

Ballina & Environs Development Plan

2009 - 2015

Incorporating:

Variation No. 1 (Core Strategy) made on October 17th 2011

Variation No. 2 (Modifications to Plan) made on September 8th 2014

Variation No. 3 (Provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015) made on January 16th 2017



**Ballina Town Council
Mayo County Council**

May 2009

Ballina & Environs Development Plan

2009 - 2015

This Document Incorporates:

Variation No. 1 (Core Strategy) made on October 17th 2011

Variation No. 2 (Modifications to Plan) made on September 8th 2014

Variation No. 3 (Provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015) made on January 16th 2017

Prepared on behalf of Ballina Town Council & Mayo County Council by:

McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan Limited, GFSC, Moneenageisha, Galway

Stephen Dowds Associates, Town Planning Consultant Town Park Centre Tuam Road Galway

Reid and Associates, Economic, Social and Planning consultants, 1 Willow Park Grove, Dublin 11

David O Connor Transport and Planning Consultant, 122 Parkgate Place, Parkgate Street, Dublin 8

Adopted: 23 April 2009
Came into force: 20 May 2009

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	5
List of Maps	6
List of Tables	6
List of Figures	6
1 Introduction	
1.1 Aims and Role of Development Plan	7
1.2 Town Profile	11
1.3 Settlement Structure	13
1.4 Demographic Status and Economic Situation	15
1.5 Development Strategy	29
2 Policies and Objectives	
2.1 Residential Development	35
2.2 Town Centre	42
2.3 Retail/Commercial Development	50
2.4 Transportation	61
2.5 Heritage – Townscape	70
2.6 Community and Cultural Amenities	75
2.7 Recreation Areas and Leisure Facilities	79
2.8 Tourism	84
2.9 Urban Fringe	87
2.10 Environment	89
2.11 Water & Sewage	93
2.12 Other Services	97
2.13 Land Use Zoning Objectives	99
2.14 Joint Hub Strategy	103
3 Development Management Standards	
3.1 Residential Use Standards	104
3.2 Standards on Design and Layout	109
3.3 Design and Layout of Flats and Apartments	112
3.4 Standards for Infill Development	115
3.5 Residential Management Standards	116
3.6 Standards for Rural and Other Residential Developments	117
3.7 General Development Standards/Requirements	119
3.8 Standards for Commercial, Retail, Industrial and Development in Mixed Used Zones	123
3.9 Standards for Community Use facilities	129
3.10 Standards for Parking/Loading	131
Appendices	
A Design Guidelines	134
B Record of Protected Structures	138
C Strategic Environmental Assessment (Separate Binding)	
D A1 Size Maps - Maps 06 (Variation) and 07 (separate)	

List of Maps

01	Plan Boundary	Following P. 08
02	Location	Following P. 12
03	Situation	Following P. 12
04	Neighbourhood Areas	Following P. 36
04A	Core Strategy Map	Following P. 40
05	Core Retail Areas	Following P. 52
06	Land Use Zoning (Variation)	Rear Pouch
06A	Land use Zoning (Town Centre)	Rear Pouch
07	Objectives	Rear Pouch
07A	Objectives (Salmon Quarter)	Separate
08	Residential & Regenerations Lands	Separate

List of Tables

1.0	Percentage Employed in Industrial Groups, Urban Districts, 2006	12
1.1	Population Change in Ballina Study Area 1991 to 2006	17
1.2	Percentage Change in Ballina Study Area 1991 to 2006	18
1.3	Population and growth rate as percentage of county, region, state	18
1.4	Rate of Population Change in Ballina 1991 to 2006	19
1.5	Population by Gender 1991 to 2006	20
1.6	Growth in Age Cohorts 1996 to 2006	22
1.7	Ethnicity in Ballina 2006	22
1.8	Population make-up, Ballina, State, 2006	22
1.9	Population Projections Using RPG's	23
1.10	Household Status Ballina 1991 to 2006	23
1.11	Occupancy Status Ballina 2006	23
1.12	Occupancy Rates, Ballina Rural and Inner Rural	24
1.13	Occupancy Rates, Mayo	24
1.14	Persons over 15 by Employment Status 2002 to 2006	26
1.15	Persons over 15 by Employment Status - Differences Between 2002 to 2006	26
1.16	Percentage of Persons over 15 by Employment Status, 2002 to 2006, Ballina, Mayo, State	27
1.17	Persons Employed by Category in Ballina 2002 to 2006	28
1.18	Persons Employed and Unemployed by Category in Ballina 2002 to 2006	28
2.0a	Core Strategy Tables a	31
2.0b	Core Strategy Table b	32
2.1	Percentage Growth in Value and Volume of Retailing in Ireland	52
2.2	Percentage Growth Rate of Towns in Mayo 2002 to 2006	52
2.3	Retail Structure in County Mayo 2001	53
2.4	Retail Structure in County Mayo 2007	53
2.5	Difference in Retail Structure in County Mayo 2001 to 2007	54
2.6	Percentage of County Mayo Retail Sector for Each Town	54
2.7	Types of Open Space in Ballina and Environs	79
3.1	Apartments: Recommended Minimum Floor Areas and Standards	113
3.2	Car Parking Standards	130

List of Figures

1.1	Ballina urban, Ballina inner urban, Ballina rural (map)	17
1.2	Ballina urban, Ballina inner urban, Ballina rural (chart)	19
1.3	Rate of Population Change in Ballina 1991 to 2006	19
1.4	Population by Gender 1991 to 2006	20
1.5	Population Profile for Ballina, Mayo, West, State, 2006	21
2.1	Potential Urban Framework Character Areas	43
2.2	Typical Mall Layout and Possible Retail Solution for Ballina	44
2.3	Examples of Cycle Priority	64
2.4	Public Parks in Ballina	83

1 Introduction

1.1 Aims and Role of Development Plan

Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council have prepared this Development Plan under Section 9 of the Planning and Development Acts, 2000 – 2006. This Development Plan will replace the previous Ballina Town Development Plan 2003-2009.

The planning authority for the town of Ballina is Ballina Town Council. Under the provisions of Section 9(3)(a) of the Act, the Plan also covers an adjoining area within the jurisdiction of Mayo County Council. It is therefore prepared jointly by both authorities and will be adopted by both authorities (see *Map No. 01*).

The area covered by the plan includes the entire administrative area of Ballina Town Council and also some adjoining areas within the jurisdiction of Mayo County Council. These additional areas have been extended beyond what those included in the previous town plans. The areas covered comprise the following townlands:

Abbeyhalfquarter	Commons	Knocksbarrett
Ardnaree or Shanagry	Creggaun	Laghtadawannagh
Ardoughan	Croftonpark	Quignalecka
Ballina	Farrandeelion	Quignamanger
Ballyholan	Farrannoo	Quignashee
Ballynaraha	Garrankeel	Rahans
Behybaun	Glebe	Raish
Belleek	Gortatogher	Rathkip
Bunree	Gorteen	Rathnaconeen
Carowcushlaun	Kilmoremoy	Rathmeel
Carowcushlaun West	Knockleagha	
Cloonturk	Knocknalyre or Downhill	

The Plan addresses the proper planning and sustainable development of the town and will operate for a period of six years from the date it came into force (20/5/09). The plan has been drawn up after a comprehensive review of the current condition of the town and a widespread exercise of public consultation. This has included public meetings, and surveys of statutory and non-statutory bodies, schools and clubs. A series of Working Papers have also been prepared and are available.

Where appropriate, the Plan re-iterates the text of the previous (2003) Plan. The principle focus of this particular review has been on areas concerning traffic/roads/parking and town centre renewal.

The Plan sets out a strategy and framework for the future development of the town over the next six years. It gives the overall policies of the Councils with regard to the future of the town, more detailed objectives and standards for development control. The plan is in three sections:

Section 1, Introduction:

This states the background to the plan, the overall strategy for the future of the town and the demographic and economic analyses on which the policies and objectives are based.

Section 2, Policies and Objectives:

This section is organised under a series of land use headings – residential, industrial, commercial etc – as well as infrastructure and gives the broad policies of the Councils and the more detailed objectives.

Section 3, Development Management Standards:

This section gives detailed requirements that should be followed by developers and others in carrying out development works within the area of the plan. This section will principally be implemented through the development control system, that is, through planning permission under Section 32 of the Act in the case of private developers and through Part XI of the Act in the case of public authorities.

The plan also includes a Strategic Environmental Assessment (Appendix C) as required by the Act.

This plan adopts the range of Government Guidelines, national and regional policies that are presently in existence and also adopts all the relevant policies of Mayo County Council. These are outlined below in brief.

1.1.1 Policy Context

In 2002 the Government published the *National Spatial Strategy* (NSS) as an overall spatial policy framework for the country, setting out its detailed approach to achieving more balanced regional development. It represents Government policy in relation to strategic spatial planning policy and therefore, as required under Section 12(11) of the Act, is highly relevant to the functions of the planning authority in preparing and making the development plan.

In a regional context the NSS aims to boost the performance of strategically placed growth centres or “gateways”, acting at the national level to drive development over the urban and rural areas they influence and support more balanced patterns of development. Galway and Sligo are the gateways which are most likely to influence development in Mayo. However, the combined gateway of Athlone / Tullamore / Mullingar could also have significant impacts provided improved infrastructural linkages are put in place. At the regional level, a number of strategically located hubs have been identified, which will support and be supported by the gateways and act as drivers of local sub-regional development. In Mayo, Ballina and Castlebar are identified as a linked development hub, which with effective connections to and from the gateways, occupy a strategic position between the wider hinterland of west Mayo and a strengthening Galway, Sligo, Donegal axis on the east of the County.

It is intended that Ballina/Castlebar will act as a fulcrum for regional growth drawing on national economic progress, developing its economic strength and as a result helping to energise the wider Mayo/West Roscommon area. A high standard of infrastructural provision, in particular, enhanced connectivity between Ballina/Castlebar and also between the linked hub and the gateways and other hubs is therefore critical if the linked hub is to fulfill its role as set out in the NSS. The Strategy also recognizes that towns such as Westport and Claremorris present opportunities for development and expansion through effective promotion and marketing in association with the Castlebar/Ballina linked hub. The role outlined for Ballina in the national context as a joint hub and the role it will play in its regional and county context are central to the provisions of this Development Plan.

1.1.2 National Guidelines

In recent years, a broad range of National Guidelines have been issued relating to Sustainable Rural Housing, Wind Energy, Built Heritage, Retailing, Residential Densities, Telecommunications, Quarries, Childcare and Strategic Environmental Assessment. Draft Guidelines have also been issued relating to Landscape and Landscape Assessment and Development Plans. All of these have influenced the formulation of the strategic aims,

objectives and development management guidelines in the County Development Plan and in this Ballina Development Plan.

1.1.3 The Mayo Development Plan 2008 – 2014

This Plan has been drawn up to fit in with the overall policies of the Mayo County Development Plan 2008-2014.

1.1.4 County Development Board 10-year Integrated Strategy

Preparation of the Development Plan is carried out within the context of other plans and strategies, which impact on the development of the County. *Le Chéile le Neart - Mayo County Development Board 10-year Integrated Strategy* for example, sets out a ten-year integrated strategy for the economic, social and cultural development of the County. The Ballina Town Development Plan is designed to give physical and spatial expression to many of the objectives of the Strategy.

1.1.5 Regional Guidelines

County Mayo, along with Counties Roscommon and Galway, and Galway City Council, form the Western Regional Authority. In October 2010 The West Regional Authority published the Regional and Planning Guidelines for the western Region 2010-2022.. The aim of the Guidelines is to provide a framework for long term strategic development in the West Region for the period 2010 – 2022 which is consistent with the NSS and which ensures the successful implementation of the NSS at the regional, county and local level. The RPG's 2010-2022 considered the key issues facing the region in light of the changed global and national economic environment and published revised population targets for the all counties and major towns within the region. The revised population targets for the twin hubs of Ballina and Castlebar outlined in the Regional Planning Guideline for the Western Region require the incorporation of measures to manage lands zoned for residential use in the current Development Plan as part of the Core Strategy process. The Core Strategy establishes an evidence based strategy for the spatial development of Ballina Town and Environs for the years 2009 – 2015.

The requirement to prepare a Core Strategy is set out in the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010. The aim of the Core Strategy is to show, based on an evidence based approach, that the development objectives in the Development Plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives as set out in the NSS and the RPGs, with particular reference to the following:

- Population Targets
- Zoning for Residential Use
- Retail Development
- Public Transport

The Strategy has been influenced by national legislation and other EU directives including the SEA Directive, Habitats Directive, Floods Directive and water Framework Directive and incorporates wider planning, economic and social objectives. Economic, technical, social and environmental considerations have been explored with particular regard to the capacity of Ballina Town and Environs to contribute to the objectives of the Core Strategy and which are consistent with opportunities for public or sustainable travel and the availability of existing and planned critical water and waste water infrastructure.

The Core Strategy has been informed by the SEA which examines the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the Development Plan and by HAD which examines the likely impact on the Natura 2000 network in accordance with the Habitats

Directive. The framework first and foremost avoids adverse impacts on the environment or provides appropriate mitigation of any adverse impacts.

1.1.6 Implications of the Regional Planning Guidelines

A stated objective of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region is “to put in place a broad planning framework for the region and to provide an overall long-term strategy for the making of development and local plans”.

Under Section 27(1) of the Planning Act, the Planning Authority must have regard to these guidelines when making and adopting a development plan.

Accordingly, they have influenced the overall strategy, aims and objectives of the Plan.

In order to comply with the Guidelines the Plan must, inter alia:

- Promote the Castlebar/Ballina linked hub in accordance with the Core Strategy
- Given the importance of Westport as the third largest town in the County, it is an objective of Mayo County Council that the town continues to develop as a natural extension of the linked hub of Ballina and Castlebar
- Support and provide for infrastructural development and place a strong emphasis on an integrated approach to land-use planning and transportation
- Support agriculture and rural development including the diversification of farming activities
- Support the development of tourism including the clustering of tourist attractions, water based tourism facilities and tourism attractions capable of regional impact
- Support educational, training, up-skilling and research initiatives at all levels
- Support the realization of the full potential of the Corrib Gas Field
- Support and facilitate the re-opening of the Western Rail Corridor
- Support the provision and retention of healthcare and community services in smaller towns and villages through a sustainable settlement strategy
- Support the development of leisure, sporting, arts, cultural and recreational facilities.

The Plan has been prepared as an implementation mechanism for the Regional Planning Guidelines as they apply to Ballina and Mayo, and the Overall Strategy, Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy, policies and objectives have been formulated in response to the Guidelines and in compliance with the Core Strategy

1.1.6 (a) River Basin Management Plans

The River Basin Management Plan for the West Region was adopted in 2010. It identifies the specific environmental objectives to be achieved by the end of 2015 and corresponding programmes for of measures (i.e. actions that will be taken to achieve the objectives). The Core Strategy and plan Policies and objectives must have due regard to the programme of measures detailed in detailed in the Management Plans

1.1.7 Sustainable Development

The Government’s policy for sustainable development is set out in documents such as the *National Sustainable Development Strategy 1997* and *Making Ireland’s Development Sustainable, 2002*. Sustainable development is generally defined as ‘development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs’. However, sustainable development is not just about protection of the natural and man-made environment, it is equally about the economy and quality of life and therefore relates to social, economic and cultural sustainability and achieving a balance between these three dimensions.

Central also to the whole concept is that development should allow future generations to enjoy a quality of life at least as high as our own and should respect our responsibilities to the wider international community. In Comhar’s document *Principles for Sustainable Development*, the need to ensure that sustainable development encompasses environmental protection, economic development and social development in an integrated manner is emphasized. This plan embraces the principles of sustainability in addressing future growth and development as promoted in the above documents.

1.2 Town Profile

1.2.1 Brief History of the Development of Ballina

While there is evidence of prehistoric¹ and early Christian settlement around the area, it is generally acknowledged that the first significant development near Ballina occurred in 1427 with the establishment of the Augustinian Abbey on the eastern banks of the River Moy. It may be presumed that the Abbey formed the nucleus of a small urban settlement typical of that found throughout the rest of Ireland during the Middle Ages outside of the walled towns.

The 'modern' plan of Ballina began to emerge after 1723 thanks to the efforts of Lord Tyrawley who brought flax and linen workers into the area from the northeastern counties to work at new mills at Bunree. The mill and the dwellings constructed to house the workers constitute the first major development in Ballina since the foundation of the Abbey; it also provided a spur for the construction later in the 18th century of two new bridges across the River Moy as well as a military barracks in Ballina.

The early to mid 19th century was a period of economic success in Ballina. In 1817 William Malley brought large trading vessels to Crocketstown for the first time, essentially establishing Ballina as a seaport. The building boom was extended by the commencement in 1827 of St. Muredach's Cathedral and went on to include the construction of Belleek Manor, Ballina House, and two new modern, stone bridges across the Moy to replace the earlier structures. Thoroughfares were built along the Moy's new banks and a road was built connecting Ballina to Swinford.

Before 1870, Ballina had acquired a courthouse, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, a workhouse (the fifth largest in the country), an icehouse and a large convent (to house the Sisters of Mercy who had arrived from Sligo in 1862). At around this time, however, Ballina fell into a long period of decline which the Tyrawley Herald attributed to the demise of the local linen trade: while formerly the Trades Union Societies of Ballina had 600 members and 101 apprentices, by 1864 membership was reduced to fifty.

Housing schemes developed throughout the early to mid 20th century created for Ballina a suburban ring, however, the urban core of the town still centres on the 18th and 19th century development along Pearse and the adjoining streets. While few new buildings of note were added to the building stock, one 20th century structure left a lasting impression on the Ballina townscape: the Creteboom.

1.2.2 The Town of Ballina

Ballina and Castlebar are the two largest towns in County Mayo; they are of approximately equal size. Ballina has traditionally served as a market town and service centre for a large hinterland incorporating North County Mayo and the west of County Sligo. There is some evidence that its hinterland has shrunk in recent years. This is related to the improvement of road communications with its nearest and most important rival – Castlebar and the as yet unimproved condition of much of the main roads leading to Ballina.

The town has a peripheral location both within the Country as a whole and within the County. It is on the county's northern coastline, at the tip of Killala Bay, where the River Moy enters the sea. Being the first bridging point at the head of Killala Bay, it is a focus of communications for a wide area of North Mayo and West Sligo.

The area served by the town is mainly rural with a high dependence on agriculture. Tourism is also a significant employer. The outstanding landscapes of the west of Mayo and the coastal areas of North Mayo and West Sligo are a significant resource and attraction.

¹ *The Dolmen at Primrose Hill*

Particular attractions are the Céide Fields Centre near Ballycastle and the excellent fishing on the Moy and its associated lakes.

Its main roads are:

- The Foxford Road (N26) also serving as the main road to Castlebar and the link to the main Dublin road (N5). The first stage of a scheme to improve this road has been completed since the adoption of the last town plan. Plans are now well advanced on providing the rest of this road which will link to the N5 at Bohola.
- The Crossmolina Road (N59, west bound), the main road from the town to the west of the county
- The Sligo Road (N59, east bound), linking to Sligo town and the west of County Sligo.

In general, the condition of these roads is not good. Road improvements have been slow and it is not expected that current road plans will be completed in the time frame of this new plan. This creates significant problems of congestion in the town, impedes traffic and detracts from the amenities of the town, particularly the town centre.

The town has a large Bus Éireann depot as well as some private bus operators. The single line railway from Dublin extends to Castlebar and Westport with passengers for Ballina having to change at Manulla Junction. This takes from the convenience of the rail link and services are limited. Ireland West Airport Knock is located about 40km from the town. The old port of Ballina no longer serves as a commercial port. Other than fishing ports, the closest port of any size is Galway.

The town is located within the Border, Midland and Western Region of the country.

A National Spatial Strategy was published by the Government on 28th November 2002. This has, amongst other matters, identified towns and cities that will serve as “gateways” and “hubs” to help secure a better distribution of development throughout the country. As such it is intended that new development will be better distributed, thereby avoiding the concentration of development in the Greater Dublin area with associated problems of congestion in Dublin and underdevelopment elsewhere. The towns of Castlebar/Ballina are identified as a single development “Hub”, the lower level of identified growth centres.

In this regard, it is an objective of the plan to:

- build on the National Spatial Strategy
- establish links with Castlebar in light of the National Spatial Strategy

Ballina has a strong emphasis on Commerce and Manufacturing. This is shown in the accompanying Table 1.0 of comparative figures for the county’s three main towns. Westport shows a surprisingly heavy emphasis on manufacturing as well. Castlebar’s function as the county town shows in the large numbers in the Transport, Public Administration and Professional Services category.

Table 1.0: Percentage employed in Industrial Groups, Urban Districts, 2006

	Ballina	Castlebar	Westport
Agriculture and Mining	1.4 %	1.5 %	1.6 %
Manufacturing	13.0 %	11.3 %	16.2 %
Building, Electricity and Gas	13.4 %	13.7 %	10.5 %
Commerce, Trade, Services	31.2 %	28.4 %	39.6 %
Transport, Public Administration and Professional Services	36.3 %	40.5 %	28.0 %
Other	4.7 %	4.6 %	3.9 %

Source: Census of Population, 2006

Ballina's industrial function can be seen in a number of prominent industrial facilities, particularly Ballina Beverages and Hollister.

The town's second principle function is servicing and retail. It has a large and quite vibrant convenience retail core including Dunnes Stores, Tesco and Lidl and a wide range of other outlets, including Penneys.

The town also has an administrative function including offices of the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government, the Road Safety Authority and offices of both the Town Council and Mayo County Council. This is less extensive than the range of such functions that exist in Castlebar which include the main County Council offices, County hospital and third level college.

Overall, survey work in the preparation of this plan revealed concerns about several problems and challenges facing the town but a generally positive image of the town and a view that it is a good place to live and work. With further work on the town's strengths and continuing effort to address outstanding and new problems, it is the intention of the council that this plan will contribute towards the future well being and prosperity of the town.

1.3 Settlement Structure

1.3.1 Introduction

The centre is the most important part of a town. It is the focus of its economic life, the location of its historic core and most of its best buildings and the hub of its communications. The town centre of Ballina remains the focus of commercial activity. In this regard it has advantages over many Irish towns as little commercial development has taken place at the edges and the main new supermarket retailers are located in the centre rather than in out of centre developments. This adds to the vitality and the viability of the town centre.

Nonetheless, there are substantial areas within the centre that are underutilised. A number of significant opportunity sites exist and it is the intention that this plan will facilitate their development to the benefit of the town centre and the town as a whole.

The town has a strong character, typical of that of Irish towns of its size. It has a town centre, mostly of traditional, two and three storey buildings, plastered and slated with the typical Irish finishes of shop fronts and plaster with windows of a vertical emphasis and pitched roofs of slate. This character is still largely intact, though, with a few modern buildings that might have shown greater sensitivity to their surroundings.

Significant improvements have taken place in the public domain. These include:

- Improvements at the Humbert Monument,
- Amenity work at the Ridge Pool Road
- Improvements to Moy Lane
- Improvements to the Town Park.

There is scope for further improvement, especially the eventual redevelopment of the Market Square and related sites such as the old barracks site.

The town has also seen some significant urban redevelopment including the new Civic Offices, the Garda Station, Penneys, refurbishment of Heitons, the development of the Library and the development of a pedestrian bridge at the Ridgepool alongside a new cultural centre.

The banks of the River Moy are a strong and distinctive feature of the town and could be improved and developed. The river is a major amenity and a major part of the general character of the place - the sort of feature that is remembered by a visitor. It also has a major amenity in Belleek Woods. This is enhanced by its riverside location. It is of added

value due to its proximity to the town but the intervening area is a rather unsatisfactory mix of different uses – amenity, industrial and residential.

Outside the town centre, there has been extensive development, particularly some large industrial developments and extensive new housing schemes. These have often been on scattered sites so the town has lost much of its compactness with some new developments extending out a distance along the approach roads. This can be seen on the Sligo, Foxford and Crossmolina roads but is most pronounced on the Killala road where both Ballina Beverages and some housing schemes are far outside the limit of previous development and are interspersed with undeveloped lands.

The Quay Area is a distinct centre in itself with a strong and very attractive character enhanced by its river frontage and the trees of Belleek Woods opposite. It has significant unrealised potential, possibly as a tourist focus.

1.3.2 Strengths

1. The town has a large hinterland and there are few nearby rival centres for it to compete with.
2. It has an attractive hinterland with significant existing and potential tourist value.
3. The town is served by a National Primary Route and two National Secondary Routes. It is also on a railway line and bus services. There is an international Airport close by.
4. The town centre remains the focus of commercial development and has not been undermined by out-of-town retail.
5. It is well served by convenience shopping.
6. It has a number of large high-profile industries.
7. The town's setting and location is attractive. The River Moy is world famous as a fishery. It contributes greatly to the physical attractiveness of the town. Belleek Woods are a major amenity.
8. The town's location in the Border, Midland and Western Region (BMW) area gives it priority in terms of assistance for foreign direct investment incentives from government agencies.
9. Water and sewage infrastructure is generally adequate.
10. The electricity infrastructure within the town is adequate.
11. The recent location of the Road Safety Authority in the town and its expected expansion, will lead to employment and population growth. It will give the town, which has traditionally relied on manufacturing and shopping, a major service function.

1.3.3 Weaknesses

There are a number of difficulties faced by Ballina arising out of the structure of the town.

1. The town's location is peripheral and existing poor quality roads and transport infrastructure exacerbates this. Road proposals have been slow to realise because of the difficulty of obtaining funding. Train and other services are limited.
2. In the past, much of the development in the town was quite scattered. Whilst more recent development has been more compact and centrally located, there are still extensive areas where developed and non-developed land intermingles. This creates costs in servicing and obscures the divide between town and country. It increases dependence on the private car by separating home and work as well as home and services.
3. There has, in the past, been significant urban sprawl of very low density housing on the town's margins. This creates problems for future development and blurs the distinction between town and country.
4. Public housing is highly concentrated, particularly on the Crossmolina Road. This contributes to over concentration and a sense of social imbalance.

5. Some parts of the town are restrained by poor access. This applies in particular to the lands to the west of the railway (Knockleagha).
6. Ballina is not the County Town and loses out in many of these functions to Castlebar.
7. Comparison shopping in the town is weak.
8. There are significant empty sites in the town centre.
9. The town has a poorly developed tourism industry focusing largely on the Moy fishery.
10. The existing condition of the main approach road to the town, the N26.

1.3.4 Opportunities

1. The proposed town ring road will ease congestion, improve the amenities and improve accessibility to the town and to the general hinterland. It will open up some lands to development that were otherwise inaccessible.
2. There are opportunities for renewal in the town centre and opportunities for infill and increased density.
3. More could be made of the Moy Riverside including public amenity works and appropriate new buildings, which could allow the development of a very impressive townscape.
4. There is scope for general improvement to the public demesne in the town centre.
5. There is extensive land available for development around the town.
6. The National Spatial Strategy could lead to major growth opportunities.
7. There is scope to develop comparison shopping and retail warehousing.
8. There are opportunities to develop the amenity value of the Moy and Belleek Woods.
10. The town has the potential to act as a gateway for the tourism industry of North Mayo. It is well located with regard to some highly scenic areas and some important visitor attractions and is the only sizeable town in the area.
11. Development of the Clark Library and Archive and development of the County Museum.

1.3.5 Threats

1. The possibility of pollution in the Moy could have a serious impact on the town's tourism and amenities.
2. The by-pass will lead to pressure for out of town developments, particularly retail. This could significantly harm the town centre.
3. The recent tendency for development to centralize in the eastern and southern part of the country is detrimental to the interests of Ballina, which is remotely located in the northwest.
4. The inappropriate development of lands between Belleek Woods and the town could isolate one from the other.

1.4 Demographic Status and Economic Situation

1.4.1 Introduction

In this section the demographic structure of Ballina and its wider environs are outlined and examined as well giving a projection of future population, an assessment of the workforce and household make-up for the town. As a joint Hub, Ballina is projected to grow strongly under the National Spatial Strategy and it has demonstrated this strong growth over the last intercensal period. The population structure of the town is evolving and this makes projections of future population problematic. This section of the paper will assist in determining the future need of a number of other sections in this Development Plan.

The Town of Ballina does not fit neatly into a single statistically defined area. It straddles four different Electoral Divisions (ED) but does not fully occupy these areas. It also encompasses the CSO defined area of the town, but this area does not fully reflect the boundary being adopted for this development plan which is much larger. It is not possible to disaggregate the town boundary area from these four ED's and is thus proposed to encompass all four ED's as part of a study area for the town. Since the last Development Plan the boundary area of the plan has been extended and thus broadens the study area.

The area to which the projections relate is the old Urban District of Ballina, together with the DEDs of Ballina Rural, Ardnaree North and Ardnaree South. This area of all four DEDs is called the **Study Area** and covers a greater area than is covered by the plan but calculations for the plan area are made from these projections. Those areas outside the town boundary area are predominantly rural in nature and have low levels of population. The vast majority of population in the four ED's are to be found within the predefined town boundary area.

1.4.2 National Spatial Strategy and CSO Population Projections

Ballina is identified as being a joint Hub with Castlebar in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS). Its role as a Hub is to support the role of nearby Gateways and support a range of smaller towns and villages in its hinterland. It is anticipated that Hubs and Gateways would grow at faster rates than other towns and villages and would be growth poles for their hinterlands.

The NSS population projections were based on the 1996 Census of Population and the growth rates that were accepted then were much lower than current expectations. The current NSS population projections used the compound growth rate of only 0.7% per annum, whereas since 2001 Ireland's population growth continues to accelerate beyond the 1.6% per annum compound mark. The NSS projections would put Ireland's population at 4.7 million persons by 2021, whereas current CSO projections are looking at a national population of 5.07 million in the same period. The publication by the CSO of the Population and Labour Force Projections 2006-2036 and the Regional Population Projections 2006-2021 indicate that significant population growth is currently taking place and that this trend is likely to persist for some time to come. These figures revise previous population estimations by the CSO in 1999 and base them on growth trends from the 2002 Census of Population and trends of subsequent birth, death and migration rates. The figures indicate that on the basis of the CSO's new migration assumption there will be a net immigration rate of 30,000 per annum to 2016, 20,000 per annum between 2016 and 2026; 15,000 per annum from 2026 and 2036. The rate of immigration was approximated by the CSO to be 70,000 persons per annum in 2005 and increased again in 2006 and 2007 (CSO, Population and Migration Estimates, September 2005).

In this Plan the reality of faster growth rates and the evidence of these rates on Ballina up to 2006 are taken into account.

1.4.3 Ballina Structure

Ballina can be subdivided into three key areas: Ballina Urban (the core of the town), Ballina Inner Rural (the area directly around the core of the town where significant population has begun to grow and expand) and the rural area where a number of estates have begun to appear and where the town has begun to stretch out beyond the town. This is outlined in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1.1: Ballina urban, Ballina inner rural, Ballina rural

1.4.4 Headline Population Figures

Using the CSO data in the four selected ED's from the last four Census of Populations (1991, 1996, 2002 and 2006) considerable population shifts in the Ballina Study area can be seen. These are outlined in Table 1.1 below. Since 2002 there have been a number of subdivisions within the relevant ED's by the CSO and these are reflected in the tables.

The population of the Ballina study area has grown from 10,442 in 1991 to 12,824 persons in 2006, indicating a 22.8% growth rate over this period. The state grew by 20.3% in this same period and the growth rate for County Mayo has been 11.8%. The greatest growth rates have occurred in the Ardnaree South Urban ED and this is reflected in Table 1.2 below. Ballina Urban has seen a steady decline in its population since 1996. This area represents the core of the town centre and is a pattern reflected in many town centres over the last decade as individuals have moved to new housing estates in more suburban areas. The Town Council views this move as one that requires remedial attention.

Table 1.1: Population Change in Ballina Study Area 1991 to 2006

Ballina Population	1991	1996	2002	2006
Geographic Area				
001 Ardnaree South Urban	2083	2124	2367	2582
002 Ballina Urban	4480	4728	4627	4280
006 Ardnaree North (part)			349	349
007 Ardnaree South Rural (part)			939	1624
010 Ballina Rural (part)			1196	1221
006 Ardnaree North (part)	781	835	571	619
007 Ardnaree South Rural (part)	1384	1367	748	822
010 Ballina Rural (part)	1714	1966	1087	1327
Ballina	10442	11020	11884	12824
Ballina Population	1991	1996	2002	2006
Urban	6563	6852	6994	6862
Inner Rural	0	0	2484	3194
Rural	3879	4168	2406	2768
	10442	11020	11884	12824

Source: CSO, Census of Population 1991 to 2006

Table 1.2: Percentage Change in the Ballina Study Area 1991 to 2006

	1991 to 1996 % change	1996 to 2002 % change	2002 to 2006 % change	1991 to 2006 % change
Ardnaree South Ur	2.0	11.4	9.1	24.0
Ballina urban	5.5	-2.1	-7.5	-4.5
Ardnaree North Pt			0.0	
Ardnaree South rural pt			72.9	
Ballina Rural Pt			2.1	
Ardnaree North Pt	6.9	-31.6	8.4	-20.7
Ardnaree South rural pt	-1.2	-45.3	9.9	-40.6
Ballina Rural Pt	14.7	-44.7	22.1	-22.6
	5.5	7.8	7.9	22.8

Source: CSO, Census of Population 1991 to 2006

These growth patterns can be viewed in terms of a comparison with the County, the region and the state and these are outlined in Table 1.3 below. Ballina has grown at a faster pace than the County since 1996 and has been growing at a rate similar to the region and the State during this period. Its importance in the County in terms of being an urban population centre has grown and while it is the second largest urban centre in County Mayo, it is growing at a faster pace than Castlebar.

Table 1.3: (a) population and (b) growth rate as proportion of county, region, state

	Ballina	Mayo	West	State
1991	10,442	101,713	333,974	3,525,719
1996	11,020	111,524	352,353	3,626,087
2002	11,884	117,446	380,297	3,917,203
2006	12,824	123,839	414,277	4,239,848

	Ballina	Mayo	West	State
91-96	5.54%	9.65%	5.50%	2.85%
96-02	7.84%	5.31%	7.93%	8.03%
02-06	7.91%	5.44%	8.94%	8.24%

Source: CSO, Census of Population 1991 to 2006

Figure 1.2 below outlines this shift in growth patterns within the town area. Little growth is seen in the urban area and rural decline is also observed. The area that has grown is the inner rural area that is just outside the core area of the town. It is this area where pressure for future population growth will likely continue.

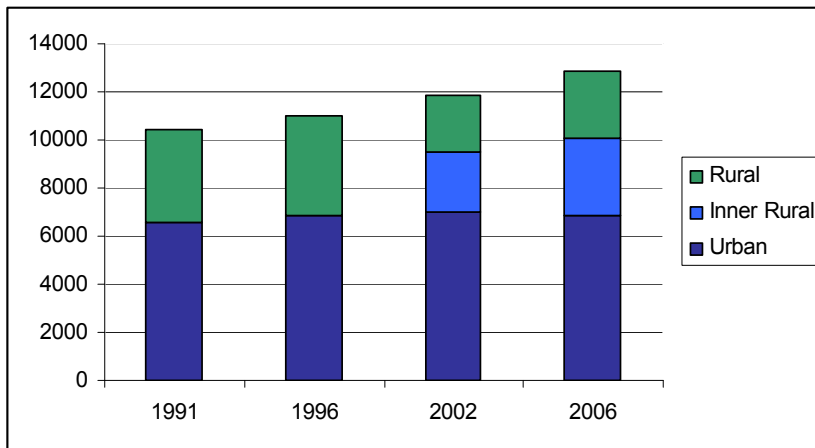


Figure 1.2: Ballina Urban, Ballina Inner Rural, Ballina Rural

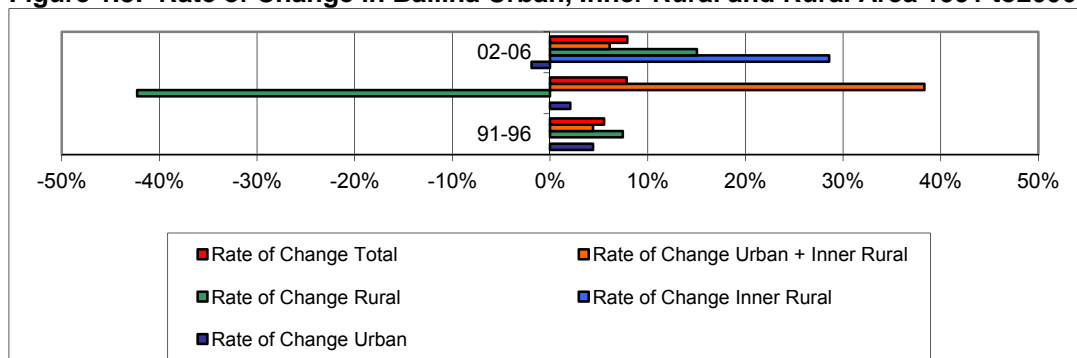
The rate of change in population confirms the lack of growth in the Ballina Urban area and the growth of population in the areas outside the core of the town. This is set out in Table 1.4 below where the Inner Rural area has grown by 29% in the 2002 to 2006 period, which saw a decline of 2% in the urban area. The rural area has also seen growth of 15% in this period indicating the pressure on the town to spread out beyond the core. The Town Council are concerned that development is beginning to take place in the Urban Fringe and addresses this in section 2.9.

