

# Chapter 28. Economic development

County Sligo can meet its population growth targets if job creation increases significantly. This requires continued support for the industrial employment sectors, as well as:

- attracting new investment and supporting existing businesses, including those in the retail, hospitality and tourism sectors;
- ensuring that essential infrastructure (especially transport and service infrastructure) is in place;
- supporting the local economy in rural towns and villages across Sligo, to help retain young population.

The private sector has a vital role to play in addressing these requirements, in addition to the DHLGH, Uisce Eireann, TII, NTA, Enterprise Ireland, IDA, Sligo County Council and the Local Enterprise Office (LEO).

The protection of the county's natural and built heritage through planning and environmental services is integral to the tourism offering. The attractiveness of towns and villages enhances the residents' quality of life and is important for investment decisions by both foreign and domestic business investors.

The Development Plan, which contains policies regarding all of the above, is thus a prerequisite which underpins economic growth and employment.

## 28.1 Industry and enterprise locations

The majority of jobs are concentrated in Sligo Town and Environs, which has become the County's centre for industry and enterprise due to the availability of a large pool of skilled workers, of which a substantial proportion commute from outside Sligo Town and even from adjoining counties.

### **Sligo Town and Environs**

According to the Western Development Commission's "*Industry in the Western Region – Sectoral Profile*" (2019), manufacturers of chemicals & pharmaceuticals are by far the largest industrial employers in County Sligo, accounting for circa 30% of industrial workers.

The share of industrial employment in these fields in Sligo is second highest in the country (after Waterford) and considerably greater than the next highest western county (21% in Mayo) and national average (18%). In the case of MedTech, Sligo has the third highest share of industrial employment in the state (24%),

Large companies involved in high-tech manufacturing include AbbVie, GSK, Brusa and TopChem. The majority of large industrial employers are located in Sligo Town, in IDA's Business and Technology Park at Finisklin, or on their own landholdings (AbbVie).

### **Outside Sligo Town**

Tobercurry, Collooney and Grange, located along national primary roads, have developed a variety of smaller enterprises staffed by a local workforce, as did Strandhill, which has a purpose-built Enterprise Centre near the airport.

Collooney, originally targeted for the development of a small enterprise park, has seen the short-lived growth of retail warehousing, to the detriment of Sligo Retail Park (Carrowroe). Vacant units in Collooney Business Park have gradually reverted to their intended enterprise use. The continuation of this process will be supported.

Having regard to the predominance of small businesses in the County outside Sligo and Environs, enterprise centres should be fostered and expanded in the Support Towns of Tobercurry, Ballymote and Enniscrone, in addition to Strandhill.

Small-scale enterprise space should also be provided in other villages across the County, either in dedicated areas (BIE or MIX zoning objectives) or as part of general village uses (“Rural Village” zoning objective), to support the creation of local jobs in the south and west of the County.

### 28.1.1 Business, industry and enterprise

The “Business, industry and enterprise” (BIE) zoning objective applies to lands reserved for general employment uses in Sligo Town, the three Support Towns of Ballymote, Tobercurry and Enniscrone and several large villages. The objective provides for the development of manufacturing, light industry, logistics (warehousing, transport), office-based and non-retail businesses, enterprise centres (e.g. Strandhill), community enterprise units (e.g. Ballintogher) etc.

Lands designated for enterprise development include the IDA’s Business and Enterprise Park at Finisklin and the existing industrial estates in Ballymote and Tobercurry.

In addition to BIE lands already in use, there are substantial areas reserved for future development to the south of Sligo Town at Oakfield, to the north of Sligo Town at Ballytivnan / Rathbraughan / Barroe.

### 28.1.2 Office development

Currently, the main concentration of office development is in Sligo Town, in the centre and edge-of centre areas such as Finisklin and Cranmore. Larger office buildings will be directed to locate within the mixed-use zones of Sligo Town or within business parks (BIE-zoned lands), where appropriate.

Smaller-scale office developments will be facilitated in Sligo’s neighbourhood centres as well as in the centres of Ballymote, Enniscrone, Tobercurry and Satellite Villages, if demand arises.

