

Why prepare a local area plan for Ballymote

What is a local area plan?

A local area plan (LAP) is a document that sets out a detailed strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area covered by it. The legal basis for the process of making a LAP is set out in Sections 18-20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

A planning authority may prepare a LAP in respect of any area considered suitable and, in particular, for those areas which require economic, physical and social renewal and for areas likely to be subject to large scale development within the lifetime of the plan.

The process of preparing a LAP must be transparent and inclusive. All interested parties must be given an opportunity to express their opinions and make suggestions regarding any issue pertaining to the plan. All submissions must be considered by the elected members of the local authority before deciding what policies and objectives should be included in the LAP.

Why do we need local area plans?

- To provide for orderly, balanced development in the interest of common good.
- To indicate detailed requirements regarding the provision of community facilities and amenities.
- To set specific standards for the design of developments and structures.
- To ensure that all sectors of the society are properly considered and catered for.
- To provide a degree of certainty and security.

A new LAP for Ballymote

Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017 (CDP) specifies that Ballymote LAP is to be reviewed by 2014.

The LAP should outline a vision for the area that it covers, specifying the type, amount and quality of development needed to achieve that vision, while seeking to protect and enhance the environment and amenities.

Within the wider policy framework of the CDP, the Ballymote LAP should provide the necessary degree of certainty within which individual development decisions can be made.

Pre-draft consultation on the LAP

In accordance with current legislation, a planning authority must take whatever steps it considers necessary to consult the public before preparing a LAP.

As part of the legally-required pre-draft consultation stage, the Development Planning Unit of Sligo County Council has prepared this Consultation Paper with a view to providing the public with sufficient information and suggestions to stimulate a debate on the future of Ballymote.

The following pages briefly review the existing LAP (2005-2011), assess the progress in implementing its objectives, present the most relevant CDP provisions that relate to or impact on Ballymote, together with some comments, suggestions and a number of questions aimed at establishing the public's needs and preferences that could be addressed in the new LAP.

How does the LAP affect you?

- Indicates future development needs, highlights opportunities and constraints.
- Details future housing, economic development, conservation of the natural and built heritage, infrastructural projects and other proposals.
- Informs and guides anyone planning or investing in future development, infrastructure or services.
- The Plan is a tool for controlling and guiding new development.
- It is used to assess planning applications and appeals.
- It is a vehicle for facilitating local proposals and priorities.

How can you get involved in the preparation of the LAP?

If you are interested in the development of Ballymote and wish to contribute to the shaping of its future, you should make a written submission to the planning authorities during the specified period: 9 November to 9 December 2011.

All individuals, businesses, community groups, public sector and non-governmental agencies, any other organisations are strongly encouraged to participate in the plan-making process.

Based on the provisions of the CDP 2011-2017 and the outcome of pre-draft consultation, a draft LAP will be prepared and put on public display for further consultation.

Review of Ballymote LAP 2005-2011

Ballymote LAP 2005–2011 was adopted by Sligo County Council on the 5th December 2005. The Plan was prepared under Sections 18–20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and, together with the CDP 2005-2011, provided the statutory basis for the consideration of planning applications.

The LAP provided a detailed, comprehensive framework of planning policies and objectives designed to guide the physical development of Ballymote so that growth could take place in a co-ordinated, sensitive and orderly manner, while at the same time conserving the town's built and natural heritage.

The planning team carefully analysed the services, land uses, infrastructure and planning permissions in existence in 2004-2005. Environmental considerations and the concept of sustainable development underpinned all the aims, policies and objectives of the Plan.

The main objectives of the LAP focused on improving the residential land supply, commercial fabric and office and enterprise space within the town, to enable Ballymote to meet the needs of the inhabitants of the town and surrounding hinterland.

“Section 1 – Legalities & Guidance for Ballymote” detailed the legislative and policy context that guided the preparation of the 2005-2011 LAP.

“Section 2 – From the Past” identified Ballymote as an important historical, agricultural, educational and economic centre. The Plan took into account Ballymote's role as a service centre for the surrounding rural community, a centre of employment through industrial and enterprise development, its tourism potential and the importance of Ballymote's open space and recreational facilities.

Ballymote was identified in the County Development Plan 2005–2011 as a Key Support Town with a projected population of 2,500–4,000 by the year 2021. At the time of adoption of the Ballymote LAP 2005–2011, the most recent demographic figures available were from Census 2002, which recorded a population of 981 persons in Ballymote.

“Section 3 – The Future of Ballymote” set out the general principles, aims and strategy regarding the future expansion of Ballymote. These provided the framework for objectives set out in section 4 of the LAP. These general principles related to the consolidation of the town, the protection of the environment and took account of infrastructural considerations.

“Section 4 – Realising the Potential” included a zoning map showing the desired land uses in the town. It noted that development was somewhat constrained to the east, due to a more sensitive topography such as the rising hills at Earlsfield, Bellanscarrow West and Keenaghan.

It identified the need for a mix of house sizes (in terms of number of bedrooms) and observed that the rental market was good in Ballymote. The recommendation was for further residential developments to be focused on backland and infill sites.

