



Ardee 2040 Consultation Report

Ardee, Co. Louth

April 2022



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1 Introduction

In June 2021 Louth County Council launched an exciting project to prepare design proposals for the regeneration of Ardee. The project seeks to recover the streetscape and provide high quality public spaces alongside sports, recreation and active travel facilities and act as a catalyst for the positive regeneration of the broader town centre area.

As part of this project an early consultation exercise was undertaken to ascertain the wants and needs of the local community in relation to this regeneration project. This report outlines the various methods of recruitment for the engagement process, the channels used for the public consultation, the insights gathered, including those from the extensive public consultation survey, and how these insights have helped to shape the design proposals which are currently being developed through.

Full copies of the survey and all public communications as well as formal submissions from stakeholder groups and meeting notes are included in the Appendices at the end of this document. The report concludes Stage 1 of the project and provides insights for the design team from which they will develop proposals. These proposals will be brought forward for public validation in Stage 2 of the project. Stakeholders will have an opportunity to review design proposals and the options will be validated through further communications and consultation.

“Ardee is a beautiful little town, with lovely amenities, shops and history if it was developed properly to attract tourism, visitors, workers and residential people to the town. The river is beautiful and with lovely wildlife on it”

- Respondent

2 Executive Summary

In June and July 2021, Louth County Council undertook preliminary engagement and consultation for the preparation of design proposals for the regeneration of Ardee.

The study area covers four key character/opportunity areas:

- Main Street
- Ash Walk
- River Greenway
- Old Railway and Amenity Lands

The project seeks to recover the streetscape and provide high quality public spaces alongside sports, recreation and active travel facilities and act as a catalyst for the positive regeneration of the broader town centre area.

It represents the Ardee 2040 campaign – a targeted place-making response aimed at improving the streetscape and amenity of Ardee focused on these four key opportunity sites. This ambitious project will result in a holistic design proposal, setting a new benchmark for public realm and town centre infrastructure to be brought forward in an application for funding under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.

This early consultation report provides a summary and analysis of the first phase (Stage 1) of stakeholder and community consultation and the outputs from its stakeholder survey. The findings within this report have been used by the project design to define and develop proposed interventions, which will be subject to further consultation in order to refine and validate proposals at a later phase in the project (Stage 2).

As part of the design development, key stakeholders and members of the community have been engaged to assess their needs and aspirations. This exercise also provided an opportunity for those we engaged to provide feedback on the proposed design principles and mixed-use ambition for the sites.

The stakeholder engagement was carried out during the public health crisis, and varying levels of restrictions applied at different stages of engagement, which may have influenced both the number and type of responses received. The survey was live during the circuit breaker lockdown, during which time the general public were advised to stay at home and limit their contact with people outside of their household 'bubble'. The public information webinars took place shortly after restrictions were eased and the general public could meet with other households when outdoors.

To inform this work, a consultation survey was carried out online and received a total of 541 submissions (equivalent to c.11% of the population of Ardee town as per the last census). The responses we received represented a diverse range of stakeholders with an interest in the Ardee area, or with a connection to one of the four key opportunity sites.

The survey was hosted online at www.ardee2040.ie and was live for a fortnight from 21st June -5th July 2021. It sought to gather participant feedback on specific potential uses for the four key character areas, existing key features in the area, and road-test draft design principles.

Of the 541 responses, 24% of respondents live in Ardee, 20% use the local shops, 15% walk/cycle around the area, 13% use the community and public facilities, 12% use the sports and recreation facilities, 7% use the night-time economy, 6% work in Ardee and 3% are business owners.

The feedback demonstrated a clear demand for an overall reduction in traffic and greater access to sustainable travel measures, better river access and public space, and more sports and recreation facilities.

There was an overwhelmingly positive response to developing the potential of Ardee, with particular emphasis on its location close to the M1, equidistant between Belfast and Dublin.

Ardee's location was seen as a significant advantage. The town is ideally placed to benefit from hybrid working, as more people choose to live further from our capital cities, due to daily physical in-office presence being a less common employment requirement.

The responses emphasised the contributions that new housing and increased appetite for remote working could make to the community.

In total, 82% (444 respondents) strongly agreed or agreed that the town had unrealised potential to attract more people to work and live in the area.

There was a strong emphasis on harnessing the potential of Ardee Castle and the amenity of the river and associated wildlife.

Having considered the combined results of the qualitative and quantitative data generated from the survey, a number of very clear themes that the community feel strongly about have emerged (this was further evidenced in the breakout room discussions and the additional stakeholder consultation meetings, noted later within this report):

- Tourism and heritage potential
- Traffic congestion and flow, centralised parking, car free zones
- Youth and physical activity space
- River walk improvements and the environment
- Under-utilisation of public and outdoor space
- Improvements to Main Street

3 Stakeholder Engagement Methodology

An early consultation process with Ardee's stakeholders and members of the local community commenced in June 2021.

The consultation to date comprises a preliminary survey (open from 21st June-5th July 2021), an online consultation webinar and several direct meetings with representative stakeholder groups and individuals.

Following requests, direct meetings took place with representatives from Ardee Age Friendly, County Louth Bee Keepers' Association, Ardee Athletics Club and Fáilte Ireland, alongside some private property owners.

A written submission to the consultation was made by Transport Infrastructure Ireland, the Ardee Athletics Club and the Louth Beekeepers Association. A combined submission was also made from the Athletics Club, Square United and Ardee Boxing Club (see Appendix 1).

The digital information consultation webinar took place on Thursday 5th of August, 2021 from 6pm-8pm.

Early consultation insights survey

The primary purpose of the survey was to gather quantitative and qualitative insights from across a variety of stakeholders with an interest in Ardee as well as members of the local community.

The survey (see Appendix 2) set out to gather participant feedback on potential uses (including traffic and parking, public space and features, Ash Walk, the River Dee and sports and recreation), existing key features within the site boundary, and road-test potential streetscape and public realm changes within the Ardee area.

A total of 35 questions (closed and open queries) informed the survey.

The survey was split into five sections of enquiry – Ardee Town, Main Street, Ash Walk, River Greenway, and Sports and Recreation – from which the key themes noted above have emerged.

Survey recruitment

The research was promoted through a series of stakeholder letters which were issued electronically and by post from Turley Strategic Communications on behalf of Louth County Council to c. 250 stakeholders across community, political, economic and enterprise sectors, as well as members of the community living in close proximity to the site. A copy of this letter and the site map provided to stakeholders is available in Appendix 3.

2,469 Ardee 2040 leaflets were distributed to homes and businesses within 1km of the site boundary to ensure those in the surrounding area were made aware of the early consultation process. A copy of this leaflet is available in Appendix 4.

The survey was hosted on a dedicated project webpage (www.ardee2040.ie) and promoted via social media.

A series of Facebook and LinkedIn advertisements ran to further promote the consultation to key stakeholders and members of relevant organisations in the local community. The Facebook and LinkedIn social media campaign reached a total of 28,428 users targeting residents both in Ardee and the wider geographic area.

During the consultation period, the website hosted 1,473 users and experienced 1,849 sessions. The website experienced 2,759 page views overall.

The top traffic sources of the project website were Facebook (72%), followed by direct traffic (26%) and organic searches (2%).

Public consultation event

A digital public information event took place on Thursday 5th August 2021 to present the findings of the early consultation insights survey to key stakeholders and members of the local community.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, it was not advisable to hold an in-person event. Therefore, the event was held via Zoom. Community groups, residents and local stakeholders were invited to take part in the session.

The aim of the webinar was to discuss the findings from the early consultation survey and provide information regarding the next steps of the design process.

A total of 41 people registered to attend the event, with 19 people attending.

A number of the project team were present on the webinar, including representatives from Louth County Council and members of Turley's Planning and Strategic Communications teams.

During the information event, the project team presented a summary of the design process, an overview of the key findings from the early consultation survey, and facilitated a Q&A session with attendees.

As well as presenting an overview of the survey results, the webinar also included a number of live polls to engage the audience and to test the initial themes and findings that emerged from the consultation survey.

After the presentation, attendees were invited to join a breakout room to discuss details of the project with members of the project team. Seven people joined the breakout rooms, providing valuable insight into support for the scheme and potential development locations. Stakeholders in the breakout rooms included:

- Ardee and District Cancer Support Group
- Local residents
- Local elected representatives (Cllrs and TDs)
- Friends of Ardee Bog
- Louth Beekeepers Association

In the breakout rooms, the main items discussed were:

- Need to improve the visual aspect of the Old SuperValu
- Traffic concerns
- Clarity when discussing this project that it differs from bypass work and funding
- Need for an amenity / sports facility with multiple uses to provide a permanent home for several clubs based in the area
- Desire for a river walk that connects heritage sites within the town
- Tourism potential – particularly the potential to develop a place making/way finding scheme that tells the Ardee heritage story and creates an attraction for visitors
- Desire for Ardee Castle to be a focal point within the town with shared space around the area key, and its importance for the regeneration of the town
- Concerns that existing walking routes were insufficiently safe or attractive. Desire for a safe route for walking / running around the town
- Potential to develop the history of beekeeping in the area as an attraction for beekeepers and people interested in the hobby
- The owner of the bakery beside the Castle expressed an interest in allowing the property to be used as part of the Ardee 2040 regeneration
- Widening of footpaths and developing shared space should not cost accessible parking places

Among the comments we received, the comment presented below is representative of the ambition for Ardee that shone through during the breakout sessions:

“There are so many opportunities already existing in Ardee that can be utilised so much better. The castle should have a thriving historical aspect brought back to life, with adequate parking organised to assist”.

“There should be a skate park and basketball court added then give kids more of a choice. Also use the railway it is a phenomenal Space for outdoor concerts BBQ fun days and improve the tracks. Put a bike path through the town of cyclists to use and access the town safely”. Survey Respondent

Stakeholder meetings

As part of the consultation, meetings took place with key stakeholders that included local property owners, Louth Beekeepers’ Association, Fáilte Ireland, Ardee Age Action and the Ardee & District Athletics Club.

Meetings were held via Zoom or Microsoft Teams between July and October 2021. Meetings were attended by members of the project team from Turley Planning, Turley Strategic Communications and/ or Louth County Council. Meeting notes are available in Appendix 6.

Issues that emerged from these meetings can be found in the Findings and Design Response section of this document, alongside comments made from open-ended responses to the survey.

The Findings and Design Response section also includes a summary of the emerging themes and feedback relating specifically to the Westgate Vision development that we gathered during our survey.

Additional consultation

Remote channels for engagement were also used during the consultation process alongside the digital channels to ensure broad accessibility to the consultation process.

The consultation project established a dedicated Freephone consultation number (1800-010101) and stakeholders could speak to a member of the project team via telephone, record their survey responses, ask questions or seek additional information. A freepost address was also available and members of the public who were unfamiliar with digital consultation could return hard copies of the survey via post and also request any additional information as well.

The project team could also be contacted via a dedicated email address, contact@ardee2040.ie. In addition, a live chat function was in use via the project website from Monday to Friday 9am-5pm, allowing stakeholder queries to be addressed in real time. In total, three emails and five live chats were received.

Calls with various stakeholders were facilitated via Teams and Zoom. Copies of the notes from these sessions detailed later in this consultation document.

A press release and public notice were issued to the local papers detailing the public consultation methods and encouraging members of the public to participate. A copy of each is included in Appendix 5.

4 Survey Analysis – Respondent Profile

The survey was hosted online and received 420 completed responses from a total of 541 survey respondents. There were 121 incomplete responses.

Figure 4.1 below illustrates the breakdown of how respondents identified their connection to Ardee.

At a glance, we can see that of the 420 responses, 24% (101 respondents) live in Ardee, 20% (84 respondents) use the local shops, 15% (63 respondents) walk/cycle around the area, 13% (55 respondents) use the community and public facilities, 12% (50 respondents) use the sports and recreation facilities, 7% (29 respondents) use the night-time economy, 6% (25 respondents) work in Ardee and 3% (13 respondents) are business owners.

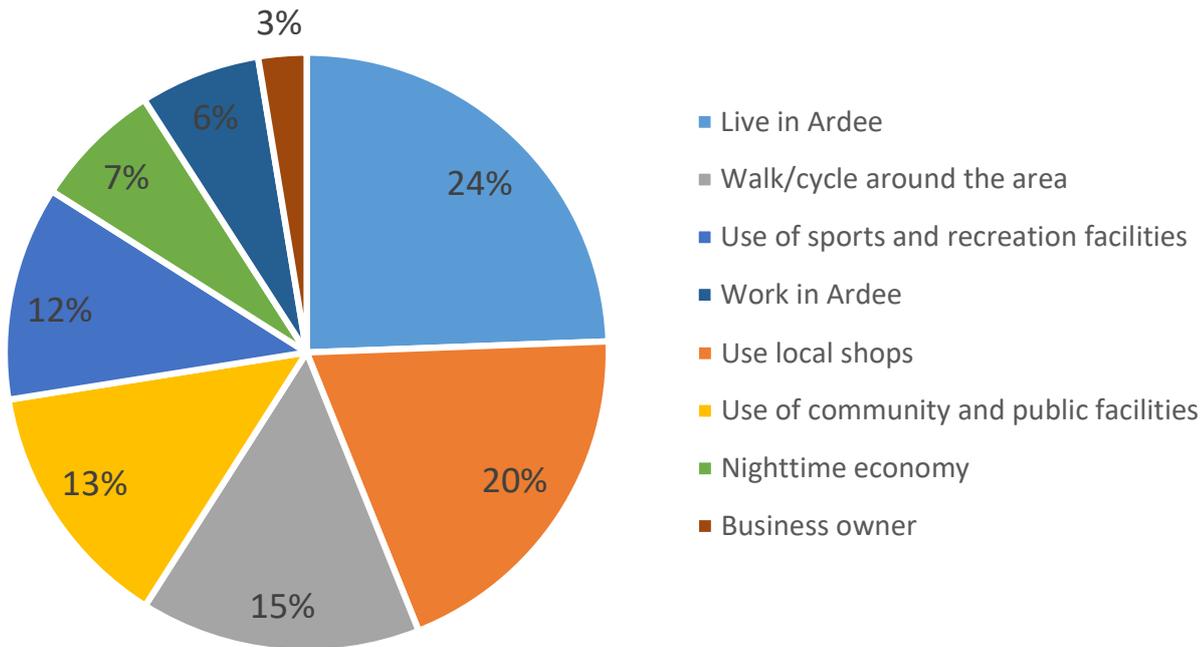


Figure 4.1: Responses to 'What is your connection to Ardee? (Please check all that apply)'

5 Priorities

To establish an initial picture of how respondents perceive the area, we asked them what features they would like to see introduced to Ardee town.

Whilst responses were wide ranging, words closely associated with sporting and recreation facilities (park, outdoor area, walk, pool), transport (traffic), and an increase in commercial facilities (shop, hotel) featured most prominently in responses. This is detailed in Table 5.1 below. A total of 359 responses were received for this question.

These responses are generally positive. It is clear that respondents would also like to see an increase in existing facilities in the town (more), and there is a desire to improve and expand on the existing facilities and services for the area.

Theme	Tally	Summary of comments
Highways and access	70	<p>The need for traffic management measures is viewed as a critical requirement in order to improve Ardee town.</p> <p>It was suggested that current levels of congestion be addressed in order to encourage town centre use. Many respondents suggested that a bypass be built to address this problem. It was also suggested that traffic control measures, such as traffic lights, be implemented.</p> <p>A small number of respondents suggested that large heavy goods vehicles should be prohibited from entering the town centre during working hours.</p> <p>In terms of accessibility, possible enhancements were suggested including safer pedestrian crossings and consideration for disabled and elderly users.</p>
Recreational facilities and amenity space	67	<p>Respondents emphasised the importance of introducing recreational facilities for leisure and social use to the town centre.</p> <p>Several respondents suggested that outdoor amenity spaces – such as play parks, a band stand and street furniture – should be included for the benefit of people of all ages. The addition of seating areas and bins was frequently mentioned.</p> <p>Improvements to the public realm and streetscape were deemed necessary in order to improve the town, particularly around Market Square and Main Street.</p>
Tourism and visitor facilities	53	<p>A large number of respondents highlighted the tourism potential of Ardee through the development of attractions and facilities to encourage visitors to the town.</p> <p>The desire to encourage tourism was expressed through the provision of tourist attractions, such as opening Ardee Castle to visitors, with the possibility of hosting tours and cultural events within the grounds. Several respondents suggested that accommodation such as hotels should be considered in order to encourage visitors to stay in the area.</p> <p>It was suggested that event information be posted on a dedicated town website.</p>
Sports and leisure	52	<p>There is a desire for the provision of new and improved sports facilities. Improved athletic facilities and a new swimming pool were particularly popular among respondents.</p>
Active travel	40	<p>It is believed that infrastructure improvements are required to encourage active modes of transportation. Several respondents suggested that future development plans include wider and safer cycle and pedestrian paths. More cycle lanes and pedestrianisation around the castle, railway line, and riverside have been proposed as specific areas for improvement. Improved public transportation was also suggested.</p>

Retail facilities	32	The feedback highlighted the need for a broader range of retail facilities, such as shops and restaurants. Ardee's reestablishment as a market town was mentioned, with the possibility of weekend farmers' markets. Potential improvements include a stronger night-time economy and longer shopping hours.
Youth facilities	26	Facilities for young people were identified as a necessity to improve the current offering. After-school programmes and extra space, including playing fields for children, were suggested.
Regeneration and future development	25	It was suggested that several derelict buildings could be brought back into use to improve the overall appeal of the area. A few respondents also believed that further housing development would aid the town.
Parking	18	Improved parking spaces were mentioned several times, with respondents describing the current problems with parallel parking in the town centre. It was suggested that street parking be realigned.
Landscaping and public open spaces	16	The inclusion of more green open spaces and landscaping measures was a recurring theme in the feedback. Improving the aesthetics of the town through the incorporation of public art murals on buildings and landscaping in the main square was suggested.
Employment opportunities	8	It was suggested that more job opportunities be created through the establishment of businesses and shared workspaces.
Heritage provision	5	Enhancing the town's heritage by preserving traditional shop fronts and emphasising the town's history was suggested as a potential improvement.
Town maintenance	4	Ensuring that the town is well-kept and properly signposted was deemed to be a priority by a small group of respondents.
Council	2	A few respondents mentioned the need for an improved town council and a possible merger with Monaghan County.
Security	2	Improving safety by incorporating measures such as CCTV to help reduce antisocial behaviour was highlighted.
Health infrastructure	1	One respondent suggested that a new GP surgery was necessary.

Table 5.1: Thematic analysis of responses to 'What feature(s) would you introduce to improve Ardee Town?'

6 Existing Perceptions

Respondents were then asked a series of questions to evaluate their existing perceptions of Ardee and key areas within the study.

They were first asked to rate the quality of the following features in Ardee:

- Parking facilities
- Café/restaurant choice and quality
- Variety/range and quality of shops
- Daytime safety and security
- Night-time feeling of safety and security
- Quality of night-time economy

Figure 6.1 below highlights the responses to these questions. A total of 422 responses were received for this question.

Daytime safety and security was rated particularly positively with 74% (310 respondents) rating it either 'Good' or 'Very Good'. However, the number of respondents who felt the night-time feeling of safety and security is 'good' or 'very good' fell to 37% (156 respondents).

The café/restaurant choice/quality received a high proportion of 'Good' or 'Very Good' responses at 40% (166 respondents). 41% (173 respondents) gave a 'neutral' reaction to quality of night-time economy and an additional 41% (173 respondents) responded with 'poor' or 'very poor'.

The variety/range and quality of shops was met with a 'neutral' response by 34% (144 respondents) and ranked 'poor' or 'very poor' by 39% (163 respondents). Similarly, 33% (140 respondents) responded 'neutral' to the existing parking facilities, while 41% (173 respondents) responded 'poor' or 'very poor'.

Respondents were also asked to rate the current quality of Ardee's public spaces.

As Figure 6.2 demonstrates, 42% (175 respondents) see the quality of public space as 'poor' or 'very poor'. Only 24% (102 respondents) feel the quality of public space is 'good' or 'very good'. A total of 420 responses were received for this question.

Opinion on the quality of public space around Ardee Castle was even more negative with 82% (344 respondents) responding with 'poor' or 'very poor'.