The Council supports the repurposing of vacant and derelict buildings in the County’s town centres for office use (among other uses), as part of the anticipated *Town Centre First Plans*.

### 28.1.3 Waste management, industry, logistics and transport-related activities (former “WILT” zoned lands)

Waste management, light industry, logistics and transport-related activities have historically located mostly on lands to the south of Sligo Town, at Carrowroe and Belladrehid, between the N4 (Dublin Road) and the L-3608 (Carrowroe to Ballysadare Road).

These lands are not serviced and Uisce Eireann has no plans to service these lands during the life of the Development Plan 2024-2030. However, the area has excellent road access and is a suitable location for activities which require substantial sites, not available in the built-up urban area.

Sligo County Council will seek the inclusion of these former WILT-zoned lands in Uisce Eireann’s next Capital Investment Plan.

Until adequate service infrastructure is put place, no further expansion or intensification of existing uses on these previously zoned WILT lands will be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the existing on-site treatment systems can safely and adequately dispose of any increased effluent in accordance with relevant EPA standards.

## 28.1.4 Seveso sites

The *Chemicals Act (Control of Major Accident Hazards involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2015 (S.I. No. 209 of 2015)*, known as the “COMAH Regulations”, implement the **Seveso III Directive (2012/18/EU)**. These Regulations lay down rules for the prevention of major accidents involving dangerous substances and seek to limit the consequences of such accidents for human health and the environment.

This Development Plan does not designate sites or zones for uses that might be classified as Seveso establishments. However, such developments may occur during the Plan’s life. In 2024, the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) published an updated list of *Notified Lower Tier Establishments*, which mentions Lough Gill Distillery (Hazelwood, Co. Sligo). **[Correction 1]**

The Council will comply with the Seveso III Directive in reducing the risk and limiting the potential consequences of major industrial accidents. Any proposal for a Seveso development will be considered only in low-risk locations, within acceptable distances from relevant environmental sensitivities. Such 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 proposals, in addition to normal planning criteria.

## 28.1.5 Enterprise development outside designated zones

It is accepted that there are certain types of activities that may have specific locational requirements which can be more readily accommodated outside lands zoned for business, industrial and enterprise uses. Where no suitable sites are available in designated areas, the Planning Authority will consider enterprise uses outside BIE zoned lands if the respective activities are sympathetic to the surrounding area and do not degrade its visual, cultural or residential amenities. Such developments will need to satisfy traffic, public health, amenity and environmental assessment requirements.

## 28.1.6 Working remotely

With the expansion of broadband, remote working has become a viable alternative, or a complement to office-based employment. Remote working is also environmentally sustainable where it reduces emissions associated with car-based commuting.

Live/work units can be generally accommodated on lands zoned for residential and mixed uses, as well as in rural areas. In all cases, the principal use of such units must remain residential and the type of work should not have any impact on infrastructure, the natural environment or the amenities of adjoining properties.

In addition to working from home, it is now possible to avail of remote work hubs. The government’s Remote Working Strategy (2021) supports significant investment in infrastructure to underpin the development of the national hubs network. (DRCD - National Hub Network Working Group, DETE, Q4 2021)

The remote work hubs are of particular importance for the continued viability of small villages and rural areas. The use of such hubs can have a transformative impact on local economies and communities through increased employment.

## Business, industry and enterprise policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-BIE-1** Support the consolidation of existing business/enterprise parks, their extension where necessary, and the provision of new enterprise centres in Ballymote, Enniscrone and Tobercurry in addition to Strandhill.
- P-BIE-2** Pursue, in co-operation with Uisce Eireann, the provision of service infrastructure to existing warehousing, industry, logistics and transport-related developments (former “WILT” zoned lands) located to the south of Sligo Town.
- P-BIE-3** Support the repurposing of vacant and derelict buildings in town centres for office-based enterprise activities.
- P-BIE-4** Consider development proposals for business or enterprise outside designated zones only where **all of the following criteria are met**:
- A.** the proposed use has locational requirements that can only be accommodated in a rural area and this has been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority;
  - B.** the resultant development is of a size and scale that does not impact negatively on the character and amenity of the surrounding area;
  - C.** the proposal demonstrates that it has taken into account traffic, public health, environmental and amenity considerations and is in accordance with the policies, requirements and guidance contained in this plan;
  - D.** the proposal does not conflict with the requirement to safeguard the strategic function, safety and investment in the strategic national road network to date, and is in compliance with the provisions of the Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines ‘Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (DoECLG, 2012). **[PA-107]**

In all instances, it should be demonstrated that the proposal would not generate traffic of a type and amount inappropriate for the capacity of the access roads, and would not require improvements that might affect the character of these roads.

