

# 8. Transport and mobility



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

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

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

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

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

## 8.1 Sligo as a regional transportation node

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

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

### **Ongoing development of the Atlantic Road Corridor**

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

### **Improvement of road links between the NSS Gateways**

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

### **Continued upgrading of road links to Northern Ireland**

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

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

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

### **Targeted improvements in key national secondary roads**

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

### 8.1.1 Provisions of the Regional Planning Guidelines

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

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

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

### Mobility - strategic policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

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

### Mobility - strategic objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

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

## 8.2 Public transport

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

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

### 8.2.1 Bus services

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

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

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

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

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

### 8.2.2 Railways

Rail infrastructure in County Sligo consists of:

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

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

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

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

## 8.2 Public transport

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

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

### Public transport policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

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

### Public transport objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

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

## 8.3 Road network

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

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

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

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

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

### General roads objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

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

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

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

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

### 8.3.1 National primary and secondary roads

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

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

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

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

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

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



N4 from Collooney to Sligo

#### National roads objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

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

Table 8.B National road projects in County Sligo

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

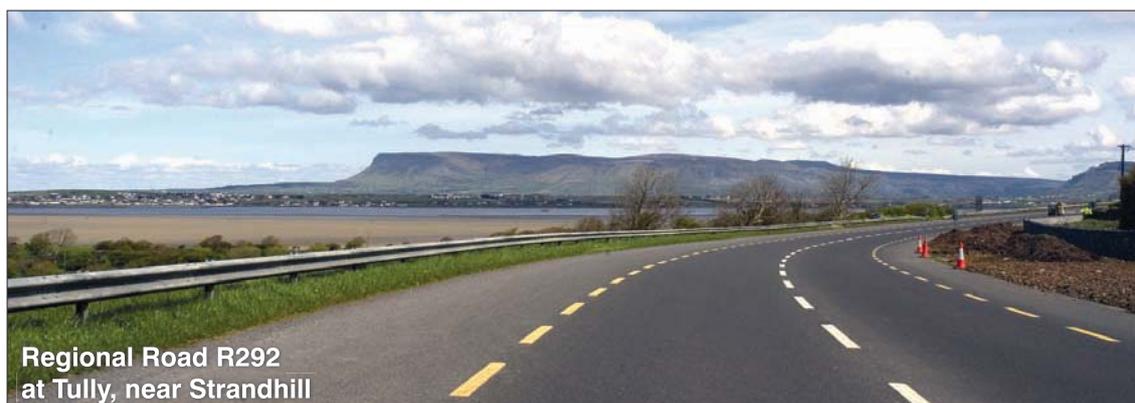
\* Note: the timeframe for all projects is subject to NRA approval.

### 8.3.2 Non-national roads and bridges

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

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

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



Regional Road R292  
at Tully, near Strandhill

## Non-national roads and bridges objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

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

**Table 8.C Planned non-national road improvements**

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

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

## 8.4 Cycle and pedestrian movements

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Cycling and walking policies

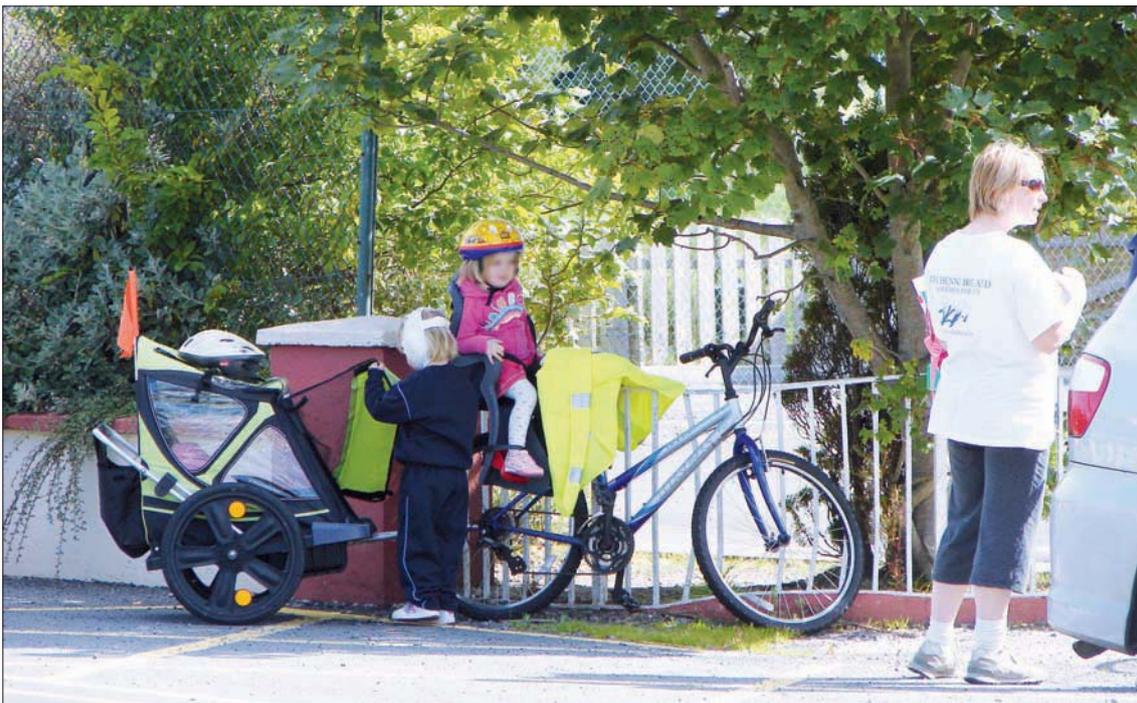
It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

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

### Cycling and walking objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

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





Landing at Sligo Airport

## 8.5 Airports

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

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

### Airports objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

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

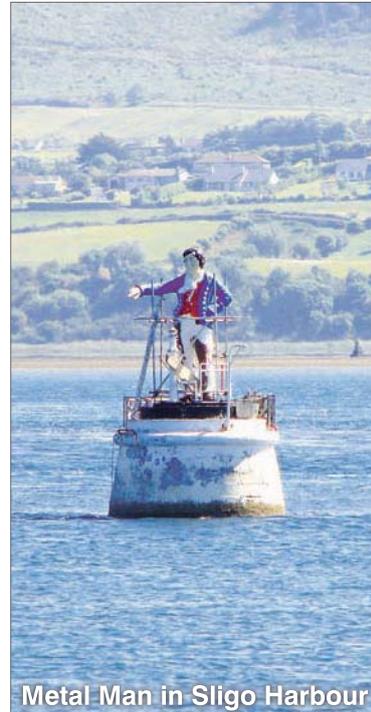
## 8.6 Port and harbours

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

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

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

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



Metal Man in Sligo Harbour

### Ports and harbours policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

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

### Ports and harbours objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

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