

PROPOSED BALTINGLASS TOWN PLAN PART A

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1. TOWN PLAN STATUS AND PROCESS

The Baltinglass Town Plan will be adopted as a variation to the County Development Plan 2004-2010, as set out in Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000. Where a planning authority proposes to make such a variation to the Development Plan, the variation shall be undertaken during a 14 week period and shall be in accordance with the following:

1. Publish notice of the proposed variation, and display the variation for a 4 week period, during which members of the public are invited to submit written submissions which will be taken into consideration before the making of the variation.
2. Following the public consultation period, the Manager shall, over a 4 week period, prepare a report on the submissions received and shall submit the report to the members for their consideration. The Manager's report shall (i) list the persons/bodies who made submissions, (ii) summarise the issues raised, and (iii) give the response of the Manager to the issues raised, taking account of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, the statutory obligations of the local authority and any relevant Government policies or objectives.
3. The members shall consider the proposed variation and the Manager's report over a 6 week period, and may, by resolution, make the variation, with or without modifications, or refuse to make it. In making a variation, the members are restricted to considering the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, the statutory obligations of the local authority and any relevant policies or objectives of the Government.
4. Once a variation is made, the public are notified of the varied Development Plan and a copy is made available for inspection.

The period of the Baltinglass Town Plan shall be taken as the lifetime of the County Development Plan, that is November 2010.

2. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Public consultation was undertaken prior to the preparation of the proposed Baltinglass Town Plan.

A public consultation meeting was held on 12th October 2006 at 7pm in Germaine's Hotel in Baltinglass. A Background Issues Paper was made available to all members of the public in order to facilitate the public discussion and submission making process. Written submissions were invited from members of the public during a 4 week period from 12th October 2006 to 9th November 2006.

63 submissions were received from interested bodies and members of the public. The following is a summary of the main issues that were identified in these submissions:

Population and Residential

- Population projections too conservative

- Substantial population increases predicted – infrastructure must be developed in tandem.
- For and against 50% restriction for locals
- One off houses should be allowed for locals
- Traveller accommodation to be considered
- For and against apartment developments
- Provide increased supply of local authority housing
- Proper enforcement of planning permissions required
- Reduce restrictions on extensions with reduced garden space
- Development must reflect local character of town – important that this character is retained

Retailing and Town Centre

- Town suffers from expenditure leakage to other centres - need to improve the retail sector of the town and develop new larger retail outlets to attract larger catchments to the town.
- Need for a major foodstore
- Architecture and density must reflect character of town – 3 storey limit town centre
- Town centre needs to be revitalised – possible enlargement of town to the north
- Substantial amount of dereliction – refurbishments required

Employment

- New industrial/employment opportunities badly needed.
- Industrial development at suitable locations – minimise impact on residential amenity, traffic issues.
- Incubator/enterprise units should be encouraged
- Build upon opportunities to develop the town as a tourist destination.
- Aspirations to attract employment must be realistic – constraints such as poor accessibility, traffic congestion

Community

- Lack of facilities for community groups – need for a multi-use community facility for shared use between community groups – particularly groups specialising in childcare and youth services.
- Improved sports facilities required – tennis courts required
- Arts and Cultural Centre required
- Additional entertainment facilities required
- Swimming pool needed
- Boundary required between Scoil Naomh Iosaf and Ardglass
- Zone all lands associated with post-primary school for educational purposes
- Zone adequate land for needs of Adult and Further Education Centre and for Youth Services

Infrastructure

- Provide southern bypass and new bridge over river – possible link at south of town from Lathaleere on R747 to Clough Cross on N81

- Improve traffic, cycling and pedestrian facilities – road improvements, one way system in town centre, traffic calming, alleviate traffic congestion, parking problems, provide disabled facilities, upgrade of footpaths and street surface, upgrade public lighting, deal with traffic/pedestrian hazard, enhanced cycle/pedestrian facilities.
- Proper parking management required in town centre – for and against parking restrictions, extra carparks required
- Deal with traffic hazard in proximity to schools
- Previous floods – building on floodplain should be restricted, risk of flooding to town centre, flooding of lands west of Church Lane (keep free of development, possible car park)
- Water and sewerage infrastructure to be improved to cater for population
- Additional public transport options required – additional bus stops required, particularly town centre
- Upgrade recycling facilities
- Broadband access required
- Encourage renewable energy provision
- Upgrade surface water drainage system, mains water, increase capacity of foul water system