## 28.2 Economic activities in rural areas

County Sligo is predominantly rural. In order to ensure the viability of rural communities, towns and villages, there is a need to support sustainable economic activities and rural diversification.

### 28.2.1 Rural enterprise diversification

Interventions required to support the diversification of the rural economy include the promotion of rural transport and the delivery of high-speed broadband to rural areas.

The Council will support the development of niche activities, such as those relating to food (particularly value-added products such as artisan food), 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 and photography tuition, angling tourism, field studies and hill-walking.

Spatial policies for rural development must take into account the changing structure of agriculture and employment in rural areas, in conjunction with landscape management principles and natural resource development needs.

### Rural enterprise diversification policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

**P-RED-1** Facilitate farm diversification and the development of rural resource-based enterprise (such as organic farming, equestrian activities, bird watching, biomass and energy production, poultry, mushroom growing, flower growing etc.), subject to normal planning considerations and the protection of the environment.

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.

The proposal shall also demonstrate that it does not conflict with the requirement to safeguard the strategic function, safety and investment in the strategic national road network to date, and is in compliance with the provisions of the Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines 'Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DoECLG, 2012).

**[PA-108]**

**P-RED-2** Adopt a flexible approach to proposals for complementary economic enterprises undertaken to supplement income from farming. Such enterprises may be established at existing farm locations, 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 or personal income needs, it will be required, where appropriate, to relocate to a nearby town or village.

## Rural enterprise diversification policies

- P-RED-3** Facilitate remote working by rural dwellers who are not farmers, subject to normal planning considerations. Such activities would generally involve (but are not limited to) providers of professional services whose work can be carried out from a home office using high-speed broadband.
- P-RED-4** Encourage the growth or expansion of existing rural based or well-established small-scale industry and enterprise in rural County Sligo.
- Where an existing rural-based enterprise proposes to expand in its current location, it will be necessary to demonstrate that such expansion can be accommodated without damage to the environment, natural or built heritage, human health, visual and residential amenity, and that it will not have a negative impact on the character of the area.
- P-RED-5** Support and promote organic farming and producers operating in the county including the facilitation of farmer's markets at appropriate locations. **[PA-109]**

## 28.2.2 Forestry

Sligo County Council recognises the importance of forestry development and acknowledges the potential for further afforestation in County Sligo. Forestry planting, and other forestry related activities, are outside the control of the Planning Authority. The Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine is Ireland's national forest authority. It is responsible for national forest policy, the promotion of private forestry, the administration of the forest consent system and forestry support schemes, forest health and protection, the control of felling, and the promotion of research in forestry and forest products.

As a consultative body dealing with proposals for initial forestation, the County Council will submit appropriate observations to the Forest Service in cases when new plantation has the potential to affect visually vulnerable areas, sensitive rural landscapes or exceptional views available from designated scenic routes.

### Forestry policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-FOR-1** Support sustainable forestry development in County Sligo, subject to the protection of 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 DECLG and shall have regard to any management plans prepared by the Department.
- P-FOR-3** Require identification of existing rights-of-way and established walking routes before planting commences. Forestry should not obstruct existing rights-of-way, traditional walking routes, recreational and tourism facilities.

### 28.2.3 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 Drumcliffe 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, Pullaheeney, Rosses Point, Aughris and Easky. The present small-scale fisheries support some sport fishing, which has potential for expansion as a tourist activity.

## Aquaculture, mariculture and fishing policy

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-AMF-1** Facilitate sustainable fishing, aquaculture and 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.



## 28.2.4 Mineral extraction and quarries

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 operates in a manner that minimise the potential adverse impacts on the environment and local communities.

