



Comhairle Chontae Liatroma
Leitrim County Council



Ceangal

Clár den Chomhairle Oidhreachta
A Heritage Council programme

Leitrim Heritage Plan

2026 – 2031



www.leitrim.ie



Sketch commissioned by Leitrim County Council



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Foreward from Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive

We are delighted to introduce the new Leitrim Heritage Plan. This is our third Leitrim Heritage Plan and it puts a framework in place to promote the conservation and communication of our heritage.

Our unique heritage makes Leitrim an attractive place in which to do business and encourages domestic and overseas visitors to our county. Through this heritage plan, we develop the framework to raise awareness of this valuable asset and take the necessary steps to conserve and protect it. We will continue to research, conserve, manage, promote and interpret our built, natural and cultural heritage.

On behalf of Leitrim County Council, we would like to thank the members of the Leitrim Heritage Forum for their work in preparing this new plan and to thank all of the people who took part in the public consultations and shared their thoughts, ideas and aspirations to help shape the plan. We would also like to thank The Heritage Council for their support over the last number of years which has been essential in the implementation of the previous Heritage Plan, and we look forward to continuing to develop heritage services in the County with their continued support.

*Leitrim's heritage is a
vital asset – shaping our
communities, supporting our
economy and strengthening
our sense of place*



Joseph Gilhooly,
Chief Executive,
Leitrim County Council



Cllr Mary Bohan,
Cathaoirleach,
Leitrim County Council

Heritage Plan Aim

To Honour the People of Leitrim through
a Celebration of their Unique Heritage.







Dr Martina Moloney,
Chairperson,
The Heritage Council



Virginia Teehan,
Chief Executive,
The Heritage Council

Foreward from the Heritage Council

It gives us great pleasure to welcome the *Leitrim County Heritage Plan 2026–2031*. This plan is a significant and timely achievement—distinct not only in its ambition but in its structure, reflecting a county that deeply values its unique cultural and natural landscape.

The inclusive approach to heritage by Leitrim County Council – recognising the interdependence of natural, built, and cultural assets – is particularly inspiring. It reflects a deep understanding of how people connect with their surroundings, valuing them as vibrant expressions of identity, memory, and place.

The Heritage Council has long supported this joined-up approach to heritage in Local Authorities, beginning with the introduction of the Local Authority Heritage Officer Network in 1999, and growing to include Biodiversity Officers, Archivist and Architectural Conservation Officers. Together, under our Ceangal Programme, they form a strong foundation for an integrated and forward-thinking heritage response.

We are proud to support Leitrim through our many programmes including the Adopt a Monument programme which has recently selected the historic church and graveyard in Kilbride in north County Leitrim, offering the community direct access to expertise, mentoring and support to help them to protect, preserve, and promote their local heritage.

We want to acknowledge the community groups, heritage organisations and experts who took part in shaping this heritage plan. Their input gives it energy and keeps it grounded in local priorities.

We are proud to have supported the development of this plan and commend Leitrim County Council for its leadership. We particularly acknowledge the outstanding work of Leitrim’s Heritage Officer, Sarah Malone.

The Heritage Council looks forward to supporting Leitrim County Council, the Heritage Forum, and the wider community as this ambitious plan is brought to life.



*Rich in living traditions,
where knowledge is shared,
communities connect and
heritage is still part of
everyday life*

Leitrim's Heritage

Our heritage consists of aspects of the past that we value in the present and that we choose to pass onto future generations. In Leitrim our heritage has been shaped by people's relationship with the landscape and by their families and communities.

We are so fortunate in Leitrim to have so many wonderful custodians who carry the knowledge of their heritage and traditional practices and pass on this knowledge to the next generation. This still happens in Leitrim, making it rich in living cultural traditions and a thriving sense of community where neighbours still call and will stop to pass the time.

Leitrim has a truly beautiful diverse rural landscape. The northern half of the County is dominated by table-like mountains and glacial glens and possess Ireland's shortest stretch of coastland at 3 miles long. While the southern half of the County forms a lowland drumlin landscape with its network of lakes and the mighty River Shannon. This unique landscape has shaped the location and layout of our villages and towns, provided resources for our industrial heritage, dictated where our archaeological monuments can be found and has given us the mosaic of natural habitats which support our farming and rural communities.

