



Fáilte Ireland
National Tourism Development Authority

Development Guidelines for Tourism Destination Towns





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Introduction



About these Guidelines

National tourism research continually confirms that attractive towns are a key motivator for holidaymakers in choosing Ireland as a holiday destination, as is interesting history/culture and friendly people. Indeed, Ireland has an abundance of all three. However, the challenge is to unlock the economic potential of the visitor for local businesses and communities, and deliver high quality destination town experiences for visitors, that still capture local distinctiveness and support thriving local communities. There is also the associated challenge of ensuring visitors are reassured in advance, at the time of booking, that there will be ample things to do and see, day and night¹.

These guidelines are intended as a practical aid to Local Authorities, Chambers of Commerce, LEADER, Town Teams and other business and community groups who consider their town to either be a tourism destination town ('destination town') or have the potential to develop as one, and should be used as part of a developmental agenda. They will also be useful to smaller towns and villages with the potential to further develop as day trip destinations.

The guidelines draw together the most relevant insights into what visitors want and need, and focus on the tourism elements of destination town development - on the understanding that planning authorities have access to a wide variety of other guidelines in relation to infrastructure, service planning, and public realm. Successful destination towns work collaboratively and strategically in providing the necessary products and services to support the tourism industry. National government policy has also been taken into account in preparing the guidelines - in particular the National Planning Framework and National Development Plan, with the strategic emphasis on supporting rural development and regeneration.

QUICK DEFINITIONS

Visitor

A traveller taking a trip to a destination outside his/her usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose other than to be employed by a resident entity in the place visited.

Tourist

A visitor whose trip includes an overnight stay.

Holidaymaker

A tourist whose main reason for travelling is a holiday.

Business Tourist

A tourist whose main reason for travelling is for business.

VFR

An abbreviation for tourists whose main reason for travelling is 'visiting friends and relations'.

Getting Started

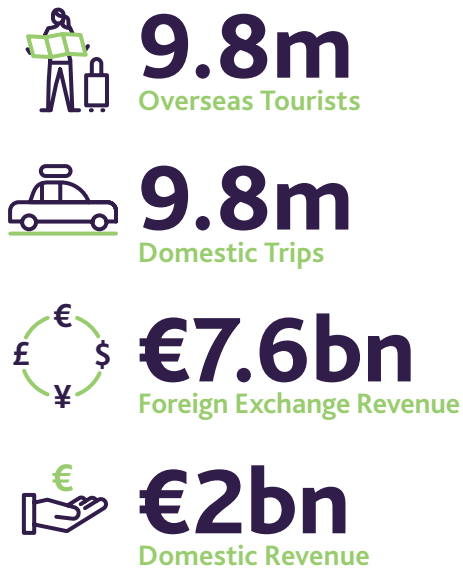
- Review the criteria laid out in the guidelines, using the self-completion basic assessment checklist in the back cover as a starting point to establish what the town's strengths, weaknesses and opportunities are.
- Identify the actions that are required.
- Consider the structures through which elements can be delivered, e.g. town team, Tidy Towns Committee, Chamber of Commerce.
- Work with key stakeholders to integrate priorities into other plans, such as:
 - Local Area Development Plans
 - Urban Design and Public Realm Plans
 - Village Design Statements
 - Tourism/Visitor Experience Development Plans
- Consider the channels through which identified weaknesses and opportunities can be addressed, e.g. through a town's Public Realm Plan for longer term projects, through other specific work such as flood protection or street upgrades for more short term aspects.
- The best approaches are innovative and multi-layered, integrating tourism, urban planning, community development and conservation.

The full implementation process can be found on page 58.

1 For further details, see <http://www.failteireland.ie/International-sales/Managing-sales-channels-for-international-growth.aspx>

The Tourism Opportunity for Towns

Significant economic and social opportunity for towns²



Tourists bring direct expenditure into towns.

Fáilte Ireland estimate average daily expenditure by holidaymakers at €91 in 2017, but other research has also found that daily expenditure can range as high as €200, depending on length of stay, type of accommodation used and purpose of visit. On this basis, it is possible for a destination town to earn up to €1 million from just 5,000 staying holidaymakers.

Tourism expenditure increases incomes and employment, both directly in tourism enterprises and indirectly among many suppliers.

A further multiplier effect is generated by the expenditure of people employed in the tourism industry and in suppliers to the industry, with research by Fáilte Ireland showing that each additional 1,000 overseas tourists supports 20 jobs in the tourism industry.

Increased economic activity leads to increased investment.

The expansion in economic activity creates a platform to support investment in business, public amenities and infrastructure that benefit the residents of destination towns as well as their visitors.

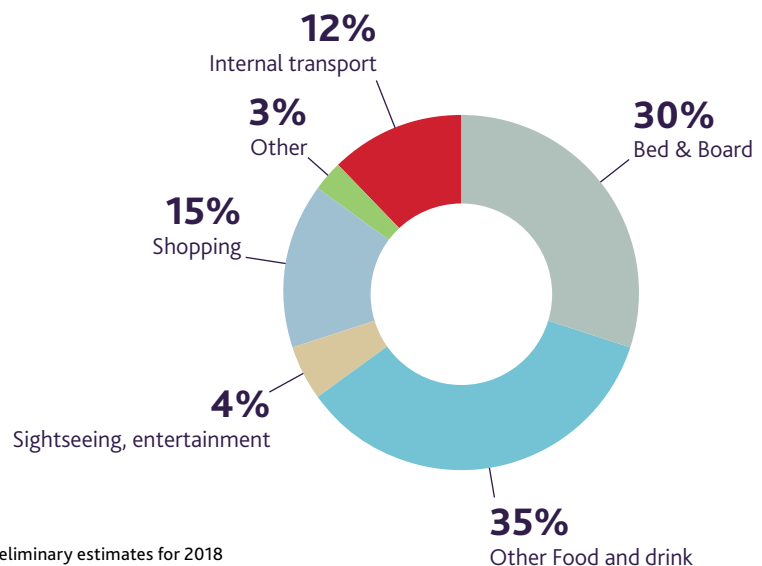
The tourism market provides additional demand for locally grown and created products - a significant audience for local artisans, artists, creatives and other businesses.

Tourism contributes to the creation of more attractive and vibrant towns for the entire community, providing the impetus for towns to preserve/repurpose heritage infrastructure and to invest in refreshing a town's appearance.

As a result, **tourism can also assist in addressing a number of challenges faced by communities and planning authorities**, including the loss of community, declining economies and under-used town fabric.

Destination towns can capture a substantial share of tourists' expenditure through the provision of a range of services. However, two-thirds of expenditure by visitors is on accommodation, food and drink (see Figure 1). These are the areas in which towns can make significant economic gains and emphasises the importance for towns of attracting overnight visitors, rather than daytrippers.

Figure 1: What Tourists spend their money on³



² Source: Fáilte Ireland; data in headlines are Fáilte Ireland preliminary estimates for 2018

³ Source: Fáilte Ireland

What Tourists to Ireland are Looking For⁴

Generally, the factors that make a town a quality place for residents are also what makes it a good place for tourists. These include the following:

Strong character & sense of place	Rich diversity of functions and activities	Adaptable urban structure to accommodate longer term changes	Well-connected network of streets
Priority in town centre for pedestrians	Coherent, legible and attractive streetscapes	Good quality and attractive public realm ⁵	Survival of the main street
Unlocking under-used and vacant sites	Ensuring clean and safe environment	Addressing traffic and congestion	Integration of green spaces & linkages, within and around the town

All of these factors are well-established on the urban and social development agenda for planning authorities, and there are a wealth of guidelines already in place to support their efforts in creating attractive and thriving urban environments.

However, there is a wide variety of research available on what visitors specifically expect and want, what their characteristics are and how they behave.

The majority of overseas visitors consider Ireland for a holiday because of:

- friendly/hospitable people
- plenty of things to see and do
- beautiful scenery
- interesting history/culture: soaking up the atmosphere of an authentic culture is highly attractive
- good range of natural attractions
- attractive cities and towns
- the relaxed pace

Holidaymakers visiting towns also want to:

- explore the coastline by boat
- sit outside a pub/cafe and people watch
- take a tour where a guide tells you the story of the area
- spend an afternoon exploring/ strolling around a picturesque town
- listen to traditional music in a local pub and experience the local entertainment scene
- visit a festival celebrating local culture, food and heritage
- access nature close to urban centres as a means of getting the best of both urban and rural

Relevant long-term consumer trends include:

- increasing use of smart technology
- with ongoing emphasis on online 'shareable' experiences
- increasing reference to crowd-sourced reviews of destinations
- increasing proliferation of accommodation types and platforms
- increasing urbanisation of populations, leading to less familiarity with rural and small-town environments, and expectations of modern comforts
- ongoing need for 'down' time and relaxation
- exponential increase in retail as entertainment
- global village phenomenon - broader range of destination choices within easier reach

⁴ Targeting British Holidaymakers; Targeting French Holidaymakers; Targeting German Holidaymakers; Targeting US Holidaymakers; Visitor Attitudes Survey; Travel Profiles - Britain, Germany, France & USA; all Fáilte Ireland

⁵ Streets, squares, parks, courtyards, alleys, malls, car parks and spaces, public planting, seats, public art, traffic signs, railings, water features, advertising hoardings, etc..



What is a Tourism Destination Town?



A tourism destination town is a town in which a visitor can spend an overnight, and in which a cluster of products, services, activities and experiences are offered. It incorporates various stakeholders and intangible elements, such as its character, image and identity⁶, and can function as a touring base for visitors.

In order for a tourist to consider a town as a destination where they would stay at least one night, it must broadly have:

- at least one attractor/asset that can drive demand
- a variety of things to do and see
- a variety of places to sleep and eat

Destination towns that provide a wide variety of products, services and experiences - as outlined in key criteria of these guidelines - have the opportunity to increase visitor dwell time and expenditure in local businesses and communities.

Differing attractions and activities require varying amounts of a tourist's time and therefore it is more useful to consider the minimum number of attractors a destination town should have from the perspective of time rather than simply volume.

An approximate outline of a twenty-four hour period for a visitor in a town - as illustrated in Figure 2 - provides a framework to consider. A town that hopes to attract staying visitors has to be able to offer them, at the very least, sufficient attractions, activities and entertainment within the town itself to provide ample engagement for more than eleven hours a day, including three hours in the evening.

No tourist will be attracted to a town where there is the possibility they may be bored - which means that year-round destination towns, in particular, need to offer **a selection of accommodation, and sufficient things to do and see for two days**. Ideally, tourists will leave the town feeling there was more they could have done or seen - that they hadn't exhausted the opportunities and are therefore eager to return for more.

In this context, in addition to core services (e.g. accommodation) a destination town needs to be able to serve up a menu of options - some of which will be strong enough to motivate them to visit in the first place and others that will also satisfy their core needs (e.g. for entertainment, spending quality time with friends/loved ones). The exact number and scale of these should be in keeping with the size and characteristics of the town. For example, a large town with a population of over 20,000 has the carrying capacity to cater to larger numbers of visitors and therefore will be expected to have a greater variety of dining, activities and attractions than a smaller town.

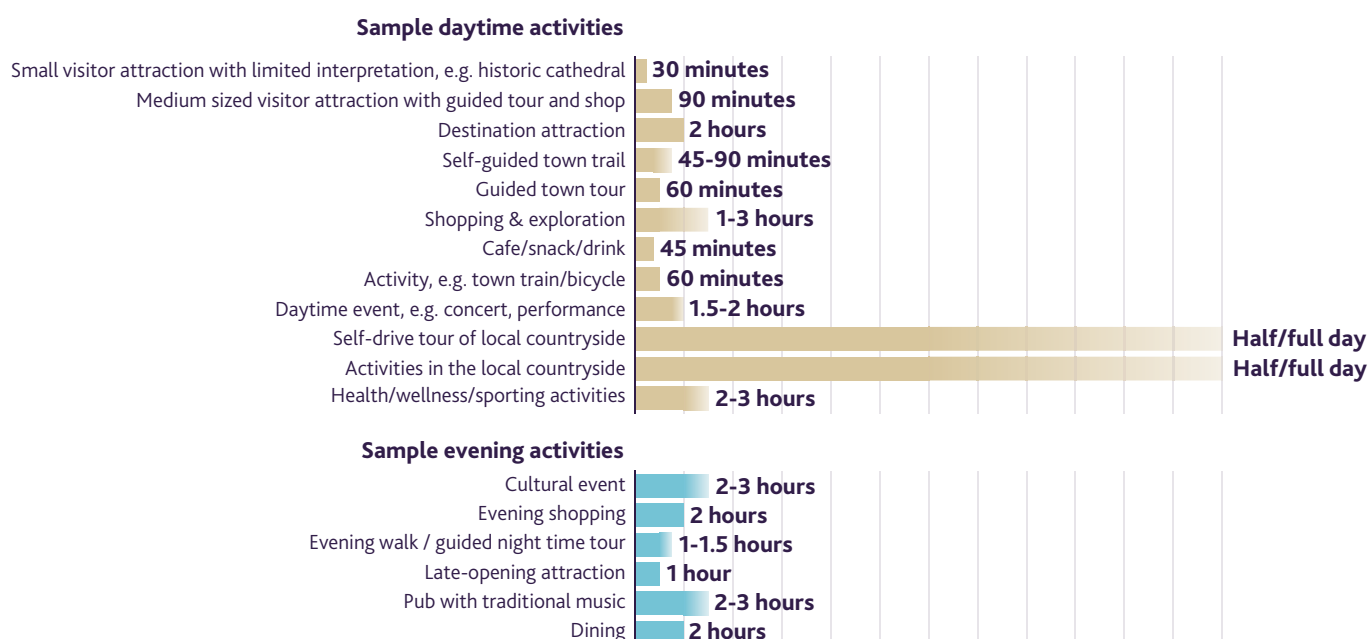
Figure 3 on page 6 provides a sample of how towns can consider tourists' itineraries. If a potential destination town cannot identify at least eleven hours of entertainment per day for a two-day visit (including shopping and dining), it needs to expand its tourism offering.

