

SLIGO

County
Development
Plan 2011-2017
Volume 1

May 2011

County SLIGO

Development Plan 2011-2017

Volume 1



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Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017

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This publication is available for inspection or purchase at the Planning Office of Sligo County Council and at the Council's Area Offices in Ballymote, Enniscrone and Tobercurry. It can also be viewed and downloaded from the Council's website at www.sligococo.ie/cdp

The CDP consists of two volumes: **Volume 1** contains the main written statement and **Volume 2** contains 30 mini-plans.

The Plan also incorporates the **Record of Protected Structures** for County Sligo and is accompanied by the following supporting documents:

Environmental Report (Strategic Environmental Assessment)

Appropriate Assessment Screening (Habitats Directive)

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

One **A1 map (Landscape Characterisation Map)** is also available as part of the CDP.

The CDP 2011-2017 will remain in force for six years, but may be amended at any time using the development plan variation procedure specified in Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

All adopted variations will be made available for inspection or purchase at the Planning Office of Sligo County Council and at the Council's Area Offices in Ballymote, Enniscrone and Tobercurry. It will also be possible to view and download them from the Council's website at www.sligococo.ie/cdp

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Development
Planning Unit

16 May 2011

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“ The publication of the Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017 is the culmination of a comprehensive engagement between the public, the planners and the elected members of Sligo County Council.

It is testament to the expertise and skill of the staff of the Planning Section of the Council.

The Plan provides a strategy which will enhance the quality of life of the citizens of Sligo within an environment of outstanding quality.”

Councillor Joe Leonard

Cathaoirleach

Contents of Volume 1

Introduction	1	6. Community facilities	75
1. County Sligo: the planning issues	2	6.1 Delivering community facilities	75
1.1 Important policy developments	2	6.2 Education	77
1.2 Sligo - key development factors	4	6.3 Childcare	78
1.3 Population change	6	6.4 Children's play	79
1.4 Recent trends - implications for the County Development Plan	7	6.5 Sports, recreation and open space	80
2. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	9	6.6 Healthcare facilities	81
2.1 Legal context	9	6.7 Burial grounds	82
2.2 SEA changes	9	6.8 Arts and cultural facilities	83
2.3 Environmental Report	9	6.9 Allotments	84
2.4 Scoping	9	7. Heritage	85
2.5 Alternatives	10	7.1 Natural heritage	86
2.6 Evaluation of the Plan	14	7.2 Archaeological heritage	99
2.7 Mitigation measures	14	7.3 ARchitectural heritage	104
2.8 Monitoring	14	7.4 Protecting landscape character	109
3. County Sligo: Core Strategy	15	8. Transport and mobility	115
3.1 Core Strategy basics	16	8.1 Sligo as a regional transport node	116
3.2 Spatial development framework	20	8.2 Public transport	118
3.3 Settlement structure	24	8.3 Road network	120
3.4 Development land requirements	30	8.4 Cycle and pedestrian movements	124
3.5 Housing land provision in the County	34	8.5 Airports	126
3.6 Implementation	37	8.6 Port and harbours	127
4. Economic development	39	9. Environmental infrastructure	128
4.1 Approach to economic development	40	9.1 Water, wastewater and drainage: context and legislation	128
4.2 Rural development and enterprise	44	9.2 Water supply	130
4.3 Sligo County Retail Strategy	49	9.3 Wastewater treatment	134
4.4 Tourism development	53	9.4 Surface water drainage	140
5. Housing	58	9.5 Waste management	141
5.1 Existing and future housing development	58	10. Environmental quality	145
5.2 Housing Strategy	60	10.1 Water quality	145
5.3 Social and affordable housing	63	10.2 Coastal zone management	150
5.4 Traveller accommodation	65	10.3 Air quality	154
5.5 Voluntary and cooperative housing	66	10.4 Noise control	154
5.6 Special needs housing	66	10.5 Major Accidents Directive (Seveso II)	155
5.7 Rural housing	67	10.6 Climate change and flood risk management	156
5.8 Holiday homes and second homes	73	11. Energy and telecommunications	160
5.9 Vacant housing	74	11.1 Energy	160
		11.2 Telecommunications	164

12. Development management standards	168	Appendices	
12.1 Development management principles	168	Appendix A. Population and housing	203
12.2 Site development standards	171	Appendix B. Designated nature conservation sites	209
12.3 Residential development standards	174	Appendix C. Biodiversity sites	212
12.4 Retail, commercial and industrial use standards	184	Appendix D. Protected species	214
12.5 Community facilities standards	190	Appendix E. Geological heritage sites	220
12.6 Roads, access, circulation and parking	191	Appendix F. Monuments in State care	221
12.7 Miscellaneous development standards	195	Appendix G. County landscape designations	223

Figures

Fig 1.A County Sligo's location in the national context	1
Fig. 1.B Border Region: sub-regions as outlined in the Regional Planning Guidelines 2004	2
Fig. 1.C Infrastructure strategy as outlined in the Draft Regional Planning Guidelines 2010	3
Fig. 1.D Population change in County Sligo's Electoral Divisions between 1996 and 2006	7
Fig. 2.A Scenario 1: Recent Trends – demand-led growth	11
Fig. 2.B Scenario 2: Spreading Out Development – small-village catch-up	12
Fig. 2.C Scenario 3: Focused Growth – Gateway focus and Key Town consolidation	13
Fig. 3.A Draft Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 – Spatial Strategy Map	20
Fig. 3.B The Core Strategy map as a spatial development framework	21
Fig. 3.C Settlement Structure - guiding principles	26
Fig. 3.D County Sligo – settlement structure and hierarchy	27
Fig. 5.B Rural housing policy areas in County Sligo	68
Fig. 7.C Archaeological and historic landscape of the Cuil Irra Peninsula	103
Fig. 7.D Landscape character map	111
Fig. 10.B Features of Sligo's coastal zone	152
Fig. AA-1 Sligo and Environs area	203
Fig. AA-7 Vacant housing estates in Ireland, 2009	207
Fig. AB-1 Special Areas of Conservation (including cSAC)	209
Fig. AB-2 Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas	211
Fig. AB-3 Special Protection Areas	211

Boxes

Box. 3.J Principle of Sequential Development	32
Schedule 3.L Settlements subject to the moratorium on multiple-housing development	36
Box 7.A Heritage protection principles	86
Box 7.B Natural heritage – legislative and policy context	88
Box 9.C Existing and proposed waste management facilities and services in Sligo	143
Box 10.C Proposed coastal protection works in County Sligo	152

Tables

Table 3.E Summary of past and envisaged population distribution in County Sligo: Census 2002 and 2006, projections/allocations for 2017	27
Table 3.F Principal Gateway Satellites – recommended population levels 2017	28
Table 3.G Secondary Gateway Satellites – recommended population levels 2017	28
Table 3.H Key Support Towns – recommended population levels 2017	29
Table 3.I Villages supporting rural communities – recommended population levels 2017	29
Table 3.K Core Strategy Table - RPG Population and housing land allocations, land zoned for residential development and corresponding housing yields	35
Table 4.A Retail provision in County Sligo - data from surveys undertaken in 2003 and 2008	50
Table 5.A Housing unit projections and delivery 2005–2007	58
Table 8.A Structure of the road network in County Sligo	120
Table 8.B National road projects in County Sligo	122
Table 8.C Planned non-national road improvements	123
Table 9.A Proposals for water supply schemes in County Sligo, 2010–2017	131
Table 9.B Proposed wastewater treatment plants and extensions in County Sligo	135-136
Table 10.A Lakes and water quality status in County Sligo	147
Table 12.A Car parking standards	179-180
Table AA-2. Summary of population change scenarios for Sligo City and County to the years 2017 and 2020	204
Table AA-3. Border Regional Population Targets 2010, 2016 and 2022	205
Table AA-4. Comparison between RPG population targets and the High-Growth Scenario estimates for County Sligo	205
Table AA-5. Housing Strategy 2010-2017 - summary of past and envisaged population distribution in County Sligo	206
Table AA-6. Summary of past and envisaged population distribution in County Sligo: Census 2002 and 2006, projections/allocations for 2017	206
Table AA-8. Permanent housing units by occupancy status on Census Night, 2006	208
Table AA-9. House completions in County Sligo, 2000 to 2008	208

County Development Plan: Introduction

As the blueprint for development in County Sligo, the County Development Plan is the over-arching strategic framework document for sustainable development in spatial, economic, social and environmental terms.

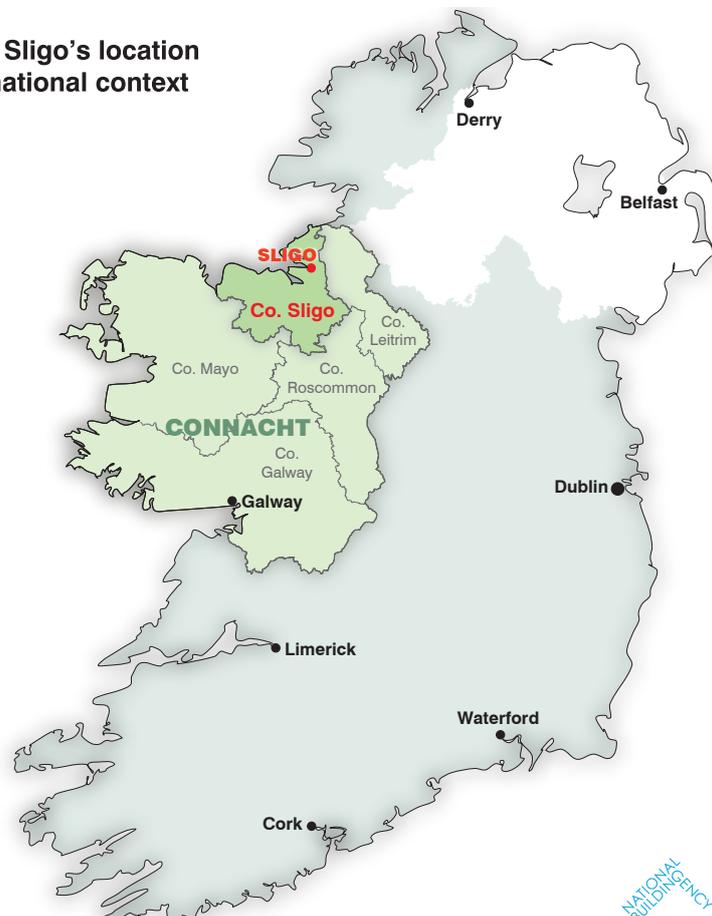
As such, the development plan must offer clear guidance on sustainable development policies and objectives addressing various issues such as housing and the creation of sustainable communities, transport, urban development, waste management, judicious use of natural resources, climate change etc. (*Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, DoEHLG, June 2007)

Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017 sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Sligo, in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Plan relates to the County of Sligo, except for the Sligo and Environs area, which is covered by the *Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016*.

This Plan builds on the review of Sligo County Development Plan 2005-2011, taking into account recent development trends as well as national and regional policy changes. The Plan presents the Council's outlook for the future development of the County for the period up to 2017, within the framework of a longer-term perspective. Within this strategic outlook, the Plan sets out planning policies that are aimed at:

- driving forward the economic and social development of Sligo, by boosting competitiveness and enhancing the quality of life for the citizens of Sligo within an environment of outstanding quality, through:
 - the implementation of a Core Strategy for the County aimed at achieving the balanced development of County Sligo,
- and thus:
 - responding to national and regional planning policy contained in the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines.

Fig. 1.A County Sligo's location in the national context



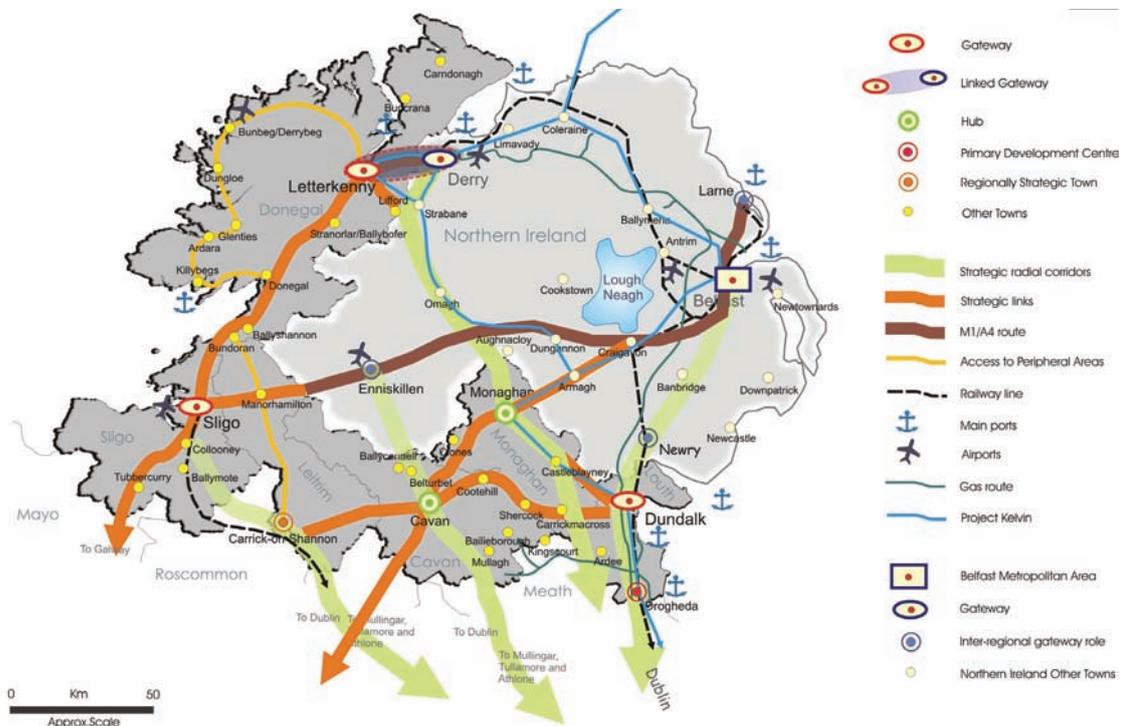
1.1 Policy developments

Key messages from these and other relevant policy documents, to which this Plan responds, are as follows:

At national level:

1. The NDP aims to deliver a programme of prioritised and structured investment in Ireland's physical, economic and social infrastructure, in order to strengthen Ireland's competitiveness, sustain economic and employment growth, foster balanced regional development and promote social inclusion. For Sligo, the NDP represents recognition by Government that investment in critical infrastructure is necessary to sustain balanced regional development and needs to be responded to through a dynamic planning and development framework and investments prioritised and structured around a development programme.
2. The NSS represents the first national strategic planning framework and identifies Sligo as an urban centre to be developed in an accelerated manner as a Gateway City to drive the overall development of the North-West. This County Development Plan responds to the call in the NSS for frameworks at the county level to achieve balanced development in areas outside of the gateways.

Fig. 1.C Infrastructure strategy as outlined in the Draft Regional Planning Guidelines 2010



At regional level:

3. The Draft Border RPGs 2010 aim to support the development of the gateways identified in the NSS within a more detailed framework that includes Hubs and other key towns outside the Gateways. The Guidelines establish a broad framework for county development plans to ensure that the development of the Gateways under the NSS moves forward in tandem with a process of strengthening other urban areas and supporting a dynamic rural community. The RPGS also set minimum population targets and related housing land requirements for counties and major urban centres in the Border Region.
4. The River Basin Management Plans identify the specific environmental objectives to be achieved by the end of 2015 and corresponding programmes of measures (i.e. actions that will be taken to achieve the objectives). Sligo County Council is responsible for the implementation of the RBMPs. Development plan policy must have due regard for the programme of measures detailed in the Management Plans. The RBMPs were published in 2010.

At local level:

5. The Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 sets out a detailed development framework to transform Sligo into a Gateway City, as outlined in the NSS.
6. The County Development Board has established an economic, social and cultural development strategy for Sligo with the support of key interest groups and agencies. This strategy promotes balanced spatial development, social inclusion and enhancement of the living culture of Sligo as the aims for the future.

1.2 Sligo – key development factors

County Sligo, located in the province of Connacht, in the north-west of Ireland, encompasses a total land surface of approximately 1,837.11 km², bordered by Counties Leitrim, Roscommon and Mayo, and flanked to the west by almost 200 km of Atlantic coastline.

Landscape setting

The County has a varied natural landscape with spectacular limestone mountains, such as Benbulbin and Benwislin, other interesting upland terrain (e.g. the Ox and Bricklieve Mountains), numerous picturesque lakes (Loughs Gill, Arrow, Glencar, Easkey, Gara and Talt), enclosed farmland and a diverse coastline comprising low-lying cliffs, indented shoreline and sandy beaches. These topographical attributes combine to give Sligo an outstanding landscape setting.



Heritage and culture

Sligo possesses unique archaeological and historical remains, with more than 5,000 recorded archaeological sites dating back over 6,000 years, including the prehistoric sites of Carrowmore, Carrowkeel and Creevykeel.

The beauty of the countryside coupled with a rich cultural and historical past has inspired musicians, artists and poets alike, including the Yeats family, St. Colmcille and Michael Coleman. This has provided Sligo with strong international recognition on which to base a thriving tourism industry.

In recent years, County Sligo has benefitted from the development of a range of cultural facilities such as the Coleman Music Centre, The Folk Museum, The James Morrison Teach Ceoil and Teach Laighne, Tobercurry Community Library.

The character of the County has been enhanced through public art commissions, which have been integrated with village renewal schemes (e.g. commissioned seating for Coolaney's riverside walk by Alex Pentek, a landmark lighting feature in Ballysadare created by Tony Stallard, and in Grange, a sculptural work created by Elizabeth Caffery for the village park).

Economic trends

The Gateway City of Sligo has developed as an important industrial, commercial and residential centre supporting a regional airport, a railway terminus, a port, two third-level colleges and a general hospital. Sligo serves as the administrative, commercial, service, health and educational centre for a large hinterland. It also acts as an important distribution centre in the North-West.

In 2009 there were 47 companies located in four IDA business parks in the County. Sligo City, with a sizeable mass of labour and skills, underpinned by its ease of access and availability of infrastructure and services, has developed as the key location for industry in County Sligo. Tobercurry and Grange are the other industrial employment centres in the County.

Outside the City, agriculture continues to be an important part of the local economy, although its share of economic output and employment has declined in proportional terms, while forestry, tourism and other emergent, rural-based economic activities continue to support the smaller towns and villages of the County.

Since late 2007 there has been a notable change in employment levels, with increased redundancies and rising unemployment. This trend has accelerated as the recession deepened and spread from the construction and finance sectors to the rest of the economy.

As in other Western counties, employment in Sligo tended to be in sectors that are lower-skilled, lower-value-added and more vulnerable in a recession (e.g. construction, retail), with lower shares in the higher-skilled and high-value-added sectors (e.g. information and communications technology, financial services). These factors will have implications for the County's ability to respond and adapt to the decline.

The public sector remains the most important employer in the County. This employment profile means that the County is not as well placed in the move towards an increasingly knowledge-based or 'smart' economy.

According to the Western Development Commission (*Work in the West: The Western Region's Employment and Unemployment Challenge*, December 2009), the current tendency for economic and regional policy to focus on the role and potential of the major cities may further exacerbate the difficulties, as the Western Region, particularly its northern part, is predominantly rural, with small towns and villages where the decline in construction had a profound impact in employment terms.

In the context of this employment profile, the Western Development Commission has identified three key employment challenges facing the Western Region:

- adjusting to the decline in construction employment;
- return of the "brain drain";
- delivery of education and training in the region.

The WDC recommends that national economic strategies encourage the growth potential of smaller urban centres and rural areas, investment in critical infrastructure and measures to retain skilled people in the region. In terms of job creation, this would translate in:

- identifying and focusing training and investments in priority growth sectors;
- retraining construction workers for the "green economy" and investment in the development of renewable energy resources;
- training and investment in the area of elder care, given the older age profile of the population in the West;
- supporting locally-trading micro-enterprises in rural areas;
- support for process (non-technological) innovation as well as product innovation.

1.3 Population change

The 2006 Census recorded a total population of 60,895 persons in County Sligo, of which 17,892 were living in Sligo Borough (as defined by Census boundaries). This represented an increase of 2,716 (4.67%) in the County's population compared to 2002, and 5,073 (9.09%) compared to 1996.

Sligo Borough and nearby electoral divisions

The Borough lost 581 (2.91%) of its residents between 2002 and 2006, having grown by 3.6% between 1996 and 2002.

The town's overspill development between 1996 and 2006 was reflected in significant growth within some electoral divisions (EDs) adjacent to, or within commuting distance of Sligo Borough.

The best examples are Knockaree ED, which includes the satellite village of Strandhill and Sligo's expansion along the Strandhill Road, and Collooney ED. The population of Knockaree ED grew by 1,175 (57.5%), while Collooney ED grew by 627 people (58.5%) between 1996 and 2006.

Total population living in Sligo City and within 10 miles of it

In 2002, there were 38,870 people living in the Borough and the 29 EDs within 10 miles of Sligo city centre. By 2006, the population of the same area had grown to 40,011, which represents 65.73% of the total County population.

The number of people living in the Borough and within 10 miles of it has risen, slowly but constantly, by 3,543 (9.7%) between 1996 and 2006.

The County area outside the Borough generally gained population at a faster pace than the urban core between 1996 and 2006, growing by 8.2% between 2002-2006 (compared to minus 2.91% in the Borough) and by 13% over the entire decade 1996-2006, when the Borough added less than 1% to its population (106 persons).

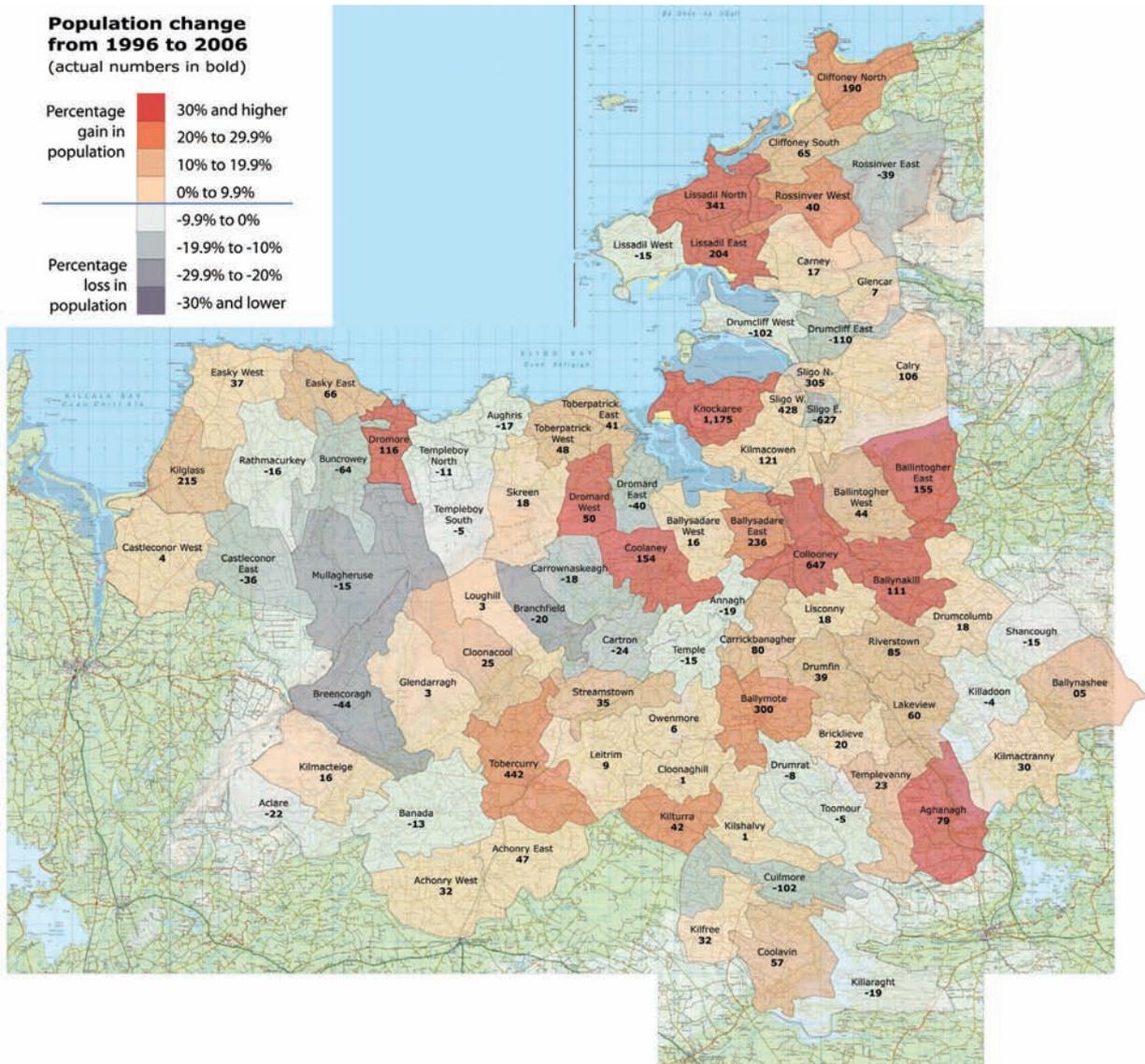
During the twelve years from 1991 to 2002, the population of rural areas in the central and northern parts of the County rose consistently, while more western and southern parts lost population. Population growth over 10% was recorded in 21 out of 79 EDs, six of them experiencing growth of over 15%.

Depopulation has gradually slowed down: 40 rural EDs lost population between 1991 and 1996, but only 34 EDs underwent this process between 1996 and 2002 and just 24 did the same between 2002 and 2006. Most of the EDs that have continued to experience population decline cover extensive uplands and remote rural areas of marginal agricultural value.

The key trends that emerge from a review of Census information are as follows:

- the population of Sligo Borough is stagnant, while that of the Gateway's immediate commuter belt is rising slowly but constantly;
- the County has outpaced the Borough in terms of population growth;
- the process of population decline has been reversed in most parts of the County, with substantial rates of increase being recorded in areas containing satellite villages of Sligo City;
- western parts of County Sligo exhibit more persistent patterns of population stability or decline, generally in the mountainous and remote areas.

Fig. 1.D Population change in County Sligo's Electoral Divisions between 1996 and 2006



1.4 Recent trends and implications for the County Development Plan

Taking account of recent policy developments, economic and demographic trends, the major implications for the formulation of a renewed development strategy for County Sligo to 2017 and beyond are as follows:

- County Sligo should strive to retain and increase its population, building on its strategic location in the North-West, its quality of life and its natural and cultural heritage attributes, in order to realise the vision for balanced regional development presented in the NSS. Employment creation, education, training and investment in critical infrastructure are essential in retaining and growing the County's population.
- To support national efforts towards balanced regional development and achieve important regional and local benefits, there is a need to focus on the Gateway City of Sligo, by taking a strategic approach to the planning and development of Sligo and its environs and aiming to deliver a compact, accessible, physically attractive, public transport-based and business-friendly city with cohesive communities and a strong cultural identity.

- For balanced development to take place within County Sligo, the role of the Gateway needs to be partnered with a focus on specific development roles for other urban areas in the County, such as:
 - the larger towns of Ballymote, Enniscrone and Tobercurry;
 - the Gateway satellites;
 - the smaller villages.
- Rural areas in Sligo have experienced significant economic, demographic and physical changes:
 - some areas have grown rapidly in population, pointing to the need to carefully manage overspill development associated with Sligo reaching outwards;
 - extensive areas of upland and marginal agricultural land present new opportunities for diversifying the rural economy;
 - the County’s coastline, uplands, rivers, together with its cultural heritage, give it a recognisable national and international identity and are a resource to be wisely managed in sustaining the development of the County into the future.
- County Sligo has benefited from investment in critical enabling infrastructure, such as the Sligo Inner Relief Road, upgrading of the Sligo-Dublin rail line, improvements to Sligo Regional Airport, extension of broadband services, upgrading of energy and telecommunication networks, construction and upgrading of water supplies and wastewater treatment infrastructure. This process should continue. However, to capture the maximum gain, there is a continued need for focused investment to help develop the Gateway and consolidate the towns in the County as local economic engines.
- As we move forward, Sligo’s cultural offering must become stronger and more diverse if the County seeks to attract increased visitor numbers and an internationally mobile workforce. By making it a priority in the development plan, the County Council intends to protect and develop Sligo’s character and culture for the future wellbeing of the County.

2. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

2.1 Legal context

In June 2001, the European Parliament and Council adopted the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC), which was transposed into Irish law in the form of Statutory Instruments No. 435 and 436 of 2004 (SEA Regulations). Both sets of regulations became operational on 21 July 2004. The Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004) are applicable to the Sligo County Development Plan.

SEA is a systematic process for evaluating, at the earliest stage of decision-making, the environmental quality and potential consequences of alternative visions incorporated in plans and programmes. The undertaking of a “full SEA”, i.e. the preparation of an Environmental Report, is mandatory in the case of development plans.

2.2 SEA stages

SEA involves several stages, the most important being:

- determining the scope of the assessment, in conjunction with prescribed environmental authorities (the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources);
- collecting baseline environmental data;
- preparing and evaluating alternative development scenarios;
- selecting the optimal scenario and preparing the Draft Plan;
- assessing the Draft Plan against the baseline data and strategic environmental objectives;
- modifying and refining the Draft Plan to minimise negative environmental impacts;
- recommending mitigation measures;
- establishing a system of monitoring the environmental effects of implementing the adopted Plan, based on appropriate indicators and targets.

2.3 Environmental Report

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017 has been undertaken by the environmental consultants CAAS on behalf of Sligo County Council. The resultant Environmental Report (ER) is published as a separate document.

The SEA has informed the policies and objectives included in the Plan and has also suggested appropriate mitigation measures which have been incorporated in the relevant chapters.

2.4 Scoping

The scope of environmental issues to be dealt with by the SEA, together with the level of detail in which they were to be addressed, was determined in consultation with the prescribed environmental authorities, i.e. the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.

The most important strategic environmental issues in County Sligo were identified as follows:

- **water:** surface water quality and groundwater vulnerability; compliance with the Water Framework Directive and Surface Water Regulations 2009;
- **wildlife:** protection of Natura 2000 sites, Annex II species, non-designated species and habitats, priority habitats, marginal farmland and water-dependent habitats; ecological connectivity;
- **flooding:** compliance with the DoEHLG's guidelines on flood risk management by undertaking a flood risk assessment;
- **landscape and cultural heritage:** avoidance of unnecessary impacts of development upon sensitive rural landscapes and visually vulnerable areas; protection of the significant archaeological heritage.

The main implications for the CDP are:

- the need to limit the extents of urbanised developments to conform with the capacity of existing and planned wastewater treatment plants, which, in turn, will be limited by the assimilative capacity of the receiving waters;
- the need to ensure compliance with the highest standards in the provisions of new private wastewater treatment systems in the environs of planned settlement centres that occur within sensitive surface or groundwater catchments;
- the need to adopt measures arising from the Western River Basin Management Plan, the Shannon and North Western River Basin Management Plans, the associated Programmes of Measures and from national legislation/guidelines relating to the protection of *freshwater pearl mussels*;
- the need to adopt measures arising from the Flood Risk Management Guidelines.

2.5 Alternatives

The SEA Directive requires that reasonable alternatives (taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the Plan) are identified, described and evaluated in relation to their likely significant effects on the environment.

These alternatives must be realistic, capable of implementation, and should represent a range of different approaches within statutory and operational requirements of the Plan.

Taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the CDP, three development scenarios were formulated through consultation between the plan-making team and the SEA consultants.

The Recent Trend, Spreading-Out Development and Focused Growth scenarios provide alternative visions of how future growth might occur in County Sligo.

As the CDP is required by legislation to be reviewed and replaced by a new development plan every six years, a Do-Nothing scenario was not considered.

Scenario 1: Recent Trends – demand-led growth

Over-zoning, developer-led growth and an increase in the number of one-off rural housing have been the main development features of recent years in County Sligo.

According to 2006 Census data, just one year after the adoption of the CDP 2005-2011 growth in the satellite villages had already attained levels beyond what was envisaged in the Settlement Strategy and what was considered sustainable in terms of Gateway promotion. Furthermore, the zoning of much more land than what was realistically needed in certain settlements has now resulted in a large number of vacant dwellings. Some of the Key Satellites of Sligo, but also other villages located in majority in the Sligo Sub-region, have been affected by these trends.

At the same time, there has been a small but steady growth in rural one-off houses, not just in the rural areas in need of regeneration, but also in the rural areas under strong urban influence. This growth did not appear to be hindered by the rural housing policies, which were nonetheless drawn up in accordance with the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines.

Scenario 2: Spreading Out Development – small-village catch-up

There are many settlements in County Sligo where very little or no development has taken place during the construction boom, primarily because no tax incentives were available for house construction at those locations.

It could be argued that these and other similar settlements also “deserve” their “fair” share of future growth, alongside the towns and villages that have already seen a substantial amount of development in recent years.

Alternative Scenario 2 (see Figure 2.B) provides for sufficient land to be zoned and serviced in those Sligo villages that were “left behind” and advocates adequate infrastructure to be put in place in order to cater for population and employment growth in these locations.

This scenario would result in:

- a degree of population growth in the more attractive and better serviced villages as a result of residential zoning and additional infrastructural commitments;
- continued stagnation or loss of the Gateway’s population to the satellites and smaller villages in the Sub-region where there is an excess of housing;
- hindrance of growth in Key Support Towns, as newly-formed households occupy vacant houses in Gateway satellites or prefer to settle in smaller villages or outside settlements, in rural areas, particularly in Rural Areas in Need of Regeneration.

Scenario 2 – Spread development

● All settlements receive an equal share of future growth as development is spread throughout the County

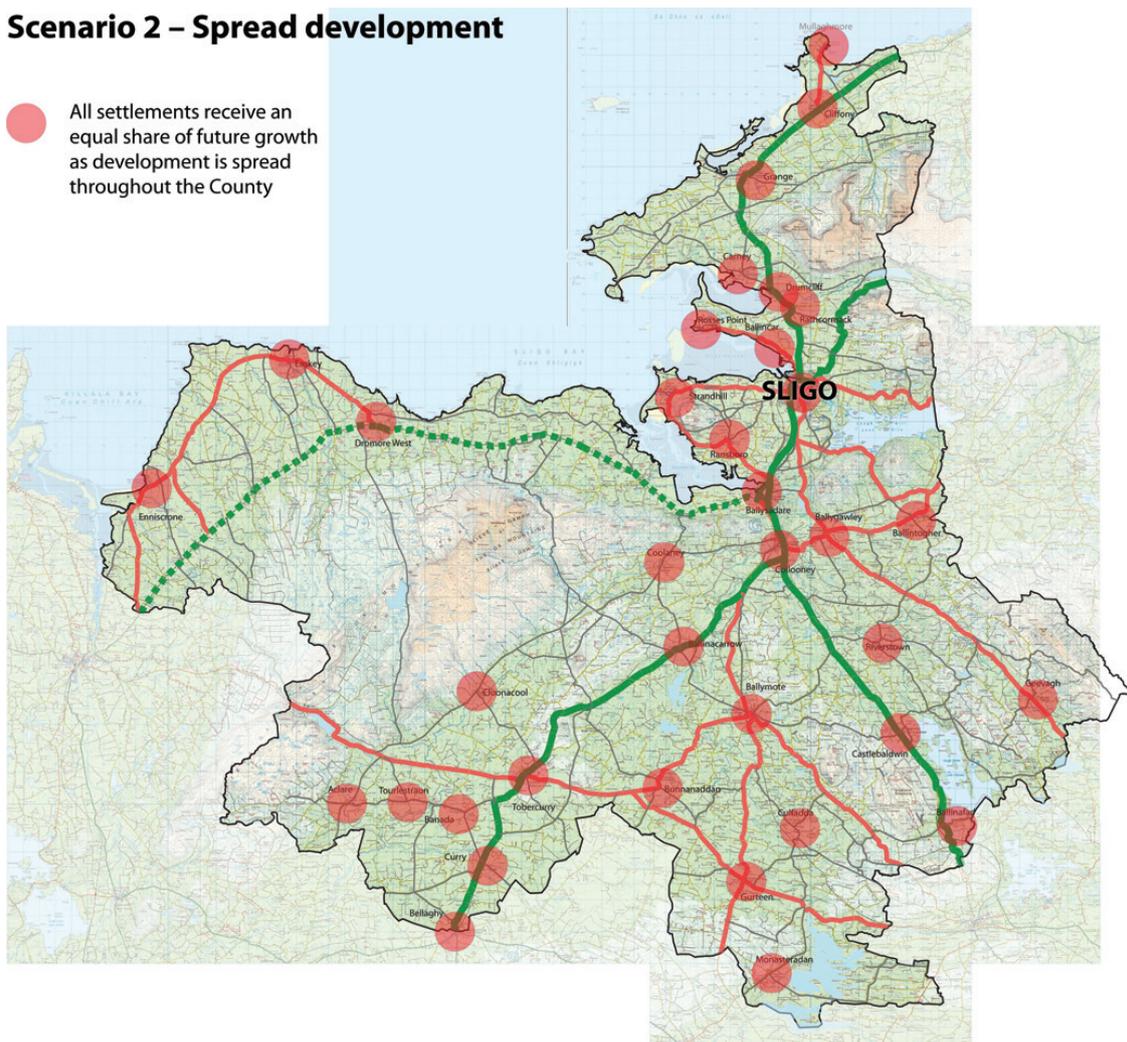


Fig. 2.B Scenario 2: Spreading Out Development – small-village catch-up

It is acknowledged that some of the satellites and other villages have new wastewater treatment plants with a capacity much higher than their existing and envisaged population. However, wastewater treatment capacity is only one in an array of planning issues that must be taken into consideration when determining the optimal population level in a particular settlement for the period of a development plan.

Scenario 3 is the preferred scenario for the development of County Sligo over the period of the CDP 2011-2017.

2.6 Evaluation of the Plan

Section 8 of the Environmental Report evaluates the goals, policies and objectives of this plan against sixteen Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs), making use of the baseline environmental information and a wide range of maps. The SEOs were developed from international, national and regional policies which generally govern environmental protection objectives. The SEOs are used as standards against which the development strategies, goals, policies and objectives of the Draft Plan can be evaluated in order to help identify areas in which significant adverse impacts are likely to occur, if unmitigated against.

At Draft Plan stage, a total of 617 sets of policies and objectives were assessed against the SEOs. The assessment indicated that:

- 565 groups of policies and objectives are likely to improve the status of certain SEOs;
- 302 groups of policies and objectives are potentially conflicting with the status of certain SEOs, but such conflicts are likely to be mitigated;
- 345 groups of policies and objectives are not likely to interact with the status of the SEOs.

The Environmental Report concludes that, with the integration of appropriate mitigation measures, potential adverse environmental effects which could arise as a result of implementing the Plan would be avoided, reduced or offset.

2.7 Mitigation measures

Mitigation measures are measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse impacts on the environment of implementing the Development Plan. Section 9 of the Environmental Report recommends general mitigation measures, which have been incorporated into the relevant Draft Plan chapters. Additional and more detailed mitigation measures than those which have been integrated into the Plan are likely to be required by the development management and EIA processes for individual projects.

2.8 Monitoring

The SEA Directive requires that the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes are monitored.

Monitoring enables, at an early stage, the identification of unforeseen adverse effects and the undertaking of appropriate remedial action. In addition to this, monitoring can also play an important role in assessing whether the Plan is achieving its environmental objectives and targets and whether the proposed mitigation measures are being implemented.

The Environmental Report puts forward proposals for monitoring the environmental effects of the CDP. The proposals include specific indicators and targets as well as suggestions for putting in place a monitoring system within the local authority.

Section 10 of the SEA Environmental Report identifies indicators for monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan. A monitoring evaluation report on the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan will be prepared alongside the Manager's report to the elected Members on the progress achieved in securing the Plan objectives within two years of the making of the Plan. (This Manager's report is required under Section 15 of the Planning and Development Act 2000.)

3. County Sligo: Core Strategy



Sligo has been designated as a Gateway City under the National Spatial Strategy (NSS). As the national planning framework for Ireland, the NSS aims to achieve a better balance of social, economic and physical development across the state, supported by more effective planning. Within this context, Sligo is recognised as having the potential to build scale and critical mass to drive development in the North-West. The approach is to make the region competitive according to its strengths while ensuring a high-quality urban environment and vibrant rural areas.

Apart from the development of an enterprising and competitive Gateway, the vision for the future of County Sligo involves the creation of compact, liveable towns and villages, in a green and accessible County, which offers affordable homes, healthcare, educational, cultural and recreational facilities set in a high-quality natural environment where heritage is protected and enhanced.

The Core Strategy of this Development Plan seeks to realise the vision for Sligo by addressing the key issues identified in Chapter 1.

The Core Strategy is consistent with the National Spatial Strategy and the Border Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) in supporting balanced development throughout the County in parallel with the growth of Sligo as a Gateway City and the strengthening of its links to other significant urban centres in the Border Region and beyond.

The implementation of the Core Strategy is made possible by:

- the **Spatial Development Framework** (Section 3.2), which sets out strategic policies on the location of residential and employment-related development, transport framework and environmental quality;
- the **Settlement Structure** (Section 3.3), which defines the settlement hierarchy and indicates how future population growth should be distributed throughout the County. Section 3.3 also provides details of population targets and population change scenarios;
- the **Development Land Requirements** (Section 3.4), which outlines the guiding principles and sets out strategic policies regarding the zoning of land for residential and other uses during the life time of this Plan.

The Core Strategy is supported by strategic economic development policies (included in Chapter 4), the Retail Strategy (Section 4.3), the Housing Strategy (Section 5.2), rural housing policies (Section 5.7) and the strategic policies relating to transport and mobility (Section 8.1).

3.1 Core Strategy basics

The Planning and Development Act 2010 amended Section 10 of the Principal Act by introducing the requirement of a “core strategy that shall show that the development objectives in the development plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy and regional planning guidelines”.

This Core Strategy provides relevant information to demonstrate consistency with NSS and RPGs and sets out Core Aims and Strategic Goals that, in turn, define and shape:

- growth locations;
- population distribution;
- land use zoning.

3.1.1 Growth model consistency with NSS and RPGs

Having identified Sligo as one of four new gateways in 2002, the NSS emphasises the role of balanced development at local level, which must be achieved through the strengthening of the urban settlement structure in parallel with ensuring that the resources of rural areas are developed to offer a viable future to rural dwellers.

The 2010 Border RPGs choose a balanced approach to regional development – a polycentric settlement model, supported by a strong road network – recommending the prioritisation of key urban settlements in terms of population and investment growth, while at the same time sustaining and revitalising rural areas.

In accordance with the above concepts, this Core Strategy defines a spatial development framework for County Sligo which prioritises Gateway growth and Key Town consolidation, while seeking to support rural areas mainly by strengthening a range of small villages throughout the County. The spatial development framework is detailed in Section 3.2 of this Plan.

3.1.2 Compliance with RPG population targets and housing land requirements

The RPGs set out population targets for 2016 and 2020 for both County Sligo and Sligo and Environs.

Having estimated a population of 66,430 in 2010, the RPGs indicate that the targets for County Sligo are 71,851 persons in 2016 and 77,350 persons in 2022. The population targets for Sligo and Environs are 21,200 (in 2016) and 23,200 (in 2022). It should be noted that these figures refer to the Sligo and Environs area as defined by Census 2006 boundaries (see Appendix A for details).

Like the Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016, this County Development Plan uses the High-Growth Scenario, one of a set of projections prepared for the Joint Sligo City and County Housing Strategy 2010-2017, which was adopted by both Sligo Borough and County Councils in 2009 as part of the Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 (refer to Appendix A).

The High-Growth Scenario projects a County population of 72,838 persons in 2016 (slightly higher than the RPG target) and 76,909 persons in 2020 (on course for reaching the RPG target in 2022). The Scenario envisages a County population of 73,835 in 2017, which is 2,000 persons higher than the RPG target for 2016.

However, it is acknowledged that the Scenario may be too optimistic and therefore, in the interest of consistency with the Regional Planning Guidelines, this Development Plan uses the RPG recommendations in determining the housing land requirements for the lifetime of the plan.

The housing land requirement as defined by the RPGs is 195 hectares for the county, excluding the Sligo and Environs area. A breakdown of this area by settlement is provided in Section 3.5 Housing Land Provision in the County and in Appendix I of Volume 2 (Mini-Plans) of this Plan.

3.1.3 Core aims of the County Development Plan

Taking account of recent policy developments, current trends, the achievements of the previous Development Plan and the collective implications of the above for the period to 2017, the core aims of this Plan are:

- CA-1** 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;
- CA-2** To adequately provide for the growth of Sligo towards a target population of up to 74,000 by 2017, structured in a balanced manner between:
 - the Gateway City of Sligo (up to 34,000)
 - the wider area of County Sligo (up to 40,000), encompassing the consolidation of Key Support Towns and smaller settlements, and the maintenance of viable rural communities in the hinterlands of these towns and villages.
- CA-3** To support the implementation of the Gateway status for Sligo City, as set out in the NSS, the RPGs and as provided for in the Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016, by ensuring the structured and orderly development of Sligo as a compact and sustainable city;
- CA-4** To sustain the vitality of urban and rural communities throughout the County in a way that will complement the vibrancy of the Gateway and reinforce the identity of Sligo, ensuring that culture is central to the County's identity and quality of life of all those who live, work and visit Sligo.
- CA-5** 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 for investment and business activities, and as a key legacy to be handed forward to future generations.
- CA-6** To 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 Border Regional Planning Guidelines, collaborating on support for critical enabling infrastructure, such as inter-regional road and rail linkages, and co-operating on areas of mutual planning interest.

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.

3.1.4 Strategic goals of the County Development Plan

SG-1. Supporting balanced economic development

- 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 in the Key Support Towns of Tobercurry, Ballymote and Enniscrone.
- 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.

SG-1. Supporting balanced economic development (continued)

- g. Promote Sligo City and County as a suitable location for the relocation of state and/or semi-state bodies.
- h. Work with the relevant providers to ensure adequate infrastructure 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.
- j. Encourage and facilitate the sustainable development of the creative and cultural industries as a driver of the local economy.
- k. Work with Fáilte Ireland, Sligo Marketing Forum and the County Development Board on the development of niche cultural tourism initiatives as an economic growth driver for the region.

SG-2. Carefully managing development patterns

- a. Implement a clear spatial development strategy that maintains the distinctive landscape attributes of Sligo.
- b. Promote a balanced settlement pattern in urban areas, while facilitating sustainable rural settlement.
- c. Encourage, in the Sligo Subregion, a mix of land uses in 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 urban centres 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 City and Key Support Towns.
- f. Strengthen existing rural communities, by ensuring that the planning system facilitates the housing needs of persons with roots in, or links to rural areas, as provided for in the NSS, as well as local enterprise initiatives.

SG-3. Conserving environmental quality

- a. 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 County.
- b. Conserve the landscape character and ecological integrity of the coastal zone.
- c. Enhance the physical environment of towns and villages through the Urban and Village Renewal Scheme and other urban design initiatives.
- d. Support applicants and potential applicants in ensuring that environmental and landscape matters are considered in the initial stages of development proposals.
- e. Protect and, where necessary, improve water quality within the County.

SG-4. Driving urban renewal

- a. Drive the process of regenerating derelict and under-used areas within the County's towns and villages.
- b. Conserve the historic form and character of the towns and villages.
- c. Promote Sligo City as the main retail and service centre, with support from Tobercurry, Ballymote, Enniscrone, and promote Collooney and Grange as lower-tier retail/service centres.

SG-5. Promoting effective transportation

- 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, Key Support Towns and settlements along rail corridors.
- 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.

SG-6. Delivering improved infrastructure

- a. Provide adequate water and sewerage capacity to accommodate the projected needs of the future population, ensuring the sustainable use of water resources.
- 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. Encourage energy-efficient building, layout and design.
- e. Implement the Connaught Regional Waste Management Plan 2006-2011 and successor documents and provide the necessary waste management infrastructure.

3.2 Spatial Development Framework

3.2.1 Regional Planning Framework

The foundation of the Core Strategy for Sligo is the Spatial Development Framework, which is based on the spatial structure outlined in the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 and reinforced by the Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010.

Relevant key strategic goals outlined in the Regional Planning Guidelines are:

SG-2 *Ensure the development of the key urban settlements and the strategic links between them and facilitate integrated sustainable development between urban and rural areas.*

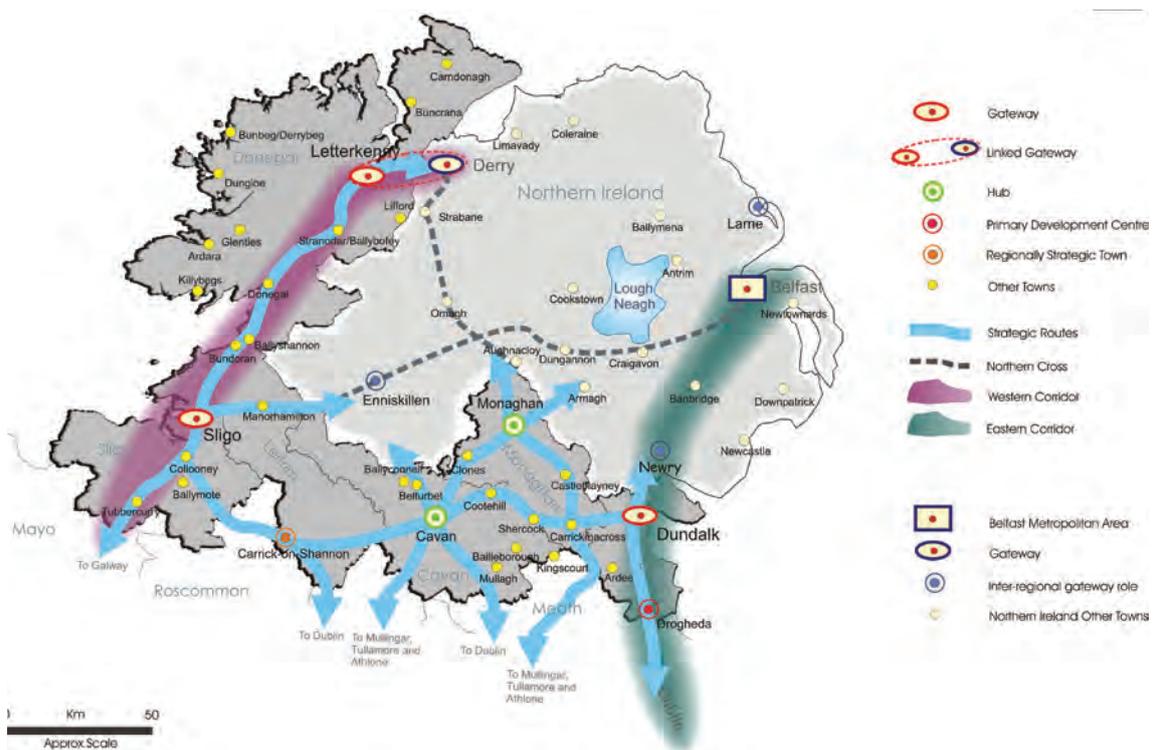
SG-3 *Improve intra- and inter-regional connectivity and mobility throughout the region.*

The Spatial Development Framework for County Sligo is intended to guide growth and investment while carefully managing resources in the County in accordance with the strategic goals of this Plan as stated in Section 3.1.

Fig. 3.A below shows the regional context, while fig. 3.B on the opposite page illustrates the spatial development framework for County Sligo.

County Sligo's Spatial Development Framework is supported by the Settlement Structure and transport networks (see Section 3.3 and Chapter 8), and complemented by the Housing Strategy, the Retail Strategy and the community, economic and infrastructural development objectives, in the context of appropriate conservation, protection and enhancement of natural and built heritage. The Spatial Development Framework is to be implemented through the preparation of local area plans and mini-plans, as outlined in Section 3.6 Implementation.

Fig. 3.A Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 – Spatial Strategy Map

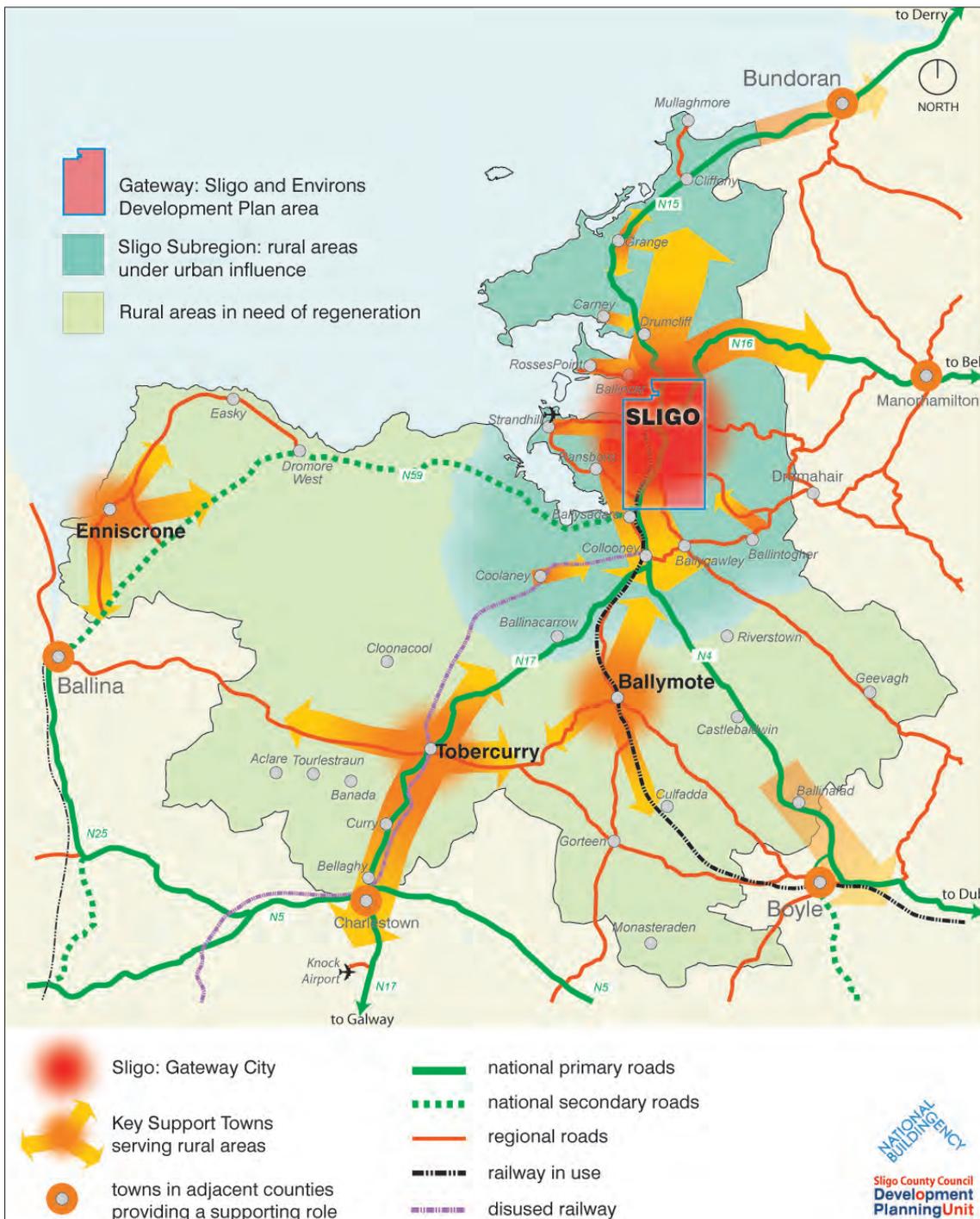


3.2.2 Spatial development principles

A. Gateway focus

The Spatial Development Framework is a structured approach to planned growth in County Sligo, centred on the core aim CA-1 of developing Sligo Gateway as envisaged by the National Spatial Strategy – a nationally significant urban centre, whose location and scale support the desired critical mass necessary to sustain strong levels of economic growth and prosperity in the North-West – and reinforce its links with Gateways and Hubs in neighbouring counties.

Fig. 3.B The Core Strategy map as a spatial development framework



B. Improved connectivity and mobility

Essential to Sligo's further growth are an improvement in its road and rail connectivity with other NSS Gateways and Hubs, good links to Northern Ireland and secure air connections with Dublin and the UK. Ongoing development of the Atlantic Road Corridor, the reopening of the Western Rail Corridor and the consolidation of the Regional Airport are of strategic importance for Sligo Gateway and County.

C. Managed growth in the Subregion

In order to support Gateway development, it is essential to control growth in the Sligo Subregion. This is the immediate hinterland of the Gateway, which has been subject to significant development pressure in recent years. The subregional area largely coincides with what the NSS describes as a 'rural area under strong urban influence'. The Subregion contains the five principal satellites of the Gateway – Collooney, Ballysadare, Strandhill, Rosses Point and Grange – and the eight secondary satellites – Carney, Drumcliff, Rathcormack, Ballincar, Ransboro, Coolaney, Ballygawley and Ballintogher.

Development in the Subregion should be limited and directed into the satellites of the Gateway, preserving the rural areas mainly for agriculture and selected tourism and recreation uses.

D. Key Support Towns consolidation

Throughout much of County Sligo, particularly the south and west, there is a need to address the regional imbalance at County level and build on the strengths and scale of existing settlements. Three Key Support Towns have been identified – Ballymote, Tobercurry and Enniscrone – to assist in promoting, sustaining and diversifying the rural economy. A strong transport network is required to ensure optimal connections between the Gateway and its Key Support Towns, which need to be consolidated and equipped with adequate infrastructure in order to serve the local needs of smaller settlements' and rural areas' residents.

E. Promoting settlements with special functions

The Council acknowledges the fact that several towns and villages in the County have special functions. Easkey, Mullaghmore, Rosses Point, Strandhill and Enniscrone play a regionally significant coastal tourism role. Gorteen and Riverstown have regionally significant cultural roles. The Council will encourage other towns and villages to develop specialist niche activities that could help to distinguish them, thereby promoting their development. Such activities might relate to local specialist foods, crafts, literary or music connections etc.

F. Village strengthening

Throughout the County, but particularly outside the Sligo Subregion, there is a variety of small villages, some of which have had little or no development in recent years. At the opposite end, certain villages have seen proportionally substantial residential development and are now experiencing vacancy. It is essential to support and strengthen these villages and provide for a certain amount of growth in the smaller ones, in order to ensure that local services are sustained and to offer a suitable alternative to rural housing.

G. Integrating public transport and settlement

National primary and secondary roads, as well as strategic non-national roads reinforce the County's transport network, connect the Gateway with other important urban centres and link it with its satellites and the Key Support Towns. The consolidation of Tobercurry and Ballymote would support the provision of public transport and would also increase the potential for a rural rail service – the development of the Western Rail corridor and a rural commuter rail service on the Dublin railway. In order to improve the prospect of an operational Western Rail Corridor (WRC), the County Council will continue to support the development of selected settlements such as Bellaghy, Tobercurry, Coolaney, Collooney and Ballysadare along the WRC, in addition to Ballymote on the Dublin rail corridor.

H. Supporting rural communities

Throughout the County, people live and work outside of villages and towns in a dispersed settlement pattern. In the past, these areas have been largely dependent on farming, but with the decline of agricultural activities and the associated population, there is a need to sustain these rural communities through other means. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to accommodate rural-generated housing needs and facilitate the development of sustainable sources of income and enterprise such as rural tourism, agricultural diversification, forestry, aquaculture and new sources of energy, in the context of appropriate protection of the environment.

Strategic spatial development policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- SP-SD-1** Promote residential and employment growth in the Gateway City of Sligo.
- SP-SD-2** Support the ongoing development of the Atlantic Road Corridor, and the upgrading of road links to other NSS Gateways, important urban centres and Northern Ireland.
- SP-SD-3** Promote public transport by road and rail and support the reopening of the Western Rail Corridor.
- SP-SD-4** Seek co-ordination between residential/economic development and transport corridors and encourage concentration of such development at locations that are optimally served by existing and planned road/rail connections.
- SP-SD-5** Outside the Gateway, direct growth into towns and villages and promote compact settlement forms.
- SP-SD-6** Establish a system of buffer zones around settlements so as to restrict sprawl and the possible merging of distinct settlement areas. These buffer zones will be determined by setting "Plan limits" as part of the preparation of local area plans and mini-plans.
- SP-SD-7** Monitor and strictly control residential and commercial development in the Gateway Satellites/villages in the Subregion.
- SP-SD-8** Consolidate the three Key Support Towns of Ballymote (serving South Sligo), Enniscrone (serving West Sligo) and Tobercurry (serving South-West Sligo) by providing them with an appropriate range of services including social infrastructure, retail, office, commercial and enterprise facilities to enable them to serve their respective rural catchments in an optimal manner.
- SP-SD-9** Revitalise small villages through the promotion of limited development within their built-up areas (on infill sites, vacant sites and backlands) in preference to continued ribbon development on the approach roads, thereby ensuring the efficient use of public infrastructure and providing a suitable alternative to rural housing.
- SP-SD-10** Carefully manage development patterns in rural areas and facilitate sustainable activities or uses that help preserve the vitality of rural communities while protecting the environment and heritage of the County.
- SP-SD-11** Ensure that sensitive coastal environments are generally maintained free from development between settlements, except where there are proposals for significant public infrastructure (e.g. roads, piers, marinas) or where significant public benefit may arise.

Strategic spatial development objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- SO-SD-1** Review or amend the existing local area plans for the Key Support Towns of Ballymote and Enniscrone by 2014.
- SO-SD-2** Prepare a local area plan for the Key Support Town of Tobercurry by 2014.
- SO-SD-3** Review Strandhill Local Area Plan by 2012.
- SO-SD-4** Prepare a local area plan for any other area in the County that might come under significant development pressure during the lifetime of this development plan.

3.3 Settlement Structure

This section expands on the Core Aims of the Development Plan by setting out a Settlement Structure for the County. The Settlement Structure draws on the Border Regional Planning Guidelines and Sligo Sub-regional Development Strategy 2001-2021 .

Sligo County Council seeks to provide a proactive basis for the future development and regeneration of the County, supporting Sligo's growth into a city with the critical mass necessary to sustain the County and the North-Western Region into the future.

This involves aiming towards a long-term, strategic population horizon of 80,000 people over the next 20 to 30 years. Therefore, the approach taken in this Development Plan, as in its predecessor, is not a predict and provide one, but rather a *plan* ⇒ *monitor* ⇒ *manage* approach that seeks to ensure that Sligo can reach its Gateway status, with adjustments to land use zoning through the preparation of mini-plans and local area plans.

The Council acknowledges that to achieve such growth, it will depend significantly on assistance from Central Government, in terms of key policy decisions on issues such as:

- the provision and improvement of essential infrastructure (road, rail, air transport, water and wastewater treatment, energy and telecommunications);
- working in partnership with key organisations whose remit it is to promote and/or secure economic development;
- marketing and promoting Sligo as an attractive place to live and work and ensuring that the County has a robust settlement structure, manages its growth and maintains its attractive landscape context.
- promotion of Sligo by the IDA and other agencies, to attract business/industry to the region.

3.3.1 Developing a settlement strategy

The Border RPGs provide that, following their adoption, it will be the function of each constituent local authority to review County Development Plans in line with the minimum population targets and develop a settlement strategy based on this information.

The settlement strategy "must be set within the framework of the RPGs and develop rational population growth models, outline resulting housing demand and how this demand will be accommodated through an appropriate HLR [HLR = housing land requirements] consistent with the regional planning guidelines". In this context, county development plans must distribute growth targets among towns, villages and rural areas.

