

Chapter 07 Development of Community Infrastructure

Almost every large town and village in the County has a community group - evidence of a high level of community organisation and infrastructure



7.0 Introduction

There has been a long history of community-led development with both the credit union and co-operative movements having their beginnings in the County. This continues to this day, with a large number of groups specializing in a variety of areas.

Almost every large town and village in the County has a community group - evidence of a high level of community organisation and infrastructure. There are also a large number of 'specialist' groups e.g. Disability Groups, Women's Groups, Youth Groups as well as a network of approximately fifteen groups dealing with deprivation (Monaghan Against Disadvantage).

In a baseline report for Monaghan carried out in 2001 by Peter Quinn Consultancy Services a number of strengths and weakness were found in relation to community infrastructure. These are summarised as follows:

1. There are a large number of Community established cultural festivals and activities within Monaghan. These contrast with the County's poorly developed tourism infrastructure.
2. Monaghan has attracted a large number of artists including eight local professional artists and fifteen commercial craft workers. The county has three performing arts and cultural groups supporting a long tradition of community based drama.
3. There are three main Irish-language cultural groups in Monaghan and although only one-tenth of the population speaks the language on a regular (i.e. weekly) basis, the language has clearly benefited from the recent revival in interest nationally.
4. The community development sector in the county is relatively well developed and has been supported by a variety of agencies including Monaghan CEB, Monaghan VEC, the Partnership Board and LEADER. These projects have made a major contribution to building social inclusion with groups such as asylum seekers, ex-prisoners, youth and single parents.



Strategic Policies for Community Infrastructure

Strategic Policies for Community Infrastructure	
	ARTS AND CULTURE
SP 1	Continue to support cultural and entertainment activities in the county by co-operating with the Arts Council, community groups and other relevant bodies.
SP 2	Encourage cross border community cultural community initiatives
	COMMUNITY FACILITIES
SP 3	Ensure that all leisure and community facilities including crèches and play schools are located where there will be safe and easy access, with adequate car parking facilities, and where they would not be detrimental to the privacy and amenity of any neighbouring residential properties.
SP 4	Promote the use of existing buildings for community purposes particularly where the present use is redundant
SP 5	Promote the multiple use of school facilities for community purposes in so far as such uses are compatible with the primary purpose of the facilities.
	EDUCATION
SP 6	Co-operate with education authorities in the siting of school facilities and ensure that locations are easily accessible from all parts of a school's catchment area
SP 7	Ensure that sufficient lands are available for educational infrastructure and a third level institution
	LIBRARY SERVICES
SP 8	Ensure that library facilities are available to all people in the County.
	COURTHOUSES
SP 9	Ensure that all courthouses in Monaghan are maintained in a good state of repair
	MOTOR TAXATION
SP 10	Provide sufficient and well maintained facilities for motor taxation incorporating access for disabled persons
	OTHER SERVICES
SP 11	To co-operate with statutory and other bodies responsible for the installation of infrastructural services as necessary for the implementation of this plan, and to see that those services shall be located where they will have least impact on the environment



Arts and Culture

7.1 Arts and Culture

The Arts Act 2003 defines "Arts" as any creative or interpretative expression (whether traditional or contemporary) in whatever form, and includes, in particular, visual arts, theatre, literature, music, dance, opera, film and architecture, and includes any medium when used for those purposes.

Culture can be described as the sum total of our experience, encompassing history, archaeology, environment, an Gaeilge, folklore, customs, sports and recreation, contemporary life, religion, citizenship, the border, tourism, education and government. The arts give us the tools with which we can express our experiences.

County Monaghan benefits from a remarkably well-documented history and interest. Interest in local heritage is strong, with heritage groups in every parish. Conservation of heritage sites and the promotion of candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC) are steadily gaining importance within the voluntary, private and public sectors in the county.

Monaghan County Council supports the practice of the arts, in whatever form or medium, which celebrates and enacts creativity and expression. The practice of the arts confers aesthetic values with which to enhance society. In addition to the intrinsic value of the arts, there is also the substantial and recognised value that the arts contribute to the socio-economic development of society, Participation in arts activities is frequently a means of both individual and community celebration. A vibrant arts sector can enhance both the socio-economic achievement of a locality.

Unfortunately facilities for the arts are relatively under-developed in County Monaghan, with only four dedicated arts venues and one purpose built arts centre. There are two theatres (The Garage and Iontais Centre) and two exhibition areas in Monaghan Town and one Literary Resource Centre at Inniskeen.

Monaghan County Council recognises this contribution and makes provision for the continued development of the arts in order to further local cultural, social and economic development.

