

# Overview of post-2005 changes

Since the adoption of Ballymote Local Area Plan 2005-2011, there have been a number of significant changes, both local and national, in terms of the economy, legislation and planning policy.

## Population

At the time of the preparation of the Ballymote LAP 2005-2011, the most recent demographic figures available were those from Census 2002. The results of Census 2011 are not yet published, but 2006 information is now available.

### Demographic change 2002-2011

Area	pop. 2002	pop. 2006	% change '02-'06	pop. 2011	% change '06-'11
County Sligo	58,200	60,894	+4.6	65,270*	+7.2
Ballymote ED	1,405	1,717	+22.2	2,076*	+20.9
Ballymote Town	981	1,229	+25.3	Not available	Not available

\* Preliminary figures only. Source: www.cso.ie

## Economy

Since 2008, the national economy has been in decline due to the global financial crisis and the collapse of the property market. Like many other towns in Ireland, Ballymote has been affected by the downturn in the economy and by the subsequent increase in unemployment and out-migration.

Because the residential unit supply began to exceed demand, three housing developments in the town have not been fully completed, planning permission has expired

for two others and four permitted developments have not even commenced.

While employment in construction has collapsed, the Tente factory, the OPHardt Hygiene factory and the enterprises within the Business Park provide local employment, in addition to a small number of jobs in retail and services.

At present a significant proportion of people living in the area commute to Sligo and Carrick-on-Shannon for work. The LAP therefore will need to facilitate employment generation by supporting new developments with the potential to deliver jobs.

### Main developments permitted since 2005

<b>PL 06/377</b>	73 houses (15 constructed)
<b>PL 06/1390</b>	4 houses (no work commenced)
<b>PL 09/03</b>	renovation of the former Mill Complex (not commenced)
<b>PL 09/312</b>	84 houses (no work commenced)
<b>PL 09/280</b>	4 houses (no work commenced)
<b>PL 10/480</b>	extension to Teagasc (commenced)
<b>PL 10/480</b>	Top Chem units 2, 3 and 4
<b>Part 9</b>	Garda Station (completed)
<b>Part 8</b>	Fire Station (completed)
<b>Part 8</b>	Library (completed)

## Legislation

### Planning & Development Act 2010

This Act amended the Planning Acts of 2000-2009 with specific regard given to supporting economic renewal and sustainable development through the introduction of a **Core Strategy** in development plans.

The Act envisages a closer alignment of the Development Plans and Local Area Plans with the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines. It also clarifies the obligations of the planning authorities under the Habitats Directive, i.e. the requirement for Appropriate Assessment of plans and projects.

## Planning Policy

### Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 (RPGs)

The RPGs adopted in 2010 for the first time allocate population "targets" and upper limits for the zoning of land for residential uses in the constituent counties of the Border Region. There are separate specifications for Gateways and Hubs. The allocation of these targets at sub-county level is left to the respective planning authorities, which were obliged to amend their development plans by the end of September 2011.

### Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017 (CDP)

The new Sligo CDP, which was adopted earlier this year, contains a Core Strategy which is consistent with the National Spatial Strategy and the new Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010. The CDP supports balanced development throughout the County in parallel with the growth of Sligo as a Gateway City. It also recommends population levels and allocates housing land to the County's towns and villages, including Ballymote

# Selected CDP provisions applicable to Ballymote (I)

In the Settlement Structure and Hierarchy set out in the County Core Strategy, Ballymote is identified as a Key Support Town, along with Tobercurry and Enniscrone.

A number of strategic goals in the development plan are specifically relevant to the Key Support Towns:

## SG-1: Supporting Balanced economic development

- c. Promote economic development and the provision of industry/enterprise in the Key Support Towns of Tobercurry, Ballymote and Enniscrone.