Heritage

- Need to promote the town as a tourism centre for West Wicklow but subsequently improve and make available a diversity of tourist accommodation.
- Preserve important views, e.g. Abbey, Baltinglass Hills
- Archaeological, built and natural heritage to be preserved
- Extend the river walk and parks
- New Hotel is needed
- Better tourism infrastructure/culture facilities required.
- Tourist centre required
- Potential for farmers market
- Additions should be made to Record of Protected Structures
- Archaeological sites have accessibility problems, e.g. Baltinglass Hill
- Protect the Outdoor Education Centre

Zoning Submissions

- Various submissions received pertaining to rezoning of land.

3. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

As this Plan will be part of and form a subset of the County Development Plan, it is not proposed to include a repetition of the policies, objectives or strategies as set out in the CDP. Where standards or objectives for a particular development are not included in this Plan, the provisions of the CDP shall apply. The Plan will however include appropriate Baltinglass specific development objectives and guidance, compatible with those of the CDP, to assist the Development Management process in managing sustainable progress for the town.

The CDP includes any variations made to the CDP within the life of the Plan, and includes any subsequent variations made after the adoption of the Baltinglass Town Plan.

3.1 DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

Having regard to the capital expenditure required to provide for Roads and Transportation, Environmental and Community Facilities Infrastructure, the Council will require contributions from benefiting developers. Contributions shall be made in accordance with Wicklow County Council's Development Contribution Scheme, adopted December 2005, and crafted by virtue of its powers enacted under Section 48(1) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000.

In addition, Wicklow County Council will continue the practice of granting planning permissions with the inclusion of conditions requiring levies or bonds to be paid and/or works undertaken to facilitate developments in the interests of the common good.

4. 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 Plans of the environmental impacts of alternative actions and contributes to the integration of environmental considerations into Plan making.

4.1 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The EU Directive 201/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (Strategic Environmental Assessment) – (SEA) are given effect by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 435 of 2004) and by the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No.436 of 2004).

The SEA Directive requires that an environmental assessment must be carried out for all plans and programmes that fall within the parameters as set out in the Directive. As the Baltinglass Town Plan is being prepared under Part II, Section 13 of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 2000, the Plan will be adopted as a variation to the County Development Plan. As the Plan will be a variation to the CDP, screening of the Plan is required in accordance with the SEA Directive.

4.2 THE SCREENING PROCESS

Screening is the technique applied to determine whether a particular Plan, other than those for which SEAs are mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant an SEA. The key indicator that will determine if an environmental assessment is required of particular non-mandatory plans, is if they are likely to have *significant environmental effects* on the environment or not.

Where the planning authority is uncertain that there is a prima facie case for an SEA, the Plan must be screened for its possible significant effects and the designated environmental authorities should be formerly consulted during, and as part of, the screening exercise.

The designated authorities are the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoELG), and the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources. While the EPA must be consulted in all cases, consultation with the two Departments is conditional on the Plan having significant effects within the remit of those Departments.

4.3 CONSULTATION WITH ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITIES

Consultation was undertaken with the designated authorities, who returned the following comments:

Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources

- In terms of the protection of water quality and fishery status of the receiving waters, the status objectives as set out in the Water Framework Directive should not be compromised as a result of this Plan.
- Wastewater Treatment Plant capacity must be sufficient to take and treat the increased loadings, both organic and hydraulic, that are likely to arise from the projected population increases anticipated in the Plan.

Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government

- *Archaeological recommendations:*
 - It is a matter for the local authority to decide if a SEA is required.
 - There may be significant archaeological impacts. In this case it should be sufficient to address these in the Plan, which should contain objectives for the protection of archaeological heritage.
- *Architectural Heritage:*
 - It is expected that the making of the new Plan will have a benign environmental effect. In this regard a new Plan could have a significant effect on the architectural heritage of the town, albeit beneficial. This could take in, for instance:
 - The recognition of the special interest of additional structures and proposing them for inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures, and
 - The setting out of one or more Architectural Conservation Areas of appropriate extent within the town.

