

Chapter 12. Ballymote Town Plan

Ballymote is located 24 km to the south of Sligo town, in the south-east of the County. The economic and social role of Ballymote is acknowledged in the CDP through its designation as a **Support Town**, which delivers services to its residents and to many rural communities in South Sligo.

12.1 Town profile

Ballymote town assets			
Population	2022 Census	1,711	+10.45% increase 2016-2022
	2016 Census	1,549	+0.63% increase 2011-2016
	2002-2022	+ 730 residents	+74.41% increase since 2002
Housing stock	2016 Census	893 dwellings, of which 196 were considered vacant	
Service infrastructure	Water supply	Sourced from Lough Talt through the Lough Talt Water Treatment Plant	
	Wastewater treatment	3,500 PE with spare capacity of approx. 906 PE	
	Road network	Regional roads R-293, R-294, R-295, and R-296 connect the town to Collooney, Boyle, Gorteen, Bunnanadden and Tobercurry	
Social infrastructure	Schools	One primary and two secondary schools (including PLC courses)	
	Churches	Two churches	
	Sports facilities	GAA pitch, Soccer pitch	
	Other assets	Town park, health centre, supermarkets, crèches and post office	
Sustainable transport	Train	Train Station on the Sligo-Dublin line	
	Bus	Served by Bus Eireann routes and the Local Link	
	Active Travel	No scheme at present (2023)	
Architectural heritage	Protected Structures	22 structures, 15 of which are located within an Architectural Conservation Area	
Natural heritage and environment	Natura 2000 sites nearby	Cloonacleigha Lough and Templehouse Lake cSAC	
	Flood risk	Present. Flood Zones A and B are mapped in Appendix 1 of the SFRA	

12.1.1 Housing

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 in a relatively low-density pattern.

12.1.2 Community facilities and recreational open space

Ballymote is served by one primary and two secondary schools, Colaiste Muire and Corran College. Among the most significant facilities are the Community Library in the town centre and the modern Primary Care Centre.

The Loftus Hall, the Art Deco Theatre/cinema, and the Family Resource Centre are also located in the town centre. Other community facilities include the GAA club and pitch, the Athletics Club and grounds, and the fire station. All these facilities should be maintained and enhanced where necessary.

12.1.3 Transport and mobility

Ballymote is served by three regional roads, R-293, R-294, and R-295, which connect it to the national roads N-4 (Sligo to Dublin) and N-17 (Sligo to Galway). In terms of public transport by road, the town is served by Bus Eireann and a Local Link daily service.

It is the only Support Town with a train station, as it is crossed by the railway line connecting Sligo to Dublin. However, the presence of the railway and train station is an insufficiently used opportunity for improving connectivity.

In order to encourage walking as a safe and convenient mode of transport, as well as a healthy leisure activity, it is proposed to expand the existing network of pedestrian routes and linkages throughout Ballymote.

12.1.4 Business, industry, enterprise

Manufacturing activities in Ballymote are located to the west of the town, along the R-296 (Tobercurry Road). The Tente factory and the OPHardt Hygiene factory, which occupy large sites at this location, employ approximately 200 people from the surrounding area.

Other areas where industrial activities are carried out include the Ballymote Business Park at the Railway Station, which accommodates The White Hag brewing company, TopChem Pharmaceuticals and local horticultural business Quickcrop. There are also a number of industrial units to the north of the town and the Homeland (former Connacht Co-op) Creamery to the south-west.

12.1.5 Retail

Ballymote acts as a service centre for the surrounding rural community of south-east Sligo. Retail uses are concentrated along Teeling Street, Lord Edward Street and O'Connell Street. Ballymote Mart operates on Thursdays and Fridays and casual trading takes place on O'Connell Street on designated days. A medium-sized supermarket is located in the town centre.

12.1.6 Tourism

Ballymote has historical attractions, like Ballymote Castle and Abbey, but also a variety of geographical areas of interest for tourists, such as the Kesh Caves on the slopes of Kesh Corran.

