



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary County Council

Draft Thurles & Environs Local Area Plan 2024 – 2030

July 2023



Non-Technical Summary

The publication of the Draft Thurles Local Area Plan 2024-2030 (LAP) presents an opportunity for the planning authority, stakeholders and the community to collaborate in the preparation of a new land use strategy and development objectives for Thurles. Its function is to act as a framework for sustainable investment, to enable employment and homes, to protect the environment and heritage and to help deliver a good quality of life for everyone. The LAP when made, will replace the Thurles & Environs Development Plan 2009 (as varied).

The LAP sits at the 'local' tier of planning policy and is consistent with the objectives of national and regional level planning policies, as well as the Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028. The LAP is comprised of the following documents:

- A Written Statement with specific policies and objectives laid out across nine sections
- Maps including land-use zoning with flood risk areas, and built and natural heritage
- Appendices as follows:
 1. Serviced Land Assessment
 2. Local Transport Plan (to be attached when available)
 3. Consolidation and Regeneration Sites
 4. Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report and Non-Technical Summary
 5. Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report
 6. Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

The LAP is supported and underpinned by a detailed assessment of infrastructure and services available in the town (Appendix 1), a Local Transport Plan for sustainable travel and movement (Appendix 2 once available), and a schedule of underused and vacant individual and consolidated sites suitable for regeneration (Appendix 3). Appendices 4 to 6 set out the detailed environmental, ecological and flood risk assessments carried out.

The LAP is focused on a renewed and targeted approach to compact growth and regeneration, with the town centre as the heart and focal point of Thurles, and with clear consideration of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures and modal shift change in terms of how we get around. At the centre of this LAP is consideration of quality of life for the community in the form of housing, jobs, education and amenities.

In recent times the town has benefited from new investment with further future commitments for investment in the form of public realm, active travel and regeneration funding. The Liberty Square Enhancement works, which are well underway, were funded under the Urban Regeneration

Development Fund (URDF) and Thurles Market Quarter, which is due to commence, was awarded funding under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF).

The Thurles Town Centre Renewal Strategy was prepared through the Town and Village Renewal Scheme fund, in which a suite of regeneration projects was developed for the town in collaboration with businesses and the community of Thurles through extensive public consultation. A masterplan proposal document for the Friar Street/Castle Avenue area of Thurles was also produced as an action of the Renewal Strategy. The LAP will support the ambitions of this Strategy and will endeavour to harness further public and private investment in the town.

Public participation is important to the process of plan preparation, and after the public consultation period for the Draft LAP has ended, the Council will consider all submissions received. At this time, the Council may either adopt the draft LAP in November 2023 or make recommendations for changes to the Draft LAP. If proposed changes are materially different to the Draft LAP, a further round of public consultation may take place, specifically on those changes proposed. Any further submissions received at this stage would again be considered by the Council and the LAP would, in this case, take effect in spring 2024.

LAP photos have been kindly provided by John O'Loughlin, Thurles.

Abbreviations

AA	Appropriate Assessment
ACA	Architectural Conservation Area
CARO	Climate Action Regional Office
CCMA	County and City Management Association
DAP	Drainage Area Plan
DCEDIY	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
DECC	Department of Environment Climate and Communications
DECLG	Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government
DEHLG	Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government
DHLGH	Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage
DOE	Department of Education
DRCD	Department of Rural and Community Development
EEC	European Economic Community
HSE	Health Services Executive
LAP	Local Area Plan
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LDS	Local Development Strategy
LECP	Local Community and Economic Plan
NIAH	National Inventory of Architectural Heritage
NPF	National Planning Framework
NTA	National Transport Authority
PE	Population Equivalent
PPN	Public Participation Network
PRA	Primary Retail Area
RMP	Record of Monuments and Places
RRDF	Rural Regeneration and Development Fund
RSES	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
RZLT	Residential Zoned Land Tax
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEAI	Sustainable Energy Association of Ireland
SEC	Sustainable Energy Community
SFRA	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
SLA	Serviced Land Assessment
SPC	Strategic Policy Committee
SUDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
TCC	Tipperary County Council
TCDP	Tipperary County Development Plan 2022 – 2028
The Act	The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended

Table of Contents

Non-Technical Summary.....	ii
List of Abbreviations.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	5
1.0 Introduction.....	8
1.1 Background to this Local Area Plan.....	8
1.2 Environmental Assessments.....	8
1.3 How to read the Policies and Objectives of the Plan.....	9
1.4 Thurles Town and Socio-Economic Profile.....	10
1.5 Policy.....	14
2.0 Planning and Development Strategy.....	15
2.1 Tipperary County Development Plan 2022 - 2028.....	15
2.2 A Climate Resilient, Sustainable and Low-Carbon Town.....	17
2.3 A Framework for Investment.....	18
2.4 Spatial Development Strategy.....	19
2.5 Policy and Objectives.....	25
3.0 Town Centre Strategy.....	27
3.1 Thurles Centre First.....	27
3.2 Consolidation, Regeneration and Compact Growth.....	28
3.3 Land Activation and Strategy for Vacancy and Regeneration.....	28
3.4 Public Realm and Way-Finding.....	30
3.5 Retail and the Town Centre.....	31
3.6 Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Core.....	32
3.7 Policy and Objectives.....	33
4.0 Economic Development Strategy.....	35
4.1 Employment and Enterprise Strategy.....	35
4.2 Thurles Employment Areas.....	38
4.3 Tourism Strategy.....	40
4.4 Policy and Objectives.....	42

5.0 Sustainable Communities.....	44
5.1 Thurles Low-Carbon and Sustainable Energy Community	44
5.2 Just Transition	45
5.3 Residential Development	45
5.4 Open Space and Amenities	48
5.5 Education and Learning in Thurles.....	49
5.6 Thurles as an Age Friendly and Inclusive Town	52
5.7 Community Action and Support	52
5.8 Digital Connectivity	53
5.9 Policy and Objectives.....	54
6.0 Transport and Connectivity	56
6.1 Active Travel, Movement and Accessibility	57
6.2 Public Transport.....	58
6.3 Demand Management	59
6.4 Roads Strategy	60
6.5 Safeguarding the Strategic Road Network	60
6.6 Policy and Objectives.....	61
7.0 Recognising our Local Heritage	63
7.1 Natural Heritage.....	63
7.2 Our Built, Social and Cultural Heritage.....	64
7.3 Policy and Objectives.....	68
8.0 Infrastructure, Energy and Utilities	70
8.1 Energy Demand and Renewable Energy	70
8.2 Water and Wastewater	70
8.3 Sustainable Surface Water Management.....	71
8.4 Circular Economy and Waste Management	72
8.5 Flood Risk Management	72
8.6 Policy and Objectives.....	75
9.0 Land use Zoning Framework.....	78
10.0 Monitoring and Evaluation.....	83

10.1	Introduction	83
10.2	Monitoring and Evaluation	83
10.3	Planning Objective	83

Appendices

1. Serviced Land Assessment
2. Local Transport Plan
3. Consolidation and Regeneration Sites
4. Strategic Environmental Assessment and non-technical summary (Separate Document)
5. Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report (Separate Document)
6. Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Separate Document)

Maps

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Map 1A: | Land use Zoning and Flood Risk |
| Map 1B: | Land use Zoning and Flood Risk (Central Area) |
| Map 2: | Built and Natural Heritage |
| Map 3: | Natural Heritage and Amenity |
| Map 4: | Town Centre and Regeneration |

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background to this Local Area Plan

This Draft LAP has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of “the Act”. LAPs are required for towns with a population over 5,000. Therefore, a new LAP is mandatory for Thurles. When made, this LAP will replace the existing Thurles and Environs Town Development Plan 2009.

This LAP complies with the ‘Core Strategy’, policies and objectives of the Tipperary County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 (TCDP), and the provisions of the TCDP will apply to all new development in conjunction with this LAP.



Figure 1: The TCDP sets out the strategic planning framework for Thurles

This LAP outlines the local spatial planning framework for Thurles with planning policies and objectives unique to the town set out at the end of each chapter. Planning policies will inform private and public sector local development proposals, and planning objectives represent the key local objectives of the Council to be achieved over the lifetime of the LAP.

This LAP has been prepared having consideration to Local Area Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DECLG, 2013) and their accompanying best-practice manual and the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DHLGH, 2022).

1.2 Environmental Assessments

1.2.1. Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)¹ is the formal systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan before a decision is made to adopt the

¹ Required by European Directive 2001/42/EC (‘the SEA Directive’). This Directive is transposed into Irish law by Statutory Instrument (S.I.) No. 436 of 2004 (the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment)

plan. It is iterative and informs the plan-making process of the likely environmental impacts of alternative actions, and contributes to the integration of environmental considerations into plan-making. The findings of the SEA are set out in the Environmental Report and Non-Technical Summary (Appendix 4). This Report provides a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of decisions regarding the location of development in the LAP area. The mitigation measures needed to offset potential adverse effects of the LAP and future monitoring proposals are integral to the LAP.

1.2.2. Habitats Directive Assessment

The requirements for Habitats Directive Assessment (also referred to as ‘Appropriate Assessment’ or ‘AA’) of plans or projects, are outlined in Article 6(3) and (4) of the European Communities (1992) Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the ‘Habitats Directive’). The emerging LAP is being subject to an AA process, the current findings of which are contained in the accompanying AA Natura Impact Report (see Appendix 5). Considering measures already in force through the Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028 and having incorporated mitigation measures into the Draft Local Area Plan, the AA Natura Impact Report demonstrates that the Draft Plan is not foreseen to give rise to any significant adverse effects to designated European sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.²

1.2.3. Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

An SFRA carried out to support the preparation of the LAP is attached as Appendix 6. The SFRA is required to be prepared in accordance with the requirements of ‘the Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (DEHLG and OPW 2009) and Circular PL02/2014 (DECLG, August 2014).

1.3 How to read the Policies and Objectives of the Plan

The Draft LAP includes policies and objectives at the end of each Chapter. The policies of the Plan seek to manage and guide new development of the town in a sustainable way. The objectives of the Plan are included to provide clarity on the active role of the Council in managing, supporting, and implementing the vision for the Plan. To aid ease of use of the Plan, where practicable and to

Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011 (the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).

² Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be:

- a) no alternative solution available,
- b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed; and
- c) Adequate compensatory measures in place.

avoid repetition of planning policy elsewhere, the policies of the NPF, RSES and TCDP have not been repeated within the Plan.

1.4 Thurles Town and Socio-Economic Profile

1.4.1. Location and Character

Thurles enjoys a strategic location in the centre of Tipperary at the junction of two national roads, the N62 and the N75 with close proximity also to the M8 which provides access to Dublin and Cork. The Cork/Limerick to Dublin rail line traverses the town providing a high frequency train service to the town.

The town is compact in nature and relatively flat with the River Suir flowing through the centre of the town. Thurles is rich in architectural and historical heritage with a proud history going back many centuries represented by structures including Black Castle and Bridge Castle. One of the earliest maps of Thurles, Rocque's Map, dating to 1755 shows block outline buildings at



either side of the River Suir and to the western limits of Liberty Square including Black Castle with Castle Avenue also in place. Thurles was historically, and continues to be, a strong market town serving the wider region.

Thurles benefits from two Third Level Institutions both with university status; the Technological University of Shannon (TUS, Thurles Campus) and Mary Immaculate College (MIC, St Patricks College). In addition, the second level schools of Thurles are of a particularly high standard and serve a wide catchment who both commute and board in the town's secondary schools.

Thurles also embraces a strong sporting tradition as the founding location of the GAA on November 1st 1884 in Hayes' Hotel. Today Thurles is home to Semple Stadium, the country's second largest GAA stadium. Semple Stadium plays host to on average of six hurling championship matches per year. These matches are typically full or near to the stadium's capacity of c. 46,000. These championship matches alone account for up to a quarter of a million yearly visitors to Thurles.

1.4.2 Socio-Economic Profile

Demographic Profile

Census 2022 identified that the Built-up Area (BUA³) of Thurles had population of 8,185. Though a direct comparison with the settlement area in Census 2016 and the BUA area in Census 2022 cannot be drawn, the geographical areas of the Electoral Districts (EDs) of the town, Thurles Urban and Thurles Rural, have not changed in the inter-census period. The combined population of these EDs has increased from 9,128 in 2016 to 9,487 in 2022, a 3.9% increase in population. This increase in population is below both the state (8.1%) and county (5.2%) growth over the same period. The growth of the Thurles Urban ED is 4.5%, aligning with Tipperary's ambition for more consolidated patterns of growth. This is further demonstrated by the increase in the density of the urban population, increasing from 1,336 persons per square km in 2016 to 1,384 in 2022, a 3.6% increase in density.

Age Profile and Dependency

The average age of the state population in 2011 was 36.1, 37.4 in 2016 and 38.6 in 2022. In Tipperary, the average age was 38.6, an increase of 1.2 years. In the main EDs comprising Thurles, the average age in 2016 was 38.85, this rose to 40.85 in 2022 which is over and above the national increase of 1.2 years in the inter-census period.

The age profile of Thurles consists of a relatively higher proportion of over 65s (19.3%) than the State (15.1%) and County (17.5%). The old age dependency rate for Thurles is 30.93% which is significantly above the State rate of 23.10% and the County rate of 27.89%. Bearing this in mind age-friendly development practices and suitable elderly living accommodation will be important considerations in the future growth and development of the town.

Employment Profile

Professional Services and Skilled Trades are the dominant industries for people in the town.

³ In Census 2022, the CSO introduced a new geographic area to replace the 'Settlements' geographic area in previous Censuses. Detail on the methodology of the BUA can be seen on the CSO website at

<https://www.cso.ie/en/census/census2022/census2022urbanboundariesandbuiltupareas/>

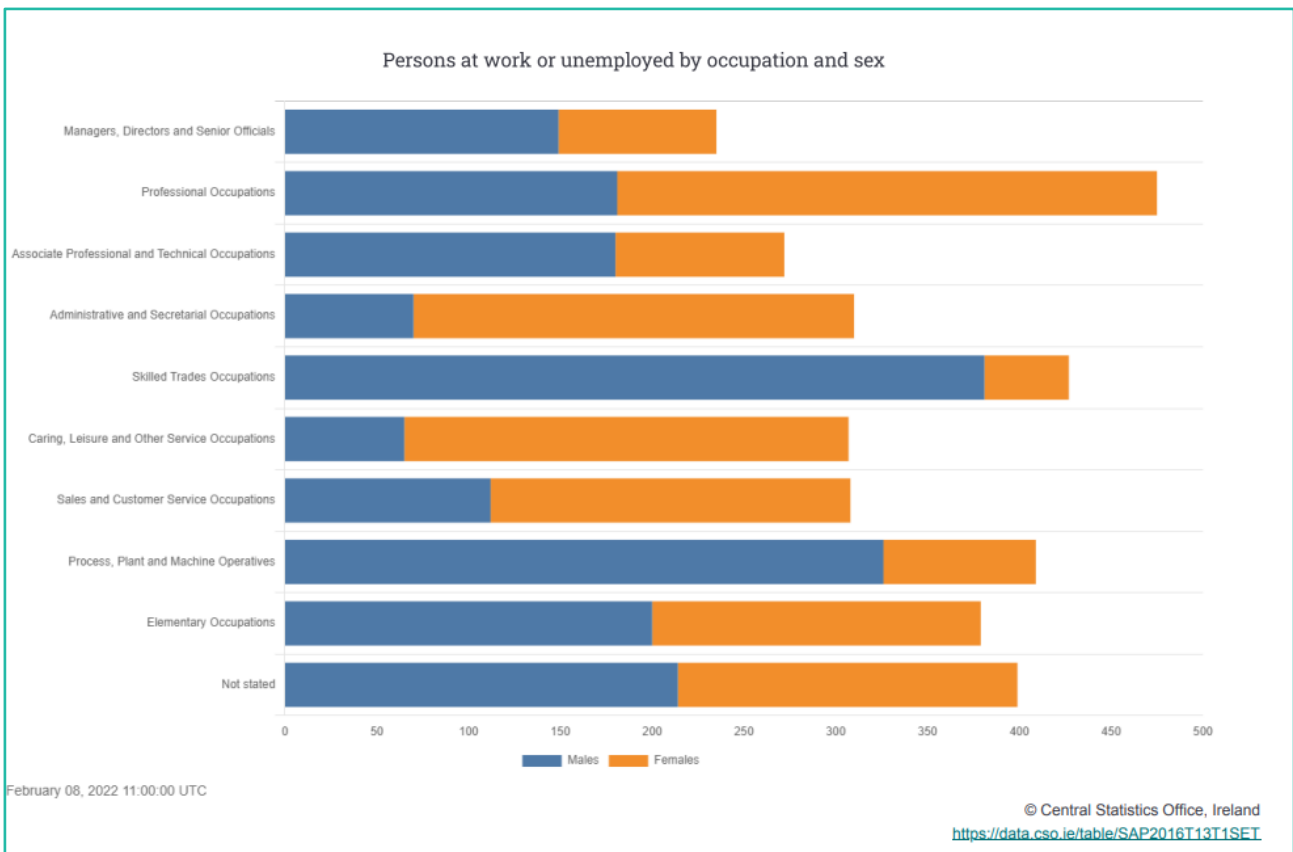


Figure 2: Persons at Work by Industry and Sex CSO 2016

Almost 10% of the population over 15 years are considered to be unemployed having previously departed a job, this compares with 7.8% at a county level. A further 1.2% are classed as looking for their first job in comparison to 0.8% countywide.

Jobs Ratio is a good indication of community vitality, employment base and an important measure of sustainability. A higher ratio is one indicator of a better choice of jobs and lower need for commuting out of the area for employment. Thurles has a relatively low jobs ratio of 1.01, compared with the other towns in the county below.

Table 1.1: Jobs to resident workers in the largest Tipperary Towns (CSO 2016)	
Town	Number of jobs to resident workers
Clonmel	1.39
Nenagh	1.22
Thurles	1.01
Roscrea	1.13
Carrick on Suir	0.65
Tipperary	1.12
Cashel	0.99
Cahir	0.99
Templemore	1.22

1.4.3 Transport Profile

There were 3,914 people residing in the Thurles settlement area who are classed as being 'At Work'. Of these workers, a total of 49.8% (1,592) are employed in Thurles, 19.2% (612) are employed elsewhere in Tipperary, and 11% (352) commute out of the county for employment.

An additional 2,350 workers commute into Thurles for employment every day. Of these, 85.8% (2,017) commute from elsewhere in Tipperary and the remaining 14.2% (333) commute from outside the county. The total number of jobs with a fixed location in Thurles is therefore 3,942 and represents a net daily gain in working population of 748. The total number of jobs based in Thurles represents 8.8% of all jobs located in the county.

The overall mode share for active travel (walking and cycling) to education is close to 34%, significantly higher than the national average (26.5%), and county average (17%). Cycling, however, is below the national average by 1.3%. Public transport mode share is 5%, falling significantly below the national average of 21.2%. Overall, the car is still the dominant mode of transport for education-related trips, accounting for 61.2% of all journeys. This is approx. 11% above the national average. Car trips are predominantly concentrated in areas further from Thurles schools. However, there are still pockets of car trips within the study area that are within a reasonable walk or cycle.

