

DRAFT
Toberry
Local Area Plan
2015–2021

April 2015

Draft Tobercurry Local Area Plan 2015–2021

Sligo County Council has prepared a Draft Local Area Plan (LAP) for Tobercurry. The Draft LAP sets out land use zoning proposals and detailed development objectives for the period 2015-2021 and beyond.

Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment

Following screening and consultation with prescribed environmental authorities, the Planning Authority has determined that the implementation of the Tobercurry Local Area Plan 2015-2021 is not likely to have significant effects on the environment. Therefore, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is not required.

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report has also been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive. Copies of the SEA Screening Report, the SEA decision and the AA Screening Report are available alongside the Draft Plan.

Public consultation and information session

The Draft Plan and associated documents will be available for inspection **from Thursday 2 April to Friday 15 May** at the Teach Laighne Library, Tobercurry, and the Planning Office of Sligo County Council (City Hall, Quay Street, Sligo) during office opening hours. The documents can be viewed and downloaded from the Council's website at www.sligococo.ie/tobercurry

A public information session will take place **from 4 pm to 6 pm on Thursday, 23 April, in Teach Laighne.**

Submissions and observations

Anyone wishing to make submissions or observations in respect of the Draft Plan may do so during the public consultation period. Submissions should include maps, where relevant. All submissions received within the stated period will be taken into consideration prior to the adoption of the Plan. Submissions should be made in writing (hard copy or e-mail), headed "Draft Tobercurry Local Area Plan" and sent to:

The Development Planning Unit

Sligo County Council, City Hall, Quay Street, Sligo
Tel. 071-9114481

Digital submissions should be e-mailed to dpu@sligococo.ie

Closing date for submissions: 4 pm on Friday, 15 May 2015

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Introductory note

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) indicates that a local area plan “shall be consistent with the objectives of the development plan, its core strategy, and any regional planning guidelines that apply to the area of the plan”.

The Draft Tobercurry Local Area Plan (LAP) has been prepared in accordance with the policies and objectives of the Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017 (CDP), its Core Strategy and the provisions of the Border Regional Planning Guidelines.

The Draft Tobercurry LAP is thus consistent with the Development Plan, whose strategic and general policies and objectives apply to the LAP area. In each chapter, the Draft LAP lists the CDP provisions most relevant to the Tobercurry Plan area. These provisions are shown in *italics like this*:

Strategic settlement policies

SP-S-2 *Encourage growth in the Gateway and Key Support Towns by applying a moratorium on multiple housing developments in the settlements listed in Schedule 3U of the CDP, until the year 2013, when a review should be undertaken based on new Census figures.*

The CDP policies have been already adopted by the Council as part of the County Development Plan. They cannot be changed through the Local Area Plan process.

However, the Draft LAP contains policies and objectives which are specific to Tobercurry and complement the CDP provisions. The Draft LAP policies are presented in a box like this:

Retail development policies	
It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:	
RDP-1	Strengthen the retail and commercial functions of the town centre, by ensuring that retail or commercial uses are retained at the ground floor level.
RDP-2	Promote the re-use of existing vacant retail premises within Tobercurry.

The Draft LAP policies are subject to public consultation and may be changed if the elected members of the Ballymote-Tobercurry Municipal District consider it necessary.

Should the members propose amendments to the Draft Plan, these amendments will be the subject of strategic environmental assessment and appropriate assessment screening, followed by a second stage of public consultation.

1. Plan context



1.1 Legal basis for Tobercurry LAP

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) specifies that a local authority must make a local area plan (LAP) for all towns under its jurisdiction where the population, as counted by the most recent Census, exceeds 5,000 persons. A LAP must also be made for towns with a minimum of 1,500 persons, in cases where the County Development Plan does not already include objectives for these places.

The Planning Act indicates that local authorities may prepare a LAP for any area considered suitable, especially those likely to be subject to large-scale development or those which require economic, physical and social renewal during the lifetime of such a plan.

Tobercurry is County Sligo's second town in economic and population terms. The town had 1,747 inhabitants in 2011 (Census figure), having grown from 1,171 in 2002, i.e. by almost 50% in less than a decade.

National and regional planning policy documents such as the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and the Border Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) have made the case for the urban strengthening of Tobercurry, which is strategically located along the Sligo-Galway Road (N-17) and the Western Rail Corridor.

In view of the above, Sligo County Council has decided to prepare a LAP for Tobercurry.

1.1.1 Local Area Plan 2015-2021

In 2011, the County Council adopted the Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017 (CDP), which – for the first time – was based on a Core Strategy, in accordance with amended planning legislation. The Core Strategy confirmed the settlement hierarchy in the County and Tobercurry's designation as a Key Support Town for the rural areas in south-west Sligo.

The Tobercurry LAP 2015-2021 implements specific provisions of the Core Strategy, of which the most important is the allocation of land for residential development.

The LAP is prepared in accordance with Sections 18, 19 and 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Plan will remain operational for six years following its adoption, but the Council may decide to amend or revoke the LAP at any time.

1.1.2 Purpose of the LAP

The purpose of this Local Area Plan is to provide a comprehensive level of detail as to the desired manner and pattern of growth for the town of Tobercurry. The LAP is designed to guide and regulate development through land use zoning, planning policies and specific development objectives.

Tobercurry LAP is consistent with the objectives of the Sligo County Development Plan 2011–2017 (CDP). All policies and objectives contained in the CDP apply to Tobercurry. In particular, the LAP is consistent with the Core Strategy contained in the County Development Plan 2011-2017 (refer to Chapter 3). It is important to note that the next CDP for the period 2017-2023 will supersede this LAP in the event of a conflict between CDP and LAP provisions.

1.2 Location and background

1.2.1 Geography

Tobercurry is located approximately 35 km (22 miles) south of Sligo town, in the south-west of the County, along the national primary road N-17 (Sligo to Galway). The regional road R-294 (Boyle to Ballina) crosses the town, which is also the convergence point for the local road network.

The disused Sligo-Limerick rail line – better known as the Western Rail Corridor – runs along the north-western side of the town centre.

Most of the town lies at a height of between 80 and 90 m above sea level, with the land gently rising to the north-east of the town, reaching a height of 104 m at the top of Mountain Road.

The landscape surrounding Tobercurry is flat and low-lying, with a pattern of small and medium-sized fields bounded by hedgerows and some mature tree belts. The Ox Mountains are not far, only 7 km north-west of Tobercurry, while the hills of Knocknashee (north) and Muckelty Hill (north-east) provide an attractive backdrop to the town.



1.2 Location and background

The provisions of the Local Area Plan apply to an extensive area comprising two distinctive zones:

- the **development zone**, consisting of most of the existing built-up area (excludes ribbon development along the approach roads) plus lands zoned for future development;
- the **buffer zone**, consisting of a relatively large rural area surrounding the development zone.

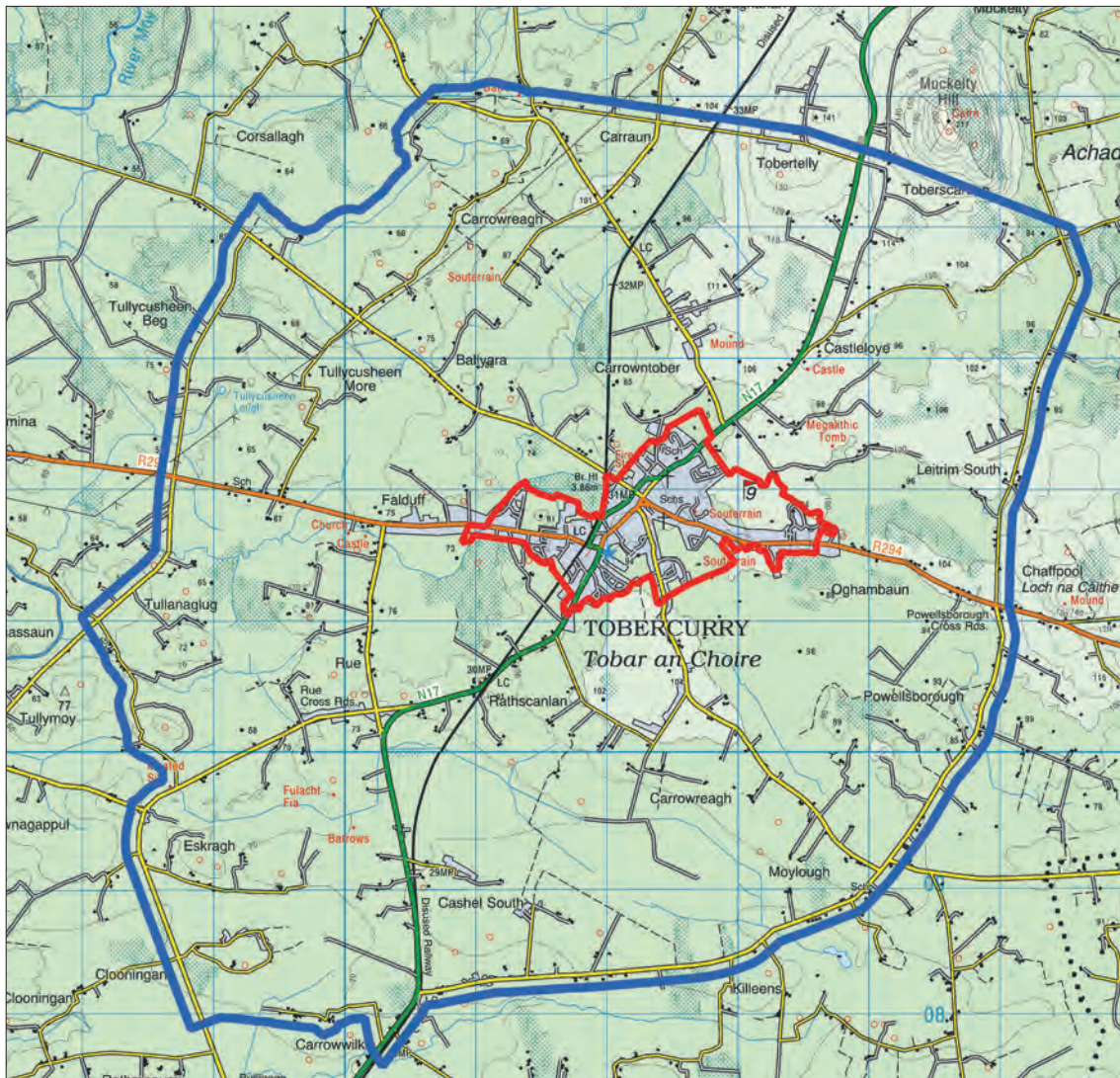
The development zone is enclosed within the development limit (red line in the image below), while the entire plan area is contained within the Plan limit (blue line in the image below).

The development zone extends into the townlands of *Ballyara or Falduff, Carrowntober, Oghambaun, Rathscanlan and Tobercurry*.

The wider Plan area incorporates the following additional townlands:

Achonry, Ballyara (Knox), Carraun, Carrigeenagowna, Carrownagappul, Carrowreagh (Cooper), Carrowreagh (Knox), Carrowwilkin, Cashel South, Castleloye, Clooningan, Corsallagh, Doomore, Drimina, Eskragh, Leitrim South, Moylough, Powellsborough, Rue, Toberscardan, Toberately, Tullanaglug, Tullycusheen Beg, Tullycusheen More, Tullymoy

Fig 1.A The extent of the Plan area (inside the blue line) and the development zone (inside the red line)



1.2.2 Historical background

Tobercurry was first mentioned in O'Donovan's Annals in 1397, when a fortress was built at 'To-bar an Choire' (meaning 'well of the rock'). The next mention occurs in the survey of 1663 where it was written as "Tuberncorne".

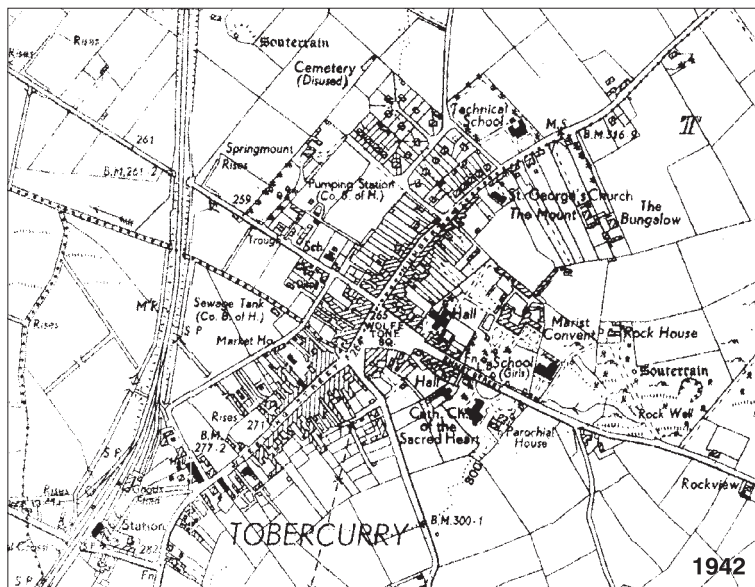
Tobercurry has associations with the rising of 1798 and the "Race of Castlebar". It is said that the French passed through Tobercurry on that eventful occasion and that the leaders of the rebellion (Humbert, Teeling and Wolfe Tone) have given their names to the streets of the town, which was just a country village when the French cavalry passed through.



The Church of Ireland was built in 1830, followed by the Catholic Church in 1832. All other buildings and improvements to the town came later. These included Session Courts, a Constabulary Station, a work house and a dispensary.

The year 1895 saw the introduction of the railway to Tobercurry. This was a vital piece of infrastructure linking the town with the ports at Sligo, Ballina and Westport.

In 1920, during the War of Independence, the town was all but destroyed during a reprisal by the Royal Irish Constabulary (Black & Tans) after the killing of a District Inspector in an ambush at Chaffpool. It is documented that "the main street burned for many days and was almost completely destroyed".



Following this widespread destruction, houses in the town were renovated or reconstructed. Building schemes were established by local industrialists and by private means. Factories set up in the 1950s later became well established in the town.

Tobercurry continues to appear as a typical market town which grew from the convergence of two roads meeting at the heart of the settlement at Wolfe Tone Square. From there it expanded in a north-east/south-west direction along Teeling Street and Humbert Street, with only limited development crossing this axis.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, accelerated urban growth took the form of multi-unit residential developments on backlands off the main axis of the town (N-17, north-east/south-west).

Some residential development occurred on backlands off the R-294 (east-west direction). However, ribbon development remains predominant along the roads to the east and west of the town centre.

1.3 Demographic information

Tobercurry is a Census town, i.e. a town with a legally-defined boundary for Census purposes. It had a population of 1,171 in 2002, which increased by 576 persons, to 1,747 in 2011 – a growth of 49.2%.

During the same period, Tobercurry Electoral Division (ED) grew by 644 persons (37.2%), from 1,894 to 2,538 persons. Presumably a large portion of the 644 population increase in the ED occurred within the town itself.

Between 2002 and 2011, Tobercurry's 576-strong population growth was the highest in County Sligo, surpassing the other two designated Key Support Towns of Ballymote (increase of 558 persons) and Enniscrone (increase of 555 persons).

Table 1.B Demographic change in County Sligo, Tobercurry Town and ED, 2002 to 2011

Area	Population 2002	Population 2006	change 2002-2006	Population 2011	change 2006-2011	change 2002-2011
County Sligo	58,200	60,894	+4.6%	65,270	+7.2%	+12.14%
Tobercurry Town	1,171	1,421	+21.3%	1,747	+23%	+49.2%
Tobercurry ED	1,894	2,181	+15.1%	2,538	+16.36%	+34%

Source: cso.ie

1.3.1 Age profile

Tobercurry's population aged under 20 accounted for 27.5% of the total population in 2011, a slightly lower proportion than in 2002, when it represented 30% of the total.

At the same time, the proportion of persons aged 65 and over has decreased from 16.7% in 2002 to 12.7% in 2011.

The most significant change has been in the 20 to 64 age group, i.e. the working age population, which in 2011 represented 60% of the total, compared to only 53.3% in 2002.

The largest increase in any age group was recorded in the 30 to 34 category, where numbers grew from 72 in 2002 to 172 in 2011. Consistent with this growth in the number of potential parents, the number of children aged under 5 – for which the availability of childcare services would be important – more than doubled between 2002 and 2011, from 82 to 176.

This appears to be the effect of young families from outside the town moving into newly-built houses. As further houses are completed and occupied, the average age of the population is likely to decrease in the medium term. Additional playgrounds, sports and recreational facilities for the young should be provided, whilst at the same time catering for the specific needs of older age groups.

Table 1.C Population classified by broad age group in Tobercurry, Census 2002, 2006, 2011

Age group	2002		2006		2011	
	persons	percentage of total	persons	percentage of total	persons	percentage of total
0 - 19 y	351	30.0%	373	26.2%	480	27.5%
20 - 64 y	624	53.3%	826	58.1%	1,045	60.0%
65 and over	196	16.7%	222	15.6%	222	12.7%
total	1,171	100%	1,421	100%	1,747	100%

Source: cso.ie

1.3.2 Employment profile

In 2011, there were 665 persons (49.3% of the workforce) employed in Tobercurry town, compared to only 415 in 2002 (45.2% of the workforce). Employment peaked in 2006, when 52.9% of the working age population (599 persons) had a job.

The proportion of persons who had lost their jobs in the year before the Census remained relatively stable between 2002 and 2006, with 63 persons in 2002 (6.9%) and 73 in 2006 (6.45%). However, there was a dramatic increase to 200 persons unemployed in 2011 (14.84% of the workforce), clearly correlated with the economic crisis.

It is notable that Tobercurry's workforce (consisting of people at work plus the unemployed), as a proportion of the population aged over 15, increased substantially, from 53% in 2002 to over 65% in 2011. In parallel, the proportion of persons looking after the home or family fell from 14.7% in 2002 to 8.5% in 2011.

The proportion of retired people dropped from 17.1% in 2002 to 12.6% in 2011.

1.3.3 Educational profile

In terms of education, the trend from 2002 to 2011 indicates a reduction in the number of people with primary only or no formal education, combined with doubling of the number of degree-holders (both primary and postgraduate). Over 55% of the residents of Tobercurry completed secondary or similar education, while circa 15% hold a degree, with three persons having obtained a doctorate (PhD) according to Census 2011.

1.3.4 Household profile

Between 2002 and 2011, the most noticeable phenomenon in terms of household composition was the strong growth in one- and two-persons households in parallel with a fall in the number of households with three or more members. In 2011, one- and two-person households represented as much as 63.5% of the total number of households in Tobercurry town. This would suggest a predominance of young persons/couples who are not yet parents and older persons or couples whose children no longer live in the same household.

The average number of persons per household has decreased constantly, from 3.0 in 2002 to 2.5 in 2011.

1.3.5 Key demographic issues

The most significant issues that emerge from a review of the demographic trends appear to be the following:

- The population of Tobercurry has increased substantially in the period 2002 to 2011, by almost 50%, as an effect of the significant housing stock built during the economic boom years.
- While the proportion of young persons has decreased between 2002 and 2011, there has been a strong growth in the population of working age. The proportion of retired persons has decreased, while their number has remained relatively stable.
- There has been a significant growth in the number and proportion of one- and two-persons households. This could be interpreted as an increase in the number of young and old households (single people or child-free couples). This phenomenon could indicate a future increase in demand for child-care and youth-related facilities, as well as a potential demand for special-needs accommodation and even nursing home places for the aging generations.
- The growth of a professional, degree-educated workforce living in Tobercurry, combined with the scarcity of local employment, seems to indicate that an ever larger number of workers have to commute to other urban centres. The travel-to-work statistics included in **Chapter 8 Transport** appear to confirm this hypothesis.

1.4 Planning issues

Since 2008, the national economy has been in decline due to the economic crisis. Tobercurry has been substantially affected by the collapse in the property market and the construction industry, like many other small towns in Ireland.

With the economy showing signs of improvement at the time of writing (early 2015), there is potential for Tobercurry to recover and consolidate its role as a Key Support Town for the south-western area of the county.

Several planning issues have been identified as being relevant for Tobercurry, which faces many challenges and has to compete with other urban centres in attracting investment and jobs. These issues are outlined in the following subsections.

1.4.1 Planning legislation and guidance

The Planning and Development Act 2010 introduced, inter alia, the requirement to base development plans on a Core Strategy (see below and Chapter 3 of this Plan).

The Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 defined, for the first time, population targets and upper limits for the zoning of land for residential uses in the constituent counties of the Border Region and in the region's Gateways and Hubs, designated by the National Spatial Strategy.

Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017 contains a Core Strategy which is consistent with the National Spatial Strategy and the Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010. The Core Strategy recommends population levels and allocates housing land to the County's villages and towns, including Tobercurry.

The government intends to replace the National Spatial Strategy with a more concise National Planning Framework 2016-2026, responding to a new economic and operational context. Regional Planning Guidelines will also be replaced by Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES).

These changes in national and regional planning guidance will be reflected in the Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023. Following the adoption of the CDP 2017-2023, Tobercurry LAP may have to be amended to ensure consistency with the revised CDP and updated planning guidance.

1.4.2 Underutilised town centre



Tobercurry's central square and main streets are dominated by vehicular traffic, making it uncomfortable for pedestrians. Due to the traffic-centred design, the existing civic space at Wolfe Tone Square does not function to its full potential in terms of hosting events or offering a pleasant urban experience to residents and tourists.

The town needs a pedestrian-friendly, well-functioning central zone, that can bring people together and link their activities.

1.4.3 Traffic congestion



Tobercurry is crossed by a national road (N-17), a regional road (R-294) and is the convergence point of a series of local roads, all of which bring a substantial amount of traffic into town. This combines with widespread illegal parking to cause daily congestion, especially along Teeling Street. A substantial improvement is necessary in the way pedestrians and drivers use the town. This will involve the streamlining of traffic flows and car parking in the central streets.

1.4.4 Dereliction and vacant lands



Tobercurry has a significant amount of both derelict and underutilised lands. The removal of dereliction, especially along Humbert Street and Circular Road, represents a significant challenge for the town. The large vacant sites adjoining Circular Road have a great potential in that their development would be able to activate frontages onto Circular Road and help expand the town centre after the construction of the N-17 by-pass.

1.4.5 Lack of outdoor recreational facilities



Despite its size and designation as a Key Support Town, Tobercurry has no public park, no functional playground and no outdoor facilities for teenagers and young adults.

Although there is a vibrant local sports scene in South Sligo, the town has insufficient sports fields and extremely limited associated facilities.

Safe, looped walkways and nature trails are also lacking in the area surrounding Tobercurry. Providing such routes would increase not only the wellbeing of the residents, but could also increase the town's attractiveness for tourists.

1.4.6 Pre-draft consultation

As required by the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), Sligo County Council undertook consultation with the public and prescribed authorities before preparing a draft LAP for Tobercurry.

Preliminary consultation took place in November-December 2011, based on a Pre-Draft Consultation Paper. However, the Council did not proceed with the preparation of the LAP at that time.

In June 2014, the Planning Section resumed pre-draft consultation and organised a public information session (19 June 2014) in Teach Laighne, Tobercurry.

Six submissions were received during this first stage of consultation, including those from prescribed environmental authorities (for details, refer to the SEA Screening Report that accompanies this LAP).

The main issues raised in submissions related to sewerage and wastewater treatment, archaeological heritage, flood risk management, protection of habitats, phasing of residential development, traffic and parking, walkways, sports and recreational facilities.

All the above concerns are addressed in this LAP, which also incorporates the recommendations and suggestions of state agencies which participated in pre-draft consultation.

1.5 Vision and strategic aims for Tobercurry

The development of Tobercurry is guided by the following vision:

To promote the development of a socially and economically successful town, with a renewed and extended town centre, served by an effective circulation system, in a healthy natural environment.

To achieve the vision, the following strategic aims will be pursued:

Tobercurry - strategic aims

- SA-1** Promote the sustainable and consolidated development of Tobercurry as a Key Support Town with a diverse and sustainable local economy.
- SA-2** Ensure that the people of Tobercurry have access to affordable housing, education, community and recreational facilities.
- SA-3** Pursue the enhancement of Tobercurry's town centre through the removal of dereliction, the refurbishment of Wolfe Tone Square and the creation of an urban streetscape along Circular Road.
- SA-4** Seek the development of a more efficient and integrated circulation system, including walking and cycling links.
- SA-5** Promote tourism by facilitating the development of tourism-related infrastructure, to allow for the expansion of existing businesses and the setting up of new ones.
- SA-6** Recognise the importance of natural, archaeological and architectural heritage in the LAP area as factors which contribute to Tobercurry's attractiveness.

Chapter 2 of this Plan outlines the legal requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment, and the Planning Authority's determination in this regard.

Chapter 3 indicates how the provisions of the County Core Strategy are transposed into the Tobercurry LAP.

Chapters 4 to 10 of the Plan contain relevant sectoral information together with detailed policies and objectives designed to implement the vision and strategic aims outlined above.

In order to promote desirable development patterns in the town, an urban design strategy is detailed in **Chapter 11**.

Chapter 12 includes the Zoning Map, Zoning Matrix, zoning objectives and all the other relevant maps pertaining to the LAP.

2. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

2.1 Legal requirements

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a systematic process of evaluating, at the earliest stage of decision-making, the environmental quality and potential consequences of alternative visions incorporated in plans and programmes.

The steps involved in SEA are:

- screening (determining whether or not SEA is required);
- scoping (determining the range of environmental issues to be covered by the SEA);
- preparation of an Environmental Report;
- carrying out of consultations;
- integration of environmental considerations into the plan or programme;
- publication of information on the decision (SEA statement).

However, the process can stop after the first step if, after screening, it is determined that the implementation of the plan or programme will not have significant effects on the environment.

The European Environmental Assessment Directive 2001/42/EC was transposed into Irish legislation in the form of Statutory Instruments no. 435 and 436 of 2004 (SEA Regulations).

S.I. No. 436/2004 is the regulatory instrument applicable to land-use plans, including Tobercurry LAP. The SEA Regulations were amended by S.I. No. 200 and 201 in 2011, to ensure consistency with the Planning and Development Act, which was amended in 2010.

In accordance with Article 14A of the SEA Regulations, a planning authority intending to prepare a local area plan for a settlement with a population of up to 5,000 persons must determine whether the LAP would have significant effects on the environment.

2.2 Screening Tobercurry LAP

For Tobercurry, this determination has been done through a screening exercise undertaken in accordance with the guidelines published by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - *Synthesis Report On Developing a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies For Plans And Programmes In Ireland (2003)*.

