



Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo Mayo County Council



DRAFT

Ballina Local Area Plan 2024-2030

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Chapter 1 Introduction and Context

1.1 Introduction and Context

The Ballina Local Area Plan (the 'Plan') has been prepared in accordance with the requirements and provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (the 'Act'), particularly Sections 18-20 of the Act.

A local area plan is required to be prepared in respect of an area that is designated as a town in the most recent census, which has a population 5,000 or more, and is situated in the functional area of the planning authority, which is a county council. The 2016 Census of Population indicated that the settlement of Ballina had a total population of 10,171 persons. A local area plan is therefore mandatory for Ballina.

The Plan sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Ballina in the context of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-28, the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region, and the Mayo County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. It is also informed by Ministerial Guidelines issued pursuant to Section 28 of the Act together with EU requirements regarding Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA); an Appropriate Assessment/Natura Impact Report (AA/NIR), and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).

1.2 Climate Action

This Plan is set in a context where climate change is accepted as a global challenge and requires climate action responses in adaptation and mitigation to ensure a healthy, economically thriving, liveable built environment (see Figure 1.1). One of the key National Strategic Outcomes of the NPF is to transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society.



Figure 1.1: Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 provides for a national climate objective, which commits to pursue and achieve no later than 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable, and climate-neutral economy. The Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2023 sets out the measures to be taken to reach our targets in each sector of the economy. These sectoral measures and targets will be updated annually.

Mayo County Council’s Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (Climate Ready Mayo), 2019-2024, forms part of Ireland’s national strategy for climate adaptation, as set out in the National Adaptation Framework 2018 (NAF). The purpose of this Strategy is to ensure that climate adaptation considerations are mainstreamed into all plans and policies and integrated into all operations and functions of the local authority, and it is a policy of the County Development Plan to support its implementation.

The compact growth agenda outlined in the NPF is reinforced through Ireland’s CAP 2023, which promotes extensive retrofitting of existing premises and housing stock and the prioritisation of brownfield and compact development. The actions committed to in CAP 2023 strongly align and support the regeneration and revitalisation of Ireland’s towns, including through reducing demand for travel by car, sustaining economic and social activity at street level and increasing access to shops, employment, and amenities by sustainable transport modes.

1.3 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. The 2030 Agenda encourages countries to set out a holistic approach to achieving a sustainable future for all by developing national responses to the SDGs and incorporate them into planning and policy.



Figure 1.2: Sustainable Development Goals

Ireland is committed to achieving the SDGs, as set out in the Department of Environment, Climate and Communication’s ‘National Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development Goals 2022-2024. There is significant alignment between the NPF’s National Strategic Outcomes and the SDGs. A key objective of the National Implementation Plan is to embed the framework provided by the 2030 Agenda into the work of national and local government.

1.4 Spatial Planning Context



Figure 1.3: Hierarchy of Plans

1.4.1 National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework sets out a high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth of Ireland and provides 10 National Strategic Outcomes for realising the vision of the plan. The NPF sits at the highest tier of planning policy in Ireland, and all regional and local planning policy should be consistent with the principles contained within it.



Figure. 1.4: NPF National Strategic Outcomes

1.4.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy



Figure 1.5: RSES Key Metrics

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) introduces a Growth Framework for the Northern and Western Region, which includes a settlement hierarchy, growth ambitions and supporting policy framework to advance the spatial and economic development of the region. The RSES recognises Ballina as a strategic employment centre of significant scale, which can act as a regional driver to complement and support the higher order urban areas in the region. The RSES recognises Ballina as having the potential to accommodate significant levels of growth in population and employment through appropriate investment in infrastructure, support services and placemaking initiatives.

1.4.3 County and Town Development Plans

The Ballina Local Area Plan must be consistent with the provisions of the Mayo County Development Plan (CDP) 2022-2028. The Core Strategy of the Mayo CDP sets out the population and household targets, in addition to the zoning requirements to facilitate new residential for Ballina over the plan period. The CDP also contains a suite of policies and objectives to guide development, which should be read in conjunction with this Plan.

The lifetime of the Ballina and Environs Development Plan 2009-2015 was extended following the abolition of Town Councils in 2014 to run contiguous to the lifetime of the Mayo County Development Plan 2014-2020. Upon final adoption, the Ballina LAP will replace the Ballina Town and Environs Plan 2010-2016 (as extended).

Where conflicting policies and objectives arise between the CDP and the LAP, the policies and objectives of the CDP shall take precedence. It should be noted that the general development management guidelines applicable to the plan area are included in the Mayo County Development Plan. This Plan therefore includes policies and objectives that are specific to the future development of the town of Ballina.

1.5 Town Profile



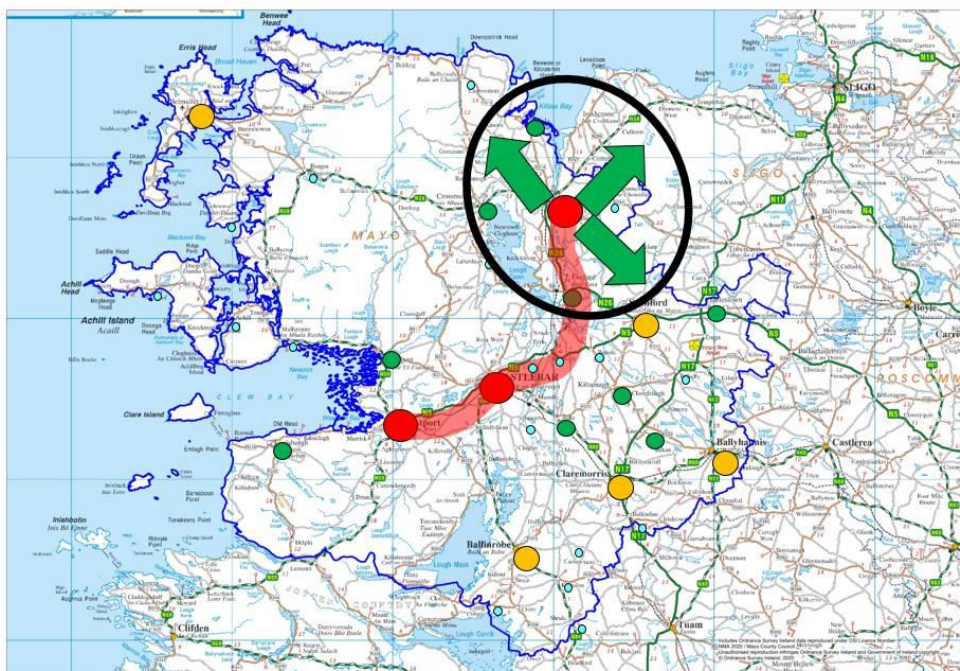
Map 1.1: Ballina in context

Traditionally a market town and service centre for a large hinterland, incorporating North County Mayo and the west of County Sligo, Ballina town is located at the tip of Killala Bay, where the River Moy enters the sea. The first bridging point at the head of Killala Bay, Ballina is a strategic gateway to the Northwest Region and a focus for communications for the North Mayo and West Sligo area. The town is served by N26 Foxford Road, which links to the N5 Dublin Road, the N59 Crossmolina Road and the N59 Sligo Road.

Ballina has a strong focus in tourism, retail, commerce, manufacturing, and industry. A significant employer for the town, tourism plays a key role in the success of Ballina as a destination. The town also enjoys a vibrant social life and culture scene and is a regional and national destination for festivals and events, including the Salmon Festival and French Food Festival.

1.6 Growth Cluster

At a strategic level, the Mayo CDP recognises that the economic development of Mayo will be further enhanced through the development of the economic growth clusters in the County. Ballina, Castlebar and Westport are located within a central strategic growth corridor in the County, as set out in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-28 (See Map 1.2 below). From a regional perspective, this corridor provides urban places of scale between the Galway Metropolitan Area to the south and the Sligo Regional Growth Centre to the north, thereby contributing to the realisation of the Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC).



Map 1.2: Castlebar – Ballina - Westport Economic Growth Cluster corridor and Gateway to North Mayo and Southwest Sligo

The purpose of this growth cluster is to enhance the economic development of these three regional towns of scale, and their catchments, by harnessing and developing the complementary strengths and synergies between the settlements to create highly connected centres of scale, with the necessary critical mass, in terms of population and employment, to enable them to compete and grow to fulfil their potential and drive regional and national development in tandem with regional and national policy.

1.7 Composition of the Plan

The Plan comprises of three volumes. Volume I include the written statement, accompanying maps and appendices. Volume II comprises the Environmental Reports including the Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Volume III contains the Draft Ballina Local Transport Plan.

1.7.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process is the formal systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. It informs the plan-making process of the likely environmental impacts of alternative actions and contributes to the integration of environmental considerations into plan-making.

The findings of the SEA are set out in the Environmental Report, which, while constituting part of the Plan documentation, is presented as a separate document. The Environmental Report provides a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of decisions regarding the location of development in the Plan area. The mitigation measures needed to offset potential adverse effects of the Plan and future monitoring proposals have been transposed from the Environmental Report into the Plan.

1.7.2 Appropriate Assessment (AA)

The requirements for Appropriate Assessment of plans or projects, is outlined in Article 6(3) and (4) of the European Communities (1992) Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora ('Habitats Directive'). The assessment examines the implications of proceeding with the plan or project within its zone of influence, in view of the conservation objectives of European Site(s).

The Plan was screened for AA during its preparation at draft stage. This screening found that significant effects on European Sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, could not be screened out, and therefore, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment/Natura Impact Assessment (NIR) was required. All AA recommendations have been integrated into the Draft Plan. The emerging conclusion of the AA is that the Plan will not adversely affect the integrity of European Sites, in light of their conservation objectives. The AA NIR is presented as a separate document accompanying the Plan in Appendix 3.

1.7.3 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) is an assessment of flood risk and includes mapped boundaries for indicative flood risk zones, taking into account factors such as local knowledge, site walkovers and flood risk indicators. The SFRA is required to be prepared in accordance with the requirements of The Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) and Circular PL02/2014 (August 2014). All SFRA recommendations have been integrated into the Draft Plan. The SFRA is presented as a separate document accompanying the Plan in Volume II.

1.8 Ballina Local Transport Plan (BLTP)

Mayo County Council (MCC) has developed a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Ballina, in tandem with the LAP, to ensure trip origins and destinations, such as residential, retail, educational and employment uses, are all connected by sustainable transport modes. The LTP sets out a suite of short (1-2 years); medium (3-5 years); and long-term (>10 years) proposals, with targeted measures, to guide future transport investment in Ballina with the aim of providing a sustainable transport network for the town and its environs.

The Ballina LTP examines all transport modes and how they interact both in the town centre and throughout its environs, specifically including linkages with active travel modes and public transport modes. The development of a sustainable transport network has the potential to contribute positively to both the local area and to its residents through a combination of direct and indirect benefits.

Chapter 2 Development Strategy

2.1 Introduction

The Development Strategy has been informed by the NPF, RSES and Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028, which will influence the sustainable future growth of Ballina over the lifetime of the plan and beyond. This Plan has also been informed and guided by the findings and recommendations of the accompanying environmental assessments, and the proposals set out in the Ballina LTP, accompanying this Plan. The development strategy for Ballina is guided by the vision statement and strategic aims set out in this chapter.

2.2 Regional Key Town

Ballina is designated as a Key Town in the RSES. Key Towns are considered regionally strategic employment centre of significant scale that can act as regional drivers complimenting and supporting higher-order urban areas within the settlement hierarchy. They also have the potential to accommodate a significant level of growth in population and employment through appropriate investment in infrastructure, support services and placemaking initiatives.

The Regional Strategy identifies Ballina as a gateway to for the North Mayo and southwestern Sligo regions. It is envisaged that Ballina, as a central economic driver, will ‘unlock’ opportunities to further develop the established linkages and synergies between Ballina, other regional settlements, and the Regional Growth Centre of Sligo. In this regard, identifying and promoting the linkages and synergies within North Mayo and southwestern Sligo are an important spatial element underpinning this strategy.

2.3 Vision Statement

VISION STATEMENT

To support and grow the role of the Key Town of Ballina, to create a sustainable and competitive town that supports the health and well-being of the people of Ballina, providing an attractive destination, as a place in which to live, work, invest, do business and visit, offering high quality employment and educational opportunities within strong and vibrant sustainable communities, whilst ensuring a transition to a carbon neutral and climate resilient town that supports high environmental quality.

The development of this vision will be progressed through the implementation of the Ballina LAP, having regard to its role at a national, regional, and county level; its social, cultural and economic assets, and in recognition of the aspiration of the local community and stakeholders to work together in partnership to deliver the sustainable balanced growth of Ballina town and its environs.

2.4 Strategic Key Future Priorities

This Plan has been prepared in the context of a long-term vision for Ballina, which will only be achieved by focussed implementation of sustained and targeted measures and key priorities over the short to medium/long term, some of which may extend beyond the life of this Plan. The Plan presents an opportunity to create compact, sustainable communities and liveable places; to address shortfalls in social infrastructure and initiate the necessary transition to a low carbon and sustainable model of development that will improve the quality of life for people living in the town.

The RSES has identified the following Key Priorities for Ballina:

- Build on Ballina’s strong enterprise and associated skills base, strong infrastructural base in terms of connectivity, Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) and proximity to the Atlantic Europe Connect sub-sea telecommunications cable, Ireland West Airport Knock and the Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC).
- Build on the significant tourism potential of Ballina through investment in tourism related infrastructure, including Monasteries of the Moy Greenway from Belleek to Killala, incorporating EuroVelo1 Atlantic Coastal Route, Mountain Biking Trail via Ballina connecting the Wild Nephin Ballycroy National Park to the National Mountain Bike Trail at Coolaney.
- Regeneration within the town core particularly in the Market Square/Military Barracks area and regeneration of the riverside along the River Moy is crucial to facilitate an enterprise-led regeneration of the town centre.
- Promote and support the uptake of under-utilised industrial and commercial space and expand upon the capacity of business parks/industrial estates in the town.
- Removal of barriers to development through enhanced road and rail connectivity to and from Ballina including:
 - i. Priority upgrade of the N26/N58 linking Ballina and the northwest of the county to the N5.
 - ii. Enhanced rail services to Dublin and commuter services between Ballina, Castlebar, Westport and Claremorris with connectivity to Galway and Limerick Metropolitan Cities and major international ports such as Shannon/Foynes, should the Western Rail Corridor be realised.
- Continued investment in rail freight facilities at Ballina.
- To support and grow the role of Ballina as the key economic driver in the north-west of the county and for a cluster of smaller towns in its catchment, capitalising on its designation as a Key Town within the context of the Sligo Regional Growth Centre and its location in relation to the Atlantic Economic Corridor, in order to facilitate long-term economic growth within the context of a high-quality environment supporting a wide range of services and amenities, thereby making it attractive as a place to work, live and invest in.

2.5 Strategic Goals

The strategic goals which relate to the advancement of this vision, are set out hereunder for each chapter of the Plan. The Plan aims to build on previous successes and to strengthen Ballina strategic advantage as the county town, to ensure that we meet the needs of our citizens, communities, built and natural environments, infrastructure and economic/employment development to their full potential, while combatting and adapting to climate change.

- **Climate Action:** *To transition Ballina to a carbon neutral and climate resilient town by 2050, with an emphasis on reduction in energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions, through a combination of effective mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change; in addition to maximising the opportunities for energy efficiency, renewables and decarbonisation.*
- **Town Centre Regeneration:** *To develop a robust and design-led urban regeneration and development strategy; to maximise the strengths of the town; and to promote sustainable movement. To integrate new and regenerated areas within the historic core in a contemporary manner that complements the existing urban structure and heritage of the town. To create an integrated and commercially robust, liveable and sustainable town. To ensure that best practice urban design principles are applied to all new development, based on the principle that well-planned and integrated development enhances the sustainability, attractiveness and liveability of an area.*
- **Economic Development and Employment:** *To support and enhance the sustainable economic growth of Ballina, consistent with its role as a Key Town through the provision of designated areas for high quality employment, through the expansion and protection of its tourism product and through the enhancement and expansion of its role as a thriving retail destination.*
- **Housing and Communities:** *To facilitate and deliver liveable, high-quality, nearly zero-energy, integrated residential development that provides for an appropriate demographic mix in tandem with the delivery of good social and physical infrastructure to support the development of vibrant and diverse communities.*
- **Movement and Transport:** *To promote and develop a sustainable, integrated transport system for Ballina that prioritises walking, cycling and public transport, and provides an appropriate level of road infrastructure, road capacity and traffic management to support future development and enhance connectivity to and from regional towns and cities.*
- **Built Environment:** *To recognise and enhance the unique identity, character and built heritage of Ballina, to improve quality of life through the application of healthy placemaking, underpinned by good urban design with the creation of attractive public spaces that are vibrant, distinctive, safe and accessible and which promote and facilitate positive social interaction.*
- **Natural Environment:** *To protect, conserve, enhance and sustain the natural environment of Ballina and promote climate adaptation, placemaking and enhance biodiversity through promotion of green infrastructure for future generations.*
- **Infrastructure and Environmental Services:** *To phase future growth in line with the capacity of supporting physical infrastructure and to ensure it occurs in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.*

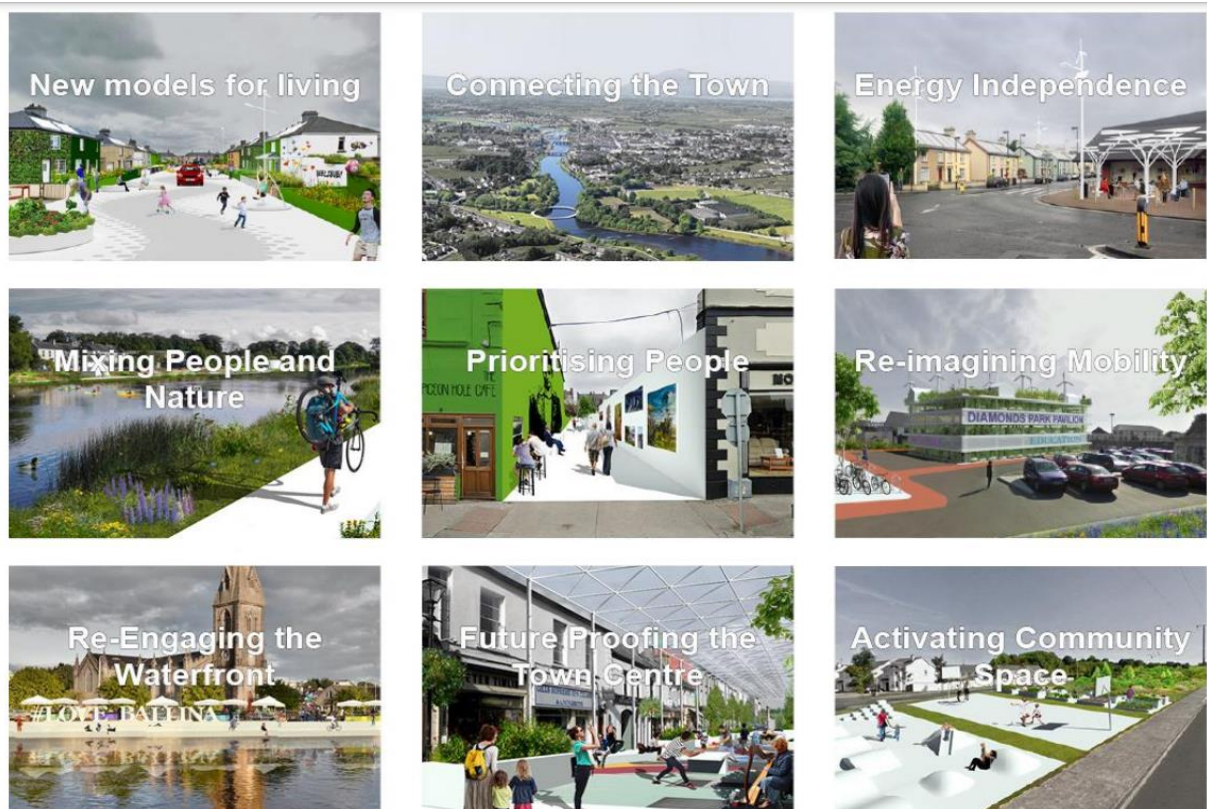


Figure 2.1: Strategic vision for Ballina (images: maryrobinsoncentre.ie)

2.6 Development Strategy

The SEA considered three alternative development scenarios for the Ballina LAP, considered to be realistic, reasonable, implementable and viable. Scenario 3 is the preferred development strategy being pursued in the Ballina LAP. This option is considered the most effective in the delivery of a sustainable, carbon neutral and climate resilient future for the town, consistent with national, regional and local planning policy, and the strategic vision and aims for Ballina, in terms of reducing the effects of climate change through focusing on the delivery of compact growth, town centre regeneration, sustainable mobility, creation of sustainable communities, protection of built and natural heritage, utilising services and infrastructure, green and blue infrastructure protection and enhancement, while also promoting and maximising the most efficient and sustainable use of land.

Key Elements of the Development Strategy include:

- **Compact Growth** – New residential development to be accommodated within the existing built-up footprint of the town on brownfield/vacant/infill sites in the town centre, existing and new residential areas, at appropriate densities, and optimising existing social and physical infrastructure.
- **Sustainable Transport and Mobility** – Effective integration of transport and land use through pursuing compact growth through the application of the 10-minute town approach; improved accessibility to existing residential areas to encourage and facilitate active mobility, and by implementing a suite of measures from the Ballina Local Transport Plan to encourage sustainable transportation within the Plan area.

- **Built Environment** – Enhancing the built environment and protecting the character of Ballina’s built heritage through a strong emphasis on promoting opportunities for place making and urban regeneration, particularly in the town centre, creating attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that provide for a high quality of life and well-being, whilst appropriately protecting the character of historic built heritage.
- **Natural Environment**—To protect and enhance Ballina’s environmental resources, including the networks of green and blue Infrastructure throughout the plan area; and support measures to achieve a sustainable, carbon neutral and climate resilient future for the town, including promoting a sustainable built and natural environment, maximising the most efficient and sustainable use of land, and promoting a security of energy supply through renewable energy sources.
- **Sustainable Communities** – Promoting vibrant communities where people can live, work and enjoy access to a range of community services for all needs and ages and promote social integration through a range of housing developments with an appropriate mixture of house type, tenures and sizes to meet all needs in Ballina.

2.7 Challenges and Opportunities

While the challenges affecting the current urban structure of Ballina are substantial, there are several areas of opportunity, that if acted upon, would greatly assist in the creation of a more integrated urban structure and better-connected town. These opportunities can be summarised as follows:

Connecting the town centre and the periphery: There is a major spatial disconnection between the commercial core and the employment clusters around the periphery. The regeneration of the town centre can assist in the delivery of opportunities for initiating new and improved high-quality links between the historic town core and new developments at the periphery.

Integrating residential areas into the urban structure: The tendency to create large, isolated blocks of housing has created disconnected and car dependent residential areas that lead to the fragmentation of the overall urban structure. Mayo County Council have prepared a Local Transport Plan for Ballina (BLPT). The BLPT examines the potential for the incorporation of sustainable transport with integrated, legible, well connected, and permeable neighbourhoods, as well as the feasibility of public transport options within the town and environs, thus improving access to social and community infrastructure. The BLPT will inform and assist in the approach for future zoning and development to ensure the town grows in a coherent, connected and unified manner.

Using diverse movement networks as connective links: Movement infrastructure is biased towards facilitating private car access. Connectivity between key locations, destinations and residential communities is poor and has led to fragmentation of the town and the excessive use of a small number of routes. Increasing permeability linkages will connect various areas in the town through sustainable modes of travel i.e. walking and cycling which will connect the hinterlands via the urban core of Ballina.

Unifying the urban structure through a high-quality public realm: The existing public realm of Ballina is highly fragmented, under exploited and suffers from high levels of traffic movement and congestion which detract from the overall experience of the town, particularly within the historic core area. A

strategic approach to the public realm, combined with the full implementation of the Local Transport Plan, will generate, and sustain spatial unity in the urban structure over the longer term.

2.8 Core Strategy

The Ballina Local Area Plan must be consistent with the provisions of the Mayo County Development Plan, as per Section 19(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). Local Area Plans take a detailed look at a specific area and provide a land use planning framework and principles for the future development of the area. The objectives contained in the local area plan are relevant to the local area and must be consistent.

Ballina is a Tier 1 (a) Key Town in the core and settlement strategies of the Mayo County Development Plan. The Core Strategy allocates 15.7% of the overall housing target growth for Mayo over the Plan period to Ballina to accommodate a projected population growth rate of 24.4% as set out in Table 2.1 below. The table identifies that an increase to 12,348 persons to the year of 2028 and a dwelling target of 511 additional units to the year 2028 is required for Ballina.

Town	Population 2016	Population 2021	Population Growth Rate %	Housing Targets	Housing Growth Rate %	Quantum of lands zoned for New Residential Development (Hectares)
Ballina	10,171	11,160	24.4%	551	15.7%	29.73

Table 2.1: Projected Population Increase and Housing requirements to 2028.

Therefore, it is critically importance for the sustainable future growth of Ballina that future housing is delivered in a compact growth approach in accordance with sustainable principles and the NPF/RSES objectives, in a manner that meets housing need requirements. The overall allocation of residential units and associated land requirements for Ballina is set out in Table 2.2 below.

Ballina Allocation of Residential Units/Lands Requirements		
Land Zoning Category	Housing Targets (551)	Area
<i>Town Centre/Opportunity Sites</i>	35	2.33ha.
<i>Residential Infill Lands</i>	70	4.66ha
<i>New Residential Lands</i>	446	29.73ha

Table 2.2: Housing Units and land Requirements for Ballina to 2028.

In addition, it is also critically important to ensure that sufficient lands are zoned for employment uses in the town. This will provide employment for both people living in the town and wider catchment, which in turn will advance the economic growth of Ballina.

2.8.1 Achieving Compact Growth

The National Planning Framework (NPF) requires at least 30% of all new housing units must be delivered within the existing urban footprint (CSO Boundary) of the town. The development strategy

seeks to concentrate all new homes within the existing built-up footprint of the town. The Plan supports the delivery of new homes through the appropriate redevelopment of town centre regeneration sites for a mixture of uses. Most new homes are directed towards infill greenfield sites zoned 'New Residential' within existing residential neighbourhood areas.

The Plan also supports the delivery of additional new homes within existing residential areas through consolidation/infilling/densification over the plan period, where development can be assimilated satisfactorily through design, layout and amenity impact in a manner that does not detract from the character of the area. This will allow for efficient use of existing services, facilities and would support the existing and planned sustainable transport network as set out in the Draft Ballina Local Transport Plan.

2.8.2 Compliance with the Core Strategy

To ensure compliance with the core strategy of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 and its housing allocation for Ballina, it will be necessary to monitor the number of residential units permitted and developed on an annual basis. This enables a closer alignment between the core strategy population projections, development activity and all necessary physical, social and community infrastructure. Where it is apparent that New Residential zoned lands cannot or will not be developed within the plan period, residential development may be considered within Strategic Residential Reserve Tier I.

2.8.3 Tiered Approach to Land Use Zoning

Appendix 3 of the NPF requires all plans to adopt a tiered approach to land use zoning. The NPF sets out a two-tier approach to land zoning as follows:

Tier 1: Serviced Zoned Land – comprising lands that can connect to existing development services and generally positioned within the existing built-up footprint of a settlement or contiguous to existing developed lands or spatially sequential within the plan area.

Tier 2: Serviceable Zoned Land – Lands that are not currently sufficiently serviced to support new development but have the potential to become fully serviced within the life of the plan. These lands may be positioned within the existing built-up footprint of a settlement, or contiguous to existing developed lands or to Tier 1 zoned lands. The potential for delivery of the required services and/or capacity to support new development on Tier 2 lands must be identified and specific details provided by the planning authority in the form of an Infrastructural Assessment.

The land use zonings within this Plan were assessed in terms of their potential for future development based on their serviceability as per the findings of the Infrastructural Capacity Assessment accompanying this plan (refer to Appendix I).

2.8.4 Development Densities

The Plan adopts a fluid and site-specific approach to development densities. The density of development and number of units permissible will be determined at detailed design stage based on a full assessment of site characteristics, local conditions, design sensitivities, connectivity and overall quality of the scheme and having regard to the various provisions within the development

management guidelines, as set out within the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the relevant Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines.

2.9 Integrating Climate Considerations into the Ballina LAP

The Plan places climate action at the heart of its vision and promotes a development strategy to achieve compact growth, town centre urban regeneration, a sustainable transportation system, and best practice in low carbon energy systems, planning and design. The Plan also places a priority and focus on enhancing and protecting the biodiversity, natural heritage and environment of the town and its environs. The LAP has been guided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals and climate action provisions of the NPF and RSES, and Ireland’s CAP 2023. The Plan supports the sectoral emission reduction targets of the national climate action plans and the transition to a carbon neutral and climate resilient future.

2.10 Development Strategy Policies and Objectives

Development Strategy Policies	
It is a Policy of the Council to:	
DSP 1	Support and facilitate the sustainable growth of social, economic and residential developments in Ballina in accordance with the National Planning Framework, the Northern and Western Regional Spatial Economic Strategy 2020-2032, and the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 (and any review thereof).
DSP 2	Support the compact growth of Ballina to ensure that new development proceeds in a sustainable manner and at an appropriate scale, density and in line with the Core Strategy.
DSP 3	Promote measures to reduce vacancy and the underuse of existing building stock and support initiatives that promote the reuse, refurbishment and retrofitting of existing buildings within the Plan area.
DSP 4	Ensure that sufficient land is available at appropriate locations to satisfy the Economic Development Strategy and County Core Strategy growth allocation for Ballina and to ensure Ballina maintains its status as one of Mayo’s Key Towns and that key employment sites are provided.
DSP 5	Ensure the vitality and viability of the town centre is maintained and enhanced and to strengthen its function by facilitating the development of residential, retail, community, tourism, professional and other services, subject to compliance with the policies and development management standards of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028.
DSP 6	Ensure that all new development within the Ballina LAP area accord with the policies, objectives and development standards set out in the Mayo County Development 2022-2028, in respect of wastewater systems.

DSP 7	Support the effective and efficient use of land in Ballina, prioritising compact growth through the development of brownfield/infill land in the built-up footprint of the town in preference to greenfield land.
DSP 8	Require the preparation and assessment of all planning applications in the plan area to have regard to the information, data and requirements of Appropriate Assessment, Natura Impact Report, SEA Environment Report and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report that accompany this LAP. There shall be a requirement of Ecological Impact Assessment as appropriate in the Plan area.

Development Strategy Objectives

It is an Objective of the Council to:

DSO 1	Deliver at least 30% of all new homes in Ballina within the existing built-up footprint of the town.
DSO 2	Seek the sustainable intensification and consolidation of the existing built environment in accordance with the objectives for compact growth in higher-level spatial plans through appropriate infill, brownfield development, supported by the necessary physical and community infrastructure.
DSO 3	Monitor the scale, type, tenure, and location of constructed and permitted developments in Ballina during the lifetime of the Plan and apply appropriate development management standards to ensure compliance with the Core Strategy to achieve the delivery of strategic plan-led and coordinated balanced development within the town.
DSO 4	Promote sustainable economic development, enterprise and employment opportunities and prioritise the town centre as the primary location for retail and services.
DSO 5	Promote and facilitate sustainable modes of transport prioritising walking, cycling and public transport, whilst protecting and improving existing road infrastructure.
DSO 6	Protect, conserve, and enhance the built environment, through promoting awareness, utilising relevant heritage legislation, and ensuring quality urban design principles are applied to all new developments, respecting historic and architectural heritage.
DSO 7	Protect, enhance, and connect areas of natural heritage, green and blue infrastructure, and open space for the benefits of quality of life and biodiversity, capitalising on climate change adaptation and flood risk measures.
DSO 8	Ensure the highest quality of public realm and urban design principles are applied to all new developments.
DSO 9	Guide the future development of Ballina in accordance the Town Centre First policy approach seeking to bring people and appropriate business/services back into the heart

	of Ballina through place-making, good quality urban design, sustainable mobility, and control of development in other locations which might undermine this objective.
DSO 10	To seek to support the implementation of the recommendations of the Ballina/North Mayo Growth Cluster Study to advance the economic development of Ballina as an economic driver for North Mayo.

Chapter 3 Climate Action

3.1 Strategic Aim

To transition Ballina to a carbon neutral and climate resilient town by 2050, with an emphasis on reduction in energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions, through a combination of effective mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change; in addition to maximising the opportunities for energy efficiency, renewables, and decarbonisation.

3.2 Introduction

Climate change has emerged as one of the biggest global environmental challenges facing current and future generations. Climate change can be defined as the alterations to climate directly or indirectly attributed to human activities, which release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

Appropriate spatial planning, particularly compact urban development helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The NPF, RSES and the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 encourages compact growth and recognises the potential for such compact growth to facilitate the development of renewable and low carbon energy development, such as low carbon district heating.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and building climate resilience can, as well as tackling climate change, also create co-benefits, including cleaner air, health benefits and more energy efficient buildings. This in turn will have positive benefits for residents, businesses, and visitors alike. There are also economic opportunities to be realised in tackling climate change through innovative and technological solutions, such as renewable energy.

