

**N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin
Oral Hearing**

**Brief of Evidence by
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Acting Senior Executive Planner
Sligo County Council**

1.0 PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

1.1 Qualifications

B.Sc. Environmental Planning, Queen's University Belfast 1999.

Postgraduate Diploma in Town & Country Planning, Queen's University Belfast 2000.

1.2 Experience

Since qualifying as a Town Planner in 2000 I have been continuously employed in dealing with various aspects of town and country planning. My experience started with a period in a private planning consultancy before I commenced employment with Sligo County Council in 2001. I have been employed by Sligo County Council since 2001. During this time I have worked in both development management and forward planning sections of Sligo County Council and Sligo Borough Council. Furthermore I was part of the team with responsibility for the preparation of the current Sligo County Development Plan (SCDP) 2011-2017. My current position is that of Acting Senior Executive Planner in the development management section.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this submission is to assess the need for the proposed project in an overall planning and sustainable development context and with particular emphasis on balanced regional development.

The N4 National Primary Route is part of the East/West road corridor linking Ireland's largest transportation node (Dublin) with the largest transportation node in the North-West (Sligo). It measures c. 34.8km in County Sligo of which c. 11.6km between Sligo City and Collooney is Type 1 Dual Carriageway with c. 8.8km south of Castlebaldwin having already been realigned to Standard Single Carriageway design.

The *Proposed Road Development* concerns the remaining portion of the N4 in Co. Sligo requiring improvement and measures approximately 14.71km in length. The road type will be Type 2 Dual Carriageway tied into the existing network to the south via a section of Standard Single Carriageway.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT

The mainline realignment will comprise two separate forms of Road Type with the change in cross section defined by a roundabout in the townland of *Castlebaldwin*. Approximately 13.82km of the proposal consists of a Type 2 Dual Carriageway commencing at the existing N4/N17 roundabout in the townland of *Collooney/Toberbride* and extending to a proposed roundabout in the townland of *Castlebaldwin*. The *Proposed Road Development* will tie back into the existing N4 to the south of the aforementioned roundabout with a Standard Single

Carriageway alignment measuring approximately 0.89km in length before its conclusion in *Cloghoge Lower Td.*

The Type 2 Dual Carriageway road consists of two lanes in both directions with a segregating barrier within the paved median to separate the traffic streams. Cyclists and pedestrians will be encouraged by signage to use an alternative route, for example the old national primary route.

The section of road which is proposed to be Standard Single Carriageway will be commensurate with the existing improved section (Curlew Mountains Bypass) of the National Primary route at *Cloghoge Lower Td.* This consists of a single carriageway and hard shoulder in each direction.

4.0 THE NEED FOR THE SCHEME

Chapter 2 of the EIS outlines that this section of the N4 route is currently deficient in alignment, cross-section, capacity and junction/direct access arrangements for both the calculated design speed of 100kph and the statutory speed limit of 100kph. These deficiencies have resulted in increased journey times and reduced journey reliability, both of which have negative economic impacts on both businesses and consumers. Most notably there has also been a severely high rate of accidents on this road section, including 8 fatalities between 1996 and 2011.

As outlined earlier this submission has a particular emphasis on balanced regional development. The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG's) establish a spatial framework for balanced regional development in Ireland. Within the NSS and Border Region RPG's context Sligo City is recognised as having the potential to build scale and critical mass to drive development in the North-West as a Gateway City. The approach is to make the region competitive according to its strengths while ensuring a high-quality urban environment and vibrant rural areas.

One of the fundamental elements that underpin balanced regional development is access to and connectivity within a region, since accessibility is one of the key determinants of a region's competitiveness. This is discussed in further detail in section 5 of this submission.

5.0 COMPLIANCE WITH POLICY

5.1 The Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T)

As of January 2014 (following Regulation EU No. 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European network), the European Union has a new transport infrastructure policy that connects the continent between East and West, North and South. This policy aims to close the gaps between Member States' transport networks, remove bottlenecks that still hamper the smooth functioning of the internal market and overcome technical barriers. It promotes and strengthens seamless transport chains for passenger and freight, while keeping up with

future technological trends. This project will help the economy in its recovery and growth, with a budget of up to 26 billion euro up to 2020.

