

Chapter 11 Community, Social, Cultural & Sports Development

11.0 Aim

Promote the development of Birr as a **“Key Service Town”**, where people can live and work, with access to a range of community facilities that are a vital component in increasing social inclusion and contribute to the **quality of life** for all.

11.1 Context

11.1.1 Community Facilities

“Community Services” potentially covers a very broad range of infrastructure and service provision to meet the needs of residents within the Birr area. The Planning and Development Acts 2000-2009 focuses on childcare and educational facilities, which includes services such as pre-schools, Naionraí (Irish language playgroups), day-care services, crèches, playgroups, childminding, after-school groups and primary, secondary and special needs schools. Other community facilities include places of worship, burial grounds, hospital and health centres, facilities for the elderly and persons with disabilities, libraries and community halls.

“Community Facility” covers a variety of amenities which are responsive to and meet the needs of individual communities. For the purposes of this plan, the individual sectors in broad terms, which are providers of community facilities, include the State, Local Authorities, Community Groups and private interest groups.

11.1.2 At a National Level...

“Towards 2016” - The National social partnership agreement proposes a “lifecycle” approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion across key lifecycle stages i.e. children, people of working age, older people and people with disabilities.

The **“National Action Plan for Social Inclusion”** 2007-2016 sets out how the agreements under **“Towards 2016”** will be achieved through targets and interventions.

The **National Development Plan 2007-2013** is committed to assisting in combating social exclusion which is fundamental to the quality of life of all individuals. This includes, for example, the provision of the CLÁR Programme, Local Development Social Inclusion Scheme and Rural Social Schemes.

11.1.3 County Development Board Strategy

Close **linkages** exist between this Development Plan and the County Development Board Strategy. A primary function of the CDB strategy is to bring the socio-economic and physical planning processes together. The **land-use** policies of this **plan** must be informed by and **reflect** the **socio-economic** and **cultural** considerations of the **County Development Board Strategy**.

In general, the purpose of this **plan** in relation to community, social and cultural development is to include appropriate policies and objectives which relate to the allocation and reservation of land, development management standards and provision of specific social, community and cultural facilities for Birr.

11.1.4 Social Inclusion

Social inclusion refers to the way in which all persons in a community are integrated in an equal manner, reducing barriers to participation e.g. discrimination and/or physical barriers such as accessibility and inadequate transport facilities. In order to combat social exclusion, actions must be taken at both national and local level and be focused on the most disadvantaged areas. Projects in Birr include physical upgrading works such as traffic calming and provision of play areas at Grove Street Crinkle and Millbrook Park Halting Site.

The **Local Anti Poverty Strategy 2008-2010** prepared by the **Offaly County Development Board** in conjunction with Offaly County Council is consistent with the Governments Social Inclusion Policy as set out in the NDP 2007-2013 and the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016. Further, **Offaly County Council’s Annual Internal**

Social Inclusion Plan, which is a cross-departmental plan, highlights how each internal section within the Councils individually seeks to target and contribute to social inclusion within the community.

11.1.5 Offaly Sports Partnership

The **Offaly Sport Partnership** has a remit which involves engaging in inter-agency planning for the efficient and effective development of sport and recreational activities in County Offaly, with the full participation of voluntary clubs and organisations. In particular, to ensure provisions for the youth, older adults and those people who are disadvantaged or marginalised.

11.2 Strategy

This plan seeks to assist and facilitate in the improvement of existing social, community and cultural facilities, as appropriate within Birr and make adequate provisions for the development of new facilities. As highlighted in table 11.1, the **Councils** provide a number of roles in ensuring adequate provision of social, community and cultural facilities as appropriate, namely:

Table 11.1: Role of the Councils in the Provision of Community/Social and Cultural Facilities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reservation of lands for community uses within Birr.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitation and flexibility in the provision of increased community services within Birr as appropriate, including education, health, childcare etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applying a collaborative approach in the assessment of planning applications submitted which are required to reflect the scale of its location and carrying capacity in terms of community infrastructure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plan for the appropriate expansion of Birr as per its position within the County settlement hierarchy and Crinkle's position as a village within this plan.

In particular, suitably located sites will be reserved in existing and newly built-up areas where deficiencies exist. In addition, a portion of the Councils' owned lands at Scurragh have been zoned for use as public open space. In newly developing areas, sites for community facilities e.g. pre-schools, clinics, convenience shops and local resource centres will be identified to meet anticipated needs through the Local Area Strategies in Chapter 6. The provision of social facilities including recreational facilities for the youth of the town is essential, and the Councils wish to see the expansion of these types of facilities in Birr.