Figure 2: Sample illustration of 24-hours for a tourist in a destination town



6 Amended from the World Tourism Organisation of a tourism destination as "a physical space with or without administrative and/or analytical boundaries in which a visitor can spend an overnight. It is the cluster (co-location) of products and services, and of activities and experiences along the tourism value chain and a basic unit of analysis of tourism. A destination incorporates various stakeholders and can network to form larger destinations. It is also intangible with its image and identity which may influences its market competitiveness."

Figure 3: Sample menu of activities to create 2 day itineraries



Categories of destination towns

An additional factor to consider is the seasonal nature of tourism. Some smaller towns operate as destinations for tourists only at particular times of the year, with some refocussing on local business such as weddings and corporate in the off-season. In this context, Fáilte Ireland has usefully identified two categories of destination towns.



Year-round destination towns, with a minimum bed stock of 1,000.

These tend to be sufficiently large and varied in terms of industries to operate as destinations all year, e.g. Waterford, Kilkenny, Westport. They offer a wide variety of accommodation, conference, shopping, dining and other activities, and will often be the main transport hub for the region. During the off-season they can perform as supports for the surrounding area, and for smaller seasonal destination towns where capacity is restricted outside the main season.



Seasonal destination towns, with a minimum bed stock of 300.

These offer a full range of smaller-scale facilities during the peak/shoulder seasons when the pattern of demand (e.g. summer holidays) and nature of the primary offering (e.g. seaside, outdoor activity) lend themselves to significant tourism volume, e.g. Schull, Clifden. But these towns scale down during the off-season as demand decreases considerably, with many other providers closing from October/November to March/April, although accommodation may remain open to cater for local business.

Other towns with tourism development agenda.

There are many examples of attractive towns and villages in Ireland that may be of insufficient scale to develop as overnight destinations but which are popular destinations for day trips. These guidelines can also be of benefit to these towns in developing and enhancing their tourism potential.

The specific characteristics of all activities and services necessary for a tourism destination town - including accommodation, orientation, access, dining and others - are the focus of the remainder of these guidelines.

Guidelines



Tourism-Specific Needs

As tourists to a town, and potentially to Ireland, tourists are not necessarily familiar with the systems, locations and social fabric of our towns and communities. In addition, holidaymakers engage with different services and products than local residents may do, and have different patterns of behaviour. As a result, they have specific needs that are over and above those of residents.

By reviewing the wealth of research that exists, it is possible to identify what these 'touch-points' are, as illustrated in Figure 4. These are the specific factors that need to be addressed by towns that intend to deliver as tourism destination towns.

Figure 4: Illustration of key tourism-specific touch-points



Access, Orientation & Signage



Image: Visit Westmeath

What we mean

The process of **arriving in a town** and of **getting around** has to be easy and pleasant for visitors, who are generally unfamiliar with the town and the area. Orientation and managing visitor flow also has the potential to improve visitor satisfaction levels, to bring business to less prominent locations, to increase dwell time and drive visitor spend. Integrating attractive smaller streets, alley ways, lesser-known heritage sites and attractions into orientation plans can encourage visitors to explore away from the main thoroughfare, making unexpected discoveries and enhancing both interest and length of stay in the town.

It is vital to help visitors navigate the town with a wayfinding plan that ensures they can find what they need and are supported in exploring - guiding them in a way that is likely to result in their having the best positive experiences of the town. The town needs to take a broad view of access that stretches as far as the relevant main access points, including road, rail and bus. It is also worth remembering that towns act as gateways to the surrounding areas for visitors and orientation should take account of this.

Wayfinding is more than about signs (see Figure 5).

It is an integrated approach to making the town accessible to visitors through a variety of methods that include signage, public realm, interpretation, use of key buildings, technology, lighting, maps and other mechanisms that can both subtly and more overtly encourage visitor flows in particular directions.

Good wayfinding identifies when, where and how intervention is needed, and how best it can be achieved in order to orient people in a physical space. It also takes into consideration the specific requirements of different user groups, including visitors who have restricted mobility.

Orientation and managing visitor flow also has the potential to improve visitor satisfaction levels.

Figure 5: Illustration of Elements of Niagara Falls' Wayfinding Strategy'⁷



Why it matters

Visitors are unlikely to be familiar with a town or village, and may also have to navigate the additional challenges of using a non-native language or driving a hire car on the opposite side of the road to their usual. As a result, they need to be able to find their way easily into and out of the town centre. Entry and departure routes are also important in contributing to their first impressions of the town. When in the town, visitors enjoy exploring on foot, taking their time to slow down, look around and soak up the atmosphere. This satisfies many needs that visitors carry when coming to Ireland on holiday.

In order to be able to find their way around and to fully explore what a town has to offer, they need practical supports - maps, signage⁸, trails, and other wayfinding tools, as well as streets that are optimised for pedestrians. They also need clarity - only seeing signs that are current and relevant. Too much complexity causes confusion and disorientation.

Critically, from the town's perspective, improving wayfinding has been proven to result in concrete economic benefits to businesses. For example, a £25m investment on wayfinding for London's Trafalgar Square resulted in a 300% increase in visitation⁹.

£25m investment
300% increase in visitation

⁷ Source: <https://www.thelagroup.com/real-impact-wayfinding/>

⁸ Research shows that signposts and maps predominate to direct visitors' way. There is also evidence that signposting is not always what it needs to be for visitors.

⁹ *The Pedestrian Pound*, Just Economics commissioned by Living Street

Checklist

✓	1.1. Establish a wayfinding plan¹⁰. It must be coherent, intuitive and attractive for the town, and include the elements listed below at minimum.
✓	1.2. Consider the needs of key user groups in developing orientation, e.g. less mobile visitors, cyclists.
✓	1.3. Provide a variety of marked trails through the town to facilitate visitors' desire to explore on foot. They must be interesting and safe, and the number of them must be appropriate to the scale of the town. Consider developing a core orientation trail that loops around the town centre, picking up key locations and features of interest while avoiding re-tracing steps. This latter may be sufficient for smaller towns.
✓	1.4. Use public realm design to support orientation and wayfinding. (<i>See also Public Realm</i>).
✓	1.5. Consider the role of key buildings, sites and attractions within the town as cues for wayfinding and/or as 'kick-off' points.
✓	1.6. Consider night time exploration , taking account of the varying characteristics of areas by day and night, and exploring the role of illumination in supporting wayfinding and enhancing the town after dark. Lighting can be used to add character, differentiate different areas and enhance key historic landmarks. ¹¹
✓	1.7. Ensure the town also acts as a gateway to the surrounding area , providing visitors with orientation that supports exploration of the natural landscape, attractions and villages within driving distance of the town.
✓	1.8. Ensure well-maintained, consistent and legible signposting to the town centre from all main entry routes, including junctions at main road networks, railway stations and coach/bus set-down points.
✓	1.9. Ensure a consistent and appropriate approach to signage around the town¹²: not too many or too varied in type, but sufficient to ensure good support for exploration and wayfinding (<i>see also Interpretation, Storytelling & Animation</i>).
✓	1.10. Remove defunct signs and repair/replace essentials ones.
✓	1.11. Prioritise pedestrian or non-motorised traffic in key town centre areas , and reduce traffic congestion, in order to make it easy to move around on foot and to reduce reliance on cars.
✓	1.12. Ensure ample convenient parking - for coaches and cars. It must be well-indicated as suitable for access to the town centre, and with good orientation signage from parking to town centre and to key attractors. Consider the use of shuttle transport during peak season, if there is lack of parking space within walking distance of the town centre.
✓	1.13. Ensure good servicing of access points (clean, tidy, litter bins, toilets, orientation signage)

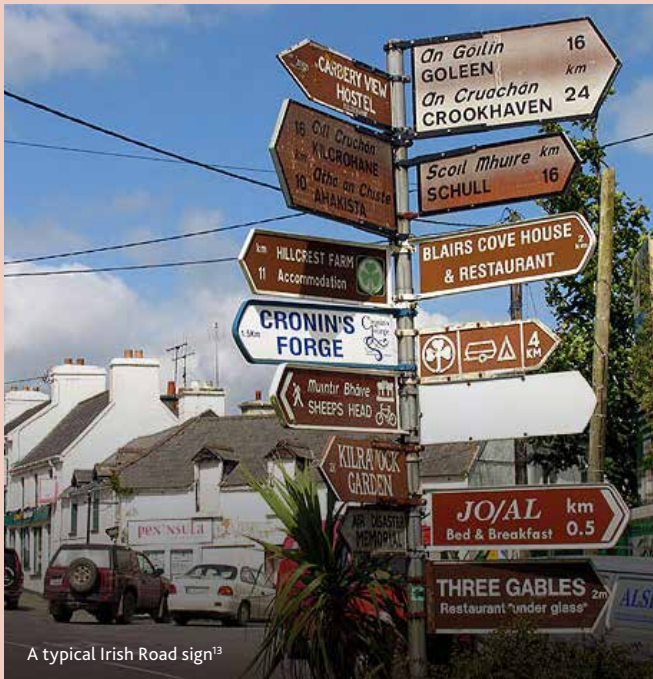
¹⁰ Sample wayfinding strategy for Roscrea: <https://www.tipperarycoco.ie/sites/default/files/Publications/Roscrea%20Signage%20and%20Way-finding%20Strategy%20March%202017%20%282%29.pdf>

¹¹ There is currently an accessible tourism pilot scheme underway in Killarney and best practice guidelines in this regard will be shared when they are available.

¹² For further details, see Guidelines for the Provision of Pedestrian Signage: http://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/2_Develop_Your_Business/1_StartGrow_Your_Business/Historic_Towns_Guidelines-1.pdf?ext=.pdf

Figure 6: Various examples of wayfinding

Cluttered vs clear signage



Effective and innovative signage



13 Source: 'The Problem with Irish Road Signs', Pam Brophy

14 Source: <https://www.dunlaoghaire.ie/about-dun-laoghaire/>

15 Source: A Heritage Led Vision to the Next Decade, The Heritage Council

16 Source: Sasaki design for Baton Rouge Downtown Wayfinding

17 Source: Stratford Original Business Improvement District, UK

18 Source: Creating the Canvas for Public Life in Bath, Lighting Strategy, Bath and North East Somerset Council

19 Source: Sign Directions, UK

Case Study 1: A New Wayfinding System for Bath²⁰

The new information system is designed to help tourists experience the most of the town and uses materials and forms inspired by the town's history



Smaller monoliths provide more detailed mapping showing attractions close by



The system is supplemented by maps; and is integrated with public transport

Opportunity/Challenge

The historic City of Bath attracts 4 million tourists into an area of only 1.6 miles square. Until recently it had given little thought to the visitor experience but it was recognised that this needed to be addressed as a key to the longterm economic sustainability of tourism - the primary industry for the town. In addition, research identified that many of Bath's visitors were leaving with a very limited understanding of the extent of the city.

Approach

A comprehensive public realm and movement strategy was developed which identified key components of place and design, as well as defining the principle of 'Bathness'. It linked back to the origins of the town, integrating what had historically been a pioneering approach to public spaces. Multiple stakeholders were involved, including designers from the fields of urban and landscape design, lighting, theatre and opera, as well as transport and movement professionals. Involving local residents was also a key component. A multi-modal information system was established, using the same suite of products and services from online to street, and integrating pedestrian and transport information.

Outcomes

The programme is part funded by the EC's CIVITAS initiative and is ongoing, but is leading to considerable improvements to visitor experiences in the town. The Council reports good feedback in terms of the visitor experience and a review in 2016 emphasised the ongoing need for on-street orientation in addition to digital information. However, the absence of quick reference signs (e.g. fingerposts) in the new scheme was identified as having a negative impact and is now being addressed.