In Ireland the Sligo-Dublin N4/M4 route forms part of the TEN-T 'comprehensive road network' which is the basic layer of the TEN-T and which feeds into the 'core road network' at regional and national level. The Collooney-Castlebaldwin section of the N4 is part of a larger section of the route which is identified as 'Road / To be upgraded' on the TEN-T map as shown in Figure 5 Appendix 2 of this report (the section to be upgraded is shown by a dotted red line). In terms of road standard requirements TEN-T guidelines state that the comprehensive road network should consist of high-quality roads, defined as roads which play an important role in long-distance passenger and freight traffic and integrate the main economic and urban centres. It further stipulates that these high quality roads shall be either motorways or express roads and shall be delivered by 2050.

It is therefore considered that the proposed road development would facilitate the provision of this comprehensive network and would be consistent with TEN-T policy and standards.

5.2 National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) provides strategic planning guidance for a range of government policies and regional and local plans. It also provides a national framework to guide policies, programmes and investment.

The NSS is designed to achieve a better balance of social, economic, physical development and population growth between regions of the country.

The NSS recognises that achieving spatial balance will depend on enhancing the capacity for the movement of people, goods, energy and information between different areas of the country. Improvements in terms of time and cost can reduce the disadvantages of distance, and physical networks of infrastructure such as the N4 route are of particular relevance in this regard.

In relation to strengthening the West and North West in a national strategic context the NSS states:

Additional gateways, particularly in the West and North West, where the urban structure is weakest, must be developed. In identifying new gateways, a number of key factors must be taken into account including strategic location, capacity for substantial development, an existing business and innovation dynamic and existing or potential transport linkages.

Critical mass in the West and North West can be strengthened by developing Sligo as a gateway to capitalise on its strategic location and energise its associated hinterland. Building up the national role and scale of Sligo will require, as a first step, the development of a planning, land use and transportation framework. This will provide a focus around which local authorities, business and community interests can reach consensus on the future development of Sligo and utilise its substantial physical capacity for development, while safeguarding its outstanding natural setting.

Under 3.7, Key Infrastructure, the NSS states:

Achieving spatial balance by developing the potential of areas will depend on enhancing capacity for the movement of people, goods, energy and information between different places. Improvements in terms of time and cost, can reduce the disadvantages of distance.

Physical networks of infrastructure such as roads, public transport, energy and communications are of particular relevance to the NSS, since they themselves have a spatial impact and also influence the location, timing and extent of development.

Under 3.7.1, Transport, the NSS states:

To support balanced regional development, Ireland's transport networks must

- *build on Ireland's radial transport system of main roads and rail lines connecting Dublin to other regions, by developing an improved mesh or network of roads and public transport services;*
- *ensure, through building up the capacity and effectiveness of Ireland's public transport networks, that increases in energy demand and emissions of CO2 arising from the demand for movement are minimised;*
- *allow internal transport networks to enhance international access to all parts of the country, by facilitating effective interchange possibilities between the national transport network and international airports and sea ports;*
- *address congestion in major urban areas by increasing the use of public transport.*

Decisions on land use and development must take account of the existing public transport networks or support the emergence and development of new or augmented networks.

In summary, Ireland's future transport network can be viewed in terms of:

- *strategic radial corridors*
- *strategic linking corridors*
- *strategic international access points.*

The N4 is identified as a Strategic Radial Corridor, providing road access to the gateways of Sligo and Dublin, and to hubs and other areas in the vicinity of the Border. The NSS states the following should be attained in terms of this particular corridor:

Corridors to the West (x3): good quality road and public transport connections between Dublin, Galway, Mayo and Sligo

