

Ballinasloe Area Community Development Company CLG

Submission to Ballinasloe Local Area Plan

Executive Summary of Submission

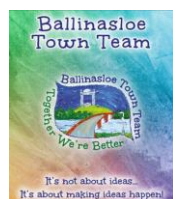
In essence the core three pillars of our community's focus for the next decade is:(as based on BACD's emerging 10-year Plan for the town)

- Sustainable Living Town (Enterprise and Remote Working prioritised)
- Tourism (including Heritage and Genealogy Development)
- Healthcare (Become the centre of excellence for mental health.)

Specifically, the Local Area plan needs to prioritise:

1. The prioritisation of the releasing of the final tranche of capital monies transferred to Galway County Council from the UDC for the development of River Park, Walks and Main Street Rear Development, which was first advocated in the Town Development Plan of 1985 and again in all of the 1990s plan.
2. The Plan must set out timescales and milestones in the implementation phases. A cursory read of the last plan 2015 – 2021 in relation to the town shows how little has been achieved.
3. The St. Brigids Hospital Complex development needs to be agreed upon and implemented with the relevant state agencies.
4. The North Western Regional Assembly RSES Report and it's designation of priorities for the town (As one it's 9 Key Towns) must underpin all development objectives .
5. To spatially and sustainably develop Ballinasloe as a counterbalance to population migration and apparent congested activity of the City – Ballinasloe needs to be earmarked for aggressive population growth.
6. The plant must create a template for working on resource and infrastructural collaboration between the Eastern – frontier of Galway County, South Roscommon, Westmeath and Offaly who all make up our Eastern and Southern hinterland and under the Just Transition Programme is viewed as the Western envelope of the Government's new programme post Bord na Mona in the Midlands.

Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd (BACD Ltd) as one of leading stakeholders of the community will work assiduously with the Executive and Members of Galway County Council and all Govt. Agencies in realising our ambition for our town.



BACD Submission to the Local Area Plan

Introduction

Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd (BACD Ltd) (see Appendix 1 for Full background and details of BACD Ltd.) as the local community development company have carefully considered this submission based on the works carried out by the company in Ballinasloe over the past 20 years.

Our submission has been workshopped by our board members over some months and reflects the deliverable priorities of our developing 10 year Strategic Plan for the Community. (See appendix 2 Ballinasloe 2030 + beyond Plan Presentation).

We earnestly believe that our submission needs to be reviewed in conjunction with the points made about our Town's potential and attributes in the envelope of the Ireland 2040 Plan, the CEDRA Report and Teagasc Index of the Economic Strength of Rural Towns 2014, The Just Transition Report 2019, and the NWRA Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020 – 2032 .

Specifically pages 124 and 125 of the NWRA Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020 – 2032 details what needs to be prioritised and actioned by the local authority as we are located in one of the County's Strategic Corridors and has been designated as one of 9 key towns to deliver its ambitious and forward-looking strategy for our region.

Context

BACD Ltd are currently formulating a 10-year plan for the town that will work alongside the County Development Plan & Local Area Plan for Ballinasloe. In essence there are three pillars of our community's focus for the next decade:

- Sustainable Living Town (Enterprise and Remote Working prioritised)
- Tourism (including Heritage and Genealogy Development)
- Healthcare (Become the centre of excellence for mental health.)

The Local Area Plan/Galway County Council must set out to partner and underpin the key deliverables of the community 10 year being created for the town which addresses the needs of the area.

Submission:

Our submission refers to issues and actions that should be prioritised for inclusion based on the layout of themes included in the Local Area Plan as follows:.

1) Vision and Strategic Context

For Ballinasloe as the County Town – the last 20 years of development can be best described as uneven with significant decline of town centre and erosion of local manufacturing based jobs from At Cross in 1999 right through to this months announcement of the loss of 105 with the APTAR closure .

The loss of over 2000 manufacturing and service jobs in that 20 years have been somewhat offset by the growth of the commuter workforce to Galway, Athlone, Tullamore and even Dublin .