4 million tourists
1.6 miles square

²⁰ Information from: 'City of Bath Information System', Society for Experiential Graphic Design; Bath & North East Somerset Council; Creating the Canvas for Public Life in Bath, Lighting Strategy, Bath and North East Somerset Council

Attractiveness of Town



Figure 7: A good example in Ireland of well-maintained streetscape, Westport

What we mean

Overseas visitors are accustomed to visiting well-maintained and preserved, attractively presented and historically interesting towns and villages in their own and other countries. They expect to find similar experiences in Ireland - towns that are **distinctive in terms of character, architecture, layout and history** as well as being having vibrant town centres that are litter-free and well-maintained. They hope to enjoy our towns by exploring on foot, absorbing the atmosphere, sitting and watching the world go by, learning about our unique culture and history, and participating in some of what they enjoy doing during leisure time at home - eating good food, sharing good company, shopping and perhaps attending a live performance.

This requires a focus on place-making on the part of the planning authority, community and other stakeholders. Place-making is a multi-party, multifaceted approach to creating quality places to visit and live in, and is recognised as part of government policy.

The primary assets of a town will often be its stock of historic buildings and its sense of place - which can be difficult to

articulate. Character can be found in both tangible and intangible things - the town itself, its architecture, public realm, parks, gardens, stories, historical associations and functions. The Heritage Council is a valuable source of guidance in this regard²¹. It is also carried through the local population, in their engagement with each other and with visitors. Additionally, the surrounding countryside is also an important component in overall attractiveness.

Why it matters

Visiting attractive towns is a key motivator for overseas holidaymakers considering Ireland as a destination. Delivering on visitor expectations, therefore, has the potential to vastly contribute to visitor satisfaction - enhancing positive word-of-mouth promotion as well as the potential for repeat business.

People are also an essential component of a holiday experience in Ireland, are one of the motivating factors for visitors, and a warm welcome is part of what they expect to find. The role of the community^{22, 23} is also widely recognised as important.

21 'Renewing your Historic Town or Village', The Heritage Council

22 For further details, see Connemara Visitor Study 9th May

23 For further details, see FI Community Survey 2015

Figure 8: Street art in Stratford, ON, Canada - Shakespeare quotes that only appear when it rains



Figure 9: The expanse of market square in Bantry provides the perfect location for a thriving weekly market that is particularly popular with tourists



Checklist

✓	2.1. Integrate tourism into existing business agenda in Town Teams, or create new forums for the wider business sector to be involved in delivering for, and benefitting from, tourism ²⁴ . Ensure the focus is on prioritising activities/areas that are most likely to yield greatest tourism benefits.
✓	2.2. Integrate tourism into other existing platforms , e.g. community and arts structures, such as Tidy Towns, programming at the local Arts Centre, local festivals/events committees.
✓	2.3. Identify what makes the town unique and distinctive , and ensure it is protected. Many towns have distinctive historical layouts that contribute to their character.
✓	2.4. Identify opportunities for ongoing improvement to the tourism assets of the town, e.g. historic buildings and streetscapes, festivals, exhibitions, public art, rivers, open spaces, etc., as well as linking to other tourism offerings, e.g. activities, the arts ²⁵ . (See also <i>Public Realm</i>).
✓	2.5. Ensure that the 'softer' elements of the town's tourism assets are made accessible to visitors and that quality is enhanced, e.g. eating, socialising, meeting and engaging with local residents, engaging with traditional culture (such as Irish language and music).
✓	2.6. Integrate natural features that have influenced the town's location, orientation and layout, such as rivers, lakes, hills, valleys. River banks provide pleasant opportunities for town walks and for relaxing. For some markets, such as Germany, interaction with nature is an important driver; for others, especially the British, an urban hub with easy access to the countryside is particularly appealing.

²⁴ Consider the role of tourism in wider town renewal, as illustrated here: <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/AFramework-for-Town-Centre-Renewal.pdf>

²⁵ See the following example of a detailed heritage-led town plan for Youghal: https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/Youghal_A_Heritage_Led_Vision_to_the_Next_Decade.pdf

Case Study 2: Towns in the Lake District National Park, England²⁶

Opportunity/Challenge

The Lake District is a popular destination for tourists with its stunning natural landscape and association with Wordsworth and Beatrix Potter. There is a significant tourism opportunity for towns in the region to maximise their proximity to the National Park but the challenge is how to do so, given the small scale of the towns and the need to preserve their heritage.

Approach

Towns and villages in and around the Lake District emphasise their role as a gateway to the stunning natural environment, with carefully managed parking and transport, supporting visitor information and a range of nature-based activities that are co-ordinated in conjunction with the National Park. The towns understand that visitors, in addition to finding practical supports for their exploration of the landscape, also expect to be able to enjoy the historic ambience and heritage of the towns (e.g. Beatrix Potter and Wordsworth histories), and to access a range of town-based services and experiences. Heritage, in a wide variety of forms, is preserved and reinterpreted for a modern age as part of the overall experience.

Villages in the Lake District
maximise their position and
heritage as gateway points to
the surrounding landscape

Outcomes

Tourism is a significant economic contributor for towns in the area. In 2017, 19.17m visitors spent £1.4bn in the Lake District, and tourism supported the equivalent of 18,565 jobs.



Integration and re-interpretation
of heritage for modern visitors



Towns provide integrated parking and transport options;
and prioritise pedestrian traffic in town centres

Source: Wikimedia Commons



Source: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk>

²⁶ Sources: The Lake District National Park; Cumbria Tourism; Wordsworth Country Tourism; Grasmere Gingerbread

Public Realm



Figure 10: Innovative approach to public realm in Ireland that provides for multiple uses: the Apple Market, Waterford

What we mean

Public realm is all areas of urban fabric that the public has access to. It is generally defined as the publicly owned streets, pavements, rights of way, parks and other publicly accessible open spaces, as well as public and civic buildings and facilities. It also includes street furniture such as public seating, lamp posts, signage, street art, bollards, bus stops, etc. There is already a good level of knowledge and expertise in this area, and the challenge now is to use it in delivering tourism and in meeting the needs of visitors.

However, public realm can also play a significant role in the delivery of tourism, and it is on this aspect that we focus here, rather than on the general elements of public realm.

Why it matters

Public realm supports public interaction, contributes to 'place making'²⁷ and can transform towns into high-quality places to live, visit and invest - encouraging day and evening economies. It has socio-economic, environmental and cultural benefits²⁸, including:

- Increased pedestrian flow - enhancing the vitality and vibrancy of the town
- Increased dwell time by visitors - leading to increased spend in local businesses
- Increased rents and property values - leading to enhanced viability
- Increased street activity, through retail, cafés, on-street performance - making the town more attractive for visitors
- Reduction in accidents and crime, due to the increase of people on the street
- Decreased noise/pollution, due to better traffic management

²⁷ For further details, see <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>

²⁸ For further details, see *National Public Realm Factsheet No.4*, The Heritage Council 2008

From a tourism perspective, in addition to contributing to the attractiveness of a town, public realm can also influence visitor flow and the interaction of visitors with the local community. Tourists have a different pattern of engagement with a town than residents do, and, as discussed previously, they have different needs that need to be accommodated when developing public realm.

Public realm improvements can boost business sales from both visitors and residents alike. Research in the UK illustrates potential impacts²⁹:

- Improvements to public spaces can boost footfall and trading by 40%
- Investing in better streets and spaces for walking can increase retail sales by 30%

The following provides some examples of how tourism can be integrated into a variety of elements of the public realm. The list is far from exhaustive, however, as new opportunities are continually presenting themselves. (See also Figures 6, 7, 8, 9 & 17).

Public Realm Element	Sample Tourism Opportunities
Streets	<p>Wide pavements in key areas encourage visitors to slow down for sightseeing and window-shopping.</p> <p>Streets need to offer clear connection to key attractions and between key areas.</p> <p>Street frontages of relevant businesses can provide views of interiors to encourage visitor use.</p>
Historic lanes and sidestreets	<p>If developed with an eye to interpretation, design and lighting, lanes can help to tell a town's story, link popular and less-visited areas of a town, and add colour to a visit.</p>
Plazas, open spaces, green spaces and rivers/lakes	<p>Open spaces can be developed with sufficient flexibility to cater for markets, open-air performances, pop-up shops and exhibitions, and other events.</p> <p>Green areas and rivers can be used for outdoor activities.</p> <p>Open spaces can provide opportunities for visitors to rest while sightseeing and to soak up the town's atmosphere.</p> <p>They can act as orientation points.</p>
Pavements	<p>Different paving/kerbs can be used to differentiate zones/'quarters' within a town, e.g. historic quarter.</p> <p>Way finding can be added to / integrated into pavements to subtly direct visitors without adding to existing signage clutter.</p> <p>Pavements can provide space for temporary cafe seating during busy tourism seasons.</p>
Seating, bollards, other street furniture	<p>A town's unique culture/history can be integrated into the approach taken to all street furniture, strengthening its sense of place.</p> <p>Street furniture can be used as part of overall way finding scheme.</p> <p>Public art can be integrated with functional street furniture to add to overall attractiveness of town and provide photo opportunities.</p> <p>It can also be used to differentiate various zones in a town.</p> <p>Where budget permits in larger towns, automatic monitoring of visitor flows can also be built into street furniture in key areas.</p>
Public transport stops/stations	<p>They can enhance the sense of place by attention to design and materials.</p> <p>They can incorporate orientation information.</p>

²⁹ *The Pedestrian Pound*, Just Economics commissioned by Living Street

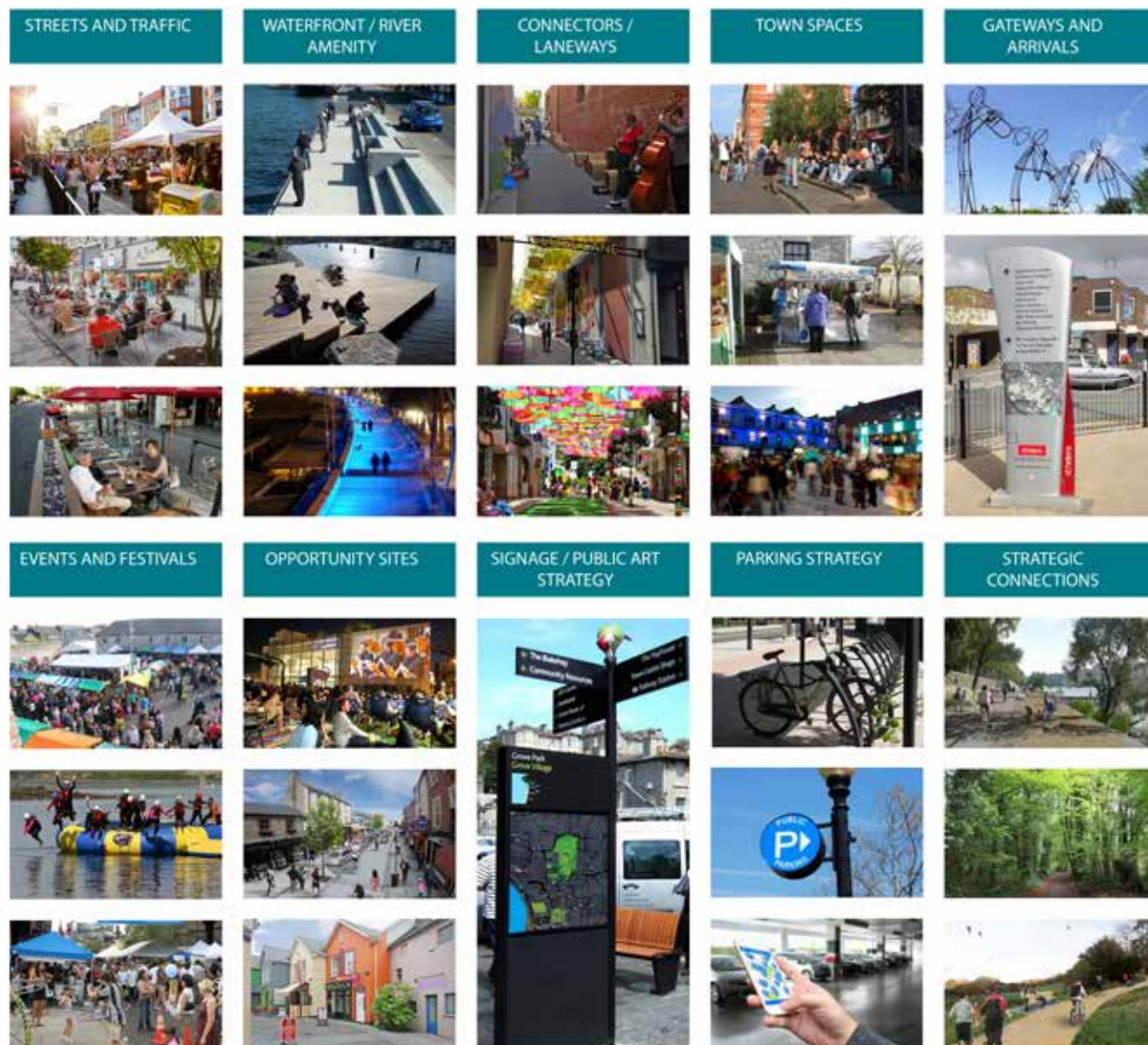
Public Realm Element	Sample Tourism Opportunities
Civic & historic buildings	Consider their position in the wider town environment for tourists unfamiliar with the town, e.g. replacing walls with railings to open up lines of sight for tourists, integration with way finding and streets, modifying where possible to allow multiple uses including evening.
Historic fabric of the town	This includes old buildings, surviving examples of traditional paving and building materials and techniques, traditional town layouts, etc. Highlighting these contributes significantly to the attractiveness and unique qualities of a town from a visitor's perspective.
Lighting	<p>Appropriate lighting enhances sense of place and ambience.</p> <p>It can be used to support wayfinding and to encourage evening exploration, reassuring visitors with regard to orientation and safety.</p> <p>It can be used to highlight key historic buildings, attractive structures and natural features in a town, reinforcing the two points above.</p> <p>Seasonal lighting can create a festive atmosphere for visitors.</p> <p><i>(See Things to Do in the Evening for further discussion and examples).</i></p>

Checklist

✓	3.1. Review elements of public realm and identify their tourism opportunities.
✓	3.2. Integrate tourism requirements and opportunities into Public Realm Plan , if such exists, or into other town plans.
✓	3.3. Review more immediate opportunities within public realm development work to integrate tourism opportunities, e.g. considering what can be done as part of flood protection work.
✓	3.4. Protect and enhance the built heritage and character of the streetscape, including shop fronts and street-facing windows.
✓	3.5. Strip back street clutter e.g. unnecessary signage, overhead wires, to reveal a town's character and to provide more open spaces.
✓	3.6. Maximise the use of public spaces for activities such as markets, open-air performances and pop-up retail/dining.
✓	3.7. Explore the opportunity for public art , which, in addition to enhancing the character of a town, now plays an enhanced role with the popularity of sharing photos on social media.
✓	3.8. Consider the provision of free Wi-Fi in the town, to enhance the visitor experience and as a mechanism for capturing data.