Environmental Protection Agency

The following matters were identified by the EPA:

- Key environmental resources in area immediate to Baltinglass identified.
- Environmental issues that should be considered during Plan making process identified.
- EIA may be required for implementation of certain projects.
- Consult with DoEHLG re 'appropriate assessment' of development on River Slaney SAC.

- Requirement to comply with environmental policies of Wicklow County Development Plan and EU/National legislation.
- Consideration regarding impact of effects on the environment is a matter for the local authority.
- Review ‘Urban Waste Water Discharges in Ireland, A Report for the Years 2004 and 2005’ and consider any implications for Plan area. All water services authorities will be subject to new regulations – the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007 (currently being prepared).
- Regard should be paid to ‘Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities’.

4.4 BALTINGLASS TOWN PLAN SCREENING

The screening process was undertaken in consultation with the EPA and the two departments referred to above. Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 sets out the main types of criteria for determining whether a Plan would be likely to have significant environmental effects. The screening process considered these criteria and resulted in the following assessment:

Characteristics of the Plan

- The Baltinglass Town Plan is a land use Plan that will provide a framework to deliver development projects within the town.
- The Plan is set in the context of the Wicklow County Development Plan, 2004-2010. The Plan has to be consistent with the objectives of the CDP.
- The Plan must confine itself to the proper planning and sustainable development. All policies and objectives must be informed by the principles of sustainable development.
- No significant environmental problems are anticipated to result from the Plan.
- Policies pertaining to the implementation of EU legislation on the environment (e.g. waste management, water protection) are included in the CDP. These CDP policies shall apply to the Baltinglass Town Plan.

Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected

The main effects of the Plan pertain to the implementation of the land use zoning objectives. The main effects are considered as follows:

Land Uses	Policies/ Objectives Proposed	Effect on Environment
Residential	Zone additional c.27ha for residential use, to accommodate an additional population of 1,265 people in the town.	No significant effects.
Employment	Zone additional c.10ha for employment use.	No significant effects – individual development proposals could be dealt with by means of Environmental Impact Assessments where appropriate.
Community	Zone c.4ha for community development. 3ha of formal active open space to be provided	Positive and durable

Road Infrastructure	Provision made for new indicative roads and bridge	Alleviate traffic congestion
Water and sewerage	Ensure that water and sewerage infrastructure is in place to accommodate a population of 3000 – refer to policy 11.1 of the Plan	No significant effects
Archaeological, architectural and natural heritage	Protect all heritage in accordance with the CDP	Positive and durable

- The cumulative effect of the Plan is unlikely to be significant.
- The Plan has no national, regional or inter-county transboundary effects.
- There are no designated SEVESO sites within the Plan area. It is not envisaged that employment zoned lands will generate any activities that will result in significant risks as a result of accidents.
- The current population of Baltinglass is 1,735. The population of the town is projected to grow to 3,000 by 2016. Environmental effects resulting from this population increase are unlikely to be significant.
- The vulnerability of the area is likely to be affected due to the following special natural characteristics and cultural heritage:
 - *Vulnerable Aquifer* – A large portion of the new zoned land is located within Action Areas that overlie part of a sand and gravel aquifer. This aquifer is classified as a vulnerable aquifer of local importance due to the nature of the sand and gravel. The Council has considered the likely environmental effect of development on this aquifer and has concluded that, considering the following, the effect will not be significant:
 - (i) Baltinglass receives its water from 2 wells (Tinoran and Parkmore) and springs (Clogh Lower springs, which are soon to be replaced by a deep well). This water is obtained from zones within the underlying bedrock and not from the sand and gravel aquifer. Development over part of the sand and gravel aquifer will not impact on the water sources for the town.
 - (ii) Development is limited to the NE margin of the sand and gravel aquifer and as such does not interfere with the overall extent of it.
 - (iii) Development shall be properly serviced with sewer infrastructure. No septic tanks will be permitted. This will ensure that the aquifer is not polluted.
 - *River Slaney Special Area of Conservation* – The River Slaney SAC is within the town boundaries. Land covered by the SAC is zoned ‘OS: Open Space’. Policy 8.2 and 8.3 of the Plan will ensure that the SAC is not compromised. The Council considers that there is not likely to be a significant environmental effect on the quality of the SAC.
 - *Archaeological and Built Heritage* – Having regard to Policy 9.1 of the Plan and the comments of the DoEHLG, it is considered that there is not likely to be significant effects on the archaeological and built heritage of the town. It should be noted that a green buffer has been zoned around the Abbey, in order to protect this significant heritage feature and associated views.
 - *Flooding* – Although the town has been subject to previous floods, policy 11.2 of the Plan will address the issue of risk associated with potential flooding.

