



Comhairle Contae Mhaigh Eo
Mayo County Council

VOLUME 1

Written Statement



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Glossary of Terms

Active Travel	Travelling with a purpose using your own energy (walking & cycling).
Appropriate Assessment (AA)	Is a focused and detailed impact assessment of the implications of the plan or project, alone and in combination with other plans and projects, on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives.
Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)	A place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines and heights, which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, or contributes to the appreciation of protected structures and whose character it is an objective of a development plan to preserve.
Backland development	Development which takes place to the rear of existing structures fronting a street or roadway.
Biodiversity	The variability among living organisms on the earth, including the variability within and between species and within and between ecosystems.
Brownfield Site	A site which has been subjected to building, engineering or other operations, including but not limited to residential, commercial, industrial buildings/land no longer in use and has become abandoned/obsolete/vacant.
Climate Change	Changes in the earth's weather, including changes in temperature, wind patterns and rainfall, especially the increase in the temperature of the earth's atmosphere that is caused by the increase of particular gases, especially carbon dioxide.
Carbon sequestration	Process of transferring carbon from the atmosphere to the terrestrial biosphere (soil or vegetation).
Community Facilities	Facilities that are open to and provided for the benefit of the public.
Compact Growth	Development occurring within the existing footprint' of built-up areas cities, towns and villages.
Comparison Goods	Goods that are required on an infrequent basis by individuals and households such as clothing and footwear, furniture and furnishings and household equipment (excluding non-durable household goods), medical and pharmaceutical products, therapeutic appliances and equipment, educational and recreational equipment and accessories, books, newspapers and magazines, goods for personal care and goods not elsewhere classified.
Convenience Goods	Goods that are required on a daily basis by individuals and households such as food, beverages (non-alcoholic and alcoholic), tobacco and non-durable household goods.
Critical Mass	Refers to building up higher levels of population, services and functions in particular area.

Cumulative effects	Are changes to the environment that are caused by an action in combination with other past, present and future human actions.
Development Contributions	Charges or levies placed on developers relating to the cost of services and utilities which are provided by Mayo County Council.
Ecological Corridors	Nature corridors such as hedgerows, riverbanks etc. used by species to get from one conservation site/habitat to another.
Ecosystem	Is a group of plants, animals and bacteria that work together to remain healthy.
Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)	Pursuant to EU Directive 85/ 337/ EEC (as amended in 1997), EIA is a legislative procedure used for identifying the environmental effects of development projects to be applied to the assessment of the environmental effects of certain public and private projects which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.
Green Infrastructure	An inter-connected network of green open spaces that provide a range of ecosystem services - from clean air and water to wildlife habitat.
Hedgerow	A natural or semi-natural row of bushes, shrubs and/or trees forming a boundary.
Household	One or more persons occupying a dwelling which has a kitchen and bathroom facilities.
Housing Stock	Houses that already exist.
Infill Development	Development taking place on a vacant or undeveloped site between other developments.
National Planning Framework	A planning framework for Ireland that aims to achieve balanced regional development and promote areas of critical mass through a network of cities and towns identified as Metropolitan Areas, Regional Growth Centres or Key Towns.
Natura 2000 network	The assemblage of sites which are identified as Special Areas of Conservation under the Habitats Directive or classified as Special Protection Areas under the Birds Directive 79/409/EEC, or a Site of Community Importance.
Natural Heritage Area (NHA)	Designation for wildlife conservation in the country.

Protected Structure	Any structure or specified part of a structure, which is included in the Record of Protected Structures. A structure is defined by the Act as 'any building, structure, excavation, or other thing constructed or made on, in or under any land, or any part of a structure'. In relation to a protected structure or proposed protected structure, the meaning of the term 'structure' is expanded to include: a) the interior of the structure; b) the land lying within the curtilage of the structure; c) any other structures lying within that curtilage and their interiors, and d) all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of the above structures.
Recorded Monument	An archaeological monument protected under the National Monument (Amendments Act) 1994-2004.
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)	A planning framework for a Region for long term strategic development of that Region consistent with the National Planning Framework. (Mayo falls within the Northern and Western Region).
Residential Densities	The number of residential units per area unit (e.g. hectare).
Rural Generated Housing	Housing needed in rural areas within the established rural community by people working in rural areas or nearby urban areas.
Sequential approach	Where development takes place outwards from the centre of an urban area with lands closest to the town centre being developed first.
Seveso II	Major Accident Directive which is aimed at the prevention of major accidents which involve dangerous substances and the limitation of their consequence for humans and the environment.
Smart County	The concept of Smart County is an extension and the next phase in the development of a Smart Region model, which recognises that, in order for the County to achieve a potential smart future requires consideration of the opportunities, benefits and challenges that smart technologies and data can offer beyond the traditional applications in rural and urban context.
Smarter travel	A sustainable transportation model which promotes sustainable modes of transport such as public transport, walking and cycling, along with other actions such as e-working over dependency on car travel.
Sustainable Mobility	Sustainable Mobility can be described as linking people and places in a sustainable way by supporting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comfortable and affordable journeys to and from work, home, school, college, shops and leisure; • travelling by cleaner and greener transport and; • a shift away from the private car to greater use of active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport (e.g. bus, rail).

Sustainable Development	Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to develop their own needs.
Special Areas of Conservation	Prime wildlife conservation areas/sites considered of importance at both Irish and European level; the legal basis for their designation is the Habitats Directive.
Special Protection Area	Sites/areas primarily classified for the conservation of bird species; the legal basis for their designation is the EU Birds Directive.
Town Centre	Town, village or district centres that provides a broad range of facilities and services and serve as a focus for the community and for public transport, excluding retail parks, local centres and small parades of shops of purely local significance.
Tree Preservation Order	An order made by Mayo County Council for the preservation of any tree, trees, groups of trees or woodlands. The order may prohibit the cutting down, topping, lopping or wilful destruction of trees except with the consent of the Council which may be granted subject to conditions.
Urban Generated Rural Housing	Housing demand that is driven by people living and working in urban areas, who wish to live in the countryside and includes second homes.



1 INTRODUCTION

Municipal Districts

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out the roadmap for the overall proper planning and sustainable development of County Mayo over the plan period. While the Plan is in place for a six-year period, it is framed having regard to the long-term development objectives of the county up until 2040, to align with national and regional spatial plans. The Plan governs the whole functional area of Mayo County Council, including the former Town Council functional areas of Castlebar, Ballina and Westport. The Council operates through four Municipal Districts (MD) in the county, which include Ballina MD; Castlebar MD; Claremorris-Swinford MD and Westport-Belmullet MD (see Map 1.1).

The Plan, when adopted, will replace the Mayo County Development Plan 2014-2020. This plan provides for, and manages, the physical, economic, and social development of the County, in the interests of the overall common good, and in compliance with environmental legislation. It includes a set of development objectives and standards, which set out where land is to be developed, and for what purposes (e.g. housing, retail, education, schools, employment, open space, amenity, conservation etc). It informs decisions on where public services such as roads and water infrastructure are to be provided and affects the type of buildings that can be constructed and how land is utilised. It influences many facets of daily economic and social life, in terms of where people can live, what services and facilities are available and where job opportunities are to be sited.

1.2 Profile of County Mayo

County Mayo is located on the west coast of Ireland in the province of Connacht. The county stretches from Lough Corrib and Killary Harbour in the south to the barony of Erris and Killala Bay in the north, and from the Atlantic Ocean on the west coast to the counties of Sligo and Roscommon on the east. Mayo is the third-largest county in area in the state and the second largest county in Connacht, in terms of size and population. Mayo has a population of 130,507, Castlebar being the largest town has a population of just over 12,000, followed by Ballina (10,171), Westport (6,198), Claremorris (3,687) and Ballinrobe (2,786). Over 71% of people in Mayo live in rural areas.

There is a distinct geological difference between the west and the east of the county. The west consists of large areas of extensive Atlantic blanket bog, whereas the east is largely a limestone landscape.

- Mayo has the longest coastline in Ireland, at 1,168 km or approximately 21% of the total coastline of the State.
- The highest point in Mayo (and Connacht) is Mweelrea, at 814 m (2,671 ft).
- The River Moy in the northeast of the county is renowned for its salmon fishing.
- Ireland's largest island, Achill Island, lies off Mayo's west coast.
- Mayo has Ireland's highest cliffs at Croaghnaun, Achill Island, while the Benwee Head cliffs in Kilcommon Erris drop almost perpendicularly 900 feet (270 m) into the Atlantic Ocean.
- The northwest areas of County Mayo have some of the best renewable energy resources in Europe, if not the world, in terms of wind resources, ocean wave, tidal and hydroelectric resources.



The county possesses a strong community identity and a rich and diverse cultural heritage. Mayo's Gaeltacht region, comprising of three distinct areas (Erris, Achill Island and Tourmakeady), is the third largest in Ireland with 10,886 inhabitants, representing 11.5% of the total Gaeltacht population in the state. Significant progress continues to be made in the improvement of physical, social and community infrastructure in the towns and villages throughout the county, as it is recognised that social infrastructure and community development supports economic growth, provides employment opportunities and improves the well-being and quality of life for the people of Mayo.

The county contains an extensive national road network and rail network, which connects the towns of Ballina, Castlebar, Westport, Claremorris, Ballyhaunis and Foxford. The county also contains Ireland West Airport Knock. The airport provides an international gateway to the west region, and its Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) has the potential to become a major enterprise and employment hub within the Atlantic Economic Corridor.

1.3 Strategic Context

The Plan builds on the review of the 2014-2020 County Development Plan and is required to set out a strategy for the growth and development of County Mayo, consistent with national and regional spatial plans. The Plan must also have regard or be consistent with national development guidelines, local strategies and programmes, and must comply with both planning and environmental legislation. Since the adoption of the Mayo County Development Plan 2014-2020, significant changes have occurred in the policy and regulatory environment for land use planning in Ireland. A new national and regional hierarchy of plans are now in place.

Project Ireland 2040, which includes the National Planning Framework (NPF) and National Development Plan (NDP), sets out the Government's policy on spatial planning over the period to 2040. The NPF influences all spatial plans from national to local level. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) sets out the mechanism for delivering the NPF at a regional level. The County Development Plan will provide an overall strategy for development for the county, whilst local area plans provide more detailed planning guidance for urban areas with over 5,000 population.

1.3.1 The National Planning Framework

The NPF is a high-level strategy that provides the sustainable framework to guide where development and investment occurs in Ireland up until 2040. The NPF is centred around ten national policy objectives called National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) (see Figure 1.1 below). Regional and local plans must align with these NSOs, which are underpinned by 75 national policy objectives (NPOs). The preparation of the County Development Plan has been informed by these NSOs and related NPOs. The NSOs emphasise that regional and international connectivity will contribute to the development of a strong economy. The top priority of the NPF is sustainable growth of compact cities, towns and villages.



Figure 1.1: National Strategic Objectives of the NPF Source: Project 2040.

1.3.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)

The RSES is a strategic plan to support implementation of Project Ireland 2040 (NPF and NDP) and the economic policies and objectives of the Government, by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the region. The adopted RSES (2020-2032) for the Northern and Western Region identifies regional assets, opportunities and pressures and provides appropriate policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs). Development plans for counties within the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) area must align with this RSES.

At a strategic level, the RSES provides a framework for investment to better manage spatial planning and economic development to sustainably grow the Region to 2032 and beyond. It aims to transform the region with a new, focused approach to the delivery of housing, enterprise, infrastructure, healthcare, education and childcare, while also developing more employment clusters in high-value sectors such as tech, advanced engineering, food and medtech.

The NWRA RSES provides for a growth framework to transform the region based on 5 Growth Ambitions:

- **Vibrant Ambition** - *Economy and Employment*
- **Natural Ambition** - *Environment*
- **Connected Ambition** - *Connectivity*
- **Inclusive Ambition** - *Quality of Life*
- **Enabling Ambition** - *Infrastructure*

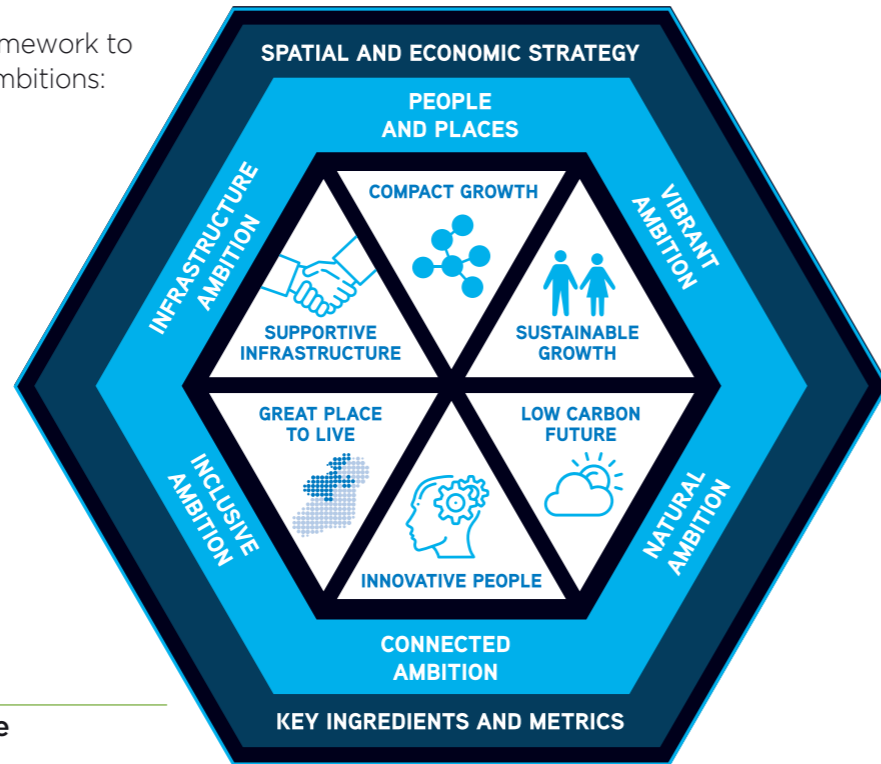


Figure 1.2: Five Growth Ambitions of the RSES Source: NWRA RSES 2020-2032

Figure 1.2 above illustrates these growth ambitions with associated guiding principles, aligned with the NPF’s strategic objectives, such as compact growth, sustainable growth, supportive infrastructure, place-making and a low carbon future.

The RSES identifies the large urban areas as key economic drivers for the region, and at county level. In Mayo, the RSES identifies strategic roles for Castlebar and Ballina, as designated Key Towns, and Westport, as a town with strategic development potential of a regional scale intrinsically linked to Castlebar.

1.3.3 Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028

In order to achieve the outcomes of the NPF and RSES, the Mayo County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 is considered the first of three development plans to 2040. Figure 1.3 below shows how the Plan fits in the nationally, regionally and locally context.

The intention of this plan is to build on the development foundations already established in Mayo and to ‘plant seeds’ throughout to stimulate growth. With the implementation of a comprehensive monitoring regime, the second of the three development plans will provide adjustments and policy interventions that are necessary to re-align with both the NPF and RSES but will also see necessary adjustments to align with the National Marine Planning Framework. The third development plan will build on previous two plans and may require further adjustments and policy intervention to ensure alignments with the NPF and RSES.

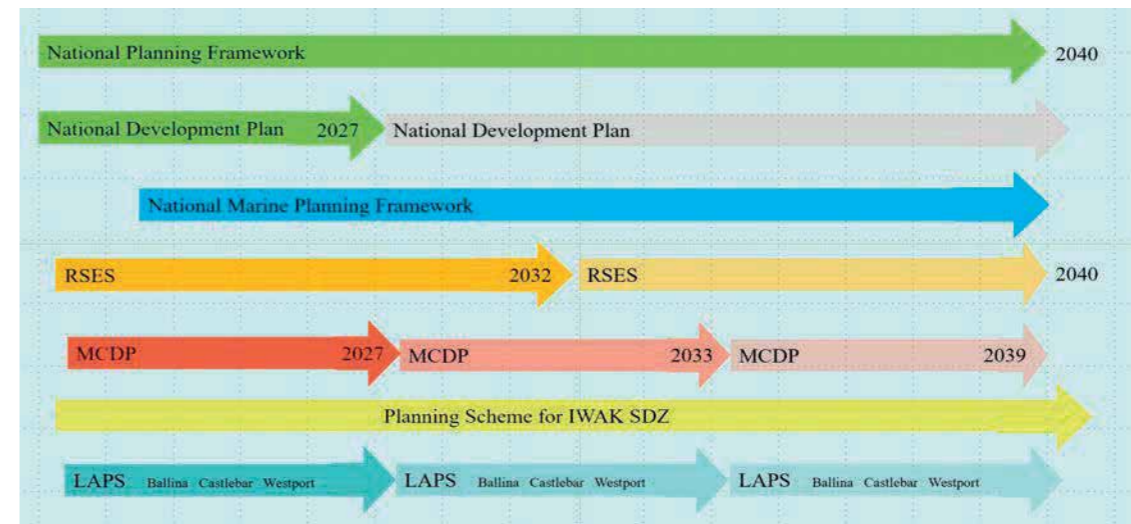


Figure 1.3: Showing Context of Plan, Nationally, Regionally and Locally

1.4 UN Sustainable Development Goals

There is significant alignment between the NPF, the RSES and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These Goals also act as a foundation for the Mayo County Development Plan, 2022-2028. There are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the UN General Assembly in 2015 as a blueprint to achieve better and more sustainable development for all. The NPF states: “sustainability is at the heart of long-term planning and the NPF seeks to ensure that decisions we take today meet our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs”. RPO 5.5 of the RSES expands on the concept the sustainable use of natural assets by seeking to: Ensure efficient and sustainable use of all our natural resources, including inland waterways, peatlands, and forests in a manner which ensures a healthy society a clean environment and there is no net contribution to biodiversity loss arising from development supported in this strategy. Conserve and protect designated areas and natural heritage areas. Conserve and protect European sites and their integrity.

Development Plan objectives can have a direct impact on achieving the SDGs, such as Sustainable Communities and Climate Action and have an indirect impact on the achievement of many other SDGs. The strategic aims and development objectives in the Plan are therefore proofed against the SDGs.



Figure 1.4: United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

1.5 Climate Action

Climate change impacts are currently experienced worldwide. Coastal areas in western parts of Europe, such as Ireland, can expect more heavy rain, higher risk of flooding from rivers and higher risk of storms in winter. County Mayo is particularly vulnerable to river, coastal/tidal flooding, drought, colder winters as well as surface water flooding arising from heavy rain. Tackling climate change is a top priority for the EU and the European Commission has presented a package of measures designed to make Europe the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050. The European Green Deal includes key policies aimed at ambitiously cutting emissions, preserving Europe's natural environment and investing in cutting-edge research and innovation. It sets out an achievable roadmap that will ensure the EU's economy becomes sustainable by turning climate and environmental challenges into opportunities across all policy areas that will result in economic growth and jobs.

Furthermore, the national Climate Action Plan (2021) sets out a course of action to address the impacts of climate change on Ireland's environment, society, economic and natural resources. The Climate Action Plan identifies the scale of the challenge and examines impacts on a range of key sectors including Electricity, Transport, Built Environment, Industry and Agriculture and charts a course towards ambitious emission reduction targets. Mayo County Council has adopted and is implementing a Climate Adaptation Strategy for the county and will also deliver a Climate Action Plan. Climate change is an integral theme of the Development Plan.

1.6 Planning Guidelines

The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, issues statutory guidelines from time to time, to planning authorities, who must have regard to them in carrying out their functions, including in the preparation of the County Development Plan. They cover a wide range of issues including architectural heritage, childcare facilities, landscape, residential density and design, environmental assessment and development management. Where planning guidance documents contain Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPR), such as in the Interim Guidelines on Statutory Plans, Renewable Energy and Climate Change (2017), Apartment Guidelines (2018) and Building Height Guidelines (2018), local authorities are required to be consistent with these documents.

1.7 Preparation of the Development Plan and the Legislative Context

The preparation of the Development Plan has been influenced by a number of strategic international, national, regional and local policy documents, guidelines, strategies and legislation. Figure 1.5 below illustrates the Irish hierarchy of plans and demonstrates how EU and national legislation and policy, as well as local input, will feed into the preparation of the County Development Plan.

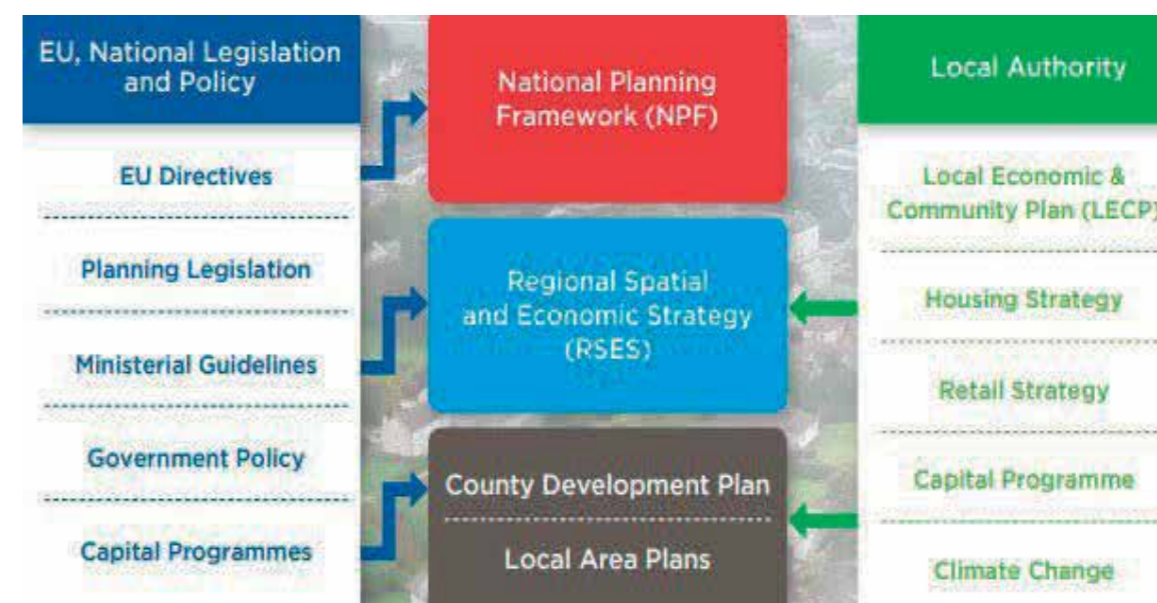


Figure 1.5: Irish Hierarchy of Plans and EU and National Legislation and Policy

The Plan must also have regard to the Development Plans of adjoining Local Authorities, which include Galway, Sligo and Roscommon. Development plans must comply with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), in particular, Sections 9, 10, 11 and 12. Development plans must be consistent, as far as is practicable, with national plans, policies or strategies that the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage determines relate to proper planning and sustainable development. Section 10(2) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended) requires development plans to include mandatory development objectives relating to zoning of lands, provision of infrastructure, conservation and protection of the environment, management of features and preservation of the landscape, etc. The County Development Plan accords with planning legislative requirements.

1.8 Environmental Reports

The County Development Plan has also been informed by the preparation of three Environmental Assessments, in tandem with the plan making process. In accordance with European and National legislation, the Council has carried out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and an Appropriate Assessment (AA) under the SEA Directive and Habitats Directive. These assessments are undertaken in order to ensure that the potential impacts of the objectives contained in the Plan on the environment can be evaluated. This process informs the content of the plan and ensures that development responds appropriately to the sensitivities and requirements of the wider natural environment. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has also been undertaken for the plan area. This provides a broad assessment of flood risk within the county and will inform strategic land use planning decisions in this and other local plans. It is considered that the development objectives in the Plan are consistent, in as far as practicable, with the conservation and protection of the environment.

1.8.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Plan was subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), as required under the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004. SEA is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before the decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. The findings of the SEA process are included in the SEA Environmental Report that accompanies the Development Plan. The outcomes of the SEA process have been fully incorporated into the preparation and making of this Plan. The Environmental Report has been published as a separate document in conjunction with this Plan and is included in Volume 5.

1.8.2 Appropriate Assessment (AA)

Article 6(3) of European Council Directive 92/43/ EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive) requires Competent Authorities, in this case Mayo County Council, to undertake an Appropriate Assessment of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site, but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects. The assessment examines the implications of proceeding with the plan or project in view of the relevant European site's conservation objectives. All AA recommendations have been integrated into the Plan. The emerging conclusion of the AA is that the Plan will not adversely affect the integrity of European Sites, in light of their conservation objectives. A Natura Impact Report has been published as a separate document in conjunction with this Plan and is included in Volume 5.

1.8.3 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) is an assessment of flood risk and includes mapped boundaries for indicative flood risk zones, taking into account factors such as local knowledge, site walkovers and flood risk indicators. SFRA is required under 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Environment and Office of Public Works, 2009) and the associated Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Circular PL2/2014. All SFRA recommendations have been integrated into the Plan. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been published as a separate document in conjunction with this Plan and is included in Volume 5.

1.9 Format of the County Development Plan

The Plan consists of 6 volumes. Volume 1 consists of a written statement and maps. The written statement comprises of 12 chapters. Chapters 2 to 12, inclusive, include an overarching strategic aim and a set of development objectives to achieve the strategic aim. The maps provide a graphic representation of the key elements of the Plan. Volume 1 is set out as follows:

CHAPTER 1	INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER 2	CORE AND SETTLEMENT STRATEGY
CHAPTER 3	HOUSING
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CHAPTER 12	SETTLEMENT PLANS

Volume 2 contains the Development Management Standards. The aim of this guidance document is to assist those wishing to develop in the county by outlining what will be required when applying for planning permission. The guidance document is based on the objectives in the Plan, government policy, planning guidance documents and established best practice.

Volume 3 includes the Book of Maps for Settlement plans.

Volume 4 includes Supporting Documents such as the Mayo Renewable Energy Strategy; Mayo Housing Strategy; Landscape Appraisal for County Mayo; Mayo Rural Housing Design Guidelines 2008, and Record of Protected Structures.

Volume 5 includes all 3 Environmental Reports (SFRA, SEA and AA) undertaken in the preparation of the plan.

Appendices includes the (I) Settlement Assets Capacity Matrix, (II) Municipal District Projects and (III) Key Documents Table.

1.10 Statement Outlining Compliance with Section 28 Guidelines

Pursuant to Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), Mayo County Council is required to append a statement to the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 to include information which demonstrates the following:

- i. 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 Development Plan, or
- ii. If applicable, that 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 development plan and shall give reasons for the forming of the opinion and why policies and objectives of the Minister have not been so implemented.

The following table demonstrates how the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 implements applicable Ministerial Planning Guidelines issued under Section 28 of the Act.

Section 28 Guidelines	Interim Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028
Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (2009)	The preparation of the Plan has had regard to this guidance document. A Natura Impact Report has been prepared and accompanies the Plan.
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Guidelines (2004)	The preparation of the Plan has had regard to these Guidelines. Strategic Environmental Assessment was initiated with the preparation of a SEA Environmental Report accompanying this Plan.
Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2004), and as updated (2011)	Chapter 9 (Built Environment) and Chapter 10 (Natural Environment) addresses the natural and built heritage, and conservation. Policies and objectives contained within this Plan have had regard to various legislative provisions and policy guidance documents, including, the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2004, (as updated 2011). The Plan provides policies and objectives relating to the protection and conservation of the Architectural and Archaeological Heritage. It is accompanied by a Record of Protected Structures. The Plan includes an objective to investigate the feasibility of designating additional Architectural Conservation Areas during the Plan period.
Implementing Regional Planning Guidelines – Best Practice Guidance (2010)	Chapter 2 (Core and Settlement Strategy) sets out policies and objectives to ensure that the Core Strategy requirements of the Plan are consistent with national and regional policy (National Planning Framework 2018, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region 2020), as required by the 2010 Guidance document.

Section 28 Guidelines	Interim Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028
Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001) And as updated by Circular letter PL3/2016 (2016)	Chapter 8 (Sustainable Communities), Chapter 12 (Settlement Plans) and Volume 2 (Development Management Standards) addresses the issue of childcare facilities. Chapter 7 includes policies which set out the most appropriate locations for childcare facilities in addition to policies which have regard to the recommendations and requirements of the Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001). Volume 2 (development management standards) set out details regarding the provision of childcare facilities and advises that planning applications will be considered having regard to compliance with the Childcare Facilities Guidelines.
Development Management Guidelines (2007)	Volume 2 Development Management Standards has been prepared having reference to the Development Management Guidelines.
Development Plan – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2007)	The Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities have informed the preparation of this Development Plan. The Plan also sets out the planning framework for the future development of each of the settlements and rural areas which is informed by national and regional planning policy.
Quarries and Ancillary Activities (2004)	Chapter 4 Economic Development and Chapter 10 Natural Environment set out the policies and objectives for the extractive industry. Volume 2 (Development Management Standards) refers to the Guidelines and identifies the issues to be addressed in development proposals for quarries.
Provision of Schools and the Planning System (2008)	Policies and objectives contained in Chapter 8 (Sustainable Communities) address education provision in the county.
Retail Planning Guidelines (2012)	Chapter 4 (Economic Development) refers to the Guidelines and sets out the retail policies and objectives of the Development Plan.
Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines (2005)	Chapter 3 (Housing) sets out the rural housing policies and objectives for County Mayo. These policies and objectives incorporate the recommendations of the guidelines.
Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)	The Guidelines have been considered in the context of Volume 2 Development Management Standards, Chapter 2 (Core & Settlement Strategy), Chapter 3 (Housing), Chapter 9 (Built Environment) and Chapter 12 (Settlement Plans), to encourage the provision of high-quality design and density in the settlement areas of County Mayo.
The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)	A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been carried out for County Mayo having regard to the Guidelines. The SFRA document accompanies the Plan and identifies areas of flood risk by reference to data available from a number of sources. Policies and objectives in relation to flood risk are included in Chapter 7 (Infrastructure).
Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012)	Chapter 6 (Movement and Transport) contains a specific policy which restricts development affecting national primary and secondary roads, outside urban speed limits in accordance with the 2012 Guidelines.

Section 28 Guidelines	Interim Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028
Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006)	Chapter 11 (Climate Action and Renewable Energy) has been formulated having regard to the Wind Energy Guidelines. Chapter 11 of the Plan contains a positive supporting statement. The Renewable Energy Strategy includes maps, which identify locations open for consideration for wind energy development. In addition, Volume 2 Development Management Standards requires all planning applications for wind energy turbines or wind farms be assessed against the Wind Energy Guidelines.
Development Contribution Schemes – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2013)	Volume 2 (Development Management Standards) refers to the Guidelines, which is designed to assist planning authorities to achieve, through their development contribution schemes, a balance between the costs of the services provided and the need to support economic activity and renewal.
National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015- 2025	Chapter 10 (Natural Environment) notes the National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025, which recognises the importance of landscape protection and its interconnectivity with biodiversity and climate change. It identifies the need for national and regional landscape character assessments to provide a framework for comprehensive and consistent local (county) landscape character assessments. Once the necessary national and regional landscape character assessments and maps are in place, in addition to guidance on local landscape character assessments, the Council will review the Landscape Appraisal of County Mayo to ensure a consistent approach.
Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standards for New Apartments (2015) (as updated 2018).	Volume 2 (Development Management Standards) refers to these Guidelines which provides guidance including specific planning policy requirements on apartment developments.
Guidance Note on Core Strategies (2010)	Chapter 2 (Core & Settlement Strategy), states that the Core Strategy has been guided by the content of these guidelines and in particular the provision of the Core Strategy Table and Core Strategy Settlement Map
Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2013) (as updated)	Chapter 6 (Movement and Transport) and Volume 2 Development Management Standards address these Guidelines and how they provide practical design measures to encourage more sustainable travel patterns in urban areas and best practice in the design of street networks and individual streets.
Urban Development and Building Heights – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018)	Chapter 3 (Housing), Chapter 9 (Built Environment) and Chapter 12 (Settlement Plans) and Volume 2 (Development Management Standards) address types of sites that could be considered for taller buildings
Tree Preservation – Guidelines for Planning Authorities	Chapter 10 (Natural Environment) states that the Council aims to protect individual trees, groups of trees or woodland, which are of environmental and/or amenity value. This can be done with a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) that can be made through the development plan process or a separate TPO process under Section 205 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The existing Tree Preservation Orders are set out in the plan.

Section 28 Guidelines	Interim Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028
Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures – Guidelines for Planning Authorities	Chapter 7 (Infrastructure) states that the Council recognises the importance of achieving a balance between facilitating the provision of telecommunications services in the interests of social and economic progress and protecting residential amenity and environmental quality. The Council will have regard to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Governments Guidelines on Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures and Circular Letter PL07/12 (Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures) in assessing development proposals.
Interim Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Statutory Plans, Renewable Energy and Climate Change (2017)	Chapter 11 (Climate Action and Renewable Energy) states that renewable development has had regard to various national plans, policies and strategies that relate to renewable energy and climate change.
Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities Design Guidelines (2007)	Volume 2 (Development Management Standards) has had regard to the Guidelines

Table 1.1 - Implementation of Section 28 Ministerial Planning Guidelines

1.11 Implementation and Monitoring

Mayo County Council is fully committed to securing and monitoring the implementation of the strategies, policies and objectives of this Plan. The Council will continue to occupy a leadership role to progress and secure the Plan policies and objectives to achieve the sustainable development of the county. The successful implementation of a significant number of the policies and objectives of this Development Plan will necessitate on-going collaboration and a sense of good-will across a range of agencies and stakeholders. The implementation of this Plan will depend also on the economic climate, political support, Council funding and the availability of funding from other sources.

The Planning Department of the Council is the main section responsible for monitoring and implementing the Plan, mainly through the development management function. However, it is important to note that this Plan coordinates the work and objectives of other key departments within Mayo County Council, such as Local Economic Office (LEO). In some cases, the body responsible for the implementation of certain Plan objectives may be external, such as Irish Water, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Waterways Ireland, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018 established the legal basis for the Office of the Planning Regulator and outlines its role and functions, which include the assessment of all local authority forward planning programmes. It operates an independent monitoring role, advising Government on implementation of local authority statutory planning processes.

Under the provisions of Section 15 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the Council has a statutory obligation to secure the implementation of the objectives of the Plan and to prepare a progress report on achieving the objectives not more than 2 years after the making of this Plan. Additionally, under Section 22A (2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended),

each Local Authority within the Regional Assembly is required, every 2 years, to prepare and submit a report to the Assembly setting out progress made in supporting objectives, relevant to that authority, contained in the RSES.

As far as practicable, every effort has been made to formulate objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable and realistic. Some sources of funding that will help in achieving the delivery of objectives within the Plan include:

- Public Private Partnerships
- Urban Regeneration and Development Fund
- Rural Regeneration and Development Fund
- Climate Action Fund
- Disruptive Technologies Fund
- Development Contributions

Chapter	Objectives	Delivery Timeframe	Lead
Chapter 2	CSO 1, CSO 2, CSO 3	Short Term	Planning
	CSO 7, SO 12, TVHO 12	Medium Term	Planning
	SSO 14, SSO 16, RHO 6	Medium Term Medium Term	Forward Planning Architects/Forward Planning
Chapter 3	SO 1, SO 12, CSO 4, CSO 5, CSO 6,	Long Term	Planning
	SSO 11,	Long Term	Municipal District
	HSO 1,	Long Term	Forward Planning
	HSO 2, HSO 3, HSO 4, HSO 5, HSO 6, HSO 7,	Long Term	Housing
	HSO 8 TVHO 10	Long Term Long Term	Housing & Planning Architects/Forward Planning
Chapter 4	EDO 18, EDO 28	Short Term	Planning / Enterprise & Investment
	EDO 41,	Medium Term	Forward Planning
	EDO 53	Medium Term	Enterprise & Investment
	EDO 7, EDO 24 EDO 40, EDO 64	Long Term Long Term Long Term	Enterprise & Investment Forward Planning Marine
Chapter 5	TRO 3, TRO 4, TRO 5, TRO 7, TRO 8, TRO 23,	Long Term	Tourism, Recreation and Amenity
	TRO 24,	Long Term	Tourism, Recreation and Amenity
	TRO 25,	Long Term	Marine Section
	TRO 27 & TRO 28, TRO 29, TRO 30	Long Term	Planning Section
Chapter 6	MTO 1, MTO 7	Short Term	Sustainable Transportation Unit
	MTO 4, MTO 10, MTO 11, MTO 13, MTO 14, MTO 15	Long Term	Sustainable Transportation Unit
	MTO 21,	Long Term	Sustainable Transportation Unit
	MTO 22, MTO 24	Long Term	Tourism, Recreation and Amenity
	MTO 25	Long Term	Road Design Office/Planning
	MTO 32	Long Term	Road Design Office/Planning
	MTO 36	Long Term	Road Design Section Marine Section

Chapter	Objectives	Delivery Timeframe	Lead
Chapter 7	INO 1	Long Term	Rural Water Section
	INO 4	Long Term	Various Sections
	INO 5	Long Term	Murrisk - Rural Water Section Achill/ Water Services on behalf of Irish Water
Chapter 7	INO 6, INO 9	Long Term	Rural Water Section & Water Services on behalf of Irish Water
	INO 27 INO 30, INO 34	Long Term Long Term	Environment Enterprise & Investment Unit
Chapter 8	SCO 1, SCO 12 BEO 25	Long Term	Planning
Chapter 9	BEO 8, BEO 12, BEO 13, BEO 27, BEO 28	Medium Term	Planning/Architects
	BEO 32, BEO 33, BEO 38, BEO 39	Medium Term	Forward Planning
	BEO 14, BEO 16, BEO 25, BEO 31	Long Term	Architects Section
	BEO 35, BEO 36, BEO 37	Long Term	Forward Planning
Chapter 10	NEO 1, NEO 2, NEO 5, NEO 10, NEO 15, NEO 18 NEO 20, NEO 28, NEO 32,	Long Term Long Term	Heritage Office Heritage Office / Forward Planning & Environment
	NEO 35	Long Term	Climate Action & Environment
Chapter 11	CAO 2, CAO 3, CAO 4, CAO 5, CAO 7, CAO 8	Long Term	Ballina MD, Environment & Climate Action Unit
	REO 1, REO 2, REO 7, REO 21, REO 23	Long Term	Forward Planning
Chapter 12	GSO 4, GSO 6, GSO 7, BRO 3, BRO 6, BRO 9,	Long Term	Forward Planning
	BSO 2, BSO 12, BTO 4, BTO 7, CMO 3, CMO 12,	Long Term	Forward Planning
	SDO 2, SDO 3, SDO 12, BAO 5, CNO 1, CNO 11,	Long Term	Forward Planning
	CRO 7, FDO 6, KAO 6, KAO 8, KAO 10, KTO 7,	Long Term	Forward Planning
	KKO 6, LHO 8, NTO 5, NTO 8	Long Term	Forward Planning
	GSO 9,	Long Term	Sustainable Transport Unit
	CRO 4, FDO 3	Long Term	Climate Action /Env /MD Office
	GSO 10, GSO 11, GSO 15, BSO 4, CMO 1, CMO 4,	Long Term	Municipal District Office
	LHO 2, LHO 3, CMO 2, KTO 3, KTO 4, KTO 5,	Long Term	MD Office
	NTO 2, NTO 3, NTO 6, SDO 7, SDO 8, SDO 9,	Long Term	MD Office
	SDO 13, BAO 3, CNO 5, CNO 8, CNO 9	Long Term	MD Office
	LHO 4,	Long Term	Heritage Office/ MD Office
	KAO 4, KTO 5, BSO 8, CMO 5, CNO 2, CNO 5	Long Term	Road Design Office
	KTO 2	Long Term	Arts Office
LHO 1	Long Term	Water Services	
BRO 2, CRO 2,	Long Term	Architects	
BSO 3, KKO 2, LHO 6	Long Term	Tourism, Recreation and Amenity	
CAO 4, LHO 5, RSVO 9 & NTO 6	Long Term	Environment	
BTO 3 BTO 2	Long Term	Belmullet District Office	

1.12 Interpretation

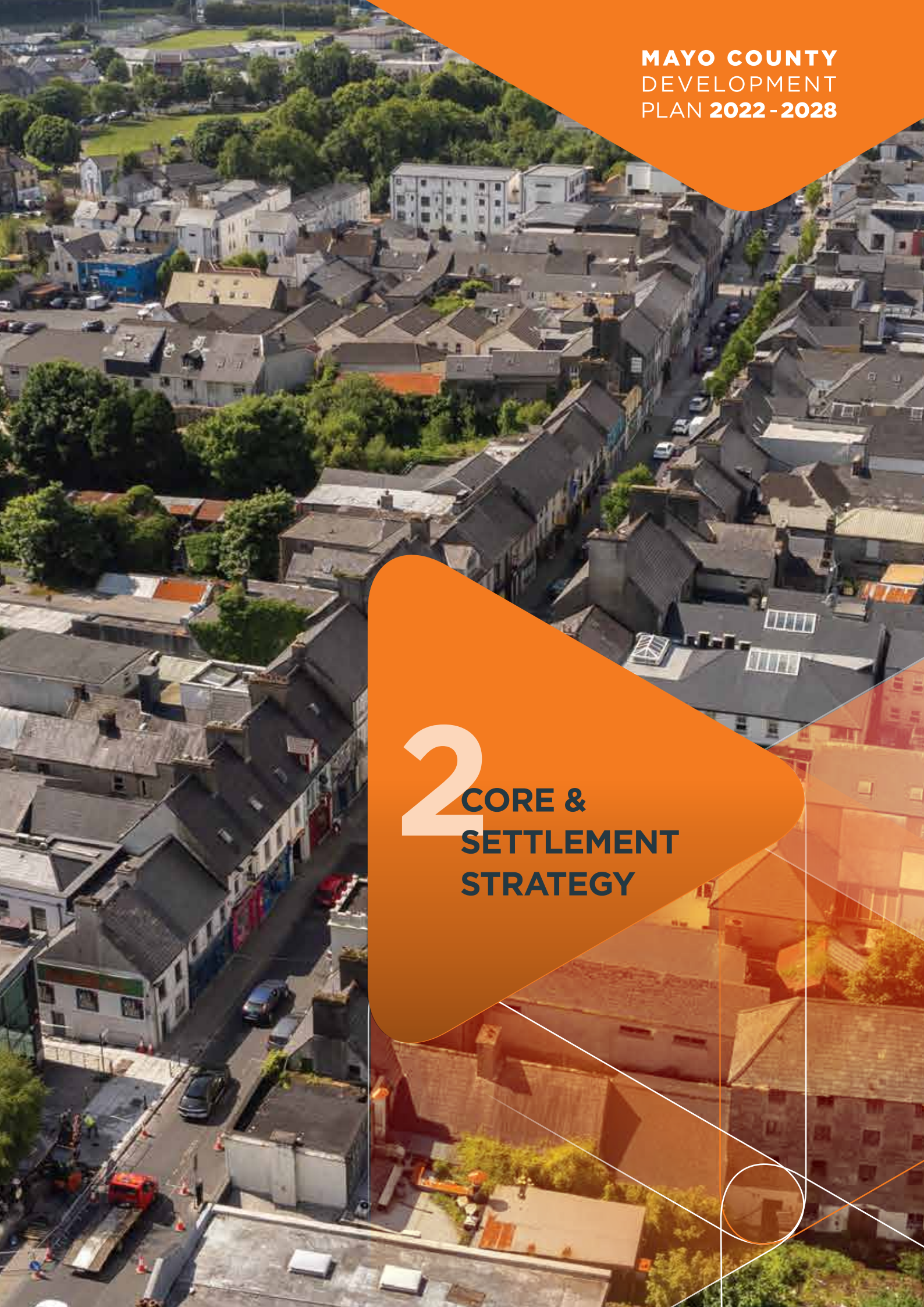
In interpreting this document in all cases should any conflict arise between the written word and accompanying maps the written word shall take precedence.

1.12.1 Protocols

In all cases the following protocols apply:

- The Council refers to Mayo County Council.
- The Plan refers to the County Development Plan 2022-2028.
- The County refers to County Mayo.

**2
CORE &
SETTLEMENT
STRATEGY**



Chapter 2

Core & Settlement Strategy

2.1 Introduction

The Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy for the County Development Plan has been prepared through extensive collaboration between the Forward Planning team, Elected Members and all relevant sections of the Council. It has also been informed by the National Planning Framework (NPF), the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Region, the UN Sustainable Goals and the Strategic Economic Drivers influencing the sustainable future growth of County Mayo over the lifetime of the plan and beyond.

The challenge is to build on the unique dispersed settlement characteristics of Mayo, in order to provide a balance, link and synergy between the rural countryside and urban settlements of the County. This will be realised through the following vision for County Mayo and the strategic aims set out below.

2.2 Vision of County Mayo

To create a sustainable and competitive county that supports the health and well-being of the people of Mayo, providing an attractive destination, as a place in which to live, work, invest, do business and visit, offering high quality employment and educational opportunities within strong and vibrant sustainable communities, whilst ensuring a transition to a low carbon and climate resilient county that supports high environmental quality.

2.3 Strategic Aims

The strategic aims which relate to the advancement of this vision, are set out hereunder for each chapter of Volume 1 of the County Development Plan. The Plan aims to build on previous successes and to strengthen Mayo's strategic advantage as a county, to ensure that we meet the needs of our citizens, communities, built and natural environments, infrastructure and economic/employment development to their full potential, while combatting and adapting to climate change.

- **Housing** - To facilitate the sustainable growth of all rural areas, towns, villages and countryside throughout the county by seeking to accommodate, as far as possible, all persons in their choices to live in our rural areas, towns and villages; by supporting and strengthening the rural economy to sustain vibrant rural communities and by promoting consolidation and compact development of all urban

and rural settlements in an attractive setting that provides a suitable mix of housing with supporting amenities; and by ensuring coordinated investment in infrastructure that will support economic competitiveness and create a high quality living and working environment.

- **Economic Development** - To promote and enhance Mayo's economic development potential through increased resilience in the county's enterprise, underpinned by talent and innovation, thereby ensuring that Mayo is best placed to excel in the long-term delivery of sustainable jobs and an enhanced standard of living for all.
- **Tourism Development** - To develop Mayo as a leading tourism destination through continued sustainable expansion of the tourism sector, with a focus on creating high-quality visitor services and the continued development and enhancement of visitor attractions and activities, capitalising on our natural and cultural heritage assets, whilst safeguarding these resources for future generations.
- **Movement and Transport** - To support increased use of sustainable modes of transport; the integration of spatial planning with transport planning; enhanced county and regional accessibility; the transition to a low carbon energy efficient transport system; and the development of a safer, more efficient, effective and connected transport system within Mayo.
- **Strategic Road Network** - To maintain the strategic function, capacity and safety of the national roads network, including planning for future capacity enhancements, and to ensure that the existing extensive transport networks, are maintained to a high level to ensure quality levels of service, safety, accessibility and connectivity to transport users.



Map 2.1 Strategic Road Network in Mayo

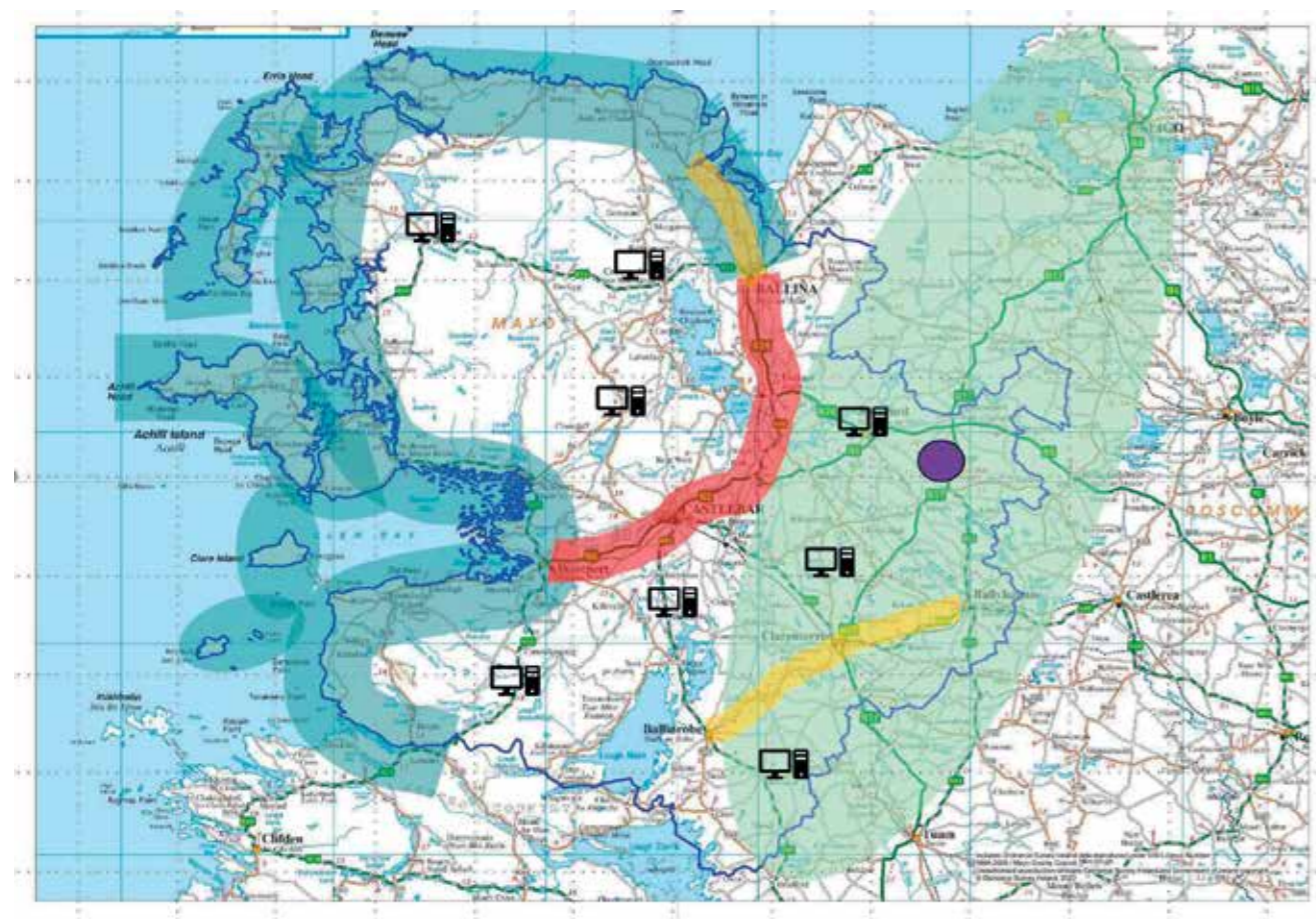
- **Infrastructural Development** - To protect, improve and provide water, wastewater, surface water and flood alleviation services throughout the county, and to facilitate the provision of high-quality information communication technology, broadband, telecommunication information and electricity network required to support and enhance the key aims of best place to live, work, visit and invest.
- **Sustainable Communities** - To develop and support vibrant sustainable communities in Mayo where people can live, work and enjoy access to a wide range of community, health, educational facilities and amenities, suitable to all ages and needs, in both urban and rural areas, thereby supporting a high quality of life for all to enjoy.
- **Built Environment** - To recognise and enhance the unique identity, character and built heritage of Mayo's towns, village and rural areas, to improve quality of life through the application of healthy placemaking, underpinned by good urban design with the creation of attractive public spaces that are vibrant, distinctive, safe and accessible and which promote and facilitate positive social interaction.
- **Natural Environment** - Continue to protect and enhance the county's natural heritage and biodiversity and ensure that networks of green and blue infrastructure are identified, created, protected and enhanced to provide a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits to communities; To also improve the knowledge and understanding of the county's landscape and coast, and enhance the overall characteristics, qualities and diversity of landscape character, its sense of place and local distinctiveness in recognition of the amenity potential of the county.
- **Climate Action and Renewable Energy** - To transition to a low carbon and climate resilient county, with an emphasis on reduction in energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions, through a combination of effective mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change; in addition to maximising the opportunities to become a national leader in renewable energy generation, whilst increasing the resilience of our Natural and Cultural Capital to climate change by planning and implementing appropriate adaptation measures.
- **Settlements** - To develop Mayo's settlements as a network of attractive, liveable towns, villages and countryside in the county with sustainable levels of population, employment activity and enhanced levels of amenity which encourage a high quality of life and well-being and support a sustainable synergy with the rural countryside.