This strategy, for the purposes of this plan, identifies the needs of communities in broad terms. However, a **collaborative approach** by all stakeholders i.e. state, local authority, community groups and the private sector on the identification and provision of community facilities is required on an on-going basis to ensure that appropriate facilities are provided, when necessary. The Councils play an integral role in facilitating and supporting these identified needs.

11.2.1 Education

11.2.1.1 Councils' Role

Central Government through the Department of Education and Science is responsible for the delivery of educational facilities and services. The **Councils' role** in education provision is in ensuring that **adequate serviceable land is available** in appropriate locations to meet current and envisaged future requirements within and beyond the period of this plan.

11.2.1.2 The Provision of Schools and the Planning System, a Code of Practice for Planning Authorities, Department of Education and Science and DoEHLG

The code of practice sets out the best practice approaches that should be followed by the planning Authorities in ensuring that the planning system plays its full part in facilitating the timely and cost-effective roll-out of school facilities

by the Department of Education and Science and in line with the principals of proper planning and sustainable development.

11.2.1.3 Identification and Suitability Assessment of Sites for Primary Schools, Technical Guidance Document TGD-025, Department of Education and Science, 2007

This document gives guidance in identifying and suitability assessing the size of sites required for primary school developments and primary school extensions.

11.2.1.4 Future Requirements over the Plan Period¹

As illustrated in Tables 11.2 and 11.3, there are currently 4 number primary schools and 1 number secondary school serving Birr. Based on the Department of Education and Science's criteria, which is in accordance with the following:

- Midland Regional Planning Guidelines (2004) i.e. taking the higher figure of population growth of **5,500** persons up to **2020**, and
- using the 2006 Census for Birr as a base year,
- projections would yield a primary population age of **660**, and a post primary age population of **468**.

Table 11.2: Birr Primary School Enrolment 2008

Number	Name	Location	Boys/Girls /Mixed	Current Enrolment
1	Mercy Primary School	Birr	All girls	233
2	St. Brendan's Boys NS	Birr	All Boys	227
3	SN Osmann (Church of Ireland-Co Educational)	Birr	Mixed	81
4	Croinchoill NS (Co-Educational)	Crinkle	Mixed	197
5	Total			738

Source: DoES

For post primary level, the Department states it may be possible to add the level of accommodation into the existing post primary school. However, this would be dependent on the size and suitability of the existing site and school agreement.

Table 11.3: Birr Secondary School Enrolment 2008

Number	Name	Location	Boys/Girls/ Mixed	Current Enrolment
1	Birr Community School	Birr	Both	761

Source: DoES

Therefore it is deemed prudent to reserve a site for a possible new primary school (1x24 classrooms) dependant on the population developing as targeted. The site size requirement for the new school is stated as 1.6Ha (4 acres).

Alternatively, the DoES states, it may be possible to add some of this level of accommodation onto existing primary schools. This, however, would be dependent on the size and suitability of their existing sites and school agreement.

¹This information was supplied by the Department of Education & Science (DoES).

The Councils have ensured that adequate land is zoned for a possible new primary school and for the extensions to existing primary and secondary schools within this plan (refer to Chapter 6: Local Area Strategies).

11.2.2 Other Education

The 3rd Level Colleges of Tipperary Institute of Technology and Athlone Institute of Technology are in close proximity to Birr.

Birr Outdoor Education Centre (OEC) is a non-profit making organisation under the auspices of County Offaly V.E.C. and central to "other education" facilities and opportunities for Birr. The centre is one of nine in the Country recognised by the DoES. Birr O.E.C. is approved by the Association for Adventure Sports and by Fáilte Ireland and run a wide range of courses including:

- Outdoor Education for schools and youth groups.
- Adventure Summer Camps.
- Skills Training in various adventure sports.
- Team Building/Management Training.
- Language/Recreation Holidays.
- Adult and Continuing Education Courses.
- Ecology Courses.

Courses provided are part of the curriculum for Junior, Transition Year and Leaving Certificate classes. In addition the centre provides adult classes under the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) and Youthreach Programmes.

VTOS full-time programmes are designed to provide unemployed adults with the education, skills and qualifications needed for employment. Some VTOS students go directly into employment on completing a VTOS course, others continue on to further training or higher education.