While 43% (179 respondents) felt the parks and green areas are 'good', 26% (113 respondents) feel they are 'poor' or 'very poor' and that there is still room for improvement.

When considering the attractiveness of Ardee town, 34% (142 respondents) feel it is 'good' or 'very good', while 25% (107 respondents) feel it is 'poor' and 11% (45 respondents) noted it as 'very poor'.

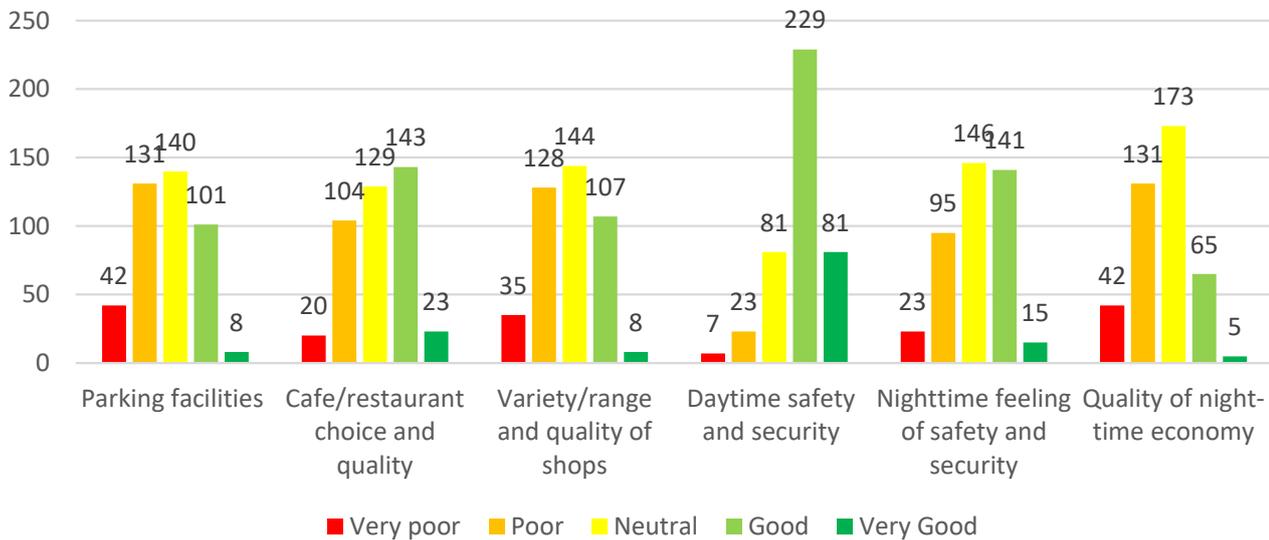


Figure 6.1: Responses to 'Please rate the quality of the following features of Ardee'

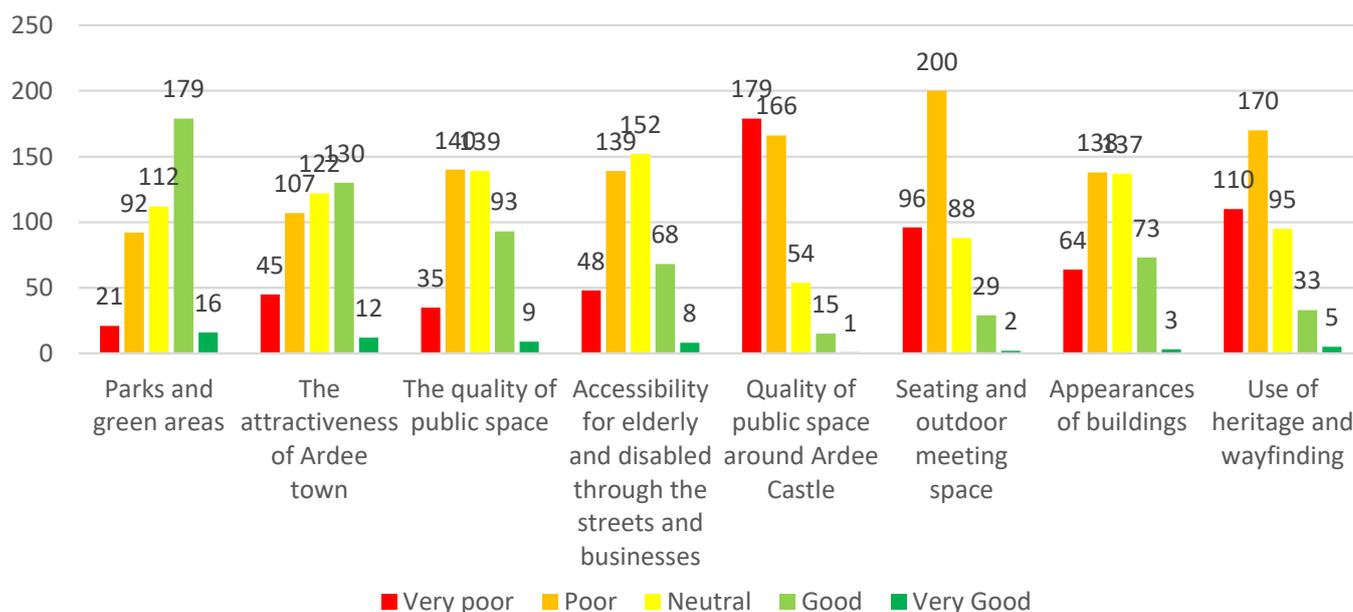


Figure 6.2: Responses to 'Please rate the quality of the following aspects of Ardee's public spaces'.

Improvements to accessibility for elderly and disabled received a 'neutral' mark by 36% (152 respondents), while 33% (139 respondents) feel it is 'poor', and 11% (48 respondents) feel it is 'very poor'. However, 16% (68 respondents) noted it as 'good'.

Less than 1% (3 respondents) feel the appearance of buildings are 'very good'. On the other hand, only 15% (64 respondents) said they are 'very poor'. 33% (137 respondents) say they have a neutral stance.

Improvements in use of heritage and wayfinding is needed with 66% (280 respondents) rating it as 'poor' or 'very poor'. Additionally, 70% (296 respondents) rate the seating and outdoor meeting space of Ardee as 'poor' or very poor'.

A plurality of respondents did however note that the parks and green spaces in other areas, and the attractiveness of Ardee town were 'good' or 'very good', at 46% and 34% respectively.

7 Ardee Town Centre

Respondents were also asked about their support for a “15-minute town”, in which services are accessible from where one lives within 15 minutes by walking, cycling or via public transport.

Of the 366 responses to this question, as Figure 7.1 shows, an overwhelming majority of 87% (318 respondents) either agreed or strongly agreed with the “15-minute town” concept. A total of 366 responses were received for this question.

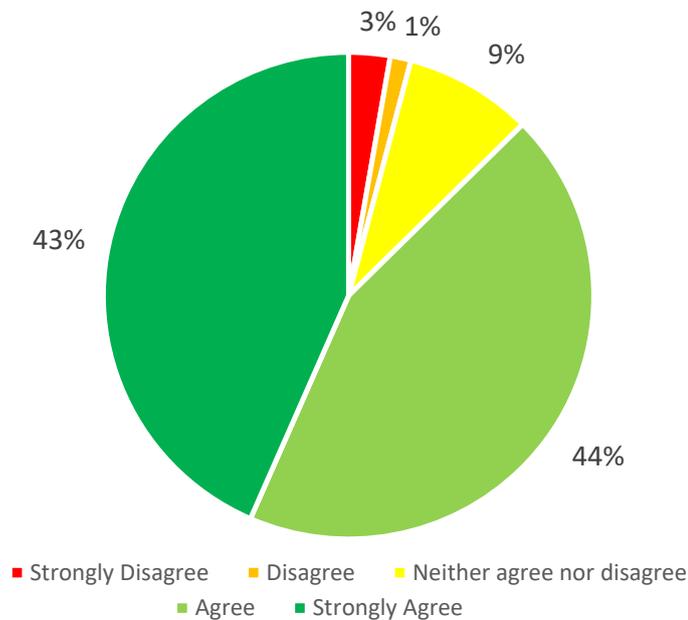


Figure 7.1: Responses to ‘A 15-minute town is one that has all community facilities and services accessible within a 15 minute walk or cycle from homes or are accessible by public transport services. Would you support Ardee becoming a 15-minute town?’

Looking in more detail at walking in and around Ardee, respondents were asked to identify the features that would encourage walking. These results are shown in Figure 7.2. A total of 370 responses were received for this question.

Of all the options presented both “heritage wayfinding and trails” and “better pedestrian crossing points” were the most popular proposed features. Of the 370 responses, 90% (333 respondents) deemed heritage wayfinding and trails as ‘very’ or ‘extremely important’. Similarly, 86% (318 respondents) deemed “better crossing points” as ‘very’ or ‘extremely’ important.

However, other proposed measures such as “Tree planting”, “High quality public realm”, “Outdoor furniture”, and “Better quality and wider footpaths” were all received positively.

The number of respondents ranking the following projects ‘very important’ or ‘extremely important’ were:

- 66% (246 respondents) for tree planting
- 72% (267 respondents) for high quality public realm
- 76% (281 respondents) for outdoor furniture
- 78% (289 respondents) for better quality and wider footpaths

Only “reduced on-street parking on narrow streets” significantly split opinion, with the largest group of respondents (111 respondents) neutral on the idea.

However, by a small margin, a larger combined group of 47% (175 respondents) either described it as ‘very important’ or ‘extremely important’.

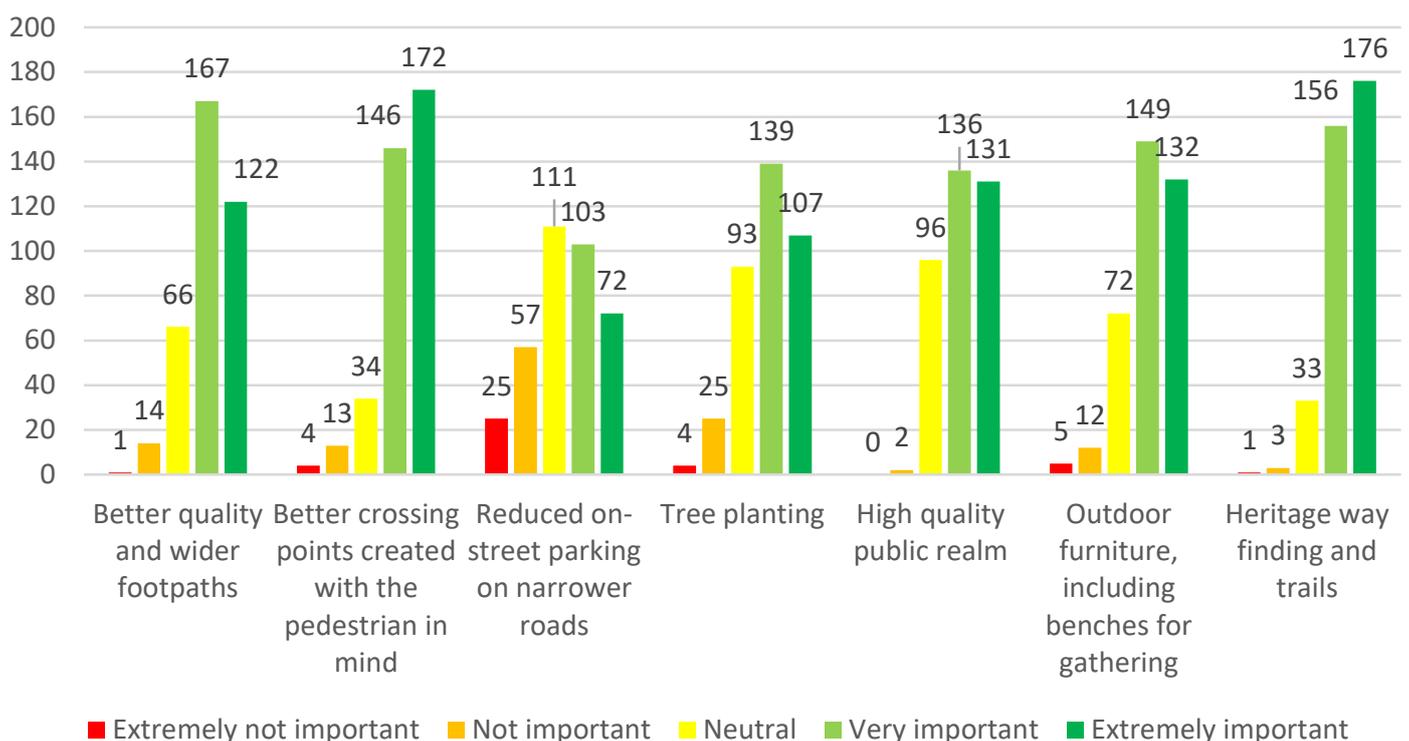


Figure 7.2: Responses to ‘How important are the following to encourage walking in Ardee (please rate all)’.

8 Traffic and Parking

One of the main goals of the consultation survey was to assess the current attitudes and future aspirations towards parking and traffic management in Ardee.

Part of the proposed regeneration of the area includes a potential pedestrianisation of the Ash Walk area.

330 respondents replied when asked about pedestrianisation. Figure 8.1 shows that a large majority of 68% (224 respondents) either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposals to fully pedestrianise Ash Walk from Main Street, in order to facilitate a public plaza. A total of 330 responses were received for this question.

The clear support for pedestrianisation reflects respondents' views concerning the current traffic situation in Ardee.

A total of 83% (305 respondents) of 367 respondents noted that the traffic congestion in town, particularly around Main Street, was 'very bad'. **Figure 8.2** below visually highlights the responses to this question. A total of 367 responses were received for this question.

Of 205 respondents, 48% (98 respondents) showed support for the introduction of some restricted parking in Ardee through a number of dedicated parking zones. A further 34% (70 respondents) were unsure as shown in Figure 8.3. A total of 205 responses were received for this question.

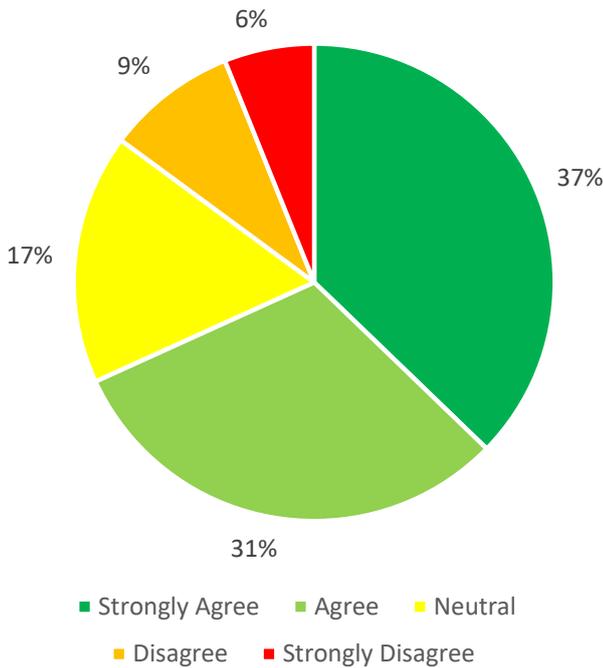


Figure 8.1: Responses to 'How strongly do you agree with the following statement: I would support the full pedestrianisation of Ash Walk coming from Main Street to facilitate a public plaza and space for public gatherings with the presence of street furniture'.

It was noted in subsequent meetings with Age Friendly representatives that they would like to see the proposed location of these zones to ensure they were placed in convenient and accessible locations for everyone in the area.

Therefore, support for such restrictions could rise if many of the 34% (70 respondents) of unsure respondents were provided with clarity on the location of these dedicated parking zones.

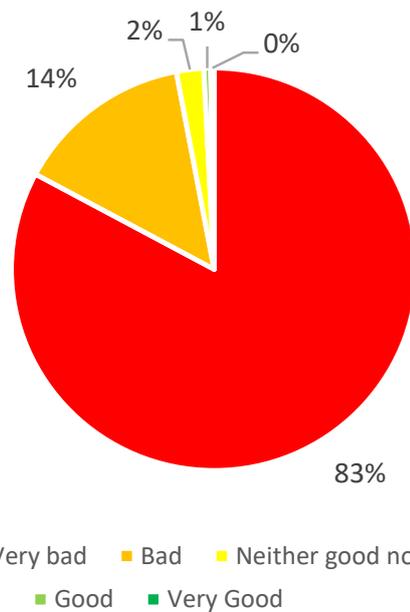


Figure 8.2: Responses to 'How would you rate traffic congestion in town, particularly around Main Street?'

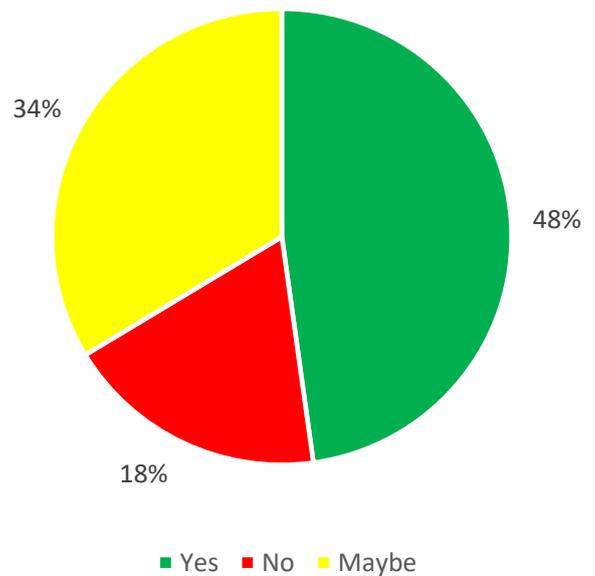


Figure 8.3: Responses to 'Would you support parking to be permitted in a number of dedicated parking zones only?'

9 Active Travel (Walking and Cycling)

Respondents were then presented with a number of proposals about active travel and efforts to encourage cycling and improve infrastructure in the area with results shown in Figure 9.1. A total of 362 responses were received for this question.

Of the 362 responses received for this question, the most popular proposed features included:

- 70% support for “providing additional safe and secure cycle parking” (255 responses agree or strongly agree)
- 68% support for “ensuring connection between all cycling routes” (245 responses agree or strongly agree)
- 65% support for “providing dedicated and segregated cycle facilities on busier roads and junctions” (235 responses agree or strongly agree)
- 57% support for “making smaller streets less busy by removing or reducing through traffic” (210 responses agree or strongly agree).

There was support for other measures, including:

- 39% support “establishing a cycle hire scheme for traditional and electric bikes including cargo bikes” (142 responses agree or strongly agree)”
- 35% “permit cyclist to safely travel both ways on a one-way street” (127 responses agree or strongly agree).

Respondents were also asked to rate the accessibility of Main Street for a number of different people or groups of people. As shown in **Figure 9.2**, 60% (206 respondents) noted that accessibility to Main Street for pedestrians was either ‘good’ or ‘very good’. A total of 341 responses were received for this question.

Accessibility was deemed to be ‘good’ or ‘very good’ for parents with small children by 39% (132 respondents), although a large cohort of 30% (101 respondents) responded ‘neither good nor poor’.

Notably the accessibility of Main Street for all other categories scored poorly, with both car and delivery drivers considered to have ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ access, as was noted by 44% of respondents (149 in total) and 63% (216 respondents) respectively.

For those with mobility issues and hearing/visual disabilities these were deemed to be ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ by 59% of respondents (202 respondents) and 60% (205 respondents) for each group respectively. Similarly, 55% (187 respondents) rated access for the elderly as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’.