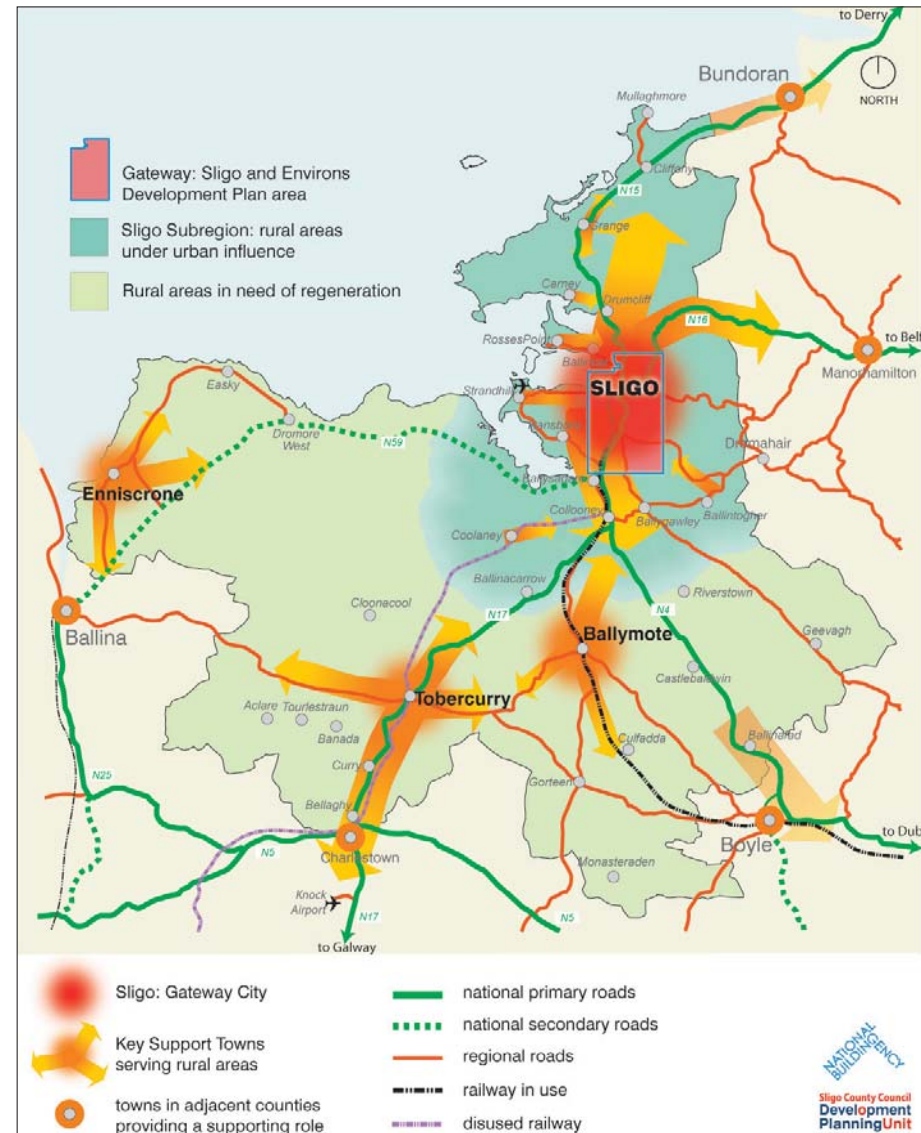
## SG-2: Carefully managing development patterns

- d. Encourage the location of new strategic economic developments in and around key urban centres in order to strengthen the Gateway City and Key Support Towns.
- e. Counteract tendencies towards extensive ribbon development and urban sprawl, particularly on the immediate environs of Sligo City and Key Support Towns

## SG-4: Driving urban renewal

- a. Drive the process of regenerating derelict and under-used areas within the County's towns and villages.
- b. Conserve the historic form and character of the towns and villages.
- c. Promote Sligo City as the main retail and service centre, with support from Tobercurry, Ballymote, Enniscrone, and promote Collooney and Grange as lower-tier retail/service centres.

**The Core Strategy Map for County Sligo represents a spatial development framework for the long term**



# Selected CDP provisions applicable to Ballymote (II)

## Strategic goals of the County Development Plan

### SG-1 Supporting balanced economic development

c. Promote economic development and the provision of industry/enterprise in the Key Support Towns of Tobercurry, Ballymote and Enniscrone.

### SG-2 Carefully managing development patterns

d. Encourage the location of new strategic economic developments in and around key urban centers in order to strengthen the Gateway City and Key Support Towns.