The foundation of BACD ; in 1999 has been one of the most positive legacies of the local losses and in supporting some 500 new posts and 80 companies has(with the support of the agencies) delivered on an Enterprise economy , see appendix 4.

The Celtic Tiger years left the town with some additional housing, a new Nursing home, a new 4 star hotel , a new Dunlo Shopping Complex , new investment in educational facilities . The designation of the town as a RAPID town (one of the 51 most economically disadvantaged towns in the country in 2010) in it's entirety allowed for fast tracking and prioritising of all sporting and leisure grants which has resulted in the town centre having a myriad of top of the range, floodlit sports facilities in all codes.

The economic collapse of the town's fortunes owing to marked rise in unemployment was confirmed by the Teagasc Government Report of 2014 when on the Index of Economic Strength of 292 Rural Towns; we were ranked 249th for unemployment and 194th for emigration.

Allied to the economic malaise - the Reform of Local Government, the abolition of the town Councils – replacing them with unwieldy Municipal Districts in 2014 saw the community without its own administration of local affairs in 173 years.

In the six years since the removal of the Town Council , loss of Mayor, loss of Urban elections – even as a platform for issues of significance has removed administrative focus on the towns development which the Development Company through the Town Team has attempted with limited support to address.

On the takeover in 2014 Galway County Council had transferred to them from the old UDC a capital account of €22 million (€4.5 for the Convent / Library Project/ €6.5 for the Streets Enhancement and landscaping Project / €1.2 million for Community Capital Projects / €6 m set aside for the Remediation works of the old Landfill in Poolboy and €4.3 for the development of River Park, Walks and Main St. Rear Development).

Given that the final planning problems with the new National School Development have been addressed and the Dept of Education will be proceeding to tender and build shortly it is imperative that this Development plan signals the prioritisation of the releasing of the final tranche of capital monies and utilising it with INTER REG / National or other European Funding to develop the parallel street from the school in the Convent Grounds, a Biosphere River Park and Walk and new road way with commercial opportunities which can address the deficit in shopping choices

identified in the Town Benchmarking Report of 2014 & Review in 2016 (See full details in Appendix 4)

This focus would allow for a new regeneration of the town centre to the RIVER – which was first advocated in the Town Development Plan of 1985 and again in all of the 1990s plan.

Another key ask with this County five year plan is that it sets out timescales and milestones in the implementation phases. A cursory read of the last plan 2015 – 2021 in relation to the town shows how really little has been achieved.

The town has been eclipsed by Tuam in the past decade in terms of population – this was not signalled or prioritised in any of the previously published plans. In the 20 years since 1996 - the population growth of Ballinasloe has remained stunted in comparison to its Loughrea and Tuam counterparts.

If the County is serious about taking pressure off the city and spatially spreading sustainable living and economic activity to all parts of the county a far more aggressive strategy and focus is needed for Ballinasloe than that of the past 25 years .

