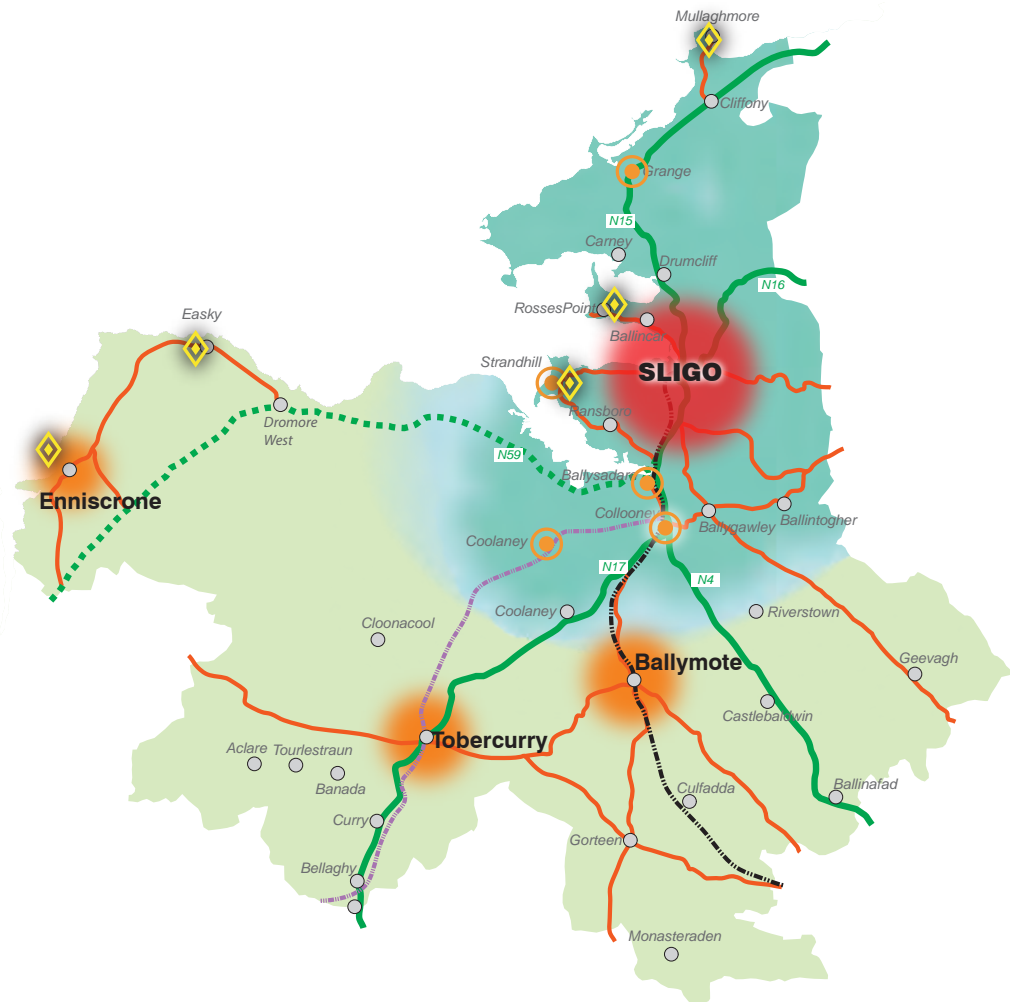


Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023 - Volume 1



Sligo County Development Plan 2017–2023 ■ Volume 1

This Development Plan for County Sligo (CDP) has been prepared under Section 11 of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2015. It was adopted on 31 July 2017 and came into operation on **28 August 2017**.

The CDP consists of two volumes: **Volume 1** contains the main written statement and **Volume 2** contains 32 mini-plans. The Plan is accompanied by the following supporting documents:

Landscape Character Assessment Map (A1 format)

Housing Strategy

County Retail Strategy

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Environmental Report (Strategic Environmental Assessment)

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

The County Development Plan and associated documents are available for inspection or purchase at the Planning Office of Sligo County Council in the City Hall (Quay Street, Sligo) and at the Council's Area Offices in Ballymote, Enniscrone and Tobercurry.

The documents can also be viewed and downloaded from the Council's website at www.sligococo.ie/cdp

**Prepared by the Development Planning Unit
of Sligo County Council 28 August 2017**

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County Development Plan: Introduction

As the blueprint for development in County Sligo, the County Development Plan is the over-arching strategic framework document for sustainable development in spatial, economic, social and environmental terms.

The development plan must offer clear guidance on sustainable development policies and objectives, addressing various issues such as settlement and the creation of sustainable communities, economic development, transport, energy, judicious use of natural resources and adaptation to climate change

Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023 (CDP) sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Sligo, in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

As a result of the implementation of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and consequent abolition of Sligo Borough Council, Sligo County Council has extended its jurisdiction over the Sligo and Environs area, for which two development plans were previously prepared jointly by the two planning authorities (in 2004 and in 2010)

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 also established a Municipal District system of local administration. There are two such districts in County Sligo: the Municipal District of Sligo and the Municipal District of Ballymote-Tobercurry.

This Plan builds on the review of the Sligo CDP 2011-2017, taking into account recent changes as well as national, regional and local policy developments.

The CDP presents the Council's outlook for the future development of County Sligo and its Gateway City for the period up to 2023, within a long-term perspective.

The Plan provides a spatial planning framework designed to support the economic and social development of the County, as envisioned in the first Sligo Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021.

1. County Sligo today: the planning issues

Since the last development plan for Sligo was adopted in 2011, there have been important developments at national, regional and local level. The local government reform of 2014, changes in national and regional policy and recent demographic and economic trends gave rise to issues that must be addressed in the new County Development Plan.

1.1 Planning policy

A variety of national, regional and local government policy documents have been reviewed in preparing this Development Plan. The Policy documents most relevant to the CDP are:

- at national level: the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020
- at regional level: the Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022
- at local level: the Sligo Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022 (LECP) and the Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 (SEDP)

Key messages from these documents are outlined below.

At **national** level:

1. The NSS, Ireland's first national strategic planning framework, identified Sligo as an urban centre to be developed in an accelerated manner as a Gateway City to drive the overall development of the North-West. This County Development Plan, like its predecessors, promotes growth in the Gateway City of Sligo while seeking to achieve balanced development in County areas outside gateways.

The NSS is due to be replaced by a statutory National Planning Framework (NPF) in 2017. It is expected that the NPF will retain the Gateway designations and will continue to promote balanced development of the national territory, taking into account the diverse characteristics of urban and rural areas.

At **regional** level:

2. The Border RPGs 2010 aimed to support the development of the Gateways identified in the NSS within a more detailed framework that includes Hubs and other key towns outside the Gateways.

The Guidelines established a broad framework for county development plans to ensure that the development of the Gateways under the NSS moved forward in tandem with a process of strengthening other urban areas and supporting a dynamic rural community.

The RPGs also set minimum population targets and related housing land requirements for counties and major urban centres in the Border Region up to the year 2022. The Core Strategy of this County Development Plan takes full account of the RPG population targets.

The Border Regional Planning Guidelines are due to be replaced in 2017 by a Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy prepared by the Northern and Western Regional Assembly.

At **local** level:

3. The first Local Economic and Community Plan for County Sligo was prepared by Sligo County Council and the Local Community Development Committee during 2015 and adopted in January

2016. The LECP sets a vision, goals, objectives and detailed actions designed to mobilise all stakeholders with an interest in a successful future for Sligo.

Generating employment and stimulating economic activity emerged as the highest priority of the LECP, with complementary goals relating to quality of life and a culture of inclusion seeking to reduce poverty and deprivation. Such goals are reflected in relevant chapters of this County Development Plan.

4. The Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 represents a detailed development framework to transform Sligo into a Gateway City, as outlined in the NSS. Jointly prepared by Sligo Borough and County Councils, the SEDP was incorporated in 2014 into the CDP 2011-2017, following the merging of Sligo's planning authorities.

The Core Strategy of this County Development Plan reflects the strategic goals of the SEDP and provides for the preparation of a local area plan for Sligo and Environs as a detailed policy document directing the growth of the Gateway.

1.2 Sligo – key development factors

County Sligo, located in the province of Connacht, in the north-west of Ireland, encompasses a total land surface of approximately 1,837.11 sq.km, bordered by Counties Leitrim, Roscommon and Mayo, and flanked to the west by almost 200 km of Atlantic coastline.



1.2.1 Sligo City

The city of Sligo is the largest centre of population in the North-West, exerting its influence on a hinterland that extends far beyond the County boundaries (Gateway functional area),

Sligo Gateway is one of two Gateways designated by the NSS in the Border Region of Ireland, with the linked cross-border Gateway of Letterkenny and Derry located approximately 110 km to the north-east, and the Dundalk Gateway circa 170 km to the east.

As is the case with many of the designated Gateways, Sligo serves as an administrative, employment, commercial, health and education centre for a large hinterland.

The Gateway benefits from the presence of two third-level colleges. The Institute of Technology Sligo offers a diverse range of courses in business, engineering, humanities and science, while St. Angela's College (a constituent college of the NUI Galway) provides courses in nursing, health studies, home economics and education.

With the benefit of improvements in telecommunications, utilities, infrastructure and the availability of well-serviced sites, the Gateway has been able to establish itself as a high-quality location for business, with several international companies choosing to locate here.

Since the NSS was published in 2002, Sligo's transport links have improved. The Gateway is served by road and rail-based public transport. There is also a port facility in the city, allowing for the import and export of goods.

1.2.2 Landscape setting

The County has a varied natural landscape with spectacular limestone mountains, such as Ben Bulbin and Ben Wislin, other interesting upland terrain (e.g. the Ox and Bricklieve Mountains), numerous picturesque lakes (Loughs Gill, Arrow, Glencar, Easky, Gara and Talt), enclosed farmland and a diverse coastline comprising low-lying cliffs, indented shoreline and sandy beaches. These topographical attributes combine to give Sligo an outstanding landscape setting.

1.2.3 Heritage and culture

Sligo possesses unique archaeological and historical remains, with more than 5,000 recorded archaeological sites dating back over 6,000 years, including the prehistoric sites of Carrowmore, Carrowkeel and Creevykeel.

The beauty of the countryside coupled with a rich cultural and historical past has inspired musicians, artists and poets alike, including the Yeats family, St. Colmcille and Michael Coleman. This has provided Sligo with strong international recognition on which to base a thriving tourism industry.

1.2.4 Economic environment

The Gateway City of Sligo has grown to be a regionally important urban centre, serving as the administrative, commercial, service, health and educational focus for a large hinterland. It has a significant industrial role and also acts as a distribution centre in the North-West.

The County offers a good mix of skills, infrastructure and support services for any company establishing operations here. In 2016 there were 19 multinational companies located in IDA business parks in County Sligo (Finisklin and Ballytivnan in Sligo City, Collooney, Tobercurry and Ballymote). Sligo also has a vibrant cluster of Irish companies.

Sligo City, with a sizeable mass of labour and skills, underpinned by its ease of access and availability of infrastructure and services, has developed as the key location for industry in County Sligo. Tobercurry is the County's second largest employment centre.

The public sector remains the most important employer in County Sligo, with a high concentration in Sligo City. As in other Western counties, private-sector employment tends to be in sectors that are lower-skilled, lower-value-added and more vulnerable to economic fluctuations.

Outside the City and towns, agriculture remains an important part of the local economy, while tourism and other small-scale, rural-based economic activities continue to support a substantial population living in villages and in the countryside.

1.3 Population change

The 2011 Census recorded a population of 65,393 in County Sligo, of which 19,452 were living in the Sligo and Environs area (as defined by Census boundaries). This represented an increase of 4,498 (7.3%) in the County's population compared to 2006, and 7,193 (12.3%) compared to 2002.

According to Census 2016, the County's population was 65,535, only 142 persons (0.21%) more than in 2011. Sligo and Environs underwent a change of statistical boundaries, following the abolition of Sligo Borough Council in 2014. As a consequence, the population recorded in 2016, i.e. 19,199 persons, is not directly comparable with the 2011 figure of 19,452.

1.3.1 Sligo Borough and the Environs (Sligo City)

Before Census 2016, Sligo and Environs (as defined by Census boundaries), or Sligo City, consisted of the three Sligo urban electoral divisions, formerly known as Sligo Borough, plus the urban extensions into adjoining areas – see Fig. A on the next page.

The total population of the Sligo and Environs area as defined by Census boundaries increased by only 52 people between 2006 and 2011, after decreasing by 333 from 2002 to 2006.

The Borough lost 324 (1.8%) of its residents between 2006 and 2011, after having lost 581 persons (3.15%) between 2002 and 2006. The Borough population was 17,568 in 2011, lower even than in 1996 (by 200 persons).

The urban overspill since 1996 is reflected in the constant population growth in the Environs (contiguous built-up areas outside the former Borough boundary), from 723 in 1996 to 1,884 in 2011.

Fig. 1.A Sligo and Environs area (purple) as defined by Census boundaries before 2014 (the red circle is the boundary of the former Sligo Borough)

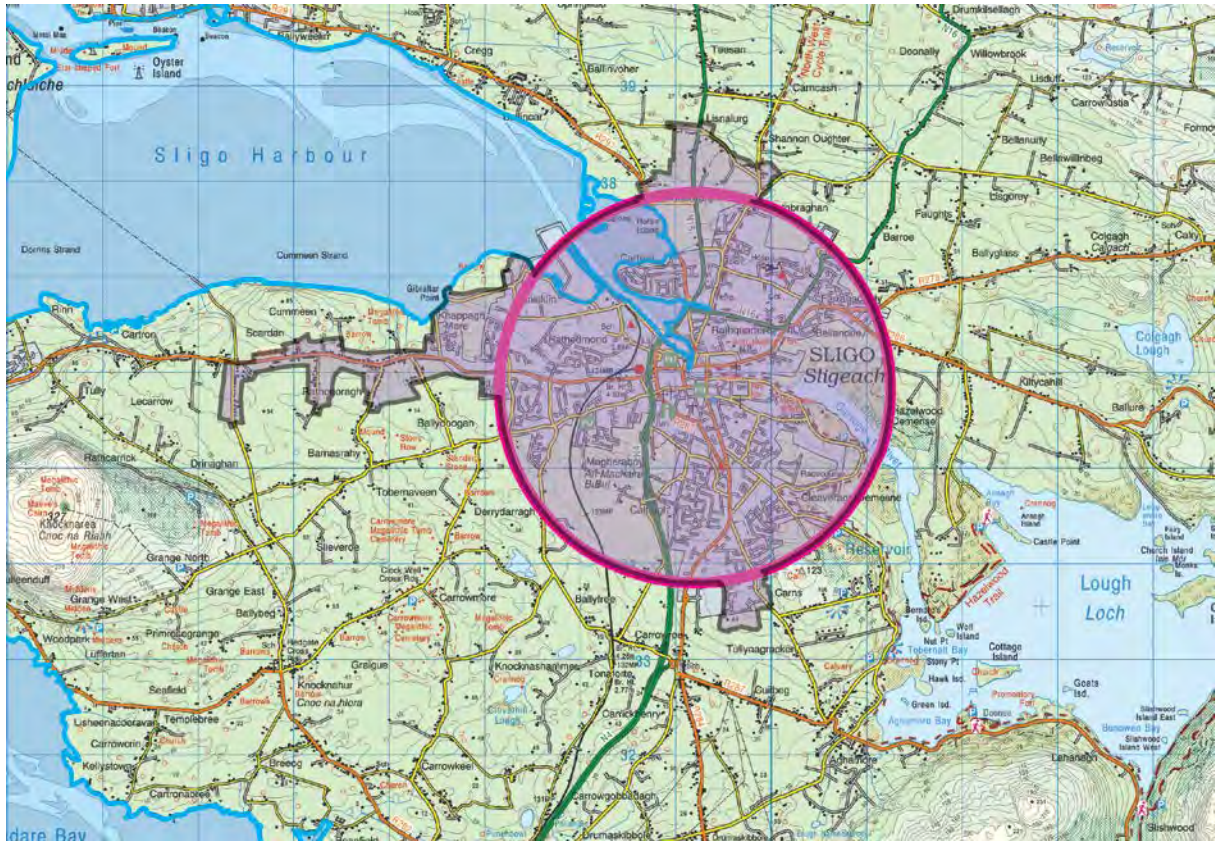


Table 1.B Population change in Sligo and Environs from 1996 to 2016

	Census 1996	Census 2002	Census 2006	Census 2011	Census 2016
Population in Sligo East Urban ED	5,961	5,568	5,334	4,937	4,998
Population in Sligo West Urban ED	6,784	7,160	7,212	7,129	7,219
Population in Sligo North Urban ED	5,041	5,745	5,346	5,502	5,222
Population of the former Sligo Borough (sum of the three EDs above)	17,786	18,473	17,892	17,568	17,439
Population in the Environs of Sligo	723	1,262	1,510	1,884	n/a
Total population in Sligo and Environs (former Borough plus Environs)	18,509	19,735	19,402	19,452	n/a
Intercensal change in Sligo and Environs (population as percentage of previous Census figure)		106.62 %	98.31 %	100.25 %	n/a
Percentage change from 1996 to 2011				105.09 %	n/a
Population of Sligo Town within the boundaries redefined by Census 2016					19,199

1.3.2 Population living in twelve electoral divisions surrounding Sligo Borough

In 1991, there were 11,933 persons living in the twelve electoral divisions (EDs) close to or adjoining the Borough area (the three Sligo urban EDs). By 2011, the population of the same area had grown by over 40%, to 16,714 persons. Census 2016 recorded a corresponding figure of 17,020 persons.

This significant population increase outside the main urban area of the County occurred mostly in the Environs of Sligo and in the designated Gateway Satellites of Ballysadare, Collooney and Strandhill.

Fig. 1.C The twelve electoral divisions around Sligo City where population increased by 40% from 1991 to 2011



Table 1.D Population change from 1991 to 2016 in twelve electoral divisions around Sligo City

Electoral Division (ED)	Census 1991	Census 1996	Census 2002	Census 2006	Census 2011	Census 2016
Collooney ED	1127	1107	1255	1754	2543	2742
Kilmacowen ED	1830	1929	1868	2050	2230	2161
Ballysadare East ED	925	984	1215	1220	1261	1237
Drumcliff West ED	1883	2029	1929	1927	1830	1893
Carney ED	664	664	707	681	692	692
Ballintogher East ED	367	388	430	543	627	636
Calry ED	1539	1702	1836	1808	1806	1702
Drumcliff East ED	799	890	855	780	736	724
Lissadill East ED	414	433	507	637	782	864
Ballintogher West ED	342	375	384	419	435	443
Knockaree ED	1859	2044	2833	3219	3557	3690
Glencar ED	184	215	210	222	215	236
Total population in the 12 EDs	11933	12760	14029	15260	16714	17020
Intercensal change in the 12 EDs (population as percentage of previous Census figure)		106.93%	109.95%	108.77%	109.53%	101.83%
Percentage change from 1991 to 2011 / 2016					140.07%	142.62%

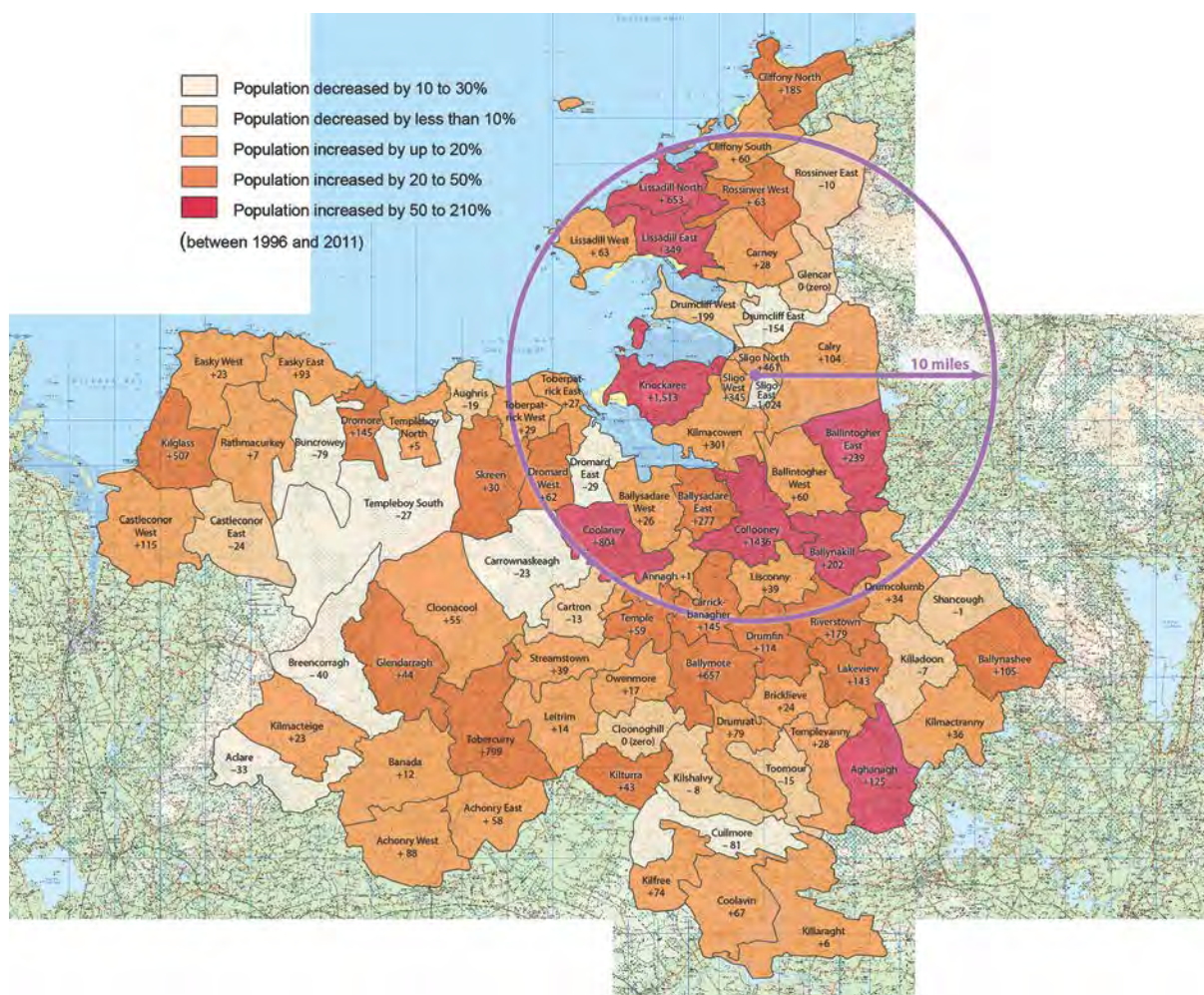
1.3.3 Population living in Sligo City and within 10 miles of it

In 2006, there were 40,939 people living in the Borough and the 30 EDs within 10 miles of Sligo city centre. By 2011, the population of the same area had grown to 43,458, which represents two-thirds (66.45%) of the total County population. This proportion was 65.73% in 2006.

The number of people living in Sligo City and within 10 miles of it has risen, slowly but constantly, by 6,269 (by 17%) between 1991 and 2011.

Population growth took place exclusively in the County area outside the Borough between 1991 and 2011 – the increase was 34% (compared to minus 2.91% in the Borough). During the decade 2002-2011, the increase was 23%.

Fig. 1.E Population change in County Sligo’s Electoral Divisions between 1996 and 2011 (percentage and actual figures)



1.3.4 Population change in the remaining County areas

During the fifteen years from 1996 to 2011, the population of rural areas in the western, southern and south-western parts of the County rose consistently, e.g. by 13% in West Sligo, 14% in south Sligo and circa 30% in the south-eastern area of the County.

The County’s main towns – Ballymote, Enniscrone, Tobercurry – and villages such as Coolaney, Riverstown and Easky account for a substantial proportion of this growth, with localised rates of up to 76% (Enniscrone).

Over the same period, population decreased by between one person (Shancough ED) and forty persons (Breencorrugh ED) in only six electoral divisions, mostly in the Ox Mountains and other remote areas.

1.3.5 Population trends

The key trends that emerge from a review of Census information are as follows:

- the population of the former Sligo Borough is stagnant, while that of the nearby electoral divisions is rising steadily; most of this growth has occurred in designated Gateway Satellites;
- the County as a whole has outpaced Sligo and Environs in terms of long-term population growth rate; the main towns had the largest increases;
- the process of population decline has been reversed in most parts of the County; western parts of County Sligo exhibit more persistent patterns of population stability or decline, generally in the mountainous and remote areas.
- the County population in 2016 was almost at the same level as in 2011 (increase of 142 persons or 0.2%), indicating that the natural increase (births minus deaths) during this period was slightly higher than the out-migration caused by the recent economic crisis and associated job losses.

1.4 Recent trends and implications for the County Development Plan

Taking account of recent developments, economic and demographic trends, the main implications for the formulation of a renewed development strategy for County Sligo to 2023 and beyond are as follows:

- County Sligo should strive to retain and increase its population, building on its strategic location, improved infrastructure, quality of life and its natural and cultural heritage attributes. Employment creation, education, training and further investment in infrastructure are essential in retaining and growing the County's population.
- There is a pressing need to focus on the Gateway City of Sligo, by mobilising all national, regional and local agencies which can contribute to the development of compact, accessible, physically attractive and business-friendly city with cohesive communities and a strong cultural identity.
- In the past, County Sligo has benefited from investment in critical enabling infrastructure in the areas of transport, water supply, wastewater treatment and broadband. This process was due to continue with the support of the Gateway Innovation Fund (GIF); in 2007, Sligo Local Authorities submitted an application for the funding of four projects: the Eastern Garavogue Bridge, the enhancement of O'Connell Street, the creation of a Cultural Quarter and the development of a Regional Park at Cleveragh. However, due to economic crisis, the GIF did not materialise.

In Sligo, essential pieces of infrastructure have still not been delivered, despite being at advanced planning stages – e.g. the Eastern Garavogue Bridge and Approach Roads Scheme, Cranmore Regeneration, the Western Distributor Road and the IDA Business Park at Oakfield. It is critical that funding is made available for the provision of such pieces of infrastructure if the Gateway is to develop to achieve its economic and social potential.

- In the future, Sligo’s cultural offering must become stronger and more diverse if the County seeks to attract increased visitor numbers and an internationally mobile workforce. By making it a priority in the development plan, the County Council will strive to protect and develop Sligo’s distinctive character and identity.
- In the interest of balanced development within County Sligo, it will be necessary to improve the functions and performance of Ballymote, Enniscrone and Tobercurry, while supporting the provision of services in Gateway Satellites and smaller villages;
- Rural areas in Sligo have experienced significant economic and demographic changes. Some areas have stagnated or lost jobs and population. At the same time, there are new opportunities for diversifying the rural economy. The County’s natural and cultural heritage give it a recognisable identity and are resources that need to be wisely managed.

2. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA)

2.1 Legislative context

In June 2001, the European Parliament and Council adopted the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC), which was transposed into Irish law in the form of Statutory Instruments No. 435 and 436 of 2004 (SEA Regulations). Both sets of regulations became operational on 21 July 2004. The Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004) are applicable to the Sligo County Development Plan.

SEA is a systematic process for evaluating, at the earliest stage of decision-making, the environmental quality and potential consequences of alternative visions incorporated in plans and programmes. The undertaking of a “full SEA”, i.e. the preparation of an Environmental Report, is mandatory in the case of development plans.

2.2 SEA stages

SEA involves several stages, the most important being:

- determining the scope of the assessment, in conjunction with prescribed environmental authorities (the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources);
- collecting baseline environmental data;
- preparing and evaluating alternative development scenarios;
- selecting the optimal scenario and preparing the Draft Plan;
- assessing the Draft Plan against the baseline data and strategic environmental objectives;
- modifying and refining the Draft Plan to minimise negative environmental impacts;
- recommending mitigation measures;
- establishing a system of monitoring the environmental effects of implementing the adopted Plan, based on appropriate indicators and targets.

2.3 Environmental Report

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023 has been carried out in Sligo County Council’s Planning Section by the same team (planners and heritage officer) who prepared the Plan.

When the elected members proposed amendments to the Draft Plan following the consultation period, these proposals were assessed for potentially significant environmental effects and mitigation measures

were recommended, where appropriate. An Addendum to the initial Environmental Report was prepared and accompanied the proposed amendments on public display for the last stage of consultation.

Following the adoption of the Plan, the Environmental Report was updated and is published as a separate document.

2.4 Scoping the assessment

The environmental components specified under the SEA Directive are: biodiversity, fauna, flora, population, human health, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, and landscape.

In consultation with the relevant authorities, the planning/SEA team determined the environmental issues to be dealt with by the SEA, and the required level of detail. Scoping recommendations were received from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM).

The EPA's scoping recommendation related both to general issues and county-specific issues.

The general issues to be addressed were: water (including water quality, drinking water, wastewater, bathing water, flood prevention and management), biodiversity (Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, the need for Appropriate Assessment, fisheries, green infrastructure), air, noise and climatic factors, energy conservation and renewables, landscape character assessment, transportation and infrastructure planning, waste management.

In addition to the above, the EPA highlighted certain issues specific to County Sligo, such as the substandard wastewater treatment plants in six settlements, the need to address historic landfill sites and the high levels of radon gas in many areas of the County.

The DAFM submission indicated the potential impacts of the Plan on the marine environment.

Scoping helped the SEA to focus on the issues relevant to County Sligo.

2.5 Alternative development scenarios

The SEA Directive requires that reasonable alternatives (taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the Plan) are identified, described and evaluated in relation to their likely significant effects on the environment. These alternatives must be realistic, capable of implementation, and should represent a range of different approaches within statutory and operational requirements of the Plan.

Taking into account the objectives and the geographical scope of the CDP, three development scenarios were formulated. The **Demand-Led Growth**, the **Gateway-Focused Growth** and the **Hierarchically-Structured Growth** scenarios provide alternative visions of how future growth might occur in County Sligo. As the CDP is required by legislation to be reviewed and replaced by a new development plan every six years, a Do-Nothing scenario was not realistic.

Having regard to the overall principles which underpin the concept of sustainable development, it is considered that **Hierarchically-Structured Growth** is the preferred scenario for the development of County Sligo over the period of the CDP 2017-2023. This approach achieves a proper balance between economic, environmental and social considerations.

2.6 Evaluation of the CDP provisions

Section 8 of the Environmental Report evaluates the policies and objectives of the CDP 2017-2023 against fifteen Strategic Environmental Objectives (SEOs), which were developed from international and national policies which generally govern environmental protection objectives.

At Draft Plan stage, all policies and objectives were assessed against the SEOs. The assessment indicated that most policies and objectives were likely to improve the status of SEOs.

Certain policies and objectives have the potential to conflict with the status of SEOs, but such conflicts are likely to be mitigated. There are no policies or objectives conflicting with SEOs to such a degree that mitigation would not be possible.

A small number of policies and objectives are not likely to interact with the status of SEOs.

The Environmental Report concludes that, with the integration of appropriate mitigation measures, potential adverse environmental effects, which could arise as a result of implementing the Plan, would be avoided, reduced or offset.

Section 9 of the Environmental Report indicates that mitigation measures have been integrated into the Plan. Additional mitigation measures were recommended following the consideration of proposed amendments to the Draft Plan. These additional measures have been integrated into the adopted Plan.

2.7 Appropriate Assessment

In accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive (43/92/EEC) and EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC), the impacts of the policies and objectives of all statutory land use plans on certain sites that are designated for the protection of nature (Natura 2000 sites), must be assessed as an integral part of the process of drafting the plan. This is to determine whether the implementation of plan policies could have negative consequences for the habitats or plant and animal species for which these sites are designated. This assessment process is called Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) and must be carried out at all stages of the plan making process.

The Habitats Directive Screening analysis undertaken on the Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023 examined the key environmental factors that could potentially affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, e.g. disturbance, habitat loss, etc. In undertaking the screening, there was a focus on determining if the implementation of the Plan would give rise to any likely significant effect on Natura 2000 sites in view of any site's conservation objectives and integrity.

As a proactive measure, the Heritage Officer worked with the Development Plan Team to ensure that protection policies for the Natura 2000 network were interwoven into the fabric of the Plan. Thus the protection of the Natura 2000 network was integrated into the Plan.

A further assessment was carried out in relation to the proposed amendments of the Draft Plan. The resulting Natura Impact Report highlighted the fact that one of the proposed amendments had the potential to affect a Special Area of Conservation. Because of this assessment, the respective proposed amendment was not adopted. The final Plan continues to ensure protection of the Natura 2000 network. It is anticipated that no Natura 2000 site within the county or within 15 km of the county boundary will be adversely affected by the Plan.

In line with the text of the Plan, all plans and projects arising from the policy actions and recommendations will be required to carry out a Habitats Directive Assessment as appropriate.

3. County Sligo: Core Strategy

Sligo was designated as a Gateway City in 2002, under the National Spatial Strategy (NSS), which aimed to achieve a balanced social, physical and economic development across the state. Within this context, Sligo was recognised as having the potential to build scale and critical mass to drive development in the North-West.

In the absence of substantial investment in critical infrastructure, partly due to the economic crisis, Sligo has not yet achieved its potential in terms of economic development and population growth. Despite the difficulties, Sligo County Council remains determined to drive the development of the City and County towards the vision set out in the NSS.

In July 2014, Sligo County Council, working with Sligo Local Community Development Committee, embarked on an extensive research and consultation process to identify Sligo's key challenges, opportunities and priorities from both a community and economic perspective. The outcome of that process was Sligo's first Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), which set a vision, goals, objectives and detailed actions designed to mobilise all stakeholders with an interest in a successful future for Sligo.

It is acknowledged that many of the major issues affecting the County's development are contingent on national policy and government funding. The LECP focuses on what can be achieved locally by working together to bring about a higher quality of life and more sustainable economic development in Sligo.

The LECP and the County Development Plan are complementary policy documents, which share the same **vision** (see below) for the County's future.

Overarching Vision

County Sligo will be an enterprising, creative, inclusive and resilient place, which values and celebrates its unique environment, rich culture and heritage, and where the wellbeing of current and future generations is central to everything we do.

Realising this vision involves the promotion of development in the Gateway City of Sligo, the creation of compact, attractive towns and villages, in a green and accessible County, which offers affordable homes, healthcare, educational, cultural and recreational facilities set in a high-quality natural environment where heritage is protected and enhanced.

All the policies and objectives for development contained in Volume 1 and Volume 2 of this Plan are subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive and, where relevant, those of the Birds Directive, EIA directive and relevant national legislation.

3.1 Core Strategy basics

The Planning and Development Act 2010 amended Section 10 of the Principal Act by introducing the requirement for a “core strategy that shall show that the development objectives in the development plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy and regional planning guidelines/the regional spatial and economic strategy”.

This section contains relevant information to demonstrate consistency with the NSS and RPGs.

3.1.1 Required contents

The Planning Act indicates that a Core Strategy must set out a medium- to long-term development framework for the County area, expressed in both qualitative and quantitative terms.

The main QUALITATIVE dimension of the Core Strategy is represented by the **settlement hierarchy** with details on NSS designations, settlement roles or functions, and designations of rural areas for sustainable rural housing purposes. A further qualitative dimension is added by the retail hierarchy (refer to Section 3.2 Settlement hierarchy).

The main QUANTITATIVE indicators are the **population allocated to settlements and rural areas**, the corresponding **land zoned for housing** (or a mix of housing and other uses) and the number of **residential units proposed to be built** on zoned lands (refer to Section 3.4 Population and housing lands).

The Core Strategy must provide details of national roads and relevant regional roads, rail routes, areas designated for growth and for which it is intended to prepare local area plans (refer to the Core Strategy Map and to Section 3.5 Local area plans).

The **Core Strategy Map** is a diagram showing the settlement hierarchy, the main roads and rail routes and the designation of rural areas for the purpose of sustainable rural housing – refer to Figure 3.A.

3.1.2 Consistency with NSS and RPGs

Having identified Sligo as one of four new gateways in 2002, the NSS emphasised the role of balanced development at local level, which must be achieved through the strengthening of the urban settlement structure in parallel with ensuring that the resources of rural areas are developed to offer a viable future to rural dwellers.

The 2010 Border Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) proposed a polycentric settlement model, supported by a strong road network. The RPGs recommended the prioritisation of key urban settlements in terms of population and investment growth, while at the same time sustaining and revitalising rural areas.

In accordance with the above concepts, this **Core Strategy** prioritises growth in the Gateway City of Sligo and consolidation of the County’s main towns, while seeking to support rural areas mainly by strengthening a range of small villages throughout the County.

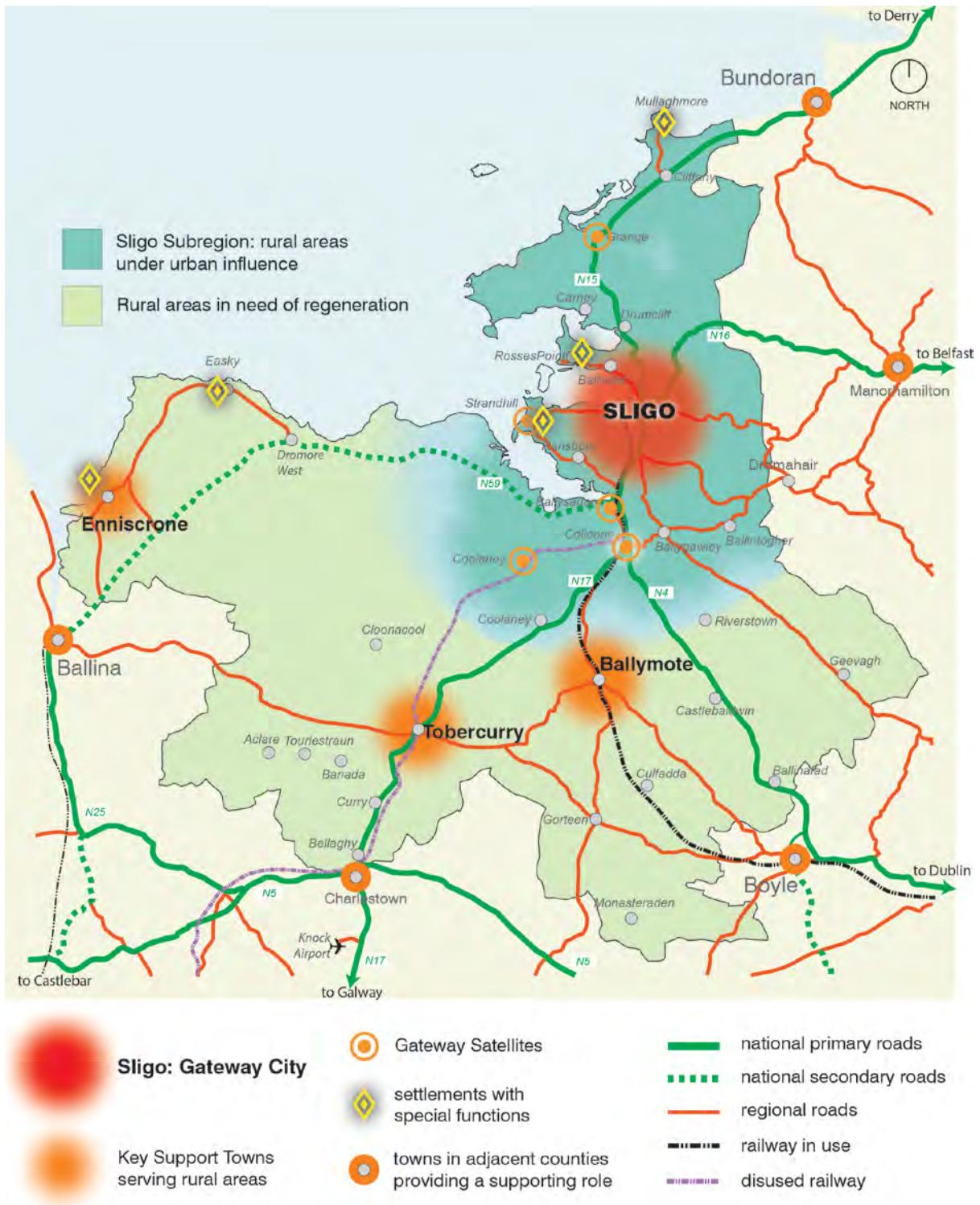


Fig. 3.A County Sligo – Core Strategy Map

3.1.3 RPG population targets and housing land allocations

The RPGs set out population targets for 2016 and 2022 for both County Sligo and the Sligo and Environs area (as defined by Census).

Having estimated a population of 66,430 in 2010, the RPGs indicated that the targets for County Sligo (including the Sligo and Environs area) were 71,851 persons in 2016 and 77,350 persons in 2022.

The specific population targets for Sligo and Environs (Census area) were set at 21,200 (in 2016) and 23,700 (in 2022).

Census 2016 indicates that the County population has remained stationary, with 65,535 persons counted, 142 persons more than in 2011. The demographic stagnation demonstrated by the 2016 Census is reflected in the fact that almost all the greenfield land zoned for housing in 2011 has remained undeveloped.

Following the RPG recommendations, the previous Plan allocated greenfield housing land for an additional population of 5,421. The RPG housing land allocations for the period 2011-2017 were 195 ha in the County plus 40 ha in the Sligo and Environs area. These lands continue to be available for development.

This Development Plan follows the 2010 Border RPG recommendations regarding population by taking into consideration the **additional population** that the RPGs envisaged for the period 2016-2022, i.e. the difference between the 2022 and the 2016 targets. This figure is **5,500 persons**, who will potentially need to be accommodated during the life of this Plan (2017-2023).

As the lands previously zoned to accommodate 5,421 new residents have not been developed, it is considered that the same lands would be able to accommodate 5,500 persons.

For the period of the current Plan (2017-2023), the housing land allocations were determined based on the RPG population targets for 2022. These allocations are detailed in **Section 3.4 Population and housing land** of this Plan.

The CDP 2017-2023 may have to be varied (amended) following the replacement of the NSS with a National Planning Framework (NPF) and the subsequent preparation of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES).

It is likely that the RSES for the Northern and Western Regions, applicable to County Sligo, will set revised population targets with corresponding housing land allocations.

3.2 Settlement hierarchy

The distribution of future population growth into settlements is based on the settlements' role and position in the spatial hierarchy. County Sligo's settlement hierarchy is as follows:

Gateway City:	Sligo and Environs
Gateway Satellites:	Ballysadare, Collooney, Coolaney, Grange, Strandhill
Key Support Towns:	Ballymote, Tobercurry, Enniscrone
Villages sustaining rural communities:	Aclare, Ballinacarrow, Ballinafad, Ballinacarn, Ballintogher, Ballygawley, Banada, Bellaghy, Bunnanadden, Carney, Castlebaldwin, Cliffony, Cloonacool, Culfadda, Curry, Dromore West, Drumcliff, Easky, Geevagh, Gorteen, Monasteraden, Mullaghmore, Ransboro, Rathcormack, Riverstown, Tourlestrane, Rosses Point.

In parallel with their position in the settlement hierarchy, Strandhill, Rosses Point, Mullaghmore, Enniscrone, Easky and Coolaney and have a regionally-significant **special tourism function**.

The settlement hierarchy is shown in **Fig. 3.A County Sligo – Core Strategy Map** (see page 17).

3.2.1 Gateway focus

At the core of the Settlement Hierarchy is the development of **Sligo Gateway** as envisaged by the National Spatial Strategy, i.e. a nationally significant urban centre, whose location and scale support the desired critical mass necessary to sustain strong levels of economic growth and prosperity in the North-West, and reinforce its links with Gateways and Hubs in neighbouring counties.

Sligo City, as intended for the purposes of the RPG allocations, is equivalent to Sligo and Environs as per Census boundaries, i.e. the three Electoral Divisions of Sligo North, Sligo East and Sligo West plus the urban extensions outside these EDs.

The Gateway area is defined in this County Development Plan as Sligo City together with the surrounding area consisting of twelve Electoral Divisions in the city's proximity (Ballintogher East; Ballintogher West; Ballysadare East; Calry; Carney; Collooney; Drumcliff East; Drumcliff West; Glencar; Kilmacowen; Knockaree; Lissadill East – refer to Fig. 1.C in Chapter 1). The Gateway area includes the satellite villages of Strandhill, Collooney, Ballysadare and the smaller villages of Ballinacarn, Ballintogher, Ballygawley, Carney and Rosses Point.

This definition reflects the likely extent of the area with the highest proportion of residents commuting daily to Sligo for work, education or shopping.

The population of the twelve EDs increased by over 42% between 1991 and 2016, from 11,933 to 17,020 persons. The population of the three urban EDs (former Sligo Borough) increased by just 1.5% over the same period, from 17,302 to 17,658 persons. The 2016 Census figure was slightly lower, at 17,439 persons. It is evident that the most significant population growth is taking place outside the County's main urban centre, especially in villages and rural areas and much less in the urban Environs of Sligo.

This Gateway definition has been chosen in this Plan for the purpose of monitoring population change on the basis of ED-level data collected by successive Censuses.

3.2.2 Managed growth in the Sligo Subregion

In order to support the development of Sligo City, it is essential to control growth not just in the Gateway area but also in the wider Sligo Subregion. This hinterland of the City largely coincides with what the NSS describes as a ‘rural area under strong urban influence’ (refer to Section 3.3 Rural settlement).

The Subregion contains thirteen villages, of which five are designated Gateway Satellites.

Development in the Subregion needs to be strictly managed and directed into Sligo City, Gateway Satellites and smaller villages with adequate infrastructure, preserving the rural areas mainly for agriculture and selected tourism and recreation uses.

3.2.3 Key Support Towns consolidation

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

Three Key Support 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 City.

The three 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.

3.2.4 Promotion of settlements with special functions

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 recognized for their coastal tourism role. Gorteen and Riverstown have regionally significant cultural roles.

This CDP promotes Coolaney as a new settlement with a special tourism function, by supporting the development of a National Mountain Bike Centre (refer to Section 4.4 Tourism development).

The Council will encourage other towns and villages to develop specialist niche activities that could help to distinguish them, thereby promoting their economic wellbeing. Such activities might relate to local specialist foods, crafts, literary or music connections etc.

3.2.5 Support for smaller villages

Outside the Sligo Subregion, there is a variety of small villages, some of which have seen little or no growth in many years. Other villages, where substantial residential development took place during the economic boom, have experienced vacancy for extended periods.

It is necessary to support all these settlements and seek to direct a certain amount of growth 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.

3.2.6 Retail role of settlements

Sligo County Council will facilitate new retail development in the County's main urban centres in accordance with the updated *County Sligo Retail Strategy (2016)*, which sets out the retail hierarchy for the County and indicates the level and form of retailing appropriate to Sligo City, the Key Support Towns and the smaller villages.

The retail hierarchy designates Sligo City as a Primary Retail Centre (Tier 1), while Tobercurry, Ballymote and Enniscrone are Key Support Retail Centres (Tier 2). Satellite villages are placed on Tier 3(a) and the remaining villages occupy Tiers 4 and 5 in the hierarchy. (Refer to Section 4.5 Retail planning for further details)

3.2.7 Integration of transport and urban settlement

National primary and secondary roads, as well as strategic non-national roads, reinforce the County's transport network, connect the Gateway City with other important urban centres and link it with its satellites and the Key Support Towns.

The consolidation of Tobercurry and Ballymote would support an enhanced provision of public transport and would also increase the potential for a rural commuter rail service along the Dublin-Sligo line and, if feasible at some stage in the future, along the Western Rail Corridor.

3.3 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 activities and associated population, there is a need to sustain these rural communities through other means.

Government policy on rural housing is set out in the National Spatial Strategy and the document *Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DOEHLG, April 2005). The rural settlement policy framework contained in the NSS aims to sustain and renew established rural communities, while strengthening the structure of smaller settlements to support local economies.

The Council remains committed to Sligo’s Gateway status and will support the growth of Sligo City by defusing 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 **rural-generated housing need**, 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 in relation to Sligo City. Applicants with a demonstrable rural housing need will be accommodated subject to the policies set out in **Section 5.3 Housing in rural areas**.

3.3.1 Types of rural areas

The NSS identifies four different types of rural area and calls for different policy responses for each. The broad different types of rural area are:

- rural areas under strong urban influences;
- stronger rural areas;
- structurally weak areas;
- areas with predominantly dispersed settlement patterns.

The 2005 County Development Plan was the first to identify two main types of rural area in County Sligo: **rural areas under urban influence** and **rural areas in need of regeneration** (i.e. structurally weak). Having analysed Census data and planning applications for rural housing in recent years, the Planning Authority determined that the trends have remained largely constant in terms of population rise or decline and demand for one-off housing in both types of rural areas in county Sligo.

This County Development Plan retains the same rural area designations as set out in previous plans (2005 and 2011).

Rural Areas under Urban Influence

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

Sligo City is the dominant urban centre in County Sligo. The City’s influence extends northwards and eastwards to the County Leitrim boundary (and beyond), southwards and westwards for circa 15-18 km. The challenge here is to direct new housing development into the Gateway City 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** (see page 17).

Rural Areas in Need of Regeneration

These areas have a weaker economy and fewer settlements. Historically, they experienced persistent or significant population decline. In these areas, the challenge is to retain population and support the rural economy while seeking to consolidate existing settlements.

The areas in the west and south of County Sligo are considered to be structurally weak and in need of regeneration. Their extent is shown on **Fig. 3.A County Sligo – Core Strategy Map** (see page 17).

3.3.2 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, essential services and infrastructure (water and wastewater).

In the interest of preventing urban sprawl and preserving the visual identity of Sligo's towns and villages, green belts have been established as part of the preparation of local area plans and mini-plans since 2003 (the first being the buffer zone in Strandhill LAP).

The main purpose of the green belt policy is to protect the land around towns and villages from unnecessary development and maintain the designated areas mainly for agriculture or forestry.

It is essential that settlements are consolidated within the limits set out in their land-use plans (local area plans and mini-plans), while retaining a strong spatial and visual identity that differentiates them from the surrounding countryside.

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

Applicability of the CDP green belts policy

This County Development Plan defines the boundaries of green belts around thirty-two villages – please refer to Volume 2 Mini-Plans.

The **strategic green belts policy** set out in this Plan shall apply to mini-plans and to local area plans (existing and future). It does not apply to Sligo City's buffer zone and green belt as defined in the Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010 (SEDP), but it shall apply to the Sligo and Environs Local Area Plan which will replace the SEDP.

Green belts in local area plans

The extent of the green belts surrounding Sligo City and each of the Key Support Towns of Enniscrone, Ballymote and Tobercurry shall be determined as part of the preparation or review of the respective local area plans.

The definition of these green belts shall be based on evidence of development pressure, as illustrated by the number and locations of planning applications for rural housing, and up-to-date Census data regarding population change in the vicinity of Sligo City and Key Support Towns (detailed demographic information collected during Census 2016 is expected to be published in 2017).

When preparing or reviewing local area plans for Sligo City, Enniscrone, Ballymote and Tobercurry, the Council may introduce additional policies relating to development in these urban centres' green belts, if necessary.

Strategic settlement policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

Urban and rural settlement

- SP-S-1** Pursue the further development of Sligo as a Gateway City and economic driver for the North-West region.
- SP-S-2** Promote economic development in the Key Support Towns of Tobercurry, Ballymote and Enniscrone.
- SP-S-3** Support the development of settlements with special functions – Easky, Mullaghmore, Rosses Point, Strandhill, Enniscrone, Coolaney – and encourage other towns and villages to specialise in niche activities.
- SP-S-4** Strengthen existing rural communities by facilitating sustainable rural settlement in accordance with the National Spatial Strategy and the *Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoEHLG, April 2005)

Green belts

- SP-S-5** 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);
 - protect heritage, water quality and the recreational amenity of rural areas surrounding settlements;
 - focus attention on lands within settlements which are zoned for development and likely to contribute to the regeneration of these areas.

Retail

- SP-S-6** Reinforce the economic roles of the County’s main urban centres by facilitating retail development on the basis of the Retail Hierarchy which designates the following:
- Tier 1 Sligo City – Primary Retail Centre
- Tier 2 Tobercurry, Ballymote, Enniscrone – Key Support Retail Centres

Transportation

- SP-S-7** Integrate transportation and land-use planning in order to reduce the need to travel (especially by car) and reduce GHG emissions, by promoting the consolidation of development in settlements with adequate services and facilities.

3.4 Population and housing land

As indicated in Section 3.1.3 (RPG population targets), this Development Plan follows the 2010 Border RPGs recommendations regarding population targets by taking into consideration the **additional population (additional to the base year 2016)** envisaged by the RPGs for the period 2016-2022. Housing land requirements for the lifetime of the plan are calculated accordingly.

3.4.1 Population considerations

According to Census data, the total population of County Sligo in 2011 was 65,393, of which 19,452 persons lived in Sligo and Environs. Census 2016 counted 65,535 persons.

The RPGs specified population targets for Sligo and Environs (Census area) of 21,200 (in 2016) and 23,700 (in 2022). The remaining County population target was set at 50,651 (in 2016) and 53,650 (in 2022).

The economic downturn of 2008-2014 has encouraged out-migration. Due to this, the County's 2016 population has remained at the same level as in 2011, significantly lower than the RPG target of 71,851 (whole county population). The population of Sligo and Environs area has decreased slightly.

For the purposes of aligning the Core Strategy with the Border Regional Planning Guidelines, the RPG population targets for Sligo City and remaining County area taken to be the additional population envisaged to locate in the Gateway and County between 2016 and 2022. This would mean a **2,500-person increase in Sligo City** and an additional population of **circa 3,000 in the remaining County areas** between 2016 and 2022.

Table 3.1 Summary of past and envisaged population distribution in County Sligo: Census 2002, 2006, 2011, 2016 (preliminary Census result) and allocations for 2023

Settlement category or area	Pop. 2002	Pop. 2006	Pop. 2011	Pop. 2016	RPG target 2016 or pop. level recommended in CDP 2011-2017	RPG target 2022 or recommended pop. level by 2023
Sligo and Environs (Census boundary)*	19,735	19,402	19,452	19,199	21,200 (RPG), i.e. 2,000 more than in 2010	23,700 (RPG), i.e. 2,500 more than RPG target for 2016
Key Support Towns (combined)	2,820	3,479	4,509	4,691	4,700	5,100
Ballymote	981	1,229	1,539	1,549	1,700	1,900
Enniscrone	668	829	1,223	1,156	1,200	1,450
Tobercurry	1,171	1,421	1,747	1,986	1,800	2,000
Villages	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	12,450	14,300
Rural areas	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	33,501	34,000
County total	58,200	60,894	65,393	65,535	71,851 (RPG), i.e. 5,421 more than in 2010	77,350 (RPG), i.e. 5,500 more than RPG target for 2016

* As the Sligo and Environs boundary has changed in Census 2016, direct comparison is not possible.

3.4.2 Housing land availability in 2016

Sligo and Environs

In Sligo and Environs, the SEDP (2010), as amended in 2011, zoned approximately 28.6 ha for housing and a further 16 ha for mixed uses, including housing. Due to the economic crisis, no multi-unit housing development and no mixed-use development including housing have been built in Sligo City since 2010. As a result, the areas zoned for residential development or mixed uses including housing have not been used. The only form of residential development during 2010-2016 has been sporadic, on infill sites, involving single houses.

Remaining County area

The CDP 2011 allocated population and corresponding housing land to the County and the Gateway in accordance with the RPG targets. Further allocations were made for Key Support Towns, villages and rural areas. Circa 194 hectares of greenfield land were allocated for housing in the County's towns and villages.

The CDP 2011 also imposed a moratorium on multi-unit housing development in 26 settlements, in order to encourage the completion and occupation of unfinished or vacant residential developments in those towns and villages.

During the recession, house construction on zoned lands was greatly reduced. Between 2010 and 2014, for example, just 52 permissions were granted for housing in towns and villages outside Sligo City. Only 16 commencement notices for houses were received during the same period.

Under such circumstances, the amount of greenfield land zoned for housing and suitable for multi-unit developments has remained virtually unchanged in the County area.

3.4.3 Approach to housing land allocation 2017 to 2023

Given that most lands zoned for housing have remained unused both in Sligo City and in the County's towns and villages, it is assumed that any population increase in County Sligo since 2011 has occurred mostly in rural areas, on unzoned land or in settlement green belts (areas previously designated as "buffer zones").

In order to promote growth in the Gateway City, in accordance with the NSS and RPGs, a dual approach is proposed:

- **Sligo and Environs area** – expand the options for residential development by offering a wider choice of location on additional sites.
- **remaining County area** – generally retain the total amount of residential zoning as allocated in the CDP 2011-2017.

3.4.4 Sligo and Environs area

For Sligo and Environs, the RPGs recommended that 40 ha of greenfield land be zoned for residential uses, to cater for 2,000 additional persons between 2010 and 2016 with a corresponding requirement of 1,000 residential units. The RPGs recommendations were based on an average density of 35 units per hectare in Sligo and Environs, on an average household size of 2 persons, and incorporated 50% over-zoning in accordance with DEHLG's Development Plan Guidelines. Having regard to these

parameters, the recommended area should have been 43 ha, as noted in the Variation No. 2 “Core Strategy” of the SEDP (Table 5.I on p. 3 of that document).

The RPG recommendation translated into the retention of 68 ha of land zoned for residential and mixed use, of which a net area of 28.6 ha had residential potential. Over 514 ha of land with residential potential were placed in the Strategic Reserve.

The spatial distribution and ownership of zoned residential land in the SEDP area, combined with a shortage of financing, have not been conducive to development, despite a sustained demand for new houses in the Sligo City area.

With the economy recovering, there are indications that house-building activity could restart in Sligo and Environs if there were more choices in terms of location. This could be achieved by releasing housing land from the Strategic Reserve.

When calculating housing land allocations for the period 2017-2023, it is considered appropriate to apply the same parameters (residential density and household size) as those used in the RPGs for the period 2010-2016.

Applying the average household size of 2 persons, an average residential density of 35 units per hectare and an over-zoning coefficient of 50%, for an additional population of 2,500 (RPG target), the corresponding housing land would amount to **circa 53 ha to be zoned in the forthcoming Sligo and Environs Local Area Plan for residential and mixed uses by releasing sites from the Strategic Reserve.**

Should the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (due to replace the RPGs) make different recommendations, the amount of land to be zoned for housing and mixed uses in Sligo and Environs will be revised accordingly.

3.4.5 Remaining County area

For the remaining County area, the RPGs recommended the zoning of 195 ha of greenfield land for housing, to provide 1,555 new housing units for a population increase of 3,421 between 2010 and 2016. The average household size considered was 2.2 persons and the average residential density was 12 units per hectare.

Due to the fact that no new housing scheme has been built since 2011, the amount of land zoned for residential uses in mini-plans and local area plans has decreased only slightly (due to small infill developments).

In the beginning of 2016, there were approximately 58 hectares of greenfield land allocated for residential uses in the County’s towns (draft and adopted LAPs) and circa 125 hectares zoned for housing in the villages (mini-plans).

Considering an average household size of 2.2 persons and an average density of 12 dwellings per hectare, the total amount of 183 hectares was capable of accommodating 4,831 persons in 2,196 housing units, or - if the 50% overzoning is taken into account – 3,220 persons in 1,464 new dwellings. These figures do not include the residential potential of lands zoned for mixed uses.

Having regard to the above, it was considered unnecessary to zone additional land for housing in the current Plan for the period 2017-2023. Several sites have in fact been rezoned due to various reasons, including poor access, peripheral location, potential flood risk and proximity to designated nature conservation sites.

The major challenge for the County's towns and villages will be to offer better services and quality of life, in order to attract families which would otherwise choose to build in the countryside.

The Core Strategy Tables A and B show the amount of land allocated to residential uses in the Gateway and the rest of the County for the period 2017-2023, together with its housing potential and the number of additional residents that can be accommodated in Sligo City, Key Support Towns and the smaller villages.

It is noted that both RPG targets for additional population, i.e. 2,500 in Sligo City and 3,000 in the County towns and villages, can be accommodated without major changes to the residential and mixed-use zoning already in place.

Core Strategy Table A. Allocated residential zoning, corresponding housing capacity and potential additional population in Sligo City (future LAP)

Gateway City	Undeveloped residential land 2016 (hectares)	Residential zoning allocated to future LAP (including 50% overzoning)	Potential number of dwellings (average density 35 units /ha)	Potential additional population (average household size of 2 persons)	Potential additional population if the 50% overzoning is not taken into account
Sligo and Environs	44 ha*	53 ha**	1,855 units	3,710 persons	2,473 persons

* The existing area includes the residential potential of mixed-use zoned lands

** The allocated area DOES NOT include the residential potential of mixed-use zoned lands

Core Strategy Table B. Proposed residential zoning, corresponding housing capacity and potential additional population in Sligo County, excluding the Gateway

Settlement	Undeveloped residential land 2016 (hectares)	Residential zoning specified in the Draft CDP 2017-2023 (including 50% overzoning)	Potential number of dwellings (average density 12 units /ha)	Potential additional population (average household size of 2.2 persons)	Potential additional population if the 50% overzoning is not taken into account
Key Support Town Ballymote	21.1 ha	21.1 ha	253 units	558 persons	372 persons
Key Support Town Enniscrone	14.1 ha	14.1 ha	169 units	372 persons	248 persons
Key Support Town Tobercurry	n/a *	19.5 ha	234 units	515 persons	343 persons
32 Villages	125 ha	114 ha	1,368 units	3,010 persons	1,987 persons
Total County excluding Gateway City	160.2 ha**	168.7 ha	2,024 units	4,455 persons	2,950 persons

* The Draft LAP prepared in 2015 for Tobercurry zoned 19.5 hectares for multi-unit residential development

** The total zoned area DOES NOT include the allocation for Tobercurry, as the LAP was not adopted.

3.5 Local area plans

In accordance with section 10(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), this County Development Plan zones land for various uses within the framework of 32 village mini-plans (refer to volume 2).

The zoning of land in the Gateway City of Sligo and in the Key Support Towns will be set out as part of the preparation of review of local area plans for these urban centres.

The zoning objectives and zoning matrix contained in this CDP are applicable to the 32 mini-plans and to existing and future local area plans.

It is, however, accepted that different or modified zoning objectives may apply to local area plans, in recognition of each urban centre's specific character and also as a result of public consultation undertaken as part of LAP preparation.

3.5.1 Sligo and Environs

The Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 (SEDP) was incorporated into the Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017 following the abolition of Sligo Borough Council and the establishment of a single planning authority with jurisdiction over the entire county.

The zoning and objectives contained in the SEDP are incorporated as statutory provisions into this County Development Plan (2017-2023) and shall remain unchanged until the adoption of a local area plan for Sligo and Environs (expected in 2018).

3.5.2 Key Support Towns

Zoning in the Ballymote and Enniscrone Local Area Plans is incorporated as statutory zoning under this CDP and shall remain unchanged until the review of these LAPs.

A draft local area plan for Tobercurry was prepared in 2015, but was not adopted. Following the adoption of this County Development Plan, the Draft Tobercurry LAP shall be revised and shall be subject to renewed public consultation with a view to adopt the local area plan as soon as possible.

3.5.3 Urban regeneration

Section 10(2)(h) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended by the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015) specifies that a development plan shall include objectives for the development and renewal of areas that are in need of regeneration, in order to prevent—

- (i) adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas, in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land,
- (ii) urban blight and decay,
- (iii) anti-social behaviour, or
- (iv) a shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses;

While no such areas have been identified in the 32 mini-plans included in Volume 2 of this Plan, a number of areas have been designated for urban regeneration in the 2010 Sligo and Environs Development Plan. The number and extent of such areas will be revised as part of the preparation of Sligo and Environs Local Area Plan. Further such areas may be identified in the Key Support Towns of Ballymote, Enniscrone or Tobercurry when reviewing or preparing the respective local area plans.

Urban regeneration objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-REG-1** Identify areas in need of regeneration in Sligo City and, if appropriate, in the Key Support Towns of Ballymote, Enniscrone and Tobercurry, as part of the process of review or preparation of the respective local area plans.