Renewable and low carbon energy development can be accommodated in appropriate locations within the natural and built environments in Ballina, without compromising other important environmental assets or people's quality of life. These developments assist in delivering a more stable and affordable energy supply for homes and businesses, which help communities realise the social and economic benefits of renewable and low carbon energy.



Figure 3.1: Climate Action Mitigation and Adaptation Measures

3.3 County Position

The Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out Mayo’s position on climate change and renewable energy for the plan period. Mayo County Council will develop a climate change screening checklist and guidance document. This will help ensure new developments take account of climate change over the lifetime of a development, in terms of key elements such as site location, site layout, building, ventilation and cooling, drainage, water, outdoor spaces and connectivity.

3.3.1 Mayo Climate Adaption Strategy

The Council published their first Climate Adaptation Strategy ‘Climate Ready Mayo’ in September 2019. This strategy sets out a vision and establishes both strategic goals and adaption goals with targeted objectives across five operational goals for Mayo to ensure the County will be climate ready, as set out below in Figure 3.2. Mayo County Council will also be preparing a Climate Action Plan over the plan period, which will also provide a pathway to decarbonise Mayo to meet our 2030 National climate action sectoral targets.



Figure 3.2: Goals of Mayo’s Climate Adaptation Strategy

3.3.2 Ballina Green Towns Initiative

Public and stakeholder engagement is extremely important in addressing climate change. It is recognised that there is a need to foster and build momentum on wider citizen engagement in climate change, across all age groups. Ballina – Ireland’s Greenest Town is a successful established example of community engagement in this regard.



Figure 3.3 – Ireland’s Greenest Town (Image source: maryrobincentre.ie)

The Initiative aims to make Ballina Ireland’s greenest town by 2030 and to become a European exemplar for large scale de-carbonization and a model for the green transition. It brings together families, business and community groups in Ballina and North Mayo to work together on ambitious, transformative projects to bring about a brighter, more sustainable future.

The Plan supports the vision and objectives set out to achieve these aims and places climate action at the heart of its vision by promoting a development strategy to achieve compact growth and best practice in low carbon planning and design for Ballina.

The strategic vision for the Ballina Green Town includes five interdependent core areas - Energy, Mobility, Economy, Ecology and People (See Fig. 3.4 below). Each has a high-level target and three strategies, reflecting best practice, tested methodologies and an understanding of the critical social-ecological systems relating to Ballina, prompting actions from the individual to town-wide.



Figure 3.4: Ballina Green Town - strategic vision, targets and strategies (Source: www.maryrobinsoncentre.ie)

The transitioning of Ballina to a green future will be achieved through a collaborative approach of a shared vision with schools, education providers including the Mary Robinson Centre and NUIG, businesses, households, Mayo County Council, government bodies and elected representatives. The success of the project will be measured through a data driven approach assessing the current situation and progress over time. Using GIS, a smart platform/app will enable the measurement of progress, provide support and information and facilitate community feedback.

3.3.3 Ballina Energy Plan

The Council will support Energy Master Plan (EMP) developed by Sustainable Energy Communities in Ballina. An EMP provides a low carbon roadmap to enable the town to become more energy efficient, use renewable energy, where possible, and use smart energy technology, if appropriate. An EMP includes a “Register of Opportunities” for decarbonising projects by local communities that can be implemented over the plan period. Suitable projects may include energy retrofitting of residential and non-residential buildings; a roadmap for electrification of the heat and transport systems; and the identification of viable renewable energy and energy storage projects. These projects will help contribute toward achieving the 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions required nationally by 2030.

2.4 Decarbonising Ballina and Reducing Greenhouse Emissions

The Plan examines the following sectors which tie in with the Ballina Green Towns initiative:

- Electricity Generation
- Built Environment
- Transport
- Land Use
- Nature Based Solutions

These measures lay the foundations for transitioning Ballina to a carbon neutral and climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy and are discussed further below.

3.4.1 Electricity Generation

Renewable energy is a low carbon, or zero carbon source of energy produced from sources that are constantly replenished through the cycles of nature. Unlike fossil fuels, these sources of energy are not finite. The development of renewable energy resources and the development of low carbon energies is critical to the transition to a carbon neutral economy, and to meet climate targets relating the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The development of renewables, including micro renewables are needed to ensure the security of our energy supply.

The LAP supports the use of micro generation renewable energy technologies. The development of renewable energy infrastructure and initiatives to provide a viable alternative to the burning of fossil fuels. Sources of renewable energy include solar photovoltaic (PV), solar thermal, geothermal, hydroelectric power, renewable gas, green hydrogen, the use of biofuels and onshore and offshore wind turbines. The Council will support and promote the development of renewable energy technologies most suited to Ballina at appropriate locations. Potential also exists for examining district centre heating opportunities within the town considering the type and variety of industries that exist, which produce excess heat that could be harnessed and recirculated.

3.4.2 Electric Vehicles (EVs)

Electric vehicle use is growing in Ireland and will undoubtedly form a large part of the transition to a carbon neutral economy. Range anxiety has been described as a key area of concern for drivers, making it essential that efficient, reliable electric charging infrastructure is available in a range of public locations.

ESB is responsible for the roll out of public electric car charge points in Ireland, whilst private EV charging providers operate publicly accessible chargers on private land. There are several existing EV Charging locations in Ballina. Mayo County Council are committed to facilitating the expansion of the EV charging point network across the county to ensure greater connectivity and reliability for EV drivers.

The introduction of new regulations for the installation of electric vehicles (EV) recharging infrastructure came into effect in 2021 under the publication of the EU Energy Performance Regulations and will help to encourage supporting infrastructure. These new regulations require the installation of recharging points for EV for both new buildings and existing buildings undergoing major renovations for more than ten car parking spaces. These regulations also require the installation of a minimum number of recharging points for all existing buildings (other than dwellings) with more than twenty car parking spaces by January 01, 2025. The installation of EV recharging infrastructure will support the Climate Action Plan targets of nearly one million EV to be on the road by 2030 and will help to facilitate this transition.

3.4.3 Built Environment

High quality design is fundamental to making places more attractive, sustainable, safe, healthy, and accessible. Good design can help reduce and mitigate the impacts of climate change; promote healthier lifestyles; create safer places and make high quality and attractive places that foster civic pride. In well-designed places, water features also form part of an integrated system of landscape, biodiversity, and drainage. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and Nature Based Solutions can be used to enhance the surrounding environment and provide many additional benefits including attenuation, improvements to biodiversity and habitat, character, amenity, and open space.

The National Residential Retrofit Plan commits the Government to retrofit 120,000 dwellings to B2 or cost optimal by 2025 and 500,000 by 2030. The Council supports and encourages the retrofitting of existing buildings with appropriate energy efficiency measures within the Ballina Plan area. The Plan also supports and encourages energy conservation and the use of renewable energy sources in existing buildings.

Proper planning can help increase resilience to the impacts of climate change through the built design, layout and landscape design of development, such as promoting low carbon design approaches to reduce energy consumption in buildings. The Council is committed to ensuring developments and places are designed to deal with the challenge of adapting to and mitigating to Climate Change.

Developers should be proactive in responding to climate change and adopt sustainable and low carbon construction principles in terms of design, layout, and density. Sunlight and energy efficiency should be considered as part of the layout, through solar design and natural ventilation systems. Buildings and their surrounding landscapes should be designed to make efficient use of natural resources during construction, operation and maintenance.

3.4.4 Transport

Ireland is targeted to reduce transport related emissions by 50% by 2030. Integrating land use planning with transportation is key to addressing climate change, supporting economic prosperity, and improving the quality of life for those who live in Ballina. Reducing the need to travel, especially long distances, by private car, and increasing the use of sustainable and healthy travel alternatives, can bring multiple benefits to our climate, local environment, and communities.

Policy to reduce emissions in the transport sector are focused on both reducing the transport intensity of growth and the carbon intensity of travel. To reduce transport emissions, the LAP seeks to develop Ballina in a compact fashion, through appropriate zoning, town centre regeneration, application of sustainable densities, the densification of existing residential areas and through enhanced connectivity for active travel and public transport.

The Ballina Local Transport Plan (LTP), which forms an integral part of the LAP, sets out a series of objectives and actions over the plan period and beyond to ensure that essential transport infrastructure will be delivered at the right locations in the town to facilitate a modal shift towards more sustainable transport options.

3.4.5 Land Use

Settlement patterns, built form, mobility and the mix of land uses in the Ballina will be key factors in transitioning to a climate resilient and carbon neutral town, as well as providing a range of other environmental, social, and economic benefits. Planning Ballina, in a fashion where people are enabled to live and work and access facilities by walking and cycling or through the provision of convenient public transport options will reduce the need to travel by car and the associated carbon emissions. This aligns with the 10-minute town concept whereby people can access most of their daily needs within 10-minutes on foot or bicycle from where they live. It also aligns with the overall approach set out in the government's 'Housing-For-All' Plan (2021) which emphasises that compact growth contributes to the transition to a carbon neutral and climate resilient society.

Cross-cutting themes engrained throughout the Plan, include Compact Growth and Sustainable Travel. The Core Strategy of the County Development Plan sets out a sustainable housing strategy in which compact growth, including brownfield redevelopment and urban infill, is a priority in line with the NPF and the RSES.

3.4.6 Waste

National climate action policy emphasises the need to take action to address climate action across all sectors of society and the economy. In the waste sector, policy on climate action is focused on a shift towards a 'circular economy' encompassing three core principles: (1) designing out waste and pollution; (2) keeping products and material in use; and (3) regenerating natural systems. The government's commitment to these principles is underlined by the publication of the Circular Economy Bill 2021, which will provide a national policy framework for Ireland's transition to a circular economy. It will also seek to implement many of the actions contained in the recently published Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy which sets out Ireland's National Waste Policy for 2020-2025.



Figure 3.5: The Circular Economy

3.4.7 Nature Based Solutions

Nature-based solutions to adapt to climate change can be deployed through the active provision and management of new and existing green and blue infrastructure in Ballina. Green and blue infrastructure can provide significant environmental benefits including flood water storage, urban cooling and improved air quality. They also have an important role in tackling the biodiversity crisis, sequestration of carbon, absorbing filtering and attenuating water, preventing erosion and filtering pollutants from the air and water. Figure 3.6 below shows how nature-based solutions and other climate friendly measures can be integrated into the built environment. Forests are probably the most familiar nature-based solution for climate change and can contribute both by reducing emission sources and increasing carbon sinks. Nature based solutions in Ballina shall have regard to the “Management of Rainwater and Surface Water Runoff in Urban Areas – Best Practice Interim Guidance Document (2022)”.

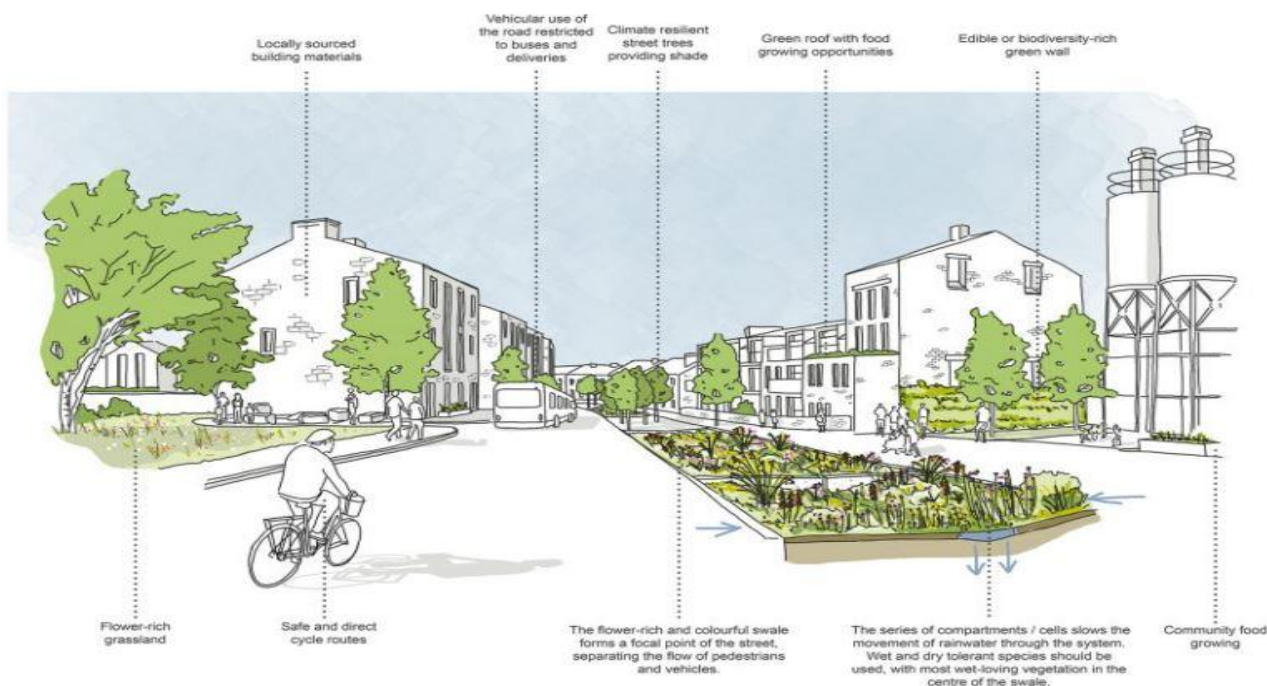


Figure 3.6: Nature-based Solutions (Source: <http://www.landuse.co.uk>)

3.4.8 Green Spaces

Green spaces in urban areas mitigate the effects of pollution and can reduce a phenomenon known as the urban heat island effect, which refers to heat trapped in built up areas. The urban heat island effect appears in towns and cities because of the impact of human activity. The heat generated by people, transport, shops, and industry is trapped/absorbed in the narrow roads, dark building materials, courtyards, concrete structures, and surfaces, unable to escape to the atmosphere. This can bring the temperature in urban areas up 3-4°C higher than the surrounding countryside.

Increased temperatures in summer leads to an increased demand for cooling. This expands our energy consumption, which in turn intensifies fossil fuel consumption, increasing pollutants in the air and harmful smog on our streets. Hotter pavements also damage the water cycle. In summer, surface temperatures can be significantly higher than the surrounding air, and that heat is transferred to the rainwater that drains into our sewers, which in turn raises water temperatures as it is released into streams, rivers, and lakes. This can be destructive to aquatic ecosystems, as changes in water temperature can be stressful or even fatal for marine life.

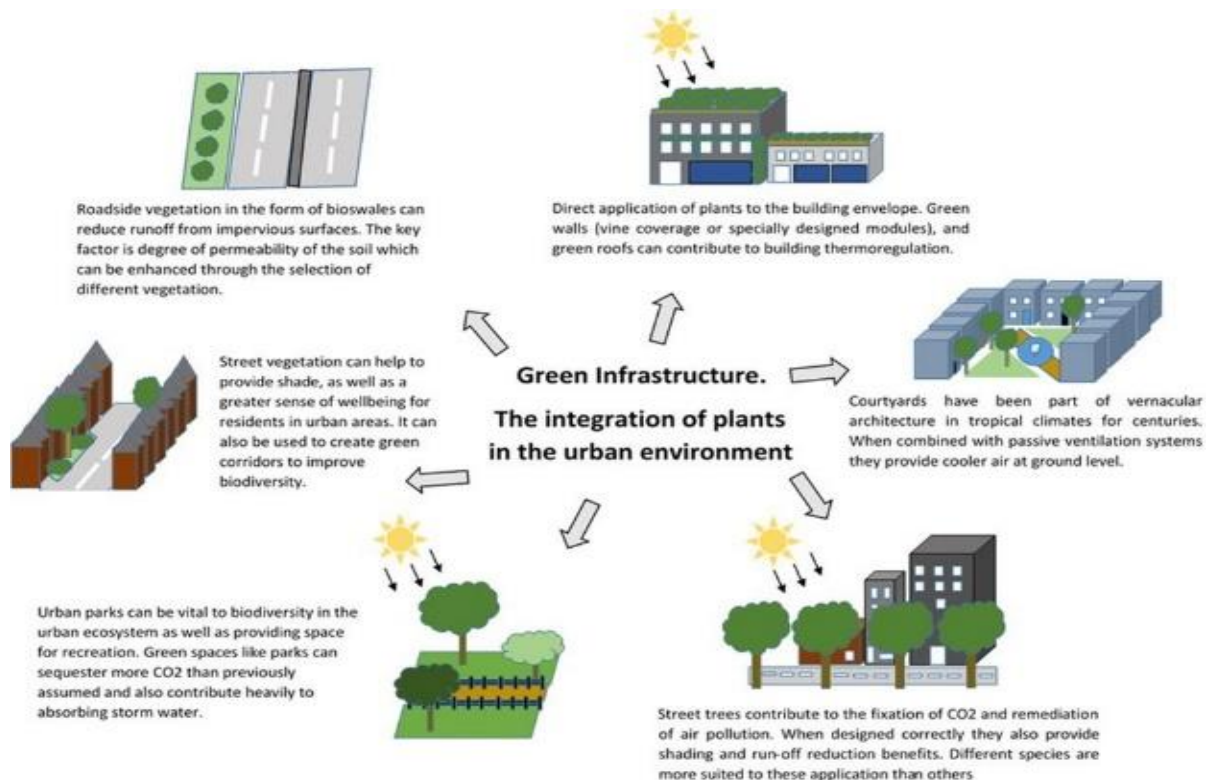


Figure 3.7: Examples of urban green infrastructure and their potential contributions to the health and wellbeing of urban dwellers (Source: <https://www.mdpi.com/journal/buildings>).

Figure 3.7 above shows that vegetation, particularly in the presence of high moisture levels, plays a vital role in the regulation of surface temperatures. There are different ways of reducing the effects of the urban heat island effect. However, a common measure to mitigate urban heat island is to increase urban green spaces such as parks, street trees and green roofs.

Increased soil, plants, tree coverage and other greenery in the built environment, including green roof and walls, would both reduce surface temperature, reducing the energy needed to heat and cool the buildings. Green roofs can also help regulate rainwater, trapping it as it falls and filtering out pollutants.

Tree planting within and around urban areas help reflect solar radiation, while also decreasing the urban heat island effect. Trees provide shade, absorb carbon dioxide, release oxygen and fresh air and provide a cooling effect. Deciduous trees are ideal for urban areas because they cool the area in summer and don't block any warmth during the wintertime.

The introduction of SuDS (Sustainable drainage systems) has several benefits including heat reduction through evaporation and flood prevention, particularly during periods of high rainfall when surface water runoff increases in urban areas. SuDS mimic natural drainage by storing, infiltrating, and slowing the flow of water. The impervious surface in urban environments has lower infiltration and evaporation than natural environments and greater surface run off.

3.5 Climate Actions Policies and Objectives

Climate Action Policies

It is a Policy of the Council to:

- CAP 1** Mitigate against the effects of climate change, adapt to its impacts, and to ensure resilience, development proposals should take into account and demonstrate how they are:
- a) promoting sustainable patterns of development including development in sustainable locations.
 - b) promoting the use of energy efficient, micro-generating and decentralised renewable energy systems, including through incorporating sustainable design features and the use of zero carbon technologies.
 - c) promoting the use of zero carbon technologies.
 - d) facilitating sustainable travel by encouraging active travel and travel by public transport in preference to the private car.
 - e) supporting the adaption of existing homes to reduce energy use, including Protected Structures and those located within Architectural Conservation Areas, providing there is no adverse impact on historic character or appearance.
 - f) supporting the delivery of facilities needed to divert waste away from landfill and promote the prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery of materials (including heat from waste) with disposal to landfill as the final option.
 - g) limiting / mitigating the likely greenhouse gas emissions, including through the provision of green infrastructure, and minimising resource and energy requirements through the siting, design and layout of all new development.
 - h) working with natural environmental processes through promoting green infrastructure and the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems / Nature Based Solutions.

<p>CAP 2</p>	<p>Promote and encourage development which is resilient to climate change by ensuring that development proposals demonstrate sustainable design principles for new buildings/ services/site, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) measures such as green roofs and green walls to reduce internal overheating and the urban heat island effect. b) ensuring the efficient use of natural resources (including water) and making the most of natural systems both within and around buildings. c) minimising pollution by reducing surface water runoff through increasing permeable surfaces and use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). d) reducing flood risk, damage to property from extreme events– residential, public, and commercial. e) reducing risks from temperature extremes and extreme weather events to critical infrastructure such as roads, communication networks, the water/drainage network, and energy supply. f) promoting and protecting biodiversity and green infrastructure.
<p>CAP 3</p>	<p>Promote low carbon development within the County which will seek to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, and which will meet the highest feasible environmental standards during construction and occupation. New development should generally demonstrate/provide for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Building layout and design which maximises daylight, natural ventilation, active transport, and public transport use. b) Sustainable building/services/site design to maximise energy efficiency. c) Sensitive energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings. d) Energy efficiency, energy conservation, and the increased use of renewable energy in existing and new developments.
<p>CAP 4</p>	<p>Support a successful transition to a circular economy where waste and resources are minimised in accordance with emerging legislation and national strategy including the Circular Economy Programme 2021-2027, as amended or superseded.</p>
<p>CAP 5</p>	<p>Support the designated and any future Decarbonising Zone (DZ) in Ballina and associated implementation plan promoting measures to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and improve general environmental conditions in this area.</p>
<p>CAP 6</p>	<p>Promote and encourage positive community and/or co-operative led climate action initiatives and projects in Ballina, including the Ballina Green Towns Initiative, that seek to reduce carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency, enhance green infrastructure, and encourage awareness on climate change issues.</p>

CAP 7	Support and encourage the development of small-scale wind renewable facilities / micro-renewable energy production.
CAP 8	Promote the use of district heating systems in new residential and commercial developments where such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment, landscape, biodiversity, or local amenities.
CAP 9	Support the development of sustainable low-carbon climate resilient communities and encourage a climate adaptation and mitigation approach to developments which will enable regeneration.
CAP 10	Encourage innovation and facilitate the development of pilot schemes in Ballina that support climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.
CAP 11	Support Energy Master Plan(s) prepared by Sustainable Energy Communities in Ballina, where appropriate, to support the recommendations of the Ballina Energy Master Plan.

Climate Action Objectives

It is an Objective of the Council to:

CAO 1	Ensure all development proposals shall have regard to the Mayo Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2019), any revised or forthcoming adaptation, mitigation, or climate action strategies in the formulation of any plans and when assessing planning application for future developments.
CAO 2	Consider a variation of the development plan within a reasonable period of time, or to include such other mechanism, as may be appropriate, to ensure that the development plan will be consistent with the approach to climate action recommended in the revised Local Area Plan Guidelines when adopted or any other relevant guidelines.
CAO 3	Promote the use of smart climate change, energy, and carbon off-setting solutions in new developments. In the cases of large industrial, commercial, or newly constructed public buildings, the incorporation of renewable technologies, such as solar energy in the design will be encouraged, subject to compliance with all relevant planning criteria. The Council encourages the NZEB standard of building or equivalent for all new development and the use of blue green infrastructure as a mechanism for surface water management and improving public realm.
CAO 4	Support high levels of energy conservation, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources in existing buildings, including retrofitting of appropriate energy efficiency measures in the existing building stock, and to actively retrofit Mayo County Council's

	housing stock to a B2 Building Energy Rating (BER) in line with the Government's Housing for All Plan retrofit targets for 2030.
CAO 5	<p>Have regard to Goal 3 of the Mayo Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024:</p> <p>Increase the Resilience of Natural and Cultural Capital:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build awareness of Nature Based Adaptation Solutions and Green Infrastructure. 2. Support biodiversity for its intrinsic value within the natural environment and its importance in climate change adaptation. 3. Develop a database of impacts of climate change on Mayo's Natural Environment. 4. Identify Cultural and Heritage Sites vulnerable to climate change and develop adaptation and management policies. 5. Encourage adaptation in Agriculture and Local Food Supply
CAO 6	Examine the potential of district heating, including district heating derived from waste heat, where available, technically feasible and cost effective, and carry out a feasibility exercise in support of district heating in Ballina, to assist in meeting renewable heat targets and reduce Ireland's GHG emissions.

Chapter 4 Town Centre and Regeneration

4.1 Strategic Aims

- *To develop a robust and design-led urban regeneration and development approach which will maximise the strengths of Ballina town centre and promote sustainable movement.*
- *To integrate new and regenerated areas within the historic core in a contemporary manner that complements the existing urban structure and heritage of Ballina town.*
- *To create an integrated and commercially robust, liveable, and sustainable town.*
- *To ensure that best practice urban design principles are applied to all new development, based on the principle that well-planned and integrated development enhances the sustainability, attractiveness, and liveability of an area*

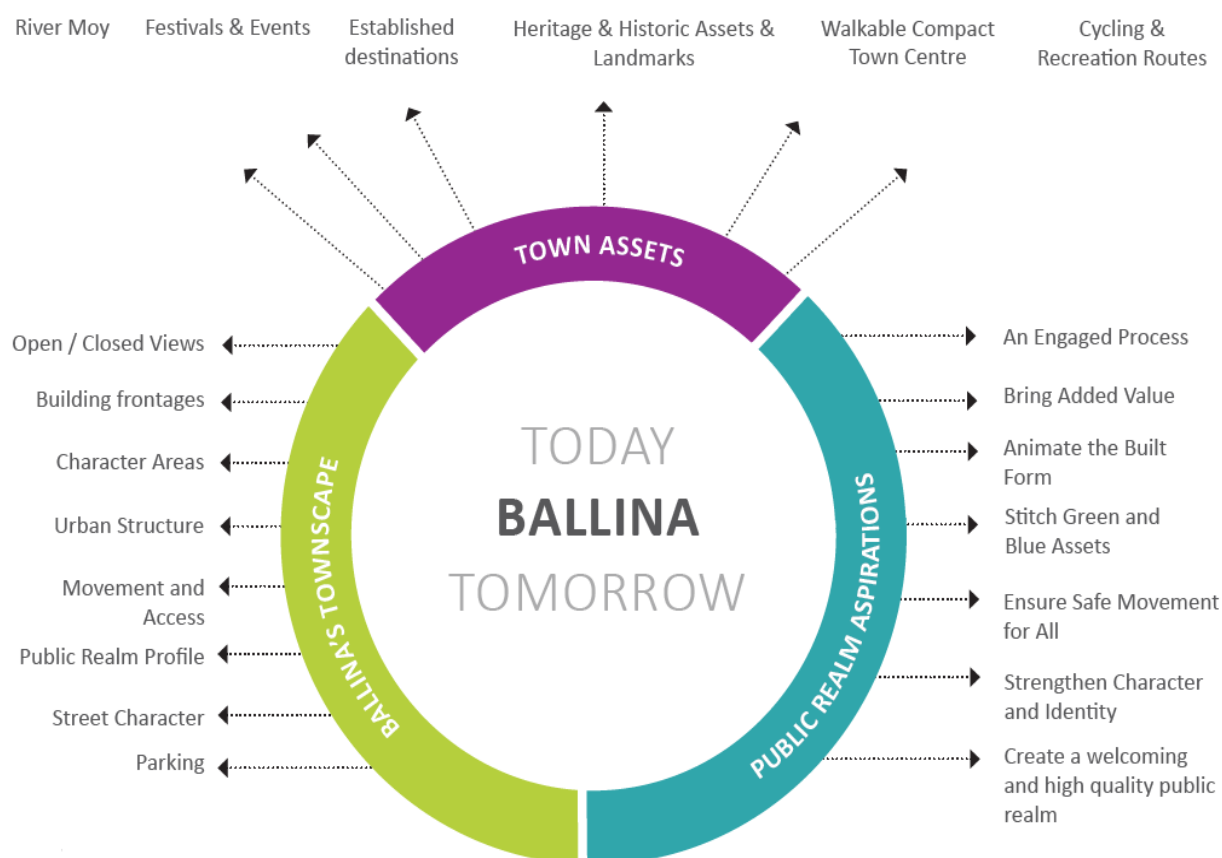


Figure 4.1: Town Development Strategy (Source: Draft Ballina Public Realm Strategy)

4.2 Introduction

To realise the strategic vision for Ballina and fulfil its regional role as a Key Town, the plan places strong focus on sustainable compact growth, with particular emphasis on the regeneration and repopulation of core and built-up areas. This approach focuses on maximising the use of infill, vacant and under-utilised sites and of buildings that are suitable and capable of re-use to provide housing, jobs, services, and amenities. There are many regeneration opportunities in Ballina town centre. National funding

schemes in place to address vacancy, decay, dereliction and make town centres attractive and desirable places to live, work, visit and invest. National policy documents such as ‘Town Centre First’ (2022) and supporting plans such as public realm plans provide a roadmap to support towns to design, deliver and implement a plan that can reimagine each town. This chapter identifies core regeneration areas in Ballina town centre for transformational regeneration, which will enhance the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre and Quay.

4.3 Ballina Collaborative Town Centre Health Check and Draft Public Realm Strategy

Between 2016 and 2018 representatives from Mayo County Council, the Heritage Council, Ballina Chamber of Commerce and Atlantic Technological University engaged in a collaborative programme to prepare a Collaborative Town Centre Town Centre Health Check for Ballina and findings report which summarises an extensive analysis of Ballina Town Centre. The findings, which include traffic and parking issues and dereliction, will inform policies and actions to help build a sustainable and future-proofed town.

The Ballina Draft Public Realm Strategy is an action of the County Mayo Heritage Plan and outlines six key themes as the drivers for the strategy as follows:

- Identity
- Bringing the streets to life
- New civic quarters
- An activated and connected waterfront
- Legibility and orientation
- Welcome and arrival.

4.4 The Urban Structure of Ballina

Ballina has a compact town centre which has a strong character and rich heritage. Two important assets of the town include its centre and the River Moy waterfront. They are the focus of the town’s economic life, the location of its historic core and the hub of its communications and tourism activity. Ballina is unique in that much of its commercial and economic development has taken place in the heart of the town, and not at its edges. This adds to the vitality and vibrancy of the town. There are opportunities to enhance this further. The central spine of Ballina town centre, part of which is a designated Architectural Conservation Area, is traditionally formed of two and three-storey buildings defining the main streets. These buildings generally date from the turn of the 20th Century. The traditional urban forms of that time prevail at present. For the main part, the facades running through the centre of Ballina are well maintained and are visually attractive. Several of the streetscapes in the town benefit from the existence of strong, clearly defined edges. However, in some instances, vacancy and dereliction lend to a negative image within the town core. These areas would greatly benefit from a strategic approach for their redevelopment.

4.4.1 The Quay Area

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



Figure 4.2: Ballina Quay

4.4.1 Areas in Need of Regeneration

In common with many urban centres of a similar size towns across Ireland, the core of Ballina has become depopulated and underutilised in areas, with increased numbers of derelict and vacant buildings, brownfield sites and underdeveloped backlands. This has had adverse impacts on the traditional town centre area from an aesthetic and economic perspective. National and regional planning policy now seeks to counteract the increased depopulation, vacancy, urban decay, and dereliction of town centres, thereby, making core areas more attractive places to live, work, visit and invest in town centre areas. More visually attractive and accessible town centres will contribute to the vibrancy of traditional urban core areas and encourage a shift to more active forms of travel, thereby reducing greenhouse gases.

Opportunities exist in Ballina to rejuvenate the town centre and Quay area. In 2019, Mayo County Council secured an investment of €3.2 million from the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund for the transformation of Ballina's 1740s military barracks into a digital hub and innovation quarter. The realisation of this and other projects will be the catalyst for transformational change for Ballina. Additional targeted regeneration projects will also be required over the plan period and beyond to further consolidate and revitalise the core area. Section 4.6 of the Plan identifies opportunity sites within the town centre and Quay area for targeted regeneration, redevelopment and public realm enhancements.



Map 4.1: Proposed Site Layout for Military Barracks

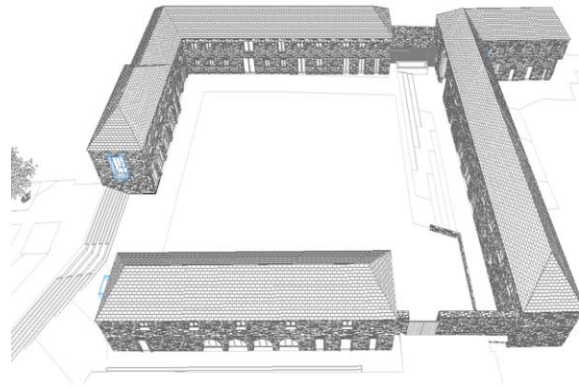


Fig 4.3: Conceptual image of Military Barracks

4.5 Urban Development Strategy

This Plan seeks to build on the principles previously contained in the Ballina Town and Environs Development Plan (2009-15) which sought to consolidate the overall growth of Ballina. The strategic vision for Ballina as set out in this Plan, along with new and emerging planning policy at National and Regional levels provide a much greater level of focus in directing and shaping the future growth of the town and as such the main principles guiding the physical development of the town is based on the following:

- Continued focus on consolidation of the urban form through infill development within the defined built-up area of the town and at a suitable scale.
- Emphasis on plan-led development with a particular focus on town centre regeneration
- Recognition of the town centre as being the primary area of retail activity in Ballina.
- Identification of key areas for economic development within the plan area, in addition to the core town centre (where further economic potential exists).
- Understanding of the need to deliver new and improved connections through the provision of a high-quality public realm along with a focus on sustainable movement. These connections will help link the town centre with surrounding residential areas, the periphery, and the wider hinterland of the town.
- Identification and utilisation of historic and natural assets to provide for new and enhanced tourism and recreational activities.
- The appropriate utilisation of active land management processes/measures to facilitate delivery of development within the town centre.