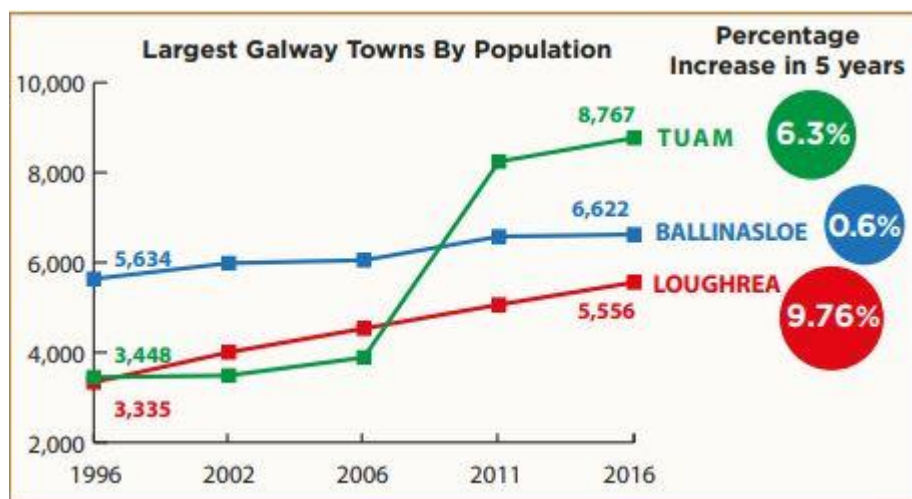


Fig1 : Population Statistics for Loughrea Tuam & Ballinasloe 1996 to 2016

The next plan for five years has to accept that the location of the town as practically frontier in that some 35% of its natural catchment population lives in County Roscommon and some 25% of its citizens work in Athlone in County Westmeath .

Some latitude has to be allowed for in the plan in interlocking the developmental objectives of Ballinasloe to provide some of the needs of South Roscommon , the Connacht side of Athlone and west Offaly.

The NWRA RSES Report encourages neighbouring and adjoining county councils to harmonise approaches to development and we strongly feel that Ballinasloe could form a pilot in this regard with Roscommon County Council & Offaly County Council .

2) Compliance with the Core Strategy & Residential Development.

Re Focus Ballinasloe Town as an area of Exponential Growth.

Ballinasloe Town and the vast majority of the Ballinasloe Municipal District is outside the GTPS study Area and this should remain.

The Town of Ballinasloe should be designated an Area of unlimited growth in the Development Plan. Fast track the upgrade Waste Water and Water services in The Ballinasloe Electoral area to allow the Town and the Municipal District to grow its population in line with other areas of the County.

Current house prices (2021) indicate that private housing is outside the means of many people and is likely to remain so. Therefore the provision of housing will largely rely on local government developments. Borrowing for such developments may be inexpensive in the period of the development plan 2022-2028 based on current economic evidence.

Population growth of 30% from 6700 to 8700 should be our target. The development of appropriate and serviced lands to provide for high quality, well laid out and well landscaped sustainable residential communities with an appropriate mix of housing types and densities, together with complementary land uses such as community facilities, local services and public transport facilities, and sustainable transport options to serve the residential population of the area and the surrounding environment needs to be a priority.

Finding a suitable pilot project with some of the St. Brigid's Grounds and the State Housing Agency must be key.

Prioritise infill developments.

Options for development of housing for the plan period under consideration for promotion must include:

- Green site development with utilities provided.
- Brown site development – there may be some utilities already in place.
- Reusing / restoring / redeveloping the upper floors in 2nd and 3rd floor structures (usually over a commercial premises) in streets and thoroughfares within the town(s). This may require governmental grant aid to private owners of such premises. This type of street renewal would have a knock effect on local businesses etc. Utilities already in place.
- Downsizing developments i.e. retirement campus – many middle class housing estates now house one or two parents per house whose children have fled the nest and they are sitting on 3 and 4 bedroom premises far too large for their requirements. Allowing them to sell up and downsize would release substantial housing for other families to use and would also provide a retirement nest egg to the sellers!! The downsize premises are essential for this to work.
- A proper mix of social housing within private housing schemes.
- A supply of single parent / single child accommodation i.e. 2 bedsits etc.
- An assurance from Irish Water that it can supply any new developments.

3) Climate Change/ Environment, Renewable Energies

Ballinasloe Flood Relief Scheme

There is an urgent need to fast track the timeframe on the proposed €8.59 million flood relief scheme proposed for Ballinasloe from the CFRAMs report which had its inception in 2018. The proposed completion date is 2025, and this is five years away and the risk of flooding in town remains high owing to the ever-increasing rainfall levels. Further flooding would cause interruption to business and to citizens of the town and its hinterlands.

There is an urgent need for Galway Co Council, the OPW, Engineering Consultants, Environmental Consultants, and all other stakeholders to redouble their efforts to fast track the timeframe.

