

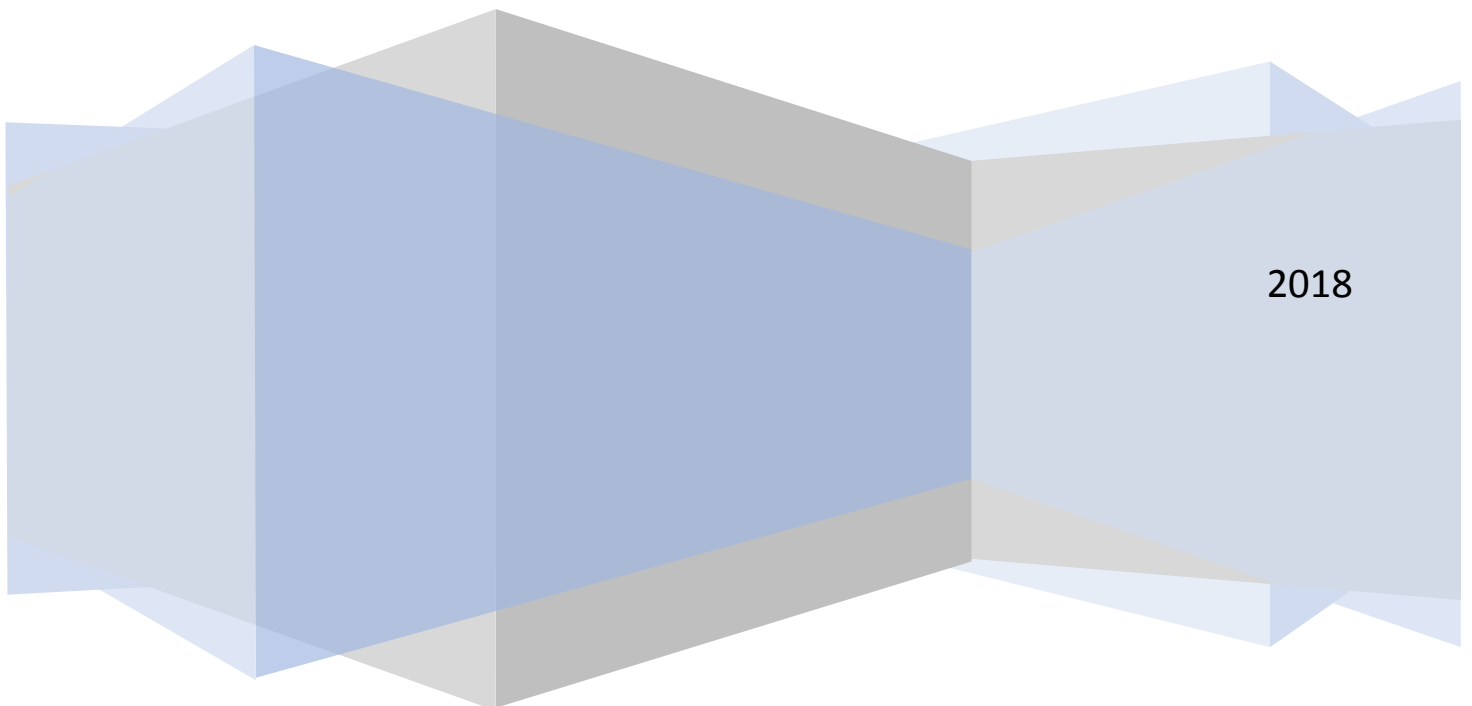
Kilkenny County Council



Callan Health Check Report

(Extracted from combined Callan and Inistioge Pre-Published Health Check Report)

Future Analytics Consulting Ltd



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1 Introduction

Kilkenny County Council is committed to improving the social and economic conditions of communities throughout the county and recognises that each of the county's towns and villages must provide high quality living, working, education, recreation and culture opportunities in an attractive environment.

Future Analytics Consulting has been appointed by Kilkenny County Council to undertake a *Town and Village Centre Health Checks* for eight towns and villages in County Kilkenny. Consultation with organisations and community members was also conducted as part of the process. The analysis of the data obtained from the research and stakeholder consultation process provided the foundations for the formulation of a series of recommendations for each settlement.

This report provides up-to-date information on the performance of each settlement, incorporating an assessment of strengths, constraints, opportunities and threats which Kilkenny County Council will use in preparing for future development and enhancement of each settlement. Moreover, the data will support future community and socio-economic planning and development of each of the towns and villages assessed with a view to enhancing the prosperity and vitality of each settlement and improving the quality of life for the local community and those working and visiting.

1.1 Town and Village Health Check Approach

Town and Village Health Checks collate information on settlements based on a range of indicators and the overall performance of the centres is assessed against pre-determined indicators in order to create reliable baseline information. As outlined in the Retail Planning Guidelines, viability and vitality are core elements to the enhancement of town and village centres: "*Vitality is a measure of how active and buoyant a centre is, whilst viability refers to the commercial well-being of a town*", thereby, a measure of its capacity to continually attract investment. The indicators of vitality and vibrancy assessed include;

- Key Attractors;
- Diversity of uses;
- Accessibility;
- Traffic & Parking;
- Pedestrian flow and footfall;
- Vacancy and dereliction;
- Environment (shop fronts, signage, general appearance, green spaces, biodiversity and natural quality); and
- Community Amenity (recreation, arts, culture and sports);

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Indicators are assessed through a combination of existing data analysis, physical surveying of the town, and community engagement.

The study comprised baseline research, site visits and public consultation and was undertaken by independent qualified Town Planners from Future Analytics Consulting, with considerable experience in the area of urban and rural planning. A statistical profile of each settlement was developed by collating and mapping the latest data from a range of quantitative datasets, including data from the CSO Census, Pobal, GeoDirectory, EPA, National Parks and Wildlife Services, National Monuments, which together allowed the exploration of themes such as economic activity and performance, employment and settlement connectivity and community projects.