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

There is potential to increase the tourism offer of the town by promoting and marketing its attractions. The establishment of a tourist information office in the centre of the town would be beneficial.

12.1.7 Natural heritage

Ballymote is surrounded by five wetland sites of local importance: Ballybrennan Bog, Maghera Bog, Carrigans Upper, Bellanascarrow Lough and Ardrea Lough. Designated sites such as at Cloonacleigha Lough and Templehouse Lake cSAC (Site Code 000636) are located to the west of the town.

Significant hedgerows and tree groups can be found in the Town Park, around the former Corn Mill in the north-east of the town, adjacent to the convent school and along the railway line.

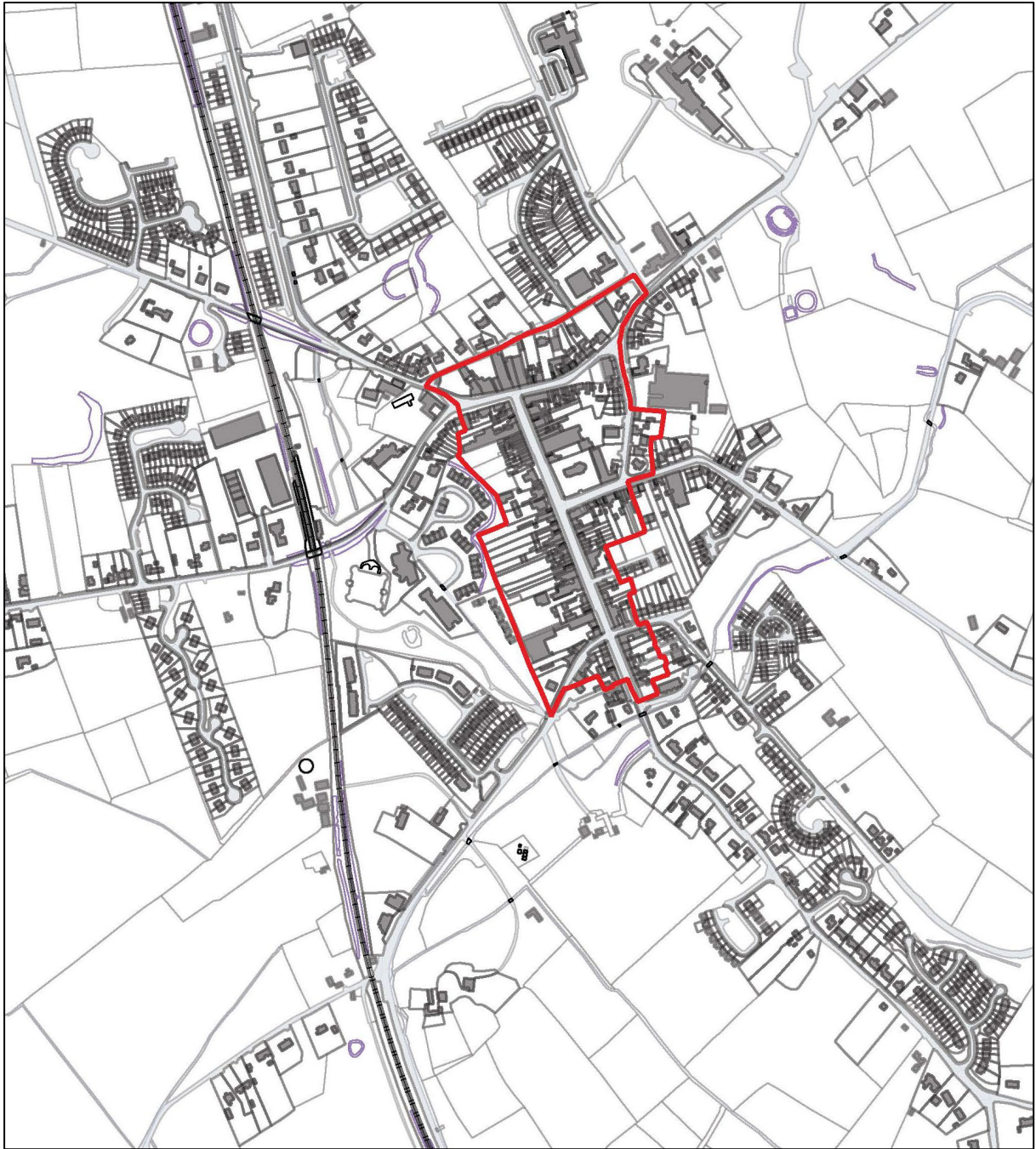
12.1.8 Built heritage

Ballymote contains the only Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) in the County outside Sligo Town. The ACA comprises streetscapes of very attractive buildings and shopfronts of various styles. Ballymote's streets are distinctive and a huge part of the identity of the town.

The extent of the Ballymote ACA is shown on **Fig. 12.A** below.

Please refer to **Section 25.3 Architectural Heritage** in Chapter 25 Built Heritage for the policies and objectives pertaining to ACAs.

Figure 12.A Ballymote Architectural Conservation Area



Protected Structures

The following buildings in Ballymote are included in the Record of Protected Structures (Volume 4 of this CDP):

RPS No. 43 Emlaghfad Parish Church	RPS No. 44 Former Garda Station	RPS No. 45 Former Market House
RPS No. 46 Ulster Bank	RPS No. 47 Bank of Ireland	RPS No. 48 Ballymote Post Office
RPS No. 49 House/Shop (Ds Barber shop)	RPS No. 50 House/Shop (Dwyers)	RPS No. 51 House/Shop (Tighe's, formerly Cawleys)
RPS No. 52 House with shopfront	RPS No. 53 House/Shop (Doddys)	RPS No. 54 House
RPS No. 55 Wall mounted post box	RPS No. 56 Stone house	RPS No. 57 L.Hayden's pub and town house
