Urban Design, Placemaking & Regeneration

Meanma agus Misneach

Chapter 14 Urban Design, Placemaking and Regeneration

Aims:

- To create vibrant and bustling towns and villages with a diverse mix of activities where residents benefit from inclusive, attractive, connected, vibrant and well-functioning places to live, work, visit, socialise and invest in.

- To deliver improved urban design and healthy placemaking outcomes across Kildare's network of settlements through the implementation of the principles people-centred and design-led planning, including the 10-minute Settlement concept.

- To continue to pursue a Town Centre First approach to planning, renewing, and developing the historic cores of County Kildare's towns and villages.

14.1 Introduction

Kildare is becoming an increasingly urbanised county, a trend that is anticipated to continue over the coming decades and one which the plan must address in order to focus on the needs of current and future residents of the county. As such, its network of settlements, its towns and villages, are the focus of ongoing growth and expansion. A key issue will be to ensure that this growth is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. In this regard, it is recognised that settlements need to successfully accommodate and integrate new development whilst also maintaining and enhancing the character and viability of their historic centres. This is considered to be a critical element central to the retention of their overall identity, and key to providing both new and existing communities with '*a sense of place*' and belonging.

Increasing emphasis on the idea and importance of 'place' has permeated spatial planning policy in recent years. A powerful tool for achieving the delivery of successful places is people-centred urban design. There is now a widespread acceptance that high quality design within our towns and villages is not just an optional 'add-on' but is in fact an essential requirement for the development of sustainable and healthy communities and climate resilient settlements.

Accordingly, the central purpose of this chapter is to:

- Outline the vital role that urban design can play in creating and shaping successful places whilst also improving the quality of life of residents and the experience of visitors.
- Illustrate the policy response and approach Kildare County Council has taken in the design and management of its towns and villages and in fostering the development of high-quality urban places.
- Provide best-practice urban design guidance to assist key stakeholders in providing for the growth and development of Kildare's settlements.

14.2 Policy Background

The evolution of spatial planning policy in recent years has resulted in a particular focus being placed on the more efficient use of land within our urban settlements, where the redevelopment of brownfield and infill sites, at increased densities, is promoted in order to minimise unnecessary greenfield development and urban sprawl.

The focus on compact growth, the consolidation of our towns and villages and the delivery of enhanced urban environments is set out in national and regional planning policy. The National Planning Framework (2018) sets out targets for the development of new homes within the built-up footprint of existing settlements, it also seeks to '*ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well-designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and wellbeing*' (National Policy Objective (NPO) 4). Similarly, a key principle underpinning the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Region is '*Healthy Placemaking*' which seeks to '*promote peoples' quality of life through the creation of healthy and attractive places to live, work, invest and study in*'.

14.3 Urban Design

Urban design is the art of creating and shaping built environments. It involves the arrangement and design of buildings, public spaces, transport systems, and social infrastructure. It is both a process and an outcome of creating communities in which people live, connect with each other, and engage with the physical place around them. Urban design operates at many different scales, ranging from the macro level of the urban structure (planning, transport and green infrastructure networks) to the micro level of street furniture and lighting.[1]

Figure 14.1 - *Influence of Urban Design on the Creation of Sustainable Settlements*

As illustrated in Figure 14.1, urban design is considered to be the vital link which connects and influences all aspects of the built environment. For example, the achievement of sustainable mobility or a high-quality public realm within a settlement will not be realised without integrating people-centred urban design principles into plan-making and implementation. Good urban design outcomes can therefore be seen as fundamental to the delivery of sustainable settlements and in providing an improved quality of life for residents. It is therefore considered that urban design is much more than being concerned about visual aesthetics, it also has a huge bearing on the functionality and liveability of our towns and villages.

---

[1] Urban Design Group (www.udg.org) and https://urbandesign.org.au (as adapted).

Being multidisciplinary in nature, urban design incorporates land use planning, architecture, transport planning, landscape architecture and other professions together. In this regard, urban design requires co-ordinated and integrated involvement by many stakeholders, including the community over a sustained period to best effect change.

14.3.1 Placemaking

Placemaking is a particular aspect of urban design which focuses on how public spaces can best be designed and managed in order to enhance the connections between people and these places. The concept of placemaking is very much people-centred and looks to the needs, aspirations and desires of the community. Placemaking strategies seek to effectively utilise a local community's assets and potential with the aim of creating high quality public spaces that promote peoples' overall quality of life. Figure 14.2, which details the various elements that have a bearing on the overall quality and success of a place, also highlights that successful placemaking can in some circumstances be a complex and long term undertaking as it is dependent on the coalesces of many different factors.

Figure 14.2 - *What Makes a Great Place? (Source: Project for Public Space)*
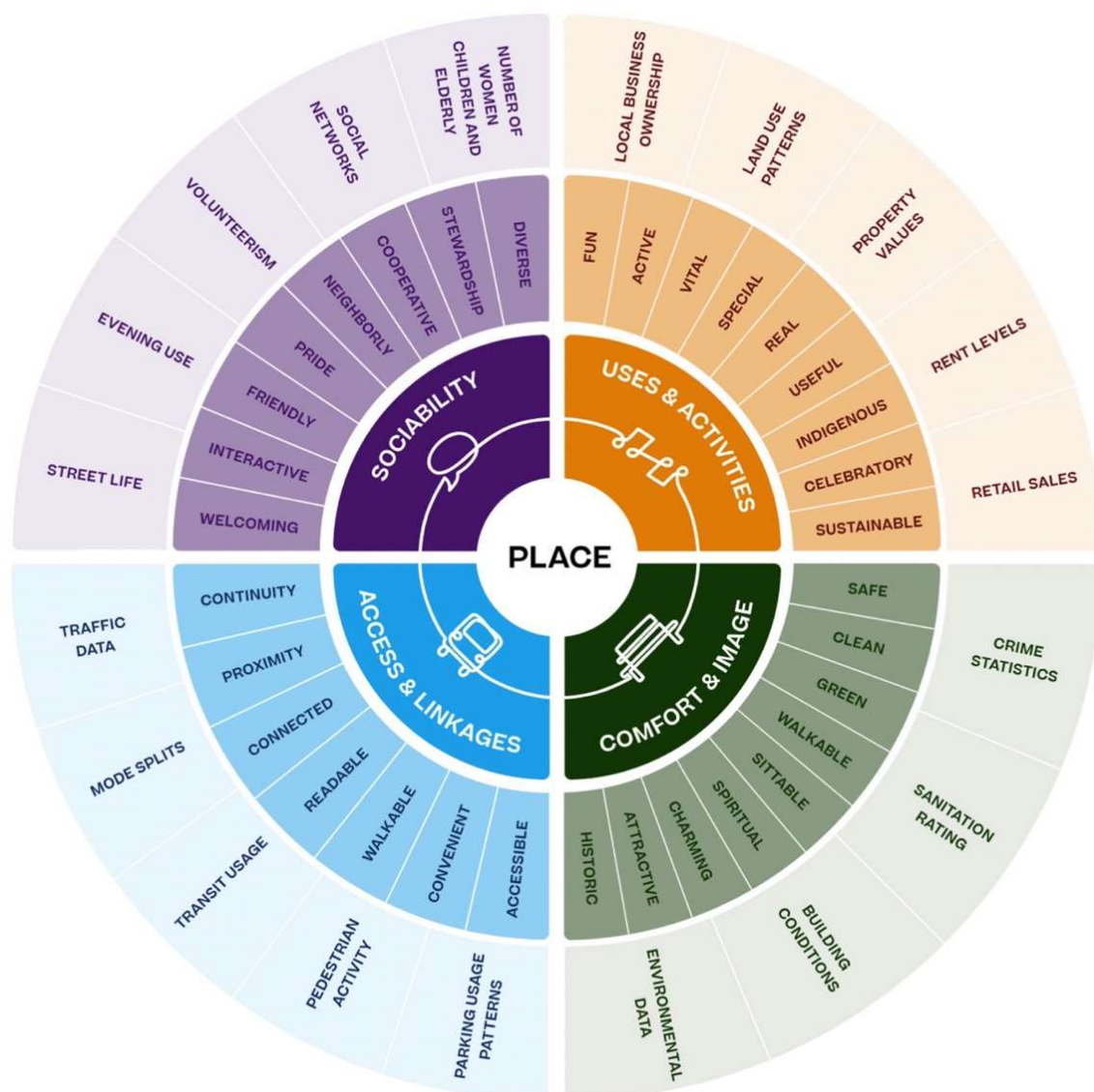
### 14.3.2 Healthy Placemaking and Quality of Life

