

# ***BALLAGHADERREEN TOWN TEAM***

C/O Community Resource Centre, The Shambles, Ballaghaderreen

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## **Ballaghaderreen Town Team Submission**

**Roscommon County Development Plan 2021 to 2027.**

**Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020**

Ballaghaderreen is a strategically placed town situated close to the Mayo/ Sligo borders in north Roscommon. The town is one of the four 'Tier 2' urban centres designated in the Roscommon County Development Plan (the others are Boyle, Castlerea and Monkstown/Bellanamullia).

The town has grown over the past quarter-century (by 538 people or 42% since 1991) but in the past decade its population has essentially remained static at around 1,800.

Ballaghaderreen is a Cathedral Town and acts as an administration, business, educational, leisure, retail and service centre. It enjoys a good community infrastructure but currently experiences many of the classic issues faced by rural Ireland's smaller towns, such as:

- High vacancy rates (the highest in 'urban Roscommon')
- A need to create jobs and maintain sustainable employment.
- A need to strengthen the local economy
- The growing draw of the cities/overseas for many of its people especially young and educated people,
- A need to attract more people in to experience and use the town
- A need to come to terms with the impact of the digital age across society

In recent years, Ballaghaderreen's growth has halted and the town's centre displays decline and vacancy, lacks footfall and a vibrant commercial business activity.

Since 2014 the N5 national route has bypassed Ballaghaderreen, carrying almost 5,000 vehicles per day.

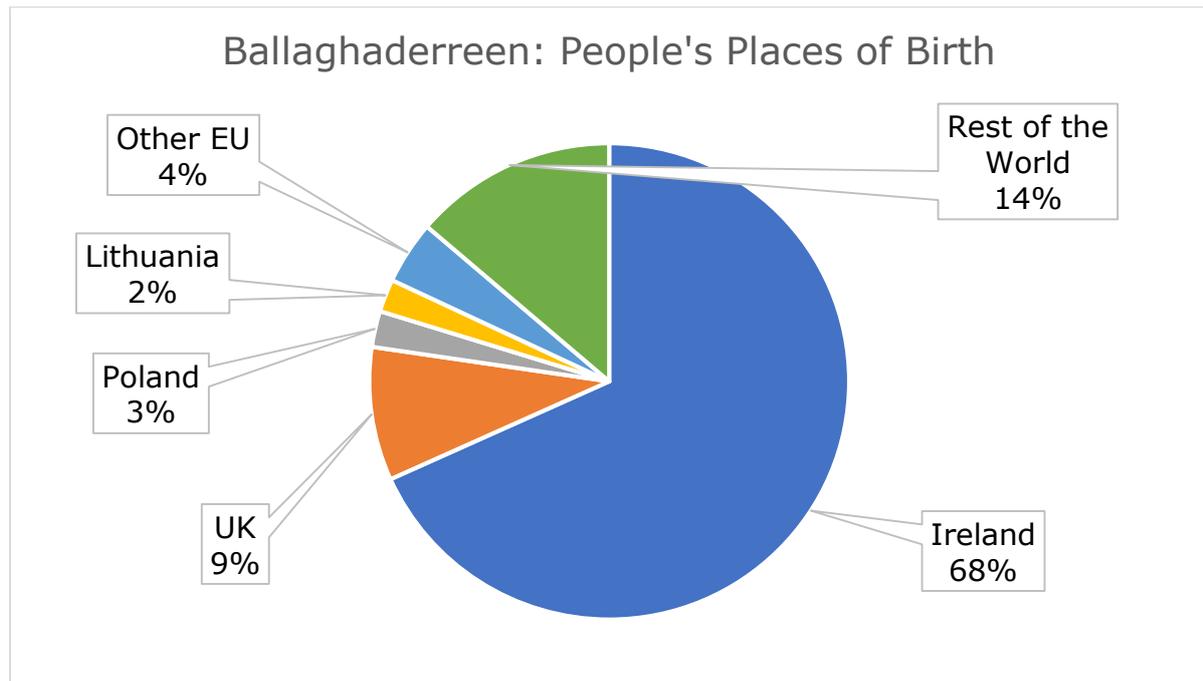
It remains a town with an urban fabric of great potential, with very strong outdoor sports provision, a robust community infrastructure, several vibrant businesses but a central area that's suffering decline and a loss of footfall.

At the 2016 Census just over 1,800 people lived in Ballaghaderreen, showing that following two decades of significant growth (up by a sizeable 43% between 1991 and 2011), the population has effectively stagnated since 2011.