2.4 Cross-Cutting Themes

The following cross-cutting themes also inform the plan:

- Sustainable Communities
- Placemaking
- Social Inclusion
- Regeneration
- Green Infrastructure
- Climate Action

These six-key cross-cutting principles reflect the three pillars of sustainability: Social, Environmental and Economic. The policy context and central objective of this plan is people focussed, recognising that 'quality of life' encapsulates strong economic output and stability, good environmental performance and a good standard of living for all, through the creation of healthy, sustainable and attractive places to live, work, invest and visit.



Map 2.2: Strategic Economic Drivers in County Mayo.

2.5 Strategic Economic Drivers with County Mayo

The core and settlement strategies are shaped by the key strategic economic drivers within the county and the wider region. These strategic economic drivers have the potential to drive real transformational change for Mayo, making the county one of the most attractive places to live, work, invest and visit in Ireland. Map 2.2 above illustrates the spatial influence of the strategic economic drivers for County Mayo. The map highlights the influence of the Coastal Corridor to the west and north of the county; the influence of the Atlantic Economic Corridor to the east of the county, including Ireland West Airport Knock and its economic Strategic Development Zone; and the influence of Economic Growth Clusters corridors to the south and through the central reach of the county. The increase of 'Smarter-working' options such as remote working and co-working hubs also has real potential to sustain strong and vibrant rural communities throughout the county.

2.5.1 Coastal Zone Corridor

County Mayo has an extensive and varied coastline, which is one of the most valuable and sensitive resources in the county. Coastal areas also support a diverse array of related industries such as fisheries and aquaculture, tourism, shipping and gas industries, which generate enormous economic productivity. The Wild Atlantic Way has also been an important initiative that has showcased how the natural beauty of this landscape has contributed to the economic development of the coastal corridor in recent years. Significant potential exists to harness the marine resources along the County Mayo coastline

for recreation and leisure; transport; renewable energy; and appropriate industry. Mayo is strategically located to grow the 'blue economy' not only in County Mayo but also at a regional and national level. Economic growth in the marine sector also has the potential to create employment and increase prosperity in all parts of the County, most particularly in coastal communities.

2.5.2 Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC)

Mayo is strategically located along the Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC). The AEC aims to combine the economic hubs, clusters and catchments of the area to attract investment, improve competitiveness, support job creation and contribute to an improved quality of life for the people who live there. The AEC has significant potential for future economic growth of/in County Mayo and the wider region. The advancement of Mayo's economic growth clusters; Ireland West Airport Knock and its Strategic Development Zone; key capital infrastructural projects under Project 2040; and the potential future reopening of the Western Rail Corridor will all consolidate the AEC. The success of the AEC initiative will attract more enterprise and people to the county and the region, progressing balanced regional development, whilst sustaining strong and vibrant communities.

2.5.3 Ireland West Airport Knock (IWAK) and Strategic Development Zone (SDZ)

Ireland West Airport Knock acts as a magnet to draw people and investment to the county and the region, driving economic activity in the form of business and investment as well as tourism and travel. The airport acts as an international gateway to the West of Ireland as well as the North, North-West and Midlands areas. The role of IWAK as a county and regional driver has been further enhanced through the designation of IWAK as an economic Strategic Development Zone (SDZ). The SDZ secures the future development and expansion of the airport and surrounding lands and will form an enterprise and employment hub for the region.

2.5.4 Growth Clusters

The economic development of Mayo will be further enhanced through the development of economic growth clusters for Castlebar-Westport; Ballina and its catchment; and Ballinrobe-Ballyhaunis-Claremorris. These economic growth clusters seek to harness and develop the complementary strengths and synergies between the settlements and their functional hinterland, to create highly connected centres of scale, with the necessary critical mass, in terms of population and employment, to enable them to compete and grow to fulfil their potential and drive regional and national development in tandem with regional and national policy.

2.5.5 Smarter-Working

The growth of digitalisation and the rising accessibility of new technology is having a significant influence on where people live and work. Flexible, smarter-working options such as remote working at home or in a co-working space within a local town or village, will play a critical role in maintaining strong and vibrant rural communities in County Mayo over the plan period and beyond. Such options will retain and attract skilled workers to live, work and invest in Mayo, driving sustainable economic activity, building communities and supporting the transition to a greener economy.

2.6 Strategic County Development Plan Objectives

The overarching strategic county development plan objectives, as set out hereunder, are predominantly underpinned by the strategic aims of the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the Mayo County Council's Corporate Plan 2019-2024.

Strategic County Development Plan Objectives

SO 1 Population Growth

To plan for a population increase in County Mayo during the plan period of 15,200 persons.

SO 2 Quality of Life for Citizens and Communities

To promote the well-being and quality of life of all citizens and communities in Mayo and to enhance the attractiveness of the county as a place in which to live, work, visit, invest in and enjoy.

SO 3 Employment and Investment

To support employment, encourage enterprise, maximise investment and create an environment that will establish Mayo as a premier investment location, capitalising on the county's existing and emerging key economic drivers, such as the Coastal Corridor and Marine Environment, the Atlantic Economic Corridor, Ireland West Airport Knock (IWAK), the IWAK Strategic Development Zone and the Economic Growth Clusters of Ballina/North Mayo, Castlebar-Westport, Ballinrobe, Ballyhaunis and Claremorris, and Ballina-Killala.

SO 4 Low Carbon and Climate Resilient County

To transition to a low carbon and climate resilient county, by promoting sustainable settlement patterns, the integration of land-use and sustainable modes of transport, encourage walking, cycling and public transport, increasing reliance on green energy sources, encouraging urban and rural communities to facilitate effective change and by building climate change resilience and climate action into all services and functions of Mayo County Council.

SO 5 Development of Sustainable Communities

To support and develop sustainable communities and a competitive county that enhances the health and wellbeing of our people and places from rural to urban, with access to employment opportunities, accessibility to high quality housing and physical, social and community infrastructure, including quality transport infrastructure and new digital technologies, where people of all ages can enjoy a good quality of life and a sense of pride in their place.

SO 6 Inclusive Society

To promote and assist an inclusive county, to ensure that all people of Mayo have access to the range of resources to allow them to fully participate in their local communities, to tackle poverty and social exclusion.

SO 7 Protection of Natural and Built Environment

To create a sustainable Mayo that protects and enhances the natural and built environment, which underpins Mayo's unique identity, environmental character and quality of life and also creates a vibrant county that is an attractive destination for business and enterprise, tourists, residents of the county and creative industries alike.

Strategic County Development Plan Objectives

SO 8 Supporting Rural Areas

To promote the role of Mayo's rural countryside, by developing a sustainable synergy between the rural area and network of settlements, enhancing the rural economy with improved connectivity, broadband, rural economic development opportunities and smarter working opportunities, all within the context of the sustainable management of land and resources.

SO 9 Ecological Impact Assessment, Appropriate Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

To ensure the assessment of all planning applications in the Plan area have regard to the information, data and requirements of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report, SEA Environmental Report and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report contained in Volume 5 of the Mayo CDP 2022-2028.

To require project planning to be fully informed by ecological and environmental constraints at the earliest stage of project development and any necessary assessment to be undertaken, including Ecological Impact Assessments (EclA) and assessments of disturbance to species protected under the Wildlife Act and/or the Flora Protection Act and of Habitat IV species protected under the Habitats Directive.

Ensure that proposals for developments located within identified or potential flood risk areas, or which may exacerbate the risk of flooding elsewhere, are assessed in accordance with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines (DoEHLG/OPW 2009) and Circular PL2/2014 (or any updated/superseding document), the relevant policies, objectives and guidelines within this plan and shall also take account of the National CFRAM Programme Flood Hazard Mapping and Flood Risk Management Plans when they become available.

SO 10 Implementation of National and Regional Objectives

To contribute and progress, as practicable, towards achievement of the National Strategic Objectives of Project 2040, the Regional Growth Ambitions of the Northern and Western Regional Assembly's RSES, and the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

SO 11 Urban Renewal and Regeneration

Continue to enhance the towns and villages of County Mayo, through renewal and regeneration, improvements to public realm infrastructure, healthy place-making and by improving the visual amenity, urban design, viability, vibrancy of these areas so that people can live, work and invest in these areas.

SO 12 Integrated Land Use and Transportation Planning

Integrate land use planning and sustainable transportation planning, promote the consolidation of development, encourage sustainable travel patterns by reducing the need to travel particularly by private transport, while prioritising walking, cycling and public transport.

2.7 Core Strategy

The Core Strategy is intended to set out high level policy to direct the future spatial development of County Mayo, consistent with the NPF, RSES and the Planning Acts. Under the Act, a Core Strategy focuses on:

- Defining a settlement hierarchy for the County that is consistent with the NPF and RSES.
- Transposing the prescribed NPF and RSES housing and population targets set at county level for the rural and urban centres identified within the settlement hierarchy.
- Providing an evidence-based rationale for the land proposed to be zoned for residential and mixed-use development, having regard to the capacity of existing zoned land and the phasing of development and taking account of the location of public transport and services.
- Demonstrating how the Planning Authority has had regard to the statutory Retail Planning Guidelines in setting out objectives for retail development.

Mayo is a rural county with a dispersed settlement pattern which is reflective of Mayo's agrarian history, and which demonstrates the relationship between Mayo people and the rural countryside. The Core Strategy underpins and builds on this rural settlement pattern, whilst strengthening the role played by the towns and villages in establishing a sustainable synergy between both rural and urban areas of the county. The Core Strategy provides a sustainable choice for development between rural and urban areas, increasing the attractiveness of Mayo as a place to live, work, visit and invest.

2.7.1 Population Projections for County Mayo

The Implementation Roadmap for the NPF highlights the Governments focus on achieving alignment between national, regional and local planning policy and practice. The roadmap provides transitional population projections at a regional and county scale, in order to inform Development Plans for the period 2026 and 2031 (Table 2.1). It also sets out mechanisms to assist Development Plans in addressing the six-year period up to 2026/2027. The transitional population projections from the Roadmap for Mayo are listed below:

Transitional Population Projections for County Mayo		
2016	2026	2031
130,500	142,000-144,500	147,000-150,500

Table 2.1 Transitional Population Projections for County Mayo

2.7.2 Population Scenarios at Settlement/County Level

Several population growth scenarios were examined in formulating a settlement strategy for Mayo¹. The growth scenarios reviewed the key determinants of birth, death and migration rate in the county up to the period 2031, including non-policy-based intervention and policy-based intervention scenarios. The non-intervention scenario does not envisage any policy-based intervention but instead assumes the continuation of the prevailing trends in mortality, fertility and migration. The policy intervention scenario utilises an interpolated forecast of population and assumes a level of policy- based interaction. This

scenario was chosen as it aligns with the NPF implementation roadmap population targets. Specifically, the scenario aligns with the NPF projected higher population growth rate for the county, and this is achieved by developing complementary policies and objectives devised to retain 30% of the population that would otherwise migrate out of the county. A central tenet of the chosen scenario is the inclusion of complementary policies and objectives in the plan to enhance the attractiveness of the county for remote working, smarter work practices, and the provision of infrastructure at appropriate locations and scale to facilitate same.

2.7.3 Population Targets for County Mayo

Utilising the policy intervention scenario, which is aimed at reducing migration out of the county and increasing migration into Mayo, the population target for the Plan period to 2027 is set out below in Table 2.2.

Population Target for County Mayo		
2016	2027	Increase (%)
130,500	145,700	15,200 (+11.6)

Table 2.2 Population Targets for County Mayo

The key principle of the Core Strategy is to build on the unique dispersed settlement characteristics of Mayo. In order to provide a balance, link and synergy between the rural countryside and urban settlements of the county, the population ratio between rural and urban will be targeted at 60:40.

Target Population Ratio to 2027		
Rural:Urban		
Rural (60%)	Urban (40%)	Total (100%)
85,790	59,910	145,700

Table 2.3 Targeted Population Ratio to 2027

2.7.4 Housing Land Requirements

The national and regional NPF Implementation Roadmap population targets account for 50% more growth (headroom) than is required up to 2026/27. Therefore, there is limited further requirement for 'headroom' for population growth to be incorporated into statutory development plans in most cases. Projected population growth should be planned in accordance with NPF requirements. These requirements target a minimum of 30% of all new development on infill and brownfield sites within the existing built footprint of urban settlements of over 1,500, with a minimum of 20% of all development on infill and brownfield sites within the existing built footprint of rural settlements. In this regard, lands have only been identified in the Core Strategy for development that can connect to existing development services, i.e. road and footpath access including public lighting, foul sewer drainage, surface water drainage and water supply, for which there is service capacity available, and can therefore accommodate new development. These lands are also positioned within the existing built-up footprint of established settlements or contiguous to existing developed lands.

2.7.5 Average Household Size

The Census 2016 data indicates that Mayo has a population to household size of 2.62, which is lower than the state average of 2.75. However, the NPF states that this state average is expected to decline to around 2.5 by 2040, while also acknowledging that household sizes in urban areas tend to be smaller than in the suburbs or rural parts of the country. In line with this projected trend, a graduated average household size is utilised within this plan to 2040. As shown in the Housing Strategy (Volume 4), in 2027, the average household size is thus projected to be 2.56. By applying the relevant household size to projected population increases, it is possible to forecast required household numbers to 2027 and beyond.

2.7.6 Household Composition

As set out in Section 6.6 of the NPF, information on household composition and projections in relation to household size are informative evidence inputs that can assist with understanding stock profile pressures. Analysis of the historic household sizes (i.e. household size cohort per household from the historic Census data) has therefore been undertaken to help discern and forecast how the composition of households may change during the plan period and is presented in the Housing Strategy (see Volume 4). This analysis (as summarised in Figure 2.1) demonstrates a trend towards 1 and 2 person households over the plan period, which are projected to form a combined total of 62.1% of all households by 2027. In contrast, the number of households comprising of 4 people or more will continue to decline between 2021-2027. Households with four or more people will amount to approximately 22.6% of total households by 2027.

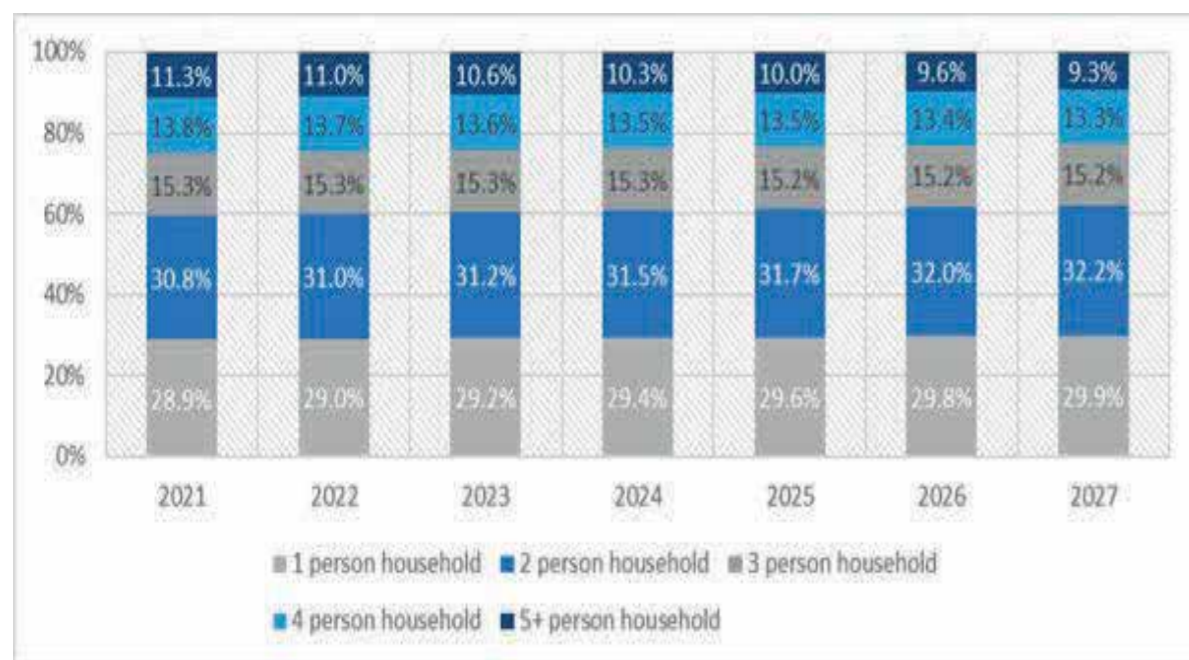


Figure 2.1 Forecasted Household Size Cohort in County Mayo during the plan period (Source: CSO, projected)

2.7.7 Core Strategy Table

The Core Strategy Table as set out below indicates the distribution of future population and housing across the county's settlements in the form of a settlement hierarchy.

Settlement Tiers	Settlements	Population 2016	Population 2021	Population increases to 2028	Population Growth Rate %	Housing Targets*	Housing Target Allocation Rate %	Quantum of lands zoned Existing Residential	Quantum of lands zoned for New Residential*	Quantum of lands zoned for Strategic Residential Reserve Tier I	Quantum of lands zoned for Strategic Residential Reserve Tier II
Tier I (a) Key Towns	Ballina	10,171	11,160	12,348	24.4%	511	15.7%	*	29.73	*	*
	Castlebar	12,068	13,242	14,651	21.4%	708	21.8%	*	36.87	*	*
Tier I (b) Strategic Growth Town	Westport	6,198	6,745	7,513	21.2%	285	8.8%	*	17.13	*	*
Tier II Self-Sustaining Growth Towns	Ballinrobe	2,786	3,010	3,323	19.3%	122	3.7%	66.68	13.87	19.4	30.53
	Ballyhaunis	2,366	2,556	2,822	19.3%	71	2.2%	58.68	6	22.12	5.99
	Béal an Mhuirthead	1,019	1,101	1,215	19.3%	108	3.3%	39.28	3	15.09	N/A
	Claremorris	3,687	3,984	4,397	19.3%	182	5.6%	126.71	8.18	30.75	49.16
	Swinford	1,394	1,506	1,663	19.3%	68	2.1%	53.76	4.48	8.79	15.31
Tier III Self-Sustaining Towns	Balla Charlestown Kiltimagh Killala Knock Louisburg Newport Foxford Crossmolina	7,824	8,357	8,998	15%	251	7.7%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tier IV Rural Settlements	18 Settlements*	4,535	4,741	4,989	10%	116	3.6%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tier V Rural Villages	37 Villages*	2,421	2,482	2,542	5%	30	0.9%	*	*		
Total		52,048	56,403	64,461	23.8%	2,452	75.4%				
Open Countryside		76,642	81,101	81,239	6%	800	24.6%				
County Total		130,507	137,504	145,700	11.6%	3,252	100%				

*Note: Statutory Local area plans LAPs to will be prepared for Tier I (a & b) towns.

*See Settlement Hierarchy for Tier V Rural Villages

Table 2.4 Core Strategy Table

*Note: Statutory Local area plans will be prepared for Tier I towns. Lands zoned for Residential in Tier II towns will be monitored to ensure the delivery of the proposed housing targets. Upon reaching the new residential unit target per settlement, the remaining undeveloped residential lands will revert to strategic residential reserve lands. Tiers III, IV and V adopt a single category mixed-used zoning approach.

2.7.8 Retail Strategy

The Mayo County Development Plan recognises a four-tier retail hierarchy in the county (See Table 2.5 below). This retail hierarchy is consistent with the RSES (2020-2020), Section 28 Retail Planning Guidelines (2012) and the Settlement Strategy and aims to concentrate higher order shopping functions in Castlebar, Ballina and Westport. The sequential approach to development will be applied to proposals for retail development in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG 2012). The land use maps for Tiers I to III, inclusive, identifies inner (town centre) and outer (edge of town centre) town centre areas to assist in the applicable of the sequential approach, whilst ensuring edge-of-centre sites are within easy walking distance of the identified primary retail area of each town.

Tiers	Town	RPGs Retail Hierarchy Tiers
Tier I(a) - Key Towns	Ballina and Castlebar	Regional (Tier 2)
Tier I(b) - Strategic Growth Centre	Westport	Sub-Regional/District Centre (Tier 3)
Tier II - Self-Sustaining Growth Centres	Ballinrobe, Ballyhaunis, Belmullet, Claremorris and Swinford	Small Towns and Rural Areas (Tier 4)
Tier III - Self-Sustaining Growth Centres	Balla, Charlestown, Crossmolina, Foxford, Knock, Killala, Kiltimagh, Louisburgh and Newport.	Small Towns and Rural Areas (Tier 4)
Tier IV - Rural Settlements	18 no. Rural Settlements	Local Shopping (Tier 5)
Tier V - Rural Villages	37 no. Rural Villages	Local Shopping (Tier 5)

Table 2.5 - Retail Hierarchy

2.7.9 Monitoring and Management

With the adoption of specific population targets for the county and each settlement/tier typology, the monitoring of the extent of residential development is required to ensure that development occurs in a coherent, reasoned and evidence-based manner. Notwithstanding that the population increase/household allocations are targets and not limits the delivery of all residential development will be carefully monitored during the lifetime of this Plan to ensure it does not cumulatively result in housing units or population being exceeded within the context of the overall population limits within the county and in accordance with the Core Strategy and S28 Housing Target Guidelines.

2.7.10 Core Strategy Policies and Objectives

Mayo County Council shall ensure that the future spatial development of Mayo is informed by means of a plan led approach, directing residential and employment generating development to locations in accordance with national and regional policy, and with environmental carrying capacity, which can support investment in public infrastructure and services, and which is sensitive to the physical character of the built and natural environment. This approach is enshrined in a number of Core Strategy Policy Objectives, as set out below.

Core Strategy Policies

CSP 1	To promote and facilitate the development of sustainable communities in the county, by managing the level of growth in each settlement to ensure future growth is in accordance with the Core Strategy and County Settlement Hierarchy, in order to deliver sustainable and vibrant rural and urban communities.
CSP 2	To support the implementation of the Core Strategy for Mayo in a manner that is consistent with policies at a national and regional level, in particular population targets and distribution.
CSP 3	To promote measures to reduce vacancy and the underuse of existing building stock and support initiatives that promote the reuse, refurbishment and retrofitting of existing buildings within all settlements in the Settlement Hierarchy and the rural countryside.
CSP 4	To support the compact growth of towns and villages to ensure that development proceeds sustainably and at an appropriate scale, density and sequence and in line with the Core Strategy Table.
CSP 5	It is a Policy of the Council to examine the feasibility and where practical, seek to facilitate serviced sites on council acquired land, at affordable prices within the footprint of existing settlements, predominantly aimed at Tier II and Tier III settlements. These serviced sites would be developed, and master planned by Mayo County Council and made available for sale to persons who meet a defined range of criteria to be established in consultation with the Housing SPC and/or national guidelines.

Core Strategy Objectives

CSO 1	To secure the implementation of the population and housing growth household allocation set out in the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy, in so far as practicable, by facilitating rural housing, while allowing for the accommodation of further residential growth in our designated settlements, subject to the availability of infrastructure and services.
CSO 2	To ensure that sufficient zoned lands are available to satisfy the housing requirements of the designated settlements in the county over the lifetime of the Plan.
CSO 3	To adopt Local Area Plans for Ballina, Castlebar and Westport that align with the NPF, RSES and this Core Strategy. During the transition period between adoption of this County Development Plan and the adoption of the Local Area Plans for Ballina, Castlebar and Westport, the objectives (including zoning objectives), policies and standards in this County Development Plan shall apply to these towns.
CSO 4	To move towards more compact towns by promoting the development of infill and brownfield/consolidation/regeneration sites and the redevelopment of underutilised land within and close to the existing built-up footprint of existing settlements in preference to edge of centre locations.

CSO 5	To deliver at least 30% of all new homes in urban areas within the existing built-up footprint of settlements.
CSO 6	To deliver at least 20% of all new homes in rural towns and villages within the existing built-up footprint of settlements.
CSO 7	To implement all land use planning policies and objectives in a manner which takes account of and is consistent with the Core Strategy, in order to accelerate a transition to a greener, low carbon and climate resilient county with a focus on reduced travel demand through the promotion of sustainable settlement patterns.
CSO 8	To monitor development for compliance with the objectives of the Core Strategy and adjust, where necessary, the approach taken to the consideration of development proposals, in order to ensure effective and reasonable alignment with national and regional policy and objectives.
CSO 9	To monitor and maintain a record of residential development permitted in settlements designated under the Settlement Hierarchy in accordance with any Departmental guidance that may arise.

2.8 Settlement Strategy

The settlement strategy will continue to provide for the sustainable development of the county by continuing to balance the distribution of Mayo's population between rural to urban.

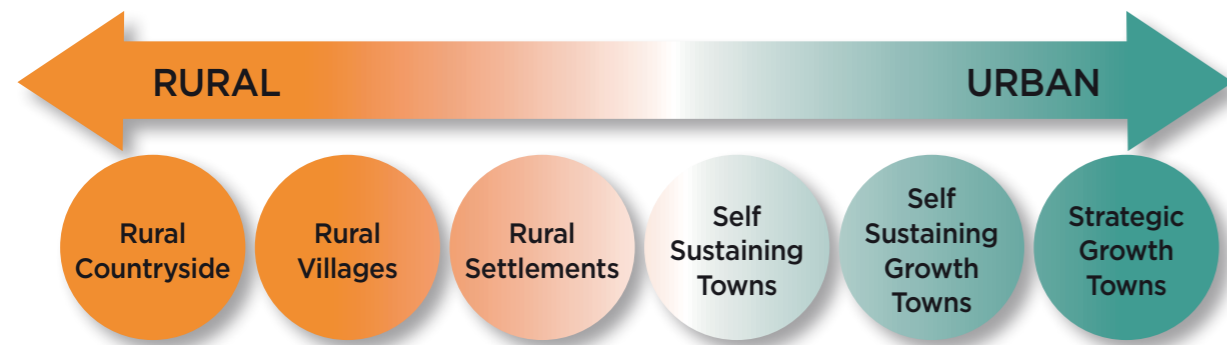


Figure 2.2: Synergy Between Rural and Urban through Settlement Hierarchy

2.8.1 Settlement Hierarchy

County Mayo has traditionally been a predominantly rural county and for this reason the Core and Settlement Strategy separates the rural countryside from settlements in the Settlement Hierarchy. The allocation of the settlements within each tier of the settlement hierarchy was informed by:

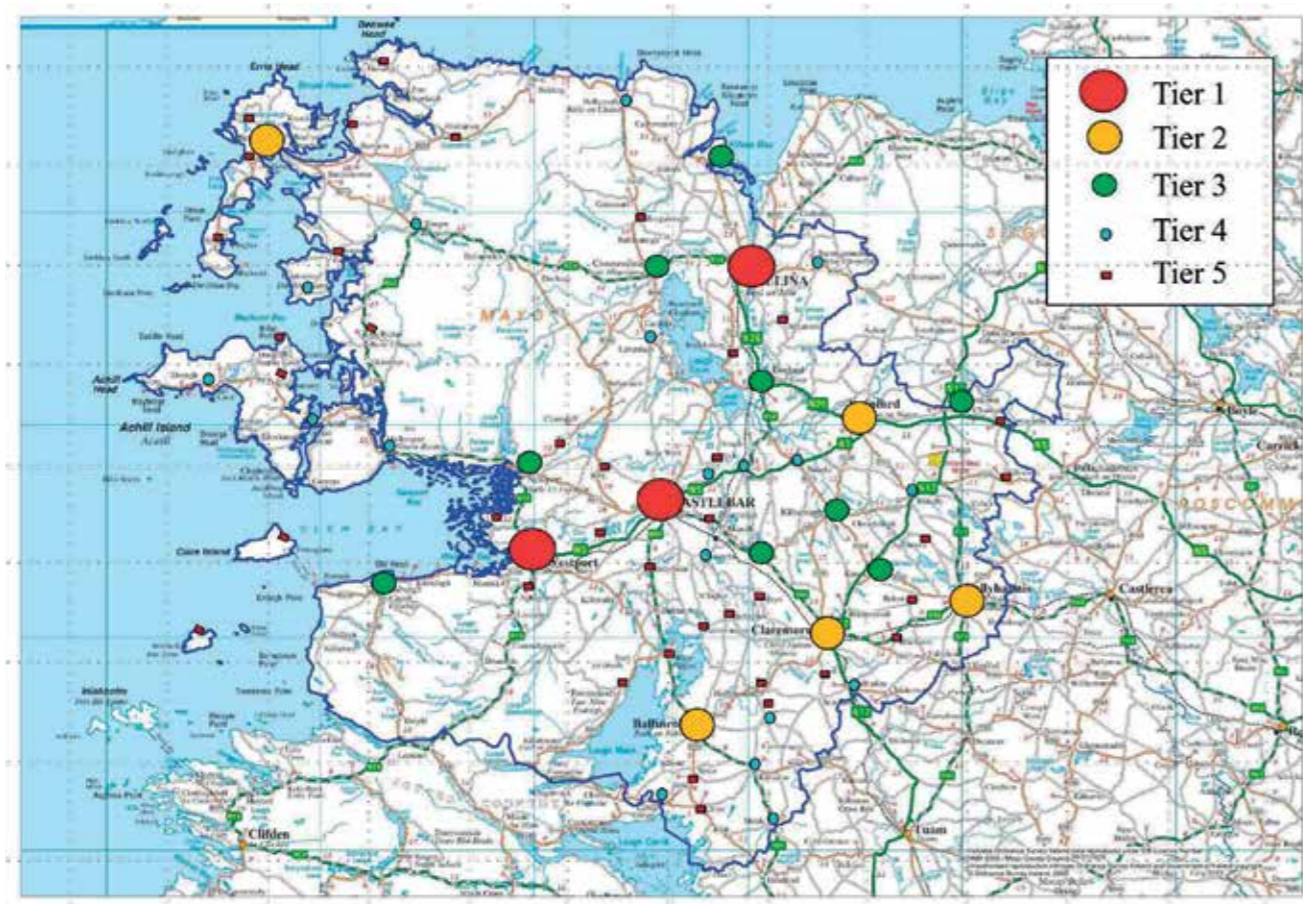
- NPF and RSES
- Population Size
- Settlement Asset Capacity Matrix (Appendix I).
- Ratio of Jobs to Worker Ratio

This approach ensures that settlements identified for significant population and/or employment growth are supported by the requisite investment in infrastructure and provision of employment opportunities, amenities and services.

Rural					Urban
Rural Countryside	Tier 5	Tier 4	Tier 3	Tier 2	Tier 1
	Rural Villages	Rural Settlements	Self-Sustaining Towns	Self-Sustaining Growth Towns	Key Towns & Strategic Growth Towns
	Aghagower, Aghamore, An Tinbhear (Inver), Attymass, Ballycroy, Ballyglass, Ballyheane, Bekan, Breaffy, Brickens, Bun an Churraugh (Bunnacurry), Carnacon, Carracastle, Ceathrú Thaidhg (Carrowteige), Corrchloch (Corclough), Cross, Crossboyne, Doogort, Eachléim (Aghleam), Gaoth Sáile (Gweesalia), Geata Mór (Binghamstown), Gleann na Muaidhe (Glenamoy), Glenhest Glenisland, Hollymount, Islandeady Kilmovee, Knockmore, Mayo Abbey, Moygownagh, Moyne (Kilmeena), Parke, Partry, Poll an tSómas (Pollatomish), Roundfort, The Neale & Tuar Mhic Éadaigh (Tourmakeady).	Keel-Dooagh, Shrulle, Kilkelly, Gob an Choire (Achill Sound), Bangor Erris, Ballindine, Ballycastle, Bunnyconnelan, Bellavary, Kilmaine, Cong, Turlough, Mulranny, Belcarra, Bohola, Lahardane, Irishtown, Dumha Thuama (Doohoma).	Balla, Charlestown, Crossmolina, Foxford, Killala, Kiltimagh, Knock, Louisburgh, Newport	Ballinrobe, Ballyhaunis, Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet), Claremorris Swinford	Ballina, Castlebar, Westport

Settlement Hierarchy for County Mayo (Table 2.6).

Settlement Hierarchy for County Mayo



Map 2.3 Settlement Hierarchy Map

2.8.1.1 Rural Countryside

The rural countryside is and will continue to be a living and lived-in landscape focusing on the requirements of rural economies and communities, while at the same time avoiding inappropriate development from urban areas and protecting environmental assets. The Council will ensure that development of the unserved rural areas takes place in a manner that is compatible with the protection of key economic, environmental, biodiversity and cultural/heritage assets such as the road network, water quality and important landscapes.

2.8.1.2 Rural Villages (Tier V)

Rural Villages in the Settlement Strategy comprises of small villages, of less than 50 people.

Aghagower, Aghamore, An Tinbhear (Inver), Attymass, Ballycroy, Ballyglass, Ballyheane, Bekan, Breaffy, Brickens, Bun an Churraigh (Bunnacurry), Carnacon, Carracastle, Ceathrú Thaidhg (Carrowteige), Corrchloch (Corclough), Cross, Crossboyne, Doogort, Eachléim (Aghleam), Gaath Sáile (Gweesalia), Geata Mór (Binghamstown), Gleann na Muaidhe (Glenamoy), Glenhest, Glenisland, Hollymount, Islandeady Kilmovee, Knockmore, Mayo Abbey, Moygownagh, Moyne (Kilmeena), Parke, Partry, Poll an tSómas (Pollatomish), Roundfort, The Neale & Tuar Mhic Éadaigh (Tourmakeady).

There is considerable variation in the villages included in this tier in terms of scale, character, context, and infrastructure. However, all have potential for appropriate levels of growth and consolidation. In order to realise the consolidation of these villages, each Rural Village Plan defines the village boundary and encourages development to be delivered in a sustainable, sequential manner from the village core outwards, while promoting the reuse and redevelopment of vacant and derelict sites and buildings. A single category mixed-use zoning applies to the rural village plans i.e. Rural Village Consolidation Zoning. A similar approach is adopted for Tier IV Rural Settlement Plans. These rural villages provide a choice for those who wish to live in a rural setting but not in the rural countryside.

2.8.1.3 Rural Settlements (Tier IV)

Keel-Dooagh, Shrule, Kilkelly, Gob An Choire (Achill Sound), Bangor Erris, Ballindine, Ballycastle, Bellavary, Bunnyconnellan, Kilmaine, Cong, Turlough, Mulranny, Belcarra, Bohola, Lahardane, Irishtown and Dumha Thuama (Doohoma).

Tier IV of this Core Strategy contains serviced rural towns and villages with populations of greater than 50 but less than 500, which function as local service and employment providers. In these settlements, defined land use areas can be identified (e.g. town centre, residential etc.) and a broader range of services, functions and employment opportunities are generally provided. All settlements in this tier are serviced by Irish Water infrastructure.

In order to realise the consolidation of these villages, each Rural Settlement Plan defines the village boundary and encourages development to be delivered in a sustainable sequential manner from the village core outwards, while promoting the reuse and redevelopment of vacant and derelict sites and

buildings. A single category mixed-use zoning applies to the rural settlement plans i.e. Rural Settlement Consolidation Zoning. Facilitating population growth through the provision of housing of suitable scale and character in these villages, subject to availability of services, is considered paramount to ensuring their future vitality and viability. The availability of serviced sites, in tandem with schemes such as the Irish Water Scheme for Small Towns and Villages, will further help to achieve this objective.

2.8.1.4 Self-Sustaining Towns (Tier III)

Crossmolina, Foxford, Balla, Killala, Knock, Kiltimagh, Louisburg, Newport and Charlestown.

Self-Sustaining Towns have moderate levels of population growth and a limited localised employment base, are reliant on other areas for employment and/or services and therefore require targeted 'catch up' investment to become more self-sustaining. While some of the settlements in this tier have populations similar to that of a number of settlements in Tier II, the employment base and asset capacity in the Tier III settlements need to be firstly increased, as opposed to targeting them for larger population allocations at this juncture.

In order to reflect this more measured approach to development within Self-Sustaining Towns, the aggregate population increase for all of the settlements in this tier is accumulated and each settlement plan adopts a more flexible zoning approach, within a defined settlement boundary. A single category mixed-use zoning applies to Tier III Self-Sustaining Towns i.e. Self-Sustaining Consolidation Zoning. This approach is also underpinned by the identification of opportunity sites within each settlement and objectives designed to ensure that future developments are of a suitable scale and nature, consolidate the town core and demonstrate the use of the “good neighbour” principle and the sequential approach at all times.

2.8.1.5 Self-Sustaining Growth Towns (Tier II)

Claremorris, Ballyhaunis, Ballinrobe, Swinford and Béal an Mhuirthead

The towns included in Tier II of the settlement strategy are described as Self-Sustaining Growth Towns. These are towns with a moderate level of jobs and services with capacity for continued commensurate growth, in order to become more self-sustaining. Three of the towns included in Tier II, Claremorris, Ballyhaunis and Ballinrobe have existing populations over 1,500, while the towns of Swinford and Béal an Mhuirthead, with populations of 1,394 and 1,019 respectively, are also included. All Tier II towns have jobs to workers ratio of close to 1 or above, with Swinford and Béal an Mhuirthead having jobs to workers ratio of 2.332 and 1.735 respectively, this indicates that a significant number of workers commute to each settlement from their labour catchments. All towns in this tier are also included based on the social, economic, and natural assets identified in each when assessed using the Settlement Asset Capacity (Appendix I), which would indicate their capacity to accommodate larger population allocations in comparison to Tier III towns.

On an individual level, it is considered that Swinford also merits inclusion based on its strategic location on the N5, along the Atlantic Economic Corridor and in close proximity to Ireland West Airport Knock and the Key Towns of Ballina and Castlebar. Béal an Mhuirthead also merits inclusion being an important Gaeltacht Service Town along the Coastal Zone and Wild Atlantic Way. This town plays a key role in the delivering services and supporting employment for the northwest region of Mayo which is at a remove from other growth towns.

A conventional land-use zoning approach has been adopted for Tier II Self-Sustaining Growth Towns, with Town Centre Opportunity Sites identified in town centre areas to encourage town centre consolidation and revitalisation.

2.8.1.6 Key Towns and Strategic Growth Towns (Tier I (a) and Tier I (b))

Ballina, Castlebar and Westport

The towns included in Tier I of the settlement strategy are described as Tier 1 (a) Key Towns and Tier I (b) Strategic Growth Town. These towns are the main urban centres of scale in the county. The RSES designates Castlebar and Ballina as Key Towns. Key Towns are defined as regionally, strategic employment centres of significant scale that can act as regional drivers that complement and support the higher-order urban areas within the settlement hierarchy.

Westport, a Strategic Growth Town in the settlement hierarchy, is identified in the RSES as an urban centre with strategic development potential which seeks to build on the strong physical, economic and social intrinsic links with Castlebar. The future growth of Castlebar and Westport is best achieved by building on these intrinsic links to grow in tandem as a driver of economic development for the county and region.

Ballina

Ballina has a population of 10,171 (CSO 2016) and is the second largest town in Mayo. Ballina functions as the main economic driver for a large area of north Mayo. The town provides 4,810 jobs, with a jobs/resident worker ratio of 1.361 (CSO 2016). Due to its proximity to County Sligo, the town also serves as the main economic, commercial and social/educational centre for parts of west Sligo. This influence, in turn, overlaps with the western sphere of influence of the regional growth centre of Sligo town. This juxtaposition highlights Ballina’s current and future role, both as a stand-alone economic driver and an integral part of the network of other key population centres and economic drivers along this section of the AEC.

Castlebar

Castlebar has a population of 12,068 (CSO 2016) and is the largest town in Mayo. Castlebar is the main administrative, public health, education and commercial centre in the county. The town provides over 9000 jobs, with a jobs/resident worker ratio of 1.920 (CSO 2016). Castlebar, at a more strategic level, is intrinsically linked to the nearby town of Westport and the imminent upgrading of the N5 will also reduce the commuting time between Westport and Castlebar.

Westport

Westport has a population of 6,198 (CSO 2016) and is the third largest town in Mayo. Westport provides important administrative, service and economic roles and functions to its hinterland and has a reputation as being one of Ireland’s premier visitor destinations. The town provides 4,142 jobs, with a jobs/resident worker ratio of 1.647 (CSO 2016). Westport’s large industrial base, its enterprise economy and vibrant tourism industry, as well as its potential marine resources, justifies its inclusion in the top tier of the Settlement Strategy for the county as a linked growth driver with Castlebar.

Settlement Strategy Policies

SSP 1	Support the appropriate growth of the Rural Countryside by offering a sustainable choice for people to live in order to maintain vibrant Rural Communities.
SSP 2	Support the continued growth and sustainable development of Ballina, Castlebar and Westport, as designated Tier I towns (Key Towns and Strategic Growth Town) in the Settlement Strategy, capitalising on Ballina’s designation as a Key Town in the context of the Sligo Regional Growth Centre and Castlebar/Westport as a linked growth driver in the region.
SSP 3	Promote consolidation in Self-Sustaining Growth Towns coupled with targeted investment where required, to improve local employment, services and sustainable transport options and to become more self-sustaining settlements.
SSP 4	Promote commensurate population and employment growth in the designated Self-Sustaining Towns, providing for natural increases and to become more economically self-sustaining, in line with the quality and capacity of public transport, services and infrastructure available.
SSP 5	To promote and encourage the sustainable, balanced development of the Rural Settlements and Rural Villages in an incremental manner, with the emphasis on small scale development over a medium to long-term period, in keeping with the character of the settlement.
SSP 6	To support the creation of healthy and sustainable communities that encourages and facilitates walking and cycling and general physical activity through the implementation of best practices in urban design that promotes permeability and interconnecting spaces.

SSP 7	To promote the integration of land use and transportation policies and to prioritise provision for cycling and walking travel modes and the strengthening of public transport.
SSP 8	To develop the county in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy and to require future residential development to locate at and be of a scale appropriate to the settlement tiers and levels identified in the Core Strategy Table, subject to the availability of infrastructure and services.

Settlement Strategy Objectives

SSO 1	To facilitate the appropriate growth of the Rural Countryside by offering a sustainable choice for people to live in order to maintain vibrant Rural Communities.
SSO 2	To facilitate the development of Ballina, Castlebar and Westport to underpin their role as designated Tier I Key Towns and a Strategic Growth Town, respectively, in the Settlement Hierarchy and to ensure that the growth of these towns takes place in an orderly and sustainable fashion that will not detract from the vitality and viability of their town centres.
SSO 3	To require sustainable, compact, sequential growth and urban regeneration in Ballina, Castlebar and Westport by consolidating the built-up footprints of these towns through a focus on regeneration and development of town centre infill and brownfield sites, and encouraging regeneration of underutilised, vacant and derelict lands for residential development and mixed use to facilitate population growth.
SSO 4	To apply higher densities to the higher order settlements of Ballina, Castlebar and Westport (see DM Standards), to align with their roles within the settlement hierarchy, subject to good design and development management standards being met.
SSO 5	To apply graded densities in towns and villages having regard to their role in the Settlement Hierarchy and where they are commensurate to the existing built environment.
SSO 6	To strengthen the core of settlements and encourage the compact growth of settlements by way of the development of infill sites, brownfield lands, under-utilised land / buildings, vacant sites, and derelict sites within the existing built-up footprint of the settlements and develop outwards from the centre in a sequential manner.
SSO 7	To promote measures to reduce vacancy and the underuse of existing building stock and support initiatives that promote the reuse, refurbishment and retrofitting of existing buildings and the regeneration of under-utilised lands within all settlements in the Settlement Hierarchy and the rural countryside.
SSO 8	To ensure that settlements grow in a manner that is self-sustaining with sufficient social and economic infrastructure, and to a scale which aligns with the Settlement Hierarchy prescribed in the Core Strategy.
SSO 9	To ensure that all applications for retail developments are appropriate to the retail role, function and capacity of settlements within the settlement hierarchy and County Retail Hierarchy (Table 2.5) and have regard to the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG 2012, as amended or superseded).

SSO 10	To support and facilitate the delivery of consolidation and targeted 'catch up' investment in services, infrastructure, amenities and local employment to settlements, where appropriate.
SSO 11	To seek to progress the list of Municipal District Projects over the plan period, as set out in Appendix II.
SSO 12	To ensure the promotion of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas including the promotion of measures to— (i) reduce energy demand in response to the likelihood of increases in energy and other costs due to long-term decline in non-renewable resources, (ii) reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, and (iii) address the necessity of adaptation to climate change; in particular, having regard to location, layout and design of new development.
SSO 13	The land use zoning provisions of the existing town and environs development plans for Ballina, Castlebar and Westport shall continue to be implemented on an interim basis until such time as local area plans are adopted for these towns, whilst also having regard to any draft local area plan, and subject to compliance with the provisions of the Mayo County Development Plan, including the Core Strategy population/housing targets.
SSO 14	Development proposals in Ballina, Castlebar and Westport shall be assessed on an interim basis taking account of the principles of proper planning and sustainable development inter alia traffic safety, residential amenity, flood risk, cultural, natural and built heritage, and in accordance with the provisions of the Mayo County Development Plan, including the Core Strategy population/housing targets.
SSO 15	To support and facilitate the achievement of the key priorities identified for the Key Towns of Ballina and Castlebar to maximise opportunities of regional scale, as set out in Section 3.8 of the RSES (2020-2032).
SSO 16	To identify and facilitate higher and increased building heights for appropriate uses at suitable locations in the Tier I (a) Key Towns of Ballina and Castlebar consistent with SPPRs 1-4 of the Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2018).

CHAPTER 2
CORE & SETTLEMENT STRATEGY



3 HOUSING



Chapter 3 Housing

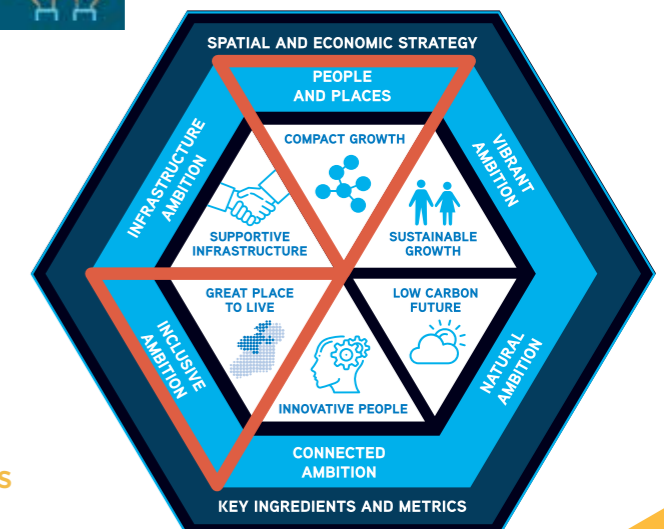
3.1 Strategic Aim

The strategic aim of this chapter is to facilitate the sustainable growth of all rural areas, towns and villages throughout the county by seeking to accommodate, as far as possible, all persons in their choices to live in our rural areas, towns and villages; by supporting and strengthening the rural economy to sustain vibrant rural communities, by promoting consolidation and compact development of all urban and rural settlements in an attractive setting that provides a suitable mix of housing with supporting amenities; and by ensuring coordinated investment in infrastructure that will support economic competitiveness and create a high quality living and working environment.

Related UN Sustainable Development Goals



Related NPF National Strategic Outcomes



Related RSES Growth Ambitions

3.2 Introduction

This chapter has been guided by the above strategic aim, sustainable development goals and national strategic objectives to ensure sustainable growth of housing provision and aims to ensure all housing needs are appropriately accommodated in the rural areas, towns, villages and open countryside of County Mayo. The chapter has also considered the key legislative and policy documents set out in Appendix III, including the NPF and RSES for the Northern and Western region.

3.3 National and Regional Position

Placemaking, compact growth, active land management, and addressing the impact of climate change are some of the key themes of the housing growth strategy in both the NPF and RSES. There is also an underlying objective to create attractive and 'liveable' environments where more people will choose to live. The sustainable compact growth of urban settlements is a key priority of the NPF. The NPF supports the overall pattern of rural and small-town development and seeks to protect areas that are under strong urban influence from unsustainable over-development and to encourage population to be sustained in more structurally weak areas, that have experienced low growth or decline in recent decades, while sustaining vibrant rural communities.

3.4 Mayo Context

This chapter sets out the housing needs of County Mayo, as informed by the Mayo Housing Strategy 2022-2028 (Volume 4) and the urban and rural housing strategy for the county. The Housing Strategy correlates with the Core Strategy and is underpinned by a Housing Need Demand Assessment HNDA, as required under the NPF. The Core Strategy (Chapter 2) outlines the county settlement strategy, the population targets and the amount of land required for residential purposes over the plan period 2022-2028. This chapter also provides policies and objectives to accommodate all housing needs in rural and urban locations over the plan period, ensuring the delivery of high-quality homes that meet the needs of the people of Mayo.

3.4.1 Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA)

Under Section 94 (1) (a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), each planning authority "shall include in any development plan a strategy for the purpose of ensuring that proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the development plan provides for the housing of the existing and future population of the area in the manner set out in the strategy". In order to ensure that the plan-making system is supported by a robust methodology to inform policies and funding initiatives around housing and associated land requirements, the NPF has introduced a new requirement for each Local Authority to develop a Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA). The HNDA will support the preparation of housing strategies and all related housing policy outputs, e.g. city and county development plans, local area plans, traveller accommodation plans etc.

3.4.2 Housing Strategy / HNDA - Guiding Principles

An evidence-based and future-proofed methodological approach has been adopted to ensure that the County Mayo Housing Strategy meets the housing needs of the county and its residents, while remaining in keeping with local, regional and national guidelines. The strategy is underpinned by a HNDA which provides a robust baseline to inform and guide policies and objectives under the Mayo County Development Plan 2022-2028. The HNDA incorporates a range of socio-economic and

demographic data to analyse current levels of demand and supply within Mayo's housing sector, and projections for future need over the lifetime of the development plan and beyond to 2031. It incorporates demand across different tenures, including owner-occupied, the rental sector and social housing and provides estimates of future housing needs, based on employment growth, income levels and affordability in the housing market. This is elaborated on further in Appendix II.

The HNDA undertaken as part of this development plan spans two key stages - current and future outlook; and assesses three core areas: Population, Housing and Economy. These are set out in Figure 3.1 below.

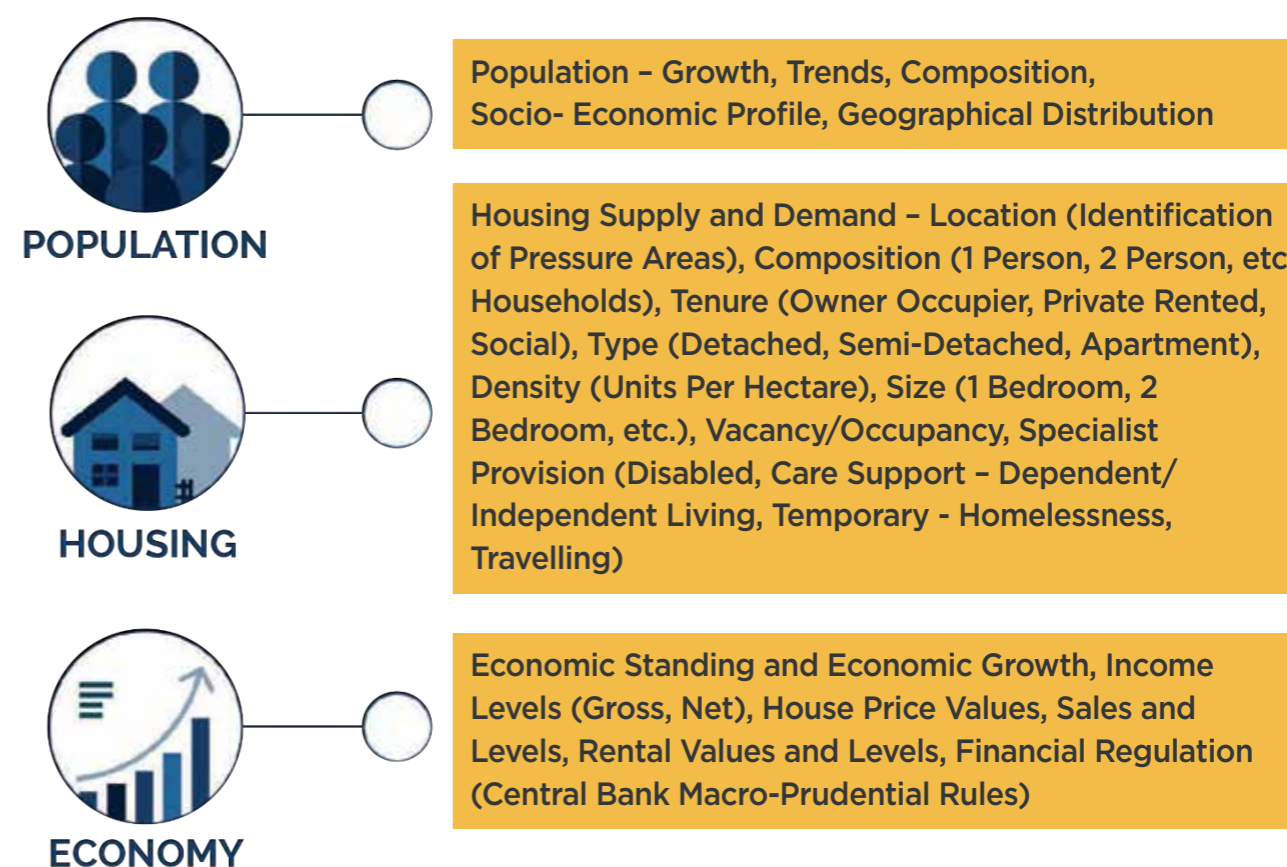


Figure 3.1: HNDA Assessment Areas. Source: Future Analytics Consulting

3.4.3 Housing Legislation and Policy

This section identifies and reviews the key legislative and policy instruments at a local level, relevant to the delivery of Mayo's Housing Strategy 2022-2028.