### SG-4 Driving urban renewal

c. Promote Sligo City as the main retail and service centre, with support from Tobercurry, Ballymote, Enniscrone, and promote Collooney and Grange as lower-tier retail/service centers.

### SG-5 Promoting effective transportation

b. Promote the development of settlements along existing and former railway lines, so as to facilitate future rail initiatives in the County, with adequate reservations for park-and-ride facilities.

f. Promote the development of quality interchange facilities between road, rail, bus and bicycle in Sligo City Centre, Key Support Towns and settlements along rail corridors.

## Spatial development principles

### Strategic spatial development policies

**SP-SD-3** Promote public transport by road and rail and support the reopening of the Western Rail Corridor.

**SP-SD-6** Establish a system of buffer zones around settlements so as to restrict sprawl and the possible merging of distinct settlement areas. These buffer zones will be determined by setting “Plan limits” as part of the preparation of local area plans and mini-plans.

**SP-SD-8** Consolidate the three Key Support Towns of Ballymote (serving South Sligo), Enniscrone (serving West Sligo) and Tobercurry (serving South-West Sligo) by providing them with an appropriate range of services including social infrastructure, retail, office, commercial and enterprise facilities to enable them to serve their respective rural catchments in an optimal manner.

### Strategic spatial development objective

The County Development Plan 2011-2017 also contains a specific objective to review the Ballymote LAP:

**SO-SD-1** Review or amend the existing local area plans for the Key Support Towns of Ballymote and Enniscrone by 2014.

## Population and housing land

In an attempt to manage the growth of settlements and to direct future development in accordance with the County Core Strategy as outlined in the CDP 2011-2017, population targets have been established for the settlements in each tier of the hierarchy along with supporting policies to inform development management.

Consistent with this strategy, the recommended population level for Ballymote is 1,700 persons by 2017.

## Extract from the CDP 2011-2017: Key Support Towns’ recommended population levels for 2017

Key Support Town	pop. 2002	pop. 2006	recommended pop. level 2017
Ballymote	981	1,229	1,700
Enniscrone	668	829	1,200
Tobercurry	1,171	1,421	1,800

**The CDP also sets out 21 hectares as the maximum amount of land that can be zoned for residential uses in the Ballymote LAP.** (The LAP 2005-2011 zoned 65 hectares of greenfield land for housing.)

The land allocations for particular settlements are derived from the provisions of the Border Regional Planning Guidelines.

## Rezoning proposals

Lands zoned in LAPs prepared before the adoption of the CDP 2011-2017 may or may not retain their zoning when the LAPs are reviewed.

Rezoning and new zoning adopted as part of the review of existing LAPs will be incorporated as zoning under the CDP.

Any such rezoning/new zoning will have to comply with the Core Strategy, Spatial Development Framework and Settlement Structure set out in this Plan.

Zoning/rezoning proposals will be assessed against the Zoning Principles and Strategic Zoning Policies.

# Selected CDP provisions applicable to Ballymote (III)

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## Economic development

As the shift from manufacturing to market services occurs, enterprise centres should be fostered and expanded in the key support towns of Tobercurry, **Ballymote** and Enniscrone, in addition to Strandhill

### *Strategic economic development policies*

**SP-ED-1** Ensure that sufficient and suitable land is reserved for new enterprise development at key locations throughout the County, particularly in the Key Support Towns of Tobercurry, Ballymote and Enniscrone, and promote these towns as secondary employment centers, after Sligo City.

Outside the Gateway, five centers in the County are of significance in terms of retail, due to their size, location or acknowledged importance in the NSS – Tobercurry, **Ballymote**, Enniscrone, Grange and Collooney.

During the period 2011 to 2017, the additional retail floor space requirement is equivalent to a small supermarket, possibly to be provided in the Key Support Town of **Ballymote**, which has only one such facility.

### *Retail planning objective*

**O-RP-1** Facilitate the provision of an additional supermarket in Ballymote.

## Transport and mobility

The promotion of Tobercurry and Ballymote as Key Support Towns, and Collooney and Ballysadare as Principal Gateway Satellites, will serve to enhance the feasibility of the Western Rail Corridor and local commuter rail services.