The objectives and actions in this Heritage Plan aim to acknowledge and support the custodians of Leitrim's Heritage and to inspire younger generations to cherish our unique cultural, built and natural heritage and to hopefully pass on the knowledge and love of their heritage to future generations.

Introduction

The Leitrim Heritage Plan sets out the Leitrim County Council heritage programme for the County for the next six years, to be delivered working in partnership with groups and agencies. This is the third Heritage Plan for County Leitrim, covering the period 2026-2031 and is a commitment by Leitrim County Council to promote and protect Leitrim's heritage. This plan has been prepared by Leitrim County Council with assistance from the Leitrim Heritage Forum and in consultation with members of the public and local, regional and national stakeholders with an interest in the heritage of our County. The plan will be delivered by the Leitrim Heritage Officer, who has been in post since 2018. This role forms part of a network of County Heritage Officers in Local Authorities across the country, which is part funded and supported by The Heritage Council. The Heritage Council's vision is that the value of our heritage is enjoyed, managed and protected for the vital contribution that it makes to our identity, well-being and future.

Heritage Forum

The Heritage Forum is a non-statutory advisory group established by Leitrim County Council to provide advice on the preparation and implementation of the Heritage Plan and is facilitated by the Heritage Officer. Membership of the Heritage Forum is drawn from elected representatives, Leitrim County Council staff, representatives of communities and organisations with an interest in, or responsibility for, the care and protection of heritage in Leitrim. A list of Forum Members can be seen in Appendix 1.

A six-year commitment to protect, promote and manage Leitrim's heritage through partnership and collaboration





Education, engagement and promotion emerged as clear priorities from the people of Leitrim

What's Your Leitrim Heritage? Public Consultation

In conjunction with the Heritage Forum, the Heritage Plan was informed by an extensive public consultation process. A public consultation entitled 'What's Your Leitrim Heritage?' was held over a six-week period and included an on-line survey, press release, newspaper advertisement and a social media campaign where submissions were welcomed. A total of 78 submissions were received from members of the public and these submissions have informed this plan. There are many reoccurring issues throughout both the Heritage Forum workshop and the public consultation and it can be concluded that the Heritage Forum and the local community consider these to be priority issues to be addressed in the Heritage Plan. Leading themes to emerge from both the Heritage Forum workshops and the public consultation were Education, Engagement and Promotion.