Strategic settlement policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- SP-S-1** Recognise the role of the Gateway City of Sligo as a key driver of social and economic development in the County and in the North-West, and support its growth towards a population of 34,000 by 2017.
- SP-S-2** Encourage growth in the Gateway and Key Support Towns by applying a moratorium on multiple housing developments in the settlements listed in Schedule 3.L until the year 2013, when a review should be undertaken based on new Census figures.
- The moratorium shall apply exclusively to multiple housing schemes and should not affect infill development, renovations, replacements and subdivisions of existing units.
- Applications for multiple residential development will not normally be permitted, except where they replace previously permitted development (live permissions only) consisting of the same or a higher number of units.
- The moratorium shall exclude applications for social and special-needs housing.
- SP-S-3** Manage growth in the Gateway's principal and secondary satellites so as to ensure that the population in these settlements does not exceed the levels set out in the Tables 3.F and 3.G.
- SP-S-4** Encourage population growth in the Key Support Towns of Ballymote, Enniscrone and Tobercurry to the levels set out in Table 3.H.
- SP-S-5** Support and facilitate appropriate population growth in smaller settlements throughout the County, to the levels set out in Table 3.I, based on mini-plans, subject to availability of infrastructural capacity.
- SP-S-6** In settlements for which no mini-plans are available, facilitate small-scale residential growth of maximum 10% of existing development, subject to availability of infrastructural capacity.
- SP-S-7** In order to ensure that development takes place in accordance with the Settlement Structure and Housing Strategy, cumulated permitted residential development, if occupied, should not lead to more than 10% excess in the allocated population for each settlement during the lifetime of this Plan.

Strategic settlement objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- SO-S-1** Implement a system of monitoring residential vacancy in all settlements, and particularly in those subject to a moratorium on new residential development.
- SO-S-2** Review the moratorium on residential development in 2013 as part of the Manager's Progress Report on the implementation of the CDP objectives, in accordance with the plan-monitor-manage approach stated in this Plan.

3.3.2 Settlement principles

County Sligo’s Settlement Structure has been prepared in parallel with the Border RPGs and takes due cognisance of the Guidelines’ requirements. The Settlement Structure reflects the Spatial Development Framework outlined in Section 3.2, which sets out the principles for orderly growth in the County. These principles are illustrated in Fig. 3.C below.



Fig. 3.C Settlement Structure - guiding principles

3.3.3 Settlement hierarchy

The distribution of future population growth into settlements is based essentially on the settlements’ role and position in the spatial hierarchy. The settlement hierarchy is as follows:

Gateway City: Sligo and Environs (as defined in the SEDP 2010-2016)

Principal Gateway Satellites: Ballysadare, Collooney, Grange, Rosses Point, Strandhill

Secondary Gateway Satellites: Ballinac, Ballintogher, Ballygawley, Carney, Coolaney, Drumcliff, Ransboro, Rathcormack

Key Support Towns: Ballymote, Tobercurry, Enniscrone

Villages sustaining rural communities: Aclare, Ballinacarrow, Ballinac, Banada, Bunnanadden, Castlebaldwin, Cliffony, Cloonacool, Culfadda, Curry, Dromore West, Easky, Geevagh, Gorteen, Monasteraden, Mullaghmore, Riverstown, Tourlestrane

In parallel with their position in the settlement hierarchy, Strandhill, Rosses Point, Mullaghmore, Easky and Enniscrone have a “special function”, i.e. a county- or regionally-significant tourism role.

The settlement structure and hierarchy are illustrated in Fig. 3.D opposite.



Table 3.E Summary of past and envisaged population distribution in County Sligo: Census 2002 and 2006, projections/allocations for 2017

Settlement category or area	Population 2002	Population 2006	Population 2017
Gateway (as defined in the SEDP)	25,247	24,755	33,947
Principal Satellites	3,473	4,531	6,250
Secondary Satellites	n/a	n/a	2,110
Key Support Towns	2,820	3,479	4,700
Villages supporting rural communities	n/a	n/a	4,090
Rural areas	n/a	n/a	22,738
County total	58,200	60,894	73,835

3.3.4 Future population distribution

The recommended distribution of future population growth into settlements is essentially related to the settlements' role and position in the spatial hierarchy.

In assessing the suitability for development and recommending an optimal population level for each settlement, the following factors have been taken into consideration:

- settlement function/designation in the settlement hierarchy;
- existing level of development and residential capacity of unoccupied dwellings
- availability of community, social and commercial facilities
- environmental constraints (landscape, heritage designations, water quality)
- capacity of environmental infrastructure (i.e. water supply, wastewater treatment);
- accessibility

The summary of future population distribution is shown in Table 3.E (see previous page), while the recommended 2017 population levels for individual settlements are shown in tables 3.F, 3.G, 3.H and 3.I.

Table 3.F Principal Gateway Satellites – recommended population levels 2017

Principal Gateway Satellites	Population 2002	Population 2006	Recommended population level 2017
Strandhill	1,002	1,413	1,700
Ballysadare	853	971	1,500
Collooney	619	892	1,500
Grange	225	383	600
Rosses Point	774	872	950
Total	3,473	4,531	6,250

Table 3.G Secondary Gateway Satellites – recommended population levels 2017

Secondary Gateway Satellites	Population 2002	Population 2006	Recommended population level 2017
Ballincar	n/a	n/a	280
Ballintogher	n/a	182	280
Ballygawley	n/a	186	250
Carney*	n/a	219	400
Coolaney-Rockfield	167	208	900
Drumcliff	n/a	n/a	100
Ransboro	n/a	n/a	120
Rathcormack	n/a	n/a	180
Total	n/a	n/a	2,110

3.3 Settlement structure

Table 3.H Key Support Towns – recommended population levels 2017

Key Support Towns	Population 2002	Population 2006	Recommended population level 2017
Ballymote	981	1,229	1,700
Enniscrone	668	829	1,200
Tobercurry	1,171	1,421	1,800
Total	2,820	3,479	4,700

Table 3.I Villages supporting rural communities – recommended population levels 2017

Villages	Population 2002	Population 2006	Recommended population level 2017
Aclare	n/a	n/a	180
Ballinacarrow	n/a	n/a	200
Ballinacorney	n/a	n/a	150
Banada	n/a	n/a	60
Bellaghy	78	115	135
Bunnanadden	n/a	n/a	170
Castlebaldwin	n/a	n/a	150
Cliffony	327	425	500
Cloonacool	n/a	n/a	130
Culfadda	n/a	n/a	90
Curry	n/a	n/a	150
Dromore West	n/a	n/a	275
Easkey	211	240	400
Geevagh	n/a	n/a	200
Gorteen	250	269	500
Monasteraden	n/a	n/a	70
Mullaghmore	137	147	180
Riverstown	273	310	450
Tourlestrane	n/a	n/a	100
Total	n/a	n/a	4,090

3.4 Development land requirements

Development land requirements are met through the zoning of land for a variety of uses. The purpose of land use zoning is to indicate the intended uses of all lands within the zoned settlements – in accordance with the policies and objectives of this Plan – to promote orderly development and to prevent the co-location of incompatible or conflicting uses.

The allocation of development land in the County seeks to ensure that adequate amounts of land are reserved at appropriate locations in order to allow the emergence of particular types of development as required to fulfil the aspirations outlined in this Plan.

3.4.1 Key infrastructure

The allocation of development land throughout the County has been heavily influenced by the County's infrastructural endowments, particularly:

1. the north-south transport axis;
2. the south-eastern road and rail link to Dublin;
3. the regional airport in Strandhill;
4. the availability of capacity in water/wastewater treatment facilities and in receiving waters, taking account of the 2010 Water Services Investment Programme; and
5. the stock of social infrastructure, especially primary school places.

Accessibility

The Gateway of Sligo and the County as a whole are served by a strong national roads network – N4 to Dublin, N15 to Donegal, N16/A4 to Belfast, N17 to Galway and N59 to Ballina. While this transport infrastructure is considered adequate for the needs of the County over the lifetime of the Plan, more upgrades are at various stages of planning or design (refer to Chapter 8 for details). The Gateway is also linked to Dublin by rail and the Regional Airport in Strandhill ensures further connectivity to the capital and the UK.

Social infrastructure

In terms of education facilities, the County possesses a good stock of primary and secondary school places and supports the Department of Education's Forward Planning Section in assessing any requirements for new school places

For the time being, sites have been reserved in 14 village mini-plans to cater for local school expansion, relocation or the provision of a new school (see Volume 2 of this Plan).

Other community and care facilities are present to various degrees in all the settlements identified in the Settlement Structure. Multiple uses and sharing of facilities services are strongly encouraged in this Plan (refer to Chapter 6 for details).

Water supply

The provision of an adequate water supply to serve the anticipated level of population growth within Sligo County requires monitoring and phased improvements concurrent with development needs. The nine water supply schemes serving County Sligo have a combined capacity of circa 30,000 m³/day.

Despite significant investment in water infrastructure, there are still important deficits throughout the County. The Council identifies the locations under the greatest development pressure and prioritises the upgrading of existing, or provision of new infrastructure in these areas. (Refer to Section 9.2 for details on water supply).

Wastewater treatment

While the Gateway is well served in terms of wastewater treatment by Sligo Main Drainage Scheme, which has a capacity of 50,000 PE, there is a need to upgrade and improve the network and treatment facilities of a number of towns and villages throughout the County.

The current treatment capacity in public schemes in the County (including the Gateway), of 89,780 PE, is planned to increase to 114,740 PE. There is additional treatment capacity in private wastewater treatment systems.

It should be noted, however, that not all zoned lands in settlements will be serviced within the lifetime of this Plan. This is because the zoning of land for residential use takes a longer term view with regard to development potential. Land use plans (local area plans and mini-plans) also incorporate a residential zoning overhead (generally 50%) to allow for an element of choice. Therefore not all zoned lands should necessarily be viewed as appropriate for development within the lifetime of this plan. Zoned lands will be serviced subject to funding availability and compliance with the Core Strategy. (refer to Section 9.3 for details on wastewater treatment).

Environment and heritage

County Sligo contains a significant number of areas that are environmentally distinctive and sensitive and that are both an asset to the county and an important resource to conserve into the future.

To that end, this Core Strategy is the outcome of the strategic environmental assessment of three possible county development scenarios, which are described in Chapter 2 (SEA). and is also informed by the assessment (under the Habitats Directive) of the potential effects of development on Natura 2000 sites.

The assessments above have demonstrated that the proposed focused growth in line with this Core Strategy will ensure the sustainable development of the county, including conserving the integrity of sensitive habitats.

The drawing up of the settlement hierarchy and the definition of specific roles for rural areas was guided by the need to properly protect, manage and enhance the natural and built environment, particularly those elements that are non-renewable and most valuable.

The conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, natural heritage, landscape and the built environment (archaeology and historic buildings) are to be promoted as important elements of the long-term economic growth and development of County Sligo.

3.4.2 Zoning principles

The approach to zoning is based on the following principles:

- ZP-1** the requirement to reserve land for residential development in accordance with the preferred population growth scenario, the Core Strategy, the Settlement Structure and the RPG recommendations;
- ZP-2** the need to provide suitably-located lands for a variety of uses, including commercial, enterprise, community facilities, open space, sports and recreation amenities to serve and complement residential uses;
- ZP-3** the core aim of protecting the environment, landscape setting and heritage in and around settlements (see core aim CA-5 and strategic goal SG-3 in Section 3.1);
- ZP-4** the goal of consolidating Sligo settlements (see strategic goal SG-2 points a, b, and e in Section 3.1);
- ZP-5** the principle of sequential development (see Box 3.J overleaf).

Box. 3.J Principle of Sequential Development

In order to maximise the utility of existing and future infrastructure provision and promote the achievement of sustainability, a logical sequential approach should be taken to the zoning of land for development:

1. Zoning should extend outwards from the centre of an urban area, with undeveloped lands closest to the core and public transport routes being given preference. ‘Leapfrogging’ to more remote areas should be avoided.
2. A strong emphasis should be placed on encouraging infill opportunities and better use of under-utilised lands.
3. Areas to be zoned should be contiguous to existing zoned development lands. Only in exceptional circumstances should this principle be contravened: for example, where a barrier to development is involved such as a lake close to a town. Any exceptions must be clearly justified by local circumstances and such justification must be set out in the written statement of the development plan.

3.4.3 Zoning in the County Development Plan

In this County Development Plan, zoning of land in accordance with section 10(2)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) is set out within the framework of 30 mini-plans (refer to Volume 2).

The land-use zoning is based on the five principles outlined in Section 3.4.2 and guided by the strategic zoning policies set out in this section. In the interest of consistency, the same zoning objectives apply to all mini-plans. The zoning objectives are detailed in Chapter 13 of Volume 2 of this Plan.

3.4.4 Zoning in local area plans

In the case of settlements for which local area plans have been prepared prior to the adoption of this Plan, it is accepted that different zoning objectives apply to those settlements, in recognition of their specific character and also as a result of public consultation undertaken as part of preparing those LAPs.

Until the review of existing LAPs following the adoption of this Development Plan, zoning in these local area plans will remain unchanged and will be incorporated as statutory zoning under the County Development Plan. This provision applies to the LAPs for Strandhill, Enniscrone, Ballymote, Charlestown-Bellaghy and a small portion of the Hazelwood-Ballinode LAP, which extends outside the limit of Sligo and Environs Development Plan (SEDP).

Zoning objectives in new and revised local area plans will be defined in those plans, where necessary, in accordance with the specifics of the settlement and public consultation.

3.4.5 Rezoning proposals

Any variation of the CDP involving a rezoning proposal that might be considered during the lifetime of this Development Plan should be based on a demonstrated need and should not conflict with the Core Strategy of this Plan, the Spatial Development Framework and the Settlement Structure.

Rezoning proposals should be assessed against the Zoning Principles and Strategic Zoning Policies.

Lands zoned in LAPs prepared before the adoption of this Plan may or may not retain their zoning after the LAPs are reviewed. Rezoning and new zoning adopted as part of the review of existing Local Area Plans shall be automatically incorporated as zoning under the CDP, without the need to vary the development plan. However, any such rezoning/new zoning will have to comply with the Core Strategy, Spatial Development Framework and Settlement Structure set out in this Plan.

3.4.6 Surplus development land

A number of towns and villages in County Sligo had a surplus of land zoned for residential development, inherited from mini-plans included in the CDP 2005-2011.

In this CDP, the amount of land zoned for residential development has been reduced in the case of certain villages where previous zoning was in excess of the requirements of the Core Strategy and Settlement Structure. However, lands have retained residential zoning where permission for development had already been granted, or in cases where the County Council had the intention of providing dwellings to fulfil a local need.

3.4.7 Strategic land reserve

Any further lands that might be proposed to be zoned for residential uses in excess of the area corresponding to the requirements outlined in the Core Strategy shall be included in a *Strategic Land Reserve* and shall only be developed when future Housing Strategies will call for additional zoned land.

In exceptional circumstances, should the supply of residential land prove insufficient in any settlement during the lifetime of the CDP, it may be possible to release lands from the strategic reserve by zoning it for residential uses through the development plan variation procedure. The need for any such rezoning shall be supported by factual evidence, corroborated by the results of the proposed annual housing vacancy monitoring process.

Strategic zoning policies

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- SP-Z-1** Use zoning to promote the sustainable development of compact, liveable, pedestrian-friendly settlements, with a defined commercial/retail core and an adequate economic basis. No lands shall be zoned for development in isolation, outside the development limits of settlements.
- SP-Z-2** Ensure that sufficient land is available for a wide range of non-residential uses at appropriate locations in order to achieve balanced development of the County as a whole.
- SP-Z-3** Ensure that the amount of land zoned for residential uses is consistent with the requirements of the Core Strategy and the recommendations of the Border Regional Planning Guidelines. Land proposed for zoning in excess of requirements, if any, shall be included in a strategic reserve for potential development after the lifetime of this Plan, in accordance with the Settlement Structure and Housing Strategy in operation at that stage.
- SP-Z-4** Facilitate mixes of uses appropriate for each area, with a view to reducing the need to travel by car between home, work/school and local facilities.
- SP-Z-5** Prioritise the redevelopment of under-utilised and brownfield lands over greenfield, particularly in the Key Support Towns and Gateway Satellites, thus increasing the efficient use of essential infrastructure.
- SP-Z-6** Protect designated nature conservation sites, landscape, archaeology, valuable natural amenity areas, water and natural resources through appropriate zoning designations, while allowing for the possible further expansion of settlements in the long-term.
- SP-Z-7** Make adequate land reservations for the development of future infrastructural projects.
- SP-Z-8** Provide a clear demarcation between settlement built-up areas and the surrounding countryside through appropriate zoning objectives, development limits and plan limits.

3.5 Housing land provision in the County

3.5.1 Distributing the RPG housing land requirement

This Development Plan identifies a strategic housing land requirement of 235 hectares of land for the plan period, which will meet the RPG targets for future population growth for the County as a whole, including the Gateway of Sligo.

The area above breaks down into a requirement of 40 hectares for the Gateway and 195 hectares for the rest of the County, as derived from the 2010 Regional Planning Guidelines and its population targets for the Gateway and the for the wider County area.

The following population targets are to be accommodated in the period to 2016:

- for the Gateway of Sligo: an increase of 2000 persons;
- for the wider county area: an increase of 3,421 persons.

The housing land requirement for the County (excluding the Gateway) of 195 hectares is based on an average density across the towns and villages of 12 residential units per hectare and an additional 50% allowance, to ensure choice in the market for development land. This is in line with the *Development Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoEHLG, 2007).

The County Development Plan 2005-2011 zoned 350 hectares of land for housing, while Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2004-2011 zoned 358 hectares of land for similar purposes. The excess over the RPG provision of 40 hectares for the SEDP area and 195 hectares for the County needed to be addressed.

A key feature of the CDP 2011-2017 is therefore the allocation of housing land throughout the County in accordance with the RPG-predicted requirements for housing land, taking account of:

1. the spatial distribution of development lands and the need to support a pattern of sustainable settlements which, in the longer term, can be provided with essential physical and social infrastructure;
2. the imperative to promote the development of the Gateway as a key driver of the development of the County;
3. the level of vacancy in settlements and the need to support its resolution in multi-unit housing developments;
4. the extent of live planning permissions.

The RPG allocation of 195 hectares breaks down into the settlement hierarchy as shown in Table 3.K (on the opposite page), which outlines the amount of greenfield land zoned for multi-unit residential development in County Sligo's settlements for which a land-use plan has been or will be prepared.

Thus, Table 3.K sets the framework within which the planning authority will, over the lifetime of this Development Plan, reconcile the level of residential zonings inherited from the pre-2011 period with the RPG allocations. After the adoption of this CDP, the planning authority will review existing local area plans in order to bring the level of land zoned and available for residential development in line with the overall provisions outlined in Table 3.K.

The individual allocations of land zoned for residential uses in mini-plans are shown in Appendix I of Volume 2 of this Plan. The allocations for Key Support Towns and Strandhill (not shown in Volume 2) are as follows:

Ballymote - 21 ha, Enniscrone - 14.8 ha, Tobercurry - 22 ha, Strandhill - 14.4 ha.

3.5.2 Housing land requirements in the Gateway

For Sligo and Environs, the RPGs specify a housing land requirement of 40 hectares during the period 2010-2016, which coincides with the lifetime of Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 (SEDP).

Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 has been amended in 2011 by incorporating a Core Strategy chapter and map. Lands zoned for residential and mixed uses (with housing potential), considered to be in excess of the RPG requirements, were included in a Strategic Land Reserve.

Table 3.K Core Strategy Table - RPG Population and housing land allocations, land zoned for residential development and corresponding housing yields

Settlement category	A. Additional population as per RPG targets for 2016	B. Estimated housing requirements of additional population (as per RPGs)	C. ¹ Provision of greenfield residential zoned land 2011-2017 (hectares)	D. ² Potential housing yield from residential land (no. of units)	E. ³ Potential population capacity of residential land (no. of persons)	F. Provision of mixed-use lands (hectares)	G. ⁴ Potential housing yield from mixed-use lands (no. of units)	H. Potential population capacity of mixed-use lands (no. of persons)	I. Potential excess or shortfall of housing over the period 2011-2017 (=D+G-B)
1. (=3+4+5+6) County settlements outside Gateway	3,421	1,555	193.9	1,554	3,265	40.7	242	536	241 ⁵
2. Gateway - Sligo and Environs	2,000	1,000	23.9	557	1,114	44	443	886	0
3. Key Support Towns	n/a	n/a	57.8	462	1016	1.18	7	15	n/a
4. Principal Gateway Satellites	n/a	n/a	40	325	715	7.8	46	103	n/a
5. Secondary Gateway Satellites	n/a	n/a	31.9	254	508	10.6	63	140	n/a
6. Villages supporting rural communities	n/a	n/a	64.2	513	1026	21.12	126	278	n/a
7. (=1+2) County and Gateway total	5,421	2,555	217.8	2,111	4,379	84.7	685	1,422	241

Notes: 1. Includes 50% overzoning. 2. The potential housing yield from lands zoned for residential use is calculated using only 2/3 (0.66) of the area zoned, thus excluding the 50% overzoning. The density used is 12 units/ha for the County and 35 units/ha for the Gateway. 3. The household size used is 2.2 persons for the County and 2 persons for the Gateway. 4. The potential housing yield from lands zoned for mixed uses is calculated using only 1/2 (0.5) of the area zoned, assuming that the uses on the remainder would be non-residential. In the Gateway, for lands zoned C1, C2 and NC, a ratio of 1/4 (0.25) is used in the calculations. (See the SEDP Core Strategy Variation 2011). 5. The lands zoned for mixed uses in the 30 mini-plans incorporated in the CDP are small sites located in village cores, generally unsuitable for multi-unit residential development. Therefore the likelihood of such development is very low.

3.5.3 Moratorium on multi-unit residential development

Estimates of vacant house numbers prepared by County Council planners (see Appendix I of Volume 2 of this Plan) tend to confirm the fact that high rates of vacancy occur outside the Gateway and the Key Support Towns, in places such as Ballysadare, Collooney, Coolaney-Rockfield, Carney etc. In these settlements, residential development was permitted beyond the level corresponding to the potential population growth outlined in the County Development Plan 2005-2011. The levels of vacancy in these settlements would be further exacerbated if all the units permitted were to be constructed.

In an economic climate which seems to encourage migration out of the County, it is improbable that substantial population growth will occur in the short term and help decrease the number of vacant houses. It is likely that the high rates of vacancy will persist for a longer period, beyond the lifetime of this Plan.

In order to curtail the increase in residential vacancy in the County, a moratorium on new residential development is to be applied in those settlements where the existing housing capacity plus the potential capacity of permitted (and not yet built) housing development can accommodate a population which is equal to or higher than the recommended population levels as indicated in Tables 3.F, 3.G, 3.H and 3.I.

This moratorium shall apply exclusively to multiple housing schemes and will not affect infill development, renovations, replacements and subdivisions of existing units.

This means that applications for multiple residential development will not normally be permitted, except where they replace previously permitted development (live permissions only) consisting of the same or a higher number of units. Applications for social and special-needs housing are excluded from the moratorium.

The moratorium should be revisited in 2013, after the publication of the full Census 2011 reports. In the intervening period, the vacancy situation should be monitored by the County Council's area planners. The Manager's Progress Report due in 2013 should include an account of the vacancy monitoring project and should make recommendations regarding the suspension or extension of the moratorium. The settlements subject to a moratorium on residential development are listed in Schedule 3.L below.

Schedule 3.L Settlements subject to the moratorium on multiple-housing development

Settlements	Bunnannadden	Enniscrone
Ballinacarrow	Carney	Gorteen
Ballinafad	Castlealdwin	Grange
Ballincar	Cliffony	Mullaghmore
Ballintogher	Collooney	Riverstown
Ballygawley	Coolaney	Rosses Point
Ballymote	Culfadda	Strandhill
Ballysadare	Dromore West	Tobercurry
Bellahey	Easkey	Tourlestrane

3.6 Implementation

Under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), planning authorities have a statutory obligation to secure the implementation of the objectives of a development plan. The implementation of these objectives 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.

3.6.1 Local area plans and mini-plans

An important element of the development plan strategy is to bring policies to a more detailed local level through local area plans and mini-plans. The strategic and broad-ranging policies of the CDP provide a general framework, but not necessarily the detailed treatment required for significant proposals in certain areas.

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) specifies that a local authority must make a local area plan (LAP) for all towns under its jurisdiction with a population in excess of 5,000 persons and for settlements with a minimum of 1,500 residents in cases when the development plan does not already include objectives for these settlements.

According to Census 2006 demographic data, no town in County Sligo (outside the Gateway) had a population of 5,000 or even 1,500 at the time of the census. However, in the past decade the County Council has considered necessary to put in place detailed planning frameworks for those settlements that came under significant development pressure in the early 2000s.

In addition to statutory local area plans, Sligo County Council has adopted 30 mini-plans as part of the County Development Plan 2011-2017. These are village planning frameworks consisting of a set of detailed written objectives accompanied by two maps (Zoning and Objectives). Without having the complexity of a local area plan, the mini-plans have proven successful in the detailed implementation of the CDP policies and objectives.

3.6.2 Development Contributions Schemes

Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) enables local authorities, when granting a permission under Section 34 of the Act, to include conditions for requiring the payment of a contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the planning authority and that is provided by or on behalf of a local authority (regardless of other sources of funding for the infrastructure and facilities).

A planning authority may make one or more schemes in respect of different parts of its functional area. Sligo County Council has prepared two schemes, one for each of the two different parts of its functional area: the Environs of Sligo (within the SEDP area) and the county area outside of this (subject to the County Development Plan). These schemes are reviewed annually to reflect the market-induced cost variations in providing infrastructure and services.

Under a general development contribution scheme, planning authorities do not need to show a direct connection between the development contributions paid and works undertaken to facilitate that development. However, it will be important for the planning authority to ensure that the basis for determining the contribution levels is justified and adequately supported.

The types of public infrastructure and facilities that can be funded by this mechanism are:

- (a) the acquisition of land;
- (b) the provision of open spaces, recreational and community facilities and amenities and landscaping works;

- (c) the provision of roads, car parks, car parking spaces, sewers, waste water and water treatment facilities, drains and water mains;
- (d) the provision of bus corridors and lanes, bus interchange facilities (including car parks for those facilities), infrastructure to facilitate public transport, cycle and pedestrian facilities, and traffic calming measures;
- (e) the refurbishment, upgrading, enlargement or replacement of roads, car parks, car parking spaces, sewers, waste water and water facilities, drains or water mains, and
- (f) any matters ancillary to paragraphs (a) to (e).

Occasionally, the planning authority may make supplementary or special contributions schemes directly related to the funding of specific infrastructural projects.

Particular developments – such as schools, community halls, sports and other social/community facilities, including extensions, as well as renovation works carried out on protected structures – may be exempt from development contributions. Exemptions may also be granted for refurbishment works associated with “living-over-the-shop” schemes.

3.6.3 Bonds

The planning authority will impose bonds or other forms of securities on private developers, as a condition of a particular planning permission. These bonds are intended to ensure that all roads, footpaths, landscaping, lighting and other services within a development will be completed to an acceptable standard.

The amount of a bond or security will be based upon the estimated cost of the development works. The bond will remain in place until all prescribed works are satisfactorily completed or until the development is taken in charge by the local authority.

3.6.4 Public-private partnerships (PPP)

A public-private partnership (PPP) is a form of procurement – an arrangement between the local authorities and private-sector providers for the purpose of delivering infrastructure or services that traditionally have been provided by the public sector. Through a partnership arrangement, the public and private sector can combine to provide public services and infrastructure in the most economically efficient manner.

3.6.5 Monitoring and reporting

The Planning Section is the main section in Sligo County Council to oversee the implementation of the development plan, mainly through the development management function. However, it is important to note that this Plan co-ordinates the work and objectives of other key departments within the local authority, such as Infrastructure, Housing, Community and Enterprise.

In some cases, the body responsible for the implementation of certain Plan objectives may be external, such as the National Roads Authority.

The large number of objectives included in the Plan represents a significant challenge for the Council. However, many of the Plan’s objectives are set within a longer timeframe, of 20 to 30 years, which may not be fully implemented over the lifetime of the CDP.

Section 15(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) states that the manager of a planning authority shall, not more than two years after the making of a development plan, give a report to the members of the authority on the progress achieved in securing the objectives of the Plan.

A Manager’s Progress Report will be prepared by the Development Planning Unit within two years of the adoption of the CDP 2011-2017. This report will include appropriate inputs from all the relevant local authority sections and departments in charge of implementing and/or monitoring the implementation of Plan objectives. A further Progress Report will be prepared upon the commencement of the next review of the CDP in 2015, and will be used to inform pre-draft public consultation.

4. Economic development



Following more than a decade of growth, when the number of working people went up to 27,328 in 2006 from 20,204 in 1996 (a rise of 35%), the economic decline that began in 2008 caused a substantial loss of jobs in Co. Sligo, with 5,279 persons on the Live Register in January 2010 (there were only 1,944 in January 2006).

The main area of employment, as documented by Census 2002 and 2006 data, remains the services sector, while manufacturing is in decline, the construction industry has collapsed and agriculture plays a relatively small role in the local economy. The County had a relatively high proportion of its workforce employed in the public sector, meaning that the loss of jobs has been probably less severe than in other parts of the country.

According to the Economic and Social Research Institute's Medium Term Review 2008-2015 (published in May 2008), "despite the very real difficulties that are currently being encountered ... the economy will eventually rebound and return to its medium-term growth path".

The Review highlighted the changing drivers of the Irish economy, with the export of business and financial services being a vital contributor to growth, while the protection of the environment continues to gain importance.

The ESRI report also noted that "Structural policies, such as investment under the NDP, will play a key role in developing good health care, excellent education, and a clean environment will be increasingly important in making Ireland an attractive location to live and work."

However, in the Quarterly Economic Commentary – Winter 2009, the ESRI pointed to a contraction of the Irish economy in the order of 3% in 2008 and 10% in 2009, with an unemployment rate of 12.5% at the end of 2009, compared to just 4.6% at the end of 2007. The Institute expected a stabilisation of the economy in 2010 and a return to modest growth in subsequent years.

County Sligo should be prepared to share in the predicted return to growth over the following years by putting in place a robust economic development framework as part of its development plan.

4.1 Approach to economic development

The promotion of economic development in general, and industry and enterprise in particular, depends heavily on the policies, objectives and guidelines set out in other Sections of this Development Plan. Supporting economic development requires a multi-pronged approach, the key components of which are:

- earmarking key settlements for focused growth (see Chapter 3);
- providing and supporting the provision of essential infrastructure (see Chapters 8, 9 and 10);
- reserving sufficient land in suitable locations for industry and enterprise uses (see Mini-Plans in Volume 2);
- availability of high-speed telecommunications, especially for enterprise (see Chapter 11);
- availability of clean and reliable sources of energy (see Chapter 11);
- promoting and facilitating appropriate educational/training measures to ensure a suitably skilled local workforce (see the strategic economic development policies in this chapter);
- encouraging research and development linkages between industry/business and local third-level institutions (see the strategic economic development policies in this chapter);
- forging mutually-beneficial linkages and partnerships – e.g. with regional and cross-border bodies (see the strategic economic development policies in this chapter);
- securing high standards of landscape and environmental protection/enhancement (see Chapters 7 and 9);
- ensuring that towns and villages remain attractive to investment;
- offering a good quality of life to those who live and work in the County.

As a result of its location, regional and cross-border activities will continue to play a vital role in the economic development of County Sligo. This Development Plan supports the objectives of the key regional development bodies, including:

- the BMW Regional Assembly
- the Border Regional Authority (BRA)
- the Western Development Commission (WDC)
- the Omagh-Sligo Partnership
- the Irish Central Border Areas Network (ICBAN)

The Plan draws on the principles for developing the economy of the Border Region outlined in the RPGs.

The economic development measures outlined in this Section need to be paralleled by initiatives in education, training and physical infrastructure. County Sligo's ability to attract investment continues to be restricted by its relatively weak infrastructure, including under-provision of broadband services, a lack of high-voltage electricity supply and deficiencies in road infrastructure. These barriers to the economic development of the County are addressed in the Development Plan through policies relating to energy, telecommunications and transport infrastructure.

4.1.1 Industry and enterprise

The Census of Industrial Production 2007 indicated that a total of 3,714 industrial workers and other employees were engaged in 77 industrial units in Sligo and were earning a combined 120,063,000 euro per year.

The gross industrial output of County Sligo, at 940,061,000 euro, was the third lowest in the Border Region in 2007, and made up only 10.9% of the region's total industrial output and only 0.76% of the national output.

Although the manufacturing sector will continue to decline nationally, it remains important to Sligo's local economy, at least until other types of employment – e.g. “green” jobs – can be created.

These changing circumstances will require the promotion of skills and processes able to reinsert the former industrial labour force into suitable employment. There will be policy implications for the various agencies in charge of industrial development, training, infrastructural provision, and research and development.

Industry and enterprise in County Sligo are supported by the IDA, Enterprise Ireland and Sligo County Enterprise Board, who assist in all aspects of industrial promotion, including the provision of financial support, securing international trade and creating new partnerships.

Business co-operation and trade between County Sligo and Northern Ireland is fostered through cross-border initiatives such as the Sligo-Omagh Partnership and the Sligo County Council-led Taskforce.

FÁS Ireland seeks to maximise the development of enterprises tailored to meet the regeneration needs of local economies within disadvantaged communities.

Sligo County Enterprise Board (CEB) plays an important role in the development of local enterprise in County Sligo. Under the NDP 2007-2013, the CEB received national and European funding for direct financial assistance in the form of grant-aid as well as funding for entrepreneurial development including training, mentoring and advice.

By the end of 2008, around 802 full-time and 377 part-time jobs had been provided through direct financial assistance from the Board. In 2008 alone, the Board invested a total of 268,310 euro under its Entrepreneurial and Capability Development Measure, supporting 34 projects.

4.1.2 Higher education and research

Established in 1970, the Institute of Technology has developed to have almost 6,000 students and some 550 staff, hosted in a 70-acre campus on the outskirts of Sligo. The Institute delivers flexible programmes, from higher-certificate and degree-level courses to taught postgraduate and research awards through both traditional and online delivery.

IT Sligo provides a broad range of programmes in Science, Engineering, Business and Humanities, and also offers a number of apprenticeship programmes. Its customer focus and entrepreneurial approach means that, in response to market demand, it has developed specific programmes, such as PR Event Management, Construction Management, Forensic Science, Pharmaceutical Science, Eco-Tourism, Financial Services and Electronics.

St. Angela's College, Sligo, a College of the National University of Ireland, Galway, is a provider of university-level education and research in the North-West. St. Angela's College delivers programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels across the academic fields of Nursing and Health Studies, Home Economics and Education. The College offers a wide range of access, adult education and professional development programmes.

Although established as a College of Education for Home Economics teachers, in recent years the College has expanded far beyond its original remit and currently its profile of academic programmes of study also includes Special Needs Education, Theology, Food and Consumer Studies, Science, Irish, Economics and Social Studies. Current student numbers attending the College are approximately 900.

Research and development initiatives in local third-level institutions can provide further support to local enterprise. There are two such units in County Sligo: a Business Innovation Centre in Sligo IT and a Food Centre at St Angela's College.

4.1.3 The creative sector

In 2009, the Western Development Commission (WDC) published Creative West, a report on the Creative Sector in the Western Region, with the creative sector defined as "occupations and industries centred on creativity, for the production and distribution of original goods and services".

The WDC has an interest in promoting the creative sector within the region because it has strong growth potential, generates high-quality employment, stimulates innovation in other sectors, plays a key social role and can stimulate both rural and regional development. The report estimates that in 2008 there were 4,779 creative businesses in the Western Region, which directly employed 11,000 people, equal to 3% of total

employment in the region. It is believed that the creative sector generates an annual turnover of 534m euro and directly contributes 270m euro to the gross value added (GVA) of the region.

Creative businesses in the region tend to be small-scale, with 39% of the surveyed sample of 293 businesses being self-employed and only 12% employing more than 10 people. Music, visual and performing arts accounted for a high number of businesses but a low share of total turnover, as many of those involved operate on a part-time basis and are not primarily commercially focused. In contrast, the internet and software sector accounted for a relatively small share of total businesses, but a far higher share of total turnover, indicating commercial focus and higher productivity.

Across the region, the importance of the creative sector for total employment was found to be highest in counties Leitrim, Sligo, Galway and Donegal.

Among the recommendations of the WDC for developing the Western Region's creative sector, some are relevant to this Development Plan and can be implemented through appropriate policies:

- nurture and develop future creative talent in the region through education;
- develop creative connectors and hubs in the region to facilitate businesses and operators to work in suitable cost effective environments;
- accelerate growth of creative businesses through enhanced broadband capacity (particularly the high-productivity creative technology sector);
- enhance the quality of the built environment;
- improve the transport network.

Projected to grow at a faster rate than the economy as a whole, the creative and cultural economies are central to economic planning and will be one of the key growth areas for Ireland in the next decade. Development plan policies facilitate the growth of these economic sectors in Sligo City and County. Sligo County Council supports the economic actions of the County Development Board's *Action Plan 2009-2011*.

4.1.4 Industry and enterprise locations



Community enterprise units in Ballintogher

Sligo City, Tobercurry and Grange are the primary locations for manufacturing industry in the County.

Sligo City has become the main centre for industry and enterprise due to its large pool of skilled workers, ease of access and relatively good telecommunications infrastructure. The availability of labour, transport facilities and infrastructure attracts enterprise and stimulates agglomeration effects in the local economy. Due to the spatial concentration of production in Sligo City, cost savings are made

by companies locating there, rather than in rural areas. Economies of scale help to explain why growth is unevenly distributed between the Gateway City and the rest of the County.

Tobercurry and Grange have developed a variety of smaller industries, due to their location along national transport corridors and the availability of a local workforce. Strandhill is showing potential as a centre for enterprise, with the development of an Enterprise and Technology Centre adjacent to the Regional Airport.

Collooney, originally earmarked for the development of an enterprise park, has seen the short-lived development of retail warehousing, to the detriment of Sligo Retail Park. Currently vacant units in Collooney Business Park should revert to their intended industrial/enterprise use and the proliferation of retail warehousing outside the Gateway area should be curtailed.

As the shift from manufacturing to market services occurs, enterprise centres should be fostered and expanded in the Key Support Towns of Tobercurry, Ballymote and Enniscrone, in addition to Strandhill.

Small-scale enterprise space should also be provided in other settlements across the County, either in dedicated areas or as part of mixed-use zones, to help offset the loss of employment in other sectors such as construction and agriculture, and support the creation of local jobs in the south and west of the County.

Strategic economic development policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- SP-ED-1** Ensure that sufficient and suitable land is reserved for new enterprise development at key locations throughout the County, particularly in the Key Support Towns of Tobercurry, Ballymote and Enniscrone, and promote these towns as secondary employment centres, after Sligo City.
- SP-ED-2** Facilitate enterprise development in other urban locations where infrastructural facilities, services and good communications are readily available or can be provided at a reasonable cost.
- SP-ED-3** Encourage the development of small-scale enterprise space in villages and facilitate teleworking.
- SP-ED-4** Adopt a flexible approach to start-up businesses and resource-based, small-scale industrial/enterprise activities. Where a proposed development needs to locate near an existing natural resource, it will be necessary to demonstrate that it can be accommodated without damage to the environment, natural or built heritage, visual amenity, and that it will not have a negative impact on the character of the area.
- SP-ED-5** Encourage and facilitate small indigenous industries, in recognition of their increasing importance in providing local employment and helping to stimulate economic activity among local communities.
- SP-ED-6** Support an expanded education and research sector in County Sligo.
- SP-ED-7** Facilitate the growth of creative businesses, particularly the high-productivity creative technology sector, by seeking the provision of enhanced broadband capacity and by encouraging the growth and clustering of the creative and cultural industries in the County.
- SP-ED-8** Liaise with the IDA, Enterprise Ireland and the County Enterprise Board, to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the provision of necessary infrastructure and services to support enterprise and industrial development.
- SP-ED-9** Promote the integration of employment with other land uses and the transportation network and ensure, in particular, that employment-intensive uses are located in proximity to existing and planned strategic routes, where public transport is most viable.
- SP-ED-10** Acquire sites for industry and enterprise, subject to the availability of funds.
- SP-ED-11** Ensure that a high standard of design, layout and amenity is provided and maintained at locations selected for enterprise development.
- SP-ED-12** Continue to support and facilitate cross-border co-operation and trade between County Sligo and Northern Ireland.

4.2 Rural development and enterprise

County Sligo, like the Border Region, is predominantly rural. Therefore, spatial policies must take into account, on an ongoing basis, the changing structure of agriculture, as recommended in the RPGs, in conjunction with landscape management principles and natural resource development needs.

The reduction in public service provision and the declining agricultural sector are accelerating the population decline in some rural areas, thereby threatening the survival of rural communities. In recent years, rural areas have experienced a reduction of public services, such as sub-post offices, Garda stations, primary schools and banks. Access to public services is therefore a priority for those living in rural areas.

In order to strengthen the provision of services, regenerate rural communities and promote the economic development of rural areas, there is a need to support rural and agricultural diversification through a variety of initiatives. These include rural and agri-tourism initiatives; promoting rural transport; developing telecommunications to rural areas; and promoting the development of small incubator units as an adjunct to other rural activities, such as agriculture, horticulture, forestry, mariculture and alternative energy production.

Both Sligo Leader Partnership and Sligo County Enterprise Board provide funding and technical assistance in the promotion of local employment and enterprise initiatives focused on the individual (i.e. individual business plans) and the project. Projects assisted by these bodies include farmers' markets, tourist attractions, rural incubator units promoting crafts, the arts, pottery, antiques, indigenous manufacturing and engineering, in addition to agri-businesses. The Council will work with these bodies, and others, to promote rural development and enterprise.

Rural development and enterprise policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-RDE-1** Develop the potential for innovation and diversification in the rural economy, as a means of retaining population into rural areas and supporting rural services.
- P-RDE-2** Support the active involvement of rural communities in the provision of local services and the development of rural resource-based enterprise, such as organic farming, equestrian activities, bird watching etc, subject to normal planning considerations and the protection of the environment.
- P-RDE-3** Promote the continuance of Rural Transport Initiatives as an essential service to people in rural areas, who would otherwise be excluded because transport is not available, accessible or affordable to them locally.
- P-RDE-4** Facilitate the development of broadband telecommunications, as an enabler of rural enterprise, to counteract the effects of remoteness.

4.2.1 Forestry

Sligo County Council recognises the importance of forestry development, as set out in government policy, and acknowledges the potential for further afforestation in County Sligo. The Council intends to prepare an Indicative Forestry Strategy for the County, which will indicate opportunity and constraint areas for future forestry development. When completed, this strategy will be incorporated in the County Development Plan. In the interim, it is considered that new coniferous forestry development is unlikely to be sustainable in SPAs, pNHAs and cSACs. Coniferous forestry plantations will also be discouraged in water quality-sensitive areas, in designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes, Visually Vulnerable Areas and along Designated Scenic Routes indicated on the Landscape characterisation Map in Chapter 7.



Forestry policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-FOR-1** Support and promote sustainable forestry development in County Sligo, subject to the protection of, inter alia, scenic landscapes and views, water quality, heritage features, residential amenity and public safety.
- P-FOR-2** Discourage new forestry development, except for broadleaf, in proposed/candidate and adopted NHAs, SACs and SPAs, in designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes and Visually Vulnerable Areas, along designated Scenic Routes and in water quality-sensitive areas. (Broadleaf forestry will be open to consideration in these areas and in all proposed and adopted NHAs, SPAs and SACs, will be subject to consultation with the DoEHLG and shall have regard to any management plans prepared by the Department.)
- P-FOR-3** Adopt a proactive approach in conjunction with the Forest Service and Coillte to ensure sustainable forestry development.
- P-FOR-4** Encourage access to forestry, including private forestry, for walking routes, mountain bike trails, bridle paths and other activities that do not generate noise.
- P-FOR-5** Forestry should not obstruct existing rights-of-way, traditional walking routes, recreational and tourism facilities.
- P-FOR-6** Identify existing rights-of-way and established walking routes before planting commences.
- P-FOR-7** Forestry will not be permitted on ridgelines and should not have a negative visual impact. On steep slopes, above the 300 metre line, planting will be strongly discouraged and, where possible, existing areas under forestry will be reduced and/or redesigned following clearfelling.

Forestry objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-FOR-1** Prepare an Indicative Forestry Strategy for County Sligo in conjunction with the Forest Service and incorporate it in the County Development Plan. The Strategy should provide for the maintenance of public rights-of-way and traditional walking routes. The Indicative Forestry Strategy shall undergo SEA and AA screening.

4.2.2 Aquaculture, mariculture and fishing

Aquaculture relates to the commercial production of fish and shellfish species. The term is generally used to describe fish farming operations both on inland and coastal (marine) waters. For the purposes of this Plan, aquaculture relates to fish farming on inland water bodies, such as lakes, rivers and land-based artificial ponds and tanks. Because of environmental concerns and the very limited capacity for aquaculture on Sligo's inland lakes, major aquaculture projects will be discouraged, unless the Council is satisfied that such proposals will be environmentally sustainable and have a limited impact on the visual amenity of the area. Such environmental concerns associated with finfish aquaculture include:

- protection of the aquatic environment;
- the need to guard against escapees;
- the avoidance of any genetic threats, potential disease and parasitic implications to local fish stocks (there is a need to source seed from certified disease-free stock);
- potential conflicts in relation to water supply, which can become critical during low-flow periods.

Mariculture is the cultivation of marine organisms in their natural environment. Mariculture in County Sligo comprises the commercial production of mussels, clams and oysters. Mariculture developments are concentrated in Drumcliff Bay off Lissadell, Cummeen Strand, in Sligo Harbour and at Culleenamore in Ballysadare Bay. These developments are subject to a licence from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF). In practice, the Council is consulted prior to issuing of licences. The aquaculture industry faces many challenges on the environmental front, and the County Council, in its limited capacity, will seek to promote sustainability and waste management programmes within the sector.

The fishing industry in Sligo is less well-developed than in nearby Donegal and Mayo. However, there are some localised areas where fishing is important. The resort town of Enniscrone supports good beach and rock fishing. Commercial fishing boats operate at Raghly, Mullaghmore, Pollnadviva, Pullaheaney, Rosses Point, Aughris and Easkey. The present small-scale fisheries support some sport fishing, which has potential for expansion as a tourist activity.

Aquaculture, mariculture and fishing policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-AMF-1** Encourage and facilitate sustainable mariculture development associated with job creation, in a manner that is compatible with other uses of the Sligo coast, and subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive, Water Framework Directive, the provisions of the EC (Quality of Shellfish Waters) Regulations and objectives of Shellfish Pollution Reduction Programmes.
- P-AMF-2** Work with the mariculture industry to increase environmental sustainability.
- P-AMF-3** Support and facilitate the development of the existing fishing industry, where such development is compatible with provisions for the protection of the Natura 2000 network.
- P-AMF-4** Encourage the expansion of sport fishing, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

4.2.3 Diversification of agricultural activity

In 2006, the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector engaged just 6.5% (down from 8% in 2002) of the labour force in County Sligo, with the majority of these people being self-employed

In the period 1991-2001, there was a 46% reduction in the number of persons employed in agriculture and nearly half of the 4,504 agricultural holdings in the County were part-time ventures in 2000.

Compounding this decline is the fact that farm sizes are significantly smaller than the national average: for example, only 4% of farms in County Sligo are above 50 hectares, compared to 12% nationally. Furthermore, a high percentage of farming families are dependent on social welfare or alternative enterprises for family income. These factors contribute to a high level of rural deprivation and a strong need for rural diversification in County Sligo.

Policies for agricultural diversification

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-AGD-1** Promote agriculture and sustainable agricultural diversification (to include recreational uses), while seeking to protect and maintain bio-diversity, wildlife habitats, water quality and nature conservation.
- P-AGD-2** Provide infrastructure to serve the needs of agriculture, in-cooperation with the appropriate agencies.
- P-AGD-3** Support mechanisms to reduce agricultural pollution and the eutrophication of rivers and lakes.
- P-AGD-4** Support secondary and tertiary economic activities associated with the primary activities of agriculture, forestry, mineral extraction, fishing, aquaculture and mariculture, subject to environmental considerations.
- P-AGD-5** Facilitate farm diversification and possible spin-offs (e.g. biomass and energy production, poultry, mushroom growing, flower growing, equestrian facilities), in association with vigorous and adequate environmental controls upon their development.
- P-AGD-6** Support farm families seeking to establish alternative and/or complementary economic enterprises to supplement their income from farming, subject to appropriate scale and intensity of development, having regard to traffic, environmental, landscape and residential amenity considerations. Where the enterprise is not dependent on a rural location, and the scale and intensity grow beyond family income needs, it will be encouraged, where appropriate, to relocate to a nearby town or village.
- P-AGD-7** Facilitate the development of niche activities, such as those relating to food (particularly value-added products), forestry (e.g. wood products), crafts, eco-tourism and agri-tourism – e.g. farmhouse accommodation, pet farms, farm holidays, health farms, equestrian activities, bird-watching holidays, painting/photography tuition, angling tourism, field studies and hill-walking. Other pursuits that will be facilitated are: walking, cycling, mountain and other off-road biking, nature trails, wildlife trails, maritime trails, back-packing, orienteering, paragliding and hang-gliding, canoeing and kayaking, caving, mountaineering, rock climbing, adventure sports, swimming in waterways, wild camping, pony trekking, boating and archaeological guided walks.

4.2.4 Mineral extraction and quarries

In the past decade, the demand for aggregates (stone, sand and gravel) has increased in line with the growth in national construction activity. Owing to the low unit value of aggregates, the most significant cost is transport and, as a result, most quarries operate within a 30-50 km radius of their market.

Sligo County Council recognises that the aggregates and concrete products industry contribute to the development of the County by the creation of employment and the provision of essential building materials for all new construction, urban development, roads and infrastructural projects. The Council seeks to ensure that the extractive and concrete products industry follows an environmental code of practice, so as to minimise the potential adverse impacts on the environment and local communities.

In assessing development applications relating to existing or proposed quarries, the Council will take full account of the document *Quarries and Ancillary Activities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoE, 2004).

4. Economic development

Aggregate extraction from the coastal zone, particularly from beaches, estuaries and cobble storm berms, has created many problems in the past, resulting in increased levels of erosion and flooding in coastal areas. The Sligo coastline is vulnerable to further similar activities, which have the potential to interfere with natural coastal processes and particularly the softer shoreline areas such as dune systems, which tend to be ecologically rich.

The GSI, in association with the Marine Institute, has been conducting a National Seabed Survey since 2000. This will facilitate the identification of marine and terrestrial aggregate deposits, if any, within the coastal zone. Any proposals for future coastal/marine aggregate extraction along the Sligo coast will be considered only after detailed environmental impact assessment and consultation with the DCENR, if appropriate.

Mineral extraction and quarrying policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-MEQ-1** Protect all known unworked deposits from development that might limit their scope for extraction (e.g. one-off housing).
- P-MEQ-2** Ensure that extraction and associated processes are carried out in a sustainable manner and do not impinge on existing rights-of-way or walking routes.
- P-MEQ-3** Minimise the impact of quarrying on residential and natural amenities and water quality through rigorous licensing, development control and enforcement measures.
- P-MEQ-4** Encourage development proposals – subject to normal planning criteria – that can demonstrate a commitment to good environmental management through the implementation of recognised environmental management practices approved by the Planning Authority.
- P-MEQ-5** Seek the reuse of worked out quarries for recreational, industrial, ecological and other uses, following appropriate restoration.
- P-MEQ-6** In respect of development proposals on or in the proximity of quarry sites, the Council will require that appropriate investigations are carried out into the nature and extent of old quarries (where applicable), the nature and extent of soil and groundwater contamination and the risks associated with site development works. Adequate measures to mitigate these risks shall be submitted as part of the planning application.

Mineral extraction and quarrying objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-MEQ-1** Co-operate with the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) in the identification of major mineral deposits in County Sligo through Aggregate Potential Mapping (APM) and safeguard these resources for future extraction.
- O-MEQ-2** Identify the location of marine aggregate deposits, if any, along and off the coast of County Sligo, with the assistance for the GSI/Marine Institute, based on the National Seabed Survey.
- O-MEQ-3** Ensure that any future proposals for extraction of marine/coastal aggregates along or off the Sligo coast are subject to detailed environmental impact assessment. This shall include an assessment of the impact(s), if any, of the natural coastal processes.
- O-MEQ-4** The processing and storage of extracted aggregates on lands within the coastal zone shall be carried out in a manner that minimises the impact on natural and residential amenities.

4.3 Sligo County Retail Strategy



Supermarket in Grange

All planning authorities are required to prepare a Retail Strategy for inclusion in the development plan for their area, as set out in the *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities* published by the DoEHLG in December 2000 (reviewed in January 2005).

4.3.1 Retailing in County Sligo

Unlike many Irish counties, Sligo is mono-nodal, with Sligo City being by far the largest and dominant urban centre in the County. A *Joint Sligo City and County Retail Strategy* was prepared as part of the Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016. This ensures that the Retail Strategy for the County draws upon and complements the City and Environs Retail Strategy.

Outside the Gateway, five centres in the County are of significance in terms of retail, due to their size, location or acknowledged importance in the NSS – Tobercurry, Ballymote, Enniscrone, Grange and Collooney. In terms of population, there are other significant settlements in the County – Rosses Point, Strandhill, Ballysadare – that have not come under detailed consideration, due to their proximity to Sligo City.

Recognition of the dominance of Sligo City should not diminish the importance of the smaller retail centres in the County. They play a useful role in sustaining local communities and in reducing the need to travel.

4.3.2 Projected retail floor space requirements

In 2008 two surveys were undertaken to inform the Retail Strategy: a survey of shoppers in Sligo City centre and a telephone survey of 800 households within Sligo's catchment area, which extends into North Leitrim and North Roscommon – this is referred to as the "study area". The Household Survey informed the projected floor space requirements to 2015 and 2020, alongside existing and projected population estimates prepared for each zone of the catchment/study area.

It is assumed that most expenditure originating in rural County Sligo takes place in larger centres, particularly Sligo City and Environs, and also in centres such as Ballina, Boyle and Carrick-on-Shannon. It is assumed that this will continue to be the case. Therefore, only expenditure on convenience goods (predominantly foodstuffs) was examined.

4. Economic development

Table 4.A Retail provision in County Sligo - data from surveys undertaken in 2003 and 2008

	Ballymote		Collooney		Enniscrone		Grange		Tobercurry		TOTAL	
	2003	2008	2003	2008	2003	2008	2003	2008	2003	2008	2003	2008
Convenience retail												
No. of outlets	8	4	6	6	4	5	3	4	13	10	34	29
Floor space (sq.m.)	1,226	1,436	642	743	242	249	452	411	1,835	1,137	4,397	3,976
No. as % of all outlets	13%	6.9%	18%	17.1%	19%	20%	17%	23%	17%	16.9%	16%	14.9%
Total Comparison retail												
No. of outlets	16	17	10	7	3	8	6	4	19	14	54	50
Floor space (sq.m.)	1,937	2,444	241	4,091	211	252	622	815	2,103	2,665	5,114	10,267
No. as % of all outlets	26%	29.3%	30%	20%	14%	32%	33%	23.5%	25%	23.7%	26%	25.8%
Mainstream Comparison												
No. of outlets	n/a	11		1		7		2		9		30
Floor space (sq.m.)	n/a	1,001		94		170		39		385		1,689
No. as % of all outlets	n/a	19%		2.9%		28%		11.8%		15.3%		15.5%
Bulky comparison												
No. of outlets	n/a	6		6		1		2		5		20
Floor space (sq.m.)	n/a	1,443		3,997		81		777		2,280		8,578
No. as % of all outlets	n/a	10.3%		17.1%		4%		11.8%		8.5%		10.3%
Retail services												
No. of outlets	26	28	11	14	13	11	8	7	35	29	93	89
Floor space (sq.m.)	n/a	959	n/a	506		678		252		1,38		3,433
No. as % of all outlets	43%	48.3%	33%	40%	62%	44%	44%	41.2%	47%	49.2%	45%	45.9%
Vacancies												
No. of outlets	11	9	6	8	1	1	1	2	8	6	27	26
Floor space (sq.m.)	410	381	369	4,775	20	101	18	227	602	1,402	1,419	6,886
No. as % of all outlets	18%	15.5%	18%	22.9%	5%	4%	6%	11.8%	11%	10.2%	13%	13.4%
Total retail floorspace (sq.m.)												
No. of outlets	61	58	33	35	21	25	18	17	75	59	208	194
Floor space (sq.m.)	3,572 (without services)	5,220	1,252 (without services)	10,116	473 (without services)	1,279	1,092 (without services)	1,705	4,540 (without services)	6,241	10,930 (without services)	24,561

4.3 Retail strategy

The retail study, undertaken by consultants Roger Tym and Partners, found that most South and West Sligo residents do their supermarket shopping in centres such as Ballina, Carrick-on-Shannon and Boyle, while the majority of those living in the wider Gateway area and North Leitrim use facilities in Sligo City.

The Retail Strategy notes that large parts of County Sligo lack ready access to supermarket facilities and suggest that the development of “intermediate convenience facilities” (i.e. outside Sligo City) may be appropriate, in order to encourage a more sustainable pattern of convenience goods shopping while also reducing related expenditure leakage from the County (refer to Section 5 of the Joint Sligo City and County Retail Planning Strategy 2010-2017 for details on market shares and expenditure).

Additional floor space requirements are estimated at 1,220 sq.m. by 2015, rising to 4,470 sq.m. by 2020 (refer to Tables 5-10 and 5-11 on pages 45 and 46 of the Sligo City and County Joint Retail Strategy). In both instances, there would be scope for higher levels of floor space should discount retailers enter the market.

During the period 2011 to 2017, the floor space requirement is equivalent to a small supermarket, possibly to be provided in the Key Support Town of Ballymote, which has only one such facility.

The Retail Strategy outlines that a substantial part of the future floor space requirements has already been granted planning permission. In this context, it is necessary to monitor carefully the implementation of permitted development, to ensure that the County can provide an appropriate scale and quality of retail floor space, commensurate with its future population and the strategic role of its towns.

4.3.3 Location of future retail development

It is anticipated that, within the lifetime of this Plan, most new retail floor space will be provided in Sligo City and Environs.

Prospects of growth in the smaller towns of the County are limited and the thrust of development plan policy is to maintain and enhance the existing retail environment to serve and benefit local communities.

In this respect, outlets of particular importance include general food stores, newsagents, post offices and pharmacies, in addition to pubs, restaurants and cafés. The convenient location of these facilities, within the heart of towns and villages, contributes to sustainable patterns of development in a number of ways:

- by enabling services to utilise existing infrastructure, therefore saving resources;
- by strengthening town and village centres and fostering community and social interaction;
- by reducing the need to make journeys by car, thereby decreasing congestion and creating a safer environment.

Rural County Sligo could also look to tourism as another source of potential retail income. To enable the County to better exploit its tourism potential, the County Council will encourage the provision of facilities such as craft outlets and shops specialising in outdoor pursuits like angling and water sports.



Ballymote



Riverstown

Retail planning policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-RP-1** Support and encourage the key role of retailing within the towns and villages of County Sligo, particularly for daily convenience shopping, e.g. foodstuffs.
- P-RP-2** Facilitate small-scale retail development in villages, provided that:
- there is no significant adverse impact on the vitality and viability of established centres of Tobercurry, Ballymote, Enniscrone, Grange and Collooney, and
 - the proposals are of appropriate scale and are acceptable in terms of design, impact on residential amenity, servicing and parking arrangements.
- P-RP-3** Encourage the retention of retail/service outlets (e.g. general food stores, news-agents, post offices, pharmacies, pubs, restaurants and cafés) within town and village centres, with the exception of commercial operations that are no longer viable or are more appropriately located elsewhere (e.g. petrol filling stations).
- P-RP-4** Encourage uses that support local retail and service outlets, such as tourism-related ventures, hotels, craft shops and shops specialising in outdoor pursuits and water sports.
- P-RP-5** Ensure that retail and service outlets are located within the central area of a town or village, where they can best serve the population of the surrounding area.
- P-RP-6** Discourage inappropriate out-of-town shopping facilities that detract from the vitality, viability and/or character of existing town and village centres.
- P-RP-7** Generally discourage any retail outlet in excess of 500 square metres net retail floor space, including extensions that would enlarge an existing development over this threshold. Development over this size is clearly intended to serve more than a local catchment and would therefore be more suitably located in Sligo City and Environs.
- P-RP-8** Acknowledge the fact that many retail cores have an interspersed residential element. Give favourable treatment to proposed changes of use to retail, where the dwelling has adjacent retail uses on both sides, as this helps to create compact and sustainable retail cores.
- P-RP-9** Facilitate the reuse of existing vacant retail outlets in towns and villages.
- P-RP-10** Promote initiatives or programmes to enhance the character and urban design quality of Tobercurry, Ballymote, Enniscrone, Collooney and Grange, to ensure that they remain attractive for investment in commerce and retailing.
- P-RP-11** Ensure that all new retail and commercial development proposals respect the scale and character of the streetscape within which they are proposed.
- P-RP-12** Encourage the retention of traditional shop fronts and pub fronts of character and good design quality.

Retail planning objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-RP-1** Facilitate the provision of an additional supermarket in Ballymote.
- O-RP-2** Restrict the further development of retail warehousing in Collooney and Grange and encourage the conversion of vacant units to appropriate uses, in accordance with the respective zoning objectives.

4.4 Tourism development



Dorrins Strand

4.4.1 Existing resources

With the growth in affluence, mobility and leisure time, tourism is one of the major growth areas of the national economy. County Sligo, with its wealth of beautiful scenery, still remains largely unspoiled and relatively undiscovered. The County's cultural heritage and landscape, its accessibility by road, rail and air, and the range of activities available augur well for the continued expansion of this sector.

The natural scenery of Sligo is amongst the finest and most spectacular in the country. It is the County's primary tourist attraction. The mountains, forests, woodlands, lakes, rivers, coastline, offshore islands and largely unspoiled rural landscape offer the widest range of natural amenity and recreational pursuits. The protection of this unique natural environment, which could be jeopardised by development pressure – particularly unsympathetic, sporadic residential development, agricultural and forestry development and increased risk of pollution – is fundamental to the development of the tourist industry.

Benbulbin, the Dartry Mountains and the Ox Mountains provide the most spectacular scenery in County Sligo and have major potential for activities such as touring, sightseeing, mountaineering, hill-walking and pony-trekking. In addition, some of the more spectacular mountains are areas of scientific and archaeological importance.

Forests occupy a significant portion of Sligo's land area. Mostly under State control, they have a major recreational value and are open to the public. Woodlands like Slish Wood, Union Wood, Lough Gill Forest, Ben Bulbin Forest, Collooney Forest and Lough Talt Forest have significant stands of deciduous trees. These woodlands are located in scenic areas. Specially organised forests walks can exploit their botanical, visual, and literary/archaeological interests in a sensitive and unobtrusive manner.

The lakes of Sligo give the County a special identity. Lough Gill and the Garavogue River, Lough Arrow, Lough Gara, Glencar Lake, Templehouse Lake, Lough Talt and Lough Easky are immediately recognised as part of the typical Sligo landscape. These lakes are a major resource for sailing, boating, fishing and lakeshore walks. They also have strong wildlife, literary, archaeological and historical significance, although infrastructural services need to be developed to fully exploit their potential in a sustainable manner.

The coastline of County Sligo is another substantial resource. The traditional resorts of Mullaghmore, Rosses Point, Strandhill and Enniscrone have long attracted many visitors. In addition, there are magnificent beaches at Dunmorán, Streedagh and Culleenamore. Many smaller beaches are dotted along the coast.