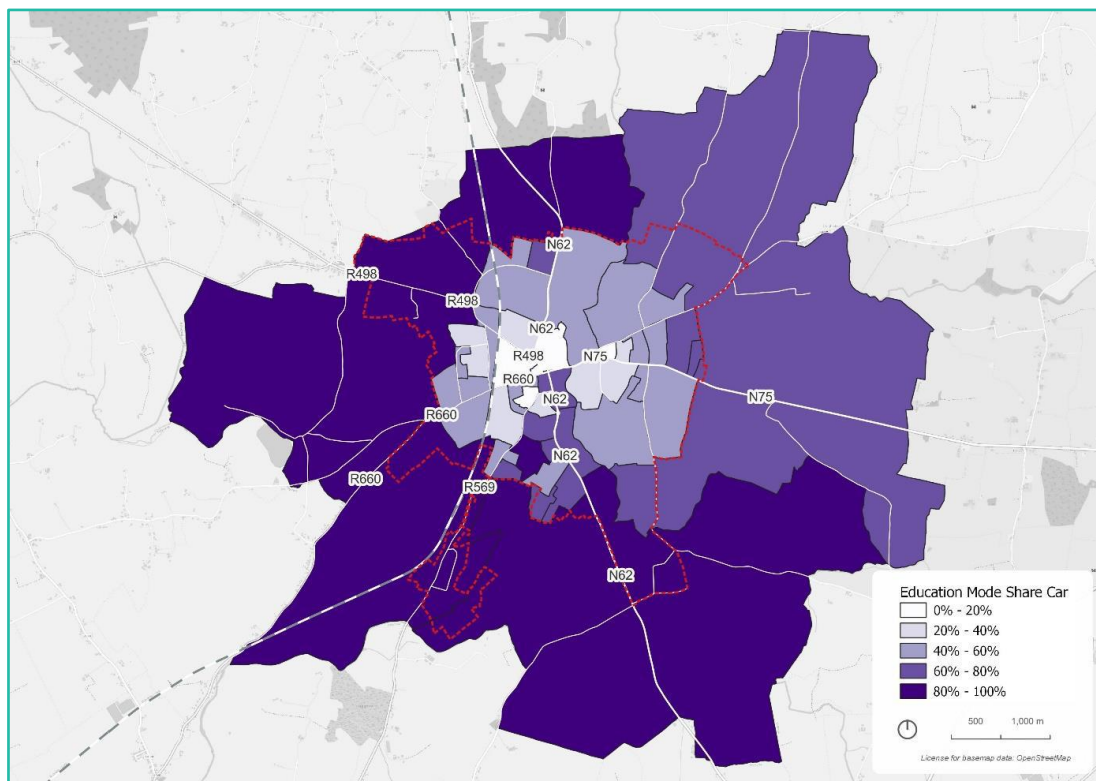


Figure 3: Trips to Education by Car

Approx. 18% of commuter trips to work originating in the study area are undertaken by active modes. Walking trips form the majority of these, with cycling accounting for just 2.2%, 1% under

the national average. Public transport represents just 2.6% of the mode share for commute trips, approx. 7% below the national average. The private car is the most dominant mode of transport for work trips from the study area at 79.4%, 2.4% above the national average for this mode. Private car use in Thurles is, however, below the County average of 88.4%.

1.5 Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:	
Policy 1.1	Assess all new development proposals within the boundary of the Thurles Local Area Plan 2024-2030 in accordance with the policies, objectives and requirements of the Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028 (and any review thereof), and this LAP. Where conflicts arise, the Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028 (and any review thereof) shall have primacy in decision-making ⁴ .

⁴ Provisions from the County Development Plan identified as mitigation in the SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Report shall apply regardless of whether the County Development Plan is varied and/or reviewed and/or expires.

2.0 Planning and Development Strategy

In 2030, Thurles will be a vibrant sustainable and attractive community. The community will benefit from a high quality of life, quality housing choices, improved access to employment options and an improved range of services in the town. The town will benefit from re-balanced growth, the regeneration of central areas of the town and an increasing town centre residential population, in turn supporting local businesses and services. Thurles will continue to embrace and build upon its status as a third level town with a strong sporting tradition.

2.1 Tipperary County Development Plan 2022 - 2028

The TCDP is the strategic planning framework for the county and sets out a framework for development of the county's towns and villages in line with the National Planning Framework 2018 (NPF) and the Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020 (RSES). In



guiding new development and investment in Thurles, the TCDP should be consulted along with the local planning framework as set out in this LAP.

The TCDP Chapter 2 Core Strategy identifies Thurles as a 'Key Town' (one of three Key Towns) with a unique strategy for the growth of Thurles set out in Volume 1, Section 4.3.3. The key socio-economic considerations for the area, and a town profile plan (including walking and cycling proximities to the town centre, compact growth area, key infrastructure and areas at flood risk) are also outlined. This LAP builds on the TCDP town profile plan (Figure 6) in setting out a local spatial development strategy for the town.

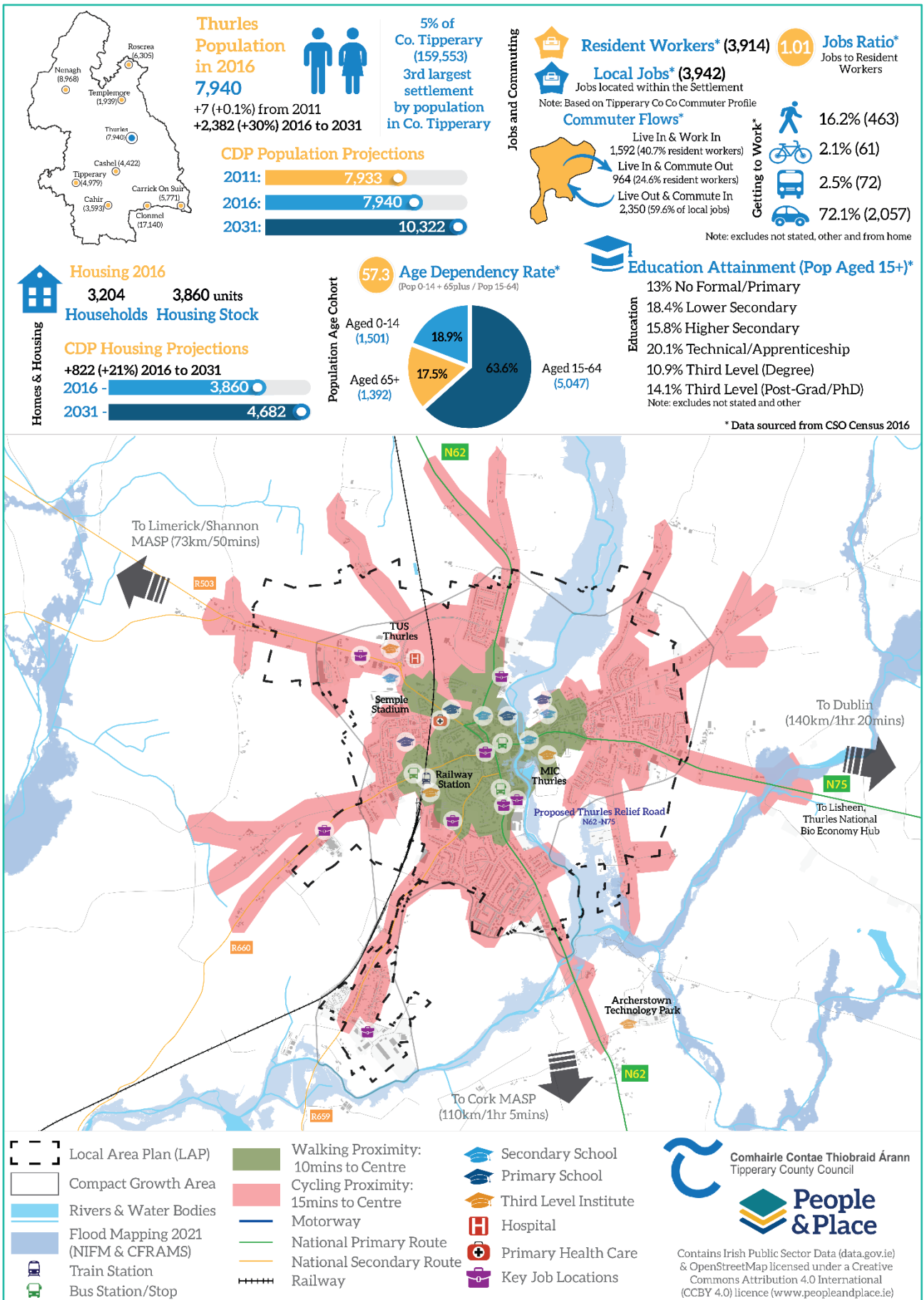


Figure 4: Thurles Town Profile Plan Section 4.3.3 TCDP

2.2 A Climate Resilient, Sustainable and Low-Carbon Town

The National Climate Action Plan 2023 provides a detailed plan for taking decisive action to achieve a 51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and setting us on a path to reach net-zero emissions by no later than 2050, as committed to in the Programme for Government and set out in the Climate Action Plan (DECC, 2023).

It is a Core Ambition of the TCDP to enable a 'Climate Resilient, Sustainable and Low Carbon County' and to support a 51% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2030 in line with the National Climate Action Plan. The National Climate Action Plan and the TCDP sets out a schedule of actions. This LAP has incorporated those actions as they relate to spatial planning locally in Thurles including those that influence the following; compact growth and sustainable mobility, sustainable transport measures, town-centre first, nature-based solutions, and flood risk and water management. A new 'Climate Action Plan' for Tipperary County Council will be prepared by the Council in 2023, and will also seek to support the roles of communities and other sectors in achieving their climate adaptation and mitigation targets.

Delivering Climate Action 2030 (CCMA, 2021) is the strategy for local authorities for delivering on the Climate Action Charter. It sets out "*to deliver transformative change and measurable climate action across our cities and counties and within our own organisations, through leadership, example and mobilising action at a local level.*" The Council, in partnership with the SEAI, will work alongside communities and businesses to drive the change needed, create pathways for climate action and ensure the continued development of our cities and counties as sustainable places to live, work, visit and invest in. Existing structures such as the Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs), Public Participation Networks (PPNs), Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs), Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) and other statutory and non-statutory consultation and engagement can help enable this.



The construction process can account for a large quantum of the lifecycle carbon of a building or development. Therefore, the most carbon effective method of development is often to refurbish existing buildings and structures to support new development. The redevelopment of existing buildings and structures can also have cultural or social benefits associated with the preservation of historic buildings and the evolution of their functions within the community. The retrofitting of existing structures will therefore be the preferred approach to brownfield development, unless it demonstrated that retrofitting is unfeasible, or redevelopment would

provide positive carbon impact through the re-design, construction and use stages of a new building, compared with retrofitting.

2.3 A Framework for Investment

It is a function of this LAP to provide a framework that will inform proposals/bids for funding and investment. In doing this the LAP will be supported by the Tipperary Local Economic and Community Plan and the Tipperary LEADER Local Development Strategy. There are many public national investment/funding programmes, a non-exhaustive summary of these is set out below, noting that that these may change or be updated over the lifetime of the LAP.

Table: 2.1 Funding Programmes (noting these may change over the lifetime of the LAP)	
Funding Programme	Purpose of Fund
Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF)	Supports compact and sustainable development, through the regeneration and rejuvenation of Ireland's five cities and other large towns. The URDF applies to larger towns with a population of more than 10,000 people and to a number of smaller towns with fewer than 10,000 people but with more than 2,500 jobs and which function as significant centres of employment.
Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF)	Supports the regeneration and development of rural towns, villages and outlying areas. The purpose is to support job creation in rural areas, address de-population of rural communities and support improvements in towns and villages with a population less than 10,000.
Town Centre First Funding	A co-ordinated, whole-of-government policy framework to proactively address the decline in the health of towns across Ireland and support measures to regenerate and revitalise them.
Town and Village Renewal Scheme	To support the economic and social recovery of rural towns with a population of less than 10,000, and focuses on projects that have clear positive impacts on the town in terms of placemaking and town centre regeneration. It also provided specific funding for streetscapes enhancements.
Croí Cónaithe	To attract people to build their own homes and refurbish properties to live in small towns and villages
European Regional Development Fund	To support the Town Centre First approach, address dereliction and vacancy – managed by the Regional Assemblies

Historic Towns Initiative	To regenerate urban centres through heritage-led regeneration for significant buildings, streetscape conservation and enhancement and public realm work.
Historic Structures Fund	To conserve and enhance heritage structures and historic buildings in public and private ownership
Built Heritage Capital Grant	To provide smaller grants for works to historic buildings and repair historic structures
Destination Towns Initiative	To develop the tourism potential of destination towns, and to create a sense of place in towns across Ireland, attracting visitors to the area and helping to provide the necessary infrastructure to support regional growth in tourism.
Serviced Sites Fund	To provide key facilitating infrastructure, on public lands, to support the delivery of affordable homes to purchase or rent.
Repair and Lease Scheme	To provide upfront funding for any works necessary to bring privately owned property up to the required standard and in return the property owner agrees to lease the dwelling to the Local Authority to be used as social housing.
Buy and Renew Scheme	To support Local Authorities and Approved Housing Bodies in purchasing and renewing housing units in need of repair and makes them available for social housing use.
Sustainable Mobility Investment Programme	To support the roll out of new and improved active travel infrastructure in towns and villages.
Climate Action Fund	To aid and provide financial support to projects to help Ireland achieve its climate and energy targets. At least €500 million in government funding up to 2027 will be provided for specific sectors (such as electricity, transport, heat or agriculture) or specific areas (such as capacity building, innovation or community participation).

2.4 Spatial Development Strategy

2.4.1 Strategic Vision and Aims

This LAP sets out a strategic vision for Thurles and has been informed by collaboration and consultation with stakeholders and the general public. Key local supporting documents and frameworks that have influenced this LAP include:

- Thurles Town Centre Renewable Strategy 2021

- Thurles Town Centre Masterplan Proposals 2021
- Relevant plans, strategies and funding programmes at a national, regional and county level as outlined in the TCDP.



Figure 5: Thurles Town Centre Renewal Strategy Objectives

Thurles is located at the centre of the Southern Region for which objectives are provided for in the Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

In this LAP, particular consideration has been given to funding programmes under Project Ireland 2040 (DPER) as set out in Section 2.3 that support the regeneration and revitalisation of rural towns. This LAP has been prepared to underpin the Core Strategy of the TCDP and its Core Ambition to deliver ‘Vibrant, Living Towns driving the Regional and Local Economy’. The ten Strategic Objectives of the TCDP each comply with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and are reflected in the local spatial planning framework outlined.

2.4.2 Population Growth and Housing

The population of Thurles in 2016 was 7,940, a population increase of only 0.09% over Census 2011 figures (7,933). In line with the NPF and the TCDP, it is planned to deliver a population growth of 30% by 2031. It is projected that by 2030 (the LAP lifespan), it will be necessary to cater for a population of approximately 10,057 persons an additional 2,117 persons over 2016 population. This projected population growth would result in an estimated requirement for approximately **784** additional housing units (2.7 persons average occupancy) to 2030.

Table 2.2: Population Growth and Housing Need			
Population 2016	Projected Population 2031	Population growth 2030	Housing requirement 2030
7,940	10,322	10,057	784 units

Housing Delivery over the lifetime of the previous Town Development Plan

Since 2009 there has been little housing delivery in the LAP area. However, planning permission is in place for new housing as follows:

- 36 dwellings – Stradavoher
- 125 dwellings – Bohernamona

- 63 dwellings – Lognafulla
- 26 dwellings – Dublin Road

This equates to planning permission in place for **250 units** primarily located to the east of the River Suir. There is a lack of 'live' residential planning permissions to the north of the town, and west of the River Suir which is the most appropriate location for development in terms of wastewater servicing.

Social Housing Demand and Delivery

399 applicants for social housing support have identified Thurles as their first choice, with the following breakdown of housing requirements:

Unit size	Number 1 st Choice Housing Applicant
1-bedroom unit	144
2-bedroom unit	148
3-bedroom unit	85
4 or greater bedroom unit	22
Total	399
Total Number currently accommodated through HAP	193

Since 2016, there has been a moderate social housing construction in the town (61 units). There has been a number of purchases and refurbishments by the housing authority as part of its social housing programmes. There are construction projects underway, and it is expected that by 2026 an additional **88** new social homes shall be constructed in Thurles through local authority own development and through turnkey social housing developments delivered by private contractors.

Traveller Accommodation

The Tipperary Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 sets the following requirements over this period for the county and Thurles:

Area	Standard Housing / Including RAS / Leasing	Group Housing	Halting Site	Single Rural Dwelling	Total
Tipperary County	58	15	8	9	90
Thurles	14	6	-	2	22

Student Accommodation

Thurles is an established third level town with two university campuses, MIC and TUS, situated within and close to the town centre. There are c.1,000 students attending university in Thurles and while there are good quality public transport connections to the town, it is important to ensure that there is an attractive accommodation offering for those who wish to stay on campus and in the town. Both institutions have plans for the growth of their campuses which will require an associated increase in the supply of student accommodation.

Tipperary County Housing Strategy

The Tipperary County Housing Strategy (Volume 3 of the TCDP) highlights key local issues:

- At the county level at least 21.2% of new households will experience affordability challenges. For Thurles, there is a higher affordability constraint with 26%⁵ of new households potentially experiencing affordability challenges.
- Smaller units (1 and 2 bedroom) must be delivered to ensure that this specific household demand is met, and that more affordable units are provided. It is estimated that 59% of new units should fulfil this type.
- New housing developments should fulfil the definition of compact, near zero energy rated and well connected with the town centre in compliance with the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2009).

Building Vacancy

According to the Geodirectory data Q4 2022, there were 4,411 properties within the LAP area. Of these, 91 residential properties and 82 commercial properties were vacant. In total there were 173 vacant properties, which represents a vacancy of 3.9% of the total stock. Vacancy in the town centre will be subject to further detailed analysis as part of any Town Centre First Plan.

The Council carried out its own Town Centre Health Check in June 2023 which identified 147 buildings that were completely vacant in the urban core, 63 were residential premises, 59 were commercial and 25 were a mix. There was a 23% commercial vacancy rate on the ground floor and a 5% residential vacancy rate with a further 18% commercial vacancy rate on the first floor and an 8% residential vacancy rate.

⁵ Total housing demand of 315 units/the number of persons on the social housing list not currently accommodated in Thurles with HAP support.

New Housing Demand

In summary, it is identified that there is a need for approximately 784 new units in Thurles. It can be assumed that little of this demand has been met by new construction since 2016. There is a need for 399 social and affordable units (with 193 already accommodated in the town as supported by the Housing Assistance Payment programme). The Council is seeking to deliver 88 houses in Thurles to 2026 (Housing Delivery Programme). Therefore, there is a short fall of 118 new units in projected delivery that will need to be delivered by private development (including for 20% social and affordable units).

2.4.3 Land Use Zoning Framework

The land use zoning framework is set out in Chapter 9. 12 zoning types are identified and described in detail in Table 9.1.

Residential Land Zoning

Land use zoning provision must accord with the Core Strategy of the TCDP. The LAP timeline is 2024 – 2030. Therefore, the LAP land use zoning requirement was adjusted by considering the TCDP 2028 framework and applying 2 additional years (2030)⁶. This results in a requirement for approximately 39.4 ha⁷ of serviced/serviceable residential lands. New residential use is permitted on lands zoned for 'Urban Core, 'Regeneration' and 'New Residential', as set out below:

Land zoning	Area (ha)	Maximum Housing Delivery capacity
New Residential	48.19	Calculated at 100% Residential = 1,205 units
Regeneration	1.02	Calculated at 30% Residential Share = 8 units
Urban Core	39.99	Calculated at 30% Residential Share = 299 units

After consideration in the SLA (Appendix 1) excess lands that were previously designated for 'New Residential' use have been designated as 'Strategic Reserve' (20.60 ha), and where appropriate lands previously zoned for new residential use have been rezoned for uses other than 'New Residential'. Maps 1A and 1B set out the proposed land zoning map for the Town.

