



Roscrea Town Centre First Plan: Baseline Planning Report

June 2023

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1 Introduction

This baseline planning report documents background research and analysis undertaken to support the preparation of the Roscrea Town Centre First Plan (TCF). It describes the policy context against which the TCF Plan is prepared and sets out aspects of national, regional and local policy that are relevant to the TCF Plan projects. It outlines key elements of the Town Centre Health Check approach that underpins TCF Plans. A Town Centre Health Check is described in ‘*Town Centre First – A Policy Approach for Irish Towns*’ as the process of taking stock of how a town is faring across a variety of parameters. In alignment with this, a socio-economic profile of the town, a description of land use and economic activity and the social, community and cultural characteristics of the town, are described in this report. An overview of public consultation undertaken during the preparation of the TCF Plan is also provided.

2 Policy Context

An overview of national, regional and local policy that sets the background and foundation for many of the Town Centre First initiatives and projects that will be promoted in the Plan is provided below. The policy context is particularly important in identifying the strategic opportunity for TCF projects.

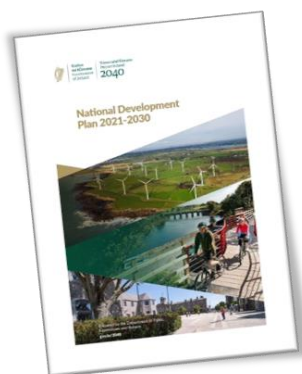
2.1 National Planning Framework: Ireland 2040



Project Ireland 2040 is the government’s long-term overarching strategy to make Ireland a better country for all people. There are various strands to Project Ireland 2040, with perhaps the most significant component being the National Planning Framework (NPF). The NPF outlines the Government’s high-level strategy for the future sustainable development of Ireland.

NPF has identified ten core principles termed as ‘National Strategic Outcomes’ (NSO), to frame all policies and objectives. The NSOs look to strengthen rural economies and communities (NSO3); to create a strong economy supported by enterprise, innovation, and skills (NSO5); and to enhance amenity and heritage (NSO7) – all of which are inherently embedded within the TCF approach for Roscrea.

2.2 National Development Plan 2021-2030



The National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030 is an update and revision of the original NDP 2018-2027, that sets out the Governments over-arching investment strategy and budget for 2021-2030. This underpins the implementation of the National Planning Framework and has a significant focus on improving the delivery of infrastructure projects to ensure speed of delivery and value for money. The NDP will support a total investment of €165 billion over the period 2021 to 2030 and will aim to ensure continuous cross-sectoral regional development and public investment.

The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) supports the National Strategic Outcome in relation to “Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities”. The RRDF is a capital spending investment programme of €1 billion investment in supporting rural renewal to enable towns, villages, and outlying areas to grow sustainably.

The RRDF can fund projects including (but not limited to):

- Measures that support the regeneration and development of towns and villages.
- Projects that support job creation. Entrepreneurship, and innovation within rural areas, with a strong preference for digital hubs, enterprise hubs, creative hubs, or training facilities.
- Projects that encourage the co-location of facilities to create a focal point of activity in a town or village.
- Provision of infrastructure projects that improve and support housing and/or commercial development.
- The development of community or public facilities to support towns and village populations, including social infrastructure provision.

2.3 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES)

The Southern Regional Assembly is a regional-level authority covering nine counties containing ten local authorities and three sub-regions. County Tipperary is one of the counties within this regional assembly and is located within both the Mid-West and South-East Strategic Planning Area. The RSES has identified a range of challenges facing rural towns and villages like Roscrea. These include:

- Increasing building vacancy in rural towns and villages;
- Demise of the historic vibrancy of town and village centres;
- Loss of services, including schools, pubs, shops, garda stations and post offices;
- Lack of available sites and services;
- Preference to live outside settlements.

Central to addressing these challenges is a sustainable place framework that will enable further renewal of towns and villages through investment in towns and villages including renewal initiatives, development of 'New Homes in Small Towns and Villages' initiatives and coordination between local authorities and other stakeholders to deliver investment. Regional Policy Objectives (RPO) to strengthen towns like Roscrea include:

RPO 26 which sets out 7 objectives for towns and villages including but not limited to:

a. To strongly support strengthening the viability of our towns and rural settlements, as a key objective of the RSES, including the protection of essential rural services such as post offices, shops, and medical facilities; and,

b. To seek investment and initiatives that deliver smart technologies, revitalisation of mixed-use town and village centre streets, and pilot initiatives for regional good practice in renewal and re-use of buildings

The RSES places an emphasis on placemaking by encouraging the growth of compact settlements in tandem with social, recreation and cultural development and in seeking to protect and enhance the identity and character of unique places. Key to this is investment in sustainable mobility and public realm enhancements.

RPO 31: *Local authorities, through development plan and local area plan objectives, shall provide for and implement a Sustainable Place Framework to ensure the development of quality places through integrated planning and consistently excellent design. The role of education, learning and health in providing inclusive, dynamic and adaptable urban environments must be included in sustainable place frameworks. The importance of consultation with local communities is supported and recognised*

On regeneration, the RSES seeks a dynamic approach to land use within the footprint of existing settlements and encourages active approaches for brownfield and infill development in towns to tackle vacancy and dereliction (**RPO 34 and 35**).

The TCF Plan provides an active delivery mechanism to achieve relevant objectives of the RSES at a local level in Roscrea.

2.4 Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025

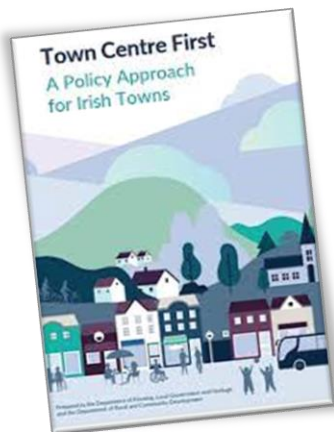


Our Rural Future is a framework for the development of rural Ireland over the period of 2021-2025. It seeks to address challenges that rural Ireland faces, and the opportunities that exist for rural economies and communities to benefit. It contains 152 actions which will be delivered by the Government, Local Authorities and State Agencies over the next five years. Within this there are 9 key deliverable areas, covering the 152 actions, which are outlined below.

Key Deliverable Areas:

- Optimising Digital Connectivity and Supporting Remote Working.
- Supporting Employment and Careers in Rural Areas.
- Revitalising Rural Towns and Villages.
- Enhancing Participation, Leadership and Resilience in Rural Communities.
- Enhancing Public Services in Rural Areas.
- Transitioning to a Climate Neutral Society.
- Supporting the Sustainability of Agriculture, the Marine & Forestry.
- Supporting the Sustainability of our Islands and Coastal Communities.
- Successful Implementation of the Policy.

2.5 Town Centre First: A Policy Approach for Irish Towns 2022

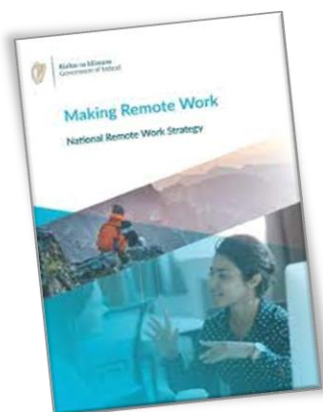


Town Centre First, built on the foundations of the National Planning Framework and Our Rural Future, represents a new approach to the development of our towns, where local communities and local businesses can be central to reimagining their own towns and planning their own futures. With towns and villages across Ireland facing significant challenges and opportunities that require a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach, Town Centre First (TCF) aims to facilitate that response by towns of all sizes across the country so that their centres can function as the sustainable and vibrant heart of the communities they serve, in ways that are adaptable and appropriate to 21st Century needs.

Roscrea is selected as one of the 26 pathfinder towns to help inform the approach to supporting towns that are at the earlier stage in the TCF process. As part of the pathfinder town, Roscrea has been provided funding to development a Town Centre First Plan that will support the development of a unique vision for the town as well as outline specific interventions required to deliver on the vision.

The delivery of the Town Centre First policy approach is supported by different public funding schemes, including the Rural Regeneration and Development Funding (RRDF) and the Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund Scheme.

2.6 Making Remote Work: National Remote Work Strategy 2021

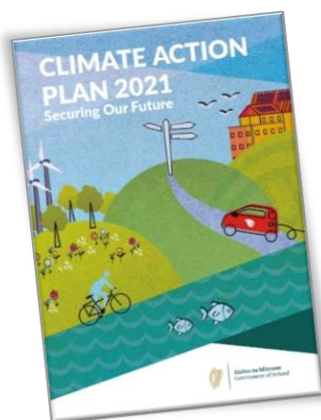


Remote working is at the forefront of working lives because of COVID-19. While some experienced remote working in Ireland pre-COVID-19, it wasn't the norm and has greatly accelerated in recent years to now being a central part of the workplace today and in the future. This strategy seeks to ensure remote working is a permanent feature in the Irish workplace and build on the progress made in the adoption of remote working to date in a way that will maximise the economic, social, and environmental benefits. Developing and leveraging remote working infrastructure is one of three key pillars of this strategy, with objectives regarding the mapping of commuter, skills and childcare facilities data to inform future hub development and objectives involving investment in future hub development outlined in this pillar. The strategy has three key actions to support this objective, which are as follows:

1. Create a Conducive Environment
2. Develop and Leverage Remote Work Infrastructure
3. Build a Remote Work Policy and Guidance Framework

Roscrea is well positioned to benefit from higher levels of remote working within the town which will bring footfall, vibrancy and spend to the town centre, where workers are actively encouraged to stay within the town.

2.7 Climate Action Plan 2021: Securing Our Future



The Climate Action Plan 2021 sets out a roadmap for taking decisive action to reduce Ireland's emissions by 51% by 2030 and reach net zero no later than 2050. It contains a suite of goals, objectives and actions spanning across all industries and sectors towards achieving these targets of halving national emissions by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050. It establishes a legally binding framework with clear targets and commitments, to ensure the necessary structures and processes are in place to deliver our national, EU and international climate goals and obligations in the near and long term.

€5 billion of the total €9.5 billion in additional carbon tax receipts over the period of the newly adopted NDP have been allocated to increase capital investment levels in energy efficiency. In addition, our National Resilience and Recovery Plan commits €518 million to prioritising

advancing the green transition to significantly reform and direct relevant funding towards decarbonising projects such as retrofitting, ecosystem resilience and regeneration, climate mitigation and adaptation, and green data systems. Through the TCF projects and initiative, there is a now a major opportunity for Roscrea to contribute to the objectives of the plan, for example, through public realm projects that promote active and sustainable travel or through the regeneration and reuse of town centre buildings and sites.

2.8 The Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024

The Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 presents five strategic objectives to guide the economic development of County Tipperary and neighbouring Clare and Limerick. These are:

1. Digitalisation and Innovation

2. Sustainability
3. Enterprise in regional towns/rural areas
4. Supporting SME, start-ups and microbusiness
5. Social enterprise and tackling areas of high employment

Through the TCF approach and the delivery of projects prioritised under this plan, there is a new opportunity for the town of Roscrea to align with the objectives of the plan thereby strengthening its role and contribution to the regional economy.

2.9 Future Jobs Ireland 2019: Preparing Now for Tomorrow's Economy



The Future Jobs Ireland report was created to ensure Ireland's economy is well positioned to adapt and prosper in the future and aims to drive our development as a resilient, innovative, and globally connected economy, capable of coping with technological and other transformational changes ahead. Future Jobs Ireland is focused on five key pillars: Embracing Innovation and technological change, improving productivity, increasing labour force participation, enhancing skills and developing talent, and transitioning to a low carbon economy. By aligning with the five key pillars and their associated objectives, Roscrea will position itself as a resilient and innovative economy ready to adapt and prosper in the future.

2.10 Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025

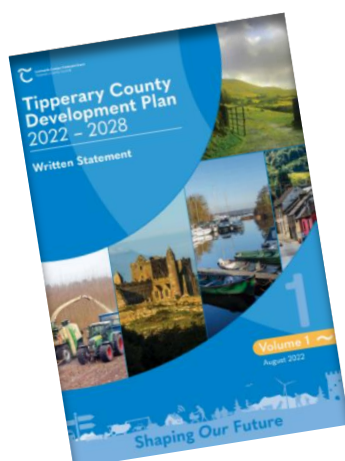


Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025 was created to benefit all people living in Ireland, companies operating here or planning to establish here, those working here, and those hoping to work here. The strategy builds on the progress made under the previous strategy 'Towards Tomorrow's Skills' and outlines objectives and actions over the next 10 years. The Strategy aims to provide:

- A focus on providing skills development opportunities that are relevant to the needs of learners, society, and the economy.
 - Employer participation in skills development and effective use of skills in their organisations, to become more productive and competitive.
 - Constant improvement and evaluation of teaching and learning quality at all stages of education
 - More people across Ireland engaging in lifelong learning
- A focus on active inclusion, to support participation in education and training and the labour market
 - Support for an increase in the supply of skills to the labour market

Small towns such as Roscrea can benefit from the objectives and actions outlined within Ireland's National Skills Strategy 2025 to improve the skills and quality of the town's workforce. In turn, there is an opportunity to strengthen and diversify the local economy bringing benefits for town centre in terms of vibrancy and inclusivity.

2.11 Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028



Tipperary County Development Plan which came into effect in August 2022 presents a new ‘whole of Tipperary’ plan embracing inclusivity, quality of life and health placemaking for the plan period up to 2028. Its vision for the County is ‘*A vibrant place where people can live, visit and work in a competitive and resilient economy, a sustainable environment and inclusive and active community.*’

Roscrea is identified as a ‘District Town’ in the settlement hierarchy for the County. The Core Strategy sets a population target of 6,172 during the plan period up to 2028. District towns are described as having an important role in supporting their hinterlands and the Key Towns, in supporting local economic strengths, and in provision housing and services. The strategy for District towns is for continued growth as part of a balanced urban structure. The residential function of these centres will be strengthened and improved, and they will be promoted as desirable places to live and work. They will provide employment, quality retail choice, regional transport and community services.

A Town Profile Plan for Roscrea (Figure 1.1) shows the relatively compact nature of the town and its suitability to support a 10-minute town concept with active travel initiatives. Strengths of the town include heritage assets such as Roscrea Castle and Damer House, its natural amenities and from an economic perspective, the strong employment centre, strength in the agri-food sector and the presence of the Roscrea Business & Innovation Park.

The Development Plan also recognises the importance of building on the principles of ‘compact growth’, through focusing on a ‘Town Centre First’ approach and appropriate land activation measures. This is expected to provide a framework for the development of the towns and help address vacancy, dereliction, and brownfield site development. It is stated that ‘*the Council will seek and support new opportunities for strategic regeneration as they arise having consideration to the strengths of the town and building on the town’s reputation as an age-friendly town and on heritage-led regeneration opportunities.*’

Town Centres and Place-making is a key focus area of the Development Plan with an active ambition to ‘*support the regeneration, repopulation and development of our towns and villages to help them thrive, and to contribute to local and national recovery, enabling people live and work in a high quality and sustainable environment.*’ A range of place-making approaches are set out to achieve this ambition which place a focus on integrated and collaborative regeneration, sustainable transport, public realm, retrofit of existing building stock to tackle vacancy and improve energy efficiency.

Town Centre First is recognised as a key framework for regeneration in the Plan. There are also provisions for ‘Streets as Places for People’, encouraging diversity of uses within town centres, tackling vacant buildings and sites and supporting retail quality and choice. Objective 7-A-E sets out a series of measures for the Town Centre First approach. In summary form, these include:

Obj 7A - supporting and delivering on the TCF policy approach, working with stakeholder to stimulate regeneration and competitive bidding, actively enabling urban infill/ brownfield development and the practical implication of objectives for compact growth, identify regeneration/opportunity sites, promote heritage led regeneration, reuse and conservation, encourage residential uses in centres, identify settlement consolidation sites.

Obj 7B – collaboration with private landowners in activation land

Obj 7C – facilitating TCF strategies/public realm and closely liaising with community and all relevant stakeholders

Obj 7D – Undertake Town Centre Health Checks and identify vacancy reduction targets in LAPs

Obj 7E – Engage in activation measures enabled by legislation to address dereliction and vacancy and reduce the number of derelict sites and dangerous structures.

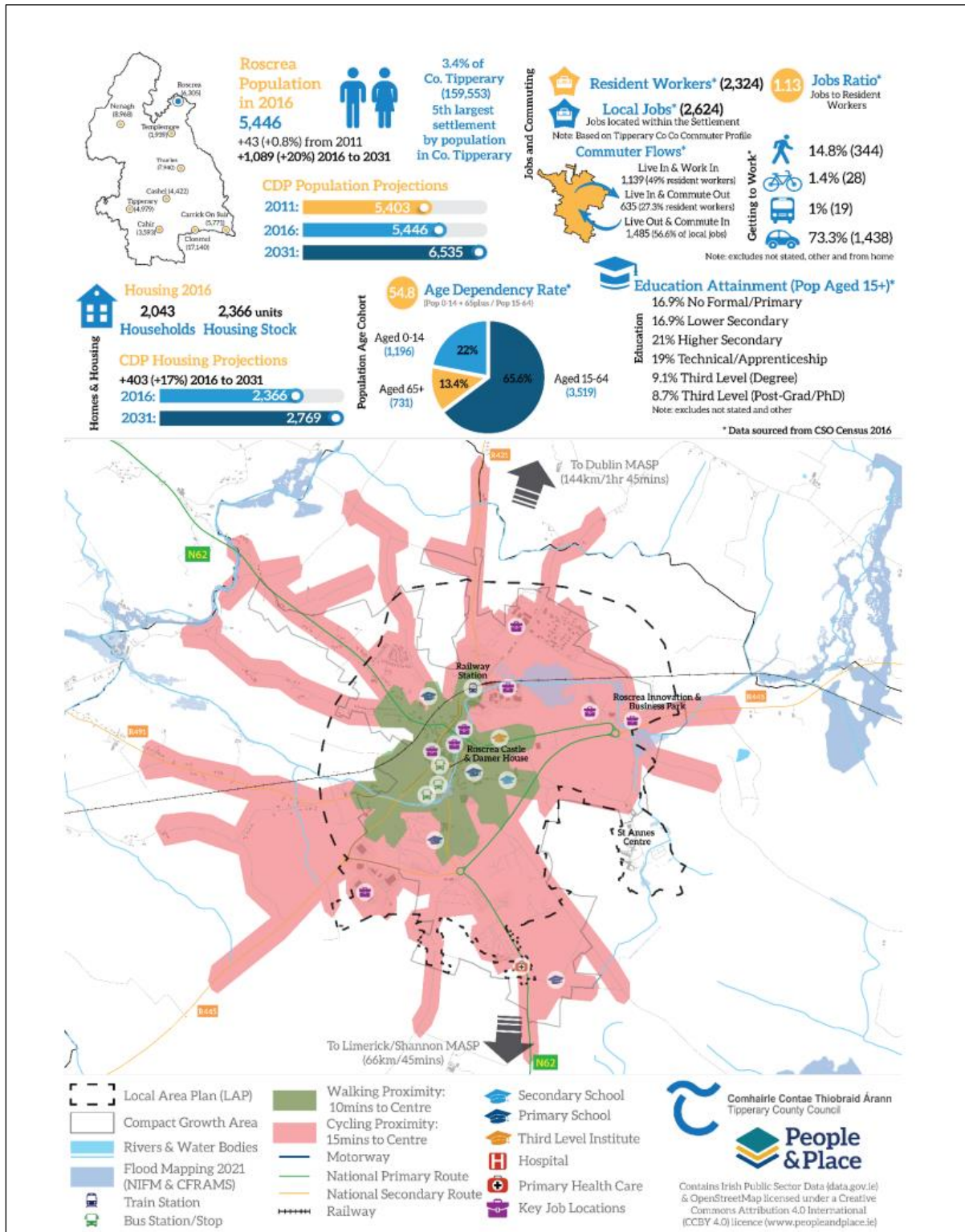
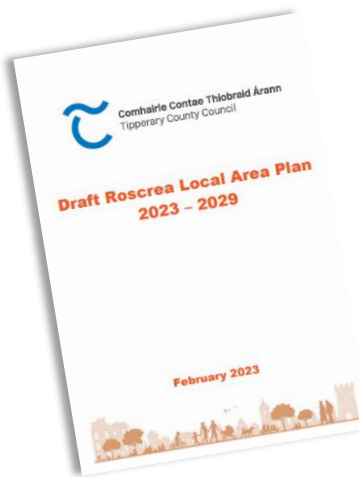


Figure 2-1 Roscrea Town Profile Plan (Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028 Vol 1 – Chapter 4)

2.12 Draft Roscrea Local Area Plan 2023-2029



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

The draft LAP builds on the success of earlier planning strategies for the town most notably the Roscrea Town Centre Enhancement Plan, 2013 and the Roscrea Signage and Way Finding Plan, 2017.

The Draft Plan recognises the Town Centre First Plan as part of the LAP. The LAP provides policy support to recent investments in the town particular in active travel and regeneration including the Town Centre First Plan. The plan describes how these projects expand on those set out in the Roscrea Enhancement Plan 2013 and the development of

Roscrea as an Age Friendly town. The stated goal of the LAP is *'to connect and enable each of these initiatives, and ensure, with the support of the Local Economic and Community Plan, that a framework and funding strategy is set out to enable the delivery of their visions. The LAP will also help enable, inform and activate private sector investment in the town'*.

The LAP presents planning policies and objectives unique to Roscrea and which will help to achieve the overall planning and development strategy for the town: -

'In 2029, Roscrea will be a vibrant sustainable and age-friendly community. The community will benefit from a high quality of life, quality housing choices, improved access to employment options and an improved range of services in the town. The town will benefit from re-balanced growth, the regeneration of central areas of the town and an increasing town centre residential population, in turn supporting local businesses and services.'

Central to the town centre strategy for Roscrea is the Town Centre First Plan:

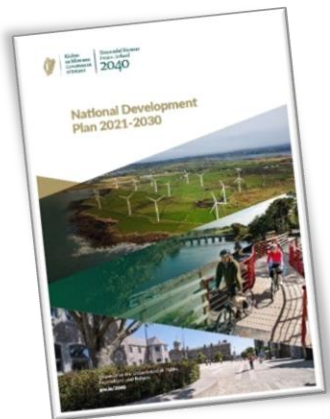
'The Town Centre Strategy for Roscrea will seek to ensure that the vibrancy and vitality of the town is maintained and enhanced. This will be achieved by increasing the residential population of the town centre, regenerating town centre brownfield lands, implementing the Town Centre First Plan, and providing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

As recognised in draft LAP, the TCF Plan plays a crucial role in delivering the vision of the LAP to support the town centre as a place to work, live, visit and do business. It does by presenting a coordinated regeneration strategy, promoting the redevelopment of underutilised sites, enhancing town centre services, enable residential development and protecting and showcasing the historical core.

3 Relevant Funding Opportunities

An overview of funding opportunities that projects promoted through the Town Centre First process may be eligible for are set out below – this is a non-exhaustive and summary overview.

3.1 Rural Regeneration and Development Fund

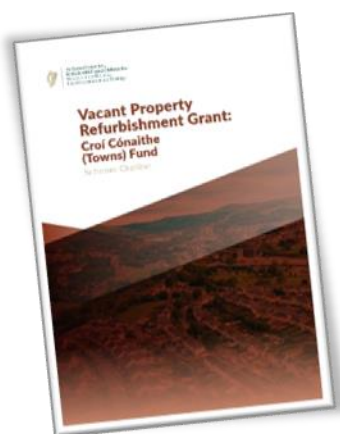


The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) is a funding programme that is investing €1 billion in rural Ireland up to 2027. This fund is aimed:

- Supporting job creation in rural areas
- Addressing de-population of rural communities
- Supporting improvements in towns and villages.

RRDF funding is available for towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000, therefore Roscrea qualifies for this fund. The funding is awarded through a competitive bid process, proposals are invited from Local Authorities and other locally/regionally based organisations such as Local Development Companies.

3.2 Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund Scheme



The Croí Cónaithe is a grant introduced by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. This grant is a key initiative that underpins the policy objectives set out in Pathway Four 'Addressing Vacancy and the Efficient Use of our Existing Stock' of 'Housing for All'. The grant is aimed at addressing the blight of vacant and derelict properties across cities, towns and villages by bringing them back into use, adding vibrancy and providing new accommodation in these areas.

A grant of up to a maximum of €50,000 is available for:

- The refurbishment of vacant properties for occupation as a principal private residence, and
- For properties which will be made available for rent, including the conversion of properties which have not been used as residential heretofore, subject to appropriate planning permission being in

place. This is subject to upper limits for the types of work, specified below, having regard to a reasonable cost assessment by the local authority. The grant is inclusive of the VAT cost of the works.

