

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [forwardplanning](#)  
**Subject:** Submissions to Galway County Development Plan  
**Date:** Wednesday 2 September 2020 10:34:00

---

Hi

We wish the following (see link) plan be considered as part of the county development plan regarding Maigh Cuilinn

<http://whitakerinstitute.ie/project/moycullen-2030-a-village-plan/>

Regards  
Jimmy Keady (Forbairt Pobail Maigh Cuilinn)

---

This email has been scanned for spam and viruses by Proofpoint Essentials. Click [here](#) to report this email as spam.



Toggle navigation

- [Home](#)
- [Projects](#)
- Moycullen 2030: A Village Plan

## Moycullen 2030: A Village Plan

This Irish Research Council funded project set out to explore a different approach to planning in Ireland. Owing to the nature of the modern service-led economy, it will come as little surprise that cities are growing faster than less urbanised regions. However, in Ireland this trend towards unbalanced development was well established over five decades ago. This project grew out of a concern, that politically, Ireland is one of the most centralised countries in Europe. Local government finances reflect this reality (see Ger Turley piece), local planning in Ireland is underfunded. The result of this is a lack of coherence in planning at the local level. Local Area Plans tend to be reductive, deduced from constrained budgets at the local authority level, and devoid of real consideration of their place.

The Village Plan set out to develop a methodology to encourage the broadest possible public engagement in planning for the future development of a village from the bottom up. Part of this methodology involved the development of the 'Village Plan' App which introduced users to the environmental and social consequences of planning decisions. Over the course of six months, the project collected the wishes and wants of over 800 residents (close to 50%) of the village.

Download the report [here](#).

Project Overview

**Principal Investigator**

Dr Patrick Collins

**Project Duration**

June 2019-December 31 2019

**Project Website**

[Visit Website](#)

Moy  
cullen

2030

Maigh  
Cuilinn

# Moycullen 2030: A Village Plan.

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Réamhrá</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Moycullen</b>	<b>11</b>
History	12
Legislation (planning)	14
<b>Guiding Principles</b>	<b>17</b>
Climate Imperative	17
Good Planning Practice	19
<b>The Process: A Collective Authorship of Place</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Moycullen 2030: A Village Plan</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Community Recommendation 1</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Community Recommendation 2</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Connectivity Recommendation 1</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Connectivity Recommendation 2</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Collaboration Recommendation 1</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Collaboration Recommendation 2</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Next Steps</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>74</b>



*This research was funded by the Irish Research Council under their New Foundations scheme.*

## SCENARIO 1: MOYCULLEN 2030 A Village Unplanned

### Key traits:

Sprawling developments

Large estates

Suburbanisation

Car centred

Strained services

Commuter village

Lack of infrastructural investments

### Defining features:

Increased land speculation

Increased liability of flooding

Increased social atomisation

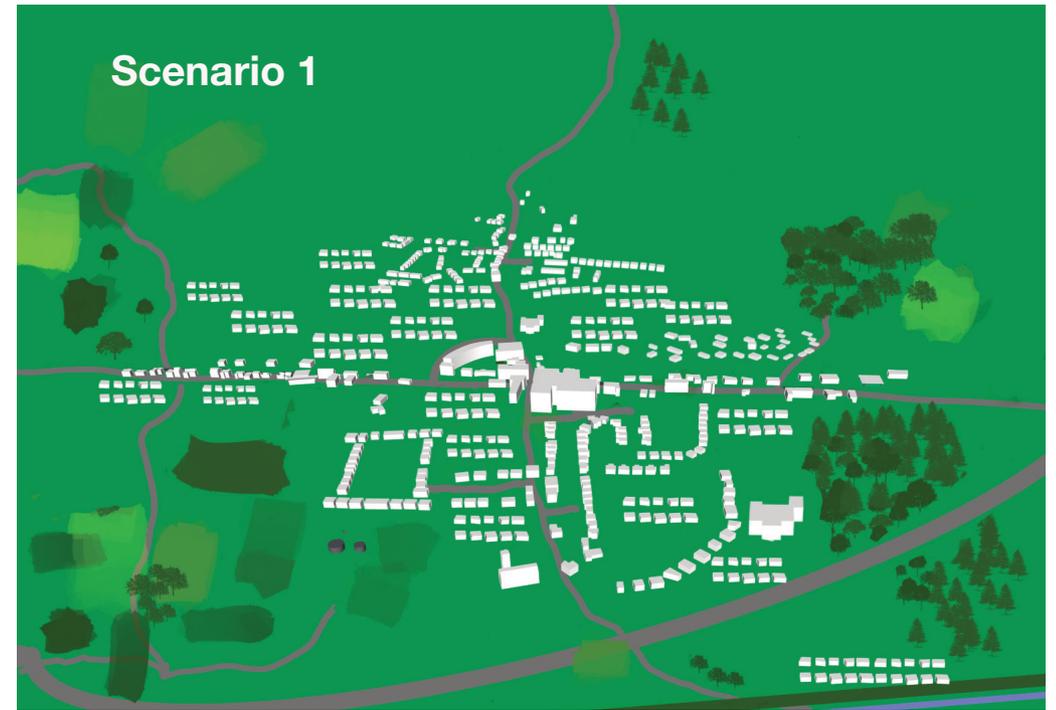
Risk of ghettosiation

No village centre

Lack of a public realm

Falling house prices

## Scenario 1



## SCENARIO 2: MOYCULLEN 2030 A Village Planned

A village planned under the guidance of good practice **planning principles** and **climate resilience**. A village planned according to the will of its residents.

### COMMUNITY:

People centred, place based development that ensures the central role of the community in future development.

- The Co-op. A cultural / community hub, a site of social exchange.

- A Public Park. Improved public realm, a centering of the village.

### CONNECTIVITY:

People centred, place based development that ensures better connectivity within the village and between it and the city.

- Improved footpaths, Connemara Greenway and Blueways.

- A bus stop, an hourly bus service to Galway city.

### COLLABORATION:

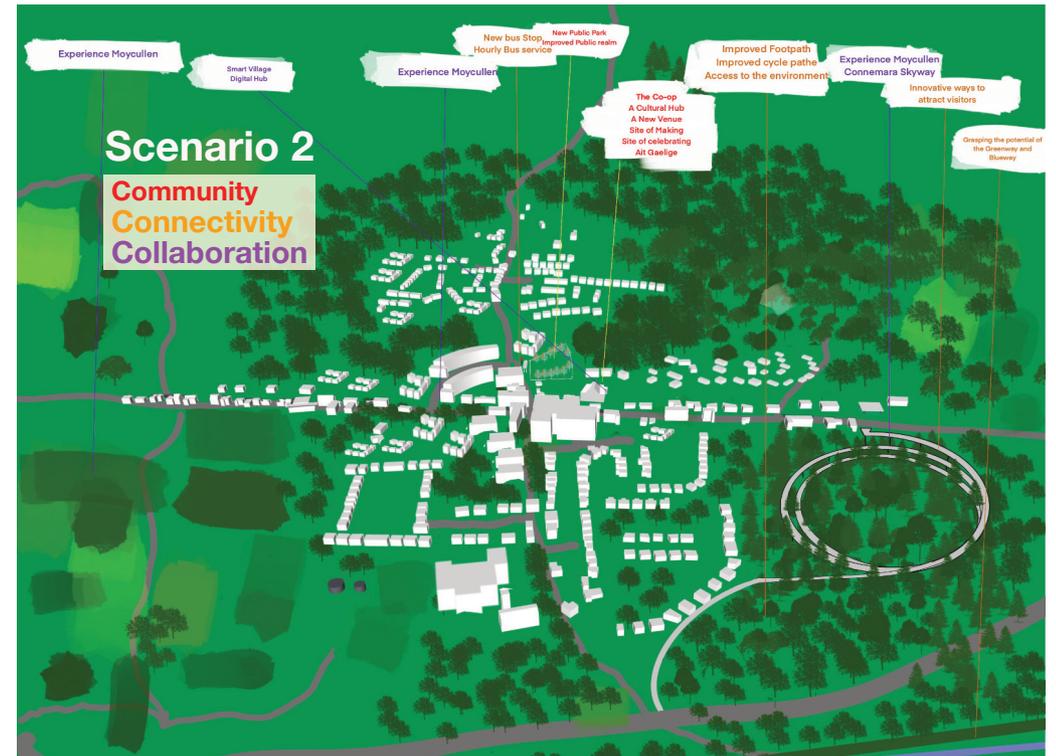
People centred, place based development that is coordinated and ensures broad buy in.

- "Experience Moycullen", coordination of the village offerings.

- Smart Village, people powered planning and better leadership at the local level.

## Scenario 2

Community  
Connectivity  
Collaboration



# Introduction

Moycullen is set for change. A number of key infrastructural investments are due. A bypass of the Village is set to commence in 2020, a new primary school will be built by 2022 and a dedicated cycleway in the form of the Connemara Greenway is due for completion in the same year. In all, 300 housing units have been granted permission within the village boundaries. Longer term infrastructural investments such as the planned ring road around Galway city will also have very real effects on the Village in the foothills of Connemara. Conservative estimates would place these changes as at least doubling the population of the village by 2030. Change is coming to Moycullen.

Amid grand plans decided on in boardrooms of national institutions like the National Roads Authority or An Bord Pleanála, communities can feel far removed from the process of change. As a nation, our engagement with the planning process tends to be reactive, we see the plans and then we decide whether we agree with them or not. The result is that planning influence is mostly understood in the negative; if we agree we remain silent, if we disagree, we lodge an objection.

The Moycullen Village Plan was conceived to change how residents of a place interact with planning decisions regarding that place. As such, it sets out to be proactive. In so doing, it is placing the resident at the very centre of the process. With the help of support from the Irish Research Council and NUI Galway, we have set about changing the way we think about planning and placemaking. This has been achieved through an extensive engagement process that has taken place over six months. That engagement saw us solicit the views of circa 800 residents of Moycullen village. The discussions were interesting and the insights were fascinating. What follows is simply the summation of the views of people regarding their place.

Throughout the process, it was obvious that the people were waiting for these questions to be asked. People have a vested interest in their place. Various phases of growth have shaped the nation. From the building boom of the Celtic Tiger, the

Ghost estates of the financial crisis to the current undersupply of housing, people recognise how different approaches have shaped the places we live. Arguably, now, more than ever, people have a greater interest in how we will make them in the future.

In reality, the Ireland that we live in has been shaped by a select few. The interests of developers have superseded those of the State. In turn, developers as private entities have acted in accordance with the market and with incentives that the State has provided. As a result, we feel like we have had very little influence over the places we work and live in. Yet, partly a direct consequence of past mistakes, partly due to the climate imperative, people want to have a say in how their places are made. This was the starting point for the Moycullen Village Plan project.

In June 2019, we set about developing a collective vision for the future development of Moycullen. The central tenet of the project was community authorship of their place. This was carried out through an open and participative methodology to ensure that all voices were heard. Through interviews, focus groups, face-to-face surveys and online engagement we have collected the wishes and the wants of the people of Moycullen. This report is a broad reflection of those. In as much as this report marks the end of this project, the real hope is that it marks the start of a truly community-led participation in the future development of the village.

**“With most things, the average is mediocrity. With decision making, it’s often excellence. You could say it’s as if we’ve been programmed to be collectively smart.”** James Surowiecki  
- The Wisdom of Crowds.

While it may be true that it takes a village to raise a child, it is also true that it takes a community to make a Village. The village of Moycullen sits north-west of Galway city. While only 12 kilometres from the city centre, the village has a unique identity, it is a sporting place, is áit le Gaeilge í, it is home to many generations and home to newcomers. Home to 1,704 residents it is a place with a strong and vibrant community. It is also a place of business, businesses of all kinds mix traditionalism and innovation in the delivery of their offer. Moycullen is a place of potential, and it is a place that will change. This Village Plan has

set out to collect the thoughts of the community on the shape of that change.

Though local in focus, this village plan recognises the broader context in which the development of Moycullen takes place. Environmental sustainability will be one of the biggest challenges to face this and the next generation. Changing climate patterns require not just the building of more weather resilient places, but requires built infrastructure to offset bad environmental practice. Changing patterns induced by technological advances and their effect (positive and negative) on how places are made will also be considered. Important here is the contradictory pattern of technology connecting and atomising people.

### Vision

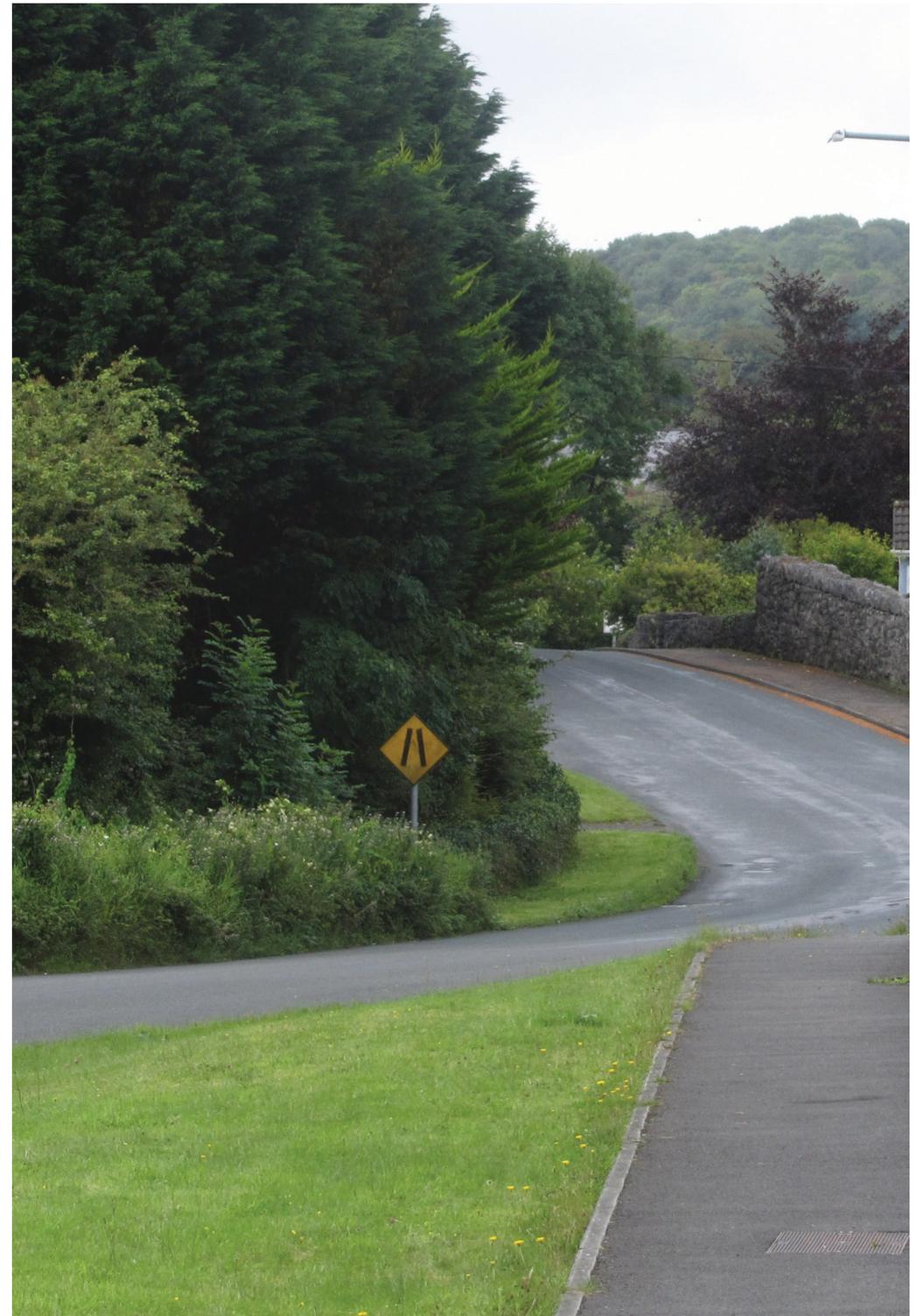
Moycullen wishes to grow in an open and connected manner. The future vision for the development of Moycullen village is one that has the community at its heart. Abiding by the principles of sustainable development Moycullen wishes to be a home for all, one that celebrates its achievements in sports, arts and culture, enterprise and community care. Moycullen's future relies on its past. Through the next chapter of growth, Moycullen wishes to reflect on its heritage, the importance of language and its connection to the environment. Moycullen wishes to grow alongside Galway and recognises the degree to which its growth is dependent on the city. Moycullen also wishes to ensure the future for its own distinct identity and will strive to represent itself, its concerns and its beliefs in future development.