There is an urgent need for develop and identify a preferred option for Ballinasloe flood relief Scheme.

SEI Plan Ballinasloe

Ballinasloe will play its part in helping County Galway to deliver on the climate change actions as per the CAP. We are already establishing ourselves as an urban Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) under the umbrella of BACD Ltd . We are members of the SEAI network and are working closely with our Mentor in completing the Energy Master Plan (EMP) application.

The EMP will be our roadmap for the next 10 years of this project. Our aim is to become a low carbon urban community. The SEC team is the driving force of this project, hoping to create a 5-8% reduction in carbon emissions through increased energy efficiency and energy upgrades. This will include home and commercial retrofitting.

We will develop energy management skills and knowledge and invest in smart technologies to facilitate the transition to low carbon transport and heating. Our Register Of Opportunities will highlight what natural resources we can take advantage of to develop renewable energy.

We are very fortunate to have the River Suck which meanders around our town. The banks of the River Suck will provide an ideal location to establish a renewable energy demonstration project - a very effective way of introducing solar energy to the community and increasing acceptance levels. It will be a small scale, 6/8 solar panels, which will introduce the concept of, and promote the benefits of solar energy being very passive, with no noise or pollution.

It will empower our community to generate our own renewable energy project which will be owned, operated and controlled by the community. The benefits of the SEC at community level will result in enhanced comfort and health from living/working in energy efficient buildings, financial and energy savings, boosting local employment and supporting community development. SEC's contribute to regional/national energy targets and reduce society's environmental impact. Globally low carbon and renewable energy support the need to address climate change by reducing global emissions.

The Local Area Plan must set out to partner and underpin the key deliverables of the SEI Plan being created for the town which addresses in a very comprehensive way the evolution of renewable energies and protection of environment.

Environmental

Anti Dumping Initiatives required , building awareness, educating and putting measures in place to prevent Dumping in scenic areas. Ballinasloe Walks and Trails have been very active in a number of voluntary cleanup days in Poolboy Bog with the support of the local litter warden, tidy towns Ballinasloe and the Environment section of GCC. There should be more structured Engagement with the Environment Section, Litter warden, Galway Co Co to organize targeted voluntary clean-ups of Poolboy Bog and Coordination of organized cleanups during the year

Bulky item collections be targeted at 1 per month to be available to the community for this area in civic amenity centre to prevent illegal dumping along with Signage for these bulky item collections be displayed on the entrances to this bog area/at amenity centre entrance and on social media or brochures

4) Town Centre and Regeneration

The plan must make the town centre – attractive, accessible, amenable, and sustainable. The plan must also support the town centre retailing and commercial activities that enhance the vitality and vibrancy of our town.

The immediate Use it or Lose It ‘attitude’ needs to be adopted with derelict commercial buildings in the immediate town centre – a charter needs to be implemented which lays out stating the minimum standards of care/appearance which must be adhered to.

Better usage of existing streetscape – bringing business onto the streets through outdoor café and restaurant seating area’s.

Better use of our side lanes which lead onto our main streets which again can be incorporated into the previous point.

Development of cycle lanes through the town centre, promoting health and wellbeing and taking unnecessary traffic out of the centre.

All new development and refurbishment to be carried out for a sustainable future with emphasis placed on eco friendly practices leading to a better environment.

The town to be a centre for Electric Vehicle charging.

The plan should include :

- Sizeable Grant aid for old buildings
- Investment in quality signage
- Develop rear of Main Street / Society Street – River Parks, River Walk

Provide an annual grant to cover management and resources to manage the public realm of town centre.

Enhancement of the Marina area and routes to the town centre will also benefit both the residents and business as well as tourists

We feel that housing on the outskirts of the town is more beneficial overall compared to more dense housing closer to the town centre. These housing units of course need to be carefully zoned and planned to ensure they enhance the area, facilitate the required schools, creches, and other services needed for a growing population.