4.6 Regeneration Strategy

The purpose of the strategy is to set out a development framework, in order to guide the consolidation and rejuvenation of the commercial core of Ballina; assist in creating revitalised town centre streets and public spaces; to facilitate and provide for the development and improvement of the Quay, and appropriate town centre uses including retail, residential, cultural and community uses with an overall aim to enhance the vitality, viability and attractiveness of Ballina as a destination to live, work, do business and visit.

Ballina town centre has faced challenges over recent years, in particular the underperformance of the commercial core area reaching its full potential as a multi-activity and multi-use area at the heart of a growing urban settlement. To ensure that this plan provides a strategy for the future development of the town centre area and Quay, several regeneration areas within the historic town core area and Quay area are identified, which seek to build on the strengths of the town; its architectural, archaeological and natural heritage; urban spaces; and civic, cultural and commercial amenities, in addition to identifying opportunities to build upon.

4.6.1 Regeneration Strategy Approach

Five character areas have been identified within the commercial core area (see Map 4.2 below). These areas were defined based on their current use (i.e. brownfield/vacant/derelict/under-utilised); distinctive character; predominately land-uses in each area; unique challenges and opportunities; and the potential contribution they each can make to the future regeneration and revitalisation of the town centre. It is envisaged, that each core area will act as catalysts for change within the town core.



Map 4.2: Character Areas (CA's) Ballina

Opportunity sites have been identified in each character area. Mayo County Council encourage the development of Opportunity Sites in Ballina for a mixture of uses that will contribute to the regeneration, vibrancy, diversity, vitality, attractiveness, safety, liveability, and compact growth of the town centre. In addition, proposals must demonstrate how they will interact within its context and the wider urban.

Development proposal on opportunity sites must be consistent with urban design framework(s)/masterplan(s) to inform their future development. To guide urban design framework(s)/masterplan(s), Section 11.3 of this Plan sets out urban design principles. Proposals must also comply with national guidelines (as appropriate) towards achieving sustainable compact development and to integrate principles of good urban design and placemaking.

Short-term and long term aims:

- **Short-term:** The short-term vision for the character areas seeks to pursue the upgrading of the public realm, identify key connections and to set out desirable uses within each character area.
- **Medium/Long-term:** The medium to longer term vision is to facilitate regeneration by the adaptive re-use of existing buildings, sensitive infill of vacant sites and the creation of new urban form.

Placemaking:

All development will be centred on the concept of placemaking with the aim of enhancing the character and spatial qualities of each area. The framework for each regeneration area will therefore seek to:

- Identify the main issues and challenges affecting the area.
- Develop a coherent identity for the regeneration area based on its unique character, attributes, and assets.
- Define the role that the area will play in the future development of the town centre.
- Outline the spatial opportunities and urban design solutions, which would assist in the development of such an envisaged role.

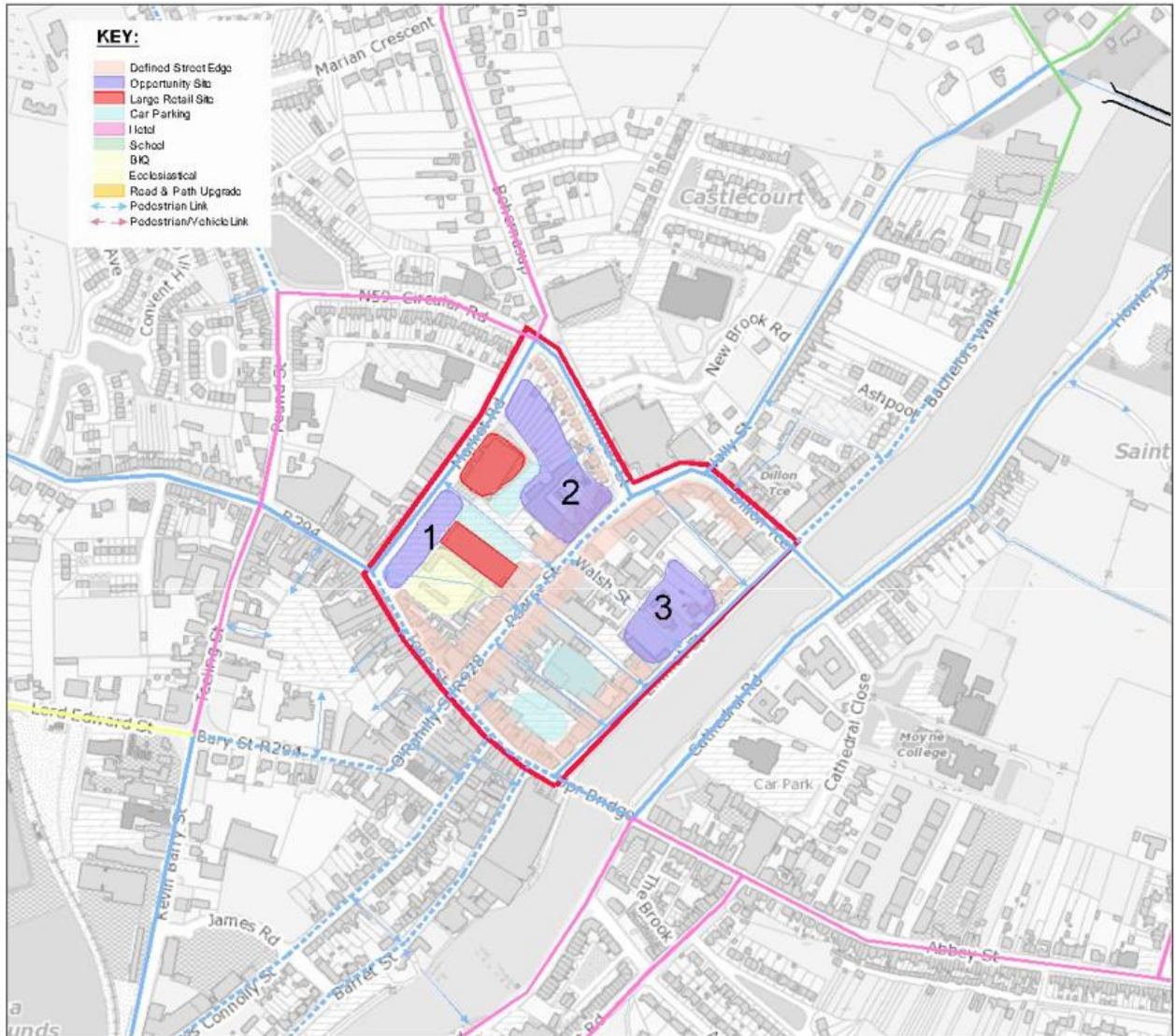
4.7 Character Areas and Opportunity Sites

- 1. Town Core:** The Town Core extends from Market Road, Humbert Street, Emmet Street, Tolan Street, taking in Pearse Street and Walsh Street.
- 2. Moy Quarter:** This area extends along the River Moy taking in the Lower Bridge, Ridgepool, Upper Bridge, Emmet Street, Cathedral Road, Tom Ruane Park and Riverslade.
- 3. Western Quarter:** This area forms the outer town core and adjoins the Town Core and Moy Quarter on the western side and encompasses James Road, Kevin Barry Street, Teeling Street, Pound Street, Circular Road, Bohernasup, Castlecourt, Barrett Street and Bachelor's Walk.
- 4. Cathedral Quarter:** This area encompasses part of the town centre which is to the east of the Moy Quarter and includes Cathedral Road, the Upper Bridge, Plunket Road, Abbey Street, Cathedral Close, Bunree Road and ends at Howley Street.

5. **Quay Quarter:** This area encompasses part of Quay Road and ends at the junction with Creggs Road.

1. The Town Core

The Town Core extends from Market Road, Humbert Street, Emmet Street, Tolan Street, taking in Pearse Street and Walsh Street. Part of the Town Core forms the Ballina Town Centre ACA. Key regeneration projects within the Town Core include the Market Square regeneration project and the formalisation of the new link Road at Penny's.



Map 4.3: Spatial parameters of the Town Core

Spatial parameters of the Town Core Character Area	Main Issues/Challenges	Medium/Long Term Vision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus for commercial activity in Ballina • Contains several major retail supermarkets. • Significant car parking available • Pedestrian linkages from Market Square to Pearse Street and onto Emmet Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited housing supply • Significant level of vacancy and dereliction. • Traffic congestion and heavy traffic volumes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Travel measures • Improve permeability linkages • Flood Relief Scheme • Public Realm enhancements

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicular linkages to the rest of the town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of permeability for pedestrians and cyclists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regeneration projects at the Military Barracks, Market Square and BMW/Tesco site • Completion of Mary Robinson Centre
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Opportunity Site 1: Market Square



Map 4.4 Site Location & Map 4.5 Aerial image of site

Area: 0.3156 Hectares (approx.)

Land Use Zoning: Town Centre

Description: Market Square is located off Tone Street and Market Road within the established town core adjacent to the Military Barracks, Pennys and Tesco. Market Square is currently used as a car park and market area.

Potential: The Market Square Site has significant potential as a catalyst for re-energising the centre of Ballina.

Underpinning ambitions for the project are the development of the highest quality public-realm space, connectedness and permeability, civic value, economic value, innovation and transformational place-making.

Potential Uses:

- Cultural
- Civic space
- Public Realm

Opportunity Site 2: BMW Tesco area



Map 4.6 Site Location & Map 4.7 Aerial image of site

Area: 0.8965 Hectares (approx.)

Land Use Zoning: Town Centre

Description: Opportunity Site 2 is situated in the historic town core and comprises of a number of vacant and derelict units along Pearse Street, including the Ballina Mineral Water (BMW) site, vacant lands connecting to Market Road and adjoins the Tesco site on Market Road.

Potential:

The BMW Site has significant potential as a catalyst for re-energising the centre of Ballina.

Underpinning ambitions for the project are the development of highest quality public-realm spaces, connectedness, relevance, civic value, economic value, innovation, and transformational place-making.

Through a mix of commercial, residential, community and civic uses the project will provide an anchor for the regeneration of Ballina. There is additional scope available for the development of the backlands which runs parallel to established development along Humbert Street.

Potential Uses:

- Residential
- Offices
- Cultural
- Civic space
- Car Parking
- Commercial

Opportunity Site 3: Emmet Street



Map 4.8 Site Location & Map 4.9 Aerial image of site

Area: 0.5781 Hectares (approx.)

Land Use Zoning: Town Centre

Description: Opportunity Site 3 comprises of a funeral home and car parking and also derelict residential units to the north. There are permeability linkages from this site to Pearse Street and Emmet Street linking onto the River Moy.

Potential: The site has potential for both town centre and residential uses. The area forms part of a fine-grained streetscape along Emmet Street which is comprised of a mix of residential, mixed use, tourism, and retail formats.

The development of this site has potential to contribute to the revitalisation of underutilised lands within the town centre area and more appropriate town centre uses.

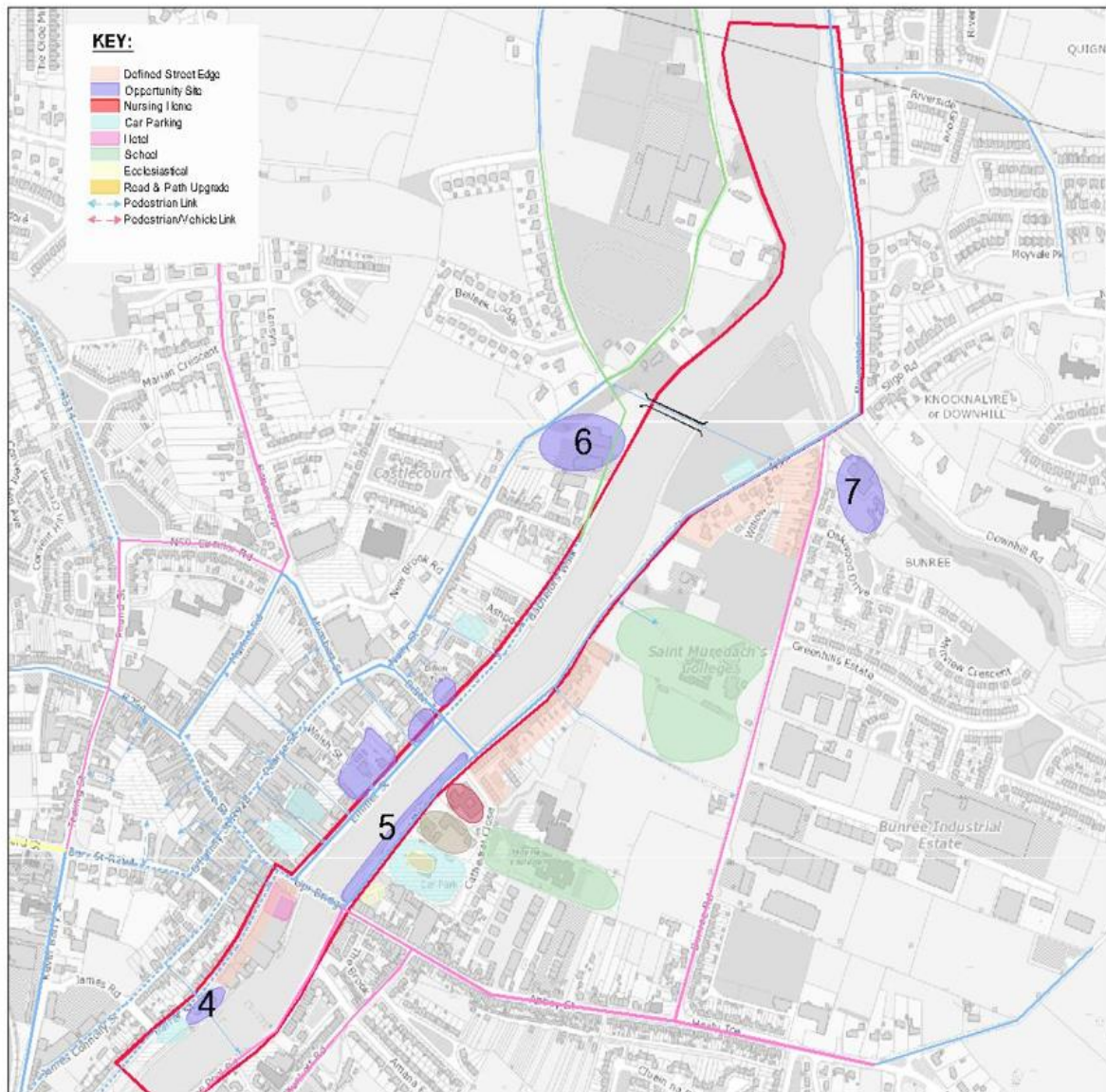
The site holds potential for the improvement of the street frontage, with additional scope available for the development of permeability linkages between Emmet Street, the Moy, Walsh Street and Pearse Street

Potential Uses:

- Commercial
- Offices
- Tourist related development
- Permeability linkages

2. Moy Quarter:

This area extends along the river Moy taking in the Lower Bridge, Ridgepool, Upper Bridge, Emmet Street, Cathedral Road, Tom Ruane Park and Riverslade. Key regeneration works in the Moy Quarter area are public realm works in Emmet Street and Cathedral Road resulting from the Ballina Flood Relief Scheme (see Section 10.4.1).



Map 4.10: Spatial Parameters of Moy Quarter CA

Spatial parameters of the Moy Quarter Character Area	Main Issues/Challenges	Medium/Long Term Vision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inner and outer retail cores adjoin the Moy Quarter • Pedestrian linkages from Emmet Street to Cathedral Road and to the Quay and rest of the town. • Vehicular linkages to the rest of the town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited housing supply • Significant level of vacancy and dereliction. • Traffic congestion and heavy traffic volumes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Travel measures • Improve permeability linkages • Flood Relief Scheme • Public Realm enhancements

Opportunity Site 4: Becketts House and adjacent lands



Map 4.11 Site Location & Map 4.12 Aerial image of site

Area: 0.1732 Hectares (approx.)

Land Use Zoning: Town Centre

Description: Opportunity Site 4 is situated between Barrett Street along the banks of the River Moy. The site comprises of derelict residential buildings and vacant lands. There is a car park to the south of the site.

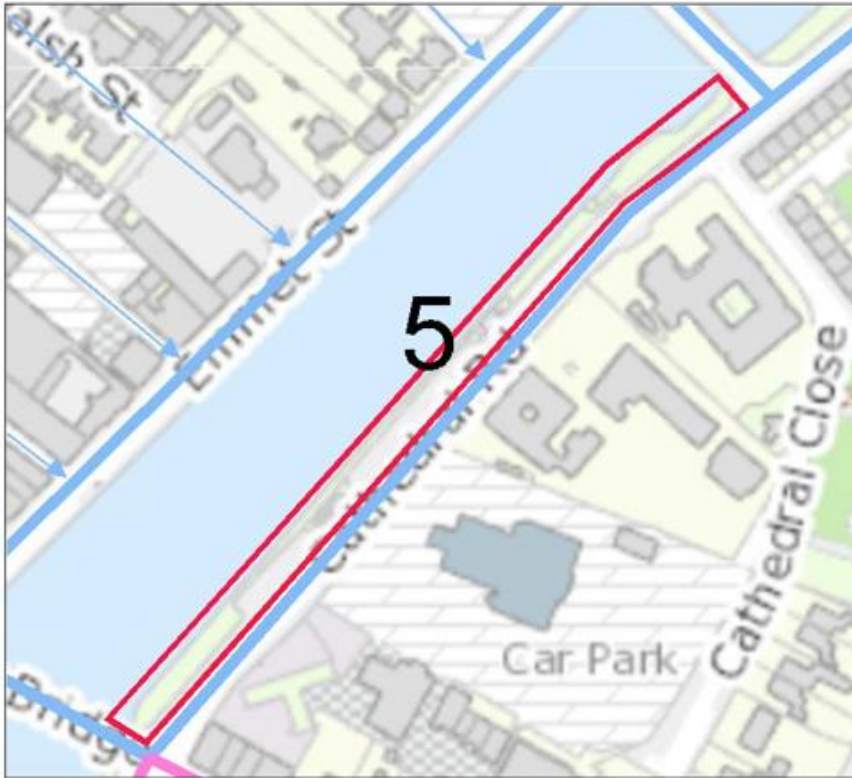
Potential: Residential

Underpinning ambitions for the project are the development of the highest quality public-realm space, connectedness and permeability, civic value, economic value, innovation and transformational place-making.

Potential Uses:

- Residential
- Cultural/Arts
- Civic space
- Public realm

Opportunity Site 5: Public Realm works along Cathedral Road



Map 4.13 Site Location.

Map 4.14 Aerial image of site

Area: 0.22 Hectares (approx.)

Land Use Zoning: Town Centre

Description:

Opportunity Site 5 is located between Cathedral Road and the banks of the River Moy at the location of flood relief works.

Potential Uses:

Revitalise and rejuvenate this area of the town centre and opportunities for the creation of a civic space and improved public realm.

Underpinning ambitions are the development of the highest quality public-realm space, connectedness and permeability, civic value and transformational place-making.

Opportunity Site 6: Old Creamery Site



Map 4.15 Site Location.

Map 4.16 Aerial image of site

Area: 1.7084 Hectares (approx.)

Land Use Zoning: New Residential

Description: Opportunity Site 6 comprises of a former creamery building and adjacent vacant lands. The site adjoins the town centre to the south and low density residential dwellings to the north. The River Moy bounds the site to the east.

Potential:

The development of this site has potential to contribute to the revitalisation of underutilised lands within the town centre area for residential uses and permeability linkages.

Potential Uses:

- Residential
- permeability linkages
- Active Travel identified pedestrian bridge

Opportunity Site 7: Old Mill



Map 4.17 Site Location.

Map 4.18 Aerial image of site

Area: 0.9558 Hectares (approx.)

Land Use Zoning: Edge of Town Centre

Description:

Opportunity Site 7 is situated off the N59 and Oakwood Drive It adjoins the Bunree River/Moy Tributary and is adjacent to Bunree Road. The site comprises of a derelict Mill and ancillary buildings.

Potential:

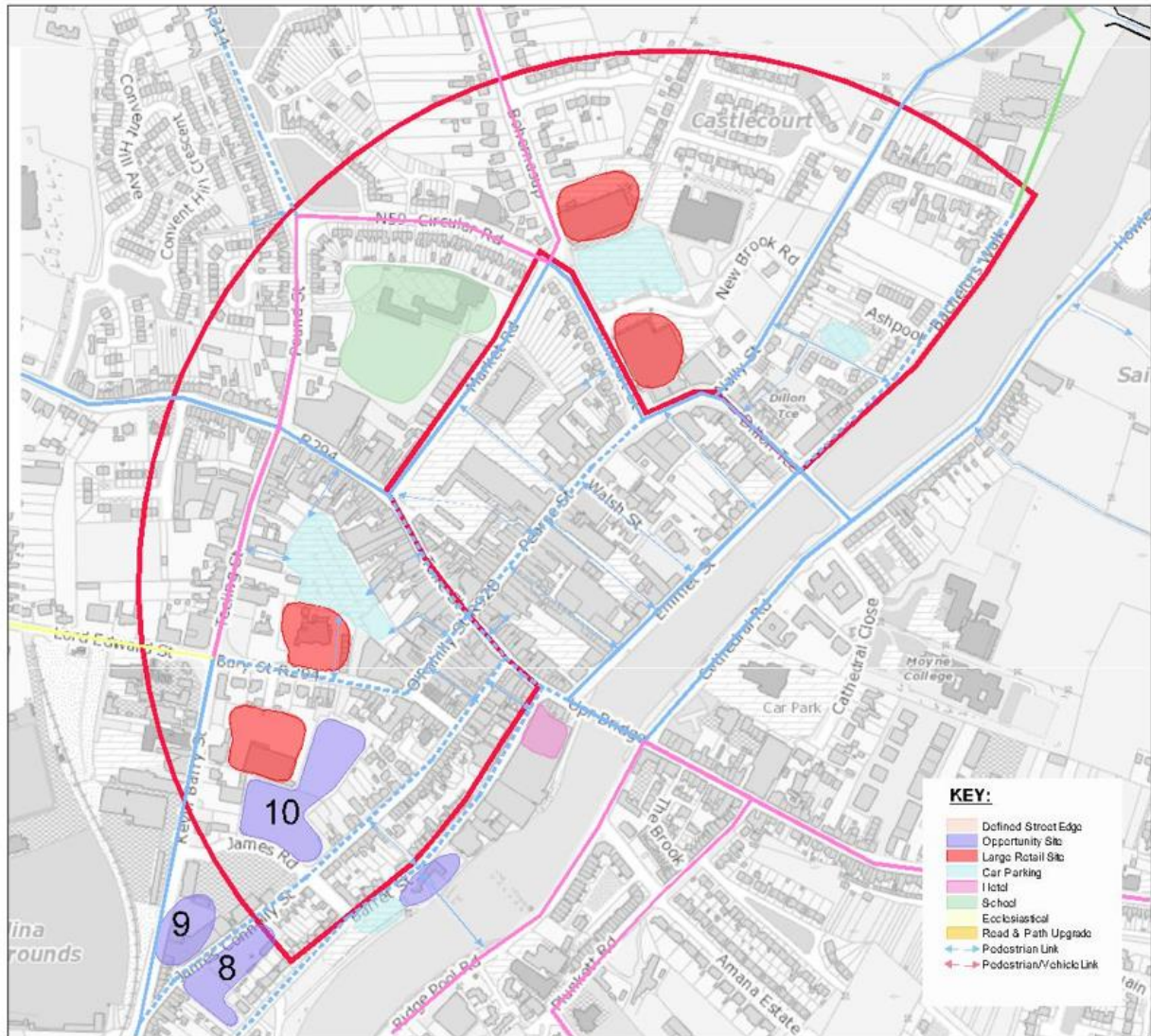
The development of this site has potential to contribute to the revitalisation of underutilised lands within the edge of town centre area for higher density residential and town centre uses and permeability linkages.

Potential Uses:

- Residential
- Tourist related development.
- Commercial
- Permeability linkages

3. Western Quarter:

This area forms the edge of town core and adjoins the Town Core and Moy Quarter on the western side and encompasses James Road, Kevin Barry Street, Teeling Street, Pound Street, Circular Road, Bohernasup, Castlecourt, Barrett Street and Bachelor's Walk.



Map 4.19: Spatial Parameters and Opportunity Sites of the Western Quarter CA

Spatial parameters of the Western Quarter CRA	Main Issues/Challenges	Medium/Long Term Vision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian linkages to town centre and train and bus stations. • Vehicular linkages to the rest of the town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permeability and linkages • Limited housing supply • Significant level of vacancy and dereliction. • Traffic congestion and heavy traffic volumes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Travel measures • Improve permeability linkages. • Public Realm enhancements

Opportunity Site 8: James Connolly Street



Map 4.20 Site Location.

Map 4.21 Aerial image of site

Area: 0.4476 Hectares (approx.)

Land Use Zoning: Edge of Town Centre

Description: Opportunity Site 8 is located along James Connolly Street and comprises of a disused concrete manufacturing plant and yard

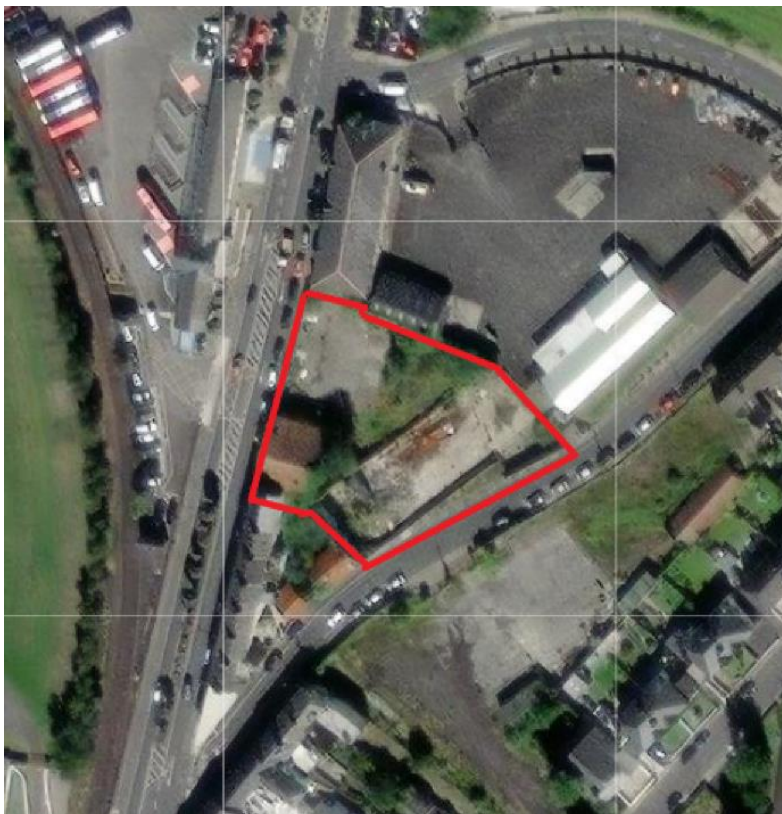
Potential:

The site has potential for both town centre and residential uses. The development of this site has potential to contribute to the revitalisation of underutilised lands in the edge of town core area. The site holds potential for the improvement of the street frontage, with additional scope available for the development of permeability linkages between Morrison Terrace, Barrett Street and the River Moy

Potential Uses:

- Residential
- Offices
- Permeability links
- Car Parking
- Commercial

Opportunity Site 9: Duffy's Bakery Site



Map 4.22 Site Location. & **Map 4.23** Aerial Image of site

Area: 0.5232 Hectares (approx.)

Land Use Zoning: Edge of Town Centre

Description:

Opportunity Site 9 is located along James Connolly Street and Kevin Barry Street comprises of a disused bakery and yard. Eircom owner lands are located adjacent to the lands which adjoin James Road.

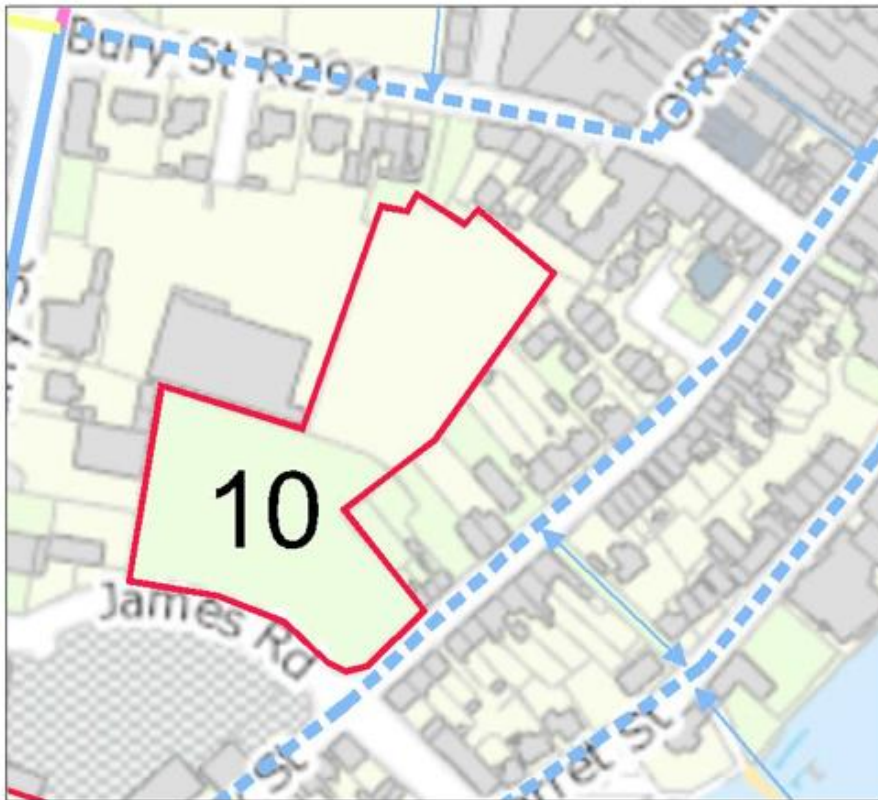
Potential:

The site has potential for both town centre and residential uses. The development of this site has potential to contribute to the revitalisation of underutilised lands in the edge of town core area. The site holds potential for the improvement of two street frontages, with additional scope available for the development of permeability linkages between the train and bus stations and James Road, Morrison Terrace, Barrett Street and the River Moy

Potential Uses:

- Residential
- Offices
- Permeability links
- Car Parking
- Commercial

Opportunity Site 10: James Road



Map 4.24 Site Location.

Map 4.25 Aerial image of site

Area: 1.04 Hectares (approx.)

Land Use Zoning: Town Centre

Description: Opportunity Site 10 is located off James Road James Connolly Street and can be accessed from Bury Street through pedestrian walkways. The site is adjacent to a new supermarket and residential and commercial units around the lands in question.

Potential:

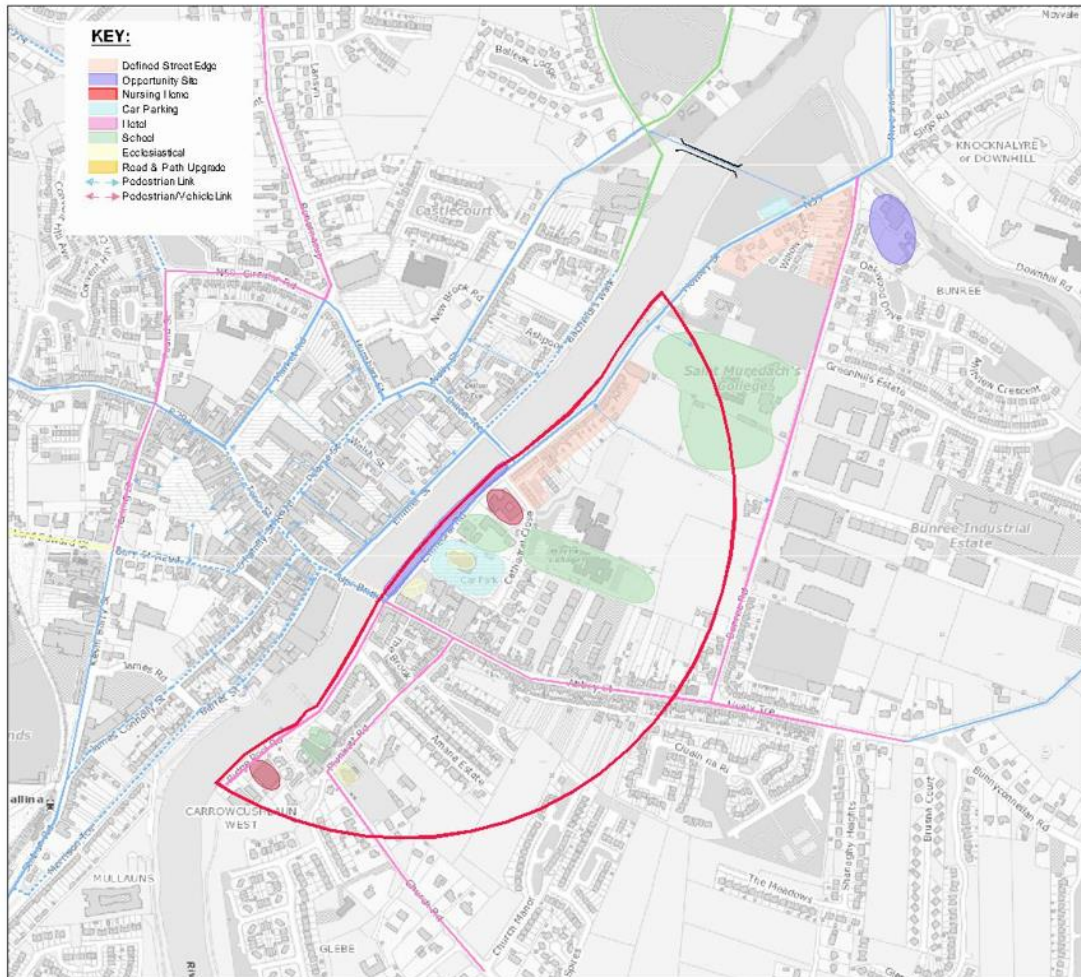
The site has potential for both town centre and residential uses. The development of this site has potential to contribute to the revitalisation of underutilised lands in the town core area. The site holds potential for the improvement of two street frontages, with additional scope available for the development of permeability linkages between the town centre and the Moy, James Road and bus and train stations.