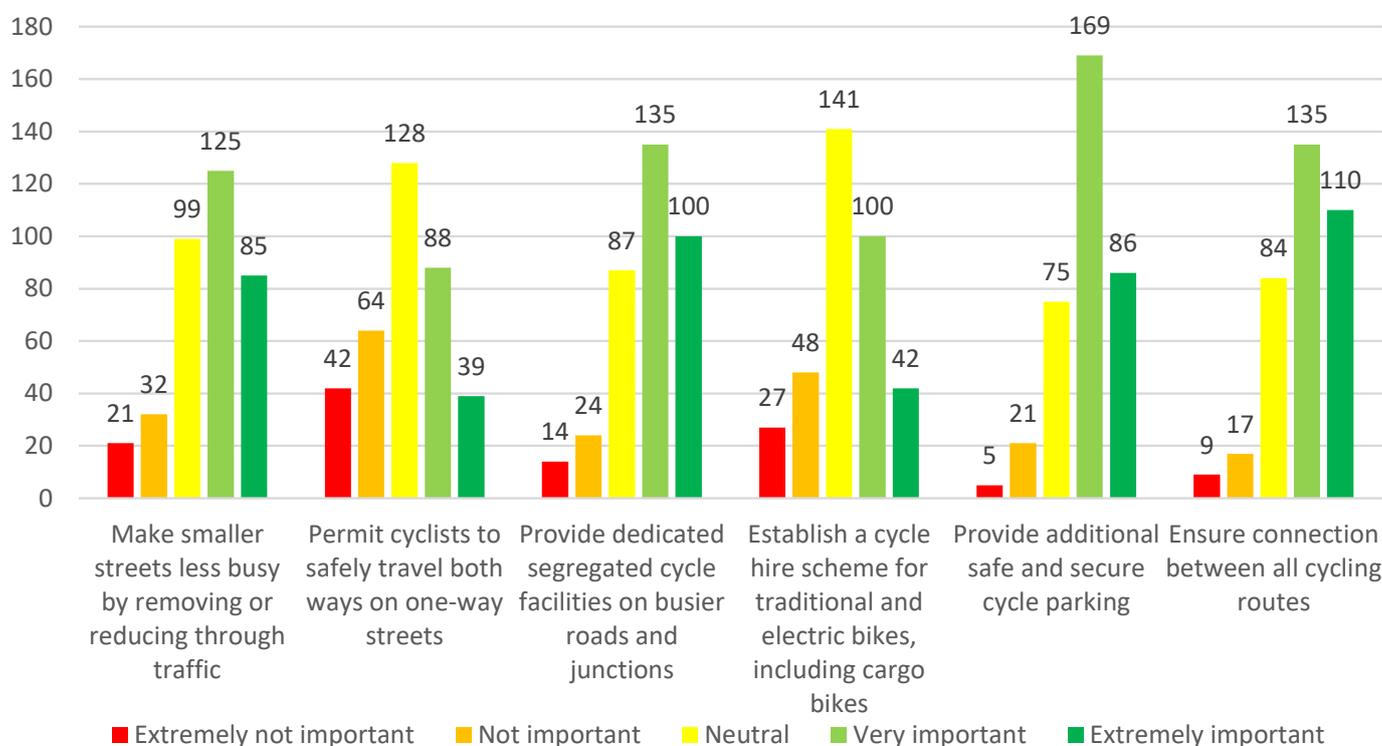


Figure 9.1: Responses to ‘How important are the following to encourage more cycling in the town?’ (please rate all)

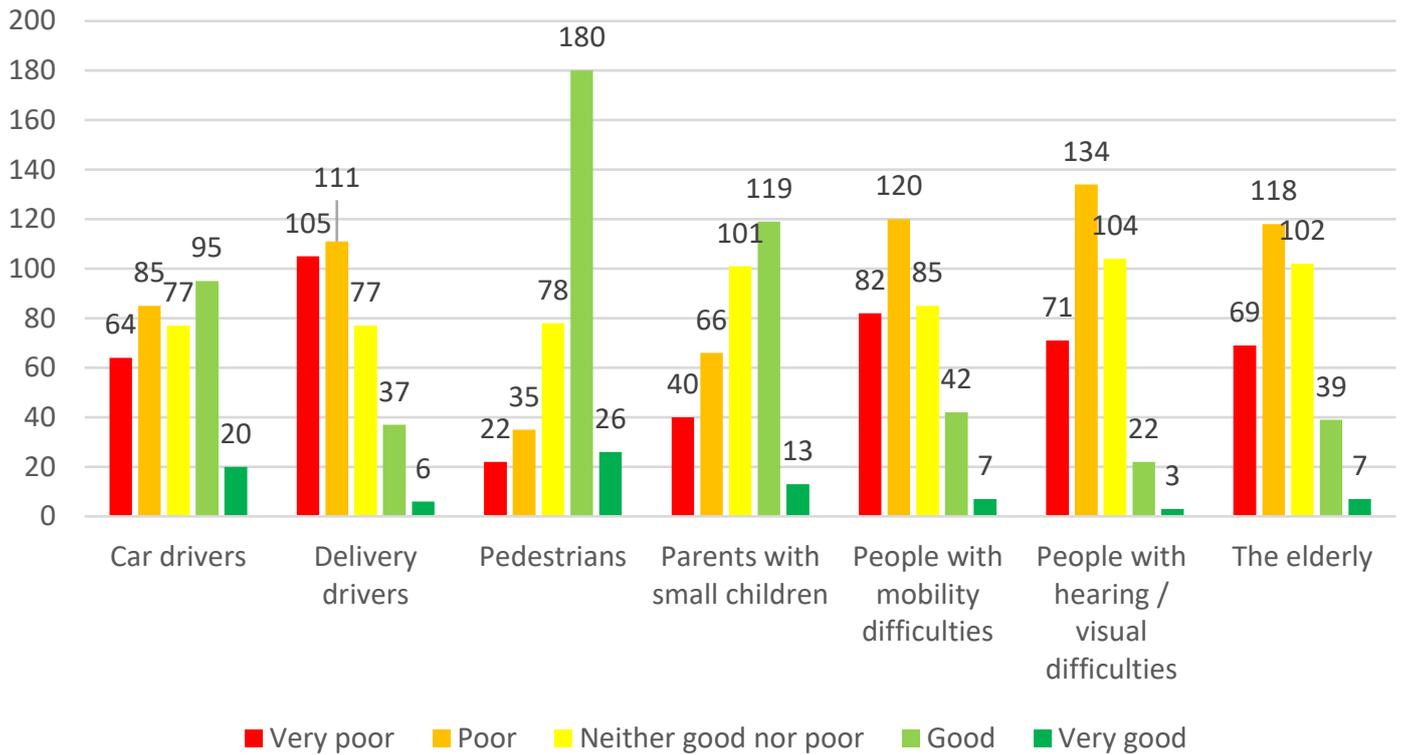


Figure 9.2: Responses to 'Please rate the accessibility of Main Street for:'

When asked about the ways in which pedestrian safety can be improved within Ardee from a list of seven options (maximum weighted average score), the most popular response was 'resurfacing work' (151 first preference choices). A total of 351 responses were received for this question.

The least popular choice by weighted average was 'more defined segregation between cycleways and vehicular traffic'. However, the same measure received the third highest number of first preference votes (51 first preference votes), indicating that this was likely an important measure for some respondents (such as cyclists) more than others (such as motorists).

Dished curbs, replacing trees that have broken through pavements, and better connections to other pathways in town all received a similar weighted average, but replacing trees carried the third largest number of 1st preference votes (49 first preference votes). See Table 9.1 below:

Measure	Weighted Average	% 1st Preference Votes	Number 1st Preference Votes
Resurfacing work	5.492877	43.02%	151
Dished curbs (ramp curbs at junctions, accessible parking spots and bus stops)	4.735043	8.26%	29
Replacing trees that have broken through pavements	4.282051	13.96%	49
Better connections to other pathways in the town	4.119658	7.12%	25
More public lighting	3.39886	7.41%	26
Dedicated pedestrian zone	3.017094	5.70%	20
More defined segregation between cycleways and vehicular traffic	2.954416	14.53%	51

Table 9.1: Responses to 'In order to improve the safety of pedestrian paths and lane ways, please rate the following in order of priority'.

As a new school is proposed for the area behind Ash Walk, in order to assess the transport needs for people who would be using the school, the survey asked those who plan to use the school in future how they are most likely to access it. The results are demonstrated in Figure 9.3. A total of 312 responses were received for this question.

63% (196 respondents) noted that the question was not applicable to them.

Of the remaining 116 respondents who selected one of the transport options, 45% (52 respondents) noted they would access the school via private car and 41% (48 respondents) would access the school via walking, with smaller numbers utilising car-pooling, cycle bus, cycling or utilising public transport.

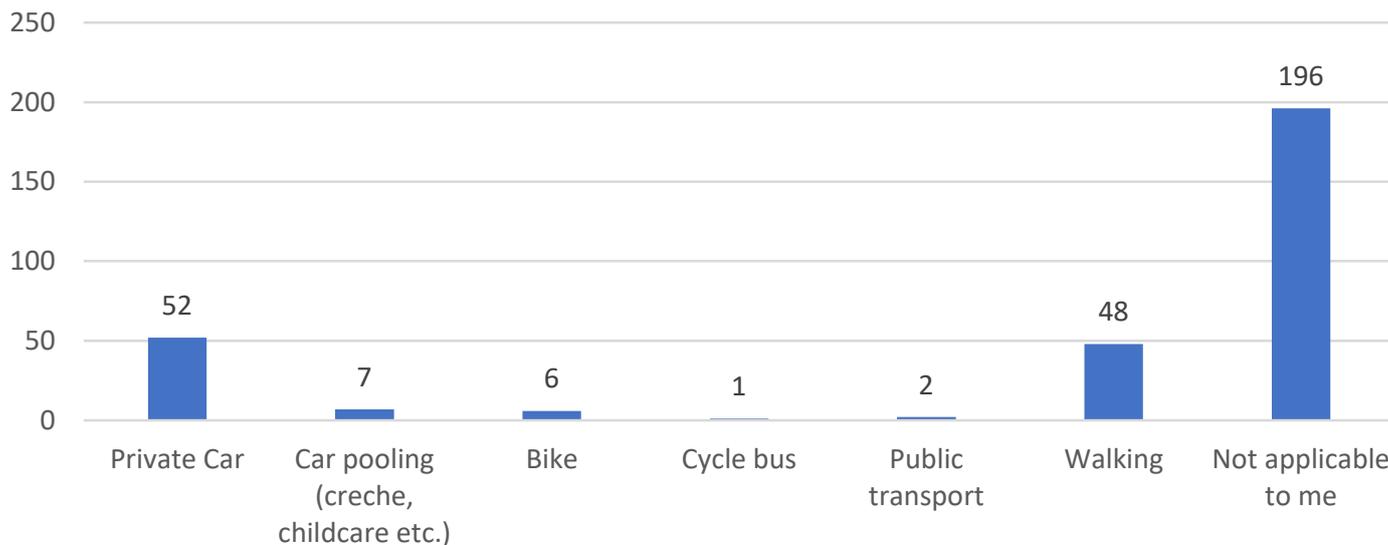


Figure 9.3: Responses to 'If you will use the new school planned behind Ash Walk, please select which option you are most likely to use for access?'

10 Public Spaces and Key Features

Respondents were asked to provide feedback on public spaces and key features of the town, including the Main Street and Ardee castle.

In an open-ended question, respondents were asked what measures could reinvigorate Main Street for businesses and the community to thrive.

Traffic management, landscaping and public open spaces, and repurposing derelict buildings were highlighted as the most popular themes in response to this question. Table 10.1 below outlines all responses in more detail. A total of 283 responses were received for this question.

Theme	Tally	Summary of comments
Highways and access	112	<p>The need for traffic management measures is viewed as a top priority to reinvigorate the main street.</p> <p>Traffic congestion was a recurring theme which detracts visitors from using the town centre. A number of respondents suggested widening footpaths and measures to minimise vehicle use especially HGV's in the town centre, including traffic calming measures.</p> <p>Suggestions for infrastructural improvements included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bypasses on the N2 and N52 • Removal of on street parking in the town centre • Wider footpaths and smaller driving lanes • Better transport links • Delivery traffic access only • Traffic calming measures <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"Building the bypass and removing traffic from Main Street would give town safer feel and make it easier for locals to use town facilities".</i></p> <p><i>"Less traffic, traffic calming measure, bypass".</i></p> <p><i>"Too much traffic through the town, some thought should be given how to reduce/mitigate through traffic (ring roads, HGV restrictions etc.)".</i></p>
Landscaping and public open spaces	78	<p>A popular suggestion in the feedback was to include public open spaces and social spaces in the town centre.</p> <p>A number of respondents requested new outdoor seating areas to encourage people to utilise businesses on the Main Street.</p> <p>It was suggested that landscaping measures be included to combat air pollution and make the environment more aesthetically welcoming.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"Provision of outdoor seating and rest/ leisure areas. These meeting points are lacking at present".</i></p> <p><i>"Create modern, clean, open public squares or spaces with seating, bins and planting".</i></p> <p><i>"I think an open square with outdoor seating behind/at the old Supervalu would greatly improve Ardee".</i></p> <p><i>"More greenery (combat car pollution), more seating/family friendly areas".</i></p>
Repurpose derelict buildings	74	<p>Respondents emphasised the number of derelict buildings, stating that they should be restored and maintained to help generate business. A number of responses emphasised the possibility of using the buildings for exhibitions and events.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"Utilising the vacant buildings. They look terrible and leave very unappealing gaps in the street scape. Also are a terrible waste of space".</i></p> <p><i>"The north end of the town looks dirty and dilapidated and needs a revamp".</i></p> <p><i>"There are lots of unused empty buildings, some of which are run down looking. It would be nice to see something happen in those spaces, exhibitions, events, markets/ traders".</i></p>

Retail facilities	70	<p>A recurring theme was the need to increase the variety and number of shops and services in the town.</p> <p>Several respondents mentioned the need for more food and beverage outlets, as well as the possibility of hosting a weekly food market.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"More variety of shops, shopping centre".</i></p> <p><i>"Better variety of shops, less barbers and hairdressers".</i></p> <p><i>"More dining options, tables or seating outside".</i></p>
Building maintenance	50	<p>A large number of respondents emphasised the importance of buildings being well-kept and maintained in order to create an appealing environment for visitors and locals. It was also suggested that better street lighting be installed.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"The empty buildings need tidied up, even if not in use they should be kept looking better".</i></p> <p><i>"Council enforcement, lots of main street allowed to remain an ugly mess".</i></p> <p><i>"Better street lighting the main street is very dark on left side going down. The old bakery building should be put to use and the stores good do with painting".</i></p> <p><i>"The town needs a complete face lift. The paint and plaster work of the buildings, particularly from the Credit Union towards the roundabouts are shocking. The playground needs a lift if it is to attract children and parents".</i></p>
Access and parking	50	<p>Several respondents cited insufficient parking as a barrier to attracting customers and visitors to the town. To address this, improved off-street parking was proposed. In relation to this, there have been calls to remove on-street parking in order to widen footpaths.</p> <p>One respondent suggested that a train service be included to provide access to the town.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"Traffic in Ardee is appalling, coupled with no parking it is making it very difficult for traders to attract customers".</i></p> <p><i>"Better parking and access".</i></p> <p><i>"Remove the on-street parking, then make the footpaths wider".</i></p>
Tourism and community events	33	<p>The castle is regarded as a potential major attraction that could draw visitors and boost tourism in the area. It was suggested that it could host events such as concerts. It was also suggested that monthly or annual events be introduced to entice visitors.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"Ardee Castle should be open to the public and also available as a concert venue".</i></p> <p><i>"Open up Castle to bring in tourists. Also a hotel in the town would help".</i></p> <p><i>"Maybe a fair/small festival annually to boost the economy".</i></p> <p><i>"It would be nice to see something happen in those spaces, exhibitions, events, markets/ traders".</i></p>
Business support	27	<p>Grants and low-cost rates for businesses were suggested to encourage small business growth and revitalise the main street.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"Grants available for Small business to open up on main street".</i></p> <p><i>"Sympathetic rent and rate costs, encouragement of new ventures with pop up shops in empty premises".</i></p> <p><i>"Reduce Rates or give 2 years rates free to new business starting up".</i></p>

Housing	6	The provision of more housing, including family homes, was emphasised in the feedback in order to bring new footfall to the town. Representative Comments: <i>"Same as before, the main street looks terrible with empty shops fronts. Reconvert them to family homes. Not apartments but houses".</i> <i>"New residents with income to spend".</i>
Industrial park	2	A small number of respondents suggested that industrial development should be encouraged to remove traffic from the town and encourage retail in the town centre. Representative Comments: <i>"Taking the through traffic out of the town centre, encouraging more light industry and service industry around the periphery of the town. This would stimulate growth, encourage more retail, give more employment and people would want to live here so provide affordable housing to meet demand yet not trail behind it".</i>

Table 10.1: Responses to 'What do you think could reinvigorate Main Street for businesses and the community to thrive?'

The following question (To improve the streetscape around Ardee Castle I support...) consequently focused on the streetscape around Ardee Castle and how it could be improved.

The suggestion to install appropriate lighting within the vicinity of the castle received the highest level of support out of all options with 53% (175 respondents) strongly agreeing. There was 42% (140 respondents) strongly agreeing with the addition of new seating and outdoor furniture, as well as planting near the castle with 40% (133 respondents) strongly agreeing. A total of 333 responses were received for this question.

The introduction of appropriate lighting within the vicinity of the castle was strongly supported, with 53% (175 respondents) strongly agreeing with this proposition.

The removal of bollards and introduction of shared space to increase pedestrian use was also supported, with 71% (236 respondents) either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this proposition.

Whilst only a small minority, there was less support for removing some off-street parking spaces in order to increase pedestrian space, with 22% (72 respondents) disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this suggestion. However, the majority of respondents at 59% (196 respondents) endorsed the proposals by either agreeing or strong agreeing.

The results are shown in **Figure 10.1**

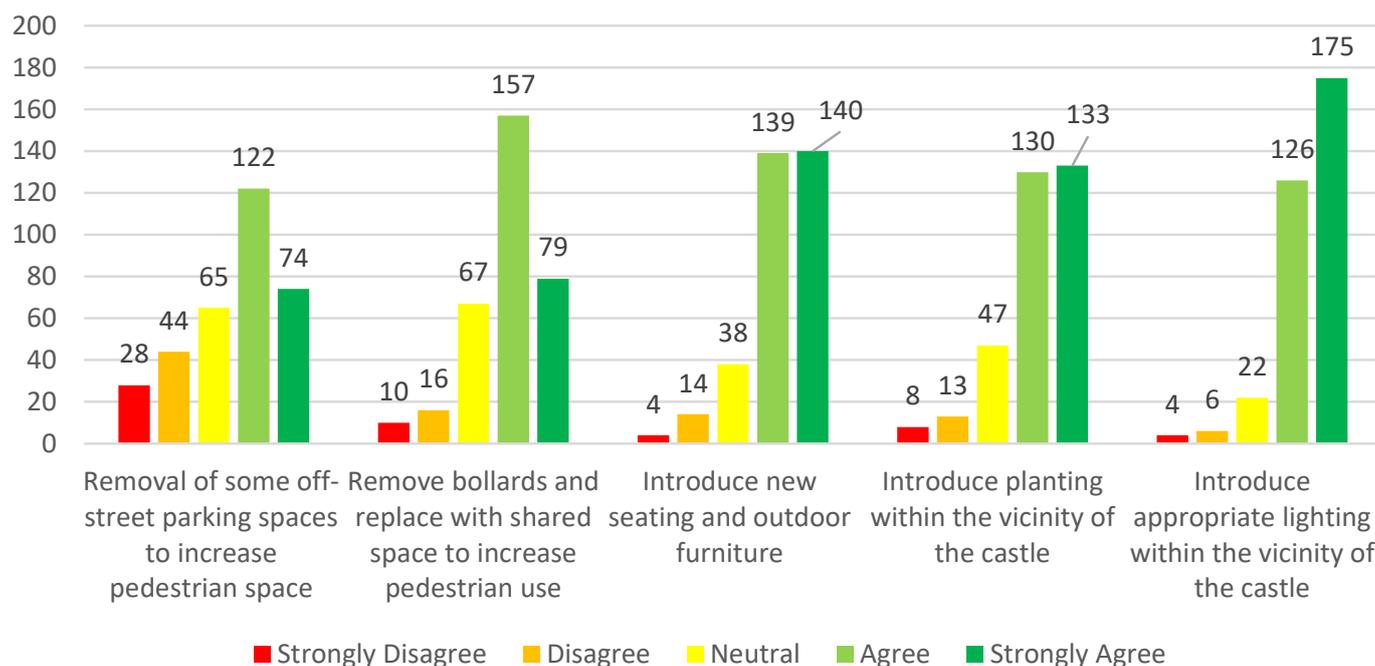
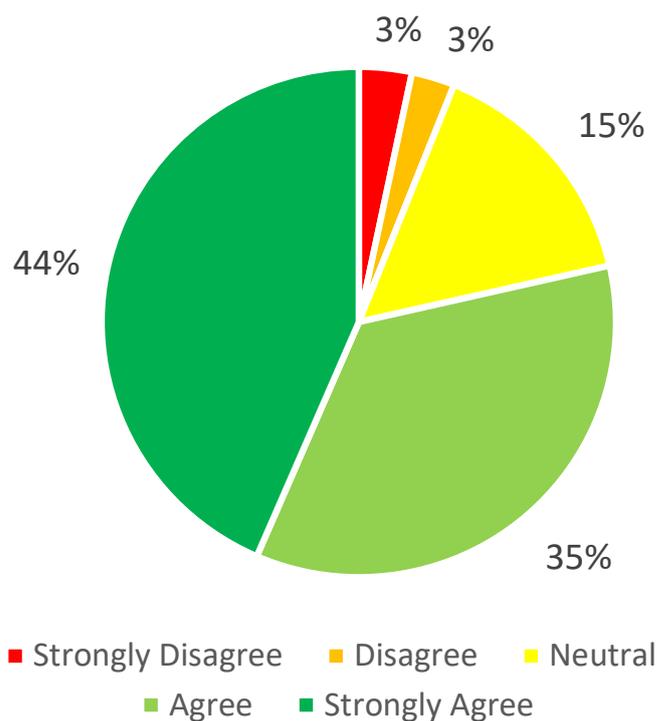


Figure 10.1: Responses to 'To improve the streetscape around Ardee Castle, I support...'

