

# MONKSLAND/BELLANAMULLIA (ATHLONE WEST) LOCAL AREA PLAN 2016 - 2022

## VARIATION NO. 1

### EFFECTIVE DATE 1<sup>st</sup> AUGUST 2017



Comhairle Contae  
Ros Comáin  
Roscommon  
County Council





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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this Local Area Plan is to set out a framework for the physical development of the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) area so that growth may take place in a coordinated, sensitive and orderly manner, while at the same time being sensitive to the environment.

Policies and objectives outlined in this LAP are in addition to the policies and objectives contained in the Roscommon County Development Plan (RCDP) 2014-2020. It is acknowledged that not all strategic objectives will be achieved during the six year LAP timeframe; however it is important to identify these objectives to ensure commitment to achieving them in the longer term.

In the interests of clarity, any reference to a goal, aim, policy and objective in the text of this Local Area Plan, shall be construed as an 'objective' of this Plan for the purposes of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2014 and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2015.

## 1.1 STATUTORY CONTEXT

This LAP has been prepared in accordance with Sections 18 to 20 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2014, and replaces the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) Local Area Plan 2010 - 2016. It is required to be consistent with the regional planning guidelines for the area as well as the policies and objectives of the RCDP and its Core Strategy, which set out the overarching development strategy for the County. The LAP should be read in conjunction with the RCDP 2014 - 2020. Where any provisions of the LAP conflict with the provisions of the RCDP, the RCDP will take precedence.

## 1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

### 1.2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing the LAP and must be carried out prior to the adoption of any plan or programme. SEA is undertaken in accordance with the EU SEA Directive 2001/42/EC. The findings of the SEA are outlined in the Environmental Report published alongside the LAP.

### 1.2.2 Appropriate Assessment (AA)

An Appropriate Assessment is an assessment, based on best scientific knowledge, by a person with ecological expertise, of the potential impacts of any plan or project on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site i.e. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs). All land use plans proposed under the Planning and Development Acts 2000 -2015, including Local Area Plans, must be screened for any potential impact on areas designated as Natura 2000 sites. Appropriate Assessment is carried out under Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive. A Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment report has been prepared for the Monksland/Bellanamullia LAP 2016 – 2022 and is published alongside the LAP.

### 1.2.3 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

A Strategic Flood Risk of the LAP was carried out in accordance with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management* (DEHLG, 2009). The guidance recommends a staged approach to flood risk assessment, which covers both the likelihood of flooding and the potential consequences. Stage 1 Flood Risk Identification and Stage 2 Initial Flood Risk Assessment were carried out on the LAP. Screening, scoping and appropriate flood risk assessments are key steps. The SFRA report **concluded** that a Stage 3 Detailed Flood Risk Assessment of the LAP was not required.

### 1.3 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

In accordance with Section 20(1) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2015, prior to preparing a draft local area plan, the local authority must take whatever steps it considers necessary to consult with the public, including public bodies, non-governmental agencies, residents' associations, community groups, and business interests in the area.

The following pre-draft consultation was undertaken:

- A newspaper notice was placed in the Roscommon People and the Westmeath Independent informing the community of the public meeting to be held. In addition, the notice was forwarded to all the members of the Public Participation Network (PPN), as well as Comhairle Na NÓg. Posters were placed in shop windows and leaflets dropped advertising the public meeting within the LAP area.
- The **Public Meeting** was then held at the Monksland Community Centre in Monksland/Bellanamullia on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

The main issues raised during pre-draft consultation included the following:

- **Industrial, Business, Commercial and Retail development:** The area needs to be promoted as an area for industry and IT, providing better broadband particularly for home businesses, and creating a core centre of the area. Vacant retail warehousing space also needs to be taken up prior to granting of same within the LAP area.
- **Community Facilities:** Serious concern was raised as to the under-provision of social and community facilities in the area, which included, a new national and secondary school, a public park, publically accessible recreational facilities for all age groups, a resourced youth centre, a library, a Garda station and a graveyard. Aligned to this is the need to ensure social inclusion and access to facilities and healthcare for the community.
- **Open Space and Sporting Provision:** Those present at the community meeting indicated a strong desire for a centrally accessible public park, as well as additional publicly accessible sports facilities. Landscaping and tree planting along newly upgraded roads was also indicated as a priority.
- **Residential Development:** The use of vacant residences as well as resolving issues outstanding in unfinished estates is a priority.
- **Infrastructure:** The community positively acknowledged the number of road improvements which had taken place over the last number of years but still felt that a number of improvements were required which included, amongst others, the extended upgrading of the New Tuam Road towards Bellanamullia together with an extended pedestrian and cycle network and bus service, traffic calming on newly upgraded roads, as well as the introduction of welcome signage in the area.
- **Services:** The community expressed dissatisfaction with the high lime and chlorine content in the water supply, they indicated that the flooding issues in the area could be attributed to lack of maintenance of the Cross River, and all businesses as well as the community at large would benefit hugely from the connection to high fibre broadband in the area.
- **Tourism:** Although not a destination in itself, the area needs to capitalise on its location in proximity to the Rivers Shannon and Cross, the presence of the Athlone Springs Hotel in the area, the traditional Mill Bar, and proximity to heritage features immediately outside of the LAP area.

Further details of issues raised through public consultation can be found in Appendix 1 of this Plan.



## 2 POLICY CONTEXT

A wide variety of international, national, regional and local government policy documents have been reviewed in the preparation of this LAP.

### 2.1 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

The **National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020** (NSS) is a planning framework for Ireland that aims to achieve a better balance of social, economic and physical development across Ireland, supported by effective planning.

The **Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022** (RPGs) provide the strategic regional mechanism for the implementation of the NSS. They set out the vision for the West Region identifying strategic goals, policies and objectives which establish a framework for lower level plans including this LAP.

### 2.2 COUNTY CONTEXT

The **Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020** (RCDP) sets out the strategic planning framework for the County which is consistent with the NSS and the RPGs. (Map 1 and 2)

### 2.3 POPULATION CONTEXT

#### 2.3.1 Core Strategy, Settlement Hierarchy and Population Calculations

In accordance with Section 10 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2015, the RCDP 2014-2020 includes a Core Strategy which provides projected population growth figures for Monksland/Bellanamullia over the plan period. Projected population growth is allocated in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy<sup>1</sup> included in the RCDP which identifies Monksland/Bellanamullia as a Tier 2 SC<sup>2</sup> (Special Category) Settlement in the County. The population allocation for Monksland/Bellanamullia is outlined below and is that appropriate for its size and position in the Settlement Hierarchy for the County.

#### Period: 2014-2020

- Population Allocation = 538 persons
- Houses Required<sup>3</sup> = 215 units
- Residential Land Required<sup>4</sup> = 24.2 Hectares<sup>2</sup>

### 2.4 SETTLEMENT POLICY

Settlement policy aims to broadly guide where new development will occur in the County and is a fundamental component of spatial planning. It considers population distribution, settlement size, settlement role, and settlement hierarchy, as follows:

<sup>1</sup> As per the NSS and RPGs

<sup>2</sup> Monksland/Bellanamullia, as a Special Category within Tier 2, will develop in the context of the larger settlement of Athlone which is part of the Midlands Linked Gateway. The population allocation of 538 does not include 50% overzoning or residential reserve, which will facilitate significantly higher population growth should the requirement for such development arise over the period of this plan. Therefore, residential land requirement will be 50% over and above the **16.1 hectares** of residential zoned land indicated in the Core Strategy = **24.2 hectares**

<sup>3</sup> Given an average of 2.5 persons per household for the County as per the RPGs

<sup>4</sup> Given a density of 20 units per hectare

- The RPGs provide population figures for the County as well as Roscommon Town up to 2022.
- The Council must consider these figures and distribute them amongst the County's towns in a manner consistent with the aims of the RPGs as well as the proper planning and sustainable development of the County.
- Population figures for each settlement are outlined in the Roscommon County Development Plan's Core Strategy which promotes the development of settlements in accordance with their location in a hierarchy as outlined in the NSS and RPGs.
- In accordance with the RCDP 2014-2020 Core Strategy figure, the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) Local Area Plan 2016 - 2022 identifies a population growth of 538 persons over the period of the plan.
- Monksland/Bellanamullia, as a Special Category within Tier 2, will develop in the context of the larger settlement of Athlone which is part of the Midlands Linked Gateway. The population allocation does not include 50% overzoning or residential reserve, which will facilitate significantly higher population growth should the requirement for such development arise over the period of this plan.

### 3 PROFILE OF MONKSLAND/BELLANAMULLIA

The Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area is situated west of the River Shannon, within the administrative jurisdiction of Roscommon County Council and it borders the development boundary of Westmeath County Council to the south-east. The LAP area is at a strategic location on the main routes between Dublin and Galway, i.e it is bounded to the south and south-east by the M6/N6 motorway and the Dublin to Galway railway line, in addition to being in close proximity to the River Shannon in the east. The area has developed as a principal service and employment centre for County Roscommon and centrality and accessibility are key advantages to this strategic location (See Map 1 and 2).

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010 – 2022 support the sustainable development of this South Roscommon settlement which forms an integral part of the Midland Gateway of Athlone-Tullamore-Mullingar. In the figure indicating the Spatial Settlement of the Region (p.51 of the RPGs, 2010), the areas between Roscommon town and Athlone, and Athlone and Ballinasloe are indicated as areas of major economic activity.

#### 3.1 EXISTING CONTEXT

##### 3.1.1 General

The direction and location of development within Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) has been influenced by the physical topography of the LAP area. Its **principal characteristics** are:

- seasonal flooding of the River Shannon flood plain;
- land that is poorly drained due to a high water table and poor surface run-off;
- extensive bog areas;
- gravel ridges and eskers; and,
- a pattern of roads that reflects the above characteristics.

The **residential development** in Monksland is dense with a number of housing developments built both north and south of the new Tuam Road (R362). Large-scale **Industrial** as well as **Business, Enterprise Park/Light Industry and Warehousing** developments are prevalent in Monksland with a marked deficiency in the provision of **social and community facilities**.

##### 3.1.2 Population and Demographic Profile

In terms of its location with respect to **District Electoral Divisions (DEDs) and Townland boundaries**, the development envelope of the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP is situated within the DED of Athlone West Rural which extends as far as Barrymore in the north, Cloonakille Townland in the west, the Cross River in the south and the River Shannon in the East. The LAP area falls predominantly within the townlands of Monkland and Bellanamullia, with limited areas of Thomastown and Crannagh townlands included on the periphery. (Map 4)

Census 2006 identified a population of 3122 persons in the Athlone West Rural DED, which had increased to 4459 persons at the time of the last Census in 2011. This represents a 42.8% growth, as compared to the County average (9%) and State average (8.2%) for the same period.

The CSO 2011 also indicates the following figures for part of the Athlone West Rural DED which covers most of central Monkland; the population in 2006 was 2489 persons and in 2011, 3829 persons which represents a 53.7% increase in population. (Map 4a)

The population density, from the 2011 CSO, in County Roscommon is 26.2 persons per sq. km compared to a state average of 67. In the DEDs surrounding the LAP area the population density is 103.6 persons per sq. km i.e. with Athlone West Rural being highest at 233.5 persons per sq. Km.

The number of housing units currently within the LAP boundary is 1678 units<sup>1</sup> which equates to a current population of approximately 4195 persons<sup>2</sup> residing within the LAP boundary, when the latest geodirectory figures are utilised.

### 3.1.3 Infrastructure and Services

#### 3.1.3.1 Roads and Transportation

The Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area is located at a strategic transportation hub:

- at the junction between the M6/N6 motorway between Dublin and Galway;
- the N61 National Secondary Route between Athlone and Boyle; and,
- is also traversed by the Dublin-Westport Railway Line. (see Map 5)

The nearest train station is in Athlone town. Bus travel into the centre of Athlone has significantly improved in recent times and a shuttle service now operates hourly from SuperValu. Those wishing to avail of the long distance buses to Dublin and Galway however, still need to travel into the town to take advantage of these services.

In terms of road improvements, a number have been undertaken in the area since 2010. These include:

- the upgrading of the New Tuam Road, R362 with footpaths, drainage and public lighting as well as the construction of a roundabout at the junction of the Old and New Tuam Roads;
- the upgrading of the Old Tuam Road, L2047, from its junction with the New Tuam Road to the RCC Athlone area office and community centre, with footpaths, drainage, public lighting and bus stops;
- the upgrading of the Old Tuam Road, L2047, from the Monksland Community Centre and RCC Athlone area office to the junction with the R446 to the east with an improved road surface; and,
- the upgrading of the Monksland Industrial Estate Road (L75841) past Carty Meats and facilitating Jazz Pharmaceuticals, to include widening, pavement strengthening, footpaths and public lighting etc.

#### 3.1.3.2 Water Services (See Map 6)

Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014 responsibility for water services nationally rests with Irish Water (IW). Roscommon County Council is carrying out the majority of its previous functions by way of a service level agreement with Irish Water (IW). The strategies, policies and objectives detailed below may not be Irish Water strategies.

The LAP area is served by the South Roscommon Regional Water Supply Scheme (RWSS) from the reservoir at Killeglan. New water treatment plants have been provided at Killeglan and Lisbrock. These plants and the reservoir provide sufficient capacity for the amount of lands zoned for development as part of this LAP, and indeed spare capacity to 2030 for the South Roscommon Area, dependent on demand.

The key issue for water supply in this area is the maintenance of a water conservation programme which will address leaks in the area.

The Cross River which traverses the LAP area has a Q3 rating through the Shannon Callows cSAC and the river in the vicinity of the discharge point has a rating of Q 4 (latest EPA monitoring reports with results dating from 2011).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An Post Geodirectory, June 2015

<sup>2</sup> The RPGs indicate an average of 2.5 persons per household for the County.

<sup>3</sup> The Q Value system describes the relationship between water and the macro-invertebrate community. Q5 have good water quality, while Q1 have bad water quality. In addition, in accordance with the Water Framework Directive, surface waters in Ireland are classified as high, good, moderate, poor and bad quality.

The overall status of the Cross River for 2010-2012 (latest EPA information) is poor i.e. Q 3 and that for the River Shannon for the same period is poor i.e. Q 3.

#### 3.1.3.3 Flood Risk and Protection (Map 8)

The River Shannon and Cross River flowing to it, are the primary sources of flooding in the environs of Athlone and the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area. There are no recorded OPW flood points within the LAP boundary.

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) of the LAP area has been carried out as part of the LAP process. The SFRA identifies areas liable to flooding (including any identified by the OPW), assesses the extent of the flood risk in these areas and identifies mitigation measures to ensure that new development in the area will not exacerbate the existing problems and to prevent the recurrence of flooding.

#### 3.1.3.4 Wastewater Services (Map 6)

The Monksland WWTP has a design capacity of 14,400 PE and the existing development as well as that proposed under this plan will not exceed that, unless unforeseen large-scale water-dependent uses are proposed.

Irish Water (IW) / RCC now operate under a Capital Investment Programme and Asset Needs Briefs. There are currently 4 minor upgrade programmes for the waste water treatment network which have each been approved separately and IW/RCC are at the procurement stage for all of these.

In addition, in terms of the discharges from the WWTP to the Cross River, IW / RCC currently operate under an EPA discharge license.

The particular challenge within the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area in the past was the presence of multiple numbers of pumping stations for wastewater disposal. A number of these have since been taken in charge by IW/RCC and at present there are 8 public pumping stations and 4 private pumping stations.

The surface water sewer network serving the LAP area has been upgraded as part of recent road works including the New and Old Tuam Roads as well as the Monksland Industrial Road.

In relation to surface water quality, the most recent data from the EPA identifies Q-values of Q4 - Good status at two monitoring stations just beyond the LAP area, in Bellanamullia and CrannaghBeg, along the River Cross.

#### 3.1.3.5 Waste Management

Several domestic waste collection companies operate in the LAP area. Collectors provide a segregated collection service, where recyclables and municipal waste are collected on alternate weeks.

There are no civic amenity sites within the LAP area. The nearest is in Athlone. Bringbank facilities are located at the Monksland Community Centre.

#### 3.1.3.6 Energy (See Map 7)

The electricity demand of the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area is distributed from the 110kV Station Bulk Supply Point in Athlone, through the 38kV, Medium Voltage (MV), and Low Voltage (LV) network to customers. Map 7 indicates the Electricity and Gas supply network. There is sufficient capacity in the network to cater for proposed development on foot of this LAP.

The Dublin – Galway Gas pipeline, which forms part of the 322km (high pressure) cross-country transmission pipeline extending from Dublin to Galway and Limerick connects into the national grid and will supply natural gas to thousands of homes and businesses in the Midlands and west of Ireland. The gas network in Athlone currently ties in at the western end of the New Tuam Road Bridge and large parts of Monksland have been recently connected. Planning permission has also been granted and extended to 2018 for a gas turbine power station in the LAP area. (See Map 7)

#### 3.1.3.7 Telecommunications

Athlone town forms part of the Midlands Broadband Project and is the beneficiary of High Speed Broadband, to the level of Metropolitan Area Network. Monksland also has such a system and wireless Broadband is also available. Broadband ducting was also installed as part of the upgrades of the Old and New Tuam Roads.

Mobile phone coverage, provided by a range of operators, is generally very good in the area.

#### 3.1.4 Social and Community Facilities

##### 3.1.4.1 Community Facilities (See Map 11)

There are a number of social and community facilities which have been provided within the LAP area which RCC has assisted with, namely:

- Development of the Monksland community centre<sup>4</sup>;
- Two new sports pitches and dressing rooms at Cushlea,
- Childrens playgrounds adjacent to the Monksland Civic centre; and,
- The provision of footpaths and lighting on the Old and New Tuam Roads.

In terms of **libraries**, the mobile library calls to the LAP area once per week and parks at the SuperValu supermarket.

Westmeath County Council provides the **Fire Service**, by agreement with Roscommon County Council, in the southern part of the County.

An astroturf pitch has been provided at the Cushla Pitches, which is home to Monksland FC and it is also available for private hire.

##### 3.1.4.2 Schools and Educational Facilities (See Map 11)

There is currently only one primary school within the LAP area, i.e. Cloonakilla NS. The Summerhill NS and secondary school are situated in Crannagh Beg to the south of the LAP area.

With regard to third level education, the Athlone Institute of Technology is the nearest such facility. In addition, there is a FAS Training Centre in Athlone.

There are currently 2 full day childcare facilities in the LAP area, namely Grovelands and Millmount, and there is an afterschool Activity Club at the Monksland Community Centre.

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<sup>4</sup> There is an ongoing **RAPID** (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development) programme undertaking community work in the Monksland area. This includes, support for the community centre; small infrastructural works such as the public lighting, drainage and shrubbery to be provided around the civic centre.



### 3.1.4.3 Health (See Map 11)

The Monksland Medical Centre is the Primary Health Care Centre in the area and includes a number of services, including; GPs, public health nurses, practice nurses, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, speech and language therapist, primary care social worker, home help as well as dietetic services, mental health services, and an area medical officer. Tusla, as well as the school dentist, are currently occupying the office space at the Western Health Boards offices below the RCC Monksland Area Office.

### 3.1.4.4 Burial Grounds

The LAP area is presently serviced by 3 graveyards which are located outside the development envelope of the LAP area, namely, the Drum Cemetery, Cloonown Cemetery and the Cloonakille Cemetery (historic). The Drum and Cloonown Cemeteries have been expanded and upgraded to provide capacity for a twenty year timeframe.

## 3.1.5 Recreation, Leisure and Tourism

### 3.1.5.1 Open Space and Sporting Provision (See Map 11)

The open space system within the LAP area consists of the various open space areas and linkages, such as natural areas and greenbelts (e.g. along the Cross River), other greenbelts and landscaping areas (e.g. those areas associated with the M6 and the playground and green area associated with the Civic Offices / Community Centre), sports fields and recreation and amenity areas (e.g. Monksland United FC / Cushlea pitches and mini golf facility in Bellanamullia), transitional agricultural areas (e.g. in Monksland and Bellanamullia), etc., that support ecological functioning, recreational activities and visual amenity.

In terms of sporting provision, the Cushla Pitches provide sports fields as well as an astroturf pitch and is the home of Monksland United FC. An 18 hole mini-golf course is available at Woodview Country Club in Bellanamullia. A playground area and basketball court is available adjacent to the Community Centre in Monksland. Other facilities exist outside of the LAP area, namely, the handball alley in Bellanamullia, the Bealnamulla Soccer Pitch, and a range of facilities in Athlone town.

### 3.1.5.2 Tourism Resources, Facilities and Infrastructure (See Map 12)

The area relies heavily on its association with Athlone for tourism. In terms of tourism accommodation, the Athlone Springs Hotel and The Mill Bar provide these facilities for tourists. Tourist sites in close proximity to the LAP area include: the River Shannon and recreational opportunities associated with it; the Meehanbee Dolmen on the Drum Road; the Drum Monastic Settlement, incorporating St. Brigid's Holy Well, Heritage Centre and graveyard; and, the Thomastown Ancient Cemetery.

## 3.1.6 Built and Natural Heritage

### 3.1.6.1 Architectural and Archaeological Heritage (See Map 9)

There are no buildings listed on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) within the LAP area. There are however two period properties identified in Appendix 3 which could be considered for protection on the RPS i.e. Larkfield House and Woodberry House. Several Buildings of Interest have also been identified particularly around Bellanamullia. (see Appendix 3 and Map 9).

There is one structure listed for protection on the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), i.e. a Burnt Spread in Bellanamullia. (see Appendix 3 and Map 9)

### 3.1.6.2 Natural Heritage (See Map 10)

There are no designated sites<sup>5</sup> within the Plan area, however, there are a number of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) within a 15km radius of the LAP area (see Map 8). The Cross River which flows through the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area, from the north-west to the south-east, flows into the Shannon River and through the Shannon River Callows which is a SAC, SPA and pNHA. (see Map 8)

The LAP area falls within two Landscape Character Areas i.e. predominantly Roscommon LCA 8: Lower Lough Ree and Athlone Environs and Roscommon LCA 35: Brideswell Esker Belt. The areas are of Very High and Moderate Landscape Value respectively reflecting the river corridor landscape type and associated ecology and habitats, as well as the geologically valuable Esker Belt.

