active modes of transport in the area.

Furthermore, the accessibility credentials of the bus stops along George's Street will be improved with a new Part M compliant terraced and stepped plaza at George's Square, a new Part M compliant ramped walkway to the riverfront, adjacent the medieval wall, and with new/upgraded designated pedestrian crossing points and use of shared spaces.

All car parking / loading bays etc. provided as part of the development will comply with the minimum standards set out in Table 13.9 of the LCDP entitled 'Dimensions of Parking Spaces'.

The reconfiguration of parking spaces has also facilitated a consolidation of the existing disabled bay parking spaces and will allow for the future provision of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points.

It is considered that the car parking provision proposed for the development is adequate to serve the needs of the wider community and visitors to the town whilst encouraging sustainable modes of transport in compliance with national, regional and local policy and the objectives of the Climate Action Plan 2023.

Disabled Car Parking Provision

Section 13.16.7 of the LCDP entitled 'Disabled Parking' states that "*parking spaces shall be generally applied at the rate of 5% of spaces for developments requiring 10 or more spaces, with a minimum of one no. space*".

The proposed development will not incorporate any new or additional building floorspace and so there is no specific requirement to provide additional disabled parking as part of the development. A disabled car parking space will be provided along Fair Street and Dominick Street. It is further noted that disabled car parking spaces are

provided within existing car parking areas located adjacent the application site including the parking areas at Fair Street, Patrickswell Lane, Dominick Street and the multi-storey Haymarket car park.

All proposed disabled car parking bays will comply with the minimum standards set out in Table 13.9 of the LCDP entitled 'Dimensions of Parking Spaces'.

Electric Vehicles

The following 'Electric Vehicles' policy objectives are of note with respect to the proposed development:

- *MOV 10: To facilitate the switch to Electric Vehicles through the roll-out of additional electric charging points at appropriate locations within the County in association with relevant agencies and stakeholders.*
- *MOV 11: To facilitate the provision of electricity charging infrastructure for electric vehicles both on street and in new developments in accordance with car parking standards prescribed in the Development Management Guidelines in Chapter 13.*

In addition to the above policy objectives, Section 13.16.9 Charging Points for Electric Vehicles of the LCDP states that *"In all car parking areas, provision shall be made for charging points for electric vehicles. This shall include the necessary wiring and ducting. Pending the publication of guidance on the minimum requirement of these spaces, an assessment shall be made on a case-by case basis; however, applicants shall strive to provide these charging points in a minimum of 20% of the total spaces"*.

The proposed development has been designed in a manner to enable electric vehicle charging points to be accommodated should Louth County Council roll out a wider electric vehicle charging point strategy in the area/Drogheda town centre.

2.1.2 Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future: A New Transport Policy for Ireland' (2009)

'Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future: A New Transport Policy for Ireland' (2009) seeks to accommodate more sustainable means of travel, particularly walking and cycling and public transport. The Westgate 2040 proposals have been designed to support such measures and seek to accommodate a shift towards walking and cycling journeys, specifically within the town centre. Providing a safer and enhanced environment for both pedestrians and cyclists will encourage greater adoption of sustainable means of travel in the future and is key to the creation of a consolidated, fully connected Westgate area that is a fundamental aim of the current proposals.

Implementation of Smarter Travel can be summarised into a number of overarching actions:

- Actions to reduce distance travelled by private car and encourage smarter travel, including focusing population growth in areas of employment and to encourage people

to live in close proximity to places of employment and the use of pricing mechanisms or fiscal measures to encourage behavioural change.

- Actions aimed at ensuring that alternatives to the car are more widely available, mainly through investment and improvement in cycling, walking and public transport facilities.
- Actions aimed at improving the fuel efficiency of motorised transport through improved fleet structure, energy efficient driving and alternative technologies.

It should also be noted that one of the key proposals, the proposed reprioritisation of George's Street/George's Square, has been undertaken in consultation with the NTA / Louth County Council and the wider active travel proposals for the area which will include upgrading of junctions to better facilitate pedestrian / cyclist / transport movement along this route, slowing the existing traffic speeds along the R132 to shift current transport modes along this route from car to more sustainable cycle alternatives. The relevant active travel schemes include:

- Drogheda Dublin and North Road Cycle/Pedestrian Design Scheme: Provision of cycle lanes along the R132 North Road from the Rosehill Junction south to the R900 Fair Street junction (approximately 2.0 km), where possible. Louth County Council is working to submit a planning application for this proposal in March 2024 with a view to complete construction in December 2025.
- Drogheda R132 Bridge of Peace to MacBride Train Station: Construction of segregated cycle lanes from the Bridge of Peace along the old Dublin Road (the R132) and terminating at MacBride Railway Station (approximately 1.55km). Louth County Council is working to submit a planning application for this proposal in June 2024 with a view to commence construction in March 2025.