It is becoming ever more apparent that the design of our built environment has a direct impact on our health and wellbeing, with research consistently reporting that the majority of our health outcomes are explained by factors other than healthcare and are strongly linked to environmental factors.[2] Car-oriented development over the past several decades has resulted in our settlements expanding in a disconnected and dispersed manner. Such a trend which is mirrored across western society, has had knock-on implications on peoples' overall health and wellbeing and is closely linked to rising levels of obesity, chronic disease and social isolation in the population.

'*Healthy placemaking',* which is cited by the RSES as a 'growth enabler' for the region, seeks to improve the design and functionality of settlements so that healthy activities and experiences are integral to people's everyday lives[3]. In practical terms, this means promoting and implementing active travel and neighbourhood design policies that encourage physical activity, increase opportunities for social interaction and strengthen mental health, thereby enhancing overall quality of life and wellbeing. The implementation of healthy placemaking practices also help settlements tackle and adapt to the ongoing challenges associated with climate change and an aging society.

14.3.3 Urban Design and the Concept of the 10-Minute Settlement

The 10 Minute Town Concept seeks to have all community facilities and services accessible within a 10 minute walk or cycle from homes or to ensure that they are accessible by public transport services that connect to larger scaled settlements. A 10-minute walking environment equates approximately to 800 metres in distance. Essentially, the concept provides for settlements to be designed to reduce the overall need to travel while also allowing for

Figure 14.3 - A 10-Minute Settlement in Practice; Walkable, Permeable and Convenient Links to Public Transport

sustainable transport options (walking and cycling) to become realistic and convenient alternatives to the car for short trips, therefore reducing carbon emissions.
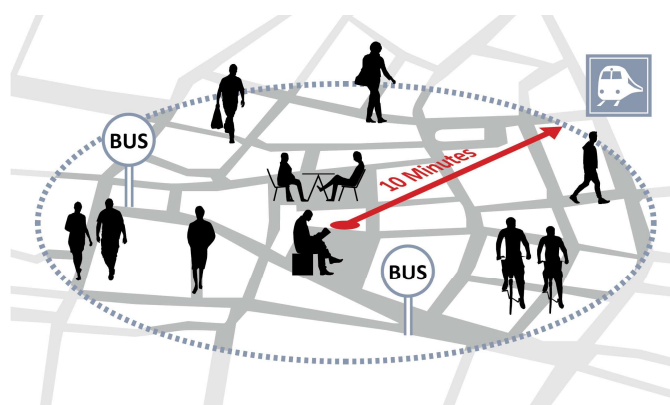
The 10-minute settlement is seen to represent the practical implementation of principles relating to people-centred urban design and healthy placemaking whilst also fully aligning with the requirements of compact growth. The concept can be achieved in existing settlements through urban design interventions which would improve walkability and provide for other public realm enhancements. Its implementation within new developments would see their design and structure successfully incorporate features such as permeability and high-quality pedestrian and cyclist connectivity links, which would be provided in tandem with the development of improved levels of social

---

[2] Public Health England (2017) Spatial Planning for Health: An Evidence Resource for Planning and Designing Healthier Places.

[3] Design Council (2017) Creating Healthy Places (as adapted).

infrastructure, neighbourhood centres/local shopping and local employment opportunities.

While the concept of the 10-minute settlement can be applied to towns and villages of all sizes, the results may not be as effective in smaller towns and villages due to their lack of critical mass to support local services and employment centres. However, all settlements both large and small will benefit from greater levels of permeability and improved walking and cycling facilities. The 10-minute settlement concept is a key aim of this Plan and a number of provisions are integrated throughout various chapters to ensure its practical implementation in towns and villages of all scales across the county.

14.4 The Role of Settlements in Kildare

14.4.1 Kildare's Unique Network of Towns and Villages

Whilst Kildare's towns and villages are the drivers of socio-economic development, they are also the repositories of our cultural and civic, architectural and industrial heritage. In the past the achievement of economic development in our settlements has often been at the expense of our built heritage. However, towns and villages are increasingly being viewed as important environmental assets. Indeed, it is considered that the most environmentally-friendly building is the one which already exists. Good urban design outcomes within settlements can realise the aspirations of economic progress whilst also retaining their unique heritage and sense of place.

Kildare's settlements display an inherent legibility and intrinsic character. For example, as illustrated in Figure 14.4, while the layout of Naas and Athy are medieval in origin and somewhat organic in character, Maynooth is more formal in nature being the product of 18th Century Georgian town planning, and the grid like street of pattern of Newbridge reflects its development as a relatively modern garrison town. It is these differences in form and character, developed over centuries, that have contributed to the creation of a unique and distinctive sense of place in these towns.

Figure 14.4 - *Street and Block Maps of Naas, Athy, Maynooth and Newbridge Town Centres*
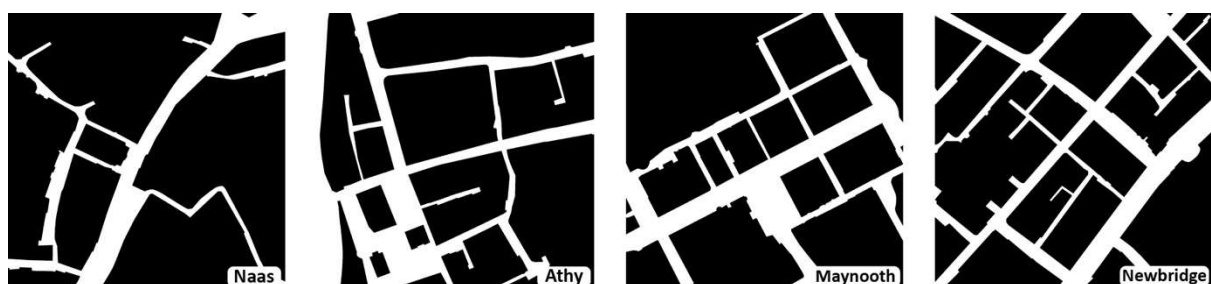
14.4.2 Town Centres: 10-Minute Settlements in Practice

The historic town centres of County Kildare represent the practical embodiment of what it means to be a 10-minute settlement. Developed at a human scale, all share the same characteristics including being inherently walkable; incorporating a fine urban grain; home to a mix of activities; the location of retail and employment services and the focus of public transport options.

Such attributes are very difficult to create over the short to medium term and therefore these historic townscapes offer us a link to a more sustainable model of development which should be protected while also being the focus of appropriate renewal and

regeneration efforts. This course of action will not only secure the safeguarding of their cultural and historic value for future generations but will also help to ensure that they remain vibrant and viable entities and a favoured destination for our collective commercial, civic, social and recreational activities.