Table 1.4: Rate of Change in Ballina Urban, Inner Rural and Rural Area 1991 to 2006

	91-96	96-02	02-06
Rate of Change Urban	4%	2%	-2%
Rate of Change Inner Rural			29%
Rate of Change Rural	7%	-42%	15%
Rate of Change Urban + Inner Rural	4%	38%	6%
Rate of Change Total	6%	8%	8%

The changes in the three areas in the Ballina study area are graphically demonstrated below in Figure 1.3.

Figure 1.3: Rate of Change in Ballina Urban, Inner Rural and Rural Area 1991 to 2006



Source: CSO, Census of Population 1991 to 2006

1.4.5. Changing Profile of Ballina

Ballina's population is changing in nature as well as growing in size. Many of these changes reflect the overall changing nature of the state and the composition of its population. In the following sections a number of these changes are outlined.

1.4.6 Rate of Change by Gender

Using the Ballina urban and inner rural areas it can be seen in Table 1.5 below that the number of males in Ballina has grown considerably in the period from 1991 to 2006. In 1991 there were considerably fewer males than females in Ballina. This gap has closed in the intervening years to the point where there is almost an equality of number in both genders. This is currently the position in the state.

Generally both genders have grown considerably over the last 15 years, but the rebalancing of the Male to Female ratio is very evident and has implications in relation to creating sustainability in the population structure in the town.

Table 1.5: Population Break Down by Gender 1991 to 2006

	Males	Females
1991	5107	5335
1996	5450	5570
2002	5829	6055
2006	6372	6452

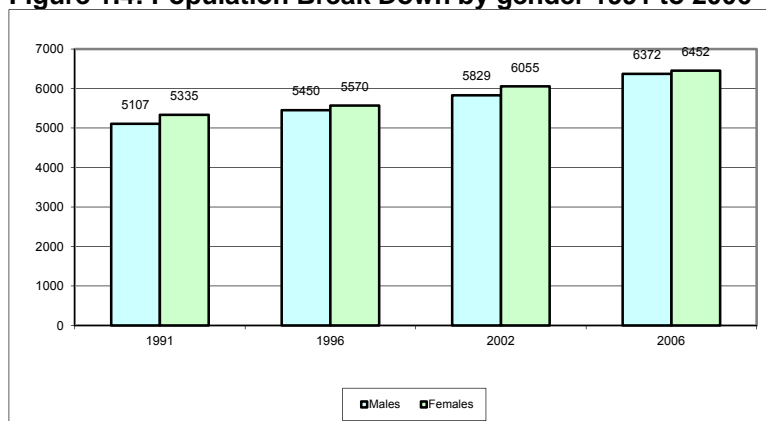
	Males	Females
91-96	7%	4%
96-02	7%	9%
02-06	9%	7%

	Males	Females
Ballina	49.7%	50.3%
State	50%	50%

Source: CSO, Census of Population 1991 to 2006

This position relating to gender balance is illustrated in Figure 1.4 below. The narrowing of the gap between males and females can be clearly identified over time and again showing that by 2006 that there is near equality in numbers between both genders.

Figure 1.4: Population Break Down by gender 1991 to 2006

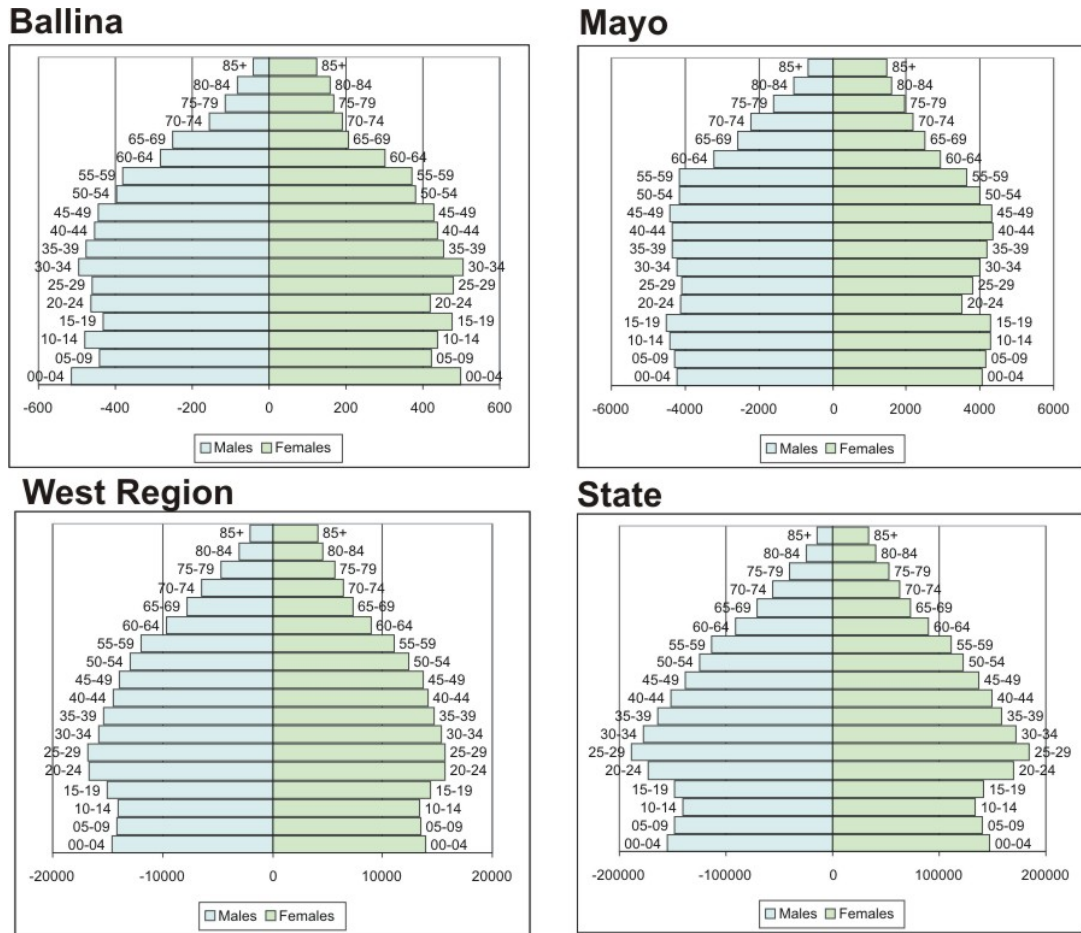


Source: CSO, Census of Population 1991 to 2006

1.4.7 Age Structure

A significant determinant of population growth and thus, population projection is the age profile of an area. This also gives a very strong indication of the requirements of what provisions need to be made for different cohorts of populations.

Figure 1.5: Set of Four Population Pyramids for Ballina, Mayo, West Region and the State, 2006



In Figure 1.5 above the age structure of Ballina, County Mayo, the West Region and the State are illustrated. While the West Region and the State are similar in structure, with high proportions of population in the 20 to 44 age cohorts and few in the school going age cohort, Ballina differs, having a very high number of children in the 0-4 age group. This has implications for the provision or retention of schools in the town and this has been brought forward in the consultation process. This is addressed in section 2.6 of this plan. The age pyramid also indicates that there are a significant number of people in the 20 to 50 age cohort. Bulking of people in the age cohort 20 to 44 can indicate strong migration into the area. Taken with the high number of young children, it seems that young families have settled in the area. The Town Council welcomes this change in population structure and increasing population size as an indication of Ballina meeting its role as a hub in the NSS.

In Table 1.6 below the age structure of Ballina in the years 1996 to 2006 is outlined. It indicates that there has been significant growth of population in the 0-4 age cohort, particularly in the 2002 -2006 period where an additional 112 individuals have been added to the population indicating a growth rate of 12.4%. This indicates that there will be pressure on school places into the future, particularly if this trend is to continue. The population in the 20 to 64 age group has also grown considerably (12.7%) as stated above and this indicates that there is likely to be an increase in the number of children.

The age cohort 65+ also shows significant growth over the ten years, but particularly in the four year period 2002 to 2006 (10%). This has implications for health provision in the town, particularly for care for the elderly and the provision of locally based step-down facilities, and nursing homes.

Table 1.6: Growth in Different Age Cohorts in Ballina 1996 to 2006

Age Cohort	1996	2002	Difference	% Change	2002	2006	Difference	% Change
0-4	865	900	35	4.0	900	1,012	112	12.4
5 to 14	2,051	1,825	- 226	-11.0	1,825	1,780	- 45	-2.5
15 to19	954	1,028	74	7.8	1,028	908	- 120	-11.7
20 to 64	5,889	6,775	886	15.0	6,775	7,633	858	12.7
65+	1,261	1,356	95	7.5	1,356	1,491	135	10.0
Total	11,020	11,884	864	7.8	11,884	12,824	940	7.9

Source: CSO, Census of Population 1991 to 2006

1.4.8 Changing Profile of Ballina Population

The size and age structure of Ballina's population is not all that is changing in Ballina. The make up of its population has changed dramatically in the last ten years. This mirrors changes in the rest of the state, though the changes in Ballina are different in character than in other towns, for instance Dublin where the make up of new population differs considerably from place to place within the city, or Ballyhaunis where a significant number of individuals for the Asian sub continent have moved to the town. The Town Council welcomes this diversity of population and recognises that it poses challenges for the Council and the Town. It is recognised that this trend will likely continue.

Table 1.7: Ethnicity in Ballina 2006 (Urban and Inner Rural)

Ethnicity	Ballina	State
Irish	8711	3550140
Any other White background	588	285060
Irish Traveller	279	21935
Not stated	117	70189
Other including mixed background	78	45581
Any other Asian background	45	35165
Chinese	24	16250
African	20	39734
Any other Black background	9	3701
Total	9871	4067755

Source: CSO, Census of Population 1991 to 2006

In Table 1.7 above the ethnic breakdown of the population in Ballina and the State are outlined as per the 2006 Census of Population. Of 9,871 persons, 8,711 are declared as being Irish. While others have declared themselves as being born in Ireland they have declared themselves as being ethnically different, including 279 from the travelling community, 588 who are white and from a different country and smaller numbers from different nationalities and different cultures.

Table 1.8: Percentage of Population Make-up in Ballina and the State 2006

	Ballina	State
Percentage Irish	88%	87%
Percentage other background	12%	13%

Source: CSO, Census of Population 1991 to 2006

Clearly the population is still mainly Irish in character, but one where differences are emerging. This is likely to evolve over time. Table 1.8 shows that the position in Ballina is almost identical to that which pertains in the State.

1.4.9 Population Projections in Accordance with the Regional Planning Guidelines

Notwithstanding the population analysis and projections in Sections 1.4-1.4.8 of the plan, the Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022 published in October

2010 outlines revised population targets for the West Region as a whole and sets population targets for the Galway Gateway and Hub/Link Hubs within the Region. Under the RPG's it is envisaged that the population for the West Region shall be 484,700 by 2016 which equates to 9.7% of the overall population figure for the state.

Based on the population figures outlined in the RPG's it is projected that for the lifetime of the plan (up to 2015) the population targets of Ballina town and environs shall be 11505 which represents a population increase of 975 from 2010 figures.

Table 1.9: Population projections Using RPGs

	Projected for 2015	Projected for 2016
Ballina & Environs	11505	11700
Increase from 2010 population figures outlined in RPG's	975	1,170

1.4.10 Households

The Census of Population in 2006 outlines the numbers and category of dwelling and its tenure in Ballina and County Mayo. Table 1.10 indicates that there are 3,863 dwellings in the Study area of which 2,605 are owner occupied with or without a mortgage and 326 rented from the local authority and a further 57 being purchased from the local authority. There are 717 houses that are rented in the town.

Table 1.10: Household Status Ballina (Source: CSO, Census of Popn. 1991 to 2006)

Number of permanent private households by type of occupancy, 2006	Ballina, Mayo
Owner occupied with mortgage	1382
Owner occupied no mortgage	1223
Buying from Local Authority	57
Rented from Local Authority	326
Rented from Voluntary Body	290
Other rented - unfurnished	58
Other rented - furnished	369
Occupied free of rent	56
Not stated	102
Total	3863

Table 1.11 indicates the vacancy rate in housing in County Mayo. The figures indicate that 24.4% of housing are vacant and while some of these are holiday homes, the majority of them are vacant or remain unsold. The vacancy rates in County Mayo are particularly high but based on anecdotal evidence and observation, this does not seem to be a significant problem in Ballina, although it was mentioned in the public consultations at the beginning of the plan review.

Table 1.11: Occupancy Status Mayo

Occupancy Status	Mayo
Occupied by usual resident(s) of the household [A]	43218
Occupied by visitors only [B]	465
Unoccupied: Residents temporarily absent [C]	736
Unoccupied: Vacant house [D]	9136
Unoccupied: Vacant flat [E]	946
Unoccupied: Holiday home [F]	4216
Total housing stock [G=A+B+C+D+E+F]	58717
Vacancy rate [(D+E+F)/G] %	24.4

Source: CSO, Census of Population 1991 to 2006

From the figures above it is possible to calculate the occupancy rates that pertain in the town and the county. The occupancy rates for County Mayo are outlined in Table 1.13 below over the 1971 to 2006 period for rural and urban areas. The county average occupancy rate decline from 3.8 persons per house in 1971 to 2.75 in 2006. It is projected that these rates will continue to decline to the European average.

Table 1.12: Occupancy Rates – Ballina urban + inner rural

Ballina Occupancy Rate 2006	
Number of Households	3863
Population	10056
Occupancy Rate	2.60

Source: CSO, Census of Population 1991 to 2006

Table 1.12 above indicates that the Occupancy rate in Ballina is 2.6 persons per household. This is lower than the County average but higher than the aggregate urban area within the County. The differences here, while marginal, do have implications on the number of houses that will be required to meet the population increases anticipated above.

1.4.11 Ballina Employment

Ballina has a severe unemployment problem. Census 2006 identified that Ballina had an unemployment rate of 15.8% and this was the highest unemployment rate among large Irish towns. The people of the town and the business community in general have expressed concern at the lack of a role key state agencies have played in developing the town's employment and business development. The failure of the town to attract the necessary physical infrastructure and subsequent industrial development is a cause for concern. The town has lost significant employers over time and has found few replacement industries.

Table 1.13: Occupancy Rates – Mayo

Year	Area Type	Mayo
1971	Total	3.8
	Aggregate Town Area	3.97
	Aggregate Rural Area	3.77
1981	Total	3.63
	Aggregate Town Area	3.58
	Aggregate Rural Area	3.64
1991	Total	3.31
	Aggregate Town Area	3.17
	Aggregate Rural Area	3.35
2002	Total	2.87
	Aggregate Town Area	2.68
	Aggregate Rural Area	2.94
2006	Total	2.75
	Aggregate Town Area	2.54
	Aggregate Rural Area	2.84

Source: CSO, Census of Population 1991 to 2006

The business sector is, however, generally positive and upbeat. Trading in the town is good, but allowing for improvement. The role of Ballina Beverages and Hollister in the town was seen as being critical to the continued development of the town.

An area for the development of an IDA industrial park has been identified off the Sligo Road and while there were great hopes of this park being developed it has been tied up in a

protracted process over ownership issues. It is hoped that this will be resolved in the near future and that the development of a high quality industrial park will be put in place. The town has a number of areas that have light industry. Many of these are old and need reinvigoration.

On a national basis the Irish economy has performed exceptionally over the last decade creating very significant employment and being a magnet for industrial and service development as well as for migrant workers. Domestic demand has driven much of this development with strong growth being experienced in the construction and service sectors. National unemployment rates have dropped to 4.5% and have remained under 5% for some time. Changes in the economy have indicated that this period of economic expansion is slowing down and a number of national and international process are occurring simultaneously to dampen economic activity. Continued investment in infrastructural development under the National Development Plan (NDP) are likely to keep the economy active and allow towns such as Ballina fulfil their potential under the NSS and the NDP. Utilising the significant proportion of employees in the high skill occupations and attracting high skilled migrants are important for the national and local economy. Forfás have identified the need to have creative workers working in creative regions or cities/towns. This will attract companies to locations where such workers want to live. Ballina, with its attractive town and positive living conditions, can be such a place. The town must put itself in a position to react to the next increase in the economy and capitalise on its competitive advantages. To do this additional infrastructure will need to be attracted to the town, as can be expected for a joint hub.

The local tourist sector needs to be developed. It is recognised that the town has not developed its tourism as much as it could have and that there are great tourist attractions in Ballina and its hinterland. This product and the area's natural beauty could be exploited more and that Ballina had greater attractions than many other locations in the country and the County, but the town was not seen to be succeeding in attracting visitors.

The Mayo County Development Plan has indicated that Ballina is one of a number of key towns in the overall development of the County. It is the policy of the County to facilitate the sustainable development of the town with an appropriate range of social and physical infrastructure that would support local services, retail, commercial and enterprise development. It is the Council's policy to encourage and promote a high quality of industrial / enterprise development as well as promoting the agri-industry and rural enterprises. It recognises the importance too of the tourist sector that will assist in diversifying away from the declining agricultural sector. These policies are part of a backdrop to a very successful economic growth period that saw strong national employment growth and reductions in unemployment. It is recognised that there are difficulties in attracting large foreign direct investment into various parts of the county due to the county's peripherality and lack of large scale urban centres and a deficit of key infrastructural provision in terms of rail, road telecommunications and energy provision.

While Enterprise Ireland is active in the County supporting a range of individual enterprises there are no specific plans for Ballina. Equally, while IDA Ireland is, with some success, focusing much of its efforts at directing new investment into the BMW region, it is not specifically working on a strategy for each town in the region. IDA Ireland has a number of key strategic sites in the West and in County Mayo, including Ballina, and these will be utilised to attract investment into these areas that have indicated a preference for such locations.

The location of Ballina Beverages and Hollister in Ballina give the town a significant economic boost and advantage over many of its neighbouring towns in the county, particularly with the projected growth of Ballina Beverages and the decentralisation of the Road Safety Authority to the town. Building on these positive developments and the continued development of the service sector within the town are likely to provide further employment opportunities for the town that will assist in ensuring the town develops a local sustainable economy.

The growth of population in Ballina will have put pressure on existing social and economic provision as well as providing opportunities for the development of additional employment generation and enterprise development. The projected growth of future population will put additional pressure on housing and existing commercial run services.

1.4.12 Employment Status in Ballina Study Area

The numbers of persons in the labour force and in gainful employment has increased substantially between 2002 and 2006 in the Ballina Study Area. Table 1.14 below indicates the numbers of individuals over the age of fifteen categorised by their economic status in 2002 and 2006 as per the Census of Populations. It shows the number of individuals who are at work, seeking their first job or who are considered to be unemployed. It also outlines those individuals who are not considered to be in the labour force – those not actively seeking employment – students, home carers, retired or those who are unable to work.

Table 1.15 below links with Table 1.14 and shows the difference between the two census years. Normally in a short four year period it would not be expected to show much difference, but the population in Ballina has grown considerably in the intervening period and the national economy has continued to grow passing benefits to the town.

The number of individuals who are over 15 has increased by 873 in the study area. The numbers employed in the town has increased by 803 while the numbers of people unemployed has also increased by 199. Whilst the town does have an unemployment problem, the significant rise in employment demonstrates that the local economy has been dynamic and has seen very significant growth and development.

Table 1.14: Persons over 15 by Employment Status 2002 to 2006

	2002			2006		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
At work	2544	1967	4511	2991	2323	5314
Looking for first regular job	90	60	150	80	45	125
Unemployed having lost or given up previous job	411	160	571	484	286	770
Student	482	506	988	392	500	892
Looking after home/family	40	1304	1344	52	1089	1141
Retired	552	389	941	655	603	1258
Unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability	306	263	569	271	235	506
Other	33	52	85	11	15	26
Total aged 15 years and over	4458	4701	9159	4936	5096	10032
In Labour Force	3045	2187	5232	3555	2654	6209
Not in Labour Force	1413	2514	3927	1381	2442	3823

Source: CSO, Census of Population 2002 to 2006

Table 1.15: Persons over 15 by Employment Status – Differences Between 2002 to 2006

	Difference		
	Male	Female	Total
At work	447	356	803
Looking for first regular job	-10	-15	-25
Unemployed having lost or given up previous job	73	126	199
Student	-90	-6	-96
Looking after home/family	12	-215	-203
Retired	103	214	317

Unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability	-35	-28	-63
Other	-22	-37	-59
Total aged 15 years and over	478	395	873
In Labour Force	510	467	977
Not in Labour Force	-32	-72	-104

Source: CSO, Census of Population 2002 to 2006

The number of individuals classified as being students has declined by 96 and those working in the home have also decreased by 204. The number of retired persons has increased by 317 persons. Significantly the labour force has increased by 977 and those not active in the labour force have decreased by 104. This is a healthy trend for the town.

Table 1.15 also indicates that male employment has increased at a faster rate than female employment and that female unemployment has increased at a significantly larger rate than male unemployment. There are significantly more females retired than males and there has been a large reduction in male students. The numbers of females described as looking after family and home has also reduced dramatically in this short four year period.

In Table 1.16 the percentage breakdown of each component of the table is outlined and is compared to the position in the County and the state. This comparison shows that the percentage of persons at work in the town has increased from 49.3% to 53% in a four year period and now equates to the employment position in the County, but is somewhat behind the 57.2% of persons at work in the state. The unemployment rate, however, has grown in the four-year period increasing to 7.7% and being significantly greater than that which pertains in both the county and the state. As stated above, the CSO has identified that the town of Ballina has the highest rate of unemployment for a large town in the country and this is borne out when looking at the study area. This is a matter of great concern to the Town Council.

The percentage of persons who are in the labour force has grown in the intervening four years from 57.1% to 61.9%, which is close to the proportion which exists within the state. The make up of those outside the labour force is somewhat different, with fewer students in Ballina (travelling to college outside the area) and more people retired.

Table 1.16: Percentage of Persons over 15 by Employment Status 2002 to 2006 in Ballina Study Area, Mayo and the State

	% of Total			Mayo	State
	2002	2006		2006	2006
At work	49.3	53.0		53.1	57.2
Looking for first regular job	1.6	1.2		0.8	0.9
Unemployed having lost or given up previous job	6.2	7.7		4.5	4.4
Student	10.8	8.9		9.5	10.4
Looking after home/family	14.7	11.4		12.7	11.5
Retired	10.3	12.5		14.0	11.2
Unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability	6.2	5.0		4.9	4.1
Other	0.9	0.3		0.4	0.4
Total aged 15 years and over	100.0	100.0		100.0	100.0
In Labour Force	57.1	61.9		58.4	62.5
Not in Labour Force	42.9	38.1		41.6	37.5

Source: CSO, Census of Population 2002 to 2006

The increase in the numbers of persons in employment in the town by 803 persons and the growing labour force is to be welcomed. This brings greater prosperity to the town. It is however, a matter of concern that unemployment has not reduced and that the town

remains with a difficult problem. This Development Plan will aim to develop the town in a manner that will assist in the development of employment and trade. This will assist in generating a strong local economy that is in keeping with the role the town must play as a joint hub in the NSS.

1.4.13 Breakdown of Employment Type in the Town

The trends in employment are an important indicator in determining the needs of the local economy. In Table 1.17 below the break down of employment by employment category in 2002 and 2006 is outlined. There are significant differences in the employment by gender as well as changes within employment sectors. Agriculture Forestry and Fishing continues to steadily decline (-20.9%) while building and construction has increased very substantially (87.7%) in this short four year period. Employment in commerce and trade, professional services and other categories have all increased significantly, with commerce and trade and professional services being particularly important for the growth of female employment.

Table 1.18 below looks at the employment position in 2006 and includes those individuals who are unemployed and outlines their own categorisation of their employment type. In line with table 1.17 we see that there are a significant number (79) from the manufacturing sector who are unemployed, and this is a category which has declined (-2%) in the four year period. Unemployment is still high among construction workers (Male). 873 persons (453 male and 420 female) are employed in sales (retailing) and there are 65 persons unemployed in the sector. There are 368 persons unemployed in the Other Workers category.

Table 1.17: Persons Employed by Employment Category in Ballina 2002 to 2006

	2002			2006			% Change
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	175	7	182	135	9	144	-20.9
Building and construction	335	16	351	625	34	659	87.7
Manufacturing industries	527	232	759	532	212	744	-2.0
Commerce and trade	706	618	1324	774	711	1485	12.2
Transport and communications	164	28	192	157	26	183	-4.7
Public administration	137	128	265	149	125	274	3.4
Professional services	202	597	799	213	727	940	17.6
Others	298	341	639	406	479	885	38.5
Totals	2544	1967	4511	2991	2323	5314	17.8

Source: CSO, Census of Population 2002 to 2006

Table 1.18: Persons Employed and Unemployed by Employment Category in Ballina 2006

	Not Working 2006			Working 2006		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Farming, fishing and forestry managers	12	0	12	106	6	112
Other agricultural workers	4	2	6	19	3	22
Manufacturing workers	65	14	79	582	105	687
Building and construction workers	72	2	74	494	12	506
Clerical and office workers	3	14	17	56	378	434
Administrative and government workers	6	2	8	230	172	402
Transport workers	30	1	31	243	37	280

Sales workers	27	38	65	453	420	873
Professional workers	25	11	36	374	571	945
Services workers	20	54	74	245	468	713
Other workers	220	148	368	189	151	340
TOTAL	484	286	770	2991	2323	5314

Source: CSO, Census of Population 2006

1.5 Development Strategy

1.5.1 Introduction

The vision for the future development of Ballina over the plan period is to ensure that the town develops in a manner which will provide a high quality environment and which is attractive to residents, workers, visitors and investors. In order to achieve this vision, the plan aims to re-establish Ballina as one of the principal service centres in the region and as the regional tourism gateway. The overall strategy in the plan therefore is to achieve the following:

- Establish Ballina as a self-sufficient town with housing development to be balanced by employment creation
- To facilitate the development of the town centre as an attractive shopping and tourist destination
- Promote the town's amenities – River Moy/Fishing & Water based recreational activities
- Enhance residential areas throughout the town, by providing recreational facilities, neighbourhood centres and parks and pedestrian/cycling linkages
- To create a vibrant town centre business and residential community
- To develop the potential of Ballina as a commercial centre and a heritage town
- To make Ballina town centre a commercially viable place through good land-use and retail management and the provision of an effective transport and access network
- To capitalise on the development of the Ridgepool Pedestrian Bridge and nearby cultural centre to improve and market Ballina's image and identity as a cultural town of scenic beauty

1.5.2 Development – General

Whereas the focus of the previous plan was on the creation of sustainable residential communities and viable neighbourhood centres, a priority of the town at this stage is the development of the town centre and the provision of an effective transport and access system. The commercial viability of the town is at risk because of lack of investment and poor accessibility. It is a priority of this plan to reverse that by fostering the development of a traffic management solution for the town that will restore investor confidence and return the town centre to its natural state as an active and attractive market town serving a vibrant community.

Under the last development plan (2003-2009), a strategy of consolidation of the town was pursued but earlier scattered development has left its mark, particularly on the Killala and Foxford Roads. A policy of consolidation will continue. This approach is important for a number of reasons:

- Scattered development results in residential developments which are isolated from essential services thus increasing the cost of the provision of such services.,
- It results in increased dependence on the private car and creates unsustainable patterns of transport.
- It results in interfingering of urban and rural landsuses with resultant conflict between the two.

The overall development strategy, therefore, is to consolidate the development of the town by concentrating future development over the plan period on lands closer to the town centre. This strategy will ensure that future residential development in particular, is located closer to essential commercial, community and other infrastructure. It will also help to reduce trip generation and consequently traffic congestion and will make the most efficient use of physical infrastructure.

Future development in Ballina will also be encouraged and promoted through the development management process and other available tools and mechanisms, including the Vacant Site Levy (in accordance with the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015) in order to facilitate and encourage appropriate development of vacant sites on lands identified as "Regeneration lands" and "Residential lands" on the map 8 titled "Residential & Regeneration Lands"

1.5.3 Residential Development

There is currently a total of 148 hectares of undeveloped residentially zoned lands in Ballina resulting in a potential housing yield of 2960 units (assuming an average density of 20 units per hectare). This land is capable of housing an additional population of 7104 persons (assuming the RPGs a household size for the twin hubs of Ballina and Castlebar of 2.4 persons).

There are also a number of development sites within the town that currently have live planning permission for residential developments, but which are partially completed or not yet commenced. These sites cover an area 22 hectares and when completed would yield a total of 429 units within the lifetime of the plan. Furthermore it is estimated that there are currently a total of 746 vacant units within the town and when this figure is added to the number of potential units on development sites that are unfinished or not yet commenced, it results in a potential provision of 1175 units in the town within the lifetime of the current Development Plan.

Table 2.0a: CORE STRATEGY TABLE: Settlement Hierarchy; Population Targets and Land Requirements up to 2022

Settlement Hierarchy	Population Targets			Population Increase From 2010 to		Residential Units Required		Existing Residential Units 2010	No of Residential Units that could be provided from			Potential Yield Total ⁴	Res. Units Shortfall / Excess (-/+)		Residential Zoning for 2016 based on shortfall or excess in Res Units (HA)			
	2010	2016	2022	2016	2022	2016	2022		VU ¹	UFE ²	LPP ³		2016	2022	T ⁵	UD ⁶	R ⁷	E ⁸
Linked Hub																		
Ballina	10530	11700	12915	1170	2385	487	994	4387	746	52	377	1175	+688	+181	465	148	24	126

¹ VU= Estimated number of Vacant Units

² UFE= Unfinished Housing Estate

³ LPP= Number of units permitted (2+) but not yet developed

⁴ Potential Housing Yield Total = VU+UFE+LPP

⁵T= Total lands zoned for residential development in Hectares

⁶UD = Total lands that have a residential zoning but have not been developed in Hectares

⁷ R = Housing land (zoned) requirement for 2016. This figure indicates the area of residentially zoned land required to meet housing demand until 2016 and is obtained by dividing then number of residential units required by that date by a density of 20 units per hectare.

⁸ E = Out of the total land zoned residential the area of land in hectares that is considered in Excess. This is the lands zoned for residential purposes that are undeveloped and considered excess for the population projections estimated for each town that has zoning objectives.

Table 2.0b: CORE STRATEGY TABLE: Settlement Hierarchy; Population Targets and Land Requirements for the lifetime of the current Development Plan (2015)

Settlement Hierarchy	Population Targets		Population Increase From 2010 to 2015	Residential Units Required including 50%Headroom	Existing Residential Units 2010	No of Residential Units that could be provided from			Potential Yield Total ⁴	Res. Units Shortfall / Excess (-/+)	Residential Zoning for 2015 based on shortfall or excess in Res Units (HA)			
	2010	2015				VU ¹	UFE ²	LPP ³			T ⁵	UD ⁶	R ⁷	E ⁸
Linked Hub														
Ballina	10530	11505	975	406	4387	746	52	377	1175	+796	465	148	22	126

¹ VU= Estimated number of Vacant Units

² UFE= Unfinished Housing Estate

³ LPP= Number of units permitted (2+) but not yet developed

⁴ Potential Housing Yield Total = VU+UFE+LPP

⁵T= Total lands zoned for residential development in Hectares

⁶UD = Total lands that have a residential zoning but have not been developed in Hectares

⁷ R = This figure indicates the total area in hectares, of the sites within the Development Plan Area with live planning permissions that have not yet commenced or are incomplete.

⁸ E = Out of the total land zoned residential the area of land in hectares that is considered in Excess. This is the lands zoned for residential purposes that are undeveloped and considered excess for the population projections estimated for each town that has zoning objectives.

1.5.4 Commercial Development

The town centre is the principal commercial area in Ballina and the town is fortunate to have contained the major retail supermarket outlets within the town centre. The plan strategy in relation to commercial development is to maintain and support the role of the town as the principal commercial area in Ballina. Nevertheless, in relative terms, the quality of retail offer has declined as the convenience majors have not developed their facilities for various commercial reasons. This has given other regional towns a comparative advantage over Ballina, unreflective of its position in the urban retail and spatial hierarchy. This has knock-on effects for the comparison and services sector within the town. Nevertheless, this lacuna presents an opportunity to develop Ballina as a very effective urban retail complex, once key land use and retail management decisions are made.

The strategy in the previous plan was to allow neighbourhood shopping to serve the needs of residential neighbourhoods in convenient locations, provided it is on a scale appropriate to those needs and will not detract from the commercial role of the town centre. In this plan, the principal priority is to revitalise the town centre. It is felt that by encouraging major retailers to locate and expand as close as possible to the town centre other commercial investment will follow. Two strategic sites exist at either end of the town (at Bury Street and Humbert Street) and objectives to facilitate high-density commercial and mixed-use development are recommended. It will be vital, however, to ensure that these commercial development hubs are well accessed by an effective transport network and parking system. Once this is achieved, investment can be made in quality environmental improvements to the town's streetscape.

Some commercial development has taken place outside of the town centre in the form of car sales outlets, local convenience shops, space consuming outlets such as hardware builder providers etc. Many of these uses are more appropriately located outside of the town centre due to space/building requirements and the type and volumes of traffic generated.

The strategy acknowledges that some commercial activities such as retail warehousing, bulky goods etc are more appropriately located outside of the town centre with good road access. Such development close to residential areas should be in scale and character with these areas.

1.5.5 Industrial Development

Industrial land in Ballina is well distributed throughout the town with sites on the Killala, Foxford, Bunree and Crossmolina Roads in addition to some smaller isolated pockets. This spatial spread of industrial lands has advantages in terms of the distribution of employee traffic throughout the town thus avoiding more serious traffic congestion, which would likely result from a single industrial location.

Industrial lands on both the Killala and Foxford roads are owned by Ballina Beverages & Hollister respectively and are not currently available for new industry. There is a limited area available in the IDA Industrial Estate on the Bunree Road to the rear of the existing factory building.

An estimated 19.3 hectares (47.7 acres) of undeveloped industrial zoned land is currently available within the plan boundary. Much of these lands are located on the Foxford Road and there is pressure, as evidenced in zoning submissions to this plan process, for further industrial and commercial development in this area.

The IDA has progressed the purchase of 14 hectares of land at the junction of the Sligo/Creggs Road as a Business Park for future industry of this nature. However, these

lands have not yet come available for commercial investments due to title issues which are being dealt with by the authority. Legal issues that arose concerning these lands are now resolved and it is expected that these lands will be developed in the near future.

1.5.6 Recreation & Leisure

Ballina is synonymous with recreation and leisure activities. This is in part due to its function as the gateway to vast scenic areas in Northwest Mayo, Céide Fields and, in particular, fishing on the River Moy. Within the town, the single greatest natural asset is the river followed by Belleek Woodlands, which are also located on the riverbank, Crocketstown/Quay area and the Bunree River. The overall strategy in this plan is to develop recreation and amenity facilities to a high standard and in a manner, which make them accessible to both residents and visitors.