Where the refurbishment costs are expected to exceed the standard grant of up to €50,000, a maximum top-up grant amount of up to €20,000 is available where the property is confirmed by the applicant to be derelict (i.e., structurally unsound and dangerous) or if the property is already on the local authority's Derelict Sites Register, bringing the total grant available for a derelict property up to a maximum of €70,000. In the case of a top-up grant in respect of a derelict property not on the Derelict Sites Register, an independent report prepared by an appropriately qualified professional is required to be submitted along with the application, confirming, to the satisfaction of the local authority, that the property is derelict.

Properties considered for inclusion must be vacant for two years or more and built before 1993. For the purposes of this scheme, a property is deemed to be vacant if it has been vacant and unoccupied for a period of two years or more.

3.3 Town and Village Renewal Scheme



The Town and Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS) is a funding scheme focused on supporting the rejuvenation of rural towns and villages throughout Ireland. This scheme is part of "Our Rural Future - Ireland's Rural Development Policy 2021 – 2025, funded under Project Ireland 2040. Since the launch of the scheme in 2016 over €149 million has been allocated to more than 1,600 projects. The scheme seeks to deliver remote working infrastructure to provide an opportunity for people to continue to live in rural communities while following their career ambitions. It will also see continued investment in town centre living.

This scheme is supported by the Town Centre First Policy and has a particular focus on bringing vacant and derelict buildings and sites back into use as multi-purpose spaces. The scheme supports small

to medium capital projects with grand funding for projects ranging from €20,000 to €500,000. The scheme is targeted at two categories:

Category 1: Towns and villages up to 5,000 people

Category 2: Town with a population of 5,001 to 10,000 people (which Roscrea falls under)

This scheme is similar to the RRDF, a competitive process where local authorities submit application forms to the Department of Rural and Community Development. These include the main TVRS measures and the Building Acquisition Measure (BAM). The scheme also provides for a Project Development Measure (up to €50,000) which assists Local Authorities to contribute to a pipeline of significant, well-developed projects which might be subsequently progressed to construction stage, subject to the availability of further funding.

3.4 LEADER Community Led Local Development (CCLD)

The LEADER Programme is funded by both the EU and Irish Government and provides grants, advice and training to support business start-up, expand or develop new products; communities projects to be planned and carried out and assist projects that help the rural environment.

The LEADER programme is administered at a local level by 29 local action groups. The North Tipperary Development Company (NTDC) is responsible for selecting and awarding LEADER funding to projects and delivering a range of rural enterprise, social inclusion and community development initiatives to the Roscrea and wider North Tipperary area. The LEADER funding allocation and programme for Co. Tipperary covering the period 2023 – 2027 is expected to accept applications based on projects which improve:

- Economic Development & Job Creation
- Rural Infrastructure & Social Inclusion
- Sustainable Development & Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption

3.5 Miscellaneous funding opportunities

Aside from the funding opportunities described above, there are other grant schemes which would support the regeneration of Roscrea. The following is a non-exhaustive list:

- Creative Ireland Grant Scheme
- Heritage Council Community Heritage Fund

- Dept. of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Community Monuments Fund
- SEAI Community and Business Grants
- Local Authority Community Grants
- Fáilte Ireland Small Grants Scheme
- Tipperary Local Enterprise Office Financial Supports
- NTA Active Travel Grants Programme

4 Town Centre Health Check – An Overview

A Town Centre Health Check is described in ‘*Town Centre First – A Policy Approach for Irish Towns*’ as the process of taking stock of how a town is faring across a variety of parameters. These parameters greatly influence activity and the overall performance of a town centre. They are the reasons why people interact with a town centre. In Roscrea, there are four primary drivers for activity in the centre, as follows:

- Employment and school
- Retail and social services
- Social, recreational or leisure amenities and heritage attractions
- Living in the centre

The Town Centre Health Check for Roscrea seeks to examine how the town is performing in the context of these drivers. A range of surveys have been undertaken to consider the health of the town and its performance in supporting people living, working and visiting the town for the reasons set out above. These surveys and analysis are presented in summary form within the Town Centre First Plan. The background/baseline studies on the following parameters are provided in this document:

- **Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile:** This allows us to understand the characteristics, skills and attributes of people living and working in the town. It is these people who will drive forward the projects and initiatives set out in this TCF Plan.
- **Land Use and Economy:** Land Use surveys to establish activity levels and diversity in the town. This includes employment activity with a specific focus on key town centres sectors such as retail to establish current levels of commercial activity and outlook. It also includes an audit of vacancy and dereliction within a town centre. Pedestrian counts to establish actual town centre visitor numbers are also provided.
- **Social, Community and Culture:** This comprises a survey of amenities and services to establish the choice and diversity of offer serving a town.

Detailed background work on the following is available separately:

- **Built Form:** An overview of built form within Roscrea including existing housing, streetscapes, vacancy and dereliction, and heritage.
- **Movement and Connections:** This provides an analysis of Roscrea town in terms of ease of movement and accessibility in terms of walking, cycling, and driving. It includes the study of travel modes, walkability audits, and public realm analysis.
- **Nature and Landscape:** This describes the towns natural and landscape assets with analysis on public realm and landscaping, scenery, civic spaces, and green and blue infrastructure.

The Town Centre First Plan collectively considers all these attributes as the foundation against which positive change, through the proposed TCF projects, can be brought about.

5 Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile

A demographic and socio-economic profile of Roscrea is presented to provide a baseline of information on the attributes of the local population. This allows for a better understanding of the potential for positive change and to **help determine the type and nature of supports** that might be needed for residents of the town. It can also be useful in informing opportunities that exist for the town – and **how best to draw on local assets and skillsets in effectively driving forward the TCF agenda and projects**.

For context, the baseline analysis of the socio-economic profile for the Study Area in Roscrea is compared to the wider County. The Study Area is defined on the basis of a 10-minute town concept, which is promoted both within the RSES as well as the Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028. Application of this study area allows an understanding of the population resident within the town centre and immediate surrounds. 13 Small Areas overlapping with the Study Area were selected as the source of data to provide a more accurate socio-economic profile of the Study Area (Figure 5-1 & Figure 5-1).

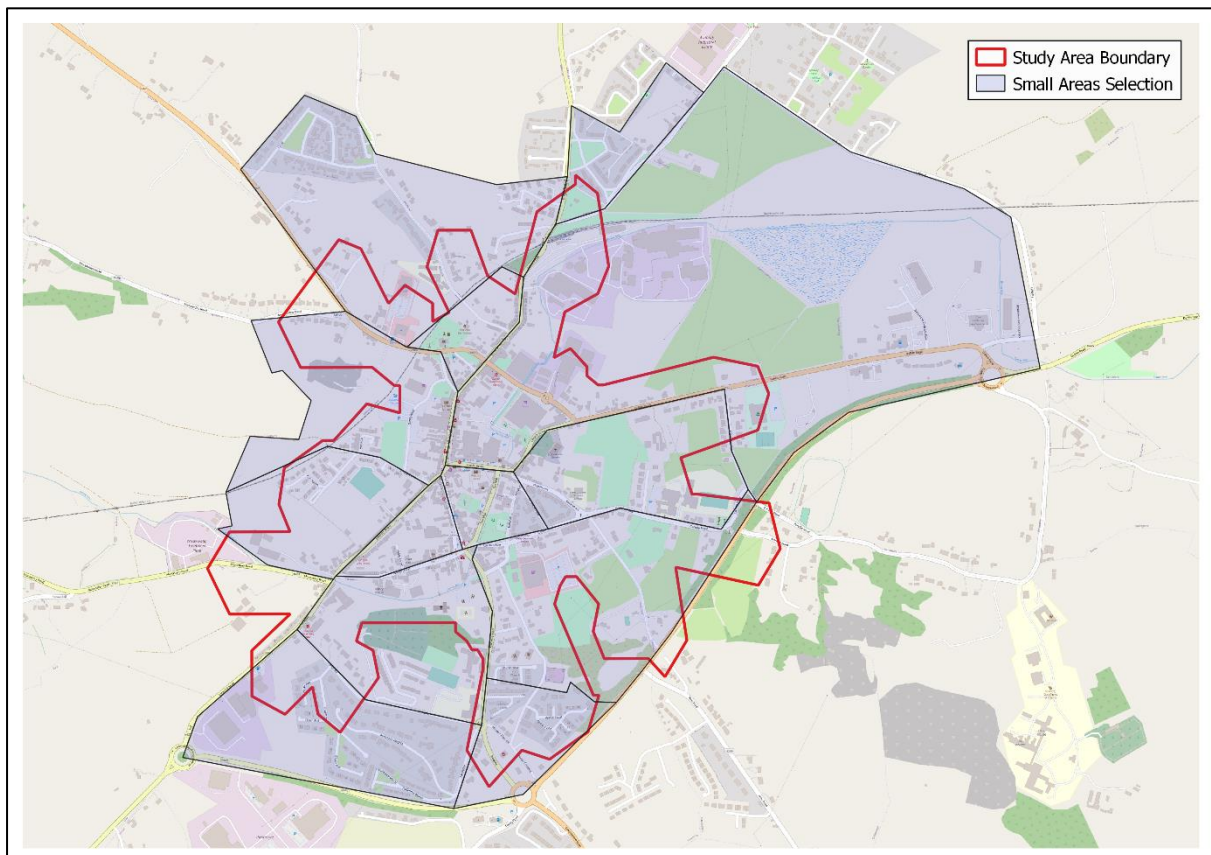


Figure 5-1: Study Area and Small Area Selection.

Demographics, population change, age profile, household status, educational attainment, and economic status are discussed in brief below. While some Census 2022 results are now available (i.e., overall population figures at Electoral Division level), detailed dissemination of the 2022 data has not yet been made available at the time of this assessment.

Generally, the socio-economic indicators of Roscrea are broadly in line with the wider county of Tipperary, indicating that macro trends, rather than localised issues, are the key influence on the town. The most recent population trend for Roscrea, as per Census 2022, would indicate that the **town is undergoing a slow but steady population growth while also supporting a growing hinterland area**. While County Tipperary recorded a 5.1% overall growth in population, this was influenced **primarily by growth that occurred outside of the existing large settlements**.

As is common with similar rural communities under less urban influence, there are **challenges in retaining younger generations** within the community due to migration for third level education, graduate opportunities, and employment opportunities more generally. As a result, the town demographics display a higher working and older age profile. **Roscrea is home to a comparatively large number of families with dependent children**, and so ensuring a high standard and availability of services and amenities that respond to the requirements of this base is important.

Roscrea is also characterised by a **slightly higher than average level of unemployment** in comparison to County or State level, although, 46% of the total population are recorded as being employed as per Census 2016.

Roscrea, as of Census 2016 had a **comparatively high level of residential vacancy and a considerable smaller household size** than the rest of the County. There is also a substantially lower level of owner occupancy in comparison to the wider County. The town recorded around **46% of the households that rent their home**. Perhaps a reflection of this is the higher rise in housing prices evident for the town than other similar sized towns. As identified in the Draft Local Area Plan for Roscrea 2023-2029, there is a **significantly higher affordability constraint** for Roscrea, with 41% of new households potentially experiencing affordability challenges. The increasing trend in sale prices of housing will compound affordability issues that persist in the town.

Despite these issues, and indications of stagnation in the town's population and economic growth, there are no clear trends of decline in any key socio-economic indicators, beyond that of a generally ageing population which is a broader national characteristic. The town is home to **a diverse population with a broad range of skill sets and experience**. **Both Roscrea and the wider environs are well positioned for sustainable growth with the correct strategies and investment**.

A more detailed overview of the data underpinning the above overview is now provided with respect to demographics, housing, education and employment.

5.1 Demographics

A diverse population

Understanding the demographic profile of Roscrea is essential to ensure any forthcoming TCF initiatives or projects respond to the requirements of the local population and are inclusive of all residents of the town. The vast majority (79%) of Roscrea's population identify as Irish nationals but there is diversity in the nationality's resident in the town with Polish (5%), Lithuanian (4%), UK nationals (1%) and other EU nationals (8%) also resident within the area (Figure 5-2). The County level data for Tipperary is broadly similar, in that Irish nationals constitute the highest portion of the population at 90%, while the composition of other nationalities is slightly different from that of Roscrea. At the County level, the composition of UK nationals is comparatively higher at 3% while those from other nations, such as Poland (2%), Lithuania (1%) and other EU countries (2%) constitute a slightly lesser portion.

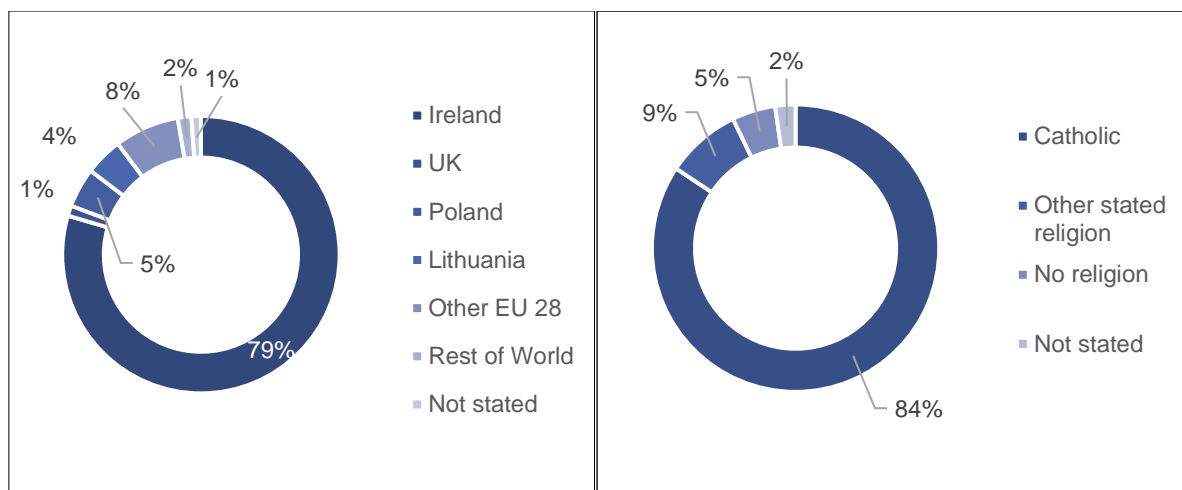


Figure 5-2 Population Nationality and Religion in Roscrea Town (Source: CSO 2016)

The population in Roscrea largely identify as Catholic (84%), with around 9% stating religion that cover all other faiths and 5% of the residents identify as having no religion at all (Figure 5-2). This is consistent with the broader religion profile for Tipperary County, which demonstrates marginally higher figures for each of the category.

5.2 Population Change

Slow but steady population growth – supporting a growing hinterland area

Population change within County Tipperary is presented at Electoral Division level based on Census 2022 preliminary results. Between 2016 and 2022, County Tipperary recorded a 5.1% population growth that **primarily occurred outside of the existing large settlements** (as shown in Figure 5-3). Major settlements within County Tipperary have mostly witnessed relatively low levels of population increase with only two urban areas recording a high level of increase in population - Nenagh and Tipperary town. The highest population growth in the county occurred in Terryglass with 20.3% increase in population recorded from 2016 to 2022. Population growth is also evident in relatively rural areas around Nenagh, Borrisokane, and Cloughjordan, served by M7, N52, and the railway connecting Roscrea, Nenagh, and Limerick, areas along M8 serving Urlingford, Cashel, and Cahir, and the railway connecting Dublin and Cork via Templemore, Thurles, and Tipperary.

The Roscrea area experienced 4.7% population growth across the most recent census period (2016-2022) which is lower than the wider county level. However, this is a higher growth rate than nearby urban towns Templemore (2.8%) and Thurles (2.4%), but lower than Nenagh (8.3%-11.1%) and Tipperary (4.1%-11.8%). Population growth in surrounding areas of Roscrea has been relatively strong, for example in Timoney (9.3%), Bourney East (13.7%) and Bourney West (7.1%) – suggesting that the town is supporting a growing hinterland area.

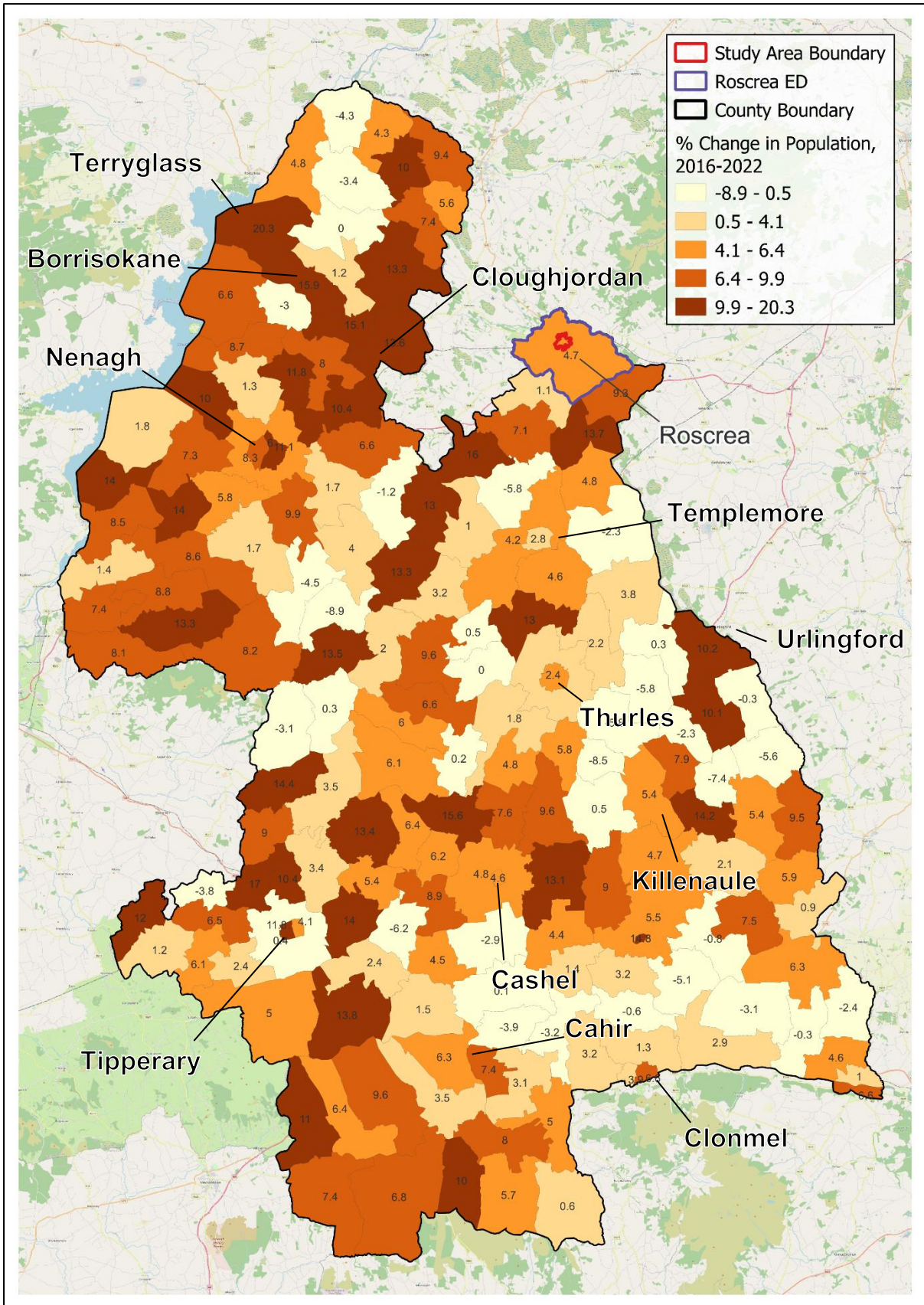


Figure 5-3: Population Change in County Tipperary.

5.3 Age and Family Cycle

A family-oriented place

Understanding the age and family cycle of residents is essential to sensible decision making on services and facilities and as such, is an important consideration in guiding the TCF Plan. Roscrea’s population pyramid (Figure 5-4) displays similar patterns to the population composition in wider County Tipperary, with a **higher concentration of people in the age groups of 30-59 years old and in the younger population of 0-14 years old**. Roscrea is home to a higher share of young people aged between 20-29 years old than the county average. The resident population aged 60 years and older is comparatively small, however, Roscrea has a noticeably higher elderly population aged 80+ years old, with significantly more females than males in this group.

Both population pyramids show **evidence of economic, and education driven migration** with less population in the late teens and early 20s, possibly attributable to young people moving away for third level education and employment opportunities. In both cases, there is a recovery in the population starting with the early 30s cohort. As illustrated by the population pyramid, there is a greater gender imbalance in Roscrea than the wider County – with more males than females in the town, which could indicate the existence of gender inequality for certain age groups.

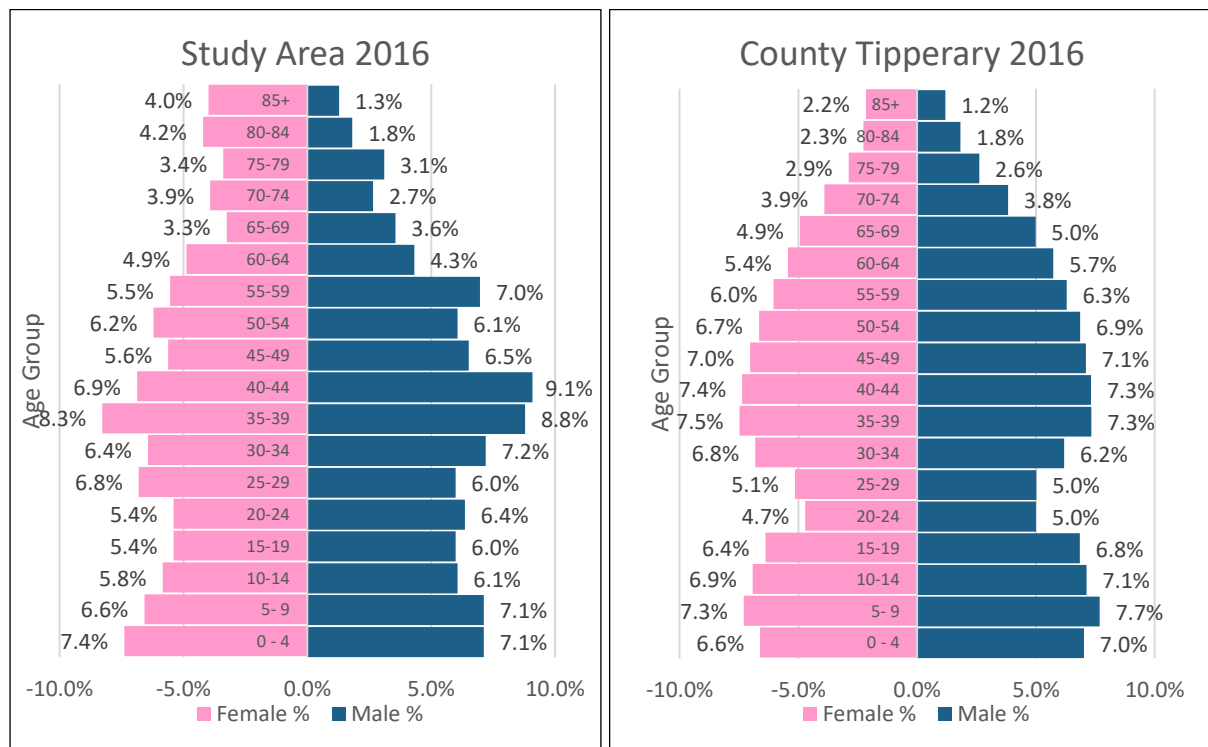


Figure 5-4 Population Pyramid for Roscrea Town and County Tipperary (Source: CSO 2016).

Table 5.1: Population Distribution for Roscrea Town, County Tipperary, and the State (Source: CSO 2011 & 2016).

