

Chapter 11

Castleblayney Town Development Plan

2013-2019

11.1 Introduction

The Castleblayney Town Development Plan 2013-2019 is the successor document to the Castleblayney Town Development Plan 2007-2013 and any previous plans. The plan relates to the administrative area of Castleblayney Town Council as identified on the attached map CYDP1. This plan should be read in conjunction with the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019.

This Town Development Plan has been prepared concurrently with the Plans for Monaghan County and other towns of Monaghan, Carrickmacross, Clones, and Ballybay, in an attempt to provide a more comprehensive and cohesive blue print for the development of the county as a whole.

As such the land use zoning map contains zoned lands within the environs of the towns that are located within the functional area of Monaghan County Council. For the sake of clarity and to avoid repetition, these maps have not been reproduced elsewhere. They will however, in so far as they relate to lands zoned for a particular land use within the functional area of the County Council, form part of the County Development Plan 2013-2019.

It should be noted that many policies contained within the Monaghan County Development Plan will also be applicable to the Castleblayney Town Development Plan. In order to avoid repetition, common policies have not been repeated in each plan, but have in many cases, been highlighted and cross referenced by paragraph numbers and policy references. In all cases however, policies contained within the Monaghan County Development Plan that relate to urban development shall apply and be considered to form part of the Castleblayney Town Development Plan, unless otherwise stated. Similarly, policies contained within the Castleblayney Town Development Plan will be applicable to all zoned lands identified on the attached map CYDP1 and shall form part of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019 unless otherwise stated.

The Castleblayney Town Development Plan 2013-2019 sets out the Council's vision for the development of Castleblayney and contains objectives which it seeks to implement over the period of the plan. These objectives relate to a range of topics including road and traffic, provision of services, preservation and conservation of buildings and protection of sites of scientific, historic or cultural importance. The plan will also address current and future plans for the development of Castleblayney through the provision by means of zoning of appropriate areas of land for residential, commercial and retail, industrial, open space and recreational areas.

11.1.1 Location and Historical Context

Castleblayney is the third largest town in County Monaghan and is located on the national primary route from Dublin to Derry (N2). The national secondary route (N53) links the town to Dundalk, the gateway for the region. The town benefits from its strategic location between Monaghan (24kms), Dundalk (27 kms) and Carrickmacross (17kms) and Armagh City (27 kms).

Castleblayney's origins can be traced back to the period of Saint Maeldoid who founded a church near Lough Muckno in early times. In terms of its existing settlement form and built environment, the historical development of the town is closely associated with the plantation of Ulster and the succession of the Blayney family to land entitlement in the area from 1607. In particular, the emergence of Castleblayney is inextricably linked to the establishment of Blayney Castle (close to the site of the existing Hope Castle) and the management of the surrounding estate. From the period of the late 1700s, the Blayney's were responsible for cultivating local industry and establishing key buildings in the settlement including the Markethouse/Courthouse, the Church of Ireland Church and the Roman Catholic Church.

Castleblayney has continued to function largely as a market/service centre for its rural hinterland, which extends in to County Armagh. The decline in agriculture and the closure of key industries and service functions in the town, together with the impact of the Troubles, have left obvious structural deficiencies in the town that need to be addressed. However in recent years the town has developed as a residential centre and new commercial and retail developments have strengthened the town's economic base.

It is within this context that the new Town Development Plan for Castleblayney is now formulated.

11.2 Strategy and Vision

Chapter 8 of the Monaghan County development Plan 2013-2019 contains strategic objectives for Castleblayney Town. Up until recently, Castleblayney has failed to capitalise on its strategic position on the N2 route and its close proximity to the North of Ireland. Increasing mobility, declining population levels and a failure to attract significant new industrial investment contributed to the town's decline in the latter half of the last century. Areas requiring specific attention in this development plan include the following:-

- Development of Lough Muckno and its environs as a tourist asset.
- Proximity to border, political, historic and economic disadvantage.

While Castleblayney was in decline for a number of years, recent development levels indicate that the town has recovered and is expanding its residential, retail, industrial and commercial base. It is the aim of this plan to assist and direct development in the town over the plan period with an emphasis on developing the town's main assets, which are; its strategic location, both nationally and in relation to Northern Ireland, and it's potential for tourism based on recreation in and around Lough Muckno. It should be noted however that this is a spatial plan and is confined to directing development through land use zoning.