Throughout the years, coastal erosion has caused significant damage in some areas. The protection of existing infrastructure and the unspoilt beauty of the whole coastline is of major importance in ensuring that Sligo's recreational and tourism potential can be fully exploited.

The other great resource for tourism in Sligo is the County's cultural, literary, historical and archaeological heritage. Increased interest in heritage, both nationally and internationally, has resulted in it becoming a major resource. The protection of heritage assets and their contexts is extremely important.

The Council recognises the importance of the tourism industry to County Sligo and the potential that exists within the County for the industry to expand further. This can be especially meaningful in more peripheral rural areas, many of which are areas of scenic value.

4.4.2 Trends and assumptions for the future

With 156,000 overseas tourists who generated revenue of 39m euro in 2006, Sligo had just one-third of the visitors of neighbouring County Mayo and only one-tenth of the revenue of County Galway. There are strong indications that Sligo has not capitalised on its full tourism potential. The availability of high-quality accommodation is a prerequisite for attracting high-spending tourists to the region. Although a number of hotels have been built in recent years, County Sligo is still significantly lacking in guesthouse accommodation. Unless addressed, such deficits will continue to act as a constraint to the development of the local and regional tourism industry.

Sligo County Council supports the policies outlined in the *Blueprint for Tourism Development in the West* (Western Development Commission, 2000). The WDC has always recognised that rural tourism can play a key role in promoting sustainable development. Since setting up the Western Development Tourism Programme in 2001, the WDC has become involved in a range of projects, including the Green Box. Begun in 2002 as Ireland's first eco-tourism project, the Green Box is now becoming one of Ireland's major niche tourism initiatives. The project delivers an eco-tourism destination to visitors to the Green Box region (all of Leitrim and Fermanagh and parts of Donegal, Sligo and Cavan).

In line with the *Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010*, it will be the aim of Sligo County Council to promote the development of major new tourist attractions, particularly with regard to untapped tourism potential.

The Council will also co-operate with neighbouring local authorities, cross-border bodies and other agencies to promote and establish sustainable tourism initiatives in less-developed tourist destinations, particularly marginalised rural areas. Although rural tourism remains a relatively small niche in the overall tourism context, local communities can benefit from the promotion of local assets and the development of specialist activities.

Examples of the tourism products that are emerging, or have scope for further development, include holidays breaks that focus on the music tradition, literature, literary associations, hill-walking, archaeology and geology, angling, surfing, equestrian holidays, thalassotherapy (e.g. seaweed baths) and golf.

Each of these activities can generate spin-offs and demand for additional services, including accommodation, restaurants and transport.

Cultural tourism

County Sligo's character and culture are vital assets that help the county compete as a tourism destination and a location of choice.

Cultural tourism is set to grow and throughout the next decade Sligo must aim to unlock the tourism potential associated with its archaeology, landscape, literary and musical heritage and its festivals.

County Sligo is in a strong position to build on its unique cultural heritage, which is a key differentiator in developing the area as a cultural tourist destination.



Tourism development policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-TOU-1** Promote the development of tourism in a sustainable manner and encourage the provision of a comprehensive range of tourism facilities, subject to location, siting and design criteria, the protection of environmentally sensitive areas and other planning considerations.
- P-TOU-2** Protect and conserve those natural, built and cultural heritage features that form the basis of the County's tourism industry, including areas of important landscape, coastal scenery, areas of important wildlife interest, historic buildings and structures and the traditional form and general appearance of towns and villages.
- P-TOU-3** Promote the development of high-quality tourist accommodation, especially hotels and guesthouses, and ensure high standards of architectural and urban design in all new tourist accommodation and facilities
- P-TOU-4** Strictly control development that might be detrimental to scenic and heritage assets, in cSACs, SPAs, proposed NHAs, designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes and Visually Vulnerable Areas, and along designated Scenic Routes. The Council will use its other statutory procedures, particularly in relation to waste management, water and air pollution, to ensure that these natural amenities remain unpolluted and visually unspoilt.
- P-TOU-5** Provide signposting and improve roads, existing amenity and viewing areas, and provide for car parking, public facilities and access in scenic areas, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- P-TOU-6** In recognising the special amenity value of mountains, moorlands and forests, valleys and lakes, it is the Council's policy to encourage use of these areas for activities such as touring, sightseeing, mountaineering, and hill-walking, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive. This will be done in co-operation with state agencies and other interested bodies and local community groups. In this regard, the Council will, within financial resources, improve access and create public rights of way.
- P-TOU-7** Promote walking, rambling and cycling as appropriate recreational and tourism activities within the Plan area.
- P-TOU-8** Explore the provision of sustainable medium- and long-distance walking routes, in co-operation with adjoining local authorities.
- P-TOU-9** Support and promote, with the co-operation of private landowners, public access to heritage sites and features of natural heritage, geological and archaeological interest, coastal areas, islands, mountains, rivers, lakes and other natural amenities, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- P-TOU-10** Promote the development of eco-tourism and other leisure activities, in an effort to diversify the range of tourist experiences available in the County and extend the tourist season, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- P-TOU-11** Promote the development of interpretative signs and information boards at important sites of archaeological and natural interest.
- P-TOU-12** Support the growth of cultural tourism in the County and its potential for niche tourism products by facilitating the development of cultural events, infrastructure and activities.



Tourism development objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-TOU-1** Secure the establishment of a flagship visitor attraction in the County, subject to normal development control standards and compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- O-TOU-2** Examine the feasibility of providing a walkway through Union Wood, subject to availability of resources and compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- O-TOU-3** Seek to establish a bird-watching area at the Ballygilgan Nature Reserve (Carney), subject to appropriate environmental considerations.
- O-TOU-4** Develop a coherent network of attractive cultural hubs/clusters with good access and supporting tourism and cultural signage.

Coastal zone tourism policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-CZT-1** Ensure that future caravan, camping and parking facilities in coastal areas will not be visually intrusive or impact on sensitive coastal environments (e.g. sand dune systems), by requiring, inter alia, appropriate siting, layout, design and natural screening, and compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- P-CZT-2** Ensure continued compliance with EU Directives on water quality for all bathing beaches.
- P-CZT-3** Promote awareness of the sensitivity of the coastal environment, amongst visitors and residents alike, through the provision of educational/heritage appreciation programmes, public information boards and other appropriate means.
- P-CZT-4** Maintain and develop small piers and harbours along the Sligo Coast, subject to funding and compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- P-CZT-5** Give priority to coastal areas within County-wide programmes to signpost and improve public rights of way.

Coastal zone tourism objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-CZT-1** Manage and control car parking and vehicular and pedestrian movements on beaches and within dunes and other vulnerable areas. The management and control of car parking shall be carried out in compliance with the Habitats Directive where relevant.
- O-CZT-2** Develop green parking areas in appropriate coastal locations, i.e. soft areas that can be left in their natural state during out-of-season months and used to provide overflow facilities during peak periods. The development of such car parking areas shall be subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- O-CZT-3** Exclude land-based and marine-based motor sports activities from beaches.
- O-CZT-4** Provide a number of designated facilities and access points for controlled water-sports activities, in a manner that avoids conflict with nature conservation and activities such as swimming, sailing, fishing and mariculture.
- O-CZT-5** Liaise with the National Trails Advisory Committee to investigate the possibility of providing a coastal path along the coastline of County Sligo, with a right-of-way status, and liaise with counties Mayo, Leitrim and Donegal to set up a study group to advance this matter. The study group should be established within one year from the adoption of this Plan. Development of a coastal path shall be subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- O-CZT-6** Identify existing and potential coastal walking routes which can be developed as a tourism product and a local amenity. These routes will ideally be permanent, of high quality and adequately managed, should allow for further expansion and provide links to other activities and facilities.

Chapter 5. Housing



The core objective of housing policy is to enable every household to avail of an affordable, good-quality dwelling, suited to its needs, in a good environment and, as far as possible, at the tenure of its choice. The key challenge in this regard is the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities where people want to live and work now and into the future.

Sligo County Council's role is to formulate policies offering a range of options towards direct housing provision and assistance towards persons unable to house themselves from their own resources, to consider planning applications for private housing, and to ensure that sufficient lands are zoned to meet the projected housing demand. The Council is both the housing authority and the planning authority and, in these roles, it has the capacity to influence the supply and location of new housing within its functional area.

5.1 Existing and future housing development

County Sligo experienced a high level of residential construction between 2000 and 2008. It is particularly noteworthy that during the 2005-2007 period, house completions proved to be significantly in excess of Housing Strategy projections (see Table 5.A below). In fact, the projected cumulative total for the 2005-2011 period (5,672 units) had almost been achieved by the end of 2008 (5,521 units). Consistent with worsening economic conditions, house construction declined dramatically in 2008-2009 and this trend is set to continue in the short and medium term.

Table 5.A Housing unit projections and delivery 2005–2007 (source: www.eirestat.cso.ie)

Housing units	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Projections*	699	705	751	799	2,954
Delivered	1,164	2,164	1,269	924	5,521
Difference	+ 465	+ 1,459	+518	+125	2,567

* As per *Sligo Borough and County Councils' Joint Housing Strategy 2005–2011*

A review of household projections, carried out as background analysis to the Sligo and Environs Development Plan in 2008, estimated that between 1,494 and 2,122 households would be in need of accommodation in the County during the 2010-2017 period.

5.1.1 Assessment of overall housing needs

Taking into account the population targets set by the Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 (refer to Section 3.1.2 Compliance with the RPG population targets and housing land requirements), it is estimated that the County Development Plan would have to cater for an additional population of circa 3,421 between 2011 and 2017, and that the Sligo and Environs area would accommodate 2,000 additional persons during the same period.

Based on the potential figure of circa 3,421 additional persons to be accommodated in County Sligo between 2011 and 2017 and an average household size of 2.2 persons per household, it would appear that circa 1,555 households will be in need of accommodation between 2011 and 2017.

5.1.2 Location of future housing

Whilst there has been no shortage in the supply of residential development in recent years, the location and distribution of this development has not been in accordance with the settlement structure envisaged in the CDP 2005-2011 and refined in this Plan (refer to Section 3.3 Settlement Structure).

In order to redress the residential balance in the County, it is essential that future residential development is permitted on the basis of a rate and location that is consistent with the Core Strategy.

This will be achieved through the application of a *plan-monitor-manage* approach to residential development. This approach involves placing appropriate controls on the extent of lands zoned for residential uses in various land-use plans, as well as monitoring housing supply through the development management process. The approach is also linked to the infrastructural capacity of each settlement.

The allocation of zoned residential land to each settlement has been done in a manner that is consistent with the Core Strategy, the Settlement Structure and the infrastructural capacity. These allocations are incorporated into mini-plans (see Volume 2 of this Plan) and will be incorporated into local area plans as part of the review of these plans.

5.1.3 The issue of density

While the housing need estimates outlined in subsection 5.1.1 above are based on modest assumptions about housing density, the Council will have regard to Government policy, which seeks to encourage more sustainable development through the avoidance of excessive suburbanisation and through the promotion of higher densities (*Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns and Villages)*, DoEHLG 2009).

Accordingly, in existing settlement centres, densities of 30 to 40+ units per hectare will be encouraged. Outside centres, densities of 20-35 units per hectare will be expected, whilst lower densities of 15-20 units per hectare will be accommodated on the edge of settlements. The key issue is that each site is different and in some cases a low density may be appropriate, while in other instances a certain increase in density would be suitable (for example a courtyard development in the middle of a village or some infill sites within a village or town, where it is important to maintain the traditional streetscape).

5.1.4 Sustainable residential development

It is an aim of this Plan to promote sustainable residential development that minimises the need for the use of private cars for daily activities and that delivers a good quality of life.

Sustainable residential development should provide variety in terms of ancillary uses and supporting facilities, and should promote social integration between diverse household types and age groups.

Development should be designed to promote efficient use of land and energy, and to provide an attractive living environment which respects its context.

The approach towards future housing provision will take into account the location and context of a particular proposed development. Detailed policies regarding the future provision of housing in 30 settlements are set out in the corresponding mini-plans contained in Volume 2 of this Plan.

5.1.5 Future household sizes

Average household size in rural County Sligo, at 2.79 persons per household, was amongst the lowest in the State in 2006 and, in line with national trends, will probably continue to decrease. The revised household projections assume that the trend of falling household size will accelerate in the rural areas of the County. Over the period of the Development Plan, from 2011 to 2017, it is assumed that the average household size will decrease to approximately 2.5 persons per household. This will have implications for housing demand, with a growing need for smaller dwellings and a greater mix of house types and sizes.

A high proportion of households on the Council's Housing List have a preference for two/three-bedroom units, while elderly people or persons with special needs prefer single-bedroom units. A key objective of the Housing Strategy is the provision of a suitable range of housing types and sizes, to avoid the uniformity of suburban-type development and facilitate the integration of social and affordable housing into existing communities.

5.2 Housing Strategy

Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 requires planning authorities to prepare Housing Strategies for their areas and include these provisions in their Development Plans.

As part of the preparation of the Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010–2016, Sligo County Council and Sligo Borough Council have produced a Joint Housing Strategy for the period 2010–2017. This Strategy covers the entire area of County Sligo and its provisions were largely incorporated into the Sligo County Development Plan 2011–2017.

The objectives of the Housing Strategy are fully compatible with those contained in the Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 in relation to housing. However, the economic climate and the housing market has changed dramatically since 2008, when the Strategy was prepared, and some of the estimates could appear unrealistic.

The key findings of the Housing Strategy are as follows:

- Based on a continuing decline in projected household sizes and based on population figures corresponding to the three population change scenarios (refer to Section 3.3 Settlement Structure), it is estimated that the number of additional households (i.e. in addition to the 2006 census figures) requiring accommodation in the County Development Plan area by 2020 would be between 1,301 and 3,413. For the period up to 2017, the figure would be between 1,023 and 3,259.
- It is estimated that between 2010 and 2017, the number of social and affordable housing units required in the whole County (i.e. including the Sligo and Environs area) would range between 1,342 and 2,247 under the Revised NSS-target and High-Growth scenarios, and between 1,006 and 1,680 under the Low-Growth Scenario.
- Within the County Development Plan area, social and affordable housing unit requirements during the period 2010–2017 are estimated to be from 446 to 745 under the Low-Growth Scenario, 515 to 862 under the High-Growth Scenario, and from 361 to 605 under the Revised NSS-target Scenario.
- During the period 2010 to 2017, direct social and affordable housing provision is estimated to be in the region of 600 units in total in the County Council area, subject to DoEHLG funding arrangements.
- The spatial distribution of housing development anticipated by the CDP 2005-2011 has not been realised. There has been an over-concentration of housing in satellite villages, Key Support Towns, and several rural settlements at the expense of Sligo City. The key drivers of this trend have been disparities in developable land supply, land values, development incentives and land zoning controls.
- In Sligo County as a whole, land zoning should be based upon the Settlement Structure, with the Gateway City of Sligo given priority for future development.

Strategic housing policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- SP-HOU-1** Encourage a balanced supply of private housing in the county, in a manner that is consistent with the Core Strategy and the Settlement Structure, and which will support the creation of sustainable communities through the provision of an appropriate range of housing types and high-quality residential environments.
- SP-HOU-2** Reserve 20% of eligible sites which are subject to new residential development (or a mix of uses including residential) for the development of social and affordable units, in accordance with the Housing Strategy and the requirements of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000.
- SP-HOU-3** Ensure that the needs of older people, people with disabilities and other special-needs persons and households are adequately catered for in new developments.

Strategic housing objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- SO-HOU-1** Implement the relevant provisions of the Sligo City and County Joint Housing Strategy 2010-2017.
- SO-HOU-2** Continue to monitor the extent of residential development in the county area to ensure that sufficient land is zoned to accommodate housing demand over the Plan period.
- SO-HOU-3** Ensure that 20% of all sites eligible for Part V is reserved for the development of new social and affordable residential units.
- SO-HOU-4** Continue with the programme of refurbishment and regeneration of existing local authority housing stock.
- SO-HOU-5** Establish a register of eligible households interested in acquiring affordable housing.



General housing policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- GP-HOU-1** Have regard to the principle of sequential development in assessing all new residential development proposals, whereby areas closer to settlement centres will be prioritised for development in advance of lands further from settlement centres. Notwithstanding this principle, each proposal will be considered on its merits and having regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
- GP-HOU-2** Require high quality and innovation in the layout and design of new residential development, particularly with regard to:
- environmental sustainability and energy efficiency;
 - site/internal layouts that may incorporate live/work units and/or home zones;
- GP-HOU-3** Ensure the provision of a suitable range of house types and sizes to facilitate the changing demographic structure and in particular the increasing trend towards smaller household sizes. In private housing schemes, the following mix of house types should generally apply:
- | House type | Proportion in the scheme |
|--------------|------------------------------------|
| 1-2 bedrooms | minimum 30% of total no. of houses |
| 3 bedrooms | minimum 30% of total no. of houses |
| 4+ bedrooms | maximum 20% of total no. of houses |
- GP-HOU-4** Promote more compact forms of residential development, such as infill and backland development, and ensure – through the development management process – that access points to backland areas are reserved or that adequate road frontage is reserved to provide future road access, to enable comprehensive backland development.
- GP-HOU-5** Ensure that services and utilities in residential developments are provided concurrently with the construction of new dwellings.
- GP-HOU-6** Ensure that all apartment and mixed-use developments provide for estate management so as to preserve the amenity, quality and visual character of the development, to ensure adequate maintenance of common facilities and areas, and encourage tenant involvement and participation in estate management. (Refer also to the Development Management Standards Chapter of this Plan).
- GP-HOU-7** Promote higher densities of residential development in appropriate locations and circumstances, having regard to the principles outlined in the DoEHLG's *Guidelines for Planning Authorities – Sustainable residential development in urban areas*.
- GP-HOU-8** Ensure that new housing development in towns and villages is of appropriate scale, layout and quality design, and that it relates to the character and form of the settlement.
- GP-HOU-9** Ensure that all new multiple housing development proposals, including apartments and mixed-use developments, provide adequate facilities for the storage, separation and collection of waste (organic, recyclable and landfill waste) and ensure the ongoing operation of these facilities.

General housing objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- GO-HOU-1** Monitor and manage the extent of existing and permitted residential development to ensure that it is consistent with the Settlement Structure and the infrastructural capacity of each settlement.

5.3 Social and affordable housing



Culfadda



Tourlestrane



Enniscrone



Coolaney

Social and affordable housing schemes in County Sligo

In addition to private sector provision, housing needs can be met from a variety of sources, including local authority development and the voluntary and co-operative housing sector under an array of different tenure and contract forms.

The Housing Strategy seeks to ensure that housing is available for people with different levels of income and includes an estimate of the amount of social, affordable and voluntary housing required in County Sligo. A large proportion of households were considered unable to meet their accommodation needs at the time of preparing the Strategy (2008-2009), due to the economic downturn and limited access to credit.

The Housing Strategy estimates the requirements for social and affordable housing based on available data on income distribution, expectations regarding household income change, house prices and mortgage interest rates. Taken together, these factors determine the number and proportion of new households who will require social or affordable housing. Whilst the volatility of economic conditions since 2008 renders any such analysis extremely challenging, the results of the calculations and associated sensitivity analysis consistently indicated that in excess of 20% (in some cases rising to 43%) of households will require social and affordable housing. In the CDP area, this would represent a requirement of between 446 and 862 social and affordable housing units during the 2010-2017 period.

At the end of November 2009, there were already approximately 466 households on the Council's Housing List, of which over half had a location preference. Demand is spread throughout the County but is particularly high in Collooney, Ballysadare and Strandhill.

Local authorities are required to prepare comprehensive multi-annual plans for the delivery of social and affordable housing programmes, in line with national policy and social partnership agreements. These multi-annual plans also deal with the regeneration, refurbishment, maintenance and management of the existing local authority housing stock and address provision by the voluntary and co-operative housing sector.

Sligo County Council and Sligo Borough Council have prepared a Social and Affordable Housing Action Plan 2004-2008. The Action Plan is reviewed periodically, in conjunction with the DoEHLG, and brought in

line with achievable targets and available budgets. Because of funding shortages, it is expected that the annual completion and output rates will be reduced, despite increasing numbers applying for inclusion on the Housing List. The figures indicate that there will be a significant shortfall in the supply of social and affordable housing by the County Council. Some of the difference will have to be made up through the provision of housing under the leasing arrangements introduced in 2009.

Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended in 2002) is another means through which the Council can provide social and affordable housing. In accordance with Part V of the Act, it is the policy of Sligo County Council to require 20% of all land zoned for residential uses (or for a mix of residential and other uses) to be reserved for the purpose of social and affordable housing (refer to Section 5.1 and the Strategic Housing Policies).

Given that almost every settlement in the County is now covered by a land-use plan, there is potential for the role of Part V to expand, subject to growth in residential development. Prior to commencement of any development permitted under the terms of Part V, applicants will be required to enter into an agreement with the County Council.

Local authority housing is well distributed throughout the County. Over the period of the Plan, the provision of further social and affordable housing may be considered on Council-owned lands depending on needs, funding and on approvals obtained from the DoEHLG. The Council recognises the need to avoid concentration of new social housing in any particular area, especially adjoining existing social housing estates. The Council will have regard to this concern in dealing with all new housing development proposals.

In line with government policy, Sligo County Council will work to deliver more and better quality housing responses in a more strategic way that is focused on building sustainable communities.

Social and affordable housing policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-SA-HOU-1** Promote social inclusion by ensuring that social and affordable housing is well distributed throughout all residential areas rather than concentrated in a few locations.
- P-SA-HOU-2** Ensure that development in areas subject to an agreement under Section 96 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 is integrated with the rest of the development, so as to avoid undue social segregation.
- P-SA-HOU-3** Ensure that the supply of housing units under the Housing Strategy reflects the current and anticipated demographic characteristics and household sizes.
- P-SA-HOU-4** Encourage linkages between existing public and private housing areas through the provision of shared facilities, services and pedestrian/cycle and vehicular connections, as appropriate, between these areas.
- P-SA-HOU-5** Where a particular need is identified, provide housing schemes designed for the needs of older people and/or those with special needs. Otherwise, housing schemes shall be designed with a suitable mix of house types and designs which can be easily adapted to accommodate special housing needs.

Social and affordable housing objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-SA-HOU-1** Prepare and implement an updated Social and Affordable Housing Action Plan to address direct housing provision and assistance towards housing provision.

5.4 Traveller accommodation

The 2006 Census recorded a total of 128 families (319 persons) living in temporary housing units in County Sligo. The 2008 assessment of Traveller accommodation needs carried out within Sligo County and Borough indicated that there were approximately 87 Traveller families living within the County at the time.

Sligo County Council recognises the distinct culture and lifestyle of the Traveller community and will endeavour to provide suitable accommodation for Travellers who are indigenous to the area, using the full range of housing options available, such as standard lettings in local authority estates, lettings in voluntary housing schemes, group housing schemes, halting sites, single/stand-alone housing where required etc. Working with the Traveller community, its representative organisations and local communities, the Council will seek to ensure an equitable distribution of Traveller facilities throughout the Plan area.

A new Traveller Accommodation Programme has been adopted for the period 2009–2013.

Traveller accommodation policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-TA-HOU-1** Provide for the accommodation needs of Travellers, as far as is reasonable and practicable, using the full range of housing options available to the Local Authorities and having regard to the policies outlined in the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009–2013.
- P-TA-HOU-2** Consider the submissions of Travellers, their representative organisations and those of the local communities in relation to the siting, planning and design of prospective halting sites or group housing schemes, so as to avoid social conflict and promote social inclusion.
- P-TA-HOU-3** Provide and manage halting sites in a manner compatible with the local environment and the needs of the travelling community, based on management plans set up in co-operation with Traveller families. Halting sites will be subject to the detailed design standards as outlined in the Department of the Environment's *Guidelines for Residential Caravan Parks for Travellers* (October 1997), and normal development management standards.

Traveller accommodation objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-TA-HOU-1** Provide appropriate accommodation to meet the needs of Travellers through the implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2009–2012 and the Joint Housing Strategy.
- O-TA-HOU-2** Provide Traveller Accommodation at Collooney, Tobercurry, Cloonamahon (existing site to be redeveloped) and Ballyfree (existing site to be redeveloped).

5.5 Voluntary and cooperative housing

Voluntary and cooperative housing provision is increasingly becoming a strong feature in the delivery of accommodation nationally. A marked feature of the voluntary sector is that many associations also offer related, non-housing services such as social activities, welfare advice and estate management skills. Although delivery in Sligo has been modest to date, the Council will continue to involve the voluntary and cooperative housing sector in the provision of social housing in their functional areas. Discussions are ongoing regarding existing and future proposals, particularly regarding the provision of housing to meet special needs categories.

Voluntary and cooperative housing policy

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

P-VC-HOU-1 Assist voluntary and non-profit cooperative housing associations in the provision of housing and encourage a more active involvement of these sectors in the housing market.

5.6 Special-needs housing

Sligo County Council recognises the need to accommodate the housing requirements of those with special needs and those in particular circumstances. The type and location of accommodation for persons with special needs will be assessed in line with current thinking and practice.

5.6.1 Older people

The aging of the population poses strategic challenges for society in general, and particularly for the development of responsive health and social policies. As a key social policy area, housing is a function that must adapt in order to meet the needs of a growing number of older people. The Council will work with various bodies/agencies and the private sector to facilitate suitable proposals for the accommodation of older people.

5.6.2 Accommodation for persons with special needs

Where the housing requirements of such persons are identified, these needs can be met by direct provision of accommodation by the County Council or in conjunction with the HSE or the voluntary sector. In line with national policy, the Council implements grant schemes that provide financial assistance in carrying out works to render dwellings more suitable for occupants with special needs. Subject to funding, the Council will continue to implement these schemes.

5.6.3 Accommodating homeless persons

The DoEHLG has published a new Homeless Strategy 2008–2013. On the basis of the Strategy's recommendations, Sligo Homeless Forum, together with other voluntary and statutory bodies, has prepared an Action Plan on Homelessness in Sligo 2009–2011. The plan is based on an independent review of the current situation and aims to address gaps and challenges identified, while building on existing strengths.

5.6.4 Refugees

Persons who have been granted refugee status have automatic rights to apply for local authority housing. Consideration should be given in this regard to household size and structure, and the need for access to social supports in terms of language, education and employment.

Special needs housing policy

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-SN-HOU-1** Continue to support independent living for older people and the provision of specific, purpose-built accommodation.
- P-SN-HOU-2** Continue to meet the housing needs of persons with special needs both by direct provision of accommodation and by facilitating the provision of housing by the voluntary sector.
- P-SN-HOU-3** Continue to implement the following grant schemes: Housing Adaption Grant for People with Disability, Mobility Aids Grant and Housing Aid for Older People Scheme.
- P-SN-HOU-4** Promote a partnership approach between the HSE, disability interest groups, voluntary housing associations and the local authority in meeting the particular needs of people with disabilities and the elderly.
- P-SN-HOU-5** Facilitate the provision of suitable accommodation for the homeless and for those in need of emergency accommodation.
- P-SN-HOU-6** Implement the provisions of DoEHLG's Homeless Strategy 2008–2013 and the Action Plan on Homelessness in Sligo 2009-2011.
- P-SN-HOU-7** Ensure that housing developments accommodating the elderly, the disabled and the households least likely to own cars have easy and convenient access to local facilities and to public transport.
- P-SN-HOU-8** Support proposals for the provision of sheltered housing and work with the various bodies / organisations responsible for provision of this type of accommodation.

5.7 Rural housing

Government policy on rural housing is set out in the National Spatial Strategy and the document *Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DOEHLG, April 2005). The rural settlement policy framework contained in the NSS aims to sustain and renew established rural communities, while strengthening the structure of smaller settlements to support local economies. In this way, key assets of rural areas are protected in order to support quality of life, and rural settlement policies are responsive to differing local circumstances.

Sligo County Council acknowledges that there is a long tradition of people living in rural areas in County Sligo. The Council also acknowledges that there are extensive rural areas throughout the County, where people continue to live in a highly dispersed settlement pattern. In the past, these areas were largely dependent on agriculture and farming. With the decline of such activities, there has been an associated decline in the rural population. In these areas, it is accepted that there is a need to sustain rural communities, and therefore a less restrictive policy on one-off housing will apply.

In formulating policy on rural housing, the Council will consider whether a proposal is classed as rural-generated housing or urban-generated housing, as defined in subsections 5.7.2 and 5.7.3 of this Plan.

5.7.1 Rural housing strategy

The Settlement Structure (Section 3.3) highlighted the fact that there are parts of County Sligo which have been subject to significant development pressure (principally within the Sligo City Sub-Region) and other areas that have experienced depopulation and are in need of regeneration. Whilst these two distinct types of area require a different policy response, it will remain the policy of the Council to accommodate genuine rural-generated housing need throughout the County.

The Rural Areas in Need of Regeneration and Rural Areas Under Urban Influence are broadly outlined on the Rural Housing Policy Map (Fig. 5.B). Proposals for rural housing in or near the general boundary or interface of these zones will be considered on their merits, having regard to the existing pattern and intensity of development and the absorption capacity of the landscape.

The need for the distinction between the two types of rural area is important, as the Council remains committed to Sligo's Gateway status and the need to attain critical mass, thereby defusing the pressure for additional housing in rural areas close to Sligo City and Environs. Additional housing needs should generally be accommodated within the Sligo Borough and Environs area, satellite settlements, Key Support Towns and other settlements where sufficient growth opportunity exists.

5.7.2 Rural-generated housing

Rural-generated housing is defined as the housing needed by:

- a. persons whose primary employment is in a rural-based activity with a demonstrated genuine need to live in the locality of that employment base, for example, those working in agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, horticulture or other natural resource-based employment and who can demonstrate that they have been engaged in this employment for over five years;
- b. persons who have no family lands but who wish to build their first home in the area, on a site within a 5-km radius of their original family home, within the rural community in which they have spent a substantial and continuous part of their lives;
- c. persons with a vital link to the rural community in which they wish to reside, by reason of having lived in this community for a minimum period of seven years or by the existence in this community of long-established ties with family members;
- d. persons who are required to live in a rural area for exceptional reasons, including health reasons. Such applications must be accompanied by a specialist's report and recommendation outlining the reasons why it is necessary for the applicant to live in a rural area. The application should also be supported by a relevant disability organisation of which the applicant is a member, where applicable.

In applying sympathetic consideration to bona fide farmers, emigrants returning to their place of origin and applicants claiming exceptional circumstances (other than those outlined above), the overriding concern of the Council will be the resultant net community benefit accruing to an area by permitting further residential development.

The Council will endeavour to accommodate rural-generated housing in Rural Areas Under Urban Influence and Rural Areas in Need of Regeneration. Housing in buffer zones around settlements will be accommodated subject to objective 13.8.E in Chapter 13 Mini-plans - general policies (Volume 2 of this Plan).

5.7.3 Urban-generated housing

This is defined as housing in rural areas sought by those living and working in urban areas; it includes second and holiday homes. Frequently, this type of housing takes the form of ribbon and/or sporadic development along the approach roads to larger settlements and low-density development in scenic locations. The Council will endeavour to accommodate urban-generated housing within the development limits of all towns and villages and in Rural Areas in Need of Regeneration. This approach has been adopted because of the problems that arise from a proliferation of one-off houses, including those listed below:

- creation of demands for the subsequent provision of public infrastructure (i.e. roads and utilities);
- proliferation of septic tanks in areas with poor soils that do not have the capacity to absorb effluent;
- contamination of local water supplies and a reduction in water quality;
- rising land values that push up prices for those with a genuine local housing need;
- higher energy consumption and transportation costs arising from increased car-based commuting;
- profound effects on landscape character, with potentially harmful effects on the tourism sector, which depends on high-quality landscapes;
- loss of investment in rural towns and villages, leading to dereliction and vacancy;
- relocation of younger and more affluent people from settlements to the surrounding rural areas.

5.7.4 Rural housing design and development patterns

New development in rural areas should be absorbed and integrated successfully into the rural setting, i.e. development should harmonise or 'read' with the existing traditional pattern of development and not intrude on unspoilt landscapes.

High standards of location, siting and design should be satisfied in order to achieve this objective (see Sections 12.3.20, 12.3.21 and 12.3.22 for further guidance in this regard).

The practical achievement of well integrated rural housing development requires considerable skill and experience in site assessment and detailed design. It requires an ability to examine a site in the context of its natural and built surroundings and analyse whether the site is capable of carrying the proposed development without being unduly dominant on either the surrounding landscape or pattern of development.

As a general principle, it is better to design on a modest basis rather than design for maximum public visibility or 'intrusion' in terms of building form and detailing.

In the main, ribbon development and urban sprawl in the countryside will be discouraged.

Ribbon development means frontage development along a road where there is no tandem development in the backlands, for example five or more houses on any one side of a given 250 metres of road. It is undesirable because it creates numerous accesses onto traffic routes, sterilises backlands, landlocks farmland, creates servicing problems (e.g. water supply, drainage, footpaths, street lighting) and intrudes on public views of the rural setting.



Ribbon development: frontage development along a road with no tandem development in the backlands



Urban sprawl: unplanned development expansion along the roads out of towns and villages



Traditionally, rural housing made use of trees, hedges, setbacks and natural contours for successful absorption

Urban sprawl means unplanned development expansion along the roads out of towns and villages, whether or not in ribbon form. It gives rise to the same problems associated with ribboning, but may have an even greater visual impact and transform the character of the adjacent settlement.

However, in certain circumstances, especially where ribbon development is substantially in place and where additional housing will effectively consolidate the ribbon, infill development may be permissible.

Similarly, where urban sprawl can be 'rounded off' or significantly ordered through careful siting of new development, such development may be permissible.

Whilst ribbon development and urban sprawl will be discouraged, applications for single houses will be assessed according to their capacity to be absorbed into the

landscape without creating a disproportionate visual impact or giving rise to significant traffic or environmental impact. Visual impact will be assessed according to the landscape designations indicated on the Landscape Characterisation Map (refer to Fig. 7.C in Section 7.4 Protecting Landscape Character). The Council will generally discourage new rural housing in designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes, Visually Vulnerable Areas, in coastal zones and along designated Scenic Routes.

5.7.5 Replacement and refurbishment of derelict houses

The Council will facilitate the restoration of derelict houses in the countryside and sympathetic consideration will be given to proposals to provide replacement dwellings. This policy applies to both rural-generated and urban-generated housing. In the case of both derelict and replacement houses, design proposals should generally reflect the scale, character and external finishes of the derelict/replacement house.



Restoration of derelict houses will be facilitated

Where it is proposed to replace or restore an existing dwelling house, the house to be replaced or restored should be clearly recognisable as a dwelling house. In any such case the essential characteristics of a house (i.e. external walls, roof, and openings) must be substantially intact and the structure, when last used, must have been used as a dwelling. In assessing the condition of such structures, the planning authority will disregard any recent structural works carried out as an attempt to comply with the above requirements.

New houses permitted under this policy should be constructed on the site of the house to be replaced – i.e. replacement in situ – except in circumstances where a setback is required in order to improve vehicular access or where alternative siting would be preferable in the interests of visual amenity, public health or orderly development.

Rural housing policies (I)

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-RHOU-1** Ensure that, in permitting one-off rural housing, key rural assets such as water quality, natural and cultural heritage and landscape quality are respected and protected.
- P-RHOU-2** Encourage the renovation and reuse of existing derelict rural properties and consider proposals for replacement dwelling houses on their merits. These properties should generally be intact and exhibit the essential characteristics of a dwelling house as outlined in subsection 5.7.5 of this Plan. The location, siting and design of any such proposal shall also reflect those of the existing property.

[continues on the next page]

Rural housing policies (II)

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-RHOU-3** Facilitate rural-generated housing in all areas of the County, while providing for urban-generated housing in Rural Areas in Need of Regeneration, subject to the policy considerations set out below:
- a. Control of ribbon development, especially close to Key Support Towns and other settlements.
 - b. Control of rural housing in the coastal zone, especially between coastal roads and the sea.
 - c. Protection of designated heritage sites, such as proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs), candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).
 - d. Protection of the integrity of designated Visually Vulnerable areas, Sensitive Rural Landscapes and Scenic Routes (see the Landscape Characterisation Map - Fig. 7.C in Section 7.4 of this Plan).
 - e. Protection of key natural assets, such as surface and ground water and aggregate or mineral reserves.
 - f. Ensuring the safe operation of key transport arteries, particularly national primary and secondary roads and the rail network. Access to national roads shall be restricted in accordance with DoEHLG's *Draft Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (June 2010).
 - g. Ensuring that physical planning standards are met – e.g. soil conditions suitable for effluent disposal, availability of a suitable and reliable water supply, adequate flood control/avoidance measures. All proposed on-site wastewater treatment systems shall comply with the EPA document *Code of practice for Wastewater Treatment and disposal Systems serving Single Houses* (2009).
 - h. Incorporation of existing natural and heritage features into the development, e.g. tree stands, significant hedgerows, stone walling, wetlands and streams.
 - i. Minimising the visual impact of the development on the surrounding landscape by ensuring that normal siting, layout and design criteria are met – e.g. avoid visually prominent sites, design the dwelling house to integrate appropriately with its landscape context, include screening and landscaping proposals.
 - j. Ensuring that the scale, bulk and massing of the proposed development is in keeping with existing developments in the area
 - k. Encouraging innovative design, provided it does not dominate its setting or alter the character of the landscape.
 - l. Promotion of building layouts that maximise the potential for solar gain and wind protection.
 - m. Ensuring that there is adequate infrastructure to service the development.
 - n. Ensuring that the road network is adequate to cater for the development, that safe vehicular access is available and that the traffic movements generated by the development will not give rise to traffic hazard.
 - o. In granting permission for one-off rural housing, the Council is insistent that it will not provide public services, such as footpaths, public lighting, water or sewerage connections where they do not already exist.
 - p. Where hedgerows forming roadside boundaries are required to be removed for safety reasons, they should be reinstated on the new boundary line, in order to insure the continuity of wildlife corridors.

5.8 Holiday homes and second homes

Managing the provision of tourism accommodation is essential to ensuring the delivery of a sustainable tourism strategy. As outlined in Section 4.4, much of Sligo's tourism product is based upon its natural scenery, heritage and landscapes. Therefore, in the interests of protecting the rural environment and the economic provision of services and facilities, demand for holiday homes and second homes should be accommodated in serviced settlements only, and particularly in Easkey, Mullaghmore, Rosses Point, Strandhill and Enniscrone, designated "settlements with special functions", which play a regionally significant coastal tourism role. It is unlikely that other settlements in the county will experience a high demand for such developments, but any such case should be restricted to small-scale development only.



Holiday accommodation in Enniscrone

While the provision of such accommodation within existing settlements can contribute to the local economy, it might result in local people being priced out of the property market. It can also put increased pressure on local infrastructure. Therefore there is a need to ensure there is a sustainable balance between the number of holiday/second homes and the number of permanent residences. Ongoing monitoring of the supply of holiday homes will therefore be carried out by the planning authority in order to ensure that an appropriate balance is maintained.

It is sometimes unclear whether a particular development is to be used as holiday/second homes or as permanent housing. This makes quantification of holiday home provision difficult. In the interests of clarity, all such future proposals will be required to submit additional details regarding tenure, management etc.

Holiday / second homes policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-HHOU-1** Direct proposals for holiday homes and second homes into existing serviced settlements, particularly into Easkey, Mullaghmore, Rosses Point, Strandhill and Enniscrone.
- P-HHOU-2** Ensure that an appropriate balance is maintained between the number of holiday/second homes and the number of permanent homes within each settlement with special functions.
- P-HHOU-3** Ensure that the total amount of holiday or second home developments permitted in any other settlement is limited in scale to maximum 10% of the number of permanently-occupied houses.
- P-HHOU-4** Require, where appropriate, through the development management process, the submission of precise details regarding the intentions for tenure and management of potential holiday/second home developments.

Holiday / second homes objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-HHOU-1** Establish baseline data on the number of holiday/second homes and the number of permanent homes in relevant settlements and continue to carry out monitoring of this data throughout the plan period.

5.9 Vacant housing

The 2006 Census recorded that approximately one house in four (23.1%, including holiday homes) in County Sligo was vacant on Census night in April 2006, compared to a national average of 15% and an EU average of just 7%. Survey work carried out in 30 settlements (all the settlements covered by Volume 2 of this Plan) by County Council planners in 2009 also recorded a high average vacancy rate of approximately 15% (it should be noted that the survey did not include presumed holiday homes within the vacancy rate).

The numerous vacant houses in many villages, in sometimes unfinished developments, detract from the vitality and amenity of the settlements and can even encourage antisocial behaviour.

As discussed in Chapter 3 Core Strategy, a *plan-monitor-manage* approach to housing provision should help to reduce vacancy rates. In the meantime, the Council will strive, through available enforcement mechanisms, to ensure that housing developments and associated services/facilities are completed in accordance with the terms of relevant planning permissions.

A flexible and supportive approach will also be adopted towards alternative uses for existing vacant residential units or other types of buildings. A wide range of potential uses – including community facilities, commercial, retail, enterprise, arts etc. – will be considered in such cases. The key consideration is that any such prospective development must be of an appropriate scale and must be compatible with existing and proposed surrounding uses. It should also be appropriately designed and should demonstrate compliance with all other relevant development management standards.

Vacant housing policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-VHOU-1** Adopt a flexible and supportive approach towards alternative uses of vacant residential units/buildings, subject to appropriate scale, design and compatibility with existing and proposed surrounding uses.
- P-VHOU-2** Strive to ensure – through the enforcement process – that housing developments and associated services and facilities are completed to a standard that is in accordance with the terms of the relevant planning permission.

Vacant housing objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-VHOU-1** Establish baseline data on the number of vacant residential units in each settlement in the CDP area and continue to carry out monitoring of vacancy throughout the plan period.

6. Community facilities



Community facilities include facilities for education, childcare, sports and recreation, arts and culture, healthcare, burial grounds etc. This County Development Plan is concerned with improving existing facilities and making adequate and appropriate provisions for the development of new facilities.

The development and facilitation of an effective social infrastructure network is important in the promotion of Sligo as a county which offers a good quality of life, where social inclusion and community participation are regarded as necessary prerequisites to sustainable development.

6.1 Delivering community facilities

The Council recognises the importance of community participation in the improvement of existing community facilities, and encourages increased involvement of local groups, independently and in association with the relevant statutory bodies, in the future development of the County.

The Council will ensure that local-level participation is facilitated and reinforced through stronger partnerships, thereby enabling the development of an effective social infrastructure to cater more adequately for the needs of the current and future population.

One of the mechanisms through which this can be more easily achieved is the local area plan process and the preparation of mini-plans (see Volume 2 of this Plan), where specific requirements and needs can be identified and addressed at the local or neighbourhood level.

Whilst LAPs and mini-plans include lands zoned specifically for community requirements, a flexible and supportive approach will be adopted towards proposals for community facilities on suitable sites within other zoning categories (i.e. residential, village centre, industry/enterprise etc).

However, any such proposal should be suitably located within the development limits of the relevant settlement and should be easily accessible for all sections of the community.

Community facilities policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-CF-1** Assist as far as possible in the provision of community facilities by reserving suitably-located land, by assisting in the provision of finance for their development (where appropriate), and/or by the use of the development management process to ensure provision is made for such facilities as the Council considers appropriate.
- P-CF-2** Encourage high standards in the design and finishes of community facilities.
- P-CF-3** Continue to apply development levies to provide for recreational and community facilities relating to new developments.
- P-CF-4** Optimise existing and proposed physical resources / infrastructure by supporting multi-functional building use and provision.
- P-CF-5** Recognise the importance of community participation in the improvement of existing community and recreational facilities, and encourage increased involvement of local groups, both independently and in association with the relevant statutory bodies, in the future provision of such facilities.
- P-CF-6** Encourage the siting of community facilities in suitable locations, especially within residential / village centre areas, or close to existing facilities / services and public transport routes.
- P-CF-7** Work with relevant agencies in identifying areas for the provision of quality social infrastructure.
- P-CF-8** Promote social inclusion by exploring ways to integrate minority groups into the community and by supporting the development of fully-integrated communities catering for people of different ages and incomes. The Sligo County Community Forum will have a key role in implementing this policy.
- P-CF-9** Encourage the establishment of specific bodies and programmes to facilitate the integration of those with special needs, and people of all age groups.
- P-CF-10** Adopt a flexible and supportive approach towards proposals for the provision of community facilities within a wide variety of land-use zoning categories, in particular lands zoned for community facilities, village-centre mixed-use zones, residential development and commercial/enterprise uses. Any such proposal should be suitably located within the development limits of the relevant settlement and should be easily accessible for all sections of the community. It is also acknowledge that some community facilities may be accommodated in rural areas, subject to site suitability.
- P-CF-11** Consider the accommodation of small-scale community enterprise developments within existing and proposed community facilities areas, subject to appropriate design, layout and servicing.

Community facilities objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-CF-1** Facilitate the phased redevelopment of the existing Wisdom services care facility at Cregg, to provide an integrated residential and educational community to include a range of facilities for those with and without intellectual disabilities and special needs, subject to the availability of adequate wastewater treatment infrastructure.

6.2 Education

The Department of Education and Science is responsible for the delivery of educational facilities and services. The County Council's responsibility in this regard is to ensure that adequate serviced or serviceable land is available to meet current and future requirements.

One method of addressing these future requirements is by reserving suitable sites in settlements through the mini-plan and local area plan adoption processes. Whilst sites may be specifically reserved for this purpose, education and related uses should be favourably considered within a variety of land-use zoning categories, thereby ensuring sufficient flexibility to accommodate future needs.



St Attracta's School, Tobercurry

County Sligo contains a wide range of educational facilities. At third level, the Institute of Technology (IT) and St. Angela's College both play important roles. IT Sligo is located within the Sligo and Environs Development Plan area. St. Angela's College, part of the National University of Ireland (Galway), is located within the County Development Plan area, currently serves over 800 students and has continued to experience significant growth in recent years.

Education facilities policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-ED-1** Support the provision of additional land for educational uses through the consideration (on suitable sites) of such facilities in a wide variety of land-use zoning categories, in particular lands zoned for community facilities, mixed uses and residential development.
- P-ED-2** Promote the location of new educational facilities within existing settlements, and preferably near community facilities (such as community centres, playing fields and libraries) and public transport services. Only in exceptional cases will out-of-town locations be considered.
- P-ED-3** Support the educational institutions in their plans to expand and develop.
- P-ED-4** Encourage and support the development of further educational facilities and training programmes to ensure a suitably skilled local workforce, including facilities for children and adults with special needs.
- P-ED-5** Encourage facilities connected with the integration of those with special needs into the education system of streamlined schools.
- P-ED-6** Support Sligo's schools in the upgrading and modernisation of their building stock so as to ensure that these institutions can accommodate population growth.
- P-ED-7** Ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided concurrent with the development of an educational facility. Such infrastructure may include footpaths, pedestrian crossings, cycle lanes, parking facilities, ramps and facilities for those with special needs.
- P-ED-8** Support the further development of St Angela's College, subject to appropriate siting, design and servicing infrastructure.
- P-ED-9** Promote the development of outreach programmes between businesses and third-level institutions, whereby Sligo can develop as a centre of excellence in research and development.

6.3 Childcare

National policy recognises that childcare facilities are integral to economic and social wellbeing. Under Partnership 2000, an expert working group was established to develop a strategy for the development and delivery of childcare and early education services. Through this, the National Childcare Strategy 1999 was formulated, and later replaced by the National Childcare Strategy 2006-2010.

In 2001, the DoEHLG published *Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities*. Sligo County Childcare Committee (SCCC), established in response to these guidelines and operating under the National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP), prepared a strategy document entitled *Sligo County Childcare Plan 2002-2006*, which was then superseded by the *Sligo County Childcare Strategic Plan 2007-2010*.

The *Sligo County Childcare Strategic Plan 2007-2010* includes a review of the previous plan period (2002-2006) and notes that significant progress has been made in childcare provision. This includes a dramatic increase in the number and range of childcare facilities, along with significant improvements in terms of membership / representation, quality of service, training, information, performance review and evaluation.

A mapping exercise also identified a total of 78 childcare facilities located throughout the County. However, it was noted that private childcare provision in the south of the County is relatively poorer than in the north. This is particularly evident in disadvantaged rural areas, where childcare provision is mainly community-based.

The Strategic Plan provides a framework for the implementation of the NCIP, and incorporates the background work undertaken by SCCC in developing the plan, as well as the agreed county-level strategic goals and objectives.

The Council will consider the SCCC Strategic Plan in dealing with the future provision of childcare facilities, and will also have regard to the DoEHLG's 2001 *Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities*.

Childcare policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-CC-1** Work with the Sligo County Childcare Committee in the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2007–2010 and successor documents.
- P-CC-2** Consider childcare needs in future local area plans and residential development proposals.
- P-CC-3** Encourage the establishment of appropriate childcare facilities in suitable locations, such as village centres, areas of concentrated employment, in the vicinity of schools, adjacent to public transport corridors and /or pedestrian areas, and in larger new housing estates.
- P-CC-4** Have regard to the DoEHLG's *Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2001). In applying standards regarding the provision of childcare facilities in larger residential developments, the Planning Authorities will show flexibility by considering the provision of multi-purpose community facilities in certain cases, as appropriate.
- P-CC-5** Support proposals that provide an improved variety of childcare services (both in terms of childcare providers, i.e. private / community, and childcare type, i.e. sessional services / full-day care), having particular regard to the deficits identified in the SCCC Strategic Plan 2007–2010.
- P-CC-6** Optimise existing physical resources/infrastructure within the County by supporting multi-functional building use and provision, to include childcare facilities.

6.4 Children's play

In line with *Ready, Steady, Play: A National Play Policy* (National Children's Office/Department of Health and Children – NCO/DoHC, 2004), Sligo County Council recognises the importance of play in childhood and the need to maximise opportunities for play, both within the natural and built environment. The Council is committed to consulting with children and young people when developing plans for play provision, as recommended in the *National Children's Strategy: Our Children – Their Lives* (NCO/DoHC, 2000).

Together with Sligo County Development Board, the County Council has established a Local Play Advisory Forum with the dual role of developing a Play Policy and a County Play Plan. The forum consists of various departments within the County Council, external groups including the Community Forum, County Childcare Committee, the Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership, parents' organisations and councillors. The Play Policy was adopted by SCC in 2008.

There are currently eight public playground facilities in the CDP area. There are also two fee-paying playgrounds in Enniscrone, one of which is seasonal. A significant proportion of work on these playgrounds was completed since 2005.



Play area
at Killavil National School
Ballymote

Children's play policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-CP-1** Support the implementation of Sligo County Council's Play Policy in co-operation with the relevant community organisations and agencies.
- P-CP-2** Seek to maximise the range of play opportunities available to children, particularly children who are marginalised or disadvantaged or who have a disability.
- P-CP-3** Take a lead role in the development of stand-alone, outdoor play areas, subject to funding, and agree on priority areas in consultation with the County Childcare Committee.

Children's play objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-CP-1** Prepare a plan for the development of play provision in the County, in conjunction with the County Development Board and in consultation with children and young people.

6.5 Sports, recreation and open space

Playing fields and other open space facilities are an important resource for sport. They also make a significant contribution to informal recreation and possess amenity value. There is a need to safeguard such facilities from unacceptable development in order to continue to provide for the needs of both current users and future generations. The Council will therefore generally discourage development on, or the removal of playing fields, pitches and other recreation facilities.

Sligo has been designated as a Sports and Recreation Partnership under the Irish Sports Council's *Era for Sport* programme, which ensures that sports resources are co-ordinated at a local level. The partnership has formulated a local strategic plan for the years 2007-2012, entitled *Making Sport and Recreation a Way of Life*. Through the adoption of a clear direction and targets, the plan aims to lead the development of sport in Sligo, to increase levels of physical activity and to ensure that partnership remains strong and effective.

The Council will ensure that adequate land is zoned for the development of accessible and affordable sporting and recreational facilities, particularly for the youth, the older adults and those who are disadvantaged or marginalised.

Sports, recreation and open space policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-SRO-1** Support the aims, goals and objectives of the Sligo Sport & Recreation Partnership Strategic Plan 2007-2012, *Making Sport and Recreation a Way of Life*.
- P-SRO-2** Preserve existing public or private recreation areas, including sports clubs, grounds, built leisure facilities and open space. If a change of use is sought, ensure that alternative recreational facilities are provided in a suitable location.
- P-SRO-3** Facilitate shared use of sports and recreation facilities, particularly school facilities.
- P-SRO-4** Support local sports and community groups in the development of facilities through appropriate land use zoning.
- P-SRO-5** Ensure that all new facilities are appropriately located where they can best meet the needs of all sections of the community that they are intended to serve.
- P-SRO-6** Encourage the provision of sports and recreation infrastructure as an integral part of new residential schemes.
- P-SRO-7** Encourage and, if necessary, require developers to incorporate natural features such as rivers, streams, trees and tree groups into open space layouts in the planning of future developments.
- P-SRO-8** Require the preparation and implementation of landscaping plans and open space maintenance arrangements for all proposed open spaces areas.
- P-SRO-9** Preserve and improve access for the public to lakes, coastal, riverside, upland and other areas that have traditionally been used for outdoor recreation, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- P-SRO-10** Assist in developing a network of sports, recreation and open space facilities throughout the County to encourage a range of recreational and amenity activities that will cater for both active and passive needs.
- P-SRO-11** Actively promote and protect public access to the coast and designate traditional walking routes thereto as public rights-of-way.
- P-SRO-12** Where feasible, develop walkways/cycleways between coastal sites and green space in built-up areas.
- P-SRO-13** Ensure that golf course development does not damage or encroach upon vulnerable dune systems and does not impinge on existing rights-of-way or walking routes.



Health Centre, Ballymote

6.6 Healthcare facilities

The Health Service Executive for the North-West is the primary body responsible for the delivery of health and personal social services to Sligo's population. Of equal significance is the role it plays in promoting health and wellbeing.

In line with the government policy of decentralisation of healthcare facilities, certain health facilities and services are now being provided at a remove from major hospitals. Residential services for the elderly, mental health services, learning disability services and primary care services are now distributed throughout a number of settlements within County Sligo. This has improved service accessibility and has been achieved through the upgrading of existing health centres and the construction of new ones.

The provision and expansion of healthcare facilities will continue to be supported by the County Council.

Healthcare policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-HC-1** Encourage the integration of health services and facilities with new and existing community facilities, where feasible.
- P-HC-2** Promote the location of health services and care facilities within existing settlements, on sites convenient to pedestrian access and public transport.
- P-HC-3** Support the provision of health services and facilities for people with learning disabilities and special needs.
- P-HC-4** Accommodate the provision of accessible care facilities throughout the County to cater for the specific needs of the elderly and those of young people.
- P-HC-5** Support existing healthcare facilities in their plans to develop and expand.



6.7 Burial grounds

Sligo County Council is responsible for the acquisition of land for the provision of burial grounds, for undertaking any necessary works on these lands and for delineating burial plots.

Following a survey of all burial grounds carried out in 2005, a Burial Grounds Policy 2006-2010 has been adopted. The policy identifies ten burial grounds in need of urgent action and sets out a programme of works aimed at addressing these concerns. Whilst some projects have been successfully completed, the Council will continue to monitor and review requirements in this regard.

A revised policy, which incorporates the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 2004, has also been formulated. The policy highlights the fact that 48 of the 64 burial grounds in the county are designated National Monuments and, as such, require appropriate consultation and consents prior to carrying out any works on site.

Burial grounds policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-BG-1** Provide or assist in the provision of new burial grounds and extensions to existing burial grounds, by reserving sufficient land in suitable locations.
- P-BG-2** Encourage the development of burial grounds to take account of cremation and 'green lawn' principles, to promote more efficient use of land and to facilitate maintenance.
- P-BG-3** Promote the establishing of burial ground committees and assist them in the appropriate maintenance and management of burial grounds.
- P-BG-4** Ensure that appropriate archaeological assessment is carried out in relation to any works to burial grounds which are designated National Monuments, in accordance with the requirements of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 2004.

6.8 Arts and cultural facilities

Sligo County Council supports and promotes opportunities for everyone to participate in the cultural life of the county by facilitating the provision of well-managed, sustainable cultural infrastructure, suitable for all ages, and by adopting a flexible approach to the incorporation of cultural facilities in the development or refurbishment of community facilities.

Public art is commissioned and co-ordinated by the Public Art Officer (Sligo Arts Service) and carried out in line with the Council's public art policy and the aims and objectives of its public art programme.

Arts and cultural facilities policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-AC-1** Encourage and assist in the development of the arts and to support the ongoing development of cultural infrastructure throughout the County.
- P-AC-2** Continue to enhance the public domain by encouraging the provision of public art, both temporary and permanent, across all art forms and artistic disciplines, in towns, villages and new residential developments through the government-supported *Per Cent For Art* scheme.

Seat Leaves (2008) by artist Alex Pentek at River Walk, Coolaney



6.9 Allotments

An allotment is defined as an area of land comprising not more than 1,000 square metres that is let or available for letting to and cultivation by one or more than one person who is a member of the local community and lives adjacent or near to the allotment, for the purpose of the production of vegetables or fruit mainly for consumption by the person or members of his or her family.

Sligo County Council recognises that the public's interest in growing fruit and vegetables locally has increased significantly in recent years. This has been due to a number of reasons including economic circumstances and health benefits, along with concerns regarding sustainability and the embodied energy involved in the global production and transportation of food.

The planning authority will therefore facilitate the development of allotments at suitable locations throughout the County. Such locations should be consistent with the terms of the definition above and should be located within or close to existing settlements, where they will be more easily accessible to all sections of society.

Allotments policy

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-A-1** Facilitate the development of allotments at suitable locations throughout the County. Any such facility should be located within or close to an existing settlement and should be easily accessible.

Allotments in Germany - originally developed after WW2 as a social public utility



7. Heritage



Heritage includes many aspects of the world around us. Landscapes, hedgerows, field systems, rivers, plants and animals are all part of our natural heritage. Archaeological sites and many other buildings and structures – such as houses, shops, bridges and mills are features of our built heritage. County Sligo has a rich and varied heritage, including dramatic landscapes, archaeological monuments and the coastline.

Heritage is integral to the identity of Sligo. It provides the county with a strong sense of place, character and distinctiveness. Protection of our heritage not only has environmental and quality of life benefits for the people of Sligo, but it also brings significant economic benefits.

Many features of Sligo's heritage are nationally or internationally important and are therefore protected by international and national legislation. These heritage features are non-renewable and once destroyed, they are lost forever. Protection of our heritage for future generations is the responsibility of us all.

Protecting our heritage is an integral part of sustainable development and also brings economic benefits to the county. As custodians of this heritage, we have a duty to continue our guardianship role, so that future generations may also benefit from and enjoy this rich inheritance. Managing our heritage resource in an appropriate manner provides a county that is a good place to live, work and visit and will bring significant benefits to the people of Sligo.

In 2002, the Government published the *National Heritage Plan* and the *National Biodiversity Plan*, which set out strategies for the conservation and management of our heritage. A key element of both plans is an enhanced role for local authorities in heritage awareness and management, to be given effect through the preparation and implementation of *County Heritage Plans* and *Biodiversity Action Plans*.

Box 7.A Heritage protection principles

The policies and objectives for environment and heritage have been developed in accordance with the following principles:

1. The natural and built environment, particularly those elements that are non-renewable and most valuable, need to be properly protected, managed and enhanced.
2. The conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, natural heritage, landscape and the built environment should be promoted as important elements of the long-term economic growth and development of the County.
3. The protection of County Sligo's physical heritage (including archaeology and historic buildings) is a tangible representation of the County's past and is a sound basis for economic growth and regeneration.
4. The *polluter pays* principle and the *precautionary* principle are important elements of any planning policies that deal with environmental and heritage matters.

Heritage objectives

It is the objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-H-1** Implement, in partnership with all relevant stakeholders, the *County Heritage Plan 2007-2011* and subsequent heritage plans.
- O-H-2** Adopt and implement, in partnership with all relevant stakeholders, a *County Biodiversity Action Plan* and subsequent biodiversity plans.

7.1 Natural heritage

Our natural heritage includes the variety of life we see around us every day, often referred to as biodiversity. It includes plants, animals and their habitats, as well as the physical and geological foundation that forms our landscape and seascapes.

County Sligo supports a wide diversity of natural heritage and biodiversity of local, national and international importance. When sustainably managed, our natural heritage and biodiversity can improve our quality of life, create jobs and increase people's enjoyment and pride in the County.

Sligo County Council plays an important role in the protection of the County's natural heritage and the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. Protecting and enhancing our natural heritage is vital for the health, well-being and quality of life of communities throughout County Sligo. It is a core aim (CA-5 – see subsection 3.1.3) of this development plan to protect, conserve and manage these natural resources in a sustainable manner to ensure that economic growth complements the county's unique environmental setting.

This section sets out how Sligo County Council will meet its statutory obligations to provide for the conservation and protection of our natural heritage. In general, it is an objective to ensure, wherever possible, that developments or activities do not impact adversely upon wildlife and its habitats. A sustainable approach requires that the natural heritage resource, comprising natural habitats and species within the Plan area, should be conserved and protected for the benefit of future generations.

In general, if uncertainty exists regarding the potential impact of a proposed development, full account must be taken of the *polluter pays* and *precautionary* principles, and the proposed development will be resisted unless or until its effects are more clearly understood.

Natural heritage - general policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-NH-1** Protect, sustainably manage and enhance the natural heritage, biodiversity, geological heritage, landscape and environment of County Sligo in recognition of its importance for nature conservation and biodiversity, and as a non-renewable resource, in association with all stakeholders.
- P-NH-2** Ensure as far as possible that development does not impact adversely on wildlife habitats and species. In the interest of sustainability, biodiversity should be conserved for the benefits of future generations.
- P-NH-3** To promote increased understanding and awareness of the natural heritage and biodiversity of the county.
- P-NH-4** Protect and, where possible, enhance the plant and animal species and their habitats that have been identified under the EU Habitats Directive, EU Birds Directive, the Wildlife Act and the Flora Protection Order.
- P-NH-5** The *polluter pays* and the *precautionary* principles are integral components of planning policies that deal with environmental and heritage matters. Where uncertainty exists regarding the potential impact of a proposed development on the natural heritage resource, full account shall be taken of the precautionary principle.



Glencar Valley seen from N16
designated Scenic Route

Box 7.B Natural heritage – legislative and policy context**European Directives**

The European Communities Habitats Directive (1992) plays a major role in the provision of protected areas for habitats and species of conservation concern, designated in Ireland as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). The EU Birds Directive (1979) offers protection to internationally important bird populations in Special Protection Areas (SPA). Collectively, these designated areas are known as Natura 2000 sites. The Habitats and Birds Directives were transposed into Irish law through the Natural Habitats Regulations (1997) and subsequent amendments.

The National Heritage Plan 2002

The National Heritage Plan sets out a clear and coherent strategy and framework for the protection and enhancement of Ireland's national heritage. The core objective of the Plan is to protect the national heritage as well as promoting it as a resource to be enjoyed by all.

National Biodiversity Plan 2002

This Plan recognises that conservation and enhancement of biodiversity is essential for sustainable development, and for maintaining the quality of human life. The National Biodiversity Plan sets out 91 actions to halt the current and continuing loss of plant and animal species, as well as the biodiversity and habitats that they comprise, by 2010. The second National Biodiversity Plan has now been drafted and, once adopted, will provide the new context for biodiversity policy and planning in Ireland in the future.

Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010

The 2010 Border Regional Planning Guidelines (Section 6.3 of the guidelines) recognise that the region is rich in natural heritage areas of international, national, regional and local importance. The Guidelines include a number of policies and objectives relating to natural heritage.