3.4.3.1 Mayo County Housing Strategy 2014-2020

The Mayo County Housing Strategy 2014-2020 provided a comprehensive review of demographics and housing demand within the county to inform the Mayo County Development Plan 2014-2020. It projected need for the planning provision of housing, as well as the demand for social and affordable housing, within the county based on data from the 2011 Census and regional population targets.

3.4.3.2 Mayo Local Economic and Community Plan 2015-2021

The Mayo Local Economic and Community Plan 2015-2021 was completed to meet provisions under the Local Government Reform Act 2014. It is an action-focused framework that identifies economic and local community issues in County Mayo, the purpose of which is to implement actions to achieve sustainable economic growth and improved social outcomes within the county.

3.4.3.3 Mayo County Council Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024

The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 places a statutory obligation on local authorities to prepare and implement a Traveller Accommodation Programme. The programme highlights that 100 families will require accommodation over the course of the 2019 - 2024 programme.

3.4.3.4 Mayo Disability Strategy 2016-2020

The core goal of the Mayo Disability Strategy is to meet the identified housing needs of people with disabilities locally, whether they are currently living in the community and/or in a congregated setting. It acknowledges the challenges faced by persons with a disability in sourcing appropriate accommodation through private home ownership, the private rental market or through social housing support. The strategy identifies significant disability housing need in Mayo. The housing waiting list identifies that 162 people with a disability were waiting for social housing. This strategy sets out realistic targets for meeting need during the lifetime of the strategy through new build, acquisitions, Social Leasing Initiative, approved housing bodies, Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS), Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), Casual Vacancies and Voids.

3.4.4 Social and Affordable Housing Requirements

The Housing Strategy (Volume 4) shows that with regards to private rental affordability, households which are identified as not being able to meet the 'Affordability Criteria' over the plan period are considered to require social (and affordable) housing. The total households for social (and affordable) housing need requirements are set out in Table 3.1.

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2021- 2027
No. of Additional Households That Do Not Qualify for a Mortgage	63	63	63	63	64	64	56	436
No. of Additional Anticipated Households That Do Not Qualify for a Mortgage and Cannot Afford Private Rental	63	63	63	63	64	64	56	436

Table 3.1: Overview of Social and Affordable Housing Need Requirement during Plan Period 2022-2028. Source: Future Analytics Consulting

It has been determined that 436 households will not qualify for a mortgage during the plan period. Additionally, these 436 households will not meet the affordability criteria for private rental. Households which are identified as not qualifying for a mortgage and not being able to meet the

'Affordability Criteria' over the plan period are therefore considered to require social (and affordable) housing.

3.4.5 Existing Social Requirement and Targets

There are currently 1,311 households on the Mayo Social Housing List (as of April 2020). This can be further broken down as follows:

Area	Social Housing Waiting List
Castlebar	494
Claremorris	274
Ballina	313
West Mayo	230
Total Waiting List	1311

Table 3.2: Overview of Social Housing Requirements by Municipal District (2020)

With respect to unit type, there is a greater demand for 1 and 2 bed units across the county which account for 75% of the requirement. However, demand overall is concentrated in the larger urban settlements of Castlebar, Claremorris and Ballina.

Progress on the delivery of social housing units is documented as part of quarterly updates by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government². Mayo County Council achieved 120% of the Rebuilding Ireland Target in 2019 and in 2018. Mayo County Council also exceeded its targets, delivering 574 units or 119% of its requirements.

Targets 2018-2021		Targets 2019					
Build, Acquisition and Leasing	Building, Acquisition, Leasing	Build	Acquisition	Leasing	HAP & RAS	All SH delivery streams	
Mayo	526	136	93	8	35	362	498

Table 3.3: Progress on Rebuilding Ireland Social Housing Targets 2019

Under Rebuilding Ireland, Mayo is targeted to deliver 526 social housing units within the 'building, acquisition and leasing' category, specifically between 2018-2021. Through 2018-2019, Mayo County Council have delivered 305 units via these means. Over the course of 2020-2021, approximately 221 additional units are to be delivered through 'building, acquisition and leasing' mechanisms in order to meet the Rebuilding Ireland targets.

² <https://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/social-housing/social-and-affordable/overall-social-housing-provision>

3.4.6 Tenure

Tenure is an important consideration for the delivery of housing and Section 6.6 of the NPF identifies the need to estimate the demand for different tenure types. Analysis of the historic tenure split (during the 2002, 2006, 2011 and 2016 Census) has therefore been undertaken in the Housing Strategy (Volume 4) to help discern and forecast how the household tenure may change over the plan period. This analysis indicates a small decrease in the proportion of households categorised as 'owner occupiers' in Mayo, with a corresponding growth in the rental sector (see Figure 3.2)

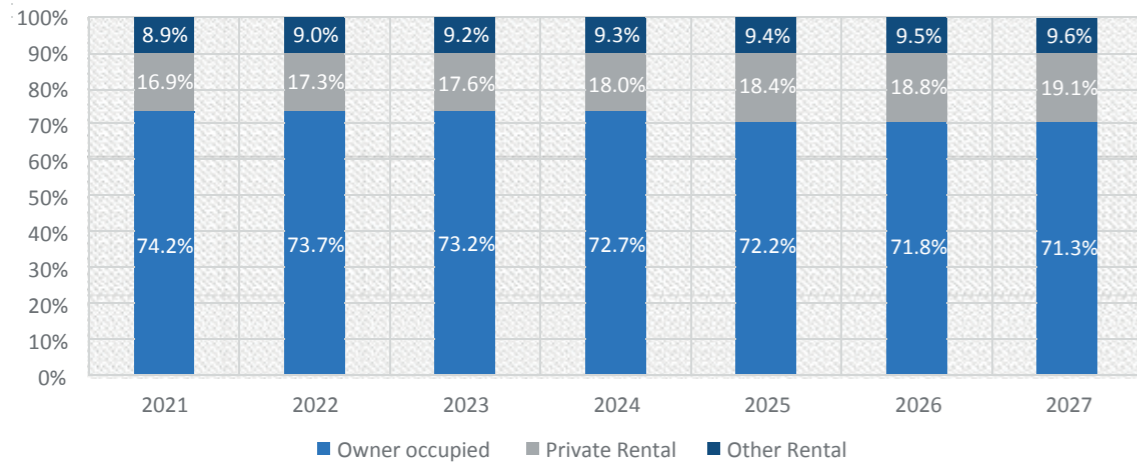


Figure 3.2: Household Tenure Forecasts for Households in County Mayo during plan period (Source: CSO, projected)

3.4.7 Housing Strategy Policies and Objectives

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) sets out clear requirements for the monitoring and review of local authority housing strategies. Section 95 subsection (1)(b) requires that a planning authority's development plan should include objectives to ensure that the housing strategy is implemented. The policies and objectives of this Housing Strategy (set out in Volume 4) are set out below.

Housing Strategy Policies	
HSP 1	To promote the provision of housing in the county, both public and private, in rural areas, small settlements and larger towns, in a manner that provides a balance and choice in terms of location, house type and tenure.
HSP 2	To promote social integration and the provision of a range of dwelling types in residential developments that would encourage a mix of tenure, particularly in any state funded house building programmes.
HSP 3	To promote a mixture of house types, tenures and sizes to reasonably match the requirements of different categories of households and ensure that the special requirements of older persons, persons with disabilities and persons with learning difficulties, are developed in convenient, easily accessible and permeable locations.
HSP 4	To support the provision of accommodation for older people and for people with disabilities that would allow for independent and semi-independent living, in locations that are proximate to town and village centres, and services and amenities, such as shops, local healthcare facilities, parks and community centres.

HSP 5	To promote new social and affordable housing developments designed and constructed on the principles of universal design and life-long adaptability, energy efficiency, good design and healthy placemaking.
HSP 6	To support the work of voluntary and cooperative housing associations in County Mayo.
HSP 7	To consider the use of Modular Units for use as permanent residences, in both single and multi-unit developments, where it complies with the requirements of Section 3.4.7.1 below and normal planning and environmental criteria

Housing Strategy Objectives	
HSO 1	To reserve sufficient lands to facilitate and implement the Housing Strategy and its policies, as informed by the HNDA undertaken as part of this development plan.
HSO 2	To secure the implementation of the Part V Housing Strategy, in particular, through the reservation of 10% of all land zoned solely for residential use, or for a mixture of residential or other uses, to be made available for the provision of social and affordable housing referred to in section 94(4)(c) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) and shall be provided in accordance with an Agreement referred to in section 96 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) and in accordance with Part V Ministerial guidance or any future revised guidance.
HSO 3	To increase the stock of social housing within the county in order to meet the social housing needs identified in this Housing Strategy as well as the long-term housing needs of existing households on the local authority housing waiting list.
HSO 4	To seek to procure vacant homes where needed and appropriate, to ensure their continued use for residential purposes and develop housing on infill / brownfield sites within town and village centres for social and affordable housing provision.
HSO 5	To seek to procure vacant sites or derelict/substandard sites where needed and appropriate, to facilitate the regeneration and repopulation within town and village centres for social and affordable housing provision.
HSO 6	Secure the implementation of the Council's Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 and to review this programme if required and/or deemed to be necessary, during the plan period.
HSO 7	To co-operate with Voluntary Housing Associations and other providers of social housing within County Mayo to secure the delivery of new housing of appropriate design and at appropriate locations over the lifetime of the Plan.
HSO 8	To support the ongoing monitoring and review of the HNDA, in accordance with the guidance on HNDA methodology issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage. This will include monitoring and maintenance of a record of residential development permitted as single rural houses.
HSO 9	To review, as may be necessary, the County Mayo Housing Strategy should a variation to the Mayo County Council Development Plan, 2022-2028, be made or if planning legislation (notably 'Part V') is amended during the lifetime of plan.

3.4.7.1 Modular Homes

The use of modular units as permanent residences, in both single and multi-unit developments, will be given consideration on a case-by-case basis. It must be demonstrated that the units will provide a high quality, sustainable construction with a lifetime similar to concrete construction (minimum 60 years). The external finishes of the units must be in keeping with the local vernacular finishes, and in this regard the units must therefore have an external plaster finish and normal (conventional) roof slates. The units must comply with all other standards pertaining to residential developments.

3.4.8 Rural Single Housing

It is recognised that there is a continuing need for housing provision for people to live and work in rural Mayo to sustain vibrant rural communities. The NPF states that it will continue to be necessary to demonstrate a functional economic or social requirement for housing need in areas under urban influence. Elsewhere, the NPF states that single houses in the countryside will be facilitated based primarily on siting and design criteria. The Plan makes a distinction between ‘Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence’ and ‘Remaining Rural Areas. Map 3.1 delineates the ‘Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence’ for Tier I and Tier II towns of the Settlement Hierarchy. The factors of density per square km where greater than 30 inhabited units per square kilometre were considered the most appropriate indicators to establish ‘Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence’ and ‘Remaining Rural Areas’.

Note: Rural Villages located in areas under urban pressure are to be excluded from the above restrictions for a radial distance of 200 metres from village centres.

Category 1 - Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence: These areas include the open rural countryside around the Tier I (Key Towns and Strategic Growth Town) and Tier II (Self-Sustaining Growth Towns) towns. They have been designated to support the sustainable growth of the urban areas, to provide for the immediate, local rural community who have a genuine housing requirement, while directing urban generated housing into designated settlements, maintaining their vitality and viability. It is recognised that new dwellings in these areas make a contribution to the vitality and viability of the local rural and urban communities.

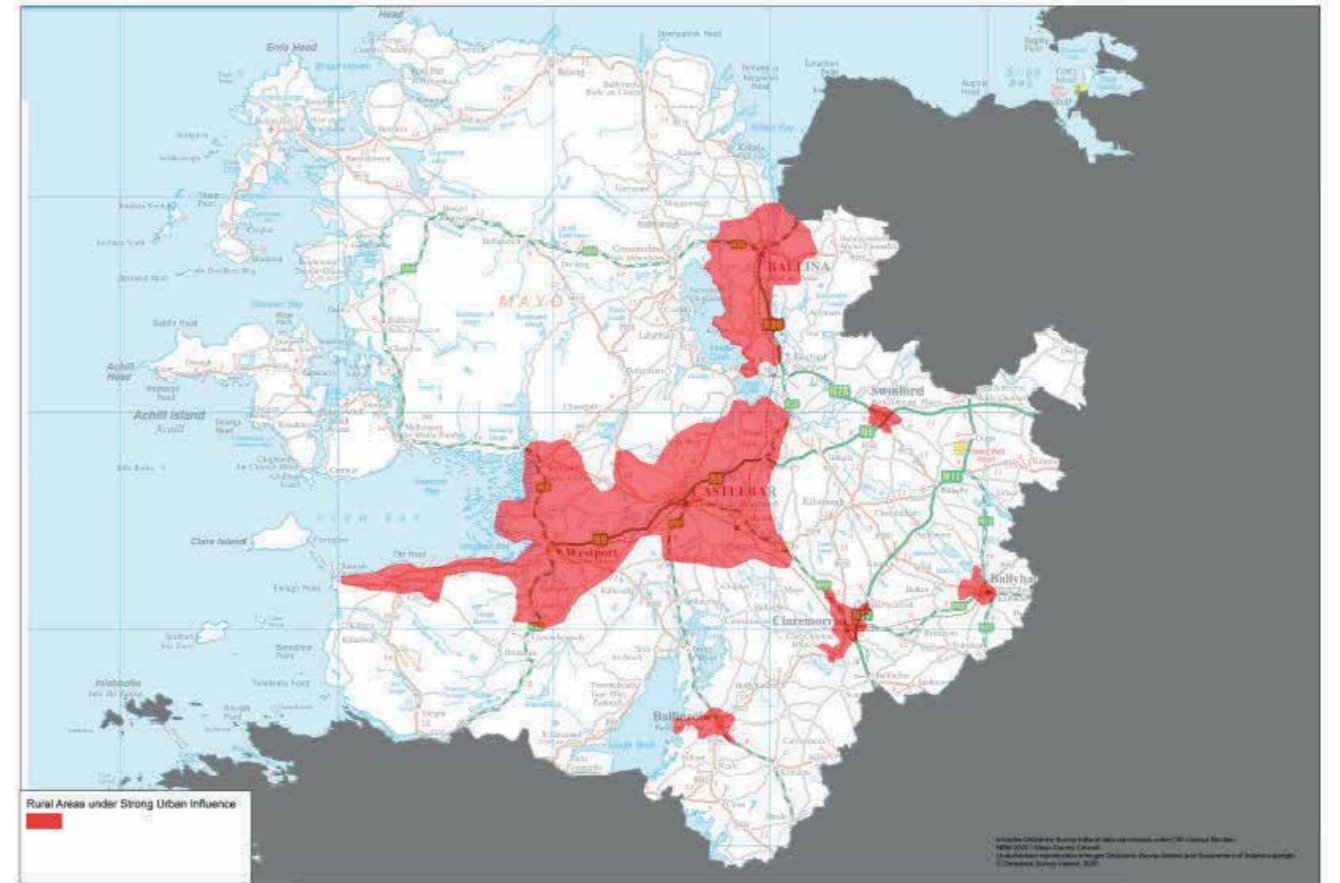
Category 2 - Remaining Rural Areas: These areas comprise of all other rural areas outside of the identified pressure areas under strong urban influence. It is recognised that sustaining smaller community areas is important and as such, it is considered appropriate to encourage rural housing in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. In these areas, the Council recognises the importance of increasing population and supporting the rural economy, while seeking to consolidate the existing rural town and village network.

The sensitive reuse, refurbishment and replacement of existing rural dwellings is also recognised as a vital element in maintaining the vibrancy of the countryside.

The Council also recognises the need to continue to cater for local rural housing needs in areas that are visually and/or environmentally sensitive, such as Scenic Routes; Scenic Routes with Scenic Views and Coastal Areas/Lakeshores (see Map 10.2 in Chapter 10), to ensure a balance between maintaining vibrant, all year round, rural communities, while safeguarding the physical beauty and natural environment of the county.

- **Category 1 - Scenic Routes:** These are public roads passing through or close to areas of outstanding natural beauty, or places of interest, showcasing the unique landscape character and natural environment of Mayo, which would have a low capacity to absorb new development.
- **Category 2 - Scenic Routes Scenic Views:** These are locations along Mayo’s Scenic Routes that offer the most advantageous locations to view to and from areas of outstanding natural beauty and / or places of interests, which would have an extremely low capacity to absorb new development.

- **Category 3 - Coastal Areas / Lakeshores:** These are areas along Mayo’s coastline and larger lakeshores that tend to be open in character, highly visible with intrinsic scenic qualities which have an extremely low capacity to absorb new development.



Map 3.1 Rural Areas under Strong urban Influence

Rural Housing Policies	
RHP 1	To support and promote strong vibrant sustainable rural communities in County Mayo.
RHP 2	To support the development of all rural areas to regain sustainability and vibrancy and to reverse the significant rural population decline since 1951.
RHP 3	To endeavour to accommodate the housing needs of the population, as projected in the Core Strategy, while at all times seeking to facilitate, as far as possible, all persons in their choices to live in our rural areas, towns and villages, subject to normal planning considerations and carrying capacity of natural resources.
RHP 4	To ensure that future housing in rural areas have regard to the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2005 (DOEHLG) or any amended or superseding guidelines.
RHP 5	To ensure that rural housing applications employ site specific design solutions to provide for proposals that integrate into and reflect and enhance local landscape character, in terms of siting, design, materials, finishes and landscaping.

RHP 6 To encourage the reuse of an existing rural building/structure other than a house for residential development subject to proper planning and sustainable development.

RHP 7 To consider replacement dwellings or development of other structures to habitable homes in all rural areas, subject to normal planning considerations.

RHP 8 To require that new houses in the rural areas ensure the protection of water quality in the arrangements for on-site wastewater disposal, ensure provision of a safe means of access in relation to road and public safety, avoid flood risk and ensure the conservation of sensitive areas such as natural habitats, ecological connectivity, the enjoyment of protected structures and other aspects of heritage.

Rural Housing Objectives

To facilitate single houses in the countryside. However, in Rural Areas under Urban Influence applicants will be required to demonstrate a social or economic link to the area in which they wish to build. An economic need would include applicants having a genuine housing need and whose future or current employment is in close proximity to the primary residence they propose to build. Local rural area includes, but is not limited to Parish, District Electoral Division and Townlands. A genuine housing need includes, but is not limited to:

1. Farmers, their sons and daughters, close relations or any persons taking over the running of a farm in the area in which they propose to live.
2. Sons, daughters or other relations of non-farming persons who have spent a period of their lives living in the general rural area in which they propose to build a home.
3. Returning immigrants who spent a period of their lives living in the rural area in which propose to build and now wish to return to reside close or convenient to family members or guardians to care for or support them or work locally or to retire.
4. Persons involved in farming activity including equine enterprise, or persons employed or are intending to take up employment in any other local service, enterprise or profession.
5. Persons whose health circumstances require them to live in a particular environment or close to family support. Applicants qualifying under this category of housing need are required to demonstrate by way of medical decertation why this is preferable.
6. Where permission has been granted for a rural housing proposal in an area deemed to be under urban pressure an occupancy condition may be imposed under section 47 of the Planning and Development act 2000.

An occupancy clause shall not be applied to any successful application outside of areas deemed to be under urban pressure.

The Residency Condition shall not affect the sale of the house or site by a mortgagee in possession or by any person deriving title from such a sale where force majeure applies, for example, death, illness, relationship break up, emigration, unemployment, relocation due to work issues which would necessitate a new primary place of residence.

RHO 1

RHO 2 In rural areas not classified as in Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence, there is a presumption in favour of facilitating the provision of single housing in the countryside, based on siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans, except in the case of single houses seeking to locate along Mayo's Scenic Routes/ Scenic Routes with Scenic Views or Coastal Areas/Lakeshores (See RHO 3 below).

Housing applications along Mayo's Scenic routes, will be considered where applicants can demonstrate a clear need to locate in the area concerned, whilst ensuring that it:

Does not impinge in any significant way on the character, integrity and distinctiveness of the area

RHO 3 Meets high standards in siting and design

Satisfies all other criteria with regard to, inter alia, servicing, public safety, and environmental considerations

Demonstrates enhancement to local landscape character and ecological connectivity

Note: An occupancy clause will be attached to any grant of planning permission.

Housing applications, within Mayo's Coastal Areas and Lakeshores and within areas

along scenic routes with designated scenic views, will be considered where the applicants can demonstrate a long-standing social link to the area concerned, whilst ensuring that it:

Does not impinge in any significant way on the character, integrity and distinctiveness of the area

RHO 4 Cannot be considered at an alternative location

Meets high standards in siting and design

Satisfies all other criteria with regard to, inter alia, servicing, public safety, and environmental considerations

Demonstrates enhancement to local landscape character and ecological connectivity

Note: An occupancy clause will be attached to any grant of planning permission.

RHO 5 To advise all rural housing applicants to utilise the Design Guidelines for Rural Housing (Mayo County Council) and core principles of same.

RHO 6 To review the existing Design Guidelines for Rural Housing during the lifetime of this plan.

RHO 7 That there will be a general presumption against allowing ribbon development i.e. greater than 5 houses in a row over 250m of road frontage, in any area outside of the development boundaries of all settlements listed in the Settlement Hierarchy of this plan.

RHO 8 Applicants seeking to replace or reuse an existing house or other structure such as a church, schoolhouse or other substantial building in any rural area will not be required to demonstrate a housing need and will be assessed under normal planning considerations.

RHO 9	To discourage the demolition and replacement of traditional or vernacular rural houses in order to protect the varied types of housing stock in rural areas of the County and to preserve the rural built heritage. Demolition and replacement will only be considered, on a case-by-case basis, where it is clearly demonstrated by way of a suitably qualified structural engineer's report that the dwelling/structure is not reasonably capable of being made structurally sound or otherwise improved.
RHO 10	To require that any proposal to extend/refurbish an existing rural dwelling house, occupied or otherwise, takes account of the siting and size of the existing building and endeavours to ensure that the design, scale and materials used in the refurbishment and/or extension are in keeping and sympathetic with the existing structure and that mature landscape features are retained and enhanced, as appropriate.
RHO 11	Buildings which are ancillary to existing rural dwelling(s), such as self-isolation units/granny flats/independent living unit or remote working office unit will be considered on their individual merits, subject to compliance with the criteria outlined in Section 2.9 of Volume 2 (Development Management Standards) of the Plan.
RHO 12	Mayo County Council supports and encourages multi-generational housing, and the adaption of existing housing to facilitate multi-generational living, whereby a family member of an older or younger generation (or both) can be facilitated with the provision of additional accommodation onto an existing dwelling, the adaption of the existing accommodation, or at construction, the facilitation of the need for multigenerational living.

3.4.9 Housing in Towns and Villages

The sustainable growth of compact urban and rural settlements is a top priority of the NPF and RSES, with particular emphasis on the regeneration and repopulation of core and built-up areas. This approach focuses on maximising the use of infill, vacant and under-utilised sites and of buildings that are suitable and capable of re-use to provide housing, amenities, jobs and services. The Plan aims to develop and support the consolidated growth of Mayo's urban and rural settlements in a sequential manner. This will be achieved by locating a high proportion of housing in the existing built-up footprints of each settlement at appropriate densities, thereby strengthening town and village centres. New housing allocation must be consistent with the Core Strategy and be proportionate to the size, function and capacity of settlements in accordance with the Settlement Hierarchy.

The plan seeks to ensure the delivery of high-quality residential developments prepared, designed and laid out in accordance with the standards as set out in Development Management Standards (Volume 2) and Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines. New housing developments must enhance the unique identity and character of Mayo's towns and villages and be appropriate to its location and surrounding context. Residential schemes must be of an appropriate density, provide high quality design, layout and public realm. They must also be underpinned by good urban design with the creation of attractive public spaces that are vibrant, distinctive, safe and accessible and which promote and facilitate active travel.

3.4.10 Apartment Development

The Planning Authority acknowledges that increasing prevailing heights has a critical role to play in addressing the delivery of more compact growth in our urban areas, making optimal use of the capacity of sites in urban locations where transport, employment, services or retail development can achieve a requisite level of intensity for sustainability. In Mayo, 4% of households lived in apartments in 2016

(Census), substantially lower than the national rate of 12%. 28% of all households in the county were one person households. In line with housing generally, the scale and extent of apartment development should increase in relation to proximity to core urban centres and other relevant factors. Existing public transport nodes or locations where high frequency public transport can be provided, that are close to locations of employment and a range of urban amenities, including parks/waterfronts, shopping and other services, are also particularly suited to apartments. In considering proposals for apartment developments, the Council will have regard to any specific planning policy requirements (SPPRs) set out in the 'Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2018).

3.4.11 Residential Densities

Higher densities will be applied to the higher order settlements of Ballina and Castlebar to align with their roles as Key Towns, subject to good design and development management standards being met. Higher densities will also be applied to Westport, in recognition of its Tier I status within the settlement hierarchy. It is important that the density of new development in towns and villages is reflective of the existing character and that growth is linked to infrastructural capacity. As such, there will be a graded reduction in residential density for Self-Sustaining Growth Towns and Self-Sustaining Towns and Villages that are commensurate to the existing built environment.

3.4.12 Layout and Design

In considering proposals for development, the Council will have regard to the Guidelines on 'Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities - Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities' (2007); 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' and the accompanying 'Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide' (2009); and 'Sustainable Rural Housing - Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2005), together with the Mayo Rural Housing Design Guidelines (2008). Furthermore, regard will also be had to any specific planning policy requirements (SPPRs) set out in the 'Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2018).

Town and Village Housing Policies	
TVHP 1	To support the development of quality residential schemes having regard to and being consistent with the standards and principles set out in the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) and any relevant specific planning policy requirements (SPPRs) in the 'Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2018) and the 'Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2018) (and as updated).
TVHP 2	To support the creation of attractive residential developments with a range of housing options and appropriate provision of functional public and private open space that is consistent with the standards and principles set out in the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and the associated Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice Guide, DEHLG (2009) and any subsequent guidelines.

TVHP 3	To encourage and foster the creation of attractive, mixed use, sustainable communities that include a suitable mix of housing types including larger detached units, and tenure with supporting facilities, amenities and services that meet the needs of the community and are in accordance with the principles of universal design, life-long adaptability, energy efficiency and urban greening, in as far as practicable.
TVHP 4	To encourage the reuse of upper floors above commercial premises for residential accommodation
TVHP 5	To promote higher residential densities in appropriate locations, and in particular, close to town centres and along public transport corridors, in accordance with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, DEHLG (2009).
TVHP 6	To promote innovation in architectural design that delivers buildings of a high quality that positively contribute to the built environment and local streetscape.
TVHP 7	To promote the development of vacant residential and regeneration sites in all development centres in the county, as appropriate, in accordance with the requirements of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended).
TVHP 8	To direct multiple residential developments to those settlements identified in the Core Strategy and to require that the scale of such development is in accordance with growth projected within that specific settlement, except where there is otherwise a demonstrable need.

Town and Village Housing Objectives

TVHO 1	To ensure that a suitable variety and mix of dwelling types and sizes is provided in developments to meet different needs, having regard to demographic and social changes, whilst all times acknowledging and reflecting the existing character of the area.
TVHO 2	To require residential development to demonstrate that a housing density appropriate to its context is achieved, providing for a sustainable pattern of development, whilst ensuring a high-quality living environment.
TVHO 3	To ensure all apartments are designed having regard to the standards principles and any specific planning policy requirements (SPPRs) outlined in the Design Standards for New Apartments - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (March 2018) (or as updated).
TVHO 4	To ensure the provision of childcare facilities as an integral part of proposals for new residential developments, having regard to the DEHLG's Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2001 (as may be updated) in relation to the provision of childcare facilities, where appropriate.

TVHO 5	To achieve minimum appropriate densities and provide an adequate mix of building heights and typologies appropriate to the urban context having regard to the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009); Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2018) and the 'Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2018) (or as updated), including any relevant specific planning policy requirements (SPPRs), where appropriate.
TVHO 6	To require that applications for residential development take an integrated and balanced approach to movement, place making, and streetscape design in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, DTTS and DECLG (2013 as amended).
TVHO 7	To ensure the provision of adequate areas of high quality, safe and overlooked open space within residential developments and support the provision of play and recreational areas, including pollinator-friendly management of public open space, in all new large residential developments.
TVHO 8	To require that development proposals for new residential developments in settlements demonstrate a high-quality design process, including layout, specifications, and external finishes.
TVHO 9	To guide multiple residential development in a sequential manner outward from the core area of settlements, to maximise the utility of existing and future infrastructure provision, to promote sustainability, to make more efficient use of underutilised lands, and to avoid the extension of services and utilities to more remote areas.
TVHO 10	To prepare design guidelines for new residential developments in towns and villages during the lifetime of the plan. In the interim, the design guidance and principles set out in the Village Design Statements for Louisburgh, Mulranny and Belcarra and the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and accompanying Urban Design Manual (DoEHLG) 2009 (or as updated) shall apply, where appropriate.
TVHO 11	Buildings which are ancillary to existing town or village dwelling(s), such as self-isolation units/granny flats/independent living unit or remote working office unit will be considered on their individual merits, subject to compliance with the criteria outlined in Section 4.15 of Volume 2 (Development Management Standards) of the Plan.
TVHO 12	To review the car parking standards (Table 7 of Section 7.12.1 Vol. II) over the lifetime of the plan to include maximum parking standards. In the interim period, a reduction of parking standard requirements will be considered for urban infill and brownfield locations, subject to the individual merits of each development proposals, with respect to performance-based criteria, in accordance with the provisions of NPO 13.
TVHO 13	Mayo County Council supports and encourages multi-generational housing, and the adaption of existing housing to facilitate multi-generational living, whereby a family member of an older or younger generation (or both) can be facilitated with the provision of additional accommodation onto an existing dwelling, the adaption of the existing accommodation, or at construction, the facilitation of the need for multigenerational living.

CHAPTER 3
HOUSING



**4
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

Chapter 4 Economic Development

4.1 Strategic Aim

The strategic aim of this chapter is to promote and enhance Mayo's economic development potential through increased resilience in the county's enterprise, underpinned by talent and innovation, thereby ensuring that Mayo is best placed to excel in the long-term delivery of sustainable jobs and an enhanced standard of living for all.

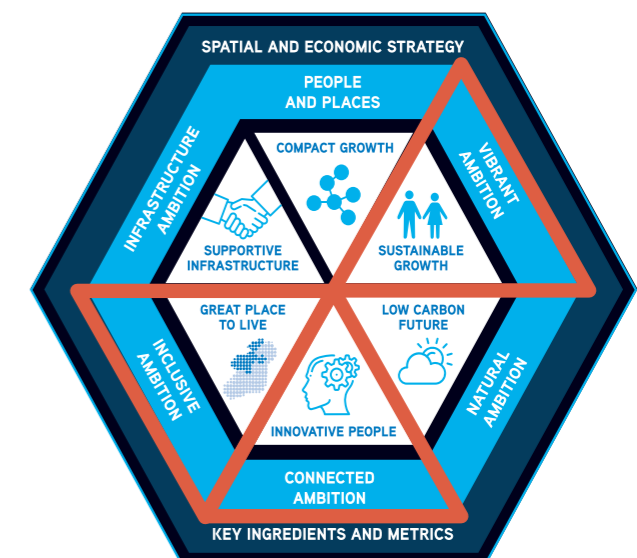
Related UN Sustainable Development Goals



Related NPF National Strategic Outcomes



Related RSES Regional Growth Ambitions



4.2 Introduction

This chapter has been guided by the above strategic aim, sustainable development goals and national strategic objectives to ensure the sustainable growth of enterprise and employment in County Mayo. The chapter has also considered the key legislative and policy documents set out in Appendix III, including the NPF and RSES for the Northern and Western region.

4.3 National and Regional Planning Position

The NPF and the RSES also recognise the important economic role of urban settlements at a county and regional level, and rural settlements at a local level, whilst identifying the need to strengthen rural economies and communities by broadening the employment base of rural areas, improving connectivity and addressing infrastructural deficits. In terms of job creation in urban areas, the overarching guidance provided in the NPF is that job creation should follow population increase at a ratio of 0.66:1 (NPO 1c).

The economic vision of the RSES is to facilitate inclusive and sustainable growth. The strategy seeks to build on the identified strengths of the region and to sustain a strong economy that supports sustainable job creation. It promotes the diversification of indigenous, economic activity and seeks to increase the proportion of activity in knowledge-intensive, high-value businesses to ensure the region is more resilient to global economy shocks and has greater longevity. The RSES acknowledges that the adopted Planning Scheme for the Ireland West Airport Knock (IWAK) Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) represents a significant gamechanger for the future economic development of the region and for the consolidation of the AEC. The RSES also identifies key priorities for Castlebar and Ballina that will unlock their latent potential and enable their sustainable growth as attractive key economic drivers.

4.4 Mayo Context

County Mayo has long been recognised as an attractive place to live, work and do business, owing to the quality of its surroundings, good transport links, a well-educated workforce, together with its location along the Wild Atlantic Way and Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC). Quality of life in Mayo is also regarded an important element in attracting inward investment. The county has a strong network of towns, villages and settlements that provide a diverse range of services, including civic uses, retailing, professional services, hospitality and tourism related services. Mayo also has a strong rural economy with equine, agriculture, energy production and tourism also featuring strongly. The strategic aim of this chapter aligns with the recognised need for longer-term sustainable growth in enterprise and employment, as advocated in Enterprise 2025 Renewed and Future Jobs Ireland. Mayo County Council recognises that economic development and employment in the county is best achieved through a collaborative approach between the business communities, educational institutes and national agencies, with the Council facilitating, enabling and promoting economic growth within the county.

County Mayo is the second largest county in the region, with a population of over 130,000 people, 40% of which are aged under 25 years of age. Strong digital and physical infrastructures, a competitive young workforce and long tradition of entrepreneurship and innovation, renders Mayo as one of the best places in Ireland to locate a business. It has a broad range of industries and economic sectors with more than 4,000 businesses, ranging from start-ups to major multinational companies, including Baxter, Allergan, Hollister and Ballina Beverages. The county provides a favourable business climate, offering strong business supports and networks, a highly skilled workforce and a clean, green location with quality natural resources and ready access to international markets.

Third level education is an important determinant for business location and stimulating overall economic growth. The population of Mayo is well-educated, with over 34.8% attaining third level education according to Census 2016 figures. This reinforces the perception of Mayo as a county with

a highly skilled and educated workforce, as higher educational attainment levels are linked with higher employment rates. The advancement of GMIT as a leading third level education provider, in addition to Mayo's proximity to other third level education providers within and outside of the region, is expected to further enhance these figures over the coming years.

4.4.1 Local Enterprise Office

Since the establishment of the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), Mayo County Council has had a more direct role in supporting economic development and enterprise for new and established businesses at local level within the county. The LEO provides a range of business information, advice, training and supports to assist enterprises to consolidate and grow. The LEO also acts as a gateway to Enterprise Ireland, a support for manufacturing and internationally traded business companies that have the capacity to grow quickly. Mayo County Council recognises that the context for enterprise development has changed in recent years, with an increased need to focus on collaboration and additionality, by way of a 'bottom-up' approach to the creation and delivery of sustainable employment.

Mayo County Council and its Local Enterprise Office work in collaboration with other agencies and stakeholders to actively promote and encourage economic development and enterprise development in the County. The Council aims to facilitate economic development and employment opportunities by providing or supporting the delivery of infrastructure and implementing urban and rural economic initiatives. The Council also facilitates economic development by the zoning of appropriate lands in the higher order towns for employment and by ensuring that planning policy and objectives are supportive of business and enterprise.

4.4.2 Mayo County Council Economic Strategies

Mayo's economic development is guided at local level by three economic strategies – The economic element of the *Mayo Local Economic and Community Plan and Action Plan 2015-2021* (LECP), the *Mayo Economic Strategy – Mayo: Sustaining Jobs, Supporting Growth & Winning Investment* and this Economic Development chapter of the Mayo County Development Plan. The economic elements of the LECP consider opportunities for economic development in Mayo based on an identification of existing and emerging sectors, including food, agri-engineering, pharmaceuticals and the creative industry. The action plan sets out a range of integrated collective actions to secure sustainable economic development in the county.

Mayo: Sustaining Jobs, Supporting Growth & Winning Investment focuses on a number of key economic pillars. These are business attraction, retention and expansion, investment readiness and PR, marketing and communications. The Mayo diaspora, its educated and skilled labour force, the development of telecommunication infrastructure, emerging sectors and branding are identified in the strategy as the drivers for economic success. This document will be superseded by a Mayo Economic Development Strategy incorporating a Food and Drink and a Digital Strategy. Six key pillars are identified for the new strategy, these are innovation, sustainable, entrepreneurial, skill focused, collaborative and place making. This Economic Development chapter of the plan is informed by the aforementioned strategies.

Economic Development Policy

EDP 1 To support and promote economic opportunities identified in Mayo County Council's Economic Strategy - *Mayo: Sustaining Jobs, Supporting Growth & Winning Investment* or any amended or replacement strategy.

Economic Development Objectives

EDO 1 To facilitate and support the continued growth of the economy in the county in a sustainable manner and in accordance with the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy.

EDO 2 To support and facilitate the economic development of the county in a manner which is consistent with the economic pillars identified in the Enterprise and Investment Units Economic Strategy.

EDO 3 To continue to promote the county to attract enterprise and investment into Mayo through the Enterprise & Investment Unit and/or Local Enterprise Office, with a focus on a number of established and emerging sectors including tourism, manufacturing, marine, renewable energy, ICT, food and agri-food.

EDO 4 To continue to support new and existing enterprises in the county through the provision of training, mentoring, financial supports, advice and networking events.

EDO 5 To encourage enterprise and employment development to locate in brownfield sites or unoccupied buildings in town centres or where appropriate in existing industrial/retail parks or other brownfield industrial sites in preference to undeveloped zoned or unzoned lands.

EDO 6 To facilitate the economic development of Mayo to create a viable and favourable economic environment for business and enterprise, whilst delivering sustainable jobs, employment opportunities and an enriched standard of living for all.

EDO 7 To identify and promote a range of locations within the County for different types of enterprise activity including international business and technology parks, small and medium enterprises (SME) and micro enterprise centre.

EDO 8 To co-operate with local and national development agencies and engage with existing and future employers in order to maximise job opportunities in the County.

EDO 9 To encourage and facilitate home-based start up enterprises of appropriate type, size and scale, subject to compliance with the criteria outlined in 5.10 of Volume 2 (Development Management Standards) of the Plan, and where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, residential amenity or visual amenity.

EDO 10 To work in partnership with relevant stakeholders, to ensure that a sustainable approach is taken to enterprise development and employment creation across all sectors of the Mayo economy, in accordance with the Green Economy national frameworks relevant to each sector.

EDO 11 To engage with all relevant government stakeholders, enterprise agencies and sectoral representatives in pursuing 'green' approaches to economic development and actively collaborate with key industry and educational bodies to promote Mayo based initiatives across the economic sectors.

EDO 12 To promote quality employment and residential developments in proximity to each other in order to reduce the need to travel.

EDO 13 To encourage the provision of 'live work' communities, in which employment, residency and sustainable transport facilities are located in close proximity to each other, to reduce long distance commuter trends and congestion, as well as reducing outward migration from the county.

EDO 14 To ensure that people intensive developments are located close to the strategic public transport network.

EDO 15 To address the rate of out bound commuting, with the provision of 'live work' communities in strategic settlements served by sustainable transport, thereby improving quality of life, encouraging volunteerism and community engagement.

EDO 16 To encourage mixed use settlement forms and sustainable centres, in which employment, residency, education and local services / amenities are located in close proximity to each other.

EDO 17 To work with Irish Water and other infrastructure providers, to support the provision of services and facilities to accommodate the future economic growth of the County and to seek to reserve infrastructure capacity for employment generating uses.

EDO 18 To ensure that there is sufficient quantum of zoned lands to facilitate a range of enterprise across the county in line with the settlement hierarchy.

EDO 19 To support start-up businesses and small-scale industrial enterprise at appropriate locations throughout the County, subject to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

EDO 20 To further linkages and partnerships with GMIT including the branding of the area as a centre of excellence in the knowledge-based economy.

EDO 21 To encourage and facilitate indigenous industries, at appropriate locations with good communication infrastructure, in recognition of their increasing importance in providing local employment and helping to stimulate economic activity within small communities.

EDO 22 To support the use of town centre and other suitable locations for new service focused enterprises.

EDO 23 To support the continued development of Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT), Castlebar Campus including the development of a shared approach to enterprise development with the Local Enterprise Office.

EDO 24 To acquire suitable land (subject to the availability of funding), including, where appropriate, disused sites in State ownership, for creative and innovative entrepreneurial initiatives and the provision of clustered incubator units.

EDO 25 To promote the development of the key strategic employment sites identified in the Economic Development Strategy for County Mayo.

EDO 26 To support and promote the equine industry in the County as an economic and employment provider.

EDO 27 To work with Eirgrid, as far as practicable, to ensure power infrastructure is available for the development of zoned employment lands within the N5 corridor.

EDO 28 To review the Development Contribution Scheme.

4.4.3 Ireland West Airport Knock (IWAK)

The presence of Ireland West Airport Knock (IWAK) in Mayo is recognised as having a significant role in expanding the enterprise and tourism development of the county and wider region. The adopted Planning Scheme (2019) for IWAK Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) for the future development and expansion of the airport and surrounding lands is of regional and national significance. The SDZ will secure the long-term development of IWAK as a strategically important hub for transport, tourism, business and employment in Mayo and the wider region. The SDZ provides the potential to be a key driver of the Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC) in the region, helping to increase its potential to function as a cohesive model for balanced regional economic development, with potential for significant enterprise growth and access to international markets.

Ireland West Airport Knock Policies

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| EDP 1 | To promote and support the strategic role of IWA Knock SDZ as a significant regional economic driver and promote the SDZ location as a regional economic business and enterprise hub. |
| EDP 1 | To support the development of the IWA Knock SDZ in tandem with the required infrastructure for both the expansion of the airport and in its delivery as a regional business and enterprise hub. |

Ireland West Airport Knock Objectives

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| EDO 29 | To promote and facilitate the growth of IWAK as a creative and innovative area that is globally competitive, internationally linked, attractive and open. |
| EDO 30 | To support, promote and facilitate the implementation of the approved Planning Scheme for the designated SDZ at IWA Knock (including the mitigation measures of the statutory environmental assessment carried out for the planning scheme), which provides the framework for the expansion of the Airport in terms of its transport and business operations and as a new business and enterprise destination. |
| EDO 31 | To support and recognise the important national and regional role of IWAK in the economic life of the county and region and to facilitate its activities and development, having regard to the IWAK SDZ. |

4.4.4 Atlantic Economic Corridor

The Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC) extends along the western seaboard of Ireland and includes ten local authority regions from Kerry to Donegal. The region is viewed as having significant potential for future economic growth and creating balanced regional development to complement the eastern seaboard economic corridor. The overarching objective of the AEC initiative is to maximise the infrastructure, talent and enterprise assets along the western seaboard, including the corridors between Ballina and Castlebar/Westport to IWAK, and to combine the economic hubs, clusters, and catchments of the area to attract investment, improve competitiveness, support job creation and contribute to an improved quality of life for the people who live there. The consolidation of the AEC will be further realised through the development of the IWAK SDZ; the advancement of key infrastructural projects

under Project 2040; the potential future reopening of the Western Rail Corridor; and the roll out of the national broadband plan.

Atlantic Economic Corridor Policies

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| EDP 4 | To promote, support and facilitate the Atlantic Economic Corridor initiative in a sustainable manner to secure the long-term economic and employment growth for Mayo. |
| EDP 5 | To promote, support and facilitate the appropriate development of Mayo's towns, villages and rural areas that function as part of the Atlantic Economic Corridor. |

Atlantic Economic Corridor Objectives

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| EDO 32 | To advance and promote the AEC in order to maximise the advantages of Western Region links and the development of an All-Ireland economy. |
| EDO 33 | To support the sustainable development of a Castlebar-Westport Growth Cluster as a driver of economic development for the county and region, building on the dual capacity, complementarity and combined strengths of both towns in terms of population, established commercial, social and cultural links and proximity, thereby strengthening the urban structure of the region and enabling the realisation the Atlantic Economic Corridor. |
| EDO 34 | To facilitate the development of the Western Rail Corridor, in order to support and underpin the development of the Atlantic Economic Corridor, to encourage the economic growth of Mayo and the wider region, and to support vibrant local communities. |
| EDO 35 | To promote and facilitate in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, the provision of AEC enterprise hubs within the towns and villages in Mayo. |
| EDO 36 | To work with adjoining counties to secure the Atlantic Economic Corridor, as a model of balanced regional development. |

4.4.5 Growth Clusters

Mayo County Council seeks to further progress the sustainable economic development of the county through the growth cluster development model for Castlebar-Westport and Ballina. This model is based on building on complementary strengths and synergies between the urban centres, to enable them to compete at a regional and national level. In the context of linked towns, there is greater potential to encourage business clustering to enable complementary businesses to start up and progress to making the move from non-traded to traded activities. This is through facilitating cooperation, specialisation, marketing, distribution and sales. Given the size of Mayo, its geographical characteristics and location in relation to Galway and Sligo, the combined strengths of the three towns of Castlebar, Ballina and Westport will be harnessed to drive development from within the county as highly connected complementary urban centres.

The Castlebar-Westport Economic Growth (CWEG) Cluster 2040 was adopted by Mayo County Council in 2020. The CWEG Cluster has the potential to create larger interdependence and complementary urban centres of a regional strategic scale, through building critical mass of population and further employment, in tandem with enhanced accessibility and quality of life. These intrinsically linked urban areas have a variety of strong employment sectors such as Pharma and Engineering, Higher Education Institutes (HEIs), cultural institutions and health services, all of which provide latent capacity for the CWEG Cluster to enhance its regional role. Castlebar-Westport hosts some of the world's largest and most successful companies across a range of industry sector, such as Allergan and Baxter. The CWEG Cluster is also home to large indigenous businesses such as Carrig Donn, Portwest & KOG Logistics.

Ballina is identified as a key town to be prioritised for local and regional enterprise. It is Mayo's most northerly town with a population of over 10,000 and functions as the main economic driver for a large area of north Mayo. Complementary to the Castlebar-Westport Economic Growth (CWEG) Cluster, Mayo County Council are also developing an economic growth cluster study for Ballina, in the context of supporting towns within its catchment. The study seeks to support and grow the role of Ballina as the key economic driver in the north-west of the county, capitalising on its designation as a Key Town within the context of the Sligo Regional Growth Centre and its location in relation to the Atlantic Economic Corridor.

Growth Clusters Policies

EDP 6

To support and grow the role of Ballina as the key economic driver in the north-west of the county, capitalising on its designation as a Key Town within the context of the Sligo Regional Growth Centre and its location in relation to the Atlantic Economic Corridor, in order to facilitate long-term economic growth within the context of a high-quality environment, supporting a wide range of services and amenities.

EDP 7

To support and grow the role of Castlebar as the main administrative, healthcare and education centre in the county, the main centre for commerce and enterprise, capitalising on its designation as a Key Town within the context of the Galway Metropolitan City and Sligo Regional Growth Centre and its location in relation to the Atlantic Economic Corridor, in order to facilitate long-term economic growth within the context of a high-quality environment supporting a wide range of services and amenities.

EDP 8

To support and grow the role of Westport as a key economic driver in the county and as a national tourism hub, capitalising on its significant tourism related assets, including its designation as a Heritage Town and its status as an urban centre with strategic development potential of a regional scale within the context of Galway Metropolitan City, Sligo Regional Growth Centre, the Key Towns of Ballina and Castlebar, and its location in relation the Atlantic Economic Corridor, in order to facilitate long-term economic growth within the context of a high quality environment, supporting a wide range of services and amenities.

EDP 9

To support and promote the sustainable development of the Castlebar-Westport Economic Growth Cluster as a driver of economic development for the County and Region, building on the dual capacity, complementarity and combined strengths of both towns in terms of population, established commercial, social and cultural links and proximity, thereby strengthening the urban structure of the region and enable the realisation the Atlantic Economic Corridor.

Growth Clusters Objectives

EDO 37

To seek to support the implementation of the recommendations of the Castlebar-Westport Economic Growth (CWEG) Cluster 2040.

EDO 38

To seek to support the implementation of the recommendations of the Ballina/North Mayo Growth Cluster Study to advance the economic development of North Mayo.

EDO 39

To investigate the potential for the Tier II urban settlements of Ballinrobe, Ballyhaunis and Claremorris to function as an economic growth cluster in South Mayo, capitalising on their proximity to the IWAK and AEC.

EDO 40

To explore the feasibility of seeking the designation of the former Asahi Plant and adjoining lands outside of Killala as a Strategic Development Zone.

4.4.6 Retail

The retail sector is also a significant employer in County Mayo. The achievement of a strong retail sector leads to the creation of vibrant town centres that offer a diverse range of services to residents and communities in the surrounding rural hinterlands. The potential of retail outlets to generate footfall means that their location is critical. They have a major bearing on the health of town centres and this, in turn, has a major impact on the vitality of the surrounding hinterland.

In recent years, the retail environment has been changing and continued leakage to higher order centres and migration to online sales rather than through traditional on street outlets is posing a significant challenge to town centres. Many of the town centres in the county have suffered from increases in levels of vacancy and dereliction and lower value retail users in their core retail streets. The need to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres is supported in the NPF and RSES. It is important to develop quality town centre commercial environments, that will in turn improve the vibrancy and enhance traditional on street experiences in towns and villages throughout the county.

Mayo County Council supports compact growth, place-making, high quality urban design, urban and rural regeneration and active land management to release brownfield and infill sites for development in town/village centres. It recognises that investment, robust planning policies and objectives and public engagement with key stakeholders are key solutions to reversing the trend of high vacancy rates and dereliction in town/village centres.

Retail Policies

EDP 10

To support the vitality and viability of existing town and village centres and facilitate a competitive and healthy environment for the retailing sector into the future, by ensuring that future growth in retail floorspace responds to the identified settlement hierarchy, the sequential approach, the appropriate protection of the built environment and the needs of the projected population of the settlement area.

EDP 11

To encourage local partnership, town teams or community organisations to develop and implement local economic initiatives which will enhance town and village centres.