Policies for Arts and Culture

AC 1.	Develop programmes, alone or in partnership with others, where appropriate, to support the development of the arts.
AC 2.	Support people's experience of the arts, to advocate the unique value of the arts in society, and to recognise both promise and achievement in the making of art.
AC 3.	Encourage cross border cultural initiatives
AC 4.	Support cultural and entertainment activities in the county by co-operating with the Arts Council, community groups and other bodies.
AC 5.	Promote and provide facilities for the arts and culture, including theatres throughout the county
AC 6.	Provide facilities for arts in partnership with other bodies, arts organisations and local communities

Childcare facilities

7.2 Provision of childcare

National policy with regard to childcare aims to improve capacity and quality of childcare facilities for the community. It is recognised that increased female participation in the labour force together with social change has resulted in a major increase in the demand for childcare. The provision of childcare facilities is now seen as being of utmost importance for economic and social well being. The Childcare Facility Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government, 2001) emphasise the role of planning in the promotion of increased childcare provision.

The provision of childcare facilities will be encouraged in appropriate locations, including residential areas, town centre, district and neighbourhood centres and in areas of employment. New residential areas have been identified as an important location for the provision of childcare facilities. In accordance with the requirements of the Guidelines, provision shall be made for purpose built, easily accessible facilities in new developments of 75 residential units or more. In existing housing developments, the establishment of small crèches will be considered, but the premises must remain primarily residential and traffic access arrangements must not interfere with general residential amenity. Development management standards in relation to childcare facilities are outlined in development management policy H7.

Policy for Childcare Facilities	
CF 1	To encourage the provision of childcare facilities in appropriate locations, including residential areas, town centres, district and neighbourhood centre and in areas of employment. Such facilities will normally provide open space play areas, good accessibility and off street parking and will be subject to normal proper planning and development considerations
CF 2	Childcare facilities will be permitted in rural areas within 2 km of existing community/social facilities such as a community hall, school, sporting facilities etc, where a demand has been established and where no alternative is available locally, subject to good planning practice. Childcare facilities may also be permitted outside the 2 km radius where a local need has been clearly identified and is approved by the County Childcare Committee

Community Buildings, Sports, Recreation, and Open Space

7.3 Sports, Recreation and Amenity

Access to opportunities for recreation and amenity is an important consideration in determining the quality of life, and is likely to become more significant as land becomes more valuable and pressure from competing land uses becomes more intense. Recreation ranges from competitive sports to the passive appreciation of the natural environment and the expression of the artistic spirit through painting or craftwork. County Monaghan has a wide diversity of recreational activities some of which form local customs and traditions. Many of the competitive sports demand ever increasing standards of facilities and accommodation, and

participants in County Monaghan will require access to such facilities in order to compete equally at national and international level. Community facilities play a very important role in helping to develop a sense of community. So too do sports and physical recreation, in addition to being important components of everyday life and well being. The county is well endowed with outdoor facilities including lakes, rivers and forests, providing the main assets for passive recreational use. These natural assets facilitate participation in pursuits such as angling, water sports and walking.

There is a strong sporting tradition in Monaghan, especially in Gaelic sports. The GAA has 38 clubs in the county, each owning their own ground, and many with indoor social and sporting facilities. Women's Gaelic football is growing rapidly. Soccer is increasing in popularity. Golf also continues to gain in popularity with four 18 hole courses and one nine hole course, two driving ranges and a number of pitch and putt clubs around the county. Other sports played include athletics, rugby, boxing, rally driving, motor cycling,

bowling, horse riding, gymnastics and water sports. The number however of indoor sports and leisure facilities are suitable only for a narrow range of activities. The new leisure centre and swimming pool in Monaghan Town will improve the provision of facilities within the county.

The Council will ensure that adequate land is zoned for the development of accessible and affordable sporting and recreational facilities, particularly for the youth, the older adult and those who are disadvantaged or marginalised. The Council will also ensure that adequate land is provided within residential developments for play and sports facilities, through development control measures.

Policies for Recreation and Amenity

REC 1.	Co-operate with all agencies in promoting and developing the recreational potential of the county and carry out appropriate development as and when resources permit.
REC 2.	Where possible, the Local Authority may work in conjunction with developers and local communities in the provision and improvement of recreational facilities.
REC 3.	Promote and encourage the development of long and medium walking and cycling routes throughout the county, to link with existing established national, local and cross border walking/cycling routes.
REC 4.	Require developers to include the provision of sports and recreation infrastructure in new residential schemes. Natural features such as rivers, streams, trees and tree groups as well as landscaping plans and maintenance arrangements should be incorporated into new developments.
REC 5.	Protect the amenity of scenic and environmentally sensitive areas and promote the knowledge and appreciation of the natural amenities of the County.
REC 6.	Ensure that adequate amenity and recreational open space and facilities are available for all groups of the population at a convenient distance from their homes and places of work.
REC 7.	Protect established walking routes from intrusive development
REC 8.	Support local sports and community groups in the development of facilities
REC 9.	Confine games/recreational activity, which would give rise to loss of amenity including elevated levels of noise, to locations, which would not create disturbance to residents or have a negative impact on the conservation status of protected structures.
REC 10.	Promote the provision of public playgrounds and parks in all settlement centres and ensure compliance with the County Council's Play Policy
REC 11.	Co-operate and encourage the provision of youth centres or amenity centres for young people.
REC 12.	Promote and provide, where possible access to rivers and lakes for recreational and amenity uses