RPS No. 58 Ballymote Courthouse and attached west wing	RPS No. 59 Ballymote Railway Station and associated buildings and features	RPS No. 104 Earlfield House (Sisters of Mercy Convent)
RPS No. 117 Castleview House	RPS No. 118 Road over railway bridge	RPS No. 119 Road over railway bridge
RPS No. 229 Former Corn Mill	RPS No. 360 Church of the Blessed Virgin and her Immaculate Conception (RC)	RPS No. 419 Old Emlaghfad Church (COI)
RPS No. 420 Former Church Warden's House		

12.2 Population and housing allocations

The potential housing yield of lands zoned for housing in Ballymote amounts to circa **215** units for the Plan period. The delivery of these dwellings would facilitate an increase of Ballymote’s population by up to **537** residents. **The actual housing allocation is 185 units, as per the Core Strategy Table (Section 3.3).**

Section 12.2.1 below lists the sites which have been designated to contribute to the compact growth of Ballymote, together with their potential housing and population yields.

Section 12.2.2 includes a table showing the amount of land with residential potential proposed to be zoned in Ballymote for the period of this CDP (2024-2030), compared to the previous Ballymote Local Area Plan (which was incorporated into the CDP 2017-2024).

12.2.1 Compact growth designations

A number of sites have been designated in Ballymote as **Settlement Consolidation Sites (SCS)** and **Additional Provision sites (AP)**, as recommended in the *Development Plan Guidelines (2022)*, in order to give effect to the NPF requirements for compact growth.

Several **Regeneration Sites** have also been designated in accordance with Section 10(2)(h) of the Planning Act.

Regeneration sites

There are five sites designated for regeneration in Ballymote, of which three are located in the town core (refer also to **Section 12.3.3** in this chapter). Because there is no certainty regarding the potential housing yield of any redevelopment on these sites, they have not been included in the Core Strategy housing allocation.