A Screening Report was prepared by the Development Planning Unit of Sligo County Council in June 2014. The Report was organised under the following headings:

- A. Brief outline of the proposed local area plan**
- B. Background information on Tobercurry**
- C. Characteristics of the proposed local area plan**
- D. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected**
- E. Conclusion**

The conclusion of the Screening Report is reproduced on the next page.

Conclusion

The Draft Tobercurry LAP 2015-2021 will be prepared in the context of the existing CDP 2011-2017, which sets out a strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County and has already been assessed under the SEA completed as part of the CDP process.

The LAP will be consistent with the CDP. The CDP provisions (including the SEA mitigation measures) will apply to the LAP area.

The LAP will be focused on the consolidation of the town and the protection of Natura 2000 sites and other sensitive habitats within the Plan area.

The proposed LAP will involve a relatively small area of greenfield land available for development during the plan period, particularly in relation to residential development. It will also establish a Buffer Zone in order to facilitate the above-mentioned urban consolidation and to offer additional protection to designated natural heritage areas.

Having described the characteristics and assessed the expected effects of implementing the Local Area Plan for Tobercurry, and having regard to the characteristics of the area likely to be affected, it appears that the proposed LAP, if implemented, would have negligible effects on the environment.

On the basis of the above assessment based on the criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the SEA Regulations, it is the opinion of the Planning Authority, at this stage of the process, that the proposed Tobercurry LAP is not likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Accordingly, a full Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

2.3 Consultation with environmental authorities

As prescribed by the SEA Regulations, the relevant environmental authorities were notified and the Screening Report was sent in June 2014 to the Department for Environment, Communities and Local Government (SEA Section), Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Development Applications Unit), the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Environmental Protection Agency and the planning authorities of counties Leitrim, Mayo and Roscommon.

Leitrim County Council responded on 24 June 2014, indicating that in the interest of achieving a consistent approach between local authorities, particularly in the determination of housing land requirements, consideration should be given to the vacant housing stock and to the phased release of residential land.

The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, through **Inland Fisheries Ireland** (IFI), responded on 7 July 2014 with detailed recommendations relating to wastewater treatment, buffer zones, flood alleviation, aquatic habitats, water abstraction and the control of invasive species.

The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, through the **Development Applications Unit** (DAU), responded on 14 July 2014, suggesting specific narrative, policies and objectives to be included in a dedicated Archaeological Heritage chapter and recommending that recorded monuments are shown on the maps contained in the LAP.

The Environmental Protection Agency noted the Planning Authority's conclusion that a full SEA is not required. In its response of 14 July 2014, the Agency made several recommendations and suggestions relating to land zoning, the inclusion of relevant CDP policies in the LAP and the incorporation of a policy committing the County Council to working with Irish Water to address infrastructural deficiencies in water supply and wastewater treatment.

As no other comments were received from environmental authorities, the Planning Authority – having incorporated the above recommendations into the Draft Plan – decided not to undertake a full SEA. This decision is published alongside the Draft Plan.

The SEA Screening Report relating to the Draft Tobercurry LAP was updated in March 2015 and is available as a separate publication.

3. Core Strategy



3.1 Core Strategy basics

3.1.1 Regulatory context

The 2010 Planning and Development Act amended Section 10 of the Principal Act (2000) by introducing the requirement for a “core strategy that shall show that the development objectives in the development plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy and regional planning guidelines”.

The Core Strategy for County Sligo was adopted as part of the CDP 2011-2017. The Strategy provides relevant information to demonstrate consistency with the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and the Border Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs). It also sets out core aims and strategic goals which, in turn, define and shape growth locations, population distribution and land use zoning.

3.1.2 Sligo’s spatial development framework

The 2010 Border RPGs chose a balanced approach to regional development – a polycentric settlement model, supported by a strong road network – recommending the prioritisation of key urban settlements in terms of population and investment growth, while at the same time sustaining and revitalising rural areas.

In accordance with the above concepts, the Core Strategy Map for County Sligo illustrates a spatial development framework which prioritises Gateway growth and Key Support Towns consolidation, while seeking to support rural areas mainly by strengthening a range of small villages throughout the County. Tobercurry is one of the three Key Support Towns designated in County Sligo’s spatial development framework.

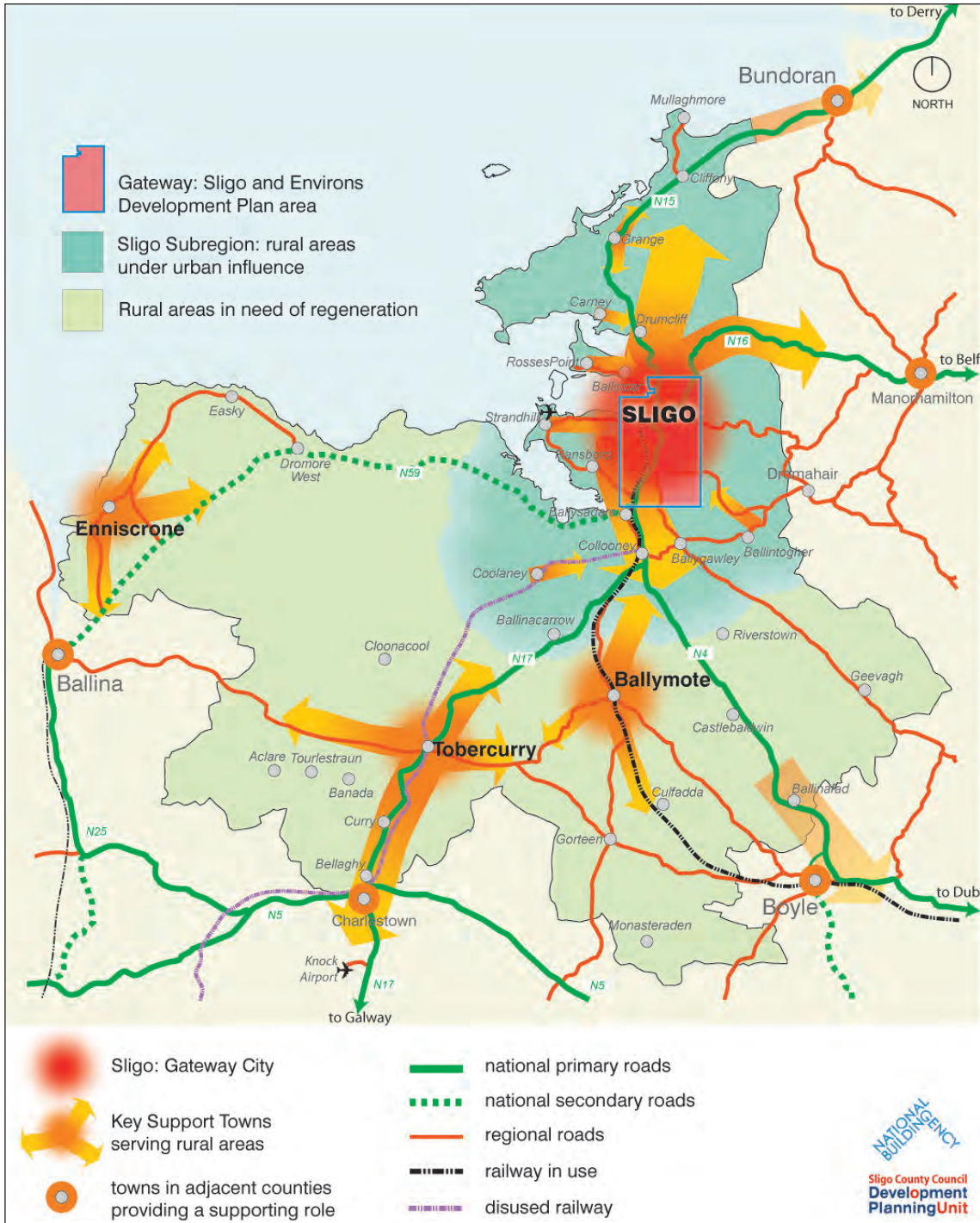


Fig. 3.A Extract from CDP 2011–2017: The Core Strategy map as a spatial development framework (corresponding to Fig. 3.B in the CDP)

3.1.3 Compliance with RPG population targets and housing land requirements

The RPGs set out population targets for 2016 and 2020 for both County Sligo and the Sligo and Environs area. Having estimated a population of 66,430 in 2010, the RPGs indicate that the targets for County Sligo are 71,851 persons in 2016 and 77,350 persons in 2022.

Starting from the RPG recommendations and population targets, the Core Strategy included in Sligo's County Development Plan further allocates shares of future population growth to the County's towns and villages, in proportion to their role and position in the settlement hierarchy.

The housing land requirement, as defined by the RPGs, is 195 hectares for the county, excluding the Sligo and Environs area. A breakdown of this area by settlement is provided in Section **3.5 Housing Land Provision in the County** (Volume 1) and in **Appendix I** of Volume 2 (Mini-Plans) of the County Development Plan.

The CDP, in subsection **3.5.1 Distributing the RPG housing land requirement** (p. 34 of the CDP), indicates that Tobercurry's allocation is a maximum of 22 hectares of greenfield land for residential uses.

3.2 Tobercurry's population and housing land allocations

3.2.1 Population target

In an attempt to manage the growth of settlements and to direct future housing 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 population level that the CDP recommends for Tobercurry is 1,800 persons by 2017.

Table 3.B Key Support Towns' recommended population levels for 2017 (CDP 2011-2017)

Key Support Town	Population 2002 (Census)	Population 2006 (Census)	Recommended population level 2017
Ballymote	981	1,229	1,700
Enniscrone	668	829	1,200
Tobercurry	1,171	1,421	1,800

It is important to note that at the time of drawing up the Core Strategy and allocating future population levels to the County's settlements, demographic information from the 2011 Census of population had not been issued. The now-published census data indicates that **the population of Tobercurry was 1,747 in 2011**, very close to the target set in the CDP for 2017. This is considered a positive development and an indicator of Tobercurry's capacity to attract and retain permanent residents, despite the fact that local employment opportunities have been scarce in recent years.

At the same time, it would be very difficult to estimate the town's population in 2015, having regard to the economic downturn which might have forced many people, especially the young, to leave the town in search of jobs elsewhere. The possibility that the 2015 population is lower than the 2011 population cannot be excluded.

Population targets for all towns in County Sligo will be revised as part of the preparation of the CDP 2017-2023, which may take into account demographic data from Census 2016, if available.

3.2.2 Housing land requirements

In recognition of Tobercurry's Key Support Town status, the CDP allocates a maximum of 22 hectares to be zoned for future housing development.

This Plan zones 22 hectares of greenfield land for housing (excluding infill sites). This figure comprises 19.5 hectares of lands zoned residential and a notional 40% residential element (2.5 ha) of 6.4 hectares of lands zoned for mixed uses.

If developed at an average gross density of 18 units per hectare, the 19.5 ha of greenfield lands zoned residential could add another 351 housing units and could lead to an increase of up to 876 persons in the town's population (based on an average household size of 2.5, as recorded in Census 2011).

Having regard to the strategic aim of consolidating the town (SA-1 in Chapter 1 of this LAP) and to the principle of sequential development, which prioritises the development of lands closest to the town core, it is considered appropriate to phase development on lands zoned for residential uses.

3.2.3 Phasing of residential development

The development of lands zoned for residential uses should take place in two phases, as indicated on Map 4 in Chapter 12.

Phase 1 comprises the following types of lands to be developed in the short/medium term:

- the greenfield sites zoned for housing, located closest to the town centre, zoned residential, where new housing development would fill substantial gaps between existing built-up areas.
- the lands zoned for mixed commercial and residential uses in the town centre - this excludes the mixed-use site located at the north-eastern town entrance;

Note: Lands in Phase 1 have a housing capacity of circa 140 units (calculated at 18 units per hectare on average) which could accommodate approximately 350 people (considering an average household size of 2.5 persons per household).

Phase 2 includes the mixed-use site at the north-eastern town entrance and the remainder of greenfield lands zoned residential, distributed in a balanced manner around the town. Good access, proximity to community and recreational facilities and suitable topography were taken into account when deciding to zone these lands for long-term housing development.

Note: Lands in Phase 2 have a housing capacity of circa 210 units (calculated at 18 units per hectare on average) which could accommodate approximately 526 people (considering an average household size of 2.5 persons per household).

When the moratorium on multi-unit housing development (refer to section 3.2.5 below) will no longer be in operation, residential lands included in Phase 1 should be developed first.

Applications for housing on lands included in Phase 2 will be considered only if 70% of lands zoned residential in Phase 1 have been fully developed and there is clear evidence of further demand for housing. The 70% will be calculated with respect to residential lands only, and shall exclude mixed-use lands.

In the case of residential development, exceptions to the 70% rule may be considered if landowners do not develop or do not make available for development lands included in Phase 1.

It should be noted that lands in the unfinished portions of the housing schemes at Maiden Crescent, Masshill Road and Ox Crescent are considered infill sites and thus are not affected by the moratorium or the residential phasing.

Applications for social or special-needs housing will also not be affected by the residential phasing provisions.

Residential phasing policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to permit the development of lands for residential uses in two phases as follows:

- RESP-1 Phase 1** comprises the following types of lands to be developed in the short/medium term:
- A.** the greenfield sites zoned for housing, located closest to the town centre, where new residential development would fill substantial gaps between existing built-up areas;
 - B.** the lands zoned for mixed commercial and residential uses in the town centre (excluding the mixed-use site located at the north-eastern town entrance).
- RESP-2 Phase 2** includes the mixed-use site at the north-eastern town entrance and the remainder of greenfield lands zoned residential.
- RESP-3** Applications for housing on lands included in Phase 2 will be considered only if 70% of lands zoned residential in Phase 1 have been fully developed and there is clear evidence of further demand for housing.

3.2.4 Residential zoning and strategic land reserve (SLR)

Of Sligo's three Key Support Towns, two – Ballymote and Enniscrone had local area plans (LAPs) adopted during the construction boom period (2004-2005), which led to the zoning of large amounts of land for residential development in anticipation of continuing high demand for new houses.

Upon reviewing these LAPs (Ballymote in 2012 and Enniscrone in 2014), it was necessary to include some of the lands previously zoned for housing in a strategic land reserve (SLR), in order to comply with the land allocations under the Core Strategy of the CDP 2011-2017.

This is not the case in Tobercurry, for which no LAP was prepared before 2011 (when a Core Strategy was included for the first time in the CDP). The greenfield land allocation for residential uses in Tobercurry is 22 ha, as required by the Core Strategy.

Should additional lands be considered for residential zoning as part of the public consultation on the Draft Tobercurry LAP, it would be necessary to ensure compliance with the relevant provisions of the CDP, outlined below.

In Section **3.4.7 Strategic land reserve** (p. 33 of the CDP), the County Development Plan specifies that:

Any further lands that might be proposed to be zoned for residential uses in excess of the area corresponding to the requirements outlined in the Core Strategy shall be included in a strategic land reserve and shall only be developed when future Housing Strategies will call for additional zoned land.

The CDP also includes **strategic zoning policies**, of which the most relevant are the following:

- SP-Z-1** *Use zoning to promote the sustainable development of compact, liveable, pedestrian-friendly settlements, with a defined commercial/retail core and an adequate economic basis. No lands shall be zoned for development in isolation, outside the development limit of settlements.*
- SP-Z-3** *Ensure that the amount of land zoned for residential uses is consistent with the requirements of the Core Strategy and the recommendations of the Border Regional Planning Guidelines. Land proposed for zoning in excess of requirements, if any, shall be included in a strategic reserve for potential development after the lifetime of this Plan, in accordance with the Settlement Structure and Housing Strategy in operation at that stage.*

In exceptional circumstances, should the supply of residential land prove insufficient in Tobercurry, it may be possible to zone additional lands or to release land from the strategic land reserve (should one be in existence) by amending the local area plan. The need for any such land zoning or release shall be supported by factual evidence.

Should the adopted Tobercurry LAP include a strategic land reserve, the policies outlined below will be applicable.

Strategic land reserve (SLR) policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- SLRP-1** Restrict residential development on lands included in the SLR during the lifetime of the LAP 2015-2021, except for one-off rural housing in cases of genuine rural-generated housing need which comply with policy HP-5 of this LAP.
- SLRP-2** On lands included in the SLR, permit the development of community facilities and other non-residential developments compatible with residential uses insofar as they do not adversely impact on the potential for comprehensive and co-ordinated development of surrounding lands.
- SLRP-3** Release lands from the strategic land reserve only in exceptional circumstances, i.e. if the supply of residential land proves insufficient during the lifetime of the CDP and the LAP. Any land release shall be supported by factual evidence and shall conform to the strategic zoning policies outlined in the CDP. The land release shall be by amendment of the Tobercurry LAP.

3.2.5 Moratorium on multi-unit housing development

Estimates of vacant house numbers produced by County Council planners during the preparation of the CDP and subsequent surveys confirmed that high rates of vacancy continue to exist in many settlements throughout the county.

In order to curtail the increase in residential vacancy in the County, the CDP Core Strategy imposed a moratorium on new residential development in those settlements where the existing housing capacity plus the potential capacity of permitted (and not yet built) housing development could accommodate a population equal to or higher than the recommended population levels (See Chapter 3 of the CDP).

Tobercurry is among the settlements subject to the moratorium on multi-unit housing development. The moratorium is applicable exclusively to multiple housing schemes and does not affect infill development, renovations, replacements and subdivisions of existing units.

This means that applications for multiple residential development will not normally be permitted, except where they modify previously permitted development (live permissions only) by reducing the number of units or changing the type of dwelling from what was originally permitted. Applications for social and special-needs housing are excluded from the moratorium. (Refer also to Chapter 5 Housing of this LAP).

The moratorium was revisited in 2013, after the publication of the full Census 2011 results. In the intervening period, the vacancy situation has been monitored by the County Council's area planners. In light of the continuing high rates of vacancy, the moratorium has been extended to 2017.

3.3 Zoning categories

As in most urban areas, it is possible in Tobercurry to distinguish clusters of similar activities located in particular parts of the town, while other types of uses are scattered throughout the built-up area. In most cases, the zoning of land for specific use categories takes account of the existing activities on the ground. However, in certain instances, the zoning does not reflect the existing use, but indicates the desired future use for a particular site or area, in accordance with the needs of the community as a whole.

The Zoning Map is shown in Fig. 3.C on page 20. A larger version is included in Chapter 12 of this LAP. The Zoning Matrix (as included in the CDP), outlining the permissible uses in each zoning category, accompanies the Zoning Map. The zoning objectives for each zoning category are also appended to the Zoning Map and Zoning Matrix (refer to Chapter 12).

3.3.1 Types of activity in Tobercurry

Mixed-use central zone

Commercial activity is concentrated on Teeling Street, Humbert Street and the western ends of Emmett Street and Mountain Road, circa 5.2 ha in total. The amount of land zoned for mixed uses and still undeveloped is 6.4 ha.

Residential areas

The areas currently (2015) in residential use cover circa 48 ha, mostly in housing estates off the main roads or as ribbon development along the same roads. A total of 19.5 ha of greenfield lands are zoned for housing development in two phases: 7.8 ha in Phase 1 and 11.7 ha in Phase 2. A further 4 ha are considered infill sites, not subject to residential phasing.

Community facilities

A substantial area – 6.7 ha – is occupied by a variety of community facilities, such as schools, healthcare facilities, religious grounds, recycling facilities, fire station etc. The 6.7 ha include a 0.5-ha site zoned for the possible future use of the primary school.

Open space, sports and recreational facilities

There is no park in Tobercurry and very few accessible green areas (such as the green around the Catholic church). The open spaces in residential estates amount to 10.6 ha. Publicly-accessible private open space within Tobercurry consists of a golf course (22.8 ha). The GAA grounds cover 4.5 ha. Provision is made in this LAP for a new town park with sports and recreation facilities – a total of 5.4 ha between Mountain Road and Emmet Street.

Commercial uses

The Aurivo co-op shop and garden centre along Ballina Road are the only premises zoned exclusively for commercial uses, 1.7 ha in total.

Business and enterprise uses

The two industrial estates accessible off the Ballina Road and the additional land zoned for business and enterprise uses cover an area of 12.2 ha.

Transport-related uses

Areas zoned for transport-related uses, amounting to a total of 8.1 ha, comprise the transport node adjoining the railway, proposed and existing town-centre car parking areas and a substantial reservation for the construction of the N-17 bypass, to the west of the town centre.

The full list of zoning objectives, together with their definitions and the Zoning Matrix (which indicates what uses would be permitted in each zoning category), can be found in Chapter 12.

3.3.2 Zoning Map

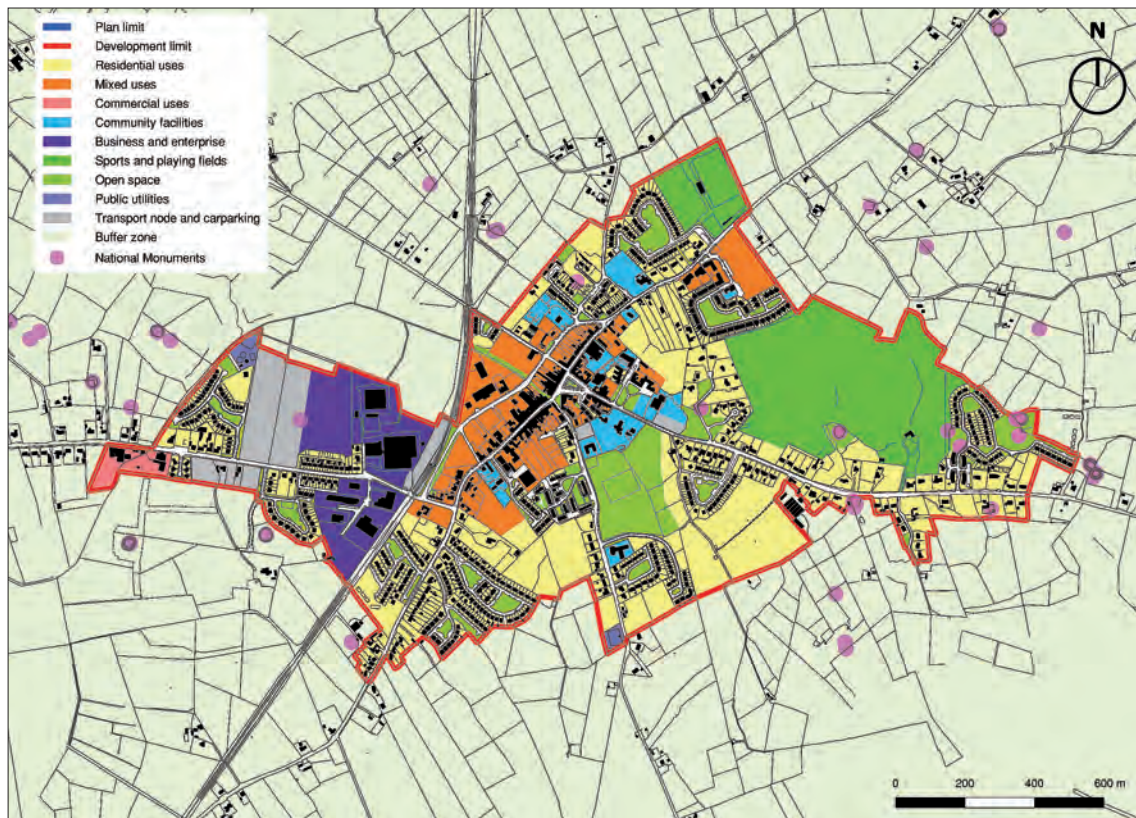


Fig. 3.C Land use zoning in Tobercurry LAP 2015-2021 (refer to Chapter 12 for a larger version)

The Zoning Map (Maps 2 and 3 in Chapter 12 of this Plan), which indicates largely what type of activities should take place in various areas of Tobercurry, should be read in conjunction with the chapters of the LAP corresponding to each activity group. The development zone comprises approximately 184 ha. Much of this area is occupied by roads.

Table 3.D Areas of land zoned for various uses in Tobercurry LAP 2015-2021

Zoning category	Area zoned (hectares)	Area already developed (hectares)	Undeveloped area (hectares)
MIX – Mixed uses	11.6	5.2	6.4
RES – Residential uses total, of which:	72.3	48.8	23.5
Infill sites	4	—	4
Phase 1 residential	7.8	—	7.8
Phase 2 residential	11.7	—	11.7
CF – Community facilities	6.7	6.2	—
COM – Commercial uses	1.7	1.7	—
BUS – Business and enterprise	12.2	7.8	4.4
OS – Open space	16.1	10.6	5.4
existing (in estates)	10.6	10.6	—
town park	5.4	—	5.4
SPF – Sports and playing fields	27.3	27.3	—
golf course	22.8	22.8	—
GAA grounds	4.5	4.5	—
PU – public utilities	0.9	0.9	—
TPN – Transport and parking nodes	8.1	—	—

3.3.3 Development limit and buffer zone

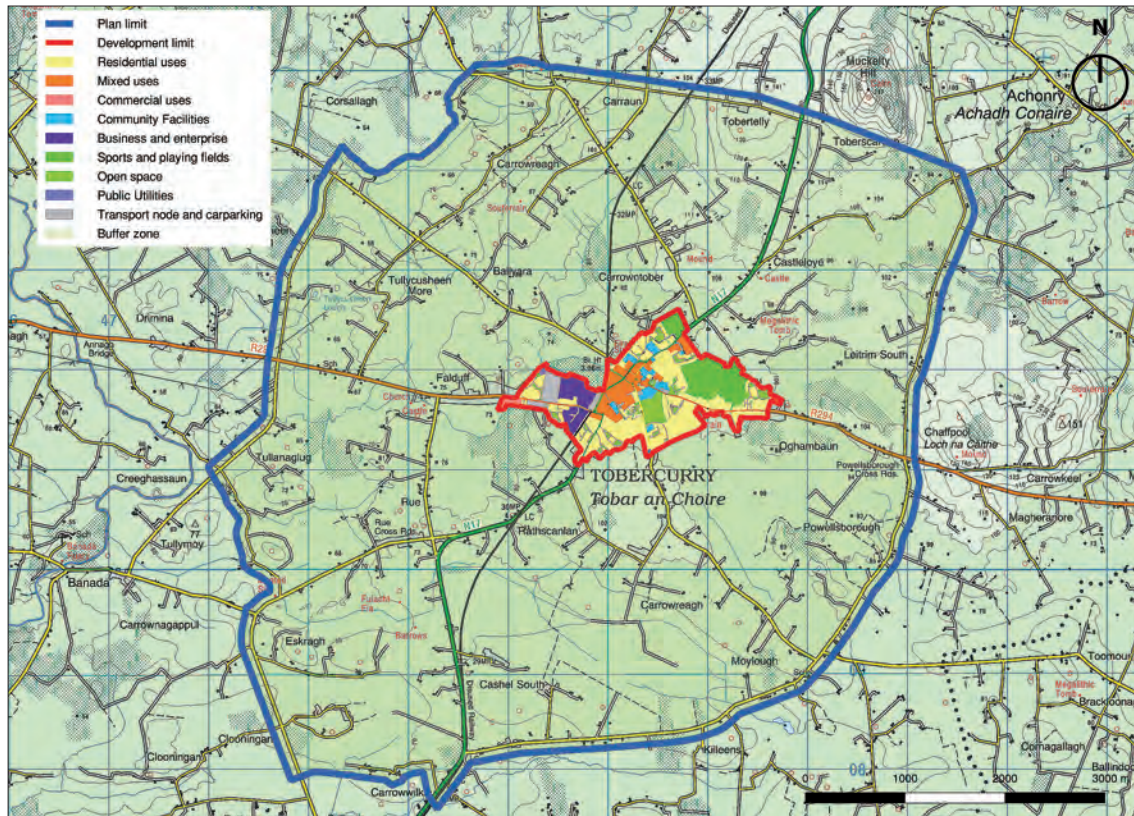


Fig. 3.E Extent of the buffer zone outside the development limit of Tobercurry

The CDP, in **Section 3.2 Spatial development framework** and in **Section 3.4 Development land requirements**, makes the following provision for the establishment of buffer zones and plan limits:

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-Z-8 *Provide a clear demarcation between settlement built-up areas and the surrounding countryside through appropriate zoning objectives, development limits and plan limits.*

Due to ribbon development along the approach roads, Tobercurry does not have a defined urban edge at present. There is evidence of ongoing pressure for one-off housing in an extended rural area around Tobercurry.