Land Use Planning

11.3 Land Use Planning

The Castleblayney Town Development Plan is fundamentally concerned with promoting growth and development while protecting the natural and built environment of the town. The primary tool to implement this strategy is through land use zoning. The land-use zoning relating to Castleblayney Town is detailed on Map CYDP1.

Land use zonings indicate the purpose for which particular areas of land may be used and outline policy with regard to the approximate location and distribution of uses and activities. The purpose of such zonings is to allow for the rational use of land, protect the amenity of the town and to allow adequate space for current and future developments. Castleblayney has been zoned with a variety of land uses enclosed within a development limit which should provide compatible land uses and sufficient lands for the sustainable development of the town over the plan period 2013-2019. Details of land use zonings are contained within Chapter 8 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019. The land uses applicable to Castleblayney are as follows:-

- Town Centre.
- Existing Residential
- Proposed Residential
- Strategic Residential Reserve
- Industry, Enterprise and Employment
- Existing Commercial
- Community Services/Facilities
- Recreation and Amenity
- Landscape Protection / Conservation

Natural and Built Heritage

11.4 Natural and Built Heritage

11.4.1 Natural Heritage

Lough Muckno (and its environs) is one of only two Areas of Primary Amenity in the county (see appendix 1 and map 4.7 of the Monaghan County Development Plan). It is also a designated Proposed Natural Heritage Area. It is an invaluable natural resource that has helped shape the development of Castleblayney and should be afforded the highest degree of protection.

11.4.2 Built Heritage

In terms of its built environment, Castleblayney has a rich legacy of buildings and structures symbolic of the different stages of its development and linked to its development as a market/service centre for the rural hinterland. The character and distinctiveness of the town is as much associated with the manmade environment as it is with the natural setting of the town. Conservation and renewal of the architectural and historic character has the added benefit of encouraging economic revival. Moreover, greater awareness of Castleblayney's heritage helps generate self-confidence and pride in the town and so helps to develop an attractive image to the inhabitants, visitors, tourists and potential investors alike.

Key features of the Built Environment in Castleblayney

As in the case of many towns in Ireland, some of the finest architecture to be found in Castleblayney was constructed by the Churches. In addition to these religious institutions, an appraisal of the built environment in the town points to a number of outstanding structures and facades worthy of protection. These include:-

Saint Maeldoids Church of Ireland

This Church was built in 1808 on the site of the first church to be established in Castleblayney. The 36 metre tall spire was added to the structure in 1818. The cemetery of Saint Maeldoids comprises the Blayney Vaults, which contain the remains of the 6th Lord Blayney.

Saint Mary's Church

Barn-style design inclusive of Gothic revival transepts pinnacles and buttresses. It has a smooth rendered, pale, blue-grey finish.

The Courthouse

This large building dates from the 1800s and occupies a prominent position in Market Square at the intersection of West Street, Muckno Street and Henry Street. This Courthouse was built in 1856 and the architectural differences between the bottom storey and upper part of the building indicate that the Courthouse was constructed on top of the old Market house, which dates from 1801. It still retains much of its wrought iron railings. It is proposed to renovate and restore the Courthouse.

Hope Castle

Lord Andrew Thomas Blayney built this castle in the 1780s near the site of the original castle. It is one of Castleblayney's most imposing edifices and commands a spectacular view of the environs of Lake Muckno.

Its name derives from Mr Henry Thomas Hope who purchased Blayney Castle and the adjoining Estate in 1853. Hope replastered and embellished this three-storey Georgian brick house and added the front entrance porch. He also built the nearby Coach House.

In addition to its landmark status and locational attributes, its associations over the years and various uses also sets it apart for special consideration. Between 1900 and 1904, Hope Castle housed Queen Victoria's son, the Duke of Connaught. Since then, it has been used as a barracks (1919-1921), a temporary hospital (1932-1937) and more recently, from 1942-1974, as a guesthouse run by Franciscan sisters.

In the 1980s, the Castle was acquired by Monaghan County Council. The building was later sub-let under a County Council lease and while under this lease in 2010 the Castle was extensively damaged in an arson attack. Subsequently the building remains in a non used state at this present date.

Hope Castle Gates & Gate Lodges

These structures form the entrance to Muckno Park and help to define the break between the urban fabric of the town and its rural hinterland. One of the lodges is in a very bad condition. The other is in need of refurbishment and modernisation.

The Coach House next to Hope Castle

This was built in the 1860s by Henry Thomas Hope. Its special character owes much to its stonework and ironwork and its carriage archways.