Research and Site Visits

The project team undertook extensive background research into each town and village, comprising a socio-economic assessment of the study area's demographics, a review of Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) maps and aerial photographs, tourism and heritage plans and strategies, and retail and environmental attributes. Site visits of each settlement was conducted, the purpose of which was to gain an understanding of each of the town and village characteristics, in terms of;

- visual appearance and presentation;
- functions;
- retail offering;
- vacancy rates;
- parking;
- tourism offerings;
- cultural;
- built and natural heritage;
- facilities and amenities;

Consultation and Workshop

Consultation with key stakeholders was held by means of individual meetings with key stakeholders representing community, social, cultural and environmental views, and participatory public workshops. The purpose of the workshops was to give those attending an opportunity to actively contribute to the process and discuss and share ideas on the challenges and future opportunities for their respective towns and villages. The project team used methods, aids such as photographic aerial images of each settlement and a SCOT (Strengths, Constraints, Opportunities and Threats) analysis approach to facilitate the workshop.

SCOT (Strengths, Constraints, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis

A SCOT (Strengths, Constraints, Opportunities and Threats) analysis was undertaken for each settlement which set out the strengths, weaknesses/constraints, opportunities and threats associated with each of the seven settlements. The desk top reviews, combined with site visits, and stakeholder consultation assisted in the preparation of each SCOT analysis and builds a picture of what is valued and appreciated in each settlement, what is unsatisfactory and needs changing, where there are threats and opportunities. The SCOT provides a basis for a vision for the future that stakeholders believe to be both desirable and achievable.

Recommendations

The findings of the study, in the form of the Town and Village Centre Health Check, SCOT analysis, and the consultative community workshop, have been invaluable in identifying measures for further action. These further actions are set out through a series of recommendations. The recommendations, which are evidence based, will contribute to the enhanced vitality and viability of each of the settlements. The recommendations are presented in the form of short-term (typically 0-6 months), Medium-term (typically 7-24 months) and long-term (typically 2-5 years). The recommendations are accompanied by a series of SMART (*Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound*) actions.

1.2 Settlements Studied

This study comprises health checks for eight (8) towns and villages throughout County Kilkenny. The settlements assessed are:

- Callan
- Inistioge
- Gowran
- Ballyragget
- Freshford
- Ballyhale/Knocktopher
- Mooncoin
- The Rower

The settlement boundary of each centre are in accordance with the CSO settlement boundaries. While each of the health checks was cognisant of the full settlement boundaries, they focussed on the vibrancy and vitality of each town or village centre.

This extracted report refers to the Callan Health Check only.

2 Callan

2.1 Introduction

The town of Callan is a vibrant and historic town. As one of the larger District Towns in the County, it provides a range of public services, cultural and natural heritage as well as retail and other commercial services. According to the spatial hierarchy in *Kilkenny County Council Development Plan 2014-2020* Callan is identified as one of the county’s District Towns, as well as in the *South Eastern Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022*, and is therefore targeted for growth over the coming years.

There is a distinct cross pattern to the street layout in the centre of Callan, with the four most significant streets converging on one central point offering a focal point for the urban form. The King’s River traverses east-west through the northern part of the town which also contains the medieval core mixed with old-fashioned shop fronts adding to the charm of the area. A neat group of landmark public administration buildings represents the civic quarter of Callan, with larger plots and classical style facades. A significant extension to the town was constructed in the 19th Century south of the historic core with more generous dimensions, a contrast to the narrow streets close to the river.

2.2 Study Area

The study area of the town health check comprises the area as defined in the CSO Settlement boundaries (see Figures 1 and 2).



Figure 1. CSO settlement boundaries for the northern part of Callan Town.



Figure 2. CSO settlement boundaries for the southern part of Callan Town.

2.3 Location and Connectivity

Callan is located 16 km south-west of Kilkenny City, 24 km from Carrick on Suir, 27 km from Clonmel and 56 km from Waterford City. Callan is well connected by road, with the N76 traversing on the west side of the town centre making it accessible to Kilkenny City, and by extension, linked up with the M9 to Dublin City. Callan is serviced by a private bus company operating direct routes to Kilkenny and Dublin.

2.4 Demographic and Socio-economic Characteristics

According to Census of population 2016, Callan has a population of 2,475, which is an **increase in resident population of just over 6% since the previous Census of population 2011**. The most common age cohorts resident in the town between **35 and 44 years old, representing 17.5%** of the resident population (an increase of 1% since 2011). 87% of the resident population are Irish nationals – the same proportion as in 2011. In terms of household composition, the two-person households represent the largest group at 39%. The most frequent family units with children are those with 1 or 2 children making up 82%.

In terms of housing, Census 2016 also records that **44% of all permanent private households built since 1920 were built during the years 2001-2010** – a higher proportion than the national average of just over 25%. According to Census 2016 vacant housing comprises just over 10% of total housing, which is a decrease of 2.9% since Callan Local Area Plan 2009-2020 was published.

In relation to employment, **Callan had a 9% unemployment rate in 2016 compared to a 7% national average**. Approximately 15% of the population were retired at the time of the 2016 census. *‘Managerial and technical’* is the largest workers group, making up 23.5% of all categories. Persons in total working in *‘Professional Services’* is one of the strongest industries in Callan at almost 28% of the total industries, while *‘Commerce and Trade’* comprises 23.5% of all industries. **The 2016 Pobal HP Deprivation Index shows Callan Urban with a score of -5.87 which is marginally below the national average** with three small areas in the town indicating very disadvantaged status (see Figures 3 and 4).

In terms of educational attainment, **Census 2016 records that 25% of the population of Callan had completed the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) Level 6 (Higher Certificate) or above**. While this is an increase of just over 1% since 2011, it remains well below the State average of 40%, in 2016, for this level of educational attainment. 12.5% of the population of Callan stated in Census 2016 that they have a disability marginally below the national average.

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Regarding transport and commuting, **47.5% of people in Callan travelling to work, school or college have a journey time of 15 minutes to 45 minutes**; remaining roughly at the same level since 2011. Census 2016 records that 76%, of households own either one or two cars. This level of car ownership is reflected in that 60% of those travelling to work, school or college are recorded as using a car, while 23% of people travel by foot.