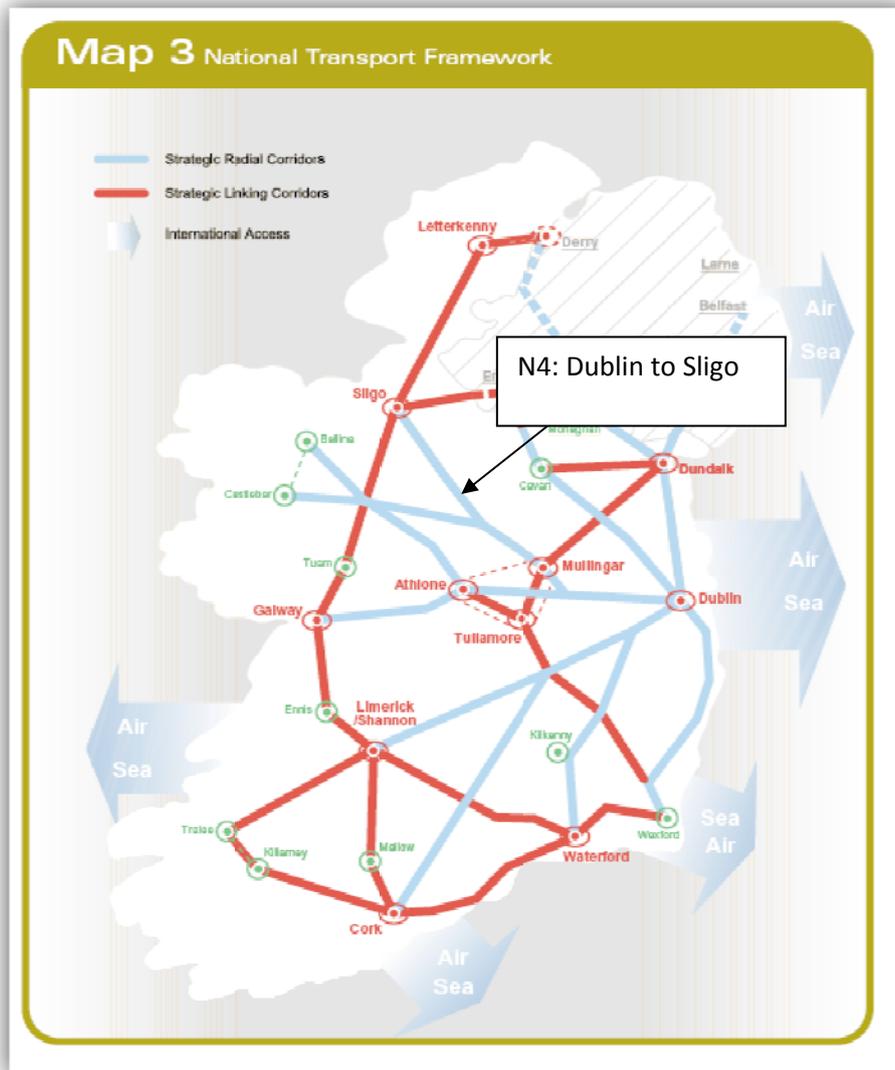


Fig. 1 National Transport Framework, (Map 3 of National Spatial Strategy)

In relation to Strategic Infrastructure Priorities and Transport in particular, the NSS states the importance of completing objectives which were identified in the NDP. This is relevant in terms of the N4 and Radial Corridors where it outlines that the NDP *provides for the completion of the main road inter-urban links*. It goes on to suggest that the priorities beyond this in relation to Sligo should be:

...improved access to Sligo that builds on recent investment in road and rail routes...

It is considered that the above outlines the national importance of developing gateways such as Sligo and the central role that effective transport links such as the N4 have in driving such development.

5.2 Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022

The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) is a long term strategic planning document which aims to direct the future growth of the Border Region, and seeks to implement the planning framework set out in the National Spatial Strategy (2002). The Regional Planning Guidelines identifies the M4/N4 as a Strategic (Western) Radial Corridor which connects Dublin to Sligo via the linked Gateway of Athlone/Tullamore/Mullingar, Longford and Carrick-on-Shannon, and as the primary access route to the west of the Border Region.

