

Chapter 5. Settlement Strategy

The Settlement Strategy of the Development Plan represents the Council’s options and priorities in terms of spatial and economic development of County Sligo within the national (NPF) and regional (RSES) planning frameworks.

This Strategy provides local direction on the desired future development of all urban and rural settlements, including rural areas.

In accordance with Section 10(2A) of the Planning Act, the Settlement Strategy comprises those elements of the Core Strategy that relate to the settlement hierarchy, population growth projections and housing land requirements.

5.1 Settlement structure and hierarchy

The settlements of County Sligo have remained largely unchanged since the 1990s in terms of their social and economic roles. While some villages have seen unprecedented housing growth during the early 2000s, their economic functions have not developed sufficiently to make them self-sustaining.

Despite an apparent demographic stagnation, Sligo Town has retained and consolidated its economic functions, providing services and employment for the population of a very large hinterland.

The established settlement structure forms the basis of the County’s settlement hierarchy, which is summarised below. The settlement hierarchy is illustrated in **Fig. 3.A Core Strategy Map** (refer to **Chapter 3 Core Strategy Statement**)

Towns	
Regional Growth Centre (RGC)	Sligo Town (and Environs)
Support Towns	Ballymote, Tobercurry, Enniscrone

Villages	
RGC Satellite Villages	Ballysadare, Collooney, Coolaney, Grange, Strandhill
Villages with Special Coastal Tourism Functions	Easky, Mullaghmore, Rosses Point
Villages Sustaining Rural Communities (serviced)	Aclare, Ballinacarrow, Ballinafad, Ballincar, Ballintogher, Bellaghy, Bunnanadden, Carney, Castlebaldwin, Cliffony, Cloonacool, Culfadda, Curry, Dromore West, Drumcliff, Geevagh, Gorteen, Monasteraden, Riverstown
Unserviced villages and dispersed settlement in rural areas	Ballygawley, Banada, Ransboro, Rathcormac, Tourlestrane and rural areas

5.2 Population growth and housing supply

Population projections relevant to County Sligo are provided in the NPF Implementation Roadmap, while the NWRA Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy sets population targets for Sligo Town and estimates the corresponding number of housing units required by 2040.

Housing projections for the County are appended to the Section 28 Housing Supply Target Methodology Guidelines (DHLGH, 2020).

5.2.1 Population and housing projections set at national level

Population

Appendix 2 of the NPF Implementation Roadmap includes transition regional and county population projections to 2031. Figures for County Sligo are specified in the context of the North-West subregion of the NWRA.

Table 5.1 NPF population projections for County Sligo

(extract from Appendix 2, p.14 of the NPF Implementation Roadmap)

Population	Census 2016	Projection 2026	Projection 2031
County Sligo	65,500	71,500–72,500	74,000–75,500

In accordance with the above projections, the County’s population should increase by 8,000 to 9,400 persons by 2030 above the number recorded in Census 2016 for a total of approximately **75,000 residents**.

Census 2022 recorded a County population of **70,198**. Having regard to this figure, the estimated additional population to be accommodated by 2030 period would be circa **4,800**.

Housing

Based on the population projections scenarios prepared by the ESRI, the DHLGH issued Housing Supply Target Methodology Guidelines (HSTM Guidelines) in 2020 under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The Excel database accompanying the Guidelines provided projected annual figures for new household demand in each local authority area up to the year 2031.

For County Sligo, the total adjusted demand corresponding to the Plan period is approximately **4,029** units. The calculations in accordance with the "Worked Example 2" provided in Appendix 1 of the HSTM Guidelines are shown in Table 5.2 (see next page).

Table 5.2 Adjusted total housing demand in Co. Sligo during the Development Plan period¹