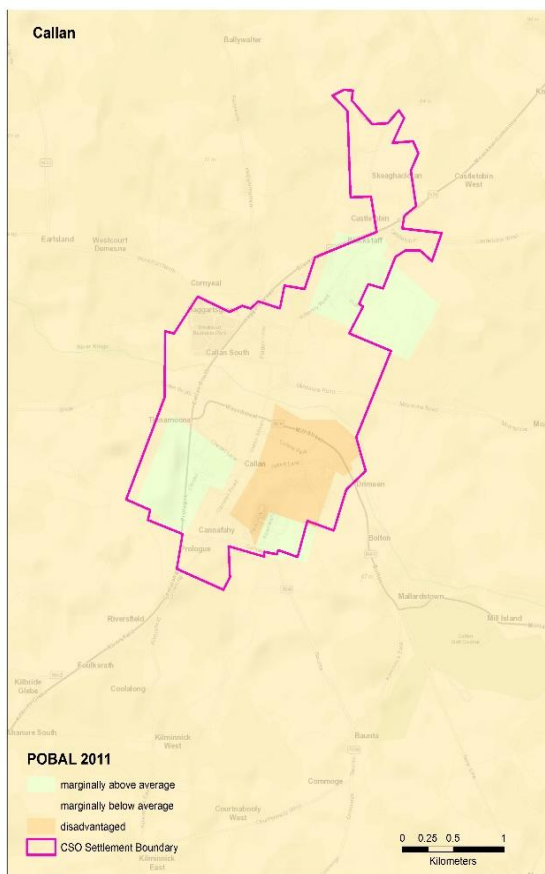


Figure 3. Pobal HP Deprivation Score 2011, Callan Town.

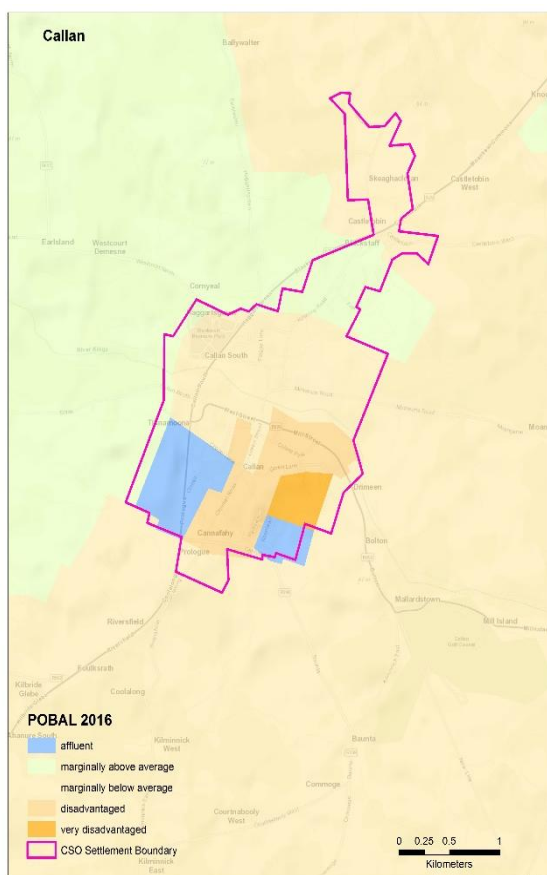


Figure 4. Pobal HP Deprivation Score 2016, Callan Town.

2.5 Town Character and Environmental Quality

The central part of Callan is designated as ‘Architectural Conservation Area’ in the *Kilkenny Council Development Plan 2014-2020*, and is also identified as a medieval town in *Callan Local Area Plan 2009-2015* (extended to 2020). Callan was once one of several Walled Towns in Kilkenny County, however, the town is presently not a member of the Irish Walled Towns Network. The characteristic medieval core of the town developed during the beginning of 13th century and encompasses Mill Street, Upper and Lower Bridge Streets, Coyne Street, Mill and Clodine Lane. The streets are narrow and winding and centre primarily on Upper and Lower Bridge Street. There is a distinct cross pattern to the street layout in the centre of Callan, with the four most significant streets converging on one central point offering a focal point for the urban form.



Figure 5. Bridge Street.



Figure 6. Main street crossroads in Callan town.



Figure 7. Shop front on Bridge Street.



Figure 8. Shop front on Bridge Street.

A contrast between the narrow-built environment of the medieval core is offered by the bridging point over King’s River affording patrons views of King’s River and associated flood plain. The elegantly designed bridge represents an attractive feature of civil engineering heritage, however it is in need of some upkeep.

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In the southern part of Green Street, A neat group of landmark public administration buildings offer the street a formal setting, with larger plots and classical style façades which contributes pleasantly to the streetscape. The buildings on the main streets generally comprise of two and three storey buildings with traditional shop fronts. Many of the buildings in the main retail centre have retained traditional shop fronts and features such as sash windows and other original features which create an attractive traditional character for the town. Sadly, many of the original buildings, particularly along Bridge Street, are lying conspicuously vacant.

Vacant and derelict buildings

Analysis of Geodirectory data¹ shows that Callan has 28 vacant commercial addresses out of a total of 179 commercial addresses – a rate of 16% vacancy for commercial addresses, which is one of the highest vacancy rates compared to other towns and villages in Kilkenny county. There are a number of vacant buildings located in prominent areas of the town. These include former retail units, B&B and public houses. Bridge street has the highest level of dereliction and vacancy of mostly shared use retail and residential properties. This part of the towns core was traditionally a lived-in space and is at risk of further deterioration

without targeted re-use interventions for its heritage buildings. Notably, there is a cluster of vacant premises on Bridge Street, including the large property and formerly well-established Grogan's, a B&B, adjacent to the stone bridge. The south part of town, Green Street, generally has less vacant shops with a wide array of businesses maintaining street activity.



Figure 9. Vacant buildings on Bridge



Figure 11. Vacant building on Bridge Street.



Figure 10. Vacant building on Bridge Street.



Figure 12. Vacant building adjacent to river on Bridge Street.