Housing vacancy is a major issue with 36% of the town's 1,181 permanent dwellings being unoccupied on Census Night 2016.

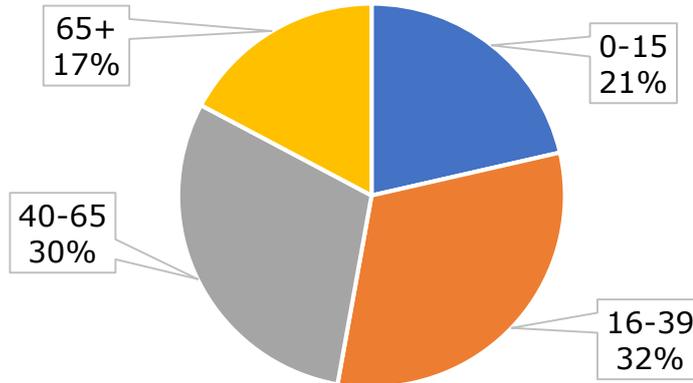
The town is projected to grow by 271 people between 2016 and 2022, this new population requiring 108 new houses (or a third of the current vacancies).

The town enjoys a very diverse population with a third of the residents having been born outside Ireland:



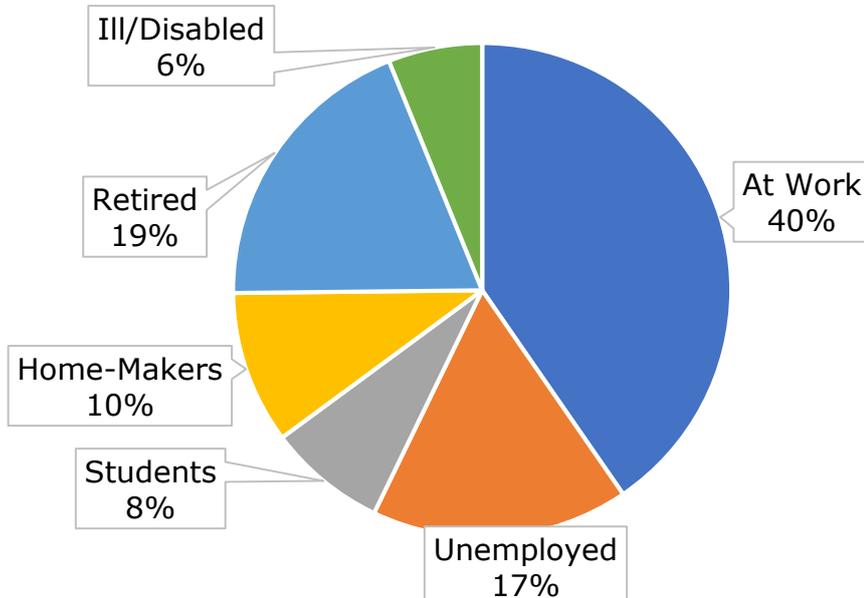
Of the 466 residents who speak a foreign language, 18% do not speak English well or at all. Ballaghaderreen also has a fluid population with 15% having lived at a different address one year before Census Day 2016.