First Presbyterian Church, Lakeview

The Presbyterian Church in Castleblayney was built in 1787 on land donated by Lord Blayney. Its barn style design has gothic influences.

The Hope Arms Hotel

Located on Main Street directly opposite the entrance to Lough Muckno this hotel is registered as being operational since 1824. Its plain frontage belies an impressive interior and detailed fittings. It also has a nice set of wrought-iron railings. Its most notable guest was Charles Stewart Parnell who resided in the hotel in 1883 during the Monaghan By-Election of that year.

Hope Temple

Located at Concra, this building was a resting/summer house for the Blayney and the Hope families. There is only one side of the structure remaining.

Convent of Mercy

The Sisters of Mercy arrived in Castleblayney in 1905 and opened a school on New Street. The Convent was built in 1910 on the former site of an old Brewery.

The Almshouses

Built in 1879 the Castleblayney Almshouses are prominently located at the entrance to the town from the Carrickmacross and Dundalk direction. Their redbrick appearance, symmetrical form and extensive lawn have a prominent setting on the rising ground of Connabury Hill. Their design attributes include five towering chimney stacks and arched doorways. The caretaker's lodge at the front of the site is designed in sympathy with the almshouses. This building has recently been refurbished.

The rounded corner at Market Square

The unusual rounded configuration of this road and its ascent from Muckno Street into West Street has resulted in an unusual curved frontage which characterises this part of the town.

The Corner House at the junction of Market Square and Henry Street

This building is unusual in Castleblayney in that its form curves with the street. This style is more commonly found in Monaghan Town itself.

Building adjoining Bank of Ireland, West Street

This building with a vertical emphasis, massing and regular window pattern complements the adjoining Bank of Ireland property. Its interior also retains much of the dimensional character of the late nineteenth century.

Church Street Cottages

This row of stone landlord cottages was built in 1877 for the labourers of the Hope Estate. Their exteriors are in good condition and they constitute one of the most attractive streetscapes found within the town.

Church Street Gate Lodge and Pillars to Hope Castle

This Gate Lodge and Pillars, which date from 1877, were the Church Street entrance to Hope Castle.

The Caretakers residence at Saint Maeldoids

Built in the style of the landlord cottages, its brickwork and gothic finishing complement the building line of the landlord cottages.

The Seven Houses

Located on Market Square, these have now been consolidated into four houses, consisting of a terraced row of three cottages and a detached two storey building known as "Forest View", which has distinctive window shutters, barge boards and dormer windows.

McGuigan's Boutique, Muckno Street

The traditional pilaster, stall riser and entablature of this shop front set it apart from the adjoining frontage on this side of Muckno Street.

Lyric Theatre/Cinema

With seating capacity for 1,200 people this theatre was, at one time, the largest in Ireland. The theatre also doubled up as a cinema.

Bank of Ireland, West Street

The cut stone/brick façade is enhanced by intricate fenestration and door detailing, with the windows varying in size and shape in each storey. The bank is built in a style quite similar to the Muckno Gate Lodges whereby a cut stone pattern forms the base of the ground floor and the red-bricked frontage on the upper floors is adorned with quoin stones.

Row of five houses in Market Square at Muckno Gates

Wrought ironwork forms part of the property railings and window frames. The White House guesthouse is one of the finer properties found in the square. The nearby oriel window above the archway also lends to the especial character of this area.

Castleblayney Town Council Offices and property on opposite site of Archway

These early nineteenth century buildings are located at either side of a pedestrian archway accessible to the largest backhand public car park in Castleblayney. While both buildings have good door cases and wrought iron railings, the Town Council building also has a fine bay window.

Post Office, West Street

Good traditional proportions.

Mallon Solicitor's office

Pleasing red-brick façade with good roof detailing and single bay window.

The built heritage is an invaluable and finite resource which requires effective stewardship to ensure its continued enjoyment by both present and future generations. Its retention helps to better inform future generations of the past and is critical to the reinforcement of a town's identity.

11.4.3 Archaeology

There will be a presumption against development that would adversely affect sites of archaeological importance and their settings, unless there are exceptional circumstances to indicate otherwise. The uncovering of archaeological objects will be closely linked to explorations and investigations into the Muckno area.