A development limit (shown in red on the Zoning Map) has been defined in order to mark the desired boundaries of the contiguous built-up area of Tobercurry for the lifetime of the LAP.

Outside the development limit, a buffer zone has been established around the town. Buffer zones have multiple purposes, such as:

- consolidating and containing settlements within a single development limit;
- safeguarding land for the future expansion of settlements and for the provision of infrastructure;
- preserving views;
- protecting the integrity of archaeological sites and monuments in the area surrounding settlements.

The buffer zone stretches between 1.5 km and 4.3 km outside the contiguous built-up area of the town (measured along public roads). It is shown on Fig. 3.E above as the yellow-green area between the development limit (red line) and the Plan limit (blue line).

Buffer zone policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- BZP-1** Reserve the buffer zone principally for agricultural use.
- BZP-2** Ensure that the siting and construction of new roads and buildings in the buffer zone minimises their visual and environmental impact, subject to appropriate assessment under the Habitats Directive.

4. Economic development



The economic role of Tobercurry is acknowledged in the CDP through its designation as a Key Support Town. The principal role of a Key Support Town is to deliver services not only to its population, but also to an extensive rural area surrounding it. There is a variety of businesses operating in Tobercurry. However, like many other small towns, Tobercurry cannot provide employment for its entire active population. Many people commute to work in Sligo City and in other towns, some outside the county. It is important for the sustainability of the town to ensure that adequate facilities are available for start up-businesses and for the potential expansion of existing industries and enterprises.

Any future economic development strategy for County Sligo should focus on the generation of employment opportunities not just in Sligo City but also in the Key Support Towns.

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 requires the preparation (by the Local Authority) of a Local Economic and Community Plan consistent with the Core Strategy and other relevant provisions of the County Development Plan. It is expected that the first Local Economic and Community Plan (due in 2015) and its successors will set out concrete measures to support local enterprise and job creation in the Key Support Towns, including Tobercurry.

4.1 Main CDP provisions

Among the strategic goals of the County Development Plan (CDP), the following are the most relevant for Tobercurry:

Supporting balanced economic development

SG-1(c) *Promote economic development and the provision of industry/enterprise in the Key Support Towns of Tobercurry, Ballymote and Enniscrone.*

SG-1(i) *Work in partnership with key organisations, such as the Industrial Development Agency and Enterprise Ireland, whose remit is to promote and/or secure economic development.*

Carefully managing development patterns

SG-2(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.*

Driving urban renewal

SG-4(a) *Drive the process of regenerating derelict and under-used areas within the County's towns and villages.*

Promoting effective transportation

SG-5(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.*

SG-5(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.*

The strategic economic development policies included in Section 4.1 of the CDP outline the general approach of the planning authority towards supporting the growth of business and enterprise throughout the County. For Tobercurry, some of the most relevant policies are:

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 centres, after Sligo City.*

SP-ED-9 *Promote the integration of employment with other land uses and the transportation network and ensure, in particular, that employment-intensive uses are located in proximity to existing and planned strategic routes, where public transport is most viable.*

SP-ED-11 *Ensure that a high standard of design, layout and amenity is provided and maintained at locations selected for enterprise development.*

The CDP seeks to ensure that the Key Support Towns will continue to serve their respective communities in an optimal manner. The most relevant CDP provisions in this regard are:

Retail planning policies

P-RP-9 *Facilitate the reuse of existing vacant retail outlets in towns and villages.*

P-RP-10 *Promote initiatives or programmes to enhance the character and urban design quality of Tobercurry, Ballymote, Enniscrone, Collooney and Grange, to ensure that they remain attractive for investment in commerce and retailing.*

P-RP-12 *Encourage the retention of traditional shop fronts and pub fronts of character and good design quality.*

Tourism development policies

P-TOU-1 *Promote the development of tourism in a sustainable manner and encourage the provision of a comprehensive range of tourism facilities, subject to location, siting and design criteria, the protection of the environmentally sensitive areas and other planning considerations.*

P-TOU-7 *Promote walking, rambling and cycling as appropriate recreational and tourism activities within the Plan area.*

Please note that the policies and objectives outlined in **Chapter 4 Economic Development** of the CDP apply to all future retail, commercial and industrial development proposed in Tobercurry.

The following sections do not substitute, but complement the provisions of the CDP. It is recommended to consult Chapter 4 of this LAP in conjunction with Chapter 4 of the CDP.

All proposals for retail, commercial and industrial developments will have to comply with the provisions of **Chapter 12 Development Management Standards** of the CDP.

4.2 Employment situation



There are a substantial number and a wide variety of (mostly small) businesses operating in Tobercurry. There are also several larger enterprises, including the manufacturing companies located in Tobercurry's industrial zone.

4.2.1 Occupational profile

The residents of the Plan area work predominantly in the fields of professional services and commerce, which have a strong presence in the town of Tobercurry (see Table 4.A). There are also many people occupied in manufacturing and administration, with a decreasing proportion engaged in agriculture. A substantial number of persons are involved in activities outside the standard Census categories.

Table 4.A Occupational profile of persons employed and resident in Tobercurry, 2002-2011

Occupation	2002		2006		2011	
	persons	% of total	persons	% of total	persons	% of total
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	20	4.8%	25	4.1%	19	2.9%
Building and construction	46	11.1%	90	15%	39	5.9%
Manufacturing industries	88	21.2%	107	18%	96	14.4%
Commerce and trade	88	21.2%	138	23%	145	21.8%
Transport and communications	15	3.6%	18	3%	31	4.7%
Public administration	21	5.1%	36	6%	54	8.1%
Professional services	85	20.5%	105	17.5%	166	25.0%
Other	52	12.5%	80	13.3%	115	17.3%
Total	415	100%	599	100%	665	100%

Source: cso.ie

4.2.2 Evolution of unemployment

Although the number of persons at work increased between 2002 and 2011, both in absolute figures and as a proportion of the population aged over 15, unemployment following job losses has become a serious problem as a consequence of the economic crisis.

The unemployment problem worsened further in 2014 after two government departments (the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and the Department of Social Protection) closed their Tobercurry offices. The number of unemployed people almost trebled between 2006, when 81 persons were looking for work, and 2011, when 220 persons were in that situation.

Table 4.B below shows the evolution of unemployment in the Plan area, where in 2011 almost 15% of the people over 15 years of age were without a job.

Table 4.B Changes in the principal economic status of persons aged 15+ and resident in Tobercurry – Census years 2002 to 2011

Principal economic status	2002		2006		2011	
	persons	% of total	persons	% of total	persons	% of total
At work	415	45.2%	599	52.9%	665	49.3%
Looking for first regular job	10	1.0%	8	0.7%	20	1.5%
Unemployed having lost or given up previous job	63	6.9%	73	6.45%	200	14.8%
Student	80	8.7%	85	7.5%	116	8.6%
Looking after home / family	135	14.7%	116	10.3%	115	8.5%
Retired	156	17.0%	190	16.8%	170	12.6%
Unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability	51	5.6%	53	4.7%	61	4.5%
Other	7	0.8%	7	0.6%	1	0.1%
Total	917	100.0%	1131	100.0%	1348	100.0%

Source: cso.ie

4.3 Enterprise and industry

The industrial sector within the town is strong compared to other similar sized towns within the region. Tobercurry's industry consists mainly of light engineering and manufacturing, with a number of small to medium-sized companies.

Significantly, Tobercurry is the only town in the County outside Sligo City to have a Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber's main goal is to encourage integration between businesses, help them work together on joint projects and promote Tobercurry and South Sligo.

4.3.1 Office development

The office base in Tobercurry is contained mainly within the town core, between Humbert Street and Teeling Street. These businesses provide various financial, legal, and property services to the local community.

The Teach Laighne "One-Stop Shop" (civic offices) located on Humbert Street accommodates a library, local authority services, courtroom space for the Western Circuit Court, facilities for the HSE and community space. A tourist office operates at the front of the building.

In early 2015, the former government offices at the southern end of Teeling Street were still vacant.

4.3.2 Local enterprise support

Tobercurry benefits from having the branches of two banks in the town: the Allied Irish Bank on Wolfe Tone Square and Bank of Ireland on Teeling Street. Tobercurry Credit Union is located on the southern side of Wolfe Tone Square. Conference facilities are available in both Murphy's Hotel on Teeling Street and Cawley's Hotel on Emmet Street.

In 1991, two local groups, the Tobercurry Town Traders Association and the Tobercurry Community Council (both formed in the late 1970s/early 1980s) merged to form the Tobercurry Chamber of Commerce and Community Association. Over the years, the Chamber has grown from a small group of traders from the town to an organisation that brings together a broad range of businesses from the South Sligo area, promotes tourism, sponsors community events and supports the Tobercurry Tidy Town programme.

4.3.3 Industrial activity

There are two industrial estates in Tobercurry, both located off the Ballina Road on opposite sides of the road. The International Development Agency (IDA) occupies the estate on the southern side of the road. It covers approximately 4.2 hectares and in early 2015, it hosted five businesses, including Alpha Precision and Palace Joinery, which are involved in manufacturing and logistics. An undeveloped 1.2 ha portion of the IDA lands (now zoned for business and enterprise uses) was for sale.

A larger industrial area located to the north of the Ballina Road accommodates two firms, Basta and Tool & Gauge. An additional 3 ha of undeveloped land to the west is zoned for business and enterprise. North of the town along the N-17 (Sligo Road), Mulmuf Exhausts manufactures exhaust systems for different types of engine-powered machinery.

Tobercurry has a history with tool making and is a base for numerous businesses. Both Basta and Tool & Gauge were established in the town during the 1950s. Both companies provided employment for over 400 people up to the 1980s. As a consequence of the economic downturn, both companies have downsized and now employ circa 100 people between them.

Aurivo, previously Connacht Gold, is a large employer for the population of South Sligo. The company's head office, which was located in the industrial estate on the Ballina Road, moved to Sligo City in late 2014. However, the creamery, co-op shop and garden centre remain in place on the Ballina Road.

Industry and enterprise policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- IEP-1** Liaise with the IDA, Enterprise Ireland and developers in encouraging and facilitating new industries and high-potential start-ups to locate in Tobercurry.
- IEP-2** Adopt a flexible and supportive approach towards proposals for alternative uses for any vacant industrial units. In addition to details set out in the zoning matrix, the Planning Authority will consider a range of suitable uses for any such properties, including activities relating to the creative industries, tourism, recreational and cultural uses, exhibitions etc.
- IEP-3** Require appropriate landscaping of all enterprise and industrial developments.
- IEP-4** Require new business, enterprise or industrial units to share access with existing similar developments, where possible.

4.4 Retail development



Tobercurry functions as a retail and service centre for the surrounding rural community of South Sligo. The primary retail zone comprises Wolfe Tone Square, Teeling Street, Humbert Street and Emmet Street. The town has a healthy shopping environment, with reasonable footfall along the main streets and around Wolfe Tone Square.

4.4.1 Shop types

Commercial development within the town includes eight convenience stores, six public houses, two hardware stores, three pharmacies, three car garages, two beauty salons, six hair salons and six restaurants.

Comparison shopping within the town is limited to ten stores and is confined to local independent operators.

There is a pattern of small retail units, with the exception of the two supermarkets, Supervalu and Euro Spar, which are larger than most other shops in the town.

4.4.2 Retail occupancy

Information obtained from local auctioneers suggests that the commercial property market within Tobercurry is stable. In February 2015 there were 20 vacant units (26%) on the main shopping streets of Tobercurry. Seven (out of 35 commercial properties - 20%) of these were on Teeling Street, 4 of which appear to have been vacant for some time.

The majority of the prominent units on the town's main streets were occupied, thus projecting a positive image of active frontage onto the main streets of the town. The high occupancy is mainly due to the large number of local retailers who have been in business in Tobercurry for decades.

The high occupancy rate suggests a positive future for Tobercurry in terms of its economic vitality and prosperity.

4.4.3 Street market

A street market takes place on Wolfe Tone Square on the second Wednesday of each month. The market has potential for 15 stalls. A smaller-scale market is held each Thursday and Friday. Only two spaces are available for stalls on these days. Retailers sell fruit, vegetables and fish.

Retail development policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- RDP-1** Strengthen the retail and commercial functions of the town centre, by ensuring that retail or commercial uses are retained at the ground floor level.
- RDP-2** Promote the re-use of existing vacant retail premises within Tobercurry.
- RDP-3** Require the retention of traditional shop fronts that enhance the character of the town's streetscape.
- RDP-4** Encourage, where appropriate, the infilling of brownfield sites within the town core with a diverse range of commercial and retail uses.
- RDP-5** Assess all retail proposals on the basis of the Retail Strategy for County Sligo and in accordance with the provisions of the DoECLG's 2012 Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities.

4.5 Tourism

The tourism industry in Tobercurry has significant potential, given its proximity to the picturesque Ox Mountains and Lough Talt and the many festivals and events taking place annually.

Tourism accommodation in the town centre includes Cawley's 14-room hotel, on Emmet Street, and the 20-room Murphy's Hotel on Teeling Street. There are also several B&Bs in the town and surrounding area, which offer alternative accommodation to visitors.

4.5.1 Cultural tourism

Tobercurry hosts several festivals throughout the year. The hosting of festivals adds depth to the visitor experience whilst enriching community spirit in the area.

The Old Fair Festival, taking place annually in August, has grown to become a five-day event and one of the leading Fair Days in the country. The highlight of the festival is the Old Fair Day (see image below), which is always held on the second Wednesday in August.



The Fair Day includes live demonstrations of thatching, weaving, butter-making, trashing, pottery making and rush work. Farm animals are brought into town. Wolfe Tone Square and the main streets are closed to traffic for the duration of the fair.

In July of each year, the South Sligo Summer School holds a week-long event of traditional music, song and dance. Musicians, singers and dancers from Ireland and from abroad descend on Tobercurry to take part. Classes are held in traditional instruments and traditional singing, lilting and Sean-Nós style dancing.

Other festivals hosted by Tobercurry include:

- Western Drama Festival – held annually in March
- South Sligo Walking Festival – held annually in May
- Samhain Street Festival – held annually in October (Halloween Night)
- One Act Festival – held annually in November

4.5.2 Tourist office

A community tourist office, operated in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland, is located on Humbert Street. It is staffed all year round and gives visitors information on attractions, activities and events.

Tourism policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- TOP-1** Co-operate with all stakeholders and appropriate agencies in promoting tourism and securing the development of tourism-related enterprises and facilities in the Tobercurry area.
- TOP-2** Promote the development of tourism related-infrastructure and facilities, subject to Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Directive.
- TOP-3** Ensure that the facilitation of tourism and related development does not impact negatively on the environmental quality or result in the deterioration of the quality of the tourism product.
- TOP-4** Support the relocation of the tourist office to a more conspicuous and central location in the town.

5. Housing



With a population of 1,747 (Census 2011), Tobercurry is the County's second largest town, after Sligo City. This Local Area Plan aims to provide the framework in which timely development can sustain and enhance the viability and diversity of Tobercurry. One of the ways in which this can be achieved is through appropriate management of the housing capacity of the town.

5.1 Main CDP provisions

The CDP promotes sustainable residential development, which makes efficient use of land and energy and minimises the need for using private cars for daily activities. Sustainable housing also involves integration of diverse household types and age groups.

The most relevant strategic goal of the County Development Plan is SG-2(e):

Carefully managing development patterns

SG-2 (e) *Counteract tendencies towards extensive ribbon development and urban sprawl, particularly on the immediate environs of Sligo City and Key Support Towns.*

Among the other relevant provisions of the CDP are the following:

Strategic settlement policies

SP-S-2 *Encourage growth in the Gateway and Key Support Towns by applying a moratorium on multiple housing developments in the settlements listed in Schedule 3 U of the CDP, until the year 2013, when a review should be undertaken based on new Census figures.*

The moratorium shall apply exclusively to multiple housing schemes and should not affect infill development, renovations, replacements and subdivisions of existing units.

Applications for multiple residential development will not normally be permitted, except where they replace previously permitted development (live permissions only) consisting of the same or a higher number of units.

The moratorium shall exclude applications for social and special-needs housing.

[Note: the review carried out in 2013 resulted in the continuation of the moratorium for the remainder of the CDP lifetime]



Strategic housing policies

SP-HOU-1 *Encourage a balanced supply of private housing in the county, in a manner that is consistent with the Core Strategy and the Settlement Structure, and which will support the creation of sustainable communities through the provision of an appropriate range of housing types and high-quality residential environments.*

SP-HOU-2 *Reserve 20% of eligible sites which are subject to new residential development (or a mix of uses including residential) for the development of social and affordable units, in accordance with the Housing Strategy and the requirements of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000.*

General housing policies

GP-HOU-1 *Have regard to the principle of sequential development in assessing all new residential development proposals, whereby areas closer to settlement centres will be prioritised for development in advance of lands further from settlement centres. Notwithstanding this principle, each proposal will be considered on its merits and having regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.*

General housing objectives

GO-HOU-1 *Monitor and manage the extent of existing and permitted residential development to ensure that it is consistent with the Settlement Structure and the infrastructural capacity of each settlement.*

Vacant housing policies

P-VHOU-1 *Adopt a flexible and supportive approach towards alternative uses of vacant residential units/buildings, subject to appropriate scale, design and compatibility with existing and proposed surrounding uses.*

Please note that the general housing policies and objectives outlined in **Chapter 5 Housing** of the CDP apply to all future residential development proposed in Tobercurry.

The following sections do not substitute, but complement the provisions of the CDP. It is recommended to consult Chapter 5 of this LAP in conjunction with Chapter 5 of the CDP.

5.2 Local context

Historically, houses were built outside the commercial core along the main streets, Teeling Street and Humbert Street, along the N-17 north and south of the town, and along the Ballymote Road to the east. Ribbon development is also evident along the Ballina Road as far as St. Attracta's School.

With the rise of the Celtic Tiger in the 1990s, Tobercurry started to develop its backlands and, at the same time, sprawled outwards along the main approach roads. This occurred due to the demand for large sites able to accommodate housing at higher densities.

Residential development significantly accelerated after 1998, stimulated by the Rural Renewal Tax Incentive Scheme. Section 23 allowed investors to gain tax relief on rental income earned over a ten-year period. Development was predominantly "suburban" in style. Such developments were located further out from the town centre, where large tracts of land were available.

The large number of three- and four-bedroom, semi-detached dwellings constructed in the late 1990s and early 2000s were aimed at first-time buyers and investors, with little regard for local demand. Eventually it became apparent that the number of three-bedroom houses built was excessive compared to the available demand. Apartments were also constructed, both in mixed-use developments and integrated into housing estates.

Between the years 2004 and 2014, a total of 338 residential units were granted planning permission in eleven multi-unit developments in Tobercurry. Not all of these units were constructed before the relevant permissions expired. Some housing estates took years to be completed, while others remain unfinished.

Since the end of the boom in 2007-2008, activity in the residential property market has declined. Investors have been struggling to rent properties and house purchases have been few.

The 2011 census recorded a total of 1,093 houses within the census boundary of Tobercurry, with 381 being unoccupied on the night of the survey. (The census boundary does not coincide with the development limit set out in this Plan.)

The 2014 vacancy survey carried out by the Planning Section of Sligo County Council found 162 vacant residential units.

Unfinished housing estates

In July 2013, a survey undertaken on behalf of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government's National Housing Development Survey 2013, identified 8 multi-unit housing developments that were unfinished in Tobercurry: Ougham Baun, Parklands, Springvale, The Fairways, Cnoc na Sí, Maiden Crescent, Ox Crescent and a development of 5 houses on Masshill Road.

The 2014 National Housing Development Survey listed only four estates: Maiden Crescent, the five-unit development at Masshill Road, Ox Crescent and The Fairways. Of the 211 units permitted in these four estates, 105 houses and 32 apartments were built and occupied. At the time of the survey, one house was vacant, 14 were close to completion, 24 were only partly built and for the remainder of 35 units, planning permission had expired. In early 2015, no construction work was taking place in any of the four estates.



5.3 Housing provision 2015-2021



5.3.1 Moratorium on multi-unit housing development

As already indicated in Section 3.2.5 of this Plan, Tobercurry is one of the settlements subject to a moratorium on multi-unit housing developments, given its relatively large number of vacant residential units. The moratorium applies exclusively to multi-unit housing schemes and does not affect infill development, renovations, replacements and subdivisions of existing units. Applications for social and special-needs housing are also excluded from the moratorium.

5.3.2 Quantum of new residential development

Section 3.2.2 Housing land requirements (p. 16 of this LAP) specifies that this Plan zones 22 hectares of greenfield land for residential uses (excluding infill sites). This figure comprises 19.5 ha of lands zoned residential and a notional 40% residential element (2.5 ha) of 6.4 ha of lands zoned for mixed uses. If developed at an average gross density of 18 units per hectare, the 19.5 ha of greenfield lands zoned residential could add another 351 housing units. Based on an average household size of 2.5 (as recorded in Census 2011) this could lead to an increase of up to 876 persons in the town's population.

The lands zoned for residential uses are to be developed in two phases (refer to **Map 4 Residential phasing** in Chapter 12 of this Plan). Lands in Phase 1 have a housing capacity of 140 units, while lands in Phase 2 have a capacity of 210 dwellings (refer to Section 3.2.3 Phasing of residential development and to Section 5.3.4 Prioritising housing development). However, the pace of new house building will be determined not only by market demand, but also by the availability of sufficient drinking water and the capacity of the wastewater treatment plant, for which Irish Water is responsible.

5.3.3 Preferred location of new housing

Future housing areas have been designated based on the principle of sequential development, whereby areas closer to the town centre must be prioritised for development in advance of lands further from the town centre. Such areas cannot be developed, however, as long as the moratorium continues to be in place.

Tobercurry has various sites suitable for infill development (where the moratorium does not apply), ranging from existing derelict properties with street frontage to underused backlands and brownfield sites.

In the short term, residential development should be focused on such backland and infill sites, allowing for permeability and interconnection, and taking into account environmentally sensitive areas. The sensitive redevelopment of these sites will play a significant role in the consolidation and sustainable development of the town, given that residential uses are an important element in the vitality of the town centre. Infill sites also allow for the provision of a diversity of residential types in terms of design, size and affordability.

The principal consideration in assessing residential proposals, or mixed-use proposals with a residential element on suitable infill sites, will be the overall design quality of the scheme and the protection of the amenity of the surrounding users.

5.3.4 Prioritising housing development

The Council acknowledges that priority needs to be given to the completion of unfinished housing estates. In the case of Tobercurry, several planning permissions for residential development expired before the schemes could be completed. These permissions were not extended before they expired.

The unfinished areas of the above-mentioned housing schemes, zoned residential, are considered infill sites, where the moratorium on multi-unit residential development does not apply. Therefore, new applications will be considered on these sites, in the interest of completing the housing estates.

In order to consolidate the town and in accordance with the principle of sequential development, which prioritises the development of lands closest to the town core, development on lands zoned for residential uses shall take place in two phases, as previously mentioned.

Phase 1 comprises undeveloped residential sites closest to the town centre, while Phase 2 includes the remainder of greenfield sites zoned for housing.

Applications for housing on lands included in Phase 2 will be considered only if 70% of lands zoned residential in Phase 1 have been fully developed and there is clear evidence of further demand for housing.

Monitoring of house completion and building is essential during the lifetime of this LAP in order to manage the delivery of appropriate residential development in Tobercurry.

5.3.5 Design of residential development

All proposals for residential development must comply with the provisions of **Chapter 12 Development Management Standards** of the CDP. The emphasis should be on quality urban design and the following design principles should be applied to all proposed multi-unit residential schemes:

- **Connectivity and permeability** – Convenient access should be provided between and within residential development, and also to community and commercial facilities and places of work.
- **Sustainability** – Priority should be given to walking, cycling and public transport. The layout of new residential developments should seek to minimise car-borne trips.
- **Safety** – Streets, footpaths and cycle routes should ensure safe access for users of all ages and degrees of mobility.
- **Legibility** – It should be easy for both residents and visitors to find their way around residential areas.

Designers of residential developments should have regard to the DoECLG's 2009 publication *Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns and Villages)*.

For additional guidance and best-practice examples, developers and designers of housing schemes are also advised to consult the DoECLG's *Urban Design Manual – a companion to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas* (May 2009).

5.3.6 Residential densities

The scale and density of existing development will be taken into consideration when assessing planning applications for housing or a mix of housing and other uses.