14.4.3 Town Centres: Challenges and Opportunities

Kildare's town centres face a number of differing challenges depending on their scale, function and location within the county. Several struggle with the consequences of out-of-town retail developments or retail leakage to other towns, while all continue to be affected by the fallout from the relentless rise of online shopping and e-commerce, and the resulting changes in retail needs and shopping habits.

The size of some town centres also has an effect on their functionality, as settlements such as Celbridge and Leixlip originally developed as villages and were not designed to serve their present day heavily urbanised hinterlands. The result is a combination of large-scale retail leakage to other settlements and their main streets being choked with vehicular traffic. Traffic congestion also arises from the fact that many town centres are also the location of a single river crossing within a settlement, or that towns lack of completed distributor/orbital roads. A congested town centre is seen to be a less accessible and attractive one; it is a place which offers the visitor a poorer spatial experience, and the resident a lower quality of life.

Taking the above into consideration it is not surprising that many of Kildare's town centres continue to experience particularly elevated levels of retail and residential vacancies. Indeed, town centre land use surveys conducted over the past number of years found retail vacancy levels to be in excess of 20% in some settlements.[4] Such studies also show that many vacancies are long term in nature, indicating that previous uses may never return and bringing into question the future viability of the commercial core within some settlements.

While the challenges facing Kildare's town centres are substantial and not to be under-estimated, it is considered that the conditions for achieving their effective renewal and rejuvenation are now in place. A key element of this is that national and regional spatial policy has recognised that the traditional role of town centres has evolved, and while providing a viable retail offer will continue to be an important function, it will by no means be the primary concern. In order to survive and thrive, the town centres of the future will need to attract people with new recreational, tourist, cultural, employment and residential opportunities.

Town centres are also considered to have a critical role in the realisation of compact growth and low carbon development in the county, where historic cores have the capacity to accommodate substantial quantities of new homes either by the utilisation of living opportunities within existing vacant buildings or through brownfield/backland development. Increasing the residential offer alongside a targeted investment in the public realm within town centres will not only help to tackle the housing crisis affecting the county but also make these historic cores more attractive and liveable destinations,

---

[4] The Heritage Council's Collaborative Town Centre Health Check Programme considers town centre retail vacancy rates in excess of 10% to be 'problematic'. It is noted that the target for town centre retail vacancy under normal trading conditions is 5%.

thereby consolidating and enhancing their status as established 10-minute settlements.

Urban Design and Placemaking

Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

UD P1	Apply the principles of people-centred urban design and healthy placemaking as an effective growth management tool to ensure the realisation of more sustainable, inclusive, and well-designed settlements resilient to the effects of climate change and adapted to meet the changing needs of growing and aging populations.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

UD O1	Require a high standard of urban design to be integrated into the design and layout of all new development and ensure compliance with the principles of healthy placemaking by providing increased opportunities for physical activities, social interaction and active travel, through the development of compact, permeable neighbourhoods which feature high-quality pedestrian and cyclist connectivity, accessible to a range of local services and amenities.
UD O2	Ensure that town centres remain the focal point of their respective settlements by maintaining and enhancing their role as dynamic, attractive, resilient and inclusive environments, and as established destinations for commercial, retail, civic and recreational activities.
UD O3	Support and promote the '*10-minute settlement*' concept across all towns and villages in the county and require that all Local Area Plans incorporate policies and objectives that will assist in its implementation.
UD O4	To require all proposals for multi-unit residential developments to demonstrate how the principles of '*Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design*' have been considered and applied in the design and layout of the proposed scheme.

14.5 Policy Responses

In refocusing on town and village centres with high quality urban design interventions, the Council established a new strategic projects and public realm unit to apply for funding and manage regeneration and renewal projects across the county. As of late 2021, this multidisciplinary unit is progressing 65 different projects worth a combined total of €45 million, all with the aim of delivering high-quality places that will be attractive locations to live, work, visit and invest in.

14.5.1 Town and Village Renewal

The Council's regeneration efforts to-date has placed a particular emphasis on delivering town and village renewal, specifically the rejuvenation of settlements' historic commercial cores. The overarching approach adopted has been heavily

influenced by National Policy Objective 6 (NPO 6) of the National Planning Framework which seeks to regenerate '*towns and villages of all types and scale as environmental assets, that can accommodate changing roles and functions, increased residential population and employment activity and enhanced levels of amenity and design quality, in order to sustainably influence and support their surrounding area*'. Essentially, the Council views its actions, as part of a wider exercise in future proofing Kildare's settlements, making them more resilient and adaptable to long term demographic, economic, social and climate trends.

14.5.2 Kildare County Council's Placemaking Mechanisms

14.5.3 Town Renewal Masterplans

In supporting the changing roles and functions of town centres and developing a sustainable model for their development, the Council has commenced the preparation of Town Renewal Masterplans for settlements of all sizes across the county. Renewal Masterplans (as outlined in Table 14.1) will focus on maximising the potential of towns and villages built and natural heritage by using these existing assets to enhance their role as visitor destinations and helping to create new local employment opportunities. The tailored approach adopted by Renewal Masterplans to each settlement's regeneration will provide for the development and enhancement of their overall function and 'unique selling point' (USP) through the identification and implementation of priority projects. In this regard, a Town Renewal Masterplan should be viewed also as a plan of action and a platform which establishes a targeted and co-ordinated long term investment strategy, enabling the creation of local synergies (i.e., the development of tourism-based enterprises) which will in turn kickstart a broader economic regeneration of a settlement.

14.5.4 Transforming the Public Realm

A high-quality public realm greatly assists in the development of a people-centred, universally accessible settlement that is not only socially inclusive but also supports local businesses through the increased footfall resulting from an attractive, comfortable, and safe urban environment. As such, Public Realm Strategies (as outlined in Table 14.1) are a critical tool for setting out an alternative long term vision for the design and management of a town's key network of public spaces. It is further noted that a high-quality public realm can become a destination in its own right. For example, a well-designed town square or waterside space has the potential to become a key social/recreational space, enticing people to linger and patronise the businesses of an area.

Table 14.1 - Kildare County Council's Placemaking Strategies

Type of Strategy	Purpose and Level of Detail
	(Ranging from most strategic to most detailed/site specific)
Urban Design Framework / Urban Regeneration Framework An Urban design /Regeneration Framework	An Urban Design Framework sets out a strategic development strategy and vision for a specific area over a medium to long term timeframe, and outlines guiding principles which establish the key urban design issues which are to be developed and managed. Urban Design Frameworks should consider at a minimum, how the area relates to its wider contextual area in terms of urban form, existing and proposed access and movement channels, the allocation of land uses and