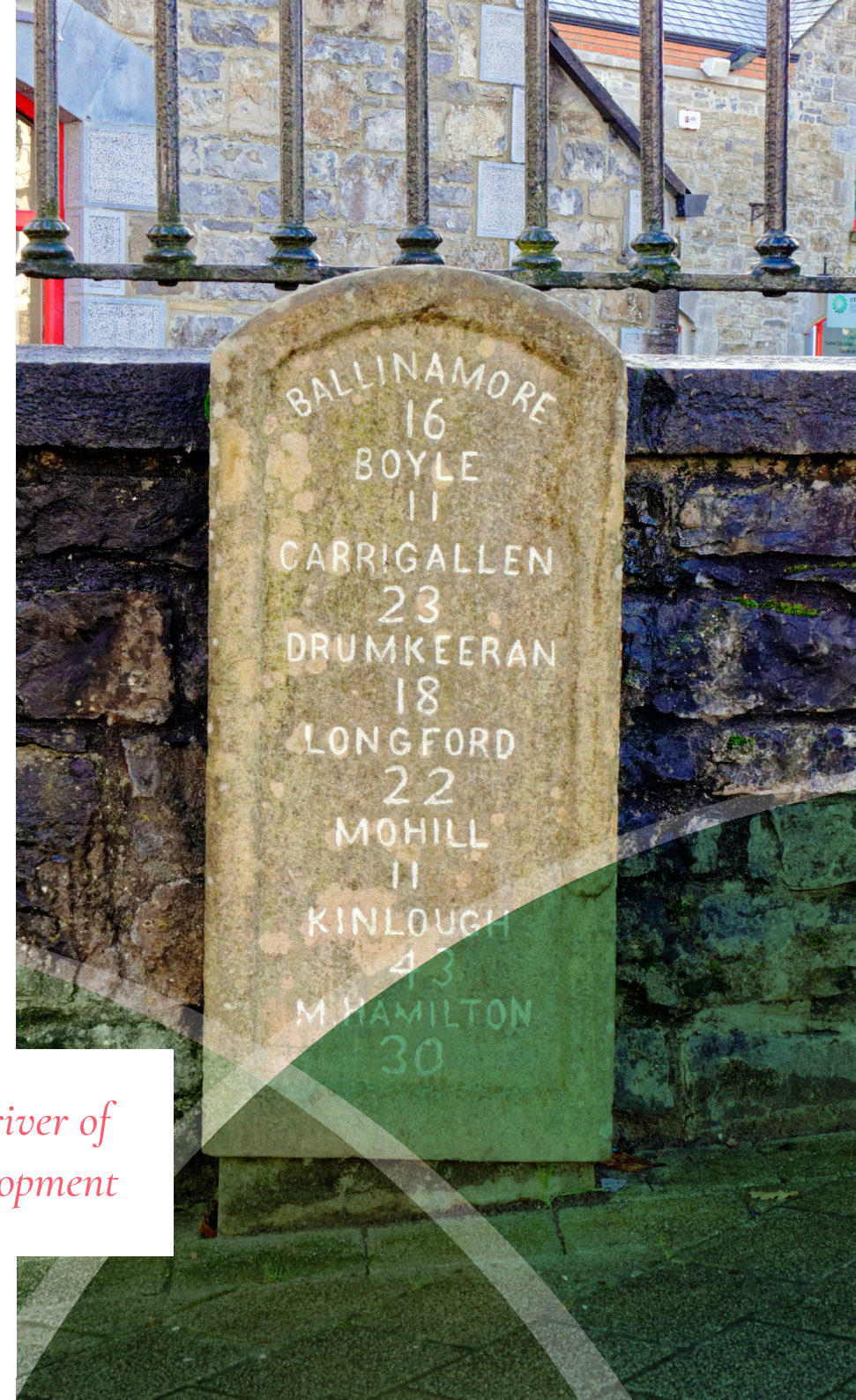
All stages of the Heritage Plan development are outlined in Appendix 2.

Leitrim Heritage Plan: National Context

Heritage holds an ever-increasing prominence in National policy due to its value as a vital economic driver, a focal point for tourism and a catalyst for both rural and urban development.

This has led to the importance of heritage being acknowledged in government policy and initiatives including Heritage Ireland 2030, the National Biodiversity Action Plan, Creative Ireland and many more. These national policies directly impacts heritage in Leitrim and also filters down to policy at the County level through the Leitrim County Development Plan and the Leitrim Local Economic and Community Plan. The Heritage Council's Strategic Plan 2023-2028 entitled 'Our Place in Time', is also an important document for heritage both nationally and locally as it sets out a comprehensive vision for heritage conservation and management in Ireland and reiterates The Heritage Council's commitment to working in partnership with Local Authorities on heritage protection.

*Heritage is increasingly recognised as a driver of
tourism, well-being and sustainable development*



Leitrim Heritage Plan: Local Context

Leitrim County Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2029 sets out the Council's vision for the next five-year period for a vibrant and sustainable Leitrim offering opportunities for everyone. It is a strategic framework within which Leitrim County Council will operate and contains several priority actions for the protection, conservation and enhancement of Leitrim's natural, built and cultural heritage.

The Leitrim County Development Plan 2023-2029 sets out the framework for land-use and the sustainable development of the county for the period 2023-2029. The County Development Plan contains policies and objectives for archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage

including Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Areas and archaeology, amongst others. This Heritage Plan aims to support and strengthen the County Development Plan and other plans by providing data and by proposing policy that establishes a clear policy direction and framework for heritage in Leitrim and its protection, conservation, management and promotion.

The Leitrim County Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030 is a comprehensive roadmap aimed at conserving, enhancing, and celebrating the rich biodiversity of County Leitrim. Natural Heritage actions will be delivered through the Biodiversity Action Plan. The aim of the plan is to record,

conserve, restore and promote biodiversity within County Leitrim over the lifetime of the plan.