2.2 Connections

The study area is primarily formed by streets and roads which collectively provide the space for all road users to circulate by foot, bicycle, taxi, bus and car.

There are many competing demands from the many modes of transport and from the diverse user population comprising a mix of ages and mobility abilities. The proposal promotes increased use of sustainable modes of transport but will also cater for necessary private car movements. There is a requirement to reduce traffic levels and traffic speeds. The co-ordination of all these forms of movement within the area help to define the design, roles and character of various streets. Some streets, such as Father Connolly Way, have important functions regarding vehicle and cycle movements in an east-west direction but also provide a public amenity area adjacent the River Boyne. Others serve local access traffic to various commercial buildings, while also catering for cyclists and cars and may provide quieter routes for pedestrians to walk along, such as Patrickswell Lane.

Other transport measures to consider and which impact on the design of streets and spaces are a number of Louth County Council / National Transport Authority initiatives for new active travel schemes (as outlined above), all of which will lead into and integrate/connect with the application site.

There is also a need to expand the provision of on street bicycle parking to cater for visitors to offices, residences, restaurants, shops etc. The different character and role of each of the streets informs the design choices made regarding layout (carriageway and footpath widths), amenity (trees, planters, seating etc.), street furniture (lighting, bins, signage etc.) and the materials to be used. The challenge for the public realm strategy in responding to the movement / connectivity needs of the area is met through a number of proposed interventions across the site.

2.3 Enhancing Accessibility

The George's Square area aims to create a quality gateway / arrival space, public spaces, pedestrian linkages and public realm to ensure inclusivity for all members of the community. The site extends from Fair Street along the R132 to the northern bank of the River Boyne at the Bridge of Peace. However, it should be noted that the proposals have been designed to complement and support wider active travel measures being undertaken by LCC / NTA, including the area south of the R132 / R168 Trinity Street junction and the Bridge of Peace. It is important to note that the application site comprises 200m of the overall length of the wider active travel measures being undertaken by LCC/NTA in the area.

In order to accommodate the aforementioned active travel schemes which are located immediately north and south of the George's Street, the existing R132 Georges Street / R132 Trinity Street / R900 West Street junction will receive upgrades with a reduction in the number of carriageway lanes and widths to facilitate the provision of an on-road cycle lane. The existing vehicular traffic arrangement at this junction has been maintained wherever possible and no realignment of the R168 Trinity Street is proposed.

The lane configuration of the R132 Georges Street within the study area has been broadly influenced by the Active Travel Schemes on either side of the application site and result in the reduction of a through lane in both directions. However, it should be noted that as the Active Travel Schemes extend wider across the Drogheda area and the impact of these schemes will significantly change the level of traffic arriving into the application site from both directions (e.g. reduced number of traffic lanes and new traffic signals proposed south of the Bridge of Peace at the R132 / Rathmullen Road junction in order to manage traffic flow into Georges Street).

The provision of the Port Access Northern Cross Route (PANCR), which will connect the M1 and the west directly to Drogheda Port, will have a significant impact on the removal of traffic, in particular HGV movement from the study area. The provision of the PANCR across the northern environs of Drogheda, the

initial phase of the project consisting of the construction of a new port access road from the R132 Dublin Road across the Twenties Road and along to tie in to the Ballymakenny Road, will see a significant improvement and result in a reduction in the number of vehicles needing to pass through and along the R132 and avoid impacting the Westgate area and the Historic Line of the Drogheda Town Walls.

The measures which will be implemented as part of the Westgate 2040 proposals will influence the use of sustainable modes of transport and help minimise the need for private vehicle trips. The design and layout of the development will facilitate ease of access to public transport, support walking and cycling and meet the needs of people with disabilities and others whose mobility is impaired through adherence to current design guidelines.

The proposals will enhance the public realm in and around Old Abbey Lane and along Father Connolly Way, Dominick Street, Patrickswell Lane, Scholes Lane and adjoining street. The proposed interventions include:

- The provision of shared surface area along Father Connolly Way / Dominick Street with some minor modifications to the junction layout.
- The removal of car parking / bus lay-over along the southern side of Father Connolly Way in order to provide a 2.0m wide cycle lane, footpath and enhance hard and soft landscape along the River Boyne and to encourage more sustainable modes of travel to/from the area and connectivity to the wider active travel initiatives.
- Narrowing of Dominick Street and the removal of car parking spaces in order to enhance user safety.
- Shared Surface treatment on Patrickswell Lane and limit access to the area for 'local access only'.
- Relocation of the vehicular access into Dominick Street car park from Patrickswell Lane to Dominick Street.
- Provision of hard and soft landscaping measures to enhance the public realm in the area.