3.6 Miscellaneous zoning provisions

3.6.1 Strategic Land Reserve

A number of towns and villages in County Sligo have a legacy of land previously zoned for residential development. In the CDP 2011, the amount of zoned land was reduced in certain villages where zoning was in excess of the requirements of the Core Strategy.

In the LAPs reviewed after the adoption of CDP 2011, surplus housing land was designated as Strategic Land Reserve.

The SEDP was also varied in 2011 to reduce the amount of residential land in accordance with the County Core Strategy. A substantial amount of housing land was placed in the Strategic Reserve.

This Development Plan generally retains the areas designated as Strategic Land Reserve in local area plans and mini-plans, with very small alterations.

Any further lands that might be proposed to be zoned for residential uses in excess of the area set out in the Core Strategy shall be included in the Strategic Land Reserve and shall only be developed when future Housing Strategies will call for additional zoned land.

In exceptional circumstances, should the supply of residential land prove insufficient in any settlement during the lifetime of the CDP, it will be possible to release lands from the strategic reserve through the development plan variation procedure. The need for any such rezoning shall be demonstrated by factual evidence.

Building on lands in the Strategic Land Reserve shall be restricted to certain categories of development, such as individual rural houses for specific categories of persons, **social and** special-needs housing, community facilities and other non-residential developments, provided that they do not prevent the future comprehensive and co-ordinated development of adjoining lands.

3.6.2 Rezoning proposals

During the lifetime of this Development Plan, any CDP or LAP variation involving a rezoning proposal shall be evidence-based, responding to a demonstrated need and should not conflict with the Core Strategy of this Plan. Rezoning proposals should be assessed against the **Strategic Zoning Policies**.

Lands zoned in LAPs prepared before the adoption of this Plan may or may not retain their zoning after the LAPs are reviewed. Similarly, lands zoned in the SEDP may or may not retain their zoning in the forthcoming Sligo and Environs LAP.

Rezoning and new zoning established as part of the review of existing local area plans and the preparation of new LAPs shall be automatically incorporated as zoning under the CDP, without the need to vary the Development Plan.

Any such rezoning will have to comply with the Core Strategy set out in this Plan.

Strategic zoning policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- SP-Z-1** Use zoning to promote the sustainable development of the Gateway City of Sligo and a hierarchy of compact, attractive, pedestrian-friendly settlements, with vital commercial cores and adequate economic bases. No lands shall be zoned for development in isolation, outside the development limits of settlements.
- SP-Z-2** Ensure that the amount of land zoned for residential uses in the County is consistent with the requirements of the Core Strategy as set out in Section 3.4 of this Plan, as derived from the recommendations of the Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010.
- Any land proposed for zoning in excess of the above requirements shall be included in a Strategic Reserve for potential development after the lifetime of this Plan.
- SP-Z-3** Revise the housing land allocation for Sligo County and for Sligo City (as part of the preparation of the Sligo and Environs LAP), if required by the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy due to replace the Border Regional Planning Guidelines.
- SP-Z-4** On lands included in the Strategic Land Reserve, permit the development of the following, insofar as they do not adversely impact on the potential for comprehensive and co-ordinated development of surrounding lands:
- individual houses for landowners, including their sons and daughters, who wish to build a first home for their permanent occupation on the landholding associated with their principal family residence where they have lived for a minimum period of seven years;
 - social and special-needs housing;
 - community facilities and other non-residential developments compatible with residential uses;
 - student accommodation.
- SP-Z-5** Provide a clear demarcation between settlement built-up areas and the surrounding countryside through the setting of development limits and appropriate measures to define and strengthen the edge of towns and villages (refer to Urban development and expansion policies in Chapter 12. Town and village design).
- SP-Z-6** Establish green belts around towns and villages to preserve the visual identity of the settlements, protect designated nature conservation sites, landscape, archaeology, valuable natural amenity areas, water and natural resources, while allowing for the possible further expansion of settlements in the long-term.

3.7 Implementation

Under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), planning authorities have a statutory obligation to secure the implementation of the objectives of a development plan. The implementation of these objectives may be constrained by factors such as the economic climate, political support, allocated local authority funding and the availability of funding from diverse sources. Accordingly, no funding of projects can be guaranteed in advance, nor can the implementation of all objectives contained within the Plan be assumed. However, it is the intention of Sligo County Council to exercise all legal powers to ensure that objectives are implemented. This includes the use of compulsory acquisition powers, where necessary.

3.7.1 Local area plans and mini-plans

An important element of the development plan strategy is to bring policies to a more detailed local level through local area plans and mini-plans. The strategic and broad-ranging policies of the CDP provide a general framework, but not necessarily the detailed treatment required for significant proposals in certain areas.

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) specifies that a local authority must make a local area plan (LAP) for all towns under its jurisdiction with a population in excess of 5,000 persons and for settlements with a minimum of 1,500 residents in cases when the development plan does not already include objectives for these settlements.

According to Census 2011 demographic data, no town in County Sligo (outside the Gateway) had a population of 5,000. However, in the past decade the County Council has considered it necessary to put in place detailed planning frameworks for those settlements that came under significant development pressure in the early 2000s.

Local area plans are in place for the Key Support Towns of Ballymote and Enniscrone, and a Draft LAP has also been prepared for Tobercurry.

Sligo County Council has included 32 mini-plans as part of the County Development Plan 2017-2023. These are village planning frameworks consisting of a set of detailed written objectives accompanied by three maps (Zoning, Objectives and Designations). Without having the complexity of a local area plan, mini-plans have proven successful in the detailed implementation of the previous CDP's policies and are expected to be similarly effective during the lifetime of the current Plan.

3.7.2 Development Contributions Schemes

Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) enables local authorities, when granting a permission under Section 34 of the Act, to include conditions for requiring the payment of a contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the planning authority and that is provided by or on behalf of a local authority (regardless of other sources of funding for the infrastructure and facilities).

A planning authority may make one or more schemes in respect of different parts of its functional area. Sligo County Council currently operates two schemes, one for the Sligo and Environs area and a second one for the rest of the County.

These schemes are reviewed regularly to reflect the market-induced cost variations in providing infrastructure and services.

Under a general development contribution scheme, planning authorities do not need to show a direct connection between the development contributions paid and works undertaken to facilitate that development. However, it will be important for the planning authority to ensure that the basis for determining the contribution levels is justified and adequately supported.

Occasionally, the planning authority may make supplementary or special contributions schemes directly related to the funding of specific infrastructural projects.

3.7.3 Bonds

The Planning Authority will impose bonds or other forms of securities on private developers, as a condition of a particular planning permission, in accordance with the requirements set out in the Department's Circular Letter PL 11.2013. These bonds are intended to ensure that all roads, footpaths, landscaping, lighting and other services within a development will be completed to an acceptable standard.

The amount of a bond or security will be based upon the estimated cost of the development works. A bond or security will continue to be required until all prescribed works are satisfactorily completed or until the development is taken in charge by the local authority.

3.7.4 Vacant site levy

The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 introduced the vacant site levy as a site activation measure, to ensure that vacant or underutilised land in urban areas is brought into beneficial use, while also ensuring a more efficient return on State investment in enabling infrastructure and helping to counter unsustainable urban sprawl.

The vacant site levy can be imposed by planning authorities under certain conditions in designated areas, i.e. where sites remain vacant and site owners/ developers fail to bring forward reasonable proposals, without good reason, for the development/reuse of such property in line with the provisions of the relevant local area or development plan.

For the purpose of the application of the vacant site levy, a site means “any area of land exceeding 0.05 hectares identified by a planning authority in its functional area but does not include any structure that is a person's home.”

The levy shall be applied annually by a local authority at a rate of 3% of the market valuation of the vacant sites, exceeding 0.05 hectares in area, with reduced and zero rates applying in certain circumstances (0.05 hectares roughly equates to one-eighth of an acre or 500m²). The market valuation shall be determined by the local authority by authorising a suitably qualified person to estimate the price which the unencumbered fee simple of the site would fetch if sold on the open market. The levy shall be payable by the registered owner(s) of the site.

Sligo County Council will implement the vacant site levy as provided for in the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 and in accordance with the requirements set out in the Department's Circular Letter PL 7/2016.

3.7.5 Monitoring and reporting

The Planning Section is the main section in Sligo County Council to oversee the implementation of the development plan, mainly through the development management function. However, it is important to note that this Plan co-ordinates the work and objectives of other key departments within the local authority, such as Infrastructure, Housing, Community and Enterprise.

In some cases, the body responsible for the implementation of certain Plan objectives may be external, such as the Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and Irish Water.

Implementing the objectives included in the Plan represents a significant challenge for the Council. However, many of these objectives are set within a longer timeframe, of 20 to 30 years, which may not be fully implemented over the lifetime of the CDP.

Section 15(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) states that the Chief Executive of a planning authority shall, not more than two years after the making of a development plan, give a report to the members of the authority on the progress achieved in securing the objectives of the Plan.

A Chief Executive's Progress Report will be prepared by the Development Planning Unit within two years of the adoption of the CDP 2017-2023. This report will include appropriate inputs from all the relevant local authority sections and departments in charge of implementing or monitoring the implementation of Plan objectives.

The SEA Directive requires that the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes are monitored. Monitoring enables the identification of unforeseen adverse effects and the undertaking of appropriate remedial action at an early stage.

A preliminary monitoring evaluation report on the effects of implementing the County Development Plan will be prepared to coincide with the Chief Executive's Progress Report. Environmental indicators and targets will be reviewed at that stage.

A further Progress Report will be prepared upon the commencement of the next review of the CDP in 2021, and will be used to inform pre-draft public consultation.

4. Economic development

The national economy has started to recover, as proven by strong GDP growth rates since 2014 to date. The Irish economy is set to register a steady growth in 2017 and 2018, with expected GDP increases of 3.8% and 3.5% respectively. More important, unemployment is forecasted to fall to 6.2% in 2017 and 5.2% in 2018. This constitutes a remarkable recovery given the scale of difficulties which have afflicted the domestic economy since 2007 (source: ESRI's *Quarterly Economic Commentary, Summer 2017*).

County Sligo should be prepared to share in the predicted return to growth over the following years by putting in place a robust economic development framework as part of its development plan.

Like all local authorities, Sligo County Council plays a central role in supporting economic development and enterprise at local level. This is done in a number of ways, including through the Council's capital and current budgets, infrastructure provision, undertaking socio-economic research and analysis, spatial and economic planning, and the provision of goods, services and community infrastructure. The County Council is also a key agent for the local delivery of national policy objectives.

Planning, development and the provision of local infrastructure are core functions that are vital for enterprises. 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, villages enhances the 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 pre-requisite which underpins economic growth and employment.

4.1 Approach to economic development

This County Development Plan draws on the principles for developing the economy of the Border Region outlined in the 2010 Border Regional Planning Guidelines. The Plan may have to be amended to bring it in line with the provisions of the forthcoming Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES) due to be prepared by the Northern and Western Regional Assembly, which took over the planning co-ordination role previously held by the Border Regional Authority.

County Sligo's ability to attract investment continues to be restricted by its relatively weak infrastructure, including under-provision of broadband services. These barriers to the economic development of the county are addressed in the Development Plan through policies relating to energy, telecommunications and transport infrastructure.

The promotion of economic development in general, and industry and enterprise in particular, requires a multi-pronged approach, the key components of which are:

- earmarking key settlements for focused growth (see Chapter 3 – Core Strategy);
- ensuring that towns and villages remain attractive to investors by offering a good quality of life to those who live and work in them (see Chapter 6 – Community facilities and Chapter 12 – Town and village design)

- providing or supporting the provision of essential infrastructure, including high-speed telecommunications (see Chapters 8, 9, 10 and 11);
- reserving sufficient land in suitable locations for industry and enterprise uses (see Mini-Plans in Volume 2 and adopted local area plans);
- supporting the provision of clean energy from reliable sources (see Chapter 11);
- securing high standards of landscape and environmental protection (see Chapters 7 – Heritage and 10 - Environmental quality);

The economic development policies outlined in the following subsections need to be paralleled by initiatives in education, training and enterprise support. The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) complements the CDP policies through its goals, objectives and actions which focus on the non-spatial elements of economic development, such as:

- promoting and facilitating appropriate educational/training measures to ensure a suitably skilled local workforce
- encouraging research and development linkages between industry/business and local third-level institutions
- forging mutually-beneficial linkages and partnerships – e.g. with regional and cross-border bodies

4.1.1 LECP provisions

Generating employment and stimulating economic activity emerged as the single highest priority for Sligo during the public consultation for the development of the Local Economic and Community Plan.

The LECP recognises that it is businesses and entrepreneurs that create jobs. The Plan focuses on what the County Council can do, in co-operation with other agencies, to support the business community and encourage entrepreneurship.

This is to be achieved by providing local leadership in relation to the development of supportive policies, focusing on the economic impact of the Local Authority's core functions, advancing key infrastructural projects and providing co-ordinated supports to business.

The LECP 2016 proposes the following **Vision for Sustainable Economic Development:**

County Sligo will be known locally, nationally and internationally for its rich talent, innovative education system, robust infrastructure, supportive business environment, entrepreneurial culture and high quality of life

The corresponding High-Level Goal 1 indicates that *Sligo will be promoted and developed as the economic driver of the North-West and as an attractive location for sustainable investment, tourism, entrepreneurship and employment.*

The overall target is to *increase employment and improve economic activity.*

The following Objectives are defined under Goal 1:

Table 4.A Objectives defined under LECP Goal 1:

1.1	Provide the strategic leadership to ensure that all organisations working to improve employment and economic activity in Sligo are working collaboratively and in the collective interest of the county
1.2	Develop a culture within Sligo County Council that is strongly supportive of sustainable economic development and ensure it is to the forefront in delivering services for ensuring a high quality of life for residents and visitors to Sligo
1.3	Maximise the regional significance of Sligo as an economic hub and the gateway to the Northwest Region and improve the county's connectivity and economic infrastructure
1.4	Support job creation and sustainable economic development in communities throughout County Sligo
1.5	Develop and implement an integrated and sustainable tourism strategy for the county and engage all sectors in the collective promotion and development of Sligo
1.6	Promote Sligo as an attractive investment location for foreign direct investment and the development and expansion of the indigenous enterprise sector
1.7	Support and develop Sligo's important micro-enterprise and SME sectors including the expansion of existing enterprises and the start-up of new businesses
1.8	Develop sustainable 'place-specific' economic development initiatives to stimulate thriving urban communities and strengthen the fabric of towns and their hinterlands, building on their key strengths
1.9	Activate and support marginalised communities and individuals to access employment opportunities

Through its strategic and sectoral policies, the County Development Plan focuses on the spatial aspects of economic development, thus complementing the institutional employment-supporting measures contained in the LECP.

Together, the CDP and the LECP define a coherent framework for the promotion of economic growth in County Sligo.

4.2 Industry and enterprise

Industry and enterprise in County Sligo are supported by the IDA, Enterprise Ireland and Sligo County Council’s Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Sligo LEO is part of the Local Enterprise Office network that was created within local authorities when the 35 County and City Enterprise Boards were dissolved in 2014. The Office is committed to delivering an integrated support service for micro-enterprises and small business in the county. It assists those interested in starting up a new business or already in business, including entrepreneurs, early stage promoters, start-ups and small business looking to expand. The LEO provides advice, information, training, mentoring and financial supports.

4.2.1 Local business environment

Business demography data from the CSO indicate that the number of enterprises in County Sligo decreased from 2,736 in 2006 to 2,294 in 2012, with the number of people engaged in these enterprises falling from 16,875 to 14,291 during the same period. [Note: “persons engaged” includes employees, proprietors and family members.] Micro-businesses represent the majority of enterprises in the county. In 2012, there were 2,294 businesses registered in County Sligo, of which 2,095 (over 90%) engaged fewer than 10 persons per business, for a total of 4,226 people (i.e. two people per business, on average). Of the remaining 199 enterprises, 59 engaged between 20 and 49 persons (1,845 in total) and 25 engaged 50 to 249 persons each (2,345 in total).

Table 4.B Persons at work by broad industrial sector – 2006 and 2011

Broad industrial sector	Number of persons at work	
	2006	2011
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1,795	1,770
Mining, quarrying and turf production	70	41
Manufacturing industries	3,631	3,047
Electricity, gas and water supply	170	186
Construction	3,155	1,224
Wholesale and retail trade	3,443	3,528
Hotels and restaurants	1,524	1,606
Transport, storage and communications	1,109	977
Banking and financial services	669	566
Real estate, renting and business activities	1,570	1,577
Public administration and defence	1,788	2,061
Education	2,003	2,360
Health and social work	4,160	3,846
Other community, social and personal service activities	1,015	1,051
Industry not stated	1,226	1,594
Total at work	27,328	25,434

As expected, there was a great decline in construction employment between 2006 and 2011 – a reduction of 1,931 jobs. Nearly 600 manufacturing jobs were lost during the same period.

While manufacturing is in decline, the construction industry has collapsed and agriculture plays a relatively small role in the local economy. The main area of employment, as documented by Census data, remains the services sector. The County also has a relatively high proportion of its workforce employed in the public sector (administration, education and health services).

These changing circumstances require the promotion of skills and processes able to reinsert the former industrial labour force into suitable employment, including self-employment and micro-enterprises. There will be policy implications for the various agencies in charge of enterprise support, training and mentoring.

4.2.2 Enterprise support

Industry and enterprise in County Sligo are supported by the IDA, Enterprise Ireland and Sligo County Council's Local Enterprise Office (LEO).

Sligo LEO is part of the Local Enterprise Office network that was created within local authorities when the 35 County and City Enterprise Boards (CEB) were dissolved in 2014.

The primary role of the Local Enterprise Office is to support the micro-enterprise sector (1-10 employees) within Sligo and to encourage and foster enterprise development. Its remit also extends to assisting small businesses.

The Office delivers grant-aid, training, mentoring, advice and non-exchequer funded interventions. It assists those interested in starting up a new business or already in business, entrepreneurs, early stage promoters, start-ups and small business looking to expand. Since its inception in 2014, the LEO assisted a total of 13 projects through the provision of financial assistance, bringing the total number assisted in 2014 through the LEO and the CEB to 28. In overall terms, the Office had a total of 202 grant-aided clients at the end of 2014.

The County Development Plan can assist in enterprise development by ensuring that sufficient zoned land is available at suitable locations, by supporting the provision of essential infrastructure and by including relevant economic development policies and objectives for specific towns and villages.

4.2.3 Industry and enterprise locations

Sligo City and Tobercurry are the primary locations for manufacturing industry in the County.

Sligo City has become the main centre for industry and enterprise due to its large pool of skilled workers, ease of access and relatively good telecommunications infrastructure. The availability of labour, transport facilities and infrastructure attracts enterprise and stimulates agglomeration effects in the local economy. Due to the spatial concentration of production in Sligo City, cost savings are made by companies locating there, rather than in rural areas. Economies of scale help to explain why growth is unevenly distributed between the Gateway City and the rest of the County.

Tobercurry, Collooney and Grange have developed a variety of smaller enterprises, due to their location along national transport corridors and the availability of a local workforce. Strandhill has potential as a centre for enterprise, given the presence of an Enterprise and Technology Centre near the airport.

Collooney, originally earmarked for the development of an enterprise park, has seen the short-lived development of retail warehousing, to the detriment of Sligo Retail Park. Vacant units in Collooney Business Park have slowly started to revert to their intended industrial/enterprise use. The continuation of this process will be supported.

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

Small-scale enterprise space should also be provided in other settlements across the County, either in dedicated areas or as part of mixed-use zones, to help offset the loss of employment in sectors such as construction and manufacturing, and support the creation of local jobs in the south and west of the County.

Strategic policies for economic development

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- SP-ED-1** Ensure that sufficient and suitable land is reserved for new enterprise development at key locations in Sligo City, Tobercurry, Ballymote and Enniscrone, and promote the Key Support Towns as secondary employment centres, after Sligo City.
- SP-ED-2** Promote the integration of employment with other land uses and the transportation network and ensure, in particular, that employment-intensive uses are located in proximity to existing and planned strategic routes, where public transport is most viable.
- SP-ED-3** Facilitate the development of small-scale enterprise space in villages where good access, infrastructure and services are readily available or can be provided at a reasonable cost.
- SP-ED-4** Adopt a flexible approach to start-up businesses and resource-based, small-scale enterprise activities outside towns and villages, in recognition of their increasing importance in providing employment and stimulating economic activity within rural communities.
- SP-ED-5** Ensure that a high standard of design, layout and amenity is provided and maintained at locations selected for enterprise development.
- SP-ED-6** Liaise with the IDA and Enterprise Ireland to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the provision of necessary infrastructure and services to support enterprise and industrial development.

4.3 Rural development and enterprise

County Sligo is predominantly rural. Due to a slow, but constant decline in agricultural employment over the past decades, a high percentage of farming families are dependent on social welfare or alternative enterprises for family income. These factors contribute to a high level of rural deprivation and a strong need for rural diversification in County Sligo.

In recent years, rural areas have experienced a reduction of public services, such as sub-post offices, Garda stations, primary schools and banks. The reduction in public service provision and the declining agricultural employment threaten the survival of rural communities.

In order to regenerate rural communities and promote economic sustainability outside towns and villages, there is a need to support rural diversification through a variety of initiatives. These include the promotion of rural transport and the delivery of high-speed broadband to rural areas.

Sligo LEADER Partnership (SLPC) was responsible for the delivery of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2007–2013 in County Sligo. Before winding up, the programme supported over 400 projects in the business and community sectors in Sligo.

The Sligo Local Action Group (LAG)/Local Community Development Committee through the new RDP 2014-2020, as well as Sligo Local Enterprise Office (LEO), will provide funding and assistance in the promotion of local employment and enterprise initiatives focused on the individual and the project. Projects assisted by these bodies include farmers' markets, tourist attractions, rural incubator units promoting crafts, the arts, pottery, antiques, indigenous manufacturing and engineering, in addition to agri-businesses. The Council will work with these bodies, and others, to promote rural development and enterprise. The new Rural Development Programme will have a budget of over €7.655 million for distribution in Sligo.

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.

4.3.1 Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ)

The Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) was established in 2012, to conduct comprehensive research and produce a detailed report meant to inform the economic development of rural areas for the period to 2025. In 2014, CEDRA published a report with 34 recommendations. The report identified the rural hinterlands of towns as functional areas of an appropriate scale for government intervention. These areas are classified as Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ). A pilot initiative was launched in 2015 and local authorities were invited to submit applications in cooperation with their relevant REDZ communities.

There are three REDZ defined in County Sligo. Sligo REDZ is the largest, covering the north, centre and south-east of the county; the other two are Tobercurry REDZ (south-west) and Enniscrone (west). Sligo County Council was successful in its application for funding under the REDZ Pilot Initiative.

The Council received €150,000 from the DECLG for the area of Tobercurry and its hinterland of 15 electoral divisions (some of which are located in Co. Mayo).

An Enterprise Centre in the former Aurivo headquarters and an Urban Enhancement Initiative involving the development of a link between Wolfe Tone Square and the Circular Road were among the projects outlined as part of the REDZ application. Other projects funded are: action planning workshops, an economic appraisal of future use of the disused railway line, a marketing and mentoring programme, branding and visual identity upgrade etc.

The REDZ concept, if properly funded, may help to address the immediate need for economic stimulus in rural areas. Should the Tobercurry REDZ Pilot Initiative be successful, Sligo County Council will seek further investment into the other REDZ in the county (Sligo and Enniscrone rural areas).

Rural development and diversification policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

P-RDD-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.

P-RDD-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.

P-RDD-3 Facilitate tele-working by rural dwellers who are not farmers, subject to normal planning considerations. Such activities would generally involve providers of professional services whose work can be carried out from a home office using high-speed broadband.

P-RDD-4 Support the continuance of the Rural Transport Programme as an essential service to people in rural areas, who would otherwise be excluded because transport is not available, accessible or affordable to them locally.

P-RDD-5 Encourage the growth or expansion of existing rural based or well-established small-scale industry and enterprise in rural County Sligo. *(continues on next page)*

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.

4.3.2 Forestry

Sligo County Council recognises the importance of forestry development, as set out in government policy, and acknowledges the potential for further afforestation in County Sligo. Forestry planting is largely outside the control of the Planning Authority. Initial forestation is classified as an exempted development under the Planning Regulations 2001 (as amended). An Environmental Impact Assessment is required only for a plantation exceeding 50 hectares.

Coniferous forestry plantations will also be discouraged in water quality-sensitive areas, in designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes, Visually Vulnerable Areas and along Designated Scenic Routes indicated on the Landscape characterisation Map in Chapter 7. As a consultative body dealing with proposals for initial forestation, the County Council will submit observations to the Forest Service, where appropriate, particularly in cases when new plantation might 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.

4.3.3 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 Drumcliff 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, Pollnadivva, 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.

4.3.4 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.

In assessing development applications relating to existing or proposed quarries, the Council will take full account of the document *Quarries and Ancillary Activities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoE, 2004).

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 and consultation with the DCENR, if appropriate.

Mineral extraction and quarrying policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-MEQ-1** Protect all known unworked deposits from development that might limit their scope for extraction (e.g. one-off housing)
- P-MEQ-2** 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-3** Seek the reuse of worked out quarries for recreational, industrial, ecological and other uses, following appropriate restoration.
- P-MEQ-4** 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.

4.4 Tourism development

4.4.1 Existing resources

With the growth in affluence, mobility and leisure time, tourism is one of the major growth areas of the national economy. County Sligo, with its wealth of beautiful scenery, still remains largely unspoiled and relatively undiscovered. The County's cultural heritage and landscape, its accessibility by road, rail and air, and the range of activities available augur well for the continued expansion of this sector.

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

Benbulbin, the Dartry Mountains and the Ox Mountains provide the most spectacular scenery in County Sligo and have major potential for activities such as touring, sightseeing, mountaineering, hill-walking and pony-trekking. In addition, some of the more spectacular mountains are areas of scientific and archaeological importance.

Forests occupy a significant portion of Sligo's land area. Mostly under State control, they have a major recreational value and are open to the public. Woodlands like Slish Wood, Union Wood, Lough Gill Forest have significant stands of deciduous trees. These woodlands are located in scenic areas. Specially organised forests walks can exploit their botanical, visual, and literary/archaeological interests in a sensitive and unobtrusive manner.

The lakes of Sligo give the County a special identity. Lough Gill and the Garavogue River, Lough Arrow, Lough Gara, Glencar Lake, Templehouse Lake, Lough Talt and Lough Easky are immediately recognised as part of the typical Sligo landscape. These lakes are a major resource for sailing, boating, fishing and lakeshore walks. They also have strong wildlife, literary, archaeological and historical significance, although infrastructural services need to be developed to fully exploit their potential in a sustainable manner.

The coastline of County Sligo is another substantial resource. The traditional resorts of Mullaghmore, Rosses Point, Strandhill and Enniscrone have long attracted many visitors. In addition, there are popular beaches at Culleenamore, Streedagh and Dunmoran. Many smaller beaches are dotted along the coast.

Throughout the years, coastal erosion has caused significant damage in some areas. The protection of existing infrastructure and the unspoilt beauty of the whole coastline is of major importance in ensuring that Sligo's recreational and tourism potential can be fully exploited.

The other great resource for tourism in Sligo is the County's cultural, literary, historical and archaeological heritage. Increased interest in heritage, both nationally and internationally, has resulted in it becoming a major resource. The protection of heritage assets and their contexts is extremely important.

The Council recognises the importance of the tourism industry to County Sligo and the potential that exists within the County for the industry to expand further. This can be especially meaningful in more peripheral rural areas, many of which are areas of scenic value.

4.4.2 Trends and assumptions for the future

Tourism is a critical component of the West of Ireland economy, with the accommodation and hospitality sectors as key drivers of employment. Tourism also supports the service sectors, including retail and transport, thus delivering substantial social and community benefits.

International tourism to the West of Ireland declined significantly in both visitor numbers and share of holiday visits to Ireland in the period 2007-2010. County Sligo had 156,000 overseas tourist in 2006 (who generated revenue of 39m euro), but only 133,000 overseas tourists in 2013 (revenue generated – 44m euro).

The availability of high-quality accommodation is a prerequisite for attracting high-spending tourists to the region. A number of hotels have been built in recent years, but County Sligo is still significantly lacking in guesthouse accommodation.

There are strong indications that Sligo has not capitalised on its full tourism potential. In 2015, the county had 61 accommodation premises (of which 14 hotels), compared to 137 in Co. Donegal (53 hotels) and 166 in Co. Mayo (44 hotels). There were 4,314 tourist beds in Sligo, compared to 10,288 in Donegal and 10,240 in Mayo. The number of tourist attractions was 127 in Sligo, but 340 in Donegal and 246 in Mayo. Unless addressed, such deficits will continue to act as a constraint to the development of the local and regional tourism industry.

In an attempt to reverse the decline in tourist numbers, Fáilte Ireland has developed the Wild Atlantic Way as a tourism initiative of strategic importance for the West of Ireland. This initiative, which is undertaken on an unprecedented scale, is expected to play a significant role in generating employment and revenue from national and international tourism in County Sligo.

In line with the *Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010*, it will be the aim of Sligo County Council to promote the development of new tourist attractions, particularly with regard to untapped tourism potential.

4.4.3 The Wild Atlantic Way (WAW)

The Wild Atlantic Way encompasses the coastline and hinterland of the nine coastal counties in the West of Ireland – Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo, Mayo, Galway, Clare, Limerick, Kerry and Cork. The route extends along circa 2,500 km, from the village of Muff (Inishowen Peninsula, County Donegal) to Kinsale (West Cork).

The route was defined by associating pre-existing touring routes and providing linkages between them to form a contiguous touring route from Donegal to West Cork. Along the route, 161 Discovery Points (existing viewing points and lay-bys) were identified, in addition to 27 Embarkation Points to the 26 off-shore islands. Of the Discovery Points, 14 are ‘Signature’ Discovery Points because they offer more opportunities for visitors.

While the immediate catchment of the WAW is the coastal zone, the Programme Area for the purpose of the Failte Ireland’s Operational Programme is the totality of the nine coastal counties.

A number of urban centres have been identified as gateways to the Wild Atlantic Way, namely: Cork, Killarney, Limerick, Ennis, Galway, Westport, Sligo, Donegal and Letterkenny.

A key objective of the Operational Programme is to identify a series of loops off the main route to further encourage visitors to explore the wider region and to increase the dwell time of international visitors.

Fáilte Ireland will co-ordinate future WAW works relating to the Discovery Points, but it is the relevant local authorities and other stakeholders who will carry out these works.

There are seven Discovery Points identified in Co. Sligo, at Mullaghmore Head, Streedagh Beach, Rosses Point Beach, Strandhill Beach, Aughris Head, Easky Pier, Enniscrone Pier.

Sligo County Council has carried out remedial works on the seven Discovery Points as part of Fáilte Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way Capital Investment Programme. The works included improvements at the seven car parks located at the Discovery Points: surfacing, fencing, boundary treatments, improved signage and the installation of information boards.

The expected development of a Signature Discovery Point at Mullaghmore Head will require significant input from the local authority. There is also strong potential for the development of a Yeats Trail as a driving route off the WAW.

4.4.4 Rural tourism

Rural tourism can play an important role in supporting and diversifying the economy of rural communities and is based on local amenities and natural heritage. The growth of rural tourism (including agri-tourism) is linked to local economic, social and natural resources. There is strong potential for eco-tourism. This approach promotes enhanced awareness and positive appreciation of local resources, traditions and ways of life. It also provides opportunities to optimise the use of amenities and share the benefits throughout rural areas.

The County Council will co-operate with neighbouring local authorities, cross-border bodies and other agencies to promote and establish sustainable tourism initiatives in less-developed tourist destinations, particularly marginalised rural areas. Although rural tourism remains a relatively small niche in the overall tourism context, local communities can benefit from the promotion of local assets and the development of specialist activities.

Examples of the tourism products that are emerging, or have scope for further development, include holiday breaks that focus on the soft adventure, music tradition, literature, literary associations, hill-walking, archaeology and geology, angling, surfing, equestrian holidays, thalassotherapy (e.g. seaweed baths) and golf. Each of these activities can generate spin-offs and demand for additional services, including accommodation, restaurants and transport.

Walking trails

As part of the Border Uplands Project, Sligo County Council has completed the following trails by June 2015, all of which are now open to the public:

- Tormore, Glencar (2.5-km looped upland walking trail)
- Gortarowey, Ben Bulbin (5.5-km looped walking trail)
- Union Rock (1-km linear walking trail)
- Knocknarea (2.4-km linear walking trail)
- Carrowkeel (Miners Way and historical trail)
- Streedagh (3.5-km linear walking trail)
- Mullaghmore (4.5-km looped walking trail)

Coolaney National Mountain Bike Centre

The Council’s Community and Economic Development Section has identified a number of opportunities for the development of rural tourism attractions, of which the most important is the establishment of a National Mountain Biking Centre in Coolaney. The project involves the development of 80-km single-track cycling trails through Coillte-owned forestry in the Ox Mountains with the potential to attract upward of 50,000 visitors per year.

Box 4.C. Opportunities for walking and cycling trails/outdoor activities

Potential project name	Description
Greenway on or along the Sligo-Leitrim Northern Counties Railway (SLNCR)	Trail from Sligo to Enniskillen
Greenway on or along the Western Rail Corridor	Trail from Sligo to Bellaghy
Long Bank, Beltra	Walking route along the “Long Bank” land reclamation dam, providing exceptional views of Ballysadare Bay and the landscape beyond it
Beara Breifne Way	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
Sligo Way	Realignment of the Sligo Way (Coolaney to Lough Easky), resulting in a long-distance off-road walking trail
Ben Bulben Forest Walk	Link between existing walkway and the local road L-7216-21 to expand the existing trail network
Surf Centres	Development of surf centres and related facilities at Strandhill, Mullaghmore, Enniscrone, Easky and Dunmorán Strand

4.4.5 Cultural tourism

County Sligo’s character and culture are vital assets that help the county compete as a tourism destination and a location of choice.

The County is strongly associated with William Butler Yeats and in 2015, on the 150th anniversary of the birth of the Nobel Prize-winning poet, Sligo County Council added its support to a successful programme of exhibitions, performances, educational events, festivals, concerts, readings, talks and screenings funded by the DAHG and administered by the WDC.

Cultural tourism is set to grow and Sligo must aim to unlock the tourism potential associated with its archaeology, landscape, literary and musical heritage and its festivals.

County Sligo should build on its unique cultural heritage, which is a key differentiator in developing the area as a cultural tourist destination.

Box 4.D. Opportunities for cultural tourism

Potential project name	Description
Yeats Centre	Development of a strong Yeatsean experience in Sligo, including a key visitor attraction (a Yeats Centre)
Cuill Irra Peninsula	Development of Cuill Irra as a significant archaeological tourist attraction – one of only four passage tombs in Ireland which have international significance
Carrowkeel-Keshcorran	Development of Carrowkeel as a significant archaeological tourist attraction – one of only four passage tombs in Ireland which have international significance
Sligo Gaol	Development of Sligo Gaol as a tourist attraction
Ballinafad Centre	Redevelopment of the Ballinafad Centre with a focus on the archaeological monuments at Carrowkeel
Ballymote Abbey	tourism-related development at the Abbey site, which is adjacent to existing tourism assets such as Ballymote Castle, Park, Mill, Miniature Railway
Spanish Armada Visitor Centre	Conservation, management and interpretation of the Spanish Armada wrecks site at Streedagh and development of a visitor centre.

4.4.6 Main provisions of the LECP 2016

Objective 1.5 - Develop and implement an integrated and sustainable tourism strategy for the county and engage all sectors in the collective promotion and development of Sligo

Actions:

Establish a forum to lead local tourism development
Conduct a tourism asset audit of the county to inform product development and marketing including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sligo’s vibrant music and arts scene - Sligo’s outdoor adventure product and major sporting attractions and events - Sligo’s rich history, landscape and built and natural heritage - Sligo’s capacity to host major events from large festivals to business and trade conferences - Sligo’s significant and unique attractions along the Wild Atlantic Way
Develop Sligo’s tourism infrastructure, subject to Habitats Directive assessment, to include support for signature projects that build on the county’s unique selling points, for example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve access and interpretation of heritage sites - Support the development of greenways and cycling routes - Support the development of discovery points along the Wild Atlantic Way at Mullaghmore Head, Streedagh Point, Rosses Point, Strandhill, Aughris and Dunmorán Strand, Easky Beach and Enniscrone Beach - Maintain and improve Sligo’s piers and harbours in particular those close to the Wild Atlantic Way viewing points - Support the development of National Mountain Bike Centre, Coolaney - Support the development of Maritime Centre Strandhill - Implement a series of coastal protection works to safeguard local amenities and tourism facilities - Development of tourism product in north Sligo based on the Armada story.
Develop a marketing strategy for Sligo’s outdoor and adventure tourism product
Support and co-ordinate festivals and events to maximise their economic potential
Development of Sligo’s night time economy through implementation of annual plan to retain Purple Flag
Make Sligo’s rich literary and cultural history, in particular the Yeats family legacy, central to the county’s international tourism product including, subject to Habitats Directive assessment where required. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual Yeats Festival calendar of events - Support development of a Yeats Trail and International centre to commemorate Yeats legacy - Sligo 1916 Celebrations
Maximise the rural sustainable tourism potential of County Sligo through development of the countryside as a recreational resource for visitors and residents alike including measures to safeguard the environment subject to proper planning & sustainable development criteria, and Habitats Directive Assessment.
Develop food trails that combine activities and experiences based on culture

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 cSACs, SPAs, proposed NHAs, designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes and Visually Vulnerable Areas, and along designated Scenic Routes will be strictly controlled.

P-TOU-2 Support the development of high-quality tourist accommodation, especially hotels and guesthouses, 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 6, Section 6.7 Outdoor recreation).

P-TOU-5 In recognising the special amenity value of mountains, moorlands and forests, valleys and lakes, it is the Council's policy to facilitate the use of these areas for activities such as touring, sightseeing, mountaineering, and hill-walking.

This will be done in co-operation with state agencies, local community groups and other interested bodies and. In this regard, the Council will seek to improve access and create public rights of way, within the available financial resources (refer also to Section 6.7 Outdoor Recreation in Chapter 6).

P-TOU-6 Promote walking, rambling and cycling as tourism activities within the Plan area. (refer also to Section 6.7 Outdoor Recreation in Chapter 6).

P-TOU-7 Explore the provision of sustainable medium- and long-distance walking routes, in co-operation with adjoining local authorities (refer also to Section 6.7 Outdoor Recreation in Chapter 6 and Section 8.3 Cycle and pedestrian movements in Chapter 8).

P-TOU-8 Support and promote, 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-9 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.

Coastal zone tourism policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-CZT-1** Ensure that future caravan, camping and parking facilities in coastal areas will not be visually intrusive or impact on sensitive coastal environments (e.g. sand dune systems), by requiring, inter alia, appropriate siting, layout, design and natural screening, and compliance with the requirements of 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, 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.
- 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. (A-4-2)

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** Examine the feasibility of providing walkways on upland areas (e.g. Dartry Mountains, Bricklieves and Ox Mountains etc.), subject to availability of resources and subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

4.5 Retail planning

The Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DECLG, 2012) require development plans to set out clear, evidence-based policies and objectives in relation to retailing. In addition, a development plan should include:

- an outline of the level and form of retailing activity appropriate to each settlement in the Settlement Hierarchy;
- a broad assessment (square metres) of the requirement for additional retail floorspace;
- strategic guidance on the location and scale of retail development;
- objectives to support action initiatives in city and town centres, such as mobility management measures and public realm interventions;
- relevant development management criteria for the assessment of retail proposals.

Sligo County Council has commissioned the preparation of a revised and updated Retail Strategy for the entire county, including the Sligo and Environs area. The Strategy addresses all the requirements of the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012.

The following subsections summarise the findings of the Retail Strategy and set out the Council's strategy, policies and objectives as required by the Guidelines.

4.5.1 Retail hierarchy in County Sligo

In the national retail hierarchy, Sligo is placed on the “Regional” (second) tier, together with other NSS Gateway, Hubs and towns performing important regional retailing functions.

Outside the Gateway, the towns of Tobercurry, Ballymote and Enniscrone are of significance in terms of retail, due to their size, location and designation as Key Support Towns in the Settlement Hierarchy of the Development Plan.

In terms of population, there are other significant settlements in the County, such as the five Gateway Satellites – Ballysadare, Collooney, Coolaney, Grange and Strandhill.

As noted under the previous Retail Strategy, County Sligo is considered mono-nodal in terms of its retail offering, which is concentrated in Sligo City. Tobercurry serves as the second largest urban centre in terms of retail and related businesses, followed by Ballymote and Enniscrone. The satellite villages of Collooney, Grange, Ballysadare, Strandhill and Coolaney have varying levels of retail services. The villages of Bellaghy and Gorteen may not have large populations, but they do serve sizeable hinterlands based on their service offering.

The recommended retail hierarchy (see Fig. 4.E below) is largely aligned with the settlement hierarchy defined the Core Strategy of this Plan. It should be noted that there are no District Centres (as defined in the *Retail Planning Guidelines*) in County Sligo.



Fig. 4.E Retail hierarchy in County Sligo

The Retail Strategy, which is published as a separate document, provides detailed assessments and recommendations for Sligo City and each of the towns and villages listed above. The Strategy also incorporates a health check of small villages, which play an important role in the local economy and are part of the retail landscape of the County.

4.5.2 Projected retail floor space requirements

The Retail Strategy suggests that the demand for additional commercial facilities will be dependent on population increase and an increase in *per capita* expenditure, taking into consideration the existing and future dynamics of retailing in the catchment and the existing provision of retail floorspace.

Following a county-wide survey of retail floorspace and having estimated future change in retail sales and household expenditure, the Retail Strategy calculates the future floorspace requirements for convenience, comparison and bulky goods as shown in the table below:

Table: 4.F Estimated additional retail floor area in County Sligo by 2023

Year	Convenience	Comparison	Bulky Goods	Total
2023	2,492	4,338	4,975	11,805

Convenience floorspace

It is noted that extant planning permissions, concentrated in Sligo City and Enniscrone, can facilitate in the region of 5,600sq.m. convenience retail floorspace, but these permissions are nearing expiration and look unlikely to be realised.

The Strategy states that an increase in convenience shopping floorspace is most likely to be required in Sligo City and the Key Support Towns. Over the period of the Plan, the 2,492 sq.m. requirement is considered modest, but capable of facilitating an improved retail mix within the County and reduced drive times for shoppers.

Outside the Gateway, the requirement for additional convenience retail floorspace is estimated to be 1,270 sq.m net up to 2023. This additional floorspace may entail expansion of an existing retail operation or a new-build retail unit, such as a supermarket. However, given the average floor plates of new supermarket facilities (generally above 1,000–1,300 sq.m. net), extending above the estimated requirements should be considered in such instances, on a case by case basis.

Comparison floorspace

Any proposed increased in comparison shopping floorspace is expected to occur in Sligo City. While there may be scope for comparison shopping in smaller centres, a lack of footfall is more likely to direct these developments towards Sligo City centre.

Bulky goods floorspace

The extent of additional bulky goods retail floorspace expected over the Plan period can readily be absorbed in the existing stock of vacant retail space. There currently is a significant oversupply in retail warehousing and there is a need to constrain this type of development.

While there might be pressure to allow mainstream comparison and convenience use of permitted retail warehousing structures, the Retail Strategy recommends that such proposals be resisted.

4.5.3 Location of future retail development

Tier 1 – Primary Retail Centre – Sligo City

While the convenience shopping function of Sligo City Centre is important to its ongoing vitality, it must be ensured that convenience retail facilities are easily accessible across the city as a whole. Details regarding the location and scale of retail development in the city will be addressed in the future Sligo City Retail Strategy (to be prepared in conjunction with the Sligo and Environs Local Area Plan).

Over the period of the Plan it is anticipated that the majority of demand for comparison retail growth will be centred upon Sligo City (Tier 1) and the Council should continue to focus comparison retailing into the city centre.

Tier 2 – Key Support Retail Centres

The 500-sq.m. floorspace cap set in the previous CDP shall no longer apply in the Key Support Towns of Tobercurry, Ballymote and Enniscrone. A sequential approach to the location of new retail outlets greater than 500 sq.m. will be adopted. The Council will encourage site assembly to support convenience retail provisions in these key locations.

Enniscrone is not currently served by a large convenience retailer, despite having a permanent population of 1,223 (2011) and a much larger population at weekends and seasonal peaks.

It is considered that the town is capable of absorbing a larger convenience retailer, which may encourage occupation of existing vacant units in the town, reducing the need for journeys to neighbouring centres. A facility capable of serving weekly shopping needs may involve extension of an existing structure or the building of a new one.

Tier 3a – Satellite Retail Centres (Strandhill, Grange, Collooney, Coolaney & Ballysadare)

Strandhill, Grange, Ballysadare, Collooney and Coolaney function primarily as “suburbs” of Sligo City. Each of these villages accommodates a medium-sized convenience shopping outlet and a number of smaller convenience and non-retail businesses. Strandhill and Collooney appear to be functioning quite well, with low vacancy rates, and they may experience further demand for additional retail and related services.

Tier 3(b) – Neighbourhood Centres

Neighbourhood Centres (i.e. locations providing retail and related services outside of the town centre) only occur in Sligo City. Details regarding the scale and location of retail floorspace in neighbourhood centres will be provided in the forthcoming Sligo City Retail Strategy.

Tier 4(a) – Local Retail Centres

The local retail centres of Gorteen and Bellaghy comprise retail services significantly greater than that of the other villages in the County and are therefore recognised as performing a higher retail function. Without a commensurate increase in population, it is unlikely that there will be a need for increased retail floorspace in these centres. The maximum net retail floorspace in the Local Retail Centres shall be restricted to 500sq.m. per unit.

Tier 4(b) – Supporting Retail Centres

Rosses Point, Riverstown, Cliffony, Dromore West and Easky are characterised by basic convenience shopping functions, some limited incidences of comparison shopping and local retail services including post offices, pubs and cafes. These villages have a narrow retail base and proposals for additional services in these centres is likely to be limited over of the lifetime of the Plan.

Tier 5 – Village stores

Such stores can be found in Aclare, Tourlestrane, Ballygawley, Banada, Curry, Bunannaden, Mullaghmore, Cloonacool, Monasteraden, Ballinafad, Carney, Culfadda, Castlebaldwin, Geevagh, Rathcormac and Ballintogher. Primarily convenience outlets, they provide a readily accessible service for basic goods, especially for the less mobile members of communities. These stores play a vital role at local level and their continued operation should be supported.

Rural County Sligo could also look to tourism as another source of potential retail income. To enable the County to better exploit its tourism potential, the County Council will support the provision of facilities such as craft outlets and shops specialising in outdoor pursuits like angling and water sports.

4.5.4 Sligo City – Primary Retail Centre

It is anticipated that, within the lifetime of this Plan, most new retail floor space will be provided in Sligo City and Environs. The area suitable for retail proposals is identified within the *Sligo & Environs Development Plan 2010* (city centre zoning).

While new convenience retail floorspace would not be exclusively provided within Sligo City, any potential increase in comparison shopping floorspace is most likely to locate in the city.

Analysis undertaken as part of the review of the Retail Planning Strategy demonstrates scope for additional convenience floorspace both within the City and in the County generally.

In Sligo City, there will be an additional requirement for an estimated 1,251 sq.m net convenience floorspace by the end of 2023. This additional floorspace may entail expansion of an existing retail

operation or a new retail unit, such as a supermarket. However, given the average floor plates of new supermarket facilities (generally above 1,000–1,300 sq.m. net), potential for extending above the estimated requirements noted above should be allowed for in such instances.

In terms of comparison retail floorspace, between 2016 and 2023 there is scope for further development of some 4,338 sq.m (net). However, this is not in addition to the various permissions for the Centre Block and surrounding area which have yet to be implemented.

The preferred location for retail development is within the existing city centre and Neighbourhood Centres. Development proposals not according with the fundamental objective to support the vitality and viability of city and neighbourhood centre sites must demonstrate compliance with the sequential approach. Sligo County Council will require that a full assessment of all suitable, viable and available sites is undertaken.

An update of retail policies and objectives applicable in Sligo City Centre and in the existing and proposed Neighbourhood Centres will be provided in the forthcoming Sligo and Environs LAP.

Strategic retail planning policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

SP-RP-1 Consolidate Sligo City's role as a regional shopping centre and the Primary Retail Centre (Tier 1) in County Sligo.

SP-RP-2 Ensure that additional retail floorspace is provided in line with the projected requirements outlined in Table 4.F and in the County Sligo Retail Planning Strategy (2016).

SP-RP-3 Support the provision or extension of retail facilities in the Key Support Retail Centres (Tier 2) of Tobercurry, Ballymote and Enniscrone.

The location of new retail outlets with a floorspace greater than 500 sq.m. will be subject to the sequential approach. The Council will encourage site assembly to support convenience retail provision in these key locations.

SP-RP-4 Facilitate small-scale retail development in villages, provided that:

- there is no significant adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the Key Support Retail Centres of Tobercurry, Ballymote, Enniscrone, and
- the proposals are of appropriate scale and are acceptable in terms of design, impact on residential amenity, servicing and parking arrangements.

SP-RP-5 In Local Retail Centres (Tier 4a), Supporting Retail Centres (Tier 4b) and smaller villages (Tier 5) generally discourage any retail outlet in excess of 500 sq.m. net retail floor space, including extensions that would enlarge an existing development over this threshold. Development over this size is clearly intended to serve more than a local catchment and would therefore be more suitably located in a higher-tier centre.

Retail planning policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-RP-1** Assess all proposals for retail development in accordance with the requirements of the *Retail Planning Guidelines* (2012).
- P-RP-2** Generally require the retention of retail/service outlets (e.g. general food stores, newsagents, post offices, pharmacies, pubs, restaurants and cafés) within town and village centres, with the exception of commercial operations that are no longer viable or are more appropriately located elsewhere (e.g. petrol filling stations).
- P-RP-3** Encourage uses that support local retail and service outlets, such as tourism-related ventures, hotels, craft shops and shops specialising in outdoor pursuits and water sports.
- P-RP-4** Ensure that new retail and service outlets are located within the central area of a town or village, where they can best serve the resident population.
- P-RP-5** Discourage inappropriate out-of-town shopping facilities that detract from the vitality, viability and/or character of existing town and village centres.
- P-RP-6** Facilitate the reuse of existing vacant retail outlets in towns and villages.
- P-RP-7** Promote initiatives or programmes to enhance the character and urban design quality of the Key Support Towns (Tobercurry, Ballymote, Enniscrone) and Gateway Satellites (Ballysadare, Collooney, Coolaney, Grange and Strandhill), to ensure that they become and remain attractive for investment in commerce and retailing.
- P-RP-8** Ensure that all new retail and commercial development proposals respect the scale and character of the streetscape within which they are proposed (refer also to **Section 12.1 Historic streetscapes in Chapter 12** and to **Section 13.5.9 Shopfronts in Chapter 13 Development management standards**).
- P-RP-9** Require the retention of traditional shop fronts and pub fronts of character and good design quality (refer also to **Section 12.2 Shopfronts in Chapter 12** and to **Section 13.5.9 Shopfronts in Chapter 13 Development management Standards**).

Retail planning objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-RP-1** Facilitate the provision of a new or extended supermarket in Enniscrone.
- O-RP-2** Restrict the further development of retail warehousing in Collooney and Grange and encourage the conversion of vacant units to appropriate uses, in accordance with the respective zoning objectives.

Chapter 5. Housing

The Council is both the Housing Authority and the Planning Authority for Sligo City and County. In these roles, it has the capacity to influence the supply and location of new housing within its functional area. To this end, the County Council must prepare a Housing Strategy, as required by the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) – refer to **Section 5.1** below.

As a Housing Authority, the Council’s role is to formulate policies offering a range of options regarding direct housing provision and assistance to persons unable to house themselves from their own resources.

As a Planning Authority, the Council must ensure that sufficient lands are zoned to meet the projected housing demand and must consider planning applications for private housing.

In formulating housing policy, Sligo County Council aims to enable every household to avail of an affordable, good-quality dwelling, suited to its needs, in a good environment and, as far as possible, at the tenure of its choice. The key challenge in this regard is the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities where people want to live and work now and into the future.

5.1 Housing Strategy

A County Sligo Housing Strategy 2017–2023 has been prepared in accordance with Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Housing Strategy forms an integral part of the Sligo County Development Plan 2017–2023. The primary purpose of the Strategy is to ensure that the overall supply of housing is sufficient to meet the needs of the existing and future population of Sligo.

The key findings of the 2016 Housing Strategy are as follows:

Census data and identified trends

- House completions in Sligo reached a peak of 2,164 dwellings at the end of 2006 before decreasing rapidly year-on-year to just 167 dwellings by the end of 2015, a fall of 92%.
- There has been a significant reduction in the number of scheme houses and apartments completed since 2006. This indicates that during the life of the previous Development Plans (CDP and SEDP), the majority of houses were built in rural locations, on unserviced land.
- The 2011 Census recorded that 22.2% of all permanent housing units in County Sligo were vacant, which is significantly higher than the national average of 14.5%.
- There is a significant number of one-person households, which have seen a notable increase since 2006 as a percentage of the total number of households.
- Approximately 20% of the total number of private households within the County live in private rented accommodation.

Social housing requirements

- The 2013 housing need assessment for Sligo indicated that there were 770 households on the social housing waiting list.

- Based on current trends, it is estimated that approximately 2,162 persons will require social housing by 2023 which equates to 865 households.
- The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 places the focus of Part V on the delivery of social housing, with a requirement for up to 10% social housing in developments in excess of 9 units. In the operation of these revised Part V arrangements, the priority will be to secure social housing units on-site. The making of cash payments in lieu of social housing is to be discontinued. It is considered reasonable to apply a requirement of 10% of all land zoned for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses, be reserved for the purposes of Part V.

Housing land provision

- It is estimated that the County Development Plan would have to cater for circa 5,500 additional persons between 2017 and 2023, in order to comply with the population targets set by the Regional Planning Guidelines 2010.
- 3,705 housing units will be required to accommodate the estimated population increase over the period of the Plan.
- The housing land provision as specified in the Core Strategy of the CDP 2017-2023 is more than sufficient to meet Sligo's housing needs up to 2023, even allowing 50% overhead to facilitate an element of choice as recommended by the DECLG Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities (refer to the Core Strategy tables A and B in Section 3.4 on page 29).
- The Core Strategy for the County Development Plan 2017-2023 should ensure that the amount of land zoned for residential purposes within the County area does not exceed that allocated within the CDP 2011–2017. However, in order to promote growth in the Gateway City, consideration should be given to expanding the options for residential development in the future Sligo and Environs LAP by offering a wider choice of location on additional sites.

Strategic housing policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- SP-HOU-1** Encourage a balanced supply of private housing in the county, in a manner that is consistent with the Core Strategy and the Settlement Hierarchy, and which will support the creation of sustainable communities through the provision of an appropriate range of house types and high-quality residential environments.
- SP-HOU-2** Reserve 10% of eligible sites which are subject to new residential development (or a mix of uses including residential) for the development of social housing units, in accordance with the Housing Strategy and the requirements of Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).
- SP-HOU-3** Ensure that the needs of older people, people with disabilities and other special-needs persons and households are adequately catered for in new residential developments.

Strategic housing objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- SO-HOU-1** Implement the relevant provisions of the Sligo County Housing Strategy 2017-2023.
- SO-HOU-2** Monitor residential development and manage the supply of new housing to ensure that it is consistent with the requirements of the Core Strategy and the infrastructural capacity of each settlement.

5.1.1 Sustainable residential development

It is an aim of this Plan to promote sustainable residential development that delivers a good quality of life and minimises the need for the use of private cars for daily activities.

Sustainable residential development should provide variety in terms of ancillary uses and supporting facilities, and should promote social integration between diverse household types and age groups.

New houses should be designed to ensure efficient use of land and energy, and to create an attractive living environment which respects its context.

The approach towards future housing provision will take into account the location and context of a particular proposed development.

Further in this chapter, **Sections 5.2 Urban housing** and **5.3 Housing in rural areas** offer general policy guidance on new housing both within and outside settlements.

Urban design considerations which are relevant to new residential development in towns and villages can be found in **Chapter 12 Town and village design**.

The **Development management standards** chapter of this Plan (**Chapter 13**) contains detailed guidance regarding the layout and design of housing developments in rural and urban areas. The standards relating to urban development apply to all land-use plans prepared by Sligo County Council.

Chapter 1 of Volume 2 includes further housing policies specifically for the 32 villages subject to mini-plans.

The local area plans prepared for the Key Support Towns of Ballymote, Enniscrone and Tobercurry (draft LAP 2015) also include housing policies responding to the specific character of each area.

The forthcoming Sligo and Environs Local Area Plan (due to be prepared following the adoption of the CDP 2017-2023) will set additional housing policies, objectives and development standards adapted to the character and needs of the City.

5.1.2 Location of future housing

While the construction of new housing schemes in towns and villages has almost ceased during the life of the CDP 2011-2017, there has been no slow-down in the building of individual houses in rural areas.

As the anticipated economic recovery may lead to increased house-building activity, it is essential that future residential development takes place mostly on zoned lands, in Sligo City, Key Support Towns and villages designated for growth.

New housing will be permitted at a rate that is consistent with the Core Strategy. This will be achieved through the application of a *plan-monitor-manage* approach to residential development in urban areas.

This approach involves placing appropriate controls on the extent of lands zoned for housing in various land-use plans, as well as monitoring housing supply. The approach is also linked to the infrastructural capacity of each settlement.

The allocation of zoned residential land throughout the County is set out in the Core Strategy (refer to **Section 3.4 Population and housing land**).

These allocations are incorporated into mini-plans (see Volume 2 of this Plan) and will be incorporated into local area plans as part of the review of these plans or preparation of new ones.

The zoning maps pertaining to mini-plans and local area plans indicate the proposed location and extent of future residential areas.

While the location and quantum of future urban housing is set out in the Core Strategy, the future locations of individual houses in rural areas cannot be predicted. However, the growth of rural housing can be managed in accordance with the *Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoEHLG, April 2005), which recommend that planning authorities apply certain restrictions regarding housing in specified types of rural areas.

The rural housing policy areas in County Sligo are shown in on the **Core Strategy Map** (refer to Chapter 3) and in the illustration on the next page (Fig. 5.A).

The corresponding housing policies for each of these areas are presented in Section 5.3 further in this chapter.



Fig. 5.A - Rural housing policy areas in County Sligo

5.2 Urban housing

5.2.1 House types and sizes

Average household size in County Sligo, at 2.6 persons per household, was amongst the lowest in the State in 2011 and, in line with national trends, will probably continue to decrease. The revised household projections assume that the trend of falling household size will accelerate in the rural areas of the County.

Over the life of the Development Plan, from 2017 to 2023, it is assumed that the average household size will decrease to approximately 2.35 persons. This will have implications for housing demand, with a growing need for smaller dwellings and a greater mix of house types and sizes.

The Council will require prospective developers to incorporate a mix of plot sizes, house sizes and types, such as two-bedroom, three-bedroom and four-bedroom houses, single-storey and two-storey etc., to accommodate the diverse needs, preferences and purchasing power of future residents.

5.2.2 Residential density

While the housing need estimates outlined in the Housing Strategy are based on modest assumptions about housing density, the Council will have regard to Government policy, which seeks to encourage more sustainable development through the avoidance of excessive suburbanisation and through the promotion of higher densities (*Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns and Villages)*, DoEHLG 2009).

Accordingly, in existing settlement centres, densities of 30 to 40+ units per hectare will be encouraged. Outside centres, densities of 20-35 units per hectare will be expected, whilst lower densities of 15-20 units per hectare will be accommodated on the edge of settlements.

The key issue is that each site is different and in some cases a low density may be appropriate, while in other instances a high density would be suitable (for example a courtyard development in the middle of a village or some infill sites within a village or town, where it is important to maintain the traditional streetscape).

The Planning Authority may determine the appropriate density in any particular location by considering the following:

- a.** local pattern of development and residential densities in adjoining areas;
- b.** existing landscape and other features of the site;
- c.** design quality (higher densities may be permitted in developments exhibiting high-quality design)
- d.** levels of privacy and amenity;
- e.** proximity to main transport routes;
- f.** the capacity of the infrastructure to serve the demands of the proposed development;

Urban housing policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

P-UHOU-1 Have regard to the principle of sequential development in assessing all new residential development proposals, whereby areas closer to settlement centres will be prioritised for development in advance of lands further from settlement centres. Notwithstanding this principle, each proposal will be considered on its merits and having regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

P-UHOU-2 Require high quality in the layout and design of new residential development, having regard to the guidance and standards set out in DECLG's *Guidelines for Planning Authorities – Sustainable residential development in urban areas*. Refer to Section 13.3 Residential development in urban areas (development management standards).

P-UHOU-3 Ensure the provision of a suitable range of house types and sizes to facilitate the changing demographic structure and in particular the increasing trend towards smaller household sizes. In private housing schemes, the following mix of house types should generally apply:

House type	Proportion in the scheme
1-2 bedrooms	minimum 30% of total no. of houses
3 bedrooms	minimum 30% of total no. of houses
4+ bedrooms	maximum 20% of total no. of houses

P-UHOU-4 Promote more compact forms of residential development, such as infill and backland development, and ensure – through the development management process – that access points to backland areas are reserved or that adequate road frontage is reserved to provide future road access, to enable comprehensive backland development.

P-UHOU-5 Ensure that services and utilities in residential developments are provided concurrently with the construction of new dwellings.

P-UHOU-6 Promote higher densities of residential development in appropriate locations and circumstances, having regard to the principles outlined in the DECLG's *Guidelines for Planning Authorities – Sustainable residential development in urban areas*.

5.2.3 Vacant and unfinished housing

The 2011 Census recorded that approximately one house in four (22.2%, including holiday homes) in County Sligo was vacant on Census night in April 2011, compared to a national average of 14.5%.

The numerous vacant houses in many villages, in sometimes unfinished developments, detract from the amenity of the settlements and can even encourage antisocial behaviour.

As outlined in **Chapter 3 Core Strategy** and **Section 5.2.1 Location of future housing**, a *plan-monitor-manage* approach to housing provision should help to reduce vacancy rates. In the meantime, the Council will strive, through available enforcement mechanisms, to ensure that housing developments and associated services or facilities are completed in accordance with the terms of relevant planning permissions.

A flexible and supportive approach will be adopted towards alternative uses for existing vacant residential units or other types of buildings. A wide range of potential uses – including community facilities, commercial, retail, enterprise, arts etc. – will be considered in such cases. The key consideration is that any such prospective development must be of an appropriate scale and must be compatible with existing and proposed surrounding uses. It should also be appropriately designed and should demonstrate compliance with all other relevant development management standards.

With regard to the remaining unfinished residential developments in the County, the Council will continue to work proactively with residents, developers and all relevant stakeholders to secure satisfactory completion.

Vacant housing policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-VHOU-1** Strive to ensure – through the enforcement process – that housing developments and associated services and facilities are completed to a standard that is in accordance with the terms of the relevant planning permission.
- P-VHOU-2** Adopt a flexible and supportive approach towards alternative uses of vacant residential units/buildings, subject to appropriate scale, design and compatibility with existing and proposed surrounding uses.

Vacant housing objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-VHOU-1** Establish baseline data on the number of vacant residential units in each settlement in the CDP area and continue to carry out monitoring of vacancy throughout the Plan period.

Unfinished housing developments objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-UFHOU-1** Work with all relevant stakeholders to secure the satisfactory completion of unfinished housing developments in the County.

5.3 Housing in rural areas

Government policy on rural housing is set out in the National Spatial Strategy and the guidance document *Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DOEHLG, April 2005).

Sligo County Council acknowledges that there is a long tradition of people living in rural areas in a highly dispersed settlement pattern. In the past, these areas were largely dependent on agriculture and farming. With the decline of such activities, there has been an associated decline in the rural population.

