

Bedford, Katie

From: noreen <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday 25 May 2023 07:12
To: Forward Planning; noreen
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Submission for Abbeyfeale Town Plan
Attachments: Noreen's Submission to LCCC.odt

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To whom it concerns,
Please find attached my submission with regard to the Abbeyfeale town plan.
Many thanks,
Noreen Cotter,

[REDACTED]

Sent from [Outlook](#)

24TH May 2023

Dear Sir/ Madam,

My name is Noreen Cotter. I am a native of Abbeyfeale and have lived here for most of my life. I teach locally, am a mother of four and very passionate about my local town and it's future. I am very grateful to those who have worked on the production of the Draft Abbeyfeale Local Area Plan 2023 – 2029. Overall I think it is a very good document and wish to make the following comments in relation to the Draft Plan:

The Old Cinema Building

This is a beautiful art deco building which has huge potential. I'd imagine the building is in a bad state and would probably need to be knocked and started from scratch. But this would give the freedom to build a purpose built structure. The façade could, and **should** be preserved. It could be a wonderful location for some artist in residency programmes. Perhaps the ground floor could consist of a number of artist's workshops and then upstairs be converted into accommodation for the artists in residence. There is a scheme in Dublin called Block T, which offers studio space and accommodation to artists. Obviously this is on a scale much bigger than what would be required in Abbeyfeale, but I think the concept is good. It is also part funded by the Arts Council. Take a look at their website by clicking on the link here.

<https://www.blockt.ie/studios>

Below here is a photo of the Shanagarry Maker's Space. It is downstairs in the Shanagarry Design Centre. Imagine the downstairs of the cinema having perhaps a larger communal area and then artists studios stemming off from that area.





It would also be good to incorporate a **heritage space** into this building. Various members of the community have many old, important artefacts which need to be shared with the public: items of Fr. Casey, postcards from the War Front in 1914, items from the Old church, Shop registers from 1920, local publications from the 1950's, coins from the 1880's, the list goes on. It has been suggested that some of these items be given to museums in Limerick city. But these, and much more are part of the heritage of Abbeyfeale and we

strongly feel they should have a home here. By including a heritage centre in the same building as artists, means it's a living vibrant space rather than a typical "museum" that a person visits perhaps once in their lifetime.



Across the road from the cinema are 2 cottages which also seem to be derelict. If these were to be renovated and also made available to the Artist in Residency programme one would really be creating a “**Creative Quarter**” in Abbeyfeale in this area of Main Street. A short distance further in to town is the studio of local sculptor Ruairí Dennison and then further up past the church is the Glórach theatre.