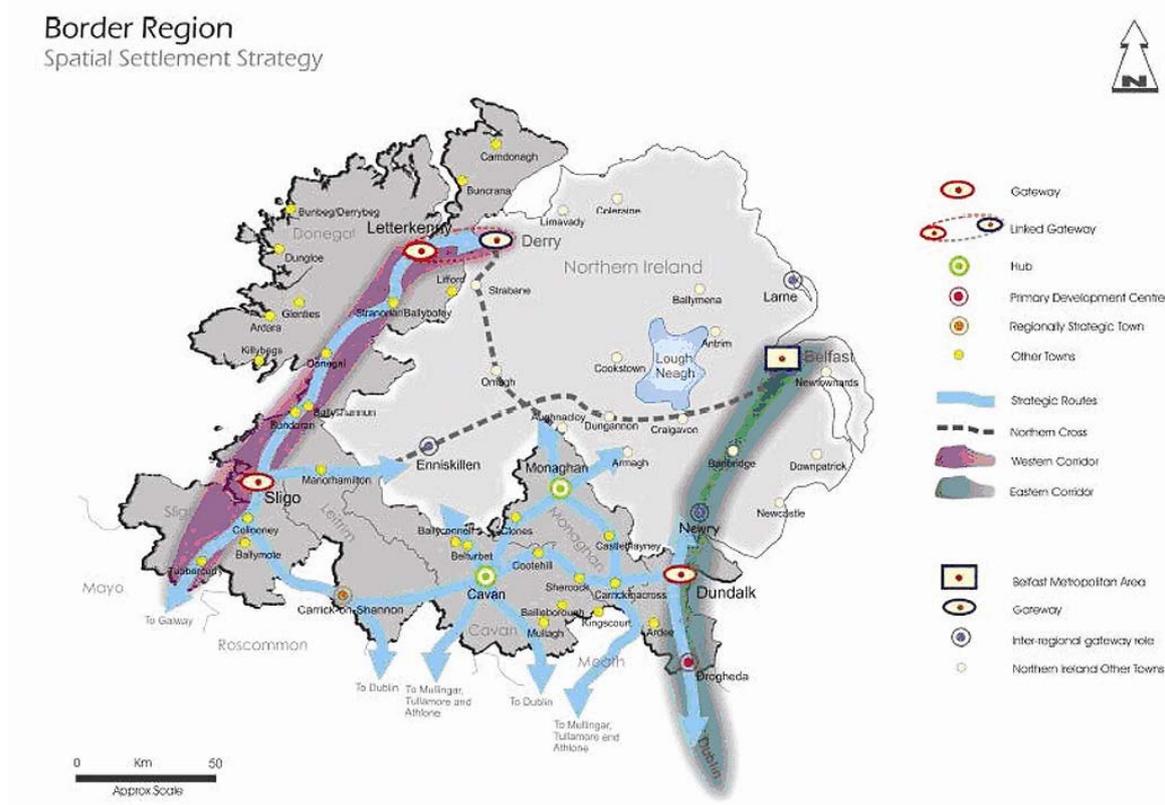


Fig. 2 Spatial Settlement Strategy (Map 3.1 of Border Regional Planning Guidelines)

The N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin Realignment is listed as one of the major schemes in planning which will have a significant influence on the Border Region in the coming years.

Key strategic goals outlined in the *Regional Planning Guidelines 2010* that are also relevant to the N4 project include (in summary):

- 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.

5.3 Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017

5.3.1 Core Strategy

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”.

With particular reference to the N4 project, the aims and goals of the Core Strategy include the following:

- 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.
- SG-1 a.** Facilitate and encourage the development of Sligo as a Gateway City and economic growth driver for the North-West region.
- SG-1 h.** Work with the relevant providers to ensure adequate infrastructure in terms of road, rail, aviation, energy and broadband telecommunications.
- SG-5 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.

The spatial development principles of the County Development Plan are closely linked to transport infrastructure and those that are relevant to the N4 project include the following:

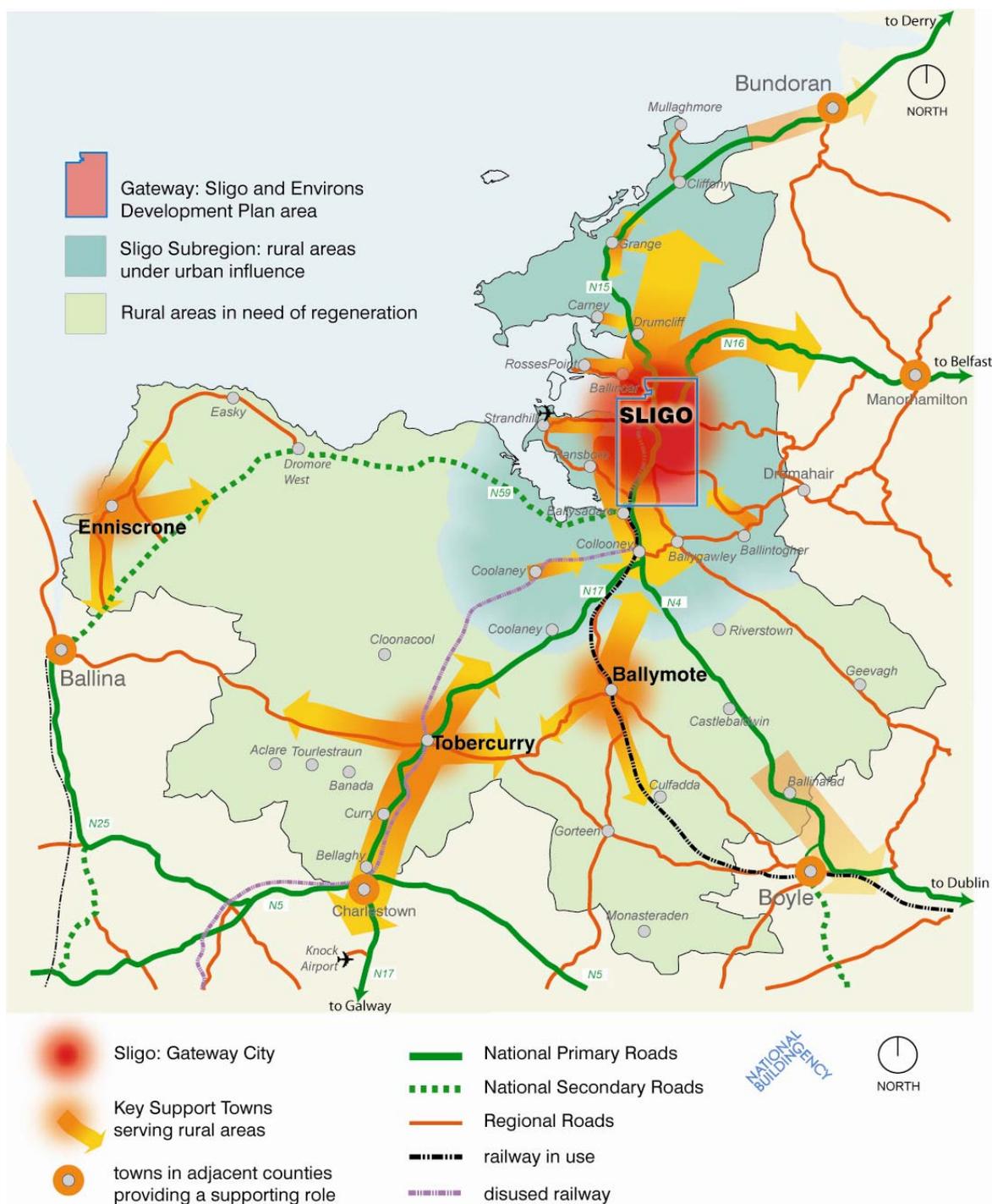
Gateway focus

The Spatial Development Framework is a structured approach to planned growth in Co. 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.

Improved connectivity and mobility

Essential to Sligo’s further growth is 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.

Fig. 3 The Core Strategy map as a spatial development framework (Fig. 3.B of the SCDP 2011-2017)



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.

5.3.2 Settlement structure

The Settlement Structure of the County Development Plan reflects the Spatial Development Framework. On the basis of the settlement structure and the various elements of the Core Strategy as outlined previously in this report, the County Development Plan allocates future population levels and development land requirements for each settlement in the County. Section 3.4.1 of the Plan highlights that these allocations are heavily influenced by the County's infrastructural endowments, including the north-south transport axis and the south-eastern road link to Dublin.

The County Development Plan aims to grow the Sligo Gateway population to 34,000 by 2017. The Plan also includes significant growth recommendations for other settlements relevant to the N4 project. This includes an increase in Ballymote from 1,229 in 2006 to 1,700 in 2017 (the 2011 recorded census population was 1,539). Collooney and Ballysadare are to grow from 2006 levels of 892 and 971 respectively to 1,500 (the 2011 recorded census populations were 1,369 and 1,344 respectively).