County Sligo Heritage Plan 2007-2011

The Plan aims to collect and make available heritage information, to inform public policy on heritage, to support the strategic and integrated management of heritage at a local level, to demonstrate best practice in heritage conservation and to raise awareness through education initiatives.

County Sligo Biodiversity Action Plan

The plan aims to prioritise, co-ordinate and initiate action to ensure the effective conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in County Sligo. It is also meant to raise awareness and appreciation of local biodiversity through involving local communities in its conservation, and to inform policy.

7.1.1 European and national designated natural heritage sites

A number of sites in County Sligo have been identified as being of exceptional importance for wildlife at a European and/or national level. European and national legislation protects the most valuable of our natural heritage areas.

At European level, Natura 2000 sites form a network of protected areas throughout the European Union. They comprise Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the EU Habitats Directive, and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the EU Birds Directive. The Habitats and Birds Directives were transposed into Irish law through the Natural Habitats Regulations (1997). Any person proposing to carry out a plan or project that is likely to have a significant impact on a Natura 2000 site should refer to subsection 7.1.2 of this chapter, regarding Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA).

Local authorities are required to ensure that a Habitats Directive Assessment of the implications of proposals affecting designated conservation sites is undertaken in respect of developments requiring planning

permission. This applies to all development proposals, plans and licensed activity (water abstraction, waste permits etc.), irrespective of location, likely to impact on these sites.

At national level, the Wildlife Act 1976 and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 are the principal statutory provisions for the protection of wildlife (both flora and fauna) and the control of activities which may impact adversely on the conservation of wildlife.

Under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) are designated to conserve species and habitats of national importance and it is proposed that sites of geological interest would in time be given statutory protection as NHAs through the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000.

The designation of these sites at national level is the responsibility of the DoEHLG, but it is the responsibility of all to secure their protection for the future. Some of these sites also have other designations, such as Statutory Nature Reserve, Refuge for Fauna, Biogenetic Reserve or Ramsar Site.

The process of site designation is ongoing, with new sites being added and/or upgraded, in terms of their conservation status, and the boundaries of existing sites being adjusted, as better information becomes available. In addition, there is a range of plants and animals and their associated habitats that are protected under European and national legislation, wherever they occur (see subsection 7.1.6 in this chapter).

The lists and maps of pNHAs, cSACs and SPAs, Ramsar Sites and statutory Nature Reserves occurring in County Sligo, provided in Appendix A, were compiled in March 2010. For up-to-date information, please contact Sligo County Council or the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the DoEHLG.

7.1.2 Habitats Directive Assessment (Appropriate Assessment)

Circular letter SEA 1/08 and NPWS 1/08 issued by the DoEHLG states that any draft land use plan (development plans, local area plans) or amendment/variation to it proposed under the planning and development Act 2000 (as amended) must be screened for any potential impact on areas designated as Natura 2000 sites (i.e. SACs or SPAs), to determine whether a full Appropriate Assessment of the project is required in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (1992). The DoEHLG has also issued a document titled *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities* (2009).

An Appropriate Assessment means an assessment, based on best scientific knowledge, by a person with ecological expertise, of the potential impacts of the plan on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 sites (including Natura 2000 sites not situated in the area encompassed by the draft plan) and the development, where necessary, of mitigation or avoidance measures. The impacts assessed must include the indirect and cumulative impacts of approving the plan, considered with any current or proposed activities, developments or policies impacting on the site. The potential impacts of policies outside Natura 2000 sites (known as 'ex-situ' impacts) must also be included in the assessment.

If the Habitats Directive screening indicates that a plan or project arising from this Development Plan will have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, either directly or indirectly, on its own or in combination with other plans and projects, then the plan or project must be the subject of an Appropriate Assessment as per Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (1992).

Having considered the conclusions of the Habitats Directive Assessment, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site(s) concerned. If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected and it shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.

Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or priority species, the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment, or further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. The Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected and it shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.

Where development is permitted in spite of a negative assessment, the planning authority will consider the use of conditions or planning agreements to ensure the protection and enhancement of the site's nature conservation interest.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service will be invited to prioritise the preparation of Management Plans for Natura 2000 Sites. This will facilitate the development of site specific Conservation Objectives in the context of the proper planning and sustainable development of the County.

European and national designated natural heritage sites - objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-NH-1** Protect and maintain the favourable conservation status and conservation value of all natural heritage sites designated or proposed for designation in accordance with European and national legislation and in other relevant international conventions, agreements and processes. This includes sites designated or proposed as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Ramsar Sites and Statutory Nature Reserves.
- O-NH-1a** Promote the maintenance and, as appropriate, the achievement of favourable conservation status of protected habitats and species in association with the NPWS.
- O-NH-2** Assess, in accordance with the relevant legislation, all proposed developments which are likely to have a significant effect (directly or through indirect or cumulative impact) on designated natural heritage sites, sites proposed for designation and protected species.
- O-NH-3** When considering any plan or project prepared or assessed on the basis of this development plan, the planning authority must comply fully with Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive (as transposed into Irish Law by the EU Habitats Regulations 1997 and subsequent amendments) and assess whether the plan or project is likely to have a significant impact upon the integrity, conservation objectives and qualifying interests of any Natura 2000 site.
- O-NH-4** Consult with the relevant prescribed bodies and appropriate agencies when considering undertaking, approving or authorising developments which are likely to affect designated natural heritage sites or those proposed to be designated.
- O-NH-5** Establish and maintain an up-to-date planning register of all previously adopted and proposed plans/programmes and all granted and proposed developments which are likely to have a significant effect (directly or through indirect, cumulative or in-combination effect) on European Sites within or adjoining the county, to allow for the appropriate assessment of potential ex-situ and cumulative/in combination effects of proposed plans, programmes and projects on such sites.
- O-NH-5a** An appropriate assessment screening determination shall be made for all land use plans, related variations and projects in consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
- O-NH-6** Support and co-operate with statutory authorities and others in support of measures taken to manage designated nature conservation sites in order to achieve their conservation objectives. Specific regard shall be had to Conservation Management Plans and their conservation objectives/management practices, where they exist.
- O-NH-7** Promote development for recreational and educational purposes that would not conflict with maintaining favourable conservation status and the meeting of the conservation objectives for designated sites.

7.1.3 Nature conservation outside of designated sites

Existing nature conservation legislation provides for the protection of particular species and sites of international and national importance. However, such primary habitats and landscape features cannot be sustained in the long-term in isolation from one another. There must be a network of protected areas, ecological corridors, and ecological “stepping stones” available to support the movement of species and to sustain the habitats, ecological processes and functions necessary to maintain biodiversity and the key elements in this ecological network need to be identified, protected and enhanced.

Most of Sligo’s biodiversity is interwoven throughout our landscape and includes woodlands, hedgerows, earthen banks and ditches, coastal habitats such as mudflats and sand dunes, our rivers, lakes and wetlands, areas of upland blanket bog, heath and raised bogs and unimproved grasslands, as well as the plant and animal species that are found in these wild places. Rare and protected sites and species cannot survive independently of their surroundings. The wider landscape provides vital links and corridors to allow the movement of plants and animals between protected sites.



Burnet moths
on thistle



Harebells



Common spotted
orchid

Promoting and protecting biodiversity and wildlife corridors

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive outlines our obligations in relation to natural heritage in the wider countryside. It provides that, through land use planning and development policies, Planning Authorities shall endeavour to improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and encourage the management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild fauna and flora. Such features are those which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure (such as rivers with their banks or the traditional systems of marking field boundaries) or their function as stepping stones (such as ponds or small woods), are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.

County Biodiversity Sites

Many sites of biodiversity value within the County do not meet the criteria that would enable them to be designated at an international or national level. Although such sites are of immense importance at a regional and county level, to date they have not been fully surveyed or recognised as such. In order to inform this process, the County Council has commissioned – and continues to commission – surveys of key habitats such as hedgerows, wetlands and unimproved grassland. It is critical to the overall ecological network and biodiversity value of County Sligo that these sites are identified, valued and conserved. The County Biodiversity Sites which are of recognised conservation value are listed for protection in Appendix C of this Plan.

A key support measure to this policy area is the ongoing work in identifying important elements of the county’s ecological network. This ongoing work commenced under the County Habitat Mapping Programme and is an action of the County Heritage Plan and County Biodiversity Plan.

During the lifetime of this Development Plan, Sligo County Council will continue to identify – for protection – landscape features of major importance for wild flora and fauna as per Article 10 of the EU Habitats Directive and County Biodiversity Sites.

Nature conservation outside designated sites - policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-NH-6** Minimise the impact of new development on habitats of natural value that are key features of the County's ecological network. Developments likely to have an adverse effect on recognised sites of local nature conservation importance will be required to demonstrate the impacts on the ecological value of the site and will not be approved unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there are reasons for the development that outweigh the need to safeguard the nature conservation value of the site.
- P-NH-7** Ensure that development proposals, where relevant, improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and encourage the management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild fauna and flora as per Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.
- P-NH-8** Ensure that proposals for development protect and enhance biodiversity, wherever possible, by minimising adverse impacts on existing habitats and by including mitigation and/or compensation measures, as appropriate, which ensure that biodiversity is enhanced.
- P-NH-9** Apply the *precautionary* principle in relation to development proposals with potential to impact on County Biodiversity Sites or on local nature conservation interest by requiring an ecological impact assessment to ensure that any proposed development will not affect the integrity and conservation value of the site.
- P-NH-10** Ensure that no ecological networks, or parts thereof which provide significant connectivity between areas of local biodiversity, are lost without remediation as a result of implementation of this Plan.

Nature conservation outside designated sites - objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-NH-8** Continue the County Habitat Mapping project, thereby generating the necessary information to identify landscape features that are of major importance for wild fauna, flora and County Biodiversity Sites, as key features of the county's ecological network which will enable planning for future development in a sensitive manner while protecting sites of high nature conservation value.
- O-NH-9** Identify and protect, in co-operation with the relevant statutory agencies and other relevant groups, County Biodiversity Sites which are not otherwise protected by legislation.
- O-NH-10** Ensure that the findings of Habitat Mapping project (when completed) are utilised to inform the development management process.
- O-NH-11** Endeavour, where considered necessary, to improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 Network, by encouraging the preservation and management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora as referred to in Article 10 of the Habitats Directive. These features include those which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure (such as rivers with their banks or the traditional systems for marking field boundaries) or their function as stepping stones (such as ponds or small woods), are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.
- O-NH-12** Integrate biodiversity considerations into Local Authority plans, programmes and activities where appropriate.
- O-NH-13** Provide guidance for developers and the general public in relation to nature conservation outside designated sites and the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and geological heritage in general.

7.1.4 Woodlands, trees and hedgerows

Woodlands, trees and hedgerows within County Sligo contribute significantly to biodiversity and landscape character. There are a number of woodland habitats such as oak woodland, wet woodland and scrub throughout the county.

Trees make a positive contribution to the county's landscape and townscapes. In addition they provide wildlife habitats, soften hard urban edges and provide scale and backdrops to streets and buildings. They also filter out noise, dust and pollutants and prevent flooding by retaining moisture.

Hedgerows constitute an important natural and historic resource, given their contribution to landscape quality, their ecological importance as wildlife habitats and historical significance as townland and field boundaries. While the relative importance of hedgerows is difficult to assess without a detailed survey, in general, the following categories are worthy of protection:

- ancient hedgerows - field systems dating prior to the mid-17th Century;
- townland boundaries;
- hedgerows that have a farming, landscape, cultural function;
- hedgerows incorporating archaeological features;
- hedgerows that are important as wildlife corridors between habitats;
- hedgerows adjacent to roads, green lanes, tracks and wooded ground;
- banks and ditches that may have the above characteristics.

Woodlands, trees and hedgerows policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-NH-11** Protect trees and hedgerows from development that would impact adversely upon them, and promote the enhancement of existing hedgerows by seeking increased coverage, in conjunction with new development.
- P-NH-12** Protect woodlands and hedgerows from damage and/or degradation and work to prevent the disruption of the connectivity of the woodlands and hedgerows of the county.
- P-NH-13** Protect and manage existing woodlands, trees and hedgerows which are of amenity or biodiversity value and/or contribute to landscape character, and ensure that proper provision is made for their protection and management when undertaking, approving or authorising development.
- P-NH-14** Ensure that, when undertaking, approving or authorising development, sufficient information is provided to enable an assessment of impacts on woodlands, trees and hedgerows.
- P-NH-15** Encourage development proposals that enhance the landscape through positive management and additional planting/sensitive replanting of native tree species.
- P-NH-16** Ensure, where required, that applications for development include proposals for planting and/or leave a suitable ecological buffer zone between the development works and areas/features of ecological importance.
- P-NH-17** Recognise the biodiversity and archaeological importance of townland boundaries, including hedgerows, and promote their protection and retention.
- P-NH-18** Encourage the development of proposals for new woodlands utilising funding available through schemes such as the NeighbourWood and Native Woodland Schemes.

Woodlands, trees and hedgerows objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-NH-14** Undertake a study to document and map significant mature trees within the County area within the lifetime of the plan.
- O-NH-15** Make Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) as required in order to ensure the protection of important trees in urban and rural areas that contribute to public amenity, particularly indigenous trees and trees under threat.
- O-NH-16** Preserve and conserve trees or groups of trees identified in the Tree Preservation Order (TPO) at Mullaghmore.

7.1.5 Inland waters – lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and groundwater

The rivers and streams, lakes, wetlands and groundwater occurring within the Plan area are home to a variety of habitats and species. Lough Gill, Lough Arrow, Lough Talt, the lakes Gara, Easky and Templehouse, together with the rivers Owenmore, Unshin, Moy and Easky, are the main water bodies in County Sligo. The banks of rivers and streams (riparian zones) are particularly important, as they contain a range of habitats and species which are different from the surrounding landscape. Riparian zones function as ecological corridors and “stepping stones” that enable species to move from place to place.

Wetlands associated with rivers and streams, such as wet grasslands and marshes, are important for biodiversity but have other benefits as well. They reduce the flow of pollutants to both surface water and groundwater and ease the impacts of flooding by retaining floodwaters and releasing them slowly back into our waterways. Rivers and streams also provide recreational benefits for local communities. Groundwater is important for supplying water and maintaining wetlands and river flows in dry periods.

Rivers and streams should be maintained in an open, semi-natural condition, wherever possible. Their corridors and valleys should be protected and maintained for their biodiversity, landscape and flood protection value. This should be achieved by strictly controlling development in river/stream corridors and valleys and by implementing sustainable drainage systems for commercial and residential developments. Groundwater resources should be protected and managed in a sustainable manner.



Lough Talt

Riparian zones

Riparian zones are particularly vulnerable to damage from inappropriate development. While this Plan does not prohibit development in a riparian zone, developments taking place in such zones must ensure the protection of these vulnerable areas. A key requirement of an integrated watercourse protection strategy is the set-aside of sufficient land along the river margin or corridor:

- for larger river channels (over 10 m), the recommended width of the core riparian zone (CRZ) is 35-60 m (18-30 m on each side of the river) and may be larger where flood plains adjoin the riparian zone;
- for smaller channels (under 10 m), a core riparian zone (CRZ) of 20 m or greater (minimum 10 m on each side of the river) is recommended. The determined width should be tailored to the specific site, river reach or lakeshore characteristics and their associated habitats.
- for salmonid rivers, the core riparian zone should be a minimum of 25 m on each side of the river.

It is important that the buffer zone is large enough to protect the ecological integrity of the river (including emergent vegetation) and the riparian zone (bankside vegetation including trees), taking into account the historical use of the area. In identifying the Core Riparian Zone along a watercourse, regard will be had to the following criteria:

- provision of bed and bank stability;
- protection of water quality;
- maintenance of viability of riparian vegetation;
- provision of continuity and connectivity along the riparian zone;
- integration with floodplain processes;
- management of edge effects at riparian/urban interface;
- protection of natural values within channels.

Inland waters policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| P-NH-19 | Protect rivers, streams and other water courses and their associated Core Riparian Zones (CRZs) wherever possible and maintain them in an open state, capable of providing suitable habitats for fauna and flora. |
| P-NH-20 | Protect and enhance the natural heritage and landscape character of river and stream corridors and valleys, maintain them free from inappropriate development and make provision for public access where feasible and appropriate. |
| P-NH-21 | Protect and enhance biodiversity richness by protecting rivers, stream corridors and valleys by reserving land along their banks for ecological corridors, maintaining them free from inappropriate development and discouraging culverting or realignment. |
| P-NH-22 | Ensure that all proposed greenfield residential and commercial developments use sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) in accordance with best current practice, ensuring protection of the integrity of wetland sites in the adjoining area, including their hydrological regime. |
| P-NH-23 | Ensure that floodplains and wetlands within the Plan area are retained for their biodiversity and flood protection value. |
| P-NH-24 | Ensure that proposed developments do not adversely affect groundwater resources and groundwater-dependent habitats and species. |
| P-NH-25 | Work with landowners, local communities and other relevant groups to protect and manage inland waters, river corridors and their floodplains from degradation and damage, and to recognise and promote them as natural assets of the urban/rural environment. |
| P-NH-26 | Have regard to the County Sligo Wetlands Surveys 2008 and 2009 and subsequent wetland surveys that may be published during the lifetime of this Plan. |

Inland waters objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-NH-17** Consult with prescribed bodies prior to undertaking, approving or authorising any works or development that may impact on rivers, streams and watercourses.
- O-NH-18** Require that runoff from a developed area does not result in deterioration of downstream watercourses or habitats, and that pollution generated by a development is treated within the development area prior to discharge to local watercourses.
- O-NH-19** Ensure that an appropriate ecological assessment is undertaken for developments with the potential to impact on inland waters.

7.1.6 Protected species

County Sligo hosts many native wild plant and animal species, some of which are unique and special to the county. Certain species are rare or vulnerable and are protected by law, as they require special measures to ensure their continued survival. At national level, the Flora (Protection) Order (1999), or other such orders, list legally protected plant species. The Wildlife Act 1976 and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 list protected animal species.

The Habitats Directive contains Annexes for plant and animal species (other than birds) identified to be of conservation concern and for which conservation measures and regulations apply.

The Birds Directive contains a number of Annexes which list bird species for which varying conservation measures and regulations apply. This protection applies wherever the bird species are found and is not confined to sites designated for nature conservation. This is particularly important when assessing development proposals for lands outside of an SPA but which are used for roosting, feeding, nesting etc. by bird species for which the SPA is designated.

The Habitats Directive and the implementing Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 require that certain species listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive are strictly protected. These are as follows (species known to occur in Sligo are indicated thus *): all Bat Species*, Otter*, Whales and Dolphins*, Leatherback Turtle, Natterjack Toad, Kerry Slug, Killarney Fern*, Slender Naiad and Yellow Marsh Saxifrage.

These species are not restricted to designated nature conservation areas. Bats and otters may be found anywhere in the county, where conditions and habitats are suitable. Carrying out of any work that has the potential to disturb these species, and for which a derogation licence has not been granted by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, may constitute an offence. A list of all known protected plant and animal species known to occur in County Sligo along with the relevant legislation affording their protection is included in Appendix C of this Plan.

Protected species policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-NH-27** Protect plant species and their associated habitats listed in the Flora (Protection) Order 1999.
- P-NH-28** Protect species and their associated habitats that require strict protection under the Habitats Regulations (*S.I. No. 477/2011 - EC (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011*).
- P-NH-29** Protect animal and bird species and their associated habitats protected under the Wildlife Act 1976 and Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000.
- P-NH-30** Ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact, incapable of satisfactory mitigation, on plant, animal or bird species protected by law.

Protected species objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-NH-20** Consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (DoEHLG) and take account of any licensing requirements when undertaking, approving and authorising development which is likely to affect plant, animal or bird species protected by law.
- O-NH-21** Provide guidance to developers and others in relation to species protected by law and their protection and management in the context of development.
- O-NH-22** Undertake surveys, as appropriate, to establish the location of protected flora and fauna in the Plan area through the County Heritage Plan and the County Biodiversity Action Plan.

7.1.7 Invasive species

Invasive non-native plant and animal species are the second greatest threat to biodiversity worldwide, after habitat destruction. They can impact negatively on native species, can transform habitats and threaten whole ecosystems, causing serious problems to the environment and the economy.

There is potential for the spread of invasive species during excavation and construction works. To minimise the risk of accidental transfer of non-native species, it will be necessary to adhere to current best practice protocol for avoiding the spread or transfer of all invasive species and plants, in particular Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed and Zebra Mussel, all of which occur within the Plan area. Sligo County Council will strive to prevent their spread and to seek eradication where possible, as opportunities and resources allow.

Invasive species policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-NH-31** Prevent the spread of invasive species within the Plan area, including requiring landowners and developers to adhere to best practice guidance in relation to the control of invasive species.
- P-NH-32** Seek the control and/or eradication of invasive species, as appropriate, within the Plan area, as opportunities and resources allow. Targeted invasive species control should be informed by current distribution of species, degree of threat posed and resources available to control and/or eradicate them.
- P-NH-33** Promote public awareness and engagement with regard to invasive species through awareness campaigns and the provision of targeted information on the role of the general public in the control of invasive species.

Invasive species objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-NH-23** Undertake a study through the County Heritage Plan and County Biodiversity Plan to quantify the extent of invasive species within the Plan area, with recommendations of priority species for control and /or eradication, the degree of threat posed and the resources required for effective management.

7.1.8 Geological heritage sites

To date, sites of geological interest have not been comprehensively covered by the existing nature conservation designations. The DoEHLG and the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) are currently drawing up of a list of sites of national geological interest that will be proposed as NHAs as part of the Irish Geological Heritage Programme (IGHP). In the interim, Sligo County Council has listed in this Plan the geological features of national and county importance occurring in the County with the objective of maintaining their conservation value. The list has been produced in consultation with the GSI and is included in Appendix D of this Plan.



The Glen, Coolera Peninsula

Sites of geological interest - objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-NH-24** Protect and maintain the character, integrity and conservation value of those features or areas of geological interest that are listed in this Plan or that may be proposed by the DoEHLG and/or the GSI in the lifetime of this Plan.

7.2 Archaeological heritage

7.2.1 The archaeological resource

Archaeology is an irreplaceable link with our past and is to be found in every townland in County Sligo. Sligo's archaeological heritage, through its monuments, artefacts and environmental evidence, provides knowledge and a critical resource for the study of our historic or prehistoric peoples and their cultures. Only a portion of the material remains of the past has survived, as many sites have disappeared from the landscape. Of those that do survive, some are visible in the landscape while others only survive beneath the current ground surface or have been remodeled within more modern buildings.

County Sligo, with over 6,500 known archaeological sites and monuments, has one of the highest densities of archaeology of any Irish county. Sligo's archaeology varies greatly in form, date and condition. Ranging from the Mesolithic Period (7000 BC) to the end of the Medieval Period (1700 AD), the archaeological record includes megalithic sites, fulachta Fiadh, Early Christian ecclesiastical sites, churches and graveyards, medieval buildings, castles, industrial archaeology and underwater sites such as wrecks. Sligo has a number of significant archaeological and historical landscapes, the most notable being the Cuil Irra Peninsula (which includes Knocknarea, Carrowmore and Carns Hill), Carrowkeel and Inishmurray.

The archaeological heritage is a resource that can be used to gain knowledge and understanding of the past and is, therefore, of great cultural and scientific importance. Sligo County Council recognises the importance of preserving and protecting this resource, while fostering a greater public appreciation of the archaeological heritage within the Plan area.

7.2.2 Policy and legislation

The principles set out in the DoEHLG publication *Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* (1999) provide the national policy framework in relation to archaeological heritage.

The National Monuments Act 1930 and its amendments of 1954, 1987, 1994 and 2004 provide for the protection of the archaeological heritage. Archaeological heritage includes all types of archaeological remains including monuments, ship-wrecks and archaeological objects.

Under the Act there are different levels of monument protection. A level of universal protection is afforded to all monuments listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP). The RMP was established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994; all entries on the list are known as recorded monuments and are shown on an accompanying set of maps.

While all known monuments are included on the RMP, a lesser number are accorded a higher level of protection. Some are entered on the Register of Historic Monuments established under Section 5 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1987. The highest level of protection is accorded to National Monuments, i.e. monuments deemed to be of national significance (see Appendix F of this Plan).

7.2.3 Development proposals affecting archaeology

Various types of development can impact on the visual appreciation, setting and amenity of recorded monuments. Such impacts should be adequately assessed and, where possible, negated or minimised. Previously unidentified archaeological sites may be uncovered during development works, while archaeological deposits that would be damaged by development must be investigated and recorded in great detail.

Any proposed development (due to its location, size or nature) with the potential to affect the archaeological heritage resource will be subject to an Archaeological Impact Assessment. This includes proposals close to archaeological monuments, proposals extensive in area (half a hectare or more) or length (1km or more), and development that requires an Environmental Impact Assessment. Other areas of high archaeological potential may exist outside the boundaries of conventionally recognised monuments, especially in wetlands, former wetlands and in the inter-tidal zone.

The Council will have regard to the recommendations of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government when considering proposals with potential to affect the archaeological heritage. The Planning Authority recommends that potential developers consult as early as possible with the relevant agencies, such as the National Monuments Service of the DoEHLG and the Planning Section of Sligo County Council, in order to ensure that archaeological concerns can be integrated into development proposals at as early a stage as possible.

7.2.4 Industrial archaeology

In 2005, an *Industrial Archaeology Survey of County Sligo* was commissioned by Sligo County Council on behalf of the County Sligo Heritage Forum, as an action of the County Sligo Heritage Plan. The project collated all paper-based information relating to industrial heritage sites in the County. The project outputs were a report outlining approximately 1200 industrial heritage sites in the county, an accompanying database and a digital map of the recorded locations. When considering development proposals that may affect sites identified in the Sligo Industrial Archaeology Survey (2005), the Council will require an Industrial Archaeology Assessment.

7.2.5 Conservation plans

Conservation plans were commissioned for Carrowkeel (2005) and Inishmurray (2007) by Sligo County Council on behalf of the County Sligo Heritage Forum, as an action of the County Sligo Heritage Plan. The purpose of any conservation plan is to describe the significance of a site, assess the issues that make the site vulnerable and put in place policies to address those issues. The Council will seek the adoption and implementation of the Conservation Plans for Carrowkeel and Inishmurray in association with the landowners and relevant stakeholders, within the lifetime of this Plan. Sligo County Council recognises the significance of these unique and internationally important sites and associated landscapes, and is fully committed to ensuring that they are protected and preserved *in situ*.

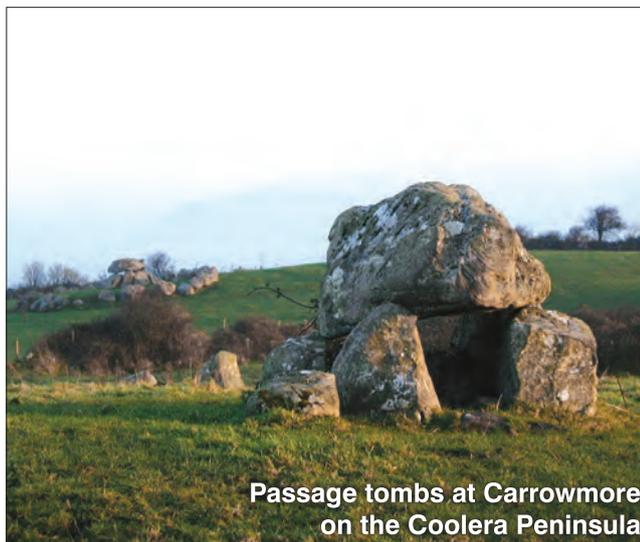
7.2.6 The Cuil Irra Peninsula – Carrowmore, Knocknarea and Carns Hill

The cluster of megalithic tombs at Carrowmore represents one of the four major passage tomb cemeteries in Ireland and is the largest such cemetery in the country. Others include Carrowkeel, also in County Sligo, as well as Newgrange and Lough Crew in County Meath. The archaeological landscape of the Cuil Irra (Knocknarea) peninsula dates from around 4,000 BC or earlier, as suggested from excavations. The site formed an important ritual centre in the Neolithic period and the known archaeological monuments present are mostly laid out on an east-west axis.

Providing a focus at the centre of the peninsula is the megalithic cemetery at Carrowmore, comprising an oval-shaped cluster of 30 monuments surrounding the centrally

placed cairn of “Listoghil” (Tomb 51). To the west of the peninsula, overlooking Carrowmore megalithic cemetery from the summit of Knocknarea Mountain, is the iconic flat-topped cairn known as Miosgán Meadhbha (Maeve’s Cairn). To the east of Cuil Irra, also overlooking Carrowmore, are two large cairns on the summit of Carns Hill. The cairns are comparable in size to Maeve’s Cairn on the summit of Knocknarea.

Sligo County Council recognises the significance of the unique and internationally-important archaeological landscape of the Cuil Irra Peninsula and is fully committed to ensuring that this special archaeological landscape is protected and preserved *in situ*.



**Passage tombs at Carrowmore
on the Coolera Peninsula**

Sligo County Council will seek to put in place a development management strategy for the Cuil Irra Peninsula to include Knocknarea, Carrowmore and Carns Hill, and will work with the relevant agencies to achieve this objective within the timeframe of this Plan. In this regard, the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government has appointed a steering group to oversee the preparation of a Conservation Study of Archaeological Features at Knocknarea, Carrowmore and Carns Hill, Sligo.

Archaeological heritage policies (I)

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-AH-1** Protect and enhance archaeological sites, monuments, their setting, appreciation and amenity within the Plan area, including those that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) or newly discovered archaeological sites and/or sub-surface archaeological remains.
- P-AH-2** Require archaeological assessment, surveys, test excavation and/or monitoring for planning applications in areas of archaeological importance, if a development proposal is likely to impact upon in-situ archaeological monuments, their setting and archaeological deposits.
- P-AH-3** Ensure that full consideration is given to the protection of archaeological heritage when undertaking, approving or authorising development in order to avoid unnecessary conflict between development and the protection of the archaeological heritage.
- P-AH-4** Secure the preservation in-situ or by record of:
 - the archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places as established under section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994;
 - any sites and features of historical and archaeological interest;
 - any subsurface archaeological features that may be discovered during the course of infrastructural/development works in the operational area of the Plan.

Preservation relates to archaeological sites or objects and their settings. Preservation in-situ is most effectively achieved by the refurbishment of existing buildings, in situations where it is possible to retain the greater part of existing structures without the need for new foundations.
- P-AH-5** Ensure that development within the vicinity of a Recorded Monument does not detract from the setting of the feature and is sited and designed appropriately.
- P-AH-6** Protect historic burial grounds that are recorded monuments and encourage their maintenance in accordance with conservation principles. Development may be restricted or conditions requiring substantial excavation may be imposed in and adjacent to former burial grounds.
- P-AH-7** Encourage and promote the appropriate management and enhancement of the archaeological heritage within the Plan area.
- P-AH-8** Facilitate and enhance public access to and understanding of the archaeological heritage and disseminate information and advice on the archaeological heritage to prospective developers and the general public.
- P-AH-9** Require that all development proposals for industrial buildings and sites of industrial archaeological importance be accompanied by an industrial archaeology assessment of the surrounding environment. New development should be designed in sympathy with existing features and structures.
- P-AH-10** Ensure, through the application of appropriate design standards and criteria, that land uses do not give rise to significant losses of the integrity, quality or context of archaeological material except as may be conditioned or directed by the appropriate heritage agencies.

[continues on the next page]

Archaeological heritage policies (II)

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-AH-11** Have regard to the policy recommendations and guidelines established in the Conservation Plans for Carrowkeel and Inishmurray, commissioned by Sligo County Council.
- P-AH-12** Have regard to the recommendations and guidelines which will be established in the document *A Conservation Study of the Passage Tomb Group and Associated Archaeological Features and Other Monuments of Knocknarea, Carrowmore and Cairns Hill, Co. Sligo*, commissioned by the DoEHLG in partnership with relevant stakeholders. .

Archaeological heritage objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

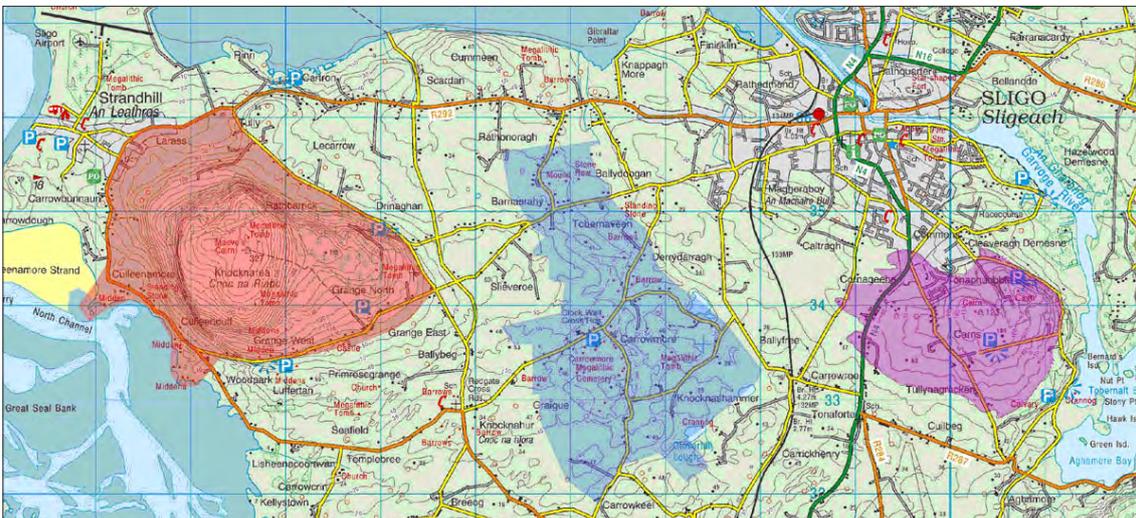
- O-AH-1** Require an Archaeological Impact Assessment when considering development proposals with a potential to affect archaeological heritage, and have regard to the advice and recommendations of the prescribed bodies as defined in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in relation to undertaking, approving or authorising development.
- O-AH-2** Refer to the above-mentioned prescribed bodies all proposals for linear development over one kilometre in length, proposals for development involving ground clearance of a half hectare or more and proposals for development affecting present or former wetlands, unenclosed land, rivers or estuaries.
- O-AH-3** Require the preservation of the context amenity and visual integrity and connection of archaeological monuments to their setting. Views to and from archaeological monuments should not be obscured by inappropriate development. Archaeological visual impact assessments should be undertaken to demonstrate the continued preservation of an archaeological monument's siting and context.
- O-AH-4** Ensure that a suitably qualified archaeologist carries out all archaeological works required when permission is granted for development that requires mitigation of impacts on the archaeological heritage.
- O-AH-5** Encourage the incorporation of, or the reference to significant archaeological finds into development schemes, where feasible. Archaeological monuments should not form part of green space or car parking allocations in proposed developments.
- O-AH-6** Identify and protect internationally important archaeological landscapes such as the Carrowkeel, Inishmurray and the Cuil Irra Peninsula (which includes the core areas of Knocknarea, Carrowmore and Carns Hill), in co-operation with landowners and relevant stakeholders and statutory agencies.
- O-AH-7** Identify appropriate archaeological sites in the Plan area to which public access could be provided and work to secure public access, where appropriate, in consultation with the land owners.
- O-AH-8** Protect and preserve archaeological sites discovered since the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places (1995).
- O-AH-9** Protect and preserve the archaeological value of underwater archaeological sites. In assessing proposals for development, the Council will take account of river, lake, inter-tidal and sub-tidal environments.
- O-AH-10** Protect and preserve the archaeological value of industrial heritage sites as identified in the Industrial Archaeology Survey of County Sligo (2005). Proposals for refurbishment, works to or redevelopment/conversion of these sites will be subject to a full architectural and archaeological assessment.

Objectives for the Cuil Irra Peninsula – Carrowmore, Knocknarea and Carns Hill

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-CIP-1** Have regard to the recommendations and guidelines which will be established in the document *A Conservation Study of the Passage Tomb Group and Associated Archaeological Features and Other Monuments of Knocknarea, Carrowmore and Carns Hill, Co. Sligo*, commissioned by the DoEHLG in partnership with relevant stakeholders.
- O-CIP-2** Protect groups of important National Monuments in the Cuil Irra Peninsula, inclusive of their contextual setting and interpretation, through careful management of development in the area.
- O-CIP-3** Protect the vulnerable archaeological and cultural landscape and protect views within and adjacent to Carrowmore Megalithic Cemetery, Knocknarea and Carns Hill.
- O-CIP-4** Protect the context, amenity and integrity of the archaeological heritage and landscape at Carns Hill, including the direct intervisibility between the core areas of the Cuil Irra Peninsula (Knocknarea, Carrowmore and Carns Hill) and other relevant locations within the wider Cuil Irra passage tombs complex.
- O-CIP-5** Establish a co-ordinated signage programme (directional and information signage) for Carrowmore Megalithic Cemetery, Knocknarea and Carns Hill with the relevant agencies including the OPW and NMS, DoEHLG.
- O-CIP-6** Refer to the National Monuments Section DoEHLG all development proposals within the archaeological and historic landscape of the Cuil Irra Peninsula (which includes the core areas of Knocknarea, Carrowmore and Carns Hill) as identified in fig. 7.A below.
- O-CIP-7** Ensure that Archaeological Impact Assessments are requested at pre-planning and planning application stage for all development proposals within the archaeological and historic landscape of the Cuil Irra Peninsula (which includes the core areas of Knocknarea, Carrowmore and Carns Hill).
- O-CIP-8** Put in place a development management strategy for the protection of the archaeological landscape of the Cuil Irra Peninsula, to include Knocknarea, Carrowmore and Carns Hill, in partnership with landowners, the relevant agencies and stakeholders.

Fig. 7.C Archaeological and historic landscape of the Cuil Irra Peninsula



7.3 Architectural heritage



Lisadell House, Lissadill, Carney

County Sligo hosts a rich heritage of buildings and structures. It is an objective of this Plan to seek the protection and conservation of buildings and structures of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social and technical importance.

The principal mechanism for protection of these buildings and structures is through their inclusion on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). This provides positive recognition of the structures' importance, protection from adverse impacts and potential access to grant aid for conservation works.

There are currently 400 structures included in the Record of Protected Structures for County Sligo. As the review of the Record of Protected Structures is an ongoing process, these figures may change during the lifetime of this Plan.

7.3.1 The Record of Protected Structures (RPS)

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (Part II, Section 10(2)(f) and (g)) places a statutory obligation on local authorities to include in their development plans objectives for the protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historic, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. These buildings and structures are listed in a register known as the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). In preparing the RPS for the County Sligo, the Planning Authority had regard to:

- the Architectural Inventory for County Sligo, prepared by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) of the DoEHLG, and associated Ministerial recommendations; (see www.buildingsofireland.ie)
- the *Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoEHLG 2004).

A Protected Structure, unless otherwise stated in the RPS, includes the interior of the structure, the land lying within its curtilage, any other structures and their interiors lying within that curtilage, plus all of the fixtures and features that form part of the interior or exterior of any of these structures.

The owner or occupier of a Protected Structure is entitled to ask the Council for a written declaration (under Section 57 of the Planning and Development Act 2000) indicating the type of works that would or would not materially affect the character of that structure or any element of it that contributes to its special interest.

Declarations provide guidance as to what works would or would not require planning permission in the context of the protection of the architectural heritage.

County Sligo has buildings of different character, quality, age and style, which contribute significantly to the county's attractive streetscapes. The buildings and structures identified in the RPS are irreplaceable records of the past and therefore require protection. Their presence enhances the character of the county and adds to local distinctiveness.

It is recognised that in order to prolong the life of a protected structure, it may be necessary for such a building to accommodate change or new uses. The effect of the Protected Structure status is to ensure that any changes or alterations to the character of the building are carried out in such a way that the existing special character is retained and enhanced.

With a view to encouraging the restoration of protected structures, the Council will not seek development contributions provided for under Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, which might normally apply to the development, if the proposal involves restoration/refurbishment to a high architectural standard.

The RPS may be amended between reviews of the Development Plan and the Council can add to or delete from the RPS at any time by following the procedures outlined in Section 55 of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

An up-to-date RPS, incorporating any additions or deletions within the lifetime of the current Development Plan, will be maintained on Sligo County Council's website and will also be made available for inspection at the public counter of the Planning Section at Sligo County Council's offices.

7.3.2 Protection of non-habitable structures

Non-habitable structures, such as historic gardens, stone walls and street furniture, make a significant contribution to our architectural heritage. A lack of awareness of their inherent and associative value can result in the loss of these structures and subsequent erosion of heritage assets.

Stone walls are an integral part of our rural/demesne landscape, often providing significant historic reference and contributing to the character of areas. They can be vulnerable to needless damage or destruction during development, as well as inappropriate and poor reconstruction.

There are a number of significant historic garden/estate landscapes in County Sligo. It is essential that appropriate appraisal and surveying informs the consideration of development proposals for these sensitive sites.



Estate landscape, Markree Demesne



Stone walling

Non-habitable structures make a significant contribution to our built heritage

7.3.3 Architectural Conservation Areas

In some towns and villages there are significant groups of heritage structures that require protection and conservation. In the countryside there are also concentrations of particular building types or buildings related to a certain period of history. The need to protect these buildings and the character of their settings is acknowledged in this Plan. It is therefore intended, where appropriate, to establish Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs), in conjunction with the preparation of Local Area Plans and other statutory land use plans.

The main consequence of ACA designation is the control of inappropriate development for the purpose of preserving and enhancing the character of the area concerned. The designation of ACAs will give protection to parts of the built heritage that may not warrant inclusion in the RPS, but without which, areas would be characterless.

7.3.4 Town and village streetscapes

Sligo County Council acknowledges that many historic buildings in Sligo's towns and villages have been altered in recent years and not always in the most sympathetic manner. While individually, many buildings in Sligo's towns and villages may not warrant inclusion on the RPS, or even within an ACA, nonetheless it is the ensemble of many ordinary traditional building types, their plot patterns, their fenestration, materials, meandering building lines and subtle variations in building height that contribute to the inherent character of a particular settlement. These details should be considered very carefully before allowing the alteration or replacement of buildings to occur.



Collooney



Ballymote



Easky



Coolaney

Concentrations of traditional building types contribute to the character of settlements

7.3.5 Enabling development

Enabling development is development that would be unacceptable in planning terms (e.g. inconsistent with zoning objectives for an area) but for the fact that it would bring significant public benefits in the form of securing the long-term future of a protected structure.

Enabling development will be considered in circumstances where:

- it secures the restoration of a protected structure, currently in poor condition, to best-practice conservation standards for any purpose compatible with the character of the structure or its constituent features, including the setting of the protected structure;
- it is demonstrated that the extent of enabling development is the minimum necessary to secure the future of the protected structure;
- the public benefit associated with securing the future of the protected structure decisively outweighs the drawbacks of breaching other planning objectives;
- it involves the conversion of a protected structure to a use compatible with the character of the building;
- it avoids detrimental fragmentation of the heritage asset.

Architectural heritage policies (I)

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-BH-1** Preserve, protect and enhance the architectural heritage of County Sligo for future generations. The area's architectural heritage is of national and regional importance and is central to Sligo's ability to promote itself as a centre for cultural tourism.
- P-BH-2** Secure the protection of buildings and structures or features of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest identified on the Record of Protected Structures.
- P-BH-3** Generally encourage the re-use of older buildings through renovation and rehabilitation, in preference to their demolition or reconstruction.
- P-BH-4** Have regard to the 2004 *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines* and subsequent guidance issued by the DoEHLG when assessing proposals for development affecting a protected structure.
- P-BH-5** Exempt a development proposal from the normal requirement for the payment of a development contribution if the proposal involves restoration/refurbishment of a protected structure to a high architectural standard.
- P-BH-6** Ensure that any development, modifications, alterations, or extensions affecting a protected structure, adjoining structure or structure within an ACA is sited and designed appropriately and is not detrimental to the character of the structure, to its setting or the general character of the ACA.
- P-BH-7** Promote the principles of contextual compatibility for all new buildings within the historic built environment and promote carefully-designed architectural solutions that are modern and innovative, except in or adjoining an ACA or a protected structure, where, in the opinion of the planning authority, redevelopment in the traditional or historicist manner may be more appropriate.
- P-BH-8** Ensure that any new development activity acknowledges the traditional frame for development - in particular, buildings will be required to maintain historical building lines. There will be a presumption against new buildings stepping back from established building lines, except for key public buildings, or where a new building might interfere with the setting of a protected structure or an ACA. [continues on the next page]

Architectural heritage policies (II)

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-BH-9** Maintain the traditional plot width along the perimeter of blocks within historic streetscapes, particularly where the building façade is manifested on the streetscape. Under some circumstances, a new building with a broader plot width might be permitted, but the façade will be required to include some form or articulation that emulates or fits in with the traditional streetscape character.
- P-BH-10** Facilitate and permit plot amalgamation and land assembly in the centre of blocks (backlands of plots) so as to promote commercial viability while ensuring that there is a balance between the scale of the development proposals, in terms of height, mass and bulk, so as not to dwarf the traditional perimeter buildings of the block.
- P-BH-11** Generally maintain a continuous building line along streetscapes - this assists in maintaining the character of an area and can screen car parks, loading bays and service yards within blocks.
- P-BH-12** For new or replacement buildings, encourage the retention of subtle variations in building lines, building heights and plot widths, which are a trademark of the traditional Irish streetscape.
- P-BH-13** Generally, only consider applications for change of use where the level of physical intervention required to make the building suitable for its new use does not damage or alter the character of the structure that makes it of special interest.
- P-BH-14** Protect important non-habitable structures such as historic bridges, harbours, railways, roadside features (e.g. historic milestones, cast-iron pumps and post-boxes), street furniture, historic gardens, stone walls, landscapes, demesnes and curtilage features, in cases where these are not already included in the Record of Protected Structures.
- P-BH-15** Support the visual attractiveness of the county by encouraging owners of derelict sites/buildings to develop and improve them in an appropriate manner and pursue, where necessary, owners of buildings and sites under the Derelict Sites Act 1990.
- P-BH-16** Facilitate enabling development to be carried out in conjunction with works to protected structures where consistent with the parameters outlined in subsection 7.3.5 Enabling Development.
- P-BH-17** Continue to develop the Council's advisory/educational role with regard to heritage matters and to promote awareness and understanding of the architectural heritage.
- P-BH-18** Encourage the retention of original windows, doors, renders, roof coverings, chimneys, rainwater goods and other significant features of structures of architectural heritage merit, whether protected or not.
- P-BH-19** Encourage the restoration or appropriate replacement of original doors, sash/casement timber windows and slate roofs over their replacement with modern materials (such as PVC windows and doors) or designs that may be insensitive in their detailing or relief to traditional façades and roofs.
- P-BH-20** Ensure that modern design solutions have regard for the traditional context and streetscape elements and utilise some of the traditional architectural idioms in their composition, form and/or design.

7.4 Protecting landscape character



7.4.1 Regulatory context

Planning and Development Act 2000

Under the Planning and Development Act, 2000, planning authorities have considerable duties and powers in relation to the landscape. They have a duty to include in the development plan objectives for the preservation of the character of the landscape; they have powers to designate areas of special amenity, within which development may be prevented or limited, and landscape conservation areas, within which exempted development may be brought within planning control.

The Landscape and Landscape Assessment Guidelines (2000)

Landscape and Landscape Assessment Guidelines (2000) have been published by the Department of Environment and Local Government (DoELG). The Guidelines are intended to assist planning authorities in understanding their obligations in respect of landscape issues when preparing development plans. The Guidelines stress the need for a proactive view of how development and change can be accommodated in the landscape and also highlight the need to assess all landscapes instead of focusing on 'special' ones.

Section 1.2 of the guidelines states: "It is Government policy that, in deciding for or against development, the appropriateness of that development within the given landscape context be considered". The guidelines seek to heighten awareness of the importance of landscape issues in all aspects of physical planning; provide guidance to planners and others to show how landscape considerations should be dealt with; and indicate specific requirements for development plans and for development management.

The European Landscape Convention (ELC) (2000)

The most significant policy development regarding landscape character and its assessment and protection has been the adoption of the European Landscape Convention in 2000 (ratified by Ireland in 2002). The Convention potentially requires that signatories must first recognise landscapes in law and establish policies aimed at their protection, management and planning. The Convention defines "landscape" as an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. The definition applies to all landscapes - rural, urban, peri-urban or degraded - and to all scales of landscape.

By giving this recognition and protection to all landscapes, the Convention formally acknowledges that it is no longer feasible to recognise and protect landscapes solely through a 'special areas' approach. The Convention is intended to 'democratise' landscape by extending to the entire population the right to benefit from good quality landscapes and to influence future landscape change. The way in which these requirements are met is left to the discretion of national governments, and it is generally envisaged that many of the requirements of the Convention can be met under existing legislation and policies, if sensitively applied to give due recognition and weight to landscape issues.

7.4.2 Landscape Character Assessment

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is a process that describes, maps and classifies landscapes objectively. Defining landscape character enables an understanding to be formed of the inherent value and importance of individual landscape elements and the processes that may alter landscape character in the future.

The cultural and ecological aspects of the landscape cannot be divorced from its physical and visual characteristics, so all of these elements are considered. In preparing an LCA, the county's rich natural and built heritage, as outlined in the preceding sections, have a significant bearing.

The purpose of an LCA is to assist the Council in the formulation and implementation of its policies, informing the council, in particular where it is to:

- promote the understanding of Sligo's landscape in terms of its unique character and recognise what elements should be preserved, conserved or enhanced;
- predict the broad pattern of future changes and devise policies and objectives as guidance to planners and other parties which will ensure that change is favourable to landscape character; sensitivity and capacity of the landscape should be given due consideration in all aspects of decision-making;
- assist in the achievement of sustainable development, the underlying principle of all current planning practice and legislation, by promoting a unified approach to landscape planning and management which links policies and recommendations for landscape character to existing planning policies.

7.4.3 Current knowledge and policy

The county's landscape is not homogeneous and neither are the pressures on it. It is inevitable that different parts of the county will be subject to different development pressures and will exhibit differing abilities to absorb and accommodate such development pressure.

A landscape characterisation and appraisal study was commissioned by Sligo County Council and completed by CAAS Environmental Consultants in 1996. This resulted in a map that was the basis for the Development Control Policy Map, which formed part of the Sligo County Development Plan 1999-2004 and the subsequent Sligo County Development Plan 2005-2011.

The Map classifies the County according to its visual sensitivity and ability to absorb new development without compromising the scenic character of the area. It indicates, inter alia, designated:

- **Normal Rural Landscapes:** areas with natural enclosing features (e.g. topography, vegetation), which have the capacity to absorb a wide range of new development forms – these are the main farming areas of the County.
- **Sensitive Rural Landscapes:** areas that tend to be open in character, with intrinsic scenic quality and a low capacity to absorb new development – e.g. Knocknarea, Aughris Head, Coney Island.
- **Visually Vulnerable Areas:** distinctive and conspicuous natural features of significant natural beauty or interest, which have extremely low capacity to absorb new development – examples are the Ben Bulbin plateau, the Sligo coastline, lakeshores.
- **Scenic Routes:** public roads that coincide generally with popular tourist routes passing through or close to Sensitive Rural Landscapes, or adjoining Visually Vulnerable Areas, and affording unique scenic views of one or more distinctive natural features.

The Map (see Fig. 7.D opposite, also available in A1 format) has proven robust in both facilitating development and conserving fragile landscapes. The designation of Scenic Routes provided a basis for protecting views and prospects of certain Visually Vulnerable features. Appendix G contains a list of the scenic views to be preserved.

7.4.4 Heritage landscapes

Areas which are of exceptional value and of international importance, such as the Cuil Irra Peninsula, Carrowkeel and Inishmurray, are highly sensitive to development and thus must be afforded particular protection. Over the life of this Plan, the Council will explore the preparation of a Local Area Plan and/or designation of Landscape Conservation Area(s), pursuant to Section 204 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000, in respect of the above heritage landscapes. The purpose of such plans and/or designations is to protect the rural character, setting, historic context and archaeological heritage of the landscape. In identifying and/or designating such areas, the Planning Authority will ensure that the scope and extent of such designation is sufficient to conserve the specific areas requiring protection.





View towards Sligo City from the eastern slope of Knocknarea

Landscape character assessment and protection policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-LCAP-1** Promote the understanding of Sligo's landscape in terms of its inherent and unique character, in order to recognise what elements should be preserved, conserved or enhanced.
- P-LCAP-2** Promote a unified approach to landscape planning and management, linking policies and objectives for the preservation of the county's unique landscape character to all relevant planning policies and objectives throughout the Plan.
- P-LCAP-3** Protect the physical landscape and visual character of the County.
- P-LCAP-4** Protect the historic and archaeological landscapes of the County.
- P-LCAP-5** Protect and enhance the visual qualities of rural areas through the sensitive design of necessary development.
- P-LCAP-6** Maintain a variety of settlement types as a critical part of landscape character in Sligo and preserve the essential characteristics of individual settlements within their settings by developing robust design guidance.
- P-LCAP-7** Have regard to potential environmental impacts of new infrastructure/industrial development, such as noise and air pollution impinging on views, tranquility and character, and the consequences that such development may have for the evolution of settlements.
- P-LCAP-8** Promote the development of tourism in a sustainable manner and encourage the provision of a comprehensive range of tourist facilities, subject to location, siting, design criteria and compliance with the Habitats Directive
- P-LCAP-9** Encourage the continued sustainable development of rural communities without compromising the physical, environmental, natural and heritage resources of the county.
- P-LCAP-10** Maintain a vibrant and healthy agricultural sector based on the principles of sustainable development whilst at the same time finding alternative employment in or close to rural areas to sustain rural communities.
- P-LCAP-11** Preserve the status of traditionally open/unfenced landscapes. Fencing in upland or amenity areas will not normally be permitted unless such fencing is essential to the viability of the farm and conforms to best agricultural practice. The nature of the material to be used, the height of the fence and, in the case of a wire fence, the type of wire to be used will be taken into account. Barbed-wire shall not be used for the top line of wire. Stiles or gates at appropriate places will be required.
- P-LCAP-12** Where possible, preserve the open character of commonage and other hill land and secure access thereto.

Landscape character assessment and protection objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-LCAP-1** Undertake a Landscape Character Assessment for County Sligo within the lifetime of this Plan, in accordance with the principles of the European Landscape Convention and best practice guidance.
- O-LCAP-2** Explore, within the lifetime of this Plan, the opportunity of preparing a Local Area Plan and/or designating of Landscape Conservation Area(s), pursuant to Section 204 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000, in respect of the following heritage landscapes: Cuil Irra Peninsula, Carrowkeel and Inishmurray.
- O-LCAP-3** Seek to preserve the landscape character of County Sligo by assessing all development proposals against the provisions of the Landscape Characterisation Map. Planning applications that have the potential to impact significantly and adversely upon landscape character or scenic views may be required to be accompanied by a visual impact assessment using agreed and appropriate viewing points and methods for the assessment.
- O-LCAP-4** Discourage any developments that would be detrimental to the unique visual character of designated Visually Vulnerable Areas.
- O-LCAP-5** Strictly control new development in designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes, while considering exceptions that can demonstrate a clear need to locate in the area concerned.
- O-LCAP-6** Ensure that any new development in designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes:
- does not impinge in any significant way on the character, integrity and distinctiveness of the area;
 - does not detract from the scenic value of the area;
 - meets high standards of siting and design;
 - satisfies all other criteria with regard to, inter alia, servicing, public safety and prevention of pollution.
- O-LCAP-7** Preserve the scenic views listed in Appendix G by controlling development along designated Scenic Routes and other roads, while facilitating developments that may be tied to a specific location or to the demonstrated needs of applicants to reside in a particular area. In all cases, strict location, siting and design criteria shall apply, as set out in Section 12.3 Residential Development Standards.
- O-LCAP-8** Liaise with adjoining planning authorities to ensure that development plan policies are consistent in the protection and management of landscape.

8. Transport and mobility



Development Plan policy aims to integrate transport and land use in order to provide a sustainable framework for economic and social development. The peripheral location of County Sligo requires a strong transportation network, in order to allow Sligo City to perform its important regional role, which is essential to the competitiveness and vitality of the county.

The designation of Sligo as a Gateway City in the National Spatial Strategy further emphasises the importance of strong and strategic links to urban centres in the Border Region, along the Atlantic Corridor, beyond regional and national boundaries. The Border Regional Planning Guidelines specifically support the development of a number of strategic routes, in order to ensure Sligo's success as a Gateway, including all national roads and rail links.

Sligo functions as the major transportation node in the North-West. The city is located at the end of the national primary road N4 connecting with Dublin, via Mullingar and Longford. Other primary and secondary roads link Sligo with Galway, Belfast, Letterkenny/Derry and other urban centres.

Sligo is served by a Regional Airport situated in Strandhill, five miles to the west of Sligo City. The airport runs a commuter service to Dublin and a seasonal international service to Manchester. The airport is important in facilitating access to the North-West for both tourist and business interests. Further international air transport services to the region are supported by Ireland West Airport at Knock, just 45 minutes away from Sligo.

In accordance with the vision for County Sligo, in addition to strengthening the County's strategic transport links, it is the aim of Sligo County Council to support the creation of a pedestrian-friendly and cyclist-friendly environment in the County's settlements, with a good provision of public transport, reduced congestion and attractive town and village centres which are not dominated by the car.

8.1 Sligo as a regional transportation node

Sligo is the largest transportation node in the North-West. Sligo City is connected to Dublin (via Carrick-on-Shannon) by the national primary road N4. Other national primary and secondary roads connect Sligo to Belfast (via Enniskillen), Derry and Letterkenny (via Donegal Town), Galway, Ballina and other urban centres.

The policy document *Transport 21* and the Roads Sub-Programme of the National Development Plan 2007-2013 outline the government's principal objectives which impact on Sligo:

Ongoing development of the Atlantic Road Corridor

The N17, N4 (Collooney to Sligo) and the N15 form part of the Atlantic Corridor, which loops from Waterford, via Cork, Limerick, Galway and Sligo, to Letterkenny. The upgrading of this route is identified as a specific project to be delivered under Transport 21.

Improvement of road links between the NSS Gateways

Links from Sligo to other NSS Gateways include the N17 to Galway and the N15 to Letterkenny (both forming part of the Atlantic Corridor outlined above), the N4 to Mullingar and the N16 which forms part of the west-east connection from Sligo to the Gateway of Dundalk.

Continued upgrading of road links to Northern Ireland

This measure relates to the N16, which is the major link from Sligo to Enniskillen and Belfast.

Provision of a West-East link connecting Sligo to Dundalk via Enniskillen and Cavan / Monaghan

The National Development Plan refers to the Sligo-Enniskillen-Dundalk route as a key strategic cross-border route. The National Spatial Strategy also indicates a road connection between Sligo and Dundalk, via Carrickmacross, Cavan and Enniskillen. The development of the N16 from Sligo to Enniskillen will form an integral part of this route.

Targeted improvements in key national secondary roads

The N59 from Sligo to Galway via Ballina, Westport and Clifden is specifically targeted under the NDP.

8.1.1 Provisions of the Regional Planning Guidelines

The Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 also identify a Strategic Radial Corridor and two Strategic Links that cross Sligo: the Western Radial Route (M4/N4), the Atlantic Corridor (N13/N15/N17) and the West/North Central Corridor (N16/A4).

The Western Radial Route (M4/N4), which connects Dublin to Sligo via the linked Gateway of Athlone/Tullamore/Mullingar, Longford and Carrick-on-Shannon, is the primary access route to the west of the Border Region.

The provision of a high-quality link between Sligo and Dublin is also identified as a specific project to be delivered under *Transport 21*, and although this route has seen significant investment in recent years in areas outside of the Border Region, the Collooney-Castlebaldwin section remains substandard and its improvement is listed as "in planning stage" at the time of writing (2010).

Mobility - strategic policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- SP-MOB-1** Integrate transportation planning and land-use planning in order to reduce the need to travel (especially by car), by promoting the consolidation of development in a network of settlements with existing services and facilities.
- SP-MOB-2** Support the creation of an integrated and environmentally-sound transport system, in particular with regard to accessibility and choice of transport, with a quality inter-city bus and rail service, alongside the promotion of cycle facilities and pedestrian movements.
- SP-MOB-3** Make optimal use of existing transportation infrastructure by using traffic management in order to reduce travel times and congestion.
- SP-MOB-4** Promote increased use of and investment in public transport by means of appropriate land use planning measures close to existing transport nodes, routes and corridors.
- SP-MOB-5** Encourage the shift from car use to more environmentally-friendly modes of transport and ensure the provision of quality interchange facilities between road, rail, bus and bicycle in relevant settlements.
- SP-MOB-6** Promote the reopening of the Western Rail Corridor from Athenry to Sligo, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- SP-MOB-7** Plan for the future traffic and transportation needs in Sligo and ensure that new development does not compromise the expansion of rail and road corridors in the County. Proposed road realignment/improvement lines and associated corridors shall be preserved free from development that would prejudice the implementation of the road scheme.
- SP-MOB-8** Protect the traffic carrying capacity of national roads, the level of service they deliver and the period over which they continue to perform efficiently, by avoiding the creation of new access points or the generation of increased traffic from existing accesses onto the N4, N15, N16, N17 and N59 outside the 50 km/h speed limit, in accordance with the DoEHLG's publication *Spatial Planning and National Roads (Draft) Guidelines for Planning Authorities*.
- SP-MOB-9** Promote improved access to and sustainable development and operation of Sligo Regional Airport and Sligo Port. Any development that occurs through the implementation of this policy shall be subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

Mobility - strategic objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- SO-MOB-1** Implement the relevant policies in relation to sustainable transport and in particular the Department of Transport's policy document *Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future, A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009–2020*.
- SO-MOB-2** Develop a strategy to promote and facilitate greater use of sustainable modes of travel such as walking and cycling, in line with the Department of Transport's *Smarter Travel, Cycle and Walking Strategies*.

8.2 Public transport

Public transport plays a key role in sustaining the vitality and viability of rural communities in County Sligo. Alongside the promotion of cycle facilities and pedestrian movements, quality bus and rail services can reduce car dependency within and between settlements.

Responsibility for local public transport is divided between the public and private sectors. The Council supports community transport services, in particular the Rural Transport Initiative (RTI), which is aimed at people who are excluded or who may become excluded because transport is not available, accessible or affordable to them locally.

8.2.1 Bus services

Bus services play a vital social role in rural communities, linking rural areas with settlements and essential services, such as schools and healthcare.

There are five categories of bus transportation currently serving County Sligo:

- Bus Eireann expressway long-distance services, linking Sligo with Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway, Knock, Westport, Ballina, Donegal, Letterkenny, Derry, Enniskillen and Belfast;
- Bus Eireann local commuter routes;
- Bus Eireann school bus services operated on behalf of the Department of Education and Science;
- Private mini-bus services;
- Community bus routes operated under the Rural Transport Initiative (RTI).

Three RTIs serve County Sligo: County Sligo Leader Partnership's Rural Transport Programme, Community of Lough Arrow Social Project (CLASP) and Rural LIFT, a community transport project. These services provide access to transport for key target groups of the rural population, namely older people, people with disabilities, women at home, lower income groups and young people. The Rural Transport Programme provides 22 weekly bus services, hackney, taxi and community car scheme services in the west, south, south-west and north Sligo. CLASP provides 26 services in south-east Sligo.

Sligo Rural Transport Programme (RTP) serves all passengers, but especially those who are at risk of social isolation as a consequence of their rural location, and provides access to employment, recreation, education and essential services. All vehicles are wheelchair accessible. Services are demand-responsive, door-to-door, scheduled and once-off trips. At present, Sligo RTP is in the process of developing integrated services through a pilot scheme with the HSE in the Ballymote area.

