



**URB
SECURITY**

planning safer cities

Longford IAP



**URB
SECURITY**

Issues and Actions

Over the course of several meetings and facilitated workshops, the ULG identified issues in a Longford context that have a negative impact on the perception of Urban Security for users of the town centre. These are summarised below



1. Garda Profile



2. Town Appearance



5. Perception



4. Safe Mobility



5. Utilise Urban Assets

These issues were explored at length in the context of each of the operational areas covered by the ULG to ensure that solutions and actions arising were feasible and implementable.

Summary



1. Garda Profile

- Community Policing Unit
- Engage Marginalised and vulnerable Groups



2. Town Appearance

- Address Derelict and vacant units
- Install Landscaping
- Improve lighting
- Implement Urban Realm Improvements



5. Perception

- Address local and national PR and media relationships



4. Safe Mobility

- Remove barriers to visibility, accessibility and movement
- Implement active travel initiatives
- prevent inappropriate use of vehicles on footpaths
- Reduce HGV's through Town Centre



5. Utilise Urban Assets

- Enhance links between focal areas
- Investigate regeneration of strategic sites

Garda Profile

The ULG consider the lack of Garda profile a contributory factor in the security issues facing Longford, including anti-social behaviour and loitering in certain areas, indiscriminate parking and criminal activity. More visible Garda presence and profile, including ongoing CCTV surveillance and Community policing will have a positive influence on how safe and secure people feel in using central Longford. Enhanced relationships with marginalised and vulnerable communities will increase a sense of inclusion and connection with the wider society.



1. Support and expand Community Policing

The scope of this action is to ensure that there is a highly visible Garda presence in the town centre at appropriate times, focusing on specific areas. This action builds on existing work by the Garda community policing unit that has proved successful to date and integrates with the ongoing CCTV system installation and monitoring.

Challenges include:

- Ongoing violent criminal activity in Longford, which is intermittently ignited by social events and at flashpoint areas, such as the Post Office and the availability of specialist Garda back-up support.
- Enclosed, dark and confined spaces that are not well trafficked or overlooked provide opportunities for ant-social behavior and deter pedestrian use, resulting in a cycle of decline.
- The lack of activities for teenagers and young adults is also an issue that requires resolution.

1. Support and Expand Community Policing

Goals



- Eradication of violent criminal activity and drug-dealing
- Less anti-social behaviour associated with particular areas and/or particular times of the day
- increased sense of security, greater footfall, greater confidence, greater use.
- Pedestrian focused central area and a more pleasant town centre environment.
- Supervised activities, spaces and events for school-goers, preventing anti-social behaviour at holiday time and creating a less intimidating environment for town users.

- Increase Garda Patrols and CCTV surveillance to deter criminal activity
- Identify and monitor areas of concern and associated times as a standing item on ULG agenda
- Feed into potential improvements under other actions such as Urban Realm Improvements, Landscaping and Lighting
- Patrol and monitor areas identified to prevent anti-social behaviour.
- Liaise with schools and youth organisations to provide coordinated, supervised activity and events for school-goers, preventing anti-social behaviour

Activities



Partners



An Garda Siochána
Longford County Council
Education providers
Chamber of Commerce
Business Community
Arts Community
LCRL
Community Representative Groups
Comhairle na NOg
Muintir na Tire

2. Engage with Marginalised and Vulnerable Groups/Individuals

The scope of this action is to build relationships between marginalised and vulnerable groups, the Gardai and the wider community to build trust, prevent urban security issues and develop a "self-policing" ethos in the town centre. This will be achieved through direct contact through community policing on the street, at specific events and in targeted spaces as outlined in Action 1 above. This will be supported by contact with representative organisations such as support groups, educational facilities and healthcare settings.

The specific challenges associated with this action include:

- The scale and concentration of new communities and ethnic minorities in the Longford Urban area and associated diverse languages and cultures may cause difficulties in navigating community supports and in some cases can cause mistrust of Gardai and other service institutions
- Cultural norms for one group may not be understood by another - eg. use of the street as an extension of the home, for playing, socialising and eating. This can lead to tensions and marginalisation/victimisation
- Signage and navigation throughout the town core may not be easily understood by a diverse audience, licensing for signage and street appliances need to consider accessibility
- Amenities and services in the town centre may not be safely and universally accessible eg. to parents with small families, those with disabilities and the elderly. Women in particular may feel insecure in certain locations.

