

PURPLE FLAG ASSESSOR SPOT CHECK REPORT

DETAILS OF ENTRY	OVERNIGHT ASSESSMENT	
<p>Location of Entry Mullingar</p>	<p>Date of Assessment 29-30 July 2017</p>	<p>Night of the Week Saturday</p> <p>Anomalies (Things to be taken in account for i.e. Weather, Seaside Town): N/A</p>
<p>Name of Assessors Peter Mann (Lead) & Leona McGee</p>	<p>Times Covered (Please tick)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entrant's presentation</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Early evening: 5-8pm</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Late evening: 8pm-11pm</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Night: 11pm-2am</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Late night: 2-5am</p>	<p>Members & Roles of Local Partnership Present Brigid Manley (Chamber of Commerce), Mark Brindley (Chamber of Commerce), Tracey O'Toole (Chamber of Commerce), Catherine Kileen (Chamber of Commerce), Ian Lacey (Chamber Support), Ruth Illingworth (historian and resident), Angela Maher (Mullingar Town Team), Sgt Roger Nicholson (An Garda Siochana).</p>
<p>Author of Report Peter Mann</p>		
<p>Date of Report 03 August 2017</p>		

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<p>Documents Reviewed (Please tick)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Entry Form</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Map of Area</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purple Flag Area Snapshot</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Self Assessment Chart</p>	<p>Guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attach the itinerary for the assessment • To achieve an overall Standard Met no standards should fall within the grey shaded boxes and no two attributes in any theme must be below standard. • Please can you explain any significant differences in scoring between yourself and the centre e.g. if a Town/City scores themselves “Excellent” and you score a “Standard Met”, why there is such a margin? • Please show entrant’s and your recommended standards on the same chart: <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Your recommended standards</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The entrant's standards</p>
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	Core Agenda and Attributes	Assessment	Standard	Significantly Below Standard	Below Standard	Standard Met	Above Standard	Excellent/Outstand'g
	<p>WELLBEING. (Welcoming, Clean and Safe)</p> <p>Threshold Standard. Per capita crime and anti social behaviour rates that are at least average and show an improving trend – taking both residents and visitors into account (See KPIs).</p>					• X		
1	<p>Safety. Proportionate level of visible, effective policing and active surveillance</p>	<p>We witnessed an appropriate number of police from the late night period onwards (patrols were on bicycles, consisting of 3 officers).</p> <p>CCTV was well positioned to follow pedestrian routes throughout the PF area. We noted that CCTV in the PF area did not feature any signage. Although it may not a legal requirement, it can be a positive thing to highlight that CCTV is in operation and there for public protection, adding to positive perceptions of safety.</p>				X	•	

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2	<p>Care. Responsible guardianship, customer care and concern for community health</p>	<p>We were advised that streets and neighbourhoods in Mullingar have a 'community alert marshal' with a responsibility to highlight issues of concern (fly-tipping, litter, antisocial behaviour concerns).</p> <p>We were pleased to notice two prominently placed AEDs in the PF area.</p>			<p>● X</p>		
3	<p>Regulation. Positive and proactive licensing and regulation</p>	<p>Staggered closing times for pubs and clubs appeared to work well. We were able to see the positive impact of this approach in the orderly and gradual way the town centre emptied.</p> <p>We were impressed with the fact that there was virtually no fly-posting or graffiti in the PF area.</p>			<p>● X</p>		
4	<p>Services. Appropriate levels of public utilities</p>	<p>Lighting, generally, was appropriate and as a result most areas of the area felt safe late into the night. Town Park was well lit after dark. It was noted that lighting was out at the crossing on Dominick Place (Dominick Street end) and the two feature lampposts outside Market House (close to the crossing).</p> <p>There was a good standard of cleanliness throughout the whole PF area from the finish of retail trading time through to the late nighttime (no tradewaste and very little litter). However, cigarette litter was noticeable outside most licensed premises and particularly at crossing points along Dominick Street and Oliver Plunkett Street.</p> <p>We witnessed public urination in prominent locations along Oliver Plunkett Street. Whilst there are no public toilets or pop-up urinal facilities we were advised that licensed premises would offer individuals an opportunity to use their facilities, if requested.</p>			<p>● X</p>		
5	<p>Partnership. The active involvement of business in driving up standards</p>	<p>There was evidence of good partnership working in the PF area. It was clear that partnership is important to the local authority and is evident by their financial commitment to Mullingar's connection with PF. It was evident that PF-related activity was private sector led (via the Chamber of Commerce). Given the size of the town and the Chamber's enthusiasm, this ensured that that</p>			<p>● X</p>		