Moycullen 2030 foresees future development of the village that is guided by the three following principles:

**Community:** universally recognised as a defining trait of the village, all development needs to be cognisant that any new building ensures the strength of 'community' into the future.

**Connectivity:** future development of the village requires better connections. Moycullen needs to be better connected to the city and its outstanding natural environs. Of importance is a growing village that connects its people in better ways.

**Collaboration:** to achieve its full potential the future development of Moycullen must occur in an open, transparent and informed way. A community centred village requires community at the centre of its development.



## Réamhrá

Tá athrú i ndán do Mhaigh Cuilinn. Tá roinnt infheistíochtaí tábhachtacha infreastruchtúir ar na bacáin. Tá tús le cur le seachbhóthar timpeall ar an mbaile sa bhliain 2020, tógfar bunscoil nua faoin mbliain 2022 agus tá bealach rothaíochta ar leith le críochnú sa bhliain chéanna; Bealach Glas Chonamara. Ar an iomlán, tá cead pleanála faighte do 300 aonad tithíochta laistigh de limistéar an bhaile. Beidh tionchar réalaíoch freisin ag infheistíochtaí fadtéarmacha infreastruchtúir ar an mbaile i mbunchnoic Chonamara, lena n-áirítear an seachbhóthar timpeall ar chathair na Gaillimhe. Meastachán coimeádach a bheadh ann go ndéanfaí daonra an bhaile a mhéadú faoi dhó de bharr na n-athruithe seo faoin mbliain 2030. Tá athrú ag teacht chuig Maigh Cuilinn.

Agus pleananna móra á socrú i seomraí boird de chuid fhorais náisiúnta cosúil leis an Údarás um Bhóithre Náisiúnta nó An Bord Pleanála, d'fhéadfaí go mbraitheann pobail scoite ón bpróiseas athraithe. Is minic a bhíonn muid frithghníomhach mar thír agus muid ag idirghníomhú leis an bpróiseas pleanála, feiceann muid na pleananna agus déanann muid cinneadh ansin an n-aontaíonn muid leo nó nach n-aontaíonn. Is é an toradh a bhíonn ar sin ná go mbíonn tuiscint dhiúltach againn ar thionchar pleanála; má aontaíonn muid fanann muid ciúin, mura n-aontaíonn muid, cuireann muid ina gcoinne.

Bunaíodh Plean Bhaile Mhaigh Cuilinn chun athrú a dhéanamh ar an gcaoi a ndéanann muintir na háite idirghníomhú le cinntí pleanála i dtaca leis an áit sin. Tá sé mar aidhm ag an bplean a bheith réamhghníomhach dá réir. Tá an cónaitheoir i gcroílár an phróisis dá réir. Le tacaíocht ón gComhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn agus ó Ollscoil na hÉireann Gaillimh, tá athrú á dhéanamh againn ar an mbealach a smaoiníonn muid ar phleanáil agus ar chomhfhorbairt áite. Baineadh é seo amach trí phróiseas cuimsitheach comhairliúcháin thar tréimhse sé mhí. Bhailigh muid tuairimí ó thuairim is 800 duine de mhuintir Mhaigh Cuilinn mar chuid den phróiseas sin. Bhí plé spéisiúil ann agus léargais shuimiúla ann freisin. Is é seo a leanas achoimre shimplí ar na tuairimí atá ag daoine i dtaca lena n-áit fhéin.

Le linn an phróisis, bhí sé soiléir go raibh na daoine ag fanacht go gcuirfí na ceisteanna seo. Tá leas dílsithe ag daoine ina n-áit fhéin. Tá roinnt tréimhsí fáis tar éis na tíre a mhúnlú. Ón mborradh i gcúrsaí tógála le linn an Tíogair Cheiltigh, eastáit thréigthe ón ngéarchéim airgeadais go dtí an lá atá inniu ann nuair nach bhfuil dóthain tithíochta á soláthar, aithníonn daoine an tionchar a d'imir modhanna éagsúla ar na háiteanna a mbíonn muid inár gcónaí iontu. D'fhéadfaí a rá go bhfuil níos mó suime ag daoine anois sa bhealach a ndéanfaidh muid cinntí amach anseo ná mar a bhí riamh cheana.

Go fírinneach, tá líon beag daoine tar éis Éirinn an lae inniu a mhúnlú. Tá leas forbróirí tagtha in áit leas an Stáit. Mar thoradh ar sin, braitheann muid go raibh tionchar suarach againn ar na háiteanna a mbíonn muid inár gcónaí iontu. Ach fós féin, mar thoradh díreach ar bhotúin a rinneadh roimhe seo, mar thoradh ar an riachtanas timpeallachta, go pointe áirithe, is mian le daoine tionchar a bheith acu ar an mbealach a ndéantar comhfhorbairt ar na háiteanna a mbíonn siad ina gcónaí iontu. Ba é seo an pointe tosaigh don togra ar a dtugtar Plean Bhaile Mhaigh Cuilinn.

I Mí an Mheithimh thosaigh muid ar chomhfhís a fhorbairt d'fhorbairt Mhaigh Cuilinn amach anseo. Ba í bunchloch an togra ná údar an phobail ar a n-áit fhéin. Baineadh é seo amach trí mhodheolaíocht a bhí oscailte agus rannpháirteach chun a chinntiú gur tugadh cluas éisteachta do na rannpháirtithe ar fad. Tá mianta agus riachtanais mhuintir Mhaigh Cuilinn bailithe againn trí agallaimh, grúpaí fócais, suirbhéanna duine le duine agus dul i gcomhairle le daoine ar an idirlíon. Is léiriú í an tuairisc seo ar na hiarrachtaí sin. Sa mhéid is gur féidir a rá gurb í an tuairisc seo deireadh an togra, tá sé mar ábhar dóchais go mbeidh sí ina tús ar rannpháirtíocht faoi stiúir an phobail i dtaca le forbairt an bhaile amach anseo.

**“Don chuid is mó, is í measarhacht an meán. Maidir le cinntí a dhéanamh, barr feabhais atá ann go minic. D'fhéadfaí a rá gurb amhlaidh go bhfuil muid ríomhchláraithe chun a bheith cliste le chéile.”** James Surowiecki - The Wisdom of Crowds.

Cé go bhféadfadh sé a bheith fíor go mbíonn baile iomlán ag teastáil chun páiste a thógáil, tá sé fíor chomh maith go mbíonn pobal ag teastáil chun baile a chruthú. Tá baile Mhaigh Cuilinn suite siar ó thuaidh ó chathair na Gaillimhe. Cé nach bhfuil sé suite ach 12 chiliméadar ó lár na cathrach, tá féiniúlacht ar leith ag an mbaile, is áit spóirtiúil í, is áit le Gaeilge í, tá go leor glúine seanbhunaithe ann, agus daoine nua chomh maith. Agus 1,704

daoine ina gcónaí ann, is áit í le pobal láidir bríomhar inti. Is áit ghnó atá inti, gnólachtaí de gach sórt a mheascann traidisiúnachas agus nuálaíocht chun a gcuid tairiscintí a sholáthar. Is áit le hacmhainneacht í Maigh Cuilinn, agus tiocfaidh athrú uirthi. Tá sé mar aidhm ag Plean an Bhaile tuairimí an phobail a bhailiú i dtaca leis an gcruth a bheidh ar an athrú sin.

Cé go bhfuil fócas áitiúil ar an mbaile, aithníonn plean an bhaile an comhthéacs níos leithne ina bhfuil Maigh Cuilinn ag forbairt. Beidh inmharthanacht timpeallachta ar cheann de na dúshláin is mó a bheidh roimh an ghlúin seo agus roimh ghlúine eile amach anseo. De bharr athruithe ar phátrúin aeráide, ní hamháin go mbeidh gá le háiteanna a thógáil a bheidh in ann cúrsaí aimsire a sheasamh, ach beidh infreastruchtúr tógtha ag teastáil chun droch-chleachtais thimpeallachta a chúiteamh. Déanfar machnamh freisin ar phátrúin atá ag athrú de bharr dul chun cinn i gcúrsaí teicneolaíochta agus an tionchar a bhíonn acu (dearfach agus diúlach) ar an mbealach a gcruthaítear áiteanna. Tá na pátrúin fhrithráiteacha teicneolaíochta a cheanglaíonn daoine agus a mhionáíonn daoine tábhachtach anseo.



## Fís

Is mian le Maigh Cuilinn fás ar bhealach oscailte agus ceangailte. Tá an fhís d'fhorbairt Mhaigh Cuilinn sa todhchaí bunaithe ar chúrsaí pobail a bheith i gcroílár an bhaile. Ag cloí le prionsabail i dtaca le forbairt inmharthana, is mian le Maigh Cuilinn a bheith ina bhaile do chách, a dhéanann a chuid éachtaí a cheiliúradh i gcúrsaí spóirt, na healaíona, fiontraíocht agus cúram pobail. Braitheann todhchaí Mhaigh Cuilinn ar an stair a bhaineann leis. Sa chéad chaibidil fáis eile, is mian le Maigh Cuilinn machnamh a dhéanamh ar an oidhreacht a bhaineann leis, an tábhacht a bhaineann leis an teanga agus an ceangal atá aige leis an timpeallacht. Is mian le Maigh Cuilinn fás taobh le taobh le Gaillimh agus aithnítear an spleáchas atá aige ar an gcathair. Is mian le Maigh Cuilinn freisin an todhchaí a chinntiú don fhéiniúlacht ar leith a bhaineann leis agus oibreoidh sé go dian chun an baile a chur in iúl, chomh maith lena ghnóthas agus a chuid prionsabal i dtaca le forbairt amach anseo.

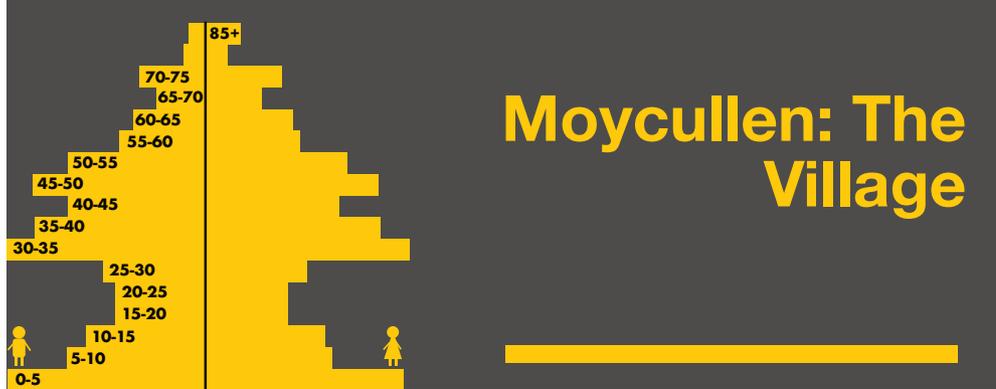
Tuarann Maigh Cuilinn 2030 forbairt an bhaile amach anseo a bheidh treoraithe ag na trí phrionsabail seo a leanas:

**Pobal:** Aitheanta mar shaintréith an bhaile, ní mór d'fhorbairt ar bith a bheith airdeallach go gcinnteoidh aon tógáil nua láidreacht an phobail amach anseo.

**Ceangal:** Ceangail níos fearr ag teastáil d'fhorbairt an bhaile amach anseo. Tá ceangal níos fearr ag teastáil idir Maigh Cuilinn agus an chathair agus an ceantar nádúrtha sármhaith mórtimpeall air. Tá sé tábhachtach go gceanglaíonn baile atá ag fás muintir an bhaile sin ar bhealaí níos fearr.

**Comhoibriú:** Chun acmhainneacht iomlán an bhaile a bhaint amach ní mór Maigh Cuilinn a fhorbairt ar bhealach oscailte, soiléir agus feasach. Chun baile a chruthú le pobal i gcroílár an bhaile, is gá go mbeidh an pobal i gcroílár fhorbairt an bhaile.





and cosmopolitanism can ensure the future development of the village as an attractive and interesting place.

## Moycullen: The History

The work of the Moycullen Heritage Society and the recent publication of the *Moycullen Miscellany* highlights the depth of history to the surrounding area. Together with the book (Ruaidhri's Story) aimed at younger readers (and published in three languages), there is a depth of recorded history on the development of the village.

In this report, we are concerned with how the modern village was made and how this can help us determine the best patterns for future development. Figure A is a graphic representation of changing settlement patterns and the making of Moycullen over the past two centuries. The broad trend is clear; development in Moycullen has evolved in a more concentrated manner, reflected by the loose clustering of housing and services around a crossroads. The commercial rationale is also clear; the tendency to cluster services brings with it economies of scale and scope.

The natural environment around Moycullen has created a valley that runs from east to west of the village settlement. It is likely that within the valley substantial deforestation of woodland (and the holly shrubs from which the village derived its name) occurred to make way for agriculture use. Much of the fertile land in the area is located east towards Lough Corrib. According to O'Sullivan et al. (2019), the early village settlement of Moycullen took place one kilometre east of the current village. That settlement centred around the O'Flaherty castle and a medieval church that were located nearby. That Moycullen was a hinterland of heavily populated clusters of small settlements and clachans.