### 3.1.7 Economic Development and Employment

#### 3.1.7.1 Economic Profile

The Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area is identified as a Tier 2 SC<sup>6</sup> (Special Category) Settlement in the county given its population and status in terms of employment and service provision but recognising that it will develop as part of the larger settlement of Athlone Town.

*“Monksland is envisaged, as part of this Core Strategy, as continuing to be a prime Industrial centre with its proximity to the M6, railway link, and allocation of Industrial lands justifying this designation. The Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region acknowledge that Athlone has significant influence on the economic development of South Roscommon. The document supports the overall development of Monksland/Bellanamullia as an integral part of Athlone and the Athlone Gateway but recognises that the area requires phased infrastructural support, services and facilities such as schools, a recreational park and improved public transport. The ongoing development of a district centre, capable of serving local retailing, recreational and social needs is viewed as being a priority for this area. As recommended by the Retail Planning Guidelines (2012) co-ordination in relation to local planning issues in terms of policy and a joint Retail Strategy is required on the part of Roscommon and Westmeath County Councils. Roscommon County Council endorses this approach and has made initial approaches to its neighbouring County Council in this regard.” (RCDP, p 22)*

The industrial sector within the LAP area is the strongest in the county. There are a number of pharmaceutical enterprises and a meat processing plant situated on lands zoned for Industry (I) and Business, Enterprise Park/Light Industry and Warehousing (BE) on either side of the New Tuam Road.

There are a number of larger commercial premises situated on lands zoned for Business, Enterprise Park/Light Industry and Warehousing (BE). The lands to the rear of the Athlone Springs Hotel include mainly office space which is partly occupied. The land between the Monksland Medical Centre and the unoccupied Pharmaplaz Technology Park encompasses a number of occupied and unoccupied premises or parts of premises. The take up and release of commercial, office, retail and retail warehousing space in the LAP area is high and the plan has attempted to focus on the proposed future development of the area and not merely the uses which are in place at present.

<sup>5</sup> Designated Sites include Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas.

<sup>6</sup> Monksland/Bellanamullia, as a Special Category within Tier 2, will develop in the context of the larger settlement of Athlone which is part of the Midlands Linked Gateway. The population allocation of 538 does not include 50% overzoning or residential reserve, which will facilitate significantly higher population growth should the requirement for such development arise over the period of this plan.

In terms of the provision of retail and retail warehousing space, the Retail Strategy which forms part of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020 indicates that 3,621m<sup>2</sup> of that retail space granted between January 2007 and January 2013 remains vacant or extant. The most recent survey in June 2015 however, conducted by RCC as part of the preparation for this LAP indicates that this was modest and in terms of lands zoned in the area; 1,355m<sup>2</sup> of developed commercial space on DC lands are vacant, 204m<sup>2</sup> of developed commercial space on LC lands are vacant, 8,415m<sup>2</sup> of developed commercial space on BE lands are vacant. It should be noted however that there is a great deal of movement in the commercial property sector both in terms of rentals and sales which is borne in mind in the formulation of the development strategy for this area. More detail is provided in the development strategy concerning future economic development and employment within the LAP area.

In terms of retail provision within the LAP area, the District Centre (DC) closest to the junction of the New and Old Tuam Roads includes a convenience supermarket in addition to a pharmacy, takeaway, cafe and bakery and bookmakers etc. The Athlone Springs Hotel and Leisure Complex is situated immediately to the south of this and a car sales garage is located across the road from it facing the new Tuam Road.

Lands zoned as “District Centre” to the north of the New Tuam Road incorporating the Monksland Medical Centre includes the Athlone Primary Health Care Centre, pharmacy, radio station, gymnasium, restaurant, hairdressers, offices etc.

The local centre (LC) zoning in Bellanamullia at the western extremity of the development envelope is centered around Bannons Garage and shop. The Local Centre at the south-eastern most extremity of the LAP area includes a garage with its associated shop and a number of small business premises. The Local Centre at the Athlone Area Office and Monksland Community Centre includes the Tusla Child and Family Agency Offices.

### 3.1.8 Urban Development

#### 3.1.8.1 Residential Development

There has been significant residential development in the LAP area over the last 15 years, and considering the role of Monksland as an economic driver for the county, the proximity of the area to Athlone town centre, and, the presence of the M6/N6 connecting Galway and Dublin, it is likely that this type of development will continue in the future, albeit on a significantly reduced scale.

As of July 2015 there were approximately 40 vacant residential units within the LAP area.<sup>7</sup> Unlike the previous LAP for the area, many of the planning permissions for housing developments which existed in the area and were not built have expired and there are currently only two permitted developments (see Appendix 4) which number 25 units still to be constructed (information from July 2015). In addition, there is one unfinished housing estate which does not have a live permission but where there are 10 unfinished houses and 2 creches and 1 doctors surgery not built. The 2014 National Housing Development Survey (NHDS) identified only 1 unfinished residential estates in the LAP area i.e Waterville. (see Appendix 4)

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<sup>7</sup> RCC groundtruthing of June 2015 Geodirectory information – site visit on 22/07/2015



## 4 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### 4.1 CHALLENGES

#### COMMUNITY VIEW

Footpath improvements and extensions of the footpaths in places are necessary for increased pedestrian safety.

“Residents are quite remote from Athlone town. Better local road connectivity is needed in the area.”

#### 4.1.1 Infrastructure and Services

##### Road, Pedestrian and Cycle Networks

- Ensuring continued maintenance, improvement and upgrading of existing infrastructure and the timely development of new infrastructure in line with the development of the area.
- Over reliance on the private car, deficient public footpath network and limited cycle ways in area.
- Speeding is an issue in some areas; speed controls etc. are required.

#### COMMUNITY VIEW

Significant concerns regarding the high lime and chlorine content of the water in the area was expressed by community members.

It is essential that development is steered away from floodplains, for example, in areas close to the Cross River.

##### Water and Wastewater Services

- The wastewater network must be maintained and upgraded as necessary to serve the area as it expands.
- Ensure the protection of groundwaters in the area, particularly given the prevalence of the use of septic tanks and private pumping stations in the area.
- Ensure that all surface waters in the area i.e. the Cross River, Lough Ree and the River Shannon, achieve good water status.

#### COMMUNITY VIEW

Bottle banks at the community centre are a problem due to dumping. It would be better if existing bottle banks were located at SuperValu i.e. more footfall, cameras and better lighting.

Additional bottle banks are needed near the Pharmaceutical Hub.

##### Flood Risk and Protection

- Control development and ensure appropriate flood mitigating measures are in place.

##### Waste Management

- Applying good waste management procedures to ensure litter does not detract from the visual quality of the area.

##### Energy

- A secure and reliable electricity transmission infrastructure is needed to support economic development and attract investment to the area.

#### COMMUNITY VIEW

“Broadband is great in some areas and not so great in others e.g. at the Mill Bar.”

#### COMMUNITY VIEW

The local national school is at capacity and there is no secondary school in the area.

“The area needs a Garda Station, library and graveyard.”

##### Telecommunications

- Need for reliable broadband for all households and businesses
- Ensuring that the physical infrastructure and structures needed to provide an effective mobile phone service are developed in a strategic way that minimises the impact, where possible, on the environment.

#### 4.1.2 Community Facilities

- Ensuring the provision of adequate social, recreation and community facilities to meet the needs of the local population, such as youth facilities.

A lack of educational facilities for the increasing population of the area, particularly primary school places.

Anti-social behaviour at the playground is a concern along with this type of behaviour associated with vacant and derelict buildings and sites.

**COMMUNITY VIEW**

"The area has yet to realise its full tourism potential."

There is a lack of local events and festivals to encourage tourists to the area.

**4.1.3 Tourism Resources, Facilities and Infrastructure**

- Capitalising on the tourism potential of the wider area is essential to the local economy.
- Promoting the strengths of the area including local heritage, walking and cycle routes, and its proximity to waterways such as the Cross River, Lough Ree and the River Shannon.
- Creating links to recognised regional and national touring routes in order to attract visitors to the area. This would include links to the Dublin to Galway Cycleway – Ireland's first Intercity Greenway (south and east of the LAP area).

**4.1.4 Built and Natural Heritage**Buildings within the Area

- Promote the preservation of the architectural quality of key buildings of interest within the area.

**4.1.5 Economic Development and Employment**

- Encouraging new business in the area and increasing employment opportunities.
- There are a number of industrial and large scale businesses in the area and it is a key aim to continue to encourage companies to establish a base within the area e.g. particularly in the pharmaceutical and IT sectors.

**4.1.6 Retail and Commercial Development****COMMUNITY VIEW**

Opportunity to take up derelict and vacant buildings and sites for new retail opportunities.

- Ensuring the local shopping needs of residents are catered for appropriately in the Monksland / Bellanamullia area without detracting from the larger shopping area of nearby Athlone town centre.
- Securing occupancy for the significant levels of vacant retail warehousing floor space that exists in the area.
- No focus or centre to the area. No "sense of place" for the community.

**4.1.7 Residential Development**

- Large scale residential development with a deficiency in the provision of social and community facilities to service these areas
- Address residential vacancy in the area (currently 40 units – July 2015).
- Address public health and safety, as well as security on unfinished residential estates, and the satisfactory completion of essential services such as roads, public lighting, footpaths, piped services and amenity areas.
- Address derelict and vacant buildings in the area.

**COMMUNITY VIEW**

"There is no incentive to build houses in the area."

**COMMUNITY VIEW**

Completing unfinished housing estates and residential units, such as Parkway, Oyster Homes and derelict sites, is essential to the future development of the area.



## 4.2 OPPORTUNITIES

### 4.2.1 Infrastructure and Services

#### Road, Pedestrian and Cycle Networks

- Improve the quality of approach roads into the area.
- Ensure the provision of an extended public bus network to serve the entire Monksland / Bellanamullia area e.g. as far as the Galway Road and Cloonakilla National School.
- Creating a pedestrian friendly environment by encouraging a move away from high rates of dependency on the private car through increased provision of footpaths and cycle lanes.

#### COMMUNITY VIEW

Springwell Road needs to be consistently maintained as it is an important landmark and feature in the area along with the well itself.

More cycleways and walking facilities are needed in the area e.g. along the Cross River and on the Springwell Road.

#### Energy

- Take advantage of the existing gas network to encourage new business etc. into the area.

#### COMMUNITY VIEW

The existing pitches at Cushla are in private ownership and not open for free to the public.

A new public park and recreational facilities such as pitches and a running track are needed in the area.

#### Telecommunications

- Supplying a high quality and competitive broadband service in the area to promote industrial and commercial development and to attract new business investment into the Monksland / Bellanamullia area.
- Ensure that telecommunications infrastructure is adequately screened, integrated and/or landscaped so as to minimise adverse visual impacts on the environment.

### 4.2.2 Community Facilities

- Increase the provision of community facilities in the area for all age groups and ensure existing facilities are maintained.
- Use of vacant residential and other units for community facilities, if of a suitable scale and design and compatible with surrounding land uses.
- The dual-use of schools and other community and educational facilities for training courses, classes etc.

#### COMMUNITY VIEW

"The area lacks adequate sporting and recreational facilities."

A recreational area and public park is needed at the junction of the New and Old Tuam Roads or at the site of Hannon's Quarry.

#### Open Space

- Develop a public park in the area which could incorporate or separately provide other public open space facilities such as a pitch, astroturf pitch, a running track and allotments.
- Ensure that existing public open spaces are properly maintained and managed so that all members of the community can avail of and enjoy these essential community facilities.

Additional tree-planting and landscaping is needed along the New and Old Tuam Roads and the Sli Na Sláinte route and the road to the pitches.

#### COMMUNITY VIEW

"There is potential to capitalise on the river or a park adjacent to the river e.g. potential kayaking opportunities."

There is potential for the development of an activity centre in the area similar to Delphi or Lough Key.

### 4.2.3 Tourism Resources, Facilities and Infrastructure

- Facilitate the development of appropriate new private and public recreation, leisure and tourism infrastructure and facilities, and ensure access for all groups of the community.
- Strengthen the links between the Monksland / Bellanamullia area and Athlone town so both areas can benefit from visiting tourists.

A new *Sli Na Sláinte* route has been recommended in the area by the Monksland Tidy Towns.

- Support the development of the Dublin to Galway Cycleway – Ireland’s first Intercity Greenway - as well as local walks and cycleways as appropriate.
- Increase tourism signage to identify key attractions in the area in order to entice visitors to the Monksland / Bellanamullia area to stay and explore the area.
- Develop and promote safe walkways in the vicinity of places of interest, such as the Cross River and thereby encourage people to visit underutilised areas.

#### 4.2.4 Built and Natural Heritage

##### Buildings within the Area

- Require a high standard of building, road and paving treatments that will create a high-quality environment with a distinctive and coherent character which will help to develop a sense of place and focus for the Monksland / Bellanamullia area.

#### 4.2.5 Economic Development and Employment

- Strengthen the links between the Monksland / Bellanamullia area and Athlone and the Midland Linked Gateway towns in order to foster opportunities for new commercial activities, for example, within the industrial and business sectors.
- Create a strategic reserve of new industrial and enterprise lands in the area and encourage the provision of flagship enterprises, micro-enterprises, telecommunications and ICT Infrastructure.
- Promote Monksland / Bellanamullia as a desirable location for targeted economic investment and as a primary centre for the location of industry and enterprise development.
- Prioritise the reuse of existing vacant industrial, business, light industrial and warehouse units.

##### **COMMUNITY VIEW**

The Monksland / Bellanamullia area is a rapidly growing economic area.

There are currently many vacant and derelict buildings which could provide additional industrial and business opportunities in the area.

#### 4.2.6 Retail and Commercial Development

##### **COMMUNITY VIEW**

“There are lots of retail vacancies in the area.”

- Providing a central focus for the area by designing a single District Centre within the LAP area.
- Promote the uptake of existing vacant premises, where appropriate, in conjunction with the development of the District Centre.

More land needs to be zoned for business enterprise in the area to capitalise on the area’s proximity to Athlone town which has been marketed by the IDA for software and IT development companies.

#### 4.2.7 Home-based Economic Activity

- Appropriate proposals for small-scale home-based economic activity may be supported where the proposal does not generate significant new traffic movements and is generally compatible with surrounding uses.

#### 4.2.8 Residential Development

- Encourage the use/reuse of existing vacant residential units in the area as an alternative to new build.
- Encourage the completion of unfinished housing estates. In cases where this cannot be achieved seek to improve unfinished residential areas for the benefit of existing residents.

##### **COMMUNITY VIEW**

“There is a need to increase space for individual houses.”

“Monksland / Bellanamullia is an affordable, desirable place to live.”

## 5 VISION AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Roscommon County Council has an ambitious but achievable **Vision** for the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area for the period 2016 – 2022 and beyond.

*The Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) area will develop as an integral part of the Athlone Linked Gateway and act as a vital driver of social and economic development, with beneficial effects for the county. It is seen as vital for industry and manufacturing development opportunities, to aid the country's economic recovery and increase job opportunities in the county and will continue to be the prime industrial centre in the county. The area will continue to be an attractive, vibrant, consolidated and sustainable settlement with its population supporting economic and employment growth and taking advantage of a full range of co-ordinated physical, social, community and recreational infrastructure and services. People in the area will be living within a high quality built and natural environment and will experience an enhanced quality of life with equal opportunities for all.*

The following are the **Strategic Aims** for the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area:

1. Build on the role of Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) as a Key Town within Tier 2 of the County Settlement Hierarchy and given its Special Category status as a settlement which will develop as part of the larger Athlone Town area.
2. Support the continued development of the local economy by promoting the area for industrial and manufacturing development opportunities, particularly in the fields of pharmaceuticals and IT.
3. Support the consolidation of commercial activity within the LAP area around a District Centre in which a high quality commercial core is established within a well developed public realm. The public realm should display appropriate and sustainable building forms, materials, heights and associated landscaping in order which aims to create a sense of place and focus for the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area.
4. Consolidate residential development in the area, and ensure the development of a high quality built environment with a well developed public realm.
5. Promote and facilitate the development within the LAP area of the full range of social and community facilities and services, which support all sectors of society, including education and training, health, recreation, sports, arts and culture.
6. Promote an enhanced quality of life for all, based on high quality sustainable residential, working and recreational environments, infrastructural and transportation networks, with the use of alternative energy in a sustainable and harmonious way. These services should be provided in tandem with development and associated population increase.
7. Create a strong and inclusive community through the provision of 'access for all' to cultural, social and community facilities through the promotion of social inclusion and the implementation of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy.
8. Positively impact on the well-being of the LAP area by ensuring the redevelopment and reuse of vacant and derelict residential, commercial and industrial buildings and promoting the renewal and environmental improvement of neglected areas.
9. Promote, encourage and facilitate the further development of the tourism industry in the LAP area by capitalising on the presence of the Hotel, the proximity of the Shannon River and Lough Ree, the proximity of the new Dublin to Galway Greenway, the proximity of Hodson Bay, the presence of the Drum Heritage Centre and heritage sites in the wider area etc.
10. Protect and safeguard groundwater supplies and ensure that they are not compromised by commercial, agricultural, domestic or other activities, particularly in non-serviced areas outside the LAP boundary.
11. Protect the archaeological, natural and built heritage of the area.
12. Avoid urban sprawl on the edges of the area and maintain a clear distinction between the urban envelope and the rural hinterland.

The Council is committed to delivering this vision of the LAP area through working in partnership with the local community and local organisations, and through promoting the policies and objectives contained in this, and future, LAPs.

## 5.1 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OPTIONS

The purpose of the development strategy is to provide a clear strategic direction for how the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area should develop over the lifetime of the Plan and beyond. The need for a flexible, longer-term development strategy for the area is clear in light of the economic downturn which has impacted upon Monksland/Bellanamullia and contributed towards limited economic growth and residential development in the LAP area over the past number of years.

The Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area is included within 'Tier 2' of the Settlement Hierarchy of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014 – 2020, given its population and status in terms of employment and service provision, and designated as a 'Special Category' as it is envisaged to develop as part of a larger settlement of Athlone Town.

The Development Strategy envisages that Monksland will continue to be a prime centre for industrial and manufacturing development opportunities and will act as a vital driver of social and economic development, which will aid the country's economic recovery and increase job opportunities in the county.

Aligned with this is the acknowledgement of the significant improvement over the last number of years in the built environment with, amongst others, the upgrading of the New and Old Tuam Roads, the upgrading of the Sports Grounds in Cushla, the development of a supermarket to cater for the needs of the community, and the development of a hotel which has attracted people to the area. The development strategy aims to support this by encouraging the consolidation of the commercial core around a central District Centre which creates a "core" with a sense of place and focus for the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area.

The Development Strategy aims to promote the consolidation of residential development around this commercial core as well as developing of a central recreation space to serve the communities in Monksland and Bellanamullia.

### Development Strategy Options

Three Development Strategy Options are considered for the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area:

- Development Strategy 1 considers the implications of continuing in accordance with the development objectives of the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP 2010-2016;
- Development Strategy 2 considers the implications of directing new development to vacant and infill opportunities in the Monksland area only; and,
- Development Strategy 3 considers the implications of prioritising commercial, industrial and residential development in Monksland whilst allowing the area to expand outward in a phased manner.

The following sections outline the three options, including key features and implications.

**Main Features of Development Strategy 1 (Figure 5.1 below)**

- Development envelope of the LAP area includes Monksland and Bellanamullia, and extends to include Summerhill college and lands along the Drum Road in Crannagh Beg, as well as predominantly un-developed lands in Bogganfin adjacent to the N61.
- The majority of the residential, commercial and industrial development is centred in Monksland although no visible and functional ‘centre’ exists.
- The N6 national primary road and Dublin-Galway railway line bisect the LAP area. This has the effect of making the latter two areas more remote, i.e. Crannagh Beg which is separated by the N6 and the Dublin – Galway railway line, and Bogganfin by the N6.
- Facilitates large-scale residential development which is not contiguous and provides large pockets of land for infill residential development.
- Deficiency in the provision of social and recreational facilities within the LAP area considering the scale of the residential and commercial population.
- Large scale industrial development and high vacancy in retail warehousing accommodation.
- Significant improvement in the roads and transportation infrastructure, providing for vehicles and pedestrians, in the LAP area.
- No cross-linkages within the LAP area between Crannagh Beg, Monksland and Bogganfin.
- Provision of road linkages from the New/Old Tuam Roundabout to the N61 Athlone to Roscommon national secondary road.
- Three optional ‘District Centres’ recommended in Monksland and Bogganfin, the latter of which relies heavily on the provision of a link road through to the N61.
- The provision of ‘Greenbelt’ zoning in areas which are prone to flooding.

**Positive Implications of Development Strategy 1**

- The recommendation of road linkages between the disconnected areas of the LAP.
- The zoning of additional lands for the expansion of Industry.
- The zoning of lands for ‘District Centre’ as a means of encouraging a ‘sense of place’ and ‘focus’ for the area.
- The zoning of lands for residential expansion.

**Negative Implications of Development Strategy 1**

- Unsustainable provision and ‘no proven need’ for the amount of lands zoned for residential purposes i.e. provision for over 3000 households over 3 phases of residential development.
- The incorporation of disconnected areas and zoning of lands particularly for residential purposes which are surplus to requirements for the lifetime of the plan.
- Insufficient lands zoned within the lifetime of this plan for ‘Community and Education’ as well as ‘Recreation and Amenity’.
- The provision of multiple options for a District Centre thereby detracting from the successful operation of a single central focus for the area particularly in terms of commercial development.