Higher densities will be encouraged in areas adjoining the town centre and on lands zoned for mixed uses, in the range of 20 to 30 units per hectare (8-12 units per acre), depending on the site context and suitability. Densities above this level will also be considered in the town centre, as part of infill/brownfield site development or redevelopment of existing built-up central sites.

It is considered acceptable for developments located further from the town core to have lower densities, i.e. under 20 units per hectare (8 units per acre and lower).

5.3.7 Social and affordable housing

The provisions of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) apply to lands zoned residential and to all residential elements of mixed use developments on lands where residential uses are acceptable in principle or open for consideration. The County Council's Housing Strategy (2011-2017) requires developers to reach an agreement with the Council and reserve land or housing units, equivalent to 20% of the permitted development, for the provision of social and affordable housing.

The Council will engage with developers prior to the submission of a planning application to negotiate the detailed operation and implementation of the requirements of Part V of the 2000 Act (as amended).

5.3.8 Special-needs housing

Sligo County Council recognises the need to accommodate the housing requirements of those with special needs and those in particular circumstances, such as the elderly, the disabled, the homeless or persons who have received refugee status.

Relevant policies are included in Section 5.6 of the CDP. These policies are applicable to Tobercurry.

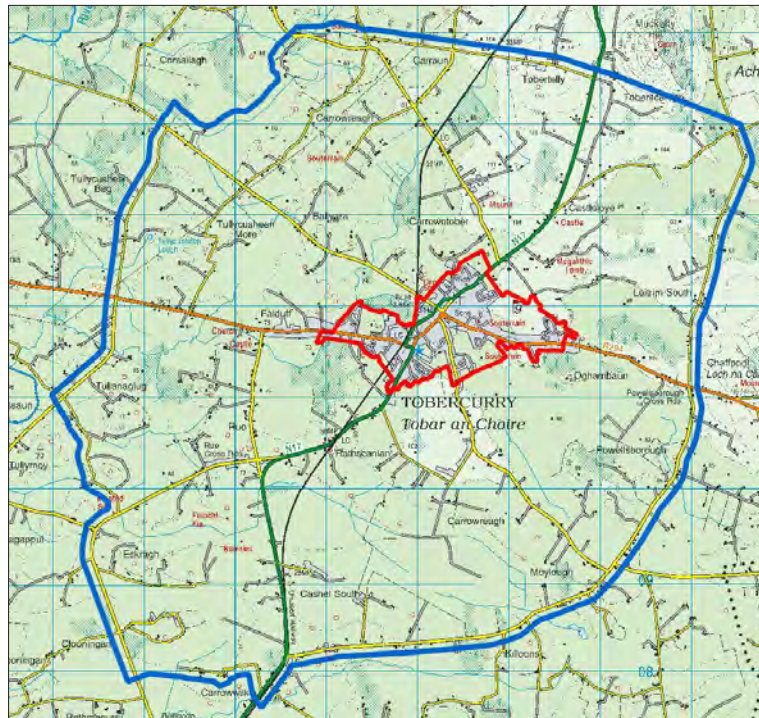
Applications for social or special-needs housing will not be affected by the residential phasing provisions set out in Section 3.2.3 of this Plan and mentioned in Section 5.3.4 of this chapter.

5.3.9 Housing in the buffer zone

There is evidence of constant pressure for one-off housing in an extended rural area around Tobercurry, along both local and regional roads.

A buffer zone has been established around Tobercurry (refer to Section 3.3.3 Development limit and buffer zone of this Plan), in accordance with the requirements of the CDP.

The purpose of this buffer zone is to contain and consolidate the town, restrict development along the approach roads and prevent the sprawl of single houses in the rural area, while safeguarding land for the town's future expansion and for planned infrastructure projects (such as the Tobercurry bypass and any ancillary infrastructure).



While development will be generally discouraged within the buffer zone, proposals for single houses may be accommodated subject to the Council's rural housing policies (Section 5.7 of the CDP) and the additional policies outlined in this chapter.

Housing policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- HP-1** Facilitate the completion of unfinished housing estates by considering new planning applications on the remaining infill sites in such estates.
- HP-2** Encourage the development of housing and/or a mix of residential and other uses on brownfield and infill sites in the town centre.
- HP-3** Ensure that residential development takes place in a manner and at a pace that does not exceed the capacity of water and wastewater treatment infrastructure. Developments shall not be occupied unless adequate water and wastewater treatment infrastructure is in place.
- HP-4** Consider new applications for multi-unit residential development on greenfield sites only if the moratorium on multi-unit housing developments has ceased to have effect in Tobercurry, and in accordance with the residential phasing provisions outlined in Section 3.2.3 of this LAP.

Housing within the buffer zone

- HP-5** Accommodate proposals for one-off rural housing only in cases of proven need of immediate family members of locally resident families who wish to build on their own land and have no suitable option on their holdings outside the buffer zone, subject to appropriate assessment under the Habitats Directive.
- HP-6** Encourage the sensitive renovation or replacement of existing vacant or derelict structures, as opposed to new build.

Housing objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- HO-1** Monitor house completion and building, in order to manage the delivery of appropriate residential development in Tobercurry.

6. Community facilities



A sense of community spirit is the cornerstone of any successful town or urban area. A Local Area Plan may not be able to contribute to community spirit, but it can provide a policy framework to guide the development of projects that enrich community life. The residents of Tubbercurry have demonstrated a strong involvement in the development of the town to date.

The substantial work undertaken by volunteers living within the Tubbercurry Plan area is reflected in the success of the annual Old Fair Day, the South Sligo Summer School, the Western Drama Festival and the South Sligo Walking Festival, as well as in the wide range of activities undertaken by the Tidy Towns group.

6.1 Main CDP provisions

Among the most relevant provisions of the CDP are the following:

Community facilities policies

- P-CF-1** *Assist, as far as possible, in the provision of community facilities by reserving suitably located land, by assisting in the provision of finance for their development (where appropriate) and /or by the use of the development management process to ensure provision is made for such facilities as the Council considers appropriate.*
- P-CF-6** *Encourage the siting of community facilities in suitable locations, especially within residential areas / town (village) centre areas or close to existing facilities / services and public transport routes.*
- P-CF-10** *Adopt a flexible and supportive approach towards proposals for the provision of community facilities within a wide range of land-use zoning categories, in particular lands zoned for community facilities, mixed uses, residential development and commercial/enterprise uses. Any such proposals should be suitably located within the development limits of the relevant settlement and should be easily accessible for all sections of the community.*

Education facilities policies

- P-ED-6** Support Sligo's schools in the upgrading and modernisation of their building stock so as to ensure that these institutions can accommodate population growth.
- P-ED-7** Ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided concurrent with the development of an education facility. Such infrastructure may include footpaths, pedestrian crossings, cycle lanes, parking facilities, ramps and facilities for those with special needs.

Childcare policies

- P-CC-6** Optimise existing physical resources within the County by supporting multi-functional building use and provision, to include childcare facilities.

Healthcare policies

- P-HC-2** Promote the location of health services and care facilities within existing settlements, on sites convenient to pedestrian access and public transport.

Sport, recreation and open space policies

- P-SRO-2** Preserve existing public or private recreation areas, including sports clubs, grounds, built leisure facilities and open space. If a change of use is sought, ensure that alternative recreational facilities are provided at suitable locations.
- P-SRO-4** Support local sports and community groups in the development of facilities through appropriate land use zoning.
- P-SRO-5** Ensure that all new facilities are appropriately located where they can best meet the needs of all sections of the community that they are intended to serve.

Please note that the policies and objectives outlined in **Chapter 6 Community facilities** of the CDP apply to all future community facilities proposed in Tobercurry.

The following sections do not substitute, but complement the provisions of the CDP. It is recommended to consult Chapter 6 of this LAP in conjunction with Chapter 6 of the CDP.

All development proposals for community facilities must also comply with the relevant provisions of **Chapter 12 Development Management Standards** of the CDP.



6.2 Education



The provision of education facilities has an important role to play in developing sustainable and balanced communities. The existence of such facilities can increase the attractiveness of an area for families and for businesses.

The level of education of the population resident in the Plan area has consistently risen in the past decade, as shown by Census data collected in 2002, 2006 and 2011.

While the number of people educated only to primary level has decreased, the number of degree holders and professionals has almost trebled between 2002 and 2011 (see table 6.A below).

Table 6.A Changes in the educational attainment of the population resident in Tobercurry, Census years 2002, 2006 and 2011

Level of education	2002		2006		2011	
	persons	% of total	persons	% of total	persons	% of total
No formal education and primary education	191	23.4%	181	18.8%	170	15.1%
Secondary, vocational, technical and non-degree education	482	59%	560	58%	624	55.3%
Primary degree and/or professional qualification	63	7.7%	97	10.1%	169	15%
Postgraduate degree (masters, diploma, certificate)	19	2.3%	35	3.6%	48	4.3%
Doctorate (PhD)	0	0%	0	0%	3	0.27%
Not stated	61	7.5%	92	9.5%	114	10.1%
Total	816	100%	964	100%	1,128	100%

Source: cso.ie

6.2.1 Schools

Tobercurry has one primary school, the Holy Family Primary School, which is located beside the Marist Convent at Emmet Street. In 2014, the school had 198 pupils on its register, fourteen full-time teachers and four visiting teachers, (in 2006 it had 130 pupils and nine teachers).

The school has undergone a refurbishment in recent years with the addition of two new classrooms. It is anticipated that an extra classroom will be required in the near future. The lack of car parking and drop-off areas for students and staff is a critical issue for the school.

St. Attracta's Community School is Tobercurry's secondary school. This modern building, which opened in 2002, accommodated the amalgamation of the Marist Convent Secondary School and Banada Abbey Secondary School.

St. Attracta's Community School was the first public-private partnership (PPP) school building project in the country. Located on a 15-acre site, it was one of the largest and best equipped school buildings in the country, built to cater for 675 students. In 2014, the school had almost 600 students and 60 teachers (up from 515 students and 43 teachers in 2006).

6.2.2 Training facilities

The North Connaught College opened in January 1940 as a vocational school. In the early 1990s, the school became a college of adult and further education. Since then, the college has offered hundreds of adults the opportunity to study locally for a recognised qualification. The College provides a comprehensive range of evening classes as well as eleven daytime courses.

6.3 Family support

6.3.1 Family Resource Centre

Tobercurry Family and Childcare Resource House Project Co. Ltd was established in 1998 by volunteers from the local community. In 2004, funding was received from the Family Support Agency (replaced in 2014 by the Child and Family Agency, a statutory organisation) to enable the project to open a Family Resource Centre (FRC) on Humbert Street. Since receiving funding, the FRC has moved to a new premises on Mountain Road.

The Centre is one of 107 family resource centres in Ireland which are accountable to the Child and Family Agency. The Centre offers services to the young and old, to people with disabilities and to families through a variety of supports and programmes. These include counselling services, parent and toddler groups, a men's shed, women's groups, a walking group and cookery classes.

The FRC also provides education programmes such as basic computers and internet skills, one-to-one support for literacy and English classes for non-Irish nationals.

6.3.2 Childcare

Tobercurry has two main childcare centres: the Lollipop Lane Crèche and the Family Resource Centre crèche. The Lollipop Lane Crèche provides full-day childcare, Montessori school, afterschool services and holiday camps. Lollipop Lane currently employs 14 people and caters for a maximum of 66 children. In 2014, 93 children were using the service every week (2014).

The FRC offers a HSE-approved community facility with capacity for 90 children in total (72 at any one time) and employs 15 people. It operates the free pre-school scheme and a childcare subvention programme (reduced childcare fees).

6.3.3 Playgrounds

There is only one playground in Tobercurry, on Mountain Road. It was refurbished and fenced in 2006, but is now in a poor state and is closed to the public (2015). The lack of a functional playground is seen to be a critical issue in Tobercurry. The nearest playground is in Aclare (Kilmacteigue playground).

The upgrading of the Mountain Road playground or the provision of a new playground, as part of the development of the town park, is a priority for Tobercurry.

6.3.4 Young adults/teenagers

Facilities for young adults and teenagers are limited in Tobercurry. The Foroige youth café, located on Humbert Street, opened in 2013 and is one of the few spaces in Tobercurry dedicated to young adults and teenagers.

There is also a South Sligo No Name Club, which holds meetings every Thursday night during the summer months in the Family Resource Centre. The No Name Club is a national voluntary youth organisation founded in 1978 with clubs throughout the country.

6.4 Health, disability and older persons care

6.4.1 Primary care

A HSE health and day care centre, located off Teeling Street, is effectively the primary care centre for Tobercurry. The healthcare team provides a single point of contact to the health system for the population living in a large catchment area around Tobercurry including Banada, Tourlestrane, Achonry, Cloonacool, Mulinabreena and Curry.

The Centre offers three GPs, a public health nurse, physiotherapy services and a counsellor. The primary care team members also link with other community-based disciplines to ensure that all health and social needs are catered for. These include dental care, speech and language therapy, chiropody. The day care centre provides ancillary services to its users, such as a laundry service, meals on wheels and transport.

The HSE has long-term plans to develop a primary care centre on a Community Council site at the rear of the current Health Centre building, in a public-private partnership (PPP) arrangement, to cater for all primary care and mental health needs of the population in the catchment area.

6.4.2 Other care facilities

The HSE also funds Gallagher House (which is a day care facility run by the Learning Disabilities Service) and Mulholland House on Main Street, both of which cater for respite care. Gallagher House opened in 1989 with ten students. In 2014, when it celebrated 25 years in operation, there were 29 students with a learning disability, ranging in age from 39 to 72. Programmes include computers, cookery, gym and gardening. A sports programme is ran for the students in conjunction with Sligo Leader and Sligo Sports Partnership.

Sophia Housing Association, together with Sligo County Council, developed a scheme of 32 apartments at the old Marist Sister Convent on Emmet Street. Within the site there are three houses, each with eight units of accommodation, occupied by people with intellectual disabilities. The complex also contains a conference space and meeting rooms.

Baileys Nursing Home is a family-run nursing home located on Mountain Road. In 2014, it supported 41 residents and had plans to expand the facility to cater for 80 residents.

6.5 Culture and sports



6.5.1 Teach Laighne

The Teach Laighne Civic Offices, Library and Administration Centre is a two-storey building located on Humbert Street, which accommodates a library, local authority offices, courtroom space for the District Court, facilities for the HSE and community space/meeting rooms. It is used regularly by the local community as a meeting place for groups such as the Tobercurry Active Retirement Association and the Tobercurry Historical Society. The building (designed by McCullough Mulvin Architects) received awards from the Royal Institute of Architects, the Architectural Association of Ireland and the Tidy Towns Association.

6.5.2 Library

The Tobercurry Community Library, located in Teach Laighne, opened its doors to the public in 2003. The library offers free membership, free internet access and free computer classes. It runs two book clubs and has been instrumental in establishing a number of other groups in the community, such as the Tobercurry Writers' Group, the Tobercurry Bookworms Reading Group, and the Chess and Draughts Club for children. The library also serves as a venue for many workshops, presentations and lectures.

The Sligo Europe Direct Information Centre (EDIC) opened at Tobercurry Community Library in April 2013. The centre serves as a contact point for all queries on the EU from citizens living in counties Sligo, Leitrim, and Mayo.

6.5.3 Sports grounds

Tobercurry has a vibrant sports scene, with organisations such as the Golf Club, South Sligo Spokes Club (cycling club), Ox Mountains Cycling Club, the Ox Mountain Ramblers (walking club), South Sligo Athletics Club, the South Sligo Community Walking Group, the local GAA Club (founded in 1888) and the Real Tubber Football Club (founded in 1960).

The main sports fields are found at Kilcoyne Memorial Park (GAA) and Mountain Road (soccer). The facilities at Mountain Road are extremely limited. A storage container is used as a changing room and there are no toilets on site. Permission was granted to the South Sligo Community Park in 2013 to construct a club house with four changing rooms, a soccer pitch, a three-lane running track, a tennis court and a three-lane bowl court.

6.6 Recreation and open space

Private recreational open space within Tobercurry, consisting of the golf course and the GAA grounds, is well maintained and open throughout the year.

However, Tobercurry suffers from a lack of publicly-accessible, landscaped open spaces and recreation areas in the town centre. The undeveloped sports field on the Mountain Road is the only dedicated open space area in the town, aside from the various incidental open spaces located throughout housing estates. Submissions received from the public in relation to the forthcoming Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) indicate a significant demand in Tobercurry for such facilities.

6.6.1 Public parks

A large, centrally-located park is needed in the town. This park should contain various amenities such as a playground for young and older children, recreational space for teenagers, sports facilities and landscaped open space. To this end, approximately 5.4 ha of greenfield land located between Mountain Road and Emmet Street are zoned as open space. Part of the land is already being used by the South Sligo Athletics Club, which has obtained planning permission to upgrade its existing facilities. The new town park could also include a new playground, recreational areas for teenagers and young adults, sports facilities such as an outdoor gym, a running track, football and soccer pitches etc.

Further land is zoned as open space along the Maiden River for the provision of a **linear park** connecting into the proposed network of walkways in the buffer zone.

6.6.2 Walking routes

As well as lacking public open space in the town centre, Tobercurry lacks a network of safe (off-road) walkways and nature trails. The forest walk at Rathscanlon (Tobercurry Trail), while attractive and pleasant to use, is very short and is not located conveniently for the majority of Tobercurry residents.

A substantial looped walk around the built-up area, that is safe to use at night time and during the winter months, is much needed in Tobercurry.

One of the objectives of this Plan is to investigate the creation of a network of walks incorporating, where possible, key landscape features such as:

- views of the Ox Mountains;
- stream corridors and wetlands;
- significant hedgerows and mature trees;
- the disused railway line;
- existing rural laneways.

A number of routes have been identified as having potential for the creation of looped walks. Their establishment is dependent on available resources, including private fundraising, as well as the permission of relevant landowners. These routes include lands alongside the disused railway line, lands alongside the Maiden River and the extension of the existing forest walk at Rathscanlon.

In order to complete the network of walkways, all roads and streets along the identified walking routes should have adequate footpaths and all new roads should be constructed with wide footpaths and grass verges where possible.

Open space provided concurrent with new development should link into and function as part of the town's open space network rather than take the form of piecemeal, isolated pockets. New residential/mixed-use developments adjacent to walkways must incorporate connecting pathways into the designated walkway. Developments shall be designed to ensure that properties overlook adjoining walkways.

6.7 Other facilities



6.7.1 Community centre – St Brigid’s Hall

St Brigid’s Hall, located on Wolfe Tone Square, has served the community of Tobercurry for 85 years, since its construction in 1930. The hall is used for a range of indoor sports activities, it hosts the Western Drama Festival (the oldest drama festival in the country) and it is a main venue for music and dance classes during the annual South Sligo Summer School.

6.7.2 Garda station

The Tobercurry Garda Station, located on Teeling Street, is part of the Ballymote Garda District. Its catchment area extends southwards to the Sligo/Mayo border, westwards as far as the Garda area of Enniscrone and northwards as far as the Garda areas of Coolaney/Collooney.

6.7.3 Fire station

A new fire station was opened in Tobercurry in 2001. The station covers Tobercurry and the surrounding areas as far as Lough Talt and the Ox Mountains. This station houses state-of-the-art equipment for the local fire service and facilities for local, county and national training courses. The station is base to nine retained firefighters and deals with 100 call-outs per year on average.

Community facilities policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- CFP-1** Maintain and enhance existing sports facilities and support the provision of new facilities.
- CFP-2** Support the provision of further crèche/childcare, healthcare and older persons care facilities, as necessary, within the development limit, on sites that are easily accessible for all sections of the community.
- CFP-3** Facilitate the development of a HSE primary care unit and other community facilities (e.g. nursing homes) compatible with residential uses on lands zoned for residential or mixed uses, where appropriate.
- CFP-4** Promote cultural development and the provision of associated facilities that acknowledge and build upon local character and distinctiveness.
- CFP-5** Promote the re-opening of the playground at Mountain Road or the provision of a new playground.

Open space objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

Public parks

- OSO-1** Reserve land between Mountain Road and Emmet Street for a public park incorporating sports and recreation facilities for a wide range of users.
- OSO-2** Reserve land alongside the Maiden River for the creation of a linear park subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive.

New walkways

- OSO-3** Examine the provision of a network of walkways from the Tobercurry Trail (Rathscanlon forest walk) to the disused railway line, using existing laneways and land adjacent to the railway and the Maiden River, as far as is practicable, subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive.
- OSO-4** Create a new walkway from the N-17 (Galway Road) to Mountain Road and the R-294 (Ballymote Road) alongside planned roads (Roads Objective TCO-1), through the proposed town park and areas zoned for residential use.

7. Heritage



The quality of the built and natural environment is an important factor in determining where people choose to live and in attracting investment into particular areas. Natural, archaeological and built heritage are all part of Tobercurry's environment and need to be preserved in the interest of the town's future.

The County Development Plan 2011-2017 (CDP) contains a substantial Heritage chapter, which outlines in detail the Council's policies and objectives in relation to natural, archaeological and architectural heritage, as well as in relation to the County's landscapes.

Please note that the policies and objectives outlined in **Chapter 7 Heritage** of the CDP apply to all relevant future developments proposed in Tobercurry.

The following sections do not substitute, but complement the provisions of the CDP. It is recommended to consult Chapter 7 of this LAP in conjunction with Chapter 7 of the CDP.

All development proposals must also comply with the relevant provisions of **Chapter 12 Development Management Standards** of the CDP.

7.1 Natural heritage

The landscape surrounding Tobercurry is generally flat and low-lying, supporting small- and medium-sized field patterns, with hedgerows and mature tree belts.

Notable landscape features such as the Ox Mountains, Knocknashee Hill and Muckelty Hill are all located within a 10 km radius. The nearest significant bodies of surface water are the River Moy (4 km west of the town), the Owengarve River (5.5 km south-west) and several lakes, including Lough Talt and Templehouse and Cloonacleigha Loughs, all located more than 10 km away from Tobercurry.

7.1.1. Main CDP provisions

The most relevant policies and objectives of the CDP applicable in Tobercurry are the following:

Natural heritage – general policies

- P-NH-1** *Protect, sustainably manage and enhance the natural heritage, biodiversity, geological heritage, landscape and environment of County Sligo in recognition of its importance for nature conservation and biodiversity, and as a non-renewable resource, in association with all stakeholders.*
- P-NH-2** *Ensure as far as possible that development does not impact adversely on wildlife habitats and species. In the interest of sustainability, biodiversity should be conserved for the benefit of future generations.*

European and national designated natural heritage areas – objectives

- O-NH-1** *Protect and maintain the favourable conservation status and conservation value of all natural heritage sites designated or proposed for designation in accordance with European and national legislation and in other relevant international conventions, agreements and processes. This includes sites designated or proposed as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Ramsar Sites and Statutory Nature Reserves.*
- O-NH-2** *Assess, in accordance with the relevant legislation, all proposed developments which are likely to have a significant effect (directly or through indirect or cumulative impact) on designated natural heritage sites, sites proposed for designation and protected species.*
- O-NH-3** *When considering any plan or project prepared or assessed on the basis of this development plan, the planning authority must comply fully with Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive (as transposed into Irish Law by the EU Habitats Regulations 1997 and subsequent amendments) and assess whether the plan or project is likely to have a significant impact upon the integrity, conservation objectives and qualifying interests of any Natura 2000 site.*

Nature conservation outside designated sites

- P-NH-8** *Ensure that proposals for development protect and enhance biodiversity, wherever possible, by minimising adverse impacts on existing habitats and by including mitigation and/or compensation measures, as appropriate, which ensure that biodiversity is enhanced.*
- P-NH-10** *Ensure that no ecological networks, or parts thereof which provide significant connectivity between areas of local biodiversity, are lost without remediation as a result of implementation of this Plan.*

Woodlands, trees and hedgerows policies

- P-NH-11** *Protect trees and hedgerows from development that would impact adversely upon them, and promote the enhancement of existing hedgerows by seeking increased coverage, in conjunction with new development.*
- P-NH-17** *Recognise the biodiversity and archaeological importance of townland boundaries, including hedgerows, and promote their protection and retention.*

Inland waters policies

- P-NH-19** *Protect rivers, streams and other water courses and their associated Core Riparian Zones (CRZ) wherever possible and maintain them in an open state capable of providing suitable habitat for fauna and flora.*
- P-NH-21** *Protect and enhance biodiversity richness by protecting rivers, stream corridors and valleys by reserving land along their banks for ecological corridors, maintaining them free from inappropriate development, and discouraging culverting or realignment.*

Protected species policies

- P-NH-28** *Protect species and their associated habitats that require strict protection under the Habitats Regulations (S.I. No. 477/2011 - EC (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011).*

Inland water objectives

- O-NH-19** *Ensure that an appropriate ecological assessment is undertaken for developments with the potential to impact on inland waters.*

7.1.2 Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

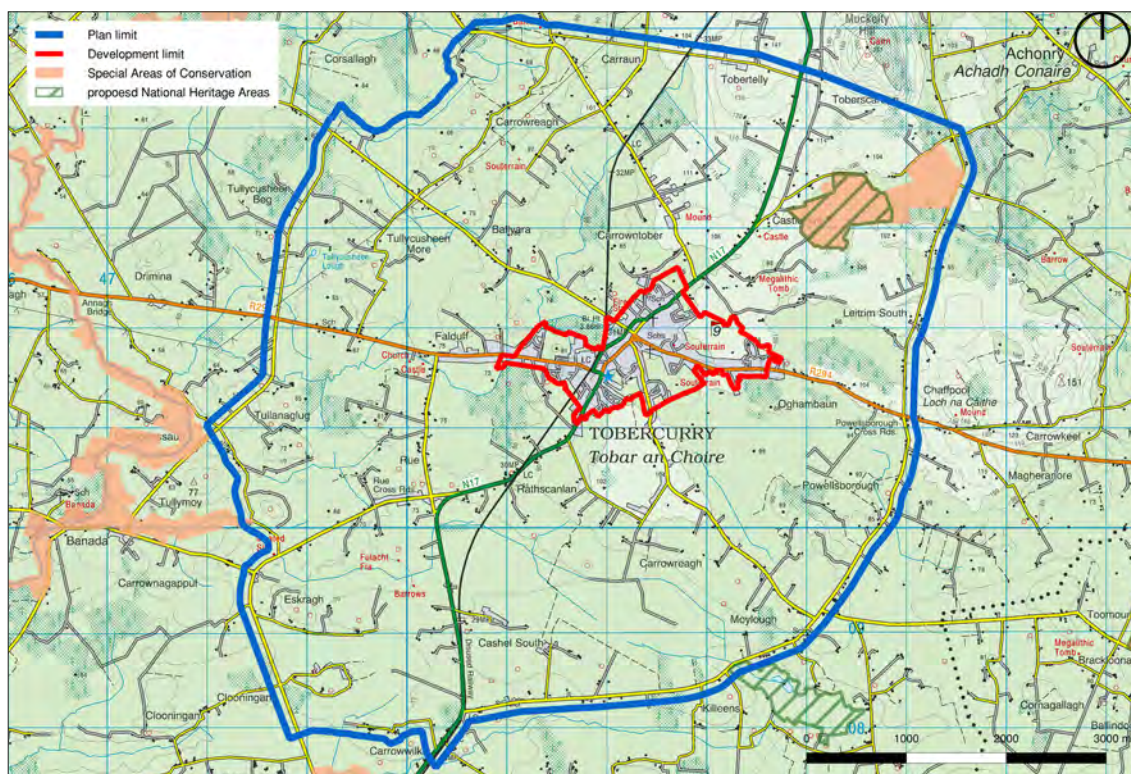


Fig. 7.A Turloughmore, Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and proposed National Heritage Area (pNHA), located on the north-eastern edge of the Tobercurry Plan area

Turloughmore, a turlough situated to the north-east of the town, is the only designated Natura 2000 site in the Plan area. The site is a designated Special Area of Conservation (site code 000637). This SAC occupies a hollow in the drift-covered ridges north-east of Tobercurry. The predominant habitat within the site is turlough, which is listed as a priority habitat under Annex I of the European Habitats Directive.