Three residential density classes were identified:

Density 1 – under 8 units/acre (under 20 units/hectare)

Density 2 – 8 to 11 units per acre (20–27 units/hectare)

Density 3 – 12+ units per acre (circa 30+ units/hectare)

Minimum and maximum housing and population increases were estimated in relation to the 160 acres (65 hectares) of greenfield land zoned for residential uses,

based on the assumption that the average household would consist of 2.75 persons.

The capacity of greenfield land zoned for residential uses was a minimum of 1,225 housing units (equivalent to 3,369 persons) and a maximum of 1,717 housing units (equivalent to 4,721 persons).

In support of the residential uses, Section 4 of the LAP also included objectives relating to open space, heritage protection, urban design, retail and other business development, tourism and infrastructural utilities.

It was envisaged that an open space network would be established around Ballymote, incorporating the key landscape features and facilitating access to Ballymote's archaeological and architectural heritage.

The subsection on urban design looked at how the town could be developed in the future and identified ways in which the townscape could be enhanced.

It included some guidance for infill developments, boundary treatments, building heights, the creation of a distinct urban edge, the reuse of vacant derelict properties and the retention of existing design features that give character to streetscapes.

The subsections on retail and business generally extended urban design recommendations to these areas of activity.

The LAP included a substantial subsection relating to transport, with detailed recommendations regarding improving access, the enhancement of streets, parking, footpaths and the provision of cycling-related facilities.

The LAP also contained a number of general and specific policies and objectives in relation to water, wastewater, electricity and broadband.

Progress in implementing the Plan's objectives (I)

Ballymote LAP 2005-2011 contained, at the end of each sub-section, a number of objectives designed to guide development and protect the amenities of the area.

This section of the Consultation Paper assesses the progress in implementing the objectives contained in the Local Area Plan 2005-2011.

It includes comments, where relevant, and it makes recommendations relating to the retention of certain objectives in the new LAP 2011-2017.

Objectives for Housing

Objective	Progress	Comment
H1 – suitable range and mix of houses	A suitable range and mix of dwellings house has been constructed, catering for the existing and future population.	Retain in the new LAP
H2 – Services and utilities to be provided concurrent with construction of houses	Objective implemented.	Retain in the new LAP

Objectives for Establishing Quality Networks

Objective	Progress	Comment
OS1 – Create open space network encircling key landscape and heritage features.	The objective has not been fully realised to date.	Retain in the new LAP
OS2 – Preserve significant views	On-going. Development has been discouraged along ridgelines.	Retain in the new LAP
OS3 – Retain significant vegetation	On-going. Permitted developments have retained existing vegetation on site where possible.	Retain in the new LAP

Objectives for Archaeology

Objective	Progress	Comment
A1 – Support OPW restoration of Ballymote Castle	On-going	Retain in the new LAP
A2 – Safeguard Franciscan Abbey and adjoining graveyard.	On-going	Retain in the new LAP
A3 – Support access to various archaeological sites.	On-going	Retain in the new LAP
A4 – Integrate sites of archaeological interest into walking trail.	The objective has not been fully realised to date.	Retain in the new LAP

Objective for Architectural Heritage

Objective	Progress	Comment
AH1 – Encourage public and developers to appreciate the built heritage within Ballymote.	On-going	Retain in the new LAP

Progress in implementing the Plan's objectives (II)

Objectives for Urban Design

Objective	Progress	Comment
UD1 – Encourage sensitive restoration of derelict buildings that contribute to the built heritage.	Some progress has been made, such as the construction of the new Garda Station. The remaining sites have not yet been developed.	In the new Plan, retain the objective for all sites except for that of the new Garda Station
UD2 – Improve the physical appearance of the junction in front of Loftus Hall and the junction to the east of Teeling Street.	Objective not realised	Retain in the new LAP
UD3 – Encourage development on the brownfield site adjacent to Loftus Hall	Objective not realised	Retain in the new LAP
UD4 – Explore the possibility of developing the former cinema site	Refurbishment of the former cinema building has been completed	Remove from Plan
UD5 – Encourage the development of the site adjacent to the cinema.	No proposals have been received for the development of the adjacent site.	Retain in the new LAP
UD6 – Pedestrian link between Teeling Street / Corran College and through from O'Connell Street	Objective not realised	Retain in the new LAP
UD7 – Development of permeable building adjacent to Mart	Objective not realised	Retain in the new LAP
UD8 – New street front to the rear of O'Connell Street and Teeling Street.	Objective not realised	Retain in the new LAP
UD9 – Preserve vernacular stonewalling	On-going	Retain in the new LAP
UD10 – Retain distinctive features – fire hydrants, post box	On-going	Retain in the new LAP
UD11 – Ensure signposts are clearly visible.	On-going	Retain in the new LAP



Progress in implementing the Plan's objectives (III)