5.3.3 Transport

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 and its important regional role and location require a strong transportation network, which is essential to the competitiveness and vitality of the county.

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 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*. This provides 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.

Policies and objectives of the Plan that are relevant to the N4 project include the following:

- O-R-1** It is the objective of Sligo County Council to bring National Roads up to appropriate standards, as resources become available, and to continue improvement works on non-national roads so as to develop a safe and comprehensive road system for the county.
- 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.

With regard to the above it should be noted that Table 8.B of the Plan sets out the planned National road projects in County Sligo. This includes the realignment and upgrading of the N4 route from Collooney to Castlebaldwin.

6.0 COUNTY SLIGO: PLANNING TRENDS AND ISSUES

6.1 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. 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.

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 the 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. 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(WDC)¹, 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. 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.

On the basis of the above it is considered that the upgrading of the N4 constitutes a significant component of the infrastructural investment that is required to reverse the economic trends that are affecting County Sligo. As discussed in section 5.1 of this report, this also has national implications as current economic trends are adversely affecting the

¹ Work in the West: The Western Region's Employment and Unemployment Challenge, December 2009

potential for Sligo to drive the overall development of the North-West as envisaged in the NSS.

6.2 Population

The County Development Plan indicates that 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. The Sligo Borough area lost 581 (2.91%) of its residents between 2002 and 2006, having grown by 3.6% between 1996 and 2002.

The County area outside the Sligo urban area 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).

Updated analysis of the 2011 Census is included in section 6.3.2 of the EIS. Again this information points towards a continuation of 2006 trends with the population of County Sligo rising by 7.4% to 65,393 persons in 2011, whilst the Sligo and environs area rose by less than 1% to 19,452 (it should be noted that the 'Sligo and environs' area quoted in relation to 2011 does not correspond exactly with the 'Borough' area used in 2006).

These population trends highlight the need for increased focus on directing development into the Sligo Gateway and this would be aided by improved transport links including the N4 upgrading between Sligo and Dublin.

6.3 Planning implications of recent trends

Taking account of recent policy developments, economic and demographic trends, and when viewed in the context of the proposed N4 project, the major implications for a sustainable 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 including the N4 upgrading, are essential in retaining and growing the County's population.
- 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 (in close proximity to the N4 project), Enniscrone and Tobercurry
 - the Gateway satellites (including Collooney and Ballysadare along the N4)
 - the smaller villages (including Castlebaldwin, Riverstown and Ballinafad along/close to the N4).

- 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 including the upgrading of the N4, to help develop the Gateway and consolidate the towns in the County as local economic engines.

7.0 IMPACT ON THE LANDSCAPE

7.1 The landscape of Sligo

The County Development Plan highlights Sligo's varied natural landscape with spectacular mountains, picturesque lakes, 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. Section 7.4 of the Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017 deals with landscape character and includes a Landscape Characterisation Map (see Appendix 1: figure 4) which classifies the County according to its visual sensitivity and ability to absorb new development without compromising the scenic character of the area.

The map indicates the following classifications:

- 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.

7.2 Impact of the proposed development on landscape features

With regard to the above classifications it can be seen that there is a high density of sensitive/vulnerable/scenic features throughout the County, particularly in the upland/coastline areas of the north and west. However, the area surrounding the Collooney – Castlebaldwin route is notably different to much of the County in that it is

dominated by Normal Rural Landscape which has a higher capacity to absorb development.

The areas around Toberscanavan Loughs and Markree Estate are designated as Visually Vulnerable Area and/or Sensitive Rural Landscape. It should be noted that on-line upgrading of the existing road is proposed at this location and accordingly the proposed development would not have a significant adverse impact on landscape character.

The area of Sensitive Rural Landscape to the west of Doorly Hill would not be affected by the proposed development as the proposed route runs along the eastern slopes of Doorly Hill. The wetland areas around Lough Corran are also designated as Sensitive Rural Landscape but the proposed development runs along the margins of this area only and it is not considered that there will be a significant adverse visual impact.