Potential Uses:

- Residential
- Offices
- Permeability links
- Car Parking
- Commercial

4. Cathedral Quarter:

This area encompasses part of the town centre which is to the east of the Moy Quarter and includes Cathedral Road, the Upper Bridge, Plunket Road, Abbey Street, Cathedral Close, Bunree Road and ends at Howley Street. Key regeneration works in the Cathedral quarter are the same as the Moy Quarter area which are public realm works in Emmet Street and Cathedral Road resulting from Flood Relief Scheme.

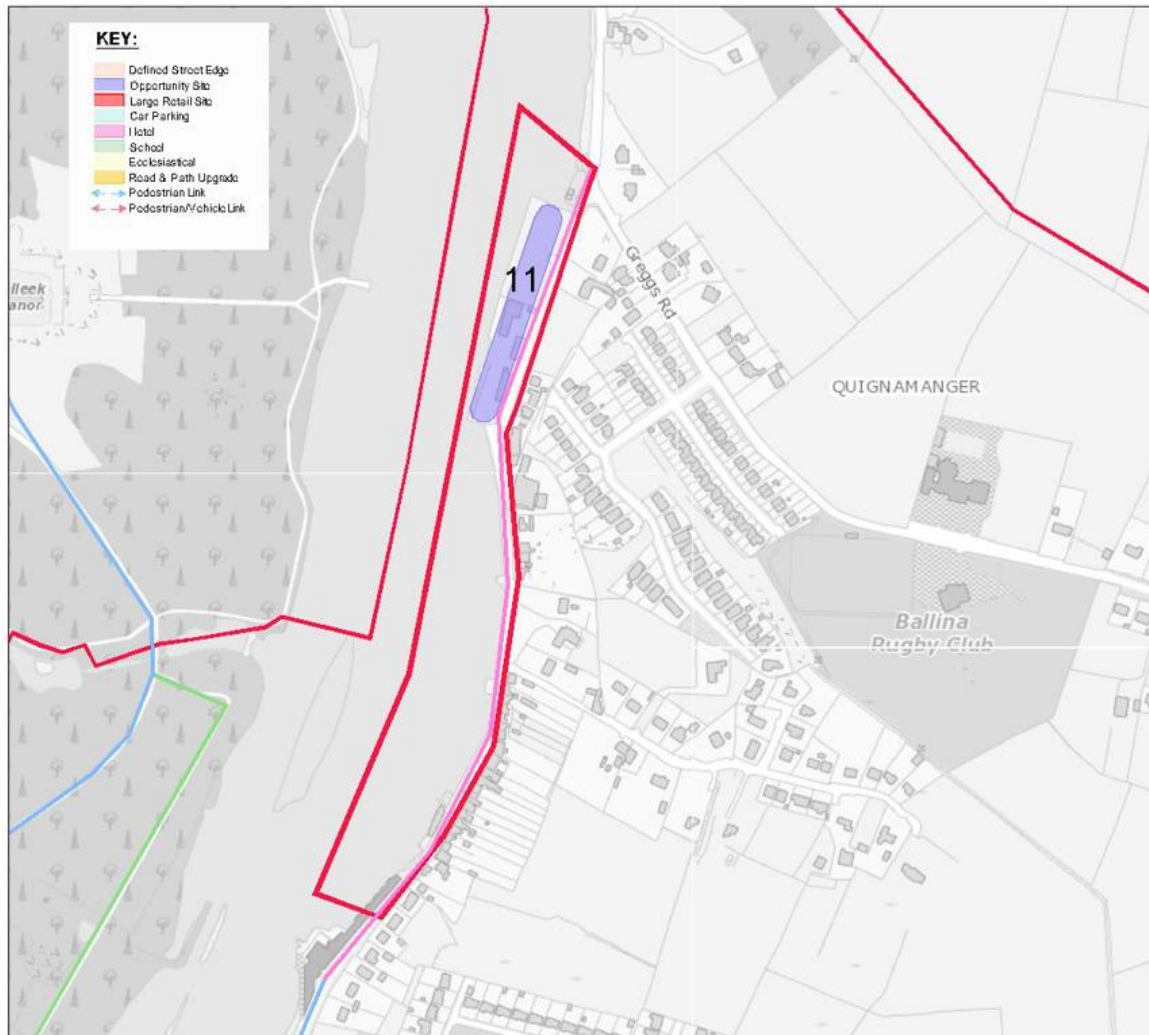


Map 4.26: Spatial Parameters of the Cathedral Quarter CA

Spatial parameters of the Cathedral Quarter CRA	Main Issues/Challenges	Medium/Long Term Vision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern quarter of Town Centre • Pedestrian and vehicular linkages from Cathedral Road to the Quay, Emmet Street, Plunket Road and Bunniconnellan Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permeability and linkages • Limited housing supply • Significant level of vacancy and dereliction. • Traffic congestion and heavy traffic volumes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Travel measures • Flood Relief Scheme • Improve permeability linkages. • Public Realm enhancements

5. Quay Quarter:

This area encompasses part of Quay Road and Quay area and ends at the junction with Creggs Road. Key Regeneration Projects within the Quay Quarter Area include the Quay Regeneration Project and public realm enhancements.



Map 4.27: Spatial parameters of the Quay Quarter CRA

Spatial parameters of the Quay Quarter	Main Issues/Challenges	Medium/Long Term Vision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permeability and linkages to the Quay and town Access to the Moy for boating, fishing and water sports. Vacancy and Dereliction Housing Supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linkages to opposite side of the River at Belleek Sub-settlement of Ballina Capacity for self-sustaining community Additional housing supply Public realm and regeneration works along the Quay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master plan required for the area Capacity for self-sustaining community Public realm and regeneration works along the Quay

Opportunity Site 11 -Quay regeneration area



Map 4.28 Site Location.

Map 4.29 Aerial image of site

Area: 0.9010 Hectares (approx.)

Land Use Zoning: Tourism and Related

Description: Opportunity Site 11 is comprised of lands at the Quay which are situated on the River Moy. Current uses include a beautician, hair salon, Cultural and Events Centre, disused bakery shop and car parking

Potential: Revitalise and rejuvenate this area of the Quay and opportunities for the creation of a civic space and improved public realm.

Underpinning ambitions for the area are the development of highest quality public-realm spaces, connectedness, tourism and marine activity, civic value, economic value, innovation and transformational place-making.

Potential Uses:

- Tourism and marine development
- Public realm
- Light commercial

4.8 Town Centre and Regeneration Policies and Objectives

Town Centre Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

TCP 1	Ensure that new development in the town centre and in particular the Opportunity Site Areas comprise of the highest of qualitative and design standards, complimenting the existing historical built fabric, or natural heritage, sustaining Ballina as a town in which to live, work, invest in and do business.
TCP 2	Seek to develop and improve areas within the town in need of regeneration, renewal, and redevelopment. The Council will seek to apply, where appropriate, the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, Derelict Sites Act, and use Compulsory Purchase Orders and other active land management instruments, as appropriate, to facilitate regeneration, housing supply, employment opportunities and community facilities.
TCP 3	Protect the visual character, built and cultural heritage, ambience, and vitality of the traditional heart of the town centre to meet the retailing and service needs of the area, in addition to offering a pleasant and attractive environment for shopping, business, tourism, recreation and living.
TCP 4	Actively encourage, support, and facilitate environmental and public realm improvements in Ballina to address environmental quality, urban design, safety, identity, and traffic impact.
TCP 5	Support the development of the further public realm projects in Ballina that will enhance the aesthetics of the town's built and natural character and improve the overall ambience and visitor experience of the town.
TCP 6	Embed an age-friendly approach to the design of the public realm.
TCP 7	Support and encourage the principle of healthy place-making in Ballina

Town Centre Objectives

It is an objective to:

TCO 1	Continue to encourage and facilitate the reuse and regeneration of derelict, vacant, backlands and underutilised lands and buildings in the town centre through active land management for retail, residential and other mixed uses and where necessary through appropriate legislative mechanisms/instruments and / or by supporting the progression and delivery of projects funded by the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and other appropriate funds to achieve this aim.
TCO 2	Support and facilitate the implementation the Draft Public Realm Plan for Ballina, including proposals for improving the pedestrian environment for residents and visitors.

TCO 3	Work with landowners and other stakeholders in the redevelopment of the identified 'opportunity sites' for appropriate town centre uses over the lifetime of the Plan.
TCO 4	Encourage and facilitate the development of Opportunity Sites in Ballina for a mixture of uses that will contribute to the regeneration, vibrancy, diversity, vitality, attractiveness, safety, liveability, and compact growth of the town centre. In conjunction with this, proposed developments must demonstrate how they will interact within its context and the wider urban area.
TCO 5	Work in partnership with community groups in the development of regeneration initiatives and public realm enhancement projects and to seek funding for projects as opportunities arise.
TCO 6	Support the provision of cycling infrastructure, bicycle parking facilities and electric vehicle charging points in the town centre, in accordance with the recommendations of the Local Transport Plan and subject to traffic and pedestrian safety.
TCO 7	Undertake a building heights and residential density study for Ballina town, within a year of adoption of this Local Area Plan, to identify suitable locations within the town where development potential for greater height and density rates can be suitably accommodated.
TCO 8	<p>a) Promote high quality place-making and public realm in accordance with the Mayo Development Plan 2022 – 2028, including the Development Management Standards, any replacement thereof and any relevant Section 28 Guidance. All development shall demonstrate climate resilience measures to climate-proof critical infrastructure.</p> <p>b) Ensure the highest quality of public realm and urban design principles are applied in the town centre, and the opportunity areas identified in this Proposed Plan. The success of the public realm is high quality, easily maintained street furniture, soft landscaping. Drainage solutions should be designed on the principles of SuDS.</p> <p>c) Ensure development proposals have considered the urban design criteria of site context, connectivity, inclusivity, variety, efficiency, distinctiveness, layout, public realm, adaptability, privacy and amenity, parking and detailed design.</p>
TCO 9	Facilitate and support the re-use/repurposing and regeneration of vacant/derelict land and buildings within the town centre with due cognisance of the character, built heritage and design requirements for Architectural Conservation Area's (ACAs).
TCO 10	Mayo County Council will prepare, or coordinate, as appropriate, urban design frameworks/masterplans for the Opportunity Sites in Ballina Town to inform future development proposals.
TCO 11	Maintain and enhance the vitality and vibrancy of the Town Centre by addressing and controlling leakage of social, economic, and service activities to areas outside the Town Centre.
TCO 12	Prevent the use of film or screening that obscures the glazed areas of a shopfront window where it negatively impacts upon the streetscape.

5.1 Strategic Aim:

To support and enhance the sustainable economic growth of Ballina, consistent with its role as a Key Town through the provision of designated areas for high quality employment, through the expansion and protection of its tourism product and through the enhancement and expansion of its role as a thriving retail destination.

5.2 Introduction

The NPF sets out the development of a strong economy supported by enterprise, innovation, and skills as a National Strategic Outcome, that will depend on creating places that foster enterprise and innovation and attract investment and talent. The NPF states that this can be achieved by building regional economic drivers. The RSES has designated Ballina as a Key Town, and therefore is regarded as having the capacity to act as a regional economic growth driver. To fulfil Ballina's regional role, it is critically important that job opportunities are created in the town to sustain its economic growth. A healthy economy contributes to the quality of life for those who live and work in the town and its environs. Retaining existing jobs and creating new employment opportunities in Ballina are key priorities for the Council.

5.3 Ballina/ North Mayo Growth Cluster Study (BNMGCS)

The Ballina / North Mayo Growth Cluster Study (BNMGCS) which was commissioned by Mayo County Council, outlines a high-level strategy, Vision 2030 – North Mayo Economic Gateway to 'unlock' opportunities to further develop the established linkages and synergies between Ballina, classified a 'Key Town' within the Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy, regional settlements and the Regional Growth Centre of Sligo. Ballina will be a central economic driver for the North Mayo region and southwestern Sligo within this Gateway. The BNMGCS outlines a recommended course of action to develop the 'Irish Market Town of the Future' for Ballina as a catalyst for regional growth in North Mayo based on the strength of its community, location, heritage, and natural resource assets. The market town of the future will be a catalyst for regional economic growth and represent the focal point of an agile regional economic cluster maximising existing and emerging sectoral opportunities. In this regard, identifying and promoting the linkages and synergies within North Mayo and southwestern Sligo are an important spatial element underpinning this strategy.

5.4 Economic Profile

Ballina has a strong focus on commerce and manufacturing with servicing and retail being the town's second principal function. The town also has an administrative function including Government Departments and national bodies as well as Mayo County Council Municipal District offices. The town also serves a public health function provided by the district hospital. Ballina has nearly 5,000 jobs and a jobs/resident worker ratio of 1:36.

With a population of over 10,000, Ballina functions as the main economic driver for a large area of north Mayo. Furthermore, due to its proximity to the border of County Sligo, Ballina also serves as the

main economic, commercial, and social/educational centre for parts of west Sligo. This influence, in turn, overlaps with the western sphere of influence of the Regional Growth Centre of Sligo Town. This juxtaposition highlights Ballina’s current and future role both as a stand-alone economic driver and integrating as part of the network of other key population centres and economic drivers in the region.

It has a strong town centre which has maintained its vibrancy through the location of supermarkets in the town centre minimising out of town retail development. The town has attracted significant single enterprises including Ballina Beverages, Lionbridge, and Hollister. There is significant potential for regeneration within the town core particularly in the Market Square/Military Barracks area as well as potential riverside amenities along the River Moy. URDF funding has been allocated for the regeneration and redevelopment of the Military Barracks into a tech hub and renewed market centre. There is capacity in public and private commercial/business parks and industrial estates situated within the town to cater for the expansion of existing businesses and attract new industries and enterprises.

The town has rail connectivity to Dublin, as well as to the south should the Western Rail Corridor be realised. Ballina has the most significant rail freight activity outside of Dublin, providing a vital service to commercial/industry in the town and beyond and supports the transition to a climate neutral and climate resilient region. The proximity of Ireland West Airport Knock to Ballina benefits the town and significantly broadens the transport network capacity to an international catchment.

5.5 Economic Development Strategy

A key principle underpinning the Plan is the pursuit of sustainable economic development opportunities to provide for an increase in the number of jobs based in the town. Ballina is an important employment centre within and outside of the County Mayo. The town has a high ratio of jobs to residential workforce at 1.361 (Census 2016), which means that they are attracting workers from a wide catchment area. For Ballina to fulfil its designated role as a Key Town and an important economic driver for the county and wider region, the town must aim to increase its jobs creation over the longer term. The overarching guidance in the NPF is that job creation should follow population growth at a ratio of 0.66:1 (NPO1c). Therefore, the Economic Development Strategy targets 1,306 extra jobs and a projected jobs ratio target of 0.66 for the town by 2028, as set out in Table 5.1 below. The jobs ratio aligns with the 0.66 jobs ratio target for the region, as outlined in the NPF.

Ballina	2011	2016	2028 (Population Projection)
Population	11,086	10,171	12,150
Labour Force	3,896	3,534	4,222
No. of jobs in Ballina	4,808	4,810	5,756
Job Ratio	1.234	1.361	1.363

Table 5.1 – Population and Jobs Information (RSES: pop growth match with job creation at 0.66:1= 0.66X (12,150-10,171=1,979) = 1,306 additional jobs needed.)

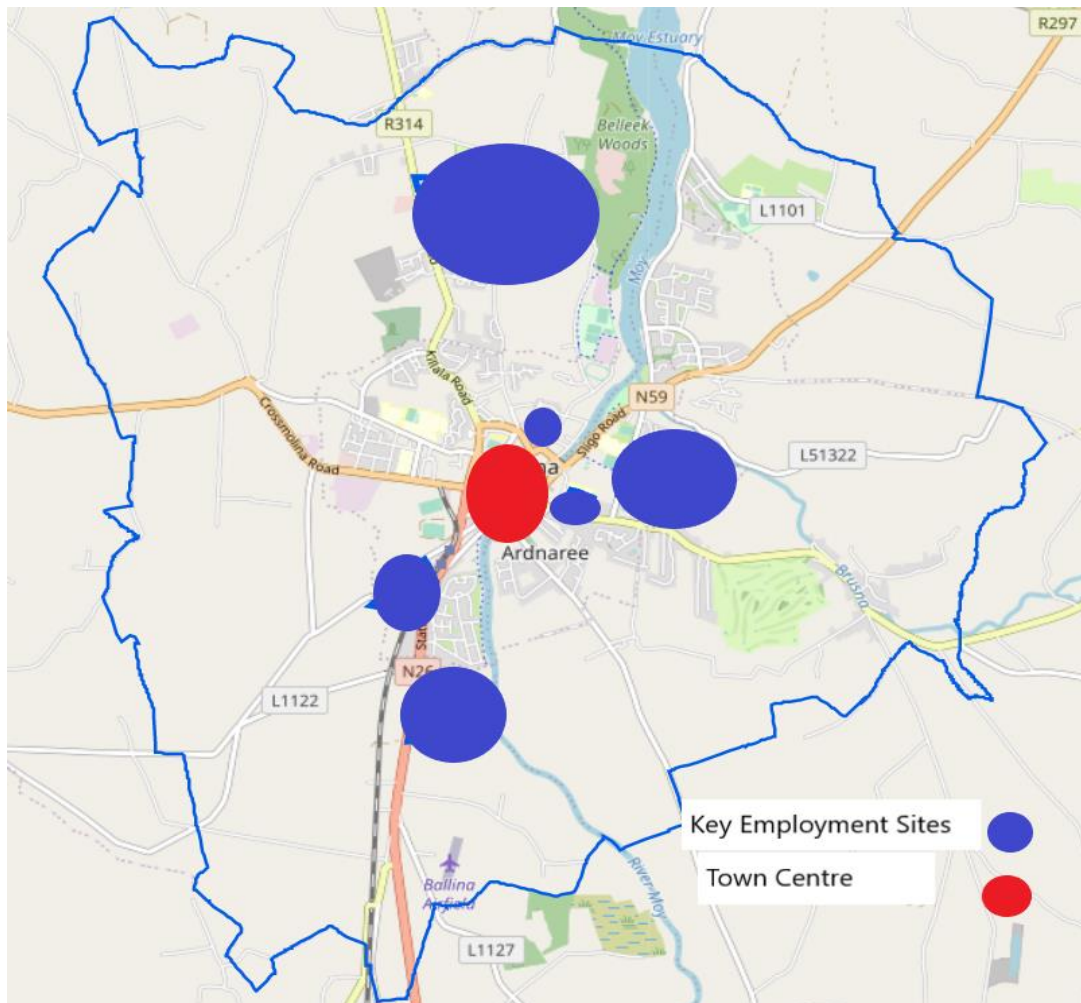
5.5.1 The Economic Development Strategy for Ballina will be achieved by:

- Providing the necessary infrastructure and zoned lands to attract economic development in recognition of the status of Ballina as a Key Town.
- Capitalising on the existing infrastructure in place in Ballina to enhance the local employment base.
- Regeneration of the town centre for the provision for retail and commercial, tourism and hospitality, cultural and amenity functions.
- Continuing to develop Ballina as a Level Two Town Centre in accordance with the RSES and the County Retail Hierarchy, by consolidating the retail and town centre offering and improving on the urban fabric and public realm of the town centre area.
- Ensuring new industrial or business floorspace will allow for future flexibility including future subdivision and/or amalgamation to provide for a range of accommodation particularly for small businesses.
- Development and expansion of the tourist product in Ballina by supporting tourism developments such as
- Supporting and facilitating all forms of employment activity, subject to environmental and other relevant planning considerations.
- Work with the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), IDA, OPW, Ballina Chamber of Commerce and other agencies regarding the development of potential economic and tourism opportunities for Ballina.

5.5.2 Commercial: Office and Enterprise

Ballina has an administrative function including offices of the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government, the Road Safety Authority, and offices Mayo County Council. Located within the Market Square area of the town centre is the Military Barracks which has received URDF for the Ballina Innovation Quarter and Digital Hub, which will transform the historic town centre military complex that dates back to 1742 into a state-of-the-art digital hub and innovation centre with the capacity to create up to 210 jobs while also acting as a catalyst for urban regeneration of the town and its surroundings.

The hub will be comprised of 20 spaces for technology, digital media, and internet companies to scale and grow alongside local enterprises together with a distillery which will create jobs in the production of high-end rum. It forms part of a network of innovative co-working spaces in the western region. The creation of incubator units and hot-desking in the town centre will give the people who work remotely more than a desk, but an all-inclusive social element also. The Innovation Quarter can also serve as a crucial link with regional 3rd Level Colleges and Universities, e.g. National University of Ireland – Galway, Atlantic Technological University and will assist in facilitating the upskilling of the regional workforce through training.



Map 5.1 Main Employment Sites



5.5.3 Industry

Manufacturing employs 14.4% of the working population of the town compared to the national average of 9.5%. 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 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.

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 (see map 5.1 above). 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 and Hollister respectively and are not currently available for new industry. There is a limited area available in the Industrial Estate on the Bunree Road to the rear of the existing factory building. 87 hectares of undeveloped industrial zoned land is zoned within the plan boundary.

Ballina Industry 2016	Total	%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	33	0.91%
Building and construction	139	3.83%
Manufacturing industries	524	14.46%
Commerce and trade	964	26.59%
Transport and communications	151	4.17%
Public administration	197	5.43%
Professional services	805	22.21%
Other	812	22.40%
Total	3,625	

Table 5.2: Ballina Industry Breakdown (Census 2016)

5.5.2.1 Enterprise and Employment Lands of National or Regional Strategic Importance

The IDA currently own 14 hectares of land at the junction of the N59 Sligo Road and local road Creggs Road which is one of the key strategic employment sites within the County. Approximately 23ha of land is available for development within and adjacent to the IDA Park and these lands have the potential to accommodate both people and product intensive economic activity – knowledge orientated services and associated high tech manufacturing. Once developed, the IDA business park will be positioned and marketed as a suitable location for indigenous and foreign direct investment developments considered to be of national or regional strategic importance. Developments of national or regional strategic importance are those which contribute significantly to meeting any of the objectives of the National Planning Framework or contribute significantly to meeting any regional spatial and economic strategy for an area or have a significant effect on the area of more than one planning authority.

5.6 Retail

Ballina has a distinctive character, layout and fabric and a strong town centre which has maintained its vibrancy through the location of supermarkets in the town centre minimising out of town retail development. There are many national multiple retailers within the town centre, including Tesco, Penny's, Lidl, Aldi, Eason's and Dunnes Stores which are all key anchors and attract customers to the town centre. Retail warehousing for hardware, builders' suppliers and household goods are located

outside the town centre on the Bunree and Crossmolina Roads. The LAP encourages compact growth in the town centre and core retail area. It is recognised that the retail sector is pivotal to regeneration and renewal of Ballina town centre, its economic viability and delivery of a high-quality public realm, built environment and sense of place.

To support the primacy of the town centre for retail development, Mayo County Council will apply the sequential approach advocated in the retail guidelines when assessing retail developments. To assist in the application of the sequential approach, the land use zoning map for the LAP identifies an inner retail core (town centre) and outer retail core (edge of town centre). Distinguishing between the inner and edge of town centre, will support the historic town centre core, whilst ensuring edge of centre sites are within easy walking distance of the primary retail area of the town.



Town Centre Retail



Town Centre

5.6.1 Town Centre Retail Areas

Ballina town centre is primarily located around 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, Lidl site 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 edge of centre uses is also less clearly defined with a transition zone bounded by Kevin Barry Street, Barrett Street and Bury Street. Lidl provides a bookend for the centre at Humbert Street leading to Bohernasup.

This Plan focuses on the regeneration of the town centre (See Chapter 4) to cater for its changing role, providing for significant retail and commercial functions in tandem with bringing back homes into the centre. The regeneration of the town centre represents an opportunity to develop a sustainable environment which is an attractive place to work, live, invest, study and visit.

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. It offers a range of convenience and comparison shops, pharmacies, museums, cafés and restaurants, and public houses.



Map 5.2 Retail Focal Area



Map 5.3 Inner and Outer Retail Core

5.6.2 Inner and Outer Retail Area

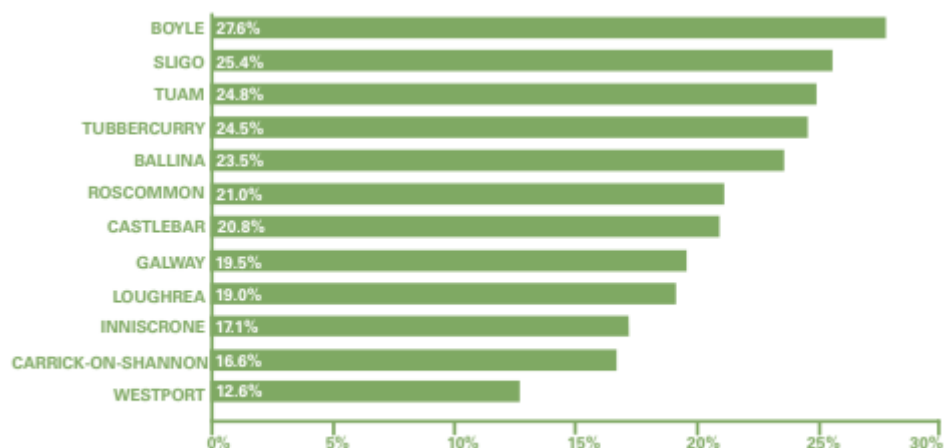
Ballina contains two distinct commercial/retail areas (See Map 5.2 and Map 5.3 above). The inner retail core area represents the historical shopping core, which contains a wide range of convenience and comparison shops, office and residential apartments adding to the mix of uses located within/along the historic central spine. The inner retail core area mainly provides for large convenience stores (See Map 5.3).

The inner retail core area, which is part of the historic commercial core, is the preferred area for retailing and Mayo County Council through this plan, will seek to protect and improve its vibrancy and vitality. The footprint of the inner retail core will be consolidated and encouraged to expand along the western end and to the rear of Pearse Street into Market Square.

Pre Covid-19 Ballina had a strong evening economy and has been accredited the Purple-Flag status for standards of excellence in managing the evening and night-time economy (ENTE), as one which is enjoyable, entertaining, diverse, and safe between the hours of 5pm and 5am.

5.6.3 Vacancy

The NPF, RSES and Mayo County Development Plan place a particular emphasis on the challenge presented by commercial vacancy rates in our towns and villages. The national commercial vacancy rate stands at 14.1% (Q2 of 2023). The commercial vacancy rate for County Mayo is 17.3% (Q2 of 2023), with the rate for Ballina at 23.5% (Q2 of 2023), see Figure 5.1 below.



Source: GeoDirectory Database

Figure 5.1 – Commercial Vacancy Rate by Town Q4 of 2022

The level of vacancy in Ballina town centre area has become a pronounced issue in recent years with factors such as online shopping and has been exacerbated further by the Covid-19 Pandemic. A concerted effort will be made through various funding mechanisms and collaboration with relevant organisations such as the Ballina Chamber of Commerce, to ensure that the core shopping area in the town are attractive, maintained and well serviced with infrastructure to secure their prosperity into the future.

To reduce retail/commercial vacancy levels, the Council will actively pursue the regeneration and renewal of Ballina town centre through the redevelopment of identified opportunity sites (Chapter 4) and the delivery of a high-quality public realm. This will greatly enhance the economic vitality and viability of the town centre, increase footfall, and reduce retail and commercial vacancy.

5.7 Tourism

Mayo County Council recognises that there is a major opportunity to further develop Ballina's tourism industry as a key economic sector for the town and Quay area. Ballina has a number of major tourist attractions, particularly the River Moy and its associated salmon fishery and the annual Ballina Salmon Festival. It is also well located to act as a gateway to the wild and scenic landscapes of the west of the county. Other tourist developments which offer considerable opportunities for the town include the Jackie Clarke Collection and Mary Robinson Centre. There are also proposals for a Salmon Museum, and the development of additional leisure facilities, including marine facilities at the Quay.



Image: Heritage Day during annual Salmon Festival Ballina.

A key priority for Ballina in the RSES is to build on the significant tourism potential of Ballina through investment in tourism related infrastructure, including Monasteries of the Moy Greenway from Belleek to Killala, incorporating EuroVelo1 Atlantic Coastal Route, Mountain Biking Trail via Ballina connecting the Wild Nephin Ballycroy National Park to the National Mountain Bike Trail at Coolaney. The delivery of the cycling infrastructure through the Ballina LTP will help realise this priority.

5.8 Remote Working, Co-working and Business Workspaces

The Plan encourages shared workspaces as a use to accommodate those who do not wish to commute long distances and who seek to avail of a local formalised shared work environment. Having regard to the demand arising from the changed work patterns and behaviours, this plan supports the provision of appropriately located remote working hub/premises for the purposes of multi-purpose shared working space.

The Council recognises that managed co-working hubs provide much more than a physical centre for start-ups and expanding enterprises, allowing important interaction between early-stage entrepreneurs, remote workers, more experienced business owners and Local Enterprise staff. Increased investment in remote working hubs that are in locations that suit commuters and are close to childcare facilities will also potentially attract people to live in towns.

Town centre locations are preferred (though not limited to), where the reuse of underutilised or vacant properties will be encouraged and supported.

5.8.1 Live – Work Units

Traditionally office-based activities have tended to have a high density of employment and whilst the impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic on the density of employees per office space is not yet clear, it is anticipated that employers will require lower densities and, in some cases, offer a blended solution of office and remote working. The increase in working from home/e-working provides new opportunities for people who would like to live in Ballina. The recent change in work patterns has the benefit of increasing the vibrancy of the town centre through the concept of a live-work unit.

A live-work unit can be defined as a single commercial unit, designed to accommodate a residential element e.g. commercial ground floor with living accommodation over. Live-work units are used for business/enterprise to provide for uses such as office, medical and related consultations, data

processing, software development, media associated uses, publishing and film production, artists and crafts studios, home-based economic activity, and creative industries.

While this Plan supports the concept of home working, it is important that such activity is not injurious to the amenities of a predominantly residential area and therefore employment use in a dwelling should be restricted to the occupier(s) of the dwelling and such use should be subordinate to the main use of the dwelling as a residence.

5.9 Economic Development Policies and Objectives

Economic Development, Commercial and Industry Policy	
It is the policy of the Council to	
EDP 1	Encourage the development of employment areas in a comprehensive and sequential manner which uses existing infrastructure effectively and efficiently, ensuring they are designed to the highest architectural and landscaping standards, with natural site features, such as watercourses, trees and hedgerows be retained and enhanced as an integral part of the development/scheme.
EDP 2	Support the development and expansion of enterprise and employment within Ballina, and to co-operate with all stakeholders, landowners, and relevant agencies to attract investment, while at the same time ensuring there is no resultant negative impact on the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre.
EDP 3	Support and promote the development of economic and enterprise development and activity in a manner which contributes to the transition to a carbon neutral, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable Ballina.

Economic Development Objectives	
It is the objective of the Council to	
EDO 1	Engage with IDA Ireland and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment in seeking to attract indigenous and Foreign Direct Investment into Ballina of a type consistent with the Enterprise and Employment land use zoning objectives of this plan.
EDO 2	Ensure new enterprise and employment uses provide Workplace Travel Plans /Mobility Management Plans to reduce dependency on private modes of travel consistent with the principles set out in the National Transport Authority guidance: 'Achieving Effective Workplace Travel Plans'.
EDO 3	Support, promote and facilitate the provision of shared co-working spaces/hubs in town centre and other appropriate locations in Ballina to provide multi-purpose flexible workspace options.