During the 1820s, Scottish engineer, Alexander Nimmo was responsible for the building of a new road connecting the existing Knockferry road to the coast. The subsequent crossroads (between it and the Galway-Clifden road) provided a natural anchor point for the development of the Moycullen

The key strength of the village is its people. In terms of demographics, the village is unique in both the national and international context. Of the 1,704 residents in 2016, more than two-thirds are under 44. The youthful demography of a village of its size is a key pointer for future growth. Moycullen is a diverse and inclusive place with nearly one in five residents born outside of the State. At the same time, the Irish language is central to the identity of the community in the village and its surrounding region - 52% of the population speak Irish regularly. The socioeconomic status of the village is another strength. With below-average unemployment, close to two-thirds of those at work are either professionals or in managerial/technical positions. This also translates to the educational attainment across the village as registering well above the national average, with an unusually large concentration of PhD graduates.

In isolation, these statistics cast the village in a very positive light, yet in the context of planning for the future development of the village, these statistics identify a very strong starting point. For obvious reasons, a youthful demography bodes well for future growth. Yet perhaps more important is the fact that much of this is made up of young families. Young families are an important indicator of future viability as they are the group most likely to invest in the future development of a place.

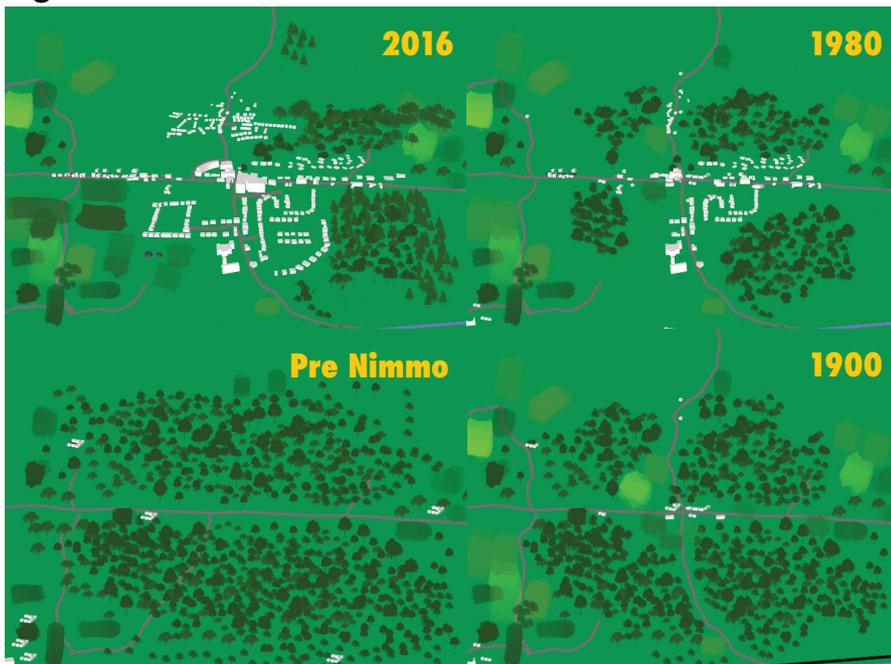
The importance of the Irish language alongside a degree of diversity and inclusion as reflected in the nationalities of residents of the village also bodes well. International research on the future sustainability of place highlights the importance of openness alongside the maintenance of authenticity. Moycullen's ability to do both over the past two decades has been a testament to its people. A continuation of both tradition

## Moycullen: The legislation

we know today. The story of the development of Moycullen is not a typical one for an Irish village, its development makes it unique in terms of not following a predictable and sequential pattern of development from the thirteenth century to the present.

CSO figures show the number of housing units that make up the village as having grown 10 fold since 1970. Steady growth of the village occurred between 1980 and 2000, with the construction of a number of housing estates, namely Pairc na gCaor and Woodlands. The most significant expansion occurred between 2000 and 2010. This was part of a national epoch that witnessed the coincidence of increased demand, decreased cost of borrowing and investment speculation in the creation of a property led economic boom in the 2000s. The decade from 2010, will likely be considered a lost one as a result of economic recession and fiscal rectitude. However, in 2020 we see the green shoots of growth. This is best exemplified by the Diore Fea estate, previously termed a ghost estate, which is now providing homes for Moycullen's newest residents.

**Figure A**



Regional disparity is on the increase in Ireland. Dublin, and other cities are growing at a faster rate than the rest of the country. If left unchecked, serious questions will be asked about the sustainability of Ireland outside its major cities. This speaks to a broader issue; Ireland has a very poor record in spatial planning. While urban growth is to be expected in modern, service-led economies, the sprawling nature of Irish urban growth over the past 30 years is unsustainable (environmentally, economically and socially).

Better, more sustainable development is one of the main pillars of the Irish government's recently published National Development Plan (NDP). Achieving this will involve implementing development strategies that deliver positive outcomes for both urban and rural areas. The NDP suggests compact growth strategies for large urban areas to address problems associated with economic growth such as urban sprawl, uneven population patterns and the associated infrastructure pressures. *Place-based development plans will be encouraged to address the specific needs of rural locations, enhance social and economic vibrancy and create a sustainable living space.* One hundred and sixteen billion euro will be set aside for development projects throughout the lifetime of the Ireland 2040 project - the National Planning Framework - ninety-one billion of which will be funded by the exchequer. Regional assemblies, county councils and local community development committees are all expected to play a crucial role in planning and developing Ireland over the next decade.

Figure B shows the hierarchy and spatial scales associated with planning in Ireland. The NDP is an important document in that it acts as the foregrounding of all sub-national planning documents. At the regional level, these are the recently published Regional Spatial Economic Strategies, under the auspices of the Regional Assemblies in Ireland. The recent Local Government Act gives more power to regional assemblies, who can use the RSES as a way to better define the future direction of the region.

The North West Regional Assembly sits in Ballaghderreen and acts as a coordinator between national and local plans. County Development Plans and associated Local Area Plans (for places with populations over 1,500) are authored by the county council

(local authority). Section 9 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires local authorities to make development plans for its area every six years. These plans should be consistent with the National Development Plan and the regional spatial and economic strategies at the time in question. Section 10 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) stipulates that specific development requirements in a particular area will be subject to the making of a local area plan. The local area plan should address important strategic objectives such as employment, transport, housing, communications, sports and community facilities, health, education and climate change.

Section 10 of the Act also outlines the need to set out an overall strategy for sustainable development in a written statement. The written statement shall include a core strategy which shows the development objectives in the plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy. Development objectives for a local authority should include planning and development policies concerned with: the zoning of land, provision of infrastructure, environmental protection, preserving the character of the landscape, integrating planning and sustainable development of the area with social, community and cultural requirements, preservation improvement and expansion of amenities, provision of accommodation for the travelling community.

This gives some indication of how county development plans designed to meet the specific requirements of a place will be consistent with the overall objectives of national development plans. County and local area plans are not a permanent fixture and must be reviewed and modified to capture the most recent national and regional spatial strategies. Section 11 of the Planning and Development Act (as amended) states that no later than four years after the making of a development plan, a planning authority should give notice of its intention to review its existing development plan and prepare a new development plan for its area. This gives scope to local authorities to review and amend projects and ensure the county and local area development plans remain closely aligned to the national development plan.

**The Moycullen Local Area Plan is due in the second half of 2020. This Village Plan could be extremely timely.**

**Figure B**



# Guiding Principles

## The Climate Imperative

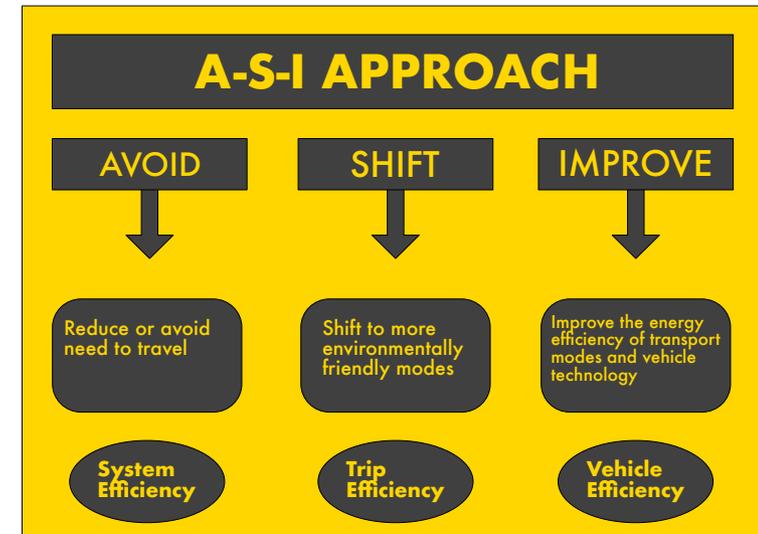
The Irish Government's 2019 Climate Action Plan has declared a climate and biodiversity emergency. The Action Plan identifies the threats resulting from an increase in global temperature as including: - Rising sea-levels threatening habitable land and particularly coastal infrastructure - Extreme weather, including more intense storms and rainfall affecting our land, coastline and seas - Further pressure on our water resources and food production systems with associated impacts on fluvial and coastal ecosystems - Increased chance and scale of river and coastal flooding • Greater political and security instability - Displacement of population and climate refugees - Heightened risk of the arrival of new pests and diseases - Poorer water quality - Changes in the distribution and time of lifecycle events of plant and animal species on land and in the oceans.

Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement on climate change require a transformational shift of our economies and societies towards climate-resilient and sustainable development. To respond to this requirement involves a profound change in the systems and practices of everyday life. Every home, every community, every workplace and every farm, must be mobilised to get involved. The role to be played by planning will be paramount. Abiding by the Climate Action Plan is now a number one priority for all spatial plans from the local, to the national level.

Planning in Ireland needs to seriously consider the imperative. As recently as December 2018, Ireland was the worst-ranked county in the EU on climate action for the second year in a row. The Climate Change Performance Index, which is produced annually, places Ireland 48th out of 56 countries worldwide. While some sectors, namely agriculture and transport, are more responsible for than other for carbon emissions, the reality is that bad planning (in the form of urban sprawl and under-provision of environmentally friendly alternatives) has directly contributed to Ireland's poor record.

As a planning document, this Village Plan must abide by and respect the imperative. Beyond the obvious logic in pursuing an environmentally just future, failure to do so will make it impossible for any recommendations to translate into the broader planning framework. Figure C represents the future approach to climate resilient planning put forth by the office of the planning regulator in Ireland

Figure C



## The Principles of New Urbanism

**Figure D 10 Principles of New Urbanism**

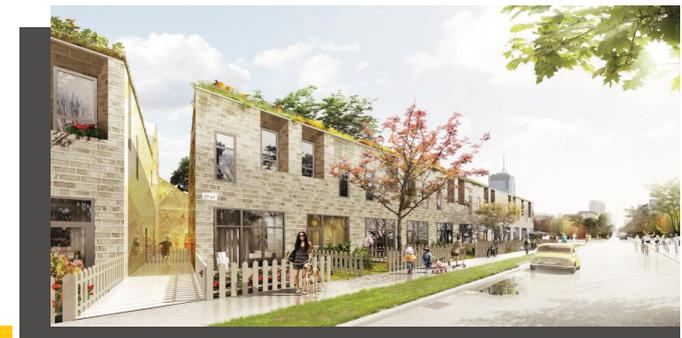
<p><b>1. Walkability</b></p> <p>-Most things within a 10-minute walk of home and work -Pedestrian-friendly street design (buildings close to street; porches, windows &amp; doors; tree-lined streets; on-street parking; hidden parking lots; garages in rear lane; narrow, slow speed streets) - Pedestrian streets free of cars in special cases.</p>	<p><b>2. Connectivity</b></p> <p>-Interconnected street grid network disperses traffic &amp; eases walking -A hierarchy of streets from main to local. -High-quality pedestrian network and public realm makes walking pleasurable.</p>
<p><b>3. Mixed-Use &amp; Diversity</b></p> <p>-A mix of shops, offices, apartments, and homes on site. Mixed-use within villages, within blocks, and buildings.</p> <p>-Diversity of people - of ages, income levels, cultures, and races.</p>	<p><b>4. Mixed Housing</b></p> <p>A range of types, sizes and prices in closer proximity.</p>
<p><b>5. Quality Urban Design</b></p> <p>Emphasis on beauty, aesthetics, human comfort, and creating a sense of place; Special placement of civic uses and sites within the community. Human scale architecture &amp; beautiful surroundings nourish the human spirit.</p>	<p><b>6. Traditional Village Structure</b></p> <p>-Discernable centre and edge - Public space at the centre - Importance of quality public realm; public open space designed as civic art -Contains a range of uses and densities within 10-minute walk.</p>
<p><b>7. Increased Density</b></p> <p>-More buildings, residences, shops, and services closer together for ease of walking.</p> <p>-New Urbanism design principles are applied at the full range of densities from small towns, to large cities.</p>	<p><b>8. Green Transportation</b></p> <p>-A network of high-quality services connecting cities, towns, and villages -Pedestrian-friendly design that encourages greater use of bicycles, rollerblades, scooters, and walking as daily transportation.</p>
<p><b>9. Sustainability</b></p> <p>-Minimal environmental impact of development and its operations - Eco-friendly technologies, respect for ecology and value of natural systems -Energy efficiency -More local production -More walking / cycling, less driving.</p>	<p><b>10. Quality of Life</b></p> <p>Taken together these add up to a high quality of life well worth living and create places that enrich, uplift and inspire the human spirit.</p>

Considered as international best practice in planning circles, the principles of new urbanism can help shape places that are sustainable, connected and community centred.

The negative effects of unconsidered planning, planning where land prices and house prices dictate development are plain to see. Without guidance, the State is left vulnerable and the development of a place can be decided on by those with access to means. Ireland, and indeed Moycullen, has been left scarred by the unfettered boom in housing through the Celtic Tiger years. Developer-led property speculation saw the footprint of settlements spread; financially and environmentally this is a footprint that is difficult to manage.

Design-led thinking in terms of planning is needed. International examples from eco-village templates to newly planned communities point the way to better planning practice. The rationale is clear. Abiding by the principles of new urbanism makes places better. Residents benefit from a higher quality of life, healthier lifestyles from increased use of alternative transport. Other benefits include a more people-centric village, a better sense of place and a stronger identity. These principles also ensure a more connected place, a village with greater freedom and independence for the young and the old.

From the business perspective places that abide by new urbanism induce economies of scale, closer proximity and greater cooperation with other businesses. These places are also more attractive for developers, they return higher property and rent prices. Villages that have adopted smart growth policies lead to decreased approval times for development. There are benefits at the local government level as well. Better designed places offer lower rates of investment in public infrastructures, plus greater civic involvement in the community leads to better governance.