The proposed development will enhance safety and connectivity for sustainable modes in and around the town centre.

In the short to medium terms, the proposed scheme will maintain and cater for the current level of traffic movements as the current traffic flows (existing one-way and two-way carriageway is being maintained). However, the width of the carriageway has been reduced in order to better channelise vehicle movements and cater for a safer environment for pedestrians, cyclists and vulnerable road users.

The proposed streetscape improvements will also reduce vehicles speeds and will have environmental benefits, in terms of improved air quality and reduced noise impacts, in addition to providing improved facilities for more sustainable modes of travel to/from the area and connectivity to the wider proposed Active Travel initiatives.

In addition, Louth County Council is reviewing the potentially to extend the Mell Car Park by 15-20 car parking spaces, and if undertaken, these spaces will lie in close proximity to the Westgate area to help cater for any future car parking shortfall for the area.

2.4 Parking & Servicing Provision

The proposed development will not incorporate any new or additional building floorspace and so there is no specific requirement to provide additional parking as part of the development. The development proposals do, however, propose to reduce the level of car parking within the application site, with the spaces reallocated for urban realm and to facilitate walking and cycling to/from and within the site.

As part of the development proposals, a total of 9 no. on-street car parking spaces will be removed from the George's Square and Fair Street area. An additional 10 no. parking spaces and space for approximately 2 no. buses in a parking / lay-over area is to be removed from the southern side of Father Connolly Way. A further 22 no. on-street parking spaces along Dominick Street and Patrickswell Lane will be removed.

In total, 41 no. car parking spaces and a bus lay-over area are proposed to be removed from within the application site to provided new and improved public realm areas and to enhance permeability and walking/cycling connectivity within and to/from the site. The reconfiguration of spaces has also facilitated a consolidation of the existing disabled parking spaces and allows for the provision of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points.

A total of 2 no. accessible parking spaces are also proposed for the area with 1 no. located along Fair Street and 1 no. space located along Dominick Street. It is further noted that disabled car parking spaces are provided within existing car parking areas located adjacent the application site including the parking areas at Fair Street, Patrickswell Lane, Dominick Street and the multi-storey Haymarket car park.

In addition, existing car parking facilities in close proximity to the application site are to remain, such as car parking areas at Bolton Street, Fair Street, Dominick Street and Father Connolly Way, and the multistorey Haymarket Car Park which is also located approx. 200m to the southeast of the area. The loss of on-street car parking within the application site will be further mitigated through enhanced

accessibility by active travel modes of transport and additional cycle parking facilities.

As outlined previously, Louth County Council is reviewing the potential to extend the Mell Car Park by 15-20 car parking spaces, and if undertaken, these spaces will further mitigate the loss of on street parking within the application site noting that these new spaces are located within walking distance from the Westgate area.

It is envisaged that delivery access will be required along Patrickswell Lane to service the various buildings and the Courthouse and this will be accommodated within the shared surface area proposed for the street. However, through traffic, other than for delivery purposes, will not be encouraged to use this route.

We consider that the car parking provision proposed for the development is adequate to serve the proposed needs of the wider community and visitors to the town whilst encouraging sustainable modes of transport in compliance with the objectives of the Climate Action Plan 2023.

2.4.1 Parking Mitigation Measures

Within the short term, the primary focus of the parking strategy is to manage existing provision and to enhance the accessibility of the area in order to reduce the parking demand. These short-term measures are summarised as follows:

- Manage and make maximum use of available parking to support town centre vitality and provide for the needs of all users;
- Work with other car parking providers to ensure adequate, appropriate and consistent car parking provision, encompassing both on and off-street provision;
- Provide clear vehicular and pedestrian routings to/from car parking locations that minimise vehicle circulation and ensure ease of access to the town centres;
- Identify and investigate the potential for outlining areas of land where remote car parking may be provided to for the town so that a Park'n'Ride or Park'n'Stride facility could be operated and facilitated; and
- Ensure optimum approach to enforcement, balancing the need to encourage good parking behaviour, without unnecessary strictness, whilst delivering value for money from the resources employed.

Within the medium to longer term, the focus of the parking strategy needs to reflect the potential changing dynamics of the area, providing a positive influence supporting economic growth and managing travel behaviour.