The town centre is ideal for socialising, and the facilitation of additional restaurants, cafes and recreational centres to be promoted and new businesses serving the locality in these areas supported as much as possible.

Ballinasloe is the ideal stop on the Athlone to Galway greenway. For leisure cycling and attracting tourists to the area, who in turn will support local businesses, is essential. The inclusion of formal cycle paths on the main routes around the town would be a welcome addition. Any new planning should certainly promote the inclusion of cycle and pedestrian pathways either along main road routes, or through alternative routes leading to the town centre.

Integrating enterprise land uses with other uses such as residential, transportation and tourism

Consideration to fuller exploitation of the main focal points of the town :utilise for outside dining and commercial activity, A place for country markets / exhibition of local arts & crafts Regional or specialist Organic Food events etc. Eg. The Fair Green which at present is used for one week in the year and car parking for the GAA pitch - hosting festivals/ concerts/ events on a regular basis. It is a natural arena which is underutilised

5) Economic & Enterprise Development

Prioritise development of IDA Business and Technology Park along with the relevant state agencies.

Provide a realistic Budget for enterprise centre management including effective management and tenant progression of Library Office Space

The town and environs of Ballinasloe are IDEALLY suited for the development of Remote Working Hubs. A local charter of Grow Remote has been active since 2019. In addition, there are numerous vacant buildings (either whole or part) which can be transformed into remote working hubs. GCC need to advise on potential sites for such remote working hubs

BACD are currently planning to develop a number of enterprise hubs under their direct management, these along with the other existing and future enterprise hubs in the town need to have a unified marketing approach.

6) Tourism

Ballinasloe is one of the largest towns in the new Failte Ireland Hidden Heartlands. Discussions have already taken place with Failte Ireland to find ways of developing the town as a tourism hub. There

are sufficient tourist attractions within a short distance including Clonmacnoise, Battle of Aughrim as well as significant number tours of ancient churches. The interpretive centre in Aughrim is underutilised and Development of same is imperative

Ballinasloe needs the Development of a Hidden Heartlands central tourism office in the town (part of TII office) and utilisation of the county Tourism Officer one day per week in Ballinasloe

It is imperative that such an important town like Ballinasloe will be included on the chosen routing for the Dublin to Clifden Greenway, providing direct access to the town. The facilities available to the visitor which are needed on a daily basis are in place – Banking, Laundry, Bars, Restaurants, Cafés, Accommodation, Bike Hire & Repair, direct access to Public Transport – an ideal Starting / Finishing point for any tour.

Ballinasloe is an ideal centre point to be an ‘Axis’ between the Hidden Heartlands and The Greenway allowing for a multitude of activities to be undertaken.

A Tourism , Genealogical and Heritage Centre needs to be established to anchor the social enterprise and soft skill sets needed for domestic and international visitors. Along with the Development of a Comprehensive Tourist Trail Within Ballinasloe & hinterland

The development of River Walks, Bog Walks, Trails a Biodiversity River Park , canal walks and forest walks need to be fast tracked in conjunction with the pre planning , tendering and construction of the OPW Flood Alleviation works.

7) Community Facilities

Additional facilities for teenagers to spend their free time is key to any urban setting. An outdoor park with dedicated areas for young children and also teenagers would be ideal

Community sports facilities are indeed of great benefit and Ballinasloe town is well served with such resources. Whilst the county may have a...”rich and varied cultural tradition” we in Ballinasloe also have a number of buildings to accommodate the performance of cultural and artistic productions. Such infrastructure includes a Town Hall (capacity circa 400) a Town Band Hall (capacity circa 100), the Library (capacity circa 100) and two hotels with ballrooms attached. The town has Drama groups, a Musical Society, a Town Band, a Harp Orchestra, a Pantomine group and a vibrant traditional music scene. All of these contribute to social capital and enhance social cohesion and community spirit. Given the infrastructure that’s in place currently, both in artistic endeavour and the premises to house same much greater emphasis should be placed on the performing arts within the town. Develop cultural events calendar – October Fair , Ada English / Larry Reynolds / Dinny Delaney etc. The plan must encourage and foster greater collaboration and co marketing of these groups, facilities for audience participation.