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		<p>there was a broad cross-section of businesses involved and participating in PF associated activity.</p> <p>The Whatsapp Group, led by the Dominick Street Traders, is another example of businesses wanting to do the right thing. We were pleased to hear that the informal approach works well and is planned to be extended.</p>					
6	<p>Perceptions. A valid and positive presentation of the area to customers</p>	<p>We are pleased that market research, last conducted in 2014/15, is due to be renewed. Other work planned will cover the areas of car parking, safety, toilet facilities and retail offer. We would hope that data should be in place for the next renewal process.</p> <p>We felt safe at all times during our assessment.</p>			● X		
	<p>Core Agenda and Attributes</p>	<p>Assessment</p>	<p>Significantly Below Standard</p>	<p>Below Standard</p>	<p>Standard Met</p>	<p>Above Standard</p>	<p>Excellent/Outstand'g</p>
	<p>MOVEMENT (A Secure Pattern of Arrival, Circulation and Departure)</p> <p>Threshold standard: Some form of appropriate late- night public transport provision (See KPIs).</p>				● X		
1	<p>Public Transport. Safe, affordable, well-managed late night public transport</p>	<p>We observed a good amount of private hire taxis and very little waiting times. Mullingar seems to work well using shared taxis which brings the price down for users and offers a door-to-door service.</p> <p>We were pleased to hear that Irish Rail offered additional trains to/from the town for special events. However, it was noted that communication of this could be better and this was acknowledged by the representative we engaged with.</p>			● X		
2	<p>Car Parking. An appropriate provision of secure late night car</p>	<p>There is a good level of parking provision and sites are well signposted, clean and well lit.</p>			X	●	

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	parking						
3	Pedestrian Routes. Clear, safe and convenient links within the centre and homewards	<p>The main area was easy to navigate. On inspection, all pedestrians appeared to know their destination and how to get there.</p> <p>Overall there was little conflict between pedestrians moving about the PF area.</p>			● X		
4	Crowd Management. Measures to deal with overcrowding, congestion and conflict between those on foot and moving vehicles	<p>Staggered closing times for pubs and clubs seemed to work well. We were able to see the positive impact of this approach in the orderly and gradual way the town centre emptied.</p>			● X		
5	Information. Provision of practical information and guidance to town centre users	<p>There were very little sign-posting or street maps, and therefore knowing what was in the PF area was not obvious. We noted there one traditional-style tourist information sign in the PF area.</p> <p>Upon leaving Mullingar Train Station it was not immediately obvious how to access the town centre. Visitors to the town would therefore be reliant upon asking for directions or using a mobile device.</p> <p>The planned public realm scheme presents significant opportunities to ensure practical information and guidance to town centre users is addressed.</p>		X	●		
6	Partnership. Business and operator commitment and participation	<p>Whilst the existing partnerships are sufficient, it would be good to see a push for partnership building beyond the existing structures. This will be all the more important once the public realm improvement process begins.</p>			X	●	
	Core Agenda and Attributes	Assessment	Significantly Below Standard	Below Standard	Standard Met	Above Standard	Excellent/Outstanding
	A BROAD APPEAL (A Vibrant Choice and a Rich Mix)					● X	

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Threshold standard. An evening and late night offer that is broader than youth-oriented and alcohol-based activity (See KPIs).						
1	Food and Dining. A choice of eating venues and a commitment to good food	<p>The PF area offered a solid range of restaurants. It was also evident that families were important to the offering. We were impressed with the collection of restaurants and reasonable pricing.</p> <p>Takeaway facilities were spread evenly and appropriately through the PF area. It was noted that there was very little resultant litter.</p>				● X
2	Pubs and Bars. Well-managed venues, to meet varied tastes, and offering more than just alcoholic beverages	<p>The PF area had a good range of bars and pubs. Most pubs that catered for a mixed audience, including a number of venues that offered live music.</p> <p>We were impressed with the Greville Arms as a unique venue housing the owner's collection of interesting artefacts.</p>			X	●
3	Late Night Venues. A late-night offer that complements the diverse appeal of the centre as a whole	<p>The choice of night-time entertainment in the PF area was good, with an appropriate mix of pubs and clubs. The three nightclubs present a good range and choice for those wanting to continue their evening after 11pm.</p>			● X	
4	Early Evening Activity. An active early evening period, including late opening shops	<p>We were impressed with the range and choice in the early evening period.</p> <p>Young people are well catered for in the PF area and the skate park provides a great outdoor space in a beautiful environment.</p> <p>Kingdom of Sports also provides a great leisure space for those wanting to do someone a little bit different.</p> <p>Mullingar Greyhound Stadium is certainly a wonderful asset for the PF area. Having a well-managed space that brings people to the area is something that we felt could be exploited a little more.</p>				● X