Consideration has also been given to the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DHLGH, 2022) and their provision that zoned housing land that is serviced, and can be developed for housing within the life of the new plan, should not be subject to de-zoning. Consolidation and

⁶ 35.5ha (3031 zoning framework) – 23.6 (2028 zoning provision) = 11.9/3 = 3.97ha x 2 (years) = 7.9ha plus 23.56ha = 31.5ha 2024 – 2030. For indicative purposes only, an average density of 25/ha applied and an 'additional capacity' at 25% was also applied.

⁷ An average density of 25/ha and 'additional capacity' at 25% was applied. Excluding the capacity of town centre sites to accommodate residential development

infill development underpin the development strategy in this LAP in line with achieving Strategic Objective No. 1 (Compact Growth) of the NPF. National Policy Objective (NPO 3c) of NPF requires that at least 30% of all new housing units (235) must be delivered within the existing built-up footprint/compact growth area of the town. This aspect is addressed in more detail in Section 5.2.1 – Thurles Neighbourhoods.

Serviced Land Assessment (SLA)

The NPF has provided a detailed methodology for local authorities to apply in developing a zoning framework, informed by the population targets and based on an assessment of available serviced land and infrastructure. This process is outlined as Appendix 1. The Council, in the preparation of the zoning framework, has considered the provisions of the SLA, the Development Plan Guidelines (DHLGH, 2022), the national Town Centre First Programme and the need to support compact growth. In this process the Council has sought to ensure that a sufficient choice of land for development is provided to support the sustainable residential, economic and social growth of the town. The quantum of land use zoning by the primary land uses is set out in Table 2.6.

Land zoning	Area (ha)	Description
New Residential	48.19	For New Residential use
Strategic Reserve	20.60	Long-Term Strategic and Sustainable Development Site. Sites that will deliver housing within the subsequent development plan period (i.e. more than 6 years). (4.4.4 of the Development Plan Guidelines)
Regeneration	1.02	Mixed use, including Residential
Urban Core	39.99	Mixed use, including Residential

As outlined in the Land Use Zoning Objectives in Chapter 9, the purpose of the Strategic Reserve is to ensure the availability of “long-term strategic and sustainable development sites” for the future growth of Thurles. The development of these areas in a piecemeal or discordant way would prejudice the sustainable future development of the town. New development in lands zoned strategic reserve will not therefore generally be permitted. Where exceptional circumstances apply that would justify the development of these lands within the lifetime of the Plan, the applicant will be required to demonstrate how the remaining lands within the ‘Strategic Reserve’ land use zoning could be developed sustainably and cohesively.

2.4.4 Non-Conforming uses

The Council will support the continued operation and expansion of authorised, long-established activities that are in operation at locations that are not compatible with current planning objectives, provided that they do not result in loss of amenity to adjoining properties, adverse impact on the environment, visual detriment to the area or creation of a traffic hazard.

2.5 Policy and Objectives

Local Planning and Development Policy	
It is the policy of the Council to:	
Policy 2.1	Require the retrofitting of existing structures on brownfield sites, unless it is demonstrated that retrofitting is unfeasible, or redevelopment of the site would provide positive carbon impact through the re-design, construction and use stages of a new building, compared with retrofitting.
Policy 2.2	Support new development that will enable sustainable housing growth, employment and prosperity for Thurles as a 'Key Town' and its community in line with the Strategic Objectives of the TCDP.
Policy 2.3	Require new development to incorporate best practice in low-carbon and energy efficient planning and techniques, as reflected by the policies and objectives of the TCDP and this LAP, and in accordance with the forthcoming Climate Action Plan for Tipperary 2023 (and any review thereof).
Policy 2.4	Support compact residential growth in Thurles through the sustainable intensification, and consolidation of the town centre and established residential areas, and to meet identified housing targets and requirements in line with the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2009) and any review thereof.
Policy 2.6	Facilitate development of existing but non-conforming and long-established uses, to support their continued operation and expansion, provided such does not result in loss of amenity to adjoining properties, adverse impact on the environment, visual detriment to the character of the area or creation of a traffic hazard.

Local Planning and Development Objectives	
It is an objective of the Council to:	
Objective 2A	Support the local community to identify and implement measures and actions to reduce energy consumption, produce renewable energy from local resources and to adapt to a changing climate, in accordance with the Tipperary Climate Action Plan 2023 (when complete),
Objective 2B	Work in partnership with community groups in the regeneration and revitalisation of Thurles, and to actively seek and secure funding and investment under available national and regional investment and funding programmes in line with the development strategy as set out.
Objective 2C	Support and facilitate the development of lands in collaboration with landowners and service providers for residential and employment development over the lifetime of the LAP.
Objective 2D	Actively respond to the specific need in Thurles for affordable housing and housing units for one and two-bedroom units, through the delivery of local authority social and affordable housing programmes and through the implementation of funds and programmes available from central government to support the delivery of new homes.
Objective 2E	Monitor the scale, type, tenure and location of constructed and permitted developments in Thurles to ensure compliance with the Core Strategy and to achieve the delivery of strategic plan-led and coordinated balanced development within the town.
Objective 2F	Support the provision of third level student accommodation in appropriate locations in Thurles, including on-campus, and of appropriate design (including adequate communal facilities and external communal space), to meet demand for student housing generated by TUS and MIC Thurles Campuses, and in accordance with the National Student Accommodation Strategy.
Objective 2G	Undertake Town Centre Health Checks periodically, in accordance with the methodology set out in the Heritage Council's guidance, in order to ascertain the quantum of vacant building stock in the town centre.
Objective 2H	Engage with the Tipperary Energy Agency, and other relevant energy agencies, to develop targeted energy and climate action measures within the geographic area of the LAP.

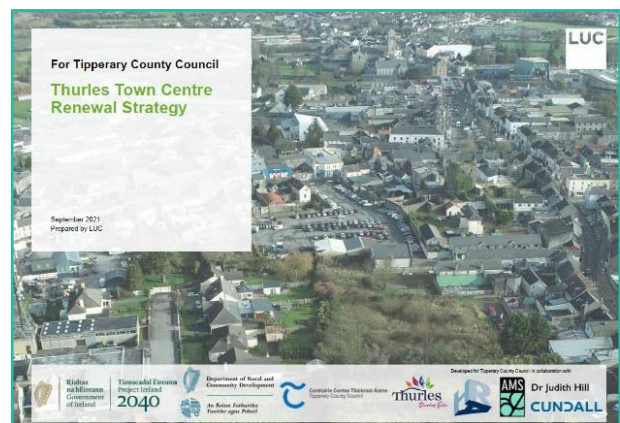
3.0 Town Centre Strategy

The Town Centre Strategy for Thurles will seek to ensure that the vibrancy and vitality of the town is maintained and enhanced. This will be achieved by increasing the residential population of the town centre, regenerating town centre brownfield lands, implementing the Thurles Town Centre Renewal Strategy, and providing a high-quality, pleasant and enjoyable town centre environment focused on connectivity, active modes of travel and public transport for the community and large student population.

The Council and its partners have already successfully attracted funding to the town from sources including the URDF, RRDF, LEADER and Town and Village Renewal programmes etc, and will ensure that the spatial planning frameworks are in place to continue to enable this approach.

3.1 Thurles Centre First

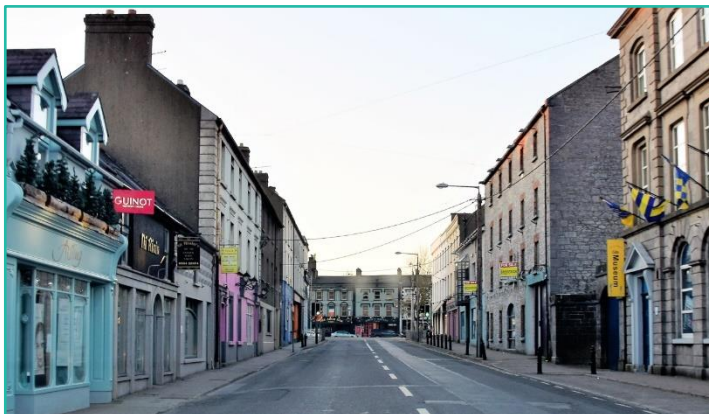
It is the vision of this LAP to support the town centre as a place to work, live, visit and do business. The Thurles Town Centre Renewal Strategy (2021) sets out a suite of regeneration projects for the town promoting the redevelopment of vacant buildings and underused sites, enhancing town centre services, enabling residential development and protecting and showcasing the historic core of the town. The



Renewal Strategy will act as the key regeneration strategy for the town in advance of any Town Centre First Masterplan that is developed under the National Town Centre First Policy (DRCD, 2022). The Renewal Strategy provides the basis for the town to seek support from multiple funding streams, as outlined in Table 2.1 and provides a vision for the development of the town. It includes a background study of the area and identifies key projects / actions to further the realisation of the vision from funding streams, maximising state investment and opportunities for the delivery of a co-ordinated programme of investment. The Renewal Strategy includes a supplementary document, the Thurles Town Centre Masterplan Proposals which looks at options for developing underused backlands in the Friar Street/Castle Avenue area of the town.

3.2 Consolidation, Regeneration and Compact Growth

The LAP identifies underused and poorly consolidated sites and areas to provide opportunities for residential and town centre development, allowing people to live, work and socialise in the town thereby reducing the need for reliance on the private car for short journeys. This LAP has set out appropriate land use zoning for the town, identified underused sites suitable for regeneration (Appendix 3) and has identified the compact growth area (see Town Profile map – Figure 4). Building on the Thurles Town Centre Renewal Strategy, the LAP identifies key regeneration and consolidation opportunities in the central area and describe and animate key projects, their potential benefits, and pathways and actions for their immediate development.



The Friar Street/Castle Avenue Masterplan area and a large backland area in Stradavoher have both been identified as Consolidation Sites in the Draft LAP. Consolidation Sites are sites located within the existing built-up area with significant housing/mixed-use potential that have a critical role in achieving policy objectives for consolidation and compact growth. It will be a key focus of the Council to collaborate with the owners of these sites to enable their redevelopment and use for enterprise and/or residential-led regeneration.

Regeneration Sites and Regeneration Areas

Sites in the town that are suitable for residential/mixed use development have been identified. These are described in Appendix 3. The Council will seek to work with and support the landowners of sites with potential for regeneration and development to enable their planning and delivery. In addition to the regeneration sites, there are areas in Thurles zoned for 'Regeneration' use. These are specific areas of the town centre-built fabric for significant redevelopment, consolidation and regeneration activity.

3.3 Land Activation and Strategy for Vacancy and Regeneration

3.3.1 Enabling and Supporting Regeneration

It is a first principle of the Council to collaborate with, and support landowners in using their vacant property thereby reducing vacancy and dereliction. There are a number of statutory provisions designed to activate the development of underused or vacant sites. The Council will continue to

offer support to landowners through its planning, housing and local enterprise services and offer regeneration schemes such as the Commercial Vacancy Incentive Scheme, the Croí Cónaithe Scheme, the Repair and Lease Scheme, Buy and Renew Scheme, RRDF etc.

The Council and the local community have already engaged with regeneration funding streams, and have received funding for:

- Liberty Square Enhancements, public realm works to the main thoroughfare in the town;
- Thurles Market Quarter, a new market and events space in the town and;
- Development of the Thurles Town Centre Renewal Strategy which is a framework for further future funding.

The LAP will support the delivery of these important projects, which will provide a catalyst or investment, regeneration and sustainable development in the town centre. The LAP will also support appropriate new development proposals, particularly on lands zoned 'Regeneration' or lands identified in Appendix 3.

3.3.2 Statutory Land Activation Provisions

The Residential Zoned Land Tax

The Finance Act 2021 introduced the Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) applicable to lands zoned and serviced for residential development and for mixed-use including residential development. The key principles of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015, such as the need to include the regeneration of areas as a key part of the development plan process, and the inclusion of objectives for areas in need of regeneration are outlined in this LAP, and will be supported by the Town Centre First approach. The Council will seek to support and assist landowners, subject to the RZLT in development of their lands for residential use.



Derelict Site Levy

The Council maintains a register of derelict sites and dangerous structures in line with the Derelict Sites Act 1990 and the Local Government Sanitary Services Act 1964. The Council will engage with landowners of derelict sites and seek to utilise active land management measures in order to incentivise development of these sites.

3.3.3 Upper floor and Commercial Vacancy

There is scope in the town centre to better use existing vacant space, particularly at upper floors of buildings. However, there are a number of costly and time-consuming barriers to the refurbishment of existing town centre premises. One such barrier is the uncertainty, cost, and delays associated with the multiple, separate statutory permissions needed to bring a building back into use. The Council will, in conjunction with its Town Centre First programme, work with owners to support the occupation of upper floors and commercial vacancy.



3.4 Public Realm and Way-Finding

Over the lifetime of the Thurles and Environs Development Plan 2009, as varied a number of public realm projects and plans have been developed and implemented including the Liberty Square Enhancement project, Thurles Market Quarter and the Thurles Town Centre Renewal Strategy. These projects and plans along with a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Thurles, which is being prepared at the same time as the LAP, will put in place a viable framework for investment in public realm and way-finding, and as funding comes available. These documents will inform proposals for public realm enhancement and way-finding investment. The LAP will support and require public and privately funded development to ensure public space is provided for residents, visitors and employees in the town, and is appropriately designed.

3.4.1 Liberty Square Enhancement Plan

The public realm enhancement scheme for the redevelopment of Liberty Square was granted URDF Category One funding in 2018 and is currently underway. This funding allows for the regeneration and redevelopment of Liberty Square through enhanced public realm, the relocation of car-parking, rationalisation of traffic movements, and the expansion of pedestrian space within the square. The physical development of the Square will allow for a more people-focussed, pedestrian and cyclist friendly space with additional space for outdoor seating and gathering.



3.4.2 Thurles Market Quarter

Thurles Market Quarter was successful in securing RRDF grant funding in 2020 for the restoration and redevelopment of a 19th Century vacant agricultural building in Thurles town centre and its associated car-park. The project seeks to deliver a new venue for the farmer's market and an events space for the town and includes public realm and sustainable transport interventions. The project is currently at a detailed design stage.

3.5 Retail and the Town Centre

Thurles has an important sub-regional role with a good range of convenience and comparison offer. The town services a large rural catchment and is not expected to compete directly with the other sub-regional town of Nenagh or with Clonmel⁸. Thurles town has strong established central areas and their strengthening and environmental improvement is a priority to Tipperary County Council. Thurles Shopping Centre is anchored by Dunnes Stores and is an edge of centre development. Tesco and Supervalu occupy town centre locations. There are retail warehousing units located at the Racecourse Road and Thurles Retail Park Stradavoher.



The Council, in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Local Authorities (DECLG, 2012) will continue to support the viability of the town centre, including applying a 'town centre first approach' and 'sequential test' for development. This LAP has defined the Town Centre area and within that the 'Primary Retail Area' (PRA). The PRA of Thurles is defined as the following streets:

- Liberty Square
- Friar Street
- Parnell Street
- Slievenamon Road

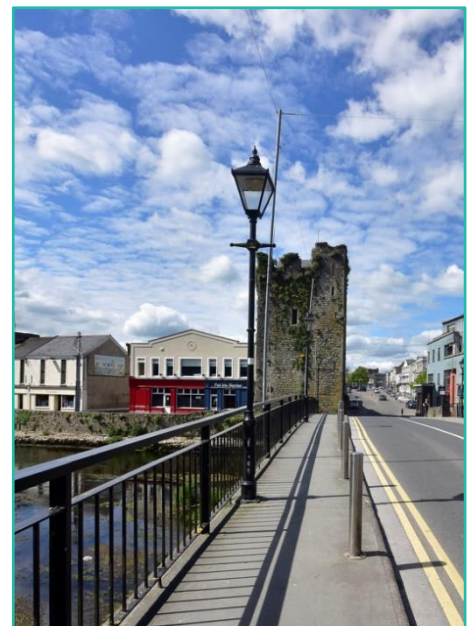
Thurles is a Key Town and in line with the county retail hierarchy, the Council will seek to support an appropriate range of retail choice to serve the needs of the rural catchment, protect the vitality of the town centre and support an appropriate mix of daytime and night-time uses. Within the PRA, the Council will seek to ensure that ground floor uses promote a high level of daytime footfall,

⁸ Templemore Thurles Municipal District Town Centre Initiative Report March 2016

activity and animation and avoid and over-proliferation of inappropriate uses, in accordance with Policy 7-2 of the TCDP. This Plan seeks to recognise Thurles' important function as a market town and to support the re-location of the farmer's market to the Thurles Market Quarter once construction is complete. New convenience retailing will be only acceptable where there is a demonstrated need, and where it will support the town centre. New retail warehousing may be facilitated, but only where it is demonstrated that there is a need for additional floor space, and where it will support the town centre, in accordance with Policy 7-4 of the TCDP.

3.6 Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Core

Thurles is rich in architectural and historic heritage. The Architectural Heritage study carried out as part of the Thurles Town Centre Renewal Strategy provides the historical context for the town, owing its development to Theobald Walter, who probably built the initial earth and timber Anglo-Norman motte castle of the late 12th/early 13th century. The settlement associated with the castle that developed into the town of Thurles was situated to the east of the castle. A review of the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) for Thurles will be carried out under Section 55 of the Act whereby it will be included in the TCDP RPS (Volume 4). The historic core of the town and Architectural Conservation Areas are further addressed in Chapter 7.



Traditional shopfronts are an important built fabric of the urban core and proposals for new development where existing shopfronts are present will be required to retain and refurbish shopfronts, in accordance with the requirements of Policy 13-2 of the TCDP and Chapter 12 of the Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011).

3.7 Policy and Objectives

Planning and Development Policy	
It is the policy of the Council to:	
Policy 3.1	Support compact growth through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the collaborative redevelopment and reuse of vacant and underused sites and areas in the 'Urban Core' and 'Compact Growth' area, (b) the development of sites identified through the URDF, RRDF and other funding streams; and (c) the redevelopment of Town Centre 'Regeneration Sites', 'Consolidation Sites' and areas zoned for 'Regeneration'.
Policy 3.2	Support new development proposals for regeneration sites which accord with the Key Planning Criteria for these sites set out in Appendix 3: Regeneration Sites.
Policy 3.3	Support new development that aligns with the provisions of the Thurles Town Centre Renewal Strategy (2021), the Thurles Town Centre Masterplan Proposals document (2021) and any future Town Centre First Plan.
Policy 3.4	Require new development proposals to accord with the county retail hierarchy and policy and to support and underpin the vibrancy and vitality of the town centre area and the PRA in line with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2012).
Policy 3.4	Require new development proposals within the Primary Retail Area to provide active uses on the ground floor, and resist the proliferation of takeaways and betting shops with the Primary Retail Area.
Policy 3.6	Support new development which enhances the setting of Thurles town centre, including its architectural and historical heritage and character, and facilitates compact growth, connectivity and active travel as opportunities arise.
Policy 3.7	Require traditional shopfronts to be retained or refurbished, in accordance with the requirements of Policy 13-2 of the TCDP and Chapter 12 of the Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011).

