

BALLYMOTE

Local Area Plan 2012–2018



September 2012

BALLYMOTE

Local Area Plan

2012–2018

Sligo County Council adopted the Ballymote Local Area Plan 2012-2018 (LAP) on 3 September 2012. This LAP was prepared under Section 19 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Environmental assessment

Following screening and consultation with prescribed environmental authorities, the planning authority has determined that the implementation of Ballymote Local Area Plan is not likely to have significant effects on the environment. Therefore, a 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.

Availability

The LAP, the SEA Screening Report, the SEA decision and the AA Screening Report can be viewed and downloaded from the Council's website at www.sligococo.ie/ballymote.

Hard copies can be obtained by contacting the Planning Office of Sligo County Council.

For additional information, please e-mail the Development Planning Unit at dpu@sligococo.ie

**Prepared by the Development Planning Unit
Sligo County Council, 23 January 2012**

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Prepared by
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3 September 2012

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Contents

| | | | |
|---|----|---|-----|
| 1. Plan context | 1 | 7. Heritage | 49 |
| 1.1 Legal basis for Ballymote LAP | 1 | 7.1 Natural heritage | 49 |
| 1.2 Purpose of the LAP | 2 | 7.2 Archaeological heritage | 52 |
| 1.3 Geography and history | 2 | 7.3 Architectural heritage | 55 |
| 1.4 Demographic information | 4 | 8. Mobility and transport | 59 |
| 1.5 Planning issues | 6 | 8.1 Main CDP provisions | 59 |
| 1.6 Pre-draft consultation | 7 | 8.2 Access roads | 60 |
| 1.7 Vision and strategic aims for Ballymote | 8 | 8.3 Town centre traffic and parking | 61 |
| 2. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) | 9 | 8.4 Pedestrian and cycle facilities | 63 |
| 2.1 Legal requirements | 9 | 8.5 Public transport | 64 |
| 2.2 Screening Ballymote LAP | 9 | 9. Infrastructure | 67 |
| 2.3 Initial consultation with environmental authorities | 10 | 9.1 Water supply | 68 |
| 2.4 Amendments of the Draft LAP | 10 | 9.2 Wastewater treatment | 69 |
| 2.5 Conclusion | 12 | 9.3 Waste management | 71 |
| 3. Core Strategy | 13 | 9.4 Energy and telecommunications | 72 |
| 3.1 Core Strategy basics | 13 | 9.5 Infrastructural provisions for Ballymote | 73 |
| 3.2 Ballymote's population and housing land allocations | 15 | 10. Environmental quality | 74 |
| 3.3 Land use zoning | 19 | 10.1 Water quality | 75 |
| 4. Economic development | 23 | 10.2 Air quality | 76 |
| 4.1 Main CDP provisions | 23 | 10.3 Noise control | 76 |
| 4.2 Retail development | 24 | 10.4 Flood risk assessment | 77 |
| 4.3 Enterprise and industry | 28 | 10.5 Environmental quality provisions | 78 |
| 4.4 Tourism | 30 | 11. Urban design | 79 |
| 5. Housing | 32 | 11.1 Urban context | 80 |
| 5.1 Main CDP provisions | 32 | 11.2 Character areas | 81 |
| 5.2 Trends in housing | 33 | 11.3 Scope for improvement | 84 |
| 5.3 Housing provision 2012-2018 | 37 | 12. Maps | 89 |
| 5.4 Social and affordable housing | 39 | Map 1. Existing land use (2011) | 90 |
| 5.5 Special needs housing | 39 | Map 2. Zoning | 91 |
| 5.6 Housing in the buffer zone | 39 | Zoning Matrix | 92 |
| 6. Community facilities | 41 | Map 3. Zoning detail | 94 |
| 6.1 Main CDP provisions | 41 | Map 4. Sites previously zoned residential | 95 |
| 6.2 Education facilities | 42 | Map 5. Strategic Land Reserve | 96 |
| 6.3 Childcare facilities | 44 | Map 6. Green Corridors | 97 |
| 6.4 Health and elderly care facilities | 44 | Map 7. Archaeological sites and monuments | 98 |
| 6.5 Cultural facilities | 45 | Map 8. Protected Structures and ACA | 99 |
| 6.6 Sports and recreation facilities | 46 | Map 9. Transport and mobility objectives | 100 |
| 6.7 Other facilities | 47 | Map 10. Water supply and sewerage networks | 101 |
| | | Appendix I. Flood Risk Assessment | 103 |
| | | Appendix II. Protected Structures in Ballymote | 111 |

1. Plan context



1.1 Legal basis for Ballymote 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 original Planning and Development Act 2000 set a threshold of 2,000 persons, but also indicated 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.

Census 2002 counted fewer than 2,000 persons in Ballymote. However, the County Council considered it necessary to prepare a LAP for the town, which was designated as a Key Support Town in the CDP 2005-2011 and was already experiencing development pressure in the early 2000s. The Ballymote LAP 2005-2011, prepared by planning consultants from the National Building Agency (NBA), was eventually adopted on 5 December 2005.

According to Census 2006 demographic data, no town in County Sligo (outside the Gateway) had a population of 5,000 or even 1,500. But it is likely that demographic information from Census 2011 (due to be published in 2012) will show that Ballymote has now more than 1,500 residents.

Therefore, the County Council has decided to review the Ballymote Local Area Plan 2005-2011 and prepare a new LAP for the period 2012-2018. The new LAP updates and builds on the strengths of the 2005-2011 Plan.

The Ballymote LAP 2012-2018 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.

The Council may amend or revoke the LAP at any time.

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 Ballymote. The LAP will guide and regulate development through land use zoning, planning policies and development objectives.

Ballymote LAP must be consistent with the objectives of the current Sligo County Development Plan 2011 – 2017 (CDP). All policies and objectives contained in the CDP apply to Ballymote. It is important to note that the CDP supersedes the LAP should any conflicting provisions be included in the Plan.

In particular, the LAP must be consistent with the Core Strategy contained in the County Development Plan 2011-2017 (refer to Chapter 3)

1.3 Geography and history

Ballymote is located 24 km (15 miles) to the south of Sligo City, in the south-east of the County. The entire area lies within the administrative jurisdiction of Sligo County Council and incorporates the townlands of Camross, Stoneparks, Carrowcauley, Rathnakelliga, Keenaghan, Maghera, Carrownanty and Ballymote itself.

The Bricklieve Mountains are situated 6 km to the south-east of Ballymote with the hill of Kesh Corann providing a picturesque backdrop to the town. Numerous caves have been found in the limestone sediment of this hill, revealing evidence of human presence dating from the Neolithic and early Christian times.

The topography of the town is undulating, with most of the built-up area lying at a height of 60–80 m above sea level. The north-east of the town and its environs rises to a height of 120 m (see Fig. 1A below).

Fig. 1.A Topography of the wider Ballymote area

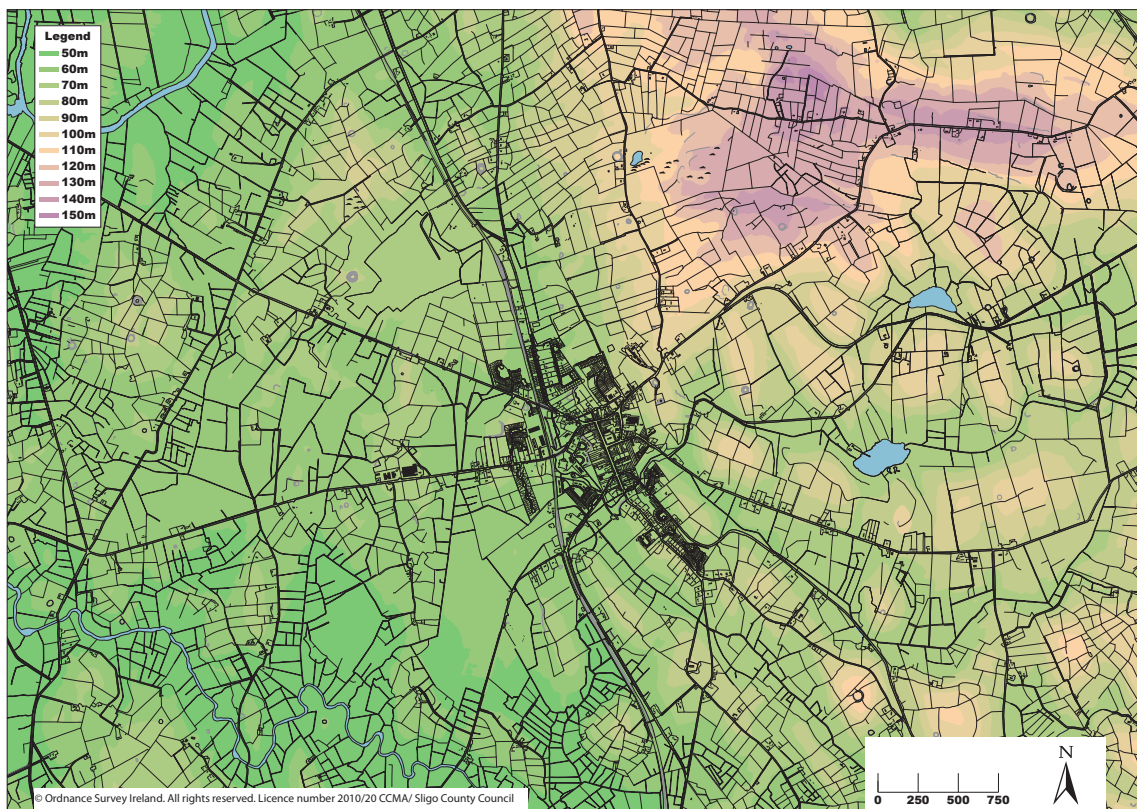




Fig. 1.B Ballymote in 1847



Fig. 1.C Ballymote in 1942

Ballymote, once the second largest town in the County, is an important historical, agricultural, educational and economic centre. The town was known as Atha Cliath an Chorainn – ‘the ford of the hurdles of Corran’. In 1300, Richard de Burgo erected a castle to protect his newly won possessions in Sligo.

The name Ballymote was derived from this castle (Baile an Mhota – homestead of the castle mound). The castle is a Recorded Monument (SL033-092) and was used up until the late 17th Century. Soon after this the fortifications were made harmless, the moat was filled up and the castle fell into ruins. During his time in Ballymote, Richard de Burgo also financed the construction of a road linking the town to Boyle and Collooney.

The Book of Ballymote (c.1391), written in Ballymote Castle, is a unique manuscript containing genealogical, topographical and biblical material. The book is now preserved in the Royal Irish Academy.

In 1442, three brothers founded Ballymote Friary, which is sited across the road from the castle. Like most religious houses throughout Ireland, the friary did not survive the Reformation. The remnants of the friary are located adjacent to Ballymote Catholic Church and are surrounded by a graveyard. The medieval ruin is rectangular, with a large east window, under which stood the main altar.

Significant prehistoric remains – such as complex ancient field systems, house sites, barrows, enclosures and ringforts – are prevalent in the immediate vicinity of Ballymote town. These findings indicate that farming was already taking place in the Ballymote area 3,000 years ago.

The modern development of Ballymote appears to date from the late 18th Century, with Earlsfield House (now the Convent of Mercy) being built by the Fitzmaurices, who established a linen-manufacturing base in the town. Shortly after this, a bleach mill was erected to the south of the town; its remains can still be seen today. These industries gave a boost to the development of the town and led to the building of houses for the workers.

In 1837, according to Samuel Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*, Ballymote town had 875 inhabitants, contained 140 houses and was situated at the junction of six roads (see Figures 1.A and 1.B above).

1.4 Demographic information

The Electoral Division (ED) of Ballymote covers Ballymote town and surrounding rural environs. The 2006 and 2011 Censuses recorded a population of 1,717 and 2,076 persons respectively, living in Ballymote ED. This indicates a rise in population of 20.9 % over 5 years. This LAP is mainly concerned with the population of the town itself.

The 2006 Census recorded a population of 1,229 persons living in the town. Between 2002 and 2006 the population of Ballymote increased by 25.3%, and grew similarly between 2006 and 2011, by 25.2%.

Table 1.D Demographic change 2002-2011

| Area | population 2002 | population 2006 | percentage change 2002-2006 | population 2011 | percentage change 2006-2011 |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| County Sligo | 58,200 | 60,894 | +4.6 | 65,393 | +7.4 |
| Ballymote ED | 1,405 | 1,717 | +22.2 | 2,074 | +20.8 |
| Ballymote Town | 981 | 1,229 | +25.3 | 1,539 | +25.2 |

It should be noted that detailed demographic data collected during the 2011 Census had not been published at the time of writing. Therefore, the information contained in the following subsections is sourced mainly from the Censuses of 2002 and 2006.

1.4.1 Age profile

In 2006, the younger dependent population (those aged between 0–14 years) accounts for 20.5% of Ballymote's population. This was similar to the 2002 ratio and was equivalent to the national ratio of 20.3%. However, the proportion of older dependent persons (aged 65+) was significantly higher in Ballymote at 18.3% (19% 2002) when compared to the national proportion of 11.03%. This could be due, in part, to the presence of the St. Vincent de Paul housing scheme for the elderly and to the nursing home located in the town.

The proportions of younger and older people in the total population of Ballymote need to be taken into consideration when making provision for certain amenities and facilities in the town.

There is a lower proportion of people aged 15–44 living in Ballymote: 41% (36% in 2002) compared to 46.6% nationally. This might be related to young adults migrating to larger urban areas in order to continue their education or to find a job.

1.4.2 Employment profile

42.47% of the population of Ballymote was in gainful employment at the time of the 2006 Census (47% in 2002), with the unemployment rate for Ballymote at 3.09% comparable to the national average of 4.4%. At the time of writing, no data was available regarding recent or current unemployment rates in the town.

The proportion of retired persons, 15% (17% in 2002 census), was higher than the national 11.1%, but lower than the ratio of population aged 65 and over.

1.4.3 Occupational profile

In 2006, Ballymote's professional workers represented 22.2% (15% in 2002) of the working population, comparable to the State average of 23%.

At the same time, the manufacturing and building industry appeared to employ the largest part of the population gainfully employed: 44.5% (28% in the 2002 census).

1.4.4 Educational Profile



While 40.5% of the population was educated to upper secondary level in 2006 (32% in 2002), the proportion of those who completed third level education was significantly lower in Ballymote, at 17.5% (19% in 2002), than the national average of 23.8% (26% in 2002).

1.4.5 Household profile

According to the 2006 Census, there were 472 households in Ballymote, an increase of 118 households since the 2002 Census.

The average number of persons per household in Ballymote in 1996 and 2002 was 3 and 2.75 respectively. The national average was 3.14 in 1996 and 2.75 in 2002.

Since 2002 there has been a further decrease in household size in Ballymote, to an average of 2.6 persons per household in 2006. Nationally, the average number of persons per household was 2.94 in 2006.

Table 1.E Population and households in Ballymote in Census years 1996 to 2011

| Year | Population | Number of households | Average number of persons per household |
|------|------------|----------------------|---|
| 1996 | 994 | 325 | 3 |
| 2002 | 981 | 354 | 2.75 |
| 2006 | 1,229 | 472 | 2.6 |
| 2011 | 1,539 | 642 | 2.31 |

Source: Central Statistics Office

1.4.6 Key demographic issues

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

- The population of Ballymote declined slightly from 1996 to 2002 but increased significantly between 2002 and 2006 and continued to grow at a similar pace between 2006 and 2011. From on-site surveys and a desktop survey of planning applications, it was clear that the population of Ballymote would have increased considerably from 2006, due to the large number of completed housing units.
- A significant amount of Ballymote's population is over the age of 65. If this trend were to continue, the dependent population could become too large for the town to be viable. Therefore, it will be necessary to adopt planning measures designed to retain a population with a balanced age structure.

1.5 Planning issues

Since the adoption of the first Ballymote Local Area Plan in 2005, there have been a number of significant changes, both local and national, in terms of economy, legislation and planning policy. Since 2008, the national economy has been in decline due to the global financial crisis and the collapse of the property market. Like many other towns in Ireland, Ballymote has been affected by the downturn in the economy and by the subsequent increase in unemployment and out-migration.

In light of the aforementioned changes a number of planning issues have been identified as being relevant for the Ballymote LAP. These issues are outlined in the following subsections.

1.5.1 Planning legislation

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 NSS Gateways and Hubs of the region.

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. It also recommends population levels and allocates housing land to the County's villages and towns, including Ballymote.

1.5.2 Land use zoning

Ballymote LAP 2005–2011 zoned 160 acres (65 hectares) of land for residential purposes, which included 4 acres (1.6 ha) of mixed infill development. While the objective of improving the residential land supply has been achieved, the extent of lands zoned for housing proved to be significantly in excess of the actual housing requirements.

The area of land zoned for residential uses has been reduced in the current LAP in accordance with the allocation contained within the Core Strategy of the CDP 2011-2017. An area of 21.1 hectares is zoned for the lifetime of this LAP, in accordance with the Core Strategy. Refer to **Chapter 3 Core Strategy**, **Chapter 5 Housing** and to the **Zoning Map** (Map 2/3 in Bof this Plan).

1.5.3 Unfinished housing estates

Since 2003 to date, 17 housing developments have been permitted in Ballymote. In July 2011, a survey undertaken on behalf of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government's *National Housing Development Survey* identified 8 housing developments that were unfinished.

The completion of these estates must be prioritised. Where this is not possible, other solutions need to be devised and applied. Refer to **Chapter 5 Housing** of this LAP for provisions relating to unfinished estates.

1.5.4 Traffic congestion

The town centre comprises Lord Edward Street, O'Connell Street and Teeling Street. Despite the fact that these streets are relatively wide, traffic congestion frequently arises at peak times during the day and on weekly market days. Traffic congestion is partly due to disorderly on-street car parking, which is a result of a lack of delineated parking spaces, and also due to a lack of conveniently located parking facilities. In order to have a functional town centre, this problem needs to be addressed. Refer to **Chapter 8 Transport** for specific transport and circulation policies and objectives.