- The zoning of lands for light industry and warehousing which are disconnected from the 'central area' and difficult to access.
- The zoning of lands inland of Bogganfin and some to the north of the Old Tuam Road, which rely heavily on the provision of the proposed link road, without a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of this road.



**Main Features of Development Strategy 2 (Figure 5.2 below)**

- Significantly reduced LAP area
- Consolidate commercial and residential development in Monksland only by directing development to existing vacant and infill areas with only limited expansion to cater for projected population growth for the limited 6 year period.
- Limited new areas of residential, commercial, and industrial development.
- No proposed link roads connecting parts of the area and linking through it.
- Limited lands zoned and limited scope for the provision of facilities for ‘Community and Education’ as well as ‘Recreation and Amenity’.
- The zoning of a single area for the provision of a ‘District Centre’.

**Positive Implications of Development Strategy 2**

- Limited new commercial and industrial expansion which results in good spatial connectivity and a clear ‘focus’ for the area.
- Direct light industrial and warehousing development to vacant units and infill sites.
- Limited need for new roads and transportation infrastructure.
- Consolidation of residential development, directing it firstly to existing vacant units, brownfield and infill sites and then limited expansion on Greenfield sites which provides more sustainable development and creates a critical mass for the provision of other social and community facilities.

**Negative Implications of Development Strategy 2**

- Limited new areas for the expansion of industrial and light industrial development in an area of the county which is considered for significant growth in this area as part of the Athlone Linked Gateway.
- Restricting new residential development to existing vacant units, brownfield and infill sites would not cater for the demand predicted in the Core Strategy of the RCDP 2014 – 2020, and could deter investment in the area by limiting choice.
- Limited provision of lands zoned for vital ‘Community and Education’ as well as ‘Recreation and Amenity’ uses would exacerbate the under-provision of these facilities in the area.



**Main Features of Development Strategy 3 (Figure 5.3 below)**

- Development envelope of the LAP area includes Monksland and Bellanamullia which are intrinsically linked and form one community.
- Consolidation of the commercial core into one 'District Centre' located adjacent to existing commercial / retail development.
- Facilitate new residential development at a level which is consistent with the Core Strategy of the RCDP 2014 – 2020, and in those areas contiguous to existing residential development. Expansion will follow the "sequential approach" from the 'centre' of the LAP area.
- Provision of sufficient lands zoned for 'Industrial' purposes which allows infill development as well as expansion and growth away from residential development.
- Emphasis on the use of vacant buildings and infill development to accommodate light industrial and retail warehousing floorpsace (i.e. zoned for 'Business, Enterprise Park/Light Industry and Warehousing') as well as the provision of a 'Specific Objective' i.e. SO4, for the creation of a pharmaceutical hub on the site of the vacant Pharmaplaz development. In addition, the provision of some expansion opportunity between the 'District Centre' and 'Industrial' lands which provides a useful buffer between heavy 'Industrial' uses and 'District Centre' uses.
- Identification of lands for 'Recreation and Amenity' including a Specific Objective i.e. SO2, for the provision of a centrally located public park; and 'Community and Education' i.e. potentially providing lands for the provision of a new school. In addition, the provision of a 'Specific Objective' i.e. SO1 on lands zoned for NR which would also be suitable for the provision of a school.
- Internal link road provided as a long term objective to link the communities along the N61 in South Roscommon to the community in Monksland/Bellanamullia.

**Positive Implications of Development Strategy 3**

- Consolidating commercial development into a single 'District Centre' in order to provide a focus and 'sense of place' for the community.
- The potential provision of a central and publically accessible park situated opposite the District Centre. This would unite the communities of Monksland and Bellanamullia and add to a 'sense of place' and provide focus for the community.
- Encouraging the use of vacant and infill BE lands is prudent and limited zoning of additional lands provides choice in this area where take-up and release of property is high. In addition, it provides a much needed buffer between heavy 'Industrial' uses and 'District Centre' uses.
- The provision of additional contiguous lands for 'Industrial' uses provided adequate expansion opportunities for this growth sector, as well as locating it sufficiently removed from residential development in the LAP area.
- The extent of lands zoned for 'New Residential' development is at an appropriate level to cater for the expected population growth in the area as indicated in the Core Strategy (see detailed analysis later in this chapter).
- Two specific land parcels (zoned (CE) and proposed (SO1) of NR zoning) provide choice for the potential provision of a school or other community and educational uses.
- A potential internal link road between Monksland and the communities along the N61 would provide a much needed connection between these communities and removes unnecessary local traffic from the motorway/national primary route.

**Negative Implications of Development Strategy 3**

- The further development of lands to the north of the Old Tuam Road relies on the provision of the internal link road
- The further expansion of 'Industrial' lands to the west of the Cross River relies on a significant investment in the provision of a bridge across the river, link road through to the Meehambee Road and the upgrading of the Meehambee Road.
- Constrained land uses may exist surrounding the Cross River in areas prone to flooding.

### The Preferred Development Strategy for the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area.

Development Strategy 3 (DS3) will benefit the area the most, as it combines all the positive aspects of the other two strategies. It consolidates development within Monksland, centered around a District Centre and public park establishing a core and focus for the community. It improves connections to Bellanamullia and allows for the long term development of linkages with the community in South Roscommon through the provision of the Link Road. It consolidates residential development in close proximity to the centre of the area predominately on infill sites with limited expansion towards Bellanamullia and only within projected population growth rates for the area. It encourages the take-up of existing vacant retail warehousing space and allows for limited growth and expansion between the District Centre and lands zoned for Industry. Industrial development is allowed to expand in this area whilst protecting residential amenity. It provides options for the development of community and education facilities close to where communities are concentrated.

#### Creating a Workable Strategy

The identification of Development Objectives is important in the delivery of the Preferred Strategy and the main development aims of the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP 2016 – 2022. The preferred Development Strategy promotes the following:

- The consolidation of commercial development into a single ‘District Centre’ which should be purpose designed and built in accordance with guidance provided in a Framework Plan for the overall landholding. This will provide a currently lacking central focus and ‘sense of place’ for the community. The development proposed in this area will also need to be of a high architectural standard which will improve the appearance of this urban environment.
- The addition of much needed space for ‘Recreation and Amenity’ for the communities in this area through the provision of a publically accessible greenspace in the form of a public park, with potential for a playing pitch situated opposite the District Centre. The provision of such a facility in this central area aims to unite the communities of Monksland and Bellanamullia and will add to a ‘sense of place’ and central focus for residents of the area.
- Addressing high retail warehousing vacancy by encouraging the use of vacant and infill BE lands and providing limited zoning of additional lands for this purpose between the District Centre and lands for Industrial purposes, thereby providing choice in this area where take-up and release of property is high. In addition, it provides a much needed buffer between the two aforementioned uses.
- Concurring with the recommendation made in the RCDP 2014 – 2020, that this area remain the prime industrial centre for the county as well as a vital driver for social and economic development, the provision of additional contiguous lands for ‘Industrial’ uses which allows much needed room for expansion of this growth sector as well as locating it sufficiently removed from residential development in the LAP area.
- Capitalising on the presence and success of pharmaceutical enterprises within the area by encouraging a ‘hub’ of such activity on the vacant Pharmaplaz site.
- The amount of land which is zoned for ‘New Residential’ development is sufficient to facilitate expected population growth in the area as indicated in the Core Strategy of the RCDP 2014 – 2020. It follows the ‘sequential approach’ with those located closer to the District Centre and infill opportunities recommended for development first and those more remote following. These are predominantly located north of the New Tuam Road with limited expansion west towards Bellanamullia.
- Addressing the deficit in lands zoned for ‘Community and Educational Uses’ by identifying two specific land parcels, one zoned (CE) and the other proposed (SO1) on NR zoning, for the potential provision of a school or other community and educational uses.

- Addressing the need for internal connections through the potential provision of an internal link road between Monksland and the communities along the N61. This would provide a desirable connection between these communities and would remove unnecessary local traffic from the motorway/national primary route.

The following are the **Strategic Development Objectives** for the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area:

**Strategic Objective 1**

Establish a 'central' focus for the LAP area by consolidating commercial development around a single centrally located District Centre.

**Strategic Objective 2**

Address the deficit in the provision of facilities for 'Recreation and Amenity' as well as 'Community and Education' through the zoning of lands for these purposes which are central and easily accessible to the community.

**Strategic Objective 3**

Encourage sustainable development through the use of vacant and infill BE lands particularly for retail warehousing.

**Strategic Objective 4**

Continue to promote the LAP area as a driver of social and economic development and the prime industrial centre by encouraging the take-up of vacant BE sites and recommending appropriate lands for industrial expansion.

**Strategic Objective 5**

New residential development to be accommodated to cater for expected population growth only and to be more centralised within the LAP area.

**Strategic Objective 6**

Long term objective to connect the community in South Roscommon with that in this LAP area through the provision of an internal link road to the N61.

The Development Strategy sets out how the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area should develop over the next 6 years and beyond. The Council will continue to endeavour to meet these objectives over the period of this Plan as well as future Plans. The Council's primary focus will be to build on this Strategy in order to maintain a vibrant, attractive and sustainable area which continues to be focused on social and economic growth.



## 5.2 HOUSING STRATEGY AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

National guidance promotes the use of a ‘sequential approach’ in relation to the zoning and development of lands in urban areas in order to maximise the use of existing and future infrastructure, and to promote sustainability.<sup>1</sup> The sequential approach specifies that zoning shall extend outwards from the centre of an urban area, with undeveloped lands closest to the core and on public transport routes being given preference (i.e. leapfrogging to more remote areas should be avoided). A strong emphasis should be placed on encouraging infill opportunities and the better use of under-utilised lands. Areas to be zoned shall be contiguous to existing zoned development lands. The provision of water and sewerage investment by local authorities must also be related to the sequencing of residential lands and must also be integrated with the provision of public transport, schools, and community and leisure facilities.

In addition, the following objectives and principles of sustainable development must be considered:

- A reduction in the need for transportation and travel;
- The promotion of higher density residential development, thereby making more efficient use of the land resource available in the area;
- A reduction in the extent of urban expansion and sprawl, combined with the avoidance of and safeguarding against urban coalescence, which results from a loss of distinction between urban and rural areas; and,
- The promotion of development on ‘brownfield’ sites thereby reducing the need for new development on ‘greenfield’ sites.

These objectives meet with the aspirations of national and local policy as well as best practice on sustainable development.

The Regional Planning Guidelines project a population increase of 5,200 people in the period 2010-2016 and 6,700 people in the period 2016-2022 for County Roscommon. From these figures, the Core Strategy, which forms part of the RCDP 2014-2020, indicates that 2,480 additional households will be formed in the county over the period of the plan, from 2014 to 2020, arising from a core strategy population allocation of 6,200 people.

A total of **24.2 hectares** of residential zoned land is required over the period of this plan 2016-2022. This has been calculated having regard to the following;

- A. The expected population increase in the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) area between 2014 and 2020, based on the minimum population growth targets identified in the RPGs, is **538 persons**. Taking a projected average household size of **2.5 persons**<sup>2</sup> the total number of residential units required over this period is **215 units**. In order to calculate the total amount of residential zoned land required over this period, a density of **20 residential units per hectare** is used, resulting in a land requirement of approximately **10.75 hectares**. However, there is also a need to ensure that enough land is available to meet residential needs for nine years (6 years of the Plan period and 3 years beyond).<sup>3</sup> Therefore, taking this into account, a total of **16.1 hectares** of residential zoned land would be required over the period of this plan 2016-2022.
- B. However, this area is identified within the RCDP 2014 – 2020 as an integral part of the Athlone Linked Gateway and acts as a vital driver of social and economic development, with beneficial effects for the County. In addition, it is viewed as vital for industry and manufacturing development opportunities, to

<sup>1</sup> See Development Plans: Guidelines for Local Authorities, DEHLG, June, 2007 and Local Area Plans: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DECLG, June, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> The RPGs for the West Region 2010-2022 (RPGs) indicate an average of 2.5 persons per household for all households outside of Roscommon Town.

<sup>3</sup> Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities, June 2007, DEHLG (now DECLG), page 43.

aid the country's economic recovery and increase job opportunities in the county and will continue to be the prime industrial centre. Hence, the following was included in the text of the RCDP;

*“Monksland/Bellanamullia, as a Special Category within Tier 2, will develop in the context of the larger settlement of Athlone which is part of the Midlands Linked Gateway. The population allocation ... does not include 50% overzoning or residential reserve, which will facilitate significantly higher population growth should the requirement for such development arise over the period of this plan.”*

### 5.2.1 Development Strategy for Residential Development

The Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP 2010 – 2016 identified approximately 157 Ha of lands for residential development over three phases for the area (i.e. 36.89 Ha for the lifetime of the Plan, 53.57 Ha for years 6 to 15, and 66.91Ha for years 12 to 33) – more than twice that required in the lifetime of the Plan to 2022 and 10 times that required if one assessed the figure globally. Development of this extent could accommodate a total population over the three phases of 7850 persons, which almost doubles the population of the LAP area.<sup>4</sup> This would be unsustainable and would give rise to deficiencies in servicing such a large population increase, as well as being inconsistent with the area's growth rate and the current economic climate.

The Council will maintain a Vacant Site Register and implement the Vacant Site Levy as required by the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015, as a mechanism to stimulate site activation in urban areas, which is intended to “bring underutilised vacant sites and buildings into beneficial use, ensuring more sustainable urban development and an efficient return on state investment in enabling infrastructure.”<sup>5</sup>

The site activation measure aims to encourage the release of zoned lands at key locations in order to stimulate development, deliver housing at appropriate locations, and, stimulate the regeneration of vacant urban sites.

Therefore, the DECLG's 'sequential approach', as outlined earlier in this section, has been used to identify suitable lands for new residential development in this Local Area Plan. The Development Strategy has taken into consideration:

- The population targets and residential units required over the period 2016-2022;
- The additional household formations outlined in the Core Strategy of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020;
- The average number of dwellings per hectare in the LAP area, calculated at 20 units per Ha;
- Vacancy rates, permitted residential development and unfinished units in housing estates in the LAP area including those that may or may not have extensions of their planning permissions;
- Whether land is serviced or not;
- The need to consolidate residential and commercial development closer to the 'centre' to avoid unnecessary sprawl and pressure on infrastructure.

The following specific residential zonings are identified in Development Strategy 3 (see Table 1 of Chapter 6 and Map 13 Land Use Zoning):

- (1) New Residential
- (2) Strategic Residential Reserve

<sup>4</sup> The part of the Athlone West Rural DED which covers most of the LAP area recorded a population of 3829 persons in Census 2011 (see Chapter 3).

<sup>5</sup> Circular letter PL6/2015, 31 August 2015.

### (1) New Residential

The lands zoned 'New Residential' (NR) will accommodate new residential development required over the period of the Plan, 2016 to 2022. This will comprise:

- Greenfield sites, the majority of which fall within 750m of the District Centre surrounding SuperValu; and
- Infill development.

New Residential lands represent an area of approximately **23.20 Ha** in total, with the lands identified in accordance with the sequential approach.

### (2) Strategic Residential Reserve

In addition, a Strategic Residential Reserve (SRR) is identified in the Plan. These lands will be developed over the period of the next Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP 2022 – 2028. However, they will also act as a reserve of new residential land, in the event that population growth and demand for housing over the period of this Plan, 2016 - 2022, is greater than estimated and lands zoned for New Residential are fully taken up before the end of this Plan in 2022. These lands comprise:

- Greenfield sites which fall within 750m and 950m of the District Centre surrounding SuperValu ; and,
- Infill development which requires the development of three parcels of land identified as NR in order to commence.

SRR lands represent an area of approximately **3.84 Ha** in total.

Strategic Residential Reserve lands will be suitable for housing development when:

- a) All lands zoned 'New Residential' have been developed; or
- b) All lands zoned 'New Residential' are subject to the grant of planning permission (extant planning permission), and there is demonstrable demand, supported by factual evidence, for further new residential development, within the Plan area.

All lands identified as (1) New Residential and (2) Strategic Residential Reserve have been selected with regard to the sequential approach and represent sustainable development as the lands are serviced.



## 6 LAND USE ZONING FIGURES AND MATRIX

### 6.1 LAND USE ZONING FIGURES

In addition to land zoned for residential, retail, commercial and industrial purposes the plan also zones land for other uses. Table 1 below indicates how it is proposed to zone the remaining land within the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP Boundary (See Map 13 for details).

**Table 1: Proposed zoning areas for the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP**

Zoning	Amount of land zoned	
	Hectares	Acres
Existing Residential	94.00	232.28
New Residential	23.20	57.33
Strategic Residential Reserve	3.84	9.50
District Centre	14.45	35.71
Local Centre	1.62	4.00
Community and Educational Uses	6.66	16.46
Transitional Agriculture	71.67	177.10
Business Enterprise Park/Light Industry and Warehousing	23.33	57.65
Industrial Uses	62.47	154.37
Public Utilities	3.88	9.60
Car parking	0.07	0.17
Recreation and Amenity	12.60	31.14
Leisure Tourism	0.16	0.40
Greenbelt	42.56	105.17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>360.61</b>	<b>891.09</b>

#### 6.1.1 Land Use Zoning Objectives and Matrix

The Land Use Zoning Objectives and Matrix within this section outlines the zoning objectives for each zone identified in the land use zoning map (Map 13). It indicates the use and type of development which is appropriate for each zone. The indication that a proposal is 'permitted in principle' in the Matrix does not imply a grant of permission or that a planning application will be successful, as each planning application will be determined on an individual basis by the Planning Authority. All proposals would be required to be consistent with the development standards and the requirements on public health, traffic safety, residential amenity, heritage, design and visual amenity.

Land uses not listed in the Matrix will be considered on the merits of the individual planning application, having regard to the general policies and zoning objectives for the area and in considering the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. Development proposals should generally be compatible with the Land Use Zoning Matrix.

#### Land Use Zoning Objectives

This plan identifies specific areas for specific types of land use in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development and the Land Use Zoning Maps reflect this detail.

In addition, explanatory maps have been provided which apply specific hatching over the Land Use Zones for "Residential" lands to give effect to the requirements of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015. The hatching applies to lands where the Vacant Site Levy may apply.

Objectives for each of the land use zones are outlined below. It should be noted that there are several which are common and repeated but which are relevant to the land uses proposed. It should also be noted that the objectives as listed are not exhaustive.

<p><b>ER</b></p> <p><b>Existing Residential</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and enhance the residential amenities of existing and new residential communities and provide a high level of services within walking distances of residential developments.</li> <li>• Provide for infill residential development at a density and design appropriate to the area and needs of the community.</li> <li>• Provide for new and improved ancillary social and community services.</li> <li>• Improve accessibility from these areas to town centres.</li> <li>• Provide for appropriately scaled retail facilities, in addition to local community and social facilities, for the immediate community.</li> <li>• Require the inclusion of appropriate open spaces in developments in this zone.</li> </ul>
<p><b>NR / SRR</b></p> <p><b>New Residential / Strategic Residential Reserve</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide for new residential development, including a mix of residential options, as well as appropriate local services and community facilities such as corner shops, recreation and amenity, education and childcare, community and recycling facilities, public transport and renewable energy options.</li> <li>• Preserve the residential amenity of the neighbourhood.</li> <li>• Have regard to the overall heritage of the area.</li> <li>• Require the inclusion of appropriate open spaces in developments in this zone.</li> </ul>
<p><b>DC</b></p> <p><b>District Centre</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a range of retail and non-retail service functions, including social and community functions, at a level which will serve the population of the Plan area, but will not affect the viability and vitality of neighbouring Athlone town.</li> <li>• Purpose built group of shops.</li> <li>• Provide for the development of a mix of commercial/retail uses including a convenience shop(s) such as a supermarket or superstore, comparison shops, non-retail services, such as banks, building societies, restaurants, pharmacies, take away, video/DVD rental, public house, and dental/medical surgery.</li> <li>• Provide for local services such as medical centre, offices, workshops, crèche, petrol station, waste segregation facility (bring bank), launderette, where appropriate, to meet the needs of the community.</li> <li>• Where appropriate, provide accommodation over retail/commercial units, grouped small starter/incubator workshops, craft or service units etc.</li> <li>• Strong building design to provide focal points within mixed-use developments that will add legibility and clarity to the physical structure and layout of the development.</li> <li>• The centre could be developed around a public/focal space, where appropriate</li> <li>• Provide sustainable transport linkages such as public transport, adequate cycle and walkways from the district centre to surrounding residential areas.</li> <li>• Require the inclusion of appropriate open spaces in development in this zone.</li> </ul>
<p><b>LC</b></p> <p><b>Local Centre</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect, provide for and/or improve local centre facilities serving a localised population.</li> <li>• Provide for local services which may typically comprise a newsagent/other small shop, sub-post office etc. of a local nature serving a small, localised catchment population.</li> <li>• Provide for local services such as waste segregation facility (bring bank), ATM, small offices under 100m<sup>2</sup>.</li> <li>• Provide sustainable transport linkages such as public transport, adequate cycle and walkways from local centres to the District Centre and peripheral areas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>CE</b></p> <p><b>Community and Educational Facilities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide for health, welfare, community, education and institutional uses including schools, childcare, community meeting areas, churches, hospitals etc. in close proximity to existing and planned residential communities as well as the other ancillary services such as public services and recycling facilities.</li> <li>• Provide for dual use of community facilities, where possible and appropriate.</li> <li>• Provide for childcare facilities which would also be easily accessible to employees working within the area and can be considered a safe environment for children.</li> </ul>

