

2. County Sligo in the Future: a Strategic Outlook



2.1 Strategic aims

Taking account of recent policies, important development trends, the achievements of the previous Development Plan and the collective implications of the above for the period to 2011, the strategic aims of this Development Plan are:

- to develop the full potential of each part of County Sligo to contribute to the optimal performance of the County as a whole – economically, socially and environmentally;
- to drive forward the development of Sligo towards a target population of between 75,000 and 80,000 by 2011, structured in a balanced manner between:
 - the Gateway City of Sligo (35,000-40,000). Strategic 20-30-year population: 50,000-80,000.
 - the wider area of County Sligo (40,000), encompassing the targeted development of Key Support Towns and priority settlements, and the maintenance of viable rural communities in the rural hinterlands of these towns and villages.
- to support the implementation of the Gateway status for the City of Sligo, as set out in the NSS and as provided for in the *Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2004-2010*, by ensuring the structured and orderly development of Sligo as a compact and sustainable city;
- to sustain the vitality of rural communities throughout the County in a way that will complement the vibrancy of urban settlements and reinforce the identity of Sligo;
- to ensure that the nationally – and internationally – renowned natural and cultural heritage of Sligo is wisely conserved and enhanced, both as a driver of Sligo's identity and attractiveness to investment and business activity, and as a key legacy to be handed forward to future generations.
- build up the regional-level linkages between County Sligo and other parts of the Border Region and adjoining regions, such as the Western Region and Northern Ireland, by supporting the implementation of regional spatial strategies, such as the *Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region 2004-2024*, collaborating on support for critical enabling infrastructure, such as inter-regional road and rail linkages, and co-operating on areas of mutual planning interest.

2.2 Implementing the aims of the Development Plan

The implementation of a development plan may be constrained by factors such as the economic climate, political support, allocated local authority funding and the availability of funding from diverse sources. Accordingly, no funding of projects can be guaranteed in advance, nor can the implementation of all objectives contained within the Plan be assumed. However, it is the intention of Sligo County Council to exercise all legal powers to ensure that objectives are implemented: this includes the use of compulsory acquisition powers, where necessary.

Table 2.A below outlines the broad aims of the Development Plan that are variously expanded on in the detailed development objectives sections of the Plan.

Table 2.A Broad aims of the County Development Plan

<p>1. Supporting balanced economic development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Facilitate and encourage the development of Sligo as a Gateway City and economic growth driver for the North-West region. b. Integrate business locations with the surrounding land uses and transportation network. c. Promote economic development and the provision of industry/enterprise at the Key Support Towns of Tobercurry, Ballymote and Enniscrone, in addition to Collooney. d. Promote rural/agricultural diversification, through the sustainable use of natural resources, e.g. tourism, forestry, energy production. e. Market and promote Sligo as an attractive place to live and work. f. Involve Sligo Institute of Technology in the promotion of Sligo as a centre of third-level education and hence an attractive place for investment. g. Promote Sligo City and County as a suitable location for the decentralisation of state and/or semi-state bodies. h. Work with the providers of infrastructure to ensure adequate provision in terms of road, rail, aviation, energy and broadband telecommunications. i. Work in partnership with key organisations, such as the Industrial Development Authority and Enterprise Ireland, whose remit it is to promote and/or secure economic development.
<p>2. Carefully managing development patterns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Implement a clear settlement strategy that maintains the distinctive landscape attributes of Sligo. b. Create a balanced settlement pattern in both urban and rural areas that supports sustainable rural settlement. c. Encourage, in the Sligo Sub-Region, a mix of land uses in towns and villages with connections to efficient public transportation systems, to reduce growth in car-based commuting patterns, to reduce inefficient use of energy and resources and to promote social inclusion and more sustainable development patterns. d. Encourage the location of new strategic economic developments in and around key centres of growth in order to strengthen the Gateway City and Key Support Towns. e. Counteract tendencies towards extensive ribbon development and urban sprawl, particularly on the immediate environs of Sligo. f. Strengthen existing rural communities, by ensuring that the planning system facilitates both the housing needs of all persons with roots in, or links to rural areas, as provided for in the NSS, as well as local enterprise initiatives.

Table 2.A Broad aims of the County Development Plan (continued)

<p>3. Conserving environmental quality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support applicants and potential applicants in ensuring that environmental and landscape matters are considered in the initial stages of development proposals. b. Wisely conserve and manage the natural and cultural heritage of the County, including the character of the landscape, views and prospects, and the environmental quality of the setting of towns and villages. c. Enhance the physical environment of towns and villages through the Urban and Village Renewal Scheme and other urban design initiatives. d. Conserve the landscape character and ecological integrity of the coastal zone.
<p>4. Urban renewal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Drive the process of regenerating derelict and under-used areas within the City, towns and villages. b. Conserve the historic form and character of the towns and other settlements. c. Promote Sligo City as the main retail and service centre, with support from Tobercurry, Ballymote, Enniscrone and Collooney as district retail/service centres.
<p>5. Effective transportation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Target, prioritise and promote investment in inter-city and inter-county road and rail connections, as a means of realising the potential of Sligo as an important economic centre in the North-West. b. Promote the development of settlements along existing and former railway lines, so as to facilitate future rail initiatives in the County, with adequate reservations for park-and-ride facilities. c. Integrate the public transportation system with a quality bus and rail service, alongside the promotion of cycle and pedestrian facilities within and adjacent to existing settlements. d. Encourage large employers, including public services (such as schools) to locate on sites close to village and urban centres, where public transport can be provided more easily. e. Promote ‘commuter planning’ for large employers in the County. f. Promote the development of quality interchange facilities between road, rail, bus and bicycle in Sligo City Centre. g. Promote community transport services, in particular the Rural Transport Initiative, aimed at people who are excluded, or who may become excluded because transport is not available. h. Promote and support the development and use of Sligo Regional Airport so as to ensure a better level and frequency of service and enhance Sligo’s accessibility to tourists and businesses, both nationally and internationally.
<p>6. Delivering improved infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide adequate water and sewerage capacity to accommodate the projected needs of the future population. b. Maximise the use of existing water, sewerage, electricity and telecommunications networks and support the provision of broadband. c. Promote the development of gas supply and alternative energy forms in County Sligo. d. Promote energy-efficient building, layout and design. e. Implement the <i>Connaught Regional Waste Management Plan 1999-2004</i> and provide the necessary waste management infrastructure.