Table 12.1 Regeneration sites

REG – Regeneration sites				
Site code	Location	Zoning 2017	Proposed zoning 2024	Site area (ha)
REG-1	Lands at the junction between Teeling Street and the R-296 (Sligo Road)	MIX	MIX	0.11
REG-2	Lands defined by Teeling St. and Marren Park (contains the former cinema)	MIX	MIX	0.41
REG-3	Backlands with frontage onto Fairgreen Road (including SuperValu car park)	MIX	MIX	0.70
REG-4	Land south of Cois na Dún (north of Ballymote Business Park).	RES	RES	0.64
REG-5	North & west of Earl’s Court housing development (Phase 2, eastern section)	RES	RES	1.28
Total				3.14

Settlement Consolidation Sites (SCS) and Additional Provision Sites (AP)

Lands designated as SCS and AP are proposed to be zoned for residential (RES) or a mix of uses including residential (MIX). The potential housing yield of these lands has been calculated based on the following:

- the average residential density is 25 units per hectare, which is higher, but not excessive when compared to the density of existing housing estates in Ballymote;
- the Council-owned site (SCS 1) included in the Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022-2026 site has a predetermined allocation of 30 houses for the period of the plan.
- sites zoned RES are presumed to be developed exclusively for housing;
- the residential component of sites zoned MIX is approximated to 50%;
- the average household size of future occupants of new housing is set at 2.5 persons.

All SCS and AP sites are located largely within the 2016 Census settlement boundary for Ballymote, with only some portions of SCS 1 and SCS 2 partly outside. It is estimated that circa 160 houses, i.e., 73% of the potential housing yield, can be delivered within the settlement’s built-up footprint (2016 Census boundary), far in excess of the 30% requirement of RPO 3.2(c).

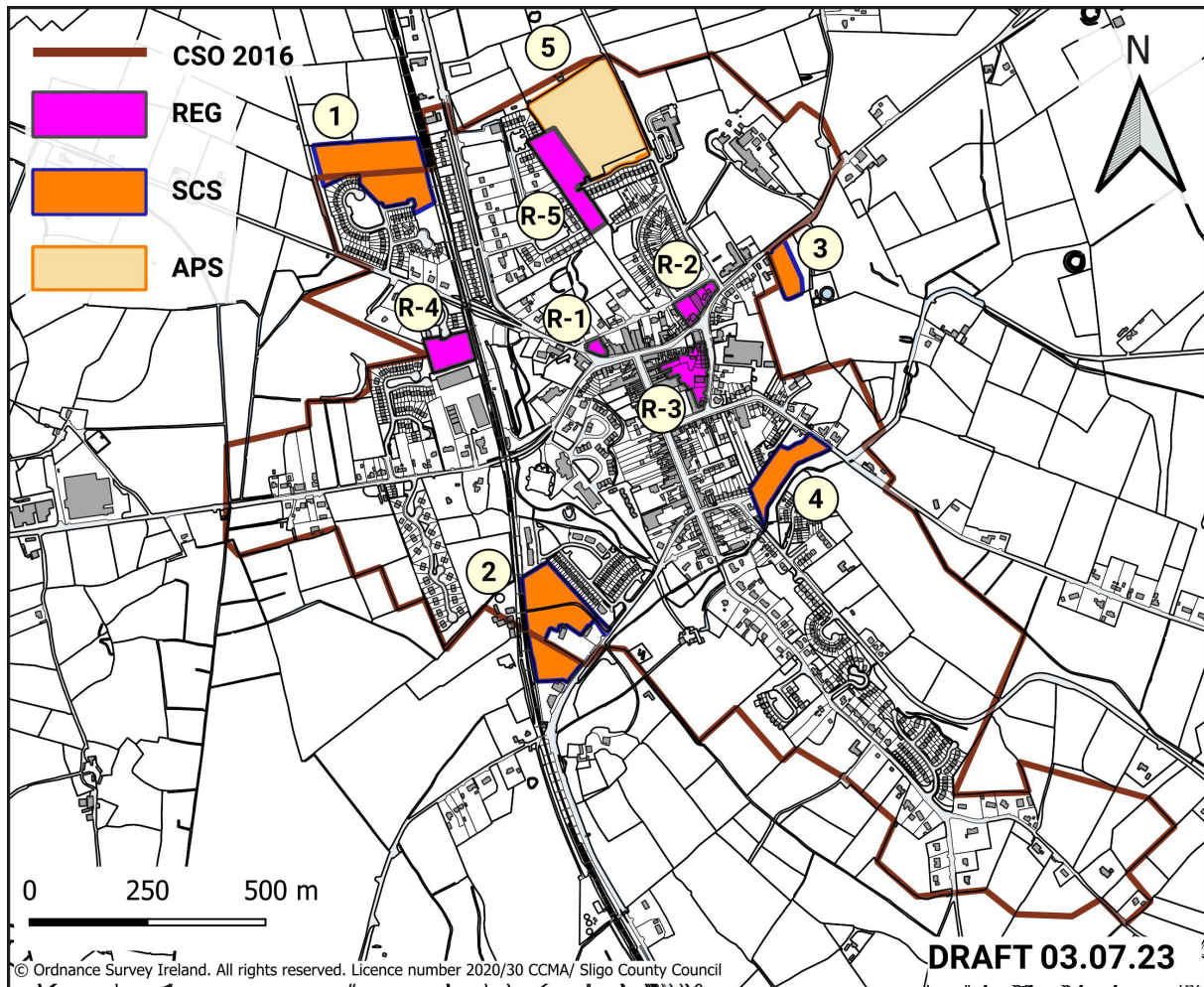
Table 12.2 – Settlement Consolidation Sites