The final question in relation to public spaces asked respondents how strongly they agreed with the following statement: 'I would be in favour of a new town square/plaza area in the Ash Walk locality (specifically within the space between Main Street and SuperValu)'. The results are demonstrated in Figure 10.2 below.

79% (261 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, demonstrating that there are high levels of support for this area of the town to be developed. A total of 331 responses were received for this question.

Figure 10.2: Responses to 'How strongly do you agree with the following statement: I would be in favour of a new town square/plaza area in the Ash Walk locality (specifically within the space between Main Street and SuperValu)'.



11. Ash Walk

Respondents were asked quantitative and qualitative questions about Ash Walk, specifically about the features they valued and how likely they were to use the area for recreational purposes if it was improved.

When asked what features of the Ash Walk area they valued, the most common response at 35% (75 respondents) was 'None', indicating that the area is viewed neutrally or perhaps even negatively in its current state by a large number of respondents.

A number of responses, on the other hand, valued specific features, with the second most popular response being Parking (37 responses), closely followed by Amenity Mix (30 responses), with a number of respondents complementing the variety of shops and businesses located in this area.

A smaller proportion of respondents (16) cited traffic management as a valuable feature, particularly the one-way system, which was frequently mentioned, as well as footpaths (13 respondents) and connectivity (9 respondents). Table 11.1 below outlines the responses to this question in more detail. A total of 216 responses were received for this question.

Theme	Tally	Summary of comments
None	75	<p>A large number of respondents did not value any features of Ash walk deeming it to be rundown, poorly designed and unsafe.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"It is a horrible area with the worst public realm in town. Badly needs improvement"</i></p> <p><i>None – it is poorly designed and unsafe</i></p>
Parking	37	<p>Several respondents valued the availability of parking and associated access to Main Street on foot.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"Parking, open space and smaller shops"</i></p> <p><i>"Proximity to both SuperValu and the main shopping areas of the town. It usually has parking space available"</i></p> <p><i>"Nice wide footpaths, good parking spaces"</i></p>
Amenity mix	32	<p>The variety of shops, cafes and local businesses is deemed to be a key feature of the local area by a number of respondents.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"The little cafes and coffee shops, we have mammy and baby meet ups and go there for coffee as we have ti remain outdoors, but the path with the tables is very narrow and cars travelling through mean if you have small children not in a buggy it is too dangerous"</i></p> <p><i>"Parade of shops and parking - also looks really inviting at night in winter with the lighting strings from Railway Bar across".</i></p> <p><i>"Nice list of shops and services"</i></p>
Traffic management	16	<p>Respondents highlighted the one way system as a valued asset of the area.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"The one way system"</i></p> <p><i>"One way traffic for safe cycling"</i></p> <p><i>"One way traffic"</i></p>
Open space	13	<p>Open spaces and landscaping in this area were noted by a number of respondents.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"Open community market areas"</i></p> <p><i>"Nice open area"</i></p>

Pedestrian footpaths	13	<p>The pedestrian footpaths were highlighted as a valuable feature, particularly in relation to their width, and the ease of access to the Main street on foot.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>“Good quality footpaths”</i></p> <p><i>“Footpaths and one way driving system”</i></p> <p><i>“Wide footpaths”</i></p>
SuperValu	11	<p>SuperValu and associated parking were mentioned by a large number of respondents as a valued feature.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>“SuperValu and the car park”</i></p> <p><i>“The SuperValu and public car park”</i></p> <p><i>“Proximity to SuperValu”</i></p>
Connectivity	9	<p>Connectivity to the main shopping areas and Main Street was highlighted by respondents. The potential for further connections between Ash walk and the surrounding area, including Kells Road was also mentioned.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>“Easy access home through the boat trench”</i></p> <p><i>“It has potential to line up with the Kells Road (in a safer manner than at present)”</i></p>
St Joseph’s Walk	5	<p>The woodland walk to St Josephs was specifically mentioned as a valuable feature of the area.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>“There is a wonderful wooded walkway through the grounds of Saint Joseph’s hospital that should be a public amenity”.</i></p> <p><i>“The walk by St Joseph’s was a lovely route”</i></p>
Landscaping	5	<p>Landscaping features, such as the mature trees and planting, were referenced by a small group of respondents.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>“The mature trees in the distance”</i></p> <p><i>“The established trees and the little seating area at the river”</i></p> <p><i>“Trees and large space”</i></p>
Quiet character	5	<p>The quiet character of the area, with space and reduced traffic, was appreciated by respondents.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>“The quiet and the character”</i></p> <p><i>“Less traffic, it’s quieter”</i></p>
Lighting	4	<p>Festive lighting along the parade of shops was noted as a feature of the winter season.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>“Love the lighting at Christmas time”</i></p> <p><i>“Looks really inviting at night in the winter with the lighting”</i></p>

Table 11.1: Responses to ‘What features of the Ash Walk area do you value?’

Respondents were also asked whether they currently use the HSE lands behind Ash Walk for walking/running or other forms of recreation.

As shown in Figure 11.1, 79% (257 respondents) responded 'No'. Respondents were then asked whether they would use the HSE lands behind Ash Walk for walking/running or other forms of recreation if the area was improved and made more accessible.

Opinion inverted as 252 (76%) responded 'Yes', demonstrating that there is a clear desire for this area and walkway to be improved for

walking and recreation. Figure 11.1 below illustrates the responses to these two questions. A total of 326 and 332 responses respectively were received for these questions.

Finally, respondents were asked if they intended to use the new school planned behind Ash Walk and which option they would use for access.

Whilst the question was not applicable to the majority, private car use and walking were the most popular responses to this question as demonstrated below:

Would you use the HSE lands for walking/running or other forms of recreation if it was less overgrown and more accessible via a walkway from Ash Walk?

Do you currently use the HSE lands behind Ash Walk (the open space behind the SuperValu carpark), for walking/running or other forms of recreation?

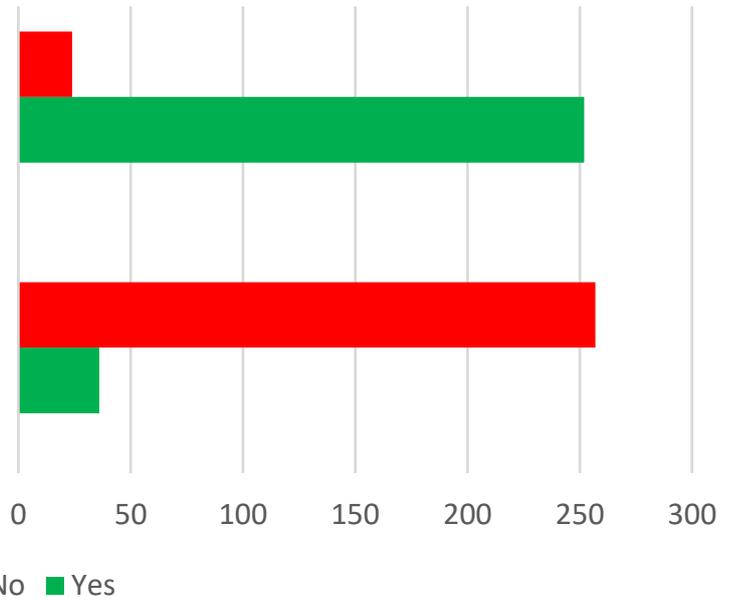


Figure 11.1: Responses to 'Do you currently use the HSE lands behind Ash Walk (the open space behind the SuperValu carpark), for walking/running or other forms of recreation?'

'Would you use the HSE lands for walking/running or other forms of recreation if it was less overgrown and more accessible via a walkway from Ash Walk?'

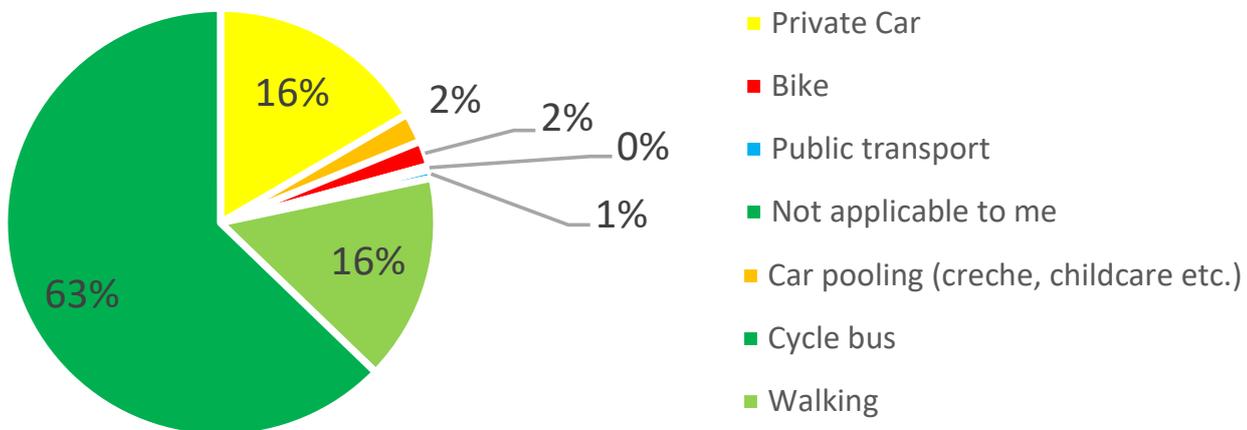


Figure 11.2: Responses to 'Do you currently use the HSE lands behind Ash Walk (the open space behind the SuperValu carpark), for walking/running or other forms of recreation?'

12 The River Dee

A number of questions were asked about the River Dee, about its potential as a greenway and about its connection to the wider town and the Riverside Walk.

There was overwhelming support for the exploration of the River as a Greenway, with 96% (309 respondents) agreeing or strongly agreeing with this.

It is evident from the responses that the river is a highly valued asset within the town that is currently not being utilised efficiently.

A total of 322 responses were received for this question.

Figure 12.1 outlines the responses in more detail.

Respondents were also asked to elaborate on their responses, and a summary of representative comments is included below. The most common response (34 responses) was that the space was underutilised. A total of 188 responses were received for this question.

A summary of all responses is displayed in **Table 12.1** below by theme.

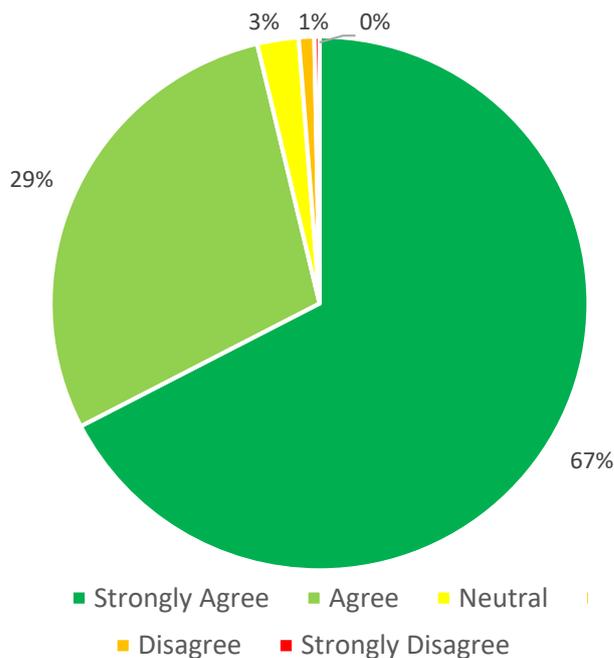


Figure 12.1: Responses to 'The potential of the River Dee as a greenway should be explored'.

Theme	Tally	Summary of comments
Underutilised	34	<p>A large number of respondents felt that the river was not being used to its full potential in its current state. It was felt that it was being neglected and was not being properly protected or maintained currently. Making it more appealing was suggested as a way to incentivise use and encourage visitors.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"It is a beautiful walk that is underutilised, no signs from the town, the railings dont look nice, very little sitting and quite a bit of graffiti. If it was tidied up with more plants and flowers and better-looking railings with more wooden benches it would be lovely"</i></p> <p><i>"It is a wonderful feature that is underutilised"</i></p> <p><i>"Beautiful spot and underutilized"</i></p>
Greenway	29	<p>A large number of respondents suggested the inclusion of a greenway connecting to the river area, similar to the river walk along the River Boyne in Drogheda. It was suggested that appropriate signage should accompany the greenway.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"Very important to further enhance Greenway for cycling & pedestrian"</i></p> <p><i>"The greenways in Waterford, Carlingford have brought so much to many small villages & towns in the area, why can't Ardee be the same?"</i></p> <p><i>"Greenways are fantastic public amenities"</i></p>
Safety improvements	24	<p>Respondents emphasised the importance of improving river safety. It was felt that safety improvements, such as CCTV and lighting, were required.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"Would be nice if it was clean and safe"</i></p> <p><i>"More attention should be given to it to make it safer and more attractive for people to walk along"</i></p> <p><i>"Currently only a small section of the river is utilised and that doesn't feel safe. River has strong link to story of Ardee".</i></p>

Maintenance of the river area	22	<p>Several respondents emphasised the beauty of the river area, stating that it is an asset to Ardee. It was suggested that it be maintained in order to be fully appreciated.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"It is beautiful and while I see it is maintained it is neglected in that it has never been considered for anything else or improved in any way".</i></p> <p><i>"I live beside the Dee and it is a lovely area but not maintained very well"</i></p> <p><i>"At present it is a rubbish dump overgrown with briars"</i></p>
Accessibility and connectivity	18	<p>It was suggested that active travel and exercise routes should be incorporated along the river. This included the addition of cycle paths, connections to the railway walk, or a new bridge connecting to Kells Road to provide safe access for pedestrians and cyclists.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"I wouldn't walk it on my own at the moment. If done up could be a fantastic for walks and cycles".</i></p> <p><i>"It could serve to reduce fragmented routing and encourage more people to walk or cycle into town".</i></p> <p><i>"Lots of younger families would love to have a safe, flat space to walk/cycle with their young families. A space where you don't have to worry about traffic".</i></p>
Recreational and social facilities	17	<p>A small group of respondents noted that the river area lacked amenities such as seating areas for socialising or a café to encourage greater use.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"So much potential there, we could have bike trials, seating/picnic area with coffee hut, proper full playground. Skateboard park, bowls etc, so much potential, heritage/ tourist centre".</i></p> <p><i>"It's such a lovely setting and I have often thought so much more could be done with this area".</i></p> <p><i>"Every Town that has a river utilises it as an Amenity except Ardee, small Cafes/Craft & other retailers should be encouraged to setup to bring passive policing and help develop along the river bank"</i></p>
Antisocial behaviour	12	<p>The lack of use of the river area has been attributed to antisocial behaviour. Respondents expressed concern about antisocial groups congregating, particularly during the evening hours, which discourages them from using the river.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"It's currently just used for alcohol and drugs and doesn't feel safe, I brought my son for breakfast on a Sunday at 11 and there were men with tops off drinking cans and there were needles at benches further along so I had to leave immediately"</i></p> <p><i>"Used by youths for drinking/taking drugs in evenings and night time"</i></p> <p><i>"It is disappointing to see it used for drinking alcohol and the rubbish discarded too."</i></p>
History	6	<p>The river's history and connections to Irish mythology were highlighted. It was suggested that the area's historical significance be capitalised on in order to increase use and attract visitors.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"It is a lovely space with great potential for development as an amenity. It also has a great history with regard to the Legend of Cuchulainn and Ferdia"</i></p> <p><i>"Beautiful river walk with history attached ie cul clainn, make a history tourism destination spot"</i></p>

Water sports	4	<p>A few respondents suggested that the River Dee should facilitate water sports, such as paddle boarding, canoeing or fishing.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"The dee should be accessible for different water sports such as paddling boarding boarding swimming. More boat ramps or areas to access the water could increase the people in the town".</i></p> <p><i>"Water sports could be facilitated"</i></p>
Wildlife preservation	1	<p>The need to maintain the river for wildlife development was highlighted.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"There is so much habitat for wildlife here. WE need to look after , nourish & care for what we have and ensure its future. We have learnt (most especially throughout Covid) how important nature is to us all".</i></p>

Table 12.1: Responses to 'The potential of the River Dee as a Greenway should be explored - please explain your answer?'

In response to the statement "The River has a strong connection to the wider town", 76% (242 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed. A total of 319 responses were received for this question.

Figure 12.2 outlines the responses in further detail below.

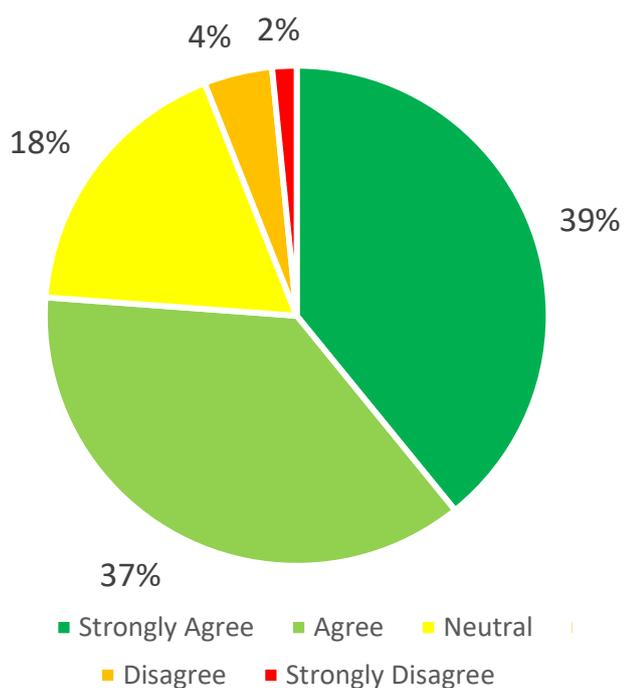


Figure 12.2: Responses to 'The River has a strong connection to the wider town'.