2.6 Accessibility and Legibility

Traffic and Parking

Callan’s main commercial district is centred on Bridge Street and Green Street, which extend to connect with each-other, running north-south. West Street and Mill Street cross at the main intersection south of the bridge. King’s River traverses through the northern part of the town centre with an historic stone bridge as a motorised and pedestrianised crossing. Several ancillary streets and laneways adjoin the four primary thoroughfares offering access to private space; such laneways significantly contribute to the character of the space. The same layout with its narrow passage ways and footpaths also contributes to constraining traffic movements by foot, car and other modes of transport.



Figure 13. Street car parking on Green Street



Figure 14. Bicycle parking facilities on Green Street

Before the N78 was constructed, the road of Bridge Street and Green Street functioned as the main highway from Waterford to Dublin and consequently heavily trafficked. With the N78 traversing on the west side of town, it is now making commuting to the larger towns in the county more accessible for the residents of Callan. While through traffic is much decreased, heavy congestion of motorised traffic still occurs around Bridge Street due to its narrow layout. This adversely affects the commercial viability of properties along the street,

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additionally, at times when this street is traffic free, there is occasional speeding occurring along Bridge Street, presenting a pedestrian safety risk. There is ample free street parking in Callan, primarily located on Green Street and next to larger places of business such as SuperValu and Aldi. There is also a free public car park adjacent to KCAT and Callan Augustinian Priory.

Green Street has seen major improvements to the pedestrian environment with the rationalising of car parking, new and wider, wheelchair accessible footpaths with benches and interpretative signage, to what is the most commercially vibrant part of town. This presents a contrast to northern parts of town, particularly Bridge street which is a poor pedestrian environment with low levels of commercial vibrancy. There is no designated cycle infrastructure in or around Callan town, however there is some bike parking in the town centre, some found on Green Street (see Figure 14).

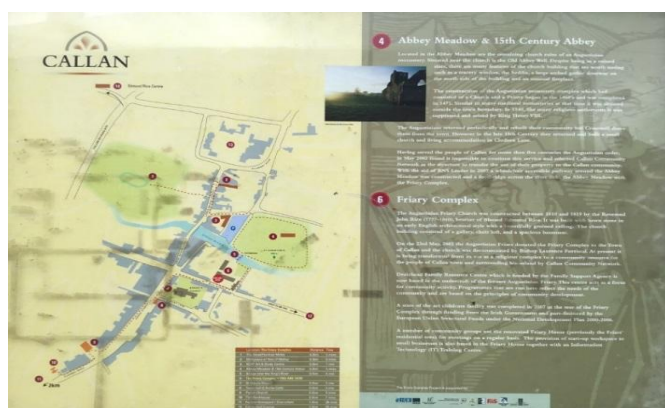


Figure 15. Trailing map of Callan town tourist sites.



Figure 16. Directional signage at main crossing in Callan town.

Legibility and Signage

Directional signage is clear and prominent on entrances to Callan town. Signage within the town centre is good for parking areas and to local amenities, accommodation and attractions outside of the town. Directional signage providing information to attractions within town centre could be improved, however there is interpretative heritage signage and mapping for pedestrians throughout the primary street (see Figure 15).

2.7 Commercial Vibrancy

Callan town has a wide range of businesses, analysis of Geodirectory data² shows that there are 135 enterprises in total, however the vacancy rate is moderate to high of commercial

² <https://www.geodirectory.ie/What-is-Geodirectory.aspx>

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addresses with particular concentration of vacancies around Bridge Street. The most frequent enterprises in Callan are:

- Beverage serving activities (9 enterprises),
- Hairdressing and other beauty treatment (6 enterprises),
- Restaurants and mobile food service activities (6 enterprises),
- 'Other human health activities' (5 enterprises),
- 'Retail sale in non-specialized stores with food, beverages or tobacco' (5 enterprises)