Ballinasloe Social Services and other such advocacy groups play a key role in responding to the needs of our fellow citizens and the Plan must identify avenues of assistance for them for the next few years.

8) Built Heritage Architectural

A heritage trail for town centre linking to an app to allow users find their own level of engagement needs to be introduced onto the historical landscape.

St Brigids Hospital Grounds – buildings and 200 acre campus an architectural conservation plan needs to be urgently implemented.

Clontuskert Abbey headstones need to be restored and need to have full preservation

Promote Awareness of the towns Past Which Includes Protected Structures, ACA's and Archeology

Establish and create trails and tours of these ecclesiastical and archaeological heritage sites. There needs to be more signage, directions and information points from the centre points around Ballinasloe, ie. Tesco roundabout and marina. These trails and tours need to be linked in with other tourist attractions like Beara Breifne Way, Hymany Way

Ballinasloe needs a tourist office with literature highlighting all these ecclesiastical and heritage sites within a radius of 30miles.

There needs to be more website/online promotion of these sites on Hidden Heartlands linked sites and also Ballinasloe related and linked websites ie. Ballinasloe.ie

Facilitating modern living standards and conveniences in some of our older buildings that are protected structures located in conservation areas.

When owner's of these protected structures wish to enhance or renovate them there needs to be some coherence between all the involved preservation bodies. Currently it is impossible for many of owner's to do anything with these structures as different bodies cannot agree. Maybe the bodies for these structures need to be consolidated.

Over the shop living needs an integrated approach from HSE, Environment , Planning , Fire and Conservation elements, not the disjointed one that leaves the property owner discouraged from making improvements – even with Government Schemes.

9) Transportation & Movement

Promotion of Walking, Cycling ,Use Of Public Transport

- Trailing/ Signposting and mapping of current and new town centre and suburb walk trail
- Development of Athlone to Galway greenway, ideal for healthy and safe activities.

- Development of River Suck amenity, including walkways or board walk on the new levees which will accompany the Floodrelief scheme
- Developing infrastructure in Poolboy bog for walkways that link the Beara Breifne/Hyman routes with the riverwalk way that runs from Poolboy lough to the Marina or other access roads into the town in alliance with Galway Sports Partnership, tourism officer and Local Authority.
- Signage for this developing area & guided bogwalks, signage in the center of town to indicate all of the developing walkways both in Poolboy, linking walks on Hymany way through Aughrim Battle field and Aughrim village, suck valley walks so they become recognised walks.
- Signage for local biodiversity in this area. Developing infrastructure of picnic benches, look out points in scenic spots.
- GCC to work in conjunction with Ballinasloe Walks & Trails
- In this disadvantaged area of Ballinasloe working with the National Physical Activity Plan and Sports Partnership Officer to promote healthy activities ie. Walking, cycling, nordic walking or any other activities that will support all sectors of our community.
- Investment in areas to sit and water refill points.
- In Ballinasloe and surrounding areas we have a larger aging population and we need to provide easy accessible sports and activities for this part of the community.
- Support and funding to develop some surrounding public owned lands for community recreational use and integrate awareness, education in the preservation and promotion of biodiversity
- More frequency of public transport services to the main population centres
- More frequency of connections for outline rural population centres
- Provision of public transport timetables that coincide with travel/ work requirements – East and West

Smarter Travel To Reduce Dependence On The Private Car

- Ballinasloe is ideally positioned to take advantage of ‘Smarter Travel’ being on the main transport route from East to West, with rail & good infrastructure for public transport.
- Need for increased frequency of both train and bus availability
- Introduction of more regional timetables (Athlone-Galway rail travel), similar with bus connections.
- parking standards for new developments can’t reflect the need to reduce car dependency until a light bus or suburban service is introduced to plug into current public bus and rail services.