Youthreach Programmes give young people between the ages of 15 and 20, who left school early, an opportunity to get recognised qualifications and training. Students aim for nationally recognised awards including Junior Certificate, Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) and IT exams such as European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL).

Located in Syngefield Industrial Estate, Birr Centre for Education and Development offers education to all adult learners in an integrated setting. Programmes can be up to 3 years duration. A wide range and variety of courses are on offer with nationally accreditation including FETAC Levels 1-4 (foundation – Leaving Certificate) Leaving Certificate Applied and Junior Certificate.

11.2.3 Childcare

11.2.3.1 Councils' Role

The **Councils' role** in relation to childcare facilities is in implementing national guidelines and local policies and in encouraging/supporting adequate measures which are consistent with the size and scale of development proposals. In addition, the Councils have a role in accommodating both an increase in population levels as per Birr's position within the County settlement hierarchy and also facilitating individuals in the workforce at optimum locations i.e. within residential estates, town/village centre locations and places of employment (refer to Chapter 6 Local Area Strategies).

11.2.3.2 Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities

Increasing numbers of people in the workforce and changing lifestyles have increased the demand for **childcare** facilities within our communities. The Councils continue to have regard to national guidelines notably *Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities*. At a local level, the Offaly County Childcare Committee (inter-agency) has prepared a Strategic Plan (2007-2010) which outlines the strategic framework for the development of high quality childcare and family support services for all children and families in County Offaly for the period 2007-2010.

11.2.3.3 Teenspace National Recreation Policy for Young People (2007)

The Councils will have regard to the Department of Health and Children's policy document entitled '*Teenspace National Recreation Policy for Young People*' (2007). It is recognised that a multi-agency approach is necessary in meeting the needs of the youth within the County and including Birr. Such needs include, recreational opportunities, including both formal and informal activities i.e. 'youth cafes', sports facilities and casual areas where young people can integrate with each other etc.

11.2.4 Children's Play Facilities

The Councils recognise the need to maximise opportunities for children's play facilities both within the natural and built environment. The Councils have adopted a **Play Policy** in accordance with national policy – "Ready Steady Play: A National Play Policy" and same is currently being implemented. The County Development Board has prepared a Draft Play Strategy 2008-2010 for Offaly.

The new playground is located in the town centre of Birr and its success is reflected through the high level of usage. It has a strategic location in a functional open space, designed with appropriate materials and overlooked by the people of Birr creating town ownership. Therefore, the playground's design and location is of an excellent standard and presents a good example for future development of playgrounds in Birr and County Offaly. The location of any proposed public facilities will be built upon the careful process used to develop the new playground.

11.2.5 Youth

It is recognised by the Councils that facilities, such as a skate park and a youth café, would benefit the teenage community of Birr. The process of providing this skatepark is currently on-going. Members of Birr Resource Centre have highlighted that the provision of a youth café should include training for the teenage community on issues such as how to run groups, organise talks and arrange for people of interest to visit. It is considered that such responsibilities will break into the skills of this age-group and increase self-esteem.

11.2.6 Elderly and Disabled

It was highlighted in Chapter 2 that the elderly percentage share of population in Birr was increasing. The Councils will continue to address the needs of the elderly and disabled through the provision of services, amenities and improvement of Birr's public realm. Also, the Councils will support Birr Resource Centre in developing the concept of "Integration Groups" between the elderly and youth of Birr, providing greater integration between both age-groups.

11.2.7 Non-Irish Nationals Living in Birr

As highlighted in Chapter 2, in 2006 12% of the percentage share of population in Birr was Irish non-national, which is similar to other large towns in County Offaly. The Councils recognise the valuable contribution that Irish non-nationals have made to the local economic and social environment of Birr over the past 6 years. The Councils will continue to support and facilitate the location of all new residents to Birr. This will be achieved through the provision of services (including land-use zoning), improving the quality of life and continuing to make Birr an attractive place to work and visit.

11.2.8 Health Services

11.2.8.1 Councils Role

The Health Services Executive (HSE) is the principle body responsible for the delivery of health and social services. The **Councils have a role** in ensuring that health services are located within accessible areas. The Councils acknowledge that residential care facilities and other health services distributed throughout settlements improve service accessibility and greater integration within the community. Subsequently, the Councils will continue to support and facilitate the location of these services in Birr (refer to Chapter 6: Local Area Strategies). The Councils will support the Department of Health and Children and Health Services Executive in the provision and development of new facilities.