Planning and Development Objectives	
It is an objective of the Council to:	
Objective 3A	Support the Town Regeneration Officer and any future Town Team in the preparation and implementation of a collaborative Town Centre First Plan for Thurles that will build on the Thurles Town Centre Renewal Strategy and recent work and successful funding applications to date, and to provide a framework for which further funding will be sought.
Objective 3B	Support landowners with potential sites for regeneration and development through the Council's planning, housing and local enterprise services and offer regeneration schemes such as the Commercial Vacancy Incentive Scheme, the Croí Cónaithe Scheme, the Repair and Lease Scheme, Buy and Renew Scheme etc.
Objective 3C	Offer support to landowners and planning agents, to help overcome planning obstacles to the occupation and reuse of vacant upper floors and commercial units in the town centre; and develop best practice guidance in the re-use of upper floors.
Objective 3D	Develop and improve areas in need of regeneration, renewal and redevelopment and to apply, where appropriate, the provisions of the Finance Act, Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, Derelict Sites Act, and use Compulsory Purchase Orders to enable regeneration, reduce vacancy, increase housing supply, employment opportunities and provide community facilities.
Objective 3E	Progress and develop on the collaborative vision as set out in the Thurles Town Centre Masterplan Proposals.
Objective 3F	Support the re-location of the farmer's market to Thurles Market Quarter, once the development is complete.

4.0 Economic Development Strategy

By 2030, Thurles will have consolidated its existing employment base with enhanced employment opportunities for local residents. This will be achieved by supporting existing businesses to diversify and expand, supporting the development of existing and new business parks in the town, promoting and enabling tourism development and by improving the town centre experience through the delivery of new infrastructure and a Town Centre First approach. Having consideration to the designation of nearby Lisheen as a National Bioeconomy Campus, Thurles will be a driver of the bioeconomy, including bioenergy and bio-technology. Thurles and Lisheen will be a strategic national economic and employment driver as one of six designated sites within the EU for piloting the next generation of the bioeconomy.

The TCDP has designated Thurles as 'Key Town' with strong capacity for enterprise and employment growth building on its strengths and specialties. The town has strengths in its local retail and professional services, building on its strong town centre offering and providing trade and employment. The town is also notable as a heritage town with a rich historical character that can tap into recent investment in national tourism offerings including Fáilte Ireland's - Ireland's Ancient East. There are a number of serviced business parks in and adjacent to the LAP area including the Shannon Commercial Properties site at Archerstown, Lisheen Bioeconomy Campus and Cabragh Business Park. Employment is also provided in a wide range of services in the town including, retail, agriculture, sports, nursing homes, education, tourism etc.



4.1 Employment and Enterprise Strategy

4.1.1 Local Employment and Economic Framework

This LAP sets out a local spatial planning framework to enable enterprise and employment. This will be further supported by a Local Community and Economic Strategy (LCEP)⁹, prepared for the county under the Local Government Reform Act 2014. The LCEP will set out objectives and actions to be provided, for example, through the work of the Local Enterprise Office and through available funding supports, to promote and support the economic and local and community development of the county, both by itself directly, and in partnership with other economic and

⁹ The LCEP is currently being reviewed, the new LCEP will be dated 2023 - 2029

community development stakeholders. In addition, the LEADER Local Development Strategy (LDS) prepared under the CAP Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027 will provide guidance on the supports available under the Tipperary LEADER programme to groups seeking funding and support for enterprises to support job creation, social inclusion and environmental projects.

The LECP and LEADER LDS will be consistent with the provisions of the TCDP and this LAP, and when applied together, will form a complete planning and economic framework to help support and attract new investment and development to Thurles.

4.1.2 Land Use Zoning and Development Management

This LAP has considered the location of existing employment sites in the town centre and elsewhere in the town, and supporting infrastructure such as water services and roads in setting out a land use zoning framework for employment and enterprise. The town centre is a key employment location with very good levels of physical, transport and social infrastructure. New employment in the urban core will help support existing business in town and high-density employment should therefore be directed to the town centre in the first instance, as well as areas zoned 'Mixed Use' and 'Regeneration'.

In addition, lands have also been zoned for 'Employment' uses. The 'Employment' land use zoning designation will enable diverse land-uses associated with enterprise and employment in Thurles, and is supplemented by the designation of 'Strategic Employment Areas' (See Section 4.2). In considering new employment proposals on lands zoned for 'Employment', the Council will consider the nature of the proposed use and the following principles:

- New office-based development with a high density of employees shall be located on sites with easy employee access i.e. the urban core or where public transport/active travel between home and work is available.
- New office, research and development and high technology/ high technology manufacturing type employment, shall be located in an existing high quality built and landscaped environment, unless it is demonstrated that there is no availability of such sites.

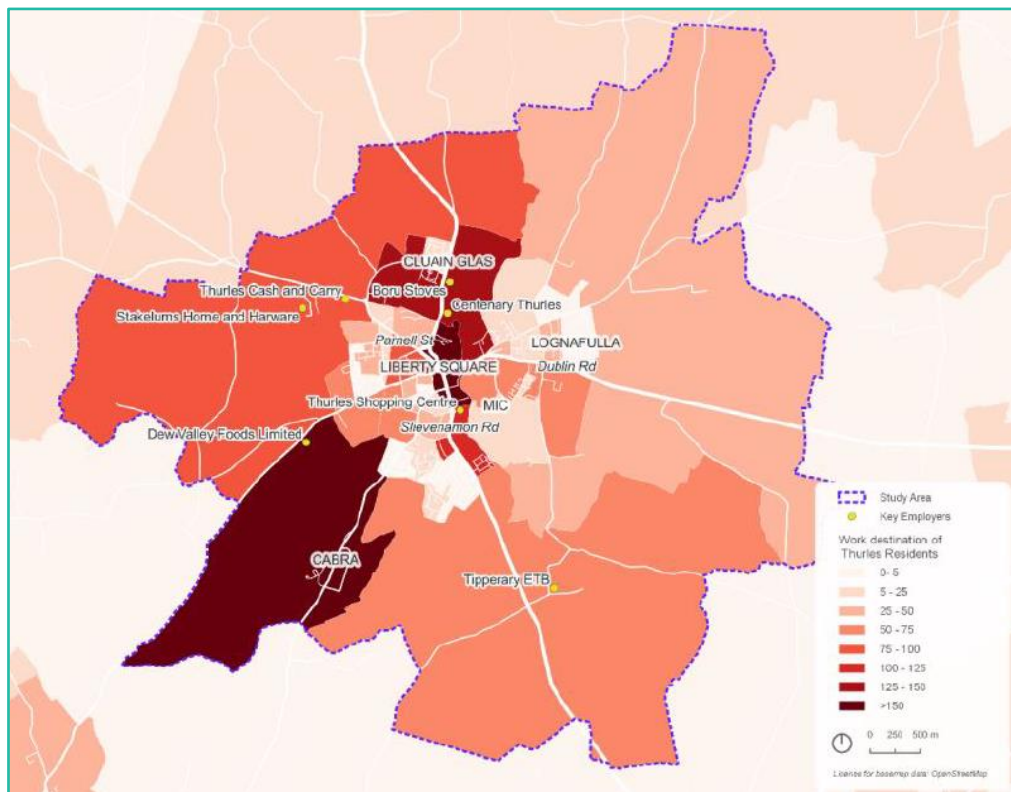


Figure 6: Employment Destination (LTP Boundary)

The RSES identified Strategic Employment Areas associated with Thurles town are located outside the LAP boundary with a 25.5 ha Shannon Commercial Properties site at Archerstown to the south east of the town and Lisheen Bio-Economy Campus located approximately 14km north east of Thurles. Within the LAP boundary, the Electoral District containing Cabragh Business Park and Dew Valley is the most employment dense area of the town as demonstrated in Figure 8. Section 8.3.2 of the TCDP sets out the requirement to identify ‘Strategic Employment Locations’ for towns within the County.

This LAP seeks to increase the existing relatively low jobs ratio in the town by ensuring that there is a sufficient quantum of land zoned for ‘Employment’ purposes within the town and that the town maximises its potential to benefit from the Strategic Employment Sites located proximate to the town.

4.1.3 Lisheen Bio-Economy Campus

A National Bio-Economy Campus is being developed at a former zinc and lead mine located between the villages of Moyne and Templetuohy, in Tipperary. This National Campus is being led by the Irish Bio-economy Foundation with a range of stakeholders, including universities, private enterprise and is supported through Enterprise Ireland. The campus will have a range of facilities, which will enable industry, entrepreneurs and researchers to scale technologies that convert Ireland’s natural resources (including residues) to products of high value, for use in a wide variety

of sectors including food ingredients, feed ingredients, pharmaceuticals, natural chemicals, biodegradable plastics and more.

4.2 Thurles Employment Areas

The TCDP recognises that the ‘Key Towns’ and ‘District Towns’ of the county are the primary locations for strategic employment at the county or regional scale. Thurles town already supports areas zoned for employment uses, and the Council will seek to consolidate and strengthen these, including the strategic employment function of the town centre. A further site has been identified on the N62 to the south of the town as suitable for strategic employment dense development.

Two strategic employment areas linked to the growth and development of the town are:

Shannon Commercial Properties site at Archerstown

Key Attributes	Description and Guidance
Access	Accessed from a local road connecting to the N62 at Clongower. Footpath access along the N62 for 3.5km to the Town Centre. Cycle and active travel improvements required to facilitate workers living in town.
Services	Serviced
Existing uses	Tipperary ETB Training Centre, Thurles Testing Centre, Pressure Welding
Consolidation & Expansion	Poor level of occupation with ample room for new occupation and consolidation
Development Guidance	Not within the Thurles LAP boundary. Site falls within the provisions of the TCDP and Thurles LTP.

Lisheen Bioeconomy Campus

Key Attributes	Description and Guidance
Access	Accessed from the L3201.
Serviced	Site is partially served with water.
Existing uses	Uses to be related to the Bioeconomy.
Consolidation & Expansion	Poor level of occupation with ample room for new occupation and consolidation.
Development Guidance	Not within the Thurles LAP boundary. Site falls within the provisions of the TCDP and will be subject to the preparation of a masterplan.

N62 Technology Park

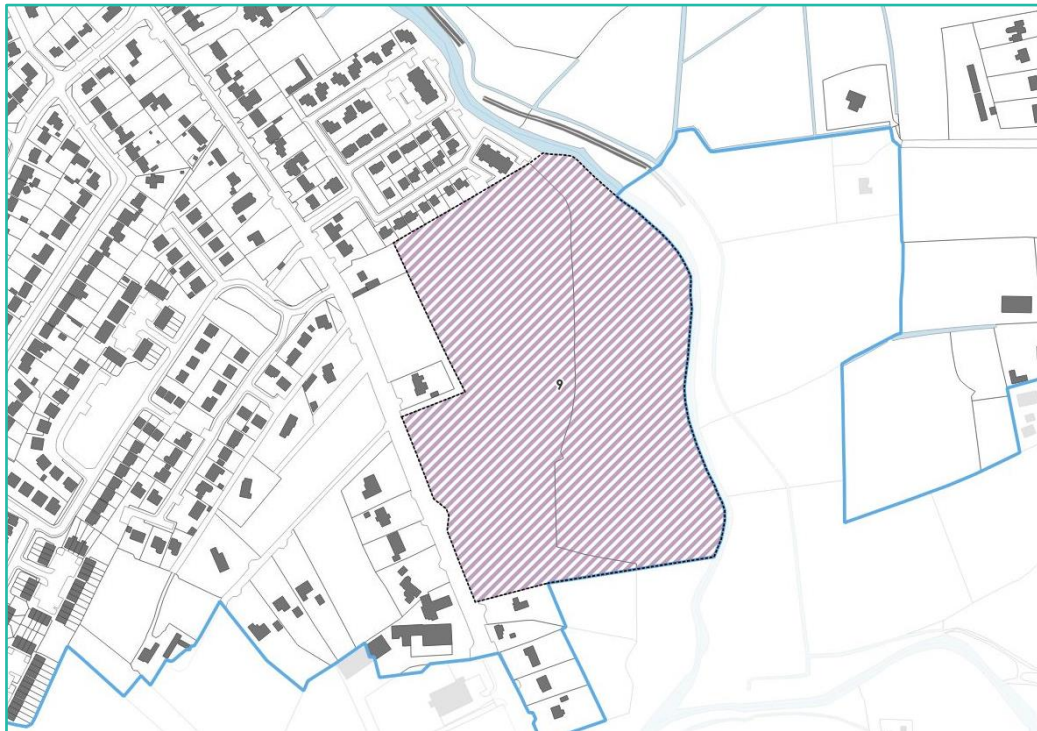


Figure 7: Employment Site Location and Description

The site is located on the N62 south of the town and adjacent to predominantly residential uses to the north and the River Suir to the east. The site measures 9.5 ha and is greenfield in nature. The eastern boundaries of the site are within an area susceptible to flood risk.

The site is zoned 'Employment' in the Draft Thurles LAP.

Key Attributes	Description and Guidance
Access	Accessed from the N62
Serviced	Serviced
Proposed Uses	High density employment uses. Office and Innovation. No retail or retail warehousing.
Consolidation & Expansion	Not currently occupied.
Development Guidance	Zoned 'Employment'. Access and egress to be considered with TCC Roads Department. Active travel interventions to be provided in accordance with the Thurles LTP.
Key Planning Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The site would be suitable for high density employment uses. ● Not suitable for retail or retail warehousing. ● Any development should respect the residential amenity of adjoining sites. ● Suitably designed junction with N62 with pedestrian/cycle linkages to the Town centre in collaboration with TII and the Council Roads Section.

- High quality smarter travel facilities including secure bicycle parking should form part of proposed developments.
- Mobility Management Plan to be included with proposals.
- Active travel/amenity route adjacent to the River Suir and N62.
- A land mark entrance feature such as public art to reflect the location of the site as the gateway to the town.

Other Employment Locations

There are a number of established employment locations within the LAP area that provide an important economic function to the town and wider region and that have significant potential for further employment growth within this Plan period:

- Dew Valley Foods
- Cabragh Business Park
- Thurles Retail Park
- TUS (in partnership with university)

4.3 Tourism Strategy

Thurles is located in the Fáilte Ireland tourism programme called 'Ireland's Ancient East' and is itself an ancient town dating back to the 13th century. Thurles benefits from its status as the 'home of hurling' with the GAA founded here in 1884 and now as home to Ireland's second largest GAA stadium Semple Stadium with a capacity of 45,690 people. The Thurles Town Centre Renewal Strategy includes an objective to build on this status and develop a tourism asset within the town based on the Semple Stadium and Thurles' GAA heritage. The Tipperary 'Marketing, Experience & Destination Development Plan', 2016 - 2021 sets out a development strategy for tourism. This is supported by 'Tipperary Transforming – Tourism Product Development Plan 2020 – 2030' (Tipperary Tourism and Tipperary County Council), a 10-year vision statement for tourism development. These promote Tipperary as a national leader in 'Responsible Tourism'. A key concept in Tipperary Transforming is the need to consider – 'Hero Products'. Thurles has been identified as an ideal location for a 'sports village attraction' whereby children, teenagers and families from all over Ireland can stay on campus and partake in a wide range of sporting activities.



Figure 8: Thurles Town Centre Renewal Strategy (GAA Heritage Trail)

The Thurles Town Centre Renewal Strategy support the tourism concepts outlined. The potential of the town to attract visitors as part of national/regional tourism offerings will be supported by the Council and 'Tipperary Tourism'.

4.4 Policy and Objectives

Planning and Development Policy	
It is the policy of the Council to:	
Policy 4.1	Support and direct new development proposals that generate high densities of employment towards lands zoned 'Urban Core', 'Mixed Use' and 'Regeneration'.
Policy 4.2	Support new employment proposals on lands zoned for 'Employment', having regard to the nature of the proposed use, the availability of space within existing serviced employment areas, and the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) New office-based development with a high number and density of employees shall be located on sites with easy employee access i.e. supporting public transport/active travel accessibility between home and work. b) New office, research and development and high technology / manufacturing type employment shall include provision for high quality built and landscaped environment.
Policy 4.3	Support sustainable development of enterprise, in accordance with the principles for each 'Employment Area' as set out in Section 4.2, ensuring the provision of appropriate scale and form of employment uses.
Policy 4.4	Support new visitor accommodation, arts and cultural development, orientation and signage to support the tourism industry and the development of tourism linkages/clusters with neighbouring areas and towns in line with current national and local tourism programmes including 'Tipperary Transforming – Tourism Product Development Plan 2020 – 2030'.
Policy 4.5	Support new tourism-based development which enhances employment opportunities, the quality of the environment and contributes to the visitor experience of Thurles in accordance with the principles in 'Tipperary Transforming – Tourism Product Development Plan 2020 – 2030'

Planning and Development Objectives	
It is an objective of the Council to:	
Objective 4A	Enable enterprise and employment development in Thurles, through the spatial planning framework of this LAP and the economic support frameworks of the LECP, Leader LDS and provided by the Local Enterprise Office of the Council.
Objective 4B	Promote and support the growth and development of Lisheen Bioeconomy Campus as an important employment location with strong ties to Thurles, maximising its residential and employee potential.
Objective 4C	Promote and support the development and use of the Archerstown Industrial Estate and N62 Technology Park, through the work of the Local Enterprise Office, and to maintain the parks as high-quality settings for employment uses with active travel linkages with the town centre and residential areas.
Objective 4D	Support the development of arts and cultural activities, new visitor accommodation and activity-based leisure activities to support the tourism industry in the town; and promote and expand physical and cultural tourism linkages with neighbouring areas and towns.
Objective 4E	Support the delivery of a sports campus in Thurles, in line with the Tipperary Transforming Heritage Theme and its 'Hero Product' concept, thus adding value and enhancing the visitor experience. The key focus is to provide a unique sporting product for people all over Ireland to enjoy.
Objective 4F	Support the delivery of a tourism product linked to the GAA and Semple Stadium.

5.0 Sustainable Communities

Over its lifetime, the Thurles LAP, as part of a larger multi-stakeholder social and economic framework, will help facilitate the development of sustainable and socially inclusive communities, where high-quality, age friendly and student housing is provided consistently, and integrated with the delivery of community and social infrastructure to support a high quality of life for the residents of the town.

Thurles has exceptional assets including built, sporting, cultural and natural heritage, a strong educational offering, and an engaging and proactive community. However, Thurles has challenges in terms of limited terrestrial employment, areas of disadvantage and a town centre dominated by through traffic. This LAP, as a local land use strategy will support quality of life, including issues such as strong inclusive community, quality and



affordable housing, physical infrastructure, pride of place, recreation and open space, sustainable travel, public realm etc. This will work hand in hand with the social and economic framework as set out in the Tipperary LECP.

5.1 Thurles Low-Carbon and Sustainable Energy Community

In 2018, Thurles Heat Map and Outline Feasibility Study was carried out in order to assess the potential for a district heating system in Thurles. An energy heat map was generated for the town highlighting the demand for energy in each small area. Using the heat map, thermal demand profiles for housing in three of the Small Areas with particularly high thermal demands were generated. These thermal demand profiles were then combined, and an outline feasibility study was generated.

The feasibility of 'district heating' and 'combined heat and power' systems is dependent on spatial and urban planning related factors such as heat demand density and zoning of building uses, which reinforces the need to consider spatial planning and energy planning together. It is envisaged that such local renewable energy systems will become a feature of towns such as Thurles with support under the national Climate Action Plan. The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland provides supports/funding to communities in mapping their energy demands and potential energy resources in an 'Energy Master Plan'.

At the local level in Thurles, through the provisions of the current Climate Action Plan and Delivering Climate Action 2030 (CCMA, 2021), the Council will seek to support the local community and relevant sectors in engaging in programmes such as ‘the SEAI Sustainable Energy Community’ (SEC) programme, sectoral adaptation plans and sustainable energy and climate action initiatives.