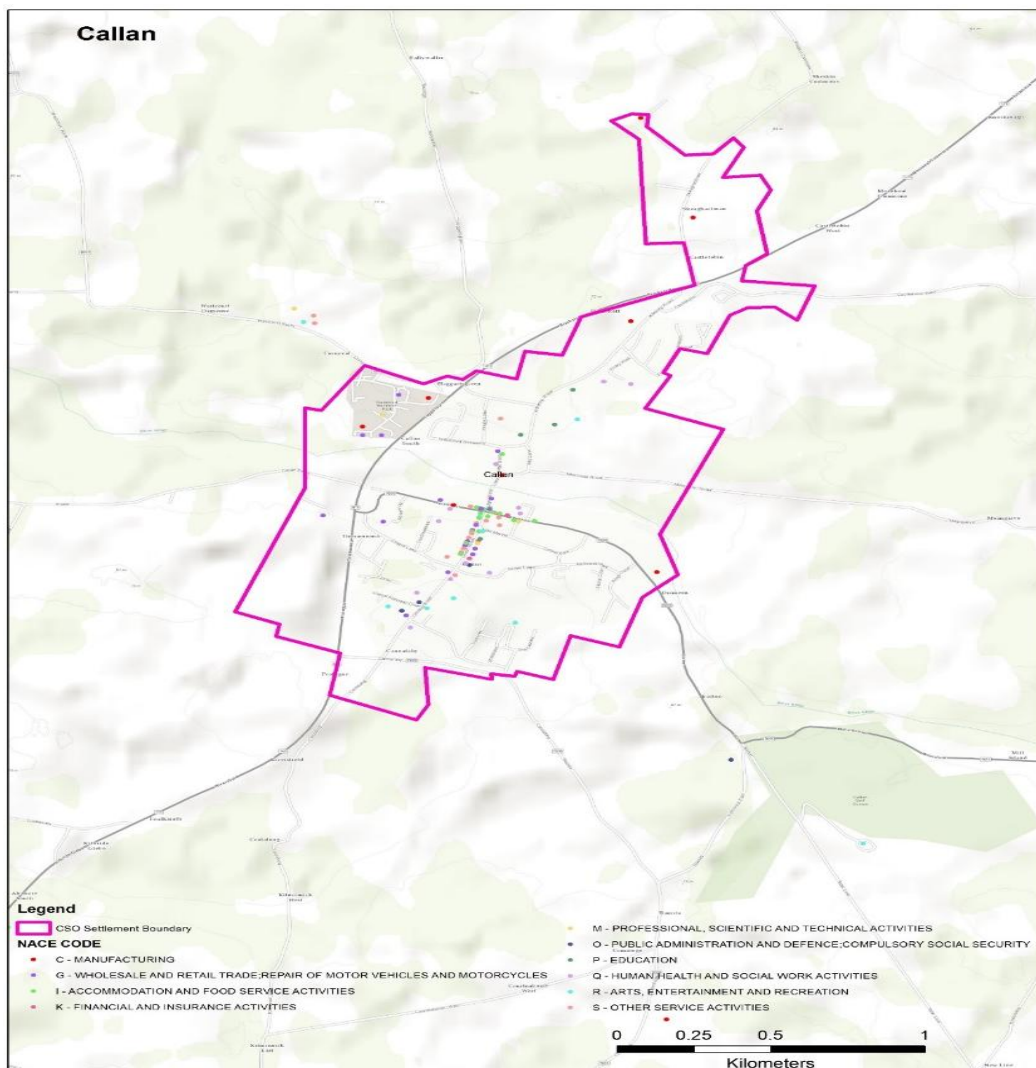


Figure 17. Commercial activities in Callan (Source: Geodirectory)



Figure 18. Business on Bridge Street



Figure 19. Businesses on West street.

Key retail premises in Callan include grocery/butchers, pharmacy's, a Post Office, banks, Credit Unions, hairdressers, funeral homes, in addition to a number of public houses along the main streets. There are few charming cafés (not located in a public house) situated in different parts of the town, but restaurants are less evident. There are also a number of professional services including solicitors, accountants, architects and estate agents. Callan town's main supermarkets include SuperValu which is situated one of the main streets (Green street) and Aldi located on the immediate outskirts of the town with direct access from the N76. It's vital for a town of this size to have the key services to meet the needs of both local and adjacent communities as well as inviting facilities for spontaneous visitors. Both supermarkets have large car parking areas as well as accessible by short walking distances from town centre. Callan has one business park, in the north-west hosting a mix of mechanical and industrial businesses. The commercial accommodation in Callan is limited to a few B&B's located in the vicinity of Callan town.





Figure 20. Photos 1-4 showing businesses on Green Street.

With Kilkenny Crystal factory and outlet shop having its home in Callan, as well as a pottery workshop, the town is continuing the creative craft and design trail of Kilkenny City. The creative spirit synonymous with Kilkenny City can also be recognised in the many theatre groups and community developments of Callan, particularly the hosting of the annual town festival *Abhainn Rí*, which attracts many visitors. The town offers local produce at the weekly Farmers Market, which is part of the community glue of Callan. The farmer-owned Callan co-op is based in the town servicing the community as a one-stop shop for hardware and agricultural needs as well as selling farmers produce, and offering employment and servicing the many towns around Callan.

2.8 Services and Facilities

Callan town provides a wide range of social and community services. These include Camphill Community – a shared home and work community for people with special needs, Callan Workhouse Union – a developing facility for art, design, research and community activities in Callan and Droichead family resource centre on West Street, offering a wide range of family support services including a Community Childcare facility at the rear end of the Friary Complex on Mill Street. The Friary Complex is also a spaced used by Callan Community Network. Other active members of the community include Fennelly's Art Centre, Bridge Street Regeneration Group, Active Retirement Group, Resident Groups, Tidy Towns and Community Alert. Further key services in Callan town include a library, civic offices, Youth Projects, Men's Shed, a Community Hall, nursing homes, Callan Credit Union, a church and a Parish Hall.

The town also has a primary school, Bunscoil McAuley Rís, as well as two post-primary schools in Callan, St Brigid's College and Colaiste Eamonn Rís, all of which are located in the north part of town. There are no non-denominational schools in Callan. The Municipal District offices of Kilkenny County Council is situated in the town, there is also one Garda Station, a Fire Station, and contains one of only two primary health care centres in County

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Kilkenny. Further key services provided include a health centre, general practices and dental practices. Childcare facilities in Callan include Driochead FRC Childcare, Crèche, Montessori Playschool and additional child-friendly facilities is Callan Playground located at Fair Green. The town have a range of community and sporting facilities hosting sporting clubs including John Locks GAA club, Callan Utd Soccer Club, Handball Club, Golf, Athletic Club, Boxing club and archery. Callan Handball and Squash Club is proposing to extend and refurbish their facilities. Callan United Football Club have recently proposed a €1.5m upgrade of their facilities in the southeast of the town including new dressing room/ pavilion. In addition to sports facilities, a walking track around the soccer grounds, linking into the wider amenity area, is under construction as part of Fair Green Regeneration Project. Further outdoor walkways are proposed at John Locke's Park and the Motte Fields. There is no public swimming pool in Callan.

The arts and the community is well established in Callan with the Callan Community Network established 1999 as a voluntary group. The core aim of the group is in the betterment and advancement of Callan. There are a number of art outlets, such as the KCAT (Kilkenny Collective for Arts Talent) Art Centre, an inclusive, participatory and diverse arts centre. It collaborates with Equinox Theatre Company, combining artists with learning disabilities and other disadvantages with professional arts practitioners. Camphill Communities have one of their facilities in Callan town - a shared home and work community for people with special needs. The residents of Camphill Community are an integrated part in the different community works in Callan, participating in the annual festival *Abhainn Rí* and in the KCAT Art Centre as well as involved in other cultural, social and economic activities in the town. Callan have an Afterschool Club as well as two youth groups under the Ossory Youth organisation including Callan Youth Project and Callan Street Art.



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Figure 21. Camphill Garden and Polytunnel at Callan Workhouse Union.

