

## Design Statement: Letterkenny Market Square Design competition

The layout I have designed is to be functional, contemporary and celebrates the towns past, present & future. The general layout is inspired by the archetypal social Plazas found in mainland Europe, but with an Irish twist.

Two zones have been created, 1. The Main Square/Plaza & 2. Tourist information Office/quieter shared space, to the rear of the site.

The main Square acts as an extension to Main Street, becoming a part of the fabric of the town, This is in sharp contrast to the existing poor layout, which turns its back on the town. Careful detailing has gone in to achieving desired levels which achieve a gentle 1:45 gradient Plaza. Accessible routes for disabled users are included in the design thinking. The Square is to be open & airy, designed to deter potential anti-social behaviour from playing out. Minimal Ornamental planting & thin canopied/small street trees also help achieve this.

Designing a multifunctional square has been the priority. The Space encourages socialising, outdoor dining and is highly dynamic in its uses. It anticipates for the positive changes and growth expected in Letterkenny in the coming years. Mobile coffee vans, cinemas and emergency vehicles can all access the new Square, and a new water fountain, creates an exciting space brimming with life, even on ordinary days.

Relocating the tourist office will add a further reason to visit the Square, and it is hoped tourists start their discovery of Letterkenny from here. Walking tours can commence from the new 'Letterkenny Timeline' where the rich heritage of the town will be revealed for all to see.

Materials such as Timber have been inspired by historic photos showing horse and carts on market day, timber is an attractive and tactile material, which will soften the dominance of the hard-landscaped square. Natural stone is highly sought for the Square, with a preference for lighter material such as white sandstone, as used to construct St. Eunans Cathedral. Cobble Stone or sett paving, used strategically, can add a sense of tradition and local character to the Square and wider vicinity. Laser engraved text within paving can bring the space to life, creating an interactive element.

The design also considers an upgrade of Main street, from a car dominated space to a breathable, airy part of the town full of trees and life. The streetscape will be brought to life with elements of text, art and sculpture which can tell the story of the people and heritage of Letterkenny.