Experience Moycullen

Smart Village  
Digital Hub

Experience Moycullen

New bus Stop  
Hourly Bus service

New Public Park  
Improved Public realm

Improved Footpath  
Improved cycle path  
Access to the environment

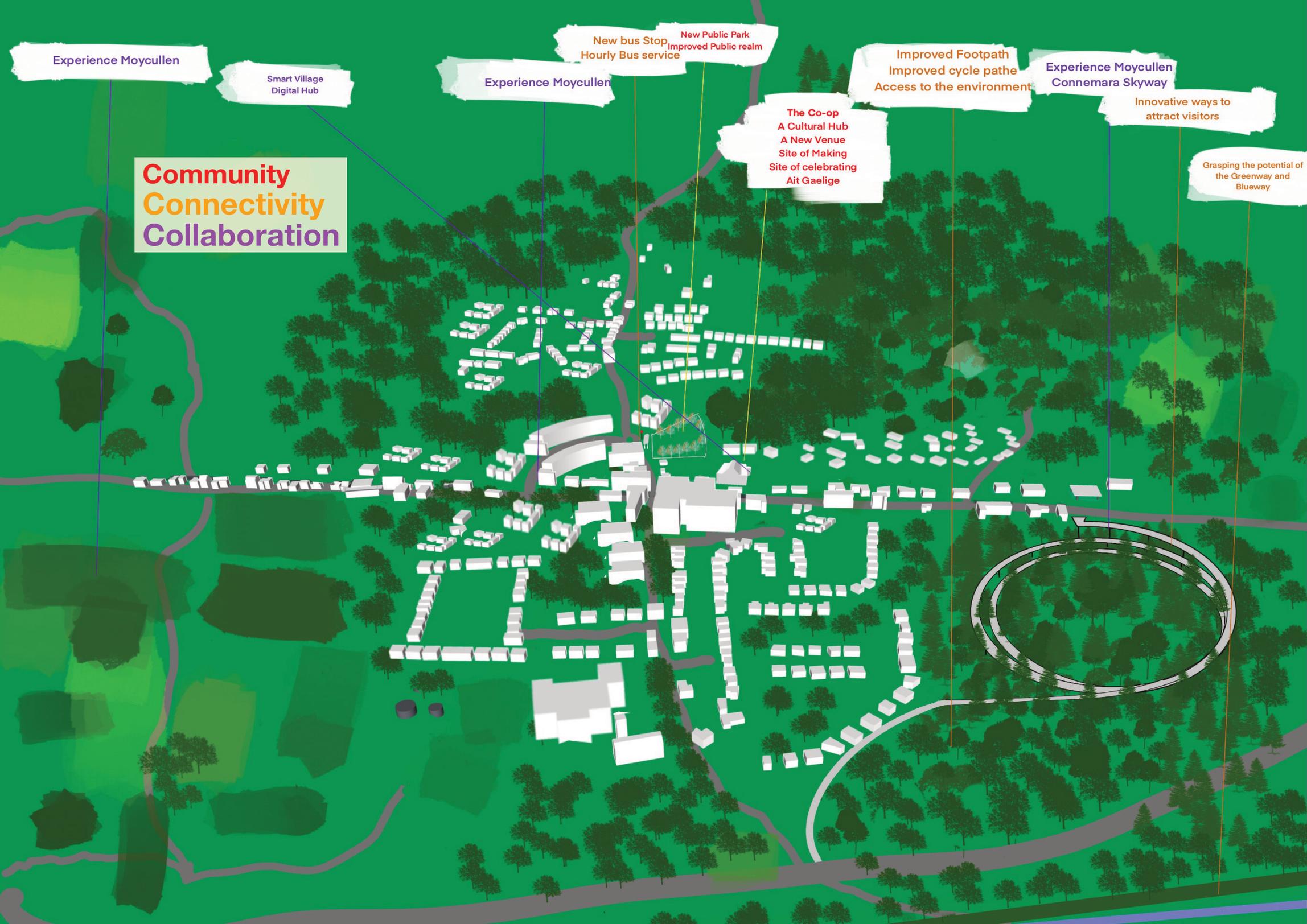
Experience Moycullen  
Connemara Skyway

Innovative ways to  
attract visitors

Grasping the potential of  
the Greenway and  
Blueway

**Community**  
**Connectivity**  
**Collaboration**

The Co-op  
A Cultural Hub  
A New Venue  
Site of Making  
Site of celebrating  
Ait Gaelige





**MAIGH CUILINN  
MOYCULLEN  
2030**

**PUBLIC MEETING**

Join us on Thursday the 28th of November at 8pm  
in The Forge Pub and hear what the people of  
Moycullen see as important for the future  
development of the village.  
This is another opportunity to have your say on  
the Moycullen Village Plan.

Upstairs in The Forge Pub 28/11 at 8pm.

TWITTER: @MOYCULLEN2030    WEB: WWW.MOYCULLEN2030.ORG



# The Process: A collective authorship of place.

This village plan acts as the broadest and deepest consultation ever carried out in the village of Moycullen. Since June of 2019, over 800 people have engaged with the initiative. With close to half the population of the village actively contributing to the plan we can say, with confidence, that the Moycullen 2030 Plan reflects the collective wishes and wants of the village. As such, this initiative is unique in the context of local development in Ireland. Planning in Ireland has been carried out at a remove, the process, the language and the broader infrastructure of the planning system is by its nature exclusionary. Moycullen Village Plan acts as an opportunity for active engagement, one in which the residents of the village can be part of envisioning a future for that village.

In 2018 we approached the Irish Research Council with the following:

- Phase 1:** The first phase of consultation will evolve out of the background research through the identification of the key stakeholders in the village from the community, to business to political and religious. A set of face to face interviews will be carried out. (Month 2 and 3)
- Phase 2:** A broader awareness campaign through social media and visual displays throughout the village. Online consultation will take place with the use of survey tools. (Month 3 and 4)
- Phase 3:** Data from the above will be analysed and presented. This will act as a focal point for the "Moycullen Speaks Out" series of focus where residents will be offered the opportunity to voice their opinions on the future development of the village. Organisations and individuals will have the opportunity to present their visions for their place. (Month 4-5)
- Phase 4:** Public information evening with a public display of the main findings in the village. (Month 5-6)

**Figure E**

**Figure F**

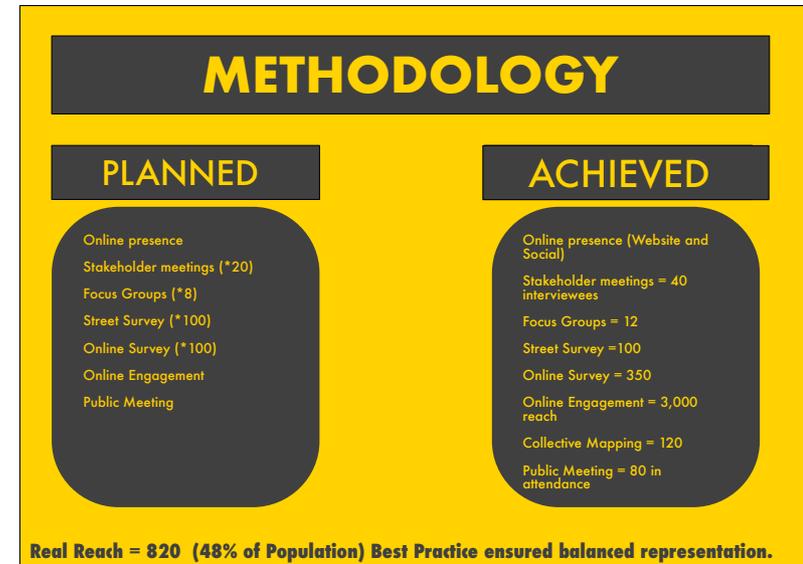


Figure F shows how we have met those goals.

Desk-based research in the form of a comprehensive historical and socioeconomic analysis of the village of Moycullen provided a solid grounding to commence consultation. Use was made of local associations such as the Moycullen Community Development Association (MCDA) and Galway County Council representatives to identify key stakeholders in the village. Some interview candidates were made obvious by their role in the village, owners of larger businesses were targeted as well as local political representatives. Others were less obvious, including small scale entrepreneurs, community members and artists. The method was open and use was made of the snowballing technique; the identification of interviewees by other interviewees. In identifying interviewees a conscious effort was made at all times to ensure the broadest possible representation of the village.

## Interviews

Interviews were semi-structured and followed the same format with each participant. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. (In the interest of fairness interviewees were offered anonymity).

The following graphic (figure G) represents a broad overview of the main issues discussed over the 50 hours of interviewing. All interviews commenced with the respondent being asked to reflect on their position in the village and what, for them, is unique about the village. Respondents from all sectors identified COMMUNITY as one of the defining traits of the village. For many, this was identified as the strong presence and support of the GAA in the village, others saw community as the sense of togetherness and care shown by neighbours. All agreed that the GAA and other sporting celebrations reflected the strength of the community rather than being solely responsible for it. Second to Community were general references to the landscape and environment that surrounds the village. Respondents drew attention to the hillside nature of the village (lost in part owing to recent construction), the lakes (Lough Corrib and Ballyquirke) and canals together with forests and distinct topography north of the village.

**Figure G**



In terms of potential contributions to the development of the village, interviewees were unanimous on the need for the development of the planned GREENWAY. Respondents from all sectors highlighted the business and financial impacts that the Greenway would bring. Many were knowledgeable on the positive benefits reaped by other (similar) communities adjacent to the Mayo and Waterford greenways. Many referred to the non-economic impacts in the form of positive health benefits, access to the countryside and the provision of a viable alternative option for transport from the village in the city.

This latter point was taken up again in a variety of different subjects relating to the village. Best surmised as CONNECTIVITY, a broad consensus touched on the disjointed nature of physical connections in the village. All sectors, notably those in the sports sector highlighted the lack of connectivity between one of the key anchors of the community (the GAA pitches) and the village itself. Footpaths and safe cycle connections were highlighted as a simple way to connect the village. There was a consensus that the planned bypass of the village would better serve to connect the village either side of the N59 (however, many respondents also highlighted the lack of innovative thinking in the design of the bypass). Interviewees highlighted how less traffic on the N59 would better unify village and encourage more walking through the centre.

The lack of connectivity to its surrounding natural environment was also highlighted as problematic. Alongside reference to the Greenway cycle/walkways/ footpaths, interviewees also highlighted the canal system to the north of the village. Part of an established canal network connecting Galway city to the lakes of Connemara, it was seen as underused, an untapped resource that could be targeted for recreation and transport. While car traffic was highlighted as a negative, broad consensus was expressed over the need for a much-improved bus service between the village and the city to encourage (more sustainable) alternatives to private car use.

One final issue over which there was a consensus in the stakeholder engagement (a theme that would continue to emerge throughout the broader engagement process) was that of LEADERSHIP. Broadly speaking, this was a perception of a disjointed approach to development in the village. Questions were asked over who was in control of the future development of the place. It was highlighted that the village lacked a locus of

control. Individuals and organisations were variously cited as having a role in the development of the village, but it was roundly considered that there was an absence of coordination between them.

The issue of leadership is faced by many villages and towns around Ireland. In villages like Moycullen, places so well endowed with community actors and groups, coordination of effort can be a significant undertaking. Throughout the conversations regarding leadership, there was respect expressed for those "that do" and a genuine wish for broader INCLUSION in the process. These are key issues that face the village in its future development.

*"It's the community that makes this village. That has been a constant through change"*

*"It's the footpaths, its how people get around, I mean why no Greenway?"*

*"I think its a family of families"*

*"It is open and inclusive"*

*"The council do nothing, I mean anything that has been done has been by the people"*

The village plan App was developed in conjunction with the School of Machines Making and Make-Believe in Berlin. This augmented reality app allowed users to measure the sustainability of the greenfield village they had planned. Once chosen, the mix of housing and services was scanned by the App, it gives users a 3D rendering of their village and scores them according to environmental, commercial and social sustainability. As a focus group exercise it was valuable in encouraging users to think about the connectedness and relatedness in planning issues.



## Focus Groups

Focus group work brings together individuals with a shared interest to contribute to discussions on the key issues under investigation. Focus groups are a staple of social science research. They are used to challenge ideas and better filter consensus. Focus groups were arranged by broad themes identified in the first phase of consultation. Invites were sent directly to representatives of those themes. The groups were themed as follows:

- School groups
- Local business
- Sport
- Community 1
- Community 2
- Senior citizens
- Parents of the young
- Planning
- City-based workers

Best practice international research informed the structured approach taken to the focus groups. In doing this we made use of a variety of exercises, some individual work, other group-based. Here we were concerned that all voices were heard equally. Mapping exercises, one supported by the village Development App (see box) and the other an individual mapping task were important in how they informed the group and positioned it to contribute to the third exercise: the SWOT analysis of the village.

The results of the SWOT analysis are represented in figure H. The overlap between issues expressed by participants in the first two phases of consultation is clear. Again COMMUNITY features strongly and is highly ranked as a stand out strength of village in all focus groups. Interestingly, when participants are asked to project forward and envisage what are the broad threats in future development, they also highlight community as susceptible in future growth scenarios. The Irish language, as well as the demographic make up of the village, are highlighted as strengths. The young, diverse and well-educated residents of the village are seen as important factors to build on as it grows.

## Plean Teanga

Moycullen currently has an Irish language plan under review. Recommendations include:

- Have a structure that will ensure the effective implementation of the language plan.
- Recruit, employ and introduce a Language Planning Officer (OPT) who will work under the direction of An Coiste Stiúrtha of GMC and will be responsible for implementing the recommendations of the language plan.
- In general, raise awareness of bilingualism and bilingual education, the role of Irish in our identity as a community, the language planning process and provide a point of contact for the community.
- Summarise Plean Teanga Mhaigh Cuilinn in a bilingual booklet for all households.
- Lobby to achieve a fair share of resources from Roinn na Gaeltachta and Údarás na Gaeltachta including community facilities.