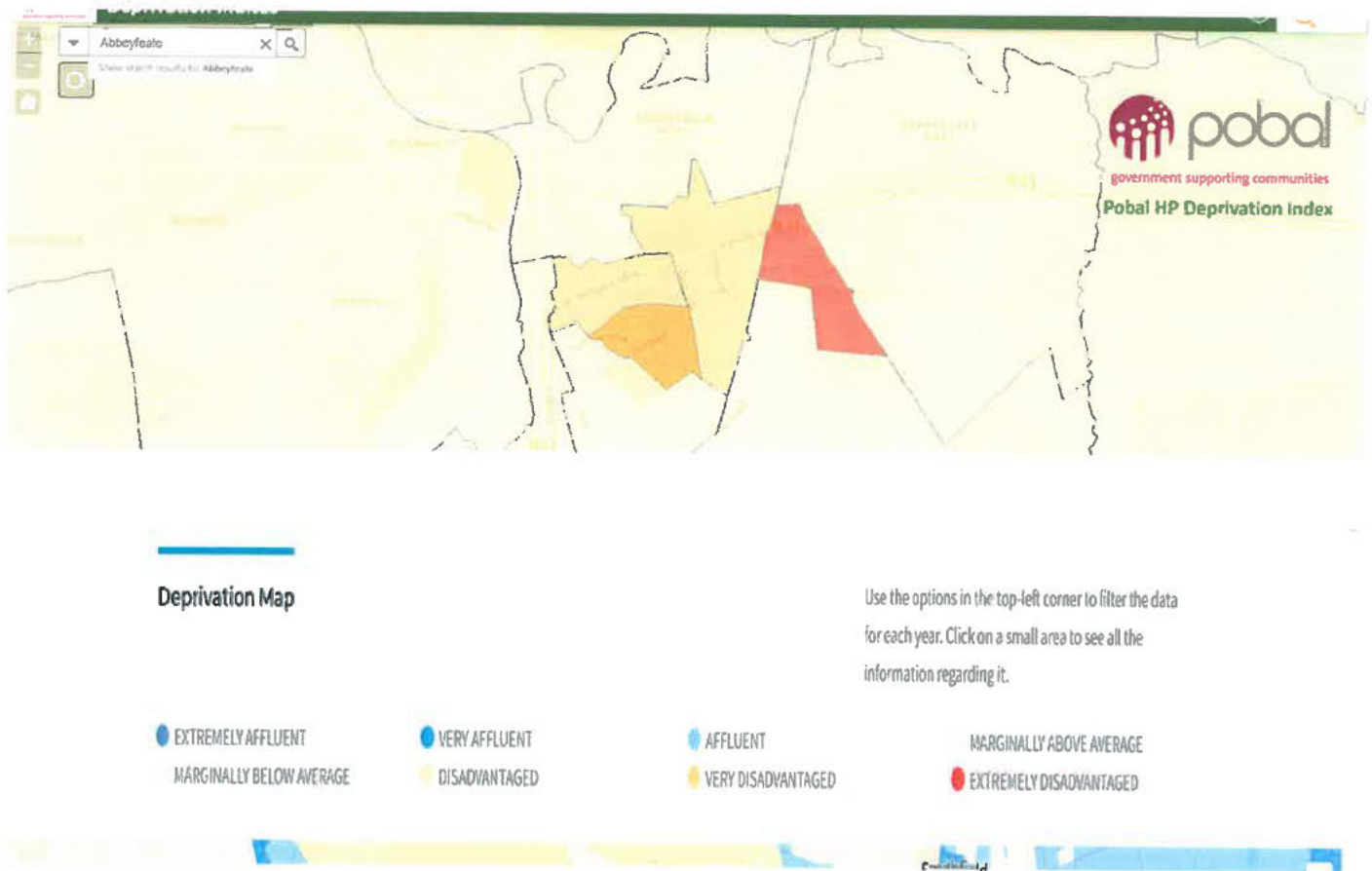
The Convent Building

The convent building doesn't appear to be in the draft plan but I think it should. I'm not sure if there has been a sale agreed but I do think it's essential that this building remain **zoned for educational and community services**. It is on the same site as an all girls primary school and mixed secondary school. It is a protected structure which does bring complications but I do think it would be a wonderful location for the following:

Community Creche: Currently there is no facility in the town which provides day care for children from 0 to 3 years of age!!!! This is completely unsatisfactory. Currently parents are taking their children to a creche in Duagh. It makes no sense that a small village like Duagh has a creche and a larger town like Abbeyfeale has none. This also means that parents without transport are not available to take up employment locally.

A large community hall: The town seems to have a number of small gathering places but no decent one that would accommodate a crowd of say 300 people. If a school or local group wishes to have a concert for a crowd that size there is no facility in town since the old convent secondary school hall was demolished. Many smaller villages seem to have such halls. Look at Athea, Castlemahon and Lyreacrompane!

A family resource centre: Yet again a small village like Duagh has a family resource centre and Abbeyfeale doesn't! Both primary schools were appointed DEIS status in September 2022 and the secondary school is also a DEIS school. The profile of the town as seen in the Pobal Deprivation Index of 2016 shows the extreme need we have in the town for family support, and yet we have no family resource centre!!

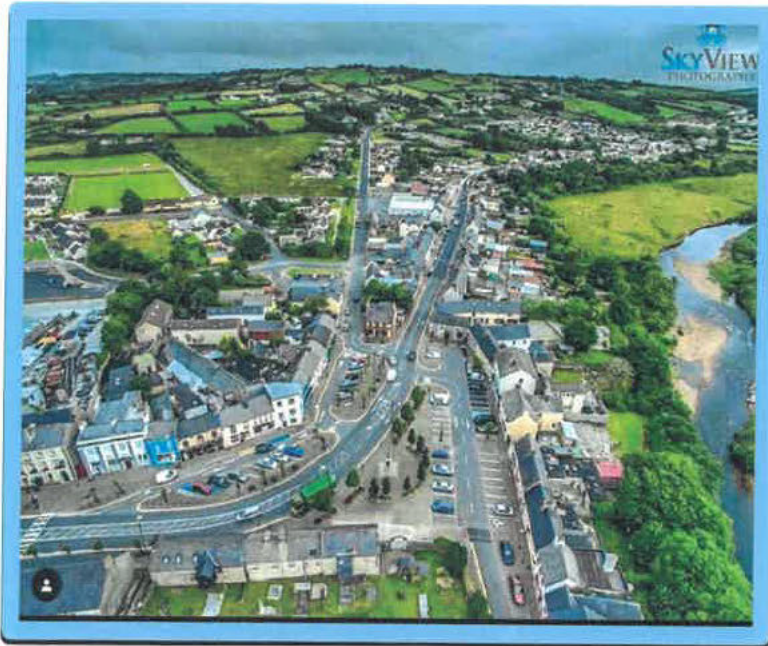


Assisted Living Accommodation : St. Ita's sheltered housing is a wonderful facility in the town for the elderly. However we have no facility where younger people with additional needs could live semi independently. Many of these younger people are living with ageing parents. What is there future to be? There is a gorgeous project in Naas called Mc Auley Place where the convent building was converted into 53 single apartments for the elderly. Also included in the building is a tea room, community centre, garden , hobby room and a cultural and arts centre in the former chapel which is sometimes used for small weddings. It is well worth looking at <https://www.mcauleyplace.ie/>

Perhaps the upstairs of the building could be used for this type of accommodation. It could be a fantastic secure, safe and happy home for many people who could live independently with just that small bit of support, and what peace of mind it would be for their parents and families. We need to be a voice for these people.

Access to the Greenway is essential. I know it isn't easy to establish a safe cycle link from the Greenway to the town centre but it is essential. I would love to see it come up New Street even if just as far as the back road where people would dismount, walk, cross at the pedestrian crossing in front of the school and then come around the back of the Abbey on old church street and then arrive at the square.

Abbeyfeale is also situated on the lovely river Feale but one would hardly know it. We have our backs turned to the river. It would be amazing to have some sort of **river bank walk** as far as the lovely Town Park. Or even to knock through an access next to the Bank Or Ireland building to a riverside seating area.



My apologies for such a lengthy submission. I appreciate you taking the time to read it,

Kind Regards

Noreen Cotter,

Abbeyfeale