Type of Strategy	Purpose and Level of Detail
	(Ranging from most strategic to most detailed/site specific)
	activities, densities, the identification/integration of public open spaces, implementation and may address phasing (taking account of key stakeholders). It should also identify areas that may be considered for more detailed masterplans or other priority projects. An Urban Design Framework may focus on a greenfield site, or the rejuvenation of a town centre or previously developed (brownfield) lands.
Masterplan To be identified in the County Development Plan / Local Area Plans and supported by objectives contained therein. Masterplans may be incorporated into statutory Local Area Plans.	A Masterplan is more detailed than a Urban Design Framework in that it should set out a detailed layout and design, the hierarchy of streets/roads and open spaces, the street/block pattern, street profiles (cross-sections), with a focus on the three dimensional form and with guidance on the scale and height of buildings and even details such as materials. In formulating the Masterplan and examining options, it should have regard to the likely availability of sites/ownership patterns, the development of supporting infrastructure (including social infrastructure), phasing and financial feasibility. Detailed masterplans can include cost estimates on key public infrastructure or amenities with mechanisms for achieving same (project delivery).
Town Renewal Masterplan Supported by objectives of the County Development Plan. and relevant Local Area Plans.	A Town Renewal Masterplan is effectively a blueprint to guide the rejuvenation of a town or village. It is informed by a robust analysis, including for example the historical context (urban morphology), urban 'health checks,' land use surveys, building condition surveys, analysis of movement patterns (pedestrian movement/footfall and vehicular movement), car parking analysis, architectural heritage appraisals and urban design character and it is generally supported by extensive public consultation. As part of the Renewal Masterplan process a number of priority projects are identified for delivery.
Public Realm Strategy/Plan Generally supported by objectives of a Local Area Plan and/or identified as a Priority Project of an Urban Regeneration Framework / Town Renewal Masterplan.	Public Realm Strategies set out the details of phased co-ordinated projects that will enhance and improve the way historic town and village centres function and are presented through hard and soft landscaping. Public Realm Strategy tasks involve: • Generating audits and urban quality appraisals to take stock of the heritage of historic towns/villages • Determining which features in town centres are valued by communities • Establishing a shared vision for the future, and • Formulating and outlining a strategic plan to implement that vision. Public Realm Plans deal with the street surface, finishes, hard landscaping (focusing on materials/palette), soft landscaping (street trees and planters) and the provision of street furniture (public seating, litter bins, street lighting, heritage signs, information boards, de-cluttering signage and utilities). It can also address streetscape issues and typically will involve an effort to have

Type of Strategy	Purpose and Level of Detail
	(Ranging from most strategic to most detailed/site specific)
	over-head utility lines underground. These design interventions improve the attractiveness of the urban/village environment, they reclaim spaces previously devoted to cars and car parking in favour of places for people to walk, cycle and socialise and in doing so they frequently assist in turning vacant properties into active use.
Key Development Area (KDA) To be identified in Local Area Plans and supported by objectives contained therein.	A Key Development Area (KDA) comprises of lands within a settlement which have been identified as being strategic to the development of that settlement over the life of a Local Area Plan, usually for the purposes of delivering new residential housing. Its intention is to set out the broad spatial parameters for the development of the site and is designed to assist all parties involved in the planning process including the planning authority, design teams and other key stakeholders. A designated KDA includes a written design brief for the site accompanied by an urban design framework map, illustrating an overarching design concept for the lands. This essentially sets out the key spatial elements required in order obtain planning permission on a site.
Design Statement A requirement of the County Development Plan for certain individual development applications (see Chapter 15).	The purpose of a design statement is to provide details to the planning authority on the overall design concept and thought process underpinning a development proposal, whilst also demonstrating how it takes into consideration applicable planning policies and objectives contained in a Local Area Plan and/or the County Development Plan, along with relevant Ministerial Guidelines. Well-considered design statements should include various iterations of the development proposal illustrating how the overall design was originally devised, altered and redrafted to respond to the constraints and environmental sensitivities of the surrounding context. Design statements are considered to be a key tool in assisting the planning authority in its assessment of individual proposals in order achieve good urban design outcomes within smaller scale sites.

14.5.5 Other Spatial Interventions

In addition to the preparation and implementation of placemaking strategies, the Council has also undertaken various short term projects aimed at enhancing peoples' experience and enjoyment of the public realm. One such initiative has sought to implement the concept of tactical urbanism in a number of towns across the county. Tactical urbanism is defined as short term, quick to install, low cost and scalable interventions in the urban

Figure 14-5 - *Example of Tactical Urbanism at Market Square in Kildare Town*

environment with the potential to catalyse long term change. The central idea is that such schemes are typically introduced on a temporary or trial basis to enable data to

be collected and feedback invited, with changes made in response to that feedback. If the tactical urbanism intervention is deemed a success, then further capital investment will be made to establish a 'new normal' and permanent intervention. As part of the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic several projects of this kind were rolled out across the county to provide increased space for outdoor socialising. Overall, these interventions have proven successful. For instance, the reclaimed space at Market Square in Kildare town as illustrated in Figure 14.5 has been very popular with members of the public. It is anticipated that the Council will build upon this positive momentum and roll-out further tactical urbanism projects at strategically important town centre locations over the life of the Plan.

Other key initiatives to support the overall enhancement and vibrancy of the public realm include Kildare County Council's shopfront renewal scheme which has been successful in assisting in the delivery of numerous enhanced shopfronts in town centres across the county. This scheme is applied in conjunction with the Council's Shop Front Design Guide (2013) which provides guidance and best practice on the design of shopfronts. In an effort to promote and manage the increased interest of the hospitality sector in providing outdoor seating, best practice guidance has also been prepared by the Council with respect to Section 254 Licensing of outdoor dining and seating areas and associated design components within the public realm.

14.5.6 A Town Centre First Approach

The Programme for Government (2020) recognised the need for and committed to, the development of a strategic approach to town centre regeneration that would maximise the impact of the Government's considerable investment in urban regeneration. On foot of this, '*Town Centre First – A Policy Approach for Irish Towns*' was published in February 2022. Informed by the Scottish model, the scope of the Town Centre First Policy extends beyond the implementation of traditional town centre planning policy to place the public sector to the forefront of investing in town centres, ensuring their overall health, and helping communities thrive. This approach also recognises the need for collective responsibility amongst all key stakeholders to help town centres develop sustainably, reinvent their function, and meet the changing needs of residents, businesses, and visitors. While primarily aimed at towns with a population of over 400 people, the principles and provisions of the policy document are designed to apply to settlements of varying size, including smaller villages.

The Town Centre First Policy seeks to take an overarching and co-ordinated approach to town centre regeneration. It recognises the key role and experience that Local Authorities have in driving regeneration strategies. As such, the sector features prominently as stakeholders responsible for implementing the majority of the 33 specific actions set out in the policy document.

Some of the key features of the policy include;

- The setting up of a national town centre first approach to co-ordinate and drive Town Centre First actions and engagement at a national level. The Office will also be a forum for best practice and provide capacity building for Town Teams, a Health Check Programme and other resources, as well as funding information and best practice models for developing Town Centre First Plans;
- A network of Town Regeneration Officers (TROs) based in Local Authorities to lead Town Centre First implementation and to liaise with the National Town Centre First Office. The role of the TROs will include supporting local Town

Teams in the preparation of Town Centre First Plans, assisted by the wider local authority;

- The preparation of non-statutory Town Centre First Plans produced by local Town Teams, drawn from local community and business representatives, with the support of the local government sector;
- In keeping with the Government's Housing for All Plan (2021), a key focus of the Town Centre First Policy will be the provision of new housing in towns which will constitute a critical part of their overall regeneration.

This Plan commits to supporting the rollout and implementation of the Town Centre First Policy (February 2022) to towns and settlements across County Kildare and to ensuring that the provisions and actions contained in the policy document are fully integrated into the established regeneration activities and work programme of the County Council.

14.5.7 Tackling Town Centre Vacancies

The chronic issue of retail and residential vacancies in town centres needs to be resolved if there is to be a meaningful regeneration of our towns and villages. Whilst efforts to regenerate the public realm and enhance tourism and employment opportunities through various placemaking strategies will assist in helping to find new roles and functions for vacant buildings over the longer term, it is recognised that a more interventionist approach on the part of the Local Authority is required.