While it is accepted that there is a need to sustain rural communities, applications for individual houses outside towns and villages will be assessed having regard to the type of rural area as designated in **Section 3.3 Rural Settlement** (Core Strategy) and the demonstrated need of the applicant to build a new house in the area.

5.3.1 Rural housing policy areas

In Rural Areas in Need of Regeneration, the Planning Authority will facilitate one-off housing without requiring applicants to demonstrate a housing need. Persons living and working in either rural or urban areas, who seek to build a house, will generally be accommodated in these areas, subject to normal planning considerations (refer to Section 13.4 for details on normal planning considerations).

In Rural Areas under Urban Influence, the Planning Authority will accommodate those applicants with a **rural-generated housing need** – which is a demonstrated, genuine need to live in the respective rural areas – subject to normal planning considerations.

In all rural areas, certain restrictions will apply in designated settlement green belts, along Scenic Routes, in Sensitive Rural Landscapes and in Visually Vulnerable Areas (for details on these designations, refer to **Section 7.4 Landscape character**).

The main criterion for assessing application for single houses in all rural areas will be the suitability of the proposed development in the context of the broader and long-term proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Housing policy in Rural Areas In Need Of Regeneration

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-RANR-HOU-1** Accommodate proposals for one-off rural houses in **Rural Areas In Need Of Regeneration**, subject to normal planning considerations including Habitats Directive Assessment and compliance with the guidance set out in **Section 13.4 Residential development in rural areas** (development management standards).

Housing policy in Rural Areas Under Urban Influence

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-RAUI-HOU-1** Accommodate proposals for one-off rural houses in **Rural Areas Under Urban Influence**, subject to normal planning considerations, including Habitats Directive Assessment and compliance with the guidance set out in **Section 13.4 Residential development in rural areas** (development management standards), where a housing need is demonstrated by the following categories of applicants:
- A.** landowners, including their sons and daughters, who wish to build a first home for their permanent occupation on the landholding associated with their principal family residence;
 - 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);
 - 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 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.

Housing policy in green belts and sensitive areas (Scenic Routes, Sensitive Rural Landscapes, Visually Vulnerable Areas)

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

P-GBSA-HOU-1 Accommodate proposals for one-off rural houses in the green belts and sensitive areas, subject to normal planning considerations including Habitats Directive Assessment and compliance with the guidance set out in **Section 13.4 Residential development in rural areas** (development management standards), where a housing need is demonstrated by the following categories of applicants:

- A.** landowners, including their sons and daughters, who wish to build a first home for their permanent occupation on the landholding associated with their principal family residence;
- 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.

5.3.2 Siting and design of rural houses

It is important to note that the policy considerations outlined above represent only one element in the assessment of an application for dwelling house in a rural area. Other considerations relating to siting, design, environment, heritage, amenity and traffic considerations are also of paramount importance in the consideration of any development. These considerations are dealt with in more detail in the Development Management section and the Rural House Guide.

New houses in rural areas should be absorbed and integrated successfully into the rural setting, i.e. the buildings should harmonise or ‘read’ with the existing traditional pattern of development, without intruding on unspoilt landscapes or breaking the skyline.

The practical achievement of well-integrated rural housing development requires considerable skill and experience in site assessment and detailed design. It requires an ability to examine a site in the context of its natural and built surroundings and analyse whether the site is capable of carrying the proposed development without becoming unduly dominant on either the surrounding landscape or pattern of development.

Practical guidance regarding the siting and design of rural houses can be found in **Section 13.4 Residential development in rural areas** (development management standards).

Rural housing siting and design policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-RHOU-1** Encourage those who wish to build in rural areas to apply traditional principles in the siting and design of new houses, while facilitating high-quality modern design solutions.
- P-RHOU-2** Require new house proposal in rural areas to comply with the guidance set out in **Section 13.4 Residential development in rural areas** (development management standards).

5.4 Social housing

Social housing is defined as rented housing provided by the local authority or a voluntary housing body. Over the period of the Plan, the provision of further social housing may be considered on Council-owned lands depending on needs, funding and approvals obtained from the DoECLG. The Council recognises the need to avoid concentration of new social housing in any particular area, especially adjoining existing social housing estates. The Planning Authority will have regard to this concern in dealing with all new housing development proposals.

In line with government policy, Sligo County Council will work to deliver more and better-quality housing, focusing on building sustainable communities.

The Cranmore Regeneration project is an example of the manner in which the local authority proactively seeks to transform the social, economic and physical fabric of an area through collaborative, long-term strategic planning, investment of resources and urban regeneration.

A high proportion (57%) of applicants on the Council's Housing List are one-person households. An objective of the Housing Strategy is the provision of a suitable range of house types and sizes, to avoid uniformity in residential development and facilitate the integration of social housing into existing communities.

Social housing policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-SHOU-1** Promote social inclusion by ensuring that social housing is well distributed throughout all residential areas rather than concentrated in a few locations.
- P-SHOU-2** Ensure that development in areas subject to an agreement under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) is integrated into the housing scheme in a manner which avoids undue physical and social segregation.
- P-SHOU-3** Ensure that the supply of housing units under the Housing Strategy reflects the current and anticipated demographic characteristics and household sizes.
- P-SHOU-4** Encourage linkages between existing public and private housing areas through the provision of shared facilities, services and pedestrian, cycle and vehicular connections, as appropriate.
- P-SHOU-5** Require developers of housing schemes to provide a suitable mix of house types and designs which can be easily adapted to accommodate special housing needs.

Social housing objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-SHOU-1** Continue with the programme of refurbishment and regeneration of existing local authority housing stock.

5.4.1 Traveller accommodation

Sligo County Council recognises the distinct culture and lifestyle of the Traveller community and will endeavour to provide suitable accommodation for Travellers who are indigenous to the area.

The range of housing options available includes standard lettings in local authority estates, lettings in voluntary housing schemes, group housing schemes, halting sites, single or stand-alone housing where required.

Working with the Traveller community, its representative organisations and local communities, the Council will seek to ensure an equitable distribution of Traveller facilities throughout the Plan area.

The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 requires all local authorities to prepare, in consultation with Travellers and the general public, a five-year Traveller accommodation programme to meet the existing and projected needs of Travellers in their area.

Sligo County Council's *Traveller Accommodation Plan 2014–2018* estimates that 64 households will require accommodation ranging in type from standard housing to serviced sites.

Traveller accommodation policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-TA-HOU-1** Provide accommodation for Travellers, as far as is reasonable and practicable, using the full range of housing options available and having regard to the policies outlined in the *Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014–2018* and subject to Habitats Directive assessment.
- P-TA-HOU-2** Consider the submissions of Travellers, their representative organisations and those of the local communities in relation to the siting, planning and design of prospective halting sites or group housing schemes, so as to avoid social conflict and promote social inclusion.

Traveller accommodation objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-TA-HOU-1** Provide Traveller Accommodation at Collooney, Tobercurry, Cloonamahon (existing site to be redeveloped) and Ballyfree (existing site to be redeveloped).

5.4.2 Voluntary and cooperative housing

Voluntary and cooperative housing provision is increasingly becoming a strong feature in the delivery of accommodation nationally. A marked feature of the voluntary sector is that many associations also offer services such as social activities, welfare advice and estate management skills.

These associations seek to achieve a balance in social housing provision by widening the range of housing options to meet different and changing needs. They are mainly concerned with accommodating persons or families who are in need of housing and who do not have the resources to provide any accommodation of their own. Since 2010, voluntary housing associations have provided 288 dwellings throughout the County.

Voluntary and cooperative housing policy

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-VC-HOU-1** Assist voluntary and non-profit cooperative housing associations in the provision of housing and encourage a more active involvement of these sectors in the housing market.

5.5 Housing for persons with diverse needs

Sligo County Council recognises the need to accommodate the housing requirements of those with diverse needs and those in particular circumstances. The type and location of accommodation for persons with diverse needs will be assessed in line with current thinking and practice.

5.5.1 Older people

The aging of the population poses significant challenges for society in general, and particularly for the development of responsive health and social policies. As a key social policy area, housing is a function that must adapt in order to meet the needs of a growing number of older people. The Council will work with relevant agencies and the private sector to facilitate suitable proposals for the accommodation of older people.

5.5.2 Accommodation for persons with disabilities

The *National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011–2016* sets out the government’s approach to addressing the housing needs of people with disabilities. The Strategy uses the term ‘disability’ in reference to four categories of disability, i.e. sensory disability, mental health disability, physical disability and intellectual disability.

The *Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2016–2019*, prepared by the Housing and Disability Steering Group of Sligo County Council and the HSE in 2016, fulfils the requirements of the National Strategy. The *Strategic Plan* establishes a policy framework to guide the provision of housing for people with a disability by the local authority and by other housing providers.

In line with national policy, the Council implements grant schemes that provide financial assistance in carrying out works to render dwellings more suitable for occupants with special needs. Subject to funding, the Council will continue to implement these schemes.

5.5.3 Accommodating homeless persons

The *North-West Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2013–2016* was prepared for housing authorities of Sligo, Leitrim and Donegal in conjunction the HSE. The six strategic aims of the plan are:

1. To reduce the number of household who become homeless through further development and enhancement of preventative measures
2. To eliminate the need for people to sleep rough
3. To eliminate long-term homelessness and to reduce the length of time people spend homeless.
4. To meet the long-term housing needs through an increase in housing options
5. To ensure effective services for homeless people
6. To ensure better co-ordinated funding arrangements and re-orientate spending on homeless services away from emergency responses to the provision of long-term housing and support services.

5.5.4 Refugees

Persons who have been granted refugee status have automatic rights to apply for local authority housing. Consideration should be given in this regard to household size and structure, and the need for access to social supports in terms of language, education and employment.

Special-needs housing policy

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-SN-HOU-1** Continue to support independent living for older people and the provision of specific, purpose-built accommodation.
- P-SN-HOU-2** Continue to meet the housing needs of persons with special needs both by direct provision of accommodation and by facilitating the provision of housing by the voluntary sector.
- P-SN-HOU-3** Facilitate the provision of suitable accommodation for the homeless and for those in need of emergency accommodation.
- P-SN-HOU-4** Where a particular need is identified, provide housing schemes designed for the needs of older people and/or those with special needs.
- P-SN-HOU-5** Support the implementation of the *North-West Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2013–2018* and successor documents.
- P-SN-HOU-6** Ensure that housing developments accommodating the elderly, the disabled and the households least likely to own cars have easy and convenient access to local facilities and to public transport.
- P-SN-HOU-7** Support proposals for the provision of sheltered housing and work with the various bodies / organisations responsible for provision of this type of accommodation.

5.6 Miscellaneous housing provisions

5.6.1 Holiday homes and second homes

Managing the provision of tourism accommodation is essential to ensuring the delivery of a sustainable tourism strategy. As outlined in **Section 4.4 Tourism**, much of Sligo’s tourism product is based upon its heritage and landscapes. Therefore, in the interest of protecting the rural environment, demand for holiday homes and second homes should be accommodated in serviced settlements only.

Enniscrone, Easky, Mullaghmore, Rosses Point and Strandhill are designated “settlements with special functions”, which play a regionally significant coastal tourism role. It is unlikely that other settlements in the County will experience a high demand for holiday homes, but any such case should be restricted to small-scale developments.

While the provision of holiday accommodation within existing settlements can contribute to the local economy, it might result in local people being priced out of the property market. It can also put increased pressure on local infrastructure. There is a need to ensure a balance between the number of holiday/second homes and the number of permanent residences. The Planning Authority will monitor the supply of holiday homes, in order to ensure that an appropriate balance is maintained.

It is sometimes unclear whether a particular development is to be used as holiday/second homes or as permanent housing. This makes quantification of holiday home provision difficult. In the interests of clarity, all such future proposals will be required to submit additional details regarding tenure, management etc.

Holiday homes and second homes policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-HSH-1** Direct proposals for holiday homes and second homes into existing serviced settlements, particularly into Easky, Mullaghmore, Rosses Point, Strandhill and Enniscrone and subject to the availability of adequate water and wastewater capacity and Habitats Directive assessment.
- P-HSH-2** Ensure that an appropriate balance is maintained between the number of holiday/second homes and the number of permanent homes within each settlement with special functions.
- P-HSH-3** Require, where appropriate, at planning application stage, the submission of precise details regarding the intentions for tenure and management of potential holiday/second home developments.
- P-HSH-4** Ensure that new holiday home developments are constructed to the standards and specifications applicable to housing intended for permanent occupation. Exceptions may be made for specific types of holiday accommodation designed exclusively for short-term occupation by tourists (e.g. apart-hotels, chalets etc.)

Holiday homes and second homes objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-HSH-1** Continue to carry out monitoring of the number and location of holiday/second homes throughout the plan period.

5.6.2 Derelict houses

The Council will encourage the restoration of derelict houses in the countryside, in preference to their demolition and replacement. At the same time, sympathetic consideration will be given, on a case-by-case basis, to proposals to provide replacement dwellings where restoration is not practical or desirable. This policy applies throughout the entire rural area of County Sligo, including in settlement green belts.

In the case of both restoration and replacement proposals, the design should generally reflect the scale, character and external finishes of the existing house.

Where it is proposed to replace a vernacular dwelling, which in the opinion of the Planning Authority has architectural merit, or cultural or social significance, the retention and restoration of the building will be encouraged in preference to replacement.

Whether it is proposed to replace or restore an existing house, this house should be clearly recognisable as a dwelling. This means that the main characteristics of a house (i.e. external walls, roof, and openings) must be substantially intact and the structure, when last used, must have been used as a dwelling. In assessing the condition of such structures, the Planning Authority will disregard any recent structural works carried out as an attempt to comply with the above requirements.

New houses permitted under this policy should generally be constructed on the site of the house to be replaced – i.e. replacement *in situ* – except in circumstances where a setback is required in order to improve vehicular access or where alternative siting would be preferable in the interests of visual amenity, public health or orderly development.

Derelict houses policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-DHOU-1** Encourage the renovation and reuse of existing derelict houses and consider proposals for replacement houses on their merits. The structures proposed for replacement should generally be intact and exhibit the main characteristics of a dwelling. The location, siting and design of any such replacement house shall reflect those of the existing derelict dwelling. Where historic or vernacular buildings are located on the site, consideration should be given to their retention or incorporation into any proposed development.
- P-DHOU-2** Encourage the retention and restoration of vernacular dwellings of local architectural, cultural or social significance.

5.6.3 Ribbon development

Ribbon development is formed by the building of a row of houses along a road outside of settlement boundaries. It is undesirable because it creates numerous access points onto traffic routes, sterilises backlands, landlocks farmland, creates demands for the uneconomic provision of public infrastructure (e.g. water supply, drainage, footpaths, street lighting) and intrudes on public views of the rural setting.

For the purposes of this Development Plan and in accordance with the Department's guidance provided in the *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines*, ribbon development is defined as five or more houses on any side of a given 250-m stretch of road.

Ribbon development policy

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-RD-1** Discourage development proposals which would be likely to contribute to or exacerbate ribbon development.
- P-RD-2** Consider development proposals on gap sites or peripheral sites at locations where ribbon development is already in place, as an alternative to dispersed development that might have a greater visual or traffic safety impact.

6. Community facilities

The development and facilitation of an effective social infrastructure network is important in the promotion of Sligo as a county which offers a good quality of life, where social inclusion and community participation are regarded as necessary prerequisites to sustainable development.

Quality of life in Sligo's urban and rural settlements is enhanced by access to education, recreation, healthcare and cultural infrastructure. These services are fundamental to social cohesion, as they are able to promote a sense of community and make places more attractive for living and working.

This County Development Plan is concerned with improving existing facilities and making adequate provisions for the development of new facilities.

6.1 LECP provisions

In accordance with the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the promotion of local and community development includes, inter alia, the enhancement of quality of life and wellbeing and the provision of infrastructure and community facilities, investment in physical regeneration and environmental improvements.

During the public consultation for the development of the Local Economic and Community Plan, it became clear that County Sligo has a great diversity of people and communities, with differing needs in terms of education, health, wellbeing in general. There is a need to support all people and communities to participate equally in the social and cultural life of the county.

The LECP 2016 proposes the following **Vision for Sustainable Community Development:**

'County Sligo will be a vibrant social and cultural hub where all members of the community are encouraged to achieve their full potential, where active citizenship is fostered and where human rights, equality, and diversity are valued and respected.'

There are three corresponding High-Level Goals:

Goal 2: *We will harness the transformative power of education and training to boost sustainable economic and community development*

Goal 3: *We will ensure community wellbeing by making Sligo a healthier place to live, grow, work and play*

Goal 4: *We will promote a culture of inclusion and equality and address poverty*

The overall targets are to improve educational attainment, quality of life, health and wellbeing, and decrease poverty and deprivation.

The following objectives are defined under the three Goals :

Goal 2	We will harness the transformative power of education and training to boost sustainable economic and community development
	Objectives
2.1	Promote and develop Sligo as a regional centre of excellence in education
2.2	Support Lifelong Learning and initiatives to support access to education
2.3	Utilise arts and culture as tools for education and personal development
2.4	Develop targeted measures to address educational disadvantage and reduce the achievement gap
2.5	Facilitate better linkages between schools, colleges and local employers
2.6	Develop the skills and educational infrastructure to support job creation in key local economic sectors
Theme	Health and Wellbeing
Goal 3	We will ensure community wellbeing by making Sligo a healthier place to live, grow, work and play
	Objectives
3.1	Empower, build capacity within the community and support participation in health and community wellbeing initiatives
3.2	Introduce measures to improve accessibility and equality in the delivery of health and community services
3.3	Promote positive mental health and wellbeing
3.4	Reduce risk factors for chronic diseases through community-based initiatives
3.5	Plan for a healthy and sustainable environment recognising different needs and abilities
3.6	Develop integrated measures to improve community safety
Theme	Social Inclusion, Poverty and Equality
Goal 4	We will promote a culture of inclusion and equality and address poverty
	Objectives
4.1	Develop measures to address exclusion and poverty in disadvantaged and isolated areas
4.2	Develop initiatives that support social inclusion amongst groups that are vulnerable to poverty and exclusion
4.3	Build and strengthen leadership and capacity in the community sector and increase networking, collaboration and joint planning amongst all organisations
4.4	Develop measures to ensure equality, cultural awareness and integration
4.5	Improve services and outcomes for children, young people and families

Sligo – an age-friendly county

In common with many counties in the North-West, Sligo's proportion of over-65s is growing. Census data shows that in 2011 there were 9,043 people over the age of 65 and only 4,594 children under the age of 5 in County Sligo. This unprecedented demographic shift towards an overall older population presents substantial challenges for the county into the future.

The provision of support services for older people was identified as an area of significant importance during the LECF consultation process.

The actions included in the LECF seek to provide improved structures that will support people to age with more dignity, with easier access to essential services and with more opportunity to stay engaged with their communities. Action 4.2.3, in particular, indicates the Council's intention to deliver an integrated *Age-Friendly Plan* for the county, in collaboration with relevant agencies.

Through its general policies and specific community facilities objectives set out in the mini-plans, the County Development Plan focuses on the spatial aspects of community development, thus complementing the objectives outlined in the LECF.

Together, the CDP and the LECF define a coherent framework for the promotion of social wellbeing in County Sligo.

6.2 Delivering community facilities

Sligo County Council recognises the importance of community participation in the improvement of existing community facilities, and encourages increased involvement of local groups, independently and in association with the relevant statutory bodies, in the future development of the county.

The Council will ensure that local-level participation is facilitated and reinforced through stronger partnerships, thereby enabling the development of an effective social infrastructure to cater more adequately for the needs of the current and future population.

One of the mechanisms through which this can be more easily achieved is the local area plan (LAP) process and the preparation of mini-plans (see Volume 2 of this Plan), where specific requirements and needs can be identified and addressed at the local or neighbourhood level.

While LAPs and mini-plans include lands zoned specifically for community requirements, a flexible and supportive approach will be adopted towards proposals for community facilities on suitable sites within other zoning categories (e.g. residential, mixed uses, industry/enterprise etc).

However, any such proposal should be suitably located within the development limits of the relevant settlement and should be easily accessible for all sections of the community.

The Council adheres to the principle of *universal accessibility*, which is a key concept meaning that "all environments should be accessible by everyone, regardless of ability". Universal accessibility will benefit everyone, affording people with disabilities, older persons, parents with buggies etc. greater access to the built and external environments.

Community facilities policies

- P-CF-1** Assist as far as possible in the provision of community facilities by reserving suitably-located land and through the use of the development management process to ensure provision is made for such facilities as the Council considers appropriate.
- P-CF-2** Require high standards in the design and finishes of community facilities.
- P-CF-3** Optimise existing and proposed physical resources and infrastructure by supporting multi-functional building use and provision, such as the accommodation of small-scale community enterprise units within existing and proposed community facilities.
- P-CF-4** Encourage the siting of community facilities in suitable locations, especially within settlement centres and residential areas or close to existing facilities and public transport routes.
- P-CF-5** Adopt a flexible approach towards the provision of community facilities within a variety of land-use zoning categories, in particular on lands zoned for mixed uses, residential development and enterprise. Such proposals should be located within settlement development limits and should be easily accessible for all sections of the community.

It is acknowledged that some community facilities may be better accommodated in rural areas, outside settlement development limits, subject to site suitability and subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

6.3 Education

It is recognised that education is a critical driver of economic success and social progress. The provision of quality education and training is central to the skills, knowledge and innovation-based economy that will underpin future prosperity. Improved access to education and training opportunities is also crucial to helping achieve the objectives of a more sustainable and inclusive society.

In recent years, there has been a continuous improvement in the level of education amongst the population in County Sligo. In 1991, 36.1% of adults had primary education only. This percentage fell to 20.1% in 2006, and 16.6% in 2011.

The proportion of Sligo's population with third-level education has grown from 13.0% in 1991 to 29.0% in 2006 and 30.0% in 2011. The most common qualifications are in the areas of social science, business, engineering, manufacturing, health, welfare and education and teaching.

There are 68 primary schools and 14 post-primary schools in County Sligo. At third level, the Institute of Technology (IT) and St. Angela's College both play important roles.

The Department of Education and Skills is responsible for the delivery of educational facilities and services. The County Council's responsibility in this regard is to ensure that adequate serviced or serviceable land is available to meet current and future requirements.

One method of addressing these future requirements is by reserving suitable sites in settlements through the mini-plan and local area plan preparation processes. In addition to site reservation through the specific zoning of land for the provision of community facilities, education and related uses will also be favourably considered within other zoning categories, thereby ensuring sufficient flexibility to accommodate future needs.

Education facilities policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-ED-1** Support the provision of additional land for education-related uses through the consideration (on suitable sites) of such facilities in a variety of land-use zoning categories, in particular lands zoned for community facilities, mixed uses and residential development.
- P-ED-2** Direct new educational facilities to locate within existing settlements, preferably near community facilities (such as community centres, playing fields and libraries) and public transport services. Only in exceptional cases will out-of-town locations be considered and will be subject to compliance with habitats directive assessment.
- P-ED-3** Support the educational institutions in their plans to expand and develop.
- P-ED-4** Support Sligo's schools in the upgrading and modernisation of their building stock, so as to ensure that these institutions can accommodate population growth.
- P-ED-5** Ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided concurrent with the development of an educational facility. Such infrastructure may include footpaths, pedestrian crossings, cycle lanes, parking facilities and facilities for those with special needs.

6.4 Arts and cultural facilities

Sligo County Council supports and promotes opportunities for everyone to participate in the cultural life of the county by facilitating the provision of well-managed, sustainable cultural infrastructure, suitable for all ages, and by adopting a flexible approach to the incorporation of cultural facilities in the development or refurbishment of community facilities.

Public art is commissioned and co-ordinated by the Public Art Officer (Sligo Arts Service) and carried out in line with the Council’s public art policy. Commissions are funded through the government-supported *Percent For Art* scheme.

Libraries

Sligo County Council currently operates a central library in Sligo town, two community libraries, one part-time branch library, a mobile library, as well as a County Museum and County Archive service. These services play an important role in connecting and empowering communities.

The library service in County Sligo is undergoing a major change in the delivery of its core services as envisioned in the DHPCLG’s policy document *Opportunities for All: Catalyst for Economic, Social, and Cultural Development – a Strategy for Public Libraries 2013 -2017*.

Public libraries in County Sligo are being upgraded as fully accessible, neutral spaces, with a view to facilitating communities to avail of arts, business and cultural activities and services.

Sligo County Council’s *Library Services Development Plan 2017–2022* charts the future direction of Sligo’s library service through strategies which aim to meet the demands of the evolving economic and community profile of the county.

Arts and cultural facilities policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-AC-1** Encourage and assist in the development of the arts and to support the ongoing development of cultural infrastructure throughout the County.
- P-AC-2** Continue to enhance the public domain by encouraging the provision of public art, both temporary and permanent, across all art forms and artistic disciplines throughout County Sligo, supported by the *Percent for Art* funding scheme.
- P-AC-3** Support the improvement of library facilities and services, particularly in those communities which have undergone rapid increases in population or designated for future development.
- P-AC-4** Support the delivery of the objectives and actions set out in the Sligo Library Service Plan 2017-2022 in providing community-based educational, cultural and lifelong learning centres.

6.5 Childcare facilities

The provision of childcare facilities is recognised as a key piece of social infrastructure required to enable people to access employment, education and social networks. Access to good quality childcare facilities is a high priority for many families in County Sligo.

The LECP, through its Action 2.2.3, indicates that Sligo County Council will support the delivery of affordable childcare to enable greater uptake of education opportunities. The target is to deliver more community childcare places under the co-ordination of Sligo County Childcare Committee (SCCC).

Through the Development Plan, Sligo County Council will support the SCCC in the delivery of additional childcare places mainly by zoning lands for community facilities (which include childcare) in suitable locations within settlements.

The Council will also require the provision of childcare facilities as an integral part of new large-scale residential developments, as recommended in the DECLG's 2001 *Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities*. Generally, one childcare facility with places for 20 children should be provided for every 75 dwellings.

Childcare policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-CC-1** Work with the Sligo County Childcare Committee in the delivery of additional childcare places at suitable locations.
- P-CC-2** Encourage the establishment of appropriate childcare facilities in suitable locations, such as village centres, areas of concentrated employment, in the vicinity of schools, adjacent to public transport corridors and /or pedestrian areas, and in larger new housing estates.
- P-CC-3** Apply the recommendations of the DECLG's *Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2001) when considering proposals for large-scale residential developments. In certain cases, the provision of multi-purpose community facilities may be acceptable.
- P-CC-4** Support proposals that provide an improved variety of childcare services (both in terms of childcare providers, i.e. private / community, and childcare type, i.e. sessional services / full-day care).
- P-CC-5** Optimise existing physical resources/infrastructure within the County by supporting multi-functional building use and provision, to include childcare facilities.

6.6 Healthcare facilities

The Health Service Executive for the North-West is the primary body responsible for the delivery of health and personal social services to Sligo's population. Of equal significance is the role it plays in promoting health and wellbeing.

In line with the government policy of decentralisation of healthcare facilities, certain services are now being provided outside major hospitals. Residential services for the elderly, mental health services, learning disability services and primary care services are now distributed throughout a number of settlements within County Sligo. This has improved service accessibility and has been achieved through the upgrading of existing health centres and the construction of new ones.

The provision and expansion of healthcare facilities and the integration of appropriate healthcare facilities within new and existing communities will continue to be supported by the County Council.

Healthcare policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-HC-1** Encourage the integration of healthcare services and facilities with new and existing community facilities, where feasible.
- P-HC-2** Promote the provision of healthcare services and facilities within existing settlements, on sites convenient to pedestrian access and public transport.
- P-HC-3** Support the provision of healthcare services and and universally accessible facilities for people with all types of disabilities and special needs in accordance with the recommended standards set out in *Building for everyone – a Universal Design Approach (NDA, 2012)*.
- P-HC-4** Accommodate the provision of accessible care facilities throughout the County to cater for the specific needs of the elderly and those of young people.
- P-HC-5** Facilitate the phased redevelopment of the existing Wisdom services care facility at Cregg, subject to the availability of adequate wastewater treatment infrastructure and subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

6.7 Outdoor recreation

Outdoor recreational spaces and facilities are essential for the health and wellbeing of people living in County Sligo. The natural amenities available in Sligo, such as the Atlantic beaches, lakes, rivers, mountains, forests and trails, make the county an ideal location for outdoor sport and recreation, both active and passive. These natural amenities need to be augmented by parks, playing fields, playgrounds, green networks for walking and cycling, which should be easily accessible to all the county's communities, urban or rural.

Open spaces, both public and private, can fulfil a variety of functions in addition to recreation, such as providing visual amenity, protecting habitats and biodiversity, drainage management (particularly storm water control) etc.

Playing fields and other open spaces are an important resource for sport. They also make a significant contribution to passive recreation and possess amenity value. There is a need to safeguard such facilities from unacceptable development in order to continue to provide for the needs of both current users and future generations. The Council will therefore generally discourage development on, or the removal of existing playing fields, pitches and other recreational open spaces.

The Council will ensure that adequate land is zoned for the development of outdoor recreational and sporting facilities, which should be equally accessible to the youth, the older adults and those who are disadvantaged or marginalised.

6.7.1 Open space and parks

The provision of quality green space, for people of all age groups and levels of physical fitness, is paramount, particularly in the context of urban, higher-density development.

Open spaces and outdoor recreational facilities will be required to be an integral part of the design of new development. At the same time, the Council will adopt a more proactive approach with regard to the provision of larger open spaces, such as parks, for the benefit of the city, town and village communities. Special attention should be given to targeting recreational facilities to teenagers.

Sligo County Council will continue to develop its hierarchy of parks and open spaces incorporating a network of areas for passive and active recreation, as funding becomes available. The hierarchical approach seeks to achieve a balanced provision of parks of different sizes and functions distributed throughout the County, and particularly in Sligo City and Environs.

6.7.2 Children's play

Sligo County Council recognises the importance of play in childhood and the need to maximise opportunities for play, both within the natural and built environment. The Council will support the provision of playgrounds in a variety of land-use zoning categories, from residential areas and community facilities to areas zoned for sports and recreation or green belts, where appropriate.

The development of a primary and secondary network of playgrounds, based on size of catchment, will continue to be progressed in Sligo City and Environs, as funding becomes available.

6.7.3 Sports

County Sligo was designated European Town of Sport 2014, based on the diverse range of sporting activities available to the people of Sligo, the commitment of clubs, communities, schools, IT Sligo, the programmes rolled out to targeted and disadvantaged groups, and the support given by the agencies involved, in particular the partnership approach to the delivery of sports and recreational activities. This Development Plan supports this partnership approach to the delivery of sports and recreational activities, in particular the objectives set out in Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership's Strategic Plan 2013–2016.

Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership (SSRP) was established in 2001 under the Irish Sports Council, to increase levels of participation in sport and physical activity in County Sligo. Its work includes programmes to increase participation of people of all ages and abilities.

One of the objectives of the SSRP, as set out in its strategic plan, is to support the development of future outdoor recreation spaces, including walking and cycling trails.

Sligo County Council will facilitate the development of existing sports and outdoor recreation facilities and will support the provision of additional facilities at suitable locations.

6.7.4 Outdoor recreational amenities

Sligo's natural environment lends itself to a large variety of outdoor pursuits, including walking, hill-walking, mountaineering, rock-climbing, cycling, mountain biking, and all types of water sports including swimming, surfing, kite surfing, sailing, kayaking, rowing, and supping. These are all recognised as growing leisure activities that can largely be facilitated with a minimum of supporting infrastructure.

Sligo County Council will facilitate the development of appropriate support infrastructure to enable improved access to such activities, including an appropriately designed and sited National Mountain Bike Centre at Coolaney, a Maritime Centre in Strandhill, a Beachery in Rosses Point and a pontoon at Riverside in Sligo City.

Coastal zones, uplands, lake and river banks as well as forests are among the most attractive areas for outdoor pursuits. Access to such areas is essential for both local residents and tourists.

Public rights of way

Public rights of way constitute an important recreational amenity for local people and visitors. They enable the enjoyment of landscape, natural and archaeological heritage, and provide links to valuable assets such as lakes, mountains, bogs and forests. A public right of way is a person's right of passage, established by usage or grant, along a road or path, even if the route is not in public ownership.

The Council recognises the importance of protecting existing public rights of way and will pursue the creation of additional ones, by agreement with landowners, to facilitate the development of walking trails in areas of high amenity value.

A public right of way will only be included in the Development Plan when the following criteria have been satisfied:

- There must be actual dedication by the landowner to the public use of the route in question or there must be sufficient evidence to show that such a dedication was intended;
- A public right of way must be open to the public and not just a class of persons or limited number of the public;
- A public right of way must start in and finish in a public area (i.e. it cannot terminate in private property);
- A public right of way cannot be obtained by stealth, by force or by licence i.e. it must be a route to which the public have a right of access as a right not by way of permission.
- The Council has identified six routes which are considered to fulfil the above criteria. These routes are listed in Table 6.A below and shown on a set of maps grouped in Appendix J.

Table 6.A Public rights of way within County Sligo

Reference no.	Location	Description
PROW 1	Lissadell	From the centre of the Bunbrennoige Bridge for a distance of 263 m west to the point where the former Lissadell House was situated along the coast
PROW 2	Ballysadare	Quarry walk from the existing road to the foreshore and Abbey
PROW 3	Rosses Point	From the public car park to the second beach
PROW 4	Enniscrone	Walk north from the Pier along the seashore, exiting 870 m north onto L-66018
PROW 5	Trawane Bay	From the road L-60043 to the shoreline of Trawane Bay
PROW 6	Mullaghmore / Cliffony	From the R-297 to the beach at Trawalua

It is important to note that this list is not an exhaustive. The omission of a right of way from this list shall not be taken as an indication that such a right of way is not a public right of way. Over the life of this plan, the Council will endeavour to add to this list where it has been established that the above criteria have been satisfied and having consulted with the communities and landowners involved.

Additional details on PROW 1


In accordance with Supreme Court Rulings No. 89 and 92 of 2011:

- A right of way exists between point A (Easting 162505.674, Northing 344090.033) and point B (Easting 162261.274, Northing 344008.744) – see map after p. 98
- There is no right of parking off the route of PROW 1;

The right to pass and repass the nine-foot avenue does not extend to the lawns, gardens or any other land on either side of the right of way.



PROW 1
Public right of way
number 1 at Lissadill

 Public right of way
to be preserved



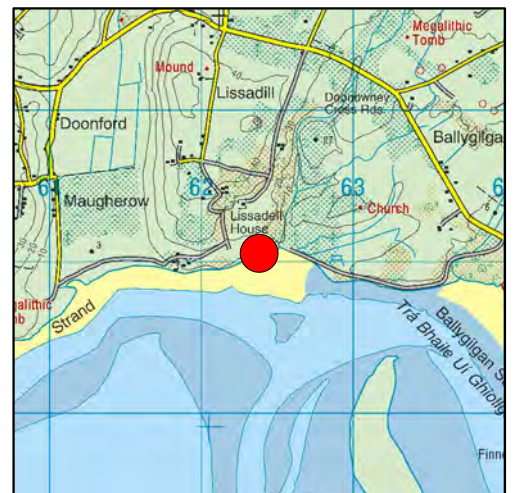
Notes:

Details shown on this map are for information purposes only. Further details on any item should be clarified with Sligo County Council.

This map has been produced by Sligo County Council with available Local Authority and Ordnance Survey Ireland base data.


It is important to note that this is not an exhaustive list and that the omission of a Right of Way from this list shall not be taken as an indication that such a Right of Way is not a Public Right of Way.

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PROW 2
Public right of way
number 2 at Ballysadare

 Public right of way
to be preserved



Notes:

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PROW 3
Public right of way
number 3 at Rosses Point

 Public right of way
to be preserved



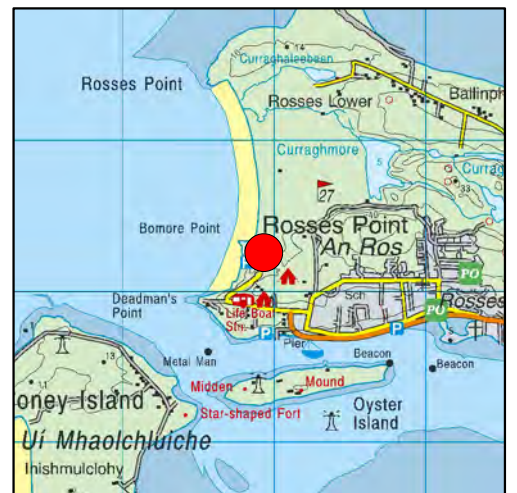
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PROW 4
Public right of way
number 4 at Enniscrone

 Public right of way
to be preserved



Notes:

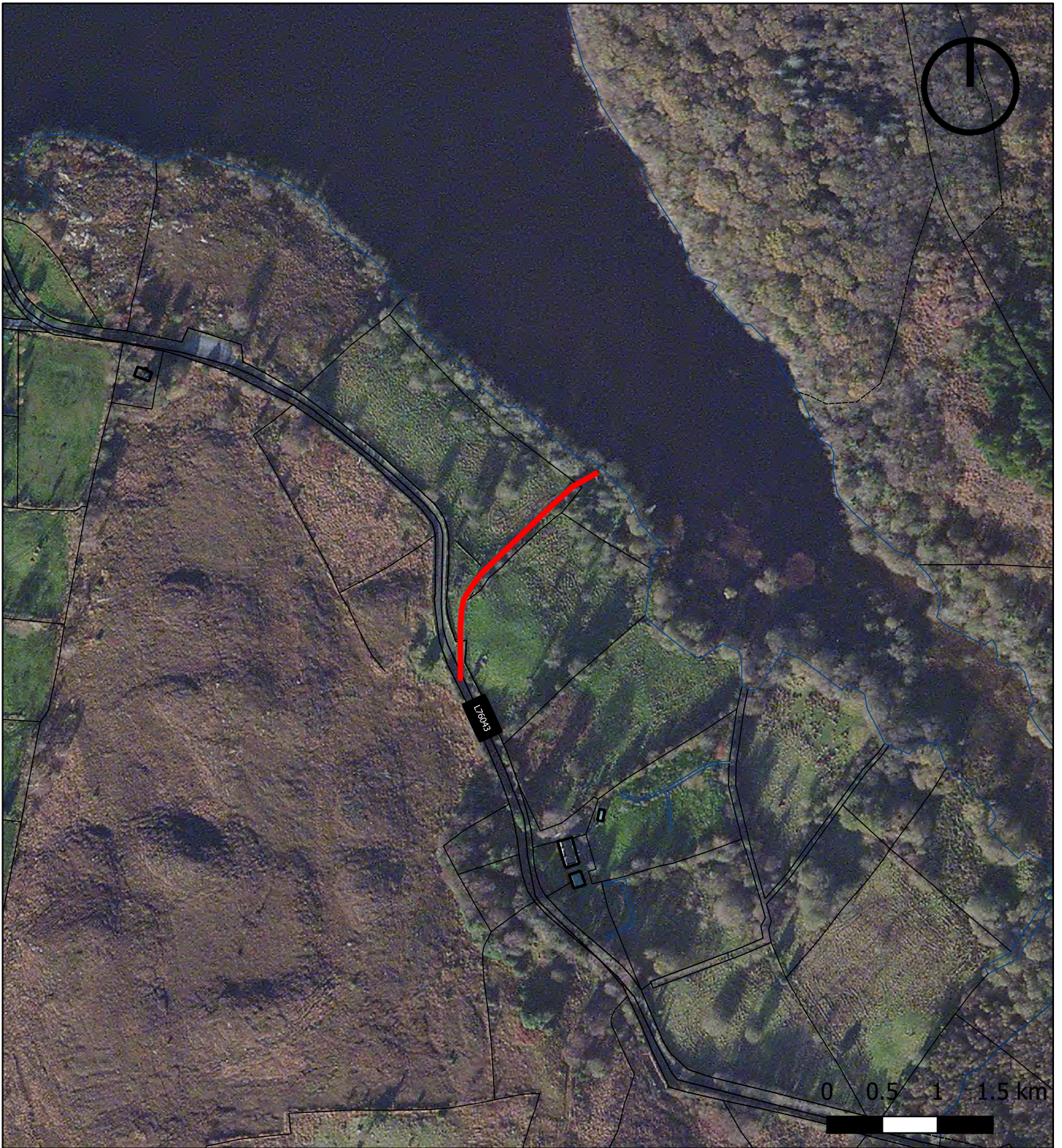
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PROW 5
Public right of way
number 5 at Trawane Bay

 Public right of way
to be preserved



Notes:

Details shown on this map are for information purposes only. Further details on any item should be clarified with Sligo County Council.

This map has been produced by Sligo County Council with available Local Authority and Ordnance Survey Ireland base data.


It is important to note that this is not an exhaustive list and that the omission of a Right of Way from this list shall not be taken as an indication that such a Right of Way is not a Public Right of Way.

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PROW 6
Public right of way
number 6 at Trawalua
Strand

 **Public right of way**
to be preserved



Notes:

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Established walking routes

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.

Permissive Trails

In contrast to public rights of way, many long-distance walking routes exist on a permissive access basis. The National Waymarked Way network is a particular category of walks which are created under the long-distance walking routes committee established in 1979. While they were labelled as National Waymarked Ways, they are not to be confused with designated public rights of way. As National Waymarked Ways are permissive in nature, consent can be withdrawn at any time by the landowner.

Greenways

Greenways are routes shared by non-motorised users, such as walkers, cyclists, roller skaters, and sometimes horse riders, which can be used for recreation, tourism and even daily journeys. They are often created out of disused railways, canal towpaths, utility rights-of-way, or along river corridors.

Greenways provide a framework for community-based initiatives and projects related to nature conservation, cultural heritage preservation, sustainable tourism and mobility. They are usually managed by local people in order to encourage sustainable development and healthy lifestyle.

The routes predominantly utilise established green spaces, but can also cross and link to public roads. As they provide recreational opportunities for walking, jogging and cycling, these routes should meet satisfactory standards of width, gradient and surface condition to ensure that they are both user-friendly and low-risk for users of all abilities.

There are three major types of greenways: long-distance (connecting countries, regions and major settlements), local greenways and urban greenways.

The main purpose of **long-distance greenways** is sustainable tourism (typically cycle tourism). Please refer to Chapter 8 Transport for details on the Council's objectives for long-distance greenways.

Local greenways are usually shorter paths developed in rural areas for recreation, heritage interpretation and week-end tourism.

Urban greenways are shared-use trails built along rivers, abandoned railways or natural corridors in urban areas. In addition to the recreational uses, they also provide safe mobility for daily trips.

As part of the preparation or review of local area plans and mini-plans, the County Council will identify green corridors suitable for the creation of urban and local (rural greenways).

“Neighbourwoods”

The Council recognises the recreational potential of forestry and will support local communities seeking to establish a “neighbourwood”. The NeighbourWood Scheme, which is operated by the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), supports the development of attractive close-to-home woodland amenities (or ‘neighbourwoods’) for public use and enjoyment. The scheme is available to local authorities and private landowners, working in partnership with local communities.

Outdoor recreation policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

General

P-OR-1 Protect and enhance public open spaces and established recreational green areas.

P-OR-2 Support the provision of a variety of accessible, multifunctional, high-quality open spaces and facilities for active and passive recreation, which meet the needs of residents and visitors to County Sligo, are fit for purpose and are economically and environmentally sustainable.

Parks and open spaces

P-OR-3 Reserve land for new parks and other recreational green spaces as part of the preparation of local area plans for Sligo City, Key Support Towns and village mini-plans.

P-OR-4 Extend the range of recreational facilities provided within parks and other types of open spaces, as budgets allow.

P-OR-5 Develop and improve physical linkages and connections between the network of parks and public open spaces in the County.

P-OR-6 Where feasible, develop walkways and cycleways between green spaces or green corridors in built-up areas and recreational areas located outside settlements, including coastal, upland, lakeland and forestry sites and subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

Playgrounds

P-OR-7 Support the provision of playgrounds in a variety of land-use zoning categories, from residential areas and community facilities to areas zoned for sports and recreation or green belts, where appropriate.

Sports facilities

P-OR-8 Support the objectives of the Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership's Strategic Plan 2013-2016, *Sport and Recreation - A Way of Life in Sligo*, and any successor Strategic Plans.

P-OR-9 Support the development of existing sports and recreation facilities, and the provision of new facilities, as appropriate and subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive..

P-OR-10 Preserve existing public or private recreation areas, including sports clubs, grounds, built leisure facilities and open space. If a change of use is sought, ensure that

alternative recreational facilities are provided in a suitable location.

P- ORS-11 Facilitate shared use of sports and recreation facilities, particularly school facilities.

P- ORS-12 Support local sports and community groups in the development of facilities through appropriate land use zoning and ensure that all new facilities are appropriately located where they can best meet the needs of all sections of the community that they are intended to serve.

P- OR-13 Encourage the provision of sports and recreation infrastructure as an integral part of new residential schemes.

Outdoor recreational amenities

P- OR-14 Preserve and improve access for the public to lakes, beaches, coastal, riverside, upland and other areas that have traditionally been used for outdoor recreation and subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive. Where feasible, apply or support the application of universal design principles, as recommended in *Building for everyone – a Universal Design Approach (NDA, 2012)*.

P- OR-15 Support the sustainable development of water-based leisure, tourism and related activities in County Sligo, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

P- OR-16 Actively promote and protect public access to the coast and uplands, and designate traditional walking routes thereto as public rights-of-way.

P- OR-17 Protect existing known rights of way and seek the establishment of additional rights of way, by agreement with landowners, to extend existing walking trails or create new ones and subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive..

P-OR-18 Continue the process of mapping rights of way in the County during the lifetime of this development plan, pending resources.

P- OR-19 Provide adequate signposting and waymarking on rights of way.

Greenways

P-OR-20 Protect existing local greenways and consider designating them as public rights of way.

P-OR-21 As part of the preparation or review of local area plans and village mini-plans, identify corridors suitable for the creation of urban greenways and seek to connect and integrate them with local and long-distance greenways in the adjoining rural areas and subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

P-OR-22 Seek to protect the integrity of established long-distance walking routes. When assessing applications for developments in the vicinity of established walking routes, the Planning Authority shall consider the proposed developments' potential impact

on such routes.

Recreational woodlands

- P- OR-23** Protect access to forestry and woodlands – in co-operation with Coillte and private owners or operators – for walking routes (including long distance and looped walks), mountain trails, nature trails etc. for the benefit of local people and tourists.
- P- OR-24** Support local communities that wish to apply for grants under the Forest Service’s **Neighbourwood Scheme** (DAFM) or any other initiative aiming to establish or enhance woodlands for recreation.

6.8 Allotments

An allotment is defined as an area of land comprising not more than 1,000 square metres that is let for cultivation by someone who is a member of the local community and lives close to the allotment. The purpose of allotments is the production of vegetables or fruit for consumption by the cultivators and their families.

Sligo County Council recognises the public’s interest in growing fruit and vegetables locally. Cultivating food on allotments offers economic and health benefits, and can contribute to a decrease in the consumption of energy involved in the production and transportation of food.

The Planning Authority will therefore facilitate the development of allotments at suitable locations throughout the County. Such locations should be consistent with the terms of the definition above and should be located within or close to existing settlements, where they will be easily accessible to all sections of the local community.

Allotments policy

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-A-1** Facilitate the development of allotments at suitable locations throughout the County. Any such facility should be located within or close to an existing settlement and should be easily accessible.

6.9 Burial grounds

Sligo County Council is responsible for the acquisition of land for the provision of burial grounds, for undertaking any necessary works on these lands and for delineating burial plots. The Council monitors the operation of burial grounds and reviews requirements in this regard on an ongoing basis.

The Council's Burial Grounds Policy highlights the fact that 48 of the 64 burial grounds in the county are designated National Monuments and, as such, require appropriate consultation and consents prior to carrying out any works on site.

Burial grounds policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-BG-1** Provide or assist in the provision of new burial grounds and, where feasible, extensions to existing burial grounds, by reserving sufficient land in suitable locations.
- P-BG-2** Encourage the development of burial grounds to take account of cremation and 'green lawn' principles, to promote more efficient use of land and to facilitate maintenance.
- P-BG-3** Ensure that appropriate archaeological assessment is carried out in relation to any proposals to extend or for works to burial grounds which are designated National Monuments, in accordance with the requirements of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 2004.

7. Heritage

County Sligo has a rich and diverse heritage, which includes landscapes, countryside, archaeological sites and the built environment of towns and villages. Heritage is integral to the identity of Sligo. It provides the county with a strong sense of place, character and distinctiveness. Heritage protection is an integral part of sustainable development, it has environmental and quality of life benefits for the people of Sligo, and also brings significant economic benefits.

In 2002, the Government published the *National Heritage Plan* and the *National Biodiversity Plan*, which set out strategies for the conservation and management of our heritage. A key element of both plans is an enhanced role for local authorities in heritage awareness and management, to be given effect through the preparation and implementation of *County Heritage Plans* and *Biodiversity Action Plans*.

Relevant legislation

Many features of Sligo's heritage are nationally and/or internationally important and are therefore protected by international and national heritage legislation.

The National Monuments Acts (1930-2004) provides the framework for the protection of archaeological heritage.

The Planning and Development Act (2000-2015) provide the mechanism for protecting and managing built heritage by listing historic buildings on the Record of Protected Structures and through the designation of Architectural Conservation Areas.

The European Birds Directive (1979) and **Habitats Directive** (1992), **Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations** 2011, the **Wildlife Act** 1976 and the **Wildlife (Amendment) Acts** 2000-2010 provide for the protection of natural heritage. In addition, Ireland has ratified a number of international conventions and agreements relating to heritage.

The **National Heritage Plan** (2002) and **National Biodiversity Plan** (2011) state national policy and identify national priorities in relation to the protection and management of national heritage. The core objectives of these plans are to protect the national heritage and to promote it as a resource to be enjoyed by all. These plans require local authorities to prepare and implement Heritage and Biodiversity Plans, in partnership with relevant stakeholders.

Heritage – general objectives

It is the objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-H-1** Implement, in partnership with all relevant stakeholders, the *County Sligo Heritage Plan 2016-2020* and subsequent heritage plans.
- O-H-2** Adopt and implement, in partnership with all relevant stakeholders, the *County Sligo Biodiversity Action Plan 2011-2015* and subsequent biodiversity plans.
- O-H-3** Prepare and support the implementation of a Green Infrastructure Strategy¹ for County Sligo.

7.1 Natural heritage and biodiversity

Natural heritage includes the variety of life we see around us every day, often referred to as biodiversity. It consists of native plants, animals and their habitats, the physical and geological foundation that forms landscapes and seascapes, and the influence of people who have settled there. These elements combined make up the unique biodiversity of the county.

Biodiversity loss is recognised as a global threat. Accordingly, the EU has set a target to halt biodiversity loss by 2020 through implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy (2011). The strategy reflects the commitments taken by the EU in 2010, within the international Convention on Biological Diversity. The EU Biodiversity Strategy has the following 6 targets:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Target 1 | Protect species and habitats |
| Target 2 | Maintain and restore ecosystems |
| Target 3 | Achieve more sustainable agriculture and forestry |
| Target 4 | Make fishing more sustainable and seas healthier |
| Target 5 | Combat invasive alien species |
| Target 6 | Help stop the loss of global biodiversity |

¹ Green Infrastructure can be broadly defined as a strategically planned network of high quality natural and semi-natural areas with other environmental features, which is designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services and protect biodiversity in both rural and urban settings. (source: *Building a Green Infrastructure for Europe* – European Commission, 2013 – available at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/docs/green_infrastructure_broc.pdf)

Natural heritage – general policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-NH-1** Protect, sustainably manage and enhance the natural heritage, biodiversity, geological heritage, landscape and environment of County Sligo in recognition of its importance for nature conservation and biodiversity, and as a non-renewable resource, in association with all stakeholders.
- P-NH-2** Promote increased understanding and awareness of the natural heritage and biodiversity of the county.
- P-NH-3** Protect and, where possible, enhance the plant and animal species and their habitats that have been identified under the EU Habitats Directive, EU Birds Directive, the Wildlife Act and the Flora Protection Order.
- P-NH-4** Take full account of the precautionary principle where uncertainty exists regarding the potential impact of a proposed development on the natural heritage resource.

7.1.1 Designated sites for nature conservation

EU nature legislation, most notably the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive, forms the backbone of biodiversity policy and the legal basis for Natura 2000, the nature protection network, through designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). This European network of biodiversity sites is supplemented by the designation of Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) designated in Ireland by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). Locally, sites of heritage value are designated through the County Development Plan as County Biodiversity Sites.

The lists and maps of pNHAs, cSACs and SPAs, Ramsar Sites and statutory Nature Reserves occurring in County Sligo, are provided in **Appendix A**.

Protected natural areas cannot thrive in isolation. Maintaining and re-establishing connectivity between these natural areas is needed to restore the health of ecosystems and allow species to thrive across their entire natural habitat. This connectedness can be achieved through “green infrastructure” which seeks to harness biodiversity as a natural infrastructure for the benefit of both people and nature.

Designated sites for nature conservation – policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

P-DSNC-1 Protect and maintain the favourable conservation status and conservation value of all natural heritage sites designated or proposed for designation in accordance with European and national legislation and agreements. These include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Ramsar Sites, Statutory Nature Reserves.

In addition, the Council will identify, maintain and develop non-designated areas of high nature conservation value which serve as linkages or ‘stepping stones’ between protected sites in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.

P-DSNC-2 Promote the maintenance and, as appropriate, achievement of ‘favourable conservation status’ of habitats and species in association with the NPWS.

P-DSNC-3 Carry out an appropriate level of assessment for all development plans, land-use plans and projects that the Council authorizes or proposes to undertake or adopt, to determine the potential for these plans or projects to impact on designated sites, proposed designated sites or associated ecological corridors and linkages in accordance with the Habitats Directive, All appropriate assessments shall be in compliance with the provisions of Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

P-DSNC-4 Consider development within, or with the potential to affect, Natural Heritage Areas or proposed Natural Heritage Areas, where it is shown that such development, activities or works will not have significant negative impacts on such sites or features, or in circumstances where impacts can be appropriately mitigated.

Designated sites for nature conservation – objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

O-DSNC-1 Identify and protect local areas of high nature conservation value and support the management of landscape features which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.

7.1.2 Protected plant and animal species

County Sligo hosts many native wild plant and animal species, some of which are unique and special to the county. Certain species are rare or vulnerable and are protected by law, as they require special measures to ensure their continued survival. At national level, the Flora (Protection) Order (2015) lists legally protected plant species. The Wildlife Act 1976 and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 list protected animal species.

The Habitats Directive contains Annexes for plant and animal species (other than birds) identified to be of conservation concern and for which conservation measures and regulations apply.

The Birds Directive contains a number of Annexes which list bird species for which varying conservation measures and regulations apply. This protection applies wherever the bird species are found and is not confined to sites designated for nature conservation. This is particularly important when assessing development proposals for lands outside an SPA which are used for roosting, feeding, nesting etc. by bird species for which the SPA is designated.

The Habitats Directive and the implementing Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 require that certain species listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive be strictly protected. These are as follows (species known to occur in Sligo are indicated thus *): all Bat species*, Otter*, Whales and Dolphins*, Leatherback Turtle, Natterjack Toad, Kerry Slug, Killarney Fern*, Slender Naiad and Yellow Marsh Saxifrage.

These species are not restricted to designated nature conservation areas. Bats and otters may be found anywhere in the county, where conditions and habitats are suitable. Carrying out of any work that has the potential to disturb these species, and for which a derogation licence has not been granted by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, may constitute an offence.

A list of all known protected plant and animal species known to occur in County Sligo is included in **Appendix B**.

Protected plant and animal species – policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-PPAS-1** Ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact, incapable of satisfactory mitigation on plant, animal or bird species protected by law
- P-PPAS-2** Consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (DAHG) and take account of any licensing requirements when undertaking, approving and authorising development which is likely to affect plant, animal or bird species protected by law.
- P-PPAS-3** Provide guidance to developers and others in relation to species protected by law and their protection and management in the context of development.

Protected plant and animal species – objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

O-PPAS-1 Undertake surveys, as appropriate, to establish the location of protected flora and fauna in the Plan area through the County Heritage Plan and the County Biodiversity Action Plan.

7.1.3 Nature conservation outside of designated sites

Nature conservation legislation provides for the protection of sites and species of international and national importance. However, sites and species benefitting from statutory protection do not alone represent the full extent of natural heritage. In fact, most biological diversity occurs throughout the countryside. Rare and protected sites and species cannot survive independently of their surroundings. The wider landscape provides vital links and corridors to allow the movement of plants and animals between protected sites.

Promoting and protecting biodiversity and wildlife corridors

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive requires EU member states to secure the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network by maintaining, and where appropriate developing, features of the landscape (including those crossing national borders) which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora. Such features are those which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure (such as rivers with their banks or the traditional systems of marking field boundaries) or their function as stepping stones (such as ponds or small woods), are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.

County Biodiversity Sites

Many sites of biodiversity value within the County do not meet the criteria that would enable them to be designated at an international or national level. Although these sites are of immense importance at a regional and county level, to date they have not been fully surveyed or recognised as such. In order to inform this process, the County Council has commissioned – and continues to commission – surveys of habitats such as hedgerows, wetlands and unimproved grassland. It is critical to the overall ecological network and biodiversity value of County Sligo that these sites are identified, valued and conserved.

Identification of important elements of the county's ecological network commenced under the County Habitat Mapping Programme. This ongoing work is also listed as an action of the County Sligo Heritage Plan and County Sligo Biodiversity Action Plan.

Nature conservation outside designated sites - policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-NCODS-1** Minimise the impact of new development on habitats of natural value that are key features of the County’s ecological network. Developments likely to have an adverse effect on recognised sites of local nature conservation importance will be required to demonstrate the impacts on the ecological value of the site and will not be approved unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there are reasons for the development that outweigh the need to safeguard the nature conservation value of the site.
- P-NCODS-2** Ensure that development proposals, where relevant, improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and encourage the retention and management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild fauna and flora as per Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.
- P-NCODS-3** Ensure that proposals for development protect and enhance biodiversity, wherever possible, by minimising adverse impacts on existing habitats and by including mitigation and/or compensation measures, as appropriate, which ensure that biodiversity is enhanced.
- P-NCODS-4** Apply the *precautionary principle* in relation to development proposals with potential to impact on County Biodiversity Sites or on local nature conservation interest by requiring an ecological impact assessment (EcIA) to ensure that any proposed development will not affect the integrity and conservation value of the site.
- P-NCODS-5** Ensure that no ecological networks, or parts thereof which provide significant connectivity between areas of local biodiversity, are lost without remediation as a result of implementation of this Plan.
- P-NCODS-6** Provide guidance for developers and the general public in relation to nature conservation outside designated sites and the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and geological heritage in general.
- P-NCODS-7** Integrate biodiversity considerations into Local Authority plans, programmes and activities where appropriate.

Nature conservation outside designated sites – objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-NCODS-1** Continue the County Habitat Mapping project, thereby generating the necessary information to identify landscape features that are of major importance for wild fauna, flora and County Biodiversity Sites, as key features of the county's ecological network
- O-NCODS-2** Identify and protect, in co-operation with the relevant statutory agencies and other relevant groups, County Biodiversity Sites which are not otherwise protected by legislation.
- O-NCODS-3** Ensure that the findings of the county Habitat Mapping project (when completed) are utilised to inform the development management process.

7.1.4 Wetlands

Wetlands include water courses, water bodies marshes, fens, reed beds, bogs and wet woodlands. Wetlands tend to have high biodiversity value, protect water quality and reduce flood risk. While many protected areas include wetlands, most wetland areas occur outside designated sites.

Recent changes to planning legislation require that work or development involving the drainage or reclamation of a wetland greater than 0.1 ha needs planning permission. For drainage or reclamation of wetlands greater than 2 ha, an Environmental Impact Assessment is necessary.

The Council will require an ecological assessment (including where necessary EIA) is carried out at the appropriate level in relation to proposals for drainage or reclamation of wetlands.

Wetlands policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-WET-1** Have regard to the County Sligo Wetlands Surveys 2008-2011 and subsequent wetland surveys that may be published during the lifetime of this Plan. Protect surveyed wetland sites that have been rated of A (International), B (National) and C+ (County) importance.
- P-WET-2** Ensure that an ecological assessment at an appropriate level is undertaken in conjunction with proposals involving drainage or reclamation of wetland habitats.

7.1.5 Trees, woodlands, and hedgerows (A-7-3)

Trees and woodlands make a significant contribution to biodiversity, landscape character and visual amenity. Trees are wildlife habitats, soften hard urban edges and provide scale and backdrops to streets and buildings. They also filter out noise, dust and pollutants and prevent flooding by retaining moisture.

Insensitively designed development can result in loss of or damage to important trees. It is therefore desirable that existing trees are taken into consideration in the formulation and assessment of development proposals. Where trees or groups of trees are of particular value and may be at risk from development or other activities, consideration will be given to the making of tree preservation orders in accordance with the Tree Preservation Guidelines.

Hedgerows constitute an important natural and historic resource, given their contribution to landscape quality, their ecological importance as wildlife habitats, corridors between habitats and historical significance as townland and field boundaries. Hedgerows are afforded protection under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000, which prohibits the cutting of hedges during the bird nesting period (1st March to 1st September).

While the relative importance of hedgerows is difficult to assess without a detailed survey, in general, the following categories are worthy of protection:

- ancient hedgerows – field systems dating prior to the mid-17th Century;
- townland boundaries;
- hedgerows that have a farming, landscape, cultural function;
- hedgerows incorporating archaeological features;
- hedgerows that are important as wildlife corridors between habitats;
- hedgerows adjacent to roads, green lanes, tracks and wooded ground;
- banks and ditches that may have the above characteristics.

Woodlands, trees and hedgerows policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-WTH-1** Protect trees, woodlands and hedgerows from development that would impact adversely upon them. Promote new tree and woodland planting and the enhancement of existing hedgerows by seeking increased coverage, in conjunction with new development using native species of local provenance, where possible.
- P-WTH-2** Discourage the felling of mature trees to facilitate development and, where appropriate make use of tree preservation orders to protect important trees and groups of trees which may be at risk or have an important amenity or historic value.

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| P-WTH-3 | Require the planting of native broadleaved species, and species of local provenance, in new developments. |
| P-WTH-4 | Promote the planting of native tree and shrub species by committing to using native species (of local provenance wherever possible) in its landscaping works and on County Council property. |

7.1.6 Inland Waters - lakes, rivers, streams and groundwater

The rivers and streams, lakes, wetlands and groundwater occurring within the Plan area are home to a variety of habitats and species. Lough Gill, Lough Arrow, Lough Talt, the lakes Gara, Easky and Templehouse, together with the rivers Owenmore, Unshin, Moy and Easky, are the main water bodies in County Sligo. The banks of rivers and streams (riparian zones) are particularly important, as they contain a range of habitats and species which are different from the surrounding landscape. Riparian zones function as ecological corridors and “stepping stones” that enable species to move from place to place. Groundwater is important for supplying water and maintaining wetlands and river flows in dry periods.

Rivers and streams should be maintained in an open, semi-natural condition, wherever possible. Their corridors and valleys should be protected and maintained for their biodiversity, landscape and flood protection value. This should be achieved by strictly controlling development in river/stream corridors and valleys and by implementing sustainable drainage systems for commercial and residential developments. Groundwater resources should be protected and managed in a sustainable manner.

Riparian zones

Riparian zones are particularly vulnerable to damage from inappropriate development. While this Plan does not prohibit development in a riparian zone, developments taking place in such zones must ensure the protection of these vulnerable areas. A key watercourse protection measure is the set-aside of sufficient land along the river margin or corridor:

- for larger river channels (over 10 m), the recommended width of the core riparian zone (CRZ) is 35-60 m (18-30 m on each side of the river) and may be larger where flood plains adjoin the riparian zone;
- for smaller channels (under 10 m), a core riparian zone (CRZ) of 20 m or greater (minimum 10 m on each side of the river) is recommended. The determined width should be tailored to the specific site, river reach or lakeshore characteristics and their associated habitats.
- for salmonid rivers, the core riparian zone should be a minimum of 25 m on each side of the river.