The Leitrim Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2023-2029: The Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) has prepared the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) in conjunction with Leitrim County Council. The remit of the LCDC and LECP are the promotion of economic, local and community development in the County. The LECP will form the strategic framework for all publicly funded local, economic and community development programmes.

Heritage underpins local planning, biodiversity, economic development and community well-being



Heritage Plan Implementation and Funding

This Heritage Plan is a 6-year plan with 32 actions and will form the basis of the work programme of the Heritage Office and the Heritage Forum. Each year a work programme will be drafted based on the actions of the plan. Delivery of County Heritage Plans will be facilitated in part by the Heritage Council Heritage Plan Fund, and this Heritage Plan sets the framework for Leitrim County Council to apply to this fund. Annual funding allocation from the Heritage Council is co-funded by Leitrim County Council.

A number of other funding sources are also available for heritage led projects, such as the Creative Ireland funding, and will be utilized to carry out the actions in this Heritage Plan. The realization of actions specified in this plan will be dependent on the availability of the necessary financial resources and the Heritage Officer will proactively seek to identify relevant sources of funding in this regard. Furthermore, the realization of various actions may be led by Heritage Forum stakeholders and other relevant organisations.

A practical, action-focused plan supported by partnerships and targeted funding





Objectives

1. Engage Individuals and Groups to Participate in Heritage Initiatives
2. Promote Awareness and Appreciation of Leitrim's Heritage
3. Support the Gathering and Dissemination of Heritage Data
4. Support the Conservation and Management of Leitrim's Heritage



Heritage engagement thrives when communities, generations and volunteers are actively involved.

Engage Individuals and Groups to Participate in Heritage Initiatives

Encouraging people to actively engage with Leitrim's heritage is at the very core of this plan. The public consultation showed a strong preference for engaging with school aged children, senior citizens and facilitating inter-generational projects. The actions in the Heritage Plan will support the committed, strong and active network of community groups, volunteers and organisations in the county to engage with their heritage and will act as a catalyst for partnership action to enhance the management and protection of our heritage and embed community engagement.

Actions:

- Provide opportunities for engagement of both individuals and groups to participate in heritage projects.
- Ensure heritage programmes and initiatives have multi-generational appeal.
- Engage active participation in selected heritage projects through a citizen science approach.
- Support Sustainable Heritage Tourism initiatives.
- Promote funding opportunities for individuals, local heritage groups and communities for built, natural and cultural heritage initiatives.
- Support community and heritage groups to plan and undertake heritage projects.
- Create innovative approaches to engaging people with their heritage through the Creative Ireland programme.
- Promote the use of heritage resources in education, in particular the Heritage in Schools Scheme and local heritage-education packs.





Promote Awareness and Appreciation of Leitrim's Heritage

Both the Heritage Forum and the public consultation prioritized raising awareness of Leitrim's Heritage. Actions in this plan will aim to communicate the importance of our built, natural and cultural heritage to raise awareness and appreciation across all audiences. Effectively communicating the importance of heritage will help increase public awareness, understanding, appreciation, enjoyment, support and protection of Leitrim's heritage.

Actions:

- Develop online resources for heritage in the County.
- Develop themed literature resources on the heritage of the County.
- Promote and facilitate heritage events and initiatives to coincide with National heritage initiatives such as Heritage Week.
- Continue to develop the Connecting Through Heritage Podcast series to capture memories of Leitrim residents and heritage experts.
- Continue to develop the Connecting Through Heritage YouTube series to showcase heritage projects and unique aspects of Leitrim's heritage.
- Showcase and disseminate information on heritage projects through the Heritage section on the Leitrim County Council website.
- Promote the Irish Language in the County and seek the appointment of an Ofigeach Gaeilge.
- Promote the Counties' historic towns and heritage sites through discovery heritage guides in digital / print form.
- Develop an annual programme to raise awareness and improve understanding of heritage in Leitrim.

*Promote Awareness
and Appreciation*

Objective 3

Support the Gathering and Dissemination of Heritage Data

This objective aims to enhance and expand the knowledge base for cultural and built heritage and address knowledge gaps. The actions will support and commission academic research, baseline surveys and data-gathering on our built and cultural heritage necessary to inform evidence-based approaches to heritage management and best practice guidance. Material gathered will not only promote awareness and protection of these sites but can also be used to interpret them.

