

Dundalk's Pulse Taken in First-ever Town Centre Health Check RED C Survey Report

The findings of a major new RED C survey, on the strengths and opportunities for Dundalk Town Centre have been released today by the Dundalk Collaborative Town Centre Health Check Team (CTCHC). Funded by the Heritage Council, the survey reveals people's impressions of the town's shopping and eating options along with parking and entertainment facilities. Both shoppers and business people felt that the historic border county town would benefit from improved public realm, more parking and more shops. According to BIDS Manager, Martin McElligott, "the survey will help to guide plans for the future management and revitalisation of Dundalk." Brian Walsh, Board member of the Heritage Council, hailed the Heritage Council's role saying that the collaborative approach is crucial in effecting change in our country's towns. "We're looking to ensure that our towns survive and thrive in a time of great uncertainty, this collaborative approach allows everyone to play a role in our respective town centres.

The **RED C survey** focuses on a number of key indicators of the overall health of the town centre including: level of town centre activities, land use/ commercial mix, pedestrian footfall patterns and business operators and shoppers' perceptions of the quality of the environment of the town. It is also part of the much wider initiative of the **Dundalk Town Centre Health Check Team** with a more in-depth report that is being launched by **Minister of State for Housing and Urban Renewal, Damien English T.D.** on May 14th, 2019 in the County Museum, Dundalk

The survey showed that:

- Shopping is the main reason why users use Dundalk town centre on a regular basis
- Convenience is the most common reason why people shop in Dundalk town centre
- People using the Town think there is a good selection of cafés and restaurants in Dundalk
- Almost 80% describe the town as attractive.
- People rated highly on the general ease of access around the Town Centre.
- Shoppers have also indicated that they would avail of later closing times from Monday to Friday, 9am to 7pm
- A vast majority of respondents rated the Town Centre as a safe place both during the day and night

In October 2018, Dundalk was selected (along with seven other towns) to participate in the Heritage Council's National 'Pilot' Town Centre Health Check Training Programme with partners RGDATA, Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (DoHPCLG), Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DoAHRRGA). The project team which completed the comprehensive CTCHC survey of Dundalk Town Centre includes representatives from Dundalk BIDs, Louth County Council, Dundalk Chamber, Dundalk Credit Union, DKIT, Queens University and Dundalk Tidy Towns with support provided by the Heritage Council.

Welcoming the Dundalk Town Centre Health Check Report system, the **Town Centre Commercial Manager Martin Mc Elligott** said the report is a positive and constructive basis on which Dundalk town centre can be further enhanced and promoted. "This was a truly collaborative baseline survey involving the town's key strategic partners and it gives us a great framework for taking stock of Dundalk's assets, many of which will be discussed at our one-day Border Towns' Workshop held at the Imperial Hotel on April 11TH 2019. The support of the Heritage Council has been a huge helping us to compile this survey. In this time of Brexit and all of the uncertainty that surrounds it, we need to be equipped with this sort of data to collaboratively guide and build our future. The Heritage Council's role in this has been critical. Dundalk is a bustling, vibrant town with so much to offer and this collaborative survey will help us to enhance and maximise the quality of life for everyone in the town" he said.

ENDS

Copies of the report are now available at

<https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/projects/town-centre-health-check-training-programme>

Contact: Alison Harvey Email: aharvey@heritagecouncil.ie

Contact Martin McElligott Email: manager@dundalkbids.com

Note to editors:

The Heritage Council, RGDATA, Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government (DoHPCLG), Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DoAHRRGA), and Partners' National Pilot TCHC Training Programme has been a powerful catalyst for bringing key stakeholders and agencies together to ensure a vibrant future for the historic town centre of Dundalk and to enhance the quality of life for citizens and visitors alike.

Dundalk Town Centre Health Check Survey methodology:

Using a 15 - Step TCHC methodology developed by the Heritage Council in collaboration with third level institutes involved in the pilot training programme, students from IT Dundalk's Department of Creative Media and Information Technology and Department of Business Studies collected survey data from users/shoppers and businesses and carried out a land use survey to examine the use and mix of floorspace. Pedestrian counts and a survey of car parking space were also undertaken.

Members of the public were asked about their opinions of Dundalk Town Centre, what activities they undertake in the town centre, their suggestions for the future of the historic border town centre, and what environmental improvement they would like to see implemented.