Retail and Town Centre Policy

It is a Policy of the Council to:

EDP 4	Support the retail function of Ballina as a Regional Tier 2 Category town in the Retail Hierarchy, and to consolidate existing retail development within the town centre.
EDP 5	Support and facilitate the development of retail, retail services and niche retailing in the town centre area, including new/infill development and redevelopment of an appropriate scale.
EDP 6	Support and facilitate the development of retail led tourism associated with the natural and built heritage assets of Ballina.

Retail and Town Centre Objectives

It is an Objective of the Council to:

EDO 4	The Council, in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Local Authorities (DECLG, 2012 or as amended or superseded) will continue to protect and promote the vitality and viability of Ballina town centre, including applying a ‘town centre first approach’ or sequential test for retail developments.
EDO 5	Manage the over proliferation of certain undesirable uses such as fast-food outlets, amusement arcades, off licences, bookmakers, and of other non-retail uses in the interest of protecting the vibrancy, residential amenity, and public realm of Ballina’s town centre.
EDO 6	Ensure that new shop front and signage design contributes positively to and enhances the streetscape and is in accordance with the guidance set out in The Development Management Standards of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 and as set out in the Mayo Shopfronts Booklet (Mayo County Council).
EDO 7	To support, promote and facilitates measures, such as town centre regeneration, implementation of the local transport plan to improve accessibility and public realm improvements and other town centre first initiatives over the plan period, to reduce retail and commercial vacancy in Ballina town centre.

Tourism Policies

It is the policy of the Council to

EDP 7	Promote and support and facilitate the development of the tourism infrastructure in Ballina with emphasis on utilising and harnessing, in an appropriate and sustainable manner, the potential of the town’s natural and built heritage.
EDP 8	Encourage the development of tourism activities such as water-based activities, cultural and food tourism including festivals and food markets in Ballina.

EDP 9	Support the development of new tourist facilities or the upgrading / extension of existing tourist facilities.
EDP 10	Promote festivals and sporting events to increase the tourism, cultural and lifestyle profile of the town.
EDP 11	Support and encourage the provision of ground floor live work units and/or co-working spaces, as part of mixed-use and residential developments, in appropriate town centre locations, as a means of enlivening streets and to provide flexible accommodation for small businesses and remote working opportunities.

Tourism Objectives

It is the objective of the Council to

EDO 8	Support and facilitate the development of an integrated network of greenways and heritage trails, including The Monasteries of the Moy from Belleek to Killala.
EDO 9	Work with all relevant stakeholders and Failte Ireland to facilitate the provision of standardised signage and interpretation for tourism facilities and tourist attractions throughout the town.
EDO 10	Explore the development potential of Ballina Harbour/Quay area in terms of marine related tourism and extensive marine resources.

Chapter 6 Housing and Sustainable Communities

6.1 Strategic Aim

To facilitate and deliver liveable, high-quality, nearly zero-energy, integrated residential development that provides for an appropriate demographic mix in tandem with the delivery of good social and physical infrastructure to support the development of vibrant and diverse communities.

6.2 Introduction

Sustainable communities meet the residential, social, and recreational needs of existing and future residents, their children and other users, providing opportunities for prosperity and a high quality of life. The socio-economic context for Ballina provides a picture of a healthy town which benefits from a wide range of natural, recreational, and social amenities. The focus of the Plan period will be to enhance these amenities and provide quality housing and a range of choice to meet the needs of the change demographics and all sectors of the population.

6.3 Residential Development Strategy

The Development Strategy for the town is based around a framework to facilitate residential development on lands zoned within the town centre and on a range of other residential sites within walking distance and close to existing services. The Council will also seek to promote compact growth through the re-use and re-development of vacant properties, brownfield, and infill sites within the town in a sequential manner. This will be achieved by locating a high proportion of housing in the existing built-up footprint of Ballina at appropriate densities, thereby strengthening the town centre. New housing allocation must be consistent with the Core Strategy and be proportionate to the size, function and capacity of Ballina as a Key Town in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy.

Residential development in Ballina will be assessed having regard to the following national guidance and policies (and any review of these guidance documents):

- Housing for All – a New Housing Plan for Ireland (DHLGH 2021)
- Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities (DEHLG, 2007)
- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (DEHLG, 2009)
- Design Standards for New Apartments (DHPLG, 2018)
- Urban Development and Building Heights (DHPLG, 2018)
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DTTS and DHPLG, 2013 and as updated)
- Development Management Standards set out at Volume II of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028.

6.4 Residential Development, Housing and Sustainable Communities

6.4.1 Housing Profile

Residential growth in Ballina over past decades has generally taken place north of the town off the Sligo, Killala and Crossmolina Roads and provision has comprised generally of 3 and 4 bed semi-detached and detached housing. The pattern of housing in Ballina consists of limited housing in the town centre with scope for expansion of high-density residential use. On the fringes of the town centre there are some high-density older suburbs including council housing schemes on the Crossmolina Road. At the town fringes there are substantial modern housing estates of 3 and 4-bedroom semi-detached units built on cul- de-sac road systems. Some of these estates are detached from the town with interlacing areas of agriculture and other lands. This is particularly evident along the Killala, Enniscrone and Bunnyconnellan Roads. Some ribbon development is also evident along these roads. Ballina has a significant presence of social and voluntary housing particularly in the Ardnaree and Crossmolina Road areas.

6.4.2 Residential Development, Capacity and Delivery

In accordance with the County Development Plan, and in order to facilitate the assessment of development proposals, applications will be required to be accompanied by an evidence-based analysis of housing needs and detailed design statements incorporating a mix of house types and sizes. All residential development proposals must comply with the provisions set out in the County Housing Strategy and Housing Need Demand Assessment in accordance with the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-28.

The development of infill sites and provision of living accommodation on upper floors of commercial units within the town centre is supported by the Plan. Proposals for infill development should be sensitively designed to have regard to proximity of neighbouring buildings, the uses of proposed development and neighbouring properties, impacts on light, overshadowing, servicing, noise, and general disturbance.

In accordance with the policies of the County Development Plan, the Housing Strategy and the requirements of Part V of the Act, social housing will be required to be delivered as part of new private housing which meets the thresholds set out in the Act. The Council is also continuing to deliver social housing in Ballina through the Government's Housing for All programme, including consideration for those with disabilities and special needs.

6.4.3 Residential Density, Mix and Design

Higher densities will be applied to Ballina to align with its role as a Key Town, subject to good design and development management standards being met. Increasing prevailing heights has a critical role to play in addressing the delivery of more compact growth in Ballina Town Centre, making optimal use of the capacity of sites in the town centre where transport, employment, services, or retail development can achieve a requisite level of intensity for sustainability. Tenure is an important consideration for the delivery of housing and Section 6.6 of the NPF identifies the need to estimate the demand for different tenure types. Therefore, in accordance with national policy and to respond to our demographic trends of smaller housing sizes and an ageing population, residential development

over the next plan period will need to provide a greater range of choice and options to meet the needs of the community.

The overall design and layout of new schemes should be of high quality and comply with the Urban Housing policy and objectives set out in Volume 1/Written Statement and Volume 2/ Development Management Standards of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-28. The Planning Authority may exercise its discretion in relation to quantitative standards in certain circumstances (see Section 11.2), particularly in appropriate town centre locations. Residential proposals within the Plan area must aim to deliver appropriate densities, adequate mix of building typologies and have consideration for prevailing heights appropriate to the urban context, whilst having due regard for the built heritage of Ballina.

6.4.4 Density

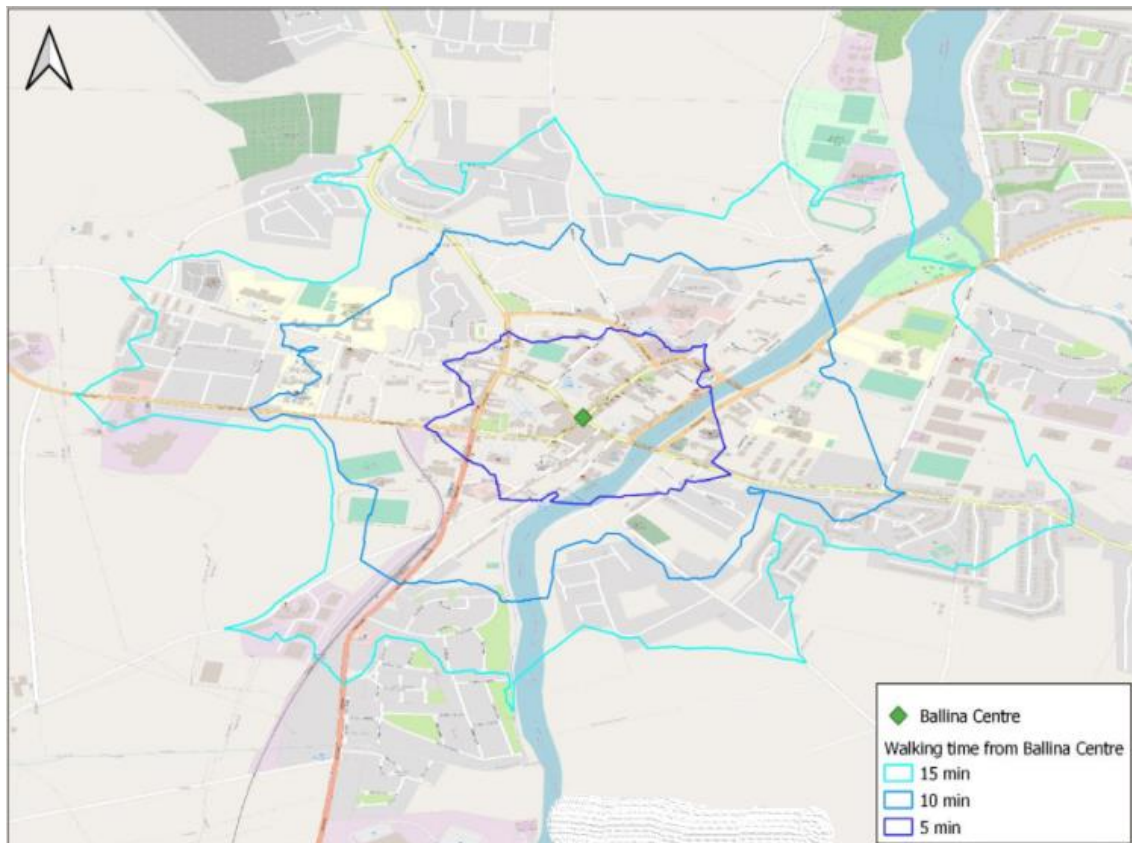
Historically, the town centre of Ballina is characterised by buildings designed to accommodate commercial use at ground floor, with accommodation or living space above 'living over the shop'. Analysis of the area indicates that key community infrastructure and the train station are within the 5 -10 minute walk bands of the town centre and essential community and transport infrastructure. The Plan seeks to provide mixed uses incorporating residential development, which can potentially accommodate higher densities within the town centre area in line with compact urban living. The Plan supports proposals for residential development in appropriate infill or brownfield locations within the Town Centre zoned area which can generally accommodate development complying with the requirements of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028. On lands outside of the Town Centre area, the pattern and type of existing residential development is categorised by housing schemes and estates of varying scales, with a range and mix of house types, typically of semi-detached and detached two storey typologies. Local variations will be considered based on the character and specific restrictions or considerations including adjacent high-quality open space or sustainable travel opportunities.

6.4.5 Mix and Height

As a Tier 1(a) Strategic Growth Centre, it is anticipated that there will be a demand for a varied mix and type of housing within the Ballina Plan area, especially for single occupancy units given the limited supply and accommodation for the elderly with more suitable housing in order for them to free up larger homes by downsizing. The Plan seeks to address this imbalance by ensuring a greater mix of house types; and to provide for both a mix of dwelling size and dwelling type to cater for a diverse range of housing needs. Design and layout of schemes should be of high quality and comply with the urban housing and urban design principles contained in Volume II of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 and shall include the requirement for a justification in the form of a Statement of Housing Mix setting out the rationale /justification, along with consideration for the existing character and mix of the area, design, location, market considerations and Part V requirements.

Settlement Strategy Objective 16 (SSO 16) of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 seeks to identify and facilitate increased building heights for appropriate uses in suitable locations in Ballina in accordance with Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPR) 1-4 of the Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018). The increasing of prevailing heights has a critical role to play in addressing the delivery of higher density development particularly capitalising on the potential for delivery of residential units at locations where transport, employment, services

or retail development can be optimised. Height, including transitional height arrangements, will be considered in appropriate locations within and close to the Town Centre, proximate to existing public transport nodes or locations where high frequency public transport can be provided, close to locations of employment and/or third level educational institutions where there is ease of access to a range of urban amenities and sustainable transport options.



Map 6.1: 400m and 1000m walking bands from centre of Ballina

6.4.6 Housing for Older People / Special Needs Housing

Ballina has a number of dedicated services for people with special needs and elderly persons within the town – These include St. Augustin’s, Moy Ridge and River View Nursing Homes and Ballina Over 55’s Club on Cathedral Road. As the population of the town is likely to continue to age, further dedicated services will be required for elderly persons. The Plan will support the implementation of the Mayo Disability Strategy and the provision of dedicated elderly and special needs services including assisted living, supported living, nursing homes and day care centres where the applicant can demonstrate there is an evidenced based need for these services.

Housing is a key social policy area that needs to adapt to meet the changing needs of older people. The NPF supports national policy to assist older people to live with dignity and independence in their own homes and communities, for as long as possible. It highlights the need for well-designed lifetime adaptable infill and brownfield development, close to existing services and facilities, supported by universal design and improved urban amenities. Accommodation for the elderly in Ballina will be required to locate in existing residential areas, well served by social infrastructure and amenities, such as footpath networks, public transport and local facilities and services, to allow for better care in the

community, independence and access, ensuring that residents are not isolated. All new developments will be required to provide accommodation suitable and adaptable for the elderly. The Plan will support the implementation of the Mayo Disability Strategy and the provision of dedicated elderly and special needs services including assisted living, supported living, nursing homes and day care centres.

6.4.7 Traveller Accommodation

The Census 2016 indicates that of the towns with 1,500 or more persons, with Ballina having the 14th highest number of Irish Travellers in Ireland. The Council recognises the distinct culture and lifestyle of the Travelling Community, and it will endeavour to provide suitable accommodation for travellers who are indigenous to the area. There are two local authority halting sites in Ballina and the Mayo Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 indicates that there are nine unauthorised encampments in the town.

The Traveller Accommodation Programme outlines the Council's proposals to meet the accommodation needs of traveller families in the county as a whole, including Ballina and sets out a strategy to achieve these proposals. The Council will consult with the Travelling Community, their representative organisations and local communities in relation to the siting, planning and design of traveller accommodation such as halting sites or group housing schemes, in order to promote social inclusion.

6.4.8 Low Energy Buildings

The design construction and operation of new buildings has a significant role to play in reducing energy demand and increasing energy efficiency into the future. The Nearly Zero-Energy Buildings (NZEB) applies to all new buildings occupied after December 2020. Therefore, all new homes will have a typical Building Energy Rating (BER) of A2 compared within the current rating for new builds of A3.

Retrofitting and refurbishment of the existing housing stock also plays an important role in meeting higher energy efficiency standards in the future. Grants are available through the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) to upgrade the energy efficiency of a person's home.

6.5 Community, Arts and Educational Facilities

Ballina is well catered for in terms of community and social facilities and has many active community groups, and public and social enterprises located in the town including Ballina Tidy Towns Committee, Ballina Over 55's Club, Moy Innovations, Ballina IRD, Involve youth services. These groups have been very successful in delivering a number of projects including the development of the community garden initiative, social inclusion initiatives, Healthy Ireland projects, farmers market, and numerous improvements to derelict and disused buildings in the town. Delivering physical and social infrastructure in tandem with residential development to support the continued development of a healthy, active, and liveable town is a core aim of the plan and the Council will seek to support community-led and cultural projects which enhance the well-being of residents of the town and improve the quality of the environment in the town.

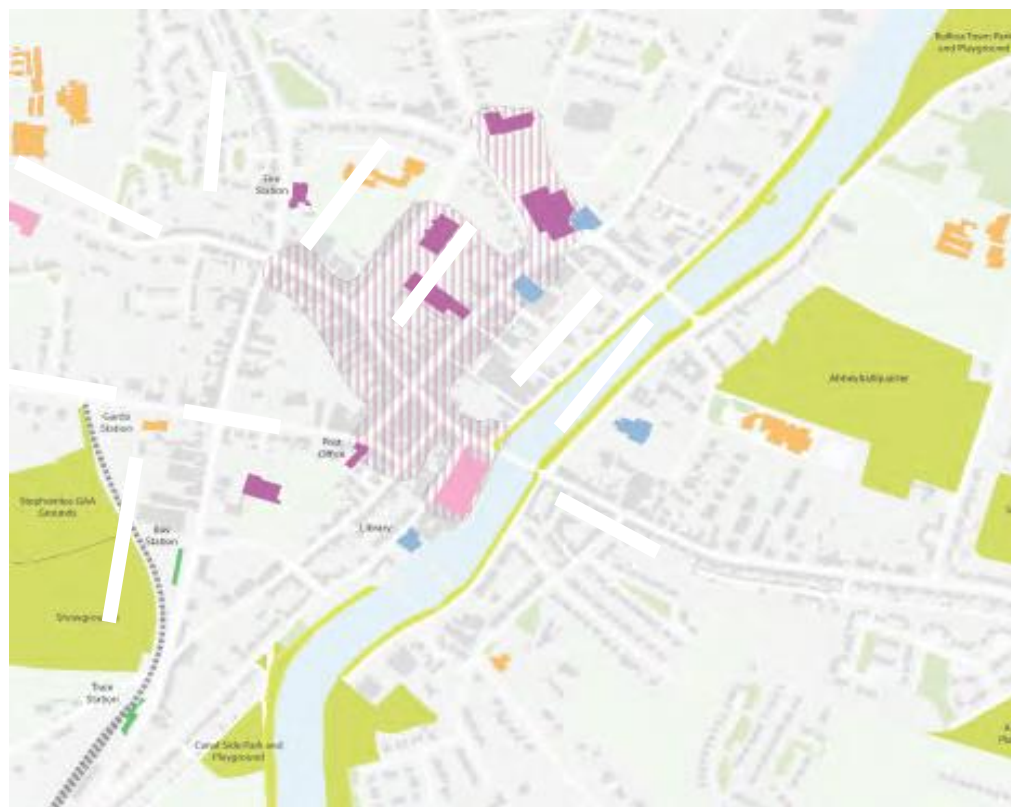
Health services in Ballina include a district hospital, western care facility and outpatient service. The Plan will support the proportionate expansion of healthcare facilities in the town and will zone sufficient land for this purpose.

Ballina has two early pre-schools registered with Tusla, at Greenhills and The Haven in Parkside. The provision of new childcare facilities within the Plan boundary will be supported in accordance with the requirement of the policies set out in the CDP.

Ballina is served by three primary schools, and three secondary schools - two mixed and one an all-girls school located on the Sligo Road, Convent Hill and Cathedral Road. A secondary school is currently under construction on Convent Hill to replace the existing school at this location. The Plan will support the proportionate expansion of education facilities in the town and land is zoned for this purpose. Ballina is served by educational provision for students with special needs and disabilities including St. Dymphna's school located at Convent Hill.

Ballina is also home to several adult educational providers, including Ballina Training Centre and training for people with disabilities including Employability Mayo. The provision of adult education services will continue to be supported in the Plan.

There are numerous Arts centres and museums and Art installations and projects throughout the town including The Ballina Arts Centre, The Glasgow Kennedy Centre, The Jackie Clarke Museum and The Mary Robinson Centre.



- Recreational / Amenity Destinations ■
- Community Destinations ■
- Cultural Destinations ■
- Leisure Destinations ■

Map 6.2: Recreation, amenity, cultural and leisure destinations in Ballina

6.6 Sport and Recreation

Ballina has a lot to offer in terms of sport and recreation and has a number of sporting and recreational facilities, particularly the River Moy and its associated salmon fishery. Other facilities in Ballina include Tom Ruane Park (Town Park), Ballina Golf Club, Ballina Rugby Club, Ballina Showgrounds, football grounds and athletics track and two GAA grounds (Map 6.2 above). The Town Park is well laid out and the sports fields towards Belleek Woods are well used with active and strong community sports associations. There are children's playgrounds and a MUGA located within the town boundary and Belleek Woods has been adapted for children's play also. Policies for recreational facilities include to support local sporting and community organisations to develop their facilities and provide activities for residents and visitors to Ballina. The plan also seeks to ensure that new school provision has adequate sport and leisure facilities that will be open for use to local communities. The plan seeks to improve the overall appearance of the town by developing and enhancing existing amenities/facilities.



Leisure Cycling at Belleek Woods



Ballina Arts Centre



Cultural Destination

6.7 Mayo Age-Friendly Strategy

The Mayo Age Friendly Programme addresses the challenges faced by our older people. The objective of the MAFP is to work to improve the services and facilities that our older people have identified as being important to them, and the wider community, as they live healthy and active lives.

The purpose of the Mayo Age-Friendly Strategy (MAFS) is to set out a vision where the inclusion of older people is promoted, valued, and actively encouraged in all areas of life. The strategy seeks to support older people to live independently with confidence, security, and dignity in their homes for as long as possible and to encourage this age group to maintain, improve and manage their health and wellbeing. Public realm projects will have regard to and implement the principles of Universal Design and Age Friendly Ireland's 'Age Friendly Towns' and 'Being Age Friendly in the Public Realm', where feasible. The Plan will also seek to ensure, where possible, that homes in new residential developments are universally designed to the Lifetime Homes standard set out in Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities (DEHLG, 2007) and the Design Manual for Quality Housing (DHLGH, 2022).

6.8 Community and Climate Change

The greening of built environments can contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation, by cooling the surrounding area and providing homes for wildlife, as well as ecosystem services. It also boosts property values and adds to the quality of life by filtering the air, reducing noise and creating attractive places where people can live or spend time. Ballina has several vibrant community groups active in promoting climate action and enhancing biodiversity and the vision for Ballina to become Ireland's Greenest Town by 2025. Mayo Council will seek to provide support to the local community in the development of sustainable energy initiatives.

6.9 Open Space and Amenities

High-quality open spaces and amenity areas are essential for a good quality of life and are key components of sustainable communities. Ballina is well-served in this regard, with natural amenities including Belleek Woods, River Moy, Bunree River, Town Park and Gardens, children’s walks and playgrounds and sports fields. There are also several community gardens in Ballina. Green infrastructure includes nature conservation areas, parks, open space, rivers, floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, farmland, and town greenways which support and improve environmental conditions in a way that facilitates environmental, economic and societal benefits. The protection of Green Infrastructure as well as the redevelopment of public open spaces and amenity areas, which are accessible to all, as well as providing play spaces for children that are safe will be promoted in the plan.



Recreation and Leisure



Mary Robinson Centre on the River Moy

6.10 Housing and Sustainable Communities Policies and Objectives

Residential Development Policies

It is a policy of the Council to:

HSCP 1	Encourage the compact growth of Ballina and undertake a town centre first approach to ensure that development proceeds sustainably and at an appropriate scale, density and sequence and in line with the County Core Strategy Table.
HSCP 2	Promote healthy place-making, increase the liveability factor of Ballina, encourage the most efficient use of land, and ensure a mixture of residential unit types that are designed and constructed on the principles of universal design, life-long adaptability and energy efficiency.
HSCP 3	Encourage the reuse of upper floors above commercial premises in Ballina for residential accommodation.
HSCP 4	Support new residential development and infill development that occurs in tandem with the delivery of supporting physical and social infrastructure.

HSCP 5	Support approved housing bodies and other sectoral agencies in the provision of a greater diversity of housing type and tenure, including social housing and exploring new models at low-cost rental and affordable homeownership.
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Residential Development Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

HSCO 1	Support, promote and facilitate the appropriate consolidation, densification and/or redevelopment of brownfield and infill sites for residential uses within the footprint of the existing built-up area, where appropriate, including living above the shop opportunities.
HSCO 2	Safeguard the amenity and integrity of completed residential estates and provide for smarter travel options, it is the objective of the Council to ensure that new access proposals to any adjoining lands through an existing completed residential estate is provided for pedestrian or bicycle movements/connectivity only.
HSCO 3	Seek to provide Traveller Specific Accommodation at appropriate locations close to key services, including education, community, health, recreation and public transport facilities in accordance with the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 (or any updated).

Residential Density, Mix and Design Policy

It is a policy of the Council to:

HSCP 6	Require that an appropriate sustainable mix of housing type, tenure, density and size is provided in all new residential areas, and in appropriate brownfield/infill areas to meet the needs of the population of Ballina, including the provision of special needs housing, which includes housing for older people, people with disabilities, social housing, affordable housing and accommodation for the travelling community.
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Residential Density, Mix and Design Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

HSCO 4	Require that a good mix of housing types and sizes is provided in all new residential areas and in appropriate brownfield/infill areas, to meet the needs of the population of Ballina, including the provision of appropriate supported housing and longer-term residential care solutions designed for older people and/or people with disabilities. This will include accommodation provided under Part V requirements.
HSCO 5	Support and promote high levels of energy conservation, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources in existing buildings, including retro fitting of energy efficiency in traditional buildings. All new buildings will be required to achieve the

	Nearly Zero-Energy Buildings (NZEB) standard in line with the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD).
HSCO 6	Comply with the Special Policy Planning Requirements (SPPRs) for apartment standards and building heights issued under Section 28(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Age Friendly Policy

It is an objective of the Council to:

HSCP 7	Promote an age-friendly town, which seeks universal accessibility and age-friendly homes in accordance with the Age-Friendly Ireland - Ten Universal Design Features, 2021, and the best-practice guidance outlined in the Building for Everyone – A Universal Design Approach, by the Centre of Excellence in Universal Design.
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Age Friendly Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

HSCO 7	Support the objectives set out in Mayo Age Friendly County Strategy 2022–2026 and any subsequent strategy, regarding the implementation of Age Friendly principles in the planning, design and delivery of physical infrastructure, public realm works, business and commercial premises.
HSCO 8	Encourage the delivery of facilities and services for older people, at appropriate locations in Ballina.

Community, Arts and Educational Facilities Policy

It is a policy of the Council to:

HSCP 8	Promote and support a broad range of community, health, cultural and educational facilities to serve the future needs of the residents of the Plan area and its wider catchment.
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Community, Arts and Educational Facilities Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

HSCO 9	Facilitate and secure the provision of social infrastructure to support existing and new communities within the Plan area, in a manner which provides flexibility to respond to varied and changing community needs.
HSCO 10	Actively engage with the Department of Education and Skills in the identification and delivery of school sites to address the emerging demands.

HSCO 11	Support, promote and facilitate the development of cultural, arts and performance spaces in Ballina.
HSCO 12	Encourage the development of new facilities and improvements to and expansion of existing facilities for educational, early learning, childcare and healthcare facilities, at appropriate locations in Ballina.

Sports and Recreation Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

HSCO 13	Support and facilitate the provision for the development of a skate park in Ballina
HSCO 14	Support the endeavours of sports and community groups in the acquisition and/or use of lands for sports and recreation purposes.
HSCO 15	Facilitate and promote the development of a network of playgrounds, amenity spaces and recreational areas for children of all ages which are universally designed throughout the town and its environs.
HSCO 16	Seek the development of additional municipal facilities that are available for all users within the town of Ballina and its surrounding areas.

Chapter 7 Transport and Movement

7.1 Strategic Aim

To promote and develop a sustainable, integrated transport system for Ballina that prioritises walking, cycling and public transport, and provides an appropriate level of road infrastructure, road capacity and traffic management to support future development and enhance connectivity to and from regional towns and cities.

7.2 Introduction

On a national level, both planning policy and transport policy emphasises the need to provide efficiencies for the movement of people and goods, through integrated multi-modal, accessible and affordable transport networks, high quality networks support competitiveness, economic progress, balanced regional development, access to opportunities. In addition, a key aim of NPF is the delivery of improved sustainable mobility in our towns and villages, which accords with Ireland's Climate Action Plan(s) to move away from polluting and carbon intensive population systems to new cleaner technologies, with transport related emissions set to reduce by 51% by 2030 and reduce vehicle kilometres travelled by 20%.

7.3 Ballina Context

Chapter 6 of the Mayo County Development Plan sets out the county-level context for Movement and Transport. Mayo has one of the highest average rates of private car usage compared to the national average. Coupled with a lack of viable transport alternatives to commuters, the result is in a high dependency on the private car. This trend is reflected in the high levels of car-based travel in Ballina, where the historical dispersed and disconnected nature of development has placed limitations on movement and circulation.

In Ballina, the private car is still the main mode of transport. This Plan seeks to reduce the reliance on the private car and to focus land-use and development, in line with sustainable transport alternatives. By locating people close to employment and complimentary services the need for car-based travel is reduced, which makes active travel a more viable alternative. It is recognised that both location and design of development has a fundamental influence on travel patterns, and therefore an integrated approach to land use and transportation is taken.

It is equally important that Ballina maintains and develops its existing transport related infrastructure including road, rail and transport links to ensure its functional role both as a Tier 1 Key Town and its strategic role as a gateway to for the North Mayo and southwestern Sligo regions.

A suite of policies and objectives set out in the County Development Plan promote and underpin the delivery and provisions for transport in line with compact, sequential growth. A major challenge facing Ballina is – the facilitation of future growth balanced against the need to address traffic congestion, whilst improving connectivity and movement of people within the town area, the wider area and beyond.

7.4 Integration of Land Use, Transport and Sustainable Mobility

Settlement patterns play a fundamental role in influencing how people travel, both the distances undertaken and the modal choice. The proximity of populations to education, retail and leisure assists in generating an environment which promotes a shift towards active modes, such as walking and cycling. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that alternatives to the car are integrated in the design of streets and public spaces, prioritising cycling, and walking as active transport modes. The effective management of space within the town centre should deliver a high level of priority and permeability for walking and cycling to create accessible, attractive, vibrant, and safe places to work, live, shop and engage in community life.

The Mayo County Development Plan examines the existing modes of travel and modal split, recognising the need to reduce car dependency through the promotion of compact development, sustainable travel and the integration of land-use and transport in planning for future growth, in line with its Core Strategy.

In compliance with objective MTO 1 of the CDP and regional policy objective RPO 6.17 of the RSES, a Local Transport Plan (LTP) has been prepared for Ballina (Ballina LTP), and forms part of the LAP.

7.5 Ballina Local Transport Plan (Ballina LTP)

The Ballina LTP is aimed at providing a functional and active travel network from the town centre outwards. It has been prepared in collaboration with the NTA and runs concurrent with this Plan. The Local Transport presents an evidence-based assessment of the town, which takes into consideration the location, land-use and transport infrastructure and provides a suite of recommendations for various modes of travel to serve forecasted travel demand based on population and employment growth targets for Ballina.

A key aim of the Ballina LTP is to improve the integration between Land Use and Transport Planning. It provides an appraisal of the current transport environment bringing sustainable transport considerations to the forefront. In particular, the LTP provides alternatives to car-base travel, including the promotion of active travel and alternative technologies, as well as a strategy for the delivery of sustainable transport. It provides a suite of necessary supporting infrastructure/measures and services, in line with land uses, through a range of design solutions and specific measures aimed at enhancing the physical public realm and transport network.

A primary aim of the Ballina LAP is to promote a compact development, through regeneration of brownfield/infill sites in the town centre and by densification and consolidation of established neighbourhoods within the plan area. This will have the effect of reducing or avoiding the need for longer distance trips and tie in with active travel alternatives to private car use. The Ballina LTP examines existing and proposed transport infrastructure and services across all modes of transport including public transport, active modes (walking and cycling), the general vehicular network, as well as other complimentary measures. It provides recommendations for the necessary interventions and measures required to effectively facilitate the anticipated increase demand arising from growth. The approach taken to achieve a more sustainable transport sector is based on the Avoid-Shift-Improve principle as set out in National Sustainable Mobility Policy.