Age	Study Area 2011	Study Area 2016	% Change Study Area	Study Area 2016 (%)	Tipperary County 2016 (%)	State 2016 (%)
0-9	347	377	8.6%	14.1%	14.3%	14.4%
10-19	313	311	-0.6%	11.6%	13.6%	13.1%
20-29	378	328	-13.2%	12.3%	9.9%	12.0%
30-39	414	410	-1.0%	15.3%	13.9%	15.8%
40-49	325	375	15.4%	14.0%	14.4%	14.4%
50-59	304	331	8.9%	12.4%	12.9%	12.0%
60-69	209	214	2.4%	8.0%	10.5%	9.5%
70-79	194	175	-9.8%	6.5%	6.6%	5.8%

80+	138	152	10.1%	5.7%	3.7%	3.1%
Total	2,622	2,673	1.9%	100%	100%	100%

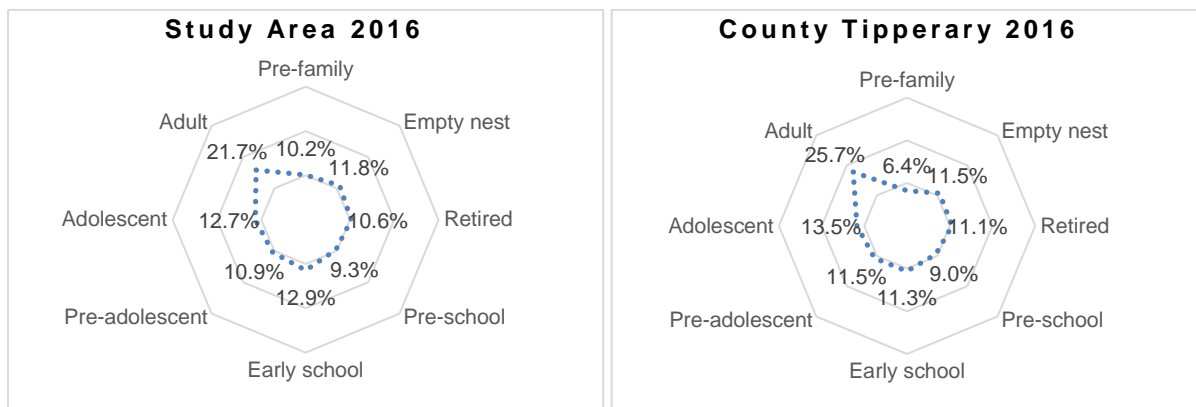


Figure 5-5: Family Cycle of Roscrea Town and County Tipperary (Source: CSO 2016).

The family cycle data within Roscrea (see Figure 5-5) shows 21.7% of families are at adult stage having yet to reach pre-family stage, comparing with the wider county level at 25.7%. **45.8% of families are at pre-adult stage (pre-school, early school, pre-adolescent, and adolescent), slightly higher than 45.3% recorded in the wider county.** 10.2% of the households are pre-family in Roscrea, which is considerably higher than the County level of 6.4%. 11.8% households in Roscrea are empty nesters while 10.6% are retired.

5.4 Housing Stock

Comparative high residential vacancy

As recorded by Census 2016, there are approximately **1,319 permanent dwellings in the Study Area** as of 2016. 1,103 dwellings are fully occupied which equals to an occupancy rate of 83.6% which is lower than the wider county of 85.8%. 184 dwellings are recorded as vacant in 2016 representing a **residential vacancy rate of 13.9%**. This is substantially higher than the average in County Tipperary of 10.8% vacancy.

Table 5.2: Housing Stock Status of Permanent Dwellings (Source: CSO 2016).

Occupancy	Study Area No. of Dwellings	Study Area % Total Dwellings	County Tipperary No. of Dwellings	County Tipperary % Total Dwellings
Occupied	1,103	83.6%	59,284	85.8%
Temporarily Absent	23	1.7%	1,320	1.9%
Unoccupied Family Homes	9	0.7%	1,009	1.5%
Vacant	184	13.9%	7,493	10.8%
Total	1,319	100.0%	69,106	100.0%

Traditional housing forms dominating

The housing stock within the Study Area largely consists of houses, with only 7% of the total stock consisting of apartments and 3% categorised as ‘Other’. The composition of houses between the intercensal year has maintained the same level from 2011 to 2016 at 90%. There was a slight decrease of the percentage of apartments stock from 8% to 7%.

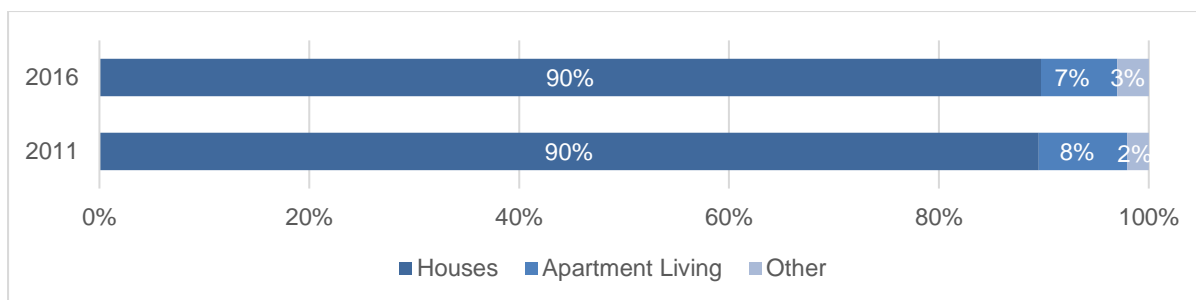


Figure 5-6: Type of Housing Stock in Roscrea Town (Source: CSO 2011 & 2016).

5.5 Home Ownership

Comparatively low level of home ownership

Home ownership in Roscrea shows a different profile when comparing with the wider county level. Roscrea town has a substantially lower level of owner occupancy at 51.2% in comparison with that in the wider county at 71.2%. There are **45.8% of the households in Roscrea that rent their home**, which includes 27.4% rent from private landlords or rent free and 18.4% rent from local authorities or housing bodies. This is compared with 26.4% rented homes in wider County Tipperary.

Table 5.3: Home Ownership in Roscrea Town and County Tipperary (Source: CSO 2016)

Ownership	Study Area No. Households	Study Area % Total Households	County Tipperary No. Households	County Tipperary % Total Households
Owner Occupied (w/o mortgage)	559	51.2%	42,030	71.2%
Rented (private/ free of rent)	299	27.4%	9,170	15.5%
Rented (Local Authority, AHB)	201	18.4%	6,442	10.9%
Not Stated	33	3%	1,429	2.4%
Total	1,092	100.0%	59,071	100.0%

5.6 Household Size

Small household size

As shown in Figure 5-7, **one-person households make up 35% of the households** in Roscrea, with another **28% of the households only have 2 persons (63% of all households)**. In wider County Tipperary, 54% of the households are one or two persons in size, breaking down at 26% and 28% respectively. **This is evidence of a much smaller household size in Roscrea than the wider county.**

There is an average of **4.8 rooms per house in Roscrea town and 1.8 bedrooms**, which is lower than County Tipperary average of 5.5 rooms per house and 2.5 bedrooms.

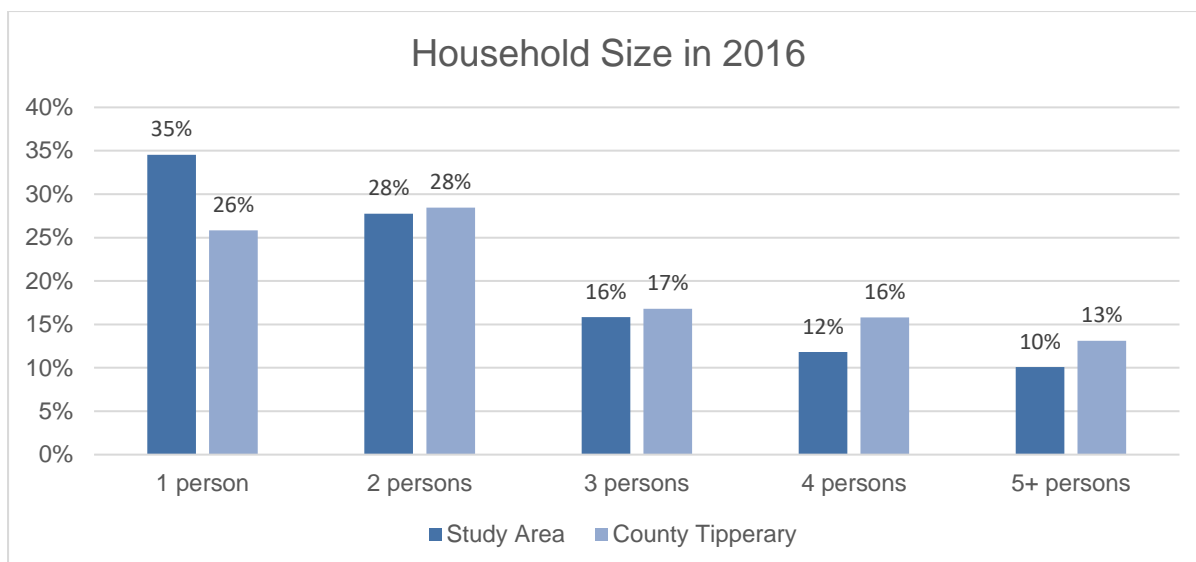


Figure 5-7: Household Size in Roscrea Town and County Tipperary (Source: CSO 2016).

5.7 Housing Market

Local property prices increasing amid affordability constraints locally

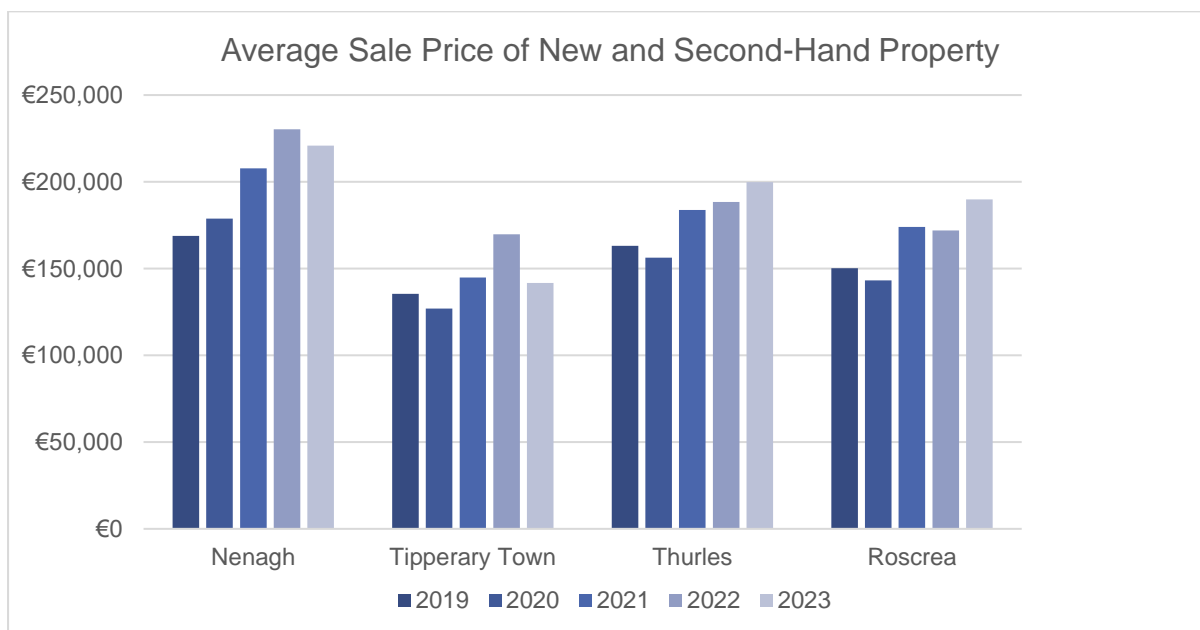
An analysis of the average sale price of new and second-hand property was carried out for 4 towns in Tipperary – Nenagh, Thurles, Tipperary Town and Roscrea. The intention is to understand affordability and the housing market in the town – this type of information is interesting in understanding the scope and potential for town centre living. Nenagh and Thurles, two of the ‘Key Towns’ within the County are notably larger towns.

Nenagh experienced an overall increase in sale prices in the years 2019 to 2022 (30%) despite a small, decline notable in 2023 Q1. For Roscrea, a 26% increase is notable since 2019, based on latest available for figures for Q1 of 2023. Sale prices in Thurles are 22% higher and 5% higher in Tipperary Town than they were in 2019.

While the housing market in all these towns is dominated by the second-hand properties, Nenagh recording consistent sales in new-builds between 2019 and 2022. Roscrea and Thurles also had some new-build sales activity in 2020, 2022 and in Q1 2023. There was a 22% increase in the sales prices for new-builds in Thurles with a 14% increase apparent for Roscrea between 2022 and Q1 of 2023

The price of second-hand properties in Roscrea increased by 27% between 2019 and Q1 of 2023. This shows growth in the market for second hand properties in the town – a positive indicator for the potential reuse and refurbishment of vacant housing stock in the town. However, as noted in the Draft Local Area Plan for Roscrea 2023-2029, there is a significantly higher affordability constraint for Roscrea, with 41% of new households potentially experiencing affordability challenges. The increasing trend in sale prices of housing will compound affordability issues that persist in the town.

Figure 5-8 Average Sale Prices of New and Second-Hand Property



5.8 Education and Skills

There is a strong level of education in the town with around 179 persons aged 15 years and over in school or college and another 212 people engaged in other forms of education (Figure 5-9).

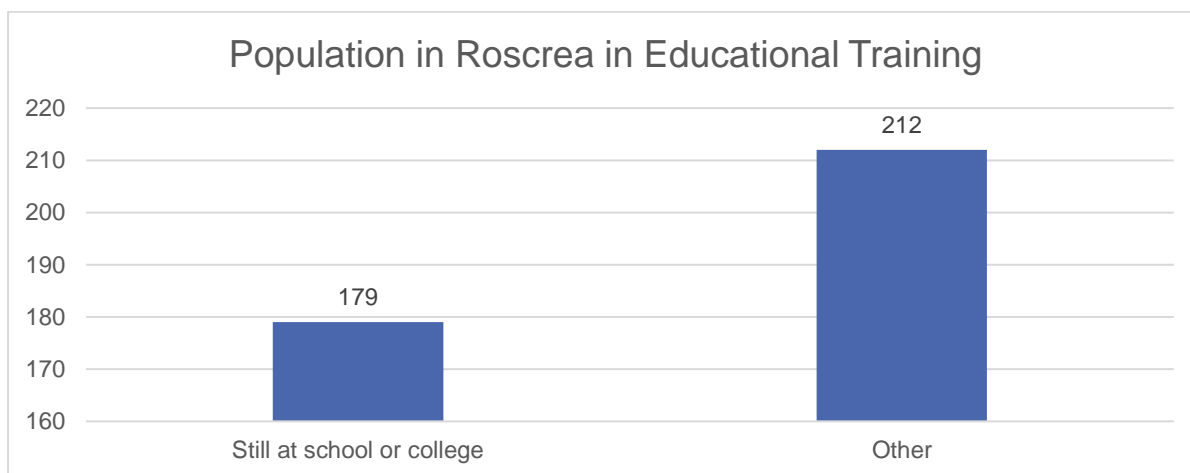


Figure 5-9 Population aged above 15 years whose education has not ceased

Among school leavers, there are notable peaks at the age of 18 (13%) and again at 21 and over (14%). This would reflect the completion of Leaving Certificate followed by enrolment in further education at university or college. The data indicates that some individuals left school after the Junior Certificate at the age of 15, 16 and 17 (c. 21% of 15 years and over whose education has ceased) – this portion was the same at County Level for this age group, in 2016. In total, 452 individuals in Roscrea left education before the age of 18 (c.26%), 234 left at the age of 18, and another 380 (22%) ceased their education after the age of 18. It is also noted that 680 people have not stated the status of their education at the time of the Census 2016. The County Level data would reflect a similar trend in the portion of early school/education leavers, with the numbers peaking at 18 years (13%) and 21 years and over (19%).

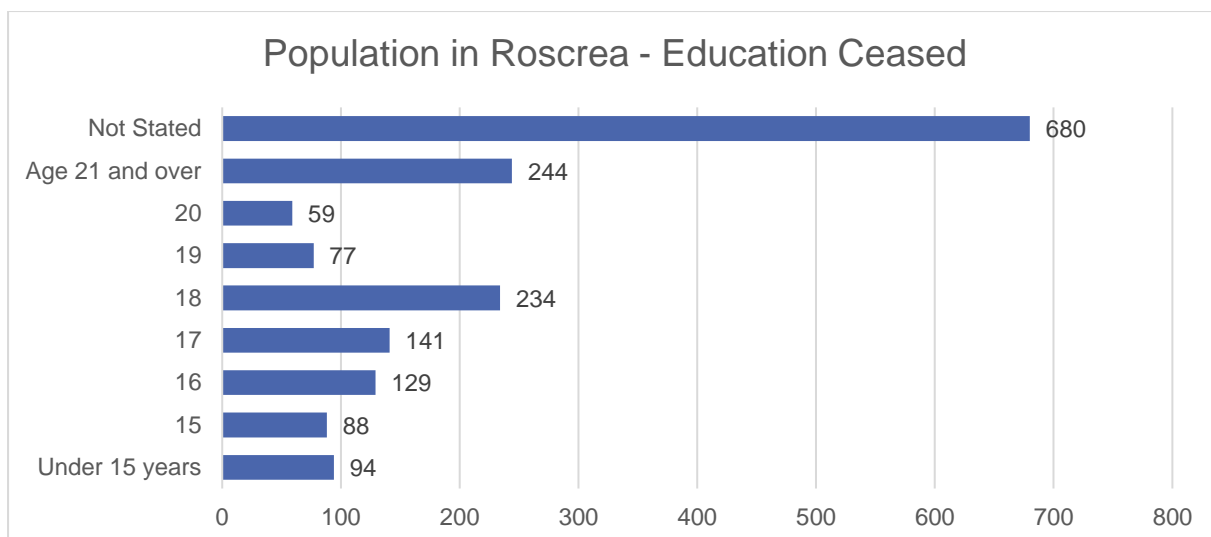


Figure 5-10 Population aged 15 years and over by age education ceased (Source: CSO 2016)

5.9 Deprivation Levels

Known pockets of disadvantage across the town

The Pobal Deprivation Index (DI) allows an analysis of relative rates of deprivation and affluence across Ireland. Figure 5-11 presents the DI levels as of 2016 recorded within Roscrea by Small Areas. The DI levels in Roscrea town centre are mostly classified as **“marginally below average”** (receiving scores of 0 to -10), and **“disadvantaged”** (scores of -10 to -20), with one Small Area classified as **“very disadvantaged”** (scores of -20 to -30).

Specifically, the northwest section of Roscrea town centre is classified as being more deprived than other parts. The townparks area to the west of Limerick Street was classified as being ‘very disadvantaged’. Town centre areas to the west of Rosemary Street, Main Street and Grove Street are all classified as being ‘disadvantaged’. In comparison, areas situated to the east of Main Street and to the south of Abbey Street were evaluated as **“marginally below average”**.

Overall, the DI levels recorded in the 13 Small Areas in Roscrea town centre shows an average score of -10.4 which is considerably lower than the county average (-3.39) and the state average (-1.74). At the Electoral Division level, the Roscrea ED was classified as being ‘marginally below average’ with a score of -8.72, a slight decline compared to the 2011 **“marginally below average”** score of -8.07.

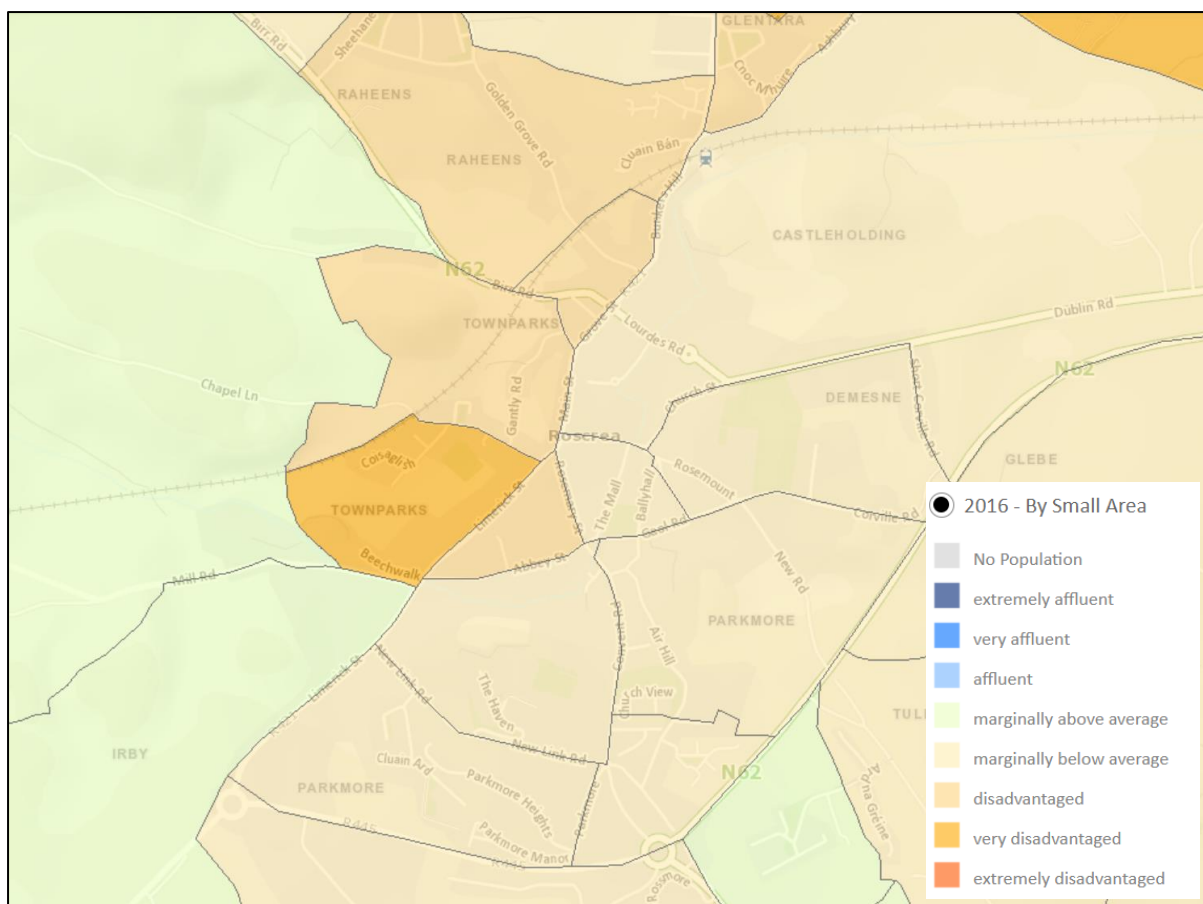


Figure 5-11: Deprivation Levels in Roscrea 2016 (Source: Pobal).

5.10 Economic Status and Employment

The economic status and employment activities for local people is an important marker of the prosperity of the town and the capacity for growth. Principle economic status, as captured by CSO 2016, provides a breakdown for the number of people aged 15 years and older in the labour force who are economically active and inactive, unemployed, or those looking for their first job. Persons or groups over 15 years of age not actively participating in the labour force are typically students, home makers, retirees, or persons unable to work due to illness or disability and they are therefore considered to be economically inactive. The following Table 5.4 provides an overview of the labour force in the Study Area in comparison to Tipperary and the State.

While there was a notable decline (-12.7%) in the number of 'Unemployed' persons within the Study Area in 2016, which constituted 12.8% of the overall population in 2016, this still represented a higher rate than the County and State average. A decline of -8.8% was also observed in the number of homemakers 'Looking after Home/Family', which comprised 9.3% of the population. The proportion of those 'Looking for First Regular Job' in 2016 within the town consisted of only 1.6% of the population. The highest composition of the population within the Study Area, constituted of people 'At work', which stood at around 45%.