Plan period: Q3 2024 to Q3 2030 (1 July 2024 to 30 June 2030)		Annual average households	Total households
A	ESRI NPF scenario projected new household demand 2017 to Q2 2030 (end of Plan period)	896 p.a. (over the 6 years of the Plan)	5,381 (from ESRI research)
B	Actual new housing supply 2017 to Q4 2022 and estimated future delivery in 2023 and Q1-Q2 2024		1,345 (from CSO completions data and estimation of 2024 delivery)
C	Homeless households (latest data from January 2023 Homeless Report), and unmet demand as at Census 2016		59 (from DHLGH and Census) (was 43 originally)
D	Plan Housing Demand = Total (A-B+C) (Projected ESRI NPF demand - new completions) + Unmet demand	682 p.a.	4,095
E	Potential adjustment 1 to end 2026 portion of plan period to facilitate convergence to NPF strategy (where justified)	Mid-point between ESRI NPF and baseline scenarios to 2026 in lieu of A above	
E1	ESRI Baseline scenario projected new household demand 2017 to Q4 2026		4,056 (from ESRI research)
E2	ESRI NPF scenario projected new household demand 2027 to Q2 2030 (Plan end)		1,315 (from ESRI research)
E3	Mid-point between A-E2 (ESRI NPF and Baseline scenarios to Q4 2026)		4,000
E4	Adjusted Total Plan Demand calculation based on E2 + E3 in lieu of A above	671	4,029 (E2 + E3 - B + C = total)
F	<i>NOT APPLICABLE IN THIS EXAMPLE</i> <i>Potential adjustment 2 to end 2026 portion of plan period to facilitate convergence to NPF strategy, applicable where B exceeds or is close to D (where justified)</i>	<i>Mid-point between ESRI NPF and baseline scenarios to 2026 in lieu of A above, plus up to 25%</i>	

[the highlighted figures in the above table have resulted from PA-11]

¹ As per HST Guidelines, Appendix 1, Worked Example 2: Local Authority where (i) ESRI NPF scenario is lower than the ESRI Baseline scenario, and (ii) mid-point between ESRI baseline and NPF scenarios can be justified to 2026 as a housing supply target for a Q3 2024 to Q2 2030 Plan period.

5.2.2 Population and housing targets set at regional level

Population

The RSES sets population targets for Sligo Town while also indicating the minimum uplift to 2040 and to the same intermediate years as the NPF Implementation Roadmap.

Table 5.3 Sligo RGC population targets (extract from Table 3 on p. 40 of the RSES)

	2016 Census population	Minimum increase to 2040 (%)	Uplift to 2040 (persons)	Minimum uplift to 2026	Minimum uplift to 2031	Target population in 2031
Sligo Town	19,200	40%	8,000	4,400	2,200	26,000

In accordance with the above provisions, the targeted population growth in Sligo Town would be circa 6,160 persons by 2030, bringing the total population to **circa 25,360**. This is a very ambitious target, which may not be attained based on past trends.

Housing

In Section 3.7(c) of the RSES, RPO 3.7.38 requires Sligo County Council to facilitate the provision of 3,000 to 5,000 residential units to accommodate the additional Sligo Town population envisaged by 2040. This would be equivalent to providing between 150 and 250 units per year from 2020 to 2040.

During the 6-year life of the CDP 2024-2030, the number of dwellings allocated to Sligo Town in accordance with the RSES provisions would be between 900 and 1,500 units.

Taking into account the empirical evidence of acute housing shortage in Sligo Town, constantly increasing since 2016, the actual demand is probably much higher.

This Plan facilitates “frontloading” the delivery of housing in Sligo Town, by zoning sufficient land to accommodate the Core Strategy allocation of **2,649** units by 2030, and potentially **more** units taking into account the lands zoned in excess of the minimum required.

5.2.3 Population and housing allocations at local level

It is evident that the figures derived from the NPF population projections and the RSES population and housing targets are not correlated with the HST housing figure as calculated in Table 5.2.

As indicated in the Core Strategy Statement, the Planning Authority considers reasonable to base settlement population targets on past trends and on the NPF County population estimate of 75,000 by 2030.

The overall housing allocation of **4,029** units has been distributed to the 12 towns and villages in accordance with the preferred spatial development option (selected SEA Alternative) described in Section 1.2 (Chapter 1), i.e. “Option 3 – Driving growth in the County through the Sligo RGC”. The allocations have been made on the basis of Infrastructural Assessments and Settlement Capacity Audits – details are provided in Volume 2, which contains 12 town and village plans.

The Settlement Strategy for each of the six settlement levels, together with the respective population and housing allocations, reflects the above option.

5.3 Strategy for towns

5.3.1 Sligo Town: accelerated compact growth

Sligo Town, previously under the joint jurisdiction of Sligo County Council and Sligo Borough Council (dissolved in 2014) has seen a long period of stagnation in terms of population and housing. It is estimated that the population of the County’s main town grew by only 4.4% between 2002 and 2022.

A series of complex factors, including a chronic shortage of investment in the town, have influenced new households to locate outside the Sligo Borough boundary. It is evident from Tables 5.4 (below) and 5.5 (further in this chapter) that the Environs of Sligo and the Satellite Villages have seen significant population growth in the 2000s.