Furthermore, the role of technology in transport is anticipated to significantly diversify over the next 5 to 10 years, enabling alternative approaches to delivering parking services.

The key areas of the longer term strategy are as follows:

- Prioritise available parking for different user groups on the basis of identified need;
- Keep under review on-street parking provision and restrictions, giving due consideration for the varying needs of different parking user groups across town; and
- Ensure adequate information provision, through a variety of different mediums, to direct visitors and permit locals to make informed travel decisions.

2.5 Traffic & Pedestrian Event Management

In line with the development proposals for the area which are seen to enhance the safety and connectivity for sustainable modes in and around the town centre, the design proposal also enable parts of the application site, such as West Street and Old Abbey Lane, to be used as an event space whereby the newly enhanced public realm and pedestrianised areas could be closed to traffic for a period of time to host an evening or weekend event.

The current level of traffic movements into and out of the area are proposed to be maintained but road closures to host community/cultural/arts festivals or events can be accommodated within the area whilst also maintaining a high degree of the traffic flow (existing one-way and two-way carriageway) in and around the area and also provide access to the current off-street car parking area along Father Connolly Way and Dominick Street. Access for emergency vehicles would be maintained at all times in the area and would be outlined in an event related Traffic Management Plan which would be prepared as part of a future proposed event, depending on the impact of such an event on the public road network.

3 Active Travel Strategy

3.1 Introduction

Active Travel are journeys made through physical activity of the human body and can bring many benefits to health and wellbeing, the economy and the climate.

We face a number of challenges in coming years, and declining levels of physical activity and an increase in traffic on the roads are two that will have a major impact on the life of residents in the county. This strategy sets out the vision for making cycling and walking the preferred option for residents taking short journeys, or as part of longer journeys that include public transport.

Being more physically active can benefit everyone and can lower the chances of developing diabetes, heart disease and other preventable conditions.

3.2 Active Travel Benefits

Active travel gives people an opportunity to be physically active as part of their daily routine and incorporating physical activity into everyday tasks reduces the need to find extra time, money or motivation for exercise. It can also make it cheaper to travel by saving on fuel, vehicle running costs and parking charges.

Making short journeys using active travel helps to reduce the number of vehicles on the road and improves air quality. It can also be quicker, as in urban areas journey times are often shorter when walking or cycling as users can take advantage of routes not accessible to motor vehicles.

Four key benefits are highlights as follows:

Sustainable Economic Growth

Walking and cycling are particularly important to the local economy, as people are more likely to spend in their local shops and neighbourhoods. This helps create local jobs and investment in local facilities, supporting a sustainable local economy. Cycle and hiking tourism is a good example as evidence suggests people will carry less and spend more in the communities they pass through, and linger in places with enhanced public realm.

Improved health and wellbeing

Including walking or cycling journeys in our daily routines is one of the easiest ways to improve individual health and wellbeing. Active travel facilities such as greenways, protected cycleways and slow traffic neighbourhoods offer a free alternative to the gym. The health benefits of active travel include a reduced risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, cancer, obesity and type 2 diabetes,

improvements to musculoskeletal health and mental wellbeing. As the number of car journeys fall, so too do the risks from air pollution and traffic danger

Social Inclusion

We must provide incentives for those groups who are under-represented in terms of active travel, and for whom transport is often expensive, or inaccessible. These groups include women, children, the elderly, disabled and those with low incomes. Children are increasingly unable to play out or travel independently. Walking and cycling can help tackle social exclusion by improving access to jobs, schools, facilities and other opportunities.

Addressing Climate Emergency

In 2019, transport accounted for a significant proportion (20%) of Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions. Combined with public transport journeys, active travel is an important component of longer distance journeys. As we encourage a switch to active travel, we will free up space for public transport and active travel infrastructure, creating pleasant urban environments to encourage further walking and cycling journeys. By including trees, planting and sustainable drainage systems in new infrastructure, we can support carbon reduction, lower flood risk and create pleasant, shaded spaces.

3.3 Active Travel Strategy Actions

The overarching ambition of this Active Travel Strategy is to:

Make active travel an attractive and realistic choice for short journeys in the area

Delivering on this ambition will lead to more people walking and cycling, contributing to the following outcomes:

- Improved health through an increase in physical activity
- Reduced congestion on the highway network by providing better travel choices
- Safer active travel

These outcomes will be realised by delivering the following actions:

Action 1: Integrate active travel into planning.