1.5.5 Community facilities

While Ballymote has experienced significant residential development, this was not matched by the development of community facilities until recent years. Despite the aging population, Ballymote still doesn't have an adequate primary care centre.



A public health centre has been provided on Teeling Street in temporary premises. These premises are insufficient for the needs of the users and those of the service provider, the HSE.

A modern, properly equipped facility needs to be provided in the town on a suitable site at a convenient location. Refer to **Chapter 6 Community Facilities** for the specific community facilities policies and objectives.

1.5.6 Wastewater infrastructure

The existing treatment plant needs to be upgraded, but details regarding design capacity have not been finalised. Substantial parts of the existing drainage network in Ballymote are a combined system. The separation of the foul and surface water collection systems, where feasible, will be an important part of the upgrade works on this sewerage scheme.

In the meantime, new development will be permitted only if the capacity of the treatment plant is not exceeded. Refer to **Chapter 9 Infrastructure** for details of relevant policies and objectives.

1.5.7 Urban design

Urban growth in the second half of the 20th century took mainly the form of residential development stretching along approach roads. As new housing schemes were developed in recent years, the urban form of Ballymote suffered through a lack of connectivity and attention to the creation of new streetscapes. There is a need for a more compact and connected urban environment in Ballymote.

Most of the urban design measures proposed in the 2005 Plan have not been implemented. The policy framework needs to be retained in the LAP 2012-2018. Refer to **Chapter 11 Urban design** for the relevant recommendations.

1.6 Public 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 Ballymote for the period 2012-2018. The planning issues identified in Section 1.5 above were included in a *Pre-Draft Consultation Paper*. Pre-draft consultation took place between 9 November and 9 December 2011. Of the twelve submissions received at that stage, four indicated that Ballymote needed a proper primary care centre and maybe another nursing home, adequate parking in the town centre, additional lands zoned for business and enterprise and a tourist information office. Three submissions referred to particular sites, requesting residential zoning. The submission received from the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht contained useful suggestions and recommendations in relation to the protection of archaeological heritage and nature conservation in the Ballymote Plan area.

Following this, a Draft LAP was prepared and placed on public display from 23 January to 5 March 2012.

Based on the thirteen submissions received on the Draft LAP, the Manager recommended 17 amendments. These were endorsed by the Councillors, who proposed another amendment. All proposed amendments were subject to public consultation between 18 July and 15 August 2012, having been assessed for potential environmental impacts. One amendment was found to have a potentially negative impact on an archaeological monument, if adopted. This is documented in the **Appendix to the SEA Screening Report** and in **Chapter 2 Strategic Environmental Assessment**.

However, the elected members of Sligo County Council decided to adopt the LAP with all the proposed amendments. The LAP was adopted at the Ordinary Meeting of Sligo County Council on 3 September and became operational four weeks later, on 1 October 2012.

1.7 Vision and strategic aims for Ballymote

The development of Ballymote is guided by the following vision:

To create a sustainable, economically and socially successful town, served by an effective transportation system, and where new development will be of a high architectural standard.

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

Ballymote - Strategic Aims

- SA-1** Promote the sustainable and consolidated development of Ballymote as a Key Support Town.
- SA-2** Facilitate economic activity by ensuring that sufficient land is zoned and adequate infrastructure is available to allow for the expansion of existing enterprises and the setting up of new ones.
- SA-3** Ensure that the people of Ballymote have access to affordable housing, employment, education, community and recreational facilities.
- SA-4** Recognise the importance of natural, archaeological and architectural heritage in the LAP area as a factor which contributes to Ballymote's attractiveness as a place to live and work.
- SA-5** Seek the development of a more efficient and integrated transport system, including walking and cycling networks, and support the reopening of the Western Rail Corridor.
- SA-6** Ensure that the current and future population and businesses of Ballymote are served by adequate water supply, wastewater treatment, electricity, telecommunications and waste management infrastructure.

Chapter 2 of this Plan outlines the legal requirements for Strategic Environmental Assessment and the planning authority's decision in this regard.

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

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

In order to promote desirable development patterns in the town, an urban design framework is detailed in **Chapter 11**. This includes specific guidelines for key sites within the town.

2. S E A (Strategic Environmental Assessment)

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 Ballymote 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 Ballymote LAP

For Ballymote, 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*.

An **SEA Screening Report** was prepared in November 2011. The Report consisted of the following:

- A. Brief outline of the proposed local area plan
- B. Background information on Ballymote
- 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 below.

Conclusion

The LAP 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, with limited provision for expansion in appropriate areas.

When compared to the existing Ballymote LAP 2005-2011, the proposed LAP will involve a significant reduction in the extent of overall area of greenfield land available for development during the plan period, particularly in relation to residential development.

Having described the characteristics and assessed the expected effects of implementing the Local Area Plan for Ballymote, 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 Ballymote LAP is not likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Accordingly, a full Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

2.3 Initial consultation with environmental authorities

As prescribed by the SEA Regulations, the relevant environmental authorities were notified and the Screening Report was sent in December 2011 to the Minister for Environment, Communities and Local Government, the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and the Environmental Protection Agency, for comment.

The EPA noted the Planning Authority's conclusion that a full SEA is not required. The Agency made several recommendations and suggestions, which have been incorporated into the LAP.

The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht made useful suggestions and recommendations in relation to the protection of archaeological heritage and nature conservation in the Ballymote Plan area. These too have been incorporated into the LAP.

As no other comments were received from environmental authorities, the Planning Authority decided not to undertake a full SEA. This decision was published alongside the Draft Plan.

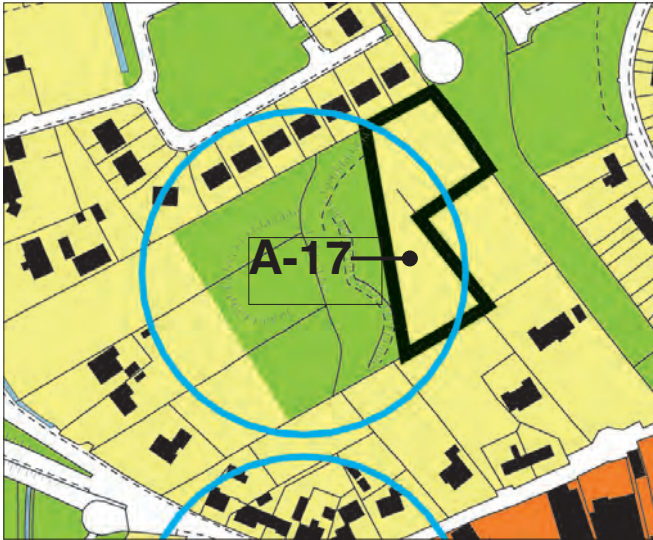
The SEA Screening Report of the Ballymote LAP was made available for public consultation alongside the Draft Plan during the period 23 January to 5 March 2012.

2.4 Amendments of the Draft LAP

On 14 May 2012, the members of Sligo County Council considered the Draft LAP and the First Manager's Report and resolved to make 18 amendments to the Draft Plan. Of these, 17 were based on the Manager's recommendations made in the First Manager's Report. The additional amendment, proposed by the members, conflicted with the Manager's recommendations.

The amendments recommended by the Manager remained largely within the scope of the Draft LAP, although some of these amendments were material alterations. These 17 amendments would not have changed the conclusion of the initial SEA Screening Report associated with the Draft LAP.

However, the additional amendment proposed by the members was assessed as having the potential to significantly impact on the environment.



The **amendment A-17** involved the zoning of 0.93 acres of land for residential use instead of open space.

A portion of 0.62 acres of the area concerned is located within the Zone of Archaeological Potential (ZAP) which surrounds the archaeological monument SL033-090 (ringfort/rath in the townland of Stoneparks) (see illustration below).

The boundary of the area subject to amendment A-17 is shown in black, while the boundary of the ZAP is shown in blue in the illustration.

An **Addendum to the SEA Screening Report** was prepared and circulated to the prescribed environmental authorities. This report indicated that the majority of the proposed amendments, if adopted, would not change the conclusion of the initial SEA Screening Report, but the proposed amendment A-17 had the potential for significant effects on the archaeological monument located in the vicinity of the subject site (see illustration and explanations above).

The Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht advised against the zoning for residential use of the site subject to amendment A-17, in the interests of preserving the archaeological monument SL033-90 and the area sufficient to protect its amenity, character and setting.

Despite the advice of the EPA, DAHG and the Manager's recommendation, the elected members of Sligo County Council decided to adopt the LAP with all its amendments, including the zoning amendment A-17. The Members specified that only one house (family home) could be built on the lands subject to amendment A-17.

In its conclusion, the final version of the Addendum to the SEA Screening Report indicates the following:

The Ballymote LAP, as adopted, remains almost entirely within the framework set out in the Draft LAP.

The potential negative impacts of the amendment A-17/zoning for residential uses of a portion of a ZAP would be likely to occur only if the site is developed intensively, as a result of a grant of planning permission.

However, the policies of the County Development Plan (CDP) take precedence over the objectives of the LAP. The CDP policies will apply in any situation where a LAP objective (including zoning objective) conflicts with the provisions of the CDP.

It is considered that the following CDP policies and objectives should be applied in the assessment of any planning application involving the site subject to the zoning amendment A-17, in order to avoid, reduce or mitigate any potential negative impacts that might result from development on the site:

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 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.*

The adopted Ballymote LAP 2012-2018 also includes the following relevant policies:

AHP-1 *Protect the archaeological heritage of Ballymote 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, 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.

2.5 Conclusion

Having regard to the archaeological heritage protection policies and objectives included in the CDP and in the Ballymote LAP, it is considered that any potential negative impacts on archaeology, resulting from the zoning for residential use of a portion of the ZAP pertaining to the Recorded Monument SL033-90, can be avoided, reduced or mitigated.

Therefore, the Ballymote Local Area Plan 2012-2018, as adopted, is not likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Note: The SEA Screening Report and its Addendum are available as a separate document. This document can be viewed or downloaded from the County Council's website at www.sligococo.ie/ballymote or obtained in hard copy from the County Council's Planning Office at Riverside, Sligo.

3. Core Strategy



3.1 Core Strategy basics

3.1.1 Regulatory context

The Planning and Development Act 2010 amended Section 10 of the Principal Act by introducing the requirement of 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.

Having identified Sligo as one of four new gateways in 2002, the NSS emphasises the role of balanced development at local level, which must be achieved through the strengthening of the urban settlement structure in parallel with ensuring that the resources of rural areas are developed to offer a viable future to rural dwellers.

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 Town consolidation, while seeking to support rural areas mainly by strengthening a range of small villages throughout the County. Ballymote is one of the three Key Support Towns designated in County Sligo’s spatial development framework.

3. Core Strategy

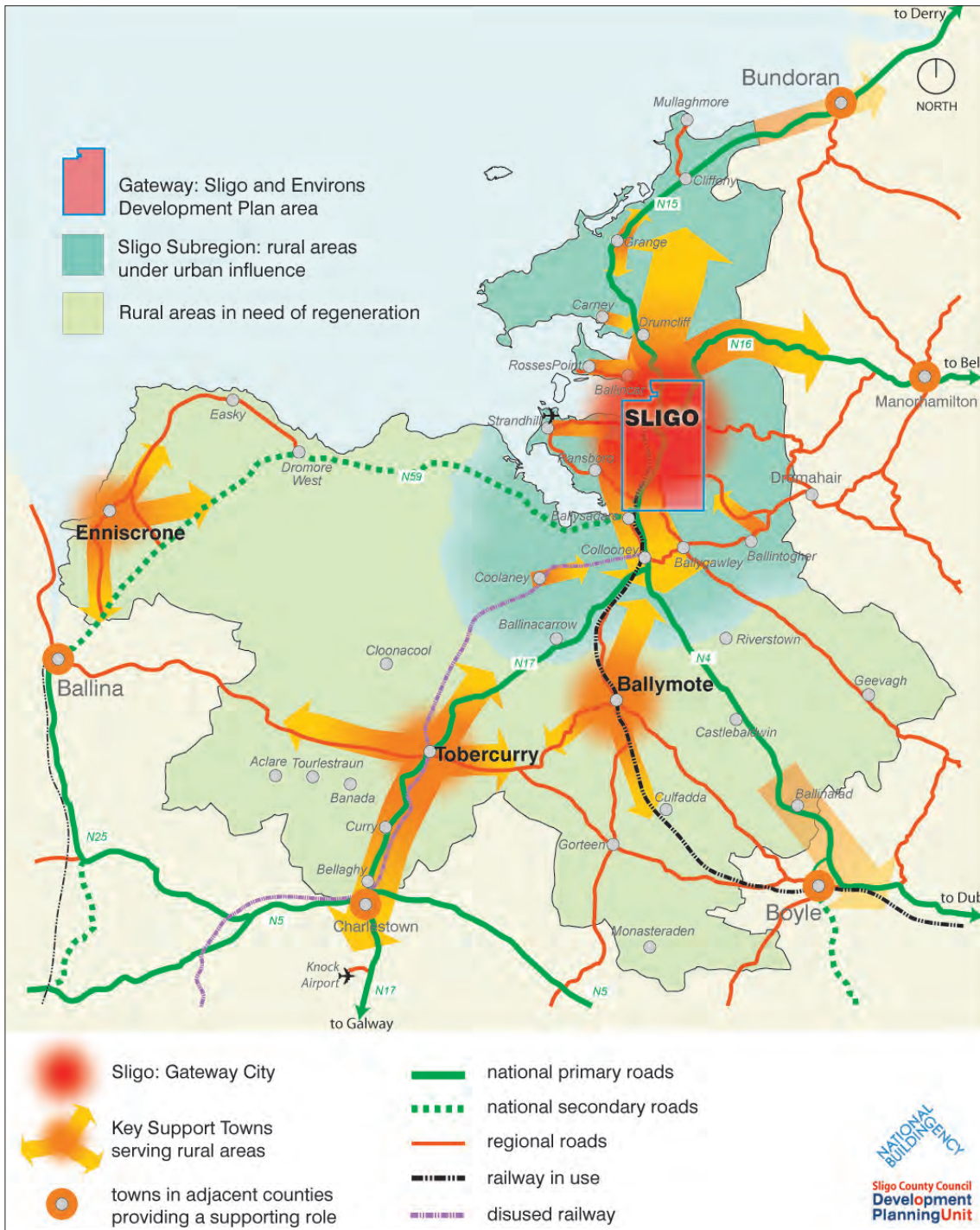


Fig. 3.A Extract from CDP 2011–2017: The Core Strategy map as a spatial development framework (corresponding to Fig. 3.B in the CDP)

3.1.3 Compliance with RPG population targets and housing land requirements

The RPGs set out population targets for 2016 and 2022 for both County Sligo and Sligo and Environs.

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 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 and in Appendix I of Volume 2 (Mini-Plans) of the CDP.

The Core Strategy Table (Table 3.K in Section 3.5 Development land requirements of the CDP) indicates that Ballymote's allocation is a maximum of 21 hectares of greenfield land for residential uses.

3.2 Ballymote'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 Ballymote is 1,700 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) | Population 2011 (Census) | Recommended population level 2017 |
|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Ballymote | 981 | 1,229 | 1,539 | 1,700 |
| Enniscrone | 668 | 829 | 1,223 | 1,200 |
| Tobercurry | 1,171 | 1,421 | 1,747 | 1,800 |

It is important to remember 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 had not been published.

Based on the number of occupied houses counted in Ballymote in the October 2011 survey (conducted by the Planning Section), it was speculated that the population of Ballymote had already surpassed the target: circa 800 houses occupied by an average household of 2.6 persons (the average for Ballymote as recorded in the 2006 Census) equating to a total population of over 2,000. In summer 2012, when the first Census figures were published, it emerged that Ballymote had only 1,539 residents.

It is possible that many of the houses deemed occupied in the 2011 survey were in reality not inhabited on a permanent basis. It is also likely that the average household is now made up of fewer people than it was in 2006.

3.2.2 Housing land requirements

In recognition of Ballymote's Key Support Town status, the CDP allocates 21 hectares to be zoned for future housing development in Ballymote.

It should be noted that the 2005–2011 LAP zoned 65 hectares of greenfield land for housing. Of those lands, 14 hectares have now been developed. The amount of remaining greenfield land is 51 hectares.

Resulting from the CDP allocation of housing land for Ballymote, it was necessary to reduce the amount of undeveloped land zoned residential from 51 to 21 hectares.



Fig. 3.C Sites previously zoned for housing, where zoning has changed in the current LAP 2012-2018

Fig. 3.C above shows the sites that were zoned residential in the previous LAP but are no longer zoned for such uses. Map 4 in Chapter 12 is a larger version of this illustration.

This Plan zones 21.1 hectares of greenfield land for residential uses. If developed at an average gross density of 18 units per hectare, these residential lands could add another 370 housing units to the existing 902.

Areas zoned for mixed uses have not been taken into account when assessing the potential for housing development, due to one or more of the following factors:

- unsuitable location, size and/or shape;
- unsuitable access arrangements;
- very low probability of consolidation of adjoining sites.

Greenfield lands zoned for residential uses are distributed in a balanced manner around the town, taking into account the principle of sequential development, which gives priority to lands situated closer to the town centre. Proximity to community and recreational facilities, good access and suitable topography were also taken into account when deciding to retain the zoning of these lands for the lifetime of the Plan.

3.2.3 Strategic land reserve

A total of 33 hectares of lands zoned for residential uses in the 2005-2011 LAP have now been included in a Strategic Land Reserve (SLR).

This designation recognises the value of these lands and the fact that they were zoned for the same or similar uses in the 2005-2011 LAP.

The designation seeks to prevent their utilisation for other, possibly inappropriate, activities, by safeguarding them for future housing development.