Improving the Safety of vulnerable road users (cyclists/ pedestrians)

- Development of Athlone to Galway greenway.
- Continue to improve the footpath maintenance within the urban area & encourage individuals to use these on daily walks
- Develop specific walkways within the urban area, increased signage for existing walk trails

Appendixes attached

- Appendix 1: BACD Company Details & Background Details
- Appendix 2 The Summary Presentation of our evolving 10 Year Plan 2030 & beyond .
- Appendix 3 The Re Imagining St. Brigids Report
- Appendix 4 : 2014 Town Benchmarking Report & 2016 Town Benchmarking Review
- Appendix 5 Pages from the RSES 124 and 125 detailing the Key Town priorities for Ballinasloe

Summary of 2030 and beyond Community plan

Sustainability/Smart Living Town

Ballinasloe is a Key Town in many ways. One less often discussed is the proximity to Athlone Institute of Technology as well as NUIG and GMIT will be of particular interest to technology companies now and even more so as AIT transitions to University Status, making Ballinasloe an ideal hub for these companies in the Medical, Pharma, Software and Fin Tech sectors whilst keeping them situated in county Galway.

Combining the tech opportunities with the proximity to Portiuncula as a University Hospital will provide additional opportunities to attract specialised business to the town in the medical and pharma area.

With a stable and entrenched (family) population, the town and its hinterlands provides a wide employment resource pool for potential enterprises. This deep-rooted workforce will not job hop for slight improvements in hourly income. As the number of non-Irish population is relatively small when compared with the larger towns and city in the county, there will be low staff turnover should there be a major economic shift.

The location of the town to the major transportation arteries allows for the seamless the movement of goods and materials from suppliers to customers at home or overseas.

The town and environs of Ballinasloe are ideally suited for the development of Remote Working Hubs. A local charter of Grow Remote has been active since 2019. In addition, there are numerous vacant buildings (either whole or part) which can be transformed into remote working hubs.

Ballinasloe will play its part in helping County Galway to deliver on the climate change actions as per the CAP. We are already establishing ourselves as an urban Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) under the umbrella of BACD Ltd . We are members of the SEAI network and are working closely with our Mentor in completing the Energy Master Plan (EMP) application.

Tourism

The town as a Demesne laid out town of the 19th century with its Clancarty influences, the Mills, the Canal, the Workhouse, the Hospitals , the Railway , the Fair and the Early Christian sites combined with quality accommodation , walks, parks, trails and of course the marinas on the Shannon – Erne waterway – the most westerly link, means the town is poised to become a new Hidden Heartlands destination location .

The Battle of Aughrim site a few kilometres west , Clonmacnoise (15 kms away) the Beara Brefni way and Hymany Way waymarked walks and the Shannon – Suck Valley corridor provide the community with a variety of underutilised assets to deliver a Tourism and Heritage Strategy as part of our 10 year plan.

Mental Health

St. Brigid’s Hospital was one of the largest institutions of it’s kind in the country, catering for the Mental wellbeing at it’s peak, 1800 patients and 850 staff. The Re- Imagining St. Brigids Plan was an in depth process over 9 weeks in 2018 that culminated in a day long workshop based on over 200 submissions received from the community and stakeholders to route map possible uses for the old Psychiatric Buildings and the 51 acre campus they stand upon. A full report was issued to the relevant stakeholders and principally the key Dept. of Health . (See full report in appendix 3)

Ballinasloe can become a support centre for the existing Hospital and all medical care distributed in the town along with the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plants which are based nearby in Athlone and Galway.

The Town can consolidate as a Centre of Excellence for Mental Health Care and we can draw on the existing pool of talent and experience which is already in place along with the education and research and graduates which are available from our four 3rd Level Institutions (AIT, GMIT, NUIG , Maynooth University).

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