2. Engage with Marginalised and Vulnerable

Goals



- A universally accessible, inclusive town centre
- All sections of society have strong relationships with Gardai and other support services and have a voice regarding urban security in Longford
- An understanding of cultural functions in the urban area between communities and the role of the individual in achieving urban security
- Supervised activities, spaces and events for school-goers, preventing anti-social behaviour at holiday time and creating a less intimidating environment for town users.

- Increase Garda Patrols and relationships with groups that have come to their attention in the context of security
- Identify barriers to safe navigation in the town centre as a standing item on ULG agenda and investigate funding to address
- Feed into potential improvements under other actions such as Urban Realm Improvements, Landscaping and Lighting
- Liaise with schools and youth organisations to provide coordinated, supervised activity and events for school-goers, preventing anti-social behaviour

Activities



Partners



An Garda Siochána
Longford County Council
Education providers
Chamber of Commerce
Business Community
Arts Community
LCRL
Community Representative Groups
Comhairle na NOg
SEAI

Town Appearance

A high-quality town centre will instill a sense of pride-of-place and identity within those that live work and use it. Derelict and vacant properties create an intimidating environment, coupled with poor lighting that deter pedestrian traffic and activity at street level. An attractive environment will increase activity and passive security, particularly in targeted areas. Public and private initiatives and investment have the potential to transform the town core, along with innovative solutions in lighting and wayfinding to secure a secure, accessible and inclusive central area.



3. Address Dereliction and Vacancy

The scope of this action is to improve the overall physical appearance of the town centre. Increasing pride of place and an enhanced sense of identity is important to promote passive self-policing of the town centre, making it socially unacceptable to behave in an anti-social way, damaging the reputation of the town, while making others feel safer and more secure. This action is linked to several others in this IAP, including urban realm, lighting and landscaping improvements and the creation of a positive perception of Longford from within.

This Action will make small-scale, high-impact interventions in the streetscape to improve the appearance and perception of the town to reduce the impact of vacant and/or derelict properties. Activities will include sponsored and private initiatives to paint and repair properties in high profile and blackspot locations, in tandem with improvements in public and private lighting solutions to highlight positive features to encourage activity and passive security.

The specific challenges associated with this action include:

- The number of derelict and vacant properties in prominent areas in the centre, the uncertain ownership of these in some cases, and the inability to provide beneficial uses for these properties over the last number of years, despite numerous incentive schemes

3. Address Dereliction and Vacancy

Goals



- An attractive town centre that instills a sense of identity and pride in those who live there and is a safe and attractive place to live, work and visit.
- Well maintained public and private spaces throughout the town centre that encourage movement and promote pedestrian activity
- Garveys Yard studio and SSA as an example

- Encourage the repair and painting of high profile buildings, walls and structures in the town centre
- Continue the programme of incentives for shopfront improvement
- Engage with local businesses, Community employment schemes, voluntary organisations and other agencies in the public and private sector to maintain public and private spaces
- Investigate potential projects and public and private funding sources to progress this action

Activities



Partners



Longford Tidy Towns
Longford County Council
Education providers
Chamber of Commerce
Business Community/Private investors
Individual Landowners
Arts Community
LCRL
Community Representative Groups
Comhairle na NOg
Revenue Commissioners
Enterprise Ireland

4. Install Landscaping

Working with other actions under the Town Appearance theme, the [scope](#) of this action is to reinforce improvements in the overall physical appearance of the town centre and use hard and soft landscaping interventions to enhance urban security.

This action will make tangible interventions in the streetscape to improve the appearance and perception of the town and encourage movement in particular areas to promote activity and define appropriate areas to sit and/or congregate. Hard and soft landscaping will be used to promote security, preventing the development of "dead" areas out of sight that encourage anti-social behaviour, where litter can accumulate and that are uncomfortable to walk through .

Planting and soft landscaping will be designed with security in mind, while to improving the setting and biodiversity/environment, showing a town that has pride of place and a strong sense of identity.