Theme	Tally	Summary of comments
History	53	<p>The historical value of the river was frequently mentioned with regard to its connection to the town. It is believed that the heritage of the river should be recognised and capitalised upon in order to attract visitors and users.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"The town is where it is because it was an ancient crossing point for people moving north to south"</i></p> <p><i>"It is central to the town – it is where the town gets it's name!"</i></p> <p><i>"The Dee is historically very important and should have a stronger presence"</i></p>
Limited connectivity and accessibility	19	<p>Limited connectivity between the river and the town and poor accessibility was highlighted within the feedback. It was suggested that the pathways be introduced to promote active travel.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"If access to the Dee was improved I think the connection would be stronger".</i></p> <p><i>"Development of private housing has been allowed right up to the river bank, and much of it is now inaccessible to the public and out of view"</i></p> <p><i>"There is very little connectivity between all areas around Ardee".</i></p>
Central location	11	<p>The central location of the river was mentioned by a number of respondents and the fact that it runs through the heart of the town.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"It is central and currently and a short cut for some to John Street".</i></p> <p><i>"It's a central feature of the town that has yet to be utilised to its full potential"</i></p> <p><i>"It travels from out the Kells road, through the town out to the link road and out towards Stabannon. A proper riverside walk is needed. The river and river banks need to be cleaned up and tidied in the areas that go through the town".</i></p>
Promotion of the river	10	<p>It was suggested that the River should be better promoted in order to make it a focal point of the town and to entice people to use, develop and maintain it.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"Unless you knew where it was you wouldn't go looking for it".</i></p> <p><i>"The history of the Dee and the Castle go hand in hand and should be used as potential tourist attraction"</i></p> <p><i>"Ardee is named after the events on the river and has a strong connection to it. Other towns use their river walks as an amenity and we have missed out on its potential so far"</i></p>
Underutilised	9	<p>It is felt that the River is underused and that more attention should be focused on improving the river area. Antisocial behaviour was mentioned as a reason for limited use.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"Due to anti social behaviour it is very poorly utilised".</i></p> <p><i>"Ardee's place in mythology is underutilised the river area could become a focus of those stories"</i></p> <p><i>"The Dee is an essential part of Ardee and under used and badly neglected"</i></p>

Safety issues	8	<p>A few respondents highlighted the fact that people do not feel safe walking along the river in its current state.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"I'm in Ardee a lot but have never used this walk as unsure of its safety"</i></p> <p><i>"From our history, our stories, past and present the Dee is at the heart of our community and it is not enjoyed enough, possibly, kids safety is the concern".</i></p> <p><i>"I think it's underused as not considered safe for many users. I would not go there or want my daughter to for safety reasons".</i></p>
Recreational facilities	8	<p>The potential of the river to provide recreational facilities, such as water sports was highlighted by respondents.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"Maybe allow row boats to navigate the waterways and utilise the natural facilities"</i></p> <p><i>"Potential for water sports and on water activities"</i></p> <p><i>"it's all around it, the town has it in its name & it should be central to recreational plans going forward".</i></p>
Appearance	7	<p>The natural beauty of the river environment and its aesthetic value to the town was emphasised in the feedback. The bridge was mentioned as a great design feature.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"It's beautiful and should be reclaimed through development"</i></p> <p><i>"The river forms a main part of the town....beautiful river! Lovely walk ways could be developed with the potential for cafe etc on it"</i></p> <p><i>"The bridge is a great design feature of the town, it bridges the north to the south of the town".</i></p>
Popularity	5	<p>A number of respondents believe that the area is well used and popular among families in Ardee.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"Love to go with kids for a walk over there. It makes town bigger".</i></p> <p><i>"Used by families, walkers, joggers etc"</i></p>
Unsure	5	<p>A few respondents were unsure about the value of the river connection and whether it was considered to be valued by locals.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"What connection? We have left it in ruin"</i></p> <p><i>"I think many people in the town don't really consider the river"</i></p>
User groups	3	<p>It was suggested that whilst the river attracts families and individuals using the area for recreation. Others suggested that it was only used by young people.</p> <p>Representative Comments:</p> <p><i>"People are scared to use the River side walk now - as a child and young teen in the 80s and 90s it was filled with people, families. More needs to be made of the 'drunk with the hunk', incredible history that we barely exploit. Now it has become synonymous with drinking, loitering, drug taking, attacks, vandalism".</i></p> <p><i>"It's mostly young people who use it. Coz there is nothing else for them in this town. Ohh except one young group and football...most of them don't want to do".</i></p>
Limited importance	1	<p>One respondent suggested that other areas, including the castle and railway line, are of greater importance than the river.</p>

Respondents were asked to explain their answer in further detail. A summary of all responses is displayed in Table 12.2 below by theme. A total of 145 responses were received for this question.

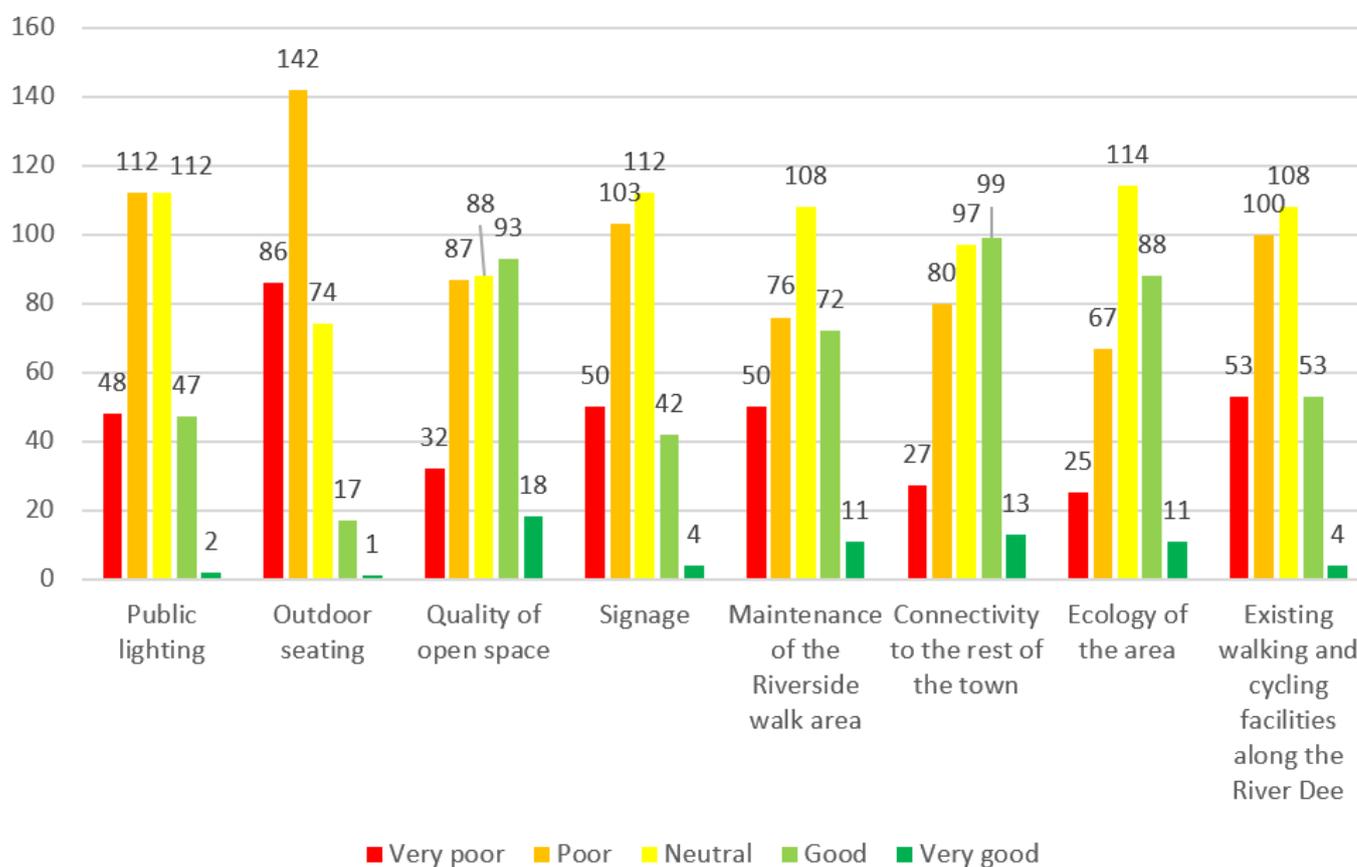


Table 12.2: Responses to 'The River has a strong connection to the wider town - Please explain your answer'.

Respondents were also asked to rate a number of aspects of the Riverside Walk on an asymmetric Likert scale (Very Poor – Very Good), as shown in Figure 12.3 below. A total of 321 responses were received for this question.

Figure 12.3: Responses to 'How would you rate the following aspects of the Riverside Walk?'

Notably, the provision of outdoor seating is widely regarded as poor, with 71% (228 respondents) stating that the current provision is 'poor' or 'very poor'. 50% (160 respondents) rated Public Lighting 'very poor' or 'extremely poor'.

A total 48% (321 respondents) rated the signage along the Riverside walk as either 'poor' (103 respondents) or 'very poor' (50 respondents).

More positively the maintenance of the riverside walk was rated as either 'good' on 22%, or 'very good' on 3%. Meanwhile 34% (108 respondents) only responded neutrally.

The quality of open space performed slightly better with 29% (93 respondents) rating it as 'good' and 6% (18 respondents) as 'very good'.

When considering connectivity to the town respondents tended not to respond in the extremes, with 4% (13 respondents) rating it as 'very good' and 8% (27 respondents) rating it as 'very poor'. 31% (99 respondents) rated it as 'good' and 30% (97 respondents) rated it as 'poor'.

The strongest opinion on the ecology was 'neutral', with 36% (114 respondents). Meanwhile 27% (88 respondents) ranked it as 'good' and 21% (67 of respondents) ranked it as 'poor'.

31% (100 respondents) felt the current walking and cycling facilities along the river were 'poor' and 17% (53 respondents) ranked them as 'very poor'.

This is a stronger indicator that there is support for further improving and incorporating the river into future plans assuming that current barriers, such as antisocial behaviour, can be addressed.

Given the river's proximity to the town, this could pave the way for future tourism opportunities.

13 Sports and Recreation

In terms of sports and recreation, a series of questions were posed in order to determine how frequently facilities were being used, what types of sports were being played in the area, and what additional sports and recreation facilities should be provided. A total of 158 responses were received for this question.

Respondents were initially asked if they used any sports and recreation facilities in Ardee and the breakdown can be seen in **figure 13.1** opposite.

Whilst 85% (135 respondents) responded 'No', when asked, "What type of other sports are you aware of that are played in the area?" a wide variety of sports were identified.

The most common response was Soccer on 49% (107 respondents), closely followed by Gaelic Games on 42% (92 respondents), third was Athletics on 33% (72 respondents), followed by Tennis on 32% (70 respondents) and Boxing on 31% (68 respondents).

A full breakdown of responses can be viewed in Figure 13.2 below.

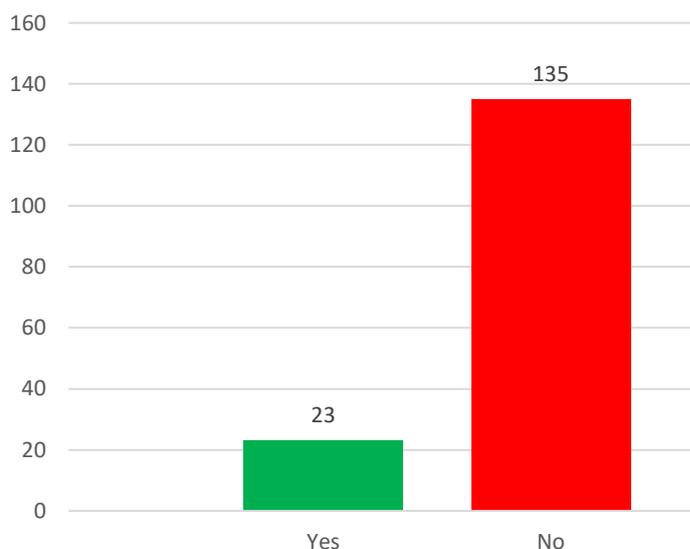
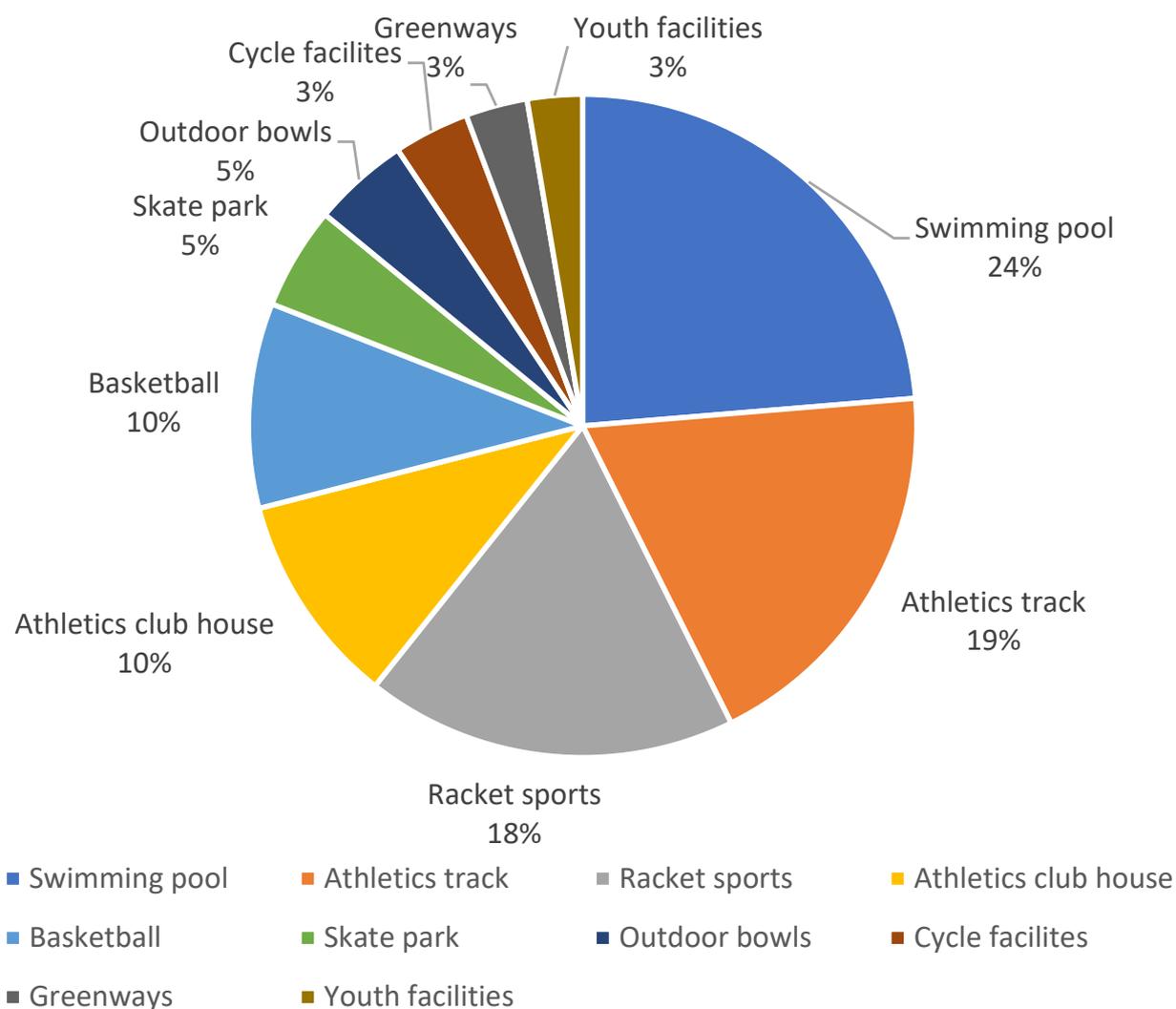


Figure 13.1: Responses to 'Do you use any sports and recreation facilities in Ardee'.



Sport	Number	Percentage
Handball	6	2%
Accessible Playground	5	2%
Water Sports	5	2%
All-weather Pitch	4	2%
Badminton	4	2%
Health and Wellbeing Zone	4	2%
Additional Soccer Pitch	3	1%
Cinema	3	1%
Golf Facilities	3	1%
Creative Recreation	3	1%
Gaelic Sports	3	1%
Multi-sport Stadium	3	1%
BMX track	2	1%
Fitness Class Studios	2	1%
Gym	2	1%
Invest in Existing Sports	2	1%
Pool Hall	2	1%
Rock Climbing	2	1%
Soccer Club House	2	1%
Volleyball	2	1%
Ten Pin Bowling	1	>1%
Amateur Drama	1	>1%
Baseball	1	>1%
Boxing Club House	1	>1%
Car Racing	1	>1%
Dog Park	1	>1%
Go-karting	1	>1%
Gymnastics	1	>1%
Horse Racing	1	>1%
Kids Soft Play	1	>1%
Men's Shed	1	>1%
MMA	1	>1%
Motocross	1	>1%
Mountain Bike Trail	1	>1%
Netball	1	>1%
Trampoline Area	1	>1%
Rounders	1	>1%
Running Club	1	>1%
Table Tennis	1	>1%
Zip Lines	1	>1%

Figure 13.3: Responses to 'What additional sports and recreation facilities should be provided in the area in the future'.

A majority of respondents would welcome increased sports and recreational facilities in the area. A total of 89% (276 respondents) strongly agreed or agreed with this statement as shown in Figure 13.4. A total of 310 responses were received for this question.

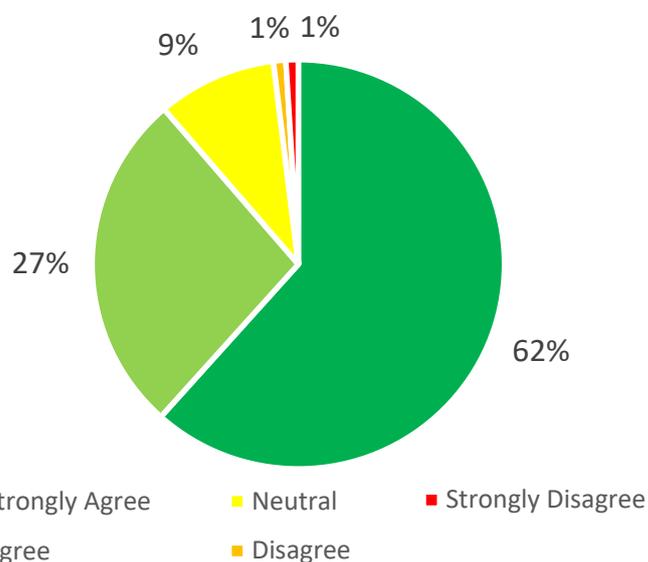


Figure 13.4: Responses to 'I would welcome increased sports and recreational facilities in the area'.

The final question asked if people would support linking new sports and recreational facilities to existing and proposed walkways and cycle paths. 90% (277 respondents) strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. **Figure 13.4** outlines the responses in more detail.

The results of this section clearly demonstrate the high levels of sporting and recreational activities that already exist in the area, as well as support for the incorporation of a wide range of additional sports and recreational facilities in the future. A total of 308 responses were received for this question.

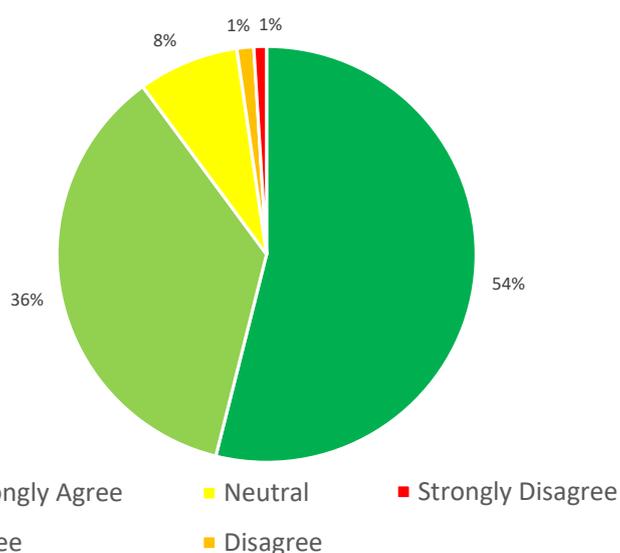


Figure 13.4: Responses to 'I would support linking new sports and recreational facilities to existing and proposed walkways and cycle paths'.

14 Findings and Design Response

In this Chapter we outline how the input and insights gleaned from the various forms of consultation have helped to shape the design proposals being brought forward. The consultation exercise offers a unique insight into what the community and users of Ardee would like to see in this area.