<p><b>TA</b></p> <p><b>Transitional Agricultural Uses</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserve the character of rural or 'edge areas' and provide for agricultural development as well as other uses not directly associated with agriculture, such as housing for family members, or those with a housing need, tourist related projects such as caravan parks or campsites, and amenity such as playing fields and parks, in order to avoid a sharp transition between the urban edge and primarily agricultural areas.</li> <li>• Prohibit development that would create premature demand for infrastructural services.</li> <li>• Restrict new residential development to essential housing need.</li> <li>• Agricultural diversification will be considered in these areas.</li> <li>• Guard against urban sprawl and ribbon development particularly along the national road network.</li> </ul>
<p><b>BE</b></p> <p><b>Business, Enterprise Park/Light Industry &amp; Warehousing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide for commercial, light industry, warehousing and enterprise units and ancillary uses such as training, education, childcare, financial, cafés, petrol station, fitness centre, parking and recycling facilities.</li> <li>• Prohibit heavy industry and incinerators/thermal treatment plants.</li> <li>• Encourage appropriate scale, density, type and location of development to reduce traffic generated and the demand for travel and sustainable modes of transport such as connections to public transport, walking and cycling networks.</li> <li>• Provide transitional areas with appropriate landscaping where this zone adjoins other land uses.</li> <li>• Provide for appropriate advertising and advertising structures.</li> <li>• Provide for construction and demolition waste to be used as fill, with the associated licensing, prior to development of these sites.</li> <li>• Encourage the use of existing suitable vacant floorspace prior to the development of new floorspace.</li> <li>• Allow for the development of a limited element of retail warehousing at appropriate locations i.e. restricted to the sale of bulky comparison goods, including DIY goods, furniture, carpets, motor accessories, garden products, toys and electrical goods, provided there is no conflict with other policies and objectives of this LAP. This is intended to extend the range and choice of shopping available to residents of the area without diverting trade from existing shops or adversely affecting the vitality and viability of the existing Athlone town centre.</li> </ul>
<p><b>I</b></p> <p><b>Industrial Uses</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reserve lands for the provision of heavy industry.</li> <li>• Provide for manufacturing and service industry, and storage facilities as well as ancillary facilities such as training, education, childcare, financial, parking and recycling facilities and waste disposal options.</li> <li>• Provide for appropriate advertising and advertising structures.</li> <li>• Provide for construction and demolition waste to be used as fill, with the associated licensing, prior to development of these sites.</li> </ul>
<p><b>PU</b></p> <p><b>Public Utilities, Services &amp; Facilities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide for and improve public utilities such as electricity, telecommunications, water, wastewater, gas etc to ensure the long-term sustainability of these services and to meet wider regional and national objectives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>CP</b></p> <p><b>Car parking</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide for car parking as well as other transport facilities such as public transport, tour bus parking etc. at appropriate locations and taking account of through traffic.</li> <li>• Ensure that traffic safety and the car parking requirements are fulfilled.</li> </ul>



<b>RA</b>  <b>Recreation, Amenity &amp; Open Space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserve and improve active and passive recreational public and private open space and provide for new leisure &amp; amenity facilities in the area.</li> <li>• Provide for local amenities and recreational facilities including playing fields and dedicated amenity areas.</li> <li>• Protect the natural amenity, including waterways.</li> <li>• Prevent the loss of existing open space, recreation and sporting grounds.</li> </ul>
<b>LT</b>  <b>Leisure Tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider developments for leisure and recreational based activities as well as appropriately scaled service oriented facilities such as coffee shops, hotel, restaurant(s) and public house(s), etc.</li> <li>• Provide a visual and environmental buffer, where appropriate, to preserve the natural amenity of the area such as alongside waterways, rivers and floodplains.</li> </ul>
<b>GB</b>  <b>Green Belt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect the setting, character and environmental quality of areas of high natural beauty and safeguard their environmental, archaeological and ecological amenities.</li> <li>• Provide a visual and environmental buffer, where appropriate, to preserve the natural amenity of the area such as alongside waterways, rivers and floodplains.</li> <li>• Other than identified green belt lands within existing housing developments, ensure this area is not used to satisfy the open space provision of adjoining housing developments.</li> <li>• Prohibit development which would detract from the visual amenity of the area or result in a loss of recreational open space.</li> </ul>

### **Specific Objectives**

<b><u>Specific Objective 1 (SO1)</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicated on lands zoned for New Residential (NR)</li> <li>• Provides for the potential development of a school following appropriate site assessments.</li> <li>• It should be noted that if this site is deemed appropriate and necessary, additional lands to the rear indicated as Strategic Residential Reserve (SRR) may be required for an adequate site area for the development of such.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Specific Objective 2 (SO2)</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicated on lands zoned for Recreation and Amenity (RA) and District Centre</li> <li>• Provides for the development of a Framework Plan by RCC to be prepared in the first year following the making of this LAP, for all the lands in this area including the adjacent SO3 site, prior to the granting of permission on any of it.</li> <li>• The Framework Plan will provide details of the type of development and layout envisaged for the full site and the adjacent SO 3 site.</li> <li>• Provides for the provision of a publically accessible green space in the form of a public park, with facilities for all age groups, situated within the District Centre.</li> <li>• The provision of such a facility in this central area aims to unite the communities of Monksland and Bellanamullia and will add to a 'sense of place' and central focus for residents of the area. It is envisaged that the park be developed as part of the mixed use development with a mix of soft and hard landscaping to provide a high quality public realm sufficient to announce and make a positive contribution to the district centre environment.</li> <li>• Provides for a mix of retail/commercial and residential units on the District Centre portion of the SO2 lands in the creation of an active frontage which will edge and define the public park with a mix of retail, commercial and residential units at ground floor level constituted of small floorplate, fine grained mixed use blocks of high quality design, providing passive surveillance and opportunities for public interactions within the district centre.</li> </ul>

<p><b><u>Specific Objective 3 (SO3)</u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicated on lands zoned for District Centre (DC)</li> <li>• Provides for the development of a Framework Plan by RCC, to be prepared in the first year following the making of this LAP, for all the lands in this area including the adjacent SO2 site, prior to the granting of permission on any of it.</li> <li>• The Framework Plan will provide details of the type of development and layout envisaged for the full site and the adjacent SO 2 site.</li> <li>• Only appropriate developments that are fine-grained, of high architectural merit and well landscaped will be considered.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Specific Objective 4 (SO4)</u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicated on lands zoned for Business, Enterprise Park/Light Industry and Warehousing</li> <li>• Encourages the development of a Pharmaceutical Hub on the site of the vacant Pharmaplaz development either through completion of the existing development or an appropriate redevelopment of the site.</li> <li>• In order to promote the LAP area for this type of development, appropriate uses will be considered on this site, which could not be considered “heavy industry” but which may not adhere strictly to the use descriptions provided above.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Specific Objective 5 (SO5):</u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicated on lands zoned for ‘Business Enterprise Park/Light Industry &amp; Warehousing’</li> <li>• Provides for the provision of a high quality, low traffic intensity, business/enterprise use or uses, to be developed as part of a unitary plan for the overall zoned land, together with an accessibility strategy which reflects its proximity to a major national road interchange and does not unduly undermine the function or operational capacity of the N6, N6 Junction 13 and associated infrastructure.</li> <li>• The unitary plan shall pertain to the ‘SO5’ lands in their entirety. Responsibility for the preparation of a unitary plan shall rest with any party / parties intending to develop the lands. The unitary plan shall be subject to consultation with and the final agreement of the Planning Authority, prior to the submission of any planning application. Any development proposal on the lands in advance of the completion of a unitary plan shall be considered premature.</li> <li>• Only appropriate developments that are of high architectural merit and make a positive contribution to the character, setting and image of the area will be considered.</li> </ul>

## ZONING MATRIX

The land use zoning matrix details those land uses permitted in principle, open for consideration and not normally permitted, under each use class. It should be noted that this section should be read in conjunction with the development management guidelines and standards outlined in Chapter 8: Development Management and the Built Form of this Plan as well as Chapter 9: Development Management Guidelines and Standards of the RCDP 2014-2020.

### Permitted in Principle = V

A use which is ‘Permitted in Principle’ is generally acceptable subject to the normal planning process and compliance with the relevant policies and objectives, standards and requirements set out in the Plan.

### Open for Consideration = O

A use which is ‘Open for Consideration’ may be permitted where the Planning Authority is satisfied it is compatible with the policies and objectives for the zone, will not conflict with the permitted, existing or adjoining land uses and conforms with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

### Not Normally Permitted = X

A use which is ‘Not Normally Permitted’ is one which will not be considered by the Planning Authority except in exceptional circumstances. This may be due to its perceived effect on existing and permitted uses,

its incompatibility with the policies and objectives contained in this Plan or the fact that it may be inconsistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

### Other Uses

Proposed land uses not listed in the Land Use Zoning Matrix will be considered on an individual basis with regard to the general policies and zoning objectives for the area including the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. All zones should be considered as mixed development zones, with a primary use/uses but not necessarily excluding other development that in the opinion of the Planning Authority are necessary for the vitality and proper development of the area.

### Established Use

Many established uses exist in locations where they do not correspond to the designated land use zoning objective of the area as set out in the Plan. Improvement works to established premises may be permitted where the proposed development would not be injurious to the amenities of the area and is consistent with proper planning and sustainable development.

### Transitional Areas

While the zoning objectives indicate the different uses permitted in each zone, it is important to avoid abrupt transitions in scale and use at the boundary of adjoining land use zones. In these areas it is necessary to avoid developments that would be detrimental to amenity, for example, in zones abutting residential areas, particular attention will be paid to the uses, scale and density and appearance of development proposals, as well as to landscaping and screening proposals in order to protect the amenities of residents. It is particularly important to include buffer zones between land zoned as Existing and New Residential, and Industrial or Business, Enterprise Park/Light Industry and Warehousing.

### Non-conforming Uses

Throughout the Plan area there are uses that do not conform to the zoning objectives. These may include uses that were in existence on 1 October 1964 that subsequently received planning permission or have no permission and may not be the subject of enforcement proceedings.

The improvement of premises accommodating non-conforming uses, including residential properties, will generally be permitted where the development does not seriously injure the amenities of the area or result in a concentration of development (subject to the provisions and requirements of the Planning and Development Acts).

The extension of premises accommodating non-conforming uses, including residential properties, will be considered on their merits and may be permitted where the development does not seriously injure the amenities of the area and is otherwise in accordance with the proper planning and development of the area.

### Constrained Land Use

The principle of 'Constrained Land Use' will apply to existing non-Greenbelt lands which fall within Flood Risk Zones A or B (as identified on Map 8). Within such areas, new development will be limited, although there will be a recognition that existing development uses within such areas may require small scale development. Please refer to Chapter 7, Section 7.4 'Flood Risk and Protection' and Appendix 5: 'Advice for Development within Constrained Land Use Zones' for further detail.

**Land Use Zoning Matrix**

<b>DC</b>	District Centre
<b>ER</b>	Existing Residential
<b>NR</b>	New Residential
<b>SRR</b>	Strategic Residential Reserve
<b>LC</b>	Local Centre
<b>BE</b>	Business, Enterprise Park/Light Industry & Warehousing
<b>I</b>	Industrial Uses
<b>CP</b>	Car parking
<b>PU</b>	Public Utilities, Services & Facilities
<b>CE</b>	Community & Educational Facilities
<b>RA</b>	Recreation, Amenity & Open Space
<b>GB</b>	Greenbelt
<b>LT</b>	Leisure Tourism
<b>TA</b>	Transitional Agricultural Use

USE	DC	ER	NR/SRR	LC	BE	I	CP	PU	CE	RA	GB	LT	TA
Abattoir <sup>1</sup>	O	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	O
Advertisements and Advertising Structures (e.g. permanent large billboards)	√	X	X	√	√	√	O	O	O	O <sup>2</sup>	X	O	X
Agricultural Buildings	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O
Allotments <sup>3</sup>	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	O
Amusement arcade	√	X	X	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
Apartments	O	√	√	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
Bank / Building Society / ATM	√	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	X
Betting Office	√	O	O	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Boarding Kennels	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O
Bring Banks	√	O	O	√	√	√	O	X	O	O	X	X	O
Café	√	X	O	√	O*	O*	X	X	O	√	X	√*	O
Caravan Park-Holiday	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O <sup>4</sup>	X	X	√	O
Caravan Park-Residential	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	O	O
Car Dismantler / Scrap yard	X	X	X	X	O	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Car Park	√	O	O	√	√	√	√	O	O	O	O*	O	O
Car Park Multi Storey	O	X	X	X	O	O	√	O	O	X	X	O	X
Cash and Carry / Wholesale Outlet	O	X	X	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cemetery	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	O	√	O	X	X	O
Childcare Facilities (Crèche/ Nursery)	√	√	√	√	O*	X	X	X	√	X	X	O*	O
Cultural / Community Use <sup>5</sup> e.g. Garda Station, Fire Station, Ambulance Service	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	√	O	X	O	O
Civic Amenity Site	X	X	X	X	√	√	X	√	O	X	X	X	O

<sup>1</sup> Must be small in town centre/district centre where serving a butchers shop

<sup>2</sup> For sporting clubs

<sup>3</sup> Open for consideration on a temporary basis on all undeveloped lands

<sup>4</sup> Temporary overnight use

<sup>5</sup> Includes Class 10 & 11 uses, page 199, Planning and Development Regulations 2001

USE	DC	ER	NR/SRR	LC	BE	I	CP	PU	CE	RA	GB	LT	TA
Conference Centre	√	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	X
Construction and Demolition (C&D) Landfill <sup>6</sup>	X	O	O	O	√	√	√	O	O	X	X	O	O
Disco /Nightclub	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
Doctor / Dentist / Medical and Related Consultants / Veterinary Surgery	√	O	O	√	√	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	X
Drive-through Restaurant	O	X	X	O	O	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	X
Educational Facilities	√	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	√	X	X	O*	O
Electricity generation / power plant	X	X	X	X	O	√	X	O	X	X	X	X	O
Funeral Home	O	X	O	O	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Garden Centre / Garden Shop	√	X	X	√	√	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	√
Guesthouse / Hostel	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	√	O
Halting Site / Group Housing	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hazardous Waste Depot	X	X	X	X	O	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hazardous Waste Processing	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Heavy Vehicle Park	X	X	X	X	O	√	O	O	X	X	X	X	X
Holiday Home – Short term lettings	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	X
Hospital	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X	X	X
Hotel / Motel	√	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	X
ICT Masts	X	X	X	X	O	√	X	O	X	O	X	O	O
Industry-Extractive	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Industry-Heavy <sup>7</sup>	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	O	X	X	X	X	X
Industry-Light <sup>8</sup>	X	X	X	X	√	√	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Leisure Centre / Health Spa	√	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	O	O	X	√	X
Mart / Co-op	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	O

<sup>6</sup> Subject to government guidelines on Flood Risk Management

<sup>7</sup> As defined in Part 1 and those above the threshold in Part II of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001.

<sup>8</sup> As defined in Article 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001.

USE	DC	ER	NR/SRR	LC	BE	I	CP	PU	CE	RA	GB	LT	TA
Motor Sales Outlet / Showroom	√	X	X	O	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Offices less than 100m <sup>2</sup>	√	O	O	O	O	O*	X	X	O	X	X	O*	X
Offices 100m <sup>2</sup> to 1000m <sup>2</sup>	√	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Offices over 1000m <sup>2</sup>	√	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Open Air Market	O	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	O	O	X	O	O
Park and Ride Facility	X	X	O	X	√	√	√	X	O	X	X	X	O
Petrol Station	√	X	X	√	√	√	O	X	X	X	X	X	O
Place of Public Worship	√	√	√	O	X	X	X	X	√	X	X	X	O
Plant / tool hire	O	X	O	O	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	O
Public House	√	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
Recycling Facility e.g. Composting, waste recovery etc.	X	X	X	X	O	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Residential	√	√	√	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	O***
Residential (Institutional)	O	O	√	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Restaurant	√	O	O	√	O*	X	X	X	O*	O*	X	√	X
Retail Warehouse e.g. bulky goods such as furniture	X	X	X	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Rural Industry-Food processing	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	O
Science and Technology Based Enterprise (Large scale)	X	X	X	X	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Service Garage < 100m <sup>2</sup> excluding sales and storage	O	X	X	O	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Shop – Comparison	√	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	X
Retail Park	√	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Retail warehouse	X	X	X	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X



USE	DC	ER	NR/SRR	LC	BE	I	CP	PU	CE	RA	GB	LT	TA
Warehouse clubs	X	X	X	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Factory Shop	O	X	X	√	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Factory outlet centre	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Shop – Convenience Outlet	√	O	O	√	X	X	X	X	O*	X	X	O	X
Shop - Supermarket	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Shop - Superstore	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Small Scale Manufacturing (e.g. framing)	O	O	O	O	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	O
Sports Fields	X	O	√	O	O	X	X	X	√	√	X	O	O
Take-away (not drive thru)	√	X	X	O	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	O*	X
Transport Depot	X	X	X	X	O	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X
Veterinary Surgery	√	X	X	O	√	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Water-based recreational / cultural activities	O	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	√	√	X	√	O

**Note:**

\* If ancillary to main use, will be permitted in principle.

\*\* Exclusively residential proposals in Core Town Centre/District Centre zones will not normally be permitted.

\*\*\* Open to consideration in accordance with the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines (2005).



## 7 POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

Chapters 1 to 4 of this Plan identify the current profile of the area, and the challenges and opportunities facing it. Chapter 5 provides a Vision and Development Strategy outlining the way forward. This Chapter, and the zoning objectives and matrix outlined in the previous Chapter, give effect to the Vision and Development Strategy outlined in Chapter 5.

### 7.1 ROLE OF MONKSLAND/BELLANAMULLIA

The Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area is identified in the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014 – 2020 as a Tier 2 Special Category Settlement. It “is included within Tier 2 of the Settlement Hierarchy given its population and status in terms of employment and service provision. It is envisaged that Monksland/Bellanamullia will develop as part of a larger settlement (Athlone town) and in recognition of this distinction from the ‘Key Towns’ within Tier 2, Monksland/Bellanamullia is assigned the designation of a Special Category settlement within Tier 2 of the Settlement Hierarchy, due to these external influences.”<sup>1</sup>

The following policies and objectives will assist in the appropriate development of the area over the next six years, in a local and county context.

### 7.2 INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

#### 7.2.1 New Proposals

##### Roads Infrastructure

The importance of road transportation, with regard to facilitating movement within and through the LAP area, is recognised. Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix 2 detail both the planned motorway /national primary roads and national secondary roads projects relating to the LAP area, as detailed in the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014 – 2020. Table 3 provides a list of non-national road improvements for the years 2016 – 2022, envisaged for the area, subject to funding. These aim to improve the quality of the roads infrastructure as well as the connections within and through the area.

##### Pedestrian and Cycle Network

The Plan recognises the importance of increasing the proportion of journeys made by public transport, as well as considering the needs of pedestrians and cyclists in the area. In order to promote a change from reliance on use of the private car, and instead encourage walking and cycling, the Plan seeks to promote increased linkages between residential areas and the core of the LAP area and Athlone town. The provision of new footpaths and cycleways on appropriate roads is a key element. Improvements to the Old and New Tuam Roads in the last number of years have focused on improvements of this nature.

#### 7.2.2 Roads and Transportation Strategy

The **Roads and Transportation Strategy** for Monksland/Bellanamullia aims to:

- Provide a safe, efficient and integrated movement network which will improve, upgrade and sustainably expand the road network to accommodate current and potential future growth within the LAP area.
- Improve the quality of the roads infrastructure as well as the connections within and through the area.
- Provide safe and adequate access, and increased linkages between residential areas and the core of the LAP area and Athlone town without compromising the existing network.

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<sup>1</sup> (RCDP, 2014: p 22)

- Provide adequate traffic management and parking facilities.
- Facilitate appropriate public transportation to and from the area.
- Provide safe pedestrian and cycle routes to serve the existing population as well as future growth in the area.
- Support the development of the Galway to Dublin Cycleway, the first inter-city greenway in a proposed national network.

#### Policies for Public Transport

##### **Policy 1**

Support the provision of the full network of public transport services and facilities within the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area.

##### **Policy 2**

Have regard to the recommendations contained within the document *Smarter Travel - A sustainable transport future: A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020*, as well as the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* (2013) and implement within the Plan area as appropriate.

#### Objectives for Public Transport

##### **Objective 1**

Investigate the feasibility of providing a transport node within the LAP area which would cater for amongst others, bus shelters and associated facilities for long haul bus operators.

##### **Objective 2**

Continue to develop a pedestrian and cycle-friendly environment within the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area, subject to resources. This will include the provision of facilities outlined in Table 3 in Appendix 2.

##### **Objective 3**

Investigate the feasibility of providing a footpath/cyclepath from the Monksland area to the St Josephs College, Summerhill along the R466, as well as along the Tuam Road from “River Village” to “Bannons” Shop.

##### **Objective 4**

Facilitate the tri-Athlone cycling event which travels through the LAP area and maximise tourism benefits for the area.

#### Policies for Roads and Transportation

##### **Policy 3**

Ensure that all development proposals in the area fulfil traffic safety and car parking requirements.

##### **Policy 4**

Provide a safe and modern road network within the LAP area which is compatible with the pattern of land use and with through traffic.

##### **Policy 5**

Increase the capacity of existing local road and pedestrian network in the area. Create improved transport links between Monksland/South Roscommon area and the town of Athlone.

##### **Policy 6**

Regulate, control and improve road signage within the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area.

**Policy 7**

Ensure adequate circulation and parking facilities to serve developments in accordance with the minimum car parking standards set out under the development management guidelines and standards in Chapter 8 of this LAP and Chapter 9 of the RCDP 2014-2020.

**Policy 8**

Consider cross-over usage of car parking where many different uses of buildings are in place, and where appropriate, to maximise land usage.