### *Mobility - strategic policy*

**SP-MOB-6** Promote the reopening of the Western Rail Corridor from Athenry to Sligo, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

### *Public transport policies*

**P-PT-1** Promote the consolidation of settlements on existing public transport routes and along the Western Rail Corridor.

**P-PT-4** Promote the development of the Western Rail Corridor, as a strategic transport corridor linking Sligo and the North-West with Mayo, Galway and Limerick. Any development that occurs through the implementation of this policy shall be subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

## Environmental infrastructure

### *Wastewater objective*

**O-WW-4** Complete the planning stage for upgrade works to Collooney and Ballymote WWTPs, subject to necessary approvals and compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

## Record of Protected Structures (RPS)

The revised RPS adopted as part of the new County Development Plan 2011-2017 includes 23 structures located in Ballymote.

On the previous (2005-2011) RPS there were only 7 structures listed.

The additional buildings that are now protected structures have been recommended in 2007 by the then Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government, based on the survey undertaken for the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.

# Key issues to be addressed in the LAP - housing (I)

## Land use zoning - housing land

The LAP 2005-2011 zoned 160 acres (65 ha) of land for residential purposes, which included 4 acres (1.6 ha) of mixed infill development (D3).

While the the objective of improving the residential land supply has been achieved, the extent of lands zoned for housing in the Ballymote LAP area proved to be significantly in excess of the actual housing requirements.

The area of land currently zoned for residential uses must be reduced in accordance with allocation contained in the Core Strategy of the County Development Plan 2011-2017.

**Of the 65 hectares of greenfield land currently zoned for housing in Ballymote, only 21 hectares are to be retained, in accordance with the Core Strategy.**

## Housing units

Since 2003 to date, 17 housing developments were permitted in Ballymote, of which just 6 were permitted since the adoption of the current LAP in December 2005.

In July 2011, a survey undertaken on behalf of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government's *National Housing Development Survey* identified 8 housing developments that were unfinished.

In all these estates, either some houses have not been completed or certain roads, footpaths and lighting are still missing or incomplete.

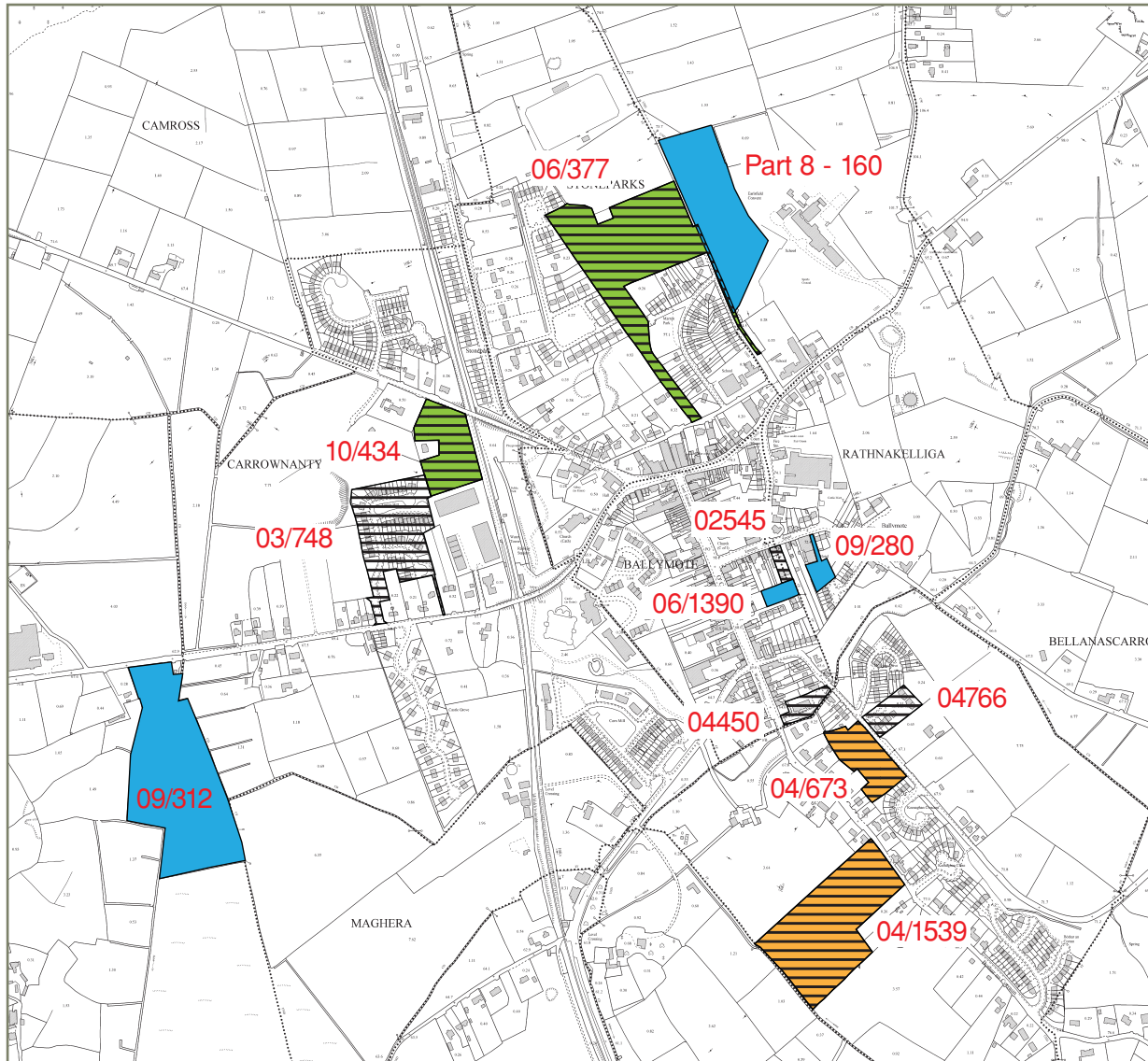
## Current status of permitted residential developments in Ballymote