8.2.2 Railways

Rail infrastructure in County Sligo consists of:

- the Sligo-Dublin line, used mainly for inter-city services;
- the disused line from Collooney to Bellaghy/Charlestown, which forms the northern section of the Western Rail Corridor, potentially linking Sligo to Galway/Limerick, with onward connections to Cork, Waterford and Rosslare.

The Sligo-Dublin rail line is a key strategic transportation link for the North-West. In recognition of this, Iarnród Eireann has undertaken major upgrading work investing over 150 million euro in Sligo services since 1999.

This included resignalling, level crossings, platform lengthening and other safety investments. The new intercity commuter fleet is the latest phase in the transformation of the Sligo-Dublin route. Sligo-Dublin passengers have also benefited from a major increase in frequency, with the service increasing from 5 trains each way daily to 8 trains each way. New railcars entered service on the Sligo intercity line in December 2007.

The construction of a new train station at Ballysadare, along with the provision of adequate car parking, would encourage commuters from west Sligo to 'park and ride' at Ballysadare, taking the train into Sligo City.

Together with the other local authorities in the West, Sligo County Council is seeking the reopening of passenger and freight services along the Western Rail Corridor. This route has been identified as a 'National Transport Corridor' in the NSS and its reopening is strongly supported by the RPGs. The proposal would provide an important north-south rail service in the West, with potential for internal regional linkages, connections to Dublin and a range of commuter services. The current NDP has committed to the phased reopening of sections of the Western Rail Corridor from Ennis to Athenry and onwards to Claremorris. The Ennis to Athenry section should be completed early in 2010, Athenry to Tuam is planned for 2011 and Tuam to Claremorris planned for 2014 (depending on funding). The preservation of the line from Claremorris to Collooney is included in Transport 21.

The promotion of Tobercurry and Ballymote as Key Support Towns, and Collooney and Ballysadare as Principal Gateway Satellites, will serve to enhance the feasibility of the Western Rail Corridor and local commuter rail services.

Public transport policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-PT-1** Promote the consolidation of settlements on existing public transport routes and along the Western Rail Corridor.
- P-PT-2** Support the provision of public transport services by reserving land in suitable locations for public transport infrastructure and ancillary facilities, such as park-and-ride.
- P-PT-3** Support the provision of a local commuter rail service on the existing mainline railway.
- P-PT-4** Promote the development of the Western Rail Corridor, as a strategic transport corridor linking Sligo and the North-West with Mayo, Galway and Limerick. Any development that occurs through the implementation of this policy shall be subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- P-PT-5** Support local, community transport services in consultation with the local communities.

Public transport objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-PT-1** Continue to work with the service providers, such as Iarnród Éireann and Bus Éireann, to reduce the need for car trips by improving the availability, reliability and quality of public transport.
- O-PT-2** Examine the feasibility of a rail link between Sligo and Derry via Manorhamilton and Enniskillen, and the integration of such a rail link with new national road alignments and designs, i.e. N16 (Enniskillen Road). Any development that occurs through the implementation of this policy shall be subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- O-PT-3** Ensure that the design and layout of new developments facilitates circulation by public transport.

8.3 Road network

Outside Sligo City and its environs, County Sligo has a rather dispersed population living in rural areas and small settlements throughout the county. The road network is essential as private vehicles remain the main mode of transport for the majority of the population, as well as for commercial and industrial activities. Whilst the emphasis in the Sligo and Environs area is an encouraging public transport, cycling and walking, private vehicle travel is likely to remain the main mode of transport in the County during the life of this Plan.

Maintenance and upgrading the road network remains a priority for Sligo County Council. The Council works with the National Roads Authority (NRA) and Department of Transport (DOT) for the improvement of all roads. Funding of road maintenance and improvement works is provided by Central Government as well as the Council's own resources. The Central Government funding is channelled from the DOT through the NRA to the Local Authority.

Sligo County Council's road network is made up of 2,643.8 km of national, regional and local roads as shown in Table 8.A below.

Table 8.A Structure of the road network in County Sligo

Road type	Length (km)	Percentage of total road network
National primary	102.7	3.9%
National secondary	47.4	1.8%
Regional	222.6	8.4%
Local	2,271.1	85.9%
Total	2,643.8 km	100%

General roads objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-R-1** Bring national roads up to appropriate standards, as resources become available, and continue improvement works on non-national roads, so as to develop a safe and comprehensive road system for the county.

Policies for roads (and other linear infrastructure) crossing Natura 2000 sites

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to require any road project which involves crossing a Natura 2000 site to:

- P-N2000-1** Demonstrate the need for the project in light of a "do nothing" context.
- P-N2000-2** Examine the potential for intensifying or upgrading existing roads as an alternative to carrying out new road development affecting a Natura 2000 site.
- P-N2000-3** Develop and evaluate a comprehensive series of plausible alternative routes and design strategies (to include long-span and tunnel options).
- P-N2000-4** Demonstrate how each route has taken due account of, and accommodated ecological and legal considerations, including the requirements of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive.

8.3.1 National primary and secondary roads

Sligo County Council's Capital Roads Programme for National Routes is framed within the targets set out in the National Development Plan 2007-2013 and Transport 21.

These publications provide a basis on which policy decisions for the development of the National Road network are to be made over the period 2000-2019.

Continuing improvements to the national primary and secondary road network will enable the catchment area of County Sligo to expand – particularly south to parts of Mayo and Roscommon, via the N17 and N4, and north to Donegal, via the N15.

Improvements to the N16 to Enniskillen will enhance connections to both Northern Ireland and the Border Region. Links via Enniskillen will be improved, thus reducing the travel time to Belfast and to the Border towns of Cavan, Monaghan and Dundalk.

The National Spatial Strategy highlights the importance of the N17 (Sligo to Galway) and N15 (Sligo to Letterkenny) routes for the promotion of regional development.

Although the national roads comprise less than 5% of the County's total road network, they carry the majority of its traffic.



N4 from Collooney to Sligo

National roads objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-NR-1** Facilitate programmed improvements to the National Road network, including the programme of realignments and upgrades, as set out in Table 8.B, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- O-NR-2** Restrict new access points onto national roads in accordance with the DoEHLG's publication *Spatial Planning and National Roads (Draft) Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, in order to maintain traffic capacity, minimise traffic hazard and protect and maximise public investment in such roads.
- O-NR-3** Carry out a Route Selection Study for a City By-Pass for Sligo City and Environs.
- O-NR-4** Maintain the national road bridge stock.

Table 8.B National road projects in County Sligo

Road number	Route	Description of work	Estimated completion time/ status - subject to NRA approval/ funding
N4	Collooney to Castlebaldwin	realignment and upgrading	2013: completion*
N17	Collooney to Tobercurry Bypass	realignment and upgrading	no completion date
N17	Tobercurry Bypass	realignment and upgrading	2013: completion*
N17	Tobercurry Bypass to Charlestown (including bypass at Bellaghy/ Charlestown)	realignment	2015: completion*
N15	Sligo to Leitrim County boundary	realignment and upgrading	2015: completion*
N4/N15	Sligo to Borough Boundary & Environs	realignment and upgrading	2013: completion*
N16	Sligo to Leitrim County boundary	realignment and upgrading	2018: completion*
N59	Farranyharpy to Ballygreighan	realignment and upgrading	2012: completion*
N59	Ballysadare to Mayo County boundary	improvements	ongoing
N4/N15	Sligo Bypass	Route Selection Study	2012: completion*

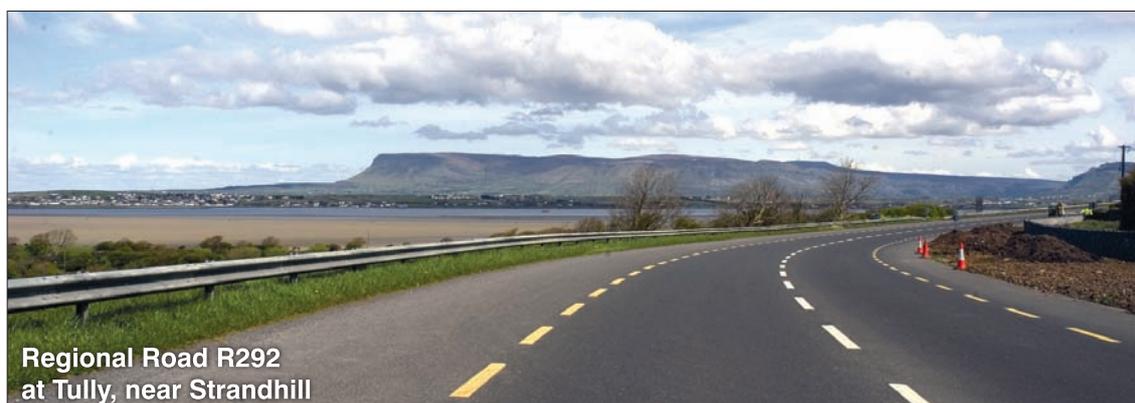
* Note: the timeframe for all projects is subject to NRA approval.

8.3.2 Non-national roads and bridges

Regional and local roads make up 95% of County Sligo's road network. Extensive improvements have been made to the network under the Council's Multi-Annual Restoration Programme. Road Restoration and Specific Improvement Grants provide funding for non-national road improvements, in which approximately 50 million euro has been invested in County Sligo in the last five years.

It is the policy of the Council to manage non-national roads in an economic and efficient manner, with a particular emphasis on safety.

Over 300 bridges dispersed throughout the county support the non-national road network. The Council continues to adopt a proactive role in maintaining, preserving and strengthening these bridges as necessary. The majority of the structures are of considerable age. The Council must have due regard to the historical value of this component of the built heritage of the county in the manner and methods engaged in maintaining the bridge stock and associated structures.



Regional Road R292
at Tully, near Strandhill

Non-national roads and bridges objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-NNR-1** Identify local priorities for road improvements in conjunction with the preparation of mini-plans and local area plans.
- O-NNR-2** Implement the roads and traffic management objectives of adopted mini-plans/local area plans, subject to the availability of funding.
- O-NNR-3** Improve road access to Sligo Regional Airport, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- O-NNR-4** Continue investment in local roads infrastructure in County Sligo, in order to improve access to peripheral areas of the County and promote social inclusion.
- O-NNR-5** Carry out improvement works on regional and local roads, and in particular to the regional road network as set out in Table 8.C, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- O-NNR-6** Continue to maintain, repair, replace and preserve the considerable bridge stock of the county, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- O-NNR-7** Develop the Strategic Non-National Road – the Western Distributor Road, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- O-NNR-8** Develop the Strategic Non-National Road – The Eastern Garavogue Bridge and Approach Roads, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

Table 8.C Planned non-national road improvements

Road number	Route
R284	Carrowroe to Roscommon County Boundary (serving Ballygawley, Soeey, Drumnacool and Geevagh)
R290	Collooney to Crossboy via Ballygawley and Ballintogher
R287	'Sligo City to Dromahair (serving Lough Gill)
R292	Entire length from Sligo City to Ballydrehid
R293	Ballymote to Castlerea (serving Gorteen)
R294	Cloonloo to Tobercurry to Lough Talt (on the Ballina to Boyle Road, also serving Gorteen)
R296	Ballymote to Bunnannaddan to R294
R297	Dromore West to Enniscrone to Sligo County Boundary (linking the N59)
R286	Molloway Hill to Leitrim County Boundary
R291	R291/N15 junction to Rosses Point
R278	Ballinode to Leitrim County Boundary
R296	N59 to Enniscrone
R279	N15 to Mullaghmore
R870	Sligo City
S.N.N.*	Western Distributor Road
S.N.N.*	Eastern Garavogue Bridge and Approach Roads

* S.N.N. = Strategic Non-National

8.4 Cycle and pedestrian movements

Cycling and walking play minor roles as modes of transport in County Sligo due to long trip distances. For short trips, they are cost-effective, non-polluting and highly flexible modes of transport that foster improved health and wellbeing. The provision of designated cycle routes, walking trails/pathways and improved road surfaces also supports tourism by facilitating cycling and walking holidays and enhancing the local tourism product.

The Council will use its powers under the Planning Acts to preserve and maintain existing rights of way, to create new ones where appropriate, and to promote their greater use in amenity areas. In addition the Council may seek to incorporate the provision of pedestrian ways as a condition of planning permission to link amenities, facilities and points of interest. Sligo County Council is aware that providing such routes can cause concern, as these may give rise to anti-social behaviour, particularly along unsupervised and secluded laneways. Every effort shall be made to avoid such situations, through public lighting, appropriate layout and landscaping.

Providing for the needs of cyclists and pedestrians is an important element of an integrated transport system for County Sligo. The provision of facilities for commuting cyclists will be a priority for Sligo County Council over the lifetime of this plan.

The Department of Transport's Policy Document *Smarter Travel: A sustainable Transport Future*, published in February 2009, is a new Transport Policy for Ireland for 2009–2020. This policy document sets out the necessary steps to ensure that people choose more sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport. The overall vision is to have a sustainable transport system by 2020.

The vision of Department of Transport's *National Cycle Policy Framework*, published in April 2009, is that all cities, towns, villages and rural areas will be bicycle-friendly and the target is that by 2020, 10% of all journeys will be by bicycle.

The Department of Transport has also committed to publishing a *National Walking Policy*. Sligo County Council will implement the relevant policies and actions contained in these plans, where feasible, over the period of the plan.

Cycling and walking policies

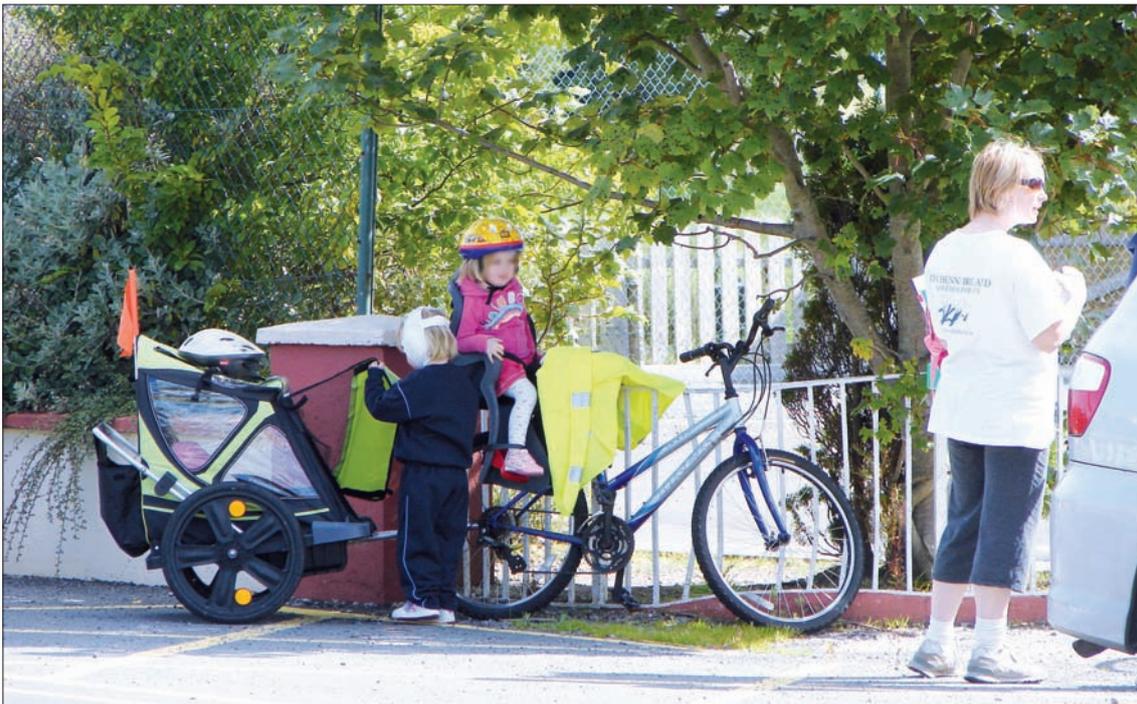
It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-CW-1** Promote walking and cycling as sustainable transport modes and healthy recreational activities.
- P-CW-2** Promote cycling as a viable commuting mode of transport.
- P-CW-3** Require that all new developments are designed to integrate into a cycling network linking with adjoining development areas and schools, and provide cycle and pedestrian-friendly development layouts, infrastructure and facilities.
- P-CW-4** Consider the use of off-road routes, such as disused railway lines and bridle paths, for both walking and cycling to improve access to rural tourist attractions.
- P-CW-5** Protect and promote Greenways and consider designating them as public rights of way.
- P-CW-6** A number of long-distance walking routes exist throughout the county. These long-distance walks, together with local walks, provide important access networks. This is an important recreational resource whose integrity should be protected. The impact of any proposed development on these routes should be taken into account when considering applications for permission for developments in their vicinity.

Cycling and walking objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-CW-1** Provide, improve and extend cycle and pedestrian routes on existing roads, proposed roads, roads being upgraded and green corridors (including river corridors), where feasible and practical, subject to compliance with Habitats Directive.
- O-CW-2** Develop cycle routes from Strandhill, Rosses Point, Ballysadare and Collooney to Sligo City subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.
- O-CW-3** Plan and make provision for the safe and efficient movement of cyclists and pedestrians in and around built-up areas.
- O-CW-4** Make provision for the integration of pedestrian and cycle facilities (i.e. bicycle parking) at public transportation nodes and village/town centres.
- O-CW-5** Implement the relevant policies of the Department of Transport's *National Cycle Policy Framework* and support the provision of a national cycle network.
- O-CW-6** Commence the process of mapping rights of way in the County during the lifetime of this development plan.
- O-CW-7** Implement the relevant provisions of the Department of Transport's *Walking Policy*, when published.
- O-CW-8** Provide appropriate facilities for pedestrians and for people with special mobility needs.
- O-CW-9** Prepare a Transport Plan for Sligo to include all modes of transport, in line with the Department of Transport's guidelines, when published.
- O-CW-10** Support the development of a footway and cycleway (greenway) alongside the disused railway line from Claremorris to Collooney, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive, insofar as such route does not compromise the reopening of the Western Rail Corridor.





Landing at Sligo Airport

8.5 Airports

County Sligo is served by Sligo Regional Airport and Ireland West International Airport (Knock), which are of strategic importance as a means of access to the County and are critical to the success of the local and regional economy. Knock Airport is located just 20 km from Tobercurry and a 45-minute journey from Sligo City. The promotion of Tobercurry and Ballymote as Key Support Towns, and Bellaghy-Charlestown as a local centre of enterprise, is reinforced by their proximity to Knock Airport and the availability of direct access to an international business and tourism market.

Sligo Regional Airport is located at Strandhill, 8 km from Sligo City. Aer Arann provides two daily flights in each direction between Dublin and Sligo. The Airport has a 1200-metre long runway, capable of handling airliner and executive aircraft. The 30-minute flight time between Dublin and Sligo is of benefit to commuters, tourists and business interests. The Airport is owned and managed by Sligo North-West Airport Co. Ltd., which has developed a high-quality business park on adjacent lands and examined the feasibility of extending the runway.

Airports objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-A-1** Promote and support improved access to and expansion of Sligo Regional and Knock International Airports, so as to secure a better level and frequency of service and promote Sligo's accessibility to tourists and businesses, both nationally and internationally. Any development that occurs through the implementation of this policy shall be subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

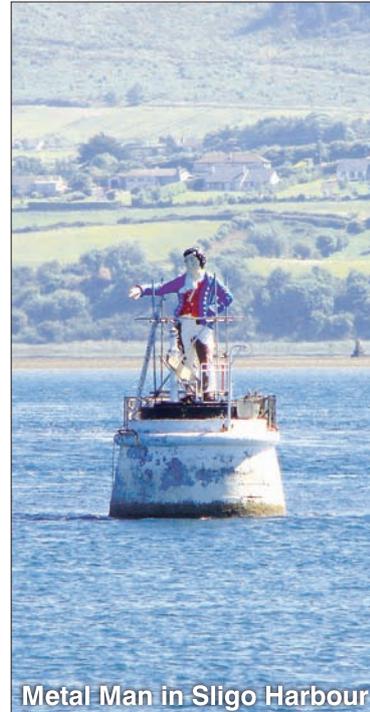
8.6 Port and harbours

Sligo Port is one of seven ports in the BMW Region, and the only one on the west coast. While the significance of Sligo Port in national terms is quite low, it remains important in the regional and local economy, supporting local industry and providing an import/export transportation facility.

Sligo County Council took over the running of the port on 13 June 2006, following a Government decision relating to regional ports. Sligo Port has benefited from various safety improvement works in recent years, all funded by the Department of Transport (Marine Transport Division), including: a major upgrade of Barytes Jetty, safety improvements to Deep Water Jetty, substantial improvements to the shipping channel's training wall, pontoons and access ramp at Timber Jetty, near Hughes Bridge.

The primary cargoes shipped to Sligo Port are coal, slack, timber and fish meal, with metal scrap being the main export. The Port can facilitate ships up to 3,200 dwt. Sligo's throughput is approximately 52,000 tonnes a year. Studies are underway to facilitate capital and maintenance dredging within the harbour, to enhance the use and longevity of the Port. The studies are funded by the Department of Transport.

Harbours, piers and shipways along the Sligo coast provide marine access for the fishing industry and commercial or recreational boat users. The Government provides partial funding for the improvement of piers and harbours, but there is no funding provision for maintenance, which is a constant cause of concern. The Council has recently completed improvements at Raghly Harbour and has applied to the Department of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (DAFF) for funding for other projects.



Metal Man in Sligo Harbour

Ports and harbours policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-PH-1** Continue to support the sustainable development and operation of Sligo Port.
- P-PH-2** Support the role of harbours, piers and shipways in facilitating fishing, marine leisure, recreation and other activities including the RNLI station at Rosses Point. (RNLI stands for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, established in 1826)

Ports and harbours objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-PH-1** Improve road and rail access to the Port, in order to boost its viability as an international freight port.
- O-PH-2** Carry out improvements at Mullaghmore, Enniscrone and Pullaheeney Harbours and maintain and improve other piers and harbours, as resources allow, subject to the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- O-PH-3** Maintain navigation aids and tidal gauges, as necessary, for the benefit of the maritime and coastal communities, subject to the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

9. Environmental infrastructure



9.1 Water, wastewater and drainage: context and legislation

Sligo County Council has a number of important roles in relation to the management and sustainability of water bodies and ground water systems throughout County Sligo. It is the Water Services Authority with responsibility to provide, operate, improve and extend the water services infrastructure as necessary, thus ensuring a sufficient supply of quality drinking water, wastewater treatment capacity and storm water drainage capacity in order to support the development of the County.

The Council has an equally important role in protecting the natural heritage and ecosystems and to achieve a clean, safe, healthy and sustainable environment. Water, wastewater and storm water infrastructure investment supports and facilitates balanced and sustainable development in County Sligo and it is particularly important that an appropriate share of this investment is targeted towards the development of the county's towns and villages in line with the Core Strategy and settlement structure outlined in Chapter 3 of this Plan.

Over the lifetime of the CDP 2005-2011, County Sligo has experienced substantial development pressure in certain areas, which has placed serious strain on the existing capacity for water supply, wastewater infrastructure and storm water infrastructure. Significant capacity issues still remain in many settlements.

The continued provision and effective operation of water services infrastructure is a key element in supporting economic growth and providing a satisfactory quality of life for existing and future residents within county Sligo through sustaining environmental quality. Infrastructural capacity is a key consideration in the planning approvals process for new developments within the county. The reality is that there are significant limitations on available resources, including financial and environmental, which dictate that investment must be focused in order to maximise potential benefit to the county in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Regulatory framework

The Water Services Act 2007 provides the legislative framework, governing functions, standards, responsibilities and practice in relation to the planning, management and delivery of water services. This legislation

focuses on water and wastewater “in the pipe” as distinct from broader water resources and environmental issues (refer to Section 10.1 Water Quality).

The Drinking Water (No. 2) Regulations 2007 set out the standards and responsibilities relating to the provision and monitoring of a quality drinking water supply to consumers. The regulations also outline the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) role in a supervisory capacity over local authority operations. The EPA reviews how the Council operates and manages its facilities, and may issue directions on upgrades required to existing facilities in order to achieve compliance with these regulations.

The Wastewater Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007 empower the EPA to licence and regulate local authority wastewater treatment and collection systems. These licences specify both quality standards and volume of discharges permissible from plants and therefore may limit further development in some areas where environmental constraints exist. Some existing systems may also require significant investment to ameliorate the impacts of existing developments.

The Water Framework Directive, Nitrates, Habitats, Urban Wastewater and Shellfish Directives issued by the European Union will also directly impact on the Council’s ability to utilise existing water sources, and the capacity to treat and dispose of wastewater and associated bio-solids. In particular, they will limit the Council’s capacity to increase overall outputs from existing plants and development options for new facilities.

Sligo County Council’s Needs Assessment 2009, which covers the period from 2010-2012 and beyond, sets out a strategic investment programme of some 152 million euro. Schemes are prioritised, based on assessment criteria outlined by the DoEHLG, in order to determine the Water Services Investment Programme 2010 - 2012. Advancement of projects therein will depend on Department approvals and resource availability. A key constraint on such projects is the requirement that the Council fund a significant element of project costs from local resources, in accordance with the implementation of the National Water Pricing Policy.

The Council will also be required to prepare a Water Services Strategic Plan, as set out in the Water Services Act 2007, during the lifetime of this development plan. The Plan will set out a strategy for the provision of water services in the County taking cognisance of policies and objectives of this development plan, sustainable development, affordability, environmental constraints, service quality and regulatory criteria. The adoption of the Water Services Strategic Plan is a reserved function of the Council.

Strategic water, wastewater and storm water drainage objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- SO-W-1** Improve water and wastewater services in those areas of the county where deficiencies exist at present, subject to the availability of resources and appropriate statutory approvals.
- SO-W-2** Carry out measures to address deficiencies in existing water and wastewater infrastructure, so as to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements and the objectives of the Water Framework Directive.
- SO-W-3** Preserve and further develop water and wastewater infrastructure in order to facilitate the growth of settlements at an appropriate rate which is consistent with the Core Strategy and the Settlement Structure.
- SO-W-4** Implement adequate surface water drainage measures and prohibit unsuitable development in flood-susceptible areas.
- SO-W-5** Prepare a Water Services Strategic Plan – in compliance with the Water Services Act – for the functional area of the Council. Such a plan may be prepared jointly with other water services authorities.

9.2 Water supply

The provision of an adequate water supply to serve the anticipated level of population growth within Sligo County requires monitoring and phased improvements concurrent with development needs. Sligo County Council has carried out significant investment in water infrastructure over the period of the previous plan. However, there are still significant deficits throughout the County in these services. As these deficits cannot be immediately addressed, the Council identifies the locations under the greatest development pressure and prioritises the upgrading of existing, or provision of new infrastructure in these areas. The locations are then categorised for servicing through the appropriate investment programme.

When deficits are identified, they are included in a priority listing. However, due to fluctuations in development pressure, this listing must be kept flexible and under constant review. In order to assist in the provision of infrastructure, and where it is deemed appropriate, the Council will enter into public-private partnerships (PPPs) with the private sector for the provision of infrastructural projects. The Council will also fund schemes through special development contributions under Section 48(2) (c) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), as appropriate.



Kilsellagh reservoir

9.2.1 Sligo's water supply schemes and infrastructural needs

Currently there are eight schemes (listed below) supplying public water throughout Sligo, six of which are regional schemes.

- Lough Talt RWSS
- Riverstown RWSS
- Lough Easkey RWSS
- Kilsellagh WTW
- North Sligo RWSS
- Cairns Hill WTW
- South Sligo RWSS
- Foxes Den WTW

There are two main sources of water supplying the Sligo and Environs area, namely Kilsellagh Reservoir and Lough Gill. The Sligo and Environs Water Supply Scheme is designed to provide for the domestic, agricultural and industrial water requirements of Sligo City and its outlying regions, such as Ballincar, Rosses Point, Strandhill and Ballintogher.

There is a water treatment plant at Kilsellagh and two plants treating water from Lough Gill – Cairns Hill and Foxes Den. The three water treatment plants have been, or are in the process of being upgraded to facilitate the improved treatment and overall quality of the water supply. A water conservation programme is being implemented within the Sligo and Environs area, to reduce “unaccounted-for water” (UFW) and to promote a more sustainable approach to usage.

In general, water supply facilities and drinking water quality throughout the county need to be improved to serve existing communities and accommodate planned growth. The proposed improvements to enhance Sligo's water supply schemes are outlined in Table 9.A on the next page.

Table 9.A Proposals for water supply schemes in County Sligo, 2010–2017

Scheme	Treatment	Status	Design capacity (m³/day)
Carns Hill Water Supply Scheme	microstraining, ozonization, filtration, chlorination, fluoridation	N/A – no upgrade proposed at present.	5,450 m ³ /day
Foxes Den Water Supply Scheme	dissolved air flotation, rapid gravity filtration, chlorination & fluoridation	Sligo & Environs WSS phase 3 works – upgrade design capacity from 11,000 to 16,500m ³ /day is dependant on future growth in the Sligo & Environs area	11,000 m ³ /day
Kilsellagh Water Supply Scheme	dissolved air flotation, rapid gravity filtration, chlorination & fluoridation	Dam upgrade works complete at Kilsellagh and new water treatment works at Kilsellagh will be operational in May 2010	4,500 m ³ /day
Lough Easky Regional Scheme	clarification, rapid gravity filtration chlorination, fluoridation	Strategic review of the existing Lough Easky scheme & minor upgrade work to be completed pending departmental approval	4,450 m ³ /day
Lough Talt Regional Scheme	chlorination, fluoridation	Construction of a new water treatment works, storage reservoirs and intake works	to be determined
North Sligo Regional Scheme	clarification, rapid gravity filtration, chlorination, fluoridation	Strategic review of the existing North Sligo scheme & minor upgrade work to be completed as part of the small scheme programme	2250 m ³ /day
South Sligo Regional Scheme	by Roscommon County Council	Strategic review of water supply to South Sligo area	1,000 m ³ /day
Riverstown Regional Scheme	chlorination	Minor upgrade work to be completed as part of the small scheme programme	500 m ³ /day

9.2.2 Water Conservation and Network Management Project

The DoEHLG's *National Water Study* (2000) found that up to 47% of all water produced by treatment plants surveyed was unaccounted-for and that in some areas of the country this level was much higher. Therefore, there is strong evidence that water conservation is a practical, realistic and economic way of meeting much of the extra demand for water.

Water conservation activities have been ongoing in County Sligo since 1999, with the commencement of the Lough Easky/Lough Talt Water Conservation Project, followed by the North Sligo Water Conservation Project in 2001. The Sligo County Water Conservation and Network Management Project (Phase 2) commenced in August 2006.

The County Sligo Water Conservation and Network Management Project is sub-divided into three stages. Stage 1 - Water Management Systems has been completed. Stage 2 - Implementation of Water Management Systems and Active Leakage Control is ongoing and has already achieved a reduction in water production of approximately 9,000 m³/day in the Sligo County and Borough areas.

Stage 3 is intended to further reduce the level of UFW through a programme of Network Mains Rehabilitation works. A detailed report on Stage 3 proposals has been submitted to the DoEHLG for approval. Sligo County Council also produced a Consolidated Rehabilitation Strategy Report in December 2008 recommending that the project is arranged into 11 phases. It is envisaged that Network Mains Rehabilitation Phase 1 (Sligo City) will commence in 2010 with Phase 2 (Lough Talt) to commence in 2011/2012 and subsequent phases to follow. These are subject to approval of funding by the DoEHLG.

The estimated cost of the first 5 phases of work is 22,897,408 euro. The payback period for the works, based on the estimated savings in water production costs and estimated savings on leak repairs per annum, is less than 21 years. Given that the design life of new rehabilitation works is in excess of 50 years it is considered that this work will represent a good return on investment. Similar savings are expected on subsequent phases of work.

9.2.3 Rural water supply and quality

Responsibility for group water schemes was devolved from the DoEHLG to local authorities in 1997. Group water schemes are generally permitted in cases where the Council does not propose to carry out a public scheme and the area can be served by the extension of the existing Council water mains. It is the policy of the Council to co-operate, encourage and advise in the provision of group water schemes in the County.

A number of rural dwellings and small communities throughout Sligo do not have the benefit of a public mains water supply system. These dwellings rely on group schemes and individual well supplies. It is an objective of the County Council to ensure that all rural water supplies comply with the EC (Drinking Water) (No.2) Regulations 2007.

Many private water users rely on groundwater sources that are prone to contamination from septic tank or farmyard effluent. Therefore the protection of underlying aquifers is important for the environmental quality of rural water supply. It is an integral part of the County Council's services to strive towards improving the quality and reliability of rural water supply. Currently there are 49 part-private GWSs which are supplied off public supply and 22 private GWSs, of which 12 are currently being operated by a DBO contractor. As part of the Rural Water Programme, Sligo County Council takes in charge a number of part-private group water supplies. These schemes are reviewed by Water Services and minor upgrade works are completed as part of the takeover agreement with each scheme.

Water supply policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-WS-1** Ensure an adequate, sustainable and economic supply of good quality water for domestic, commercial and industrial use, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- P-WS-2** Conserve water supplies through the minimisation of leakage and wastage in the interests of efficiency and sustainability.
- P-WS-3** Promote public awareness and involvement in water conservation measures.
- P-WS-4** Co-operate, support and advise in the provision and management of group water schemes in the County.
- P-WS-5** Promote the inclusion of water conservation and sustainability measures so as to minimise the use of potable water in new developments.
- P-WS-6** Existing and future population within the County shall be served with clean and wholesome drinking water. It is Council policy to ensure that all drinking water complies with the European Union Drinking Water Directive 98/83/EC as given effect in Irish law by the European Communities (Drinking Water) (No.2) Regulations 2007, as may be amended, and to implement the relevant recommendations set out in *The Provision and Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland – A report for the Years 2007-2008* (EPA Office of Environment Enforcement, 2009).

Water supply objectives

It is the objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-WS-1** Complete the construction of the new water treatment plant at Kilsellagh, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- O-WS-2** Complete the planning and construction of the new water treatment plant at Lough Talt subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- O-WS-3** Extend the existing water treatment plant at Foxes Den (depending on future growth in the Sligo and Environs area), subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- O-WS-4** Carry out a strategic review of both North Sligo and Lough Easky Regional Water Supply Schemes. Any development that occurs through the implementation of this policy shall be subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- O-WS-5** Continue to advance the Water Conservation Programme in the County area.
- O-WS-6** Improve the water supply to the South Sligo Area.
- O-WS-7** Implement the requirements of the EC (Drinking Water) (No. 2) Regulations 2007.
- O-WS-8** Provide an adequate water supply for fire fighting, where feasible.
- O-WS-9** Continue to implement the annual Rural Water Programme. Any development that occurs through the implementation of this policy shall be subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- O-WS-10** Advance all the schemes listed on the Water Services Investment Programmes, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

9.3 Wastewater treatment

The provision of wastewater treatment infrastructure is imperative to facilitate the economic, social, and physical development of the county and to support settlement growth. In addition, the continued improvement and provision of this infrastructure is necessary to meet the requirements of the Urban Wastewater Treatment (Amendment) Regulations 2004. There are 30 major wastewater treatment schemes within the county, of varying size and complexity.

There is a need to upgrade and improve the network and treatment facilities of a number of towns and villages throughout Sligo County. However, it should be noted that not all zoned lands in settlements need necessarily be serviced within the lifetime of this plan. This is because the zoning of land takes a longer term view with regard to development potential which may exceed the targets set out in the Core Strategy. Land use plans also incorporate a residential zoning overhead (generally 50%) to allow for an element of choice and to facilitate the release of adequate land for residential development. Therefore not all zoned lands should necessarily be viewed as appropriate for development within the lifetime of this plan. Zoned lands will be serviced subject to funding availability and compliance with the Core Strategy.

The Sligo Main Drainage Scheme has provided Sligo City and surrounding areas with adequate treatment and drainage capacity to serve up to 50,000 PE (population equivalent), thereby allowing for future development and growth. Furthermore, a Serviced Land Initiative scheme was completed in the Teesan-Lisnalgur Area. To ensure EU standards are maintained and all areas are serviced appropriately, there is a need for further upgrading of drainage infrastructure in some of the outlying areas of the environs, such as Ballincar, Cregg, Rosses Point, Carrowroe and Cummeen.

There has been significant investment in wastewater treatment facilities throughout the County since 2005. New wastewater treatment facilities were constructed in Carney, Dromore West, Coolaney, Gorteen, Ballysadare, Aclare and Cloonacool.

A new wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) was constructed in Enniscrone as part of the 20-year operation and maintenance contract of six additional WWTPs, namely Ballysadare, Aclare, Cloonacool, Dromore West, Coolaney and Easky.

The Water Services Section of the Council has submitted wastewater discharge licence applications to the EPA for all of the WWTPs in County Sligo. The Council will be required to comply with the EPA licensing requirements.

As part of the Sludge Management Plan for County Sligo, which was endorsed by the Department, sludge generated from public sewerage schemes throughout the County and from private treatment systems (including individual septic tanks and on-site systems serving one-off housing) can be transported to a sludge hub centre at the Sligo Main Drainage Centre at Finisklin for treatment and disposal. To facilitate the sludge collection process, two satellite stations have been completed in County Sligo at Ballymote and Enniscrone.

9.3.1 Prioritisation of investment

The areas to be prioritised for wastewater infrastructure have been identified in the Sligo County Council Needs Assessment 2009. Schemes will be progressed under the Major Schemes Programme, with any schemes with a cost of less than 1m euro being progressed under the Small Schemes Programme.

The Water Services Investment Programme is a national multi-annual approach to investment in water infrastructure which is part-funded by the Exchequer. The marginal cost (non-domestic) element is funded by Sligo County Council and subsequently recovered locally via consolidated water pricing. The Needs Assessment process will inform the development of the Water Services Investment Programme 2010–2012 in order to adequately address the specific environmental and economic pressures that have emerged in recent years. The objectives of the Programme are to ensure that the timing and scale of investment will facilitate development, ensure compliance with statutory requirements for drinking water and wastewater treatment and maintain environmental sustainability.

9.3 Wastewater treatment

Proposed treatment works and extensions to drainage infrastructure throughout County Sligo are outlined in the Table 9.B below. An examination of the wastewater situation shows that there is some capacity for treatment in the following towns and villages: Aclare, Ballysadare, Carney, Cloonacool, Coolaney-Rockfield, Culfadda, Curry, Dromore West, Enniscrone, Gorteen, Monasteraden, Riverstown, Sligo City and the Teesan/Lisnalurg area, Easky and Geevagh.

Table 9.B Proposed wastewater treatment plants and extensions in County Sligo

Town/Scheme	Current design PE*	Existing outfall / treatment	New design PE	Remarks
Aclare	750	inlet works, aeration tank, clarifier, sludge holding tank	n/a	new treatment works completed in 2005, part of O&M contract
Ballinacarrow	250	extended aeration	500	new treatment works proposed
Ballinafad	150	septic tank & ABR, peat-based percolation system	350	new treatment works proposed
Ballincar / Cregg / Rosses Point Main Drainage Scheme	1,500	holding tank, sea outfall at Rosses Point	5,000	new collection system to be completed to pump wastewater from Rosses Point (Ballincar, Cregg, Rosses Point WWTW**) into Sligo Main Drainage – 5,000 PE
Ballinode / Hazelwood Main Drainage Scheme	n/a	n/a	n/a	drainage masterplan has been developed
Ballintogher	200	aeration tanks & peat-based percolation system	500	new WWTW to be completed as part of small scheme programme.
Ballygawley	n/a	n/a	450	new treatment works and collection system proposed
Ballymote	3,000	inlet works, extended aeration, clarifier, sludge holding tanks, satellite hub centre.	n/a	design review to be completed and upgrade of the existing WWTW to be completed
Ballysadare	4,500	new inlet works, aeration tanks, clarifier, storm tank and sludge holding tank	n/a	new treatment works completed in 2005, part of O&M contract
Bunnannaddan	80	septic tank	350	new WWTW to be completed as part of small scheme programme.
Carney	2,500	new inlet works, aeration tanks, clarifier, and sludge holding tank	n/a	new treatment works completed in 2007.
Carrowroe Main Drainage Scheme	n/a	n/a	4000	proposed new collection system to be completed.
Castlebaldwin	100	septic tank & peat-based percolation system	n/a	n/a
Cliffony	450	extended aeration	1100	new treatment works proposed
Cloonacool	750	inlet works, aeration tank, clarifier, sludge holding tank	n/a	new treatment works completed in 2005, part of 20-year O&M contract
Collooney	1,400	extended aeration, clarifier	n/a	preliminary report to be completed for upgrade of the existing WWTW

* PE – Population equivalent ** WWTW – Wastewater Treatment Works [continues on the next page]

9. Infrastructure

Table 9.B continued

Town/Scheme	Current design PE*	Existing outfall / treatment	New design PE	Remarks
Coolaney	2,500	new inlet works, aeration tanks, clarifier, storm tank, sludge holding tank	n/a	new treatment works completed in 2007, part of 20-year O&M contract.
Culfadda	150	extended aeration	n/a	spare capacity in the existing plant
Cummeen Main Drainage Scheme	n/a	n/a	3,000	proposal to pump wastewater from Cummeen into Sligo Main Drainage - 3,000 PE
Curry	400	extended aeration	n/a	spare capacity in the existing plant
Dromore West	2,500	new inlet works, aeration tanks, clarifier, storm tank, sludge holding tank	n/a	new treatment works completed in 2007, part of 20-year O&M contract
Drumcliff	150	septic tank & peat-based percolation system	n/a	review of this scheme to be completed
Easky	450	extended aeration	n/a	upgrade works completed in 2008, new pumping station to be completed in early 2010, part of 20-year O&M contract
Enniscrone	5,000	new inlet works, aeration tanks, clarifier, storm tank and sludge holding tank, sludge hub centre	n/a	new treatment works completed in 2008, part of 20-year O&M contract.
Geevagh	250	extended aeration	n/a	upgrade works completed in 2009 as part of small scheme programme
Grange	280	extended aeration	2,500	new treatment works proposed
Gorteen	2,500	new inlet works, aeration tanks, clarifier, storm tank and sludge holding tank	n/a	new treatment works completed in 2008
Monasteraden	400	extended aeration	n/a	none
Mullaghmore	320	holding tank, sea outfall	1,600	new treatment works proposed
Riverstown	600	extended aeration	n/a	spare capacity in the existing plant
Rathcormack	n/a	n/a	n/a	funding will be sought from the DoECLG to assess the feasibility of providing public wastewater treatment
Rockfield	250	extended aeration plant	n/a	new scheme completed in 2007
Sligo Main Drainage Scheme	50,000	new pumping station, new inlet works, aeration tanks, clarifiers, storm holding tanks tank and sludge hub centre	n/a	new treatment plant completed in 2009
Strandhill	1,500	oxidation ditch	4,500	upgrade of existing WWTW
Teesan / Lisnalurg Main Drainage Scheme	5,500	pumping station and associated pipework	n/a	all work associated with this scheme were completed in 2009
Tobercurry	1,400	Imhoff tank, percolating tank, tertiary treatment	5,000	upgrade of existing treatment works proposed

* PE – Population equivalent ** WWTW – Wastewater Treatment Works

9.3.2 Rural wastewater disposal

In rural areas, much of the wastewater produced is treated and disposed of on-site by means of individual septic tanks and proprietary effluent treatment systems (PETS). It is essential that these systems are properly designed, installed and maintained to avoid environmental pollution (see Section 12. Development Management Standards). All such proposals shall be in compliance with the Environmental Protection Agency's *Code of practice for Wastewater Treatment and disposal Systems serving Single Houses* (2009). Where appropriate, other developments shall be in compliance with the EPA's document *Waste water Treatment Manuals – Treatment systems for small communities, business, leisure centres and hotels* (1999).

Wastewater policies (I)

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-WW-1** Ensure sustainable collection, treatment and discharge of wastewater effluent generated within the County.
- P-WW-2** Ensure that developers provide effective drainage systems with separate foul and surface water networks.
- P-WW-3** Ensure that effluent/sludge is treated and disposed of in accordance with the required EU standards.
- P-WW-4** Promote the sustainable use of wastewater treatment facilities.
- P-WW-5** Strive to provide adequate wastewater treatment capacity to facilitate development in County Sligo. The provision of such infrastructure will only be pursued where the planning authority is satisfied that it is necessary and in accordance with the requirements of the Core Strategy and the Settlement Structure of the County.
- P-WW-6** Facilitate appropriate proposals from private developers to extend existing public wastewater infrastructure networks, where such proposals would result in the servicing of lands zoned in accordance with the Core Strategy. Any such proposal shall be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- P-WW-7** Ensure that public wastewater treatment infrastructure is in place, with adequate capacity, prior to developments being occupied.
- P-WW-8** All proposals for on-site treatment systems shall be designed, constructed and maintained in accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency's *Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (PE≤10)*. (2009) and/or *Treatment Systems for Small Communities, business, Leisure Centres and Hotels*, and any guidance documents issued by the County Council.
- P-WW-9** As relevant and as appropriate, seek to implement the relevant measures for individual water bodies set out in the Western River Basin Management Plan and the Shannon and North-Western International River Basin Management Plans and the associated Programmes of Measures.
- P-WW-10** Prohibit the discharge or disposal of domestic wastewater from one-off houses, following treatment, to surface water bodies.
- P-WW-11** Ensure that adequately designed grease-traps are installed and maintained in all commercial premises where food is prepared.
- P-WW-12** Ensure that adequately designed oil interceptors are installed in all commercial developments that include car-parks or other oil- and petrol-related activities.
- P-WW-13** Regulate discharges to local authority sewerage schemes to protect and improve groundwater and surface water quality in accordance with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.

[continues on the next page]

Wastewater policies (II)

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-WW-14** Ensure tertiary treatment (phosphorus removal) is provided in proposed upgrades to existing or new local authority wastewater treatment infrastructure.
- P-WW-15** Discourage the use of pumping stations in private developments. Storm overflows from pumping stations serving private developments will not be permitted.
- P-WW-16** Promote the establishment of a satisfactory management structure in relation to existing in-situ private wastewater pumping stations.
- P-WW-17** Development proposing to connect to the public wastewater treatment system shall not be permitted unless the planning authority is satisfied that adequate capacity is available.

Exceptions to this policy will be considered in cases where works on upgrading the wastewater facilities have commenced and will be completed within a reasonable timeframe. In such cases, appropriate conditions shall be applied to planning permissions to ensure that the proposed development and the upgrading works are suitably phased.

- P-WW-18** In cases where a settlement is not served by a public wastewater treatment plant, or where no spare capacity exists in an existing wastewater treatment plant, individual developments proposing to use on-site wastewater treatment will be considered subject to appropriate scale, assessment, design and conditions, taking groundwater vulnerability into account.

Any such permitted development shall be subject to legally binding maintenance and bonding arrangements agreed with the planning authority and shall be required to connect to the public wastewater treatment plant when/if adequate capacity becomes available.

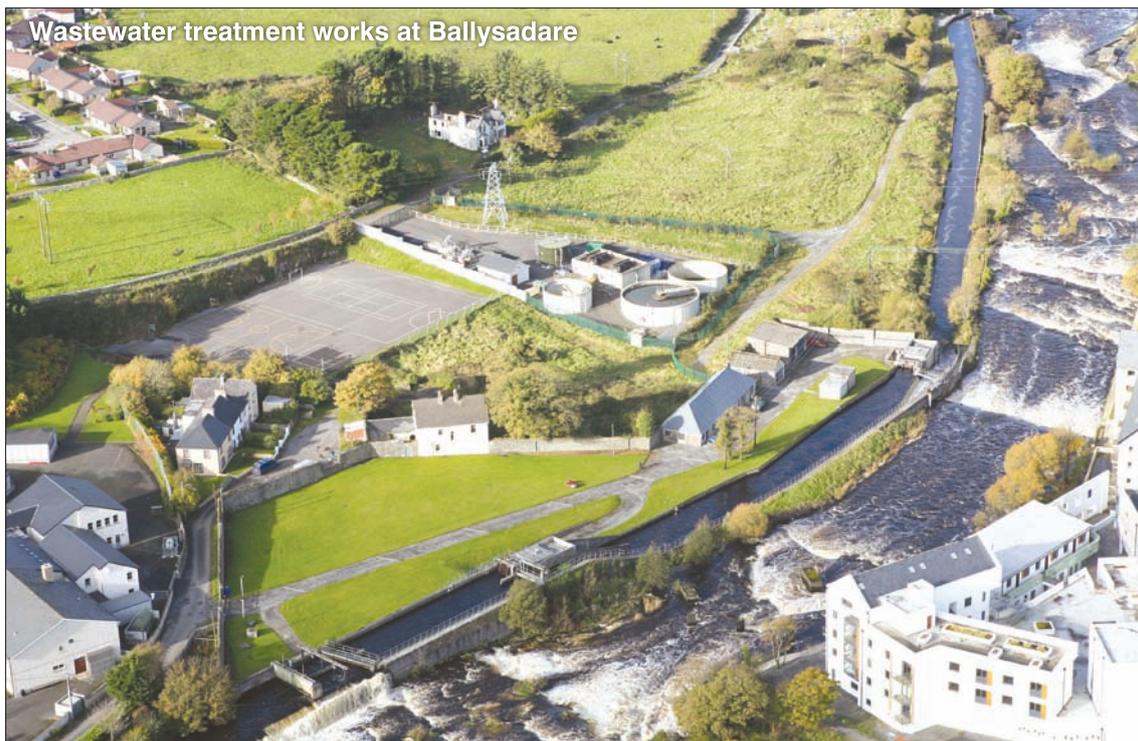
However, communal on-site wastewater treatment systems (i.e. systems servicing more than one residential unit, commercial premises etc.) will not be permitted in any case.

- P-WW-19** In cases where capacity exists, all proposed developments will be required to connect to the public wastewater treatment plant.
- P-WW-20** Development shall be accompanied by financial contributions to facilitate the provision of wastewater treatment infrastructure with adequate capacity that will ensure compliance with the provisions of the relevant River Basin Management Plan(s) and the Habitats Directive.
- P-WW-21** Implement the relevant recommendations set out in the document *Urban Wastewater Discharges in Ireland for Population Equivalents Greater than 500 Persons – A Report for the Years 2006 and 2007* (EPA Office of Environment Enforcement, 2009) where feasible, and to examine the feasibility of connecting unsewered areas, including individual properties/premises currently serviced by septic tanks, to existing and planned sewer networks subject to the availability of resources.,

Wastewater objectives

It is the objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-WW-1** Complete the construction of the new wastewater treatment plants at Tobercurry, Grange, Strandhill and Ballinafad.
- O-WW-2** Complete the planning and construction of the new wastewater treatment plant at Ballintogher, Bunnanadden, Cliffony, Ballinacarrow, Mullaghmore and Ballygawley, subject to necessary approvals and compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- O-WW-3** Complete the construction of a wastewater collection system to pump wastewater from Rosses Point, Ballincar and Cregg into Sligo Main Drainage.
- O-WW-4** Complete the planning stage for upgrade works to Collooney and Ballymote WWTPs, subject to necessary approvals and compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- O-WW-5** Facilitate the sustainable development of towns and villages by improving and extending wastewater infrastructure as set out in Table 9.B, subject to the availability of necessary funding and compliance with the Core Strategy and Settlement Structure for the County.
- O-WW-6** Achieve compliance with the Urban Wastewater Treatment (Amendment) Regulations 2004 with regard to wastewater collection, treatment and discharge and implement the relevant recommendations set out in the document *Urban Wastewater Discharges in Ireland for Population Equivalents Greater than 500 Persons – A Report for the Years 2006 and 2007* (EPA).
- O-WW-7** Implement the Sludge Management Plan for the County.
- O-WW-8** Achieve compliance with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.



9.4 Surface water drainage

Due to its impervious surfaces, the built environment will create an increase in surface water run-off. The majority of towns and villages in County Sligo are coping with surface water run-off either through natural dissipation into nearby watercourses or through the installation of artificial drainage systems. The presence of natural environment, incorporating woodlands and wetlands, aids in retaining surface water, thereby helping in the regulation of stream flows. Storm water retention facilities provide temporary storage for surface water that is in excess of the capacity available in downstream channels. This method is considered to be in accordance with better practice guidelines and will be encouraged in County Sligo. Individual developments facilitated under the guidance of this development plan shall be obliged, in all cases where surface water drainage measures are required, to provide a surface water drainage system separated from the foul drainage system.

In the case of one-off rural dwellings or extensions, except in circumstances where an existing surface water drainage system is available to the proposed development site and which, in the opinion of the planning authority, has adequate capacity to accommodate the identified surface water loading, surface water shall be disposed of, in its entirety, within the curtilage of the development site by way of suitably sized soak holes. In the case of driveways, drainage measures shall be provided to a detail acceptable to the planning authority so as to avoid run-off from the site to the adjoining public road.

For all other greenfield developments, in general it is the policy of Sligo County Council to require the limitation of surface water run-off to pre-development levels. Where a developer can clearly demonstrate that capacity exists to accommodate run-off levels in excess of greenfield levels, the planning authority will give consideration to such proposals on a case by case basis. In the case of brownfield development, while existing surface water drainage measures will be taken into account, some attenuation measures may be required, at the discretion of the planning authority. In line with the above, Sligo County Council will consider all drainage proposals consistent with SDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems).

Surface water drainage policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-SW-1** Require the provision and use of separate foul and surface water drainage systems.
- P-SW-2** Ensure that developments are kept at an appropriate distance from watercourses, to protect them from contamination, allow for natural drainage and facilitate channel clearing maintenance.
- P-SW-3** Preserve and protect the water quality of natural surface water storage sites, such as wetlands, where these help to regulate stream flows, recharge groundwater and screen pollutants (such features also provide important habitat functions).
- P-SW-4** Protect wetland areas and floodplains from development.
- P-SW-5** Prohibit the alteration of natural drainage systems and, in the case of development works, require the provision of acceptable mitigation measures in order to minimise the risk of flooding and negative impacts on water quality (including run-off, erosion and sedimentation).
- P-SW-6** Protect drainage characteristics of river channels and streams that can facilitate surface water drainage, by ensuring that development is kept at an appropriate distance from stream banks and/or adequate protection measures are put in place.
- P-SW-7** Promote storm water retention facilities for new developments and existing catchment areas, particularly where developments are proposed in proximity to an existing open water course or stream.
- P-SW-8** Encourage and, where appropriate, require that the permitted flow from a development to a public storm water drain or watercourse is restricted/equal to the natural run-off rates from the undeveloped site.

9.5 Waste management

The large amount of waste produced by humans must be significantly reduced or recycled in a manner that is least damaging to the environment so as to increase more sustainable living. Waste comes from a wide range of sources, including construction, industrial activities, agriculture and households. The level of interest in waste minimisation and effective waste management has dramatically increased in recent years. Diverting waste from landfill is one of the greatest waste management challenges facing our Country.

The Connacht Waste Management Plan (2006-2011) was adopted by the six Connacht local authorities (Galway, Leitrim, Mayo, Roscommon and Sligo County Council and Galway City Council). The plan re-emphasises the waste management targets to be achieved in order to comply with national and EU targets, namely: recycle 48%, thermally treat 33% and landfill 19% of our waste.

Almost one third (30%) of Sligo's household waste was recycled in 2008, which was an increase in comparison to the amount recycled in 2007. However, in order to reach the ambitious target of 48% recycling of household waste, the continued roll-out and use of the 'third bin' for organic waste is essential.

It is expected to continue to work with waste collectors and others to increase the percentage of organic waste diverted from landfill. There are ever-increasing demands placed on organisations and households, but the need for proper waste management continues to be of paramount importance for economic, legislative and environmental reasons.

9.5.1 Municipal waste infrastructure

There is a continuing need to avoid the production of waste at source and to try and divert as much as possible from landfill. This diversion of waste is achieved through the provision of facilities and services, followed by education and enforcement. The bring-bank network, civic amenity sites, composting site, kerbside recycling, home composting and the introduction of a separate organic waste collection – all help divert waste from landfill. Sligo County Council will continue to examine ways of managing waste in a more efficient manner.

Dry recyclable wastes are catered for at the two recycling centres located in Sligo town and Tobercurry. The use of these facilities continues to grow and complement the separate kerbside collection of dry recyclable materials, which is available throughout Sligo.

Adequate infrastructure is in place in County Sligo to cater for the quantities of dry municipal waste produced, and the challenge now is to maintain and increase their use by both domestic and commercial customers. Glass is diverted from landfill via a network of 40 recycling/bring-bank sites located throughout Sligo town and county.

Organic kitchen waste makes up approximately 30% of all household waste generated. Home composting is a positive and simple option to deal with this waste stream. The Environment Section continues to promote the use of home composters and offers them for sale at a subsidised rate. Home composting and the introduction of the 'third bin' for organic kitchen waste will greatly increase the diversion of this waste from landfill, thus increasing Sligo's recycling rates.

Landfill is the least desirable option in dealing with waste, and is at the bottom of the EU waste hierarchy. However, landfill is required to deal with the waste that cannot be recycled, composted or thermally treated, which is estimated to be 19% of all waste generated in Connacht.

A greater percentage of landfill capacity is required until the necessary infrastructure is put in place to recycle, compost and in particular thermally treat waste. We also have to continue to deal with historic situations and the environmental problems caused by historic (i.e. closed) landfills. There is a need to carry out risk assessments on closed landfills and to implement the necessary measures to reduce any of the environmental impacts which may be associated with the landfill.

9.5.2 Construction and demolition waste

As 2.6 million tonnes of construction/demolition waste is produced annually in Ireland, with only an estimated 43% recycled, Sligo County Council will seek to promote the recycling and reuse of construction/demolition waste, which will help reduce the demands of the construction industry for aggregates. The Council will examine the scope for recovery of construction and demolition waste from local authority projects, as well as the use of recycled construction materials in site development, road building and other infrastructural projects.

Measures may also be incorporated into the licensing procedures for industry to encourage a reduction in environmental impact. Construction and demolition waste management plans are to be submitted as part of certain development proposals. Extractive developments are encouraged to incorporate C&D recycling facilities, which would facilitate the use of recovered materials in the restoration of sites, subject to compliance with environmental legislation.

9.5.3 Hazardous waste

Sligo County Council will co-operate with other agencies in relation to the planning, organisation, authorisation and supervision of the disposal of hazardous waste. The anticipated provision of a hazardous waste collection facility at Tobercurry Recycling Centre will assist in diverting hazardous waste to the appropriate recovery and disposal facilities. The movement of hazardous waste shall be controlled using the appropriate waste management legislation.

9.5.4 Green waste

Green garden waste is a bulky waste fraction that should be diverted from landfill. Sligo County Council completed the construction of a green waste composting facility at Ballysadare. This facility opened in June 2008 and is accepting green waste and selling peat-free compost generated at the site.

9.5.5 Litter control

Litter has a negative effect on our environment, with implications for tourism and investment. To counteract litter pollution, it is the policy of the County Council to implement the Litter Management Plan 2007-2010. Initiatives under this Plan include:

- enforcement;
- establishing a partnership between the Council and community groups in tackling litter management;
- promoting environmental education through schools and community groups;
- highlighting litter problem areas and developing initiatives to solve litter problems in those areas.

9.5.6 Energy recovery

Energy recovery is a further method of waste management, which is generally applied to landfills. Although no landfills will be operated within County Sligo, energy recovery can be harnessed from biogas, a renewable and environmentally-friendly fuel resource produced in large sewage treatment projects.

Box 9.C Existing and proposed waste management facilities and services in Sligo

<p>Door-to-door/kerbside collection. This involves the collection of recyclables from individual households and was introduced in Sligo City in 2003. It is proposed to extend this service by rolling out the third bin which caters for organic waste.</p>
<p>Bring-bank network. There are currently 40 recycling/bring-bank sites located around the county, with some of these in Sligo City. It is proposed to increase the number of these facilities. There has been an upgrading of the bring-bank network in rural areas and extension to villages with a population greater than 200. The recycling banks currently provide facilities for glass and aluminium cans.</p>
<p>Waste recycling centres. There are two waste recycling centres in Sligo catering for the following waste streams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ recyclable waste – glass, metal, packaging, dry recyclables from domestic sources etc. (feed to local materials recovery facilities) ■ bulky waste – wood and metal waste, white goods etc.; ■ priority/hazardous waste – batteries, waste oils etc.; ■ green garden waste; ■ light construction and demolition waste; <p>Waste electrical goods are accepted free of charge at these facilities. It is proposed to extend the waste streams accepted at these facilities, one example being the inclusion of hazardous waste.</p>
<p>Materials recovery facility. One such facility exists in Sligo City. This sorts and bales recyclable waste from door-to-door collection systems and bring-banks. It also processes source-segregated recyclable waste from commerce and industry.</p>
<p>Construction and demolition waste. This is one of the largest sources of waste. A facility will be provided within the County, to deal with the segregation and crushing of construction and demolition waste for reuse.</p>
<p>Transfer station. This involves the compaction and transfer of residual waste. The private sector currently provides a materials recovery facility and waste transfer station within Sligo City.</p>
<p>Ballysadare composting facility. This facility opened in June 2008 and is accepting green waste and selling peat free compost generated at the site.</p>
<p>End-of-life vehicle recycling facilities. There are a number of these facilities in Sligo where members of the public can now bring there scrap cars (free of charge).</p>

Waste management policies (I)

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-WM-1** Promote reduction, recycling, reuse and proper management of all waste through practices which limit environmental pollution.
- P-WM-2** Liaise with and encourage the private sector, semi-state and voluntary groups to actively pursue initiatives which involve recycling and/or reuse. Minimise unnecessary consumption of depletable natural resources and, through the proper reuse and recycling of waste, divert as much waste from landfill as possible.
- P-WM-3** Promote the development of facilities in accordance with the waste hierarchy principle, which involves a shift toward preventive and waste minimisation measures, while developing recycling and reuse, disposal with energy recovery and, as the last option, disposal of residual waste to landfill. [continues on the next page]

Waste management policies (II)

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-WM-4** Promote measures to reduce the production of waste and encourage the recycling of construction and demolition waste and the reuse of aggregates and other materials in future construction projects.
- P-WM-5** Require the incorporation of waste reduction/minimisation measures in the design and construction of developments, particularly those that are likely to give rise to large amounts of C&D waste. For certain developments, site-specific waste plans will be required.
- P-WM-6** Require all new developments – including residential, commercial and industrial developments, neighbourhood centres, shopping and retail areas – to provide adequate storage for the three segregated municipal waste types (organic, recyclable and land-fill waste) and incorporate waste management facilities commensurate with their nature and scale. Waste collection points shall have adequate access to provide for loading and further division after recycling on site, in order to facilitate the achievement of high recycling levels, as specified in the Waste Management Plan.
- P-WM-7** Encourage and enforce initiatives under Waste Management Regulations made under the Waste Management Acts 1996 to 2010 and implement the *polluter pays* principle, *proximity* principle, *precautionary* principle and the principle of *shared responsibility* in all waste management initiatives and investigations.