To achieve this, the policies and objectives set out in the plan are designed to develop both natural amenities such as Belleek, the banks of both the River Moy & Bunree River, Crocketstown as well as man-made parks and playgrounds such as those at Mercy Park, Market Square and the Dolmen and in particular to link these amenities by means of Pedestrian/Cycle Routes following the most attractive links between these amenities. These Pedestrian/Cycle Routes, as well as fulfilling a recreational and leisure role, also provide transportation routes linking the suburban housing areas with the town centre.

The council is also progressing the delivery of a programme of parks for the town. These parks, located in Mercy Park, Ardnaree, Killala Road, Sligo Road and Bunree Neighbourhood Parks and will increase and improve the quality and quantity of public open space in the town. The development of a riverside cultural centre will enhance the cultural amenity of the town. Recent high quality commercial developments, such as the Icehouse Hotel development, enhance the town as a tourist destination.

1.5.7 Capacity of Zoned lands

An analysis of the current situation within the Plan Area with regard to the provision of residentially zoned lands in light of the population projections outlined in the RPS is provided in Section 1.5.3.

There are significant areas of undeveloped industrial zoned lands on the Foxford Road and a major IDA property on the Sligo road; the development of which has been delayed. In the IC (Industrial/Commercial) zone, there are again substantial areas of undeveloped lands, particularly in Knockleagha. There are also significant areas of lands remaining undeveloped in the Community Facilities zone (mainly on the east bank of the Moy) and in the Utilities zone (on Convent Road). Within the town centre zones (C1 and C2), there are significant opportunity sites. Some additional lands have been zoned C1 and C2 in the town. These include the C1 zoning around the lands occupied by Lidl and C2 zoning along the riverside on the east bank.

2 Policies and Objectives

2.1 Residential Development

2.1.1 Analysis

2.1.1.1 Introduction

- Population Targets

Taking account of the population targets outlined in the RPGs for the Western Region (2010-2022), it has been estimated that the population of Ballina will increase by 975 people within the period of the current plan (2009-2015), requiring the provision of 406 new dwelling units to accommodate the increase in population.

Zoning for Residential Use

There is currently a total of 148 hectares of undeveloped residentially zoned lands in Ballina resulting in a potential housing yield of 2960 units (assuming an average density of 20 units per hectare). This land is capable of housing an additional population of 7104 persons (assuming the RPGs figure of 2.4 persons per household for the twin hubs of Ballina and Castlebar size).

Town	Population Target	Population Increase for plan period	Res Units Required for plan period	VU	UFE	LPP	Potential Housing Yield Total	Res Units Shortfall / Excess (+/-) for plan period
Ballina (2015)	11505	975	406	746	52	377	1175	+769

¹ VU= Estimated number of Vacant Units; ² UFE= Unfinished Housing Estate; ³ LPP= Number of units permitted (2+) but not yet developed; ⁴ Potential Housing Yield Total = VU+UFE+LPP

The pattern of housing development might be described as follows:

1. In the town centre, there is limited housing. Typical of Irish towns, there is very little residential use of upper floors for "living above the shop". There are some recent apartment and town house developments but there is much scope for expansion of high density and high quality residential use in the town centre.
2. On the fringe of the town centre, there are some high density, older suburbs, such as the council housing schemes on the Crossmolina road.
3. At the fringes of the town, there are substantial modern housing estates built in the typical modern fashion on *cul de sac* road systems, incidental open space provision and mostly two-storey house designs. These are generally of significantly lower density and are quite scattered with interlacing areas of agricultural and other lands. This is particularly evident on the Killala Road but also on the Enniscrone Road and, to a lesser extent, on the Bunnyconnellan Road.
4. Some ribbon development has taken place at the fringes of the study area particularly on the Crossmolina Road and Bunnyconnellan Road. This creates some problems of access to undeveloped backlands.

It is intended to restrict ribbon development both to ensure the more efficient use of services and of land and also to protect lands that might be required for the longer term development of the town.

Average household size has been falling rapidly. In this respect, Ballina is no different from the rest of the country, which is changing to a more typically European pattern. Average household size was 2.94 (2002), 2.6 (2006) and, during the period of the plan is expected to fall to 2.37 (2015). This has major implications for the future provision of housing as the number of units required will not only grow as population grows but will also grow because of the lower occupancy rate. A greater variety of house types is therefore required.

Ballina has a significant presence of the voluntary housing sector. Clúid have taken over the St. Patrick's estate on the Crossmolina Road and have taken 20 houses in Ardnaree. Respond have two developments of 18 houses at Avondale Court and 43 houses at Bunree. There is a large council housing scheme site on the Bunnyconnellan Road. This includes voluntary housing as well as direct local authority housing and private housing.

2.1.1.2 Residential Density Guidelines

The Residential Density Guidelines for Planning Authorities (September 1999) issued by the Department of the Environment and Heritage arose out of concern about increasing car dependence, under-utilisation of infrastructure and the demand for new houses. The document provides for the use of increased density in the development of residentially zoned lands. Planning authorities are required to take these policies on residential density into account in preparing their development plans. Higher densities are, in particular, encouraged in town centres, on "Brownfield Sites" and close to corridors of public transport. Even on "Greenfield sites", densities of between 35 to 50 dwellings per hectare (14 to 20 per acre) are to be encouraged.

The Department is currently preparing new guidelines on residential development - (Guidelines for Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas) and the council will also have regard to these. When adopted, these will replace the Residential Density Guidelines of 1999.

2.1.1.3 Neighbourhoods

Within the last decade a number of new housing estates have been constructed at relatively low densities spread out at significant distances from the town centre. This has resulted in housing areas being at a significant remove from retail and other services. Furthermore, some of these areas are physically separated from each other by natural and other features. This Development Plan seeks to ensure that such development is restricted in the future and that new development will take place proximate to the town where possible and adjacent to existing developments where appropriate, subject to compliance with the Core Strategy.

The last plan (2003-2009) identified residential neighbourhoods within the Town Plan boundary with a view to creating a local identity and providing local facilities conveniently located for those resident in such areas. It is noted that this approach is very much in conformity with the thinking in the government's new guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas. It was intended that Action Area Plans would be drawn up for each which would strengthen local identity and provide local facilities and a local heart to the area with minor shopping, parks etc, and subject to compliance with the Core Strategy. The following neighbourhoods were identified (see Map NO. 04):

I The residential areas between the Bunnyconnellan Road and the Swinford Road and between the Swinford Road and the River Moy

This area on the south-eastern side of the town is defined clearly on one side (west) by the River Moy and by the edge of urban development on two others (east and south). The

northern boundary is less distinct with intermixed residential, community and industrial areas to the north and the Bunree River beyond. Significant amounts of housing development have taken place, some of it at a significant distance from the town centre. The road network serving the area focuses on Abbey Street/Plunkett Road where there is a significant amount of commercial activity. Amenity provision is available between open spaces within housing schemes as well as the banks of the Moy and playing fields on the Bunnyconnellan Road and Bunree Road. An Action Area Plan has not yet been completed for this area but a public park is to be provided.

II The Sligo/Enniscrone Road Areas

This is the most clearly defined of the neighbourhoods. It is separated from the rest of the town by the Bunree River across which there is but one narrow bridge. It is also the most distant from the services available in the town centre. Here there are significant new housing developments and much residentially zoned land. The Quay lends itself as a suitable location to provide a neighbourhood centre as it is centrally located and has some existing commercial activity. An Action Area Plan was completed for this area (see Quay Area Neighbourhood Action Area Plan 2004-2009) which encourages an element of commercial development in the vicinity of the Quay and provided an overall framework for the development of the extensive residentially zoned lands in this area. This will include the provision of a public park. The land has been acquired for this purpose.

III The Foxford Road Area

New estates have extended out along the Foxford Road, mostly between the road and the Moy. The Foxford Road is the backbone of the area and the common access to all of the housing developments. A spine of open space running along the banks of the River Moy provides a common amenity to the area and an alternative pedestrian spine to the vehicular connection of the Foxford Road. The Action Area Plan for this area has not yet been carried out.

IV The Crossmolina Road/Convent Road/McDermott Street Areas

This area is characterised by a high proportion of local authority housing. Most is located in a high density area between the Crossmolina Road and Convent Hill. The park and the school grounds on Convent Hill soften the area's character and it includes the highest land in the town. There are services on the Crossmolina Road and a cinema has been provided in the area. An Action Area Plan for the area was commenced but delayed pending the outcome of a major development in the area – a proposed Tesco outlet at the GAA grounds – which still remains unresolved. It is hoped to progress this plan in the near future.

V The Killala Road Area

As in Neighbourhood III, this area is focused on the spine of a main and busy road – the Killala Road. Large new housing developments have been built on both sides of the road but with limited services. Some of these extend far out from the town centre, beyond the Ballina Beverages factory. Some commercial facilities are available along the Killala Road. This area is convenient to Belleek and the plan envisages improved pedestrian connections between this area and the woods. The Action Area Plan was completed in 2009 (see Killala Road Neighbourhood Action Area Plan, 2004-2009). The land for the park has been acquired.

2.1.1.4 Mayo Housing Strategy

The Mayo 2008 Housing Strategy is currently under review and will be updated as necessary to comply with the Core Strategy.

2.1.1.5 Traveller Accommodation

Mayo County Council has adopted a Traveller Accommodation Plan for the county for the period 2005-2008 under the Housing Traveller Accommodation Act 1998. This strategy is due for renewal in 2009.

This Plan has identified that there are 41 families located in Local Authority housing in Ballina as well as a further 13 families living on the road side or in private accommodation in 2005. The 2006 Census has identified that 279 members of the travelling community were living within the town boundary area in 2006. The Mayo County Council Traveller Accommodation Plan indicated that an additional 14 housing units were required in Ballina with a further projected need of 13 additional units to meet the housing needs of families from the travelling community up to 2008.

It is proposed to provide accommodation for travellers in larger housing schemes at a rate of 1:8 or 1:5 in smaller schemes. Halting sites are also to be provided if “needs cannot be met by conventional housing during the term of the plan”. The County Council wish to proceed with a policy of providing conventional housing with perhaps two transient sites, one each in the east and west of the county.

As the Traveller Accommodation Plan will be out of date by the time this Development Plan is adopted, it will be necessary to review it in the lifetime of the Town Plan. It will form part of this plan once adopted.

2.1.2 Policies and Objectives

Policies

It is the policy of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council:

- To restrict ribbon development and low density housing development on the fringes of the town.
- To ensure that the residentially zoned lands within the Town Boundary should be developed first and that no further housing development should take place outside the town boundary until such time as most of the land within the Boundary is developed subject to compliance with the Core Strategy
- To encourage the development of residential neighbourhoods with associated services and amenities, subject to compliance with the Core Strategy.
- To implement the Mayo County Housing Strategy jointly with Mayo County Council under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 subject to compliance with the Core Strategy
- To encourage higher density of residential development in accordance with the Residential Density Guidelines as published by the Department of the Environment and Heritage (September 1999) and the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines 2008, subject to compliance with the Core Strategy.
- In view of requirements for the increase of density of residential development, it is also the policy of the planning authorities to require a high standard of design and layout of all residential developments, subject to compliance with the Core Strategy
- To co-operate with Mayo County Council in the facilitation of the overall Mayo Traveller Accommodation Plan and to review that plan in 2009 when the new Mayo Traveller Accommodation Plan is adopted, subject to compliance with the Core Strategy
- To encourage residential development in the town centre in conjunction with retail and other commercial development, subject to compliance with the Core Strategy.
- To provide sufficient water and wastewater treatment capacity to service all future development outlined in the Core Strategy.
- To utilize all available tools and mechanisms, including the Vacant Sites Levy (in accordance with the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015) in order to facilitate and encourage appropriate development of vacant sites on lands identified as “Residential Lands” on Map 8 titles (Residential and Regeneration Land”.

It is the policy of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to facilitate as far as practicable; the Core Strategy requirements introduced by the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 as per the revised population projections as set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022 by undertaking the following:

To alter the existing undeveloped lands zoned R1 and R2 Residential under the current Development Plan by:

- Introducing a phased approach to future new multiple unit residential development within the plan area,
- Rezoning other residentially zoned lands to agriculture
- Rezone lands located within Benefitting Lands as identified on the OPW National Flood Hazard Mapping website, from R1 and R2-Residential to Recreational/Amenity
- Creating two new categories of zoning; R1 – Existing Residential and R2 – Existing Residential

The revised policy is shown on Map NO 06 (variation) and is as follows:

Phase I Residential Lands

Phase I Residential lands shall comprise of all undeveloped residentially zoned lands which currently have live planning permissions that are either unfinished or not yet commenced. Phase I. lands shall also include residentially zoned lands that have been left in an incomplete and derelict condition as a result of former construction activity and because of this could not conceivably revert back to Agricultural/Amenity use. This refers specifically to 2 sites on the Killala Road marked 1 and 2 on Map No. 06 (variation). This will result in a capacity in Phase I Residential lands for the provision of 729 residential units and when this figure is added to the estimated 746 vacant units within the town it results in a possible total housing yield of 1475 units. Although this figure is in excess of the demand figure of 406 housing units as calculated using the RPG population projections, it is considered that this policy ensures adequate provision for residential demand while prioritising the incomplete and semi-derelict sites within the town within the lifetime of the current Development Plan.

- All lands in phase 1 shall be developed in compliance with their current R1 or R2 zoning as indicated on Map NO 06 (variation)

Phase II Residential Lands

Phase II Residential Lands shall comprise of currently residentially zoned serviced lands closest to the town centre and centres of population. The Council will consider new multi-unit residential development on Phase 2 lands only where a justification test is submitted showing that one

Or more of the following circumstances apply:

- (1) 70% of phase 1 lands have been fully developed, or;
- (2) 70% of Phase1 lands have been fully committed to development (i.e. where planning permission has been granted and where construction is underway), or,
- (3) In the case where all phase 1 lands have not been committed, it shall be proven that those uncommitted lands are unavailable for development or unserviceable.

AND where the justification test demonstrates the following;

- (4) The Phase 2 lands are readily serviceable and
- (5) There is a proven demand for new development based on a demonstrated lack of availability of housing and/or
- (6) There is an overriding justification for development on phase 2 lands based on changed circumstances that may require the release of additional lands to cater for increased population numbers.

Rezone from Residential to Agricultural.

The areas to be rezoned from R1-Residential and R2 – Residential to Agriculture are as follows:

- A 12 hectare area of land previously Zoned R2- Residential, located at Beleek and numbered 3 on Map No. 06 (Variation)
- A 17 hectare area of land previously zoned R2- Residential, located between the Sligo Road and the Quay and numbered 4 on Map No. 06 (Variation)

- A 12 hectare area of land, previously zoned R1 – Residential, located on Church Road and numbered 5 on Map No.06 (Variation)
- A 6 hectare Area of land, previously zoned R2- Residential, located between Church Road and the eastern bank of the River Moy and numbered 6 on Map No.06 (Variation)

Where a consented development is not constructed during the lifetime of its permission, any future planning applications on the site will be determined based on the zoning on Map No 06 (variation).

Create new zoning R1 and R-2 – Existing Residential.

All residentially zoned lands not included in Phase I Residential or Phase II residential shall be considered as R1 – Existing Residential and R2 – Existing Residential. In Areas Zoned R1 – Existing Residential, and R-2 Existing Residential, existing densities will continue on site, having regard to the existing residential character of the area.

Rezone from R1 and R2 Residential to Recreational Leisure

Rezone from R1-Residential and R-2 Residential to Recreational Leisure lands adjacent to the River Moy and identified as Benefiting Lands on the OPW National Flood Hazard Mapping website.

This rezoning refers specifically to:

- A 1.7 hectare strip of land previously Zoned R1-Residential and located on the eastern bank of the River Moy adjacent to the Glebe Housing Development and numbered 7 on Map No.06 (Variation)
~
- A 0.75 hectare Area of land previously Zoned R-2 Residential located on the western bank of the River Moy, to the rear of Molloy Terrace and numbered 8 on Map No.06 (Variation)
- A 1 hectare area of land previously Zoned R-2 Residential, located on the western side of the River Moy to the rear of the Rehins Fort Housing Estate and numbered 9 on Map No.06 (Variation)

Objectives

It is an objective of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council:

- RD 1** To consolidate the development of the town of Ballina by permitting the development of the residentially zoned lands that are closest to the town centre, subject to compliance with the Coe Strategy
- RD 2** To implement the objectives of the Mayo 2008 Housing Strategy and any subsequent Housing Strategy, in compliance with the Core Strategy.
- RD 3** To permit higher density residential development in accordance with government policy as set out in the document “Residential Density Guidelines as published by the Department of the Environment and Heritage” and the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines 2008. Highest densities will be permitted in the town centre, medium densities in the inner residential areas and lower density in outer residential areas as detailed in Part 3 of the Plan, subject to compliance with the Core Strategy.
- RD 4** To update and complete the Action Area Plans for each of the five identified residential neighbourhoods (Map No. 04) on a prioritised basis.
- RD 5** To develop a new public park in the residential neighbourhood bounded by the Sligo Road, Enniscrone Road and Creggs Road and to attach conditions to residential planning permissions in this area requiring the payment of financial contributions towards the acquisition and development of such a park.

- RD 6** To secure the provision of a greater variety of types and sizes of residential units in order to meet the changing requirements of occupants, and in particular to meet the requirements of smaller household size.
- RD 7** To provide accommodation for traveller families in accordance with the Traveller Accommodation Plan 2009-2013
- RD 8** To develop the new public parks at Ard na Ri, Mercy Park, Bunree and Killala Road and to attach conditions to residential planning permissions in this area requiring the payment of financial contributions towards the acquisition and development of such a park.
- RD 9** Ensure a high standard of architectural and environmental design to consolidate the traditional scale and character of Ballina and create a quality built and natural environment throughout.
- RD 10** To aspire not to locate direct local authority housing in areas where there is currently a high concentration of local authority housing
- RD11** The Town Council acquires sites in town centre or just off town centre locations to develop small cluster housing schemes for the elderly and people with disability.
- RD12** Social Housing Estates to continue to be located in every area of the town excluding Parkside and Ardnaree areas until a social balance is achieved throughout the town
- RD13** The number of houses in Social Housing Estates be limited to a maximum of 30 and smaller if possible.
- RD14** It is an aspiration of the Council to take over private housing estates as soon as possible, if requested.
- RD15** Proposed Name of Housing Estates to be included as part of Planning Application to insure that names of estates are aligned with Town Lands in which estates are located.
- RD16** That all new houses provide as part of the planning conditions efficient energy practices that limit CO2 emissions and promote positive sustainable development practices
- RD17** It is an objective of the Council to encourage and facilitate the development of vacant and undeveloped residential lands through the use of all available tools and mechanisms, including the Vacant Site Levy, in order to support implementation of the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy and the Interim Housing Strategy.

In this regard, residential lands where the Vacant Site Levy may be applied include:

1. All Phase 1 Residential lands in Ballina and
2. Any other residential zoned lands on which there is planning permission in respect of which substantial works have not been carried out within 3 years of the date of permission.

These areas are shown on map 8 titled "Residential and Regeneration Lands"

2.2 Town Centre

2.2.1 Analysis

Ballina Town Centre can be described as the area bounded on the West by Kevin Barry Street, Teeling Street and Pound Street; on the North by Circular Road, the Dunnes Stores car park, and Dillon Terrace; and on the East by Cathedral Road; on the south by the new link road. To the West and North, the boundaries of the town centre are relatively clearly defined by Kevin Barry Street, Teeling Street, Pound Street, Circular Road, Humbert Street, Dillon Terrace which, as well as providing a through route for heavy traffic passing through Ballina, also represent the transition from mainly residential uses to mixed town centre uses. On its eastern edge, the boundary of the town centre is less clearly defined with a variety of uses on Cathedral Road and mixed town centre uses extending outwards from the town centre along Abbey Street. On the Southern boundary, the transition from town centre to outer centre uses is also less clearly defined with a transition zone bounded by Kevin Barry Street, Barrett Street and Bury Street. Lidl has extended the centre beyond Bury Street and there is a major potential development site behind it and along the new link road.

The focus of the town centre commercial area is formed by the axis of Pearse Street/O'Rahilly Street and Tolan Street/Tone Street. The greatest concentration of commercial activity in the town is to be found along these two perpendicular axes. The town centre overall contains a wide variety of activities from retail, office and residential uses to schools and municipal buildings. Aside from the commercial focus along Pearse Street, the focal point in the town centre as well as the town's finest natural amenity is the River Moy. Despite this, like many Irish towns, the focus of commercial activity has tended to turn its back on the river.

While significant areas along the riverbank were identified for redevelopment and regeneration under urban renewal schemes in the early 90's, these schemes failed to secure the comprehensive and integrated redevelopment of the riverside areas and failed to take advantage of this significant natural asset. Earlier Urban Renewal Schemes included substantial areas, resulting in regeneration projects being spread too thinly thus failing to achieve an integrated and comprehensive redevelopment of any part of the town core. The subsequent I.A.P Urban Renewal Scheme had a more focused approach. Two substantial areas within the town centre were included in this scheme (i.e. Market Square, Market Road and Diamonds Yard).

Considerable opportunities exist for appropriate redevelopment of the properties bounded by Pearse Street, Dillon Terrace, Tone Street and Emmett Street. The town centre strategy in this plan recommends that attention should be focused on this block due to its central location, high profile and its potential to achieve the level of redevelopment recommended. The redevelopment of this block should endeavour to open up as many pedestrian linkages as possible between Pearse Street and Emmett Street by utilising existing laneways, such as Pawn Office Lane, Moy Lane and an extension of Walsh Terrace in addition to further pedestrian linkage further North. Appropriate developments along these laneways, and Emmett Street in particular, should include retail and related activities at ground level, which would draw people into this area by adding vibrancy and life to these streets and laneways. Detailed design guidelines for future development in this town centre block are set out in *Appendix A*.

The redevelopment of Market Square presents an opportunity to develop an additional focal point in the form of a civic space in this area.

The town centre and in particular Pearse Street has a distinct streetscape character and includes a number of buildings of architectural importance. These are addressed in Chapter 5 dealing with heritage buildings.

2.2.2 Urban Design and Urban Structure

The design, layout and quality of Ballina's urban landscape is a frequently raised concern and a consensus exists that areas of the town are underachieving relative to their potential. This has repercussions on the local retail economy, the town's heritage and tourism potential as well as the fabric of the community.

The design and layout of the town should be integrated with the developing urban transport strategy. It should also foster the development of the town as a heritage and tourism amenity and it should develop the town as a vibrant retail and commercial destination.

2.2.3 Designation of Character Areas and Amenity Areas

Ballina is made up of a number of distinct areas that have their own identity and function. The development of these according to their potential can do much for the economic and social development of the town and environs as a whole. The most important of these, and which arose most frequently in public consultation are the **town centre**, the **market square**, the **river area** and the **harbour area**.

Figure 2.1: Potential Urban Framework Strategy Character Areas



This study outlines the main issues pertaining to these and suggests broadly a strategy as to how they may be developed in urban design terms. A further stage, and one which should follow the implementation of a town centre traffic management study, may be the development of an Urban Framework Strategy for Ballina comprising area design briefs for each of these “character areas” including plans, images and guidance notes. Such briefs could guide future development in a coordinated and sensitive manner and may assist in the branding and identity-development of the places and provide guidance on how best to develop principal opportunity sites. Such Strategies are noted as a possible development during the life of the new plan and will depend on the availability of finance.

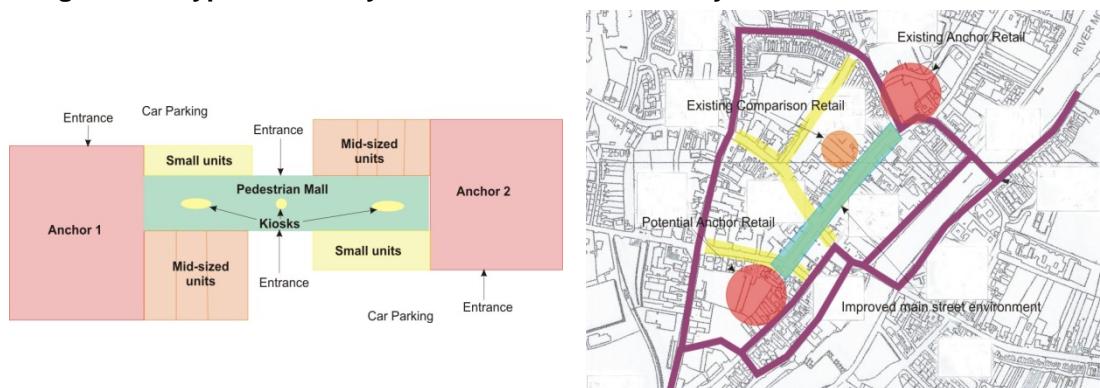
2.2.3.1 Town Centre

In order to look at how Ballina's town centre might be developed and laid out, it is worth examining contemporary shopping centre practice. Counter to what is happening in many Irish towns the out of town shopping centre and mall is in decline internationally and "mall theory" is now more than ever concerned with town centre and main street design.

The traditional shopping mall is based on two low-rent (or often zero-rent) anchors at opposing ends of an arcade wherein most of the mall revenues were raised through small-medium size units, kiosks and other uses. Parking was retained on the outside of these contrived pedestrian environments.

A similar layout could be derived in Ballina if a site for a major anchor was found at the western end of Pearse Street. Providing good vehicular access to this site from an inner orbital route and to the existing Dunnes' site could lead to the regeneration of the main shopping area in between, including Pearse Street, O'Rahilly Street, Tone Street, Tolan Street and the important network of side streets and alleys. The development of Market Square is vital to the regeneration of the town centre but may be secondary to the development of a commercially viable urban retail complex in the town.

Figure 2.2: Typical Mall Layout and Possible Retail Layout Solution for Ballina



2.2.3.2 The Market Square

A coordinated strategy for the redevelopment of Market Square is underway with the beginning of site assemblage in order to provide for the comprehensive redevelopment of the square in a coordinated manner. Other sites such as the Mineral Water site and the Scoil Pádraic site may also be important to its development.

A number of key features will be essential towards its success. Firstly, maintaining and developing linkages and permeability are important. Secondly, the layout of the square will be vital and a wide variety of design approaches could exist. Thirdly, what function the square should serve is an important question. The square has a historical role in the town which is not reflected in its current use as a car park.

Fundamental to the above is the question of what is the meaning of the square to the town. The site assemblage offers a chance to develop the square as a centre point for Ballina commercial and community life. How this happens will affect the fabric of the town for many years.

2.2.3.3 The River Area

The Moy River is a valuable amenity to the town economically, environmentally and as a tourism and community facility. A River Plan was prepared a number of years ago and has been implemented in part. This development should be continued. An architecturally impressive footbridge is being provided along with a cultural centre on the riverside. Some

stretches of the river are inaccessible in order to protect tourism activity and any actions that can be taken to make the river accessible to all should be encouraged. Care is required, however, in order to reconcile the tourism and recreational needs of anglers and others.

The areas approaching the river are inhibited by high levels of traffic and poor pedestrian access. Addressing this issue could potentially allow space to be reallocated towards the more civic uses. Development of river fronts can be invaluable to a town.

The allocation of zoning and housing densities around the river is done in a way which presents the river as a barrier rather than a focal point. It may be more appropriate to treat the river as a single zone as opposed to a barrier between residential area types.

2.2.3.4 The Harbour Area

Belleek was considered to be a fantastic amenity by most during the public consultation exercise. Establishing a strong link between the woods and the town would enhance their amenity to the public and enhance the attractiveness of Ballina as a town with good recreational amenities.

A number of sports facilities are close to the woods and are actively run by local community members. Cases have been made for expanded sports facilities and, where demand exists, the existing complex acts as a strong sports and recreational centre for the town.

A marina proposal exists for the harbour itself. This would encourage water-based recreation. Increasingly the sports and leisure market is becoming more diversified and providing for an increasing array of sports and water-based activity will enhance the attractiveness of Ballina as a place to live and to visit. A harbour area plan may assist in developing the area to incorporate existing and new recreational facilities.

2.2.4 Streets, Lanes and Spaces

Ballina's streets, alleyways and spaces are a sometimes hidden and often under-exploited asset of the town. It is generally agreed that the town has many impressive streets and that its character should be protected, however the quality of much modern development is often criticised as bland and poor.

While newer private developments have received criticism, the new Garda Station and library receive a lot of praise. The issue of dereliction is an issue in the town and there is a consensus that more needs to be made of the many opportunity sites within the town, as well as the too-many derelict sites that exist. Greater connectivity throughout the town and links to key amenities are needed.

In order to develop the potential and character of the town a number of policy areas may need to be developed: -

2.2.4.1 Permeability and Block Size

Permeability in new development blocks is important. The Urban Design Compendium recommends block sizes of around 60m to 80m in urban areas, which is currently being met throughout much of Ballina town centre, thanks to its network of alleyways and pedestrian links. The use and development of these alleyways is important to making Ballina an exciting, accessible and attractive town. Laneway development adjacent to the Library is an excellent example and this



type of layout should be continued elsewhere. The presence of frontage surveillance (from the library) is an important feature.

2.2.5 Town centre environmental improvements

Many towns, including Ballina, are carrying out street and town centre improvements, including the provision of pedestrianised or part-pedestrianised links, quality street surfaces, street furniture and other environmental enhancements. Plans are advanced for a major refurbishment of Pearse Street. In addition, the Council will investigate the preparation of an integrated Urban Design Framework Strategy; subject to cost and the availability of resources. Unlocking the potential for this process in Ballina is dependent on an effective traffic management system and also improving the commercial viability of the town. Once this is achieved, an environmental improvement scheme will enhance further the attractiveness of the town as a destination. The potential exists for a commercially vibrant and highly attractive town centre with such measures in place.

2.2.5.1 Standard of development

The standard of architectural design and construction are vital to developing an attractive urban realm. Several recent private developments received criticism for perceived poor standards in facades, balcony design and overall design. Given the sensitivity of the Ballina town centre environment, the provision of photomontages, visual impact analyses, elevational analyses, palettes of materials by developers as part of the planning application would assist in the improvement of built standards. The development of heritage buildings and various town centre derelict sites to a high standard is important to the town. Recent developments such as a retail courtyard on Tone Street and the library are positive examples of what can be achieved.



2.2.5.2 Walkways, Desire Lines and Trails

Two “strategic” walking routes emerged during discussions with the community: the first covering what might be called the “Town pedestrian realm” (link from train station via the town and river area to the town parks); the second covering the “River pedestrian realm” (link from River Area to Quay Area). Detailed analysis of these routes could assist in identifying how the safety and amenity of the pedestrian can best be enhanced.

2.2.5.3 Public Art and Street Furniture

A programme of public art to supplement existing examples throughout the town would be an asset. The North Mayo sculpture trail is an example of the impact this could have. Street furniture, including seating, cycle stands, water features, etc. are an important feature to a town’s streetscape. Many areas are developing design guides to assist in setting these out. Street furniture, including seating, needs to be carefully designed so as not to attract unwanted behaviour.

2.2.5.4 Shopfront Design

A Ballina Town Design Guide has been prepared and sets out shopfront improvements. Improved and sensitive shopfront design is evident in some good recent examples on Pearse Street. It may be a consideration to review and extend the guidelines as part of an urban framework strategy to act as a town centre design guide for the layout of streets, laneways, street furniture, public art and lighting. Above all, the distinctive character, layout and fabric of the town needs to be exploited and developed to its full potential.



2.2.6 Town Centre Society and Living

There were calls for quality mixed housing in the town to bring families back into the centre. According to one local source, where one-time up to twenty families lived over shops on O'Rahilly Street, now perhaps two do. There is a belief that families are being driven out by the type and cost of housing and that there is no housing suitable for older people. There is concern that only apartments are being built and not houses.

While there was a positive and safe feeling from those living and working in Ballina, a number of people raised issues relating to anti-social behaviour. Some of this related to nocturnal activity, particularly on Pearse Street. There is a belief that policing (active or passive, through CCTV or frontage surveillance) needs to be improved.

A more effective, although long-term approach to dealing with town centre anti-social issues is to encourage both a mix of uses and housing types, thereby creating continual activity and a mixing of generations. In such environments, anti-social groups tend not to assemble or become prevalent.

A mixed use housing policy might recommend a mix of housing types in or close to the town centre to provide for groups that are, increasingly, seeking alternative forms of accommodation to the suburban residential model, including: -

- Over-the-shop living
- Empty nesters
- Immigrants
- Young urban professionals
- Artists and people attracted to cultural lifestyles
- Families

Standards in construction and apartment design needed to be reviewed to address the above. Recently, the DoEHLG issued national standards for apartments and these standards are specified in the Development Management Section of this plan. Dublin City Council also issued standards aimed at addressing alternative housing types and families in particular. These are more demanding but should be considered by developers as a means of bringing family living into the heart of the town.

2.2.7 Town Centre Culture and Heritage

The town has many unique cultural, historical and social heritage elements, including Humbert and the French landing, being the birthplace of Mary Robinson, links to Republicanism as well as outstanding scenic and recreational amenities, especially game-fishing on the Moy. One major recent addition to the town is the donation of the Clarke Collection to the town. This is currently located in the new library, pending its relocation to

new premises in the refurbished former Provincial Bank, already acquired by the council for that purpose. There is also a new library in the former Moy Hotel and a new arts centre has begun to be developed in the former Newman Institute premises.

As well as exploiting the tourism potential of Ballina's heritage the town should be developed as an attractive place to live for all. A number of Cultural and Amenity Needs were raised during the public consultation: -

- Community centre
- Conference centre
- Youth facilities
- Elderly facilities
- Town hall facilities
- Town centre open-air community forum

Some of the above functions may be worthy of consideration in the redevelopment of Market Square, for example. The recently developed library received praise from the community and many people felt its function rooms could be used more often and for more purposes. The forthcoming cultural centre on the riverside will do much to address the deficit in cultural facilities.

Ballina is seen as a market town that was the premier trading town in Mayo in the 1950's and has slipped down the pecking order. People believe it has a better town centre than Castlebar, untapped tourism potential, a skilled workforce and there are plenty of people who have left and want to come back. Many people mentioned that the town needs a third level institution. In summary, people are proud of their town and believe the quality of life in the area is very good but that there are areas for improvement.

2.2.8 Policies and Objectives

Policies

It is the policy of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to:

- Maintain physical appearance of the town centre in terms of building fabric, urban spaces and streets with the overall aim of ensuring attractive, user-friendly environment in the central area
- Discourage inappropriate uses (e.g. office, residential) at ground level on the principal shopping streets in the town centre in order to maintain and enhance the vibrancy of these streets
- Encourage appropriate redevelopment in the central area, which will take maximum advantage of the town centres natural assets
- Protect the established town centre residential population and ensure that there is a continued residential community within the town.
- To revise and update the existing Ballina Town Design Guide.
- Ensure that new development does not result in damage to the town's architectural and archaeological heritage
- Facilitate and encourage the development of an accessible, user-friendly town centre with particular reference to people with disabilities, pedestrians, cyclists and also by improving the availability of short term parking within easy reach of all parts of the central area
- Retain existing street patterns and building lines and encourage the retention of buildings of character rather than their replacement by new buildings
- Ensure that existing and new development does not have a detrimental impact on the quality of life in established residential areas
- Ensure the regeneration and redevelopment of Market Square to create a commercially and socially viable civic space reflecting the historical and cultural uniqueness of the square and its role in the town's development. The promotion of strong linkages to surrounding streets reflecting key desire lines and careful consideration of the square's relationship to the surrounding townscape

- To utilize all available tools and mechanisms, including the Vacant Sites Levy (in accordance with the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015) in order to facilitate and encourage appropriate development of vacant sites on lands identified as “Regeneration Lands” on Map 8 titled “Residential and Regeneration Land”.