Moycullen's Street Feast!  
**Féasta Sráide**  
**Mhaigh Cuilinn**  
 Beir linn! 05/05/2019  
 ag an Coach House, Maigh Cuilinn  
 2-6pm

## Maigh Cuilinn - Plean Teanga Irish Language Plan



Gaeilge Mhaigh Cuilinn

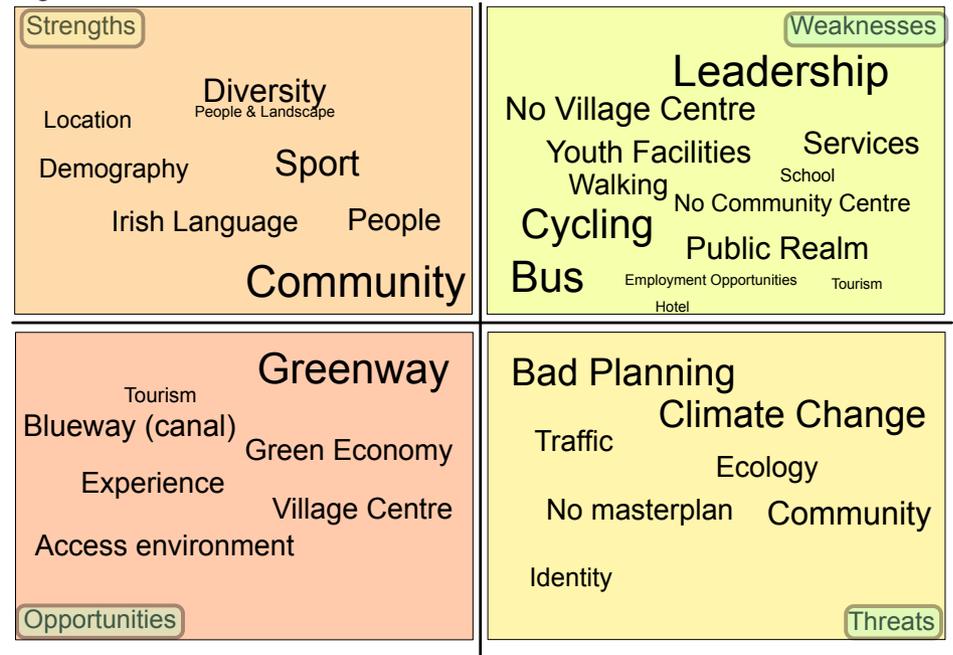
- Cruinnithe Poiblí - Public Meetings
- MÍ NA SAMHNA - NOVEMBER**
- Dé Luain Monday 12th - Scoil Thulach Uí Chadhain @7pm
  - Dé Máirt Tuesday 13th - Scoil Tuairíní @ 7pm
  - Dé Céadaoin Wednesday 14th - Teach na Gaeilge @ 7pm
  - Déardaoin Thursday 15th - Scoil Bhaile Nua @ 7pm

Déanfar cur i láthair ar dhreachtphlean teanga Mhaigh Cuilinn agus beidh deis ag an bpobal a dtuairimí a thabhairt & moltaí a dhéanamh

There will be a presentation on the draft language plan for Moycullen and the public will have an opportunity to give their views & suggestions



Figure H



The emergence of LEADERSHIP as a key weakness for the village chimes with reflections from the individual interviews. While broad in its application references were made to leadership at all levels from the local community level to national government and governance. This inspired interesting conversations on new forms of governance in the village that are explored in the following chapter. The lack of bus CONNECTIVITY and provisions for cycling and walking were discussed with the contention that there exists an untapped demand for both that cannot be judged on current supply.

*"It is hard to know who to go to, whose job it is to make the village better"*

*"There is no doubting the amount of work, but you have question... Where is the coordination?"*

Connectivity and coordination of development conversations fed directly into all groups identifying the lack of coherence in the built village as a major weakness. Participants felt that the lack of a village centre or analogous Public Realm was one of the major weakness that would leave the village exposed in its future

development. Many members of various focus groups expressed the fear that the lack of an identifiable centre would lead directly to the suburbanisation of the village should population growth continue as planned. Here, issues of identity and distinction were expressed as being tantamount in the future development of the village.

*“The fact that it has no real centre now is worrying, moreso if the place were to grow”*

*“You would worry about the Knocknacarrification of Moycullen”*

Talking points here lead directly to the perceived threats to the village's future. Primary amongst these was the threat of BAD PLANNING in Moycullen's future development. All groups expressed serious concern as to unchecked development leading to the building of more housing estates before any of the weaknesses evident in the village were addressed. Fear was expressed about the potential suburbanisation of the village as unchecked development would leave it as a little more than a collection of housing estates on the edge of Galway city. Few participants referenced the formal planning process of Local Area Plans and those that did were either part of the planning sector or worked in local development. There was general agreement that the formal planning process was exclusionary in its complexity and neither visible nor transparent. The development of a community-led masterplan for the village was seen as timely and beneficial for a village undergoing change.

From a positive perspective, all participants expressed belief in the potential for Moycullen as it develops. Again, the GREENWAY was highlighted as pivotal in unlocking that potential. While legitimate concern was expressed over actions to combat climate change, participants saw the greenway as part of the answer. Beyond the numerous benefits from alternative transport choices, new connectivity and tourism potential, groups highlighted how the Connemara Greenway could act as an anchor for the village in terms of building an identity around the green economy and environmentally engaged pursuits. There was unanimous support for its development and how it could position the village environmentally, socially and commercially. Moycullen as an EXPERIENCE destination.

## Survey

The results of the survey serve to solidify the concerns and aspirations of the village. Ensuring a scientifically rigorous representation, members of the team carried out over 90 of these face to face with respondents. On three occasions, the team took up space in the weekly farmers market. This takes place on a Friday afternoon and accounts for a significant throughput of pedestrian traffic in the village. To boost paper-based responses members of the team also carried out a door to door surveying of all housing estates in the village. Beyond increasing the response rate to the survey in an assured and representative manner, these exercises also served to increase visibility and awareness of the project and helped grow our online following.

A first-round analysis was carried out on face-to-face surveys. Comparing that to the final analysis, which included responses gathered online, shows no difference of statistical significance. This lends more confidence for the process undertaken. Demography and gender of respondents reflect that of national accounting (CSO), while time resident, correlated with demography tells the story of recent waves of settlement in Moycullen. During Ireland's housing booms of the mid-1980s and the latter half of the 1990s and early 2000s, the village, ostensibly through the construction of new housing estates, welcomed new, often young, families. This is a pattern that will be recreated as a result of current and planned construction taking place in the village.

A simple yet important metric is how happy people are living in the village. While a true analysis of contentment might require a more in-depth analysis, as an initial understanding it is clear that the residents of Moycullen are very happy living there. This simple metric should not be overlooked and any future planning would need to consciously promote happiness. A broad reading of international research shows a high and proven correlation between the depth of 'COMMUNITY' in a place and the level of contentment of its residents.

Figure 1 gives us an idea as to what the residents of the village feel best describes Moycullen. Irish research on rural villages shows the high level of cross over between sport (often GAA) and community. Both apply in near equal measure to the village in this case. Setting this against our broader analysis and comments on

same from the survey we can see that a strong community enables a good sporting identity and that a strong community does not rely on a sporting identity.

Generally perceived as a safe place to live (relating to levels of contentment) residents are less inclined to define it as a 'traditional' or 'cultural' place. Counter to this point are references to the work of the Moycullen Heritage Society

which is warmly reflected on by respondents. Again, tradition and culture require further attention to be better understood. The results are not out of sync with those of international work. Tradition and culture are difficult to maintain as places grow through rapid expansion. Many efforts have been made by the residents of Moycullen to protect against this (see Plean Teanga box above) but without sustained support, they will struggle in the face of future development.

This last point is relevant in considering the current provision of amenities in the village. Current amenities do not provide adequately for the demand to celebrate culture or creativity in the region. Many cite the lack of a basketball court for the Moycullen team as negative, but the good work of the GAA can be seen in the positive reflection on sporting amenities. Commercial amenities both in term of services (pubs, restaurants) and retail (shops) are seen as adequate according to respondents.

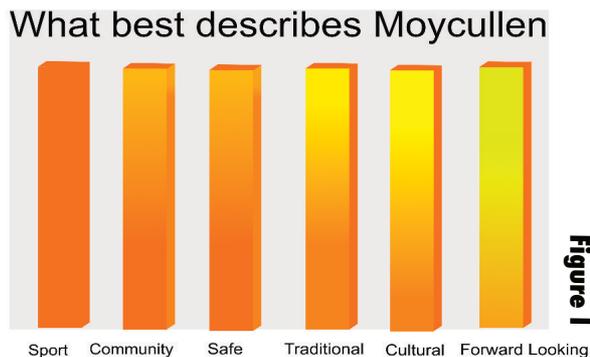


Figure I

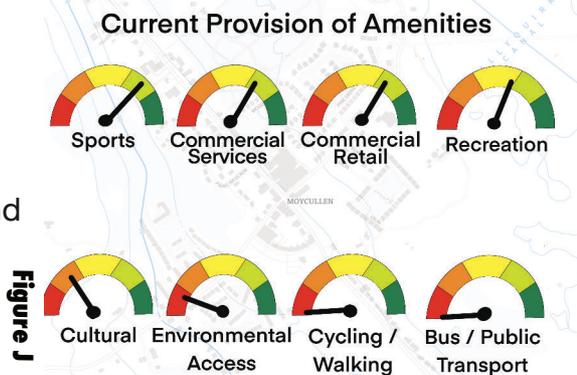


Figure J

*"You can say there is a great community, there are no bricks and mortar to back it up though"*

*"What we need now is a place to celebrate culture, the GAA is great, but what about the other kids?"*

Most telling in terms of under-provision are key areas reflected above. What figure J represents is the latent or untapped demand for ACCESS and CONNECTIVITY. This is also reflected in more open questions relating to access to the environment. Residents feel disconnected from the valuable resource on their doorstep. Again the GREENWAY features highly in the minds of residents. Many respondents bemoaning the lack of progress as well as reflecting on the multitude of benefits that its construction would reap for the community. BUS and alternative transport options are in high demand for the village, a level of untapped demand that is set to grow.

Figure K

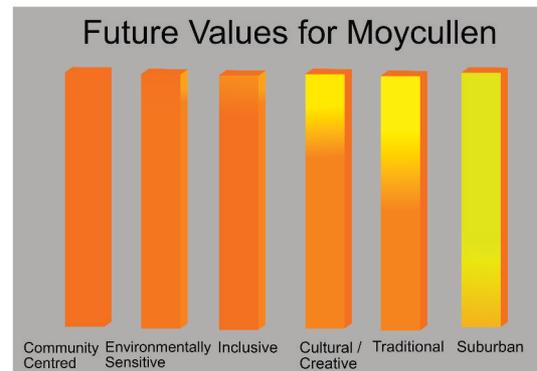


Figure K urges respondents to consider future development. Rather than specifics in terms of infrastructure, this question urged residents to consider the broader values that they would like to have associated with their village in the future. Here again, COMMUNITY is at

the fore. This reflects not only the current depth of community ties but the desire to ensure that depth into the future. Environmental sensitivity refers not only to sustainable building practices but also to climate-resilient buildings, construction that ensures protection from climate change. Relating this to broader comments reflects a desire that a future village is better planned. A well-planned village ensures a smaller carbon footprint by lessening the need for carbon generating pursuits such as an over-reliance on private cars. Inclusivity refers also to village design, through an express desire for more open and accessible places (public buildings such as libraries, community centres, as well as to the environment). Inclusivity also refers to

housing types and the recognised need to address the current housing crisis by a mixed approach to housing development.

Issues of IDENTITY come to the fore in the express wish from respondents that Moycullen does not evolve into a suburb of Galway. Ensuring against this requires more attention to that which makes the place unique. Here respondents cite cultural, creative and traditional values as being important for the kind of development they wish to see in the village. The complementary nature of these values speaks to a general coherence in the future visioning of the village.

Figure L ranks amenities according to their importance for the future development of the village. The broader point in reflecting on the patterns shown here is a set of respondents that have ranked community as an important value for the future of the village. Connectivity is judged as important for the development of community. An increased bus service, the completion of the greenway and bricks and mortar (community centre) to enable social connections are all seen as the most vital amenities for the future development of the village. Residents also recognise that the current primary school in the village is beyond capacity and in need of investment. Such is the level of current and future enrolment, this too is a priority for the development of the village. Other factors such as youth facilities and co-working spaces speak to the demography of a village that has seen the wave of new residents in the early 2000s grow, moving beyond the playground to something more appropriate. While the interest in co-working spaces is reflective of the change in modern work practices.

### Ranked in terms of importance to the Village

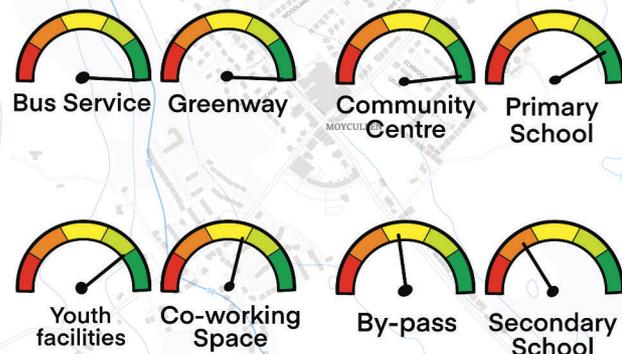


Figure L

## Collective mapping

The collective mapping exercise constitutes a new approach to community planning. It is guided by the principle of grounding the aspirations of respondents and encouraging the spatial manifestation of the collective wishes of the village. Figure M shows the blank exercise along with instructions. Respondents were encouraged to think beyond the current and to develop the village according to their aspirations without constraints. Issues of land ownership and planning were deliberately avoided to best encapsulate the ideas and ideals of residents. The collective mapping exercise relies on the contributions of 100 residents. Again, efforts were made to ensure representation. The results of the exercise are presented below.

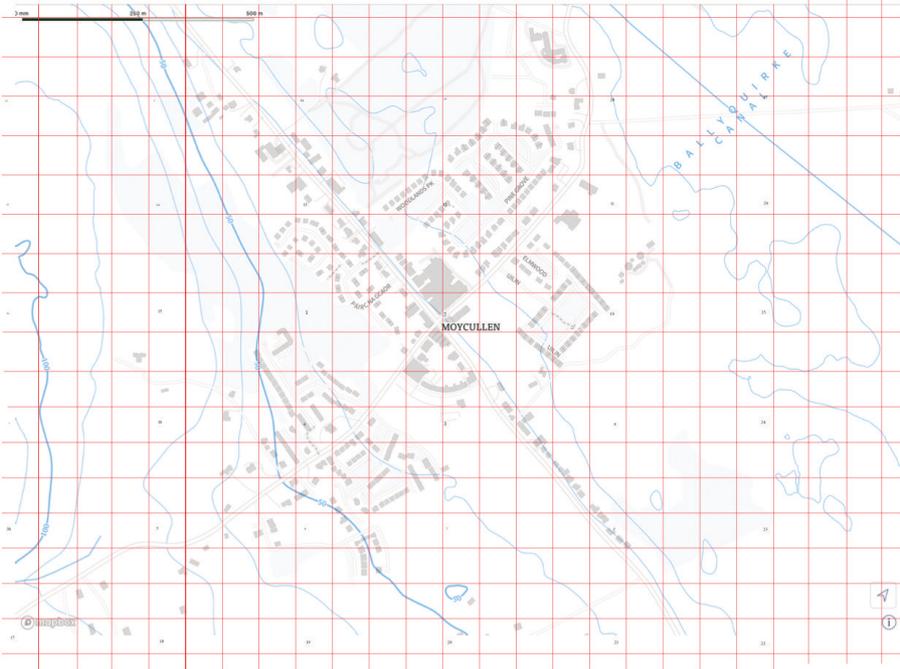
Housing is distinguished by type. All respondents were guided as to the possible level of future growth for the village and their visions as to what type of housing and where that housing be situated is shown here. High-density housing (the most often chosen type of housing) is generally sited in the village centre on vacant lands. The density of housing lowers as we move away from the village centre. Interesting to note the inclusion of social /community/care housing which is also situated in proximity to the village centre. In general, as with other elements of this exercise we see some evidence of the wisdom of crowds, the above patterns tantamount to a well-planned housing development for the village.

The choice of location for the new primary school is on the site it currently occupies with some respondents choosing Kilrainey Woods (the latter was the focus of a campaign run by parents of school-going children, while the former matches what, at the time of writing is the preferred choice of the Department of Education). The choice for an imagined secondary school is adjacent to the current primary school site. Again, in planning terms, this makes sense and is likely to be informed by the recent policy employed by the Department. The building of a new primary school in its current location also better aligns with a more compact approach to development, the siting of a key piece of village infrastructure closer to its centre.