- It is not expected that certain environmental quality standards will be exceeded and it is not expected that existing land uses in the Plan area will be intensified such that vulnerable areas will be significantly affected.

Having regard to the above screening assessment, the Council determines that the Baltinglass Town Plan would be unlikely to have significant environmental effects, and as such, an SEA is not warranted.

5. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The spatial pattern of development in Baltinglass must conform with strategic planning objectives that are set out in the ‘National Spatial Strategy’ (2002), the ‘Regional Planning Guidelines for the ‘Greater Dublin Area, 2004-2016’ and the ‘Wicklow County Development Plan, 2004-2010’. All forms of development must conform with the principles of sustainable development.

5.1 NATIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY 2002-2020

Baltinglass is within the Greater Dublin Area, the national strategic role of which is to consolidate development. Baltinglass is identified as an Urban Centre, located in an area with strategic rural assets, within the hinterland of the metropolitan area. Baltinglass is located east of the National Transport Corridor of Dublin to Waterford. Under the NSS, Urban Centre towns are required *“to cater for local growth in residential, employment and service functions through enhancing the built environment, water services, public transport links and capacity for development in these centres. Accommodating such additional functions must however be balanced with protecting the character and quality of these towns”*.

5.2 REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDELINES 2004-2016

Baltinglass has been identified as a Small Growth Town. The RPGs determine a population range of 1,500 to 5,000 people for such towns. The Guidelines provide that *“relatively small and locally financed businesses and other economic activities are appropriately located within Small Growth Towns. Retailing would be mainly in the convenience category, serving the town and its local rural catchment area only. Small Growth Towns are also likely to contain facilities such as primary and/or postprimary schools, and a health clinic”*.

5.3 WICKLOW COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (CDP) 2004-2010

Baltinglass is designated as a Level 5 Small Growth Town I in the County Population and Settlement Strategy. These towns represent the stronger towns in the County, which provide a good range of employment, retail and social/community services to their hinterlands. Policy SS3 of the Strategy applies to Baltinglass:

“Multi-house developments – 50% Regional Growth, 50% County Growth (a), i.e. in any new housing development, a minimum of 50% of new houses must be sold to persons that have been living and/or working in County Wicklow for at least 1 year. There are no restrictions of the remaining 50%.

Single house developments – Any new single house developments shall be restricted to those living and/or working in the County for 1 year.”

Baltinglass falls between the following Landscape Zones, as provided for in the CDP:

Landscape Zones and Categories

Landscape Zone	Landscape Category	Vulnerability	CDP Text
Area of Special Amenity	Baltinglass Hills	High (i.e. landscape is subject to pressure for development which could result in serious deterioration in landscape quality)	“The rolling undulating terrain of the hills around Baltinglass distinguishes the Baltinglass Hills category. Possibly the greatest source of pressure affecting this category relates to the existence of important archaeological remains and monuments. This archaeological wealth must be protected for its heritage value as well as tourism potential.”
Rural Area	Land lying under the 130m contour – extending south of Baltinglass to Ballyconnell.	Medium	“This land can be described as gently rolling, low lying and undulating. The area is very rural and is characterised by only a few small towns and villages.”

6. POPULATION

The following table sets out actual and indicative population figures for Baltinglass Town:

Year	Population	% Increase on previous population	Source
1996	1,127		1996 Census – population of Town
2002	1,260	11.8%	2002 Census – population of Town
2006	1,735	37.6%	2006 Census – population of Town
2010	2,500	44%	CDP Indicative Population*
2016	2,500		CDP Indicative Population*
2016	3,000	20%	Current Town Plan Indicative Population

* The Draft CDP had an indicative 2010 population of 1,969. It appears that this figure was revised during the adoption of the CDP.

The CDP includes an indicative population of 2,500 for 2010 and 2016. In order to account for anticipated growth up to 2016 it is considered that a revised 2016 figure should be provided in the current Plan. Considering growth of 38% during a 4 year period between 2002 and 2006, it is considered that a projected population of 3,000 in 2016 is reasonable.