EDP 12	To promote the reuse of vacant floorspace. Alternative uses shall be assessed on their own merits against the requirements of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.
EDP 13	To support and promote the retail sector in the county and ensure compliance with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities DoECLG (April 2012) and Retail Design Manual DoECLG (April 2012) or any amended or superseding version of the guidelines and design manual.
EDP 14	To promote the reuse or reactivation of vacant underutilised properties/shop units, in order to assist with the regeneration of streets and settlements in the county.

Retail Objectives

EDO 41	To implement/review the Mayo County Retail Strategy in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012, as amended or superseded, within 3 no. years of the final adoption of the Mayo County Development Plan.
EDO 42	To promote and reinforce all town centres in the county as primary shopping areas.
EDO 43	To adhere to the principle of 'sequential approach' in the consideration of retail applications located outside of core retail areas.
EDO 44	To ensure proposals for retail development in towns and villages make a positive contribution to the general townscape through the promotion of excellence in urban design, signage, consideration of the built heritage; and designed to a scale appropriate to the settlement.
EDO 45	To continue to implement and facilitate environmental, amenity and recreational improvements to the public realm, in existing town and village core retail areas.
EDO 46	To maintain an appropriate mix of uses and to maintain the role of the town centre as a dominant commercial and retail centre, and prevent an excessive concentration of particular (single type) uses with the town centre areas of Mayo's towns and villages, for example bookmakers/betting offices; licenced premises, discount retail units, hot food takeaways, etc.
EDO 47	To promote and facilitate on-street activities including street markets and farmers/country markets in all existing retail centres or any event that adds to the vitality and viability of existing town and village centres, whilst not unduly impacting on the existing retail function.
EDO 48	To support retail in town and village centres through the sequential approach, as provided within the Retail Guidelines, and to encourage appropriate development formats within the town and village centres.
EDO 49	To encourage new (and expanding) retail developments to locate close to public transport corridors, to enable sustainable travel to and from our town and village centres, where applicable.
EDO 50	To adopt a presumption in favour of the reuse, and restoration of town centre buildings for use as retail space, subject to satisfying other planning criteria and standards.

4.4.7 Smart Economy

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) play a crucial role in enabling social and economic activity and the enhancement the ICT infrastructure throughout the county is a priority. This must be managed to ensure a balance between the provision of such infrastructure in the interests of social and economic progress and sustaining residential amenity and environmental quality. Mayo County Council has prepared a Digital Strategy which seeks to facilitate and support the rollout of Digital Infrastructure and Skills to all citizens in County Mayo.

Smart Economy Policies

EDP 15	To support and facilitate the delivery of the National Broadband Plan and Mayo County Councils Digital Strategy as a means of developing further opportunities for enterprise, employment, education, innovation and skills development, for those who live and work in rural areas throughout Mayo, where appropriate.
EDP 16	To support the development of the ICT sector in Mayo, along with key stakeholders and relevant agencies to ensure that the economic, potential of the sector is secured for the benefit of the local, regional and national economy.
EDP 17	To support and promote the development of a Smart County to benefit the economic growth, quality of life and wellbeing of the people of Mayo and advance the NWRA 'Smart Region' Growth Ambition in the RSES.
EDP 18	To support the development of a Smart County to develop and diversify the rural economy, to build on local enterprise and infrastructure assets, to drive innovations around energy, transport, agri-food, tourism, e-services and remote working.

Smart Economy Objectives

EDO 51	To support the role out of actions listed in the Mayo County Council Digital Strategy.
EDO 52	To support the development of sites where data centres, ICT related development and high potential start-ups can thrive.
EDO 53	To identify suitable locations and support the provision of co-working facilities, digital hubs/eHubs and eWorking centres throughout the county that function as outreach hubs for out of county employers and that promote flexible working arrangements and strengthen the AEC hub network.

4.4.8 Rural Economy

Mayo is a rural county, with much of its population rural-based and the majority of the land in the county is in agricultural / forestry use. Construction, engineering, manufacturing, quarrying, tourism-related services, transport, energy production, forestry, agriculture, food, education, waste disposal and health are all significant areas of employment in the rural areas of County Mayo. The Council recognises, however, that rural-based employment extends beyond these traditional rural sectors to include all aspects of the economy. A national strategic outcome of the NPF is 'Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities'. Rural areas play a key role in defining our identity, in driving our economy and our high-quality environment and are part of the county's strategic development during the plan period.

In addition to the natural resources and food sector as traditional pillars of the rural economy, improved connectivity facilitating home working and digital hubs, broadband and rural economic development opportunities offer the potential to ensure our rural area remains and strengthens as a living and working community. Local Development Companies are important collaborators with Mayo County Council on rural economic development through their work with the LEADER Rural Development Programme and other rural based programmes.

Rural Economy Policies

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| EDP 19 | To support, in conjunction with Mayo LEO and other agencies, the development of indigenous industry and business start-ups in rural employment centres (villages and settlements) in the county, subject to compliance with siting, design and environmental considerations. |
| EDP 20 | To support the implementation of the new LEADER Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, and any subsequent amended/updated programme for the county. |

Rural Economy Policies

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| EDO 54 | To facilitate rural enterprises, and resource development (such as agriculture, agri-food sector, agri-tourism, commercial fishing, aquaculture, rural tourism, forestry, bio- energy, the extractive industry, recreation, cultural heritage, marine enterprise sector, research and analysis) and renewable energy resources (such as wind/solar/ocean energy) that are dependent on their locality in rural locations, where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, residential amenity or visual amenity. Where proposals demonstrate measures to promote environmental enhancement through improved ecological connectivity, such as measures in the Pollinator Plan, additional native species planting or blue and green infrastructure measures, these will be favourably considered. |
| EDO 55 | To support rural entrepreneurship and the development of micro businesses (generally less than 10 no. employees) in rural areas, where environmental and landscape impact is minimal and such developments do not generate significant or undue traffic. This objective shall not apply to sites accessed from the National Road Network. |
| EDO 56 | To support remote working in the rural area, at an appropriate scale, for enterprise/businesses that do not require visiting members of the public, subject to normal planning considerations. |

4.4.9 Agriculture, Agri-Food, Agri-Tech

The agriculture sector is a significant source of economic activity throughout the county. It contributes to exports, provides the raw materials for the food processing industry and has potential for providing more added value in the artisan food sector. The Council will take a positive approach to applications for sustainable agricultural developments generally, subject to the protection of ground waters, residential amenities, designated habitats and the landscape.

The Council promotes the use of Agri-tech which is the use of technology for farming that is developed to improve efficiency and profitability, which aims to improve farming through information monitoring and analysis of weather, pests, soil and air temperature.

Mayo County Council has developed an agriculture strategy that will drive economic development, support employment and create sustainable jobs in the county. The purpose of the strategy is to set out a series of actions that will help Mayo capitalise on its opportunities and overcome the barriers to developing this critical component of the local economy. The strategy summarises the agriculture sectors in the county and sets out how they will be developed. The objective is to do this in a balanced way whilst maximising their contribution.

Agriculture Policies

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| EDP 21 | To support the implementation of the Mayo County Council Agricultural Strategy to promote the continued development and expansion of the Agri-Food Sector, subject to the measures and environmental objectives of the forthcoming Common Agricultural Policy Strategy for Ireland. |
| EDP 22 | To support the implementation, at county level, of the provisions set out in Food Harvest 2025, subject to environmental carrying capacity constraints. |
| EDP 23 | To maintain a vibrant and healthy agricultural sector based on the principles of sustainable development, whilst at the same time supporting alternative employment in or close to rural areas to sustain rural communities. |
| EDP 24 | To work with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Teagasc and all other stakeholders to support the agricultural and agri-business sector, as appropriate. |
| EDP 25 | To support and promote the equine industry in the county as an economic and employment provider. |
| EDP 26 | To support the development of appropriately located allotments, in areas which have good access to and are proximate to built-up and residential areas. |

Agriculture Objectives

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| EDO 57 | To support, promote and consider, on their individual merits, the reuse of redundant agricultural buildings and the development of new buildings to accommodate farm diversification / enterprise within an overall farmyard complex. |
| EDO 58 | To support, promote and facilitate the implementation of the actions of Mayo County Council's agricultural strategy - A Sustainable Agricultural Strategy for Mayo or any amended/replacement strategy to secure economic and employment growth in the county in a sustainable manner. |

	To encourage proposals for farm shops where it can be clearly demonstrated that:
EDO 59	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the products to be sold are primarily produce grown on the farm holding. b. the scale and scope of the retailing proposed will not harm the viability or retail facilities in any nearby town or village. c. and the proposed shop is operated by the owner of the farm and is ancillary to the main use of the property for agricultural activities.
EDO 60	To ensure that equine based developments are located on suitable and viable landholdings and are subject to normal planning, siting and design considerations.
	To facilitate the development of allotments of an appropriate scale, subject to normal planning considerations and which meet the following criteria:
EDO 61	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The lands are situated within or immediately adjacent to the edge of towns/ villages or are easily accessible to the residents of a particular town or village; and ii. Adequate water supply and adequate parking facilities can be provided.

4.4.10 Extractive Industries

The Council recognises the importance of sand and gravel extractions in the economic life of the county and its importance as a valuable source of employment in parts of the county. It is also recognised, however, that exploitation of deposits can have a seriously damaging environmental impact on the county's natural landscape. A satisfactory balance is required between the needs of the building industry and the need to protect the environment.

The Council recognises the importance of ensuring that those extractions which would result in a reduction of the visual amenity of areas of high amenity or damage to areas of scientific importance or of geological, botanical, zoological and other natural significance, including all designated European Sites are not permitted. The Council requires that all such workings should be subjected to landscaping requirements and that worked out quarries should be rehabilitated to a use agreed with the Planning Authority.

The use of these rehabilitated sites shall be limited to wastes such as soil, stone and subsoils and sites shall be authorised under the appropriate waste regulations. The Planning Authority will have regard to the Department of the Environment's Guidelines for Planning Authorities for Quarries and Ancillary Activities 2004 (and any updated editions) and to the Geological Survey of Ireland's Geological Heritage Guidelines for Extractive Industries, when assessing applications relating to the extraction industry in the county.

Extractive Industry Policies	
EDP 27	To support adequate supplies of aggregate resources to meet the future growth needs of the county and the wider region where there is a proven need for a certain mineral/aggregate and to exercise appropriate control, while addressing key environmental, traffic and social impacts.
EDP 28	To support the development of aggregate resources (stone and sand/gravel deposits) in a manner which minimises effects on the environment and having regard to the principles of sustainability.

Extractive Industry Objectives	
EDO 62	To ensure that the development of aggregate resources (stone and sand/gravel deposits) is carried out in a manner which minimises effects on the environment, including the Natura 2000 network and its sustaining habitats (including water dependent habitats and species), amenities, infrastructure and the community, and can demonstrate environmental enhancement through habitat management plans/ecological restoration.
EDO 63	Have regard to the Quarry and Ancillary Activities Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities DoEHLG (April 2004) and to the Geological Survey of Ireland's Geological Heritage Guidelines for Extractive Industries, or any new or subsequent quarry guidance.

4.4.11 Marine Economy

The emergence of the blue economy as a key driver of sustainable living has refocused national and international attention on harnessing the resources off the coast. New world demands in terms of food supply, energy security, biotechnology and climate change identify the coast as the focus of sustainability. The role of the Marine Section of Mayo County Council is to bring a stronger strategic focus on all aspects the marine with a view to leveraging our extensive marine resources to build a vibrant competitive marine sector in Mayo. The section aims to develop possible pathways to transform what are obvious comparative advantages into competitive advantages and ensure that our local marine sector can contribute to the economic sustainability of the county as a whole. It is hoped to leverage the emerging blue economy sectors such as offshore energy, marine biotechnology and the area of research and development. It is also a priority to support the more traditional marine activities such as fishing, aquaculture and leisure, in terms of investment and infrastructure, to build vibrant and sustainable coastal communities.

Marine Economy Policies	
EDP 29	To support the sustainable growth and development of the maritime economy, particularly in remote rural coastal communities and islands.
EDP 30	To support the sustainable development of the marine sector, having regard to Harvesting Our Ocean Wealth An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland July 2012 and the publication of the National Marine Planning Framework and subsequent marine spatial plans.
EDP 31	To support the sustainable development of marine aquaculture and fishing industries having regard to best environmental practices, so as to maximise their contribution to jobs and growth in coastal communities where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, residential amenity or visual amenity.
EDP 32	To protect the county's valuable inland fishery resource and support its sustainable development through the protection of water and habitat quality and facilitation of ancillary infrastructure at appropriate locations.

Marine Economy Objectives

EDO 64	To review and where necessary vary the County Development Plan upon adoption of the Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) to ensure alignment, and consistency between land-use and ocean-based planning and to ensure coordination supporting the protection of the marine environment and growth of our marine economy.
EDO 65	To support the upgrade and improvement of the county's harbours and piers, where necessary, and ensure the sustainable development of this infrastructure to enable aquaculture and seafood industry expansion.

4.4.12 Green Economy

The 'Green Economy' refers to an increasingly sustainable approach in undertaking economic activity. The term 'Green Economy' covers a wide range of sectors that have in common the objective of providing goods and services in a sustainable way that reduces impact on the environment and contributes to the circular economy. In Ireland, this covers activities such as sustainable food production, tourism, green financial services, green products and services, waste and water management, renewable energy and energy efficiency. The NPF recognises and supports the development of the circular and bio economy.

The Government's Action Plan for Jobs 2017 outlines that there is a 'strong economic dimension to the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy'. The Council recognises the significant role the 'Green Economy' has to play in the competitiveness of the county and the country as a whole. The growing international emphasis on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving resource efficiency, presents a major opportunity for indigenous enterprises to grow and export innovative products and services.

This Plan aims to recognise and develop the full potential of green energy including biomass for energy production / manufacturing and the export of green electricity to the national grid. The Plan seeks to support industries and business seeking to generate energy within the confines of their specific sites and the export of surplus energy to the national grid.

Green Economy Policies

EDP 33	To support the implementation of the Green Economy national frameworks through encouraging enterprise development and employment creation across all sectors of the Mayo economy.
EDP 34	To support rural diversification through sustainable rural development practices, investment in rural towns and villages, providing for access to technology and skills development network.

Green Economy Objectives

EDO 66	To support and facilitate the Green Economy in County Mayo
EDO 67	To facilitate the development of industries that create and employ green technologies and take measures to accelerate the transition towards low carbon and circular economies.
EDO 68	To facilitate homebased economic activity that allows employers, enterprises and entrepreneurs the option of working from home or a local hub to reduce commuting, and congestion and facilitate a low carbon county.
EDO 69	To support and facilitate renewable energy initiatives that facilitate a low carbon transition.

4.4.13 Major Accidents and Seveso II Sites

The European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2006 transposes the SEVESO II Directive 96/82/EC (relating to the prevention of major accidents involving dangerous substances) into Irish Law. The Directive aims to prevent accident hazards from dangerous substances and to limit the consequence of such accidents through the following measures:

- The siting of new establishments.
- Modification of existing establishments.
- Development in the vicinity of an establishment which by virtue of its type or siting is likely to increase the risk or consequence of a major accident.
- Site specific emergency planning by the local authority and site operator.

The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) provides advice to Planning Authorities, where appropriate, in respect of planning applications for development within a certain distance of the perimeter of these sites. There are five SEVESO sites in County Mayo, which are European Refreshments (t/a Ballina Beverages), Vermillion Exploration & Production Ireland Ltd., Barnatra, Ballina, Brookland Gas Company Ltd. (Ballina), Calor Teoranta, (Claremorris) and Flogas Ireland Ltd. (Ballyhaunis). The following objectives are applicable in respect of same and any future proposal involving dangerous substances.

Major Accidents and Seveso Objectives

EDO 70	To ensure that appropriate distances are maintained between any proposed development and any existing Seveso II establishment, in the interest of the health and safety of the occupiers of the proposed development.
EDO 71	To require that, the siting of new establishments, or modification of existing establishments classified under the Seveso II Directive, as listed in Volume 2 of this Plan, and new development in the vicinity of existing establishments shall take into account the need to prevent major accidents involving hazardous substances and safeguard both the public and the environment.

CHAPTER 4
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



5 **TOURISM &
RECREATION**

Chapter 5 Tourism & Recreation

5.1 Strategic Aim

The strategic aim of this chapter is to promote and facilitate a sustainable and well- managed year-round, high-quality tourism industry that generates economic benefits to all areas of the county, thereby contributing to the wider tourism industry of the region.

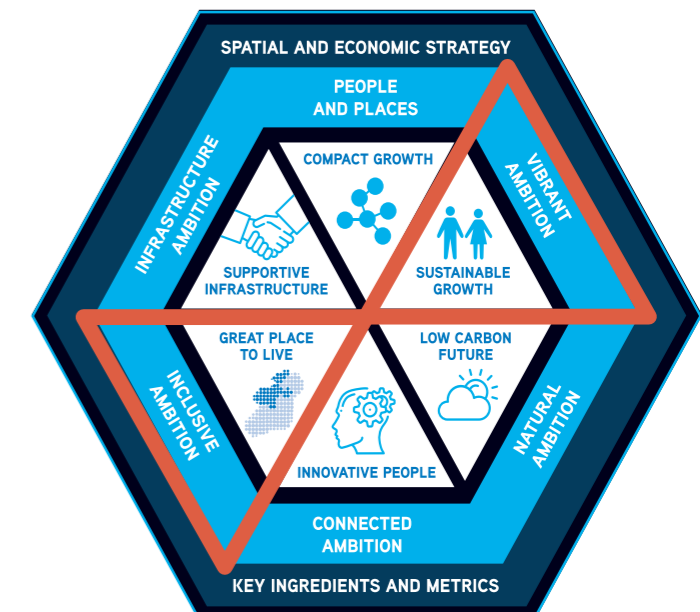
Related UN Sustainable Development Goals



Related NPF National Strategic Outcomes



Related RSES Regional Growth Ambitions



5.2 Introduction

This chapter has been guided by the above strategic aim, sustainable development goals and national strategic objectives to create a sustainable tourism and recreation industry in County Mayo. The chapter has also considered the key legislative and policy documents set out in Appendix III, including the NPF and RSES for the Northern and Western region.

5.3 National and Regional Planning Position

To develop a sustainable tourism industry in Ireland, the NPF and RSES recognise that infrastructural investment is required to enhance our amenities including the built, cultural and natural heritage assets in both urban and rural areas. Investment in developing a well-designed public realm in settlements, recreational infrastructure and rural amenities including activity-based tourism and trails, such as greenways, blueways and peatways will significantly contribute to the sustainable growth of the tourism sector. The NPF and RSES also recognise the emerging tourism potential of the Mayo's Dark Sky Reserve at Ballycroy National Park, as an alternative tourism experience.

The RSES identifies the potential to develop additional tourism attractions of scale, building upon a significant number of outstanding natural assets and existing recreational attractions, as key to enabling the region to become a prominent destination for tourism, leisure and recreation activities. The strategy highlights the need to build on the significant tourism potential of Ballina through investment in tourism-related infrastructure, such as the Monasteries of the Moy Greenway from Belleek to Killala. The strategy further identifies the need to build on the significant tourism potential of Castlebar. This is through investment in tourism-related infrastructure, including improved cycle and walking tourism/recreational infrastructure and connectivity to the Great Western Greenway at Castlebar to Westport and the Wild Atlantic Way. The RSES also notes that the future, strategic potential of Westport is best achieved by building on the existing economic, commercial and social links with Castlebar. This will enable Westport to further develop its existing strong tourism base.

5.4 Mayo in Context

Tourism is an important driver of economic activity in Ireland. This sector is our largest indigenous industry and provides income and employment to all areas of the country, including urban, rural and coastal. Mayo has a lot to offer as a tourism destination and has great potential to further develop its tourism industry as a key economic sector for the county. A wealth of natural resources, unspoilt environment, scenic and sensitive landscapes as well as internationally renowned destinations such as Céide fields, Wild Nephin Ballycroy National Park, Croagh Patrick, Downpatrick Head, Knock Shrine, Westport/Clew Bay, Achill, Cong, Ballina, Pontoon and its offshore islands allow for the further development of a wide range of tourism products. These include heritage and culture, activity and adventure and religious and pilgrimage tourism. The Great Western Greenway from Westport to Achill has proven to be a very successful walking and cycling amenity and tourism product for the county.

A number of established walking and cycling routes have been developed which allow local communities to access and enjoy the natural environmental assets, such as the Turlough Greenway and cycle network in Castlebar and the Railwalk walking and cycle route in Westport. The recent branding of Ireland's Atlantic coastline as the Wild Atlantic Way touring route, offers unprecedented opportunities to showcase the attractions and activities along the Atlantic coast of Mayo to a receptive

global audience. Mayo has been identified as 'The heartbeat of the Wild Atlantic Way' - an exceptional opportunity for the county.

The tourism industry makes a significant contribution to the vitality and sustainability of a wide variety of local enterprises, particularly in rural areas. The Plan seeks to facilitate and enable an integrated and sustainable high-quality, year-round tourism product, guided by, but not limited to Mayo County Council a Tourism Strategy, Destination Mayo 2016-2021. Mayo County Council recognises that the realisation of the strategy (or superseding version of the strategy) will require investment in supporting infrastructural development to meet the needs of both resident and visitor populations.

5.4.1 Destination Mayo 2016-2021

Mayo's Tourism Strategy, Destination Mayo 2016-2021, identifies tourism as a key economic sector for Mayo, with the potential for significant job creation. Its vision is to develop Mayo as a premier tourism destination, in conjunction with world-class activities, exceptional heritage attractions, cultural attractions and high-quality experiences attractive to domestic and international visitors alike. The tourism strategy highlights that Mayo has significant potential for a new high quality, innovative product development, ranging from the Wild Atlantic Way, Monasteries of the Moy Greenway, expansion of the highly successful Great Western Greenway, Blueway Water Trails, VeloRail, Wild Nephin Wilderness Park and the Mary Robinson Centre in Ballina. Initiatives such as interpretation of the Sacred Landscape, Pilgrim Trails across the county, the famine history of Mayo and facilities for adventure activities both land and water-based, offer unique ways for a wide range of visitors to engage with Mayo's landscape, heritage and people.



Figure 5.1: Key elements of Wild Mayo - Destination Mayo Tourism Strategy

The tourism strategy identifies key assets, attractions, and activities that can be further developed and promoted under the branding of Wild Mayo. The strategy, supported by a Tourism Action Plan, is based around the development of the key tourism pillars identified earlier.

The successful implementation of Mayo's Tourism Strategy will ensure a wider distribution of tourists to a range of tourist options that the County has to offer. It will also help extend the tourism season and reduce pressure on existing infrastructure in the more traditional tourist destinations. Mayo County Council seeks to maintain a balance between sustainable development of tourism and the preservation of the environment.

5.4.2 Regional Tourism Strategies (RTS's)

Fáilte Ireland are in the process of preparing Regional Tourism Strategies for each of the four Regional Experience Brands (Dublin, Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Ancient East and Ireland's Hidden Heartlands). The purpose of the Regional Tourism Strategies is to identify the sustainable tourism development priorities that will help to unlock the commercial potential of the region bringing benefits to all stakeholders and industry. Each strategy will be prepared based on the VICE model which is a methodology for working towards sustainable tourism that seeks to strike an appropriate balance between the needs of the Visitor, the Industry and Community and the Environment. The strategy will be for the period to 2022-2026 and will be grounded in the Fáilte Ireland's new Corporate Strategy. There will be a strong spatial element to the strategies which will seek to identify where development should take place in order to unlock the tourism potential of the region.

Fáilte Ireland has created a framework to develop and deliver visitor experience development plans (VEDPs). This approach identifies the 'hero' products for an area and provides a framework to present the experiences and stories of that area in a way that tourists can readily and easily understand. It clearly identifies tangible actions and a process for businesses to shape their respective tourist experience in line with the overall experience brand proposition and the key motivating themes for their area. There will be two VEDP's delivered in Mayo over the next number of years, Clew Bay and North Mayo/Erris. These will enable clusters and geographies to amplify their local tourism offering in a compelling and motivating way for international tourists and encourage increased visits, dwell time and spend in the locality.

Strong character & sense of place	Rich diversity of functions and activities	Adaptable urban structure to accommodate longer term changes	Well-connected network of streets
Priority in town centre for pedestrians	Coherent, legible and attractive streetscapes	Good quality and attractive public realm ⁵	Survival of the main street
Unlocking under-used and vacant sites	Ensuring clean and safe environment	Addressing traffic and congestion	Integration of green spaces & linkages, within and around the town

Figure 5.2 Quality Tourist Destination Factors (Fáilte Ireland)

Fáilte Ireland's Destination Towns initiative highlights the importance of maintaining and enhancing the quality of place that visitors experience during their stay (See Figure 5.2 above). Attractive towns and villages are a key motivator for holidaymakers in choosing Ireland as a holiday destination. However, nationally and regionally, the challenge is to unlock the economic potential of the visitor for local businesses and communities. This will be realised through the delivery of high quality 'destination town' experiences for visitors, that still capture local distinctiveness and support thriving local communities. The best approaches to unlocking this potential is innovative and multi-layered, integrating tourism, urban planning, community development and conservation. Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet) has been designated as a Destination Town. The destination town initiative aligns with Mayo County Council's goal of making the County a high-quality place in which to live, work and visit.

General Tourism Policies	
TRP 1	To work in partnership with local, national and international agencies/bodies to promote County Mayo as a tourist destination and to support and encourage cohesion and linkages between the relevant agencies/ bodies to implement the key tourism objectives of this Plan.
TRP 2	To support and promote sustainable tourism development, accessible to all throughout the county and work in partnership with tourism organisations and adjoining Local Authorities, where necessary, in securing the development of tourism enterprises and infrastructure, subject to suitable locations where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, residential amenity or visual amenity.
TRP 3	To support the work of Fáilte Ireland and the strategic growth of tourism development in the county through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To support the implementation of the Wild Atlantic Way Tourism Strategy. The implementation of Fáilte Irelands Destination & Experience Development Plans (EDP's) for Clew Bay and North Mayo/Erris.
TRP 4	To co-operate with Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, and any other relevant bodies in the implementation of Destination Mayo 2016-2021 by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging investment in the tourism industry in the county with specific reference to leisure activities (including walking, cycling, equestrian and family focused activities), including connectivity to the Great Western Greenway at Castlebar to Westport and to the Wild Atlantic Way. Encouragement and support of the upgrading of public transport facilities in Destination Towns, including the provision of Transport Hubs/Links. Supporting the development of new and emerging tourism products and facilities or upgrading/extension of existing tourist facilities at tourist sites within the county, within proper planning and sustainable development principles. Require the preparation and assessment of all planning applications arising from the Destination Mayo strategy to have regard to the information, data and requirements of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report and SEA Environmental Report of the Destination Mayo Strategy.

TRP 5	To support the delivery of high quality 'destination town' experiences for visitors by supporting expansion in accommodation and facilities within Destination Towns and supporting infrastructural investment, including improvements to the public realm, transport links, accommodation, the night-time economy and the sustainable development of our natural and built heritage.
	To promote and support the continued strategic development of Westport, Ballina and Castlebar as tourist destinations through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Supporting the enhancement of Westport as a major tourism centre in the West of Ireland, building on its reputation as one of Ireland's premier visitor destinations along the Wild Atlantic Way, as a heritage town and gateway to areas of outstanding natural and built heritage. b. Supporting the development of Westport's key assets e.g. Westport House Demesne, Quay area, extension of the Great Western Greenway and additional greenway linkages e.g. Westport-Cong Trail and National Coastal Path. c. Exploration of the development potential of Westport and Ballina harbour areas in terms of marine related tourism and extensive marine resources. d. Promote the significant tourism potential of Ballina and its location as a prominent stop on the Wild Atlantic Way, a gateway to Northwest Mayo, the Céide Fields, and internationally renowned salmon fishing, through investment in tourism related infrastructure, including Monasteries of the Moy Greenway from Belleek to Killala, incorporating EuroVelo1 Atlantic Coastal Route, Mountain Biking Trail via Ballina connecting the Wild Nephin Ballycroy National Park to the National Mountain Bike Trail at Coolaney and ongoing development of the Wild Atlantic Way, including Discovery Points at Crockets Town. e. Promote the development of Castlebar as a nationally important Sports Tourism and Adventure Hub, including leveraging existing sports assets and existing natural and built facilities at Lough Lannagh Holiday Village. f. Promote the development of Castlebar as a nationally important events, conference and business tourism hub, including through leveraging existing local assets such as Galway Mayo Institute of Technology, Castlebar Campus, Castlebar Regional Training Centre, Breaaffy House Resort, the Royal Theatre, and expanding the scale and capacity of hotel and other accommodation within the town. g. To support the implementation of the feasibility study entitled Moy estuary, A Development Strategy, where appropriate.
TRP 6	
TRP 7	To encourage the clustering of tourism products and services within identified hubs, to facilitate the sharing of infrastructure and services where possible, to increase linkages within and reduce leakage from the local economy.
TRP 8	To work with the relevant authorities to promote the concept of creating Ireland's first "National Marine Park" in Killala Bay, from Easley Head to Kilcummin Head. This would enhance the Economic, Environmental and Social values of Killala Bay and promote the understanding and enjoyment of those special qualities by the public.

General Tourism Objectives	
TRO 1	To work with all relevant stakeholders and Fáilte Ireland to facilitate the erection of standardised signage for tourism facilities and tourist attractions as part of national and regional initiatives.
TRO 2	To enable, facilitate and encourage the growth and sustainability of the tourism sector, through supporting the provision of tourism enterprise developments in rural areas including open farms, subject to the provision of adequate infrastructure and compliance with normal planning considerations.

5.4.3 Key Tourism Pillars

To provide for the continued expansion of the tourism sector in Mayo, three key tourism pillars have been identified. Firstly, the continued development and enhancement of our tourism product and the various categories of tourism that bring visitors to Mayo. Secondly, ensuring that high quality services and accommodation are accessible and available for our visitors and thirdly, the identification of priority infrastructure designed to provide new and innovative activities and flagship products, as set out in Table 5.1. These projects will help differentiate the Mayo tourism offering from those in other areas of the country. Additionally, these projects will provide the necessary platform from which small tourism enterprises can operate and grow, helping to create jobs and regenerate rural areas throughout the county.

Tourism Categories	Infrastructure, Services and Accommodation	Priority Infrastructure - Flagship Projects
Activity, Adventure and Sports Tourism	Greenway expansion and improvements	Wild Atlantic Way - Discovery Points
Spiritual and Pilgrimage Tourism	Facilities - camping and camper vans sites.	Walking
Cultural and Amenity Tourism	Access to tourist sites for all	Greenways
Food and Culinary Tourism	Visitor centres	Marine
Festivals and Events	Accommodation - glamping, pods, hotels, B&B's, guesthouses, hostels.	Lakes of Mayo
Wild Atlantic Way and Wild Mayo	Services - toilets, showers etc	Adventure

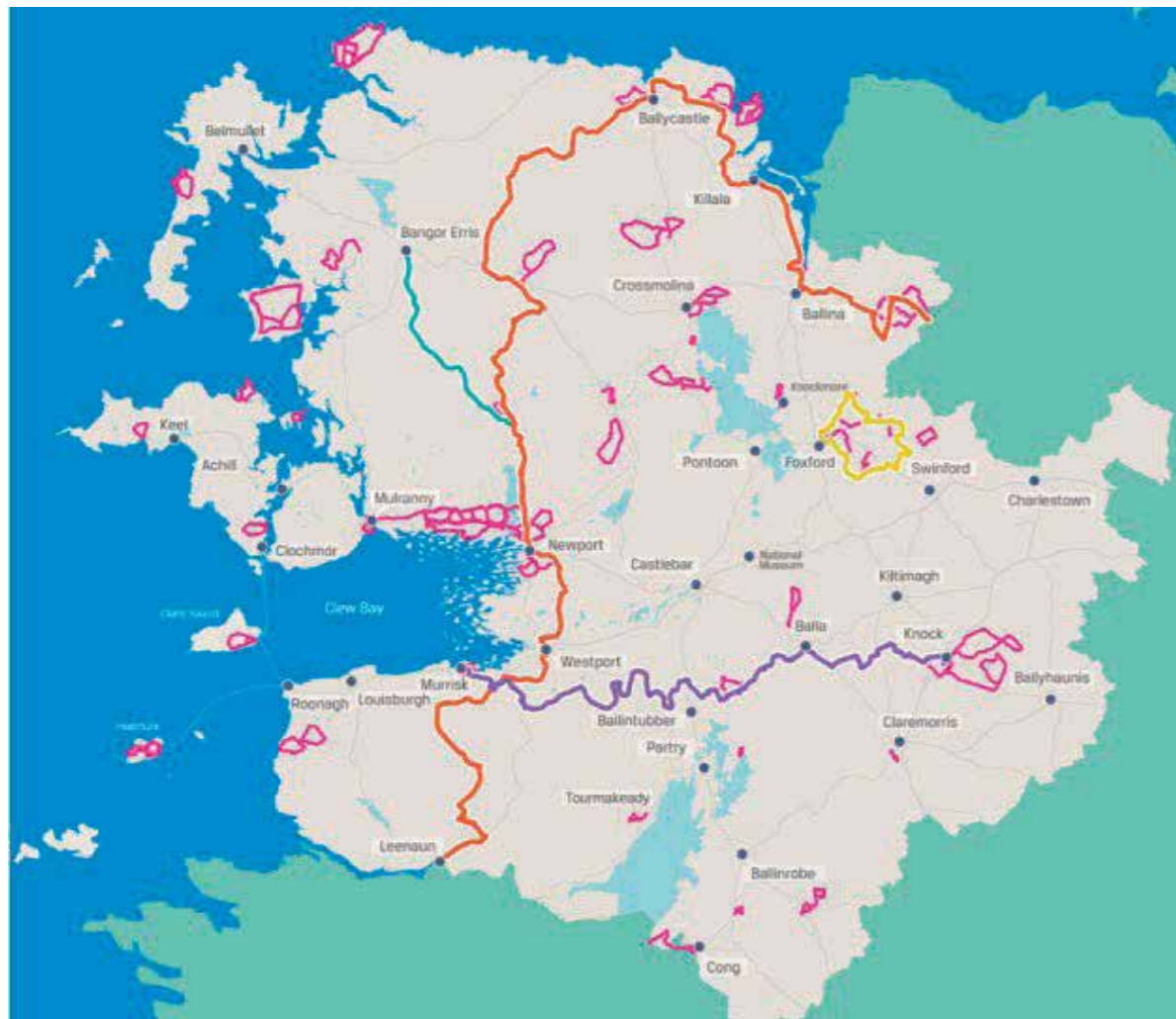
Table 5.1 Priority Infrastructure - Flagship Projects and required Infrastructure, Services and Accommodation.

5.4.3.1 Key Pillar 1: Tourism Categories

In planning their trip, visitors need reassurance that there will be plenty of quality opportunities both to see and do in the daytime and evening, along with a range of accommodation options and restaurants. Mayo has five key categories of tourism under which the various tourism offerings are set out.

Activity, Adventure and Sports Tourism

Mayo lends itself well to adventure activities and sports tourism due to its impressively wild landscape, rugged coastline and the wide availability of an adventure and activity product in the county. Mayo has the most extensive network of recreational greenways and tracks and trails for cycling and walking in Ireland, most notably the Great Western Greenway, while Lough Lannagh in Castlebar has been identified as a sports tourism and adventure hub. Map 5.1 below shows the existing network of trails in County Mayo. The county also has a number of nationally known Adventure Centres at Delphi, Achill and Westport and there has been a surge in participation in activity challenges around the county such as Gaelforce, Sea2Summit, Pink Ribbon, Achill Roar and Race to Glory. Mayo also has strong reputation as a golfing destination, with 14 golf courses within the county. Horse racing, horse riding and bird watching are also popular activity-based tourism products in Mayo.



Map 5.1: Existing Trails in County Mayo

Water sports activities are also very popular across coastal, lakes and river locations, including swimming, surfing, canoeing, kayaking, scuba diving and sailing. Other popular water tourism activities are fishing and angling due to the abundance of productive lake, river and sea angling fisheries, with high Salmon fisheries located at Carrowmore, Errif, Beltra and Furnace and the Moy being the most productive salmonoid river in Ireland. The county has some of Ireland's greatest lakes in Conn, Cullen,

Mask and Corrib all with excellent quality angling. Additionally, the availability of sea angling produce in the waters of Killala Bay, Clew Bay, Achill and Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet), all contribute to a large variety of angling products to suit the different preferences of the angling markets.

Activity, Adventure and Sports Tourism Policies

TRP 9

To support the implementation of the opportunities and actions identified in the Mayo Tourism Strategy and Action Plan - Destination Mayo 2015-2021, regarding the development of activity, adventure and sports tourism at strategic locations throughout the County in conjunction with the Tourism section of Mayo County Council and other relevant stakeholders.

TRP 10

To support the implementation of the strategy for Greenway development in Ireland - "Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways" in relation to the development and extension of greenways throughout the county, in conjunction with the Tourism section of Mayo County Council and other relevant stakeholders.

TRP 11

To promote Mayo as a premier walking/cycling destination in the Country and support the further development of walking routes and trails within the county and the integration and linkage of these with other existing / proposed routes and trails both within and outside of County Mayo, in accordance with national walking strategy guidance and in conjunction with the Tourism Section of Mayo County Council, Fáilte Ireland and other relevant stakeholders. Opportunities to enhance ecological connectivity should be integrated as part of any linking of routes to strengthen and support green infrastructure.

TRP 12

To support the development of a regional water-based leisure sector in a sustainable manner, making the best use of existing and planned infrastructure and resources, in a manner that is sensitive to the natural and cultural heritage resources, in conjunction with relevant regional partners.

TRP 13

To support local, national and international tourism agencies and bodies in their work to promote Mayo as a unique tourism destination and build on the 'Wild Mayo' adventure brand and to continue to position itself as 'The Heartbeat of the Wild Atlantic Way' through an interagency approach, utilising available funding streams to implement the tourism objectives of this plan.

TRP 14

To work with the National Transport Authority, Fáilte Ireland, Waterways Ireland and all stakeholders to develop a coordinated approach to the selection, delivery and servicing of future greenways, blueways, trails and routes throughout the county.

Activity, Adventure and Sports Tourism Objectives

TRO 3

To explore a feasibility study, including the development of route options, for the creation of a coastal walking/cycling route along the western seaboard, in collaboration and partnership with the NWRA, other relevant local authorities and stakeholders, including the public, to enhance access to our tourist assets along the route of the Wild Atlantic Way.

TRO 4

To investigate the development of bike trails and sites at Keenagh/ Ballycastle/ Bunnyconnellan Bike Trail and the Mountain Bike Centre at the Wild Nephin site, in conjunction with the Tourism Section of Mayo County Council.



Map 5.2: Proposed Spiritual Trail and Timber Trail in County Mayo

Spiritual and Pilgrimage Tourism

Mayo has considerable appeal as a spiritual tourism destination, with 1.6 million people travelling to Mayo annually to visit Knock Shrine. Added to this, Mayo has a rich sacred landscape with many religious heritage sites and pilgrimage walks, from the Monasteries of the Moy to Caher Island, Ballintubber Abbey, Tochar Padraig and Croagh Patrick among the key offerings. Map 5.2 above shows a proposed spiritual trail route from Croagh Patrick to Knock Shrine and Cong.

Spiritual and Pilgrimage Tourism Objective

TRO 5

- a. To explore the development of a long-distance Spiritual Trail linking Croagh Patrick, Ballintubber Abbey and Knock Shrine. Investigate the potential of linking this trail to Burriscarra, Cong, Turlough and the Monasteries of the Moy through the Tourism Section of Mayo County Council and other relevant stakeholders.
- b. To explore a range of spiritual walking and pilgrimage events to showcase Mayo as a spiritual tourism destination, with particular emphasis on generating overnight stays for visitors to Knock Shrine.
- c. To support and facilitate the development of Knock as a world-renowned religious tourist destination.
- d. To investigate the delivery of pilgrim trail improvements and upgrades on the Croagh Patrick trail and Tochar Padraig trail.

Opportunities to enhance ecological connectivity should be integrated as part of any linking of routes to strengthen and support green infrastructure. SEA and AA measures relating to the above were identified in the Destination Mayo Plan and should be adhered to and integrated to any project level assessments.

Cultural and Amenity Tourism

Mayo is a county with a rich heritage. The remote and rural nature of the county has resulted in much of this heritage surviving today, intact and authentic. Mayo boasts numerous museums and buildings of interest including the Jackie Clarke Museum, Museum of Country Life, Westport House, Moore Hall, and Enniscoe. Investment in the visitor attraction sector in the last twenty-five years has led to the development of these facilities and a number of other landmark attractions that capture and showcase Mayo's heritage. Coupled with this, Mayo's Arts, and Cultural Centres add a cultural dimension, including diverse evening entertainment.

Mayo is renowned for its unspoilt and richly diverse landscape and is home to Ballycroy and Nephin National Park and the Dark Sky Park. It boasts many forests and woodlands, lakes and rivers including Loughs Conn, Corrib and Cullen. Mayo's islands, coastal areas, marine resources and activities are major natural assets and significant components of the county's overall tourism offering. The natural beauty and unspoilt environment of Mayo's coastal locations are also important factors in bringing tourists to these areas and generate business opportunities for coastal areas. The county boasts a large number of Blue Flag and Green Coast Beaches, which have become important centres for water sports activities, such as surfing, kite-surfing, swimming, paddle boarding, kayaking, etc. and for activities such as walking, jogging and general enjoyment of the coastal area. Mayo also has many islands, all with their own individual histories, culture and communities. Managed appropriately and developed sustainably, coastal and marine tourism and recreation can deliver sustainable products, services and jobs. The protection of the coastline and marine areas is imperative to ensure long-term benefits from tourism activities that are based on this enviable natural asset. This includes maintaining good environmental conditions and good water quality.

Cultural and Amenity Tourism Policies

TRP 15	To support the implementation of the opportunities and actions identified in the Mayo Tourism Strategy and Action Plan – Destination Mayo 2015-2021, SEA and AA, regarding the development of cultural and amenity tourism and the Wild Atlantic Way in Mayo, in conjunction with the Tourism section of Mayo County Council and other relevant stakeholders.
TRP 16	To support the protection and enhancement of Mayo’s historic buildings, gardens and museums as cultural tourist attractions.
TRP 17	To support developments which will enable and encourage countryside recreation in appropriate locations to foster an increased appreciation of, and access to, the natural environment.
TRP 18	To work in partnership with Coillte to identify opportunities for tourism and recreation facility development within commercially managed forests, where appropriate, and to promote and continue to be involved in the NeighbourWood Scheme (2017).

Cultural and Amenity Tourism Objectives

TRO 6	To encourage access to forestry and woodlands, including private forestry, in cooperation with key stakeholders for walking routes, bridle paths, mountain biking, nature walks, orienteering, hiking, recreational areas and other similar facilities and to retain existing public rights of ways through forest lands.
TRO 7	To investigate the development of Moore Hall Estate and walled garden in conjunction with the Tourism Section of Mayo County Council and relevant working groups.
TRO 8	To investigate the further potential of the Wild Nephin Ballycroy National Park and Dark Sky initiative in a sustainable manner. This approach should demonstrate good practice in terms of eco-tourism and wilderness and seek to gain recognised accreditation on same.
TRO 9	To explore the development of community walks, off road trails/rural trail developments, parks, other outdoor amenities and recreational infrastructure, and work with relevant landholders and recreational/tourism agencies to increase access to the countryside and our coastal areas, subject to proper planning and sustainable development principles.
TRO 10	Encourage sensitively designed and located development which provides for the appreciation, interpretation, upgrade and provision of access to natural habitats, scenic vistas and heritage and geoheritage features for the benefit of rural tourism, subject to normal planning and nature conservation consideration.
TRO 11	To utilise Mayo’s natural and heritage resources to foster the development of tourism as a viable sustainable sector of the economy, in a sustainable manner, which complements the scale, quality and unique features of the county.

Food and Culinary Tourism

Mayo with its clean waters, natural scenery and untamed wildness has great food and hospitality at its core. Over seventy producers have been identified around the county with products ranging from seafood, sausages, meats, mountain lamb, farmhouse cheese, farmhouse butter, pesto, sea salt, hedgerow infused vinegars, chocolate, nougat, natural still and sparkling water, green tea sparkling water to craft beers. A number of food trails and festivals have been established included the Gourmet Greenway, Feile na Tuaithe, Westport and Ballina food festivals.

Food and Culinary Tourism Policy

TRP 19	To support the development of Mayo as a ‘Foodie Destination’ through the implementation of the Fáilte Ireland ‘Food Tourism Development Strategy 2018-2023’ and the Mayo County Council Food and Drink Strategy 2020-2025 and the opportunities and actions identified in the Mayo Tourism Strategy and Action Plan – Destination Mayo 2015-2021 regarding the development of food tourism in Mayo, in conjunction with the Tourism section of Mayo County Council and other relevant stakeholders.
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Food and Culinary Tourism Objectives

TRO 12	To explore the development of a Mayo food network and market signature food experiences around the county, including artisan food trails such as the Gourmet Greenway and Edible Greenway and other food trails, at appropriate locations throughout the county.
TRO 13	To facilitate Féile na Tuaithe and the Westport and Ballina food festivals and other food and drinks tourism events at appropriate locations throughout the county.

Festivals and Events

150 festivals and events are held annually in Mayo. Largely attributable to successful community engagement in tourism in Mayo, many of these festivals have long histories and have become part of the fabric of life in Mayo’s towns and villages, often playing an important role in drawing Mayo’s diaspora home on holiday. These festivals offer an authentic experience and a genuine engagement opportunity for visitors. Festivals are predominantly small, community managed and range from historical/heritage themes to music, arts, horseracing, regattas, walking festivals and agricultural shows. In recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in activity challenge events including marathons, duatlons, triatlons and adventure challenges involving various combinations of cycling, running and water-based activities.

Festivals and Events Policies

- To support the implementation of the opportunities and actions identified in the Mayo Tourism Strategy and Action Plan – Destination Mayo 2015-2021 regarding the development festivals and events in Mayo, in conjunction with the Tourism section of Mayo County Council and other relevant stakeholders by:
- TRP 20** supporting community groups and festival committees to identify and access new sources of funding for festivals and events in the county.
- promoting the development of a variety of new festivals, including Mayo Dark Skies International and sporting events, to appeal to a wide range of visitors and to increase the profile of the county as a key tourism destination.
- TRP 21** To support and promote existing festivals and sporting events, in conjunction with the relevant tourism and sporting agencies to increase the cultural, heritage and lifestyle profile of the county, and to facilitate the establishment of new events where viable, subject to the satisfactory location, access, parking provision and protection of the surrounding environment.

5.4.3.2 Key Pillar 2: Infrastructure, Services and Tourist Accommodation

The provision of sufficient, appropriate and high-quality infrastructure, services and accommodation to meet the needs of visitors is fundamental to Mayo reaching its potential for a thriving tourism sector.

Infrastructure and Visitor Services

The provision of sufficient, appropriate and high-quality infrastructure to meet the needs of visitors is fundamental to Mayo reaching its potential for a thriving tourism sector. Future provision will be based on current and future projected needs. Services and infrastructure should be clustered in visitor destination towns and villages where possible, providing for a suitable range and critical mass of services that will strengthen visitor destinations. In terms of infrastructure provision, the expansion of inter-urban and town greenways has been identified as a priority by the Tourism Section of Mayo County Council, in conjunction with facility improvements along existing greenways. Visitor centres, services, car parking and facilities at key tourist sites have also been identified for development.

The Council recognises the potential for pressure being placed on the County's natural and heritage amenities through increased tourism. In this regard, it is important that the provision for increased tourism activity is in line with the provision of the required infrastructure to support such development. The Council will use the full range of its statutory procedures, particularly in relation to waste management, water and air pollution, to ensure that natural amenities remain unpolluted and visually unspoiled.

Tourism-related development proposals will be required to demonstrate a high standard of design, with strong consideration given to a proposal's potential impact on its surroundings, in terms of scale and intensity and the potential for the proposal to add significantly to the quality of the visitor experience.

Infrastructure and Visitor Services Policies

- TRP 22** To support the implementation of priority infrastructural developments and tourism facilities identified by the Tourism Section of Mayo County Council, including the development of new tourist facilities or upgrading/extension of existing tourist facilities at tourist sites within the county, within proper planning and sustainable development principles.
- TRP 23** To support and promote sustainable tourism, accessible to all throughout County Mayo, and to work in partnership with tourism organisations and adjoining local authorities, where necessary, in securing the development of tourism enterprises and infrastructure, subject to suitable locations, where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 200 network, residential amenity or visual amenity.
- TRP 24** To encourage the clustering of tourism products and services within identified hubs, to facilitate the sharing of infrastructure and services where possible, to increase linkages within and reduce leakage from the local economy.

Infrastructure and Visitor Services Objective

- TRO 14** To identify opportunities for funding for infrastructural projects and facilities, including LEADER, national and European funding schemes and seek to maximise the benefit of such funding opportunities for County Mayo.
- TRO 15** To work with key stakeholders, including transport providers, to promote, support and facilitate the provision of sustainable rural transport modes to key tourist locations within the county.

Tourism Accommodation

Tourism can generate immense benefits to the local economy, and it is therefore considered appropriate to maintain, improve and increase the provision of high-quality accommodation for visitors and encourage longer term stays in the county. While it is an objective for new tourist accommodation to locate in towns and villages, in close proximity to services and amenities, it is also recognised that some forms of tourism developments, due to their scale or nature, may require a location outside of settlement boundaries. Such developments and their requirement to locate outside of an established settlement, will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, having regard to their nature, scale, site suitability and normal planning considerations.

Tourism Accommodation Policies

TRP 25 To promote the sustainable development of the tourism sector in appropriate locations throughout the county.

TRP 26 To encourage proposals to reinstate, conserve and/or replace existing ruinous or disused dwellings for holiday home purposes, subject to normal planning considerations including design, safe access and provision of any necessary wastewater disposal facilities.

Tourism Accommodation Objectives

To ensure that tourism related accommodation such as holiday homes, hotels, caravan/camping parks, glamping etc. are primarily located within existing settlements where there is existing infrastructure provision to service the development and where they can contribute to maintenance of essential rural services.

Certain forms of low-impact tourist accommodation such as Camping and Glamping/Pod sites may also be considered outside of existing settlements where it is:

- TRO 16**
- Proposed to incorporate the reuse an existing structure as an integral part of the development.
 - Adjacent to, and capable of availing of, an existing appropriate commercial enterprise or community facility or located on an existing farm

In all cases the facility shall be of an appropriate scale for the location and shall have a high standard of design, layout, landscape, including Sections 6.2 and 6.3 of the Development Management Standards (Volume 2), and environmental protection so as not to impact negatively on the visual and residential amenity of the area or have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.

TRO 17 To facilitate, where appropriate, the conversion of former demesnes or estate dwellings and their outbuildings into tourism facilities, subject to good planning principles and architectural practice.

TRO 18 To facilitate the sustainable development of a variety of quality tourist accommodation types, at suitable locations, throughout the county.

TRO 19 To positively consider the development of new hotels in existing settlements, with particular preference for locations in larger settlements. In rural locations (i.e village/ rural nodes), it must be demonstrated that: (i) the area proposed to be served by the new development has high visitor numbers associated with an existing attraction / facility; (ii) a need for new / additional hotel type accommodation for these visitors has been identified having regard to the profile of the visitor and the availability and proximity of existing hotels in the area; and (iii) the distance of the location from a significant settlement is such that visitors to the area/attraction are unlikely to avail of existing hotel facilities.

TRO 20 To positively consider the (part) conversion of existing dwellings to Bed & Breakfasts (B&Bs) and Guesthouses, to be operated by the owner-occupier of the dwelling. Applications for new build B&Bs /guesthouses will in the first instance be evaluated as private dwellings and the objectives and standards applicable in that area type (e.g. large town, rural town, rural area, etc) will be applied.

TRO 21

To ensure that holiday home / self-catering developments on a farm holding shall be provided by farmhouse extension or by the utilisation of other existing dwellings / structures on the property. Only where it has been demonstrated that these are not viable options, will permission be considered for new build development. Any new build development shall be in close proximity to the existing farmhouse.