Turloughmore is important for being the northernmost turlough in the country. It is of ecological interest also for its relatively oligotrophic nature, and has a good representation of the associated vegetation types. The habitat is rather uniform, though the vegetation that is there is well developed and not currently overgrazed. The importance of the site stems largely from its northerly location and the sand content of the soil, which is fairly unusual.

Turloughmore is less calcareous than most turloughs and is also relatively free-draining. There are no long-lasting pools left when groundwater levels subside and therefore no aquatic vegetation is present. Pasture, some of which floods at times of very high water levels, surrounds the remainder of the turlough.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service has published a Conservation Objectives document for the site¹, which outlines the conservation objectives and conservation status of the SAC, its attributes and targets and the factors that can adversely affect the achievement of the conservation objectives.

Such factors include agricultural improvements to the area around the turlough and overgrazing². The site is visited occasionally by small numbers of Whooper Swan, a species listed on Annex I of the European Birds Directive.

The River Moy SAC (site code 002298) is located about 3.5 km to the west of the town, outside the Plan limit. This is the main receiving water body for surface water run-off from the Plan area.

¹ NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: Turloughmore (Sligo) SAC 000637. Version 3. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

² NPWS (2013) Turloughmore (Sligo) SAC 000637– Site Synopsis. Rev 13. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

7.1.3 Natural Heritage Area (NHA)



There are no designated Natural Heritage Areas within the Plan area, but there are two proposed NHAs: Turloughmore (Site Code 000637), which represents half of the designated SAC at Turloughmore, and Moylough Turlough (Site Code 001677), whose north-western tip is located within the Plan limit.

7.1.4 Natural heritage outside designated sites

The backdrop of the Ox Mountains is the predominant landscape feature in the Tobercurry area. On the outskirts and within a short distance of the town, there are commercial plantations, which are not easily accessible or normally used for walking. There are many undeveloped greenfield sites in the town, many of which are bound by mature trees. The disused railway corridor is currently a haven for wildlife and the small wooded area at Rockwell is another green oasis in the middle of the built-up area.

The main natural features within the town and its immediate surroundings include:

- several conifer plantations, of various ages;
- significant extents of peatland and wetlands, both east and west of Tobercurry;
- pockets of mature trees and some tree avenues;
- Tobercurry Stream (locally known as Maiden River) which drains to the River Moy.

7.1.5 Water-based habitats

A number of stream channels, drainage ditches and wetland areas exist within the surroundings of Tobercurry. It is important, especially in terms of biodiversity, to maintain these water sources by incorporating them into the framework of the Plan. The County Sligo Wetlands Survey 2008-2011 identified and mapped potential wetland sites within County Sligo, some of which occur within the Plan area and are shown in Fig. 7.B on page 51.

If a development has the potential to affect a wetland site identified in the LAP, an ecological assessment should be undertaken to determine the impacts of such development on the wetland. The ecological assessment should be undertaken in accordance with objective O-NH-19 of the CDP (listed in subsection 7.1.1. above). In addition, S.I. No. 454/2011 - Planning and Development (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2011 sets significantly lower thresholds in relation to proposals for the requirement for planning consent for the drainage or reclamation of wetlands and the requirement to screen for EIA, and for requiring EIA.

It is now mandatory to screen all projects where it is proposed to drain/reclaim an area measuring over 0.1 ha of wetlands (including estuarine marshes or callows) in order to determine whether EIA is required.

EIA is mandatory where proposed work would involve the drainage and/or reclamation of more than 2 ha of wetland. Wetlands are defined to be “*natural or artificial areas where biogeochemical functions depend notably on constant or periodic shallow inundation, or saturation, by standing or flowing fresh, brackish or saline water*”.

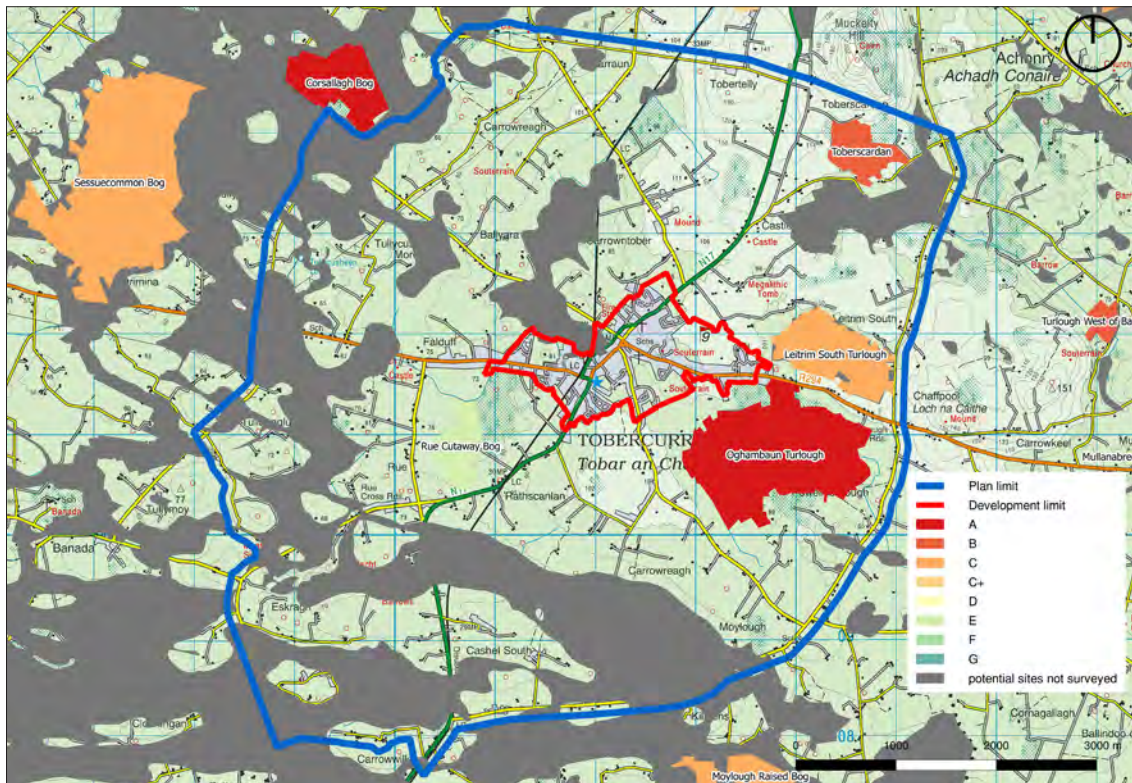


Fig. 7.B Wetland sites identified within the Tobercurry Plan area

7.1.6 Hedgerows as wildlife corridors

A number of significant hedgerows and tree groups are evident in the rural area around Tobercurry. Hedgerows and mature trees can be multi-functional, but essentially they are important for wildlife. Wherever possible, they should be retained and incorporated into any future development.

Ideally, the various natural and semi-natural features and open space elements should be linked, thereby guaranteeing flora and fauna dispersal throughout the Plan area. This provides the town with an attractive setting and allows for interaction between people and their surrounding natural environment.

The value of hedgerows

Flood control – the root systems of hedgerows regulate water movement and help prevent flooding.

Disease control – hedgerows help prevent the spread of airborne disease (e.g. tuberculosis in cattle).

Water quality – hedgerows trap silt and soil particles, which clog up fish spawning grounds if they enter watercourses.

Cultural and historical significance – hedgerows are part of Ireland's cultural, historical and archaeological heritage. Townland boundary hedgerows are particularly important, as they can often date from medieval times.

Wildlife shelter – as the area of native woodlands in Ireland is small, hedgerows have become very important wildlife habitats. They provide food, shelter, and corridors of movement, nest and hibernation sites for many of our native flora and fauna.

Screening – when incorporated into urban and rural developments, hedgerows provide screening and can greatly enhance the scenic quality of an area.



7.1.7 Invasive species

In terms of invasive species, the highly invasive Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) was recorded on a site off the R-294 (east of Tobercurry). Control and eradication of the stand would be a priority action to prevent the spread of Japanese Knotweed in the town.

Natural heritage policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- NHP-1** Maintain and enhance the conservation value of the Natura 2000 sites within and adjoining the Plan area. Ensure that Appropriate Assessment Screening is carried out for any plan or project within the Plan area with potential to impact on a Natura 2000 site, such as the Turloughmore SAC or the Moy River SAC.
- NHP-2** Encourage the retention and enhancement of existing habitats and biodiversity areas in Tobercurry town and throughout the Plan area, in particular the Maiden River, wetlands and linear habitats of nature conservation value (hedgerows, tree lines and stone walls).
- NHP-3** Require developers to retain existing significant hedgerows, tree groups and wetlands and incorporate these features into their developments where possible.
- NHP-4** Apply the precautionary principle in relation to development proposals with potential to impact on the wetlands within the Plan area by requiring an ecological impact assessment to ensure that any proposed development will not affect the integrity and conservation value of the site. Such assessments shall have regard to S.I. No. 454/2011 - Planning and Development (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2011.
- NHP-5** Protect the water quality of rivers and streams throughout the Plan area by restricting development in the Core Riparian Zones (CRZ). The CRZs should be generally 10 m wide on each side of rivers, except for salmonid rivers, where CRZs should extend to 25 m on each side of the river.

Natural heritage objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- NHO-1** Control and prevent the spread of invasive species within the Plan area.
- NHO-2** Carry out a survey of invasive species in Tobercurry.
- NHO-3** Protect the established swift colony on the building on the corner site of Circular Road and the L-8705-29.

7.2 Archaeological heritage

Archaeology is an irreplaceable resource, a link with the past which can be found in every townland of County Sligo. Tobercurry and the surrounding countryside are home to a wealth of archaeological heritage dating back to the Stone Age. Throughout the Plan area, archaeological features are apparent in the form of ringforts, ancient field patterns, souterrains and enclosures. Fig 7.C on page 54 illustrates this rich presence of archaeological sites in Tobercurry.

Proposed developments that may (due to their location, size or nature) have implications for archaeological heritage should be subject to archaeological assessment. Such developments include those that are located at or close to archaeological monuments or sites, those that are extensive in terms of area (0.5 hectare or more) or length (1 kilometre or more) and developments that require an Environmental Impact Assessment.

7.2.1 Record of Monuments and Places

All known monuments and sites are registered in a statutory inventory known as the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP). The RMP contains monuments dating from before 1700 AD and some sites post 1700 AD. A zone of archaeological potential (ZAP) surrounds each monument.

Recorded monuments are protected under the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. Copies of the RMP for County Sligo are available for inspection at the Planning Office of Sligo County Council and in public libraries. The maps showing the archaeological sites are subject to updating. Therefore, the most recent edition should be consulted.

The RMP is not an exhaustive list of all archaeology in existence. Potential sites of archaeological interest may include archaeological remains beneath the ground surface. Such remains may only be uncovered during development work and must be investigated and recorded in great detail. Please refer to the archaeological heritage policies of the CDP for guidance.

7.2.2 Main CDP provisions

The following are some of the most relevant archaeological heritage policies and objectives contained in the CDP 2011-2017:

Archaeological heritage policies

- P-AH-1** *Protect and enhance archaeological sites, monuments, their setting, appreciation and amenity within the Plan area, including those that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) or newly discovered archaeological sites and/or sub-surface archaeological remains.*
- P-AH-2** *Require archaeological assessment, surveys, test excavation and/or monitoring for planning applications in areas of archaeological importance, if a development proposal is likely to impact upon in-situ archaeological monuments their setting and archaeological deposits.*
- P-AH-5** *Ensure that development within the vicinity of a Recorded Monument does not detract from the setting of the feature and is sited and designed appropriately.*
- P-AH-8** *Facilitate and enhance public access to and understanding of the archaeological heritage and disseminate information and advice on the archaeological heritage to prospective developers and the general public.*

Archaeological heritage objectives

- O-AH-1** *Require an Archaeological Impact Assessment when considering development proposals with a potential to affect archaeological heritage, and have regard to the advice and recommendations of the prescribed bodies as defined in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in relation to undertaking, approving or authorising development.*
- O-AH-3** *Require the preservation of the context amenity and visual integrity and connection of archaeological monuments to their setting. Views to and from archaeological monuments should not be obscured by inappropriate development. Archaeological visual impact assessments should be undertaken to demonstrate the continued preservation of an archaeological monument's siting and context.*
- O-AH-7** *Identify appropriate archaeological sites in the Plan area to which public access could be provided and work to secure public access, where appropriate, in consultation with the land owners.*

7.2.3 The archaeological heritage of Tobercurry

There are 135 recorded archaeological monuments in the Plan area, of which 12 are located inside the development limit. There is a variety of archaeological remains, including ring forts, souterrains, tombs, enclosures etc. Fig. 7.C shows the location of these monuments within and around the Plan area, while the associated table indicates their RMP numbers and gives the corresponding descriptions.

The main focus of prehistoric activity in the Plan area generally appears to be located along a ridge of high ground that runs southwest to northeast at an average height of between 100m to 140m above sea level. This ridge contains two prominences that are the main focus of prehistoric activity - Muckelty Hill and Knocknashee.

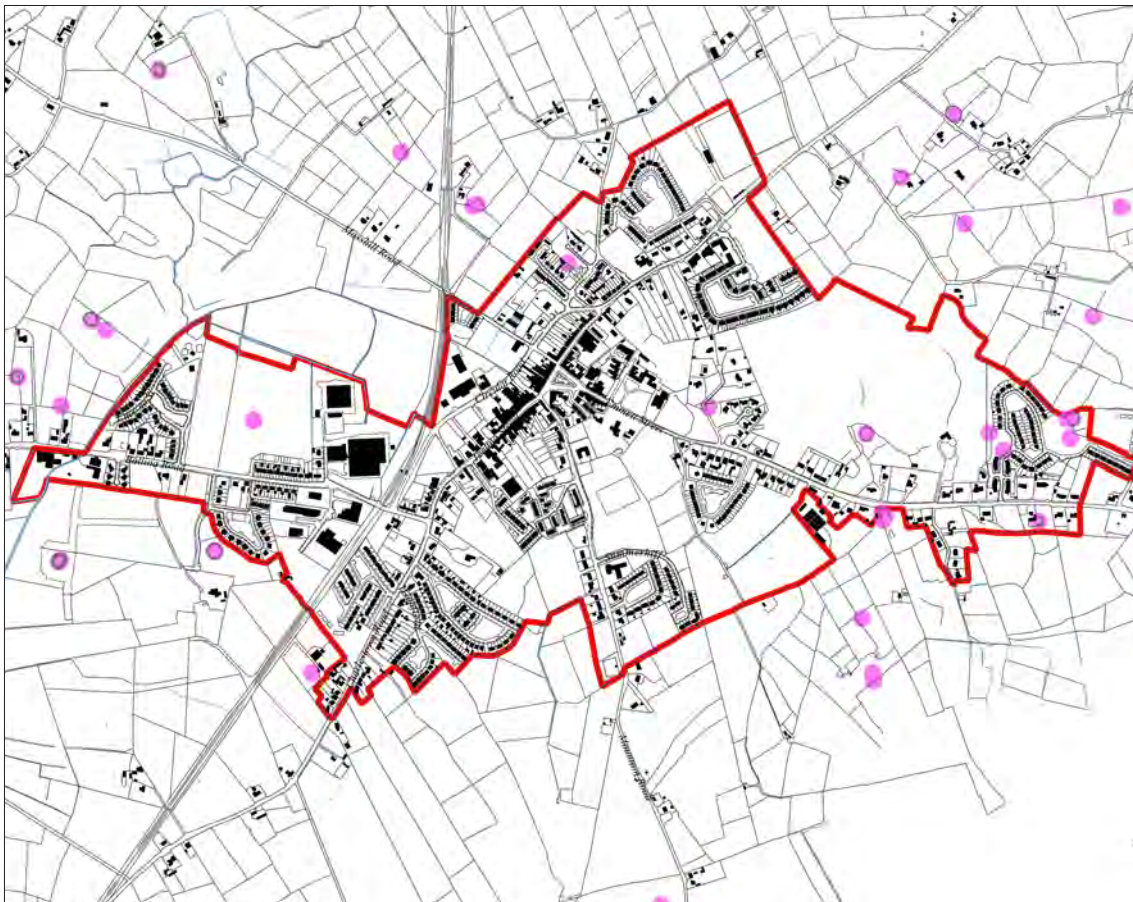


Fig.7.C Archaeological monuments within and around Tobercurry town

Table 7.D Archaeological monuments within the development limit of Tobercurry LAP

RMP no.	Townland	Class description
SL038-029----	Rathscanlan	Ringfort - Rath
SL038-032----	Carrowntober	Souterrain
SL038-033----	Tobercurry	Souterrain
SL038-034----	Oghambaun	Ringfort - Cashel
SL038-037----	Oghambaun	Ringfort - Rath
SL038-038001-	Oghambaun	Ringfort - Cashel
SL038-038002-	Oghambaun	Ringfort - Rath
SL038-037001-	Oghambaun	Standing Stone possible
SL038-038003-	Oghambaun	Enclosure possible
SL038-074----	Rathscanlan	Megalithic Tomb - Court Tomb
SL038-036----	Oghambaun	Ringfort - Rath possible
SL038-035001-	Oghambaun	Souterrain

Archaeological heritage policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

AHP-1 Protect the archaeological heritage of Tobercurry from damage.

AHP-2 Secure the preservation (in-situ, or as a minimum, preservation by record) of:

- the archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments as established under section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994;
- sites and features of historical and archaeological interest.

In securing such preservation the Planning Authority will have regard to the advice and recommendations of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, both in respect of whether or not to grant planning permission and in respect of the conditions to which permission, if granted, should be subjected.

Any development either above or below ground, within the vicinity of a site of archaeological interest shall not be detrimental to the character of the archaeological site or its setting.

AHP-3 Support and promote public awareness of, access to and linkages between the various sites of archaeological value within Tobercurry, with the cooperation of private landowners.

AHP-4 Integrate sites of archaeological interest into the open space network, where feasible..

7.3 Architectural heritage

The architectural heritage of a place is a unique resource, an irreplaceable expression of the richness and diversity of the past.

Tobercurry's buildings have a range of significant architectural styles that deserve recognition for their individual architectural merit.

Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) provides for the protection of the architectural heritage. The primary mechanism for this is through the compilation of a Record of Protected Structures (RPS) as part of the County Development Plan (CDP).

The current RPS for County Sligo contains a number of protected structures within the Tobercurry Plan area.

By adding structures to the RPS, the Planning Authority seeks to protect and conserve buildings and structures of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social and technical importance.

7.3.1 Main CDP provisions

Among the most relevant policies of the CDP in relation to architectural heritage are the following:

Architectural/built heritage policies

- P-BH-3** *Generally encourage the re-use of older buildings through renovation and rehabilitation, in preference to their demolition or reconstruction.*
- P-BH-7** *Promote the principles of contextual compatibility for all new buildings within the historic built environment and promote carefully-designed architectural solutions that are modern and innovative, except in or adjoining an ACA or a protected structure, where, in the opinion of the planning authority, redevelopment in the traditional or historicist manner may be more appropriate.*
- P-BH-8** *Ensure that any new development activity acknowledges the traditional frame for development - in particular, buildings will be required to maintain historical building lines. There will be a presumption against new buildings stepping back from established building lines, except for key public buildings, or where a new building might interfere with the setting of a protected structure or an ACA.*
- P-BH-11** *Generally maintain a continuous building line along streetscapes - this assists in maintaining the character of an area and can screen car parks, loading bays and service yards within blocks.*
- P-BH-12** *For new or replacement buildings, encourage the retention of subtle variations in building lines, building heights and plot widths, which are a trademark of the traditional Irish streetscape.*
- P-BH-14** *Protect important non-habitable structures such as historic bridges, harbours, railways, roadside features (such as historic milestones, cast-iron pumps and post-boxes), street furniture, historic gardens, stone walls, landscapes, demesnes and curtilage features, in cases where these are not already included in the Record of Protected Structures.*
- P-BH-15** *Support the visual attractiveness of the county by encouraging owners of derelict sites/buildings to develop and improve them in an appropriate manner and pursue, where necessary, owners of buildings and sites under the Derelict Sites Act, 1990.*
- P-BH-20** *Ensure that modern design solutions have regard for the traditional context and streetscape elements and utilise some of the traditional architectural idioms in their composition, form and/or design.*

7.3.2 Record of Protected Structures



The Record of Protected Structures (RPS) is a mechanism for the statutory protection of architectural heritage. Under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), each planning authority is required to compile and maintain a RPS for its functional area.

The RPS for County Sligo is an integral part of the County Development Plan 2011-2017, although it is published as a separate document. The Record lists 400 structures, of which 13 are located within the Tobercurry Plan area, including 11 structures in Tobercurry town.

A protected structure, unless otherwise stated in the RPS, includes the exterior and interior of the structure, its curtilage (including any other structures and their interiors lying within that curtilage). The protection applies to all fixtures and features that form part of the interior or exterior of these structures.

The Council recognises that in order to prolong the life of a protected structure, it may be necessary for the building(s) to accommodate appropriate change and/or new uses. The effect of the Protected Structure status is to ensure that any changes or alterations to the character of the building(s) are carried out in such a way that the existing special character is retained and enhanced.

For additional information in relation to protected structures, please consult Section 7.3 of the County Development Plan 2011-2017.

Appendix II of this Plan contains details and photographs of Tobercurry's protected structures, together with a short description of each building, as provided by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (available from www.buildingsofireland.ie). The locations of these structures are shown on Map 8 in Chapter 12.

7.3.3 Historic streetscape

Tobercurry contains a range of interesting buildings and a variety of architectural styles, all of which add to its character. While not included in the Record of Protected Structures, certain buildings within Tobercurry deserve recognition for either their individual architectural merit or their contribution to the streetscape. Historic buildings are an intrinsic part of our cultural heritage and identity. They are a finite resource, which cannot be replaced once lost or damaged.

Certain buildings – although not warranting recording, due to modernisation and renewal works such as replacement of windows and doors with fixtures made of modern materials – should be given special consideration in terms of planning and development proposals, so that they retain their positive contribution to the streetscape and to the character of the surrounding area.

One such example is Gallagher's Terrace, built along the N-17 to the south of the town centre. The terrace, which consists of semi-detached, two-storey houses with long front gardens, has many characteristics of a Georgian terrace, although sadly no original timber sliding sash windows survive.

7.3.4 Buildings of note



There are many buildings in Tobercurry, which – while not protected structures – are considered significant in terms of their contribution to the character of the town.

These buildings of note (identified in Appendix III and on Map 9 in Chapter 12) have been selected by reason of their vernacular character and positive contribution to the streetscape. Some of these buildings have been altered in the past with the removal of original features.

However, they still retain the essence of their traditional character and merit retention. It is considered essential to preserve elements of the historical character of the town in order to define and strengthen the identity of the town.

7.3.5 Historic shopfronts

Tobercurry has many historic shopfronts which add character and colour to the streets, in particular Teeling Street. The town's shopfronts are distinctive in that the fascia, pilaster, architrave and cornice were often made in plaster. Many shopfronts do not have pilasters; they have just a fascia, architrave and a decorated cornice extending for the entire width of the building.

As 19th-century shopfronts are becoming increasingly rare in Ireland, it should be a priority to protect what remains of this valuable heritage. It is an objective of this Plan to protect the historical shopfronts of Tobercurry. For a list of the shopfronts to be protected, along with recommendations for their enhancement, please see Appendix IV.

Double doors were a feature of late 19th Century/early 20th Century shopfronts (see below). Very often such doors have been replaced with a single door and a side fan light, however in Tobercurry, a significant number of buildings and shopfronts in particular retain the original double door. In the interests of retaining the richness of the traditional streetscape, these doors should also be protected.



Architectural heritage policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- ARP-1** Preserve, protect and enhance the architectural heritage of Tobercurry, which is central to the town's ability to promote itself as a tourist attraction.
- ARP-2** Support the appropriate renovation and reuse of buildings of note, in order to retain Tobercurry's architectural character and strengthen its identity.
- ARP-3** Encourage the sensitive redevelopment of buildings which make a positive contribution to the townscape of Tobercurry, in preference to their demolition and replacement.

Architectural heritage objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- ARO-1** Require any development proposal involving *buildings of note* (and their sites), identified on Map 9, to restore or renovate and/or incorporate these buildings into new development proposals – as appropriate – in a sensitive manner that will contribute to the preservation of the streetscape character.

Such development proposals shall have regard to the architecturally valuable features detailed in Appendix III and to the recommendations made in relation to each *building of note*.