In relation to Scenic Routes it is noted that 3 such designated routes converge at the southern extremity of the proposed development at Castlebaldwin. These routes are numbered and listed in Appendix G of the County Development Plan as follows:

- No. 3. N4 Castlebaldwin to Ballinafad (Views of Bricklieve Mountains, Lough Arrow and Curlew Mountains)
- No. 56. Lakeshore drive around Lough Arrow from Castlebaldwin to Roscommon County boundary (Views of Lough Arrow and Bricklieve Mountains)
- No. 60. From Castlebaldwin southwards to junction with R295, southwest of Templevanny Lough (Views of Bricklieve Mountains, Kesh Corran and Lough Arrow).

However, it should be noted that the proposed development is only affected by short sections at the start or finish of each route. These affected sections are within or close to the existing built-up area of Castlebaldwin where the listed views are not particularly evident due to separation distances, topography and existing development. Accordingly it is not considered that the proposed development would significantly detract from views to be preserved as listed in the Development Plan.

7.3 Design of the proposed development

It is acknowledged that there is a need to ensure that the design of the road project is commensurate with the route function and the character of the surrounding landscape. In this regard the proposed development consists of a Type 2 Dual Carriageway and Standard Single Carriageway, including a significant extent of online upgrading for the northern section of the road.

As outlined previously in this report, sections of the N4 to the north and south of the proposed development have previously benefitted from significant upgrading. To the north the N4 has been upgraded to Type 1 Dual Carriageway between Sligo and Collooney, and south of Castlebaldwin has already been realigned to Standard Single Carriageway. The proposed development concerns the remaining and connecting portion of the N4 in Sligo which has not seen any significant improvements since its designation from a Trunk Road to a National Primary Route in 1977. It is therefore considered that the design of the proposed

development would be more consistent with the already upgraded sections of N4 to the north and south of the proposed development and accordingly that the proposed development would not be out of character when viewed in the context of the wider landscape.

The vast majority of the area affected by the proposed route is characterised as a Normal Rural Landscape and it is considered that the existing N4 constitutes a significant element of that landscape, both in terms of its visual impact and the established functional character of this agricultural area which serves as an important transport corridor. It is considered that the proposed development would consolidate the character of this area and accordingly would not have a significant adverse impact on landscape character.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

This report has highlighted the important role that Sligo has to play as a designated 'Gateway' in accordance with the NSS and as set out in the Border Regional Planning Guidelines. However it must be acknowledged that achieving spatial balance will depend on enhancing capacity for the movement of people, goods, energy and information between different places. Improvements in terms of time and cost can reduce the disadvantages of distance, and physical networks of infrastructure such as the N4 route (identified as a Strategic Radial Corridor in the NSS) are of particular relevance in this regard.

Progress on achieving balanced regional development as envisaged in the NSS has been limited due to a number of factors including the significant national slowdown in development since late 2007. Census information for 2006 and 2011 has outlined that the Sligo Gateway population has essentially remained stagnant.

The spatial development principles of the County Development Plan are closely linked to transport infrastructure. The N4 route is considered to be a vital element of the Core Strategy, including the spatial development framework and the settlement structure. Whilst the development of Sligo as a Gateway is the ultimate aim of the Core Strategy, other settlements such as Ballysadare, Collooney and Ballymote play an important complimentary role and are relevant to the N4 project.

Improved accessibility is considered to be a vital aspect of economic development and the upgrading of the N4 would be considered a significant development in the challenge to attract investment to the area. This in turn has the potential to contribute significantly to balanced regional development as envisaged in the National Spatial Strategy.

The proposed N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin road development is therefore an essential piece of infrastructure which will reduce journey times, improve reliability and improve traffic safety for users.

Having considered:-

the role of the N4 in the TEN-T trans-European transport network policy and the policies and standards set out therein to create a safe and efficient road network throughout Europe;

the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 and the objectives set out therein to support balanced regional development and improve infrastructure networks such as roads;

the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Border Region 2010-2022, and policies and objectives contained therein to improve national roads in the region;

the Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017, the Core Strategy contained therein and specific policies and objectives to improve national primary routes within the county;