Status of lands	Planning file number	Site area (hectares)	Permission expiry date	Current zoning
<b>Permitted developments that have not commenced</b>  (shown in blue on the map)	PL 09/312	4.47	6 July 2011	residential
	Part 8 (local authority development)	2.74	n/a	residential
	PL 06/1390	0.36	26 March 2012	residential
	PL 09/280	0.15	2 September 2014	mixed use
	<b>Total - 7.72</b>			
<b>Developments under construction</b>  (shown in green on the map)	PL 06/377	3.75	27 November 2011	residential
	PL 10/434	1.19	29 February 2016	mixed use
	<b>Total - 4.94</b>			
<b>Developments under construction where planning permission has expired</b>  (shown in orange on the map)	PL04/673 (commencement notice received on 18 July 2006)	0.92	26 September 2009	residential
	PL04/1539 (commencement notice received on 23 June 2006)	3.37	19 April 2011	residential
	<b>Total - 4.29</b>			

## Unfinished housing estates in Ballymote, 2011 (shown as hatched areas on the map)

Name of housing development	Development address	Planning file number	Date of granting permission	Number of permitted units	Number of finished units	Number of vacant units
<b>Cois na Dun</b>	Carrownanty	PL 00/1148	03/04/2003	20	4	0
<b>Earls Court</b>	Stroneparks & Earlsfield	PL 06/377	28/11/2006	73	13	1
<b>Mill Race View</b>	Wolfe Tone St.	PL 04/450	03/08/2004	8	8	0
<b>Newtown Park</b>	Keenaghan	PL 04/673	27/09/2004	19	1	0
<b>Patrick Mullen Dev.</b>	Keenaghan	PL 04/766	21/10/2004	9	5	5
<b>The Downs</b>	Keenaghan	PL 04/1539	17/10/2005	51	7	6
<b>The Mews</b>	Emmett Street	PL 02/545	06/02/2003	8	8	0
<b>Tower Hill</b>	Carrownanty	PL 03/748	15/03/2004	55	55	2

# Key issues to be addressed in the LAP - housing (II)



## Questions

- ▶ Given that circa 17 hectares of land already have the benefit of planning permission and/or have housing developments under construction, only a further 4 hectares can be zoned for housing in the next LAP.

Which areas of Ballymote should be prioritised for residential development?

- ▶ What housing types and sizes (in terms of number of bedrooms) would be best suited for the various areas zoned for residential use?
- ▶ Are the existing housing density recommendations appropriate or should they be revised?
- ▶ Is higher-density (apartment) living a viable option in Ballymote?