SCS - Settlement Consolidation Sites							
Site no.	Location	Zoning 2017	Proposed zoning 2024	Site area (ha)	of which net residential	Potential housing yield	Potential no. of residents
1	Carrownanty, to the north of Mountain Drive (HDAP site)	RES	RES	2.57	2.57	30	75
2	Gurteen Road	RES	RES	2.29	2.29	57	142
3	Pearse Road	RES	RES	0.51	0.51	13	32
4	Lands between Grattan Street and R-295 (Boyle Rd.)	RES	RES	0.98	0.98	25	62
Total				6.35	6.35	125	313

Table 12.3 – Additional Provision Site

AP - Additional Provision site							
Site no.	Location	Zoning 2017	Proposed zoning 2024	Site area (ha)	of which net residential	Potential housing yield	Potential no. of residents
5	North & west of Earl’s Court housing development (Phase 1, western section)	RES	RES	3.59	3.59	90	224

Fig. 12.B Compact growth designations in Ballymote: Regeneration sites (REG), Settlement Consolidation Sites (SCS), Additional Provision Sites (APS) in the context of the 2016 Census settlement boundary (CSO)



12.2.2 Population, housing and land zoning requirements

The table below provides settlement-level information that has been aggregated in the main Core Strategy Table included in **Chapter 3 (Vol. 1)**.

The area in column 5 corresponds to the proposed zoning in the Draft CDP 2024-2030. It is the sum of the sites zoned RES and the residential portions of sites zoned MIX. This figure will change if any amendments are made as a result of public consultation.

Table 12.4 Population, housing land and housing allocation for Ballymote

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Population 2022 and percentage of County population*	Population target 2030 and percentage of County population projection**	Housing allocation 2030 and percentage of County housing demand***	RES and MIX zoning 2017	Proposed RES and MIX zoning 2024	Potential housing yield of RES and MIX zoned lands 2024	Current (2023) excess of zoned land
1,711 (2.43%)	1,850 (2.46%)	185 (4.7%)	22 ha	9.94 ha	215	12.09 ha

* County population 2022 = 70,198; ** County population projection = 75,000 (estimated from the NPF Implementation Roadmap)