5.2 Just Transition

The National Just Transition Fund (JTF) is a key pillar of the Government’s plan for the Midlands region. A fund has been made available to support communities transitioning to a low carbon economy. The focus is on retraining workers and generating sustainable employment in green enterprise across the region. The objective of the Fund is to facilitate innovative projects that contribute to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the Wider Midlands region, including the Thurles Municipal District, and have significant employment and enterprise potential. The Fund supports projects that take a whole-of-Midlands strategic approach and complement other sources of public funding. Thurles town can benefit from the range of projects that can potentially be developed as a result of JTF which can include new enterprise hubs, supporting local business development, research and exploratory studies, tourism and heritage projects including tracks and trails, and opportunities for reskilling.

5.3 Residential Development

The ‘Development Strategy’ for the town has established a framework to facilitate compact residential development on lands zoned within the town centre area and areas close to existing services. The Council will also seek to promote compact growth through the re-use and re-development of vacant properties, regeneration and consolidation sites, brownfield and infill sites. In particular, the Council will seek to reverse the decline of the town centre as a living neighbourhood, encourage and direct new development to the town centre and adjoining areas and support compact growth and the revitalisation of town centre neighbourhoods.

5.2.1 Thurles Neighbourhoods

A population density map for Thurles is set out in Figure 10, having consideration to this, to the accessibility of the population to the town centre and policy direction for compact development and town centre growth, it is possible to plan for neighbourhoods and appropriate residential density.

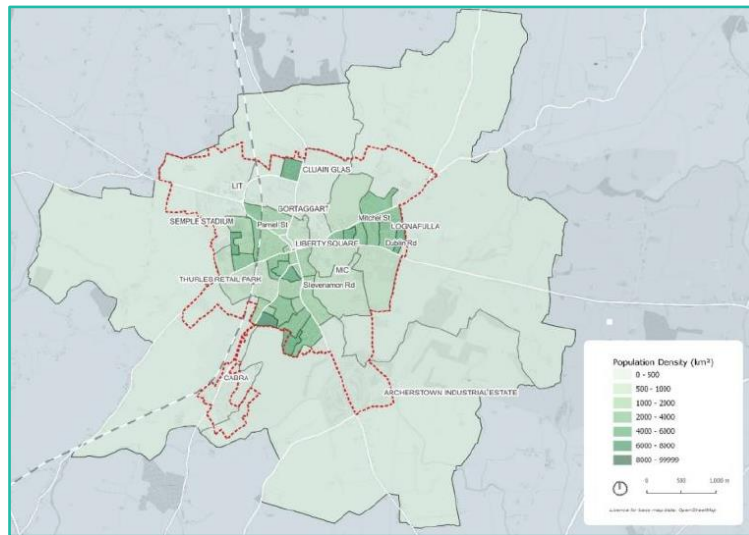


Figure 9: Population Density (LTP Boundary)

Liberty Square and its east/west approaches, the railway line and the River Suir have influenced residential development in the town, and consequently, there are five distinct neighbourhoods to Thurles in terms of location and accessibility (Figure 11).

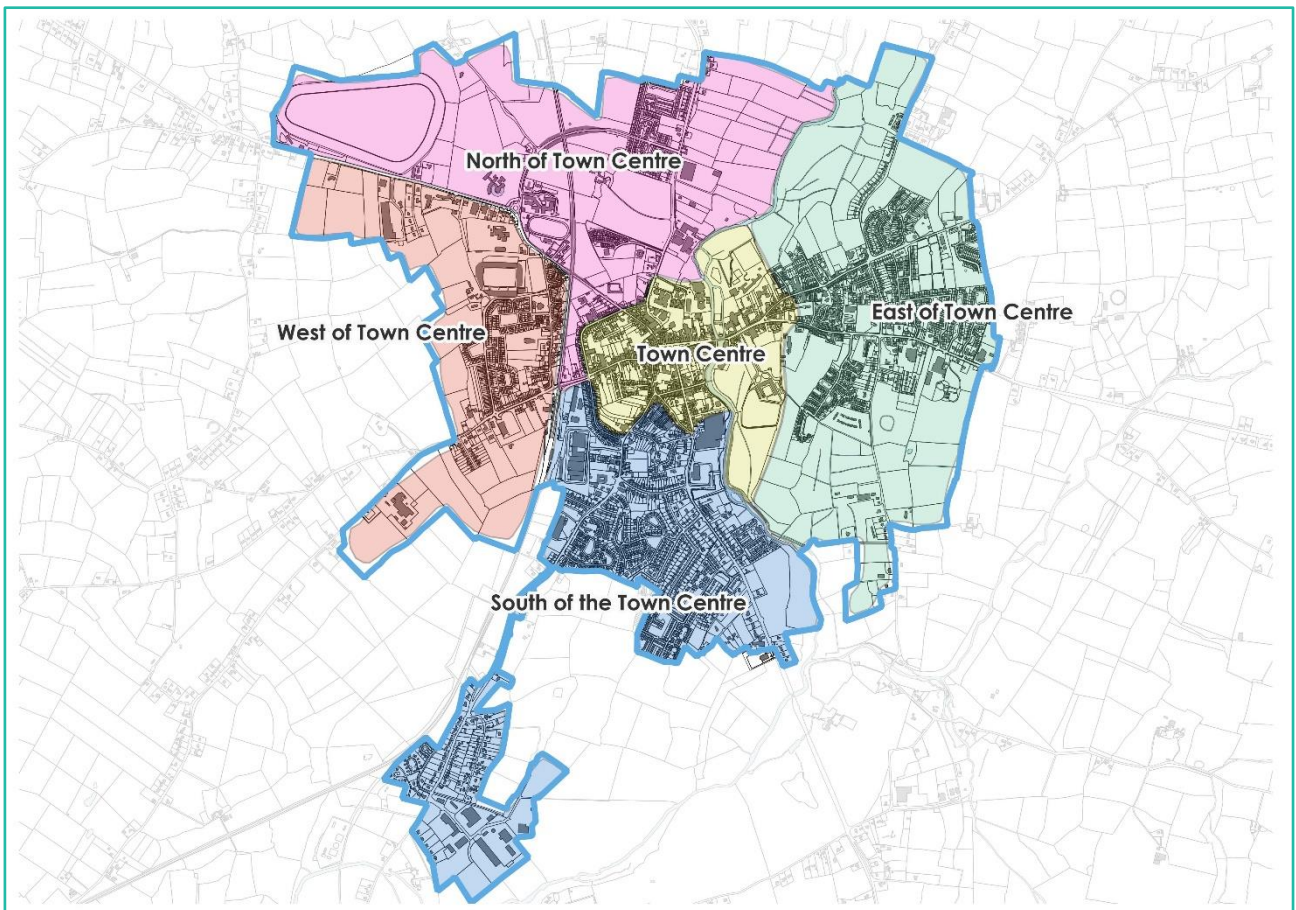


Figure 10: Thurles Neighbourhoods

1. The Town Centre/Central Core

The historical town centre is zoned as 'Urban Core' and 'Regeneration' and is vital to the character and quality of life for people of Thurles. This LAP seeks to encourage compact development and will actively seek the regeneration and reuse of all vacant areas, within and proximate to the town centre area. It is expected that more than 30% of new population growth will occur in this area (and the neighbourhoods adjoining the town centre) with a focus on higher density, well connected and high-quality urban housing.

2. Neighbourhoods West of Town Centre

While this area enjoys easy access to the train station, it is restricted by only two rail line crossings. This area is limited in the number of proximate services such as retail and town centre services. This area is constrained in terms of water and wastewater provision and any significant residential development will be limited until the network has been upgraded.

3. Neighbourhoods South of Town Centre

This area was historically the focus of residential development in the town. Much of the remaining development potential in this area will be focussed on the consolidation of underused backlands. This area is well served in terms of its proximity to the town centre and the shopping centre, however all of the primary and second level schools are located north of Liberty Square. This area is affected by large traffic volumes travelling on the N62 and traversing Liberty Square. The Council will seek to improve active travel connections within this area and in particular to the town centre, schools and colleges.

4. Neighbourhoods North of Town Centre

This area is well served in terms of water and wastewater capacity. It has more recently become the focus of residential development but is lacking in terms of the associated services (retail, healthcare, etc.). It has good access to the town centre and its schools but could benefit from enhanced sustainable transport linkages. The Council will support the delivery of a segregated active travel route from Mitchell Street to the train station travelling through this area and serving its schools (route provided in Draft LTP Appendix 2). This area includes a large proportion of the residentially zoned land. The Council is supportive of further appropriate residential development in this area that provides enhanced permeability and active transport links.

5. Neighbourhoods East of Town Centre

The area to the east of the River Suir has extended its pattern of residential development further east rather than north and south of the N75 thus resulting in a reliance on car trips, this is exacerbated by the through traffic travelling on the national road with only one river crossing into Liberty Square. The planning authority will work with the Active Travel team in putting in place

walking, cycling and public transport options from this area to the town centre. The Council will support the delivery of a segregated active travel route from Mitchell Street to the train station serving the schools in this area to the north (route provided in Draft LTP Appendix 2). The Council will seek to consolidate development in this area, and further expansion of the town to the east of Lognafulla on greenfield lands will not be facilitated over the lifetime of this LAP.

5.3.2 One-off Housing in the Town

Single housing units will be facilitated throughout the town on serviced and infill sites and will be assessed on a case by case basis in line with development management standards. Lands zoned 'Town Environs' are under urban pressure and have an important role in the long-term growth of Thurles. Whilst they are not required for town growth and expansion at present, in due course the town may grow and additional lands may be required.

The primary use of these lands shall be agriculture in line with the land use zoning matrix as set out in Chapter 9. In exceptional circumstances, with consideration on a case by case basis, a single house may be permitted for a person with an economic need directly associated with agriculture and where there is no alternative site available.

5.4 Open Space and Amenities

The town is well-served in term of open space and amenities, with GAA, soccer, tennis, swimming and gym etc facilities all located within the town. Thurles Town Park opened to the public in 2015 and includes a playground, a skate park, outdoor gym equipment, large green space and a pedestrian bridge improving accessibility to Emmet Street.



The Lion's Club and other community groups in the town have secured funding and improved a number of amenity spaces around the town. The redevelopment of public spaces and opportunity sites will be required to provide well-designed public spaces accessible to all, as well as providing play spaces for children that are safe. Provision of dedicated playground spaces will be supported as well as the provision of allotment space.

5.5 Education and Learning in Thurles

The LAP identifies the key education and training locations and services in Thurles as part of its land use strategy. The locations of these facilities are zoned primarily for ‘Community Services and Infrastructure’ and the consideration of such premises is a key aspect of sustainable transport planning and the Local Transport Plan. Figure 11 demonstrates the proliferation of schools and colleges in Thurles and their contribution towards the overall character of the town.

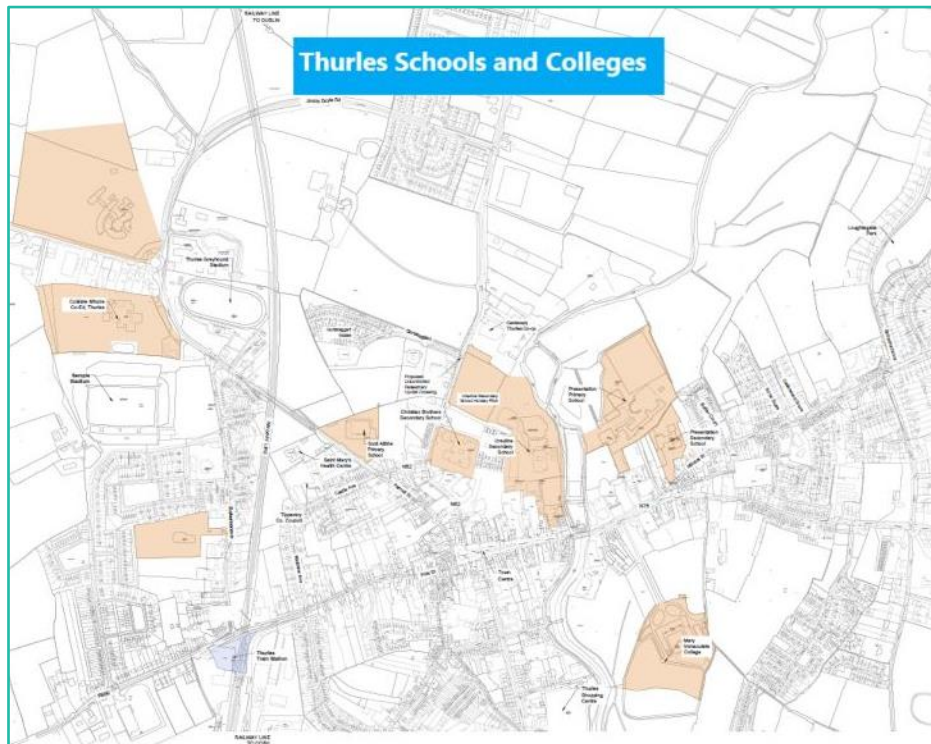


Figure 11: Schools and Colleges in Thurles

5.5.1 Primary and Secondary Schools

Thurles Town is served by primary schools and post-primary schools. It is projected that by 2031 the population of Thurles will have grown to 10,322, an increase of 2,382 persons. This equates to a need to accommodate at least an additional 274 primary students and 179 post primary students¹⁰ in the town (this figure does not include additional student demand that will arise in the hinterlands).

Table 5.1: Existing Schools within the Plan Area

Primary	
Gaelscoil Bhríde	Bohar na Naomh, Durlas, Co. Tiobraid Árann
Scoil Ailbhe CBS	Upper Parnell St, Gortataggart, Thurles, Co. Tipperary

¹⁰ According to the Department of Education school place requirements are calculated as follows: Primary level equates to 11.5% of population and 25 students per classroom, and Post-primary are assessed at 7.5% of population numbers.

Scoil Angela	Ursuline Convent, Liberty Square, Thurles, Co. Tipperary
Scoil Mhuire Presentation	Cathedral Street, Thurles, Co. Tipperary
Post Primary	
Thurles CBS	O'Donovan Rossa St, Thurles Townparks, Thurles, Co. Tipperary
Cólaiste Mhuire Co-Ed	Castlemeadows, Thurles, Co. Tipperary
Presentation Convent	Cathedral Street, Thurles, Co. Tipperary
Ursuline Convent	Ursuline Secondary School, Templemore Road, Thurles, Co. Tipperary

Leugh National School and Rahealty National School are located within the parish of Thurles and play an important role in serving the wider catchment.

Adequacy of existing school places

The Department of Education has set out the following considerations in relation to Thurles:

- At both primary and post primary level, the maintenance of buffers around existing school sites to enable expansion is critical and land zoning should enable schools to expand.
- At primary level, the projected scale of population increases to 2031 should be possible to meet through the expansion of existing schools.
- At post primary level the level of additional potential requirements arising from the projected population increase could be met at existing schools.
- Notice of intention to deliver modular accommodation at Colaiste Mhuire has been further submitted to the Council to facilitate urgently required classroom spaces stemming from increased enrolments, including from children under international protection and/or children with special needs.

This LAP has identified the existing schools in the LAP area and has applied an appropriate land use zoning to enable and protect the expansion capacity of existing facilities. The 'Provision of Schools and the Planning System Code of Practice' (DoE, 2008) was applied in considering land zoning requirements for the existing schools.

5.5.2 Third Level Education Serving Thurles

Thurles is in a unique position for a town of its size in that it is served by two university level institutions. Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) is located in the north west of the town on the Nenagh Road. The other TUS campuses are located in Limerick, Clonmel and Ennis. There is a varied prospectus in the TUS Thurles campus with courses in



Environmental Science and Climate Change, Sports Science, Agricultural Science, Social Care amongst others.

Mary Immaculate College (MIC), with its primary campus in Limerick, has an additional campus located in the centre of Thurles town in former 19th century seminary. The campus

has been modernised with extensive learning and sports facilities and on-campus accommodation. MIC have published a 20-year plan for growth which includes for a significant expansion of their Thurles campus. They provide a number of courses focussed in primary and post-primary education and the Arts.



The ETB in Archerstown, outside the LAP boundary but serving Thurles, provides training for apprentices in the following trades: electrical, electronic security systems and construction plant fitting. It also offers traineeship courses in Tour Guiding, Logistics & Distribution, ICT, Hospitality, Accountancy & Pathway. Evening training courses include Graphic Design, Pastries and Desserts, and Barista training.



Thurles has the capacity to build on the opportunity these institutes provide to the town in order to grow and thrive as a bustling and energetic Third Level Town.

Table 5.2: Third Level Education, Thurles

Technological University of the Shannon	Nenagh Road, Thurles
Mary Immaculate College	St Patrick's Campus, Cathedral Street, Thurles
Tipperary Education and Training Board	Archerstown Industrial Estate, Thurles

5.5.3 Community, Health and Educational Facilities

Thurles has community and social facilities and has many active community groups, and public and social enterprises located in the town. These groups have been very successful in delivering a number of projects. The Thurles Community Training Centre is located in Stradavoher and provides courses in Catering, Computer and Office Skills, Hairdressing and Woodwork & Home Decoration to young people who have not completed their Junior Cert or Leaving Cert. In addition to these courses, it also offers Counselling Support and Literacy Support services. Thurles public library is located in 'The Source' building on Cathedral Street. The Thurles Citizens information office is located on Slievenamon Road and offers vital information, advice and advocacy services. The Council will seek to support educational, community-led and cultural projects which enhance the well-being of residents of the town and improve the quality of the environment.

The Thurles Primary Care Centre was opened in 2022 and provides a wide range of healthcare services to the community. There are nine early years Tusla registered childcare facilities within the town.

Policies 6-1, 6-2, 6-3 and 6-5 of the TCDP support and facilitates the provision of community, health and childcare facilities.

5.6 Thurles as an Age Friendly and Inclusive Town

Developing Age Friendly¹¹ Towns revolves around the ethos that if you design for the young, you exclude the old, but if you design for the old, you include everyone. Age Friendly Towns plan for the older person's needs, supports active ageing, and facilitates older adults to remain living in their own homes and communities. In a similar fashion, ensuring development is designed to 'Universal Design'¹² principles and standards will support people to remain living in their communities throughout their lifetimes, even where special needs are required to be met.

New development within Thurles and particularly with regard to development of the public realm, amenities, housing and commercial development will be required to be designed in accordance with the principles of 'Universal Design' and 'Age Friendly' development.

The Council will support actions, measures and funding for the development of Age Friendly and Universal Design measures in Thurles. The Council will also seek to ensure that homes in new residential developments are universally designed to the Lifetime Homes standard set out in Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities (DEHLG, 2007).

5.7 Community Action and Support

The focus of the LAP period will be to enhance public amenities and services amenities in consultation and collaboration with the many community groups, services and stakeholders in the area. The Tipperary PPN is a collective of all the community, voluntary, social inclusion, and environmental groups in Tipperary and provides an opportunity for the community voice to be

represented on Council Committees and various other boards and committees. The PPN also runs



¹¹ Age Friendly Ireland champion the development of Age Friendly places in Ireland and have produced a number of guidelines and toolkits to aid design practitioners in developing Age Friendly places.

¹² The 7 principles of 'Universal Design' are internationally recognised, and guidance and information on 'Universal Design' in Ireland is administered by the National Disability Authority. The critical principle of Universal Design is that design accommodates a wide range of preferences and abilities

training courses for member groups and shares information about funding, grants, consultations, and other relevant activities.

5.8 Digital Connectivity

The roll-out of highspeed broadband services in Thurles is ongoing under National Broadband Ireland (NBI)¹³. Most of the town has access to high speed broadband services, whilst there are some areas where the service will be provided through state-led intervention under NBI. It is proposed to develop a Digital Hub within the town. The Council is currently in the process of identifying a suitable location.