Actions:

- Commission surveys and studies of understudied aspects of the Leitrim's heritage.
- Commission a heritage audit of Leitrim's historic towns and villages
- Establish a pilot project to survey and record field names in the County.
- Establish a Historic Graveyard project in the County.
- Commission a survey of holy wells in the County, including associated customs and cures.
- Commission a study on the vernacular architecture of Leitrim.
- Survey and promote Leitrim's intangible cultural heritage, including oral history, social history, placenames and folklore.

Good heritage management begins with strong evidence and shared knowledge



*Protecting heritage today ensures it
can be enjoyed tomorrow*

Support the Conservation and Management of Leitrim's Heritage

Protection and conservation of our heritage are central to this plan. We will promote best practice in terms of conserving our heritage and provide advice to ensure its protection into the future. We will aim to support better protection and management of Leitrim's Heritage through increasing the capacity of the Heritage Sector in Leitrim.

Actions:

- Raise awareness of built heritage assets among landowners and promote best practice.
- Promote heritage funding initiatives to private owners and community groups.
- Support the appointment of a Conservation Officer to meet the demands for Local Authority heritage services.
- Work with statutory authorities to communicate and promote the protection of built and natural heritage sites to help safeguards these sites.
- Provide information to owners of Protected Structures on funding schemes which support the conservation of the historic environment including the Built Heritage Investment Scheme and the Historic Structures Fund.
- Promote the Community Monument Fund to owners and community groups to encourage conservation of archaeological monuments.
- Develop and implement heritage-related policies within current and future County Leitrim Development Plans and Corporate Plans.
- Advise and guide communities, owners and occupiers, landowners, council staff and developers on the care and conservation of heritage and heritage sites.



Appendix I

Members of the Leitrim Heritage Forum

Cllr. Justin Warnock	Elected member, Leitrim County Council
Cllr. Cormac Flynn	Elected member, Leitrim County Council
Cllr. Eddie Mitchell	Elected member, Leitrim County Council
Cllr. Paddy O'Rourke	Elected member, Leitrim County Council
Cllr. Gary Prior	Elected member, Leitrim County Council
Cllr. Ita Reynolds Flynn	Elected member, Leitrim County Council
Mary Quinn	Director of Services, Leitrim County Council
Bernard Greene	Senior Planner, Leitrim County Council
Pio Byrnes	Senior Executive Planner, Leitrim County Council
Sarah Malone	Heritage Officer, Leitrim County Council
Rebecca Cogan	Biodiversity Officer, Leitrim County Council
Mary Conefrey	Local Studies Librarian, Leitrim County Council
Ashling Cartwright	Leitrim Development Company
Hubert McMorrow	Tourism Sector, Manorhamilton
Kim Taylor	Mohill Historical Society
Gerry Creamer	Manorhamilton Historical Society
Patricia O'Loughlin	Public Participation Network, Dromahair Heritage Group
Seán O Súilleabháin	Public Participation Network, Glór Bhéal an Átha Móir
Tamlyn McHugh	National Monuments Service
Sarah Jane Halpin	National Built Heritage Service
Shane Kilrane	Teagasc
Martina McCarthy	Waterways Ireland
David Fitzpatrick	Office of Public Works
Emma Timoney	Office of Public Works
Siobhan McGowan Loughlin	Office of Public Works
Sarah McCarthy	Fáilte Ireland

Appendix 2

Timeline for Leitrim Heritage Plan Review Process

04 March 2025

First meeting of the Heritage Forum which included workshop on Heritage Plan priorities.
Nominated Chair (Cllr. Justin Warnock).

02 April 2025

Launch of 6-week pre-plan public consultation entitled 'What's Your Leitrim Heritage?'

June 2025

Review and collation of Heritage Forum workshop results and public consultation results.

16 September 2025

Heritage Forum workshop to review priorities and write actions for Heritage Plan.

October 2025

Preparation of Draft Heritage Plan and submission to Senior Management Team for review.

December 2025

Presentation of draft Heritage Plan to the Physical Environment Strategic Policy Committee.

February – March 2026

Draft Heritage Plan 4-week public consultation.

September 2026

Presentation of Draft Heritage Plan Leitrim County Council Elected Members



For further information contact:

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