The specific [challenges](#) associated with this action include:

- Legacy installations that hinder movement and create isolated and insecure areas, inappropriate planting that is not effective year-round.
- Development of a cohesive theme to promote legibility
- Policing of Seating/congregation areas
- Vandalism
- Maintenance

4. Install Landscaping

Goals



- An attractive town centre with a cohesive landscaping theme that promotes legibility and secure movement through the town centre, is vandal resistant and easily maintained and policed
- Safe and secure seating in appropriate areas and universally accessible streets promoting optimal pedestrian movement patterns
- Framed and defines spaces that encourage visibility and prevent "dead areas"

- Ensure that security considerations are included as part of ongoing major town landscaping projects
- Engage with the relevant organisations to ensure universal accessibility
- Engage with local businesses, Community employment schemes, voluntary organisations and other agencies in the public and private sector to maintain public and private spaces
- Investigate potential projects and public and private funding sources to progress this action

Activities



Partners



Longford Tidy Towns
Longford County Council
Age Action Ireland
Chamber of Commerce
Business Community
Individual Landowners
Arts Community
LCRL
Community Representative Groups
Disability advocate groups

5. Improve Lighting

The [scope](#) of this action is to review lighting across the town centre in a security context and align this with other actions in the Town Appearance Theme.

Appropriate lighting is essential in setting the town centre experience, highlighting attractive features and promoting secure navigation throughout the urban area. Loss of night-time activity in the town centre is a critical issue that has created a cycle of stagnation in the town core. Lack of appropriate lighting exacerbates this, preventing activity with a negative impact on urban security in the centre.

Lighting design is a specialist function that has a range of considerations including energy efficiency, metering provisions and residential amenity in addition to security functions.

The specific [challenges](#) associated with this action include:

- Legacy installations that do not comply with current energy efficiency/metering standards.
- Poorly designed lighting that does not sufficiently illuminate and create dark areas/security threats
- Excessive lighting that is not appropriately shielded and creates residential amenity/traffic safety issues
- Development of a cohesive design theme to promote legibility
- Vandalism
- Maintenance

5. Improve Lighting

Goals



- A welcoming and secure town centre environment that encourages the night time economy and associated activity, halting the cycle of decline
- Appropriately illuminated streets, laneways, alleys and public spaces that can be safely navigated after dark
- Highlight town assets and features to provide legibility and give the best impression of Longford at night

- Engage specialists to integrate lighting considerations in all Urban Realm and other infrastructure projects in the town centre and implement their recommendations
- Investigate funding potential for a lighting review of the town core, focusing on security aspects in particular. Implement findings in consultation with Local Authority regeneration and roads departments in conjunction with private property owners and in consultation with wider community.

Activities



Partners



Longford Tidy Towns
Longford County Council
Age Action Ireland
Chamber of Commerce
Business Community
Individual Landowners
Arts Community
LCRL
Community Representative Groups
Disability advocate groups
SEAI

6. Implement Urban Realm Improvements

There are a number of major urban realm improvement projects underway in Longford Town Centre. The [scope](#) of this action is to progress these projects, highlight areas where urban security can be improved and identify/develop supporting actions that maximise benefit.

Approved and ongoing Urban Realm Improvement projects across the town centre focus on developing sustainable physical and perceptual connections from north to south (Royal Canal to Camlin River) and East to West (Connolly Barracks to Albert Reynolds Peace Park) and through urban blocks (Breaden's Lane). The promotion of safe and effective movement across the core area is a primary consideration in these projects and there has been an iterative process between the design of these projects and the progression of this IAP. The SSA is an example of this, examining the potential for enhanced perception of security in a known anti-social behaviour blackspot. On analysis, should this prove to encourage activity between the Main Street and the adjacent car park and increase the use of off-street parking, it will provide a tool for application in other areas of the centre, supporting urban security in existing and future Urban Realm improvement projects.

The specific [challenges](#) associated with this action include:

- Delays due to procurement process and material availability, COVID related construction delays, department ratification processes.
- Rising material and construction costs due to COVID, BREXIT
- Widespread streetscape and traffic disturbance due to scale of works
- Unforeseen issues arising at survey/construction stage
- Buy-in from businesses, traders and general public

6. Implement Urban Realm Improvements

Goals



- A connected, secure, accessible and legible town centre, vibrant through the day and into the night.
- An attractive tourism destination where cyclists and pedestrians can safely navigate between major attractions amenities and services
- An explicitly pedestrian-focused centre with safe and attractive connections to off-street parking to facilitate core functions.