**Policy 9**

Ensure all planning applications for new development that may affect the national road network shall be accompanied by a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) including reference to the TII Traffic & Transport Assessment Guidelines. A TIA shall ensure the provision of a safe and convenient movement network that:

- caters for the future orderly and sustainable expansion of the LAP area;
- has adequate capacity to accommodate current and expected future traffic volumes from existing and proposed developments anticipated within the lifetime of the Plan;
- will guide future development on these lands along an appropriate internal circulation network for vehicular, pedestrian and cycling movement; and,
- will facilitate appropriate public transportation to and from the town.

**Policy 10**

Assess all development proposals that access onto National routes in accordance with the policies set down in the *Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020* and the provisions of the *DECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012)*.

**Policy 11**

- (a) Require a Road Safety Audit (RSA) for all development that incorporates a proposal for a new access to a national road and where the development may give rise to a significant increase in traffic on an existing access to a national road.
- (b) Require a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) where a development gives rise to a significant increase in traffic.
- (c) Regarding the above, reference should be made to the TII Design Manual for Roads and Bridges HD19/12.

**Policy 12**

To encourage the use of electrically operated cars and bicycles, in line with Council and National Policy, non-residential developments shall provide facilities for battery operated cars to be recharged at a rate of 10% of the total car parking spaces (metered-fast charging 220-240V, 32A three phase).

**Objectives for Roads and Transportation****Objective 5**

Facilitate the programmed improvement to the National Road Network as per Tables 1 and 2 of Appendix 2, subject to funding.

**Objective 6**

Carry out improvement works on non-national roads as per Table 3 of Appendix 2, subject to funding.

**Objective 7**

Encourage the development of link roads within the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area to open up lands and link communities.

**Objective 8**

Ensure that development lands are not “cut-off” by reserving access points from public/private roads to these lands within the LAP area and thus allow their development potential to be realised.

## 7.3 WATER SERVICES

### 7.3.1 Water Services Strategy

The **Water Services Strategy** aims to:

- Work closely with Irish Water to identify and facilitate the timely delivery of water services required to realise the development objectives of this Plan.
- Ensure that the network and its provision is efficient, cost effective and environmentally appropriate, and that it protects public health.
- Wherever practicable, services and infrastructure should be delivered in an integrated manner prior to the development of areas, in co-operation with Irish Water.

#### Policies in relation to Water Services

##### Policy 13

In conjunction with Irish Water, continue the development and upgrading of the water supply so as to ensure that an adequate, sustainable supply of piped water of suitable quality is available for domestic, commercial, industrial and other uses (e.g. fire safety) for the sustainable development of the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area

##### Policy 14

Have regard to the Groundwater Protection Plans for the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area, and encourage and promote compliance with all relevant EU, National and Local Guidelines and Regulations concerning water quality for the county.

##### Policy 15

Encourage the use of rainwater harvesting systems on suitable sites within the LAP area.

##### Policy 16

Permit development only in instances where there is sufficient capacity in the public water and wastewater infrastructure.

##### Policy 17

Protect surface water and groundwater resources and their associated habitats and species including fisheries and in particular Annex II listed species.

##### Policy 18

Encourage and promote compliance with the *Water Framework Directive 2000*; Groundwater Source Protection Zones document for the *South Roscommon Regional Water Supply Scheme* (GSI, April 2003); the *European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009* (SI No. 272 of 2009); as well as any National and EU Regulations concerning water quality for the County.

##### Policy 19

Support the delivery of the objectives of Irish Water's *Water Services Strategic Plan* (Draft 2015).

#### Objectives in relation to Water Services

##### Objective 9

Implement the *European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations (No. 2) 2007* and ensure, in conjunction with Irish Water, that water supplies comply with the 48 parameters identified in these Regulations.

**Objective 10**

Implement the relevant recommendations contained within the River Basin Management Plans and associated Programme of Measures for the Shannon International River Basin District and the Western River Basin District, in order to facilitate the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, in co-operation with Irish Water.

**Objective 11**

Implement the Water Conservation Programme of Irish Water and RCC, which addresses leakage in existing water distribution systems.

**Objective 12**

The Council, in conjunction with Irish Water, shall have regard to the EPA (2012) publication *The Provision and Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland - A Report for the Year 2011* (and any subsequent update) in the establishment and maintenance of water sources in the county.

**Objective 13**

The Council, in conjunction with Irish Water, shall undertake recommendations made by the EPA arising from any failure to meet drinking water standards and any enlistment on the EPA's Remedial Action List.

**Objective 14**

All proposals for the development of an upgrade to the water supply system will be screened for Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and where significant impacts are identified, a Natura Impact Statement will be prepared.

**Objective 15**

Ensure that all fire hydrants are clearly identified, maintained and marked and that any that have been surfaced over be unearthed and tested on a regular basis.

## 7.4 FLOOD RISK AND PROTECTION

### 7.4.1 Flood Risk and Protection Strategy

The **Flood Risk and Protection Strategy** aims to:

- Avoid flooding in areas at risk of flooding, by not permitting development in these areas, particularly floodplains, unless there are wider sustainability grounds for the development and the flood risk can be managed at an acceptable level without increasing flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reducing the overall flood risk;
- Adopt a sequential approach to flood risk management based on avoidance, reduction and then mitigation of flood risk as the overall framework for assessing the location of new development in the development planning process; and
- Incorporate flood risk assessment into the process of making decisions on planning applications and planning appeals,

### 7.4.2 Constrained Land Use Zoning Strategy

The **Constrained Land Use Zoning Strategy** aims to facilitate the appropriate management and sustainable use of flood risk areas.

This constrained zoning derives from the recommendations set out in the SFRA undertaken for the LAP. This constrained zoning limits new development, while recognising that existing development uses within these zones may require modifications and/or extension. Such proposals may be deemed acceptable provided that it has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, that the development



will not give rise to significant flooding issues, will not obstruct important flow paths, introduce a significant additional number of people into flood risk areas or entail the storage of hazardous substances.

Development proposals within this zone shall be accompanied by a detailed Flood Risk Assessment, carried out in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines & Circular PL 2/2014 (or as updated), which shall assess the risks of flooding associated with the proposed development.

Proposals shall only be considered where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, that they would not have adverse impacts or impede access to a watercourse, floodplain or flood protection and management facilities, or increase the risk of flooding to other locations. The nature and design of structural and non-structural flood risk management measures required for development in such areas will also be demonstrated, so as to ensure that flood hazard and risk will not be increased. Measures proposed shall follow best practice in the management of health and safety for users and residents of the development. As such, the development proposed should include measures to ensure that residual risks can be managed to an acceptable level.

With regard to climate change, Strategic Flood Risk Assessments and site-specific Flood Risk Assessments shall provide information on the implications of climate change with regard to flood risk in relevant locations. The 2009 OPW Draft Guidelines on 'Assessment of Potential Future Scenarios for Flood Risk Management' (or any superseding document) shall be consulted with to this effect.

#### **Policies in relation to Flood Risk & Protection**

##### **Policy 20**

Support, in co-operation with the OPW, the implementation of the *EU Flood Risk Directive* (2007/60/EC), the *Flood Risk Regulations* (SI No. 122 of 2010), the DEHLG (now the DECLG) and OPW *Guidelines for Planning Authorities, The Planning System and Flood Risk Management* (Nov 2009), updated/superseding legislation or Departmental Guidelines and any future outputs from the Shannon International Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Programme, once finalised.

##### **Policy 21**

Protect water bodies and watercourses from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include protection buffers in riverine and wetland areas as appropriate. Promote the sustainable management and uses of water bodies and avoid, where possible, culverting or realignment of these features.

##### **Policy 22**

Protect Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B from inappropriate development and direct developments/land uses into the appropriate Flood Zone in accordance with the *Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2009) (or any superseding document). Any proposal for development/land use which is inappropriate within the Flood Zone must be accompanied by a Development Management Justification Test and site-specific FRA in accordance with the criteria set out under the *Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2009).

##### **Policy 23**

Require all new large scale developments to provide 'Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems' (SUDS) as part of their development proposals.

##### **Policy 24**

Require a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) for all planning applications in areas at risk of flooding, including developments that may be appropriate to the particular Flood Zone. Site specific FRAs shall consider and provide information on the implication of climate change with regard to flood risk in relevant locations.

**Policy 25**

Require a Flood Risk (Impact) Assessment and Management Plan for all significant development impacting on flood risk areas to identify potential loss of floodplain storage and including details of how it would be offset in order to minimise impact on the river flood regime.

**Policy 26**

Ensure that existing wetland habitats are adequately protected, managed and where appropriate enhanced where flood protection/management measures are necessary.

**Policy 27**

Any proposals aimed at alleviating flooding will be subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive.

**Objectives in relation to Flood Risk & Protection**
**Objective 16**

In conjunction with Irish Water, and where technically feasible and economically viable, improve and extend the surface water disposal infrastructure to serve all zoned areas, in order to facilitate development.

**Objective 17**

Ensure the implementation of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines, including Circular PL 2/2014 (or any updated/superseding document) in relation to flood risk management within the Plan Area.<sup>2</sup>

**Objective 18**

Within the Monksland/Bellanamullia LAP area, RCC shall:

- Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding;
- Avoid new developments increasing flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface run-off;
- Ensure effective management of residual risks for development permitted in floodplains;
- Avoid unnecessary restriction of national, regional or local economic and social growth;
- Improve the understanding of flood risk amongst relevant stakeholders;
- Ensure that the requirements of EU and national law in relation to the natural environment and nature conservation are complied with at all stages of flood risk management; and
- Monitor and maintain surface water drainage infrastructure, in collaboration with relevant authorities.

**Objective 19**

Liaise with the OPW on all issues involving river drainage and flood relief, especially when dealing with any applications in the vicinity of important drainage channels.

**Objective 20**

Where technically feasible and economically viable, improve and extend the surface water disposal infrastructure to serve all zoned areas, in order to facilitate development

<sup>2</sup> Implementation of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines, including Circular PL2/2014 includes the following approach:

- (a) Avoid, reduce and/or mitigate the risk of flooding within flood risk areas, including fluvial, pluvial and groundwater flooding.
- (b) Development proposals in areas where there is an identified or potential risk of flooding or that could give rise to a risk of flooding elsewhere may be required to carry out a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment and justification test where appropriate.

## 7.5 WASTEWATER SERVICES

### 7.5.1 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)

The Council will have regard to the guidance concerning Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) designed to manage storm water run-off in urban areas.

### 7.5.2 Wastewater Services Strategy

The **Wastewater Services Strategy** aims to:

- Ensure that there are adequate services and infrastructure associated with wastewater collection, treatment and disposal to cater for development within current and future development envelopes.
- Ensure that the network and its provision is efficient, cost effective, environmentally appropriate and that it protects public health. Wherever practicable, services and infrastructure should be delivered in an integrated manner prior to the development of areas.

#### Policies in relation to Wastewater Collection and Treatment

##### Policy 28

Comply with the relevant provisions of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 and 2004 and the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007.

##### Policy 29

In conjunction with Irish Water, implement relevant recommendations set out in the EPA (2014) publication Focus on Urban Waste Water Discharges in Ireland 2013 (and any subsequent update).

##### Policy 30

Facilitate, in conjunction with Irish Water, the provision of an adequate wastewater collection, treatment and disposal system for Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area to serve existing and future populations in accordance with the *Water Framework Directive 2000*, and *EU Urban Wastewater Directive* and in accordance with the EPA Discharge Licence.

##### Policy 31

Support the protection of groundwater resources and dependent wildlife/habitats in accordance with the *Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC* and the *European Communities Environmental Objectives (groundwater) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010)* or any updated legislation.

##### Policy 32

Ensure that all new developments have and are provided with satisfactory drainage systems in the interests of public health and to avoid the pollution of the ground and surface waters.

#### Objectives in relation to Wastewater Collection and Treatment

##### Objective 21

RCC shall adopt the following approach when considering development applications:

- Reduce the use of multiple private pumping stations.
- Where technically feasible and economically viable, existing and future pumping stations should come under the control of RCC and IW.
- Development shall be phased in such a way as to only allow areas that can connect into the sewerage network directly by gravity to be developed.

**Objective 22**

Explore the feasibility and appropriateness of entering into Public-Private Partnerships for the provision of necessary infrastructure, in co-operation with Irish Water.<sup>3</sup>

**Objective 23**

Comply with all relevant legislation and policy of government concerning wastewater provision and discharge.

**Objective 24**

Any proposals for the development of an upgrade of the waste water treatment plant and waste water network will be subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with *Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive*.

**Objective 25**

Where technically feasible and economically viable, improve and extend the wastewater collection, treatment and disposal infrastructure to serve all zoned areas, in co-operation with Irish Water, in order to facilitate development

**Objective 26**

In currently unserved areas, strictly control the siting of septic tanks and proprietary treatment systems and promote public awareness on the issue of correct installation, monitoring and maintenance in the interests of the protection of the environment and public health.

## 7.6 WASTE MANAGEMENT

As well as having regard to the new regional waste management plan, the *Connaught-Ulster Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021*, once it is adopted, the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP will also have regard to all legislative, national and regional documents and objectives in the implementation of waste management.

### 7.6.1 Waste Management Strategy

The Waste Management Strategy aims to protect the local environment and quality of life of its citizens by facilitating:

- Adequate collection and disposal of domestic, commercial, industrial and other waste;
- The provision of a comprehensive programme of education and information on waste management, waste prevention and minimisation, and litter;
- The reuse and recycling of materials within the LAP boundary; and,
- A good working relationship with Tidy Towns Committees, Community Groups and Schools around the issues of waste, recycling, and litter.

<b>Policies in relation to Waste Management</b>
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**Policy 33**

Encourage waste reduction and recycling in accordance with the National Environmental Awareness Campaign.

**Policy 34**

Promote the increased re-use and recycling of materials from waste sources and co-operate with local retailers and residents' associations in managing collection points for recycling goods.

<sup>3</sup> Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is basically just a different method of procuring public services and infrastructure by combining the best of the public and private sectors with an emphasis on value for money and delivering quality public services. More information on PPP is available on the Irish Government Public Private Partnership Website <http://www.ppp.gov.ie>

**Policy 35**

Require all new housing development (with 30 houses or more) to provide recycling facilities at designated areas designed to a high standard in accordance with the *Connaught-Ulster Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021*, when finalised.

**Policy 36**

Ensure that all new developments, particularly those including apartments, have adequate provision for management of waste, which includes sufficient receptacles for occupiers.

**Policy 37**

Promote the increased re-use and recycling of materials from waste sources and co-operate with local retailers and residents' associations in managing collection points for recycling goods.

**Objectives in relation to Waste Management**
**Objective 27**

Ensure the implementation of any national and regional waste management planning processes so that priority waste issues are addressed e.g. the implementation of segregated brown bin collection for bio-waste, mentioned in the DEHLG (now the DECLG) *Circular WPPR 17/08, National Strategy on Biodegradable waste*.

**Objective 28**

Implement the objectives of *Connaught-Ulster Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021*, and promote, where appropriate, the DEHLG (now the DECLG) *Best Practice Guidelines on the preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction & Demolition Projects*, July 2006.

**Objective 29**

Work with and assist local community groups and schools in litter prevention and control, and support initiatives such as the Tidy Towns, Tidy Estates, Tidy Gardens, Tidy Graveyard, Golden Mile, Green Schools Programme and schools anti-litter awareness competitions.

**Objective 30**

Facilitate the upgrading and maintenance of waste management facilities in the area, including bring banks and litter bins, and extend the bring bank network where appropriate to all new housing developments. In addition, consider the relocation of existing bins at the Monksland Community Centre to the DC zoning in proximity to SuperValu.

**Objective 31**

Developments shall ensure that adequate soil protection measures are undertaken where appropriate. Require the undertaking of appropriate investigations to determine the nature and extent of any soil and/or groundwater contamination and the risks associated with site development work, where Brownfield development is to occur within the Plan area.

## 7.7 ENERGY

### 7.7.1 New Proposals

#### The Electricity Network

The *Eirgrid Transmission Development Plan 2012-2022* identifies two projects in County Roscommon. The first is the extension of the 220kv network from Flagford to a substation at Srananagh in Sligo. The second is the potential development of a 400kv overhead line between Bellacorick in County Mayo and Flagford Station in County Roscommon as part of the Grid West Project. The Grid West Project aims to capitalise on the renewable energy potential of the West Region i.e. wind, wave and tidal energy in order to meet Ireland's national goal of 40% of electricity demand from renewable energy by 2020. The Council recognises that the development of secure and reliable electricity transmission infrastructure is a key factor for supporting economic development and attracting investment to the area.

#### The Gas Network

The Dublin – Galway Gas pipeline connects into the national grid and will supply natural gas to thousands of homes and businesses in the Midlands and west of Ireland. The gas network in Athlone currently ties in at the western end of the New Tuam Road Bridge and large parts of Monksland have been recently connected. The gas network now extends as far as the Forest Mill housing estate in the west, to River Village in the south, as far as Oakdale in the east and to Sli na Choiste in the north.

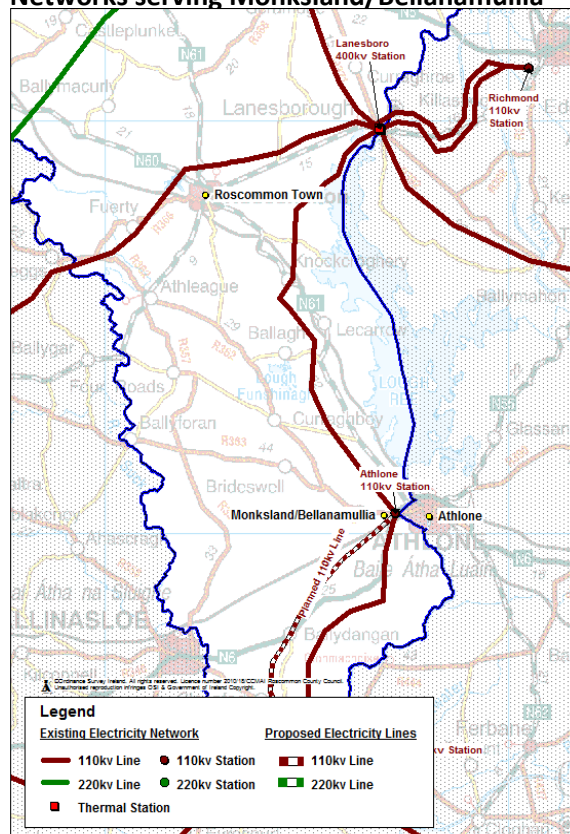
In addition, planning permission has been granted for a gas turbine power station in the LAP area.<sup>4</sup>

#### Renewable Energy

It is an objective of the *Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020* to implement Government Policy on limiting emissions of greenhouse gases and encourage the development of renewable energy sources in an appropriate and sustainable manner. Wind energy is the main renewable energy source with potential for development at the moment.

RCC supports the reduction of energy consumption and the Environment Section of RCC is currently engaged in the process of energy mapping with a view to reducing energy consumption within the organisation itself. In addition, the preparation of a Climate Change Strategy is ongoing. The policies and objectives identified below will ensure that the production of greenhouse gases will be significantly reduced by either the construction of energy efficient homes or the increased use of renewable energy.

**Figure 7.1: Existing and Proposed Electricity Networks serving Monksland/Bellanamullia**



<sup>4</sup> Planning permission was granted (until November 2013; extended to November 2018) for a 100 MW open cycle gas turbine power station with a turbine hall 8.75m high, maintenance bay, exhaust stack 20m high, air vent 20m high, air cooler, water cooler, power control module, main and auxiliary transformers, bunded fuel oil tank 1800m, raw water tank 580m, water treatment module, treated water tank 580m, firewater module, tanker unloading area, office/workshop and associated site development works. No development has taken place as yet.



### 7.7.2 Energy Strategy

The **Energy Strategy** aims to:

- Encourage the development and upgrading of energy infrastructure and services within the LAP area to support the proposed growth in economic activity and population within the development envelope.
- Ensure that the network and its provision is efficient, cost effective, environmentally appropriate and that it protects public health.
- Deliver services and infrastructure in an integrated manner prior to the development of areas, wherever practicable.
- Encourage the development and use of renewable energy sources within the LAP area.
- Support the aims of sustainable energy use and conservation in building design and construction.

#### Policies in relation to Energy Supply

##### Policy 38

Promote the implementation of the following policy documents, amongst others:

- White Paper on Energy Policy Framework, 2007 - 2020, *Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland*.
- *National Climate Change Strategy*, 2000, by facilitating measures to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases within the LAP area.
- *Energy Performance of Buildings Directive* (Directive 2002/91/EC) as transposed into Irish Law in 2006.
- *National Spatial Strategy*, in so far as it aims to deliver reliable and effective energy systems such as electricity and gas in order to power industry and services.

##### Policy 39

Safeguard any strategic energy infrastructure corridors which become evident, from encroachment by other developments which may compromise their provision in the future.

#### Objectives in relation to Energy Supply

##### Objective 32

Co-operate and liaise with statutory and non-statutory providers in order to facilitate energy infrastructure provision, including the development of renewable energy sources at suitable locations.

##### Objective 33

Work in collaboration with Bord Gáis Energy, the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) and other statutory bodies in the provision of a comprehensive gas distribution grid within the LAP area and throughout County Roscommon.

##### Objective 34

Promote the maintenance and upgrading of electricity infrastructure within the LAP area.

##### Objective 35

Contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.



## 7.8 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

### 7.8.1 Telecommunications Strategy

The **Telecommunications Strategy** aims to:

- Achieve a balance between facilitating the provision of telecommunications services in the interests of social and economic progress and sustaining residential amenities including public health as well as maintaining a quality environment.
- Recognise that the provision of broadband to all is essential to furthering the social and economic development of County Roscommon as a whole and promote the upgrading of existing broadband infrastructure and the provision of new fibre optic broadband infrastructure throughout the County.

#### Policies in relation to Telecommunications Infrastructure

##### Policy 40

Support enhanced coverage, further co-ordinated and focused development, and the extension of telecommunications infrastructure including broadband connectivity within the LAP area.