Objectives

It is an objective of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to:

- TC1:** Facilitate and encourage the development of a limited number of larger car parks, accessible from the inner ring route
- TC2:** Resist the conversion of ground floors of premises on the principal shopping streets from retail to non-retail uses. For these purposes the principle shopping streets are Pearse Street, O’Rahilly Street, Tone Street, Tolan Street, Emmett Street and Market Road.
- TC3** Following the implementation of a traffic management system and the creation of an environmental traffic cell, a town centre environmental improvement study shall be put in place to include improved paving, lighting, signage, accessible parking and pedestrianisation
- TC4** Apply family-friendly standards for town centre residential development
- TC5** Encourage town centre living and improve facilities and environmental conditions for the town centre community
- TC6** Promote the development of anchor mixed-use commercial hubs at either end of Pearse Street to generate a commercially viable urban structure
- TC7** Assist and promote the redevelopment of underused/derelict sites in the town centre, starting with the block bordered by Emmet Street and Pearse Street in accordance with the design guidelines in Appendix A.
- TC8** To seek the provision of photomontages, visual impact analyses, elevational analyses and detailed palettes of materials by developers as part of town centre planning applications to assist in the improvement of building standards
- TC9** Building heights on Pearse Street shall respect the traditional street frontage and building heights in the town and shall be at least 3 stories and be appropriate to both the street and the site.
- TC10** It is an objective of the Council to encourage and facilitate the development and renewal of areas, identified having regard to the core strategy, that are in need of regeneration in Ballina through the use of all available tools and mechanisms, including the Vacant Site Levy (as provided for under the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015), in order to prevent —
 - (i) adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas, in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land,
 - (ii) urban blight and decay,
 - (iii) anti-social behaviour, or
 - (iv) a shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses.

In this regard, the following areas are identified for the purpose of renewal and regeneration:

1. Lands zoned as C1-Commercial (Town Centre) and
2. Lands zoned as C2-Commercial (Edge of Centre)

These areas are shown on map 8 titled "Residential and Regeneration Lands"

2.3 Retail/Commercial Development

2.3.1 Analysis

Ballina is the principle service centre in North Mayo, a catchment stretching from the Mullet Peninsula into North West Sligo. While Ballina is still the largest town in County Mayo in population terms, it has taken second place behind Castlebar in terms of total retail and service sector floor areas. The population of the town is growing faster than its neighbouring hub, but the deficit in its retail and commercial sector also continues to grow.

An increase in the commuter population in Ballina, in addition to the expansion of both Castlebar and Sligo, has weakened Ballina's position as the principal service town in the north of the county and has diminished the vitality and viability of the town's commercial core. Both Castlebar and Sligo, and to a lesser extent Westport, have grown to prominent retail positions over the past decade thereby encroaching on Ballina's catchment and diminishing the town's role as a major regional centre in terms of retailing importance. A number of significant retail planning permissions have been granted in Ballina for retail warehousing, but to date these have not been taken up. Ballina's total net retail floor space (Convenience, Commercial, Service and other retail) at 46,600 sq metre accounts for 28.4% of the counties retail floor space. This is inclusive of permissions granted but not in place. Of this total net floor space, 6,644 sq meters is devoted to convenience retail, 10,214 sq meters to comparison retail and 29,750 sq meters to service and other retail outlets (County Mayo Retail Strategy 2008).

The retailing sector is one of the big employers in the town and constitutes the heart of economic activity in Ballina for most individuals in the town and in its hinterland. In the public consultation undertaken around the Development Plan, it was generally accepted that there was a need to keep retailing in the centre of the town and there should be resistance to moving normal retail activity to the edge of the town. This was accepted by retailers and consumers alike.

The range of commercial facilities available in the town, generally provide for the day-to-day needs for the population with a significant portion travelling to Castlebar, Sligo or Galway for higher order comparison goods such as clothing, electrical and specialised goods. Comparison shopping (non bulky goods) has increased marginally over the last six years, but convenience retailing has declined marginally.

Retail Centres in the Town Centre and the Core Strategy

Ballina has largely retained its retail development within the town centre core. There are a large number national multiple retailers within the town centre, including Tesco, Penny's, Lidl, Eason's and Dunnes Stores which are all key anchors and attract customers to the town centre. Existing policies and objectives in the development plan have regard to national policy and guidelines relating to retail development, thereby ensuring that future retail development is carried out in accordance with the Mayo County Retail Strategy and the Retail Planning Guidelines.

2.3.2 Irish Retailing Trends

Retailing is a dynamic sector in the Irish and international economy. It is responsive to income levels and economic activity. In the last two decades retailing in Ireland has been transformed. It has developed with the Irish economy and modernised considerably. The nature of the retailing product has changed in parallel with the changing nature of the Irish consumer. This modern Irish consumer has greater levels of real income and disposable income. With huge increases in population over the last fifteen years and very significant levels of employment generation and wealth generation, it is not surprising to see that this has impacted on the retailing sector.

In Table 2.1 below the Retail Sales index for the end of 2007 indicates the very significant levels of growth in sales and in the volume of sales in the last five years. This year on year growth exceeds the economic growth rates in the Irish economy and has resulted in very significant employment growth in the service sector in Ireland. This has occurred in a period where many products have experienced low rates of inflation, particularly in the convenience goods sector.

Table 2.1: Percentage Growth in Value and Volume of Retailing in Ireland

Year	Value of sales (%)	Volume of sales (%)
2002	2.5	0.2
2003	3.2	0.9
2004	4.4	3.0
2005	6.2	4.8
2006	7.8	6.2
2007 e	6.6	6.0

Source: CSO Retail Sales Index November 2007

There has been great pressure over this time period to expand the range and quantity of retail space in towns throughout the country.

2.3.3 Ballina Retail Catchment

The Catchment of Ballina is identified in the County Retail Strategy as the North and West of the County. This is an extensive area that covers the majority of Belmullet and Ballina rural areas. The population of this area is 33,524 according to the 2006 Census of Population and amounts to 27% of the county's population.

Mayo has few significant urban centres, though the county is large. Ballina and Castlebar are by far the largest towns in the county. In Table 2.2 below, the growth rates in the towns in Mayo of over 1,500 persons between 2002 and 2006 are outlined. The town of Ballina has grown at a rate of 7.9% in the 2002 to 2006 period, approximately the national average (8.1%), whereas its linked hub town, Castlebar, has grown at the significantly slower pace of 4.6%. The difference in the population of the two towns differs by 1,482 and this is narrowing.

Table 2.2: Percentage Growth Rates of Towns in Mayo - 2002 to 2006

	% Growth
Castlebar & Environs	4.6
Ballina & Environs	7.9
Westport & Environs	-2.8
Claremorris	23.5
Ballinrobe	29.0
Ballyhaunis	23.7
Swinford	0.3
County Mayo	5.4

Ballina makes up 8.4% of the County population, while Castlebar accounts for 9.6% of the County population. The proportional scale of Ballina within the county has increased slightly over the 2002 to 2006 period. County Mayo does not have a strongly developed urban structure with no very large urban centres and retains a significant rural population. The roles that Ballina and Castlebar play in terms of retailing and service provision are made more important by this lack of urban development.

2.3.4 Retail Space in Ballina and County Mayo

The County Mayo Retail Strategy 2008 outlines the retailing position within the County. In Table 2.3 below, the retailing position that existed in 2001 is outlined. Table 2.4 outlines the position in 2007 and Table 2.5 outlines the differences between the two periods.

Table 2.3: Retail Structure in County Mayo- 2001

Town	2001			
	Convenience (M ²)	Comparison (M ²)	Bulky Comparison (M ²)	Total (M ²)
Castlebar and Environs	8,334	12,648	11,087	32,069
Ballina and Environs	6,900	8,203	12,598	27,701
Westport and Environs	3,469	5,855	2,161	11,485
Claremorris	1,906	1,781	1,328	5,015
Ballinrobe	1,997	1,132	1,745	4,874
Ballyhaunis	1,756	1,510	1,960	5,226
Swinford	1,775	1,223	972	3,970
Belmullet	1,324	1,317	2,154	4,795
Crossmolina	752	570	1,945	3,267
Co Mayo	26,973	34,239	35,950	97,162

In 2001 Castlebar and Ballina had a significantly greater proportion of retailing than all other towns in the County in both convenience and comparison goods, and considerably more retail warehousing or bulky goods space than all other locations with 65% of this type of retailing between both towns.

Table 2.4: Retail Structure in County Mayo- 2007

Town	2006/2007			
	Convenience (M ²)	Comparison (M ²)	Bulky Comparison (M ²)	Total (M ²)
Castlebar and Environs	7,171	11,605	34,272	53,048
Ballina and Environs	6,644	10,214	29,750	46,608
Westport and Environs	4,832	8,680	2,578	16,090
Claremorris	3,666	2,841	13,846	20,352
Ballinrobe	1,697	3,142	1,483	6,323
Ballyhaunis	3,816	1,381	3,086	8,282
Swinford	1,509	895	1,591	3,995
Belmullet	1,380	2,358	1,831	5,570
Crossmolina	767	448	2,542	3,757
Co Mayo	31,481	41,565	90,979	164,026

The quantity of convenience shopping available decreased in both Ballina and Castlebar and this is illustrated in Tables 2.4 and 2.5. Normal comparison goods increased in Ballina by 2,011 sq. meters and bulky goods space by 17,152 sq meters. The vast quantity of this additional space is not in place; it relates to live planning permissions that have not yet been taken up. Ballina has had a number of significant applications for bulky goods shopping space and while one of these has been approved, it has not been taken up after a number of years. Other space had been included in the figures in the County Strategy as an application had been made, but has been subsequently refused. Considerable bulky goods retail development has taken place in Castlebar and this has been located at the rim of the town.

Table 2.5: Difference in Retail Structure in County Mayo- 2001-2007

Town	Difference 2001 - 2007			
	Convenience (M ²)	Comparison (M ²)	Bulky Comparison (M ²)	Total (M ²)
Castlebar and Environs	-1,163	-1,043	23,185	20,979
Ballina and Environs	-256	2,011	17,152	18,907
Westport and Environs	1,363	2,825	417	4,605
Claremorris	1,760	1,060	12,518	15,337
Ballinrobe	-300	2,010	-262	1,449
Ballyhaunis	2,060	-129	1,126	3,056
Swinford	-266	-328	619	25
Belmullet	56	1,041	-323	775
Crossmolina	15	-122	597	490
Co Mayo	4508	7,326	55,029	66,864

While Table 2.5 does not reflect the true position in relation to Ballina's retail capacity, it does give a picture of what it might look like if a number of proposed developments are to take place and indicates the lack of real retailing facilities that exist in Ballina. If the town has less than the stated quantum of retail in operation, then it is leaking expenditure out of the catchment area. More importantly the employment that should be generated in the retail sector is at a sub optimal level.

Table 2.6: Percentage of County Mayo Retail Sector for Each Key Town

Town	2007			
	Convenience %	Comparison %	Bulky Comparison %	Total %
Castlebar and Environs	22.8	27.9	37.7	32.3
Ballina and Environs	21.1	24.6	32.7	28.4
Westport and Environs	15.3	20.9	2.8	9.8
Claremorris	11.6	6.8	15.2	12.4
Ballinrobe	5.4	7.6	1.6	3.9
Ballyhaunis	12.1	3.3	3.4	5.0
Swinford	4.8	2.2	1.7	2.4
Belmullet	4.4	5.7	2.0	3.4
Crossmolina	2.4	1.1	2.8	2.3
Co Mayo	100	100	100	100

Table 2.6 outlines the proportion of convenience, comparison and bulky goods retail space in each key town in County Mayo in 2007. As would be expected the larger towns have the greatest proportion of retail space. This is due in particular to the level of comparison and bulky goods shopping in these towns. The difference between the retail quantum in the three main towns is much more relevant. Castlebar has 9.6% of the county's population, Ballina 8.4% and Westport 4.4%. Using these proportions would indicate that Ballina would have a similar level of retail as that in Castlebar and almost double that of Westport. The proportion of retailing in the County shows that Westport has proportionally more retail per head of population than both Ballina and Castlebar and that Castlebar has 4% more retail than Ballina, even while including the bulky goods retail space that is presently agreed to in planning but not in place within Ballina.

The County Retail Strategy has indicated that based on these figures there is little need for additional retail space in the County over the next five years. What little additional retail that is to be agreed to is to be focused in the three largest towns.

There are a large number of vacant and under-utilised sites within the town centre area. The initial focus for new development should be in the area located between Emmett Street, Market Road, Tone/Tolan Streets and Dillon Terrace/Humbert Street. This should

be followed by focusing on the block bounded by Tone/Tolan Street, Kevin Barry/Teeling Street and Barrett Street where substantial under-utilised sites are available for future commercial and mixed use developments. These areas are also addressed in section 2.2 dealing with the Town Centre and section 2.5 dealing with Heritage and Townscape in addition to the design guidelines set out in Appendix A.

In order to ascertain the full position of the town, Ballina Town Council will seek the co-operation of the Chamber of Commerce and the town retailers to conduct a full retail survey of the town and to identify areas that may presently be included in the County Retail Strategy as operational space and separate it out from space that is currently in operation in the town. The assessment of retail space as conducted in all County Retail Strategies takes no account of the quality of the existing retail in a town. In any further retail study of Ballina a qualitative approach needs to be devised to get a full and accurate picture for the town.

There are a number of national multiple retailers within the town centre, including Tesco, Penny's, Lidl, Eason's and Dunnes Stores which are all key anchors and attract customers to the town centre. The town in recent years has had no cinema until the opening of the Cineplex which operates away from the centre of the town, but which has been accepted as being a very positive addition to the town.

While the larger retailers have the most significant proportion of retail space, there is a very large quantity of small local retailers in the town. This sector adds considerable variety in the town and has marked it out in a unique way. Much of the space, however, is sub-optimally used and there is a significant level of vacancy in parts of the town, particularly the fringes of the town and in a number of side streets. In the core retail area, retail units are interspersed with service and commercial type activities adding to the vitality in the core town area. There is a lack of medium sized locations available for comparison shopping.

This trend towards maintaining retail facilities in the town centre is in part because of resistance by the Council to pressure for outward movement of retail business. There is significant growth and this poses opportunities for the development of the retail sector. Growth will also put pressure on the retail sector to move to edge of town locations and out of town locations. With the quantity of space still available in the town centre and the vacancy level that exists in the town, this move should be strongly resisted.

The total convenience floor area is dominated by a number of significant retailers, namely, Tesco, Dunnes Stores and Lidl. Together these stores represent a significant retail facility in the town and play a significant role in maintaining the town's position as the convenience shopping centre of North Mayo. Ballina, in contrast to many comparable market towns, has managed to retain most of its convenience retail outlets in the town centre. These include Tesco's at Market Square and Dunne's Stores on Humbert Street.

There was also recognition from the retailers and consumers that Ballina needs a number of additional high profile retailers, national multiples or internationally recognised retailing organisations or brands to be attracted to the town centre.

If Ballina is to maintain its role as the principal service centre for a substantial catchment area, the critical mass of its shopping facilities must increase in order to serve its catchment population and strengthen its position within the region's retail hierarchical structure. This can be achieved by intensifying land uses in the established town core thus creating a more vibrant and attractive shopping centre. In addition the perception of Ballina, as a shopping destination needs to be improved.

This can be achieved by means of additional shopping facilities, renewal of derelict and under-utilised lands in the town centre and environmental improvements particularly on the main shopping streets, the market square area and streets fronting the River Moy. The area around the river is a critical area for the town. It has been improved considerably over a number of years, yet it still does not interact very well with the core retail area in the town.

The river frontage is not well used in terms of activities that relate back into the core of the town and its recreational and trading activities.

2.3.5 Retail Warehousing

There is a recognition that Ballina requires some retail warehouse development at the edge of the town and that to date this had tended to locate in other centres such as Castlebar. Leakage of retailing business to towns, such as, Castlebar and Sligo was repeatedly mentioned in the consultation phase and this seemed to be due to a wider range of retailing brands and larger units being available.

With the exception of Hardware, Builder Providers and some household supplies located on Bunree Road and the Crossmolina Road in particular, Ballina does not have any significant out of town location for retail warehouse and bulk retail outlets. It is acknowledged that such uses are more appropriately located outside of the town centre due to the nature and scale of buildings required and the type and volume of vehicular access necessary. Retail Warehouses have become part of the overall shopping experience and the lack of such outlets in Ballina may, to some extent, account for Ballina losing out to Castlebar and Sligo in terms of shopping.

These issues were addressed in the last development plan by the zoning of 53.3 ha of land in the Knockleagha area for a combination of light industrial and retail warehouse type activities. The lands have the advantage of being located relatively close to the town centre, adjacent to the railway station and adjacent to the N26 National Primary Route which is the principal traffic route serving Ballina. The location is in close proximity to the proposed ring-road and in particular the section linking the N26 with the Crossmolina Road which has been identified as a priority phase in terms of the overall outer ring-road. Development on these lands has commenced. Planning permission was sought and has been granted for substantial retail warehousing on the Crossmolina Road but this has not yet been taken up. Figures for Retailing in Ballina include this development that is not yet in place.

2.3.6 Retail Strategy

In assessing the suitability of proposed retail developments, preference will generally be given to town centre locations. Where such sites are unavailable, consideration will be given to edge of centre sites and only where these sites are exhausted will consideration be given to out-of-town locations. This is the sequential approach to retail planning as set out in the Retail Planning Guidelines. It is also the policy of the Council to encourage the refurbishment and redesign of vacant and derelict buildings / sites in the town centre for reuse as retail and commercial units.

A retail strategy for County Mayo has been adopted for the entire County and a revised County Mayo Retail Strategy 2008 is currently being considered, in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines. While the town centre will be the main focus of retail activity, with the presumption against development outside the town core, limited convenience shopping at neighbourhood level has a significant role to play in terms of overall retail provision. Retail Warehousing will also be considered at the designated locations outside of the town centre as outlined in Section 2.3.5. All commercial/retail developments should be assessed in light of the Governments Retail Planning Guidelines, County Mayo Retail Strategy and the Policy and Objectives listed in this section.

The County Mayo Retail Strategy 2008 has identified that in the national context there are four tiers in the National Retail Hierarchy and that these are based on the population structure of these centres as set out in the Retail Planning Guidelines as established in 2000 and based on the 1996 census of population. Ballina and Castlebar have been identified in the third tier of towns in this Hierarchy.

Ballina, as well as Castlebar, have been identified as being in the first tier of the County Mayo Retail Strategy along with Westport (due to its all year round tourist activity). The

Strategy has identified the town centre functions of both Ballina and Castlebar as being important to the retailing offer within the County and sees Castlebar as serving the role of the county town and service centre, while Ballina performs the same role for those residing in the North and West of the County.

The RPG expressly identifies preferred locations for retail development. In summary, the preferred location is within a town, district or major village centre and only where such options are not possible can consideration be given to other locations removed from these areas. Determining how well a proposed or existing retail development meets this aspiration / requirement, is called the *Sequential Test*. Preference to retail developments will be in the town centre, followed by edge of centre locations which would be within an easy walking distance from the primary shopping core of the town and where out of town alternatives are only considered where alternative suitable and viable sites exist. New developments should be away from national roads, relief roads or areas where major infrastructure has taken place to ensure that the town works more effectively. In accordance with Retail Planning Guidelines, large-scale retailing shall be avoided, where possible, adjacent or close to existing, new or planned national routes. In relation to out of town retail developments, the developer shall submit a transport assessment showing how trips to and from the proposed development might affect the road network. The RPGs have also ensured that a range of size caps are enforced on differing types of retail stores. It is not the intention of the RPG or the County Strategy to distort or impair competition, but to protect the vitality and viability of town centres. The RPG encourages local planning authorities to accommodate additional retail development in a way that is efficient, equitable and sustainable. The RPG reiterates that the optimum locations for new retail development should be accessible to all and of a scale and nature that still facilitates the continued prosperity of traditional city and town centres.

2.3.7 Retailing Issues in Ballina

There are a number of key issues that impact on the retailing in Ballina and these have arisen out of the public consultation with individuals and the business community. Some have been identified in the County Retail Strategy.

The key issues include the proposed relocation of the Tesco store. A number of possible locations have been talked about and all have possibilities and difficulties. The Town Council is keen to have high profile retailers operating in the town and making a positive contribution to the delivery of consumer services to the town and making an impact to its continued economic development. The Council is convinced that the best long term interests of the town is the protection of its trading core within the town centre and through design of locations and quality buildings allow for the town to work effectively as a commercial entity. The identification of workable retail hubs around the core central shopping area is considered desirable by the Town Council.

Issues that impact on retailing include:

- Traffic and parking
- Pedestrianisation
- Type and diversity of retailing available
- Streetscape
- Street furniture
- Size of retail unit (comparison)
- Location of Tesco
- Number of vacant sites
- The development of the Market Area

These issues are addressed in various parts of this Development Plan.

2.3.8 Neighbourhood Centres

Outside of the town centre area and the retail warehousing locations, small retail/commercial development will be favourably considered in the form of neighbourhood centres to serve residential neighbourhoods located outside of the central area. These residential neighbourhoods are as follows:

- I Bunree/Bunnyconnellan/Swinford/Church Road Areas
- II Sligo/Enniscrone Road Areas
- III Foxford Road Area
- IV Crossmolina Road/Convent Road/McDermott Street Areas
- V Killala Road Area

I Bunree/Bunnyconnellan/Swinford/Church Road Areas

Because of the proximity of the Bunree/Church Road residential neighbourhood to the town centre and the existing mix use areas along Abbey Street and Plunkett Road, neighbourhood commercial facilities for this area are recommended on Abbey Street and Plunkett Road areas which have been zoned for mixed use accordingly. Improved Pedestrian Access to Abbey Street/Plunkett Road is recommended from newly developed residential areas.

II Sligo/Enniscrone Road Areas

The Quay/Crocketstown area is already established as a commercial/retail neighbourhood centre to serve the Sligo/Enniscrone road residential neighbourhood.

The expansion of this neighbourhood centre will be necessary to serve the growing residential population in this area in addition to its tourism and leisure role as set out in Sections 2.7 (Recreation Areas and Leisure Facilities) and 2.8 (Tourism) Lands have been zoned for commercial use to accommodate this expanded neighbourhood centre. An Action Area Plan, incorporating these proposals has already been adopted by the council.

III Foxford Road Area

Residential development in the Foxford Road area is located primarily to the east of the Foxford Road and extends a considerable distance southwards from the town centre. A number of retail outlets are already established along the Foxford Road primarily in the form of forecourt shopping. While a neighbourhood centre located on a major traffic route is not an ideal situation, the relatively small size of this residential neighbourhood, the proximity of the majority of the houses to the Foxford Road and to the attraction of this major traffic route for retail operators, the establishment of a neighbourhood centre off the N26 would be extremely difficult and unlikely to succeed. The established forecourt retail outlets are deemed adequate to serve the needs of this relatively small residential neighbourhood over the plan period and therefore no lands have been zoned for neighbourhood centre facilities in this area. However, neighbourhood retail/commercial development is open for consideration in residential zones should the need arise.

IV Crossmolina Road/Convent Road/McDermott Street Areas

The Crossmolina Road/Convent Road/McDermott Street residential neighbourhood is one of the longer established residential areas on the outskirts of the town and is also located relatively close to town centre services. This residential neighbourhood is already served by some existing retail outlets on Lord Edward Street but traffic conditions, parking etc are not good at this location. Enhanced pedestrian links, pedestrian crossing facilities between this neighbourhood and the town centre are recommended particularly those pedestrian crossing facilities on Teeling Street/Pound Street/Kevin Barry Street which functions as an inner ring route for through traffic.

V Killala Road Area

The residential neighbourhood on the Killala Road extends a considerable distance northwards from the town centre and is currently served by a local supermarket (Costcutters) located on the Killala Road. As with the Foxford Road, the provision of a neighbourhood centre on a major traffic route is not an ideal location. However, this facility is already established and will serve the needs of this neighbourhood on both sides of the Killala Road over the plan period. An Action Area Plan for this area incorporating these proposals has already been prepared.

The locations of the recommended neighbourhood centres, to serve the residential neighbourhoods outlined, are indicated on Map No. 04. Retail outlets serving these residential neighbourhoods will be on a scale appropriate to serve the needs of the surrounding residential areas and should not undermine the role of the town centre as the principal retail centre in Ballina. In particular large supermarkets or shopping centres will not be permitted in such locations. It is envisaged that units, typically of 500sqm and perhaps up to 740sqm, might be considered. The total area of any individual unit, whether comparison, convenience or a combination of both shall not exceed 740sqm. Action Area Plans for all five residential neighbourhoods will be completed. This is also referred to in Section 2.1 (*Residential Development*). These action area plans will focus in greater detail on the commercial/retail centres to serve each neighbourhood.

2.3.9 Policies and Objectives

Policies

It is the policy of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to:

- Maintain and support the role of the central area as the dominant commercial and retailing area in the town
- Enhance the physical appearance of the town centre in terms of building fabric, urban spaces and streets
- Promote redevelopment of derelict and under-utilised lands in the town centre and achieve sustainable development through intensification of land use.
- Pursue a sequential approach to retail planning with the preferential order of location for major new retail development as follows:
 - Town Centre
 - Edge of Centre
 - Out of Centre locations
- To control large scale convenience and comparison retail outlets outside of the town centre so as to protect the vitality and viability of the central area. The total area of any individual unit, whether comparison, convenience or a combination of both shall not exceed 740sqm.
- To ensure the consolidation of all retail warehouse/bulk goods outlets etc. in the form of a retail park
- Enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of Ballina as a shopping town
- Control the spread of uses which would lead to the deterioration of the attractiveness and of the shopping function of the principal shopping streets
- Ensure that new development does not detract from the town's architectural and archaeological heritage
- Facilitate the development of small neighbourhood centres in order to provide local shopping facilities within walking distance of residential areas
- That a second retail hub be identified for future development around the town centre
- That retailing policies in the town should encourage a wider diversity of products on offer
- The design of new retailing units will have regard to the needs of the town and ensuring it retains its attractive nature
- That the Council will seek the co-operation of the Chamber of Commerce and the town retailers to conduct a full retail survey of the town looking at the size of units,

the type of goods sold in these units, the level of vacancy, the turnover rates for the units, the retailing patterns in the town and the location and scale of proposed new retail proposed for the town. This retail survey will inform the future needs of the town within the County Retail Strategy

Objectives

It is an objective of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to:

- RC1** Promote and facilitate the development of retail/commercial activities in the town core (see map no. 5)
- RC2** Improve the quality of the physical environment in the town centre by means of improved lighting, pedestrianisation/pedestrian links, paving, overall signage and access to parking
- RC3** Facilitate appropriate local shopping facilities (particularly convenience goods) in the residential neighbourhoods identified in Section 2.1 (*Residential Developments*) and in locations identified on Map No. 04.
- RC4** Ensure that retail developments comply with the sequential approach by ensuring retail development occurs in the following order:
 - 1. Town Centre
 - 2. Edge of Centre
 - 3. Out of Centre
- RC5** To implement the objectives of the Mayo County Retail Strategy.
- RC6** Enhance the attractiveness of Ballina as a location for Regional Headquarters and encourage the development of such Regional Headquarters in the town
- RC7** That nationally known retailers be encouraged to locate in the town
- RC8** That a strategic traffic plan be put in place that addresses land use and the future commercial development of the town.
- RC9**
 - 1) Town Council to work with the owners of Town Centre commercial sites that are derelict or are moving towards dereliction to
 - a) Fast track development where potential investors are available in line with the development plan
 - b) Assist with the redevelopment of such sites by marketing same to national/international retail chains in keeping with the town Development Plan.
 - c) Have such sites cleared and landscaped
 - d) Enforce the derelict sites act in the interest of commercial life of the town.
 - 2) Commercial and household satellite dish/communications receivers will not be permitted on the front façade of premises and this is to be included as a condition of planning permission.
 - 3) The Ballina court service be retained, upgraded and supported.
 - 4) Ballina Town Council to create a dedicated full time post for a Litter/Dog warden in year 1 of the new plan.
 - 5) Ballina to develop twinning/official relationships with other towns and cities on the island of Ireland to eliminate distance and language, as barriers to twinning and to cement relationships with Northern Ireland through community.
 - 6) The Council is concerned about proliferation of Bookies/turf accountants, take-aways, Discount Shops (i.e. €1/€2 shops) and sex shops and will seek to restrict further the proliferation of such uses. A Retail Impact Statement may be requested.

2.4 Transportation

2.4.1 Introduction

Traffic is considered as being a major issue that requires considerable attention in the town. Traffic is inhibiting the town's business development and public amenity. It is seen as being a barrier to the development of the town. The main current traffic issues within the town include the following: -

- Provision of an effective road hierarchy
- Town centre traffic management
- Pedestrian crossing facilities
- Junction design and layout
- Safety at schools
- Developing the town centre economy
- Protecting the amenity of the town, especially the river area
- Cycle and pedestrian facilities
- Public transport facilities
- Parking

2.4.2 Provision of an Effective Road Hierarchy

Traffic volumes and the absence of an effective road hierarchy are a constraint on the economic and social development of the town. The town was recently recorded as having the highest unemployment rate for a major town nationally. Funding priorities and the development of an effective transport and access network, including a road hierarchy filtering regional and local trips needs to be looked at in this context, nationally regionally and locally.

A number of bypass alignment options have been identified for the town. Selecting a preferred option and progressing this to design and assessment is the next important stage. In advance of this process the selected alignment options need to be protected from development that may disrupt their future possible delivery.

A link road programme, serving essential orbital trips, is under development with a number of links recently opened. The success of the existing link road programme is evident in improved access, the opening up of sustainable development landbanks and the removal of orbital trips from congested town centre links. The delivery of the remainder of this programme needs to continue to be prioritised.

2.4.3 Town Centre Traffic Management

Town centre traffic remains the most contentious point of discussion among the majority of townspeople. Alongside the above higher level road priorities there is an urgent need to approach the matter in an integrated manner.

While a previous traffic study was undertaken more than six years ago, some of the traffic growth forecasts used have since been exceeded and revised upwards by the NRA for future years. This is likely to persist with continued economic growth (which generates demand for trips), population increase and increased car-ownership.

The council will implement a programme of necessary traffic management modifications to improve traffic flows and the town centre environment within the town and environs.

2.4.4 Pedestrian Crossing Facilities

Currently a number of key pedestrian routes are not served by adequate crossing facilities and excessive priority is given to traffic. Approaching crossing points on an individual basis

can often be counterproductive as crossing points form part of routes and usually exist within a complex traffic network. Therefore, pedestrian priority should be assessed in a comprehensive manner as part of a town centre traffic study. In providing for pedestrians it is most important to consider principle “desire lines”. A number of strategic pedestrian routes, serving key amenities, schools and residential areas, need to be identified and appropriate crossing points designed at optimum locations.

2.4.5 Junction Design and Layout

Consideration has been made for the provision of signals or roundabouts at certain junctions. While roundabouts are advantageous in many scenarios (e.g. out of town ring roads where steady flows are experienced throughout the day) in urban environments roundabouts can be space-hungry, do not cater well for pedestrian and vulnerable road users and, without signals, do not cater for traffic management. In a town centre traffic study, individual junction design options will be assessed and appropriate design recommendations made.

The capacity and performance of a number of key junctions is a concern, particularly on approaches to the town. Various signal control technologies exist to cater for different traffic environments. For example, MOVA (Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation) signals optimise traffic at isolated junctions according to existing demands and are being deployed increasingly by local authorities across Ireland. In the case of Ballina, where several isolated junctions exist with predominantly tidal flows (for example the Sligo Road and Foxford Road junctions), MOVA may be an effective solution at certain locations.

2.4.6 Safety at Schools

Road safety for school-children is a growing concern in every town. Recently, successful measures have been taken in a number of locations, for example at Convent Hill. Nevertheless, the issue is raised by the community for the town in general. A road safety programme for schools is recommended that can be rolled out on a school by school basis.

A number of primary and post-primary schools exist in Ballina and Environs, including: -

Post-primary

Moyne College
St Muredach’s College
St Mary’s College

Primary

St Michael’s NS
Scoil na gCaeathan saol
Scoil Pádraig NS
St Nicholas NS
Scoil Iosa NS
St Dymphnas NS
Culleens NS
Knockanillo NS
The Quays NS
Behy NS
Rehins NS
Breaffy NS

According to the Institute of Public Health in Ireland the number of 5-12yr olds who walked or cycled to school fell from 51% in 1981 to 44% in 1991 and 27% in 2002. This is clearly a national problem and results from a vicious cycle whereby, the more children are transported by car, the less safe the roads become for the remainder, etc.

Recent measures at Convent Hill demonstrate a good example of school access design, including set-down, speed reduction, crossing point and road layout measures.

New speed restrictions and time-based speed restrictions adjacent to schools are now permissible under recent road legislation and will be considered at all school sites.

Programmes targeting safety for schoolchildren also prove successful and involve a consultative, cross-sectoral approach. Safer Routes to Schools (SRTS) programmes usually involve consultation with students, teachers and parents to devise and manage a safe access network. Feedback can lead to physical road safety measures (signage, road layout improvements, development of off-road routes) and soft measures (warden provision, walking buses, cycle trains, park and stride, safe routes maps, etc.). As part of the SRTS programme a School Travel Plan is often put in place. School Travel Plans require a forum of teachers, parents and road safety officials to monitor the Safer Routes to Schools programme. Often the best approach is to consult with schools to see if they are interested in cooperating in such a study.

2.4.7 Developing the Town Centre Economy

Ballina's town centre retail economy is visibly suffering from poor accessibility, congestion and the lack of a clear road hierarchy. Nevertheless, it has a quality streetscape and a strong urban heritage.

A number of towns, including Dublin city, have revitalised their commercial cores through the implementation of "environmental traffic cells" (ETCs). In principle these involve the creation of a network of access-only streets surrounded by an inner orbital route. Streets within the cell can be downgraded to pedestrian-only, part-pedestrian, shared surface, "homezone" or low-speed traffic zones as appropriate for the particular context. Initial surveys suggest that such a strategy is feasible in Ballina. For Ballina, a single environmental traffic cell is likely to be sufficient and the following links will be considered for inclusion: -

- Pearse Street
- Tone Street
- Tolan Street
- Rahilly Street
- Bury Street
- Market Street

Successful ETCs usually incorporate an additional outer orbital route. As already stated, a system such as above will only be fully successful with the implementation of the link road programme and the town bypass. Environmental traffic cells and town centre traffic management systems work best and cause least disruption to business when introduced on a phase-by-phase basis.

2.4.8 Protecting the Amenity of the Town, especially the River Area

Similarly, one of the town's strongest assets, the river area, is dominated by its surrounding vehicular traffic system. Initial surveys suggest that a well thought-out traffic management strategy could provide better river access for pedestrians while providing for improved town centre traffic flows.

While any solutions will need to be tested rigorously, it could be possible, for example, to allow the reallocation of road space towards an improved pedestrian realm and act as part of the an inner orbital route. Such a successful circulatory system has been seen to operate in other towns with a similar heritage / riverside urban environment.

2.4.9 Pedestrian and Cycling Facilities

Walking and cycling are totally sustainable modes of transport. There is no negative impact on environmental quality and these transport modes are healthier and more efficient than private car transport.

There are opportunities to provide direct and safe pedestrian and cycle routes, for example in conjunction with linear parks or other areas of open space. All new proposed road links present an opportunity to provide cycle routes to ensure there is a choice of travel modes.

The Urban Design Compendium recommends maximum block sizes of 60m-80m in urban environments to promote good pedestrian access. For the most part this is achievable within Ballina town centre. However the continued improvement, (including the provision of lighting, passive surveillance, active uses, street furniture and quality paving) of lanes and alleyways will do much to enhance the town's permeability.

Ballina is dominated by low-density residential development away from the town centre. High car usage creates a poor environment for pedestrians and cyclists. A core element of the strategy needs to be the creation of strong links from outlying areas to the centre.

In order to achieve this, the links themselves need to gain priority, be well designed and follow desire lines. The use of elements such as cut-throughs and off-route cycle tracks is recommended.

All new residential development should include a pedestrian and cycle desire line analysis. Once these are established, safe, well-lit and "passively-supervised" routes will be planned for key amenity locations.

As resources permit, measures will be implemented along key walking routes to create an integrated network of well-maintained routes, make them safe through good passive surveillance and integrate them into the wider urban structure so that they form part of the urban fabric of the town. Residential frontage development overlooking walkways and public open spaces needs to be a prerequisite of any new development.

"Cyclestations" are the norm in many continental urban areas whereby a small bicycle store, mechanic and managed cycle-park is located next to a rail station or within the town centre. Consideration will be given to such a facility in or near the town centre in Ballina.



Figure 2.3: examples of cycle priority. (a) cut-throughs, (b) off-road routes, (c) cycle "trains", (d) locker facilities, (e) "cyclestation" and (f) parking at shops

Cycle parking should also be a concern for town centre commercial development. Good quality cycle-parking directly in front of commercial accesses will be a requirement for all new town centre developments.