Waste management objectives

It is the objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-WM-1** Implement the Connacht Waste Management Plan and strive to provide, or assist the private sector in the provision of the necessary waste management infrastructure required for the achievement of the targets.
- O-WM-2** Make appropriate provision for a bring bank centre for glass and cans in each village.
- O-WM-3** Co-operate with other agencies in ensuring the safe disposal of hazardous waste by implementing the relevant provisions of the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2008-2012.
- O-WM-4** Examine the feasibility of energy recovery from large sewage treatment facilities.
- O-WM-5** Strive to implement the Litter Management Plan 2007-2010 and successor plans.
- O-WM-6** Where resources allow, carry out risk assessments in accordance with the EPA published code of practice *Environmental Risk Assessments for Unregulated Waste Disposal Sites* for any historic unregulated waste disposal sites identified and develop appropriate remediation plans for such sites.
- O-WM-7** Promote the roll-out and encourage the use of the third bin for organic waste.
- O-WM-8** In relation to any proposals for development of lands that may be contaminated or filled with waste (e.g. reclaimed/filled lands), require the applicants to engage specialist environmental consultants to investigate and assess the presence and extent of contamination, and to recommend remediation measures for agreement with the Local Authorities.
- O-WM-9** Require the preparation of Waste Management Plans for the construction stages of developments where deemed necessary.

10. Environmental quality



10.1 Water quality

Water quality includes surface water, groundwater, estuarine and coastal waters. The main sources of water pollution are agriculture, forestry, industrial discharges, wastewater treatment plant discharges and effluent discharges from unserviced developments. It is the objective of Sligo County Council to control the aforementioned developments and activities, through planning and development policies and through the enforcement of national water quality legislation, to ensure they do not adversely affect water quality.

Water quality monitoring and management is governed by the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD - EC/2000/60/EC) and provides for water management on the basis of River Basin Districts (RBDs). The functional area of County Sligo falls within three of these RBDs: the Western RBD, Shannon International RBD and the North-Western International RBD. In accordance with the provisions of the Directive, waters fall into five status categories: bad, poor, moderate, good and high. The WFD requires that our waters achieve at least good status and that none of our waters deteriorate by 2015.

The overall objectives of a river basin project are:

- to establish an integrated monitoring and management system for all waters within a River Basin District,
- to develop a dynamic programme of management measures and
- to produce a River Basin Management Plan (RBMP).

The Management Plans will identify the specific environmental objectives to be achieved by the end of 2015 and the programme of measures, which are the actions that will be taken to achieve the objectives.

Sligo County Council is responsible for the implementation of the RBMPs. Development plan policy must have due regard for the programme of measures detailed in the Management Plans. The RBMPs came into effect in July 2010.

10.1.1 Quality of estuarine and coastal waters

Sligo County Council must ensure that planning and development policies take due account of the provisions of the Water Framework Directive and the European Communities (Quality of Shellfish Waters) Regulations 2006, in order to maintain the existing water quality status in estuarine and coastal waters.

The Garavogue Estuary and Sligo Bay (including Ballysadare Bay and Drumcliff Bay)

Water in the Garavogue Estuary is classed as having good status, while Sligo Bay is classified as high status. The new wastewater treatment plant serving Sligo City and Environs is now fully operational. This will ensure that municipal discharges of wastewater are treated in accordance with the requirements of national legislation. Ballysadare Estuary and Drumcliff Estuary are classed as good status and high status respectively. In 2009, Drumcliff Bay and Sligo Bay were designated as shellfish waters in accordance with the European Communities (Quality of Shellfish Waters) Regulations 2006 (implemented as S.I. No 268 of 2006). Ballysadare Bay may be designated a shellfish water at some date in the future.

The DoEHLG has prepared Pollution Reduction Programmes for Sligo Bay and Drumcliff Bay, which must be implemented by Sligo County Council. Monitoring of shellfish waters is carried out by the Marine Institute on a national basis.

Part of Killala Bay (and Moy Estuary)

Water quality in the Moy Estuary is currently classed as moderate status and Killala Bay as high status. A portion of the functional area of Sligo County Council borders the Moy Estuary, south-west of Enniscrone.

10.1.2 Bathing water quality

A new Directive on bathing water quality (Directive 2006/7/EC), which came into force on 24 March 2006, will replace the existing 1976 Directive with effect from 31 December 2014. The new Directive gives a stronger focus to the protection of public health and requires a more proactive approach to the management of bathing water quality.

The Directive will require the preparation of bathing water profiles and assessments of the causes of pollution that might affect bathing waters and impair bathers' health. The Directive also requires an increased provision for public participation, allowing the public to make informed choices about when and where to bathe.

The new Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008 (S.I. No. 79 of 2008) transposed the EU Bathing Water Directive 2006 into Irish Law on 24 March 2008. Transitional measures will be in place until the Regulations are fully implemented. The existing designated bathing waters at Mullaghmore, Enniscrone and Rosses Point will be regarded as 'identified bathing waters' pending the identification of bathing waters by 2011 as required by the 2008 Regulations.

The overall objective is to ensure that the quality of bathing water is maintained and, where necessary improved, so that it complies with specified standards designed to protect public health and the environment.

10.1.3 River water quality

The most recent EPA report on river water quality in County Sligo relates to 2008. The regional EPA laboratory monitored 65 sampling stations on 34 rivers and streams in County Sligo during 2008. In 2009, all rivers within the county were assigned a specific 'current status'.

The Water Framework Directive places an obligation on local authorities to achieve the good status classification of all rivers within the timescales detailed in the Directive. It will be necessary to improve current bad, poor and moderate status rivers to the good status classification and prevent existing good and high status rivers from deteriorating.

There are two designated salmonid rivers in the County: the Moy and the Owengarve. Sligo County Council will strictly control development and activities in the catchments of rivers in order to protect waters from pollution and achieve the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.

10.1.4 Lake water quality

Lough Gill, Lough Easky and Lough Talt are particularly important in terms of public water supply, while Lough Arrow is used as a raw water source in a number of Group Water Schemes serving a wide rural hinterland. These four larger lakes are targeted for particular attention in terms of water quality monitoring, due to their scale and economic and social significance as a raw water source for drinking water supplies.

Lough Talt and Lough Easky are currently classified as high status and good status respectively, and these classifications must be retained. Lough Gill and Lough Arrow are currently classified as moderate status. Good status must be achieved within the timescales detailed in the Directive.

Sligo County Council will control development and activities in the catchments of all lakes in order to protect and maintain existing water quality and improve water quality in lake systems that are currently not achieving the requirements of the Water Framework Directive. Lakes classified under the Water Framework Directive are detailed in Table 10.A below.

Table 10.A Lakes and water quality status in County Sligo

Lake type	Lake name	River Basin District	Current water status	Grid reference
Branded fishery lakes*	Talt	WRBD	high	G-39-15
Framework Directive lakes	Arrow	WRBD	moderate	G-79-11
	Cloonacleigha	WRBD	good	G-61-15
	Easky	WRBD	good	G-44-22
	Gara	SIRBD	good	G-71-00
	Gill	WRBD	moderate	G-75-34
	Templehouse	WRBD	bad	G-61-10
	Bellanascarrow	WRBD	moderate	G-68-15
	Dargan	WRBD	moderate	G-72-28
	Glencar Lake	WRBD	good	G-74-43
Important trout fishery lakes	Colgagh	WRBD	n/a	G-73-36
	Bo	SIRBD	n/a	G-79-18
	Nasool	WRBD	n/a	G-79-07
	Labe	WRBD	good	G-73-12
	Bree	WRBD	n/a	G-56-28
	Aghree	WRBD	n/a	G-51-29
	Gal	WRBD	n/a	G-44-21
	Rumduff	WRBD	n/a	G-44-21

Note: N/A = interim status not assigned

* Branded fishery lakes are designated by Bord Fáilte and the Central Fisheries Board and are considered significant in terms of their value as salmon and trout fisheries

10.1.5 Groundwater quality

In accordance with the provisions of the Water Framework Directive groundwater is assigned a status based on both chemical status and quantitative status. All groundwater within the functional area of Sligo County Council has been assessed as at “good status” in terms of quantitative status. In terms of chemical status, groundwater is generally at good status, but specific poor status groundwater bodies must be improved within timescales detailed in the relevant river basin district management plans. Under the provisions of the Water Framework Directive, Sligo County Council must protect and maintain the existing good status groundwater bodies and improve poor status groundwater in Sligo by 2021. An extended timeframe until 2021 has been included in the RBD Plans to allow compliance with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.

A practical and effective means of protecting groundwater and preventing pollution is the use of a Groundwater Protection Scheme. The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) prepared a Groundwater Protection Scheme for County Sligo in 2009. The scheme will offer guidelines for local authority departments in carrying out their functions and will provide a framework to assist in decision making on the location, nature and control of developments and activities in order to protect groundwater.

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to ensure that the water quality status objectives detailed in the Water Framework Directive are achieved and to protect groundwater from pollution, by controlling development activities that may have an adverse effect on groundwater quality.

Water quality policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-WQ-1** Ensure that all development proposals have regard to the policies, objectives and measures detailed in the River Basin Management Plans.
- P-WQ-2** Ensure that all development proposals have regard to the policies and objectives of the Sligo Groundwater Protection Scheme to ensure the protection of groundwater resources and groundwater-dependent habitats and species.
- P-WQ-3** Ensure compliance with the provisions of the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 (S.I.9 of 2010) and the Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC) on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration.
- P-WQ-4** Ensure compliance with the provisions of the European Communities (Quality of Shellfish Waters) Regulations and the objectives of Shellfish Pollution Reduction Programmes.
- P-WQ-5** Ensure compliance with the requirements of the Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008 (S.I. No. 79 of 2008).
- P-WQ-6** Protect the quality of estuarine, coastal and designated Shellfish Waters by controlling land-based discharges to these waters.
- P-WQ-7** Strictly limit and control new development in or near the catchment areas of water bodies, particularly salmonid rivers and those that are the source of the following drinking water supplies:
 - Lough Gill
 - Lough Arrow
 - Kilsellagh Source catchment
 - Lough Talt
 - Lough Easky
 - Gortnaleck and Lyle streams
 - Riverstown Source Catchment
 - GWS Source Catchments
- P-WQ-8** Require adherence to any source protection plans for the above-mentioned drinking water source catchments.
- P-WQ-9** Require that all proposals for on-site wastewater treatment systems be designed and constructed in accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency's *Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (PE≤10)* (2009).
- P-WQ-10** Prohibit any development which is likely to lead to the deterioration of water quality.
- P-WQ-11** Ensure compliance with European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2009.



River Moy at Banada

Water quality objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-WQ-1** Implement the management measures contained in the Western RBD, Shannon International RBD and North-western International RBD Management Plans.
- O-WQ-2** Implement the Shellfish Pollution Reduction Programmes.
- O-WQ-3** Ensure the continuation of measures to enforce water pollution legislation.
- O-WQ-4** Seek to achieve consistency between development management and environmental pollution control measures, taking adaptation to climate change into account.
- O-WQ-5** Continue monitoring, auditing and reviewing County Sligo's environmental status with regard to the quality of groundwater, river, lake, estuarine and coastal waters.
- O-WQ-6** Require farmers in high-risk areas to prepare nutrient management plans.
- O-WQ-7** Consider drafting bye-laws under the Local Government (Water Pollution) (Amendment) Act 1990, where it is considered necessary for the regulation of agricultural and forestry activities and on-site wastewater treatment systems.
- O-WQ-8** Maintain existing satisfactory water quality and improve all unsatisfactory waters in the County in accordance with the provisions of the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC).
- O-WQ-9** Prepare and enforce Source Protection Plans for drinking water catchments within the County.
- O-WQ-10** Require that all discharges to waters and sewers be licensed in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government (Water Pollution) Acts 1977 & 1990, European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (S.I. No. 272 of 2009) and European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations, 2010.
- O-WQ-11** Promote public awareness of invasive species, to maximise protection for all water bodies from infestation by invasive species, including Zebra Mussel, and Japanese Knotweed.
- O-WQ-12** Promote public awareness on the protection of water quality and water conservation.

10.2 Coastal zone management

From sheltered bays, beaches, small islands and wild Atlantic surf, Sligo possesses a varied and spectacular coastline. The coastline, however, is a finite resource that provides environmental, economic, recreational and aesthetic benefits and access to marine resources such as fisheries and aquaculture. It also contains many sensitive ecosystems – ranging from sand dune systems to salt marshes and estuaries rich in marine and bird life – and is significant in terms of cultural and archaeological heritage.

The primary attraction of the Sligo coast is its relatively unspoilt character, its geological and hydrodynamic variability. Increasingly, the coastal zone is coming under pressure from, for example:

- tourism providers who may seek to exploit scenic views in the provision of accommodation or other facilities;
- individual homeowners;
- maricultural developments;
- wind farm operators who wish to avail of coastal locations with high wind speeds;
- holiday makers and/or surfers looking for unspoilt coastlines.

10.2.1 Development in coastal areas

The coastal zone shall generally refer to the area between the nearest continuous road and the High Water Mark. However, it may extend beyond such roads and therefore, for coastal zone management purposes, “it extends as far inland and seawards as is required by management objectives” (The European Workshop on Coastal Zone Management, Dorset, 1991). Accordingly, planning-related matters will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the planning authority when considering planning applications or development proposals.

Pressure for development needs to be examined in the context of a coastal environment undergoing fairly rapid change, as the coastal zone is subject to constant pressures from various agents of erosion, potential pollutants and conflicting user groups. It is estimated that coastal zone erosion results in a loss of land area of up to 300 hectares per year around the Irish coast.

Coastal Zone Management aims to achieve a more efficient and sustainable use of the coastal resource. The impacts arising from climate variability, including changing weather patterns and predicted rising sea levels, will be most readily discernible at the coast.

Flooding of low-lying coastal areas is likely to become more frequent as a result of predicted increased intensity and frequency of oceanic storms. The likely outcome may exacerbate coastal erosion, which could have a devastating effect on existing development and infrastructure. New proposed developments in all low lying coastal areas should include flood risk assessment.

The Government’s only discussion document on the subject, entitled *Coastal Zone Management - A Draft Policy for Ireland* (1996), which is not yet official policy, states that “policies of limitation and curtailment on tourism and leisure development and use are ... necessary to deal with the increasing pressure”.

Within the County there are 19 coastal NHAs, SPAs, SACs, Ramsar Sites and Nature Reserves. The boundaries of such areas do not, however, define the limits of actual or potential conservation interest within the coastal zone. Some sites without formal recognition are locally important and will be taken into consideration in the assessment of development proposals. (See policies in Section 7.1 Natural heritage).

Policies for development in coastal areas

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-DCA-1** Generally restrict development in the coastal zone - specifically between coastal roads and the sea - except where it can be demonstrated that it does not detract from views or impact on environmentally sensitive areas. Exceptions will be considered for sustainable tourism development, public infrastructural works and development that is contiguous with existing towns and villages.
- P-DCA-2** Restrict the location of industrial development within the coastal zone to resource-based activities that have a clear and demonstrable need, i.e. those dependent on resources offered at the sea or coast (e.g. maritime industries, mariculture). All such proposals will be subject to the strict application of location, siting and design criteria.
- P-DCA-3** Promote existing degraded coastal areas, e.g. those where quarrying or other deleterious activities have taken place, as significant brownfield development sites, subject to appropriate environmental mitigation measures and the strict application of location, siting and design criteria.
- P-DCA-4** Any development proposal in coastal areas will be subject to the requirements of the Habitats Directive, including the assessment of potential cumulative, in-combination effects in association with other, plans, programmes, projects and works.

Objectives for development in coastal areas

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-DCA-1** Maintain and update the Marine Emergency Response Plan for the Sligo Coast.
- O-DCA-2** Control and minimise sources of water and land pollution.
- O-DCA-3** Consider the establishment of a local forum for each of the coastal cells along the County's coastline, involving landowners, local communities and relevant interest groups, to explore and resolve coastal zone management issues that are specific to each area.

10.2.2 Coastal protection

Coastal protection works aim to reduce land loss and the frequency of flooding. In the past, engineering works tended to impose armoured defences along the shoreline, whereas in recent times there has been a preference for a 'softer' approach, i.e. working with natural processes rather than opposing them, where possible. The coastline is subject to a continuous natural process of erosion and deposition within specific coastal cells. These cells consist of a source area (where erosion is the dominant process) and a sink area (where accretion is the dominant process). This interlinked system requires that any intervention – e.g. in the form of a breakwater, seawall, pier or groyne – be restricted to the cell or sub-cell boundaries within which the intervention occurs.

The following general guidelines should also be adhered to in the coastal zone:

- no building or development within 100 metres of 'soft' shorelines;
- no further reclamation of estuary land;
- no removal of sand dunes, beach sand or gravel;
- all coastal defence measures should be assessed for environmental impact;
- careful consideration should be given to the implications of using 'hard engineering' solutions.

10. Environmental quality

Initial studies (*Sligo Coastal Zone Management Plan - Draft*, H.A. Saunders, 1995 for Sligo County Council) suggested that there may be five coastal cells along the Sligo coastline (see Fig. 10.B). Hard or semi-hard engineering structures are often the only robust protection solutions at exposed locations. Such structures are normally confined to densely-populated coastal villages or locations where it is considered necessary to protect significant public infrastructure (e.g. harbours, piers, outfalls and public roadways).



Fig. 10.B Features of Sligo's coastal zone

The planning and design of such works must have regard to the existing coastal cell systems and the associated coastal dynamic behaviour. In light of the sometimes high cost of such defences, there is a case for restricting and containing development near the coast, so as to minimise the demand for costly protection measures.

Coastal protection works that have been carried out by the Council are the Strandhill Coast Protection Scheme and Mullaghmore Harbour Breakwater Improvement Works. Dune management schemes involving 'softer' methods have been carried out at Enniscrone, Strandhill and Mullaghmore, on a phased basis. Other proposed projects (subject to funding) are set out in Box 10.C

Box 10.C Proposed coastal protection works in County Sligo

Strandhill effluent treatment works – coastal protection works
Enniscrone strand - protection of riverbank, pumping station and lifeguard building
Pullaheeny - coastal protection
Strandhill - dune management
Easkey - scenic drive protection



Policies for coastal protection

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-CP-1** Ensure that regard is paid to visual and environmental considerations in the design of coastal defence works.
- P-CP-2** Ensure that any developments permitted within the coastal zone are appropriately sited, having regard to coastal flooding, vulnerability and the predicted rise in sea level.
- P-CP-3** Require that flood risk assessment is carried out in relation to development proposals within the coastal zones, where appropriate.
- P-CP-4** Establish development limits and natural buffers at the coast, particularly in conjunction with the preparation of local area plans and mini-plans.
- P-CP-5** Strictly control the nature and pattern of development on all promontories and headlands, and ensure that, if development is permitted, it is designed and landscaped to the highest standards. Landscaping will be of a type that is predominantly native to the area and sea-salt spray-resistant.

Objectives for coastal protection

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-CP-1** Carry out the coastal zone management and protection works outlined in Box 10.C.
- O-CP-2** Identify, prioritise and implement coastal protection works within the coastal zone that are considered necessary, subject to the availability of resources.
- O-CP-3** Monitor existing dune management schemes on an ongoing basis and effect appropriate repairs, improvements and extensions, subject to the availability of resources and compliance with the Habitats Directive.
- O-CP-4** Examine existing beach bye-laws and make appropriate amendments, in the interest of protecting sand dunes from encroachment and damage.
- O-CP-5** Continue to employ soft engineering techniques (i.e. dune stabilisation and planting) where appropriate.

10.3 Air quality

Sligo is fortunate in enjoying a high-quality environment, with very little industry contributing to problems of air pollution. However, emissions caused by car use and the burning of fossil fuels have a detrimental effect on the environment. In this regard, steps will be taken to reduce dependence on bituminous coal. Some progress has been made through the ban, in October 2003, on the marketing, sale and distribution of this kind of coal in Sligo City and the adjoining townlands of Finisklin, Ballydoogan and Knappaghmore. At present there are no government plans to extend the ban to smaller towns and villages in County Sligo. The Council will seek to implement the provisions of the Air Pollution Act 1987.

In association with the foregoing, the Council will promote an increase in the use of alternative energy sources through the design and servicing of buildings – e.g. improving solar gain through building orientation and using solar panels and ground source heat pumps. A reduction in the number of car trips will also be facilitated through more sustainable development patterns in towns and villages that encourage walking and cycling. The Council will also support rural public transport initiatives.

Air quality policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-AQ-1** Support the ban on bituminous coal in Sligo City and Environs and encourage the use of smokeless fuel throughout the County.
- P-AQ-2** Encourage a more energy-efficient approach to the design and servicing of buildings for residential, commercial, industrial and other uses, including public buildings.
- P-AQ-3** Facilitate and encourage an increase in the supply and use of public transport.
- P-AQ-4** Ensure, in conjunction with the EPA, that all existing and new developments are operated in a manner that does not contribute to deterioration in air quality.
- P-AQ-5** Ensure all new developments incorporate appropriate measures to minimise odour nuisance from the development.
- P-AQ-6** Promote the retention of trees, hedgerows and other vegetation, and encourage tree planting as a means of air purification and filtering of suspended particles.
- P-AQ-7** Protect the air quality in the County and promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development.

10.4 Noise control

In Irish legislation, noise is addressed under the EPA Act 1992 and the EPA Noise Regulations 1994. Most large-scale activities that result in high noise levels are subject to an Integrated Pollution Control (IPC) licence from the EPA.

Noise control policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-NC-1** Seek to protect the amenity of dwellings, businesses, community facilities and other existing developments when assessing proposals for development that is likely to generate significant levels of noise.
- P-NC-2** Ensure all new developments incorporate appropriate measures to minimise noise nuisance from the development.

10.5 Major Accidents Directive (Seveso II)

The Major Accidents Directive (96/82EC), also known as the Seveso II Directive, was introduced into Irish law through the EC (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2000 (S.I. No. 74 of 2006). The Directive seeks to prevent major accidents involving dangerous substances and chemicals and limit their consequences for humans (in terms of health and safety) and the environment.

This development plan does not designate sites or zones for uses that might be classified as Seveso establishments and no such establishments exist at present. However, such uses will not normally be permitted in the vicinity of residential areas, areas of concentrated public use or in environmentally sensitive areas. There may also be sites in neighbouring counties that might impact on land in Sligo.

The Council is obliged to pursue the aims of the Directive through controls on the siting of new establishments. The Council must seek technical advice from the National Authority for Occupational Health and Safety in relation to:

- the provision of a new Seveso establishment (or modification to an existing establishment) which may pose risks of major accidents;
- development within a certain distance of a Seveso establishment;
- certain developments considered as being capable of adding to the risk of a major accident in the vicinity of a Seveso establishment.

Any relevant development proposals will be referred to the Health and Safety Authority, whose technical advice will be taken into account in the overall assessment of the development, in addition to normal planning criteria.

Major Accidents Directive policy

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-MAD-1** Consult with the Health and Safety Authority when assessing proposals for a new Seveso establishment or modifications to an establishment, and when assessing proposals for development in the vicinity of existing Seveso establishments.

Major Accidents Directive objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-MAD-1** Maintain appropriate distances between establishments covered by the Major Accidents Directive and residential areas, areas of public use and areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest.

10.6 Climate change and flood risk management

10.6.1 Climate change

Ireland's *National Climate Strategy (2007-2012)* builds on the Government's commitment to sustainable development as outlined in the document *Towards 2016* and the NDP 2007-2013. The Strategy is one of a number of inter-related Government initiatives that will address energy and climate change issues. Significant work has been done to predict the likely impacts of climate change for Ireland. There will be implications for water supply, flooding, coastal erosion, agriculture, land use planning and health.

Sligo Borough and County Councils have commenced the preparation of a joint Climate Change Strategy, in accordance with the national Strategy. It is an objective of Sligo County Council to implement the provisions of the Joint Sligo Borough and County Council Climate Change Strategy, when finalised.

The impact of climate change on sea levels, the nature and pattern of rainfall events and weather patterns generally is relevant. Although the impacts of climate change are not known, it is widely believed that climate change may result in higher risk of flooding both inland and at coastal locations, through the raising of sea levels, the occurrence of more intense rainfall events and more frequent and intensive storm activity. It is important, therefore, that this issue is addressed within the CDP as decisions on the scale and location of future development may increase flood risk.

10.6.2 Flood risk

Flooding from rivers and coastal waters is a natural phenomenon that cannot be entirely prevented. Flooding occurs when the capacity of a watercourse to convey water through an area is exceeded. Flooding also occurs in coastal areas, when sea water encroaches on land due to failure of coastal defences, exceptional climatic or other factors. Flooding from the sea and from rivers is probably best known, but prolonged and intense rainfall can also cause sewer flooding, flooding from overland flow and ponding in hollows.

The man-made environment can exacerbate the consequences of flooding. Development in a flood plain, or building in areas where existing drainage infrastructure is deficient or inadequate, places property and people at risk. Flooding may impact on the economy, social well-being, public health and the environment. The impact on individuals and communities can be significant in terms of personal suffering and financial loss.

Guidelines for Planning Authorities – The Planning System and Flood Risk Management

Following from the EU Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks, the DoEHLG and the Office of Public Works (OPW) published *Planning Guidelines: The Planning System and Flood Risk Management* in November 2009. An accompanying document entitled *Technical Appendices* outlines the scale at which it is appropriate to carry out flood risk assessment. The Guidelines recommend a clear and transparent assessment of flood risk at all stages in the planning process, and indicate that Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is required at County Development Plan level in order to provide a broad assessment of all types of flood risk, to inform strategic land-use planning decisions.

The precautionary approach should be adopted in carrying out Flood Risk Assessments and the following key guiding principles should be followed in all instances:

- avoidance of development in areas at risk of flooding by not permitting development in such areas unless fully justified and where capability exists to manage risk without impacting elsewhere;
- application of a sequential approach to flood risk management based on:
 - avoidance of development in areas of high/moderate flood risk;
 - reduction of flood risk through incorporation of less vulnerable uses;
 - mitigation of flood risk in assessing suitability of locations for development;
- the incorporation of flood risk assessment into the process of making decisions on planning applications and planning appeals.

Progress in flood risk assessment

The OPW is currently involved in preparing Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments (PRFAs) with the relevant local authorities, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other key agencies. This will identify Areas with Potential Significant flood Risk (APSRs) based on historic and predictive data and consultation with stakeholders.

Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management Plans (CFRAMs) will be established nationwide and will include a prioritised set of flood risk management measures for their relevant areas, including the use of physical and management responses.

Detailed flood mapping is not yet available for County Sligo and therefore Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) at this stage must rely on available information.

Available information

The current sources of information regarding flooding and flood risk are as follows:

- historical recording of spatial information prepared by the OPW in consultation with local authorities (this map gives a clear illustration of the number and distribution of previous flood events across the County and is available on www.floodmaps.ie);
- OPW benefiting lands mapping which shows lands that would have benefited from arterial drainage works (available as a layer on www.floodmaps.ie), which is a surrogate indicator of flood risk;
- extent of historical flooding shown on 6-inch Ordnance Survey mapping;
- mineral alluvial soil mapping (An Teagasc dataset).

It should be borne in mind that works have taken place in some flood locations to alleviate risk of repeat flood events and data quality is variable.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

In compliance with the DoEHLG Guidelines, a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been prepared as part of the CDP (see separate document accompanying this Plan). The SFRA provides a description of the spatial distribution of flood risk at appropriate scales for the Plan.

The 30 mini-plans contained in the Plan have each been dealt with at a detailed local scale. Whilst the resulting areas that are depicted as being liable to floods are not entirely reliable, they do provide an indication that further assessment of flood potential may be required.

County Sligo and its settlements have been analysed using GIS to determine the presence of flood risk factors. In turn, these factors form the basis of a scoring system that prioritises the need for detailed flood risk assessment and management studies. The settlements have been ranked according to flood risk, position within the settlement hierarchy, and the availability and status of recent flood studies.

It should be noted that this is a county-scale strategic GIS analysis based on available flood risk criteria only. Flood risk analyses for subsidiary land-use plans as well as for the next County Development Plan will be able to draw upon more detailed and accurate studies that will become available during the lifetime of this Plan. The mapping and plans that will emerge from these studies (PFRAs, CFRAMs etc.) will form the basis for future consideration of flood risk.

The impact of flood risk on decisions regarding location of future development is recognised as being of significant importance to the growth of the county. The recommendations arising from the SFRA have been incorporated into the policies and objectives outlined below.

Flood risk management policies (I)

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-FRM-1** Protect and enhance the County's floodplains, wetlands and coastal areas subject to flooding as vital green infrastructure which provides space for storage and conveyance of floodwater, enabling flood risk to be more effectively managed and reducing the need to provide flood defences in the future.
- P-FRM-2** Establish a 20-metre-wide strip/buffer zone around lakes and along both sides of all rivers, and a 50-metre-wide buffer zone from soft shorelines. Development proposals will be required to maintain these buffer zones free from development.
- Exceptions to this may be considered for strategic road projects, river banks enhancement works, bridge and road repair works, in the case of brownfield sites and in cases where the maintenance of the buffer zone is not practically achievable. In such cases a reduced buffer width may be accepted and any such cases will be assessed on an individual basis.
- P-FRM-3** Restrict development within 50 m of soft shoreline and require any development proposal in the coastal zone to consider the implications of predicted sea-level rise.
- P-FRM-4** Where new or upgraded flood/coastal defences are essential to protect existing development, subject all such proposals to assessment in accordance with the requirements of the Floods and Habitats Directives.
- P-FRM-5** Ensure that no removal of sand dunes, beach sand or gravel is undertaken.
- P-FRM-6** Implement the provisions of the DEHLG's *Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities*.
- P-FRM-7** Direct strategically significant growth, projects and infrastructure to areas with a low risk of flooding.
- P-FRM-8** Zone/designate land for development in areas with a high or moderate risk of flooding only where it can be clearly demonstrated, on a solid evidence base, that the zoning or designation will satisfy the justification test set out in chapter 4 of the *Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines*.
- P-FRM-9** Restrict development in areas at risk of flooding unless:
- it is demonstrated that there are wider sustainability grounds for appropriate development;
 - the flood risk can be managed to an acceptable level without increasing flood risk elsewhere;
 - the overall flood risk is reduced, where possible.

Developments considered necessary in order to meet the objectives of this Plan, or required on wider sustainability grounds, will be subject to the development management justification test outlined in chapter 5 of the *Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines*.

Measures such as flood compensation storage works or new hard-engineered flood defences alone will not be acceptable as justification for development in flood risk areas. Such measures will only be considered as part of a proposal if the development is warranted by the justification test on planning and sustainability grounds in the first instance, and where no alternative site is available.

[continues on the next page]

Flood risk management policies (II)

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-FRM-10** Require development proposals, where appropriate, to be accompanied by a detailed flood risk assessment in accordance with the provisions of the DoEHLG's *Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities* and to address flood risk management in the detailed design of development, as set out in Appendix B of the Guidelines.
- P-FRM-11** Require new developments and extensions to existing developments, where relevant, to use Sustainable Drainage Systems (SDS) in order to minimise the extent of hard surfacing and paving.
- P-FRM-12** Assess flood risk in Local Area Plans in accordance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines (OPW and DoEHLG, 2009) in a manner that is appropriate to the scale and circumstances of each area and having regard to the priorities set out in the SFRA that accompanies this Plan.

Flood risk management objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-FRM-1** Cooperate with the Office of Public Works in developing catchment-based Flood Risk Management Plans (CFRAMs) and incorporate relevant CFRAM recommendations into the Development Plan.
- O-FRM-2** Work with the OPW to establish catchment-based Flood Planning Groups involving all key actors and groups representing agriculture, forestry, water management and land management.
- O-FRM-3** Complete future SFRAs/FRAs in accordance with the prioritisation set out in the SFRA, subject to review and the availability of additional data during the lifetime of this Plan.
- O-FRM-4** Undertake Stage II Flood Risk Assessments when reviewing local area plans, in accordance with the OPW/DoEHLG's *Flood Risk Management Guidelines*.

Disclaimer

It is important to note that compliance with the requirements of the *Guidelines on Flood Risk Management* and of the Floods Directive 2007/60/EC is a work in progress and is currently based on emerging and incomplete data, as well as estimates of the locations and likelihood of flooding. The Assessment and mapping of areas of flood risk, in particular, still awaits the publication of both Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments [PFRA] and of Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management Plans [CFRAMs]. As a result, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in County Sligo is based on available information.

Accordingly, all information in relation to flood risk is provided for general policy guidance only. It may be substantially altered in light of future data and analysis. As a result, all landowners and developers are advised that Sligo County Council and its agents can accept no responsibility for losses or damages arising due to assessments of the vulnerability to flooding of lands, uses and developments. Owners, users and developers are advised to take all reasonable measures to assess the vulnerability to flooding of lands in which they have an interest prior to making planning or development decisions.

11. Energy and telecommunications



11.1 Energy

The availability of energy is of critical importance to facilitate new development. The NDP 2007-2013 sets out the strategic context and programmes for the provision of energy and related infrastructure. In addition, the Government has also issued a number of policy documents and guidelines in relation to energy in the following publications:

- *National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012 (2007)*
- *Energy White Paper – Delivering a sustainable Energy future for Ireland (2007)*
- *Maximising Ireland’s Energy Efficiency – National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2009-2020 (2009)*

Sligo County Council aims to facilitate, promote and achieve a balance between responding to central Government policy on renewable energy and enabling energy resources within the plan area to be harnessed in a manner which is in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

Strategic energy policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- SP-EN-1** Support the sustainable infrastructural development of energy generation and transmission networks, to ensure the security of energy supply and provide for future needs, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- SP-EN-2** Promote energy conservation and efficiency measures and facilitate innovative building design that promotes energy efficiency in accordance with national policy and guidelines.
- SP-EN-3** Encourage the development of sustainable, energy-efficient buildings throughout the plan area.

Strategic energy objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- SO-EN-1** Preserve significant landscape views from the visual intrusion of large-scale energy infrastructure.
- SO-EN-2** Seek the extension of the natural gas supply infrastructure to Sligo.
- SO-EN-3** Implement Government policy on limiting emissions of greenhouse gasses and encouraging the development of renewable energy sources in an appropriate and sustainable manner.

11.1.1 Electricity

The transmission network forms the backbone of power supply. Its development is critical to ensuring that County Sligo has the necessary infrastructure to attract business and accommodate economic growth and the future development of the local economy.

In 2002 and 2003, planning permission was granted to the ESB for major upgrading of the electricity transmission infrastructure in Sligo and neighbouring counties. For County Sligo, this included the construction of a 220 kV line running from the south-east of the County to a new substation at Ballysumaghan, along with the construction of five other new 110 kV lines to serve the north and east of the County. Construction commenced in April 2004 and the substation at Ballysumaghan has now been completed. This will improve quality of supply and provide security and adequate capacity of supply to service future industrial, commercial and domestic development.

Policies for the provision of electricity

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-EL-1** Facilitate the sustainable provision of new high-voltage electricity infrastructure in County Sligo.
- P-EL-2** Support the maintenance and upgrading of electricity infrastructure throughout the County.

11.1.2 Gas

While Sligo is not served by gas infrastructure at present, Bord Gáis has identified Sligo City as a 'Phase 3: town being considered for connection to the distribution network' and part of north Sligo towards Donegal has been identified as an 'Area location for consideration'. The extension of the natural gas pipeline to Sligo would be a significant boost to the economic growth of the region.

11.1.3 Renewable sources of energy

The concept of energy efficiency promotes more sustainable forms of energy production, including the greater exploitation of wind, hydro, solar and tidal power sources.

The target for Ireland in the European Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC) is a 16% share of renewable energy in the final consumption by 2020. The share of electricity from renewable energy has more than doubled between 1990 and 2008 – from 4.9% to 11.9%, an increase of 7 percentage points over eighteen years. Most of this increase took place in the seven years after 2000. Nationally, growth in renewable energy use in 2005-2008 was up 16%.

The government policy in relation to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is set out in the National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012. Sligo County Council recognises the contribution that alternative energy sources can make towards limiting pollution associated with the generation of electricity (emissions of carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and smoke). It is the policy of the Council to promote the generation of energy from renewable and alternative sources in an environmentally acceptable manner.

11.1.4 Wind energy

Sligo's mountainous landscape and exposed location on the western seaboard combine to create good conditions for the generation of wind power. The wind farm capacity available in the County in 2010 is 51.1 MW, produced by four companies with installations at King's Mountain, Carran Hill, Geevagh and Lackan.

The wind energy potential available in the County is indicated in Sustainable Energy Ireland's *Wind Atlas for Ireland*.



Wind farm at Kingsmountain, West Sligo

It is a challenge for the Council to achieve a reasonable balance between: (a) responding to government policy on renewable energy; and (b) enabling the wind energy resources of the County to be harnessed in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Pressure for future wind farm development is likely to be concentrated in upland and coastal areas and in offshore locations, particularly where energy providers can access the national electricity grid.

The development of wind energy has potential benefits for the County as a whole, including employment creation, assisting rural development by providing an additional source of income for farm families and local communities, and reducing dependence on oil and other imported fuels.

The siting of wind turbines requires careful consideration. While turbines located on elevated sites tend to have a higher output, they also have a significant visual impact. Visual obtrusiveness depends on the location, layout, size, number, design and colour of the turbines, as well as the subjective perceptions of the viewer.

The *Wind Energy Guidelines* published by the DoEHLG in June 2006 outline the main criteria to be used in assessing development proposals. These criteria include:

- environmental impact – effects on landscape, natural and archaeological heritage;
- seeking visual harmony and balance – choice of turbines, towers, colour and siting;

- keeping secondary structures to a minimum – buried on-site cabling, minimal fencing, transformers placed inside towers where possible;
- keeping access roads to a minimum – using established roads where possible and following natural contours if roads are necessary;
- managing the building site – removing waste, avoiding erosion, replanting the land.

In assessing proposals for wind farms, the Council will require detailed information to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) standard. Assessment in accordance with government guidelines will have regard to visual impact (including the scarring effect of access roads), noise, electro-magnetic interference, ecological impact, safety (including aircraft safety and navigation) and land use implications.

Proposals will generally be discouraged in or close to pNHAs, cSACs, SPAs, designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes, Visually Vulnerable Areas, Scenic Routes, protected views, Zones of Archaeological Potential.

11.1.5. Hydroelectric power

Turbines driven by falling water have the potential to generate hydroelectric power. County Sligo has the resources to generate 2.5 MW of power per annum from small hydroelectric plants. At present, the County has several small-scale hydroelectric power stations, at least one of which holds a Power Purchase Agreement with the ESB until December 2010.

In assessing development proposals for hydroelectric power stations, the main considerations are:

- integration of the facility into the riverscape;
- non-interference with fish and wildlife;
- safe and sensitive undergrounding of power lines;
- the effect on the landscape and ecology.

The Council will also consider the document *Guidelines on the Planning, Design, Construction & Operation of Small-Scale Hydro-Electric Schemes and Fisheries* (Engineering Division & Central and Regional Fisheries Board, DCENR 2007).

11.1.6 Wave energy

Ireland has made significant advances in the research and development of wave-generated energy and County Sligo's extensive coastline has potential for this form of development. While proposals below the High Water Mark are outside the Councils jurisdiction, on-shore ancillary plant, buildings and power lines will require assessment and all on-shore impacts must be mitigated to the greatest extent possible.

Most of the coastal zone, particularly in the west of the County, is relatively flat, providing long open views. Development proposals should therefore avoid locations that are immediately adjacent to coastal settlements or significant tourist attractions. Detailed visual, ecological, archaeological heritage and social impact of such proposals will be assessed in determining their acceptability.

11.1.7 Bioenergy

Bioenergy is energy derived from biofuels, such as biodiesel, biogas or biomass. Biofuels are considered to be "CO₂-neutral", not adding to the carbon dioxide level in the atmosphere. Technologies used to produce electricity from biofuels vary widely. The Planning Authority will consider each proposal on its merits, subject to proper planning and environmental consideration.

The Council will encourage the production of trees for biomass and other initiatives for the generation of renewable energy. Burning of such biomass has a neutral greenhouse gas effect and the important advantage of providing the opportunity for farmers to diversify into new crops. Power generation from this source does not suffer from the lack of consistency in supply that affects wind power.

11.1.8 Solar energy

In recent years, the use of solar energy in Ireland, in addition to ground-source heating systems, has provided sustainable energy for buildings and reduced the demand for electricity supply from the national grid. Such initiatives will be encouraged in the future.

Renewable energy policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-REN-1** Support and promote a move away from fossil-fuel energy production through investment in renewable energy.
- P-REN-2** Encourage and facilitate the sustainable production of energy from renewable sources, energy conversion and capture in forms such as wind power, hydro-power, wave-generated energy, biomass, solar technology and energy-efficient building design/servicing. All such development proposals will be assessed for their potential impact on Natura 2000 sites, designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes, Visually Vulnerable Areas, Scenic Routes and scenic views, as well as in accordance with strict location, siting and design criteria, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- P-REN-3** Support existing and new enterprises who wish to use renewable energy to serve their own needs by on-site energy production, subject to normal planning criteria.

Renewable energy objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-REN-1** Identify and map, during the lifetime of this Plan (subject to resources), areas within the county where there is significant wind energy potential and where energy development would be acceptable in principle, subject to visual, landscape, heritage, environmental and amenity considerations.
- O-REN-2** Facilitate small-scale renewable energy developments within urban areas, where appropriate, and support small community-based generation projects in rural areas, subject to visual, landscape, heritage, environmental and amenity considerations.
- O-REN-3** Implement the provisions of the integrated Regional Energy Strategy that will be prepared by the Border Regional Authority in accordance with the Regional Planning Guidelines 2010.

11.2 Telecommunications

Intensive digitisation of telecommunications offers a competitive advantage in attracting economic development and investment. It also offers more flexible working arrangements, enabling people to work and communicate internationally from their homes. The movement away from labour-intensive manufacturing to the skilled services sector of the economy has major policy implications for the provision of infrastructure, particularly the provision of telecommunications. Census 2006 data indicated that the Border Region was joint lowest (with the Midlands) for broadband coverage (12%) in Ireland. Of particular significance to the Border Region is Project Kelvin, which will significantly boost broadband availability and capacity in the Region.

Sligo County Council acknowledges the importance of telecommunications, particularly broadband telecommunications, in terms of capitalising on investment opportunities.

11.2.1 Broadband infrastructure

The following initiatives are supported by Sligo County Council, which is targeting full coverage of broadband connectivity throughout the County:

- Ireland's Broadband Strategy (2003): this report outlines the government's action plan regarding the deployment of broadband throughout the country. The government's Broadband Action Plan (2003) will focus on towns with population in excess of 1,500 people that are currently without broadband. These are to be linked to high-speed Internet access as part of a 140 million euro spending programme by government in partnership with local authorities. Outside towns of this population size, the Group Broadband Scheme will help provide high-speed connectivity.
- Group Broadband Scheme: provides funding for the provision of broadband services to small, underserved rural or remote areas and particularly for community organisations.
- Metropolitan Area Network (MAN): a network of ducting and fibre-optic cable laid within a metropolitan area, predominantly aimed at large business and reselling operators to provide services including telecommunications, Internet access, television, telematics and CCTV. The optical fibre infrastructure allows for very high throughput rates between the service provider and the customer.
- School Broadband Access Programme: in a joint approach, the telecommunications sector and the government has provided funding for the roll-out of broadband to all primary and secondary schools in the country.
- The National Broadband Scheme (NBS) is being run by the Department of Communications Energy and Natural Resources. It aims to provide broadband services to consumers and businesses located within those parts of the country which have no form of broadband available at the moment. The contract to implement and operate the National Broadband Scheme (NBS) was entered into with "3" (a Hutchison Whampoa company trading as 3) on 23 December 2008. Under the contract, 3 will be required to provide services to all premises in the NBS area who seek a service. In order to facilitate competition in the area, 3 will also be required to provide wholesale access to any other authorised operator who wishes to serve premises in the NBS area.

11.2.2 Mobile telephony infrastructure

With regard to mobile phone network development, the physical infrastructure and structures needed to provide this service must be developed in a strategic way that minimises the impact on the environment and takes public opinion into account. Good siting and design need to become an integral part of the planning system, respecting not only environmentally sensitive areas, but also the wider context.

Antennae, their support structures, power lines, equipment containers and access roads will be assessed with respect to safety, siting and design criteria and the mitigation of intrusive impacts. In all circumstances, the sensitivity to the context of the proposed development requires consideration. Site conditions, safety aspects, technical constraints, landscape features and capacity requirements affect the design of such installations.

Options to reduce the negative visual effect of such structures include:

- mast and/or site sharing;
- installation on existing buildings and structures;
- camouflaging/disguising techniques to integrate telecommunications equipment into the design, scale, colour and/or texture of existing buildings and landscape;
- using small-scale equipment.

Proposals in the following areas will be permitted only on the basis of absolute necessity, visual mitigation, mast or tower design and site restoration following obsolescence:

- cSACs, SPAs, pNHAs
- designated Sensitive Landscapes, Visually Vulnerable Areas and Scenic Routes.

It is the policy of the Council to achieve a balance between facilitating the provision of telecommunications services in the interests of social and economic progress and sustaining residential amenities, environmental quality and public health.

Proposals for telecommunication masts and infrastructure shall comply with the DoEHLG's *Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures Guidelines* (1996) and any revisions.

The Council will use the sequential approach in terms of factors to be taken into account in the control of telecommunications structures in built-up areas, as outlined in the Guidelines. The following series of "tests" will be applied to development proposals for telecommunications infrastructure on sites in or near residential areas, education facilities, hospitals, child care facilities or nursing homes:

- is an existing utilities site available, such as an electricity substation?
- has the mast/antenna been designed and adapted for the specific location?
- are possible sites in commercial or retail areas available?
- is an existing tall building or structure available?

Proposals shall be accompanied by a statement and supporting evidence of compliance with the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) Guidelines or the equivalent European pre-standard 500166-2 conditioned in licensing arrangements with the DCMNR. Any permission granted will be conditioned with respect to time limitation, replacement of obsolescent technology with more environmentally acceptable designs, bonding arrangements and site restoration on cessation of service.

In the vicinity of larger towns, developers should endeavour to locate in industrial estates.

In areas outside of towns/villages, masts should be placed in tree groupings or forestry plantations where such features exist, provided that the antennae are clear of obstruction and so long as ancillary facilities, such as access roads, do not impact negatively on the landscape. The developer will be required to retain a cordon of trees around the site, which will not be felled during the lifetime of the mast, with the written agreement of the owner.

In unforested areas, softening of the visual impact should be achieved through judicious choice of colour scheme and through the planting of shrubs, trees etc. as a screen and backdrop.

In general, proximity to Protected Structures, archaeological sites and other monuments should be avoided. Any proposals affecting Protected Structures or within ACAs shall have due regard to the guidance provided in the DoEHLG's *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2005*.

Where existing support structures are not unduly obtrusive, the Council will encourage co-location of antennae on existing support structures, masts and tall buildings. Applicants must satisfy the Council that they have made every reasonable effort to share with other operators and to minimize adverse visual impact. Where it is not possible to share a support structure, the developer should share the site or an adjacent site so that masts and antennae may be clustered.

Development proposals for telecommunication structures must have regard for aircraft safety and navigation.



Telecommunications policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-TEL-1** Protect areas of significant landscape importance from the visual intrusion of large-scale telecommunications infrastructure.
- P-TEL-2** Ensure that telecommunications infrastructure is adequately screened, integrated and/or landscaped, so as to minimise any adverse visual impacts on the environment.
- P-TEL-3** Facilitate open access to high-speed and high-capacity broadband digital networks to support the development of a smart economy within the County.

Telecommunications objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-TEL-1** Support a programme of broadband connectivity throughout the County by liaising with telecommunication service providers.
- O-TEL-2** Support the National Broadband Scheme in its bid for funding for development of broadband in the county.
- O-TEL-3** Support and facilitate take-up of the Group Broadband Scheme and the School Broadband Access Programme.
- O-TEL-4** Support, by planning condition where appropriate, the development of underground broadband infrastructure for road, commercial and residential schemes, as set out in the government's recommendations.
- O-TEL-5** Have regard to Government guidelines on telecommunications infrastructure, including Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 1996 (DoEHLG) and any subsequent revisions.
- O-TEL-6** Implement the provisions of the Draft Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 by:
 - a. supporting the repair and upgrading of the existing telephone network including the provision of improved broadband enabled individual line services to all subscribers (Draft RPG policy *INFO12*);
 - b. promoting the provision of open access ducting in all new developments (Draft RPG policy *INFO13*);
 - c. supporting the network-enabling of all new residential development and the provision of open access co-located communication service connection and access facilities (Draft RPG policy *INFO14*);
 - d. providing open access ducting in all public infrastructural projects (Draft RPG policy *INFO15*);
 - e. supporting the extension of access to the MANs to small business and residential users through lower connection and use costs (Draft RPG policy *INFO17*).

12. Development management standards

12.1 Development management principles

The purpose of this chapter is to give guidance to developers regarding the criteria used by the planning authority to assess planning applications.

Each application for development is unique and each site is unique. A decision to grant or refuse planning permission takes this uniqueness into account. Individual applications for development will be assessed against the policies and objectives of the Development Plan. The decision is not taken by using a standard formula or a set of rules.

The guidance contained in this chapter is not exhaustive, but merely a statement of general principles.

Planning application

To obtain planning permission, it is necessary to submit a comprehensive planning application, which complies with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations. Advice and guidance on making a planning application are available from Sligo County Council.

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government publishes a series of leaflets on all aspects of the planning system and these are available free of charge from the Department or from planning authorities. They cover a whole range of issues, including how to make a planning application, lodge an appeal, requirements for change of use, building extensions etc.

The leaflets can be downloaded from the website of the DoEHLG at www.environ.ie.

Before submitting a development proposal for a site within or in the immediate vicinity of a settlement, potential applicants are advised to examine the relevant Zoning Map, Objectives Map and Zoning Matrix in Volume 2 of this Plan, to check whether the proposal is in accordance with the specific provisions for the respective area. Another useful checklist is the set of Sustainability Indicators (see subsection 12.1.2).

12.1.1 Land use zoning matrix

The purpose of land use zoning is to indicate the intended uses of all lands within the limits of mini-plans – refer to the Zoning Matrix and Zoning Maps in Volume 2 of this Plan.

The Zoning Matrix states the degree of acceptability of particular types of development within areas zoned for various use categories.

An indication that a development would be “permitted in principle” does not imply an automatic grant of planning permission, or indeed that a planning application will necessarily be successful.

Zoning categories

MIX	village centre-type mix of uses
COM	commercial uses
RES	residential uses
CF	community facilities
BUS	business, enterprise and light industry
TOU	tourism-related uses
OS	open space (public, private, natural/semi-natural, green corridors)
SPF	sports and playing fields
NR	natural resource reservation
PU	public utilities
TPN	transport and parking nodes
BU	buffer zone

P Permitted in principle

A use that is permitted in principle is one which the local authority accepts in theory in the relevant zone. However, it is still subject to the normal planning process, including the consideration of all relevant policies and objectives outlined in the Plan.

O Open for consideration

A use open for consideration is one which the local authority may permit where it is satisfied that the suggested form of development will be compatible with the policies and objectives for the zone, will not conflict with the permitted uses and conforms with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

N Not normally permitted

Development not normally permitted in a particular zone is one which will not be entertained by the local authority, except in exceptional circumstances. This may be due to its perceived effect on existing and permitted uses, its incompatibility with the policies and objectives contained in this Plan or the fact that it may be inconsistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Existing non-conforming uses

The extension/expansion of existing non-conforming uses in each zoning category shall be assessed on its merits. Nothing in the Zoning Matrix shall be taken as necessarily precluding the reasonable extension/expansion of non-conforming uses or the conversion of these developments to similar uses.

12.1.2 Sustainability indicators

These indicators act as a simple checklist for developers and the local authority to address a number of issues relating to the sustainability of new development.

Mix of uses – is the development in an appropriate location and does it encourage an appropriate mix of uses?

Where appropriate (e.g. town and village centres, new large-scale developments, mixed-use zones, along major transportation routes and transport nodes) a mix of uses should be incorporated into the development, such as housing, commercial, educational, leisure, live-work units, crèches, community facilities etc. This will enable easy access for all to facilities and could also contribute to a reduction in traffic generation.

Mix of dwelling types – does the development encourage a mix of dwelling types?

To address the social balance within communities, there needs to be an adequate mix of types of housing, including affordable and social housing. Provision for this is made under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000. There is also a need for a mix of dwelling sizes within housing developments - i.e. one-, two- and three-bedroom houses, apartments, townhouses etc. – to cater for a changing demographic.

Development density – does the development encourage higher densities?

Density indicates how heavily developed a particular site is. Higher densities should generally be encouraged, particularly in town and village centres, at transportation nodes and along major transportation routes. However, higher densities should only be permitted where an important emphasis is placed on qualitative standards in relation to design and layout, so that the highest quality residential environment is achieved.

Footprint ratio – does the development utilise the land well?

This indicator will reveal how much of the site is built over, and thus how much of it is available for public or open space. The footprint ratio may be a factor in creating a balanced and sustainable development.

Green space – does the development include useable green areas?

This indicator addresses the quality and usability of the green space provided. Open space can be used for leisure and productive uses such as vegetable gardens. It can also be beneficial in providing potential habitats for wildlife.

Mix of open space - does the development include a mix of open space types?

It is essential that there is a mix of open space types throughout the town/village area and also within large-scale new developments. The mix could include agricultural use (e.g. allotments) in certain areas, leisure and amenity areas (sports, public parks), public open space (streets and squares) and wildlife areas/parks (linear parks, lakes/ponds, wildlife corridors, reed beds, woodland etc.).

Waste - does the development address the issue of waste?

Development should address issues such as construction/demolition waste recycling and the location and provision of household/business recycling. All development should provide adequate facilities to enable a high standard of waste management to be applied to those wastes arising from the development when used in accordance with its intended approved use.

Energy use – has the development considered and addressed energy consumption and its reduction?

Development should seek to reduce energy use in buildings by using energy-efficient design, integration of solar-heat energy within building design, building fabric, consideration of the topography etc. (more information on these issues can be obtained from Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland – www.seai.ie).

Water use – has the development used water-efficient design, i.e. for collection, storage, efficient use and recycling?

Clean water is a key environmental resource. Water should be recycled and used more efficiently where possible. Development proposals should demonstrate a consideration for the inclusion of a rain water harvesting system so as to avoid the use of potable water in appliances such as toilets, washing machines, dishwashers and outdoor taps.

Transport mix – is there adequate provision and access to all modes of transport, including cycling and walking?

As transport is a major energy user, sustainable transport is important in creating sustainable developments. Access to good-quality transport facilities should therefore be integral to all new developments, with an emphasis on integrating land use and transportation facilities (e.g. cycling, walking, rail access and bus access). As well as promoting a comprehensive and integrated transport strategy, it is also important to consider mobility management plans and the integration of different transport modes.

In residential developments, road design should minimise the impact of the car, and promote a transfer to more sustainable modes of transport. An emphasis on walking and cycling routes/linkages should be a priority within new residential developments.

Sustainable use of land – does the development proposal conform with the sequential approach?

In terms of efficiency of land use, it is important to use land in a more economic and efficient manner, particularly within urban environments. In the interests of sustaining compact settlements, it is recommendable to use land within town/village centres before developing greenfield sites. To this end, the Council will promote, where suitable, the reuse of brownfield and derelict sites.

CO₂ emissions – what are the overall CO₂ emissions associated with the building's energy consumption?

In 2002 the EU adopted the Building Energy Performance Directive 2002/91/EC (EPBD), which contains a range of provisions aimed at improving energy performance of residential and non-residential buildings, both new-build and existing. This Directive was transposed into Irish legislation as Regulations in 2006.

The EPBD requires that specific forms of information and advice on energy performance be provided to building purchasers, tenants and users, enabling them to take this issue into consideration in any decisions on property transactions.

As part of the Directive, a Building Energy Rating (BER) certificate, which is effectively an energy label, will be required at the point of sale or rental of a building, or on completion of a new building.

12.2 Site development standards

12.2.1 Residential density

Increased densities are intended to maximise the use of existing infrastructure, support the feasibility of appropriate uses (i.e. neighbourhood centres), facilitate the development of public transport, and ensure that residents are located as close as possible to services and community facilities. In higher-density urban environments, where a high proportion of the population lives within reasonable walking distance of the shops and facilities they visit on a regular basis, a reduced dependency on car travel will result.

In turn, this will tend to lead to subsequent benefits such as reductions in air pollution and emissions, a safer and healthier urban environment, increased social inclusion and community participation (particularly for the older people, the less mobile and those without private transport).

In assessing residential development proposals, the Council will have regard to Government policy, which seeks to encourage more sustainable development through the avoidance of excessive suburbanisation and through the promotion of higher densities (*Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns and Villages)*, DoEHLG 2009).

Accordingly, in existing settlement centres, densities of 30–40+ units per hectare will be encouraged. Outside centres, densities of 20-35 units per hectare will be encouraged, whilst lower densities of 15-20 units per hectare will be accommodated on the edge of settlements. The key issue is that each site is different and in some cases a low density may be appropriate, while in other instances a certain increase in densities would be suitable (for example a courtyard development in the middle of a village or some infill sites within a village or town, where it is important to maintain the traditional streetscape).

Higher-density development can be achieved via a combination of dwelling types, e.g. new apartments, conversions, and three-storey town houses with private gardens. Single-category housing will be discouraged. Higher densities than those specified may be acceptable in certain locations when it can be clearly illustrated that an innovative and high-quality residential environment is proposed.

In exceptional circumstances, the planning authorities may determine a more appropriate density in any particular location by considering the following:

- a. the extent to which the layout meets all other criteria for residential development;
- b. existing densities in adjoining residential areas;
- c. the capacity of the infrastructure to absorb the demands of the proposed development;
- d. existing landscape and other features of the site;
- e. the housing need of the area;
- f. the amount of land serviced for housing in the area;
- g. principles of sustainability;
- h. design quality – higher densities may be permitted in developments exhibiting high-quality design.
- i. proximity to main transportation routes;

- j. the level to which other density provisions have been met during the life of the Plan;
- k. levels of privacy and amenity;
- l. quality of pedestrian linkages between open spaces and to/from local facilities.

Apartments will normally be permitted in areas zoned RES, MIX and CF.

Developments which include accommodation for the elderly, students and those with disabilities and special needs will be assessed having regard to the particulars of each case.

Where relevant, plot ratios and site coverage standards will be recommended as part of the review of LAPs for Ballymote, Enniscrone, Strandhill and in the forthcoming Tobercurry LAP.

12.2.2 Building/structure height

An increase in building height may be particularly suitable in certain circumstances, for example on focal/landmark sites in towns.

In assessing all developments, the following factors will be considered in assessing building height:

- a. degree of overshadowing and loss of light to surrounding properties;
- b. degree of overlooking and consequent loss of privacy for adjoining properties;
- c. the scale and rhythm of the existing streetscape;
- d. the extent to which the building impacts on structures or spaces of architectural or historic importance;
- e. the extent to which the building impacts on important landmarks;
- f. the extent to which the building impacts on attractive public views from significant vantage points;
- g. the degree of impact of the building on the skyline;
- h. the degree to which the building may contribute to the overall townscape; in particular, care will be required in the treatment of rooftops and all machine/mechanical rooms will need to be adequately screened or designed as an integral part of the building;
- i. the quality of the overall design;
- j. the scale of the building in relation to surrounding urban space, together with the effect of the building on the quality of the space;
- k. the effect of the building on the microclimate in the immediate vicinity;
- l. the area of the site, and whether it is large enough to provide a visual transition (by way of open space, or a base of lower buildings) from the scale of surrounding development.

12.2.3 Building lines

The planning authority will normally seek to ensure that development is not carried out in front of established building lines. Generally, it will be an aim to create a continuous building line along a street edge. Consistent building lines will also be encouraged in the design of community facilities and in new industrial/enterprise park developments, where buildings will have a clear relationship with each other. Where located along roads of traffic importance, increased setbacks may be determined to provide for greater amenity, safety of road users and residents, and for future road widening.

Building lines may be relaxed in the following cases:

- to incorporate key landscape features into the development layout;
- to incorporate key landmark buildings;
- for innovative designs which can positively enhance the townscape;
- for innovative housing layouts, where the traditional setback from the public footpath is flexible due to new designs, with a decreasing emphasis on the minimum required space to the front of dwellings,
- to provide important areas of public open space, e.g. squares;
- to facilitate traditional building forms, such as open courtyards etc.

12.2.4 Landscape/vegetation

A landscape plan should accompany all planning applications, unless otherwise determined by the planning authority. The landscaping scheme shall be designed as an integral part of the development and shall consider the following factors:

- existing landscape features such as stands of mature trees, hedgerows, rock outcrops and water features; these shall be properly identified and retained where appropriate. Hedgerows can be given the appearance of a conscious design decision by additional planting on the edge and at junctions;
- layouts will be required to facilitate the retention of the maximum number of existing significant trees;
- new developments will be required to consider the future growth, management and maintenance of the landscape and open space areas. Planting needs to have a careful balance between quick-growing species for early maturity and trees with a longer lifespan, which may reach their peak in up to 100 years' time.
- the landscape plan and the selection of plant species should take into consideration low-maintenance species. Generally, single trees require more expert attention than those in composite groups, which are less vulnerable to damage. Formal, single-tree lines have little effect as screen belts or buffers; for this reason, groupings of young trees will be encouraged.
- native tree species will generally be preferred, since they are more valuable as wildlife habitat than introduced species, because they support a greater variety of insect life;
- the presence or absence of invasive species on the development site should be considered; where these occur, detailed proposals should be provided for their management/eradication.

In considering what native tree and shrub species are appropriate to each particular situation, the planning authority will have regard to the details set out in the Heritage Council's publication *Conserving and Enhancing Wildlife in Towns and Villages*. Applicants and developers are therefore advised to consult this document and incorporate its recommendations into landscaping plans.

The planning authority will require the developer to carry out landscape improvements to open space. Security by means of a financial bond may be required to ensure the protection of existing trees on a development site or to ensure that a landscaping plan is adequately implemented.

12.2.5 Infrastructural service standards

Where water and/or sewerage infrastructure is privately provided, the type and design shall be in compliance with the standards set by the planning authority. Provision must also be made for possible future connection into the public system. In addition, proposals from private developers to extend existing public wastewater infrastructure networks will be facilitated, where such proposals would result in the servicing of zoned lands. Any such proposal shall be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Where feasible, services should be provided underground in the interests of amenity.

For guidance on services associated with residential developments, refer to Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas (DoEHLG, 1998).

Where sewerage infrastructure is privately provided, the type and design shall be in compliance with the EPA's *Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (PE \leq 10)* and/or the EPA's *Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres and Hotels* manual or standards set by the planning authority.

12.2.6 Undergrounding of cables

The planning authority will seek to place underground all electricity, telephone and television cables in the urban built-up areas, especially within zones designated for residential development.

The planning authority will ensure that overhead lines will not be permitted in any area of high amenity value, as it is a policy aim to preserve significant landscape views from the visual intrusion of large-scale telecommunications and energy infrastructure.

12.3 Residential development standards

12.3.1 Design principles for multi-unit residential development

Multi-unit or multiple housing developments can be described as housing schemes of more than one dwelling, which are dependent upon communal support services such as roads, water, sewerage system etc. Multi-unit housing development outside settlements, in the open countryside, will normally be discouraged.

Design principles

The following design principles should be applied to all proposed multi-unit residential schemes:

Connectivity and permeability: Convenient access needs to be provided between and within areas, particularly to larger community and commercial facilities and to places of work. Routes within the area should be as direct as possible, following – where feasible – existing desire lines. For this reason, the construction of “gated estates” will be discouraged.

Sustainability: Priority should be given to walking, cycling and public transport, and the layout of new residential areas should seek to minimise the need for car-borne trips.

Safety: Streets, footpaths and cycle routes should provide for safe access by users of all ages and degrees of personal mobility. The needs of specific user groups, particularly the elderly or persons with prams/small children, must be considered at the design stage, and walkways should be well-lit and capable of being supervised from overlooking dwellings.