It is important that the buffer zone is large enough to protect the ecological integrity of the river (including emergent vegetation) and the riparian zone (bankside vegetation including trees), taking into account the historical use of the area.

In identifying the Core Riparian Zone along a watercourse, regard will be had to the following criteria:

- provision of bed and bank stability;
- protection of water quality;
- maintenance of viability of riparian vegetation;
- provision of continuity and connectivity along the riparian zone;
- integration with floodplain processes;
- management of edge effects at riparian/urban interface;
- protection of natural values within channels.

Inland waters policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-INW-1** Protect rivers, streams and other water courses and their associated Core Riparian Zones (CRZs) from inappropriate development and maintain them in an open state, capable of providing suitable habitats for fauna and flora. Structures (e.g. bridges) crossing fisheries waters shall be clear-span and shall be designed and built in consultation with Inland Fisheries Ireland.
- P- INW-2** Protect and enhance biodiversity richness by protecting rivers, stream corridors and valleys by reserving land along their banks for ecological corridors, maintaining them free from inappropriate development and discouraging culverting or realignment.
- P- INW-3** Ensure that all proposed greenfield residential and commercial developments use sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) in accordance with best current practice, ensuring protection of the integrity of wetland sites in the adjoining area, including their hydrological regime.
- P- INW-4** Ensure that floodplains and wetlands within the Plan area are retained for their biodiversity and flood protection value.
- P- INW-5** Ensure that proposed developments do not adversely affect groundwater resources and groundwater-dependent habitats and species.

Inland waters objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O- INW-1** Consult with prescribed bodies prior to undertaking, approving or authorising any works or development that may impact on rivers, streams and watercourses.
- O- INW-2** Require that runoff from a developed area does not result in deterioration of downstream watercourses or habitats, and that pollution generated by a development is treated within the development area prior to discharge to local watercourses.

7.1.7 Invasive species

Invasive non-native plant and animal species are the second greatest threat to biodiversity worldwide after habitat destruction. They can negatively impact on native species, can transform habitats and threaten whole ecosystems, causing serious problems to the environment and the economy. Irish legislation makes it an offense to plant, breed, disperse, allow dispersal or cause to grow a range of plant and animal species, or to import or transport these or vector material such as soil or spoil from which they can grow (Articles 49 and 50 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011).

There is potential for the spread of invasive species during excavation and construction works. The Council will seek to prevent the spread of invasive non-native species through the control of movement of contaminated spoil where such movement is regulated or undertaken by the Planning or Local Authority.

Invasive species policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-INV-1** Prevent and control the spread of invasive plant and animal species within the county.
- P-INV-2** Require, where appropriate, Invasive Species Management Plans to be prepared for development proposals regulated by the Planning Authority or undertaken by the Local Authority, and in particular for Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed.

Invasive species objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-INV-1** Undertake a study through the County Heritage Plan and County Biodiversity Plan to quantify the extent of selected invasive species (Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed) within the Plan area, with recommendations of priority species for control or eradication, the degree of threat posed and the resources required for effective management.

7.1.8 Geological heritage sites

To date, sites of geological interest have not been comprehensively covered by the existing nature conservation designations. The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) and the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) are drawing up a list of sites of geological interest that will be proposed as Natural Heritage Areas.

In the interim, Sligo County Council has listed in this Plan the geological features of national and local importance occurring in the County, with the objective of maintaining their conservation value. The list was produced in consultation with the GSI and is included in **Appendix C**.

Sites of geological interest – objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-SGI-1** Protect from inappropriate development, and maintain the character, integrity and conservation value of those features or areas of geological interest that are listed in this Plan or that may be proposed by the DAHG and/or the GSI in the lifetime of this Plan.

7.2 Archaeological heritage

7.2.1 Sligo's archaeology

Archaeological heritage consists of the material remains left behind by past societies and includes structures, places, caves, sites, features or portable objects, whether on land, underwater or in the intertidal zone.

Sligo's irreplaceable archaeological heritage provides information on development through the millennia. Only a portion of the material remains of the past has survived, as many sites have disappeared from the landscape. Of those that do survive, some are visible in the landscape while others only survive beneath the current ground surface or have been remodelled within more modern buildings.

To date, over 6,500 archaeological monuments have been identified in County Sligo, which has one of the highest densities of archaeology of any Irish county. All known archaeological sites are identified in the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) (see www.archaeology.ie).

Sligo's archaeology varies greatly in form, date and condition. Ranging from the Mesolithic Period (7000 BC) to the end of the Medieval Period (1700 AD), the archaeological record includes megalithic sites, fulachta Fiadh, Early Christian ecclesiastical sites, churches and graveyards, medieval buildings, castles, industrial archaeology and underwater sites such as wrecks.

Sligo has a number of significant archaeological and historical landscapes, the most notable being the Cuil Irra Peninsula (which includes Knocknarea, Carrowmore and Carns Hill), Carrowkeel and Inishmurray.

The archaeological heritage is a resource that can be used to gain knowledge and understanding of the past and is, therefore, of great cultural and scientific importance. Sligo County Council recognises the importance of preserving and protecting this resource, while fostering a greater public appreciation of the archaeological heritage within the Plan area.

7.2.2 Policy and legislation

The Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) has specific responsibilities for the identification and protection of our archaeological heritage.

The National Monuments Service carries out these duties in respect of sites and monuments and in line with national policy as stated in *Frameworks and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* (1999), and other policy documents.

Provisions for carrying out works to designated archaeological monuments are outlined in documents such as The Register of Historic Monuments, The Record of Monuments and Places and in the National Monuments Act 1930 and its amendments of 1954, 1987, 1994 and 2004.

Under the Act, there are different levels of monument protection. A level of universal protection is afforded to all monuments listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP). The RMP was established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994; all entries on the list are known as recorded monuments and are shown on an accompanying set of maps.

While all known monuments are included on the RMP, a lesser number are accorded a higher level of protection. Some are entered on the Register of Historic Monuments established under Section 5 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1987.

The highest level of protection is accorded to National Monuments, i.e. monuments deemed to be of national significance (see **Appendix D**). Under Section 14 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 2004, a National Monument is a monument in the ownership or guardianship of the State or a Local Authority or a monument that is the subject of a Preservation Order or a Temporary Preservation Order.

7.2.3 Development proposals affecting archaeology

Various types of development can impact on the visual appreciation, setting and amenity of recorded monuments. Such impacts should be adequately assessed and, where possible, eliminated or minimised. Previously unidentified archaeological sites may be uncovered during development works, while archaeological deposits that would be damaged by development must be investigated and recorded in great detail.

Any proposed development (due to its location, size or nature) with the potential to affect the archaeological heritage resource will be subject to an Archaeological Impact Assessment. This includes proposals close to archaeological monuments, proposals extensive in area (half a hectare or more) or length (1 km or more), and development that requires an Environmental Impact Assessment. Other areas of high archaeological potential may exist outside the boundaries of conventionally recognised monuments, especially graveyards and monastic sites, in wetlands, former wetlands and in the inter-tidal zone.

7.2.4 Industrial archaeology

In 2005, an *Industrial Archaeology Survey of County Sligo* was commissioned by Sligo County Council on behalf of the County Sligo Heritage Forum, as an action of the County Sligo Heritage Plan. The project collated all paper-based information relating to industrial heritage sites in the County. The project outputs were a report outlining approximately 1200 industrial heritage sites in the county, an accompanying database and a digital map of the recorded locations. When considering development proposals that may affect sites identified in the Sligo Industrial Archaeology Survey (2005), the Council will require an Industrial Archaeology Assessment.

7.2.5 Underwater archaeology

County Sligo's coastal waters, tidal estuaries and rivers contain many features and finds associated with its maritime and riverine heritage, such as shipwrecks, piers, quay walls, fords, stepping stones and associated archaeological objects and features. Section 3 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1987 makes specific provisions for the protection of shipwrecks and underwater archaeological objects.

7.2.6 Conservation plans

The purpose of any conservation plan is to describe the significance of a heritage site, assess the issues that make the site vulnerable and put in place policies to address those issues. The Council will have regard to any existing and forthcoming conservation plans prepared as part of the County Sligo Heritage Plan 2016-2020.

The *Sligo Gaol Conservation Plan* was adopted by Sligo County Council in 2010. The Council will seek the implementation of the Sligo Gaol Conservation Plan in association with relevant stakeholders, within the lifetime of this Development Plan.

7.2.7 The Cuil Irra Peninsula – Carrowmore, Knocknarea and Carns Hill

The cluster of megalithic tombs at Carrowmore represents one of the four major passage tomb cemeteries in Ireland and is the largest such cemetery in the country. Others include Carrowkeel, also in County Sligo, as well as Newgrange and Lough Crew in County Meath. The archaeological landscape of the Cuil Irra (Knocknarea) peninsula dates from around 4,000 BC or earlier, as suggested from excavations. The site formed an important ritual centre in the Neolithic period and the known archaeological monuments present are mostly laid out on an east–west axis.

Providing a focus at the centre of the peninsula is the megalithic cemetery at Carrowmore, comprising an oval-shaped cluster of 30 monuments surrounding the centrally placed cairn of “Listoghil” (Tomb 51). To the west of the peninsula, overlooking Carrowmore megalithic cemetery from the summit of Knocknarea Mountain, is the iconic flat-topped cairn known as Miosgán Meadhbha (Maeve’s Cairn). To the east of Cuil Irra, also overlooking Carrowmore, are two large cairns on the summit of Carns Hill. The cairns are comparable in size to Maeve’s Cairn on the summit of Knocknarea.

Sligo County Council recognises the significance of the unique and internationally-important archaeological landscape of the Cuil Irra Peninsula and is fully committed to ensuring that this special archaeological landscape is protected and preserved *in situ*.

Sligo County Council will seek to put in place a development management strategy for the Cuil Irra Peninsula to include Knocknarea, Carrowmore and Carns Hill, and will work with the relevant agencies to achieve this objective within the timeframe of this Plan. In this regard, the National Monuments Section with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht appointed a steering group to oversee the preparation of a *Conservation Study of Archaeological Features at Knocknarea, Carrowmore and Carns Hill, Sligo*.

Archaeological heritage policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

P-AH-1 Protect and enhance archaeological sites, monuments, their setting, appreciation and amenity within the Plan area, including those that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) or newly discovered archaeological sites and/or sub-surface archaeological remains.

P-AH-2 Require archaeological impact assessment, surveys, test excavation and/or monitoring for planning applications in areas of archaeological importance, if a development proposal is likely to impact upon in-situ archaeological monuments, their setting and archaeological deposits.

P-AH-3 Require the preservation of the context, amenity, visual integrity and connection of archaeological monuments to their setting. Views to and from archaeological monuments shall not be obscured by inappropriate development. Where appropriate, archaeological visual impact assessments will be required to demonstrate the continued preservation of an archaeological monument's siting and context.

P-AH-4 Secure the preservation in-situ or by record of:

- the archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places as established under section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994;
- any sites and features of historical and archaeological interest;
- any subsurface archaeological features that may be discovered during the course of infrastructural/development works in the operational area of the Plan.

Preservation relates to archaeological sites or objects and their settings.

Preservation in-situ is most effectively achieved by the refurbishment of existing buildings, in situations where it is possible to retain the greater part of existing structures without the need for new foundations.

P-AH-5 Protect historic burial grounds that are recorded monuments and encourage their maintenance in accordance with best conservation principles. Development may be restricted or conditions requiring substantial excavation may be imposed in and adjacent to former burial grounds.

P-AH-6 Where possible, facilitate and enhance public access to and understanding of the archaeological heritage and disseminate archaeological information and advice to prospective developers and the general public.

P-AH-7 Require that all development proposals for industrial buildings and sites of industrial archaeological importance be accompanied by an industrial archaeology assessment of the surrounding environment. New development should be designed in sympathy with existing features and structures.

- P-AH-8** Protect and preserve the archaeological value of underwater archaeological sites and associated features. In assessing proposals for development, the Council will take account of the potential underwater archaeology of rivers, lakes, intertidal and subtidal environments.

Cuil Irra Peninsula – Carrowmore, Knocknarea and Carns Hill

- P-AH-9** Refer to the National Monuments Section, DAHG all development proposals within the archaeological and historic landscape of the Cuil Irra Peninsula (which includes the core areas of Knocknarea, Carrowmore and Carns Hill) as identified in **Fig. 7.A** (see next page).
- P-AH-10** Ensure that Archaeological Impact Assessments are requested at pre-planning and planning application stage for all development proposals within the archaeological and historic landscape of the Cuil Irra Peninsula (which includes the core areas of Knocknarea, Carrowmore and Carns Hill).

Archaeological heritage objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-AH-1** Identify and protect internationally important archaeological landscapes such as the Carrowkeel, Inishmurray and the Cuil Irra Peninsula (which includes the core areas of Knocknarea, Carrowmore and Carns Hill), in co-operation with landowners and relevant stakeholders and statutory agencies.
- O-AH-2** Identify appropriate archaeological sites in the Plan area to which public access could be provided and work to secure public access, where appropriate, in consultation with the land owners.
- O-AH-3** Prepare and implement conservation plans in partnership with relevant stakeholders for key heritage sites in County Sligo, including, Drumcliffe and the Greenfort, Sligo.

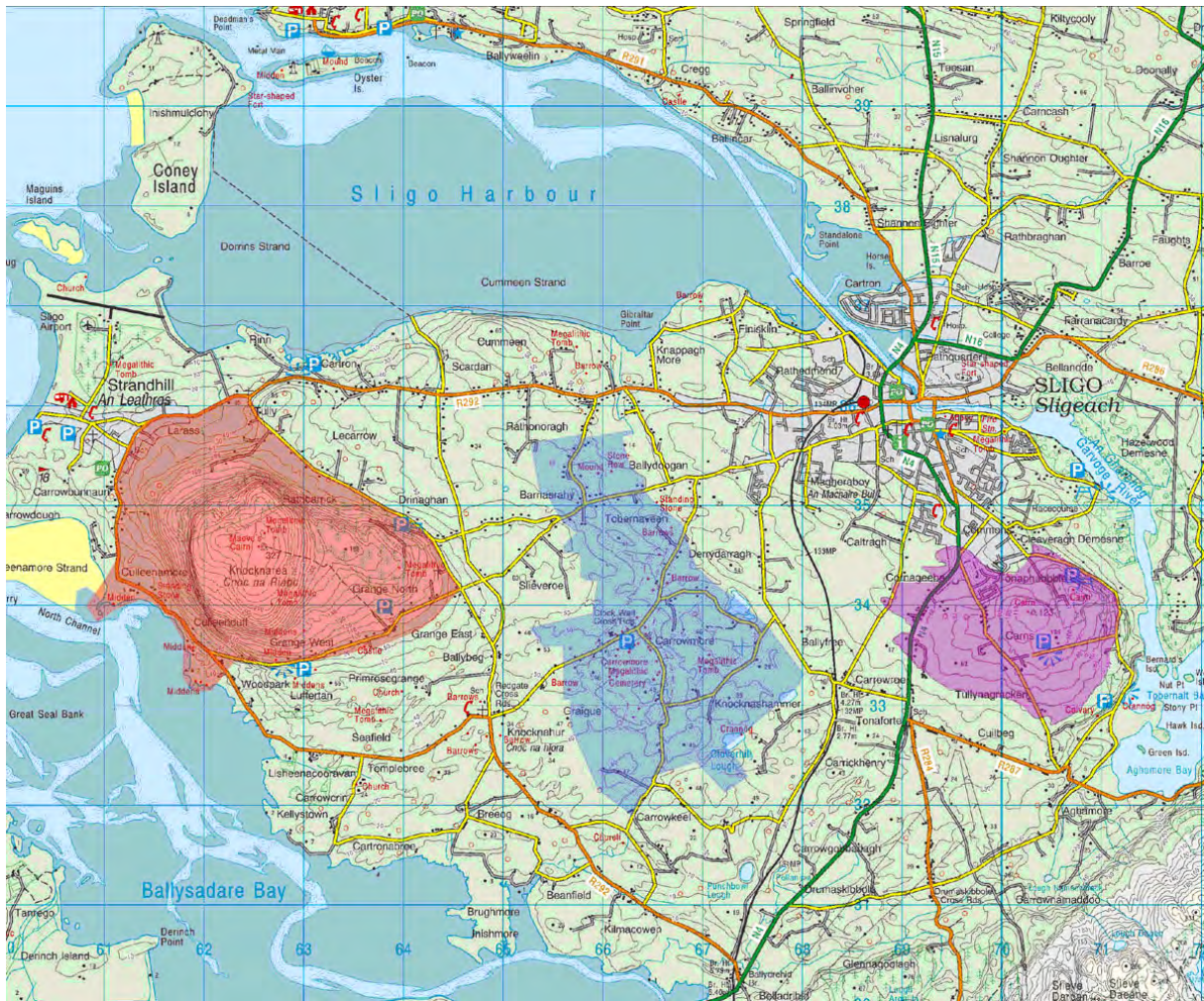


Fig. 7.A Archaeological and historic landscape of the Cuil Irra Peninsula

7.3 Architectural heritage

County Sligo hosts a rich heritage of buildings and structures. It is an aim of this Plan to seek the protection and conservation of buildings and structures of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social and technical importance.

The principal mechanism for protection of these buildings and structures is through their inclusion on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). This provides positive recognition of the structures' importance, protection from adverse impacts and potential access to grant aid for conservation works.

There are over 700 structures included in the Record of Protected Structures for County Sligo (which also covers the Sligo and Environs area).

7.3.1 The Record of Protected Structures (RPS)

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (Part II, Section 10(2)(f) and (g)) places a statutory obligation on local authorities to include in their development plans, objectives for the protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historic, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. These buildings and structures are listed in a register known as the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). In preparing the RPS for County Sligo, the Planning Authority had regard to:

- the Architectural Inventory for County Sligo, prepared by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) of the DoEHLG, and associated Ministerial recommendations; (see www.buildingsofireland.ie)
- the *Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoEHLG, 2004).

A Protected Structure, unless otherwise stated in the RPS, includes the interior of the structure, the land lying within its curtilage, any other structures and their interiors lying within that curtilage, plus all of the fixtures and features that form part of the interior or exterior of any of these structures.

County Sligo has buildings of different character, quality, age and style, which contribute significantly to the county's attractive streetscapes. The buildings and structures identified in the RPS are irreplaceable records of the past and therefore require protection. Their presence enhances the character of the county and adds to local distinctiveness.

It is recognised that in order to prolong the life of a protected structure, it may be necessary for such a building to accommodate change or new uses. The effect of the Protected Structure status is to ensure that any changes or alterations to the character of the building are carried out in such a way that the existing special character is retained and enhanced.

With a view to encouraging the restoration of protected structures, the Council will not seek development contributions provided for under Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, which might normally apply to the development, if the proposal involves restoration/refurbishment to a high architectural standard.

It should also be noted that under Section 57(10) (b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the Council “shall not grant permission for the demolition of a protected structure or proposed protected structure, save in exceptional circumstances”.

The RPS may be amended between reviews of the Development Plan and the Council can add to or delete from the RPS at any time by following the procedures outlined in Section 55 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

7.3.2 Protection of non-habitable structures

Non-habitable structures, such as historic gardens, stone walls and street furniture, make a significant contribution to our architectural heritage. A lack of awareness of their inherent and associative value can result in the loss of these structures and subsequent erosion of heritage assets.

Stone walls are an integral part of our rural/demesne landscape, often providing significant historic reference and contributing to the character of areas. They can be vulnerable to needless damage or destruction during development, as well as inappropriate and poor reconstruction.

There are a number of significant historic garden/estate landscapes in County Sligo. It is essential that appropriate appraisal and surveying informs the consideration of development proposals for these sensitive sites.

Items of street furniture are part of the built and cultural heritage, and can contribute to the character and interest of an area, whether designated an ACA or not. Such items include lamp standards, seats and benches, bollards, railings, street signs, free-standing or wall-mounted post boxes, telephone kiosks, horse troughs, water pumps, drinking fountains, jostle stones, milestones, paving, kerbstones, cobbles and setts, pavement lights, coal hole covers, statues, plaques, gates etc.

7.3.3 Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA)

Planning authorities are obliged to preserve the character of places and townscapes which are of special architectural, historic, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or that contribute to the appreciation of protected structures, by designating them *architectural conservation areas* (ACAs) in their development plan.

ACAs can comprise entire streetscapes, designed landscapes associated with a country house, medieval towns, industrial complexes, designed open spaces, religious complexes and so forth. The special character of an ACA is made up of its architectural features, setting, spatial qualities and land uses.

The main consequence of ACA designation is the prevention of inappropriate development for the purpose of preserving and enhancing the character of the area concerned.

Currently there are five ACAs in County Sligo. Four ACAs were designated in Sligo City in 2004, as part of the Sligo and Environs Development Plan. The fifth ACA was designated in Ballymote in 2012, under the LAP 2012-2018.

7.3.4 Town and village streetscapes

Sligo's vernacular built heritage consists of buildings created using local materials and following local traditions, to meet the needs of local people. These structures are often undervalued because they do not represent 'great architecture'.

Sligo County Council acknowledges that many historic buildings in Sligo’s towns and villages have been altered in recent years and not always in the most sympathetic manner.

While individually, many buildings in Sligo’s towns and villages may not warrant inclusion on the RPS, or even within an ACA, it is the ensemble of many traditional building types, their plot patterns, their fenestration, materials, meandering building lines and subtle variations in building height that contribute to the inherent character of a particular settlement. These details should be considered very carefully before allowing the alteration or replacement of buildings to occur.

Certain buildings, while not protected structures, are considered significant in terms of their contribution to the setting and architectural amenity of the town. These *Buildings of Note* (identified and mapped in previously adopted local area plans and in the Mini-Plans contained in Volume 2 of the CDP) have been selected by reason of their vernacular character and positive contribution to the streetscape. Some of these buildings have been altered in the past with the removal of original features. However, they still retain the essence of their traditional character and merit retention.

Chapter 12 Town and village design contains a section (12.1) which addresses historic streetscapes, with a corresponding subsection (section 13.2.4) in the Development Management Standards chapter intended to guide development in historic streetscapes.

7.3.5 Enabling development

Enabling development is development that would be unacceptable in planning terms (e.g. inconsistent with zoning objectives for an area) but for the fact that it would bring significant public benefits in the form of securing the long-term future of a protected structure. Enabling development will be considered in circumstances where:

- it secures the restoration of a protected structure, currently in poor condition, to best-practice conservation standards for any purpose compatible with the character of the structure or its constituent features, including the setting of the protected structure;
- it is demonstrated that the extent of enabling development is the minimum necessary to secure the future of the protected structure;
- the public benefit associated with securing the future of the protected structure decisively outweighs the drawbacks of breaching other planning objectives;
- it avoids detrimental fragmentation of the heritage asset.

Architectural heritage policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-ARH-1** Preserve, protect and enhance the architectural heritage of County Sligo for future generations. The area's architectural heritage is of national and regional importance and is central to Sligo's ability to promote itself as a centre for cultural tourism.
- P-ARH-2** Ensure that any development, modifications, alterations, or extensions affecting a protected structure, an adjoining structure or a structure within an ACA is sited and designed appropriately and is not detrimental to the character of the structure, to its setting or the general character of the ACA.
- P-ARH-3** Exempt a development proposal from the normal requirement for the payment of a development contribution if the proposal involves restoration/refurbishment of a protected structure to a high architectural standard.
- P-ARH-4** Facilitate enabling development to be carried out in conjunction with works to protected structures where consistent with the parameters outlined in subsection 7.3.5 Enabling Development.
- P-ARH-5** Protect important non-habitable structures such as historic bridges, harbours, railways or non-structural elements such as roadside features (e.g. historic milestones, cast-iron pumps and post-boxes), street furniture, historic gardens, stone walls, landscapes, demesnes and curtilage features, in cases where these are not already included in the Record of Protected Structures.
- P-ARH-6** Promote the retention and re-use of the vernacular built heritage through increasing public awareness of its potential for re-use and its adaptability to change.
- P-ARH-7** When considering proposals to adapt vernacular buildings to meet contemporary living standards and needs, require applicants to apply the conservation principles and guidelines set out in the ICOMOS Charter on the Built Vernacular Heritage (Mexico 1999) – refer to Appendix H of this Plan.

Architectural Conservation Areas – policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-ACA-1** Conserve and enhance the special character of the Architectural Conservation Areas in this plan. The special character of an area includes its traditional building stock and material finishes, spaces, streetscapes, shop fronts, landscape and setting.
- P-ACA-2** Protect all buildings, structures, groups of structures, sites, landscapes and all features considered to be intrinsic elements to the special character of the ACA from demolition and non sympathetic alterations.
- P-ACA-3** Promote appropriate and sensitive reuse and rehabilitation of buildings and sites within ACAs.
- P-ACA-4** Require the retention of original windows, doors, renders, roof coverings, chimneys, rainwater goods and other significant features of structures of architectural heritage merit, whether protected or not.
- P-ACA-5** Seek the repair and reuse of traditional shopfronts and where appropriate, encourage new shopfronts of a high quality architectural design.
- P-ACA-6** Ensure that new development within or adjacent to an ACA respects the established character of the area and contributes positively in terms of design, scale, setting and material finishes to the ACA.
- P-ACA-7** Promote high quality architectural design within ACAs, including redevelopment in the traditional or historicist manner, where appropriate.
- P-ACA-8** Ensure that all new signage, lighting, advertising and utilities on buildings within an ACA are designed, constructed, and located in such a manner that they do not detract from the character of the ACA.
- P-ACA-9** Protect and enhance the quality of open spaces within ACAs and ensure the protection and where necessary reuse of street furniture and use of appropriate materials during the course of public infrastructure schemes within ACAs.

7.4 Landscape character

7.4.1 Regulatory context

Planning and Development Act 2000

Under the Planning and Development Act, 2000, planning authorities have considerable duties and powers in relation to the landscape. They have a duty to include in the development plan objectives for the preservation of the character of the landscape; they have powers to designate areas of special amenity, within which development may be prevented or limited, and landscape conservation areas, within which exempted development may be brought within planning control.

The Landscape and Landscape Assessment Guidelines (2000)

Landscape and Landscape Assessment Guidelines (2000) were published by the Department of Environment and Local Government (DoELG). The Guidelines are intended to assist planning authorities in understanding their obligations in respect of landscape issues when preparing development plans. The Guidelines stress the need for a proactive view of how development and change can be accommodated in the landscape and also highlight the need to assess all landscapes instead of focusing on ‘special’ ones.

The European Landscape Convention (ELC) (2000)

The most significant policy development regarding landscape character and its assessment and protection has been the adoption of the European Landscape Convention in 2000 (ratified by Ireland in 2002). The Convention requires that signatories must first recognise landscapes in law and establish policies aimed at their protection, management and planning. The Convention defines “landscape” as an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. The definition applies to all landscapes - rural, urban, peri-urban or degraded - and to all scales of landscape.

National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025

The National Landscape Strategy, published by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) in 2015, will be used to ensure compliance with the ELC and to establish principles for protecting and enhancing the landscape while positively managing its change. It is a high-level policy framework designed to achieve balance between the protection, management and planning of the landscape by way of supporting actions. The National Landscape Strategy will be implemented and co-ordinated by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in partnership with all key stakeholders.

7.4.2 Landscape Character Assessment

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is a process that describes, maps and classifies landscapes objectively. Defining landscape character enables an understanding to be formed of the inherent value and importance of individual landscape elements and the processes that may alter landscape character in the future.

The cultural and ecological aspects of the landscape cannot be separated from its physical and visual characteristics, so all of these elements are considered. In preparing an LCA, the county’s rich natural and built heritage, as outlined in the preceding sections, have a significant bearing.

The purpose of an LCA is to assist the Council in the formulation and implementation of its policies, informing the council, in particular where it is to:

- promote the understanding of Sligo’s landscape in terms of its unique character and recognise what elements should be preserved, conserved or enhanced;
- predict the broad pattern of future changes and devise policies and objectives as guidance to planners and other parties which will ensure that change is favourable to landscape character; sensitivity and capacity of the landscape should be given due consideration in all aspects of decision-making;
- assist in the achievement of sustainable development, the underlying principle of all current planning practice and legislation, by promoting a unified approach to landscape planning and management which links policies and recommendations for landscape character to existing planning policies.

The DAHG’s *National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015–2025* indicates the Department’s intention to develop a National Landscape Character Assessment by 2020. The existing LCA for County Sligo may need to be reviewed to ensure consistency with the national assessment and any new departmental guidance.

7.4.3 Current knowledge and policy

The county’s landscape is not homogeneous and neither are the pressures on it. It is inevitable that different parts of the county will be subject to different development pressures and will exhibit differing abilities to absorb and accommodate such development pressure.

A landscape characterisation and appraisal study was commissioned by Sligo County Council and completed by CAAS Environmental Consultants in 1996. This resulted in a map that was the basis for the Landscape Characterisation Map, which formed part of the Sligo County Development Plans 1999-2004, CDP 2005-2011 and CDP 2011-2017.

The LC Map classifies the County according to its visual sensitivity and capacity to absorb new development without compromising the scenic character of certain areas. It designates the following:

- Normal Rural Landscapes:** areas with natural features (e.g. topography, vegetation) which generally have the capacity to absorb a wide range of new development forms – these are largey farming areas and cover most of the County. At the same time, certain areas located within normal rural landscapes may have superior visual qualities, due to their specific topography, vegetation pattern, the presence of traditional farming or residential structures. These areas may have limited capacity for development or may be able to absorb new development only if it is designed to integrate seamlessly with the existing environment.
- Sensitive Rural Landscapes:** areas that tend to be open in character, highly visible, with intrinsic scenic qualities and a low capacity to absorb new development – e.g. Knocknarea, the Dartry Mountains, the Ox Mountains, Aughris Head, Mullaghmore Head etc.
- Visually Vulnerable Areas:** distinctive and conspicuous natural features of significant beauty or interest, which have extremely low capacity to absorb new development – examples are the Ben Bulbin plateau, mountain and hill ridges, the areas adjoining Sligo’s coastline, most lakeshores etc.

- **Scenic Routes:** public roads passing through or close to Sensitive Rural Landscapes, or in the vicinity of Visually Vulnerable Areas, and affording unique scenic views of distinctive natural features or vast open landscapes. In addition to remote views, scenic routes have often a distinctive visual character conferred by old road boundaries, such as stone walls, established hedgerows, lines of mature trees, adjoining cottages or farmyards together with their traditional, planted enclosures etc., all of which warrant protection.

The Map (which is available separately in a large format – A1) has proven robust in both facilitating development and conserving fragile landscapes. The designation of Scenic Routes provides a basis for protecting views and prospects of certain visually vulnerable features.

Appendix E contains a list of roads designated as Scenic Routes and details of the scenic views to be preserved.

7.4.4 Heritage landscapes

Areas which are of exceptional value and of international importance, such as the Cuil Irra Peninsula, Carrowkeel and Inishmurray, are highly sensitive to development and thus must be afforded particular protection. Over the life of this Plan, the Council will explore the preparation of a Local Area Plan and/or designation of Landscape Conservation Area(s), pursuant to Section 204 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000, in respect of the above heritage landscapes. The purpose of such plans and/or designations is to protect the rural character, setting, historic context and archaeological heritage of the landscape. In identifying and/or designating such areas, the Planning Authority will ensure that the scope and extent of such designation is sufficient to conserve the specific areas requiring protection.

Landscape character assessment and protection policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-LCAP-1** Protect the physical landscape, visual and scenic character of County Sligo and seek to preserve the County's landscape character.

Planning applications that have the potential to impact significantly and adversely upon landscape character, especially in *Sensitive Rural Landscapes*, *Visually Vulnerable Areas* and along *Scenic routes*, may be required to be accompanied by a visual impact assessment using agreed and appropriate viewing points and methods for the assessment.

- P-LCAP-2** Discourage any developments that would be detrimental to the unique visual character of designated Visually Vulnerable Areas.

- P-LCAP-3** Preserve the scenic views listed in **Appendix F** and the distinctive visual character of designated *Scenic Routes* by controlling development along such Routes and other roads, while facilitating developments that may be tied to a

specific location or to the demonstrated needs of applicants to reside in a particular area. In all cases, strict location, siting and design criteria shall apply, as set out in Section 13.4 Residential development in rural areas (development management standards).

P-LCAP-4 Strictly control new development in designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes, while considering exceptions that can demonstrate a clear need to locate in the area concerned.

Ensure that any new development in designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes:

- does not impinge in any significant way on the character, integrity and distinctiveness of the area;
- does not detract from the scenic value of the area;
- meets high standards of siting and design;
- satisfies all other criteria with regard to, inter alia, servicing, public safety and prevention of pollution.

P-LCAP-5 Protect the historic and archaeological landscapes of the County.

P-LCAP-6 Preserve the status of traditionally open/unfenced landscapes. Fencing in upland or amenity areas will not normally be permitted unless such fencing is essential to the viability of the farm and conforms to best agricultural practice. The nature of the material to be used, the height of the fence and, in the case of a wire fence, the type of wire to be used will be taken into account. Barbed-wire shall not be used for the top line of wire. Stiles or gates at appropriate places will be required.

P-LCAP-7 Where possible, preserve the open character of commonage and other hill land and secure access thereto.

8. Transport and mobility

Development Plan policy aims to integrate transport and land use in order to provide a sustainable framework for economic and social development.

The peripheral location of County Sligo 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.

8.1 National and regional transport policy

The designation of Sligo as a Gateway City in the National Spatial Strategy further emphasises the importance of strong transport 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.

The national roads M-4/N-4 (Dublin to Sligo), the N-17 (Galway to Sligo), the N-15 (Sligo to Donegal) and the N-16 (Sligo to Northern Ireland) are identified as part of the EU's Trans-European Transport Networks TEN-T¹, which are a planned set of road, rail, air and water transport networks in the European Union.

The policy document *Investing in our Transport Future - Strategic Investment Framework for Land Transport*, published by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) in 2015, emphasises the need for improved alignment of transport and spatial planning. The document states that effective and mutually supportive land use and transport planning policy, in the form of national and regional frameworks, are essential for the development of more sustainable communities.

The guidance document *Spatial Planning and National Roads*, published by the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government (DOECLG) in 2012, sets out planning policy considerations relating to developments affecting National Roads outside the 50 and 60 km/h zones. This document emphasises the importance of maintaining and protecting the strategic function of National Roads.

Government policy strongly promotes the move to more sustainable modes of transport and the policy document *Smarter Travel – A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020*, published by the Department of Transport (DOT), sets out Government policy objectives with respect to promoting a significant modal shift from private transport to sustainable transport modes over the period to 2020.

In accordance with the above, it is the aim of Sligo County Council to strengthen the County's strategic transport links. The Council will also support the creation of a pedestrian-friendly and

¹ The TEN-T networks are part of a wider system of Trans-European Networks (TENs), including a telecommunications network (eTEN) and a proposed energy network (TEN-E or Ten-Energy). TEN-T envisages coordinated improvements to primary roads, railways, inland waterways, airports, seaports, inland ports and traffic management systems, providing integrated and intermodal long-distance, high-speed routes.

In general, TEN-T projects are mostly funded by national or state governments. Other funding sources include: European Community funds (ERDF, Cohesion Funds, TEN-T budget), loans from international financial institutions (e.g. the European Investment Bank), and private funding.

cyclist-friendly environment within and between 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.

8.1.1. Provisions of the National Spatial Strategy

The National Spatial Strategy 2002 (NSS) recognises that quality road networks are crucial to economic development. Improvements in terms of travel time and cost can reduce the disadvantages of distance.

The N-4 Sligo to Dublin road is identified as a Strategic Radial Corridor, providing road and public transport connections between Dublin and Sligo.

The N-17 Sligo to Galway and **N-15 Sligo to Letterkenny** are identified as Strategic Linking Corridors, *providing improved connections between gateways and hubs from Cork to Derry via Sligo.*

The N-16 Sligo to Belfast is identified as a Strategic International Access Point *providing road access internationally to and from Gateways, hubs and other areas in the vicinity of the Border.*

The national roads above also connect Sligo to Dublin International Airport and Port, to Ireland West (Knock) and Shannon International Airports, and to Belfast International Airports and Port.

In relation to public transport, the NSS seeks to ensure that rail continues to offer realistic alternatives to road travel on the key inter-city routes, such as the **Sligo-Dublin railway line**.

It is recognised that **bus services** will be the principal means of providing effective public transport in Gateways and Hubs.

8.1.2 Provisions of the Regional Planning Guidelines

One of the Key Strategic Goals in the Regional Planning Guidelines is to improve connectivity in the Region through the development of Strategic Radial Corridors and Strategic Links.

The RPGs identify the **M-4/N-4 Western Radial Route** as a Strategic Radial Corridor, linking Dublin with Sligo. The N-4 (Collooney to Castlebaldwin section) is a priority route for improvement.

The Atlantic Corridor, which includes the **N-15 and the N-17**, is identified as a Strategic Link. Priorities for this route are the N-17 (Bellaghy to Collooney section) and the N-15 (Sligo to Leitrim county boundary section).

The West/North Central Corridor N-16/A-4, which links the Gateway of Sligo with Enniskillen in Northern Ireland, is also identified as a Strategic Link, which requires substantial investment. The key priority for this route is the N-16 (Sligo to Enniskillen).

The RPGs support the integration of road, rail, and bus transport at key locations and the development of park-and-ride facilities particularly within the Gateways.

The re-opening of the Claremorris–Sligo railway line is seen as a long-term priority for the Region, but only when the other sections of the Western Rail Corridor are completed and operational. The RPGs also support examining the potential of a rail link from Sligo to Letterkenny.

The RPGs support the Government’s Smarter Travel Policy and the National Cycling Policy Framework, as well as other measures to encourage cycling and walking, particularly in urban centres such as Sligo.

8.1.3 Strategic Investment Framework 2015

The Department of Transport's document *Investing in our Transport Future - Strategic Investment Framework for Land Transport* (2015) supports all of the key policies and objectives in both the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines and outlines the following principles for future investment:

- Maintenance of the strategic elements of the land transport system, i.e. road and rail. A new rail policy is to be developed.
- Addressing urban congestion through (inter alia) expanded walking and cycling infrastructure and improved public transport capacity.
- Maximising the contribution of land transport networks to national development by enhancing the efficiency of the existing network, improving connections to key seaports and airports, provide access to poorly served regions, for large-scale employment proposals, completing missing links, addressing critical safety issues and supporting national and regional spatial planning priorities.

8.1.4 Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2016-2021

The government's document **Building on Recovery: Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2016-2021** (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 2015) prioritises funding for road, rail and public transport networks.

Out of a total of €6.6 billion for investment in roads, the Capital Plan provides €4.4 billion to ensure the existing network is maintained and strengthened. A number of new projects are listed for construction, including the N-4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin Scheme and the Eastern Garvogue Bridge and Approach Roads Scheme.

The Capital Plan also commits to smarter travel and carbon reduction measures, such as greenways (including cross-border greenways), to ensure that the transport sector contributes to climate change mitigation targets.

Transport – strategic policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- SP-TRA-1** Support the creation of an integrated and environmentally-sound transport system, in particular with regard to accessibility and choice of transport, with a quality intercity bus and rail service, alongside the promotion of cycle facilities and pedestrian movements.
- SP-TRA-2** Make optimal use of existing transportation infrastructure by using traffic management in order to reduce travel times and congestion.

- SP-TRA-3** 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-TRA-4** Plan for the future traffic and transportation needs in Sligo and ensure that new development does not compromise the expansion of rail, road and cycling corridors in the County. Proposed road realignment/improvement lines, road corridors and national cycle route corridors shall be preserved free from development that would prejudice the implementation of the schemes.
- SP-TRA-5** Promote improved access to and sustainable development and operation of Sligo Port and Sligo Airport (Strandhill) and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.
- SP-TRA-6** Facilitate and encourage the provision of adequate car-parking facilities in Sligo City and the County's towns and villages.
- SP-TRA-7** Facilitate the roll-out of charging infrastructure for electric vehicles, in line with the *National Renewable Energy Action Plan's* target for 10% of Ireland's vehicles to be electric by 2020.

Transport – strategic objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- SO-TRA-1** 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*.
- SO-TRA-2** Implement the relevant transportation policies of the DTTAS policy document *Investing in our Transport Future - Strategic Investment Framework for Land Transport*, in partnership with funding agencies and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.
- SO-TRA-3** Initiate the preparation of a *Transportation Study for Sligo City & Environs*, subject to available funding, and implement the recommendations of this Study subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.

8.2 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 because private vehicles are the only mode of transport for the majority of the population, as well as for commercial and industrial activities. While the emphasis in the Sligo and Environs area is on 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.

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 Composition 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	100%

Maintenance and upgrading the road network is a priority for Sligo County Council. The Council works with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and Department of Transport (DTTAS) for the improvement of all roads.

Funding of regional and local road maintenance and improvement works is provided by the central government directly through the DTTAS, with some funding for maintenance coming from the Council’s own resources. All national road funding is channelled from the DTTAS through the TII to the Local Authority.

The maintenance of the existing network, which includes restoration, improvements and minor realignments, is a key priority for the DTTAS. Sligo County Council will continue to work with the DTTAS and TII to appropriately maintain these roads on an annual basis.

Sligo’s bridge infrastructure forms an intrinsic part of the County’s road network and the Council will continue its bridge rehabilitation programme as one of the leading local authorities in the state at bridge restoration.

Road safety

Road safety continues to be a priority for all agencies involved, including Sligo County Council. The Road Safety Authority’s *Road Safety Strategy 2013-2020* outlines specific actions, including the carrying out of minor realignment schemes on national roads and the implementation of safety schemes at high-risk locations on regional and local roads.

Sligo County Council will continue to implement these actions as prioritised by the TII under the HD15 Safety Schemes, HD28, Pavement Overlay Programmes and Minor Realignments Schemes.

Road safety policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-RS-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.
- P-RS-2** Continue to implement the actions of the Road Safety Authority's *Road Safety Strategy 2013-2020* in partnership with the TII.

8.2.1 National primary and secondary roads

There are five national primary roads and one national secondary road in County Sligo. Considering the critical importance of the Atlantic Corridor national road network for the Northern and Western Regions, their upgrade is vital not just for Sligo's future growth, but for the entire region.

Although the national roads comprise less than 5% of the County's total road network, they carry the majority of its traffic. In accordance with national policy, Sligo County Council will continue to maintain and improve the national road network in Sligo.

The N-4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin Scheme, identified as a Strategic Radial route in the NSS and RPGs, received all statutory consents in 2014. It is specifically listed as a priority scheme for funding in the Capital Investment Plan 2016-2021. It is expected that construction of this route will commence in 2018.

The N-16 Sligo to Leitrim County Boundary Scheme is at Route Selection stage (2016). It is expected that this route will be developed as two-three minor schemes, commencing in 2018.

Route corridors for both the N-15 and the N-17 have already been selected and will be advanced to the statutory process when approval is given by the TII to do so.

Sligo's Inner Relief Road (SIRR) is a strategic transport corridor providing access to the city centre and linkages to the surrounding areas, including the port and Docklands. These linkages will continue to be improved on an ongoing basis.

In 2015, the N-4 Hughes Bridge was widened to three lanes in each direction, along with the provision of footbridges for pedestrians and cyclists. The widening of the N-4/N-15 from Hughes Bridge to Scotsman's Walk, including junction improvements, will continue over the next few years.

The realignment of the N-59 from Farranyharpy to Ballygreighan was completed in 2012. Improvements are ongoing and further realignments are being pursued as funding becomes available.

National roads policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-NR-1** 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 N-4, N-15, N-16, N-17 and N-59 outside the 50 km/h speed limit, in accordance with the DoECLG's publication Spatial Planning and National Roads -Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012).
- P-NR-2** Protect the route corridors necessary for the construction of new roads or the upgrading of existing national roads in Sligo, in accordance with the DoECLG's publication Spatial Planning and National Roads - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012).
- P-NR-3** Apply the provisions of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DTTS, DECLG 2013), **in exceptional circumstances**, to development along national roads inside the 60-km/h speed limit zones in towns and villages, **with the consent of TII. In all other circumstances on national roads, design standards in TII publications will apply**
- P-NR-4** Maintain the national road network in accordance with the TII Pavement Asset Management System.
- P-NR-5** Permit direct access to zoned lands along national roads inside the 50 km/h speed limit subject to normal planning considerations. Within **transitional zones** (between 50 km/h and 60 km/h speed limiting signs), access may be permitted, but only in limited circumstances, where it is in the interest of facilitating orderly urban development, and subject to a road safety audit carried out in accordance with TII requirements.

National roads objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-NR-1** Undertake programmed improvements to the national road network, including the programme of realignments and upgrades, as set out in Table 8.B and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.
- O-NR-2** Carry out a feasibility study for a City Bypass for Sligo and Environs.

Table 8.B National road projects in County Sligo

Road number	Route	Description of work	Estimated completion time/status - subject to TII approval/funding
N-4	Collooney to Castlebaldwin	realignment and upgrading	2020 completion*
N-17	Collooney to Tobercurry Bypass	realignment and upgrading	no completion date
N-17	Tobercurry Bypass	realignment and upgrading	no completion date
N-17	Tobercurry Bypass to Charlestown (including bypass at Bellaghy/Charlestown)	realignment	no completion date
N-15	N4/N15 Junction to Leitrim County boundary	realignment and upgrading	no completion date
N-4/N-15	Hughes Bridge to North of Rosses Point Junction	realignment and upgrading	2018 completion*
N-4/N-15	North of Rosses Point Junction to Scotsman's Walk	realignment and upgrading	2021 completion*
N-4 (SIRR)	Carrowroe Roundabout to Hughes Bridge	upgrading junctions	ongoing
N-16	Sligo to Leitrim County boundary	realignment and upgrading	2021 completion*
N-59	Ballysadare to Beltra	realignment and upgrading	2020 completion*
N-59	Ballysadare to Mayo County boundary	improvements	ongoing
N-4/N-15	Sligo Bypass	feasibility study	2021 completion*
All national roads	where required and prioritised	Maintenance including overlays and minor realignments	ongoing
All national roads	where required and prioritised	Road Safety Schemes	ongoing

* Note: the timeframe for all projects is subject to TII approval and available funding.

8.2.2 Non-national roads and bridges

Regional and local roads make up 95% of County Sligo's road network. The Council strives to manage non-national roads in an economic and efficient manner, with a particular emphasis on safety. 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.

The **Western Distributor Road**, a *Strategic Non-National Road*, is vitally important for access to the IDA's business park site at Oakfield. The scheme has all the statutory consents, detailed design has been completed, and its development is a priority for Sligo County Council.

The **Eastern Garavogue Bridge and Approach Roads**, another *Strategic Non-National Road*, will provide north-south access across the Garavogue River on the eastern side of Sligo. This scheme has all the statutory consents, the detailed design has been completed, and is also a priority for development by Sligo County Council. It is also listed as a priority scheme for funding in the Capital Investment Plan 2016-2021.

As Sligo City grows, it will be necessary to ensure that adequate links can be maintained between different parts of the city, north and south, east and west. In order to ensure this accessibility, it is proposed to develop a number of routes within the expanding urban environment which will be identified in more detail as part of the preparation of the Sligo and Environs LAP.

Bridges

Over 450 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 will have 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. At least four bridges have substantial repairs carried out annually, and a greater number have minor improvements or repairs carried out.

Non-national roads and bridges policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-NNR-1** Identify local priorities for road improvements in conjunction with the preparation of mini-plans and local area plans.
- P-NNR-2** Implement the roads and traffic management objectives of adopted mini-plans/local area plans, subject to the availability of funding.
- P-NNR-3** Continue investment in local roads infrastructure in County Sligo, in order to improve access to peripheral areas of the County and promote social inclusion.
- P-NNR-4** Continue to maintain, repair, replace and preserve the County's bridges, the majority of which are over 140 years old and have a heritage value and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.
- P-NNR-5** Upgrade roads, footpaths, car-parking areas and junctions within the County's towns and villages in accordance with the provisions of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DTTS, DECLG, 2013), subject to the availability of resources.

Non-national roads and bridges objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-NNR-1** Carry out improvement works on regional and local roads, and in particular to the regional road network as set out in Table 8.C and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.
- O-NNR-2** Develop the Strategic Non-National Road – the Western Distributor Road.
- O-NNR-3** Develop the Strategic Non-National Road – The Eastern Garavogue Bridge and Approach Roads.
- O-NNR-4** Reserve a number of proposed intra-urban road links for development within Sligo City in conjunction with the preparation of the Sligo and Environs LAP.

Table 8.C Planned non-national road improvements

Road number	Route
R-284	Carrowroe to Roscommon County Boundary (serving Ballygawley, Soeey, Drumnacool and Geevagh)
R-290	Collooney to Crossboy via Ballygawley and Ballintogher
R-287	Sligo City to Dromahair (serving Lough Gill)
R-292	Entire length from Sligo City to Ballydrehid
R-293	Ballymote to Castlerea (serving Gorteen)
R-294	Cloonloo to Tobercurry to Lough Talt (on the Ballina to Boyle Road, also serving Gorteen)
R-296	Ballymote to Bunnannaddan to R-294
R-297	Dromore West to Enniscrone to Sligo County Boundary (linking the N-59)
R-286	Molloway Hill to Leitrim County Boundary
R-291	R-291/N-15 junction to Rosses Point
R-278	Ballinode to Leitrim County Boundary
R-296	N-59 to Enniscrone
R-279	N-15 to Mullaghmore
R-870	Sligo City
S.N.N.*	Western Distributor Road
S.N.N.*	Eastern Garavogue Bridge and Approach Roads

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

8.3 Cycle and pedestrian movements

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.

Cycling and walking play minor roles as modes of transport in County Sligo for 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, greenways, walking trails/pathways and improved road surfaces also supports tourism by facilitating cycling and walking holidays and enhancing the local tourism product.

The Department of Transport's policy document *Smarter Travel: A sustainable Transport Future*, published in February 2009, focuses on sustainable transport. The 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. The target is that by 2020, 10% of all journeys will be by bicycle.

Sligo has advanced many of the actions outlined in the *Smarter Travel* policy document and was designated an Active Travel Town, following the receipt of funding to implement measures in Sligo's Cycling Strategy. All initiatives associated with Active Travel Towns are aimed at increasing the shift from car to bicycle and walking. Cycle lanes were provided on the main routes linking the suburbs to Sligo city centre, including the Strandhill Road, Rosses Point Road and Pearse Road. Sligo County Council will continue to implement measures to increase the modal shift away from car by commuters travelling to work, school and leisure activities.

It is recognised that the provision of good quality, safe, long-distance cycling routes are an excellent leisure and tourist product and can also serve as Smarter Travel infrastructure for commuters. The *National Cycle Network Scoping Study 2010*, published by the DoT and the NRA, identified a comprehensive network of national cycle routes throughout Ireland.

Three routes are identified through County Sligo:

- Sligo to Dundalk via Manorhamilton;
- Sligo to Letterkenny and Strabane via Ballyshannon and Donegal;
- Sligo to Clifden via Ballina and Westport.

Sligo is also designated as a potential Cycling Hub in Failte Ireland's *Cycling Hubs & Gateways* designations.

Two further routes have been identified since the publication of the scoping study:

- The Sligo Leitrim & Northern Counties Railway (SLNCR), which is an abandoned railway line from Sligo to Enniskillen (Co. Fermanagh, NI), passes through counties Leitrim and Cavan. Following a feasibility study, Sligo County Council carried out a preliminary design and public consultations on the Sligo Section of the route. This greenway needs to be advanced to the Statutory Process stage.
- The feasibility of developing a greenway along or adjacent to the closed railway line from Collooney to Charlestown needs to be examined. A greenway along this route would have the

advantage of being on public land. A feasibility study would determine the best fit for the old railway line.

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 national documents, where feasible, over the period of the plan.

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 appropriate layout and design.

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** Plan and make provision for the safe and efficient movement of cyclists and pedestrians in and around built-up areas.
- P-CW-3** Make provision for the integration of pedestrian and cycle facilities (i.e. bicycle parking) at public transportation nodes and village/town centres, public car parks and Institutions.
- P-CW-4** Ensure that adequate cycle facilities are provided in all new institutions, employment centres, sports complexes and leisure facilities, in the form of sheltered bicycle parking and locker rooms with shower facilities.
- P-CW-5** Promote cycling as a viable commuting mode of transport.
- P-CW-6** 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-7** Provide appropriate facilities for pedestrians and for people with special mobility needs.
- P-CW-8** 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. Where feasible, provide separate trails for walkers and cyclists in the interests of safety and convenience, with appropriate surfaces for each type of user and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.

- P-CW-9** 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 and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.
- P-CW-10** Implement the relevant policies of the Department of Transport’s *National Cycle Policy Framework 2009–2020*, and support the provision of a national cycle network.
- P-CW-11** Implement the relevant provisions of the Department of Transport’s *Walking Policy*, when published.
- P-CW-12** Implement the measures in Sligo’s Cycling Strategy and update the Strategy as appropriate.

Cycling and walking objectives

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-CW-1** Develop cycle routes from Ballysadare and Collooney to Sligo City.
- O-CW-2** Develop a cycle route from the proposed Eastern Garavogue Bridge to Hazelwood House.
- O-CW-3** Prepare an Integrated Transportation Plan for Sligo to include all modes of transport, with support from the National Transport Authority (NTA).
- O-CW-4** Facilitate the pedestrianisation of Sligo City Centre by the development of link roads and footbridges and the introduction of a 30 km/h zone in the Centre of Sligo City.
- O-CW-5** Seek the development of a footway and cycleway (greenway) on or alongside the closed railway line from Collooney to Bellaghy (Sligo/Mayo county boundary) insofar as such route does not compromise the reopening of the Western Rail Corridor, if reopening the railway line is deemed feasible.
- O-CW-6** Seek the development of a footway and cycleway (greenway) on or alongside the abandoned railway line (SLNCR) from Collooney to Enniskillen, with a connection from Collooney to Sligo town, which can also serve as a Smarter Travel commuter route and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.

8.4 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 Programme (RTP). This Programme has a specific focus on responding to rural isolation and enhancing the mobility, accessibility and community participation of local people, particularly those at risk of social exclusion.

8.4.1 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, Dublin Airport, 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 Programme (RTP).

The RTP is delivered in Sligo via two organisations: Local Link, the Sligo-Roscommon-Leitrim Rural Transport Company Ltd, and the Community of Lough Arrow Social Project (CLASP).

These services provide access to transport for key target groups of the rural population, namely older people, people with disabilities, people working in the home, lower income groups and young people. The Rural Transport Programme provides weekly bus services, hackney, taxi and community car scheme services throughout all of rural Sligo.

The RTP serves all passengers, but especially those who are at risk of social isolation as a consequence of their rural location. The service provides access to employment, recreation, education and essential services, and is demand-responsive.

8.4.2 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.

Sligo-Dublin line

The Sligo–Dublin rail line is a key strategic transportation link for the North-West. The major investment by Iarnrod Eireann in upgrading works since 1999 has increased passenger comfort and has significantly improved reliability of journey times between Sligo and Dublin. The frequency of 6-7 trains daily each way, together with the added wi-fi service on these intercity routes, made this mode of transport more attractive for both business and leisure passengers.

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. Supporting population growth in Collooney and Ballysadare, designated Gateway satellites, will serve to enhance the feasibility of local commuter rail services.

Western Rail Corridor

The feasibility of reopening the Western Rail Corridor as far as Collooney needs to be examined in the context of the new rail policy which is to be developed by the Department of Transport. This policy will address key issues such as the spatial focus of rail investment, social and environmental considerations, value for money, an affordable scale of network and the economic and investment context.

Public transport policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-PT-1** Strengthen Sligo’s function as a transportation node in the North-West and facilitate an easy interchange between different transportation modes.
- P-PT-2** Promote the consolidation of settlements on existing public transport routes.
- P-PT-3** 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-4** Support the provision of a local commuter rail service on the existing mainline railway.
- P-PT-5** Examine the feasibility of reopening the Western Rail Corridor, as a strategic transport corridor linking Sligo and the North-West with Mayo, Galway and Limerick in the context of the new rail policy to be developed by the DTTaS.
- P-PT-6** Support local, community transport services in consultation with the local communities.
- P-PT-7** Continue to work with the service providers, such as Iarnrod Eireann and Bus Eireann, to encourage the reduction in the need for car trips by improving the availability, reliability and quality of public transport.
- P-PT-8** Ensure that the design and layout of new developments facilitates circulation by public transport.

8.5 Airports

County Sligo is served by Sligo Airport (Strandhill) and Ireland West International Airport (Knock).

Knock Airport is of strategic importance as a means of access to the County and is critical to the success of the local and regional economy. The 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 is reinforced by their proximity to Knock Airport and the availability of direct access to an international business and tourism market.

Sligo Airport is located near the village of Strandhill, 8 km from Sligo City. For 28 years, it operated as a Regional Airport, providing flights to Dublin and UK destinations. Following difficulties in securing safety improvements to the runway, along with the withdrawal of PSO (Public Service Obligation) funding from the Dublin/Sligo route in 2011, Sligo Airport ceased to operate the regional service. Sligo Airport currently serves as the North-West base of the Irish Coast Guard Search & Rescue Helicopter. The Airport is owned and managed by Sligo North-West Airport Co. Ltd., which has developed a high-quality, successful business park on adjacent lands.

Airport policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- O-A-1** Facilitate improved access to Knock International Airport, so as to secure a better level and frequency of service and promote Sligo's accessibility to tourists and businesses, both nationally and internationally.
- O-A-2** Support proposals to upgrade facilities and improve the viability of Sligo Airport and subject to compliance with 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 since then, 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 dead weight tonnage (dwt). Sligo's throughput is approximately 52,000 tonnes a year.

Capital and maintenance dredging is required within the harbour, to enhance the use and longevity of the Port. A Foreshore Licence has been approved in principle for this work, but it is subject to the granting of a Dumping at Sea Licence by the EPA (an application has been made in this regard).

Harbours, piers and slipways 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 Enniscrone and Aughris piers and has applied to the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine (DAFM) for funding for other projects.

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, and improve road and rail access to the Port subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive, in order to boost its viability as a freight 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** Carry out improvements at Rosses Point Pier and Harbour, Mullaghmore, Enniscrone and Pullaheeney Harbours, and maintain and improve other piers and harbours, as resources allow and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.
- O-PH-2** Maintain navigation aids and tidal gauges, as necessary, for the benefit of the maritime and coastal communities.

9. Environmental infrastructure

9.1 Water, wastewater and drainage

The sustainable growth of County Sligo is dependent on the satisfactory provision of service infrastructure, utilities and communication networks. A plan-led approach, in accordance with the County's Core Strategy, is required in the provision of such services.

Furthermore, this infrastructure needs to be provided in a manner that protects public health and is environmentally appropriate and economically effective.

9.1.1 Irish Water

Established in March 2013 under the *Water Services Act 2013*, Irish Water is charged with bringing the water and wastewater services (excluding surface water drainage) of the 34 local authorities together into one national service provider.

Irish Water commenced the take over of water and wastewater responsibilities from local authorities on a phased basis from January 2014. Since this date, Sligo County Council has entered into a *Service Level Agreement (SLA)* with Irish Water to operate water services on behalf of Irish Water.

9.1.2 Prioritisation of investment

Irish Water prepared a twenty-five-year *Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP)* and a *Capital Investment Plan (CIP)*, which is to be revised periodically. Generally, the CIP will provide details of proposed investment in infrastructure over a five-year cycle. Both the WSSP and the CIP must be informed by national, regional and local planning policy.

The *Capital Investment Plan (CIP) 2014-2016* outlines indicative investment priorities and projects that were previously included in the DECLG's *Water Services Investment Programme (WSIP)*. The WSIP 2010-2012 (which was extended to 2013) formed the basis of the CIP 2014-2016, modified as appropriate by Irish Water in consultation with Sligo County Council. The second CIP will cover the period 2017-2021.

All the schemes operating in County Sligo, including those contained within the CIP 2014-2016, are as presented in **Tables 9.B and 9.C**

9.2 Water supply

The provision of an adequate water supply to serve the anticipated level of population growth within County Sligo requires monitoring and phased improvements concurrent with development needs.

Sligo County Council has carried out significant investment in water infrastructure over the period of the last CDP (i.e. since 2011) in conjunction with the DECLG’s WSIP. However, significant deficits remain throughout the county. It is now within the remit of Irish Water to address these infrastructure deficits.

The Water Services Section of Sligo County Council will operate in conjunction with Irish Water to provide and maintain an adequate public water supply network throughout the County for the period of the Plan.

9.2.1 Sligo’s water supply schemes

Currently there are eight schemes supplying public water throughout Sligo. The schemes and the supply zones are outlined in Table 9.A below.

Table 9.A Water supply zones in County Sligo

Town	Water supply
Ballymote	Lough Talt Regional Water Supply
Enniscrone	Lough Easky Regional Water Supply
Tobercurry	Lough Talt Regional Water Supply
Ballysadare	Sligo Environs Water Supply (Kilsellagh WTP, Foxes Den WTP, Cairns Hill WTP)
Collooney	Sligo Environs Water Supply (Kilsellagh WTP, Foxes Den WTP, Cairns Hill WTP)
Grange	North Sligo Regional Water Supply
Rosses Point	Sligo Environs Water Supply (Kilsellagh WTP, Foxes Den WTP, Cairns Hill WTP)
Strandhill	Sligo Environs Water Supply (Kilsellagh WTP, Foxes Den WTP, Cairns Hill WTP)

There are two main sources of water supplying the Sligo and Environs area, namely Kilsellagh Reservoir and Lough Gill.

The Sligo and Environs Water Supply Scheme is designed to provide for the domestic, agricultural and industrial water requirements of Sligo City and its outlying regions, such as Ballincar, Rosses Point, Strandhill, Ballysadare, Collooney and Ballintogher.

Lough Talt Regional Water Supply covers the area of County Sligo east of the Ox Mountains. It supplies to Ballymote, Bellaghy, Coolaney, Ballinacarrow, Aclare, Banada, Cloonacool, Curry and Tobercurry.

Currently there is a water treatment plant at Kilsellagh and two plants treating water from Lough Gill – Cairns Hill and Foxes Den. In 2016, IW will upgrade the Foxes Den WTP to provide its full design

capacity of 550 m³/h. As part of this contract, IW will decommission the Cairns Hill WTP. The Cairns Hill Service Reservoirs will remain in service and Foxes Den water will be pumped to Cairns Hill.

In general, water supply facilities and drinking water quality throughout the county need to be improved to serve existing communities and accommodate planned growth. The CIP 2014-2016 includes works to alleviate some of the shortfalls in several WTPs. Water conservation measures will be also implemented to reduce unaccounted-for water (UFW) in the existing water supply networks, while some deficiencies will be addressed via the Minor Works Programme (MWP).

Table 9.B Water supply schemes in County Sligo

Scheme	Treatment	24-h production capacity (m³/day)	Current average daily production (m³/day)	Planned works
Carns Hill Water Supply Scheme	microstraining, ozonization, filtration, chlorination, fluoridation	5,400 m ³ /day	3,000 m ³ /day	decommissioning in conjunction with the proposed upgrade of Foxes Den WTP (550 m ³ /hr)
Foxes Den Water Supply Scheme	dissolved air flotation, rapid gravity filtration, chlorination & fluoridation	11,000 m ³ /day	Present abstraction 7,000 m ³ /day. Following the decommissioning of the Cairns Hill WTP, this will increase to circa 10,000 m ³ /day	proposed upgrade (550 m ³ /hr) in conjunction with the decommissioning of the Cairns Hill WTP
Kilsellagh Water Supply Scheme	dissolved air flotation, rapid gravity filtration, chlorination & fluoridation	8,000 m ³ /day	5,096 m ³ /day	No works are proposed by IW in relation to this scheme.
Lough Easky Regional Scheme	clarification, rapid gravity filtration, chlorination, fluoridation	4,400 m ³ /day	2,800 m ³ /day	No works are proposed by IW in relation to this scheme.