2.9 Natural Environment and Built Heritage

King's River runs through the north part of the town centre and located on the banks is both the Motte and Abbey Meadow which provide great natural amenity and environmental quality. The King's River forms part of the River Nore, which is Special Area of Conservation and classified as a Natura 2000 site. These locations, together with the Fair Green and John Lockes GAA Club, comprises the open space of Callan town. The King's River is also an important fishing river. According to the EPA report on water quality the overall quality is good to moderate. The northern part of town is in need of improvements, both



Figure 22. Historic features and information on Green. Street.

infrastructural and visual upkeep. Bridge Street and the King's river corridor have the natural potential to contribute positively to the town as both an active recreation space and contribute to the towns charm and character as an aesthetically and visually rich component, however, currently neglected and undermanaged. There is a plan to undertake works to clear the river bed and river banks from Bridge Street to the pedestrian ridge. It is intended that this will improve river flow by reducing sedimentation, which presently detracts from the amenity value of the river, and reduce flooding in surrounding streets.

Steeped in history, Callan has a wealth of cultural assets in terms of historic landmarks, famous people and architectural sights. Callan dates from the year 1207AD when it was granted its town charter. Some of the built heritage of the town include St. Mary's Church in the Main Street, were the west tower is all that remains of the original 13th century church. There are some remains of the fifteenth-century Augustinian Priory and traces of the castle

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on the east side after crossing King's River from the south. Historic interest points also include the Norman Motte, the ruins of a monastic settlement of the 15th century and the recently restored 19th century Workhouse, which is now used as a community space for art projects in collaboration with the public and artists.

County Kilkenny has a rich medieval heritage and contains a number of walled towns and villages, one of them is Callan with its physical fabric and many historic monuments. The town has numerous conservation designations and a large portion of the town of Callan is also designated as a zone of potential archaeological interest. The town has three National Monuments, which makes up the main focal points, including St. Mary's Church, Augustinian Friary (Abbey) and the Anglo-Norman Motte. The two latter ones are located in the surroundings of King's River, both of which include large areas of open space adjacent to the river upstream and downstream, which contribute considerably to the importance of the natural and historical environment. As national monuments, both sites have been identified as part of the River Nore Special Area of Conservation. Potential to the develop the site can also be recognized in the existing physical walkway between the river and the two amenity sites and that there was previously a Pitch and Putt Club on the Abbey Meadow. With improvement to the river and banks it will open up the possibility of a range of water activities as well as improve the tourism potential with economic benefits to the town.

Besides the national monuments, the town also have several Protected Structures, many located in the core of the town. This medieval core makes up the characteristics of the main streets of the town, which encompasses Mill Street, Upper and Lower Bridge Streets, Coyne Street, Mill and Clodine Lane.

Callan's historical interest lies just as much with its people as with its buildings and monuments, with an impressive list of sons and daughters. These include Edmund Ignatius Rice, founder of the Irish Christian Brothers and Presentation brothers, who was born on the



Figure 23. Historic features and information on Green Street.

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outskirts of the town. In the main street stands a memorial in Kilkenny limestone to Edmund Ignatius Rice. Others include the artist Tony O'Malley, the Candler family who founded the world-famous Coca-Cola Company and the architect of the White House, James Hoban, to mention but a few.

2.10 Tourism and Recreation

Callan is well-distinguished as a mediaeval town mixed with 19th century architecture and layout offering the visitor a contrasting streetscape of narrow lanes and open town plates. The old-fashioned shop fronts along the main streets and the contemporary murals made by the people of Callan all contributes to the unique experience of this small Irish town. The atmospheric streets and original shop fronts of the town have been compared to a film set and even used as such for parts of the film *Breakfast on Pluto* in 2006.



Figure 24. Abhainn Rí Festival signage.

The town's strong arts community includes several theatre groups operating in Callan and since 2010, the organization of the annual *Abhainn Rí Festival of Participation and Inclusion*, holding a series of events for ten days aiming to bring people together and a celebration of Callan's cultural and community life showcasing a wide range of art activities, events and experiences. The festival is not only inclusive of people but also of the town itself, highlighting different corners of the town such as Bridge Street, the King's River, the

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National monuments and The Workhouse. Its title “Abhainn Ri” translates into English as “Kings River”, then, as the subject of the celebration, it is appropriate that the river is in a suitable state of visual and inviting appearance. The vibrancy of the art activities in Callan holds great tourism potential. The three National monuments St. Mary’s Church, Augustinian Friary and the Motte of Callan town have potential to be further explored as tourist attractions. There is some evidence in historic written descriptions suggesting that Callan town was once a Walled Town of great note including murage, walls, gates and buildings. However, the remaining evidence of Callan as a Walled town are a series of medieval murage records as well as some written documentary referring only to gates and fosse. There is therefore some uncertainty whether Callan was a walled town. Nevertheless, in order to fully explore the rich history of Callan, the Walled Town theme has great potential to be explored in depth and to consider nominating Callan to the Irish Walled Towns Network.

Callan currently has approximately 14.68 ha of land zoned as open space. Much of this is centred on the Motte, Friary Meadow, the Fair Green and John Lockes GAA Club, which are at central and accessible locations within the town, though the GAA Club has limited access due to its surrounding high walls. Both the Motte and the Friary Meadow are located on the banks of the King’s River and are of considerable importance to the natural and historical environment. The King’s River has received funding of €72,000, as part of the *Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2017*, to undertake in-river and riverbank improvements³.