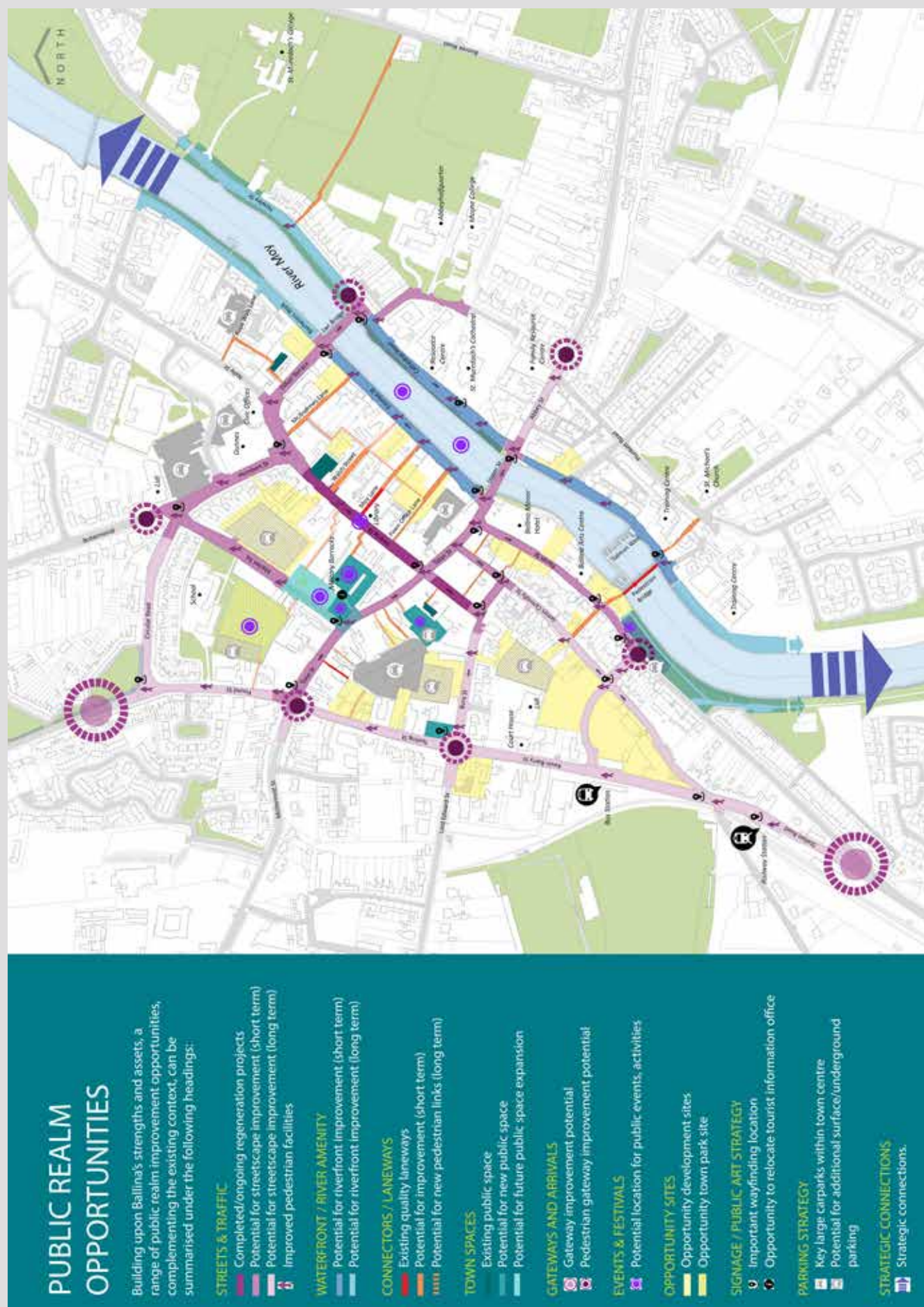
Many local authorities are now in the process of developing collaborative and integrative public realm plans and the following images (Figures 11 & 12) are extracted from the public consultation process associated with the development of Ballina's Public Realm Plan.

Figure 11: Good practice examples from Ballina's draft Public Realm Plan³⁰, integrating tourism needs



³⁰ Ballina Draft Public Realm Plan: <https://www.ballina.ie/ballina-public-realm-plan/>

Figure 12: Elements of Ballina's draft Public Realm Plan, integrating tourism needs



Case Study 3

Place de la Fontaine Chaude, Dax, France³¹



Opportunity/Challenge

Dax is an historic Roman spa town in the southwest of France. It is the biggest spa town in France and is an important regional tourism centre. The Place de La Fontaine Chaude was originally built in 1814 and is the heart of the resort, with some 60,000 hydrotherapy consumers visiting local thermal spas each year. In 2010, the local district decided to transform this public area in order to increase tourism and improve quality of life for residents.

Approach

Key elements of the project to revitalise the town included the following:

- Recovering and highlighting the position of the historic fountain in the centre of the plaza.
- Creating a more integrated approach to pavements and streets by putting them all on an even level.
- Creating a space where festivals and events could be hosted.
- Introducing a new lighting design that also integrates art and highlights the historic public realm.
- Creating a new open space under the shade of trees to encourage visitors to rest



³¹ Source: Land8 Landscape Architects Network



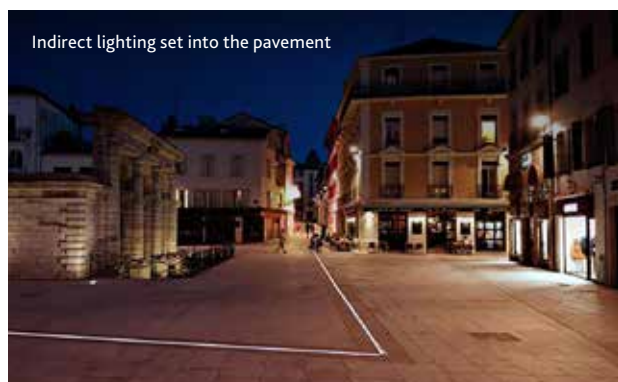
Place de la Fontaine Chaude, before (opposite page) and after (this page)

Outcomes

- Slowing of road users by creation of a shared surface.
- More open-air events, taking advantage of new open space.
- Highlighting historic features contributes to sense of place.
- Enhanced attractiveness.



The open spaces and highlighting of historic public realm provides an attractive setting for pavement cafés and relaxation



Indirect lighting set into the pavement



Seating

4

KEY CRITERIA

Interpretation, Storytelling & Animation



What we mean

Ensuring that a town tells its stories in an interesting and compelling way, feeding visitors' interest with stories that fire their imagination. The town, its history, culture and stories can be brought to life in an ever-increasing variety of ways for visitors, ranging from basic interpretative panels, guided tours and on-street entertainment right through to high-tech virtual reality experiences that peel back layers of history to reveal the town as it was before the modern age.

Why it matters

The more that people and their stories are built into the experience of a destination town, the higher visitor satisfaction levels will be - which is where interpretation, or 'how we tell our stories', begins. Bringing the past and present to life so that it resonates with visitors, and gets them thinking, talking and engaging, is the role of interpretation. Well-planned, clearly thought out and engagingly delivered interpretation makes the experience of the town richer and more relevant.

Checklist



4.1. Identify the core stories the town wants to tell, with the support of an external expert. A few thoughtfully selected themes are more appealing than offering a larger number, many of which may not be of any relevance to a non-Irish visitor. Consider the frame of reference that visitors will be viewing the town through in deciding which stories are likely to be of most interest.



4.2. Select an appropriate variety of interpretation media through which to tell the stories³². Interpretation can include locals, human guides, print pieces (leaflets, maps), information panels and plaques, audio, multi-media and others - and should fit with the character and scale of the town. All interpretation should be accessible for visitors.



4.3. Ensure that there are human guides in place at relevant locations and attractions, regardless of what static and technological media are used. An analysis of reviews for attractions and activity businesses consistently shows that human guides contribute to high levels of visitor, particularly in their humour, warmth and knowledge.

³² For further details, see Heritage Interpretation guidelines: http://www.failteireland.ie/Failteireland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/2_Develop_Your_Business/3_Marketing_Toolkit/5_Cultural_Tourism/Heritage_Interpretation_Manual.pdf

Things to Do and See in the Daytime



What we mean

From a tourism perspective, the daytime economy of a town consists of all the elements that a visitor spends time and money on during the day. Primarily it consists of:

- Attractions and attractors
- Activities
- Retail
- Dining

The first two we will consider here, while dining and shopping will be considered separately.

Destination attractors, in particular, play an important role.

These are any kind of experience that a visitor will travel a greater distance specifically to visit, and which will provide several hours' entertainment. In the context of destination towns, these are primarily major attractions (both built and natural), such as Kilkenny Castle or the Rock of Cashel, that are in, or within easy driving distance of the town.

There are also a variety of other types of attractions that can be considered 'destinations', including major retail outlets (e.g. Kildare Village), attractor dining experiences/chefs (e.g. Ballymaloe House and Cookery School, McNeen's Restaurant and Cookery School), unique activities and accommodation. Seasonal or one-off events can also act as temporary destination attractors; these

include festivals, concerts, hosting major cultural exhibitions and seasonal markets.

In some cases, the town itself is already established as the main attraction, as is the case where towns have a reputation for their attractiveness that is beyond the appeal of any one location, attraction or activity within the town (see *Attractiveness of Town* on page 14). National research identifies several that are already spontaneously mentioned by visitors in surveys, such as Clonakilty, Doolin, Sligo, Wexford and Donegal, among others.

In addition to destination attractors that can put a town on the map for tourists, as mentioned earlier, **a destination town needs to be able to offer a broad mixture of attractions and activities**. These can include heritage buildings, visitor attractions, cultural attractions and performances, guided and self-guided themed tours, activities in and near the town (greenways, blueways, hiking, cycling, golf, riding), non-restaurant food-related activities (trails, markets, cookery schools), art/craft experiences, wellness experiences and events.

Why it matters

Things to do and see during the day provide the vehicles through which visitors fulfil the needs and expectations they held when they made the decision to visit the town. They are the opportunities to create memorable experiences, share enjoyment

with loved ones, learn about and explore new areas and spend time engaging in subjects that interest them, and more.

From the perspective of the town, attractions and activities provide an opportunity to attract tourism expenditure directly into the local economy - through admission/participation charges, donations and associated retail.

Destination attractors offer the added advantage that they can raise consumer awareness of the town they are located within or near, and give them a reason to visit. This is especially true for the American market, which is attracted by iconic world-class historic attractions, although less true for other markets that are more motivated by the opportunity to soak up the atmosphere than by specific attractions.

The American market is attracted by iconic world-class historic attractions.