TRO 22

To facilitate the development of hostels along established walking / hiking routes and adjacent to existing tourism / recreation facilities, subject to normal planning criteria.

5.4.3.3 Key Tourism Pillar 3: Flagship Infrastructure Projects

A programme of infrastructural improvements has been identified through the Tourism Section of Mayo County Council to meet gaps in the existing tourist product and to address future product needs. The programme includes the delivery of a number of flagship tourism projects throughout the county which are designed to provide new and innovative activities.

Flagship Infrastructure Projects Policies

To support the promotion of the Wild Atlantic Way in its role to grow the economic contribution of tourism along its route, through the upgrade and improvement of the touring network, facilities and visitor attractions through:

- TRP 27**
- Exploration of the development of signature discovery points to assist and secure Mayo's position as 'The Heartbeat of the Wild Atlantic Way'.
 - Working with all relevant stakeholders and Fáilte Ireland to facilitate the erection of standardised signage for tourism facilities and tourist attractions along the Wild Atlantic Way.
 - Working with relevant landholders and recreational/tourism agencies to increase access to the countryside and our coastal areas, and to ensure maintenance and access to the existing network of trails, paths, and tourist sites along the Wild Atlantic Way.
 - Supporting the exploration of the development of new tourist services, parking and facilities or upgrading/extension of existing tourist services, parking and facilities at tourist sites along the Wild Atlantic Way.
 - Build the concept of sustainability firmly into ongoing planning processes for tourism and outdoor recreation. In conducting tourism and recreation planning processes during the lifetime of the Mayo CDP, work towards adopting an ecosystem-based approach that assesses capacity of landscapes, communities, and natural resources to provide a basis for decision making that is firmly based on the principles of sustainability.
 - Apply environmental measures as presented in the Wild Atlantic Way Operational Programme, the SEA and NIR of the Destination Mayo Strategy and support monitoring of environmental effects associated with tourism growth to ensure cumulative and in combination effects are avoided.
 - To support the preparation of a masterplan and/or visitor traffic management plan at Downpatrick Head-Discovery Point.

Flagship Infrastructure Projects Objectives

TRO 23	To strategically facilitate the development of infrastructural flagship projects through the implementation of the National Tourism Strategy 'People, Place and Policy: Growing Tourism to 2025' Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Mayo County Council Tourism Strategy 'Destination Mayo'.
TRO 24	To identify opportunities for funding for Flagship Projects, including LEADER, national and European funding schemes and seek to maximise the benefit of such funding opportunities for County Mayo.

Wild Atlantic Way – Discovery Points

The Wild Atlantic Way has been very successful tourism initiative by Fáilte Ireland, particularly for the West of Ireland. It showcases the natural assets and outstanding scenery of the West and has been an important economic driver for County Mayo to date. Mayo County Council recognises that the Wild Atlantic Way is essential to the future of tourism and economic growth in the county. The Wild Atlantic Way is one of the longest defined coastal routes in the world, stretching approximately 2,500km. The section of the Wild Atlantic Way which runs through Mayo is a 543km coastal drive, from Killary Harbour in the south, to Ballina in the north of the county and beyond into County Sligo. The route contains 35 Discovery Points, three of which are Signature Points (Downpatrick Head, Keem Bay & Killary Harbour). Pivotal to the success of the initiative is investment in necessary infrastructure along the way, including signage and parking facilities. Signature Discovery points are worthy of significant investment and works have been completed at Downpatrick Head. Planning and design of a Signature Discovery Point is ongoing for Keem Bay, including improved walk access and improved toilet facilities. It is intended that this Signature Discovery Point will magnetise visitors to the Wild Atlantic Way and Achill, in particular”.

Walking and Greenways

Walking is Mayo’s signature activity product, and Mayo has successfully positioned itself as the Walking Capital of Ireland. Infrastructural developments include the consolidation, development and enhancement of trailhead facilities, combining with other activities such as cycling and water-based activities, to optimise the infrastructural investment. Ongoing investment in the maintenance and upkeep of existing trails to international best practice standard is recommended, along with the further development of long-distance iconic walking trails such as the coastal trail.

Investment in greenway development has proved extraordinarily beneficial for Mayo tourism in the past, and continued investment in greenway development is identified as an infrastructural priority in the Mayo Tourism Strategy. Flagship cycling infrastructure include creating new and improved linkages and facilities along the Clew Bay Greenway, the development of interurban greenways between Castlebar and Ballina and town greenways, so that the enjoyment of the wealth of natural heritage and amenity may be maximised and such assets for the purposes of tourism can be realised. This connectivity will also further facilitate activity tourism, the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society, improve health and wellbeing, job creation and improve settlement connectivity.

Walking and Greenway Policies

TRP 28	To support the implementation of the NWRA Regional Outdoor Recreation Strategy, through the extension of greenways, walking routes, tracks and trails within the county and the integration and linkage of them with other existing / proposed greenways, walking routes, tracks and trails, both within and outside County Mayo.
TRP 29	To support the progression of long-distance linear greenways and greenway town networks, and the further development and improvements of the following walking trails and coastal paths in County Mayo - Westport/Cong Walking trail; Croagh Patrick trail upgrade; Tourmakeady Trail; Bangor trail; Céide /Downpatrick Coastal Path; and Slievemore Trail, in conjunction with the Tourism Section and other relevant stakeholders.

Marine Facilities

The importance of Mayo’s coastline and waterways to the tourism product is immense. Infrastructural development, ranging from car park enhancements, toilet, changing and shower facilities to more comprehensive Activity Service Centres, enables these destinations to become more attractive to a wider range of activity enthusiasts. Marina, pontoon and mooring facilities are also an important addition for marine leisure/tourism hubs and their development.

Marine Facilities Policy

TRP 30	To support the protection and enhancement of our islands, coastline and waterways as tourism products and attractions, subject to community and environmental carrying capacity.
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Marine Facilities Objectives

TRO 25	To identify strategic marine locations, in line with the Mayo Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, for the development of pontoon and mooring facilities.
TRO 26	To explore the development of activity service centres in accordance with the Mayo Tourism Strategy and Action Plan.
TRO 27	To investigate facility upgrades at Roonagh Pier.

Adventure

Mayo is a premiere destination for adventure and lends itself well to adventure activities due to its impressively wild landscape, rugged coastline and the wide availability of adventure product in the county. A number of actions in the Destination Mayo Action Plan relate to infrastructural works which will underpin the objective of Mayo being a premiere destination for Adventure. These include the development of a National Outdoors Pursuits Centre in Castlebar, extension of the Blueway water trails and the development of “Get out there” Services centre at strategic adventure locations in the county. These proposed developments are investment heavy and will be subject to external grant funding being available to Mayo County Council.

Adventure Policy

TRP 31 To support the development of an activity centre at Keel and activity hub at Lough Lannagh, Castlebar.

Lakes of Mayo

In addition to Mayo’s lengthy coastline, Mayo’s lakes are also popular with leisure tourism and water sports enthusiasts, primarily for boating, kayaking, angling and swimming. Access to the lakes can be challenging, therefore, a series of infrastructural developments, primarily the installation of pontoons, marina and angling post facilities, are required. Mayo’s lakes also have potential for land-based activity usage too, with the potential to develop and enhance circumnavigatory cycling and walking trails. Parking facilities and lay-bys in scenic areas are also necessary to allow visitors enjoy scenic areas along themed touring routes around the county.

Lakes Objective

TRO 28 To support the protection and enhancement of our counties lakes as visitor attractions, through the identification of infrastructure requirements and development of masterplans including:
the exploration of the development of the Pontoon Lakes masterplan and construction of a boardwalk in conjunction with the Tourism Section of Mayo County Council.
working with relevant landholders and recreational/tourism agencies to increase access to Mayo’s lakes.

5.4.4 Public Rights of Way

Public rights of way constitute an important recreational amenity for local people and visitors and their enjoyment of landscapes, natural heritage as well as providing linkages to lakes and forests. The Council recognises the importance of protecting existing public rights of way and their role in facilitating the development of walking trails in areas of high amenity value. Several walking routes exist throughout the county which provide important access networks. This is an important recreational resource, the integrity of which 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.

Public Rights of Way Policy

TRP 32 To preserve and protect verified public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other places of natural beauty or recreational utility.

Public Rights of Way Objectives


The Council, within the lifetime of this plan, aims to:

- TRO 29**
- a. Identify, preserve and enhance existing accesses and public rights of way to recreational areas including the coast, upland areas, lakeshores, river-bank areas and heritage sites.
 - b. Where necessary, establish new accesses and public rights of way to recreational areas including the coast, upland areas, lakeshores, river-bank areas, and heritage sites in co-operation with landowners and the local community. When public rights of way are identified, the owners of the public rights of way shall be notified in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).
 - c. Map public rights of way in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

(a) and (b) shall be carried out in accordance with best sustainable management practices, any guidance from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.

TRO 30 To seek to identify and protect over the lifetime of the Plan further existing verified rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility, as they become available to the Planning Authority over the lifetime of the plan. (Accompanied by mapping showing public rights of way).

CHAPTER 5
TOURISM & RECREATION



6 MOVEMENT &
TRANSPORT

Chapter 6 Movement & Transport

6.1 Strategic Aim

The strategic aim of this chapter is to support increased use of sustainable modes of transport; the integration of spatial planning with transport planning; enhanced county and regional accessibility; the transition to a low carbon energy efficient transport system; and the development of a safer, more efficient, effective and connected transport system within Mayo.

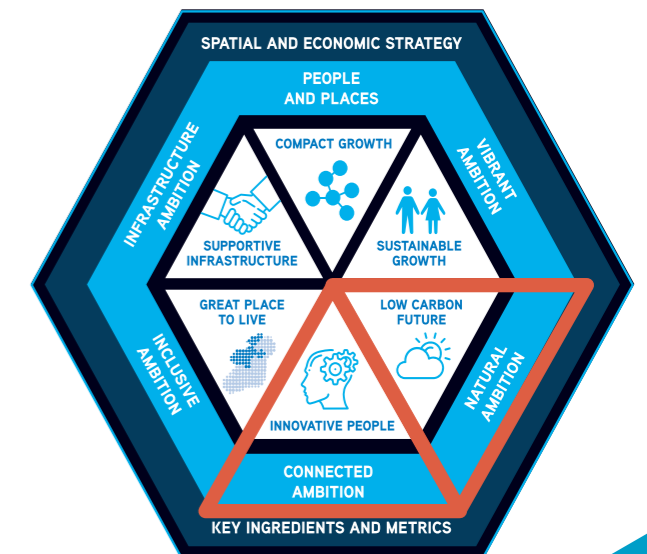
Related UN Sustainable Development Goals



Related NPF National Strategic Outcomes



Related RSES Regional Growth Ambitions



6.2 Introduction

This chapter has been guided by the above strategic aim, sustainable development goals and national strategic objectives to support the transition to a low carbon future, through use of sustainable modes of transport in County Mayo. The chapter has also considered the key legislative and policy documents set out in Appendix III, including the NPF and RSES for the Northern and Western region.

6.3 National and Regional Planning Position

A core objective of the NPF and RSES is the need for more sustainable forms of transport to reduce energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions, such as walking, cycling, electric vehicles and the increased usage of public transport. Sustainable mobility can be realised through the effective integration of land-use and transportation; the design of roads and streets; using more sustainable modes of transport; providing supporting infrastructure and education. The RSES requires the preparation of Local Transport Plans (LTP) to be made for the Key Towns of Ballina and Castlebar. These plans will support the National Planning Framework objectives of Compact Growth and Sustainable Mobility.

The NPF and RSES also places a strong emphasis on enhanced regional accessibility. The growth of the northern and western region is dependent on transport and infrastructure investment, in order to improve accessibility and travel times between urban and rural settlements. The RSES recognises the strategic importance of the Western Rail Corridor (WRC) as a growth enabler for the region, and its potential to link the economies of large urban centres along the western seaboard. The strategy recognises the potential of the WRC in consolidating the Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC). The importance of Ireland West Airport Knock (IWAK) is also recognised by the NPF and RSES as having a very significant role in tourism and enterprise development for the region.

6.4 Mayo Context

The provision of high-quality transport infrastructure and protection of the existing extensive transport network in County Mayo is critical to the county's socio-economic development and will ensure quality levels of service, accessibility and connectivity to transport users. Mayo is strategically located along the AEC and along on the western seaboard, with an international airport, railway and high quality national, regional and local road networks. The county has a significant advantage within the north-west region, in terms of its location and economic assets. These advantages must be progressed in tandem with the sustainable management and development of other essential infrastructure, whilst having regard to environmental responsibilities and complying with European and national legislation. A priority of this plan is the enhancement of the existing physical infrastructure network within the county and to strive to transition to a low carbon future, through greater support and promotion of more sustainable modes of transport.

6.4.1 Sustainable Transport

An effective and multi-modal transport system is reliant on the successful integration with land use planning. This will ensure the efficient use of land to deliver compact growth, create vibrant towns and villages and the transition to a low carbon, climate friendly environment. The location and design of development has a fundamental influence on travel patterns. This plan seeks to encourage walking and cycling as the primary modes of transports within settlement communities.

Improved street design in settlements will encourage more people to choose to walk, cycle or use public transport, by making the experience safer and more pleasant. It will help lower traffic speeds, reduce unnecessary car use and create a built environment that promotes healthy lifestyles and responds more sympathetically to the distinctive nature of individual communities and places. The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) provides design guidance and standards for constructing new and reconfiguring existing urban roads and streets in Ireland, to ensure they are safe for pedestrians and cyclists. This plan recognises that the continued delivery and maintenance of a well-functioning, multi-modal transport network is essential to advance the county's economic competitiveness, improve quality of life and enhance social cohesion.

6.4.1.1 Integrated Land Use and Transportation

The integration of land use and transportation is a fundamental principle of the national policy document Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future, 2009 - 2020. By shaping the pattern of development and influencing the location, scale, density, design and mix of land-uses, the integration of land-use and transportation can help reduce the need to travel and facilitate sustainable urban development.

The Plan promotes an integrated approach to land-use and transportation which aligns with the Core Strategy and directs future development into existing towns and settlements within County Mayo, in order to reduce car dependency. The Plan strongly supports the creation of compact growth, consolidation of existing settlements and prioritisation of the development of brownfield lands across the settlement hierarchy, which in turn will encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking as viable alternatives to the private car. Lands identified for residential development in the Settlement Plans maps (Volume 3) are located within the built-up area and are generally situated close to or within the core areas of the settlements, in order to encourage the consolidation of the settlements and make active travel (walking and cycling) more viable. Local Transport Plans are required to be prepared for Castlebar, Ballina and Westport under the RSES. The council, however, will support the preparation of similar sustainable transport plans for other settlements in the county, commensurate to the size and function of the settlement, to encourage sustainable transport.

Integrated Land Use and Transportation Policies

MTP 1	To support sustainable travel in the county by ensuring future population and employment growth predominantly takes place in urban areas which will warrant provision of public transport services.
MTP 2	To support and facilitate the integration of land use with transportation infrastructure, through the development of sustainable compact settlements which are well served by public transport.
MTP 3	To support and facilitate any 'Smarter Travel' initiatives that will improve sustainable transportation within the county, including public transport, electric and hybrid vehicles, car clubs, public bike schemes, improved pedestrian and cycling facilities, as appropriate.
MTP 4	To work with the NTA and Bus Eireann to make all existing public transport services throughout the county more accessible for wheelchair users and those with disabilities and require that proposals for new transport infrastructure are subject to an Accessibility Audit.

MTP 5	To ensure new development areas and employment land-uses are permeable for walking and cycling and are laid out in such a way as to facilitate the operation of and access to public transport by residents and employees
MTP 6	To ensure that the layout and design of new developments provide for bus stops, passenger waiting facilities, and bus turning and service regulatory layover facilities, as required.

Integrated Land Use and Transportation Objective	
MTO 1	To prepare and commence implementation of, Local Transport Plans (LTP), in conjunction with the National Transport Authority and relevant stakeholders, for Ballina, Castlebar and Westport, and other settlements, where appropriate.

6.4.1.2 Sustainable Mobility

Sustainable mobility can be described as linking people and places in a sustainable way by supporting:

- Comfortable and affordable journeys to and from work, home, school, college, shops and leisure;
- Travel by cleaner and greener transport; and
- A shift away from the private car to greater use of active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport (e.g. bus and rail).

Sustainable mobility is a challenge for County Mayo, which has one of the highest usage rates of private cars (73.2%), compared to the national average (65.6%). The dominance of the private car as the primary mode of transport is mainly contributed to the fact that Mayo is predominantly a rural county, with 71.4% of the population living in the rural area, compared to 37.3% nationally. The county has a dispersed settlement pattern and a low population density of 23.3 people per sq. km, compared to the national average (70 people per sq. km). Furthermore, the lack of viable alternative sustainable modes of transport is also a significant contributing factor for the high usage of private cars in the county. Less than 1% of commuters in Mayo use public transport, compared to the national average of 9.3%.

Achieving sustainable mobility will require working with key stakeholders, including the National Transport Authority and through a suite of actions which involves:

- Focusing targeted population and employment growth in settlement areas;
- Providing alternative options to the car, namely, walking, cycling and public transport;
- Improving fuel efficiency, promoting energy efficient driving and alternative technologies; and
- Permeability and accessibility improvements.

Settlement patterns play a fundamental role in influencing how people travel, both the distances undertaken and the modal choice. The provision of sustainable mobility options is only realistic when development patterns locate populations close to employment centres and complementary services such as education, retail and leisure. Walking and cycling become increasingly viable as transport options when the distance between such services is reduced. There is a need to ensure that alternatives to the car are integrated in the design of streets and public spaces, prioritising cycling and walking as active transport modes. The effective management of space in town and village centres should deliver a high level of priority and permeability for walking and cycling to create accessible, attractive, vibrant and safe places to work, live, shop and engage in community life.

6.4.1.3 Existing Modes of Transport

Table 6.1 below provides a breakdown of the daytime population (i.e. residents and commuters) in Tier I and Tier II settlements. These figures account for persons who worked or studied in the area, along with persons who travel to these towns for other purposes. The table shows that the daytime population more than doubles in most towns during the day. Workplace zones are available for each settlement.

Settlements	Sum of Total Workers in Workplace Zone	Sum of Total Daytime Population in Workplace Zone
TIER I		
Ballina	5459	11821
Castlebar	8851	16211
Westport	4210	8347
TIER II		
Ballinrobe	1506	4082
Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet)	494	966
Ballyhaunis	1484	3485
Claremorris	1667	3509
Swinford	1096	2574

Table 6.1: Daytime population in Tier I and Tier II settlements, Census 2016

Tables 6.2 and 6.3 provide a breakdown of the modes of travel for the daytime population for Tier I and Tier II towns (POWSCAR). The tables show that the private car is the main mode of transport in Tier I (55%) and Tier II (51%) towns, which is below the national average (61.40%). Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet) is the only settlement where private car usage is higher (79%) than the national average. This is attributed to its location in the north-west of the county, which serves a wide hinterland in comparison to the other settlements. It is also apparent that car passenger (car sharing) is well above the national average in all settlements, which would indicate that car sharing is a viable option. Cycling, motorbike/scooters and rail transport in all settlements is below the national average, whereas bus transport usage is above the national average for five settlements. In the short term, the modal shift strategy should focus on increased usage of cycling for all settlements.

Mode of Travel	Castlebar	Ballina	Westport	Tier 1 (a & b) Combined Average	Mayo CSO 2016*	National CSO 2016
Car Driver	59.35%	53.80%	50.56%	54.57%	43%	61.40%
Car Passenger	17.91%	18.43%	19.26%	18.53%	22.43%	4.10%
Bus	3.77%	4.10%	7.85%	5.24%	8.42%	5.90%
Train	0.08%	0%	0.65%	0.24%	0.27%	3.40%
Walk	11.58%	13.18%	13.86%	12.87%	9.63%	9.30%
Bicycle	0.73%	1.03%	1.21%	0.99%	0.81%	3.00%
Motorbike/Scooter	0.14%	0.14%	0.16%	0.15%	0.11%	0.40%
Other (incl. lorry/van)	4.56%	6.61%	5.82%	5.66%	0.52%	7.30%
Not Stated	2.42%	3.20%	2.19%	2.42%	3.92%	5.00%

Table 6.2 – Tier I Towns & National Mode of Travel, Census 2016

Mode of Travel	Ballinrobe	Ballyhaunis	Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet)	Claremorris	Swinford	Tier 2 Combined Average	Mayo CSO 2016*	National CSO 2016
Car Driver	35.88%	40.88%	79.14%	47.29%	49.94%	50.63%	43%	61.40%
Car Passenger	26.38%	23.04%	23.52%	22.13%	23.79%	23.77%	22.43%	4.10%
Bus	11.57%	9.33%	0.59%	9.33%	8.47%	7.86%	8.42%	5.90%
Train	0.34%	0.42%	0.00%	0.16%	0.06%	0.18%	0.27%	3.40%
Walk	12.79%	15.71%	10.95%	12.07%	8.53%	12.01%	9.63%	9.30%
Bicycle	0.81%	0.64%	0.44%	0.93%	0.35%	0.63%	0.81%	3.00%
Motorbike/Scooter	0.15%	0.17%	0.00%	0.16%	0.06%	0.11%	0.11%	0.40%
Other (incl. lorry/van)	2.96%	1.57%	1.77%	1.53%	1.64%	1.89%	0.52%	7.30%
Not Stated	2.22%	3.83%	3.84%	1.05%	3.10%	2.81%	3.92%	5.00%

Table 6.3 Tier II Town and National Mode of travel.

Sustainable Mobility Policies

MTP 7	To support sustainable mobility, enhanced regional accessibility and connectivity within County Mayo in accordance with the National Strategic Outcomes of Project 2040 and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region.
MTP 8	To promote the transition to a low carbon integrated transport system by firstly reducing the need for travel through the use of design solutions and innovative approaches with regards to the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, and subsequently to shift to environmentally sustainable modes of transport.
MTP 9	Work with the NTA to undertake analysis in relation to modal shift between settlements and derive a realistic modal change target for increased usage of sustainable modes of transport for the county.
MTP 10	To support and develop public transport routes throughout the County through collaboration with the National Transport Authority.

Sustainable Mobility Objectives

MTO 2	To ensure that planning applications for large scale developments that are significant trip intensive generators are accompanied by a Mobility Management Plan.
MTO 3	To liaise and collaborate with relevant agencies to support and encourage the growth of electric vehicles and EBikes with support facilities/infrastructure through a roll-out of additional electric charging points in collaboration with relevant agencies, with a particular emphasis in public parking areas, employment locations and along the Wild Atlantic Way, including the retrofitting of charging points in existing urban centres.
MTO 4	To increase cycling usage in Tier I and Tier II settlements in line with the national average (2016).
MTO 5	To retrospectively provide public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure and facilities in existing development areas to achieve growth in sustainable mobility
MTO 6	To provide suitable infrastructure on public transport corridors to improve safety and efficiency for public transport users.
MTO 7	To establish modal shift targets and a monitoring regime to increase the usage of sustainable modes of transport in the towns of Ballina, Castlebar and Westport, as informed by local transport plans.

Pedestrians and Cyclists

A key theme of government at all levels is to promote a modal shift from private car usage to walking and cycling, which in turn will have clear benefits in relation to reducing congestion, vehicle emissions and improving health, whilst improving movement and accessibility in urban and inter-urban areas. Encouraging and promoting walking and cycling as a sustainable mode of transport and moving away from reliance on the private car will depend on providing well connected and integrated pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. Pedestrian and cycle facilities will be most successful where they form a coherent network, place an emphasis on safety, directly serve the main areas where people wish to travel, provide priority over vehicular traffic at junctions, are free from obstructions and have adequate public lighting.

Mayo County Council promotes walking and cycling as a means of transport; as a means of recreational activity; and for the purposes of mental and physical health and wellbeing. Cycling as a means of transport accounts for only a small percentage of trips within the county. The Council will endeavour to make provisions for pedestrians and cyclists in both urban and rural areas of the county and facilitate an increase in cycling/walking trips to meet targets as set above. Map 6.1 below shows existing and proposed strategic greenway network in County Mayo, including a long-distance coastal greenway, long distance interurban greenway and town greenways (8km network within urban areas). The Council also wish to promote and facilitate “Park and Stride” facilities which encourage car commuters to transfer to a healthy and ecologically sound mode of transport, i.e. walking for the final element of their journey, thus reducing car journeys and easing congestion. Cycle parking should be appropriately designed into the urban realm and into new developments at an early stage, to ensure that adequate cycle parking is provided.

Pedestrian and Cyclist Policies

- MTP 11** To support safer cycling/walking routes to encourage people to be more physically active for transport and leisure purposes.
- MTP 12** To promote the design and construction of new developments to create low carbon, walkable neighbourhoods and workplaces containing high quality green and blue infrastructure.



Map 6.1 Proposed County Greenway Plan – Linear long distance and Town Greenway Network

Pedestrian and Cyclist Objectives

- MTO 8** To encourage and facilitate the maintenance and further development of the public footpath network, walking and cycling routes and associated infrastructure and where possible the retrofitting of cycle and pedestrian routes into the existing urban road network.
- MTO 9** To support the establishment of a network of interlinked cycle ways and walk ways in the county and the adjoining counties and specifically to support the development of a link between the Great Northern Greenway and the Great Western Greenway, having regard to best practice standards including the Design Manual for Urban Roads, Streets and the NTA Cycle Manual and the TII Standard DN-GEO-03084 ‘The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads or any amending/superseding national guidance or manuals. To specifically conduct a feasibility study for the development of a Greenway linking the Great Northern Greenway at Collooney to the Great Western Greenway via the high amenity areas of the Ox mountains, with a link point to the Ballina - Castlebar - Westport interurban Greenway at Foxford, Co. Mayo.

That the Western Rail Corridor (WRC) is protected and preserved for the delivery of Rail Infrastructure to develop the region and the corridor is completely removed from any feasibility study in relation to any proposed greenway.
- MTO 10** To endeavour to identify, preserve and enhance existing accesses and public rights of way to recreational areas including the coast, upland areas, lakeshores, river-bank areas and heritage sites over the lifetime of the plan, subject to any forthcoming departmental guidance.
- MTO 11** To encourage, where appropriate, the incorporation of safe and efficient cycleways, accessible footpaths and pedestrian routes into the design schemes for town/ neighbourhood centres, residential, educational, employment, recreational developments and other uses, with the design informed by published design manuals, including the Design Manual for Urban Roads, Streets and the NTA Cycle Manual and TII Standard DN-GEO-03084 ‘The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads, or any amending/superseding national guidance or manuals.
- MTO 12** To continue the development of a network of Greenways in the county in accordance with best practice and where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.
- MTO 13** To investigate the potential of providing looped Greenways / Walkways for the Tier I, II and III Settlements of the county, where it can be demonstrated that such schemes will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.
- MTO 14** To investigate the potential of providing a number of ‘Park and Stride’ facilities in appropriate locations in the county, subject to an environmental assessment of identified locations.
- MTO 15** To seek to advance the walking/ cycling projects listed in the table 6.4 below.
- MTO 16** Protect open spaces, with multifunctional green and blue infrastructure in developments, with connections to the wider network of open spaces and habitats.

Walking and Cycling Projects

CLEWBAY GREENWAY WPORT/LBURGH/ROONAGH/CLARE ISLAND/KILLARY
CLEWBAY GREENWAY ACHILL SOUND / KEEL
CLEWBAY GREENWAY ACHILL SOUND / CLOUGHMORE
CASTLEBAR URBAN GREENWAY LINK PHASE 1 & PHASE 2
TRAILS DEVELOPMENT
GWG IMPROVEMENTS, IMPROVED TOWN LINKAGES INCLUDING NEWPORT TUNNELS
BANGOR TRAIL & ERRIS ADVENTURE BRIDGE
TURLOUGH/PONTOON/FOXFORD (INCLUDING RIVERSIDE TRAIL AT TURLOUGH RIVER FALLS)
IMPROVEMENTS TO TOCHAR PADRAIG
BOWERS WALK BALLINROBE
MONASTERIES ON THE MOY/ATLANTIC CYCLE NETWORK
WESTPORT CONG LOST TREASURES TRAIL
MOUNTAIN BIKE CENTRE AND MAYO/SLIGO BIJE TRAIL
MOOREHALL MASTERPLAN (INCLUDING TRAILS)
SLIEVEMORE TRAIL
IMPROVEMENTS TO WESTERN WAY
SPIRITUAL TRAIL (CROAGH PATRICK, CONG AND KNOCK)
LONG DISTANCE COASTAL GREENWAY (MAP 6.1)
LONG DISTANCE INTERURBAN GREENWAY (MAP 6.1)
TOWN GREENWAYS (MAP 6.1)
NATIONAL COASTAL PATH, INCLUDING CÉIDE COAST
IMPROVEMENTS TO KEEM BAY SIGNATURE DISCOVERY POINT, INCLUDING TRIAL AND VIEWING PLATFORM
FALCON TRAIL FROM CANALSIDE BALLINA TO MOUNT FALCON ESTATE

Table 6.4 - List of Walking and Cycling Projects

6.4.1.4 Bus

The development of a quality bus system as an alternative to private car use is an essential element of an integrated and balanced land use transport system. There is a need for increased bus services to improve connectivity between the main urban centres in the county and regional centres. The main settlements in the county are serviced by both public and private bus operators. Under the Rural Transport Initiative, the rural areas are served by Local Link Mayo, which is based on demand. The Local Link currently operates forty-six Demand Responsive Routes in Mayo, in addition to managing the ferry service to Inishbiggle Island. The Local Link co-ordinates the delivery of community transport services for the National Transport Authority with support from Mayo County Council and provides essential transport for rural based passengers, to access services and facilities in towns and villages.

Seasonal bus services also operate to/from the National Park in Ballycroy and the Great Western Greenway from Westport. The further development of Local Link Mayo and other similar public transport services is essential to provide a modal shift to public transport in the rural parts of the county. Mayo County Council will work with public transport providers to improve and expand the public bus services within county and strengthen linkages to other areas outside of the county.

Bus Policies

MTP 13	To support and encourage public transport providers and rural community transport initiatives and programmes, such as the Local Link Rural Transport Programme, to enhance to provision of public transportation services linking rural villages to the main towns of Mayo.
MTP 14	To support improvements to public transport accessibility to and from Ireland West Airport Knock (IWAK).
MTP 15	To support improvements to public transport accessibility to and from key tourism hubs and visitor attractions.
MTP 16	To support the implementation of the Connecting Ireland Plan, where appropriate.

Bus Objectives

MTO 17	To support the operation of existing bus services, by facilitating the provisions of improved facilities and services for bus users in towns and villages, including the provision of set down areas for coaches and bus shelters at all bus stops, where feasible.
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6.4.1.5 Rail

Iarnród Éireann in their strategic policy document "Rail Vision 2030: The Future of Rail Transport in Ireland" notes the importance of the Dublin-Westport/Ballina service and that demand at Castlebar is particularly strong. It confirms the important role of rail in servicing the interconnectivity between the key towns of Mayo. Mayo County Council supports an increase in the frequency of commuter services on mainline rail network between Westport, Castlebar and Ballina. The low frequency of current rail services in Mayo, renders rail travel an unviable transport option for daily commuters. Increased

frequency of rail services and a greater integration of bus and rail services would provide for enhanced services and would facilitate the transfer from private car to bus and rail. Improving the frequency of train journeys on the Westport and Dublin line and the manning of train stations in Mayo would also attract increased usage of the rail service not only out of county but also promote an increase in the commuter service between the Mayo stations.

At present, rail links are on an east-west axis focusing on Dublin. The disused part of the Western Rail Corridor (WRC), which runs through the east of the county, if re-opened for passenger and freight transport, would provide a link to the economies of three major urban centres (Limerick, Galway and Sligo) by rail. It could provide an economic stimulus to the region, while also offering the inhabitants of the region a sustainable alternative to car travel. The re-opening of the WRC has the potential to provide the greatest transformational change both in terms of a shift towards a low-carbon society/economy but also at a regional level as a key enabler to strengthen the functionality of the AEC and capitalise of the enterprise and employment hub of the Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) at Ireland West Airport Knock (IWAK).

Rail Policies

MTP 17	To support the enhancement of rail services to Dublin and commuter services between Ballina, Castlebar, Westport and Claremorris with connectivity to Galway and Limerick Metropolitan Cities and major international ports such as Shannon / Foynes with the realisation of re-opening the Western Rail Corridor.
MTP 18	To support the re-opening of the Western Rail Corridor in order to deliver the Tuam – Claremorris – Sligo Rail at an appropriate level of service and at a standard capable of facilitating passenger and freight transport and present an opportunity to provide an integrated rail linkage to the Ireland West Airport Knock and its Strategic Development Zone.
MTP 19	To support and encourage the provision of a high-quality rail network and service (including commuter services) and ancillary works for passenger and freight carriage to, from and within the county, where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.

Rail Objectives

MTO 18	To liaise with and encourage Iarnród Éireann to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue investment in rail freight facilities at Ballina & Westport (existing) and Claremorris & Castlebar (as potential freight hubs). b. Increase frequency of commuter services on the mainline rail network between Westport, Castlebar and Ballina.
MTO 19	To support and encourage the upgrading of existing railway stations, and protect, as required, lands necessary for the upgrading of existing railway lines or stations.
MTO 20	To work with the National Transport Authority and Iarnród Éireann to safeguard and protect all existing or historic rail lines and associated facilities from redevelopment for non-transport related purposes, in order to not preclude their future use as an operational transportation network.
MTO 21	Support and facilitate the velo rail project on the Western Rail Corridor as an interim use for the rail line pending its reopening for passenger and rail freight.

6.4.2 Roads (National and Non-National Roads)

Mayo County Council is committed to the promotion of sustainable means of travel, and the encouragement of modal change from the private car. It is, however, recognised that road infrastructure retains a central position in the overall transportation network, catering for the movement of buses, goods vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, as well as the private car. In undertaking transport policies, the Council will strive to provide, maintain and enhance road infrastructure to ensure the sustainable economic development of the county.

6.4.2.1 National Routes

Mayo County Council recognises the strategic importance of the national road network in the county and its important regional and inter-regional connectivity within and through the region. The N5 and N17, national primary roads have been identified as part of the Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T). The TEN-T are a planned set of transport networks across Europe targeted for high-quality standards for road users and freight transport. The Council will preserve corridor(s) to enable design options for national road improvement and upgrade projects to be advanced. Table 6.5 provides a list of planned and proposed national road projects in County Mayo to be advanced over the plan period.

Significant investment and improvements in the existing road infrastructure have been made by the Local Authority, in terms of upgrades, realignments, maintenance, traffic management measures, traffic calming measures and road safety measures. It is important to protect, maintain and enhance the carrying capacity of the national road network in County Mayo, as deemed necessary and as resources allow. In doing so, due regard will be afforded to the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012, relating to development affecting national primary and secondary roads, including motorways and associated junctions.

National Roads Policies

MTP 20	To enhance regional accessibility between key urban centres of population and their regions through the protection of the capacity, efficiency and safety of the national road network in County Mayo.
MTP 21	To support the upgrading to a 'High Quality Road' of both the N5 and N17 National Primary Routes, within the county, as part of the Tran-European Transport Network (TEN-T).
MTP 22	To support Transport Infrastructure Ireland in the provision of service and rest area facilities that may be proposed by the TII, and have regard to the provisions of Section 2.8 of the DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines and the NRA Service Policy (August 2014), with regard to any other proposals for roadside service facilities or off-line service facilities along national roads and junctions that may be promoted by private developers.
MTP 23	To protect the capacity, efficiency and safety of the national road network in Mayo by complying with the 'Spatial Planning and National Roads -Guidelines for planning authorities' (2012).
MTP 24	To avoid the creation of additional direct access points from new development adjoining national roads or the generation of additional traffic from existing direct accesses to national roads to which speed limits greater than 60 km/h apply.

MTP 25

In relation to sections of national roads on the approaches to or exit from urban centres that are subject to a speed limit of 60 kph before a lower 50 kph limit is encountered – otherwise known as transitional zones - provide for a limited level of direct access to facilitate orderly urban development. Any such proposal must, however, be subject to a road safety audit carried out in accordance with the TII requirements and a proliferation of such entrances, which would lead to a diminution in the role of such zones, must be avoided.

National Roads Objectives

MTO 22

A less restrictive approach to non-residential access to National Roads may apply to development considered to be of National or Strategic Importance. Exceptions are required to be identified for incorporation into the Development Plan and the Council will undertake a survey to identify such sites and agree cases in consultation with the TII where 'exceptional circumstances' will apply in accordance with the provisions of Section 2.6 of the DoECLG Guidelines. Such exceptions may also include extensions to existing permitted developments along National Roads. In such cases the existing access may require mitigation measures and upgrading where it is found to be substandard.

The Planning Authority will commence the engagement with the TII to agree the case for access off the National Road. One such site has been identified in Ballina:

- IDA Site at Quignashee, Ballina (off the N59) and
- Additional sites where required and agreed with the TII

MTO 23

To ensure that developments which have the potential to generate significant traffic movements, as per the TII traffic and transportation guidelines, will be required to carry out the assessments set out 7.5 of the Development Management (Volume 2).

MTO 24

To seek to progress the National Road projects, listed in Table 6.5 subject, to required environmental assessments.

MTO 25

To seek to review, in conjunction with TII, a reduction of the maximum speed limit along National Routes, where such routes pass through identified settlements in the Settlement Strategy of this Plan.

MTO 26

To protect the study area, route corridor options and thereafter the preferred route corridor selected for the national road schemes being progressed in the Development Plan in accordance with National Development Plan Objectives and to prohibit development that could prejudice their future delivery.

MTO 27

To protect the capacity and efficiency of the national road network drainage regimes in the County for national road drainage purposes.

6.4.2.2 Non-National Roads

Regional and local roads provide an important economic role and have a valuable social and community function. These roads account for 81% of the country's roads and are often the sole means of access for local economic activity. Mayo County Council has the responsibility to maintain non-national roads and this maintenance programme is financed from the Council's own resources and/or supplemented by state grants.

Local authorities, as outlined in 'Investing in our Transport Future – A Strategic Investment Framework (DTTAS, 2015)', are required to define a 'strategic road network of national, regional and strategically important local roads' and identify funding targeted in these areas. There is an increased emphasis nationally on project appraisal requirements which identify and prioritise upgrades that make the most appropriate use of available funding. There are eighteen 'Strategic Regional Important Roads' in County Mayo, linking the main settlements to the national routes. These are shown in Table 6.6 below.

Non-National Roads Policies

MTP 26

To enhance regional accessibility between key settlements in County Mayo and their regions and to safeguard existing and future capital investment through the protection of the capacity, efficiency and safety of Strategically Important Regional Roads (Table 6.6).

MTP 27

The Council, in co-operation with the NTA, TII, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and other stakeholders, will continue with the strengthening and improvement of the local road network including links, by-passes and relief roads, with priority given to those serving the Key Towns and interconnection between such settlements, where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment or Natura 2000 network.

MTP 28

It is a policy of Mayo County Council, in relation to lands adjoining Strategically Important Regional Roads to which to which speed limits greater than 60 km/h apply, to avoid the creation of any additional access points from new development or the generation of increased traffic from existing accesses to Strategically Important Regional Roads, unless it can be demonstrated that the development is required for economic or social reasons and cannot be accessed from a non-Strategically Important Regional Road.

MTP 29

To implement the recommendations of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) in relation to urban streets and roads within the 50/60 kph zone.

Non-National Roads Objectives

MTO 28

To improve and maintain regional and county roads in line with the annual roads programme and allocated budgets.

MTO 29

To liaise with the TII and DTTAS regarding the revision of speed limits in the County.

MTO 30

To facilitate the continued improvement and upgrading of all roads, should their status be re-graded, under the national roads programme and/or the Council's Road programme. The Council will seek and support the upgrading of the status of regional roads in the county which perform functions akin to national secondary routes.

MTO 31

To promote and facilitate road safety measures throughout the County, including traffic calming, road signage and parking.

MTO 32

To seek to progress the non-National Road projects, listed in Table No. 6.5 subject, to required environmental assessments.

Road Projects in Co. Mayo			
National Roads		Regional & Local Roads	
Road Number	Project Title	Road Number	Section
N5/N26/N58	N5/N26/N58 Mount Falcon to Swinford, Castlebar East to Bohola Project incorporating the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N5 upgrade between Castlebar East & Bohola N26 upgrade between Mount Falcon & Swinford N58 upgrade between Foxford and Ballyvary N26/N58 Bypass of Foxford town 	R310 - R311	R310 Pontoon Road to the R311 Newport Road
N5	N5 Turlough to Westport		Killala Inner Relief Road (Phase 2)
N17	N17 Knock to Collooney	R322	R322 Kilmaine to Foxhall
N59	N59 Upgrades <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N59 Westport to Mulranny road project N59/N26 Eastern bypass of Ballina N5/N59 Southern bypass of Westport 	R312	Glenisland
N60	N60 upgrades: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N60 Bypass of Breaffy Village N60 Manulla Cross N60 Lagnamuck N60 Heathlawn N60 Claremorris Inner Relief Road 	R320	N17/R320 Junction at Lisduff
N59/N26	N59/N26 Western bypass of Ballina (N26 Ballina bypass phase 1)		Killala Strategic Link
N83	N83 Upgrade: N83 Bypass of Ballyhaunis		Kiltimagh Strategic Link
N84	N84 upgrade: N84 Bypass of Ballinrobe		Cong Relief Road
	Charlestown Strategic Link		

Table 6.5 Road Projects in Mayo

Road Classifications in Co. Mayo			
National Roads		Strategically Important Regional Roads	
Road Number	Road Classification	Road Number	Section
N5	National Primary Road	R294	Ballina - Bunnycoonellan
N17	National Primary Road	R294	Bunnycoonellan - Sligo County Boundary
N26	National Primary Road	R310	Castlebar - Pontoon - Ballina
N58	National Secondary Road	R311	Castlebar - Newport
N59	National Secondary Road	R312	Castlebar - Bellacorrick
N60	National Secondary Road	R313	Bangor Erris - Belmullet
N83	National Secondary Road	R314	Ballina - Killala
N84	National Secondary Road	R319	Mulranny - Achill Sound
		R321	Ballylahan-Kiltmagh
		R323	Kiltimagh - Knock - Ballyhaunis
		R327 R330	Claremorris - Roscommon County Boundary at Cloonfad
		R330	Westport - Partry
		R331	Ballinrobe - Claremorris
		R332	Kilmaine-Galway-County Boundary
		R334	Ballinrobe - Galway County Boundary
		R335	Belclare Junction, Westport - Louisburgh
		R345	The Neale-Cong-Galway County Boundary.
		R346	Cross to Cong

Table 6.6 National and Strategically Important Regional Roads in Co. Mayo

6.4.3 Air Transport

Ireland West Airport Knock (IWAK) is the principal international gateway into the region. IWAK is of major national, regional and local importance and provides international connectivity not only for the promotion of economic development in the county, but also to the economy of the wider region. The connectivity provided by the presence of an airport within the county, significantly broadens the region's transport network capacity, providing catalytic direct, in-direct and induced economic and social benefits. The SDZ at IWAK came into effect in October 2019 and will help secure the long-term development of the airport as a strategically importance hub for transport, tourism, business and employment in County Mayo and the wider region. The SDZ has the real potential to be a key driver of the AEC in the region, helping to increase its potential to function as a cohesive model for balanced, regional, economic development.

Air Transport Policy

MTP 30

To support the development of Ireland West Airport Knock as a strategic driver of economic development in the area and as a vital asset in maintaining and enhancing the connectivity of the region.

Air Transport Objectives

MTO 33

To safeguard public safety in the area around Ireland West Airport Knock by ensuring all development within 15km of Ireland West Airport Knock is subject to safe-guarding restrictions outlined in the Development Guidance document of this Plan.

MTO 34

To ensure any development associated with light aircraft/helicopter activity is approximately located in areas that avoid significant adverse effects on the environment, the integrity of the Natura 2000 network and residential amenity.

6.4.4 Piers, Harbours and Landing Places

County Mayo has the longest coastline in Ireland (1,168 km). This marine resource has allowed the fishing sector to thrive, is of major importance to tourism and leisure activities, and is a fundamental part of our natural and cultural heritage. The Marine Section of Mayo County Council is responsible for marine infrastructure development, which is an essential component for the development of the aquaculture, commercial fishing, marine leisure and offshore energy industries.

The County has strong fishing and aquaculture sectors providing considerable local employment both onshore and offshore for coastal communities. The Council will continue to support the more traditional marine activities, such as fishing, aquaculture and leisure, in terms of investment and infrastructure, in order to build vibrant, sustainable, coastal communities. In order to capitalise on the emerging blue economy sectors, such as offshore energy, the Council will explore the feasibility of the provision of a deep harbour at Kilcummin, with a view to facilitating appropriate offshore energy projects. Mayo's pier, harbours and landing places must also be assessed for their suitability to accommodate landside infrastructure arising from offshore renewable energy projects.

Ports, Harbours and Piers Policy

MTP 31

To support the development and improvements of ports, harbours, piers, slipways, associated shore facilities and access, where appropriate, where it can be demonstrated that the development aligns with the marine spatial plan and will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.

Ports, Harbours and Piers Objectives

MTO 35

To investigate the feasibility of creating a deep-sea harbour/port at Kilcummin, or other suitable coastal locations along Mayo's coastal zone, to support offshore renewable energy projects.

MTO 36

To seek to facilitate the implementation of the Marine infrastructural projects listed in Table 6.7.

Ports, Harbours & Piers Projects

Continued development of Westport Quay.

Develop safe and efficient connectivity infrastructure between the mainland and our islands in particular Clare Island and Inishturk.

Continued development of Ballina Quay.

Development of safe and efficient access to the Atlantic via Ballyglass and French port pier.

Development of blueway(s) and access to Achill Cliffs, Inishkea Islands and continued development of the marine amenity centred around Blacksod and North Achill.

Development of Purteen harbour as a focal point of marine leisure on Achill Island.

Continued development of fishing and aquaculture piers in particular Ballyglass, Cloughmore, Porturlin and Roonagh.

Continued development of Roonagh, Clare Island, Inishturk, Blacksod and Kilcummin to facilitate arrival of expeditionary cruise ships.

The continued development of Killala as a landmark heritage and cultural marine amenity.

The maintenance of all our small piers and slipways at least at their current or improved standard with particular regard to safety.

The continued maintenance and enhancement of our current array of moorings, buoys and navigational markings.

Table 6.7 - Marine Infrastructural Projects

CHAPTER 6
MOVEMENT & TRANSPORT



7 INFRASTRUCTURE

Chapter 7 Infrastructure

7.1 Strategic Aim

The strategic aim of this chapter is to protect, improve and provide water, wastewater, surface water and flood alleviation services throughout the county, and to facilitate the provision of high-quality information communication technology, broadband, telecommunication information and electricity network required to support and enhance the key aims of best place to live, work, visit and invest and facilitate the transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society.

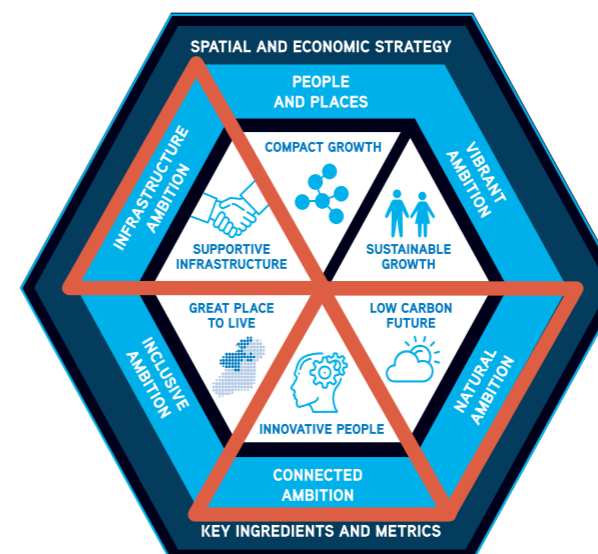
Related UN Sustainable Development Goals



Related NPF National Strategic Outcomes



Related RSES Regional Growth Ambitions



7.2 Introduction

This chapter has been guided by the above strategic aim, sustainable development goals and national strategic objectives to develop and further enhance all forms of infrastructure within County Mayo. It is also informed by Mayo County Council's Corporate Plan, 2019-2024, and the relevant infrastructural aims contained therein. The chapter has also considered the key legislative and policy documents set out in Appendix III, including the NPF and RSES for the northern and western region.

7.3 National and Regional Position

The NPF and RSES acknowledge the importance of sustainably managing our water, waste and other environmental infrastructural resources to secure the environmental and economic well-being of our future. The NPF and RSES also recognise the critical need for investment in infrastructure in order to accommodate the future projected population and economic growth envisaged to 2040. The NPF seeks to promote balanced, regional development throughout Ireland, with enhanced regional accessibility being a co-priority of the framework. This national priority is further underpinned within the RSES, which acknowledges that the provision of prudently managed, critically enabling infrastructure is key to delivering a connected, vibrant, inclusive, resilient and smart region. Growth Ambition 3 (Connected Region) of the RSES also supports the delivery of digital infrastructure such as a high-quality ICT network and delivery of the National Broadband Plan assisting in the creation of balanced regional development.

7.4 Mayo Context

The sustainable socio-economic growth of the county is dependent on the provision of essential infrastructure to ensure the delivery of a high-quality, reliable service provision. A key principle of this Strategy is to provide planned growth which will direct infrastructural investment where it is most needed. Infrastructural provision retains and attracts economic investment and employment, creates sustainable communities and supports the future development of the county. The Council, in conjunction with other agencies and authorities seek to ensure that development of infrastructural services occurs in tandem with and facilitates physical development, in order to safeguard the continued economic growth of the county and the delivery of residential accommodation for the growing population. One of the key challenges is the ability to address and keep pace with the infrastructural demands of a growing county while safeguarding public health and managing the protection of key environmental resources, all in the context of a changing climate.

7.4.1 Drinking Water and Wastewater

Irish Water replaced Local Authorities as the single provider of water and wastewater services in 2014. Irish Water is responsible for the operation of public water and wastewater services nationally, including strategic planning, policy development, service provision, customer service and capital investment planning and delivery. Mayo County Council retains its role in facilitating the provision of adequate water services, in conjunction with Irish Water, at a local level, through Service Level Agreements (SLAs). Mayo County Council will continue to work closely with Irish Water to facilitate the timely provision of water services infrastructure within the county in line with Council's Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy.

Irish Water is responsible for the public water schemes in the county, while Mayo County Council is responsible for the implementation of the Rural Water Programme. This involves regulating, monitoring and administering subsidies for Group Water Schemes and grants to householders for potable private wells.

Irish Water is responsible for the collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater, where public wastewater facilities exist in towns and villages. Wastewater treatment (Irish Water assets) is provided through thirty-two wastewater treatment plants within the county. There are two additional treatment plants due for completion over the plan period in Killala (2020) and Newport (2024). There are also two villages in Mayo where Irish Water wastewater treatment plants have been constructed but not commissioned (The Neale & Cross). In unserviced areas and outside the main towns and villages, the main method of sewage disposal is by means of individual septic tanks and proprietary wastewater treatment systems. Mayo County Council is the competent authority for the assessment and approval of individual domestic on-site wastewater treatment systems in the county.

Drinking Water Policies

INP 1

To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water in the delivery of an adequate level of water services infrastructure through the Capital Investment Plan 2017-2021 and Rural Water Programme 2019-2021 and any subsequent plans or programmes, to ensure that a sufficient water supply is available for the settlements set out in the County Settlement Hierarchy.

INP 2

To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water to promote the sustainable development of water supplies and drainage infrastructure in the county and the region, in accordance with the objectives and recommendations set out in the Irish Water's Water Services Strategic Plan.

INP 3

To liaise with Irish Water to develop and implement Water Safety Plans to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchment.

Drinking Water Objectives

INO 1

To implement the Rural Water Programme 2019-2021 and any subsequent plans.

INO 2

To provide guidance and advice regarding the protection of water supply to private wells with the overall responsibility for protection remaining with the householder.