To this end, and conscious of the growing housing crisis in the county, Kildare County Council has focused over the past number of years on bringing back into use vacant residential units in towns and villages. Through the efforts of the Vacant Housing Officer numerous vacant dwellings in town centres have been identified and brought back into use as social housing through both the Buy and Renew Scheme and the Repair and Lease Scheme. Furthermore, as part of a pilot initiative in Athy, the Council has over the past number of years, engaged with private landowners in the town centre with the aim of reducing instances of vacancy and dereliction. This targeted and sustained effort has yielded very positive results and assisted in reducing the level of residential vacancy in the town.

The establishment of the Zoned Land Tax (ZLT) in 2023, will further assist in efforts to appropriately develop regeneration sites, regardless of their size.

The revitalisation of town centre land uses can only be achieved by recognising that some former uses (including retail uses) will not be returning and by identifying and encouraging credible alternative uses and functions for these units. In this regard, the Council will support implementing the concept of 'meanwhile use' (such as pop-up shops) to provide for temporary uses to be accommodated in vacant units, where appropriate.

Town and Village Renewal

Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

UD P2	Develop towns and villages of all types and scale as environmental assets and ensure that their regeneration and renewal form a critical component of efforts to achieve compact growth development and increased climate resilience within settlements across the county.

Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

UD O5	Apply a design-led approach to urban regeneration and development by supporting the preparation of placemaking strategies (as outlined in Table 14.1) and providing for their implementation on a phased basis over the life of the Plan and beyond.
UD O6	Continue to pursue a Town Centre First Approach to renewing and developing town centres through the following: (i) Prioritising the town centre as the primary location for commercial, civic, social and cultural development and promoting new high quality infill and backland development that consolidates and regenerates the existing urban core. (ii) Preparing and implementing Town Renewal Masterplans for settlements of all sizes across the county. (iii) Actively engaging with the community, landowners, developers and other agencies to secure support and develop a shared vision for the renewal and enhancement of Kildare's towns and villages. (iv) Implementing the provisions of Government's '*Housing For All'* plan (2021) with regard to addressing vacancy and maximising efficient use of existing stock in our towns centres. (v) Implementing the provisions and Actions of '*Town Centre First – A Policy Approach for Irish Towns*' (2022) including supporting the work of any appointed Town Regeneration Officers within the Council.
UD O7	Consider, through the preparation of Local Area Plans, the concept of quarter-based planning, which should be developed on a phased basis in tandem with the delivery of necessary social and physical infrastructure, and where appropriate include bespoke urban design codes to address the local characteristics.
UD O8	Address new settlement areas already in the planning process, in the appropriate Local Area Plan process and to ensure that future new settlements are considered in conjunction with the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan to support new distributed growth in Co. Kildare during the lifetime of this Plan to inform the next CDP.

UD O9	Provide for the effective presentation, development and management of a people-centred and universally accessible public realm within settlements, through the preparation and implementation of Public Realm Strategies.
UD O10	Support the establishment of alternative uses and functions for buildings within town centres and facilitate the implementation of the '*meanwhile use*' concept to allow for temporary uses to be established in vacant units, subject to the appropriate planning and environmental considerations.
UD O11	Investigate the feasibility of a pilot scheme for a Kildare town to reduce vacancy levels, in conjunction with all relevant stakeholders.

Actions

It is an action of the Council to:

UD A1	Continue to seek funding from relevant agencies and Government sources including the Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Funds (RRDF/URDF) to secure financial support for all town and village renewal projects in the county.
UD A2	Prepare a series of Masterplans / Urban Design Frameworks over the lifetime of the Plan, in co-operation with relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to the following areas: • The Northwest Quadrant, Naas • The Canal Quarter, Naas • Lands at Confey, Leixlip • Dominican Lands, Athy • Lands at St. Raphael's / Oakley Park, Celbridge • Lands at Simmonstown, Celbridge • Collinstown (Strategic Employment lands), Leixlip • Collegelands (lands to west of Maynooth, adjoining Maynooth University and St. Patrick's College)
UD A3	Prepare and implement on a phased basis Town Renewal Masterplans for the following settlements: Naas, Maynooth, Newbridge, Leixlip, Kildare Town, Celbridge, Monasterevin, Clane, Athgarvan, Castledermot, Derrinturn, Straffan, Allenwood, Coill Dubh (inc. Coolearagh), Johnstownbridge, Kilmeague, Ardclough and Robertstown (public amenities area).
UD A4	Continue to monitor on an ongoing basis the overall health of town centres as part of the Town Centre Health Check Exercise of the Town

	Renewal Masterplan process, and in the preparation of Local Area Plans, in order to establish a 'live' baseline dataset relating to land use activities and vacancies in town centres.
UD A5	Continue to tackle residential vacancy within town centres through various initiatives, including the following; • Targeted engagement with landowners. • Promoting awareness of the Buy and Renew and Repair and Lease Schemes. • Developing tailored responses through selected Town Renewal Masterplans. • Applying for any funds made available under the Government's *Housing for All* plan (2021) to increase residential living opportunities in vacant or underutilised buildings. • Land Activation Measures, including the use of the Derelict Sites Act, Section 59 mechanisms related to the Record of Protected Structures and Compulsory Purchase Powers. • The preparation of Town Centre First Plans by designated town teams.
UD A6	Continue to pursue tactile urbanism initiatives by using the public realm within selected settlements as an experimental space to test new design concepts and alternative layouts.

14.6 Urban Design Principles: A Best Practice Approach to Development

Good urban design outcomes in our towns and villages do not happen by accident. They are the result of deliberate decisions on the part of key stakeholders to ensure that development is planned and designed in a co-ordinated and collaborative manner. This section seeks to provide for the delivery of high-quality design within Kildare's settlements by providing best practice guidance to assist key stakeholders in the integration of urban design principles from the conceptual stage of every development proposal.

Table 14.2 provides an urban design standards 'checklist' which has been informed by the Urban Design Manual (2009), The RIAI Town and Village Toolkit (2019) and other design-based research. While it is noted that statutory design guidance documents such the Urban Design Manual (see Figure 14.6 below) and the Retail Design Manual focus on the residential and retail development respectively, the principles outlined in Table 14.2 are applicable to all types of development. As per the provisions outlined in Section 15.3 of Chapter 15 in cases where design statements are required to accompany planning applications, they should outline how the development proposal complies with the Urban Design Standards Checklist along with other relevant policy objectives.

Figure 14.6 - *The 12 Criteria for Achieving Best Practice Urban Design in Residential Developments (Urban Design Manual, 2009)*

Further guidance on best practice in urban design and placemaking provided in the following documents:

- Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns and Villages) (DEHLG, 2009).
- Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide (DEHLG, 2009).
- Retail Design Manual – A Companion Guide to the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoECLG and DoAHG, 2012)
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DTTS and DHPLG, 2019)
- Urban Development and Building Heights: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DHPLG, 2018)
- Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2004)
- Creating Places for People: The RIAI Town and Village Toolkit (2019)
- Kildare Shopfront Guidelines (Kildare County Council, 2013)

Table 14.2 - Urban Design Standards Checklist

Aspect of Urban Design	Urban Design Principle	Urban Design Response
Places for People **Enriching the Existing**	**Character**	A development which takes into consideration the surrounding environment and builds upon historic character or natural features of the site in order to create an identity and 'sense of place'. The design and layout of any built form should reinforce locally distinctive patterns of townscape and landscape.