Table 5.4 Population Aged 15 years and Over by Principle Economic Status (CSO 2016)

Principal Economic Status	Study Area 2016	% Change Study Area	% Total Study Area	% Total Tipperary County	% Total State
At Work	972	6.3%	45.5%	51%	53.4%
Looking for First Regular Job	35	75%	1.6%	1%	0.8%
Unemployed	274	-12.7%	12.8%	8%	7.1%

Student	179	13.3%	8.4%	10%	11.4%
Looking After Home/Family	198	-8.8%	9.3%	9%	8.1%
Retired	333	-6.5%	15.6%	16%	14.5%
Unable to Work	138	5.3%	6.5%	5%	4.2%
Other	8	60%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Total	2,137	+1%	100.0%	100%	100%

Figure 5-12 below shows the total number of workers within each Workplace Zone as defined by CSO. In the context of County Tipperary, there are pockets of relatively higher number of workers in areas around major settlements such as Roscrea, Thurles, Nenagh, and Clonmel. This represents a relatively **good level of employment in the wider environment of Roscrea that could be harnessed in support of Roscrea town**. As indicated in the map, the total number of workers in Roscrea town centre are relatively lower than its suburban and wider surrounding areas. In Roscrea town centre, there are larger number of workers recorded in areas to the west of Main Street and N62. **There is a noticeably lack of workers in the northeast section of Roscrea town centre where there is large plot of employment lands available.**

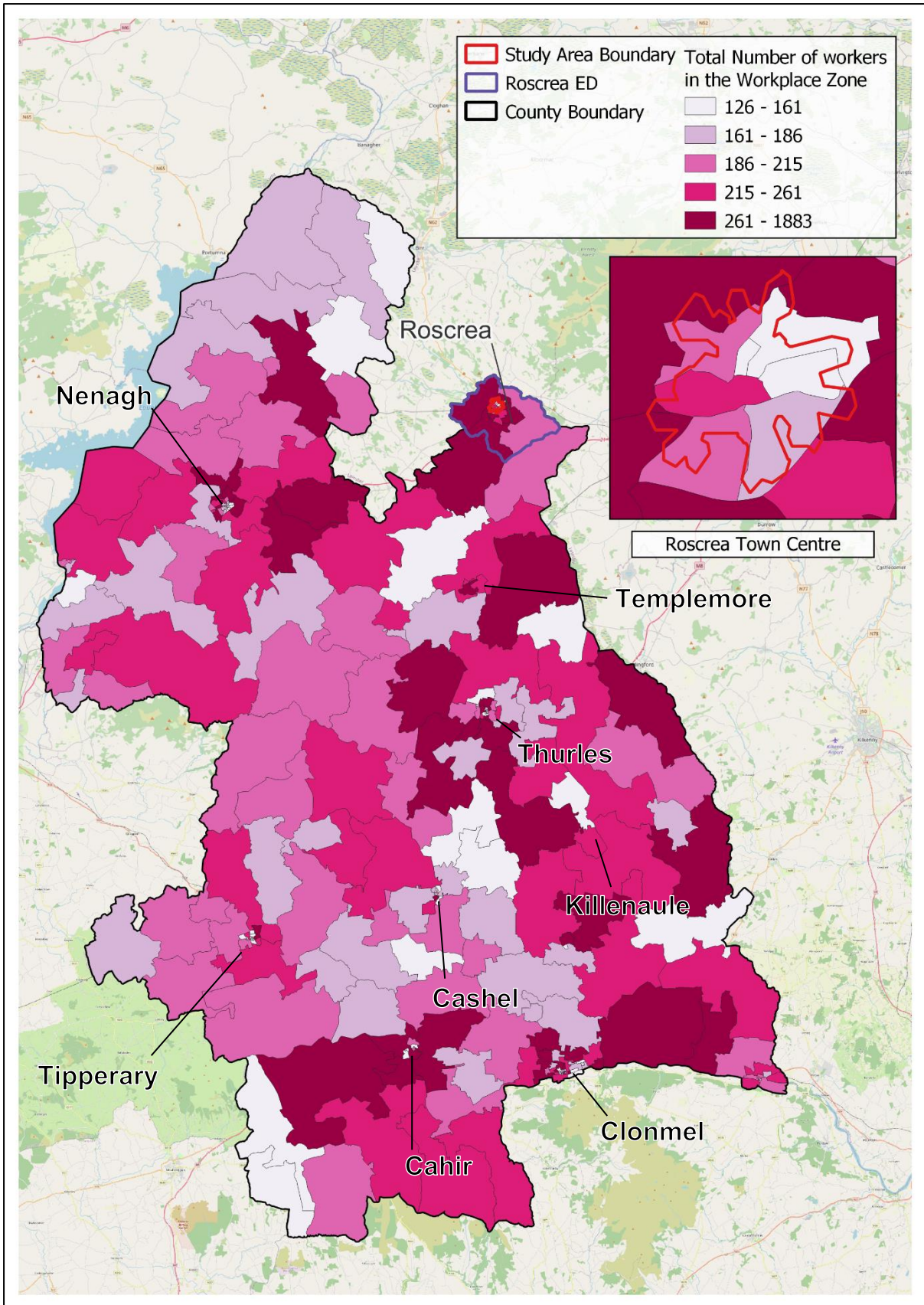


Figure 5-12: Employment in Roscrea Town and County Tipperary in 2016.

5.10.1 Skills and Occupations

Broad range of skillsets available locally

The skills distribution for Roscrea reflects a varied mix of people with non-manual, semi-skilled and manual skilled, and professionals, employers and managers.

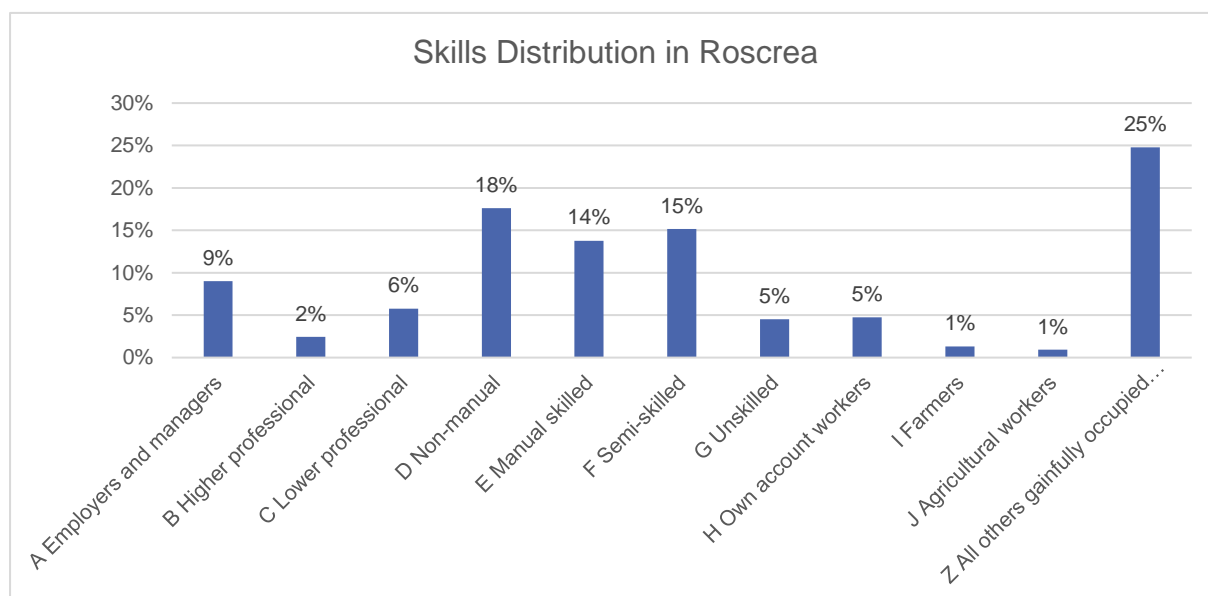


Figure 5-13 Persons in private households by socio-economic group of reference person (Source: CSO 2016)

Most of the workforce within the Study Area comprised 'All others gainfully occupied/unknown' labourers (24.8%) in 2016, followed by 'Non-manual' workers (17.6%). Professional grades comprised 17.2% of the total workforce in 2016, compared to 18.7% in 2011, and represented comparatively lower levels than the average for Tipperary County (26%).

Table 5.5 Persons in private households by socio-economic group of reference person (CSO 2011, 2016)

Socio-economic Group	2011	Summary	2016	Summary	Tipperary County 2016 (%)	State 2016 (%)
A Employers and managers	11.5%	18.7%	9.0%	17.2%	12%	15.5%
B Higher professional	2.7%		2.4%		5%	7.1%
C Lower professional	4.5%		5.8%		10%	11.7%
D Non-manual	16.4%	55.1%	17.6%	55.8%	16%	18.0%
E Manual skilled	13.8%		13.8%		10%	9.3%
F Semi-skilled	15.0%		15.2%		10%	8.6%
G Unskilled	6.1%		4.5%		4%	3.6%
H Own account workers	3.7%		4.7%		5%	5.2%
I Farmers	1.4%	26.2%	1.3%	27%	10%	4.9%
J Agricultural workers	0.4%		0.9%		2%	0.5%
Z All others gainfully occupied / unknown	24.4%		24.8%		16%	15.6%
Total	100%		100%		100%	100%

The occupancy profile for Roscrea residents is broadly similar to Tipperary County, in that, **skilled trades represent the largest category in both Roscrea Town (17.3%) and Tipperary County**

(18.8%). This is generally reflective of the local economy in a smaller town. Significant portion of the workforce are also engaged across a range of professional (6.3%), administrative (6.8%), caring leisure and other service occupations (10.4%), and process plant and machine operatives (13.1%) (Figure 5-14).

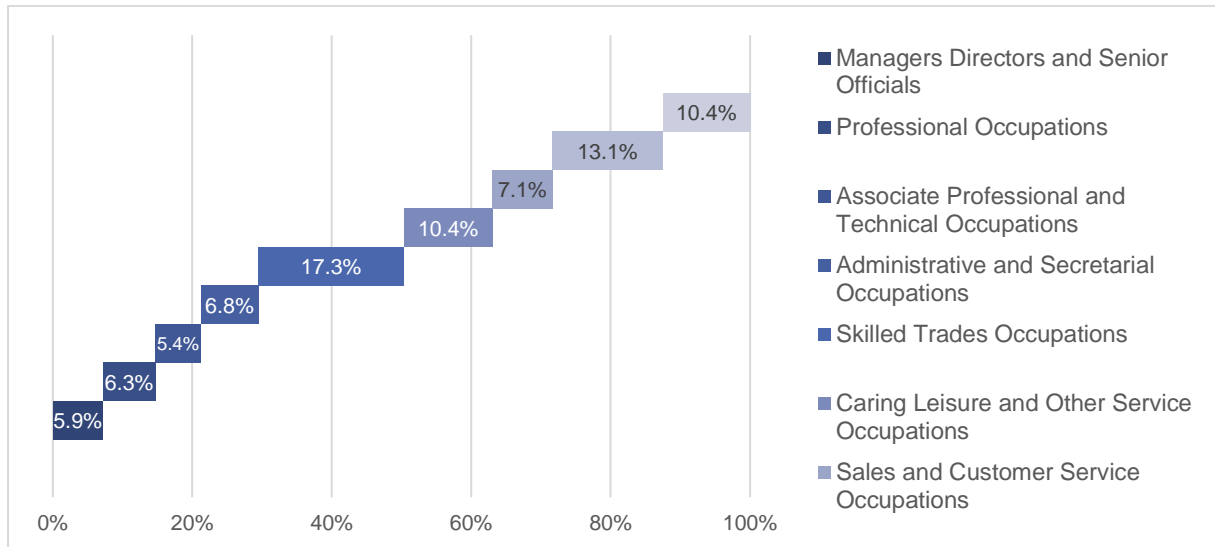


Figure 5-14 Persons at work or unemployed by occupation (Source: CSO 2016)

5.10.2 Economic Activity

Opportunity to strengthen local job creation

Roscrea’s employment level (45.5%) is comparatively lower than that of Tipperary County (51%). Unemployment levels in Roscrea are also around 14.5% higher than County Level of 8.7% and significantly higher in comparison to the State level of 4.3%. This demonstrates the extent of the opportunity to strengthen local job creation which many initiatives set in the TCF Plan can act as a catalyst for.

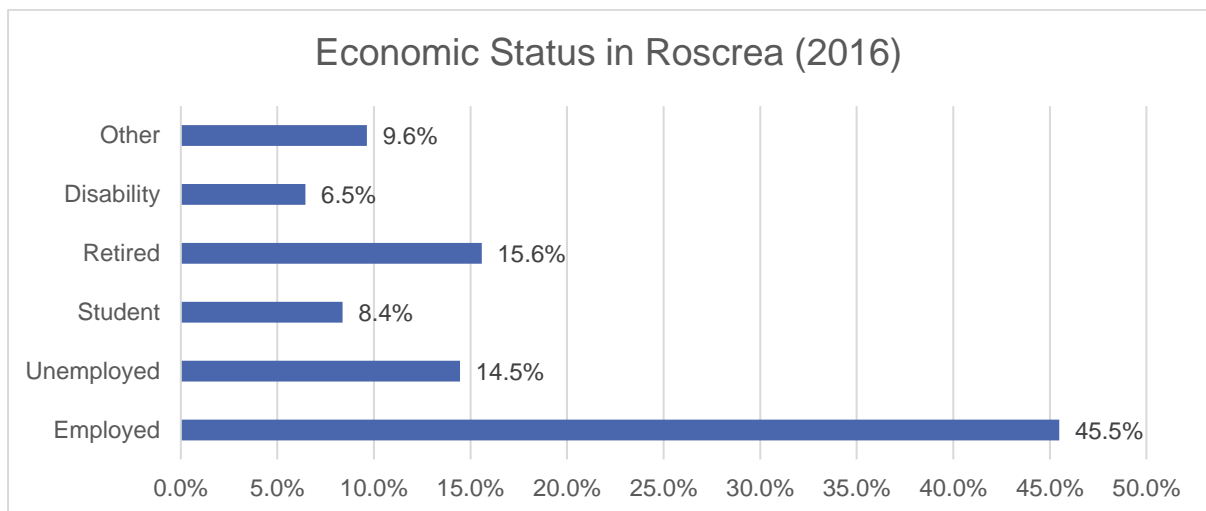


Figure 5-15 Economic status

Strong trade and manufacturing base

Of those employed, Manufacturing Industries (26.5%), Professional Services (20%) and Commerce and Trade (18.7%) account the highest employment categories within the Town. This reflects the town’s strong trade and manufacturing base (Figure 5-16).

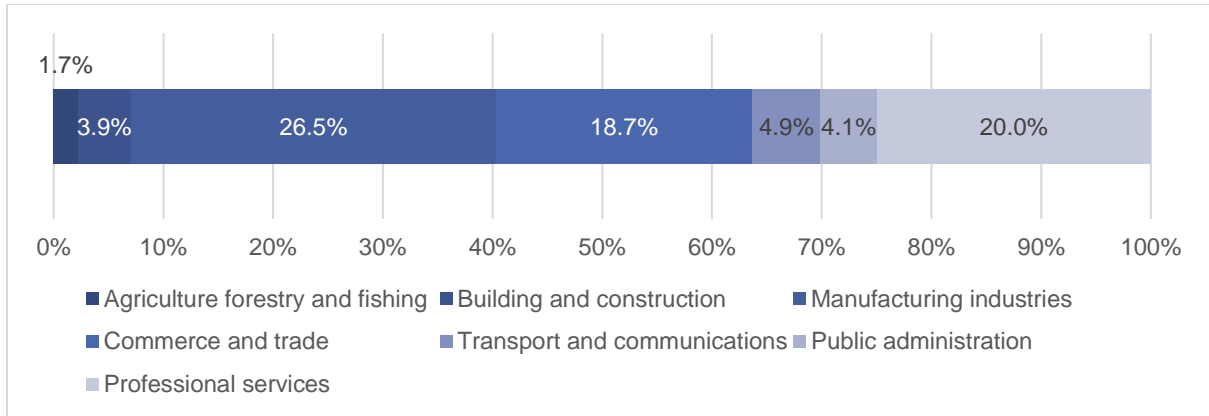


Figure 5-16 Persons at work by Industry

6 Land Use and Economy

The survey of land use shows that Roscrea offers a **comparatively strong offering in terms of retail and the service sector, but that greater diversity is needed to strengthen the overall offer and appeal of the town.** The **greatest detractor for town centre vibrancy currently facing Roscrea is the level of vacancy and dereliction evident.** While this is not a concern unique to Roscrea, it is an issue that is particularly prevalent in the town – with a vacancy rate higher than both the county and national average. Vacancy and dereliction is quite evident within the core at prominent locations on Main Street and Castle Street detracting from the heritage assets and well performing functional uses active within the area. There are a few large-scale disused sites in Roscrea town centre including the former Grants Hotel on Castle Street and the former pharmaceutical factory on Lourdes Road which present major opportunities to revitalise the area and bring more activity and jobs to the town.

Regeneration of disused sites is a priority of the draft LAP and a key opportunity area to strengthen the town centre. **A clear opportunity exists to re-establish the town centre as a residential location, and this can help address the vacancy and dereliction issue.** The review of the housing delivery pipeline shows a clear preference for development outside of the core area as would be consistent with most towns across Ireland. Targeted actions and initiatives to encourage repopulation of the town centre is required and could be facilitated through the TCF approach. Other town centre initiatives promoted and delivered through TCF that focus on improvements to the public realm, for example, will strengthen the appeal of town centre living.

6.1 Strategic Land Use Distribution

Strategic land use distribution in Roscrea is defined in the draft Roscrea Local Area Plan 2023-2029 (the draft LAP), the public consultation on which has concluded on 11 April 2023. This defines where and how jobs, services and facilities can be distributed across the town. This is a critical consideration when considering the redevelopment opportunity for key sites across the town.

Land use zoning in the study area under the draft LAP has included 'Urban Core', 'Amenity', 'Existing Residential', 'New Residential', 'Regeneration', 'Community Services and Infrastructure', 'Employment', and 'Strategic Reserve'. The central location under '**Urban Core**' **aims to consolidate and enhance urban core uses with an emphasis on compact growth.** Extensive lands are designated as 'Community Services and Infrastructure' to the south and to the east of Roscrea town centre. These are intended accommodate and protect civic, religious, community, healthcare, education, and other social and public facilities. It is noted that specific underused areas of the town centre-built fabric are designated as 'Regeneration' in the draft LAP with objectives to 'provide for targeted enterprise and/or residential-led regeneration within the consolidation area on underused sites.' Further details are provided in the following sections.

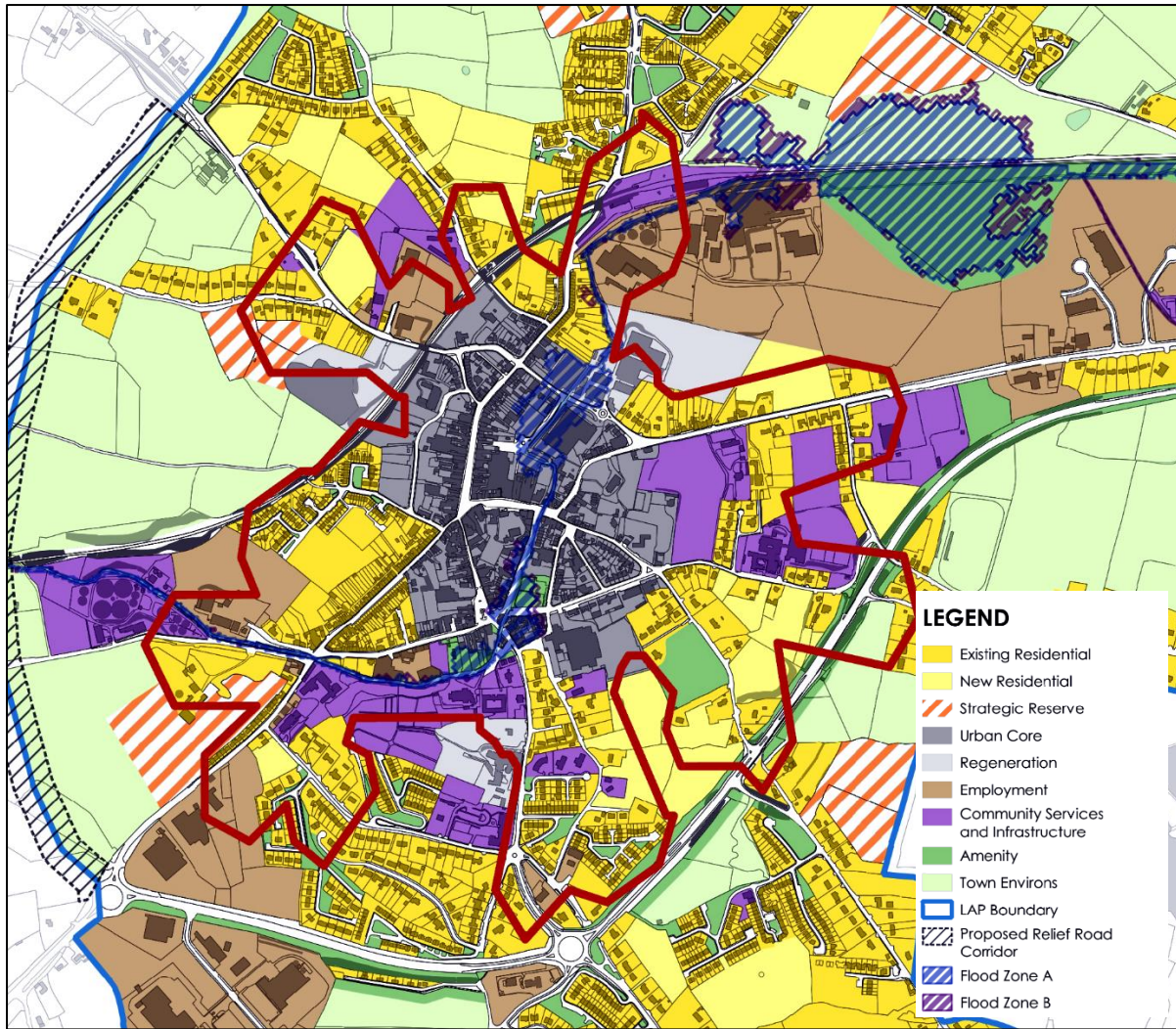


Figure 6-1: Land Use Zoning of Roscrea under Roscrea Local Area Plan 2023-2029 with Study Area Outlined.

6.2 Business Demography

A diverse range of uses within the town centre

A land use analysis undertaken in March 2023 shows the level of existing commercial activity within the study area. This analysis utilises data from GeoDirectory (Q4 2022) which provides a detailed breakdown of area businesses by NACE code and an on-site street survey (March 2023). The results of the survey are presented in Figure 6-2. Figure 6-3 shows the footprint of commercial buildings in the town centre and the wider settlement while detailed commercial activities within the central core or Roscrea town are illustrated in Figure 6.4.

In total, **there are 315 commercial premises in the town, of which 256 are in active use.** The town centre is home to a healthy mix uses most notably in ‘Wholesale and Retail Trade’ (33.2%), but also in ‘Other service activities’ (23%), ‘Accommodation and Food Service Activities’ (10.5%), ‘Human health and social work activities’ (7.8%), and ‘Professional, scientific and technical activities’ (7.4%) uses.

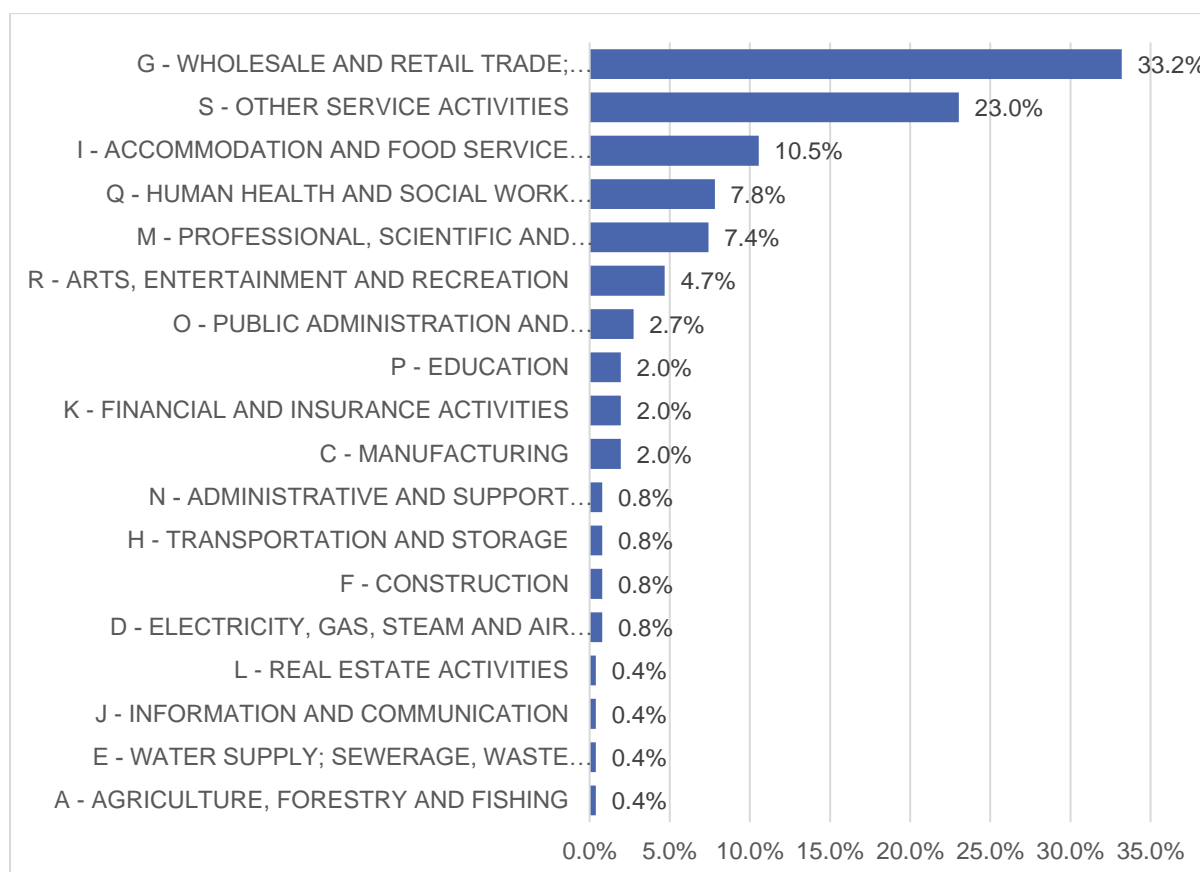


Figure 6-2: Composition of Commercial Activities in the Study Area.