- ARO-2** Require the preservation and enhancement of the following shopfronts in Tobercurry, in accordance with the recommendations detailed in Appendix IV:

1. **Shopfront** at corner of Humbert Street and Wolfe Tone Square
2. **Murphy & Sons Auctioneers** – Wolfe Tone Square
3. **O'Connor's** – Wolfe Tone Square
4. **Foleys Bar and Lounge** – Wolfe Tone Square
5. **Shopfront** (no name) – Wolfe Tone Square
6. **Ozanam Shop** – Teeling Street
7. **T. Brennan's Bar and Lounge** – Teeling Street
8. **Vodafone** – Teeling Street
9. **Barry's Pharmacy** – Teeling Street
10. **McCarrick & Sons** – Teeling Street
11. **Jewel in the Crown** – Teeling Street

7.4 Landscape character

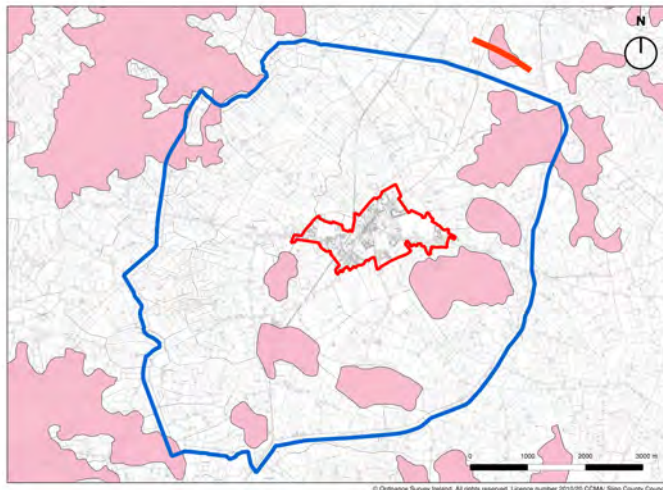


The County Development Plan 2011-2017 includes a Landscape Characterisation Map, which is a tool for assessing the visual impact and sustainability of new development. The map, first published as part of the CDP in 1999, is based on composite landscape studies and has been further refined throughout the years.

The features that can be found around Tobercurry are listed below.

- Most of the landscape is classified as *normal rural landscape* (white areas).
- Various wooded and peatland areas, as well as the turlough at Turloughmore (SAC/pNHA), are designated *sensitive rural landscape* (pink areas).
- The ridge of Muckelty Hill, to the north-east of the town, is designated *visually vulnerable* (red line).

There are no designated *scenic routes* or *scenic views* in the Plan area. The nearest significant water course is the River Moy, a designated salmonid river, which flows west of Tobercurry, outside the plan limit.



Landscape character objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- LCO-1** Keep the visually vulnerable ridge of Muckelty Hill free from development.

8. Transport and circulation



Tobercurry is approximately 34 km from Sligo City (circa 28 minutes commuting time) and 20 km (circa 21 minutes travelling distance) from Knock International Airport. The N-17 Sligo to Galway national road passes through Tobercurry in a north to south direction. The R-294 also crosses the town. This is the road linking Tobercurry to Ballina (to the west) and to Ballymote (to the east). Two other local roads converge on the town centre.

This chapter focuses on the improvement of the pedestrian and vehicular use of the town. Such improvements will involve the streamlining of traffic flows and car parking in the town centre.

The proposals outlined in the following sections are meant to enhance the mobility environment for residents and visitors alike and make adequate provision for the future expansion of Tobercurry.

8.1 Main CDP provisions

Some of the most relevant CDP policies and objectives relating to transport are as follows:

Mobility – strategic policies

- SP-MOB-2** *Support the creation of an integrated and environmentally-sound transport system, in particular with regard to accessibility and choice of transport, with a quality intercity bus and rail service, alongside the promotion of cycle facilities and pedestrian movements.*
- SP-MOB-3** *Make optimal use of existing transportation infrastructure by using traffic management in order to reduce travel times and congestion.*
- 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.*
- SP-MOB-7** *Plan for the future traffic and transportation needs in Sligo and ensure that new development does not compromise the expansion of rail and road corridors in the County. Proposed road realignment/improvement lines and associated corridors shall be preserved free from development that would prejudice the implementation of the road scheme.*

SP-MOB-8 *Protect the carrying capacity of national roads, the level of service they deliver and the period over which they continue to perform efficiently, by avoiding the creation of new access points or the generation of increased traffic from existing accesses on to the N-4, N-15, N-16, N-17 and N-59 outside the 50 km/h speed limit, in accordance with the DoEHLG's publication Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012).*

National roads objectives

O-NR-1 *Facilitate programmed improvements to the national road network, including the programme of realignments and upgrades, as set out in Table 8.B, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.*

O-NR-2 *Restrict new access points onto national roads in accordance with the DoEHLG's publication Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012), in order to maintain traffic capacity, minimize traffic hazard and protect and maximize public investment in such roads.*

National roads projects in County Sligo (extract from Table 8.B in CDP)

Road Number	Route	Description of Work	Estimated completion time/status – subject to NRA approval/funding
N-17	Collooney to Tobercurry Bypass	realignment and upgrading	no completion date*
N-17	Tobercurry Bypass	realignment and upgrading	2013: completion*
N-17	Tobercurry Bypass to Charlestown (including bypass at Bellaghy/Charlestown)	realignment	2015: completion*

*Note: the timeframe for all projects is subject to NRA approval.

Non-national roads objectives

O-NNR-1 *Identify local priorities for road improvements in conjunction with the preparation of mini-plans and local area plans.*

O-NNR-2 *Implement the roads and traffic management objectives of adopted mini-plans/local area plans, subject to the availability of funding.*

O-NNR-5 *Carry out improvement works on regional and local roads, and in particular to the regional road network as set out in Table 8.C, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.*

Planned non-national roads improvements (extract from Table 8.C in CDP)

Road Number	Route
R-294	Cloonloo to Tobercurry to Lough Talt

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.*

Cycling and walking policies

- P-CW-1** *Promote walking and cycling as sustainable transport modes and healthy recreational activities.*
- P-CW-3** *Require that all new developments are designed to integrate into a cycling network linking with adjoining development areas and schools, and provide cycle and pedestrian-friendly development layouts, infrastructure and facilities.*
- P-CW-4** *Consider the use of off-road routes, such as disused railway lines and bridle paths, for both walking and cycling to improve access to rural tourist attractions.*

Cycling and walking objectives

- O-CW-3** *Plan and make provision for the safe and efficient movement of cyclists and pedestrians in and around built-up areas.*
- O-CW-4** *Make provision for the integration of pedestrian and cycle facilities (i.e. bicycle parking) at public transportation nodes and village/town centres.*
- O-CW-10** *Support the development of a footway and cycleway (greenway) alongside the disused railway line from Claremorris to Collooney, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive, insofar as such route does not compromise the reopening of the Western Rail Corridor.*

Please note that the policies and objectives outlined in **Chapter 8 Transport and mobility** of the CDP apply to all future relevant developments proposed in Tobercurry.

The following sections do not substitute, but complement the provisions of the CDP. It is recommended to consult Chapter 8 of this LAP in conjunction with Chapter 8 of the CDP.

All development proposals must also comply with the relevant provisions of **Chapter 12 Development Management Standards** of the CDP.



8.2 Road network



8.2.1 The national road N-17

The N-17 Sligo to Galway route passes through Tobercurry, where it is known as the Circular Road (current “bypass”). The road is sub-standard in alignment and capacity and has too many junctions. These characteristics lead to traffic safety issues, slow down vehicle speed and reduce the carrying capacity of the road.

In order to alleviate these problems, the National Roads Authority (NRA) approved the construction of a bypass for Tobercurry. The bypass is part of a comprehensive realignment of the N-17 and other national roads as part of the Atlantic Road Corridor, as identified in Transport 21 (an infrastructure plan published by the government in 2005 and effectively cancelled in 2011 following the economic downturn).

The construction of the N-17 Tobercurry Bypass will have a major positive impact on the nature and volume of traffic in the town. Through-traffic will be reduced significantly, creating a safer environment for pedestrians, cyclists and children.

N-17 realignment schemes

The Preferred Route for the N-17 Realignment Collooney to Charlestown was adopted by the members of Sligo County Council in 2001.

The N-17 Collooney to Tobercurry Bypass consists of 13.45 km of dual carriageway extending from the N-4/N-17 roundabout at Collooney to the townland of Carrowreilly, just north of the Achonry NCF premises, where it ties in with the northern end of the Tobercurry bypass.

The N-17 Tobercurry Bypass consists of 10.8 km of dual carriageway extending from Carrowreilly, just north of Achonry NCF premises, to Rathscanlon, just south of Tobercurry.

The Tobercurry to Knock (including Charlestown Bypass) section extends from Rathscanlan, near Tobercurry, to the townland of Shabaghmoyle on the Knock Bypass in County Mayo.

Note: At the time of writing (early 2015), all of the above NRA projects were suspended.

8.2.2 Local links

The Plan boundary extends to the south as far as Carrowwilkin along the N-17, to the west as far as Tulycusheen More along the R-294 (west), to the north along the N-17 as far as Tobertelly and to the east as far as Chaffpool along the R-294 (east).

The rural area surrounding Tobercurry is served by a network of local roads. Significant portions of these roads have been improved in recent years, but investment in their upgrading should continue.

Funding for the resurfacing of regional and local roads comes via Discretionary Improvement and Discretionary Maintenance Grants from the Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport (DTTAS).

8.2.3 New roads/streets

In order for the town to develop in a consolidated manner, a network of auxiliary streets/roads is required to open up the backlands for development. Such roads will also assist in alleviating traffic congestion in the centre and will make Tobercurry more permeable and accessible.

As recommended in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) – (DTTS/DoECLG 2013), the design or extension of the street network must be based on the principles of permeability and legibility, which support the development of a sustainable community. Such a network should ensure that all streets lead to other streets, limiting the number of culs-de-sac, and should maximise the potential for walking and cycle routes.

Corridors will be reserved for the following roads (refer to objective TCO-1):

- a link road from the junction of the Charlestown Road (N-17) with the Ballina Road (R-294) eastwards to Mountain Road (L-4502-0) and onwards to the Ballymote Road (R-294);
- a link street between the above new road and Mountain Road serving the backlands zoned for mixed and residential uses on the south-eastern side of Teeling Street;
- in the long term, a link road between the Charlestown Road (N-17) and Mountain Road (L-4502-0) which will be able to facilitate any future expansion of Tobercurry to the south.

The above links should be designed with particular attention to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.

It is important that vacant lands and backlands are accessible. In some cases, it is essential that a specific access point is kept free from development (refer to objective TCO-2). Such access points are indicated on the Transport and circulation Objectives Map (Map 10 in Chapter 12).

A major constraint to new road building is the funding of such infrastructural projects. Consequently, substantial portions of these roads will have to be constructed incrementally, as part of new developments permitted along their routes in the future.

The alignment of the new roads and the location of junctions, as shown on Map 10 in Chapter 12, are indicative. The exact details will be established at design stage.



8.3 Traffic management



Good traffic management is essential for a town to function effectively. Aspects of traffic management which are relevant for Tobercurry include the following:

- the impact of the national road N-17 on the traffic flow through the town;
- provision of adequate off-street car parking to reduce on-street car parking;
- improved pedestrian circulation.

The central built-up area of Tobercurry will be subject to a traffic management plan, which will consist of the following main elements:

- establishment of a town centre zone and transition zones along the approach roads, involving various degrees of traffic calming;
- provision of off-street car parks;
- the introduction of a one-way system along Teeling Street;
- building/upgrading of footpaths and pedestrian crossings.

Design measures must have regard to the requirements of vulnerable road users such as cyclists and pedestrians, including those with mobility/sensory impairments and older persons.

The Road Design Section of the County Council will prepare a comprehensive traffic management plan (TMP) for Tobercurry, in accordance with the recommendations contained in the DMURS as well as in the Department of Transport's Traffic Management Guidelines and the NRA's Guidelines on Traffic Calming. The TMP will have regard to the CDP policies and the relevant objectives outlined in this LAP.

The following subsections outline the measures that should be implemented in order to achieve a better-functioning town from a mobility perspective.

8.3.1 Town centre and transitional zones

The main street (Teeling Street) of Tobercurry is a regional road – the R-294. This road is subject to a significant amount of through-traffic and vehicle speed is a problem. Measures are required to slow down traffic passing through the centre and to discourage drivers, especially HGV drivers, from using the town centre as a shortcut.

In accordance with the principles contained in the DMURS, it is proposed to create two types of traffic zones in the centre of Tobercurry: a town centre zone and several transition zones on the approaches to the centre (refer to objectives TCO-3 and TCO-4).

The transition zones should be designed so as to prepare vehicle drivers to slow down before they reach the town centre zone. This can be achieved in a number of ways, such as reducing carriageway width, introducing parallel car parking, construction of build-outs and planting of trees/ornamental shrubs etc.

In the town centre, the regular road-building standards contained in the National Roads Authority's Design Manual for Roads and Bridges should be significantly relaxed by reducing carriageway width, decreasing the amount of traffic signage, decreasing the segregation between pedestrians and vehicles etc. This would be in conformity with the recommendations of the DMURS, which are designed to make towns and villages more pedestrian-friendly.

The introduction of a shared surface should be considered for the town centre zone (refer to objective TCO-3). Shared-surface streets and junctions are effective at calming traffic and research has found that they perform well in terms of safety. There is also evidence that well-designed schemes can bring benefits in terms of visual amenity and perceptions of personal safety.

8.3.2 Reconfiguration at the southern town entrance

A junction improvement scheme has obtained Part 8 approval to introduce traffic lights at two junctions at the southern end of the town between the N-17 and the R-294 (west). The scheme will incorporate improved pedestrian and cyclist facilities and aims to encourage through-traffic to avoid the town centre. The scheme involves the following:

- provision of a traffic light system at each junction of the N-17 and R-294 (west);
- realignment of the national road N-17 to facilitate the traffic light system;
- repair and resurfacing of the carriageway;
- improvement of footpaths;
- demolition of two uninhabited houses.

8.3.3 Provision of additional parking space

There are approximately 460 off-street car parking spaces open to the public in the town centre of Tobercurry. This figure includes spaces associated with shops, public buildings, the RC church and public parking at Wolfe Tone Square. Of these, circa 214 spaces are provided and maintained by Sligo County Council. In addition to the off-street spaces, on-street car parking is widely available in the town.

There is a substantial amount of illegal parking on footpaths and on double yellow lines. Parking on footpaths doesn't only inconvenience pedestrians, but is also dangerous to drivers. Cars parked this way obstruct the sight lines of vehicles exiting from nearby junctions. Teeling Street can become a bottleneck during working hours, because of unregulated on-street parking.

Illegal parking should be made more difficult (e.g. by reducing carriageway width, street planting, placement of bollards etc.). Appropriate signage should be put in place to direct people to off-street designated parking areas and to on-street parking spaces in the transition zones.

On-street car parking has a negative visual impact on the townscape. It is considered that the removal of on-street car parking from the town centre would not be detrimental to the vitality of the town and would greatly enhance the streetscape.

As an alternative to on-street car parking, it is proposed to reserve a centrally-located backland site with good vehicular and pedestrian linkages to the town's main shopping areas. This car park would be conditional on the development of a mixed-use area to the south-east of Teeling Street (refer to objective TCO-7 and Maps 10-11 in Chapter 12).

8.3.4 One-way systems

In accordance with the DMURS recommendations relevant to the town centre, it is proposed to introduce a one-way system along Teeling Street, Murphy's Lane, Wolfe Tone Square and the link road by Leonard's Court. This will facilitate the creation of a town centre zone and the introduction of shared surfaces or wider footpaths, along with other measures to enhance the ambience for the pedestrians and to slow down vehicles (refer to objective TCO-5 and illustration below).



8.3.5 Refurbishment of Wolfe Tone Square

Wolfe Tone Square does not currently perform efficiently as a town square. The Square is made up of four lanes of traffic, two on either side of a paved central area, three car parking bays and three rows of on-street car parking. The area reserved for pedestrian use is limited relative to the space dedicated to vehicles. In addition, the pedestrian space, which is isolated in the centre of the Square, is further diminished and fragmented by raised concrete planters. As a result, this space is limited in terms of its capacity for outdoor events and daily leisure activities.

The redesign and resurfacing of the square, along with the occasional closure of the northern two-way lane, would enable the area to be utilised more effectively for recreation, fairs, outdoor concerts, markets etc (refer to TCO-6). More details in relation to the proposed refurbishment are provided in **Chapter 11 Urban design**.



8.4 Pedestrian and cycling facilities

Data from Census 2011 indicates that circa 44.6% of Tobercurry residents took less than 15 minutes to get to work or school, but only 14.5% did so on foot, and just 0.5% cycled.

A review of the 2002, 2006 and 2011 census figures reveals that by far the preferred form of transport for travelling to work, school or college remains the car, with the bicycle, train and motorbike being almost negligible.

Travel by foot or by bicycle has declined since 2002, while travel by car has increased. Journey time to work, school or college has also increased since 2002, indicating that residents are obliged to travel further to find work.

National policy documents, such as the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport's *Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future*, suggest that local area plans should make provision for the retrofitting of urban areas so that walking and cycling become the best options for local trips.

The proposals contained in the following subsections of the LAP are aimed at creating sustainable neighbourhoods, in accordance with government policy.

8.4.1 Walking

In order to encourage walking as a safe and convenient mode of transport, as well as a healthy leisure activity, it is proposed to create a network of pedestrian routes and linkages throughout Tobercurry town (refer to objectives OSO-3 and OSO-4 in Chapter 6).

The quality and extent of the footpath network must be improved. New pedestrian connections between existing streets or parts of the town need to be established:

- pedestrian/cycle link between Wolfe Tone Square and Circular Road;
- pedestrian/cycle link between the Health Centre/Teeling Street and Circular Road;

Footpaths/enhanced shared surfaces are required along the following routes:

- on both road links between Circular Road and Teeling street;
- on sections of Mountain Road.

All new footpaths and shared surfaces should be designed in accordance with the principles set out in Section 4.3 *Pedestrian and Cyclist Environment* of the DMURS.

Table 8.A Modes of transport to work, school or college for Tobercurry residents aged 5+ in Census years 2002, 2006 and 2011

Census year	on foot	by bicycle	by bus	by train	by motorbike	by car	car passenger	by van	other	not stated	total
2002	208 31.2%	3 0.5%	54 8.1%	1 0.2%	4 0.6%	220 33%	90 13.5%	n/a	80 12%	7 1.1%	667
2006	163 19.4%	4 0.5%	46 5.5%	3 0.4%	1 0.1%	376 44.8%	143 17%	n/a	86 10.2%	20 2.4%	842
2011	145 14.6%	5 0.5%	45 4.5%	1 0.1%	1 0.1%	467 46.9%	205 20.6%	65 6.5%	25 2.5%	35 3.5%	994

Source: cso.ie

8.4.2 Cycling

There are very few cycling facilities in Tobercurry. An off-road cycle lane exists along the R-294 as far as St Attracta's Secondary School and cycle parking facilities are available at the school. According to local experience, the lane is not well used.

Cycling within the built-up area should be facilitated and students, especially those living in town, should be encouraged to either walk or cycle to school.

The proposed combined cycleway/footpath incorporated into the Junction Improvement Scheme (see Section 8.3.2) should be joined to the existing cycle lane on the Ballina Road.

The development of a 'greenway' along the disused railway line passing through the town should also be considered, as there is potential for a cycling and walking route that could attract tourists to the wider area.

8.5 Public transport

Both the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region 2010-2022 and the County Development Plan 2011-2017 support the improvement of public transport and recognise its importance for the viability of rural communities. Quality bus services can reduce car dependence for those travelling between settlements.

At a national level, the DTTS's Smarter Travel policy document aims that by 2020, car commuting should drop from 65% to 45% of total commuting. This is a particular challenge in a rural town like Tobercurry, which does not have the critical mass of people required for a sustainable public transport system within its built up area, and where the active population is largely dependent on private cars for commuting to larger towns for work.

8.5.1 Bus services

Bus services are the primary form of public transport within the Plan area and beyond. However, the proportion of Tobercurry residents who travel to work or school by bus has consistently declined since 2002, and in 2011 it was only 4%.

Rural transport in the area is provided by Sligo Rural Transport which operates under ruraltravel.ie, a community project funded by the Department of Transport under the Smarter Travel Project Fund. Sligo Rural Transport provides a flexible and demand-responsive, house-to-house, daytime and evening service, using accessible minibuses or taxis.

Bus Eireann ensures that the schools in Tobercurry have a school bus service. A Bus Eireann service along the Donegal-Cork route stops in Tobercurry. There are eight daily services from Tobercurry to Sligo and seven services from Sligo to Tobercurry. A bus leaves Tobercurry at 7.40 a.m. and arrives in Sligo at 8.30 a.m., returning in the evening at 16.00 or 18.15, thus enabling commuting between these towns. There are also a few private operators running daily services to Sligo, Donegal and Galway.

There is an identified need for a proper bus stop, in a convenient location and with adequate shelter. This will be incorporated into the proposed N-17/R-294 Junction Improvement Scheme at two locations identified on Circular Road (refer to objective TCO-14 and Maps 10-11 in Chapter 12).

8.5.2 Air travel – Knock Airport

Ireland West Airport at Knock in Co. Mayo, located 20 km to the south-west of Tobercurry, is considered an important selling point for the town. The airport offers flights to destinations in the UK, Spain, France, Italy, Portugal and Croatia.

8.5.3 Rail transport – the Western Rail Corridor



The disused railway line from Collooney to Bellaghy/Charlestown via Tobercurry forms the northern section of the Western Rail Corridor (WRC), potentially linking Sligo to Galway and Limerick.

Together with other local authorities in the West, Sligo County Council has so far supported the re-opening of passenger and freight services along the WRC. This route has been identified as a 'National Transport Corridor' in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and its reopening was strongly supported by the Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 (RPGs).

The government's 2005 policy document Transport 21 committed to the preservation of the line from Claremorris to Collooney. However, Transport 21 is no longer operational and there are no plans at present (2015) to re-open any more sections of the Western Rail Corridor.

At the time of writing (early 2015), the NSS was expected to be replaced by a National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Border RPGs were to be replaced by a Regional Social and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the recently-established Border, Midlands and West Regional Assembly. (The Border Regional Authority was dissolved on 1st June, 2014.)

Transport and circulation policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- TCP-1** Ensure that new public and private developments comply with the principles, approaches and standards contained in the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* (DTTS, DECLG 2013) in the provision or upgrading of vehicular, pedestrian and cycling facilities.
- TCP-2** Require new developments to provide sufficient on-site parking, which should be designed and landscaped to a high standard. Off-street parking associated with road/street frontage development should be located at the rear of the structures if possible.
- TCP-3** Provide cycle facilities to include cycle lanes and cycle parking areas where feasible throughout the town.

Transport and circulation objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

New roads and access points

- TCO-1** Reserve the following corridors to allow development of vehicular, pedestrian and cycle routes, thereby facilitating the development of backland areas and the future expansion of the town:
- A.** a link road from the junction of the Charlestown Road (N-17) with the Ballina Road (R-294) eastwards to Mountain Road (L-4502-0) and onwards to the Ballymote Road (R-294);
 - B.** a link street between the above new road and Mountain Road serving the backlands zoned for mixed and residential uses on the south-eastern side of Teeling Street;
 - C.** In the long term, a link road between the Charlestown Road (N-17) and Mountain Road (L-4502-0), which should facilitate any future expansion of Tobercurry to the south.
- TCO-2** Reserve access points at designated locations throughout Tobercurry, to facilitate the development of backlands. Access points and roads shall be overlooked and appropriately landscaped.

Traffic Management Plan – town centre zone

- TCO-3** Designate a *town centre zone* and upgrade this area by introducing a shared surface or reducing carriageway width and widening footpaths, as appropriate. This area shall be redesigned in accordance with the recommendations of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DTTS, DECLG, 2013).
- TCO-4** Designate *transition zones* outside the town centre zone in order to reduce the speed of traffic. These areas shall be redesigned in accordance with the recommendations of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DTTS, DECLG, 2013).

Traffic Management Plan - one-way systems and access restrictions

- TCO-5** Install a one-way system on the following streets or areas:
- A.** Teeling Street;
 - B.** Murphy's Lane;
 - C.** Wolfe Tone Square;
 - D.** the link road beside Leonard's Court.
- TCO-6** Allow occasional/temporary closure of the northern lane of Wolfe Tone Square (L-4506-0) to through traffic, in order to facilitate community events.
- In the long term, as resources permit, Wolfe Tone Square should be comprehensively redesigned to create a large pedestrian-friendly area capable of hosting fairs, festivals, outdoor concerts, markets and other similar events.

[continues on next page]

Transport and circulation objectives (continued)

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

Traffic Management Plan – parking

- TCO-7** Require the provision of a car park of minimum 60 spaces in conjunction with the development of lands zoned for mixed uses to the south-east of Teeling Street.
- TCO-8** Pursue, in consultation with the relevant landowners, the provision of a new public car park in conjunction with the development of lands zoned for mixed uses at the junction of Circular Road and Leonard’s Court Lane.
- TCO-9** Reserve lands to the south-east of the Holy Family National School for car parking and a drop-off/pick-up facility.
- TCO-10** Restrict on-street parking on Teeling Street between Wolfe Tone Square and Leonard’s Court, subject to the provision of alternative parking areas.

Walking and cycling

- TCO-11** Create two pedestrian links between Teeling Street and Circular Road:
- A.** between the pocket park on Teeling Street and Circular Road;
 - B.** between the Health Centre on Teeling Street and Circular Road.
- TCO-12** Enhance the existing pedestrian link between the car park at Teach Laighne and Wolfe Tone Square.

Public transport

- TCO-13** Reserve an area for a transport and parking node (TPN) on lands adjoining the dis-used railway on its western side, with access from the Ballina Road.
- TCO-14** Facilitate the provision of two bus stops at Circular Road.

National road N-17 – current and planned

- TCO-15** Safeguard the carrying capacity of the national primary road N-17 within the Plan area. New access points onto the road will be permitted only in accordance with the provisions of the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoECLG, 2012).
- TCO-16** Reserve lands to accommodate the future construction of the N-17 Tobercurry By-Pass.

For the route or location of specific objectives, refer to Maps 10-11 in Chapter 12.

9. Infrastructure



Investment in infrastructure is a vital component in ensuring the sustainable development of settlements. Tobercurry has experienced unprecedented growth over the past two decades. This has resulted in substantial pressure on water supply, wastewater collection and treatment, surface water collection and disposal, as well as communications infrastructure.