Checklist

✓	<p>5.1. Review the range of attractions and activities in the town to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1.1. sufficient number and variety to keep tourists entertained for, at minimum, two days; 5.1.2. content is relevant to target tourist segments; 5.1.3. quality in delivery, interpretation and signage; 5.1.4. opening hours are long enough to meet visitor needs - open seven days a week, with some evening opening, during peak season.
✓	<p>5.2. Identify the key attractor/s for the town (which may be the town itself - see <i>Attractiveness of Town</i>). This is sometimes obvious, but visitor research will confirm if they are, indeed, acting as motivating influences for visitors (see <i>Research</i>).</p>
✓	<p>5.3. If the key attractor is in the town itself, ensure it is well-integrated into the broader town experience through marketing, orientation, trails, cross-promotion and other linkages.</p>
✓	<p>5.4. If the key attractor is outside the town, create connections to make it enticing for visitors to consider staying. Again, marketing, orientation and cross-promotion are valuable tools, but consideration may also need to be given to local transport links.</p>
✓	<p>5.5. If the town is lacking a major attractor, review the opportunities that exist to build on an existing asset or to generate momentum around a collection of assets through themed clustering.</p>

Case Study 4: Altena, Germany³³

Opportunity/Challenge

Altena has a population of approximately 18,000. After the closure of local industries, Altena's population declined by 43% between 1975 and 2014, and although 100,000 visitors were going to the nearby castle every year, barely one tenth visited the town.

Approach

With a shift in strategic focus and a broad collaborative approach, a new framework was developed for the town that identified a range of solutions, including:

- using an elevator to connect the town with a major visitor attraction on the mountain above the town - Burg Altena
- facilitating 'pop up' shops in the town
- refurbishing the river front area
- strengthening voluntary agencies

The 'Adventure Lift' is an attractive visitor experience in its own right and includes an adventure tunnel where visitors meet knights, dwarves and craftsmen. It also encourages visitors to park in the town itself rather than bypass the town, and it improves the visitor experience on Castle Hill by reducing car traffic.

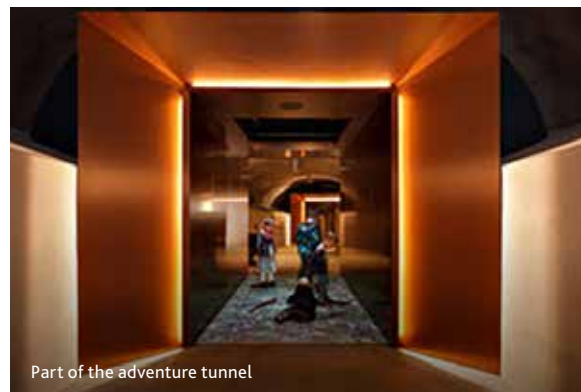
Outcomes

The town has reversed its decline, integrating refugees and the local community in a pro-active manner. Although tourism statistics are not readily available, the medieval market alone now attracts 25,000 visitors.

³³ Information from: www.visitaltena.de ; https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/carnegie_uk_trust/2016/11/Turnaround-T31owns-Case-Study-8-Altena-Germany-and-Pori-Finland.pdf;



Wire trees at night celebrating Altena's wire-making heritage



Part of the adventure tunnel



The entrance to the 'adventure lift'



Altena



6

KEY CRITERIA

Things to Do and See in the Evening



What we mean

While food and drink are an essential component of the evening economy - and are discussed separately in these guidelines - ensuring that visitors have enough attractive options before and after dinner is essential. The 'in between' period of 5.00pm-8.00pm is a time when visitors may lack things to do - with many shops and attractions closing but it being too early for many visitors to consider dining. After dinner, visitors also need a variety of engaging activities. Relevant options to consider include later-opening of key attractions and retail, arts and cultural performances/exhibitions, evening tours and activities.

More generally, as mentioned earlier, what makes an attractive town for residents also creates an attractive destination for visitors. In this regard, the Purple Flag³⁴ award identifies five core standards that support the establishment of a successful evening economy:

1. An after-hours public policy.
2. Safety and welcome.
3. Movement.
4. Appeal.
5. Sense of place.

Why it matters

As mentioned, visitors' have a different pattern of engagement than local residents do - especially earlier in the week. They hope to enjoy their time to the full by participating in leisure activities that extend beyond the daytime, and having nothing to do once the attractions and shops close can leave them unsatisfied by their experience in the town.

In addition, offering a range of evening activities increases a town's ability to maximise the economic benefits of tourism. For example, an 'Alive after Five' programme in Newcastle, England, that was intended to boost evening activity in the city centre was found to have provided a £839m boost to the city's economy between 2010 and 2017³⁵.

An 'Alive after Five' programme in Newcastle boosted the city's economy by £839m over seven years.

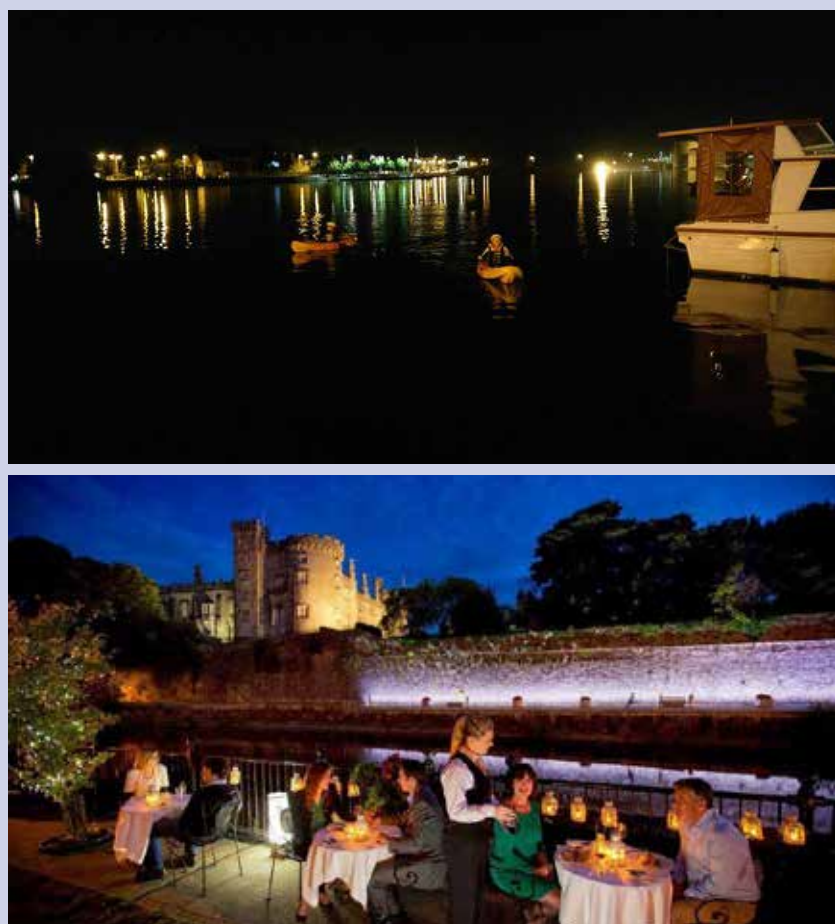
³⁴ <https://www.atcm.org/purple-flag>

³⁵ <https://www.newcastle1ltd.com/about-us/key-facts>

Checklist

✓	<p>6.1. Review the range of evening attractions and activities in the town to ensure:</p> <p>6.1.1. sufficient number and variety of non-pub options to keep tourists entertained for, at minimum, two evenings;</p> <p>6.1.2. content is relevant to target tourist segments;</p> <p>6.1.3. quality in delivery, interpretation and signage, appropriate to after-dark engagement;</p>
✓	<p>6.2. Ensure opening hours of visitor attractions, retail and restaurants are long enough to meet visitor needs, i.e. open seven days during peak season with evening opening, and taking account of European visitors preferring to dine later.</p>
✓	<p>6.3. If there are insufficient things to do in the evening, review visitor' needs and expectations and encourage businesses in key locations/during peak season to extend opening hours and consider adapting existing sites, venues and public realm to provide evening experiences.</p>
✓	<p>6.4. Consider participating in the Purple Flag award³⁶, which sets standards of excellence in the management of the evening and night time economy.</p>
✓	<p>6.5. Ensure an appropriate lighting strategy for the town³⁷, that takes into account orientation and interpretation requirements, the nature of what is being illuminated, the character of the town and environmental factors.</p>

Figure 13: Evening activities in Irish towns - evening dining³⁸ and evening kayaking³⁹



36 Source: <https://www.atcm.org/purple-flag>

37 For example, Creating the Canvas for Public Life in Bath, Lighting Strategy, Bath and North East Somerset Council

38 Source: <https://www.classicirelandguidedtours.com/private-tours-ireland-south/>

39 Source: <https://www.nevsailwatersports.ie/night-kayak-tours-limerick-city>

Figure 14: In Ireland and internationally, illuminated heritage attractions support orientation and enhance attractiveness after dark



Kilkenny Castle



St Malo, France⁴⁰



Appropriate lighting of heritage town



Edinburgh Street of Light⁴¹



Environmentally-sensitive illumination for waterfront area⁴²



Tall ships in Waterford⁴³

40 Source: Wikimedia Commons

41 The Street of Light is a temporary installation that has been running annually in Edinburgh over Christmas and Hogmanay, <https://www.edinburghguide.com/venue/streetoflight>

42 Source: *Creating the Canvas for Public Life in Bath*, Lighting Strategy, Bath and North East Somerset Council

43 Source: <http://cruisewaterford.com/about.html>



Accommodation



What we mean

Places for visitors to stay that are equipped and tailored for their needs. Specifically, a destination town needs to offer **the types of accommodation that visitors most often use: hotels, rented accommodation, guesthouses and B&Bs⁴⁴**. If there is a strong adventure, youth or other niche market in the area, then hostel, camping and other appropriate accommodation also needs to be available in order to cater to demand.

As previously outlined, it is considered to be an appropriate requirement that a year-round destination town would have a minimum of 1,000 bed spaces across the main three forms of accommodation, and that a seasonal destination town would have 300 bed spaces.

Why it matters

At a very basic level, tourist accommodation provides the means for a town to attract staying visitors, which is the catalyst for increased tourism income, increased commercial opportunities for local businesses and suppliers, more job opportunities and improved atmosphere in the town⁴⁵.

1,000 bed spaces
for a year-round destination town
300 bed spaces
for a seasonal destination town

⁴⁴ *Tourism Facts 2017*, Fáilte Ireland: approximately one in five bednights by overseas tourists is spent in rented accommodation, and a similar proportion in hotels.

⁴⁵ See *Wider Benefits of Tourist Accommodation*, Fáilte Ireland http://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/3_Research_Insights/3_General_SurveysReports/Failte-Ireland-Wider-Benefits-of-Tourist-Accommodation.pdf?ext=.pdf

Checklist

✓	7.1. Review capacity to ensure there is sufficient hotel, rented and guesthouse/B&B accommodation in the town to meet minimum needs, taking into account opening times/seasons and trends in accommodation provision (e.g. Airbnb).
✓	7.2. Ensure the variety of accommodation meets the needs of main visitor segments, e.g. rented accommodation for the family market, hostel accommodation for outdoor active segments.
✓	7.3. Review visitor feedback , through existing tourism websites, own surveys (<i>see Research on page 49</i>) and discussion with tour operators, to assess satisfaction levels with quality and quantity of accommodation.
✓	7.4. Consider options to expand capacity as required - whether seasonally or year-round. Options to consider include working with existing operators to extend their season and/or their capacity, or working with private partners to encourage new developments.
✓	7.5. Work with main accommodation providers to review sales strategies in order to maximise capacity and to encourage a collaborative, destination approach



Food & Drink



What we mean

Good quality food and drink experiences featuring Irish produce, including cafés, casual restaurants, formal restaurants, pubs, as well as mobile artisan food units, farmers' markets, craft breweries/distilleries, and other food/drink tours and experiences. While a visitor may return to a café or restaurant for a second meal during their visit to a town, it is important that they know there are a variety of options for day, evening and casual dining and for differing dietary needs/tastes - all of which are of good quality and featuring local or Irish produce. In addition, other food and drink related experiences provide engaging and attractive things to do during the day and evening.

As has also been mentioned under *Key Attractors*, the presence of a destination dining experience e.g. festivals focussed on food and drink, trails, visitor attractions, Michelin stars, and other highly-rated food providers, can act as a motivator for visitors in considering the town in the first place.

Why it matters

Most visitors, especially the key overseas tourism segments, have a particular interest in food and it forms an important part of their holiday experience, as detailed in Fáilte Ireland's Food Strategy⁴⁶. Visitors in a town are dependent on the town to offer them main meals as well as snacks - and these are opportunities for the town to enhance satisfaction levels through high-quality local produce, food and drink experiences, and menus that meet their needs for positive shared experiences and value for money.

Food/drink is also the largest area of expenditure by visitors and is therefore an important component of the economic benefit to a town from tourism.

Visitors in a town are dependent on the town to offer them main meals as well as snacks.