Legibility: It should be easy for both residents and visitors to find their way around a residential area. It is important to create a distinctive identity of the place through variety in the layout and design of the scheme. This can be achieved in a number of ways:

- by incorporating natural features (hedgerows/trees) and man-made landscape elements into the design and layout of the scheme;
- by introducing focal points or landmarks at key locations;
- by creating “character areas” within a scheme, where each area has its own visual identity, is defined by a different architectural design or different palette of materials and/or variations in site layout, building lines, house design, colour and hard/soft landscaping;
- by providing different house types or by mixing land uses at appropriate locations.

All development proposals will need to have regard to the principles and guidance set out above.

The DoEHLG guidance document *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns and Villages)* and its companion *Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide* explain these principles in more detail.

12.3.2 Road layouts in residential areas

Road layouts should be considered as part of the overall concept for the scheme and should not be the starting point of a design layout. The following should be taken into consideration:

- the arrangement of buildings, rather than roads, with the aim of creating a sense of space and enclosure;
- the creation of attractive urban/village forms, where security for pedestrians and cyclists is paramount;
- the incorporation of traffic-calming measures into the layout of the scheme, to ensure low traffic speeds via the horizontal rather than the vertical alignment of the road.
- the prioritisation of walking and cycling as transportation modes, and the provision of safe and direct access to local services and public transport.

Street layouts for new residential areas should be designed having regard to the following:

- links to the public road network and access to bus/rail-based public transport;
- access for mobility-impaired people;
- circulation routes for public services (e.g. refuse collection) and delivery vehicles;
- adjoining residential areas with limited through-traffic;
- adjoining residential areas with no through-traffic, such as culs-de-sac and sometimes home zones (see subsection 12.3.3. below);
- the need for links to accommodate through-access or connections to adjoining sites, backland areas or neighbouring lands that are likely to be developed in the future.

In the case of housing developments or streets within a development serving less than 80 units, an access road of 5.5 m is required, with 1.5 m-wide footpaths. This may be reduced to 5 m where a small number of dwellings are being served or the aim is to create a street.

Regard should also be had to the following:

- where there are culs-de-sac, these should generally be designed to accommodate through-access and linkages for pedestrians and cyclists to adjoining areas; these linkages should be adequately overlooked by dwellings and should have a minimum width of 3 m;
- turning areas should be provided for emergency and refuse vehicles; these areas should be designed as hard-landscaped, dual-use spaces where cars/large vehicles can turn, but should be primarily open spaces where children can play;
- adequate off-street facilities for parking, including visitor parking, should be provided;
- all new residential developments must include cycle lanes.

All developments shall have regard to the *Traffic Management Guidelines* (DoEHLG, DoT and DTO, 2003) and the *Provision of Cycle Facilities – National Manual for Urban Areas* (DTO, 2002).

All developments shall be designed and constructed with reference to standards set out in the following documents: *Traffic Management Guidelines* (DoEHLG, DoT and DTO, 2003); *Provision of Cycle Facilities – National Manual for Urban Areas* (DTO, 2002); *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* (NRA 2000); *Specification for Road Works* (NRA 2000); any subsequent revisions of these publications.

Additional guidance can be found in the DoEHLG's *Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas* (1998), *Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Design Guidelines* (2007), in the *Manual for Streets* (UK Department for Transport, 2007), the *Urban Design Manual* (DoEHLG, 2009) and subsequent revisions of these publications.

12.3.3 Home zones

A home zone is a residential area with streets designed to be places giving priority to people instead of motor traffic. Home zones will be encouraged in new residential developments, particularly as an alternative to cul-de-sac developments.

Within home zones, the streets are designed through the appropriate use of materials, street furniture and a variation of road widths, to ensure that motorists drive with more care and at lower speeds. Ideally, the surface is level and paved in sets and blocks rather than tarmac, to distinguish the home zone from a normal road.

On-street car parking is normally permitted, but is often arranged at the end of blocks or terraces, or provided as shared parking areas. Thus, the streets become places where children can play and people can interact.

12.3.4 Distance between dwellings

Houses should be designed in such a manner as to minimise overlooking and overshadowing of adjoining properties, and to avoid or reduce the loss of daylight. First-floor bedroom windows should be a minimum of 22 m apart.

A minimum of 1.5 m shall be provided between the side walls of detached, semi-detached and end-of-terrace dwellings to ensure privacy and ease of access. A property boundary should ideally occur mid-way along this distance.

12.3.5 Security and the orientation of buildings

Residential areas should be designed with personal security in mind, especially areas used by the public such as open spaces, playgrounds, playing fields, pedestrian and cycle links.

Houses should overlook streets and footpaths, public roads, alleyways and pedestrian/cycle through-routes. Houses located on corner sites should be designed to be orientated towards both streets.

House designs shall consider orientation and sun-path so as to maximise amenity, daylight and the benefits of passive solar gain.

12.3.6 Layout and design of apartments

The DoEHLG guidance document *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments* (2007) sets out minimum standards for floor areas of different types of apartments, storage spaces, and room dimensions for certain rooms.

In order to ensure a greater degree of flexibility, the floor plans of small one- and two- bedroom apartments should be designed so that at a later stage they can be amalgamated to form larger two- and three-bedroom units, without excessive disruption to the structure of the building. This will allow for changes in the size and mix of apartments to meet changing requirements and demands of occupants.

Minimum net floor areas for apartments are as follows:

One-bedroom apartment	45 m ²
Two-bedroom apartment	73 m ²
Three-bedroom apartment	90 m ²

The development of courtyards and new urban spaces within urban blocks will be considered, and fresh approaches to the design of urban spaces will be encouraged. Access to courtyards should generally be provided without breaking the existing street frontages, so as to assist in the creation of strong building lines.

12.3.7 Public open space

Provision of recreational open space in residential development

Open space is required to be provided with all new housing developments. Suitably designed and landscaped areas of formal and informal recreational open space (incorporating children's play areas and associated equipment) should be an integral part of the design of new housing schemes. It is important that new open space is usable, safe and integrated within the scheme as part of a cohesive landscape structure.

A minimum of 15% of the site area shall be reserved for the provision of open space, as indicated below. The exact location, size and type of open space to be provided will be determined through the development management process.

Where a developer cannot provide the appropriate amount of recreational open space on site, Sligo County Council may assist developers in meeting their responsibilities by accepting a financial contribution in lieu of physical provision, to enable the creation, improvement or maintenance of alternative facilities in the vicinity of the subject site.

The Council will encourage developers to pool land in order to satisfy open space requirements to allow the provision of large multi-purpose amenity areas (e.g. parkland and playing pitches) as well as small incidental open spaces within housing areas.

Quantitative standards

In residential developments on greenfield sites, developers should provide communal open space landscaped to a high standard equivalent to a minimum of 15% of the total area.

In non-greenfield sites, 10% of the total site area may be acceptable. In this instance, the developer shall make a contribution in lieu of the 5% not provided, which the local authority could use to provide open space at an alternative location.

On institutional lands, often containing large tracts of open space, any proposals for higher-density residential development must take into account the objective of retaining the “open character” of these lands, while at the same time ensuring that an efficient use is made of the land. In these cases, a minimum open space requirement of 20% of site area applies.

Qualitative standards

Public open space is one of the key elements in defining the quality of the residential environment. The following qualitative standards should be incorporated into any proposal for open space within a development:

Design: The layout and facilities proposed – particularly in larger schemes – should be designed to meet a range of user needs, including active and passive recreation. In many cases, smaller spaces of different sizes and types, designed for a particular use or range of uses, may be preferable to one large space in the centre of a scheme. Public open spaces should be suitably proportioned; narrow tracts which are difficult to manage/maintain are not acceptable.

Safety: Users should feel safe at all times within parks; adequate supervision, passive surveillance, appropriate boundary treatment and public lighting contribute to creating a sense of security.

Accessibility: The main open space of a scheme should be within a short walk of the majority of homes proposed.

Shared use: The potential for maximising the use of open space facilities (such as all-weather pitches) should be explored, for example, by sharing them with nearby schools.

Biodiversity: Public open spaces, especially larger ones, can provide for a range of natural habitats and can facilitate the preservation of flora and fauna.

Other issues that should be considered when designing open spaces include the following:

- Sligo County Council may require that the open space provision of any development be located in a specific area, in order to assemble a suitably-sized open space, or to enhance the existing features of the area.
- Incidental, inaccessible or backland space will generally not be acceptable, and will only be permitted where it performs a specific function, which is clearly demonstrable, such as preserving key landscape features, providing a necessary screen belt, or a specific part of a landscape plan.
- The provision of facilities – such as seating, bins, delineated play areas, lighting, and planting – must be addressed. Hard-landscaped surfaces – such as a tennis court or basketball court – as well as small green pitches within residential developments will also be considered as part of the required open space provision.
- Small areas of open space will be accepted if they are intended and designed as pocket parks where small children can play, if they contribute to the visual amenity of the area, and if they are adequately overlooked.
- As a rule, houses should front onto open spaces and provide passive surveillance. Rears of houses, blind gables or high boundary walls should generally not adjoin open spaces. Residential open space should be directly overlooked by houses on at least 75% of its perimeter.
- Open spaces should be located where they do not cause an excessive security problem for households.

12.3.8 Private open space

An adequate amount of open space shall be provided within the curtilage of each dwelling. It is recommended that a minimum rear-garden size of 60-75 sq.m. will be provided for three- to four-bedroom houses, with a lesser standard acceptable for narrow house frontages and one- to two-bedroom houses, which will require no less than 48 sq.m.

The developer will be expected to provide a variety of rear garden sizes within housing developments, so as to avoid monotonous and standardised development layouts. The existence of minimum standards should not result in uniform rear garden layouts, that become associated with particular residential zoning categories.

Rear garden sizes should generally be provided with a permanent durable barrier, a minimum of 1.8 m in height, to ensure privacy, and 2 m-high where backing onto a public area other than a public road. Post-and-wire or timber fencing shall not be permitted.

Factors to be considered in determining reduced garden sizes may include the size of the household, the provision of communal open space associated with the development and urban design considerations, e.g. the case of houses on corner sites that perform an urban design role.

12.3.9 Open space for apartments

The provision of adequate and well-designed communal and private open space for apartment developments is considered a vital component in promoting sustainable urban living. The DoEHLG guidance document *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments* sets out minimum standards for balconies and patio areas, as follows:

One-bedroom apartment	5 m ²
Two-bedroom apartment	7 m ²
Three-bedroom apartment	9 m ²

Communal – or “semi-private” – open space should be provided within landscaped courtyards, having regard to the heights and orientation of adjoining blocks in terms of the levels of sunlight obtainable in those spaces.

Private open space can also be provided in the form of rear gardens or patios for ground floor units and balconies/roof gardens for upper-level units. A minimum depth of 1.5 m is required, extending for the full length of the external living room wall.

12.3.10 Access for the disabled

All new buildings of public resort must conform with the design guidelines set out in *Access for the Disabled – Minimum Design Criteria* (1988) and the *Technical Guidance Document - Part M* of the Building Regulations, 2000.

Developers are advised to consult the document *Buildings for Everyone – Access and Use for all Citizens* (National Rehabilitation Board, 1998).

12.3.11 Car parking standards

Car parking spaces will be calculated in line with Table 12.A (overleaf). They may be provided on site or on street.

Parking spaces may be provided as a communal parking area or bay integrated into the overall development, or on-street where road widths are adequate.

Appropriately designed on-street car parking will be acceptable where it facilitates increases in residential densities in particular locations or zones.

A mix of car-parking types will be encouraged in new development proposals, so as to introduce variety and reduce the dominance of parking areas within the overall layout.

Within group parking areas, consideration will be given to the visibility of residents' cars (from their homes if possible), convenience, and the need to soften the impact of group parking by landscaping.

In some older residential areas, small front gardens and original features such as railings are part of the character of the area. In such cases, on-site car parking in front gardens/patios may not be permitted.

Proposals for off-street parking need to be balanced against loss of amenity (visual and physical) and will be considered in light of traffic flows and car parking in the vicinity.

12.3 Residential standards

Table 12.A Car parking standards

Class of development	Unit	Minimum parking spaces per unit	Bicycle parking
house	dwelling	2	1 per unit
apartment	dwelling	1.5	1 per unit
guesthouse / B&B	bedroom	1	0.5 per bedroom
hostel	10 beds	1	1 per 10 beds
retail unit	100 sq.m gross floor area	6	1 per 75 sq. m
supermarket	18 sq.m.	1	1 per 100 sq. m
office	25 sq.m.	1	1 per 5 employees
financial and professional services (including banks, building societies, estate agencies, betting shops)	20 sq.m.	1	1 per 50 sq m
bar lounge	2.5 sq.m of public area	1	1 per 75 sq. m
restaurant	4.5 sq.m of dining area	1	1 per 75 sq. m
take-away	18 sq. m gross floor area	1	
nightclub / dance hall	3 sq.m. of public area	1	1 per 100 sq. m
hotel (excluding bars, restaurants and function rooms)	bedroom	1	1 per 20 beds
conference centre	25 sq.m of public area	1	1 per 20 seats
manufacturing industry	33 sq.m. of gross floor area	1	1 per 500 sq. m
light industry	50 sq.m. of gross floor area	1	1 per 500 sq. m
warehousing	100 sq.m of gross floor area	1	1 per 500 sq. m
retail warehousing	35 sq.m. of gross floor area	1	1 per 150 sq. m
factory retail floor space	40 sq.m. of gross floor area	1	1 per 150 sq. m
garden centre	25 sq.m. of gross floor area	1	1 per 150 sq. m
car showrooms	40 sq.m. of gross floor area	1	
garage and vehicle service	service bay (cars)	3	
	service bay (lorries)	3	
	30 sq.m gross floor area	1	
service stations (not including shop)	30 sq.m.	1	
church / place of worship	4 seats	1	1 per 10 seats
theatre / cinema	4 seats	1	1 per 20 seats
community hall	5 sq.m of gross floor area	1	1 per 10 sq. m gross floor area
museum / gallery / library	100 sq.m of gross floor area	5	1 per 50 sq. m
funeral home	10 sq.m. of public area	1	1 per 25 sq. m
hospital/nursing home	bed	1	
clinics and group medical practices	consulting room	3	1 per consulting room

[continues on the next page]

Table 12.A Car parking standards (continued)

Class of development	Unit	Minimum parking spaces per unit	Bicycle parking
primary school	classroom	1.5	1 per 5 students
secondary school		2	1 per 4 students
third-level school		1 per classroom + 1 per 15 students	1 per 3 students
childcare, crèche, playschool	staff member + 20 sq. m	1 1	1 per 5 staff members on duty
sports centre / swimming pool	10 sq.m. of gross floor area	1	1 per 10 sq. m gross floor area
playing field	field	15	5 per field
bowling alley	lane	4	2 per lane
tennis court	court	2	1 per court
golf / pitch and putt	hole	2	
golf driving range	bay	1	

12.3.12 Infill housing within established residential areas

Within and around established built-up areas, a relaxation of some standards may be allowed for single replacement houses and infill development.

The design of infill development must be sympathetic to the character of the area.

While well-designed, modern buildings may be permitted, they should have regard to their setting and be capable of integrating into the streetscape/townscape context.

12.3.13 Management companies

Section 34(4)(i) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 provides for the inclusion of conditions attached to a planning permission regarding the maintenance or management of a proposed development. Provisions for estate management should be put in place in order to maintain the amenity, quality and visual quality of a development once the development is complete.

12.3.14 Housing estate and street names

Street nameplates, in Irish and English, should be erected on all housing estate roads in a location that is clearly visible to the motorist. Ideally, they should be placed at junctions to be of maximum assistance to the navigating motorist, cyclist or pedestrian.

The names of residential developments and roads shall reflect local place names, particularly townlands or local names linked to the landscape, its features, culture and/or history, including names of historical personalities who have some association with the area.

The local authority shall approve the names chosen.

The names should be fixed to walls and buildings where they can be clearly seen.

In order to assist the public and the postal authorities, all houses within housing estates or in comprehensive street developments shall be provided with numbers and/or names, which shall be visible from the adjoining road/street.

12.3.15 Live/work units

Home-based activities are defined as small-scale commercial activities, which are secondary to the use of the premises as a residence. They are permitted where the primary use of the dwelling remains residential (this being reflected in the floor area of the business) and where the amenity of surrounding residences is not adversely affected.

The planning authority, in considering applications for such developments, will examine:

- the nature and extent of the use proposed;
- the effects on the amenity of the surrounding residences;
- the levels of traffic that will be generated;
- the storage of refuse and waste collection.

Over-the-counter services, business signage, advertising hoardings, security gates/grills and excessive security lights are not appropriate in a residential area and are subject to restrictions.

Sligo County Council may grant a temporary permission of two/three years for home-based economic activities to facilitate ongoing monitoring of the activity.

12.3.16 Bed-and-breakfast

Planning permission is required for all conversions of dwellings to guest accommodation and bed-and-breakfast establishments where the number of bedrooms used for such purposes exceeds four.

In the assessments of such developments/conversions, Sligo County Council will consider car parking demands, wastewater infrastructure, the amenity of adjoining residents, the obtrusive nature of signage and the need to avoid excessive concentrations of bed-and breakfast-uses in residential neighbourhoods.

12.3.17 Waste management in residential developments

Residential developments should accommodate three wheel-bins per dwelling to cater for segregated collection of household waste. For apartment developments, there should be adequate bin storage at ground level.

Bin storage facilities should be secure from vandals, scavengers and vermin and should not create a nuisance to adjacent buildings. Storage facilities or bin houses should be designed to enable access to all receptacles at any one time (i.e. residual waste, dry recyclables, organic waste) to facilitate segregation.

Waste collection points shall have adequate access for all users, including those with disabilities, to provide for loading and further division after recycling on site, in order to facilitate the achievement of high recycling levels, as specified in the Waste Management Plan.

Developers are advised to consult the following document *Making Space for Waste - Designing Waste Management in New Developments - A Practical Guide for Developers and Local Authorities* commissioned by the Association of directors of environment, economy, planning and transport.

12.3.18 Rural housing

In 2005, the Government issued *Sustainable Rural Housing: Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, in order to facilitate the implementation of the rural policy framework set out by the NSS. The Guidelines acknowledge the role that people living in both small towns and villages and the wider countryside have to play in supporting a dynamic rural economy and social structure, and they also establish the main parameters for assessing residential development proposals outside existing settlements.

New development in rural areas should be absorbed and integrated successfully into the rural setting, as indicated in Chapter 5 of this Plan, in subsection 5.7.5 Rural housing design and development patterns. High standards of location, siting and design should be satisfied in order to achieve this objective.

All proposals for effluent treatment shall be in compliance with the Environmental Protection Agency's *Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (PE≤10)*.

12.3.19 Extensions to dwellings

The Council will require proposals for extensions to comply with the following guidelines:

- the extension should generally be subordinate to the main building;
- the form and design should integrate with the main building, generally following window proportions, detailing and finishes, including texture, materials and colour;
- the extension shall be designed to ensure that no overshadowing or overlooking of adjacent residential properties occurs.
- where an extension increases the potential occupancy of the dwelling, the adequacy of the on-site sewage treatment (in unsewered areas) should be demonstrated by the applicant.

Where adequacy cannot be demonstrated, the applicant will be required to upgrade the existing on-site wastewater treatment system to comply with the provisions of the EPA's *Code of Practice – Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (PE≤10)* (2009).

12.3.20 Rural house location

The surface character of an area, its topography, vegetation cover, fields and hedgerows, determine the impact of new development. Allied to surface character are the extent and pattern of existing development in a rural area and these factors will determine whether new development can be integrated successfully or not.

For example, in areas of open bogland, shoreline and high, exposed terrain, it may be difficult to find unobtrusive sites. In areas of enclosed fields with mature trees, stone walls, rolling topography and existing development, imaginative use of the site's natural features can integrate new building unobtrusively into the countryside.

Areas of enclosed fields, agriculture-related development and mature tree cover can absorb new buildings without damaging the rural quality of the area more effectively than open landscapes. Sensitive design will be required in all cases, but it will be crucial if buildings are proposed in visually vulnerable, open landscapes where they are likely to be seen over long distances. The location criterion, therefore, establishes whether a proposed development will be acceptable in principle, having regard to the general characteristics of the site, its context and visibility from critical viewpoints.

12.3.21 Rural house siting

The siting criterion refers to specific site assessment. The site should be sufficiently sized to accommodate a building set back from the road, and make full use of natural features. The building should be sited so as not to break the skyline or shoreline as viewed from public vantage points. Use should be made of backdrops of trees, rising land or other buildings.

Orientation of the building relative to the road and existing development is important, especially where it is proposed to terminate a ribbon of development, 'round off' existing scattered development or achieve a cluster of development. New development should relate closely to existing groups of buildings, particularly traditional farm complexes, and should not extend strip-like along public roads.

12.3.22 Rural house design

The design criterion is aimed at ensuring buildings enhance rather than diminish the visual character of the area.

- The scale, form, massing, proportions and detailing of a development must be assessed in relation to the character of the location, the existing pattern of development and existing site features.
- Building styles that are acceptable in an urban/suburban setting are often alien to a rural setting.
- Whilst there is no absolute requirement to apply any particular style, modern or traditional, buildings should be simple in terms of elevational treatment and materials.
- Access roads and driveways should respect the site contours and cross them gently in order to integrate the building with its entrance and site.
- New development should be cut into sloping land and excessive underbuilding or deadwork should be avoided.
- Traditional hedgerows or stone walls should be retained in preference to ranch, palisade, paling, post-and-wire or other fencing. If a new hedge or wall must be partially or completely removed for the purpose of improving sightlines, a replacement hedge or wall should be erected behind the sightlines. In any planting scheme, indigenous trees and shrubs appropriate to the site conditions should be used.

Often the key to successful integration of new development is attention to detailed design requirements; site management and landscaping are essential to ensure that new development does not appear stark, unfinished and out of character with adjacent vernacular architecture.

When building in the rural environment, the following factors must be considered:

- the effect of the development on the visual amenity of the area;
- interference with views of significant archaeological importance and specific natural features;
- the topography and existing site contours;
- the traditional design, form, scale, and materials used in the area;
- landscaping of the site and integration of existing features (e.g. hedgerows, trees) into the development;
- availability of connections to water and sewerage facilities, and treatment of surface water run-off;
- distance from the road boundary and safety of traffic movement;
- principles of sustainability.

The Council may require daylight and shadow projection diagrams to be submitted in all proposals where buildings of a significant height are involved or where new buildings are located very close to adjoining dwellings.

12.3.23 Site boundaries

The removal of boundary hedges and trees, and replacement with block walls and fencing leads to urban features in a rural environment. It can also have an effect on wildlife and lead to the removal of valuable hedgerows, upon which wildlife depends. The Council will require the retention of natural boundaries (except where roadside boundaries must to be set back in the interest of road safety) and encourage the planting of native trees and hedgerows along all boundaries.

Where setbacks are necessary in the interests of road safety, a natural boundary with native species should be re-established along the new setback line. Whilst hawthorn planting will generally be encouraged, the Planning Authority will have regard to the details set out in the Heritage Council's publication *Conserving and Enhancing Wildlife in Towns and Villages*. Applicants and developers are therefore advised to consult this document and incorporate its recommendations into landscaping plans.

12.4 Retail, commercial and industrial use standards

12.4.1 General principles in assessing retail proposals

In assessing planning applications for retail development, the planning authority will be guided by DoEHLG's *Retail Planning Guidelines* (2005), which identify the following elements:

- adequacy of existing shopping outlets;
- size and location of existing outlets;
- quality and convenience of existing outlets;
- effect on existing communities;
- needs of the elderly, disabled or other persons who may be dependent on local shopping outlets;
- need to counter town/village decline, promote town/village renewal and the optimal utilisation of infrastructural facilities in urban areas.

A retail impact analysis may be required as part of a planning application for retail developments, where the planning authority considers it necessary. Such developments will be assessed as to whether they:

- impact on Sligo City's retail functions;
- support the town centres;
- cause sufficient impact to undermine the quality of the centre;
- diminish the range of activities and services;
- increase the incident of vacancies;
- ensure a high standard of access;
- link effectively with the town centres;
- encourage multi-purpose trips;
- act as a driver of regeneration, with the reuse of inner urban sites.

12.4.2 Permitted locations for shopping facilities

As far as possible, new retail development is to be sited within the town centre or, if no sites are available, immediately on the edge of a town centre, with a presumption against development elsewhere. It is not appropriate for applications for out-of-centre sites to be pursued when the class of goods could quite clearly be sold from within the city centre.

New development should be accessible by a variety of transport modes, including public transport.

12.4.3 Layout and design

The design of proposals for retail development should have proper regard to the relationship with their surroundings and should, if possible, develop and enhance local character. It is recognised that much new development will be of a larger scale than existing facilities. Nonetheless, new proposals will be integrated as much as possible into the existing townscape of the centre.

Designs should avoid presenting blank frontages to streets or being inward-looking. Designs which add interest and variety, and which reflect local context should be encouraged.

The frontage onto a street should consist of the actual retail selling space, to facilitate ease of access for pedestrians. Service yards and car parking should be located at the rear of developments so as to avoid unsightly views. They should normally be placed away from the street frontage and should, wherever possible, maintain existing building lines. They should be well lit and incorporate hard or soft landscaping appropriate to their design and setting.

12.4.4 Shop fronts

The design of a new shop front should relate to the architectural characteristics of the building on which it is situated. New shop front designs must respect the scale and proportion of the streetscape by acknowledging/maintaining the existing grain of development along the street and respecting the appropriate plot width.

Proposed alterations to existing frontages need to be given careful consideration. Traditional shop frontages of character and quality should be retained in normal circumstances. Where existing shop fronts are of no special merit, total replacement is acceptable.

Multiple retailers which have adopted a corporate image will not necessarily be allowed to use their standardised shop front design, corporate colours and materials. Such companies should be encouraged to ensure that their particular fascia takes account of the character of the local area. Compatibility with individual buildings and with the street scene will be considered more important than uniformity between the branches of one company. Name-plates and signage will be required to be constructed in proportion to the façade of the building. Excessive scales or proportions will not be permitted.

The repair, restoration and replacement of shop fronts must be sympathetically carried out to protect the architectural character of the towns and villages. The process of trading through an opening in a building façade without a shop front will not be permitted. The use of loud music or other sound to attract attention to a shop front will also not be permitted.

12.4.5 Large food stores

Large food stores generally serve the weekly convenience goods shopping requirements of families. They require large areas of floorspace with adjacent car parking. The majority of this type of bulk convenience shopping is undertaken by car, but a significant proportion of customers visit by other means. Therefore large food stores should be well served by public transport. These stores should be located in accordance with the sequential test, with town centre sites being considered the most suitable locations. Where applications include significant amounts of non-food items, the accompanying drawings should clearly indicate the area to be devoted to convenience goods. As previously indicated, the national floor space cap of 3,000 sq.m. applies.

12.4.6 Discount food stores

The sequential test should be applied to this type of development in the same manner as to any other class of retail outlet. Discount food stores should have a high standard of access by public transport, foot and private car.

12.4.7 Retail warehousing

Retail warehousing activity relates to the sale of non-food, non-clothing goods. Retail warehousing includes the sale of large goods such as furniture, carpets, bulky white electrical goods, gardening goods, DIY items and toys. The activity may include outdoor display areas and is likely to have considerable car parking requirements.

In order to limit the impact on the vitality and viability of the town centres, retail warehousing must be restricted to selling truly bulky goods (furniture/carpets, bulky white electrical goods, gardening goods, DIY items). Where the range of goods sold from retail warehouses extends to the type of non-bulky durables which are normally sold from the city centre, then there is potential for an adverse impact on the centre.

Items which should be restricted from sale include grocery and food items (including alcohol), footwear, clothing, books, magazines, mobile phones, music (i.e. compact discs, tapes, mini-discs etc.), toiletries, cosmetics, artists' materials, jewellery, gifts, china and leather goods. Conditions will be attached to prevent the sale, by subdivision or change of content, of goods normally sold in city-centre shops where they would thereby compete with the use of the town/city centre to seriously injure its viability. A limit on the range of goods sold will normally be imposed and individual units will be subject to an upper floor space limit.

Retail warehouse units should ideally be grouped in planned retail parks, in order to minimise the number of trips by car. It is also important that they are limited in scale. Generally, units of less than 700 sq.m. gross floor space are more easily accommodated in town centres and, in any event, tend to sell a less bulky range of goods. Consequently it is appropriate to impose a minimum size condition preventing the construction or subdivision of units into stores less than 700 sq.m. in out-of-centre locations. Individual units should be subject to an upper floor limit of 6,000 sq.m.

The design and layout of retail warehouse units should produce a compact development form, with continuous building lines that provide for integration in urban design terms with adjoining and subsequent developments. Where more than one retail warehouse activity is proposed, shared car parking will be expected.

Parking should normally be provided to the rear of buildings, so as to temper the view of expansive car parks and/or to assist in providing continuous development blocks and building lines expected within a new street form.

A landscaping scheme should be designed as an integral part of the development. A schedule of planting and maintenance should accompany any application. The planning authority will particularly ensure that areas of open car parking are adequately landscaped, both on their perimeter and within, with a combination of trees and shrubs of sufficient density to provide visual relief and make them more attractive.

12.4.8 Petrol filling stations and ancillary uses

When considering all applications of this nature, attention should be given to the safety aspects of circulation and parking within the station forecourt. A minimum street frontage of 30 m will be required. A low wall of approximately 0.6 m in height shall be constructed along the frontage, with allowance for two access points, each 8-m wide. No advertising or commercial signage shall obstruct visibility over the site access points or front boundary/wing walls. The pump island shall be not less than 7 m from the footpath/road boundary.

Consideration will be given for the development of small shops selling confectionery, groceries and newspapers. Applications may include ancillary shops of up to 100 sq.m. net sales area, without being subject to the rigours of the sequential test.

Applications in excess of 100 sq.m. should be assessed as if they were independent retail units, in line with the sequential test. The associated filling station is of no consequence in these circumstances, and such proposals should be assessed as if there were no petrol filling facilities present.

All surface run-off from forecourt areas generated on site shall be discharged to adequately designed interceptors in accordance with best practice. Class 1 type interceptors shall be required for all discharges to the local authority surface water drainage system or to surface waters.

12.4.9 Automatic teller machines

The planning authority will strictly control the location of automatic teller machines (ATMs) having regard to the following:

- the need to protect the character of the street, building or shop front into which they are to be incorporated into (especially protected buildings). The design and location must ensure that they are safe and easily accessible. Canopies, signs and logos shall be discretely incorporated into the overall design.
- the provision of ATMs at petrol stations will be encouraged, to facilitate drivers wishing to use them.
- in general, ATMs will not be provided where queuing customers may cause disruption to other pedestrians.

12.4.10 Advertising on buildings and advertising hoardings

Generally, advertising should be sympathetic in scale, design, material and colouring, both to the buildings on which it will be displayed and its surroundings, and should not obscure architectural features. Advertising should not interfere with traffic safety and should not obstruct traffic signs.

Sligo County Council will advise potential applicants on acceptable design of advertisements prior to submitting applications. The following are Sligo County Council standards relating to advertising (applicants are advised to contact the relevant Planning office prior to submitting an application):

- where suitable, advertising will be contained within the façade area of the building and will not be permitted above the eaves or parapet level of buildings;
- in general, no projecting signs shall be permitted; consideration will only be given to small-scale projecting signs that are integral to the shopfront.
- the use of hand-painted signs or individual lettering placed on existing shop fronts or placed directly on the façade of a building where no shop front exists will be encouraged;
- internally-illuminated plastic box signs will not be permitted; lighting of signage should be external to the sign.
- the construction of name-plate fascias linking two or more buildings of different architectural design and character is restricted;
- on buildings and structures of historic, artistic and architectural interest, any signage or shop front should either be in character with the structure or should be required to not interfere with the character of the structure;
- where the building façade possesses features of architectural merit/interest, any proposed signage should have regard to or should not interfere with such features.
- the height of signs and advertising on a building will be controlled; high level advertising and advertising on upper floors will be prevented;
- the use of advertising structures will be restricted on public footpaths and on road margins where they conflict with pedestrian or traffic safety;
- finger-post signs for tourist attractions will be permitted where they do not conflict with traffic safety, subject to licensing;
- large advertising hoardings will be discouraged, except in industrial areas where their presence by reason of scale and design is not out of character with the existing environment;
- the number of signs will be limited where it is considered that they would lead to cluttered appearance at a junction or on a building.

In general, advertising hoardings, including three-dimensional signs and tri-visions will not be permitted on or in the vicinity of protected structures or on the front façades of buildings. However, advertising hoardings may be permitted temporarily where they help screen building sites and derelict sites awaiting redevelopment, and where they form an integral part of the boundary treatment of the site.

12.4.11 Canopies and awnings

The erection of canopies constitutes a development requiring planning permission. The use of plastic canopies over windows will be discouraged. Where shading of a window display is required, the traditional retractable awning is considered suitable. Scaffold drops will require planning permission.

12.4.12 Security screens

The use of metal security grills or shutters will be discouraged. Where it is suggested as essential to use such shutters, these should be open-grilled, and should be affixed to the inside of the window, or preferably behind the display area. The installation of roller shutters is a development requiring the prior grant of planning permission. The use of the public footpath for security stanchions or roller shutter fixings is not acceptable.

12.4.13 Illumination and spread of light

If external illumination is proposed, documentation shall be provided that clearly shows that light or glare from such illumination will not adversely affect pedestrian and vehicular traffic or adjacent properties.

12.4.14 Use mix

Where commercial developments are proposed, the planning authority may require an appropriate mix of uses, depending on the existing uses of the surrounding area. In general, the planning authority will encourage a mix of uses on upper floors in town and village centres.

12.4.15 Bars/night-clubs/disco-bars/ amusement centres

In order to maintain an appropriate mix of uses and protect night-time amenities in Sligo towns, the County Council, through the appropriate use of its development management powers, will prevent an excessive concentration of pubs, bars, nightclubs and hot-food take-aways in any particular area. The Council will ensure that the intensity of any proposed use is in keeping with both the character of the area (i.e. residential, mixed-use, etc.) and with adjoining businesses, when development proposals are being considered. The following issues shall be taken into account in the assessment of applications for the above uses:

- Noise at the boundaries will be carefully monitored and noise insulation measures will be required at the time of the submission of the planning application. Other effects of the development on the amenity of nearby residents must be assessed prior to the granting of planning permission, i.e. general disturbance, hours of operation, car parking, litter and fumes.
- New buildings must be designed to prevent noise escaping, and with adequate provision for refuse disposal, storage and collection.

The Council will encourage a diversity of uses in town centres throughout the day and evening, and will ensure that proper litter control measures are in place prior to the opening of any premises.

Façade design will be carefully controlled by the planning authorities, in particular the type and degree of advertising signage and lighting. The design shall respect the character of the street and the buildings.

12.4.16 Fast-food take-aways

Proliferation of hot-food take-aways will not be permitted in any particular area. Regard will also be had to the impact of hot-food take-aways on the amenities of an area, including noise, odour and litter. The planning authority may impose restrictions on opening hours of such uses as a condition of a planning permission.

12.4.17 Open-air concerts

In considering applications for open-air concerts, Sligo County Council will have due regard to the following: noise and general disturbance, hours of operation, traffic generation, traffic flow and car parking, accessibility, effect on residential amenities of the area, litter control, emergency access, ancillary uses such as fast-food provisions and toilet facilities. The Planning Authority will insist that proper provisions and arrangements in relation to these, and other relevant issues, have been made prior to the granting of permission.

12.4.18 Offices

The local authority will encourage over-counter office development to locate in the town/village centres. The use of vacant or under-utilised upper floors for office development will be encouraged. Outside the centres, applications for office development will normally be considered within the areas zoned for business/enterprise/industry (BUS) and community facilities (CF).

Change of use from shops to offices in the town/village centre will not normally be permitted, except in exceptional circumstances. There will be a presumption in favour of the granting of planning permission for the conversion of offices, currently in former dwellings, back to residential use.

All new office developments outside town/village centres will be required to provide a minimum of 10% open space. Where offices are proposed on lands zoned for business/enterprise/industry, such development will be required to provide a minimum of 10% open space in addition to a minimum 6-m strip of landscaped open space along all roads.

12.4.19 Industry, wholesale and repository warehousing development

Industry, wholesale and warehousing activity will normally only be permitted on lands zoned for business/enterprise/industry (BUS), as outlined in the development control matrix. Special consideration will be given to such developments where they would contribute to the urban renewal of an area or where they would make a significant contribution to the urban character.

Warehousing in this context is essentially for storage or wholesale and as such differs from retail warehousing. In terms of class of use, as outlined in the Planning and Development Regulations (Part 4), retail warehousing falls within Class 1, and the latter within Class 5.

Adequate space must be available for on-site storage of materials and refuse, loading and unloading, and on-site circulation and parking. Adequate provision should be made for storage of goods and materials within the building or else in a designated storage area.

A landscaping scheme for the site shall be required. In the case of developments for two or more buildings, a uniform design for boundary fences, roof profiles and building lines is essential.

A minimum open space requirement of 10% will apply. The open space should be provided such that it may function as an effective amenity area. In situations where effective open space cannot be provided on site, a contribution will be payable in lieu of other arrangements, similar to that employed in the provision of open space in residential areas. An industrial development should present a pleasant aspect helped by tree planting, the judicious placing of advertisement structures, screening of open storage areas and unobtrusive loading and parking space.

Access roads to industrial estates will normally have a minimum overall reservation width of 13 m, consisting of a 7-m carriageway, two 1.5-m grass verges and two 1.5-m footpaths. Main access routes to industrial lands will also be required to provide reservations for cycleways. Generally, the building line must be at least 9 m from the road boundary, with car parking provided to the side or rear of the building. There shall be a minimum landscaped/planting strip on all principal road frontages.

12.4.20 Waste disposal

Adequate storage must be provided for the three segregated waste types (organic, recyclable and landfill waste) and waste management facilities commensurate with the scale of the development must be incorporated. Bin storage facilities should be secure from vandals, scavengers and vermin and should not create a nuisance to adjoining buildings.

Waste collection points shall have adequate access to provide for loading and further division after recycling on site, in order to facilitate the achievement of high recycling levels, as specified in the Waste Management Plan.

12.5 Community facilities standards

12.5.1 Schools

It is estimated that one primary school requires a catchment of between 1,200–1,300 dwellings. Site requirements for a primary school are in the region of 2.15–3.0 ha.

Provision should be made in schools for a range of organised sports facilities, for car parking and for drop off and collection facilities.

Schools will be encouraged to locate in the vicinity of town and village centres.

12.5.2 Childcare facilities

In line with the *Childcare Facilities - Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoEHLG, 2001), the Planning Authority will require the provision of one childcare facility (including crèches, playschools, nursery and Montessori schools) with places for 20 children for each 75 dwellings, having regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas. In appropriate circumstances, the Planning Authority will require the provision of a multi-purpose community facility, including but not limited to childcare services.

Town and village centres are considered suitable for the location of these facilities. Applications for crèches and playschools in the proximity of a new or existing place of work, such as in a business/enterprise area, will also be favourably considered. Crèches and playschools will be permitted in areas where they will not cause hazard due to traffic congestion or adversely affect the amenity of adjoining residences. They should generally be provided alongside through-routes as opposed to culs-de-sac. Proximity to public transport nodes will also be favoured in the interests of sustainability.

Applications for childcare facilities will be assessed in accordance with the following criteria:

- details of the proposed opening times
- proposed number and age range of children
- proposed number of staff
- internal floor area devoted to use, excluding areas such as kitchens, toilets, sleeping and other ancillary areas
- details of external play areas and management of these areas
- car parking arrangements, for both parents and staff members
- local traffic conditions
- convenience to public transport nodes
- the level of existing childcare provision and the demand for childcare facilities in the area
- effect on the amenities of adjacent properties
- potential for linked trips in the proposed location due to the existence of other public, commercial and community facilities in the vicinity.

All applications for crèches or pre-school facilities shall be required to comply with the HSE and Government guidelines.

12.5.3 Care facilities

A change of use from residential to a care facility, to care for more than six persons with an intellectual or physical disability, will require planning permission and will be dealt with sympathetically, considering factors such as accessibility, traffic, safety and proximity to community and shopping facilities.

Single-storey detached houses with adequate private and secure open space and on-site parking are the preferred locations for such uses.

12.5.4 Nursing homes

Permission for change of use from a residential dwelling to a nursing home will only be granted in cases where such a use would not be detrimental to the amenities of adjoining dwellings, would be of an appropriate size and scale for the area, and where the building can be adapted to provide a satisfactory level of accommodation. Other factors to be considered include the adequacy of off-street parking facilities, satisfactory private open space, and proximity to local services and facilities.

12.6 Roads, access, circulation and parking

12.6.1 Road standards and circulation

A legible hierarchy of roads within residential developments should be created, from distributor roads, link roads, and access roads, to culs-de-sac, where appropriate. In general, road layout should comply with Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas (1998).

Roads should be designed to reduce the impact of the car and encourage walking/cycling for local trips. To reduce the dominance of the car in the street, a number of measures can be taken at the design stage:

- minimise the length of straight stretches of road/encourage short straight streets with staggered T-junctions;
- introduce speed-regulating curves;
- promote shared surfaces for vehicles, pedestrians and children at play;
- introduce different surface materials and colour variations;
- emphasise the design of entrance treatments and use of pinch points;

Allowances should be made for the requirements of service and emergency vehicles. These will require access to pedestrianised streets, and will require sufficient room to turn in cul-de-sacs. Alternative layouts in the form of home zones and innovative layouts will also be encouraged.

12.6.2 Access to the road network

It is the National Roads Authority's policy to avoid the creation of new access points or the generation of increased traffic from existing accesses to national roads to which speed limits greater than 50 km/h apply.

In accordance with this national policy and in the interest of safe traffic flow, it is the policy of the Council not to permit any new means of access along national roads N4, N15, N16, N17 and N59 outside the 50 km/h speed limit, in accordance with the DoEHLG publication *Spatial Planning and National Roads (Draft) Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, in order to protect these roads. Limited exceptions may be considered as follows, provided the proposed access can be shown not to cause a traffic hazard:

- the provision of a new house where the existing inhabited dwelling is substandard and in need of replacement. The replacement house should generally be located immediately adjoining, or on the site of the former dwelling.
- where a house is required by a farmer or a member of the farmer's immediate family, engaged in full-time employment on the family farm, and where there is no alternative access from another public road, planning permission may be granted provided any new development is clustered around the existing farm residence.
- the creation of a new access not involving additional development, which leads to the elimination of a traffic hazard arising from an existing authorised use.

- industrial or commercial development of national or regional strategic importance will be considered where it is locationally tied to a fixed resource or where it will have a major beneficial effect on the development and economy of the surrounding area. Where new industrial or commercial development is not an objective of the Development Plan, such development will be considered only in exceptional circumstances (as per the *Spatial Planning and National Roads (Draft) Guidelines for Planning Authorities* – Section 2.5) on the basis of a masterplan or local area plan prepared in consultation with the National Roads Authority.

These exceptions shall apply only subject to the condition that any such access does not conflict with any other restrictions contained in the Plan, and that the proposed access can be shown not to cause a traffic hazard.

The protection of the national road network also extends to associated junctions on the network.

Some development proposals will generate significant additional trips/travel, with potentially serious implications for the capacity and safety of the road network. In these cases, applications shall be accompanied by:

- a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA), in accordance with the DoEHLG/DoT/DTO publication *Traffic Management Guidelines* and the NRA’s *Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines*,
- a Road Safety Audit (RSA), in accordance with the NRA’s *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* and Department of Transport guidelines.

The planning authority and/or prescribed bodies will assess the need for submission of such studies on a case-by-case basis.

Noise

In order to mitigate the noise impacts on developments within the zone of influence of existing or planned national roads, the requirements of the Environmental Noise Regulations (S.I. No. 140 of 2006) shall be adhered to in the design of relevant development proposals

12.6.3 Sightlines and visibility standards

Entrances

Vehicle entrances and exits must be designed to avoid hazards to pedestrians and passing traffic. Where a new entrance onto a public road is proposed, the local authority must consider traffic conditions and available sight lines. Generally, no more than two vehicular entrances will be permitted to any commercial or industrial property, each not exceeding 7.5 metres in overall width. The pavement shall be dished and reinforced.

The widening of a means of access to a public road requires planning permission where the road is more than 4 metres in width.

The minimum sight distance required for entrances onto roads shall be in accordance with the NRA’s *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges*, which are broadly as shown in Table 12.B. The sight distances are measured to the near-side edge of the carriageway in both directions from a height of 1.05 m above the ground and from a point 3.0 m back from the edge of the road.

Table 12.B Minimum required sight distances

Maximum speed on road	100 km/h (62 mph)	85 km/h (53 mph)	70 km/h (44 mph)	60 km/h (37 mph)	50 km/h (31 mph)
Sight distance required	215 m	160 m	120 m	90 m	70 m

All developments providing for access onto public roads must show that the access proposed will not create a traffic hazard or interfere with the free flow of traffic along such roads. The availability of adequate sight distance along the road from the proposed access point is the crucial requirement for road safety.

The minimum sight distances required for entrances onto roads shall be in accordance with NRA’s *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges*. New entrances must provide for a surface water disposal system to ensure that no surface water is discharged onto the public road and, where roadside drains are affected, adequate provision for piping such drains shall be made to the satisfaction of the Council.

12.6.4 Car parking requirements, layout and design

Requirements for numbers of car parking spaces are set out in Table 12.A (see Section 12.3 of this Plan).

In dealing with planning applications for change of use or for replacement buildings, an allowance may be given for the former site use in calculating the car parking requirements generated by new development as extra.

Where the provision of on-site parking is not possible, the local authority will require a financial contribution towards the provision of car parking elsewhere by the authority in accordance with Section 48 (17)(c) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Car parking will generally be located behind the established building line and will be appropriately screened. Where it is necessary to provide parking to the front of a development, the existing boundary treatment will be maintained and additional landscaping required to enhance the visual amenities of the area.

The provision of on-street car parking will be considered in new development areas, where road widths are developed to adequate standards. This provision is designed to facilitate increases in residential densities at appropriate locations.

A greater integration of land use and transportation will be encouraged so as to reduce the generation of trips and thereby reduce the number of car spaces necessary.

The basic dimensions required for the layout of car parking areas are as follows (in accordance with the DoEHLG, Department of Transport and Dublin Transportation Office's *Traffic Management Guidelines* (May 2003)):

- minimum size of parking bay 5.0 m x 2.5 m
(Note: a minimum width of 2.3 m may be permitted for a long-term bay)
- a minimum width of aisle for 90 degree parking - 6.1 m
- a minimum width of aisle for 60 degree parking - 4.9 m
- a minimum width of aisle for 45 degree parking - 3.6 m
- a minimum width of aisle for less than 45-degree parking and for parallel parking - 3.6 m.

12.6.5 Mobility Management Plans

Mobility management's primary aim is to reduce the dependence on private car use and to promote the use of more sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport.

Mobility management aims to mitigate congestion in urban areas by providing for the transportation needs of people and goods in an ordered, planned manner. In doing this, the environmental and economic impacts of travel may be greatly reduced. For larger scale developments, where it is considered that the development may have an impact on traffic in the area, Mobility Management Plans may be requested by planning authorities as conditions.

12.6.6 Loading bays and service vehicles

In addition to the general car parking standards, service parking space will be required for vehicles necessarily involved in the operation of business in such activities as the delivery and collection of goods, the carrying out of repair and maintenance services. Each new premises proposed for office, commercial or industrial use must include, within the curtilage of the site, one or more loading bays of an adequate size to cater for its specific needs and the requirements of the type of vehicle serving the premises.

This requirement may be waived where the planning authority considers that such provisions are too onerous or restrictive given the existing urban design context. In such cases, alternative arrangements may be required, including the possible provision of designated on-street delivery bays at appropriate locations or with restrictions on delivery times.

12.6.7 Design and layout of parking areas

Parking and service spaces must be located on-site so as to prevent obstruction on-street, and should also be located, where possible, to the rear and side of buildings in such a manner as to ensure minimal injury to the amenity of adjoining premises. Where parking is allowed in sight of the general public, adequate screening or landscaping must be provided to reduce the impact of parked cars.

12.6.8 Cycle facilities

Cycle facility standards are to be considered as minimum standards.

Cycle parking standards are divided into long-term parking for staff or residents and short-term parking for customers or visitors. "Sheffield" stands are satisfactory for short-term cycle parking, whereas long-term parking requires secure, covered lockers. Shower and changing facilities, and storage areas for clothing (e.g. waterproofs and helmets) are also required by long-term users.

Cycle facilities shall be provided in conjunction with any new development proposals and the standard requirements are set out in Table 12.A (Section 12.3 of this Plan).

Cycle standards include bike-and-ride provision at bus and rail stations, which is important in encouraging sustainable transport and reducing the land requirement for parking. Prioritised cycle parking should be provided on or close to rail platforms. Where stands cannot be provided on-site, a contribution will be required towards the provision of public cycle stands.

12.6.9 Access for the disabled

Car parking shall be provided for the disabled and mobility-impaired in all car-parking developments, in the most convenient locations for ease of use. Parking for the disabled shall be laid out in a uniform order, designed to help orientation.

The minimum criteria for such parking provisions are detailed in *Building for Everyone - inclusion, access and use*, published by the National Disability Authority in 2003. Special car parking bays for the disabled shall be provided as close as possible to the entrance of premises to be served. Each disabled parking bay shall be clearly marked with the relevant international symbol.

12.6.10 Construction standards

The Building Regulations and *Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas* (DOELG, 1998) shall be consulted for standards in relation to site development works, such as footpaths, roads, sewers, drains and water supply.

12.6.11 Roadside sale of goods and services

Unauthorised parking of vehicles and trailers on national, regional and local roads for the purpose of commercial activity is considered to constitute a hazard to road users and not in compliance with Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Regulations. Accordingly the Council adopt the following approach to such development.

The planning authority will not permit parked vehicles, trailers etc to use the road network within the County for commercial purposes, provision of services or advertising for the sale of individual vehicles. Such development is considered to constitute a traffic hazard to road users.

The Council shall consider the provision of a suitably designed and privately developed commercial vehicle rest stop/park outside of the urban area, subject to the provision of safe access and circulation, suitable public facilities, adequate screening and the compatibility of adjacent land uses.

12.7 Miscellaneous development standards

12.7.1 Agricultural developments

The Council will seek to ensure that agricultural activities, including the storage and spreading of slurry, are carried out to the highest environmental standards. Farmers must comply with the requirements of the European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) Regulations, 2009 or any other documents issued by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food and Sligo County Council. Farmers shall ensure that there is no unsustainable build-up of nutrients in soils.

Non-exempted agricultural developments will be permitted in rural areas in accordance with location, siting and design criteria as outlined in Sections 12.3.20 to 12.3.22 and will not generally be permitted in the vicinity of towns and villages, where such development could create a visual intrusion into the character of the area or an environmental nuisance. In order to assess the potential impact of agricultural development, planning applications for these proposals should include the following:

- A. a completed application form for agricultural developments (available from the Planning Office of Sligo County Council);
- B. all information included in the County Council's Guidance *Notes on Agricultural Planning Applications* (available from the Planning Office).

Agricultural developments relating to provision of waste storage infrastructure shall be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2009, in terms of provision of the required 18-week waste storage capacity for the winter housing of livestock.

Agricultural waste storage structures shall be constructed in accordance with relevant Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food technical building specifications.

12.7.2 Renewable energy developments

The local authority acknowledges the current need to adopt a more sustainable approach to energy production, through the promotion of facilities such as wind farms, hydroelectric schemes, landfill gas, biogas from sewage sludge and farm slurry, and solar energy.

Alternative approaches will be favoured when considered acceptable in accordance with environmentally sustainable standards and the effects of such developments on the landscape. Some criteria that should be considered at the planning application stage are as follows:

- visual impacts
- noise levels
- impact on environmental designations
- proximity of existing dwellings and land uses
- impact of construction and related site works
- impact on existing walking routes / rights-of-way / public access to the countryside

Such factors, among others, should be considered and discussed with the local authority at pre-planning application stage.

In relation to wind farms, the Council will require detailed information to EIA standard in applications for large-scale installation proposals with significant anticipated environmental impact.

Proposals in or close to pNHAs, cSACs, designated Visually Vulnerable Areas, archaeological sites or urban settlements shall generally be discouraged. The Planning Authority will have regard to the DoEHLG's *Wind Energy Development Guidelines* (June 2006) and any revised guidelines, when considering wind energy applications.

12.7.3 Telecommunications

In 1996, the DoEHLG published *Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures: Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, dealing with telecommunications installations which form part of the requirements for licensed, public mobile telephony and which are considered to be development in accordance with the Planning and Developments Acts. The Planning Authority will have regard to these Guidelines, or any subsequent revisions, when assessing proposals for telecommunications infrastructure.

Telecommunication masts, access roads and associated power lines will be assessed with regard to siting and design criteria, safety and the mitigation of intrusive impacts. The following standards shall apply:

- A. masts will not generally be permitted in designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes, Visually Vulnerable Areas, pNHAs, cSACs or adjacent to Scenic Routes;
- B. masts shall be designed and located so as to cause minimum impact on the landscape and, where possible, should be located within forest plantations.
- C. operators should seek to co-locate their services by sharing a single mast or, if necessary, locating additional masts in cluster form.
- D. in the event of the discontinuance of any mast installations, the mast and associated equipment shall be removed from the site and the land restored to its original condition.

12.7.4 Extractive industry

In April 2004, the DoEHLG's published *Quarries and Ancillary Activities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities*. The Guidelines are also a practical guide to the implementation of Section 261 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, concerning the control of quarries. The Planning Authority will have regard to these Guidelines when assessing all quarry-related proposals.

Quarry owners and operators will be aware of the public concern to which certain extractive industries can give rise and should therefore take the earliest opportunity to discuss their proposals with the Planning Authority by means of a pre-application consultation. This will facilitate an assessment as to whether the proposed development is in accordance with the relevant policies of the Development Plan for the area, along with other relevant government guidelines and policies.

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) may be required for the proposed development, depending on its nature and extent. The relevant thresholds for the requirement of submission of Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (Part 1, Class 19 and Part 2, Class 2), i.e. development exceeding 5 hectares in area.

12.7.5 Water supply

All water mains and ancillary fittings will be constructed, laid and tested in accordance with the requirements of *Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas*, Section 4 - Water Supply (DoEHLG, 1998).

12.7.6 Wastewater disposal

All surface water and foul water drainage systems will be designed and constructed in accordance with the Building Regulations (1997) Technical Documents Part H – Drainage and Wastewater Disposal, and in accordance with the *Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas* (DoEHLG, 1998).

12.7.7 On-site wastewater treatment systems

Wastewater treatment systems should be located, constructed and maintained to the highest standards to ensure minimal impacts on water quality and particularly groundwater quality. Accordingly, all applications for planning permission involving the use of an on-site treatment system must contain sufficient information to demonstrate that the proposed development will be environmentally sustainable.

All proposals for on-site treatment systems shall be designed, constructed and maintained in accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency's *Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (PE≤10)* (2009) and/or *Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres and Hotels*, as well as any guidance documents issued by the County Council.

Treatment systems for small communities, business, leisure centres and hotels will not be permitted without an adequate, legally-binding contract for the management and maintenance of the system, for the life of the system.

Reed beds/wetlands are not considered satisfactory until national design and installation criteria are agreed.

On unsewered sites, where an extension increases the potential occupancy of a house, the adequacy of the sewerage treatment and disposal facilities should be demonstrated by the applicant. It may be necessary with significant extensions to upgrade the existing on-site wastewater treatment system to comply with the requirements of the EPA's *Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (PE≤10)*.

Site Assessment must be conducted and on-site effluent treatment systems should be designed by qualified persons listed on Sligo County Council's Site Assessor Panel.

When a new urban wastewater treatment plant is constructed or existing plants are upgraded, developments will be required to connect into the plants.

Public wastewater infrastructure must be in place and must have adequate capacity prior to developments being occupied.

Privately operated communal systems and the discharge or disposal of domestic wastewater to surface water bodies will not be permitted.

12.7.8 Surface water drainage

All applications for planning permission shall incorporate proposals for the disposal of surface water. Storm water will not generally be allowed into the foul sewerage network and should be disposed of, subject to suitable treatment where necessary, to available watercourses or through separate surface water drains to independent outfalls. The Council will also promote the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) where there are no positive or natural drainage systems into which to discharge storm water.

When creating a new vehicular access onto public roads, existing roadside drainage shall be maintained by the incorporation of a suitably sized drainage pipe. In these circumstances, each application shall be accompanied by design calculations or appropriate evidence to support the size of pipe selected. In any event, surface water shall not be allowed to discharge onto the adjoining public road from the proposed development.

12.7.9 Flooding and development management

Development management should follow the sequential approach when considering the location of development in areas of risk assessment. Applicants may be requested to submit the appropriate flood risk assessment and the planning authority will take this into account in determining the application.

Flood risk assessments should be:

- proportionate to the risk scale, nature and location of the development;
- undertaken by a competent person, such as a suitably qualified hydrologist, flood risk management professional or specialist water engineer;
- undertaken as early as possible in the particular planning process;
- supported by appropriate data and information, including historical information on previous events, but focusing more on predictive assessment of less frequent or more extreme events, taking the likely impacts of climate change into account;
- clearly state the risk to people and development, and how that risk will be managed over the lifetime of the development.

12.7.10 Construction and demolition waste (C&D)

The identification and provision of facilities for the reception of C&D waste should be integrated into the project planning and design processes. In order to ensure that this occurs, conditions will be included in the permissions granted to particular developments, requiring waste management plans be drawn up prior to the commencement of the development. These plans will be subject to approval by the planning authority, and will include site inspections to ensure that all wastes generated during development are being handled in an environmentally-sound and sustainable manner.

The plans must be carried out in accordance with DOEHLG's *Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects*.

Any developments on brown field sites should also consider the contents of these guidelines and carry out investigations to determine all possible waste types associated with a sites previous use(s).

12.7.11 Record of Protected Structures / Architectural Conservation Areas

A protected structure is defined as any structure or specified part of a structure which is included or proposed for inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). The term 'structure' includes: the interior of a structure, the land lying within the curtilage of the structure, any other structures lying within that curtilage and their interiors, and all fixtures and fittings which form part of the interior and exterior of the above structures.

Where a building is a protected structure or a proposed protected structure, works which are normally exempted from the requirement of planning permission are not exempted development where they would materially affect the character of a protected structure or any element of it which contributes to its special interest.

The alteration of a building or other structure on the RPS, other than an alteration consisting of the painting of any previously painted part of such a building or structure, shall not be carried out without having secured planning permission or a Section 5 or Section 57 declaration of exemption by the planning authority. Planning permission will not be granted for the demolition of a protected structure or proposed protected structure, save in exceptional circumstances.

Any development proposals that would affect the character of a protected structure or a proposed protected structure or the exterior of buildings within an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) shall be executed to a high conservation standard and shall not detract from their special character, significance or value.

Where an application relates to a development which would consist of, or comprise the carrying out of works to a protected structure, the planning authority will have regard to the *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoEHLG 2004). In particular, Section 6.4 of the Guidelines outlines the level and standard of documentation required to accompany a planning application that would affect a protected structure, a proposed protected structure or the exterior of buildings in an ACA. The following should accompany the planning application:

- drawings of elevations of the main features of any building within the curtilage of the protected structure which would be materially affected by the proposed development;
- photographs, plans and other particulars as are necessary to show how the development would affect the character of the structure;
- a written statement including a methodology and works specification describing and justifying the proposed works and the philosophy that informs their methodology;
- photographs sufficient to describe (i) the overall appearance of the exterior of the protected structure, including all exposed sides, its setting and its relationship with surrounding structure; (ii) any interior spaces or features that it is proposed to change; (iii) details of the exterior and interior sufficient to describe the structure's character and materials of construction.
- a conservation impact assessment prepared by a qualified and experienced conservation architect; the assessment should include a report on the condition of the protected structure.

The assessment shall be undertaken by a suitably-qualified specialist, where appropriate, detailing the impacts of the proposed development upon the special interest and character of the surrounding architectural heritage. Where buildings are considered as being of national importance, the planning authority will require that any architectural heritage impact assessment undertaken be carried out by a Grade 1 Conservation Architect. The planning authority shall be consulted at an early stage in this regard, in order to determine whether there is a need for such an assessment or for specific mitigation measures.

When assessing planning applications relating to buildings included in the RPS, the planning authority will have regard to the character and any element of it which contributes to the special interest of the structure, to include special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.

The planning authority will also have regard to the design, quality and character of surrounding development and the condition (which should be based on a report prepared by a qualified conservation architect and a Structural Engineer with conservation experience) of the protected structure.

Any owner or occupier of a protected structure may ask for a Section 57 declaration from the planning authority, which will set out the type of works, which would or would not affect the character of the structure or of any element thereof, and therefore whether planning permission is required.

12.7.12 Archaeology

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to preserve, where possible, archaeological heritage in situ, in accordance with government policy. Where archaeological heritage is likely to be affected by a proposed development, developers will be advised of their obligations under the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. Developments that impact on archaeological heritage will be treated as follows:

- For recorded monuments, archaeological remains will be preserved in situ in line with national policy. For development that may affect a recorded monument, the developer will be required to submit an archaeological impact assessment, which may also address issues of siting, monument setting, amenity and visual impact as appropriate. Where appropriate, developments affecting recorded monuments will be investigated, recorded and/or preserved.
- Outside of recorded monuments, where, in the opinion of the planning authority, developments would involve major ground disturbances (e.g linear developments exceeding 1 km in length, development greater than 0.5 ha in extent or development proposals in wetland areas), conditions relating to archaeology may be applied.
- The planning authority will require that an archaeological impact assessment and/or archaeological investigations be undertaken by a suitably licensed archaeologist prior to the commencement of development.
- The developer will be liable for the cost of archaeological investigations.
- The planning authority may require the developer to submit a report, prepared by a suitably qualified archaeologist, on the archaeological implications of the proposed development. The planning authority may impose conditions requiring:
 - professional archaeological supervision of site excavations;
 - funding by the applicant of archaeological assessment, monitoring and/or testing;
 - preservation of all or part of any archaeological remains.
- The planning authority may impose conditions which modify the development, in order to facilitate archaeological investigation or preservation;
- The planning authority will encourage the incorporation of, or the reference to significant archaeological finds into development schemes, where feasible. Archaeological monuments should not form part of green space or car parking allocations in proposed developments.
- Developers will be encouraged to supply an archaeological assessment and a method statement outlining construction procedures as part of their planning application.

Where a proposed development (excluding individual residential home units) includes a monument or site included in the Record Monument and Places within the landholding, the developer shall commission an archaeological assessment to establish the extent of archaeological material associated with the monument or site. This assessment shall also define the buffer area or area contiguous with the monument, which will preserve the setting and visual amenity of the site.

The area of the monument and buffer should not be included as part of the open space requirement demanded of a specific development, but should be additional to the required open spaces.

Should a monument or place included in the Record of Monument and Places lie within the open space requirement for a development, a conservation plan for that monument should be requested as part of the landscape plan for that proposed open space.

12.7.13 Rights-of-way

Existing rights-of-way and established walking routes shall be identified prior to any new planting, infra-structural development, energy/telecommunications developments and any other development capable of affecting the respective rights-of-way.

Development will not be permitted where a public right of way would be affected, unless the level of amenity is maintained by:

- a. the footpath/bridleway being diverted by the minimum practical distance and the route continuing to be segregated from vehicular traffic;
- b. appropriate legal procedures have been undertaken to extinguish the existing right of way and to establish the new right of way to replace it.

Appendices

Appendix A. Population and housing

A.1 Previous population projections

In 2003 Sligo County Council prepared a range of population change scenarios based on the NSS recommendations and taking into account growth documented by previous censuses. Of the four population change models that were developed as part of the CDP 2005-2011, the Fast Growth Scenario was selected as the preferred one. This scenario envisaged a County population of up to 75,000 by 2011, with a Gateway population of 35,000–40,000.