General objectives and policies for the protection of Natural and Built Heritage in Castleblayney are provided in Chapter 4, 8 and 15 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019. Specific objectives for the protection of Natural and Built Heritage in Castleblayney are as follows:

Objectives for the Protection of Natural and Built Heritage	
CBO 1.	Ensure that all plans and projects relating to natural and built heritage within Castleblayney Town are subject to policies AAP1-AAP5 contained within Chapter 4, Environment and Heritage, of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019.
CBO 2.	Encourage and facilitate the restoration and refurbishment of the Courthouse during the plan period.
CBO 3.	Prohibit development within the environs of Lough Muckno, unless in exceptional circumstances, where it has been proven to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that the integrity of the Lough and its surrounding landscape will not be threatened.
CBO 4.	Protect and conserve the River Fane and Gas Lake and its environs from inappropriate development.

Town Centre

11.5 Town Centre

The oldest part of the town includes Muckno Street, Market Square, Main Street, York Street, Henry Street and Thomas Street. The properties located along these roads extend at right angles to the carriageway to include long linear back lands which are hampered by lack of good road access. The multi-ownership of land parcels off these streets and the inability to provide access and car parking has contributed to the dereliction of sizeable tracts of backland and the marked dilapidation of the buildings therein.

The principal axis that dissects the town is West Street (commonly referred to as Main Street). It is terminated at either end by the imposing edifices of the nineteenth century Courthouse and the twentieth century Lyric Theatre. A combination of narrow shop frontages and high verticality on West Street gives a fairly strong sense of enclosure to the town centre.

There are a number of key buildings in Castleblayney which act as important focal points at the entrances to the town. They strongly influence the perception of Castleblayney and are visual flagships for the quality of its built environment.

The Old Courthouse may be considered the most impressive structure in the town and its visual prominence contributes greatly to the townscape character of Castleblayney. Its apex setting helps punctuate the enclosed linear expanse of Main Street at the entrance into Lough Muckno Park. It is also identified closely with the core of the settlement and dominates the most important public space in the town. The two nearby gatehouses are also splendid buildings that perform a vital role in defining the square and in marking the entrance to the parkland.

This area to the east of Muckno Street, adjacent to Gas Lough offers significant development potential. The lands comprise of derelict properties and back gardens with limited access at present.

Castleblayney has the potential to create a new urban streetscape with the recent construction of McGrath Road parallel to Main Street, linking Monaghan Street and Muckno Street with pedestrian links to Main Street. Backlands have been opened up for development and some construction has taken place on these properties.

New development in Castleblayney Town Centre shall be compliant with the objectives and policies in Chapters 4, 5, 6, 8 and 15 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019.

Retailing

11.6 Retailing

The Retail Development Strategy for County Monaghan, 2003, highlighted the high levels of leakage from Castleblayney to other towns in the region, particularly in the comparison goods sector. Dundalk, Armagh, Newry and Carrickmacross have all increased their retail capacity, while Castleblayney remained relatively under developed until recent years.

With the opening of new shopping centres in Monaghan Town and Dundalk, Castleblayney suffered significant leakage in both the convenience and comparison goods sectors. Convenience shopping in Castleblayney has, to a large extent, become overly reliant upon the top-up shopping trade and the custom of the less mobile sections of the townspeople, namely the old and the unemployed. However the opening of a discount store on the Monaghan Road and the construction of two new shopping centres off the Main Street has helped to redress this loss. The significant leakage of comparison spending has not however been addressed.

A Retail Development Strategy for County Monaghan for the period 2012-2019 is currently being drafted. Until this has been completed, retailing proposals within Castleblayney shall have regard to the Retail Development Strategy for County Monaghan, October 2003. New retail development within Castleblayney shall be compliant with the objectives and policies contained in Chapters 5, 6, 8 and 15 of the Monaghan County Development Plan, 2013-2019.

Population and Housing

11.7 Population and Housing

11.7.1 Population

The population of Castleblayney increased by 4.7% from 1,712 persons in 2002 to 1,793 in 2006. Preliminary 2011 Census figures indicate that the population of the town declined by 3.9% between 2006 and 2011 from 1,822 persons to 1,751 persons. However, the town and environs population of 3,634 is an increase of 16.3% from 2006.

Census 2011 population figures indicate an increase in numbers of persons living in the rural area between 2006 and 2011.

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 introduced the requirement to include a core strategy within all development plans. The core strategy must show that the development objectives in the development plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines. As a consequence the quantum of residential land use zonings must be commensurate with population growth targets set out within Chapter 3 Settlement/Core Strategy. In this settlement strategy Castleblayney is identified as a Tier 2 town which provides an extensive range of services including health, community, financial, employment and retail. Sustained growth in this settlement is required.