⁴⁶ <http://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/Publications/FI-Food-Strategy-Document.pdf>

Checklist

✓	8.1. Ensure at least three good-quality day time cafés and three evening restaurants are available, and review their quality and ability to cater for different budgets and various dietary requirements (e.g. gluten-free, vegetarian, vegan).
✓	8.2. Ensure at least one non-hotel dining option that can cater for groups in excess of 30.
✓	8.3. Review pub offerings to ensure availability of good-quality pub food experiences and cross-sectoral partnerships - e.g. food and drink pairings, local craft tastings, traditional music.
✓	8.4. Encourage all food service outlets (including attractions and activities) to review opportunities to expand their menus to highlight local food/drink produce, local food traditions, and to integrate local distinctiveness (e.g. locally-caught seafood if a coastal town, signature dishes, dishes themed around the town's distinctive character) ⁴⁷ .
✓	8.5. Encourage visitor attractions to participate in the 'Taste of Place' programme ⁴⁸ .
✓	8.6. Consider incentivising local artisan food producers to offer 'pop-up' or mobile food units to provide on-street casual dining, where/when there is significant visitor traffic.
✓	8.7. Encourage food-related innovations , such as local food hampers for self-service accommodation and picnics.
✓	8.8 Review opportunities to tie into regional and/or national food trails and networks.



⁴⁷ Place on a Plate - Using Local Food to Promote your Business, Fáilte Ireland

⁴⁸ Fáilte Ireland's food innovation programme



Retail



What we mean

Good quality shopping opportunities for visitors, especially in terms of local arts, crafts and foods. These include large destination stores as well as smaller shops, temporary/pop-up retail experiences and markets.

Why it matters

Shopping is now an important leisure activity for consumers and they expect to be able to browse, and shop for, produce that they would not find at home - either for themselves or as gifts. Additionally, showcasing local produce contributes to creating a sense of place. In this regard, pleasant shopping experiences are essential as a component of a town's tourism 'product', especially in the areas of the town where visitors congregate (see also *Attractiveness of Town* for comments regarding store fronts).

From the town's perspective, visitors provide a bigger market for local producers than the local population can provide - increasing the potential for them to make a sustainable living, and further contributing to the local economy. In addition, interesting and attractive shops can encourage visitors to explore less-visited areas of a town.

Checklist

✓	9.1. Review the range of retail opportunities in the town to ensure a wide range of large, small and temporary/seasonal offerings, as well as local craft and food producers.
✓	9.2. Harness the activities of key retailers in the town and local producers in order to enhance the distinctiveness of the town as well as offering the visitor a wider range of things to do and see. Larger and more popular retailers frequently have their own customer base beyond a town.
✓	9.3. Review opening times to ensure they are optimising the presence of tourists in the town, i.e. open seven days a week during peak season with evening opening times.
✓	9.4. Review opportunities for the art/craft sector to tie into regional and/or national trails and networks.
✓	9.5. Review, and encourage, opportunities for distinctive retail offerings and/or products that are unique to the town and area.
✓	9.6. Encourage retailers to maximise tax-free opportunities for non-EU visitors.

Case Study 5: Lisbon, Portugal - Shops with History⁴⁹



Opportunity/Challenge

Trade has played a significant role in the birth and development of Lisbon, as with other large towns and cities, but it has also been gradually losing its distinctive character as the city has modernised. In addition, shopping behaviours have changed, resulting in a decline in demand for more traditional shopping experiences and a move towards homogenised retail.

Approach

Lisbon developed an Historic Shops label, supported by a municipal fund, to give recognition to trade as a distinctive element of the city, to award to shops that have helped shape and preserve the city's history and to contribute to creating a distinctive atmosphere in the city for tourists.

Outcomes

A wide variety of businesses are now included in the scheme, including restaurants and wellness outlets. Participants report increased trade as a result of the extra publicity.

Participants report increased trade as a result of the extra publicity.

⁴⁹ <http://www.lojascomhistoria.pt>



Festivals and Events



What we mean

Festivals and significant events, such as sporting events, the hosting of major cultural exhibitions or performances, concert series, regatta, etc. Festivals are participative events, identifiable by a concentration of activities based around a specific focus or theme.

Why it matters

Festivals and participative events are an important component of the Irish tourism product, providing opportunities to showcase culture, people and places. They greatly improve the visitor experience of the destination town, and have several advantages for a town.

- They animate a destination - creating a focal point for both providers and consumers.
- They create awareness of a destination and/or experience providing a 'gateway' for new visitors.
- They provide added 'things to do' in a town.
- They can bring additional visitors to areas outside of peak season or amplify the experience for visitors during high season.

- They create platforms from which the delivery of outreach, social regeneration, personal and academic development can happen.
- They can benefit the built infrastructure by integrating the use of unusual or untypical spaces (e.g. heritage buildings, churches) as festival venues - which also provides memorable experiences for visitors and raises the profile of spaces themselves.

Festivals and participative events are an important component of the Irish tourism product.

Checklist

✓	10.1. Ensure a programme of accessible and relevant events in the town, including cultural events and events that vary in duration and scale (e.g. local/regional/national) and participative events in the shoulder/off season ⁵⁰ .
✓	10.2. Review existing festivals to ensure they meet the needs of target segments in terms of timing and duration, and also to take account of opportunities to extend the season (e.g. family events during school holidays, cultural events in the shoulder season).
✓	10.3. Review existing festivals to ensure they are well-planned , on a minimum of a three-year basis, and that they are operating in as sustainable a manner as possible.
✓	10.4. Ensure festivals are strongly marketed , especially in the initial years.
✓	10.5. Ensure festivals have an appropriate level of professional staff and are not overly-reliant on volunteers.
✓	10.6. Review existing festival content to ensure it is of sufficiently high quality and relevance for overseas visitors.

Figure 15: placemaking through festivals



The Enniskillen International Beckett Festival brought Culturally Curious visitors to a town typically attracting Great Escapers. Samuel Beckett had attended Royal Portora College in the town during his teenage years.



Carlingford Oyster Festival capitalises on its coastal location and tradition as a destination for top quality oysters, as a platform to programme family friendly events, music and activities based on the water.



Taste of Cavan was established to showcase the county's food producers and culinary credentials. Run over two days in August, the festival now includes a range of family friendly events and entertainment alongside the food fair, demonstrations and tasting opportunities.



The Dalkey Book Festival has carved a significant niche as a place-defining literary festival due to contributions from local literary residents. Economist and author David McWilliams is the festival founder, Maeve Binchy a former resident, and Irish writer Declan Hughes lives in the village.

⁵⁰ Participative events include events such as walking festivals, triathlons and others in which visitors are participants in the core activities.

Sustainability



What we mean

The long-term protection, preservation and balanced development of towns, from a variety of perspectives: social, economic, environmental, cultural and built heritage.

The internationally accepted VICE model provides a framework for the sustainable development of tourism and recognises the inherent inter-connectivity of Visitors, the Industry that provides services, the Community and culture that hosts them, and the Environment in which it all takes place⁵¹. It can be used by towns as a simple check against the future sustainability of any tourism decision.

Tourism has the potential to bring significant benefit to communities and, likewise, communities are a vital component in the development of sustainable destination towns.

Stimulating and supporting community involvement through a partnership approach to destination development is an important element of sustainability. (*See also Leadership & Collaboration*).

The essential character of the town also needs to be protected in the context of development (*see Attractiveness of Town*). There are also other aspects of sustainability that are covered separately under other headings, e.g. integration of the local community and of green infrastructure, reduction of car traffic.

Tourism is a vital component in the development of sustainable destination towns.

⁵¹ Tourism Development & Innovation - A Strategy for Investment 2016-2022, Fáilte Ireland

Why it matters

Tourism has the potential to contribute significantly to the sustainability of towns and their hinterlands, as outlined earlier. However, tourism can also have a detrimental effect when demand outstrips the carrying capacity⁵² of a destination and/or a destination's ability and efforts to sustain itself (see *Other Considerations for Mature Destination Towns*). Without a

fundamental commitment to principles of sustainability, a destination town runs the risk of damaging not only the town and its community, but will also be an unattractive proposition for visitors in the long-run as they encounter the gradual erosion of the very experience they were originally attracted by.

Checklist

✓	11.1. Ensure the local community is integrated into tourism activities within the town, through participation on town teams, volunteer programmes ⁵³ , town awards, etc.
✓	11.2. Actively engage relevant sections of the population (e.g. students, job seekers, retired) in volunteer programmes, e.g. Tourism Ambassadors, seasonal guides at historic sites, litter management in key areas/along walking trails.
✓	11.3. Integrate tourism carrying capacity (TCC) assessment and visitor management strategies into broader town planning, particularly with regard to potential constraints, bottlenecks and impacts ⁵⁴ .
✓	11.4. Identify architectural conservation areas (ACAs⁵⁵), Protected Structures⁵⁶ and/or other unique features/spaces/buildings within the town for particular emphasis in terms of preservation and interpretation (see also <i>Attractiveness of Town</i>).
✓	11.5. Ensure the local population is not adversely affected by tourism, e.g. by too much congestion or noise, and ensure that social benefits are maximised.
✓	11.6. Ensure an active litter management plan is in place.

52 The World Tourism Organisation defines a destination's carrying capacity as: "The maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without causing destruction of the physical, economic, socio-cultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitors' satisfaction"

53 Volunteer Ireland: <https://www.volunteer.ie>

54 "An upper and lower limit of TCC can be of more use...(and a) TCC assessment should provide not only the maximum but also the minimum level of development, that is the lowest level necessary for sustaining local communities." (See Resources)

55 "Under the Planning and Development Act 2000-2010, a planning authority must include an objective in its development plan to preserve the character of a place, area, group of structures or townscape if it is of the opinion that its inclusion is necessary for the preservation of the character of that area." (Cork County Council)

56 Buildings on the Record of Protected Structures list

Case Study 6: Ribe, Denmark^{57,58}

Summer street entertainment



Opportunity/Challenge

The historic town of Ribe has a population of 8,000, and its popularity as a day trip destination, including for cruise tour groups, was resulting in it reaching saturation point without the benefits of overnight tourism. It was also struggling with traffic congestion and finding sustainable uses for run-down areas.

Approach

Initiatives in the last five years have been clearly directed at cultural tourist segments most likely to stay overnight. New visitor attractions and historic quarters have been developed, evening activities introduced and accommodation expanded in the area to encourage staying visitors. The tourist information office is open up to 10:00pm, seven days a week during the summer - functioning as self-service at times.

Parking within the old town is limited to 2 hours, but ample free 48 hour parking is available elsewhere for cars, campers, coaches, etc.

Outcomes

There has been significant investment in the town and in tourism product/experiences, leading to Ribe's growing attractiveness as an overnight destination.

The tourist information office is open up to 10:00pm, seven days a week



Self-service tourist information



Night time tours



Well-preserved traffic free town centre



'Be a Viking' activities for all

⁵⁷ Nominated 'Europe's Best Big-Time Small Destination' 2014, <http://www.cruise fredericia.com/news/2014/ribe>

⁵⁸ Management of Historic Centres, Pickard, R., 2013

12

KEY CRITERIA

Basic Services & Safety



What we mean

There are basic services that visitors will expect to be able to get in a town. Most of these are also required by residents, and include:

- getting fuel for their cars
- buying provisions from a supermarket and chemist
- withdrawing cash from an ATM
- accessing public toilets
- sourcing relevant tourism information
- finding a doctor or dentist
- finding a mechanic

If the town is located in an area that has a reputation for outdoor activities, e.g. walking, fishing, sailing, visitors will also expect to find support services for these activities within the town. Finally, visitors also need to be and feel safe in a town, with attention paid to adequate lighting and minimising anti-social behaviour in the town.

Why it matters

Without basic supports and a sense of safety, visitors are unable to relax and focus on enjoying their holiday. These supports may go unnoticed when they are in place and easy to access, but if a visitor cannot find them when needed, it can seriously interfere with the holiday and leave a bad impression.

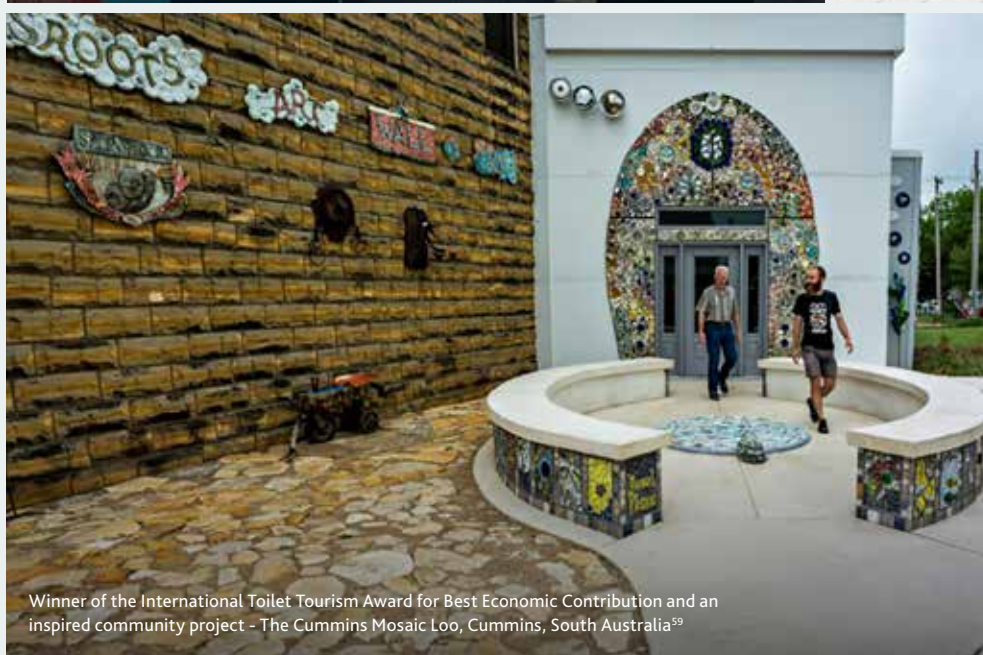
Easy access to basic supports is essential to ensure that visitors can relax and enjoy their holiday.