Sligo County Council has been striving to reverse this trend through major regeneration projects (e.g. Cranmore Regeneration) and public realm interventions (e.g. O’Connell Street, Queen Maeve Square).

The Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) has been essential and, along with other funding streams, will continue to be one of the most important resources for enhancing Sligo Town’s attractiveness for living and investing.

Table 5.4 Population trends in the Sligo and Environs area from 2002 to 2022

Sligo Town (statistical units)	Population 2002	Population 2006	Population 2011	Population 2016	Population 2022	% change from 2002 to 2022
Sligo East ED	5,568	5,334	4,937	4,998	4,940	– 11.28%
Sligo North ED	5,745	5,346	5,502	5,222	6,127	+ 6.65%
Sligo West ED	7,160	7,212	7,129	7,219	7,788	+ 0.8%
3 EDs combined <i>(jurisdiction of Sligo Borough Council until 2014)</i>	18,473	17,892	17,568	17,439	18,855	+ 2.06%
Environs of Sligo <i>(jurisdiction of Sligo County Council)</i>	723	1,510	1,884	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sligo and Environs (Census “legal town” boundary until 2011)	19,735	19,402	19,452	n/a	n/a	See note below
Sligo and Environs (Census settlement boundary in 2016)	n/a	n/a	n/a	19,199	n/a	See note below
Sligo and Environs (new Built-Up Area boundary in 2022)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	20,608	Est. 4.4% (See note below)

Note: As the Census boundary of the legal settlement “Sligo and Environs” was modified by the CSO in 2016 and again in 2022, enclosing a different area than in 2011 and previous Census years, it is not possible to calculate a correct percentage for the intercensal population growth in Sligo Town and its Environs

The largest urban settlement in the County has the greatest potential to deliver compact growth and regeneration in the existing built-up area, as well as in the designated *strategic growth areas* to the north-east (Ballinode) and south-west (Caltragh/Oakfield).

The town also has the potential to become County Sligo’s most sustainable urban area by promoting active mobility as specified in the Sligo Local Transport Plan prepared in conjunction with this Development Plan (refer also to **Chapter 9 Transport Strategy**).

The Strategy for Sligo Town consists of the following elements:

- Support accelerated population growth to a level of **at least 25,360 persons by 2030**.
- Facilitate the provision of **at least 2,650 residential units** to accommodate the accumulated unmet demand and the additional population envisaged by 2030.
- Ensure that at least 40% of new development occurs within Sligo Town’s existing built-up area, through regeneration and consolidation on infill and brownfield sites.
- Prioritise new residential and employment-related development on greenfield sites in the areas served by the Western Distributor Road at Caltragh and Oakfield, and at Ballinode, which will be served by the Eastern Garavogue Bridge and Approach Roads Scheme.

A Local Area Plan for Sligo Town and Environs will be prepared after the adoption of the Development Plan, as required by current planning legislation. The LAP will set out the detailed objectives for the area’s future growth.

This County Development Plan includes only the zoning and strategic designations and objectives for Sligo Town – refer to **Chapter 11**.

5.3.2 Support Towns – regeneration and consolidation

Throughout much of County Sligo, particularly the south and the west, there is a continuing need to address the weak urban structure and build on the strengths and scale of existing settlements.

Three towns were first identified in the CDP 2005-2011 – Ballymote, Tobercurry and Enniscrone – as urban centres able to sustain the County’s social and economic development outside Sligo Town.

During the 20 years from Census 2002 to Census 2022, all three towns have experienced substantial increases in population, exceeding the rate of investment in their physical and social infrastructure.

Table 5.5 Population growth in Sligo’s Support Towns (2002 to 2022) and targets for 2030

Support Towns	Population 2002	Population 2006	Population 2011	Population 2016	Population 2022	% growth 2002–2022	Population targets 2030
Ballymote	981	1,229	1,539	1,549	1,711	+ 74%	1,850
Enniscrone	668	829	1,223	1,156	1,291	+ 93%	1,400
Tobercurry	1,171	1,421	1,747	1,986	2,307	+ 97%	2,450
Total	2,820	3,479	4,509	4,691	5,309	+ 88%	5,700

The three Support Towns must be consolidated and equipped with adequate infrastructure and with all the services required to respond to the needs of their own residents and of those living in the surrounding rural areas. It will be essential to address vacancy/dereliction and to regenerate the

town centres through public realm improvements. Detailed objectives for the three Support Towns' regeneration and consolidation are set out in the Town Plans contained in Chapters 12, 13 and 14, together with zoning objectives.