11.7.2 Housing Strategy

Section 95(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 requires that a development plan shall set out a strategy for the purposes of ensuring that the housing needs of the existing and future population of the area in terms of tenure are provided for. Monaghan Local Authorities adopted a Housing Strategy in 2007. A review of this strategy has been undertaken and is presented as Chapter 16 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019.

The Planning Authority shall, in accordance with the requirements of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and the policies identified in the Housing Strategy, continue require developers of all private housing developments on zoned housing land in the five main towns to provide 20% of units for social and affordable housing needs.

11.7.3 Residential Developments

All new residential housing in Castleblayney Town shall be required to comply with the objectives and policies contained within Chapters 3, 4, 6, 8 and 15 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013–2019.

Industry, Enterprise and Employment

11.8 Industry, Enterprise and Employment

Castleblayney is strategically located on the main national primary route from Dublin to Derry (N2), and is linked to Dundalk, the gateway for the region, via the national secondary route (N53). The major towns of Monaghan (24kms), Dundalk (27 kms) Carrickmacross (17 kms) and Armagh City (27 kms) are located a short distance away. Castleblayney's strategic location on main transport corridors, combined with the relatively short travelling distances from the town to ports and major centres of population, offers significant potential for growth in the industrial sector.

Historically, Castleblayney had a strong industrial tradition in the craft industries related to woodworking and furniture manufacture. However these industries have declined significantly throughout the country and most new industries in Co. Monaghan are concentrated or linked to the agri-food production.

Two distinct industrial areas have developed over the past thirty years in Castleblayney. Bree Industrial Estate, which was developed for industry in 1975 by the IDA, remains home to a number of sizeable industries including Kingspan Insulation Ltd, Shabra Polymex and Recycling Ltd, and M.C. Chemicals Ltd. Direct access to the estate is possible from the N2 Castleblayney to Clontibret re-alignment.

In addition, a number of new industries have developed along the Monaghan Road to the north of the town. Castlecool Ltd., a warehousing and distribution centre, and Cargill Integra, a food production company, have successfully established business here. Castleblayney Enterprise Ltd has been hugely successful in establishing new businesses in the town and they have developed an Enterprise Centre on the Dublin Road which hosts small manufacturing and service enterprises. Through the provision of starter units, advice and administrative back-up for emerging businesses, this Centre acts as an invaluable launch pad for the creation of new businesses in the town.

A number of small and medium-sized manufacturing businesses are also located on the Monaghan Road, closer to the town centre and Muckno Street. A number of serviced sites are located on the Bog Road and some industrial development is also being carried out on the Ballybay Road.

Approximately 91 hectares of land have been zoned for industrial development in Castleblayney. This is considered sufficient to accommodate the anticipated level of industrial development in the town during the life of the plan. These areas are identified on the attached map CYDP 1.

All new industrial development within Castleblayney shall be required to comply with the objectives and policies contained within Chapters 4, 5, 6, 8 and 15 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013–2019. Specific objectives for Industry in Castleblayney are as follows:

Objectives for Industry, Enterprise and Employment

- CBO 5.** Ensure that all plans and projects relating to industry within Castleblayney Town are subject to policies AAP1-AAP5 contained within Chapter 4, Environment and Heritage, of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019.
- CBO 6.** Promote Castleblayney as a key industrial centre and encourage the provision of hi-tech industries.

11.9 Infrastructure and Services

11.9.1 Roads and Traffic Management

Since the closure of the railway in the 1950's, Castleblayney has become solely dependent upon the road network to service its transport needs. The town's strategic location on the National Primary Dublin-Derry (N2) Route and National Secondary (N53) link to Dundalk has been considerably enhanced with the opening of the M1 Dublin – Belfast Motorway and the N2 Carrickmacross By-pass. Castleblayney is now located less than 25kms from the M1 motorway and Dundalk Train Station, and within easy reach of the airport and shipping ports on the eastern seaboard. With the improvements in transport links, the town has been identified as having potential to develop as a commuter town for the east coast areas north of Dublin.

The completion of the N2 Carrickmacross By-pass and M1 Motorway intersection on the Castleblayney Road, Dundalk has significantly reduced the journey time between Castleblayney and Dublin. The completion of the N2 Castleblayney-Clontibret Realignment Route has provided a by-pass for the town, reduced traffic congestion in the town centre and improved the environment of Castleblayney.