The insights have been grouped into themes with the findings outlined in more detail and the subsequent elements of the design proposals to address the issues are then explored. The themes identified are:

- Tourism & Heritage
- Traffic congestion and flow, centralised parking, car-free zones
- Youth and physical activity space
- River walk improvements and the environment
- Under-utilisation of public and outdoor space
- Improvements to Main Street

Theme	Findings	Design Response
Tourism & Heritage	<p>Improve and protect Ardee Castle</p> <p>Improvements to Ardee Castle were mentioned frequently in responses to the survey. Respondents noted the need to protect the Castle, given that it is such an iconic landmark for the town. The main comments relating to the castle in the breakout rooms of the webinar were from those who wanted to see the castle opened up to the public.</p> <p>Issues of pedestrian mobility around the castle area were highlighted by Age Friendly Louth.</p> <p>Additional suggestions to protect the castle included removing the existing scaffolding, establishing tours about the history of the castle, and general restoration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘The Castle is a lovely feature and work outside it could easily be done to make it more appealing’ • ‘The castle need to open to the public and the town needs to be put on the map as a place to visit and explore’ • ‘Open Ardee castle and designate parking spot for 2 busses to start with to tour castle and then visit town and coffee shops, shops and restaurants’. • ‘Opening Ardee castle as a tourist center during the summer months and a community center in off peak times’. • ‘The castle absolutely has to be utilised. There are so many possible uses it is a disgrace that it is sitting idle’. • ‘Open the castle as a visitors centre with the ground floor as a reception area and coffee shop. Had the privilege of using the building on a number of occasions a few years back as a scout leader with the permission of lcc and the Castle is an outstanding building with huge potential’. <p>Tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ardee could be a hotspot for tourism to be developed. • ‘It has a wealth of heritage and tourism potential (2 Castles, Old St Marys Church, Chantry College, in addition to the legend of Cuchulainn and Ferdia). It is what I call a Goldilocks town, not too big, not too small, just right’. • ‘Ardee could become a place for tourism, music and art to flourish’. • ‘Ardee has a strong cultural and historical heritage that is not utilised enough for tourism’ • ‘Town has potential to attract tourism’ <p>Improve heritage assets and connection</p> <p>A lack of proper connection between heritage assets / historical sites of significance was noted, as was the potential to harness the growing interest and investment in Ireland’s Ancient East.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Ardee has amazing under celebrated history and heritage, is close to major towns and surrounded by beautiful countryside. Were it not for the appalling traffic congestion and poor location of shops ‘it would be a great town’. • ‘It’s so close to Dublin and Belfast. A lot of people pass through Ardee. It has a lot of heritage that is not being utilised’ • ‘Ardee has huge potential been a small town with great heritage and a direct route to the west of Ireland from Northern Ireland’. • ‘We should capitalise on its value (ancient Irish east etc)’. 	<p>Ardee Castle forms a significant part of the existing heritage value that contributes to the character of the medieval town and high street. Its protection and enhancement will be key to the regeneration of Ardee.</p> <p>Ardee Castle is one element of the medieval fabric, the enhancement of which will form the fabric of the renewed high street.</p> <p>The setting of the Castle has been identified as a heritage quarter that could form an open museum area that visually illustrates the rich heritage of Ardee.</p> <p>The design of the street around the Castle will be fully accessible and a safe, attractive place for more vulnerable users including pedestrians, cyclists and those with reduced mobility. While tour buses will need to be facilitated to the castle, this will be facilitated on adjacent roads.</p> <p>Respondents felt that widening public space in front of Ardee castle would be an important gesture. This would respect the historical importance of the castle while ensuring that pedestrians have sufficient space and are sufficiently comfortable when appreciating it.</p> <p>Ardee’s a strong cultural and historical heritage forms the basis of the regeneration proposals and the public realm design will seek to enhance and exhibit this context.</p> <p>The public realm design in and around Ardee Castle is seeking to respectfully complement the heritage while at the same time creating a clear differentiation between new and old.</p> <p>Cultural and heritage quarters, contemplation gardens and river front linear parks contribute to an enhanced area of publicly accessible open spaces, creating attractive places to live and visit, within this unique setting.</p>

<p>Youth and physical activity space</p>	<p>Pedestrianisation</p> <p>One of the main priorities of the survey was to establish support for greater pedestrianisation in Ardee. As noted in previous sections of the report, pedestrian accessibility in Ardee was rated as poor. This sentiment has been reflected in responses throughout the survey noting the need for more pedestrianisation and more pedestrian infrastructure to improve pedestrian safety.</p> <p>Ardee is an Age Friendly town but options for older persons to walk the town are limited. In improving pedestrian infrastructure, consideration must be given to providing adequate rest points via seating and street furniture. However, the design team should be mindful of unintended consequences of such provisions in creating mobility blocks.</p> <p>For older persons who would use pedestrian infrastructure, we must be mindful of the need for access to toilet facilities, as a lack of these can deter people from walking to and from locations within the town</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘More signage leading up to pedestrian crossings’ • ‘Positioning of pedestrian crossings are very dangerous one at a crossroad and one at the bottom of a hill’ • ‘Ardee’s biggest strength is its main street, which has great potential to be used as a one-way system that would allow more space for pedestrians to shop and eat/drink in the town (like seen in Killarney, for example)’ • ‘Pedestrianise the town - people before vehicles’. • ‘Make the main street a pedestrian street and move the traffic around the town’ <p>Reduce traffic congestion</p> <p>Another key issue raised consistently throughout the survey was the issue of traffic congestion. Particular interest was given to the need to bypass Ardee to prevent this build-up of traffic.</p> <p>Journey times in the car for small distances were noted due to sheer volumes of traffic.</p> <p>Issues at junctions between Main Street and Ash Walk were noted and raised in survey responses. The level of congestion and unsafe nature of junctions were also cited as reasons to opting to travel by car, rather than using active travel measures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Traffic through the town makes in an unattractive place to visit’. • ‘We need to get the N2 and N53 traffic out of the town centre. Traffic is killing the town. Just look at a typical Friday evening’. • ‘I avoid the town because of traffic which is a shame to local businesses as I would prefer to shop local and not in chain supermarkets’. • ‘Really feel that Ardee needs to be bypassed at this stage. At any of time of the day/ there is always traffic’. 	<p>Pedestrian crossing facilities are provided along the length of the N2 Main Street at various locations.</p> <p>The design proposes to enhance the opportunities for crossing points along the Main Street through the narrowing of the carriageway, reducing vehicle speeds along the route, and the provision of raised and shared surfaces to prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement around the town centre.</p> <p>The provision of street furniture and character areas along the Main Street will enhance the pedestrian experience of the area for all users. The quality of the pedestrian facilities in terms of dropped kerbs / tactile paving, etc. will be enhanced to assist vulnerable users and improve the walking experience.</p> <p>The provision of a high-quality pedestrian connectivity to / from the Main Street will enhance connectivity from parking areas, the river walk, etc. to shops and businesses within the town and on the Main Street.</p> <p>As two national roads, the Main Street (N2) and the N52 currently cater for high volumes of traffic, including heavy goods vehicle, on a daily basis.</p> <p>The design team propose to enhance Main Street and user experience through the narrowing of the road carriageway, enhancing pedestrian and cycle facilities and reducing the vehicle speeds through the area in order to encourage more active travel within the town centre.</p> <p>The relocation of parking from Main Street to an off-street area (Ash Walk) will remove traffic demand and delays caused by vehicles parking on Main Street. It also promises to make Main Street safer for all users.</p> <p>The provision of a new junction layout and pedestrian facilities along the Main Street and Ash Walk will make the area safer and more suitable for walking and cycling through the town centre.</p> <p>The design will accommodate any future provision of the Ardee by-pass and aim to provide a better user experience for all.</p>
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Parking

Parking was also mentioned frequently as a response to several survey questions. Some survey questions asked respondents if they would support dedicated parking zones, and responses indicated that the relocation of parking would still need to be convenient to access the town centre, with the potential for park and ride facilities to be incorporated into the regeneration proposals.

The key here will be to relocate parking to a convenient location, rather than reduce or remove parking completely from the area.

Some respondents also noted that relocating parking to the edge of the town could open up town centre spaces for markets and community facilities.

- ‘But lack of parking for commuters is a big problem as is the heavy traffic through the town’
- ‘Reduce on-street parking, but replace the lost spaces with a number of off-street parking areas’
- ‘provide at least one good large car park at one end of the town to eliminate the necessity to have to drive through the town’
- ‘There is no centre in this town since the Market square became a parking space. This area could be developed to become a weekly market space with seating area and chill out areas with public seating’.
- ‘We need to encourage the movement of people around the town and by limiting parking times we can increase the turnover of spaces and the resulting footfall. We should look at Car Share Schemes’.
- ‘Free parking on the town is essential to keep shops on the main street in business’

Ardee experiences a high level of on-street and off-street parking, primarily in the Main Street and Ash Walk areas of the town.

Ardee Main Street (N2) is a wide carriageway and high volumes of car parking and the parking profile along the route can give rise to some irregular parking behaviour (e.g. angled parking outside the marked bays). It is proposed by the design team to relocate as much of this parking as possible to areas that are convenient and to enhance the user experience along the Main Street. The enhancement of Main Street through the narrowing of the carriageway and reducing vehicle speeds etc. will further enhance connectivity within the town centre and make it more suitable for all road users.

Ash Walk provides a high volume of private and public off-street parking. The management of parking in these areas and the provision of a high-quality pedestrian connectivity to the Main Street will make parking in the area convenient to shops and businesses within the town and on the Main Street.

Accessibility

Creating an accessible town centre was also mentioned frequently during survey responses and stakeholder meetings with Louth Age Friendly.

This accessibility is in the form of both increasing access to the town via walking, cycling and transport, and also increasing accessibility to the town to those with small children and those with mobility issues.

While safe routes also benefit pedestrians and cyclists, it is important, as an Age Friendly Town, that reasonable stop and rest points are provided through street furniture and seating. However, such provisions should not impede those with mobility issues who may need to use wheelchairs or walking supports.

The easy access Ardee has to both Dundalk and Dublin was highlighted, which has the potential to attract more people to the area. This was particularly noted as an area to benefit on the shift in approach to remote working as a result of Covid.

- 'It is on a main road easy accessibility to Dundalk and Drogheda and the M1'
- 'One major obstacle is wheelchair accessibility down the town'
- 'Improved accessibility for people with disabilities and older people'
- 'I think we should make the town's parks a bit safer and a little more welcoming. The parks and walkways should be accessible to all and children should feel safe in the areas'.
- 'You need direct access to shops particularly as a mother to toddlers'
- 'It would depend where, as older people need access to shops that is not far from parking. It allows them to maintain their independence for longer. Same try for disabled and it encourages the abled to shop in town in independent retailers which are a v important part of Ardee town
- 'I'm in support of dedicated parking zones on the condition that they're located in sensible locations close to amenities and shopping areas. This is particularly important for accessibility for people who have disabilities'.

Enhancing accessibility across the town is a key aim of the design. It is proposed to improve connectivity for all users, in particular pedestrian and cyclists to and from the Main Street and to an area such as the River Dee, outlining amenity areas and also providing good access to and from facilities for public transport provisions in the town centre.

Pedestrian crossing facilities will be enhanced to improve the pedestrian experience around the town and a dedicated river walk / cycle facilities will be provided to connect the town from east to west along the riverbank.

The design proposes to enhance the opportunities for crossing points along the Main Street through the narrowing of the carriageway, reducing vehicle speeds along the route, provision of raised and shared surface to prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement around the town centre. Dedicated cycle facilities, in terms of cycle parking and cycle lanes, are also proposed along the Main Street and in close proximity to key demand nodes within the town centre and surrounding areas.

The provision of a high-quality pedestrian connectivity to / from the Main Street will enhance connectivity from recreational and parking areas, the river walk, etc. to shops and businesses within the town.

Dedicated bus stop facilities will be provided on the Main Street, providing appropriate space for buses and waiting areas for passengers. The bus stops will cater for a number of intercity and local services (Services: 167, 182, 980) to Dublin, Drogheda, Mullameelan.

<p>Youth and physical activity space</p>	<p>Greater variety of sports facilities</p> <p>There was a clear desire for a greater variety of sports facilities in Ardee.</p> <p>Whilst there are already a number of sports and recreation facilities, responses suggested that people would like to see wider investment in facilities such as swimming pools, new sports pitches and a sports track for the running club.</p> <p>Specific submissions were received from a number of clubs highlighting the need for a multi-use sports and amenity facility on lands owned by Louth County Council. This was reflected in the combined submission from a number of sporting clubs based within Ardee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘The Dee should be accessible for different water sports such as paddling boarding swimming’ • ‘Water sports could be facilitated by weirs’ • ‘I’m not sure of the level of sports facilities available other than Gaelic games, soccer and golf, none of which are of interest to me’. • ‘More park space and another Astro pitch for the youngsters. A community centre with a youth club in a dedicated space that could host mother and baby clubs, sports, youth clubs and teen clubs’. • ‘sports are quite good today , swimming pool would be great’ • ‘The town needs a sports track and athletic sports ground as there is a fantastic club’ <p>Space for youth</p> <p>A lack of space for young people was the focus of some discussion in the breakout rooms, while sporting facilities will appeal to many young people other amenities / places to gather without encouraging anti social behaviour should be considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Night time economy for younger people with coffee shops etc’. • ‘Has potential but needs more shops, a cinema, hotel, swimming pool all lacking. Nothing for teenagers or young people’ • ‘More done for the town, like roads fixed, more business in town, and more for the kids and young adults to do’ • ‘There’s not a lot for young people to do at the moment. There needs to be more places to just hang as right now there is only the park’. • ‘The general amenities do need to be improved. Night time cafe or later opening hours, social hub for young people in evening time to meet up’. • ‘Could do with more places to keep the youths off the streets with their hoodies’ • ‘Something needs to be introduced for the youth, with all the houses being built and population growing’ 	<p>Two sites – associated with the Old Railway and Amenity Lands situated to the east of Main Street, have been assessed in order to understand their potential to deliver sports areas and activity spaces including community gardens, BMX facilities or a cross-country running track.</p> <p>The riverside also provides an opportunity to deliver a connected foot/cycle path that would provide an amenity and leisure resource as well as a place to run and cycle.</p> <p>The development of a riverside walk / cycle amenity area aims to provide a high-quality facility which will enhance connectivity for all users across the town. It will also open up areas of the River Dee which may not have been accessible in the past to the general public and to enable various water-based sports to take place.</p> <p>The dedicated pedestrian and cycle facility along the river will connect the east and the west sides of Ardee and encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel to and from various existing and proposed amenity facilities around the town, including any proposed new amenity facilities at the Old Railway and Amenity Lands.</p>
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<p>River walk improvements and the environment</p>	<p>River</p> <p>Improving and enhancing the River Dee was a key feature within our engagement, noting that some areas of the river felt unsafe, and they would like to see more lighting and improved safety for the area. Others would like to see a general clean-up of the area, so it can be used by visitors and those who live in Ardee. Emphasis was also given to creating a greenway along the river and accommodating water sports.</p> <p>Environment</p> <p>The importance of enhancing nature, wildlife and biodiversity was referenced in survey responses and the stakeholder meetings. The attractiveness of the countryside / picturesque scenery around the river was cited as a major opportunity and something which, if promoted and harnessed, could be used to attract people to live in, work in and visit Ardee.</p> <p>Ardee has a rich history in the art of beekeeping, as part of the survey, during the breakout rooms and as part of the survey breakout rooms and written submissions it was noted that some members of the town felt strongly that the history of beekeeping in the town should be formally marked.</p> <p>There is also a need for a location location for County Louth Beekeepers' Association to meet and train beekeepers from other locations. This would need to be facilitated through the provision of a small site. The Association would be happy to take over a small site located by the waste water treatment facilities as they would not be impacted by smells.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Ardee has great history and the potential of a greenway down the railway line and riverside walk' • 'Somehow promote the river walk more and have a clear way to get to it from the town' • 'security cameras at riverside walk a d make it more kid friendly a d make a spot where families can have picnics etc not a spot for teenagers to gather and drink alcohol at night' • 'Improve the area around the river and make it safer to walk through'. • 'The river Dee has potential to become/ facilitate a canoeing club' • 'Promote the Dee river & improve the river as a tourist attraction'. • 'The river is a major feature of the town' • 'Continue up the riverbank to create a greenway possibly linking the railway link' • 'it is important we use all the resources we have to promote the Town and the River Dee could be promoted as a viable amenity. Greenways and designated walk ways are extremely popular and encourage people to visit other areas'. • 'The town needs to show a little more biodiversity. A great idea would be to plant a wildflower area in the towns parks. It would encourage wildlife and will look very eye catching too' • 'We are looking for a permanent site (bee keepers) so we can have our own premises to train old and young the craft of beekeeping. This would include keeping bees, extracting and jarring honey, making the hives which incorporates woodworking. This project could get people from all over County Louth involved in biodiversity, planting for pollinators etc etc. I have identified a site beside the sewage treatment...' 	<p>The development of the riverside aims to provide more open, connected and secure routes for walking, running and cycling.</p> <p>It will also open up areas of the River Dee which may not have been accessible to the general public to enable various water-based sports to take place.</p> <p>The facility will include enhanced connections to the Old Railway / Amenity Lands and the town centre and connect the east and the west sides of Ardee via a quiet and safe corridor featuring a combination of off and on-road facilities for cyclists and pedestrians.</p> <p>Focus will be placed on enhancing the biodiversity and ecology along the river corridor, protecting our nature so that wildlife can flourish.</p> <p>Consideration is being given to identifying a small plot of land for beekeeping.</p>
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<p>Under-utilisation of public and outdoor space</p>	<p>The importance of providing structured and appropriate outdoor facilities featured in survey responses and through various stakeholder meetings. A lack of seating and street furniture on Main Street and Ask Walk as well as along the river walk was noted. Street furniture was cited as being needed to facilitate life in a post-COVID-19 world and to bring back life to the town. It was also cited as an essential amenity for walkers, particularly those with mobility impairments as resting spots are needed. As part of the survey there was strong support for the addition of new seating and outdoor furniture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘More outdoor seating’ • ‘Outdoor dining areas covered with canopies’ • ‘The outdoor eating areas being developed is giving a lovely feel to the town, more of this please’ • ‘Ardee needs more outdoor seating areas and more businesses to come to the town’. • ‘Ardee is an excellent location between Dublin and Belfast. It has the potential to be a lot more but a lack of facilities such as bins, benches, outdoor dining makes it very difficult to spend time in’. • ‘Not enough outdoor/indoor activity places/companies/clubs for youth, not enough options for shopping/cloths/food/ etc...not enough night life options’. • ‘There is so much lost potential in the park, for open air concerts, cinemas nights, fun days etc’ • ‘The railway it is a phenomenal space for outdoor concerts bbq fun days, and improve the tracks’ • ‘Provision of outdoor seating and rest/ leisure areas. These meeting points are lacking at present’. 	<p>The proposals have sought to open up existing valuable cultural and heritage resources and to do this in a way that will provide a range of new and enhanced spaces, particularly along the high street, to provide an attractive setting for an active high street.</p> <p>The successful use of public and outdoor spaces will be reliant on people incidentally using the spaces by walking to and from their places of work or school or the shops. In other words, people will move along so-called ‘desire lines’, so the spaces must be sufficiently attractive in order to encourage visitors and residents to use them.</p>
<p>Improvements to Main Street</p>	<p>An emphasis on improving Main Street came through across all levels of public engagement. Issues such as dereliction and appearance of the Street in general was a common theme. While traffic issues were cited there was also an emphasis on general maintenance and a clean-up of Main Street as well as addressing the high vacancy rates. The space within Main Street was considered to be an asset to the community, lending itself to public realm works.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘The old super value on the main street needs to be addressed perhaps made into a nice walkway to excess the shops behind and even present a small kiosk within the walkway’ • ‘The main street, owing to its history as a market town, is very wide and has scope for development’ • ‘A lot of vacant/run down buildings in the town. Super Value old building on main St, empty shops opposite Tenanty’s pub, old bakery empty etc’. • ‘Ardee main street very poor looking’ • ‘I feel Ardee has a lot to offer but needs for investment in the main street and businesses to attract visitors’ • ‘At the moment looks run down, too many Main Street empty buildings’ • ‘It’s important to have the main streets looking great because that’s what will attract and please tourists and locals’ 	<p>The design proposals seek to create an active and attractive sequenced public realm, that will contribute to a good place to live and work and provide a series of spaces that will allow for temporary uses such as festivals and street parties.</p> <p>The sequenced new public realms are creating seven quarters all of which will have a distinct individuality as a direct response to their near surroundings to create a unique sense of place and sense of belonging.</p> <p>The asymmetric Road Scape design ensures more valuable public spaces while creating a clear differentiation between the various sequenced public realm</p> <p>Uniting Main Street’s Seven Quarters by creating a unique identity to the Street Identity, from urban furniture, light posts and trash bins that celebrates Ardee’s Coat of Arms (Flag emblem) in terms of colour scheme.</p>

15 Next Steps

Design proposals are currently being developed which will take into consideration the insights and feedback gathered from the consultation process.