This strategy has influenced the layout and design decisions and ensure active travel is prioritised in future planning processes. In addition, the strategy will encourage active travel to be better integrated with other types of transport e.g. walking to the bus stop or cycling to schools. This will be led by current

commissioning guidance and best practice, existing policies and strategies with a commitment to encouraging active travel.

Key aspects of delivering the actions, include

- The proposed development and layout has been Informed in line with Louth County Council’s transport policies.
- The proposed development supports the Councils policies to ensure that active travel is used to deliver sustainable growth and development within the planning applications.
- Active travel routes are a priority, both within proposed developments and linking sites to other services (Active Travel Schemes), community facilities and transport hubs which assist with making active travel an attractive and realistic choice for short journeys.
- Sufficient areas within the proposed developments for green spaces and attractive routes and environments have been provided (Medieval Wall area, River Boyne Riverbank, etc) so as to that encourage active travel.
- The proposed scheme has consulted and been designed in conjunction with other strategic schemes to deliver infrastructure that supports active travel.

Action 2: Provide and maintain appropriate routes for active travel.

The area will provide fit-for-purpose active travel routes that people want to use. The existing and proposed cycling and walking routes will be developed over time as the wider development allow. They will be continuous and direct where possible and serve important community services in the area, which means that some people who would like to actively travel can be. There is a need to provide facilities such as safe crossings along routes and secure cycle storage at the proposed residential development. It is also important that these routes are well maintained and designed to be as inclusive as possible.

Key aspects of delivering the actions, include

- Appropriate consideration has been given to active travel within the proposed development in terms of pedestrian and cycle facilities and connections (connections to Future Active Travel Schemes proposals) .
- Active travel resources such as appropriate signage is provided to enable safe and effective active travel.
- Adjustments to active travel route design have been made to maximise the inclusivity and accessibility to all users. The proposed development enables the connection of the LCC Active Travel Scheme through Georges Square .
- The proposed development shall enable funding for future active travel infrastructure and maintenance.

Action 3: Support active travel in the community.

There is a need to encourage and promote active travel in the community. People need the skills, confidence, information and, most importantly, the motivation to make active travel their preferred choice. Initiatives needed to support this change include pedestrian and cycle training, road safety campaigns, projects to encourage active travel to schools and work and promotion of available routes and facilities.

Key aspects of delivering the actions, include

- The proposed development supports initiatives including area wider travel planning and other active travel programmes.
- Promote active travel and provide support to increase levels of active travel within the area
- Integrate walking and cycling for travel purposes into local services through the provision of safer facilities.
- Develop and maintain recreational routes as a means of introducing people to active travel.
- Support road safety initiatives for all road users, especially the most vulnerable such as cyclists and pedestrians
- Enables the promotion of locally-based programmes to encourage walking and cycling, and integrate active travel as part of longer journeys involving public transport.

4 Conclusion

A number of key conclusions to support the car parking management strategy for the development proposals, include:

- The overall proposed scheme will include a number of measures that are deemed beneficial to improve the public realm, enhancing the pedestrian and cycle connectivity and road safety across the area. The measures which will be implemented as part of the overall development to influence the use of sustainable modes of transport and help minimise the need for private vehicle trips.
- The design and layout of the development will facilitate ease of access to public transport, support walking and cycling. Therefore, a shift towards non private car-based movements to and from the area is envisaged, thus supporting the reduced parking supply.
- The proposals will have a positive impact in relation to reducing noise and air quality through the better management of vehicle movements and parking within the area.
- It is proposed to continual work with other car parking providers to ensure adequate, appropriate and consistent car parking provision, encompassing both on and off-street provision;
- It is proposed to identify and investigate the potential for outlining areas of land where remote car parking may be provided to for the town so that a Park'n'Ride or Park'n'Stride facility could be facilitated.

Given that the development proposals will encourage prioritisation of pedestrian and cyclist modes of transport in the area, it will have a positive effect by setting a benchmark for lowering traffic and parking demand levels in the town in the short, medium and long term.

The implementation of an Active Travel Strategy for the Area would encourage use of sustainable transport measures and should relate to all future developments within the area in order to form part of the wider mitigation measures. The proposed 'hard measures' that will facilitate safer pedestrian, cycle and public bus access will be provided as part of this application.

The proposed development scheme aims to address the key 'Sustainable Transport' policy objectives as set out earlier in this report.

In conclusion, we consider that the proposed development will have significant benefits to serve the proposed needs of the wider community and visitors to the town, in line with the national and local policies whilst encouraging sustainable modes of transport in compliance with the objectives of the Climate Action Plan 2023.