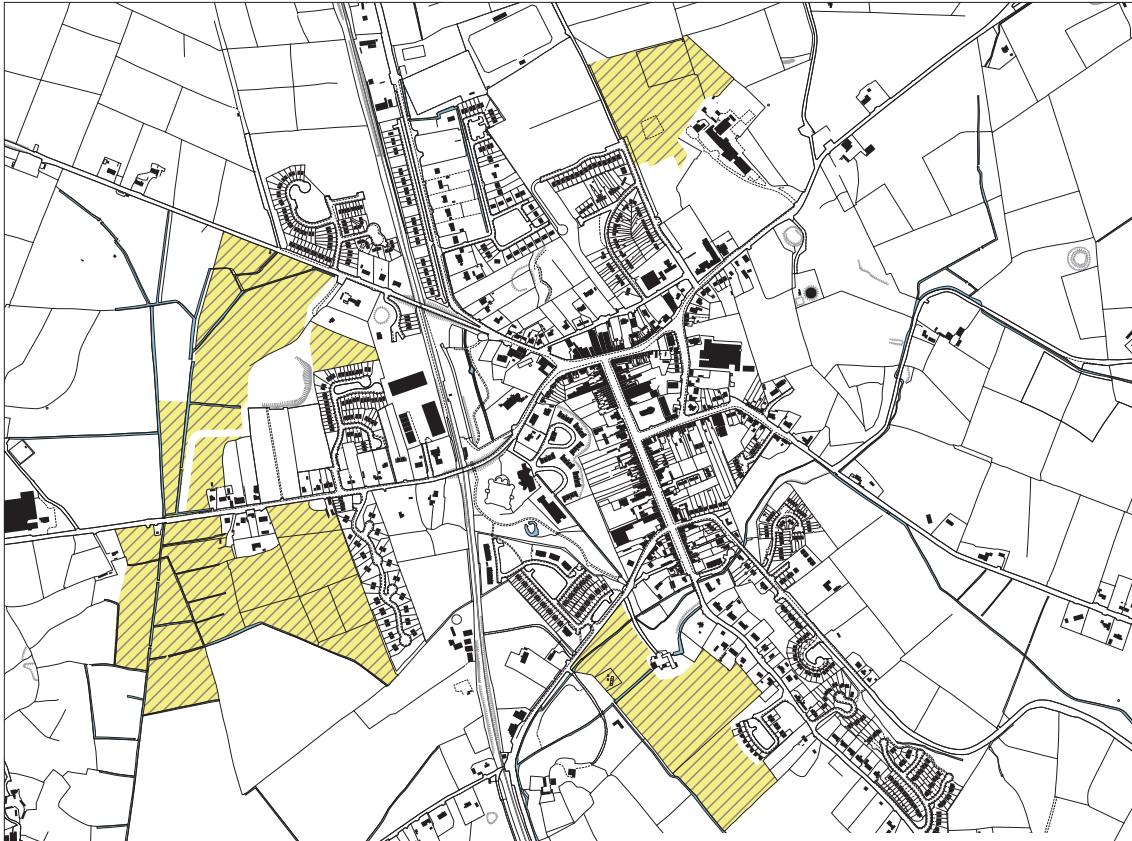


Fig. 3.D Extent of the Strategic Land Reserve

The basis for such designation is the strategic zoning policy SP-Z-3 (Section 3.4 Development land requirements) of the CDP.

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.*

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 the Strategic Land Reserve and shall only be developed when future Housing Strategies will call for additional zoned land.

In exceptional circumstances, should the supply of residential land prove insufficient in Ballymote during the lifetime of the CDP, it may be possible to release land from the Strategic Land Reserve by zoning it for residential uses by amending the Local Area Plan.

The need for any such land release shall be supported by factual evidence, corroborated by the results of the housing vacancy monitoring process.

Strategic Land Reserve 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 2012-2018, except for one-off rural housing in cases of genuine rural-generated housing need which comply with policy HP-6 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 lifetimes 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 Ballymote LAP.

3.2.4 Moratorium on multi-unit housing development

Estimates of vacant house numbers produced by County Council planners during the preparation of the CDP tended to confirm the fact that high rates of vacancy exist in many settlements throughout the county. In these settlements, residential development was permitted beyond the level corresponding to the population growth potential. The levels of vacancy in these settlements would be further exacerbated if all the units permitted were to be constructed.

In an economic climate that is likely to encourage migration out of the County, it is improbable that substantial population growth will occur in the short term and help decrease the number of vacant houses. It is likely that the high rates of vacancy will persist for a longer period, beyond the lifetime of this Plan.

Seeking to curtail the increase in residential vacancy in the County, the CDP Core Strategy imposes 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 can accommodate a population which is equal to or higher than the recommended population levels (See Chapter 3 of the CDP).

Ballymote 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 replace previously permitted development (live permissions only) consisting of the same or a higher number of units. Applications for social and special-needs housing are excluded from the moratorium. Refer to **Chapter 5 Housing** of this LAP for more details.

The moratorium should be revisited in 2013, after the publication of all the Census 2011 reports. In the intervening period, the vacancy situation should be monitored by the County Council's area planners.

3.3 Land use zoning

As in most urban areas, it is possible in Ballymote 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.

3.3.1 Types of activity in Ballymote

Mixed-use central zone

The town core operates effectively as the commercial hub of Ballymote and it should continue with this emphasis. Therefore commercial, retail and office development should remain focused on the mixed infill development zone within the town. The amount of land zoned for mixed uses and still undeveloped is 0.6 hectares.

Residential areas

Housing developments extend outwards in almost all directions from the town centre, with a more pronounced “spur” towards south-east. The greenfield lands zoned for residential development, 21.1 hectares in total, are essentially sites with planning permission or sites located close to the centre and community facilities.

It should be noted that additional residential development in Ballymote will only be permitted at a rate which is consistent with the provisions of the Core Strategy for County Sligo (see Chapter 3 of the CDP) as well as with the capacity of infrastructure in the town. No multi-unit residential development can take place before 2013, when the moratorium on this type of development is to be reviewed.

Community facilities

Community facilities can be found throughout Ballymote, with a substantial amount of land occupied by schools to the north-east of the town. A site on the northern town edge, measuring 3.22 ha, previously zoned “sports and leisure”, has been rezoned for community facilities. Over 3 hectares of greenfield land are zoned for the provision of additional community facilities.

Open space, sports and recreational facilities

The Town Park and playing fields are the largest open space areas in Ballymote. A network of linear open spaces has also been incorporated into the zoning. This provides a recreational trail, which encircles the town core. The total area of open space, including playing fields, amounts to circa 22 hectares.

Industry and enterprise zones

Industrial lands have mainly been confined to the approach roads, especially on the western side of the town, thereby ensuring easy access. Additional land, amounting to circa 4 hectares, has been zoned adjoining the existing areas dedicated to industrial development. This should allow for growth in this sector.

Transport node

The area adjoining the train station, where a park-and-ride facility is proposed, and the sites reserved for car parking in the town centre are all included under the term “transport and parking node”.

The full definition of each zoning objective and the Zoning Matrix (which indicates what uses would be permitted in each zoning category) can be found in the Maps Section of this LAP, together with the Zoning Map.

3.3.2 Zoning Map

The Zoning Map (See Maps 2 and 3 in Chapter 12 of this Plan), which indicates largely what type of activities should take place in various areas of Ballymote, must be read in conjunction with the chapters of the LAP corresponding to each activity group.

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).

The development limit encloses an area of circa 160 hectares. Much of this area is taken up by roads. The table below shows the amount of land zoned for various categories of uses in the LAP 2012-2018.

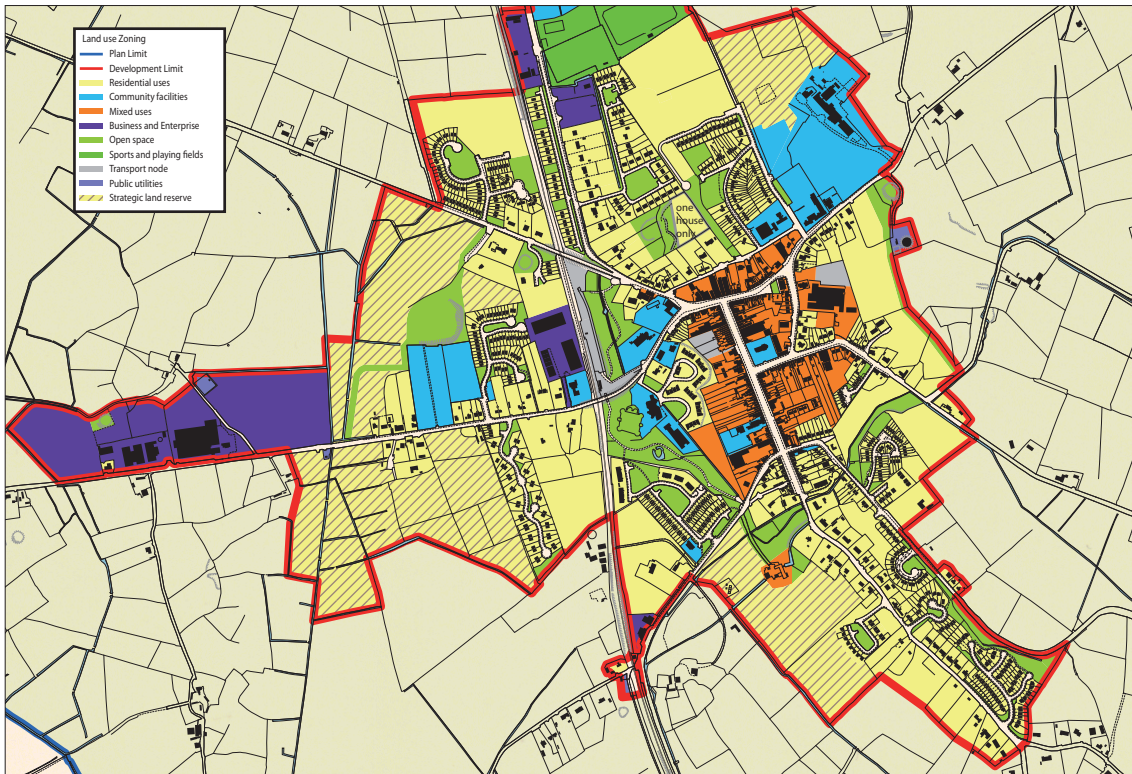


Fig. 3.E Land use zoning in Ballymote LAP 2012-2018
(please refer to Chapter 12 for a larger version of the Zoning Map)

Table 3.F Areas of land zoned for various uses in Ballymote LAP 2012-2018

| Zoning category | Area zoned (hectares) | Area already developed (hectares) | Undeveloped area (hectares) |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| MIX – Mixed uses | 10.74 | 10.14 | 0.6 |
| RES – Residential uses | 64.01 | 42.91 | 21.1 |
| CF – Community facilities | 15.75 | 12.15 | 3.6 |
| BUS – Business, enterprise and light industry | 13.86 | 6.4304 | 7.43 |
| OS – Open space | 18.76 | — | — |
| SPF – Sports and playing fields | 4.47 | 4.47 | — |
| PU – Public utilities | 1.19 | 1.19 | — |
| TPN – Transport and parking nodes | 1.59 | 0.62 | 0.97 |
| SLR - Strategic Land Reserve | 33 | — | 33 |

3.3.3 Development limit and buffer zone

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 Ballymote for the lifetime of the LAP.

Outside the Development Limit, a buffer zone has been established around the town. This zone extends on average to 1 km (between 0.7 and 1.3 km) outside the contiguous built-up area, as measured along the approach roads.

The buffer zone is shown on Fig. 3.G below as the light green area between the development limit (red line) and the Plan limit (blue line).

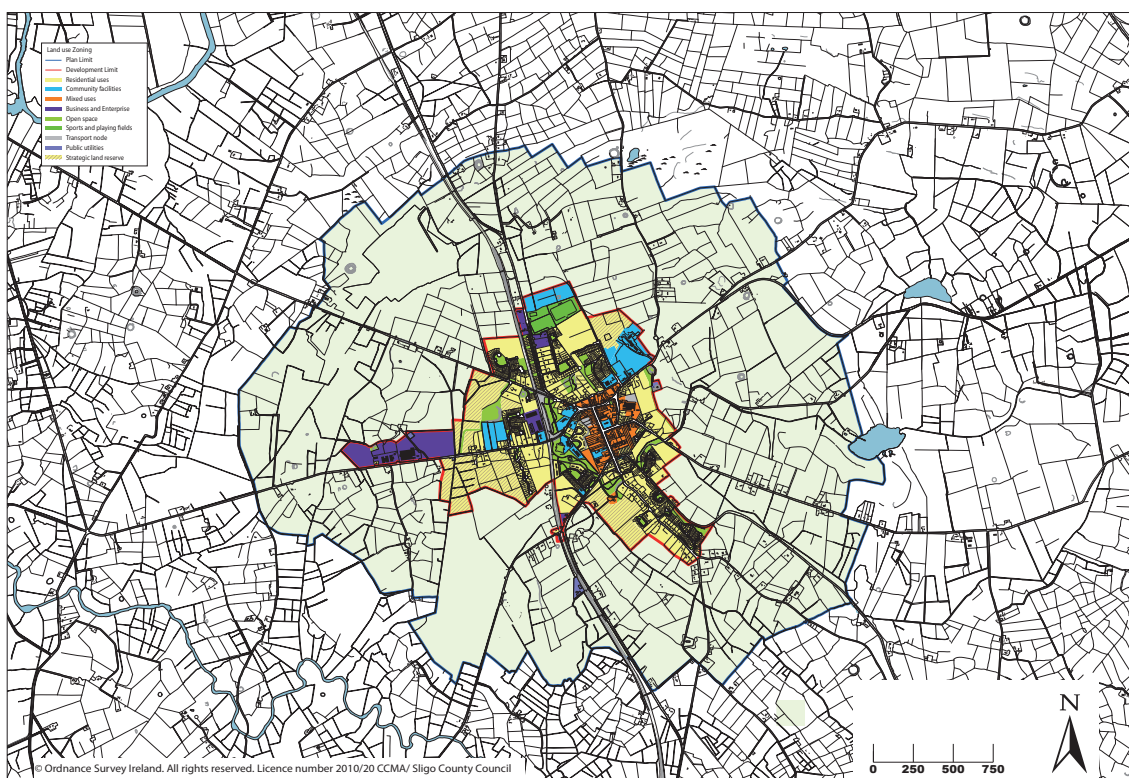


Fig. 3.G Extent of the buffer zone outside the development limit of Ballymote LAP

The CDP, in Section 3.2 **Spatial development framework**, makes provision for the establishment of buffer zones and plan limits, as outlined in the strategic spatial development policy SP-SD-6:

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.*

It is also a strategic zoning policy of the CDP to establish buffer zones around settlements, as indicated in the Section 3.4 Development land requirements of the CDP:

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.*

Buffer zones serve 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.

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.

4. Economic Development



Planning and development issues today have become more complex and frequently overlap with other policy areas such as economic development, transport, education, and health provision. The economic role of Ballymote is acknowledged in the CDP through the town's designation as a Key Support Town. Considering this role assigned to Ballymote, it is imperative that the strategy for economic development in the town focuses on the achievable delivery of local services and potential employment generation.

4.1 Main CDP provisions

Among the strategic goals of the County Development Plan the following are the most relevant for Ballymote:

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.*

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

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 Ballymote, 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 centers, 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-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.*

Retail planning objectives

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

Please note that the policies and objectives outlined in **Chapter 4 Economic Development** of the CDP apply to all future community facilities proposed in Ballymote.

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

Ballymote acts as a service centre for the surrounding rural community of south-east Sligo. Commercial development within the town core includes a supermarket, several convenience stores, cafes, public houses, co-op store, furniture store, hardware store, pharmacies, leisure and beauty facilities, restaurants etc. To provide for a growing population base, the town must strengthen and may need to expand its commercial and retail function in the future.

Ballymote's retail zone is based along Teeling Street, Lord Edward Street and O'Connell Street. To help consolidate the retail core, any further retail development should be directed into these areas, thereby facilitating multi-purpose trips and reducing the number of car movements.

4.2.1 Supermarket

The Sligo City & County Joint Retail Strategy 2010–2017 indicates that during the period 2010–2017, the additional retail floor space requirement for County Sligo is equivalent to a small supermarket. This is to be provided in Ballymote, a Key Support Town, which currently has only one such facility. The Draft Retail Planning Guidelines (2011) state that local area plans have a key role in translating overarching development plan objectives at the local level. Local area plans can outline more refined policies and objectives relating to retail development in the specific area.



The Guidelines indicate that large convenience stores, such as supermarkets and hypermarkets, are now an accepted element of retailing in cities and large towns. They cater primarily for the weekly convenience goods shopping of households.

Wherever possible, large convenience goods stores should be located in city or town centres, or on the edge of centres, to support and add variety and vitality to existing shopping areas and also to facilitate access by public transport for shoppers.

Where a case has been made for an out-of-centre site, the applicant must show, through use of the sequential approach, that the most appropriate site has been chosen.

Section 4.3.2 Projected retail floor space requirements of the CDP outlines that (based on optimistic population projections for the county) the additional retail floor space requirements in the county are estimated at 1,220 sq.m. by 2015, rising to 4,470 sq.m. by 2020 (refer to Tables 5-10 and 5-11 on pages 45 and 46 of the Sligo City and County Joint Retail Strategy). In both instances, there would be scope for higher levels of floor space, should discount retailers enter the market.

Section 7.25 of the Sligo City and County Joint Retail Strategy 2010 – 2016 states that the absence of any secondary convenience goods centre in County Sligo is a serious issue and that the provision of an additional supermarket should only be encouraged in settlements identified as Key Support towns in the County Development Plan.

During the lifetime of the CDP, the scope for further development is limited to one small to medium-sized supermarket (1,000 –1,300 sq.m net).