5.3.3 Placemaking and the National Policy on Architecture

The National Policy on Architecture (DHLGH, 2022) seeks to support national and local architectural ambitions to deliver a high-quality built environment for everyone. It promotes quality and sustainability in the design and delivery of built environment plans, programmes and projects at national, regional and local level.

The policy envisages multidisciplinary collaboration, public engagement and community-led, co-design initiatives as “placemaking” practices to integrate new developments into town and village settings. It indicates that “Built environment and placemaking projects are conceived, designed, planned and delivered by architects working in multi-disciplinary teams”.

The purpose is to see urban centres transformed into vibrant, inclusive and diverse living environments, where the growing population is aware of best architecture and placemaking practices and their importance to human health and well-being. Sligo County Council will pursue placemaking in the development, redevelopment or expansion of the County's urban centres through the expectation of high-quality architecture, urban and landscape design that can positively influence people's appreciation and interaction with the physical elements of their environment, reflective of the National Policy on Architecture. **[PA-12]**

5.4 Strategy for villages

5.4.1 Satellite Villages – carefully managed development

During the early Celtic Tiger years, before the introduction of Core Strategy requirements in development plans, there has been significant developer-led residential development in villages located close to Sligo Town.

These villages have become home to a substantial proportion of Sligo Town’s workforce, offering lower-density housing but falling behind in the provision of essential services.

As detailed in Table 5.5 below, the combined population of the five villages has grown by 4,609 persons from 2002 to 2022 – a 174% increase – while the County’s main urban centre, Sligo Town, has remained stagnant during the same period.

Table 5.6 Population growth in Sligo’s Satellite Villages (2002 to 2022) and targets for 2030

Satellite Villages	Population 2002	Population 2006	Population 2011	Population 2016	Population 2022	% growth 2002–2022	Population targets 2030
Ballysadare	853	971	1,344	1,350	1,747	+ 104%	1,900
Collooney	619	892	1,369	1,610	1,797	+ 190%	1,900
Coolaney	167	208	866	990	1,155	+ 591%	1,250
Grange	225	383	578	586	569	+ 152%	600
Strandhill	1,002	1,413	1,596	1,753	1,982	+ 97%	2,100
Total	2,641	3,867	5,753	6,289	7,250	+ 174%	7,750

In recent years, service infrastructure problems (i.e. wastewater treatment) have been largely remediated in these Satellite Villages, but there are still insufficient community facilities for the local population, and inadequate active travel and public transport services for commuters to Sligo Town.

In order to support accelerated growth in Sligo Town, it is essential to carefully manage development in the Satellite Villages, focusing on improving the quality of life of existing residents. Any additional residential development must be directed first onto brownfield and infill sites within the villages’ built-up areas.

Consistent with RPOs 3.2 and 3.3, the Council must pursue the delivery of new development within the Census boundaries in proportion of a minimum 30% in settlements over 1,500 population (e.g. Ballysadare, Collooney, Strandhill) and a minimum 20% in settlements under 1,500 population (Coolaney and Grange).

Detailed objectives for the five Satellite Villages are set out in the Village Plans contained in Chapters 15 to 19, together with zoning objectives.

5.4.2 Settlements with Special Coastal Tourism Functions

– support for sustainable tourism development

The Council acknowledges the fact that several towns and villages in the County have special functions. Enniscrone, Easky, Mullaghmore, Rosses Point and Strandhill are widely recognised for their coastal tourism role.

The inclusion of Easky, Mullaghmore and Rosses Point in the Wild Atlantic Way route presents new opportunities for tourism and related development in these villages, requiring appropriate zoning and specific objectives. These are provided in Chapters 20, 21 and 22.

5.4.3 Villages Sustaining Rural Communities

– small-scale development

Throughout the County, there is a variety of small villages, some of which have seen little or no growth in decades. Other villages, where substantial residential development took place during the economic boom, have experienced high levels of vacancy for extended periods.

It is necessary to support these settlements and seek to direct a certain amount of development in the villages with adequate infrastructural capacity, in order to ensure that local services are sustained and to offer a suitable alternative to rural one-off housing.

Chapters 34 to 51 contain specific objectives and simplified zoning provisions in 19 Village Plans.

5.4.4 Unserviced villages – strictly limited development

Five villages – Ballygawley, Banada, Ransboro, Rathcormac and Tourlestrane – where land has been zoned for development in the past, do not have adequate wastewater treatment services.