##### Policy 41

Have regard to Government guidelines on telecommunications infrastructure, including *Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures—Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DEHLG<sup>5</sup>, 1996) and any subsequent revisions, as well as the *Landscape Character Assessment* contained within the RCDP 2014-2020.

##### Policy 42

Support all new schemes for the provision of high speed, high quality broadband including the Government's Next Generation Broadband, the National Broadband Scheme, and Broadband for Schools.

#### Objectives in relation to Telecommunications Infrastructure

##### Objective 36

Encourage the provision of broadband, including the provision of electronic courtyards, within developments.

##### Objective 37

Facilitate and encourage shared access for service providers to erect antennae for line of sight broadband access.

##### Objective 38

Support the connection of all businesses and households to high speed broadband within the LAP area.

## 7.9 SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

### 7.9.1 Social and Community Facilities Strategy

The **Social and Community Facilities Strategy** aims to:

- Ensure the provision of necessary community services and facilities.
- Limit new development in urban areas where necessary social infrastructure including, but not limited to, schools and community facilities are unavailable.

<sup>5</sup> Now the DECLG

- Ensure the provision of affordable childcare within the Plan area in consultation with the Roscommon County Childcare Committee and the Health Service Executive.
- Ensure that large-scale residential development provides for, and if necessary leverages, the necessary educational, social, open space and sporting infrastructure commensurate with the scale of development.
- Promote the use of existing buildings and lands to the benefit of the wider community, subject to available resources.
- Ensure that all groups are enabled to participate fully in the life of the community and that language or other barriers are addressed so that everyone has the opportunity to live a full and active life, and to integrate and contribute to community life.

### 7.9.2 Provision of Schools

Table 2 below provides information in relation to the phasing of residential development, which is outlined in Chapter 6 of this plan, as well as educational requirements.

**Table 2: Proposed Educational Provision within the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP\***

Educational Provision	Monksland/Bellanamullia LAP boundary	
	New Residential	Strategic Residential Reserve
Area of land (hectares)*	23.20	3.84
Additional Dwellings (@20 dwellings per hectare)	464	77
Additional population (@2.5 persons per dwelling <sup>[1]</sup> )	1160	192
Additional children of school going age (12% of population)	139	23
Additional Classrooms required (@27 pupils per teacher/class)	5	1
Suggested site size (@0.77 hectares / 1.9 acres for 4-8 classrooms)	Extension of new school	Extension to new school
Additional children of post primary age (8.5% of population)	99	16
Additional Classrooms required (@27 pupils per teacher/class)	4	1
Suggested site size (@4.8 hectares/12 acres for schools of 600-800 pupils)	Extension to existing school just beyond the LAP boundary	Extensions to existing school just beyond the LAP boundary or possibly new school

\* Refer to Table 3: Recommended Residential Zoning in this chapter

Schools should be located on easily accessible sites and applications for education developments will be expected to meet the Council's Standards with regard to car-parking, building design, landscaping and access for people with disabilities. These standards will be applicable whether the proposed development is for a new educational facility or an extension to an existing resource. New facilities should be located, where possible, close to or within the main residential areas in order to reinforce a sense of community and to ensure that walking, cycling and public transport are suitable options.

### 7.9.3 Early Childhood Care and Education Provision

The land use zonings where childcare facilities are 'permitted', 'open for consideration' and 'not normally permitted' are indicated in the Land Use Zoning Matrix in Chapter 6, of this LAP.

### 7.9.4 Health

Roscommon County Council supports proposals for new health facilities within the Monksland/Bellanamullia area provided they are:

<sup>[1]</sup> Figure taken from the RPGs for the West Region 2010 – 2022

- Located within, or close to, the District or Local Centre adjacent to the Community Centre,
- Located on sites which permit access for people with disabilities,
- Accessible to public and private transport; and,
- Located close to or within walking distance of residential development.

In addition, given the amount of vacant commercial buildings in the area, the Council will encourage the use of such buildings for new health and related facilities. The Council will also continue to work alongside key health providers to assist in ensuring adequate local health services in the area and a greater quality of life for all.

#### **Policies for Social and Community Services and Facilities**

##### **Policy 43**

Facilitate the provision of a range of social, recreational and community facilities to meet the needs of all of the area's residents.

##### **Policy 44**

Ensure that social inclusion is an integral part of the design and delivery of all the Council's programmes and services, and ensure effectiveness and efficiency in its delivery.

##### **Policy 45**

Support the multi-functional use of social and community facilities, and provision of buildings and opportunities to maximise the use of existing physical resources/infrastructure within the LAP area.

##### **Policy 46**

Encourage the provision of childcare facilities as an essential part of residential schemes, places of employment such as industrial/business parks, and in close proximity to schools.

##### **Policy 47**

Provide for artistic elements in new and existing development by encouraging the use of the 'percent for art schemes' and other initiatives.

#### **Objectives for Social and Community Services and Facilities**

##### **Objective 39**

Support the delivery of a full range of social, recreational and community facilities to meet the needs of all of the area's residents. Examples are contained in Appendix 1: Community Views of this LAP.

##### **Objective 40**

Encourage the development of appropriate sites for Community and Educational Facilities.

##### **Objective 41**

Facilitate the expansion, location and development of schools by the Department of Education in the LAP area within the lifetime of the plan.

##### **Objective 42**

Support the implementation of the Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, June 2000) and the Roscommon County Childcare Committee and the Health Service Executive in formulating policy to ensure the provision of affordable childcare throughout the county and specifically within the LAP area.

##### **Objective 43**

Liaise with the appropriate health authorities in order to facilitate the accommodation of additional healthcare functions at suitable locations within the LAP area.

**Objective 44**

Explore the possibility and support, together with relevant agencies and government departments, the provision of a permanent Garda station at the Monksland Civic Offices / Community Centre, within the lifetime of this LAP.

**7.10 RECREATION, LEISURE AND TOURISM****7.10.1 Recreation, Leisure and Tourism Strategy**

The **Recreation, Leisure and Tourism Strategy** aims to:

- Promote the development of tourism in the sub-region by capitalising on the location of the LAP in proximity to the Shannon. This will involve co-ordination with neighbouring authorities particularly with regard to joint ventures which can be pursued.
- Protect and support the expansion of existing local recreation, leisure and tourism services and amenities in the area. This would include sports facilities, walking and driving routes, festivals and events, food producers, local establishments, markets, accommodation and tourist attractions.
- Promote the development of complementary new services and amenities, where appropriate, and in particular the use and redevelopment of existing vacant and derelict buildings and land for tourism-related purposes.
- Protect from development the existing public and recreational open space in the area.

**Policies for Recreation, Leisure and Tourism****Policy 48**

Facilitate the development of appropriate new private and public recreation, leisure and tourism infrastructure and facilities and ensure access for all groups of the community.

**Policy 49**

Remove illegal signage and repair and replace existing signage on tourist routes and paths, where necessary and as resources permit.

**Policy 50**

Encourage and support the improvement of access, signage and tourist information services including integrated welcome, directional and interpretative signage.

**Policy 51**

Ensure high standards of architectural and urban design in all new tourist accommodation and facilities.

**Objectives for Recreation, Leisure and Tourism****Objective 45**

Actively support the implementation of the *Roscommon Tourism Strategy 2015* as well as other relevant tourism plans for the area.

**Objective 46**

Engage with development and tourism bodies, including Fáilte Ireland to encourage the provision of adequate recreation and tourism infrastructure and tourist-oriented facilities in and surrounding the area including in print and via digital means, and encouraging hotels to indicate their status as County Roscommon enterprises.

**Objective 47**

Implement, where finances permit, proposals to improve, maintain and establish new areas of amenity, tourism and recreation facilities. In addition, carry out amenity improvements and protect the environment of the area and environs.

**Objective 48**

Work with Fáilte Ireland, the Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and other bodies in developing standardised and branded signage for tourism facilities and tourist attractions in the county and in the area.

**Objective 49**

Facilitate the establishment of Environmental Improvement Schemes to upgrade and enhance the public realm within the LAP area.

**Objective 50**

Engage with Fáilte Ireland, the Arts Council and other relevant bodies to promote and develop the arts and tourism sectors within the county. Within the LAP area this could include;

- The provision of a arts / theatre / cinema space similar to that within Roscommon town

**Objective 51**

Facilitate the development and expansion of off-road walking and cycling trails surrounding the LAP area; and for the development of linkages between existing trails and others in adjoining counties e.g. the Greenway; and support national trail development policy including the Irish Trails Strategy.

**Objective 52**

Support the development of an Integrated Sustainable Regional Tourism Strategy in consultation with relevant statutory/non-statutory bodies and local authorities.

**Policies for Open Space and Sporting Provision**
**Policy 52**

Facilitate the development of a hierarchy of multi-functional active and passive recreational spaces and facilities to provide greater opportunities for recreation and amenity for all ages.

**Policy 53**

Ensure that public open space provided as part of new development is of high quality and designed and finished to ensure its usability, security and cost efficient maintenance.

**Policy 54**

Provide for the needs of young people at suitable locations through supporting youth groups, youth sports and arts activities and providing facilities to encourage the involvement of young people in activities and gatherings.

**Policy 55**

Promote the development of an integrated open space system, consisting of open spaces, vegetation, drainage channels, etc., that will protect and conserve existing environmental designations, fauna and flora and landscape character.

**Policy 56**

Ensure that the different environmental/greenbelt zones identified in the area are adequately protected and that any development in such areas responds appropriately to the sensitivities and significance of the zone.

**Policy 57**

Ensure that fully equipped playgrounds to appropriate standards are provided within all new housing developments of in excess of 20 units. In addition, a hierarchy of useable open spaces and the provision of recreational facilities appropriate to the size of the estate or taken in combination with a number of estates are provided e.g. seating areas, landscaped open spaces, basketball courts, skatepark areas, public parks and playing pitches.

### Objectives for Open Space and Sporting Provision

#### Objective 53

Support the implementation of the County Play Policy in providing for and facilitating play throughout the county.

#### Objective 54

Maintain free of development all those areas designated as greenbelts within the LAP area.

#### Objective 55

Ensure a high quality urban environment which takes the following into consideration:

1. Retention and augmentation of mature vegetation – especially in roadside areas.
2. Improving vegetative screening of the Lough Ree and Cross River systems and associated wetlands.
3. Improving public amenities – by good design and provision of facilities in the public domain.
4. Control and monitoring of material used for fill in authorised development sites.
5. Prevention of unauthorised ‘reclamation’ of wetlands.
6. Prevention of unlicensed discharges – direct or indirect – to surface water systems.

#### Objective 56

Engage with community sporting bodies, private developers and relevant government agencies in facilitating and supporting the development and delivery of sporting facilities in the area, within the lifetime of this Plan, via public private partnership.

## 7.11 BUILT AND NATURAL HERITAGE

### 7.11.1 Built Heritage Strategy

The Built Heritage Strategy aims to preserve and safeguard our architectural and archaeological heritage, and to promote best practice in its conservation and management. It also aims to raise awareness and appreciation of this heritage in order to protect it for future generations.

### Built Heritage Policies

#### Policy 58

Identify, protect and conserve structures (i.e. includes conservation, preservation, and improvement compatible with maintaining the character and interest of the structure), or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or which are listed on the Record of Protected Structures.

#### Policy 59

Ensure that development proposals do not adversely affect the character of a protected structure or the setting of a protected structure, where the setting is considered to be of importance. In addition, promote the protection and conservation of Buildings and Features of Interest identified in this Plan as they contribute to the character of the area.

#### Policy 60

Protect the integrity, quality and context of significant sites and recorded monuments.

#### Policy 61

Seek archaeological assessment and, where appropriate, excavation and testing, preservation by record or preservation in situ, in relation to all development proposals on which the archaeological heritage may be affected.

**Policy 62**

Require that development proposals appropriately conserve and protect features of the built environment such as stone walls, pillars, piers, stiles, bridges, kerbing, cobbles, gates, railings, wells, mass rocks, post-boxes, historic telephone boxes, memorials, milestones, benchmarks, streetlights, manhole covers, ventilation pipes etc.

**Built Heritage Objectives****Objective 57**

Contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection of archaeological sites and monuments and their settings, archaeological objects and underwater archaeological sites that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places, in the ownership/guardianship of the State, or that are subject of Preservation Orders or have been registered in the Register of Historic Monuments. Contribute, as appropriate, towards the protection and preservation of archaeological sites, which have been identified subsequent to the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places.

**Objective 58**

Promote pride and awareness of the importance and value of the architectural heritage of Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) and manage any change to that heritage in such a way as to retain its character and special interest.

**Objective 59**

Promote best conservation practice and the importance of informed decision making with regard to historic buildings through advice to owners/occupiers and by encouraging the engagement of a suitably qualified conservation specialist with regard to material specification and application for protected structures.

**Objective 60**

Positively and actively encourage redevelopment of vacant, derelict and obsolete sites in a manner that is sympathetic with and complimentary to the inherent character of neighbouring structures and the historic character of the area.

**Objective 61**

Apply best conservation practice to protect features and buildings of interest within the LAP area:

- Prioritise reuse and renovation over demolition of buildings of interest and other historic buildings.
- Retain traditional features such as historic windows, doors, overlights/fanlights, renders, roof coverings, shopfronts and rainwater goods, in preference to their removal and replacement.

**Objective 62**

Conserve and protect features of the built environment such as stonewalls, pillars, piers, stiles, gates, railings, holy wells, mass rocks, historic telephone boxes, post-boxes and memorials.

**Objective 63**

Ensure that any development, either above or below ground, within the vicinity of a site of archaeological interest shall not be detrimental to the character of the archaeological site or its setting.

**Objective 64**

Facilitate and co-operate with voluntary groups and tidy towns committees in maintaining and improving the urban landscape.

**Objective 65**

Review and implement the County Roscommon Heritage Plan as it relates to the LAP area.



### 7.11.2 Natural Heritage Strategy

The Natural Heritage Strategy aims to protect and conserve existing environmental designations as well as protecting, conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the LAP area. It also aims to identify, protect and conserve sites of natural heritage importance, in co-operation with the relevant statutory authorities. It provides for the passive and active recreational needs of users as well as providing for high quality landscaping and open space areas on developed lands.

#### Policies for Designated Sites

**Policy 63**

Contribute towards the protection of (c)SACs, SPAs, Wildlife Sites (including NHAs and pNHAs) and entries to the Water Framework Directive Register of Protected Areas which are designated or become designated and notified to Roscommon County Council during the lifetime of this LAP.

**Policy 64**

Protect geological NHAs as they become designated and notified to Roscommon County Council during the lifetime of this LAP

**Policy 65**

Contribute towards the protection of natural heritage and biodiversity, including European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network, in accordance with relevant EU Environmental Directives and applicable National Legislation, Policies, Plans and Guidelines.

**Policy 66**

Contribute towards the protection of habitats and species listed in the annexes to and/or covered by the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC, as amended), Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC) and European Communities (Environmental Liability) Regulations 2008, and regularly occurring-migratory birds and their habitats, and species protected under the Wildlife Acts 1976-2000 and the Flora Protection Order.

**Policy 67**

Contribute towards the protection of the water resources, including rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, turloughs, groundwater, as well as aquatic and wetland habitats and freshwater and water dependant species in accordance with the requirements and guidance in the EU Water Framework Directive 2000 (2000/60/EC), the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the Western River Basin District Management Plan 2009-2015, Shannon International River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015 and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and policy guidance (including any superseding versions of same).

**Policy 68**

Prohibit projects which would give rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on Natura 2000 sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

### Objective for Designated Sites

#### Objective 66

Ensure Appropriate Assessment Screening, and, where required, Appropriate Assessment, is carried out for any plan or project which, individually, or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant direct or indirect impact on any Natura 2000 site or sites; in accordance with best practice guidance as issued by the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and/or the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

### Policies for Nature Conservation and Biodiversity

#### Policy 69

Ensure that dust suppression/mitigation measures are employed during the construction phase of proposed developments within the LAP area in order to offset disturbance by air emissions.

#### Policy 70

Ensure that no development, including clearance and storage of materials, takes place within a minimum distance of 10m measured from each bank of any river, stream or watercourse within the LAP boundary. Promote the sustainable management and use of watercourses and avoid the culverting or realignment of these features, where possible. Any hard landscaping proposals shall be located outside of any buffer zone areas.

#### Policy 71

In the event of lighting being proposed along watercourse corridors an Ecological Impact Assessment, including bat and otter surveys (and where necessary a Natura Impact Statement in accordance Section 177T of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2015) shall be prepared by specialists. The recommendations of the specialist studies shall be implemented into any permitted development proposals. No lighting shall be installed without prior consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS); and all such lighting shall be in accordance with advances in knowledge into the impact of lighting on bats and other species and shall also reflect advances in technology in the lighting industry.

#### Policy 72

Support the carrying out of a river corridor habitat survey of the Cross River.

#### Policy 73

Support the particulars of *Nature and Wildlife in Roscommon Action for Biodiversity 2012* and any subsequent reviews thereof.

#### Policy 74

Promote the retention and enhancement of existing habitats, biodiversity and geological heritage in the Monksland/Bellanamullia area, particularly those habitats which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure (e.g. rivers and their banks) or their contribution as stepping stones (e.g. ponds or small woods), are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.

#### Policy 75

Promote the implementation of key actions and objectives set out in Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016: Ireland's 2<sup>nd</sup> National Biodiversity Plan (including any superseding version of same), the County Roscommon Heritage Plan and the County Roscommon Biodiversity Plan as appropriate.

#### Policy 76

Ensure that development on or near a site which is considered to be of local importance avoids any significant adverse impact on the features for which the site is considered to be of importance.

### Objectives for Nature Conservation and Biodiversity

#### Objective 67

Promote the conservation of biodiversity outside of designated areas, while allowing for appropriate development, access and recreational activity.

#### Objective 68

Discourage the felling of mature trees to facilitate development, and encourage tree surgery rather than felling, where possible. All these works should be carried out in accordance with the provisions in the Forestry Act 1946.

#### Objective 69

Encourage the use of native species in amenity planting, stocking and related community actions to reduce the introduction and spread of non-native species.

#### Objective 70

Work with stakeholders including Irish Water (IW), the Office of Public Works (OPW) and others relevant parties involved in the Western River Basin District (WRDB) and the Shannon River Basin District (SHRBD), in the management of the Cross River.

### Policy for Landscape Character

#### Policy 77

Require planning applications, with potential to impact adversely on the landscape character of the Plan area, to include an appropriate visual impact assessment of the proposed development.

### Objectives for Landscape Character

#### Objective 71

Encourage and facilitate, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, the development of green infrastructure that recognises the synergies that can be achieved with regard to the following:

- Provision of open space amenities
- Sustainable management of water
- Protection and management of biodiversity
- Protection of cultural heritage
- Protection of protected landscape sensitivities.

#### Objective 72

Recognise European and national objectives for climate adaptation and work with the EPA, the Western Regional Authority and neighbouring planning authorities in implementing future Guidance for climate change proofing of land use plan provisions as is flagged in the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (DECLG, 2012).

## 7.12 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

### 7.12.1 Economic Development and Employment Strategy

The Economic Development and Employment Strategy aims to provide support for those industries and businesses located within the area and encourage the expansion of the industrial and light industrial offer as well as support limited retail expansion to service the existing and future population as projected, and to ensure that all residents of the County have easy access to basic convenience goods, whilst not compromising the role of the Athlone town centre.

- Provide support for those industries and businesses located within the area and encourage the limited expansion of the retail role of the LAP area, to ensure that all residents of the county have easy access to basic convenience goods.
- Promote and support a wide range of new job creating opportunities, support the local economic base, and encourage diversification within employment and industry.
- Develop the local economy so that it can sustain activities proportionate with the needs and scale of the expanding area.
- Work with all strategic partners and local stakeholders in the delivery of this goal and the enhancement of the local economy.

The **future economic strategy** for the **Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP** area will build on the approach advocated in the previous LAP including a focus on the following:

- Strong emphasis on **pharmaceutical businesses**, currently clustering in Monksland; and **logistics** given the county's location and improving access.
- Mobile investment in shared services; **financial services and European headquarter locations** – typically businesses of 20 to 50 persons in office environments.
- Encourage growth of the **Micro-Enterprise** sector and facilitate expansion through innovation and diversification.
- Address the shortcomings in **Telecommunications (most importantly broadband) and access infrastructure** in order to attract ICT business.
- The potential provision of a **transport hub** and improving access to **rail facilities** in the area will also be vital.
- Enhancing the supply of **social infrastructure** including health facilities, schools, arts and recreation facilities play a significant role in attracting such enterprises.
- Exploring the tourism potential of the area, for example; improved access into the county; the development of **cycle and walking routes** possibly to link with the Dublin-Galway Greenway; along with other **outdoor activity-based tourism**; and, the encouragement of public and private investment in such facilities.

#### Policies in relation to Future Employment, Enterprise and Economic Strategy

##### **Policy 78**

Promote and facilitate the implementation of targeted economic development in zoned and serviced areas as part of the Future Economic Development Strategy for the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) area.

##### **Policy 79**

Promote the use of public-private partnerships in the provision of industrial sites and business parks.

##### **Policy 80**

Support the implementation of RCC's "*Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)*" as well as the actions recommended in "*Measuring and promoting innovation in local regions: A Strategy for Co. Roscommon 2015 – 2020*".

##### **Policy 81**

Promote the uptake of vacant units.

#### Objectives in relation to Future Employment, Enterprise and Economic Strategy

##### **Objective 73**

Support the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), Roscommon LEADER Partnership and other relevant economic development agencies in encouraging indigenous innovation and enterprise, by making suitable start-up locations available to entrepreneurs. This will include the provision of high quality serviced sites/land ready

for industrial/commercial development including workspace units with high speed broadband connectivity at strategic locations.

#### **Objective 74**

Investigate the provision of outreach third level and Research & Development (R&D) facilities in the area.