- Provide resources to expediate construction processes
- Make provision for dedicated liaison between project implementation, traders, business and general public
- Monitor effects of SSA and investigate potential for similar innovative actions in other problem areas
- Integrate security considerations associated with other actions in this IAP into project implementation

Activities



Partners



Longford Tidy Towns
Longford County Council
Age Action Ireland
Chamber of Commerce
Business Community
Individual Landowners
Arts Community
LCRL
Community Representative Groups
Disability advocate groups

Perception

Longford suffers from a poor public perception in a local and national context. High profile crime stories have created a poor town image and overshadow existing urban assets and good news stories. Popular and highly utilised amenities should have a higher profile and form a greater part of the identity of the municipal area, as should the high level of community participation and town spirit.

Only two call outs as gardaí and emergency services in Longford praised over incident-free Halloween



7. Address Local and National Perception

Mainstream and social media coverage of Longford tends to focus on high-profile, negative news stories, incidents and events. The **scope** of this action is to counter this negative perception with positive reporting on activities that build community spirit and outline positive events, interventions and initiatives in Longford Society and how these contribute to a sense of community and pride of place.

Raising a positive profile of Longford Municipality will reinforce relationships between communities and the various agencies that work with them to build positive outcomes and improve an overall sense of security within the town centre.

Building pride of place and an enhanced sense of identity will create self-policing of town centre anti-social behaviour hotspots, making it socially unacceptable to behave in ways that impact poorly on the reputation of the town and reinforce a sense of safety for town centre users.

The specific **challenges** associated with this action include:

- Ongoing high-profile feuding activity reported at national level and on social media
- Ingrained poor perception of the town centre locally, nationally

7. Address Local and National Perception

Goals



- A fair and balanced reflection of Longford Town on local national and social media, showcasing its strong community spirit, achievements and the wealth of assets and amenities at its disposal, that welcomes its visitors and is a source of pride to its residents and users.
- Longford as a tourism destination, where visitors are instantly aware of and can safely navigate to areas of interest within the town centre.

- Develop a communication programme that promotes positive stories in all communications about Longford, informs the public on positive community relations and associated activities, timelines and tangible outcomes.
- Regular update official Longford social media sites to keep positive initiatives and their impacts alive.
- Review signage policy to ensure adequate and accessible information and clear signage to Urban assets and highlights at the entrance to and within the town centre

Activities



Partners



Longford Tidy Towns
Longford County Council
Longford Tourism and Heritage
Chamber of Commerce
Business Community
Arts Community
LCRL
Community Representative Groups
Local and National media outlets



Safe Mobility

The town centre is currently dominated by vehicular traffic. Prioritising the pedestrian and non-motorised traffic will increase activity, safety and security at street level. Use of inappropriate vehicles on footways and the significant number of HGV's in the centre discourages sustainable transport modes and the reduces the attractiveness of the town to pedestrians.



8. Remove Barriers to Visibility, Accessibility and Movement

This action is linked to many of the others contained in this IAP, its scope is to identify and address physical and perceptual barriers to visibility accessibility and movement.

Physical barriers can include bollards, kerbs and inappropriately located street furniture that could hinder accessibility through the town, but also elements such as the availability of safe crossing points and high demand locations. They also include visual barriers such as walls and hoardings that prevent visibility, hinder navigation and facilitate anti-social activity. Lack of visual clues in the urban area, such as effective signage, can also act as barriers to movement.

Double and triple parking on the streets in the town core are also barriers to movement that need to be addressed through encouraging people to use off-street parks (as per SSA) and greater enforcement of parking regulations.