In line with policy 6-6 of the TCDP, the Council will facilitate the development of telecommunications and digital connectivity infrastructure, where it can be demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impact on the surrounding areas, the receiving environment, the character and built heritage of the town.

13 <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/c1b0c9-national-broadband-plan/>

5.9 Policy and Objectives

Planning and Development Policy	
It is the policy of the Council to:	
Policy 5.1	Support new development and growth in the town and within the identified 'Neighbourhoods', in accordance with the principles for each 'Neighbourhood' as set out in Section 5.2.1, ensuring appropriate residential densities on central areas in accordance with the relevant planning guidelines.
Policy 5.2	Support new dwellings on lands zoned for 'Town Environs' where the applicant meets an 'Economic Need' (see TCDP Table 5.3 and Planning Policy 5 - 11), and there is no availability of alternative sites. An existing and/or shared domestic dwelling entrance of the applicant's family dwelling should be used, where practicable, and it will meet sightline requirements set out in TCDP Volume 3, Appendix 6, Section 6.1 Road Design and Visibility at a Direct Access.
Policy 5.3	Require new development proposals relating to housing, public realm, amenity, accessibility and public transport etc. to be designed in accordance with 'Universal Design' and 'Age Friendly' principles, in particular in relation to the provision of rest and dwell spaces in the town centre.
Policy 5.5	Support the development of new educational facilities, or the expansion, refurbishment or redevelopment of existing facilities where there is a demonstrable and identified need for such facilities.
Policy 5.6	Support community-led and cultural projects which enhance the social and economic well-being of residents of the town and improve the quality of the environment in the town

Planning and Development Objectives	
It is an objective of the Council to:	
Objective 5A	Support the local community and relevant sectors in engaging in programmes such as ‘the SEAI Sustainable Energy Community’, and the identification of potential district heating systems, through the provisions of the Tipperary Climate Action Plan and Delivering Climate Action 2030 (CCMA, 2021). In preparing sectoral adaptation plans and sustainable energy and climate action initiatives, including in the preparation of an Energy Master Plan and in the identification and use of local renewable energy sources.
Objective 5B	Support the development of innovative projects that contribute to a just transition from fossil fuels and aligning with the criteria of the Just Transition Fund.
Objective 5C	Support the continued expansion of third level institutions and their associated supporting residential requirements within Thurles.
Objective 5D	Support and promote the development of Thurles as an attractive Third Level Town for the wider region.
Objective 5E	Develop, in conjunction with the Council’s Active Travel Team, interconnectivity and linkages within, and between the neighbourhoods as identified in Section 5.2.1 and the town centre, the train station, employment areas and local schools and colleges.
Objective 5F	Ensure the continued operation and expansion of schools in Thurles on lands zoned for ‘Community Services and Infrastructure’, in line with the ‘Provision of Schools and the Planning System Code of Practice’ (DoE, 2008).
Objective 5G	Work with Age-Friendly Ireland in implementing the strategies and objectives of Tipperary Age-Friendly Strategy.
Objective 5H	Consult with local community groups, including the PPN and broad-based organisations such as Comhairle na nÓg, as part of the development of local policies and strategies.
Objective 5I	Secure high-quality digital connectivity in Thurles in line with the National Broad Band Plan and enable digital technology in line with the Tipperary Digital Strategy 2018 – 2023.
Objective 5J	Support the delivery of a Digital Hub as a high-quality facility for new employment and enterprise.

6.0 Transport and Connectivity

By 2030, Thurles will have initiated a modal shift to sustainable transport with more people choosing to walk, cycle and use public transport in favour of the car. This will be achieved by investing in sustainable transport infrastructure, provision of a high-quality public realm and the facilitation and activation of new development close to the town centre.

Thurles is a well-connected town in terms of physical access to local, regional and national road networks, and to high-frequency national rail services. However, the over reliance on the private car for both short local journeys, and longer journeys in the region is apparent. This LAP along with the Local Transport Plan (LTP) set out in Appendix 2, will inform site briefs, new development and future investment in infrastructure and will include interventions for:

1. Active Travel
2. Public Transport
3. Demand Management
4. Roads

The national Active Travel Grants Programme (NTA) funds projects supporting strategic pedestrian and cyclist routes, access to schools, permeability links, urban greenways and some minor public transport improvement projects. The Thurles LTP will enable the Council, through its active travel team, to seek funding for investment in the town under the annual Active Travel Grants Programme for projects identified through the LTP.

The identification of transport infrastructure proposals in this Plan, including locations and any associated mapping, that is not already permitted or provided for by existing plans/programmes/etc. is non-binding and indicative. New transport infrastructure will be considered subject to environmental constraints, including those related to habitats and potential impacts (e.g. disturbance from lighting). This will include minimising river crossings, avoiding sensitive habitats, not increasing barriers to flood waters and sustainable design and construction techniques.

As per Chapter 12 of the County Plan (under '12.5.1 Investment in Strategic Road Infrastructure'), new transport infrastructure projects contained within this Plan, including greenways and blueways, that are not already provided for by existing plans/programmes or are not already permitted, will be subject to feasibility assessment, considering need, environmental sensitivities and objectives relating to sustainable mobility. Where feasibility is established, a Corridor and Route Selection Process will be undertaken, where appropriate, in two stages: Stage 1 – Route Corridor

Identification, Evaluation and Selection; and Stage 2 – Route Identification, Evaluation and Selection.

By contributing towards a reduction in the use of the private car for trips, the Local Transport Plan provides for an overall reduction in the numbers of people exposed to pollution from emissions to air, including unacceptable noise levels from traffic, in particular within the town centre. The Area Based Transport Assessment has considered the potential for displacement of traffic to lead to localised potential impacts in terms of increased population exposure to air pollutants and/or elevated noise levels and identified that such impacts are unlikely to be significant. Proposed interventions shall ensure that they are consistent with all relevant legislative requirements.

6.1 Active Travel, Movement and Accessibility

Thurles has a well-defined central area generally supported by easily accessible retail facilities, services and amenities. The town is compact and the central area is accessible by walking and cycling, see Figure 4: Thurles Town Profile Plan. Thurles is centrally located west of the M8 Dublin to Cork motorway providing good vehicular access to both cities. The N62 provides access to the midlands and the R496 to Nenagh and Limerick. Liberty Square is the main thoroughfare for traffic approaching from the M8 by way of the N62 and N75.

A design has been completed for the provision of an Inner Relief Road to link the N62, Horse and Jockey Road, with the N75, Two-Mile-Borris Road. The project will involve a new bridge over the River Suir and a new high-quality road, with cycle lanes and footpaths, to alleviate town centre traffic congestion. The project is identified as strategically important in the National Development Plan and is a key piece of infrastructure in terms of the town traffic management and the provision of sustainable transport measures in the town.

The Council is preparing the design of an Active Travel Route for Thurles linking schools to the town centre and the train station so that a modal shift to walking and cycling is achieved for school and other trips.

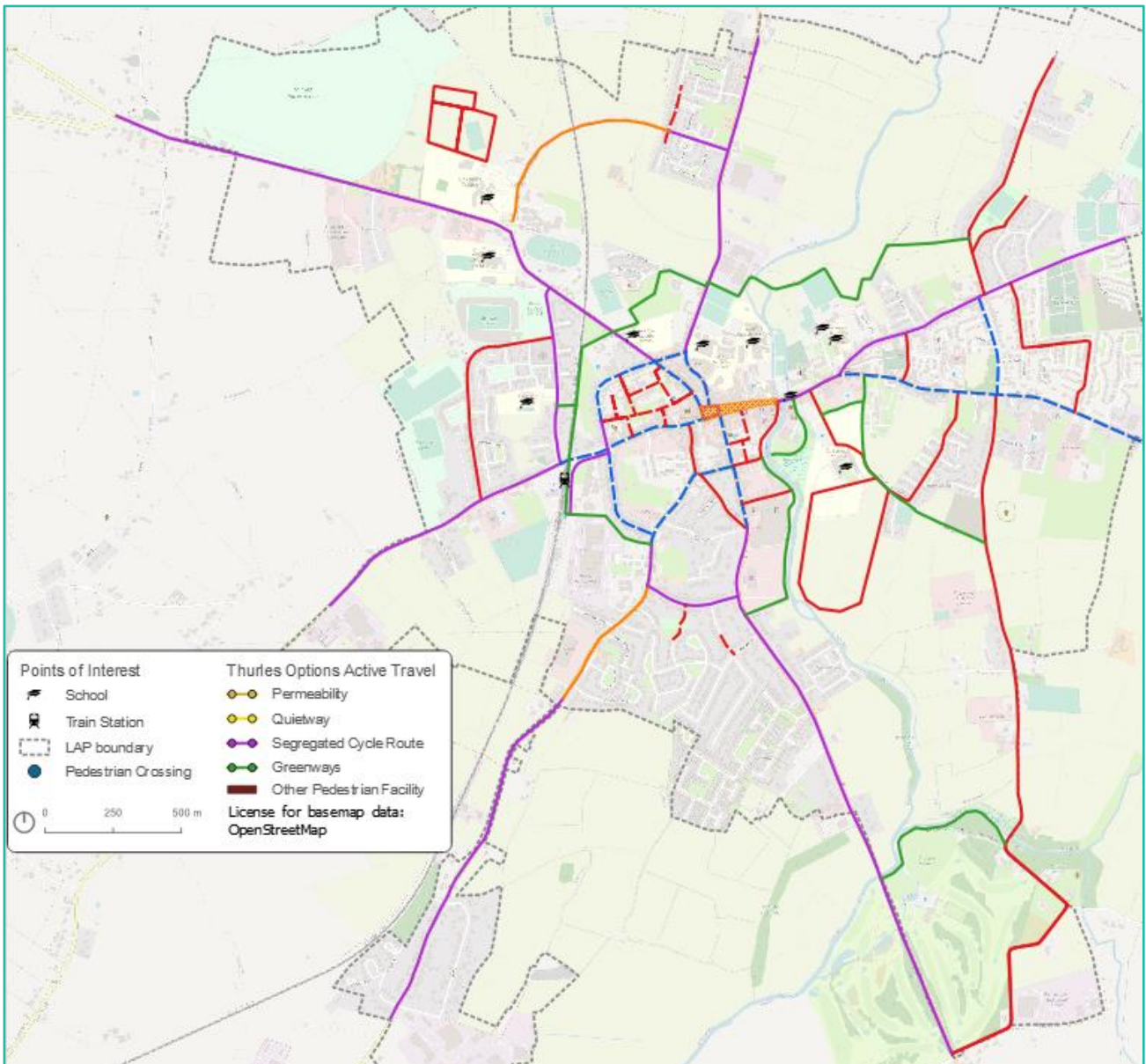


Figure 12: LTP Active Travel Proposed Routes

6.2 Public Transport

Thurles is served by the high frequency Cork/Limerick/Dublin rail line. It is also located on a number of regional and local bus corridors due to its location among neighbouring towns such as Nenagh, Clonmel, Athlone, and Kilkenny. The figure below highlights the main public transport corridors that serve the Thurles LTP study area. The NTA are currently rolling out a suite of enhanced rural bus services connecting to Thurles as part of their Connecting Ireland programme.

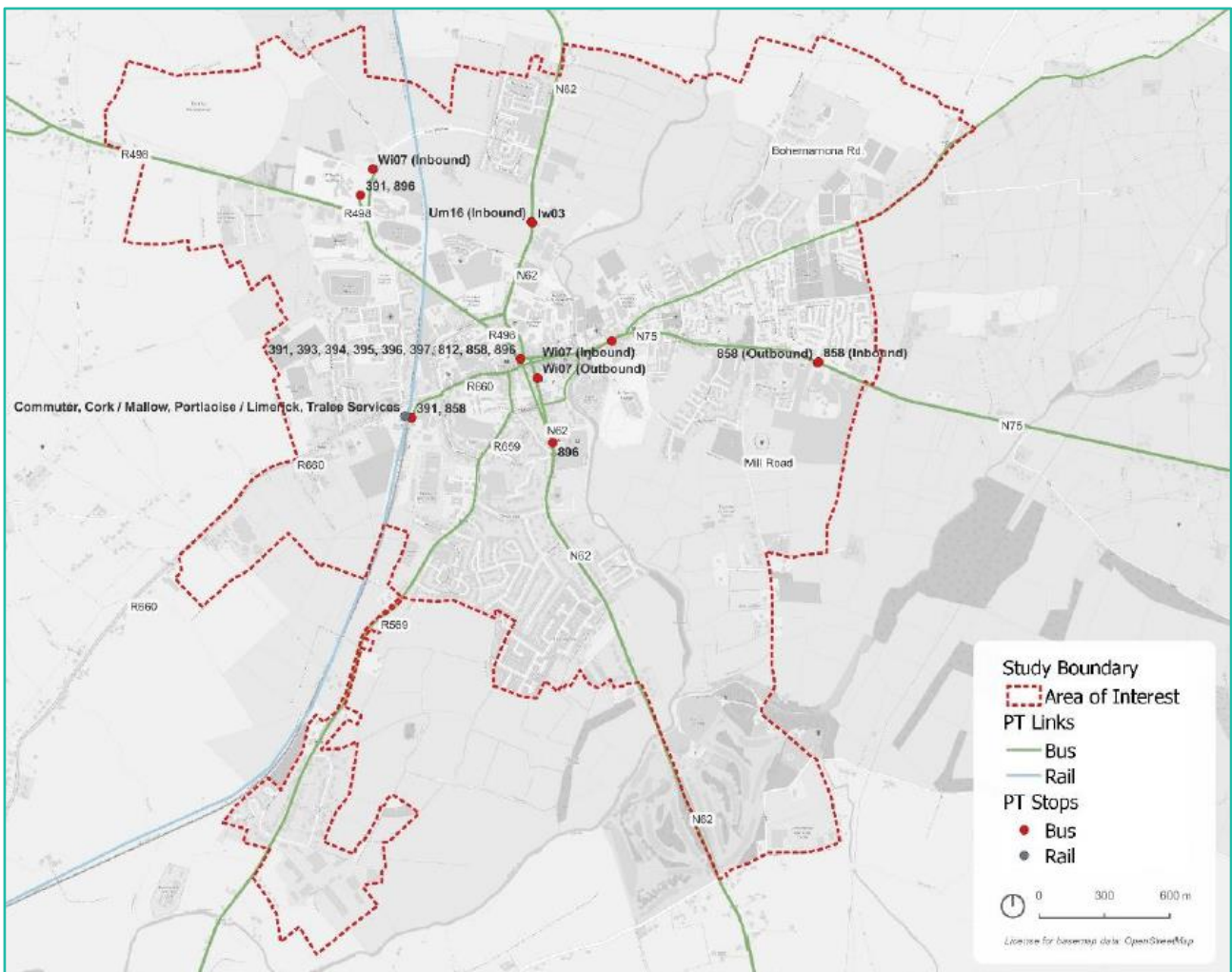


Figure 13: Thurles LTP Public Transport Services

Thurles train station is located in Thurles Town centre, less than a ten-minute walk to Liberty Square along the R660. Cycling connections from the train station to the town centre and other trip generators such as MIC and TUS are unfavourable. It is an objective of the Council, through its Active Travel Team, to provide an active travel route between the train station and the town centre serving the schools to the north of Liberty Square. The Council also seeks to work with the NTA and Irish Rail to secure the provision of a multi-modal transport hub to facilitate active and public transport modes to meet the needs of the community.

6.3 Demand Management

In addition to the measures physical measures proposed to support an increase in active travel, the LTP includes a number of demand management measures to improve the pedestrian and cycle environment. These include the implementation of a weight restriction area within the core streets of the town to limit the quantum of HGVs using the town centre, the inclusion of a 30kph speed limit zone within the central areas of the town and the requirements for mobility management plans to be provided with proposals for the development of a trip intensive nature.

6.4 Roads Strategy

6.4.1 Urban Vehicular Connectivity

The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DoT, 2019 and supplementary Advice Notes) supports the creation of place-based/sustainable street networks, which balance pedestrian and vehicle movement, as a normal part of greenfield urban development. An integrated approach to street design can enhance the value of place whilst calming traffic, improving universal access and pedestrian and cyclist comfort. Designers should consider the multifunctional role of the street and apply 'self-regulating' design measures.

The TCDP sets out the strategic investment roads projects for Thurles, which have been tested through the LTP process, as:

- Thurles Bypass linking the N62, N75 and R498; and
- Thurles Inner Relief Road.

The Council will seek to facilitate the sequential development of lands zoned for development, and to ensure that provision is made for the orderly expansion into areas that, though they may not be zoned at present, may be zoned in the future. In assessing new planning applications, and on a case-by-case basis, the Council may require the maintenance of a corridor to provide for future connectivity with adjoining lands that may be zoned for development at a future date. Such future interconnecting routes should be integrated within the urban fabric in line with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DECLG, 2013) so that a sense of place is maintained and to prevent severance between adjoining areas.

6.5 Safeguarding the Strategic Road Network

It is a key aim of the Council to maintain and protect the safety, capacity and efficiency of national roads and associated junctions. Proposals for new development on or affecting national roads within the LAP area, including the implementation of specific objectives in the LAP and Local Transport Plan, shall take account of the requirements of TII and the following publications:

- DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines 2012.
- The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads' (TII Publications DN-GEO-03084)
- Design Phase Procedure for Road Safety Improvement Schemes, Urban Renewal Schemes and Local Improvement Schemes (TII Publications DN-GEO-03030).
- TII Traffic & Transport Assessment Guidelines (2014)
- Publications GE-STY-01024 Road Safety Audit

6.6 Policy and Objectives

Planning and Development Policy	
It is the policy of the Council to:	
Policy 6.1	Support new development that will improve accessibility and movement within Thurles, reduce dependency on private car transport, increase permeability in the town, and encourage the use of energy efficient forms of transport through the promotion of walking, cycling and public transport.
Policy 6.2	Support the implementation of the active travel and demand management measures identified in the Local Transport Plan (Appendix 2) and require proposals for new development to compliment and demonstrate how they will integrate with the provisions of the Local Transport Plan.
Policy 6.3	Require that new developments are designed to comply with Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DoT, 2019 and Supplementary Advice Notes) including making provision for pedestrian and cycle infrastructure and enhancing connectivity and accessibility to the town and providing universal access (in particular for persons with disabilities, reduced mobility and older people) where a whole journey approach is considered.
Policy 6.4	Support the sequential development of lands zoned for development, and to ensure that provision is made for the orderly expansion into areas that may be zoned in the future. In assessing new planning applications, and on a case-by-case basis, the Council may require the maintenance of a corridor to provide for future connectivity with adjoining un-zoned lands.
Policy 6.5	Support the development of Thurles Inner Relief Road to allow certain through traffic to avoid Liberty Square thus alleviating congestion and aiding sustainable transport. The route corridor will be maintained free from development that might prejudice future route planning.
Policy 6.6	Support the development of Thurles Bypass linking the N62, N75 and R498, allowing for the removal of through traffic and HGVs from the town centre. An indicative route study corridor will be maintained free from development that might prejudice future route planning.
Policy 6.7	Support the delivery of a segregated active travel route from Mitchell Street to the train station, serving the schools to the north of Liberty Square.
Policy 6.8	Support the development of a multi-modal public transport hub at Thurles Train Station.