Aspect of Urban Design	Urban Design Principle	Urban Design Response
Working with the Landscape	Continuity and Enclosure	The creation of new built form that is in keeping with the surrounding urban context. Developments should seek to achieve continuity and the enclosure of space through the construction of strong urban edges, including continuity of street frontages and alignment with established building lines, along with the development of legible built form.
	Attractiveness	Ensure that attractiveness in new and regenerated buildings is achieved through the use of high-quality design, layout and material finishes.
	Variety	Ensure that built form typologies are varied within development schemes to maintain a level of interest in the urban environment.
	Quality of the Public Realm	The development of people-centred public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe, uncluttered and universally accessible.
Making Connections	Ease of Movement	Create areas which are easy to get to and move through by providing for how people get around on foot, bicycle, public transport and by car – and in that order.
	Legibility	The creation of legible places which a visitor can easily 'read' by providing recognisable and easy to navigate routes, intersections and landmarks.
Mix of Uses	Diversity	The promotion of choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to ensure a place that responds to local needs, as well as providing for a diverse society of different incomes at different stages of their lives.
Designing for Change	Adaptability	The development of built form and urban spaces that are robust and flexible enough to respond to changing social, technological and economic trends.
Sustainable Design	Environmental Sustainability	The promotion of local biodiversity by integrating the development with a settlement's green infrastructure network. Developments should allow for new wildlife habitats to become established and existing ones protected and enhanced.
	Climate Adaptation and Mitigation	Creating climate resilience through various measures such as the incorporation of green infrastructure, the integration of SuDS, maximising the most efficient and sustainable use of land, and designing environments which provides opportunities for active travel, in order to reduce carbon emissions.
Technical Issues	Access and car parking standards / provision of cycle stands Energy efficiency EV charging provision Design and location of communal refuse storage and recycling Mix of tenure	

14.6.1 Key Urban Design Terminology

Table 14.3 outlines important terminology to assist stakeholders in understanding the important elements of urban design and how they should be taken into consideration in both the design and planning stages of a proposed development.

Table 14.3 - *Key Urban Design Terminology Explained*

Urban Structure	The overall framework of a town, village or neighbourhood, showing relationships between areas of built form, activities, open space and the natural environment. It also encompasses broader systems including transport and infrastructure networks.
Urban Grain	Urban grain is essentially a description of the pattern of plots in an urban block. When this pattern is dominated by small plots it is described as fine urban grain. Fine urban grain constitutes a network of small or detailed streetscapes, as typified by historic urban centres.
Density and Mix	The intensity of development and the range of different land uses and activities (such as residential, commercial or recreational uses) within a specific area.
Height and Massing	The scale of buildings in relation to height and floor area, and how they relate to surrounding landforms, buildings and streets. Massing refers to the structure in three dimensions, not just its outline from a single perspective. Height and massing combine to create a sense of openness or enclosure, and affect the amenity of streets, spaces and other adjacent buildings.
Scale	Scale refers to the size, bulk and perception of buildings and spaces. Bulk refers to the height, width and depth of a building in relation to other surrounding buildings, the street, setbacks and surrounding open space. For example, a large building set amongst other smaller buildings may be considered 'out of scale'.
Urban Form	The arrangement and layout of a built-up area. This arrangement is made up of many components including how close buildings and uses are together; the location and distribution of such uses; and how much of the natural environment is a part of the built-up area.
Details and Material	The close-up appearance of objects and surfaces and the selection of materials in terms of detail, craftsmanship, texture, colour, durability, sustainability and treatment. It includes street furniture, paving, lighting and signage. It contributes to peoples' experience of space and enjoyment of the public realm.
Permeability	Permeability or connectivity describes the extent to the urban structure permits or restricts movement of people and/or vehicles. A high level of permeability is considered a positive attribute of urban design, as it allows ease of movement, and assists in the development of integrated communities.
Human Scale	The proportional relationship of the physical environment (buildings, streets and open spaces) to human dimensions. Development at a human scale essentially means the creation of places that are optimised for people to access and navigate through. The term generally refers to pedestrians, as opposed to car users. Historically, settlements were developed at a human scale, incorporating a fine urban grain and a high intensity of uses to accommodate the pedestrian.

14.7 The Design of Urban Streets and Blocks

The urban structure of our settlements today is characterised by low-density, car-orientated, mono-type residential development spread out along the main arterial routes radiating from the historic urban core. In most instances this development is poorly integrated and lacks permeability, being dominated by cul-de-sacs, thereby helping to lock-in car dependency. In an effort to realise the aspiration of sustainable movement, NPO 27 of the NPF seeks '*to ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments*'. This National Policy

Objective builds on the momentum established by the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (updated 2019) which seeks to create '*safe, attractive and vibrant streets*' in our settlements.

The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) has brought about a sea change in the development of our urban streets and blocks. The Manual assigns a higher order of priority to pedestrians and cyclists and places particular emphasis on the development of connected and multi-functional streets. It is a statutory requirement that the standards set out in DMURS must be applied to all urban roads and streets, with a speed limit of 60 km/h or less. The application of DMURS standards and guidelines is considered to be of critical importance in delivering compact growth and realising the concept of the 10-minute settlement.

14.7.1 Street Hierarchy

A network of attractive streets, comprising of a high standard of quality finishes and treatments such as paving and landscaping, to create an environment with a definite sense of place, should be achieved in all new developments. All development should include a hierarchy of streets designed to recognise the needs of pedestrians and cyclists and therefore encourage opportunities for active travel.

DMURS recognises the different 'movement functions' or roles of particular routes and identifies a hierarchy with three route types: Arterial, Link and Local Streets. In addition to informing road design and movement function, the type of route being developed will also have a critical impact on design, building line/frontage, building type, building height, density and landscape treatment.

Arterial Streets are the major strategic routes that connect major centres and nodes. Arterial Streets should be provided in the form of spacious, tree-lined streets to provide a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists with associated cycle lanes and footpaths. These streets should be defined by a strong urban edge with established building lines and a high-quality public realm.

Link Streets provide the links to arterial streets or between centres, neighbourhoods and/or suburbs. Their movement function will still be significant, but they will have a lesser volume of traffic than arterial streets. They cater for shorter journeys and the design, width and design speed is lower. These routes can still accommodate building height which shall be proportionate to the road width to ensure a sense of urban enclosure. The design of a link street shall vary according to the density of the area, with a higher standard of design being expected in places with more important 'place' function i.e., key junctions.

Local Streets are the routes which connect with arterial and link streets and also provide access within communities. Their movement function is much less important and their role in the creation of 'place' is vital. Such streets may even be fully pedestrianised, or they may serve a number of modes of transport (i.e., shared surface spaces). They offer a more intimate space which provides opportunities for people to linger and consequently their movement function is secondary to their function as a place.

Shared Surface Streets: With regards to 'shared surface' streets and junctions, DMURS notes that they can be particularly effective at calming traffic and in bringing benefits in terms of visual amenity, economic performance and perceptions of personal safety. In particular, the Manual states that they are highly desirable where:

- Movement priorities are low and there is a high place value in promoting more liveable streets (i.e., home-zones), such as on *Local* streets within a *Neighbourhood* and in *Suburbs*

- Pedestrian activities are high and vehicle movements are only required for lower-level access or circulatory purposes. These include streets within *Centres* where a shared surface may be preferable over full pedestrianisation to ensure sufficient activity occurs during the daytime and the evening period.

14.7.2 Street Widths and Building Height

Achieving the optimal balance between street width and building height is key to providing a strong sense of urban enclosure (as outlined in Table 14.3) and providing a robust urban structure. If such enclosure is complemented by a pedestrian focused public realm with a high level of passive supervision and overlooking, this will greatly assist in the creation of an attractive and safe urban environment, in turn providing for a strong sense of place.

As illustrated in Figure 14.7, DMURS outlines examples of ratios that can achieve an optimal sense of enclosure. Ratios in excess of 1:1 can result in a 'canyon effect', overpowering a space. This will be discouraged in all new development. Attention should be made in designing schemes to the orientation of the street in order to maximise sunlight. Smaller streets may require the upper floors of the built form to be set back in order to achieve this.