These proposals will be brought forward as part of a validation exercise. This will involve another round of consultation, during which we will invite the public to confirm that they feel the results of the first round of consultation have been reflected in our designs.

Following this supplementary engagement and consultation our consultation report will be updated to reflect this additional activity and collate the feedback and responses to our proposals. At this point we will be working closely with our design team to address any gaps in our proposals.

As part of the supplementary consultation we will be carrying out a public awareness campaign to drive participation in the process. This will include activities such as a local leaflet drop, social media campaign, public notices in local newspapers, website updates, a public information webinar, stakeholder meetings and letters to elected representatives and stakeholders etc.

During the period from submission to determination, we will continue to monitor responses to the consultation both on and offline, alerting the project team and engaging where necessary.

16 Conclusion

The ambition for this project is far-reaching with support across all levels of the Council and the local community to ensure appropriate and successful regeneration of Ardee.

Our engagement has shown there is a strong appetite for this work and a strong desire for public engagement and interaction on the overall project. This is vital for the success of the project, the strong political and community support and buy-in will be key for the delivery of the work. The stakeholders and community within Ardee are very active and politically engaged in relation to any and all development in the area and are keen to see the regeneration of the town.

The project team acknowledges the important role that the stakeholders and community play in ensuring the success of this project and look forward to continuing to work closely with all these groups and representatives to work on the regeneration of Ardee.

Appendix 1: Written Submissions

Written submission from Transport Infrastructure Ireland

Dear Ms. Power,

Thank you for your email of 24 June 2021 regarding the Ardee 2040 Consultation.

TII notes the invitation to attend a meeting/consultation on the 5 August 2021. However, TII will not be in attendance. To assist the Council, the following observations are provided for consideration in the development of the Ardee 2040 Strategy.

Ardee is the location of an important intersection of the strategic national road network comprising the N2 and N33, national primary roads, and the N52, national secondary road.

In accordance with the National Planning Framework National Strategic Outcome no. 2 'Enhanced Regional Accessibility', there is a requirement to maintain the strategic capacity and safety of the national road network. This requirement is further reflected in the National Development Plan, the recent publication of the Draft National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland and also the existing Statutory Section 28 Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities.

As outlined by TII in the Authority's submission on the Draft County Development Plan, in urban areas, where national roads continue to pass through, such as Ardee, there remains a strategic national road function that is required to be safeguarded. These roads will continue to be national roads until such time as they are bypassed and therefore will continue to facilitate heavy commercial vehicles passing through the urban areas.

The Ardee 2040 Strategy should acknowledge this strategic national road function and be prepared in this context. Proposals identified in the Strategy should be complementary to safeguarding the strategic function of the national road and importantly, addresses safety for all road users, including vulnerable road users, in town centre and urban locations.

Proposed works to the national road network in the urban area will require a Preliminary Design Report (PDR) in accordance with TII Publication DN-GEO-03030 (Design Phase Procedure for Road Safety Improvement Schemes, Urban Renewal Schemes and Local Improvement Schemes). Other TII Publications will also need to be consulted including 'The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads' (TII Publications DN-GEO-03084), TII Pavement Standards and Road Safety Audit (TII Publications GE-STY-01024) where works are proposed to the national road network.

TII would welcome being kept updated on the preparation of the Ardee 2040 Strategy.

Yours sincerely,

Senior Regulatory & Administration Executive
Ref No. TII21-113780



Written submission from County Louth Bee Keepers' Association



Hi Karen, thank you for taking my call today (30/06/2021). My name is [Redacted] and I am a member and part of the committee of Louth Beekeepers Association. We currently have 230 members from all parts of county Louth.

Over the past number of years we have been training people in the craft of beekeeping. For example in 2019 we trained 53 new beekeepers, 69 in 2020 and 76 this year. We carry out the training in conjunction with Teagasc in Dundalk and Drogheda who kindly let us use their facilities for lectures and examinations. We also promote and breed the native Irish black bee, *apis mellifera mellifera* which county Louth is a conservation area. We also have a temporary apiary in Dundalk which is kindly loaned to us by a local farmer. This gives us a space to keep bee hives to train the beginners.

This however is only a temporary situation and the site can be sold at any time or used for other purposes. Louth Beekeepers Association are also members of The Federation Of Irish Beekeeping Associations which provides us with our insurance and training/good practice standards for an annual fee. We are also registered with the Department of Agriculture and food as honey is a food product and has to be produced to their standard which we train for.

We are looking for a permanent site so we can have our own premises to train old and young the craft of beekeeping. This would include keeping bees, extracting and jarring honey, making the hives which incorporates woodworking. This project could get people from all over County Louth involved in biodiversity, planting for pollinators etc etc.

As part of the Ardee 2040 development plan I have identified a site beside Ardee sewerage works which would be ideal for our needs. This site is currently used by the county council for storing rubble and other bits and pieces. We could have a centre of excellence for beekeepers to come and visit from other parts of the country and beyond.

I hope you will give this proposal a favourable position in your plans for the future of Ardee. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely

Written submission from Ardee & District Athletics Club

PROPOSAL FOR AN ATHLETIC TRACK BY ARDEE & DISTRICT A.C. ON LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL LANDS



INTRODUCTION:

Ardee & District Athletic Club was founded in 1992, however prior to this, there had been an athletic club (*Ferdia A.C & Ardee De La Salle Athletics Club*) using the parish field (beside the Monastery Boys School) since the 1950's. Ardee & District Athletic Club is a volunteer organization rooted in the core beliefs of instilling the benefits of participation in sport (athletics) of all abilities and all ages.

We aim to promote athletics and physical activity within the community of Ardee and the surrounding area and we currently have 164 registered members (46 Senior and 118 juveniles) who represent the club at all ages from juvenile (5 years+) through to adults.

All events within the athletics arena are catered for (running (individual and team), high/long jump, shot and javelin etc.).

It is an affiliated club of the Athletics Association of Ireland and all coaches have received training from accredited Athletics Association of Ireland courses ranging from Athletic Leaders through to Level 2.

All coaches are also Garda vetted and have attended "*Child Welfare & Protection in Sport*" courses run by the Athletics Association of Ireland.

The club operates the entire year, focusing on the Cross-Country season in the winter months and Track and Field during the summer months.

We meet/ twice weekly (Tuesday and Thursday 6.30pm – 7.30pm) for training sessions with additional training sessions focusing on endurance, speed training, core work and interval training on Sunday mornings.

Adults meet on a daily basis in various groups and participate in local, national and international events ranging in distances from 5K's to ultras and also in County, Provisional and National meets.



Juvenile members of Ardee and District A.C. have achieved local (inter-club and County), regional (Leinster) and national success on both an individual and team basis in Track and Field, Cross Country and Inter-School (secondary) competitions.

Ardee and District A.C hold a number of County events during the year including our annual open Sports Day (End of August), our very successful 5K road race, which incorporates the Louth Masters Road Race (first weekend in Sept.) and the regional Ardee-Reaghstown Community Games

Ardee and District A.C. is one of 11 athletic club's in County Louth and is one of the 3 clubs with a growing membership, indeed our membership has increased by 22% from the 2017 figures – see below.

Registration Report 01/04/2018 (Club)								
County	Team name	Juvenile	Junior	Senior	Master	Grand Total 2018	Grand Total 2017	%+/-
Louth	Ardee & District A.C.	61		7	27	95	78	22%
	Blackrock A.C.(Louth)	52	1		17	110	141	-22%
	Boyne A.C.	135		9	63	207	249	-17%
	Drogheda & District A.C.	70	1	29	245	345	341	1%
	Dundalk St. Gerards A.C.	129	1	1	10	141	171	-18%
	Dundealgan A.C.	26	2	1	7	36	45	-20%
	Dunleer A.C.	98	2	25	69	194	237	-18%
	Glenmore A.C.	132	2	12	90	236	269	-12%
	Mountpleasant A.C.	33	1	8	10	52	57	-9%
	North East Runners A.C.			23	135	158	151	5%
	St. Peter's A.C.	37		1	10	48	55	-13%
Louth Total		813	10	116	684	1623	1794	-10%

Fig. A – Athletics Ireland registration report 01/04/2018

Currently Ardee and District A.C. use the parish field during the summer months and St. Mary's GAA facilities during the winter months under floodlights. There are no toilet/changing facilities available during the summer months and permission to use the facility must be applied for on an annual basis. The cost of the upkeep of the field (grass cutting etc.) is borne by Ardee and District A.C. and Square United.



Due to this arrangement, and despite requests for improvements/provision of facilities (especially toilets and storage areas), the cost of which would be born by Ardee & District A.C. permission to carry of these works have been denied.

With an increase in membership on a year by year basic, the future viability of our club to provide our community with an active athletic club is in doubt.



PROPOSAL



Fig. B – Location of LCC site/ proposed athletics track with Ardee town

Ardee and District A.C. caters for the entire town of Ardee and its environs. We have members who reside in an area from Collon to Tallanstown and pupils from the primary schools of Collon NS, Ballapousta NS, Monastery Boys School, Scoil Muire Na Trocaire, Ardee Educate Together, Scoil San Nioclas Stabannon and Tallanstown NS.





Fig. C – Aerial view of the proposed track in relation to the town center with vehicular routes (yellow) and pedestrian links (pink) indicated

The proposed site is located adjacent to the existing sewage works and is accessed by vehicles at the end of Tierney St., the walking distance from the site to the town center is only a mere 720m.

The successful “Old Railway Line” walk runs to the north of the site and successfully links the site to the town.

The site is zoned “Open Space, Amenity & Recreational” and there is no recorded archeology finds/sites within the area.



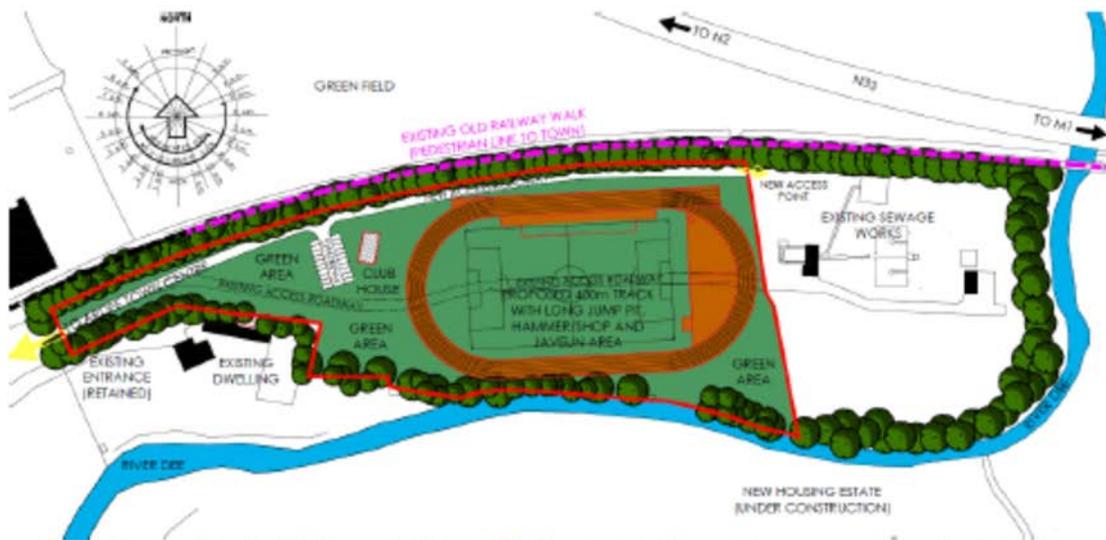


Fig. D – Proposed track with site, maintaining vehicular access to the town’s sewage works and maintaining a pedestrian link to the town center via the “Old Railway” line walk

The successful “Old Railway Line” walk runs to the north of the site while there is potential to create a riverside/boardwalk to the southern side of the site facing the River Dee. The approx. area of the site is 6.5 acres



Fig. E – Existing entrance (LHS) to the site at the end of Tierney St.



With the planned new athletic tracks in Dundalk and Dunleer together with the existing tracks in Drogheda and at the Bush Post Primary School, Ardee and District A.C. will be the only club in the county that will not have access to such a facility.

Should Louth County Council wish to discuss this matter and this proposal further, representatives from Ardee and District A.C. would be happy to meet to discuss same.

With thanks [REDACTED]

August 2018
END.



Combined written submission from Ardee and District Athletics Club, Square United and Ardee Boxing Club

Wish list: Ardee & District AC, Square United & Ardee Boxing Club.

While the following is not exhaustive it is felt that the overall development will have multiple uses and cater to the sporting and recreational needs (in excess of 1,000 residents) of Ardee and surrounding area's all year round.

There are many initiatives that are currently on hold or not reaching their full potential due to a lack of meaningful/useful facilities that will only enhance the overall wellbeing of the town.

Other voluntary clubs would also be interested in a multipurpose room for meetings & classes (yoga, self-defense, community groups such as Ardee Active Retirement, music etc.).

External areas:

- 6/8 lane running track (400m inner lane) with ancillary long jump pit.
- If track is grassed, then a hard standing area (fine gravel) for warm up/stretching.
- Soccer pitch (FAI standards) in the middle/grassed area/ also to be used by athletic field events i.e. shot, javelin and discus etc.
- Sheltered/covered area for warm up/spectators.
- Warm up area for athletes grassed area.
- Flood lights (ability to use facility all year round) – safe for all users.
- Safe access to town/walkways/CCTV
- AED/First Aid station.
- Parking area/bicycle stand.
- External potable water source.

A building to consist of:

- Meeting rooms/small kitchen/tea station.
- Gym area (room) for indoor work and strength and conditioning.
- Changing rooms (male/female)/home/away etc. toilets and showers.
- Toilet facilities accessed via outside for use all year round including accessible WC.
- Storage areas for equipment (hurdles, high jump etc.) with both internal and external access and internal storage area/external storage area.
- Room for boxing club (2nd floor?).
- Green credentials of building area-water, heat pump, solar/PV panel's etc.

Ancillary proposals for site:

- Public playground to side of sports development.
- Link to River Dee and walkways/cycle paths into town center.
- Ancillary nature area to River Dee to be respected and enhanced.
- Wild flower/meadow areas to secondary areas to be developed.

Appendix 2: Public Consultation Survey

Welcome

Louth County Council have ambitious plans for an Ardee project that will result in a holistic design proposal, setting a new benchmark for public realm and town centre infrastructure that will transform 21st century Ardee. The proposals will aim to improve the street scape, outdoor space and public facilities in Main Street; Ash Walk; The Old Railway; and amenity lands to the east of the Town.

Louth County Council is inviting members of the local community to take part in the below early consultation survey. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The deadline for survey submissions is 5 July 2021

About You

1 What is your connection to Ardee (Please check all that apply)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I live in Ardee | <input type="checkbox"/> I work in Ardee town | <input type="checkbox"/> I own a business in the town |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I use sports and recreation facilities in the town | <input type="checkbox"/> I use community and public facilities in the area | <input type="checkbox"/> I walk / cycle around the area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I use the local shops | <input type="checkbox"/> The nighttime economy | |

Other (Please Specify)

2 Please enter your contact details (optional)

Name

Address

Email Address

Tel Phone Number:

Ardee Town

3 Please rate the quality of following features in Ardee

Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very Good
Parking facilities				
1	2	3	4	5
Cafe/restaurant choice and quality				
1	2	3	4	5
Variety/range and quality of shops				
1	2	3	4	5
Daytime safety and security				
1	2	3	4	5
Nighttime feeling of safety and security				
1	2	3	4	5
Quality of night-time economy				
1	2	3	4	5

4 Please rate the quality of the following aspects of Ardee's public spaces

Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very Good
Parks and green areas				
1	2	3	4	5
The attractiveness of Ardee town				
1	2	3	4	5
The quality of public space				
1	2	3	4	5
Accessibility for elderly and disabled through the streets and businesses				
1	2	3	4	5
Quality of public space around Ardee Castle				
1	2	3	4	5
Seating and outdoor meeting space				
1	2	3	4	5
Appearances of buildings				
1	2	3	4	5
Use of heritage and wayfinding				
1	2	3	4	5

5 To what extent do you agree with the following statement: Ardee has the potential to attract more people to live and work here.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

6 Please explain your answer

7 What feature(s) would you introduce to improve Ardee Town?

8 What improvements or incentives do you think would encourage more people to live in the town?

Ardee Town Contd.

The "15 Minute Town" Concept seeks to have all community facilities and services accessible within a 10-minute walk or cycle from homes or are accessible by public transport services connecting people to larger scaled settlements.

- 9 A "15-minute town is one that has all community facilities and services accessible within a 15 minute walk or cycle from homes or are accessible by public transport services. Would you support Ardee becoming a "15-minute town"?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

- 10 How important are the following to encourage walking in Ardee (please rate all):

Extremely not important	Not important	Neutral	Very important	Extremely important
1	2	3	4	5
Better quality and wider footpaths				
1	2	3	4	5
Better crossing points created with the pedestrian in mind				
1	2	3	4	5
Reduced on-street parking on narrower roads				
1	2	3	4	5
Tree planting				
1	2	3	4	5
High quality public realm				
1	2	3	4	5
Outdoor furniture, including benches for gathering				
1	2	3	4	5
Heritage way finding and trails				
1	2	3	4	5

11 How important are the following to encourage more cycling in the town (please rate all):

Extremely not important	Not important	Neutral	Very important	Extremely important
1	2	3	4	5
Make smaller streets less busy by removing or reducing through traffic				
1	2	3	4	5
Permit cyclists to safely travel both ways on one-way streets				
1	2	3	4	5
Provide dedicated segregated cycle facilities on busier roads and junctions				
1	2	3	4	5
Establish a cycle hire scheme for traditional and electric bikes, including cargo bikes				
1	2	3	4	5
Provide additional safe and secure cycle parking				
1	2	3	4	5
Ensure connection between all cycling routes				
1	2	3	4	5

12 How would you rate traffic congestion in town, particularly around Main Street?

Very bad	Bad	Neither good nor bad	Good	Very good
1	2	3	4	5

13 Would you support parking to be permitted in a number of dedicated parking zones only?

Yes No Maybe

Please explain your answer

Main Street

14 What do you think could reinvigorate Main Street for businesses and the community to thrive?

15 Please rate the accessibility of Main Street for:

	Very poor	Poor	Neither good nor poor	Good	Very good
Car drivers	1	2	3	4	5
Delivery drivers	1	2	3	4	5
Pedestrians	1	2	3	4	5
Parents with small children	1	2	3	4	5
People with mobility difficulties	1	2	3	4	5
People with hearing / visual difficulties	1	2	3	4	5
The elderly	1	2	3	4	5

16 In order to improve the safety of pedestrian paths and lane ways, please rate the following in order of priority: (When complete, please select 'Finish Sorting')

- Resurfacing work
- Replacing of trees that have broken through pavements
- Dished curbs (ramp curbs at junctions, accessible parking spots and bus stops)
- Better connections to other pathways in the town
- More public lighting
- More defined segregation between cycleways and vehicular traffic
- Dedicated pedestrian zone

17 To improve the streetscape around Ardee Castle, I support

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
Removal of some off-street parking spaces to increase pedestrian space				
1	2	3	4	5
Remove bollards and replace with shared space to increase pedestrian use				
1	2	3	4	5
Introduce new seating and outdoor furniture				
1	2	3	4	5
Introduce planting within the vicinity of the castle				
1	2	3	4	5
Introduce appropriate lighting within the vicinity of the castle				
1	2	3	4	5

18 Other, please specify.

Ash Walk

This section focuses on the area between Main Street down to the open space behind the SuperValu carpark.

19 What features of the Ash Walk area do you value?

20 Do you currently use the HSE lands behind Ash Walk (the open space behind the SuperValu carpark), for walking/running or other forms of recreation?