In terms of community infrastructure, the results are quite resounding. There is a collective imagining of the future community needs (in the form of a community centre, library, public park and youth facilities) being delivered on lands in the village centre adjacent to the current playground. This piece of land also sees the siting of connectivity offered by a bus stop.

Figure M

# Collective Mapping Exercise



## You are the planner.

In the next ten years, this village is likely to double in population. This will require a number of physical investments. Below are the options A - T. Take a pen and choose where (in which square) you feel each of the following investments should be located.

For example: A higher density housing estate should be close to the village centre. Draw A in any of the boxes close to the village centre.

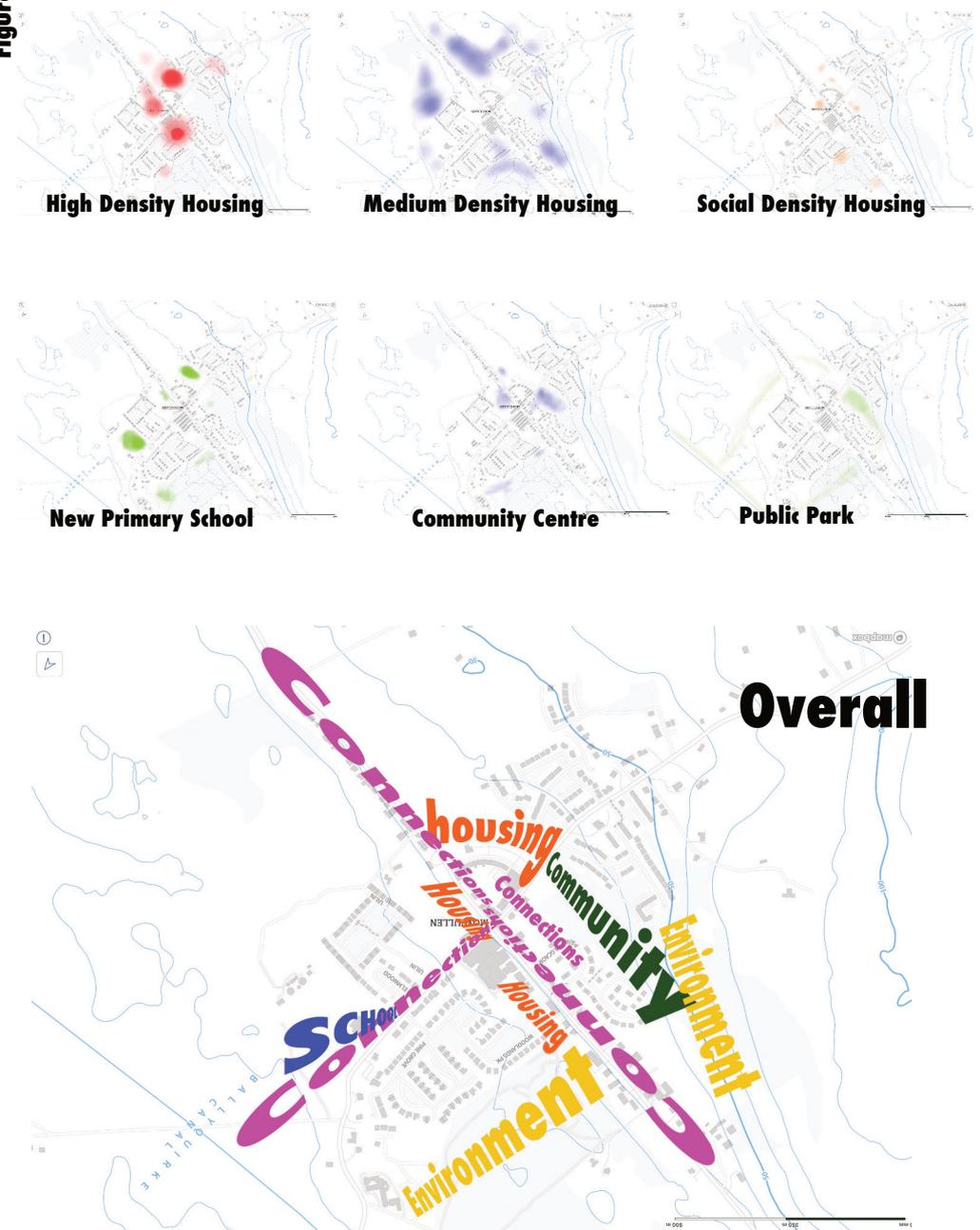
Choose what is important to you and the village, you do not have to choose all the options, and you can choose any as often as you wish.

A  High Density	B  Medium Density	C  Upmarket	D  Social / Community Care
E  New Primary School	F  Secondary School	G  Community Centre	H  Library
I  Basket ball court	J  Youth facilities	K  Public Park	L  Creative Hub
M  Co-working space	N  Restaurant / bar	O  Bus shelter	P  Sewerage treatment
Q  Hotel	R ?	S ?	T ?
	Other	Other	Other



Figure N

# Collective Mapping Results



The following graphic represents the key points that have been gleaned from this comprehensive engagement. With due reference to the broader planning context (planning practices and the ASI approach), they have been grouped as shown.

**Figure 0**



*Data presented here feeds directly into the following chapter. The level of engagement speaks not only to the innate desire that the residents of the village have in the authorship of the village's future but also lends a high level of confidence in this acting a true and scientifically rigorous representation of their wishes.*





# Moycullen 2030: A Village Plan

The above process was unique in the history of the village. Never before has the opportunity been given for the whole community to lend its voice. That voice is best represented under the following themes. Recommendations for the development of the village that the community wants was a process of filtering the voices of nearly half its residents and will be presented under these themes. - Community - Connectivity - Collaboration.

## Community

Often difficult to pin down, recognisable in parts, but hard to grasp as a whole, community (both in its presence and absence) is one of the key pillars of society. Community acts as an invisible glue, one that binds people together. Often times it is spatial; it binds people to a place. Strong communities can exist in very different places, strong communities can grow around very different issues. Communities sometimes grow around sports teams, they can grow around a shared history or heritage, they can grow against perceived threats or external forces. While it might not be easy to identify that which brings a community together, the fundamental element is clear: People.

The broad consensus is that strong communities are vital to the successful development of a place. Increasingly, we are beginning to recognise that a strong community cannot be assumed and needs to be legislated for. International research points to the fact that encouraging strong communities is directly related to the places we make.

We know that the positive benefits of a strong community are a sense of pride, strong identity, friendship and looking after each other. We also know that community has been undone in this country and beyond. A number of factors are serving to undermine the strength of communities:

- Isolation and Atomisation.
- Lack of a connection to a place
- Lack of place coherence (stretching geographies of work-live practices).
- Erosion of traditions.

The provision of housing without any community infrastructure has served to undermine community in Ireland. The building of places devoid of community facilities has fuelled issues such as antisocial behaviour and as negatively affected levels of carbon consumption. The presence of a strong community cannot be assumed in the future. Ireland and especially rural Ireland is littered with places that previously housed very strong communities. The sustenance of strong communities correlates directly with the kinds of places that we make. Planning for the physical development of a place directly impacts on the presence of 'Community' in that place.

This theme fits directly with **National Policy Object 4** of Project Ireland 2040. "Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high-quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being".

Community strength grows from shared connections and place-based identity. As Moycullen grows it can no longer take this for granted. An investment in bricks and mortar can help ensure that community can survive. The general recognition on behalf of residents and the collective desire for its sustenance throughout growth phases proves the demand for such.

# COMMUNITY recommendation 1



Purchase of the Co-op building by the community, for the community. The building, currently for sale, dates back to the mid 19th century. It is the marquee building in the village, it is central and easily accessible. The dedication of this building for community purposes would be a strong statement and match the general sentiment with regards to the accepted importance of Community.

Ensuring the future importance of the community requires a dedicated space. While plans for a bigger community centre were submitted as part of the application for RRDF were unsuccessful, the purchase of the Co-op is a different offering. The cost of the purchase could be raised by the community through numerous funding options. A vision for the future use of the space is outlined below. It acts as a suggested template -

further exploration in the form of targeted community engagement would also be warranted.

## The Co-operative -

- While not a community centre in the traditional sense, it will be a place central to the community. A site of social connection, a point of information regarding all community activities and opportunities. Building on the important work already carried out by the MCDA at Aras Uilinn, the Co-op could be a place to encourage the development of future connections as a site of social engagement and interaction.
- A site of cultural celebration. From explorations of the wealth of heritage aspects in the surrounding area, it can also be a site of creative endeavour. A space for artists and craftspeople to display their wares and celebrate the culture of the region as a venue for performances of all kinds from theatre to film and music.
- A site of learning. *Áit le Gaelige*. From the informal practice of making residents more aware of the work of the community (MCDA) to more formal methods of learning through classes to be offered there as well as a more formal agreement with NUI Galway and the potential to offer summer schools and evening courses in the venue. As a village in the Gaeltacht, the Co-op could also be a bilingual place. A potential place language classes and social events, the Co-op could be a site for social connections tri Gaeilge.
- A site for a library. According to the last county development plan, (Objective CF 10), Moycullen is due a library - the Co-op offers the ideal location for this.
- A site of digital connectivity. Following examples of international best practice, the Co-op site could offer the village a key node in the development of a digital hub. The site could be a place of learning and enterprise as well as exploration. The Co-op could be a digital service site for the region, enabling and teaching all residents actively engage in digitisation by bringing them through service provision and exploring the development of a smart village initiative (See below).
- An enterprise space, from digital nomads to those who work from home, the Co-op will provide a dedicated space (gteic) for entrepreneurial endeavour. With the support of NUI Galway, this will serve as a learning space and a new addition to the innovation ecosystem in the county.

□ A caring space: Beyond a touchpoint for key social services from childcare to elderly support, the Co-op could offer meals service such as meals on wheels. The Co-op can also act as a unique entryway to the natural environment and an environment learning space. Supported by community gardens, this will be a place where a community can learn how to better integrate and nourish its environment.

□ A Venue space. With a capacity to seat over 200, this could act as a unique performance venue. One that can attract artists of high standing to the village.



### **Viability and Sustainability**

The Co-op is ideally positioned to match the key criteria of future development at the local and national level. The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund is a commitment of €1 billion by the Irish government to be invested in rural Ireland over the period 2019 to 2027.

The purpose of the fund is to support job creation in rural areas, address de-population of rural communities and support improvements in our towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000, and outlying areas. In terms of the vision as laid out above, the Co-op matches the key criteria of enterprise and social goals.

The co-op would also benefit from other incentives like the Town Renewal scheme.

The current local area plan for Moycullen states:

"Objectives Objective CF 3 – Lands for Community & Amenity Facilities Ensure that there are adequate lands zoned and serviced lands to cater for the establishment, improvement or expansion of educational, community, recreation and amenity facilities within the Plan Area. This will include the following: a) Reserve lands for existing community facilities and for the expansion and provision of additional community facilities adjacent to existing community facility lands. b) Reserve lands for the provision of community facilities adjacent to large blocks of residentially zoned lands to meet the needs of existing and future residents." Further, that Plan recommends: Objective CF 10 – Library Site

Identify a site for the provision of a library and facilitate and support the development of such a facility.

The siting of a library in the Co-op matches the cultural bent to the proposed development. A library would also act as an anchor tenant for the building.

GTeic is an initiative run by Udaras Na Gaeltacht: Gréasán Digiteach na Gaeltachta (Gaeltacht Digital Network). gteic is a network of innovation and digital hubs in locations throughout Ireland's Gaeltacht areas. The innovation hubs will be dotted along the majestic Wild Atlantic Way in Donegal, Mayo, Galway, Kerry and Cork and will include Waterford and Meath in Ireland's Ancient East. These developments will have no small effect on the sustainable economic and social development of the Gaeltacht. The funding for gteic is approved at a support level of 75% under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.

A co-working space has been offered to the village and the Co-op is now the obvious choice. This will bring with it a revenue stream as well as capital funds for redevelopment. Such is the nature of the surrounding enterprise ecosystem, it would make sense to initially focus on small enterprises / single person operations in the creative, cultural and social enterprise sector. This is a sector where the overlap between the enterprise and social concerns are obvious. Indeed, consideration could be given to formalising this overlap between renters and the community whereby a percentage of time is offered towards community projects. One obvious area of overlap would be the living lab / smart village project outlined below.

Further alternative uses in the forms of classes from pottery to Yoga could also be housed in the venue.

Leader funding is another possibility.

### **Broader context**



The establishment of the Co-op as a shared space, a community and cultural centre, a place of learning and of social exchange chimes directly with the buildings original purpose. The Moycullen Cooperative Society was established in 1914 by the local farming community (see O'Cadhain, in O'Sullivan et al's *Moycullen Miscellany*). The co-operative movement swept across Ireland in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a direct response to a rural Ireland in decline, the co-op movement promoted economic democracy against the backdrop of sweeping political change that led to independence. The collective empowerment of farmers was an innovative response to rural decline.

A community, cultural and social enterprise space comprising of a library, co-working space and spaces for broader community pursuits acts as a 21st-century response to a spatial imbalance.

At the more local level, the purchase by the community, for the community of a marquee building in the centre of the village will be a strong statement that chimes with the concerns of the village. It will offer the MCDA an opportunity to become central and visible to residents and visitors alike. [The MCDA can decide whether to move its operation from Aras Uilinn to the Co-op, doing so would have obvious benefits in terms of visibility and centralisation. While not cost-neutral, moving out of Aras Uilinn would mean more land available for primary school expansion.]

A well-landscaped, heritage laden building brought back to life will also serve to improve the Public Realm of the village. As the marquee building of the village, it can also feed directly into identity formation. Aesthetically, a pleasing visual association backed up by a community centred ethos chimes directly with the key findings of our public engagement.



## COMMUNITY recommendation 2



A Public Park for the village. Allied with the above recommendation and relying on much of the same rationale is the recommendation that Moycullen establishes a distinct identity, formulates a degree of coherence and directly contributes to the public realm by the establishment of a public park.

Various locations were suggested throughout the consultation, but the key is that the park acts as a central node for the community. Beyond matching the often cited connection to the environment deficit, planned well it can also directly contribute to increased coherency in the village. This can be achieved by providing a focal point for the village around which further development can be planned. It contributes directly to the public realm of the village by the provision of accessible green space for the residents. A park that is sensitive to the geographical context is also important and an opportunity for the village to better

establish its identity by reflecting the unique landscape and topography it inhabits.

For it to be successful it needs to be a functional space. Easily navigable by people of all abilities, welcoming and open. Beyond the provision of a space for casual encounters, it can also serve to act as a site for trade. The weekly market on Fridays attracts customers from far beyond the village catchment area. A well designed public park could also incorporate the relocation of the market. Doing this would create a more pedestrian-friendly market ambience.