Well performing and located service sector but with scope for improvement

The service sector, which combines activities of S - ‘other service activities’, I - ‘accommodation and food service activities’, H, J, L, M, N, and R, makes up the **largest proportion of the commercial activities** mix in Roscrea town centre at 48%. On national level, the service sector accounted for 49.3% of the commercial sites as of Q4 2022 according to GeoDirectory. It indicates **that Roscrea town has a reasonable comparable service offering, although the level of provision is slightly lower than national average**. A diverse, high quality and functioning service sector is essential for the health of town centres – these uses greatly add to the appeal and time spent within a town centre which has positive knock-on effects for retail and other sectors present in a town. Accommodation and food service activities (I) are concentrated primarily within the Central Core of Roscrea town centre near Main Street, Castle Street, Rosemary Street, and The Mall. The same pattern is presented throughout other commercial activities of service sector, with premises mostly located in central locations within the town centre. While **Roscrea has a reasonable town centre service offer, there is room for improvement**, as reflected in feedback received during the consultation and engagement process for the TCF Plan which **highlighted a lack of hospitality services options and a demand for visitor accommodation in Roscrea town centre. Addressing the accommodation shortfall is a potentially important consideration for the TCF Plan.**

Retail and wholesale sector (G) is the second largest sector in Roscrea town centre accounting for 33.2% of the commercial activities mix, compared with 22.2% nationally. This suggests a comparatively **healthy retail base concentrated within the centre which is a positive indicator for growth and expansion prospects**. The consultation and engagement confirmed the well-performing retail and wholesale sector in Roscrea, with most respondents visiting Roscrea town centre daily or weekly for grocery shopping. Local businesses also believed grocery shopping is the main thing that attracts customers to Roscrea town centre. However, the **consultation also highlighted generally held**

concerns on the ability of small retailers to compete with out-of-town centres and with online shopping.

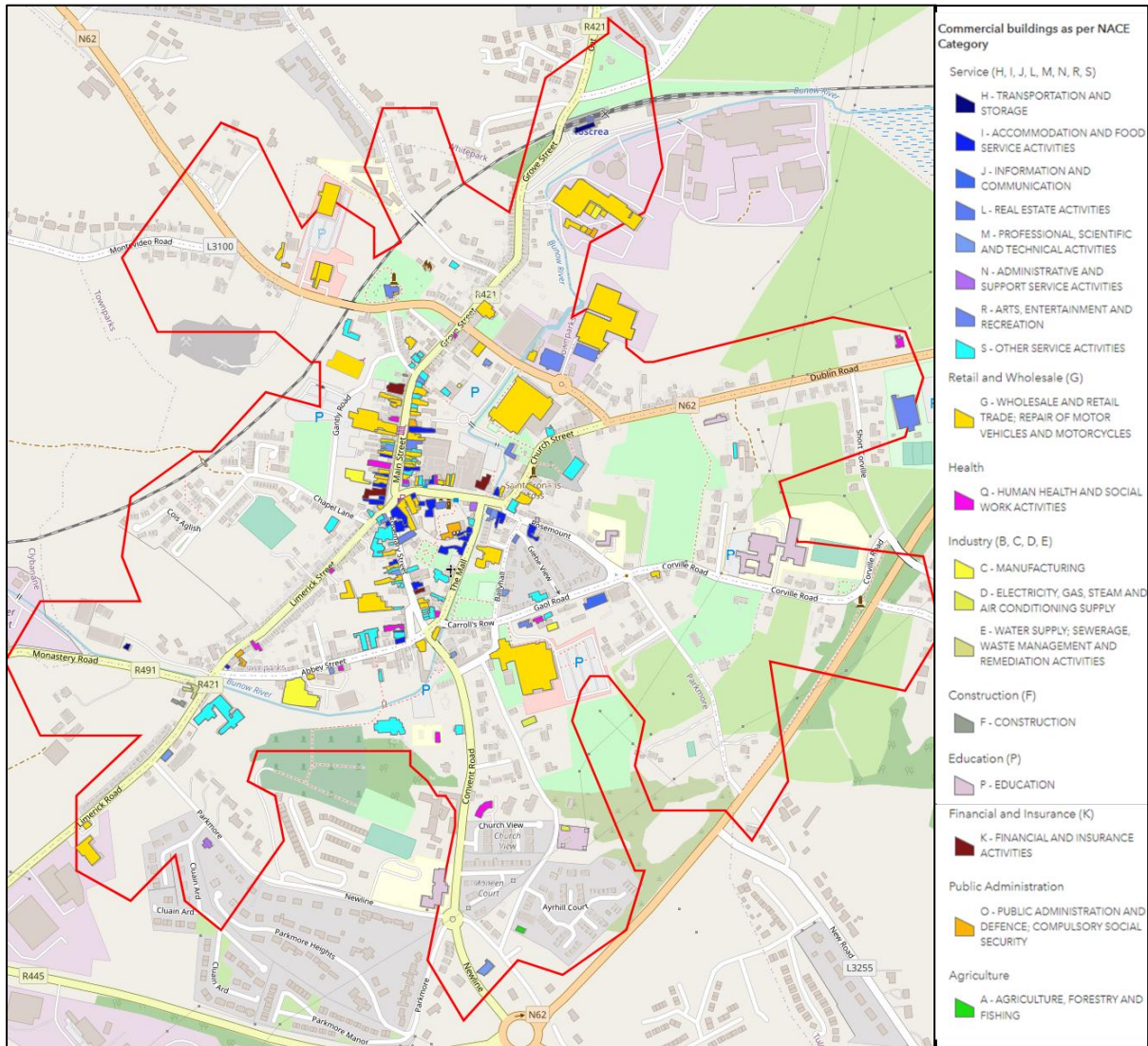


Figure 6-3: Commercial Land Use in the Study Area.

Retail primarily concentrated in town core but opportunities to further consolidate these uses

In terms of spatial distribution, Figure 6-3 and Figure 6-4 show that retail and wholesale activities (G) (highlighted in yellow) are **mostly concentrated along Main Street which is positive news for the health of the core** and the opportunity for consolidation and further growth which is evident given the extent of vacancy within the central . While large convenience retailers like Dunnes Stores, Tesco and Lidl are not situated on Main Street, all are conveniently accessible to the town core. Aldi in particular is only a few minutes walking distance away from Main Street. An **opportunity exists to further enhance and distribute footfall generated by these large retailers into the town centre** – this could potentially be achieved through accessibility initiatives and improvements to the public realm.

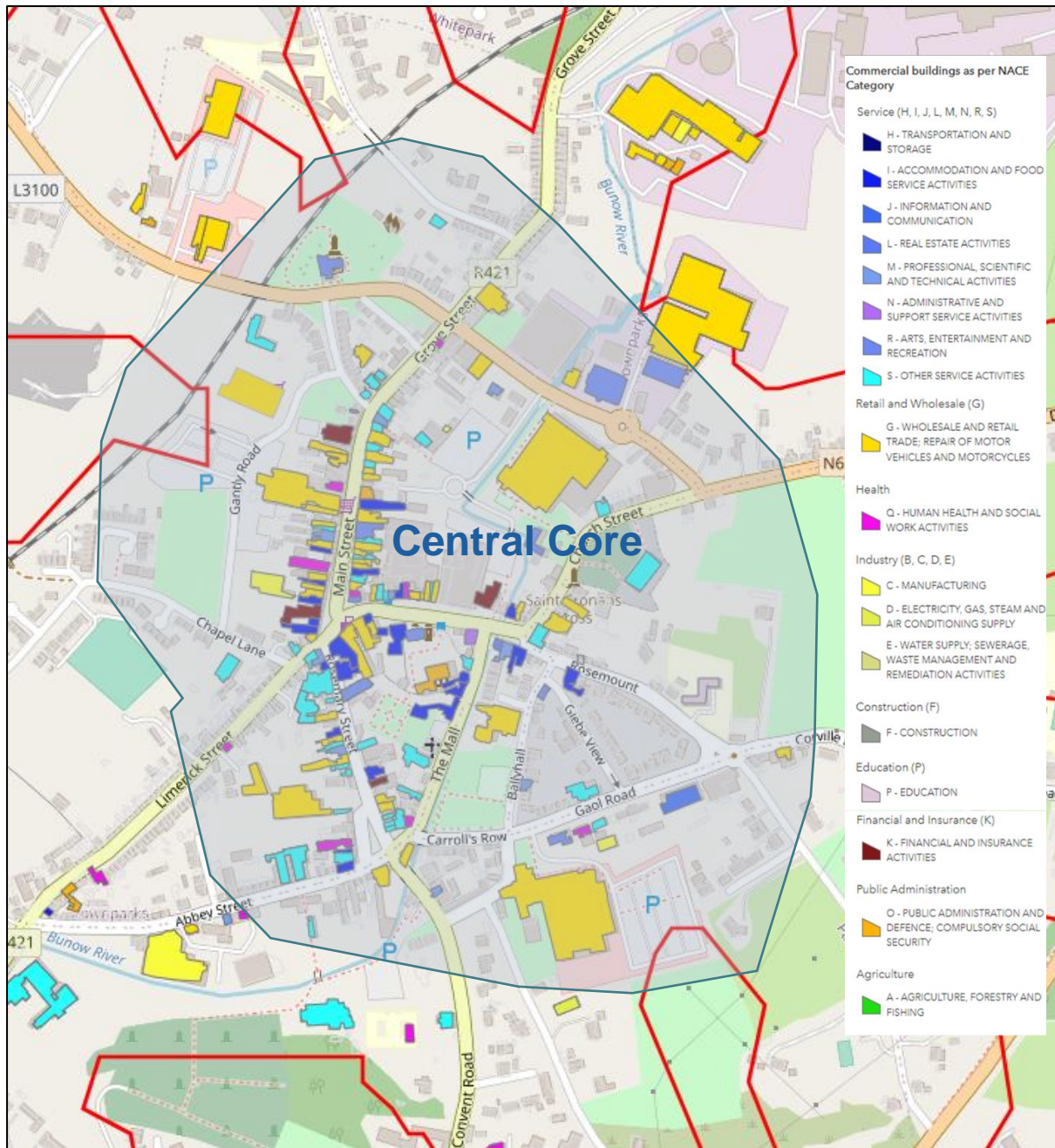


Figure 6-4: Commercial Land Use in the Central Core of Roscrea Town.

The town centre offers a reasonable mix of health and social works (Q) at 7.8% and public administration (O) at 2.7%. Compared with the national figures in Q4 2022 of 9.4% and 2.1% respectively, there is a marginally below-average provision of health and social services situated within the town centre. A full list of healthcare services in Roscrea has been provided in Section 7 Social, Community & Culture. In the town core, health services including dentists, GPs, and pharmacies are accessible in central locations on Main Street, Castle Street, and Grove Street. Mount Carmel Nursing Home on Limerick Road and Abbey Street is located towards the edge of Roscrea town. **Essential local services like these which consistently drive footfall and activity should continue to be encouraged to locate within the central area to help support the wider retail and service offer of the centre.**

In terms of education, there are 4 schools, one school of music and one education centre serving the town. These comprise 2% of the commercial activities mix in Roscrea town centre compared with a

national average of 4.5%. Except for the School of Music, which is located on Rosemount in the Central Core of Roscrea town, other education facilities are all located towards the edge of the Study Area, although still within 10 minutes walking distance.

Financial and insurance activities are centralised along Main Street, Castle Street, and Rosemary Street. These businesses comprise 2% of total commercial activities in the study area, slightly below the national average of 2.6%.

Industry sector (C, D, E) shares 3.4% of the commercial activities mix in Roscrea town centre, lower than the national average of 5.1%. The distribution of these activities is mostly at the edge of the study area. Roscrea Industrial Estate, the largest industrial land use in Roscrea is located outside of the study area at the outer edge of the town.

Tourism is not currently a significant sector within the town despite the unique heritage assets of the town, most notably the Roscrea Castle and Damer House and Gardens complex. The town centre first model offers an opportunity to embed the sector more firmly as a contributor to the local economy and to capitalise more on visitor numbers to local attractions by offering quality, centrally located tourist accommodation. Upgrades and enhancements proposed for the public realm can also, if successfully targeted and delivered, greatly enhance the vibrancy of the town and appeal to tourists, encouraging longer stays and higher spend. A renewed focus on tourism will bring a multitude of benefits in terms of job creation, vibrancy and viability within the centre. Among the most notable of these include the opportunity to promote and capitalise on the town centre position of Roscrea Castle, and the redevelopment of underutilised, derelict town centre sites such as the **former Grant's Hotel and Sacred Heart Convent for hotel accommodation and or event purposes.**

6.3 Vacancy and Dereliction

High level of vacancy detracting from active uses

Roscrea town centre has an **overall commercial vacancy rate of 16.2%**¹ (51 vacant commercial buildings out of 315), with another 2.5% (8 out of 315) of the commercial buildings can be categorised as derelict, as can be seen in Figure 6-5. The **commercial vacancy rate in Roscrea town centre is considered substantially higher than the average commercial vacancy rate of 14.5% across County Tipperary and 14% nationally, as published by GeoDirectory Commercial Buildings Report Q4 2022.** This is a particular challenge for the town centre core with a **lot of vacant and derelict premises at prominent locations on Main Street and Castle Street.** While vacancy does exist in other parts of the town centre, it is less pronounced with no obvious clusters. However, there are several prominent sites of large scale which will need to be addressed to improve the general appeal of the town centre.

Although vacancy can often be most pronounced in town centres, **the relatively high level of experienced in Roscrea compounds the urgent need to address this issue in the town centre.** This is one of the top concerns of the local community as noted by 67% of the community survey respondents who agreed that tackling dereliction and vacancy is a top priority for improving the centre. Prominent sites such as the former Grants Hotel and the former Antigen site on Lourdes Road were often referred to during the consultation in terms of the regeneration and re-utilisation opportunities presented. A description of how vacancy and dereliction present itself on key streets within the town is set out below.

¹ A vacancy and dereliction survey was completed for commercial buildings in the study area using GeoDirectory data (Q4 2022) and an on-site street survey (March 2023). Each property has been geo-located, and a record made of its vacancy/dereliction status.

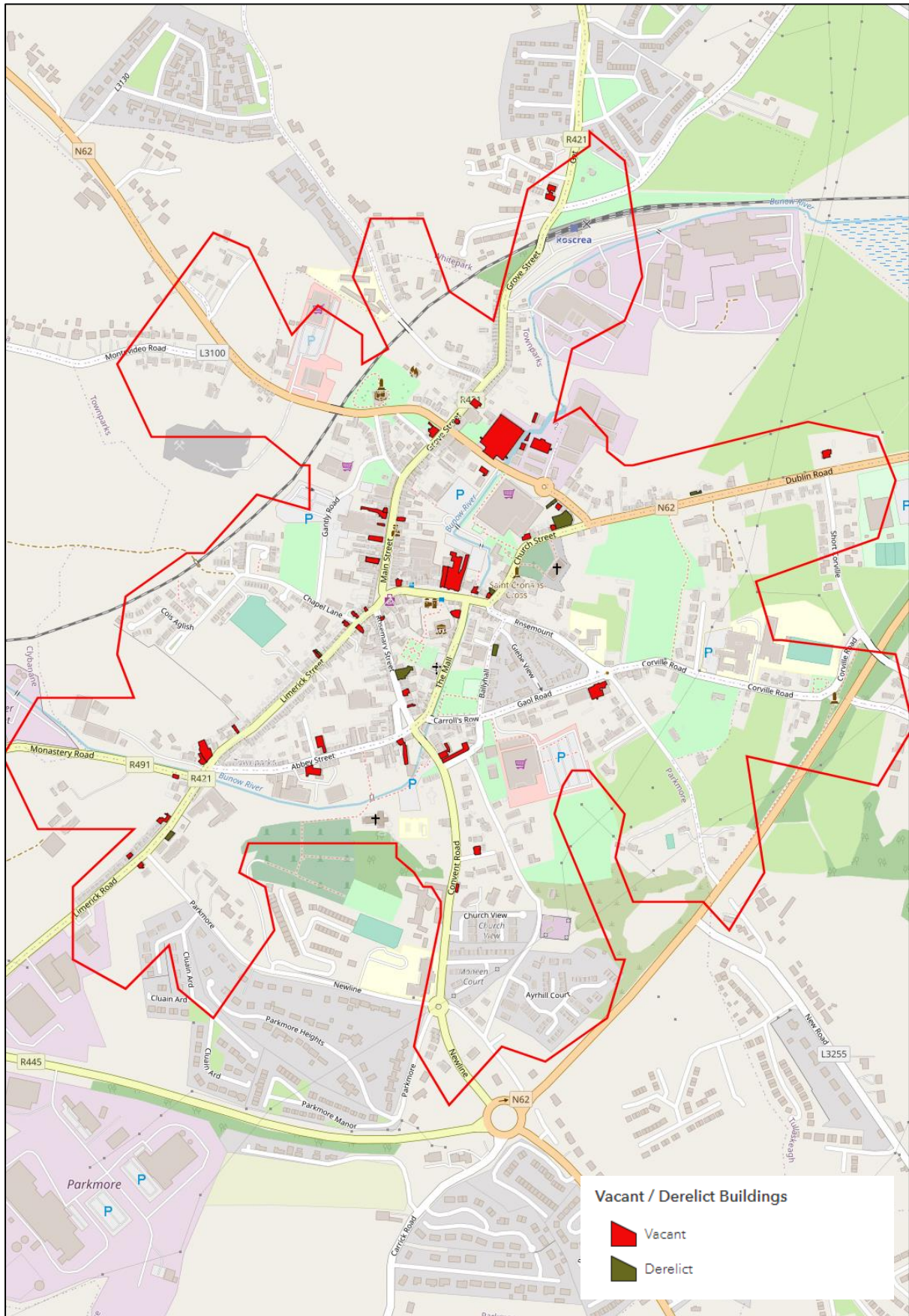


Figure 6-5: Vacancy and Dereliction in the Study Area.

6.3.1 Main Street

There are 6 vacant commercial buildings on Main Street, the primary commercial location in Roscrea. This represents 11.3% of the 53 commercial buildings surveyed on Main Street. These vacant commercial premises are mostly located to the west of Main Street close to Supervalu.



Figure 6-6: Vacant Commercial Building on Main Street.

All vacant premises along Main Street are presented as commercial uses on ground floor and possible office or residential uses on upper floors. While some above shop units could be still in use, it's clear that 3 buildings are fully vacant at both ground and upper floors. **Bringing these vacant buildings into functional use is a key priority which will add to the vibrancy and vitality of the key street in the town.**

6.3.2 Castle Street, Rosemary Street, and The Mall

This triangle area formed by the three streets comprises some of the main features in Roscrea including Roscrea Castle and Roscrea Shopping Centre. The sense of vacancy and dereliction is quite apparent on Castle Street with 3 vacant buildings in a row including the former Grants Hotel facing Roscrea Castle. Grants Hotel was continually highlighted by local people during the consultation with widespread support to reopen the hotel and bring this area back to life.



Figure 6-7: Former Grants Hotel on Castle Street.

There are 3 vacant buildings on Rosemary Street and one relatively large derelict building that greatly detracts from visual amenity in the area. The Mall includes a combination of residential, religious, and commercial uses with only 1 vacant building recorded.

6.3.3 Limerick Street and Abbey Street

Limerick Street is occupied predominantly by residential properties with a limited commercial presence. Abbey Street also is also primarily residential with some commercial and community uses to the south of Abbey Street. The vacancy and dereliction on these streets is a concern, with clusters near Main Street and a few relatively large scale vacant commercial premises on Abbey Street. These include 2 vacant light industrial warehousing in this town centre location (see Figure 6-8).



Figure 6-8: Vacant Bakery at Limerick Street / Abbey Street.

Limerick Street also has vacant residential buildings some of which have fallen into dereliction. There **residential premises located near main street present huge opportunity to be transformed into active town centre living or commercial use.** Tackling long-term vacancy should be placed at the forefront of future development plans for Roscrea town and embedded in the policy making of the Plan.



Figure 6-9: Derelict Residential Building on Limerick Street.

6.3.4 Lourdes Road

Lourdes Road is located towards the edge of Roscrea town centre and is home to large scale commercial activities including Tesco Superstore, Roscrea Gym and other wholesale and warehousing premises. It however has some of the **highest vacancy in the study area with large scale commercial units lying vacant**. This includes the site occupied by former pharmaceutical factory (Antigen) which fronts onto Lourdes Road (Figure 6-10).



Figure 6-10: Former Pharmaceutical Factory Site (Antigen) on Lourdes Road.

6.4 Regeneration Sites and Residential Zoned Land Tax

Efficient utilisation of vacant and derelict sites is a key feature of current planning policy which can be addressed through the TCF Plan. The Draft Roscrea Local Area Plan 2023- identifies 13 regeneration sites and regeneration areas in the town centre area that are suitable for residential/mixed use development. These regeneration sites include brownfield sites, greenfield sites and infill sites in the town centre that are zoned 'Urban Core' or 'Regeneration' in the draft LAP and are currently underused or disused. These sites remain vacant, and derelict as confirmed in the March 2023 TCF surveys many of which form the focus on TCF projects– including the former pharmaceutical factory site (Antigen) on Lourdes Road and the disused sites on the junction of Grove Street and The Crescent (Figure 6-11).

Tipperary County Council is committed to landowners of sites with potential for regeneration and development to enable their planning and delivery as part of the Town Centre First programme. The draft map of Roscrea for Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) as presented in Figure 6-12 has outlined 11 vacant/idle sites in Roscrea town centre that are currently zoned as 'Town Centre' with the objective 'to provide and enhance for Town Centre Mixed Use facilities' and are in scope for RZLT.



Figure 6-11: Vacant building on Grove Street / The Crescent.

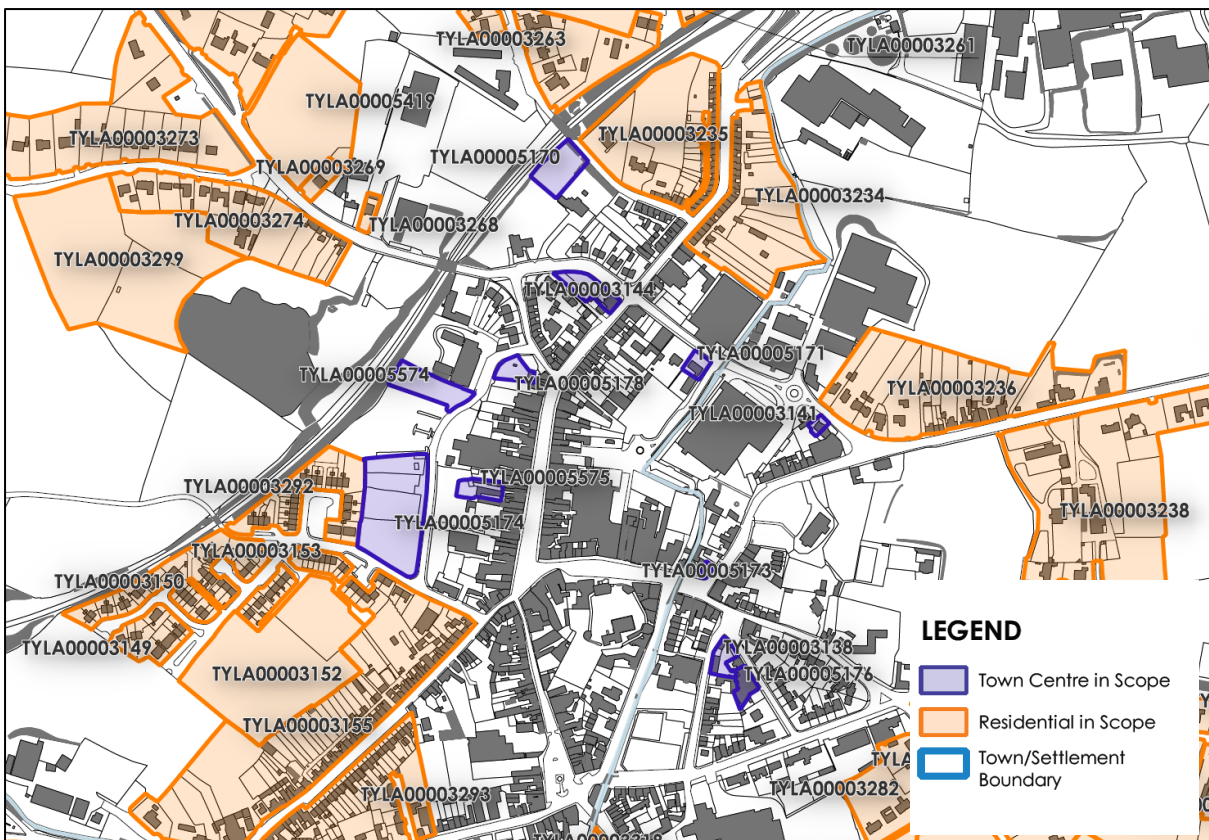


Figure 6-12: RZLT Roscrea Draft Map (Source: Tipperary County Council).