INO 3

To ensure that any new development connects to a public water supply or Group Water Scheme, where available. Connections to wells for individual housing units in unserviced rural areas will only be considered where there is no public water main or Group Water Scheme serving the site and where it can be demonstrated that connection to the proposed well will not have significant adverse effects on water quality or water quantity in the area and can provide a potable water supply in accordance with EU Drinking Water standards.

INO 4

To advance key Capital Projects as outlined in the 5-year Capital Programme.

INO 5

To support and facilitate key upgrades to the Achill water supply and the provision of drinking water in the Murrisk area.

INO 6

To support and facilitate upgrades to the water schemes listed in Table 7.1 below.

Wastewater Policies

- INP 4** To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water in the delivery of an adequate level of wastewater services infrastructure to ensure that sufficient wastewater infrastructure/capacity is available for the settlements set out in the County Settlement Hierarchy, including supporting and facilitating the identified wastewater projects listed in Table 7.1 below.
- INP 5** To collaborate with Irish Water in contributing towards compliance with the relevant provisions of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Regulations 2001 and 2004 and the Wastewater Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007 as amended.
- INP 6** To encourage and support a changeover from septic tanks/private wastewater treatment plants to public collection networks wherever feasible, subject to connection agreements with Irish Water and to ensure that any future development connects to the public wastewater infrastructure where it is available.

Wastewater Objectives

- INO 7** To require development in serviced areas to connect to the public foul sewer network, where available.
- INO 8** To require development in unsewered areas which includes a septic tank/proprietary effluent treatment unit and percolation area to be rigorously assessed in accordance with the accepted EPA Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses or the EPA Wastewater Treatment Manuals Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres and Hotels, taking into account the cumulative effects of existing and proposed developments in the area.
- INO 9** To actively endeavour to upgrade capacity in settlements that have an identified capacity shortfall, such as Hollymount, Louisburgh, Ballindine and Doogort, through Irish Water's Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme or any superseding programmes.

Water Services

- Foxford and Charlestown Sewerage Scheme
- Killala Sewerage Scheme
- Newport Sewerage Scheme
- Claremorris Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade
- Ballyhaunis Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade
- Lough Mask Regional Water Supply Scheme: Srah-Westport
- Lough Mask Regional Water Supply Scheme: Kiltimagh.
- East Mayo Regional Water Supply Scheme serving Charlestown, Swinford, Ireland West Airport Knock, Foxford & Kilkelly
- Ballina Regional Water Supply Scheme (Storage/Mains)
- Ireland West Airport Knock Treatment Plant Upgrade and Sewerage Scheme

Table 7.1 Water Services Projects

7.4.2 Waste Management

Waste management involves measures to protect the environment and human health by preventing or reducing adverse impacts of the generation and management of waste. Waste management is regulated by national and European legislation, with policy and enforcement operated between the Department of the Environment, Climate Action and Communications, the EPA and Local Government.

Mayo is located within the Connacht-Ulster Waste Management Region, governed by the Waste Management Plan 2015 - 2021. Mayo County Council is the regional lead authority, acting on behalf of the other authorities with responsibility for the successful implementation of the plan. Mayo County Council provides two civic amenity centres (Recycling Centres) at Derrinnumera and Rathroeen. The civic amenity centres provide householders with the opportunity to dispose or recycle bulky items of waste, items of household hazardous waste, green garden waste as well as householder landfill and recyclable waste.

Mayo County Council provide bring banks for householder bottles and jars throughout the county. The household and commercial waste collection service in County Mayo is provided by private sector operators, while Mayo County Council provides litter bins in towns and villages, parks and areas frequented by the public. The Council also provides a team of litter wardens and waste enforcement officers to ensure waste legislation is complied with and prosecutes those in breach of waste law.

7.4.2.1 Circular Economy

The concept of the Circular Economy is to minimise waste going to landfill and maximise waste as a resource. This means that prevention, preparation for reuse, recycling and recovery are prioritised in that order, over the disposal of waste. A recycling rate of 65% by 2030 has been proposed by the

European Commission for the Circular Economy Package. The Council will support circular economy principles, prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery over the disposal of waste. Mayo County Council also provides an educational and awareness role among various groups and supports the Green Schools Programme to promote Environmental Education from a young age.



Figure 7.1 Circular Economy Process (Source: Dept. of Communications, Climate Action & Environment)

Waste Management Policies	
INP 7	To support the Implementation of the Connacht Ulster Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021(as amended) or replacement plan with particular emphasis on reuse, recycling and disposal of residual waste in the most appropriate manner where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, traffic safety, residential or visual amenity.
INP 8	To promote the sustainable management of waste generation and investment in different types of waste treatment and support a healthy environment, economy and society.

Waste Management Objectives	
INO 10	Promote prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery, and to sustainably manage residual waste. New developments shall take account of the provisions of the Connacht Ulster Regional Waste Management Plan 2015-2021(as amended) and observe those elements of it that relate to waste prevention and minimisation, waste recycling facilities and the capacity for source segregation.
INO 11	To provide and support the provision of bring banks or other appropriate recycling facilities throughout the county
INO 12	To continue to expand environmental awareness initiatives designed to create increased public awareness of waste prevention, minimisation, reuse and resource efficiency.
INO 13	To encourage community/voluntary groups to establish additional waste services or facilities (e.g. small-scale facilities for recycling, reuse, repair) in their area and assist them to develop a strategy to provide such facilities for and with members of their community.
INO 14	To continue to support with local and Tidy Towns initiatives in the maintenance and conservation of our local urban and rural communities throughout the county.
INO 15	To seek the effective engagement of local communities in the county to promote their role in recycling waste and tackling the problem of illegal dumping within the county through liaison with the Environmental Awareness Officer.

7.4.3 Surface Water and Flood Risk Management

7.4.3.1 Surface Water Management

Mayo County Council is responsible for surface water drainage. The Service Level Agreement between Irish Water and the local authorities requires both parties to act in good faith to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in respect of surface water drainage and flood management. A MoU has been agreed in principle between Irish Water and Mayo County Council and will be ratified over the plan period.

All new development in the county must account for how surface water runoff will be appropriately managed. Mayo County Council advocates surface water management through Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS). SuDS is widely recognised as a green infrastructure-based approach to drainage and storm water management. It aims to mimic the natural drainage of a site, to minimise the effect of a development on flooding and pollution of waterways, through various engineering solutions, including using porous surface treatments, ponds, swales, filter drains or other installations.

The use of SuDS design will be important to help increase climate resilience. SuDS can provide areas where the natural processes of rainwater interception, storage and infiltration can take place within the built environment, offering a more sustainable approach to the management of urban storm water runoff from impermeable surfaces than the conventional underground pipe and storage-based solutions.

7.4.3.2 Flood Risk Management

Flooding is the most evident source of climate related impact and loss around the county. Over the past number of years, there have been significant instances where flooding has occurred in areas of the county causing damage to homes and businesses, particularly in the towns of Ballina, Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet), Crossmolina, Foxford and Louisburgh and Westport. The Islands off County Mayo have also been impacted by sea surges and coastal storms. In relation to the effective management flooding, the Water Framework Directive advocates a shift away from site specific hard engineering solutions to address flooding and a move towards a more sustainable and holistic approach flood management at the catchment scale. The capacity to adapt to greater extremes in hydrological conditions will depend on the ability to apply integrated decision making, together with technology and systems that are appropriate and sustainable.

It is of critical importance to protect floodplains, wetlands and coastal areas. These areas holding excess water until it can be released slowly back into a riverine system or the sea, or seep into the ground as a storm or tidal surge subsides. Vulnerable floodplains, wetlands and coastal areas should, therefore, be identified and preserved to the maximum extent possible, in both urban and rural areas, as “Green Infrastructure”. Flood risk is generally accepted to be a combination of the likelihood (or probability) of flooding and the potential consequences arising. Flood risk can be expressed in terms of the following relationship:

Flood Risk = Probability of Flooding x Consequences of Flooding

The assessment of flood risk requires an understanding of the sources, the flow path of floodwater and the people and property that can be affected. The source - pathway - receptor model, shown in the figure below which illustrates this and is a widely used environmental model to assess and inform the management of risk.

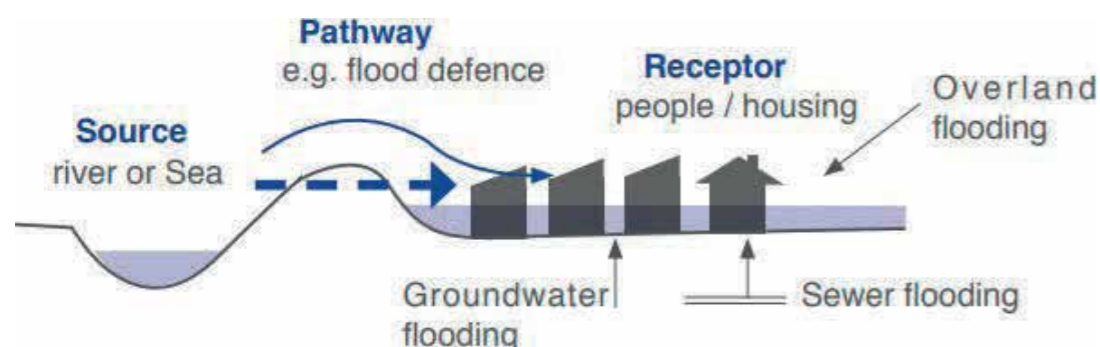


Fig No 7.2 The source-pathway-receptor model (Source: The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities)

Principal sources of flooding are rainfall or higher than normal sea levels while the most common pathways are rivers, drains, sewers, overland flow and their defence assets. Receptors can include people, their property and the environment. All three elements must be present for flood risk to arise. The planning process is primarily concerned with the location of receptors, taking appropriate account of potential sources and pathways that might put those receptors at risk.

Flooding Policy Context

The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (DoEHLG/OPW 2009, referred to as the Planning Guidelines) and PL2/2014 describe good flood risk practice in planning and development management. Planning authorities are directed to have regard to the flood guidelines in the preparation of development plans and in the preparation of local area plans and for development management purposes. The guidelines recommend a sequential approach to spatial planning, promoting avoidance rather than justification and subsequent mitigation of risk. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been prepared for the Plan, in accordance with ‘The Planning System and Flood Risk Management, Guidelines for Planning Authorities’, to assess flood risk within the Plan area. The SFRA forms part of this Plan as a separate document (Volume 5).

Mayo County Council works in close cooperation with the OPW in delivering both the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Programme and flood relief schemes, with a flood relief scheme currently being progressed for Crossmolina.

The CFRAM Management Plans published in 2018, set out the long-term strategies and measures required to manage risk in these areas. The mapping and the proposed flood management strategy will be incorporated under the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment that informs the County Development Plan. CFRAMS mapping is available for the settlements of Ballina, Ballyhaunis, Crossmolina, Charlestown, Foxford, Louisburgh, Newport, Swinford and Westport.

A major function performed by floodplains, wetlands and coastal areas is to hold excess water until it can be released slowly back into a riverine system or the sea, or seep into the ground as a storm or tidal surge subsides. Vulnerable floodplains, wetlands and coastal areas should, therefore, be identified and preserved to the maximum extent possible, in both urban and rural areas, as “Green Infrastructure”. Zoning of land for this purpose enhances opportunities for the creation of habitats, which promotes and protects flora and fauna and thus increase diversity.

Surface Water Policies

INP 9

To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water in the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for surface water drainage and flood management, including the separation of foul and surface water drainage networks where feasible and undertake drainage network upgrades to help remove surface water misconnection and infiltration.

INP 10

To support, in conjunction with Irish Water, the improvement of storm water infrastructure to increase the use of sustainable drainage and reduce the risk of flooding in urban environments.

INP 11

To support Irish Water in the development and implementation of the National Water Resources Plan for Ireland’s public water supplies which seeks to address issues around the availability of water.

INP 12

To promote water conservation and demand management measures among all water users, and to support Irish Water in implementing water conservation measures such as leakage reduction and network improvements, including innovative solutions in specific situations.

INP 13

To support Irish Water in the promotion of effective management of trade discharges to sewers in order to maximise the capacity of existing sewer networks and minimise detrimental impacts on sewage treatment works.

Surface Water Objectives

- INO 16** To support, promote and facilitate the use of green infrastructure, for example green roofs, green walls, planting and green spaces for surface water run-off retention purposes, in the interests of flood mitigation and climate change adaptation.
- INO 17** To require the use of SuDS to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving and require the use of sustainable drainage techniques where appropriate for new development or for extensions to existing developments, in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding risks.
- INO 18** To ensure new development is adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure, which meets the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, associated River Basin Management Plans and Catchment Flood Risk Assessment Management (CFRAM) Plans.

Flood Risk Management Policies

- INP 14** To have regard to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on the Planning System and Flood Risk Management (DoEHLG/OPW 2009) and Circular PL2/2014 (or as updated), in the preparation of plans and strategies related to development and in the assessment of projects.
- INP 15** To support the implementation of the recommendations in the Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMP's), including planned investment measures for managing and reducing flood risk.
- INP 16** To support the implementation of recommendations in the CFRAM Programme to ensure that flood risk management policies and infrastructure are progressively implemented.

Flood Risk Management Objectives

- INO 19** To ensure that a flood risk assessment is carried out for any development proposal where a flood risk is identified in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management (DoEHLG/OPW 2009) and Circular PL2/2014. This assessment shall be appropriate to the scale and nature of risk to the potential development.
- INO 20** To consult with the OPW in relation to proposed developments in the vicinity of drainage channels and rivers for which the OPW are responsible and retain a strip on either side of such channels where required, to facilitate maintenance access thereto.
- INO 21** To assist the OPW in developing catchment-based Flood Risk Management Plans for rivers in County Mayo and have regard to their provisions/recommendations.
- INO 22** To protect the integrity of any formal (OPW or Mayo County Council) flood risk management infrastructure, thereby ensuring that any new development does not negatively impact any existing defence infrastructure or compromise any proposed new infrastructure.

- INO 23** To ensure that where flood risk management works take place that natural heritage, cultural heritage, rivers, streams and watercourses are appropriately protected.
- INO 24** To consult, where necessary, with Inland Fisheries Ireland, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and other relevant agencies in the provision of flood alleviation measures in the County.
- INO 25** To ensure each flood risk management activity is examined to determine actions required to embed and provide for effective climate change adaptation as set out in the OPW Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan Flood Risk Management applicable at the time.
- INO 26** To cooperate with the Office of Public works in the delivery of the Crossmolina Flood Relief scheme and other schemes that may be brought forward in the lifetime of this Plan.
- INO 27** To identify and preserve vulnerable floodplains, wetlands and coastal areas to the maximum possible extent in both urban and rural areas.
- INO 28** Developments on all Opportunity Sites in all towns and villages in the Settlement Hierarchy will be subject to Flood Risk Assessments if required, in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management (DoEHLG/OPW 2009) and Circular PL2/2014. This assessment shall be appropriate to the scale and nature of risk to the potential development, and this will determine the scale and nature of the development.

7.4.4 Broadband and Information Communications Technology (ICT)

High quality ICT, telecommunication and broadband is required to support and enhance the attractiveness of living and working in the county. Mayo continues to benefit from the rollout of several Government led broadband schemes, including the National Broadband Plan (NBP) and the Broadband for Schools initiative, ensuring that broadband services are available in communities across the county. Broadband is central to the development of a knowledge-based economy throughout Ireland, facilitating remote working and promoting social inclusion. Areas without broadband cannot take full advantage of internet-centred developments in education, banking, research, business, etc.

Therefore, deficits in provision of broadband, as well as mobile coverage, in County Mayo need to be resolved. In terms of ICT, two trans-Atlantic sub-sea fibre-optic cables will come ashore in Mayo, connecting Europe with North America, providing high-speed broadband which may enable development of ICT facilities such as Data Centres in the county.

7.4.4.1 National Broadband Plan

The rollout of the National Broadband Plan (NBP) in Mayo will retain and attract people and businesses to relocate and to work remotely from the county. The NBP for Mayo will cover approximately 44% of all premises in the county. The towns serviced by the Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) presents opportunities for the development of e-working centres throughout the county and region, in line with Smarter Travel Policy of reducing the number of journeys to work by car. The development of e- working centres throughout the region will align employment and transport policies and support the uptake of the MANs network. Mayo County Council was successful in an application for funding under the Department of Rural and Community Development's Digital Innovation Programme to develop a methodology for establishing where ducting and other telecommunications infrastructure in County Mayo has been installed and to digitally record their location and information in a Geographical

Information System. This register will be made available for the implementation of the National Broadband Plan and other telecommunications providers.

7.4.4.2 Broadband Connection Points

In Year 1 of the NBP, Broadband Connection Points (BCPs) will receive high-speed broadband connectivity. BCPs are public locations around the county where the community can avail of a centralised, shared, broadband service to bridge the gap until the roll out of the NBP. There are currently twelve locations identified as BCPs in County Mayo as shown on Map 7.1 below.



Map 7.1: Mayo's Broadband Connection Points (approved/proposed) & WiFi4EU proposed locations

7.4.4.3 Wifi4EU Scheme

The Wifi4EU scheme is an initiative of the European Commission which provides funding to local authorities for the development of free Wi-Fi hotspots in public places, such as main streets, public parks, museums, libraries and other public areas. It is part of the wider European initiative to support the development of wireless broadband and promote the advantages of enjoying a high-speed internet connection on the go. It is proposed to provide the scheme to 9 settlements, these are shown on Map 7.1 above.

7.4.4.4 Telecommunications

Mayo County Council recognises the essential need for high quality communications and information technology networks in assuring the competitiveness of the county's economy and increasing the quality of life of its people. The Council also recognises the need to balance the requirement to facilitate mobile telecommunications infrastructure in the county to address existing coverage blackspots and the need to protect residential, visual amenity, the natural environment and built environment. In considering proposals for telecommunications infrastructure, the Council will have regard to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's "Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures, Guidelines for Planning Authorities" 1996 and Circular Letter PL07/12 'Telecommunication Antennae and Support Structures' and any amendments thereof.

7.4.4.5 AEConnect 1

AEConnect 1 is a trans-Atlantic sub-sea fibre-optic cable extending from Long Island, New York to Killala, Mayo, which offers the potential for the West of Ireland to become a key telecommunications and data gateway. The AEConnect cable has the capacity to cover the entire European and American information and data traffic currently in existence and the potential to double its capacity within a few years as required. The delivery of advanced technological infrastructure in the area also provides a potential platform for the development of ICT facilities, such as data centres in the county and other businesses to set up their operations in the locality.

7.4.4.6 Digital Strategy

Digital technology can help to create places and communities that manage spatial development, population growth, mobility, effects of climate change and transition to greater sustainability. Mayo County Council is currently preparing a new digital strategy for the county to replace the 2015 digital strategy. The overall aim of the new strategy is the creation of a Smart County, through Smart Communities. The Smart Communities is a new approach to community development and activation through exposure to digital content and technology and supporting people to discover the value of using digital in their daily lives. Smart Communities has the potential, in combination with the digital strategy, to deliver enhanced demand of high-speed broadband services and to address challenges in urban and rural communities. The key target areas for Smart Communities are to:

- Improve service efficiency and reduce service costs.
- Create opportunities for young people.
- Tackle social exclusion and isolation.
- Develop skills for living and the labour force.
- Improve health and wellbeing in communities.

Mayo's Digital Strategy will drive and support connectivity and participation in communities and promote social cohesion to create a healthy digital society. It will promote opportunity and access to learning and employment, protect citizens, drive efficiencies and knowledge.

Broadband Policies

- INP 17** To support and facilitate the implementation of the National Broadband Plan and the Mayo Digital Strategy as a means of developing further opportunities for enterprise, employment, education, innovation and skills development for those who live and work in rural areas.
- INP 18** To support the delivery of high-capacity Information Communications Technology infrastructure, broadband connectivity and digital broadcasting, throughout the county, in order to ensure economic competitiveness for enterprise and the commercial sectors and enabling more flexible work practices e.g. teleworking/homeworking.

Broadband Objectives

- INO 29** To require all new developments, including all new housing and commercial developments, and any local authority or community-led town and village centre redevelopment/regeneration projects, to provide specific ducting to enable broadband infrastructure, where appropriate.
- INO 30** To support and facilitate the European Commission's "Wifi4EU project" through the provision of free Wifi Hotspots at appropriate publicly accessible locations, throughout the county and expand same to as many locations as possible.
- INO 31** To identify suitable locations and support the provision of co-working facilities, digital hubs/eHubs and eWorking centres throughout the county that function as outreach hubs for employers and promote flexible working arrangements.

Telecommunication Policies

- INP 19** To support the delivery of telecommunication infrastructure in the county, having regard to the Government Guidelines 'Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures- Guidelines for Planning Authorities' 1996 (DoEHLG), the 'Guidance on the potential location of overground telecommunications infrastructure on public roads', (Dept of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources, 2015) and Circular Letter PL 07/12 (as updated) and where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse impacts on communities, public rights of way and on the built or natural environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.
- INP 20** To promote Mayo as a sustainable international destination for ICT infrastructures such as data centres and associated economic activities, at appropriate locations.

Telecommunication Objectives

- INO 32** To maximise and widely promote connectivity of Mayo based on building on existing ICT infrastructure and sub-sea fibre optic cables where possible.
- INO 33** To encourage the location of any telecommunications structure, have regard to the Landscape Appraisal of County Mayo, and where possible, advise on a less intrusive location in areas where they are unlikely to intrude on the setting of, or views of/from national monuments or protected structures.
- INO 34** To maintain and update the council's register of approved ducting and telecommunication structures in the county, to assist in the assessment of future telecommunication developments. The Council will encourage co-location of antennae on existing support structures and require documentary evidence as to the non-availability of this option in proposals for new structures. The shared use of existing structures will be required where the numbers of masts located in any single area is considered to have an excessive concentration.
- INO 35** To work with statutory undertakers to make the most efficient use of infrastructure in the delivery of broadband in the county, particularly encouraging the use of existing telecommunications ducting where it is available.
- INO 36** To actively engage with telecommunication service providers to help identify, improve and/or eliminate mobile phone signal blackspots within the county, including an examination of the feasibility and suitability of council owned lands/assets.

7.4.5 Energy Networks Infrastructure

The supply and distribution of electricity and gas throughout County Mayo is an important factor in the provision and location of employment and the creation of sustainable communities. Mayo County Council will continue to work alongside key energy providers in facilitating the future development of networks throughout the county. The Council is also cognisant of national policy, which seeks to promote renewable energy use and generation at appropriate locations within the built and natural environment, to meet national objectives towards achieving a low carbon economy by 2050.

7.4.5.1 Electricity

The provision of a safe, secure, and reliable electricity supply is a critical component necessary to sustain economic growth in Ireland. Ireland in recent years has been phasing out the use of fossil fuels, such as oil, natural gas, coal and peat to generate electricity, in favour of renewable energy sources. Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030, the Government's White Paper on energy, sets out a roadmap for a low carbon energy system to 2030. The White Paper acknowledges in the short to medium-term, that the mix of non-renewables will shift away from more carbon-intensive fuels, like peat and coal, to lower-carbon fuels like natural gas. The Climate Action Plan (2019) targets 70% of electricity must come from renewables by 2030. In 2018, 22% of all energy inputs to electricity generation were from renewable sources, whereas coal and peat accounted for 21% of fuel inputs.

EirGrid is responsible for power across the electricity transmission grid, ensuring a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity to homes, businesses and industry across the country, while ESB networks are responsible for carrying out maintenance, repairs and construction on the grid.

EirGrid has replaced the Grid West project with the North Connacht 110kV project, which will begin at the Moy substation near Ballina and end at Tonroe, Ballaghaderreen. The upgrading of the transmission network will facilitate power flows from both renewable and conventional sources to maximise the use of existing power corridors. In connecting renewable energy from the North West to the grid, this new project will reinforce the electricity network, supporting Mayo County Council's aim to enhance the attractiveness of the county as a place in which to live, work and invest.

Mayo County Council recognises that essential future upgrades are required to the electricity grid in the west, as outlined in Eirgrid's 'Tomorrow's Energy Scenarios 2019 System Needs Assessment' and will support Eirgrid in future programmes identifying grid solutions, in both infrastructural and technological terms, in order to facilitate the electricity targets, set out in the Government's Climate Action Plan 2019 and the National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030.

Electricity Policies

- INP 21** To support the provision of high-quality, electricity infrastructure and development of an enhanced electricity supply, to serve the existing and future needs of the county and to facilitate new transmission infrastructure projects, including the delivery and integration of renewable energy proposals to the electricity transmission grid in a sustainable and timely manner, whilst seeking to minimise any adverse impacts on local communities and protect and maintain biodiversity, wildlife habitats, scenic amenities, including protected views and nature conservation.
- INP 22** To co-operate and liaise with statutory and other energy providers in relation to power generation, in order to ensure adequate power capacity for the existing and future business and enterprise needs of the county.
- INP 23** To support the statutory providers of national grid infrastructure by safeguarding such strategic corridors from encroachment by other developments that might compromise the provision of energy networks where strategic route corridors have been identified.

Electricity Objectives

- INO 37** To facilitate the progression of and implement improvements to the existing electricity networks and facilitate the development of new transmission infrastructure projects in accordance with EirGrid's Implementation Plan Strategy 2020-2025 (or any superseding strategy) that might be brought forward during the lifetime of this plan.
- INO 38** To ensure the provision, where feasible, of electricity cables located underground.
- INO 39** To seek the delivery of the necessary integration of transmission network requirements to facilitate linkages of renewable energy proposals to the electricity transmission grid, in a sustainable and timely manner.

7.4.5.2 Natural Gas

The Corrib Gas terminal is located in Bellanaboy, County Mayo. It transports natural gas from subsea facilities to the Gas Networks Ireland grid and currently serves six settlements within Mayo (Crossmolina, Ballina, Castlebar, Westport, Ballinrobe and Claremorris). The Corrib Gas Field is Ireland's only indigenous natural gas source on the gas network and has been operating since 2015. It has an expected lifespan of 15 to 20 years.

Maintaining security of supply of gas is a government priority. However, the government is responsible for reducing Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions under the Climate Action Plan. The use of renewable sources of gas will have a key role to play in decarbonising the natural gas grid.

The existing gas terminal facility at Bellanaboy shall be promoted as the primary hub along the west coast to bring ashore natural gas from any future reserves found offshore therefore ensuring the continued use of the existing facility and gas grid connection.

Natural Gas Policies

- INP 24** To support and facilitate the improvement and extension of the gas grid network in County Mayo to serve existing and envisaged future residential, commercial and industrial development.
- INP 25** To support the development of enhanced gas supplies, which do not negatively impact on environmental quality, landscape, wildlife, habitats or residential amenity and which are critical to the economic development of the County.
- INP 26** To support the continued use of the Bellinaboy gas terminal as the primary hub to bring ashore any future gas reserves utilising the existing gas grid connection.

Natural Gas Objectives

- INO 40** To seek the extension of the gas network to other towns in the county and to Ireland West Airport Knock.

CHAPTER 7
INFRASTRUCTURE



**8 SUSTAINABLE
COMMUNITIES**

Chapter 8 Sustainable Communities

8.1 Strategic Aim:

The strategic aim of this chapter is to develop and support vibrant sustainable communities in Mayo where people can live, work and enjoy access to a wide range of community, health, educational facilities and amenities, suitable to all ages and needs, in both urban and rural areas, thereby supporting a high quality of life for all to enjoy.

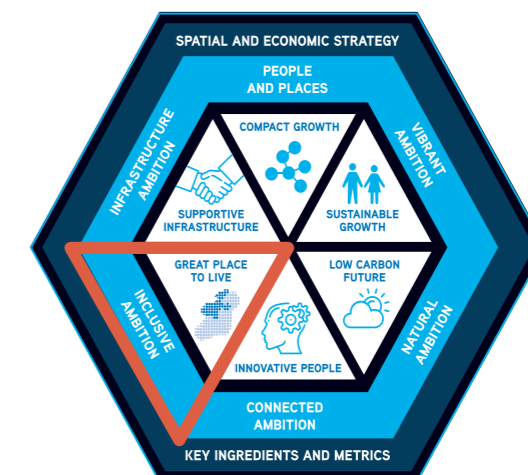
Related UN Sustainable Development Goals



Related NPF National Strategic Outcomes



Related RSES Regional Growth Ambitions



8.2 Introduction

This chapter has been guided by the above strategic aim, sustainable development goals and national strategic objectives to create sustainable communities in County Mayo. The chapter has also considered the key legislative and policy documents set out in Appendix III, including the NPF and RSES for the Northern and Western region.

8.3 National and Regional Planning Position

A core objective of the NPF and RSES is to provide comprehensive social, economic and cultural infrastructure, for all people to flourish, so that together we can create a better society. The NPF and RSES also place a strong emphasis on access to a range of quality education and health services, as well as promoting healthy placemaking and quality of life. The RSES includes growth ambitions to create an inclusive and vibrant society for the Northern and Western region. The RSES highlights the importance of the physical and social environment and place in which we live or work, and its impact on the health of people. The RSES aims to create a sustainable and competitive region that supports the health and well-being of our people and places, from urban to rural, and ensures access to affordable housing, travel and employment opportunities for all.

8.4 Mayo in Context

Mayo County Council is at the centre of local community and is a key provider of economic and social development supports and services in the county. The Council represents the people, while delivering vital local services which are central to the quality of life of everybody who lives in, works in and visits Mayo. Mayo has a thriving community sector and there is a vast number of agencies, organisations and services that contribute to this. The work of these entities in providing health, education, wellbeing, outreach supports and physical infrastructure to individuals, groups and communities is very relevant and necessary in ensuring sustainable, healthy and inclusive communities across the county. A priority of this plan is the creation of sustainable, healthy, inclusive neighbourhoods, which support thriving communities and provide for a wide range of household types, age groups, diversity, including those with a disability or illness, lone parent young families, older people, travellers and members of ethnic minority groups, with community facilities located close by.

8.4.1 Mayo Local Community Development Committee

Mayo Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), established in 2014, consists of public private partnerships of socio-economic interests. Mayo LCDC has a number of functions, one of which is to prepare and agree the local community elements of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). The purpose of the LECP is to identify objectives and implement actions to strengthen and develop both the economic and community dimensions of the county. Central to the Mayo LECP and Action Plan 2016-2021, is the understanding that economic, local and community development is mutually supportive in building sustainable communities with strong local economies. The LECP seeks to progress the following goals: community development; social inclusion; health and wellbeing; education training and skills and culture, heritage and the Arts. The LCDC has oversight of the Rural Development Programme and Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme, which is run by a number of Local Development Companies in the County.

8.4.2 Community Development in Mayo

The Mayo 'Community Futures' Programme facilitates community action planning by assisting communities preparing action plans which identify existing services, key priority areas and opportunities for development and growth within their community. 'Community Futures' encourages more people to become active in their communities, helps strengthen and develop local community organisations, enables communities to identify and progress priority projects and actions and enables them to effectively represent their interests at local, county and national levels.

The Mayo Public Participation Network (PPN) provides a mechanism to facilitate and enable the public and the community and voluntary organisations to articulate a diverse range of views and interest within the local government system. The aim of the PPN is to encourage and enable public participation in local decision making, to actively support inclusion of socially excluded groups and to identify issues of collective concern and working to influence local policy in relation to these.

'Pride of Place' has been a successful initiative in Mayo and is another example of active community participation in the county, whereby communities work in partnership with the Council to encourage best practice, innovation and leadership in providing vibrant sustainable communities, which improves the quality of life for all, through environmental improvements to towns and villages.

Local development companies continue to remain at the forefront promoting community development through a bottom-up approach in the areas of social inclusion, inequality, and local development. Mayo has four local development companies which deliver a wide range of programmes, including, but not limited to, LEADER, Local Community Development Programme, Rural Social Scheme, Tus, Rural Recreation, Community Employment, Local Employment Services and local training initiatives. Local development companies also develop additional projects using a range of other funding sources, for example Comhar na nOileán Teo delivers the LEADER programme to Mayo's inhabited islands.

Other agencies that assist community development in Mayo include Family Resource Centres which provide practical assistance to community groups, such as training, information, advice and use of shared facilities, in addition to educational and training opportunities. Sectoral communities are also assisted in the county by agencies, such as South West Mayo Development Company, Mayo North East Leader Partnership, Mayo Traveller Support Group, Mayo Traveller Inter Agency Forum, The Regional Drug Task Force, The Mayo Joint Policing Committee, The Disability Federation of Ireland and Outwest.

Economic Development Policy

SCP 1	To support empowerment and capacity building in communities and support participation in community development initiatives.
SCP 2	To recognise and support the Mayo diaspora worldwide through the implementation of the Mayo Diaspora strategy.

Community Development Objectives

SCO 1	To identify and facilitate the development of suitable sites for community facilities within the county, particularly in newly developing areas. These sites should be easily accessible (walking and cycling) and promote the use of public transport.
SCO 2	To support and assist communities to plan for the future of their villages and towns through a bottom up, participative and inclusive approach of the Mayo Community Futures process of community action planning.

SCO 3	To facilitate voluntary and community groups through the ongoing development of the Mayo Public Participation Network.
SCO 4	To promote and advance the attractiveness of the towns and villages throughout the county by assisting in the enhancement of the natural and built environment, through initiatives such as Pride of Place and the coordinated efforts of Mayo County Council, tidy towns organisations, community groups and local development companies.
SCO 5	To retain existing community facilities and public open spaces, unless a sustainable alternative can be provided in the immediate locality.

8.4.3 Community Facilities and Social Infrastructure

Social Infrastructure in this Plan includes health care services, education facilities, burial grounds, fire and emergency services and recreational and cultural facilities. The Council are responsible for the provision of some social infrastructure while the remainder is provided by Government departments, state and local agencies, and private providers and in such cases the Council works to facilitate the provision of social infrastructure. The Mayo LCDC provides oversight of all local and community development programmes in the county. Investment in social infrastructure assists in achieving economic growth, employment and improves the well-being and quality of life of our citizens.

Community infrastructure is an essential part of all communities. Facilities such as community centres, sports centres, libraries and playgrounds can serve as a focal point for the communities they serve. They also provide venues for local sporting, cultural, community, education and social events. The provision of good quality community facilities in existing and developing areas is a key element in the development of sustainable, healthy communities across the county. The Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines (2009) emphasise the need to integrate housing with the provision of supporting community and social infrastructure. The guidelines acknowledge that community facilities should be located within, or close to, neighbourhood centres and well served by public transport. Different levels of service provision are appropriate to settlements of different sizes, it is therefore important that the Council ensures that an appropriate range of community facilities are provided in all communities, taking account of the population profile and growth targets identified in the Core Strategy.

Community Facilities and Social Infrastructure Policies	
SCP 3	To ensure that County Mayo is equipped with physical and other infrastructure (including blue and green infrastructure) necessary to allow communities the capacity to develop and flourish.
SCP 4	To support the provision of a modern and effective fire and rescue services for the county.
SCP 5	To support and facilitate the development of places of worship and multi-faith facilities at appropriate locations, such as town and village centres.
SCP 6	To promote new social infrastructure developments which are accessible and inclusive for a range of users, by adopting a universal design approach and providing for an age friendly society in which people of all ages can live full active, valued and healthy lives.
SCP 7	To protect the cultural heritage of historical burial grounds within the county and to encourage their management and maintenance in accordance with conservation principles.
SCP 8	To facilitate the development of new or extended burial grounds and crematoria by the zoning of land at suitable locations, where appropriate, and providing local authority burial grounds, subject to appropriate safeguards with regard to environmental, noise and traffic impacts.
SCP 9	To ensure that all buildings, public open spaces, recreational and amenity areas are accessible for people with disabilities.
SCP 10	To direct residential care homes for older people, retirement homes, nursing homes, independent living units, assisted living units, retirement villages and sheltered accommodation into towns and villages, ensuring that they are appropriate in scale to the size of the settlement.
SCP 11	To support the enhancement of postal facilities in the County.

Community Facilities and Social Infrastructure Objectives	
SCO 6	To work with public service delivery bodies to improve the level of accessibility and facilitate the delivery of more effective and integrated services in communities.
SCO 7	To support and assist the provision of a broad range of community facilities within settlements or in close proximity to existing facilities or multi-purpose centres or public transport routes to meet the changing needs of all sectors of the community.
SCO 8	To support, promote and facilitate the development of an inter-county coastal path linking Mayo, Galway and Sligo, subject to no significant adverse impacts on the environment including the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.

8.4.4 Social Inclusion in Mayo

Social inclusion refers to the manner in which all members of the community are integrated in an equal manner. It seeks to reduce barriers to participation in areas such as education, recreation, employment, health and housing. It incorporates the need to ensure that minority groups, people of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds, the travelling community, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, the elderly, children and young people are recognised as valuable members of the community. Mayo County Council supports a socially inclusive county for all communities. Inclusive communities are achieved by improving the lives of people living in disadvantaged areas and building social capital. Priorities to achieve inclusive communities include access to and availability of services, housing and infrastructure provision.

8.4.4.1 Children, Young People and Family Support

Mayo has a multi-agency approach in assisting and supporting families, children and young people. The work of the Children and Young Persons Strategic Committee (CYPSC); Mayo County Childcare Committee; Family Resource Centres; the Traveller Inter Agency Forum; local development companies; Mayo Disability Federation and the HSE are fundamental in this regard. The provision of childcare facilities is recognised as a key piece of social infrastructure required to enable people to participate in accessing employment, education and social networks. There continues to be a demand for childcare services and the provision of good quality and affordable services close to local communities. Mayo County Childcare Committee assists in the development and coordination of preschool services in the county.

8.4.4.2 People with Disabilities

There are different types of disability, including physical, intellectual, mental health and chronic illness. In order to ensure an inclusive county, it is imperative that the requirements of people with disabilities are met appropriately and positively. There are many organizations in Mayo who assist in improving the lives of people with disabilities in areas of health, transport, accessibility and in ensuring that people with disabilities are encouraged and supported in all aspects of their lives and make positive contributions in the communities in which they live.

8.4.4.3 Older People

Mayo has a significant level of older residents, many of which live in rural areas. It has the highest rate of older people in the state. Priorities for older people at risk of social exclusion in Mayo include maintaining their health and wellbeing, reducing social isolation, improving access to support, information, services and accessibility and mobility generally and also to provide for the needs of carers. The implementation of the 'Age Friendly' programme in Mayo assists in the inclusion and improved health and wellbeing for older people in the county. Housing is also a key social policy area that needs to adapt to meet the changing needs of older people. The NPF supports national policy to assist older people to live with dignity and independence in their own homes and communities, for as long as possible. It highlights the need for well-designed lifetime adaptable infill and brownfield development, close to existing services and facilities, supported by universal design and improved urban amenities. Accommodation for the elderly, should be located in existing residential areas, well served by social infrastructure and amenities, such as footpath networks, public transport (where possible) and local facilities and services, to allow for better care in the community, independence and access, ensuring that residents are not isolated. New developments will be required to provide accommodation suitable and adaptable for the elderly.

Social Inclusion Policies

SCP 12	To support initiatives that foster social inclusion amongst groups that are vulnerable to poverty and exclusion.
SCP 13	To support the implementation of the Mayo Local Economic and Community Plan in collaboration with the Local Community Development Committee to reduce the number of people in or at risk of social exclusion.
SCP 14	To support and promote a more diverse and socially inclusive society that targets equality of opportunity and a better quality of life for all citizens, through improved integration and greater accessibility in the delivery of sustainable communities and the provision of associated services.
SCP 15	To support the implementation of the Mayo Age Friendly County Programme 2016-2020, as implemented by the Mayo Age Friendly Alliance (and any updated editions), and any key actions in relation to the physical environment.
SCP 16	To promote universal design and well-designed lifetime, adaptable and age friendly housing in accordance with best practice and with the policies and principles contained in Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach (National Disability Authority, 2012) and Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Area: Guidelines for Planning Authorities and its companion document Urban Design Manual (DEHLG, 2009) and particularly on infill and brownfield sites, walkable to existing services and facilities.
SCP 17	To support initiatives which provide access to social supports in terms of language, education and employment for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

Social Infrastructure Objectives

SCO 9	To facilitate the provision of community and resource centres and youth clubs/cafes, recreational amenities and other facilities for younger people by the identification of suitably located sites, including Council landbanks and by assisting in the provision of finance, where possible.
SCO 10	To secure the implementation of the Council's Traveller Accommodation Programme (2019-2024) and to review this programme if required and/or deemed to be necessary, during the Plan period.
SCO 11	To seek to provide Changing Spaces in the provision of any new public toilets, where feasible.

8.4.5 Health and Wellbeing

At a national level, the Government, through the implementation of Healthy Ireland: A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025, aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in Ireland. The Health and Wellbeing Working Group of Mayo LCDC, together with Mayo Children and Young Persons Services Committee (CYPSC), have received funding through the Healthy Ireland Fund for a series of actions, which will implement the national plans at county level. Mayo County Council has also received 'Healthy County Status' under The National Healthy Cities and Counties of Ireland Network and is committed to making Mayo a healthier county. The Council is actively promoting healthy communities through Mayo Sports Partnership, a multi-agency forum, that works to increase participation in sports and physical activity throughout the county.

8.4.5.1 Health Care facilities and Provision

The Planning Authority has a significant role in supporting suitable healthcare provision through ensuring that there are sufficient lands reserved in the Development Plan to accommodate the development of adequate healthcare facilities for the population of an area. These facilities, together with community support services, are directed towards suitably zoned lands in close proximity to new and existing residential areas, to allow communities access to multi-disciplinary health care, mental health and wellbeing services, in easily accessible locations throughout the County.

Health and Wellbeing Policies	
SCP 18	To promote the improvement of health and wellbeing services throughout the county, in particular to encourage the integration of health and wellbeing services and facilities with new and existing community facilities, where feasible.
SCP 19	To look favourably upon the development of primary care centre, clinics and facilities for the specific needs of an ageing population, in accessible locations, particularly town centres, which comprises access to a range of healthcare services.
SCP 20	To support the Health Service Executive and other statutory and voluntary agencies in the provision of appropriate healthcare facilities, including the development of both the system of hospital care and the provision of community-based primary care facilities.
SCP 21	To support the key priorities of the Mayo Health and Wellbeing Plan 2018-2022 (as updated in the future) to promote health and well-being.
SCP 22	To support the key priorities and actions of the Mayo Children and Young People's Plan 2018-2020 (as updated in the future) to secure better outcomes for children and young people through more effective integration of existing services and interventions at local level.
SCP 23	To support health and wellbeing initiatives and healthcare provision so that Mayo is a healthy and caring county for all.

Health and Wellbeing Objective	
SCO 12	To support the provision of improved health services on suitably zoned lands in the Tier I and II towns in the settlement hierarchy, on lands in the town centres or immediately adjacent to town centres (based on the sequential approach) which are appropriately serviced (water service, footpaths, lighting etc.)

8.4.6 Recreation Facilities and Provision

Mayo County Council recognises the role recreation, amenity and open space facilities can play in creating healthy environments and facilitating more active lifestyles, to ensure the well-being and improved quality of life for communities. In this regard, high quality open spaces, green linkages, such as walks, cycle ways, access to the lakes, beaches, sports and recreational facilities that are usable and accessible to all, should be provided in tandem with development and changing community needs. The connectivity of open spaces between urban areas, urban fringe and rural areas allows for the interaction

of people and wildlife and connects people with places of work and community facilities. In order to achieve optimum accessibility and effective provision of open space and recreational facilities, such facilities should be located and designed on a hierarchical basis according to the needs of a defined population. In addition, community gardens are increasingly becoming popular in the county and play an important function in serving communities.

Mayo County Council recognises the importance of indoor and outdoor play in the development of children and continues to promote participation in sports and recreation through a range of measures, including the operation of leisure centres in Castlebar, Westport and Claremorris, and the development of parks, playground, outdoor gyms and Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA's) throughout the County. The Council has prepared a playground policy, and the Health and Wellbeing Working Group of Mayo LCDC is preparing a Play and Recreation Strategy for Mayo 2020-2030, through the Healthy Ireland fund. The Council will continue to support future health and wellbeing initiatives.

Recreation Facilities and Provision Policy	
SCP 24	To promote the improvement of health and wellbeing services throughout the county, in particular to encourage the integration of health and wellbeing services and facilities with new and existing community facilities, where feasible.

Recreation Facilities and Provision Objectives	
SCO 13	To support and facilitate the implementation of the recommendations of Mayo County Council Play and Recreation Strategy or any subsequent strategy, in conjunction with all relevant agencies.
SCO 14	To support and facilitate the provision for the development of an indoor all-weather multi-sport dome for Ballina to serve clubs and organisations in North Mayo/ West Sligo.

8.4.7 Education, Training and Skills

The provision of investment in education and training are central to reinforcing the delivery of sustainable communities, promoting inclusion and offering choice and accessibility to a high standard of education and employment. Education, training and life-long learning are key enablers, around which personal fulfilment, a fair society and a successful population revolve. All are central to sustaining economic success and building strong communities. The planning system can facilitate the provision of schools through land use zoning and designation of particular sites. The provision of school facilities in tandem with new development is also critical to supporting sustainable communities and reducing the need to travel.

Mayo County Council recognises the important role of higher education in providing for the economic and social wellbeing of the county's population. The Castlebar campus of the Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) provides 3rd level education in the county. GMIT forms part of the Connaught-Ulster Alliance, which is a strategic partnership with Letterkenny IT and Sligo IT aimed at achieving Technological University status.

The Council has been proactive, through the Education and Training Working Group of the LCDC and various other organisations within the county, to develop third level initiatives. The Mayo Sligo

Leitrim Education and Training Board promote Adult Learning Services, Community Education, Back to Education Initiatives, Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme and Adult Guidance. In addition, the Mayo Local Enterprise Office offers business information and advice, business skills training and mentoring support, as well as other skills and training options to support businesses in the county. Informal, unaccredited lifelong learning also has a huge role to play in building social capital, keeping people connected and engaged, encouraging and supporting people on a pathway to formal education and lifting people out of poverty.

Education, Training and Skills Policies

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| SCP 25 | To support informal and formal initiatives which provide opportunities for people in Mayo to access appropriate education and training provision necessary to allow them to realise their full potential. |
| SCP 26 | To ensure the provision of new educational facilities are located within existing settlements. |

Education, Training and Skills Objectives

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| SCO 15 | To support and facilitate the establishment of co-working/ remote working hubs and creative hubs as either standalone facilities themselves or ancillary to public buildings, libraries and community centres or in towns and village centres, as appropriate. |
| SCO 16 | To support and promote the growth, development and success of the Connacht Ulster Alliance consortium's (including GMIT Mayo) ambition towards becoming a Technological University serving the west and northwest. |
| SCO 17 | To support the provision of childcare facilities and new and refurbished schools on well located sites, within or close to existing built-up areas, that meet the diverse needs of local populations and to support the intensification of development on existing school sites, where appropriate, and in accordance with Department of Education's guidelines and Development Management Guidelines (Volume II). |
| SCO 18 | To assist the County Childcare Committee in identifying priority areas within the county for the provision of childcare facilities. |

8.4.8 Culture, Heritage and The Arts

Mayo has many unique physical and cultural characteristics which contribute to its distinctive heritage and identity as a special place along the western seaboard. Music, dance, art and the Irish language also contribute to Mayo's thriving arts and creativity culture. All of these areas form a rich tapestry which add to Mayo's uniqueness. It is important that the distinct culture and heritage of our county is protected and enhanced.

8.4.8.1 The Arts and Library Service

The Arts Service of Mayo County Council has long been a leader in delivering a quality programme and promoting meaningful engagement in the Arts for all. The areas of Disability Arts, Public Art, community

interaction with Mayo Artsquad and Film Mayo are exemplars of providing an inclusive Arts offering in Mayo. Mayo County Council's Strategic Arts Plan 2018 - 2022 provides supports to the sector, taking into account the resources at its disposal.

Organisations such as The Linenhall Arts Centre, The Heinrich Boll Cottage, Ballina Arts Centre, the Custom House Studios, Ballinglen Arts Foundation, Town Hall Arts Centre, Charlestown and Áras Inis Gluaire/Erris Arts Centre provide access to high quality, lively and diverse Arts programming across the county. The venues provide key services for their locality and the wider county and provide important spaces for artists in which to practice, exhibit, network and create.

Mayo County Council recognises the potential of Mayo's Arts and creative industries sector to contribute to economic growth and job creation. It also supports the commercial development of theatres, cinemas and other cultural and entertainment uses. The incorporation of public art in public spaces, civic buildings and town centre locations is also encouraged. Mayo County Council also recognises the importance of cultural events, festivals, activities and facilities which contribute towards the intellectual, artistic and social quality of life for people in the county and attracting visitors from both within and outside the county to Mayo. The Council, through its Art's Office, seeks to promote the cultural life of the county and increase accessibility to arts and culture facilities for all members of the community.

County Mayo's public library service provides an increasingly important community, information, cultural and outreach facility role within the county. Its county headquarters is situated in Castlebar and there are 11 branches in total throughout the county including a mobile library service. The Council will continue to support the provision of library facilities across the county, as resources allow.

Arts and Libraries Policies

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| SCP 27 | To implement the Creative Ireland Programme 2017-22, Council's Arts Strategy 2018- 2022 and the Mayo Culture and Creative Strategy 2018-2022' or any subsequent strategy over the lifetime of the plan. |
| SCP 28 | To recognise and project Mayo's unique identity in an appropriate manner and to promote and market the county to derive optimum social, cultural and economic benefits. |
| SCP 29 | To continue to promote the use of the library service and further develop each library as a community gathering place and learning hub. |

Arts and Libraries Objectives

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| SCO 19 | To implement the Mayo County Library Development Plan 2015-2020 (as extended) and any subsequent Library Development Plans. |
| SCO 20 | To support the implementation of the Mayo County Council Strategic Arts Plan 2018-2022 (and any superseding version) and to ensure comprehensive provision of arts infrastructure incorporating spaces suitable for the arts and a variety of arts practices throughout the County. |

8.4.8.2 Mayo Islands and Gaeltacht Mhaigh Eo

Mayo is a peripheral rural and coastal county with nine inhabited islands. Clare Island and Inishturk are the most populated islands, outside of Achill with populations of 168 and 53 persons respectively. Significant emigration over the past fifteen years has led to a decrease in population, resulting in an older cohort of residents and high levels of deprivation. There is a dependence on small scale farming and marine based activities. Island communities continue to face significant challenges such as maintaining population, services and their unique identity.

There are three Gaeltacht areas in the county, which include Iorras, Acaill and Tuar Mhic Éadaigh. It is important to recognise the significance of our Gaeltacht areas from a cultural, linguistic and also economic viewpoint. Udaras na Gaeltachta have an important role in facilitating the improvement and quality of life of the Gaeltacht community. This is through the provision of economic and social infrastructure, in addition to employment and economic supports so that the Gaeltacht community can be maintained and sustain itself as the primary source of the Irish language, a vibrant, living community language.

Islands and Gaeltacht Policies

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| SCP 30 | To support initiatives at promoting Gaeilge, the Irish language. |
| SCP 31 | To promote and protect Mayo's heritage and culture and the advancement of the Irish Language. |
| SCP 32 | To support the inhabited islands in County Mayo and recognise the special planning and development needs of islands and island communities, particularly access, infrastructure and services. |
| SCP 33 | To actively promote and encourage the provision of mixed social and affordable housing schemes to facilitate the retention and return of islanders and immigration to the island to ensure viable and sustainable populations on offshore islands. |

Islands and Gaeltacht Objectives

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| SCO 21 | To ensure that the Irish language and our unique linguistic heritage becomes more visible and audible and integrated into all activities in Mayo. |
| SCO 22 | To strengthen the unique linguistic and cultural heritage of Gaeltacht Mhaigh Eo, by supporting and facilitating improved physical, social and economic infrastructure at appropriate locations throughout the Gaeltacht areas and require a Language Impact Statement in respect of significant developments within or close to Gaeltacht areas, |
| SCO 23 | To maintain and support the communities of Mayo's inhabited islands by facilitating sustainable social and economic development through the provision of, or facilitating the provision of, infrastructure (social and physical), housing and services, having regard to the traditional building patterns of the Islands and the need to protect, support and enhance, the cultural and natural heritage of the Islands. |
| SCO 24 | To support and assist the formulation and implementation of Irish Language Plans (Plean Teanga) for the Gaeltacht Service Towns of Béal an Mhuirthead, Ballinrobe and Castlebar, and to promote the development of the Gaeltacht in Mayo in a manner that protects and enhances the distinctive linguistic and cultural heritage, whilst meeting the needs and aspirations of both residents and visitors alike. |

9

**BUILT
ENVIRONMENT**





Chapter 9 Built Environment

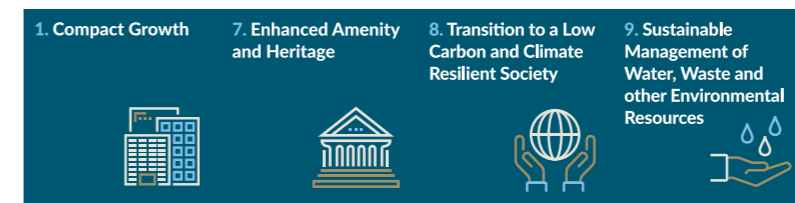
9.1 Strategic Aim

The strategic aim of this chapter is to recognise and enhance the unique identity, character and built heritage of Mayo's towns, village and rural areas, to improve quality of life through the application of healthy placemaking, underpinned by good urban design with the creation of attractive public spaces that are vibrant, distinctive, safe and accessible and which promote and facilitate positive social interaction.