The current population of Baltinglass is 1,735, which is in line with the indicative population projections set out in the CDP. Taking an indicative population figure of 3,000 for 2016, this Plan is required to make provision for an **additional 1,265 people by 2016.**

7. QUANTITY OF ZONED LAND

This Plan will cover the period of the current County Development Plan until 2010, however the zonings provided for in this Plan are set in the context of projections up to 2016.

7.1 HOUSING

The quantum of development until 2010 will be controlled through the development management process on the basis of the 2010 figures catering for an extra 765 persons. This will ensure that only the land necessary to accommodate the target population may be developed.

The amount of land to be zoned is based on the number of people to be catered for, the household size, the 'excess factor', the 'headroom' and housing density.

Household Formation

As can be seen on the following table, the size of households has been falling steadily since 2002. The most up to date projections for household size indicate that household size will reduce from the current figure of 2.9 to 2.73 in 2010 and **2.56 in 2016**.

Wicklow County Occupancy rates, i.e. persons per household

Year	Occupancy Rate	Source
2002	3.14	2002 Census – occupancy rates for Wicklow
2006	2.9	2006 Census – occupancy rates for Wicklow
2010	2.73	Projected occupancy rates for Wicklow. Background Paper – Housing Projections, RPG Update Report 2007
2016	2.56	Projected occupancy rates for Wicklow Background Paper – Housing Projections, RPG Update Report 2007

Excess Factor

This term describes the fact that demand for housing will exceed actual household formation due to the following:

- some of the additional units being required to replace obsolete housing;
- some units being vacant at any one time due to market frictional factors;
- some units being second homes or pied a terre.

The excess factor can vary over time, between regions, within counties, and between urban and rural areas. The Regional Planning Guidelines have assumed that by 2010 the excess factor will be 20% for the Greater Dublin Area, and in the Mid-East region it will be c. 13%. Given that the excess factor is greater in urban than in rural areas, that Baltinglass is in the 'Hinterland' and that a considerable proportion of households in the town are commuter households, an excess factor of **6%** will be used in this Plan.

Headroom

This is the amount of extra land that should be zoned over and above the minimum amount needed to accommodate population targets. It is also known as market factor and is intended to allow for the fact that zoned land that may not be released to the market for housing purposes during the Plan period. Headroom is normally in the range of 30%-50%. A figure of **45%** will be applied to Baltinglass in order to account for the town's location on the outskirts of the GDA.

Housing Density

The maximum density standards for green field sites in towns, as set out in the County Development Plan will apply at a rate of 20-25 units per hectare (for dwellings of 100m² and 125m²). For calculation purposes a figure of **23 houses per hectare** shall apply.

Amount of New Zoned Housing Land

The number of houses to be catered for is based on the stated 2016 population (1,265 extra population) divided by the predicted 2016 household size (2.56), which yields 494 units. A further 80 houses must be added to reflect the potential of new household formation from existing households (i.e. the difference between the number of houses required for the two household sizes), giving a total figure of 574 units. 170 of these are assumed to be sited in the Town Centre zonings, the Mart Regeneration Site (AA1) or as infill. The remainder 404 units will be at a density of 23 units/ha. The amount of land required is found by dividing these figures by the density giving a net land requirement of 17.6ha. This figure is then adjusted by adding in the 'excess factor' and 'headroom' giving a total allowance for zoned residential land of **26.5ha at medium density**.

Allocation of Land for New Housing

Area (ha)	Location
1.86	R zone - Between Old County Road and AAP5
2.16	R zone – Clough Lower
3.54	AAP5, i.e. density permitted on area covered by R and Formal Active OS zones
6.31	AAP2, i.e. density permitted on area covered by R and OS zone
8.46	AAP3, i.e. density permitted on area covered by R and Formal Active OS zones
4.47	AAP4, i.e. density permitted on area covered by R and Formal Active OS zones
26.8ha	
TOTAL	

7.2 EMPLOYMENT

2006 estimates¹ for the GDA indicate the following employment trends: In terms of the future of the Irish Economy, the services sector is seen as the sustainable growth

¹ Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2004-2016: Update on Regional Planning Guidelines – Economic Update, November 2006

promoter for the economy. Manufacturing will continue to move to high-end technology operations, and overall, research and development and science, technology and innovation will become more integral. It is anticipated that there will be no major changes to employment rates. 2006 estimates indicate that 1.75% people work in Agriculture, 22.4% work in Industry and 75.85% work in Services.