*** Total adjusted housing demand = 3,892 units (calculated as per HSTM)

Notes on Table 12.4

- **Columns 4 and 5** – the undeveloped lands taken into consideration are 100% of site areas in the case of RES (residential) zoning and 50% of site areas in the case of MIX zoning (a mix of uses including residential uses); lands zoned for residential or mixed-uses, which are proposed to be designated as Regeneration Sites, are not included in these figures.
- **Column 6** – the sum of housing yields from the lands in Column 5, proposed to be used for residential and mixed uses (For specific numbers of dwellings, refer to Tables 12.2 and 12.3)
- **Column 7** – the difference between the sum of areas zoned for RES and MIX uses in the CDP 2017-2024 and what is proposed to be zoned in the CDP 2024-2030.

Excess zoned land (2023)

The Ballymote Plan incorporated into the CDP 2017 zoned more land than what is now proposed in the Draft CDP 2024. The current (2023) excess of zoned land amounts to 12.09 ha.

These lands/sites have been redesignated as Regeneration Sites (in the case of brownfield sites), Strategic Land Reserve or Green Belt.

Strategic Land Reserve (SLR)

Within the 2016 Census boundary of Ballymote, there are three sites of long-term interest, two of which were previously zoned for housing (2005 to 2011). One of these sites was placed in the Strategic Land Reserve from 2012 onwards.

The three sites have potential for significant residential development to be delivered over a timescale greater than the six-year development plan period. These lands represent the Strategic Land Reserve (SLR) of Ballymote Town.

12.3 Promoting compact growth

Residential/mixed-use zoning and designating specific sites are essential tools for guiding the compact, sequential growth of the town from the centre outwards.

In addition to the above, compact growth will also be supported through a range of measures, and specific objectives under the following headings:

- Town Centre First
- Town centre refurbishment
- Addressing dereliction
- New residential areas
- New recreational areas
- Traffic and circulation

12.3.1 Town Centre First (TCF)

At the time of drafting this Development Plan (2023), no decision had been taken regarding the preparation of a **Town Centre First Plan** for Ballymote.

A **TCF Plan** would significantly contribute to the regeneration of Ballymote, especially by proposing solutions to the dereliction that affects parts of the town centre.

It is essential that the **Ballymote Town Centre First Plan** incorporates the relevant objectives contained in this chapter, in particular those relating to town centre refurbishment, addressing dereliction and facilitating pedestrian circulation and cycle mobility. In addition, any proposed interventions in the town centre should promote high-quality urban design.

12.3.2 Town centre refurbishment

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. However, as is the case for many towns in the west of Ireland, dereliction and vacancy are significant issues.

The town centre of Ballymote should be refurbished based on a **Public Realm Plan** (PRP), to be prepared in consultation with the local community, the (future) TCF Town Team, and the Roads and Planning Sections of Sligo County Council.

The priority in terms of public realm is the enhancement of the town's character through the refurbishment of historic buildings, while providing pleasant spaces for pedestrians to congregate and spend time. The PRP should provide guidance for the following:

- enhancement of O'Connell Street;
- landscaped public space at Ballymote Courthouse;
- redesigned Teeling Street junctions

Two-phase enhancement of O'Connell Street

Phase 1 should see the enhancement of The Rock (one of the town's central areas, in front of the Protestant Church), including the creation of a "pocket park" in combination with the green space located within the church grounds, subject to the necessary consents.

Phase 2 should incorporate the improvement of the remaining section of O’Connell Street, from The Rock to the junction with Teeling Street, providing better pedestrians areas, while retaining the character of the ACA.

Complementing the proposed enhancement of Ballymote’s main shopping street, any additional large convenience store should be located on O’Connell Street, to boost footfall and encourage cross-visitation of shops.

Civic space in front of the old Courthouse

This is an underused central space in front of a local landmark building which closes the view along Teeling Street when coming from the Sligo Road. The transformation of this space into a usable public square, suitable for markets or outdoor concerts, would add to the visual and social appeal of Ballymote.