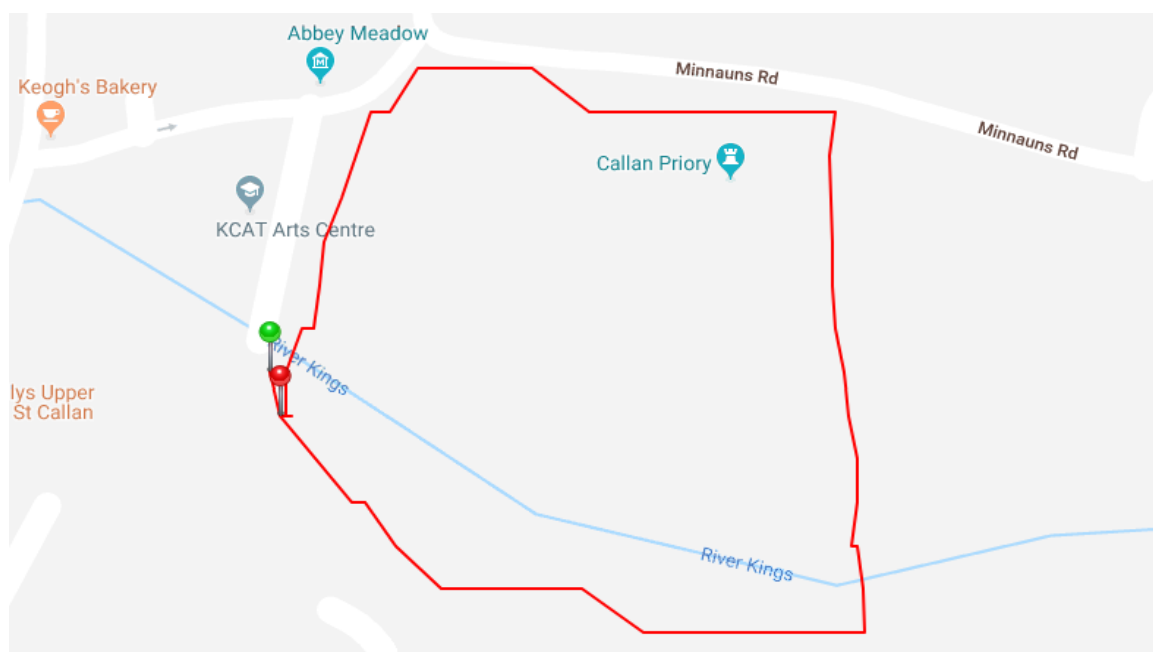


Figure 25. Callan Abbey Meadow Walk.

³ <https://www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/RSSLatestNewsAndAnnouncements/Press-Release-Funding-announced-for-11-Projects-under-the-Town-and-Village-Renewal-Scheme-2017.html>

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One of the open spaces comprises the area surrounding the Augustinian Priory, centrally located adjacent to King's River. Around the Augustinian Priory one can enjoy the designated walk *Callan Abbey Meadow Walk* which is a loop walk crossing King's River twice and passing the KCAT Arts Centre and Abbey Meadow. It's a wheelchair accessible walk with access to main building, as well as free public car park and seating along the trail, including the riverbank showcasing some of Callan's main heritage attractions.



Figure 26. Community Space in the old Workhouse.



Figure 27. Street art in Callan town.

Other cultural attractions in Callan town is Tony O'Malley birth place, KCAT Art & Study Centre and the Workhouse - where the site of the historic famine graveyard in Cherryfield lies. Further historic attraction is the thatched house "Westcourt" which constitutes Edmund Rice birth place. Also on the site is the Edmund Rice Memorial Chapel and a large visitors' centre. Other points of interest in the north part of town is the Skerry's Castle on West Street and Convent of Mercy.

John Lockes GAA Club is a space for outdoor activities, however evidently not accessible with high walls surrounding it. There is currently one play facility for children in Callan, located in the south of the town close the GAA Club. The town hosts one Golf Club, which also has a restaurant and there's also a racquetball and handball club, as well as a cycling club. The town does not currently have any hotel or B&B located in its town centre.

3 SCOT Analysis

A SCOT (Strengths, Constraints, Opportunities and Threats) analysis was undertaken for Callan which set out the strengths, constraints, opportunities and threats associated with the town. The desk top reviews, combined with site visits, and stakeholder consultation assisted in the preparation of the SCOT analysis and builds a picture of what is valued and appreciated in Callan, what is unsatisfactory and needs changing, where there are threats and opportunities. The SCOT provides a basis for a vision for the future that stakeholders believe to be both desirable and achievable.

| Strengths | Constraints |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic location (central to KK + Clonmel)/ proximity hinterland (wide) • Heritage and historic connections • Heritage buildings • Public Facilities, Sport & Open spaces • Kings River corridor • Diverse community • A skilled population • Arts & Theatre • Events e.g. <i>Abhainn Ri</i> Festival • Excellent Schools (secondary + primary), KCAT & childcare • Strong business community & Business Services • Shopping (Supermarkets, Retail, Bakery & Co-op) • Sports, healthcare & dental • Medical / Family resource Centre • Children services; and • Services for disabled and aged communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disjointed approach, lack of communication with all parts of the community, not cohesive, apathy & negativity, lack of community spirit • Lack of Public open green space • Lack of Visitors Accommodation, Hotel + B&B shortage, Lack of tourism/marketing strategy • Shortage of restaurants especially in the evening • Lack of upkeep of heritage + access, River access • Poor disability accessibility and pedestrian environment particularly on Bridge St and open spaces around King’s River etc • Business closures, Limited variety of retail (especially clothing) and associated employment • Vacant and derelict buildings particularly on Bridge Street • Lack of youth facilities, anti-social behaviour, drugs and Garda shortage & limited opening hours and on-street presence • Dog fouling, rubble dump, condition of river • Bad public transport, taxi, parking |

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| | <p>issues, condition of roads & traffic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library Service provision is constraint by the inadequate size of the current library building |
| Opportunities | Threats |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regeneration of residential dwellings at Bridge Street to build a sustainable town centre community • Tourism potential, opening heritage sites (Kells example), Later opening times for tourism, hostel, visitors centre, Visit Callan online one stop for all town activities (unbiased) & social media • Redevelopment of Heritage buildings and shared use • Abbey Theatre – coming to Callan 2019 • Bigger tidy towns (inclusive), tackle and occupy dereliction and promote pride of place • Philanthropy – funding • Inclusion of Callan in Kilkenny festivals • Surrounding area catchment • Attracting new businesses • Involvement of younger people in community planning' • Amalgamation of schools • EU funding • Integration of residents of other nationalities • Focus on food and beverage establishments to attract custom • River walking trails • Focus on Bridge St. – traffic management for better pedestrian | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollution + litter • Online shopping • Public transport cutbacks • Another economic recession • Commuting out of town • ASB, Reduced and lack of Garda (station) • Loss of large employer, Local support of independent local business, local spend, financial investment incentives in town centre • Negativity to change by community, lack of effort, energy, communication • Perception of vacancy • Lack of integration and social divide by ethnicity • Bank service reduction • Nightlife limited, especially for non-drinkers, no great music, lack of social activities • Competitive tourism, Proximity of K.K. & its success • Environmental, Physical presentation of the town; and • Flooding and drainage from town centre |