The Retail Strategy recommends that the additional convenience retail space should be provided in Ballymote, in the form of a supermarket of up to 1,500 sq.m net retail floor space. This supermarket should serve not just Ballymote, but also the residents of the southern part of the County.

4.2.2 Street market

Weekly markets are held every Thursday in Ballymote. Several stalls are set up outside the Emlaghfad Church of Ireland on Lord Edward Street. The location of this casual trading area can cause traffic congestion in the town.

The area to the side of the Church, along Emmett Street, would be a more practical location from which to host this weekly event. Regular public car parking could be restricted in this area during the hours that the casual trading is taking place. Emmett Street does not experience the traffic volumes of Lord Edward Street. Any displaced parking could be accommodated in the proposed off-street car parking area to the rear of Lord Edward Street (see Map 9 in Chapter 12).

It is also acknowledged that there may be suitable places, other than Emmett Street, for the relocation the casual trading area. All available options should be explored before making a decision in this regard.

4.2.3 Vacant retail units



A growing concern in Ballymote is the number of vacant commercial properties. At the time of writing (end of 2011), there were eleven vacant properties, principally contained within O'Connell Street and Grattan Street. This projects an unfavourable image for the town in terms of economic vitality and prosperity.

The commercial property market within the town was slow at the time of writing. There were significant delays in the sale of properties that have gone on the market. This can result in "dead frontage".

To counteract this, it will be necessary to encourage the re-use of existing commercial premises and to promote alternative "active-frontage" uses as part of infill development in the town core.



Retail development policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- RDP-1** Strengthen the retail/commercial, residential and recreational functions of the town centre, retaining retail uses at the ground floor level.
- RDP-2** Promote the re-use of existing vacant retail premises within Ballymote.
- RDP-3** Encourage the retention of traditional shop fronts that enhance the local character of the town's streetscape and provide the town with an attractive appearance to entice investment.
- RDP-4** Encourage, where appropriate, the infilling of brownfield sites within the town core with a diverse range of commercial and retail uses.

Retail development objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- RDO-1** Assess all retail proposals against the criteria and recommendations set down in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012, and the Retail Strategy for County Sligo.
- RDO-2** On the site marked UDO-5 promote the provision of niche commercial development, such as arts and crafts, entertainment units and leisure facilities with associated car park to cater for the expanding population of the town and the surrounding rural hinterland (see Fig. 11.B Urban design objectives in Chapter 11).
- RDO-3** Facilitate the relocation and expansion of the casual trading area to Emmett Street or another suitable place.
- RDO-4** Facilitate the provision of an additional supermarket in Ballymote, or an extension of the existing grocery floor space, with a net retail floor space of up to 1,500 sq.m within the area zoned for mixed uses. The development shall take place on the basis of a masterplan for consolidated landholdings, to ensure the protection of neighbouring amenities and the creation of a high quality urban environment.

4.3 Enterprise and industry

There are a variety of enterprises in Ballymote, including a cattle mart, banks, post office, auctioneers, accountants, solicitors, manufacturing industries etc. However, a high proportion of Ballymote residents commute to Sligo and Carrick-on-Shannon for work. It is therefore important for the sustainability of the town to make available adequate facilities and suitable lands for start up-businesses and for the potential expansion of existing industries and enterprises. Approximately 7.4 hectares of undeveloped lands have been zoned for industrial and light industrial / enterprise use.

4.3.1 Office development

The office base within Ballymote, contained mainly within the mixed-use section of the town centre, provides various financial, legal, and property services to the local community. Conference facilities are available in the Coach House hotel on Emmett Street.

It would benefit the town centre if the majority of future office developments were to be based within the existing mixed-use zone, alongside retail units, thereby facilitating multi-purpose trips.

4.3.2 Local enterprise



A community enterprise centre was officially opened in the town in 1993. This centre provides reasonably priced business space for local enterprises.

On the western edge of the town, a business park was established in 2000, providing the town with 13 workshop units. This was facilitated through Ballymote Community Enterprise, the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) and Sligo Leader Partnership.

At present DF Pharma, Milito Precision Engineering, Peter Mooney Motors and GD Lighting each occupy one unit, Top Chem occupies four units, while five units were vacant at the time of writing. A flexible and supportive approach will be adopted towards proposals for the use of vacant units.

4.3.3 Industrial activity



Manufacturing in Ballymote is located to the west of the town along the R296 (Tobercurry Road). The Tente factory and the OPHardt Hygiene factory, which occupy large sites at this location, employ approximately 140 people from the surrounding area.

Other areas within Ballymote where industrial activities are carried out include a couple of industrial units to the north of the town and the Connacht Co-op Creamery to the south-west.

Teagasc, Sligo County Enterprise Board, Enterprise Ireland and the IDA assist a number of businesses and entrepreneurial developments within Ballymote through grants, advice, training and information.

Industry and enterprise policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- IEP-1** Liaise with the IDA, Enterprise Ireland, County Enterprise Board and developers in encouraging and facilitating new industries and high potential start-ups to locate in Ballymote.
- IEP-2** Adopt a flexible and supportive approach towards proposals for alternative uses for existing vacant units within the business park. In addition to details set out in the zoning matrix, the planning authority will consider a range of suitable uses for these properties, including activities relating to the creative industries, recreational and cultural uses, exhibitions etc.

Industry and enterprise objectives

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- IEO-1** Require appropriate landscaping of all enterprise and industrial developments, so that they integrate sensitively within the natural environment of Ballymote, especially along the western and northern approach routes.
- IEO-2** Require new business, enterprise or industrial units to share access with existing similar developments, where possible.
- IEO-3** If industries requiring large volumes of water wish to locate in any particular settlement, they should seek to use a private water source and provide the necessary wastewater treatment facilities, in the event that the public services do not have the required capacity to deal with the extra loading.

4.4 Tourism



Ballymote and its surrounding area contain a wealth of not only historical features, like Ballymote Castle and Abbey, but also a variety of geographical areas of interest for tourists, such as the Kesh Caves.

Also the lakes and rivers in the surrounding environs of Ballymote are ideal for coarse angling.

Ballymote clearly has the potential to increase its attractiveness for tourists. However, the town's potential to attract visitors has yet to be fully realised.

At present there are a number of B&B's and a hotel within the town, but there is no tourist office in town.

Permission has been granted for the restoration of the the former Corn Mill Complex to provide exhibition areas and a tourist centre with café and restaurant. It is considered that the provision of such a facility could create a focal point for visitors to the area.

Box 4.A Ballymote's assets in terms of tourism potential

- ▶ The Caves of Kesh, located approximately 6 km to the south-east of Ballymote, accessible by the R295
- ▶ Ballymote Golf Course, located 2 km to the south-east, along the L-1604
- ▶ The Town Park, which is circa 11 acres in size and contains a memorial to one of Ballymote's most famous sons, Brother Walfrid (Andrew Kerins, 1840-1915), the founder of Glasgow's Celtic Football Club.
- ▶ The Coleman Traditional Irish Music Centre, in nearby Gorteen village, is a celebration of Irish music, culture and heritage as expressed in the South Sligo Style of music played by Michael Coleman and other musicians of his time. A traditional music festival takes place each year at the end of summer.
- ▶ Fishing at Templehouse Lake, Lough Ardrea, Ballinascarrow Lake and Owenmore River
- ▶ "Eagles Flying", the Irish Raptor Research Centre, accessible from the Templehouse Road, is the largest centre for birds of prey and owls in the country. Visitors enjoy flight demonstration and scientific information on the birds.
- ▶ Ballymote Heritage Weekend takes place annually on the August bank holiday weekend and promotes Ballymote and its history.
- ▶ Temple House Festival, held in June, provides great live music featuring Irish and international talent on 3-4 stages over 3 days, complemented by a host of peripheral activities.

Tourism policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- TOP-1** Improve the visitor experience to the town, and to co-operate with all stakeholders and appropriate agencies in promoting tourism and securing the development of tourism-related enterprises and tourist facilities in the Ballymote area.
- TOP-2** Support the development of niche tourism activities in Ballymote, such as back-to-nature holidays, health farms, eco-tourism etc.
- 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.

Tourism objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- TOO-1** Facilitate the provision of a tourist information office in Ballymote.
- TOO-2** Establish walkways and cycle routes on a legal and permanent basis to include heritage and other attractions, with appropriate signage.



5. Housing



The core objective of the Council's housing policy is to enable every household to avail of an affordable, good-quality dwelling, suited to its needs, in a good environment and, as far as possible, at the tenure of its choice. 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.

5.1 Main CDP provisions

Among the most 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 3L of the CDP, until the year 2013, when a review should be undertaken based on new Census figures.*

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 2000-2010.*

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 Ballymote.

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

5.2 Trends in housing



5.2.1 Housing areas

Ballymote acts as vital economic, social and cultural centre for the people of south Sligo and the continuing challenge is to sustain and enhance the viability and diversity of Ballymote through appropriate development and growth.

Residential development is spread throughout the town, with older terraced houses in the town centre and newer residential estates built on the approach roads and on backlands. The majority of new houses are detached and semi-detached units in a relatively low density setting. There are three local authority housing estates in Ballymote: Marren Park to the north of the town, Hillview estate to the south-east and a social and affordable housing scheme to the north-west. A further local authority housing development of 61 units was permitted in 2007 at Stoneparks.

5.2.2 Housing market

The current housing market in Ballymote appears to be in reasonable health. This can be attributed mainly to the significant reductions in houses prices – on average 30% lower than 2006 prices – and Ballymote's location along the Sligo–Dublin railway line, which provides eight services a day in each direction.

Previously, the majority of house buyers were first-time buyers and investors. However, the investment market has declined dramatically and currently the majority tends to be first-time buyers and retirees. Mostly three- and four-bedroom units are sought. In 2006, 2-3 persons occupied 45.3% of all houses. With a continued drop in household size envisaged over the period of the LAP, two-bedroom houses might become more popular. Currently there are very few such units available in Ballymote.

The rental market is buoyant in Ballymote, with a high demand for two-bedroom houses due to the availability of rent allowance for such units. It is essential that future housing schemes take this into account and provide a suitable mix of house types to meet the requirements of those in need of housing. There is a small number of apartments in Ballymote, most of which are rented.

5.2.3 Recent residential developments

A survey carried out by the County Council's Planning Section in October 2011 counted 902 housing units, an increase of 430 units since 2006, while the Census counted only 472. However, the Census enumeration boundary was slightly different from the development limit of the LAP, which is the area in which the planning staff counted housing units in 2011

Since 2003, 17 residential developments have been permitted in Ballymote, totalling 583 residential units (including the 61 local authority houses mentioned above). Of those permitted, 260 houses have been completed and 8 houses are under construction.

Work has not commenced on 315 dwellings (including local authority units). Of these 315 units, 211 still have the benefit of planning permission.

Table 5.A Housing applications in Ballymote (2003 to October 2011)

| Total number of units in permitted housing developments | 583 units |
|---|-----------|
| Number of completions | 260 units |
| Permitted but not built | 211 units |
| Under construction | 8 units |

The number of dwelling houses permitted but not yet built (211) and the 8 units under construction indicate a potential increase of 219 housing units, which could bring the total number of houses in Ballymote to 1,121. Should all the permitted units be built, it would lead to a growth of 24% in housing capacity, possibly with a corresponding rise in population.

The 2011 survey estimated a residential vacancy rate of 8.9% (80 units). This rate is considered to be moderate/low. However, there are some concerns of a potential over-supply of housing in the future if a significant portion of the aforementioned 211 units were completed and placed on the market. It is not clear at this stage if the residential demand in Ballymote will continue to remain at a reasonable level, given the unfavourable economic conditions.

Table 5.B Growth in the number of residential units, 1996 to 2011

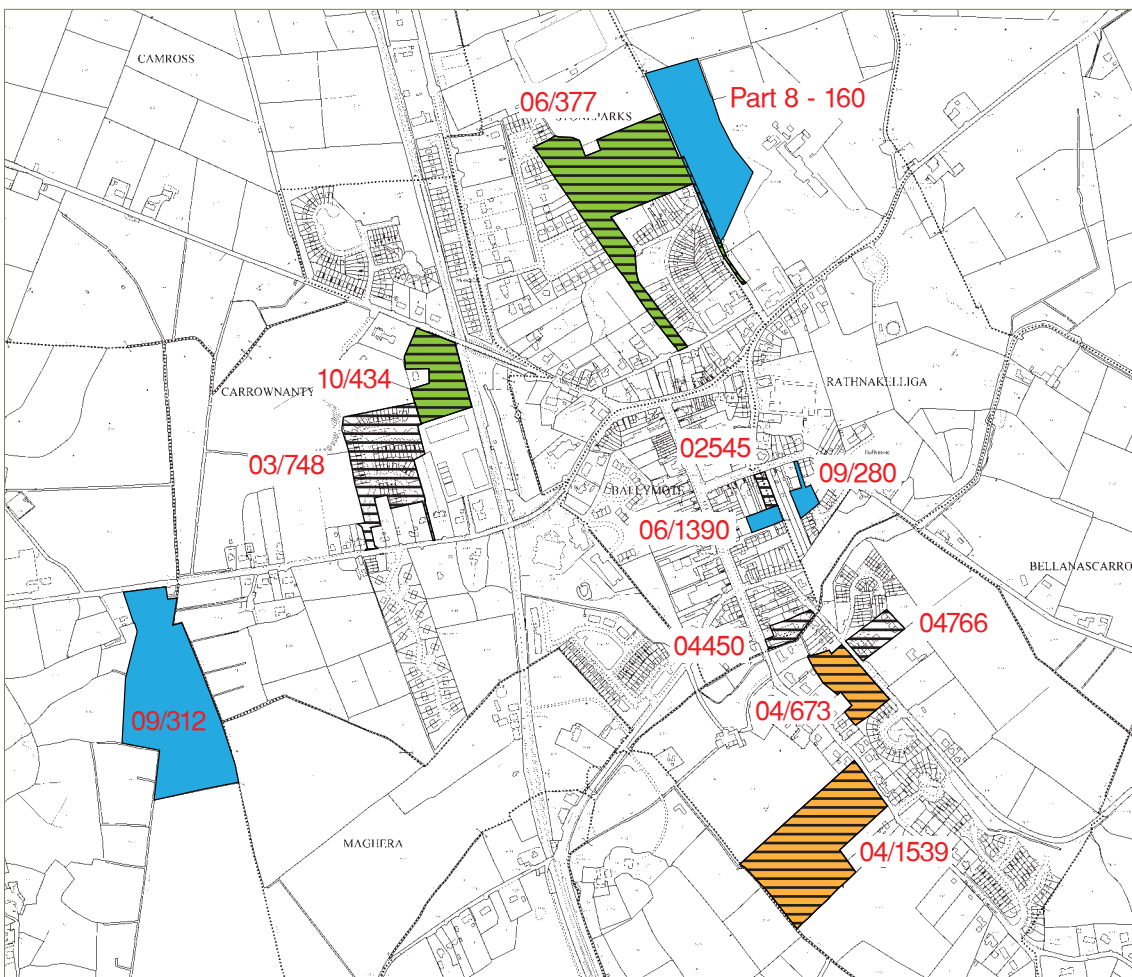
| Year | Number of houses | Percentage change from previous census |
|-------------------------|------------------|--|
| 1996 (Census) | 325 | n/a |
| 2002 (Census) | 354 | +8.9% |
| 2006 (Census) | 472 | +33.3% |
| 2011 (in-house survey*) | 902 | +91% |

* Note that the Census enumeration boundaries are slightly different from the development limit of the Ballymote LAP. The In-house survey counted houses within the development limit.

Table 5.C Status of permitted residential development in Ballymote - December 2011

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

Fig. 5.D Location of permitted residential development in Ballymote (December 2011)



5.2.4 Unfinished housing estates

In July 2011, the National Housing Development Survey – a survey undertaken on behalf of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government – identified 8 housing developments in Ballymote that were categorised as “unfinished”. They are shown on Fig. 5.E below, with details in Table 5.F.