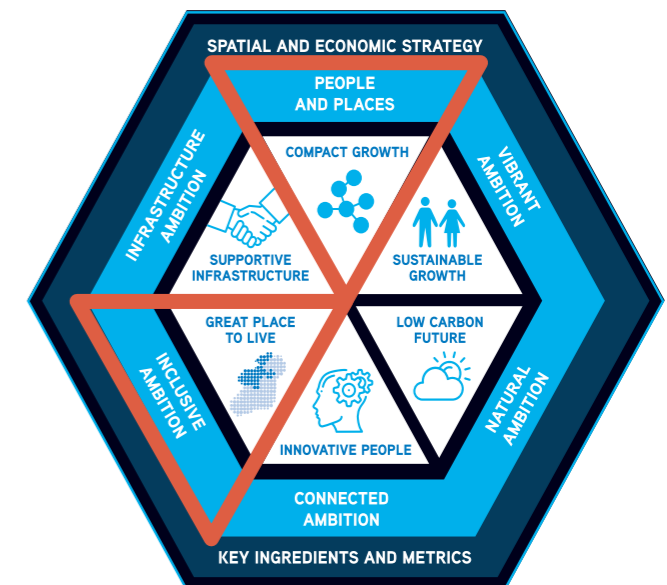
Related UN Sustainable Development Goals



Related NPF National Strategic Outcomes



Related RSES Regional Growth Ambitions



9.2 Introduction

This chapter has been guided by the above strategic aim, sustainable development goals and national strategic objectives to ensure that the built environment in County Mayo is developed in a sustainable manner. This chapter has also considered the key legislative and policy documents set out in Appendix III, including the NPF and RSES for the Northern and Western region.

9.3 National and Regional Planning Position

The NPF and RSES recognise the need for enhanced amenities and heritage in urban and rural areas, to ensure they continue to be attractive places to live, work and visit. These spatial plans identify as a priority, the need to create and strengthen the built fabric of towns and villages, so as to ensure they are attractive and sustainable settlements that can offer a good quality of life for all. In order to achieve this, the NPF and RSES pursue a sustainable spatial growth strategy of 'Compact Growth'. An important component of this growth strategy is placemaking, through the regeneration, rejuvenation and repopulation of town centres to make them attractive and vibrant places. Cultural heritage plays an important role in the creation of place-making, by providing landmark buildings and features of interest, which contributes to the character and distinctiveness of towns and villages. The NPF and RSES also seek to protect and promote the sense of place, culture together with the quality, character and distinctiveness of the Irish rural landscape.

9.4 Mayo in Context

County Mayo has a distinctive built environment. The built environment refers to the human-made environment, which encompasses places, spaces and structures of past and present generations. The built environment has evolved over time, from the earliest man-made structures to the modern built environment. Our built heritage represents the historical layer, while new developments represent the modern layer of our built environment. New developments will form the built heritage of tomorrow, in the same way as the building styles of the past have given identity to the towns and villages in the county today. Mayo County Council seeks to ensure the protection and conservation of our rich built heritage throughout the county, where it is warranted, along with the sustainable growth of our towns and villages, with particular emphasis on the regeneration and revitalisation of town and village centres.

9.4.1 Built Heritage

The built heritage of County Mayo, comprising its archaeological and architectural heritage, has a practical role in shaping a positive future for County Mayo. Combined with our cultural heritage, it should be viewed as one of the many assets that make the county an attractive place in which to live, work and visit. Our archaeological and architectural heritage assets form an intrinsic part of our national heritage and are an irreplaceable and finite resource. Mayo's unique heritage is an intrinsic part of the character and attractiveness of the county and is a catalyst for attracting tourism and investment. Mayo County Council recognises the importance of identifying, valuing and safeguarding the archaeological and architectural heritage of Mayo for future generations. This can be achieved through the proper management, sensitive enhancement and/or appropriate development of this resource.

9.4.1.1 Archaeological Heritage

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 inter tidal zones. It provides an irreplaceable link with the past and provides information on the development of Mayo from our earliest settlers. All known archaeological sites are identified in the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). The principal mechanism for the protection of the archaeological sites and monuments is through the provision of the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP). In addition to the RMP, some monuments are considered National Monuments. These are structures or sites, the preservation of which has been deemed to be of national importance and therefore worthy of state protection. The physical remains of an archaeological monument today is not necessarily the full extent of the original monument, which can remain buried in the ground with no visible surface evidence. This is known as the Zone of Archaeological Potential (ZAP), which is the area surrounding the identified site or monument.

Archaeological Heritage Policies

BEP 1

To support and promote the protection, appropriate management and sympathetic enhancement of the county's archaeological heritage within the Plan area, in particular by implementing the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended).

BEP 2

To promote awareness of and encourage the provision of access to, the archaeological resources of the county.

BEP 3

To encourage the management and maintenance of the county's archaeological heritage, including historic burial grounds, in accordance with best conservation practice that considers the impact of climate change.

Archaeological Heritage Objectives

BEO 1

To protect the archaeological heritage and sites identified in the Record of Monuments and Places, National Monuments in the ownership or guardianship of the State in addition to National Monuments that are the subject of Preservation Orders, and to safeguard the integrity of the archaeological sites in their setting.

BEO 2

To protect the tentative World Heritage Site in Mayo on the UNESCO Tentative List - Ireland 2010, The Céide Fields, from inappropriate development and support its nomination to World Heritage Status.

BEO 3

To implement, in partnership with the County Mayo Heritage Forum, relevant stakeholders and the community, the County Mayo Heritage Plan and any revisions thereof.

BEO 4

To ensure that development in the vicinity of a Recorded Monument or Zone of Archaeological Potential is sited and designed in a sensitive manner, avoiding adverse effects on landscape setting and context of monument.

BEO 5

To protect all sites and features of archaeological interest discovered subsequent to the publication of the Record of Monument and Places, in situ (or at a minimum preservation by record), having regard to the advice and recommendations of the National Monuments Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

BEO 6	To protect archaeological sites, monuments, underwater archaeology and archaeological objects in their setting, which are listed on the Record of Monuments and Places for Mayo.
BEO 7	To promote awareness and the appropriate adaptation of Ireland's built and archaeological heritage to deal with the effects of climate change with reference to the Built and Archaeological Heritage Climate Change and Adaptation Plan.

9.4.1.2 Architectural Heritage

Architectural heritage consists of buildings and structures of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical importance. The principal mechanism for protection of these buildings and structures is through inclusion on the 'Record of Protected Structures' (RPS). Mayo County Council recognises the important contribution that all historic structures, features and landscapes, including those which are not listed in the RPS, makes to the county's heritage. Local authorities can also preserve the special character of a place, area, group of structures, or townscape known as Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). The special character of an ACA is made up of its architectural features, setting, spatial qualities and land uses.

Architectural Heritage Policies

BEP 4	To protect the architectural heritage of County Mayo which is a unique and special resource.
BEP 5	To promote best conservation practice and encourage the use of appropriately qualified professional advisors, tradesmen and craftsmen with recognised conservation expertise, for works to protected structures or historic buildings in an Architectural Conservation Area.
BEP 6	To encourage the conservation of Protected Structures, and where appropriate, the adaptive re-use of existing buildings and sites in a manner compatible with their character and significance.
BEP 7	To protect buildings and structures included in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) which forms part of this Plan.

Architectural Heritage Objectives

BEO 8	To review and update the Record of Protected Structures within 12 months of adopting this plan, and on-going basis, and to make additions and deletions, as appropriate. Where exceptional circumstances apply, that discretion would be applied to work with affected parties.
BEO 9	To ensure the protection and sympathetic enhancement of buildings and structures included and proposed for inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) that are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, together with the integrity of their character and setting.

BEO 10	To protect the setting of protected structures and seek to prevent the demolition or inappropriate alteration of Protected Structures, which would adversely impact on the character and special interest of the structure, where appropriate.
BEO 11	To ensure that any new development or alteration to a building within or adjoining an Architectural Conservation Area positively enhances the character of the area and is appropriate in terms of the proposed materials, scale, density, layout, proportions, plot ratio and building lines.
BEO 12	To identify places of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, and to define them as Architectural Conservation Areas and to undertake an assessment to inform the potential ACA designation for the following areas: Castlebar, Ballinrobe, Killala, Pontoon and Doogort or any other special character areas considered by the Planning Authority worthy of such protection in County Mayo.
BEO 13	To protect the built heritage of Ballina, Castlebar and Westport, including the protected structures listed in the existing town and environs development plans and seek to review the Record of Protected Structures for County Mayo to incorporate protected structures from the plan areas of these towns.

9.4.1.3 Historic Building Stock and Vernacular Architecture

Scattered throughout the countryside and within the towns and villages of Mayo is an extensive stock of modest historic buildings and structures, some of which have been designed by an architect or engineer, while others are vernacular structures built to no formal plans, using traditional building types and materials. While these older buildings may not meet the criteria of sufficient special interest to be designated protected structures, their form, scale, materials and orientation contribute positively to the rural landscape, as well as to the historic villages and towns of Mayo, establishing the distinctive character of a particular area. The retention and reuse of these buildings and structures exemplifies sustainable development and so Mayo County Council will encourage the appropriate re-use of vernacular buildings, rather than their replacement or dereliction, where practicable.

Historic Building Stock and Vernacular Architecture Policies

BEP 8	To encourage the retention, sympathetic maintenance and sustainable re-use of historic buildings, including vernacular dwellings or farm buildings and the retention of historic streetscape character, fabric, detail and features, where appropriate.
BEP 9	To promote the retention and restoration of thatched dwellings as a key component of the built heritage of the county.
BEP 10	To encourage the protection, retention, appreciation and appropriate revitalisation of the vernacular heritage of Mayo.
BEP 11	To promote the sympathetic maintenance refurbishment and re-use of vernacular built heritage and to support the retention of original fabric such as windows, doors, renders/pub/shopfronts, roof coverings and interiors.
BEP 12	To support proposals to appropriately refurbish and extend vernacular structures in a semi-derelict or derelict condition.

BEP 13 To encourage the protection, conservation, promotion and enhancement of Country Houses, Gardens and Demesnes in the county and support public awareness, enjoyment of and access to these sites, where appropriate.

BEP 14 To discourage development that would lead to a loss of, or cause damage to, the character, the principle components of, or the setting of Country Houses, Gardens and Demesnes in recognition of their contribution to cultural heritage, landscapes and green infrastructure. Architectural heritage impact assessment, including consideration of demesne and setting may be required for proposals.

Historic Building Stock and Vernacular Architecture Objectives

BEO 14 To identify and retain good examples of vernacular architecture and historic street furniture in situ, for example, cast-iron post boxes, water pumps, signage, street lighting, kerbing and traditional road and street surface coverings.

BEO 15 To ensure that conversions or extensions of traditional buildings or the provision of new adjoining buildings, are sensitively designed and do not detract from the character of the historic building.

BEO 16 To update the survey of surviving thatched structures in the county and to promote available grant schemes in order to assist owners with their retention and repair.

BEO 17 To preserve the character and setting (for example, gates, gate piers and courtyards) of historic building and vernacular buildings, where deemed appropriate by the planning authority.

9.4.2 Sustainable Buildings

Buildings form a valuable part of our historic building stock, yet most are not protected structures. On environmental grounds and in the interest of sustainability and locking in carbon, the Plan encourages the reuse of as much of an original building/ structure as is possible. Raw material shortages will become a critical factor over the next 10 to 20 years and already major companies worldwide are switching to recycling old concrete, steel, glass, etc. Demolition and rebuilding generates significantly greater amounts of carbon. The Plan promotes the re-use and re-purposing of extant building stock on these grounds.

To create sustainable buildings, it is vital to examine the lifecycle performance of the building to address greenhouse gas emissions and circular economy principles. In the building life cycle, embodied carbon is the greenhouse gas emission associated with the non-operational phase of the building. This includes emissions cause by extraction, manufacture, transportation, assembly, maintenance, replacement, deconstruction, disposal and end of life aspects of the materials and systems that make up a building. The whole life carbon of the building is both the embodied carbon and the carbon associated with operation (heating, cooling, powering, providing water, etc). Low embodied, carbon building designs can make projects more resilient to future resource and material scarcity, price rises and uncertainty, as well as rising energy prices.

Crucially, improved buildings deliver substantial societal benefits. By improving indoor air quality and lighting, green buildings improve the health of their occupants and neighbours. While energy savings are themselves valuable, adding public health to the equation makes it even clearer, that zero carbon buildings are worthy investments.

9.4.3 Placemaking

The built environment not only includes buildings but the spaces between buildings, such as town squares, parks, community gardens and the physical infrastructure that support human activity, such as transportation and utility networks. The Plan supports the hierarchy of high quality, vibrant, consolidated and attractive urban and rural settlements, and aims to improve the quality of the built fabric of Mayo's towns and villages by applying the principles of placemaking.

Placemaking is multidimensional and represents the connection between people and place. A high-quality public realm facilitates a positive environment in which to live, work and visit, and provides for an improved quality of life for everyone. Placemaking also seeks to incorporate distinctive features and structures in a town, like historic buildings, to provide a sense of place. Successful implementation of place-making principles serves to create and support sustainable communities by providing accessible, safe and distinct built environments reflective of the character, heritage and identity of each individual settlement, supported by the creation of qualitative safe and attractive public spaces.

Sustainable Buildings and Structures Policies

BEP 15 To support and promote retaining built urban fabric/structures in towns and villages, in the interest of sustainable development in the national and global context of locking in carbon.

BEP 16 To promote and support the re-use and re-purposing of extant building stock, in the first instance, over demolition and rebuilding building, where practical, with reference to the loss of our historic building stock, sense of place and the environmental cost.

BEP 17 To support and promote the development and use of passive solar design principles in all new developments taking account of national guidelines.

BEP 18 To encourage the use of green roofs and green walls particularly on apartment, industrial, commercial, leisure and educational buildings.

BEP 19 To encourage improved energy efficiency of existing building stock and promote energy efficiency and conservation in the design and development of all new buildings, including local authority dwellings.

Sustainable Buildings and Structures Objectives

BEO 18 To seek to reduce reliance on fossil fuels in the county by reducing the energy demand of existing buildings, in particular residential dwellings.

BEO 19 To require, where feasible and practicable, the provision of green roof technology for all new public buildings (Council buildings, school buildings, hospitals, community centres, sports facilities, libraries, Garda stations etc.) to assist in flood alleviation, climate change adaptation, insulation and improved biodiversity and to actively promote these measures where appropriate in new commercial and industrial buildings.

BEO 20 To seek to improve the energy efficiency of the county's existing building stock in line with good architectural conservation practice and to promote energy efficiency and conservation in the design and development of all new buildings in the county, in accordance with the Building Regulations Part L (Conservation of Fuel and Energy).

BEO 21	To consider the adaptability of buildings over time and seek to improve the efficiency of existing building stock, promote energy efficiency, high levels of energy conservation and the use of renewable energy sources in the design and development of all new buildings in the county.
BEO 22	To inform and encourage new developments to mitigate against, and adapt to where possible, the impacts of climate change through the location, layout and design of the development.
BEO 23	To ensure that new development proposals maximise energy efficiency through siting, layout, design and incorporate best practice in energy technologies, conservation and smart technology.

Placemaking Policies

BEP 20	To provide for a high-quality public realm and public spaces by promoting quality urban design that accommodates creative patterns of use, having regard to the physical, cultural, and social identities of individual settlements.
BEP 21	To encourage the continued vitality and viability of town and village centres by promoting ongoing environmental improvements to the public realm, including blue and green infrastructure measures.
BEP 22	To encourage high quality and well-designed buildings, structures, public spaces and streets and support and promote healthy place-making and quality of life.
BEP 23	To encourage and facilitate improvements to the physical fabric and environment of town and village centres, including streetscape, street furniture, landscaping (hard and soft), signage and wirescape, while recognising that both private and public developments can contribute to effective public realm.
BEP 24	To be flexible in terms of enabling brownfield / infill development within settlements, focusing on design-led and performance-based outcomes, rather than specifying absolute requirements in all cases, whilst seeking to achieve 30% target for housing on infill/brownfield lands in urban settlements, as specified under the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial Economic Spatial Strategy for the Northern and Western Region.
BEP 25	To support the consolidation and aggregation of land where required in order to enable regeneration and proper planning and sustainable development.

Placemaking Objectives

	To apply the following key attributes when considering public realm and public space enhancements: Accessible - connected and linked permeable spaces to ensure ease of movement. Functional - safe, adaptable and social environments to attract and foster activity. Attractive - visually pleasing spaces with high quality design, materials and installations (lighting, furniture and signage) based on a singular common design theme. Distinctive - reference to local context and building on the character and identity of place. Where appropriate, recreational considerations and access to blue and greens space should be underpinned by the Green Space Principles including:
BEP 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance urban greening through planting strategies that mitigate noise and air pollution and maximise local biodiversity gain and facilitate sustainable drainage (e.g. deciduous wooded and wildflower meadow areas). A networked approach: emphasising green infrastructure networks (rather than isolated parks) can provide new opportunities for connecting existing and new green spaces and creating linkages between urban and rural areas. Examples include greenways and linear parks, local greenways or cycleways that link to regional and national greenways and de-culverting watercourses to provide new blue corridors. Well managed and maintained, creating a high-quality environment: poorly managed spaces or vandalism lead to negative perceptions among potential users. Multifunctional uses: examples include spaces that encourage active mobility, physical activity and sports, relaxation and tranquillity, and opportunities for social exchange (e.g. that incorporate community gardens or encourage park runs). Create multisensory restorative environments that help mitigate the psychological stresses of modern living through the provision of “restive places for rejuvenation”.
BEP 25	To facilitate, promote and encourage the development of Town Centre Consolidation Sites and Opportunity Sites, identified in Chapter 12 (Settlement, or any such regeneration sites in the Local Area Plans Ballina, Castlebar and Westport for appropriate development, that contributes positively to the character of the settlement. Any proposal brought forward on Opportunity Sites shall be in accordance with the Development Principles for Town Centre Opportunity Sites/Opportunity Sites should include of an urban design statement, site brief/masterplan and shall demonstrate the rationale for the proposal and how it will interact within its context and the wider urban area.
BEP 36	To require that all new developments, including public open spaces, cater for disability needs by way of appropriate design of the built environment.
BEP 27	To make a Place-Making Strategy for towns and implement Town Centre Renewal Plans.
BEP 28	To support the preparation of Design Guidelines to provide for improvements in the appearance of streetscapes.
BEP 29	To support the revitalisation of vacant spaces for example with cost effective, temporary uses that build on the longer-term vision for space.

BEP 30	To require proposals for public realm enhancements to include inclusive universal design principles.
BEP 31	To seek funding to support the preparation of site-specific Public Realm Strategies to enhance the unique characteristics and assets of Mayo's towns and villages.
BEP 32	To prepare and deliver Placemaking Strategies for Ballina, Castlebar and Westport.
BEP 33	To prepare a Placemaking Strategy for the Tier II towns of Ballinrobe, Ballyhaunis, Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet), Claremorris and Swinford.

9.4.4 Regeneration

The regeneration of town and village centres is a central goal of the plan, by maximising the use of underutilised land and buildings within the existing built-up footprint and by driving the delivery of quality housing and employment choice. The NPF and RSES require a minimum allocation of new housing to be directed into town and village centres, on brownfield, infill and under-utilised sites to repopulate and rejuvenate these core areas. Coupled with the need to repopulate town and village centres, the NPF and RSES recognises the need to strengthen the built fabric of towns and villages to ensure they are attractive places to live and invest, through the creation of a well-designed public realm, such as public spaces, parks and streets, as well as recreational infrastructure. The plan promotes a high standard of design for all new developments.

Heritage-led regeneration through reuse, presents an opportunity to encourage the enhancement and protection of both the existing built heritage and the wider historic building stock. Part of that protection will encompass renovation and renewal, in order to accommodate new and current uses, which in turn should enhance the longevity of the structures concerned. The successful development of Westport, for example, has been accommodated in a manner that maintained the integrity and character of Westport's heritage, protected the town's architectural quality and sense of place, and strengthened the separation between the historic core and its rural hinterland.

Active land management measures will be required to ensure such lands become developable over the lifetime of the plan. The NPF acknowledges that investment is required to aid local authorities in the regeneration of their town centres and provides assistance through the NDP, under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF) and the Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF). Mayo County Council and local communities have been successful in securing funding for various projects under the URDF and RRDF to date.

Regeneration Policies

BEP 26	To promote the regeneration of settlements by making better use of underutilised land and buildings, particularly within the existing built-up areas to achieve compact growth.
BEP 27	To support initiatives that promote the reuse, refurbishment and retrofitting of existing buildings within town and village centres.
BEP 28	To apply for funding under various funding streams to facilitate the enhancement, revitalisation, renewal and regeneration of communities and town/village centres, and the delivery of innovative and transformational regeneration proposals, for example, under the Urban and Rural Regeneration and Development Funds and Town and Village Renewal Schemes.

BEP 29	To promote the consolidation of town and village centres with a focus on the regeneration of underused buildings and strategic sites and on the establishment of a mix of uses to encourage greater vibrancy outside of business hours.
BEP 30	To promote regeneration and revitalisation of small towns and villages and support local enterprise and employment opportunities to ensure their viability as service centres for their surrounding rural areas.

Regeneration Objectives

BEO 34	To require all development proposals for strategic opportunity, brownfield and infill sites to be accompanied by a site brief and/or masterplan that sets out a phased programme for the regeneration of the site and demonstrates how the proposal will comply with national guidelines that seek to integrate principles of good urban design and placemaking
BEO 35	To support the regeneration of rural towns and villages through identification of regeneration projects for rural towns, villages and rural areas and promoting the utilisation of investment opportunities such as the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund.
BEO 36	To support the viability of small towns and villages, through sustainable targeted measures that address vacant premises and deliver sustainable reuse and regeneration outcomes targeted in core areas.
BEO 37	To use specific powers, such as the Vacant Sites register to address issues of vacancy and underutilisation of strategic lands in town centre locations and within the built-up footprints of Tier I to V towns and villages, including the implementation of the Vacant Sites Levy in accordance with the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015. Each year of the plan period, the planning authority will assess the county's settlements for the purposes of identifying vacant sites for addition to the Vacant Site's Register and accordingly implement the statutory provisions for same.
BEO 38	To establish a database of strategic brownfield and infill sites within two years of the adoption of the Mayo County Development Plan, to ensure brownfield land re-use can be managed and co-ordinated across multiple stakeholders, as part of an active land management process, and to monitor the brownfield housing targets urban and rural areas, as set out in Objectives CS0 5 and CS0 6.
BEO 39	To identify derelict sites and vacant sites which are suitable for redevelopment and to maintain the respective registers.
BEO 40	To facilitate appropriate densities and compact growth within urban settlements, the Planning Authority will consider a relaxation of relevant the development management guidelines to assist the delivery of appropriate uses on urban brownfield and infill sites, based on the individual merits of each development proposal, with due cognisance to NPO 13.

CHAPTER 9
BUILT ENVIRONMENT

10
**NATURAL
ENVIRONMENT**

Chapter 10 Natural Environment

10.1 Strategic Aim

The strategic aim of this chapter is to continue to protect and enhance the county's natural heritage and biodiversity and ensure that networks of green and blue infrastructure are identified, created, protected and enhanced to provide a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits to communities; To also improve the knowledge and understanding of the county's landscape and coast, and enhance the overall characteristics, qualities and diversity of landscape character, its sense of place and local distinctiveness in recognition of the amenity potential of the county.

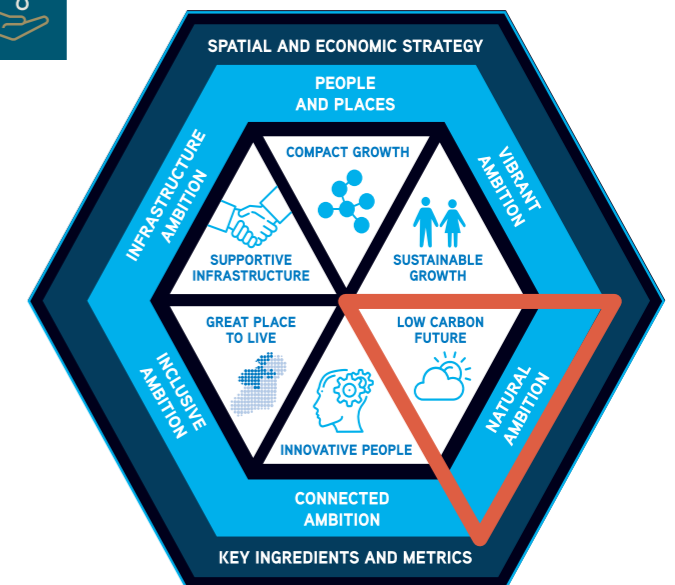
Related UN Sustainable Development Goals



Related NPF National Strategic Outcomes



Related RSES Regional Growth Ambitions



10.2 Introduction

This chapter has been guided by the above strategic aim, sustainable development goals and national strategic objectives to create sustainable communities in County Mayo. The chapter has also considered the key legislative and policy documents set out in Appendix III, including the NPF and RSES for the Northern and Western region.

10.3 National and Regional Planning Position

The NPF and RSES recognises that communities in Ireland benefit from the goods and services that the natural environment provides, including food, renewable energy, water purification, flood mitigation and places for recreation, education, creative thinking, health and wellbeing. They also recognise the importance of biodiversity and how the planning system should be responsive to our national environmental challenges and ensure that development occurs within environmental limits, having regard to the requirements of all relevant environmental legislation. The NPF and RSES acknowledges the wealth of the natural and cultural assets within our landscape, which supports our quality of life, provides for a healthy and resilient economy and helps us adapt to and mitigate climate change. The NPF and RSES both aim to protect and value our important and vulnerable habitats, landscapes, natural heritage and green spaces, including their interrelationships.

The NPF requires the integration of planning for green infrastructure and ecosystem services into all statutory land use plans. Additionally, the RSES seeks to unify the region around an environmental, growth management, economic and infrastructural strategy that is efficient, sustainable and inclusive, which builds on protecting and enhancing our natural capital. The environment and our health and wellbeing are inextricably linked, and we need to look beyond simply protecting people from threats in their environment to considering how the environment can deliver a much wider range of social, economic and environmental benefits whilst ensuring no net contribution to biodiversity loss.

10.4 Mayo Context

The natural environment compasses everything that is not human made. Land, air, water, plants and animals all comprise the natural environment. It provides us with natural resources, such as food, fuel and raw materials for the production of goods and the creation of the various components of the built environment. The natural environment also plays a fundamental role in creating sustainable communities. It can help us adapt and mitigate climate change and improve people's health and quality of life. Loss of or damage to ecosystems reduces the capacity of natural ecosystems to capture and store carbon to combat climate change. Mayo County Council plays an important role in the protection of the county's natural heritage and the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. A wide range of economic and social benefits and services result from the protection of environmental quality and biodiversity.

Mayo has a rich biodiversity and range of ecosystems, including its geology, extensive peatlands, wetland landscapes, rivers, woodlands, grasslands, eskers, trees and hedgerows. Protecting and enhancing our biodiversity and ecosystems is vital not only for our health, well-being, tourism, attractiveness of place, and quality of life of our communities today, it is also critically important in the future, in adapting to and mitigating climate change.

10.4.1 Biodiversity

The biodiversity of County Mayo includes our native plant and animal species and the places (habitats and ecosystems) where they live. Our landscape has been shaped by our geographical position on the west coast of the country, our varied geology, and the influence of the people who have settled here. These elements determine the range of native plants, animals, habitats and ecosystems that make up the unique biodiversity of the county.

Biodiversity is threatened globally by the ever-increasing demands of people for space, fuel, food and other resources. Loss or damage to sites and places of biodiversity value, caused by changes in land-use practices, pressures for development, disturbance of places used by wild animals and birds for sheltering, feeding or breeding and pollution of watercourses, all affect the extent and quality of our natural environment. The protection of our biodiversity matters for ethical, environmental and economic reasons. Healthy functioning ecosystems clean our water, purify our air, maintain our soils, provide us with food, medicines and fuel, whilst regulating our climate. A healthy environment provides places for recreational and spiritual enjoyment for the inhabitants of the county and for those who visit Mayo. It also provides attractive spaces for people to live, work and to do business.

Climate change is damaging biodiversity and ecosystems, reducing their capacity to capture and store carbon. The impact of climate change often exacerbates other pressures on biodiversity and ecosystems such as pollution, over-exploitation, invasive species, habitat fragmentation, degradation and loss. Protecting and enhancing our biodiversity and ecosystems is vital not only for our health, well-being, tourism, attractiveness of place and quality of life of our communities today, it is also critically important in combating climate change. Healthy, resilient ecosystems have a greater potential to mitigate and adapt to climate change and therefore to limit global warming. Trees and plants remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, regulate air temperatures and catch rainfall. Wetlands act as significant carbon sinks, store large volumes of water and slow down its flow. It is therefore important to reduce biodiversity loss and maintain diverse, functioning and interconnecting ecosystems across the wider terrestrial, freshwater and marine environment, in order to climate proof our natural environment. Mayo County Council have a responsibility and legal obligation to safeguard biodiversity and ecosystems.

10.4.2 Designated sites, Protected Species and Habitats

The Natura 2000 Network of European Sites includes the ecological sites designated or proposed for designation across Ireland and Europe under the Habitats and Birds Directives, including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). These are protected under law and through the planning system. The SACs are proposed or designated for protection because they support habitats and/or populations of plant and animal species that have been identified as rare or threatened at a European level. There are 53 SACs in County Mayo. The SPAs provide for the protection of sites used (for breeding, roosting or feeding) by species of birds that are rare, or vulnerable or in danger of extinction. It also provides for the protection of areas that are particularly important for migratory birds, where they congregate in significant numbers. These are usually wetlands and include many coastal estuarine sites. There are 19 SPAs in County Mayo. The Natura 2000 network of sites is also crucial in providing the space natural species need to adapt to climate change. The range of ecosystem services provided by Natura 2000 and other relevant national and regional protected areas and networks is often not recognised, however, they meet a wide variety of human needs such as clean water, air, recreation, flood protection.

Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) are designated due to their national conservation value and/or geological/geomorphological heritage. They seek to protect habitats, landforms or geomorphological features, wildlife plant and animal species or a diversity of these natural attributes. NHAs are designated under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000. Proposed Natural Heritage Areas were published on a non-

statutory basis in 1995, because of their important for wildlife and habitats, but have not been statutorily proposed or designated. These are sites that are of national importance and support a range of habitats, plant and animal species and in some cases, geological features. There are 15 NHAs in County Mayo. The Plan provides protection for these sites.

10.4.3 Non-Designated Sites

There are many sites throughout the county that host important plant and animal species or their habitats (including Annex I habitats, Annex I birds and Annex II and IV species) which are not designated as a SPA, a (c)SAC or a (p)NHA but their ecological value is of high importance. Wildlife heritage and biodiversity is not confined to statutorily designated sites and is found throughout the countryside and within our towns and villages. The promotion of biodiversity has become increasingly important over recent years. Of particular importance is the protection of wildlife corridors and steppingstones, including those covered by Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, which provide for the easy movement of wildlife, which is essential to allow them to commute from one area to another for breeding, hibernation, in search of food etc. They are also essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.

All bat species and their breeding and resting places (roosts) are legally protected in Ireland under the Wildlife Acts 1976-2000. Bats are also protected as 'strictly protected species under Annex IV (Habitats Directive) species of flora and fauna, which also protects their key habitats (i.e. breeding sites and resting places), wherever they occur. It is particularly critical that wildlife corridors, tree lines and hedgerows within the area of Lesser Horseshoe Bat roosts are retained to allow for the free movement of these bats and other species within and through the surrounding area. It is the policy of Mayo County Council that necessary steps be taken, as a matter of urgency, to secure the safety of the 740 lesser horseshoe bats currently resident in Moorehall.

The County has a wealth of biodiversity; however, modern day development and infrastructure requirements have led to fragmentation of habitats and commuting corridors, which have had a negative impact on biodiversity. Road networks, large industrial, retail and residential development have contributed to fragmentation of habitats, loss of species and a weakening of the green infrastructure network. It is important to ensure that existing habitats are maintained by incorporating natural features such as trees, hedgerows, woodlands and watercourses into development proposals to prevent biodiversity loss and contribute to a sense of place, where possible.

Biodiversity, Designated and Non-Designated Sites Policies

NEP 1	To support the protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural heritage and biodiversity of County Mayo, including the protection of the integrity of European sites, that form part of the Natura 2000 network, the protection of Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas Ramsar Sites, Nature Reserves and Wild Fowl Sanctuaries (and other designated sites including any future designations).
NEP 2	To protect and enhance the county's natural heritage and biodiversity by supporting the implementation of the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021, the National Pollination Plan 2015-2020 and County Mayo Biodiversity Plan 2015- 2020 and any future editions, in partnership with relevant stakeholders, subject to available resources.

NEP 3	To protect and enhance the county's natural heritage and biodiversity through supporting the implementation, in partnership with the County Mayo Heritage Forum, relevant stakeholders and the community, of the objectives and associated actions in the County Mayo Heritage Plan and future editions thereof, which relate to the remit and functions of Mayo County Council.
NEP 4	To conserve and enhance the county's biodiversity and ecological connectivity, identified areas of local biodiversity importance (Local Biodiversity Areas) in the towns and villages in Mayo.
NEP 5	To promote and support increased public participation in biodiversity conservation by supporting and encouraging community-led initiatives.
NEP 6	To support the maintenance of geological and geomorphological heritage values of County Geological Sites and through consultation with the Geological Survey of Ireland and seek to promote access to such sites, where possible.
NEP 7	To encourage the effective management of native and semi-natural woodlands, groups of trees and individual trees in the discharge of development management functions.

Biodiversity, Designated and Non-Designated Sites Objectives

NEO 1	To review the County Mayo Heritage Plan and County Mayo Biodiversity Plan, as appropriate.
NEO 2	To create a Wetlands Database for County Mayo of known and potential wetland sites in the county and to develop a corresponding GIS dataset as an important tool for future biodiversity and natural heritage conservation planning in Mayo.
NEO 3	To ensure the unique ecological, scenic, recreational and environmental character of the Wild Nephin Ballycroy National Park is protected and enhanced and developed appropriately.
NEO 4	To protect and enhance biodiversity and ecological connectivity in County Mayo, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, semi-natural grasslands, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, stonewalls, geological and geo-morphological systems, other landscape features and associated wildlife, where these form part of the ecological network.
NEO 5	To actively increase awareness of the importance of the natural heritage of the county and to promote education, knowledge and pride in our natural heritage.
NEO 6	To protect surface waters, aquatic and wetland habitats and freshwater and water-dependent species through the implementation of all appropriate and relevant Directives and transposed legislation and seek to protect and conserve the quality, character and features of inland waterways by controlling developments close to navigable and non-navigable waterways.
NEO 7	To seek the protection of the riparian zones of watercourses throughout the county, recognising the benefits they provide in relation to flood risk management, their protection of the ecological integrity of watercourse systems and the role they play in the enhancement of the county's natural heritage and biodiversity
NEO 8	To maintain, protect and where possible enhance the natural heritage and biodiversity of bogs, fens and turloughs, where appropriate, in County Mayo.

NEO 9	Recognise the importance, in terms of their natural heritage and biodiversity, of woodlands, tree lines, hedgerows, stonewalls, watercourses and associated riparian vegetation and the role they play in supporting bat populations and where possible developments will be encouraged to retain such features
NEO 10	To install nest boxes in all new and existing Municipal buildings, as appropriate, and in consultation with Birdwatch Ireland, Swift Conservation Ireland.
NEO 11	To ensure that the impact of development within or adjacent to national designated sites, Natural Heritage Areas, Ramsar Sites and Nature Reserves likely to result in significant adverse effects on the designated site is assessed by requiring the submission of an Ecological Impact Assessment report (EclA), Environmental Report (ER), an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), if deemed necessary, and/or a Natura Impact Assessment (NIS), if deemed necessary, prepared by a suitably qualified professional, which should accompany planning applications.
NEO 12	To support the Joyce Country and Western Lakes Geopark's aim of establishing a new UNESCO Global Geopark in the South Mayo and North Connemara area of County Galway.
NEO 13	To ensure the protection of trees or groups of trees protected under Tree Preservation Orders, as well as recognise the value and encourage the retention and management of other trees and woodlands, which make a valuable contribution to the character of the landscape, ecological corridors, green infrastructure, a settlement or its setting.
NEO 14	To protect and enhance the ecological network throughout the county to improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.
NEO 15	To create a database of the Local Biodiversity Areas and ecological networks (including green infrastructure) and develop a corresponding Geological Survey of Ireland dataset as an important tool for future biodiversity and natural heritage conservation planning in Mayo.

10.4.4 Invasive Species

Invasive species are species that have been introduced (either accidentally or intentionally) by humans, to areas outside their normal habitat range. Invasive species represents the second biggest threat to biodiversity globally. Once such species become established, they can spread quickly and the economic and environmental costs of controlling and eradicating them can be considerable. Some of the most well-known invasive species include Grey Squirrel, Rhododendron, Giant Hogweed and Japanese Knotweed to name but a few. Japanese Knotweed in particular can grow through concrete and tarmac and therefore can cause substantial damage to the built environment. Preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species is even more important with respect to European Designated sites.

Invasive Species Policy

NEP 8	To support measures for the prevention and/or eradication of invasive species as appropriate within the county.
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Invasive Species Objective

NEO 16	To ensure that where the presence of invasive species is identified at the site of any proposed development or where the proposed activity has an elevated risk of resulting in the presence of these species, details of how these species will be appropriately managed and controlled will be required.
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10.4.5 Peatlands

Peatland is a wetland terrain dominated by living peat-forming plants. Fens and bogs are both types of peatlands; the bogs are situated higher than the surrounding landscapes and obtain their water from rainfall, while fens are located on slopes, flats, or depressions and their water derives from rainfall and surface water. Peatlands account for approximately 38% of land cover in Mayo. In their natural, wet, state peatlands provide vital ecosystem services. They also regulate water flows, helping to minimise the risk of flooding. Large amounts of carbon, fixed from the atmosphere into plant tissues through photosynthesis are locked away in peat soils, representing a valuable global carbon store. Peatlands are highly significant to global efforts to combat climate change, as well as wider sustainable development goals. The protection and restoration of peatlands is vital in the transition towards a low-carbon and circular economy.

A lack of awareness of the benefits of peatlands means that they have been severely overexploited and damaged as a result of actions, including drainage, agricultural conversion, burning for fuel, among others. Peatland drainage has released huge amounts of greenhouse gases from the carbon stored within peat soils and has reduced the quality of drinking water due to pollution from dissolved compounds. Damage to peatlands also results in biodiversity loss. The National Peatlands Strategy provides a long-term framework within which, all peatlands in the State can be managed responsibly in order to optimise their social, environmental and economic contribution to the well-being of this and future generations. Mayo County Council will develop and implement a Peatland Management Strategy for County Mayo over the lifetime of the Plan, as part of Climate Ready Mayo, Climate Adaption Strategy.

Invasive Species Policy

NEP 9	To enhance the county's natural heritage and biodiversity through supporting the protection and restoration of peatlands in County Mayo, where appropriate, in order to transition towards a low-carbon and circular economy.
NEP 10	To recognise the role of peatlands as carbon sinks to combat climate change and ensure that peatland areas, including those designated or proposed for designation (pNHA, NHA or SAC), are conserved for their ecological, climate regulation, archaeological, cultural and educational significance.

Invasive Species Objective

	As part of the implementation of Climate Ready Mayo, Climate Adaption Strategy, to develop and implement a Peatland Management Strategy for County Mayo that will:
NEO 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To identify damaged Peatlands in the county and those at risk from climate change and becoming carbon emitters. b. To initiate conservation and management of Mayo's peatlands, particularly those sites nominated for designation as Special Areas of Conservation and Natural Heritage Areas, to preserve the habitat and their unique ecosystems, managing flood risk and other environmental benefits.
NEO 19	To actively increase public awareness of the importance of peatlands as carbon sinks to combat climate change.

10.4.6 Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure is the network of green spaces, habitats and ecosystems within a defined geographic area, which can range in size from an entire country to a neighbourhood. Green Infrastructure encompasses wild, semi natural and developed environments, from upland bog and wetlands to urban parks and canals. Green infrastructure provides a wide range of invaluable ecosystem services and human quality of life benefits including:

- Biodiversity management and enhancement.
- Water management including drainage and flood attenuation, filtration and pollution control.
- Recreation and tourism.
- Visual amenity and sense of place.
- Sustainable mobility.
- Food, timber and other primary production.
- Regulation of micro-climates (green lung) and potentially, climate change adaptation.

Green infrastructure, along with blue (water) infrastructure, provides economic, educational, ecological and social benefits through natural solutions and helps us to understand the advantages that nature can offer to society. It is vital to allow for nature, biodiversity and natural systems to grow and there is need to plan for its protection and creation within the county.

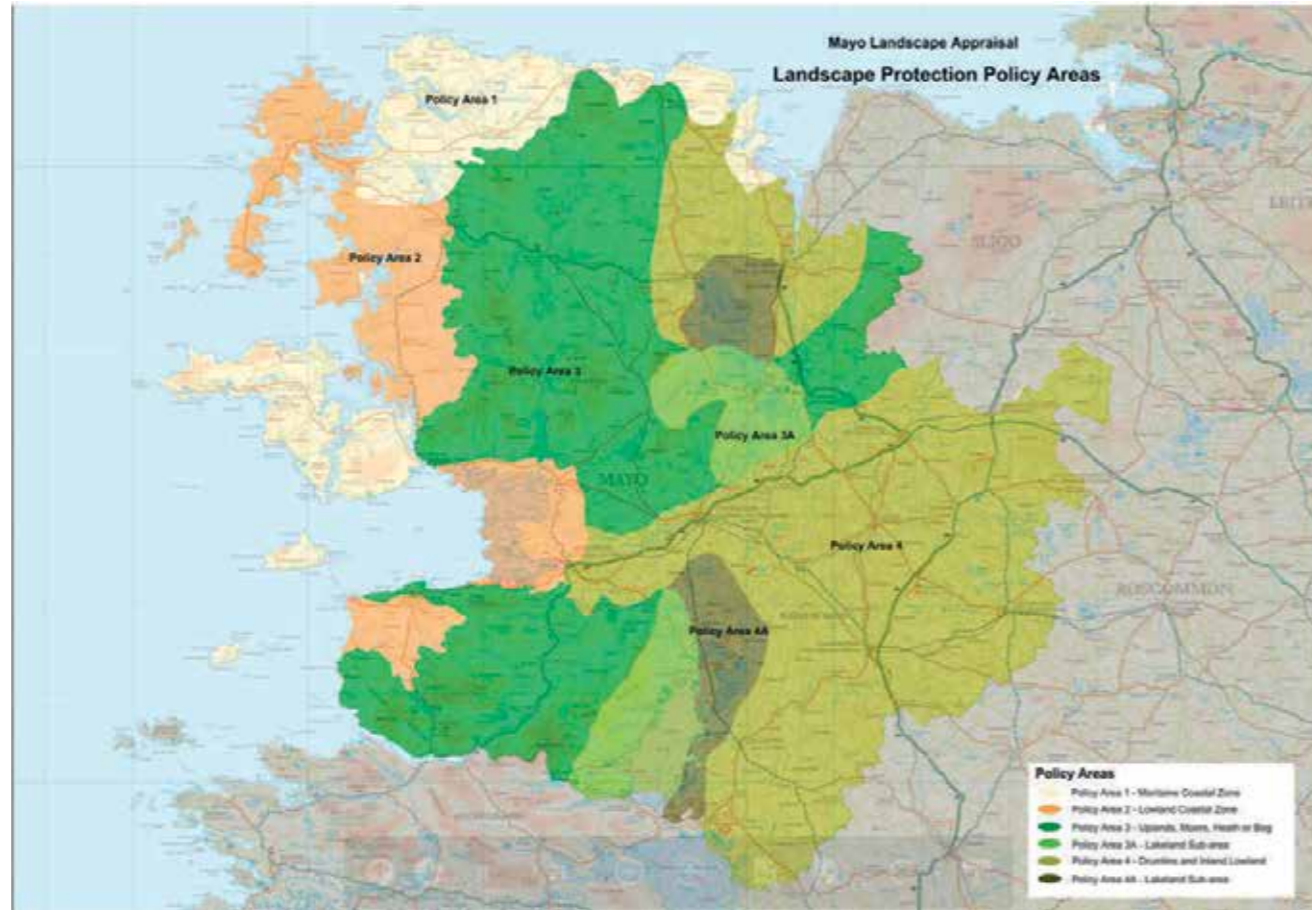
The Green Infrastructure network supports native plant and animal species and provides corridors for their movement. It maintains natural ecological processes and biodiversity, sustains air and water quality and provides vital amenity and recreational spaces for communities, thereby contributing to the health and quality of life of residents and visitors to the county. The Council's approach to Green infrastructure is one that seeks to conserve and enhance biodiversity and geological heritage and to promote the sustainable management of the landscape and coast.

Green and Blue Infrastructure Policies

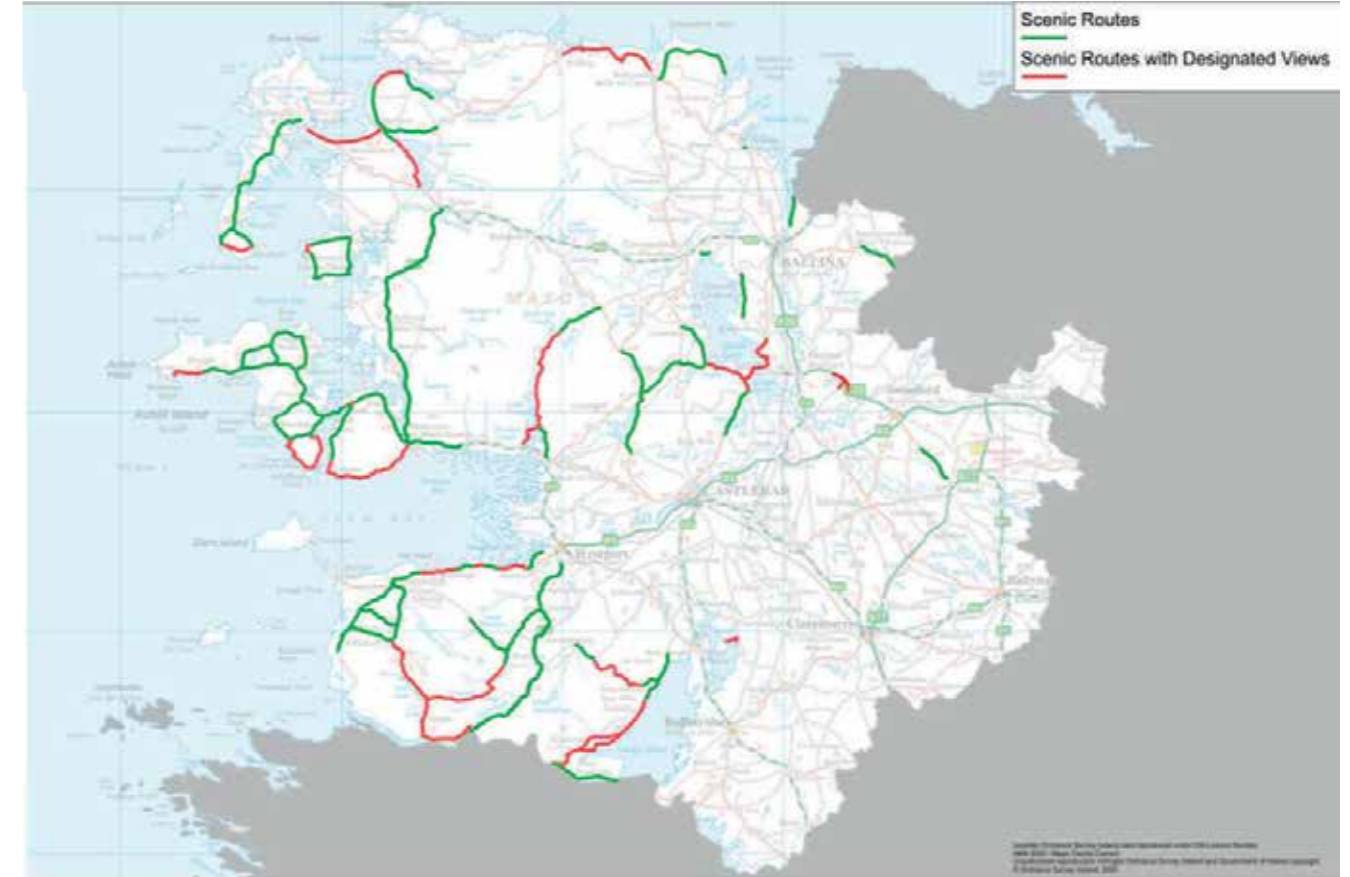
NEP 11	To recognise the economic, social, environmental and physical value of green infrastructure.
NEP 12	To seek to protect and expand the green infrastructure network within the county, where possible, and to encourage green infrastructure to be spatially connected to facilitate the extension or establishment of ecological corridors.
NEP 13	To promote and enhance green and blue infrastructure and seek to integrate the provision of green infrastructure with infrastructure provision and replacement, including walking and cycling routes, as appropriate, while protecting and enhancing natural heritage and improving ecological corridors.

Green and Blue Infrastructure Objectives

NEO 20	To prepare a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for the County over the plan period, which will be incorporated into local area plans and non-statutory plans.
NEO 21	To identify green and blue infrastructure and sustainable design that supports biodiversity and natural systems to adapt to climate change, contribute to climate adaptation in the built and natural environment and provide co benefits.
NEO 22	To ensure the design and construction of new developments creates low carbon, walkable neighbourhoods and workplaces, while providing for high quality green infrastructure based on green space principles (see BEO 22 of Chapter 9), where appropriate.
NEO 23	To protect open spaces, with multifunctional green and blue infrastructure in developments, with connections to the wider network of open spaces and habitats.
NEO 24	To protect and enhance the county's floodplains and wetlands as '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, subject to normal planning and environmental criteria.