In particularly wide streets where enclosure may be difficult to achieve through the built form alone, the planting of continuous rows street trees can help deliver a sense of enclosure.

Urban enclosure also requires that the street wall (building façades) are predominantly solid, allowing for intermittent gaps only (see Figure 14.7).
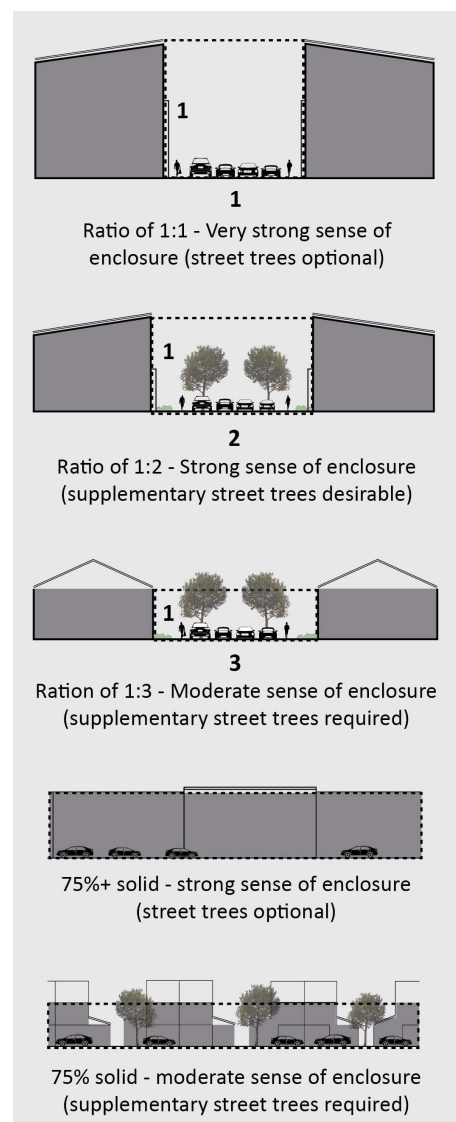

Ratio of 1:1 - Very strong sense of enclosure (street trees optional)

Ratio of 1:2 - Strong sense of enclosure (supplementary street trees desirable)

Ration of 1:3 - Moderate sense of enclosure (supplementary street trees required)

75%+ solid - strong sense of enclosure (street trees optional)

75% solid - moderate sense of enclosure (supplementary street trees required)

Figure 14.7 - *Building Height to Street Width Ratio (DMURS (2019), as adapted)*

14.7.3 The Design of Urban Blocks

How the urban structure has developed in a settlement has knock on impacts on permeability and consequently the walkability of a town or village. The more permeable and connected a settlement's network of streets and paths are, the easier it is to move around and the more likely that this movement will be made by sustainable means (i.e., on foot or bicycle). DMURS provides guidance on the size of urban block dimensions where, as illustrated in Figure 14.8, a 60m x 80m block is the optimal size for maximising accessibility within a development. While it is acknowledged that site constraints in some cases may require larger block dimensions, these should not exceed 120 metres.

Urban blocks for residential developments are generally smaller than blocks for industrial development where block sizes may need to exceed the optimal dimensions specified, in order to accommodate larger floor plates to allow for the efficient functioning of business. In such cases, mid-block pedestrian links should be provided to enable a reasonable level of permeability and encourage pedestrian movement within an area.
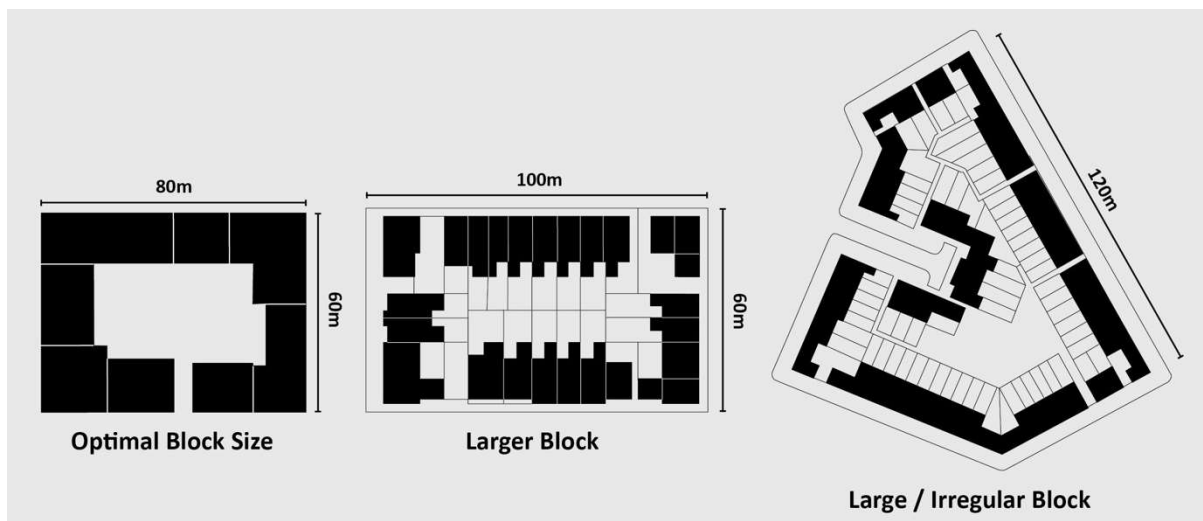

Figure 14.8 - *Optimal Sizes of Urban Blocks (DMURS (2019), as adapted)*

14.8 Urban Design and Building Heights

Following of the publication of the National Planning Framework (NPF) in 2018, updated national policy regarding Urban Development and Building Heights was issued to Planning Authorities. These ministerial guidelines form part of a wider drive, as outlined in the NPF, for increased efficiency in the use of land for urban development, in order to establish a framework for compact growth which plans for '*the growth and development of our towns and cities upwards, rather than ever outwards*'.

In practical terms, this means that Government policy requires that building heights must be generally increased in appropriate urban locations. In addition, the guidelines note that there should be a presumption in favour of buildings of increased height in our town/city cores and in other urban locations with good public transport accessibility, subject to planning and design considerations.

The Guidelines on Urban Development and Building Heights (2018) contain specific mandatory provisions referred to as Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) which must be taken into consideration by Local Authorities. Of particular relevance is to this Plan is SPPR 1, as follows:

> *In accordance with Government policy to support increased building height and density in locations with good public transport accessibility, particularly town/city cores, planning authorities shall explicitly identify, through their statutory plans, areas where increased building height will be actively pursued for both redevelopment, regeneration and infill development to secure the objectives of the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and shall not provide for blanket numerical limitations on building height.*

Also of relevance is SPPR 4 which requires that the minimum densities set out in the Guidelines for Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009) should be met and that a greater mix of building heights and typologies in planning for the future development of suburban locations, in particular in developments of 100 units or more. This section outlines how this Plan seeks to apply both guidelines and the relevant SPPRs contained therein to a County Kildare context.

14.8.1 Residential Density and Building Heights

Oftentimes the issue of building height gets conflated with that of increased residential densities, where a common misconception is that achieving higher densities automatically requires the development of tall buildings. This is not the case. Figure 14.9 (below) illustrates three different types of residential development on the same one-hectare urban block. Each variation delivers 75 units per hectare (75 uph) but does so in a different manner. The diagram shows that low rise – high coverage, and medium rise – medium coverage developments can deliver relatively high densities without the need for tall buildings.