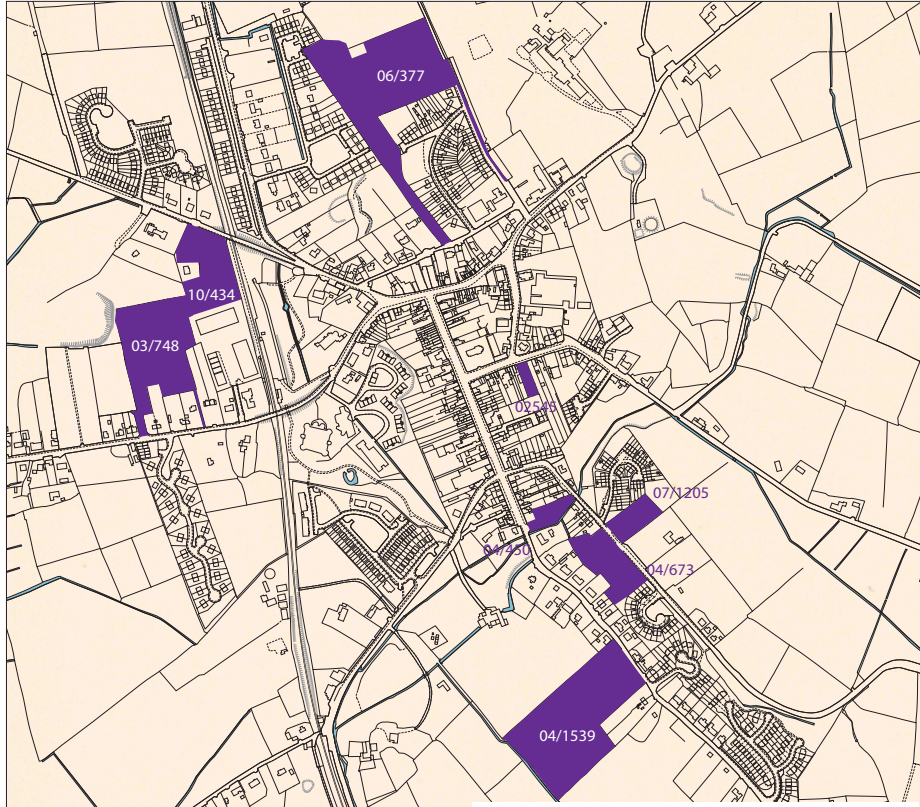


Fig. 5.E Location of unfinished housing estates in Ballymote

Table 5.F Unfinished housing estates in Ballymote, 2011

| Name of housing development | Development address | Planning file number and date of granting PP | Number of permitted units | Number of finished units | Number of vacant units | Vacant units in December 2011 (in-house survey) |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Cois na Dun | Carrownanty | PL 00/1148 03/04/2003 | 20 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| Earls Court | Stroneparks & Earlsfield | PL 06/377 28/11/2006 | 73 | 13 | 1 | 3 |
| Mill Race View | Wolfe Tone St. | PL 04/450 03/08/2004 | 8 | 8 | 0 | 6 |
| Newtown Park | Keenaghan | PL 04/673 27/09/2004 | 19 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Patrick Mullen development | Keenaghan | PL 04/766 21/10/2004 | 9 | 5 | 5 | 2 |
| The Downs | Keenaghan | PL 04/1539 17/10/2005 | 51 | 7 | 6 | 6 |
| The Mews | Emmett Street | PL 02/545 06/02/2003 | 8 | 8 | 0 | 4 |
| Tower Hill | Carrownanty | PL 03/748 15/03/2004 | 55 | 55 | 2 | 17 |

5.3 Housing provision 2012-2018

5.3.1 Moratorium on multi-unit housing development

Ballymote is one of the settlements affected by the moratorium on multi-unit housing developments, given its vacancy rate and the amount of development already permitted but not completed. As detailed in the CDP, the moratorium is to be applied in those settlements where the available housing capacity plus the potential capacity of permitted (and not yet built) housing development can accommodate a population that is equal or higher than the CDP-recommended population for that settlement. This is indeed the case of Ballymote.

Given the large number of housing units permitted and not yet built (see subsection 5.2.3 above), it might seem unnecessary to make provision for additional residential development in Ballymote for the lifetime of this LAP. However, some developments might not be constructed at all, given the number, size and type of permitted units. In order to satisfy the demand for particular house types (e.g. two-bedroom units, as discussed above), new applications might be submitted on lands with live planning permission.

After 2013, if the existing and potential housing capacity diminishes significantly, the moratorium on multi-unit housing development will cease to have effect in Ballymote (a variation of the CDP will be required). Therefore, it is essential to put in place clear guidance in respect of new residential development in the town.

The moratorium applies exclusively to multi-unit housing schemes and will 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

A total of 21.1 hectares of land is zoned for residential development in the LAP 2012-2018. This is in accordance with the Core Strategy for County Sligo, which allocates a maximum of 21 hectares to housing development in Ballymote.

The 21.1 hectares do not include small infill and backland sites zoned for housing or mixed uses. Considering an average gross density of 18 units/hectare, the land zoned residential has the potential to add 370 dwellings to the existing 902.

However, residential development will only be permitted in a manner and which is consistent with the Core Strategy (Chapter 3) as well as with the capacity of infrastructure in the town.

5.3.3 Prioritising housing development

The Council acknowledges that priority needs to be given to the completion of unfinished housing estates. Where necessary, planning permissions will be extended to facilitate the completion of these estates.

Developments already permitted, but not yet commenced, will be able to proceed as planned before the respective permissions lapse.

Any revised or new planning applications will be considered on lands with live planning permission only if the proposed number of houses is equal to or lower than that originally permitted.

Where permissions expire and no development has commenced, new applications will only be considered if:

- a. the moratorium on multi-unit housing developments has ceased to have effect in Ballymote (by variation of the County Development Plan)
- b. the lands are zoned for residential uses (i.e. not included in the Strategic Reserve)
- c. there is sufficient capacity in the existing infrastructure to serve the proposed development.

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 Ballymote.

5.3.4 Preferred location of new housing

Future housing areas must be located having regard to the principle of sequential development, whereby areas closer to the town centre will be prioritised for development in advance of lands further from the town centre.

The moratorium does not apply to infill developments, renovations and replacements, for which there are many opportunities in Ballymote. The town has many sites suitable for infill development, ranging from existing derelict sites with street frontage to underused backlands areas and brownfield sites.

In the short term, residential development should be focused on such backland and infill sites, allowing for permeability and interconnection.

The sensitive redevelopment of these sites will play a significant role in the consolidation and sustainable development of the town. Residential uses are an important element in the vitality of the town centre as a mixed use zone.

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, the provision of quality residential amenity and the protection of the amenity of existing surrounding uses.

5.3.5 Design of residential development

All proposals for residential developments must comply with the provisions of Chapter 12, Development Management Standards of the CDP 2011-2017.

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 minimize trips by car.

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 DoEHLG publication *Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns and Villages)*, 2009.

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 may 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).

5.4 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 requires developers to reach an agreement with the Council and reserve land or sites 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).

5.5 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 the refugees.

Relevant policies are included in Section 5.6 of the CDP. These policies are applicable to Ballymote, but there is no specific objective regarding the provision of special-needs housing in the town during the period 2012 to 2018.

5.6 Housing in the buffer zone

A buffer zone has been defined around Ballymote (shown on the Zoning Map between the Development Limit and the Plan Limit) in order to contain and consolidate the town while safeguarding land for its future expansion.

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 below.



Housing policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- HP-1** Co-operate with the Council's Unfinished Estates Team to facilitate the completion of unfinished housing estates. Where necessary, planning permissions will be extended in order to achieve completion.
- HP-2** Facilitate the development of a HSE primary care unit and other community facilities (e.g. nursing home) compatible with residential uses on lands zoned for housing development, where appropriate.
- HP-3** Encourage the development of housing and/or a mix of residential and other uses on brownfield and infill sites in the town centre.
- HP-4** 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 capacity. Public wastewater infrastructure should be in place, with adequate capacity, prior to developments being occupied.
- HP-5** Consider new applications for multi-unit residential development only if:
- the moratorium on multi-unit housing developments has ceased to have effect in Ballymote (by variation of the County Development Plan)
- AND
- the lands are zoned for residential uses, i.e. not included in the Strategic Reserve;
- AND
- there is sufficient capacity in the existing infrastructure to serve the proposed development.

Housing policies within the buffer zone

- HP-6** 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.
- HP-7** 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 Ballymote.

6. Community facilities



The term “community facilities” covers numerous amenities and services that are provided for public use, including spaces for education, childcare, healthcare, but also recreational outlets and burial grounds. If Ballymote is to grow as a Key Support Town, the range and quality of its community facilities should be strengthened and expanded, in order to secure social inclusion and an enhanced quality of life.

6.1 Main CDP Provisions

The provisions of the CDP most relevant to Ballymote 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.*

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-9 *Preserve and improve access for the public to coastal, riverside, upland and other areas that have traditionally been used for outdoor recreation, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.*

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.*

Burial grounds policies

P-BG-1 *Provide or assist in the provision of new burial grounds and extensions to existing burial grounds, by reserving sufficient land in suitable locations.*

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

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



6.2.1 Schools

The provision of education and its associated facilities has an integral 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.

A number of education facilities are present in Ballymote:

- the National School has 227 pupils (206 in 2005);
- Colaiste Mhuire provides secondary education for 270 pupils (365 in 2005);
- the Corran College has 134 post-leaving-cert students (100 in 2005).

Corran College currently offers two PLC courses: Horticulture and Nursing / Community & Healthcare. The former Corran College building is adjacent to the new-build Corran College and two classrooms in the old school are still utilised.

6.2.2 Training facilities

The Teagasc training centre, located close to the IDA Business Park, is currently being extended. Teagasc provides training in Agriculture such as farming practices, discussion group meetings, seminars, vocational farming, food courses, REPs courses and also computer training for farmers.

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

6.2.3 Family Resource Centre

The Family Resource Centre was established in Ballymote in 2001. Since then, it has expanded both its premises and its programmes, projects and community development initiatives in Ballymote and the rural hinterland.

The Resource Centre offers support to the young and the old, to disabled people, persons with drug addictions etc. It provides counselling, it organises summer camps, craft workshops and much more.

The Centre is a FETAC-registered education facility, capable of providing courses for early school leavers and the long-term unemployed.

A Youth Club and Youth Café are also organised, as well as parent-and-toddler and women's group meetings.



6.3 Childcare facilities

Increasing numbers of people in the workforce and changing lifestyles have increased the demand for childcare facilities in Sligo's communities. The Spraoi – Ballymote Community Childcare Centre – which was opened in 2005 beside the primary school, provides a pre-school child minding service and currently caters for 65 children. The centre employs 5 full-time staff and 11-part time staff.

The Ballymote Family Resource Centre provides parent and toddler group sessions on Wednesday mornings and also play workshops.



6.4 Primary care, mental health and older persons' health care facilities

6.4.1 Primary Care Centre

Ballymote badly needs a Primary Care Centre, which will host the HSE's East Sligo Primary Care Team, covering a population of circa 6,000. A public health centre has been provided on Teeling Street in temporary, rented premises.

The Rock Health Centre along Lord Edward Street provides a mental health day centre. It also provides clinical accommodation for 11 staff working in Mental Health Services. The building has been refurbished and this has improved the environment for patients, staff and the local community.

The HSE has indicated that its preferred policy is that of integration of services in the community. This LAP reserves sufficient lands for the provision of new community facilities. It is considered that the needed Primary Care Centre can be accommodated without difficulties on such lands.

6.4.2 Older persons

The Sisters of St. John of God founded Ballymote's original Health Unit in 1953. The Ballymote Community Nursing Unit is now run as an independent company on behalf of the HSE. The nursing unit provides 25 beds and a number of facilities and services including outreach programmes, physiotherapy, wound care clinics, anti-natal classes, chiropody and a day care centre.

St. Vincent de Paul provides elderly accommodation adjacent to the nursing unit. There are 28 units in total and home-help and meals on wheels are provided based on the need of the inhabitants of these units by the HSE. If necessary, additional nursing care facilities can be accommodated either on lands zoned for community facilities or on lands zoned for residential uses.

6.5 Cultural facilities



6.5.1 Ballymote Town Library

A new, modern, well-equipped library was officially opened in May 2011. The library is located at Teeling Street, having moved out of the inadequate premises in the Courthouse building. The Library is well stocked with books, cassette tapes, DVDs, CDs, and a reference library, including information on local history and much more. A free internet service, as well as daily and weekly papers and many weekly and monthly publications are also available. A book club has been established. Its members meet on the last Tuesday of each month. Information on the opening hours, library events, contact details and library facilities are all available on www.sligolibrary.ie.

6.5.2 Former cinema

The newly refurbished former cinema building on Teeling Street was officially opened in June 2012. The theatre can accommodate 220 people and will offer local drama groups and schools an appropriate venue in which to perform their annual productions.

6.5.3 Loftus Hall

Loftus Hall, at the corner of Abbey Terrace, dates from circa 1864 and has had many uses: parish church, parish hall and boys school. All the uses have been community-based. In time, the building has been extended. It is now used as a community centre after being refurbished by FAS in 1993-94. It hosts local meetings, discussion groups and other evening activities. The Hall forms an integral part of the cultural history of Ballymote and should be retained for community-based activities.

6.6 Sports and recreation facilities

6.6.1 Sports grounds

Gaelic football is played in Corran Park, while soccer is played in Brother Walfrid Kerins Park at the sports grounds to the north of Ballymote. The sports grounds also include a floodlit all-weather playing pitch.

Due to the increase in population, further lands have been identified to facilitate sports and leisure activities. The lands identified are adjoining the existing sports pitches, in order to consolidate these activities and allow for possible sharing of facilities.

Ballymote also has one of the best provincial indoor handball alleys in Ireland. The handball club offers coaching facilities and arranges matches nationwide. Permission has been granted for the provision of a new handball alley within the sports grounds to the north of the town.

Ballymote's 9-hole golf course is located approximately 1 km to the south-east of the town, providing the area with a challenging course.

6.6.2 Recreation areas



Ballymote's main area of recreational open space is its Town Park, which is approximately 11 acres (4.45 hectares). The park provides Ballymote with a high-quality open-space environment which is maintained to a high standard.

A small area of green open space has been provided outside the old Court House on Teeling Street. Various other amenity open spaces are located within the residential areas.

The increased population in Ballymote means that not only will open space need to be meaningfully accommodated within individual housing developments, but further public open space will need to be provided. Therefore, specific tracts of land need to be reserved to link open spaces and maintain areas in the interest of visual, natural amenity and bio-diversity.

6.6.3 Green corridors

One of the aims of this Plan is to establish an open space network within Ballymote, incorporating key landscape features such as:

- views
- archaeological features
- stream corridors and wetlands
- significant hedgerows and mature trees

The intention is to facilitate pedestrian circulation around the town via such open space / green links. These links could be informal areas with informal tree planting reducing both development and maintenance costs. Developments permitted during the period of the current LAP have taken open space links into consideration (see Map 6 in Chapter 12).

Green corridors objective

It is the objective of Sligo County Council to:

- GCO-1** Establish an open space network encircling Ballymote incorporating the following key landscape features:
- a. Ballymote Castle, Town Park and Friary;
 - b. The former Corn Mill;
 - c. The wetland area and stream corridor in Keenaghan;
 - d. The ridgeline running to the archaeological ringfort;
 - e. The mature tree line of the former Earlsfeld Estate House running up to the town's sports grounds;
 - f. The old Emlaghfad Church (Col).

6.7 Other facilities

6.7.1 Garda Station

The new Garda barracks is located along O'Connell Street and was officially opened in October 2010. The old barracks was located along Lord Edward Street. The barracks covers one of the biggest districts in Ireland, which includes Ballymote and surrounding environs such as Riverstown, Aclare, Tobercurry, Enniscrone, Easky, Ballyfarnon and Gorteen. The Station employs twenty-six Garda and three Sergeants.

6.7.2 Fire Station

The new Fire Station was officially opened in May 2010 on the site of the former fire station. The station covers Ballymote and the surrounding environs including Riverstown, Gurteen, Castlebaldwin, Coolaney, Ballinacarrow, Culfadda, Sooeey and Geevagh. The station employs seven firemen.

6.7.3 Burial grounds

Ballymote’s graveyard is located to the west of the town at Carrownanty. It is important to recognise the long-term implications of the increased population base on the town’s cemetery. There are several options for possible future expansion, but no lands have been designated specifically for this purpose.

6.7.4 Allotments

An allotment is defined as an area of land comprising not more than 1,000 square metres, which is let or available for letting to and cultivation by members of a local community who live near the allotment, for the purpose of the production of vegetables or fruit, mainly for consumption by the cultivators or members of their family.

Sligo County Council recognises that the public’s interest in growing fruit and vegetables locally has increased significantly in recent years. The planning authority will therefore facilitate the development of allotments on suitable sites. Such sites should be consistent with the terms of the definition above and should be located within or close to the town, where they will be more easily accessible to all sections of society.

It is not considered necessary to zone land exclusively for allotments or assign an “allotment objective” to one or more designated sites. The development of allotments could take place on sites zoned for various other uses, with the agreement of the landowners, provided that such developments do not contravene other policies or objectives of the LAP or prevent their future implementation.

Community facilities policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- CFP-1** Support the provision of a Primary Care Centre to serve Ballymote and the surrounding area with a range of health services integrated into the community.
- CFP-1** Maintain and enhance existing sports, recreational and playground facilities and provide additional such facilities, if necessary and feasible.
- CFP-2** Encourage the provision of crèche/childcare, healthcare and elderly care facilities within the development limits of villages, on sites that are easily accessible for all sections of the community.
- CFP-3** Promote cultural development and the provision of associated facilities that acknowledge and build upon local character and distinctiveness.
- CFP-4** Support the development of allotments at suitable locations, within or close to the town, provided that such developments do not contravene other policies or objectives of the LAP or prevent their future implementation.

Community facilities objectives

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- CFO-1** Retain Corran College for various community-based day and evening classes and groups.
- CFO-1** Retain Loftus Hall for community-based events and activities.

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 Ballymote'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 Ballymote.

The following sections do not substitute, but complement the provisions of the CDP. It is recommended to consult Chapter 7 of this LAP in association 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 immediate environs of Ballymote are not covered by natural heritage designations such as Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) or (proposed) Natural Heritage Area ((p)NHA).

Ballymote is located within a rural landscape mainly in agricultural use. Within this broader matrix of improved grassland, there are patches of seminatural habitats (wetlands, woodlands, hedgerow networks and drainage ditches) which are important for wildlife and which function as wildlife reservoirs and corridors.

Ballymote is surrounded by five wetland sites of high value local importance, namely Ballybrennan Bog, Maghera Bog, Carrigans Upper, Bellanascarrow Lough and Ardrea Lough.

In the wider area there are designated sites to be found such as at Cloonacleigha Lough and Templehouse Lake cSAC (Site Code 000636). These lakes, located in the Owenmore Water Management Unit (WMU – as designated by the Western River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015), are described in the WMU Action Plan as being of “moderate status” in terms of water quality from a biological point of view. The Action Plan indicates that the water quality of these lakes must be improved by 2021.

The Owenmore River, which flows to the west of Ballymote, provides the main natural drainage network for the plan area. A dense network of streams and drains within the environs of Ballymote is connected to this river. The Owenmore River discharges into Templehouse Lake, which forms part of the Cloonacleigha Lough and Templehouse Lake cSAC.

The Ballymote wastewater treatment plant discharges directly to the Owenmore River, upstream of Templehouse Lake. There is a clear potential for inappropriate developments within the Plan area to have a negative impact on the designated heritage site. The potential for such impacts will be assessed as per the CDP objective O-NH-2 (see subsection 7.1.1 below). All development proposals will be subject to screening (as a minimum) in accordance with the Habitats Directive.