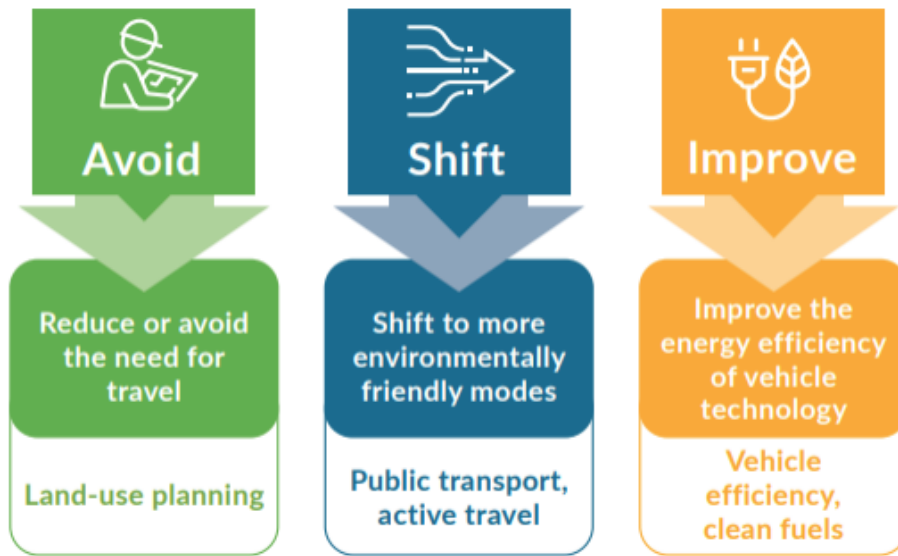


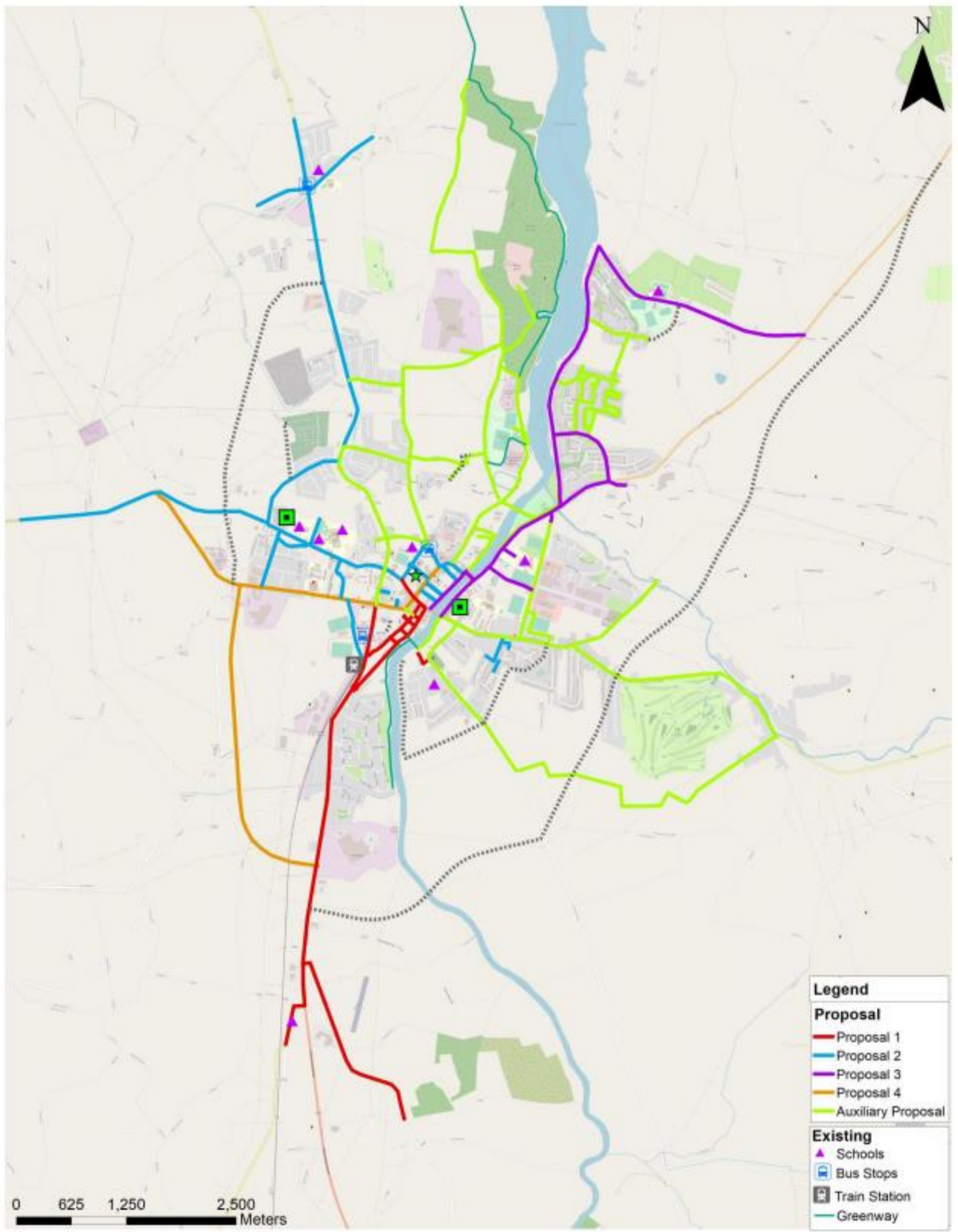
Figure 7.1 Avoid-Shift-Improve Principle (Source: National Sustainable Mobility Policy, 2022)

7.5.4 Ballina LTP Strategy

The Ballina LTP is comprised of 6 proposed schemes, which cover the overall development of transport in Ballina. The schemes have been developed to achieve the objectives set for each transport mode (i.e. walking, cycling, public transport, road network) accompanied by a set of goals for each mode category. Each scheme is comprised of a schedule of physical measures aimed at facilitating shift away from unnecessary car-based travel to more sustainable modes of travel.

The national Active Travel Grants Programme (NTA) funds projects supporting strategic pedestrian and cyclist routes, access to schools, permeability links, urban greenways and some minor public transport improvement projects. The Ballina LTP will enable the Council, through its active travel team, to seek funding for investment in the town under the annual Active Travel Grants Programme for projects identified through the LTP. The identification of transport infrastructure proposals in this Plan, including locations and any associated mapping, that is not already permitted or provided for by existing plans/programmes/etc. is non-binding and indicative. New transport infrastructure will be considered subject to environmental constraints, including those related to habitats and potential impacts (e.g. disturbance from lighting). This will include minimising river crossings, avoiding sensitive habitats, not increasing barriers to flood waters and sustainable design and construction techniques.

Ultimately, these measures are aimed at ensuring that new development can occur in line with compact, place-based, integrated development, with emphasis on active and sustainable travel patterns. Individual projects will be subjected to public consultation, environmental assessments, heritage studies, relevant statutory procedures, and consultation with the relevant statutory stakeholders. A general overview can be seen in Map 7.1 below.



Map 7.1 LTP Extent of Proposals

The physical infrastructure as per the overall LTP Proposal, will provide Ballina town and environs with the following travel and transport infrastructure:

Infrastructure	Timeline				Total
	Short Term (Proposals 1 & 2)	Medium Term (Proposals 3 & 4)	Long Term (Proposal 5)	Concurrent (Auxiliary Proposal)	
Proposed/Upgraded Two-Way Cycle Facilities (km per direction)	23.5	10.0		1.6	35.1
Proposed/Upgraded One-Way Cycle Facilities (km per direction)	0.6	0.6		1.1	2.3
Upgraded Pedestrian Facilities (km)	22.6	15.6		22.4	60.6
Proposed Pedestrian Facilities (km)	2.2			0.4	2.6
Proposed Shared Streets (km)	0.7	1.0		8.7	10.4
Proposed Greenway (km)	0.5		-	7	7.5
Proposed Active Travel Bridge	-	1		2	3
Proposed Junction Upgrades	13	11		6	30
Proposed Traffic Management with by Changing Direction of Traffic Flow	1		-		1
Proposed Traffic Management with Two-Way Traffic Flow		1	-		1
Proposed Mobility Hub	1		-		1
Proposed 'Park and Stride'	2	-	-		2
Proposed Permeability Link	3	-	-	10	13
Upgraded Permeability Link	8	3	-	4	15
Proposed Permeability Link to Tie-In with SRTS	4		-	6	10
Proposed Road Link (total length in km)	0.2				0.2
Proposed Controlled Crossings	43	33	-	10	86
N26 Ballina Bypass Phase 1		2.5			2.5
Future Active Travel Proposal (to be considered in context of N26 Bypass)		0.8			0.8
Future Link Road (total length in km) (Indicative)			5.5		5.5
Future Eastern Bypass (total length in km) (Indicative)	-		7.5		7.5

Table 7.1 Schedule of Proposals

7.6 Modal Shift

Table 7.2 below provides a breakdown of the daytime population (i.e. residents and commuters) in Ballina. These figures account for persons who worked or studied in the area, along with persons who travel to these towns for other purposes. The table shows that the daytime population more than doubles during the day. This illustrates that the town acts as a significant economic driver for the town of Ballina and the wider region.

Settlement	Sum of Total Workers in Workplace Zone	Sum of Total Daytime Population in Workplace Zone	Percentage change in Day Population
Ballina	5,459	11,821	46.18%

Table 7.2 Daytime population in Ballina, Census 2016

Table 7.3 below illustrates that the private car is the main mode of transport in Ballina (66%) which is above the national average (61.40%). It is also apparent that car passenger (car sharing) is well above the national average in Ballina, which would indicate that car sharing is a viable option. Cycling, bus, motorbike/scooters and rail transport in Ballina are well below the national average.

Mode	Current Mode Share	Mode Share Ambitions to 2029	
	As per 2016 Census	Shift from car-based trips (local journeys)	
		30% shift (based on delivery of schemes)	20% shift (based on delivery of schemes)
Private Car	66%	37% (-29%)	42% (-24%)
Cycle	3%	10% (+7%)	8% (+5%)
Walk	29%	47% (+18%)	44% (+15%)
Public Transport	3%	6% (+3%)	6% (+3%)

Table 7.3 Current Mode Share and Modal Shift Ambitions to 2029 (Source: Draft Ballina Local Transport Plan)

7.6.1 Walking and Cycling

The provision of sustainable mobility options is only realistic when development patterns locate populations close to employment centres and complementary services such as education, retail and leisure. Walking and cycling become increasingly viable as transport options when the distance between such services is reduced. There is a need to ensure that alternatives to the car are integrated in the design of streets and public spaces, prioritising cycling and walking as active transport modes. The effective management of space in Ballina town centre should deliver a high level of priority and permeability for walking and cycling to create accessible, attractive, vibrant and safe places to work, live, shop and engage in community life. Ballina has the potential to further develop its pedestrian and cycle routes, however traffic congestion in the town creates a poor environment for pedestrians and cyclists, especially at peak times. Significant deficiencies also exist in terms of continuity and the quality of pedestrian routes in some areas. These routes play an important role in the permeability of the town centre and require a comprehensive and planned upgrade. The town centre would also benefit from additional crossing points and improvement of the public realm with an emphasis on

creating a safe, uncluttered, accessible and pleasant environment for pedestrians and cyclists. It is envisaged that the findings of the BLTP will help promote sustainable mobility and produce a range of actionable projects.

7.7 Public Transport

7.7.1 Rail

Ballina railway station is located 1/2km south of the town on the N26 (Foxford Road) within walking distance of the town centre and IR operates three daily services to Dublin changing at Manulla Junction. Iarnród Éireann in their strategic policy document “Rail Vision 2030: The Future of Rail Transport in Ireland” notes the importance of the Dublin-Westport/Ballina service and it confirms the important role of rail in servicing the interconnectivity between the key towns of Mayo. This rail line also supports the economic development of towns along the Atlantic Economic Corridor, supporting access to jobs and facilitating the development of collaborative tourism initiatives. Mayo County Council supports an increase in the frequency of commuter services on mainline rail network between Westport, Castlebar and Ballina. The low frequency of current rail services in Mayo, renders rail travel an unviable transport option for daily commuters to Ballina. Increased frequency of rail services and a greater integration of bus and rail services would provide for enhanced services and would facilitate the transfer from private car to bus and rail. As well as rail connectivity to Dublin, Ballina will also have a rail linkage to the south should the Western Rail Corridor be realised. It is a regional policy to safeguard and enhance this railway corridor to support the development of the West and North-Western Region and connectivity between Ballina and Dublin.

Ballina has the most significant rail freight activity outside of Dublin, providing a vital service to commercial/ industry in the town and beyond and supports the transition to a climate neutral and climate resilient region. The proximity of Ireland West Airport Knock to Ballina benefits the town and significantly broadens the transport network capacity to an international catchment.

7.7.2 Bus

Ballina has a large Bus Éireann depot as well as some private bus operators. It is mainly served by Bus Éireann with express routes to Dublin, Belfast, Galway, Ballina, Westport, Longford, Athlone, Limerick and Cork, in addition to several regional services serving destinations in the Mid-West. There is no internal bus service in or around Ballina. However, two internal services will be identified as part of the Ballina Local Transport Plan (See Map 6.2 below) Under the Rural Transport Initiative, the rural areas in the county are served by Local Link Mayo, which is based on demand. The Local Link currently operates numerous weekly/fortnightly Demand Responsive Routes to Ballina serving the near and far rural communities of Mayo. The further development of Local Link Mayo and other similar public transport services to Ballina are required to help provide a modal shift to public transport in favour of the private car.

7.8 Roads

Ballina’s main roads include the Foxford Road (N26) also serving as the main road to Ballina and the link to the main Dublin Road (N5). The first stage of a scheme to improve this road has been completed. 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) is the main road from the town to the west of the

county. The Sligo Road (N59, east bound), links Ballina to Sligo town and the west of County Sligo. In general, the condition of these roads is not good. Road improvements have been slow. This creates significant problems of congestion in the town, impedes traffic and detracts from the amenities of the town, particularly the town centre.

The MCDP 2022-2028 sets out the strategic investment roads projects for Ballina, which have been tested through the LTP process, as:

- N59/N26 Eastern bypass of Ballina
- N59/N26 Western bypass of Ballina (N26 Ballina bypass Phase 1)

Other future strategic road projects identified as part of the Ballina LTP process are:

- Proposed Link Road between N59 Crossmolina Road to Killala Road
- Proposed Relief Road between Church Road and Healy Terrace (via Cluain Na Rí)

The Council will seek to continue to work in partnership with the Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and other stakeholders in the design process and the delivery of this scheme. New development along National and Strategically Important Regional routes will be required to accord with policies of the County Development Plan which seeks to safeguard these routes from development which would compromise the safety, integrity or capacity of these routes. Development proposals which may affect national roads within or adjacent to the Plan boundary must have regard to the requirements of the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (DTTS, 2012) and the Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (TII, 2014).

7.9 Parking

While it is necessary to have parking provision within the town, the devotion of large portions of the town centre to surface parking requires a new perspective, in line with the overarching objectives of this Plan, in particular - regeneration within the town centre, compact development and transport planning. A number of town centre Opportunity Sites have been identified within the core area, which are located on or adjacent to existing surface car-park areas. The development of these sites will potentially reduce the extent of surface car-parking available into the future.

Whilst there is a focus on active travel mode and shift away from car-based trips, the development of alternative parking solutions and measures as the need to cater for private car parking in the town centre will continue. These measures include provision of 'Park and Stride' locations and facilities at the edge of the town centre to cater for the long-distance trips into Ballina. Such facilities encourage car commuters to switch to alternative modes of transport (i.e. walking & cycling), which is particularly effective for those who commute to school or employment centres.

7.10 Movement and Transport Policies and Objectives

Sustainable Mobility Policies	
It is a Policy of the Council to:	
MTP 1	Improve accessibility and movement within Ballina, reduce dependency on private car transport, increase permeability in the town, and encourage the use of energy efficient forms of transport through the promotion of walking, cycling and public transport.
MTP 2	Engage and co-operate with the Department of Transport, National Transport Authority (NTA), Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Irish Rail, Local Link and other stakeholders to improve the provision of public transport and public transport facilities in Ballina.
MTP 3	Ensure that new developments are designed to comply with Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2019) including making provision for pedestrian and cycle infrastructure and enhancing connectivity and accessibility to the town.
MTP 4	Improve accessibility and movement within Ballina, reduce dependency on private car transport, increase permeability in the town, and encourage the use of energy efficient forms of transport through the promotion of walking, cycling and public transport.
MTP 5	Support the provision of cycling infrastructure, bicycle parking facilities and electric vehicle charging points in the town centre, in accordance with the recommendations of the Ballina Local Transport Plan (as adopted) and subject to traffic and pedestrian safety.
MTP 6	Make provisions for the use of electric vehicles through a significant increase in the provision of clearly and exclusively designated electric car charging points on public and private land in partnership with ESB and other relevant stakeholders and landowners.

Sustainable Mobility Objectives	
It is an Objective of the Council to:	
MTO 1	<p>a) Encourage and facilitate the maintenance and further development of the public footpath network, walking and cycling routes and associated infrastructure within the town and where possible the retrofitting of cycle and pedestrian routes into the existing urban road network.</p> <p>b) Promote and facilitate the enhancement of the public realm in order to create attractive, cohesive and well-connected places in order to encourage walking and cycling as more viable forms of transport within the town.</p>
MTO 2	Seek the provision of workplace mobility plans for proposals for large scale employment and the development of Smarter Travel Initiatives as set in Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020 (or any replacement thereof).

MTO 3	Promote sustainable, compact development by ensuring that all proposals for residential and mixed-use developments, including infill and brownfield, incorporate provisions for pedestrian and cyclist activity and associated facilities that will integrate into the existing road/street network and proposed active travel network in the town.
MTO 4	Identify appropriate locations on public lands in partnership with ESB for the provision of battery charging infrastructure for electric vehicles in Ballina
MTO 5	To monitor and review the progress of the Ballina Local Transport Plan in line with the Monitoring and Review strategy set out in this Plan, and in accordance with its stated goals and objectives.

Roads Policies

It is a Policy of the Council to:

MTP 7	Ensure new development proposals comply with Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Local Authorities (DTTS, 2013) and safeguard the integrity, capacity and safety of national roads.
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Road Objectives

It is an Objective of the Council to:

MTO 6	Seek to progress the Road projects, listed in Table 7.3 subject to environmental assessments.
MTO 7	Support the provision of new roads infrastructure by ensuring that the lands along the indicative routes* (as listed below) are protected by keeping them free from development that would undermine the delivery of these projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) N59 extension route b) N26 extension route <p>*these routes are indicative only and are will be subject to change</p>

Ballina Local Transport Plan Policies

It is an Objective of the Council to:

MTP 8	Support the delivery of the active travel and demand measures identified in the Local Transport Plan (Appendix 2) and require proposals for new development to compliment and demonstrate how they will integrate with the provisions of the Local Transport Plan.
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Ballina Local Transport Plan Objectives

It is an Objective of the Council to:

MTO 8 Support, encourage and promote modal shift in Ballina to meet mode share ambitions set out in Table 7.2 (Ballina LTP Mode Share and Modal Shift Ambitions to 2029) by measures such as but not limited to the following:

- Reduction in dependency on the private car
- Discouragement of vehicular through traffic
- Enhancement the public realm through traffic management and transport interventions
- Development of public transport services.
- Provision of transport demand management measure

MTO 9 Support and facilitate the implementation of the following proposed *LTP measures (but not limited to):

Walking

New footpaths:

- N26 – Southwest
- Section between Moy Valley Business Park and N26
- Morrison Terrace

New Permeability Links

- Between Hollister and Proposed Greenway
- Between Abbey Street and The Spires
- Between Ballina train station and Lord Edward Street (Safe routes to School Programme)
- Between Church Road and St Michaels NS (Safe routes to School Programme)
- Between Mercy Road to Roches Terrace (Safe routes to School Programme)
- St Patricks Estate (Safe routes to School Programme)
- Creggs Road/Quay Lane (Safe routes to School Programme)

Proposed Active Travel Bridge

- Active Travel Bridge at Lower Bridge

Proposed Park and Stride

- Cathedral Road Car Park
- St Patricks Church Car Park

Cycling:

Two Way Cyclist Facilities (fully segregated cycle tracks)

- N26 South
- N26 Kevin Barry Street
- Water Lane
- L-1127
- R-310

	<p>One Way Cyclist Facilities (fully segregated cycle tracks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morrison Terrace • Barrett, James Connolly, Hill and Tone Streets <p>Greenway / off road paths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Moy (southwest extend behind Hollister) <p>Provide Shared Street:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ferran Terrace • Mercy Road <p>* Measures listed are exhaustive, full range of measures are listed in Ballina Local Transport Plan</p>
MTO 10	Actively seek funding for investment in active travel and public transport in the town in line with the provisions of the LTP as outlined in Appendix 2 (and any review thereof).
MTO 11	Achieve the modal shift target as set out in the LPT (Appendix 2) through collaboration with the community and transport sectors over the life time of this LAP.

Car Parking Objectives

It is an Objective of the Council to:

MTO 12	Explore and provide 'Park and Stride' facilities and Mobility Hubs at appropriate locations in the town, in accordance with the recommendations of the Ballina LTP (once adopted) and in partnership with the relevant stakeholder.
MTO 13	Facilitate the provision of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Public car parks in its own role and/or in partnership with third parties, in its control of on-street parking and off-street parking to provide for short term shopping and business parking requirements and for the needs of residents, rather than long term commuter parking. b) Investigate the possibility of providing coach parking within the Plan Area.

Chapter 8 Built Environment

8.1 Strategic Aim

To recognise and enhance the unique identity, character and built heritage of Ballina, to improve quality of life through the application of healthy placemaking, underpinned by good urban design with the creation of attractive public spaces that are vibrant, distinctive, safe and accessible and which promote and facilitate positive social interaction.

8.2 Introduction

Built heritage intrinsic part of a town's heritage and provide an opportunity to learn about the past, reinforce the sense of place and act as guardians for future generations. Ballina boasts a rich architectural heritage centred around the town core comprising a mixture of building types including military barracks, houses, banks, civic buildings, ecclesiastical structures, traditional shopfronts, vernacular buildings and stone bridges spanning the River Moy. The policies and objectives of this Plan in relation to the built heritage of Ballina have been carefully considered in order to protect, enhance and promote an appreciation of these important assets as well as safeguarding the continued sustainable use of the important building stock and associated features.

8.3 Built Heritage Conservation

The Ballina Architectural Heritage Study, 1997, carried out as part of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, highlighted features of architectural importance in the town, including buildings, features and spaces of national, regional and local importance. Ballina benefits from a legacy of 18th, 19th and 20th century buildings, including Belleek Castle, townhouses on Pearse and Emmet Streets, civic and institutional buildings, such as the Military barracks, and ecclesiastical buildings, such as St. Muredach's Cathedral on Cathedral Road. The town has also inherited a Town Centre street pattern that has informed the layout of the subsequent expansion of the town.

The architecture of these buildings and the spaces between them such as Market Square, The Jackie Clarke Museum and gardens lend attractiveness to the town centre. The institutional and civic buildings provide historic links to the past and contribute to the town's identity as a market town and an important centre for public services and administration.

The traditional shop fronts in Ballina are also important to the architectural heritage of the town. The Council will encourage the retention of shop fronts according to the Council's guidance (see Development Management). New shop fronts will also be expected to respect the traditional character of the town.

8.4 Architectural Heritage and the Record of Protected Structures

Architectural Heritage is protected through the Record of Protected Structures which forms part of the Mayo County Development Plan. The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), places an obligation on local authorities to include objectives for the protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. Archaeological structures may, in some situations, be considered as

architectural heritage and, therefore, may appear on both the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and the Record of Protected Structures (RPS).

The Record of Protected Structures which relate to the Plan boundary are detailed in Volume 4 of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028. These structures merit protection and enhancement and in many cases have also been identified by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), which provides a detailed description of the survey of the structures.

8.5 Architectural Conservation Area

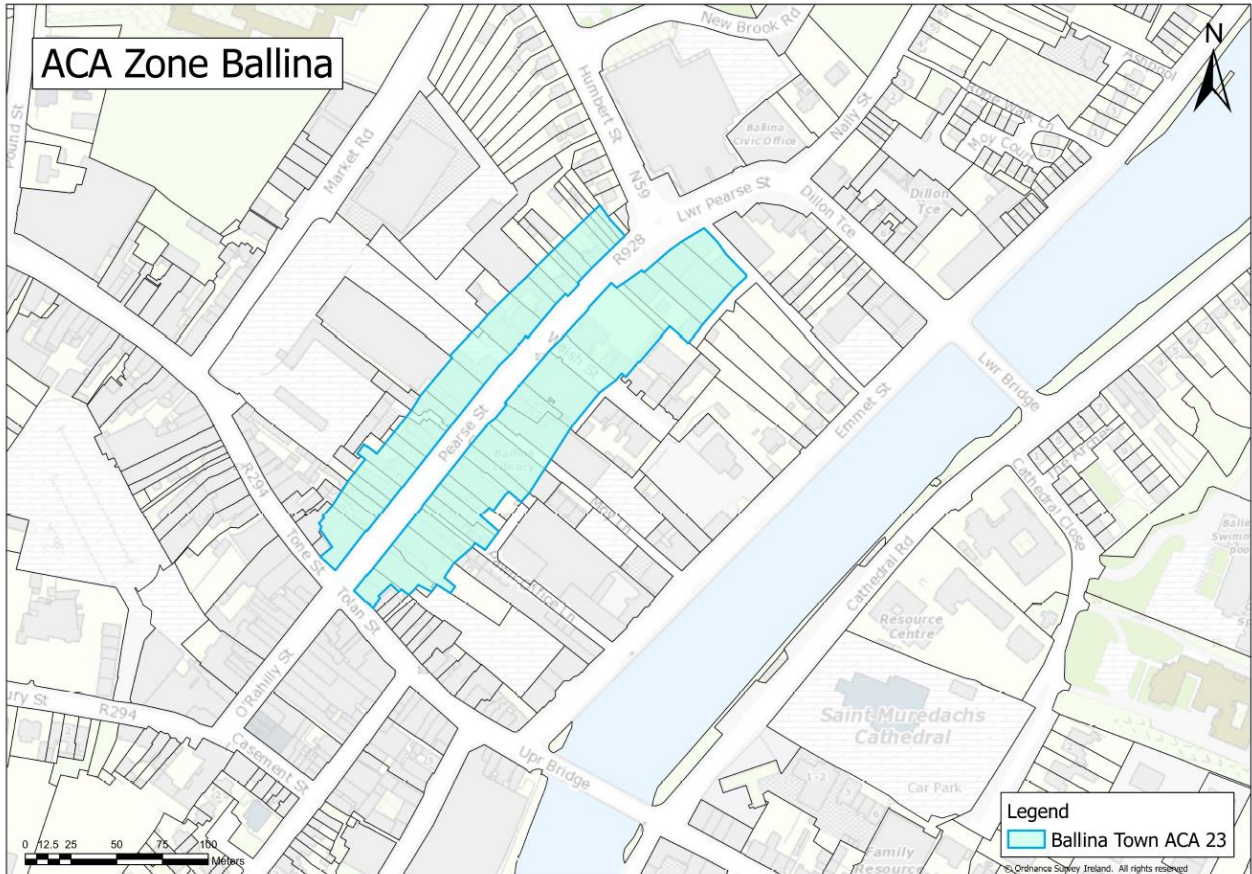
An Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, or contributes to the appreciation of a protected structure. An Architectural Conservation Area may or may not include protected structures. Owners and occupiers of protected and non-protected structures located within the ACA should note that carrying out of works to the exterior of a structure located in an ACA constitutes exempted development only if those works would not materially affect the character of the area. For example, alteration works to streetscape features such as roofs, walls, windows, doors and rainwater goods may not be exempted development. Porches and other development which may normally be considered exempt are not exempt within the ACA. Development within or adjoining the ACA is required to be sympathetic to the character of the area and be appropriately designed.

Ballina's ACA is located along Pearse Street and Walsh Street and comprises most of the main thoroughfare in the centre of the town of Ballina. It lies in a north-easterly/south-westerly orientation, the street itself stretching approximately two hundred and eighty metres. Pearse Street presents a variety of architectural styles with Victorian and Georgian facades and a wide range of material finishes. The Pearse Street ACA includes all streets leading off it, Walsh Street, 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.

Proposals for defining a second ACA in Ballina at Crocketstown/The Quay are being considered by Mayo County Council due to its historic and built heritage significance in order to:

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

An objective regarding the development of the Crocketstown/Quay ACA is included in this plan.



Map 8.1 Pearse Street ACA

8.6 Archaeological Heritage

Archaeological remains and deposits can advance the understanding of how Ballina Town and its environs have developed over the centuries and increase the knowledge of its past. It will, therefore, be important to preserve the archaeological remains within any future developments, either by protecting/preserving archaeological remains in situ or by removing and recording them.

The town and environs have a rich archaeological history. The Archaeological Survey of Ireland database at contains an interactive map/search facility that provides access to all records of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI) and should be consulted prior to the development of land within the plan area.

Mayo County Council recognises that there may be important archaeological deposits located outside the Zone of Archaeological Potential. Where such deposits are uncovered through development, the Council will have regard to the recommendations of the Department of Housing, Local Government and, Heritage in promoting their preservation and recording. The Council may request that archaeological field evaluation take place as part of the application or before development proposals are implemented, where there is evidence that archaeological remains are present.

8.7 Placemaking

The built environment not only includes buildings but the spaces between buildings, such as town squares and parks, sensory parks, community gardens and the physical infrastructure that support human activity, such as transportation and utility networks. The Plan aims to improve the quality of the built fabric of Ballina by applying the principles of placemaking. Placemaking is multidimensional and represents the connection between people and place. Ballina is fortunate in already having a high-quality public realm, with distinctive features and structures such as the Quay and the River Moy and the LAP will aim to protect and further enhance the distinctive character of Ballina and provide a safe, accessible and attractive built environment in the town.



8.8 Built Environment Policies and Objectives

Built Heritage Conservation Policies

It is a policy of the Council to:

BEP 1	Maintain, conserve, and protect the architectural quality, character and scale of Ballina.
BEP 2	Encourage high quality and well-designed buildings, structures, public spaces and streets and support and promote healthy place-making and quality of life.
BEP 3	Encourage residential uses on the upper floors of town centre commercial properties, where appropriate, and to encourage the retention of residential use except where an alternative use has been established, to maintain and enhance the overall vitality of the town centre area.
BEP 4	Protect the town centre by ensuring all new development is compatible with the existing character and visual amenity of Ballina.
BEP 5	Have regard to Mayo Shopfronts Design Guide for shopfronts and signs and to encourage the use of traditional shopfront designs and materials and signs.

Built Heritage Conservation Objective

It is an objective of the Council to:

BEO 1	Prohibit the use of plastic and neon lit shop signs within the town core and at other locations where the planning authority deem them unsuitable.
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Architectural Heritage and Record of Protected Structures Policies

It is a policy of the Council to:

BEP 6	Maintain, conserve and protect the architectural quality and character of the Pearse Street Architectural Conservation Area.
BEP 7	Encourage the rehabilitation, renovation, climate-proofing and re-use of existing protected structures and vernacular buildings within the plan area, where appropriate, over the demolition of same and new-build on-site.

Architectural Heritage and Record of Protected Structures Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

BEO 2???	Identify places of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, and to define them as Architectural Conservation Areas over the lifetime of the Plan and to undertake an assessment to inform the potential
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	ACA designation for Crocketstown/Quay area or any other special character areas considered by the Planning Authority worthy of such protection in County Mayo.
BEO 2	Preserve the protected structures and their settings in Ballina on the Record of Protected Structures and seek to prevent the demolition or inappropriate alteration of Protected Structures, which would adversely impact on the character and special interest of the structure, where appropriate and to review the Record of Protected Structures from time to time as the need arises.
BEO 3	Preserve the form and character of the protected structures by ensuring that any proposed sub- division of protected structures for multiple residential units does not impair the character of the protected structure.
BEO 4	Ensure that any alterations or interventions to protected structures shall be executed to a high conservation standard in order to protect their significance or value. Any applications for development of protected structures shall be accompanied by an assessment carried out in accordance with the Councils requirements by an accredited conservation architect, in accordance with the Councils requirements.
BEO 5	To ensure that any new development or alteration to a building within or adjoining the Pearse Street/Walsh Street Architectural Conservation Area positively enhances the character of the area and is appropriate in terms of the proposed materials, scale, density, layout, proportions, plot ratio and building lines.

Archaeological Heritage Policy

It is a policy of the Council to:

BEP 8	Support and promote the protection, appropriate management, and sympathetic enhancement of the archaeological heritage within the Plan area, in particular by implementing the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended).
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Archaeological Heritage Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

BEO 6	Protect and preserve in situ (or upon agreement preservation by record) items of archaeological interest provided for on the Sites and Monuments Record (www.archeology.ie) from inappropriate development that would adversely affect and/or detract from interpretation and setting of these sites.
EO 7	Ensure proposals contribute to the protection and preservation of the archaeological value of sites including underwater sites associated with the River Moy.

Placemaking Policies

It is a policy of the Council to:

BEP 9	Promote the regeneration of Ballina town centre by making better use of underutilised land and buildings, particularly within the existing built-up areas to achieve compact growth.
BEP 10	Encourage and facilitate improvements to the physical fabric and environment of the town, including streetscape, street furniture, landscaping (hard and soft), signage and wirescape, while recognising that both private and public developments can contribute to effective public realm

Chapter 9 Natural Environment

9.1 Strategic Aim

To protect, conserve, enhance and sustain the natural environment of Ballina and promote climate adaptation, placemaking and enhance biodiversity through promotion of green infrastructure for future generations.

9.2 Introduction

The natural environment includes those spaces outside of the built environment such as open spaces, lakes, rivers and agricultural land. Ballina town and its environs contain several significant elements of the natural environment. Belleek Woods is located within the Plan area and the River Moy flows through the centre of the town and Quay. These natural features are supplemented by a range of public open spaces and parks, significant institutional lands and playing pitches. They provide habitats for a variety of plant and animal species and combine to form an attractive physical environment that distinguish Ballina from most other urban centres of its size.