The following occupation figures for the town of Baltinglass, yielded from the 2002 Census² indicate that only 4% of the population are employed in Agriculture, compared to Manufacturing which employs 18% and Building which employs 12%. Professional/ Service/ Sales employ nearly 40% of the population. This is in line with current estimates for the GDA area, which indicate that services/professional is the greatest employer, with manufacturing employing a reasonable amount and agriculture a small amount.

2002 Census – Occupation figures for Baltinglass Town

Occupation – Baltinglass Town	%
Farming, Fishing and Forestry	4
Manufacturing	18
Building	12
Clerical, Admin and government exec	4
Transport	4
Sales	14
Professional	14
Service	11
Other	18

Under the Wicklow County Development Plan and Regional Planning Guidelines, Baltinglass is to become self-sufficient and provide employment opportunities for local growth.

Employment – Strategic Objectives

Taking account of the above, and having regard to the role and function of the town and its location at the fringes of the GDA, the Council will aim to develop employment opportunities in Baltinglass through the following objectives:

- Encourage development of small and locally financed businesses. High-tech industry and services will also be encouraged, however in this regard it is acknowledged that major employment generated investment companies are more likely to locate in larger towns closer to Dublin.
- Attract enterprise through providing a high quality environment with adequate services.
- Support agriculture and diversify rural employment options.
- Release undeveloped tourism potential
- Increase the sustainability of the town by reducing the pattern of commuting through promoting a balance between the amount of jobs and the resident labour force

² 2006 figures not available at time of publication of the current document.

The policies set out in ‘Chapter 7: Employment’ of the Plan are based on the above objectives.

This Plan will allow for ‘employment’ land to cater for the equivalent increase in population. Allowing for the following assumptions:

- 65% labour force participation rate³;
- a low density plot ratio of 0.4 to reflect the area and the preferred quality of service based employment or small enterprise units;
- a gross employment density of 25m² per employee;
- headroom 45%

gives a requirement for employment land of 7.47ha up to 2016.

(1265 x 65% = 822 @ 25m² = 2.06ha/ 0.4)

5.15ha + 45% headroom (2.32) = 7.47ha

Allocation of Land for New Employment

Area (ha)	Location
4.07	E zone – land adjoining site of Sewage Treatment works (calculation excludes the treatment works)
6.23	AAP4
10.3 ha	
TOTAL	

7.3 COMMUNITY

An assessment of the Community Facilities Hierarchy, as set out in WCC Development Contribution Scheme, indicates that a town of population between 2,000 and 7,000, should provide the following facilities: Community/Parish Hall, Multi-purpose community space, local parks and open space, outdoor multi-use games area, playspace, playing pitches and a library.

The town is currently serviced by a reasonable amount of community facilities, including a GAA pitch, a soccer pitch, a new public park and children’s playing facilities (Cois Slaine), a library, a Badminton Hall and a community hall (Fatima Hall). An assessment of the community infrastructure that is currently available, and an assessment of the comments provided in the submissions received from members of the public indicate that the following additional facilities would be required for the projected population increase:

- multi-purpose community space which would incorporate a dedicated youth space, community childcare space, meeting rooms and hard court/games area.
- Considering the anticipated growth up to 2016, an additional playing pitch may be required. A mini-pitch may be appropriate (FAI mini-pitch guidelines indicate maximum required size of 1000m² or 0.1ha)
- Crèches, playgrounds, schools, open space and recreation areas, to meet anticipated growth

‘Chapter 8: Community, Open Space and Recreation’ of the Plan provides for the development of the development of the above community facilities.

³ Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2004 -2016 – Economic Update, November 2006

Education

The town is currently serviced by two primary schools, Scoil Naomh Iosaf and Stratford Lodge; and one post-primary school, Scoil Chonglais.

The Department of Education have indicated that they require a 3 acre (1.21ha) site located close to new areas of housing and community facilities. This requirement is based on the assumption of 537 population increase between 2002 and 2010.

The current Plan is accounting for a projected population increase of 1265 up to 2016.

Nationally, 11.3% of the population at any given time is of primary school going age. $1265 \times 11.3\% = 143$ extra primary school places.