Throughout the Plan area, strictly protected species such as Otter and Bat are known to occur. Other protected animal and plant species may also be present.

The CDP 2011-2017 includes policies and objectives designed to ensure the protection of the natural environment both within and outside designated natural heritage areas. All these policies are applicable to Ballymote, as appropriate.

7.1.1. Main CDP provisions

Among the most relevant policies and objectives of the CDP applicable to development in Ballymote 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-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 the 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 (CRZs) 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 Ballymote’s hedgerows as wildlife corridors

Significant hedgerows and tree groups are evident in and around Ballymote, such as the trees in Ballymote’s Town Park, around the former Corn Mill and in the north-east of the town adjacent to the convent school.

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.

The railway line provides the town with an optimal wildlife corridor. The Town Park has been created alongside part of this railway line, thus extending the opportunity for wildlife to migrate.

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.

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 movement corridors, 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.



7.1.3 Water-based habitats

A number of stream channels, drainage ditches and wetland areas occur within the surroundings of Ballymote. It is important, especially in terms of biodiversity, to maintain these water sources by incorporating them into the framework of the Plan. 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).

Bellanascarrow Lake is situated one mile east of Ballymote. This lake holds stocks of bream, rudd, hybrids and carp. The Owenmore River flows approximately two miles to the south-west of Ballymote. This river is important for fish stocks and currently has poor water quality. The water quality in the Owenmore must be improved to Good Status under the Water Framework Directive.

The water quality of these waterways should not be compromised by any development within Ballymote. All the above components can assist in the integration of future development into the existing landscape while sustaining the biodiversity and water quality of the area.

Natural heritage policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- NHP-1** Encourage the retention and enhancement of existing habitats and biodiversity in Ballymote.
- NHP-2** Require developers to retain existing significant hedgerows, tree groups and wetlands and incorporate these features into their developments where possible.

7.2 Archaeological heritage

Archaeology is an irreplaceable resource, a link with the past which can be found in every townland of County Sligo. Ballymote is no exception. The town contains many sites of archaeological interest. Throughout the Plan area, archaeological features are apparent in the form of ringforts, ancient field patterns, souterrains and enclosures. Map 7 in Chapter 12 illustrates this rich presence of archaeological sites in Ballymote.

It is essential to protect the archaeological remnants of the past, while continuing to address the practical requirements of a modern society. It is possible to avoid conflict between the old and the new by raising the awareness of prospective applicants or developers at the pre-planning consultation stage.

Proposed developments that may (due to their location, size or nature) have implications for the 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 (1/2 hectare or more) or length (1 kilometre or more) and developments that require an Environmental Impact Statement.

The archaeological heritage of an area includes National Monuments in the care of the State; archaeological and architectural monuments and sites in the Record of Monuments and Places and the Register of Historic Monuments; zones of archaeological potential in Historic Towns; the underwater archaeological heritage, including Historic Wrecks; unknown and unrecorded archaeological sites (including subsurface elements with no visible surface remains); potential sites located in the vicinity of large complexes of site or monuments, present or former wetlands, unenclosed land, rivers or lakes, or the inter-tidal zone.

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 and some sites post 1700 AD. A zone of archaeological potential 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 County Council offices and public libraries.

The maps (i.e. the Sites and Monuments Record for County Sligo) showing the archaeological sites throughout County Sligo, are subject to periodic updating. Thus, the most recent edition should be consulted. The RMP is obviously not an exhaustive list of all archaeology in existence. The updated maps and accompanying manuals are referred to as "The Record of Monuments and Places" due to the adoption of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994.

Anyone intending to carry out works that may interfere with a monument site is required to give two months notice to the DoEHLG, who will specify what, if any, precautions or actions are required.

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 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.*



Ballymote Castle is located to the west of the town, not far from the remains of the Franciscan friary and graveyard. The Castle is a fine example of a medieval fortification and stronghold.

Consolidation and stabilisation works are continually being carried out in order to preserve the castle in-situ by the OPW on behalf of the Minister of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Interpretative signage has been put in place detailing the historic background of this site.

Archaeological heritage policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- AHP-1** Protect the archaeological heritage of Ballymote 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 relevant Department, 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.

Archaeological heritage objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- AHO-1** Support the Office of Public Works in its restoration work of Ballymote Castle and associated provision of public access and interpretation.
- AHO-2** Safeguard the continuing existence of the Franciscan Abbey and ensure the continued maintenance of the adjoining graveyard.
- AHO-3** Support the restoration of the former Mill Complex.
- AHO-4** Support access to the various sites of archaeological importance within Ballymote, with the co-operation of the private landowners.
- AHO-5** Integrate, where possible, sites of archaeological interest – such as the star-shaped fort at the old Emlaghfad COI on the Gorteen Road – into the walking trail and proposed open space network of Ballymote.

7.3 Architectural heritage

The architectural heritage is a unique resource, an irreplaceable expression of the richness and diversity of the past. Ballymote's buildings have a range of significant architectural styles that deserve recognition for their individual architectural merit.

The CDP 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.*

Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA)

- P-BH-6** *Ensure that any development, modifications, alterations, or extensions affecting a protected structure, adjoining structure or structure within an ACA is sited and designed appropriately and is not detrimental to the character of the structure, to its setting or the general character of the ACA.*
- 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/roof 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.*

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 includes 400 structures, of which 23 are located in Ballymote. The location of these structures is shown on Map 8 in Chapter 12.

A protected structure, unless otherwise stated in the RPS, includes the interior of the structure, the land lying within its curtilage, any other structures (and their interiors) lying within that curtilage plus all of the 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 change 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 Ballymote'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).

7.3.3 Architectural Conservation Area

Developed mainly in the late 18th century, the town of Ballymote hosts a significant group of structures of heritage value that require protection and conservation.

The need to protect these buildings and the character of their settings is acknowledged in the CDP and in this Plan.



Ballymote's architectural distinctiveness is displayed in the street layout and in the way that the building line and form provide a strong sense of enclosure and visual cohesiveness. This is particularly evident as you move from O'Connell Street up towards Lord Edward Street and into Teeling Street. It is therefore considered appropriate to establish an Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA) comprising portions of the main streets of the town.

The principal consequence of ACA designation is the control of inappropriate development for the purpose of preserving and enhancing the character of the area concerned. The designation of an ACA will give protection to parts of the built heritage that may not warrant inclusion in the RPS, but without which, the area would be characterless.

The extent of the Ballymote ACA is shown on Fig. 7.A below and also on Map 8 in Chapter 12.

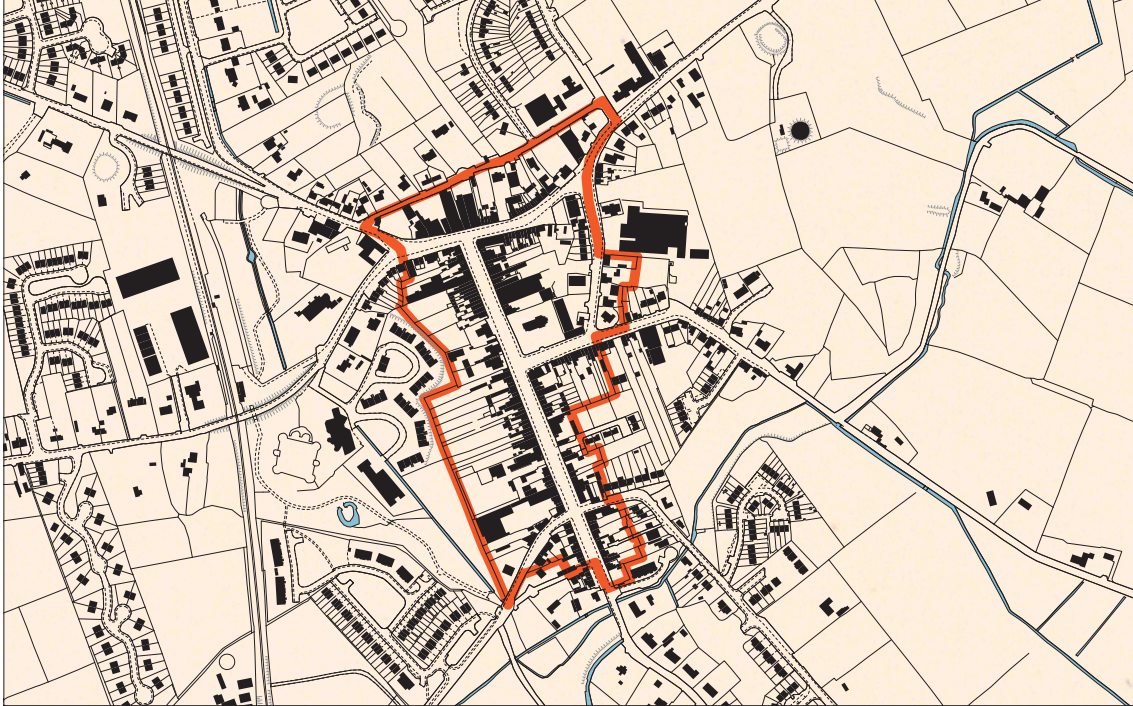


Fig. 7.A Extent of the Architectural Conservation Area in Ballymote

Ballymote ACA management policies - existing built fabric

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

Streetscape

ACAP-1 Conserve and retain original features and decorative elements of streetscape, including bargeboards, railings, etc.

Where there is an opportunity to strengthen the historic fabric within the ACA through conservation/refurbishment or reinstatement, historically appropriate interventions will be preferred.

Plots

ACAP-2 Retain the town plan of narrow building plots. Plot amalgamation and rebuild on street fronts is discouraged. Historic carriageways are to be retained.

Roofs

ACAP-3 Retain existing historic roof profiles and fabric. Retain existing chimney stacks/pots

Rainwater goods

ACAP-4 Encourage the use of Cast Iron/Cast aluminium rainwater goods; uPVC will not be permitted.

[continues on the next page]

Ballymote ACA management policies - existing built fabric (continued)

Windows

- ACAP-5** Require the conservation, retention, and/or reinstatement of traditional features and window elements, such as the original sash and casement windows.
- ACAP-6** Respect the original fenestration patterns, window opening sizes and window alignments of the historic streetscape.
- ACAP-7** Ensure that window designs and details are consistent with original designs, e.g. prohibit swing-out designs where sash windows were the traditional type.
- ACAP-8** Discourage dormer windows. Conservation grade rooflights may be considered to rear roof elevations only.

Doors

- ACAP-9** Original doors are to be conserved, retained and/or replaced. PVC or aluminium-type doors are not acceptable.

Façades

- ACAP-10** Prohibit the painting of cut stone and red brick details or facades of buildings.
- ACAP-11** Retain all decorative elements of facades.

Ballymote ACA management policies - new development

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

Plots

- ACAP-12** Require new developments to respect historic building plots. Plot amalgamation is discouraged.

Heights

- ACAP-13** Require new development to respect historic rooflines. Building heights are restricted to two and three storeys. Where strict rooflines appear along terraces, these have to be adopted.

Building line

- ACAP-14** Retain the character of continuous building lines and terraces.

Design

- ACAP-13** Require the avoidance of historicist styles. Good quality buildings of modern expression are preferred. The involvement of an architect is recommended.

Use

- ACAP-15** Facilitate changes of use only where the existing facades and other significant features are retained as part of the conversion.

Streetscape

- ACAP-16** Remove all overhead wires and cabling at façades.
- ACAP-17** Encourage the provision of street trees, where this is likely to enhance the street.

Street furniture and signage

- ACAP-18** Introduce good quality, modern street furniture, which respects the historic setting without being neo-traditional. Signage will be strictly controlled.

8. Mobility and transport



Development plan policy aims to integrate transport and land use in order to provide a sustainable framework for economic and social development. In promoting the development of Ballymote as a Key Support Town, account was taken of its location along a strategic transport link – the Dublin–Sligo railway line. This link could be expanded through the reopening of the Western Rail Corridor, which connects with the Dublin-Sligo line at Collooney. The promotion of Ballymote and Tobercurry as Key Support Towns, with Collooney and Ballysadare as Principal Gateway Satellites, should help enhance the viability of the Western Rail Corridor and that of local commuter rail services. However, a town the size of Ballymote needs good links to surrounding areas in order to attract future population and businesses. In addition, it needs to provide a choice of transport modes and adequate facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and street users with special mobility needs.

8.1 Main CDP provisions

Some of the most relevant CDP policies and objectives relating to transport and mobility 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-5** *Encourage the shift from car use to more environmentally-friendly modes of transport and ensure the provision of quality interchange facilities between road, rail, bus and bicycle in relevant settlements.*
- 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.*

Public transport policies

- P-PT-3** *Support the provision of a local commuter rail service on the existing mainline railway.*

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.

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

| | |
|------|--|
| R293 | Ballymote to Castlerea (serving Gorteen) |
| R296 | Ballymote to Bunnannaddan to R294 |

Cycling and walking policies

- P-CW-1** Promote walking and cycling as sustainable transport modes and healthy recreational activities.
- P-CW-2** Promote cycling as a viable commuting mode of transport.
- 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.

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-8** Provide appropriate facilities for pedestrians and for people with special mobility needs.

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 Ballymote.

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

8.2.1 Local links

Ballymote is approximately 24 km (15 miles) commuting distance from Sligo City and 40 km (25 miles, approx. 40 minutes) from Knock International Airport.

There is no direct access via national routes to Ballymote. The national roads serving the Ballymote catchment area are the N4 and N17.

Linkages to the N4 and N17 are confined to regional and local roads. There are no less than eight roads converging in the centre of Ballymote. The regional roads R293, R294, R295, and R296 connect the town to Collooney, Boyle, Gorteen, Bunnannaddan and Tobercurry (see Map 9 in Chapter 12).

Although significant portions of these roads have been improved in recent years, the investment in upgrading them 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. This is a multi-annual programme. Funding for the realignment of regional roads and the upgrading of bridges comes via *Specific Improvement Grants* from the Department of Transport.

8.2.2 Road condition

- ▶ R293 (from N17 to Ballymote) is in good condition. A lot of restoration work has been carried out on this road in the last five years. Approximately 2-3 km will require improvement works in the coming years.
- ▶ R296 (small section in the Ballymote area) – the condition of this road in the Ballymote area is good. (There are portions in the Tobercurry Electoral Area that require work).
- ▶ R295 (Boyle to Ballymote) is in good condition. Approximately half of this road is in the Ballymote Electoral Area and the other in Tobercurry Electoral Area. A significant amount of works has been carried out in both areas, with further works planned over the coming years.
- ▶ L-1604 (Castlebaldwin to Ballymote) – restoration has been carried out on 4.5 km of this road in the past two years. Improvement works are required on rest of this road, which is in poor condition.
- ▶ L-1502 (N4 junction at Cloonlurg to Ballymote) – 4 km of restoration work has been carried out on this road in the past two years, with further improvement works planned.
- ▶ L-1603 (Templehouse to Ballymote) – restoration work was carried out on this road at Camross in 2010. The rest of the road is in poor condition and improvement works are required.

8.3 Town centre traffic and parking



8.3.1 Street condition

All streets in Ballymote work on a two-way system. Road surfaces within Ballymote are generally in good condition. The following areas and streets having been resurfaced in recent years: Keenaghan Td., Marren Park, Teeling Street, Lord Edward Street, O'Connell Street, Wolfe Tone Street and Upper Carrigans outside the Primary School.

Surfacing works are required on the following: back road fronting the Mart, Teeling Street, Emmett Street, Grattan Street, R293 approach at Stonepark and the R296 at Ballybrennan.

8.3.2 Future streets

The increase in population and car ownership has placed increased pressure on the existing street network.

It is therefore necessary to identify means to maintain good traffic flow and circulation. In order for this to be achieved, there is a need for future auxiliary streets and access points to be created, ensuring accessibility and permeability.

A number of access points and indicative street layouts have been identified on backland areas in parts of the town. Developments permitted during the period of the LAP 2005-2011 have taken these routes into consideration (see Map 9 in Chapter 12 - objective TMO-2).

8.3.3 Car parking

There are both public and private car-parking areas within Ballymote. The train station provides parking for up to 40 vehicles and the Roman Catholic Church also provides car-parking facilities for its patrons. Commercial businesses such as the hotel and supermarkets provide car-parking facilities to the rear of their premises. However, the majority of public car parking within Ballymote takes the form of on-street parking.

Traffic congestion along Teeling Street, Lord Edward Street and O'Connell Street has become a real problem in recent years, due to the haphazard manner in which parking takes place. Along Lord Edward Street and O'Connell Street, cars reverse out of parking spaces using both sides of the road while doing so. This obstructs on-coming traffic, which in turn causes delays in traffic flows.

The delineation of car-parking bays would have a positive effect on the public realm, by reducing the 'car clutter' on the street and re-organising it into a more orderly and manageable form. This would produce an overall improvement of the streetscape.

Notwithstanding the above, additional car parking will need to be accommodated elsewhere in the town centre. Suitable lands have been identified for future car parking to the rear of the Cattle Mart (on days when the mart is not in operation) and to the rear of premises fronting onto Lord Edward Street (see Map 9 in Chapter 12).



8.4 Pedestrian and cycling facilities

It is interesting to note from the 2002 and 2006 Census figures, that by far the preferred form of transport for traveling to work, school or college remains the car, with the bicycle and train almost negligible.

Pedestrian travel within Ballymote has increased slightly, but there is much room for improvement. A concern is the small proportion of Ballymote residents who use bus and bicycle as a means of transport.

The provision and maintenance of high quality walking and cycling infrastructure is critical to reducing the dependence on cars. The provision of adequate, secure cycle parking facilities at suitable locations is also essential. The creation of direct, secure links from residential areas to services and amenities is also necessary for pedestrians and cyclists.