Appropriately designed, the park could also become a site for celebration. The village's sporting success would be better celebrated in the village. A park could provide space to welcome home teams and individuals after their success. It could also provide an appropriate space for burgeoning festivals such as Féaste Sráide and St Patrick's

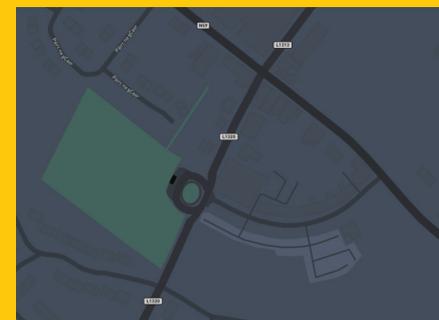
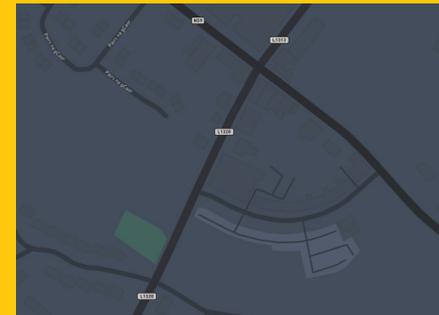
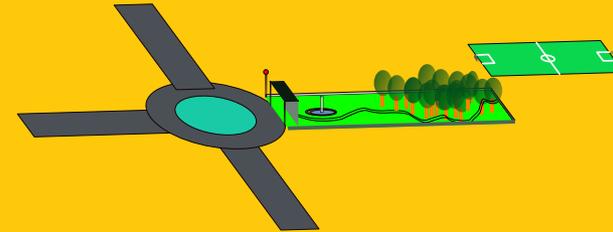
Day Festival. A centrally located open-air venue could enable the development of a schedule of cultural offerings during the year. Open-air cinema or open-air theatre and music events would help embed the park as a site of central connectivity within the community and act as a key node in the cultural infrastructure of the village.

As with many elements, Moycullen does not have to look far for the skills set required to make this possible.

Publicly owned land directly adjacent to the current playground provides an ideal site that is currently zoned Community. 18 acres stretch back into mature forest and provide an ideal site for the location of a public park for Moycullen. This land could also be further developed to include attractions for younger people not currently catered for in the village. A basketball /mixed-use five a side soccer pitch would provide for the needs of many. Further development in the lines of housing for the elderly or community care housing for the less able could also form part of this site. Alternative housing matching the general tenor of this community centred place.

Within the broader planning context, the centralisation of the village through the provision of a public park by the council has to be encouraged. Increased housing density means that the demand for public green spaces will increase. Considering this park in the broader context of environmental access is detailed further below.

Figure P



# Connectivity.

Today's world is connected in ways that would have been very difficult to predict as recently as 20 years ago. Connectivity often refers to digital or fibre optic width. In Ireland, the National Broadband Plan has set out to ensure the digital connectivity of all of Ireland, with special reference to rural areas. While vital, not just for economic, but for social, cultural and educational pursuits the digital connectivity of any place in Ireland is now served (satisfactorily or not) by that plan and those bodies identified to ensure it.

Broadening the term connectivity lets us think about how we connect with our places of work, our schools, local services and each other. The ability to connect and how we connect is vital to the future sustainability of a place. Of special note in the context of villages in close proximity to larger urban centres is how they are connected to that place. Transportation as a method of connectivity requires a fundamental rethink. How we have been transporting ourselves is not sustainable into the future. In Ireland, the use of private cars as a means of connecting has to change if we are to affect any positive impact in the war against climate change. Sustainable modes of transport such as buses, car sharing and cycling are the ways we must transit in the future. Future plans for how we make places must start with a recognition that how we use transport needs a fundamental rethink.

Internal connections at a more local level also need to be considered in the future planning of places. Unconsidered development leads to places that lack coherence. Unconsidered placement and location of services and facilities differs little from their underprovision. If such services are not coherently planned, people are disconnected from them. Consideration, therefore, needs to be given as to how people access services and how this can be done in a way that negates the need for unsustainable modes of transport. Designing places for access via people-powered modes of transport (walking and cycling) not only offsets a place's carbon footprint but directly enhances the public realm by not just helping people connect to services, but to each other.

Owing to either unchecked growth or bad forward planning, many villages in Ireland have been negatively affected by the lack of connections. Often cited in the case of Moycullen is the

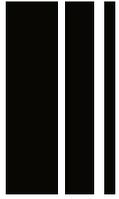
universal irony that the reliance on the private car has decreased connectivity. The throughput of traffic along the N59 has served to cut the village in two. The presence of traffic jams, as well as the speed of cars travelling through the village, has dissected the village. The planned bypass of the village will go some way to alleviating this, a quieter main thoroughfare will entice people out of their cars to navigate the space by other means.

Though not uniformly popular, the Moycullen bypass is due for construction in 2020. It will serve to take non-local traffic out of the village centre. This is an opportunity for the village to reflect on how best to take advantage of the more manageable through traffic. It is an opportunity to consider the functionality of a village that will be less reliant on a linear shape. It is also an opportunity for the village to consider investing in the public realm (see recommendation 2 below).

This relates directly to **National Policy Objective 7** of Project Ireland 2040: "Addressing the legacy of rapid unplanned growth, by facilitating amenities and services catch-up, jobs and/or improved sustainable transport links to the cities."

**Figure Q**





# CONNECTIVITY recommendation 1



Pathways, cycleways and green and blueways. To encourage connections, Moycullen needs a greater level of investment in its footpaths to directly encourage increased connectivity. The recent widening of the city side approach to the village and the building of wide footpaths demonstrated the desire that people have to walk for exercise and pleasure. The use of the same model to connect all approaches to the village would serve to increase foot traffic into and through the village. Of primary importance would be ensuring the connection of key pieces of infrastructure within and to the village. Notable here is the lack of connection to the GAA pitches to the north of the village. The development of a proper alternative to the car in travelling to and from the pitch would not only help offset carbon but serve to increase health and wellness by encouraging independence for younger members of the GAA club.

Moycullen, more than any other village along the 75km routes stands to benefit the most from the completion of the Connemara Greenway. Of the projected half a million visits taken each year, the majority will start in Galway city. 12km is an ideal stop-off point for casual cyclists. Moycullen needs to lobby for the completion of the greenway as it stands to be the most significant infrastructural investment into the village in the next half-century.

The overall enthusiasm from residents and businesses alike was made clear through all public engagement activities. The arrival of the greenway will have very obvious economic benefits but perhaps more important will be the non-economic benefits.

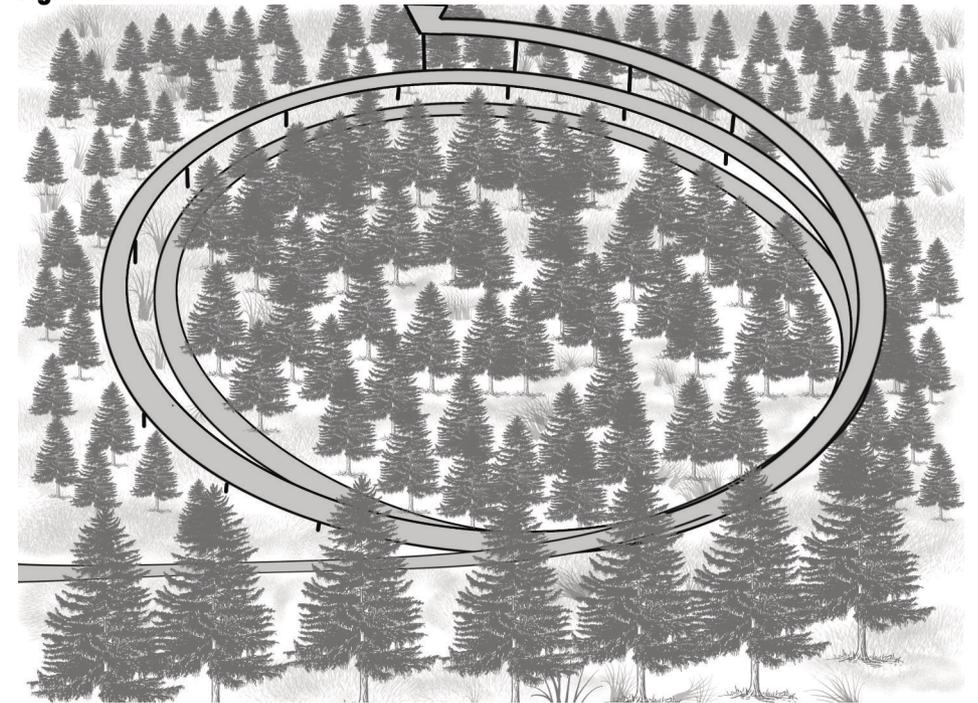
*"If you look at places like Mulranny or Kilmacthomas... There is so much potential"*

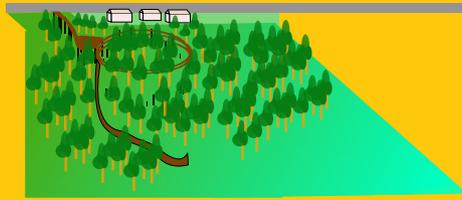
*"It blows my mind, the positives are huge - health, money, etc. How can it not be built already?"*

A safe dedicated off-road cycleway between the village and Galway city centre will offer a very real alternative

travel/commuting option. The proposed development will be built with this in mind, the Galway city Moycullen stretch being built wider to accommodate this type of usage. The environmental, health and well-being impacts of this will be obvious. Less obvious is the potential identity-building opportunity offered by the greenway. Moycullen can follow from the successful implementation in other similar-sized villages (i.e. Newport in Co. Mayo) that have branded themselves as 'bike-friendly'. The offer of plenty of bike parking, signage and dedicated safe cycle paths throughout the village would be a wise investment. Doing this will not only help capture the lucrative tourism revenue but also encourage a broader subscription locally to bike transport. Encouraging the use of bicycles and the design of places to encourage bicycles is internationally recognised best practice in the planning of places. Below we will explore further the positive benefits of branding the village associated with outdoor, environmentally engaged activity. Any Greenway project involving private land needs to include the wishes and needs of those landowners. Proper consultation is necessary to ensure the delivery of the Greenway.

**Figure R**





**'Cycling through the trees' Limburg, Belgium**

The Moycullen Loop (figure R). One potential area of concern is the likely impact that the village bypass will have on access to the greenway from the village. As currently planned, the greenway will run north of the bypass on the opposite side of the village. For the village to reap the potential economic benefit (as well as ancillary benefits from increased usage) a direct connection to the greenway would be needed. There are several ways that this can be done. Beyond lobbying of planners and engineers to include an underpass on the bypass, the village could consider enticing passing cyclists with the Moycullen Loop. The best way to encourage cycling traffic is via a loop rather than a linear connection.

The lands at Kilrainey woods provide the ideal connection to the village through a forested cycle. It will be important to offer passing cyclists an enticement to come up to the village (it is a distinct elevation to the village from the old railway line). Indeed there is an opportunity to think big in the building of a loop that itself becomes a tourist attraction (note the cycle through the trees is set to be one of Belgium's top tourist attractions - pictured).

The loop can also add to the building of identity around environmentally sensitive activity pursuits, a viable and legitimate option for Moycullen village (see below). The heritage society has already mapped out some routes of historical interest in the vicinity of the village and this acts as a different way of connecting to the environment. The planned greenway will be built along the old railway line and has obvious heritage endowments.

The loop can also refer to Community Recommendation 2 above, the building of a public park in Moycullen. The Moycullen Loop also acts as an addition to the public realm in the village. Built well, it can accommodate pedestrians as well as cyclists. As such it will act as the primary connector between residents and their environment via navigable walks for all abilities.

The loop serves to also connect the village and its residents to the blueway system. A series of canals that connect Ross Lake to Galway city. An untapped resource that, done well could compliment the greenway. Both the blue and greenway initiatives are part of a growing movement called slow tourism. This is a lucrative market of people seeking to lessen the climate footprint of their vacation. These are tourists in search of experiences, a sector of real viability for the village of Moycullen.



# CONNECTIVITY recommendation 2



## Bus shelter and bus connectivity

The age profile of Moycullen has changed. As a result, the travel needs of the village has changed. The climate imperative has become more obvious, as a result, the way people transport themselves is changing. Global and very local factors are at play in the increase in demand for a dedicated bus service to and from Moycullen.

Two demographic patterns look set to define the village's growth over the next 10 years. The growth in young adults as well as an increased share of senior citizens. National research shows that both age groups are key demographics for public transport use. Another aspect of the local context which is important is the high representation of workers in the public sector. Both the University and the Hospital are big employers in the Village, with direct proximity to the village.

The environmental imperative, allied with proposed infrastructural investments (Moycullen bypass and Galway city outer ring road) will impact the way we connect with the city in the coming years. The above factors point to the already untapped and expected increase in demand for bus use from Moycullen to Galway city.

A daytime hourly bus service, as well as increased services in the evening, would ensure that public transport via bus is a viable alternative for the residents of Moycullen. International studies show that increased provision of alternatives can shift behaviour. On average two-thirds of respondents travelled to Galway city at least once a day. Over 80% drove. A viable alternative to driving in the form of regular bus service could shift at least one-quarter of journeys to public transport in the new future and have a significant impact on the carbon footprint of the village.

More broadly speaking a well connected Moycullen also offers the potential for increased visits to the village. A reliable bus service will also chime with the developing identity of a sustainable, environmentally aware Moycullen.

Figure S is a rendition of a possible location for a bus shelter for the village. This is a central location adjacent to the above

mentioned public park. A redesigned junction with bus provision at the centre could also enable the creation of the new village centre for Moycullen. Options for parking are available in the vicinity and new charging points for electric cars are also recommended.

**Figure S**



# Collaboration and Coordination

Best encapsulated by the Irish word 'Meitheal', the coming together of communities to enrich their place has a long history in ensuring the sustainable development of places. In today's world where international phenomena such as Brexit and the rise of populism a degree of scepticism has arisen regarding national democracy. Yet, at a local level, people seem more willing and ready to effect real change. This change does not abide by formal rules, but is self-organising and regulating. Ireland provides a unique example of this in the form of the GAA, a voluntary organisation that has brought communities together for the past century and a half.

International examples like the flat-pack democracy campaign that has grown in the UK demonstrate a willingness on behalf of people to be active authors of the place in which they live. National party politics fade at a local level where people are more concerned with their place of residence. Representation of community concerns at a local level needs to be accommodated and the infrastructure for this representation needs constant reevaluation. Leadership in terms of bringing these voices and concerns upwards, to local authorities and beyond is expected and a defining tenet of a functioning democracy.

Meitheal can only survive through collaboration and a shared sense of identity. Important for people's connection to their place and each other is a subscription to a common set of identifiers. At its most obvious, this is supporting the local GAA team, at its less obvious is an unspoken concern and regard for those within the community. Threats to the vivacity of community were outlined above, with many of the same phenomena impacting identity. Shared identity can be undone by development. Beyond sport, language is an important factor in ensuring identity and community. The Irish language serves to demarcate many places on the west coast of Ireland and in doing so offers them a sense of authenticity that is difficult to replicate. This makes these communities more resilient in the face of fast-paced development.