Reconfiguration of junctions in favour of pedestrians

The junction between Teeling Street/R-296 and the junction to the east of Teeling Street, adjacent to the former cinema building and the Cattle Mart area, are both uncomfortable for pedestrians because of their extensive road space. Footpaths should be widened, and safe crossing points should be provided, along with seating and landscaping. The focus should be on place-making, without disregarding traffic safety.

12.3.3 Addressing dereliction through regeneration

In addition to the refurbishment proposals set out in the previous section and complementing the actions expected to be included in the future TCF Plan for Ballymote, the Planning Authority has an obligation, under the Planning Act, to include objectives for the development of areas in need of regeneration. The purpose is to prevent or remove any adverse effects on local amenities resulting from the neglected condition of land or structures.

There are five sites designated for urban regeneration in Ballymote (refer to **Section 12.2.1**):

The **site REG-1**, adjoining the junction between Teeling Street and the R-296, is bounded by a stonewall and sheet metal gate. This site would lend itself to the development of a landmark building.

The **infill site to the west of the former cinema, REG-2**, has been neglected for a long time. The location would be suitable for a purpose-designed County Library Branch. A new building on this site, integrating a landscaped courtyard, would substantially enhance this area of Ballymote. Development of this site should incorporate direct access onto the proposed pedestrian link proposed under **BM-UDO-4**. A courtyard setting with benches could provide a pleasant amenity square.

The **site REG-3**, which comprises lands to the rear of SuperValu, would be capable of supporting a wide range of town-centre uses, including a car park serving the town centre.

The two other regeneration sites, **REG-4** and **REG-5**, located further from the town centre, have been previously zoned for housing, but the likelihood of such development during the Plan period is uncertain. The Planning Authority will utilise all the instruments at its disposal to facilitate appropriate development on these sites.

Each of these sites should be developed as a single project, possibly phased, where appropriate. Piecemeal developments on these sites will not be permitted.

12.3.4 New residential areas

There are circa 10 hectares of land designated for residential expansion in the short term, over the Development Plan period. Five sites located within 800m of the town centre can accommodate over 537 residents in circa new 215 dwellings.

All four Settlement Consolidation Sites and the Additional Provision site should be developed as a single project, possibly phased, where appropriate. Piecemeal developments on these sites will not be permitted.

12.3.5 New recreational areas

The enhancement of the Town Park has potential to significantly expand the outdoor recreation opportunities for the residents of Ballymote. The town park should offer improved walking, playing and other recreational facilities, linked to a heritage trail incorporating the Mill, the Castle and the Abbey (refer to **BM-CRO-1**).

Ideally, the various landscape and heritage features of interest in and around the town should be linked into the above-mentioned heritage trail, enhancing biodiversity and recreational opportunities for residents.

12.3.6 Traffic and circulation

First priority: active mobility

The priority for Ballymote in terms of mobility is the establishment of a town centre fully accessible by foot and bicycle, while reducing the visual dominance of cars on the town's streets.

While footpath coverage and footpath surfaces around the town are generally good, the width of footpaths is insufficient.

Facilities for cyclists need substantial improvement and this will be a priority objective for the County Council over the development plan period (**BM-TCO-1**).

New streets

A number of access points and indicative street layouts have been identified on backland areas of Ballymote in order to facilitate the consolidated growth of the town and ensure good accessibility for all modes of transport.

Corridors will be reserved for the following roads (**BM-TCO-5**)

- a link road from the R-296 to the L-1603;
- a link road between the L-6106 and the L-1502;
- a link road between the R-293 and the health care centre.

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

Car parking

Most public car parking in Ballymote is on-street, with only a small car park to the rear of O'Connell Street. A larger car park on the opposite side of the street serves the town's main supermarket and chemist.

Traffic congestion along Teeling Street, Lord Edward Street and O'Connell Street can occur at various stages throughout a day, due in part to haphazard parking as well as to the scarcity of on-street car parking relative to the demand.

The delineation of on-street 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 form. Consolidation of land to the rear of SuperValu would facilitate a larger car park serving the town (refer to objective **BM-TCO-3**).