Sligo County Council, in co-operation with DHLGH and Uisce Éireann, as appropriate, will pursue the provision of wastewater treatment facilities to serve these villages. **[PA-13]**

In accordance with NPF provisions, lands may not be zoned unless they are serviced or serviceable during the life of the development plan.

Although these villages are not zoned as part of the CDP, the development limits are retained, in order to direct proposals for one-off houses on lands that will likely be serviced in the long-term (beyond 2030). Clustering houses served by individual wastewater treatment systems will facilitate their future connection to public wastewater infrastructure.

5.5 Strategy for rural settlement

Throughout County Sligo, 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 employment, there is a need to sustain these rural communities through other means.

Government policy on rural housing is set out in the National Planning Framework, which places a major emphasis on rural areas in relation to strengthening Ireland’s rural fabric and supporting the communities who live there.

The Council remains committed to Sligo’s Regional Growth Centre status and will support the development of Sligo Town by seeking to defuse the pressure for additional housing in rural areas close to Sligo and Environs.

At the same time, the Council acknowledges that it is necessary to accommodate those applicants with a **genuine need to live in a rural area**, which must be demonstrated at planning application stage.

In formulating policy on rural housing, the Council has considered the intrinsic characteristics of rural areas and their location (and distance) in relation to Sligo Town. Applicants with a demonstrable rural housing need will be accommodated subject to the policies set out in this chapter.

5.5.1 Types of rural areas

The NPF indicates that there are clear differences between types of rural areas and communities, including accessibility and the influence of neighbouring urban centres. A distinction is made between rural areas located within commuter catchments of large towns and those located outside such commuter catchments.

The RSES acknowledges that the management of rural area is challenging “in that some areas have a declining and ageing population whilst others are experiencing urban generated pressure from the demand for houses within the commuter zone of our cities, regional centres and their support towns”.

The National Policy Objective (NPO) 19 identifies two different types of rural area and calls for different policy responses for each. The two types of rural area are:

- rural areas under urban influence;
- rural areas elsewhere.

The 2005 Sligo County Development Plan was the first to recognise the two types of rural areas in County Sligo, and to designate a rural area under urban influence. Census data and planning applications for rural housing in recent years show that the trends have remained largely constant in terms of population change and demand for one-off housing in both types of rural areas in county Sligo.

This County Development Plan retains the rural area definitions and extents, as set out in previous development plans (2005, 2011 and 2017), which are in accordance with NPO 19.

Rural Areas under Urban Influence (RAUI)

These are areas located in the proximity of large urban centres or near major transport routes leading to those centres. In such areas, there is evidence of high demand for one-off housing development and of pressure on the local road network.

The NPF clearly states that “It will continue to be necessary to demonstrate a functional economic or social requirement for housing need in areas under urban influence, i.e. the commuter catchment of cities and large towns and centres of employment. This will also be subject to siting and design considerations” (S.5.3 *Planning for the future growth and development of rural areas*, p. 74 of the NPF).

The RSES reiterates the NPF provisions, reaffirming the need to provide single rural houses “for those that have a demonstrable economic or social need to live in the area, subject to all other proper planning and sustainable development considerations”.

Sligo Town is the dominant urban centre in County Sligo, with a commuter catchment extending northwards and eastwards to the County Leitrim boundary (and beyond), southwards and westwards for at least 15-18 km.

The **Rural areas under urban influence** designated in this CDP largely correspond to the core of the commuter catchment described above. The challenge here is to direct new housing development into Sligo Town and surrounding villages, while accommodating those with a genuine need to live in a rural location.

The extent of the **Rural area under urban influence** is shown on **Fig. 3.A Core Strategy Map** in **Chapter 3** (Core Strategy Statement).

Remote Rural Areas

Areas in the west and south of County Sligo, located at a longer distance from Sligo Town, have fewer settlements and a weaker economy. Younger people continue to move away for better job opportunities and older generations are not being fully replaced.

The NPF supports the sustainable development of rural areas by encouraging growth and arresting decline in areas that have experienced low population growth or decline in recent decades (NPO 15, p. 71 of the NPF).

In these areas, the challenge is to retain population and support the rural economy, while seeking to consolidate existing settlements.

The extent of the **Remote rural areas** is the entire County territory located outside the **Rural areas under urban influence**.

5.5.2 Green Belts

Proliferation of development, including dispersed dwellings in rural areas, can have a detrimental effect on the long-term viability of towns and villages. Such developments can also be expensive to sustain in terms of transport and service infrastructure (water and wastewater).