The CDP outlines the manner in which existing infrastructural deficiencies are to be addressed and, where possible, indicates the timeframe for the completion of such projects. It must be noted that, as a consequence of transferring public water and wastewater infrastructure to Irish Water, the responsibility for implementing CDP policies and objectives relating to such infrastructure lies with Irish Water.

9.1 Strategic CDP provisions

The most relevant strategic provisions of the CDP 2011-2017 are listed below:

Strategic water, wastewater and storm water drainage objectives

- SO-W-1** *Improve water and wastewater services in those areas of the county where deficiencies exist at present, subject to the availability of resources and appropriate statutory approvals.*
- SO-W-3** *Preserve and further develop water and wastewater infrastructure in order to facilitate the growth of settlements at an appropriate rate which is consistent with the Core Strategy and the Settlement Structure.*
- SO-W-4** *Implement adequate surface water drainage measures and prohibit unsuitable development in flood-susceptible areas.*

Proposed wastewater treatment plants and extensions (Table 9.B in the CDP)

Town/Scheme	Current design PE	Existing outfall/treatment	New design PE	Remarks
Tobercurry	1,400	Imhoff tank, percolation tank, tertiary treatment	5,000	Upgrade of existing treatment works proposed

The following subsections include the most relevant CDP provisions relating to water supply, wastewater treatment, waste management, energy and telecommunications.

Please note that the policies and objectives outlined in **Chapter 9 Environmental infrastructure** of the CDP apply to all future relevant developments proposed in Tobercurry.

All development proposals must also comply with the relevant provisions of **Chapter 12 Development Management Standards** of the CDP.

9.2 Water supply

Tobercurry receives its drinking water from the Lough Talt Regional Water Supply Scheme, which covers the area of County Sligo east of the Ox Mountains. The water treatment consists of chlorination and fluoridation.

The Scheme supplies approximately 8,500 m³/day to circa 11,000 people and businesses in the south-west Sligo area (Ballymote, Coolaney, Ballinacarrow, Aclare, Banada, Cloonacool and Curry). Currently the capacity of the plant is adequate, but according to the EPA, the treatment for *Cryptosporidium* is inadequate.

Agricultural and onsite wastewater treatment surveys have been carried out in the Lough Talt Catchment. The aim of these surveys is to gather information on farming and domestic wastewater disposal practices, assess compliance with national legislation and to assist in the overall management of South and West Sligo's main water source.

As part of the ongoing efforts to maintain/improve surface water quality as per the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, a source protection plan for the Lough Talt Public Water Supply Scheme has been prepared by Sligo County Council and submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency. The plan details measures that will be implemented to protect the existing high status of Lough Talt.

In May 2014, Irish Water published its Proposed Capital Investment Plan (CIP) for 2014–2016. The Lough Talt Regional Water Supply Scheme is included in this program under the section “review scope and commence construction”.

At the time of writing (early 2015), Sligo County Council was pursuing the construction of a new water treatment plant with a capacity of 12,500 m³/day, storage reservoirs and intake works, in partnership with Irish Water (IW) as per the CIP. In parallel, the Council was discussing with IW the possibility of an interim upgrade of the water treatment plant.

9.2.1 Main CDP provisions

Water supply policies

- P-WS-1** *Ensure an adequate, sustainable and economic supply of good quality water for domestic, commercial and industrial use, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.*
- P-WS-6** *Existing and future population within the County shall be served with clean and wholesome drinking water. It is Council policy to ensure that all drinking water complies with the European Union Drinking Water Directive 98/83/EC as given effect in Irish law by the European Communities (Drinking Water) (No. 2) Regulations 2007, as may be amended, and to implement the relevant recommendations set out in The Provision and Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland – A Report for the Years 2007-2008 (EPA Office of Environment Enforcement, 2009).*

Water Supply objectives

- O-WS-2** *Complete the planning and construction of the new water treatment plant at Lough Talt subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.*
- O-WS-6** *Improve the water supply to the South Sligo Area.*

9.3 Wastewater treatment

The existing Tobercurry wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) has been in operation since about 1970 and has a design PE (population equivalent) of only 1,400. This is inadequate for the population and businesses of Tobercurry.

The treatment system is based on conventional low-rate bio-filtration, preceded by an Imhoff tank and followed by a humus tank. The collection network consists of a combined system which includes two storm water overflows. The final effluent is discharged into the Maiden River, which has a very low assimilation capacity.

The upgrade of the plant was originally bundled with the Grange and Strandhill sewerage treatment schemes. In Irish Water's proposed Capital Investment Plan (CIP) for 2014–2016, the item "Grange/ Strandhill/ Tobercurry Sewerage Scheme – Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades" is included under the section "review scope and commence construction". Under this Programme it is proposed to construct a 3,500 PE wastewater treatment plant and to relocate the outfall to the Moy River, which has adequate assimilation capacity.

All new developments will be required to provide separate drainage systems, including SUDs (sustainable urban drainage systems), as appropriate. This approach will protect the capacity of the upgraded treatment plant.

9.3.1 Main CDP provisions

Wastewater policies

- P-WW-2** *Ensure that developers provide effective drainage systems with separate foul and surface water networks.*
- P-WW-5** *Strive to provide adequate wastewater treatment capacity to facilitate development in County Sligo. The provision of such infrastructure will only be pursued where the planning authority is satisfied that it is necessary and in accordance with the requirements of the Core Strategy and the Settlement Structure of the County.*
- P-WW-6** *Facilitate appropriate proposals from private developers to extend existing public wastewater infrastructure networks, where such proposals would result in the servicing of lands zoned in accordance with the Core Strategy. Any such proposal shall be assessed on a case-by-case basis.*
- P-WW-7** *Ensure that public wastewater treatment infrastructure is in place, with adequate capacity, prior to developments being occupied.*
- P-WW-15** *Discourage the use of pumping stations in private developments. Storm overflows from pumping stations serving private developments will not be permitted.*
- P-WW-17** *Development proposing to connect to the public wastewater treatment system shall not be permitted unless the planning authority is satisfied that adequate capacity is available. Exceptions to this policy will be considered in cases where works on upgrading the wastewater facilities have commenced and will be completed within a reasonable timeframe. In such cases, appropriate conditions shall be applied to planning permissions to ensure that the proposed development and the upgrading works are suitably phased.*

Wastewater Objectives

- O-WW-1** *Complete the construction of the new wastewater treatment plants at Tobercurry, Grange, Strandhill and Ballinacfad.*

Storm water

Historically Tobercurry town centre and adjoining areas occasionally suffered from flooding. Such flooding was mainly for short periods of time (1 to 2 days) and was caused by extensive rainfall together with the limited assimilation capacity of the storm system within this area of Tobercurry.

In 2007, a surface water pipe was laid from Springvale housing estate along the N-17, Humbert Street, Murphy's Lane and Circular Road, eventually discharging to the Maiden River.

An additional pipe is required along Circular Road to reduce the pressure on the storm water system in the centre of the town.

In order to control the volume of surface water going into the Maiden River and to remove the threat of flooding in the centre of Tobercurry, it is proposed to use SUDS (Sustainable Urban Water Drainage Systems) to dispose of storm water from all new developments.

9.4 Waste management



In accordance with the Waste Management Act 1996 and relevant associated Waste Management Plans, waste management should adhere to the “waste hierarchy”. This hierarchy places the greatest emphasis on prevention and minimisation of waste production, followed by re-use, recycling, and recovery (including energy recovery), with disposal to landfill as the lowest preference.

Waste collection contractors provide a regular service in Tobercurry. Householders are obliged to present a third bin (food/bio-waste) for collection, in accordance with the Waste Management Bye-Laws made by Sligo County Council in 2013.

Tobercurry hosts one of County Sligo's two recycling centres (the other one being in Sligo City). The recycling centre – also known as the Tobercurry Civic Amenity – which opened in July 2005 beside the Fire Station, can receive a wide range of household wastes: dry recyclables (including bulky items), hazardous items and farm plastics (at certain times of the year).

Although Tobercurry is well catered for with regard to waste recycling, it is important that further suitable locations are identified for the purposes of “bring banks”.

9.4.1 Main CDP provisions

Waste management policies

- P-WM-1** *Promote reduction, recycling, reuse and proper management of all waste through practices which limit environmental pollution.*
- P-WM-2** *Liaise with and encourage the private sector, semi-state and voluntary groups to actively pursue initiatives which involve recycling and/or reuse. Minimise unnecessary consumption of depletable natural resources and, through the proper reuse and recycling of waste, divert as much waste from landfill as possible.*
- P-WM-6** *Require all new developments – including residential, commercial and industrial developments, neighbourhood centres, shopping and retail areas – to provide adequate storage for the three segregated municipal waste types (organic, recyclable and landfill waste) and incorporate waste management facilities commensurate with their nature and scale. Waste collection points shall have adequate access to provide for loading and further division after recycling on site, in order to facilitate the achievement of high recycling levels, as specified in the Waste Management Plan.*

9.5 Energy and telecommunications

A 110/38 kV substation currently serves Tobercurry, providing power to residential, industrial and commercial premises within the area. In terms of telecommunications, there are several providers in Tobercurry, including Sky Ireland, Eircom, Q-sat, Vodafone. They supply the area with wireless, high-speed internet connections, fibre broadband and DSL technology that allows higher-capacity communications.

The digital communications infrastructure should make Tobercurry attractive for investment and allow residents to set up commercially viable businesses, particularly in the tourism industry. Coverage for mobile phone operations is good within the Tobercurry area, as the town is served by a number of mobile providers.

Any further applications for the erection of telecommunication masts will need to be individually assessed in accordance with the DECLG's *Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures Guidelines* (1996) and any subsequent revisions and related Circulars.

9.5.1 Main CDP provisions

Strategic energy policies

- SP-EN-1** *Support the sustainable infrastructural development of energy generation and transmission networks, to ensure the security of energy supply and provide for future needs, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.*
- SP-EN-2** *Promote energy conservation and efficiency measures and facilitate innovative building design that promotes energy efficiency in accordance with national policy and guidelines.*
- SP-EN-3** *Encourage the development of sustainable, energy-efficient buildings throughout the plan area.*



Renewable energy policies

P-REN-2 Encourage and facilitate the sustainable production of energy from renewable sources, energy conversion and capture in forms such as wind power, hydro-power, wave-generated energy, biomass, solar technology and energy-efficient building design/servicing. All such development proposals will be assessed for their potential impact on Natura 2000 sites, designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes, Visually Vulnerable Areas, Scenic Routes and scenic views, as well as in accordance with strict location, siting and design criteria, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

P-REN-3 Support existing and new enterprises who wish to use renewable energy to serve their own needs by on-site energy production, subject to normal planning criteria.

Renewable energy objectives

O-REN-2 Facilitate small-scale renewable energy developments within urban areas, where appropriate, and support small community-based generation projects in rural areas, subject to visual, landscape, heritage, environmental and amenity considerations.

Telecommunications policies

P-TEL-2 Ensure that telecommunications infrastructure is adequately screened, integrated and/or landscaped, so as to minimise any adverse visual impacts on the environment.

P-TEL-3 Facilitate open access to high-speed and high-capacity broadband digital networks to support the development of a smart economy within the County.

9.6 Infrastructural provision

The CDP policies and objectives outlined in the previous subsections are complemented by several policies referring specifically to infrastructural provision for Tobercurry. These are listed below.

Infrastructure policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- IP-1** Work with Irish Water to address any deficiencies in the wastewater and drinking water treatment infrastructure within the lifetime of the Plan.

Wastewater treatment

- IP-2** Ensure that all developments producing wastewater connect to the public wastewater infrastructure if they are located close to the public sewer. Privately-operated communal systems shall not be permitted.
- IP-3** Discourage the use of pumping stations in private developments. Storm overflows from pumping stations serving private developments shall not be permitted.
- IP-4** Require all proposals for domestic on-site wastewater treatment systems to be designed and installed in accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency's Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (PE ≤ 10) (EPA 2009) and subsequent amendments.

Drainage

- IP-5** Require all new developments to provide separate drainage systems, including SUDs (sustainable urban drainage systems), as appropriate.
- IP-6** Require the installation of a petrol interceptor on the outfall to the Maiden River as part of any upgrade of the surface water drainage network in Tobercurry.

Waste management

- IP-7** Ensure that adequate waste management infrastructure is in place in order to comply with the requirements of existing waste management legislation.
- IP-8** Identify and develop, where necessary, sites for the treatment, recovery and disposal of waste generated during works carried out by the local authority in the execution of its functions.

Energy

- IP-9** Facilitate the provision of electricity to serve the existing and projected consumer demand within the Tobercurry area.

10. Environmental quality



Good quality of life involves, among other things, a high-quality environment, which can only be achieved by preventing the pollution of water and air. Environmental quality is a measure of the condition of an environment relative to the requirements of one or more species, as well as human needs. It is a general term referring to varied characteristics that relate to the natural environment, such as air and water quality and noise pollution.

The protection and improvement of water quality are essential requirements of European and national legislation. These requirements are clearly outlined in the County Development Plan and will need to be complied with by all future development proposals in the Tobercurry LAP area.

Protection of air quality and protection against excessive noise are further components of the quality of life that should be enjoyed by every Tobercurry resident.

This chapter also addresses flood risk. The risk of damage to property from flooding can be minimised or even eliminated through the implementation of the CDP policies that address development in areas deemed to be liable to flooding. A Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared in conjunction with this LAP and its recommendations are reflected in the zoning of lands for future development.

Please note that the policies and objectives outlined in **Chapter 10 Environmental quality** of the CDP apply to all future relevant developments proposed in Tobercurry.

The Environmental Quality policies contained in this LAP do not substitute, but complement the provisions of the CDP. It is recommended to consult Chapter 10 of this LAP in conjunction with Chapter 10 of the CDP.

All development proposals must also comply with the relevant provisions of **Chapter 12 Development Management Standards** of the CDP.

The following subsections include the most relevant CDP provisions relating to water quality, air quality, noise control, and flood risk management.

10.1 Water quality

Water quality relates to rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuarine and coastal waters. Water quality monitoring and management is governed by the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) and provides for water management on the basis of River Basin Districts (RBD).

The main sources of water pollution are agriculture, forestry, industrial discharges, wastewater treatment plant discharges and effluent discharges from unserviced developments. It is the objective of Sligo County Council to control the aforementioned developments and activities, through planning and development policies and through the enforcement of national water quality legislation, to ensure they do not adversely affect water quality.

Main CDP provisions

Among the most relevant provisions of the CDP are the following:

Water quality policies

- P-WQ-1** *Ensure that all development proposals have regard to the policies, objectives and measures detailed in the River Basin Management Plans.*
- P-WQ-2** *Ensure that all development proposals have regard to the policies and objectives of the Sligo Groundwater Protection Scheme to ensure the protection of groundwater resources and groundwater dependent habitats and species.*
- P-WQ-3** *Ensure compliance with the provisions of the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009, the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 (S.I.9 of 2010) and the Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC) on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration.*
- P-WQ-9** *Require that all proposals for on-site wastewater treatment systems be designed and constructed in accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency's Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (P.E. ≤10) (EPA 2009).*
- P-WQ-10** *Prohibit any development which is likely to lead to the deterioration of water quality.*

Water quality objectives

- O-WQ-4** *Seek to achieve consistency between development management and environmental pollution control measures, taking adaptation to climate change into account.*
- O-WQ-5** *Continue monitoring, auditing and reviewing County Sligo's environmental status with regard to the quality of groundwater, river, lake, estuarine and coastal waters.*
- O-WQ-10** *Require that all discharges to waters and sewers be licensed in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government (Water Pollution) Acts 1977 & 1990, European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (S.I. No. 272 of 2009) and European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations, 2010.*

10.1 Water quality

Tobercurry is situated in the Western River Basin District. The EPA classified groundwater within the Plan area as being of good status. The water bodies in the Plan area and their status – as classified by the Environmental Protection Agency – are listed below.

Water body	Status
The Moy Oghambaun (known as the Tobercurry Stream or Maiden River)	bad
Moy tributary Tullycusheen Beg	bad
Moy tributary Doomore	good
Moy tributary Cashel South	high
Ballysadare Chaffpool	good
Moy Dromada (Duke)	good
Moy Owengarve Curry	high
Moy Owengarve tributary Ballincurry	poor

The policies and objectives of the CDP, complemented by the additional policies included in this LAP, will ensure the protection of surface and groundwater resources within the Tobercurry Plan area.

Water quality policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- WQP-1** Protect, maintain and, where necessary, improve water quality within the Plan area.
- WQP-2** Ensure compliance with the provisions of the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations, 2009 and European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations, 2010.
- WQP-3** Ensure that all development proposals have regard to the policies, objectives and measures detailed in the Western River Basin District Management Plan.
- WQP-4** Ensure that all development proposals have regard to the policies and objectives of the Sligo Groundwater Protection Scheme.
- WQP-5** Ensure compliance with the provisions of the European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations, 2010.

Water quality objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- WQO-1** Implement the management measures contained in the Western River Basin District Management Plan.
- WQO-2** Continue monitoring and reviewing water quality status in County Sligo, including in the Plan area.

10.2 Air quality

Tobercurry does not have an air pollution problem, given its rural location and the fact that no polluting industries are present in town. However, emissions caused by cars and the burning of fossil fuels can have a negative effect on air quality. At present, there are no government plans to ban bituminous coal (which burns with a smoky flame) in towns and villages outside Sligo City.

Main CDP provisions

Air quality objectives

- P-AQ-1** *Support the ban on bituminous coal in Sligo City and Environs and encourage the use of smokeless fuel throughout the County.*
- P-AQ-2** *Encourage a more energy-efficient approach to the design and servicing of buildings for residential, commercial, industrial and other uses, including public buildings.*
- P-AQ-6** *Promote the retention of trees, hedgerows and other vegetation, and encourage tree planting as a means of air purification and filtering of suspended particles.*

10.3 Noise and odour control

In Irish legislation, noise is addressed under the EPA Act 1992 and the EPA Noise Regulations 1994. Most large-scale activities that result in high noise levels are subject to an Integrated Pollution Control (IPC) licence from the EPA.

Main CDP provisions

Noise control policies

- P-NC-1** *Seek to protect the amenity of dwellings, businesses, community facilities and other existing developments when assessing proposals for development that is likely to generate significant levels of noise.*
- P-NC-2** *Ensure all new developments incorporate appropriate measures to minimise noise nuisance from the development.*

Noise control policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- NCP-1** Require restaurants, takeaways and bars to minimise the impact of noise and odour from their premises.
- NCP-2** Ensure that the residential amenities of houses and apartments are protected from the noise generated by developments that operate at night (e.g. restaurant/takeaway, pub, hotel, night club).

10.4 Flood risk assessment

The Tobercurry LAP 2015-2021 has been assessed in accordance with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities - The Planning System and Flood Risk Management (2009). A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out. The assessment identified the predominant source of flooding in Tobercurry as being pluvial, with limited fluvial flooding within the development limit, along the Maiden River/Tobercurry Stream.

Of the key principles of the risk-based sequential approach to managing flood risk, the main one applied was the principle of avoidance, in that most of the lands at risk from flooding were not zoned for development, but left in the Buffer Zone. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is contained in Appendix I of this Plan.

Sligo County Council will take cognisance of the OPW's Flood Studies Update Programme and any future reports in relation to flood risk for the Tobercurry Plan area. Development proposals in areas at risk from flooding will be required to implement measures to ensure that the risks are minimised or eliminated.

The national Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) programme commenced in Ireland in 2011, with the commissioning of the Western CFRAM (August 2011). The CFRAM Programme is central to the medium to long-term strategy for the reduction and management of flood risk in Ireland. The Western CFRAM maps were published in 2013 and do not include Tobercurry, where no further assessment is considered necessary.

Main CDP provisions

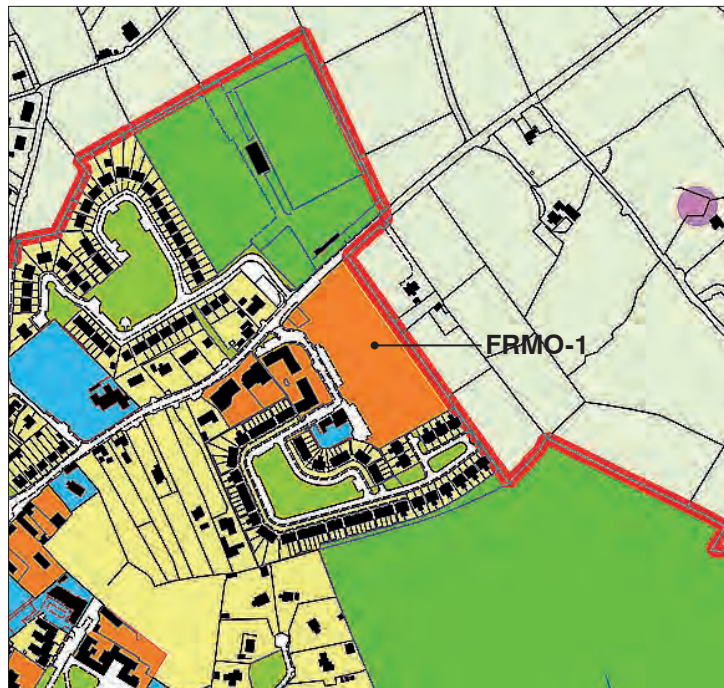
Flood risk management policies

- P-FRM-1** *Protect and enhance the County's floodplains, wetlands and coastal areas subject to flooding as vital green infrastructure which provides space for storage and conveyance of floodwater, enabling flood risk to be more effectively managed and reducing the need to provide flood defences in the future.*
- P-FRM-8** *Zone/designate land for development in areas with a high or moderate risk of flooding only where it can be clearly demonstrated, on a solid evidence base, that the zoning or designation will satisfy the justification test set out in Chapter 4 of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines.*
- P-FRM-9** *Restrict development in areas at risk of flooding unless:*
- it is demonstrated that there are wider sustainability grounds for appropriate development;*
 - the flood risk can be managed to an acceptable level without increasing flood risk elsewhere;*
 - the overall flood risk is reduced, where possible.*
- Developments considered necessary in order to meet the objectives of this Plan, or required on wider sustainability grounds, will be subject to the development management justification test outlined in chapter 5 of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines.*
- Measures such as flood compensation storage works or new hard-engineered flood defences alone will not be acceptable as justification for development in flood risk areas. Such measures will only be considered as part of a proposal if the development is warranted by the justification test on planning and sustainability grounds in the first instance, and where no alternative site is available.*
- P-FRM-10** *Require development proposals, where appropriate, to be accompanied by a detailed flood risk assessment in accordance with the provisions of the DoEHLG's 2009 Planning System and Flood Risk Management, Guidelines for Planning Authorities and to address flood risk management in the detailed design of development, as set out in Appendix B of the Guidelines.*
- P-FRM-11** *Require new developments and extensions to existing developments, where relevant, to use Sustainable Drainage Systems (SDS) in order to minimise the extent of hard surfacing and paving.*

Flood risk management objective

The following is an objective of Sligo County Council:

FRMO-1 OPW flood risk mapping indicates a potential risk of pluvial flooding in the vicinity of the site on the N-17 at Tobercurry Td, designated for mixed-use development. Any applications for developments on this site (see illustration below) shall be assessed in accordance with the *Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoEHLG and OPW, 2009) and may be required to be accompanied by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment appropriate to the type and scale of the development being proposed.



11. Urban design



Urban design is the practice of shaping the physical setting for life in cities, towns and villages. It is the art of making places. Implementing the core principles of urban design when planning and assessing development proposals is essential if Tobercurry is to function as an attractive place to live, work and relax. In order to formulate an urban design strategy for the town, it is necessary to look at the existing context in a critical but sympathetic manner. Having identified the main urban design issues in Tobercurry, this chapter proposes specific projects or actions that would significantly improve the form and functioning of the town.

11.1 Urban context

Tobercurry is essentially a market town with three main streets, Teeling Street, Humbert Street and Emmet Street, which converge in the centrally-located Wolfe Tone Square. The old core of Tobercurry has generally retained its traditional urban form. The modest buildings, two and three storeys in height, have preserved their vertically-proportioned windows, smooth plaster walls and pitched slated roofs. Many buildings have been insensitively altered over the years, but despite this, some still retain distinct features of vernacular architecture which reflect the town's former character.

The town has expanded along the two main roads, N-17 (Sligo to Galway road) and R-294 (Ballymote to Ballina Road). Residential development comprises larger houses lining the main roads outside the town centre, as well as suburban-type housing estates of varying age and quality, both close to the centre and on the edges of the town.

There are evident deficiencies in the form and functioning of the town. The main urban design issues identified in Tobercurry are outlined below:

- the dominance of vehicular traffic in the town centre;
- an underutilised central public space – Wolfe Tone Square;
- extensive dereliction and vacancy (both land and buildings);
- poorly defined urban environment along Circular Road;
- a low-quality public realm and the erosion of the traditional street character.

11.1.1 Town centre

The town centre of Tobercurry is dominated by the motor car, both stationary and mobile. The main streets are lined with parked cars, legally or illegally, often on both sides of the road. Footpaths are narrow and the main streets, being regional roads, are busy with vehicular traffic. These factors create a town centre where the pedestrian is subordinate to the car and this detracts from the appeal of the town.

11.1.2 Wolfe Tone Square

Tobercurry is the only town in County Sligo to have a centrally-located, adequately-sized urban square fronted by buildings with traditional facades, in good or at least reasonable condition. However, Wolfe Tone Square, despite being at the heart of the town, is not a space that can be used effectively by the local community for events such as fairs, markets, open air concerts or even walking or outdoor seating. This is due in part to the landscaping, which features a concrete island with large, raised planter beds leaving very little useful space for pedestrians. The island, surrounded by parking areas, is made even less accessible by the presence of roads on all sides.

Tobercurry needs a pedestrian-friendly, well-functioning central zone, that can bring people together and link their activities. For example, festivals and local trade fairs could utilise such a space to showcase community and business activities.



11.1.3 Dereliction

A combination of derelict buildings and vacant or underutilised land contribute to a negative image of a town. Tobercurry has a significant amount of both derelict and underutilised lands. The regeneration of these areas represents a significant challenge for the town. The elimination of dereliction is not straightforward. Fragmented land ownership, disputes over title or absent owners (abandoned properties) make it difficult to develop coherent and coordinated solutions for such areas.

Circular Road and Humbert Street are the two dereliction black-spots in Tobercurry. The routing of the N-17 (Circular Road) to the west of the town exposed the dereliction behind Teeling Street. Humbert Street has improved in recent years, in particular in the northern end of the street. The insertion of Teach Laighne, the County Council's "One-stop Shop" into the area was followed by the repair of several privately-owned buildings.