High rise - low coverage	Low rise - high coverage	Medium rise - medium coverage
Tower block	Terraced housing with on-street parking	Mix of houses, apartments and duplexes
75 units per ha	*75 units per ha*	*75 units per ha*

Figure 14.9 - *Different architectural forms that achieve the same density (Towards an Urban Renaissance (1999), as adapted)*

14.8.2 A Contextual Approach to Building Height

It is considered that the delivery of compact growth in a manner that is consistent with ministerial guidelines for both building heights and residential densities is, in the majority of instances, achievable in the county without the need to develop tall buildings. However, there are some cases where it may be appropriate to integrate taller buildings into the urban environment in order to maximise the most efficient and sustainable use of land at strategic locations or to create a certain level of interest and variety in the urban form.

For example, a recently developed nine-storey student apartment development in Maynooth (see Figure 14.10) provides a landmark building and increased legibility to a fast-expanding campus, without adversely affecting the existing residential or visual amenity of the area. Also, there is scope for taller buildings within Transit-Oriented Developments (TODs) (see Figure 14.11). These settlement expansion areas are developed around high-capacity transport corridors such as a high frequency bus route or railway (i.e., Bus Connects and Dart+ lines). The development of taller buildings in such a context, while providing for the necessary densities to support the viability of high-frequency transport services is also considered to be an important urban design tool which can assist in providing a new development with variety and enhancing a sense of place.

Figure 14.10 - *Courtyard Student Apartments*

(Source: Maynooth University)

Figure 14.11 - *Plan of a Transit-Oriented Development*
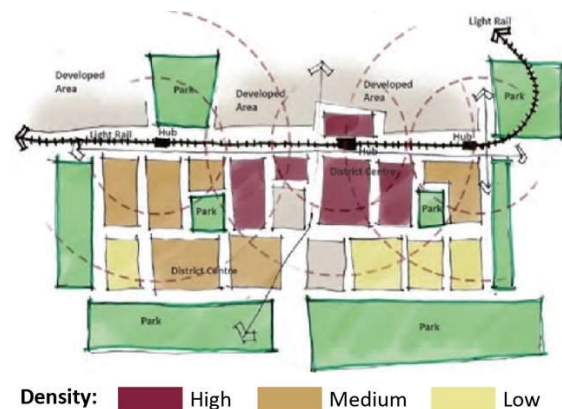
(Source: 2022-2042 Transport Strategy for the GDA)

With regard to the above, the Council has adopted a contextual approach to building heights which integrates the specific provisions of the guidelines into the Plan whilst also directing the development of taller buildings into the most appropriate development locations within the county.

It is noted that residential density levels will adhere to the requirements of Guidelines for Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009) and Circular NRUP 02/2021, or any succeeding guidelines. See Chapter 15 for more details.

Table 14.4 - *Application of the Guidelines on Urban Development and Building Heights to a County Kildare Context*

Location	Provision of Guidelines Applied
Town Centres and major towns as identified in the NPF and RSES	In accordance with Government policy to support increased building height and density in locations with good public transport accessibility, town centres and major towns as identified and promoted for strategic development in the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, increased building heights of 6+ storeys may be appropriate. This would include all town centres as well as appropriate locations within the Key Towns of Naas (east of town centre in the vicinity of Corban's Lane/Friary Lane, except for sites in close proximity to St. David's Castle) and Maynooth (immediately outside the historic core and on sites associated with Maynooth University and St. Patrick's College, close to the canal and rail line).
Sites located on key public transport corridors in urban areas	In addition to above, the Guidelines require that Development Plans must actively plan for and bring about increased density and height of development within the footprint of developing sustainable mobility corridors and networks, particularly around key public transport interchanges or nodes. The Guidelines note that subject to design and planning considerations, there is scope to consider building heights in excess of 6 storeys on suitably configured sites, especially where there are particular concentrations of enabling infrastructure to cater for such development, and the architectural, urban design and public realm outcomes would be of very high quality. Such locations may include areas served by high-frequency public transport services (Dart+ and Bus Connects) and lands surrounding planned future transport nodes and transit-oriented development (TOD), including the following: • Lands at Confey, Leixlip • Lands west of Maynooth (adjacent to future train station) • Lands in the Northwest Quadrant, Naas (adjacent to the bus only route from Naas Harbour to Millennium Park).
Urban locations outside town centres	The Guidelines seek to achieve prevailing building heights of at least three to four storeys, coupled with an appropriate density, in locations outside what would be defined as town centre areas, and in locations which would include suburban areas.

Location	Provision of Guidelines Applied
Suburban/edge locations	Both infill and greenfield development within the suburban edges of towns should include an effective mix of 2, 3 and 4 storey buildings which integrates well with the surrounding pattern of development.

14.8.3 Integrating Taller Buildings into the Urban Environment

In keeping with applying a contextual approach to increased building heights in the county, it is noted that due regard must be had to the existing characteristics of the receiving environment. In particular, care must be taken when making such interventions within town centres, many of which are Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) and have an established building height of two to four storeys. It is therefore recognised that developments of greater than 6 storeys, as envisaged in the guidelines, would not generally be appropriate given the existing streetscape, the sensitive historic environment and may also not be viable. As provided for in the Guidelines (p.13), each proposal will be required to *'…successfully integrate into/enhance the character and public realm of the area, having regard to topography, its cultural context, setting of key landmarks, protection of key views'*.

Increased building heights for developments will be required to be subject to site-specific and design quality appraisals which take into consideration the impact of taller developments on the existing urban fabric in order to ensure that such buildings integrate well with their surroundings. Accordingly, any new applications for development greater than 4 storeys shall address the development management criteria set out in paragraph 3.2 of the Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines (2018) to enable the Planning Authority to assess the application comprehensively in relation to its local context.

In locations deemed suitable for a comprehensive urban redevelopment, including areas in excess of 2 hectares, development proposals should be supported by an appropriate urban design framework/master-planning exercise prepared by the applicant to deal with movement, public realm, design and other issues dealt with at a neighbourhood scale rather than at a site-specific scale and should also address the development management criteria set out in paragraph 3.2 of the Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines (2018).

14.8.4 Development Sequencing

The Guidelines on Urban Development and Building Heights (2018) also seek to ensure that an integrated planning approach is adopted which considers employment opportunities, housing delivery and the provision of servicing infrastructure together in planning for new development, particularly within locations that are identified for significant urban expansion.

SPPR 2 of the Guidelines states that in seeking general increases in building heights, planning authorities shall also ensure appropriate mixtures of uses, such as housing and commercial or employment development, are provided for in statutory plan policy. This should include mechanisms such as block delivery sequencing in statutory plans to link the provision of new office, commercial, appropriate retail provision and residential accommodation as part of a phased approach to development. In this regard, such mechanisms as phasing will be used by the Council to manage the

development of larger sites and the regeneration of urban areas. The Council will apply such an approach as part of the Development Management process (see Chapter 15) and for sites of strategic importance identified in Local Area Plans.

Building Heights and Development Sequencing

Objective

It is an objective of the Council to:

UD O12	Comply with the provisions of the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Urban Development and Building Heights (2018) by providing for the following.
	(a) Support increased building height and densities in appropriate locations, as outlined in Table 14.4, subject to the avoidance of undue impacts on the existing residential or visual amenities.
	(b) Utilising increased building heights to support mixed use development, including downsizing opportunities and residential units that facilitate an adaptable layout to suit long term changes in homeowner requirements.
	(c) In mixed use schemes, development proposals shall include details of the sequencing of uses to enable the timely activation of supporting infrastructure and services. New development greater than 4 storeys will be required to address the development management criteria set out in section 3.2 of the Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines (2018).