Table 8.A Modes of transport to work, school or college for persons aged 5+

| Census year | Persons travelling on foot – number and proportion | Persons travelling by bicycle – number and proportion | Persons travelling by bus – number and proportion | Persons travelling by train – number and proportion | Persons travelling by motorbike – number and proportion | Persons travelling by car – number and proportion | Other mode of transport – number and proportion | Not stated | Total |
|-------------|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------|------------|
| 2002 | 197 (24%) | 8 (1%) | 41 (5%) | 2 (0.2%) | 2 (0.2%) | 436 (54%) | 102 (13%) | 20 (2.5%) | 808 (100%) |
| 2006 | 215 (28.6%) | 2 (0.26%) | 33 (4.3%) | 3 (0.39%) | 0 (0%) | 300 (39.9%) | 80 (10.6%) | 11 (1.46%) | 751 (100%) |

Source: Small Area Population Statistics, Census 2002

Note: These figures cover the entire Ballymote ED rural and urban district.

However, they are considered representative of the plan area.



8.4.1 Walking

The significant housing development experienced in the last decade in Ballymote has seen residential areas locating further away from the town centre. This has made it more difficult for people to walk to schools, shops, places of work and various community facilities.

In general footpath surfaces within Ballymote are of good quality. The following areas having been upgraded in recent years: Lord Edward Street / O'Connell Street, Wolfe Tone Street, Keenaghan, R295 approach, Teeling Street, Upper Carrigans outside the school and Grattan Street.

Other priority areas where surfaces tend to be uneven and difficult to negotiate (particularly for the elderly, wheelchair users and those with prams) are as follows:

- Section of footpath south-west of the Teeling Street/Lord Edward Street junction;
- Section of footpath from the church to Loftus Hall and to Gilmore's filling station;
- Section of footpath fronting the Mart;
- Section of footpath on Teeling Street adjacent to the Courthouse;
- Section of footpath on Teeling Street, south-west of its junction with the access road to Marren Park;
- Section of footpath on the west side in Keenaghan;
- Small section of footpath on Grattan Street.

In certain areas, where there is a demonstrable need for them, footpaths are completely lacking, such as around the dwelling at the junction of Teeling Street, opposite the petrol station, and along the R296 (to Tobercurry) towards the industrial units, at the western edge of the town. These industrial units employ a number of people who need to be facilitated in terms of pedestrian access to/from the town centre. Therefore, the footpath along this western approach road should be continued as far as the centres of employment. (See Map 9 in Chapter 12 - objective TMO-6)

8.4.2 Cycling

Facilities for cyclists are completely lacking within Ballymote and this situation needs to be addressed. There are no cycling facilities, such as bicycle parking stands/shelters or cycleways available throughout the town or at the schools. Cycling within the area should be facilitated and students, especially those living within the town boundary, should be encouraged to either walk or cycle to school.

8.5 Public transport

Public transport plays an important role in the viability of rural communities in County Sligo. Alongside the promotion of cycle facilities and pedestrian movements, quality bus and rail services can reduce car dependence within and between settlements. Both bus and rail infrastructure serve Ballymote town.

8.5.1 Train services

There are eight daily train services operating between Dublin and Sligo Monday to Friday, seven services on a Saturday and six services on a Sunday. An "early bird" service is provided Monday to Friday from Sligo to Dublin. However, the trains do not operate at times to facilitate commuter transport from Ballymote to Sligo and the fares are prohibitive.

The lack of a commuter service undermines the CDP goal of achieving an efficient, accessible and sustainable transport system for the County.

A locally based action group, South Sligo Rapid Transit Group, commissioned a feasibility study in 2001. The report was an economic, financial and environmental evaluation of proposals to introduce a rail service for commuters living in the Ballymote-Collooney-Ballsodare Corridor, on the existing rail line from Ballymote to Sligo. A commuting service would be of beneficial value to Ballymote town.

Park-and-ride facilities should be provided concomitant with the introduction of commuter rail services. The car park adjoining the railway station, if extended, would allow for the park-and-ride system to operate efficiently, thereby serving the wider area of south County Sligo.

8.5.2 Bus services

Bus Eireann provides Ballymote with a bus service along the Sligo-Roscommon-Athlone line. There is a daily return service four days a week. However, no commuting service is provided. Bus stop facilities could be improved in Ballymote with the introduction of commuting services.

Under the Department of Education and Skills, Bus Eireann provides the schools within Ballymote with a school bus service. To avail of this provision, secondary school students need to be living 4.8 miles or over from the school while primary school students need to be living 3.2 miles or over from their school. Those children living within the aforementioned distances from their school can obtain a seat on the bus, if available, after purchasing a reduced-price ticket from the local Bus Eireann Office. The service includes both morning and evening school drops and buses arriving at the schools are staggered in order to avoid congestion.

Private bus transport, taxi and hackney services are also available within Ballymote and provide services to the schools, the HSE and the residents of Ballymote.

Transport and mobility policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- TMP-1** Within the LAP area, strive to achieve the upgrading of roads, footpaths, entrances, car-parking and junctions wherever possible, along with the development of traffic-calming measures where necessary and the extended provision of pavement appropriate for wheelchair users.
- TMP-2** Require new development 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.
- TMP-3** Provide pedestrian and cycling linkages within and between existing and new housing/mixed-use/sports and recreational development, and schools throughout the area.
Note: The routes of the proposed linkages, as indicated on Map 9 Transport Objectives, are indicative only. The precise route of any such linkage shall be agreed with developers/applicants during the planning application process and shall be included as an integral part of new developments.
- TMP-4** Require the provision of secure cycle parking facilities within new developments, where appropriate.
- TMP-5** Promote the inclusion of bicycle stands within Ballymote's town centre and at the train station.
- TMP-6** Promote the provision of vehicular linkages within the Plan area.
- TMP-7** Support the provision of a commuter rail service between Sligo and Ballymote.
- TMP-8** Support the provision of a commuter bus service between Sligo and Ballymote.
- TMP-9** Support the use of park-and-ride facilities at Ballymote Train Station.

Transport and mobility objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- TMO-1** Undertake road improvements and upgrades along the local roads L-1604 (Castle-baldwin to Ballymote) and L-1603 (Templehouse to Ballymote).
- TMO-2** Reserve access points throughout Ballymote to allow development of vehicular routes to facilitate the sustainable development of backland areas, thereby allowing for improved circulation. Access roads should be overlooked and appropriately landscaped.
- TMO-3** Develop and delineate public car parking spaces at the following locations:
- to the rear of the Cattle Mart area, on days when the mart is not in operation.
 - in the brownfield site to the rear of premises fronting onto Lord Edward Street .
- TMO-4** Delineate parking bays along Lord Edward Street & O'Connell Street.
- TMO-5** Improve the quality of public footpaths at the following locations:
- Section of footpath south-west of the Teeling Street/Lord Edward Street junction;
 - Section of footpath from the church to Loftus Hall and to Gilmore's filling station;
 - Section of footpath fronting the Mart;
 - Section of footpath on Teeling Street adjacent to the Courthouse;
 - Section of footpath on Teeling Street, south-west of its junction with the access road to Marren Park;
 - Section of footpath on the west side in Keenaghan;
 - Small section of footpath on Grattan Street.
- TMO-6** Facilitate the provision of footpaths in the following areas:
- Along the R296 (to Tobercurry) to the industrial units at the western edge of the town;
 - Around the single storey dwelling at the junction of Teeling Street opposite the petrol station.

(Refer to **Map 9 Transport and Mobility Objectives** in Chapter 12)

9. Infrastructure



Investment in infrastructure is a vital component in ensuring the sustainable development of settlements. Ballymote has experienced unprecedented growth over the past decade. 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.

Strategic CDP provisions

The most relevant strategic provisions of the CDP 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.A in the CDP)

| Town/Scheme | Current design PE | Existing outfall/ treatment | New design PE | Remarks |
|-------------|-------------------|--|---------------|--|
| Ballymote | 3000 | inlet works, extended aeration, clarifier, sludge holding tanks, satellite hub centre. | n/a | design review to be completed and upgrade of the existing WWTW to be completed |

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 Ballymote.

The Infrastructure policies and objectives contained in this LAP do not substitute, but complement the provisions of the CDP. It is recommended to consult Chapter 9 of this LAP in association with Chapter 9 of the CDP.

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

9.1 Water supply

Drinking water in Ballymote comes from the Lough Talt regional scheme, which supplies treated water to a wide area in the south and west of County Sligo. The current daily output from the water treatment plant is in the range 8,500 to 9,000m³/day. The Lough Talt Regional Water Supply (RWS) provides treated drinking water to an estimated population of 11,000 living in towns and villages such as Tobercurry, Aclare, Cloonacool, Curry, Banada, Ballymote, Ballinacarrow and Coolaney. Currently the capacity of the scheme is adequate.

Lough Talt drinking water supply, servicing the Plan area, is currently listed on the EPA's Remedial Action List.

The Lough Talt RWS has been included on the EPA's Remedial Action List due to "inadequate treatment for cryptosporidium". Improved water treatment is required for compliance with the EU (Drinking Water) Regulations (No.2) 2007. The existing water treatment plant located in Gortersluin Td. is incapable of consistently producing treated water in compliance with the Regulations. The Lough Talt scheme has been included in the Water Services Investment Programme 2010-2012 and is currently being advanced through the relevant statutory planning and procurement procedures.

It is anticipated that a new water treatment plant will be operational on the scheme during 2014. The new water treatment plant will ensure there is a sufficient potable water supply to meet commercial, industrial, residential and agricultural needs during the LAP period (see Map 10 in Chapter 12).

The ongoing Sligo Water Conservation and Network Management Project will provide for the replacement and rehabilitation of parts of the Lough Talt regional water supply scheme network over the coming years. This work will serve to improve the quality and reliability of water supply to the Ballymote area and will assist in the provision of adequate supply capacity by reducing the overall unaccounted-for water levels.

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.*

General 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.*

9.2 Wastewater treatment

The Ballymote Sewerage Scheme is included in the Water Services Investment Programme 2010-2012 under schemes at planning stage. According to the EPA, Ballymote Wastewater Treatment Plant “failed to meet the overall requirements of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001” in 2010. Discussions are on-going with the Department regarding the upgrading of the existing wastewater treatment plant. The details regarding the design capacity have not been finalised.

There is some residual treatment capacity in the wastewater treatment plant at present to cater for new developments. However, this capacity is limited and will be subject to ongoing review in accordance with the requirements of the EPA wastewater discharge licence.

The hydraulic load exceeds the plant capacity because substantial parts of the existing drainage network in Ballymote are a combined system. The separation of the foul and surface water collection systems, where feasible, will be an important part of the upgrade works on this sewerage scheme. This will ease the pressure on existing sewage treatment facilities.

All new developments will be required to provide separate drainage systems, including SUDs (sustainable urban drainage systems), as appropriate. This approach will maximise the efficient use of the residual capacity in the system. The removal of storm water will serve to increase the available treatment capacity at the plant.

As part of the Sludge Management Plan for County Sligo, sludge generated from public sewerage schemes and private treatment systems throughout the County (including individual septic tanks and on-site systems serving one-off housing) is to be transported to a sludge hub centre at the Sligo Main Drainage Centre at Finisklin, for treatment and disposal. To facilitate the sludge collection process, a satellite station has been completed in Ballymote in 2010, at the site of the existing treatment plant.



Note on Development Contributions

Permitted developments will be liable for the payment of contributions, levied under the Development Contribution Scheme applicable at the time of granting permission, including special contributions where appropriate, prepared in accordance with Sections 48-49 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

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-13** *Regulate discharges to local authority sewerage schemes to protect and improve groundwater and surface water quality in accordance with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.*
- P-WW-15** *Discourage the use of pumping stations in private developments.*
- P-WW-16** *Promote the establishment of a satisfactory management structure in relation to existing in-situ private wastewater pumping stations.*
- 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.*
- P-WW-18** *In cases where a settlement is not served by a public wastewater treatment plant, or where no spare capacity exists in an existing wastewater treatment plant, individual developments proposing to use on-site wastewater treatment will be considered subject to appropriate scale, assessment, design and conditions.*
- Any such permitted development shall be subject to legally binding maintenance and bonding arrangements agreed with the planning authority and shall be required to connect to the public wastewater treatment plant when/if adequate capacity becomes available. However, communal on-site wastewater treatment systems (i.e. systems servicing more than one residential unit / commercial premises etc) will not be permitted in any case.*

Wastewater objectives

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

9.3 Waste management

The Connacht Waste Management Plan (2006-2011) was adopted by the six Connacht local authorities (Galway, Leitrim, Mayo, Roscommon and Sligo County Councils and Galway City Council). The plan re-emphasises the waste management targets to be achieved in order to comply with national and EU targets, namely: recycle 48%, thermally treat 33% and landfill 19% of the waste.

Waste collection contractors Beirnes, Greenstar and Barna provide a regular kerbside service in Ballymote. Recycling facilities are also available. A bottle bank 'bring centre' is located adjacent to the graveyard; this facilitates the collection of glass bottles and aluminium cans.

There is a historic landfill on the outskirts of Ballymote Village at Woodfield which has been closed since the early 1990s. There is no leachate collection facility in place.



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.

Waste management objectives

- O-WM-2** Make appropriate provision for a bring bank centre for glass and cans in each village.
- O-WM-7** Promote the roll-out and encourage the use of the third bin for organic waste.

9.4 Energy and telecommunications



A 38 kV station currently serves Ballymote, providing power to residential, industrial and commercial premises within the area.

In terms of telecommunications, a number of companies supply Ballymote with wireless, high-speed internet connections, satellite broadband and DSL technology that allows higher-capacity communications, including internet access over conventional telephone lines.

The digital communications infrastructure makes Ballymote attractive for investment and allows residents to set up commercially viable businesses, as their customers do not have to be limited to Ballymote's catchment area.

Coverage for mobile phone operations is good within the Ballymote 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 DoEHLG's Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures Guidelines (1996) and any subsequent revisions.

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-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.*

9.5 Infrastructural provision for Ballymote

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

Infrastructure policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- IP-1** Strive to provide Ballymote with a safe, secure and reliable water supply and a network capable of accommodating the needs of the current and projected population, commercial and industrial growth in the Plan area.
- IP-2** Pursue the upgrading of the wastewater treatment plant and the separation of foul and storm water collection systems.
- IP-3** Facilitate the provision of electricity to serve the projected population growth and consumer demand within the Ballymote area.
- IP-4** Ensure that adequate waste management infrastructure is in place in order to comply with the requirements of existing waste management legislation.
- IP-5** 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.

Infrastructure objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- IO-1** Require new developments to provide separate drainage systems, including of SUDs (sustainable urban drainage systems) as appropriate.
- IO-2** Allow for development connecting to the wastewater treatment plant up to a limit of 500 PE (population equivalent). However, notwithstanding this available capacity, residential development will be permitted only at a rate that is consistent with the Core Strategy. (See Chapter 3 of this Plan).
- IO-3** Upon completion of the new wastewater treatment facilities, allow for development up to the relevant design capacity. However, notwithstanding the availability of such capacity, residential development shall be permitted only at a rate that is consistent with the Core Strategy (see Chapter 3 of this Plan).
- IO-4** Ensure that the site of the treatment facilities is appropriately landscaped.
- IO-5** Establish a buffer zone in the vicinity of the existing WWTP site. Development within this zone may be restricted or prohibited in the interests of public health and/or the protection of residential amenities. The extent of development restrictions in each case will be assessed at planning application stage.
- IO-6** Ensure that the former landfill at Marlowe is managed properly and in accordance with the relevant guidelines and regulations.

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, as well as by protecting people and buildings from the damage that can be caused by flooding.

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

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

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.

The CDP includes sufficient policies and objectives in the areas outlined above. However, it is considered necessary to reiterate some of these policies in the Ballymote LAP, given their importance.

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

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

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 association 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.

10.1 Water quality

Water quality relates to rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuarine and coastal waters. 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.

According to the EPA, the river Bellanascarrow West, flowing through Ballymote town, is classified as being of “poor status” under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The groundwater within the Plan area is also classified as being of “poor status”.

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

Main CDP provisions

Among the most relevant provision 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.*

10.2 Air quality

Ballymote has very little industry contributing to problems of air pollution. However, emissions caused by cars and the burning of fossil fuels have a negative effect on air quality. At present, there are no government plans to ban bituminous (smokeless) coal in towns and villages outside Sligo City.

The County Council encourages the use of alternative energy sources and the reduction in the number of car trips, in order to maintain a good quality of air.

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 control

In Irish legislation, noise is addressed under the EPA Act 1992 and the EPA Noise Regulations 1994. Sligo County Council controls developments and activities through targeted policies in order to protect the amenity of existing developments from significant levels of noise.

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.*

10.4 Flood risk assessment



The Ballymote LAP 2012-2018 has been assessed in accordance with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on The Planning System and Flood Risk Management (2009). A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out. The assessment identified two sources of flooding in Ballymote: Carrigan's Upper watercourse and the Ballymote River.

In applying the risk-based sequential approach to managing flood risk for the lands adjacent to the Carrigan's Upper watercourse, the principles of avoidance and substitution could not be applied as the area is already developed. The next principle of the sequential approach is mitigation. Relevant mitigation measures are recommended to ensure flood risk will be reduced to an acceptable level. The lands adjacent to the Ballymote River are undeveloped and therefore the principle of avoidance was applied. 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 Ballymote area. Developments granted permission in areas close to flood plains will be required to implement measures to ensure that the risks of flooding 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. If relevant and appropriate to Ballymote, the Planning Authority will incorporate the recommendations of the Western CFRAM, upon its adoption, by means of an amendment to this LAP.

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 DEHLG's The 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.*

10.5 Environmental quality provisions

The CDP policies and objectives outlined in the previous subsections are complemented by several policies and objectives referring specifically to the environmental quality provisions for Ballymote. These are listed below.