8 out of 11 vacant/idle sites outlined were also identified or partially included in the draft LAP as the proposed regeneration sites. These include:

- Regeneration Site no.3 Grove Street – TYLA00003144 (RZLT)
- Regeneration Site no.6 Golden Grove Road – TYLA00005170 (RZLT)

- Regeneration Site no.8 Gantly Road – TYLA00005574 (RZLT)
- Regeneration Site no.9 Gantly Road/Chapel Lane – TYLA00005174 (RZLT)
- Regeneration Site no.10 Gantly Road/Green Street – TYLA00005178 (RZLT)
- Regeneration Site no.11 Lourdes Road/Grove Street – TYLA00005171 (RZLT)
- Regeneration Site no.12 Lourdes Road/Church Street – TYLA00003141 (RZLT)
- Regeneration Site no.13 Ballyhall/Glebe View – TYLA00003138 (RZLT)

With both designations from the draft LAP and the RZLT, these 8 vacant/idle sites can be a catalyst for regeneration of Roscrea town centre and should be emphasised in the development of the TCF Plan.

6.5 Residential Planning Pipeline

Residential development in the pipeline situated on edge of centre sites

A key focus of Town Centre First is to encourage town centre living. A review of the residential planning pipeline carried out in March 2023 was undertaken to understand the potential for this based on recent residential development proposals.

There are 7 granted permissions in and around the study area, providing a total of 177 residential units in Roscrea (

Table 6.1). Just two of these (comprising 11 units in total) are located within the study area, but on the outer edges rather than the core (Figure 6-13). Records from Building Control Management System (BCMS) show social housing development activity in the town. Of these, there are 9 units yet to be commenced and 2 apartment units already constructed. Records from BCMS indicate that none of the 5 granted residential developments outside of the study area have commenced, with 166 residential units still to be provided. It is also noted that all residential planning permissions in the pipeline are proposed as residential uses only, with no non-residential uses such as creche or retail units included.

Table 6.1: Residential Planning Pipeline.

Reg. Ref.	Scheme	Status	Date Granted	Units	Non-residential Uses
1198965	Social housing development at Grove St., Roscrea, Tipperary	Granted	16/02/2022	9	-
18600032	Carrolls Row, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary	Completed (Retention)	03/06/2021	2	-
201077	Glencarrick, Scart, Roscrea	Granted	24/05/2021	70	-
20199	The Grange, Templemore Road, Grange, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary	Granted	03/11/2020	23	-
19600927	Tullaskeagh, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary	Granted	04/06/2020	15	-
19600393	Whitethorn Hill, Tullaskeagh, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary	Granted	23/07/2019	26	-
201585	Templemore Road, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary	Granted	12/03/2018	32	-
Total				177	

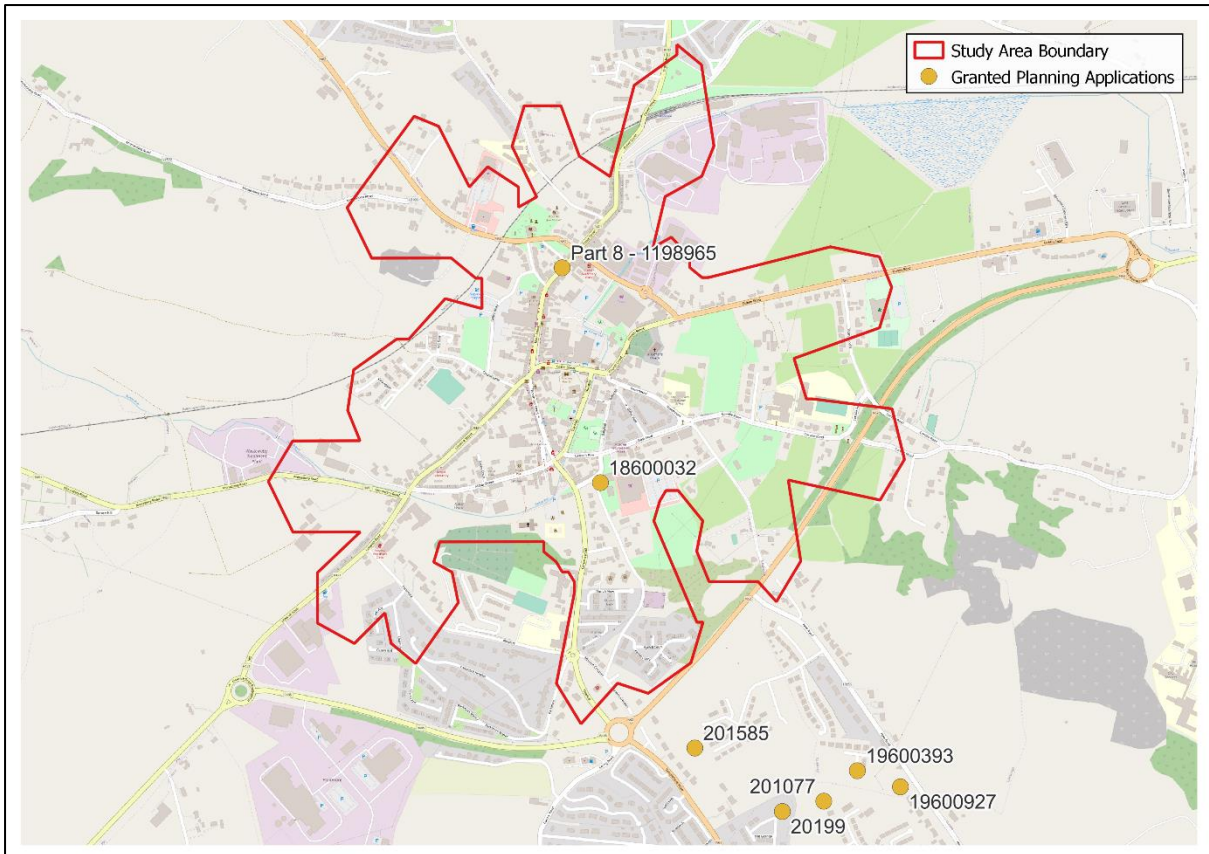


Figure 6-13: Residential Planning Pipeline Location.

Opportunity to promote adaptive reuse of vacant town centre buildings for residential use

The Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028 seeks to deliver 66% of new population and housing provision within urban centres, and 34% to the rural settlements and wider rural areas. Roscrea is designated as a District Town within the settlement hierarchy. It is **targeted to grow its population by 20% by 2031 with a focus on compact growth and appropriate density.**

The draft LAP projected that by 2029 (the LAP lifespan), it will be necessary to cater for a population of approximately 6,293 persons, an additional 847 persons over 2016 population. This projected population growth would result in an estimated requirement for approximately 315 additional housing units. The current residential planning pipeline indicates there are 177 residential units with planning permission in place, 166 units of which are concentrated to the south of the N62 in the area between Templemore Road and the Scart/Tullaskeagh areas.

More active encouragement is needed to promote the re-population and development of the town centre as a place to live. As detailed in the Section 4.4 of this report, the Study Area has a residential vacancy rate of 13.9% recorded in 2016 which is substantially higher than the average residential vacancy rate in County Tipperary of 10.8%. There is an **opportunity for Roscrea to regenerate derelict sites in the town centre for this purpose, to promote the adaptive reuse of vacant buildings and facilitate more mixed-use residential-led developments in town centre locations.**

6.6 Town Centre Footfall Survey

The level of footfall within a town centre is the best guide to its overall health and vitality. Footfall surveys were undertaken in Roscrea focusing on Main Street, Castle Street, and Rosemary Street on a Saturday in March 2023 and a Wednesday in May 2023, the results of which are shown in Figure 6-14 and Figure 6.15.

Overall and encouragingly, the highest footfall in the surveys is recorded on Main Street, followed by Castle Street. Footfall on Rosemary Street is significantly lower in comparison.

Key observations from the surveys are set out below:

Main Street

- Midweek, the town square experiences low morning and afternoon foot traffic but tends to increase in the evening as people leave school and work.
- Supervalu located on Main Street, alongside several clothing stores and takeaways, appears to be one of the main generators of footfall in the area. Those who are parked in front of the business or in on the off-street parking account for most of the foot traffic, with some pedestrians also moving to the nearby Castle Street.
- Set-down parking, including quick trips to specific establishments, influenced the amount of traffic on Main Street.

Castle Street

- The bus stop on Castle Street was a key generator of footfall during the midday survey midweek.
- The doctor's surgery, town shopping centre, and pharmacy were all clear contributors and generators of footfall on the street.
- The increase in footfall apparent in the afternoon appears to be attributable to the finish time of local schools which brought more people to the cafes and shops along the street.

Rosemary Street

- The foot traffic on a typical Wednesday was notably lower than it was on Main Street and Castle Street, although it increased in the afternoon because of people leaving work and schools closing for the day.
- The rise in the afternoon midweek could be explained by the number of takeaways opening, including Jumbo Chinese takeaway and Tasty Spice Roscrea.

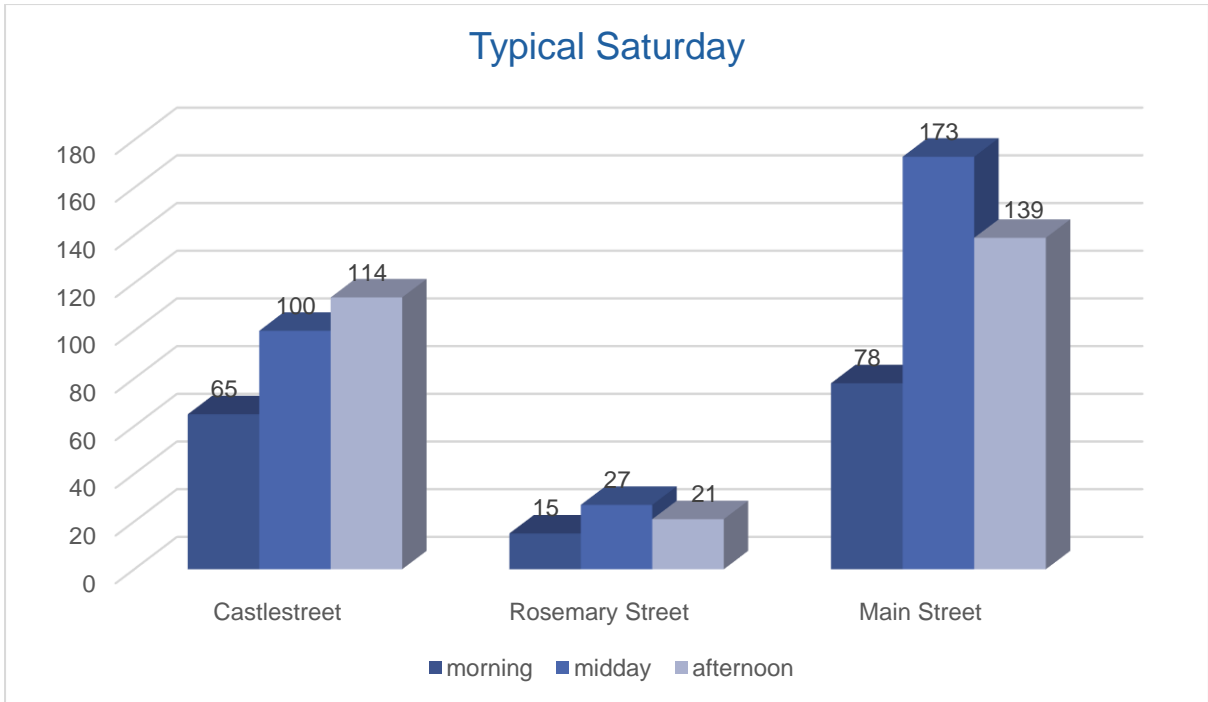


Figure 6-14: Footfall Survey Results for Roscrea Town Centre.

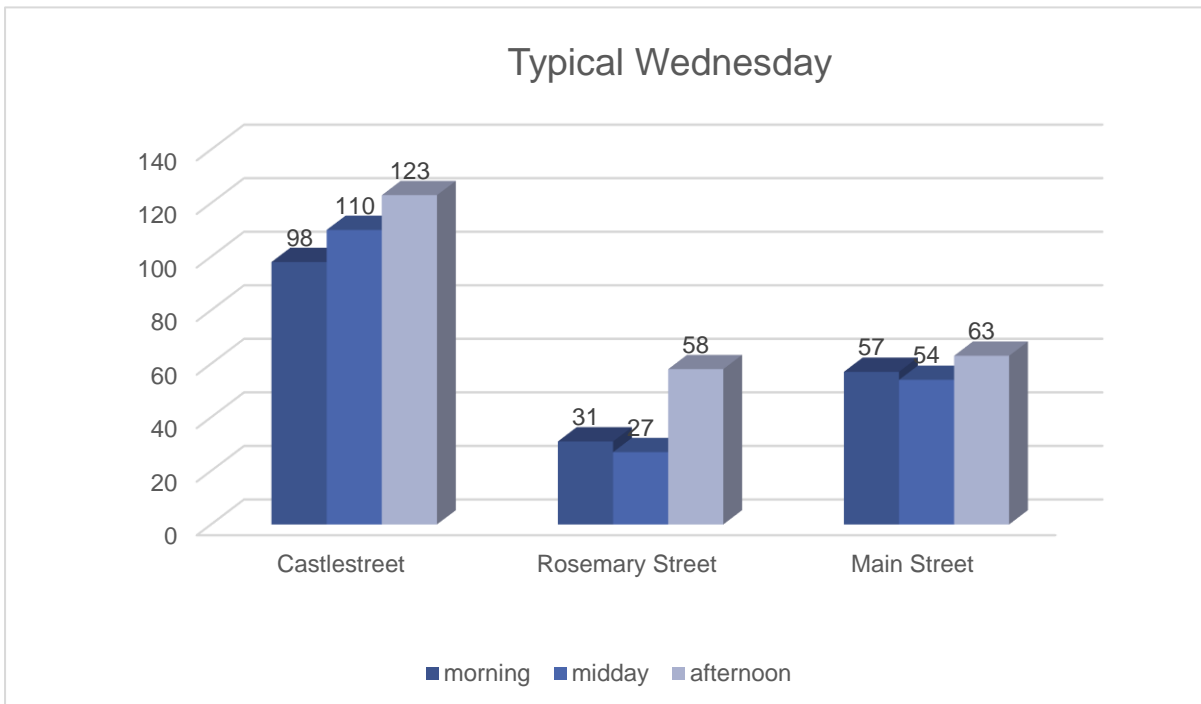


Figure 6-15: Footfall Survey Results for Roscrea Town Centre on a typical Wednesday

7 Consultation

7.1 Overview of Consultation Process

The consultation and engagement phase to inform the development of the TCF Plan took place over several weeks in March 2023. The engagement methods were selected to encourage a wide participation amongst Roscrea’s business and resident communities.

A mix of in-person, virtual events, focus group sessions with key groups, semi-structured interviews with local retailers, and online community and business surveys were undertaken during this time. In total, approximately 335 to 465 individuals participated in the consultation process, which equals to c.6% to c.9% of the population in Roscrea settlement (5,446 as recorded in 2016), representing a satisfactory engagement rate in this consultation.

A high-level summary of the main findings and feedback from the consultation and engagement process is provided below. For further detail of consultation events and survey, please refer to the *Consultation and Engagement Report: Roscrea Town Centre First Plan*.

7.2 In-Person and Virtual Consultation Events

A series of in-person and virtual consultation events took place during March 2023 including two in-person events and one online session. The feedback from these events can be summarised under common topics such as recreational activities, community, vacancy and dereliction, and employment.



Figure 7-1: Public Consultation in the Black Mills, Roscrea.

Greater diversity and choice in amenities required

The good work of the sporting communities was emphasised and championed confirming a sufficient provision of sport facilities in Roscrea. However, there is a concern regarding the availability of recreational activities outside of the sporting domain. A frequent response from the public consultation is a lack of general recreation activities, aside from sports, which are available to the public outside of daytime hours. A general need to improve the quality and provision of community facilities and initiatives was highlighted and, on several occasions, Abbey Hall was mentioned as an underutilised asset that could facilitate community functions and initiatives.

Strong enthusiasm to bring about positive change

Community spirit and civic pride was mentioned throughout the consultation with many suggesting a need to bring the community closer together and create a greater sense of community and active participation. This is suggestive of the **enthusiasm of local people to bring about positive change** – good news for the TCF approach and the forthcoming Plan projects.

Consensus on the need to tackle vacancy and dereliction

Vacancy and dereliction within the town centre was continually highlighted at every event the former Grant's Hotel and Sacred Heart Convent commonly referred to.

More local employment opportunities needed

Employment was a frequently raised issue. Concerns highlighted include the perceived lack of inward investment, a lack of high paying jobs, and the need for investment in the town. Tackling vacancy and dereliction was once again emphasised in this regard, with lots of discussion on the possible redevelopment of the former pharmaceutical factory site (Antigen) on Lourdes Road for new employment purposes.

Widespread support for improvements to public realm

Participants also called for improvements to the public realm – to address accessibility and connectivity issues, improve pedestrian access and encourage both the development and active use of green/blue routes and cycleways. There were also calls to improve public transport options available within the town. Others called for enhancements to public amenities such as public garden, square, and playground, and better public realm with a sense of safety.

7.3 Focused Sessions

Local groups were offered the opportunity to meet with the consultation team for focused engagement sessions. The project team visited local schools Corville National School and Coláiste Phobal Ros Cré where they heard that safety and security are among the key concerns for students, both from anti-social and criminal activities and in relation to general road safety issues. Young people also highlighted a real lack of recreational facilities/activities in the town especially for non-sporting activities.

The consultation team also met with members of the Autism Awareness Hub who agreed that Roscrea has been “welcoming” to their cause and what they are trying to achieve. However, there is a feeling that Roscrea lacks a safe place to bring young children with autism to and they highlighted a need for more facilities and improvements to the public realm that would respond to the needs of people with autism. Among the measures suggested were more disabled parking/age friendly parking, safer walkways, and a Family Resource Centre.

A workshop was also held with local Councillors as facilitated by the Tipperary County Council Town Regeneration Officer. The Councillors highlighted the many historic, sporting and community strengths of Roscrea town. Challenges referred to include the lack of an IDA presence in the town, the need for a unified, strategic vision amongst local community groups, and issues associated with drugs and substance misuse in the town.

7.4 Retailer Interviews

The Consultation team conducted semi structured interviews with 10 retailers to provide perspectives on the economic base of the town and the role and function of the town centre.

The responses painted a relatively poor picture of the health and performance of local retail trade sector with clear room for greater support. The main challenges or issues they face include competition from online retailers, competition from the neighbouring towns, and competition from the large supermarket chains in the town. To address these challenges and issues, local retailers feel it would be useful to

tackle the derelict buildings and high vacancy rate, to increase bins and frequent bin collection services, and to bring industry and investment to the town to address lack of high paying jobs and increase footfall.

7.5 Online Community Survey

A total of 25 questions were included as part of the community survey with a total of 335 valid responses received via this channel. Facts and figures presented below showcase some of the key findings collected from the online community survey, with further details included in the *Consultation and Engagement Report: Roscrea Town Centre First Plan*.

80%

Of the people surveyed were living and/or working in Roscrea. The majority (63%) had lived in Roscrea for more than 20 years.



68%

Of the people surveyed were either employed or self-employed, full time or part time.



38%

Of the respondents indicated that they would spend more time in the town if there were more small shops, cafes, and restaurants available.



67%

highlighted addressing dereliction and vacancy as one of the top priorities for improving Roscrea town centre



53%

believe the development of hospitality sector is Roscrea's biggest challenges, followed by town centre vacancy and dereliction (50%), and employment opportunities (46%)



31%

pointed to a lack of options in hospitality services, especially visitor accommodations.



57% of respondents visit Roscrea town centre daily for 'top-up' grocery shopping, while 66% of the respondents visit weekly for food and grocery shopping.



81% of the respondents travel to and around Roscrea by private car. Another 15% of the respondents' primary travel mode is walking.

The last 3 open ended questions queried the important issues, actions, and priorities for the Roscrea TCF Plan. Responses were grouped and analysed under common themes. Business and employment creation, and road and transport related issues were chosen by the respondents as the top two priorities to be addressed in the Roscrea TCF Plan. Community-based approaches and investment and employment incentives are among the most popular actions suggested to tackle the issues mentioned. In terms of a vision for Roscrea, **supports to grow business, employment and tourism in the town were selected as the top priorities.**

7.6 Online Business Survey

Similar to the community survey, a total of 25 questions were included as part of the online business survey. 43 businesses responded to the survey. The survey sought answers on what it's like to run a business in Roscrea with a specific focus on identifying the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for local businesses. A selection of key findings is provided below:



41

Businesses surveyed are based in the town centre.



26

Businesses surveyed have 5 or less employees.



27

Businesses surveyed have operated at their current location for over 10 years



26

Businesses believed that “Roscrea business environment can be improved significantly for enterprise growth to be realised”.



Accessibility to motorway network and strong growth potential were highlighted as Roscrea’s main strengths as a place for doing business.



Top three priorities to help drive economic development in Roscrea identified by respondents:

- ❖ Promoting a pro-business culture.
- ❖ Working with the IDA to attract Foreign Direct Investment.
- ❖ Providing the necessary infrastructure for businesses to succeed.



5 out of the 7 businesses who were trying to access grants to upgrade vacant or derelict buildings found the endeavour difficult and unproductive.

When asked what important issues should be prioritised in the Roscrea TCF Plan, 10 businesses out of 21 **emphasised the need to create employment in Roscrea**. The vision for Roscrea envisaged by local businesses reflected the same sentiment, with 10 out of 19 businesses stating that they'd like to see Roscrea develop a more supportive environment for local businesses and employers.

8 Social, Community and Culture

Community, Cultural and Social Infrastructure includes a wide range of services and facilities that contribute to quality of life. It is a **key part of the fabric of an area, not simply for wellbeing, but also in creating a sense of place and local identity for the population** of the area. The Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028 under its ‘Town Centres and Place-making’ chapter lays emphasis on some key aspects of place-making, which includes (but is not limited):

“To support and facilitate a collaborative approach to the regeneration and revitalisation of our towns to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant, and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as service, social, cultural, and recreational hubs for the local community...”

[Chapter 7, p. 111]

Roscrea provides all the functions and services associated with a small town of its scale and character. The quality of built heritage evident at key locations in the town and the retail and service offer of the town are important elements that, with further support and enhancement through targeted interventions, can contribute to higher activity levels and a livelier, healthier and prosperous town centre that will attract people to live, work and visit the town centre.

There is a significant range services and facilities catering to the immediate needs of the residents with around 160 social, community and cultural infrastructure within and bordering the town centre. The facilities are visibly focused in or around the core of the town, with some located on the edges of the centre. These services and facilities contribute to quality of life and form a key part of the fabric of an area, for wellbeing as well as creating a sense of place and local identity for the population of the area.

There is a **higher concentration of retail, arts/cultural and tourism facilities and healthcare services within the town centre core, with some public open spaces and recreational facilities also available within the town centre.** Most education and childcare facilities are located outside of the centre core, with only 1 primary, 1 post primary and 1 third level education facility located within the town centre. While there are community facilities located within the town centre, there is still some scope for greater diversity, as also identified in the new Local Area Plan period (2023-2029).

The towns unique and historic core has been acknowledged in the Local Area Plan 2023-2029 and Roscrea has been identified in the Fáilte Ireland’s tourism programme called ‘Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands’. Roscrea is rich in architectural and historical heritage, and the Roscrea Enhancement Plan, 2013 recognises it as one of the country’s oldest towns and sets out a strategy for the setting of historical assets and the key arrival points to the central area. The Local Area Plan 2023-2029 identifies the Roscrea Castle and Damer House and gardens complex as striking and outstanding historical assets in the town centre and key assets to be managed to promote tourism and tourist related businesses. Tourism in Roscrea, as of 2019 recorded around 16,900 visitors to the Roscrea Heritage Centre and Grounds.

