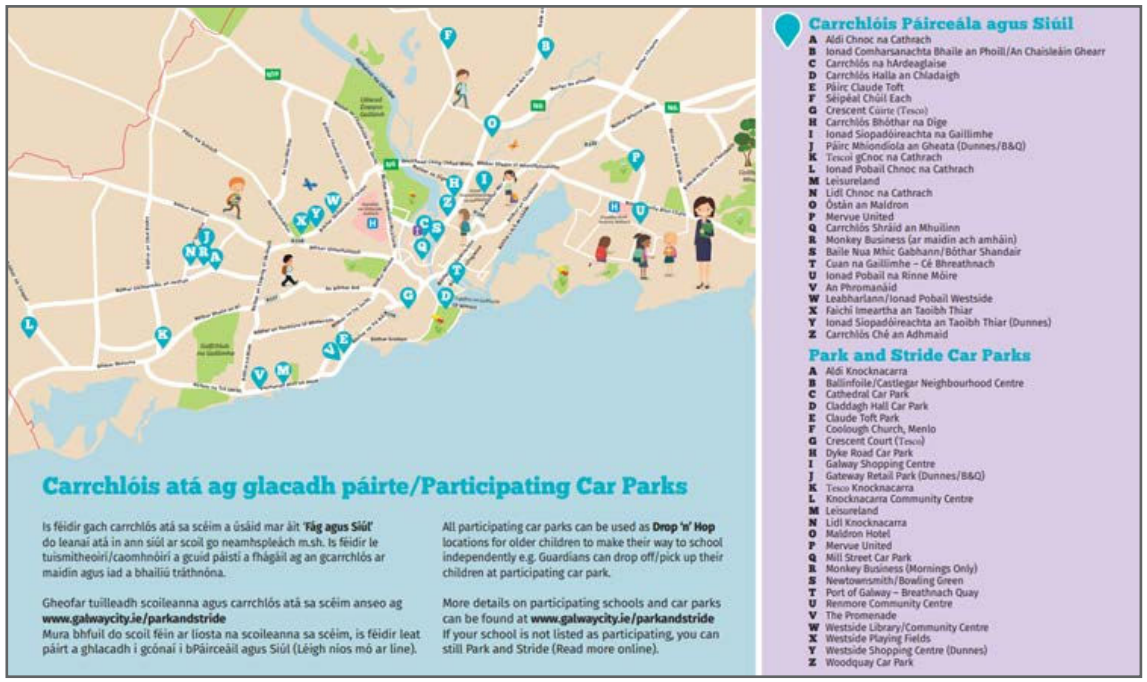

Figure 60: Galway City Council Park and Stride locations.

Figure 61: An extract from Park and Stride leaflet for Castlebar, prepared by Mayo County Council.

Park and Stride, Support to Local Authorities

In July 2023, a meeting was organised with Clare County Council, Galway City Council, Galway County Council, and Mayo County Council to discuss Park and Stride and provide an opportunity for experience and knowledge sharing across the local authorities. Park and Stride is a concept where you park your vehicle within a fifteen-minute walking distance from the school and complete the final leg of the journey on foot. It is an important tool to reduce the presence of vehicles at the front of school at school start and finish times. Each local authority provided an overview of experience with Park and Stride to date. There was also a discussion on common challenges and potential solutions.

Children should be active, at a moderate to vigorous level, for at least 60 minutes every day.

- Castlebar Park and Stride Brochure

Children who are active on the commute have higher levels of concentration in the classroom.

- HSE Physical Activity Guidelines

Continued....

Some of the main points coming from the meeting were:

- A mix of council owned and privately owned car parks may be best to maximise coverage of Park and Stride locations and having Park and Stride locations. Having Park and Stride sites on all approach routes to the school can be the best way to secure uptake of the initiative.
- Distance to the car parks is important. Up to 1km from the school is feasible but 500m/600m from the school, or less, is better.
- Permits may be needed depending on requirements of private car parks and / or for pay and display car parks. It is possible to run Park and Stride without permits, and this can avoid additional administration tasks. Where a permit system is introduced the local authority can work with the school on the preparation and issuing of permits to parents / guardians.
- Schools are key in promoting the use of Park and Stride with their own school community. If the school are not actively engaged in Park and Stride promotion it may be challenging to get a significant uptake. Promotion can also be done through local newspapers, local radio stations, and social media.
- It can be useful to trial Park and Stride initially to get people involved and trying out the initiative, particularly during summer months when weather might be better, as this can make the behaviour change less of an effort. It can also be beneficial to carry out other trials as part of promoting Park and Stride, e.g. closure of a set-down area, trial of a school street, trial of a 'no-car day', etc. Behaviour change can take time, so promotion needs to be sustained and take a multi-pronged approach.
- Insurance should not be an issue as private car parks should have public liability insurance in place which covers Park and Stride, but local authorities can support if needed.

Park and Stride is continuing to be rolled out across the four local authorities that took part in the meeting.