The Planning Authority also proposes investigating the potential development of a number of new urban roads. These proposals improve traffic movement in and around the town and are shown on CYDP1. These are as follows:

- Link from Monaghan Road (R938) to Keady Road (R181)
- Link from Dundalk Road (N53) directly to Clontibret-Castleblayney by-pass (N2 roundabout)
- Link roads from West Street to Bog Road
- Inner Relief Road from Monaghan Road (R938) to Bog Road
- Link from McGrath Road to Bog Road

The N2 primary route carries the major part of all through traffic, while the N53 secondary route to Dundalk is also heavily used by traffic accessing Dundalk and the Motorway. There are three regional roads linking Castleblayney to neighbouring towns. The R181 regional road to Keady and Newtownhamilton in the north-east accommodates a sizeable throughput of traffic and heavy goods vehicles. This section of the R181 is twice as busy as the R183 Ballybay Road and the R181 Shercock and Lough Egish Roads. All three roads are important in terms of the volumes of heavy goods and commercial vehicles they carry and its impact on the town centre. The Plan incorporates a proposed link between the re-aligned N2 and the N53 Dundalk Road.

Works will continue on improving the regional road network serving the town. The provision of access between the N2 and R181 has been identified as a priority in this plan period. The draft plan proposes the construction of three new links between the N2, north of the town centre and the R181 Keady/Newtownhamilton Road. The outer route, to be constructed in partnership with local landowners and developers will by-pass the town centre and residential areas to the north of the town. The two inner roads will offer access to the Bog Road Commercial/Industrial area.

With the removal of national and regional traffic from the town centre, the plan envisages environmental improvements to the town centre and urban/local roads

servicing the town's residential areas. In particular road re-alignment and widening, provision of footpaths and public lighting is required on local roads servicing new housing developments in Conabury, Bree, Killycard and Onomy. A number of proposed road upgrades are indicated on Map CYPD1.

General objectives and policies in relation to roads are contained in Chapters 6, 8 and 15 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013 – 2019. Policies in relation to access standards are contained in Chapter 15 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013 – 2019.

11.9.2 Parking

The most heavily subscribed public car parks in Castleblayney are located at the Commons and to the rear of the Town Council offices. The car park to the north of Main Street along McGrath Road provides additional capacity for the town centre.

All new developments in Castleblayney shall comply with car parking requirements laid out in Chapter 15 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019. Specific policies with relation to roads in Castleblayney are as follows:-

Objectives for Roads	
CBO 7.	Ensure that all plans and projects relating to roads infrastructure within Castleblayney Town are subject to policies AAP1-AAP5 contained within Chapter 4, Environment and Heritage, of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019.
CBO 8.	A 15 metre corridor should be maintained between the zoned lands and the fence line either side of the Castleblayney by pass to protect the road for any future upgrade works.

Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) may be used to provide infrastructure in Castleblayney. However, the Council should not tie itself to provide infrastructure through PPPs alone.

11.9.3 Waste Water Services

Monaghan County Council is the sole Sanitary Authority for County Monaghan and is currently responsible for the provision of Water Services (Water and Waste Water) throughout the county.

The capacity of the wastewater treatment works in Castleblayney is shown in the table below.

Table 11.1 : Capacity of Waste Water Treatment Works for Castleblayney

Town/Village	Existing Design P.E.	Current Loading P.E.	Treatment Type	Proposals
Castleblayney	12,960	5,692	Secondary	Improved works to meet EPA granted Discharge Licence(DL)

The current Water Services Investment Programme 2010-2012, provides for major investment in waste water supply infrastructure. The contracts planned during the current programme includes:-

- Castleblayney Sewerage Scheme Phase 1 (Waste water Treatment Plant Upgrade) €3,927,000.

The town's water supply is provided by Monaghan County Council from its treatment plant at Kilcitt, as part of the Lough Egish Regional Water Supply Scheme. Whilst the supply is good in terms of quality, significant defects in the town's distribution network have been uncovered and these will be addressed under the County Water Conservation Scheme over the coming years.

11.9.4 Power and Telecommunications

The Council will continue to co-operate with statutory and regulated bodies in the provision of power and communication facilities throughout the town. Chapters 6 and 15 contain the relevant policy for telecommunications throughout County Monaghan.

11.9.5 Education

The important educational function performed by the town, for both the people of Castleblayney and its hinterland, is underlined by the fact that approximately 1,400 children attend schools in Castleblayney. School numbers are swollen by the influx from the rural hinterland. Such a comparatively large number of pupils have implications for a range of urban issues in Castleblayney, notably pedestrian safety, traffic management and recreational provision.