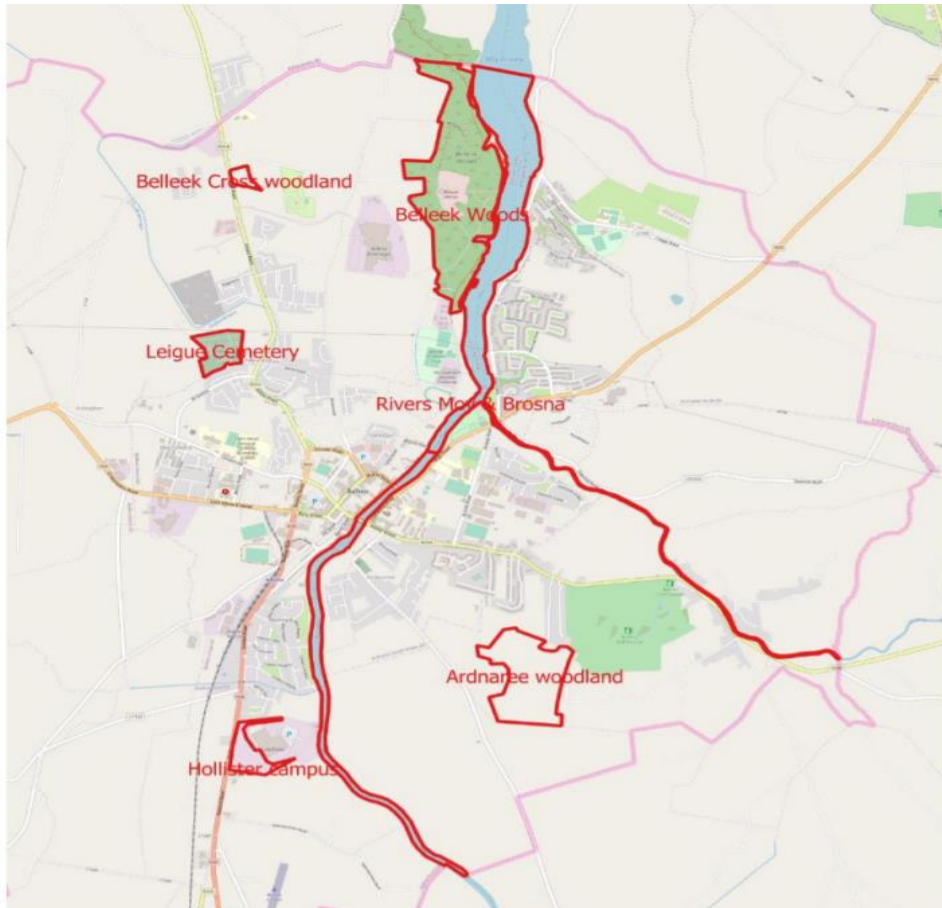
The natural environment also provides direct and indirect benefits to the population of Ballina and its surrounds. They are places where people can engage in recreational activities such as walking, swimming, water related activities and playing formal and informal field sports. These areas also provide a visual amenity that enhances the attractiveness of the town as a place in which to live and work.

9.3 Natural Heritage

Our natural heritage includes the variety of life we see around us every day, often referred to as biodiversity. Biodiversity includes everything from trees to weeds, from mammals to birds, from coast to countryside. A wide range of economic and social benefits result from the protection of environmental quality and biodiversity. For example, biodiversity forms the basis of our landscapes, provides for food and clean water supplies, nutrient recycling and coastal protection. It also contributes climate stability and human well-being.

9.3.1 Ballina Biodiversity Plan 2021-2027

To ensure the protection of Ballina's natural heritage a Biodiversity Plan for Ballina has been prepared, which has informed the preparation of this Plan. Ballina has a significant level of natural heritage, including biodiversity areas and green infrastructure and a number of notable areas are identified in the Biodiversity Plan. These are identified below.



Map 9.1 Notable Natural Heritage Areas in Ballina (Source: Ballina Biodiversity Plan)

Rivers Moy and Brosna: As Ballina is a town built along the banks of these rivers, the Moy and Brosna are important biodiversity corridors within the town and are given SAC (Special Area of Conservation) status. In linking Ballina with the countryside and habitats upstream and downstream, these rivers are important not only for their aquatic habitats, but also for riverside areas, such as reed beds along the Moy and woodland along the Brosna.

Belleek Woods: This is a large area of mixed woodland to the north of Ballina, adjoining the River Moy. The woods contain both deciduous trees, such as beech, oak and ash and conifers, such as pine and Norway spruce. This woodland is managed by Coillte and features a heritage trail and visitor facilities. Coillte's primary aim for Belleek woodland is recreation for the town of Ballina and for the wider community and preserving the biodiversity of the woods. The site is a habitat for badgers, foxes, red squirrels, otters, herons and kingfishers.

Belleek Cross Woodland: This area of woodland, adjacent to Belleek Cross, consists mainly of deciduous trees, with small numbers of conifers also present.

Leigue Cemetery: Leigue Cemetery contains old stone buildings, partly covered with ivy, which provide nesting sites for birds and roosting opportunities for bats. There are also old stone walls in the cemetery, some of which are nicely covered with ivy.

Ardnaree Woods: The woodlands at Ardnaree, to the south-east of Ballina, have a good mixture of habitats and vegetation types. While much of the site has been planted with conifers such as spruce,

with associated drainage channels, there are remnants of habitat that resemble bog woodland with *Sphagnum* spp., which is a rare habitat type. There are also clearings and open spaces with wet heath vegetation, including devil's bit scabious (*Succisa pratensis*), which is the food plant for the protected marsh fritillary butterfly. However, invasive *Rhododendron* is also present and is colonising parts of the woodland.

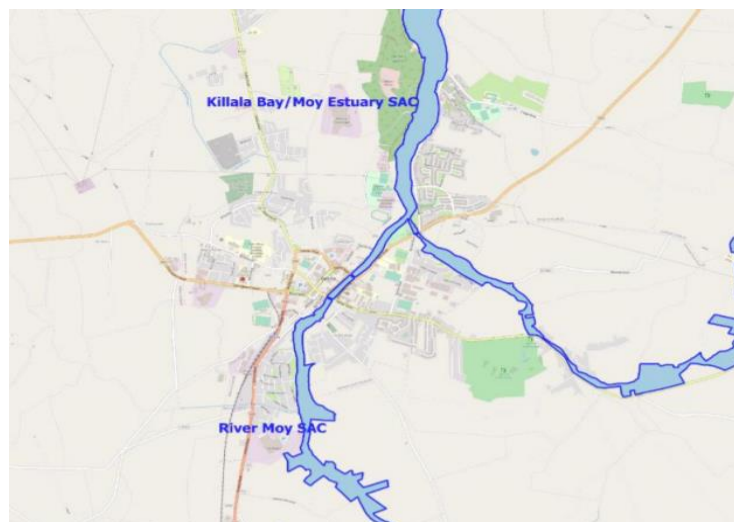
Hollister Campus: The grounds of Hollister ULC contains woodland with both conifers and deciduous trees, a pond, and areas of grassland. Efforts have been made to manage the site with biodiversity considerations in mind, including the development of pollinator-friendly areas of grassland, the preservation of woodland habitats, and the provision of bird nesting boxes and insect 'hotels'.

9.3.2 Designated Sites

Mayo County Council recognises the importance of protecting designated areas of natural and heritage value. These designations include:

- Special Protection Areas (SPA)
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Natural Heritage Area (NHA)
- Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)
- Flora Protection Order

The River Moy flows north through the centre of Ballina and 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.



Map 9.2 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) in Ballina

Killala Bay and 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. The Council will support development along designated site corridors only where it has been

demonstrated that water quality is protected, and its biodiversity value is enhanced in accordance with best practice principles of green and blue infrastructure planning.

9.3.3 Protected Species

Certain plant, animal and bird species are protected by law. This includes plant species listed in the Flora Protection Order, 1999 (or other such Orders) and animals and birds listed in the Wildlife Act, 1976 and subsequent statutory instruments, those listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), and those listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive. Proposals for developments, where appropriate, will require an assessment of the presence of bats and/or other protected species and ensure that suitable avoidance and/or mitigation measures are put in place accordingly.

9.3.4 Invasive Species

Invasive non-native plant and animal species are a major threat to biodiversity (www.invasivespeciesireland.com) and prohibitions are in place in relation to the introduction or dispersal of certain invasive species as set out in the Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Habitats Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477/2011)) and as set out in EU Regulations 1143/2014 on the Prevention and Management of the Introduction and Spread of Invasive Alien Species.

Invasive alien species can negatively impact on native species, transform habitats and threaten whole ecosystems causing serious problems to the environment and the economy. They may in certain cases pose a threat to human safety. There is potential for the spread of invasive species during excavation and construction works and for such species to be introduced into the environment via spreading from private gardens, boat users, horticulture etc. e.g. Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam.

9.4 Landscape

The varied landscape is an inherent part of Ballina's natural heritage and as such it requires protection in its own right. Therefore, the landscape must be protected against possible development, which would undermine or change its character. It is paramount to Ballina's future development only takes place where visual intrusion is minimal, particularly within areas of elevated topography or sparse vegetation.

There are several locations within the town where views of Nephin Mountain and the River Moy can be enjoyed. Certain views have been identified as worthy of preservation and include views of the river and of Belleek Woods from Crocketstown. Ballina's varied landscape must be protected against possible development, which would undermine or change its character.

9.5 Ecological Infrastructure

Ecological Infrastructure includes both Green and Blue Infrastructure. Green Infrastructure is the network of green spaces, habitats and ecosystems within a defined geographic area, which can range in size from an entire country to a neighbourhood. The Green Infrastructure network supports native plant and animal species and provides corridors for their movement. It maintains natural ecological processes and biodiversity, sustains air and water quality and provides vital amenity and recreational spaces for communities, thereby contributing to the health and quality of life of residents and visitors to Ballina. Blue Infrastructure refers to water elements like rivers, canals, ponds, wetlands, floodplains, water treatment facilities, etc.

Central to the concept of a Green Infrastructure network is its multi functionality, performing several layered functions in a single shared space. Not only does it provide for a habitat for the maintenance and protection of wildlife, it delivers environmental services such as sustainable water drainage and flood protection whilst also enabling the provision of amenity and recreational activities for people.

Parks and open spaces as green infrastructure play an important role as a mechanism for carbon offset as well as for wider environmental benefits such as placemaking, providing shade to alleviate heat stress, supporting urban biodiversity, water retention and flood alleviation. Presently there are significant areas of open space available in the town and environs. These areas are composed primarily of sports grounds, parks within residential areas, as well as significant areas of open space around the Quay area, along the River Moy and Belleek. Tom Ruane Park (Town Park) contains recreational facilities such as a children’s playground, walking routes as well as biodiversity rich areas.

Mayo County Council’s approach to green and blue infrastructure is one that seeks to conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geological heritage and to promote the sustainable management of the landscape and waterways.

9.6 Trees and Hedgerows

Trees, whether individually or in groups, make a valuable contribution to the biodiversity and visual amenity of towns. Trees perform a number of roles including absorption of pollutants, filtering noise, producing oxygen, providing a habitat for wildlife and enhancing the environment.

Ballina contains many large trees and groups of trees of considerable heritage value, which enhance the character and setting of the town. The most notable contiguous area of tree cover is found within Belleek Woods, which is the largest area of woodland within the plan boundary. These mature trees and other individual and smaller tree stands form a valuable part of the urban environment by contributing to the distinctiveness of individual parts of the town.

Tree Preservation Orders will be served where they would effectively safeguard public amenity and preserve the character of the area. Inappropriate arboricultural work to protected trees will be resisted. Mature trees situated elsewhere in the town, whether in groups or individually, should be preserved, where possible.

9.7 Natural Environment Policies and Objectives

Designated Sites Policies

It is the policy of the Council to

NEP 1	<p>In seeking to protect and enhance the natural environment, Mayo County Council will seek to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Protect, conserve and enhance the natural heritage of Ballina, including the protection of the integrity of European sites, that form part of the Natura 2000 Network.- Protect and conserve non-designated habitats and species; and- Protect and incorporate existing biodiversity features into the design and construction of new development and public realm and enhancing the biodiversity value of existing open spaces.
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	- Where appropriate proposals are made along a riparian corridor, ensure that a vegetated strip along the river in consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, is maintained.
NEP 2	Seek to ensure that new plans or projects would not result in significant climatic impacts on European sites because of their scale, resource or transportation requirements, operation or emissions, either cumulatively or in combination with other development.

Designated Sites Objective

It is an objective of the Council

NEO 1	Ensure that any proposal for development within or adjacent to the River Moy cSAC and Killala Bay and Moy Estuary cSAC/NHA is located and designed to minimise its impact on the biodiversity, geological, water and landscape value of the cSAC/NHA and, where possible, to integrate these important attributes into all such development schemes.
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Ecological Corridor Policy

It is the policy of the Council to:

NEP 3	Protect, reinforce and strengthen the Green Infrastructure network in Ballina and to strengthen links to the wider regional network. This should be informed by appropriate ecological surveys and assessment.
NEP 4	Support the implementation of the Biodiversity Plan for Ballina and any subsequent Biodiversity Plan for the Plan area over the lifetime of the Plan.

Ecological Corridor objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

NEO 2	Protect identified key green infrastructure (Map 9.1), enhance where possible and integrate existing and new green infrastructure as an essential component of new developments and prohibit development that would fragment the green infrastructure network. Site specific ecology surveys should be carried out to inform proposed development and assess and mitigate potential impacts.
NEO 3	Protect and enhance the built, natural and recreational potential of the River Moy and to encourage and promote sustainable access to and enjoyment of the River Moy.
NEO 4	Maintain a suitable buffer zone along the River Moy and other watercourses protecting them from inappropriate development.
NEO 5	Development will not be permitted to infringe upon or undermine existing areas of public open space. Any development, which is proposed adjacent to public open space, must allow for public access to these facilities.

NEO 6	Protect and enhance existing public open spaces as an amenity and recreational resource for the town and environs.
NEO 7	Support and work with the local community in the development of blue and green infrastructure in the town and in the enhancement of the biodiversity and conservation value of the river and lakes corridors.

Trees, Hedgerows and other areas of Biodiversity Policies

It is the policy of the Council:

NEP 5	<p>There shall be a presumption against the felling, topping, lopping or wilful destruction of mature trees as part of development proposals. Where a development proposal involves the felling, topping, lopping or threatens the destruction of a mature tree or trees, a tree survey will need to be included in the submission, carried out by a qualified Tree Specialist to justify the exceptional circumstances for their interference.</p> <p>The applicant must demonstrate the justification and rationale for removal of mature trees in terms of effect on ecology and landscape and demonstrate how replacement planting will compensate for loss of trees and woodland features. An assessment of potential tree roost features by a qualified and experienced ecologist may also be requested as part of such proposals.</p>
NEP 6	Protect and incorporate existing biodiversity features such as hedgerows and surface water features into the design and construction of new development and public realm. Where the loss of the existing features is unavoidable new biodiversity features should incorporate native species, and species of local provenance to replace the existing hedgerow.

Trees, Hedgerows and other areas of Biodiversity Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

NEO 8	Increase tree planting and pollinator friendly planting, in accordance with the recommendations of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan throughout Ballina and in open spaces in new developments in order to enhance local biodiversity, visual amenity and surface water management in partnership with relevant stakeholders.
NEO 9	Ensure that where the presence of invasive species is identified at the site of any proposed development or where the proposed activity has an elevated risk of resulting in the presence of these species, details of how these species will be appropriately managed and controlled will be required.
NEO 10	Enhance and promote biodiversity and amenity and to ensure the protection of environmentally sensitive sites and habitats, including where flood risk management measures are planned.

Chapter 10 Infrastructure and Environmental Services

10.1 Strategic Aim

To phase future growth in line with the capacity of supporting physical infrastructure and to ensure it occurs in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

10.2 Introduction/Context

The ability of Ballina to accommodate future development and remain a competitive location is dependent on the capacity and delivery of infrastructural support. The availability of high-quality physical infrastructure networks and environmental services is critical to securing investment, creating sustainable and attractive places, ensuring health and well-being while also safeguarding the environment. The Council will work with national, regional and local utility providers to safeguard the protection of existing infrastructure assets in the town and seek up-grades and enhancement, where necessary, to facilitate the sustainable growth of Ballina.



10.3 Surface Water Drainage Infrastructure

Mayo Council is responsible for the management and disposal of surface water runoff within the public realm. All new development within Ballina must account for how surface water runoff will be appropriately managed. The Council advocates surface water management through Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS). SuDS is widely recognised as a green infrastructure-based approach to drainage and storm water management. It aims to mimic the natural drainage of a site, to minimise the effect of a development on flooding and pollution of waterways, through various engineering solutions, including using porous surface treatments, ponds, swales, filter drains or other installations.

10.4 Flood Risk management

In accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG and OPW, 2009) a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was carried out for the local area plan. The SFRA provides a detailed evidence-based review of the town, including site survey work and outlines provision to ensure flood risk is mitigated. The SFRA has been informed by the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Programme which, under the responsibility of the OPW, deals with fluvial flood risk.

Consideration of flood risk in the SFRA acknowledges the role of climate change and includes provisions to adapt to, and mitigate, climate change. The Development Framework of the Plan informed by the SFRA ensures a precautionary approach to flood risk management and Greenfield lands at risk of flooding is zoned only for agricultural or amenity purposes. The Council will require all developments within areas identified to be at flood risk to comply with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines (DEHLG, 2009) and Circular PL2/2014.

Proposals for development where there is an identified or potential flood risk will be required to carry out a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment, and Justification Test in accordance with these guidelines and the standards of the County Development Plan. New development within these flood risk zones shall also provide details of:

- Floor levels relative to expected flood levels in ordnance survey datum.
- Internal layouts.
- flood-resistant and flood-resilient construction methods proposed.
- Emergency response planning details.
- Access and egress measures during flood events.

Extensions of existing uses or minor development within flood risk areas will be supported, provided they do not: obstruct important flow paths; introduce a number of people into flood risk areas; entail the storage of hazardous substances; have adverse impacts or impede access to a watercourse, floodplain or flood protection and management facilities; or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.



10.4.1 Ballina Flood Relief Scheme

Ballina Town has a long history of flooding. The main sources of flooding at Ballina are the high-water levels in the River Moy and also the inadequate conveyance capacities of the smaller stream channels and associated culverts along with their limited discharge capacities into the River Moy during high water levels. Properties located on Bachelor’s Walk, Arbuckle Row and Clare Street suffered extensive flood damage during the recent January 2014 and December 2015 flood events.

Under the OPW CFRAM study, Ballina Town and its low-lying environs were identified as an Area for Further Assessment (AFA) in 2012 and subsequently a number of potential flood relief/protection measures were identified and assessed to be viable and effective to reduce flooding for the vulnerable properties located in Ballina Town (www.floodinfo.ie).

In February 2020, Mayo County Council in partnership with the OPW appointed RPS Consulting Engineers Ltd to further assess the CFRAM Study identify options and prepare a detailed scheme for Ballina which is economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sustainable. The entire scheme will be implemented in five different stages. Stage I commenced in March 2020 and is currently ongoing.

Stages	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Stage I: Option Assessment, Scheme Development and Design	Progress to date				Programmed activities				
Stage II: Planning / Development Consent					Programmed activities				
Stage III: Detailed Construction Design and Tender						Programmed activities			
Stage IV: Construction Supervision and Project Management							Programmed activities		
Stage V: Handover									Programmed activities

Programmed activities
 Progress to date

Table 10.1: Outline Programme for Ballina Flood Relief Scheme

10.5 Drinking Water and Wastewater

Uisce Éireann replaced Local Authorities as the single provider of water and wastewater services in 2014. Uisce Éireann is responsible for the operation of public water and wastewater services nationally, including strategic planning, policy development, service provision, customer service and capital investment planning and delivery.

10.5.1 Drinking Water

In co-operation with Uisce Éireann, the Council will contribute towards compliance with the European Union (Drinking Water) Regulations Drinking Water Regulations 2014 (as amended) and seek to undertake any remedial action as required. Ballina’s drinking water is supplied by the Ballina Water Resource Zone. It is envisaged that there is adequate capacity to cater for the projected population increase over the Plan period. However, an upgrade to provide additional capacity is likely to be required beyond the lifetime of the Plan.

10.5.2 Wastewater Treatment

Ballina benefits from a public wastewater treatment system located in the north of the settlement catering for a population equivalent to 10,171. The facility is well within design capacity of 25,000 pe. In un-serviced areas within the plan area, the main method of sewage disposal is by means of individual septic tanks and proprietary wastewater treatment systems. Mayo County Council is the

competent authority for the assessment and approval of individual domestic on-site wastewater treatment systems in the county.

Capacity - today (PE)	Load - in 2021 (PE)	Headroom (PE)
25,000	15,888	9,112

Table 10.2: Existing Capacity of the Ballina WWTP

10.6 Energy Networks Infrastructure

A secure and resilient supply of energy is critical to the functioning of Ballina. With increases in population and economic growth, the demand for energy intensifies. The main energy networks serving Ballina are electricity and gas. The Council is also cognisant of national policy, which seeks to promote renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations within the built and natural environment, to meet national objectives towards achieving a carbon neutral and climate resilient economy by 2050.

10.6.1 Electricity

Ballina is supplied by a 110kV overhead line which is currently undergoing upgrading and undergrounding by Eirgrid which will link Ballina and Ballaghaderreen. Mayo County Council recognises that essential future upgrades are required to the electricity grid in the west, as outlined in Eirgrid's *'Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios 2019 System Needs Assessment'* and will support Eirgrid in future programmes identifying grid solutions, in both infrastructural and technological terms, in order to facilitate the electricity targets, set out in the Government's CAP 2023 and the National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030.

10.6.2 Natural Gas

Ballina is served by the national gas network which is fed by the Corrib Gas Field pipeline which runs from the terminal in Bellanaboy to Galway with feed connections to six Mayo settlements including Ballina. Maintaining security of supply of gas is a government priority. However, the government is also responsible for reducing Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions under the Climate Action Plan. The use of renewable sources of gas will have a key role to play in decarbonising the natural gas grid.

10.7 Waste Management

Mayo is located within the Connacht-Ulster Waste Management Region, governed by the Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 (or superseding plan). Mayo County Council is the regional lead authority, acting on behalf of the other authorities with responsibility for the successful implementation of the plan. The plan incorporates policies and objectives for waste management within the region. Refuse collection in Ballina is currently carried out by a number of private contractors and Mayo County Council operate recycling facilities for glass and cans at several locations throughout the town. The Council will continue to encourage and facilitate recycling at appropriate locations while also seeking to minimise waste through its environmental education programme and the Green-Schools programme. The nearest civic amenity centre is located at Rathreen, which is located between Ballina and Killala, and provides recycling facilities for a comprehensive range of waste materials.

The management and control of pollution and environmental services is essential for a good quality of life, human health, wildlife and the economy. The Council will continue to protect and enhance the environment within the Plan area through waste management and the control of air, light and noise pollution. The Council recognises the importance of maintaining Ballina as a litter free town and protecting it from indiscriminate dumping and advertising. Along with its legal obligations, the Council will work with the Tidy Towns Committee, Green Town Committee, schools and local residents' associations to increase awareness of waste recycling and litter control.

10.8 Information Communications Technology (ICT) and Broadband

The increasing use of digital technologies is impacting on every aspect of our lives; from education and leisure to health services. The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted that now more than ever better-connected services are vital to our continued growth, supporting businesses and enhancing our communities. Broadband is readily available in Ballina. Several telecoms providers have network infrastructure serving the area and provide various types of connectivity from fixed line, wireless, mobile broadband and fibre optic. Ballina is also part of the Wifi4EU scheme, which is an initiative of the European Commission which provides funding to Local Authorities to provides free WI-FI hotspots in public areas. The Council will be guided by national policy in relation to importance of high-quality telecommunication services and the facilitation of improved internet and broadband infrastructure.

10.9 Infrastructure and Environmental Services Policies and Objectives

Surface Water Drainage Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

IESP 1	Maintain and enhance the existing surface water drainage systems in Ballina and to protect surface and ground water quality in accordance with the Water Framework Directive.
IESP 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Maintain, improve and enhance the environmental and ecological quality of surface waters and groundwater, including reducing the discharges of pollutants or contaminants to waters in accordance with the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027 (DHPLG) and associated Programme of Measures. b) Require all planning applications to include surface water design calculations to establish the suitability of drainage between the site and the outfall point; where appropriate and feasible. c) Encourage the use of SuDS in public and private developments and within the public realm to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving, in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding risks
IESP 3	Maintain, improve and enhance the environmental and ecological quality of surface waters and groundwater in Ballina in conjunction with the Environmental Protection Agency and in accordance with the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027 and future cycles of this Plan.

Surface Water Drainage Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to

IESO 1	Encourage the use of SuDS within public and private developments and within the public realm to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving, in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding risks.
IESO 2	Work with Uisce Éireann to separate the discharge of additional surface water to combined (foul and surface water) sewers within the plan area, in order to maximise the capacity of existing collection systems, where possible.

Flood Risk Management Policies

It is a policy of the Council to:

IESP 4	Extensions of existing uses or minor development within flood risk areas will be supported, provided they do not: obstruct important flow paths; introduce a number of people into flood risk areas; entail the storage of hazardous substances; have adverse impacts or impede access to a watercourse, floodplain or flood protection and management facilities; or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. Proposals of this nature shall be accompanied by a commensurate assessment of the risks of flooding in accordance with the Planning Systems Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009.
IESP 5	Manage flood risk in Ballina in conjunction with the OPW and in accordance with the requirements of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) and circular PL02/2014 (August 2014).

Flood Risk Management Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

IESO 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Manage flood risk in accordance with the requirements of “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities”, DECLG and OPW (2009) and any revisions thereof and consider the potential impacts of climate change in the application of these guidelines.Require applications in areas at risk of flooding to be supported by a comprehensive flood risk assessment. All flood risk assessments should have regard to ‘The Planning System and Flood Risk Management’ (DEHLG and OPW, Nov.2009) as revised by Circular PL 2/2014, national flood hazard mapping, predicted changes in flood events resulting from climate change and the Moy & Killala Bay Catchment Flood Risk and Management Plan.Minimise flood risk arising from pluvial (surface water) flooding in Ballina by promoting the use of natural flood risk management measures including sustainable
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	<p>drainage systems (SuDS), minimising extent of hard surface/paving, and smart solutions such as innovative green infrastructure.</p> <p>d) Demonstrate that future development will not result in increased risk of flooding elsewhere, restrict flow paths, where compensatory storage / storm water retention measures shall be provided on site.</p> <p>e) Have regard to the most up to date Flood Mapping as presented on the Office of Public Works (OPW) maps.</p>
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Drinking Water and Wastewater Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

IESP 6	<p>a) Support the implementation of the Uisce Éireann Investment Plans.</p> <p>b) Liaise with Uisce Éireann, to maximise the potential of existing capacity and to facilitate the timely delivery of new water services infrastructure, to facilitate existing and future growth.</p>
IESP 7	Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the relevant River Basin Management Plan 2022-2028, and associated Programme of Measures, or any such plan that may supersede same during the lifetime of this plan.
IESP 8	Discourage the over-concentration/proliferation of individual septic tanks and treatment plants to minimise the risk of groundwater pollution.

Drinking water and Wastewater Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

IESO 4	Developments shall connect to the public sewer and public water mains, subject to a connection agreement with Uisce Éireann, in order to protect all waters in the plan area, and also to consolidate the urban structure and to control ribbon development along approach roads into Ballina.
IESO 5	Support and facilitate the delivery of free outdoor drinking water refilling stations throughout the plan area.
IESO 6	Ensure that private wastewater treatment plants, where permitted, are operated in compliance with EPA's Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (PE. ≤10) (EPA 2021), as may be amended

Energy network Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

IESP 9	Support and promote the sustainable improvement and expansion of the electricity transmission and gas distribution network that supply the Plan area, while taking into consideration landscape, residential, amenity and environmental considerations.
IESP 10	Promote and encourage the use of renewable energy technologies, at appropriate locations, for developments of existing and proposed building stock, such as district heating, micro generation (photovoltaic, micro-wind, micro hydro and micro combined heat and power) and other renewable energy technologies, which do not adversely affect residential amenity or environmental quality.
IESP 11	Support and liaise with statutory and other energy providers in relation to power generation, in order to ensure adequate power capacity for the existing and future needs of Ballina.

Waste Management Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

IESP 12	Protect environmental quality in Ballina through the implementation of European, national and regional policy and legislation relating to air quality, greenhouse gases, climate change, light pollution, noise pollution and waste management.
IESP 13	Support waste reduction and sustainable waste management through prevention, reduction and recycling and by facilitating the provision of adequate waste infrastructure, such as bring banks, at locations that will not adversely affect residential amenity or environmental quality.
IESP 14	Support local schools, town and community groups such as Ballina Green Towns Initiative, Ballina Tidy Towns through education and awareness programmes and where available, through the provision of grant aid.

Waste Management Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

IESO 7	<p>Require all commercial and residential developments to be provided with adequate internal and external space for the correct storage of waste and recyclable materials. This is particularly important in relation to shared bin spaces such as apartment developments. In such cases the following must be provided for:</p> <p>a) Adequate space must be given for waste to be segregated and stored in an appropriate manner;</p>
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	<p>b) A multi-occupancy development will require a designated, ventilated waste storage area of sufficient size which allows for the segregation of waste;</p> <p>c) New and re-designed commercial buildings and apartment complexes should have waste facilities designed in a manner that waste can be collected directly from them and where possible waste and recyclables should not have to be collected on the street or at the front of the premises.</p>
IESO 8	Promote the prevention, reduction and recycling of waste in new developments, new development proposals shall be required to submit proposals demonstrating how this is to be achieved and shall seek to ensure on-site provision for waste storage and segregation (bio-waste/dry recyclables/residual waste) pending collection at all new domestic and non-domestic premises.
IESO 9	Adequately maintain recycling facilities and secure the provision of additional facilities, as required, including in conjunction with new developments.
IESO 10	Facilitate the installation of bring bank(s) at suitable locations within the plan area, which do not adversely affect residential amenity or environmental quality.

Information Communications Technology and Broadband Policies

It is the policy of the Council to:

IESP 15	Seek the undergrounding of all electricity, telephone and television cables in the town including the town centre and in residential and amenity areas.
IESP 16	<p>Co-operate with the relevant agencies to facilitate the undergrounding of all electricity, telephone and television cables in urban areas wherever possible, in the interests of visual amenity. Where undergrounding of cables is being pursued, proposals should demonstrate that environmental impacts including the following are minimised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat loss as a result of removal of field boundaries and hedgerows (right of way preparation) followed by topsoil stripping (to ensure machinery does not destroy soil structure and drainage properties); • Short to medium term impacts on the landscape where, for example, hedgerows are encountered; • Impacts on underground archaeology; • Impacts on soil structure and drainage; and • Impacts on surface waters as a result of sedimentation
IESP 17	Discourage a proliferation of above ground utility boxes in the town and to seek screening measures and discreet locations in conjunction with the provision of such structures.

Information, Communication Technology and Broadband Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

IESO 11	Ensure that all new development proposals, incorporate s communications service infrastructure broadband, including ducting on an open access basis.
IESO 12	Facilitate the provision of adequate telecommunication infrastructure within the plan area, including telephone and broadband services, to the requirements of the relevant service providers and in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

Chapter 11 Land Use Zoning Objectives

11.1 Strategic Aim:

To manage and deliver new development to ensure that it occurs in an orderly and efficient manner in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

11.2 Introduction:

The quality of the built environment in Ballina is dependent not only on building design and street layout, but also on smaller elements that can make an important contribution. For example, standards for landscaping, residential density, building heights, site coverage, street furniture and car parking standards can all play an important role in ensuring successful and sustainable new developments. Development proposals will be assessed both in terms of the achievement of both qualitative and quantitative standards. Qualitative standards include design, layout, mix of new buildings and landscaping, whilst quantitative standards include density, plot ratio, site coverage, access, and roads standards. The general development management guidelines applicable to the plan area are set out in Volume II of the Mayo County Development Plan, 2022-2028. Where conflict exists between this Plan and the County Development Plan, the CDP will take precedence.

The Planning Authority may exercise its discretion in relation to quantitative standards in certain circumstances on a case-by-case basis such as and not limited to:

- Where appropriate to the context and necessary to secure the urban design or other objectives of this plan.
- Performance-based criteria, dependent on location and individual site characteristics, in accordance with the provisions of National Policy Objective 13.
- To facilitate comprehensive redevelopment in areas in need of urban renewal/redevelopment or the delivery of appropriate uses on urban brownfield and infill sites.
- To maintain existing streetscape profiles.
- Where a site already has the benefit of a higher density, plot ratio and/or site coverage.
- Proximity to public transport termini and corridors, where an appropriate mix of residential and commercial uses is proposed.
- To comply with Specific Planning Policy Requirement (SPPR) set out in Section 28 Guidelines, particularly in town centre locations.
- To take account of the character, context and merits of each respective site and development proposal; to assist the delivery of appropriate uses on urban brownfield and infill sites; and to facilitate higher and increased building heights for appropriate uses at suitable locations.