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| <p>environment. Retain buildings and develop historical link to arts community and tourist trail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Re-use of derelict buildings on Bridge Street, old co-op development, hotel etc• High house prices in Kilkenny (Housing growth = population growth)• Businesses on outskirts• Community awareness• New business opportunities / Sports = youth café (e.g. Squashy couch in Waterford)• Develop safe community / common spaces• Availability of government funding• Integration / communication of committees• Publicise good works• Trades groups | |
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4 Recommendations

The findings of the study, in the form of the Town Centre Health Check, SCOT analysis, and the consultative community workshop, have been invaluable in identifying measures for further action. This section provides recommendations that can be implemented and achieved within the short (typically 0-6 months), medium (typically 7-24 months) and long term (typically 2-5 years). The recommendations integrate physical, economic, social and environmental renewal measures in order to attain maximum benefit for the communities within each settlement. The recommendations are developed from the comprehensive health check, site visits and consultation process which were conducted as part of this study. These are therefore evidence based recommendations which will contribute significantly to enhanced vitality and viability of Callan. The recommendations are considered to be SMART in that they are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time Related.

The recommendations have been frame around seven core themes:

1. ***Public Realm Improvements***
2. ***Traffic Management Enhancements***
3. ***Promotion of Local Skills, Produce and Enterprise***
4. ***Recreation and Amenities Enhancement***
5. ***Community Development and Engagement***
6. ***Tourism, Culture and Heritage Development***
7. ***Branding and Marketing***

It is recommended that a Coordinator be appointed to each of the Recommendation Actions below. The text book definition of a Coordinator *is someone whose job is to make different groups work together in an organized way to achieve something*. In addition to this general definition of a Coordinator, in context of this report, the duties of the Coordinator also include organising the resources needed to implement the Recommendations below.

Callan: Town Health Check Recommendations

| Theme: Public Realm and Improvements and Residential Regeneration | | |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Recommendation | Coordinator | Timeframe |
| The assessment of all underutilised or derelict buildings within the town centre with particular emphasis on Bridge Street. | | Medium-term |

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| <p>The preparation of a regeneration plan for the residential re-use of underutilised buildings in the town centre based on individual site resolution plans.</p> | | <p>Medium-term</p> |
| <p>The Preparation of a Public Realm Plan – a detailed analysis of the current condition of the town’s public realm and to set out the strategic direction of public realm improvements needed in the town, setting the context for further consultation, detailed design, and formal approvals as necessary.</p> | | <p>Medium-term</p> |

| <p>Theme: Traffic Management Enhancements</p> | | |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <p>Recommendation</p> | <p>Coordinator</p> | <p>Timeframe</p> |
| <p>Review Bridge Street Pedestrian Environment – prioritise actions to improve safety and likelihood of new enterprise and adaptive reuse of historic properties.</p> | | <p>Short-term</p> |

| <p>Theme: Promotion of Local Skills, Produce and Enterprise</p> | | |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <p>Recommendation</p> | <p>Coordinator</p> | <p>Timeframe</p> |
| <p>Undertake Local Food and Produce Audit with the aim of developing a co-ordinated approach to promotion and collaboration.</p> | | <p>Short-term</p> |
| <p>Identify spaces to be used to support the development of local enterprises.</p> | | |
| <p>Arts and Creative to create a form of</p> | | |

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| collaboration. | | |
| Conservation and re-development of key buildings for community/creative/enterprise such as Workhouse, Friary Complex and other opportunity sites and buildings. | | |

| Theme: Recreation and Amenities Enhancement | | |
|---|-------------|--------------------|
| Recommendation | Coordinator | Timeframe |
| Support the Delivery of the planned Callan United AFC Pavilion and all-weather football pitches at the Fair Green. | | Medium-term |
| Deliver In-river and Riverbank Improvements to the King's River East of Bridge Street as per funding awarded under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2017. | | Medium-term |

| Theme: Community Development and Engagement | | |
|---|-------------|--------------------|
| Recommendation | Coordinator | Timeframe |
| Callan Town Team to prepare a Communications Strategy to ensure constant engagement with all members of the community regarding objectives and progress on actions. Close consideration of engagement with young people and other potentially marginalised members of the community. | | Short-term |
| Create a new Youth Café in the Town Centre to provide a safe and stimulating outlet for young | | Medium-term |

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| people. | | |
| Engage with owners of vacant and derelict buildings with a view to repair and enhancement works by local trades people and trainee trades people. | | Medium-term |
| Identify space to be used as a shared community space; | | |

| Theme: Tourism, Culture and Heritage Development | | |
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| Recommendation | Coordinator | Timeframe |
| Promotion and enhancement of Callan as a Walled Town , Consider nominating Callan as a walled town as part of the Irish Walled Towns Network (Heritage Council). | | Medium-term |
| Co-ordinated Heritage Trail and Signage Strategy to unlock the potential of Callan's many historic buildings and sites. | | Medium-term |
| St. Mary's church & Graveyard – improve access to the church (OPW owned) & graveyard (Kilkenny Council owned). | | Medium-term |
| Undertake a Shopfront Audit of the traditional shopfronts in Callan to be used to inform a Local Area Plan shopfront policy. | | Short-term |
| Cherryfield Famine burial ground – improve access to and interpretation of this historically important burial ground. | | Medium-term |
| Repair of Wrought Iron Railings at St. Marys Church. | | Short-term |

| Theme: Branding and Marketing | | |
|---|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Recommendation | Coordinator | Timeframe |
| <p>Commission a Tourism and Marketing Strategy to define a co-ordinated approach to providing for, and attracting visitors including a dedicated website featuring all visitor attractions and services in the town.</p> | | <p>Medium-term</p> |
| <p>Create a high-class website to promote the various Arts and Theatre companies in Callan as a co-ordinated and strategic approach to ‘selling’ the numerous offerings within the town.</p> | | <p>Medium-term</p> |

END.