Policy 6.9	Require new development proposals on or affecting national roads within the Plan area to have regard to national, regional and local policies and guidelines as set out in Section 6.5.
-------------------	---

Planning and Development Objectives	
It is an objective of the Council to:	
Objective 6A	Seek to secure funding for the development of the Thurles Bypass linking the N62, N75 and R498.
Objective 6B	Seek to secure funding for the development of the Inner Relief Road (as indicated on Map 1) to provide connectivity between the N62 (Slievenamon Road) and the N75 (Mill Road).
Objective 6C	Actively seek funding for investment in active travel and public transport in the town in line with the provisions of the LTP as outlined in Appendix 2 (and any review thereof).
Objective 6D	Collaborate with the NTA and Irish Rail to consider how the rail service, infrastructure and facilities can be better tailored to the needs of the community.
Objective 6E	Collaborate with the NTA, national and local bus service providers to consider how the bus service, infrastructure and facilities can be better tailored to the needs of the community, including for a consideration of the nature and location of public bus stops.
Objective 6F	Achieve the modal shift target as set out in the LTP (Appendix 2) through collaboration with the community and transport sectors over the life time of this LAP.
Objective 6G	Control the proliferation of non-road traffic signage on and adjacent to national roads within the LAP area in accordance with TII Policy on Provision of Tourist & Leisure Signage on National Roads (March 2011).
Objective 6H	Seek opportunities to improve permeability in existing developed areas in accordance with NTA's Permeability Best Practice Guide, and where the opportunity exists, including those identified in the Local Transport Plan (Appendix 2), require that new development incorporates pedestrian and cycle routes to increase permeability for walking and cycling within the neighbourhoods identified in Figure 10 and the wider area. An evidence-based justification, to the satisfaction of the planning authority, must be provided with a planning application where the opportunity for increased permeability for the wider area exists but is not being delivered through the application site.

7.0 Recognising our Local Heritage

In 2030, Thurles will have enhanced built heritage, amenity and green and blue infrastructure that will showcase the best of the natural and built heritage of the town. Investment in public realm, active travel, heritage and tourism will highlight amenities and provide a high-quality environment for locals, visitors and future generations. This will be achieved by ensuring that new development contributes to urban greening and local ecology, and by sensitive investment in the built heritage in the town.

The natural and built heritage of Thurles is a key element of its character and enriches our lives on a daily basis. This LAP (and its Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment) and the provisions and objectives of the TCDP seeks to identify these assets, recognise their roles and sensitivities, and ensure that adequate protection and support is incorporated in the planning framework.



7.1 Natural Heritage

7.1.1 Watercourses and Riparian Zones

Thurles is situated on a fording point of the River Suir, one of the main rivers of Ireland which links Thurles to Cahir, Clonmel and Waterford harbour on the south east coast of Ireland. Surface water in and around Thurles is channelled by several rivers and streams forming part of the Suir River Catchment. The River Suir flows to the east of the LAP area from north to south (Map 2).



The River Suir in Thurles is a wonderful natural asset, lending a unique character to the town centre. In order to protect the riparian zone, an undisturbed edge or buffer zone shall be required between new developments and watercourses, to maintain the natural function of existing ecosystems and to enable sustainable public access.

7.1.2 Nature Based Solutions, Biodiversity and Urban Greening

The Council will seek to encourage nature-based surface water management solutions, biodiversity and urban greening measures as a natural part of new development and as a measure to support a low-carbon society and build resilience to climate change. These techniques will be required to be detailed at planning application stage by both public and private sector development and as part of public realm enhancement.

7.1.3 Blue and Greenways

The Council will continue to support investment and collaboration, feasibility studies and the design and planning process in the investigation of opportunities for new green and blueways in Tipperary. A Green and Blue Infrastructure Masterplan Roadmap for Tipperary Waterways (TCC, 2018) is in place and it is proposed to prepare a 'Greenway and Trail Strategy' for Tipperary. These provide a framework for opportunities across the county and the Council will consider local opportunities over the lifetime of the LAP.

7.1.4 Trees

Trees form a valuable part of the environment by enhancing visual amenity, improving air quality, adding to the diversity of the landscape and wider environment, and providing habitats for a wide variety of wildlife. The LAP will seek to protect existing trees where possible and to promote urban greening in town centre developments.

The Council may also request that a tree survey is completed as part of a development proposal, to ensure that proposals for development will not damage or result in the loss of important mature trees.

7.2 Our Built, Social and Cultural Heritage

7.2.1 Built Heritage and Record of Protected Structures

There are a number of iconic structures in Thurles that define the character of the town including:

- Bridge Castle – a 15th century river crossing point formerly comprising the east gate of the town and Black Castle – a mid-15th century tower house located to the south east of a former Anglo-Norman castle.
- Barry's Bridge – a seven-arch limestone road bridge over River Suir, built c.1600



By the mid-18th century significant plot development had begun on the main street both east and west of the bridge and the main street to the west of the bridge shows the beginnings of its present-day splayed form, widening towards the west end. In the 1800's a diocesan college, St Patrick's, was built on land to the south of Main Street and between 1865 and 1872 the cathedral was constructed in an Italianate style by one of the foremost Irish architects of the period, John James McCarthy. A review of the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) for Thurles will be carried out in accordance with Section 55 of the Act and thereafter the TCDP, Volume 4, will set out an RPS for Thurles including provisions and objectives for their protection.



7.2.2 Architectural Conservation Areas

In order to preserve the character and identity of Thurles, a number of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) are designated in the town centre (Map 2).

1. Liberty Square and Friar Street
2. Matthew Avenue and Castle Avenue
3. Mitchell Street

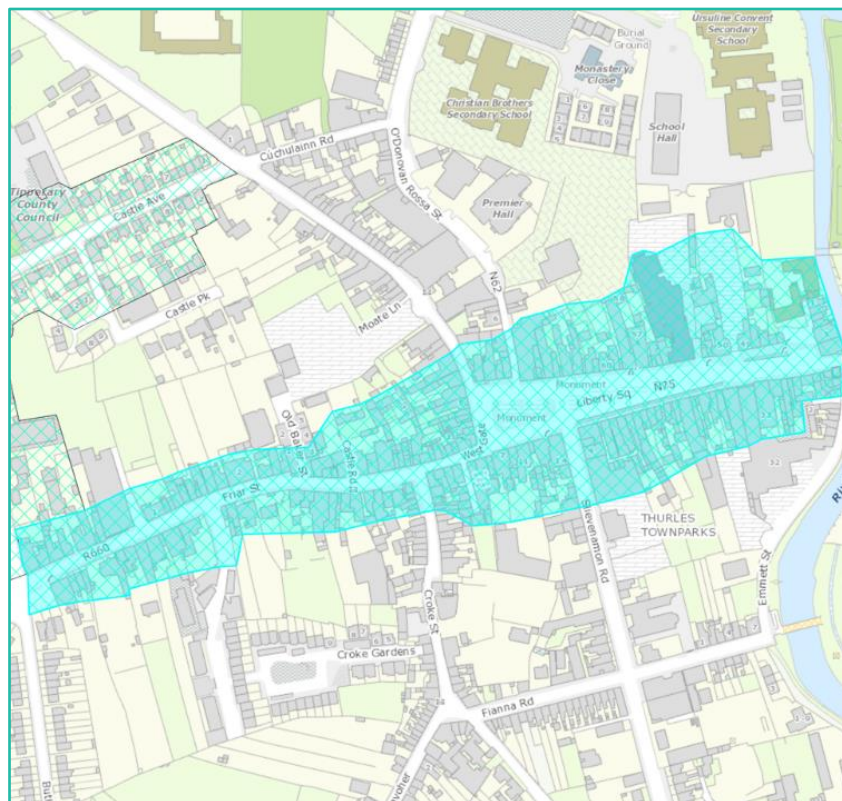


Figure 14: Liberty Square and Friar Street ACA

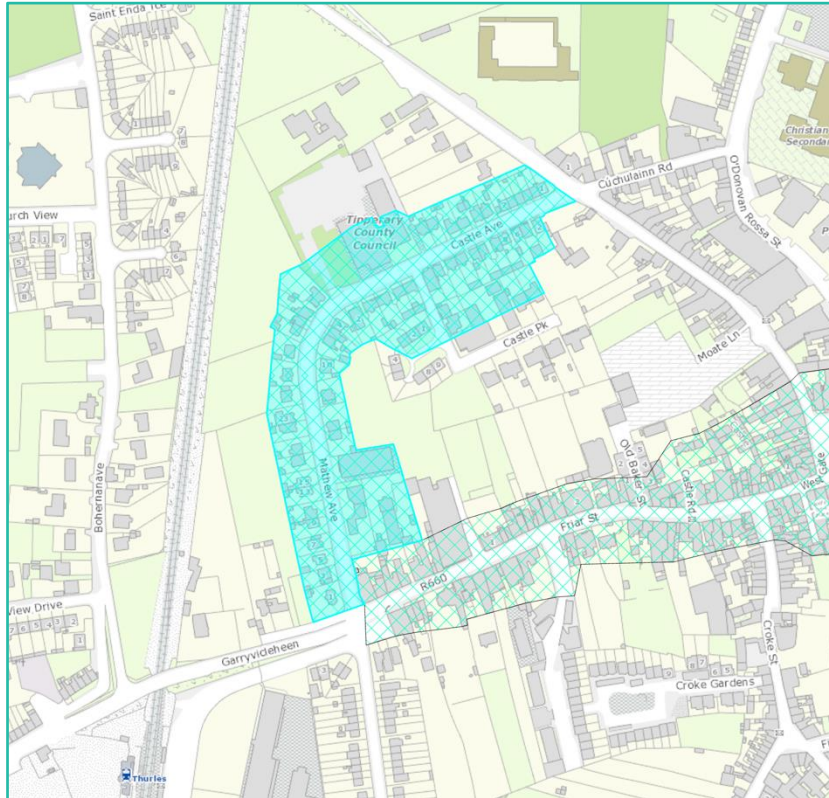


Figure 15: Matthew Avenue and Castle Avenue ACA

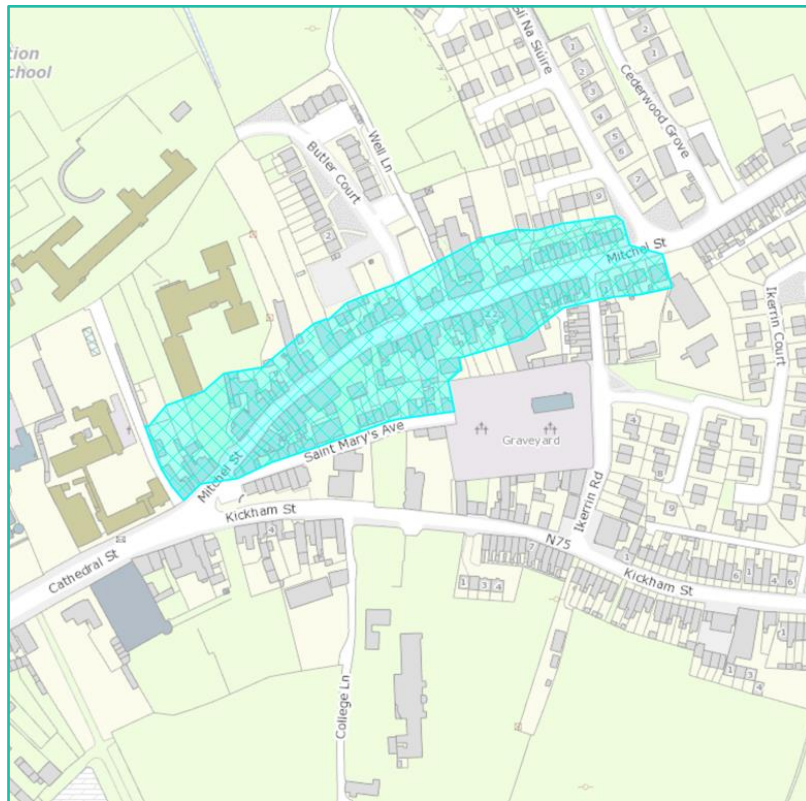


Figure 16: Mitchell Street ACA

Standard planning exemptions for works do not apply in an ACA as set out in Section 82(1) of the Act. This means that development to the exterior of a building in an architectural conservation area may require planning permission. The owner of a protected structure or structure/feature located within an ACA should seek advice before making any alteration to the interior or exterior. The Council will support new development that is sensitive to the special character and amenity of the relevant ACAs.

7.2.3 Archaeology

There are various entries to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994, within and around Thurles (Sheet No. 41 Archaeology RMP Tipperary NR), including:

TN041 - 042001	Castle – Tower House (Thurles Townparks)
TN041 - 042005	Sheela-na-Gig (Thurles Townparks)
TN041 – 042006	Bridge (Thurles Townparks)
TN041 - 042015	Gateway Site (Thurles Townparks)

The National Monuments Service applies different levels of protection to a monument depending on its significance. Universal protection is afforded to all monuments listed in the RMP. All entries on the list are known as ‘Recorded Monuments’. In addition, certain monuments are accorded a higher level of protection, and are recorded on the ‘Register of Historic Monuments’. The highest level of protection is afforded to ‘National Monuments’, i.e., monuments deemed to be of national significance. There are numerous sites and monuments found within the town’s Zones of Archaeological Potential¹⁴. Locations of sites and monuments are mapped on Map 2B. Policy 13-4 of the TCDP sets out the requirements for new development in relation to the RMPs and ZAPs.

7.2.4 Respecting Views/Streetscapes as part of new development

The consolidation and revitalisation of the compact growth area is a key focus of this LAP. However, new development should have consideration for how it can positively integrate with, and enhance the built fabric of the town. The following views and streetscapes should be given due consideration as part of the design process for new development:

1. Views into and out of the ACAs
2. View from Cathedral Street St. Patrick’s College
3. View of Bridge Castle from Liberty Square and Cathedral Street
4. View of Black Castle from Masterplan Area

¹⁴ Archaeological Survey Database, National Monuments Service

7.3 Policy and Objectives

Planning and Development Policy	
It is the policy of the Council to:	
Policy 7.1	Protect and conserve the integrity and the ecological and biodiversity value of the River Suir as it runs through the town, and to maintain a riparian strip along the river free from development and of adequate width to permit maintenance. Development proposals within or adjacent to the river will be assessed to ensure the protection of water quality and river access.
Policy 7.2	Ensure that the setting and character of Liberty Square, including the setting of Bridge Castle is safeguarded and enhanced in the assessment of new development proposals.
Policy 7.3	Require new development proposals to have regard to the architectural character and special value of Thurles' ACAs, in accordance with the Architectural Heritage Protection, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2011).
Policy 7.4	Safeguard sites, features and objects of archaeological interest in Thurles (in situ where practicable or as a minimum, preservation by record) included in the Record of Monuments and Places and sites.
Policy 7.5	Preserve structures and features of architectural and historic interest which add to the character and appearance of the town.
Policy 7.6	Require that the views and streetscapes as listed in Section 7.2.4 shall be given due consideration as part of the design process for new development to the satisfaction of the Council. A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) or Landscape Value and Impact Assessment (LVIA) may be required to demonstrate development proposals accord with this policy.
Policy 7.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Support the retention of trees of significant amenity value, and require public realm proposals to include for urban greening that is appropriate to the character of the area, provides for urban shading, supports biodiversity and provides an appropriate visual setting. b) Consider the removal of mature trees, or trees of significant amenity value, only where it can be demonstrated that the loss of the tree(s) is outweighed by the wider public benefits of the proposal. c) Require development proposals which affect trees of significant amenity value to identify trees to be retained, and methods for the protection of those trees to be retained during and post-construction to be set out within development proposals.

	d) Require new development proposals to incorporate the provision of trees, in accordance with the requirements of Section 3.7 of the Development Management standards of the TCDP.
--	---

Planning and Development Objectives	
It is an objective of the Council to:	
Objective 7A	Support and work with the local community in the development of blue and green infrastructure in the town and in the enhancement of the biodiversity and conservation value of the river corridor.
Objective 7B	Work in partnership with stakeholders and the local community in the delivery of projects for Thurles in the Green and Blue Infrastructure Masterplan Roadmap for Tipperary Waterways (TCC, 2018) and the proposed Tipperary Greenway and trail Strategy and seek funding opportunities as they arise.
Objective 7C	Support the completion of Thurles 'Looped River Walk'.

8.0 Infrastructure, Energy and Utilities

Over the lifetime of this LAP, there will be continued investment in a sustainable network of physical strategic infrastructure and utilities to support sustainable socio-economic growth, and to protect the quality of the environment of Thurles. This will be achieved through the identification of required infrastructure in collaboration with infrastructure providers, and continued investment in the right locations, and at the right time.

8.1 Energy Demand and Renewable Energy

As a town of nearly 8,000 persons, Thurles has significant energy demands for heating, electricity and transport. The town is not on the national gas network and is therefore reliant on electricity, liquified natural gas, solid fuel and oil for heating demand. In line with the objectives of the national Climate Action Plan (DECC, 2023), the Council and its stakeholders will support the transition to renewable energy for heating and transport, and will encourage and support the transition to renewable energy generated locally in tandem with the energy efficiency upgrading of built fabric throughout the town.

The Council recognises the role of domestic scale renewables and appropriately scaled renewable energy development in meeting local demand and supports the principle of on-site energy generation for self-consumption.

8.2 Water and Wastewater

Water services in towns are maintained and provided by Uisce Éireann and the Council will require new developments to be served by existing waste water treatment facilities and public water supplies, where possible.

In considering new development proposals and in developing masterplans for specific sites and lands as required under the LAP consideration shall be given to:

- The servicing of adjoining sites/ development lands (where feasible)
- The protection / diversion of existing Uisce Eireann infrastructure and maintenance of services.

8.2.1 Thurles Public Water Supply

The town is supplied from the Thurles Regional Water Supply Scheme in the Southern Region. This Water Supply Scheme provides a safe and secure water supply to over 15,000 people in the Thurles area, as well as Borrisoleigh, Ballycahill and Holycross. Uisce Éireann have indicated that

there is capacity to cater for projected population growth from the Thurles water resource zone. Monitoring is carried out by the EPA and the water supply currently meets all relevant water quality standards.

8.2.2 Thurles Public Wastewater System

Uisce Éireann is responsible for the collection, treatment and disposal of public wastewater and are currently carrying out a Drainage Area Plan (DAP) for the town incorporating a Wastewater Infrastructure Plan for future investment. The Thurles Wastewater Treatment Plant has a high design capacity, with a current (2020) load of 15,000 (PE)¹⁵. Uisce Éireann have indicated that there is capacity to cater for projected population growth in Thurles. However, they have indicated a need for ongoing improvement works in line with their DAP to ensure adequate separation of foul and surface water, and to service lands identified for development over the lifetime of the LAP. Local network upgrades may be required in some areas to provide capacity to individual sites. These will be customer driven/funded in accordance with the requirements of the Uisce Éireann Connections Charging Policy¹⁶.

New development proposals on lands adjoining the Thurles WWTP must consider the importance of preserving the strategic function of the Thurles WWTP. Where new residential development is proposed on nearby zoned lands the amenity of future residents must be considered.

8.2.3 Water Framework Directive

Applications for development under this Plan must demonstrate that the proposal for development would not adversely affect a water body's ability to meet its objectives under the Water Framework Directive, individually, as a result of the proposed development, or cumulatively, in combination with other developments.

8.3 Sustainable Surface Water Management

The Council and Uisce Éireann are responsible for the on-going maintenance and monitoring of sustainable drainage systems and will seek to maintain drainage having consideration to Water Sensitive Urban Design and application of a nature-based Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) approach. It is the policy of Uisce Éireann to maximise the capacity of existing collection systems for foul water, therefore, the discharge of additional surface water to combined (foul and surface water) sewers is not permitted. The removal of stormwater from combined sewers as part

¹⁵ Irish Water for Tipperary County Council (2021), Annual Environmental Report.

¹⁶ <https://www.water.ie/connections/information/charges/>

of roads, public realm, residential or other developments must be incorporated in new developments where feasible.