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.

Any proposals for future coastal/marine aggregate extraction along the Sligo coast will be considered only after detailed environmental impact assessment.

### Mineral extraction and quarrying policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-MEQ-1** Ensure that extraction and associated processes are carried out in a sustainable manner, which minimises the impact on residential amenities, natural environment and water quality, and do not impinge on existing rights-of-way or walking routes.
- P-MEQ-2** Seek the reuse of worked out quarries for recreational, industrial, ecological, agricultural and other uses, following appropriate restoration.  
Proposals for reuse shall demonstrate that they do not conflict with the requirement to safeguard the strategic function, safety and investment in the strategic national road network to date, and are in compliance with the provisions of the Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines 'Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DoECLG, 2012). **[PA-110]**
- P-MEQ-3** 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.

## 28.3 Tourism development

Tourism is one of Ireland's most important indigenous economic sectors. The tourism sector is an essential component of Ireland's employment base. In many rural areas, it is the only notable employer outside agriculture. The Council recognises the importance of the tourism industry to County Sligo and its potential to expand further.

The natural scenery of Sligo is amongst the finest and most spectacular in the country and is the County's primary tourist attraction. The mountains, forests, woodlands, lakes, rivers, coastline, offshore islands and largely unspoiled rural landscape offer a wide range of natural amenity and recreational pursuits.

The range of activities in Sligo includes surfing, walking (including hill-walking), swimming, supping, kayaking, mountaineering, rock climbing, and pony-trekking, sailing, boating, fishing etc. In addition, many landscapes in the County have strong wildlife, literary, archaeological and historical significance. 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 tourism industry.

### Sligo – sustainable tourism destination

Fáilte Ireland's *Sligo Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP)* will see the delivery of key projects to attract more visitors to the county. The DEDP is a five-year sustainable tourism development plan for the County. The strategic initiatives for the Sligo DEDP are based on the Strategic Objectives of the Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy.

Among the ten Catalyst Projects, the "Attraction of Scale – Hazelwood Demesne" has the highest potential to contribute to the achievement of RPO 3.7.56 of the RSES, which envisages the delivery of a tourist attraction of scale in Sligo Town. [PA-111]

Fáilte Ireland has also published *Development Guidelines for Tourism Destination Towns*, which set out the key drivers of what makes a town appealing to the international tourist. These guidelines are intended as a practical aid to all stakeholders, including community groups who consider their town to be a tourism destination or having the potential to develop as one. [PA-112]

### 28.3 1 Rural tourism

Tourism can play an important role in diversifying the economy of rural communities. The growth of rural tourism, including agri-tourism, is linked to local amenities and natural resources. There is strong potential in County Sligo for eco-tourism, which enhances awareness and appreciation of local heritage and traditions.

The Council will co-operate with neighbouring local authorities, cross-border bodies and other agencies to promote and establish sustainable tourism initiatives.

#### Walking trails

In recent years, Sligo County Council has invested significantly in walking infrastructure. The county now has a network of walking trails of various gradients, suitable for all levels of ability, through landscapes such as uplands, coastal, lakeside, forestry. [PA-120]

The web portal 'Sligo Walks.ie' contains all the necessary information a local or tourist needs to access these walks. The Council will continue to maintain and expand the walking trail network in the county.

## Coolaney National Mountain Bike Centre

The National Mountain Biking Centre in Coolaney is a key element of Sligo’s tourism offer in terms of outdoor pursuits. The project involved the development of 80 km of single-track cycling trails through Coillte-owned forestry in the Ox Mountains. It is estimated that the Centre has the potential to attract more at least 50,000 visitors per year.

Sligo County Council, in collaboration with Coillte, landowners and other stakeholders will continue to enhance and expand the offer at this centre.