# Key issues to be addressed in the LAP - the economy

## Retail development

Ballymote is essentially a market town, where people from surrounding rural areas come to shop.

While progress has been made in relation to the refurbishment or replacement of existing vacant and derelict retail units, a large number of structures remain unoccupied.

The number of vacant retail units can be attributed primarily to the short commuting distances to Sligo and Carrick-on-Shannon, where a wider range of retail and related services is available, sometimes at lower prices. In recent years, the economic crisis has obviously made the pre-existing situation worse.



## Enterprise development

Ballymote's town centre is also its office base, with the community and enterprise centre being located along Grattan Street.

Manufacturing activities are based on the western periphery of the town, within the business park and in the industrial area along the R296 (Tobercurry Road). A planning application has been received for the construction of an extension to the OPHardt Hygiene factory.

A pharmaceutical company has come to the business park in recent years. Permission was also granted to extend the Teagasc training facilities.

In general, it is considered that town's location away from the national road network and, more recently, the availability of enterprise units in Collooney have hindered Ballymote's economic development.

Ballymote's location is also considered less favourable in terms of tourism development, despite the rich potential of the surrounding areas.

## Questions

- ▶ The new Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017 identifies a possible need for an additional supermarket in Ballymote. What suitable sites would be available for such development?
- ▶ What initiatives could the new LAP promote in order to enhance the character and urban design quality of Ballymote's centre, to ensure that it becomes more attractive for investment in commerce and retailing?
- ▶ What planning approaches would be suitable to encourage the re-development of derelict or vacant retail units?
- ▶ What types of retail facilities are missing but would be viable in Ballymote?

## Questions

- ▶ How can the new LAP facilitate the development of enterprise and employment opportunities in Ballymote?
- ▶ What types of economic activity should be encouraged? How can the LAP support it?
- ▶ What new types of business and enterprise would be viable in Ballymote? What would be the locational and infrastructural requirements of such activities?
- ▶ What initiatives could the new LAP propose in order to stimulate tourism and improve the visitor experience in Ballymote?

# Key issues to be addressed in the LAP - transport and mobility

Removed from the national road network, Ballymote is however accessible via no fewer than eight roads: R293 (from Gorteen), R295 (from Boyle), R296 (from Tobercurry), L-5604 (from Boyle/Gorteen), L-1502 (from Drumfin), L-1604 (from Castlebaldwin), L-6032 (from Templehouse) and R293 (from Sligo).

Substandard roads, such as the R293 at Clarke's Bridge and the L-1502 at Drumfin, make it very difficult for coaches and other heavy goods vehicles to access Ballymote from the N17 and the N4. This is detrimental to both tourism and local enterprise.

The approach roads converge in the town centre in the form of three main streets: Teeling Street, Lord Edward Street and O'Connell Street.

Despite the fact that these streets are relatively wide, traffic jams frequently arise at peak times during the day and on the weekly market days.

Traffic congestion is partly due to disorderly on-street parking, as a result of a lack of appropriately-delineated parking spaces and overflow parking facilities.

The delineation of car parking spaces to the rear of the cattle mart area (for use on days when the mart is not in operation) has not been realised.

Equally, the envisaged car park on a brownfield site to the rear of premises fronting onto Lord Edward Street (as outlined in objective T5 in the Ballymote LAP 2005–2011 has not been provided.

There are also deficiencies in the provision of footpaths and pedestrian crossings, while cycling-related facilities are non-existent in Ballymote.

The lack of a commuter rail service is undermining the CDP goal of achieving a sustainable transport system.



## Questions

- ▶ What measures would be required in order to alleviate traffic congestion in the centre?
- ▶ What would be a good solution to the parking problem?
- ▶ Should a one-way traffic system be implemented in Ballymote? How should this be designed?
- ▶ What are the most suitable locations for providing additional parking facilities?
- ▶ What types of provision should be made for non-car users of the town's streets?
- ▶ Should there be pedestrian-only spaces in Ballymote? Where should these be located and how should they be designed?
- ▶ Should any cycle and pedestrian-only links be provided in town, separate from the streets? If yes, where?
- ▶ Where in the town is there a need to improve or extend footpaths and locate pedestrian crossings?