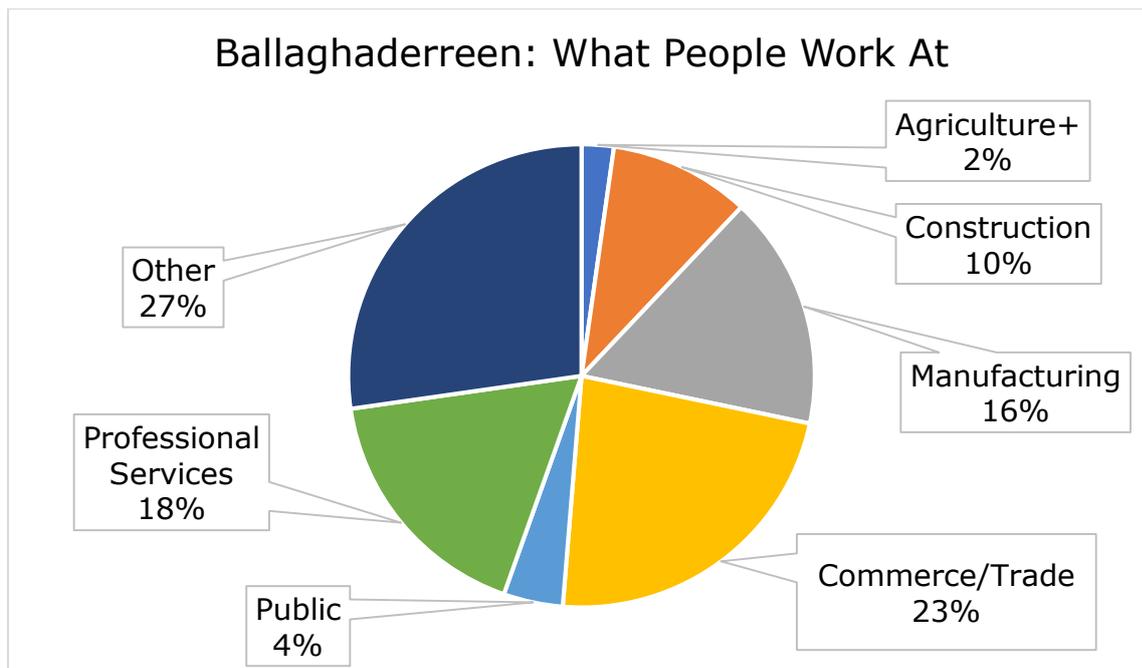
### Ballaghaderreen Age Breakdown



Ballaghaderreen’s older age profile is reflected in the 19% of its over 16-year-olds are Retired. One-person-in-ten is classed as a Home Maker whilst four-in-ten are At Work.

### Ballaghaderreen Employment Status





### What This Tells Us About Ballaghaderreen ?

- Following twenty years of growth, Ballaghaderreen's population is now static.
- The town's population is diverse and ageing .
- More local people are Retired or Unemployed than are At Work
- Large amount of vacant residential properties and business units.
- Limited employment opportunities
- Services, Manufacturing and Construction are important activities locally but the public sector is small.
- Town centre decaying and unattractive to encourage commercial/ business activity.
- Potential and opportunity to harness and leverage the tradition of agri food production in the regions of Ballaghaderreen

**The Roscommon County Development Plan 2021 to 2027 must include strategies/ action plans which can be executed to transform the town of Ballaghaderreen over the lifetime of the County Development Plan ,2021 to 2027.**

**A number of such strategies should include:**

- Improving the road signage visibility on the bypass to showcase what Ballaghaderreen has to offer.
- Create the conditions to reopen hotel accommodation in the Town.
- Enhance the marketing and promotion of Ballaghaderreen as a town of choice to live, work, visit and invest.
- Consolidate commercial activity in the town so that a wider range of appropriate retail and commercial developments within the town centre will generate employment and strengthen the town core.
- Improve the urban environment and the town centre's overall character and appearance by promoting the redevelopment and reuse of vacant and derelict residential, commercial and retail buildings
- Continue with the town painting
- Exploit our proximity to Knock Airport
- Redevelop/repurpose the local unused community hall as a town meeting hub for community activity and service provider.
- Repurpose the Fairgreen area as a town attraction
- Create a visitor centre for the old station house which is adjacent to the unused community hall
- centrally locate high quality attractive housing for prospective homeowners, whilst contributing positively to urban design
- create a more inviting town centre with vibrant public spaces that will increase commercial activity, develop an appropriate diversity of central area uses with both day-time and night-time economies, leading to longer stays and increased spend by shoppers and visitors.
- Re image the approach roads to the town in light of the bypass construction to create a welcoming and vibrant image on entry to the town
- Install modern standout signage to promote local landmarks and amenities for visitors to see and do

- Create cycle ways and walk ways to allow safe use of these areas for public amenity.
- Litter/Dumping enforce zero tolerance for dumping
- Dog litter- enforce poop and scope.
- Develop an green area in the town (the plots) to include outdoor gym and seating and children area/sensory garden.
- Promote an integrated multicultural town through education, & recreation where families feel welcome and part of the community.  
Enable the town to embrace new cultures.
- Develop Ballaghaderreen as an age friendly town.
- Combat social isolation through joint initiative with local community groups
- Combat drug culture through joint initiative with local community groups
- Childcare services needed to enable women to participate in training and work.
- Local links transport required for the town.
- Promote and encourage participation in town events Festival Patrick Day, Cultural Days etc.
- Support the local schools to accommodate the needs of the growing communities
- Support and encourage youth participation in the community so there voice can be heard
- Increase GP services in the town to meet the demands of growing communities.
- Develop social enterprise to encourage and develop employment in the area