Cycling & Walking

7.4 The provision of cycling and walking as a travel opportunity is part of a drive to promote alternatives to the private car and encourage a more sustainable means of travel. One step in this process is to improve the provision, safety, convenience and general environment for cycling and walking by ensuring the needs of cyclists and pedestrians are fully taken into account in the development process.

The Programme for Government contains a commitment to expand the national network of cycleways in order *"...to encourage more people to cycle and to promote cycling as a safe and healthy mode of travel", and to provide for new foot-paths "...to allow pedestrians to walk in greater safety and*

comfort" Recent Census data showed that an increasing proportion of short trips are being made by car. Many of these trips could be, and were in the past made on foot or by bicycle. These alternatives have both economic and social benefits which make for a healthier environment.

Cycling and walking are inexpensive transport modes and the cost of infrastructure provision is low in comparison to other modes of transport. Measures to support cycling and walking can easily be integrated with both new development and existing private and public transport.

To help promote cycle use the amount of good quality cycle parking needs to be increased. It is therefore important that secure cycle parking is provided as an integral part of any development involving jobs, residential, shopping, leisure and/or services.

Policies for Cycling and Walking

Any development providing jobs, shopping, leisure and or services, including education and community uses should take into account the needs of cyclists and pedestrians. Where appropriate, provision of the following will be required:

CW 1	Safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle access
CW 2	Safe, convenient and secure cycle parking
CW 3	Safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle links to existing or programmed networks (including existing applications) where they adjoin the development site



Traveller Accommodation

7.5 Traveller Accommodation

The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2005-2008 was adopted by Monaghan County Council in April 2005. The plan was developed at County Council level, and identified the relevant needs and input for delivery by the Town Councils of Clones, Monaghan, Castleblayney and Carrickmacross.

The total number of traveller families in the Monaghan Local Authorities area on 26th November 2004 was 96.

7.5.1 Existing Facilities

Monaghan County Council maintains and manages two permanent residential caravan parks at Gortakeegan, Monaghan (8 bays) and Largy, Clones, (4 bays). A site with basic facilities for transient families has also been provided at Gortakeegan and can accommodate another 10/12 caravans at present. This site will be incorporated into the development of 20 new permanent housing units and a community building at Gortakeegan in 2006. New transient facilities will then be required.

The Council proposes to upgrade the four bays at Largy Residential Caravan Park, Clones over the period of the plan and to consider an extension to the facility if required. The Council are seeking sites for two residential caravan parks, one each at Castleblayney and Carrickmacross to meet the needs of transient families

Policies for Traveller Accommodation

TA 1.

It is the policy of Monaghan Local Authorities within the resources available to it, to provide suitable traveller accommodation in accordance with the Assessment of Needs.

TA 2.

The council will improve existing traveller accommodation and provide new accommodation, particularly in Carrickmacross and Castleblayney.

TA 3.

Take the necessary steps to deal with incidences of unauthorised parking in public places

Social Inclusion

7.6 Social Inclusion

The wide dispersal of population across the country tends to conceal many social issues. Unemployment, hidden poverty and lack of facilities within the county are the key problems. The challenge for this plan in conjunction with all

other plans and programmes is to ensure that the counties economic progress benefits all sectors particularly those who are marginalised. Inclusion will involve taking all the necessary steps to ensure that disadvantaged groups can have equal access to facilities and services together with the opportunity to improve their skills.

Social inclusion will therefore be an important part of all development. The following policy will encourage social inclusion in land use planning within the county.

Policies for Social Inclusion

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| SI 1. | Identify locations where a local action plan is required to tackle urban/ rural decline and adopting a community involvement approach in accordance with The Monaghan Model - A Guide to Best Practice in Community Consultation |
| SI 2. | Facilitate and promote parity of access to transport services in order that the socially excluded may gain access to employment and services |
| SI 3. | Monitor and implement the Monaghan Housing Strategy and ensure that as far as possible access for the disabled is provided |
| SI 4. | Identify and develop in areas of need, schemes for environmental improvement in cooperation with the local community and in local authority housing estates. |
| SI 5. | Increase access to suitable and appropriate accommodation for all in the county of a type suited to their requirements |



Disabled Access

7.7 Disabled Access

The Council recognises the right of people to equal opportunities and recognises their contribution to society. In recognition of this, the County Council has adopted the Barcelona Declaration in July 2002 with the following proposal.