Checklist

✓	12.1. Review town to ensure all basic services are available and accessible for visitors, including signage for services where needed and taking into account opening hours of services.
✓	12.2. Provision of visitor information in a visible and central location. This can take a number of different formats e.g. a permanent/seasonal/mobile Tourist Information Office, self-service points or other clearly-marked venues that can act as a point of information. e.g. heritage centre, central arts building.
✓	12.3. Consider the role of Street Ambassadors during peak season, to answer questions and direct visitors, and the Local Experts Programme - which is a network of local people coming together to share their local knowledge in order to help visitors make the most of their visit.
✓	12.4. Consider making a simple leaflet on essential services available for visitors to the town - distributed through accommodation providers and tourist information points.
✓	12.5. Ensure those working on the front line of the tourism industry are trained. Good customer service and a knowledgeable tourism industry are vital parts of a quality visitor experience. Visitors expect, and should receive, a welcoming, helpful and informed service during their visit. <i>(See Resource Section for potential sources of tourism training).</i>
✓	12.6. Public toilets are an essential facility for visitors to a town, and must be well-maintained and in keeping with the surrounding area.
✓	12.7. The safety of the visitor throughout their stay should be a priority, and is particularly important at night when visitors are walking around the town.
✓	12.8. Consider applying for a Purple Flag award <i>(see Things to Do and See in the Evening).</i>



Figure 16: Various approaches to visitor servicing in Ireland and internationally



⁵⁹ Source: <https://www.hospitalitynet.org/news/4088845.html>



Awareness-Marketing



What we mean

Communicating with potential and actual consumers in a variety of ways in order to stimulate interest, facilitate enquiries and bookings, and provide practical information before, during and after a visit. Marketing under an over-arching theme, that ties into the broader area around the town and also fits with visitor interests, makes it easier for visitors to grasp the essence of the town and to get a sense of what to expect.

Why it matters

In order for a visitor to consider staying in a town in the first place, they must first be aware of it or of what it has to offer (i.e. a major attractor, see *Things to Do and See in the Daytime* on page 25).

They must also be able to easily find relevant information, to make enquiries and bookings, and it must also offer them what they are most interested in. Getting the marketing message right - including the right online content and visuals - especially through digital channels, has been identified as a key factor in attracting visitors⁶⁰.

Good marketing makes it easier for visitors to grasp the essence of the town and to get a sense of what it has to offer.

60 Targeting British Holidaymakers; Targeting French Holidaymakers; Targeting German Holidaymakers; Targeting US Holidaymakers - 56 e.g. http://www.failteireland.ie/Failteireland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/3_Research_Insights/1_Sectoral_SurveysReports/Targeting-GB-Holidaymakers.pdf?ext=.pdf

Checklist

✓	13.1. Ensure the town is part of a wider strategic marketing plan for the county or broader area.
✓	13.2. Develop strong collaborative networks and a shared vision and plan. Visitors should get the impression that the town is working as a unified destination across all aspects of the community.
✓	13.3. Ensure the town has its own well-managed presence online , with clear ownership, and that it is kept up to date with events, seasonal changes and relevant contact details.
✓	13.4. Know who your visitors are⁶¹, where they come from and why they have visited (<i>see also Research</i>) - and ensure this information is communicated to relevant stakeholders in the town.
✓	13.5. Ensure the principal tourism providers in the town have availed of Fáilte Ireland⁶², Local Enterprise and other support services , such as sales and marketing training, Service Excellence, price and cost management, HR skills and networking opportunities.



61 Fáilte Ireland's most recent tourism insights are available here: <http://www.failteireland.ie/Research-Insights/Tourism-Facts-and-Figures.aspx>

62 http://www.failteireland.ie/Failteireland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/Brexit/Training_Supports/Business%20Supports/Failte-Ireland-Business-Supports-Guide.pdf



Additional Considerations

While the previous criteria are the touch-points with which visitors come into direct contact when staying in a town, from a planning and management perspective there are additional factors that contribute to the success, or otherwise, of destination towns.



14

Leadership & Collaboration

The successful delivery of tourism is multifaceted, requiring the integration of a broad range of interests. In addition, this wide range of stakeholders makes the need for clear and active leadership particularly essential in ensuring that all efforts are pulling in the same direction, with a shared vision and maximising available resources towards the same end.

Checklist



14.1. Review the role of the community in delivering a positive town experience for visitors, creating new collaborations and opportunities if needed, i.e. supporting the establishment of formal volunteer programmes, integrating existing Tidy Towns work.



14.2. Review the integration of other/potential stakeholders in the tourism agenda, including those in the areas of local development, conservation, education and arts.

15

Planning, Investment & Maintenance

Successful tourism delivery requires long-term planning, with clear programmes of investment and maintenance to ensure that core products meet consumer expectations. The product also needs to be regularly refreshed/re-imagined in order to continue to attract and satisfy tourists, and to maintain quality.

Checklist



15.1. Tourism development has to be plan-led, with tourism an aspect of broader planning.



15.2. Review existing core assets in the town in order to establish a priority list of work for medium to long term investment.



15.3. Be alert for opportunities to integrate tourism development into other development work, e.g. flood improvement schemes, laying of new pipes, etc., provide opportunities to re-imagine streetscapes and to provide new tourism-relevant infrastructure if needed.

Figure 17: Award-winning approach in Ireland to good street design: Clonakilty⁶³



Clonakilty, West Cork, won the IDI award for urban design with a design concept based on reducing street clutter and providing wider pedestrian zones, including 'mini squares' at strategic locations. The town also won The Best Town in the UK and Ireland Award in 2017 at the Urbanism Awards.



⁶³ For further details, see <http://www.idiawards.ie/projects/clonakilty-400-urban-design-2/> ; <http://www.clonakilty.ie/news-and-events/clonakilty-named-best-town-in-the-uk-and-ireland-2017/>

Research

What we mean

Tourism research provides the basis for planning, development and marketing - both at the level of the planning authority as well as for individual businesses. At a national level, Fáilte Ireland provides a considerable amount of research that can be drawn on in respect of what visitors want, where they go and what they do.

At a regional level, Fáilte Ireland's accommodation occupancy survey can provide key insights into the accommodation sector when adequate response rates are reached. They also conduct sub-regional consumer research⁶⁴, and it may be worth checking in with your Fáilte Ireland key account contact before embarking on any primary research.

However, national surveys are not always appropriate vehicles for data and insight with respect to individual towns, and therefore a regular tourism survey in destination towns can be a valuable investment. Each piece of research should be tailored to a town's specific requirements.

Quantitative research - either primary or secondary - can provide data for ongoing benchmarking of a destination town's progress against planned objectives and goals, while qualitative research can provide an understanding of a tourist's perspectives of the town.

Checklist



16.1. Quantitative research measures basic tourist characteristics and can provide the following information - essential in assessing economic impact, planning needs and opportunities/gaps for further development:

- How many tourists are coming to the town?
- Where are they coming from?
- When do they visit?
- How long do they stay?
- Where do they stay?
- How much do they spend?

Quantitative data can be provided by both the demand and supply side, e.g. accommodation providers supplying occupancy data.



16.2. Qualitative research provides more insight on why tourists visit, as well as what they want and need with specific respect to the town. For larger towns, in particular, it is helpful in gauging visitor flows, blocks to longer duration visits, and factors that may be discouraging visitors from taking in particular parts of the town or certain attractions. It can answer questions such as the following.

- Why do they visit?
- How did they hear about the town?
- What do they like or not like?
- How do they navigate the town?
- What attractions and activities do they engage with?
- What do they spend money on?



16.3. Ad-hoc research can also be used from time to time for specific purpose, such as testing the potential for a proposed development, understanding in more detail how tourists interact with particular elements of the town, etc.

⁶⁴ For example, the Survey of Holidaymaker Attitudes to Holiday Experiences.



16.4. A 'mystery shop' exercise can also be particularly useful in assessing all aspects of a tourist's experience in the town, from enquiry and pre-booking, through arrival, staying, eating and exploring - including presence and quality of signage, the welcome, and the appearance of the streetscapes.

Apart from professional research companies, third level institutions - particularly those with tourism programmes - can often be a source of advice from academic tourism experts with respect to running tourism surveys in the town. Using an

established tourism company, where it exists, to run ongoing surveys among accommodation providers in the town is another useful means of gathering data.

17

Tourism Skills

Not all who work in the tourism industry, or who interact with tourists, have formal tourism training. In addition, many tourism businesses are small, even family-run, operations that have to cover the wide breadth of operations and management, including:

- financing
- marketing through a variety of communication channels, including trade, co-operative ventures, partnerships, web-based
- human resources
- knowledge of the local area
- customer service
- networking

Checklist



17.1. Ensure all tourism businesses are aware of, and have access to, the range of tourism supports available; and encourage the most significant to attend regular training events and courses (see Resource Section).



17.2. Facilitate cross-sector networking through an annual event and support the establishment of a 'free entry' offer to encourage tourism businesses to become familiar with other products in the town.



Role of Technology & Smart Tourism

Technology plays a significant role for everyone, including consumers and businesses. But it can play specific roles in a destination town, depending on the scale of the town and its resources, as well as the volume of tourists it attracts. Smart tourism is growing as an off-shoot of international (and Irish) smart city programmes, and has been adopted in a variety of European countries, including Spain (see Figure 18 for the definition of a Smart Destination from Spain's 'Smart Destinations Report'). It integrates real-time data capturing and management via leading edge technology, with innovation, governance, and sustainability, creating a platform for integrated destination management.

Figure 18: A Smart Tourism destination⁶⁵

A smart destination is an innovative space, accessible for all, established on a cutting edge technology infrastructure which guarantees sustainable development of the land, facilitates the interaction and integration of the visitor with the surroundings and increases the quality of their experience in the destination, as well as the quality of life of residents.

Checklist



18.1. Review opportunities for greater capturing and use of visitor data, bearing in mind GDPR requirements and restrictions. Some ways in which data can be collected using technology include:

- online bookings;
- log-ins to a town or major visitor attraction Wi-Fi;
- voluntary participation in visitor alert system for the town at the time of arrival.



18.2. Mapping technology (e.g. Google Maps) can be used effectively to help visitors plan town itineraries and to link them to relevant websites for bookings/advance information.



18.3. For larger towns, technology (e.g. virtual reality) can be used to analyse wayfinding and signage systems of infrastructure before they are built.



18.4. Technology can also provide an effective management tool for situations/periods of over demand, using automatic counting sensors connected to online systems in order to alert potential visitors, and/or to send social media 'push' notifications to suggest alternative routes/attractions.



Google Trips



www.dfa.ie/travelwise/



⁶⁵ Smart Destinations Report: building the future, Seggür, Spain.

Innovation

The tourism market is continually developing and evolving, as destinations and businesses compete with each other, and consumer behaviours change. The ability of a destination town to adapt is essential to its long-term sustainability, and encouraging and supporting innovation in experience development and delivery is of considerable importance. By its nature, innovation is new and different - therefore not always fitting neatly into existing classifications or structures. However, there are always a small number of trail-blazing entrepreneurs who forge ahead, creating new opportunities and markets by creating or adapting experiences, and setting examples for further private investment.

Checklist



19.1. Carry out a simple SWOT⁶⁶ exercise on the town comparing the destination with visitor needs; then review opportunities to flex and adapt existing experiences in new ways or to introduce new experiences.



19.2. Establish a small investment fund for new product/experience ideas that clearly meet the needs of target consumers.



19.3. Encourage existing innovators in the town to share some of their experience with other tourism businesses in the town, via short workshops or networking events.



19.4. Annually review international comparators and major tourism trends to remain aware of new developments in the marketplace.



⁶⁶ Assessing internal factors: Strengths and Weaknesses, as well as external factors: Opportunities and Threats.

Other Considerations for Mature Destination Towns



- They need to be alert to where they are on the product life cycle and to respond accordingly. In other words, a mature destination town's image and product may benefit from refreshment and reinvestment to avoid, or address, developing a negative reputation as a 'tired' destination.
- Mature destination towns are more likely to be dealing with the negative consequences of popularity, including managing high levels of demand (or even over-capacity) at particular places or times. (*See Resource Listing on page 59*). Common ways to approach issues of high demand include:
 - development of clusters and trails to encourage the spread of tourism beyond popular spots
 - development of new experiences
 - timed and varied ticketing to encourage tourists to visit at less busy times
 - restricting access at particular times or to particular types of traffic (e.g. coaches)
 - using technology to monitor demand levels and feed real-time information to potential visitors
- They may have more need to carry out a Tourism Carrying Capacity Assessment.
- For larger towns, there may be a need for planning zones designating tourism accommodation.

