



View from Harmony Hill, Sligo

2.11 The Urban Edge

2.11.1 Analysis

The urban edge refers to the edge treatment of the development limit or development boundary of the plan. It relates to the interface between the urban and rural environment. Typically in many towns, this interface is weakened by a proliferation of residential ribbon development along the radial approaches to the urban centre, in addition to sporadic development of an intensity not common in rural areas. This is clearly evident on many of the approach roads to Sligo City. As many individuals choose to live in the countryside, though in close proximity to the services and facilities of the urban centre, this can weaken both the 'rural character' of those areas outside the city, and the 'urban character' of areas within the city, blurring the distinction between city and country.

Sligo is fortunate, in that it possesses a rich environment, with strong landscape features that help define its edge and even act as a natural limit to development in particular areas, while allowing the City to grow in other areas.

2.11.2 The East Edge

Lough Gill, the Garvogue and the associated woodlands of Cleveragh, Doorly, Cairns, Aghamore and Hazelwood tend to both restrict and limit the development potential to the east. Such clearly defined edges help enhance the image of the city and will be maintained.

2.11.3 The South Edge

While the principal urban gateway to the City and environs is deemed to be Carrowroe Roundabout, the strategy does permit some development further south to Belladrihid, where this is of a logistical, warehousing or automotive nature in addition to some other uses that may be deemed inappropriate or undesirable on lands north of Carrowroe, for reasons of bulk, scale, or nature of the industry. A landscape buffer along the eastern side of the N4 is intended to enhance the image of this area and give it a soft (i.e., green) edge.

At Belladrihid, a combination of wetlands and more rugged hills extend eastwards (towards Aghamore), while its streams and wetlands drain west into Ballysadare Bay. This environment is ecologically sensitive and requires protection to ensure that development pressure in the area does not result in urban sprawl linking the village of Ballysadare into the environs of Sligo City.

2.11.4 The West Edge

Sligo Harbour provides a strong natural edge to parts of the west of the City, while the presence of the Carrowmore Zone of Archaeological Amenity, acts as a restrictive element to any significant urban development in the west-southwest. The Record of Monuments and Places also indicates that there are a significant number of other archaeological features that have been identified in the vicinity of Carrowmore and to the west of the City, in particular. A number of other key landscape features also exist to the west which should be protected to ultimately define the 'western edge' or limit of development, these include the wetlands at Cumeen, the stream at Barnasrahy, woodlands in the area and lands associated with the demesne of Woodville House. The interrelationship between these features provides an attractive composition to the west of the City, and should be protected.

2.11.5 The North Edge

In order to maintain the identity of Ballincar, and prevent further sprawl of the city in this direction, it is proposed to restrict significant development on the intervening lands in this area.

The proposed realigned Enniskillen Road will provide the long term development limit of the city to the north and therefore lands to the north of its alignment are proposed as a green belt area.

2.11.6 Green Belts

In order to maintain the characteristics of these areas, it is appropriate to introduce the green belt concept into policy for the city and environs. The aims of the Green Belt policy are as follows:

- Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.
- Prevent neighbouring towns and villages from merging into one another.
- Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
- Preserve the setting and special character of towns, particularly historic towns; and
- Assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the reuse of derelict and other urban land.

Green belts leave a reserve of land between the city and the green belt for expansion. The green belt is therefore both a short term and long term development objective and the reserve of intervening lands, should ensure adequate expansion for the city for the foreseeable future. It is therefore, a tool for the management of growth and its delineation is dependant on the growth of the city and environs to circa 2022 and beyond, but may require revisions in subsequent development plans.

Not all green belt land comprises countryside uses and it can cover other existing land uses that lie within the designated area, i.e., particular industries, leisure activities, etc. While the local authority acknowledges the presence of such uses, additional development will be strictly managed. The green belt policy supports the overall development strategy for the future growth and development of the city and environs - a general north-south alignment for the future expansion of the city and environs.

2.11.7 Policies

It is the policy of the local authorities to:

- Adopt a clear and distinct development boundary so as to ensure that growth of the city and environs is managed and controlled in an appropriate manner.
- Restrict development outside the development boundary, except where it can be demonstrated that there is a functional need to live and/or work in the area or where the occupant is employed in agriculture, agri-business, horticulture, market gardening, eco-tourism, equestrian or other activities dependant on the countryside or the land. A positive presumption may be given towards the building of a one-off house for persons who have existing social or community linkages with the rural location in which they wish to build (whether by family history, occupation or social connections).
- Discourage as a general presumption, any additional development within the green belt areas, except for agriculture, forestry, eco-tourism, outdoor sports and recreation, and where the associated use, scale, nature and design of buildings do not detract from the character of the area.
- Enhance the development limit or boundary of the city and environs, by ensuring that buildings are orientated towards public roads and/or through the provision of landscaping belts and tree planting.
- Restrict development outside the development boundary on all lands between the sea and coastal roads.
- That development may be permitted in the greenbelt in special circumstances where it involves the relocation of an inappropriate or incompatible use from a town or village centre to a more rural or greenfield location, and where a

public benefit is likely to arise. Such cases will be determined by the Planning Authority and the elected members on an individual basis.

2.11.8 Objective

It is an objective of the local authorities to:

UE1 Implement a series of Green Belts to the north, south, east and west of the city as indicated on the Objectives Map, Map 21.



Overview of Sligo and Environs