"That Monaghan County Council, wishing to create and develop a more inclusive society and an accessible environment in County Monaghan for people with disabilities, adopts the Barcelona Declaration which commits local authorities in Ireland and Europe to deliver local authority services in a manner which is accessible to people with disabilities and that the Council establish a Working Group to implement the terms of the Declaration in this Council and monitor its progress within the county"

The declaration advocates the right of people with a disability to equal opportunities and recognises their contribution to society and the environment they live in. Under the terms of the Barcelona Declaration it is an objective of the council to consult with people with disabilities and to devise a plan of action to design services and structures that can be used everyone.

In July 2005 the Council adopted the 'Monaghan County Council Access for all Action Plan 2005'. The launch of this Access for All Action Plan is hugely important to Monaghan County Council in its efforts to ensure that all its services are fully accessible to everyone.

The implementation of the action plan is timely with the recent publication of the Disability Act 2005. The Disability



Act 2005 is a positive action measure designed to advance and underpin participation by people with disabilities in everyday life. It places an obligation on public service providers to support access to services and facilities for people with disabilities to the greatest practicable extent.

The Access for All Action Plan identifies seven key services in which practical actions may be taken to improve accessibility. One of the key services identified is planning which includes both development control and forward planning. It is therefore an objective of this plan to include disabled access within its policies. These are as follows:

Policies for Disabled Access	
DA 1.	Promote and raise awareness for disabled access within the county
DA 2.	Consider disabled access and the requirements of 'Access for all Action Plan 2005' when considering all planning applications

Library Services

7.8 Library Services

Monaghan County Library was established by Monaghan County Council in 1928. It was the first service in Ireland to introduce a rural mobile library, in 1956. The service developed rapidly in the 1960s, building a new branch in Monaghan Town and refurbishing branches in Carrickmacross and Castleblayney. The refurbished Headquarters in Clones was opened in 1966. A branch was also opened in Ballybay in 1981. Monaghan County Library is located physically in 6 buildings across the county, mainly owned by its parent body, Monaghan County Council

Now in the new millennium, progressive council management has again focused on the service and new branches are on the drawing board for Carrickmacross and Clones, with a third under discussion for Castleblayney. Both projects are new build and will provide significant new opportunities for improved service to the people of the county.

In November 2004 the Monaghan County Library Development Plan 2005 - 2009 was published. Its mission statement is as follows:

"To enrich the lives of all our users by providing a modern library and information service which stimulates knowledge and supports lifelong learning, imagination and recreation in an inclusive and accessible manner"



Within the five year plan, the library will be working to annual operational plans that will break down the

objectives for the year into a series of tasks and date targets and other significant factors.

Policies for Library Facilities and Services

LB 1.	Ensure that library services are accessible to all throughout the county
LB 2.	Provide and upgrade library facilities throughout the county during the life of this plan period to meet the needs of the public
LB 3.	Refurbish and where necessary renovate existing stock to meet national and regional standards

Nursing Homes

7.9 Nursing Homes

The demand for nursing homes has grown over the last number of decades. Advances in the field of medicine as well as improved nutrition and quality of life have increased

average life expectancy. As this trend continues so will the demand for nursing and care facilities for the elderly. The planning authority has had considerable pressure for retirement homes and homes for the disabled and elderly in the rural areas of the county. There is a presumption against this type of development in the open countryside for reasons relating to un-sustainability, poor accessibility, social exclusion and visual intrusion.

Policies for Nursing Homes

NH 1.

Nursing homes should be located within or adjacent to towns and villages for reasons of sustainability, accessibility, social inclusion and availability of services.

Schools & Education

7.10 Schools and Education

The Council will seek to ensure that school sites are made available to school authorities in phase with development. Should a school become redundant; an appropriate change of use will be considered on its merits and shall subject to management standards as laid out in chapter 8.

Policies for Schools and Education

ED 1.

Identify suitable sites for educational facilities that are integrated in a sustainable manner into settlements and communities

ED 2.

Work in close association with all relevant agencies to ensure that educational provision is matched to future skills and needs within County Monaghan

ED 3.

Proposals for new educational facilities or extensions to existing facilities will normally be granted planning permission subject to the following criteria:

- (i) Scale and design of any resulting building does not harm the character and visual amenity of the area
- (ii) The proposals would not result in significant disturbance in terms of traffic, car parking and noise
- (iii) The facilities are accessible by a choice of modes of transport and satisfactory provision of car parking spaces are made available in accordance with table 8.2 in section 8.14 of the plan
- (iv) Traffic safety considerations are met.