Water quality policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- WQP-1** Require all developments in Ballymote to connect to the urban wastewater treatment plant, when this is upgraded.
- WQP-2** Privately operated communal systems will not be permitted.
- WQP-3** Discourage the use of pumping stations in private developments.
- WQP-4** Storm overflows from pumping stations serving private developments will not be permitted.
- WQP-5** Ensure that all development involving wastewater disposal is permitted only on lands which are serviced by public wastewater infrastructure with adequate capacity.

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 the development.
- 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).

Flood risk management objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- FRMO-1** Incorporate any relevant recommendations of the Western CFRAM, upon its adoption, by means of an amendment to Ballymote LAP.

11. Urban Design



Urban design is the practice of shaping the physical features of settlements to create places for people and to make high-quality connections between places and buildings, for the safe movement of people. While creating places for people, urban design must respect and enhance the natural environment and use resources efficiently. Improving the way public spaces work not only makes them more enjoyable, but it also has economic benefits. Better-designed public spaces make more efficient use of resources and attract more businesses.

Successful urban places have certain common characteristics, such as:

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Walkability | Walking is the “social glue” that holds public environments together. |
| Safety | Safe environments encourage community interaction and reduce the incidence of crime. |
| Variety | Activities within public spaces and the overlooking of such spaces contribute to safety and well being. |
| Inclusiveness | Design of public spaces must integrate and balance the needs of all users allowing fair and free access. |
| Sustainability | Sustainable urban design safeguards natural systems and uses resources efficiently. |
| Adaptability | Successful public places accommodate and encourage a variety of uses, at different times of day and evening. |
| Distinctiveness | Urban design uses the topography of the natural and built environment to create distinctive places that reflect and contribute to local character and identity. |

Both developers and the planning authority should apply the above principles when designing new development and assessing planning applications, respectively.

The CDP contains a substantial chapter (Chapter 12) which sets out development standards for various types of activities. The CDP, however, does not offer detailed guidelines for the design of towns and villages.

This chapter of the Ballymote LAP seeks to provide some guidance regarding the desired future pattern of urban development in the town. The guidance is based on the 2005-2011 LAP prepared by planning consultants NBA.

11.1 Urban context

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

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

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

There is a need for a more compact urban environment within Ballymote. The design or structure of the town needs to be looked at more holistically by identifying future street layouts for the sequential development of the backlands, linking developments, reducing restrictive circulation patterns and connecting areas of open space.

Most town centre sites within Ballymote are narrow, linear landholdings involving numerous landowners. The planned, co-ordinated development of derelict and in particular backland areas is difficult, as it requires the co-operation of the various landowners.

Also, the lack of structure or “deliberate design” (as opposed to random, incremental development) needs to be addressed in certain areas of the town.

The following headings outline the urban design issues that need to be taken into consideration when proposing new developments or assessing planning applications within Ballymote

11.1.1 Enclosure

The frame provided by Teeling Street, Lord Edward Street and O'Connell Street gives the centre of the town a strong sense of enclosure created by the buildings and walls that form the street boundary.

Any infill development along these streets should reinforce the existing building line, in order to create a strong streetscape.

11.1.2 Boundary treatment

Appropriate boundary treatments within towns such as Ballymote can be very important to the overall image of the town. Front boundaries provide an important interface between the private and public domain. New developments can look discordant with varying boundary types, different materials, styles, colours, and decorative features being used.

The design of boundary treatments in new developments should respect and, where desirable, reflect the existing street context.

11.1.3 Building heights

The height of infill developments should generally follow the adjoining building heights, reflecting subtle variations in height where they exist. However, focal sites and individually assessed sites within the town core (see Section 11.3) in the mixed infill development zone may be able to accommodate higher buildings.

The height of new development proposals on focal sites - and, where appropriate, other sites - will be allowed to exceed the height of surrounding buildings, subject to high-quality design and consideration for the amenity of neighbouring properties.

11.1.4 Urban edge

To ensure a strong image for Ballymote, it is essential to be able to distinguish where the rural environment stops and the town begins. It is important that the edge of the town is properly defined. In ensuring orderly development, an emphasis should be placed on building within the development boundary rather than in a haphazard manner along the approach roads or within the buffer zone. This would only weaken the overall structure of the town.

All new development on or in the vicinity of the development limit should address the view from the approach roads and present an attractive frontage to the rural surroundings of Ballymote.

11.1.5 Building condition



The majority of the buildings throughout Ballymote are in good condition. This includes most of the buildings in the commercial / retail core. However, a notable amount of these retail buildings were vacant at the time of preparing this Plan, especially along O'Connell Street.

The continued upkeep of existing buildings will be encouraged and the restoration and refurbishment of vacant buildings, especially those within the town core, will be facilitated.

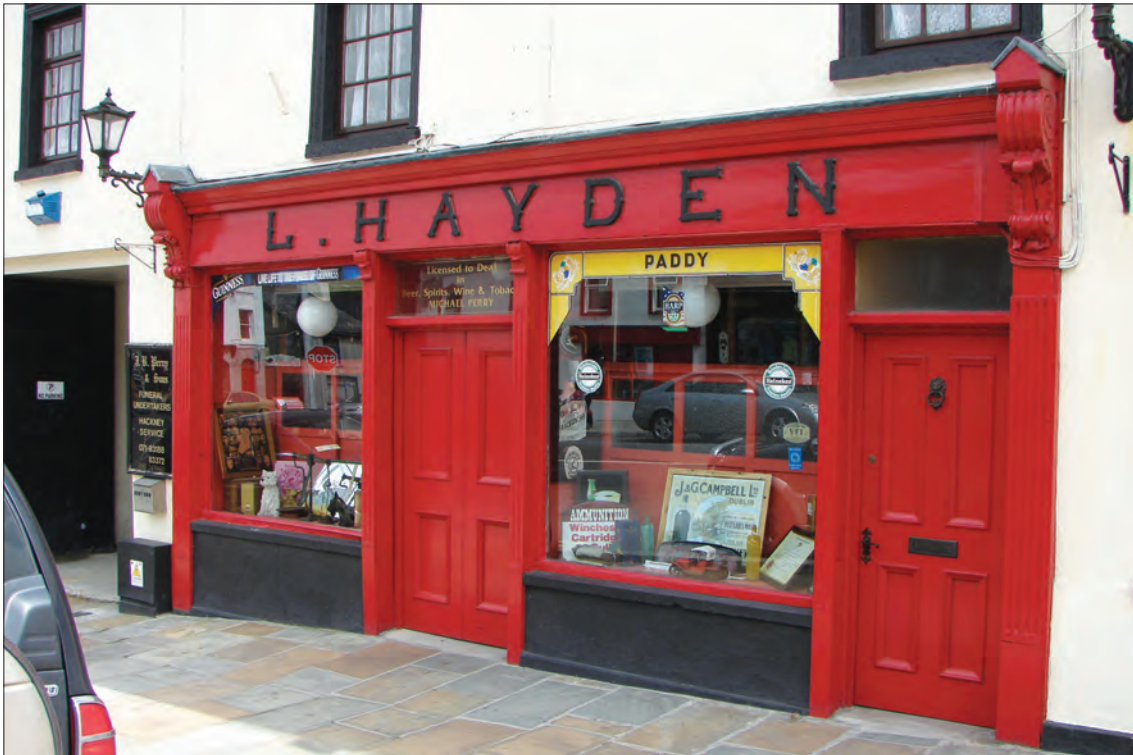
11.1.6 Dereliction

Dereliction within Ballymote is mainly evident to the rear of properties, in the form of sheds and storage areas. This is especially visible to the rear of Teeling Street and to the rear of O'Connell Street. A more coherent street frontage in both these areas could be achieved, keeping strong building lines and developing a good mix of uses.

The redevelopment of the previously derelict cinema complex at Teeling Street has substantially enhanced the image of the area. Similar redevelopments of derelict structures are highly desirable.

In the case of derelict buildings in the town centre, along the main streets, the preferred options are restoration and renovation as opposed to demolition and redevelopment.

11.1.7 Other design features



There are some noteworthy design features within Ballymote, including a number of traditional shop fronts which provide the town with a distinctive vernacular finish.

Lord Edward Street is free from overhead wiring, which gives the street an uncluttered appearance unlike Teeling Street or Abbey Terrace.

Street furniture is present in the town in the form of benches, planter boxes, signage etc. Such features should be provided in a coherent manner, ensuring that pedestrian movement is not impeded.

11.2 Character Areas

The town of Ballymote can be seen as a collection of areas featuring distinctive townscape elements. These are best described as 'character areas'. Four such character areas have been identified. From an urban design perspective, it would be important to preserve their distinctiveness by reinforcing the unique elements and features pertaining to each of them.

11.2.1 Town centre

This is the commercial and business heart of the town, which hosts convenience and comparison stores alongside offices, bars and restaurants. Like in most Irish towns, residential buildings are dispersed throughout between these commercial properties. However, a tight urban form has been created giving a strong sense of continuity and enclosure to the streetscape.

Continuity and enclosure of the streetscape are features that should be preserved and strengthened.

11.2.2 Market area

The Cattle Mart was established in Ballymote in 1959. At present, it is the only mart operating in County Sligo, holding sales once a week. Therefore, the mart is of economic and cultural importance to the area. The main two-storey structure and surrounding land complex take up a sizeable portion of land to the east of the town.

This character area could be connected in a more sympathetic way with its surrounding town environment.

Any development proposal in the vicinity of the Mart should take into account the risk of odour and possibly noise.

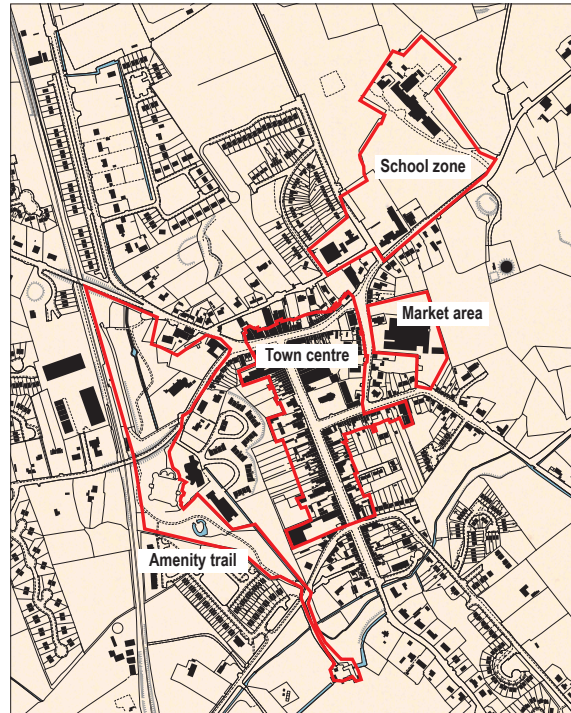


Fig. 11.A Character areas

11.2.3 School zone

The third character area comprises the schools and their surroundings. Three schools are concentrated in this one area – the primary school, the vocational school and the Convent school. The Spraoi, Ballymote Community Childcare Centre which was opened in 2005 beside the primary school, provides a pre-school child minding facility. This school cluster provides Ballymote with a strong educational focus. The proximity of structures allows for sharing of recreational facilities between schools. Also, parents of children attending both primary and secondary schools can use a single drop-off-point.

The functionality of the school zone should be preserved and the associated facilities should be expanded, as needed.

11.2.4 Amenity trail

The fourth character area stretches from the northwestern side of the town to the south. This area encompasses a parkland setting and includes such historic structures as the Roman Catholic Church, the Franciscan Abbey and adjoining graveyard, Ballymote Castle and the former Corn Mill. The area is also characterised by significant tree groups, stream courses and in some parts vernacular stonewalls (see Fig. 11.A above)

The green nature of this area, together with its connective function, should be preserved and enhanced.



11.3 Scope for improvement

There are two main areas within Ballymote which could be improved in terms of urban design quality:

- the junction to the west of Teeling Street and adjoining brownfield site at the western corner of Teeling Street;
- the junction to the east of Teeling Street with the brownfield site adjacent to the former cinema building and the Cattle Mart area.

11.3.1 Junction to the west of Teeling Street

in front of the Loftus Hall

incorporating the adjacent brownfield site



The junction at this location is very wide and provides the area with no sense of enclosure or framing. This is not helped by the faint outline of the road markings.

An island at this junction providing Abbey Terrace with a slip road onto the L-6032 (to Templehouse) would aid in counteracting the bare appearance of the area and aid in pedestrian crossings.

At present there is no defined property boundary or footpath around the cottage to the east of this site. This creates not just a poor visual image, but also a dangerous junction.

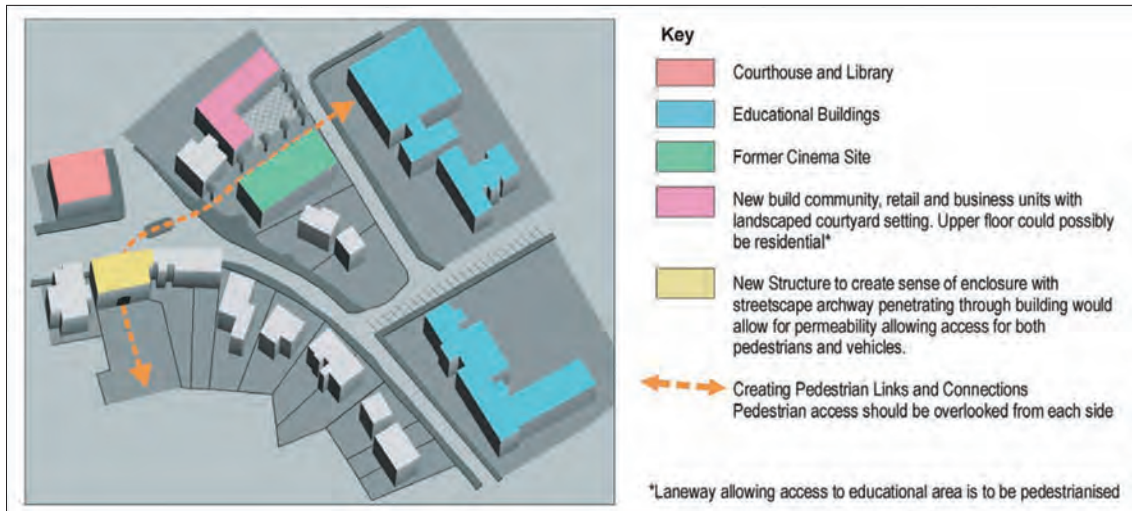
The provision of a footpath in this area is needed for both safety and aesthetic reasons.

A brownfield site adjoins this junction, bounded by a concrete stonewall and sheet metal gate. This site, due to its strategic position within the town, would lend itself greatly to the development of a landmark, focal building.

Note: The three diagrams are extracted from the Ballymote LAP 2005-2011, which was prepared by the National Building Agency (NBA).

11.3.2 Junction to the east of Teeling Street

incorporating the cinema and Cattle Mart area



Junction

The junction at this location also takes up a wide expanse of land, on a scale which is inconsistent with the tightly-knit surrounding environment.

The development of an island would also be an option for this area in order to reduce its stark image. Another option may be to extend the footpath area allowing for tree planting along its edge (see diagram above). The former cinema building at this junction, recently renovated, greatly improves the visual appearance of the area.

Brownfield site

The brownfield site near the cinema remains undeveloped. A new-build structure on this site, integrating a landscaped courtyard, would substantially enhance this area of Ballymote. Ground-floor units could incorporate community, retail and business development with the upper floors possibly reserved for residential use.



A courtyard setting with benches could provide a pleasant amenity square. It is proposed to create pedestrian access between Teeling Street and the neighbouring school. Development of this brownfield site should incorporate direct access onto the proposed pedestrian link, facilitating the possibility of erecting overhead awnings providing cover for possible outdoor seating.

Cattle mart

The large expanse of land surrounding the Cattle Mart area, coupled with the wide junction, gives this area a weak visual image. The new Fire Station has somewhat improved the urban fabric at this location. However, in order to strengthen this image, the boundary of the Cattle Mart area needs to be addressed. It is proposed to encourage the development of a 'permeable building'. This would enforce a sense of spatial containment. The building would need to be a two-storey structure in keeping with the adjoining residential buildings. An archway could be incorporated in this structure, thereby allowing and maintaining vehicular access to the Cattle Mart and providing public car parking to the rear. The use of such a building would ideally suit a community-related use, such as a fitness centre.

Urban design policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- UDP-1** Encourage the sensitive restoration of derelict buildings that contribute to the built heritage and townscape quality of Ballymote, in preference to their demolition and replacement.
- UDP-2** Require infill development along Teeling Street, Lord Edward Street and O'Connell Street to reinforce the existing building line, in order to create a strong streetscape.
- UDP-3** Where appropriate, allow new developments to exceed the height of surrounding buildings, subject to high-quality design and consideration for the amenity of neighbouring properties.
- UDP-4** Require new development on or in the vicinity of the development limit to address the view from the approach roads and present an attractive frontage to these roads.
- UDP-5** Preserve the vernacular stonewalling.
- UDP-6** Retain distinctive hard landscape features such as fire hydrants and the British post box.
- UDP-7** Ensure signposts are clearly visible and legible.

Urban design objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- UDO-1** Improve the physical appearance of the junction in front of Loftus Hall and the junction to the east of Teeling Street by either constructing landscaped islands or extending the existing footpaths.
- UDO-2** Encourage the development of a focal building on the brownfield site adjoining the Loftus Hall junction.
- UDO-3** Encourage the development of a structure with a landscaped courtyard on the available infill site adjoining the former cinema.
- UDO-4** Make provision for pedestrian linkages at the following locations:
 - between Teeling Street and Corran College;
 - from O'Connell Street through to the proposed new street frontage to the rear of this area.
- UDO-5** Facilitate the development of a 'permeable building' to create a stronger building line and image for the Cattle Mart area while still allowing vehicular access to the rear.
- UDO-6** Encourage the establishment of a new, coherent street frontage at the following locations:
 - to the rear of Teeling Street,
 - to the rear of O'Connell Street.



Fig. 11.B Urban design objectives