The Public Consultation carried out in Roscrea Town documented a range of suggestions for improvements to community, art/cultural spaces, open/recreational spaces, and retail within the town centre core. Examples included more event spaces, cafes, community halls, and the overall improvement to the vitality of the town centre – which reflects a general requirement for a safe and vibrant space for people to gather in town.

Methodology

The Study Area for the purpose of this TCF Plan is defined by the Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028, “10-minute” town concept, whereby community facilities and services are accessible within a short walking timeframe. The Town Profile Plan for Roscrea, set out under the Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028 illustrates the town boundary, compact growth area, walking and cycling distances and other relevant planning opportunities and constraints. The Development Plan further identifies the town’s *‘relatively compact nature of the town and its suitability to support the ‘10-minute town concept’ and active travel is evident’*.

The Vibrancy and Amenity study, hence, adopts the 10-minute town concept to establish the level of amenity and social/cultural infrastructure that is available within walking or cycling distance of the town and what use categories will require improvements to facilitate further development within the area and which may be suitable for further consideration as TCF projects. This section will also note any relevant and applicable suggestions/observations arising from the public consultation carried out by KPMG Future Analytics in March 2023. The list of facilities identified for the purpose of this study has been detailed under Table 8.1, and Figure 8-1 illustrates the location and surrounding context of these facilities within Study Area defined for this TCF Plan.

A large number of public and private geospatial datasets were used in the course of the survey, including but not limited to:

- 2022, 2016 and 2011 Census Boundaries and Statistics;
- 2022 OSi and ESRI Ireland Basemaps;
- 2022 Google Places Dataset;
- 2021 OSM Ireland POI Datasets – Ireland and Northern Ireland;
- 2012-2022 Department of Education and Skills - Irish Schools;
- 2022 QQI Register of Private Higher Education Institutions in Ireland;
- 2022 Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Reports – Registered Childcare Facilities;
- 2022 HSE Records – ‘Find Your Local Health Service’; and
- 2022 Cork City Council Community Support Dataset.

Table 8.1 Community and Social Infrastructure Categories applied to the Assessment

Category	Facility Type
Education Facilities (5)	Primary, Primary-Special, Post-Primary, Third Level, Further Education and other lifelong Training Centres
Childcare Facilities (3)	Registered Childcare Facilities incl. Full Day, Part-Time and Sessional services
Community Facilities (incl. Libraries) (8)	Community Centres and meeting halls, Libraries, Senior and Youth Centres/Cafes and Day Care Facilities, Community Gardens/Allotments
Arts and Cultural Facilities and Tourist Attractions (13)	Artist workspaces, arts centres, attractions, companies, education facilities, community organisations, creatives workspace, event producers, festivals, galleries, monuments, murals, museums, production companies, recording studios, resource organisations, tours, venues etc.
Healthcare Services (22)	Hospitals, health centres, doctors and specialty clinics, nursing homes, mental health services and other therapy providers
Open Space and Recreation (16)	Parks, Playing Pitches, Playgrounds, MUGAs, sports centres and clubs, leisure centres, gyms and training facilities, swimming pools, walking and cycling routes
Religious Institutions (10)	Churches, multi-faith centres and other places of worship
Retail Centres and Services (83)	District, Neighbourhood and Local Centres

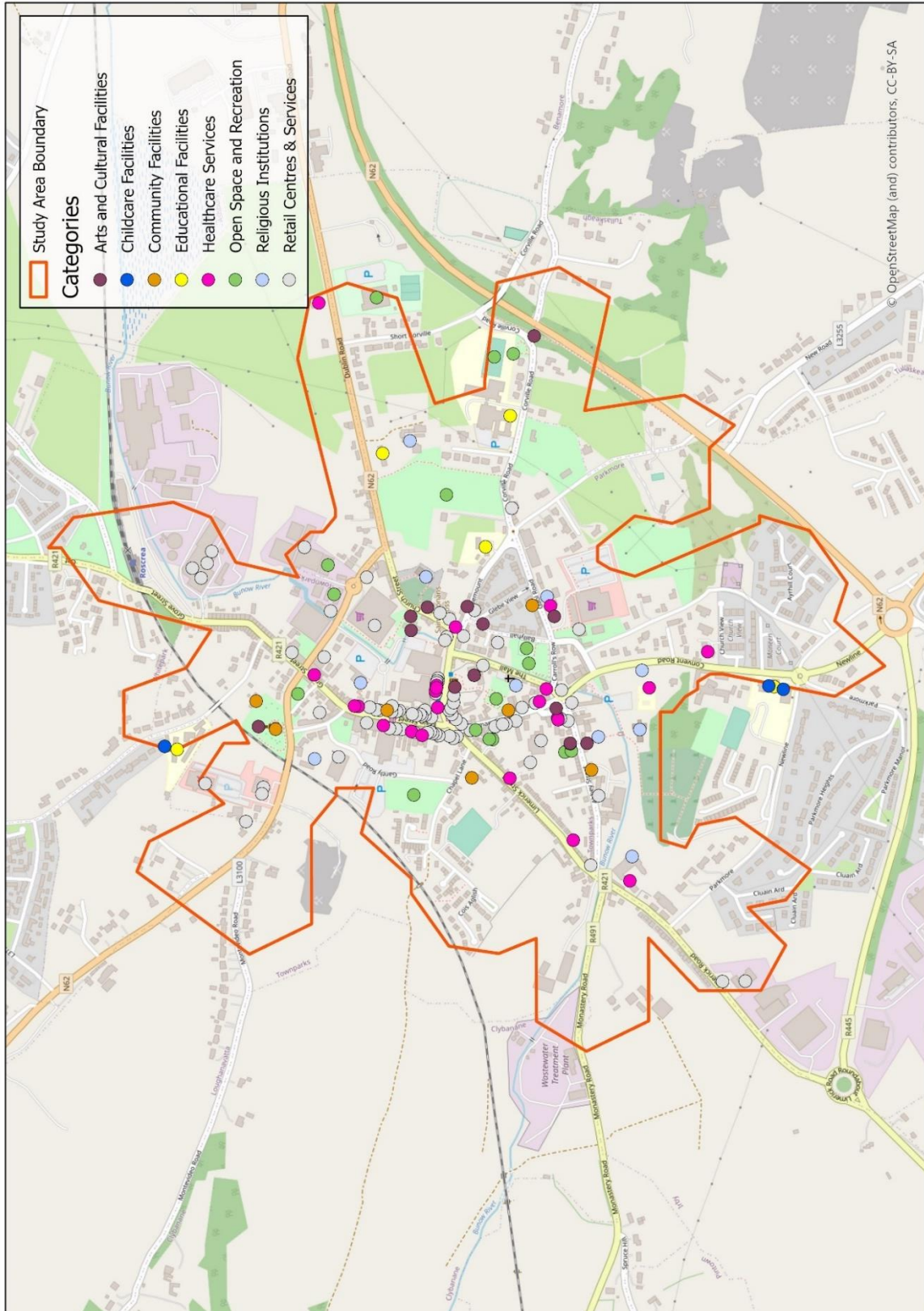


Figure 8-1 Vibrancy and Amenity facilities identified within and bordering the TCF Plan Study Area



Figure 8-2 Roscrea Town Centre – Main Street.



Figure 8-3 Roscrea Town Centre – Castle Street & Rosemary Street.

8.1 Education Facilities

A total of 5 education and training facilities were identified including 3 primary schools, 1 post primary school and 1 third level educational facility. Figure 8-4 below illustrates the location of each facility in the context of the TCF Plan area and Table 8.2 below lists all the education and training facilities identified within or bordering the Study Area. Notably, 1 primary school (Saint Cronan’s National School), 1 post primary school (Coláiste Phobal Ros Cré) and 1 third level education facility (Roscrea Education Centre) are all located within the Roscrea Town Centre. **While these facilities fall within the 10-minute study area – all are located outside the town core suggesting they may have a limited enough role in terms of generating daily footfall within the town centre.**

Table 8.2 Education and Training facilities within and bordering the Study Area

Type	Facilities
Primary (3)	Scoil Eoin Naofa, Saint Cronan’s National School, Sacred Heart Primary School
Post Primary (1)	Coláiste Phobal Ros Cré
Third Level and Training (1)	Roscrea Education Centre

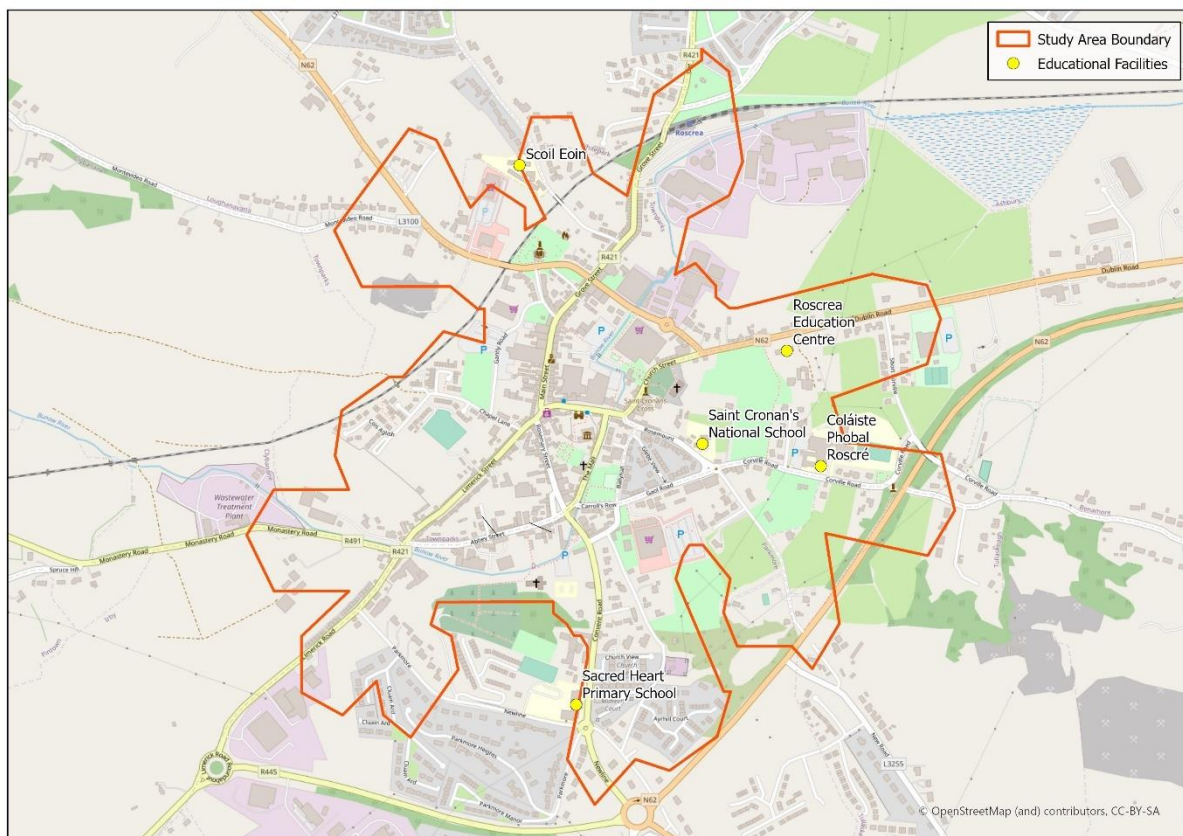


Figure 8-4 Location of education and training facilities within the Study Area

The Local Area Plan 2023-2029 for Roscrea has identified that there is a projected need of around 125 primary and 82 post primary students, expected within the schools in Roscrea town by 2031. To address this growing need for additional school places, the Department of Education has set out the following considerations in relation to Roscrea:

- At both primary and post primary level, the maintenance of buffers around existing school sites to enable expansion is critical and land zoning should enable schools to expand.
- At primary level, the projected scale of population increases to 2031 should be possible to meet through the expansion of existing schools.
- At post primary level the level of additional potential requirements arising from the projected population increase could be met at existing schools.

8.2 Childcare Facilities

Three childcare facilities were identified within a 10-minute walk of the town centre. The information has been sourced from the latest Tusla Early Years Inspectorate data² that could be accessed within the Study Area. The Figure 8-5 below, illustrates the location of each facility within the Study Area and Table 8.3 lists the existing childcare facilities within the TCF Plan Study Area all of which are located on the edge of the study boundary away from the centre. This means that childcare facilities are currently unlikely to directly generate footfall within the centre of the town itself.

Table 8.3 Childcare facilities within and bordering the Study Area

Type	Facilities
Childcare Facilities (3)	Laethanta Sona Montessori Preschool, First Steps (Little Learners), Little Einstein's Preschool and Afterschool

² The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013). Inspection Reports for active facilities are available online for public inspection and are updated at regular intervals by the service. Visit the Tusla website for more detail: <https://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/creche-inspection-reports/>

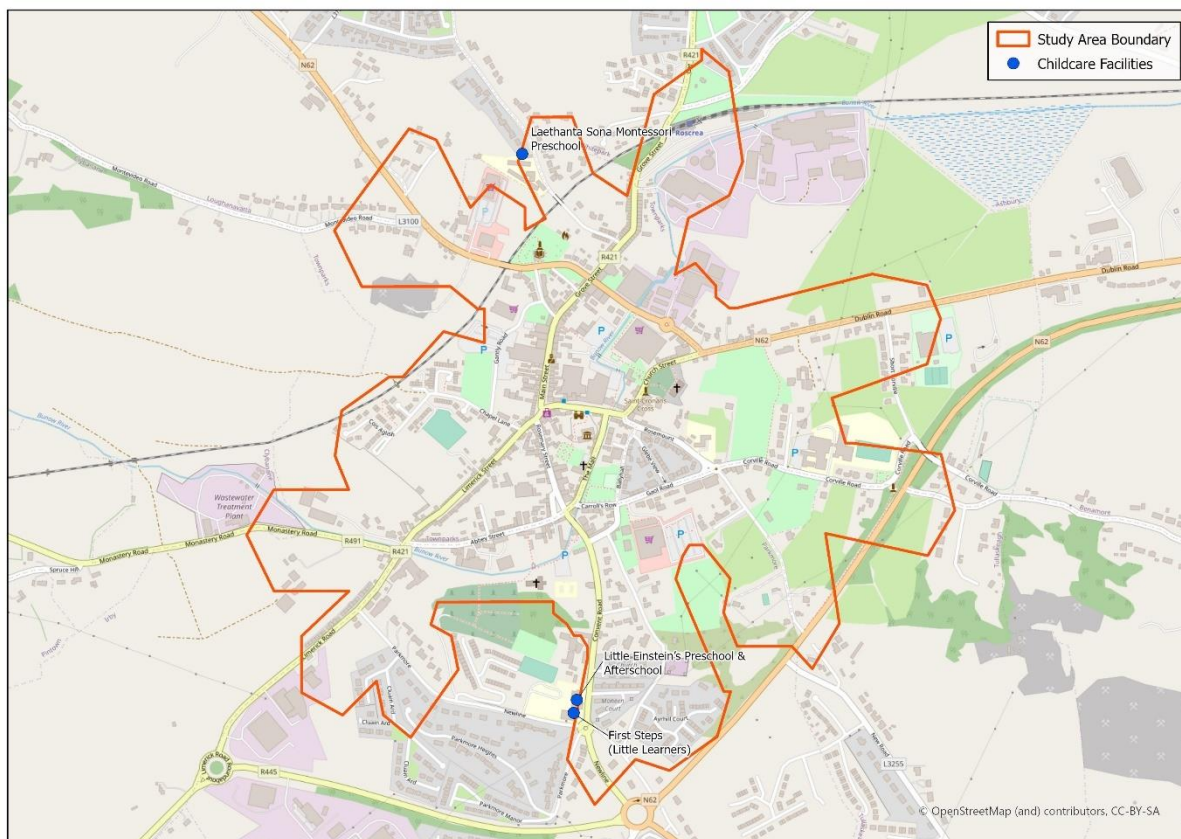


Figure 8-5 Location of existing childcare facilities within and bordering the Study Area

8.3 Community Facilities

Essential community facilities are present in the town centre but a clear scope for greater diversity

Access to quality community services and facilities can have a significant bearing on quality of life and the health and well-being of a community, by encouraging social interaction, promoting learning, and providing support services for those living, working, and visiting an area. These facilities are essential generators of local footfall bringing life and vibrancy to a place. Where there are present within a town centre location they can greatly add to the vitality and viability of the local service and retail offer.

The policy under Section 6.10 of the Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028, ‘...encourages the provision of multi-use community facilities and amenities, which would facilitate co-location and sharing of facilities, and match the needs of as many persons and groups as possible’. Concentrating community services within town centres is crucial for footfall, vibrancy and viability of the wider retail and service offer of the area.

The Local Area Plan 2023-2029 for Roscrea, in this regard, seeks to support educational, community-led, and cultural projects which enhance the well-being of residents of the town and improve the quality of the environment. The focus of the LAP period will also be to enhance public amenities and services amenities in consultation and collaboration with the many community groups, services and stakeholders in the area.

There is a considerable level of community facilities across the Study Area **most of which are situated on the main streets within the town, including some community halls and community/youth centres and a public library**, as can be seen in Figure 8-6.

Feedback received during the Public Consultations indicated a need to diversify and improve community facilities and launch initiatives that can create a greater sense of community pride and enhance quality of life for residents. In this regard, Abbey Hall and Roscrea Castle were mentioned as

assets that could facilitate community functions and initiatives. A detailed list of facilities is provided in Table 8.4.

Table 8.4 Existing Community Facility types identified within the Study Area

Type	Facilities
Community Facilities (4)	Roscrea Abbey Community Centre, Irish Wheelchair Association, Muintir Na Tíre Community Hall, Roscrea Community Hall
Senior and Youth Centres (1)	Roscrea Youth Centre
Civic Services (2)	Roscrea Garda Station, Roscrea Fire Station
Libraries (1)	Roscrea Library

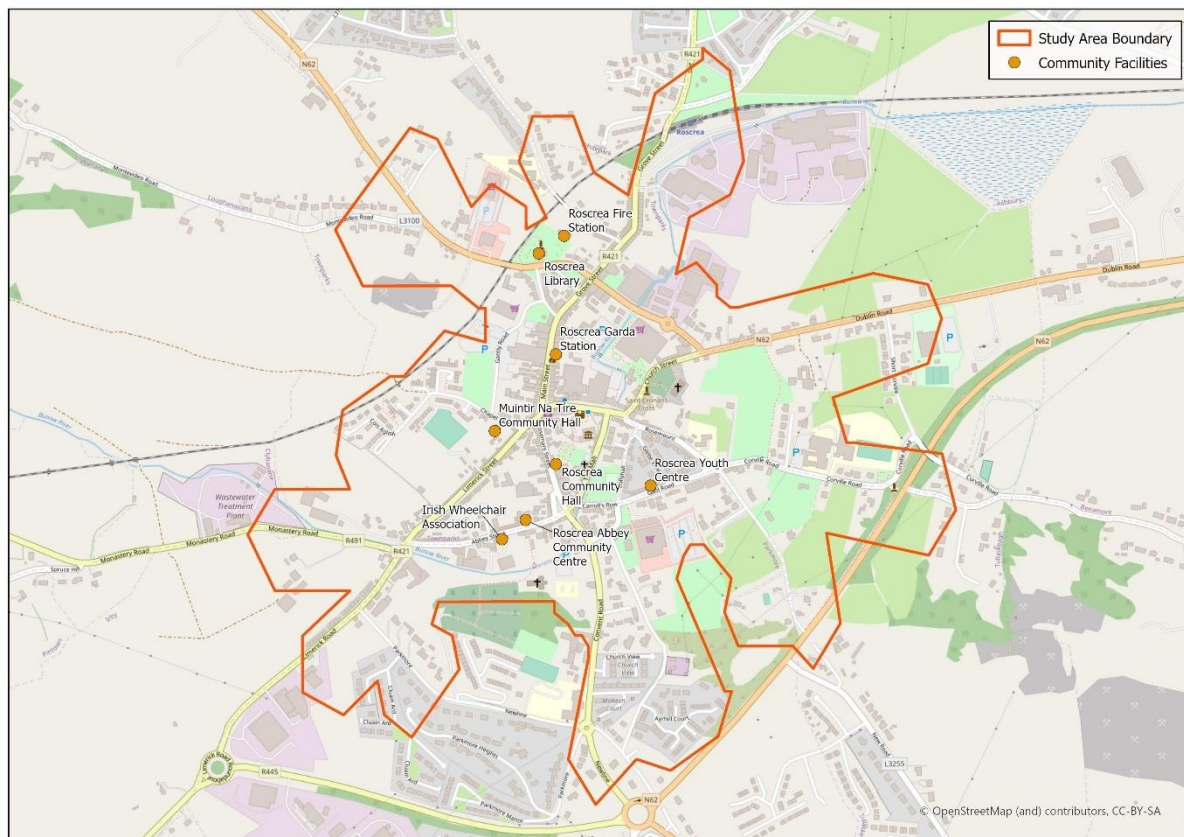


Figure 8-6 Location of existing community facilities within and bordering the Study Area

8.4 Arts and Cultural Facilities and Tourist Attractions

Opportunity to enhance and diversify the appeal of existing assets in the town centre

The Study Area is also served by a relatively high level of arts and cultural facilities and tourist attractions, with around 13 facilities identified, concentrated largely within the town centre. These are hugely **important assets that bring character, sense of place and appeal to the town centre**. A detailed list of facilities is provided under Table 8.5 and Figure 8-7 below illustrates the location of each facility within the Study Area.