Scheme	Treatment	24-h production capacity (m ³ /day)	Current average daily production (m ³ /day)	Planned works
Lough Talt Regional Scheme	chlorination, fluoridation	10,000 m ³ /day	7,500 m ³ /day	<p>IW's CIP 2014–2016 includes a proposal to upgrade the plant, which would provide for a 10-year growth scenario.</p> <p>Water Abstraction Order being advanced in tandem (for a peak demand of 9040m³/d) with proposal to build a new Plant. IW seeks to advance some elements of this Plant as Minor Works Programmes (UV Treatment system/ possible filtration system) in order to provide water compliant with the Drinking Water Regulations.</p>
North Sligo Regional Scheme Ardnaglass (Ardnaglass Upper, Barnaderg)	clarification, rapid gravity filtration, chlorination, fluoridation	3,000 m ³ /day	2,000 m ³ /day	No works are proposed by IW in relation to this scheme.
South Sligo Regional Scheme	by Roscommon County Council	1,000 m ³ /day	1,000 m ³ /day	No works are proposed by IW in relation to this scheme.
Riverstown Regional Scheme	chlorination	640 m ³ /day	350 m ³ /day	No works are proposed by IW in relation to this scheme.
Killaraght Regional Scheme	by Roscommon County Council	unknown	60 m ³ /day	Supplied from the Boyle/ Ardcairn Regional Scheme

9.2.2 Water conservation and network management

The term “unaccounted-for water” (UFW) is used as a measure of leakage in a water distribution network. Before the establishment of Irish Water, each local authority measured UFW differently. From water audits carried out by Sligo County Council’s Water Services Section, it is estimated that up to 41% of all water produced by treatment plants surveyed was unaccounted-for and that in some areas of the county this level was much higher. Using IW’s methodology this figure has been estimated to be as high as 54% based on data for the first half of 2015.

Therefore, there is strong evidence that water conservation is a practical, realistic and economic way of meeting much of the extra demand for water.

In the period of the last WSIP 2010–2012 (extended to 2013), the scheme known as “**Sligo Water Conservation Stage 3 – South Sligo Watermains Replacement Works – Contract No 3**” was satisfactorily completed.

In early 2016, Irish Water progressed the following water conservation schemes:

- **Sligo City Water Conservation Stage 3 Works Phase 1**, which involves the construction of circa 9.8 km of pipework, and also includes the **Sligo and Environs Sewerage Scheme - Advanced Works – Pearse Road Storm Sewer** (comprising 1.5 km of foul and surface water sewer and associated fittings).
- **Sligo Water Conservation Stage 3 – Mains Rehabilitation Phase 2 Lough Talt**, involving the replacement of 20.5 km of defective pipework.

9.2.3 Rural water supply and quality

A number of rural dwellings and small communities throughout Sligo do not have the benefit of a public mains water supply system. These dwellings rely on group water schemes (GWS) or on individual well supplies. Grants are available for rural dwellings older than seven years for well connections or upgrades to existing wells.

Many private water users rely on groundwater sources that are prone to contamination from septic tanks or farmyard effluent. Therefore the protection of underlying aquifers is important for the environmental quality of rural water supply.

Water supply policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-WS-1** Co-operate with Irish Water to ensure an adequate, sustainable and economic supply of good quality water for domestic, commercial and industrial use, in order to promote the development of County Sligo’s settlements as set out in the Core Strategy.
- P-WS -2** Liaise with Irish Water in seeking to establish source management and protection

zones around drinking water supply sources (ground and surface water) and develop appropriate management and maintenance measures for these sources.

- P-WS-3** Support the implementation of the Irish Water’s Capital Investment Programmes (CIP) and Minor Works Programmes (MWP) subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.
- P-WS-4** Facilitate the inclusion of water conservation and sustainability measures so as to minimise the use of potable water in new developments.
- P-WS-5** Where connection to a public water supply is not possible, or the existing supply does not have sufficient capacity, the provision of a private water supply will be permitted only where it can be demonstrated that the proposed water supply meets the standards set out in the EU and national legislation and guidance, and would not be prejudicial to public health or would not significantly impact negatively on the source or yield of an existing supply.

9.3 Wastewater treatment

The provision of wastewater treatment infrastructure is imperative to facilitate the economic, social, and physical development of the county and to support settlement growth. In addition, the continued improvement and provision of this infrastructure is necessary to meet the requirements of the **Urban Wastewater Treatment (Amendment) Regulations 2004**.

There are 31 major wastewater treatment schemes within the county, of varying size and complexity (refer to Table 9.C). There is a need to upgrade and improve the network and treatment facilities of a number of towns and villages throughout Sligo County. However, it should be noted that not all zoned lands in settlements need necessarily to be serviced within the lifetime of this plan. This is because the zoning of land takes a longer term view with regard to development potential which may exceed the targets set out in the Core Strategy.

Land use plans also incorporate a residential zoning overhead (generally 50%) to allow for an element of choice and to facilitate the release of adequate land for residential development. Therefore not all zoned lands should necessarily be viewed as appropriate for development within the lifetime of this plan.

Zoned lands may be serviced on a phased basis, subject to compliance with the Core Strategy and the provisions of the IW’s Investment programme.

The Sligo Main Drainage Scheme has provided Sligo City and surrounding areas with adequate treatment and drainage capacity to serve up to 50,000 PE (population equivalent), thereby allowing for future development and growth. Furthermore, a Serviced Land Initiative scheme was completed in the Teesan-Lisnalurg Area.

To ensure EU standards are maintained and all areas are serviced appropriately, there is a need for further upgrading of drainage infrastructure in some of the outlying areas of the Sligo and Environs area, such as Ballincar, Cregg, Rosses Point, Carrowroe and Cummeen.

There has been significant investment in wastewater treatment facilities throughout the County in the past decade (since 2005). New wastewater treatment facilities were constructed in Carney, Dromore West, Coolaney, Gorteen, Ballysadare, Aclare and Cloonacool.

A new wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) was constructed in Enniscrone as part of a contract including six other WWTPs, namely Ballysadare, Aclare, Cloonacool, Dromore West, Coolaney and Easky.

Sludge generated from public sewerage schemes throughout the County and from private treatment systems (including individual septic tanks and on-site systems serving one-off housing) can be transported to a sludge hub centre at the Sligo Main Drainage Centre at Finisklin for treatment and disposal. To facilitate the sludge collection process, two satellite stations have been completed in County Sligo at Ballymote and Enniscrone.

9.3.1 Prioritisation of investment

Irish Water is now responsible for the treatment and disposal of wastewater in towns and villages where public wastewater treatment facilities are in place. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the statutory body tasked with ensuring that appropriate standards are put in place in the provision and operation of wastewater infrastructure.

Proposed treatment works and extensions to drainage infrastructure throughout County Sligo are outlined in the Table 9.C below.

Table 9.C. Wastewater treatment plants in County Sligo

Town / Scheme	Current design PE*	Existing outfall / treatment	Current Load PE*	Remarks
Aclare	750	inlet works, aeration tank, clarifier, sludge holding tank (plant constructed in 2008)	259	No works are proposed by IW in relation to this scheme, which is part of the Enniscrone, Dromore West, Ballysadare, Coolaney, Easky, Aclare and Cloonacool DBO bundle (operated by EPS)
Ballinacarrow	250	extended aeration	302 (estimated 2016)	Upgrade works to provide a 450 p.e. plant are included in Irish Water Investment Plan for 2017-2021.
Ballinafad	125	septic tank & ABR, peat-based percolation system	133 (estimated)	Upgrade works to provide a 400 p.e. plant are included in Irish Water Investment Plan for 2017-2021..
Ballintogher	360	aeration tanks & peat-based percolation system	300 (estimated)	Elements of this plant may be advanced as part of the IW's MWP.
Ballymote	3,000	inlet works, extended aeration, clarifier, sludge holding tanks, satellite hub centre.	3,061 (estimated 2016)	Upgrade works to provide a 3,500 p.e. plant are included in Irish Water's Investment Plan for 2017-2021.

Town / Scheme	Current design PE*	Existing outfall / treatment	Current Load PE*	Remarks
Ballysadare	4,500	new inlet works, aeration tanks, clarifier, storm tank and sludge holding tank (plant constructed in 2008)	2,407 (2013)	An upgrade of the plant (treatment standard rather than capacity) may be included in the CIP 2017–2021. Part of the Enniscrone, Dromore West, Ballysadare, Coolaney, Easky, Aclare and Cloonacool DBO Bundle (operated by EPS)
Bunnannadden	400	Inlet works, aeration tank, clarifier, sludge holding tank (plant constructed in 2013)	188	No works are proposed by IW in relation to this scheme.
Carney	2,500	new inlet works, aeration tanks, clarifier, and sludge holding tank (plant constructed in 2008)	654	This plant is operated in a bundle (Response Group) together with Gorteen.
Castlebaldwin	100	septic tank & peat-based percolation system	110 (estimated)	This Plant is not on any current or proposed IW CIP. There is a need to provide a compliant plant, possibly by converting the existing plant to a pumping station and pumping to a privately constructed plant in the village.
Cliffony	800	New membrane bioreactor (MBR) plant constructed in 2014	703	No works are proposed by IW in relation to this scheme.
Cloonacool	750	inlet works, aeration tank, clarifier, sludge holding tank (plant constructed in 2008)	172	No works are proposed by IW in relation to this scheme, which is part of the Enniscrone, Dromore West, Ballysadare, Coolaney, Easky, Aclare and Cloonacool DBO bundle (operated by EPS)
Collooney	1,400	extended aeration, clarifier	2,564 (estimated 2016)	Upgrade works to provide a 3,100 p.e. plant are included in Irish Water's Investment Plan for 2017-2021.
Coolaney	2,500	new inlet works, aeration tanks, clarifier, storm tank, sludge holding tank (plant constructed in 2008)	1503	No works are proposed by IW in relation to this scheme, which is part of the Enniscrone, Dromore West, Ballysadare, Coolaney, Easky, Aclare and Cloonacool DBO bundle (operated by EPS)
Culfadda	150	extended aeration	110 (estimated)	No works are proposed by IW in relation to this scheme.

Town / Scheme	Current design PE*	Existing outfall / treatment	Current Load PE*	Remarks
Curry	400	extended aeration	194 (estimated)	No works are proposed by IW in relation to this scheme.
Dromore West	2,500	new inlet works, aeration tanks, clarifier, storm tank, sludge holding tank (plant constructed in 2008)	1192	No works are proposed by IW in relation to this scheme, which is part of the Enniscrone, Dromore West, Ballysadare, Coolaney, Easky, Aclare and Cloonacool DBO bundle (operated by EPS).
Drumcliff	150	New rotating biological contactor (RBC) plant constructed in 2012	150	This plant is not currently on the existing or proposed CIP. The plant is overloaded and needs to be reviewed.
Easky	450	extended aeration (plant constructed in 2008)	450	No works are proposed by IW in relation to this scheme, which is part of the Enniscrone, Dromore West, Ballysadare, Coolaney, Easky, Aclare and Cloonacool DBO bundle (operated by EPS).
Enniscrone	5,000	new inlet works, aeration tanks, clarifier, storm tank and sludge holding tank, sludge hub centre	2,604 (2014)	An upgrade of the plant (treatment standard rather than capacity) will be reviewed for potential inclusion in the CIP 2017–2021. The plant is part of the Enniscrone, Dromore West, Ballysadare, Coolaney, Easky, Aclare and Cloonacool DBO bundle (operated by EPS).
Geevagh	250	extended aeration	221 (estimated)	No works are proposed by IW in relation to this scheme, which is not on any existing or proposed CIP. The Plant needs to be reviewed.
Grange	280	extended aeration	733 (estimate 2016)	Upgrade works to provide a 900 p.e. plant are included in Irish Water Investment Plan for 2017-2021.
Gorteen	2,500	extended aeration (plant constructed in 2008)	1023	This plant is operated in a bundle (Response Group) together with Carney.
Monasteraden	400	extended aeration	110 (estimated)	No works are proposed by IW in relation to this scheme.
Mullaghmore	320	holding tank, sea outfall	Info. not available	Upgrade of the Mullaghmore WWTP is included in Irish Water's Investment Plan 2017-2021. This project is at feasibility stage. Design capacity of the upgraded plant to adequately serve the village and meet statutory requirements is to be determined.

Town / Scheme	Current design PE*	Existing outfall / treatment	Current Load PE*	Remarks
Riverstown	600	extended aeration	357 (estimated)	No works are proposed by IW in relation to this scheme.
Rockfield	250	extended aeration plant	152 (estimated)	No works are proposed by IW in relation to this scheme.
Rosses Point Ballincar / Cregg /	1,500	n/a	1,466 PE (2014)	Sligo County Council, in conjunction with Irish Water, is considering the options available for the provision of wastewater services for the areas of Rosses Point and Cregg / Ballincar.
Sligo Main Drainage Scheme	50,000	new pumping station, new inlet works, aeration tanks, clarifiers, storm holding tanks tank and sludge hub centre (plant constructed in 2009)	n/a	No works are proposed by IW in relation to this scheme.
Strandhill	1,500	oxidation ditch, clarifier	2,941 PE (estimated 2016)	Upgrade works to provide a 3,700 p.e. plant are included in Irish Water Investment Plan for 2017-2021.
Teesan / Lisnalurg Main Drainage Scheme	n/a	Holding tank, pumping station and associated pipework to connect to the Sligo Main Drainage Network	n/a	No works are proposed by IW in relation to this scheme.
Tobercurry	1,400	Imhoff tank, percolating tank, tertiary treatment	2,994 PE. (estimated 2016)	Upgrade works to provide a 3,500 p.e. plant are included in Irish Water Investment Plan for 2017-2021.

* PE – Population equivalent; ** WWTP – Wastewater Treatment Plant

9.3.2 Wastewater management in rural areas

Outside serviced towns and villages, much of the wastewater produced is treated and disposed of on-site by means of individual septic tanks and proprietary effluent treatment systems (PETS). It is essential that these systems are properly designed, installed and maintained to avoid environmental pollution (refer to Section 13.2.11 On-site wastewater treatment systems in Chapter 13 Development Management Standards).

Where single dwellings are located outside an area that is serviced by a public foul sewer, the developer will be required to submit details to demonstrate that the on-site wastewater treatment system can safely and adequately dispose of effluent in accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency's "Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses" (p.e ≤ 10) (2009) as amended.

Where appropriate, the development of Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OSWWTS) for small businesses/community facilities in unserviced areas may be considered where:

- they are in single ownership
- it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that the proposed OSWWTS is in accordance with Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses EPA (2009) and Wastewater Treatment Manuals-Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres and Hotels, EPA (1999) as amended.

Wastewater policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

P-WW-1 Co-operate with Irish Water in the provision of adequate wastewater treatment capacity including the programme of upgrades / extensions set out in Table 9.C and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive. These works will facilitate development in County Sligo and promote the growth of the county's settlements as set out in the Core Strategy.

P-WW-2 Require sustainable collection, treatment and discharge of wastewater effluent generated within the County, and ensure that effluent/sludge is treated and disposed of in accordance with the required EU standards.

P-WW-3 Ensure that developers provide effective drainage systems with separate foul and surface water networks.

P-WW-4 Require all new developments to connect to the public wastewater treatment plants, where capacity exists in the system.

In cases where a settlement is not served by a public wastewater treatment plant, or where no spare capacity exists in the relevant wastewater treatment plants, proposals for single houses using on-site wastewater treatment will be considered subject to appropriate scale, site assessment, design and ground conditions, taking groundwater vulnerability into account and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.

Any such permitted development shall be subject to legally binding maintenance arrangements agreed with the Planning Authority and shall be required to connect to the public wastewater treatment plant when adequate capacity becomes available.

However, communal on-site wastewater treatment systems for multiple housing developments (i.e. systems servicing more than one residential unit) will not be permitted.

P-WW-5 All proposals for on-site treatment systems shall be designed, constructed and maintained in accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency's *Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal*

Systems Serving Single Houses (PE≤10). (2009) and/or Treatment Systems for Small Communities, business, Leisure Centres and Hotels, EPA (1999) as amended, and any guidance documents issued by the County Council.

- P-WW-6** Ensure that adequately designed oil interceptors are installed in all commercial developments that include car-parks or other oil- and petrol-related activities.

9.4 Surface water drainage

Due to its impervious surfaces, the built environment will create an increase in surface water run-off. The majority of towns and villages in County Sligo are coping with surface water run-off either through natural dissipation into nearby watercourses or through the installation of artificial drainage systems. The presence of the natural environment, incorporating woodlands and wetlands, aids in retaining surface water, thereby helping in the regulation of stream flows. Storm water retention facilities provide temporary storage for surface water that is in excess of the capacity available in downstream channels. This method is considered to be in accordance with better practice guidelines and will be encouraged in County Sligo. Individual developments facilitated under the guidance of this development plan shall be obliged, in all cases where surface water drainage measures are required, to provide a surface water drainage system separated from the foul drainage system.

In the case of one-off rural dwellings or extensions, except in circumstances where an existing surface water drainage system is available to the proposed development site and which, in the opinion of the planning authority, has adequate capacity to accommodate the identified surface water loading, surface water shall be disposed of, in its entirety, within the curtilage of the development site by way of suitably sized soak holes. In the case of driveways, drainage measures shall be provided to a detail acceptable to the planning authority so as to avoid run-off from the site to the adjoining public road.

For all other greenfield developments, in general it is the policy of Sligo County Council to require the limitation of surface water run-off to pre-development levels. Where a developer can clearly demonstrate that capacity exists to accommodate run-off levels in excess of greenfield levels, the planning authority will give consideration to such proposals on a case by case basis. In the case of brownfield development, while existing surface water drainage measures will be taken into account, some attenuation measures may be required, at the discretion of the planning authority. In line with the above, Sligo County Council will consider all drainage proposals consistent with SDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems).

Surface water drainage policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-SWD-1** Require the provision and use of separate foul and surface water drainage systems.
- P-SWD-2** Ensure that developments are kept at an appropriate distance from watercourses, to protect them from contamination, allow for natural drainage and facilitate channel clearing maintenance subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.
- P-SWD-3** Preserve and protect the water quality of natural surface water storage sites, such as wetlands, where these help to regulate stream flows, recharge groundwater and screen pollutants (such features also provide important habitat functions).
- P-SWD-4** Protect wetland areas and floodplains from development.
- P-SWD-5** Prohibit the alteration of natural drainage systems and, in the case of development works, require the provision of acceptable mitigation measures in order to minimise the risk of flooding and negative impacts on water quality (including run-off, erosion and sedimentation).
- P-SWD-6** Protect drainage characteristics of river channels and streams that can facilitate surface water drainage, by ensuring that development is kept at an appropriate distance from stream banks and/or adequate protection measures are put in place.
- P-SWD-7** Promote storm water retention facilities for new developments and existing catchment areas, particularly where developments are proposed in proximity to an existing open water course or stream.
- P-SWD-8** Encourage and, where appropriate, require that the permitted flow from a development to a public storm water drain or watercourse is restricted/equal to the natural run-off rates from the undeveloped site.

9.5 Waste management

Waste comes from a wide range of sources, including construction, industrial activities, agriculture and households. To manage waste in a safe and compliant manner, a clear strategy is required.

The Waste Management Plan for the Connacht-Ulster Region is the framework for the prevention and management of wastes in a safe and sustainable manner. The Regional Waste Management Plan is required to be revised or replaced every six years.

The current plan covers the period from 2015 to 2021. Its implementation must ensure that European and national mandatory targets are achieved without compromising the health of communities in the region, its people and the environment.

The role of local authorities in waste management is focused on education, prevention, regulating householders, businesses and waste operators and enforcing waste legislation.

Waste management infrastructure provided by local authorities includes mainly bring banks and civic amenities. Sligo County Council will explore potential partnership arrangements with the private sector to develop waste, energy and amenity infrastructure as new activities at closed landfills in the county.

9.5.1 Municipal waste infrastructure

Landfill is the least desirable option in dealing with waste, and is at the bottom of the EU waste hierarchy. However, landfill is required to deal with the waste that cannot be recycled, composted or thermally treated, which is estimated to be 19% of all waste generated in Connacht.

A greater percentage of landfill capacity is required until the necessary infrastructure is put in place to recycle, compost and in particular thermally treat waste. The Council also has to deal with potential environmental problems caused by historic (i.e. closed) landfills. There is a need to continue to manage these legacy sites and to implement the necessary measures to reduce any of the environmental impacts which may be associated with the landfill.

This diversion of waste from landfill is achieved through the provision of facilities and services, followed by education and enforcement. Sligo's bring-bank network (40 sites), two civic amenity sites (Sligo and Tobercurry), green waste facility (Ballysadare), kerbside recycling, home composting and the introduction of a separate organic waste collection – all help divert waste from landfill. Sligo County Council will continue to examine ways of managing waste in a more efficient manner.

Organic kitchen waste makes up approximately 30% of all household waste generated. Home composting is a positive and simple option to deal with this waste stream. The Environment Section of Sligo County Council continues to promote the use of home composters and offers them for sale at a subsidised rate. Home composting and the introduction of the 'third bin' for organic kitchen waste should increase the diversion of this waste from landfill.

9.5.2 Construction and demolition waste

Sligo County Council will seek to promote the recycling and reuse of construction/demolition waste, which will help reduce the demands of the construction industry for aggregates. The Council will examine the scope for recovery of construction and demolition waste from local authority projects, as

well as the use of recycled construction materials in site development, road building and other infrastructural projects.

Measures may also be incorporated into the licensing procedures for industry to encourage a reduction in environmental impact. Construction and demolition waste management plans are to be submitted as part of certain development proposals as per Sligo County Council Construction & Demolition Waste guidelines. Extractive developments are encouraged to incorporate C&D recycling facilities, which would facilitate the use of recovered materials in the restoration of sites, subject to compliance with environmental legislation.

9.5.3 Hazardous waste

Hazardous waste is waste with properties that make it potentially dangerous or harmful to human health or the environment. Sligo County Council will co-operate with other agencies in relation to the planning, organisation, authorisation and supervision of the disposal of hazardous waste. The provision of a hazardous waste collection facility at Tobercurry Recycling Centre has assisted in diverting hazardous waste to the appropriate recovery and disposal facilities. The movement of hazardous waste shall be controlled using the appropriate waste management legislation.

9.5.4 Green waste

Green garden waste is a bulky waste fraction that should be diverted from landfill. Sligo County Council operates a green waste composting facility at Ballysadare, in conjunction with a local community group. This facility accepts green waste and sells peat-free compost generated at the site.

9.5.5 Litter control

Litter has a negative effect on our environment, with implications for tourism and investment. Sligo County Council will continue its efforts to combat illegal dumping activity under the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 (as amended).

Apart from enforcement, Sligo County Council's actions to counteract litter pollution include:

- establishing partnerships between the Council and community groups in tackling litter;
- promoting environmental education through schools and community groups;
- highlighting areas with a litter problem and developing initiatives to solve the problem.

Box 9.D Existing and proposed waste management facilities and services in Sligo

<p>Door-to-door/kerbside collection. This involves the collection of residual, recyclables, bio-waste and food waste from households and commercial properties.</p>
<p>Bring-bank network. There are currently 40 recycling/bring-bank sites located in Sligo County and City. The recycling banks currently provide facilities for green, brown and clear glass and aluminium cans. Most sites also have banks for textile recycling.</p>
<p>Waste recycling centres. There are two waste recycling centres in County Sligo, catering for a wide range of waste streams. It is envisaged that both Sligo City and Tobercurry will have facilities that can accept the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ recyclable waste – glass, metal, packaging, dry recyclables from domestic sources etc. ▪ bulky waste – wood and metal waste, white goods etc.; ▪ priority/hazardous waste – batteries, waste oils etc.; ▪ green garden waste; ▪ light construction and demolition waste; <p>Waste electrical goods are accepted free of charge at these facilities. It is proposed to extend the waste streams accepted at these facilities or encourage the establishment of additional facilities.</p>
<p>Construction and demolition waste. This is one of the largest sources of waste. There are a number of facilities authorised within the County to deal with the segregation and crushing of construction and demolition waste.</p>
<p>Transfer station. This involves the compaction and transfer of waste. The private sector currently provides a waste transfer station within Sligo City.</p>
<p>Ballysadare composting facility. This facility is accepting green waste and selling peat-free compost generated at the site.</p>
<p>End-of-life vehicle recycling facilities. There are several such facilities in Sligo, where members of the public can now bring their scrap cars free of charge.</p>
<p>Repair centres. It is proposed to support the establishment of facilities that can repair and renovate materials for reuse; these facilities will help reduce dependence on landfill.</p>
<p>Salvage yards. It is proposed to support the establishment of facilities that can offer salvaged materials (that otherwise would have been considered as waste) for sale.</p>

9.5.6 Historic landfills

Historic landfills are the landfills that were in operation in the period 1977-1997. Appendix F of the Waste Management Plan 2015-2021 for the Connacht-Ulster Region lists only three historic and legacy landfill sites in County Sligo: Finisklin (class A – high environmental risk) Marlow (class B – moderate environmental risk) and Tobercurry (Class C – low environmental risk). The sites at Finisklin and Marlow (near Ballymote) are known as former local authority landfills. The site at Tobercurry was never used by the local authority and its exact location and extent have not been established.

Finisklin

The former Finisklin landfill, located on the western edge of Sligo City, beside the Docklands area, was operated by Sligo County Council between 1958 and 1994.

In 2010-2011, Sligo County Council commissioned a preliminary assessment of the environmental contamination risks associated with the former Finisklin landfill site. The report concluded that there would be little or no restrictions on the type of development that could take place on the older parts of the former landfill, while the level of restrictions would increase significantly towards the northern areas, which were filled more recently.

The report also recommended that further landfill gas investigation and risk assessment should be undertaken prior to any site development works, depending on the sensitivity of the proposed development to potential landfill gas.

The final stage of the certification process and remediation of the Finisklin site, in accordance with the EPA Code of Practice: Environmental Risk Assessment for Unregulated Waste Disposal Sites (April 2007), is due to commence in 2017. Upon completion of this process, it may be necessary to formulate specific policies or objectives for inclusion in the Sligo and Environs Local Area Plan in relation to future development in the Finisklin area.

Marlow

The former landfill site at Marlow is located within the buffer zone/green belt established by the Ballymote Local Area Plan 2012-2018. A closure plan for Marlowe was put in place by the Local Authority before the publication of the relevant EPA Code of Practice. No further investigations are planned for the Marlowe site at this stage.

Having regard to the restricted range of land uses permissible in the buffer zone/green belt, it is considered that the zoning is appropriate to the potential sensitivities. In the event of a zoning change as part of the review of the Ballymote LAP, the CDP waste management policy P-WM-7 shall apply.

Waste management policies

It is a policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-WM-1** Promote the development of facilities in accordance with the waste hierarchy principle, which involves a shift towards prevention and waste minimisation measures, while developing recycling and reuse, disposal with energy recovery and, as the last option, disposal of residual waste to landfill.
- P-WM-2** Require all new developments – including residential, commercial and industrial developments, neighbourhood centres, shopping and retail areas – to provide adequate storage for the three segregated municipal waste types (organic, recyclable and landfill waste) and incorporate waste management facilities commensurate with their nature and scale.
- Waste collection points shall have adequate access to provide for loading and further division after recycling on site, in order to facilitate the achievement of high recycling levels.
- P-WM-3** Require the preparation of Waste Management Plans for the construction stages of developments where deemed necessary.
- P-WM-4** Make appropriate provision for a bring bank centre for glass and cans in each village.
- P-WM-5** In relation to any proposals for development of lands that may be contaminated or filled with waste (e.g. reclaimed/filled lands), require the applicants to engage specialist environmental consultants to investigate and assess the presence and extent of contamination, and to recommend remediation measures for agreement with the Local Authorities.
- P-WM-6** Require any development proposals on known historic landfill sites or in their vicinity shall take into consideration the *EPA Code of Practice: Environmental Risk Assessment for Unregulated Waste Disposal Sites (April 2007)*. Where landfills meet the definition of a ‘closed landfill’, as set out in the *Waste Management (certification of historic unlicensed waste disposal and recovery activity) Regulations 2008* (S.I. No 524 of 2008), there will be a requirement for authorisation of the landfill by the EPA under those regulations.
- P-WM-7** Ensure that the zoning or the rezoning of known former landfill sites, as part of the preparation or review of local area plans, is the most appropriate having regard to the potential sensitivities of such lands.
- P-WM-8** Development proposals on brownfield sites – such as former petrol stations, fuel/chemical storage areas and similar sites – shall be required to undertake an assessment if the potential for contaminated materials, soils etc to be unearthed during demolition/construction works, and the associated environmental risks.
- Where any environmental risk is identified, appropriate investigations shall be undertaken to determine the nature and extent of any materials or contaminated

soils on the proposed development sites.

A site-specific remediation plan shall be prepared to ensure that the construction and operation phases of development do not result in risk to human health, water quality, biodiversity, fisheries, air quality etc.

Waste management objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-WM-1** Ensure that the certification and remediation process of the known historic landfill at Finisklin is completed in accordance with the *EPA Code of Practice: Environmental Risk Assessment for Unregulated Waste Disposal Sites (April 2007)*.

10. Environmental quality

The environment is a valuable but vulnerable resource. When adequately managed and protected, the quality and integrity of the environment can be retained. Through the various policies and objectives set out in this chapter, Sligo County Council aims for the preservation and enhancement of the County's environmental resource. In particular, the Council will seek to achieve the highest standards of water and air quality, to properly manage the coastal zone, and to prevent or mitigate the expected negative impacts of climate change, especially flood risk.

10.1 Water quality

Water quality relates to rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuarine and coastal waters. Water quality monitoring and management is governed by the EU Water Framework Directive (EC/2000/60/EC). At present, this is carried out on the basis of River Basin Districts (RBDs).

County Sligo falls into three RBDs – the Western RBD, Shannon International RBD and the North-Western International RBD. River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) for each RBD came into effect in 2010.

The Water Framework Directive places an obligation on local authorities and other public bodies to achieve the *good status* classification of all watercourses and prevent existing *good* and *high status* surface waters from deteriorating. Existing *moderate*, *poor* and *bad status* waters must be improved to at least *good status* within the timescales detailed in the Directive.

The RBMPs identified the specific environmental objectives to be achieved and the actions needed to achieve them. The second cycle of RBMPs will cover the period 2017 to 2021. Work has commenced on the second cycle of the process, which may potentially result in one River Basin District Management Plan being produced for the geographical area of the Republic of Ireland. The new River Basin District Management Plan is due to be published by mid-2017.

Sligo County Council has a key role to play in terms of the implementation and enforcement of measures contained in the RBMPs. The CDP policies have been drafted in accordance with the measures detailed in the current River Basin Management Plans and may be reviewed, if necessary, after the publication of the second-cycle RBMP.

The main sources of water pollution are agriculture, forestry, industrial discharges, wastewater treatment plant discharges and effluent discharges from unserviced developments. It is the role of Sligo County Council to control developments and activities, through planning policies and through the enforcement of national water quality legislation, to ensure that water quality is not adversely affected.

The local authority must ensure compliance with the following legislation:

- European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009
- European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 (S.I.9 of 2010)
- European Communities (Quality of Shellfish Waters) Regulations and the objectives of Shellfish Pollution Reduction Programmes.
- Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008 (S.I. No. 79 of 2008)

10.1.1 Quality of estuarine and coastal waters

Sligo County Council must ensure that planning and development policies take due account of the provisions of the Water Framework Directive and the European Communities (Quality of Shellfish Waters) Regulations 2006, in order to maintain the existing water quality status in estuarine and coastal waters.

The principal estuarine, transitional and coastal waters which may be impacted by the plan include Sligo, Drumcliff and Ballysadare Bays and their respective estuaries. Killala Bay also borders the western perimeter of County Sligo.

The EPA have published data for transitional and coastal waters for the most recent monitoring period indicating that the Garavogue Estuary, Sligo Bay, Killala Bay and Donegal Bay Southern are currently classified at *good status*. Drumcliff Estuary is classified at *high status*, while Ballysadare Estuary is classified at *moderate status*.

In 2009, Drumcliff Bay and Sligo Bay were designated as shellfish waters in accordance with the European Communities (Quality of Shellfish Waters) Regulations 2006 (implemented as S.I. No 268 of 2006). Ballysadare Bay may also be designated in the future.

The DoECLG has prepared Shellfish Pollution Reduction Programmes for Sligo Bay and Drumcliff Bay, which must be implemented by Sligo County Council. One of the key pressures identified affecting shellfish water quality within these catchment s was on-site waste water treatment plants.

10.1.2 Bathing water quality

In 2002, the European Commission (EC) began a major review of health information relating to bathing water and in 2006 issued a Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC) which was transposed into Irish law by the ‘Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008 (S.I. No. 79 of 2008)’. These new Regulations came fully into effect on 31 December 2014.

The Directive gives a stronger focus to the protection of public health and requires a more proactive approach to the management of bathing water quality. At present, bathing waters are classified as *good*, *sufficient* or *poor*. From 2015, a further category is used – “*excellent*”. All bathing waters are now required to classify at least as *sufficient*.

The Directive specifies the preparation of bathing water profiles and assessments of the causes of pollution that might impair bathers’ health. The Directive also requires increased public participation, allowing the public to make informed choices about when and where to bathe.

The overall objective is to ensure that the quality of bathing water is maintained and, where necessary improved, so that it complies with standards designed to protect public health and the environment.

In County Sligo, there are five beaches with designated bathing waters: Dunmorán, Enniscrone, Mullaghmore, Rosses Point and Streedagh. The bathing waters at these locations must be monitored by the local authority at regular intervals during the bathing season, which runs from 1st June to 15th September each year.

Sligo County Council has established an ongoing annual monitoring programme for bathing waters. Based on 2014 monitoring data, as published by the EPA, all bathing waters achieved at least *sufficient* water quality status. Streedagh, Rosses Point, Dunmorán and Mullaghmore beaches were classified as *excellent*, while Enniscrone was categorised as *high status*.

10.1.3 River water quality

The national water quality monitoring programme (for rivers, lakes, groundwater, transitional waters for reporting purposes for the Water Framework Directive) is ongoing and usually there is a delay in the publication of this information. This monitoring programme is undertaken jointly by the EPA and local authorities.

The EPA sampling programme is generally carried out over a three-year cycle. Water quality information from the sampling programme is assessed by the EPA, which then assigns the official status for that period.

The most recent EPA report on river water quality in County Sligo relates to 2011-2013. The report indicates that extensive areas of river water in the County are either of *good* or *moderate status*. There are also a significant number of *high-status* water bodies in the county.

There are two designated salmonid rivers in the County: the Moy and the Owengarve. Sligo County Council will strictly control development and activities in the catchments of rivers in order to protect their waters from pollution.

10.1.4 Lake water quality

Lough Gill, Lough Easky, Lough Talt and Lough Gara are particularly important in terms of public water supply. In addition, Lough Arrow is used as a raw water source in a number of Group Water Schemes serving a wide rural hinterland. These five lakes are targeted for particular attention under the national surface water monitoring programme.

Based on 2011-2013 monitoring data, the majority of the principal lakes are classified at good or high status. Lough Easky, Lough Talt, and Lough Arrow are classified at good status. Lough Gill, Lough Gara and Glencar Lake are currently classified at moderate status. Templehouse Lake is classified at bad status. A significant improvement in water quality is required within time frames specified in the Water Framework Directive. At the present time, Cloonacleigha Lough and Dargan Lough have unassigned status.

Sligo County Council will control development and activities in the catchments of all lakes in order to protect and maintain existing water quality and improve water quality in lake systems that are currently not achieving the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.

Table 10.A Status of WFD-monitored lakes in County Sligo

Lake	2008-2010 ecological status	2008-2010 physico-chemical status	2011-2013 physico-chemical status	2011-2013 ecological status
Arrow	good	high	good	good
Easky	high	high	high	good
Gara	good	good	good	moderate
Gill	moderate	good	good	moderate
Kilsellagh	moderate	good	good	moderate
Talt	good	high	high	good
Templehouse	poor / bad	moderate	moderate	bad

Source: EPA’s *Integrated Water Quality Report 2013 – Western River Basin District* (published in 2014)

10.1.5 Groundwater quality

Groundwater is an important natural resource which supplies drinking water, supplies water to industry and agriculture and helps maintain wetlands and river flows through dry periods. A practical and effective means of protecting groundwater and preventing pollution is through the use of the Sligo Groundwater Protection Scheme which was prepared in 2009 by the Geological Survey Ireland (GSI).

The scheme provides a framework to assist in decision making on the location, nature and control of developments and activities in order to protect groundwater.

In the most recent groundwater assessment issued by the Environmental Protection Agency, based on data recorded during the period 2007-2012, all groundwater within County Sligo is classified at *good* status. Under the provisions of the Water Framework Directive, Sligo County Council must protect and maintain the existing *good* status groundwater bodies in Sligo.

10.1.6 Source protection

Potable water supply in County Sligo is derived from both surface water and groundwater sources. Raw water from Lough Gill, Lough Easky, Lough Talt, Lough Arrow and Lough Gara is utilised for the provision of potable water. It is crucial that water sources are protected so that dependable, good quality water can be provided.

Source protection plans have been prepared by Sligo County Council’s Environment Section in the past, relating to protection of raw water sources utilised for the provision of drinking water supplies. The most recent one was prepared for Lough Talt in 2013. It is likely that in the future, such source protection plans (or equivalent) will be prepared by Irish Water.

Drinking water sources and the supply areas are set out in **Section 9.2 Water supply**.

Water quality policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-WQ-1** Ensure that all development proposals have regard to the **Sligo Groundwater Protection Scheme**, in order to protect groundwater resources and groundwater-dependent habitats and species.
- P-WQ-2** Strictly limit and control new development in or near the catchment areas of water bodies, particularly salmonid rivers and those that are the source of the following drinking water supplies:
- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lough Gill | <input type="checkbox"/> Lough Easky |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lough Arrow | <input type="checkbox"/> Gortnaleck and Lyle streams |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kilsellagh Source catchment | <input type="checkbox"/> Riverstown Source Catchment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lough Talt | <input type="checkbox"/> GWS Source Catchments |
- P-WQ-3** Require adherence to any **source protection plans** (or equivalent) for the above-mentioned drinking water source catchments.
- P-WQ-4** Prohibit any development which is likely to lead to the deterioration of water quality.

10.2 Air quality

At present, there are no air quality monitoring stations in County Sligo, but the EPA has highlighted that a review of the existing ambient monitoring programme is ongoing. The *Air Quality in Ireland 2014* (EPA 2015) report highlights that “no levels above the EU limit value were recorded at any of the ambient air quality network monitoring sites in Ireland in 2014”.

Air quality in the county has been improved and maintained with the introduction of the Air Pollution (Marketing, Sale, Distribution & Burning of Specified Fuels) Regulations 2012. There are other factors that affect air quality and which should be considered, including emissions from commercial and industrial facilities, as well as vehicular emissions.

Sligo is fortunate in enjoying a high-quality environment, with very little industry contributing to problems of air pollution. The marketing, sale and distribution of bituminous coal (commonly referred to as smoky coal) have been prohibited in Sligo City since 2003. In 2012, when the Regulations were updated (Air Pollution (Marketing, Sale, Distribution & Burning of Specified Fuels) Regulations 2012), the prohibition was extended to include the burning of smoky coal also. The area in which the ban was in effect was also increased to include many of the townlands surrounding Sligo City.

Aiming to further reduce emissions, the Council will encourage an increase in the use of alternative energy sources in buildings – e.g. improving solar gain through building orientation and using more sustainable space heating technologies (refer to Section 13.2.18 DM Standards).

A reduction in the number of car trips will be facilitated through the promotion of compact urban development patterns that encourage walking and cycling.

The Council also continues to support the Rural Transport Programme (refer to Section 4.3 and P-RDD-4).

Air quality policies

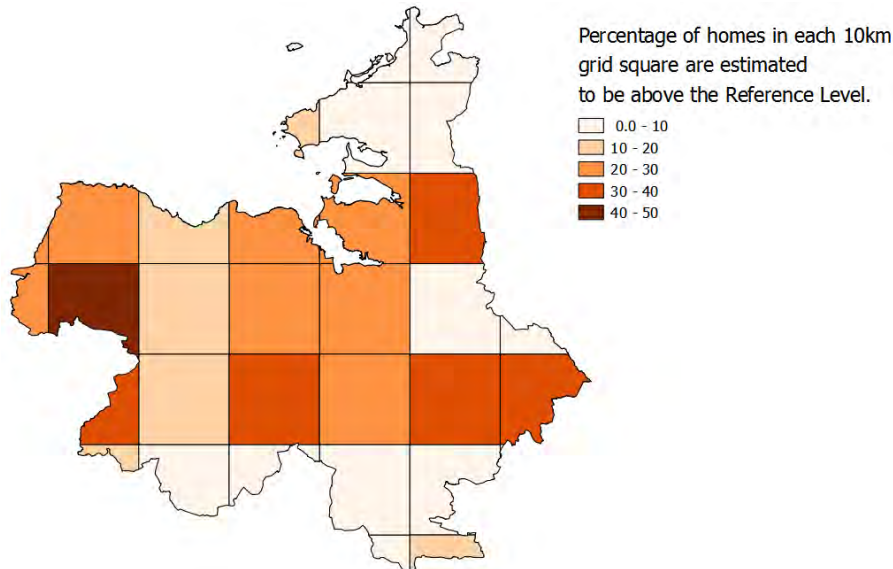
It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-AQ-1** Support the ban on bituminous coal in Sligo City and Environs and encourage the use of smokeless fuel throughout the County.
- P-AQ-2** In conjunction with the EPA, ensure that all existing and new developments are operated in a manner that does not contribute to deterioration in air quality.
- P-AQ-3** Ensure all new and – where possible – existing developments incorporate appropriate measures to minimise odour nuisance from the development.
- P-AQ-4** Promote the retention of trees, hedgerows and other vegetation, and encourage tree planting as a means of air purification and filtering of suspended particles.

Radon gas

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas, categorised by the World Health Organisation as a carcinogen, in the same group as asbestos and tobacco smoke. It has no taste, colour or smell. It can only be measured with special detectors. The acceptable level, or reference level, for homes in Ireland is 200 Becquerel per cubic metre (Bq/m³). For workplaces, the reference level is 400 Bq/m³.

Outside radon is diluted to very low levels. Radon can enter a home from the ground through small cracks in floors and through gaps around pipes or cables. Sligo has the highest incidence of homes with high radon levels in Ireland, with almost one in four homes measured in the county so far exceeding the acceptable level. Homes in some parts of County Sligo are more likely to have a radon problem. These parts of the county are called High Radon Areas. The EPA provides an interactive map at <http://www.epa.ie/radiation/radonmap> where people can see whether their homes are in a High Radon Area.



The darkest squares in the image above represent the areas with the highest radon levels. In the lightest squares, radon concentration was above the reference level in less than 10% of the houses tested.

Specific guidance on radon prevention measures for new homes is contained in the *Building Regulations, Technical Guidance Document C – site preparation and resistance to moisture* (DEHLG, 1997). The guidance specifies that all homes built after 1st July 1998 must be fitted with a standby radon sump which can be activated at a later stage to reduce any high radon concentrations subsequently found. For homes built in High Radon Areas, the installation of a radon barrier as well as a standby radon sump is required.

10.3 Noise control

Noise is defined as “unwanted sound”. In Irish legislation, noise is addressed under the EPA Act 1992 and the EPA Noise Regulations 1994.

The *Environmental Noise Regulations 2006* give effect to EU Directive 2002/49/EC on the assessment and management of environmental noise. Environmental noise means unwanted or harmful outdoor sound created by human activities, including noise from transport, road and rail traffic or from sites of industrial activity.

The Directive applies to noise to which humans are exposed, particularly in built-up areas, public parks, near schools, hospitals and in quiet rural areas. It does not apply to noise from domestic activities, noise created by neighbours or noise at workplaces.

Sligo County Council seeks to prevent public noise nuisance through the regulation of industrial, commercial and construction activities. When granting planning permission, the local authority has the power to impose conditions in relation to noise prevention or reduction. These conditions may apply to the construction phase and/or to the subsequent use of the building

Noise control policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-NC-1** When assessing proposals for activities that are likely to generate significant levels of noise, seek to protect the amenity of dwellings, community facilities and other noise-sensitive developments by ensuring that all new (and where possible existing) developments incorporate appropriate measures to minimise noise nuisance.
- P-NC-2** Developments that operate at night – e.g. restaurants, takeaways, pubs, hotels, night clubs – should not be located close to dwellings, where possible.

10.4 Coastal environment

From sheltered bays, beaches, small islands and wild Atlantic surf, Sligo possesses a varied and spectacular coastline, over 197-km long. The primary attraction of the Sligo coast is its relatively unspoilt character, its geological and hydrodynamic variability.

Increasingly, the coastal zone is coming under pressure from, for example:

- individuals seeking to build houses in scenic locations;
- tourism providers who may seek to exploit scenic views in the provision of accommodation or other facilities;
- mariculture developments;
- coastal protection works;
- wind farm operators who wish to avail of exposed coastal locations;

The coastline, however, is a finite resource that provides environmental, economic, recreational and aesthetic benefits and access to marine resources such as fisheries and aquaculture. It also contains many sensitive ecosystems – ranging from sand dune systems to salt marshes and estuaries rich in marine and bird life – and is significant in terms of cultural and archaeological heritage.

The coastline and islands are of significant ecological importance, which is demonstrated by the number and extent of designated Natura 2000 sites on islands, peninsulas and estuaries and the numerous protected species in these areas.

Proposals for development in coastal areas need to be examined in the context of the constant pressures from various agents of erosion, potential pollutants and conflicting user groups.

10.4.1 Coastal zone

For the purposes of this Development Plan, the coastal zone refers to the area between the High Water Mark and the nearest scenic route or other continuous road parallel to the coast. However, the natural coastal systems and the areas in which human activities involve the use of coastal resources may extend both beyond such roads, many kilometres inland, and into the sea.

Coastal areas are locations of a variety of scenic landscapes and numerous options for beach and water-based recreation; as such, they are a natural focus for tourism. Growing tourist numbers and poorly-planned holiday developments can put severe strain on local infrastructure, which in turn can cause local pollution and other forms of environmental degradation.

Development sprawl (including single houses) in the coastal areas can lead to increased landscape fragmentation, habitat loss and a less efficient management of resources.

Sustainable development in the coastal zone would see new development occur mainly within or in the immediate vicinity of existing towns and villages.

When considering development proposals in the coastal zone, outside existing settlements, the Planning Authority will have particular regard to the visual impact on the coastal landscape, scenic views, sensitive shorelines and ridge lines, as well as to the potential impact on environmentally sensitive areas (e.g. designated sites – see section 10.4.2 below).

10.4.2 Designated sites in the coastal zone

About a third of the EU wetlands are located on the coast, “*as well as more than thirty per cent of the Special Protection Areas designated under the Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds*”

Within the county there are coastal SPAs, SACs, NHAs, Ramsar Sites and Nature Reserves. The boundaries of such areas do not, however, define the limits of actual or potential conservation interest within the coastal zone.

Some sites without formal nature conservation designation are locally important and will be taken into consideration in the assessment of development proposals. (See policies in Section 7.1 Natural heritage).

10.4.3 Coastal Zone Management (CZM)

Coastal Zone Management (CZM) aims to achieve a more efficient and sustainable use of the coastal resource. Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) is a process that seeks to bring together all parties with an interest in the coast, with a view to replacing sectoral-based planning and management with a more integrated approach to achieving sustainability.

At present, no national plan or strategy is in place to implement a programme of actions to deliver sustainable development of Ireland’s coastal resources and communities. Current approaches to coastal zone management in Ireland are sector-based, with each sector operating within a separate framework.

The proposed revision of foreshore planning, in the form of the Maritime Area and Foreshore (Amendment) Bill 2013, will provide local authorities with increased planning functions in the nearshore and foreshore areas and presents an opportunity for Integrated Coastal Zone Management to be advanced.

10.4.4 Developments on the foreshore and nearshore

The foreshore of Ireland is classed as the land and seabed between the high water of ordinary or medium tides (shown HWM on Ordnance Survey maps) and the twelve-mile limit (12 nautical miles equals approximately 22.24 kilometres). The foreshore also covers tidal areas of rivers particularly estuaries.

Above the high water mark, local authorities have planning and management responsibilities. Below the high water mark, the State has the planning and management remit depending on the activity concerned. If a development has both offshore and onshore elements, for example, two EIAs may be necessary as well as separate public consultation exercises.

The *General Scheme of the Maritime Area and Foreshore (Amendment) Bill*, published in October 2013, aims to align the foreshore consent system with the planning system and to manage development activity in areas such as strategic infrastructure projects, oil and gas, ports and offshore renewable energy. Such projects will require consent from An Bord Pleanála.

The Bill defines a new term, the “nearshore”, as the bed and the shore below the high water mark but above the low water mark. Developments which are located either completely in the nearshore area or those which are partially on land and partially in the nearshore area, but are not strategic infrastructure or do not require EIA/AA, will need planning permission from the local planning authority. This will

be a change to the current situation whereby only developments on the foreshore which are connected to land (with some exceptions) come within the remit of local planning authorities.

The Council will have regard to the provisions of the *'Maritime Area and Foreshore (Amendment) Bill 2013'* and will fully comply with its contents when enacted.

Policies for development in the coastal zone

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-DCZ-1** Generally restrict development in the coastal zone except where it can be demonstrated that it does not detract from views, visually intrude on the coastal landscape or impact on environmentally sensitive areas.
- Between coastal roads and the sea, exceptions will be considered only for sustainable tourism development, public infrastructural works and development that is contiguous with existing towns and villages and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.
- P-DCZ-2** Restrict the location of industrial development within the coastal zone to resource-based activities that have a clear and demonstrable need, i.e. those dependent on resources available at the sea or coast (e.g. maritime industries, mariculture). All such proposals will be subject to the strict application of location, siting and design criteria and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.
- P-DCZ-3** Prohibit development in coastal areas where the natural erosion process is likely to threaten the viability of such development.

10.4.5 Coastal flooding and erosion

The impacts arising from climate variability, including changing weather patterns and predicted rising sea levels, will be most readily discernible at the coast. It is estimated that circa 500 km of soft Irish coastline is actively eroding and considered at risk.

The impacts of sea level rise on coastal erosion are not easy to estimate. Some coastlines are sinking, whilst others are uplifting. Irrespective of this, a sea level rise of at least 0.5 m is specified as a design requirement in many Irish coastal projects.

Storms not only bring high waves to the shoreline, but also elevated water levels through storm surges, which allow waves to directly attack the dunes and cliffs. Impacts were particularly evident after coastal storms along the west coast of Ireland during the winter of 2013-2014, when water levels were frequently more than 1 m higher than the predicted astronomical tide.

The storms that occurred ranged in severity from one-in-three-year to one-in-250-year events. These storms could be driven by climate change or could be a consequence of a rare climatic event.

Flooding of low-lying coastal areas could become more frequent as a result of predicted increased intensity and frequency of oceanic storms. The likely outcome may exacerbate coastal erosion, which would have a devastating effect on existing development and infrastructure. All new proposed developments in all low-lying coastal areas should include a detailed flood risk assessment.

10.4.6 Coastal protection

The **Irish Coastal Protection Strategy Study (ICPSS)** completed in 2013 provide maps for flood events with a probability of 0.1% (extreme flood – one in 1000 years) and 0.5% (indicative flood – one in 200 years). It also provides predictive erosion maps prepared for the years 2030 and 2050.

The identified areas of potentially significant coastal erosion in County Sligo are:

- Marley's Point to Strandhill
- Raghly
- Streedagh Point to Cliffony

Coastal protection works aim to reduce loss of land, infrastructure, and the impacts of coastal flooding.

This may require hard-engineered defences in order to withstand the storms and retain and defend a location. Such defences may be necessary, but can cause alterations to nearby coastal behaviour. Softer-engineered solution may be appropriate in many areas and where loss of lives is unlikely. Other options include sacrificial areas and allowing nature to take its course.

The following general guidelines should also be adhered to in the coastal zone:

- no building or development within 100 metres of 'soft' shorelines;
- no further reclamation of estuary land;
- no removal of sand dunes, beach sand or gravel;
- all proposed coastal defence measures should be assessed for environmental impact and habitats directive assessment;
- careful consideration should be given to the implications of using 'hard engineering' solutions, which should only be reserved for densely-populated coastal villages or for the protection of significant public infrastructure (e.g. harbours, piers, outfalls, public roads).

The planning and design of coastal protection works must have regard to the coastal dynamics. In light of the high cost of such defences, there is a case for restricting development near the coast, so as to minimise future demands for costly protection measures.

Coastal protection works have been carried out by the Council in Strandhill (Coast Protection Scheme) and in Mullaghmore (Harbour Breakwater Improvement Works). Dune management schemes involving 'softer' methods have been carried out at Enniscrone, Strandhill and Mullaghmore. Other proposed projects (subject to funding) are set out in Box 10.C and will be the subject of appropriate environmental assessment.

Box 10.A Proposed coastal protection works in County Sligo

Location	Proposed works
Enniscrone Strand	Protection of riverbank, pumping station and lifeguard building
Pullaheeny	Coastal and river outfall protection
Strandhill	Dune management
Easky	Scenic drive / public road protection
Raghley	Peninsular access protection works
Enniscrone	Effluent treatment plant protection works (subject to Irish Water participation)

Policies for coastal protection

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-CP-1** Ensure that visual and environmental considerations are considered in the design of coastal defence works including compliance with the Habitats Directive.
- P-CP-2** Require that any development within the coastal zone is appropriately sited and designed, having regard to coastal flooding, future shoreline erosion, predicted sea-level rise and OPW flood mapping.
- P-CP-3** Require that detailed flood risk assessment is carried out in relation to development proposals within the coastal zone and particularly on all low-lying areas, where appropriate.
- P-CP-4** Establish natural buffers at the coast, particularly in conjunction with the preparation of local area plans and mini-plans.

Objectives for coastal protection

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-CP-1** Carry out the coastal zone management and protection works outlined in Box 10.A subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.
- O-CP-2** Identify, prioritise and implement coastal protection works within the coastal zone where considered necessary, subject to the availability of resources and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.
- O-CP-3** Monitor existing dune management schemes on an ongoing basis and carry out appropriate repairs, improvements and extensions, subject to the availability of resources and compliance with the Habitats Directive. Where appropriate, continue to employ soft engineering techniques (i.e. dune stabilisation and planting).
- O-CP-4** Examine existing beach bye-laws and make appropriate amendments, in the interest of protecting sand dunes from encroachment and damage.

10.5 Major Accidents Directive (Seveso III)

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). The COMAH 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 and no such establishments exist at present. However, such uses will not be permitted in the vicinity of houses, places of concentrated public use or in environmentally sensitive areas and designated conservation areas.

When assessing relevant development proposals, the Council must seek technical advice from the National Authority for Occupational Health and Safety in relation to:

- the provision of a new Seveso establishment (or modification to an existing establishment) which may pose risks of major accidents;
- development within a certain distance of a Seveso establishment;
- certain developments considered as being capable of adding to the risk of a major accident in the vicinity of a Seveso establishment.

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 development, in addition to normal planning criteria.

Major Accidents Directive policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-MAD-1** Consult with the Health and Safety Authority when assessing proposals for a new Seveso establishment or modifications to an establishment, and when assessing proposals for development in the vicinity of existing Seveso establishments.
- P-MAD-2** Ensure that appropriate distances are maintained between establishments covered by the Major Accidents Directive and residential areas, areas of public use and areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest.

10.6 Climate change

It is widely accepted that climate change is a reality which is happening on an ongoing basis. In Ireland it is manifesting itself in the form of changes in average temperature and rainfall intensity, greater frequency of extreme weather events and subtle changes to the ecosystem.

The burning of fossil fuels for energy has contributed significantly to the build-up of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and the resulting increase in global warming. Energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy help to reduce GHG emissions and therefore play a key role in tackling climate change. Climate and energy issues already have national, regional and cross-border momentum and need to become urgent priorities at local level, where Sligo residents need to:

- use less energy and nurture an energy-efficient culture;
- adapt to a low-carbon way of living, recreating, working and travelling;
- exploit local natural resources to generate energy and become more energy self-sufficient.

Although the impacts of climate change cannot be fully predicted, it is expected that the changes in Ireland's climate will result in higher risk of flooding, both inland and at coastal locations (through rising sea levels), and the occurrence of more intense rainfall events and storm activity.

It is important, therefore, that this issue is addressed within the CDP, not least because decisions on the scale and location of future development may increase flood risk.

10.6.1 National Climate Change Adaptation Framework

The *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework – Building Resilience to Climate Change* (NCCAF) (DoECLG, 2012) emphasizes the importance of integrating climate change considerations into development plans, especially in zoning land for development. As local authorities review their development plans, they are now required to integrate climate change adaptation and mitigation objectives into their plans. Local development planning will, in effect, become the mechanism for the delivery of local climate adaptation action and local authorities may adopt a regional approach by working together.

10.6.2 Legislative context

For 2050, EU leaders have endorsed the objective of cutting Europe's GHG emissions by 80-95% on 1990 levels. The Commission has indicated milestones for domestic reductions of 40% by 2030 and 60% by 2040.

The Irish Government has passed the *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015* to underpin its commitment to the 'national transition objective' and give a statutory foundation to the necessary institutional arrangements.

In March 2017, the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment launched a statutory public consultation on Ireland's first National Mitigation Plan (NMP). The National Mitigation Plan was published on 19 July 2017. It covers greenhouse gas emissions in the Electricity Generation, Built Environment, Transport, and Agriculture, Forest and Land Use sectors. For each sector, the Plan sets out the sectoral policy context, the greenhouse gas emissions trends for each

sector, the opportunities and challenges, mitigation measures currently in place and under development, and specific actions to take forward work within each sector.

Planning authorities must have regard to the NMP when making, reviewing, varying or amending development plan policies or local area plan policies.

The 2015 Act also deals with adaptation to climate change by providing for the preparation and approval of successive National Climate Change Adaptation Frameworks or ***National Adaptation Frameworks*** (NAFs). These will outline the statutory national strategy for the application of adaptation measures in different sectors, and by local authorities, in order to reduce Ireland's vulnerability to the negative impacts of climate change. In their development plans, planning authorities will need to specify the measures being taken to reduce local vulnerability and to avail of positive climatic effects.

The first NAF will build on the substantial work already carried out under the existing *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework* and will ensure that climate adaptation in Ireland is brought forward in line with EU and international best practice. Public consultation has commenced and a draft NAF will be published for further public consultation in due course. The final Framework must be completed and submitted for Government approval by 10th December 2017.

10.6.3 Role of the Local Authority

Sligo County Council aims to be a leader in the action against climate change, by raising public awareness, providing support to local communities and enterprise, promoting climate resilience and implementing measures to aid the transition to a low-carbon economy and society. As a local authority, it will build organisational capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate change. This will involve an assessment of climate risk and the embedding of climate adaptation into key functions, including the planning process, the provision of local infrastructure and the co-ordination of emergency planning.

As a public body, the Council will fulfil its exemplary role with regard to energy efficiency in accordance with the *EU (Energy Efficiency) Regulations 2014* and the *Public Sector Energy Efficiency Strategy*, published by DCCAE in January 2017. In its operations and services, it will strive to become more energy efficient and to increase the use of renewable energy in line with international, national and any forthcoming regional targets. The introduction of renewable energy sources of heating for Council tenants will also be considered.

The Planning Authority will mainstream climate change adaptation into development management, land use planning and provisions relating to buildings, building layouts, renewable energy, transport, natural resource management, forestry, agriculture and marine waters.

All new buildings and major building renovations will be required to meet a high standard of energy performance in accordance with *EU Directive 2010/31/EU on Energy Performance of Buildings*. The *Passive House* concept and *near-Zero Energy Buildings* (nZEB) standard will be encouraged. Improving the energy efficiency and performance of existing buildings will be promoted, as will a greater use of renewable energy in buildings generally.

The promotion of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas will contribute to climate mitigation by reducing energy demand and man-made GHG emissions. The evolution of more compact and less energy-intensive forms of urban development will assist in adapting to climate change effects, such as flood risk.

Climate change considerations shall be taken into account in the assessment of critical transport and energy infrastructure proposals. Support for renewable energy development, including community initiatives, will enhance local climate mitigation and energy self-sufficiency, while delivering economic, social and environmental benefits for the County.

Integrating green infrastructure into new development and regeneration proposals will help to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The Council will encourage landscaping and tree planting within towns and villages, as a means of carbon capture, reduced storm water run-off, improved air quality and enhanced biodiversity. The protection and development of parks and natural amenities will be promoted in tandem with support for sustainable modes of transport, such as walking and cycling, and the development of green tourism and recreational initiatives.

Having regard to current national policy and planning legislation, this Development Plan seeks to increase County Sligo's resilience to climate change by promoting sustainable development in general and through appropriate policies in relation to:

- integration of land use and transportation in the form of compact, sustainable settlements (refer to Chapter 3. Core Strategy and Section 12.3 Urban development and expansion).
- promotion of sustainable travel patterns and modes of transport, with consequent reduction in GHG emission levels (refer to Section 8.3 Cycle and pedestrian movements and 8.4 Public transport).
- support for renewable energy production to facilitate the transition to a low-carbon energy system (refer to Section 11.1 Energy).
- support for the “green economy” to develop indigenous enterprises, create local employment and secure sustainable economic growth (refer to Section 4.3 Rural development and enterprise).
- sustainable and climate-resilient building design, construction and retrofit for higher energy efficiency and enhanced climate adaptation (refer to Section 13.2.18 DM standards).
- protection of wetlands, water bodies, forests, wildlife habitats, biodiversity, areas of natural heritage importance, natural features and green spaces in general (refer to Sections 7.1 Natural heritage, 10.1 Water quality and 10.4 Coastal environment).
- flood risk assessment and management, and protection against coastal flooding and erosion (refer to Section 10.4 Coastal environment and 10.7 Flood Risk Management);
- the repair of old bridges rather than their complete replacement, thereby enhancing the cultural and industrial heritage of the county and reducing the carbon footprint of such works.

Sustainability considerations, including climate change resilience, are essential elements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment carried out in conjunction with this Development Plan.

Climate adaptation and mitigation policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-CAM-1** Support the implementation of the *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework 2012*, by including relevant measures in any forthcoming adaptation plans. Such plans shall be in accordance with national guidance issued by the DoECLG and EPA and undertaken in collaboration with the Northern and Western Regional Assembly, Mayo County Council, Roscommon County Council, Leitrim County Council and Donegal County Council.
- P-CAM-2** Prepare a climate change adaptation strategy for County Sligo in compliance with national guidance and in consultation with all relevant stakeholders.
- P-CAM-3** Raise public awareness and build local resilience in relation to climate adaptation.
- P-CAM-4** Facilitate and assist County Sligo’s transition to a low-carbon economy and society.
- P-CAM-5** Promote, support and implement measures that reduce man-made GHGs, including energy management, energy efficiency, compact development patterns, low-carbon buildings and sustainable transport.
- P-CAM-6** Consult and encourage partnerships with stakeholders when addressing climate change matters, particularly through the development plan process.
- P-CAM-7** Promote and support the research and development of local renewable energy sources.
- P-CAM-8** Promote and support the use of renewable energy in all sectors.
- P-CAM-9** Support community participation in, and benefit from, renewable energy and energy efficiency projects.
- P-CAM-10** Support local innovation, economic activity and job creation in the “green economy by encouraging investment in products, services and technologies needed in a low carbon future.
- P-CAM-11** Support the repair of old structures where possible, in particular the repair of the stone arch bridge stock, in preference to replacement with high carbon materials.