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5	Public Buildings. Creative and imaginative use of public/civic buildings in the evening and at night	<p>Mullingar's attractive buildings add to the overall experience of visiting the PF area. This is particularly the case regarding the multicoloured facades of businesses.</p> <p>Mullingar's cathedral is clearly a unique selling point for the town but we felt that more could be done to promote the building as a feature of the town.</p> <p>It was noticeable that the vacancy rates were low in the PF area (figures not available - approximately 5 or 6 vacant units).</p>			• X		
6	Arts and Culture. A vibrant, inclusive arts and cultural scene	<p>The PF area features two valuable centres: Midlands Regional Cultural Centre for the Traditional Arts and Mullingar Arts Centre. Whilst there was no activity during our assessment we were pleased to hear how the space is used and its popularity.</p> <p>The local GAA and tennis/badminton clubs (both in the PF area) are clearly an important part of town centre life.</p>				• X	
	Core Agenda and Attributes	Assessment	Standard	Below Standard	Met Standard	Above Standard	Excellent/Outstanding
	PLACE (A Stimulating Destination and a Vital Place)				X	•	
	Threshold standard. A diversity of land uses. A convenient and attractive destination at night (See KPIs).						
1	Location. Appropriate location, clustering and capacity of venue types	Mullingar town centre has a nice 'feel'. The buildings are nicely clustered and well maintained. The pubs, clubs and restaurants are appropriately spaced throughout the area. The PF area is walkable.			X	•	
2	Diversity. A successful balance of uses and brands	The PF area features a large number of independent retail businesses. In terms of use of brands, the majority are featured in the shopping centre, close to the PF area. We were pleased to hear that there has been efforts to			X	•	

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		make use of the spaces above the retail units and there are a number of new businesses operating.					
3	Clarity. Well-designed links and visible signs	Wayfinding and signage requires improvement and this has been acknowledged by the partnership.			● X		
4	Animation. Attractive, well-used public places, active streets and building frontages	We were pleased to witness the efforts made by businesses to recognise and promote PF (window dressing, standards on flagpoles and support stickers). When we engaged with business representatives there was a knowledge and understanding of PF's purpose. Good use of flowering baskets along main streets and by businesses (particularly licensed premises).				● X	
5	Design. Thoughtful and imaginative design for the night	The traditional street format/design sets the environment for the evening economy. The proposed public realm improvements should present an opportunity to enhance the look and appeal of the PF area.			● X		
6	Identity. The appropriate use of natural and built features to reinforce appeal	The Royal Canal and the Town Park provides wonderful spaces for users of the PF area to enjoy. Without doubt the cathedral is a unique feature for the PF area. The newly installed 1916 monument provides another historical feature for the PF area. It was interesting to hear that part of the stone used was originally from the damaged GPO building in Dublin.				● X	
	Core Agenda and Attributes	Assessment	Significantly Below Standard	Below Standard	Standard Met	Above Standard	Excellent/Outstand'g
	THE POLICY ENVELOPE. (A Clear Aim and a Common Purpose) Threshold Standard. A momentum of collaboration between sectors, agencies, service providers and policy-makers (See KPIs).				● X		

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1	Data. A sound statistical base for policy-making and action	<p>We were pleased to hear that the partnership now receives data in relation to crime statistics, footfall and letting figures.</p> <p>Data provided prior to the assessment advised that crime and disorder levels have increased from 2014/15. We were advised that could be attributed to an increase in the volume of individuals coming to the town for specific events and a general increase in activity. Clearly, this should be seen as an opportunity for the Gardai to engage with businesses and wider civic society to reduce incidents.</p> <p>It is also welcome that the partnership has now established links with the Health Service Executive to obtain health/wellbeing statistics. We were also advised that the Retail Strategy for County Westmeath and the County Development Plan for Westmeath is due shortly and should provide an evidence base for future initiatives within Mullingar.</p>			X	●	
2	Strategy. Positive strategic objectives and targets	<p>We were pleased to hear about the development of the ENTE Strategy and Action Plan and how this has helped to bolster the partnership.</p>			●	X	
3	Coordination. Public policy coordination and focus	<p>The local authority understands the importance of strategic outcomes for the good of those engaging with the ENTE. The proposed new Town Centre Manager role provides an exciting opportunity.</p>			●	X	
4	Leadership. Clear responsibilities for policy and action	<p>Without doubt the planned public realm improvements present an opportunity for the PF area. We detected a number of differing views from businesses and individuals regarding proposals, particularly in relation to traffic management. We were pleased to see that the local authority has engaged in a consultative process that has included public meetings and proposals on display in the council offices. The council needs to ensure that the views of town centre users and businesses are fully considered. Equally, once works commence there needs</p>			●	X	