2.4.10 Public Transport Facilities

Ballina is served by Bus Éireann with express routes to Dublin, Belfast, Galway, Castlebar, Westport, Longford, Athlone, Limerick and Cork, in addition to several regional services serving destinations in the Mid-West.

Ballina railway station is located 1/2km (south) of the Town Centre on the N26. Iarnród Éireann operates three Inter City services per day to Dublin, changing at Manulla Junction.

Provision of viable public transport services in regional towns is often difficult due to constrained street networks and relatively low patronage levels. However, local bus services are being successfully provided in many towns in conjunction with sponsorship from major retailers and this may be a consideration for any future retail proposals. The provision of bus services is not one of the functions of the Councils, but the Councils would be supportive of such proposals for the town of Ballina.

Recent Rural Transport Initiatives are providing good accessibility to rural communities and groups who suffer most from mobility disadvantage, for example the elderly.

The analysis of public transport facilities within the plan area outlined in this section complies with the requirements of the Core Strategy.

2.4.11 Parking

Alongside traffic, problems with car parking were raised consistently during the public consultation. In many towns parking at key sites are over-subscribed while other car parks are inaccessible, or under-utilised. A full parking beat survey is recommended to understand parking patterns and behaviour, including occupancy, demand and behaviour during different periods.

In general, conflicting parking demand for commercial trips, employee parking and residential / business uses is contributing to a parking deficit in some areas. This in turn leads to irregular parking and longer trips on the network.

A parking survey will lead to a parking strategy to cater for future demands in the town. As such, it would best be integrated with a land use and transportation study for the town. The strategy may incorporate a number of multi-story, basement or other off-street facilities located on the edge of the town centre (environmental traffic cell area) easily accessible from orbital and arterial routes.

A parking strategy also needs to cater for different users with differing needs, including: -

- Short-term spaces
- Commercial loading
- Mobility impaired users
- Taxis
- Commercial access
- Local residents parking

It is intended that on-street facilities be dedicated as much as possible to providing for short-term, commercial loading, mobility impaired and taxi parking. Future additional long-term and commercial parking shall be provided in off-street facilities located close to an

inner orbital route. Incentives for the provision of multi-storey and basement car parks with well-planned access layouts should be provided for. Major new retail, commercial and residential facilities should be self-sufficient in terms of parking and should also take account of grouped (multi-functional) parking management.

Parking is also a function of the demand for car trips. The wider issues of the location and layout of residential facilities need to be considered in respect to their potential impact on town centre traffic and parking. Better incentive for town centre living plus the provision of good cycle and pedestrian networks can help to reduce car dependency and parking demand.

2.4.12 Speed Limits

The speed limits in Ballina are in the process of being reviewed with the respective authorities as is required on a two-yearly basis.

2.4.13 Transport Assessment of New Development

It is the policy of the Council that Transport and Traffic Assessments and Road Safety Audits be carried out for all new development meeting threshold criteria by suitably competent consultants, which are assessed in association with their cumulative impact with neighbouring developments on the road network. Guidance is given in this respect in the DoELG/DoT/DTO publication "Traffic Management Guidelines" and "NRA Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (HD 19/01 Road Safety Audits) (HA 42/01 Road Safety Audit Guidelines). The NRA has also prepared Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) Guidelines. These Guidelines seek to promote best practice for the preparation of Traffic and Transport Assessments and explain the relevance of TTA in the planning process. In particular the document is intended to provide guidance for developers, their agents, as well as local authorities and the NRA, in the scoping, conducting and evaluating of traffic and transport assessment for proposed developments.

Planning applications where development proposals are brought forward within the zone of influence of existing national roads or of planned new national roads must identify and incorporate noise mitigation measures, where the additional traffic generated by the development results in a breach of the noise design goals (as per S.I. No. 140 of 2006 environmental noise regulations) on national roads for sensitive receptors exposed to road traffic noise.

2.4.14 Policies and Objectives:

Policies

It is the policy of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to:

- Actively co-operate with all relevant agencies in the implementation of a sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system for Ballina
- To facilitate and encourage the use of transport modes other than the private car including public transport, cycling and walking, particularly between the town centre and its surrounding housing estates
- To secure the efficient and safe movement of persons and goods by road, having due regard to environmental considerations
- Require traffic / movement management plans to be submitted for large-scale residential, commercial or industrial developments
- Work with public transport operators, C.I.E./Iarnród Éireann, Bus Éireann and any other relevant bodies in the improvement of public transport and in Ballina
- Introduce traffic management measures within the town centre to discourage car circulation and facilitate pedestrian movement, cycling and public transport initiatives
- Restrict heavy goods vehicle traffic through the town centre, with the exception of service and delivery

- Restrict service and delivery so as not to interfere with traffic flow at peak commuter times
- Introduce measures to prevent through traffic and reduce speed on routes along which schools are located
- Continue to enforce parking law and control measures
- Provide for additional parking demand in future
- Ensure that all off-street car parks are designed and laid out in a safe manner
- Encourage grouped parking and multi-functional parking strategies in mixed use schemes and locations
- Develop a coherent structure of pedestrian walkways and cycle tracks utilising natural desire lines in the interest of providing a permeable and sustainable circulation pattern
- Ensure that any new or proposed pedestrian routes are sufficiently monitored by natural surveillance (i.e. ensure overlooking of open space through the design and orientation of buildings)
- Encourage, strengthen and expand the pedestrian network of streets and spaces, which support the activity of the town centre
- Explore the possibility of pedestrianising selected town centre streets
- Encourage the development of cycle routes to areas of focal activities and in all new residential developments
- Improve access and safety for cyclists and pedestrians through the introduction of cycle routes, pedestrianised streets and park and walk schemes
- Have regard to travel and transport initiatives set out in the Department of Transport's "Smarter Travel - A Sustainable Transport Future. A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020" (February, 2009).

Objectives

It is an objective of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to:

Pedestrians and Cyclists

- T1** Improve and widen, if necessary, footpath pavements on all town centre streets
- T2** Develop a town pedestrian and cyclist strategy
- T3** Continue to enhance existing pedestrian linkages between Pearse Street and Emmet Street and other key lanes and alleyways around the town
- T4** Establish a network of tourist walking routes around the town
- T5** To provide pedestrianisation schemes and pedestrian crossing facilities at appropriate locations particularly in conjunction with new developments
- T6** Install audio facilities and appropriate surfaces at all traffic lights for disabled people
- T7** Establish cycle lanes on strategic traffic routes leading into town
- T8** Provide good quality cycle parking in line with cycle parking standards located close to access points for all new town centre developments
- T9** Require a pedestrian and cycle desire line analysis in all new residential developments
- T10** Carry out Safer Routes to Schools programmes at selected school sites throughout the town in consultation with school management
- T11** Paths to be extended to the town boundary on all National and Regional Roads
- T12** Cycle lanes to be provided on all new roads and provided where possible on existing roads

Public Transport

- T13** To work with the appropriate authorities and, where appropriate, commercial developers to provide a town bus service
- T14** To facilitate the development and future expansion of the railway station for passenger and freight services
- T15** Promote the continuation of the development of Rural Transport Initiatives serving the town

Roads

- T16** Develop Stage 1 of the outer ring road linking the N26 (Foxford Road) with the N59 – West (Crossmolina Road) and the R314 (Killala Road).
- T17** Develop Stage 2 of the outer ring road linking the N26 (Foxford Road) with the N59 – East (Sligo Road).
- T18** Develop relief roads as indicated on Map No. 07
- T19** Support the upgrading of the N26 as an urgent priority
- T20** Undertake a programme of necessary traffic management modifications to improve traffic flows and the town centre environment within the town and environs.
- T21** Develop an Inner Orbital Route system, which will provide direct access to off-street car parks
- T22** Develop a town centre Environmental Traffic Cell system
- T23** Explore the possibility of different road surfaces and traffic calming within the town core to slow traffic and create a safe environment for pedestrians (shoppers) subject to approval from the necessary authorities
- T24** Introduce loading bays for commercial delivery on town centre streets
- T25** Improving route and parking signage throughout the town, including walking and tourist routes
- T26** Assess junction design and layout strategies
- T27** Establish new/refurbish traffic lights with, as necessary and appropriate, MOVA loops, vehicle actuation loops, a pedestrian phase, advanced cycle stop lines, subject to approval from the necessary authorities
- T28** Develop a through-road between Market Road and Pound Road as part of any development and change of use of the site

Parking

- T29** Develop a town centre parking management strategy and undertake a review of existing parking bye-laws
- T30** Promote the development of multi-storey or basement car park facilities on the edge of the town centre easily accessible from orbital and main arterial routes
- T31** Restrict on-street facilities, where possible, to short-term, commercial loading, mobility impaired and taxi parking
- T32** Future additional long-term and commercial parking to be provided for in off-street, preferably multi-story and basement facilities
- T33** Manage parking and parking controls to ensure good access and foster commercial activity
- T34** Provide adequate coach parking for tour and private bus operators
- T35** Establish disabled parking spaces at all public off-street car parks and, where necessary, at coach parks
- T36** Encourage use of off-street parking in the Cathedral area
- T37** Install CCTV and proper lighting at all off-street car parks
- T38** Erection of motorcycle parking at two central off-street car parks,
- T39** Ensure that major new town centre developments are self-sufficient in terms of parking where possible and practicable
- T40** Investigate the provision of a car park in Market Square under the proposed public square
- T41** Parking meter zones to be increased to include edge of town centre residential streets to provide extra parking but to allow availability of parking for residents. Residents parking to be regulated by permit.
- T42** Access to long-term car parking to be provided in appropriate locations on approaches to the town. The parking of caravans, campers and mobile homes on street, in car parks, in town parks or in any other public areas not designated for such parking to be regulated by bye law with a substantial on-the-spot fine for breach of same.

Other

- T42** All overhead, power, public lighting and communications cables inside the 50kph speed limit be put underground where feasible and subject to the approval of the relevant authority
- T43** All town centre public lighting to be upgraded and brought to standard by increasing numbers and quality of lights.
- T44** Traffic calming to be provided where required and as determined by the Town Council in all estates in the control of the town council.
- T45** Traffic calming measures to be conditioned where required and as determined by the Town Council into planning of all new estates.
- T46** Stream at Bohernasup end of Circular Road to be piped to facilitate the provision of a path, an additional traffic lane and facilitate improvements at the junction
- T47** In accordance with Retail Planning Guidelines, large-scale retailing shall be avoided, where possible, adjacent or close to existing, new or planned national routes
- T48** Applications for development on national routes will be subjected to Transport Assessment and Road Safety Audit procedures in line with the recommendations of the National Roads Authority. Individual development applications will be decided on their merits and will be in keeping with good road safety and transport planning practice
- T49** Existing and future development in proximity to national roads shall be subject to the provisions of S.I. No. 140 of 2006 environmental noise regulations

2.5 Heritage - Townscape

2.5.1 Background

In preparing a development plan, Local Authorities are now obliged to include in that plan a 'record of protected structures' (the RPS) for the '... protection of structures or parts of structures of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest'². In line with this legislative requirement, the project team for the Ballina town plan undertook a review of the town's building stock to identify those structures, which merited inclusion on the register. Generally, the approach taken was to include structures of particular antiquity or of high design (architectural or artistic) aesthetic. In addition to those structures proposed for the RPS, Ballina possesses many mid 19th century vernacular structures, stonewalls, mews buildings and mills, which make a positive contribution to the townscape. While these structures may not currently qualify for inclusion on the RPS, in the event of future development it should be policy to seek their retention and imaginative reuse.

The majority of the buildings within Town Centre Ballina date from the early to mid 19th century. They are typically modest in scale, two to four storeys in height with pitched roofs running parallel to the street. No one particular style predominates - classical and gothic motifs are found on neighbouring structures – and buildings vary in width from single to three bays wide³. The streetscape is not particularly unusual for towns of its time, except it might be argued that Pearse Street has a greater regularity than the main streets of most Irish towns.

It is important that all opportunities for future development are seen as a way of creating a better visual environment. Generally the town retains a traditional scale of buildings with vertically proportioned windows, smooth plaster walls and pitched slate roofs. This is a style that can be easily adapted to suit the modern concept and a high quality, contemporary architectural response that respects its surroundings will be encouraged at all times.

2.5.2 Design Guidelines for Future Development

Ballina retains a character very typical of the larger traditional Irish market town that has not been greatly altered by 20th century development. This may be set to change and further development is essential to consolidate the town centre. It is an objective of the council to promote quality architectural design, be it traditional or contemporary design, that will visually consolidate and enhance the existing architecture of the town. It is also considered a priority to boost the commercial and civic vitality of the town centre.

Therefore one block in particular within the town centre has been singled out because of its key location within the town centre and development opportunities which exist in the area. The block is bordered by Pearse Street, Emmett Street and Dillon Terrace and the lands adjoining those streets including the proposed protected structure of Dillon Terrace itself. It is prime location for future development. Guidelines in relation to the general form recommended for future development in the area are set out in Appendix A.

It is recommended that future development on large brownfield sites near the centre of town take the form of a coherent pattern of streets and squares and that these new streets are stitched into the weave of the existing urban fabric.

² Furthermore, as part of the development plan process Local Authorities are required to establish if areas of townscape within their jurisdiction justify protection as part of an 'architectural conservation area'.

³ Structures on Dillon Terrace and Pearse Street display a ground floor combination of large cambered arch window open with adjacent single or paired round arched door opens. This is not an exceptional motif, but occurs with noticeable regularity in the Ballina streetscape.

For example, development on the Diamonds Yard site should not be isolated from the existing urban plan by a paved parking area; similarly, a covered shopping mall extending over the entire site would not make a positive contribution to the urban environment.

In evaluating the proposals for individual buildings, the planning authorities will take account of:

- Sensitivity to the existing street pattern and scale of adjoining structures
- Imaginative use of materials
- Quality of detailing
- The provisions of the Ballina Town Design Guide

Above all else, proposals for new development should demonstrate a commitment to improving the environment in a progressive and forward-looking way.

Laneway development adjacent to the Library is an excellent example and this type of layout should be continued elsewhere. The presence of frontage surveillance (from the library) is an important feature. The library is sensitively designed with a bright and imaginative interior that reflects its location within the heritage façade of Pearse Street and the multi-functional civic role it serves in the community. Recent developments such as a modern, sustainably-designed retail courtyard on Tone Street, some recent shopfronts on Pearse Street and the library are positive examples of what can be achieved. These projects should serve as a model as well as a benchmark for future development in Ballina.



2.5.3 Architectural Conservation Areas

An Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, or contributes to the appreciation of a protected structure. An Architectural Conservation Area may or may not include protected structures. Planning permission must be obtained before significant works can be carried out to the exterior of a structure in an ACA, which might alter the character of the structure or the ACA.

Under the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 2000, as part of the development plan process Local Authorities are required to include objectives to preserve the character of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA's).

In carrying out its review of the entire study area as part of the Plan Preparation Process, the project team focussed on two areas **a)** Crocketstown or the Quays and **b)** Pearse Street, where it was felt that the historic or architectural nature of the areas in question merited nomination for designation as an ACA. However, it should be stressed that there are areas of Ballina's streetscape where a vernacular architecture has evolved over time and which makes a positive contribution to the environment.

a) Crocketstown or the Quays

Ballina's life as a port town began in 1817 when the first vessel ever to 'cross the bar' was brought into the quay by William Malley, a townsman. Later that year the ship 'Industry' was sent out laden with 50 tons of oats, possibly bound for Glasgow. Other traders followed Malley's example so that during the early years of the 19th century trade from the little port of Ballina to other cities on the West coast of Ireland as well as to Scotland and North America began to thrive. By 1852 the Tyrawley Herald reported that '... vessels of every tonnage now frequent our river...'

Improvements were made to the area after the setting up, by Act of Parliament, of the Moy Harbour Commissioners in 1860. Initially the quay front and the enclosure were established. Later, the Commission oversaw the construction of various sheds and storage areas required for the import and export of cattle, sheep and farm produce.

While the port has only seen sporadic use since 1983, the Quay area has a distinctive urban character that relates to its morphology and original use.

The reasons for defining Crocketstown as a Conservation Area are: -

- 1 Retain the character of the area
- 2 Working on those aspects of Crocketstown, which define its uniqueness, develop policies for future development in the area
- 3 Enhance the streetscape, lighting, street furniture, etc. in a manner appropriate to the character of Crocketstown

The redevelopment of this area will take place within the context of proposals for the development of a marina.

b) Pearse Street Historic Centre

Although there is little map evidence currently available to develop a full understanding of its morphology, Graham and Proudfoot⁴ (citing the striking linearity of Pearse Street) have argued that in some respects Ballina has the characteristics of an 18th century 'newtown'.

Although there is a certain consistency of scale, in other respects Pearse Street presents a variety of architectural styles with Victorian and Georgian facades and a wide range of material finishes. Nevertheless, the linearity referred to in Graham and Proudfoot, lends the street a particular quality, which is quickly and easily appreciated by even a casual visitor. The Pearse Street ACA shall include Tone Street, Tonal Street, O'Rahilly Street, Casement Street and James Connolly Street. These streets with Pearse Street and the Military Barracks form the historic centre of Ballina's 19th Century market town. The building form, fabric and character of the area should be protected from non-contextual interventions. It is recommended that those aspects, which lend the Historic Centre its character, are studied in detail and that appropriate policies are established to protect its principal characteristics.

2.5.4 Record of Protected Structures (RPS)

Structures recommended for inclusion in the RPS are listed in Appendix B. A Reference Number is attached to each structure together with the address and a brief note on each. The locations of the recommended structures are identified in Map No. 07. There are two structures/areas, which warrant special attention, with respect to their inclusion in the RPS. Those are a) Belleek Castle and b) the Creteboom.

⁴ *Urban Improvement in Provincial Ireland 1700 – 1840 (1994)*

a) Belleek Castle

A further point of explanation relates to Belleek Castle: some attendant grounds and structures, which would previously have formed part of Belleek Castle, are now in separate ownership. Therefore, in the list of structures proposed for the RPS each of the significant structures relating to Belleek are listed separately.

b) The Creteboom

While Ballina is endowed with some marvellous churches, stately homes and fine Victorian bank buildings, the most remarkable impression for the first time visitor is the sight of a concrete ship resting on its side, hull fully exposed, in the middle of the River Moy just north of the town. This is the Creteboom, Ballina's most distinctive landmark.

During the First World War Britain experienced a shortage of steel. Non-steel ships were needed to fetch iron ore from Spain but by the time the Creteboom had been built (in 1919 by John Mehr + Co, Sussex) the war was already over and the ship was no longer required. The vessel was eventually bought in 1922 by Stelp + Leighton of London, who with 10 tugs and 39 barges had managed to assemble the largest fleet of concrete ships of the time.

In 1937 the Creteboom was purchased by Ballina Harbour Commissioners. Their plan was to sink the ship (along with some traditionally constructed wrecks) near the Quay to create a sandbank. However, the Creteboom sank beside the Quay before reaching its designated resting place. Only one serious effort was made to refloat the vessel when, in 1974 and with great difficulty, the Creteboom was raised from its former location near the Quay to the current location in the middle of the River.

2.5.5 Polices and Objectives

Polices

It is the policy of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to:

- Protect those building and other structures identified in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS), identified in Appendix B
- Ensure that development proposals within Architectural Conservational Areas (ACA) do not detract from their special characteristics
- To co-operate with relevant bodies such as the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, to ensure that buildings and sites of architectural, archaeological and/or historic interest are protected and maintained to acceptable conservation standards
- To promote the renewal of derelict and under-utilised sites throughout the town
- To promote the visual attractiveness of the town by encouraging owners of derelict sites/buildings to redevelop and improve them in an appropriate manner
- Require the conservation, retention and/or reinstatement of traditional features and building elements such as shop fronts, entrances, windows, doors and door-cases. Where replacement is required, ensure that they respect the original character of the building or street to which they relate
- To protect historic items of street furniture including street pumps, street lamps, statues, traditional paving materials and surfaces
- To facilitate land assembly, as a means of assisting Urban Renewal in order to enhance the commercial viability of the town centre
- Encourage the protection of older buildings through renovation and rehabilitation as opposed to demolition and replacement
- To promote linkages between features of archaeological and architectural significance.
- To encourage, where appropriate, the reuse of redundant and obsolete structures.

Objectives:

It is the objectives of the Councils to:

- HT1** Promote the renewal and regeneration of the block bounded by Pearse Street, Emmett Street, Tolan Street and Dillon Terrace in line with the guidelines set out in Appendix A.
- HT2** Commence a programme of placing utilities underground within the architectural conservation areas
- HT3** Ensure that all laneways/pedestrian links between the main shopping streets and the river front are developed in an appropriate manner in terms of Urban Design and Use Mix
- HT4** Ensure that new development in the vicinity of the riverfront satisfactorily addresses the river in terms of design and contributes to the attractiveness and vitality of the riverside areas in terms of use mix
- HT5** To protect the setting/context of protected structures and, in the case of areas of new development, to encourage the use of such structures as focal points in new development layouts.
- HT6** To restore and protect the quay walls.

2.6 Community and Cultural Amenities

2.6.1 Analysis

2.6.1.1 Recreation

There is generally a good level of provision of recreational facilities, with a need to improve facilities or allow for expansion in some areas. Sports provision includes:

- GAA grounds
- Rugby ground
- Soccer ground
- Golf course
- Swimming Pool
- Athletics track
- Tennis courts
- Indoor sports
- Basketball
- Sub aqua club and other water sports
- Gym
- Boxing

A number of the town's sporting clubs are performing at a very high level at county, provincial and national level. These activities have encouraged individuals in from all social classes, genders and facilitate positive activities which make the town a pleasant and dynamic place to live.

There are a number of difficulties and shortcomings in such facilities. The provision of facilities in schools for sporting and leisure activity are considered to be inadequate, though local organisations allow the use of their facilities for school use and schools cooperate with the limited facilities they have.

The usage of the facilities has grown considerably over time and some facilities require expansion. The provision of outdoor all weather facilities and pitches have been noted.

There is a shortage of evening entertainment outlets in the town other than pubs and sports based activity. The development of a cinema is a significant improvement in the town over the period of the last plan. The need for passive entertainment for all ages was also noted and the development of a park in the town added enormously to the amenity space. A further four additional parks are proposed for the town.

The former Moy Hotel has been renovated and transformed into a high quality public library and museum with a wide range of facilities that are open to the wider community.

2.6.1.2 Education

There is now a shortage of school places in some parts of the town. The numbers of young children in the 0 to 4 age cohort has grown considerably in the town and the population profile of the town indicates that this is likely to continue into the future. Some schools are not full and their catchment area has declined in population. This imbalance is an issue that will have to be addressed by the relevant education authorities and school patrons. It is understood that a number of schools are expanding their roll numbers and that additional facilities may be required for their expansion. A proposal exists in the town for the amalgamation of a number of local schools and this is being considered by the relevant Boards of Management and the Department of Education and Science.

Should new sites and buildings be required to accommodate the needs of schools which are amalgamating the Council will cooperate with the identification of relevant and appropriate sites. Ensuring that these schools take place in the area where future

population growth is likely is essential. Designing in schools that will facilitate the safe movement of children to school without the use of the car is essential. Difficulties already exist with traffic movement outside existing schools and these will be addressed as part of the overall traffic management plan for the town and its environs.

The Town Council has noted that there is considerable dissatisfaction with sports/physical education facilities within the existing schools. New schools will be expected to have adequate facilities that can be utilised by both the school and the general community.

2.6.1.3 Childcare

There is limited childcare available in Ballina. The HSE have 21 centres registered but 13 of them provide only sessional day care – that is care for limited periods of up to 3½ hours while eight centres provide full day care. In addition to these services there are an additional six registered childminders also providing much needed childcare facilities in the town.

Childcare provision is an important social provision that facilitates parents working, develops children's social skills prior to entering school and is a means of creating positive learning patterns for young children. It is the Council's desire that additional childcare facilities be brought forward. Adequate childcare provision will assist a number of individuals who are currently not active in the labour force to be trained and obtain employment. The provision of high quality childcare facilities in new housing estates and other acceptable locations is to be encouraged.

The Government's Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, June 2001 will form the basis for the provision of such services in the town.

2.6.1.4 Health

The town's main health facility is St. Joseph's – located on Lord Edward Street. This includes a district hospital, out patient's clinic, training centre, psychiatric care and ambulance base.

2.6.1.5 Arts

The arts are very important to a town, contributing to education and awareness and also in identifying how a town views itself and values itself. It has previously been noted that there was frequently a poor perception of the town from many of its own residents. It is suggested that a full and vibrant artistic life can bring about a change in attitudes and enhance the quality of life of all. It is therefore the policy of the Councils to encourage and support the arts in Ballina. Much has already been done including the development of a new library for the town in the old Moy Hotel; a protected structure. Also located in this building is the Jackie Clarke Library and Archive. The latter is to be relocated into its own premises at the former Provincial Bank which has been acquired for the purpose. The former premises of the Newman Institute have been acquired as an Arts Centre and plans are advanced for its development and expansion to include a theatre.

A range of professionally delivered arts activities exist in Ballina. This is supported by voluntary activity, especially by the Boards of the three key arts organisations, the Ballina Arts Events, the Yew Tree Theatre and the Ballina Street Festival. Professional arts activity is also delivered as part of the strategy of Parkside Community Development. The town has a vibrant amateur arts scene, which is involved in drama and the festivals.

The Ballina Street Festival has gone from strength to strength since its revival in 1991. The festival runs over 10 days and includes a varied and diverse programme, with something to suit all tastes. It now attracts over 100,000 visitors to its events drawn from all over the

country. Favourite events from prior years like Lady of the Moy, the Ballina Races and others, mix with new events, with all being very much family orientated.

The festival is a community effort and plays an important role in unifying the people of Ballina and providing an opportunity to celebrate their own cultural heritage. It is acclaimed as Ireland's premier family festival and already has a name for the variety of entertainment it offers.

2.6.1.6 Street Furniture / Sculpture

The lack of street furniture and modern sculpture in the town has been noted in the public consultation in the town. This is particularly so in the town centre and in prominent points around the town. The Council is committed to developing a positive and attractive town centre that will have monuments, sculpture and street furniture that reflect its history, traditions and its place as the major town in north Mayo. It is committed to providing a positive experience for those people who live and work in the town as well as to its visitors.

2.6.1.7 Other Public Services

The town is provided with a wide range of public services that would be expected of a town of this size. These include, Gardaí, Teagasc, FÁS Training Centre, North Western Regional Fisheries Board, Post Office, Council Offices and Courthouse. The North Western Regional Fisheries Board has its headquarters in the town. The Road Safety Authority has been located in the town. A new state of the art public library and museum with high quality provision that includes internet access, training and job seeking facilities has been provided in the former Moy Hotel. A new Garda Station has recently been provided.

2.6.2 Policies and Objectives

Policies

It is the policy of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council

- To seek the provision of the best possible quality of educational infrastructure within the town
- To seek the provision of the best possible quality of health infrastructure within the town
- To support the development of third level educational facilities within Ballina and within Co. Mayo
- To support the development of the arts in Ballina including the development of an Arts Centre at the former premises of the Newman Institute. This is to include a theatre.
- To implement the standards and policies contained within "Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, June 2001"
- To improve leisure facilities for young people within the town
- To support local sporting and community organisations to develop their facilities and provide activities for people from the town and its hinterland from all social classes and genders
- To ensure that new school provision has adequate sport and leisure facilities that will be open for use to local communities
- To consider the development of additional school sites in the town as required and as advised by the Department of Education and Science. Additional lands have been identified on Convent Hill and zoned community facilities (CF) with this in mind. Further school sites may be required and residentially zoned lands (R1 or R2) may be used for this purpose as provided for under this zoning objective (See "Section 2.13.6 Zoning Categories -Primarily for Residential Use (R1 & R2)" in of this plan.)

Objectives

It is an objective of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council

- CC 1** To facilitate the development of sports and leisure facilities within the town
- CC 2** To provide quality public sculpture within the town and to identify suitable sites for such
- CC 3** To support the establishment of youth facilities on suitable sites
- CC 4** To support the development of commercial and or community childcare provision in the town
- CC 5** To enhance the existing facilities for the Arts by the development of an Arts complex including a theatre at the former Newman Institute premises
- CC 6** To provide a permanent home for the Jackie Clarke Library and Archive
- CC 7** To provide the County Museum in the Civic Offices
- CC8** To support the development of The National Salmon Life Centre at Barratt Street (Canal Side) and support the promotion of a salmon quarter in the town.

2.7 Recreation Areas and Leisure Facilities

2.7.1 Analysis

The main parks and open spaces in Ballina are:

- Tom Ruane Park (Town Park)
- Various open spaces and parks along the Moy including Canal Side Park
- The Golf Club
- The Rugby Club
- The football grounds and athletics track
- The Ballina Showgrounds
- Two GAA grounds
- A number of public parks (including housing estate green areas), school playing fields, etc.

The town also has a number of major natural amenities. These are:

- Belleek Woods, a major woodland amenity especially valuable given its proximity to the town
- The River Moy, important for active recreation (fishing, boating etc) but also as a passive amenity that adds to the appearance of the town and is probably its most significant and memorable single asset
- The Bunree River, a river with some attractive falls and riparian vegetation

The quality of provided amenities is also very high in most places. The Town Park is well laid out and the sports fields towards Belleek Woods are well used with active and strong community sports associations.

Standards for the provision of open space are set out in the document "A Parks Policy for Local Authorities" as published by the Department of the Environment in 1987. This proposes a minimum of 2ha per 1000 population as a minimum standard. It also recommends that open space be planned on areas of a population of 10,000; approximately the population of the area of this Plan.

The 1999 Residential Density Guidelines (RDGs) determine that local authorities should ensure that urban areas provide space for all formal and informal recreational activities with access generally open to the public. The RDGs recommend standards for the provision of open space in new development areas, being 15% for LAP and greenfield sites and 10% for other sites. All public open space is required to provide for a mix of passive and active recreation serving the whole community. Emphasis should also be placed on quality in design, location and social function.

The survey has shown that Ballina has the following:

Type of Open Space	Area
Formal Parks	22.79 ha
Sports	55.26 ha
Woodlands	62.30 ha
Miscellaneous	11.87 ha
Informal/Wild Areas	08.36 ha
Total	160.58 ha

Table 2.7: *Different types of open spaces of Ballina town and environs.*

The total area of open space is 161 ha. This is very large by comparison with the DOEHLG standard of 20ha. However, the table below includes a wide range of open space types and also includes external areas of open space such as Belleek and the golf course. The standards therefore should be compared with the area of formal parks (22.79 ha), which in itself meets the required standard.

In addition to the existing provision, the Council is advancing a programme of park development. Part 8 procedures have been approved by the Council for 4 new community parks in the town: -

- Mercy Park
- Ardnaree
- Killala Road Neighbourhood Park
- Bunree Neighbourhood Park

The parks have been attractively designed to provide for both active and passive recreation. They are also well located around the town. Maintaining the parks to a high standard will be important to their success as a public amenity.

There are other opportunities for walking routes on the riverbanks, Belleek Woods and Crocketstown. A walking route right through the town down to Belleek on the west bank and to the Quay area on the east would be of value and would help make the most of this amenity. Care is required, however, in order to reconcile the tourism and recreational needs of anglers and others.

The Council is also advancing contracts to construct a pedestrian bridge and cultural centre near the Ridge Pool. This will bring life to the riverside area and make the area both attractive and accessible.

The recent redevelopment of Market Square as a town square will be a significant improvement in the town centre. It is intended that it will create a focus and a place that provides a sense of identity such as Eyre Square in Galway or some of the Georgian Squares in Dublin. The aim of the regeneration and redevelopment of Market Square is to create a commercially and socially viable civic space reflecting the historical and cultural uniqueness of the square and its role in the town's development. The promotion of strong linkages to surrounding streets reflecting key desire lines and careful consideration of the square's relationship to the surrounding townscape will be important to the success of the new public space.

2.7.2 Children's Play

The importance of children's play areas cannot be overemphasized. Increasingly in the urban areas children do not have the benefit of natural playgrounds, such as woodlands, rock outcrops, hills etc., which were more freely available to children in the past. In addition, security and safety considerations have curtailed the freedom of children to travel on their own play areas. Therefore, it is essential that man made playgrounds, accessible to all children, are provided. Research has indicated, that children prefer the natural environment (e.g. water, sand, trees etc.) to man made play equipment.

2.7.3 Policies and Objectives

Policies

It is the policy of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to:

- Improve the overall appearance of the town by developing and enhancing existing amenities and open spaces and by insisting on a high quality of landscaping within all new developments, especially residential developments

- Comply with the recommendations of the Residential Density Guidelines and the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines 2008 for the provision of public and private open space in new development areas
- Involve residents and residents' associations in the enhancement of housing estate open spaces
- The loss of existing public or private recreational open space will normally be resisted unless alternative recreational facilities are provided in a suitable location, or it can be demonstrated that there is no longer sufficient demand to sustain the facility
- Encourage the development and improvement of existing sports facilities in the town in co-operation with the various clubs and associations
- Encourage the provision of the broadest range possible of sports and leisure facilities.
- Promote participation in sport and to facilitate the development of the sports facilities in the town
- Establish Ballina as a "child friendly" town, and to help children understand their environment and to experience and care for the natural environment
- Developers will be required to make provision for sport and recreational infrastructure commensurate with the needs of the development as an integral element of their proposals. Such provision should include direct provision on or off site or a development levy to enable the Council to make appropriate alternative provision

Objectives

It is an objective of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council;

- RL 1** To facilitate the continued development of Belleek Woods as a major public amenity
- RL 2** To integrate Belleek Woodlands into the town by the careful landscaping and development of the intervening areas along the riverbank and in the vicinity of the existing athletics track and football pitches
- RL 3** To require that the layout of all new developments adjoining the River Moy shall be designed to facilitate public access to the river
- RL 4** That all new developments along the River Moy shall be of the highest architectural standard and shall enhance the appearance of the river and riverbanks
- RL 5** To develop a pedestrian walkway through the town along the River Moy. In particular, it shall be an objective of the Council to extend the pedestrian link from the Upper Bridge to Canalside Park along the riverbank when the opportunity arises with the redevelopment of property. It is also an objective to improve existing riverside walks in association with the recent provision of a pedestrian bridge over the River Moy at the salmon weir. This objective is subject to an assessment of the impact of any such scheme on the river and its associated habitat and wildlife including an "Appropriate Assessment" under the terms of the EU Habitats Directive.
- RL 6** To provide a pedestrian bridge over the Bunree River at the Town Park
- RL 7** To provide a formal town centre open space with the redevelopment of Market Square
- RL 8** To progress the park development programme including planned parks or improvements at: -
- Mercy Park
 - Ardnaree Neighbourhood Park
 - Killala Road Neighbourhood Park
 - Bunree Neighbourhood Park
 - Sligo Road Neighbourhood Park
 - Canal Side Park
- RL 9** To improve the quality of landscaping and to plant trees in existing housing estate open spaces
- RL 10** To maintain existing open space and amenities, particularly Tom Ruane Park to the highest possible standard
- RL 11** To improve the appearance of the approach roads to the town
- RL 12** To provide additional tree planting within the town

- RL 13** To protect woodlands and to make Tree Preservation Orders under Section 205 of the Planning And Development Act 2000, as and when the necessity arises. However, the removal of some trees may be necessary to facilitate the provision of essential infrastructure such as Roads, Water Services etc. It is, in particular, the objective of this plan, to protect trees on Bury Street in any future developments along the street and to retain as many as possible of the existing trees in any redevelopments along this street.
- RL 14** To ensure that the provision of play areas will have regard to the following:
- A recognition of the need to provide adequate formal play facilities for children.
 - A commitment ensuring that the opportunities for play suitable for each stage of a child's development are available
 - The implications for children's safety and access to community facilities in designing publicly owned developments, environmental improvements and traffic management
 - Ensuring that wherever possible, areas of natural play space are created close to housing areas, ideally forming part of the network of green space
- RL15** The Council will investigate ways of improving the quality and capacity of existing sporting and recreational facilities through initiatives in both the public and private sector. Sources of funding will be investigated to achieve this at government level through the Lottery, with the governing bodies of the sports and through private development proposals
- RL16** The Council will investigate ways of working with community and employment organisations to maintain and manage existing and newly developed parks to ensure their success as community facilities
- RL17** To provide and/or facilitate the provision of publically accessible toilets in the town on a cost neutral basis during normal business hours. Public toilets may be required in retail developments of over 1,000 Sq. Mts.
- RL18** All Amenity Parks to be equipped with play facilities to cater for all ages groups from toddlers to teenagers



Figure 2.4: Planned Public Parks in Ballina: Ardnaree, Killala Road, Bunree and Mercy Parks

2.8 Tourism

2.8.1 Analysis

The town has a number of major tourist amenities, particularly the River Moy and its associated salmon fishery. It is also well located to act as a gateway to the wild and scenic landscapes of the west of the county. Some recent and current development also offer considerable opportunities for the town. These include:

- The development of the Clarke Collection
- The establishment of the County Museum
- Proposals for a Civic Museum
- Proposals for a Salmon Museum
- Recent hotel developments and associated leisure facilities.