The specific challenges associated with this action include:

- Effective communication with representative groups of those with special needs to ascertain their specific requirements in the streetscape
- Perceptual barriers are difficult to define

8.Remove Barriers

Goals



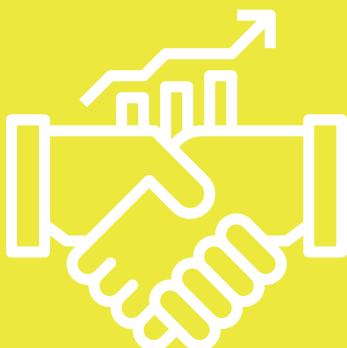
- A connected and universally accessible town that meets the needs of all sectors of society and promotes safe and secure movement

- Review accessibility audits and update where necessary
- Maintain liaison with accessibility committee
- Implement audit recommendations as part of urban realm improvements and other projects in the town centre
- Promote greater enforcement of parking regulations
- Ensure adequate signage to promote off-street parking
- Consult on location of street furniture and signage/street appliance licenses

Activities



Partners



Longford Tidy Towns
Longford County Council
Longford Tourism and Heritage
Chamber of Commerce
Business Community
Arts Community
LCRL
Community Representative Groups
An Garda Síochána
Age Action Ireland, Older Peoples Network, Age
Alliance
TII/DTTAS

9. Implement Active Travel initiatives

The scope of this action is to promote Longford Town center as a safe and secure environment for walking and cycling and access to public transport.

Longford County Council, in association with TII, is promoting active travel initiatives across the town centre. This action overlaps with others in the IAP, particularly those relating to urban realm quality and accessibility in tandem with other safe mobility actions.

The specific challenges associated with this action include:

- Shifting perceptions around movement through the town centre, for example, increased use of bicycles and motorist awareness,
- Perception of safety along route to and at public transport stops and stations

9. Implement Active Travel initiatives

Goals



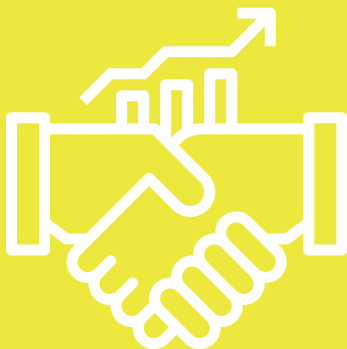
- A central area where walking and cycling are seen as safe and effective and become the dominant modes of travel
- Public transport stations and stops are attractive, provide shelter and are free from anti-social behaviour

- Update Longford Cycling and Walking strategy
- Increase length of dedicated cycle lanes within the town
- Provide adequate shelter and security at public transport locations
- Install controlled pedestrian crossings at strategic locations

Activities



Partners



Longford County Council
Longford Tourism
Chamber of Commerce
Business Community
Community Representative Groups
Transport Infrastructure Ireland
Irish Rural Link
Irish rail
Bus Eireann
DTTAS

10. Reduce access for Heavy Goods Vehicles to Town centre

This is a concise action, the scope of which is to further enhance the safety of pedestrians and cyclists in the town centre and improve air quality.

The position of Longford in the centre of the country means that it has historically been a focus for the logistics industry and a corridor for HGVs travelling between the east and west coasts. The installation of the N5 bypass in recent years has significantly reduces HGV volumes in the town centre, however issues remain and it is considered that there are viable alternatives to their use of the main street.

This is seen as an important step is enhancing the pedestrian environment, improving safety, health and well being and quality of life.

The specific challenges associated with this action include:

- Culture shift required to relocate loading areas in town centre
- Alternative routes/loading areas should not move issues elsewhere

10. Reduce numbers of HGV's through Longford

Goals



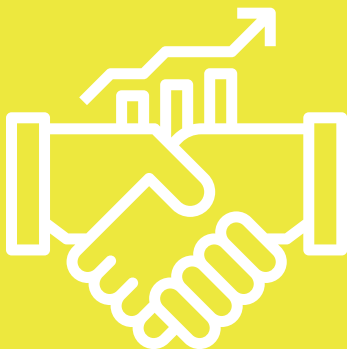
- A safer and more secure pedestrian and cyclist focused environment with enhanced air quality and reduced vehicular dominance of the town core.

- Engage with TII and identify alternative routes and loading areas within the town centre for HGV's
- Adopt the relevant bye-laws at municipal level
- Install required signage on bypasses and internal roads

Activities



Partners



Transport Infrastructure Ireland
Hauliers Associations
Longford County Council
Transport/Logistics Operators
Chamber of Commerce
Business Community
An Garda Síochána

11. Prevent inappropriate use of Vehicles on Footpaths

The scope of this action is to increase pedestrian safety by removing inappropriate motorised vehicular use from footpaths, such as electric bikes and e-scooters.