The Council will require new development in Thurles to provide separate foul and surface water drainage systems and to incorporate water sensitive urban design and nature-based SUDS. The provisions of 'Nature-Based Solutions to the Management of Rainwater and Surface Water Runoff in Urban Areas' (water sensitive urban design) Best Practice Interim Guidance Document (DHLGH, 2001) and any review thereof, will apply.

8.4 Circular Economy and Waste Management

The closest municipal landfill site to Thurles is Ballaghveny, Tipperary and the closest Municipal Recycling Centre/Civic Amenity Site is located in Cashel. There are approximately 135 Bring Banks in Tipperary with one located in Parnell Street carpark. Recycling services are also available in the privately-run Thurles Recycling Centre. Private waste collectors in the town provide a three-bin collection service, to enable householders to recycle as much as possible.

It is a key objective of the Council to support the sustainable management of waste and the reduction in the production of waste in Thurles in line with the National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy (Government of Ireland, 2022) and associated guidance across the delivery of its services and in the management of new development.

8.5 Flood Risk Management

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), as required by 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Office of Public Works, 2009) and Circular PL 2/2014 (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government), has been undertaken alongside the preparation of the SEA and the preparation of the Draft LAP. Flood risk from fluvial sources informed the land use zoning provided for by the Plan.

The SFRA is focused on land use zoning as well as flood risk management policy and has considered available, and emerging information on flood risk indicators, including the OPW's Flood Hazard and Risk Mapping and any flood defences. In line with the Guidelines, this demonstrates that Tipperary County Council have considered such climate change impacts in the preparation of this Plan, by avoiding development in areas potentially prone to flooding in the future. Overlays Land Use Zoning and National CFRAM potential future scenario mapping have been included in the SFRA. Various flood risk management provisions from the County Development Plan and the Local Area Plan explicitly integrate climate change considerations. This includes Policy 8.4 d)

outlined below. In line, with the requirements of the Flood Risk Guidelines, Flood Zones A and B have been identified for Thurles and are outlined below: (also mapped on Map 1).

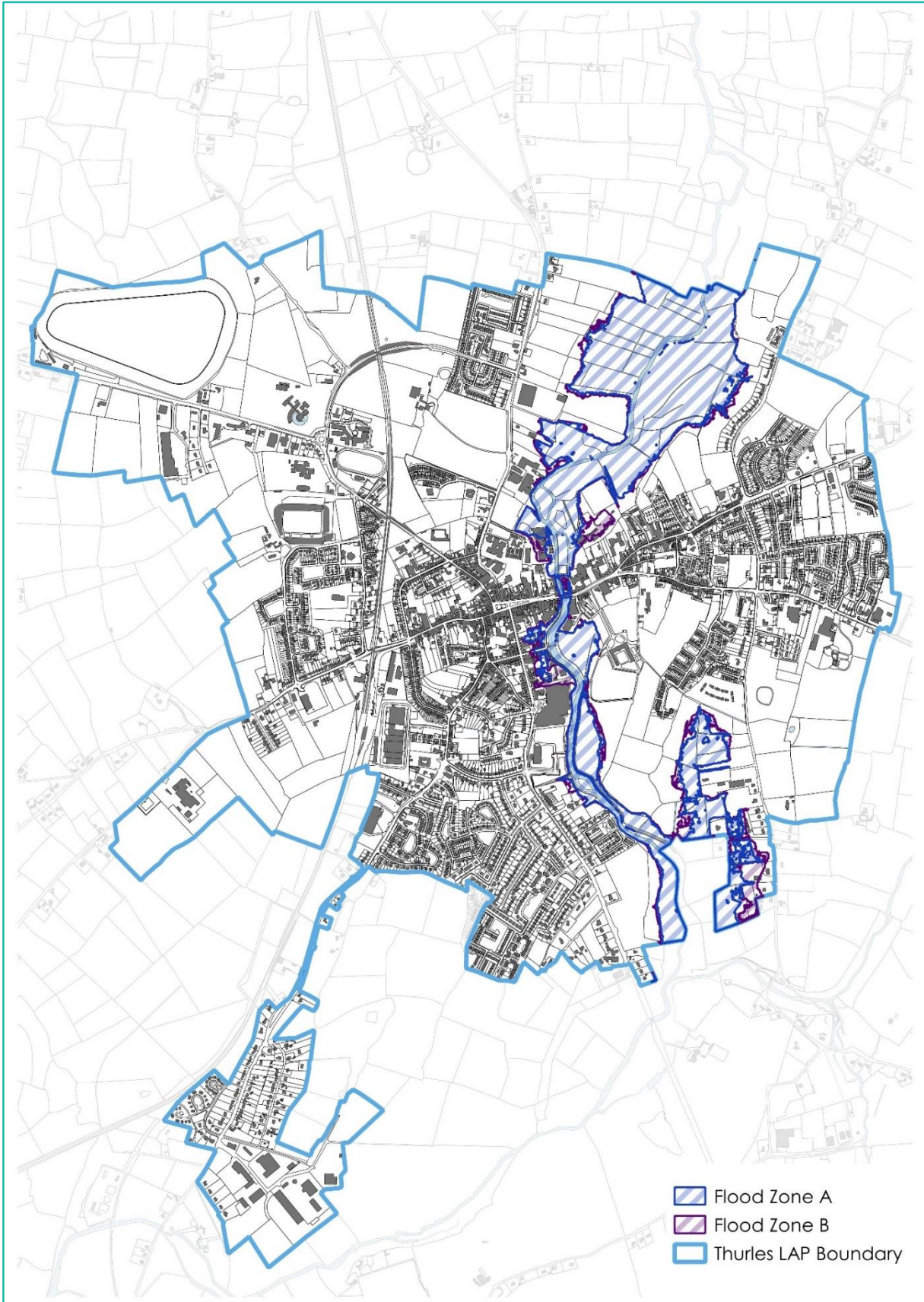


Figure 17: Flood Zones in Thurles

Areas that are located in flood risk areas are generally not zoned for uses that are vulnerable to flooding. In cases where a site is zoned for use in an area at flood risk, a 'Justification Test' was carried out as part of the SFRA (Appendix 7).

In addition to the Flood Zones A and B as identified, there are areas in Thurles, due to its underlying geology, that may be subject to intermittent ground water and pluvial flooding. Therefore, the Council will require that groundwater and pluvial risks are considered by any site-specific flood risk assessment undertaken at project level, in compliance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines (DEHLG, 2009).

In consultation with the OPW, the Council will support the development of flood relief schemes in the town.

8.6 Policy and Objectives

Planning and Development Policy	
It is the policy of the Council to:	
Policy 8.1	Support the use of renewable energy technologies at appropriate scales in residential, commercial and community developments and support the principle of on-site energy generation for self-consumption, subject to other planning and design criteria.
Policy 8.2	Support the sustainable and efficient use of existing capacity in water services and permit new connections to the Thurles public and waste water supply. Where local network upgrades are required, to ensure that capacity is provided to individual sites in accordance with the Uisce Éireann Connections Charging Policy and Uisce Eireann's Connections and Developer Service.
Policy 8.3	Require new development to ensure it would not adversely affect a water body's ability to meet its objectives under the Water Framework Directive, individually, as a result of the proposed development, or cumulatively, in combination with other developments.
Policy 8.4	Require that all development proposals in Thurles integrate SuDS, and nature-based solutions to SuDS, as part of an overall sustainable urban drainage and urban greening approach, unless they are demonstrated to be operationally unfeasible to the satisfaction of the Council.
Policy 8.5	<p>Require proposals for development to comply with requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines (DEHLG, 2009) and any update thereof) including providing detailed design specifications as may be required to facilitate the impact of development. The following provisions apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Extensions of existing uses or minor development within flood risk areas will be supported, provided they do not: obstruct important flow paths; introduce a number of people into flood risk areas; entail the storage of hazardous substances; have adverse impacts or impede access to a watercourse, floodplain or flood protection and management facilities; or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. b) Applications for development on previously developed lands within Flood Zones A or B, shall be subject to site specific flood risk assessment and shall provide details of structural and non-structural flood risk management measures, such as those relating to floor levels, internal

	<p>layout, flood-resistant construction, flood-resilient construction, emergency response planning and access and egress during flood events.</p> <p>c) Where a ‘Justification Test’ applies, it must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the planning authority that the flood risk can be adequately managed, and that the use and the development of the lands will not cause unacceptable impacts elsewhere.</p> <p>d) Require the submission of site-specific Flood Risk Assessments for developments undertaken within Flood Zones A & B and on lands subject to the mid-range future scenario floods extents, as published by the Office of Public Works. These Flood Risk Assessments shall consider climate change impacts and adaptation measures including details of structural and non-structural flood risk management measures, such as those relating to floor levels, internal layout, flood-resistant construction, flood-resilient construction, emergency response planning and access and egress during flood events. Flood Risk Assessments shall apply the precautionary approach recommended in the Guidelines and shall be informed by the advice on the expected impacts of climate change and the allowances to be provided for future flood risk management provided in the OPW’s (2019) Flood Risk Management Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan and the guidance on potential future scenarios contained therein.”</p> <p>e) Groundwater and pluvial flood risks shall be considered by any site-specific flood risk assessment undertaken at project level, in compliance with the Planning Systems and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (DEHLG, 2009). For the avoidance of doubt, the Office of Public Works’ Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment indicative pluvial maps (2012) are not considered to be reliable for assessing pluvial risk.”</p>
<p>Policy 8.6</p>	<p>Require new development proposals to safeguard the strategic function of the Thurles Waste Water Treatment Plant.</p>
<p>Policy 8.7</p>	<p>Support the development of flood relief works in Thurles.</p>

Planning and Development Objectives	
It is an objective of the Council to:	
Objective 8A	Continually progress, in conjunction with Uisce Éireann, water supply and sewer rehabilitation activities, capital maintenance activities, etc in line with the Thurles Drainage Area Plan and Wastewater Infrastructure Plan, and to continue to monitor the performance of the networks to ensure that the most urgent works are prioritised as required.
Objective 8B	Integrate a Nature-Based Solutions approach to SUDS, with a focus on biodiversity as part of new public realm and public sector development.
Objective 8C	Support the sustainable management of waste and enable a significant reduction in the production of waste in Thurles, in line with the principles of the Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy (DECC, 2021).
Objective 8D	Support with and work in co-operation with the Office of Public Works in the design, development and implementation of the Nenagh Flood Relief Scheme.

9.0 Land use Zoning Framework

The purpose of the land use zoning framework is to guide development to the right location and ensure that development takes place in a co-ordinated and coherent way, while protecting the built and natural environment of the town. The land use framework is underpinned by the SLA with a tiered approach to zoning in accordance with the NPF requirements and is informed by the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DHLGH, 2022).

Whilst the land use zoning framework will give an indication of the acceptability or otherwise of a particular use in particular areas, proposed development will also be assessed in terms of compliance with the policies set out in the TCDP and Development Management Standards¹⁷ set out therein, the Planning Guidelines and local planning objectives of this LAP.

A general guideline of acceptability or otherwise of new development is provided, although the listed uses are not exhaustive. Factors such as density, height, massing, traffic generation, public health, design, visual amenity, potential nuisance by way of noise, odour and pollution etc. are also significant and relevant to the proper planning and development of the area and will be considered by the planning authority at planning application stage.

Table 9.1: Land-Use Objectives

Zoning	Objective	Description
UC	Urban Core: Provide for the development and enhancement of urban core uses including retail, residential, commercial, civic and other uses	Consolidate the existing fabric of the core/central areas of settlements by densification of appropriate commercial and residential developments ensuring a mix of commercial, recreational, civic, cultural, leisure, residential uses and urban streets, while delivering a quality urban environment. The zoning emphasises compact growth objectives and priority for public transport, pedestrians and cyclists.
RE	Regeneration Zone: Provide for targeted enterprise and/or residential-led regeneration within the consolidation area on underused sites.	Specific underused areas of the town centre-built fabric with close physical links with the centre and targeted for significant redevelopment, consolidation and regeneration activity. New development shall be broadly in line with 'Urban Core' in nature with a focus on connectivity and linkages with the Urban Core.

¹⁷ Volume 3, Appendix 6 Development Management Standards

MU	<p>Mixed Use: To support the role of the town centre and enable primarily; retail, commercial, civic and other uses.</p>	<p>Provide for mixed uses and services, that may include retail, civic and commercial development. Policy 7-4 of the Tipperary County Development Plan 2022 will apply to planning application for retail development.</p>
RS	<p>Existing Residential: Provide for residential development and protect and improve residential amenity.</p>	<p>Existing predominately residential areas allowing for the protection of existing residential amenity balanced with new infill development.</p>
R1	<p>New Residential: To provide for new residential development.</p>	<p>New residential areas/town extensions to ensure the provision of high quality and connected new residential environments. Provide an appropriate mix of house sizes, types and tenures in order to meet household needs and to promote balanced communities.</p>
SR	<p>Strategic Reserve: Long-term strategic and sustainable development sites.</p>	<p>Sites that may deliver housing within the subsequent plan period (unless a review of the current plan identifies a need for additional lands). (4.4.4 of the Development Plan Guidelines).</p>
E	<p>Employment: To provide, improve and encourage general enterprise, business development and employment activity, including start up enterprises and tourism. Provide for distribution, warehouse, storage and logistics facilities where appropriate access to a major road network is available.</p>	<p>Facilitate opportunities for compatible industry and general employment uses. General employment areas should be highly accessible, well designed, permeable and legible with a modest density of employees. Inappropriate intensive office uses at locations poorly served by public transport, and the proliferation of retail or commercial uses requiring public access that are best located in mixed-use or town core areas will not be acceptable.</p> <p>Facilitate logistics and warehouse type activity including storage, distribution and associated re-packaging of goods and products with a low density of employees. These uses have specific transportation requirements as they can generate considerable traffic volumes and should be located within a purpose built, well designated environment connected to the strategic road network. Proposals for the sale of bulky goods/goods in bulk within high quality settings and</p>

		highly accessible locations shall be subject to the requirements of the Retail Planning Guidelines.
GI	General Industry: Provide for heavy/specialised industrial development.	Facilitate industry that may be associated with environmental emissions, including noise and odour (e.g. waste processing, aggregate processing, etc) and with intensive processing.
CSI	Community Services and Infrastructure: To provide and improve social and public facilities and infrastructure.	Provide for and protect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • civic, religious, community, health care and social infrastructure • educational and associated services/facilities such as leisure and sports facilities, start-up and incubations enterprises etc. • transport and utilities infrastructure.
A	Amenity: To provide, preserve and enhance open space, biodiversity and amenity uses.	Protect sensitive, biodiverse, riverine and scenic locations from development that would adversely affect the environmental quality/sensitivity of these areas.
OSR	Open Space and Recreation: Preserve and provide for open space, sports and recreational amenities.	Preserve and provide for general open space and open space associated with sporting and recreational amenities and services. Commercial services e.g. food and retail services shall be directly associated with and directly related to on-site sports and recreation facilities.
TE	Town Environs: To provide for agricultural needs and to protect and enhance the rural environment and setting of the settlement.	Prioritise the protection of rural amenity and avoid harmful impacts of urban sprawl. Provide for and protect agricultural activities and rural -related business activities which have a demonstrated need for a rural location, and will not conflict with the future growth of the town.

The Zoning Matrix below lists examples of key land-use activities under each zoning objective. It is a guide (in principle) of the acceptability or otherwise of the specified land-uses in each zone:

Table 9.2: Zoning Matrix												
	√: Permitted in Principle			O: Open for Consideration			X: Not Normally Permitted					
Use Types	UC	RE	MU	RS	R1	SR	E	GI	CSI	A	OSR	TE
Abattoir	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	√	X	X	X	O
Agricultural Buildings/Structures	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	√
Betting Office/Amusement Centre	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Caravan Park/Camping	X	O	O	X	X	O	O	X	X	O	O	O
Cash and Carry Wholesale	O	X	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X
Community Facility	√	√	O	O	O	O	√	X	√	O	O	O
Childcare	√	√	O	O	√	X	O	X	√	X	X	X
Night Club	√	O	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X
Cinema	√	O	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X
Doctor/Dentist/Healthcare Practitioner	√	O	O	O	O	X	O	X	O	X	X	X
Educational/School	√	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	√	X	O	X
Funeral Home	O	O	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X
Crematorium	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	X
Garden Centre	X	O	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	O
Halting Site/Traveller Group Housing	X	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X
Haulage/Bus/Truck Park	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	O	X	X	X	X
Health Centre (public)	√	O	O	O	O	X	O	X	√	X	X	X
Hotel	√	O	O	O	O	X	O	X	X	X	X	X
Industrial – General	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	√	X	X	X	X
Industrial - Light	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	O	X	X	X	X
Motor Sales Outlet	X	X	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X
Office	√	√	O	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	X
Parks/Playgrounds	√	√	O	√	√	O	O	X	√	√	√	O
Petrol Station	X	X	O	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	X
Places of Worship	√	√	O	O	O	X	X	X	√	X	X	X
Public House	√	√	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sports/Leisure Facilities	√	√	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	√	X
Student Accommodation	√	√	O	O	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X
Refuse Transfer Station	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	X
Residential	√	√	O	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	O
Restaurant	√	√	O	O	O	X	O	X	X	X	O	X
Retail Warehouse	X	O	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X
Retirement/Nursing Home	√	√	O	O	√	X	X	X	O	X	X	X

Shop – Neighbourhood	√	√	○	○	○	×	○	×	×	×	○	×
Supermarket (circa 1500sqm)	√	○	○	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Take-Away	○	○	○	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	○	×
Veterinary Surgery	○	○	○	○	○	×	○	×	×	×	×	○
Warehousing and Logistics	×	×	×	×	×	×	√	×	×	×	×	×

Note on Land Use Zoning Objectives and Matrix:

The limitation described in this note applies to a relatively small number of instances where Flood Risk Zones A and B overlap with certain Land Use Zoning objectives. Uses under all Land Use Zoning Objectives (apart from where the Justification Test outlined in the Flood Risk Management Plan has been passed) shall be limited to water-compatible uses in Flood Zone A, and less vulnerable or water compatible uses in Flood Zone B (as per the Flood Risk Management Guidelines), and detailed site-specific Flood Risk Assessment will be required in these areas. This limitation shall take primacy over any other provision relating to these land use zoning objectives.

The Justification Test has been passed for the following Land Use Zonings:

- Existing car-parking and open space at Ursuline Secondary School (zoned Community and Services Infrastructure);
- Various parts of the Urban Core; mixed uses (zoned Urban Core);
- Existing Presentation Primary School (zoned Community and Services Infrastructure);
- Existing Garda Station (zoned Community and Services Infrastructure); and
- Existing Thurles Shopping Centre (zoned Community and Services Infrastructure)

10.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

10.1 Introduction

The implementation and delivery of the LAP is a key objective of the Council. This monitoring programme will be supported by procedural, information technology and operational supports that will enable ease of measurement. The Council places an emphasis on monitoring, and it is a key objective of this Plan to carry out effective, cross-sectional monitoring and evaluation of the policies and objectives contained in this LAP.

10.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring procedures are being developed in line with Section 16.3 and Policy 16-1 of the TCDP 2022. It is proposed that the monitoring regime implemented for the TCDP is extended to include for the policies and objectives of the LAP to ensure a consistent monitoring methodology is used.

10.3 Planning Objective

Planning Objective for Monitoring and Evaluation	
It is an objective of the Council to:	
Objective 10A	Undertake a programme of monitoring and evaluation of the LAP over its lifetime in accordance with the monitoring framework and methodology prepared for the TCDP 2022.