It is essential that Sligo’s settlements are consolidated within the development limits established as part of the town and village plans contained in this Development Plan.

Outside development limits, **Green Belts** have been designated for the purposes of preventing urban sprawl and preserving the visual identity of Sligo’s towns and villages.

It is also important to protect wildlife habitats and reduce the risk of pollution to water bodies from an accumulation of individual wastewater treatment systems in the areas around settlements, which are under constant pressure for one-off housing.

Strategic settlement policies for towns and villages

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

Towns

- SP-S-1** Pursue the accelerated and compact development of Sligo Town as a Regional Growth Centre and economic driver for the North-West region.
- SP-S-2** Promote consolidation and regeneration in the Support Towns of Ballymote, Enniscrone and Tobercurry.
- SP-S-3** Improve the built environment in County Sligo's towns through "placemaking" by promoting high-quality architecture, urban and landscape design, while simultaneously tackling dereliction, in the interest of increased environmental, economic and social sustainability, as envisioned in the National Policy on Architecture. **[PA-14]**

Villages

- SP-S-4** Carefully manage development in the Satellite Villages of Ballysadare, Collooney, Coolaney, Grange and Strandhill, prioritising investment in social infrastructure and active travel infrastructure.
- SP-S-5** Support the Villages with Special Coastal Tourism Functions – Easky, Mullaghmore, Rosses Point – to achieve their full potential for sustainable tourism development.
- SP-S-6** Direct new small-scale rural development proposals into the designated Villages Sustaining Rural Communities, in the interest of their continued viability.
- SP-S-7** In unserviced villages, promote clustering of development within village development limits, to facilitate their future connection to service infrastructure.

Green Belts

- SP-S-8** Prevent inappropriate development around towns and villages by establishing Green Belts which shall serve the following general purposes:
- consolidate the settlements within development limits and retain their visual identity distinct from the surrounding countryside;
 - reserve land for future planned expansion of settlements and for the provision of major infrastructure (e.g. transport).

Strategic rural settlement policy

- SP-S-9** Strengthen existing rural communities by facilitating sustainable rural settlement in accordance with the National Planning Framework and the National Policy Objective 19, which requires that a distinction is made between areas under urban influence and rural areas elsewhere.
- A. In rural areas under urban influence, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic or social need to live in a rural area and siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements;
 - B. In rural areas elsewhere, facilitate the provision of single housing in the countryside based on siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, having regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements.

Strategic settlement policy for Rural Areas Under Urban Influence

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- SP-S-10** Accommodate proposals for one-off rural houses in **Rural Areas Under Urban Influence**, subject to normal planning considerations and compliance with the guidance set out in **Section 33.4 Housing in rural areas** (development management standards), where a housing need is demonstrated by the following categories of applicants:
- A. landowners **and farmers**, including their sons and daughters, who wish to build a first home, **in this area**, for their permanent occupation on the landholding associated with their principal family residence; **[PA-15]**
 - B. 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;
 - C. persons who have no family lands, but who wish to build their first home for their permanent occupation in the area of their original family home, within the rural community in which they have spent a substantial and continuous part of their lives (this provision does not apply in cases where the original family home is located in an area zoned for development in a town or a village);

Strategic settlement policy for Rural Areas Under Urban Influence

- D. persons with a link to the rural community in which they wish to build a first home for their permanent occupation, by reason of having lived in this community for a substantial and continuous part of their lives, or by the existence in this community of long-established ties with immediate family members;
- E. 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,

AND where such persons can demonstrate that the home they propose is in the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Note: This policy does not apply to sites located within the development limit of villages (in RAUI).

Strategic settlement policy for Remote Rural Areas

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- SP-S-11** Accommodate proposals for one-off rural houses in **Remote Rural Areas**, subject to normal planning considerations and compliance with the guidance set out in **Section 33.4 Housing in rural areas** (development management standards).

Strategic settlement policy for Green Belts and Sensitive Areas (Scenic Routes, Sensitive Rural Landscapes, Visually Vulnerable Areas)

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- SP-S-12** Accommodate proposals for one-off rural houses in Green Belts and Sensitive Areas, subject to normal planning considerations and compliance with the guidance set out in **Section 33.4 Housing in rural areas** (development management standards), where a housing need is demonstrated by the following categories of applicants:
- A. landowners **and farmers**, including their sons and daughters, who wish to build a first home, **in this area**, for their permanent occupation on the landholding associated with their principal family residence; **[PA-16]**
 - B. 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** where such persons can demonstrate that the home they propose is in the interests of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.