**Table 28.1 Opportunities for walking and cycling trails/outdoor activities**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Greenway on or along the Sligo-Leitrim Northern Counties Railway (SLNCR)</b>	Trail from Sligo to Enniskillen - high-quality greenway passing through Collooney, Ballintogher, Dromahair, Manorhamilton, Glenfarne, Blacklion, Belcoo and Letterbreen
<b>Greenway on or along the Western Rail Corridor</b>	Trail from Sligo to Bellaghy
<b>Long Bank, Beltra</b>	Walking route along the “Long Bank” land reclamation dam, providing exceptional views of Ballysadare Bay and Knocknarea
<b>Beara Breifne Way</b>	Walking route from Geevagh to Monasteraden, with potential to develop a greenway from the county boundary near Monasteraden to the Sligo-Dublin railway line and link with the Miners’ Way Historical Trail
<b>Sligo Way</b>	Realignment of the Sligo Way (Coolaney to Lough Easky), resulting in a long-distance off-road walking trail
<b>Ben Bulben Forest Walk</b>	Link between existing walkway and the local road L-7216-21 to expand the existing trail network
<b>Water sports facilities</b>	Development of surf centres and related facilities at Mullaghmore, Enniscrone, Easky and Dunmorán Strand, in addition to Strandhill
<b>Ballina to Enniscrone Recreational Walking Route</b>	A recreational route for which a feasibility study has been completed in 2022

## The Wild Atlantic Way (WAW)

The Wild Atlantic Way is Ireland's first long-distance touring route, stretching along the Atlantic coast from Donegal to West Cork. It was designed to achieve greater visibility for the west coast of Ireland and to encourage visitors to explore the wider region.

Sligo Town is one of several urban centres that have been identified as gateways to the Wild Atlantic Way. There are seven WAW Discovery Points in County Sligo, at Mullaghmore Head, Streedagh Beach, Rosses Point Beach, Strandhill Beach, Aughris Head, Easky Pier and Enniscrone Pier.

The expected development of a Signature Discovery Point at Mullaghmore Head will require significant input from the local authority.

A Yeats Trail off the WAW was completed in 2022. This signposted touring route incorporates fourteen significant locations in County Sligo that have close associations with the poet W.B. Yeats (<https://www.yeatstrail.ie/>)

Fáilte Ireland's **Wild Atlantic Way Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023–2027** is a roadmap for the industry and all stakeholders involved in tourism in the region. It is primarily informed by a number of Government strategies and also by planning policy (NPF, RSES, lower-tier plans).

The ambition of the Strategy is "to drive recovery and growth in the Wild Atlantic Way region" by creating sustainable, high-quality jobs in tourism and related areas.

For County Sligo, the Strategy prioritises the delivery of the Fáilte Ireland investment projects such as Queen Maeve Square in Sligo Town (completed in 2024) and the National Surf Centre in Strandhill, while continuing to develop new and pipeline projects. **[PA-113]**

### 28.3.2 Cultural tourism

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

The County is often described as 'Yeats Country', due to its strong association with the Yeats family. The poet William Butler Yeats always acknowledged the inspiration he drew from Sligo's landscape. His brother, the painter Jack B. Yeats, said that there was 'a bit of Sligo' in everything he painted.

Sligo County Council recognises the tourism potential associated with the Yeats connection and with the County's archaeology, landscape, musical heritage other cultural assets.

Sligo has a varied festival and events offering across all genres of music, art, literature and performance, enabled by active community participation, and an inspiring landscape.

To support this, the Council will develop a Festival and Events Strategy to underpin policy and coordinate the Festival and Events offering in the county.

**Table 28.2 Opportunities for cultural tourism**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Yeats Experience</b>	Development of a strong Yeatsian experience in Sligo, including the Yeats Trail.
<b>Cuill Irra Peninsula</b>	Development of Cuill Irra as a significant archaeological tourist attraction – one of only four passage tombs in Ireland which have international significance
<b>Carrowkeel-Keshcorran</b>	Development of Carrowkeel as a significant archaeological tourist attraction – one of only four passage tombs in Ireland which have international significance
<b>Sligo Gaol</b>	Development of Sligo Gaol as a tourist attraction
<b>Ballymote Castle and surrounds</b>	Tourism-related development at the Ballymote Castle site, which is adjacent to existing cultural assets such as Ballymote Abbey, the Town Park, Ballymote Corn Mill Complex
<b>Spanish Armada Visitor Centre</b>	Conservation, management and interpretation of the Spanish Armada wrecks site at Streedagh
<b>Enniscrone</b>	Development of multi-functional recreational community and cultural facilities at Castlefield, linked to Water Point leisure centre and Cliff Bath House
<b>Hazelwood Demesne</b>	Development of the Hazelwood Demesne as a year-round attraction of regional scale

## 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.

Development that might be detrimental to scenic and heritage assets, in SACs, SPAs, proposed NHAs, designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes and Visually Vulnerable Areas, and along designated Scenic Routes will be strictly controlled.

