

**Section 1: Legalities & Guidance for Ballymote****1.1 The Need for this Plan**

The purpose of this Local Area Plan (LAP) is to provide a comprehensive level of detail as to the desired manner and pattern of growth for the Ballymote area. It is the primary objective of this LAP to ensure the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, and as such it must be consistent with the objectives of the current *Sligo County Development Plan 2005 - 2011*. All policies and objectives referred to in the *County Development Plan (CDP)* apply to Ballymote and it is important to note that should any conflicts arise the CDP supersedes the content of the LAP.

The Plan provides a detailed framework for the future sustainable development of Ballymote having regard to social, economic and environmental requirements, as well as the associated infrastructural needs of those living and working in the area. Particular regard is also had for natural landscape features, archaeological/historical features of interest, open space needs (active and passive), and existing topography. The Plan will guide and regulate development through strategic environmental parameters, land use zoning measures, planning policies and development objectives.

*Legalities*

The Ballymote LAP is prepared in accordance with Sections 18, 19 and 20 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, which sets out provisions for the preparation of Local Area Plans. It is also in accordance with the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC), the objective of which is to *'provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans...'* The Plan will be in effect for a period of six years following its adoption. The Council may at any time amend or revoke the LAP.

*The Vision*

The aim of this LAP is to bring a cohesive and rational structure to the development of Ballymote. The main objectives of this Plan will focus on improving the residential land supply, commercial fabric and office and enterprise product of the town so that Ballymote can provide for the service needs of the surrounding hinterland. This shall be carried out in a sustainable manner by extending amenities and open space areas, protecting the natural environment, and ensuring an improved supply of the necessary physical and social infrastructure (such as water, sewage network, road links, as well as community facilities) to enable future development.

In order to promote quality development patterns in the study area an urban design framework is also included. This addresses issues such as street layout and design, landscaping, and specific guidelines on key sites within the town.

**1.2 What's already been said - Relevant Policies and Guidance**

When formulating this LAP account needs to be taken of the existing policy documents at National, Regional and Local level which could influence the Ballymote area.



### *National Level*

The *National Spatial Strategy for Ireland 2002 – 2020* (NSS) is a twenty-year strategy to guide and achieve more balanced social, economic and physical development between regions. Such a Strategy will allow all areas in the country to develop to their full potential. The Strategy recognises the interdependence of urban and rural areas and the role, which rural towns play within the spatial network in terms of flows of people and services. Ballymote due to its location and rail transport links to Sligo is seen as a '*rural area opportunity*' and should be developed as part of the network of urban and rural centres in this region.



The Ballymote LAP must comply with the principles of development espoused at national level through the NSS. The Planning and Development Act, 2000 specifically requires planning authorities to have regard to ministerial guidelines from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) and hence the following national policy documents have been regarded:

- *National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020*
- *Sustainable Development, A Strategy for Ireland, 1997*
- *National Development Plan 2000-2006*
- *The White Paper on Rural Development, 1999*
- *The Rural Transport Initiative, 2001*
- *National Anti-Poverty Strategy, 1997-2007*
- *National Children's Strategy, 2000*
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities:
  - Strategic Environmental Assessment,
  - Sustainable Rural Housing,
  - Architectural Heritage Protection,
  - Wind Farm Development,
  - Childcare Facilities,
  - Landscape and Landscape Assessment (Draft),
  - Part V (Planning & Development Act), 2000 Housing Supply,
  - Residential Density,
  - Retail Planning,
  - Telecommunication Antennae and Support Structures.

### *Regional Level*

The objective of the *Regional Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region, 2004*, is to provide a long-term strategic planning framework for the development of the Border Region in the next twenty-year period. The Border Region consists of the counties Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Louth and one of its key goals is to implement the NSS in the region and to identify a hierarchy of regionally significant settlements with a range of economic, social and cultural functions. Within the settlement strategy Ballymote has been identified as a '*small sized town for urban strengthening*', which would perform an important local role to the surrounding hinterland. Thereby necessitating appropriate development and investment.

### *Local Level*

The '*County Sligo Integrated Strategy 2002-2012*', by the County Development Board was established to develop an integrated strategy for the economic, social and cultural development of the County from 2002 to 2012. Consultation was carried out involving representatives of local government, local development

interests, state agencies, the community and voluntary sector, social partners and the general public. The primary goal of this Strategy is to achieve balanced spatial development, social inclusion, and the enhancement of our living culture.

Some of the key findings of the County Development Board, which are relevant to Ballymote, are to:

- Develop the necessary infrastructure to link Sligo regionally, nationally and internationally.
- Develop a commuter rail service between Sligo, Ballymote, Boyle and Carrick-on-Shannon.
- Increase the coverage and capacity of energy, electricity and telecommunications networks in the County.
- Develop and sustain rural services.
- Continue to develop accessible and affordable sporting and recreational opportunities.
- Increase the amount of quality workspace throughout the County.
- Ensure all developments take place in an economic and environmentally sustainable manner.

*The Sligo County Development Plan 2005 – 2011*

One of the main aims for the CDP is to *'develop the full potential of each part of the County to contribute to the optimal performance of the County as a whole – economically, socially and environmentally'*.

Some of the key policies of the CDP, which are relevant to Ballymote, are listed below:

- Promote Ballymote as a *'Key Support Town'*, serving the south and southeast of the County. In order for this to be carried out successfully the range and quality of facilities and services offered in the support town will need to be improved.
- Promote enterprise in the Key Support Towns.
- Promote the development potential of Ballymote in order to support investment in existing rail infrastructure.
- Revitalise the town through the promotion of development within built up areas (particularly on infill sites, vacant sites and on backlands), in preference to continued ribbon development on the approach roads. This will promote the efficient use of available public infrastructure and services.
- Work in partnership with local development and community associations, to examine ways of promoting and sustaining the character and service provisions of the town.

The map on the following page (Map 1: County Development Plan Settlement Concept) illustrates the status and role of Ballymote within the Settlement Strategy for County Sligo. This map has been taken from the current CDP.

# BALLYMOTE LOCAL AREA PLAN

Map 1 County Development Plan Settlement Concept