10.7 Flood risk management

Flooding from rivers and coastal waters is a natural phenomenon that cannot be entirely prevented. It occurs when the capacity of a watercourse to convey water through an area is exceeded. Flooding also occurs in coastal areas, when sea water encroaches on land due to failure of coastal defences, exceptional climatic phenomena or other factors.

Probably the best known is flooding from the sea, surcharged aquifers and rivers, but prolonged and intense rainfall can also cause flooding from overland flow, ponding in hollows and sewer flooding.

It is likely that climate change will have a significant impact on flood risk in Ireland, through sea level rise, increased number of heavy rainfall days per year and wetter winters, particularly in the west of the country, leading to higher groundwater flood risk associated with aquifers and turloughs.

These potential impacts could have serious consequences on settlements located on the coast, beside rivers and in karst limestone areas. The man-made environment can exacerbate the consequences of flooding. Development in a flood plain, or building in areas where drainage infrastructure is inadequate, places property and people at risk. Flooding may impact on the economy, social well-being, public health and the environment. The impact on individuals and communities can be significant in terms of personal suffering and financial loss.

10.7.1 Flood Risk Management Guidelines

Following from the EU Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks, the DoEHLG and the Office of Public Works (OPW) published *Planning Guidelines: The Planning System and Flood Risk Management* in November 2009. An accompanying document entitled *Technical Appendices* outlines the scale at which it is appropriate to carry out flood risk assessment. The Guidelines recommend a clear and transparent assessment of flood risk at all stages in the planning process, and indicate that Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is required at County Development Plan level in order to provide a broad assessment of all types of flood risk, to inform strategic land-use planning decisions.

The precautionary approach should be adopted in carrying out flood risk assessments and the following key guiding principles should be followed in all instances:

- avoidance of development in areas at risk of flooding by not permitting development in such areas unless fully justified and where capability exists to manage risk without impacting elsewhere;
- application of a sequential approach to flood risk management based on:
 - avoidance of development in areas of high/moderate flood risk;
 - reduction of flood risk through incorporation of less vulnerable uses;
 - mitigation of flood risk in assessing suitability of locations for development;
- the incorporation of flood risk assessment into the process of making decisions on planning applications and planning appeals.

10.7.2 Progress in flood risk assessment

The Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments (PFRAs) prepared by the Office of Public Works in 2012 resulted in the identification of 300 areas of potential significant flood risk, referred to as *Areas for Further Assessment, (AFAs)*. The AFAs are the focus of the *Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) studies*. The studies are scheduled for completion in 2016. When finalised, their findings will be integrated into the *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment* associated with the CDP. In the interim, Sligo County Council utilises the *Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA)* produced by the OPW.

In 2011, Flood Risk Review reports (FRR) were prepared by JBA Consulting on behalf of the OPW for the following areas: Ballysadare and environs; Drumcliff and Carney; Sooley; Riverstown; Grange; Collooney; Tobercurry; Coolaney; Charlestown; Gorteen; Ballymote; Rathbraughan; Willowbrook (Calry) and Sligo town centre.

Of these, eight Areas for Further Assessment (AFAs) went forward in the process for further assessment and modelling – Sligo Town, Rathbraughan, Collooney, Riverstown, Ballymote, Gorteen, Coolaney and Ballysadare. Flood mapping (Zones A and B) has been produced for these areas.

Following the assessment and modelling of the AFAs, a Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP) for the Sligo Bay Drowes Unit, which is known as Unit of Management 35 (UoM 35), was prepared in draft form. Areas of Sligo also extend into UoM 34 (the Moy catchment) and UoM 36 (the Duff catchment).

The Draft FRMP sets out the proposed strategy, actions and measures that are considered to be the most appropriate at this stage of assessment for the eight AFAs. The Draft FRMP is based on detailed modelling and appraisal of possible options for the flood risk management measures.

The OPW is in the process of completing the statutory procedure for adopting the FRMPs. Public consultation on the Draft FRMPs was held in the last quarter of 2016. Sligo County Council submitted a number of comments and observations. The final FRMPs will be published in mid-2017, along with a report detailing all submissions received.

The final FRMP for the County is expected to indicate flood risk management measures based on a national list of prioritised measures across all FRMPs.

10.7.3 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

In compliance with the DoEHLG Guidelines, a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been prepared as part of the CDP (it is published as a separate document accompanying this Plan). The SFRA provides a description of the spatial distribution of flood risk at appropriate scales for the Plan.

The 32 mini-plans contained in the Plan have each been dealt with at a detailed local scale. Whilst the resulting areas that are depicted as being liable to floods are not entirely reliable, they do provide a strong indication that further assessment of flood potential may be required.

In thirteen mini-plans, it was noted that certain areas zoned for development under the CDP 2011-2017 are in fact subject to a risk of flooding. These villages are Ballinacarrow, Ballysadare, Bellaghy, Bunnannadden, Carney, Collooney, Coolaney, Curry, Drumcliff, Gorteen, Grange, Rathcormack and Riverstown.

Having identified potential flood risk issues in these villages, it was considered necessary to proceed to Stage 2 SFRA.

The zoned areas identified as being at a risk from flooding from the Stage 1 SFRA were inspected on foot by Council planners and engineers. The purpose of these inspections were to determine whether the Stage 1 findings were valid and whether land needed to be re-zoned or de-zoned. Area engineers who attended the relevant site walkovers provided valuable local knowledge, which informed the assessment.

In the case of zoned lands that were shown to be at a risk of flooding by the PFRA maps, and where this was corroborated by local knowledge and site walkovers, the sequential approach was applied and land was rezoned to a less vulnerable use, as recommended in the Guidelines.

Where local knowledge and site walkovers did not identify a real risk, it was decided to include requirements for site-specific flood risk assessment for any proposed development in the relevant mini-plan area.

The impact of flood risk on decisions regarding location of future development is recognised as being of significant importance to the growth of the county. The recommendations arising from the SFRA have been incorporated into the mini-plans and are complemented by the policies and objectives outlined below.

Flood risk management policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-FRM-1** Protect and enhance the County’s floodplains, wetlands and coastal areas subject to flooding and ensure that no removal of sand dunes, beach sand or gravel is undertaken. These areas represent a vital green infrastructure, which provides space for storage and conveyance of floodwater, enabling flood risk to be more effectively managed and reducing the need to provide flood defences in the future.
- P-FRM-2** Direct strategically significant growth, projects and infrastructure to areas with a low risk of flooding.
- P-FRM-3** Zone land for development in areas with a high or moderate risk of flooding only where it can be clearly demonstrated, on a solid evidence base, that the zoning will satisfy the **justification test** set out in chapter 4 of the *Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines*.
- P-FRM-4** Maintain a 20-metre-wide flood protection zone around lakes and along both sides of all rivers, and a 100-metre-wide flood protection zone from soft shorelines. Development proposals will be required to maintain these flood protection zones free from development.

Exceptions may be considered for strategic road projects, river bank enhancement works, bridge and road repair works, in the case of brownfield sites, development on lands zoned subject to policy P-FRM-3 and in cases where the maintenance of the flood protection zone is not practically achievable. Such cases will be assessed

on an individual basis and subject to compliance with the Habitats and Directive.

P-FRM-5 Restrict development in areas at risk of flooding unless:

- it is demonstrated that there are wider sustainability grounds for appropriate development;
- the flood risk can be managed to an acceptable level without increasing flood risk elsewhere;
- the overall flood risk is reduced, where possible.

Developments considered necessary in order to meet the objectives of this Plan, or required on wider sustainability grounds, will be subject to the development management justification test outlined in chapter 5 of the *Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines*.

Measures such as flood compensation storage works or new hard-engineered flood defences alone will not be acceptable as justification for development in flood risk areas. Such measures will be subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and will only be considered as part of a proposal if the development is warranted by the justification test on planning and sustainability grounds in the first instance, and where no alternative site is available.

P-FRM-6 Require development proposals, where appropriate, to be accompanied by a detailed flood risk assessment in accordance with the provisions of the DoEHLG's *Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities* and to address flood risk management in the detailed design of development, as set out in Appendix B of the Guidelines.

P-FRM-7 Assess flood risk in Local Area Plans in accordance with the DoEHLG's *Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities* in a manner that is appropriate to the scale and circumstances of each area and having regard to the priorities set out in the SFRA that accompanies this Plan.

Disclaimer

It is important to note that compliance with the requirements of the *Guidelines on Flood Risk Management* and of the Floods Directive 2007/60/EC is a work in progress and is based on emerging and incomplete data, as well as estimates of the locations and likelihood of flooding. The Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management Plans (CFRAMs) have yet to be published.

As a result, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in County Sligo is based essentially on the PFRAs and local knowledge (where available). Accordingly, all information in relation to flood risk is provided only as for general guidance. It may be substantially altered in light of future data and analysis.

All landowners and developers are advised that Sligo County Council and its agents cannot accept any responsibility for losses or damages arising due to assessments of the vulnerability to flooding of lands, uses and developments.

Prior to making planning or development decisions, owners, users and developers are advised to take all reasonable measures to assess the risk of flooding on lands in which they have an interest.

11. Energy and telecommunications

11.1 Energy

The availability of suitable and adequate energy is of critical importance to social and economic development. However, as energy consumption directly impacts on the global climate, a fundamental rethink is required of the type and amount of energy used for every purpose. The Irish energy sector is currently undergoing a radical transformation to reduce fossil fuel dependence and mitigate the effects of climate change. This has a bearing on all aspects of local development and cohesive planning policies are needed to support the energy transition.

Energy consumption is responsible for 80% of total EU greenhouse gas emissions. To address this, Member States are required to significantly increase their use of renewable energies and to improve energy efficiency in all sectors. Renewable energy is also crucial to national energy security. Non-renewables currently account for over 90% of energy consumption in Ireland. Meeting national renewable energy targets requires local action. This presents both challenges and opportunities.

Being rich in renewable energy resources, County Sligo is well-placed to lay solid foundations for a sustainable energy future. Harnessing this potential will boost a range of sectors, while enhancing energy self-sufficiency. The rewards include inward investment, job creation, business development, rural regeneration and a reduction of fuel poverty.

Sligo County Council will promote and support the development and diversification of the local energy sector in accordance with EU, national and regional policy, and the provisions of the *County Sligo Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016–2021*. The *National Development Plan 2007-2013* sets out the strategic context and programmes for the provision of energy and related infrastructure. In addition, the Government has issued a number of policy documents and guidelines in relation to energy, such as the *Energy Policy Framework 2007-2020*, the *National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012*, the *National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2014*, the *Strategy for Renewable Energy 2012–2020* and the most recent *Energy White Paper - Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030*.

11.1.1 Transition to clean energy

The Energy White Paper (DCENR, Dec 2015) sets out a vision for transforming Ireland's fossil fuel-based energy sector into a clean, low-carbon system by 2050. The policy framework gives new impetus to energy efficiency, as well as accelerating the development and diversification of renewable energy generation. The vision means that GHG emissions from the energy sector will be reduced by 80% - 95%, by 2050, compared to 1990 levels, and will fall to zero by 2100.

Ireland's 2020 renewable energy target is to increase the share of final energy consumption made up of Renewable Energy Sources (RES) to 16%. This target is broken into three key sectors with individual targets for each: 40% of electricity supply (RES-E), 12% of heating (RES-H), and 10% of transport (RES-T). Ireland also has a target of a 20% improvement in energy efficiency by 2020.

The energy system is expected to change from one that is almost exclusively Government and utility led, to one where citizens and communities will increasingly be participants in energy efficiency and in renewable energy generation and distribution. The energy transition will require improved community engagement in policy making and planning.

The Government intends to widen the opportunity for citizen participation in energy matters by (inter alia) “engaging with local government on advising consumers on energy efficiency initiatives and clean energy options, integrating energy options, scoping the opportunities for demand and supply related local energy action through integrating energy issues into local area planning, and bringing stakeholders together to find locally appropriate solutions that bridge the gap between demand and supply (e.g. biomass fuel, district heating solutions).”

Community Energy Projects

The 2015 Energy White Paper indicates that community-level energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, using a range of technologies, will play an important role in the energy transition.

There will be opportunities for communities to collaborate, including with local government and energy agencies, to develop community energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

The Sustainable Energy Agency Ireland (SEAI) will continue to provide a range of supports to communities and homeowners in relation to the deployment of renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency projects, including training, advice and grant support.

Sligo County Council aims to achieve a balance between responding to government policy on the energy transition and enabling energy resources within the plan area to be harnessed in a manner which is in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

11.1.2 Wind energy

Sligo’s mountainous landscape and exposed location on the western seaboard combine to create good conditions for the generation of wind power. According to the Irish Wind Energy Association (IWEA), the wind farm capacity available in the County in 2016 was 49.15 MW, produced by five wind farms located at Kings Mountain, Dunneill, Carran Hill, Geevagh and Lackan.

The wind energy potential available in the County is indicated in Sustainable Energy Ireland’s *Wind Atlas for Ireland*, available for online viewing at <http://maps.seai.ie/wind>.

Pressure for future wind farm development is likely to be concentrated in upland and coastal areas, particularly where energy providers can access the national electricity grid. The siting of wind turbines requires careful consideration. While turbines located on elevated sites tend to have a higher output, they also have a significant visual impact. Visual obtrusiveness depends on the location, layout, size, number, design and colour of the turbines, as well as the subjective perceptions of the viewer.

It is a challenge for the Council to achieve a reasonable balance between: (a) responding to government policy on renewable energy; and (b) enabling the wind energy resources of the County to be harnessed in an environmentally sustainable manner.

The DECLG’s *Wind Energy Guidelines* (2006) outline the main criteria to be used in assessing development proposals – refer to Section 13.9.3 (Development management Standards) for details.

11.1.3 Hydroelectric power

Turbines driven by falling water have the potential to generate hydroelectric power. County Sligo has an installed capacity of 2.7 MW in two hydroelectric power stations operating at Ballysadare (2.2 MW) and Collooney (0.5 MW).

Hydro-power developments have the potential for significant impact on the aquatic resource and it is essential that where such schemes are permitted, the fisheries resource is adequately protected, without interference to fish movement, habitat or water quality.

In October 2007, the DCENR and Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) released *Guidelines on the Planning, Design, Construction & Operation of Small-Scale Hydro-Electric Schemes and Fisheries*, which contains information regarding the planning application process for hydroelectric schemes.

In assessing development proposals for hydroelectric power stations, the main considerations are:

- integration of the facility into the riverscape;
- the effect on the landscape and ecology;
- non-interference with fish and wildlife;
- safe and sensitive undergrounding of power lines;
- compliance with the Habitats Directive for designated rivers.

11.1.4 Wave and tidal energy

The movement of water in the oceans creates a vast store of kinetic energy, or *energy in motion*. This energy can be harnessed to generate electricity. Wave and tidal are the predominant forms of ocean energy in Ireland. Wave energy is defined as power from surface waves, while tidal energy is defined as power from tidal changes and ocean currents.

Ireland has made significant advances in the research and development of wave-generated energy and County Sligo's extensive coastline has potential for this form of development.

In February 2014, the DCENR published the *Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan – A Framework for the Sustainable Development of Ireland's Offshore Renewable Energy Resource (OREDPA)*.

The OREDPA sets out key principles, policy actions and enablers for delivery of Ireland's significant potential in this area. The assessment of Ireland's West Coast – including County Sligo's coastline – indicates that up to 7,000 MW could potentially be generated without significant adverse effects on the environment (taking into account mitigation).

Development planning and, in particular, foreshore lease policies, are critical enabling factors for the development of offshore renewable energy. On-shore ancillary plant, buildings and power lines will require assessment and all on-shore impacts must be mitigated to the greatest extent possible.

Most of the coastal zone, particularly in the west of the County, is relatively flat, providing long open views. Development proposals should therefore avoid locations that are immediately adjacent to coastal settlements or significant tourist attractions. Detailed visual, ecological, archaeological heritage and social impact assessments will be required for such proposals to determine their acceptability.

11.1.5 Bioenergy

Bioenergy is useful energy that is derived from recently living organisms. Bioenergy fuels are usually referred to as biomass. They can be produced from purpose-grown energy crops, forestry residues, agricultural residues and waste. Bioenergy is unique amongst renewables in that it can directly and

relatively efficiently provide energy on demand for heating, transport and electricity. Bioenergy technologies displace GHGs that count towards climate mitigation targets and approximately half of the energy required to meet Ireland's 2020 renewable targets is anticipated to come from bioenergy.

The DCENR published a *Draft Bioenergy Plan* (October 2014), which recognises that meeting the demand for biomass from indigenous sources can result in significant economic and employment benefits. The Western Development Commission (WDC), through the EU RASLRES programme, has published extensive work on the Western Region's bioenergy resource and its potential. This has highlighted the multiple economic, social and environmental benefits that bioenergy development can deliver at local level and how these may best be leveraged.

The most advantageous economic benefits arise when bioenergy is used for heating, especially district heating. By contributing to waste recovery e.g. through anaerobic digestion, it gives effect to national waste policy by utilising waste as a resource. This, in turn, improves air quality, e.g. by diverting slurry from land spreading. Likewise, cross-cutting benefits arise from the cultivation of bioenergy crops, which contributes to rural diversification and income generation, while increasing biodiversity and energy security.

The Western Region stands to benefit considerably by capitalising on the opportunities that further bioenergy development can offer. The rewards include inward investment, business development, increased local employment, improved farm profitability, rural regeneration and decreased energy costs. Sligo County Council recognises the potential of bioenergy to deliver on multiple objectives of the County Development Plan and will promote and support its development in all key policy areas. Individual proposals for bioenergy-related developments will be considered on their merits, subject to proper planning and environmental considerations.

11.1.6 Solar energy

The sun is a source of free energy which can be harnessed for heating within buildings and for the production of electricity. When used to its full potential, it can significantly reduce the overall reliance on fossil fuels.

Solar collectors capture and transfer solar heat, most commonly to heat water. Building-mounted, flat plate and evacuated tube collectors are the main types available. Air heating solar collectors assist with space heating and are of particular benefit in airtight houses with low energy demands.

The production of solar electricity relies on active solar technology. The most commonly encountered system uses solar photovoltaic panels, known as PV modules.

In recent years, the use of solar energy in buildings, in addition to ground-source heating systems, has provided sustainable energy and reduced the demand for electricity supply from the national grid.

Increasingly, energy is also being generated from large-scale solar projects. Installations have been developed across Europe and are currently planned for Ireland. Solar farms are normally built on agricultural land and leave room for dual land use so that farm practices, such as grazing, can co-exist with the solar panels. These projects are much less visually intrusive than wind and some other forms of energy generation, but may have impacts on local eco-systems, wildlife and the land's agricultural potential. Such impacts need to be carefully assessed and all development proposals accompanied by tailored mitigation measures, including biodiversity and land management plans.

The Council will encourage and facilitate the application of solar energy technologies and passive solar building design, subject to the planning considerations appropriate to the type, scale and impact of the development. Refer also to Chapter 13.2.18 (Development Management Standards).

11.1.7 Electricity transmission

The transmission network forms the backbone of power supply. Its development is critical to ensuring that County Sligo has the necessary infrastructure and capacity to attract business and accommodate the future development of the local economy.

A major investment in the high-voltage electricity transmission system is currently underway. Grid25, EirGrid's roadmap to upgrade the electricity transmission grid by 2025, was published in 2008 and is due for review. A draft strategy entitled "*Your Grid, Your Views, Your Tomorrow*" was published for consultation in March 2015, and a new Grid Development Strategy is to be published in 2017.

With regard to the Grid25 Implementation Programme, EirGrid is currently preparing a new Grid Implementation Plan.

The North-West region is rich in renewable energy resources (e.g. ocean and wind energy), which are concentrated along the western coastline. The existing transmission network is predominantly lower capacity (110 kV) with insufficient 220-kV and no 400-kV transmission infrastructure. Developing the grid will enable the transmission system to safely accommodate power flows from surplus regional generation and also to facilitate future growth in electricity demand.

The 2015 Energy White Paper recognises the need for the development and renewal of energy networks to meet economic and social goals and endorses the strategic programmes of energy infrastructure providers.

11.1.8 Natural gas

Sligo is not served by gas infrastructure at present. The *Network Development Plan 2015* published by Gas Networks Ireland does not provide for any extension of the natural gas pipeline from Ballina to Sligo.

Considering that the availability of natural gas would be a significant boost to local economic growth, Sligo County Council will continue to pursue the extension of the gas distribution network into the County.

11.1.9 Energy efficiency

New buildings shall be designed and constructed so as to ensure that the energy performance of the building is such as to limit the amount of energy required for the operation of the building and the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions associated with this energy use, insofar as is reasonably practical.

The Council will encourage an increase in the use of alternative energy sources in buildings and the retrofitting of buildings for higher energy efficiency. The Planning Authority will facilitate the retrofitting of protected structures, structures within ACAs and on historic streetscapes where it is shown that the proposed works will not negatively impact upon the character of the structure or streetscape.

At least one energy-efficiency measure should be incorporated into the design of new development (e.g. solar panels, passive solar design, heat pumps, wood burning installation etc.), and this should form part of any development proposal submitted as a planning application.

Strategic energy policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

SP-EN-1 Support the sustainable development, upgrading and maintenance of energy generation, transmission, storage and distribution infrastructure, to ensure the security of energy supply and provide for future needs, as well as protection of the landscape, natural, archaeological and built heritage, and residential amenity and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.

SP-EN-2 Facilitate the sustainable production of energy from renewable sources, energy conversion and capture in forms such as wind power, hydro-power, wave-generated energy, bioenergy, solar technology and the development of Waste to Energy/Combined Heat and Power schemes at appropriate locations and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.

All such development proposals will be assessed for their potential impact on urban and rural communities, Natura 2000 sites, designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes, Visually Vulnerable Areas, Scenic Routes and scenic views, as well as in accordance with strict location, siting and design criteria.

SP-EN-3 Promote and support the development of energy from biomass, including the cultivation, processing and conversion of energy crops and the conversion of waste to energy.

SP-EN-4 Support existing and new enterprises that wish to use renewable energy to serve their own needs by on-site energy production subject to normal planning criteria and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.

SP-EN-5 Collaborate with urban and rural communities in the development of community-level energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, subject to visual, landscape, heritage, environmental and amenity considerations and subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.

SP-EN-6 Support the implementation of relevant programmes arising from the Government's Energy White Paper *Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030* (or any successor document).

SP-EN-7 Protect significant landscapes from the visual intrusion of large-scale energy infrastructure.

Strategic energy objective

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- SO-EN-1** Seek the extension of the natural gas supply infrastructure to Sligo subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.
- SO-EN-2** Undertake an analysis of suitable areas for wind energy and prepare a map showing County Sligo’s Landscape Suitability for Wind Energy Developments, in accordance with Section 3.5 of the *Wind Energy Guidelines* (2006) and any subsequent revisions.

Energy efficiency policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-ENE-1** Encourage the use of alternative energy sources in buildings and the retrofitting of buildings for higher energy efficiency. The retrofitting of protected structures, structures within ACAs and in historic streetscapes will be facilitated where it is shown that the proposed works will not negatively impact upon the character of the structure or streetscape.
- P-ENE-2** Require at least one energy-efficiency measure to be incorporated into the design of new development (e.g. solar panels, passive solar design, heat pumps, wood burning installation etc.). The proposed energy-efficiency measure(s) should be included as part of the documentation submitted at planning application stage.

11.1.10 Unconventional gas exploration and extraction (UGEE)

It is a strategic goal of the County Development Plan to adopt the ‘precautionary principle’ in respect of development where significant environmental implications are involved, in particular proposals for unconventional oil/gas exploration and extraction projects/operations.

Further to this, the Council wishes to safeguard and nurture the unspoilt/ green image and reputation of Sligo and the health of its present and future communities, centred on the rural characteristics of the

County, agricultural activity, the landscape and its environmentally sensitive lands and water bodies – both surface and groundwater.

This Council is cognisant of the significant ongoing controversy around, and the significant proven levels of risk associated with, unconventional oil/gas exploration and extraction internationally and acknowledges that the high volume of public objections to unconventional oil/gas exploration and extraction internationally, nationally and locally relate to potential and actual adverse impacts on the environment and human health, including impacts on:

- Local Communities;
- Local Infrastructures;
- Local Landscapes and Amenities;
- Water Quality and Water Supplies;
- Air Quality and Safety;
- Land/Soil Integrity;
- Agriculture;
- Tourism;
- Climate Change;
- Local Businesses;
- Property Prices.

Objections are not solely restricted to the above.

Applications for onshore exploration licences have been received for the Northwest Carboniferous Basin including parts of Leitrim and several other counties.

It is acknowledged by this Council that there is significant and growing public concern in respect to the social, public health, economic and environmental impacts that may be associated with unconventional oil/ gas exploration and extraction in County Sligo and adjoining counties. This Council will endeavour to protect the rights of the people of Sligo and adjoining counties to be safe in their own communities and understands that short term national policy can have long term and permanent negative effects.

In 2012 Sligo County Council adopted the following motion: “Recognising the dangers that hydraulic fracturing/fracking poses to water quality, to human safety and the general environment, this council resolves to work together with other local authorities in the region, to oppose the practice of hydraulic fracturing/fracking and we call on the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Irish Government to ban the practice of hydraulic fracturing/fracking North and South of the border.”

Having regard to the foregoing, the Council has set out the following policy with regard to hydrocarbon exploration and extraction.

UGEE policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-UGEE-1** Apply the precautionary principle to Unconventional Oil/Gas Exploration and Extraction (UGEE) projects/operations proposed within the county. Given the scientific evidence, and personal testimonies, of the risks of UGEE projects/operations and with the objective of avoiding the risk of serious danger to human health or the environment, it is therefore the policy of Sligo County Council that UGEE projects/operations shall not be permitted within the County of Sligo.
- P-UGEE-2** Carefully scrutinise any unconventional oil/gas exploration and extraction project/operation proposal outside the County where it may, due to geographical proximity, have a significant impact on the County and where available evaluation does not allow the risks to the environment of the region, the ecology of the region and human and animal health within the region to be determined with certainty. It is also the policy of this Council in such cases to seek from the relevant authorities a comprehensive full life cycle Health Impact Assessment, together with a full life cycle analysis of all possible cumulative and permanent negative effects for the potential full development.
- P-UGEE-3** In the eventuality that an outside body or bodies takes steps to overrule Policy (A) (P-UGEE-1) above, that a comprehensive full life cycle Health Impact Assessment, together with a full life cycle analysis of all possible cumulative and permanent negative effects for the potential full development, will be required for any proposal for oil/gas exploration and extraction projects located inside the County, as a mandatory component of the evaluation of any such proposals.

Notes

1. 'Precautionary Principle':-
(<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001395/139578e.pdf>)
2. *Unconventional Gas Exploration and Extraction (UGEE) refers both to the use and full life cycle of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) of low permeability sources such as shale gas deposits, coal seams and tight sandstones. The impacts of UGEE projects/ operations to be considered are those arising from UGEE projects/ operations in their totality, not just from fracking activities, including all stages of UGEE projects/operations, i.e. drilling, construction, commissioning, operation, decommissioning and aftercare as well as off-site and other developments.*
3. *Including but not limited to the Compendium of Scientific, Medical and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking (Unconventional Gas and Oil Extraction) Concerned Health Professionals of NY, July 2014*
(<http://concernedhealthny.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/CHPNY-Fracking-Compendium.pdf>)”.

11.2 Telecommunications

11.2.1 Broadband

Achieving universal access to high-speed broadband is a key target under the EU Digital Agenda for Europe which envisages that by 2020 all EU citizens will have access to speeds of 30Mbps, and that 50% of citizens will be subscribing to speeds of 100Mbps.

The *National Broadband Plan for Ireland 2012, 'Delivering a Connected Society'* recognised that investment in high-speed digital and internet services can realise benefits in relation to foreign direct investment by boosting the attractiveness of regional locations outside of the urban centres.

The Plan was intended to facilitate broadband download speeds of 70Mbps with a minimum of 40Mbps generally available and 30Mbps available in harder to reach rural areas.

As this level of broadband speed was not delivered by commercial operators in every location, the DCENR published an Intervention Strategy (December 2015), which focuses on the 30% of the national territory where there is no certainty of commercial investment.

The Intervention Strategy is intended to connect all communities by dealing definitively with the broadband connectivity challenge in rural areas. This will be achieved by delivering high-speed broadband to all premises that will not be able to access such services through commercial investment alone.

In County Sligo, the entire rural area (outside towns and larger villages) represents the target of the NBP and its updated Intervention Strategy.

Sligo County Council fully supports the implementation of the National Broadband Plan and the Intervention Strategy 2015.

11.2.2 Mobile telephony infrastructure

Sligo County Council recognises the importance of high-quality telecommunication infrastructure as a prerequisite for a successful economy. It is the aim of the Council to achieve a balance between facilitating the provision of telecommunications services in the interests of social and economic progress, and protecting residential amenity and environmental quality.

Due to their design and large scale, telecommunication structures can have a significant visual impact on the landscape, both urban and rural.

The deregulation of the industry has brought both choice and competition, sometimes associated with duplication and over-provision of facilities.

The Guidelines encourage mobile telecommunications operators to share sites. The Council will ensure that all new support structures meet the co-location or clustering requirements of the guidelines. Shared use of existing structures will be necessary in order to avoid excessive numbers of masts within any given area.

In assessing proposals for telecommunications installations, the Planning Authority will have regard to the guidance document *Telecommunication Antennae and Support Structures – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DECLG 1996), as amended by the *Circular PL 07/12*.

It should be noted that whilst the 1996 Guidelines included reference to health and safety, temporary permissions, bonds and contributions, these have been revised by Circular PL 07/12, which specifies that:

- conditions limiting the life of telecommunication structures should no longer be attached (except in exceptional circumstances, e.g. site or environmental conditions applicable);
- separation distances between telecommunication structures and other developments, such as schools or dwellings, should not be specified in development plans;
- requirements for bonds or cash deposits are replaced by requirement to demolish, remove the structure and reinstate the site upon ceasing operation;
- development contributions shall not apply in respect of broadband infrastructure.

Refer to **Section 13.9.4** (Development management standards) for details relating to the siting and design of telecommunication infrastructure.

11.2.3 Domestic satellite dishes

Satellite dishes, if insensitively installed, can harm the appearance of historic buildings, townscapes and sometimes affect the character of rural areas. While satellite dishes can be erected subject to conditions and limitations specified under the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001* (as amended), such provisions are not applicable where the building is a Protected Structure or is sited within an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA).

Telecommunications policies

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-TEL-1** Protect areas of significant landscape importance from the visual intrusion of large-scale telecommunications infrastructure.
- P-TEL-2** Ensure that telecommunications infrastructure is subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive and is adequately screened, integrated and/or landscaped, so as to minimise any adverse visual impacts on the environment.
- P-TEL-3** Support the implementation of the *National Broadband Plan for Ireland (2012)* and any related programmes aiming to provide high-speed broadband in County Sligo.
- P-TEL-4** Where appropriate, require (by planning condition if necessary) the installation of underground telecommunications infrastructure associated with road, commercial and residential schemes.
- P-TEL-5** Ensure that satellite dishes do not materially affect the character and appearance of any urban or rural area, and in particular Protected Structures or Architectural Conservation Areas.

12. Town and village design

Towns in Ireland have changed from what they once were – vibrant centres of commercial and residential activity based on streets and public spaces. Today, in many towns, commercial activity is migrating to the edges and residential areas are developed far from town centres, while in the countryside the building of one-off housing intensifies.

Sligo County Council seeks to ensure that the County’s towns and villages are developed in a manner which retains and enhances their identity and character. It is expected that the creation of pleasant and attractive places will encourage people not just to work and socialise in urban areas, but also to live there as an alternative to building single houses in rural areas.

The purpose of this chapter is to establish a policy framework to guide the sustainable development of towns and villages in the county, while preserving and enhancing the traditional character of their historic cores.

This involves dealing with several issues:

1. the maintenance of the character of historic streetscapes;
2. the retention of historic shopfronts and the design of new shopfronts;
3. the expansion of urban areas while retaining the distinction between the urban and rural environment;
4. “place making” (public realm planning) and its role in enhancing or creating urban character;
5. the design and layout of new residential development.

12.1 Historic streetscapes

The historic streetscapes of an urban area play an essential role in defining the character of the place. Their value should not be estimated only in terms of heritage and visual appeal, but also in terms of their contribution to the vitality and economic well-being of towns.

Historic streetscapes include the main streets of the County’s towns and villages, generally built from the mid-19th Century to the early 20th Century. In recent years there has been little emphasis on preserving or enhancing the character of the historic streetscape, particularly those located outside of designated Architectural Conservation Areas.

The typical Irish town streetscape and its buildings often possess unique features which, combined, create character and contribute to visual amenity. Features such as sash windows, cast-iron gutters and down-pipes, hardwood doors, original shopfronts were designed out of necessity with a distinct sense of aesthetics.

The character of historic town and village centres has been eroded in recent years, due in part to the following:

- lack of awareness regarding the value of historic buildings, leading to demolition or neglect;
- replacement of traditional sash windows and timber doors with “modern” materials such as aluminium and PVC;
- inappropriate design of infill or refurbished buildings;

- removal of plasterwork to reveal stonework never intended for display;
- poor management of the public realm – overhead network cabling, inappropriate lamp standard design, intrusive positioning of equipment, insensitive siting of road traffic signage etc.

This loss of character is not irrecoverable and every effort should be made to restore these areas and enhance their visual appeal.

The quality of streetscapes does not depend solely on the appearance of buildings. The other elements of the public realm – footpaths, street furniture, public space etc. – all have a role to play. However, the appearance of buildings is a starting point to transform an urban space from a cluttered, disjointed, visually confusing place to a space that is pleasant, interesting and attractive.

The Council shall generally require the retention and refurbishment of traditional buildings in a streetscape. However, there will be cases when reconstruction is warranted or where there is a gap site. In such cases, the development of the site or reconstruction of the building should ensure that the resulting structure keeps in character with the street.

When a residential or commercial development is proposed to fill a gap in a historical streetscape, the following items should be considered: chimneys, ridge tiles, slates, verges and eaves, rainwater goods, wall finishes, windows, cills, doors, base plinth, the solid-to-void ratio of the façade, gable width etc.

The design of new buildings should reflect the most significant elements of the traditional streetscape in their vicinity and should respect the established building line.

Guidance for the development of brownfield or infill sites in County Sligo's historic streetscapes can be found in **Section 13.2.4 Development on historic streetscapes** (development management standards).

12.2 Shopfronts

The quality and nature of shopfronts play an important role in defining the character of a streetscape. Well-maintained historic shopfronts add character and charm to a street and contribute to an attractive public realm.

A shop which is considered to be 'historic' or 'traditional' has retained historic fabric and original features. The shop of any period will be considered 'historic' if it demonstrates a particular style or use of materials associated with the time.

The architectural value of buildings and the quality of townscapes can be diminished by shops in poor condition or with poorly designed shopfronts, which detract from the character of an area. Well-cared-for historic shopfronts and well-designed modern shopfronts make a town centre more attractive, improving the desirability of the area and potentially increasing footfall. This, in turn, can lead to better economic performance and prosperity for the town.

The Planning Authority will require shop owners or operators to maintain the character and appearance of well-designed historic shopfronts.

Common features of poorly designed shopfronts include over-scaled fascias, obtrusive lighting fixtures, roller-shutter doors and over-use of signage.

The aim of the Council is to ensure the following:

- the preservation of traditional shopfronts;

- a high standard of design for all shopfronts;
- appropriate use of signs and advertisements.

A well-designed contemporary shopfront will usually be preferable to an ill-proportioned imitation of a traditional shopfront. Shops which have adopted a corporate image will not necessarily be allowed to use a standardised shopfront design, corporate colours and materials.

Guidance for the design of shopfronts can be found in **Section 13.5.9 Shopfronts and signage** (development management standards).

12.3 Urban development and expansion

The Planning Authority seeks to co-ordinate the growth of the County's villages and towns on the basis of several principles, which are set out below. These principles were applied in the mini-plans for 32 villages (refer to Volume 2 of this Plan) and in the local area plans adopted to date.

An expansion strategy for an urban area should aim to achieve the following:

- a clean visual break between the built-up area and the surrounding countryside
- a compact settlement, consolidated through the development of gap sites, brownfield or derelict sites;
- sequential development (i.e. no leapfrogging of development) – the urban area expands progressively from the centre outwards;
- development of greenfield sites on the basis of masterplanning for larger areas;
- connectivity between new and existing development based on the creation of streets.

12.3.1 Urban–rural interface

The entrance to a town is an important element in its physical appearance. A characteristic of Irish towns in the past was the obvious distinction between built-up areas and countryside. Recent patterns of development have resulted in the blurring of this distinction, due to the proliferation of housing, commercial developments and advertising structures along the approach roads into towns.

The Planning Authority will endeavour to create strong edges for the County's urban areas by discouraging ribbon development on the approaches to towns and villages and establishing a green belt around every urban area. Unnecessary development (including advertising structures) will be restricted within the green belts.

12.3.2 Compact settlement

A compact settlement is one where commercial town-centre development is concentrated in the core and housing areas extend sequentially outwards. Consolidation of towns and villages into compact settlements involves prioritising the development of infill, brownfield and backland sites.

- **Infill** – Proposals for infill development should have regard to the character and context of the surrounding area. On larger sites, there may be a case for new development to establish its own character in a contemporary architectural language. Important aspects to consider are

active frontages, well defined spaces, location of car parking and servicing to the rear of the buildings, creation of streetscapes, protection of amenity of adjacent buildings.

- **Brownfield sites** can involve substantial amounts of land in or near the centre of an urban area. Large brownfield sites should be developed on the basis of a masterplan for the entire area.
- **Backland** sites generally comprise undeveloped lands behind buildings. Very often, particularly in town centres, such land can be in multiple ownership. Development in such areas will only be considered as part of a comprehensive masterplan for the entire backland area. Piecemeal development of individual plots will generally not be permitted.

12.3.3 Sequential development

Building beyond the urban edge, while a substantial amount of in-between land remains in a greenfield state, is not in the interest of sustainable development. “Leapfrogging” leads to an uncontrolled spread of the built-up area, which will result in disjointed blocks of developments, thus harming the character of the town and that of the countryside.

In order to avoid this, careful phasing of urban extensions is required, in accordance with the principle of sequential development. Phasing schemes should be put in place as part of the preparation of local area plans.

12.3.4 Masterplans

The growth of a town should not depend only on land ownership and availability, i.e. field by field development. Towns should expand on the basis of masterplans for large areas. The aim of masterplans should be to design town ‘quarters’ structured on a network of streets. Poorly connected, cul-de-sac estates are not considered appropriate forms of urban development.

Further guidance on the role, scope and content of masterplans may be obtained from the *Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns and Villages)* (DECLG, 2009) and from the UK document *Creating Successful Masterplans* (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, 2004).

12.3.5 New circulation networks

Understanding the historical context of a place is important when planning extensions to existing towns and villages.

The design of new circulation networks should be informed by an appreciation of the existing street patterns and of the way the town evolved. The imposition of incongruous street layouts upon an area should be avoided.

The main objective in designing new patterns of movement should be to create a grid. This can have either a regular or irregular shape, but it is important that each end of a street or path connects to others. Cul-de-sac systems that lead nowhere will be discouraged.

12.4 Public realm

The public realm of a town or village includes all the outside spaces that are used and seen by people. It comprises façades of buildings, shopfronts, signage, lighting fixtures on buildings, lamp posts, bollards, footpaths, squares and parks etc. A high-quality public realm involves a place that is pleasant to use and easy to access. Making an area appealing to visitors may also bring significant economic benefits by increasing commercial activity.

All new development should be designed in a manner that enhances the public realm. The elements of an attractive public realm include:

- well-designed urban spaces;
- active ground-floor uses;
- well-maintained buildings and shopfronts;
- high-quality surface treatments;
- discrete building signage and lighting;
- minimal road signage;
- street furniture, including street lighting, based on a common design theme.

Minimal measures to improve the public realm of the County's towns should include reducing visual clutter, harmonising signage and adopting a consistent approach in terms of street furniture, lighting and paving.

The formulation and adoption of a public realm strategy for any urban area is recommended if significant improvements are required.

12.5 Development of new residential areas

Towns and villages cannot become or remain vibrant and self-sustaining if people choose to live outside them. In recent years, most new houses in the County have been built in rural areas, not in towns or villages.

In the interest of sustaining urban life, the quality of development in urban areas must improve. Towns and villages must become places where people want to live. Urban areas need to offer attractive residential environments, where social interaction is facilitated, houses and gardens offer adequate space, privacy and meet the needs of modern families.

In recent decades, the traditional way of expanding towns (street by street) has been replaced with the development of housing estates on fields at the edge of towns with only one access point and little or no relationship with adjoining developments or landscapes. The continuous frontage of traditional urban streets has not been extended to new developments. Most new housing schemes feature car parking areas in front of quasi-identical, semi-detached houses. This trend has resulted in uniform, monotonous, poorly connected and disjointed urban areas, both spatially and socially.

In order to ensure that new development fits in with the character of traditional towns and villages, the creation of streets and the enclosure of space, whether by buildings or by planted elements, is required. Enclosed spaces are visually pleasing and create a sense of place and a feeling of security.

The Council will require designers and developers of multi-unit residential developments to have regard to the following principles:

- Developments should be permeable and linked to the surrounding urban fabric through new streets. If a site is on the town edge, the layout of any development should provide linkages to a further extended urban area.
- Schemes should be designed on the basis of a street network.
- New streets should prioritise pedestrians and cyclists over cars.
- Public spaces in new developments should be enclosed primarily by buildings, but also by trees, where appropriate.
- The design of new houses should reflect the local, established building traditions of the town or village. Uniformity in residential layout and design should be avoided.

Urban design policies – Historic streetscapes

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

P-UD-1 Seek the retention and refurbishment of historic buildings in traditional town and village streetscapes. Demolition will be considered only in exceptional circumstances.

P-UD-2 Maintain the traditional plot width within historic streetscapes, particularly where the building façade is manifested on the streetscape.

In exceptional circumstances, a new building with a broader plot width may be permitted, but the façade will be required to include some form of articulation that emulates the original plot widths or fits in with the traditional streetscape character.

P-UD-3 Generally maintain a continuous building line along streetscapes. Car parks, loading bays and service yards shall be located to the rear of buildings.

P-UD-4 Promote the principles of contextual compatibility for all new buildings within the historic built environment and require carefully-designed architectural solutions in compliance with the guidance set out in **Section 13.2.4 Development in historic streetscapes** (development management standards).

Planning applications for new buildings or shopfronts shall be accompanied by a site context analysis (including streetscape elevations) that demonstrates an understanding of the key urban design issues and illustrates how these have been addressed in the proposal.

P-UD-5 Require the retention and restoration of historic windows, doors, renders, roof coverings, chimneys, rainwater goods and other significant features of structures of architectural heritage merit, whether protected or not.

Where retention is not possible, the replacement of original or historic features should be executed in a manner sympathetic to the original fabric and design intent of the building. Replacement with modern materials (such as PVC windows and doors) or designs that may be insensitive in their detailing or relief to traditional façades and roofs will be discouraged.

Urban design policies – Shopfronts

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-UD-6** Require the retention and refurbishment of historic shopfronts.
- P-UD-7** Encourage the replacement of inappropriate modern shopfronts with traditionally-detailed shopfronts, based on historical evidence, or with appropriately-designed and well-detailed contemporary shopfronts.
- P-UD-8** Require shopfronts and advertisement signs to match the overall form and structure of the buildings on which they are installed, and ensure that they adhere to the guidelines set out in the *Retail Design Manual* (DECLG, 2012) and to the guidance in **Section 13.5.9 Shopfronts and signage** (development management standards) of this Plan.

Urban design policies – Urban development and expansion

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-UD-9** Create a strong urban edge for every town and village by preventing ribbon development on the approaches to built-up areas and by restricting unnecessary development within the green belts around towns and villages.
- P-UD-10** Ensure that new development in towns or villages takes place in accordance with the principle of sequential development.
- P-UD-11** Require new development on or in the vicinity of the development limit to address the views from the approach roads and present an attractive frontage to these roads.
- P-UD-12** Required that backland development is based on masterplans to be prepared in consultation with the Planning Authority. Piecemeal development of backlands within town and villages will be discouraged.
- P-UD-13** Generally restrict the installation of commercial signage and advertising structures on the county's road network, especially on the approach roads to towns and villages.

Urban design policies – New residential development

It is the policy of Sligo County Council to:

- P-UD-14** Ensure that new urban residential development complies with guidance set out in **Section 13.3 Residential development in urban areas** (development management standards) of this Plan and the design criteria set out in the *Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide* (DECLG, 2009) (refer to Appendix G)
- P-UD-15** Require all new multi-unit housing developments to be structured on a network of streets which link into the surrounding built fabric. Development on greenfield sites shall provide for future connections into adjoining lands, where appropriate.
- P-UD-16** All new streets shall be designed in accordance with the provisions of the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* (DoE, DTTAS, 2013).
- P-UD-17** Require all multi-unit developments to be accompanied by a Design Statement. The Design Statement shall provide a rationale for the site layout and building design – which shall be guided by the nature of surrounding development, natural features, accessibility and sunlight patterns in order to optimise daylight and solar gain.

Urban design objectives - Public realm

It is an objective of Sligo County Council to:

- O-UD-1** To commission the preparation of a Public Realm Strategy for Sligo City in conjunction with the Sligo and Environs Local Area Plan.

13. Development management standards

The purpose of this chapter is to offer guidance to potential applicants regarding the criteria used by the Planning Authority to assess development proposals

The development management standards that follow apply to the entire administrative area of the County. The same set of standards applies to all existing and future local area plans. The Sligo and Environs LAP may contain additional standards and guidance, as required for a larger urban centre.

The guidance contained in this chapter is not exhaustive, but merely a statement of general principles intended to guide potential applicants.

13.1 The planning process

In making a decision on a planning application, the Planning Authority is restricted to considering the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, as specified in Section 34 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The Planning Authority must have regard to the provisions of the Development Plan, Planning Act and Planning Regulations, relevant policies of the government and the minister for DHPCLG and other ministers, written submissions made by bodies or persons other than the applicant.

13.1.1 Planning guidance

Under Section 28 of the Act, the Minister for DHPCLG issues statutory guidelines to planning authorities. These guidelines cover a wide range of issues, including architectural heritage, housing supply, childcare facilities, retail planning, landscape assessment, quarries, wind energy development etc.

In the early 2000s, the Department produced a series of general information leaflets on various aspects of the Irish planning system, including how to make a planning application, lodge an appeal, requirements for change of use, building extensions etc. Please note that in some cases the planning legislation has rendered elements of these leaflets out of date.

The planning information leaflets and guidance documents can be downloaded from the DHPCLG website at www.housing.gov.ie.

13.1.2 Pre-planning meetings

In accordance with Section 247 of the Planning Act, the Planning Authority provides an opportunity for anybody who has an interest in land or buildings to engage in discussions prior to making a planning application. Potential applicants are strongly advised to avail of this service.

It should be noted that such consultations will not pre-determine any subsequent decision made by Sligo County Council.

13.1.3 Planning application

In order to obtain planning permission, it is necessary to submit an application which complies with the requirements of the Planning Act and the Planning Regulations. Advice and guidance on making a planning application are available from the Planning Section of Sligo County Council.

Before submitting a development proposal for a site or structure located in a town, a village or the immediate vicinity of a settlement, potential applicants should examine the relevant Zoning Map, Objectives Map and Zoning Matrix in Volume 2 of this Plan or in one of the County's Local Area Plans (Ballymote, Enniscrone, Tobercurry – when adopted), to determine whether the proposal is in accordance with the specific planning provisions for the respective area.

13.2 General development standards

When proposing any type of development, the applicants are advised to have regard to the considerations listed below, which represent criteria for assessment of planning applications in both urban and rural areas.

13.2.1 Building lines

The Planning Authority will normally seek to ensure that development is not carried out in front of established building lines. Generally, it will be an aim to create a continuous building line along a street edge. Consistent building lines will also be encouraged in the design of neighbourhood centres and in new industrial/business park developments, where buildings will have a clear relationship with each other. Where located along roads of traffic importance, increased setbacks may be determined to provide for greater amenity, safety of road users and residents, and for future road widening.

Building lines may be relaxed in the following cases:

- to incorporate key landscape features into the development layout;
- to incorporate key landmark buildings;
- for innovative designs which can positively enhance the townscape;
- for innovative housing layouts, where the traditional setback from the public footpath is flexible due to new designs, with a decreasing emphasis on the minimum required space to the front of dwellings,
- to provide important areas of public open space, e.g. squares;
- to facilitate traditional building forms, such as open courtyards etc.

13.2.2 Impact of development on its surroundings

The following factors will be considered in assessing the impact of a proposed structure on the receiving environment:

- a. degree of overshadowing and loss of light to surrounding properties;
- b. degree of overlooking and consequent loss of privacy for adjoining properties;
- c. the extent to which the building impacts on structures or spaces of architectural or historic importance;
- d. the extent to which the building impacts on important landmarks;
- e. the extent to which the building impacts on attractive public views from significant vantage points;
- f. the degree of impact of the building on the skyline;
- g. the degree to which the building may contribute to the overall townscape; particular care will be required in the treatment of rooftops and all machine/mechanical rooms will need to be adequately screened or designed as an integral part of the building;
- h. the quality of the overall design;
- i. the scale of the building in relation to surrounding urban space, together with the effect of the building on the quality of the space;
- j. the effect of the building on the microclimate in the immediate vicinity;
- k. the area of the site, and whether it is large enough to provide a visual transition (by way of open space, or a base of lower buildings) from the scale of surrounding development.
- l. an increase in building height may be particularly suitable for certain strategic sites.

13.2.3 Impact on architectural heritage

In order to protect, strengthen and improve the presentation and the general character of the County's built heritage, alterations and interventions to Protected Structures shall be executed to a high conservation standard and shall not detract from their significance or value.

Where an application relates to a development which would consist of, or comprise the carrying out of works to a protected structure, the planning authorities will have regard to the *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DAHG 2011) and the following should accompany the planning application:

- drawings of elevations of the main features of any building within the curtilage of the protected structure which would be materially affected by the proposed development;
- photographs, plans and other particulars as are necessary to show how the development would affect the character of the structure;
- brief written statement describing and justifying the proposed works and the philosophy that informs their methodology;

- photographs sufficient to describe (i) the overall appearance of the exterior of the protected structure, including all exposed sides, its setting and its relationship with surrounding structure; (ii) any interior spaces or features that it is proposed to change; (iii) details of the exterior and interior sufficient to describe the structure's character and materials of construction.
- a conservation impact assessment prepared by a qualified and experienced conservation architect; the assessment should include a report on the condition of the protected structure.

The assessment shall be undertaken by an RIAI-accredited architect or practice¹ (or foreign equivalent for non-Irish architects or practices), where appropriate, detailing the impacts of the proposed development upon the special interest and character of the surrounding architectural heritage. The relevant Planning Authority shall be consulted at an early stage in this regard, in order to determine whether there is a need for such an assessment or for specific mitigation measures.

The inclusion of a structure on the Record of Protected Structure (or on the proposed RPS) ensures that any works, which would materially affect the character that structure, or any element of that structure, will require planning permission, even where those works would normally be considered exempted development.

Similarly, any works within an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) which materially affects the character of the ACA, will require planning permission, where those works would normally be considered exempted development.

The alteration of a building or other structure on the RPS, other than an alteration consisting of the painting of any previously painted part of such a building or structure, shall not be carried out without having secured planning permission or a declaration of exemption by the planning authority. Demolition, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, will be resisted.

When assessing planning applications relating to buildings included in the RPS, the planning authority will have regard to the artistic, architectural or historic interest, the design, quality and character of surrounding development and the condition (which should be based on a report prepared by a qualified conservation architect) of the protected structure.

13.2.4 Development in historic streetscapes

The integrity of the County's historic streetscapes depends on the maintenance of traditional historic buildings and the careful design of refurbishment and new-build projects. The guidance set out in the table on the next page establishes principles of design and materials which should be adhered to as appropriate when proposing interventions in a traditional streetscape.

High-quality, modern design proposals may deviate from this guidance, subject to successful integration into the surrounding environment. This should be demonstrated by showing the building's elevation in the context of the streetscape where it is proposed to be inserted.

¹. To assist clients in the selection of a practice able to provide them with professional services in architectural conservation, the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI) developed an accreditation system to recognise differing levels of specialist expertise. There are three grades of accreditation, Grade I being the highest and Grade III the basic entry level to the system. Detailed information can be found on the website of the RIAI at www.riai.ie.

Feature	Heritage guidance
Proportions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure good proportions in roof to wall ratio reflecting that of neighbouring historic buildings and a high solid to void relationship (i.e. greater wall surface than windows and doors) • Building compositions (of windows and doors) should be simple in style and may be symmetrical reflecting the existing rhythm of the streetscape. • Aim to minimise the distance between the top of the ground floor windows and the sill of the first floor windows to achieve good proportions.
Gable width	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional town buildings generally have a narrow plan, 5-6 m. • Infill development should reflect the gable widths of adjoining buildings if this affects the roof profile or if the gable is seen from the street.
Plot width	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New development should respect the scale and rhythm of the existing streetscape and maintain the traditional plot width and where plots have been assembled, designs shall reflect the grain of the streetscape with due recognition of the original plot widths.
Details	
Chimneys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditionally chimneys were constructed to achieve balance and formal appeal. • All new buildings should have regard to the rhythm of the streetscape, including the provision of chimneys. • Chimneys (c.1.2 m) shall be placed centrally on the ridge of the roof. • Where chimneys are located at gables, they should be flush with the face of the gable wall. • If a building is to be replaced, the chimneys of the original structure should be replicated in the new build.
Ridge Tiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ridge tiles should reflect the traditional local characteristics and should be in a non-contrasting colour to the roof.
Slates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural slate (Salvaged or imported) is preferable.
Roofs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All roofs shall be pitched, unless dictated otherwise by the streetscape or original building. • All roofs shall be constructed so that there is no projecting soffit or barge at the gable and no boxed eaves detail.
Verges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verges on a historic street should generally comprise render flush to slate and shall have regard to local traditional detailing.

Eaves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eaves should be flush with the wall where appropriate, fascia and soffit omitted and slate shall not project beyond face of wall as traditionally detailed. • Eaves should comprise an advanced course of stone, concrete or plastered masonry.
Rainwater goods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rainwater gutters should be affixed to a corbelled eaves course of concrete, brick or stone (as appropriate). • The profile and shape should reflect traditional forms, i.e. circular, square, rectilinear. • Simple black round plastic rainwater gutters and down-pipes are recommended. White goods shall not be permitted.
Wall finishes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finishes of new or redeveloped buildings within a traditional streetscape should match the traditional materials prevalent on the street. • Traditional finishes include lime-based renders, natural cement renders, wet dash in its natural or painted form, smooth or coursed painted renders, random coursed stone, cut stone. • Inappropriate use of finishes and materials such as dry pebble dash, brick, un-rendered random rubble stone will not be considered acceptable.
Windows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size and shape of windows should be well proportioned with a vertical emphasis having regard to the proportions prevalent on the street. • When appropriate, the use of painted timber sliding sash windows is encouraged. • The use of white PVC is not considered appropriate and will not normally be permitted. • Dormer windows and roof lights (preferably conservation style) may be considered on a traditional streetscape, subject to appropriate placement and detailing.
Cills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cills shall be a minimum 100 mm deep stone (with a traditional bull-nosed profile). Concrete may be considered where appropriate.
Doors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All doors fronting onto the street shall be hardwood timber in traditional style and dimensions. Fan lights should be above the door and not incorporated into the door.

13.2.5 Impact on archaeology

Where archaeological heritage is likely to be affected by a proposed development, developers will be advised of their obligations under the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. Developments that impact on the county’s archaeological heritage will be treated as follows:

- within the zone of archaeological potential (ZAP), archaeological remains will be investigated, recorded and/or preserved;

- outside the zone of archaeological potential, where – in the opinion of the planning authority – developments would involve major ground disturbances, conditions relating to archaeology may be applied;
- the planning authority will require that archaeological investigations be undertaken by a licensed archaeologist prior to the commencement of development;
- the developer will be liable for the cost of archaeological investigations;
- the Planning Authority may require the developer to submit a report, prepared by a suitably qualified archaeologist, on the archaeological implications of the proposed development. The planning authority may impose conditions requiring:
 - professional archaeological supervision of site excavations;
 - funding by the applicant of archaeological monitoring, testing and/or assessment;
 - preservation of all or part of any archaeological remains.
- the planning authority may impose conditions which modify the development, in order to facilitate archaeological investigation or preservation;
- developers will be encouraged to supply an archaeological assessment and a method statement outlining construction procedures as part of their planning application.

13.2.6 Landscaping

A landscape plan should accompany all planning applications, unless otherwise determined by the Planning Authority. Developers shall have regard to the following requirements:

1. Existing landscape features such as stands of mature trees, hedgerows, rock outcrops and water features shall be properly identified and retained where appropriate.
2. The maximum number of significant trees shall be retained when considering locations of buildings and site works.
3. The landscape plan and the selection of plant species should take into consideration low-maintenance species. Generally, single trees require more expert attention than those in composite groups, which are less vulnerable to damage. Formal, single-tree lines have little effect as screen belts or buffers; for this reason, groupings of young trees will be encouraged.
4. Native tree species will generally be preferred, because they support a greater variety of wildlife.
5. In considering what native tree and shrub species are appropriate to each particular situation, the developers should have regard to the Heritage Council’s publication *Conserving and Enhancing Wildlife in Towns and Villages*.
6. Where invasive species occur on the development site, proposals shall be provided for their management or eradication.

13.2.7 Accessibility

The Council adheres to the principle of *universal accessibility*, meaning that “all environments should be accessible by everyone, regardless of ability”. Universal accessibility will benefit everyone,

affording people with disabilities, older persons, parents with buggies etc. greater access to the built and external environments.

The Planning Authority will endeavour to ensure that the recommended standards set out in Building for Everyone - a Universal Design Approach (NDA, 2012) are applied in internal and external built public environments where feasible.

13.2.8 Infrastructure and services

Irish Water is the new national water utility responsible for providing and developing water services throughout Ireland. Irish Water took over responsibility for public water and wastewater services from the Local Authorities with effect from 1st January 2014. Irish Water is now responsible for the operation of public water and wastewater services, including:

- Management of national water and wastewater assets;
- Maintenance of the water and wastewater system;
- Investment and planning;
- Managing capital projects; and
- Customer care and billing.

Where water and sewerage infrastructure is privately provided, the type and design shall be agreed at pre-planning stage with the Planning Authority.

Proposals from private developers to extend existing public wastewater infrastructure networks will be facilitated, where such proposals would result in the servicing of zoned lands. Any such proposal shall be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

In the interest of amenity, all electricity, telephone and television cables in urban built-up areas, especially within zones designated for residential development, shall be placed underground.

For guidance on services associated with residential developments, refer to *Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas* (DoEHLG, 1998).

13.2.9 Surface water drainage

All applications for planning permission shall incorporate proposals for the disposal of surface water. Storm water will not generally be allowed into the foul sewerage network and should be disposed of, subject to suitable treatment where necessary, to available watercourses or through separate surface water drains to independent outfalls.

The Council will also promote the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) where there are no positive or natural drainage systems into which to discharge storm water.

When creating a new vehicular access onto public roads, existing roadside drainage shall be maintained by the incorporation of a suitably sized drainage pipe. In these circumstances, each application shall be accompanied by design calculations or appropriate evidence to support the size of pipe selected.

In any event, surface water shall not be allowed to discharge onto the adjoining public road from the proposed development.

13.2.10 Flood risk assessment

Development management should follow the sequential approach when considering the location of development in areas at risk of flooding. Applicants may be required to submit a detailed flood risk assessment and the Planning Authority will take this into account in determining the application.

Pre-planning consultation is critical to the consideration of flood risk in the planning application. It is the responsibility of the applicant at this stage to gather relevant information for flood risk screening.

Flood risk assessments should be:

- proportionate to the risk scale, nature and location of the development;
- undertaken by a competent person, such as a suitably qualified hydrologist, flood risk management professional or specialist water engineer;
- undertaken as early as possible in the particular planning process;
- supported by appropriate data and information, including historical information on previous events, but focusing more on predictive assessment of less frequent or more extreme events, taking the likely impacts of climate change into account;
- clearly state the risk to people and development, and how that risk will be managed over the lifetime of the development.

13.2.11 On-site wastewater treatment systems

Where sewerage infrastructure is privately provided, the type and design shall be in compliance with the EPA's *Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (PE≤10)* and/or the EPA's *Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres and Hotels* manual or standards set by the planning authority.

Wastewater treatment systems should be located, constructed and maintained to the highest standards to ensure minimal impacts on water quality and particularly groundwater quality. Accordingly, all applications for planning permission involving the provision of an on-site wastewater treatment system must contain sufficient information to demonstrate that the proposed development will be environmentally sustainable.

In accordance with the EPA Code of Practice (2009), a site assessment must be carried out for all planning applications involving provision of a new or retention of an existing onsite wastewater treatment system. The site assessment and design of the proposed onsite wastewater treatment system shall be carried out by a suitably qualified, competent, technical professional and shall be in accordance with the above Code of Practice.

On sites served by an existing onsite wastewater treatment system, where an extension increases the potential occupancy of a house, the adequacy of the domestic wastewater treatment and disposal facilities should be demonstrated by the applicant. It may be deemed necessary by the Planning Authority, with applications relating to significant extensions and provision of additional bedrooms, to upgrade the existing on-site wastewater treatment system to comply with the requirements of the EPA Wastewater Treatment Manual; *Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (PE≤10 (EPA 2009))*.

Wetland systems are not considered satisfactory until national design and installation criteria are agreed by the Environmental Protection Agency. Proposals for the installation of reed beds must include adequate design, installation, certification and long term maintenance details.

In terms of single dwelling houses, the discharge or disposal of domestic wastewater to surface water bodies will not be permitted.

In terms of communal activities, treatment systems for small communities, business, leisure centres and hotels will not be permitted without an adequate, legally-binding contract for the management and maintenance of the system, for the life of the system.

When a new urban wastewater treatment plant is constructed or existing plants are upgraded, developments will be required to connect into the plants.

Public wastewater infrastructure must be in place and must have adequate capacity prior to developments being occupied.

13.2.12 Construction and demolition waste

The identification and provision of facilities for the reception of C&D waste should be integrated into the project planning and design processes. In order to ensure that this occurs, conditions will be included in the permissions granted to particular developments, requiring waste management plans be drawn up prior to the commencement of the development.

These plans will be subject to approval by the planning authority, and will include site inspections to ensure that all wastes generated during development are being handled in an environmentally-sound and sustainable manner.

The plans must be prepared and carried out in accordance with DOEHLG's *Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects* (2006).

Developments on brown field sites should consider the contents of these guidelines and carry out investigations to determine all possible waste types associated with a sites previous use(s).

13.2.13 Waste disposal

Adequate storage must be provided for the three segregated waste types (organic, recyclable and landfill waste) and waste management facilities commensurate with the scale of the development must be incorporated. Bin storage facilities should be secure from vandals and vermin and should not create a nuisance to adjoining buildings.

Waste collection points shall have adequate access to provide for loading and further division after recycling on site, in order to facilitate the achievement of high recycling levels, as specified in the Waste Management Plan.

13.2.14 Undergrounding of cables (A-13-1)

The planning authority will seek to place underground all electricity, telephone and television cables in the urban built-up areas, especially within zones designated for residential development [and in Architectural Conservation Areas](#).

The planning authority will ensure that overhead lines will not be permitted in any area of high amenity value, as it is a policy aim to preserve significant landscape views from the visual intrusion of large-scale telecommunications and energy infrastructure.

13.2.15 Illumination and spread of light

The limitation of light pollution is important in the interests of nature conservation, residential amenity and energy efficiency. If external illumination is proposed, documentation shall be provided that clearly shows that light or glare from such illumination will not adversely affect pedestrian and vehicular traffic or adjacent properties.