11.3 Urban Design Principles

In order to underpin the development of Ballina with sound urban design principles, the Plan places emphasis on encouraging a responsive design approach, particularly in areas of the town in need of regeneration. In tandem with the concept of 'placemaking', the Plan seeks to deliver sustainable urban growth through the creation of a distinctive, connected and enduring environment. To ensure that a 'sense of place' is at the heart of future development, this plan sets out the following urban design principles to inform and act as a guide for all development proposals within Ballina town:

- i) **Coherence of the Urban Form:** Creation of new built form that is in keeping with the surrounding urban context. Such developments should seek to achieve continuity and enclosure through the construction of strong urban edges and legible built form.
- ii) **Permeability and Accessibility:** The development of a hierarchy of connected streets and spaces which are easy to get to, move through and prioritise people before traffic. Improve overall movement and connectivity within the town, with a particular focus on design awareness for pedestrians and cyclists.
- iii) **Quality of Open Space:** The provision of high-quality open spaces within developments that are valued by people who use them on a daily basis or pass through them. Open spaces should provide character and be a focal point for all developments and should not be overly dominated by hard landscaping and car parking.
- iv) **Place and Character:** Built form which creates an identity and reinforces locally distinctive patterns of townscape and landscape while securing compact growth based on regeneration and consolidation of the town through the use and adaptive re-use of structures, infill development and legible new urban development.
- v) **Adaptability and Variety:** The development of built form that is robust enough to respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions. Ensure that built form typologies are varied within development schemes to maintain a level of interest in the urban environment.
- vi) **Vibrancy:** Increase the number of people living and working in the town centre. Promote and increase the number of people visiting Ballina for shopping, socialising, cultural and recreation activities.
- vii) **Attractiveness:** Ensure that attractiveness in new and regenerated buildings is achieved through the use of high-quality design, layout and material finishes.
- viii) **Diversity of Function and Use:** Promoting choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses to create a place that responds to the long term needs of a growing community.
- ix) **Environmental Sustainability:** The promotion of local biodiversity; allowing the development of the town's green infrastructure network, where new wildlife habitats become established and existing ones are protected and enhanced.

11.4 Land Use Zoning Objectives:

The land use zonings are identified on Map 1 and should be read in conjunction with Table 11.1 (Land Use Zoning Objectives) and Table 11.2 (Land Use Zoning Matrix).

There are a wide range of land uses identified under each of the Land Use Zoning Objectives. Proposals for development will need to demonstrate compliance with the various written provisions of the Plan, as relevant, including those relating to environmental protection and management. Environmental considerations, such as those related to elevated levels of flood risk or European site ecological designations, may limit the types of uses that may be possible at certain sites. Prospective applicants are encouraged to engage with the Planning Authority at the earliest opportunity to seek guidance as to the appropriateness of emerging proposals.

Land Use Zoning - General	
It is an Objective of the Council to:	
LUZ 1	Ensure that development progresses in accordance with the land use zoning objectives as set out in Table 11.1 and the Land Use Matrix contained in Table 11.2.

Table 11.1: Land Use Zoning Objectives	
It is an objective of the Council to implement the following land use zoning objectives for lands in Ballina:	
LUZ 2 - Town Centre Inner (TCI) and Edge of Town Centre (TCO)	To maintain and enhance the vitality, viability and environment of the town centre and provide for appropriate town centre uses.
LUZ 3 - Enterprise and Employment	To provide land for industrial, enterprise and employment uses.
LUZ 4 – Enterprise and Employment - Strategic	<p>To provide land for industrial, enterprise and employment uses considered to be of national or regional strategic importance.</p> <p>To promote the development of high value business and technology uses to reinforce Ballina’s role as a Key Town for large, innovative, companies in sectors including, science and technology-based industry in life sciences, bio-pharma, IT, internationally traded services and Research and Development. Developments within this zoning must demonstrate that they are of national or regional strategic importance which contribute significantly to meeting any of the objectives of the National Planning Framework, or, contribute significantly to meeting any regional spatial and economic strategy for an area, or, have a significant effect on the area of more than one planning authority.</p> <p>This zoning shall also provide for office park developments, storage facilities and logistics that are ancillary to the primary uses outlined above.</p>

LUZ 5 – Educational	To provide for the protection of lands for schools and educational uses.
LUZ 6 - Existing Residential	To protect the amenity and character of existing residential areas.
LUZ 7 - New Residential	To provide for high quality new residential development and other services incidental to residential development.
LUZ 8 - Strategic Residential Reserve	<p>To protect and safeguard suitable, undeveloped lands for future multiple residential developments. These lands are generally not developable during the lifetime of this plan for multiple residential developments. This position will be reviewed by the Planning Authority periodically over the lifetime of the plan to ensure housing growth targets are achieved (Core Strategy Table).</p> <p>Where it is apparent that ‘New Residential’ lands cannot or will not be developed within the plan period, residential development maybe considered within Strategic Residential Reserve.</p> <p>Single houses shall only be considered on a limited basis, where it has been established that the lands in question do not adversely impact on the intended future use of these lands; form part of the overall family landholding and no other appropriately zoned lands are available within of the plan boundary; and a demonstrable economic or social need has been established (Objective RHO 1 of the Mayo County Development Plan).</p>
LUZ 9 - Community Services / Facilities	To provide land for social, health, public administration and educational services and facilities.
LUZ 10 - Recreation and Amenity	To protect and improve the provision, attractiveness, accessibility and amenity value of public open space, amenity and recreation.
LUZ 11 – Agriculture	To reserve land for agricultural and rural uses and to preserve the amenity of the town setting.
LUZ 12 – Open Space	To preserve, provide for and improve active and passive recreational public and private open space.
LUZ 13 - Infrastructure and Utilities	To provide land for public infrastructure and public utilities.
LUZ 14 – Quay Development Zone/Marine Related Tourism	<p>The objective of the Marine related Tourism land use is to provide for marine related tourism development whilst having regard to the existing natural and built environment.</p> <p>Land uses generally permitted in this zone include tourist accommodation, open space, small scale retail units for the sale of marine related goods, sailing club ,restaurants, marina, pontoons, moorings, boat yards, bathing facilities, public utilities, parking, information boards and sporting and leisure facilities.</p>
LUZ 15 – Tourism and Related (Leisure)	To provide, maintain and enhance tourist related facilities
LUZ 16 - Ancillary Uses	To ensure that developments ancillary to the parent use of a site are considered on their merits irrespective of what category the ancillary development is listed under in the zoning matrix of this County Development Plan.

LUZ 17 - Established Use/Non-Conforming Uses	To generally support reasonable extensions and improvements to premises that accommodate established/non-conforming uses, where it is considered by the Planning Authority that the proposed development would not be injurious to the amenities of the area and would be consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
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11.5 Land Use Zoning Matrix:

The land use zoning matrix (Table 11.2) details the most common forms of development land uses in accordance with the county’s zoning objectives and classifies under the three below categories as to whether a proposed use is generally ‘permitted in principle’, ‘open for consideration’ or ‘not normally permitted’.

‘Permitted in Principle’: The subject use is generally acceptable subject to the normal planning process, compliance with the relevant policies and objectives, standards and requirements as set out in the Local Area Plan and County Development Plan, and in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. (Note: A proposal which is indicated as being ‘Permitted in Principle’ within the zoning matrix does not imply ‘automatic approval’ as each proposal for development is considered on its individual merits).

‘Open for Consideration’: The subject use may be permitted where the Local Authority is satisfied it complies with the zoning objective and other relevant policies and objectives, standards and requirements as set out in the County Development Plan, and will not conflict with the permitted, existing or adjoining land uses, in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

‘Not Normally Permitted’: The subject use is generally incompatible with the written zoning objective and will not be favourably considered by the Local Authority, except in exceptional circumstances and in such instances, the development may represent a material contravention to the plan.

Whilst the matrix does not provide an exhaustive list of potential uses, the uses listed in the matrix should be considered by applicants to provide a clear indication of the overall acceptability of a particular land use within a specific zoning category. Where a use is proposed that is not listed in the matrix, development proposals will be assessed on their individual merits in accordance with the general guidance provided by the matrix, and having regard to the nature of existing and proposed uses, to the general policies and zoning objective(s) for the area in the Local Area Plan and to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. Where there is no perceived conflict between existing and proposed uses, favourable consideration will be given to the proposed development, subject to all other normal requirements and to the principles of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Land Use Zoning Matrix Table 11.2	Town Centre Inner	Edge of Town Centre	New Residential	Existing Residential	Strategic Residential Reserve	Educational	Enterprise and Employment	Strategic Enterprise and Employment	Community Services	Recreation and Amenity	Agriculture	Open Space	Infrastructure and Utilities	Quay Development/Marine Related Tourism	Tourism and Related
Abattoir	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Advertisement Billboards	O	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	X
Agricultural Structures	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	X	X
Amusement Arcade	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Apartments	P	P	P	P	P	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
B&B/ Guesthouse	O	O	P	P	O	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Bank/ Financial Institution	P	P	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Batching Plant (asphalt/ concrete)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Betting Office	O ¹	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Boarding Kennels	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Caravan Park / Campervan Park / Camp Site/ Glamping (Tourism)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	P	P
Car Parking	O	O	O	O	X	X	O	X	O	X	X	O	O	O	X
Cash and Carry Wholesale Outlet	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cemetery	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	O	X	X	X	X
Chemist/ Pharmacy	P	P	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X
Childcare Facilities – Crèche, Nursery and Playschool	P	P	P	P	P	P	O	X	P	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cinema/ Theatre	P	P	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O
Community Facility (hall, centre or recreational use)	P	P	O	O	O	X	X	X	P	X	O	X	X	X	O
Conference Centre	P	P	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O
Dance Hall/ Disco/ Night Club	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O
Data Centre	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	P	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Dentist/ Doctor Surgery	P	P	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X
Drive Through Restaurant	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Education – excluding a night-time use	O	O	O	O	X	P	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X
Education – night-time education use	O	O	X	X	X	P	O	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X
Education – third level education use	O	O	X	X	X	P	O	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X

¹ Shall be encouraged to be located off the primary streets (O’Rahilly Street, Pearce Street, Tone Street, Tolan Street, Emmett Street and along the riverbank.

Land Use Zoning Matrix Table 11.2	Town Centre Inner	Edge of Town Centre	New Residential	Existing Residential	Strategic Residential Reserve	Educational	Enterprise and Employment	Strategic Enterprise and Employment	Community Services	Recreation and Amenity	Agriculture	Open Space	Infrastructure and Utilities	Quay Development/Marine Related Tourism	Tourism and Related
	Education – training centre	O	O	X	X	X	O	O	X	P	X	X	X	X	X
Enterprise Unit/Workshop	P	P	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Extractive Industry	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Funeral Home	O	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X
Fuel Depot	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	O	X	O	X	X
Garden Centre	O	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Go-Kart Track	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hospital	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hostel	P	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	O
Hotel	P	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	O
Industry – Heavy	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Industry – Light	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	x	X
Leisure Centre/ Gym	P	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	O	O	X	X	X	O	X
Library	P	P	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X
Licenced Premises (Public House)	P	P	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	x	X
Logistic, Storage and Distribution Units	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
Mart/ Co-operative	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Motor Sales/ Service	O	O	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nursing Home/Retirement Village/Residential Care	P	P	P	P	P	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X
Office	P	P	X	X	X	X	O ²	O ²	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Open Space (Public)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	X	P	P
Park and Stride Facility	X	O	X	O	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	O	X
Place of Worship	P	P	O	O	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	X	X	X	X
Plant/ Tool Hire	O	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Playground	P	P	P	P	P	P	O	X	P	P	X	O	X	O	O
Playing Pitches/ Sports Club	O	O	P	P	P	P	X	X	P	P	P	O	X	P	O
Primary Care Centre, Health Centre and Clinics	P	P	X	X	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	X	X	X	X

² Large offices which do not cater for visiting members of the public.

Land Use Zoning Matrix Table 11.2	Town Centre Inner	Edge of Town Centre	New Residential	Existing Residential	Strategic Residential Reserve	Educational	Enterprise and Employment	Strategic Enterprise and Employment	Community Services	Recreation and Amenity	Agriculture	Open Space	Infrastructure and Utilities	Quay Development/Marine Related Tourism	Tourism and Related
	Professional Services	P	P	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Residential – Multiple (two or more units)	P	P	P	P	P	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Residential – Single	P	P	P	P	P	X	X	X	X	X	O ³	X	X	X	X
Restaurant/ Café	P	P	X	X	X	X	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	p	p
Retail Warehousing	O	O	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
School / Third Level Education	P	P	O	O	X	P	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X
Service Station	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Shop/Retail (Comparison)	P	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O ⁴	O ⁵
Shop/Retail (Convenience)	P	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Shopping Centre / Supermarket	P	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Take Away	P	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
Traveller Accommodation	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Utility Structures	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	P	O	O
Veterinary Surgery	O	O	X	X	X	X	P	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Warehousing	X	O	X	X	X	X	P	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

³ Subject to the Rural Housing Policy as outlined in the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 (or subsequent plans)

⁴ Marine related comparison goods only

⁵ Tourism related comparison goods only

Chapter 12 – Implementation and Monitoring

12.1 Implementation Strategy

This Plan sets out a clear vision for Ballina into the future. This vision is in accordance with the role identified for the settlement at a local, county and regional context and seeks to make Ballina a more attractive place to live, work and visit. In order to achieve the stated vision, it is important that the individual measures put forward in this plan are delivered. The Council has a statutory obligation to implement the provisions of the Plan and is committed to securing its objectives.

The Council will progress the policies and objectives of the Plan:

- To advance Ballina as a Key Town
- To enhance economic activity, promote the transition to a carbon neutral and climate resilient town.
- To promote the Ballina's unique cultural, built and natural heritage.
- To develop sustainable communities ensuring sustainable use of natural resources.
- The development of the Local Area Plan has been based on the following sustainable principles:
- Promotion of compact development and the application of the 'sequential approach' advocated by national planning guidance, whereby zoning extends outwards from the town centre.
- Delivery of a sustainable transport system for Ballina through the implementation of the Ballina Local Transport Plan.
- Promotion of lands close to existing community and social infrastructure such as schools, the library, walkways/cycleways and open space and proximity to the bus stop.
- Cognisance has been taken of the need to provide upmost protection to the environment, built, natural and archaeological heritage of the historic town.

The responsibility for the implementation of policies and objectives of this Plan are dependent on a number of sources, including EU programmes and grants, the National Government, the County Council and the private sector. Particularly relevant is funding available under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) operated under the Department of Rural and Community Development which is applicable to settlements with a population in excess of 10,000.

Mayo County Council will also require developers to incorporate the objectives and development management standards set out in the County Development Plan into proposals. Other objectives, particularly key infrastructural elements, will require government funding and support. Where appropriate, the Council will seek financing from specified sources, both the public and private sector, as well as from EU programmes and grants. The implementation of a plan may be constrained by a number of elements, namely, the economic climate, political support, allocated local authority funding, and the availability of funding from other sources. Therefore, no funding of projects is guaranteed in advance nor is the implementation of all objectives contained within the plan.

It is intended that the various agencies, including voluntary groups, professional institutions, public and private bodies including Mayo County Council, and other organisations in Ballina will be encouraged to participate whenever possible, in the implementation of the policies and objectives of this plan to move the settlement forward. The Plan will also be regularly reviewed in light of new legislation or guidelines, to assess progress, and to determine where amendments are required, a variation of the Plan will be necessary.

12.2 Development Contributions

Development contributions for the provision of services such as roads, footpaths and amenity / open space provision, etc will be applied where appropriate to development applications. The details and basis for the determination of the contributions are set out in a Development Contribution Scheme 2023-2029 or any subsequent schemes adopted thereafter in accordance with the provision of section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

12.2.1 Cash Deposit/Bonds

Depending on the nature of the development, the Council may require, as a condition of planning permission, the lodgement of financial security to ensure that the permitted development is satisfactorily completed. The amount of the security will be determined by the Council and will be reviewed during the plan period. The security will be held by the Council until all works are satisfactorily completed to the exacting standards of the Council, or until the development is taken in charge by the Council.

12.2.2 Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF)

One of the key objectives of the NPF relates to the need for compact growth, with development being focused within and close to existing built-up areas. A core element of this approach is the regeneration of infill and brownfield sites. This is in line with the NPF targets of achieving at least 30% of all new homes within or contiguous to the built-up area of Ballina. In this regard, it is an objective of Mayo County Council to promote measures to reduce vacancy and the underuse of existing building stock and support initiatives that promote the reuse, refurbishment and retrofitting of existing buildings within urban centres. 30% of lands zoned for residential purposes as part of this Plan have been identified for brownfield development.

The importance of the role of regeneration in the delivery of Project Ireland 2040 is acknowledged by the provision of the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF). The €2 Billion ten-year Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) was launched in 2018 to support compact sustainable development, through the regeneration of Ireland's cities and large towns, in line with the objectives of Project Ireland 2040 – The National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan (NDP) 2018 -2027. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) provides the investment framework for Northern and Western Region. The types of proposals eligible for funding include strategic development areas, active land management, measures to address building vacancy and refurbishment, public realm improvements, enabling infrastructure, sustainable mobility and other related measures that will assist in the transition to carbon neutrality and climate resilience.

12.3 Active Land Management

The achievement of compact growth targets and regeneration will be supported through the implementation of active land management measures which promote the development of infill and brownfield lands, and strategically located greenfield sites that support the principles of consolidated growth. The Residential Zoned Land Tax is a key active land management tool to the delivery of houses on serviced sites in our towns and villages throughout Mayo.

In addition, there are significant portions of well-located lands served by public transport facilities, some of which are in public ownership. Building on the higher policy objectives set out by the 'Housing for All' Plan relating to the delivery of a new approach to active land management and to increase Social Housing Delivery and broader housing delivery, the Council will work together with the Housing Agency and Land Development Agency to facilitate the assembly/acquisition, financing, and appropriate redevelopment of these sites.

Mayo County Council will consider interventions such as site assembly using CPO, demolition and clearance or decontamination and the provision of facilitating infrastructure. When sites are acquired, the Council will decide on the most appropriate mechanism to ensure appropriate rejuvenation which may include redevelopment for civic or amenity uses, public and private housing or the release of the land back to the market for redevelopment.

Mayo County Council will actively source and leverage funds including the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF), URDF, Climate Activation Fund and Disruptive Technologies Fund to achieve compact growth and regeneration of Ballina. In this regard priority will be given to projects which result in social and economic rejuvenation and regeneration and the provision of amenities and services where these are deficient.

12.3.1 Phasing of Development

The timely provision of supporting infrastructure and community facilities in tandem with the development of areas is important in ensuring high quality, sustainable development takes place. All large-scale development proposals shall be phased having regard to the delivery of both physical and social infrastructure and orderly development.

12.4 Monitoring and Implementation

The Planning Department of the Council is the lead section responsible for monitoring and implementing the Plan, mainly through its development management function.

However, it is important to note that this Plan co-ordinates the work and objectives of not only of the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development directorates but also the Corporate and Emergency Services, Operations, Housing, as well as the Finance and Water Service directorates.

In some instances, the implementation of certain objectives may be the responsibility of external bodies such as OPW, Uisce Éireann, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Fisheries Ireland, National Roads Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, and the Environmental Protection Agency etc. The Planning Authority will work in collaboration with the relevant external body to assist in ensuring the implementation of the relevant policy objective.

The Plan objectives are specific, measurable, achievable and realistic. However, a number are set within a longer timeframe, thus they may not be fully implemented over the lifetime of this Draft Plan.

12.5 Implementation and Monitoring of the Core Strategy

The NPF states that new statutory guidelines, supported by wider methodologies and data sources, will be put in place under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act to improve the evidence base, effectiveness and consistency of the planning process for housing provision at regional, metropolitan and local authority levels.

This will be supported by the provision of standardised requirements by regulation for the recording of planning and housing data by the local authorities in order to provide a consistent and robust evidence base for housing policy formulation. As such, Mayo County Council, will monitor ongoing developments in this respect and review the operation and implementation of this Plan. This includes adjustments as needed to ensure the effectiveness of its alignment with National and Regional policy and objectives.

12.6 Strategic Environmental Assessment

The SEA Directive requires that the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes are monitored. Monitoring can both demonstrate the positive effects facilitated by the Plan and can enable, at an early stage, the identification of unforeseen adverse effects and the undertaking of appropriate remedial action.

The occurrence of significant adverse environmental effects not predicted and mitigated by this assessment, which are directly attributable to the implementation of the Plan, would necessitate consideration of these effects in the context of the Plan and potential remediation action(s) and/or review of part(s) of the Plan.

12.6.1 Indicators and Targets

Monitoring is based around indicators which allow quantitative measures of trends and progress over time relating to the Strategic Environmental Objectives identified in Section 5 of the SEA Environmental Report and used in the evaluation. Each indicator to be monitored is accompanied by the target(s) which were identified with regard to the relevant strategic actions. Given the position of the Development Plan in the land use planning hierarchy beneath the Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), the measures identified in that RSES SEA have been used – as they are or having been slightly modified – in most instances. This consistency across the hierarchy of land use plans will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of future monitoring programmes.

The SEA Environmental Report shows the indicators and targets which have been selected for monitoring the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan, if unmitigated. Monitoring is an ongoing process and the programme allows for flexibility and the further refinement of indicators and targets. The Monitoring Programme may be updated to deal with specific environmental issues – including unforeseen effects – as they arise. Many of the indicators relate to more than one of the freshwater and terrestrial environments.

12.7 Local Transport Plan

The Ballina Local Transport Plan (LTP) will guide future transport investment in the area. The LTP is a short, medium to long-term plan that will be used to guide the towns transport strategy over the plan period and beyond. The strategic aim of the Ballina LTP is to provide for the planning and delivery of transport infrastructure and services in Ballina that will allow for the generation of a sustainable transport network that can cater for demand. The National Transport Agency are responsible for the issuing of funds for Local Transport Plan projects. The implementation of the LTP will lead to Ballina being well positioned to be a leading town for sustainable transport.

12.8 Sources

The Plan will form part of the wider land use planning framework comprising a hierarchy of policies, plans, programmes, etc. This wider framework, including the National Planning Framework and the Northern and Western RSES, is subject to its own SEA (and associated monitoring) requirements. At lower tiers of the hierarchy, Local Area Plans and individual projects will be subject to their own monitoring requirements as relevant.

In implementing the Monitoring Programme, the Council will take into account this hierarchy of planning and environmental monitoring. Sources for indicators may include existing monitoring databases (including those maintained by planning authorities and national/regional government departments and agencies) and the output of lower tier environmental assessment and decision making (including a review of project approvals granted and associated documents and the output of any EIA monitoring programmes).

Internal monitoring of the environmental effects of grants of permission in the Council would provide monitoring of certain indicators on a grant of permission basis. Where significant adverse as the result of a development to be permitted are identified, such effects could be identified, recorded and used to inform monitoring evaluation.

12.9 Implementation and Monitoring Policies and Objectives

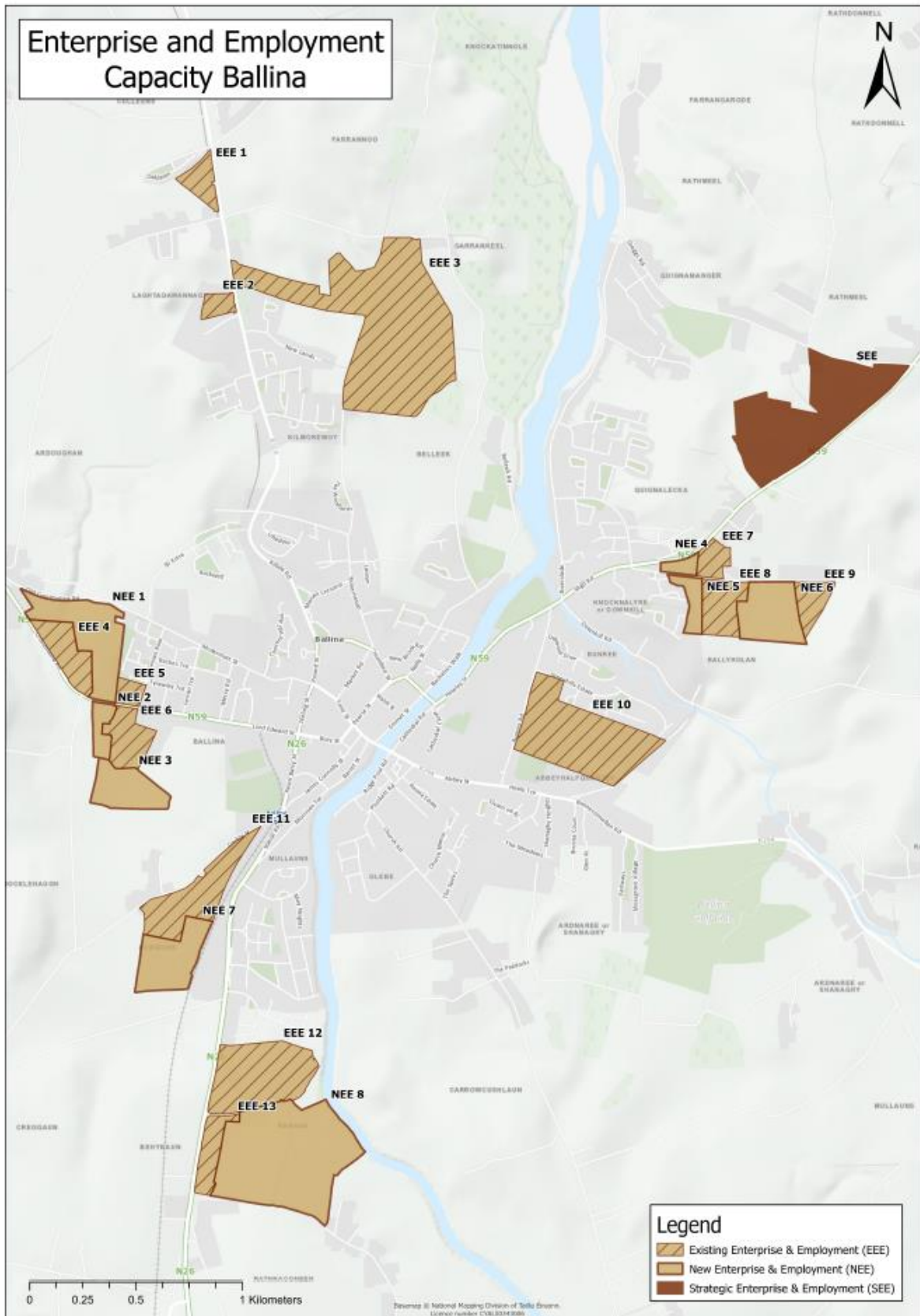
Implementation and Monitoring

It is an Objective of the Council to:

IMO 1	Monitor development for compliance with the objectives of the Core Strategy and adjust, where necessary, the approach taken to the consideration of development proposals in order to ensure effective alignment with the National, Regional and County policies and objectives.
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Settlement Capacity Assessments



Map 1: New Enterprise and Employment, Existing Enterprise and Employment and New Strategic Enterprise and Employment

New Enterprise and Employment Services						
Site No.	Area -Hectare	Lighting	Footpath	Water	Foul/Storm Sewer	Road
NEE 1	10.27	√	√	√	√	√
NEE 2	2.13	√	√	√	√	√
NEE 3	5.94	√	√	√	√	√
NEE 4	1.16	√	√	√	√	√
NEE 5	2.28	√	√	√	√	√
NEE 6	7.42	√	√	√	√	√
NEE 7	7.74	√	√	√	√	√
NEE 8	27.12*	√	√	√	√	√

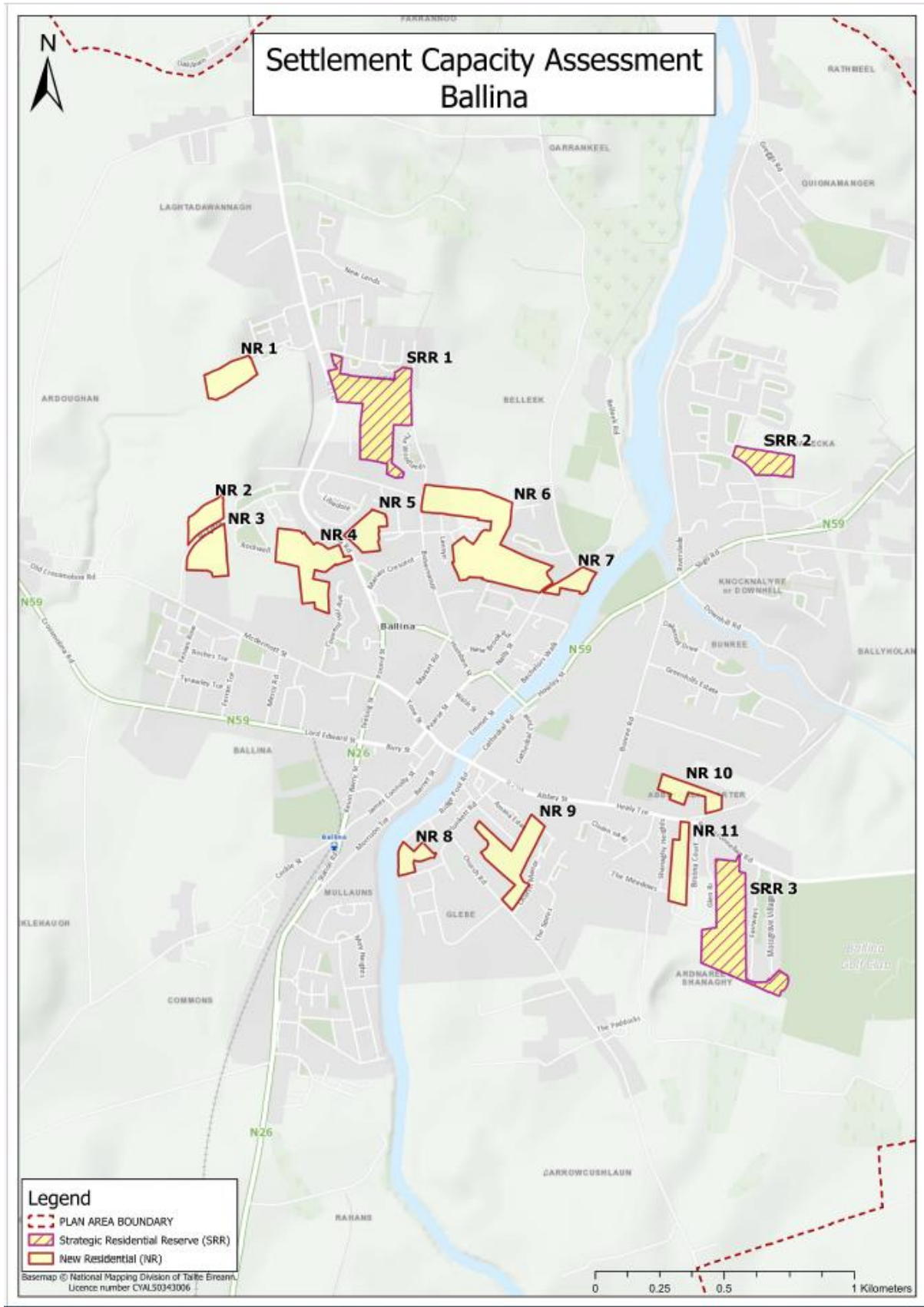
*Lands adjacent to Hollister

Table 1: New Enterprise and Employment Services

Existing Enterprise and Employment Services						
Site No.	Area -Hectare	Lighting	Footpath	Water	Foul/Storm Sewer	Road
EEE 1	2.60	√	√	√	√	√
EEE 2	1.54	√	√	√	√	√
EEE 3	39.61	√	√	√	√	√
EEE 4	4.94	√	√	√	√	√
EEE 5	1.14	√	√	√	√	√

EEE 6	4.65	√	√	√	√	√
EEE 7	2.20	√	√	√	√	√
EEE 8	4.79	√	√	√	√	√
EEE 9	2.90	√	√	√	√	√
EEE 10	18.20	√	√	√	√	√
EEE 11	9.05	√	√	√	√	√
EEE 12	13.33	√	√	√	√	√
EEE 13	3.36	√	√	√	√	√

Table 2: Existing Enterprise and Employment Services



Map 2: New Residential and Strategic Residential Reserve

New Residential Services						
Site No.	Area -Hectare	Lighting	Footpath	Water	Foul/Storm Sewer	Road
NR1	1.99	√	√	√	√	√
NR 2	1.28	√	√	√	√	√
NR 3	2.19	√	√	√	√	√
NR 4	4.28	√	√	√	√	√
NR 5	1.59	√	√	√	√	√
NR 6	9.35	√	√	√	√	√
NR 7	1.04	√	√	√	√	√
NR 8	1.03	√	√	√	√	√
NR 9	3.52	√	√	√	√	√
NR 10	1.51	√	√	√	√	√
NR 11	1.84	√	√	√	√	√
Total	29.61	√	√	√	√	√

Table 4: New Residential Areas and Services

Strategic Residential Reserve						
Services						
Site No.	Area -Hectare	Lighting	Footpath	Water	Foul/Storm Sewer	Road
SRR 1	7.16	√	√	√	√	√
SRR 2	1.81	√	√	√	√	√
SRR 3	6.54	√	√	√	√	√
Total	15.51	√	√	√	√	√

Table 5: Strategic Residential Reserve Areas and Services

Appendix 2 Ballina Local Transport Plan (to be incorporated when adopted)