Use of vehicles on the footpaths in the urban area has become a more prevalent problem as small electric vehicles become more popular, available and affordable. Bye-laws are required to restrict their use on footpaths to preserve pedestrian safety.

The specific challenges associated with this action include:

- Comprehensive identification and definition of vehicles to be excluded will be an issue to ensure that this does not impact on necessary mobility devices

11. Prevent Inappropriate Footpath Use

Goals



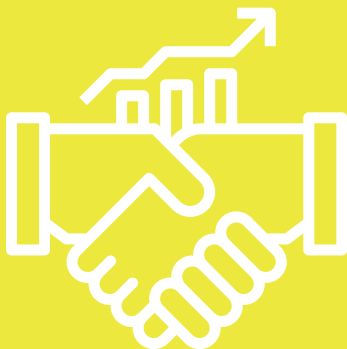
- A footpath network in the town centre that prioritises the safety needs of pedestrians and mobility impaired

- Identify and define vehicles to be excluded from footpaths
- Draft and adopt required bye-laws excluding these vehicles from specified areas
- Erect warning signage and notice of penalties

Activities



Partners



Transport Infrastructure Ireland
An Garda Síochána
Longford Tidy Towns
Longford County Council
Chamber of Commerce
Business Community
LCRL
Community Representative Groups

Utilise Urban Assets

There are attractive and well used amenities, focal areas and natural congregation areas within Longford. Improved connections between these areas, and regeneration of other, strategic assets, is required in order to create desirable movement patterns that will promote and enhance activity, vitality and vibrancy in the core area. Increased pedestrian movement at street level will increase the sense of security and safety.



12. Enhance Links between focal areas

As outlined throughout this IAP, ongoing regeneration placemaking initiatives consist of physical works to address accessibility and connectivity across the town core in a coordinated way. The [scope](#) of this objective is to build on the wide range of world-class amenities that exist in Longford, linking strategic sites within the town centre. Connecting these city assets will strengthen positive identity and reinforce sustainable movement patterns on routes that are well articulated, attractive and secure for the pedestrian. Pedestrian priority movement corridors will be strengthened between core functions, promoting footfall, activity and use. Focal areas to be improved and linked include the Barracks, Mall, Centenary Square, and potentially the Greyhound track.

The specific [challenges](#) associated with this action include:

- Coordination and timing of linked actions.

12. Enhance Links between Focal Areas

Goals



- A connected town that showcases its assets and provides safe and easily legible connections between core functions

- Identify core functions to be connected
- Implement signage programme and wayfinding strategy
- Align with existing and ongoing projects in the urban area

Activities



Partners



Transport Infrastructure Ireland
Longford Tidy Towns
Longford County Council
Longford Tourism and Heritage
Chamber of Commerce
Business Community
LCRL
Community Representative Groups

13. Investigate Regeneration of Strategic sites

The scope of this action is to investigate the potential regeneration of additional strategic sites in close proximity to the town core, to extend pedestrian a priority activity and security. The redevelopment of vacant areas will also feed into other actions in the plan around perception, attractiveness and pride of place.

One such site identified is the former Greyhound track to the south of the town centre and bounded to the west by the Royal Canal and its associated greenway, which forms part of the national network. The site is currently vacant and presents a large fence consisting of galvanised sheeting to the footpath edge in an predominantly residential area. The appropriate redevelopment of this site could provide visual and physical permeability between Park Road and the greenway, improving intervisibility and the perception of security in the area. it would also result in the area being easier to patrol and increase passive overlooking from the residential area, thereby reducing opportunities for anti-social behaviour.

The specific challenges associated with this action include:

- Funding availability
- Competing uses/functions
- Availability of resources to implement proposals

13. Investigate Regeneration of Strategic Sites

Goals



- An expanded network of connected sites within the town centre that add to quality of life and promote a safe secure and connected environment

- Investigate potential to purchase Greyhound track
- Develop masterplan based on community consultation
- Procure and manage expertise to implement Plan

Activities



Partners



An Garda Síochána
Waterways Ireland
Longford Tidy Towns
Longford County Council
Chamber of Commerce
Business Community
LCRL
Residents Groups
Community Representative Groups