Development proposals shall also demonstrate that they do not conflict with the requirement to safeguard the strategic function, safety and investment in the strategic national road network to date, and are in compliance with the provisions of the Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines 'Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DoECLG, 2012). **[PA-114]**

## Tourism development policies

- P-TOU-2** Support the development of high-quality tourist accommodation and ensure high standards of architectural and urban design in all new tourist accommodation and facilities.
- P-TOU-3** Ensure that all built elements of agri-tourism developments are appropriately designed, satisfactorily integrated into the landscape, conserve natural heritage, protect the environment and do not have a negative impact on the visual/scenic amenity of the countryside, on natural heritage or on the environment.
- P-TOU-4** Provide signposting, interpretative signs, information boards and improve roads, existing amenity and viewing areas, and provide for car parking, public facilities and access in scenic areas (refer also to **Chapter 27, Section 27.7 Outdoor recreation**).
- P-TOU-5** Provide, 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.
- P-TOU-6** 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.
- P-TOU-7** Support the implementation of the WAW Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027 (and any successor strategies) in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland and tourism stakeholders. **[PA-118]**
- P-TOU-8** Support the implementation of the Sligo Destination Experience Development Plan (DEDP), continuing the collaboration with Fáilte Ireland and tourism stakeholders. **[PA-116]**
- P-TOU-9**
- A.** Facilitate the provision of new tourist accommodation and the expansion or upgrading of existing hotels, guesthouses, B&Bs and other tourist accommodation premises at appropriate locations throughout the County, particularly in areas with existing services.
  - B.** Support the redevelopment of brownfield sites, both in settlements and in rural areas, for the provision of tourist accommodation.
  - C.** Support the development of camping, glamping and facilities for campervans/motor homes/touring caravans, both within settlements and in rural locations across the County.
- Sites in rural locations should be close to existing tourist establishments, ideally along public transport routes, where it can be demonstrated that there is a justifiable demand for new accommodation, and that the proposed development will not adversely affect the character, environmental quality and amenity of the rural area or the integrity of European sites. **[PA-115]**

## 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** Explore, in co-operation with Fáilte Ireland, the development of a tourist attraction of scale in Sligo Town, as part of the preparation of the Sligo Town Local Area Plan. **[PA-119]**

## Coastal zone tourism policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-CZT-1** Ensure that tourism facilities in coastal areas (e.g. car parking at WAW Discovery Points) will not be visually intrusive and will not impact on sensitive coastal environments (e.g. sand dune systems), by requiring appropriate siting, layout, design and natural screening, as well as compliance with the Habitats Directive.  
  
On beaches, within dunes and in other vulnerable areas, manage and control car parking, vehicular and pedestrian movements in compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive where relevant.
- P-CZT-2** Promote awareness of the sensitivity of the coastal environment through the provision of heritage appreciation programmes, public information boards and other appropriate means.
- P-CZT-3** Maintain and develop small piers and harbours along the Sligo Coast, subject to funding and compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

## Wild Atlantic Way objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-WAW-1** Along the Wild Atlantic Way, 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.
- O-WAW-2** At designated locations, including Enniscrone and Rosses Point, provide 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. **[PA-117]**
- O-WAW-3** Provide Signature Discovery Point infrastructure at Mullaghmore, subject to appropriate siting and design.
- O-WAW-4** Monitor the future development of the County's section of the Wild Atlantic Way touring route to ensure that the scenic and tourism value of this important amenity is maintained. This will be done in co-operation with state agencies, local community groups and other bodies interested in protecting the coastal environment and in improving access and visitor management to the Wild Atlantic Way.