

Westmeath County Development Plan 2008-2014

Unserviced Settlement - Ballinea



January 2009

Planning Assessment of Ballinea:

Ballinea is a small settlement approximately 6.5 km to the west of Mullingar on the R390 Mullingar to Athlone and Ballymore Road. The settlement of Ballinea is defined by Ballinea bridge on the R390 and the junction of the R390 with the R391 Clara Road. There are a total of 13 houses contained within this area.

Ballinea has a limited range of community services and facilities, comprising Foxes shop at the T junction which is next to St. Kenny's former national school. The new school for Ballinea has been located in the townland of Kilpatrick next to the Shandonnagh football grounds.

The pattern of development is characterised by a tight linear form to the west of the Ballinea bridge of detached houses in spacious plots. The house plots reduce in width closer to the T junction. There is no established vernacular to the settlement. There is one building of traditional stone design (former P.O) to the south of the R390 but the remainder of the houses along the road have been built in more recent times. There has been some linear development which radiates off the R390, however in the main the existing pattern of development in this settlement is compact and confined to between Ballinea bridge and the T junction.

There is a pumping station to the east of Ballinea bridge which serves the Quill Wood reservoir that serves the Kilbeggan reservoir. Properties within the settlement are connected to the mains water supply. There is no form of communal wastewater treatment; all developments are currently served by individual septic tanks.

There is a protected monument to the south of the old school WM025-027 which is a barrow, on the junction with the R390 and R391. This is a prominent feature on the approach to the junction and provides a defined boundary and landmark to the settlement envelope and its setting should be preserved.

The Royal Canal a designated Natural Heritage Area, to the east of the settlement envelope, has a canal walkway from Ballinea which extends to Mullingar. It would be an objective over time to link the settlement to the canal walk with a pedestrian footpath. There are no footpaths extending along the R390 from the canal bridge and pedestrian provision within the settlement is poor. Any future development would be required to provide footpaths to connect the development to the centre of the settlement.

The Mullingar to Athlone railway line extends to the south of the R390 and west of the R391. There is an overhead bridge to the south of the junction, with a height restriction. Any further development to the south of the R390 would be restricted by the railway line. The railway line and canal are constraints on the future development of this settlement.

Settlement Envelope:

A settlement envelope is proposed which defines the boundary and reflects the character of the settlement as outlined above. It is envisaged that any future development within the settlement would be contained within the settlement envelope as proposed. (refer to attached map)

There are currently 13 houses within the proposed envelope all of which are served by individual septic tanks. Future development of the settlement is constrained by virtue of the absence of waste water treatment facilities. It is therefore considered due to the lack of infrastructure including public footpath provision on the regional road, and the extent of roadside development, in addition to the existing size of the settlement future development would be limited. There is scope for sensitive infill development particularly along the northern side of the R390 and a small cluster to the rear of existing properties but this would be subject to the considerations and policy objectives stated within the County Development Plan and the unserved settlement policy guidance which accompanies this planning assessment.

It would be inappropriate to allow large scale residential development within the settlement and any large scale development should be contained within the priority towns and villages identified in the County Development Plan.

Development limits have been selected and designated on the basis that they provide an adequate and appropriate supply of development sites within the plan timescale to allow the settlement to grow in accordance with the services that are available and the scale of the existing settlement.

Policies 1-5 included within the overall policy statement on unserved settlements shall apply to Ballinea.

In addition to Policies 1- 5:

- A) Having regard to the acknowledged need to ensure development is appropriate to the scale of the existing settlement and can be absorbed:
 - The Planning Authority may permit an increase of up to 50% of the existing number of dwellings, until the end of 2014, at which time the need to allow additional units will be examined.
 - To ensure appropriate scale of development, any future development shall be contained within the settlement envelope as shown on the attached map, and should not be interpreted as an overall envelope for widespread development. Guidance at (B) below, which aims to protect settlement form, will also be used as a tool to inform appropriate scale of development.

- B) In order to ensure that development respects the established form of the settlement, the following guidance on preferred location of new development shall apply:

- Proposed infill development between existing dwellings, which would consolidate the settlement, will be considered foremost.
 - Frontage development within the settlement envelope will also be considered.
 - Small, multiple unit proposals on somewhat larger sites must consolidate the settlement and will be most favourably considered at the settlement as indicated on the attached map. For the purposes of this policy a small group of houses should be regarded as up to 3 dwellings.
 - Proposed development that would lead to road safety issues, or reduce the carrying capacity of important road links, will not be considered favourably.
 - Development that would result in the opening up of large tracts of land (which are not currently expressed as part of the settlement and would therefore detract from its character and create an incursion into the open countryside) will not be considered favourably.
- C) In order to ensure that development respects the established form of the settlement, applications for a small group of houses (as referred to above) must be accompanied by a design statement that demonstrates how the proposal continues the established character of the settlement. This information may also be requested by the Planning Authority where individual proposals raise design concerns, or are located prominently.

BALLINEA SETTLEMENT ENVELOPE