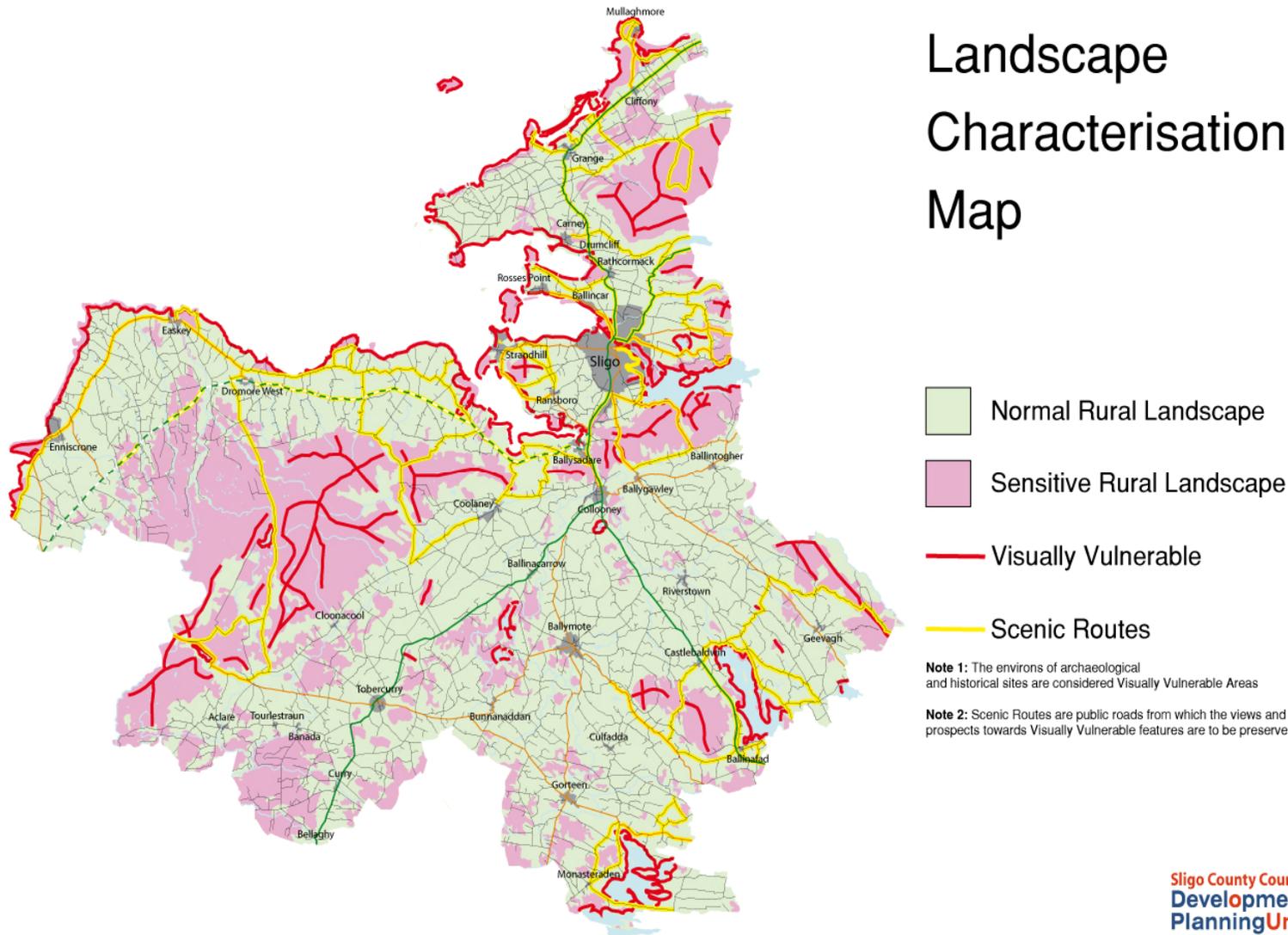
the community need and public interest served to be achieved from use of the acquired lands for the purpose identified in the order;

and the community benefit and public safety improvements associated with the proposed development;

it is my opinion that the proposed development would be in accordance with the policies and objectives of the Sligo County Development Plan and regional and national planning strategies, and accordingly would be in accordance the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Stephen Ward
Acting Senior Executive Planner
Sligo County Council

Appendix 1: Fig. 4 Landscape Characterisation Map (Fig. 7.D of the SCDP 2011-2017)



Appendix 2: Fig. 5 Ten-T Comprehensive and Core Network: Roads, ports, rail-road terminals and airports