11.2.8.2 Birr's Health Services

Birr Community Health and Nursing Unit is located at Sandymount Lane. Facilities cater for a 90 bed-nursing unit providing respite, rehabilitation, palliative and continuing care for older people. There is also a health care/day care centre for non-residents. The old Community Hospital located off John's Place still provides services such as Mid-Doc GP (out of hours service), Primary Care, Occupational Therapy, Early Childhood Services and St. Anne's Community Services. The old Health Centre includes services such as Cancer Support Service, Dental Clinic, Community and Welfare Officer, Social Worker, Physiologist and Medical Assessor.

11.2.9 Sport/Recreation/Open Space

11.2.9.1 Councils Role

The **Councils have a role** in protecting existing sport/recreation and open space areas and ensuring that adequate land is zoned for development to accommodate sporting and recreational facilities i.e. both active and passive (refer to Chapter 5: Public Amenities & Open Space and Chapter 6: Local Area Based Strategies).

11.2.9.2 Audit of Community, Sports and Arts Facilities, 2009

The Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism commissioned a joint audit of Community, Sports and Arts Facilities to be undertaken by each local Authority. Offaly County Council through its Community and Enterprise Section undertook this research via a questionnaire to all groups responsible for a Community, Arts or Sports facility in County Offaly and this audit was completed in 2009. The feedback from these questionnaires is useful for analysing and highlighting the current level of provision of community facilities, gap areas for community facilities and other issues in relation to promoting community life via appropriate and sustainable community facilities. More information including a map showing the location of the community facilities in County Offaly is available at the following web address:

http://www.offaly.ie/eng/Services/Community_and_Enterprise/.

11.2.9.3 Birr's Sporting Facilities

Birr has a colourful image throughout the country of a successful sporting town. Birr GAA club is traditionally one of the most famous club hurling teams in the country. The town and environs is served well by sports clubs with facilities for athletics, Gaelic Games (including 2 clubs) rugby, soccer, golf, tennis, gymnastics and swimming (including 2 swimming pools, 1 private), Girl Guides, 2 gymnasiums (1 private) and a youth club.

Birr Outdoor Education Centre offers residential and non-residential courses in a wide variety of activities and adventure sports including canoeing, kayaking, gorge walking, raft building, orienteering, abseiling, rock climbing, archery, team building games, obstacle course, indoor rock climbing, ropes course and hillwalking. Also, included is hostel accommodation for environmental studies and adventure sports.

The newly refurbished public swimming pool and gymnasium is located at townparks. The Councils recognise the importance of this facility and will encourage and facilitate its continued development and enhancement.

11.2.10 Libraries

County Offaly's network of public libraries provides an important community, information, cultural and outreach facility role within the County. Its County headquarters is situated in Tullamore and there are 9 branches one of which is located in Birr Civic Offices on Wilmer road.

Birr Convent was built between 1846 and 1856 and is considered as one of the gems of Birr's Architectural Heritage. Offaly County Council acquired the property in 1996 to accommodate the Town Library, Area Offices and the Town Council.

These newly created spaces provide ideal venues for the Library's outreach and cultural programmes and also areas of quiet for the general reader to pursue his/her reading or study. The core library areas are located on two floors. The first floor space, the original Pugin chapel, accommodates the adult library. The Children's library is situated on the ground floor with designated spaces for children's activities. Computers are provided on each floor. In addition to the traditional

services, the library provides assistive technology facilities, online services including Ordnance Survey historic maps, microfilm reader/printer providing access to over 150 years of Birr's newspapers. It also holds the facsimile of the Gospel Book of Macregol of Birr (The Book of Birr) and other items of local interest.

11.2.11 Arts and Culture

Offaly County Council has adopted and published a County Arts Plan for the period 2007 to 2011. This plan details areas of strategic arts development for example: existing and new infrastructure, public art development, capacity and audience building strategies as well as initiatives in music, drama, literature, film and dance development.

Birr Theatre and Arts Centre has been open since 1999 and in this time has grown from being a venue to a developmental resource for the town. In 2007, Birr Theatre and Offaly County Council developed a new children's art festival in Birr called "Hullabaloo" which aims to stimulate the imaginations of young people through a programme of events and workshops. The Councils acknowledge the valuable contribution of the Birr Theatre and Arts Centre for the people of Birr, its inhabitants and those people in surrounding areas and will continue to support same.

11.2.12 Places of Worship

The Councils recognise the valuable contribution that places of worship have in the community and will endeavour to accommodate and facilitate their provision and/or extension, where appropriate.