There are four national schools in Castleblayney:

- Convent Junior School, enrolment 176
- Scoil Mhuire na mBuachaillí, enrolment 125
- Scoil na gCailini, enrolment 109
- Gaelscoil Lorgan, enrolment 86

In addition there are two secondary colleges:

- Castleblayney College, enrolment 305
- Our Lady's Secondary School, enrolment 605

The town's primary schools are located close to the town centre, the Junior School, girl's national school on New Street and the boy's on the Dublin Road. Since the mid- nineties the two post-primary schools have extended their facilities to meet the needs of the area.

Our Lady's Secondary School is the largest school in Castleblayney having recently completed a substantial new extension to the existing school buildings. It is a co-educational establishment catering for students aged between 12 and 18 years of age. The popularity of sporting events such as Gaelic football, hurling, camogie, basketball and soccer has placed a considerable strain on the facilities of the school. This is particularly so given the need to condense all sporting activities during school hours.

Castleblayney College has a split campus, straddling both sides of the Dublin Road presenting a huge risk to pupil's dangers to pupils. It too is severely limited in terms of space to provide for a single campus and additional recreational/sporting facilities space.

Apart from the availability of finance from the education authorities, the future expansion plans of these schools will be driven by the following factors:

- Growth in population levels in Castleblayney, principally due to new home set- ups in those areas where residential planning permission exists; and
- The need to provide a modern educational service to the children.

In addition to the aforementioned schools there are a number of crèches/pre-schools spread throughout the town.

Policies in relation to development for education purposes are contained in chapter 7 of the Monaghan County Development Plan, 2013-2019.

Recreation and Amenity

11.10 Recreation and Amenity

There is a strong interrelationship between recreational provision and the provision of public open space, given that public open space is commonly used for recreational purposes. This is especially relevant to Castleblayney and its efforts to accommodate recreational needs within the confines of Lough Muckno, which is the largest and by far the most important stretch of public open space within the town. Bearing this in mind, it is appropriate to consider the type of recreational activities found within Castleblayney and to examine what relationship, if any, they have with public open space.

Recreational provision can be categorised as follows: -

Active Indoor Recreation

Outside of the school gyms, there were no significant indoor leisure facilities in Castleblayney until the opening of a fully automated tenpin bowling centre.

Íontas Arts & Community Resource Centre offers space to host a whole range of courses which benefit the individual both personally and socially. This centre incorporates a theatre, fitness suite/gymnasium and other community rooms together with crèche facilities.

Active Outdoor Recreation

There is a vibrant and healthy level of participation in the Gaelic games in Castleblayney that has acted as a cohesive force in Castleblayney during difficult times. The hub of the Gaelic games is St. Mary's Park, Dublin Road. It has a large playing pitch and small training field. The GAA club has plans to expand and modernise its facilities to include a new pitch and a major stand that will seat 2,080 spectators within a covered stand and uncovered seating for 5,000.

Concra Wood Golf and Country Club was designed by Christy O'Connor Junior and Christy O'Connor Senior. It opened in 2008, and is located on the shores of Lough Muckno.

Lough Muckno Water Ski & Wakeboard Club was established in the 1980's and has hosted national and international competitions, most notably the European Waters Ski Championships.

Lough Muckno offers Castleblayney with a unique resource for water sports. However, a careful balance needs to be reached between the use of the Lough for water sports on the one hand and its retention for public amenity and preservation as a natural habitat on the other.

Passive Recreation

Lough Muckno Park offers excellent opportunities for the passive recreational activities of walking and hiking. Within this context, it is vital that existing rights of way and new rights of way are developed in sympathy with the park.

With the exception of Lough Muckno there are few areas within the centre of Castleblayney of key open space value. There is potential for the provision of open space adjacent to Drumillard housing development. It is the intention of the Town Council to develop this area as a Town Park.

Attention should be given to the enhancement of those parts of the town which impress themselves upon both the resident and the visitor. The Council in partnership with the local Tidy Towns group, residents associations and voluntary groups have the potential to greatly enhance the town and its environs through the carrying out of improvement works on the approaches to and open spaces within the town.

Objectives and policies in relation to development for recreation and open space are contained in Chapters 7, 8 and 15 of the Monaghan County Development Plan, 2013-2019. Specific policies for recreation and amenity in Castleblayney are provided below:-

Objectives for Recreation and Amenity

- CBO 9.** Ensure that all plans and projects relating to recreation and open space within Castleblayney Town are subject to policies AAP1-AAP5 contained within Chapter 4, Environment and Heritage, of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019.
- CBO 10.** Develop a town park at Drumillard within the life of the plan.