There are a number of activities within the town. These include the Ballina Street Festival, the Salmon Festival, an 18-hole Parkland Golf course, Belleek Woods, the Swimming Pool and the annual Horticultural Show. The main highlight of the season, the Ballina Street Festival, attracts more than 100,000 visitors into this region per year (see 2.6 *Community and Cultural Amenities*).

In the public consultation process and workshops tourism was considered as being an important topic where improvements in the town could be very beneficial to the local economy. The focus of promotion of tourism is on other locations in the West, and in particular towards Westport within the County. The lack of focused tourist products available has resulted in people only spending short periods of time in the town.

2.8.2 Main Tourist Features

Nearby lakes include the famous Lough Conn and Lough Cullin. These are a major fishing amenity and famous for game fishing in particular. The Moy itself is a fine game fishing river and internationally famous.

Located in the northern half of the County of Mayo, the Moy Valley Region takes its name from the superb fishing river flowing through it. The Moy rises in the Ox Mountains on the border of West Sligo and stretches southwards towards Swinford crossing through the plains of West Mayo, until it comes to Ballina and eventually merging into the Atlantic at Killala Bay. The Moy Estuary comprises a large area of tidal waters. It teems with sea trout, which congregate here to feed on the massive stocks of sandeel.

The Moy has long been famous as a salmon river but it offers a wide variety of quality angling to suit all tastes. The Moy fishery at Ballina is one of the most famous salmon angling venues in the world. Catches of over five thousand salmon have been recorded in a single season. Its length of just over two and a half kilometres is located within the Ballina town boundaries.

Céide Fields

These are approximately 30 min from Ballina with a unique Visitor Centre. They are an experience not just for archaeologists or historians. Everyone can enjoy a vast prehistoric landscape, a natural ecology of blanket bog, dramatic cliffs and wild coastline.

The Céide Fields are the oldest known field systems in the world, over 5,500 years old. It is a unique neolithic landscape of world importance. The remains of the stone field walls, houses and megalithic tombs are preserved beneath a blanket of peat over several square miles.

Barony of Erris

Northwest of Ballina stretches the Barony of Erris, a Gaeltacht area with its unspoilt beauty and widespread sandy beaches. It is one of Europe's least inhabited areas with its own heritage and folklore very much alive.

Erris is famous for its rich fishing waters and enjoyable golfing experience. Carne Golf course on the Mullet peninsula is known throughout the world for its unique setting in the towering sand dunes of the Atlantic coastline.

North Mayo Coastline

This is one of Ireland's most splendid but least known coastlines. Its scenery of cliffs, sea stacks, sea arches and many other spectacular features of coastal erosion are a major natural attraction.

Beaches

The beaches in the area include some of the best beaches in the country, some in County Mayo and others such as Enniscrone and Easky conveniently located in adjoining County Sligo.

Mountains

The mountains of Mayo (Nepin and Nepin Beg) and of west Sligo (Ox) are little visited but offer considerable possibilities to hill walkers, naturalists and others.

Ecclesiastical Remains

To the north of Ballina and within convenient distance of the town, there are a number of fine church and monastic sites such as Moyne and Rosserk Friaries. In the town of Killala, there are further such remains including a round tower. The town is not too far away from the Marian Shrine in Knock and the County in general has very significant other religious historical places of interest.

Ireland West Airport Knock

Ballina is 48 kilometres from Ireland West Airport Knock. This important piece of infrastructure can play a critical role in bringing tourists into Ballina and the general hinterland. Ensuring the correct product is available and adequate infrastructure to get people from the airport to the town is essential.

Ballina is well placed to serve as a gateway to these important tourist amenities. In short, however, the tourism product of Ballina and of its hinterland is weakly developed and lags far behind that of other Mayo towns, especially Castlebar and Westport. The town has significantly greater potential than is being realised. Very little has been made of some of the town's best assets.

2.8.3 Policies and Objectives

Policies

- It is the policy of the Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to support the development of tourism in Ballina and, in particular to develop the role of Ballina as a gateway to the amenities and tourist attractions of northern County Mayo and of western County Sligo.
- It is the policy of the Councils to protect and to develop the fishery on the River Moy, to protect the river from pollution or other interference that could compromise that fishery.

- It is the policy of the Council to work with other statutory, voluntary bodies and commercial interests in the town with a role to play in the tourist sector or developing the capacity of the town to grow its tourist market and develop Ballina as a tourist location. The Council shall seek to develop a working group on tourism involving a wide range of interests so as to develop a local action plan on tourism for the town.
- It is the Councils' policy to use the powers available to it to promote and encourage the development of tourism in the area and to ensure that the value of the tourist industry and the wealth of underdeveloped attractions in the area bring about the maximum benefit for the town while developing sustainable tourist activities,

Objectives

It is the objective of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council:

- TM1** To protect and develop the Moy Fishery and to facilitate its development as an angling, amenity and tourist resource
- TM2** To encourage the development of tourist related products at The Quay/Crocketstown
- TM3** To facilitate the development of tourist facilities and tourist attractions within the town, particularly the development of all-weather attractions
- TM4** To develop the role of Ballina as a gateway to the tourist attractions of the surrounding hinterland
- TM5** It is an objective of the Councils to co-operate with statutory and voluntary tourism organisations in securing sustainable tourist developments within the town
- TM6** It is an objective of the Councils to use their powers to promote Ballina as a tourist centre
- TM7** To encourage a high quality of new development and maintenance of the existing built environment to make the town more visually attractive to visitors
- TM8** To improve signage in and around the town to assist the tourist market in the town

2.9 Urban Fringe

2.9.1 Analysis

The Urban Fringe refers to the areas around the town, on the fringe of the plan that are zoned for agricultural use. The area is mostly farmland but does include also some forestry and a significant amount of low density housing in the form of ribbon development.

The primary purpose of this zone is to protect agricultural and other rural activities such as forestry from undue impact by urban development and growth. In this regard it is important to maintain as clean a break as possible between town and country and avoid the interlacing of agricultural and urban uses as has happened in the past. To ensure that this is achieved proposals for significant urban developments such as housing estates and commercial and industrial developments within this zone will be regarded as premature. The rationale for this includes;

- The lack of services available in these areas
- The cost of providing services in such remote areas
- Ensuring that the future development of the town is not compromised by disorderly development
- Ensuring that housing is as proximate as possible to essential services such as schools and shops
- The management of traffic and sustainable development practices
- Allowing the town to remain tightly focused
- Protect areas of heritage and wildlife

These areas are not at present required for urban development but it is important to remember that they may be in the future if the town continues to grow. It is therefore important that they should be protected from developments that would compromise their future usefulness. For this reason, it is important to restrict one-off housing development in the zone as it compromises access and future in depth development.

The urban fringe also has an important visual function as the transition from the rural environment to the built urban environment. This refers to locations that will always remain a boundary to development. Instances in the case of Ballina are developments abutting the river or major amenities such as the golf course or Belleek. It is important in these locations that developments should respect their context and present an acceptable front elevation to the adjoining undeveloped area. This is especially true of the river, which is such an important amenity to the town. New developments should face the river, not back on to it.

New housing in the urban fringe should follow Mayo County Council Rural Design Guidelines 2008, to ensure that the visual environment is not damaged by this development.

2.9.2 Policies and Objectives

Policies

It is the policy of the Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to primarily restrict one-off housing development within this zone. New housing will be restricted to those with a housing need. This refers to those with land in the area who require housing for their own use. However, special consideration will be given to applications for single houses by persons who satisfy the planning authority that the proposed house is for their own primary residential use. In all cases, the minimum site requirement for a single house in the agriculture zone is 3,000sq metres (i.e. 0.74 acre).

In the case of a site that is located within the town boundary, the required site area will be reduced to 2,000sqm when the site is bounded by services.

Developments abutting the edge of the agricultural zone and developments that will function as a “permanent edge” to the town should face towards the adjoining undeveloped lands, particularly in locations such as the river.

The Council will seek to protect agricultural activities from harmful intrusion by residential and other developments and will seek to secure a clean break at the edge of the town between urban and rural uses.

Objectives

It is an objective of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council that:

- UF 1** Housing in this area will be restricted primarily to that necessary to serve the needs of landowners and others engaged in rural activities for their own use. Special consideration will be given to persons, not engaged in agriculture, building a house for their own use. In all cases the minimum site area in agriculture zones should be 3,000 sq metres (i.e. 0.74 acre).
- UF 2** Retail and commercial development will be located in appropriately zoned areas and will not be permitted in the urban fringe.

2.10 Environment

2.10.1 Analysis

2.10.1.1 National Heritage Areas

There are a number of nature conservation designations operated by Dúchas under the European Habitats (92/43/EEC) and Birds (79/409/EEC) Directives. These are Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas. The River Moy flows north through the centre of Ballina. The River Moy is designated as a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) (Site Code: 002298). The Brusna River which flows in a north easterly direction into Ballina is also designated as part of the River Moy cSAC. Both of these rivers join with the Killala Bay and Moy Estuary cSAC/NHA (Site Code 000458) just beyond the N59 national route in the centre of Ballina. Killala Bay & the Moy Estuary are outside of the development plan boundary but are, however, still liable to impacts arising from policies and development of the land adjacent to this designated area.

2.10.1.2 Trees

A survey was conducted of trees within the plan area for the 2003 Development Plan and this still remains relevant. The town is well endowed with the fine amenity of Belleek Woods but also some other fine groups of trees that add significantly to the environment of the town. The entrance to Ballina Beverages is well wooded and enhances the site and the entrance to the town from Killala.

2.10.1.3 Other Areas of Biodiversity Value

In addition to areas designated for conservation, Ballina and its surrounds have other habitats that are considered important on a local and regional scale. These habitats include woodland, scrub, treelines and hedgerows, semi-improved grassland, cutover bogs, wetlands and heaths. These habitats are important in their own right and as wildlife corridors connecting areas of ecological importance together. Belleek Wood is the largest area of woodland within the plan boundary. This woodland contains stands of both broadleaf trees and conifers and is a valuable habitat for wildlife. Belleek Wood and several other small pockets of woodland present within the site boundary may act as refuges/wildlife corridors for fauna commuting within or through Ballina and its environs. In addition to woodland areas, hedgerows and scrub are also known to act as wildlife corridors. Other less improved areas such as semi improved grasslands and wetlands are present within or surrounding the plan boundary may also support a more diverse suite species than adjacent highly improved agricultural habitats.

2.10.1.4 Listed Views

A number of locations within the town have been identified where there are fine views or prospects. These include some fine views of Nephin Mountain and of the River Moy. Certain views have been identified as worthy of preservation and these are:

- Views of the river and of Belleek Woods from Crocketstown.

2.10.1.5 Litter/Signage

Litter was identified in the consultation meetings and working groups as being a source of concern to the people in the town. While it was stated in the consultation meetings that improvements have taken place in terms of litter, it remains as a problem for Ballina like many other towns in the country. There are powers available to the Councils under the Litter Act 1997 which will be used against offenders. The town also has a number of derelict sites and the powers available under the Derelict Sites Act 1990 shall be used in this regard. Random advertising/signage can be very damaging visually and is therefore discouraged throughout the plan area. Infringements will be addressed through strong enforcement measures.

2.10.2 Environment - Contaminated Lands / SEVESO Sites

Contaminated land is generally considered to be lands where there are substances which could cause significant harm and endanger human health. Examples of land uses that may have caused such contamination include gas works, landfill sites and scrap yards.

While applications for development on contaminated lands will generally be encouraged, the Town Council will require that a detailed investigation is carried out and appropriate measures are taken to ensure that the land is treated properly before development takes place. In order to identify those sites within the Town likely to be contaminated, the Town Council intends to prepare a register of contaminated sites to help identify potential challenges to their redevelopment early on.

2.10.3 Control of Major Accident Hazards Directive (Seveso II Directive)

The *E.U Directive (96/82 EC)* on the control of major accident hazards, commonly referred to as the Seveso II Directive was adopted on the 3rd February 1999. It was introduced into Irish Law through statutory instrument i.e. the EC (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2000 (S.I. No. 476 of 2000), on the 21st December, 2000.

The Directive aims to prevent major accident hazards involving dangerous substances and chemicals and the limitation of their consequences for people and the environment. These objectives must be pursued through controls on the following:

- The siting of new establishments.
- Modifications to existing establishments.
- Development in the vicinity of an establishment which, by virtue of its type or siting, is likely to increase the risk or consequences of a major accident.

There are a number of Seveso II sites which affect Ballina:

- (i) Brooklands Gas Ltd
- (ii) Coca-Cola Ltd

Article 12 of the Directive provides that appropriate consultation procedures must be put in place so as to ensure that before decisions are taken, technical advice is available to Planning Authorities in respect of relevant establishments. The Health & Safety Authority (or the National Authority for Occupational Health and Safety, NAOSH) provides such advice where appropriate in respect of planning applications within a certain distance of the perimeter of these sites. The distance varies depending on the nature of activity at the site. These are indicated for the two above sites on the Objectives Map (No. 07). Such technical advice will be taken into account in the consideration of applications for planning permission.

In considering the location of any new developments covered by the Major Accident Hazard Directive, regard will be had to the zoning of the lands in question but also to the potential impact that such an establishment would have on the health and safety of the public, those living in the vicinity and any other sensitive establishments such as schools, workplaces etc.

2.10.4 Policies and Objectives

Policies

- It is a policy of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to protect the Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area on the River Moy and to ensure that it is not compromised by inappropriate development or undesirable discharges.
- It is the policy of the Council to protect designated scenic landscapes, views, routes and landscape features of local value from inappropriate development

- It is policy to use all the powers available to it to address the problems of litter and dereliction within the town.
- It is the policy of the council to use all the powers available to it to address the issue of unauthorised signage.
- It is a policy of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to ensure the protection of wetland, surface water and groundwater systems in the Plan area.
- It is a policy of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to ensure the protection of threatened habitats and species identified in 'The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland' (NPWS, 2008), which occur within and adjoining the Plan area.
- It is a policy of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to protect habitats listed in Annex 1 of the EU Habitats Directive and species in Annex II, IV and V of the directive as well as their habitats and feeding areas.
- It is a policy of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to ensure that all plans and projects which would, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, have a significant impact on a Natura 2000 site, will be subject to Habitats Directive Screening, and if required, Appropriate Assessment, to determine if the proposed development is environmentally sustainable and to ensure it will not affect the integrity of the site or its habitats or the conservation objectives of the site.
- It is a policy of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to protect and improve, where appropriate, air quality in the Plan area.
- It is a policy of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to ensure an integrated approach to waste management for any proposed development(s). Waste Management Plans are required to have regard to the 'Best Practice Guidelines on the preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction & Demolition Projects' (DEHLG, 2006).
- It is a policy of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to ensure the protection of Annex IV species, particularly bats.
- It is a policy of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to ensure compliance with the requirements of EC Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004.
- It is the policy of the Town Council in relation to proposals for developments on land which is or may be contaminated, to require the applicant to engage an environmental consultant to investigate and assess the possibility and extent of contamination and to recommend remediation measures for agreement with the Council.
- It is the policy of the Town Council to complete a register of contaminated sites detailing those sites likely to be contaminated within the town.
- It is the policy of the Ballina Town Council to consult with the Health and Safety Authority when assessing proposals for development in or near sites which are identified under the COMAH (Seveso II) Directive, in order to reduce the risk and limit the consequences of major industrial accidents

Objectives

It is an objective of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to;

- E 1** Subject to Objective E 2, to protect the trees and groups of trees as well as hedgerows and corridors of ecological or amenity value.
- E 2** To support the replacement of commercial coniferous trees in Belleek with appropriate species of deciduous and hardwood trees and to protect, conserve and enhance areas of natural or semi-natural woodland.
- E 3** To use the powers available to it to control litter within the town.
- E 4** Encourage and promote tree planting in appropriate locations throughout the town.

- E5** To ensure that the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) on appropriate assessment are met where required.
- E6** To ensure the protection of the scenic route between Crockets Town and Castleconor.
- E7** To require a Visual Impact Assessment to be carried out for proposed development(s) with potential to impact adversely on the character of the Plan area.
- E8** To require an Ecological Impact Assessment to be carried out for proposed development(s) located in areas of known or likely ecological or biodiversity value.
- E9** To require a bat survey to be carried out for proposed development(s) located within a habitat or structure that is considered suitable for bats.
- E10** To encourage the use of native and indigenous species in all developments and landscaping schemes.
- E11** To minimise lighting in new developments in the vicinity of sensitive ecological sites.

2.11 Water & Sewage

2.11.1 Water Supply

Water Supply has been one of the most significant infrastructural constraints on development in Ballina at present. The Water Supply constraints relate principally to inadequate storage capacity in and adjoining the town. Ballina's Water Supply comes from Lough Conn via two separate treatment works. The main treatment works are located at Lisglennon, north of Ballina close to the Former Asahi plant. Raw water from Lough Conn is pumped to the Lisglennon works from where treated water is then supplied to the town's reservoir at Convent Hill. The secondary works is the Wherrew Treatment Works which is located on the shores of Lough Conn from which treated water is supplied to the town's reservoir via Knockanillaun water tower. While the supply of water and the capacity of these water treatment works are sufficient to cater for current demands, some augmentation of the treatment works at Lisglennon is necessary to cater for an extended Ballina Regional Water Scheme into the future.

The Ballina Town Water Supply Scheme Stage 3 is due to commence shortly. This will include the construction of a new reservoir at Convent Hill of 4000cubic metres capacity to address current inadequate storage for town and environs. It is also proposed to construct a new reservoir at Quignalegan on the Sligo Road with a capacity of 2500 cubic metres primarily to feed water to Bonniconlon and provide security of supply to areas of Ballina on the Sligo Road.

District zone metres have been installed in the town which subdivides the water distribution system into distinct zones. This improves management of water network and assists in leak detection.

2.11.2 Sewage

Ballina Main Drainage Stage 1 was completed in 1984 under which the existing town sewage treatment works in Belleek with a population equivalent of 20,000 were upgraded.

The Ballina Main Drainage Scheme - Stage 2, is almost complete. Under this scheme sewage from the Crocketstown/Quay area is being connected to the treatment works at Belleek via a new pumping station at the Quay Road/Creggs Road junction and a new pipeline across the river to the treatment plant.

The town sewerage system has been extended in the following areas:

- Knockleagha
- Swinford Road
- Creggs Road/Enniscrone Road
- Belleek Road
- Laghtadowannagh (Killala Road)

In conjunction with the above, new pumping stations have been installed at:

- Knockleagha
- Laghtadowannagh
- Belleek Road
- Crocketstown

Existing sub-standard sewers on some of the town centre streets have been replaced and substantial separation works have been carried out whereby dedicated surface water sewers have been laid in some areas with outfalls to the River Moy to reduce frequency of incidences of combined storm water overflow from the existing network.

The capacity of the treatment works has been increased to 25,000pe to accommodate the above extensions to the network and the Quay Area. There is now adequate capacity in the treatment works for existing loading and with finite additional spare capacity.

2.11.3 Surface Water

Improvements have been carried out to the surface water system in the town that have alleviated problems in the Killala Road and Swinford/Bonniconlon Road areas.

2.11.4 Policies and Objectives

Policies

It is the policy of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to:

- Ensure an adequate, sustainable and economic supply of good quality water to meet domestic, commercial and industrial demands.
- Ensure the provision of sufficient water and wastewater treatment capacity to cater for all development outlined under the Core Strategy.
- Conserve supply through the elimination of leakages.
- Ensure high standards of water quality to comply with European (Drinking Water)(No 2) Regulations 2007 as well as high standards of pressure, storage and fire safety.
- Require, where it is deemed necessary, contributions from developers for the upgrading of the water supply and sewage infrastructure to accommodate their developments.
- Carry out enforcement proceedings for the protection of water quality under the Local Government (Water Pollution) Acts.
- Ensure that developers provide efficient drainage systems with separate foul and surface water drainage systems.
- Have regard to the measures and recommendations set out in the 'Provision and Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland', the 'Quality of Bathing Water in Ireland' and 'Urban Waste Water Discharges in Ireland for Population Equivalents Greater than 500 Persons' EPA 2007/2008 Reports.
- Monitor the effectiveness of septic tank systems and enforce planning conditions related to septic tank systems.
- Require a flood risk assessment to be carried out where residential development(s) are proposed on undeveloped R1 and R2 Residential zoned lands adjacent or in close proximity to the flood plain of the River Moy, flood event areas or areas identified as Benefitting Lands on OPW National Flood Hazard Mapping website.
- Require a flood risk assessment to be carried out on lands zoned R1 – Existing Residential and R2 – Existing Residential, that are located within, adjacent or in close proximity to the floodplain of the River Moy, flood event areas or areas identified as Benefitting Lands on the OPW National Flood Hazars Mapping website.
- Have regard to measures set out in the River Basin Management Plans and associated Programmes of Measures for the Western River Basin District.
- Reduce the impact of riverbank flood protection and drainage works.
- Protect floodplains of the River Moy and retain for their flood protection and natural heritage values.

Objectives

It is an objective of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to:

Water

- WS1** Ensure that the Ballina Town Water Supply Scheme Stage 3 is implemented as soon as possible

- WS2** Provide an additional Storage Reservoir with total storage capacity of 4000 cubic meters to be located at Convent Hill
- WS3** Provide a new reservoir at Quignalegan with a capacity of 2500 cubic metres.
- WS4** Continue on-going Leak Detection and repair Programme
- WS5** Carry out replacement/rehabilitation of Town Centre cast iron pipes
- WS6** Provide additional water pipelines in the Convent Hill area to improve water pressure and provide adequate fire fighting supply in the area

Sewage

- WS7** Commence planning for next stage of treatment works to cater for future population growth
- WS8** Provide additional extensions where deemed necessary to the existing foul sewerage system
- WS9** Complete refurbishment of Belleek treatment works and existing pumping stations
- WS10** Ensure completion of Ballina Main Drainage Scheme (Stage 2)

Surface Water

- WS11** Provide an extension of existing and installation of new surface water collection system
- WS12** Provide additional dedicated storm water sewers
- WS13** Address point and diffuse pollution sources currently affecting the Moy and Sruffaunbrogue Rivers.
- WS14** Protect riverside angling beats.
- WS15** To identify and repair drainage defects to prevent accidental foul sewage discharges from the network.
- WS16** To connect any remaining houses with the town boundary to the public foul sewer.
- WS17** To review the operation of the existing town effluent treatment plant to ensure that it meets all requirements of effluent treatment standards as recommended by the document "*Urban Wastewater Discharges in Ireland Report 2004-2005*" prepared by the Environmental Protection Agency.
- WS 18** To investigate the installation of silt traps and screens and other appropriate measures to prevent pollution arising from surface water discharges to the river Moy.

2.12 Other Services

2.12.1 Electricity Supply

It appears that the existing electricity supply network in the town of Ballina is adequate to meet expected needs over the plan period. The ESB have prepared a medium voltage network plan for Ballina (prepared May 2001) and this plan is currently being implemented. The most critical infrastructure from an electricity supply viewpoint is the construction of a reserve 38KV connection from the Moy station located to the west of the town into Ard na Ri. Planning Permission has already been granted for this connection and work is expected to commence in the near future.

The existing Ard na Ri sub-station (beside Archers Builder Providers/Hardware) requires replacement and the site is too small for an upgraded sub-station. A new site has been identified and negotiations are currently taking place with the landowner. A site for a new transformer station has been identified in the Belleek area in the vicinity of the soccer/athletics facilities.

The existing transformer station on Market Square is crucial to the town's electricity supply and the retention of this transformer station in the proposed redevelopment of Market Square will be necessary.

Growth in electricity consumption is rapidly catching up with peak generating capacity and the transmission capacity of existing infrastructure and therefore the supply of electricity to the Northwest Region is an issue which has to be addressed in a wider context. It is now accepted that large areas of the West and North-West are experiencing difficulties in complying with international standards in terms of the reliability and quality of their electricity supply and this is a major factor in determining future investment in the region.

The concerns with regard to electricity supply in the study areas are as follows:

- Generating capacity inadequate with peak demand with a significant risk of unplanned interruptions in supply as demand outstrips generating capacity
- Loss of a major generator during the winter peak would give rise to severe difficulty in maintaining the electricity supply for the western region including the area of Ballina
- There is a high risk to town supplies where they are supplied by only one line, due to maintenance requirements
- The system is dependent on relatively few large generating stations and routinely needs to use older, inefficient generators to support the network
- Gas from the Corrib Gas Field (offshore, near Belmullet) is expected to be available in the town by the end of 2008
- The construction of smaller power stations in the region may provide a means of increasing generating capacity particularly in view of the proximity of the Gas Field. Electricity demand in the region, and the number of large electricity users, in the region is unlikely to justify the construction of a significant power generating plant
- The lead-in time for construction of new generating facilities is up to five years, due to regularity and planning processes

2.12.2 Telecommunications

Access to advanced information and communications infrastructure is essential to economic development. The vast growth in the use of the Internet and Worldwide Web requires infrastructure investment to accommodate this growth. The broadband cable network will be installed on all major approach roads, industrial areas and in the town centre. Broadband delivers fast internet access as well as video on demand, video conferencing and web hosting. This is in contrast to narrow band, which typically supports traditional telephone lines and much slower internet access.

Until recently the advanced telecommunications capacity has been concentrated in the major population centres (Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Galway) with some rural areas in the East and South of the country having a more advanced network and capacity. This has led to concerns that the weakness of the broadband networks in the West and North-West is limiting the possibilities for investment. As the deregulation process is evolving, rollout is proceeding in areas with high-density business and residential usage (essentially large urban centres). If the free market principles continue to determine the rollout, then much of the Western Region will have extremely limited provision and capacity. This will hamper efforts at enticing new investment into a region as well as limiting the development of existing business.

All major routes into Ballina currently have fibre optic trunk lines. A broadband network has recently been installed in the town. Telecommunications infrastructure providers are confident that they can meet the needs of the town in terms of its future population and industrial growth.

2.12.3 Gas Supply

Bord Gais has completed the development of the Ballina Town Gas Distribution system. This work is now complete and the system will connect the town to the all Ireland transmission network.

2.12.4 Policies and Objectives

Policies

It is the policy of the Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to:

- Facilitate the development of adequate electricity and telecommunications infrastructure to accommodate the future needs of Ballina
- The development of secure and reliable electricity transmission infrastructure is recognised as a key factor for supporting the needs of the community and attracting investment to the Region
- The Councils support the infrastructural development of ESB Networks in the Ballina area
- Support the improvements to the natural gas supply to Ballina

Objectives

It is an objective of Ballina Town Council and Mayo County Council to:

- IS1** Assist the electricity infrastructure provider in the installation of necessary infrastructure
- IS2** Facilitate the development of broadband and other telecommunications infrastructure
- IS3** Assist the gas infrastructure provider in the installation of a town distribution system

2.13 Land Use Zoning Objectives

2.13.1 Introduction

All lands within the development plan area have been zoned for particular purposes as required by Section 10 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000. Section 2.13.6 Zoning Categories gives a general idea of the types of uses that will be permitted within each of these zones.

2.13.2 Land Use Zoning Categories

The broad land use zoning categories for the plan area are defined below followed by specific objectives relating to particular developments within these zoning categories:

- R1:** To provide for medium residential densities
- R2:** To provide for low to medium residential densities
- C1:** To protect the role of the town centre and provide for town centre uses
- C2:** To provide for commercial, office and mixed land uses
- I:** To provide for industry and employment
- IC:** To provide for industry, employment and retail warehouse/warehouse/bulk goods outlets
- CF:** To provide for community facilities and public/institutional uses
- RL:** To provide for recreational amenity, open space and leisure facilities
- U:** To provide for Utility Infrastructure
- A:** To preserve rural character and provide for agricultural development

2.13.3 Specific Zoning Objectives

The following are specific zoning objectives within the broad land use zoning categories set out above in Section 2.13.2:

- Development in the residential zone adjoining the South-eastern Bank of the River Moy from the plan boundary to Weir Court to allow for road access along the riverbank and a formal promenade with buildings oriented to overlook the river
- Develop the former premises of Newman College as an arts centre and theatre with associated improvements to Canal Side Park and the provision of a pedestrian bridge over the Moy
- Development of commercial/industrial lands at Knockleagha to proceed only on the basis of adequate access being provided via the future ring-road or alternatively via upgrading of the existing road network as an interim measure
- Duffy's Bakery/Kertoy's Industrial lands zoned for recreational and amenity use can be developed for tourism/recreational and amenity related purposes including, possibly, the provision of a hotel.
- The upgrading of utility infrastructure in Riverslade Park between the River Moy and the Enniscrone Road will be permitted in this Recreation and Leisure Zone.
- Development of a medium to high density mixed use town centre development to the east side of Humbert Street to include retail, commercial and other uses, and be self-sufficient in terms of car-parking
- Development of a medium to high density mixed use town centre development on lands bounded by Kevin Barry Street, Bury Street, James Connolly Street and the new link road to include retail, commercial, a sustainable mix of residential accommodation and be self-sufficient in terms of car-parking
- The regeneration and redevelopment of Market Square to create a commercially and socially viable civic space reflecting the historical and cultural uniqueness of the square and its role in the town's development. The promotion of strong linkages to surrounding streets reflecting key desire lines and careful consideration of the square's relationship to the surrounding townscape

- Depending on trends in the town school-going population and educational policy, consideration will be given to the development of possible future alternative uses for the Scoil Padraic site to the west of Market Road in order to promote the commercial and social viability of the Market Square and town centre
- The encouragement of infill development on Emmet Street
- Encourage a high quality of design and construction to reflect the riverfront aspect and pedestrian linkages to Pearse Street
- Provide for recreational amenities in line with the Council strategy of the delivery of well-planned parks providing for a mixture of passive and active recreation
- Mayo County Council recognises that the Scoil Padraig site, including the playing field, is an important social, community and amenity asset to the town. It is an objective of Mayo County Council to protect the community benefit which the lands now provide. Any further development of the site shall be informed by and take due account of the balance of community uses which currently exist on the site to which this objective relates.

2.13.4 Non Conforming Uses

Many legally established uses exist in locations where they do not conform to the designated use zoning objective set out in the plan. Extensions to or improvements of premises accommodating these uses may be granted where the proposed development would not be injurious to the amenities of the area, and would not prejudice the proper planning and development of the area.

2.13.5 Transitional Areas

While the zoning objectives indicate the different uses permitted in each zone it is important to avoid abrupt transitions in scale and use at the boundary of adjoining land use zones. In these areas it is necessary to avoid developments that would be detrimental to amenity. In zones abutting residential areas, particular attention will be paid to the uses, scale and density and appearance of development proposals and to landscaping and screening proposals in order to protect the amenities of residential properties. Planning applications for new developments in transitional areas shall be assessed with particular reference to opening hours and the possible impact on the residential amenity of adjoining properties in terms of noise and general disturbance.

2.13.6 Zoning Categories

The Land Use Zoning Categories set out the principle function of each use zone. Proposals for uses not referred to will be considered where they do not conflict with the stated purpose of the zone and where they do not undermine the primary function of another zone. Uses ancillary and complimentary to the principle use will be considered on their own merits.

Primarily for Residential Use (R1 & R2)

- To provide for residential development
- To protect residential amenity
- To provide for local shopping, amenity, recreation, community facilities and utilities
- To restrict the development of betting shops and turf accountants in residential areas.
- To promote the development of attractive residential communities with good pedestrian access to amenities and neighbourhood facilities
- To promote community-friendly residential estate layouts providing for car access while promoting good pedestrian access and safe and amenable environments
- The lands zoned for residential purposes (R2) between the Bonniconlon Road and the Swinford Road overlap with a potentially valuable habitat as indicated on Figure 5.2 and Section 5.4.8 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (Appendix C). Any development of these lands must be accompanied by an ecological assessment and

development will only be permitted in accordance with the results and recommendations of such a report.

Primarily for Agricultural Use (A)

- To preserve rural character
- To provide for agricultural development
- To restrict development which, would create a premature demand for infrastructural services
- To restrict disorderly development of backlands
- To provide for limited housing development in accordance with Section 2.9.2.

Primarily for Commercial Use (C1 & C2)

- To provide for shopping and retail stores
- To provide for office development
- To provide for other town centre uses including houses/apartments
- To preserve existing civic amenity, town centre character and heritage building sites
- To improve civic amenity by requiring high standards of civic design
- To retain retail/shop use on ground floor of principal shopping streets
- To retain character and use of existing predominantly residential streets
- To promote “Living over the Shop” and to protect the amenity of the residential community
- To promote the commercial and civic viability of the town by fostering a range of retail and other services within a well accessed environment

Primarily for Industrial Use (I)

- To provide for manufacturing and office based industry
- To provide for non-retail warehousing
- The lands zoned for industrial purposes on the Foxford road overlap with a potentially valuable habitat as indicated on Figure 5.2 and Section 5.4.8 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (Appendix C). Any development of these lands must be accompanied by an ecological assessment and development will only be permitted in accordance with the results and recommendations of such a report. An “Appropriate Assessment” under the terms of the EU Habitats Directive will be required in the event that any such site is designated under the Habitats Directive.

Solely for Recreation/Leisure Use (RL)

- To provide for public open space
- To provide for recreation/amenity development
- To protect visual and scenic amenity
- Any proposed development including the development of paths or other leisure facilities, on the land zoned RL in the vicinity of the Moy and Brusna rivers shall be subject to a Habitats Directive Assessment in Accordance with Article 6 (3) of the Habitats Directive and development will only be permitted in accordance with the results and recommendations of such an assessment.

Primarily for Community Facilities (CF)

- To provide for health and welfare, religious and educational facilities
- To provide for recreational/amenity development

Primarily for Industrial/Commercial (IC)

- To provide for retail and other warehousing
- To provide for manufacturing and office based industry
- To provide for bulk retail development
- The lands zoned for Industrial/Commercial Purposes (IC) on the Behy road overlap with a potentially valuable habitat as indicated on Figure 5.2 and Section 5.4.8 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (Appendix C). Any development of these lands must be accompanied by an ecological assessment and development will only be permitted in accordance with the results and recommendations of such a report.

- The lands zoned for Industrial/Commercial Purposes (IC) at Commons/Knockleagha are dependent on the provision of satisfactory road access. An objective for the provision of a new road access is provided for in the Objectives Map (Map No. 07). An “Appropriate Assessment” under the terms of the EU Habitats Directive will be required in the event that any such site is designated under the Habitats Directive.

Primarily for Utility Use (U)

- To provide for public utilities and transport. The lands zoned “U” in the vicinity of the water reservoir on the Convent Road may also be considered for the relocation from the town centre of uses that, in the opinion of the planning authority, are less appropriate to the town centre. This does not include regular retail activity.

Developments on Lands in the Vicinity of the Moy SAC and Killala Bay and Moy Estuary SAC

- Any proposed development on lands in the Vicinity of the Moy SAC and Killala Bay and Moy Estuary SAC and which have the potential to impact on the ecology of these SACs shall be subject to appropriate environmental assessment.