11.2.13 Burial Grounds

The Councils have a role in ensuring that adequate land is reserved to accommodate such a use in accordance with future needs within Birr. The Councils have a responsibility in the provision of burial grounds including as necessary, the acquisition of lands and the undertaking of any necessary works on these lands. The burial ground serving Birr is located at Clonohill and lands have been developed for future cemetery extension.

11.2.14 Other Traditional Local Services

Much of Birr's charm comes from traditional local services such as small shops, coffee shops and restaurants, post offices, licensed premises and the weekly farmers market. These services provide an important role for the community of Birr. Chapter 12: Built Heritage, Chapter 4, Town Centre, Retail & Renewal and Chapter 14, Built Form and Urban Development Standards, contain relevant policies and objectives with the overall aim of protecting the visual character of these buildings and improving the public realm to facilitate festivals and local markets.

11.2.15 Implementation

The successful **implementation** of the Councils' Social/Community/Cultural policies is by way of a collaborative approach by Birr Town Council and Offaly County Council, other statutory bodies, private developers, the community and voluntary sector.

11.3 Policy

Community - General

BTEP 11-01 The Councils recognise the importance of community facilities in the welfare and development of society. It is the Councils' policy to assist, where feasible, in **social, community** and **cultural development** within Birr and to encourage and facilitate the provision and extension of community facilities to serve individual communities throughout Birr and to co-operate with any bodies which wish to expand the provision of social facilities in Birr. The Councils shall encourage the provision and extension of community and sporting facilities to serve individual communities throughout the town. Social development initiatives at a community level will be encouraged and assisted where possible by the Councils. Consideration will be given on an individual basis to the provision of support for community projects, and/or making available sites for same.

BTEP 11-02 It is the Councils' policy to support and facilitate the **County Development Board** in its key objectives of strengthening the community sector in Birr and developing a long-term strategy of social investment at community level.

BTEP 11-03 It is the Councils' policy to **identify suitable sites** for community facilities within Birr (refer to Chapter 6: Local Area Strategies), particularly in newly developing areas.

BTEP 11-04 It is the Councils' policy that proposals for **new developments** will be encouraged to provide new facilities (including play facilities) for community use. Proposals should be in suitable locations and be compatible with adjoining developments. Such proposals will be subject to other policies of this Development Plan, in particular those concerning open space provision. Further, it is the Councils' policy to encourage the provision of **multi-functional** buildings, which are **adaptable** to accommodating a range of community facilities, where appropriate. (This is particularly apparent in the case of new housing estates, whereby a crèche facility can be designed to be re-developed in subsequent years, if required, for an alternative community facility). Further, it is the Councils' policy that the multi-use of public spaces will be encouraged.

Childcare

BTEP 11-05 It is the Councils' policy to encourage the provision of childcare facilities in residential areas, employment areas, retail centres and other areas as appropriate, when development proposals are put forward for consideration (also refer to Chapter 6: Local Area Strategies).

BTEP 11-06 It is the Councils' policy to assist the County Childcare Committee in identifying priority areas within Birr for the provision of **childcare** facilities.

Elderly

BTEP 11-07 It is the Councils' policy to facilitate the development of facilities and new homes for the elderly within the plan area. The provision of new residential homes within Birr environs will be considered only in such cases where it is clearly demonstrated that due to the nature of the services to be provided, a rural location is necessary and that no suitable alternative sites are available within zoned lands.

Open Space/Amenity Facilities

BTEP 11-08 It is the Councils' policy to **preserve the landuse of existing public and private recreation areas** to prevent the loss of existing leisure facilities, including sports clubs, grounds, built leisure facilities and areas of public and private open space through redevelopment to other uses. In exceptional circumstances, a change of use may be sought, but must demonstrate that alternative recreational provisions are provided in the same area or in a suitable alternative location. Further, it is the Councils' policy to identify, where possible and appropriate, new open space/amenity sites and existing sites for possible future extension within Birr (refer to Chapter 6: Local Area Strategies and Chapter 5: Amenities & Open Space).

BTEP 11-09 It is the Councils' policy to encourage and facilitate the provision of **community and recreational infrastructure** as an integral component of proposed new residential schemes and in particular, the provision of playgrounds for children.

BTEP 11-10 It is the Councils' policy to seek opportunities to improve the quality and capacity of existing leisure facilities and where appropriate, the Councils will use their powers under the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2008 to require development levies to achieve the enhancement of existing facilities and the creation of new facilities.