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		to be timely and proactive communication (what work will happen, disruption, timescales, contact details) inline with considerate construction good practice.					
5	Partnership. Multi-sector endorsement and commitment	<p>Although the strategic commitment was there, we felt that this could be even stronger with greater involvement from the public sector. This is not a criticism but an observation as the local authority does understand the value of PF and has, importantly, contributed financially to the town's PF activities.</p> <p>The private sector involvement, coordinated by the Chamber, has ensured successful buy in from the business community. We witnessed good levels of support and enthusiasm during our assessment.</p>			● X		
6	Community. A dialogue with consumers and residents	<p>We are satisfied that all stakeholders are committed to working together for the good of users, residents and businesses in the PF area.</p> <p>The development of Mullingar.ie has assisted with promotion and activities.</p>			● X		

PURPLE FLAG SUMMARY CHART

Ref	Purple Flag Core Agenda	Significantly Below Standard	Below Standard	Standard Met	Above Standard	Excellent/ Outstanding
1	Wellbeing.			● X		

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	Welcoming, Clean and Safe					
2	Movement A Secure Pattern of Arrival, Circulation and Departure			• X		
3	A Broad Appeal A Vibrant Choice and a Rich Mix				• X	
4	Place A Stimulating Destination and a vital Place			X	•	
P	Policy Envelope. A Clear Aim and a Common Purpose			• X		

NOTE. All five Themes must be at least Standard Met if the area is to be recommended for a Purple Flag

ASSESSORS CONCLUSIONS

<p>Recommendation</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-right: 10px;">X</div> <div> <p>Purple Flag Accreditation</p> <p>Standard met or exceeded on all five Core Agenda Themes</p> </div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 40px; margin-right: 10px;"></div> <div> <p>Not Yet Ready for Purple Flag Accreditation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard not met on one or more Core Agenda Themes </div> </div>
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Any Matters to be Referred to Accreditation Panel before a Final Decision is Made:

N/A

Guidance to Applicant on Any Priority Issues to Address prior to Purple Flag Renewal:

- Information sharing does exist and there are good relationships between some businesses and the police (partnership meetings and the Whatsapp group). This, however, this is informal and with no established protocols in place. **Panel recommendation to look at PF working group meeting more frequently and to be recorded/minutes rather than using “Whatsapp” addressed by interim renewal**
- With a willingness to engage and actively assist for the collective good of the PF area, the feasibility of introducing a radiolink should system should be explored; **Galway are just introducing this so you may wish to speak with them regarding set up. Theresa Donohue theresa.donohue@galwaycity.ie**
- Cigarette litter was significant and noticeable. Options for addressing this issue should be explored; **Recommendation to look at lamppost cig bins. This must be addressed by interim renewal**
- Ensuring that the local authority is engaged as fully as possible at practical/operational levels; **See new resilience attribute that has been recently added to the PF documentation under policy for 2018 (docs to be shared shortly)**
- Information/signage and promotion inside the PF area needs to be addressed. The planned public realm improvements present a significant opportunity to ensure that information signage (information blades and lamppost banners, for example) are included and asks are made clear from an early stage of the council-led process.

Guidance to Applicant on Any General Issues to Address:

- With a number of positive activities and attractions it was unclear how this was communicated to the wider public. During our assessment we detected a clear expression of interest to consider how best to market Mullingar. With a clear willingness by the Chamber and business representatives to market the town, it is essential that a conversation starts on how best sell Mullingar’s offer. It is clear that the centre would benefit from a centrally coordinated marketing strategy to promote the activities and offers of businesses in the PF area. Areas that could be considered include the music and culture (noticeable residents and live music offer) or the features in the built environment such as the cathedral; **Panel recommendation to incorporate a marketing & tourism strategy and to include this within the ENTE for Interim renewal**
- The public realm improvements present a great opportunity for the PF area. Understandably, businesses and users will be focused on traffic management and access issues. Whilst these are important the partnership has a responsibility to ensure that ENTE related aspects are treated with a significant level of importance.

(Please note that any issues noted will be reviewed in the next interim Renewal Assessment).

Specific Policies and Actions that are Excellent or Outstanding, and Especially Worthy of Note:

- Private sector knowledge and promotion of PF was impressive. Businesses clearly understood PF’s value and purpose. The Chamber’s efforts with education and promotion should be acknowledged.

Accreditation Panel Review Date: 21/09/2017

Decision: Accreditation awarded

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