The corresponding percentage at post primary level is 8.5%. $1265 \times 8.5\% = 107$ extra post primary school places.

This Plan will reserve an additional area of 5 acres (2 ha) to account for primary and post-primary school expansion. The extra land will be reserved at the site of the existing school, in order to facilitate the option of multi-school arrangements and to maximise accessibility to housing areas.

It should be noted that an additional 2ha has also been reserved to the rear of the parish grounds. This land is available for expansion of community facilities. Due to its proximity to the schools, the land would also be available for any school expansion that may be beyond the needs of the designated 2ha.

Allocation of Land for Community purposes

Area (ha)	Location
2	Land zoned C- to the rear of the existing school (a portion of the 2ha includes land directly to the rear of the existing school, which is not currently used for education purposes)
2	Land zoned C – to rear of parish grounds
0.7	Land zoned C – adjoining Graveyard
4.7 ha	
TOTAL	

7.4 FORMAL ACTIVE OPEN SPACE

This Plan will allow for 6 acres (2.4ha) of land per 1000 added population to be designated for these purposes, and thus **3ha extra land will be designated, to cater for the increased population of 1265 people.** Half of such land should be in the form of formal active playing areas for youths and adults, and a minimum of a third for children's play.

Such designated lands will be bundled with newly designated residential lands in action areas, requiring provision of both land uses in tandem.

Allocation of Land for Formal Active Open Space

Area (ha)	Location
1.5	AAP2 – may be permitted within OS zone
1	AAP3 – to be provided within R zone
0.25	AAP4 – to be provided within R zone
0.25	AAP5 – to be provided within R zone
3ha	
TOTAL	

7.5 RETAIL

The following documents were considered in the formulation of strategic policy objectives for the town of Baltinglass:

The Retail Planning Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area

Under the Retail Hierarchy for the Hinterland Area of the GDA, Baltinglass is designated a ‘Level 4 – Local Centre - Small Town’. Level 4 towns are identified as towns that have a parade of convenience stores, the occasional lower order comparison outlet and limited local services. They primarily serve a walk-in population and will have limited parking.

GDA Hierarchy identified that a Supermarket would be an appropriate form of shopping provision within Local Centres.

Draft Wicklow County Retail Strategy, 2004

The County Development Plan states that the Council will implement the policies and proposals set out in the Draft Wicklow County Retail Strategy.

Under the Strategy, Baltinglass is designated a Small Town Centre. The following policy applies to Small Town Centres: *“It is the policy of the Council to facilitate and encourage the provision of shops and services that consolidate the strength of Tier 1 Level 4 Small Town Centres to meet the needs of the existing and expanding populations.”* Within such towns, major mixed use schemes with retail components should be encouraged as they serve to strengthen and consolidate town centres and reduce the need for local people to travel for a range of goods and services. The nature of retail development envisaged is small-medium sized supermarkets with supporting predominantly convenience floorspace.

Retail development should be in accordance with the principles of the sequential approach, in that the preferred location for retail development is within the town centre. Where it is not possible to provide the form and scale of development that is required on a site within the town centre then consideration can be given to an edge of town centre site Only then can out of centre sites be considered.

Retail – Strategic Objectives

The role and function of the town, with regard to retail services, has been considered, with the following main conclusions:

- The town serves the retail needs of the resident population and population of the town's rural hinterland. The town has good convenience offer, equating to 71% of the total retail floorspace⁴, however there is a lack of comparison offer, with residents travelling to higher order towns, such as Newbridge, Naas and Carlow for higher order goods. In particular, the town suffers from the lack of a major foodstore.
- The town centre suffers from a large degree of dereliction and under-utilisation of prime retail sites.

Having regard to the above strategic policy documents and the findings regarding the town's role and function, the Council will aim to develop retail opportunities in accordance with the following objectives:

- Increase the range of retail goods available in the town, and make particular provision for the development of a major foodstore.
- Sustain the centre's position and consolidate retailing in the core of the town centre.
- Re-generate under-utilised and derelict sites, and promote the regeneration of the mart site, which is a key opportunity site for development
- Improve the vitality of the town centre and the quality of the streetscape.
- Provide for the development of neighbourhood shops and services.

⁴ Source = Draft Wicklow County Retail Strategy, 2004