Table 8.5 Existing Arts and Cultural Facility types identified within and bordering the Study Area

Type	Facilities
Arts Facilities (2)	Theresa Larkin School of Music, Roscrea Musical Society
Cultural Sites and Tourist Attractions (8)	Roscrea Tourism, Roscrea Courthouse, Rosemary Square Fountain, Roscrea Castle, Roscrea Round Tower, Saint Cronan’s Cross, Roscrea Damer House, Roscrea Abbey,

Museums and Memorial Sites (3)	The Black Mills, Thomas McDonagh 1916 Garden of Remembrance, Memorial Monument
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Roscrea, under the Draft Local Area Plan 2023-2029, has been identified in the Fáilte Ireland’s tourism programme called ‘Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands’. Roscrea’s unique identity as an ancient town centred on the 13th century Roscrea Castle and Damer House is central to its appeal as a tourism destination. The LAP notes that in 2019, there were 16,900 visitors to the Roscrea Heritage Centre and Grounds. The Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028, as part ‘Tipperary Transforming’ is required to consider– ‘Hero Products’, to create ‘Clusters’ and to identify ‘Enhancement’ projects and under the Heritage Theme Roscrea Castle and Demesne has been identified. This **concept visualises enhancement through significant investment in public realm works aimed at marrying the town more to the castle, adding value and enhancing visitor experience.**

While provision for arts, culture and tourism is relatively strong – **improvements suggested during the consultation process for the TCF included a need to facilitate participatory arts, sport, and cultural activity in town, especially an arts centre or event space.**

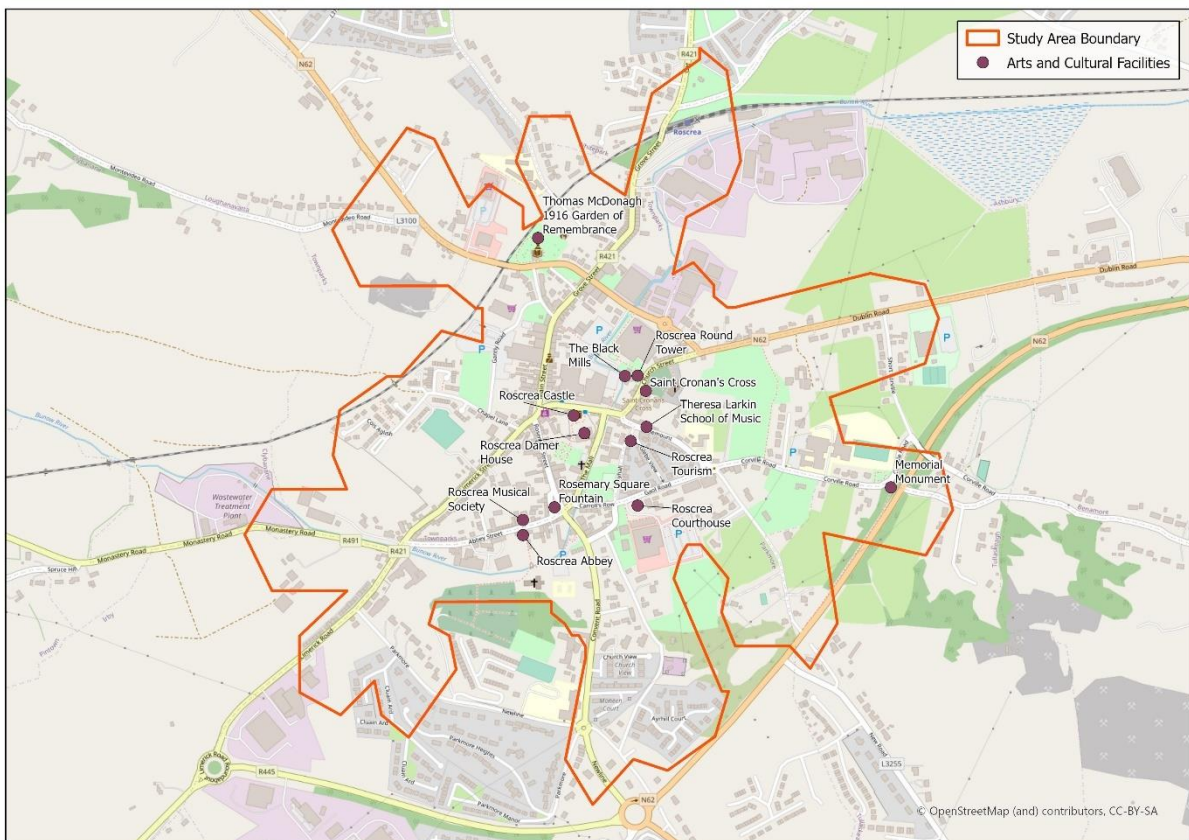


Figure 8-7 Location of Art and Cultural Facilities and Tourist Attractions within and bordering the Study Area



Figure 8-8 Roscrea Castle Street and Castle



Figure 8-9 Roscrea Damer House (Source: Heritage Ireland)

8.5 Healthcare Services

The availability of, and access to, quality health services and facilities is a key element to creating sustainable neighbourhoods and thriving town centre. The Study Area is served by around 16 healthcare facilities including HSE Roscrea Health Centre and HSE Ambulance Service, as well as a range of GPs and other Speciality Clinics. A detailed list of the facilities is provided in Table 8.6 and the Figure 8-12 further illustrates the **location of each facility many of which have a presence in the town centre and are therefore active direct generators of footfall within the main streets.**

Table 8.6 Existing Healthcare Facilities identified within and bordering the Study Area

Type	Facilities
Health Centres and GPs (6)	Dr Patrick Yon Hin, Dr Pádraig G. Ó Reachtagáin, Dr Pauline De Feu, Dr Paul Booth, HSE Ambulance Service, HSE Roscrea Health Centre
Mental Health Services and Other Therapy Providers (5)	Autism Awareness Roscrea, Positive Physiotherapy, Massage and Spa Therapy, Active Recovery, Luscious Health and Beauty
Nursing Homes (2)	HSE Dean Maxwell Community Nursing Home, Mount Carmel Nursing Home
Speciality Clinics (4)	Shields Dental and Implant Clinic, Expressions Dental Clinic, Roscrea Centre Surgery, Dental Laboratory

Pharmacies (5)

Madden's Care Plus Pharmacy, Frawley's Haven Pharmacy, Coffey's Ailcare Pharmacy, Roscrea Centre Pharmacy, Hennessey's Total Health Pharmacy



Figure 8-10 Hennessey's Pharmacy



Figure 8-11 Haven Pharmacy

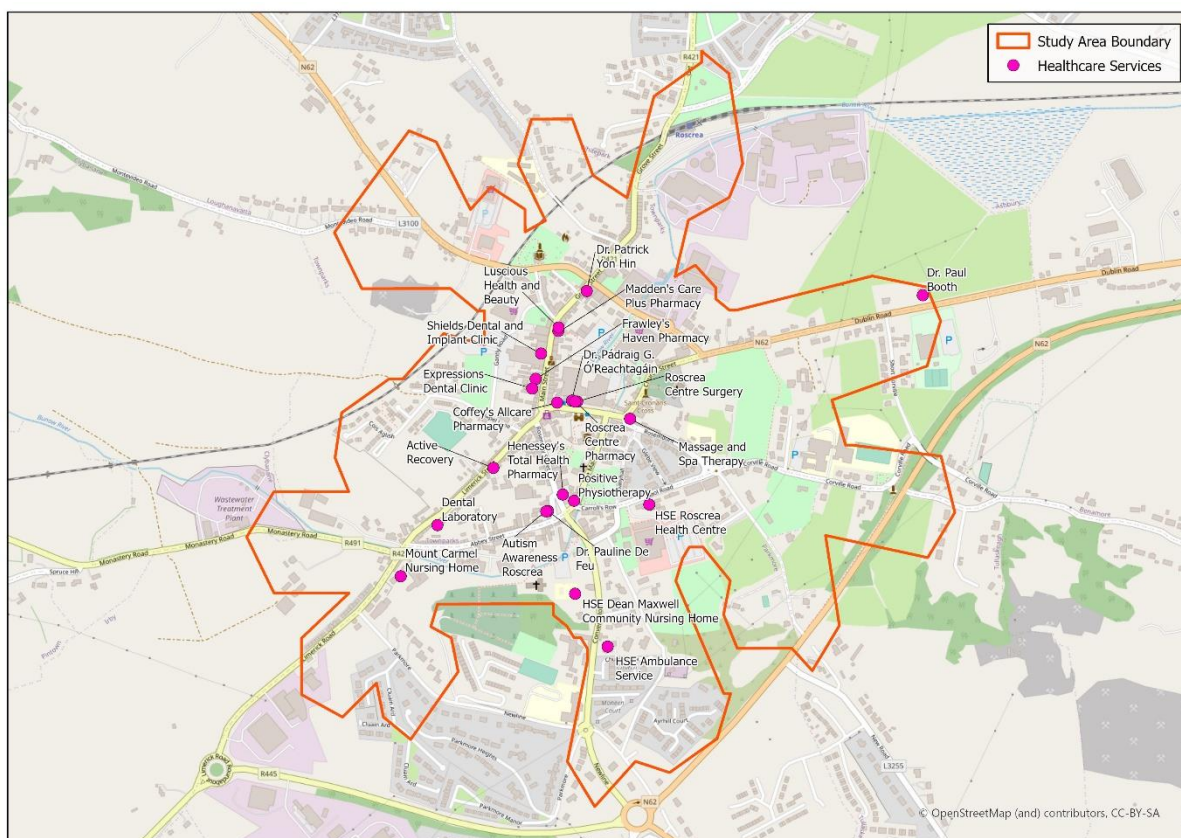


Figure 8-12 Location of healthcare facilities within and bordering the Study Area

The Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028 further supports the implementation of ‘Healthy Ireland’ in its primary goal to improve health and wellbeing for people across all stages of life. In that regard, the Development Plan has indicated the provision of ‘new healthcare facilities by both the private and public sector’.

It is further noted that the Public Consultation observed a response rate of close to 45% for participants who agreed that ‘mental health services would be the top priority for investment’.

8.6 Open Space, Sports, and Recreational Facilities

The availability of, and access to, affordable sports and recreation facilities that are within easy reach by walking/cycling within towns, is of considerable importance both to the health and wellbeing of residents and in attracting people to live and stay in an area. The town has a variety of open spaces including a couple of pitches, town parks, and a playground. Roscrea Leisure Centre is one of the major destinations in Roscrea with other facilities in the town centre including gyms and other training facilities. The complete list of facilities has been provided in the Table 8.7 below. As shown Figure 8-13 **there is a good presence of open space, sports and recreation at central locations within the town centre core.**

Table 8.7 Existing Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities identified within and bordering the Study Area

Type	Facilities
Sports Facilities and Grounds (5)	Roscrea Leisure Centre, Scouting Ireland, Roscrea Handball Club, Football Pitch, Coláiste Phobal Pitches
Parks, Playgrounds and Open Space (6)	Glebe Playground, Glebe Park, Townparks (3), Coláiste Phobal Garden
Gyms and other Training Facilities (5)	Fit Factory Roscrea, Premier Martial Art Academy, Flynn Personal Training, Carey’s Gym, DU Strength Coaching

In addition, the Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028, as part of its objectives for ‘Community Amenity and Sports’,

“...seeks to ensure that adequate and safe amenity, sports and recreational open space and facilities, including community facilities, sports fields, playgrounds, and centres are available for all groups of the population at a convenient distance from their homes and places of work in line with the provisions of the Guidelines³.”

[Chapter 6, Section 6.4.2, p. 103]

In this respect, the Council has designated land for ‘Social and Public’ uses, including for sports fields and walking and cycling amenities etc. The Development Plan further notes that community amenity is important to all and that it is supported by national programmes such as the Government Sports Capital Programme, and the ‘Men’s Shed’ movement.

The Draft Local Area Plan for Roscrea 2023-2029, further notes that the Community groups in the town have secured funding for improvements to several amenity spaces around town. However, **the LAP also identifies that redevelopment of public spaces and opportunity sites will be required ‘to provide well-designed public spaces accessible to all, as well as providing play spaces for children that are safe.’** In this regard, dedicated playground spaces as well as allotment space are supported. The LAP also includes a provision to identify a suitable site for developing a dedicated skateboard park in Roscrea – something that was highlighted as a recreation opportunity for the town during the consultation sessions.

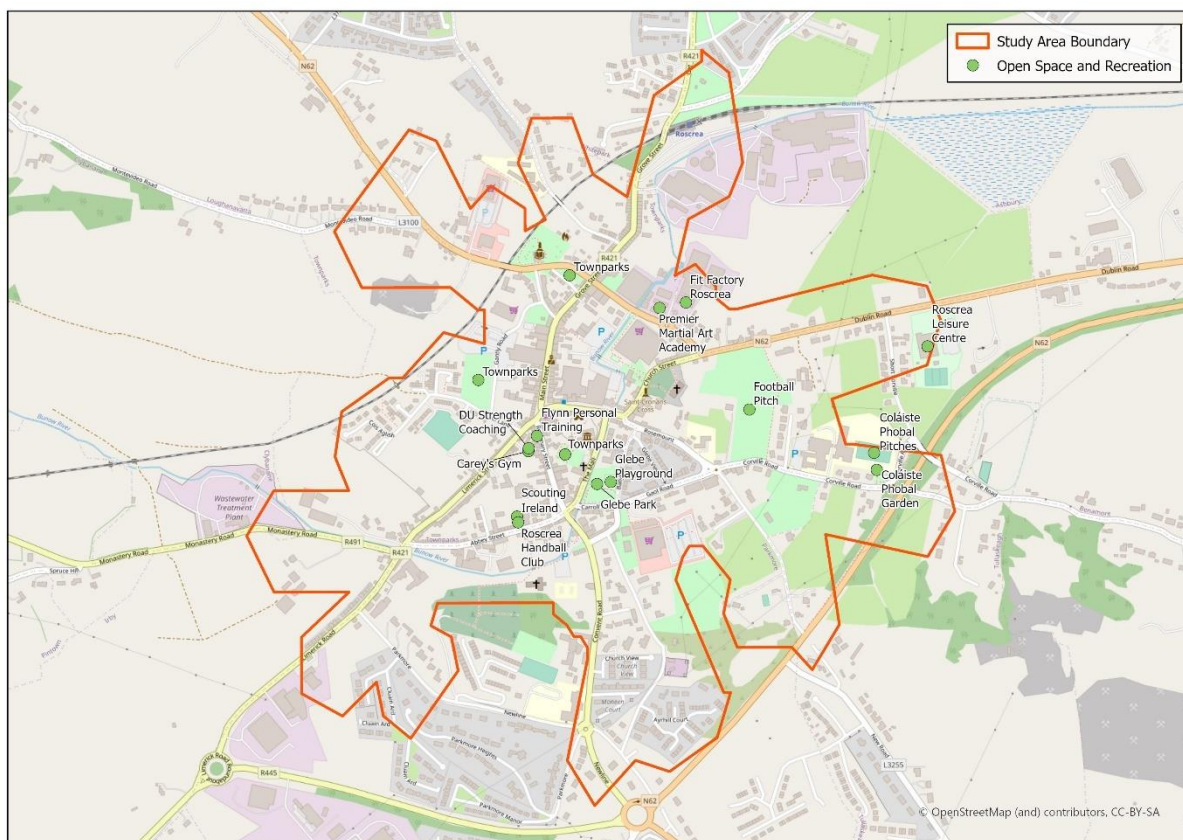


Figure 8-13 Location of existing Open space, Sports and Recreation facilities within and bordering the Study Area

During the Public Consultations carried out for the purpose of this TCF Plan, there was recurring emphasis on the great work that the sporting communities within the area are involved in, as well as acknowledgement of the fact that there is sufficient provision of sport facilities. However, concerns were raised **regarding the lack of recreation activities beyond daytime hours – the need for an evening economy and a greater diversity of non-sporting activities, were called for.** There were

³ The Sustainable Residential Development Guidelines in Urban Areas, (DEHLG, 2008) highlight the need to phase development in line with the availability of social and community infrastructure such as schools, amenities and other facilities.

suggestions regarding increasing the choice and quality of public amenities available in the town. This was resonated in the suggestions made regarding the need **to create a sense of community and a safe place to spend quality time, including public garden, square with seating and landscaping, skate park or better playground facilities.** Finally, it is noted that around 59% of the participants during the Public Consultation, stated that they would ‘welcome the delivery of public space by taking more space away from cars...’

8.7 Religion Facilities

The provision of faith facilities is important to ensure the religious needs of the existing and future population is met. Where these facilities are situated within a town centre, they can be important generators of footfall and provide indirect benefits in terms of supporting the wider service offer of nearby streets. There are around 10 religious’ institutions in Roscrea, which includes 2 cemeteries and 8 churches and other multi-faith centres which are well distributed in and around the centre of the town. A detailed list of the facilities is provided under Table 8.8 and Figure 8-14 illustrates the location of the facility within the Study Area.

Table 8.8 Existing religious facilities identified within and bordering the Study Area

Type	Facilities
Place of Worship (8)	Saint Cronan’s Parish Office, Saint Cronan’s Church (2), Saint Cronan’s Parish Centre, Parkmore House Convent, Oasis Christian Fellowship, Roscrea Methodist Church, Daughters of Charity
Burial Grounds (2)	Doyle’s Funeral Home, Tierney’s Funeral Home,

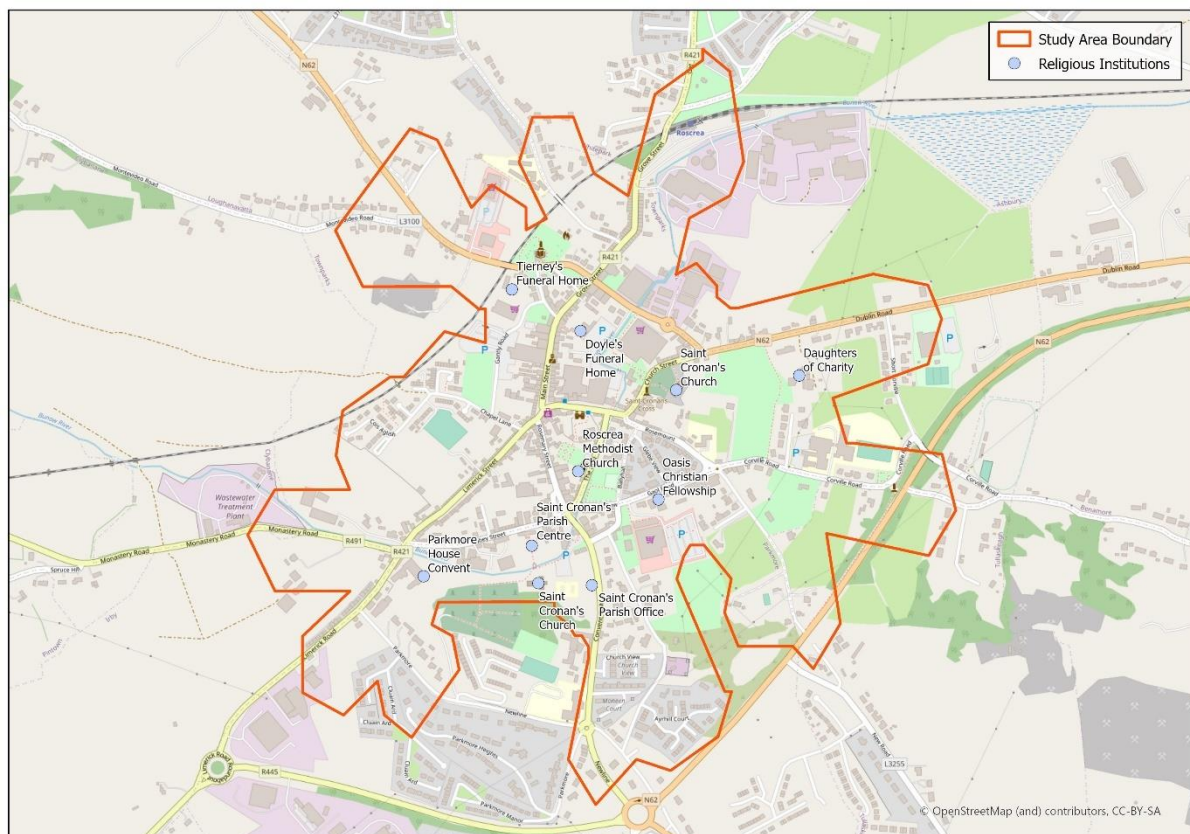


Figure 8-14 Location of existing religious facilities within and bordering the Study Area

8.8 Retail Facilities

Convenient access to retail centres and services is essential for creating viable new communities and a healthy, well-functioning town centre. Roscrea town centre offers **a reasonable strong convenience**

retail (food) offer with many of the large retail chains located within the town centre. These retailers bring footfall into the town centre and help to support the wider comparison retail (clothing, furniture, pharmaceutical, household goods etc) offer of the town. As can be seen in Figure 8-18, there is a visibly high concentration of retail facilities on the main streets, with a range of shops, restaurants, retail outlets including farmers markets and Roscrea shopping centre. However, some large retailers are situated on edge of centre sites. This presents a challenge to improve connectivity from these retail centres to the town centre. The Public Consultation carried out for Roscrea noted a suggestion by respondents that they would **spend more time in the town centre if there were more small shops, cafes, and restaurants available.**

A detailed facilities list is provided in Table 8.9 and Figure 8-18 illustrates the distance of each facility from the town centre.

Table 8.9 Existing retail centres and services identified within and bordering the Study Area

Type	Facilities
Shopping Centres (2)	Roscrea Shopping Centre, Antigen Business Park
Supermarkets and Convenience Shops (10)	Keller's Carry Out, Dunnes Stores, Vincent's Church St, Delahunty's Off Licence, Bernie's SuperValu, Spencer Spillane, Aldi, Tesco, Hogan's, Lidl
Food and Farmer's Markets/Co-ops (7)	John Hastings & Sons Ltd., P J Ahearne Victualler, Carey's Butchers, Polish Shop, Keane's XL, Healthy Vision, Duggan's Butchers
Other Retail Services (41)	Top Gas Station, Open Roscrea, Oliver Douglas and Sons, Corville Educational Supplies, Tipperary Car Parts, Doherty Brothers Topline, J. & C. Neville, Retail, Floral Blooms, The Home Centre, Shaws, An Post, Petals, Interior Fashions, JJ Percival, Fogarty's Day-to-Day News, Roscrea Tourist Information Office, Euro Giant, Vodafone, Movie Time, M. O'Donnell, Jazz Alley, Moloney Sportswear, NCBI Shop, Patterson's Hardware, Alvini, Culture Clothing, Sue Ryder Foundation, Albany Home Décor, Mullally Electrical, Fairbrother Fuels, Roscrea Tyres, Milan Motors, Wrennswood Fuels, Grove Oil and Motors, Texaco, Clothing Store, Auto Care Centre, Midland Site Supplies, Midland Power Tools, Ger Maher Home Improvements
Bars and Restaurants (23)	Abbey Bar, Jumbo Restaurant, Tasty Spice, Kickback Youth Café, Burgoo Pizza and Kebab, C Henessey Bar, The Central, The Damer Lounge, Stock and Barrell, The White House, Riverside, The Office Bar, MC's Pub, John Carroll's, Lily O'Brien's, The Ugly Duckling, Dragon Inn, Phelan's Market House, Tasty Burger, Del's Bar, Jack's Bar, Supermac's, Papa John's



Figure 8-15 Roscrea An Post



Figure 8-16 Bernie's SuperValu



Figure 8-17 The Central

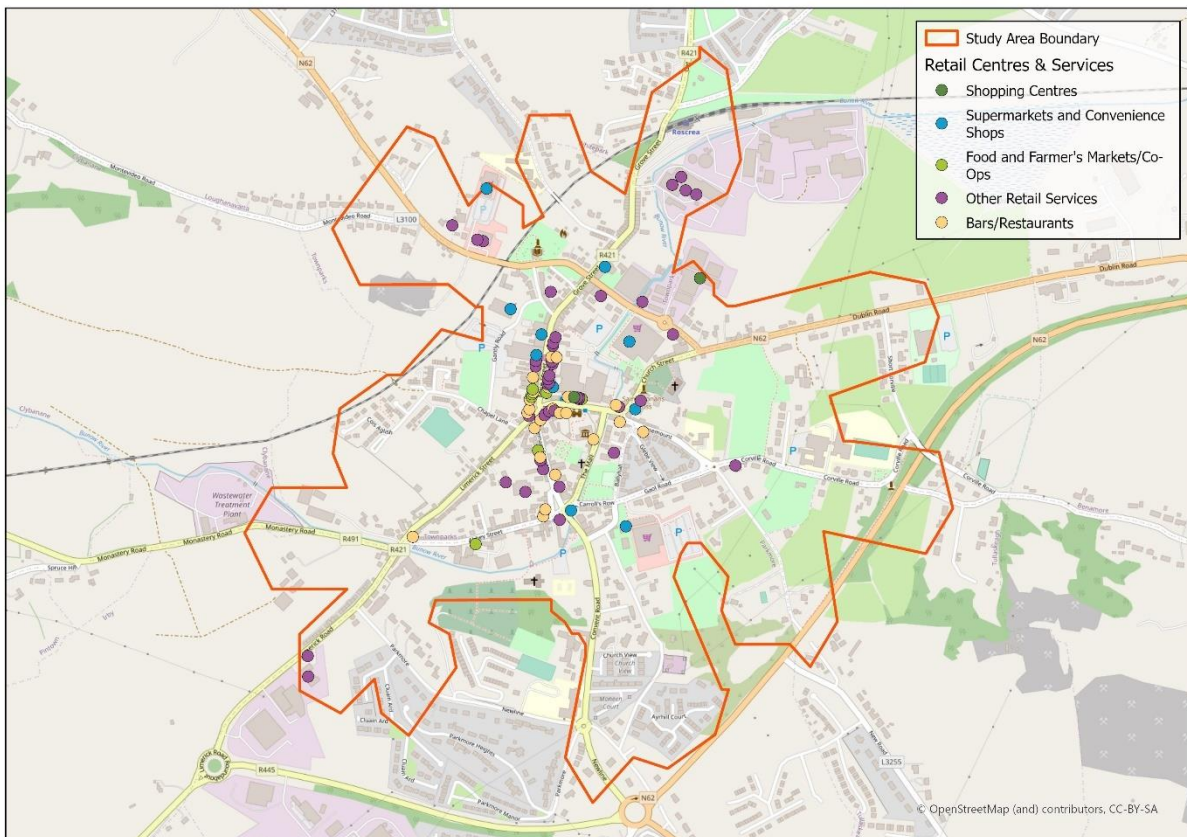


Figure 8-18 Location of existing retail services within and bordering the Study Area.

As per the County retail hierarchy, Roscrea is a District Town and the Local Area Plan 2023-2029 for Roscrea, has defined the 'Primary Retail Area' (PRA) within the town centre area. The PRA of Roscrea includes, *Main Street and Market Square, Castle Street, Rosemary Street and Square*. The Local Area Plan 2023-2029 for Roscrea also seeks, "...to support an appropriate range of retail choice to serve the

needs of the rural catchment and protect the vitality of the town centre. New convenience retailing will be only acceptable where there is a demonstrated need, and where it will support the town centre.”

TCF Plan projects should seek to support activity within the PRA of Roscrea. Notable developments that will further promote the retail sector of the town include the Roscrea Enterprise & Community Hub (REACH) consisting of Offices, Training Spaces & Ancillary Facilities at Roscrea Shopping Centre. Over €1.9 million in RRDF funding has been secured to develop the hub, supplemented with a €225,000 contribution from the Council. **The project, which is led by North Tipperary Development Company (NTDC), will provide office space for people to work in Roscrea, enabling employees to work remotely instead of commuting to larger urban centres.**

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