Collaboration is the subscription to a unifying goal. Collaboration is fundamental to ensuring the future growth of a community. It works best when diverse interests and expertise come together to subscribe to a shared value or objective. Collaboration at the village level helps ensure the better functioning of a place. Beyond reflecting the wishes and wants of a village it also positively affects the identity of that village. Village identity is increasingly important in an urbanising world. Strong identities combat the suburbanisation of villages in the orbit of bigger cities.

This relates directly to **National Policy Objective 6** of Project Ireland 2040: "New statutory guidelines, supported by wider methodologies and data sources, will be put in place under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act to improve the evidence base, effectiveness and consistency of the planning process".

The strength of community ties marks Moycullen village as unique. From GAA and heritage to active retirement, the village has a wealth of effective voluntary associations and activities. The ethos of collaboration is well established in the village. The effectiveness of this collaboration can be judged not only by the number of subscribers to various activities and pursuits but also to the resulting built infrastructure (GAA pitch/handball alley / Teach na Gaeilge) in the village. These strong community ties need to be ensured over the course of future growth in Moycullen. Enabling collaboration will be an important part of this. Recommendations above relating directly to community as well as those pertaining to connectivity can help ensure future collaboration. Ensuring a broader collective vision for the future development of the village will be important for the delivery of all recommendations.



# COLLABORATION recommendation 1

## Experience MOYCULLEN

This recommendation relates specifically to the inherent strengths and latent opportunities for the village. This is a case of identifying the unique traits and the broader potential of the village and highlighting collaborative ways to ensuring its future success. Beyond the action of 'branding', Experience Moycullen acts as a collective identifier for the village. The moniker itself is broad and a better one might be identified later, but for this report, it acts as a placeholder to highlight the possible benefits.

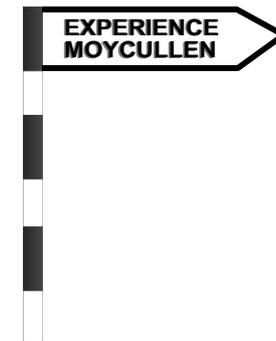
The term *Experience Economy* emerged in the work of Pine and Gilmore as far back as 1988. The experience economy is predicted to grow exponentially over the next 10 years. Current estimates see location-based experiences as a \$12 billion industry by 2023. The overall concept is that businesses must orchestrate memorable events for their customers, and that memory itself becomes the product: the "experience". More advanced experience businesses can begin charging for the value of the "transformation" that an experience offers. This, they argue, is a natural progression in the value added by the business over and above its inputs.

Since the idea was first muted, experience industries have begun to grow across the world, and Ireland is no exception. Experiential activities from outdoor pursuits (hiking, mountain biking etc) to festivals and events have grown as part of the broader 'experiences' sector. As with many new economic sectors, it can be difficult to identify, but as a set of activities, it is knowable as being outdoors, service-oriented and often related to social media (the act of 'sharing' experiences online litters social media accounts). Beyond that, it is a porous sector, it is highly interdependent on other sectors, notably those of food and retail. The obvious overlap is identified in those food and retail businesses that offer their products and services as an experience. At the same time, those who are keen to pursue

experiences also act as customers of more traditional service providers.

Experience Moycullen refers directly to the geographical situation of the village. One of the key strengths of the village is an outstanding natural environment that surrounds it. It is diverse, featuring lake lands, woodlands, and the foothills of Connemara. Experience Moycullen also refers to the current and future offer in the village. The following are a list of current experience industries in the village vicinity:

- Connemara Marble
- Celtic Crystal
- MTB
- CrossFit
- Loughwell Pet farm
- Eilemental
- Cnoc Suin
- Horse riding
- Horse riding
- Horse riding
- Oughterard Golf Club
- Wind Park
- Bridgit's Garden
- The farmers market



Service experience providers: - Tree Bark Store - The White Gables and Enjoy - The Cakery - The Mountain Road Cafe - The Forge - The Coachhouse - Regans - Bodhrán Buí - Hurneys.

Taken together and incorporating the soon to be open 'Wildlands' development, the experience sector in Moycullen is by far the largest employer in the village.

From a social perspective, a vast range of societies and social organisations already exists in the village. They vary from walking clubs to couch to 5K running clubs. There are a number of cycling clubs, a golf society, horse riding groups, and a heritage society that cater to residents that actively engage with their environment.

The combination of these factors, environment, economic and social all highlight the potential for the village to build an identity around Experience Moycullen. This identity is more than a branding exercise for the village. While the economic/commercial

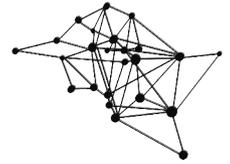
logic is obvious, the social, psychological and environmental positives are likely more important. From the environmental perspective, we know that increased access into the environment/countryside increases understanding and knowledge of environmental issues. Encouraging and enabling access to the environment has proven positive benefits for the social and psychological health of residents.

Experience Moycullen would be a collective identity-building exercise. All groups in the village could be encouraged to respond to the overarching narrative of Moycullen being the point of connection between people and their environment. There is a latent opportunity in celebrating the environment within the village. Festivals or events that coincide with the changing of seasons have been a mainstay in the locality and celebrated locally. Opportunities exist for the expansion of these under the guise of Experience Moycullen.

A starting point would be the subscription of organisations around the village. A graphic designer could be tasked with mocking up a visual identity for the village. A steering committee could be organised to oversee the rollout. As made clear above, identity will be important for two reasons, ensuring the village remains visible after the village bypass and legislating against the suburbanisation of the village with the growth of Galway city.



## COLLABORATION recommendation 2



Governing the village. Local governance in Moycullen has evolved over the course of the development of the Village. A community council existed before the formation of the Moycullen Community Development Association (MCDA or Forbairt Phobail Mhaigh Cuilinn Company (FPMC)). Forbairt Phobail Mhaigh Cuilinn Company evolved from the voluntary, non-incorporated, Moycullen Community Council which was active since the early 1970s.

FPMC/MCDA is a voluntary, representative community group. All residents of the Parish of Moycullen, who are of at least voting age, may become members of FPMC. Changes in community governance structures have coincided with growth phases of the village. The formation of the MCDA as a company limited by guarantee occurred and resulted from the acquisition of lands from the State for the community. As a result, the MCDA became responsible for 27 acres of land adjacent to the village (Kilrainey woods).

Local democracy is very important at the village level. Good governance is vital for the functioning of the village. Governance requires openness and transparency at all times. Openness ensures broader subscription and interest in local projects, while transparency ensures trust in the structures. All of this is important in generating broader collective authorship of place.

Operations run out of Áras Uilinn by part-time staff and administrators provide a vital function for the village. Much of this good work is not visible to residents but were this work not taking place it would have severe impacts on the community. Beyond necessary tasks such as street cleaning, the office of the MCDA provides a point of social contact to many who use it daily. Its function as a central coordinator for many of the village's community groups is another important role that can be easily overlooked.

The following are some of the other operational aspects of the organisation:

- FPMC runs Maigh Cuilinn Community Office from Áras Uilinn, (old schoolhouse in Maigh Cuilinn) and maintains it as a facility for use by community groups.
- FPMC facilitates over 40 local voluntary/community groups, while approx. 350 people of all ages use the facility every week.
- Údarás na Gaeltachta provides funding and support services to Forbairt Pobail Maigh Cuilinn. This included a grant towards administration costs, promotion/development of the Irish language, support through Community Employment Schemes, assistance toward the upkeep of existing community facilities at Arus Uilinn.
- FPMC has 1 part-time manager and 4 personnel employed under the Community Employment Scheme
- Provides full office and secretarial service to the local community with assistance of grant application for local voluntary groups
- FPMC has already partnered with local groups to provide facilities like a children's playground and Naoinra, and manages CE schemes and operates the existing Arus Uilinn community facility.
- Facilitate and promote youth clubs and summer camps at Community facilities.

As a functioning entity, it offers much to the day to day upkeep of the village. For more strategic, longer-term visioning of future development, some operational improvements are recommended. Overcoming the perception of the MCDA as a closed shop is imperative. There is a very important role to be played by the MCDA, but this cannot be done effectively without trust in an open and transparent governance structure.

This can be achieved by an event or a marquee change on behalf of the organisation. A well documented annual general meeting, one that is well advertised across the village and all media. Coordinating this with an event of more general interest will ensure greater attendance. This is an opportunity to open up the association for broader membership.

Potential also exists in the changing of the appreciation of the village by the acting on one or more of the recommendations above. Naturally, Community recommendation 1 and the purchase of the Co-op will be a marquee event to radically alter the place of the MCDA in the minds of the residents. This will

offer a new lease of life for the association, placing it central, literally and metaphorically in the minds of the village it serves.

Throughput of coordinators and members of the steering committee broadens not just the membership but the skill set of the association. This brings with it greater buy-in on behalf of the whole community. New skills and new voices bring with them a diversity of interests. This will also auger well for better representation from newer members of the community.

One way to effectively employ this to the best effect is through the **Charrette Approach** to planning. Charrettes are organised to encourage the participation of all. That includes everyone interested in the making of development: the developer, business interests, government officials, interested residents, and activists. This is the way for ensuring true democratic voice at the local level. For the MCDA, it involves a more active role of collaborating and coordinating. The doing of this helps the recognition of the MCDA as a facilitator of development in the village rather than the arbitrator of it.



Facilitating Charratte style planning groups would be part of the creation of a real sense of collective authorship of place. It would also aid in opening up the development process. The opening up of key decisions regarding placemaking is something that is at the heart of the Smart Village process.

**Smart Villages** are communities that use innovative solutions to improve their resilience, building on local strengths and opportunities. They rely on a participatory approach to develop and implement their strategy to improve their economic, social and/or environmental conditions, in particular by mobilising solutions offered by digital technologies. Smart Villages benefit from co-operation and alliances with other communities and actors in rural and urban areas. The initiation and the implementation of Smart Village strategies can build on existing initiatives and can be funded by a variety of public and private sources.

The impetus for designing a Smart Village can come directly from grassroots collective action or indirectly from external planning or research initiatives such as this plan. In all cases, however, certain principles need to be taken into account to keep people at the centre of the process. When planning territorial and community actions, it is useful to think of the process as cyclical or circular learning. Such a cycle brings together all aspects of planning into a coherent, unified process, helping to ensure that the plan is well-focused, resilient, practical and cost-effective. It can also help to ensure that learning from mistakes feeds back into future planning and decision-making. Local people are a central part of all phases.

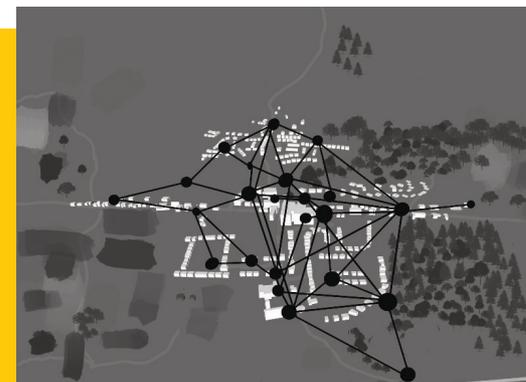
An effective and participative governance structure is essential. The setting up of a representative steering group can be a way to make sure all voices are being heard from the outset. It can be a small group that makes strategic decisions and gives strategic advice. Owing to the wealth of skills and knowledge of the residents of Moycullen it is an opportunity well worth exploring.

A significant portion of those skills resides with workers in NUI Galway and GMIT. The potential to explore a formalised connection between the village and the University (less than 10

kilometres) east should also be considered. One way that this could be agreed would be through the Digital Village initiative. The Digital Villages Platform creates the basis for significantly improving the supply of digital services in rural areas. The benefits range from better connections to improved quality of life. One example would be improved communications in the village.

The development of a local news portal that enables the service providers, the MCDA and Galway County Council to inform residents quickly about local news and events. It would also be accessible to local clubs, associations and organisations, and automatically integrate existing news sources from web and social media. The Moycullen app could extend this news system to a "my village in the pocket" solution, which makes it possible to have all the news for the area available in one place. This could be the main point of access to the digital villages, where users could find information on local events, organise carpooling, offer their services to the community and much more. This could serve to revolutionise communication between residents but also between residents and the local administration. Residents can contribute to the community more easily – for example, by making suggestions that are passed directly to the responsible administration. Digital services thereby increasing the appeal of rural areas, helping to boost economic development.

All of this is made possible by a uniform platform that intelligently connects villages and communities. The digital platform is embedded as part of the Digital Villages Ecosystem, which is vibrant, growing and always expandable with new services. The Digital Villages Ecosystem is a unique ecosystem in which digital services are developed involving all parts of the society within living labs in the region.



#### Digital Hub Moycullen



Forbairt Phobail Mhaigh Cuilinn/Moycullen Community Development Association are currently seeking to establish a Digital Hub in Moycullen and have identified a potential premises. Anyone interested should contact Jimmy Keady at the community office [info@moycullen.net](mailto:info@moycullen.net) or 091-555626



## Next steps



At the end of the consultation process two facts became obvious to the team:

- There is wisdom in the crowds
- People are eager to author their place.

The next steps are the fulfilling of the above recommendations. These are recommendations from the community itself, they are distilled from many hours of conversation and consultation. These recommendations chime with national and local policy objectives, so they are achievable.

Delivery of these recommendations relies on the community. Solace is taken from the fact that this community has delivered before. The knowledge and ethic exists at the local level. The MCDA has agreed to take these recommendations, the timing of the plan also works with the drafting of the current local area plan by Galway County Council.

The Moycullen Village Plan was a unique exercise, one that was inspiring to be part of. Key learnings need to be recognised beyond the boundaries of the village itself. While the recommendations can be submitted as part of the local area plan to Galway County Council, the methods and approach employed can also provide key learning at the county, regional, and national level. Spatial planning requires participation. As a pilot study, the Moycullen Village Plan is proof that people are willing to take an active part in the making of their place. Note should also be taken of the wisdom of people in the authorship of place. Collectively decided on, the future development of a place by the people of that place foresees development that is people centred, socially and commercially sustainable. Trusting in the people to author the future development of their place is a viable planning practice.

## Buíochas le / Thanks to

I would like to thank my colleagues in NUI Galway, especially those in the School of Geography, Archaeology and Irish Studies and the Whitaker Institute. Particular thanks to John Byrne the research co-ordinator for this project, John played an important role in activating the community and guiding the tenor of the project.

A special thanks to the community of Moycullen who have been supportive throughout. Thanks to them for their enthusiastic engagement over the duration of the project. We hope that they can see the benefit of their time spent with us.

Thanks also to Councillor Noel Thomas who has been an advocate of this project from the very start. Thanks to members of Galway County Council for support.

We would also like to thank the MCDA and Jimmy Keady for their support throughout the project. Special thanks to Danny Ezergailis for translation services.

Thanks to the project funder, the Irish Research Council for seeing the potential in a project like this that brings academic research out into the community.

Thanks to our family and friends for their support throughout.

Míle buíochas díobh go léir.

Dr. Patrick Collins

School of Geography, Archaeology and Irish Studies.

NUI Galway.