BTEP 11-11 It is the Councils' policy to facilitate the continued development and enhancement of facilities in Birr provided by the Outdoor Education Centre.

Education Facilities

BTEP 11-12 It is the Councils' policy to liaise with, co-operate with and to facilitate the Department of Education and Science and relevant school authorities in the provision of education facilities, as appropriate. This includes the identification and reservation of **sufficient land** to meet the need for **expansion** of existing schools and/or provision of new schools for both Birr town and Crinkle village, their catchment area and the requirements of the relevant education authority.

Libraries

BTEP 11-13 It is the Councils' policy to ensure that the Birr branch of the County Library Service is strongly positioned to support: the knowledge society, social inclusion, e-Government, life-long learning initiatives, local studies, archive-services, children's services, services to rural communities, the housebound and homes for the elderly.

Arts and Culture

BTEP 11-14 It is the Councils' policy to implement the Arts Plan 2007-2011 and to develop successive County arts plans in relation to Birr.

BTEP 11-15 It is the Councils' policy to maximise the **per cent for art scheme** in relation to major capital projects which provides opportunities for artists of all disciplines to create work to exist in the public realm. **Public capital projects**, for example: housing developments, roads, water and waste water treatment schemes, as well as hospitals, schools and libraries have a percentage of the total capital costs allocated for the creation of a work of art. It is the Councils' policy to reflect a commitment to, and recognition of, the diversities of the scheme in line with national guidelines.

Community Healthcare

BTEP 11-16 It is the Councils' policy to promote and facilitate the improvement of health services in Birr where necessary and, in particular, to encourage the integration of health services and facilities with new and existing community facilities, where feasible.

BTEP 11-17 It is the Councils' policy to look favourably upon **primary care centres** which comprise/provide access to a range of healthcare services including General Practitioners, nurses/midwives, health care assistants, home help assistants, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, social workers and administrative personnel, as appropriate. However, the provision of **individual healthcare facilities** will also be considered, as appropriate.

BTEP 11-18 It is the Councils' policy to co-operate with the Health Services Executive (HSE) in the provision and location of health, community and social facilities. Also to co-operate with other groups who may wish to provide social services in the town (see Chapter 6: Local Area Strategies).

Burial Grounds

BTEP 11-19 It is the Councils' policy to protect the cultural heritage of historical burial grounds within Birr and to encourage their management and maintenance in accordance with conservation principles.

Traditional Local Services

BTEP 11-20 It is the Councils' policy to support and facilitate, where appropriate, the operation of Birr's traditional local services, including the Farmer's Market.

11.4 Objectives²

Education

BTEO 11-01 To facilitate the provision/extend education facilities having regard to Chapter 6: Local Area Strategies. Where appropriate and possible, additional lands have been reserved for future school extensions and for a new school.

Childcare

BTEO 11-02 To facilitate the implementation of the **Offaly County Childcare Committee Strategic Plan 2007-2010**.

Open Spaces/Amenity

BTEO 11-03 To **develop open spaces** in accordance with Chapter 6: Local Area Strategies and Chapter 5: Amenities & Open Space, which will encourage a range of recreational and amenity activities that will cater for both active and passive needs.

Sports and Recreation

BTEO 11-04 To support and facilitate **local community groups/sporting organisations** in the development of sport and recreational facilities, in particular through land-use zoning, where appropriate (refer to Chapter 5: Amenities & Open Space and Chapter 6: Local Area Strategies).

Burial Grounds

BTEO 11-05 To provide or assist in the provision of burial grounds and extensions to existing burial grounds, by 1) reservation of land at suitable locations and 2) provision of local authority burial grounds, where feasible. Regard will be afforded to the heritage value of cemeteries and access to and information on the history, ecology, archaeology and genealogy of the sites will be promoted.

Library Facilities

BTEO 11-06 To improve current library provisions, where necessary and feasible.

Play Facilities

BTEO 11-07 To develop a partnership approach in funding and developing play opportunities throughout Birr, in accordance with the Councils current Play Policy/ Play Strategy.

Projects

BTEO 11-08 To continue to develop the following projects in partnership with the community and all other relevant bodies:

- Youth Café.
- Skate Park.
- Public toilet in town centre.

BTEO 11-09 To support and facilitate the actions of Birr Resource Centre in the development of "Integration Groups" for the elderly and youth of Birr.

² The order of listing of objectives is not intended to indicate priorities. Subject to the availability of resources, it is the Councils' aim to monitor and accomplish the objectives listed in this section within the period of the plan.