11.11 Tourism

In the past, the image of the town has been adversely affected by its proximity to the border and by the conflict in Northern Ireland. However, with the improvement in the political climate and the buoyant economic conditions now prevailing throughout the state, combined with better transport links to large centre of population, the potential for Castleblayney to capitalise on its assets for tourism related development is significant.

Lough Muckno – Castleblayney’s primary natural amenity asset

The special character and serenity of Lough Muckno derives from its combination of tranquil lakes, drumlin topography, wooded parkland and integral location within Castleblayney. As testimony to these aesthetic attributes, locals affectionately refer to Lough Muckno as the ‘Killarney of the North’.

Lough Muckno has in the past failed to capitalise on its potential. Visitor numbers attracted to the area were insufficient to make the Park a singular viable entity. For the most part, this can be attributed to the town’s poor image as a border settlement and its comparative inaccessibility resulting from security measures in the past. However, with the improvement in the political environment and the opening of border roads, Castleblayney is now well placed to capitalise upon the burgeoning tourism market in the Republic.

With this in mind, there is little doubt that the tourism development potential of Castleblayney rests with Lough Muckno. As well as being an environmental resource for Castleblayney, Lough Muckno possesses enormous potential to become an economic asset for the town. However, this requires sensitive management and a careful appraisal of all proposals submitted for the area. Any development proposals for the park should have regard to the public’s wider desire for sustainable development, preservation of the natural and built environment, and maintenance of public access. Its proximity to the built environment will help to spread the benefits of increased tourist revenue throughout the town.

The tourism prospects for Muckno Park are also linked to environmental improvements in the neighbouring public sector properties, most notably the Courthouse and the two Gate Lodges. The improvement and re-use of these buildings would greatly complement tourism enhancement efforts in Muckno Park.

Tourist Accommodation

The Glencarn Hotel and Leisure Centre is the largest provider of tourist accommodation in the town. This 30 bedroom hotel contains a 21-metre indoor swimming pool, and performs a valuable social and entertainment function in the town. Further visitor accommodation is provided in a number of bed & breakfast establishments in and around Castleblayney.

Having regard to this limited level of provision, there needs to be a balanced mix of hotel accommodation, bed & breakfast accommodation and self-catering accommodation. The recent trend for the development of self-catering apartments/dwellings for lease to tourists has affected hotel occupancy rates in rural areas. Oversupply in this sector has the potential, therefore, to detract from the economic viability of hotels in rural areas. In recognition of this fact, careful consideration should be given to the scale of permissions for self-catering development.

Fishing

Covering 900 acres, Lough Muckno has large quantities of Pike, Rudd, Bream, Perch and Roach, together with small quantities of Trout. In addition to Lough Muckno, there are another six lakes suitable for fishing within a 3-mile radius of Castleblayney ranging in size from 2.5 acres to 100 acres.

Water sports

In addition to its huge fishing appeal, Lough Muckno is sufficiently large to facilitate a range of water sports including windsurfing, sailing, boating and canoeing. Having regard to these fishing and water sport activities there is a clear need to minimise the potential for conflict between these two activities and to plan the usage of the Lough accordingly.

Golf

A championship 18-hole golf course was opened in 2008 on the shores of the Lough at Concra Wood.

Walking

Walking is a very popular pastime in Ireland. With this in mind, the natural asset of Lough Muckno, with its attributes of Black Island Forest and Concra Wood, is an ideal environment suitable for picnics and walks.

Other tourism activities

Other tourist activities available include ten-pin bowling, horse riding, tennis and clay pigeon shooting.

General objectives and policies in relation to development for tourism are contained in Chapters 4, 5, and 15 of the Monaghan County Development Plan, 2013 – 2019. Specific objectives for tourism in Castleblayney are as follows:-

Objectives for Tourism

- CBO 11.** Ensure that all plans and projects relating to tourism development within Castleblayney Town are subject to policies AAP1-AAP5 contained within Chapter 4, Environment and Heritage, of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019.
- CBO 12.** Promote Lough Muckno and its environs as the premier tourist attraction in the town.
- CBO 13.** Accommodate sustainable tourism related projects in an around Lough Muckno which are compatible with Chapter 4, Environment and Heritage, of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2013-2019.