#### **Objective 75**

In consolidating the urban form, support the location of quality employment and residential developments in proximity to each other in order to reduce the need to travel and the dependence on private transport.

#### **Objective 76**

Ensure that the infrastructure and services in the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) area are sustainably developed and upgraded to a level that can support increased economic activity. The location of industries such as pharmaceutical projects, logistics and ICT Manufacturing will require world class facilities, infrastructure and services.

#### **Objective 77**

Ensure that a high standard of design, layout and amenity is provided and maintained at locations selected for enterprise development.

#### **Objective 78**

Work with and support Enterprise Ireland in the creation of clusters, and liaise with developers in ensuring competitive packages for the provision of commercial and industrial space, within the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) area.

### **Policies for Industry**

#### **Policy 82**

Support the establishment of new industries, including high tech industries and high potential start-ups at appropriate locations within the LAP area.

#### **Policy 83**

Support the LEO, Roscommon LEADER Partnership, the IDA and Enterprise Ireland in encouraging new high tech industries and high potential start-ups to locate in the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area.

### **Objectives for Industry**

#### **Objective 79**

Facilitate the development of a Pharmaceutical Hub at SO4 (see Map 10), and the expansion of Industry and Light Industry on lands zoned for Industrial (I) and Business, Enterprise Park/Light Industry and Warehousing (BE) respectively.

#### **Objective 80**

Assist the LEO and other economic development agencies in attracting major new industry/service providers to nurture and grow existing industry. This can be done through the provision of development information, appropriate zoning provisions; and, a favourable development contribution scheme.

#### **Objective 81**

Where technically feasible and economically viable, provide for or facilitate the provision of the necessary infrastructure and services for industrial development within the Plan area.

#### **Objective 82**

Support local enterprise initiatives, national development agencies (such as the IDA, state bodies etc.) and private developers in promoting foreign direct investment into the area.

**Policies for Retail and Commercial Development****Policy 84**

Ensure that retail and service outlets are located within the identified District Centre and Local Centres, in order to serve the population of the surrounding area.

**Policy 85**

Encourage and facilitate the use of existing vacant units, particularly retail warehousing, for development. In addition, ensure that areas of vacant, derelict and under-used land within existing built-up areas (brownfield sites) are brought into productive use, as an alternative to the use of Greenfield sites.

**Policy 86**

Ensure that all developments, where appropriate, are connected by safe, usable and viable pedestrian and vehicular links.

**Policy 87**

Implement the findings and recommendations of the Retail Strategy for County Roscommon, and assess all retail proposals against the criteria and recommendations set down in the *Retail Planning Guidelines* (April 2012) and the *Retail Strategy for County Roscommon 2014-2020*, as well as investigations carried out as part of this LAP process.

**Policy 88**

Seek improvements to the visual quality of the area as part of new development and facilitate the appropriate development of the District Centre subject to compliance with the relevant development standards where applicable.

**Objectives for Retail and Commercial Development****Objective 83**

Prepare a Framework Plan (SO3) for the District Centre lands south of the New Tuam Road, prior to their development.

**Objective 84**

Facilitate and encourage the appropriate provision of retail facilities in the LAP area, particularly focused in the areas zoned as District and Local Centre/s.

**Objective 85**

Encourage property owners/developers to improve the appearance of vacant/derelict buildings, including the implementation of measures such as simple maintenance (painting, cleaning, removal of vegetation, removal of defunct inappropriate signage, securing property to protect from vandalism, installation of temporary window displays) and the provision of appropriate screening or boundary treatment.

**Objective 86**

Create a more attractive and safer pedestrian environment including the further provision of pedestrian crossings, high quality pavements and cycle paths, street lighting and street furniture in the area.

## 7.13 URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN

### 7.13.1 Residential Development

The Residential Development Strategy aims to:

- Ensure the provision of an adequate supply of housing within the LAP area in order to ensure that every household has access to a dwelling suitable to its needs, located in an acceptable environment and at an affordable price or rent;
- Ensure the delivery of social and affordable housing in the area;
- Ensure that new residential development is designed and developed to modern standards, including in relation to energy consumption, convenience and sanitation. The provision of a range of housing forms, types and sizes will be encouraged in order to cater for all sectors of society;
- Consolidate residential development in the area and minimise further ribbon development;
- Limit new development in areas where necessary physical infrastructure (public sewerage/water supply, public street lighting/public footpaths) and social infrastructure including, but not limited to schools, and community facilities are unavailable; and,
- Seek an acceptable balance and mix in the provision of social/affordable and private housing in order to promote an appropriate social and demographic balance.



**Table 3: Recommended Residential Zoning within the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) Local Area Plan 2016-2022**

	Term	Years	Area	Comments
<b>New Residential</b>	<b>Short-Term</b>	<b>1 - 6</b>	<b>23.20Ha</b>	<p><b>‘New Residential’</b> comprises lands within 750 metres of the District Centre at SuperValu and which have been identified following a sequential approach. This equates to 23.20 Ha of land with potential for 464 new residential units<sup>6</sup>. (see Map 13)</p> <p>Lands identified as ‘New Residential’ are adequately serviced (see Maps 5, 6, and 7) in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Road network - Adequate roads infrastructure, although an upgrade, footpaths, street lighting and other accommodation works will need to be provided from the Old/New Tuam Road roundabout towards Bellanamullia, as well as the upgrading of the road accessing Monksfield.</li> <li>▪ Water Supply - Of adequate capacity.</li> <li>▪ Foul sewage - The Monksland WWTP has sufficient capacity for proposed development within the lifetime of this Plan. The assimilative capacity of the Cross River cannot be exceeded. This is governed by its existing Discharge Licence for the WWTP. Development will be sustainable in relation to the river and environmentally sensitive areas.</li> </ul> <p>Supporting Infrastructure and Facilities (see Map 11):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community facilities - Approximately 4.22Ha of land has been zoned in the plan for Community and Educational Facilities. Approximately 2.35 Ha of it is currently undeveloped (with no existing planning permissions). This is more than adequate to accommodate short term needs.</li> <li>▪ Education - Five additional primary classrooms and four additional secondary classrooms may be required.<sup>7</sup> The new school proposed at Cloonakilla NS should cater for the primary school extension. The four additional post-primary classrooms needed could be accommodated through an extension to Summerhill. Alternatively as part of the development of a new school within the LAP area. S01 indicated on NR lands to the north of the Old Tuam Road provides for the potential development of a new school.</li> <li>▪ Childcare - Additional childcare facilities would be required as part of permitted residential development.</li> <li>▪ Local recreational facilities will be provided as part of any housing development greater than 20 units and lands have also been zoned RA with SO2 which provides for the provision of a public park for the area.</li> <li>▪ Healthcare - There are adequate healthcare facilities in the area with the development of the Primary Health Care centre.</li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> @ 20 units per Hectare.

<sup>7</sup> See Table 2: Proposed Educational Provision within the Monksland Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP above for further details.

	Term	Years	Area	Comments
<b>Strategic Residential Reserve</b>	<b>Medium - Term</b>	<b>6 - 12</b>	<b>3.84 Ha</b>	<p><b>‘Strategic Residential Reserve’ (SRR)</b> includes lands to the north of the Old Tuam Road as well as to the south of the New Tuam Road which relies on the development of NR lands in order for it to proceed. This equates to 3.84 Ha with a potential for 77 new residential units.<sup>8</sup> (see Map 13)</p> <p>Development of these lands will be considered appropriate when :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) All lands zoned ‘New Residential’ have been developed; or</li> <li>(ii) All lands zoned ‘New Residential’ are subject to the grant of planning permission (extant planning permission) and there is a demonstrable demand, supported by factual evidence, for further new residential development within the Plan area.</li> </ul> <p>The <b>services and facilities</b> detailed in relation to ‘New Residential’ (above) are relevant to the lands identified as ‘Strategic Residential Reserve.’ It is envisaged that as the Plan area develops that the level of community and education facilities, will grow accordingly.</p> <p>Supporting Infrastructure and Facilities (see Map 11):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Education - In addition to the requirements in NR above, two additional primary classrooms and two additional secondary classrooms may be required.<sup>9</sup> The new school proposed at Cloonakilla NS should cater for the primary school extension and the two additional post-primary classrooms needed could be accommodated through an extension to Summerhill. Alternatively as part of the development of a new school within the LAP area.</li> </ul>

### 7.13.2 Urban Development Strategy

The **Urban Development Strategy** aims to:

- Secure the proper planning and development of the area by ensuring that there is adequate zoned land in appropriate locations available for housing.
- Consolidate residential development in the area and minimise further ribbon development.
- Limit new development in areas where necessary physical infrastructure (public sewerage, water supply, public street lighting, public footpaths) and social infrastructure including, but not limited to, schools and community facilities are unavailable.
- Seek an acceptable balance and mix in the provision of social/affordable and private housing in order to promote an appropriate social and demographic balance.
- A high standard of urban design with a network of high quality spaces formed by quality buildings, paving and landscaping is the goal for the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) area.

<sup>8</sup> @ 20 units per Hectare.

<sup>9</sup> See Table 2: Proposed Educational Provision within the Monksland Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP above for further details.

### Policies for Residential Development

#### **Policy 89**

Require that new residential accommodation meets the following:

- High standards of design and necessary standards of energy consumption, sanitation and;
- Avoids developing on floodplains;
- Avoids traffic or environmental problems or damage to visual amenity;
- Incorporates suitable infill development on appropriate sites; and
- Avoids further ribbon development along roads within the development envelope and immediately contiguous thereto.

#### **Policy 90**

Facilitate the Housing Authority's programme for housing, including:

- The provision of new housing;
- The renovation/refurbishment of existing buildings;
- The provision of suitable accommodation and facilities for the Traveller Community;
- The provision of suitable accommodation for people with disabilities;
- The provision of social and affordable housing; and,
- The implementation of the provisions of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

#### **Policy 91**

Limit new development in areas where necessary physical infrastructure (public sewerage, water supply, public street lighting, public footpaths) and social infrastructure including, but not limited to, schools and community facilities are unavailable.

#### **Policy 92**

Require the naming of residential developments to reflect local place names, language or topographical features as appropriate.

#### **Policy 93**

Identify and facilitate the development and renewal of obsolete areas, vacant and derelict sites and buildings in a manner appropriate to the area, including the completion of unfinished residential estates.

#### **Policy 94**

Require phasing plans to be provided with residential housing proposals, which will ensure that a high percentage of the preceding phases are occupied before the commencement of subsequent phases. This would apply to all new residential developments over 10 dwellings.

#### **Policy 95**

To provide for the renewal of areas in need of regeneration in order to prevent—

- (i) adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas, in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land,
- (ii) urban blight and decay,
- (iii) anti-social behaviour, or
- (iv) a shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses.

### Objective for Residential Development

#### **Objective 87**

Assess and ensure that all proposals for housing developments comply with the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*, DEHLG, May 2007, and the *Urban Design Manual: A best practice guide*,

December 2008, as well as the Development Management Guidelines and Standards included in this LAP and in Chapter 9 of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2014-2020.

### Policies and Objectives for Urban Design

#### 1. Character of the Area

##### Policy 96

Promote character in 'townscape' and landscape by development that responds to and reinforces local distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture.

##### Objective 88

Require designers to identify and recognise the essential elements of quality which determine the character of an area and then reinforces, or develops it in the proposed development.

#### 2. Continuity and Enclosure

##### Policy 97

Promote the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space by development, which clearly defines private and public spaces and has a hierarchy of private, semi-private and public open spaces.

##### Objective 89

Require designers to demonstrate that the proposed development has continuity and enclosure of spaces, and that public and private spaces are defined.

#### 3. Quality of Public Realm

##### Policy 98

Promote development with public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all the community including the elderly and people with a disability.

##### Objective 90

Require designers to demonstrate quality in the design of roads, pedestrian ways, public squares and open spaces as the design of these is as critical as the design of buildings that surround them.

#### 4. Legibility

##### Policy 99

Promote legibility through development that provides recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks that help people to find their way around.

##### Objective 91

Require designers to demonstrate the ease with which the observer can read the relationship between structures, the landscape and the spaces between them as well as the objects within those spaces.

#### 5. Adaptability

##### Policy 100

Promote development that can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions.

##### Objective 92

Require designers to demonstrate the adaptability of proposed development.

## 6. Diversity and a Mix Of Uses

### Policy 101

Promote development that has diversity and choice.

### Objective 93

Require designers to demonstrate the diversity and mix of proposed development.

## 7. Ease of Movement

### Policy 102

Promote accessibility and local permeability through developments that connect with each other and are easy to move through, putting people before traffic and integrating land uses and transport.

### Objective 94

Require designers to demonstrate that main routes have been distinguished by exploiting vistas, key buildings and landmarks, making the activities and functions of the places visible and bringing a sense of liveliness to the spaces.

## Policies for Architecture and Building Design

### Policy 103

Provide an appropriate mix of facilities and services for the population living within the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP Area. These include: commercial, recreational, civic, cultural, leisure, and residential uses.

### Policy 104

Require good urban design principles in the development of the area and require new development to enhance the existing urban areas and improve pedestrian priority.

### Policy 105

Ensure that businesses and services with a high potential for public transport utilisation by employees and visitors are sited at locations that can be made easily accessible by public transport.

### Policy 106

Ensure that adequate open spaces and landscaping are established to structure developments, provide visual relief to built-up areas and to ensure adequate aspects and natural lighting to buildings.

### Policy 107

Facilitate the development of high quality mixed-use developments within appropriate zones, which would incorporate existing natural features, such as existing trees and hedgerows, wherever possible; and provide additional open spaces and landscaping to structure lands and enhance visual amenity.

### Policy 108

Require a high standard of building, road and paving treatments that will create a high-quality environment with a distinctive and coherent character.

## Objectives for Architecture and Building Design

### Objective 95

SO3 within the 'District Centre' zone requires the preparation of a Framework Plan for the entire zone prior to the granting of any planning permissions on it. Following this, all planning applications that involve site and/or building development works within the 'District Centre' zone shall be accompanied by a design statement and landscaping plan to ensure consistent, high-quality developments on the site and to enable

the Planning Authority to assess applications accordingly, in line with the approved Framework Plan for the area.

#### Policies for Urban Design and Residential Density

##### Policy 109

Ensure that a high standard of design is incorporated into residential developments, and create the layout to facilitate pedestrian safety and restrict vehicular traffic speeds in line with recommendations contained within the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets*, 2013.

##### Policy 110

Ensure that developments are appropriately designed in terms of their form, density, size and dwelling types within residential areas, such that they contribute to the built character of the area.

#### Policy for Traffic Management in Urban Areas

##### Objective 96

During the lifetime of this Plan the Council may consider the introduction of reduced traffic speed limits in certain residential areas, in areas in the vicinity of schools, and possibly with the development of the 'District Centre' fronting onto the New Tuam Road.

#### Policies for the Design of Residential Estates

##### Policy 111

Ensure high quality in the design of buildings and promote the development of buildings that are accessible, that integrate well with and complement surrounding buildings and landscape, and are energy efficient and sustainable.

##### Policy 112

Ensure that all new residential units meet minimum standards of space, room size and storage provision.

##### Policy 113

Ensure that future housing layouts<sup>2</sup> and design must be adaptable to change over time with a variety of accommodation types, sizes and tenures, as well as being designed for future transportation links. Accessibility of public facilities and public transport will determine whether the site is appropriate for higher density development.

##### Policy 114

Facilitate the refurbishment of rundown/dilapidated dwellings whether for permanent or holiday home usage. Any proposal must respect the scale of refurbishment and any extension to same should respect the residential amenity of adjoining properties.

#### Policy for Sustainable Energy and Design

##### Policy 115

Improve qualitative standards of sustainable design in proposed developments in line with the detailed recommendations contained in this Plan and in the RCDP 2014-2020.

## 8 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT AND THE BUILT FORM

### 8.1 ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN DESIGN

#### 8.1.1 Building Height

One of the common misconceptions of higher densities is that they promote taller buildings. Tall buildings do not necessarily mean higher densities. The highest densities are generally achieved in medium rise buildings, of three to four stories high.

Where buildings of significant height are proposed, it is important that the following factors will be taken into consideration:

- The quality of the overall design;
- The degree of overshadowing and consequent loss of light caused to surrounding property;
- The degree of overlooking (particularly of residential property) and consequent loss of privacy;
- The extent to which there is a disruption to the scale of an existing streetscape or landscape, save in cases where this may be intended for civic design reasons;
- The extent to which the building detracts from structures or spaces of architectural or historic importance or important landmarks;
- Any attractive views from significant vantage points that would be obscured or intruded upon by the building;
- The degree of obtrusion of the skyline, save for those in appropriately planned locations;
- The scale of the building in relation to surrounding open space, together with the effect of the building on the quality of the space; and,
- The avoidance of local, undesirable micro-climates at ground level.

#### Policy on High Buildings

In general heights should respect local streetscapes; with exceptions which reinforce the urban form or are designed as landmark structures in relation to their particular setting, being acceptable.

Care needs to be taken to protect the unique landscape of the LAP area. The objective should be to respect heights and patterns of existing buildings. When locations that would be appropriate for tall buildings are identified; development concepts for these locations (including building size, shape, silhouette, site coverage, relationship to streets and public spaces) and general design issues must also be considered.

High buildings in the right place can have a role in:

- Acting as landmarks that signify urban renaissance;
- Enhancing local identity;
- Forging a new and exciting image for regeneration sites; and
- Delivering more sustainable working and living environments.

A high buildings policy should consider:

- Topography
- Urban Structure
- Movement Corridors and Transport Nodes,
- Public Spaces,
- Historical Assets,
- Prominent Landmarks/Structures,
- The identification of Important Views/Vistas in the area (including panoramic views into and out of the area, views within the area and skyline features) and their Vantage Points.



All new development should address:

- Design
- Overshadowing
- Overlooking
- Scale of existing streetscape
- Structures or spaces of historic or other importance
- Views
- Open space
- Microclimate

### 8.1.2 Urban Design

Good urban design is essential in order to produce attractive, high-quality places in which people will want to live, work and relax. It can be achieved by the way streets and spaces are arranged and how the mass, scale and position of buildings within the landscape are planned. The results should be good neighbourhoods; with a defined centre, a place that is easy to walk around and also feels safe, with high quality buildings and attractive spaces between buildings. Good design can provide a clear and distinct sense of place in which to take pride.

Urban design focuses on how urban areas best respond to people's needs and good urban design can be broken down into the following general principles, which are by no means mutually exclusive:

1. The **Character of the Area** – a place with its own identity.
2. **Ease of Movement** – a place that is easy to get to and move through.
3. **Continuity and Enclosure** – a place where good public and private spaces are clearly distinguished.
4. **Quality of Public Realm** – an appealing place with attractive and successful outdoor areas.
5. **Legibility** – a place that has a clear image and is easy to understand.
6. **Adaptability** – a place that can change easily and incrementally.
7. **Diversity and a Mix of Uses** – a place with diversity and choice.
8. **Sustainability/Balance with Nature** – a place where a balance has been achieved between the natural and built environment.
9. **Value** – a place where value can be created to sustain the desired mix of uses and quality of townscape.
10. **Inclusivity** – a place which has something for everyone and where a diverse range of user needs are met.

### 8.1.3 Architecture and Building Design

RCC will support the establishment of buildings of a particularly high quality and unique design at key locations within the area zoned as District Centre. These buildings will be characterised by a strong building design to provide focal points within mixed-use developments that will add legibility and clarity to the physical structure and layout of the development. Buildings on corner sites will generally be encouraged to 'turn the corner' by fronting onto two streets.

### 8.1.4 Design Statement

A design statement accompanying development applications should include the following information:

1. Details of high quality architectural treatments.
2. Details of materials and finishes to be used in the scheme.
3. Details of the design approach to the provision of signage, including both information and commercial signage.
4. Proposals for the massing and height of the proposed units so as to ensure compatibility with existing nearby development and the existing scale of the urban fabric of the area.

5. Details as to how the proposed land use, layout and design of the development complies with the site's zoning and the objectives and proposals of the Local Area Plan.

### 8.1.5 Landscaping Plan

A landscaping plan accompanying development applications should include the following information:

1. An overall landscape design with details of both hard and soft landscaping.
2. A survey of all existing planting and drainage lines on the development site.
3. Details of the location, number and species names of all planting proposed to be retained, removed and/or planted on the site. All proposed planting should be suitable to the site and soil conditions.

Landscaping is an integral part of any development and there is a need to ensure that existing trees are protected and integrated into the development and that new planting is well designed and adequately carried out. The potential of existing site features should be fully explored and planning applications should include an accurate landscape survey plan. Wherever practicable, existing healthy trees should be protected and retained. A tree survey shall normally be required and healthy specimens shall be preserved. Where other trees need to be removed, these shall be replaced at a ratio of 3 to 1 i.e. 3 semi-mature trees of similar, indigenous species should be planted for each tree removed.

All new developments and extensions or alterations to existing premises shall incorporate suitable site landscaping plans showing existing planting to be retained or removed and additional planting suitable to the site and soil conditions to be planted. Other measures to reduce or mitigate impacts on surrounding land uses, including residential areas, may be required where necessary.

### 8.1.6 Urban Design and Residential Density

In residential areas, the emphasis must be on good design and achieving safe residential environments where public open space is overlooked and therefore more useable. The design of roads should discourage high-speed traffic and allow for greater community interaction. Built form should come first and road layout second, so that these areas are more visually pleasing. Where densities are higher there should be safeguards to protect residential amenity. It should be noted that sprawling suburban development does not create a sense of identity and community. It does not contribute to community interaction and is difficult to provide with public transport. It encourages the use of cars and high-speed traffic and may therefore be unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists. It is also a wasteful use of serviced land.

This plan recognises that roads fall into different categories and perform different functions, for example:

- Some roads need to be designed for the free flow of traffic and with the needs of motorists to the fore.
- Some need to be designed to inhibit the free flow of traffic and with the needs of other users to the fore.
- Most residential roads should be designed for slow traffic.