Case Study 7: Stratford-upon-Avon & Shakespeare's England⁶⁷

Opportunity/Challenge

Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire is the world-renowned Shakespearean centre - Shakespeare's birthplace and home to the newly refurbished Royal Shakespeare Company Theatre. The popularity of the Bard means that the town becomes very crowded during peak season.

Approach

Stratford continually works to create and maintain an attractive town centre. Efforts to address peak season crowding combine a number approaches - including encouraging tourists to explore beyond the key attractions, incentivising them to visit outside the main season, and working collaboratively with other towns in the region. 'Shakespeare's England' is a collaborative venture to spread the benefits of tourism across four towns in the area that share a common theme.

Outcomes

The Destination Management Plan has successfully integrated key partners, businesses and stakeholders across the region to maximise the opportunity presented by over 10 million visitors who visit the region annually. The plan is part of Visit England's approach to delivering a successful visitor economy.

Bridge Street - public realm gateway



67 The four towns involved in Shakespeare's England are: Stratford-upon-Avon, Royal Leamington Spa, Kenilworth and Warwick. See also - Visitor Survey 2015: <https://www.stratford.gov.uk/doc/206624/name/Stratford%20upon%20Avon%20Visitor%20Survey%20Final%20Report%202015.pdf>



Other Considerations for Early Stage Destination Towns



Destination towns that are at an earlier point of maturity have more need for attention to awareness building in order to establish a reputation among consumers. They may also need to be more alert to opportunities for adapting infrastructure for tourism, given that the volume of tourists may not yet be sufficient to warrant large-scale investment.

Early stage destination towns can benefit from:

- reviewing existing heritage and arts assets, and public spaces, with a view to expanding their uses to incorporate tourism-relevant services, e.g. tourist information, afternoon cultural performances, craft and farmers' markets
- strategic approach to converting day trip business to overnights by concerted efforts to expand the town's evening offering
- co-operative programmes with other established destinations that are at capacity at particular times
- a focus on attracting coach tourism business
- a creative approach to internet marketing and publicity

Case Study 8: Alberghi Diffusi - Scattered Accommodation⁶⁸

Opportunity/Challenge

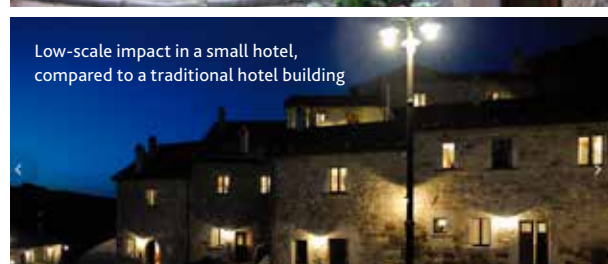
As is the case in many parts of the world, small towns and villages in Italy have struggled to sustain their communities in the face of increasing urbanisation and migration to cities.

Approach

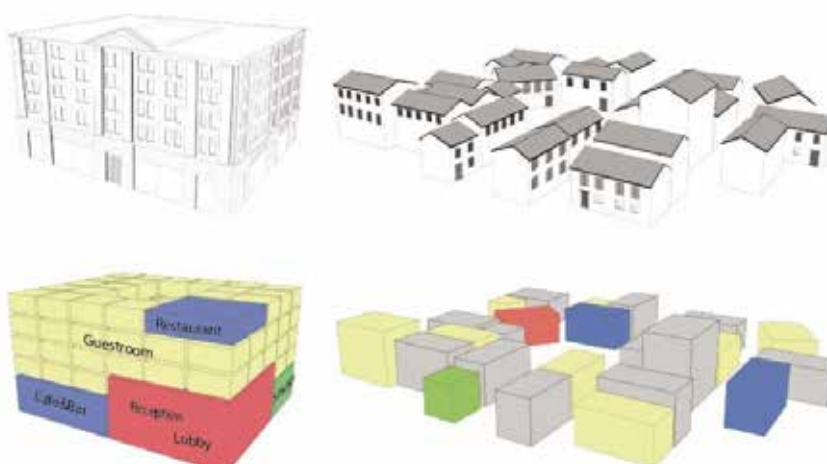
The Scattered Accommodation concept repurposes historic buildings to provide a range of services across a variety of buildings that are within walking distance of each other. It is a creative solution to providing accommodation in smaller towns that are lacking in overnight options for visitors, while also addressing the challenge of what to do with empty buildings. It also facilitates the integration of tourism within the local community.

Outcomes

It has become an important driver for the regeneration of some smaller towns and villages in remote areas of Italy. The National Association facilitates the sharing of learning and of marketing.



The Scattered Accommodation model uses the town to provide the various elements of a hotel.



⁶⁸ The National Association: <http://www.alberghidiffusi.it/?lang=en>

Making it Happen

These guidelines are designed to provide practical insight into what is required for a town to develop and operate as a tourism destination town. While they are designed in such a way as to enable users to use them in full or to dip into specific aspects of particular relevance, there is also a simple sequence of steps that a town can take in order to establish a clear path of action. These steps are circular in nature, as illustrated below, leading eventually back to a fresh review of the town.





The Steps in More Detail

1. Identify key stakeholders to assist with delivery.

There may already be a suitable stakeholder group in place, e.g. Town Team, that can be broadened to include additional stakeholders necessary to addressing the actions that have been identified in the town review. Successful tourism destinations generally have effective supply-side tourism stakeholder groups that identify and prioritise the long term development of the destination (e.g. Destination Kilkenny). These groups work best when they are separate to demand-side groups such as county or town tourism marketing groups.

2. Review and benchmarking.

The criteria can be used at any stage to review the existing tourism development potential of a town to develop/operate as a tourism destination town. Whether the town is a year round destination, a seasonal destination, or a town/village with tourism appeal, the criteria can be used to fine-tune its performance and to identify any weaknesses. Each destination town will have a unique selling point so it's important at this stage to identify a suitable best practice example internationally to benchmark against.

3. Establish where action is required.

The basic checklist provides a starting place from which to review the performance of a town. However, it needs to be used in conjunction with the main document and in collaboration with key stakeholders, mystery shop feedback and benchmarking analysis, in order to develop a more informed and detailed understanding of how and where action is required. A mystery shop should be carried out to provide visitors' perspectives of the town. This will help reveal opportunities to improve the visitor experience and journey, in order to increase visitor numbers and visitor satisfaction.

4. Review opportunities for delivery through existing vehicles.

Integrating required actions into existing local and regional plans is the most efficient way of addressing gaps and

weaknesses, and also ensures the development of a broader understanding of tourism. There are a wide range of potential plans and channels through which a town's tourism agenda can be delivered, including (but not exhaustively):

- County Development and Local Area Plans
- Public Realm Plan
- Existing infrastructural improvement schemes, e.g. flood protection, pipe/cable laying, street improvements
- Tourism plans at regional, county and local levels
- Thematic plans, e.g. Arts & Culture, Heritage

5. Bring together stakeholder group to agree a plan of action, with timeframe and key measurements. A plan to deliver on the necessary actions needs to have a clear framework for delivery that includes where responsibilities lie, what the timeframe will be and how progress will be measured. Plans should be agreed focussing first on the visitor experience, and then on identifying potential funding avenues, both existing and future.

6. Develop communications channel with wider community, including businesses and general public. The successful operation of a tourism destination town depends on the wider business community and on the general public, and ensuring their understanding and having their support are two vital elements to consider.

7. Ensure ongoing monitoring of plan by stakeholder group, adjusting as necessary. Benchmark economic measures should be agreed should as bed nights and visitor numbers at attractions.

8. Use the criteria as a basis for regular reviews of the town. With ongoing changes in consumer expectations and in business delivery, as well as gradual erosion of product, regular reviews of the town are a necessary part of successfully operating a destination town.

Resource Listing



TOURISM FACTS AND FIGURES

Fáilte Ireland. National, regional and sectoral tourism research, updated regularly: <http://www.failteireland.ie/Research-and-Insights.aspx>

ITB World Travel Trends Reports: <https://www.itb-berlin.com/Press/Downloads/Publications/>

OECD Tourism Mega Trends: <http://www.oecd.org/cfe/tourism/oecd-tourism-trends-and-policies-20767773.htm>

HERITAGE & INTERPRETATION GUIDELINES

Fáilte Ireland: http://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/2_Develop_Your_Business/3_Marketing_Toolkit/5_Cultural_Tourism/Heritage_Interpretation_Manual.pdf

ORIENTATION, WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE

London's integrated wayfinding system, Legible London: <http://www.mobilize.org.br/midias/pesquisas/londres-legivel-legible-london-system-architectur.pdf>

The Business Case for Better Streets and Places: The Pedestrian Pound: https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/1391/pedestrianpound_fullreport_web.pdf

Toronto Wayfinding Strategy: Valuing its Benefits: http://www.tcat.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/1430_FionaChapman_JonathanTong.pdf

Association of Town & City Management, UK: <https://www.atcm.org>

PUBLIC REALM

Revitalising Town Centres: A Toolkit for Councils, Local Government Association, UK: <https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/economic-growth/revitalising-town-centres-toolkit-councils>

Placemaking: Value and the Public Realm: <https://www.cbre.com/research-and-reports/Global-Placemaking-Value-and-the-Public-Realm-May-2017>

Paved with Gold: The Real Value of Street Design, Design Council UK: <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/report/paved-gold-real-value-street-design>

Article on the value of public realm: <http://www.880cities.org/doablecity/business-case/>

ACCOMMODATION REPORTS

Wider Benefits of Tourist Accommodation, Fáilte Ireland: http://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/3_Research_Insights/3_General_SurveysReports/Failte-Ireland-Wider-Benefits-of-Tourist-Accommodation.pdf?ext=.pdf

SUSTAINABILITY

A Framework for Town Centre Renewal, Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/A-Framework-for-Town-Centre-Renewal.pdf>

Defining, Measuring and Evaluating Carrying Capacity in European Tourism Destinations, University of the Aegean for the European Commission, 2001: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/iczm/pdf/tcca_material.pdf

Guidelines for the Management and Development of Architectural Conservation Areas, Cork County Council (many other local authorities have similar guidelines): <https://www.corkcoco.ie/sites/default/files/2017-04/Guide%20to%20ACAs.pdf>

While every attempt has been made to ensure information in this document is accurate, Fáilte Ireland is not responsible for any errors or omissions, but where these are pointed out, it will ensure that future editions are rectified.

Additional image credits: Public Sculptures in Easkey Village (p17): Alison Crummy. Couple cycling on Old Rail Trail Greenway (p39): Visit Westmeath

EU Tourism Indicators System for Sustainable Destination Management: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/sustainable/indicators_en

World Travel and Tourism Council publication on coping with overcrowding: <https://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/policy-research/coping-with-success---managing-overcrowding-in-tourism-destinations-2017.pdf>

TIDY TOWNS

Tidy Towns Handbook: <https://www.tidytowns.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/TidyTowns-Handbook.pdf>

PURPLE FLAG AWARD

Guidelines and information: <https://www.atcm.org/purple-flag>

HERITAGE-LED RENEWAL; ARCHITECTURAL AND HERITAGE PROTECTION

Guidelines for Local Authorities: [http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/FindOutMore/Architectural%20Heritage%20Protection%20-%20Guidelines%20for%20Planning%20Authorities%20\(2011\).pdf](http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/FindOutMore/Architectural%20Heritage%20Protection%20-%20Guidelines%20for%20Planning%20Authorities%20(2011).pdf)

Heritage Council publication on Heritage-Led Urban Regeneration: <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/Ballybrilliant.pdf>

Heritage Council publication on sustainable tourism development in towns: https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/Tourism_for_towns_995kb.PDF

Other relevant Heritage Council publications and videos can be accessed here: <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/advice-and-guidance/renewing-your-historic-town-or-village>

The Yorkshire Dales Handbook on using local distinctiveness to boost tourism: http://www.dalestourism.com/uploads/4/8/5/6/4856328/local_distinctiveness_handbook_-_susan_briggs_2012.pdf

FOOD

Fáilte Ireland's Food and Drink Strategy 2018-2023, <http://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/Publications/FI-Food-Strategy-Documents.pdf>

Fáilte Ireland's guide to using local food to promote your business: http://issuu.com/designtactics/docs/place_on_a_plate_single_page_r?mode=embed&layout=http%3A%2F%2Fskin.issuu.com%2Fv%2Fdark%2Flayout.xml&showFlipBtn=true

BUSINESS SUPPORTS

Fáilte Ireland Guide to Business Supports: http://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/Brexit/Training_Supports/Business%20Supports/Failte-Ireland-Business-Supports-Guide.pdf

TOURISM MARKETING AND RELATED ADVICE

Fáilte Ireland: <http://www.failteireland.ie/Supports/Get-Brexit-Ready/Market-Diversification.aspx>

Fáilte Ireland: <http://www.failteireland.ie/International-sales/International-sales.aspx>