External illumination shall be carefully and sensitively designed to minimise the incidence of light spillage or light pollution into the surrounding environment. The design shall take into account the minimum required for security and health and safety; therefore all external lighting:-

- shall be properly cowed and directed away from the public roadway and shall also not be visible from any point more than 200 metres away from the light,
- shall not point upwards,
- shall be sensor controlled,
- should be energy efficient,
- shall be sensitive to protected species, where applicable.

Floodlighting in rural areas, and as part of advertising schemes in urban areas, will be discouraged.

13.2.16 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

The requirement to carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment derives from EU Directives 85/337/EEC (as amended by Directive 97/11/EC).

An Environment Impact Statement is required with a planning application where the defined thresholds outlined in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) are exceeded for certain types of development.

When the proposed development is sub-threshold, the Planning Authority can require the applicant to submit an EIS if it is considered that the proposal is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

In deciding whether a proposed development is likely to have significant effects on the environment, the Planning Authority will have regard to Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) and to the DEHLG's *Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities Regarding Sub-Threshold Development* (2003).

13.2.17 Habitats Directive Assessment

In accordance with the EU Habitats Directive, any plan or project with the potential to impact on the integrity of a Nature 2000 site must be screened (Stage 1) to determine if a full (Stage 2) Appropriate Assessment is required.

An Appropriate Assessment means an assessment, based on best scientific knowledge, by a person with ecological expertise, of the potential impacts of the plan on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 sites (including Natura 2000 sites not situated in the area encompassed by the plan) and the development, where necessary, of mitigation or avoidance measures.

The impacts assessed must include the indirect and cumulative impacts of approving the plan, considered with any current or proposed activities, developments or policies impacting on the site. The potential impacts of policies outside Natura 2000 sites (known as ‘ex-situ’ impacts) must also be included in the assessment.

If the Habitats Directive screening indicates that a plan or project arising from this Development Plan will have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, either directly or indirectly, on its own or in combination with other plans and projects, then the plan or project must be the subject of an Appropriate Assessment as per Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (1992).

Having considered the conclusions of the Habitats Directive Assessment, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site(s) concerned.

If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), including those of a social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected and it shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.

Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or priority species, the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment, or further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

If a development site is located on or near a Natura 2000 site, or the proposed development may have an impact on a Natura 2000 site, it is advisable to consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service at the earliest possible opportunity.

13.2.18 Energy efficiency

This section sets out guidelines for the sustainable design, siting and construction of buildings, including dwellings, with regard to energy efficiency and energy conservation.

Passive solar design (PSD)

The siting, layout, built form and landscaping of a development can be designed in such a way so as to maximise the amount of energy gained and retained by a house from the sun. Designing a house this way can amount to substantial savings at little or no cost. The main elements of PSD are as follows:

- **Orientation** - To maximise the benefits of solar radiation, the side of a building with the highest amount of glazing should be facing south. A southerly orientation maximises solar gain in winter.
- **Wind** – Buildings should be designed and located to reduce the impact of wind chill. Suitable tree shelter belts should be incorporated into a landscaping scheme for the development.
- **Openings** - Glazed surfaces should be insulated to prevent the loss of heat. Windows on northern elevations should be kept to a minimum.

- **Internal planning** - The internal layout of buildings should be designed by placing living spaces (living room, dining room) to the south and service spaces (toilets, stairs, storage rooms) to the cooler north.

Buildings built to the internationally recognised ‘PassivHaus Standard’ are designed to have a very low energy requirement in terms of heating or cooling.

Alternative heating systems

Energy-efficient heating systems (such as wood pellet stoves and boilers and geothermal heat pumps) can greatly help to reduce dependence on conventional energy sources.

Wind energy

Proposals for the provision of small and medium-size wind turbines which fall outside the exempted development categories will be facilitated by the Planning Authority, subject to normal planning considerations.

Construction methods

Consideration should be given to the use of renewable building materials, such as wood from sustainably managed forests and locally-sourced materials.

Micro-climate enhancement

Trees and shrubs can make a significant contribution to energy conservation. The planting of trees to shelter the site from the prevailing winds and the use of hard landscaping on the south side of buildings will enhance the micro-climate and minimise the amount of energy used by the building.

Managing flooding risk

Buildings should be future-proofed against increased rainfall and storm frequency likely to result from climate change. The following measures should be considered:

- Select the site and locate the development having regard to the depth of the water table and the natural patterns of drainage on site.
- Calculate rainwater guttering and pipe work on the basis of up to 30% increase in precipitation.
- Use soft landscaping to reduce storm water runoff and help the rain to percolate naturally into the water table.
- Use porous paving to allow water to percolate directly into the water table, thereby minimising the need for a formal drainage network.
- Utilise robust roofing details, including sarking in preference to battens.
- Preserve existing trees and increase planting to reduce the need for drainage on the site.

Rain water harvesting

Rain water recovery systems harvest rain water which can then be used for the flushing of toilets, washing machines and general outside use. A rainwater holding tank is installed below the ground that gathers water from the roof of buildings. This water is pumped into a tank within the building’s roof

space where it is stored until required. This water would otherwise have to be treated and pumped at considerable cost.

The system filters and collects between 20% and 30% of total water consumption used by a family of four and is isolated from the mains water system to eliminate any possibilities of contamination.

In the event of using all of the rainwater reserve, an automatic change over system switches over to using mains water until the rainwater tank starts to refill.

13.3 Residential development in urban areas

The following documents are key references informing the standards outlined in this section:

- Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (DoECLG, 2015)
- Irish Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DTTaS, and DoECLG, 2013)
- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2009)
- Urban Design Manual: a Best Practice Guide (DoEHLG, 2009)

The Urban Design Manual, which accompanies the Governments Guidelines for Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (May 2009), sets out a series of 12 design criteria for development sub-divided into three groups: (i) Neighbourhood, (ii) Site, (iii) Home.

These 12 criteria will be used in the assessment of planning applications for residential and mixed-use developments.

13.3.1 Multi-unit housing schemes

Multi-unit or multiple housing schemes are development consisting of two or more dwellings, which are dependent upon communal support services such as roads, water, sewerage system etc.

The construction of multi-unit housing schemes will be considered exclusively on lands zoned for residential and mixed uses in local area plans and mini-plans.

Design principles for housing schemes

The following design principles should be applied to all proposed multi-unit residential schemes:

- Legibility:** It should be easy for both residents and visitors to find their way around a residential area. Designers should create a distinctive identity for the place through variety in the layout and design of the scheme. This can be achieved in a number of ways:
- by incorporating natural features (hedgerows/trees) and man-made landscape elements into the design and layout of the scheme;
 - by introducing focal points or landmarks at key locations;

- by creating “character areas” within a scheme, where each area has its own visual identity, is defined by a different architectural design, a different palette of materials, variations in site layout, building lines, house design, colour and landscaping;
- by providing different house types or by mixing land uses at appropriate locations.

Connectivity: Convenient access needs to be provided between and within areas, particularly to larger community and commercial facilities and to places of work. Priority should be given to walking, cycling and public transport. Routes within the area should be as direct as possible, following – where feasible – existing desire lines. For this reason, the construction of “gated estates” will be discouraged.

Safety: Streets, footpaths and cycle routes should provide for safe access by users of all ages and degrees of personal mobility. The needs of specific user groups (children, elderly people, wheelchair users or persons with prams) must be considered at the design stage. Walkways should be well-lit and capable of being supervised from overlooking dwellings.

When proposing multi-unit housing schemes, the developers are advised to have regard to the DoEHLG guidance document *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns and Villages)*, its companion *Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide*, to the guidance provided below and in Chapter 12 of this Plan.

13.3.2 Road layouts in residential areas

Road layouts should be considered as part of the overall concept for the scheme and should not be the starting point of a design layout. Street layouts for new residential areas should be designed having regard to the following:

- the arrangement of buildings, rather than roads, with the aim of creating a sense of space and enclosure;
- the creation of attractive urban/village forms, where security for pedestrians and cyclists is paramount;
- the incorporation of traffic-calming measures into the layout of the scheme to ensure low vehicle speeds;
- the prioritisation of walking and cycling as transportation modes, and the provision of safe and direct access to local services and public transport;
- the need for links to accommodate through-access or connections to adjoining sites, backland areas or neighbouring lands that are likely to be developed in the future.
- access for mobility-impaired people;
- circulation routes for public services (e.g. refuse collection) and delivery vehicles;
- cul-de-sacs/home zones should be designed to accommodate through-access and linkages for pedestrians and cyclists to adjoining areas; these linkages should be adequately overlooked by dwellings and should have a minimum width of 3m;
- turning areas provided for emergency and refuse vehicles should be designed as hard-landscaped, dual-use spaces where cars/large vehicles can turn, but are primarily open spaces where children can play;
- adequate off-street facilities for parking, including visitor parking;

13.3.3 Home zones, shared surfaces

A home zone is a residential area with streets designed as places where the pedestrian has priority over motor traffic.

In home zones, streets are designed with special materials, street furniture and a variation of road widths, to ensure that motorists drive with more care and at lower speeds. Ideally, the surface is level and paved in sets and blocks rather than tarmac, to distinguish the home zone from a normal road.

On-street car parking is normally permitted, but is often grouped at the end of blocks or terraces. The streets become places where children can play and people can interact.

New residential developments will be required to incorporate the home zone design principles.

13.3.4 Layout and design of apartments

The ministerial guidance document *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments* (DoECLG, 2015) sets out minimum standards for floor areas of different types of apartments, and dimensions for storage spaces and certain rooms.

Minimum net floor areas for apartments are as follows:

Studio	40 m ²
One-bedroom apartment	45 m ²
Two-bedroom apartment	73 m ²
Three-bedroom apartment	90 m ²

The designers of apartment buildings should aim to achieve higher floor areas for all rooms, and only apply the minimum dimensions as a last resort, where there is no alternative.

The development of courtyards and new urban spaces within urban blocks will be considered, and fresh approaches to the design of urban spaces will be encouraged. Access to courtyards should generally be provided without breaking the existing street frontages, so as to assist in the creation of strong building lines.

13.3.5 Security and the orientation of buildings

Public space in residential schemes, such as green areas, playgrounds, playing fields, pedestrian and cycle links, should be designed with personal security in mind.

Houses should overlook streets and footpaths, pedestrian and cycle routes. Houses located on corner sites should be designed to be orientated towards both streets.

Residential layouts and house designs shall consider orientation according to the sun path, in order to maximise amenity, daylight and the benefits of passive solar gain.

13.3.6 Distance between dwellings

Houses and apartment buildings should be designed in a manner that minimises overlooking and overshadowing of adjoining properties, and avoids the loss of daylight.

Directly opposing rear first-floor bedroom windows should be a minimum of 22 m apart.

A minimum distance of 2.4 m for single-storey and 3 m for two-storey buildings shall be provided between the side walls of detached, semi-detached and end-of-terrace dwellings to ensure privacy. For ease of access, each house shall have a minimum of 1 m per side.

13.3.7 Private open space

Houses

The minimum size of a rear garden shall be 75 sq.m., with a smaller area acceptable for houses with narrow frontages and one- to two-bedroom houses, which will require no less than 60 sq.m. The minimum garden depth shall be 11 m.

In the case of high density, infill developments, special-needs housing or retirement homes, smaller gardens (reduced area or depth) may be permitted if there are no overlooking issues.

Reductions in rear garden area or depth may also be considered where required by urban design considerations, such as the case of houses on corner sites that perform an urban design role.

The existence of minimum standards should not result in uniform rear garden layouts. The developers will be expected to provide a variety of rear garden sizes, so as to avoid standardised development layouts.

Rear gardens should generally be provided with a permanent durable barrier (wall or fence) with a height of 2 m, to ensure privacy.

Apartments

The provision of adequate, well-designed communal and private open space for apartment developments is considered a vital element in promoting sustainable urban living.

The DECLG guidance document *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments* (2015 revision) sets out minimum standards for balconies and patio areas as follows:

Studio	4 m ²
One-bedroom apartment	5 m ²
Two-bedroom apartment	7 m ²
Three-bedroom apartment	9 m ²

The designers of apartment buildings should aim to achieve higher floor areas for balconies and patios, and only apply the minimum dimensions as a last resort, where there is no alternative.

Private open space can also be provided in the form of rear gardens or patios for ground floor units and roof gardens for upper-level units. A minimum depth of 1.5 m is required, extending for the full length of the external living room wall.

“Semi-private” open space should be provided within landscaped courtyards, having regard to the heights and orientation of adjoining blocks in terms of the levels of sunlight obtainable in those spaces.

13.3.8 Public open space in multi-unit housing schemes

Open space is required to be provided with all new housing developments. Suitably designed and landscaped areas of formal and informal recreational open space (incorporating children’s play areas and associated equipment) should be an integral part of the design of new housing schemes. It is important that new open space is usable, safe and integrated within the scheme as part of a cohesive landscape structure.

The Council will encourage developers to pool land in order to satisfy open space requirements to allow the provision of large multi-purpose amenity areas (e.g. parkland and playing pitches) as well as small incidental open spaces within housing areas.

Quantitative standards

A minimum of 15% of the development site area shall be reserved for the provision of communal open space landscaped to a high standard.

On institutional lands, often containing large tracts of open space, any proposals for higher-density residential development must take into account the objective of retaining the “open character” of these lands, while at the same time ensuring that an efficient use is made of the land. In these cases, a minimum open space requirement of 20% of site area applies.

Qualitative standards

Public open space is one of the key elements defining the quality of any residential environment. The following qualitative standards should be followed when designing open space within a development:

- Layout:** The layout and facilities proposed – particularly in larger schemes – should be designed to meet a range of user needs, including active and passive recreation.
- In many cases, smaller spaces of different sizes and types, designed for a particular use or range of uses, may be preferable to one large space in the centre of a scheme. Small areas of open space will be accepted if they are intended and designed as pocket parks where small children can play, if they contribute to the visual amenity of the area, and if they are adequately overlooked.
- Public open spaces should be suitably proportioned; narrow tracts which are difficult to maintain are not acceptable.
- Incidental (i.e. “left-over”), inaccessible or backland space will generally not be acceptable.
- Inaccessible green areas will only be permitted where they demonstrably perform a specific function, such as preserving key landscape features, providing a necessary screen belt.
- Safety:** Open spaces should be located where they do not cause an excessive security problem for households. Residents should feel safe at all times both in their homes and within the green areas. Adequate supervision, passive surveillance, appropriate boundary treatment and public lighting contribute to creating a sense of security.
- As a rule, houses should front onto open spaces and provide passive surveillance. Rears of houses, blind gables or high boundary walls should generally not adjoin open spaces. Residential open space should be directly overlooked by houses on at least 75% of its perimeter.

Accessibility: The main open space of a scheme should be within a short walk of the majority of homes proposed.

Shared use: The potential for maximising the use of open space facilities (such as all-weather pitches) should be explored, for example, by sharing them with nearby schools.

Sligo County Council may require that the open space provision of any development be located in a specific area, in order to assemble a suitably-sized open space, or to enhance the existing features of the area.

Equipment: Developers should provide seating, waste bins, delineated play areas, lighting and planting.

Hard-landscaped surfaces – such as a tennis court or basketball court – as well as small green pitches will also be considered as part of the required open space provision within residential developments.

Biodiversity: Public open spaces, especially larger ones, can support natural habitats and can facilitate the preservation of flora and fauna.

13.3.9 Management companies

Estate management is necessary for maintaining the amenity, physical and visual quality of housing developments once they are completed.

Section 34(4)(i) of the Planning Act indicates that conditions can be attached to a planning permission regarding the maintenance or management of a housing development.

13.3.10 Naming of housing estates and streets

The names of residential developments and streets shall reflect local place names, particularly townlands, or local names linked to the landscape, its features, culture, history or historical personalities associated with the area. The proposed names must be approved by the Sligo County Council prior to the launching of any advertising campaign for the development.

Street name-plates, in Irish and English, should be erected on all housing estate streets in a location that is clearly visible, on walls, buildings and at junctions, to be of maximum assistance to drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. Name-plates should be durable and maintenance free, and be fixed where they are clearly visible to the motorist, cyclist or pedestrian on approaching from both directions.

In order to assist the public, postal and courier service providers, all houses within housing estates or in comprehensive street developments shall be provided with numbers or names, which shall be visible from the adjoining street.

13.3.11 Waste management in residential developments

Residential developments should accommodate three wheeled bins per dwelling to cater for segregated collection of household waste. For apartment developments, there should be adequate bin storage at ground level.

Bin storage facilities should be secure from vandals, scavengers and vermin and should not create a nuisance to adjacent buildings.

Storage facilities or bin houses should be designed to enable adequate access to all receptacles (i.e. residual waste, dry recyclables, organic waste) for all users, including those with disabilities, and to provide sufficient space for bin handling and waste collection

13.3.12 Parking standards for housing development

Parking spaces may be provided as a communal parking area or bays integrated into the overall development, or on-street where road widths are adequate.

A mix of car-parking types will be required in new development proposals, so as to introduce variety and reduce the dominance of parking areas within the overall layout.

Within group parking areas, consideration will be given to the visibility of residents’ cars from their homes, convenience and the need to soften the impact of group parking by landscaping.

Proposals for off-street parking need to be balanced against loss of amenity (visual and physical) and will be considered in light of traffic flows and car parking in the vicinity. In some older residential areas, small front gardens and original features such as railings are part of the character of the area. In such cases, car parking in front gardens may not be permitted.

Appropriately designed on-street car parking will be acceptable where it facilitates higher residential densities in particular locations.

The following car parking standards apply to new residential developments (extracted from Table 13.B Parking Standards in Section 13.8):

Class of development	Unit	Minimum parking spaces per unit	Bicycle parking
house	dwelling	2	1 per unit
apartment	dwelling	1.5	1 per unit

13.3.13 Live/work units

Home-based activities are defined as small-scale commercial activities, which are secondary to the use of the premises as a residence. They are permitted where the primary use of the building remains residential (this being reflected in the floor area of the business) and where the amenity of surrounding residences is not adversely affected.

When considering applications for such developments, the Planning Authority will examine:

- the nature and extent of the secondary use proposed;
- the potential effects on the amenity of surrounding residences;
- the levels of traffic that will be generated;
- the storage of refuse and waste collection.

Over-the-counter services, business signage, advertising hoardings, security gates/grills and excessive security lights are not appropriate in a residential area.

Sligo County Council may grant a temporary permission of two or three years for home-based economic activities to allow monitoring of the activity.

13.3.14 House extensions

Extensions to dwellings represent an important way of adapting an existing house to the needs of its occupants. Extensions should be sympathetic to the scale of the existing building and should add to rather than take from the character of the dwelling.

The Planning Authority will generally require proposals for house extensions to comply with the following guidelines:

- the extension should be subordinate to the main building. Exceptions will be considered when the building is so small that a subordinate extension would not be able to reasonably accommodate the needs of the occupants.
- the design should reflect that of the main building, generally following window proportions, detailing and finishes, texture, materials and colour;
- the extension shall be designed to ensure that no overshadowing or overlooking of adjacent residential properties occurs.

Where the extension of an existing house is not feasible or desirable, complete retrofitting and redesign may be considered, subject to normal planning considerations, residential amenity and the urban design policies set out in Chapter 12.

13.3.15 Accommodation for dependent relatives

The provision of accommodation for dependent relatives by way of a new extension to the existing dwelling shall be subject to all of the following requirements:

- The accommodation shall generally not exceed a gross floor area of 70 sq.m.
- It shall be attached and linked internally to the existing dwelling.
- The structure shall be in accordance with the guidance in **Section 13.3.14 House extensions**.
- The accommodation and the main house shall remain in a single ownership.

13.3.16 Care facilities, nursing homes, retirement villages

In general, nursing homes and care facilities should be integrated into established residential areas, where there is adequate wastewater capacity and where residents can expect reasonable access to local services.

A change of use from residential to a care facility, to care for more than six persons with an intellectual or physical disability, will require planning permission.

In assessing planning applications for nursing home developments and for change of use of dwellings or other buildings to nursing care or elderly care facilities, a range of factors will be considered including:

- the zoning of the site;
- standards set out in ‘*National Quality Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People in Ireland*’ (HIQA, 2009) (or any updated or superseding document);
- amenities of adjoining properties;
- the availability of adequate off-street parking;
- the availability of suitable private open space;
- proximity to local services and facilities;

13.4 Residential development in rural areas

New development in rural areas should be absorbed and integrated successfully into the rural setting, i.e. development should harmonise or ‘read’ with the existing traditional pattern of development and not intrude on unspoilt landscapes.

The Council will accept either houses designed according to traditional or vernacular principles, or houses of high-quality modern design where suitable. “Suburban”-style house design in rural areas is not acceptable.

All applications will be assessed on the basis of normal planning considerations.

Normal planning considerations

The “normal planning and sustainable development considerations” used in assessing planning applications include the following criteria:

- How the proposal relates to the Core Strategy, general policies and specific objectives of the County Development Plan;
- Whether there are any archaeological or other heritage factors involved;
- Whether the site is in a sensitive area, e.g. adjoining a scenic road, located in a sensitive rural landscape, in a visually vulnerable area, in a coastal zone or in a known flood risk zone;
- Whether the site is in an exposed location where the proposed development would be visually obtrusive;
- The settlement pattern of the area and the potential for overdevelopment or ribbon development;
- Whether the siting, design and scale of the proposed structure are appropriate to the surrounding natural and built environment;
- Whether the proposed site entrance is on a dangerous or high-speed stretch of road;
- Whether a large number of mature trees or an excessive length of roadside hedgerow need to be removed to provide an entrance;
- Whether there are any sewage disposal, drainage or water supply concerns;
- Whether there are any pollution or other public safety concerns;
- Whether the proposed development would unduly affect other properties in the area (e.g. by overlooking or overshadowing).

The list of criteria given above is not exhaustive. Advice on specific development proposals can be obtained as part of pre-planning consultations offered daily at the County Council’s planning office.

13.4.1 Rural-generated housing need

Section 5.3.1 Rural housing policy areas of this Plan indicates that in **Rural Areas under Urban Influence**, the Planning Authority will accommodate those applicants with a rural-generated housing need – which is a demonstrated, genuine need to live in the respective rural areas.

In order to substantiate a rural housing need, the following documentation will be required:

- Land registry documentation proving family ownership of the envisaged site
- Map showing location of the principal family residence/original family home.
- Proof of link to the rural community in which the applicant wishes to reside
- Any other details that may be deemed necessary by the Planning Authority, to be agreed at pre-planning stage.

13.4.2 Site selection – locating a house in the landscape

The placing of a house in the landscape is one of the most important aspects of building in the countryside. The Planning Authority will have regard to the following when considering a planning application for a dwelling in a rural area:

A. The Landscape Characterisation Map (refer to Section 7.4 Landscape Character)

Applications for single houses will be assessed based on the landscape's capacity to absorb new development. The proposed house must not have a visual impact that would negatively affect the character of the area.

Visual impact will be assessed according to the landscape designations indicated on the Landscape Characterisation Map.

The location of new houses in designated Visually Vulnerable Areas, in Sensitive Landscapes or along Scenic Routes will generally be discouraged. Exceptions may be made in the case of applicants who can demonstrate a need to reside in a particular area, in accordance with the **housing policy in green belts and sensitive areas** (refer to Section 5.3.1). However, new development must not obstruct scenic views available from or to the area adjoining the development site.

B. Site location

Those planning to build a house in the countryside should avoid elevated or exposed locations such as hill slopes, ridge lines or vast open landscapes where the new building would appear intrusive or break the skyline or the shoreline.

Instead of locating a house on an exposed site, the following types of site should be considered:

- sites that cluster with existing development (other houses, sheds or agricultural development such as traditional farm complexes);
- infill sites within existing ribbon development (in exceptional circumstances, sites at the end of ribbon development may be considered as an alternative to an exposed site);
- sites where the new house can “round off” scattered development.

A house should “nestle” into the site and not dominate the landscape or diminish the quality of scenic views of the surrounding countryside.

Sites should be sheltered, where possible, by topography and by established natural boundaries. Mature trees and hedgerows can offer shelter, screening or backdrop to new houses.

C. Vehicular access

Access from public roads should be managed safely and should require only minimal removal of existing roadside boundaries. The destruction of hedgerows, trees or stone walls has a strong negative impact on the rural character of an area.

Access roads and driveways should be as short as possible and should follow the contours of the site to avoid creating a “scarring” effect on the landscape.

13.4.3 Rural house design

The Planning Authority welcomes innovative design, both contemporary and traditional. Buildings should be simple in terms of design and materials

All new rural housing designed in a traditional style should have regard to the principles of traditional rural design (see below).

Talbe 13.A A guide to designing a house in the rural vernacular style

Main features of rural vernacular house design	
Proportions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure good roof-to-wall proportions and a high solid-to-void relationship (i.e. greater wall surface than windows and doors). • Composition of windows and doors should be simple and, where suitable, symmetrical. • Aim to minimise the distance between the top of the ground-floor windows and the sill of the first-floor windows to achieve good proportions.
Scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large house needs a large site to ensure effective integration into its surroundings (either immediately or in the future, through planned screening). • Larger houses (e.g. in excess of 200 m²) should be sub-divided into smaller elements of traditional form to avoid bulky structures. • Have regard to the scale of surrounding buildings.
Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a simple plan form to give a clean roof shape – a long plan in preference to a deep plan. This will avoid the creation of a bulky shape. • Gable widths should generally not exceed 8 m, (recommended under 6.5 m for narrow plan form) • A traditional storey-and-a-half house with a narrow plan form is preferable to a dormer-style bungalow. • The form of a house affects the appearance of gable elevations. Gable elevations should be simple and roof pitch generally symmetrical.

Details	
Windows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size and shape of windows should be consistent on all elevations. Windows should be well proportioned, with a vertical emphasis. • Dormer and bay windows should be used sparingly. • Roof lights are preferable to mid-roof dormer windows.
Roof	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roof pitch should range from 35° to 42° • Natural slate or natural effect slate is preferable
Chimneys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chimneys should generally be placed centrally on the ridge and should have vernacular proportions • Chimneys at a gable end should be flush with the gable.
Eaves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The eaves of a typical vernacular dwelling would be flush with the wall, soffit omitted and slate would not project beyond the face of the wall. • Roofs would be constructed without projecting soffit at gable, and without boxed eaves detail.
Fascia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overhanging roof with a large fascia board adds bulk and clutter to a house. • Decorative fascias or white PVC fascias should be avoided.
Rainwater gutters/down pipes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In vernacular houses, rainwater gutters would be affixed to a corbelled eaves course of concrete, brick or stone (as appropriate). • Simple, black, round plastic/cast-iron or aluminium rainwater gutters are recommended.
Doors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doors should preferably be made of timber, painted and simple in style. • Doors should reflect the shape of the opening. • A fan light above the door, or a window to the side of the doorway is preferable to large glazed panels on the door.
Porches and conservatories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Porches and conservatories should be simple in design and in proportion to the building. • The use of mock classical-type porches should be avoided.
External finishes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastered or rendered walls are suitable finishes for a rural house. • Brick, random rubble stone and pebble dash are not traditional finishes for a rural dwelling and should be avoided.

Design Statement

The Planning Authority will require all planning applications for a single rural house to include a **Design Statement** (except for outline permission applications).

A Design Statement is a short document in which the applicant (or the designer) explains why the proposed design is considered the most suitable for a particular site, having regard to the guidance set out in this chapter.

To find registered architects in your area, please consult the Register maintained by the Royal Institute of Architects Ireland (RIAI) at http://www.riai.ie/register/the_register_of_architects

13.4.4 Site boundaries

The boundaries of a site, in particular roadside boundaries, have a great role to play in reducing the visual impact of a house on the landscape. Applicants shall have regard to the following guidance:

- A.** Stone-faced block walls, ranch, palisade, post-and-wire or other such fencing are not traditional features in the countryside, detract from the rural character of an area and should be avoided.
- B.** All boundaries of a site should replicate the traditional boundary of existing fields in the area, e.g. dry stone walls, hedgerows, grassed earthen banks.
- C.** Where possible, an existing roadside boundary of hedgerows or dry stone walling should be retained, save where it may be interfering with the achievement of adequate sightlines, and there is no alternative site (or site access) available.
- D.** Where a roadside boundary has to be set back to achieve sightlines, it should be reconstructed behind the required set back or replaced with a boundary which reflects the prevalent traditional field boundary in the area. This could take the form of a new hedgerow, a grassed bank or a dry stone wall. The area between the road and the new boundary shall be left as a grass verge.

13.4.5 Site landscaping

A landscape plan shall accompany all planning applications. The aim of the landscape plan is to integrate the newly developed site into the surrounding countryside, provide shelter for the garden and house and encourage wildlife to the site.

- A.** Existing landscape features, such as stands of mature trees, hedgerows, rock outcrops and water features shall be identified and retained where appropriate.
- B.** The maximum number of significant trees shall be retained when considering locations of buildings and site works.
- C.** New planting should consist of native species, which are more valuable as wildlife habitat than non-native species. When considering what native tree and shrub species are appropriate to a particular location, the applicants should consult the Heritage Council's publication *Conserving and Enhancing Wildlife in Towns and Villages* http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/Wildlife/wildlife.pdf
- D.** The presence of invasive species on the development site must be indicated in the landscape plan. Where such species occur, detailed proposals for their management or eradication shall be submitted.

13.4.6 Extensions to dwellings

Extensions to dwellings represent an important way of prolonging the life of a house, be it a vernacular dwelling or a more modern bungalow. In the case of a vernacular dwelling, extensions should be sympathetic to the scale of the existing building and should enhance the character of the dwelling.

The complete redesign and extension of poorly designed one-off dwellings is acceptable, subject to the normal planning considerations regarding rural dwellings, residential amenity and the design guidelines in this chapter. The Planning Authority will adopt a more conservative approach to proposed extensions to vernacular dwellings which contribute to the local character of the area.

The Council will require proposals for extensions to comply with the following:

- the extension should generally be subordinated to the main building. Exceptions will be considered when the building is so small that a subordinate extension would not be able to reasonably accommodate the needs of the occupants;
- the form and design should integrate with the main building, generally following window proportions, detailing and finishes, including texture, materials and colour;
- the extension shall be designed to ensure that no overshadowing or overlooking of adjacent residential properties occurs.

Where an extension increases the potential occupancy of the dwelling, the adequacy of the on-site wastewater treatment system shall be demonstrated by the applicant.

Where adequacy cannot be demonstrated, the applicant will be required to upgrade the existing wastewater treatment system to comply with the provisions of the EPA's *Code of Practice – Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (PE≤10)* (2009).

13.4.7 Accommodation for dependent relatives

The provision of accommodation for dependent relatives by way of an extension to the existing dwelling shall be subject to all of the following requirements:

- the accommodation shall generally not exceed a gross floor area of 70 sq.m;
- it shall be attached to the existing dwelling;
- it shall be linked internally with the existing dwelling;
- the accommodation shall remain in a single ownership.

13.4.8 Ancillary buildings

Sheds and garages are common features of rural residential properties. Such structures can have a significant visual impact on the landscape. The Planning Authority will carefully assess the visual impact of ancillary buildings.

In order to minimise the combined visual impact of houses and ancillary structures, sheds or garages should generally be single-storey, unless it can be shown that the development cannot be seen from the public road or surrounding landscape.

13.4.9 Pattern of development

Ribbon development and urban sprawl in the countryside will be discouraged.

Ribbon development means frontage development along a road where there is no tandem development in the backlands. Ribbon development is defined as five or more houses located within a 250-m stretch of road (one side or both sides). This is undesirable because it creates numerous vehicular access points, landlocks potential future development land (on the edges of urban areas), creates uneconomic demands for services (e.g. water supply, drainage, footpaths, street lighting) and intrudes on public views of the rural setting.

Urban sprawl is development expansion outside towns and villages, in ribbon form or otherwise. It gives rise to the same problems associated with ribboning, but may have an even greater visual impact, as it leads to a gradual ‘suburbanisation’ of the countryside.

In certain circumstances, especially where ribbon development is substantially in place, infill development may be considered. Similarly, where urban sprawl can be ‘rounded off’ or significantly ordered through careful siting of new development, such development may be considered.

13.5 Retail development standards

13.5.1 General principles in assessing retail proposals

In assessing planning applications for retail development, the Planning Authority will be guided by DECLG's *Retail Planning Guidelines* (2012). The Guidelines have five key policy objectives:

- Ensuring that retail development is plan-led;
- Promoting city/town centre vitality through a sequential approach to development;
- Securing competitiveness in the retail sector by actively enabling good quality development proposals to come forward in suitable locations;
- Facilitating a shift towards increased access to retailing by public transport, cycling and walking in accordance with the Smarter Travel strategy;
- Delivering quality urban design outcomes.

13.5.2 Permitted locations for retail development

The preferred locations for new retail development are Sligo City Centre, the centres of Key Support Towns and, where appropriate, neighbourhood centres in Sligo City and village centres designated in the County retail hierarchy.

If no sites are available in Sligo City Centre or town centres, edge-of-centre sites may be considered. Development proposals for such site must demonstrate compliance with the sequential approach.

There is a general presumption against large out-of-town retail centres, in particular those located adjacent or close to existing, new or planned national roads or motorways.

New development should be accessible by a variety of transport modes, including public transport.

13.5.3 Sequential approach to the location of retail development

Planning applications for retail development proposals must comply with the criteria on location, suitability of use, size and scale and accessibility set out in the *Retail Planning Guidelines* to ensure that the site chosen is the most suitable and best available for the type of retailing proposed.

Where the applicants for a new retail development have demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that the proposal complies with the policies and objectives of the Development Plan, additional supporting studies **are not required**.

However, where the location of a proposed retail development application is not consistent with the policies and objectives of the Development Plan, then that proposal must be subject to the **sequential approach** (see below).

Order of priority

Proposals being considered under the sequential approach must demonstrate that they have addressed relevant policy principles set out below.

City and town centres

Retail development shall seek to locate in Sligo City Centre or in the relevant town centres. The Planning Authority will consider allowing retail development in edge-of-centre or out-of-centre locations only where all other options have been exhausted.

Edge-of-centre sites

Retail development in an edge-of-centre site will be considered only where the applicant can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority there are no sites (or potential sites including vacant units) within Sligo City Centre or in the relevant town centre that are **(a) suitable (b) available and (c) viable**.

Out-of-centre sites

Retail development on an out-of-centre site will be considered only in exceptional circumstances, where the applicant can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority there are no sites (or potential sites including vacant units) within Sligo City Centre or in the relevant town centre that are **(a) suitable (b) available and (c) viable**.

Site assessment criteria

When assessing potential sites, the following criteria should be taken into account:

Suitability: Consistency with Development Plan objectives, in particular zoning objectives, current land use activity in the vicinity of the site, size, capacity to accommodate development, traffic and transportation issues;

Availability: Site ownership, ease of assembly and timing. Sites must be genuinely available for development at the time that site acquisition/assembly begins or within a reasonable time-frame;

Viability: The cost of site acquisition in as city-centre or town-centre location may make a proposal unviable and force investors to look elsewhere in the area. Excessive development costs relative to values are also a consideration. For example, the requirement to deal with remediation for a brownfield site may have the potential to make a proposal unviable.

13.5.4 Applications for change of use or extension

The sequential approach shall be applied to proposals for the extension or material change of use of existing developments, where they are of a scale which could have a significant impact on the function of Sligo City Centre and any relevant retail centre in the County retail hierarchy.

Such extensions will be assessed in the context of the floorspace requirements specified in the of the development plan.

13.5.5 Retail Impact Assessment (RIA)

A **Retail Impact Assessment** (RIA) may be required as part of a planning application for retail developments, where the Planning Authority considers it necessary, particularly for proposals involving large-scale developments.

In accordance with the *Retail Planning Guidelines* (2012), through the RIA, the applicant must address the potential of the proposed development to have the following effects:

- A.** support the retail development strategy for Sligo City Centre, all the other centres designated in the County Retail Strategy, and not materially diminish the prospect of attracting private sector investment into one or more such centres;
- B.** increase employment opportunities and promote economic regeneration;
- C.** increase competition and attract further consumers to the area;
- D.** respond to consumer demand without diminishing the range of activities and services that an urban centre can support;
- E.** cause an adverse impact on Sligo City Centre or any other town/retail centre, either by itself or cumulatively with recent developments or other outstanding planning permissions (which have a realistic prospect of implementation), sufficient to undermine the quality of the centre or its wider function in the promotion and encouragement of the arts, culture, leisure.
- F.** cause an increase in the number of vacant properties in the primary retail area that is likely to persist in the long term;
- G.** ensure a high standard of access both by public transport, foot and private car so that the proposal is easily accessible by all sections of society;
- H.** link effectively with Sligo City Centre or relevant town/retail centre, so that there is likely to be commercial synergy.

13.5.6 Transport impact assessment

A Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) may be required for retail developments over 1,000 sq.m. gross floorspace as set out in the Traffic Management Guidelines 2003 (DoT and DTO) and the Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines 2007 (NRA). The TTA should also address urban design impacts of proposed public and private transport proposals.

The Planning Guidelines on Spatial Planning and National Roads (DECLG 2012) set out additional advice and requirements in relation to transport matters.

13.5.7 Layout and design of retail developments

Generally, structures should avoid presenting blank frontages to streets. The frontage onto a street should represent the actual retail selling space, to facilitate access for pedestrians and animate the streetscape.

Service yards and car parking should be located at the rear of developments, away from street frontages. Parking areas should be well lit and incorporate landscaping appropriate to their design and setting.

13.5.8 Design Statement

All proposals for new retail development shall have regard to the DAHG's *Retail Design Manual – A Companion Document to the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012)*.

Planning applications for larger schemes and proposals in sensitive urban settings shall be accompanied by a **Design Statement** indicating the rationale for the design approach adopted and why the design proposed is considered the most suitable solution for the site in question.

At a minimum, developers shall provide an illustrated report setting out how the development proposed meets with the principles set out in the Design Manual and how it complies with the relevant Development Plan or Local Area Plan policies and objectives.

13.5.9 Shopfronts and signage

The majority of shopfront alterations, including the removal and replacement of old shopfronts, the installation of signage, lighting, canopies or roller-shutters, require planning permission.

Planning applications for new shopfronts shall include drawings showing the entire building, both as existing and proposed. Elevations of adjoining buildings should also be submitted showing the proposed shopfront in its street context.

The design of new shopfronts and the modification or conservation of existing shopfronts shall comply with policies **P-UD-6, P-UD-7 and P-UD-8** in **Chapter 12 Town and village design**, and with the guidance in this section.

More information is available in the following documents:

- *Architectural Heritage Guidelines for Planning Authorities* – Chapter 12;
- Shopfront Study for Wicklow Town (2010) available at: (http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/County_Heritage_Services/Wicklow/Wicklow_Town_Shopfront_Study.pdf);
- Conservation Guidelines produced by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht available at: <http://www.inarchive.com/page/2011-07-18/http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/Heritage/BuiltHeritagePolicy/>;
- Kildare County Council – Shopfront Guidelines 2013 available at: <http://kildare.ie/CountyCouncil/Planning/ShopfrontGuidelines2013/Section%20%20Shopfront%20Design.pdf>.

Signage

- A. Signs should not clutter or dominate the façade of a building, nor the entire street frontage, and should not detract from or obscure architectural features of the building. Projecting signs, banners and flagpoles will be limited in size and number to prevent clutter.
- B. The size, design, colour and material of signs should be subdued. They should generally be positioned well below the first floor.
- C. Windows should be free of advertising stickers, notices etc.

- D.** Projecting signs should be located at fascia level and should be limited to one per building frontage. The size of hanging signs should be proportionate to the building. They should not dominate the façade or obscure architectural details.
- E.** Lettering and symbols should be proportionate to the size of the sign. Hand-painted signage or low-relief boards should be used as opposed to "box" signs.
- F.** The use of hand-painted signs or individual lettering placed on existing shopfronts or placed directly on the façade of a building (where no shopfront exists) will be encouraged.
- G.** The construction of name-plate fascias linking two or more buildings will generally not be permitted.
- H.** The height of signs and advertising on a building will be controlled. Advertising on upper floors and beyond the eaves will generally not be permitted.
- I.** Plastic or vinyl banner-type signs on the exterior of buildings will be discouraged. Only high-quality materials (e.g. wood, metal etc.) shall be used in Architectural Conservation Areas and other sensitive areas.
- J.** Signs shall not be placed above eaves or parapet levels and shall not project above the roofline of buildings.

Lighting

- K.** External illumination of buildings will generally not be permitted, but careful floodlighting of key buildings of particular architectural quality may be considered.
- L.** Limited and discrete lighting of hanging signs and fascias may be allowed in the case of businesses open in the evening – such as restaurants, pubs and clubs – but not in addition to floodlighting. In such cases, the principal purpose of the external lighting should be to make signs legible at night. The lighting should not be a feature in itself, and the fittings should be as small and unobtrusive as possible.
- M.** The back-lighting of signage in the form of individual letters is encouraged.
- N.** Internal illumination of signs will not be permitted, except for pharmacies.

Composition of traditional-style shopfronts

- O.** Traditional-style shopfronts should comprise an appropriately scaled and proportioned fascia supported by two pilasters and framed by two consoles, a cornice and architrave. A fanlight should sit above a door and a stall riser should frame the shopfront from the ground level;
- P.** The fascia and cornice should extend as high as the first floor window cills, subject to the scale and proportions of the shopfront and building;
- Q.** The width and detailing of pilasters and cornices should reflect that of existing original shopfronts in the town, subject to the scale and proportion of the shopfront and building;
- R.** Stall risers should not exceed the base of the pilasters or the depth of the fascia, whichever is less (c.45 cm), in order to provide balance to the shopfront.

Composition of contemporary shopfronts

- S.** Contemporary shopfronts should include a well-defined fascia (c. 60-90 cm deep) and have a strong vertical emphasis with a substantial base or plinth;

- T. In certain contexts, it may be appropriate to omit a fascia and apply lettering directly to the building or windows;
- U. The fascia should respect the alignment and plot width of neighbouring buildings;

Details

- V. Doors should be in a style and should use materials which are compatible with the rest of the shopfront and building.
- W. Roller shutters should be placed internally, behind window displays, and they should be see-through. External roller shutters will not be permitted.
- X. Traditional awnings are preferable to fixed canopies.
- Y. Independent access to upper floors should be retained where possible.

13.6 Miscellaneous commercial developments

13.6.1 Petrol filling stations and ancillary uses

When considering all applications of this nature, attention should be given to the safety aspects of circulation and parking within the station forecourt.

The preferred location for petrol filling stations is within the 50-60 km/h speed limits of settlements.

- A minimum street frontage of 30 m will be required.
- A low wall of approximately 0.6 m in height shall be constructed along the frontage, with allowance for two access points, each 8-m wide.
- No advertising or commercial signage shall obstruct visibility over the site access points, front boundary wall or wing walls (see also Section 13.7.5 below).
- All external lighting should be directed away from the public road. Excessive use of large illuminated signs will not be permitted.
- The pump island shall be not less than 7 m from the footpath or road boundary.

Consideration will be given for the development of small shops selling confectionery, groceries and newspapers. Applications may include ancillary shops of up to 100 sq.m. net sales area, without being subject to the sequential test.

Where the net retail floorspace is in excess of 100 sq.m., the ancillary shop will be assessed as if it were an independent retail unit, in line with the sequential test. The associated filling station is of no consequence in these circumstances, and such proposals will be assessed as if there were no petrol filling facilities present.

All surface run-off from forecourt areas generated on site shall be discharged to adequately designed interceptors in accordance with best practice. Class 1 type interceptors shall be required for all discharges to the public surface water drainage system or to surface waters.

Any car wash proposals will require a discharge licence.

All petrol filling station applications, including improvement or extension, will require Autotrack Analysis, TTA and Safety Audit.

13.6.2 Bars, night-clubs, disco-bars, amusement centres

In order to maintain an appropriate mix of uses and enhance night life in the towns of County Sligo, the Council will prevent an excessive concentration of pubs, bars, night-clubs and hot-food take-aways in any particular area.

The Planning Authority will ensure that the intensity of any proposed use is in keeping with both the character of the area (i.e. residential, mixed-use, etc.) and with adjoining businesses.

The following issues will be taken into account in the assessment of applications for the above uses:

- the impact of the proposed development in terms of noise and odour emissions. Noise and odour mitigation measures will be required to be submitted with any planning application.
- effects of the development on the amenity of nearby residents, such as general disturbance, hours of operation, car parking, litter etc. A litter management plan will be required to be submitted as part of any planning application.
- the protection of the amenity of dwellings, businesses, community facilities and other existing adjacent development.

New buildings must be designed to prevent excessive noise or odour emissions, and with adequate provision for refuse disposal, storage and collection. The design shall respect the character of the street and the buildings, and comply with the guidance set out in Sections **13.2 General standards** and **13.5 Retail development standards**.

13.6.3 Fast-food take-aways

Concentration of hot-food take-aways will not be permitted in any particular area. Regard will be had to the impact of hot-food take-aways on the amenities of an area, including noise, odour and litter.

The Planning Authority may impose restrictions on opening hours as a condition of a planning permission.

13.6.4 Guest accommodation

Planning permission is required for all conversions of dwellings to guest accommodation where the number of bedrooms used for such purposes exceeds four.

The Planning Authority will consider the following issues when assessing a change of use or a new development proposal:

- car parking demands;

- wastewater infrastructure or treatment capacity;
- the amenity of adjoining residential properties;
- the nature of proposed signage;
- the need to avoid concentrations of bed-and-breakfast uses in residential neighbourhoods.

In rural areas, the guidance set out in **Section 13.3 Residential development in rural areas** will apply.

13.6.5 Industry, wholesale and repository warehousing

Wholesale and repository warehousing involves structures designed mainly for storage and as such, differs from retail warehousing. In terms of class of use, as outlined in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) (Part 4), retail warehousing falls within Class 1, while repository warehousing falls within Class 5.

Industrial units, wholesale and repository warehousing activity will normally be permitted only on lands zoned for business/enterprise/industry (BUS), as outlined in the Zoning Matrix.

Special consideration may be given to such developments where they could help in the regeneration of an area or where they would make a significant contribution to its character.

Adequate space must be available for on-site storage of materials and refuse, loading and unloading, on-site circulation and parking. Adequate provision should be made for storage of goods and materials within the building or else in a designated storage area.

A landscaping scheme for the site will be required.

A minimum open space requirement of 10% will apply. The open space should be provided such that it may function as an effective amenity area. Industrial and repository warehousing developments should present a pleasant aspect to the public road via tree planting, the judicious placing of advertising structures, screening of open storage areas and unobtrusive loading and parking space.

Access roads to industrial estates will normally have a minimum overall reservation width of 13 m, consisting of a 7-m carriageway, two 1.5-m grass verges and two 1.5-m footpaths. Main access routes to industrial lands will also be required to provide reservations for cycleways.

Generally, the building line must be at least 9 m from the road boundary, with car parking provided to the side or rear of buildings. There shall be a landscaped/planting strip on all principal road frontages.

13.7 Advertising

13.7.1 Planning requirements

Advertising signs of various types will be subject to the requirements set out in the table below.

Type of sign	Planning requirements
Temporary Signs on public or private property advertising cultural or social events only	<p>These signs are exempt from planning permission under Class 16 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) (the Regulations), subject to certain criteria.</p> <p>The Roads Section of Sligo County Council should be consulted prior to the erection of such signage.</p>
Signs on public property i.e. the road verge, advertising commercial goods or businesses.	<p>Such signs will not normally be permitted.</p> <p>Where exceptional circumstances apply, a licence may be issued by the County Council.</p>
Signs on private property advertising commercial goods.	<p>Such signs will not normally be permitted.</p> <p>Where exceptional circumstances apply, planning permission will need to be obtained.</p>
Signs on public or private property, but not on or visible from any motorway or national primary road, advertising any local event.	<p>These signs are exempt from planning permission under Class 16A of the Regulations subject to certain criteria regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • size and height; • the length of time permissible; • the distance of the event from the sign;
Signs on the facade of buildings	<p>Such signs normally require planning permission subject to the criteria for exempted development as per the Regulations.</p>
Directional signage in the form of finger post signs for tourist attractions and accommodation.	<p>Such signs require a license.</p> <p>Application forms are available on the Sligo County Council website.</p>

13.7.2 Signage along public roads

The placing of signage along public roads detracts from the amenity of the rural setting and interferes with views and scenic landscapes.

Sligo County Council will generally not permit signage or advertising structures for commercial enterprises, goods or services along public roads, whether on private or public property.

13.7.3 Directional signage for tourism and key destinations

Signage for key tourism attractions, tourist routes, certain community facilities (e.g. schools, hospitals) or important buildings (government or public offices) will be permitted only on the subject site, at the entry points to the host town or village, or in the vicinity of road junctions leading to the facility. At these locations, signage for all such destinations should be grouped on a single structure. Sligo County Council will determine the necessity for directional signs relating to public institutions.

Directional signs for local tourist attractions removed from the main traffic routes may be permitted under an annual licence provided that:

- they are finger-post signs only;
- the area of the sign is maximum 0.7 sq.m.
- the information contained on the sign is of a directional nature only;
- the signs do not give rise to a traffic hazard;

Applications for signage on national roads shall comply with the requirements of the *Policy on the Provision of Tourist and Leisure Signage on National Roads* (NRA, 2011). All lettering, logos and symbols shall be subject to the approval of Sligo County Council.

13.7.4 Advertising on buildings

Signage and lighting on buildings should comply with the detailed guidance set out in **Section 13.5.9 Shopfronts and signage**.

13.7.5 Advertising hoardings

Advertising hoardings, including electronic displays, tri-vision and three-dimensional signs, have a significant impact on the visual appearance and character of an area.

In general, such signs will not be permitted on or in the vicinity of protected structures or on the façades of buildings. Temporary advertising may be permitted where they help screen building sites and derelict sites awaiting redevelopment, provided that they form an integral part of the temporary hoarding around the site.

Outdoor advertising hoardings in the open countryside will normally not be permitted.

The practice of parking trailers or other mobile objects bearing advertisements in fields adjoining roads is harmful to the visual amenities of the respective areas. Such mobile structures represent a traffic hazard because they distract motorists. Advertising in this manner will normally not be permitted.

13.7.6 Signage at petrol filling stations

Only minimal advertising will be permitted at petrol filling stations. Generally, such advertising shall be restricted to a single, pillar-type structure, not exceeding 4.5 metres in height.

Canopies should be appropriate to their setting in terms of height and design (including lighting).

The forecourt and adjacent footpath shall not be used for advertising, whether permanent or temporary.

13.8 Transportation, roads, parking

13.8.1 Access onto national roads

When considering any application for development on or adjacent to a national road, the Planning Authority will have regard to national policy set out in the following documents:

- *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines* (2012)
- *Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines* (2014);

The *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines* (SPNRG) require avoiding the creation of new access points or the generation of increased traffic from existing accesses to national roads to which speed limits greater than 60 km/h apply regardless of the housing circumstances of the applicant.

The SPNRG provide for limited access in transitional zones, i.e. between the 60 km/h to the 50 km/h speed limits on the approach to urban centres, to facilitate orderly urban development.

Access to national roads within 50 km/h speed limits will be considered by the Planning Authority subject to normal road safety, traffic management and urban design criteria for built-up areas.

Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA)

Some development proposals will generate significant additional trips, with potentially serious implications for the capacity and safety of the road network. In these cases, applications shall be accompanied by:

- a **Traffic and Transport Assessment** in accordance with the DoEHLG/DoT/DTO publication *Traffic Management Guidelines* and the *Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines*;
- a **Road Safety Audit** (RSA), in accordance with the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* and Department of Transport guidelines;
- As supporting documentation with larger planning applications, the Planning Authority will encourage the preparation and submission of **Mobility Management Plans** (MMP) to promote sustainable land-use and transportation practices. Mobility Management Plans will not be viewed as an alternative to TTIA and/or RSA, where these are required.

The planning authority and/or prescribed bodies will assess the need for submission of such studies on a case-by-case basis.

Sight distances

The sight distances required for access onto national primary and secondary roads are set out in Table 13.B. The sight distances are measured from the access point to the near-side edge of the carriageway in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridge.

The driver must be able to have full vision along the required sight line distance from a driver's eye height of 1.05m to an object with a height of 1.15m.

Table 13.B Sight distances required for access onto national primary and secondary roads

Design speed	100 km/h	85 km/h	70 km/h	60 km/h)	50 km/h	42 km/h
Sight distance	215 m	160 m	120 m	90 m	70 m	50 m

13.8.2 Access onto regional roads

In many cases, investment has improved the alignment, surface and safety of major stretches of regional roads, which carry significant volumes of traffic. The protection of such capacity and preservation of enhanced safety standards is important in ensuring that these roads can continue to perform important local and regional transportation functions.

Regional roads create vital safe and efficient links between the main urban settlements of the county and beyond. Some routes in particular are considered strategically important. Sligo County Council will endeavour to protect the carrying capacities of such roads in the interest of the economic viability of the county.

The consideration of new access points onto regional roads will be assessed with a view to:

- Avoiding unnecessary new accesses, for example where access could be provided off a nearby local road;
- Ensuring that necessary new entrances are located in such a manner as to provide effective visibility for both users of the entrance and users of the public roads, so that opportunities for conflicting movements are avoided, taking account of all relevant considerations such as traffic levels, typical vehicle speeds, plans for realignment;
- Avoiding the premature obsolescence of regional roads due to excessive numbers of individual entrances; and
- Securing recent investment in non-national roads by minimizing the provision of new entrances onto realigned stretches of regional roads.

13.8.3 Entrances and sightlines

General

All developments providing for access onto public roads must show that the access proposed will not create a traffic hazard or interfere with the free flow of traffic along such roads. The availability of adequate sight lines along the road from the proposed access point is the crucial requirement for road safety. Vehicle entrances and exits must also be designed to avoid hazards to pedestrians

New entrances must provide for a surface water disposal system to ensure that no surface water is discharged onto the public road and, where roadside drains are affected, adequate provision for piping such drains shall be made to the satisfaction of the Council.

Vehicular entrance points shall be recessed and the wing walls (or other boundaries) splayed so as to provide adequate sight distances in both directions, having regard to traffic conditions and road way characteristics at that location.

Rural housing

Proposed vehicular access points will be carefully considered by the Planning Authority with a view to minimising the impact of a safe access on the visual appearance and rural characteristics of the area. Road safety will take priority.

There may be circumstances where it is desirable to seek alternative access points or consider alternative sites in order to avoid excessive removal of good quality traditional roadside boundaries.

Hedgerows and other distinctive boundary treatment such as stone walls shall be retained insofar as is possible.

Where the loss of the existing boundary is unavoidable as part of new development, the new roadside boundary shall consist of indigenous hedgerows, earth banks or dry stone walls, in character with the vernacular boundaries in the area.

The new hedgerows shall be planted with a double row of native species of local provenance, e.g. Hawthorn, holly, blackthorn, hazel etc.

New boundary walls shall be built in local vernacular style, using recovered stone from the old walls or other local stone. Block walls and the use of non-local finishes, such as bricks, will be discouraged.

Commercial development

Generally, no more than two vehicular entrances will be permitted to any commercial or industrial property, each not exceeding 7.5 metres in overall width. The pavement shall be dished and reinforced.

13.8.4 Cycle facilities

Cycle facilities shall be provided in conjunction with any new development proposals and the standard requirements are set out in Table 13.B. A distinction should be made between long-term parking for staff or residents and short-term parking for customers or visitors. “Sheffield” stands are satisfactory for short-term cycle parking, whereas long-term parking requires secure, covered lockers. Shower and changing facilities, and storage areas for clothing (e.g. waterproofs and helmets) are also required by long-term users.

The cycle parking standards listed in Table 13.B are minimum standards and should be exceeded in most cases.

Cycle facilities (parking spaces and cycle tracks) should be provided in accordance with the *National Cycle Manual* (<https://www.cyclemanual.ie>) (NTA, 2011) and the *Traffic Signs Manual* (DTTAS, 2010).

13.8.5 Car parking requirements, layout and design

Car parking should be located behind the established building lines and appropriately screened. Where it is necessary to provide parking to the front of a development, the existing boundary treatment should be maintained and additional landscaping will be required to enhance the visual amenities of the area.

Appropriately designed on-street car parking may be acceptable where it facilitates increases in residential densities in particular locations or zones.

A mix of car-parking types will be encouraged in new development proposals, so as to introduce variety and reduce the dominance of parking areas within the overall layout.

In some older residential areas, small front gardens and original features such as railings are part of the character of the area. In such cases, on-site car parking in front gardens/patios may not be permitted. Proposals for off-street parking need to be balanced against loss of amenity (visual and physical) and will be considered in light of traffic flows and car parking in the vicinity.

The size and layout of car parking areas should be in accordance with the *Traffic Signs Manual* (DTTAS, 2010).

Car parking shall be provided for the disabled and mobility-impaired in all car-parking developments, in the most convenient locations for ease of use, in accordance with the document *Building for Everyone 1 – External Environment and approach*, published by the National Disability Authority in 2012.

Electric vehicles (EV)

To support the use of electric vehicles (EV), in line with Council and national policy, all new developments and extensions to existing car parking areas will be required to provide at least one parking space equipped with a fully functional EV charging point installed in accordance with current ESB specifications.

- Residential developments with communal parking areas should provide minimum one car parking space equipped with an EV charging point, and at least one for every ten residential units.
- Non-residential developments with private car parking spaces (e.g. office developments, industrial units) should provide minimum one car parking space equipped with an EV charging point, and at least one for every ten car parking spaces.
- Developments with publicly accessible spaces (e.g. supermarket, cinema, hotel, service station, school, hospital etc.) should provide minimum one car parking space equipped with an EV charging point, and at least one for every ten car parking spaces.

The charging-point parking space(s) should be clearly marked as designated for EV charging. Appropriate signage indicating the presence of a charging point (or points) should also be installed.

All other parking spaces (including residential) should be constructed to be capable of accommodating future charging points as required.

Car parking standards

Car parking spaces will be calculated in line with **Table 13.C** .

When assessing planning applications for change of use or for replacement buildings, the determination of parking requirements may be done as follows: the required parking spaces for the existing use (whether provided on site or not) will be subtracted from the total number of parking spaces required by the replacement use.

Where the provision of on-site parking is not possible, the Planning Authority will require a financial contribution towards the provision of car parking elsewhere, by the authority, in accordance with Section 48 (17)(c) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Table 13.C Car parking standards

Class of development	Minimum car parking spaces	Bicycle parking
house	2 spaces per dwelling	1 per unit
apartment	1.5 spaces per apartment	1 per unit
guesthouse / B&B	1 space per bedroom	0.5 per bedroom
hostel	1 space per 10 beds	1 per 10 beds
retail unit	6 spaces per 100 sq.m gross floor area	1 per 75 sq. m gross floor area
supermarket	1 space per 18 sq.m. gross floor area	1 per 100 sq. m gross floor area
office	1 space per 25 sq.m.	1 per 5 employees
financial and professional services (including banks, building societies, estate agencies, betting shops)	1 space per 20 sq.m.	1 per 50 sq m
bar lounge	1 space per 2.5 sq.m of public area	1 per 75 sq. m of public area
restaurant	1 space per 4.5 sq.m of dining area	1 per 75 sq. m of dining area

Class of development	Minimum car parking spaces	Bicycle parking
take-away	1 space per 18 sq. m gross floor area	
nightclub / dance hall	1 space per 3 sq.m. of public area	1 per 100 sq. m of public area
hotel (excluding bars, restaurants and function rooms)	1 space per bedroom	1 per 20 beds
conference centre	1 space per 25 sq.m of public area	1 per 20 seats
manufacturing industry/light industry	1 space per 50 sq.m. of gross floor area	1 per 500 sq. m gross floor area
warehousing	1 space per 100 sq.m of gross floor area	1 per 500 sq. m gross floor area
retail warehousing	1 space per 35 sq.m. of gross floor area	1 per 150 sq. m gross floor area
garden centre	1 space per 25 sq.m. of gross floor area	1 per 150 sq. m gross floor area
car showrooms	1 space per 40 sq.m. of gross floor area	
garage and vehicle service	3 spaces per car service bay 3 spaces per lorry service bay 1 space per 30 sq.m gross floor area	
service stations (not including shop)	1 space per 30 sq.m. of gross floor area	
church / place of worship/ theatre/ cinema	1 space per 4 seats	1 per 15 seats
community hall	1 space per 5 sq.m of gross floor area	1 per 10 sq. m gross floor area
museum / gallery / library	5 spaces per 100 sq.m of gross floor area	1 per 50 sq. m gross floor area

Class of development	Minimum car parking spaces	Bicycle parking
funeral home	1 space per 10 sq.m. of public area	1 per 25 sq. m of public area
hospital/nursing home	1 space per bed	
clinics and group medical practices	1 space per consulting room	1 per consulting room
primary school secondary school third-level school	1.5 spaces per classroom 2 spaces per classroom 1 space per classroom + 1 space per 15 students	1 per 5 students 1 per 4 students 1 per 3 students
childcare, crèche, playschool	1 space per staff member + 1 space per 20 sq. m	1 per 5 staff members on duty
sports centre / swimming pool	1 space per 10 sq.m. of gross floor area	1 per 10 sq. m gross floor area
playing field	1space per field	5 per field
bowling alley	1 space per lane	2 per lane
tennis court	1 space per court	1 per court
golf / pitch and putt	1 space per hole	
golf driving range	1 space per bay	

13.8.6 Noise

In order to mitigate the noise impacts on developments within the zone of influence of existing or planned national roads, the requirements of the Environmental Noise Regulations (S.I. No. 140 of 2006) shall be adhered to in the design of relevant development proposals.

13.9 Miscellaneous development standards

13.9.1 Agricultural developments

The Council will seek to ensure that agricultural activities are carried out to the highest environmental standards. Legal requirements relating to the collection, storage and management of agricultural wastes are detailed in the European Union (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2014 (S.I. No. 31 of 2014). Agricultural stakeholders must comply with the requirements of the above regulations.

The Planning Authority will apply the following considerations when assessing applications for agricultural buildings:

Protection of residential amenity – sufficient distance to any dwellings in the vicinity;

Safe access – adequate sightlines from the points of access onto public roads;

Visual impact – new buildings should be located within or adjoining existing farmyard complexes where possible. Structures not forming part of a farm complex should be integrated into the landscape by means of appropriate siting, external colouring and screening.

Non-exempted agricultural developments will be permitted in rural areas in accordance with location and siting criteria similar to those outlined in **Section 13.4 Residential development in rural areas**.

Agricultural developments will generally not be permitted in the vicinity of towns and villages, where they could affect the visual character of the area or cause an environmental nuisance.

In order to assess the potential impact of agricultural development, planning applications for these proposals should include the following:

- A. a completed application form for agricultural developments (available from the Planning Office of Sligo County Council);
- B. all information required in the County Council's *Guidance Notes on Agricultural Planning Applications* (available from the Planning Office).

Agricultural developments relating to provision of waste storage infrastructure shall be carried out in accordance with the storage requirements detailed in the European Union (Good Agricultural Practice For Protection of Waters) Regulations 2014 (S.I. No. 31 of 2014) , in terms of provision of the required 18-week waste storage capacity for the winter housing of livestock.

Agricultural waste storage structures shall be constructed in accordance with relevant DAFF technical building specifications.

13.9.2 Renewable energy developments

The Planning Authority acknowledges the current need to adopt a more sustainable approach to energy production, through the promotion of facilities or installations that generate renewable energy.

Such developments will be considered subject to the following criteria:

- visual impact on surrounding landscape;
- impact on designated sites, natural and built heritage, water bodies, groundwater, soils and air;
- impact on settlements or individual rural dwellings;

- impact on existing walking routes / rights-of-way / public access to the countryside.

All proposals for renewable energy developments should be discussed with the local authority at pre-planning application stage.