Following the publication of Census 2006 reports, it became apparent that despite the Border Region's population growing more than anticipated (according to the Central Statistics Office's Regional Population Projections 2005), Sligo and Environs – as defined by Census boundaries – had lost 1.69 % of its population (333 residents), while the population of the County as a whole increased by just 4.6% (2,663 people).

In 2007, revised Regional Population Projections were published by the CSO and subsequently the DoEHLG recommended that Regional Authorities adjust their Gateway population targets.

Based on the Revised Regional Population Projections for the Border Region, the Border Authority recommended that Sligo Local Authorities consider a target of circa 77,000 residents for the County, of which 42,000 would be in the Gateway by the year 2020. These targets were taken into consideration when preparing revised population change scenarios, in early 2008.

A.2 Population change scenarios

Three population change scenarios were developed for the purpose of both Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 and this County Development Plan 2011-2017: a current trend/low-growth scenario, a high-growth scenario and a revised NSS-target scenario. These are summarised in Table AA-2 on the next page. Please note that the definition of the SEDP area differs from the Census boundaries (see below).

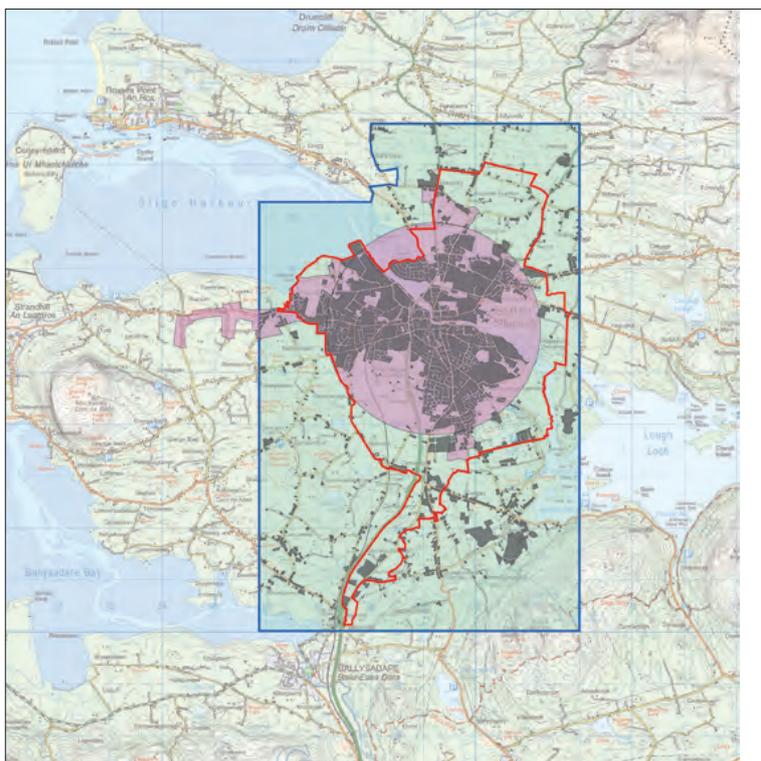


Fig. AA-1

Sligo and Environs, as defined by Census boundaries (shaded in purple), is much smaller than the area covered by Sligo and Environs Development Plan (area inside the blue line)

Table AA-2. Summary of population change scenarios for Sligo City and County to the years 2017 and 2020

Scenarios - main assumptions	Total County population (60,894 in 2006 Census)		Gateway* population (24,755 in 2006 - estimate)		Rest of County population (36,139 in 2006 - estimate)	
	2017	2020	2017	2020	2017	2020
<p>Low-growth scenario</p> <p>This scenario is based on the recent performance of the housing market, which is considered a reasonable indicator of the general economic trend.</p>	68,943	71,341	30,229	31,921	38,714	39,420
<p>High-growth scenario (preferred scenario)</p> <p>The scenario assumes improved socio-economic conditions and subsequent higher population growth attaining the NSS target for the County, distributed in a balanced manner between Gateway, key support towns, satellites and settlements with special functions, in accordance with the Settlement Strategy.</p>	73,835	76,909	33,947	37,000	39,888	39,909
<p>Revised NSS-target scenario</p> <p>This scenario assumes that both County and Gateway population targets will be achieved by 2020, with growth strongly concentrated in the Gateway and population declining in rural County areas.</p>	73,835	76,909	39,554	42,236	34,281	34,673

* The estimate and associated projections relate to the population of the larger area covered by the Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 (SEDP) and defined as Gateway area in the SEDP. The estimate does not represent the population of Sligo and Environs as defined by Census boundaries (essentially Sligo Borough and minor extensions into the County Council area).

A.3 Selecting a population change scenario

It is evident from Table 3.F that:

- the Low-Growth scenario would attain neither the Gateway nor the County revised NSS population targets of 42,000 and 77,000 respectively.
- simultaneous attainment of both Gateway and County revised NSS population targets (as in the Revised NSS-target Scenario) would involve a substantial depopulation of rural areas.

Therefore, the High-Growth Scenario is the preferred growth model, as it proposes balance between Gateway and the rest of the County. The SEDP 2010-2016 was prepared and adopted on the basis of this scenario. In the interest of consistency, the same scenario has been employed in the preparation of the CDP 2011-2017.

Regardless of what scenario is selected, the key driver of Sligo City's population increase is the extent of net migration into the Gateway, which in turn is dependent mainly on business development and job creation, supported by local entrepreneurship and investment in physical and social infrastructure.

A.4 Compliance with national projections and regional population targets

In April 2008, the Central Statistics Office issued national population projections (Population and Labour Force Projections 2011-2041), which were followed in December 2008 by regional projections. On the 5th of January 2009, the DoEHLG issued National Population Projections and Regional Population Targets 2010-2022 (see Table below), recommending that these targets be incorporated into the review of Regional Planning Guidelines and subsequently into County Development Plans.

Table AA-3. Border Regional Population Targets 2010, 2016 and 2022

	2008	2010	2016	2022 (low / high range)
Border Region population targets	492,500	511,000	552,700	595,000 - 611,400

Source: National Population Projections and Regional Population Targets 2010-2022, DoEHLG January 2009

Based on the DoEHLG's population projections and recommendations, the Border Regional Planning Guidelines, adopted in September 2010, set out "population targets" (i.e. allocations) for the years 2016 and 2022 for each county in the Border Region, as well as for each NSS Gateway, Hub and regionally-important town.

The targets for County Sligo are presented in Table AA-4 below, in parallel with the figures resulting from the preferred, High-Growth Scenario adopted by both Sligo Development Plans.

Table AA-4. Comparison between RPG population targets and the High-Growth Scenario estimates for County Sligo

Scenario	2006	Target 2016	Target 2020/2022
RPG-defined population targets	60,894 (Census)	71,851	77,350 (in 2022)
High-Growth Scenario population estimates	60,894 (Census)	72,838	76,909 (in 2020)

For the County, it is evident from the above figures that the adopted High-Growth Scenario anticipates a higher population in 2016 than the minimum RPG target, while the figure for 2020 is on course for attaining the 2022 RPG target.

It is considered that the High-Growth Scenario adopted in both the SEDP and this County Development might prove too optimistic, given the prevailing economic conditions. The difference of under 1,000 is not considered significant, therefore the Plan is essentially compliant with the population targets set out in the RPGs.

A.5 Future population distribution

The Joint Housing Strategy adopted in 2009 by Sligo local authorities as part of the Sligo and Environs Development Plan outlined the broad distribution of population in the County settlements as shown in Table AA-5 below.

Table AA-5. Housing Strategy 2010-2017 - summary of past and envisaged population distribution in County Sligo

Settlement category or area	Population 2002 (Census)	Population 2006 (Census)	Population 2010 (projection)	Population 2017 (projection)
Gateway	25,247	24,755	27,767	33,947
Satellites*	3,473	4,531	5,011	5,976
Key Support Towns	2,820	3,479	3,891	4,732
Other settlements**	1,953	2,827	3,012	3,365
Rural areas***	24,707	25,302	25,622	25,774
County total	58,200	60,894	65,322	73,835

* Satellites considered in the Housing Strategy were: Grange, Rosses Point, Strandhill, Ballysadare and Collooney.

** Other settlements considered in the Housing Strategy were: Easkey, Mullaghmore, Coolaney, Bellaghy, Rathcormack, Ballintogher, Ballygawley, Carney, Drumcliff, Calry, Ransboro.

*** Rural areas considered in the Housing Strategy included not just population residing in one-off rural housing, but also the population of the villages not listed in the settlement hierarchy of the CDP 2005-2011, i.e. Aclare, Ballincar, Ballinacarrow, Ballinacra, Banada, Bunnannadden, Castlebaldwin, Cliffony, Cloonacool, Culfadda, Curry, Dromore West, Geevagh, Gorteen, Monasteraden, Riverstown, Tourlestrane.

The Settlement Structure of this CDP allocates future population growth to the County's settlements generally in accordance with the Housing Strategy 2011-2017. However, certain adjustments had to be made to take account of village population estimates for 2010 (which were based on a survey of the number of occupied housing units).

Furthermore, the villages sustaining rural communities now have specific recommended population levels and are no longer included in "rural areas" in terms of population figures.

The table AA-6 below is a copy of Table 3.E in Section 3.3. It shows the adjusted population distribution between different settlement categories in the County.

Table AA-6. Summary of past and envisaged population distribution in County Sligo: Census 2002 and 2006, projections/allocations for 2017

Settlement category or area	Population 2002	Population 2006	Population 2017
Gateway	25,247	24,755	33,947
Principal Satellites	3,473	4,531	6,250
Secondary Satellites	n/a	n/a	2,110
Key Support Towns	2,820	3,479	4,700
Villages supporting rural communities	n/a	n/a	4,090
Rural areas	n/a	n/a	22,738
County total	58,200	60,894	73,835

A.6 The impact of residential vacancy on Sligo settlements

Data from the 2006 Census indicates that 23% of all dwellings in County Sligo were vacant in April of that year. This data was made available at county level, with the only breakdown given by broad type of dwelling (see Table AA-8 overleaf). At the time of adopting this Plan, no data was available from the 2011 Census.

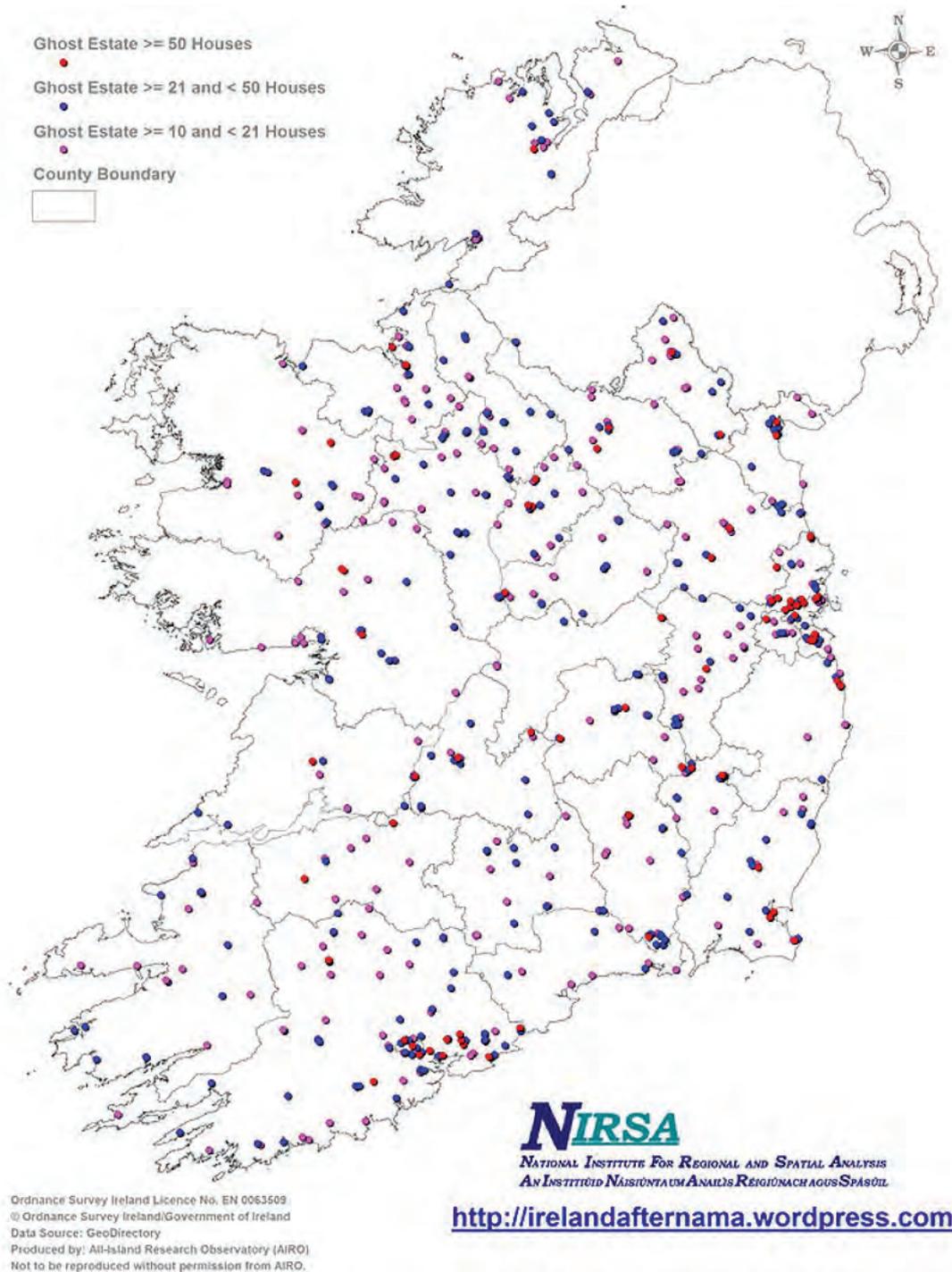


Fig. AA-7 Vacant housing estates in Ireland, 2009

Table AA-8. Permanent housing units by occupancy status on Census Night, 2006

Occupancy	No. of units
Occupied by usual resident(s) of the household [A]	21352
Occupied by visitors only [B]	277
Unoccupied: Residents temporarily absent [C]	474
Unoccupied: Vacant house [D]	4,459
Unoccupied: Vacant flat [E]	649
Unoccupied: Holiday home [F]	1,540
Total housing stock [G=A+B+C+D+E+F]	28,751
Vacancy rate [(D+E+F)/G] %	23.1

Source: Census 2006 – Principal Demographic Results, CSO

No details are provided for individual towns/villages, electoral divisions or even urban/rural areas. It is therefore difficult to assess the extent of residential vacancy at settlement level. If holiday homes and dwellings where residents were temporarily absent are not taken into consideration, the vacancy rate is still high, at 17.76% or 5,108 vacant houses of the total stock of 28,751. The problem may have been compounded by the large number of additional houses built since the Census of 2006, which was a peak year for house completions.

According to CSO data, a total of 4,357 houses were completed in County Sligo in 2006, 2007 and 2008. However, only 2,478 new houses were registered during the same period. While house completions have decreased dramatically since their 2006 peak, the total vacancy rate may have increased between 2006 and 2011.

Table AA-9. House completions in County Sligo, 2000 to 2008

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Private houses	627	679	675	953	1143	1099	2090	1153	861
Social houses	81	99	80	112	169	65	74	116	63
All housing sectors	708	778	755	1065	1312	1164	2164	1269	924

Source: CSO Database Direct for DoEHLG

A research paper on future housing demand in the Border Region (*Report on Future Housing Demand in the Border Region and Implications for Planning and Development Policy* - B. Hughes, B. Williams, d. Redmond, DIT 2009) described the situation as a “housing oversupply disequilibrium”, with a regional vacancy rate of 16.73%, which could be reduced to circa 13.76% by the year 2016.

This forecast did not take cognisance of existing planning permissions. According to the study, “current economic circumstances would indicate that there will not be sufficient demand to realise these permissions or any start-ups over the next number of years.”

The paper also noted that much of the current surplus is in the “wrong locations” with regard to the DoEHLG’s Regional Planning Guidelines Review – Gateways and Hub Targets (October 2009), which stresses the importance of achieving faster population growth in designated urban locations.

National Housing Development Survey 2011

The most recent *National Housing Development Survey*, undertaken on behalf of the DoEHLG in 2011, found 311 unfinished houses and 120 unfinished apartments in the so-called “unfinished estates” in County Sligo, outside Sligo Town. The same survey counted 287 vacant houses and 166 vacant apartments in Sligo Town. However, these figures do not include vacancies outside the unfinished estates that were the subject of the survey.

The publication of Census 2011 housing data is expected to clarify the extent of residential vacancy in County Sligo. This will facilitate the formulation of a better-tailored policy response, if necessary, during the lifetime of the CDP 2011-2017.

Appendix B

Designated nature conservation sites

General information

Designation of conservation areas is required under European law and Irish national laws. The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government is responsible for the designation of conservation sites in Ireland.

The three main types of designation are:

- Natural Heritage Areas, or NHAs – basic designation for wildlife;
- Special Areas of Conservation, or SACs – prime wildlife conservation areas, important on a European as well as Irish level;
- Special Protection Areas, or SPAs – sites important to birds, and often important for other forms of wildlife.

Policy framework

National Heritage Plan 2002

National Biodiversity Plan 2002

Sligo County Heritage Plan 2002 – 2006

Legislative framework

EU Habitats Directive

EU Birds Directive

Wildlife Act 1976

Wildlife Amendment Act 2000

Flora Protection Order

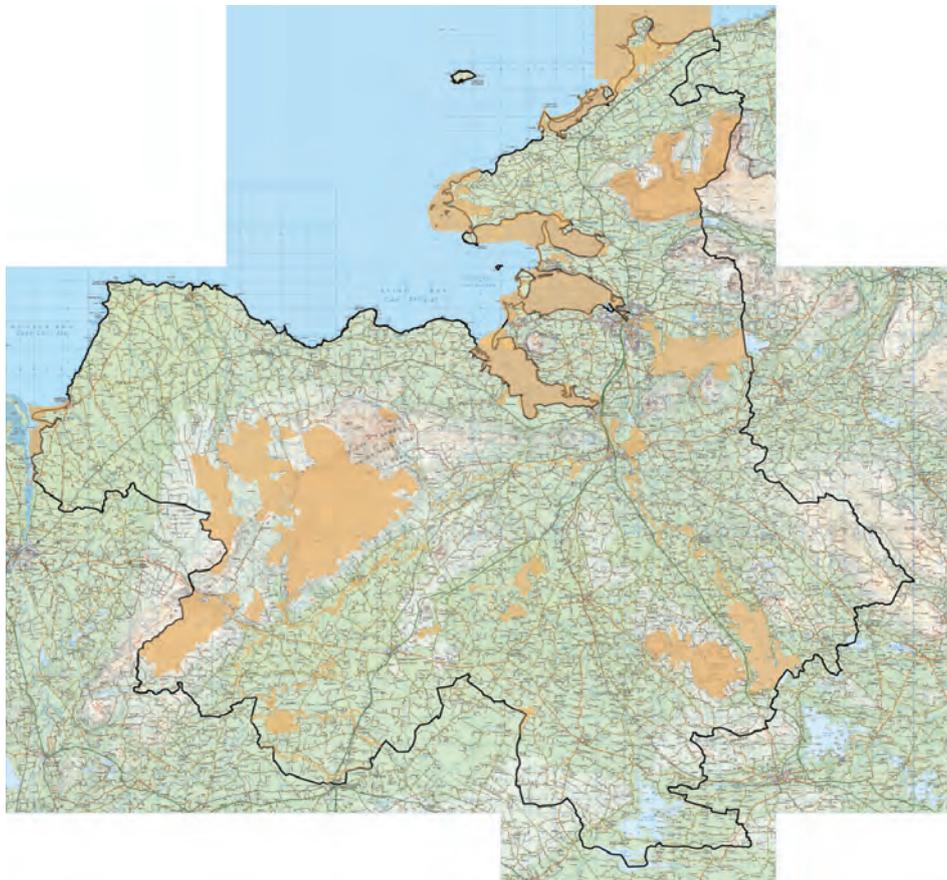


Fig. AB-1 Special Areas of Conservation (including cSAC)

Designated nature conservation sites in County Sligo

Candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC)

Code	Site Name	Code	Site Name
000458	Killala Bay / Moy Estuary	000636	Templehouse and Cloonacleigha Loughs
000497	Flughany Bog	000637	Turloughmore (Sligo)
000622	Ballysadare Bay	000638	Union Wood
000623	Ben Bulben, Gleniff and Glenade Complex	001656	Bricklieve Mountains and Keshcorran
000625	Bunduff Lough and Machair / Trawalua / Mullaghmore	001669	Knockalongy and Knockachree Cliffs
000627	Cummeen Strand/ Drumcliff Bay (Sligo Bay)	001673	Lough Arrow
000633	Lough Hoe Bog	001680	Streedagh Point Dunes
000634	Lough Nabrickkeagh Bog	001898	Unshin River
		001976	Lough Gill
		002006	Ox Mountains Bogs
		002298	River Moy

Special Protection Areas (SPA)

Code	Site Name	Code	Site Name
004133	Aughris Head	004129	Ballysadare Bay
004013	Drumcliff Bay	004135	Ardboline Island and Horse island
004035	Cummeen Strand (Sligo Harbour)	004050	Lough Arrow
004036	Killala Bay / Moy Estuary	004048	Lough Gara
004068	Inishmurray	004187	Sligo / Leitrim Uplands

Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA)

Code	Site Name	Code	Site Name
000618	Ardboline and Horse Islands, Yellow Strand and Ballintemple	001905	Feenagh and Bunnamuck Loughs
000620	Aughris Head	001907	Fin and Riskeen Loughs
001909	Ballygawley Lough	000628	Glencar Cliffs
002415	Carran Hill Bog	001908	Greenan Fen
001657	Cloongoonagh Bog	000630	Innishmurray
001658	Colgagh Lough	001904	Knockmullin Fen
002435	Crockauns / Keelogyboy Bog	001670	Knocknarea Mountain and Glen
001902	Slieveward Bog	001906	Lough Dargan
n/a	Drumaskibbole	000587	Lough Gara
001664	Dunneill River	001677	Moylough Turlough
001665	Easky River	001900	Meharth Lough
		001901	Quarryfield West Turlough

Nature Reserves

Ballygilgan (Lissadell) (est. 1986)
Easky Bog (est. 1990)

Ramsar sites

842 Cummeen Strand 843 Killala Bay / Moy Estuary
471 Easky Bog 852 Lough Gara

Note: The process of formal designation of nature conservation sites started in 2002 and is still ongoing. The information (site lists and maps) included in this Appendix represents the situation in May 2004. For up-to-date information, please contact the National Parks and Wildlife Service (www.npws.ie) within the DoEHLG or the Planning Office of the County Council.

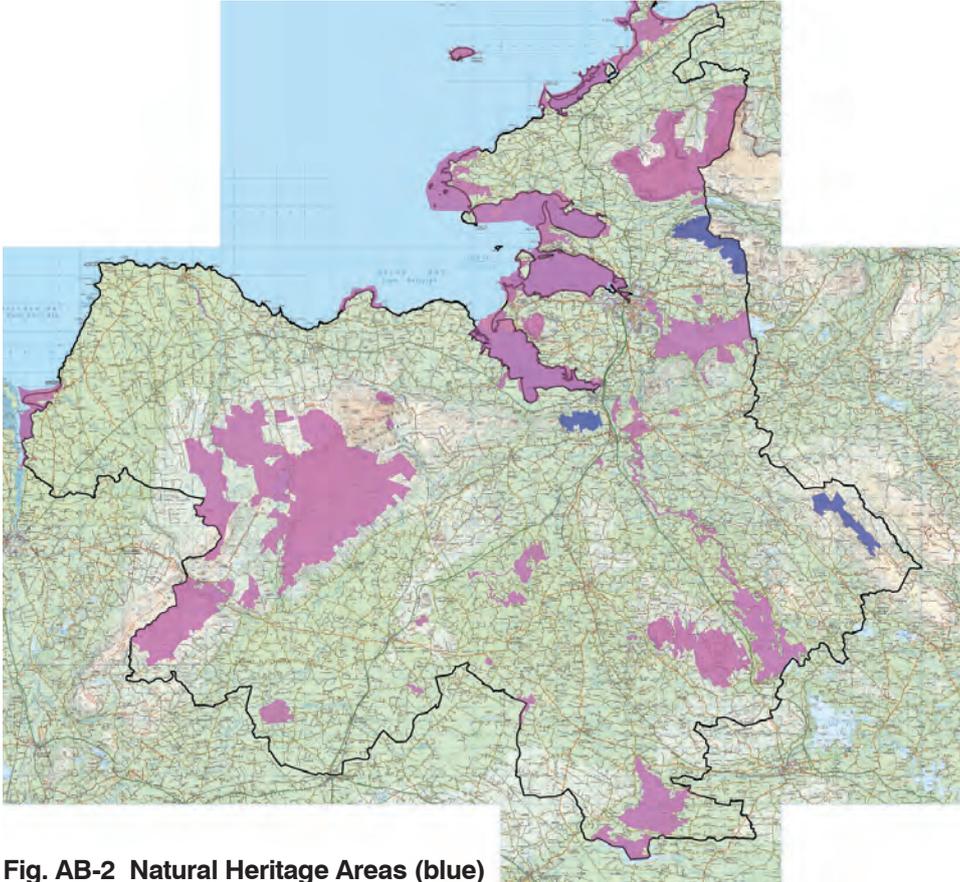


Fig. AB-2 Natural Heritage Areas (blue) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (purple)

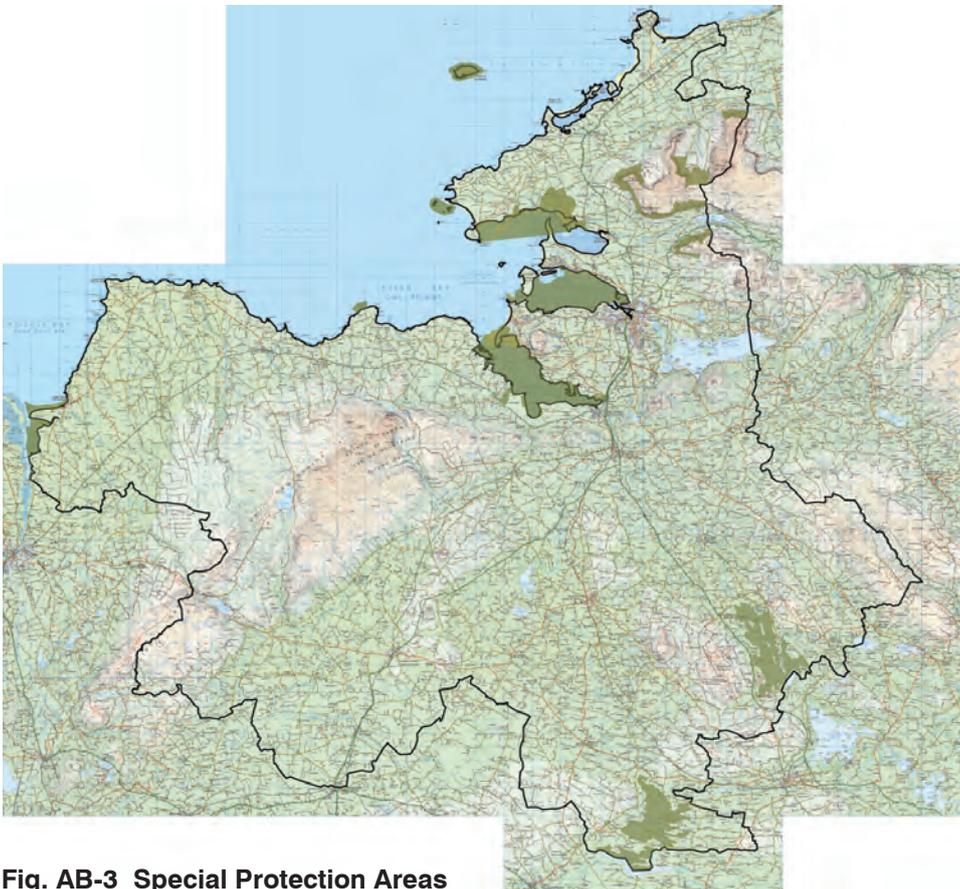


Fig. AB-3 Special Protection Areas

Appendix C

County Sligo Biodiversity Sites

Site name	Grid reference	General description
Achonry Bog	G574 154	Bog
Ardloy and Aghalenane Loughs	G 730 172	Lake and fen
Ballinacarrow (Bhoovergah) Fen	G 629 200	Fen
Ballinacarrow Fen	G 643 218	
Ballyconnell 1	G 591 458	Fen
Bartragh Marsh	G 276 289	Marsh
Boathole Lough and Lough Corran	G 698 205	Lake and raised bog
Bunnafedia A	G 554 319	Fen
Carrowmore Lough	G 673 339	Lake with reedbeds and transition mire
Carrownabanny Lough	G 557 234	Lake with reedbeds and transition mire
Cartranhugh	G 740 282	Species rich wet grassland
Cleavry Lough	G 745 147	Lake with reed beds, transition mire and fen
Cloughfin and Blind Lough	G 710 241	Lake with reedswamp
Cloonerco Bog	G 719 524	Cut-away lowland blanket bog
Collooney Marsh	G 682 254	Marsh
Coolbeg Bog	G 668 430	Poor fen and flush
Cuilleencroobagh Lough	G 726 177	Transition mire and quaking bog
Curragh Marsh	G 676 309	Lake with reed beds
Curry West	G 461 518	Cut-over bog
Curryfule Raised Bog 1	G 499 491	Raised bog
Curryfule Raised Bog 2	G 501 408	Raised bog
Drangan Bog	G 637 477	Transition mire with wet woodland/scrub
Drumcliff Bog	G 685 419	Wet grassland with poor fen and flush
Drummaskibbole Reedbeds	G 683 312	Non calcareous springs and reed beds
Folleesh Lough	G 602 292	Lake with reedbed and wet woodland/scrub
Grogagh Disused Quarry	G 678 480	Former sand and gravel quarry with ponds
Kinkillew	G 748 229	Poor fen and woodland
Kintogher fen and flush	G 681 408	Spring and flush
Knockroe Lough	G 709 236	Lake with extensive reedbeds

Appendix C

Site name	Grid reference	General description
Lackagh Fen	G 697 220	Fen
Lisnarawer Fen	G 579 313	Fen
Lisnarawer Fen North	G 583 320	Fen
Lough Naskea	G 355 903	Lake with reedbeds and fen
Loughmeenaghan	G 741 160	Lake with reedbeds, fen and marsh
Lugnagall Flush	G 725 417	Calcareous/petrifying springs
Oghambaun Turlough	G 537 108	Turlough
Punchbowl Lough	G 674 313	Lake with swamp, reedbeds and transition mire
Springfield Marsh and Reedbed	G 685 401	Marsh and reed bed
Strandhill	G 622 357	Reedbed with willow scrub and wet woodland
Swallow Hole near Riverstown	G 739 173	Turlough
Toberscanavan Lough	G 680 323	Lakes with reedbeds, fen and transition mire
Tobertelly Heath	G 534 153	Wet heath
Tunnagh Lough	G 764 239	Lake with extensive reedbeds

Sources: *County Sligo Wetland Survey 2008* and *County Sligo Wetland Survey 2009*.

Individual sites were evaluated using the NRA Site Evaluation Criteria (2004). Sites which were attributed a rating of A (international importance), B (National importance) or C+ (County importance) are listed.

Appendix D

Protected animal, bird and plant species in Co. Sligo

1. Protected animal species (other than birds) occurring in County Sligo

Common Name	Scientific Name	Protection Status
Invertebrates		
(no common name) Whorl Snail	<i>Vertigo geyeri</i>	EU Habitats Directive IUCN Red List
Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail	<i>Vertigo angustior</i>	EU Habitats Directive IUCN Red List
Freshwater Pearl Mussel	<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List
White-clawed Crayfish	<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts
Marsh Fritillary	<i>Euphydryas (Eurodryas) aurinia</i>	EU Habitats Directive
Fish		
Sea Lamprey	<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts Bern Convention
River Lamprey	<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts
Brook Lamprey	<i>Lampetra planeri</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts
Allis Shad	<i>Alosa alosa</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts Bern Convention
Atlantic Salmon	<i>Salmo salar</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts Bern Convention
Amphibians		
Common Frog	<i>Rana temporaria</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention
Common Newt	<i>Triturus Vulgaris</i>	Wildlife Acts
Reptiles		
Common Lizard	<i>Lacerta vivipara</i>	Wildlife Acts
Mammals		
Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention
Pygmy Shrew	<i>Sorex minutus</i>	Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention

Appendix D

Common Name	Scientific Name	Protection Status
Whiskered Bat	<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts I UCN Red List Bern Convention Bonn Convention
Natterer's Bat	<i>Myotis nattereri</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention Bonn Convention
Daubenton's Bat	<i>Myotis daubentoni</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts I UCN Red List Bern Convention Bonn Convention
Leisler's Bat	<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention Bonn Convention
Common Pipistrelle Bat	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention Bonn Convention
Soprano Pipistrelle Bat	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention Bonn Convention
Nathusius Pipistrelle Bat	<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention Bonn Convention
Brown Long-eared Bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention Bonn Convention
Irish Hare	<i>Lepus timidus hibernicus</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention
Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>	Wildlife Acts
Pine Marten	<i>Martes martes</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention
Irish Stoat	<i>Mustela erminea</i>	Wildlife Acts Bern Convention
Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention

Appendix D

Common Name	Scientific Name	Protection Status
Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention
Red Deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	Wildlife Acts
Sika Deer	<i>Cervus nippon</i>	Wildlife Acts
Fallow Deer	<i>Dama dama</i>	Wildlife Acts
Grey Seal	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts
Common Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts
Bottle-nosed Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts
Common (Harbour) Porpoise	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts

IUCN Red List

The IUCN *Red List of Threatened Species* provides taxonomic, conservation status and distribution information on plants and animals that have been globally evaluated using the IUCN Red List categories and criteria. This system is designed to determine the relative risk of extinction, and the main purpose of the IUCN Red List is to catalogue and highlight those plants and animals that are facing a higher risk of global extinction (i.e. those listed as *critically endangered*, *endangered* and *vulnerable*).

International Conventions

Bern

The European Community is a contracting party to the *Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats* adopted at Bern on 19 September 1979. The Bern Convention is intended to promote cooperation between the signatory states in order to conserve wild flora, fauna, their natural habitats and to protect endangered migratory species.

The parties undertake to:

- promote national policies for the conservation of wild flora, wild fauna and natural habitats;
- integrate the conservation of wild flora and fauna into national planning, development and environmental policies;
- promote education and disseminate information on the need to conserve species of wild flora and fauna and their habitats.

Bonn

The *Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals* (also known as CMS or Bonn Convention) aims to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their range. It is an intergovernmental treaty, concluded under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme, concerned with the conservation of wildlife and habitats on a global scale.

2. Protected bird species occurring in County Sligo

Common Name	Scientific Name	Protection Status
Greater White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus Cygnus</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
Red Grouse	<i>Lagopus lagopus scoticus</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Great Northern Diver	<i>Gavia immer</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Little Egret	<i>Ergetta garzetta</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus cyaneus</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts BoCCI – Red Listed
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Corncrake	<i>Crex crex</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts BoCCI – Red Listed
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
European Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts BoCCI – Red Listed
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Knot	<i>Calidrus canutus</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts

Common Name	Scientific Name	Protection Status
Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts BoCCI – Red Listed
Twite	<i>Carduelis flavirostris</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed

EU Birds Directive

Refers to bird species listed in Annex 1 of the Directive.

Wildlife Acts

Refers to the Wildlife Act 1976 and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000. The Wildlife Act 1976 in Section 19 (Protection of Wild Birds) provides that “wild birds and their nests and eggs, other than wild birds of the species mentioned in the Third Schedule of this Act, shall be protected”. This simply means that all wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected except for a few restricted species under restricted circumstances.

BoCCI Red Listed

A list of *Birds of Conservation Concern for Ireland* (BoCCI) has been published, with certain species being *red-listed* as being of high conservation concern (25 bird species) or *amber-listed* where they are of medium conservation concern (90 bird species). In the above table only those bird species which are currently *red-listed* have been included. The BoCCI is regularly reviewed and updated.

3. Rare and protected plant species occurring in County Sligo

Common Name	Scientific Name	Protection Status
Varnished Hook-moss (Shining sicklemoss)	<i>Hamatocaulis vernicosus</i> (<i>Drepanocladus vernicosus</i>)	EU Habitats Directive
Sphagnum Mosses	<i>Sphagnum spp.</i>	EU Habitats Directive
Petalwort	<i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>	EU Habitats Directive
Stag’s-horn Clubmoss	<i>Lycopodium clavatum</i>	EU Habitats Directive
Killarney Fern	<i>Trichomanes speciosum</i>	EU Habitats Directive Red Data Species
Round prickly-headed poppy (Rough Poppy)	<i>Papaver hybridum</i>	Flora Protection Order Red Data Species
Fringed Sandwort	<i>Arenaria ciliate hibernica</i>	Flora Protection Order Red Data Species
Alpine bistort	<i>Persicaria vivipara</i> (<i>Polygonum viviparum</i>)	Flora Protection Order Red Data Species
Hairy St. John’s-wort	<i>Hypericum hirsutum</i>	Flora Protection Order Red Data Species
Northern Rockcress	<i>Arabis petrea</i> (<i>Cardaminopsis petraea</i>)	Flora Protection Order Red Data Species
Alpine Saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga nivalis</i>	Flora Protection Order Red Data Species
Heath Cudweed (Wood Cudweed)	<i>Gnaphalium sylvaticum</i> (<i>Omalotheca sylvatica</i>)	Flora Protection Order Red Data Species
Bog Orchid	<i>Hammarbya paludosa</i>	Flora Protection Order Red Data Species
Small White Orchid	<i>Pseudorchis alba</i>	Flora Protection Order Red Data Species

Appendix D

Common Name	Scientific Name	Protection Status
Oak Fern	<i>Gymnocarpium dryopteris</i>	Red Data Species
Holly Fern	<i>Polystichum lonchitis</i>	Red Data Species
Corncockle	<i>Agrostemma githago</i>	Red Data Species
Moss Campion	<i>Silene acaulis</i>	Red Data Species
Fen Violet	<i>Viola persicifolia</i>	Red Data Species
Tea-leaved Willow	<i>Salix phylicifolia</i>	Red Data Species
Hoary Whitlowgrass	<i>Draba incana</i>	Red Data Species
Bog Rosemary	<i>Andromeda polifolia</i>	Red Data Species
Intermediate Wintergreen	<i>Pyrola media</i>	Red Data Species
Yellow Bird's-nest	<i>Monotropa hypopitys</i>	Red Data Species
Cowslip	<i>Primula veris</i>	Red Data Species
Purple Saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga oppositifolia</i>	Red Data Species
Yellow (Mountain) Saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga aizoides</i>	Red Data Species
Mountain Avens	<i>Dryas octopetala</i>	Red Data Species
Bird Cherry	<i>Prunus padus</i>	Red Data Species
Marsh Pea	<i>Lathyrus palustris</i>	Red Data Species
Shepard's Needle	<i>Scandix pecten-veneris</i>	Red Data Species
Henbane	<i>Hyoscyamus niger</i>	Red Data Species
Ivy Broomrape	<i>Orobanche hederæ</i>	Red Data Species
Alpine Saw-wort	<i>Saussurea alpina</i>	Red Data Species
Cornflower	<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>	Red Data Species
Swamp Meadow Grass	<i>Poa palustris</i>	Red Data Species
Alpine Meadow Grass	<i>Poa alpina</i>	Red Data Species
Smooth Brome	<i>Bromus racemosus</i>	Red Data Species
Blue-eyed Grass	<i>Sisyrinchium bermudiana</i>	Red Data Species
Marsh Helleborine	<i>Epipactis palustris</i>	Red Data Species
Bird's-nest Orchid	<i>Neottia nidus-avis</i>	Red Data Species
Bog Orchid	<i>Hammarbya paludosa</i>	Red Data Species
Green-winged Orchid	<i>Orchis morio</i>	Red Data Species
Bee Orchid	<i>Ophrys apifera</i>	Red Data Species

Red Data Species - IUCN Red List

The IUCN *Red List of Threatened Species* provides taxonomic, conservation status and distribution information on plants and animals that have been globally evaluated using the IUCN *Red List* categories and criteria. This system is designed to determine the relative risk of extinction, and the main purpose of the IUCN *Red List* is to catalogue and highlight those plants and animals that are facing a higher risk of global extinction (i.e. those listed as Critically Endangered, Endangered and Vulnerable). See *Red Data Book (Irish) Vascular Plants* (Curtis & McGough 1988).

Appendix E

Geological heritage sites

Following an audit of geological sites within County Sligo by the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI), the most important sites in Sligo are listed below. County geological sites do not receive statutory protection like proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs), but receive an effective protection from their inclusion in County Development Plans. Many of the sites described below are considered to be of national importance, as best representative examples of particular geological formations or features. They will be proposed by the GSI for designation as pNHAs by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, after due survey and consultation with landowners.

Ben Bulbin – Truskmore sites

- Ben Bulbin
- Truskmore
- Kings Mountain Rift
- Swiss Valley
- Glencarbury Mine
- Gleniff Valley
- Diarmuid and Gráinne's Cave

Precambrian sites in Sligo

- Slishwood Gap
- Glen
- Scalnacappail
- Zion Hill

Carboniferous geology sites

- Mullaghmore Head
- Streedagh Point
- Serpent Rock, Ballyconnell

Igneous intrusion sites

- Carrowhubbuck – Enniscrone

Karstic sites

- Bricklieves and Keshcorran
- Geevagh
- Lough Nasool / Lough Bo

Quaternary and landscape features sites

- Knocknarea Glen
- Knocknarea Hill
- Split Rock
- Meenamore
- The Gap – NW of Lough Talt
- Easky River solifluction lobe

Appendix F

Monuments in State care

The Office of Public Works (OPW) has particular responsibility for monuments in State care. Proposals for development that may impact on the amenity and integrity of these properties will be referred to the OPW for consideration.

The table below lists monuments in County Sligo that are under the guardianship (G) or in the ownership (O) of the OPW.

Name and description	Townland	Legal status	RMP number	National monument number
Ballinafad Castle	Ballinafad	G	SL040-189----	342
Castlebaldwin Castle	Bellanagarrigeeny or Castlebaldwin	O	SL034-185----	373
Cabragh wedge tomb	Cabragh	O	SL019-171001-	523
Carns cairn	Carns	O	SL014-23201-	568
Carrignagat megalithic tombs	Carricknagat	O	SL021-062----, SL021-104----	277
Carrowkeel passage tomb cemetery	Carricknahorna East, Carrowkeel, Doonaveeragh, Treanscrabbagh	G	SL040-101----, SL040-102----, SL040-087----, SL040-086----, SL040-087----, SL040-095----, SL040-096----, SL040-089----, SL040-09001-, SL040-	518
Carrowmore passage tomb cemetery stone circle, ring barrow, passage tomb, ringfort, megalithic structure, cashel	Carrowmore, Graigue, Tobernaveen	O	SL014-112----, SL014-114----, SL014-115----, SL014-116001-, SL014-209003-, SL014-209004-, SL014-209006-, SL014-209007-, SL014-	153
Ballymote Castle	Carrownanty	O	SL033-092----	638
Carrowreagh cashel	Carrowreagh	G	SL036-001001-	479
Castleore court tomb	Castleore	O	SL021-028----	277
Church Island church	Church Island (Lough Gill)	O	SL015-096001-	118
Cashelmore cashel	Clogher	O	SL046-011---	159
Creevykeel court tomb	Creevykeel	G	SL003-032----	338
Cummeen court cairns	Cumeen	O	SL014-045----	433
Drumcliffe high crosses and round tower	Drumcliffe South	O	SL008-084004-, SL008-084003-	119
Gortlownan motte	Gortlownan	O	SL021-012----	277

Appendix F

Name and description	Townland	Legal status	RMP number	National monument number
Gortnaleck court tomb	Gortnaleck	O	SL005-090----	607
Heapstown cairn	Heapstown	O	SL034-128----	152
Inishmurray Island early Medieval ecclesiastical site	Inishmurray Island	O	SL001-001----	117
Knocknarea passage tombs and cairns	Knocknarea South	O	SL014-076001- to SL014-076009-	153
Queen Maeve's tomb cairn	Knocknarea South	O	SL014-076003-	153
Magheraghanrush or Deerpark court tomb	Magheraghanrush or Deerpark	O	SL015-050----	377
Moytirra East court tomb	Moytirra East	O	SL035-079---	465
Sligo Abbey Friary	Sligo Town	O	SL014-065008-	189

Appendix G

County landscape designations

The genesis of the **Landscape Characterisation Map** (Fig. 7.B in Chapter 7 of this Plan), previously called *Development Control Policy Map* in the CDP 2005-2011, was the An Foras Forbartha's *Inventory of Outstanding Landscapes*, published in 1972. A variant of this map has been attached to successive county development plans up to the 1999-2004 Plan. This map was refined to take stock of the Yeats County landscape study commissioned by Bord Fáilte and a detailed landscape characterisation and appraisal study commissioned by the Council and completed by CAAS Environmental Consultants in 1998. The latter study was based on an analysis of the CORINE European landuse data and a county-wide landscape evaluation proofed against key planning policies. This resulted in a map indicating, inter alia, Sensitive Rural Landscapes, Normal Rural Landscapes, Visually Vulnerable Areas and Scenic Routes.

This approach distinguishes the “quintessential Sligo landscapes”, e.g. the Dartry Mountain range, the Glencar Valley, Lough Easky and the Ox Mountains etc. Such areas are designated as *Sensitive Rural Landscapes*, as distinct from the remainder of Sligo landscapes, which may exhibit significant scenic character and qualities, but not to the same immediate, memorable and special extent. Each designation is described in more detail below.

- Normal Rural Landscapes** have the capacity to absorb a wide range of new developments, subject to normal planning and development control procedures. Most of County Sligo falls into this category, which comprises the main areas of existing farming and rural residences. Such areas tend to have enclosing topography and existing screening vegetation – or the potential to support trees, tall hedges and woody vegetation to screen new development.

In certain locations, designated Normal Rural Landscapes form the context for exceptional landscape features, such as distinctive mountains or coastal areas. In such landscapes, it is necessary to assess each development proposal on its merits, having regard to general restrictions on development (e.g. servicing, traffic safety) and any other provisions of the Development Control Policy Map that relate to the area concerned (e.g. Scenic Routes).



Drumnacool



Kilcreevin, Ballymote

Designated Normal Rural Landscapes tend to have enclosing topography and existing screening vegetation



Kesh Corann



Benwiskin

In certain locations, designated Normal Rural Landscapes form the context for exceptional landscape features



Tievebaun Mountain



Lough Aghree, Ox Mountains

Designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes have intrinsic scenic qualities and a low capacity to absorb development



Lough Easky



Ox Mountains

Scenic Routes afford unique scenic views of distinctive natural features

- **Sensitive Rural Landscapes** are areas with intrinsic scenic quality and a low capacity to absorb new development – e.g. uplands, headlands. They generally support insufficient vegetative cover for screening purposes and most sites are seen against the sky or water. As a result, even a small development in such an area has the potential to create an impact on the appearance and character of an extensive part of the landscape.

To preserve the integrity of designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes, while endeavouring to sustain local communities, only a limited range of appropriate new developments can be accommodated. Any such proposal must demonstrate a high standard of siting, layout and design and may be required to consider ecological, archaeological, water quality and other factors.

- **Visually Vulnerable Areas** are characterised by distinctive natural features, which have an extremely low capacity to absorb new development without significant alterations of existing character over a very wide area. The eye is strongly drawn to such features, which include coastlines, lakeshores, ridgelines and hill/mountain tops, i.e. conspicuous linear features where land meets sky or water.

Due to their recognised natural beauty or interest and their susceptibility to damage, specified views of designated Visually Vulnerable Areas receive special protection (see Appendix F). Development in, or in the context/setting of these features is also strictly controlled. To be considered for planning permission, a proposal must demonstrate, inter alia, that the development will not impinge in any significant way on the integrity, distinctiveness and unique visual character of the area when viewed from the surroundings, especially from designated Scenic Routes and the environs of archaeological and historical sites.

- **Scenic Routes** indicate public roads from which the more dramatic scenic views, prospects and vistas of the County can be enjoyed. Most Routes pass through or close to designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes or adjoin designated Visually Vulnerable Areas. Scenic Routes also, in the main, form loops or circuits designed to maximise visibility of important Sligo landscapes without undue interruption. However, some routes considered to warrant designation, do not or cannot form part of a loop.



Designated Visually Vulnerable Areas are characterised by distinctive and conspicuous features where land meets sky or water

The designation of Scenic Routes provides a basis for protecting views and prospects of Visually Vulnerable features, such as mountain-ridges, lakeshores and coastlines. It is not necessary for a particular feature to be visible for the full length of a Route, as the designation is based on the overall quality and uniqueness of the views available.

Due to the strong inter-visibility between landscape elements in County Sligo, most Scenic Routes enjoy scenic views of more than one Visually Vulnerable feature.

The following section of this Appendix contains a list of the scenic views it is proposed to preserve over the 2011-2017 period. These are indicated on the Landscape Characterisation Map included in Chapter 7 of this Draft Plan and on the A1 map that accompanies the Plan.

To preserve the listed scenic views, it is necessary to control development along designated Scenic Routes, while facilitating developments that are tied to a specific location or that meet the demonstrated needs of an applicant to reside in a particular area. In all cases, the onus is on the applicant to show that there will be no obstruction or degradation of the scenic view concerned, nor significant alterations to the appearance or character of the designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes in the vicinity.

The above scenic evaluation approach and resultant map have proven robust in both facilitating development and conserving fragile landscapes. The map has been modified only in the light of development management experience. Incidentally, added protection is available under this scheme for designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes insofar as the identified scenic areas correspond greatly – over 95% correlation – with sites designated under EU Directives, e.g. SPAs, cSACs and pNHAs.

Scenic Views to be preserved

National Primary Routes

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. N15 from Bunduff Bridge (Leitrim County boundary) to Sligo | Views of Atlantic Ocean, Ben Bulbin, Kings Mountain and Benwiskin |
| 2. N16 from Leitrim County boundary to Sligo | Views of Glencar Lake, Ben Bulbin and Atlantic Ocean |
| 3. N4 Castlebaldwin to Ballinafad | Views of Bricklieve Mountains, Lough Arrow and Curlew Mountains |
| 4. N4 Collooney By-Pass from northern roundabout at Collooney to Carrowroe | Views of Ballysadare Bay, Knocknarea, Union Wood, Slieve Daeane, Slieve Dargan |
| 5. N4 Curlew By-Pass from Roscommon County boundary to Ballinafad | Views of Lough Arrow, Bricklieve Mountains and Curlew Mountains |

National Secondary Routes

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 6. N59 Beltra to Ballysadare | Views of Ballysadare Bay, Slieveward and Knocknarea |
| 7. N59 Dromore West to Beltra | Views of Atlantic Ocean and Ox Mountains |
| 8. N59 Tullylinn to Culleens | Views of Atlantic Ocean and Ox Mountains |
| 9. N59 Caltragh to Camcuill | Views of Atlantic Ocean and Ox Mountains |

Regional Routes

- | | |
|---|---|
| 10. R279 Mullaghmore to Cliffony | Views of Atlantic Ocean, Donegal Bay and Benwiskin |
| 11. R291 from Sligo to Rosses Point | Views of Sligo Bay and Harbour, Coney Island, Knocknarea and Coolera Peninsula, Slieve Dargan, Slieve Daeane, Killery Mountain and Ox Mountains |
| 12. R284 from Carrowroe to junction with road L-3605 north of Ballygawley | Views of Ballygawley Lough, Slieve Dargan and Slieve Daeane |
| 13. R286 from Sligo to Leitrim County boundary | Views of Lough Gill and Colgagh Lough |
| 14. R287 from Carrowroe to junction with road L-3605 at Correagh | Views of Lough Gill, Slish Wood, Slieve Dargan, Slieve Daeane and Killery Mountain |
| 15. R292 from Ransboro to Culleenamore House | Views of Knocknarea, Ballysadare Bay, Sligo Bay, Slieve Dargan, Slieve Daeane and Ben Bulbin |
| 16. R292 at Larass, Strandhill, immediately north of St. Anne's Church and Rectory, to junction with road L-3502 at Scardan | Views of Sligo Harbour, Sligo Bay and Ben Bulbin |

- | | |
|---|--|
| 17. R292 at Larass, Strandhill, between St Anne's Church and Sligo Rugby Club (south side) | Views of Knocknarea |
| 18. R292 at Carrowdough and Culleenamore, between the southern development limit and the Plan limit of Strandhill Local Area Plan at Culleenamore House | Views of Sligo Bay, Ballysadare Bay and Knocknarea |
| 19. R294 from The Gap (Mayo County boundary) to Mullany's Cross | Views of Lough Talt and Ox Mountains |
| 20. R295 from Carrowmaclenany Crossroads to Carrowcrory Crossroads | Views of Kesh Corran and the Bricklieve Mountains |
| 21. R294 from Mullaghroe Crossroads to Roscommon County boundary | Views of Lough Gara |
| 22. R297 from Scurmore to Dromore West | Views of Killala Bay and Atlantic Ocean |
| 23. R278 from Calry (Doonally road junction) to Leitrim County boundary at Carrickoneileen. | Views of Keelogyboy Mountain |

Local Roads

- | | |
|--|---|
| 24. L-7101 around Mullaghmore Head | Views of Atlantic Ocean and Donegal Bay |
| 25. 'The Hill' (L-7103) from junction with L-7101 on northside of Mullaghmore Head, onto L-7102 as far as junction with L-7101 on south side of Head | Views of Atlantic Ocean, Donegal Bay, the Dartry Range (Ben Bulben, Benwiskin, Truskmore) and Knocknarea |
| 26. L-3104 from junction with R279 (Mullaghmore/Cliffony road) turning east onto Lower Bunduff road (L-3101) to junction with N15 at Castlegal | Views of Bunduff Lake, the Dartry Range and Mullaghmore Harbour |
| 27. Loop road (L-7121) between N15 and coast at Moun temple, and south-east from N15 to junction with Derrylehan road (L-3205) | Views of Atlantic Ocean, Donegal Bay, Dernish Island, Conors Island, Inishmurray, Milk Harbour and the Dartry Range |
| 28. Upperwood road (L-7202) from junction with N15 down to sea shore | Views of the Dartry Range, Streedagh Point, Conors Island and Inishmurray |
| 29. Grange to Streedagh Point (L-3203 turning west onto L-3202 and north onto L-32022) | Views of Atlantic Ocean and Ben Bulben |
| 30. Benwiskin Horseshoe (L-7130) | Views of Benwiskin, Ben Bulben and Donegal Bay |
| 31. Ballaghnastrillick Bridge northwards to Leitrim County boundary (L-7126 & L-3102) and southwards to N15 at Mullaghaneane (L-3105, L-3205 & L-7216) | Views of Benwiskin, Ben Bulben and Donegal Bay |
| 32. Glencar Lake to Carney (L-3404, L-3403 & L-3402) | Views of Glencar Lake, Kings Mountain and Ben Bulben |

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>33. Kintogher road (L-3306) from junction with N15 at Tully (Rathcormack) down to Lower Rosses road (L-7311) via L-7309 and Cregg road (L-3307)</p> | <p>Views of Drumcliff Bay, the coast, Ben Bulben, Kings Mountain, Sligo Bay, Knocknarea, Killery Mountain, Slieve Dargan, Slieve Daeane, Cope's Mountain and Glencar Valley</p> |
| <p>34. L-3311 as far as junction at Yeats County Hotel turning south onto Rosses Point Promenade Road (R291) to mini-plan development limit</p> | <p>Views of Sligo Bay and Harbour, Coney Island, Knocknarea and Coolera Peninsula, Slieve Dargan, Slieve Daeane, Killery Mountain and Ox Mountains</p> |
| <p>35. Glencar Lake to N16 (L-3404)</p> | <p>Views of Glencar Lake and Kings Mountain</p> |
| <p>36. L-3602 along Garvoge River and Lough Gill from Sligo to junction with R287</p> | <p>Views of Garavoge River and Lough Gill</p> |
| <p>37. From junction of L-3409 and R286 at Ballynamona, northwards through Loughanelteen to Keelogyboy (L-3409 & L-7418), then south to R278 via Fermoyle (L-7420 & L-3407)</p> | <p>Views of Keelogyboy Mountain, Cope's Mountain, Lough Anelteen, Killery Mountain, Lough Gill, Ox Mountains, Slieve Daeane, Slieve Dargan, Kings Mountain, Ben Bulben, Knocknarea, the coast, Sligo Bay and Atlantic Ocean</p> |
| <p>38. L-7417 from junction with L-7418 north to junction with L-7416 at Glackbaun and along L-7416 from its eastern extremity near Leitrim County boundary to junction with N16 at Drumkilsellagh</p> | <p>Views of Cope's Mountain, Keelogyboy Mountain, Lough Gill, Slieve Dargan, Kings Mountain, Knocknarea, Ox Mountains, Sligo Bay and Atlantic Ocean</p> |
| <p>39. L-3502 from junction with R292 at Scardan to Ransboro.</p> | <p>Views of Knocknarea</p> |
| <p>40. Ransboro road (L-3503) at Larass, Strandhill, between St Anne's Church and the eastern Plan limit of Strandhill Local Area Plan</p> | <p>Views of Sligo Bay and Knocknarea</p> |
| <p>41. Airport Road, Strandhill (L-35052), between southern boundary of Business and Enterprise Park and northern boundary of new Village Centre</p> | <p>Views of Knocknarea</p> |
| <p>42. Road network to east and south of Knocknarea, between junctions of R292 and L-3502: specifically the Glen Road (L-3507) and L-3506</p> | <p>Views of Knocknarea, Kings Mountain, Ben Bulben, Cope's Mountain, Killery Mountain, Slieve Dargan, Slieve Daeane, Keelogyboy Mountain, Ox Mountains Ballysadare Bay, Atlantic Ocean, Culleenamore Strand, Sligo Bay, Drumcliff Bay, the coast and Coney Island</p> |
| <p>43. L-6101 from junction with N59 at Corhawnagh Church extending westward to Streamstown and south to N59 via Lisduff</p> | <p>Views of Ballysadare Bay, Knocknarea and Slieveward (Little Ox Mountains)</p> |
| <p>44. L-6101 between junction with N59 at Corhawnagh Church and junction with R290 (old N4) south of Ballysadare</p> | <p>Views of Slieveward (Little Ox Mountains)</p> |

45. Easkey coastal scenic road (L-2401) between junctions with Dromore West - Easkey road (R297)	Views of Sligo Bay, the coast, Ox Mountains and Donegal Bay.
46. Coast road from R297 at Dromore West to N59 at Beltra (L-2302 & L-2204)	Views of Atlantic Ocean, Sligo Bay, Ballysadare Bay, Ox Mountains, Knocknarea and Ben Bulben.
47. Aughris Head (L-2301 turning onto L-6301) between junctions with Beltra - Dromore West coastal road (L-2302)	Views of Knocknarea, Ben Bulben, the coast and Sligo & Donegal Bays
48. Derk road (L-6215) from junction with Beltra - Dromore West coastal road (L-2204) to sea shore	Views of Ballysadare Bay, Knocknarea, Coolera Peninsula, Coney Island, Rosses Point, Sligo Bay and Ben Bulben
49. Dromore West to Mullany's Cross (L-2702, L-4701 & L-4702)	Views of Lough Easkey, Ox Mountains and Atlantic Ocean
50. L-8701 & L-8702 from junction with L-4701 at Masshill to junction with R294 at Largan	Views of Lough Talt and Ox Mountains
51. Ladies Brae road from Carroweden (L-4602 & L-2205) leading to N59 via L-2304 and L-2303 and continuing northwards to Beltra - Dromore West coastal road (L-2302) via L-6205	Views of Ox Mountains and Atlantic Ocean
52. Carroweden to Coolaney and continuing to junction with N59 at Lugnadeffa (L-8601, L-6804 & L-2801)	Views of Ox Mountains and Atlantic Ocean
53. Coast road from Mayo County boundary at Rathmurphy northwards to its junction with R297 at Scurmore	Views of Killala Bay
54. L-6102 from junction with N59 west of Cooney Lough, continuing on L-2101 to junction with L-2801 south of Tullaghan Hill	Views of Ox Mountains, Atlantic Ocean and Cooney Lough
55. L-3605, south of Slieve Daeane and Slieve Dargan, between junctions with R284 and R287	Views of Slieve Dargan, Slieve Daeane and Lough Dargan
56. Lakeshore drive around Lough Arrow from Castlebaldwin to Roscommon County boundary (L-1404, L-1403 & L-1905)	Views of Lough Arrow and Bricklieve Mountains
57. Old N4 along western shore of Lough Arrow from Aghanagh through Ballinafad village to junction with new N4 south of Ballinafad	Views of Lough Arrow, Bricklieve Mountains and Curlew Mountains
58. Carrowcroy crossroads to Ballinafad (L-1806)	Views of Bricklieve Mountains, Curlew Mountains and Lough Arrow
59. Ladies Brae to Beltra via Chapel Street (L-6213)	Views of Ox Mountains, Coolera peninsula and Ballysadare Bay

60. From Castlebaldwin southwards to junction with R295, southwest of Templevanny Lough (L-1404 & L-5801)	Views of Bricklieve Mountains, Kesh Corran and Lough Arrow
61. Heapstown Crossroads to Killadoon Crossroads (L-1901)	Views of Lough Arrow and Bricklieve Mountains
62. Ballindoon Crossroads to Killadoon Crossroads (L-1904)	Views of Lough Arrow and Bricklieve Mountains
63. Highwood road (L-1904) from Ballindoon Crossroads to junction with L-5902 & L-59021 north of Kilmactranny	Views of Lough Arrow, Bricklieve Mountains and Kesh Corran
64. L-18011 south of Lough Arrow and L-18012 through Lecarrow (Aghanagh ED) to junction with Curlew Bypass (N4)	Views of Lough Arrow, Bricklieve Mountains and Carran Hill (north-east of Lough Arrow)
65. Killadoon Crossroads to junction with L-1101 north of Conways Cross (L-1901)	Views of Lough Arrow, Lough Nasool and Lough Bo
66. L-1101 from north of Conways Cross extending along southside of Carran Hill to Roscommon County boundary	Views of Carran Hill
67. Mullaghroe to Monasteraden (L-4104)	Views of Lough Gara
68. From Monasteraden eastward to Roscommon County boundary (L-4105)	Views of Lough Gara
69. Road west of St Aidan's church (L-8107 & L-4103) from junction at Monasteraden village, to Gorteen-Boyle road (R294) at Mullaghroe	Views of Lough Gara
70. Derrinoghran loop – from junction off R294 west of Cloonloogh onto L-5707, turning north onto L-5708, then east onto L-5705, and proceeding south on L-5706 to join up again with L-5707	Views of Lough Gara
71. L-1906 from junction with L-1905 to junction with L-5904, north of Kilmactranny	Views of Lough Arrow, Bricklieve Mountains and Keash Corran

Notes

1. Unless otherwise stated, a scenic view commencing at Sligo starts at the development limit indicated in the Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016.
2. The Darty Range includes Kings Mountain, Ben Bulben, Benwisikin and Truskmore.
3. The portions of designated Scenic Routes that run within the development limits of mini-plans and local area plans should be disregarded.