Objectives for Retailing

Objective	Progress	Comment
R1 – Encourage within specific sites the development of niche commercial ventures.	On-going	Retain in the new LAP
R2 – Explore possible relocation of casual trading area to car park in front of the courthouse.	Objective not realised	Retain in the new LAP
R3 – Promote reuse of existing vacant retail premises	While progress has been made in the refurbishment or replacement of existing vacant / derelict retail units, a high level of vacancy still exists in the town.	Retain in the new LAP
R4 – Encourage retention of traditional shop fronts and enhance local character of streetscape.	On-going	Retain in the new LAP
R5 – Encourage infilling of brownfield sites.	Some development has taken place on brownfield sites. The Plan should continue to support this.	Retain in the new LAP

Objectives for Employment

Objective	Progress	Comment
E1 – Ensure through proactive initiatives that Ballymote is attractive for inward investment	The objective, as currently worded, is unclear.	Retain in the new LAP with clarified wording.
E2 – Appropriately landscape all industrial developments.	On-going	Retain in the new LAP

Progress in implementing the Plan's objectives (IV)

Objectives for Community Facilities

Objective	Progress	Comment
CF1 – Encourage use of Corran College for community classes and groups.	The objective, as currently worded, is outside the Plan's remit	In the new LAP, include a modified objective (e.g. retain Corran College for community uses)
CF2 – Support development of a health services unit	On-going. A public health centre has been provided on Teeling Street in temporary premises. The HSE has recently opened The Rock Health Centre (mental health) along Lord Edward Street.	Retain in the new LAP with revised wording
CF3 – Retain Loftus Hall for community based activities.	On-going. Loftus Hall has been retained for community-based activities.	Retain in the new LAP



Objectives for Tourism

Objective	Progress	Comment
TO1 – Support promotion of Ballymote as an accommodation base on which to develop the town's tourism potential.	The objective, as currently worded, is unclear.	Retain in the new LAP with clarified wording.
TO2 – Encourage the development of niche tourism activities in Ballymote.	On-going	Retain in the new LAP

Objectives for Transport (continues on next page)

Objective	Progress	Comment
T1 – Facilitate road improvement along approach roads in particular at Clarke's Bridge and the approach road from Drumfin.	Objective partly realised.	Retain in the new LAP
T2 – Support the provision of a commuter rail service between Ballymote and Sligo	Objective not realised	Retain in the new LAP

Progress in implementing the Plan's objectives (V)



Objectives for Transport (continued)

Objective	Progress	Comment
T3 – Reserve access points at back-land locations to allow for good traffic circulation	Permissions granted on lands where indicative roads were shown have taken these roads in consideration. As permissions have not been granted on all the greenfield sites which include indicative roads, the objective has not been fully realised.	Retain in the new LAP
T4 – Promote the provision of vehicular linkages with the plan area.	As above	Retain with modifications to the map
T5 – Develop car parks to the rear of the mart and rear of Lord Edward Street.	Objective not realised	Retain in the new LAP
T6 – Delineate parallel car parking bays along Lord Edward Street.	Objective not realised	Retain in the new LAP with modified wording: “Delineate parking bays along Edward Street and O’Connell Street”.
T7 – Delineate car parking spaces at the primary school and Corran College and provide a drop of point for parents.	Objective realised	Omit from the new LAP
T8 – Facilitate the provision of parking restrictions at the junction of Lord Edward Street and Teeling Street.	Objective realised	Omit from the new LAP
T9 – Improve footpaths at south-western side of Teeling Street, Keenaghan area, beside the cattle mart and along Grattan Street.	Objective partly realised	Retain in the new LAP with modified wording
T10 – Facilitate the provision of footpaths along the R296, around the single storey dwelling at the junction of Teeling Street opposite the petrol station and the Keenaghan area.	Objective not realised	Retain in the new LAP with modified wording
T11 – Promote the inclusion of bicycle stands within the town and at the train station.	On-going	Retain in the new LAP

Progress in implementing the Plan's objectives (VI)

Objectives for infrastructural utilities

Objective	Progress	Comment
WS1 – Reserve land for a sludge treatment station.	The station has been completed	Omit from the new LAP
WS2 – Provide Ballymote with an adequate and reliable water supply	A new water treatment plant is planned for Lough Talt.	Retain in the new LAP
WS3 – Promote the provision and use of separate foul and surface water drainage systems	A design review and upgrade of the existing treatment plant are to be completed.	Retain in the new LAP
WS4 – Phase developments until a sewage expansion scheme can be realised.	On-going	Amend wording to accord with County Development Plan provisions
WS5 – Encourage the inclusion of Ballymote in the next round of the Serviced Land Initiative Programme.	The Serviced Land Initiative Programme has been discontinued by the Government	Omit from the new LAP
WS6 – Facilitate the provision of electricity utilities to serve the projected population.	On-going	Retain in the new LAP
WS7 – Support the inclusion of Ballymote in the Governments National Broadband Strategy and Plan, as a town to be incorporated with the metropolitan broadband network.	Objective not achieved. It is highly unlikely that the Government will fund a metropolitan broadband network for Ballymote. However, broadband is currently offered by private companies.	Omit from the new LAP