Yes No Sometimes

21 Would you use the HSE lands for walking/running or other forms of recreation if it was less overgrown and more accessible via a walkway from Ash Walk

Yes No Maybe

22 If you will use the new school planned behind Ash Walk, please select which option you are most likely to use for access

Private Car Car pooling (creche, childcare etc.) Bike
 Cycle bus Public transport Walking
 Not applicable to me

23 How strongly do you agree with the following statements?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<hr/>				
I would be in favour of new town square/ plaza area in the Ash Walk Locality (specifically within the space between Main Street and SuperValu)				
1	2	3	4	5
<hr/>				
I would support the full pedestrianisation of Ash Walk coming from Main Street to facilitate a public plaza and space for public gatherings with the presence of street furniture				
1	2	3	4	5

24 Please explain your answers

River greenway

The River Dee forms part of the Ardee 2040 project study area. The river is an important amenity in Ardee and has immense potential to further enhance pedestrian and cycle connectivity by acting as a 'Greenway' connecting several areas in the town.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

25 The potential of the River Dee as a Greenway should be explored.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

26 Please explain your answer

27 The River has a strong connection to the wider town

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

28 Please explain your answer

29 How would you rate the following aspects of the Riverside walk?

	Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very good
Public lighting	1	2	3	4	5
Outdoor seating	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of open space	1	2	3	4	5
Signage	1	2	3	4	5
Maintenance of the Riverside walk area	1	2	3	4	5
Connectivity to the rest of the town	1	2	3	4	5
Ecology of the area	1	2	3	4	5
Existing walking and cycling facilities along the River Dee	1	2	3	4	5

Sports and recreation

The project seeks to provide quality public spaces, recreational areas, sporting areas in Ardee. The following section seeks to gather your opinions on such current and potential facilities in the town.

30 Do you use any sports and recreation facilities in Ardee

Yes No

If yes, what sports and recreation facilities do you use?

31 What type of other sports are you aware of that are played in the area?

32 What additional sports and recreation facilities should be provided in the area in future

33 I would welcome increased sports and recreational facilities in the area

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

34 I would support linking new sports and recreational facilities to existing and proposed walkways and cycle paths

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Thank you! Next Steps

We are now beginning engagement with local stakeholders and the local community through dedicated online meetings.

35 I would like to register my interest in participating in a meeting in July 2021

Yes

No

Appendix 3: Stakeholder Letter and Site Map



Turley

To whom it may concern:

HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE REGENERATION OF ARDEE

I am writing on behalf of Louth County Council to invite you to take part in an early consultation regarding the development of design proposals for Ardee.

The Council has exciting plans to improve the streetscape and amenity of Ardee with a focus on four key opportunity sites: Main Street; Ash Walk; The Old Railway; and amenity lands to the east of the Town. The project work will result in a holistic design proposal, setting a new benchmark for public realm and town centre infrastructure design transforming Ardee Town from a traditional manufacturing centre to a 21st century prosperous and thriving local development. A site location map of the study area is enclosed.

The appointed multi-disciplinary team are working to establish a set of strategic and considerate design principles cognisant of the needs and aspirations of the local community, ensuring the development of design proposals for the regeneration of Ardee creating a vibrant and sustainable integrated settlement.

What's next?

Louth County Council will shortly begin early engagement with key local stakeholders through a series of web-based meetings and an online survey. To allow us to capture a diverse set of opinions, experience and ideas that are representative of the local community we are kindly asking you to complete the survey online, available at www.ardee2040.ie. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete and is open until 5pm on Monday, July 5th 2021.

As part of our consultation, we will also be distributing leaflets to the local area outlining the key consultation dates, as well as how you can access the survey online. We will also be publishing a number of social media posts, which will publicise the online survey and a public consultation webinar taking place at 6pm on Thursday 5th August 2021.

We are seeking to capture a diverse set of opinions, experiences and ideas during the first phase of consultation, using the aforementioned survey and meetings, to help shape our proposals.

Following this feedback, further development of proposals by the project team will take place. We will keep you informed of updates to proposal as the project progresses.

Yours sincerely

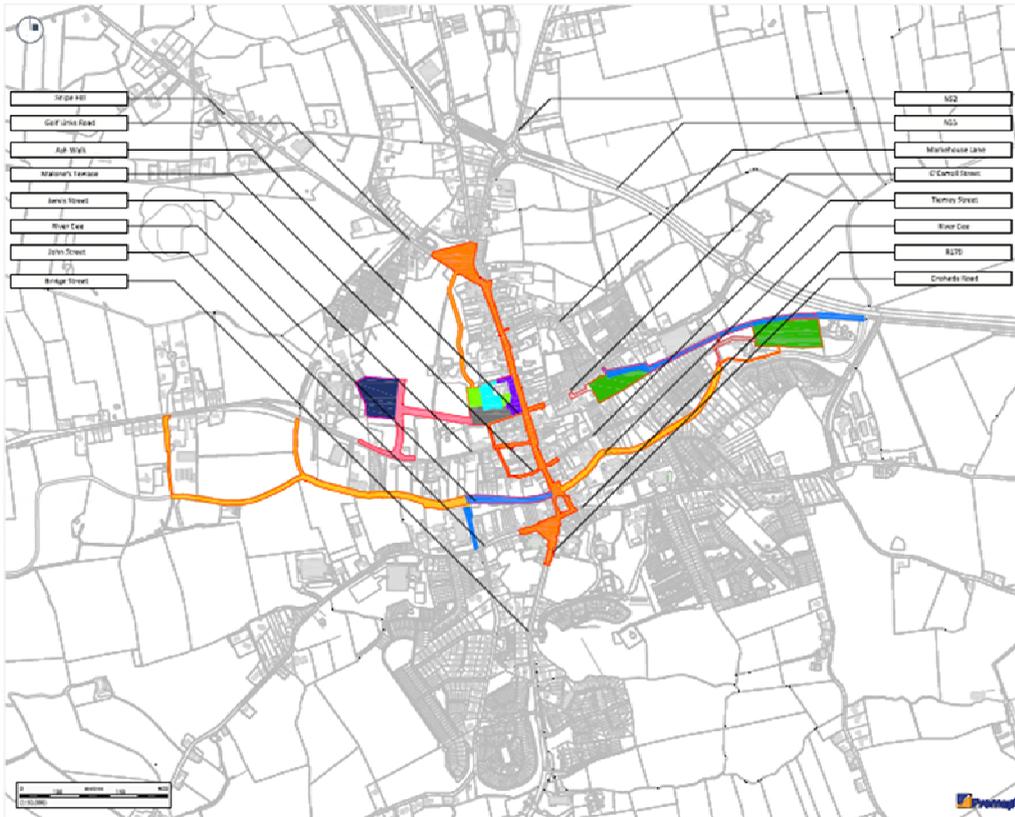
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Courtesy of Turley
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- ▬ Redline Boundary
- ▬ Main Street Public Realm Regeneration
- ▬ New Cycleways/Pathways
- ▬ Existing Cycleway
- ▬ Potential Commercial Spots & Recreational/Amenity Areas
- ▬ Undeveloped Land
- ▬ Existing Car Parks on Ash Way
- ▬ Shop Frontage along Main Street to be replaced in 2017 with proposed new shopfronts along main
- ▬ Existing Shopping Centre
- ▬ New Active Spaces together school
- ▬ Proposed new access road

CLIENT: Leath County Council
PROJECT: Ardara
DRAWING: Areas Plan
PROJECT NUMBER: LD/18/008
DRAWING NUMBER: 1000
DESIGNED BY: MR
REVISION: A **STATUS:** DRAFT
DATE: June 2013 **SCALE:** 1:5000 @ A4



Appendix 4: Leaflet

Help shape the regeneration of Ardee

Have your say at www.ardee2040.ie



Ardee

Louth County Council has exciting plans to improve the streetscape and amenity of Ardee with a focus on four key opportunity sites: Main Street; Ash Walk; The Old Railway; and amenity lands to the east of the Town. This ambitious project will result in a holistic design proposal, setting a new benchmark for public realm and town centre infrastructure that will transform 21st century Ardee.

As part of this exciting project, we are keen to engage with you to understand your needs and aspirations in order to help shape the plans for the town. Please take our initial consultation survey by visiting www.ardee2040.ie.



Email: contact@ardee2040.ie

Freephone hotline: 1800-010101

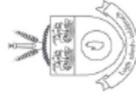
Turley, 4 Pembroke Street Upper, Dublin D02 VN24

www.ardee2040.ie



Riadas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Tionscald Éireann
Project Ireland
2040



Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council

FSC-Certified



Recycle me

Have your say

Louth County Council is inviting members of the local community to take part in an early consultation by completing a short online survey at www.ardee2040.ie. The survey seeks to explore the needs and aspirations of the local community, and opportunities for enhancement in the town of Ardee.

It is Councils ambition to develop design proposals for four key opportunity sites within Ardee: Main Street; Ash Walk; The Old Railway; and amenity lands to the east of the Town enabling a positive rural regeneration for the Town.

The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete and the deadline for submissions is **Monday 5th July at 5pm.**



Email: contact@ardee2040.ie



Freephone consultation hotline: **1800-010101**



Complete the freepost form overleaf and a member of the team will contact you to arrange a postal survey.

Louth County Council will host a digital information event via Zoom on Thursday 5th August at 6pm. To register for this event please visit www.ardee2040.ie

2

Turley
4 Upper Pembroke Street
Freepost FDN7433
Dublin 2
DO2 VN24



Name:

Email:

Address:

Comment:

Should you wish to be contacted about the project, please tick box

Thank you for your comments. A member of the team will be in touch in relation to your feedback. Personal details will not be shared with a third party and we will not contact you in relation to any other project or for marketing purposes. The information you provide will be stored securely until project completion. Following the end of this project, this information will be deleted. Unless you have indicated otherwise on the feedback form, we will not contact you about this project.

Appendix 5: Press release and Public Notice

Louth County Council Stakeholder and Community Consultation

HELP SHAPE THE REGENERATION OF ARDEE

Louth County Council is inviting stakeholders and members of the community to take part in an early consultation to explore opportunities for enhancement of key public realm areas in the town of Ardee.

The Council has exciting plans to improve the streetscape and amenity of Ardee with a focus on four key opportunity sites: Main Street; Ash Walk; The Old Railway; and amenity lands to the east of the Town. This ambitious project will result in a holistic design proposal, setting a new benchmark for public realm and town centre infrastructure that will transform 21st century Ardee.

Louth County Council is inviting all stakeholders and interested parties including residents, retailers, elderly representative groups, institutions, and businesses as well as community and sporting groups to take part in this consultation process and express their views and aspirations for the area to help shape and inform proposals. To facilitate this engagement, Louth County Council is launching an online survey at www.ardee2040.ie on Monday, 21 June 2021. The survey will close on at 5pm on Monday 5th July 2021.

Launching the early public consultation LCC Chief Executive Joan Martin, said “Louth Council are pleased to be working again with Turley on some exciting proposals for the regeneration of Ardee. Early engagement has shown there is a real appetite in the community to feed into this consultation process and help shape the design proposals. I am looking forward to bring the proposals forward for consideration by the Ardee community in early August. Finally I would encourage as many people as possible to complete the survey to ensure the proposals reflect what the community of Ardee need and want”.

Speaking about the project, Seamus Donohoe, Director, Turley Planning, said; “Turley in association with a multi-disciplinary team are delighted to be working with Louth County Council to prepare regeneration design proposals for key opportunity sites at Ardee, Co. Louth. The project work will result in a holistic design proposal, setting a new benchmark for public realm and town centre infrastructure design with a central focus on socio-economic regeneration, enterprise and sustainable urban living”.

As part of the consultation project, we will be hosting a public information webinar. Due to the ongoing Covid restrictions this will take place via Zoom. To register for the webinar, taking place on Thursday 5th August at 6pm please visit www.ardee2040.ie.

Further information relating to the project and consultation is available on our dedicated website www.ardee2040.ie, by calling 1800-010101 or by emailing contact@ardee2040.ie.

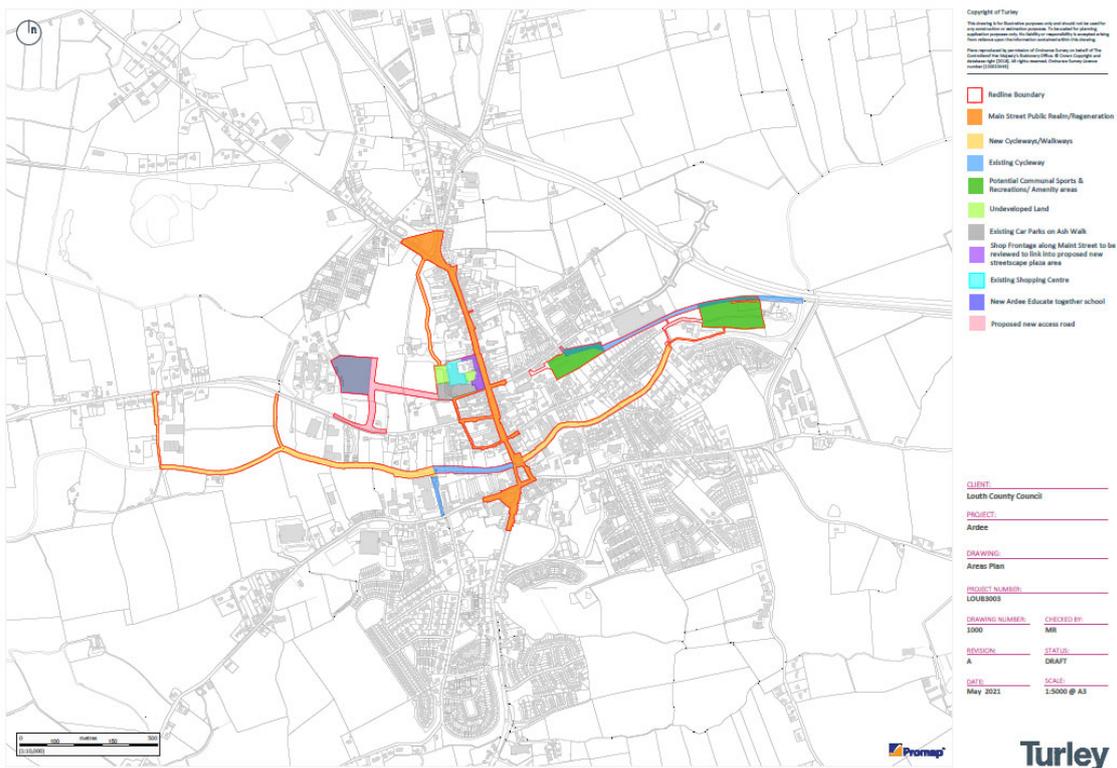
If you wish to make comments on the consultation you may do so using the above online survey, via the project email address or Freephone consultation hotline and/or in writing to: Turley, 4 Pembroke Street Upper, Dublin D02 VN24 by no later than Monday, 5th July, 2021. This stage of the regeneration of Ardee has been funded under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.

ENDS

For more information please contact Louth County Council press office DETAILS REQUIRED

Notes to editors

Study Area Map: Main Street; Ash Walk; The Old Railway; and amenity lands to the east of the Town.



Louth County Council Stakeholder and Community Consultation

HELP SHAPE THE REGENERATION OF ARDEE

Louth County Council is inviting stakeholders and members of the community to take part in an early consultation to explore opportunities for enhancement in the town of Ardee.

The Council have exciting plans to develop design proposals for four key opportunity areas that will lead to Ardee becoming established as an attractive and vibrant settlement town.

The proposed project will focus in improving the street scape, outdoor space and public facilities in Ash Walk and Main Street, improving walkways and cycleways for better and safer active travel around the town and developing new and accessible sports and recreational facilities on lands at Markethouse Lane.

Survey: An online survey is available and we would like you to take part so that your ideas and comments will inform and shape the design proposals, ensuring the plans reflect what the community want to see in Ardee. Please note the survey will close on Monday 5th July, 2021

Further information relating to the Ardee regeneration and consultation is available on our dedicated website www.ardee2040.ie, by calling 1800-010101 or by emailing contact@ardee2040.ie.

If you wish to make comments on the consultation you may do so using the above online survey, via the project email address or Freephone consultation hotline and/or in writing to: Turley, 4 Pembroke Street Upper, Dublin D02 VN24 no later than Monday 5th July, 2021.

Appendix 6: Meeting Notes

Interests: Owns some property in the town

Notes

- Noted traffic congestion on Main Street as a big problem
- Lack of connection to the river walk
- Lack of measures along the river walk to prevent anti social behaviour
- References large number of sporting clubs in the area and feels a Multi Use Games Area for the more niche sports such as track running, basketball, hockey etc. would be an excellent facility
- Sees potential to draw back people to live in the town but need to provide an attractive offering, a town that has a buzz and atmosphere
- Suggested designated cycling lanes with proper segregation to allow children and families to cycle to school safely therefore reducing local traffic, would ease pressure until the delivery of the by-pass
- Felt Ardee Castle is severely under utilized

Interests: Owns a property in the north of the town, interested in biodiversity and creating good walk spaces

Notes

- She lives in a property on the north side of the town close to St Josephs and the planned 50 bed older persons residence.
- Work has already started on the planned older persons community with the construction of an ambulance bay.
- There is a small wooded area between there and the avenue and Noelle has been in discussions with the HSE about developing some of her land as an open space for the older residents likely to live in the community once construction is complete
- She noted some trees were felled to facilitate the HSE works and has requested that as few trees as possible are felled as part of our project
- At the same location there is good potential for a park
- She is interested in seeing more parks in Ardee overall
- She loves the river walk but feels disconnected from it
- She would like to see the project address the accessibility issues in the town
- Suggests we consider creating a wheelchair accessible sensory garden as part of the project
- She is supportive of a dedicated area for bee keeping and noted the plaque in honour of Turlough O'Brien in the town (a beekeeper from Ardee who worked for the Government promoting the importance of bees in horticulture
- She would like to see environmental planting with native plants such as honey suckle, willows, snowdrops.
- She asks the project team to consider including White Elm trees when looking at planting additional trees.

Name: Failte Ireland

Interests: Tourism potential for Ardee

Notes

- Failte Ireland have Destination Communities Plans which explicitly state support for better use of Ardee Castle in particular.
- The Castle is currently awaiting the outcome of to grant application for refurbishment and restoration of the Castle
- He asks that the project team give consideration to the fact that the castle talks to Ardee's built heritage, unlocks our past, shows the connections over the lifetime of the plan from ancient trails, Carlingford connections, connections to other sites of interests.
- Ardee is well placed geographically with fantastic built assets including the castle.
- Story of time with the Boyne Valley, stories relating to the Castle is important for the town as well
- Requested that the survey is reopened for a short period to allow him to make a submission.
- Survey closed once he made a submission

Interests: Beekeeping

Notes

- Councillor from Ardee suggested that he make contact
- [REDACTED] is a member and part of the committee of Louth Beekeepers Association.
- They currently have 230 members from all parts of county Louth.
- Over the past number of years they have been training people in the craft of beekeeping. For example in 2019 they trained 53 new beekeepers, 69 in 2020 and 76 this year.
- They carry out the training in conjunction with Teagasc in Dundalk and Drogheda who kindly let them use their facilities for lectures and examinations.
- They also promote and breed the native Irish black bee, *apis mellifera mellifera* which county Louth is a conservation area.
- They have a temporary apiary in Dundalk which is kindly loaned to us by a local farmer. This gives the group a space to keep bee hives to train the beginners.
- This however is only a temporary situation and the site can be sold at any time or used for other purposes.
- Louth Beekeepers Association are also members of The Federation Of Irish Beekeeping Associations which provides the groups insurance and training/good practice standards for an annual fee.
- They are also registered with the Department of Agriculture and food as honey is a food product and has to be produced to their standard.
- The club are looking for a permanent site so they can have our own premises to train old and young the craft of beekeeping. This would include keeping bees, extracting and jarring honey, making the hives which incorporates woodworking. The club argue that this project could get people from all over County Louth involved in biodiversity, planting for pollinators etc etc.

- As part of the Ardee 2040 development plan the club has identified a site beside Ardee sewerage works which would be ideal for their needs. This site is currently used by the county council for storing rubble and other bits and pieces. The club believes they could have a centre of excellence for beekeepers to come and visit from other parts of the country and beyond.
- [REDACTED] on behalf of the wider club hopes the design team will give this proposal a favourable position in the proposal plans for the future of Ardee.

Turley Planning Ireland
4 Pembroke Street Upper
Dublin
D02 VN24

Tel: 01 517 5856