13.9.3 Wind energy developments

The Planning Authority will have regard to the DoEHLG's *Wind Energy Development Guidelines* (June 2006) and any revised guidelines, when considering wind energy applications.

The Guidelines outline the main criteria to be used in assessing development proposal. These criteria include:

- environmental impact – effects on landscape, natural and archaeological heritage;
- seeking visual harmony and balance – choice of turbines, towers, colour and siting;
- keeping secondary structures to a minimum – buried on-site cabling, minimal fencing, transformers placed inside towers where possible;
- keeping access roads to a minimum – using established roads where possible and following natural contours if roads are necessary;
- managing the building site – removing waste, avoiding erosion, replanting the land.

In assessing proposals for wind farms, the Council will require detailed information to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) standard. Assessment in accordance with government guidelines will have regard to visual impact (including the scarring effect of access roads), noise, electro-magnetic interference, ecological impact, safety (including aircraft safety and navigation) and land use implications.

Proposals will generally be discouraged in or close to pNHAs, cSACs, SPAs, designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes, Visually Vulnerable Areas, Scenic Routes, protected views, Zones of Archaeological Potential.

13.9.4 Telecommunications

Telecommunication masts, access roads and associated power lines will be assessed with regard to siting and design, safety and the mitigation of intrusive impacts. The following standards shall apply:

- A. masts will not generally be permitted in designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes, Visually Vulnerable Areas, pNHAs, SPAs, SACs or adjacent to Scenic Routes;
- B. masts shall be designed and located so as to cause minimum impact on the landscape and, where possible, should be screened by forest plantations.
- C. operators should seek to co-locate their services by sharing a single mast or, if necessary, locating additional masts in cluster form.
- D. in the event of the discontinuance of any mast installations, the mast and associated equipment shall be removed from the site and the land restored to its original condition.

Appendix A

Designated nature conservation sites

General information

Designation of conservation areas is required under European law and Irish national laws. The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is responsible for the designation of conservation sites in Ireland.

The three main types of designation are:

- Natural Heritage Areas, or NHAs – basic designation for wildlife;
- Special Areas of Conservation, or SACs – prime wildlife conservation areas, important on a European as well as Irish level;
- Special Protection Areas, or SPAs – sites important to birds, and often important for other forms of wildlife.

Policy framework

National Heritage Plan 2002

National Biodiversity Plan 2011

Sligo County Heritage Plan 2016–2020

Legislative framework

EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC, as amended)

EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)

Wildlife Act 1976

Wildlife (Amendment Act) 2000

Flora (Protection) Order (2015)

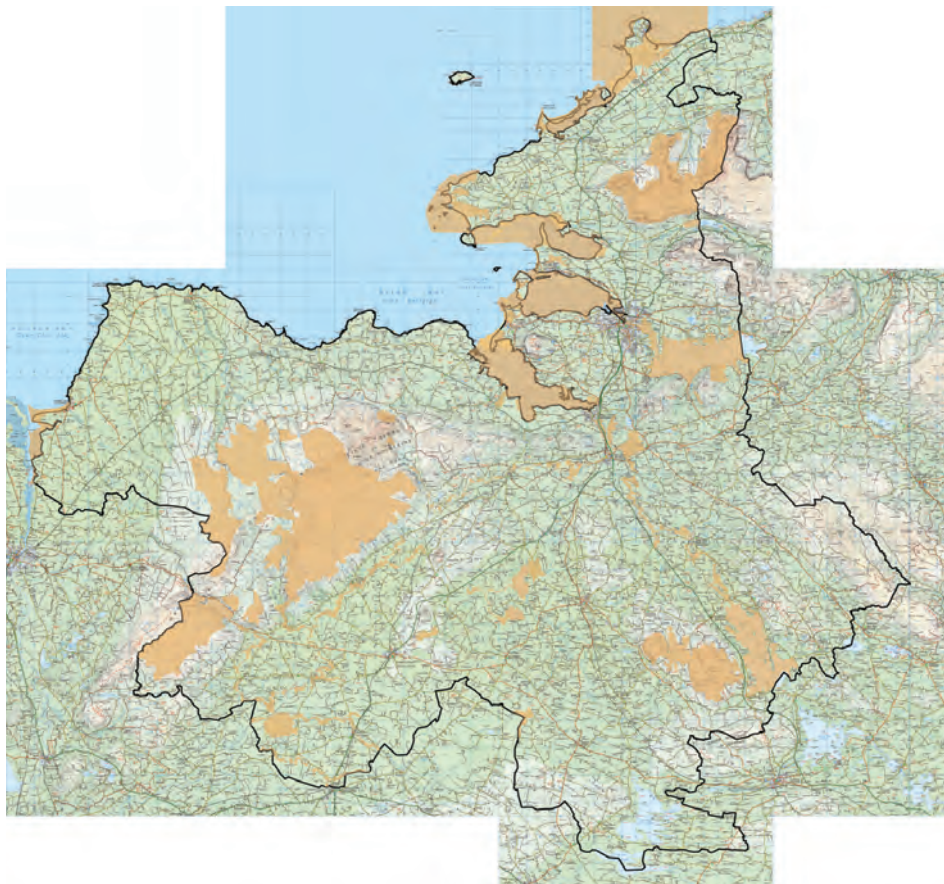


Fig. A-1 Special Areas of Conservation (including cSAC)
(This map will be updated in the final, illustrated version of the CDP)

Designated nature conservation sites in County Sligo

Candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC)

Code	Site Name	Code	Site Name
000458	Killala Bay / Moy Estuary	000636	Templehouse and Cloonacleigha Loughs
000497	Flughany Bog	000637	Turloughmore (Sligo)
000622	Ballysadare Bay	000638	Union Wood
000623	Ben Bulben, Gleniff and Glenade Complex	001656	Bricklieve Mountains and Keshcorran
000625	Bunduff Lough and Machair / Trawalua / Mullaghmore	001669	Knockalongy and Knockachree Cliffs
000627	Cummeen Strand/ Drumcliff Bay (Sligo Bay)	001673	Lough Arrow
000633	Lough Hoe Bog	001680	Streedagh Point Dunes
000634	Lough Nabrickkeagh Bog	001898	Unshin River
		001976	Lough Gill
		002006	Ox Mountains Bogs
		002298	River Moy

Special Protection Areas (SPA)

Code	Site Name	Code	Site Name
004133	Aughris Head	004129	Ballysadare Bay
004013	Drumcliff Bay	004135	Ardboline Island and Horse island
004035	Cummeen Strand	004050	Lough Arrow
004036	Killala Bay / Moy Estuary	004048	Lough Gara
004068	Inishmurray	004187	Sligo / Leitrim Uplands

Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)

Code	Site Name	Code	Site Name
000618	Ardboline and Horse Islands, Yellow Strand and Ballintemple pNHA	001905	Feenagh and Bunnamuck Loughs pNHA
000620	Aughris Head pNHA	001907	Fin and Riskeen Loughs pNHA
001909	Ballygawley Lough pNHA	000628	Glencar Cliffs pNHA
002415	Carran Hill Bog NHA	001908	Greenan Fen pNHA
001657	Cloongoonagh Bog	000630	Innishmurray pNHA
001658	Colgagh Lough pNHA	001904	Knockmullin Fen pNHA
002435	Crockauns / Keelogyboy Bog NHA	001670	Knocknarea Mountain and Glen pNHA
001902	Slieveward Bog NHA	001906	Lough Dargan pNHA
n/a	Drumskibbole pNHA	000587	Lough Gara pNHA
001664	Dunneill River pNHA	001677	Moylough Turlough pNHA
001665	Easky River pNHA	001900	Meharth Lough pNHA
		001901	Quarryfield West Turlough pNHA

Nature Reserves

Ballygilgan (Lissadell)
Easky Bog

Ramsar sites

842 Cummeen Strand 843 Killala Bay / Moy Estuary
471 Easky Bog 852 Lough Gara

Note: The process of formal designation of nature conservation sites started in 2002 and is still ongoing. The information included in this Appendix represents the situation in March 2016. For up-to-date information, please contact the National Parks and Wildlife Service (www.npws.ie) within the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht or the Planning Section of Sligo County Council.

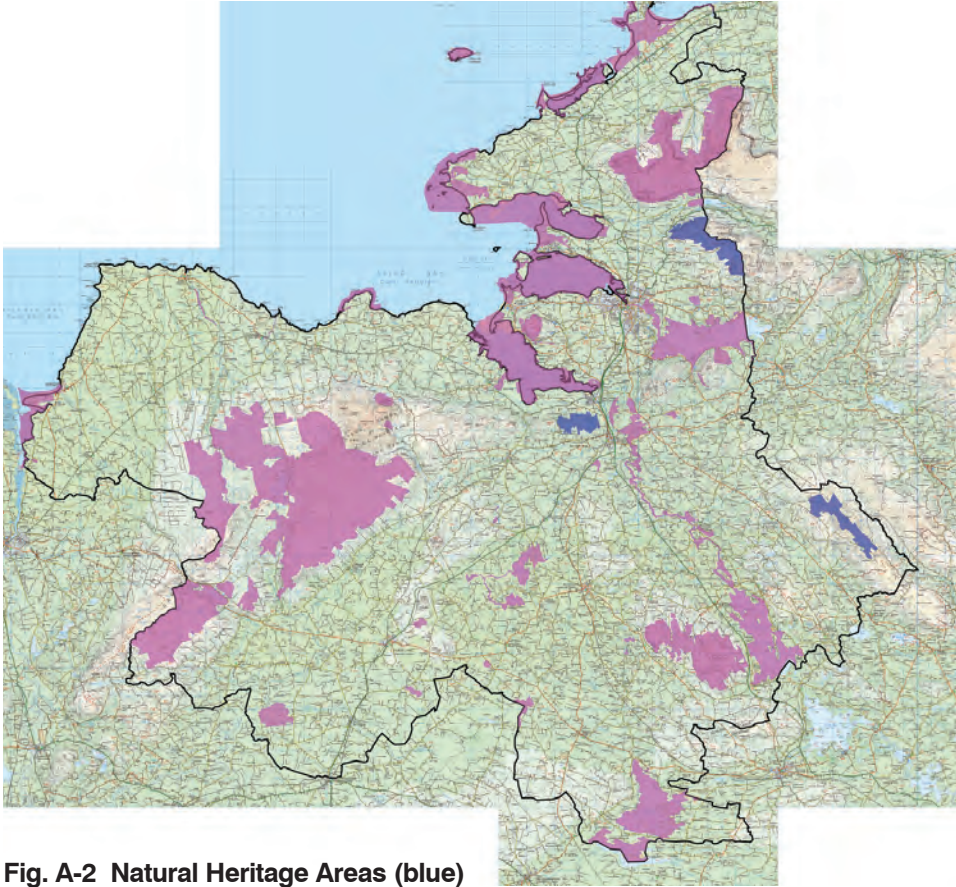


Fig. A-2 Natural Heritage Areas (blue) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (purple)

(These maps will be updated in the final, illustrated version of the CDP)

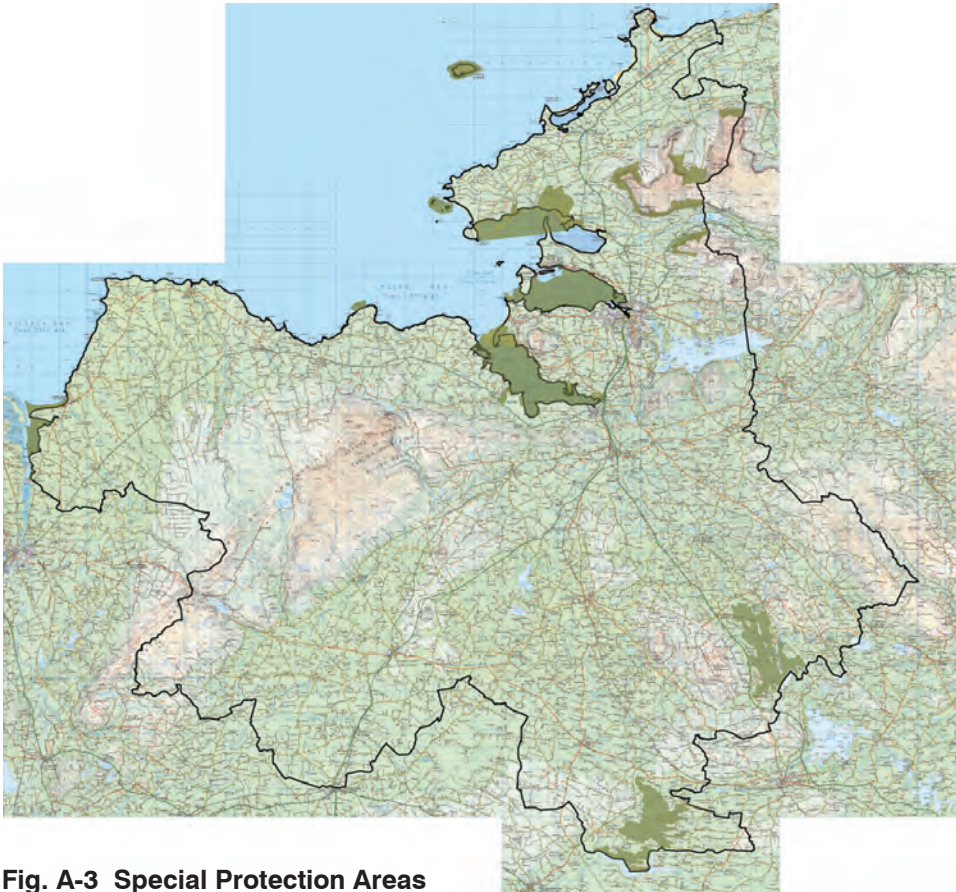


Fig. A-3 Special Protection Areas

Appendix B

Protected animal, bird and plant species in Co. Sligo

1. Protected animal species (other than birds) occurring in County Sligo

Common Name	Scientific Name	Protection Status
Invertebrates		
(no common name) Whorl Snail	<i>Vertigo geyeri</i>	EU Habitats Directive IUCN Red List
Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail	<i>Vertigo angustior</i>	EU Habitats Directive IUCN Red List
Freshwater Pearl Mussel	<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List
White-clawed Crayfish	<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts
Marsh Fritillary	<i>Euphydryas (Eurodryas) aurinia</i>	EU Habitats Directive
Fish		
Sea Lamprey	<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts Bern Convention
River Lamprey	<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts
Brook Lamprey	<i>Lampetra planeri</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts
Allis Shad	<i>Alosa alosa</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts Bern Convention
Atlantic Salmon	<i>Salmo salar</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts Bern Convention
Amphibians		
Common Frog	<i>Rana temporaria</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention
Common Newt	<i>Triturus Vulgaris</i>	Wildlife Acts
Reptiles		
Common Lizard	<i>Lacerta vivipara</i>	Wildlife Acts
Mammals		
Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention
Pygmy Shrew	<i>Sorex minutus</i>	Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention

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Common Name	Scientific Name	Protection Status
Whiskered Bat	<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts I UCN Red List Bern Convention Bonn Convention
Natterer's Bat	<i>Myotis nattereri</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention Bonn Convention
Daubenton's Bat	<i>Myotis daubentoni</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts I UCN Red List Bern Convention Bonn Convention
Leisler's Bat	<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention Bonn Convention
Common Pipistrelle Bat	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention Bonn Convention
Soprano Pipistrelle Bat	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention Bonn Convention
Nathusius Pipistrelle Bat	<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention Bonn Convention
Brown Long-eared Bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention Bonn Convention
Irish Hare	<i>Lepus timidus hibernicus</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention
Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>	Wildlife Acts
Pine Marten	<i>Martes martes</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention
Irish Stoat	<i>Mustela erminea</i>	Wildlife Acts Bern Convention
Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention

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Common Name	Scientific Name	Protection Status
Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts IUCN Red List Bern Convention
Red Deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	Wildlife Acts
Sika Deer	<i>Cervus nippon</i>	Wildlife Acts
Fallow Deer	<i>Dama dama</i>	Wildlife Acts
Grey Seal	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts
Common Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts
Bottle-nosed Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts
Common (Harbour) Porpoise	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>	EU Habitats Directive Wildlife Acts

IUCN Red List

The IUCN *Red List of Threatened Species* provides taxonomic, conservation status and distribution information on plants and animals that have been globally evaluated using the IUCN Red List categories and criteria. This system is designed to determine the relative risk of extinction, and the main purpose of the IUCN Red List is to catalogue and highlight those plants and animals that are facing a higher risk of global extinction (i.e. those listed as *critically endangered*, *endangered* and *vulnerable*).

International Conventions

Bern

The European Community is a contracting party to the *Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats* adopted at Bern on 19 September 1979. The Bern Convention is intended to promote cooperation between the signatory states in order to conserve wild flora, fauna, their natural habitats and to protect endangered migratory species.

The parties undertake to:

- promote national policies for the conservation of wild flora, wild fauna and natural habitats;
- integrate the conservation of wild flora and fauna into national planning, development and environmental policies;
- promote education and disseminate information on the need to conserve species of wild flora and fauna and their habitats.

Bonn

The *Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals* (also known as CMS or Bonn Convention) aims to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their range. It is an intergovernmental treaty, concluded under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme, concerned with the conservation of wildlife and habitats on a global scale.

2. Protected bird species occurring in County Sligo

Common Name	Scientific Name	Protection Status
Greater White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus Cygnus</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
Common Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
Red Grouse	<i>Lagopus lagopus scoticus</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Great Northern Diver	<i>Gavia immer</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Little Egret	<i>Ergetta garzetta</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus cyaneus</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts BoCCI – Red Listed
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Corncrake	<i>Crex crex</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts BoCCI – Red Listed
Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
European Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts BoCCI – Red Listed
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Knot	<i>Calidrus canutus</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
Common Tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed
Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts

Common Name	Scientific Name	Protection Status
Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>	EU Birds Directive Wildlife Acts BoCCI – Red Listed
Twite	<i>Carduelis flavirostris</i>	BoCCI – Red Listed

EU Birds Directive

Refers to bird species listed in Annex 1 of the Directive.

Wildlife Acts

Refers to the Wildlife Act 1976 and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000. The Wildlife Act 1976 in Section 19 (Protection of Wild Birds) provides that “wild birds and their nests and eggs, other than wild birds of the species mentioned in the Third Schedule of this Act, shall be protected”. This means that all wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected except for a few restricted species under restricted circumstances.

BoCCI Red Listed

A list of *Birds of Conservation Concern for Ireland* (BoCCI) has been published, with certain species being *red-listed* as being of high conservation concern (25 bird species) or *amber-listed* where they are of medium conservation concern (90 bird species). In the above table only those bird species which are currently *red-listed* have been included. The BoCCI is regularly reviewed and updated.

3. Rare and protected plant species occurring in County Sligo

Common Name	Scientific Name	Protection Status
Varnished Hook-moss (Shining sicklemoss)	<i>Hamatocaulis vernicosus</i> (<i>Drepanocladus vernicosus</i>)	EU Habitats Directive
Sphagnum Mosses	<i>Sphagnum spp.</i>	EU Habitats Directive
Petalwort	<i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>	EU Habitats Directive
Stag’s-horn Clubmoss	<i>Lycopodium clavatum</i>	EU Habitats Directive
Killarney Fern	<i>Trichomanes speciosum</i>	EU Habitats Directive Red Data Species
Round prickly-headed poppy (Rough Poppy)	<i>Papaver hybridum</i>	Flora Protection Order Red Data Species
Fringed Sandwort	<i>Arenaria ciliate hibernica</i>	Flora Protection Order Red Data Species
Alpine bistort	<i>Persicaria vivipara</i> (<i>Polygonum viviparum</i>)	Flora Protection Order Red Data Species
Hairy St. John’s-wort	<i>Hypericum hirsutum</i>	Flora Protection Order Red Data Species
Northern Rockcress	<i>Arabis petrea</i> (<i>Cardaminopsis petraea</i>)	Flora Protection Order Red Data Species
Alpine Saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga nivalis</i>	Flora Protection Order Red Data Species
Heath Cudweed (Wood Cudweed)	<i>Gnaphalium sylvaticum</i> (<i>Omalotheca sylvatica</i>)	Flora Protection Order Red Data Species
Bog Orchid	<i>Hammarbya paludosa</i>	Flora Protection Order Red Data Species
Small White Orchid	<i>Pseudorchis alba</i>	Flora Protection Order Red Data Species

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Common Name	Scientific Name	Protection Status
Oak Fern	<i>Gymnocarpium dryopteris</i>	Red Data Species
Holly Fern	<i>Polystichum lonchitis</i>	Red Data Species
Corncockle	<i>Agrostemma githago</i>	Red Data Species
Moss Campion	<i>Silene acaulis</i>	Red Data Species
Fen Violet	<i>Viola persicifolia</i>	Red Data Species
Tea-leaved Willow	<i>Salix phylicifolia</i>	Red Data Species
Hoary Whitlowgrass	<i>Draba incana</i>	Red Data Species
Bog Rosemary	<i>Andromeda polifolia</i>	Red Data Species
Intermediate Wintergreen	<i>Pyrola media</i>	Red Data Species
Yellow Bird's-nest	<i>Monotropa hypopitys</i>	Red Data Species
Cowslip	<i>Primula veris</i>	Red Data Species
Purple Saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga oppositifolia</i>	Red Data Species
Yellow (Mountain) Saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga aizoides</i>	Red Data Species
Mountain Avens	<i>Dryas octopetala</i>	Red Data Species
Bird Cherry	<i>Prunus padus</i>	Red Data Species
Marsh Pea	<i>Lathyrus palustris</i>	Red Data Species
Shepard's Needle	<i>Scandix pecten-veneris</i>	Red Data Species
Henbane	<i>Hyoscyamus niger</i>	Red Data Species
Ivy Broomrape	<i>Orobanche hederæ</i>	Red Data Species
Alpine Saw-wort	<i>Saussurea alpina</i>	Red Data Species
Cornflower	<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>	Red Data Species
Swamp Meadow Grass	<i>Poa palustris</i>	Red Data Species
Alpine Meadow Grass	<i>Poa alpina</i>	Red Data Species
Smooth Brome	<i>Bromus racemosus</i>	Red Data Species
Blue-eyed Grass	<i>Sisyrinchium bermudiana</i>	Red Data Species
Marsh Helleborine	<i>Epipactis palustris</i>	Red Data Species
Bird's-nest Orchid	<i>Neottia nidus-avis</i>	Red Data Species
Bog Orchid	<i>Hammarbya paludosa</i>	Red Data Species
Green-winged Orchid	<i>Orchis morio</i>	Red Data Species
Bee Orchid	<i>Ophrys apifera</i>	Red Data Species

Red Data Species - IUCN Red List

The IUCN *Red List of Threatened Species* provides taxonomic, conservation status and distribution information on plants and animals that have been globally evaluated using the IUCN *Red List* categories and criteria. This system is designed to determine the relative risk of extinction, and the main purpose of the IUCN *Red List* is to catalogue and highlight those plants and animals that are facing a higher risk of global extinction (i.e. those listed as Critically Endangered, Endangered and Vulnerable). See *Red Data Book (Irish) Vascular Plants* (Curtis & McGough 1988).

Appendix C

Geological heritage sites

Following an audit of geological sites within County Sligo by the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI), the most important sites in Sligo are listed below. County geological sites do not receive statutory protection like proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs), but receive an effective protection from their inclusion in County Development Plans. Many of the sites described below are considered to be of national importance, as best representative examples of particular geological formations or features. They will be proposed by the GSI for designation as pNHAs by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, after due survey and consultation with landowners.

Ben Bulbin – Truskmore sites

- Ben Bulbin
- Truskmore
- Kings Mountain Rift
- Swiss Valley
- Glencarbury Mine
- Gleniff Valley
- Diarmuid and Gráinne's Cave

Precambrian sites in Sligo

- Slishwood Gap
- Glen
- Scalnacappail
- Zion Hill

Carboniferous geology sites

- Mullaghmore Head
- Streedagh Point
- Serpent Rock, Ballyconnell

Igneous intrusion sites

- Carrowhubbuck – Enniscrone

Karstic sites

- Bricklieves and Keshcorran
- Geevagh
- Lough Nasool / Lough Bo

Quaternary and landscape features sites

- Knocknarea Glen
- Knocknarea Hill
- Split Rock
- Meenamore
- The Gap – NW of Lough Talt
- Easky River solifluction lobe

Appendix D

Monuments in State care

The term 'national monument' is defined in Section 2 of the National Monuments Act (1930) as a monument 'the preservation of which is a matter of national importance by reason of the historical, architectural, traditional, artistic or archaeological interest attaching thereto...'

National monuments in State care include those which are in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister for the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Other owners of national monuments are empowered under Section 5 of the National Monuments Act (1930) to appoint the Minister as guardian of such monuments. This means in effect that while the property of such a monument remains vested in the owner, its maintenance and upkeep are the responsibility of the State.

Monuments which may be defined as national monuments are also in the ownership or guardianship of local authorities, which have similar responsibilities under the National Monuments Acts (1930-2004) to DAHG. These monuments are not included in the dataset presented here.

The Office of Public Works (OPW) has particular responsibility for monuments in State care. Proposals for development that may impact on the amenity and integrity of these properties will be referred to the OPW for consideration.

The table below lists monuments in County Sligo that are under the guardianship (G) or in the ownership (O) of the OPW (updated 4th March 2009).

Name and description	Townland	Legal status	RMP number	National monument number
Ballinafad Castle	Ballinafad	G	SL040-189----	342
Castlebaldwin Castle	Bellanagarrigeeny or Castlebaldwin	O	SL034-185----	373
Cabragh wedge tomb	Cabragh	O	SL019-171001-	523
Carns cairn	Carns	O	SL014-23201-	568
Carrignagat megalithic tombs	Carricknagat	O	SL021-062----, SL021-104----	277
Carrowkeel passage tomb cemetery	Carricknahorna East, Carrowkeel, Doonaveeragh, Treanscrabbagh	G	SL040-101----, SL040-102----, SL040-087----, SL040-086----, SL040-087----, SL040-095----, SL040-096----, SL040-089----, SL040-09001-, SL040-	518
Carrowmore passage tomb cemetery	Carrowmore, Graigue, Tobernaveen	O	SL014-112----, SL014-114----, SL014-115----, SL014-116001-, SL014-209003-, SL014-209004-, SL014-209006-, SL014-209007-, SL014-	153
Ballymote Castle	Carrownanty	O	SL033-092----	638
Carrowreagh court tomb	Carrowreagh	G	SL036-001001-	479

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Name and description	Townland	Legal status	RMP number	National monument number
Castleore cashel	Castleore	O	SL021-028----	277
Church Island church	Church Island (Lough Gill)	O	SL015-096001-	118
Cashelmore cashel	Clogher	O	SL046-011---	159
Creevykeel court tomb	Creevykeel	G	SL003-032----	338
Cummeen court cairns	Cumeen	O	SL014-045----	433
Drumcliffe high crosses and round tower	Drumcliffe South	O	SL008-084004-, SL008-084003-	119
Gortlowan motte	Gortlowan	O	SL021-012----	277
Gortnaleck court tomb	Gortnaleck	O	SL005-090----	607
Heapstown cairn	Heapstown	O	SL034-128----	152
Inishmurray Island early Medieval ecclesiastical site	Inishmurray Island	O	SL001-001----	117
Knocknarea passage tombs and cairns	Knocknarea South	O	SL014-076001- to SL014-076009-	153
Queen Maeve's tomb (Knocknarea)	Knocknarea South	O	SL014-076003-	153
Magheraghanrush or Deerpark court tomb	Magheraghanrush or Deerpark	O	SL015-050----	377
Moytirra East court tomb	Moytirra East	O	SL035-079---	465
Sligo Abbey (Friary)	Sligo Town	O	SL014-065008-	189

Appendix E

County landscape designations

The genesis of the **Landscape Characterisation Map** (which is available separately in a large format – A1) was the An Foras Forbartha’s *Inventory of Outstanding Landscapes*, published in 1972. A variant of this map has been attached to successive county development plans up to the 1999-2004 Plan. This map was refined to take stock of the Yeats County landscape study commissioned by Bord Fáilte and a detailed landscape characterisation and appraisal study commissioned by the Council and completed by CAAS Environmental Consultants in 1998. The latter study was based on an analysis of the CORINE European landuse data and a county-wide landscape evaluation proofed against key planning policies. This resulted in a map indicating, inter alia, Sensitive Rural Landscapes, Normal Rural Landscapes, Visually Vulnerable Areas and Scenic Routes.

This approach distinguishes the “quintessential Sligo landscapes”, e.g. the Dartry Mountain range, the Glencar Valley, Lough Easky and the Ox Mountains etc. Such areas are designated as *Sensitive Rural Landscapes*, as distinct from the remainder of Sligo landscapes, which may exhibit significant scenic character and qualities, but not to the same immediate, memorable and special extent. Each designation is described in more detail below.

- Normal Rural Landscapes** have the capacity to absorb a wide range of new developments, subject to normal planning and development control procedures. Most of County Sligo falls into this category, which comprises the main areas of existing farming and rural residences. Such areas tend to have enclosing topography and existing screening vegetation – or the potential to support trees, tall hedges and woody vegetation to screen new development.

In certain locations, designated Normal Rural Landscapes form the context for exceptional landscape features, such as distinctive mountains or coastal areas. In such landscapes, it is necessary to assess each development proposal on its merits, having regard to general restrictions on development (e.g. servicing, traffic safety) and any other provisions of the Landscape Characterisation Map that relate to the area concerned (e.g. Scenic Routes).



Drumnacool



Kilcreevin, Ballymote

Designated Normal Rural Landscapes tend to have enclosing topography and existing screening vegetation



Kesh Corann



Benwiskin

In certain locations, designated Normal Rural Landscapes form the context for exceptional landscape features



Tievebaun Mountain



Lough Aghree, Ox Mountains

Designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes have intrinsic scenic qualities and a low capacity to absorb development



Lough Easky



Ox Mountains

Scenic Routes afford unique scenic views of distinctive natural features

- **Sensitive Rural Landscapes** are areas with intrinsic scenic quality and a low capacity to absorb new development – e.g. uplands, headlands. They generally support insufficient vegetative cover for screening purposes and most sites are seen against the sky or water. As a result, even a small development in such an area has the potential to create an impact on the appearance and character of an extensive part of the landscape.

To preserve the integrity of designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes, while endeavouring to sustain local communities, only a limited range of appropriate new developments can be accommodated. Any such proposal must demonstrate a high standard of siting, layout and design and may be required to consider ecological, archaeological, water quality and other factors.

- **Visually Vulnerable Areas** are characterised by distinctive natural features, which have an extremely low capacity to absorb new development without significant alterations of existing character over a very wide area. The eye is strongly drawn to such features, which include coastlines, lakeshores, ridgelines and hill/mountain tops, i.e. conspicuous linear features where land meets sky or water.

Due to their recognised natural beauty or interest and their susceptibility to damage, specified views of designated Visually Vulnerable Areas receive special protection (see the list at the end of this Appendix). Development in, or in the context/setting of these features is also strictly controlled. To be considered for planning permission, a proposal must demonstrate, inter alia, that the development will not impinge in any significant way on the integrity, distinctiveness and unique visual character of the area when viewed from the surroundings, especially from designated Scenic Routes and the environs of archaeological and historical sites.

- **Scenic Routes** indicate public roads from which the more dramatic scenic views, prospects and vistas of the County can be enjoyed. Most Routes pass through or close to designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes or adjoin designated Visually Vulnerable Areas. Scenic Routes also, in the main, form loops or circuits designed to maximise visibility of important Sligo landscapes without undue interruption. However, some routes considered to warrant designation, do not or cannot form part of a loop.



Designated Visually Vulnerable Areas are characterised by distinctive and conspicuous features where land meets sky or water

The designation of Scenic Routes provides a basis for protecting views and prospects of Visually Vulnerable features, such as mountain-ridges, lakeshores and coastlines. It is not necessary for a particular feature to be visible for the full length of a route, as the designation is based on the overall quality and uniqueness of the views available.

Due to the strong inter-visibility between landscape elements in County Sligo, most Scenic Routes enjoy scenic views of more than one Visually Vulnerable feature.

The following section of this Appendix contains a list of the scenic views it is proposed to preserve over the 2017-2023 period. These are indicated on the Landscape Characterisation Map – see the large-format (A1) map that accompanies the Plan.

To preserve the listed scenic views, it is necessary to control development along designated Scenic Routes, while facilitating developments that are tied to a specific location or that meet the demonstrated needs of an applicant to reside in a particular area. In all cases, the onus is on the applicant to show that there will be no obstruction or degradation of the scenic view concerned, nor significant alterations to the appearance or character of the designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes in the vicinity.

The above scenic evaluation approach and resultant map have proven robust in both facilitating development and conserving fragile landscapes. The map has been modified only in the light of development management experience. Incidentally, added protection is available under this scheme for designated Sensitive Rural Landscapes insofar as the identified scenic areas correspond greatly with sites designated under EU Directives, i.e. SPAs and cSACs.

Scenic Routes

National Primary Roads

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. N-15 from Bunduff Bridge (Leitrim County boundary) to Sligo | Views of Atlantic Ocean, Ben Bulbin, Kings Mountain and Benwisikin |
| 2. N-16 from Leitrim County boundary to Sligo | Views of Glencar Lake, Ben Bulbin and Atlantic Ocean |
| 3. N-4 Castlebaldwin to Ballinacfad | Views of Bricklieve Mountains, Lough Arrow and Curlew Mountains |
| 4. N-4 Collooney By-Pass from northern roundabout at Collooney to Carrowroe | Views of Ballysadare Bay, Knocknarea, Union Wood, Slieve Daeane, Slieve Dargan |
| 5. N-4 Curlew By-Pass from Roscommon County boundary to Ballinacfad | Views of Lough Arrow, Bricklieve Mountains and Curlew Mountains |

National Secondary Roads

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 6. N-59 Beltra to Ballysadare | Views of Ballysadare Bay, Slieveward and Knocknarea |
| 7. N-59 Dromore West to Beltra | Views of Atlantic Ocean and Ox Mountains |
| 8. (N-59 Tullylinn to Culleens) | <i>designation removed</i> |
| 9. (N-59 Caltragh to Camcuill) | <i>designation removed</i> |

Regional Roads

- | | |
|--|---|
| 10. R-279 Mullaghmore to Cliffony | Views of Atlantic Ocean, Donegal Bay and Benwisikin |
| 11. R-291 from Sligo to Rosses Point | Views of Sligo Bay and Harbour, Coney Island, Knocknarea and Coolera Peninsula, Slieve Dargan, Slieve Daeane, Killery Mountain and Ox Mountains |
| 12. R-284 from Carrowroe to junction with road L-3605 north of Ballygawley | Views of Ballygawley Lough, Slieve Dargan and Slieve Daeane |
| 13. R-286 from Sligo to Leitrim County boundary | Views of Lough Gill and Colgagh Lough |
| 14. R-287 from Carrowroe to junction with road L-3605 at Correagh | Views of Lough Gill, Slish Wood, Slieve Dargan, Slieve Daeane and Killery Mountain |
| 15. R-292 from Ransboro to Cullenamore House | Views of Knocknarea, Ballysadare Bay, Sligo Bay, Slieve Dargan, Slieve Daeane and Ben Bulbin |
| 16. R-292 at Larass, Strandhill, immediately north of St. Anne's Church and Rectory, to junction | Views of Sligo Harbour, Sligo Bay and Ben Bulbin |

with road L-3502 at Scardan	
17. R-292 at Larass, Strandhill, between St Anne's Church and Sligo Rugby Club (south side)	Views of Knocknarea
18. R-292 at Carrowdough and Culleenamore, between the southern development limit and the Plan limit of Strandhill Local Area Plan at Culleenamore House	Views of Sligo Bay, Ballysadare Bay and Knocknarea
19. R-294 from The Gap (Mayo County boundary) to Mullany's Cross	Views of Lough Talt and Ox Mountains
20. R-295 from Carrowmaclenany Crossroads to Carrowcrory Crossroads	Views of Kesh Corran and the Bricklieve Mountains
21. <i>(R-294 from Mullaghroe Crossroads to Roscommon County boundary)</i>	<i>designation removed)</i>
22. R-297 from Scurmore to Dromore West	Views of Killala Bay and Atlantic Ocean
23. R-278 from Calry (Doonally road junction) to Leitrim County boundary at Carrickoneileen.	Views of Keelogyboy Mountain
Local Roads	
24. L-7101 around Mullaghmore Head	Views of Atlantic Ocean and Donegal Bay
25. 'The Hill' (L-7103) from junction with L-7101 on northside of Mullaghmore Head, onto L-7102 as far as junction with L-7101 on south side of Head	Views of Atlantic Ocean, Donegal Bay, the Dartry Range (Ben Bulben, Benwisikin, Truskmore) and Knocknarea
26. L-3104 from junction with R-279 (Mullaghmore/Cliffony road) turning east onto Lower Bunduff road (L-3101) to junction with N15 at Castlegal	Views of Bunduff Lake, the Dartry Range and Mullaghmore Harbour
27. Loop road (L-7121) between N-15 and coast at Moun temple, and south-east from N-15 to junction with Derrylehan road (L-3205)	Views of Atlantic Ocean, Donegal Bay, Dernish Island, Conors Island, Inishmurray, Milk Harbour and the Dartry Range
28. Upperwood road (L-7202) from junction with N-15 down to sea shore	Views of the Dartry Range, Streedagh Point, Conors Island and Inishmurray
29. Grange to Streedagh Point (L-3203 turning west onto L-3202 and north onto L-32022)	Views of Atlantic Ocean and Ben Bulben
30. Benwisikin Horseshoe (L-7130)	Views of Benwisikin, Ben Bulben and Donegal Bay
31. Ballaghna trillick Bridge northwards to Leitrim County boundary (L-7126 & L-3102) and southwards to N-15 at Mullaghneane (L-3105, L-3205 & L-7216)	Views of Benwisikin, Ben Bulben and Donegal Bay
32. Glencar Lake to Carney (L-3404, L-3403 & L-3402)	Views of Glencar Lake, Kings Mountain and Ben Bulben

- | | |
|--|--|
| 33. Kintogher road (L-3306) from junction with N-15 at Tully (Rathcormack) down to Lower Rosses road (L-7311) via L-7309 and Cregg road (L-3307) | Views of Drumcliff Bay, the coast, Ben Bulben, Kings Mountain, Sligo Bay, Knocknarea, Killery Mountain, Slieve Dargan, Slieve Daeane, Cope's Mountain and Glencar Valley |
| 34. L-3311 as far as junction at Yeats County Hotel turning south onto Rosses Point Promenade Road (R-291) to mini-plan development limit | Views of Sligo Bay and Harbour, Coney Island, Knocknarea and Coolera Peninsula, Slieve Dargan, Slieve Daeane, Killery Mountain and Ox Mountains |
| 35. Glencar Lake to N-16 (L-3404) | Views of Glencar Lake and Kings Mountain |
| 36. L-3602 along Garvoge River and Lough Gill from Sligo to junction with R-287 | Views of Garavoge River and Lough Gill |
| 37. From junction of L-3409 and R-286 at Ballynamona, northwards through Loughanelteen to Keelogyboy (L-3409 & L-7418), then south to R-278 via Fermoyle (L-7420 & L-3407) | Views of Keelogyboy Mountain, Cope's Mountain, Lough Anelteen, Killery Mountain, Lough Gill, Ox Mountains, Slieve Daeane, Slieve Dargan, Kings Mountain, Ben Bulben, Knocknarea, the coast, Sligo Bay and Atlantic Ocean |
| 38. L-7417 from junction with L-7418 north to junction with L-7416 at Glackbaun and along L-7416 from its eastern extremity near Leitrim County boundary to junction with N-16 at Drumkilsellagh | Views of Cope's Mountain, Keelogyboy Mountain, Lough Gill, Slieve Dargan, Kings Mountain, Knocknarea, Ox Mountains, Sligo Bay and Atlantic Ocean |
| 39. L-3502 from junction with R-292 at Scardan to Ransboro. | Views of Knocknarea |
| 40. Ransboro road (L-3503) at Larass, Strandhill, between St Anne's Church and the eastern Plan limit of Strandhill Local Area Plan | Views of Sligo Bay and Knocknarea |
| 41. Airport Road, Strandhill (L-35052), between southern boundary of Business and Enterprise Park and northern boundary of new Village Centre | Views of Knocknarea |
| 42. Road network to east and south of Knocknarea, between junctions of R292 and L-3502: specifically the Glen Road (L-3507) and L-3506 | Views of Knocknarea, Kings Mountain, Ben Bulben, Cope's Mountain, Killery Mountain, Slieve Dargan, Slieve Daeane, Keelogyboy Mountain, Ox Mountains Ballysadare Bay, Atlantic Ocean, Culleenamore Strand, Sligo Bay, Drumcliff Bay, the coast and Coney Island |
| 43. L-6101 from junction with N-59 at Corhawnagh Church extending westward to Streamstown and south to N-59 via Lisduff | Views of Ballysadare Bay, Knocknarea and Slieveward (Little Ox Mountains) |
| 44. L-6101 between junction with N-59 at Corhawnagh Church and junction with R-290 (old N-4) south of Ballysadare | Views of Slieveward (Little Ox Mountains) |

45. Easkey coastal scenic road (L-2401) between junctions with Dromore West - Easkey road (R297)	Views of Sligo Bay, the coast, Ox Mountains and Donegal Bay.
46. Coast road from R-297 at Dromore West to N-59 at Beltra (L-2302 & L-2204)	Views of Atlantic Ocean, Sligo Bay, Ballysadare Bay, Ox Mountains, Knocknarea and Ben Bulben.
47. Aughris Head (L-2301 turning onto L-6301) between junctions with Beltra - Dromore West coastal road (L-2302)	Views of Knocknarea, Ben Bulben, the coast and Sligo & Donegal Bays
48. Derk road (L-6215) from junction with Beltra - Dromore West coastal road (L-2204) to sea shore	Views of Ballysadare Bay, Knocknarea, Coolera Peninsula, Coney Island, Rosses Point, Sligo Bay and Ben Bulben
49. Dromore West to Mullany's Cross (L-2702, L-4701 & L-4702)	Views of Lough Easkey, Ox Mountains and Atlantic Ocean
50. L-8701 & L-8702 from junction with L-4701 at Masshill to junction with R-294 at Largan	Views of Lough Talt and Ox Mountains
51. Ladies Brae road from Carroweden (L-4602 & L-2205) leading to N-59 via L-2304 and L-2303 and continuing northwards to Beltra - Dromore West coastal road (L-2302) via L-6205	Views of Ox Mountains and Atlantic Ocean
52. Carroweden to Coolaney and continuing to junction with N59 at Lugnadeffa (L-8601, L-6804 & L-2801)	Views of Ox Mountains and Atlantic Ocean
53. Coast road from Mayo County boundary at Rathmurphy northwards to its junction with R-297 at Scurmore	Views of Killala Bay
54. L-6102 from junction with N-59 west of Cooney Lough, continuing on L-2101 to junction with L-2801 south of Tullaghan Hill	Views of Ox Mountains, Atlantic Ocean and Cooney Lough
55. L-3605, south of Slieve Daeane and Slieve Dargan, between junctions with R-284 and R-287	Views of Slieve Dargan, Slieve Daeane and Lough Dargan
56. Lakeshore drive around Lough Arrow from Castlebaldwin to Roscommon County boundary (L-1404, L-1403 & L-1905)	Views of Lough Arrow and Bricklieve Mountains
57. Old N-4 along western shore of Lough Arrow from Aghanagh through Ballinafad village to junction with new N-4 south of Ballinafad	Views of Lough Arrow, Bricklieve Mountains and Curlew Mountains
58. Carrowcroy crossroads to Ballinafad (L-1806)	Views of Bricklieve Mountains, Curlew Mountains and Lough Arrow
59. Ladies Brae to Beltra via Chapel Street (L-6213)	Views of Ox Mountains, Coolera peninsula and Ballysadare Bay

60. From Castlebaldwin southwards to junction with R-295, southwest of Templevanny Lough (L-1404 & L-5801)	Views of Bricklieve Mountains, Kesh Corran and Lough Arrow
61. Heapstown Crossroads to Killadoon Crossroads (L-1901)	Views of Lough Arrow and Bricklieve Mountains
62. Ballindoon Crossroads to Killadoon Crossroads (L-1904)	Views of Lough Arrow and Bricklieve Mountains
63. Highwood road (L-1904) from Ballindoon Crossroads to junction with L-5902 & L-59021 north of Kilmactranny	Views of Lough Arrow, Bricklieve Mountains and Kesh Corran
64. L-18011 south of Lough Arrow and L-18012 through Lecarrow (Aghanagh ED) to junction with Curlew Bypass (N-4)	Views of Lough Arrow, Bricklieve Mountains and Carran Hill (north-east of Lough Arrow)
65. Killadoon Crossroads to junction with L-1101 north of Conways Cross (L-1901)	Views of Lough Arrow, Lough Nasool and Lough Bo
66. L-1101 from north of Conways Cross extending along southside of Carran Hill to Roscommon County boundary	Views of Carran Hill
67. <i>(Mullaghroe to Monasteraden (L-4104))</i>	<i>designation removed</i>
68. From Monasteraden eastward to Roscommon County boundary (L-4105)	Views of Lough Gara
69. Road west of St Aidan's church (L-8107 & L-4103) from junction at Monasteraden village, to Gorteen-Boyle road (R-294) at Mullaghroe	Views of Lough Gara
70. Derrinoghran loop – from junction off R-294 west of Cloonloogh onto L-5707, turning north onto L-5708, then east onto L-5705, and proceeding south on L-5706 to join up again with L-5707	Views of Lough Gara
71. L-1906 from junction with L-1905 to junction with L-5904, north of Kilmactranny	Views of Lough Arrow, Bricklieve Mountains and Keash Corran

Notes

1. Unless otherwise stated, a scenic view commencing at Sligo starts at the development limit indicated in the Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016.
2. The Darty Range includes Kings Mountain, Ben Bulben, Benwisikin and Truskmore.
3. The portions of designated Scenic Routes that run within the development limits of mini-plans and local area plans should be disregarded.

Additional Scenic Routes designated in 2017

Regional Roads

R-292 from junction L-7516 Belladrehid to junction with L-7523

Views of Ballysadare Bay, Ox Mountains, Knocknarea

Local Roads

L-7523, L-7522, L-7518, & L-7520 from junction R-292 south of Ransboro to R-292 West of Ransboro

Views of Ballysadare Bay, Ox Mountains, Knocknarea,

L-2203 continue existing Scenic Route to junction with N-59

Views of Ballysadare Bay, Ben Bulben, Knocknarea, Ox Mountains

L-6210 from junction with L-6213 to junction with L-2203

Views of Atlantic Ocean, DartryRange, Ox Mountains, Knocknarea

L-6311, L-63119, L-6309, L-63096 from junction with L-2203 to L-6213

Views of Atlantic Ocean, Dartry Range, Ox Mountains, Knocknarea

L-22041 from junction with L-2204 to end

Views of Ballysadare Bay, Dartry Range, Dunmorán Strand, Ox Mountains

L-6201 from junction with L-2204 to end

Views of Sligo Bay, Dartry Range, Ox Mountains, Knocknarea

L-7403 from junction N-15 to junction with L-3402

Views of Ben Bulben, Knocknarea, Sligo Bay, Ox Mountains

L-3203, L-3206, L-3028, L-7229 & L-3208 from junction with L-3202 (Streedagh Road) south to Raghly Head loop road

Views of Dartry Range, Knocknarea, Sligo Bay, Ox Mountains

L-7215 from junction L-3203 to end

Views of Atlantic Ocean, Dartry Range, Slieve League Cliffs, Inishmurray

L-7213 from junction with L-3203 to end

Views of Atlantic Ocean, Dartry Range, Slieve League Cliffs

L-3207 from junction with L-3206 to junction with L-7220, entire length of L-7220 back to L-3207, L-3207 to end

Views of Dartry Range, Atlantic Ocean, Ox Mountains, open landscapes with field boundaries, Knocklane Head, Knocknarea, open grasslands and field boundary patterned uplands

L-7223 from junction with L-3207 to end	Views of the Dartry Range, Knocklane Head, the rocky shoreline and cliffs, the Atlantic Ocean, Slieve League Cliffs
L-7225 from junction with L-3208 to end and L-7228 to end	Views of Ben Bulben, Knocknarea, Sligo Bay, Ox Mountains, Slieve League Cliffs, Knocklane Head
L-7228 from junction with L-3207 to end of L-72252	Views of Dartry Range, Knocklane Head, Knocknarea, Ox Mountains, Atlantic Ocean,
L-5705 from junction L-5708 to county boundary	Views of Lough Gara, open landscapes of bogland and forestry, views of County Roscommon farmland

Appendix F. Extract from the Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice Guide (DoECLG, 2009)

The 12 criteria with indicators

NEIGHBOURHOOD	01 CONTEXT How does the development respond to its surroundings? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development seems to have evolved naturally as part of its surroundings Appropriate increases in density respect the form of buildings and landscape around the site's edges and the amenity enjoyed by neighbouring users Form, architecture and landscaping have been informed by the development's place and time The development positively contributes to the character and identity of the neighbourhood Appropriate responses are made to the nature of specific boundary conditions 	02 CONNECTIONS How well connected is the new neighbourhood? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are attractive routes in and out for pedestrians and cyclists The development is located in or close to a mixed-use centre The development's layout makes it easy for a bus to serve the scheme The layout links to existing movement routes and the places people will want to get to Appropriate density, dependent on location, helps support efficient public transport
	05 EFFICIENCY How does the development make appropriate use of resources, including land? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal looks at the potential of higher density, taking into account appropriate accessibility by public transport and the objectives of good design Landscaped areas are designed to provide amenity and biodiversity, protect buildings and spaces from the elements and incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems Buildings, gardens and public spaces are laid out to exploit the best solar orientation The scheme brings a redundant building or derelict site back into productive use Appropriate recycling facilities are provided 	06 DISTINCTIVENESS How do the proposals create a sense of place? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The place has recognisable features so that people can describe where they live and form an emotional attachment to the place The scheme is a positive addition to the identity of the locality The layout makes the most of the opportunities presented by existing buildings, landform and ecological features to create a memorable layout The proposal successfully exploits views into and out of the site There is a discernable focal point to the scheme, or the proposals reinforce the role of an existing centre
SITE	09 ADAPTABILITY How will the buildings cope with change? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designs exploit good practice lessons, such as the knowledge that certain house types are proven to be ideal for adaptation The homes are energy-efficient and equipped for challenges anticipated from a changing climate Homes can be extended without ruining the character of the types, layout and outdoor space The structure of the home and its loose fit design allows for adaptation and subdivision, such as the creation of an annexe or small office Space in the roof or garage can be easily converted into living accommodation 	10 PRIVACY AND AMENITY How does the scheme provide a decent standard of amenity? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each home has access to an area of useable private outdoor space The design maximises the number of homes enjoying dual aspect Homes are designed to prevent sound transmission by appropriate acoustic insulation or layout Windows are sited to avoid views into the home from other houses or the street and adequate privacy is affordable to ground floor units. The homes are designed to provide adequate storage including space within the home for the sorting and storage of recyclables.
HOME		

INTRODUCTION	03 INCLUSIVITY How easily can people use and access the development? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New homes meet the aspirations of a range of people and households Design and layout enable easy access by all There is a range of public, communal and/or private amenity spaces and facilities for children of different ages, parents and the elderly Areas defined as public open space that have either been taken in charge or privately managed will be clearly defined, accessible and open to all. New buildings present a positive aspect to passers by, avoiding unnecessary physical and visual barriers 	04 VARIETY How does the development promote a good mix of activities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities generated by the development contribute to the quality of life in its locality Uses that attract the most people are in the most accessible places Neighbouring uses and activities are compatible with each other Housing types and tenure add to the choice available in the area Opportunities have been taken to provide shops, facilities and services that complement those already available in the neighbourhood
	07 LAYOUT How does the proposal create people friendly streets and spaces? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Layout aligns routes with desire lines to create a permeable interconnected series of routes that are easy and logical to navigate around. The layout focuses activity on the streets by creating active frontages with front doors directly serving the street The streets are designed as places instead of roads for cars, helping to create a hierarchy of space with less busy routes having surfaces shared by pedestrians, cyclists and drivers Traffic speeds are controlled by design and layout rather than by speed humps Block layout places some public spaces in front of building lines as squares or greens, and some semi private space to the back as communal courts 	08 PUBLIC REALM How safe, secure and enjoyable are the public areas? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All public open space is overlooked by surrounding homes so that this amenity is owned by the residents and safe to use The public realm is considered as a usable integrated element in the design of the development Children's play areas are sited where they will be overlooked, safe and contribute to the amenities of the neighborhood There is a clear definition between public, semi private, and private space Roads and parking areas are considered as an integral landscaped element in the design of the public realm.
	11 PARKING How will the parking be secure and attractive? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate car parking is on-street or within easy reach of the home's front door. Parked cars are overlooked by houses, pedestrians and traffic, or stored securely, with a choice of parking appropriate to the situation. Parking is provided communally to maximise efficiency and accommodate visitors without the need to provide additional dedicated spaces Materials used for parking areas are of similar quality to the rest of the development Adequate secure facilities are provided for bicycle storage 	12 DETAILED DESIGN How well thought through is the building and landscape design? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The materials and external design make a positive contribution to the locality The landscape design facilitates the use of the public spaces from the outset Design of the buildings and public space will facilitate easy and regular maintenance Open car parking areas are considered as an integral element within the public realm design and are treated accordingly Care has been taken over the siting of flues, vents and bin stores

Appendix G

Section 28 – Statement of Compliance with Ministerial Guidelines

Under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the Council is required to append a statement to the Development Plan, to include information which demonstrates:

- a) how the Planning Authority has implemented the policies and objectives of the Minister contained in the guidelines when considering their application to the area, or part of the area, of the Draft Development Plan and the Development Plan;
- b) if applicable, where the Planning Authority has formed the opinion that it is not possible, because of the nature and characteristics of the area or part of the area of the Development Plan, to implement certain policies and objectives of the Minister contained in the Guidelines when considering the application of those policies in the area or part of the area of the Draft Development Plan or the Development Plan and shall give reasons for the forming of the opinion and why the policies and objectives of the Minister have not been so implemented.

The required statement in relation to the Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023 is set out below.

Section 28 Guidelines	Sligo County Development Plan 2017–2023
<i>A Guide to Planning Enforcement in Ireland (2012)</i>	These guidelines are relevant to planning enforcement, but not relevant for the preparation of the Development Plan.
<i>Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (2009)</i>	The preparation of the Draft Plan had regard to this guidance document. Stage 1 AA Screening concluded that the Draft Development Plan, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is not likely to have significant adverse impacts upon relevant European Natura 2000 sites, therefore Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment or Natural Impact Report (NIR) is not required.
<i>Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Revised 2011)</i>	Chapter 7 Heritage sets out measures to protect the architectural heritage of the county, taking account of these guidelines. These guidelines have also informed the preparation of the Record of Protected Structures associated with this Plan.
<i>Best Practice Urban Design Manual (2009) Parts 1 and 2</i>	These documents are referenced in Chapter 12 Town and village design. Objective P-UD-14 specifically refers to the guidelines.

Section 28 Guidelines	Sligo County Development Plan 2017–2023
<i>Childcare Facilities Guidelines (2001)</i>	Chapter 6 Community facilities sets out Council’s policies regarding childcare facilities. Objective P-CC-3 specifically refers to the guidelines.
<i>Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2007)</i>	Chapter 13 Development management standards sets out that, in assessing proposals for new apartment developments, the Planning Authority will have regard to this document.
<i>Development Contribution Guidelines 2013</i>	A new Development Contribution Scheme will be prepared during the period of this Plan, ensuring compliance with these guidelines.
<i>Development Management Guidelines (2007)</i>	All planning applications will be assessed and determined under the policies, objectives and development standards of the Development Plan. The Planning Authority will comply with these guidelines when assessing applications.
<i>Development Plan Guidelines (2007)</i>	This draft Development Plan has been prepared in accordance with Sections 11 and 12 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and in accordance with the Development Plan Guidelines.
<i>Funfair Guidance 2003</i>	These Guidelines relate to the licensing requirements for funfairs and are therefore not relevant to the preparation of the Development Plan.
<i>Guidance Note on Core Strategies (2010) - Guidelines for planning authorities relating to the evidence-based rationale and contents of core strategies.</i>	Chapter 3 outlines the Core Strategy of this Plan, provides a high-level description of the key statistics and priorities underpinning the Plan, and articulates a medium to long-term, quantitatively-based strategy for the spatial development of the County.
<i>Guidelines for Planning Authorities & An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessments (2013)</i>	These guidelines are not relevant to the preparation of the Development Plan.
<i>Irish Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2013)</i>	Chapters 8 Transport and 12 Town and village design refer specifically to these guidelines.
<i>Implementing Regional Planning Guidelines - Best Practice Guidelines (2010)</i>	The Core Strategy of this Draft Plan is consistent with the Border Regional Planning Guidelines 2010–2022.

Section 28 Guidelines	Sligo County Development Plan 2017–2023
<i>Local Area Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities and Local Area Plans Manual (2013)</i>	The Planning Authority will adhere to these guidelines when preparing or reviewing local area plans specified within the strategic framework of this Development Plan.
<i>Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, Housing Supply, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2000)</i>	Chapter 5 Housing and the Housing Strategy prepared in conjunction with the Draft Plan set out compliance with these guidelines.
<i>Quarries and Ancillary Activities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2004)</i>	Chapter 4, Section 4.3.4 - Mineral extraction and quarries addresses quarries and ancillary activities, making specific reference to these guidelines.
<i>Retail Planning Guidelines and Retail Design Manual (2012)</i>	Chapter 4 Economic Development sets out Council’s policies on retail and takes account of these guidelines. A Retail Strategy has also been prepared in compliance with the Retail Planning Guidelines in conjunction with this Plan.
<i>Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines, 2005 and Rural Housing Policies and Local Need Criteria in Development Plan Circular Letter SP/5/08</i>	Chapter 5 Housing sets out the rural housing policies and indicates their consistency with these guidelines with regard to identifying different rural area types and the differing housing requirements of urban and rural communities.
<i>The Provision of Schools and the Planning System – Code of Practice for Planning Authorities (2008)</i>	Chapter 6 Community facilities sets out the Council’s policies regarding schools, taking account of these guidelines.
<i>Section 261A of Planning & Development Act 2000 - Guidelines (January 2012) and Section 261A of Planning and Development Act, 2000 Supplementary Guidelines (July 2012)</i>	These guidelines refer to legislative provisions relating to quarries and are not relevant to the preparation of the Development Plan.
<i>Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012)</i>	Chapter 8 Transport and mobility sets out the Council’s policies in relation to the national road network.

Section 28 Guidelines	Sligo County Development Plan 2017–2023
<i>Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Guidelines (2004)</i>	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the process by which environmental considerations are integrated into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes. The results of the SEA process carried out in parallel with the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan and are presented in the SEA Environmental Report and summarised in Chapter 2 of the Plan.
<i>Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)</i>	Chapter 5 Housing sets out the Council’s policies in relation to residential development, taking account of these guidelines. Chapter 13 contains residential development standards in accordance with these guidelines.
<i>Taking in Charge of Housing Estates/ Management Companies (2006)</i>	These guidelines relate to the taking-in-charge procedures for housing estates and management companies and are therefore not relevant to the preparation of the Development Plan.
<i>Landscape and Landscape Assessment Guidelines (2000)</i>	Section 7.4 Landscape character addresses issues relevant to the county’s rich landscape.
<i>The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)</i>	A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) of the Plan area has been undertaken in accordance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines. Section 10.7 sets out the Council’s policies on flood risk management, making specific reference to these guidelines.
<i>Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006)</i>	Chapter 11 Energy and Telecommunications sets out the Council’s policies in regard to renewable energy, including wind energy. Chapter 11, Section 11.1.2 makes specific reference to these guidelines.
<i>Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures Guidelines 1996</i>	The Draft Plan has taken account of these guidelines in Section 11.2 Telecommunications .
<i>Tree Preservation Guidelines</i>	Chapter 7 Heritage sets out the Council’s policies in relation to trees and woodlands within the county.

Appendix H

ICOMOS Charter

Vernacular building is the traditional and natural way by which communities house themselves. It is a continuing process including necessary changes and continuous adaptation as a response to social and environmental constraints. The built vernacular heritage is the fundamental expression of the culture of a community, of its relationship with its territory.

The International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) has ratified in 1999 a **Charter on the Built Vernacular Heritage**. The principles and guidelines contained in this Charter are set out below.

Principles of conservation

1. The conservation of the built vernacular heritage must be carried out by multidisciplinary expertise while recognising the inevitability of change and development, and the need to respect the community's established cultural identity.
2. Contemporary work on vernacular buildings, groups and settlements should respect their cultural values and their traditional character.
3. The vernacular is only seldom represented by single structures, and it is best conserved by maintaining and preserving groups and settlements of a representative character, region by region.
4. The built vernacular heritage is an integral part of the cultural landscape and this relationship must be taken into consideration in the development of conservation approaches.
5. The vernacular embraces not only the physical form and fabric of buildings, structures and spaces, but the ways in which they are used and understood, and the traditions and the intangible associations which attach to them.

Guidelines in practice

1. Research and documentation

Any physical work on a vernacular structure should be cautious and should be preceded by a full analysis of its form and structure. This document should be lodged in a publicly accessible archive.

2. Siting, landscape and groups of buildings

Interventions to vernacular structures should be carried out in a manner which will respect and maintain the integrity of the siting, the relationship to the physical and cultural landscape, and of one structure to another.

3. Traditional building systems

The continuity of traditional building systems and craft skills associated with the vernacular is fundamental for vernacular expression, and essential for the repair and restoration of these structures. Such skills should be retained, recorded and passed on to new generations of craftsmen and builders in education and training.

4. Replacement of materials and parts

Alterations which legitimately respond to the demands of contemporary use should be effected by the introduction of materials which maintain a consistency of expression, appearance, texture and form throughout the structure and a consistency of building materials.

5. Adaptation

Adaptation and reuse of vernacular structures should be carried out in a manner which will respect the integrity of the structure, its character and form while being compatible with acceptable standards of living. Where there is no break in the continuous utilisation of vernacular forms, a code of ethics within the community can serve as a tool of intervention.

6. Changes and period restoration

Changes over time should be appreciated and understood as important aspects of vernacular architecture. Conformity of all parts of a building to a single period will not normally be the goal of work on vernacular structures.

7. Training

In order to conserve the cultural values of vernacular expression, governments, responsible authorities, groups and organisations must place emphasis on the following:

- a)** Education programmes for conservators in the principles of the vernacular;
- b)** Training programmes to assist communities in maintaining traditional building systems, materials and craft skills;
- c)** Information programmes which improve public awareness of the vernacular, especially amongst the younger generation.
- d)** Regional networks on vernacular architecture to exchange expertise and experiences.

Appendix I

Sligo and Environs area

The Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010–2016 (SEDP) covered the former Borough area of Sligo together with its urban and rural environs located outside the Borough. The SEDP has been incorporated into the Sligo County Development Plan 2011-2017, following the abolition of Sligo Borough Council in 2014 and the establishment of a single planning authority with jurisdiction over the entire county.

The written statement and the objectives maps pertaining to the SEDP have been appended to the Sligo County Development Plan 2017-2023.

The documents are available for viewing and download at Sligo County Council’s website at <http://www.sligococo.ie/planning/DevelopmentPlans/SligoandEnvironsarea> and printed copies can be purchased from the Council’s Planning Office (City Hall, Quay Street, Sligo).

The policies and objectives of the SEDP will continue to apply to the Sligo and Environs area, unless they are superseded by any policy or objective contained in Chapters 1 to 12 of this Plan (CDP 2017-2023), until a Local Area Plan for Sligo and Environs is adopted.

Upon adoption of the Sligo and Environs Local Area Plan, this appendix will cease to apply and shall be removed from the County Development Plan 2017-2023.