Section 2.14 Joint Hub Strategy

Ballina has been identified as being a joint hub along with Castlebar in the National Spatial Strategy with the objective of ensuring balanced growth in the West Region. This joint Hub will play an important role with the national, regional and county structure that will include improvements in regional accessibility through advanced communications, infrastructure, by road and public transport and through the regional airport at Knock – Ireland West Airport Knock. These critical factors also include the enhanced townscape and local services necessary to underpin capacity for development in the two towns and in the wider region where they will support smaller towns and villages

Section 2.14.1 Policies

- It is the policy of Ballina Town Councils to be supportive of the development of a joint hub strategy in conjunction with Castlebar Town Council, Mayo County Council and the West Regional Authority.

3 Development Management Standards

3.1 Residential Use Standards

3.1.1 Introduction - Residential Density

The issue of densities is a crucial aspect of residential development standards. The Planning Authorities recognize that appropriate design and layout providing a high quality living environment, including the availability of proper shopping, transport and leisure infrastructure, are essential if increased residential densities are to be acceptable. The main provisions of the DOELG publication '*Residential Density; Guidelines for Planning Authorities*' have been incorporated into this Development Plan in a manner appropriate to circumstances in the town. New Guidelines are currently being prepared by the Department (Guidelines for Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas) and the council will also have regard to these. The Planning Authorities reserve the right to determine appropriate standards for each specific application. Furthermore, the Planning Authorities will encourage innovative and well-designed schemes with a mix of house types.

The principal benefits of increased residential density are seen as:

- More economic use of existing infrastructure and serviced land,
- A reduced need for the development of 'green field' sites, urban sprawl and ribbon development,
- Reduced need for investment in new infrastructure,
- Better access to existing services and facilities, and
- More sustainable commuting patterns.

Density limits alone have limited control over the quality of the residential environment. Therefore, density will be determined by a combination of actual density limits (i.e. plot ratio/site coverage) and other standards relating to public open space, private open space, privacy, overlooking car parking, design and layout. The control of development by a combination of density provisions and standards as set out above will ensure the provision of a high quality living environment.

3.1.2 Plot Ratio

Density will be applied on a plot ratio basis. Plot ratio is the relationship between site area and the total floor area of the buildings erected on it and is calculated by dividing the gross floor area of the building by the site area. The gross floor area is the sum of all floor space within the external walls of the building(s), excluding plant, tank rooms, basement storage areas (where floor to ceiling height is less than 2.2m) and parking areas. In the case of a group of buildings within a common curtilage the floor area will be aggregated.

The purpose of the plot ratio control is to:

- Prevent the adverse affects of both over-development and under-development on the amenity and layout of buildings within the town centre,
- To achieve desirable massing of heights of buildings
- To balance the capacity of the site and the capacity of the frontage streets.

A) Town Centre (C1 and C2)

The wider town centre commercial/mixed use area has been divided into two zones in this plan (i.e. C1 and C2). In the inner zone a higher density is considered appropriate, due to its central location, where maximum intensity of activities are concentrated. The plot ratio in the C1 zone therefore is 1.5:1 to 2.5:1. In the outer zone (i.e. C2) a plot ratio of 1.0:1 – 1.5:1 will apply.

The Local Authority will exercise a certain amount of flexibility in applying site coverage and plot ratio standards. Where standards cannot be met, quality of design and layout, urban design and the protection of amenities (particularly residential amenities) will be prime factors in determining whether a proposal is acceptable or not. Development proposals in excess of these standards will also be considered where it is deemed appropriate and in the interests of the proper planning and development of the area, as well as complying with the objectives of sustainable development.

Circumstances where higher plot ratios will be considered include:

- Developments that would contribute to the rehabilitation of a rundown area or
- Developments that would make a significant contribution to urban character and/or the commercial or civic vitality of the town centre
- Infill developments in an existing terrace or street, where a higher plot ratio is necessary to maintain a uniform fenestration and parapet alignment or to obtain greater height for important urban design reasons.
- Where a site has an established plot ratio in excess of the general maximum for its zone,
- Minor extensions to existing developments.

It is the Councils Policy to encourage higher densities in the town centre so as to ensure the sustainability of both the buildings and the town centre itself. Areas such as Pearse Street / Arran Place, O'Rahilly Street, Tone Street, Tolan Street and Casement Street require buildings that will in keeping with the town centre plot ratio objectives.

Town Centre uses which require an extensive ground floor footprint, such as supermarkets, will be considered on their own merits.

B) Suburban Areas (R1 & R2 Zones)

Outside the town centre, in the residentially zoned areas, two densities shall apply. This is the distinction between the R1 and the R2 zones. In the inner zone (R1) a medium density plot ratio 0.35:1 to 0.50:1 shall apply. In the outer zone (R2) a lower density is appropriate due to the location of these areas further from the town centre and closer to the undeveloped fringe. A plot ratio of 0.25:1 to 0.35:1 shall apply in the R2 zone.

The use of plot ratio, rather than the traditional density measure of houses/per hectare, allows the construction of a mix of house types and allows for a range of unit sizes. This is particularly advantageous at present when household size is falling and smaller residential units are required.

Within the range of densities stated above, the actual density permitted in any location will be determined by considering the following factors:

1. The capacity of the infrastructure to cater for future population levels.
2. Existing landscape and other features on site.
3. Provisions relating to car parking, open space, landscaping and planting.
4. Existing building lines or townscape character.
5. Principles of sustainability.
6. Proximity to main transportation routes.
7. Design Quality – higher densities may be permitted in developments exhibiting high levels of design and layout.

Notwithstanding the above; on lands designated Phase I under the Core Strategy and zoned R2-Residential, a plot ratio of 1:25 shall be the norm.

3.1.3 Site Coverage

Site Coverage ensures that the built environment is not inappropriately overloaded with building mass. This is expressed as a percentage, determined by dividing the total site area by the ground floor area of the building. Site coverage shall not normally exceed 80% in the C1 and C2 zones. Elsewhere, Site Coverage should not normally exceed 40%.

Exceptions may be allowed when they can be justified on other grounds of good planning.

3.1.4 Public Open Space

Public open space is one of the key elements in defining the quality of the residential environment. It provides passive as well as active amenity and has important ecological and environmental aspects. Public open space is to be provided in a two-tier system. Parks and playing fields will be provided at a rate of one hectare per 1000 population the provision of which is to be funded from the open space element of development contributions. The public open space requirement within housing development, which is to be provided by the developer, is as follows:

Greenfield/suburban sites	- Minimum 15% of total site area.
Other cases	- Minimum 10% of total site area.

In designing large residential development schemes adjacent to an existing development, consideration should be given to providing links and connections between open spaces. In the provision of small open spaces that may be used as children's play area, emphasis will be on ensuring that spaces are generally overlooked so that some degree of supervision may take place. Plans shall be submitted at planning stage for amenity areas and infrastructure within residential developments.

Generally, the backs of houses should not bound open space. It is more desirable that houses front onto open spaces. This improves the appearance of such open spaces and provides a level of passive surveillance which enhances security. Open spaces should be located where they do not cause an excessive security problem for households.

Open Spaces should be completed and made available for use in tandem with the completion of houses.

Where large open spaces are provided a suitable boundary treatment, which is indigenous to the characteristics of the area shall be provided, including kerbing, low walls and/or landscaping. A boundary wall is required where open space is adjacent to a public road (other than internal estate roads).

Where it is considered by the Planning Authorities that the provision of open space requirement in a particular area is not in the interests of the proper planning and development of the area, the Planning Authorities may choose one of the following options:

- That the developer makes a financial contribution towards the provision of an open space by the Local Authority elsewhere (as provided in Section 26 of the 1963 Act), or,
- The Planning Authorities may consider arrangements whereby appropriate community facilities may be provided in lieu of the developers open space requirements.

This may, for example, arise in situations where a site bounds, or is close to, a significant existing public open space.

The Planning Authorities may require that the open space provision of any development be located in a specific area in order to assemble open space quantities of satisfactory size, or to protect/enhance the existing features of the area.

In calculating the area of open space, roads, roundabouts, footpaths, grass margins and other grass areas of incidental open space shall not qualify for open space assessment. In large developments, a range of public open space sizes and types should be provided to cater for active and passive recreational needs as well as creating variety in the development.

3.1.5 Private Open Space

Privacy is an essential part of the quality of a residential environment. The provision of an adequate sized external space, which is free from undue observation, (i.e. usually a back garden) is a fundamental part of residential amenity.

- A) Houses
- B) Apartments

A) Houses

To be provided at a rate equivalent to half the gross floor area of the house but not less than 50m². Houses (terraced, semi-detached, detached) shall normally provide the private open space behind the building line.

B) Apartments

To be provided as follows:

- Town Centre
 - 10m² min. per 1 bed apartment
 - 20m² min. per 2 or 3 bed apartment.
- Suburbs
 - 20m² min. per 1 bed apartment
 - 30m² min. per 2 or 3 bed apartment.

This open space requirement for apartments may be provided as either private or shared open space. Private open space for apartment developments may be provided in the form of balconies or roof gardens, or in the case of ground floor apartments as small gardens. Consideration should be given to the orientation of balconies, which must be designed as an integral part of the building's composition and they shall respect townscape context and surrounding amenities. Roof gardens shall require a secure boundary, be properly landscaped and shall be designed and located so not to interfere with the privacy of adjoining residential properties. Private open space is also required in apartment developments for storage of outdoor goods, such as refuse bins, bicycles, laundry etc.

3.1.6 Overlooking/Minimum Rear Garden Size

Generally first floor windows shall not directly overlook adjoining lands from above ground floor from a distance of less than 11 metres minimum. In the case of development exceeding 2- storeys, 22m is recommended between overlooking facades. Windows serving halls and landings do not impact to the same degree on privacy as balconies and living rooms. The provision of living rooms and balconies on upper floors can cause significant loss of amenity to adjoining dwellings if they are located too close to site boundaries and in such cases a separation of 35m or greater may be necessary.

A reduced garden size may be permitted in exceptional circumstances where the majority of the houses/dwellings comply with the minimum garden sizes set out above and where a particular house/dwelling performs a particular townscape role, such as a key corner site, where due to its situation to the overall layout, it cannot be provided with a standard private garden.

Factors to be considered in determining reduced garden sizes, include:

- The size of the house – smaller, one and two bedroom dwellings may not require large gardens.
- The provision of communal open space associated with the development – smaller garden sizes may be permitted where there are increases in communal open space, provided that the space is entirely private, situated on the non-entrance side of the house, is not overlooked and is screened with a durable, long lasting material (garden trellises or wooden garden screens will not be permitted).

In addition, sufficient space should be provided around dwellings to ensure adequate circulation of air about the buildings themselves and the inhabitants within. Generally, a minimum distance of 3 metres will be required to be maintained between the sidewalls of adjacent dwellings or dwelling blocks. Side elevation windows of any habitable room, excluding bathroom or toilet, shall not be permitted to overlook adjoining property from the first floor level. A 2m high fence must screen all side elevation ground floor windows.

Where front boundary wall or fencing is provided, the design and materials shall add a pleasing design feature to the overall housing layout and shall be in accordance with the indigenous characteristics of the area.

Rear boundary walls or fences shall be constructed to a height of not less than 1.8 metres and shall be of concrete having a plastered or dashed finish, or in the case of a fence they should be of substantial construction. Permanent screening of a similar height should also be provided between the gardens of adjoining houses for a minimum distance of 2.5 metres behind the house.

3.1.7 Infrastructural Service Standards

Applications for housing development on unserviced and unzoned lands within the Development Plan boundary will be regarded as premature.

Where water and/or sewerage infrastructure is privately provided, the type and design shall be in compliance with the standards set by the Planning Authority. In addition, provision must be made for possible future connection into the public system. All sewerage systems should conform with the proper planning and development of the area and public health standards. Septic tanks & Proprietary Effluent Treatment Units, individual and/or group schemes will be required to connect to the public sewerage scheme when it is provided.

3.1.8 Surface Water Runoff

Most building developments on new sites will result in a significant increase in the area of impervious surface (roof and hard pavements). Surface water collected from these surfaces must discharge through a silt trap and oil interceptor before going into a river or stream. In certain residential developments surface water may be allowed to discharge to soak pits where there is no risk to groundwater. This arrangement will not normally be permitted for industrial developments.

For developments greater than 0.5 hectare the developer must submit surface water attenuation proposals, so that the risk of increased flooding due to rapid discharge of surface water is minimised.

Section 3.1.9 Standards and Guidelines

In general, the council will have regard to the standards and recommendations set out in;

- The draft guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas 2008
- Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments 2007.
- Flood Risk Guidelines for Planning Authorities November 2009

3.2 Standards on Design and Layout

3.2.1 Road Standards

It is an objective of the plan to promote the use of shared surfaces and traffic calming in the interests of road safety. The design standards required for carriageways, gradients, footpaths, roads and services vary according to the scale, intensity, layout, design and location of the proposed developments.

The Planning Authority's road requirements will be based on "DMRB – Road Geometry Handbook" (NRA December, 2000)" as well as the Local Authority's Taking in Charge Policy document.

In addition, the following documents may also be used for the purposes of design guidance to assist in layout of residential areas:

- Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (February 2008), "*Urban Design Manual – a best practice guide*"
- Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (February 2008), "*Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas –guidelines for local authorities*"
- Department for Transport (UK, 2007), "*Manual for Streets*"- English Partnerships (UK, 2007) "*Urban Design Compendium Volumes I & II*"
- Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (UK, 1998) '*Places, Street and Movement.*'
- Department of the Environment (Northern Ireland, 1988) '*Layout of Housing Roads Design Guide.*'
- *Recommendations for Site Development Works for housing Areas (Department of the Environment and Local Government 1998*

Copies of the above will be available for consultation at the Planning Office.

In the case of development fronting district and local distributor roads, larger sites with greater building lines and detached houses will normally be required. In such cases grass/planted verges (of indigenous species) in addition to footpaths will also be required. Building lines of 10-12m in such instances are recommended with site frontages of 15m and grass verges of 2m.

3.2.2 Building Lines

Maintenance of the traditional street line is of particular importance in the central area of the town, and some inner suburban locations.

- Generally the aim will be to create a continuous building line along a street edge. Consistent building lines will also be encouraged in the design of neighbourhood centres and in new industrial/business park developments, where buildings have a clear relationship to each other.
- In deciding where a building line should be located, the form of development to which it is related will be considered.
- Where located along roads of traffic importance, increased setbacks may be necessary to provide for greater amenity, to establish the status of the road, to provide for safety of road users and residents and for future road widening and for the creation of cycle paths.
- Allow for opes and breaks at street level in the building line to facilitate permeability and pedestrian desire lines in keeping with the Urban Design Compendium's recommendation of 60 – 80m in urban areas
- However, in specific situations, it may not be in the interests of good planning to enforce a rigid standard for building lines. Therefore, building lines may be relaxed in the following cases:

- For innovative designs which can positively enhance the townscape,
- To incorporate key landscape features into the development layout,
- To provide important areas of public open space, i.e., squares,
- In order to facilitate traditional building forms with open courtyards, etc.
- In general, parking should be provided to the rear of buildings, particularly where they front onto important public roads.

3.2.3 Building Height

A high building is defined as one which is significantly higher than neighbouring or nearby buildings. In a few locations, particularly within the town centre, consideration may be given to developments in which an increase in roof height is proposed, especially where this provides added definition to the streetscape. The following factors will be considered in assessing applications for high buildings:

- Excessive overshadowing and loss of light.
- The scale of an existing streetscape.
- The extent to which the building detracts from structures, parts of structures or spaces, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical interest.
- The extent to which the building detracts from important landmarks.
- Attractive public views from significant vantage points that would be obscured by the building.
- The degree of obtrusion of the building on the skyline.
- The degree to which the building may contribute to the overall townscape. In particular, care will be required in the treatment of rooftops and all machine/mechanical rooms will need to be adequately screened or designed as an integral part of the building.
- The effect of the building on the microclimate in the immediate vicinity.

3.2.4 Housing Layout and Design

As part of the aim of achieving higher densities, there is an emphasis on high quality design in new developments. Furthermore, large residential areas shall generally be broken into small functional and visual groups of approximately 20 houses or less, which fulfill a social and aesthetic need for identity. These shall be designed to create safety for young children, facilitate social interaction and introduce variety into the visual environment, avoiding monotonous repetitive type of development. Each group of houses should have its own visual identity, variations being achieved by layout, building lines, house design, colour, hard and soft landscaping and house size.

The housing development should relate to the surrounding urban form and land use. Protection and respect for the existing amenities and the character of the area is important and should be regarded as a feature of good design. Layouts should respect the need for access and the normal range of local services required by residents.

In the interests of security, all areas used by the public such as open spaces, roads and footpaths should be overlooked by housing.

Residential layouts should be designed in such a way that through traffic is discouraged. Road alignments should discourage speed and give priority to the safety and convenience of pedestrians and cyclists.

House design should make use of materials, architectural form and colour to create a high level of visual amenity. Colour may be used to create a sense of identity within the development. Natural features or landmarks such as mature trees or views or vistas should help to enrich the layout and orientation of housing.

Housing designs shall consider orientation and sun-path so as to maximise amenity, daylight and the benefits of passive solar gain to domestic heating. The Planning Authorities will require a variety of house types in developments over 20 houses. The creation of “landmarks” within the estate, whether through retention of existing features or by introduction of new features will be encouraged. These shall be agreed with the Planning Authorities prior to the commencement of development.

The councils shall have regard to the government guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas 2008 and in particular to the criteria set out in Section 3.4, Box 2 of that document.

3.2.5 Pedestrian/Cycle Access

Pedestrian linkages between housing developments must be designed with security in mind.

These linkages have many proven benefits such as:

- Greater integration between neighbouring residential areas.
- Facilitating pedestrians and cyclists, by the provision of safer and easier access to amenities, shopping and community facilities and between suburban residential areas and the town centre.

Therefore, the Planning Authorities intend that provision be made for the development of pedestrian links between the various centres of activity within the town. All existing pedestrian routes should be preserved and expanded upon where possible.

All new residential development should include a pedestrian and cycle desire line analysis. Once these are established, safe, well-lit and “passively-supervised” routes should be planned to key amenity locations.

It is recommended that measures be implemented along key walking routes to create an integrated network of well-maintained routes, make them safe through good passive surveillance and integrate them into the wider urban structure so that they form part of the urban fabric of the town. Residential frontage development overlooking walkways and public open spaces needs to be a prerequisite of any new development.

3.2.6 Local Shopping Provision

The Local Authority may require the inclusion of a small local shopping element as part of a residential development scheme, where the size of the development warrants such provision, or where the development is part of on-going house building in an area not adequately serviced with local shops (See section 3.8.3 on shopping centres and permitted locations for shopping). Generally, it is desirable that all new residential estates have reasonable access to shopping facilities. The neighbourhood centre should incorporate a range of service facilities such as convenience shopping, a chemist and a launderette. The provision of a neighbourhood centre may be phased in conjunction with the new residential development.

3.2.7 Crèches

Applicants for housing developments should refer to the requirements for childcare facilities (Section 3.9.3) and the DOELG “Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities” 2001.

3.3 Design and Layouts of Flats and Apartments

3.3.1 General Standards

Where apartment blocks are proposed in existing residential areas, their height should respect surrounding developments. Blocks higher than surrounding properties will be considered on their merits, but uncharacteristically high structures will not be permitted where they are considered to interfere with the scale, amenity or visual quality of existing developments.

It is the Planning Authorities aim that apartment developments are of high quality design, incorporating satisfactory car parking standards and adequate functional space to accommodate bicycle parking, laundry facilities and seating areas, as well as refuse storage areas for the use of all residents. These facilities should be conveniently located and well ventilated. Adequate internal storage areas will also be required within each unit.

Where infill development is proposed, particularly apartments and flats, a reduction in the levels of communal or private open space provided per unit may be considered acceptable where developments are considered to include appropriate building designs and suitable landscaping of communal areas, or where a specified alternative open space exists in the area which can be identified as serving the needs of the residents. The Planning Authorities may also permit the public and private open space requirement to be combined (partially or otherwise) to provide for communal amenity areas serving the development. Such developments may also be required to contribute, where appropriate, towards open space for active recreation being provided in the area in accordance with Development Plan Standards. Car parking areas shall not be considered as part of private open space.

In the case of a conversion of an existing house into flats or bed-sitting rooms, the existing private open space shall, where feasible, be available to the occupants of the converted house.

3.3.2 Layout and Design of Apartments and Flats

The conversion of houses to flats in predominantly single family dwelling areas will not normally be permitted as such conversions could lead to a deterioration in the residential amenities of these areas. However, the subdivision of large houses and houses on primary traffic routes and in the town centre may be permitted in certain circumstances.

Proposals for apartments or for the conversion of buildings into bed-sits/flats should take account of the standards as set out the DOELG *“Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, Sept 07”* Permission will not normally be granted where unit sizes are less than dimensions outlined. Furthermore, not all apartments should be of minimum size; a significant number of apartments in a scheme should be above those minimum standards as outlined in Section 2.2 of those guidelines.

A mix of unit sizes will be required, regard being had to the established mix of house and apartment size in the vicinity of the site. In developments of more than 10 apartments, the maximum of single bedroom apartments will be 20%.

- Each flat/bed-sitting room shall be **“self-contained”**, i.e. there shall be only one door to each flat from communal passageway. Each flat/bed-sit/apartment studio shall be provided with its own W.C. and bathroom.
- In relation to the layout of apartment developments, developments should incorporate common spaces, terraces, courtyards and incorporate spaces which are designed so as to provide a **safe and pleasant environment**. In a case where accommodation is being provided over a business, which is in separate occupation, a separate access should be provided.

Table 3.1 Apartments: Recommended Minimum Floor Areas and Standards

Minimum overall apartment floor areas

One bedroom	45 sq m
Two bedroom	73 sq m
Three bedrooms	90 sq m

Minimum aggregate floor areas for living/dining/kitchen rooms, and minimum widths for the main living/dining rooms

Apartment type	Width of living/dining room	Aggregate floor area of living / dining / kitchen area*
One bedroom	3.3 m	23 sq m
Two bedrooms	3.6 m	30 sq m
Three bedrooms	3.8 m	34 sq m

- *Note: An enclosed (separate) kitchen should have a minimum floor area of 6.5 sq metres. In most cases, the kitchen should have an external window.*

Minimum bedroom floor areas/widths

Type	Minimum width	Minimum floor area
Single bedroom	2.1 m	7.1 sq m
Double bedroom	2.8 m	11.4 sq m
Twin bedroom	2.8 m	13 sq m

- *Note: Minimum floor areas exclude built-in storage presses.*

Minimum aggregate bedroom floor areas

One bedroom	11.4 sq m
Two bedroom	11.4 + 13 sq m = 24.4 sq m
Three bedrooms	11.4 + 13 + 7.1 sq m = 31.5 sq m

Minimum storage space requirements

One bedroom	3 sq m
Two bedrooms	6 sq m
Three or more bedrooms	9 sq m

Minimum floor areas for main apartment balconies

One bedroom	5 sq m
Two bedroom	7 sq m
Three bedroom	9 sq m

- Units should show a high quality of building design and site layout and have due regard to the character and amenities of the **surrounding landscape** and/or townscape.

- Consideration should be given to the needs of **disabled people** in the location, layout and design of communal facilities and the future adaptation of some units to meet the needs of the disabled, a suitable passenger lift should be provided, in accordance with Technical Guidance Document M of the Building Regulations 2000.
- All apartment blocks must make provision for the **segregated storage of waste** at the point where the waste is aggregated before collection from the block. At a minimum, space should be allowed for three containers (one each for compostable waste, dry segregated waste and residual waste), which are adequately sized to store the quantities of waste generated by the occupants of the apartment block. Storage provisions should make allowances for collection on fortnightly or monthly basis. These areas shall be well ventilated.

Consideration should also be given to the preparation by Dublin City Council in 2007,, of guidelines for family-friendly accommodation. These guidelines, similar in context to the DoEHLG guidelines, are targeted at achieving livable accommodation for families within the inner urban environment. Higher standards are adopted in terms of unit size, floor-to-ceiling height, provision of play spaces and storage. In terms of making Ballina a family friendly place, utilisation of such higher standards where appropriate can assist in revitalising the otherwise declining town centre community.

3.3.3 Courtyards

The development of courtyards and new urban spaces within blocks will be considered and fresh approaches to the design of urban space will be encouraged. Access to courtyards should be through arches in order to avoid breaking the existing street frontages. In the case of courtyard developments, open space provision should be in accordance with development plan standards.

3.3.4 Residential Mix in Apartment/Flat developments

Residential developments, particularly those with twenty or more units, should encourage a variety of residential unit types and ensure a good social mix. In apartment developments, a mix of unit sizes is also required, including two and three bedroom apartments, with not more than 20% of apartments in any single development to be one-bedroom units. The desirable residential mix will be reviewed by the local authority in relation to location and scale.

3.4 Standards for Infill Development

3.4.1 Infill Development

Infill development policies apply to areas that are largely built up and where the proposal is not of such a scale that it represents a major addition to, or redevelopment of, the existing physical fabric. Proposed development must have due regard to the predominant design features, existing building lines and heights and the existence of particular elements, such as groups of trees and hedgerows, listed buildings or open spaces.

In those areas zoned commercial, greater flexibility over the normal development standards will be permissible. A relaxation of the car parking standards and the 15% public open space requirement should ensure development proposals are not in any way constrained by development standards more suited to locations outside the town centre.

In addition, the council considers it desirable that parking should be provided at basement level in the town centre (C1 and C2 zones). In these areas, a reduction of 15% in the parking requirement will normally be permitted when the parking is predominantly or entirely in the basement. This exception will not apply in the case of developments where the Council considers that problems of congestion or traffic hazard may arise.

3.4.2 “Granny Flats”

The demand for self-contained residential units on the site of, and attached to, existing dwellings is recognised by the Planning Authorities as fulfilling a necessary role. In order to protect residential amenities the following considerations will be taken into account in assessing such proposals:

- The existing density of development and whether the site is adequate to accommodate a second dwelling unit.
- The unit must be an integral part of the main dwelling and capable of re-assimilation into the dwelling.
- It will be a requirement that the unit must not be leased, sold or otherwise disposed of other than as part of the main residential unit on the site.
- The unit must be an addition to the existing structure or a garage conversion and shall be located largely at the side as opposed to the rear garden of the existing house.

The floor area of the unit shall not normally exceed the equivalent of 25% of the floor area of the existing house.

3.4.3 Backland Developments

Backlands are defined as lands, which do not have a frontage onto a road with a public right of way. Piecemeal and uncoordinated development of backlands, including the construction of extra dwellings in former back gardens, can result in inappropriate and disorderly development. This form of development is considered undesirable where there is an adverse effect on the residential amenity of adjoining properties, particularly where such intensification might overload infrastructure and the established use framework of an area.

It may only be considered where both garden sizes and the space between dwellings meet critical standards. It can also result in missed opportunities for large-scale renewal. It is the policy of the Planning Authorities to ensure that no development takes place that would compromise the co-ordinated development of backlands in any area.

3.5 Residential Management Standards

3.5.1 Contributions and Securities

The development of the town will require continual investment by the Local Authority in the town's infrastructure. This includes car parking, new service roads, sanitary services and recreation facilities such as playing and community facilities. It is therefore planning policy that:

- Developers will be required to make financial contributions, as a condition of a grant of planning permission, towards the cost of infrastructural services, already provided, or proposed to be provided at a future date by the Local Authority, and which are necessary to properly develop the area in the public interest, or which otherwise facilitate private development. The works required would be carried out to the design and specification and under the supervision of the Planning Authority.

Developers often experience difficulties or are unable to complete a project in accordance with terms of a planning permission. To counteract this problem the Local Authority will:

- Require developers to provide a security for the proper completion of proposals, with particular emphasis on large residential developments. The security required will be linked to the amount of roads, footpaths, lighting services and open space proposed.
- Grant permission for major residential developments in a phased manner and to require the provision of security for the completion of each phase as that phase is commenced.

3.5.2 Residential Estate and Street Names

Nameplates, in Irish and English, should be provided and erected on all housing estate roads. These shall be agreed with the Planning Authorities prior to the commencement of development. The names of residential developments and roads shall reflect local place names, particularly townlands within which developments are located. The Local Authority shall approve the names chosen. The names should be fixed to walls and buildings where they can be clearly seen. Freestanding signs will not be encouraged. In order to assist the public and the postal authorities all houses shall be provided with numbers, which shall be visible from the adjoining roadway.

3.5.3 Management Companies

The procedure for the management and completion of housing estates should normally be in accordance with Planning Authority's "Taking in Charge Policy for Private Housing Developments" (February 1999). However, when it is proposed that the residential estate is not to be taken in charge by the local authority, then the developer must set up a management company. All residents of the development must become members of this management company. Details of the Management Company must be agreed with the Local Authority prior to any development-taking place.

3.5.4 Taking in Charge

With regard to the taking in charge of completed residential developments, the Councils will have regard to the circular letter ref. PD1/08 of 28/2/08 from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The Council's own document may be reviewed to reflect this.

3.6 Standards for Rural and other Residential Developments

3.6.1 Rural Development

N.B. Single houses in those areas zoned for the continuation of agriculture will not normally be permitted, unless they meet the criteria under the Planning Authority's essential housing need category.

Where development is permitted in areas zoned for agriculture, structures should be successfully assimilated into the landscape, and positively contribute to the overall appearance of the landscape (see Section 3.7.3). Therefore, primary consideration should be given to the following factors:

- New development should not be located on a ridgeline and the roof level should be sited below the ridgeline, preferably on the foot of the ridge. This allows the natural contours of the land to screen the development.
- Consideration should be given to the retention of existing hedgerows patterns.
- Consideration should be given to the retention of existing local unplastered stone boundary walls.
- The form of new development should follow the natural contours of the ground.
- Design detailing is important in softening the visual impact of a building. Attention to doors and windows can reduce the visual impact of development by giving a vertical emphasis to the horizontal run of a building.
- Landscaping should be considered at the initial planning stage in order to obtain maximum benefit from existing features. The object of landscaping is not to screen development but to break up and soften visual impact. Any changes to the site should help to blend development into the surrounding landscape.

3.6.2 Septic Tanks & Proprietary Effluent Treatment Units

Areas outside the mains sewerage system are dependent on 'on-site' wastewater treatment systems. Conventional septic tank systems (septic tank and percolation area) properly installed and maintained are satisfactory where suitable subsoil conditions exist. The design and installation of the percolation area must conform with minimum requirements set out in the NSAI *Standard Recommendations Septic Tanks Systems: Recommendations for Domestic Effluent Treatment and Disposal from a Single Dwellinghouse* S.R.6.1991 or the requirements set out in the revised Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) document: "Wastewater Treatment Manuals: Treatment Systems for Single Houses" published by the EPA in 2000. All percolation areas must be assessed, designed and certified by a competent engineer or environmental technician. A list of other qualifications acceptable for this certification is available from the Planning Authorities.

Where suitable subsoil conditions do not initially exist, site development works may improve the subsoil conditions and make the subsoil suitable in certain circumstances. If the subsoil conditions cannot be improved then other systems may be able to treat the wastewater to the required standard.

The Planning Authorities will refuse permission for a septic tank system if there is a risk of water pollution or contamination of water supplies, or where there is evidence of undue proliferation or excessive concentration of septic tank systems*.

NOTE: * *Even where a house already exists, the installation of a septic tank system or other on-site wastewater treatment system always requires planning permission.*

3.6.3 Riparian Development

Development, which is proposed along banks of a river, lake or shore may be required to submit measures to reduce and prevent pollution during construction. Proposals for development affecting or adjacent to a number of maintainable channels of the River Moy drainage catchment within the town should be referred to the OPW Drainage Department.

3.6.4 Traveller Halting Sites

Halting sites may comprise of a hard-surfaced area, divided into bays, each bay accommodating not more than two caravans and incorporating a service block with bathroom, kitchen and toilet, and such other facilities as may be necessary for traveller needs. Only in exceptional circumstances will consideration be given to providing halting sites with more than seven bays. Provision may be made for caretakers accommodation and other facilities for good management and control of site as deemed necessary.

3.6.5 Temporary Dwellings, Caravans etc.

Temporary dwellings are taken to include caravans, chalets, mobile homes and huts. The Planning Authorities shall prohibit the use of temporary dwellings for permanent residential purposes on the grounds that such structures are generally unsuitable for human habitation during the year. Exceptions will, however, be made in dealing with acute housing emergencies. In this case, any permission granted will be for a limited period only and such temporary homes should not be obtrusively sited. The placing of caravans and temporary structures on isolated sites will not be allowed to proliferate.

3.7 General Development Standards/Requirements

3.7.1 Protected Structures

It is the policy of the planning authorities to implement the Planning and Development Act 2000 Part IV, in order to make better provision for the protection of the Architectural Heritage in the interests of the common good.

Protection, in relation to a structure or part of a structure, includes conservation, preservation, and improvement compatible with maintaining the character and interest of the structure or part thereof. Each owner and/or occupier of a Protected Structure is obliged to ensure that the structure is not endangered.

The term **structure** includes the entire fabric, including the interior, the land lying within the curtilage of the structure, any other structures lying within that curtilage and their interiors, and all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of any structure or structures referred to above.

A **protected structure** is a structure that the Planning Authorities consider to be of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view. Details of protected structures are included by the authority in its Record of Protected Structures. A **Record of Protected Structures (RPS)** is the record included in a Development Plan at the time of publication. It may be amended by the addition or deletion of entries independently of the development plan review process. The RPS is contained in Appendix B of this plan.

3.7.1.1 Planning Permission

Under planning law, many minor works to structures do not normally require planning permission. However, for a protected structure, normal exemptions do not apply. No works may be carried out to a protected structure without planning permission, which would adversely affect the character of the structure or any element of it, which contributes to its special interest.

An owner or occupier of a protected structure may make a written request to the Planning Authorities to issue a **Declaration** as to the type of works, which it considers would or would not materially affect the character of the structure or any element of the structure that contributes to its special interests. The Planning Authorities shall have regard to the Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, issued by the Dept. of Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 2004.

By regulation, applications for outline planning permission for works involving protected structures cannot be entertained. Section 57(10)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 states that a Planning Authority shall not grant permission for the demolition of a protected structure save in exceptional circumstances.

A planning application involving a protected structure is generally made in the same way as any other planning application. However, additional information must be submitted with the application. The "*Best Practise Guide for Architectural Heritage Survey and Assessment*" is the standard required of planning application involving protected structures.

3.7.1.2 Sustainable Development and Conservation

In line with government policy on Sustainable Development as well as respecting the status of the protected structure, sustainable and traditional materials and finishes should be used for protected structures and in general within historic towns. Features that are part of the architectural heritage of the county testify to the social conditions of a past age. As such, they should be managed in a sustainable manner.

3.7.2 Recorded Monuments and Places of Archaeological Interest

The Record of Monuments and Places is compiled by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland, under the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. All known archaeological sites are marked and listed. The sites are offered legal protection under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004.

Planning applications for development on, or adjoining, such sites and monuments will be considered in the light of (a) the appropriateness of the proposed development vis-à-vis the site or monument and (b) the recommendations of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

The Planning Authorities may require a detailed report/site assessment to be submitted as part of a planning application. This report shall be carried out by a licensed Archaeologist, and be submitted to the Planning Authority.

If known archaeological remains exist within the confines of the site, it will be required that:

- The archaeological excavation of the remains before development commences or,
- Supervision of normal excavation where such developments might disturb the remains,
- Funding by the applicant of monitoring, testing and/or assessment, or
- Preservation of the remains, if of prime importance.

Conditions may be imposed which modify the development in order to facilitate archaeological investigation or preservation.

In the case of planning application at other locations, a preliminary archaeological assessment of the site shall be required in the case of any major developments. This will be required as part of the planning application.

3.7.3 Landscaping and Landscape Considerations

Landscaping is an integral part of any development and there is a need to ensure that existing trees, especially along field boundaries, are protected and integrated into the development, with appropriate new planting (generally of indigenous species) well designed and adequately carried out. The potential of existing site features should be fully explored and planning applications should include an accurate landscape survey plan. Wherever possible, existing healthy trees should be protected and retained. Where the trees are to be accommodated in rear gardens of new dwellings, the building should normally be sited at least 11.5m beyond the spread of the tree. This distance may be reduced to 6m for front gardens and 2m in the case of flank walls.