12.4 Specific development objectives

In addition to the policies contained in **Chapter 10 Urban Development Principles** of this Volume (Vol. 2) and the general development policies and objectives set out in Volume 3 of this Plan, this section sets out specific objectives for Ballymote relating to urban design, transport and circulation, recreational facilities, natural and built heritage, tourism and retail.

Urban design objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- BM-UDO-1** Pursue public realm improvements on O’Connell Street in two phases:
- Phase 1** – Area in front of the Protestant Church at The Rock;
 - Phase 2** – Northern end of O’Connell Street, from The Rock to the junction with Teeling Street.
- BM-UDO-2** Maintain and enhance the public area in front of the old Court House as a public amenity space.
- BM-UDO-3** Enhance the public realm and pedestrian accessibility at the following junctions while maintaining traffic safety:
- A.** the junction between Teeling Street and the R-296 at Loftus Hall;
 - B.** the junction to the east of Teeling Street, adjacent to the former cinema building and the Cattle Mart area.
- The enhancements shall include widening of footpaths and the provision of safe and comfortable crossing points, seating and planted/landscaped areas.
- BM-UDO-4** Promote the redevelopment of the following regeneration sites, considering the guidance provided in **Section 12.3.3**:
- REG-1** The site adjoining the junction between Teeling Street and the R-296
 - REG-2** Infill site to the west of the former cinema.
 - REG-3** Backlands to the rear of SuperValu (O’Connell Street) with frontage onto Fairgreen Road.
 - REG-4** Land south of Cois na Dún, Carrownanty Td (wnorth of Ballymote Business Park)
 - REG-5** North and west of Earl’s Court housing development (Phase 2 eastern section)

Traffic and circulation objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- BM-TCO-1** Improve facilities for cyclists and pedestrians throughout the town, provide more bicycle parking facilities and widen footpaths where possible.
- BM-TCO-2** Seek the development of park-and-ride facilities associated with the car park at the railway station, to support any future rail commuter services between Ballymote and Sligo.
- BM-TCO-3** Promote the development of a car park to serve the town centre as part of any redevelopment of the **Regeneration Site REG-3** (lands to the rear of SuperValu).
- BM-TCO-4** Develop and delineate public car parking spaces at the northern end of O'Connell Street.

New roads and access points

- BM-TCO-5** Reserve the following corridors and access points to allow development of vehicular, pedestrian and cycle routes, thereby facilitating the development of backland areas and the future expansion of the town:
- a link road from the R-296 to the L1603;
 - a link road between the L-6106 and the L1502;
 - a link road between the R-293 and the health care centre.

Community and recreation facilities objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

Town Park

BM-CRO-1 Pursue the enhancement of the Town Park by generally improving walking, playing and other recreational facilities, incorporating the Mill, the Castle and the Abbey.

Heritage trail

BM-CRO-2 Pursue the development of a heritage trail around the town incorporating key features of biodiversity, recreational and heritage interest including:

- a. Ballymote Castle, Town Park and Abbey;
- 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).

Built heritage objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- BM-BHO-1** Support the preparation and implementation of a heritage-led regeneration plan for Ballymote.
- BM-BHO-2** Safeguard the preservation of the Franciscan Abbey and ensure the continued maintenance of the adjoining graveyard.
- BM-BHO-3** Support the restoration of the former Mill Complex.
- BM-BHO-4** Support the preparation of a conservation management plan for Emlaghfad Church.
- BM-BHO-5** Support the Office of Public Works in the conservation, management and associated provision of public access and interpretation to Ballymote Castle.

Tourism objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

BM-TOU-1 Facilitate the provision of a tourist information office in Ballymote.

Retail objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

BM-RO-1 Facilitate the expansion of the existing supermarket or the provision of a new one in Ballymote. Any additional large convenience store should be located on the main shopping street of the town to boost footfall and encourage cross-visitation of shops.