Design and density are inseparable concepts. It is relatively easy to lay-out a housing scheme based on national standards such as those contained in *Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas*, DELG<sup>1</sup>, 1998, but to achieve density and provide for good residential amenities requires that much more effort be put into design. Providing for good residential amenity includes:

- Avoidance of overlooking of private open space/back gardens.
- Avoidance of overlooking by opposing windows.
- Creation of more useable public open space.
- Providing for buildings to be positioned to calm traffic, etc.

<sup>1</sup> Now the DECLG

There is a difference between the densities that are suitable in town centres and at transport nodes, and those in outer urban areas. Higher densities should be achieved at town centres and transport nodes having regard to accessibility to services, whilst medium densities are appropriate in outer urban areas.

Residential layout and density policies must consider the issue of sustainability and affordability. It is recognised that a good mix of accommodation type, size and tenure provides for the needs of modern communities more appropriately. In this respect quality urban design is considered vital to achieving places that work, as well as development that complements its context and contributes to visual amenity. For example, the completion of residential estates is an essential factor to ensuring consistency and quality in development in Monksland/Bellanamullia. These aspects are addressed further in the Development Management Guidelines and Standards at the end of this Chapter as well as in Chapter 9 of the RCDP 2014-2020.

In assessing new applications for residential development in the LAP area, the Planning Authority will have regard to the recommendations in the *Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*, DEHLG<sup>20</sup>, 2009.

### 8.1.7 Traffic Management in Urban Areas

Road safety for all road users is an important issue and in town centres and residential areas the needs of pedestrians and cyclists should have priority over motorised transport. The *Traffic Management Guidelines* (2003), the *Road Traffic Act* (2004), and the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* (2013) provide for the use of lower speed limits in certain areas, for example town centres, residential areas and in the vicinity of schools, as well as for the design of roads to provide for such lower speeds.

In addition, the way in which streets are managed and used promotes or discourages a sense of community and makes them an attractive or unattractive place to live, work, shop etc. Travel needs can be reduced by land use policies which facilitate mixed uses and closely grouping different uses. Parking policy is an important element in planning and traffic management. The level of car parking provided, its location, possible fee structure and enforcement levels can all have a considerable effect on car use and traffic flow patterns. The availability of convenient and affordable parking in an area can influence people's decision on their mode of travel and in certain circumstances a reduction in the number of parking spaces may be desirable in congested urban areas. However, this can only be considered where public transport provides a viable alternative.

Car parking policies must consider various needs such as people with disabilities, commercial vehicles, taxis and motor cycles. It must also consider the conflicts between all day and short stay parking as well as the need for good advance signage. In addition, a reduction in parking standards in town centres encourages development in such areas that might otherwise be forced to locate where land has lower value. These aspects are addressed further in the Development Management Guidelines and Standards at the end of this Chapter as well as in Chapter 9 of the RCDP 2014-2020.

### 8.1.8 Design Guidelines for Residential Estates

The design of residential layouts can give a sense of identity to an area, provide for safe outdoor spaces and facilitate community interaction. Conversely, poor design can allow the development of anti-social behaviour. New development should therefore be responsive to local character and respect the visual context of the area rather than becoming extensions that lack character. Successful developments can be achieved by careful integration with the landscape or built environment using the right materials, forms and landscape elements for the locality relating to the existing built fabric and settlement structure.

The Council will have regard to the following in the assessment of residential proposals in the town:

- The need for land to be used economically.

- The capacity of the infrastructure to cater for future population.
- The adequacy of present and future community facilities.
- Appropriate density.
- Adequate privacy for individual houses, flats etc.
- The safety of proposed layouts and the capacity of existing roads to absorb future development.
- Adequate provision for car parking, open space, landscaping and planting.
- Integration with existing development and the preservation of attractive features on site.

Furthermore, the Council will continue to seek to facilitate the improvement of visually obtrusive and derelict sites within the Plan area. This will help to improve the overall appearance of streetscapes, therefore contributing to environmental improvements in the urban area. These aspects are addressed further in the Development Management Guidelines and Standards at the end of this Chapter as well as in Chapter 9 of the RCDP 2014-2020.

### 8.1.9 Sustainable Energy and Design

The promotion of renewable energy throughout County Roscommon is important for both economic and environmental reasons. Environmentally, the harnessing of renewables for energy production reduces local air pollution, produces little or no waste, and releases no harmful greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. In addition, renewable energy can contribute to employment generation either directly in the renewables industry or indirectly in the supply industry.

Renewable energy technology is well advanced and widely available, and there are a number of grants available to provide systems in existing or new development including residential developments. The Council will encourage more sustainable development through energy end-use efficiency, increased use of renewable energy and improved energy performance of all new building developments in the LAP area and throughout the county.

With regard to building construction and energy use, all new residential dwellings require a building energy rating (BER) before they are offered for sale or rent. This requirement also applies to all new non-residential development and to existing buildings offered for sale or rent.<sup>2</sup> In addition, all public buildings with a floor area up to 1,000m<sup>2</sup> must display a BER certificate. Proposals for buildings exceeding 1,000m<sup>2</sup> must consider the technical, environmental and economic feasibility of using alternative energy systems in the proposed building and the use of such systems have to be taken into account, as far as practicable, in the design of the proposed building. Alternative energy systems to be considered include:

- Decentralised energy supply systems, based on renewable energy.
- Combined heat and power systems
- District or block heating or cooling, if available.
- Heat pumps

Further information regarding sustainable energy and design, and building construction and energy use is contained in Chapter 9: Development Management Guidelines and Standards of the RCDP 2014-2020.

## 8.2 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS

It is an obligation of the Council to ensure that planning permissions granted under the Planning and Development Acts are consistent with the policies and objectives set out in the Roscommon County Development Plan (RCDP) and the Local Area Plan (LAP) for the area, as well as the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. These standards are intended to give information and a general guideline as to the Planning Authority's requirements regarding particular aspects of proposed

<sup>2</sup> Enacted as part of the Building Control Bill 2001

developments. The standards are intended to give an indication of the criteria that will be taken into account when assessing applications for new developments. These standards and guidelines are complimentary to the overall development strategy and the individual objectives and policies of the RCDP 2014-2020, as well as the Monksland/Bellanamullia LAP 2016-2022.

Development Management Guidelines and Standards are set out in Chapter 9 of the RCDP 2014-2020 and it will be a requirement of all new developments to comply with these whilst they are in force as well as their successors from 2020 to 2026 and onwards.

For residential development, further requirements are outlined in the DEHLG (now the DECLG) guidelines, *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, May 2009, and *Urban Design Manual: A best practice guide*, May 2009, as well as *Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for Apartments*, 2007, which Roscommon County Council will have regard to when assessing planning applications for residential development.

Roscommon County Council has adopted a Policy on Advertising Signs and this should be referred to and read in conjunction with the section on Advertising in Chapter 9: Development Guidelines and Standards of the RCDP 2014-2020 when such signs are considered within the LAP area.

Potential applicants are advised to contact the Planning Authority prior to lodging a planning application particularly in the case of large developments and those requiring an Environmental Impact Statement. Prior consultation with the Planning Authority can reduce delays in the planning process.

### 8.2.1 Wastewater Treatment

The Council recognises that there are areas outside the mains sewerage system dependent on individual wastewater treatment facilities. Where such systems are used it is important that they are installed and maintained to the highest possible standards and that they conform to the requirements set out in the EPA Wastewater Treatment Manual, and more up-to-date standards if issued. Individual treatment systems will not be permitted in serviced areas and will only be allowed in zoned areas in the most exceptional circumstances.

### 8.2.2 Flood Risk and Protection

This Section should be read in conjunction with the guidelines produced by the DEHLG (now the DECLG) and the OPW, *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management*, 2009.

The recommendations set out in this section seek to ensure that undeveloped land is not zoned for incompatible uses and that safeguards are put in place for already developed lands.

As a result of lands identified in the SFRA process which have the potential to flood, a “Constrained Land Use Zoning” has been introduced on some lands. Constrained land use zoning is intended to facilitate the appropriate management and sustainable use of flood risk areas within the LAP area, in accordance with the *Flood Risk Management Guidelines* 2009 and the Departmental Circular PL2/2014.

Development proposals within or immediately adjacent to the constrained land use zone will need to be accompanied by a detailed Flood Risk Assessment, carried out in accordance with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines* & Circular PL 2/2014 (or as updated), which shall assess the risks of flooding associated with the proposed development.

Proposals shall only be considered where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, that they would not have adverse impacts or impede access to a watercourse, floodplain or flood protection and management facilities, or increase the risk of flooding to other locations. The nature and design of structural and non- structural flood risk management measures required for development in such

areas will also be required to be demonstrated, so as to ensure that flood hazard and risk will not be increased. Measures proposed shall follow best practice in the management of health and safety for users and residents of the development.

Development that would be subject to an inappropriate risk of flooding or that would cause or exacerbate such a risk at other locations shall not normally be permitted.

Policies and objectives are set out in Chapter 7 to ensure that the sensitivities of the flood risk areas are adequately considered, protected and managed as appropriate, in the development management process.

### 8.2.3 Drainage

Developers will be required to provide efficient systems of drainage with separate surface water drains, taking account of flood levels and of possible increased precipitation arising from climate change. Where development is proposed in proximity to a scheduled maintainable channel, provision must be made to ensure that the effectiveness of the existing embankment system is not impaired. In particular, provision should be made to ensure that the existing embankment system will not be adversely affected by the discharge of run-off either directly or indirectly to the back drains of the embankments unless appropriate provision is made to accommodate such run-off.

### 8.2.4 Residential Site Maintenance and Management

The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, provides for the inclusion of conditions attached to a planning permission regarding the maintenance and management of a proposed development. This includes the establishment of a management company (including waste management) or maintenance. Once the development is complete, provisions for estate management should be created in order to maintain the amenity, quality and visual quality of a development. Details of the management company, inclusive of the framework of the management company, must be agreed with the Local Authority prior to the commencement of development:

- Establish a management company, with a board, including representatives of the residents, to oversee estate management. This should consider the provisions of the Multi Unit Developments Act 2011.
- Develop policies in relation to the overall appearance of the development as well as to maintenance of common areas.

### 8.2.5 Dereliction, Vacancy and Regeneration

#### 1. Derelict Sites

The Council will continue to take appropriate action in accordance with the provisions of the Derelict Sites Act 1990, and amendments, to ensure the elimination of dereliction as it occurs. At the community meeting several sites within the LAP area were identified as derelict. The Council will encourage the redevelopment of these sites and facilitate well-designed new development.

#### 2. Vacant Sites Register and Levy

The Council will maintain a Vacant Site Register and implement the Vacant Site Levy as required by the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015, as a mechanism to stimulate site activation in urban areas, which is intended to “bring underutilised vacant sites and buildings into beneficial use, ensuring more sustainable urban development and an efficient return on state investment in enabling infrastructure.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Circular letter PL6/2015, 31 August 2015.



The site activation measure aims to encourage the release of zoned lands at key locations in order to stimulate development, deliver housing at appropriate locations, and, stimulate the regeneration of vacant urban sites.

### 8.2.6 Infill developments

Infill development must have due regard to the predominant existing uses, building lines and heights, design features, as well as the existence of particular features such as built heritage, trees and open spaces. Proposals for infill development must demonstrate how they will integrate satisfactorily with the adjoining developments, without loss of amenity.

### 8.2.7 Access for All

In the interests of providing access for everyone, the specific access requirements for the elderly, children and people with disabilities must be incorporated into the design of shops, commercial buildings and all other buildings, public spaces, facilities and services likely to be used by the general public.

### 8.2.8 Lighting, Signage and Advertising

Advertisement signs have the potential to add particular interest to an area. The excessive use of signs, particularly illuminated signs, however can detract from the very location they are advertising. The use of signage must therefore be closely monitored. The use of external advertising signs will generally be restricted to one per business.

### 8.2.9 Car Parking

All developments shall be required to provide adequate provision within the site for servicing of the proposal and for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles associated with it. Parking accommodation will be expected to locate within, or in close proximity to, the site of the proposed development, and will normally be established behind the building lines in each development. The minimum parking requirement shall be calculated in accordance with the standards as laid out in Table 4 below.

The layout and design of roads in housing developments shall have regard to the *Traffic Management Guidelines* issued jointly by the DEHLG (now the DECLG), the Department of Transport and the Dublin Transportation Office, 2003, and any updates, as well as the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets*, 2013.

Residential car parking spaces, including car parking spaces for mobility impaired people, shall be constructed to be capable of accommodating future electrical charging points as required. Parking spaces shall be coded/metered, slow charging 220-240 v, 13A single phase. The Council is committed to supporting this technology.

The following should be considered when making provision for car parking facilities for all categories of development:

- Requirements for numbers of car parking spaces are set out in Table 4 below.
- In dealing with planning applications for change of use or for replacement buildings, allowance will be made for the former site use in calculating the car parking requirements generated by the new development.
- Where the provision of on-site parking is not possible, the Council may, in exceptional circumstances, accept a financial contribution in respect of the shortfall in the number of spaces. This will however be at the discretion of the Council and is likely only to apply to small scale town centre locations where the Council has provided, or intends to provide additional public car parking spaces.



- Parking and service spaces must be located on site so as to prevent road/street obstruction, and should be located where possible to the rear and side of buildings and in such a manner to ensure minimal injury to the amenity of adjoining premises.
- Planting and landscaping of all car parks shall be required.
- Parking facilities for mobility impaired drivers and their vehicles shall be provided at the general rate of 2 to 5 per 100 spaces, such spaces shall be proximate to the entry points of the proposed buildings. The allocated spaces shall be clearly delineated and shall also display a relevant upright sign.
- The parking spaces shall be proximate to the entry points of the proposed buildings.
- The parking standards for residential development will be reviewed in town centre locations and where innovative design principles are adopted. In such cases grouped parking will be encouraged.
- Where reference is made to 'floor area', it refers to gross floor area unless otherwise indicated.
- Standard / Minimum parking dimensions shall be 2.5 x 5.0 metres.
- For primary and secondary schools, a bus circulation area may be required.
- Provision shall be made for parking commercial vehicles, where appropriate.

Where the parking standards shown in Table 7 below do not cover the type of development proposed, the requirement shall be calculated relative to the most appropriate standards.

**Table 4: Car parking Standards**

Residential	Car Parking Requirements
Dwelling house/Apartment (1-3 bedrooms)	1.5 per unit
Dwelling houses/Apartment (4+ bedrooms)	2 per unit
Guest House/B&B	1 space per bedroom*
Hotel	1 space per bedroom*
Hostel	1 space per bedroom or 1 space per 10 bed dormitory*
Motel	1 space per bedroom or 1 space per 10 bed dormitory*
Caravan / Camping Site	1 space per pitch*
*Facilities are required for the set down and pick up for cars and coaches.	
Commercial	Car Parking Requirements
Shops (<250m <sup>2</sup> gross)	Retail Floorspace 1 space per 20m <sup>2</sup>
Shops (250 – 1000m <sup>2</sup> gross)	Retail Floorspace 1 space per 14m <sup>2</sup>
Shops (> 1000 m <sup>2</sup> gross)	Retail Floorspace 1 space per 10m <sup>2</sup>
Banks	1 per 14m <sup>2</sup>
Service Garages	To be determined by PA
Offices (Town Centre) Gross Floorspace	1 space per 50m <sup>2</sup>
Offices (Office Park) Gross Floorspace	1 space per 50m <sup>2</sup>
Public Houses / Restaurants / Lounge Bars	1 space per 7m <sup>2</sup> net floor space
Hot Food Take Away	Minimum of 10 spaces

	per unit or 1 space per 10m <sup>2</sup> of retail space
Dance Halls / Ballroom / Disco	1 space per 3m <sup>2</sup> *
Cinemas, Theatres, Stadia	1 space per 5 seats
Conference Centres: Public Areas	1 space per 25m <sup>2</sup>
Churches / Church Hall	1 space per 5 seats
Hospitals / Nursing homes	1.5 per bed
Surgeries	2 spaces per consultants room
Petrol Filling Station	2 spaces per pump plus requirement for other uses
Carwash	5 waiting spaces without interference to other spaces or the public road
* For buildings which have mixed use the calculation will be based upon the highest demand.	

Note: Large complex development may be assessed separately with regard to the circumstances.

Industrial	Car Parking Requirements
Man. Ind. / Light Ind. Gross Floorspace	1 space per 50m <sup>2</sup> *
Showrooms: Gross Floorspace	1 space per 50m <sup>2</sup> *
Warehouses: Gross Floorspace	1 space per 100m <sup>2</sup> *
Garages	1 space per 50m <sup>2</sup> *
*Facilities are required for the parking and turning of vehicles serving the development.	

Community	Car Parking Requirements
Athletics Playing Field	20 per track / field

Library	1 space per 50m <sup>2</sup>
Funeral Home	1 space per 5m <sup>2</sup>
Primary school	3 spaces per classroom
Secondary school	3 car spaces per classroom
Childcare facilities	1 car parking space per staff member + 1 car parking space per 4 children
Golf driving range	1 space per 2m of base line / per trap
Golf / pitch and putt courses	4 spaces per hole
Sports Clubs incl. swimming pools, tennis courts etc.	2 spaces per court, 5 spaces per 100m <sup>2</sup>
Stadia	1 space per 3 seats
Bowling Alley	3 spaces per Lane
Pool / gym	1 space per 10m <sup>2</sup>
Community Centre	1 space per 10m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Bicycle Parking Standards</b>	<b>Relevant Cycle Parking Standard</b>
Dwelling houses and flats	1 unit per dwelling
Shops	1 unit for every 200m <sup>2</sup> of gross floor space

Supermarkets and large stores	1 unit for every 200m <sup>2</sup> of gross floor space
Offices	1 stand for every 500m <sup>2</sup> of gross floor space
Industry	1 stand for every 500m <sup>2</sup> of gross floor space
Warehousing	1 stand for every 1000m <sup>2</sup> of gross floor space
Theatre, cinema, church, stadium	1 stand for every 100 seats
Hotels, guest houses	1 stand per 50 bedrooms
Lounge bars	1 stand for every 200m <sup>2</sup> of public floor space
Restaurants	1 stand for every 200m <sup>2</sup> of public floor space
Function room, dance halls, clubs	1 stand for every 200m <sup>2</sup>
Playing fields	4 stands per pitch
Schools	1 stand per 50 pupils
Nursing home	1 stand per 20 members of staff

Note: one stand = 5 units

## 1. Cycle Facilities

Cycle routes and bicycle parking shall be well provided for in new office, residential, retail and employment generating developments. The Department of Transport has several guidance documents concerning the design of cycle facilities within urban areas and these should form the basis of such development. All long-term (more than three hours) cycle racks should be protected from the weather. From a security viewpoint cycle racks should not be located in out-of-the-way locations and shall be conveniently located, secure, easy to use, adequately lit and well posted.

### 8.2.10 Transport *(To be read in conjunction with Chapter 3 of this LAP and Chapter 4 of the RCDP 2014-2020)*

In order for the road network to fulfil its primary function in an era of rapid growth in car ownership and freight movement, it will be necessary to limit the number of accesses and junctions to the network. Failure to do so would result in:

- Traffic hazard and congestion;
- Reduction in carrying capacity;
- High maintenance costs; and,
- Inadequate return on public investment.

## 1. National and Regional Roads

The National Road network should provide safe and efficient links between the principle towns and villages and thus contribute significantly to the economic prosperity of the County and State as a whole. Chapter 4 of the RCDP 2014-2020, provides specific policies and objectives with regard to development on National and Regional Routes, and Chapter 7 of this LAP provides more specific policies and objectives for the Monksland/Bellanamullia (Athlone West) LAP area.

The policy relates primarily to proposed developments located on national roads outside the 50kph speed limit zone of the town, but also addresses development proposals planned for other locations which,

because of their potential to generate high volumes of traffic, could have significant implications for national roads in the area concerned. Development control shall seek to channel traffic from new development onto existing local roads and in this way use established access points to gain entry onto national roads and shall have regard to the DECLG Policy Document, *Spatial Planning and National Road: Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, January 2012.

### 8.2.11 New Residential Development

The proposed pattern for future residential development reflects a compact urban form. This will promote accessibility to employment and to commercial, educational, social and other services. All residential development proposals should incorporate an appreciation of their context, complement the existing built environment, create sustainable movement systems where pedestrians, cyclists and vehicular traffic, offer a range of house types and include attractive and well considered detailing i.e. quality of the public realm and the interface between the public realm and buildings.

#### Dwelling Type

A suitable mix of house types is required in each development proposal. This mix should ensure a suitable combination of one, two and three bed units, as well as larger units in suitable locations. Applicants are also required to provide these units in a range of formats, including detached, semi-detached and terraced.

#### Building Line

Applicants, when making an application, will normally be required to respect the established building line in place. In instances where the existing structure being replaced has previously broken the building line, applicants will normally be requested to reinstate the general building line. This minimum set back must be increased in instances where the lands to the front of the development are required for visibility splays.

#### Open Space Requirements

Applicants will be required to provide sufficient, useable open space which is passively surveyed and easily accessible. Applicants should aim to include a mix of large and smaller open spaces which cater for a range of recreational activities.

#### Traffic Management within Residential Developments

Developers shall have regard to the Traffic Management Guidelines. Residential developments shall include natural traffic calming measures through the incorporation of natural vegetation, formal crossings, shared surfaces and on-street car parking. Sight distance/visibility splays shall be in accordance with those outlined in the County Development Plan.

#### Design Statements

To prevent the negative impacts on quality of life and the natural and/or built landscape associated with poor residential design, design statements justifying design proposals will be required to accompany applications for two or more houses. This must address the visual integration of the proposals in terms of design, siting and materials. Pedestrian access ways must also be addressed.