Developments should include new trees within the site at a ratio of at least two trees per dwelling. Garden areas should be adequately landscaped. Rear gardens should be treated with a 300mm minimum cover of consolidated topsoil where shrub planting is proposed, 100mm where grass areas are proposed. It may be a requirement in some cases that compacted areas be broken up and rubble/plastic/glass shall be removed as part of the site preparation.

The developer will be responsible for the grading, hard landscaping, planting and further development of any open space, including the provision of pedestrian paths and other facilities. The developer will be required to provide roadside trees, street planting and screen planting where necessary. A careful balance is necessary between quick growing species for early maturity and longer lived trees which may reach their peak in up to 100 years time. The landscape plan and the selection of plant species should consider low maintenance species. Generally single trees require more expert attention than those in composite groups, which are less vulnerable to damage. Formal, single tree lines have little effect as screen belts or buffers and for this reason groupings of young trees will be encouraged. Native tree species are more valuable as wildlife habitat than introduced

species, because they support a greater ecological diversity. These will generally be preferred.

Security by means of a financial bond may be required to ensure that a landscaping plan is adequately implemented. Developers should consult with the Planning Authorities at an early stage in relation to landscaping and planting proposals.

In terms of the general **landscape** itself, the Planning Authorities will also be guided by recent DOELG guidelines on “Landscape and Landscape Assessment” June 2000, which identify the following elements:

- Identification of Landscape Character Areas, including special treatment of landscapes of ‘semi-natural’ character,
- Confining development to the midslopes of hills and foothills of ridges,
- Encourage the use of traditional design, local materials and techniques on all buildings.
- Encourage the effective reinstatement and landscaping of areas affected by extractive activities or the installation in the countryside of telecommunications or other masts,
- Discourage suburban type walls, entrance gates and suburban building vernacular in the countryside.
- Discourage indiscriminate use of exotic plant species especially on roadsides and around rural gardens.
- Discourage use of brightly coloured or multicoloured brick or panel paving which is out of character with rural areas.
- The Planning Authorities shall also have regard to the provisions relating to ‘Guidelines for Rural Housing Design’ as set out in the County Development Plan.

3.7.4 Ducting of Public Utilities and Services

The Planning Authorities will normally require that all wires, cables and pipes for the provision of public utility services shall be ducted underground to preserve the amenity and visual character of an area, and in the interests of public safety. Developers will also be required to provide efficient systems of drainage with separate surface water and foul sewer drainage systems.

3.7.5 Building Regulations

The Planning Authorities will ensure that the construction of new buildings, extensions and material alterations to buildings comply with the Building Regulations. They require developers to have regard to:

- Complying with technical guidance documents issued by the Department of the Environment on Building Regulations.
- Informing the Planning Authorities of the date of commencement of development within a period of not less than fourteen days and not more than twenty-eight days before development commences.
- Obtaining a fire safety certificate where applicable (a private dwelling house does not require a fire safety certificate).

3.7.6 Access for the Disabled

The Planning Authorities will require that the layout and design of all proposed development and the refurbishment of existing development gives consideration to the needs of the disabled. Where buildings are intended for public use, the Planning Authorities will require that the design is in accordance with “*Access for the Disabled – Minimum Design Criteria*”, published by the National Rehabilitation Board, 1988, “*Buildings for Everyone – Access and Use for all Citizens*”, 1998, and Part M of the Building Regulations “*Access for the Disabled*”, 2000. In general, building design should allow full access to the building for all disabled persons, whether employees or visiting members of the public.

“It should also be noted that under the Building Regulations 2000, new private houses must be accessible to the disabled.”

3.7.7 Policies and Objectives

It is the Policy of the Council that proposed development immediately adjacent to the designated ACA sites shall not materially affect the character or integrity of the ACA areas as view into and out of the area.

It is the Policy of the Council to ensure that ACA areas are treated sensitively in relation to all proposed development proposals within and adjacent to them

It is the objective of the Council to protect ACA areas and their vicinity from development that would be insensitive to the character of the areas.

3.8 Standards for Commercial, Retail, Industrial and Development in Mixed Use Zones

3.8.1 Introduction

Many of the development standards, which are relevant to proposed commercial, retail and non-residential uses, have been dealt with in the previous section. These standards include: plot ratio (in the commercial zone), site coverage, public open space, building lines, building heights, pedestrian/disabled access, infrastructural service standards, building regulations, landscaping considerations, protected structures, sites and monuments of archaeological interest as well as the provisions on contributions and securities. Therefore, it is in the interests of the developer to consult these development standards in order to satisfy the requirements of the development plan.

3.8.2 Mixed Use in Town Centre Commercial Zone (C1 and C2)

Mixed use may be defined as a combination of retail, commercial and residential uses. The wider town centre commercial/mixed use area has been divided into two zones in this plan (i.e. C1 and C2). In the inner zone a higher density is considered appropriate, due to its central location, where maximum intensity of activities are concentrated. The plot ratio in the C1 zone therefore is 1.5:1 to 2.5:1. In the outer zone (i.e.C2) a plot ratio of 1.0:1 – 1.5:1 will apply.

The Local Authority may use its discretion in permitting plot ratios in excess of this where it is considered appropriate and in the interests of the proper planning and development of the area, as well as complying with the objectives of sustainable development. Cases where such exceptions may apply have been spelt out in Section 3.1.2 above.

Retail uses are encouraged at ground floor level on main shopping streets with retail, office or residential uses over. The Planning Authorities may insist on a residential content in proposed developments in town centre use zones.

3.8.3 Shopping Centres and Permitted Locations for Shopping

The local authority will consider proposals for shopping centres in terms of potential adverse impact on the viability of existing centres and in particular the viability of the town centre. Shopping Centres will be encouraged to locate within the town centre zone (Commercial zone). The Planning Authorities will also be guided by Retail Planning, Guidelines for Planning Authorities – DoEHLG January 2005. .

A retail impact assessment analysis may be required as part of a planning application for shopping centres or large food/grocery chain stores.

3.8.4 Industry, Wholesale and Warehousing Development

The standard plot ratio for industrial, wholesale and warehousing developments is 1.00:1, whilst the site coverage index is 80% in the town centre (C1 and C2 zones) and 40% elsewhere..

In terms of design and layout the following considerations will apply

- Surfaces within the curtilage of industrial/commercial sites shall be of hard wearing, dust free and durable material.
- Adequate space must be available for on-site storage of materials and refuse, loading and unloading and on-site circulation and parking. (For Car parking standards see section 3.10 Standards for Parking/Loading Access.)
- Adequate provision should be made for storage of goods and materials within the building or in a designated storage area

- A detailed landscaping scheme for the site shall be required (see Section 3.7.3 Landscaping and Landscape Considerations)
- Car parking spaces shall be clearly delineated. Parking spaces for vehicles for the disabled shall be located close to main entrances to premises.
- In the case of developments for two or more buildings, a uniform design for boundary fences, roof profiles and building lines is essential.
- A minimum open space requirement of 15% will be required and provided such that it may function as an effective amenity area. In situations where effective open space cannot be provided on site, a contribution will be payable in lieu or other arrangement similar to that employed in the provision of open space in residential areas will be required. (see section 3.1.4. Public Open Space).
- An industrial development should present a pleasant aspect helped by tree planting, the judicious placing of advertisement structures, screening of open storage areas and unobtrusive loading and parking space.
- The number of signs attached to a building in such areas should be limited and no sign should be excessively obtrusive or out of scale with the building façade.
- Where security fencing is required it shall not normally be forward of the front building line of the premises. Where in exceptional circumstances, security fencing is forward of the front building line it shall be set behind a landscaped mound of at least 2m in width. Security fencing shall be palisade or chain link type and shall be plastic coated or have an appropriate colour.
- Outside the town centre zones (C1 and C2) there shall be a minimum landscaped/planting strip to a width of 5 metres on all principal road frontages.
- The layout, planning and design may be subject of a detailed Action Plan to be approved by the Local Authority.

3.8.5 Retail Warehousing

Retail warehousing activity relates to the sale of non-food, non-clothing goods. This includes the sale of large-scale goods and can include furniture/carpets, bulky electrical goods, gardening supplies and toys. The activity may include outdoor display areas and is likely to generate considerable car parking requirements.

A limit on the range of goods sold will normally be imposed and individual units will normally be subject to a minimum floor area limit of 500sqm. The cumulative effect of proposed retail warehouses will also be taken into account.

Retail warehousing will only be permitted within commercial and industrial zones where the Planning Authorities are satisfied that it does not detract from the existing businesses in the town centre. A retail impact study may be required for any proposed retail warehouse activity. It should provide a compact development form, with continuous building lines.

Retail warehouse buildings should not have an industrial appearance and signage should be limited in quantity and be of an unobtrusive nature.

In accordance with Retail Planning Guidelines, large-scale retailing shall be avoided, where possible, adjacent or close to existing, new or planned national routes. In relation to out of town retail developments, the developer shall submit a transport assessment showing how trips to and from the proposed development might affect the road network.

3.8.6 Petrol Filling Stations and Ancillary Uses

Where filling or service stations are proposed, adequate measures must be implemented to integrate them into their surroundings. No filling or service stations will be permitted in locations where by reason of appearance, traffic or fumes they would injure the amenities of an area.

The essential purpose of petrol stations is to provide facilities for the sale of fuels for vehicles. However, permission will be granted for ancillary retail uses involving goods related to the motor trade. In addition, in areas not already serviced by convenience shops, permission may be granted for small shops retailing confectionery, groceries and newspapers. The net area devoted to such sales shall not normally exceed 65 square metres. This limit shall not apply to existing filling stations in central locations within the town.

All external lighting should be directed away from the public road and a proliferation of large illuminated signs will not be permitted.

3.8.7 Bars/Night-Clubs/Disco Bars/Amusement Centres

In order to maintain an appropriate mix of uses and protect night time amenities in the town, the local authority will, through the appropriate use of its development control powers, prevent an excessive concentration of any of the above uses in a particular area and shall ensure that the intensity of any proposed use is in keeping with both the character of the area (i.e. residential, mixed use etc.) and with adjoining businesses, when development proposals are being considered. The following issues shall be taken into account in the assessment of applications for the above uses.

- Noise at the boundaries will be carefully monitored and noise insulation measures will be required at the time of the submission of the planning application. Other effects of the development on the amenity of nearby residents must be assessed prior to the granting of planning permission, (i.e. General disturbance, hours of operation, car parking and litter).
- The importance of safeguarding the vitality and viability of the town centre and maintaining a vibrant mix of uses.
- The Planning Authorities shall insist that proper litter control measures be in place prior to the opening of any premises.

Façade design will be carefully controlled by the Planning Authorities and in particular the type and degree of advertising signage and lighting. The design shall respect the character of the streets and the buildings.

3.8.8 Hot Food Take-Aways

A proliferation of hot food take-aways will not be permitted in any area. Regard will be had to the impact of hot-food take-aways on the amenities in the area, including noise, odour and litter. The Planning Authorities may impose restrictions on opening hours of hot food take-aways as a condition of planning permission.

Hot food take-aways will not be permitted in close proximity to houses or residential areas. A condition will normally be attached requiring a closing time of 12.30AM. The provision of litter bins will also be required. In some circumstances, the granting of a temporary permission may be considered to allow the future review of the impact of the development.

3.8.9 Shop fronts

The following considerations will apply in relation to existing and new shop fronts:

- In general the need to change old shop fronts will be carefully considered, as it is the policy of the Local Authority to preserve and retain traditional shop fronts of character.
- No projecting lighting shall be permitted to the façade. All lighting shall be concealed within the structure of the shop front. Signage and advertising shall be limited to that applied to the shopfront surround itself.
- The repair, restoration and replacement of shop fronts must be sympathetically carried out to protect the architectural character of the town.

- Where existing shop fronts are of no special merit, total replacement is acceptable. The design of new shop fronts shall relate to the architectural characteristics of the building of which it forms part.
- New shop front designs must respect the scale and proportion of the streetscape by maintaining the existing grain of development along the street and respecting the appropriate plot width. Large expanses of undivided glass will generally not be permitted.
- National-chain shops, which have adopted a “corporate image”, will not necessarily be allowed to use their standardised shop front design, “corporate colours” and materials. Compatibility with individual buildings and with the streetscape will be considered more important than uniformity among the branches of one company.
- The process of trading through an opening in a building façade without a shop front will not be permitted.
- The use of loud music to attract attention to a shop will not be permitted.
- Lettering should be either hand painted or individually mounted in proportion to the size of the fascia.
- Maintenance of upper floors of inner urban buildings and highlighting of details will be encouraged.

3.8.10 Automatic Teller Machines

The Planning Authorities will strictly control the location of Automatic Teller Machines (ATM's) having regard to the following:

1. The need to protect the character of the street, building or shop front into which they are to be incorporated, in particular in listed buildings.
2. The design and location must be such that they are safe and easily accessible.
3. Canopies, signs and logos shall be discreetly incorporated into the overall design.
4. The provision of ATM's at petrol stations will be encouraged to facilitate drivers wishing to use them.
5. In general, ATM's will not be permitted where customers queuing may cause disruption to pedestrians.

3.8.11 Advertising and Signage

The Planning Authorities accept that advertising is an integral part of commercial and industrial development. However, in considering applications for advertising structures, it remains the primary concern of the Planning Authorities to protect the essential character of the town.

Ballina Town Council introduced the SIGNS BYE-LAWS 2013, on the 25th June 2013 to control the proliferation of sub-standard and haphazard signage in the town in recent years. Under the byelaws an advertising sign requires an approval and permit. Non compliance of the byelaw is an offence subject to monetary penalties.

Control will be exercised to prevent clutter in any location and to limit the number of signs on any building. The Planning Authorities are opposed to advertisements in residential areas, on or near buildings of architectural or historical importance or in Architectural Conservation Areas, adjacent to amenity and recreational areas, or in open space areas.

Proposals for signs and advertising structures must:

- Be in scale and harmony with the surrounding environment,
- In general, signage shall not be above 3 meters above ground level,
- Not interfere with the safety and free flow of traffic,
- Not obscure traffic signs,
- Not impair the amenities of the area,
- Not interfere with windows or other features of a building façade, and

- Not project, in whole or part, above the eaves of the building or obtrude on the skyline.

Internally illuminated plastic signs will generally be discouraged. Monument signs are to be favoured instead of freestanding signs. Free-standing advertising structures, such as sandwich boards, which require a license under Section 254 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, will not be allowed on footpaths or in pedestrian areas where they have the potential to cause an obstruction and may be a hindrance, particularly to disabled persons. Where locations are considered suitable, advertising panels may be permitted on builder's hoardings for a specified period.

3.8.12 Canopies and Awnings

The erection of canopies requires planning permission. The use of plastic canopies over windows will be discouraged. Where shading of a window display is required, the traditional retractable awning is considered suitable.

3.8.13 Security Screens

The use of metal security grills or shutters will be discouraged. Where it is essential to use such shutters, these should be open grilled, and should be affixed to the inside of the window, or preferably behind the display area. The installation of roller shutters requires planning permission. The use of the public footpath for security stanchions or roller shutter fixings is not acceptable.

3.8.14 Illumination and spread of light

If external illumination is proposed, documentation shall be provided that clearly shows that light or glare from such illumination will not adversely affect pedestrian and vehicular traffic or adjacent properties.

3.8.15 Taxi stands and hackney bases

The local authority will work with local taxi companies in the identification of suitable locations for the provision of taxi ranks.

The establishment of a taxi rank or hackney base will not be permitted where it is likely to interfere with traffic flows or parking. Satisfactory off-street parking should be provided for hackneys when the vehicles are not in use. Planning assessments will address issues of location, pedestrian safety, traffic congestion, residential amenities and accessibility.

3.8.16 Telecommunication Antennae and Support Structures

In considering applications for these structures the planning authorities will have regard to the "*Planning Guidelines for Telecommunications and Support Structures*" (DOELG July 1996).

These Guidelines include the following considerations:

- Telecommunications antennae should be located so as to minimise any negative visual intrusion on the surrounding area, especially on landscapes or streetscapes of a sensitive nature.
- The preferred location for telecommunications antennae is in industrial estates or areas zoned for industry or in areas already developed for utilities.
- The use of tall buildings or other existing structures is always preferable to the construction of an independent antennae support structure.
- Support structures should be kept to a minimum height consistent with effective operation and should be monopole (or poles) rather than latticed or square structure.
- Sharing of installations (antennae support structures) is encouraged, as it will normally reduce the visual impact on the landscape or townscape. All applications must satisfy

the local authority that a reasonable effort to share the installations has been made. Where it is not possible to share a support structure the applicant should, where possible, share a site or site adjacently, so that antennae may be clustered.

3.9 Standards for Community Use Facilities

3.9.1 Introduction

It is important to note that all Community use facility developments must abide by many of the development standards requirements mentioned in previous sections. These standards include: plot ratio/site coverage, public open space, building lines, building heights, pedestrian/disabled access, infrastructural service standards, building regulations, landscaping considerations, conservation objectives as well as the provisions on contributions and securities.

Where proposals for residential development are being considered on institutional lands it may be necessary to maintain the open character and any natural or built features on site.

3.9.2 Schools

- For primary schools a minimum size of 0.6 hectares of school land must be provided for schools with up to three class units and increasing in line with an increase in class units. Provision must be made within the site for adequate car parking and informal hard surfaced play areas for organised sport activities.
- Provision should be made in secondary schools for a range of sports facilities.

3.9.3 Crèches/Playschools

The DOELG Planning Guidelines for Childcare facilities indicate that Crèches will be required in all housing developments at a rate of one for each 75 residential units. The Town Council wish to ensure that adequate childcare provision is achieved within the town. The Council is willing to be flexible on the guidelines to achieve sustainable childcare provision in the town.

Crèches and playschools will only be permitted in residential areas when it can be proven that they will not cause hazard due to traffic congestion or adversely affect the amenity of adjoining residences.

Applications for crèches and playschools within a new or existing place of work or in proximity thereof, such as an industrial estate, will be favorably considered.

In general, the following will apply:

- Proposals located in the vicinity of workplaces, schools and in local neighbourhood centres will be preferred over proposals in established residential areas and within housing estates.
- Proposals within established residential areas will only be considered when:
 - They are located where they will not draw traffic deep into housing estates.
 - They are in detached houses. Semi detached houses may be considered in some limited circumstances.”

Applications for crèches and playschools should include the following information as part of any planning application:

- Details of proposed opening times.
- Proposed number and age range of children.
- Proposed number of staff.
- Internal floor area devoted to such use, excluding areas such as kitchens, toilets, sleeping and other ancillary areas.
- Car parking arrangements, for both parents and staff members.

3.9.4 Care Facilities

A change of use from residential to a care facility to care for more than six persons with an intellectual or physical disability will require planning permission and will be dealt with sympathetically with consideration for factors such as accessibility, traffic, safety and proximity to community and shopping facilities. Houses with adequate private and secure open space and on-site car parking are generally acceptable for such uses.

3.9.5 Nursing Homes

Privately run nursing homes provide an essential service for the elderly and the infirm. The Planning Authorities will, subject to protecting residential amenity, consider the location of nursing homes in residential areas and on sites considered adequate in size to cater for all generated needs of the development. The development of nursing homes should not involve significant changes to the streetscape involving the loss of trees, hedges, walls etc.

Permission will normally only be granted for nursing home developments that are located in properties of adequate size, with six or more bedrooms. The premises should have adequate access and comply with parking requirements (Section 3.10.1).

3.10 Standards for Parking/Loading

3.10.1 Car Parking Standards

The parking standards set out in Table 3.2 will apply as appropriate. Where a standard is not given in Table 3.2 for a particular use, the car-parking requirement will be based on the nearest use included in the table

Table 3.2 Car Parking Standards

Type of Development	Relevant car parking standards
House and Flats	Grouped parking @ 1.5 spaces per dwelling unit otherwise 2 car spaces per dwelling unit except small one bedroom flats where one space per unit is required (i.e. one onsite and the remainder in group format will meet this requirement.).
Shops	1 car space per 20 m ² of gross floor space
Supermarkets and large stores	1 car space per 25 m ² of gross floor space
Office	1 car space per 25 m ² of gross floor space
Industry	1 car space per 50 m ² of gross floor space
Warehousing (non retail)	1 car space per 100 m ² of gross floor space
Retail Warehousing	1 car space per 50 m ² gross floor space
Theatres, Cinema and Stadia	1 car space per four seats
Hotels (Excluding restaurant, bars, conference centre, function rooms)	1 car space per bedroom
Lounge bars	1 car space per 100 m ² of public floor space
Restaurants	1 car space for every 40m ² of public floor space
Ballroom, dance halls, clubs, function rooms, conference centre	1 car space per 20 m ²
Guesthouse (excluding function rooms or bars)	1 car space per bedroom
Banks	1 car spaces per 20 m ²
Crèches	1 space per employee
Schools	1 car space per classroom
Nursing homes	1 car space per 3 bed spaces

Notes:

1. Allowance will be made for mixed-use developments. Where it can be demonstrated that different uses will generate parking demand at different times/days and where cross-visitation (i.e. where one vehicle trip may cater for several activities) may occur, the parking demand for each of the constituent uses within the scheme need not be totaled. This will for example apply to hotels that include restaurant/bar/function room etc.
2. Within the centre of the town – that is within the C1 and C2 zones – rigid adherence to these standards will not be required. It will often be more appropriate to utilise public parking or multi-storey car parks.
3. Large complex developments may be separately assessed with regard to the specific circumstances.
4. In addition, the council considers it desirable that parking should be provided at basement level in the town centre (C1 and C2 zones). In these areas, a reduction of 15% in the parking requirement will normally be permitted when the parking is predominantly or entirely in the basement. This exception will not apply in the case of developments where the Council considers that problems of congestion or traffic hazard may arise.

Where there is a difficulty in providing car parking spaces or where it is considered by the Planning Authorities not to be in the interests of proper planning and development of the area, the Planning Authorities may choose that the developer make a financial contribution towards the provision of a car parking space by the local authority elsewhere.

This situation will apply in particular to town centre infill or redevelopment projects where the provision of on site parking would not be appropriate for traffic, access and urban design reasons

In dealing with planning applications for change of use or for replacement buildings, an allowance will be given for the former site use in calculating the car parking requirements generated by new development. Furthermore, in relation to Infill development a flexible application of the car parking standards will be considered.

The basic dimensions required for the layout of car parking areas are as follows:

- (i) Minimum size of parking bay 4.8m x 2.5m (Note: A minimum width of 2.3m may be permitted for a long term bay).
- (ii) A minimum width of aisle for 90 degree parking – 6.0m.
- (iii) A minimum width of aisle for 60 degree parking – 4.9m.
- (iv) A minimum width of aisle for 45 degree parking – 3.6m.
- (v) A minimum width of aisle for less than 45 degree parking and for parallel parking – 3.6m.

3.10.2 Loading Bays and Service Vehicles

Space for service vehicles should normally be provided on-site. In some circumstances, where such a requirement will have other deleterious planning implications, such as damage to the fabric of the town, injury to streetscape etc. or in circumstances where on-street deliveries is practical, this will not be required.

3.10.3 Design and Layout of Parking Areas

Parking and service spaces must be located on site so as to prevent street obstruction and should be located where possible to the rear and side of buildings and in such a manner to ensure minimal injury to the amenity of adjoining premises. Where parking is allowed in sight of the general public, adequate screening or landscaping must be provided to reduce the impact of parked cars.

3.10.4 Cycle Facilities

Cycle facilities shall be provided in conjunction with any new development or change of use proposals. Stands should be in a secure location and should be located conveniently to the main entrance of the development or to employee entrances. The number of stands required will be **10%** of the number of car spaces required for the development, subject to the minimum of one stand. For primary schools, it is recommended that a cycle space should be provided for one in five pupils. For secondary schools, it is recommended that a cycle space be provided for one in four pupils and for third level institutions and colleges it is recommended that cycle spaces be provided for one in three students. The provision of cycle parking facilities will be encouraged where possible at existing transport nodes, public buildings, retail centres and leisure facilities. Where stands cannot be provided on-site, a contribution will be required towards the provision of public cycle stands at the rate of €127 per cycle unit.

3.10.5 Disabled Parking

Reasonable provision shall be made for parking facilities for the disabled. Special car parking bays for the disabled shall be provided as close as possible to the entrance of the premises to be served. Each parking bay shall have a minimum size of 4.8m by 3.3m. Where two bays for the disabled are provided side by side, the extra space of 0.9m width, may be shared by two bays. Each disabled parking bay shall be clearly marked with the relevant international symbol.

Appendices

A	Design Guidelines	134
B	Record of Protected Structures	137
C	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) (Separate Document)	
D	Maps (Maps 06 (Variation) and 07 separate)	

Appendix A Design Guidelines

Design Guidelines for the block bounded by Pearse Street, Emmet Street, Tolan Street and Dillon Terrace.

General policies in relation to the design of future development within Ballina have been outlined in the previous section. However, it is felt that the area bounded by Pearse Street, Emmet Street, Tolan Street and Dillon Terrace should be singled out for particular attention for the following reasons:

- There is a perception that the Emmet Street side of the block fails to provide a coherent urban streetscape, while there are some fine buildings in this area others are of lesser quality. This is seen as particularly important as Emmet Street is so close to the town centre and enjoys a position of visual prominence on the banks of the Moy.
- The opportunity to create attractive pedestrian routes along the existing lanes connecting Emmet Street to Pearse Street is not being exploited to full advantage.
- The low density use that characterises the backlot area to Pearse Street as well as the entire length of Emmet Street makes the area vulnerable to an ad hoc form of development which might not necessarily lead to an improved urban environment.

In light of this, a series of proposals are now put forward for the defined area with the following objectives:

- To develop a visually coherent, urban scale streetscape along Emmet Street
- To enrich the town centre by developing attractive pedestrian routes linking Pearse and Emmet Streets
- To encourage quality contemporary architectural design

It is intended that these proposals will be prescriptive enough to generate a sense of regularity in the area yet general enough to permit a variety in individual design responses.

Type One Structures

- Type One Structures will be permitted on Emmet Street.

Units will be developed in pairs. Paired units will be identical in design, but no two pairs of units will have an identical design.

General Regulations:

Location	All new structures will be located directly along the street line.
Lot Width	Preferred width of 8m.
Height	3 storeys (but not fewer) including ground floor. A mean parapet height of 12m will be maintained along Emmet Street with variations of +/- 500mm permitted.
Depth	No specific requirement for depth of building.
Fenestration	Tripled arched arrangement on ground floor. Window finishes will be <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • timber, painted or with natural finish • anodized or ppc finished aluminum or steel, or • Other quality finish as approved by the Planning Department of the Ballina Town Council. • PVC windows facing onto public areas will not normally be permitted.
Façade	Generally traditional material, such as cut stone and smooth plaster will be acceptable. However this does not preclude the innovative use of contemporary materials and finishes, where such quality architectural response is proposed.
Roof	Option 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitched; Slate/Preferably natural slate in dark coloured finish. Option 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penthouse accommodation may be provided above the 3rd floor. Such accommodation will be set back 1.5m from the line of the façade of the building and will have a flat roof.
Use	Ground floor commercial (with retail preferred) or residential. Upper floors commercial or residential.

Type Two Structures

- Type Two Structures will be permitted on the pedestrian routes, which link Pearse Street and Emmet Street.

Lot Width	No limit as to lot width.
Height	Two or three storeys including ground floor.
Depth	No specific requirement.
Fenestration	Window finishes will be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • timber, painted or with natural finish • anodized or ppc finished aluminum or steel, or • Other quality finish as approved by the Planning Department of the Ballina Town Council. • PVC windows facing onto public areas will not normally be permitted.
Façade	Generally traditional material, such as cut stone and smooth plaster will be acceptable. However this does not preclude the innovative use of contemporary materials and finishes, where such quality architectural response is proposed.
Roof	Pitched; Slate/Preferably natural slate in dark coloured finish.

Use

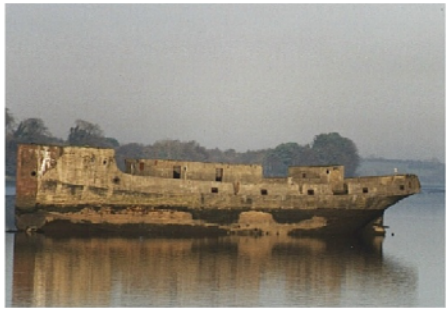

Ground floor commercial with retail preferred.
Upper commercial or residential with separate entrance from the street.




Appendix B Record of Protected Structures





It is proposed to retain the protected structures as in the Development Plan 2002 to 2009 but with two amendments, as follows:




1. The addition of Dillon Terrace
2. The omission of House on Bury Street (Item No. 32 in previous RPS)




B Record of Protected Structures




No	Address	Note	
1	Creteboom	Ruin of concrete ship aground in the Moy near the Quay at Crocketstown.	
2	Belleek Castle	Detached five bay (central and end bays advanced), two storey, Tudor Revival style limestone dwelling with distinctive double oriel above entrance. Extensive gardens to the north stepping down toward river and culminating at a landing stage (now in ruins). Built by Francis Knox-Gore circa 1825-31. Extensive outbuildings. Very impressive setting.	




No	Address	Note	
3	Knox-Gore Mausoleum	Very elaborate, neo gothic, limestone mausoleum with pinnacled central shrine above four flying buttresses on an octagonal base. By J.F. Fuller, 1872. Impressive setting.	
4	Entrance Arch	Elaborate, mid 19 th century, ashlar limestone, neo medieval entrance arch with tower and machicolations attributed to Edmund Perry, but said to be identical to entrance to Ashford Castle by J.F. Fuller. Former entrance arch to Belleek Castle.	
5	Former Icehouse (Hotel)	Detached single storey with attic over large basement, neo Elizabethan structure, built by Messrs. Little, 1859. Double A framed roof, gabled to street. Formerly known as Iceland Cottage but more popularly referred to as The Icehouse for the storage of ice in the basement. Retained its use until the middle of the 20 th century; now a hotel.	




No	Address	Note	
6	Bunree Bridge Sligo Road	7 arched limestone bridge.	
7	Ballina House	<p>Detached 3 bay, 2 storey, dwelling with central projecting entrance bay with limestone detail, circa 1830s with late 19th century modifications. Limestone detail, very nice interiors. Gardens enclosed in stonewall and containing remains of medieval structure adjacent to River Moy (the original Belleek Castle).</p>	
8	St. Muredach's College Howley Street	13 bay, 3 storey over basement school building with projecting central entrance and end bays, 1906 by W.H. Byrne.	
9	3 Nally Street	<p>End of terrace, 3 bay, single storey with basement dwelling, circa early 20th century. Attractive elevation.</p>	





No	Address	Note	
10	Sisters of Mercy Convent and School	<p>Detached 11 bay, 2-storey neo gothic style convent, circa 1867. Incorporating cloister and chapel and with some fine interior detail. Said to be by George Goldie. Adjacent stone school building, circa 1885. Many later modifications and additions to convent and school, circa 20th century.</p>	
11	Armstrong + West (Lower) Bridge	<p>4 arch limestone bridge, 1835.</p>	
12	Work House Building St. Joseph's Hospital	<p>Detached, 2 bay, 2 storey, with projecting gable fronted bay, limestone structure with slate roof: all that remains of the workhouse buildings of 1843.</p> <p>Said to be the fifth largest workhouse constructed in the country. Most of the structure was demolished in the 1930s.</p> <p>Long Section of Workhouse walls.</p>	




No	Address	Note	
13	Former Provincial Bank, Pearse Street	<p>4 bay, 2 storey, detached red brick dwelling (formerly bank) with projecting neo classical limestone entrance bay and advanced end bay. Fine limestone window surrounds.</p> <p>High aesthetic quality.</p>	
14	Presbyterian Church Walsh Street	Terraced, simple gothic style, Presbyterian Church, 1851 with later additions and incorporating a school.	
15	Presbyterian Orphanage	End of terrace structure attached to 14 above, commenced mid 19 th century and completed 1883.	Picture as above
16	Bank of Ireland, Pearse Street	3 bay, 3-storey end of terrace bank building, circa late 19 th century with 20 th century additions. Limestone façade on ground floor, red brick on upper floors with fine limestone window embrasures.	




No	Address	Note	
17	Library, (Former Moy Hotel) Pearse Street	2 bay, 3-storey end of terrace, simple gothic structure, circa early 19 th century, with rendered façade and drip mouldings. Formerly the Moy Hotel, now the public library. The elevation has great character and makes a significant contribution to the streetscape.	
18 19 20 21 22 23	Terrace of limestone fronted buildings on Pearse Street	Terrace of six (6) x 2 bay, 3 storey commercial buildings, originally dwellings over retail units, circa mid 19 th century. Distinctive combination of arched entrance doors and cambered arch over retail unit. Some Georgian pattern, timber sliding sash windows still in place.	
24	Commercial Use building on Pearse Street housing the offices of Sherry Fitzgerald.	Two bay, three storey, end of terrace structure in 'Scottish Baronial' style, 1875. Gable fronted to street. Originally a bank, now of mixed use with retail at ground floor level.	


No	Address	Note	
25	Structure on Pearse Street housing the offices of Melvin Insurances and formerly the Royal Hotel.	5 bay, 3 storey, end of terrace, mid 18 th century Georgian building with Gibbsian framed entrance. Probably originally a 2-storey building. Modified in 19 th and 20 th centuries.	
26	Rabbettes, off Market Square, formerly Becket's Hardware	Remains of army barracks including fine 5 bay, 2-storey façade. May be as early as 1740.	
27 28	Victoria House, Emmet Street	<p>Pair of 2 bay, 3 storey Georgian style terraced dwellings with attic, circa mid 19th century, now combined.</p> <p>This structure was the family home of former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson.</p>	

No	Address	Note	
29	St. Muredach's Cathedral Cathedral Road	Detached, limestone, neo Gothic Roman Catholic cathedral: 1830. Fine tower, spire and windows. Architect: Peter Madden (or O'Madden).	
30	Remains of Augustinian Friary, Cathedral Road	Ruined remains of early 15 th century Augustinian Friary, with carved Gothic doorway and window.	
31	Dillon Terrace	Early 19 th Century Terrace of 2-bay, 2-storey houses with arched doors and arched laneway to the stone courtyard of the Bond Store Warehouse.	

No	Address	Note	
32	Conlon's House Abbey Street	2 bay, 2 storey, late 18 th century terraced house with cambered entrance arch and overhanging eaves.	
33	Ham (Upper) Bridge	5 arch, limestone bridge, 1836, attributed to Darley.	
34	Amana House Plunkett Road	<p>Detached, 7 bay single storey 'long house', mid 17th century, with later additions. Now slated, but probably earlier thatch finish. Associated with the Ham family and reputed to be the first of it's type ('neither castle nor cabin') built in Connaught.</p> <p>Important early building.</p>	
35	Salmon Weir	1849, built by Messrs. Little.	

No	Address	Note	
36	St. Michael's Church Plunkett Street	Detached simple gothic style Church of Ireland Church with tower and spire. Built 1763 – 1768, enlarged in 1815, with later 19 th century additions and modifications. Rendered with some limestone detail at windows and entrance.	
37	Methodist Church, James Connolly Street	Detached, six bay, two storey formerly Methodist School and teachers' residences, now Methodist Church and offices, 1857. Pedimented gable entrance. Extended and modified during the 20 th century.	
38	Church of Ireland National School Kevin Barry Street and Bury Street	Detached, 6 bay, single storey, gable fronted school building, 1906 with later additions.	

No	Address	Note	
39	Courthouse Kevin Barry Street	Detached, 5 bay, 2 storey, classical style courthouse, circa 1840. Extensively refurbished in 1995.	
40	The Font Teeling Street and Bury Street	Marble fountain, circa 1900; Corinthian column with three bowls at base and surmounted by a ball.	
41	Monument, Humbert Street	1798 memorial: marble and limestone figure with Eire and wolfhound. Late 19 th century.	

No	Address	Note	
42	Church and cemetery, Leigue	Ruins of a church structure, the west wall of which is believed to date to the pre-medieval period, and graveyard.	
43	Ballina Dolmen, Primrose Hill to rear of railway station	Cloghogle Portal Dolmen or Dolmen of the Four Maols. Neolithic burial place of king or ancient chieftain, but associated with a popular legend about the four brothers (the Four Maols) said to have murdered the true heir to the throne on behalf of the usurper who then had them hanged.	