# Key issues to be addressed - education, culture, community

## Education

Ballymote is well served with educational facilities:

- Ballymote National School (primary level)
- Colaiste Mhuire (secondary)
- Corran College (post-leaving cert courses)

The Teagasc training facility runs day and night courses, mainly agriculture-related.

Ballymote also offers Montessori, crèche and play group facilities.

Community based training courses and schemes funded by FAS and Leader are also provided by the Ballymote Community Enterprise Centre on Emmet Street and the Ballymote Family Resource Centre on Wolfe Tone Street.

## Culture

The Loftus Hall, at the corner of Abbey Terrace, has many community-based uses. The local Drama Society uses the Hall to perform their yearly production.

The newly refurbished former cinema building will be used by the Drama Society in the future.

## Health

A public health centre has been provided on Teeling Street in temporary premises. The recently opened Rock Health Centre along Lord Edward Street provides mental health services on behalf of the HSE.

The Sisters of St. John of God nursing unit is now run as an independent company in conjunction with the HSE.

St Vincent De Paul provides elderly accommodation adjacent to the nursing unit.



## Sports

Ballymote's sports grounds, located to the north of the town, comprise two pitches for soccer and gaelic football and a floodlit all-weather playing pitch.

Ballymote has one of the top provincial indoor handball alleys in Ireland which is located to the rear of the Mart. Permission has been recently granted for the provision of new handball alley within the existing sports complex.

Ballymote also boasts a 9-hole golf course located just outside the town, to the south-east.

## Questions

- ▶ Is it necessary to make provision for the potential future extension or even relocation of any of the existing education facilities? Are any new facilities required?
- ▶ How can the LAP support the development of cultural activities in Tobercurry?
- ▶ Is there sufficient provision of childcare facilities?
- ▶ What types of facilities should be provided for older children and teenagers?
- ▶ How can the LAP more specifically address the needs of children and young people?
- ▶ What are the most suitable locations for a permanent health centre?
- ▶ Is there a need for other facilities to cater specifically for the requirements of other age groups or categories of population? If yes, what should these be and where should they be located?
- ▶ What other sports, recreation or community facilities should be supported by the revised local area plan?
- ▶ Are additional lands required for the expansion of the burial ground?
- ▶ Is the area of plan currently zoned in the LAP sufficient to cater for any future expansion of the Sports Grounds?

# Key issues to be addressed - urban design and open space

The core of Ballymote, comprising of Teeling Street, Lord Edward Street and O'Connell Street, has remained largely intact since the early part of the 20th Century. These streets feature a mix of two- and three-storey residential and commercial properties with varied rooflines, similar to many other west of Ireland towns.

Urban growth in the second half of the 20th century took mainly the form of residential development stretching along approach roads. The exception is the industrial areas which evolved along the R296 to the west of the town centre.

As new housing schemes were developed in recent years, the urban form of Ballymote has suffered through lack of connectivity and attention to the creation of new streetscapes.

There is a need for a more compact urban form within Ballymote. This can be achieved through the development of derelict and backland sites. The majority of the town centre sites within Ballymote consist of narrow linear landholdings involving numerous landowners. The planned co-ordinated development of derelict sites and in particular backland areas is difficult as it requires the co-operation of the various landowners.

In terms of recreational open space, Ballymote's main area is its town park (approx. 11 acres). The park provides a high-quality semi-natural environment, which includes a children's play ground.

The town has significant tree groups within the Park, around the former Corn Mill and near the convent school. There is also a small green area outside the old Court House on Teeling Street.

The Dublin-Sligo railway line provides an ad-hoc wildlife corridor crossing Ballymote.



## Questions

- ▶ What is the best approach to infill and derelict sites within the town's historic core in terms of design?

Should new development proposals be required to reflect the traditional scale, form, character and detail of the original/adjoining buildings or are contemporary styles acceptable?

- ▶ Can the Mart area be improved in terms of urban design? How?
- ▶ Is there a need for additional public spaces and civic buildings in Ballymote?
- ▶ How can access to features of both the built and archaeological heritage be improved?
- ▶ Are there other features of interest within Ballymote which could be included in the walking trail?