A dereliction survey was carried out by the Planning Section of Sligo County Council in 2005. Of the 34 buildings visible from the town's main roads described as being derelict in 2005, 29 remain in a similar or worse condition in 2015. An additional six buildings were noted as being in a derelict state in 2015.

11.1.4 Circular Road



Tobercurry contains a significant amount of brownfield, vacant and underutilised land within its built-up core. In early 2015 there were circa 4 ha of undeveloped land in or near the town centre. Approximately 50% of this land is located on either side of Circular Road. Some sites are large and in single ownership. Other sites are small and fragmented and would have to be amalgamated to make their redevelopment viable and beneficial for the town.

Circular road is defined by the back walls, fences and mostly derelict outbuildings of properties which front onto Teeling Street on one side, and by vacant land and disjointed commercial warehouse buildings on the other. The road is lined with a combination of palisade fencing, random block walls and post-and-rail fencing. There is very limited active frontage onto the road and very little overlooking of public spaces. This is an area of the town which needs special attention and detailed planning in order to be effectively integrated into the existing urban environment.

Two large vacant greenfield sites front onto the Circular Road, separated by a narrow road. The development potential of these two sites represents a significant opportunity to activate and animate Circular Road and, in the future, expand the town centre zone.

11.1.5 Public realm

Public realm is defined as the ensemble of publicly-owned streets, pathways, rights-of-way, parks, publicly-accessible open spaces and all civic building and facilities. The quality of Tobercurry's public spaces is affected by factors such as the motor-vehicle-centred street design, the narrowness of footpaths, the presence of overhead wires and unsightly lamp standards.

The quality of the public realm is also influenced by the condition and character of the buildings forming the street. Many of the buildings in the town centre have been altered in a way which detracts from their original character. Insensitive uPVC windows, alterations to the window openings, out-of-character shop fronts, oversized signage, changes to roof profiles and eaves treatment – all erode the original character of buildings. There are also numerous 'modern' buildings with non-traditional features which detract from the potential charm of the streets.

The street lighting throughout the town remains on wooden poles with overhead lines, which are unsightly and contribute to the poor visual quality of the town's main streets. The overhead lines should be placed underground and appropriately-designed lamp standards should replace the old wooden poles.

It is essential to ensure the maintenance and upkeep of the remaining historic fabric of Tobercurry. Poorly maintained buildings, the presence of derelict sites and vacant buildings are all factors which deter repeat visits by tourists to the town.

A well-kept town with a distinctive character will encourage passers-by to stop and could make Tobercurry a destination rather than just another small town along the Sligo-Galway road.



Fig. 11.A Phases of town centre refurbishment

11.2 Urban design strategy

The urban design strategy for Tobercurry seeks to address the issues discussed in the previous section. The strategy proposes specific projects throughout the town and provides guidance for new development and redevelopment opportunities.

11.2.1 Town centre refurbishment

The town centre of Tobercurry should be refurbished according to a public realm strategy which will be prepared in consultation with the Roads Section. A traffic management plan for a wider area will focus on reducing vehicular speed through the centre and retrofitting the main streets of the town in accordance with the recommendations of the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* (DTTS, DECLG, 2013) (DMURS - see also section 8.3.1 of this LAP).

Implementation of DMURS provisions in Tobercurry will result in significant improvements to the public realm, through the creation of shared surfaces and wider footpaths on the town's main streets, combined with the provision of conveniently-located off-street car parks.

The town centre should be refurbished in two phases (refer to objective UDO-1 at the end of this chapter).

Phase 1 of the town centre refurbishment would incorporate Wolfe Tone Square and immediately adjoining areas to all four sides of the square. (See section 11.2.2 opposite)

Phase 2 would include Teeling Street, Humbert Street, portions of Emmet Street (as far as the Holy Family National School) and Mountain Road (as far as the old playground).



11.2.2 Wolfe Tone Square

The refurbishment of Wolfe Tone Square is considered important for the economic and social well-being of the town. Making the square more inviting and usable to pedestrians should be a priority.

This would involve the use of a shared surface for the entire square where pedestrians and vehicles have equal rights. Such an approach would encourage low traffic speed, making people feel comfortable wandering across the square or standing and chatting in the middle of the square.

Such a scheme has been achieved successfully in Castle Square, in the Welsh town of Caernarfon (see image on the right and photos on the next page).

The square is similar to Wolfe Tone Square in shape and not much larger in size: Castle Square has an area of 6,000 sq.m., while Wolfe Tone Square measures circa 4,600 sq.m.

Castle Square seems to have the same origin and function as Wolfe Tone Square, in that it is a market place at the confluence of several streets in the town centre.





Image: courtesy of Gordon Hatton @ www.geograph.org.uk

Castle Square, Caernarfon – an example of redesigned public space

Gwynedd Council's aim was to transform Castle Square, in the centre of Caernarfon (North Wales) into a high-quality, multi-functional public space.

The council felt that the square wasn't showcasing the area to its fullest, and that the road cutting through restricted what events could be put on, as well as putting the emphasis on vehicle movement rather than pedestrians.

The council therefore sought to provide a flexible area which can be used to stage a wide range of activities and uses, whilst providing an attractive and distinctive space, which could be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

The scheme design required particular consideration of traffic management relating to the whole town centre, along with specific issues relating to the square such as the operation of markets, special events, taxi ranks, tourism and visitor management.

The scheme was deliberately simple in approach aiming to create an uncluttered setting to the attractive buildings surrounding the square.

The photographs on the opposite page show the redesigned Castle Square, with a surface that is shared by pedestrians and vehicles. There are no kerbs, but the lanes that can be used by vehicles to cross the square are clearly delineated by different pavement colours, as are the exclusively pedestrian areas.

Just like Wolfe Tone Square, Castle Square has a sunny side and a shaded side. The sunny side can be closed off for vehicles and used for markets or fairs, while the shaded side continues to allow through traffic on a shared surface. The absence of pavement obstructions makes the entire area useable for special events. At the same time, on regular days it is possible to have "business as usual", i.e. pedestrian thoroughfares with outdoor café seating, through traffic and car parking. Judicious planting, landscaping and street furniture (fixed and mobile) make it easy to switch the Square's use from daily routine to festive times.

11.2 Urban design strategy



Image source: www.panoramio.com

The photo on the left-hand page shows Castle Square as it was in 1964, dominated by carriageways, with narrow footpaths. The image above shows the Square in 2007, after the first improvements limiting the scope of through-traffic and increasing the pedestrian realm. The photo below shows the current configuration of Castle Square, completely redesigned. The future evolution of Wolfe Tone Square could follow the same pattern.



Image: courtesy of Richard Croft @ www.geograph.org.uk

11.2.3 Circular Road

Circular Road presents significant opportunities for redevelopment. In order to ensure that any redevelopment in this area results in a successful expansion and consolidation of the town centre, a masterplanning approach to development will be required. Piecemeal development of sites in this area will be discouraged.

Along the 500 m length of Circular Road, four distinct zones can be identified: a residential zone, a vacant zone, a commercial zone and a greenfield zone.

Residential zone

Residential properties fronting onto Humbert Street have substantial backlands with vehicular entrance gates and laneways off Circular Road.

The road frontage in this area is disjointed and unsightly. Since the development potential of these backlands is limited, a landscaping scheme for the area could create a more attractive frontage to Circular Road.

Ideally, a community group such as Tidy Towns should prepare such a scheme and mobilise the property owners to implement it.

Vacant zone

This zone comprises backlands of both vacant and existing commercial properties fronting onto Humbert Street and Wolfe Tone Square. These backlands are either underutilised or simply derelict.

Within this area, there are several buildings which may be worthy of retention and reuse, and two larger sites (see Fig. 11.B) with potential for a significant reshaping and redefining of the corner between Murphy's Lane and Circular Road. Development of these sites should create a strong streetscape and defined corners.

The proposed pedestrian link from Wolfe Tone Square to Circular Road (see Fig. 11.C) should form an integral component of any redevelopment of this wider area.

Fig. 11.B Distinct zones along Circular Road



Commercial zone

The commercial zone of Circular Road consists of the rear car parks and service yards of two supermarkets and a hotel, all of which front onto Teeling Street. A telecommunications mast is located between the two car parks. On the north-western side of Circular Road there are warehouse buildings, a residence with shop and a large, underutilised car park. The area presents itself very poorly to Circular Road via a block/stone wall, palisade fencing, railings, blank gable walls and haphazard signage.

In the long term (e.g. after the construction of the N-17 bypass), the warehouse buildings, which sit on a maximum-visibility site, should ideally be replaced by commercial or mixed-use developments more suitable for a town centre. This would contribute to the transformation of Circular Road into a proper street, forming an integral part of the town centre. In the short term, before any redevelopment of the warehouse site and the development of the greenfields, a detailed examination of this area is required, in order to ascertain what is needed to improve its visual appearance.

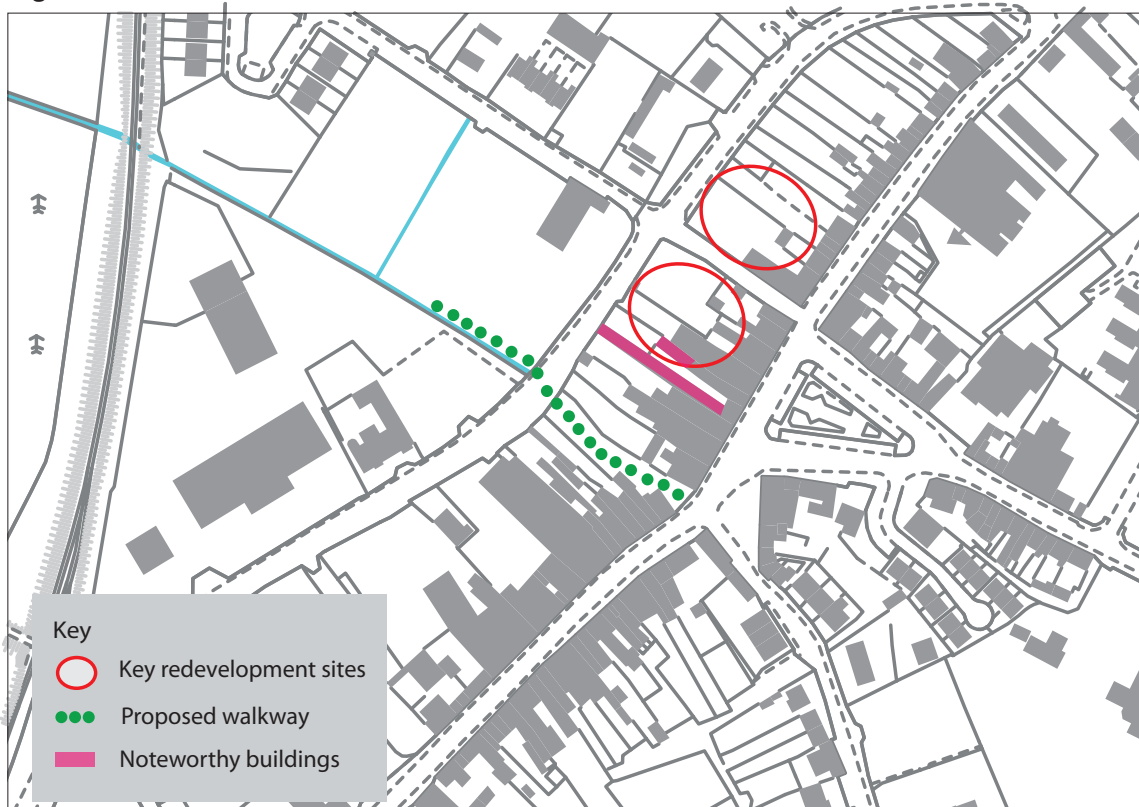
The following projects should be included in any short-term strategy for the area, to be undertaken by the County Council in conjunction with the local business community and the Tobercurry Tidy Towns group:

- formulation of a landscaping/greening plan;
- replacement of haphazard signage with a consistent signage scheme;
- installation of attractive lamp standards and removal of overhead wires;
- stone cladding/painting of all block walls;
- removal of palisade fencing.

Greenfield zone

At the south-western end of Circular Road, there are circa 1.2 ha of greenfield lands located on the corner of Circular Road and the lane by Leonard's Court. Development in this area should be facilitated. New buildings on these sites should front onto Circular Road, with car parking/open space to the rear. On either site there is potential for a landmark building (possibly a public building such as a new health centre), which would announce the beginning of the town centre of Tobercurry and invite visitors to explore the town further.

Fig. 11.C Circular Road's vacant zone



11.2.4 Addressing dereliction



The majority of derelict buildings and sites are found in the old town core, along Humbert Street and Circular Road. More efforts are needed from both the private sector and public agencies to reduce and eventually eliminate dereliction in Tobercurry.

Potential projects to address dereliction include:

- the enhancement of the link between Wolfe Tone Square and the car park at Teach Laighne – this will involve addressing the derelict building at this location;
- the creation of pedestrian links between Teeling Street and Circular Road – such links will be traversing and therefore refurbishing derelict areas;
- the creation of a new streetscape along Circular Road – this will require the assembling of derelict backlands between Teeling Street/Humbert Street and Circular Road.

11.2.5 Public realm

A high-quality public realm assists a town in fulfilling its socio-economic and tourism potential, promotes good health and well-being, encourages both day-time and evening economies, enhances the sense of place and can create a sense of civic pride. A comprehensive strategy is required to plan and coordinate improvements to Tobercurry's public realm. Such a strategy should be based on a detailed survey of the town centre, should identify the essential works and should provide guidance for their execution. The public realm strategy should include proposals and guidance for the following:

- the undergrounding of all overhead wires;
- the removal of all wooden poles and their replacement with high quality lamp standards;
- the improvement of building facades and shop fronts;
- the design of shared surfaces and street furniture;
- the rationalisation of road and advertising signage;
- proposals for encouraging public/street art.

The public realm strategy could be prepared by the relevant staff of Sligo County Council or by external specialists (e.g. urban designers), in consultation with the local community. This would be, however, subject to the availability of resources.

11.3 Design guidance

In order to support the implementation of the urban design strategy, it is considered necessary to provide design guidance for prospective developers. This should ensure that proposed projects are carried out as envisaged.

11.3.1 Undeveloped lands

In order to ensure that Tobercurry expands in an orderly fashion, a masterplan approach to new development on both greenfield and brownfield sites will be required.

A masterplan is a detailed, three-dimensional plan which sets out the intended layout of an area, incorporating proposals for buildings, spaces, movement, and matches these proposals to a delivery strategy.

A masterplan for an area should:

- show how parcels of land in separate ownership can be developed as one scheme/neighbourhood;
- define the height, massing and bulk of buildings;
- identify a movement network for people moving by foot, cycle or car;
- set out a basic infrastructure network;
- show how the new scheme can integrate with the surrounding urban context and natural environment.

A masterplan should balance control with flexibility, allowing for a combination of instruction (what must happen) and guidance (what should happen).

The following sites should be developed only on the basis of masterplans prepared in consultation with the Planning Authority (see Map 5):

- lands to the rear of the former Marist Sister Convent building;
- lands to the north and south of proposed road objective TCO-1;
- lands between the Parochial House on Emmet Street and the Rocklands housing development;
- lands to the south-east of Teeling street;
- lands along Circular Road to the north-west of Teeling Street (developments could be carried out based on separate masterplans, if appropriate).

Piecemeal development of these lands will not be permitted in the absence of a masterplan determining the overall pattern and form of development.

Design statement

For larger undeveloped or underutilised sites (UDO-10) – including four sites along Circular Road (UDO-5), developers will be required to prepare a Design Statement, i.e. a written statement setting out the design principles adopted, and including illustrations in plan, elevation and perspective. The purpose of such a statement is to facilitate a better understanding of the design approach and to provide evidence of compliance with the urban design guidance and relevant objectives contained in this LAP.



11.3.2 Redevelopment opportunities

A significant amount of both brownfield and greenfield land lie within the built-up core of the town. Private landowners, the County Council and all relevant state agencies should focus on the development of these underutilised lands and the consequent consolidation of the town before considering the development of edge of town sites.

It is a policy of the County Council to encourage the retention and renovation of buildings which are part of the historic fabric of the town. However, it is recognized that there may be occasions where the replacement of a building is warranted. In such cases, it should be ensured that the new building does not detract from the character of the street.

The urban design policy UDP-1 (see Urban design policies on the opposite page) sets out the guidelines that should be adhered to when replacing a building or developing a brownfield or infill site in one of Tobercurry's historic streetscapes.

High-quality, modern design proposals may deviate from the above guidance, subject to successful integration into the surrounding environment. This should be demonstrated by showing the building's elevation in the streetscape context where it is proposed to be inserted.

11.3.3 New shopfront design

The large number of historic shopfronts represents one of the strengths of Tobercurry's town centre. In order to build upon this, any new shopfronts should respect the character prevalent in the town. A new shopfront, whether modern or traditional in style, should acknowledge the structure of the building within which it fits. The elements of the shopfront – the pilasters, fascia and consoles – should be seen to logically support the upper part of the building. See diagram below.

The urban design policy UDP-3 (see Urban design policies on page 100) sets out the guidelines that should be adhered to when modifying or constructing a shopfront in the old core of Tobercurry.

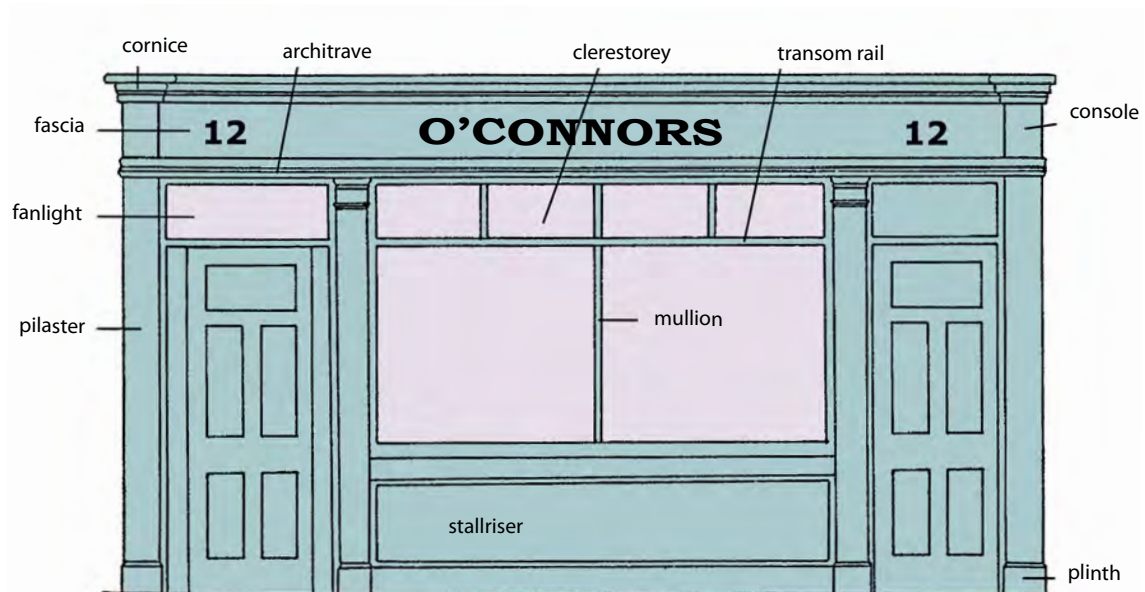


Fig. 11.D Design elements of a traditional Irish shopfront

Urban design policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

UDP-1 Ensure that the design of new developments on traditional streets follows or, where appropriate, reflects the existing street context. The restoration and reuse of derelict and vacant buildings is strongly encouraged.

Where replacement is warranted, redevelopment proposals shall be compatible with the existing vernacular character of the town, subject to the following guidance:

- A.** The design of new buildings should reflect the most significant elements of the traditional streetscape in their vicinity and should respect the established building line.
- B.** Rainwater goods shall be affixed to a corbelled eaves course of concrete, brick, or stone (as appropriate). Roofs shall be constructed so that there are no projecting soffit and barge at gable, and no boxed eaves detail. Eaves shall be flush with the wall, soffit omitted and slate shall not project beyond the face of the wall.
- C.** Windows shall generally have the proportions of a traditional sash window and shall have a minimum 100mm deep cills. In the interest of enhancing the character of the town, the use of timber sliding sash windows is encouraged.
- D.** Roofs shall be pitched, unless dictated otherwise by the streetscape or original building, and shall be slate, preferably natural slate.
- E.** Doors fronting onto the street shall be hardwood timber in traditional style and dimension. Fanlights should be above the door and not incorporated into the door.
- F.** If chimneys are visible from the streetscape, then all new buildings should have at least one chimney placed centrally on the ridge of the roof. Where chimneys are located at gables, they should be flush with the face of the gable wall. If a building is to be replaced, the chimneys of the original structure should be replicated in the new build.
- G.** Dormer windows and roof lights (preferably conservation style) may be considered on a traditional streetscape subject to appropriate placement and detailing.
- H.** Finishes of infill buildings on a streetscape should generally match the traditional finishes prevalent on the subject street. White uPVC will not be permitted on historic streetscapes. Brick or stone wall finishes may not be appropriate.

UDP-2 In the case of development proposals within historic streetscapes, require applicants to submit contextual elevations showing the proposed buildings in their streetscape.

[continues on next page]

Urban design policies (continued)

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- UDP-3** Require shopfronts and advertisement signs to match the overall form and structure of the buildings to which they pertain and ensure that they adhere to the guidelines set out in the *Retail Design Manual* (DECLG, 2012) and to the following guidance:
- A.** Traditional style shopfronts should comprise an appropriately scaled and proportioned fascia supported by two pilasters and framed by two consoles, a cornice and architrave. A fanlight should sit above a door and a stallriser should frame the shopfront from the ground level;
 - B.** The fascia and cornice should extend as high as the first floor window cills, subject to the scale and proportions of the shopfront and building;
 - C.** The width and detailing of pilasters and cornices should reflect that of existing original shopfronts in the town, e.g. T.Brennan's or Barry's Pharmacy, subject to the scale and proportion of the shopfront and building;
 - D.** Windows should have a vertical emphasis and should be free of advertising stickers/notices etc;
 - E.** Doors should be in a style and should use materials which are in sympathy with the rest of the shopfront and building;
 - F.** Roller shutters should be placed internally, behind window displays, and they should be see-through. External roller shutters shall not be permitted;
 - G.** Traditional awnings are preferable to fixed canopies;
 - H.** Projecting signs should be located at fascia level and should be limited to one per building frontage. The size, design, colour, material and illumination of all advertising signs should be subdued;
 - I.** Internal illumination of signs will not be permitted, except for pharmacies.
- UDP-4** Require new development on or in the vicinity of the development limit to address the views from the approach roads and present an attractive frontage to these roads.
- UDP-5** Require designers of new developments to apply the design criteria set out in the *Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide* (DECLG, 2009) (refer to Appendix V).

Urban design objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

Town centre

- UDO-1** Undertake the refurbishment of the town centre in two phases:
- Phase 1 will incorporate Wolfe Tone Square and an extended area to all three sides of the square; this should enhance and expand the existing civic space;
 - Phase 2 will include Teeling Street, Humbert Street, Murphy's Lane, portions of Emmet Street (as far as the Holy Family National School) and Mountain Road (as far as the playground).
- UDO-2** Facilitate the relocation of the petrol station/garage on Wolfe Tone Square to a suitable alternative site on the periphery of the town. [continues on next page]

Urban design objectives (continued)

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

Derelict sites

UDO-3 Identify the owners of derelict sites and work with them to address the problem of dereliction. Where warranted, the Council will use its compulsory acquisition power in order to remove dereliction.

Circular Road

UDO-4 Encourage the landscaping of the north western backlands of Humbert St according to an approved scheme.

UDO-5 Require the redevelopment of vacant lands and greenfield sites along Circular Road to be carried out on the basis of approved masterplans.

UDO-6 Promote the creation of a new streetscape along Circular Road by requiring new developments to provide active frontage onto this road.

UDO-7 Encourage the redevelopment of the site currently occupied by warehouses on the north-western side of Circular Road, preferably with mixed-use activities with active frontage onto Circular Road.

UDO-8 Work with the local business community and the Tobercurry Tidy Towns group to prepare a short-term strategy for improving the visual appearance of properties and their boundaries fronting onto Circular Road.

Larger opportunity sites

UDO-9 Ensure that any development on the following sites takes place on the basis of masterplans to be agreed with the Planning Authority:

- A. lands to the rear of the former Marist Sister Convent building;
- B. lands to the south and south west of Mountain View housing estate;
- C. lands between the Parochial House on Emmet Street and the Rocklands housing development;
- D. lands south of the Rocklands housing development;
- E. lands to the south of Teeling Street.

UDO-10 Require developers to submit a Design Statement for all the sites subject to UDO-9 and UDO-5. The Design Statement should be a brief document setting out the design approach and providing evidence of compliance with the urban design guidance and relevant objectives contained in this LAP.

Public realm

UDO-11 Subject to availability of resources, prepare a Public Realm Strategy in consultation with the local community.

For the location of sites subject to urban design objectives, refer to **Map 5** in **Chapter 12**.

11.3.4 National design guidance document

In 2009, the DoEHLG published an *Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide*, intended to be a companion document to the Department’s *Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*. The Manual is based around twelve criteria that have been selected to encapsulate the range of design considerations for residential development. These are:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Context | 5. Efficiency | 9. Adaptability |
| 2. Connections | 6. Distinctiveness | 10. Privacy and amenity |
| 3. Inclusivity | 7. Layout | 11. Parking |
| 4. Variety | 8. Public realm | 12. Detailed design |

The above criteria represent a distillation of current policy, guidance and tried-and-tested principles of good urban design. Although the Manual refers mainly to residential developments, the above criteria can be successfully applied/adapted to mixed-use and non-residential development proposals in Tobercurry, particularly in the central area of the town. Appendix V of this Plan contains an extract from the *Urban Design Manual* – a list of the twelve criteria together with the corresponding indicators.

The Retail Design Manual was published by the DoEHLG in 2012 and complements the key principles outlined in the above document. The Manual sets out evidence-based urban design principles to ensure that future planning for the retail sector is focused on the creation of vibrant and high quality places.

Designers, developers and the planning authority should have regard to both the Urban Design Manual and to the Retail Design Manual, as appropriate, when designing new developments or assessing planning applications.