Map 10.1 Landscape Policy Areas



Map 10.2 Scenic Routes and Views

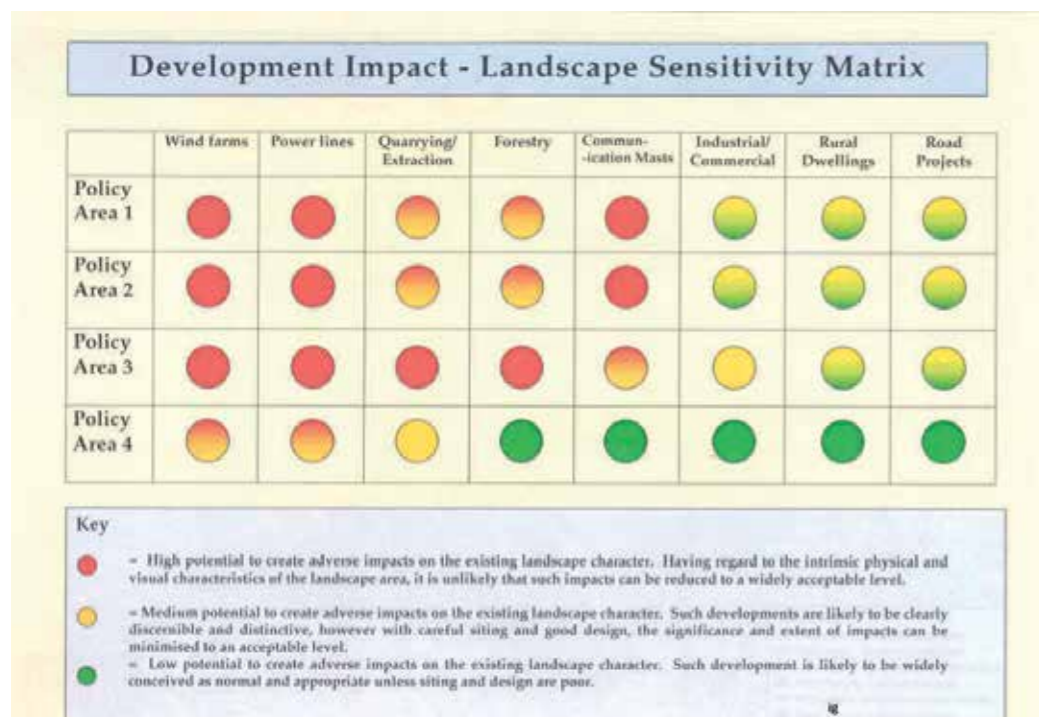


Figure 10.1 Landscape Sensitivity Matrix

10.4.7 Landscape

Mayo has a varied and unique landscape. It includes a diversity of landscape types, ranging from rolling hills and lakes to peatlands, grasslands, woodlands, eskers and wetlands. The range of different landscapes found in Mayo each have varying visual and amenity values, topography, exposure and contain a variety of habitats. Each landscape type also has varying capacity to absorb development relative to its overall sensitivity. The landscape in County Mayo contains views and prospects worthy of protection.

All aspects of our natural, built, and cultural heritage come together in the landscapes we experience every day. The coastal and countryside landscapes of County Mayo are a key green and blue infrastructural asset, not only for their intrinsic value as places of natural beauty but also because of their importance in terms of recreation, tourism and other uses. It is recognised that our landscape contains key assets in sustaining a high quality of life for the residents of the county and an important sustainable tourism resource. The protection and management of the county's natural environment is a shared responsibility. Derived from our landscape are several amenities such as walkways, cycle ways, bathing areas, boating areas, fishing rivers and lakes, etc. and many of our valuable assets, such as Croagh Patrick, Westport House, Ballycroy National Park, Turlough House, Ballintubber Abbey, Céide Fields, Knock Shrine, Mayo Dark Skies, Great Western Greenway, Moy River, Tochar Phadraig, Atlantic Drive, Blue Flag Beaches and Islands.

The Landscape Appraisal for County Mayo identifies and describes the landscape character of each part of the County (Landscape Character Areas) and Scenic Routes and Views). The county is divided into six policy areas (see Map 10.1), relating to landscape protection and capacity to absorb development. The Landscape Appraisal includes a Landscape Sensitivity Matrix (see Map 10.2) that provides a general indication of the likelihood of success of planning applications for each development type, in each policy area. The Landscape Appraisal for County Mayo will be reviewed over the lifetime of the Plan following publication of the statutory guidelines for Planning Authorities on local Landscape Character Assessments, as detailed in the National Landscape Strategy 2015-2025. In addition, Map 10.2 illustrates the scenic routes and scenic routes with designated views for County Mayo. Mayo County Council seeks to safeguard these routes from inappropriate development, which would detract from the enjoyment of Mayo's outstanding landscape.

Landscape Policy

- NEP 14** To protect, enhance and contribute to the physical, visual and scenic character of County Mayo and to preserve its unique landscape character.

Landscape Objectives

- NEO 25** To consider applications for development, along Mayo's Scenic routes, that can demonstrate a clear need to locate in the area concerned, whilst ensuring that it:
- Does not impinge in any significant way on the character, integrity and distinctiveness of the area.
 - Meets high standards in siting and design.
 - Contributes to and enhances local landscape character.
 - Satisfies all other criteria, with regard to, inter alia, servicing, public safety and environmental considerations.

Rural housing applications along Scenic Routes must comply with the requirements set out in Objective RHO 3 (Chapter 3).

- NEO 26** To consider applications for development, within Mayo's Coastal Areas and Lakeshores and within areas along scenic routes with designated scenic views, that can demonstrate a long-standing social link to the area concerned, whilst ensuring that it:
- Does not impinge in any significant way on the character, integrity and distinctiveness of the area.
 - Cannot be considered at an alternative location.
 - Meets high standards in siting and design.
 - Contributes to and enhances local landscape character.
 - Satisfies all other criteria, with regard to, inter alia, servicing, public safety and environmental considerations.

Rural housing applications along Coastal Areas and Lakeshores must comply with the requirements set out in Objective RHO 4 (Chapter 3).

- NEO 27** To ensure all development proposals are consistent with the Landscape Appraisal of County Mayo and the associated Landscape Sensitivity Matrix and future editions thereof.
- NEO 28** To review the Landscape Appraisal for Mayo and update this plan, as appropriate, following publication of the statutory guidelines for Planning Authorities on Local Landscape Character Assessments, as detailed in the National Landscape Strategy 2015-2025 and ensure consistency with the provisions of RPO 4.16 and RPO 5.2(b) of the RSES, 2020-2032.
- NEO 29** Require a Landscape/Visual Impact Assessment to accompany significant proposals, located within or adjacent to sensitive landscapes, where appropriate.

10.4.8 Coastal Zone

County Mayo has an extensive and varied coastline, which is one of the most valuable and sensitive natural resources in the county. Stretching over 1,150km or approximately 21% of the total coastline of the State, Mayo has the longest coastline in Ireland. The county's coastal areas are home to a range of habitats and ecosystem services, whilst also having significant aesthetic, leisure and economic value. Mayo's coastal ecosystems are highly productive containing high biological diversity, rich fishery resources and significant seabed minerals. The majority of Mayo's coastal waters are ecologically protected and form part of the Natura 2000 network of European Sites. Coastal areas also form attractive and traditional settlement forms and are home to many communities in the county.

Coastal areas are also among the most vulnerable areas to climate change and natural hazards. The impact of climate change on Mayo's coastline is already evident, and further increases in relative sea levels, indicate that coastal areas will be increasingly susceptible to permanent inundation and erosion. These impacts are far reaching and are already changing the lives and livelihoods of coastal communities. In order to effectively adapt to climate change in coastal areas in Mayo, a high level of understanding of the coastal system is required, supported by effective monitoring of vulnerable locations, identifying where and when remedial action is necessary. An integrated coastal management approach is also warranted, to enhance the protection of coastal resources, whilst increasing the efficiency of their uses. This will contribute to the sustainable development of coastal zones by the application of an approach that respects the limits of natural resources and ecosystems, known as the 'ecosystem-based approach'.

The National Marine Planning Framework will provide for an integrated marine planning system for more sustainable, effective management of marine activities, such as nature protection, aquaculture, fisheries, agriculture, industry, offshore wind energy, shipping, tourism, development of infrastructure and mitigation and adaptation to climate change. In Ireland, the forthcoming National Marine Planning Framework provides for an integrated marine planning system for more sustainable, effective management of marine activities.

Coastal Zone Policies

NEP 15	To protect the character, visual, recreational, ecological and amenity value of the coast and provisions for public access, while recognising the needs of coastal communities to live, work and interact with the coast.
NEP 16	To maintain and enhance our natural coastal defences to increase resilience to climate change.

Coastal Zone Objectives

NEO 30	To ensure that the county's natural coastal defences, such as beaches, sand dunes, coastal wetlands and estuaries are not compromised by inappropriate works or development.
NEO 31	To ensure that any conservation works on coastal dune systems shall be carried out in accordance with best practice, subject to ecological impact assessment and Appropriate Assessment, as appropriate
NEO 32	To investigate how the county's natural coastal defences can be enhanced to increase the climate resilience of our coastal communities.
NEO 33	To ensure any new development within areas liable to coastal flooding are assessed and developed in accordance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Office of Public Works, 2009) (as updated).
NEO 34	To protect the coastal zone through the protection, enhancement and maintenance of the current status of the designated Blue Flag beaches and Green Coasts and seek to increase the number of beaches and coasts holding this status in the future
NEO 35	As part of the implementation of Climate Ready Mayo, Climate Adaption Strategy, develop in consultation with key stakeholders, an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan for County Mayo to preserve, enhance and develop protected habitats of coastal ecosystems, dunes and wetlands, as well as protect critical infrastructure and assets from damaging storm surges.
NEO 36	Ensure new developments take account of future risk from coastal erosion/storm surges and sea level rise, including the identification and restriction of development in coastal erosion zones where appropriate, and ecosystem-based adaptation actions to manage climate risk and build resilience to climate change.

10.4.9 Water Quality

Water quality is a key issue that affects us all and its protection is the responsibility of all sections of society. Ensuring that our local natural water bodies are clean and well protected is critically important to our health and wellbeing. A healthy catchment provides high quality drinking water and supports local livelihoods such as agriculture, food production, tourism and water based recreational activities (walking, swimming, angling and water sports). It also sustains and supports water-dependent ecosystems (plants, animals, fish and insects) that depend on clean, healthy waters to survive.

The quality of all waters in County Mayo, including surface waters (rivers and lakes), estuarine and coastal waters and groundwater, represents an important ecological, recreational, economic, public health and aesthetic resource for the county. The quality of water can be easily damaged and is difficult to restore, leading to often widespread and long-term effects. Mayo County Council has responsibility for the protection of all waters in the county. The Council has an important role to play in the protection, maintenance and improvement of water quality through the planning and management of future development.

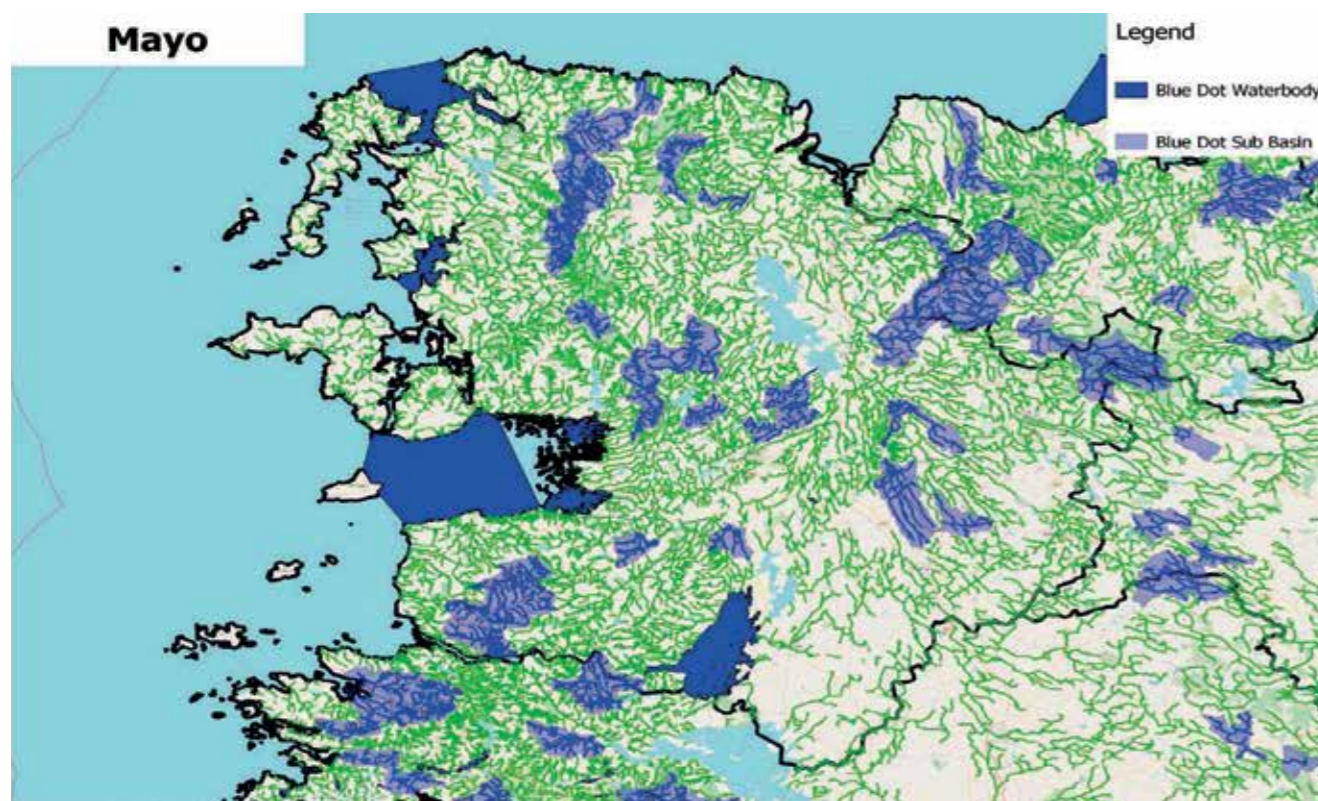
10.4.9.1 Water Framework Directive

The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) is an important piece of environmental legislation, which aims to improve our water quality. It applies to rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuaries and coastal waters. The WFD requires the preparation of River Basin Management Plans by Member States across three river basin planning cycles (2009-2015, 2016-2021 and 2022-2027) during which management

measures must be implemented, to achieve good ecological status in all waters. Achieving good water quality, through the programme of measures, will also contribute to protecting human health by improving the quality of drinking water sources and bathing waters. The WFD is linked to several other EU directives in numerous ways. These include directives relating to the protection of biodiversity (Birds and Habitats Directives), directives related to specific uses of waters (drinking water, bathing waters and urban wastewater directives) and to directives concerned with the regulation of activities undertaken in the environment (Industrial Emissions and Environmental Impact Assessment directives). The Nitrates Directive forms an integral part of the WFD and is one of the key instruments in the protection of waters against agricultural pressures.

10.4.9.2 Blue Dot Catchments Programme

The 'Blue Dot Catchments Programme' is a key action under the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021. The aim of the 'Blue Dot' programme is to protect and restore high ecological status to a network of river and lake catchments. Map 10.3 below illustrates the Blue Dot high-status waterbodies and sub-basins in County Mayo. The Council will take a precautionary approach to development which impacts on water quality, and particularly High-Status waters, in keeping with the protection objective of the WFD.



Map 10.3: Blue Dot High-Status Waterbodies and Sub-basins in County Mayo

10.4.9.3 Drinking Water Protected Areas

The WFD requires the identification of Drinking Water Protected Areas. These are reservoirs, lakes, rivers and the groundwater bodies from which water is abstracted to provide water for people to drink. The Council will seek to protect both ground and surface water resources and will work with Irish Water to develop and implement Drinking Water Safety Plans to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchment. Mayo County Council will also work with the National Federation of Group Water Schemes in respect of Source Protection Plans for Group Water Schemes to protect these sources.

Groundwater Protection Scheme and Source Protection Zones

The Geological Survey of Ireland has completed a Groundwater Protection Scheme for County Mayo. The overall aim of this scheme is to preserve the quality of groundwater, particularly for drinking purposes, for the benefit of present and future generations. A key component of the Groundwater Protection Scheme is Source Protection Zones (SPZs), which are delineated around groundwater sources to provide protection, by placing tighter controls on activities within those areas. SPZs are derived by integrating source protection areas (areas surrounding individual groundwater sources) and vulnerability categories.

The Council will take a precautionary approach to development in Source Protection Zones. Development proposals which pose a potential risk to groundwater within these zones will be required to demonstrate that no reasonable alternative site is available, and that groundwater quality will be protected to the satisfaction of the Council.

Water Quality Policies

NEP 17	To promote public awareness of water quality issues and the measures required to protect surface water, coastal and transitional waters and groundwater bodies from inappropriate and damaging development.
NEP 18	To co-operate with the EPA and other authorities in the continued implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive.
NEP 19	To protect existing groundwater sources and aquifers in the county and to manage development in a manner consistent with the protection of these resources.
NEP 20	To meet our targets to achieve 'good status' in all water bodies in compliance with the Water Framework Directive and to cooperate with the implementation of the National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021, and subsequent plans.
NEP 21	To manage, protect and enhance surface water and ground water quality to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.
NEP 22	To encourage the use of catchment-sensitive farming practices, in order to meet Water Framework Directive targets and comply with the River Basin Management Plan.
NEP 23	To promote the construction of Anaerobic Digesters at appropriate location in Mayo with a view to improving water quality while at the same time making a significant contribution to National Renewable Energy targets.

Water Quality Objectives

NEO 37	To ensure that the Water Framework Directive, the River Basin Management Plan and any subsequent Water Management Plans are fully considered throughout the planning process.
NEO 38	To ensure, through the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan(s) and the associated Programmes of Measures and any other associated legislation or revised plans, with all relevant stakeholders, the protection and improvement of all drinking waters, surface water, coastal and transitional waters and ground waters throughout the county.
NEO 39	To manage in a sustainable manner, the existing groundwater sources and aquifers in the county and manage development in a manner consistent with the sustainable management of these resources, in conformity with the EU Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 and the second cycle National River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021, and any subsequent plans and the Groundwater Protection Scheme.
NEO 40	To protect groundwater sources through the implementation of the Groundwater Protection Scheme and Source Protection Zones. Development proposals within these zones which have the potential to pose a risk to groundwater will be required to demonstrate that no reasonable alternative site is available, and that groundwater quality will be protected to the satisfaction of the Council.

NEO 41	To protect both ground and surface water resources and to work with Irish Water to develop and implement Drinking Water Safety Plans, to protect sources of public water supply and their contributing catchment, and to work with the National Federation of Group Water Schemes, in respect of Source Protection Plans for Group Water Schemes to protect these sources.
NEO 42	To comply with the Blue Dot Catchments Programme and protect and restore high status water bodies in County Mayo and ensure all proposed development which may have an impact on a high-status water quality site will require site specific assessment to determine localised pressures and demonstrate suitable mitigation measures, in order to protect these sites.
NEO 43	To protect through its regulatory controls and in conjunction with the Local Authority Waters Programme, water bodies with 'high ecological status', to restore water bodies that have fallen below 'high ecological status', to maintain water bodies at 'Good Status' and to mitigate threats to water bodies identified as 'At Risk' i.e. 'Moderate and Poor Status'.

10.4.10 Air Quality, Noise and Light Emissions

Ireland benefits from prevailing weather patterns which typically brings relatively clean, south- westerly Atlantic air over the country. Under certain conditions, typical weather patterns can be disrupted and pollutant emissions can build up in the air. These conditions can occur at any time of the year, but the impact on air quality can be particularly severe during winter, when the combination of cold still weather, increased emissions associated with a higher heating demand, particularly from solid fuels, can lead to high concentrations of pollutants with a consequent increased risk to human health. Poor air quality is a major health risk for vulnerable people and also impacts the environment, affecting the quality of fresh water, soil, and ecosystems. Air pollution can also damage materials and buildings and some air pollutants behave like greenhouse gases that cause climate change. Therefore, good air quality is a benefit for human health, the built and natural environment and to combat climate change.

Noise pollution can occur in various locations, such as building sites, heavily trafficked roads, industrial sites, etc, all of which can have significant impacts on the environment and on the quality of life of individuals, residential areas and communities in the vicinity.

It is recognised that adequate lighting is necessary to ensure a safe and secure environment, however, both urban and rural settings are affected by light pollution. Light spillage from inadequately designed lighting is increasingly recognised as a potential nuisance to nearby properties and a threat to wildlife and their habitats, particularly in relation to European sites. It can also be a waste of energy and can reduce the visibility of the night sky, which would be detrimental to the enjoyment and sustainability of the Mayo International Dark Sky Park, located in the Wild Nephin Ballycroy National Park. The Plan encourages the use of Dark Sky Friendly lighting for all new lighting and lighting upgrades.

Water Quality Policies	
NEP 24	To support and facilitate the implementation of the Air Quality Regulations.
NEP 25	To promote the implementation of the Noise Directive 2002/49/EC and associated Environmental Noise Regulations 2006, as amended.
Water Quality Objectives	
NEO 44	Promote the achievement of best ambient air quality, compatible with sustainable development, in accordance with the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/50/EC) and by ensuring that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as set out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 2011) (or any updated/ superseding documents).
NEO 45	To raise awareness of artificial light pollution and identify where lighting improvements or adjustments can be made to reduce its impact, where appropriate.
NEO 46	To protect the Mayo Dark Sky Park at Wild Nephin Ballycroy National Park and any adjoining sites that form part of the designated network, from adverse levels of artificial light pollution and encourage the use of Dark Sky Friendly lighting for all new lighting and lighting upgrades.

CHAPTER 10
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

11

CLIMATE ACTION & RENEWABLE ENERGY





Chapter 11 Climate Action & Renewable Energy

11.1 Strategic Aim

The strategic aim of this chapter is to transition to a low carbon and climate resilient county, with an emphasis on reduction in energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions, through a combination of effective mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change; in addition to maximising the opportunities to become a national leader in renewable energy generation, whilst increasing the resilience of our Natural and Cultural Capital to climate change by planning and implementing appropriate adaptation measures.

Related UN Sustainable Development Goals



Related NPF National Strategic Outcomes



Related RSES Regional Growth Ambitions



11.2 Introduction

This chapter has been guided by the strategic aim, sustainable development goals, national strategic objectives and regional growth ambitions to ensure a low carbon, climate resilient and renewably energised Mayo. The chapter has also considered the key legislative and policy documents set out in Appendix III, including the NPF and RSES for the Northern and Western region.

11.3 National and Regional Planning Position

The National Policy Position on Climate Action and Low Carbon Development establishes the national objective of achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. In order to achieve this objective, the NPF identifies planning as an established means to implement and integrate climate action at regional and local level. In response, the RSES pursues regional growth ambitions, which will help the Northern and Western region develop sustainably towards a low carbon and climate resilient future. The NPF and RSES seeks to ensure a reduction in our carbon footprint, through the delivery of sustainable, land use patterns, sustainable transportation initiatives, protection and enhancement of the green network and enhancement of biodiversity, approach to conservation, promotion of renewable energy technologies and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.

The NPF and RSES acknowledge that our international, European and national climate change commitments mean that power generation, transport and heat, increasingly have to be produced from sustainably produced electricity. Therefore, the NPF and RSES places a strong emphasis on the need for new energy systems and transmission grids. This is in order to facilitate increased renewables-focused energy generation systems, harnessing both the considerable on-shore and off-shore potential from energy sources such as wind, wave and solar and connecting the richest sources of that energy to the major sources of demand. The RSES seeks to identify renewable energy sites of scale in the region to help meet Ireland's renewable energy targets. The RSES acknowledges the renewable wave energy potential from the Atlantic Marine Energy Test Site (AMETS) located off Annagh Head, west of Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet). The test site is an integral component of Ireland's Ocean Energy Strategy and is being developed in accordance with the national Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPA).

11.4 International and European Policy Position

Ireland is a party to both the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol, which together provide a legal framework for addressing climate change. In December 2015 Ireland, as part of the European Union (EU), was a signatory to the Paris Agreement, which aims to restrict global temperature rise to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C. A key European objective is to reduce greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions by 80-95% by 2050 compared to 1990 levels. In March 2007, the European Council adopted an objective to reduce GHG emissions by 20% by 2020, compared to 1990 levels. Under the Climate Policy Framework for 2020 to 2030, the EU agreed to further reduce GHG by at least 40% by 2030, as compared with 1990.

11.5 National Policy Position

The Government declared a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency in May 2019, only the second country in the world to pass such a declaration. Ireland's national transition objective, as defined in the National Policy Position and the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, is to transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. The National Policy Position recognises the importance of reducing carbon dioxide emissions that will continue to warm the planet long into the future and adversely impact on humanity. In terms of mitigation, it has two components. The first aims to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide in three key sectors - electricity generation, the built environment and transport - by 80% by 2050, relative to 1990 levels. The second is related to agriculture, land use and forestry. It identifies 'an approach to carbon neutrality' without compromising sustainable food production as its primary objective. The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 also contains a number of legal obligations, including the preparation of National Mitigation Plans (NMP), a National Adaptation Framework (NAF) and Annual Transition Statements (ATS).

11.6 Climate Action

11.6.1 Mayo Context

Mayo County Council recognises that climate change is one of the greatest global challenges and that continual action is needed for Mayo to become a low carbon and climate resilient county. The Council has been proactive in climate action measures in the county to date. Mayo County Council were the first local authority to employ a Climate Action Officer and host to the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) for the Atlantic Seaboard North Region. The Council, along with all 34 local authorities, has signed the Climate Action Charter committing to build climate resilience into every aspect of the work we do. The Climate Action Charter, a key measure in the Climate Action Plan (2019), commits the Council to deliver a 50% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030. The Charter requires local authorities to put in place a process for carbon-proofing major decisions, programmes and projects, including investments in transport and energy, as well as in procurement. Going forward, Mayo County Council intend to establish a carbon emissions baseline for the county over the lifetime of the plan, to help the county measure the effectiveness of the county development plan in lowering carbon emissions.

11.6.2 Climate Change

Climate change can result from natural processes and factors and more recently due to human activities, through emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG). For the past 200 years, the burning of fossil fuels, such as coal and oil and deforestation have caused the concentrations of heat-trapping greenhouse gases to increase significantly in the atmosphere. Global average temperatures have increased by almost 1°C since preindustrial times, causing changes to the climate system. The impacts of climate change are diverse and wide ranging. In Ireland, predicted impacts include sea level rise; more intense storms and rainfall; increased likelihood and magnitude of river and coastal flooding; water shortages in summer; increased risk of new pests and diseases; adverse impacts on water quality; and changes in distribution and time of lifecycle events of plant and animal species on land and in the oceans. International, European and national measures and targets have been introduced

with the aim of improving adaptation to the adverse impacts of climate change, fostering climate resilience and supporting low GHG emissions development.

11.6.3 Integrating Climate Action into the County Development Plan

Climate Action is the response to reduce global warming and adjust to the consequences of climate change. Climate Action comprises of climate mitigation and adaptation measures to tackle climate change. Climate Mitigation refers to efforts that will reduce current and future greenhouse gas emissions, including reductions in energy use, switching to renewable energy sources and carbon sinks. Climate adaptation consists of actions that will reduce the impacts that are already happening and those that are projected to happen in the future. These include flood protection, reduced impact of rising sea levels, increased resilience of infrastructure and emergency response planning.

The overall vision and strategic aims of the county development plan have been influenced by climate action. Table 11.1 below demonstrates how climate action provisions have been incorporated into the county development plan. The table lists climate mitigation and adaption policies and objectives included in each chapter.

Climate Action (Mitigation/Adaptation)	
Chapters	Mitigation & Adaptation Policies/Objectives
Chapter 2 Core Strategy & Settlement Strategy	CSP 3 - CSP 4, CSO 1 - CSO 9, SSP 1 - SSP 8, SSO 1 - SSO 10, SSO 12, SSO 14, SSO 15
Chapter 3 Housing	HSP 4, HSP 5, HSO 4, HSO 5, RHP 2, RHP 6, RHP 8, RHO, 7, RHO 8, RHO 9, RHO 10, TVHP 3-7, TVHO 4 -6, TVHO 9, TVHO 10, TVHO 13
Chapter 4 Economic Development	EDP 12, EDP 14, EDP 33, EDP 34, EDO 5, EDO 9, EDO 10 - 16, EDO 22-23, EDO 34, EDO 50, EDO 54, EDO 64, EDO 64- 69
Chapter 5 Tourism and Recreation	TRP 6, TRP 8, TRP 9, TRP 12, TRP 23, TRP 25 - 28, TRO 3, TRO 4, TRO 13 TRO 14-16, TRO 18
Chapter 6 Movement and Transport	MTP 1 - 11, MTO 3 - 17
Chapter 7 Infrastructure	INP 10 - INP15, INO 14 - INO 25, INO 28
Chapter 8 Sustainable Communities	SCP 3, SCP 10, SCO 1, SCO 7, SCO 13, SCO 15
Chapter 9 Built Environment	BEP 1, BEP 3, BEP 4, BEP 5, BEP 6, BEO 1, BEO 2, BEO 3, BEO 4, BEO 5, BEO 6
Chapter 10 Natural Environment	NEP 1 - NEP 5, NEP 9 - NEP 13, NEP 16, NEP 23-24, NEO 2, NEO 4, NEO 6 - NEO 9, NEO, 13, NEO 15 - 33, NEO 43-45
Chapter 11 (Climate Action & Renewable Energy)	CAP 1 - 9, CAO 1 -8, REP 1 - 7, REO 1-23
Chapter 12 (Settlement Plans)	GSP 3, GSP 7, GSP 8, BRP 4, BRP 5, BSP 4, CMP, 3 - 5, SDP 2, CNP 3, KTP 1, NTP 3, NTO 2, RSVP 4-5, RSVP 11, BSO 4, BSO 5, CMO 6, CMO7, CRO 4, FDO 3

Table 11.1 Climate Action Policies and Objectives incorporated into the County Development Plan

11.6.4 Climate Ready Mayo

The National Adaptation Framework (NAF) identifies the critical role to be played by local authorities in addressing climate change adaptation, through the establishment of four Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs). County Mayo is situated in the Atlantic Seaboard North Climate Action Region. The main climatic risks associated with the Atlantic Seaboard North Climate Action Region include fluvial flooding, pluvial flooding, groundwater flooding and coastal flooding.

Mayo County Council has developed its Climate Adaptation Strategy - Climate Ready Mayo (2019). This strategy sets out a vision for a county that will be climate ready, a county that understands how climate change will affect our communities and businesses and a county that works together to reduce the risk and avail of the opportunities that climate change will bring. Climate Ready Mayo sets out the strategic goals, objectives and actions for adaptation in Mayo across five operational themes: governance; critical infrastructure and buildings; natural and cultural capital; water resources and flood management; and community services. The most immediate risks to Mayo are those which are due to changes in extremes such as floods, precipitation, storms and higher sea levels. Sea levels are predicted to rise by 0.55m by 2050.

11.6.4.1 Decarbonising Zone (DZ)

Mayo County Council supports the implementation of the Climate Action Plan (2019). Action 165 requires Decarbonising Zones (DZ) to be identified and developed by all local authorities. A DZ is an area identified by a local authority in a rural or urban context, in which a range of appropriate climate mitigation measures are established to address local low carbon energy, greenhouse gas emissions and climate needs. Energy baselines are established, heat maps are used to identify energy loss and a range of technologies and measures used to mitigate emissions from buildings. These zones may also include a range of local climate adaptation measures, such as climate proofing, green/blue infrastructure, citizen awareness and behavioural change. County Decarbonising Zones are also required to address the wider co-benefits of air quality, improved health, biodiversity, embodied

carbon, agricultural practices, sustainable land management, lower noise levels, waste, water, circular economy, etc. The Council will establish a Decarbonising Zone in Mayo as an exemplar for best practice within the county.

11.6.4.2 Climate Action Checklists

To support local authorities and sectors in performing risk assessments, Climate Ireland in collaboration with the Climate Action Regional Officers propose the development of a Risk Identification and Assessment Tool. This tool is envisioned to be an online portal allowing users to access, view and examine spatial datasets within a risk assessment framework. The development of this portal will assist in the development of a Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Toolkit for local authorities. The toolkit will assist with the implementation of many of the actions in the Mayo Climate Adaptation Strategy.

Mayo County Council will develop and implement a climate change screening checklist and guidance document to ensure new developments take account of climate change over the lifetime of a development, especially with regard to its location, site layout, building, ventilation and cooling, drainage, water, outdoor spaces and connectivity.

11.6.5 Decarbonising Mayo

The Plan examines the following main sectors, which set Ireland on a pathway to decarbonising the economy:

- Electricity Generation
- Built Environment
- Transport
- Agriculture
- Land Use
- Forestry
- Nature Based Solutions

These measures lay the foundations for transitioning Mayo to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050 and are discussed further below.

11.6.5.1 Electricity Generation

The provision of a safe, secure and reliable electricity supply is a critical component necessary to sustain economic growth in Ireland. To this end, Ireland in recent years has been phasing out the use of fossil fuels, such as oil, natural gas, coal and peat to generate electricity, in favour of renewable energy sources. Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030, the Government's White Paper on Energy, sets out a roadmap for a low carbon energy system to 2030. The White Paper acknowledges in the short to medium-term, the mix of non-renewables will shift away from more carbon-intensive fuels, like peat and coal, to lower-carbon fuels like natural gas. The Climate Action Plan (2019) targets that 70% of electricity must come from renewables by 2030. In 2018, 22% of all energy inputs to electricity generation were from renewable sources, whereas coal and peat accounted for 21% of fuel inputs. Mayo County Council will endeavour to play its part in promoting more sustainable renewable electricity generation, which are the multiple forms of renewable energy discussed further in the chapter.

11.6.5.2 Built Environment

The built environment sector includes residential, commercial and public buildings which generate emissions, primarily as a result of energy demand for space and water heating. Energy efficiency in the built environment sector is crucial to decarbonisation. New building regulations in the residential and commercial sectors have led to significant improvements in the efficiency of new building stock and will improve with the uptake of renewables. According to the CSO, 9.1% of domestic Building Energy Rating's (BER) in County Mayo in 2018 were Grade B and above. More stringent building regulations were introduced in 2019, requiring all new buildings to be Near Zero Energy Building (NZEB) and all existing dwellings undergoing major renovations to meet a minimum Building Energy Rating (BER) of B2. These regulations will be progressively extended to improve energy efficiency performance, including phasing out the installation of oil boilers. Increased progress in both energy efficiency upgrades and switching to renewable energy sources will be important to achieve low-carbon transition in this sector.

Mayo County Council has been proactive in reducing emissions, for example the installation of an 84kW solar photovoltaic (PV) array on Aras an Chontae, Castlebar, the largest Local Authority solar PV array in the country. The PV solar panels will provide over 11% of Aras an Chontae's electricity usage and will offset over 30,000kg of CO₂ per year. Other projects include the retrofitting of public lighting to LEDs and installation of Electric Vehicle (EV) charge points in council carparks. The Council is working towards ISO 50001 Energy Management certification, with the aim of establishing systems and processes necessary to improve energy performance, including energy efficiency, use, and consumption.

Greening Built Environments

The greening of built environments can also contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation, by cooling the surrounding area and providing homes for wildlife, as well as ecosystem services. It also boosts property values and adds to the quality of life by filtering the air, reducing noise and creating attractive places where people can live or spend time. The greening of built environments can also help prevent flooding and pollution, damaging wildlife and habitats. The hard surfaces typically created in built environments can contribute to flooding, as rainwater runs off more quickly than from natural land. In relation to a changing climate and more intense storms, it is essential that built environments incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) to reduce the rate of runoff and contribute towards the greening of towns and village throughout the county.

11.6.5.3 Transport

Transport is the second largest emitter of GHG in Ireland, behind agriculture, at 19.8% of the national total emissions in 2018. The transport sector is the biggest contributor of GHG emissions in County Mayo. Economic growth, higher levels of activity, past policies on investment, infrastructure and spatial planning have caused high levels of emissions, air pollution and congestion on roads. Dispersed settlement patterns between where people live and work implicitly increases mobility demand. This has resulted in the long-term trends in Ireland towards more private and motorised transport, which has resulted in the decline in the active modes of travel, such as walking and cycling. To reverse the

current trends, the NPF and RSES advocates reducing the distance between where people live and work, which will reduce commuting distances and GHG emissions. Effective land use management will play a major role, by pursuing sustainable options such as compact growth of urban and rural settlements for housing. Given Mayo is predominantly a rural based county with a dispersed settlement pattern, rural travel initiatives such as Local Link Mayo and renewable powered transport will low GHG emissions from transport.

The Climate Action Plan (2019) seeks to reach 100% ownership of Electric Vehicles (EV) by 2030, therefore achieving the national target of 950,000 EVs on the road in 2030. Mayo County Council purchased its first fleet of fully electric vehicles in 2019 and has provided numerous EV charging points at Council premises to help reduce emissions.

11.6.5.4 Agriculture

The agricultural sector was the highest emitter of GHG in Ireland in 2018 at 33.9%. The increase in GHG's is primarily attributed to an increase in animal stock numbers and the resultant increased levels of methane. In the livestock sector, improved feed and animal management has considerable potential to reduce methane emissions. The agricultural sector also has the potential to absorb emissions through effective land-use management. Semi-natural and managed ecosystems within farms provide for active carbon sequestration and reduction of emissions. A range of adjustment measures can also be undertaken relating to farming practices to combat climate change, for example planting, harvesting

and watering/fertilising existing crops, using different varieties, diversifying crops, and implementing management practices. The long-term challenge for the agriculture sector is to meet the National Policy Position on Climate Action, which sets a national objective to achieve carbon neutrality, without compromising the capacity for sustainable food production.

Mayo County Council's 'A Sustainable Agricultural Strategy for Mayo' provides a roadmap for the future sustainable development of the agriculture industry in Mayo. It sets out a series of actions that will guide the sector, capitalise on its opportunities and overcome the barriers to developing this significant component of the Mayo economy in an environmentally friendly manner.

Furthermore, a greater focus is required on the interactions of agriculture/forestry with climate and potential impacts on biodiversity. Most of the Irish land cover is directly shaped by humans (e.g. pastureland, cropland, forestry) with substantial implications for carbon budgets, climate resilience and biodiversity. In addition, grasslands and forests with a large number of plant species are more productive, capture more carbon and therefore have a higher potential to mitigate against climate change.

11.6.5.5 Nature Based Solutions

The concept of nature-based solutions is one of several concepts that promote the maintenance, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems to combat climate change. Nature-based solutions harness the power of nature to reduce green-house gas emissions. Solutions include but are not limited to the provision/restoration of natural habitat, ecological corridors, increased biodiversity, water treatment and retention, local amenity provision, air quality improvement, cultural and heritage preservation and flood mitigation. Nature-based solutions in towns and villages such as tree canopies, green infrastructure and sustainable urban drainage (SuDS) help to prevent flooding and erosion, regulate temperatures, absorb carbon and filter pollutants from the air.

Some of these important functions and benefits that nature-based solutions provide include:

- Vegetation, particularly trees through photosynthesis which stores carbon as it grows, while it can also reduce air pollution through filtration.
- During storm events with high winds, trees act as a natural barrier to reduce wind speed and provide shelter.
- Plants in wetland areas attenuate, filtrate and purify water.
- Trees and plants reduce water run-off in extreme rain events, taking pressure off the urban drainage system, while also preventing soil erosion.

At local authority level, nature-based solutions and green infrastructure offers an opportunity to develop integrated strategies around economic development, placemaking and rural development. These policies also achieve other social objectives, for example, safe cycling options are beneficial for enhancing human health and the mobility of young people, while local food sourcing can provide an opportunity for the kind of community engagement that the localism and health agendas are seeking to foster. Linking strategic natural assets with cultural and heritage assets further enhances the opportunities for green infrastructure strategies and nature-based solutions to drive recreation and tourism benefits, while building resilience to climate change.

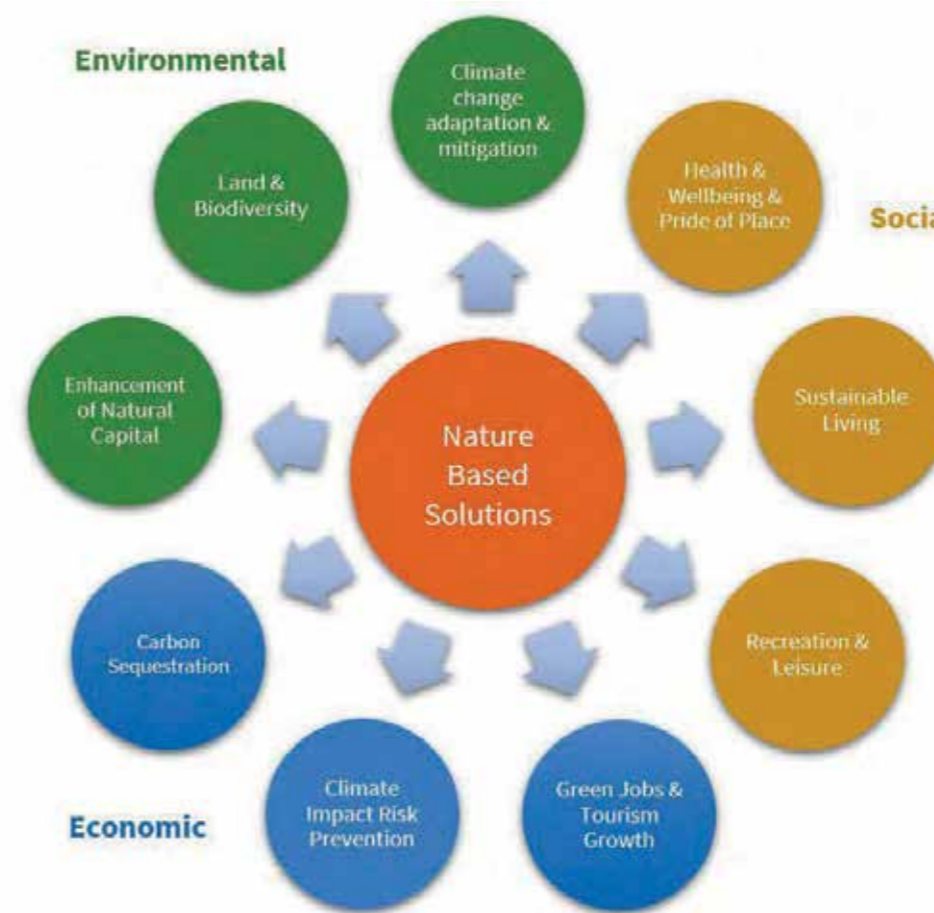


Figure 11.1 Nature Based Solutions

11.6.5.6 Land use

Land use and land-use change contribute substantially to global greenhouse gas emissions; however, they also offer significant potential to reduce emissions. The natural environment plays a crucial role in absorbing and storing carbon. Mayo County Council recognises the significant potential for cutting future emissions of greenhouse gases through maintaining healthy ecosystems and restoring degraded environments. The Council supports the preservation and restoration of degraded land, forests, peatlands, organic soils, wetlands, reduction in conversion of pastureland, improved grassland management, replanting forests and reducing other pressures on nature.

Peatlands and Wetlands

Peatlands and wetlands are not as extensive as forests and grasslands, in terms of land use, but on a per unit-area basis, they hold the greatest volume of carbon and therefore are an important nature-based solution. When peatlands and wetlands are drained and damaged, carbon is realised into the atmosphere. The rewetting and restoration of peatlands and wetlands has the capacity to secure existing carbon stock and reinitiate the carbon sequestration capacity of degraded peatlands. Mayo County Council will prepare a peatlands strategy for County Mayo over the lifetime of the Plan.

Forestry

Forests are probably the most familiar, nature-based solution for climate change and can contribute both by reducing emission sources and increasing carbon sinks. Globally, forestry and soils absorb about 30% of atmospheric carbon emissions, partially through forest productivity and restoration. Forestry offers the greatest amounts of cost-effective mitigation opportunities, comprising of about two thirds of all nature-based climate solutions. The NPF recognises that forestry plays an important role in helping with climate change mitigation, through carbon sequestration in forests and the provision of renewable fuels and raw materials. Afforestation is the most significant mitigation option that is available to Ireland's land use sector, followed by avoided deforestation and improved forest management. In addition, forests have an important role in flood risk management, as they soak up water, store it and release it gradually, limiting floods when it rains and storing water for dry periods.

Mayo County Council recognise that forestry, trees and woodlands play an important role in the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and supports afforestation. According to the National Forest Inventory (2017), 51,330 hectares of land in Mayo comprises of forestry and 508,440 hectares of land is categorised as non-forestry woodland. 55.5% of the forestry lands is publicly owned by bodies such as Coillte and National Parks and Wildlife, with 44.5% privately owned. To meet the required level of CO2 reductions, the Climate Action Plan 2019 targets national afforestation rates of an average of 8,000 hectares per year, in order to reach a national forestry land-cover target of 18% by the second half of this century.

Biodiversity, Designated and Non-Designated Sites Policies

To support and enable the implementation and achievement of European and national objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation as detailed in the following documents, taking into account other provisions of the Plan (including those relating to land use planning, energy, sustainable mobility, flood risk management and drainage);

Climate Action Plan (2019 and any subsequent versions);

CAP 1

- National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 and any subsequent versions).
- Relevant provisions of any Sectoral Adaptation Plans prepared to comply with the requirements of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, including those seeking to contribute towards the National Transition Objective, to pursue, and achieve, the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by the end of the year 2050; and Mayo Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2019-2024 and any subsequent versions).

CAP 2

To support the National Climate Change Strategy and methods of reducing anthropogenic greenhouse gases on an ongoing basis through implementation of supporting objectives in this Plan, particularly those supporting use of alternative and renewable energy sources, sustainable transport, air quality, coastal zone management, flooding and soil erosion and promotion of the retention of, and planting of trees, hedgerows and afforestation, subject to no significant adverse effects on the environment including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.

CAP 3

To support, promote and facilitate the advancement of climate action at the local and community level in County Mayo and to raise general awareness of issues associated with climate action and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

CAP 4

To support local, regional, national and international initiatives for climate adaptation and mitigation and to limit emissions of greenhouse gases through energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy sources, which make use of all natural resources, including publicly owned lands, in an environmentally acceptable manner.

CAP 5

To support the National Dialogue on Climate Action, in an effort to increase awareness of climate change, behavioural change and adaptation actions and in doing so provide an ongoing platform for planning climate resilience with a focus on personal responsibility at all levels.

CAP 6

To support the transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050, by way of reducing greenhouse gases, increasing renewable energy, and improving energy efficiency and supporting nature-based solutions to climate adaptation and mitigation that provides co benefits.

CAP 7

To support and promote the enhancement of carbon sinks such as peatlands, appropriate afforestation and permanent grasslands, with consideration of afforestation or rewetting on cut away peatlands.

CAP 8

To cooperate with the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) in respect of the implementation of existing and future climate change adaption and mitigation strategies.

CAP 9

To support Ireland's renewable energy commitments outlined in national policy by facilitating the development and exploitation of all appropriate renewable energy sources at suitable locations within the county, where such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity or local amenities, so as to provide for further residential and enterprise development within the county.

Biodiversity, Designated and Non-Designated Sites Policies

CAO 1

To support and advance the provision of renewable energy resources and programmes in line with the Government's National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP), the Governments' Energy White Paper "Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future" (2015-2030) and any other relevant policy adopted during the lifetime of this plan.

CAO 2

To support, facilitate and advance the achievement of the goals, objectives and actions of Climate Ready Mayo, the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for County Mayo.

CAO 3

To carry out a carbon emissions baseline for County Mayo over the lifetime of the plan.

CAO 4

To develop and implement a climate change screening checklist and guidance document over the lifetime of the plan, to ensure new development takes account of climate change over the lifetime of a development, in particular with regard to its location, site layout, building, ventilation and cooling, drainage, water, outdoor spaces and connectivity.

CAO 5

To identify and develop Decarbonising Zone(s) in Mayo, as per Action 165 of the Climate Action Plan 2019 and to promote the use of the Decarbonisation Zone(s) as an exemplary example for best practice within the county.

	To increase the resilience of Natural and Cultural Capital, as per Goal 3 of Climate Ready Mayo, by:
CAO 6	<p>a. Building awareness of Nature Based Adaptation Solutions and Green Infrastructure.</p> <p>b. Support biodiversity for its intrinsic value within the natural environment and its importance in climate change adaptation.</p> <p>c. Develop a database of impacts of climate change on Mayo's Natural Environment.</p> <p>d. Identify Cultural and Heritage Sites vulnerable to climate change and develop adaptation and management policies.</p> <p>e. Encourage adaptation in Agriculture and Local Food Supply.</p>
CAO 7	To recognise, support and facilitate Ballina to become Ireland's Greenest Town by 2025.
CAO 8	To support and facilitate Westport to become Ireland's first '15 Minute Town' - a sustainable town where a modal shift towards sustainable transport is actively promoted and facilitated.

11.7 Renewable Energy

11.7.1 Renewable Energy

The EU Renewable Energy Directive defines renewable energy as renewable non-fossil energy sources such as, but not limited to wind, solar, geothermal, wave, tidal, hydropower, bioenergy, landfill gas, sewage treatment plant gas, biogas and bio-char. Ireland has committed to generate at least 16% of all energy consumed by 2020 from renewable sources under the Directive, compared to 1990 levels. The EU's Climate and Energy Framework 2030 has also increased the minimum energy target from renewable sources to at least 32% for Member States.

Ireland currently has over 3,000 MW of installed renewable energy. The Climate Action Plan (2019) includes targets to increase the capacity of renewable energy in Ireland by four-fold. Ireland has a target of 70% of electricity sourced from renewables by 2030, comprising of up to 8.2 GW onshore wind, 3.5 GW offshore wind and up to 1.5GW of solar, with a view to having a net zero energy system by 2050.

11.7.2 National Energy Policy

Ireland's national energy policy is focused on three pillars: **(1) sustainability, (2) security of supply and (3) competitiveness.** Ireland must reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the energy sector by at least 80% by 2050, compared to 1990 levels, while at the same time ensuring security of supply of competitive energy sources to our citizens and businesses. The development of the Wind Energy Guidelines and the Renewable Electricity Development Plan will also facilitate informed decision-making in relation to onshore renewable energy infrastructure.

Local Authorities must also be consistent with the following national plans, policies and strategies when considering proposals for renewable energy:

- The National Renewable Energy Action Plan 2010 (Irish Government submission to the European Commission).

- The Government's Strategy for Renewable Energy 2012 - 2020 (DCENR).
- The Government's White Paper on Energy Policy - Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030 (DCENR).
- Interim Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Statutory Plans, Renewable Energy and Climate Change (July 2017).
- Wind Energy Development Guidelines, Planning Guidelines (2006), as amended or replaced.
- National Mitigation Plans (compliant with the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act, 2015).

11.7.3 Mayo Context

Mayo County Council is a leader in the development of renewable energy, with Ireland's first commercial wind farm at Bellacorick, Co Mayo in 1992. The Council recognises that a safe, secure, sustainable and affordable supply of energy is of central importance to the economic and social wellbeing of County Mayo. Continued development of renewable energy sources in Mayo will help Ireland achieve our national targets. Mayo has an enormous wind resource with the potential to underpin an entire new economy in the county. The county generates 266MW (Q1 2020) from 15 wind farms, which is approximately 6% of Ireland's overall wind energy production. The development of the extant permissions for wind and solar energy projects in the county will significantly add to Mayo's renewable energy output.

11.7.4 County Mayo Renewable Energy Target

The development of renewable energy sources is central to the overall energy policy in Ireland. The 2017 'Interim Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Statutory Plans, Renewable Energy and Climate Change' requires local authorities to indicate how development plans will contribute to realising overall national targets on renewable energy. Research carried out on behalf of the Irish Wind Energy Association (IWEA) indicates that 400 square kilometres of suitable land is available for onshore wind energy in Mayo. This figure accounts for environmental sensitivities, grid connection potential, compliance with the wind energy guidelines and other relevant planning and infrastructural considerations. Current best practice in the wind energy industry would suggest that an area of 400 square kilometres can generate a maximum potential of 10,000 MW.

In setting a realistic deliverable target for a county with a high wind potential like Mayo, a minimum target of 600MW over the plan period is considered achievable. The target would meet the energy demands of existing households in Mayo, as well as the proposed additional households for the county set out in the Core Strategy Table (Chapter 2). This renewable energy target for Mayo may need to be revised over the lifetime of the Plan to ensure alignment with the Northern and Western Regional Assembly's forthcoming Renewable Energy Strategy.

11.7.5 Mayo Renewable Energy Strategy 2011-2020

The Mayo Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) 2011-2020 outlines the potential for County Mayo and how it can capitalise on a range of renewable resources, including onshore and offshore wind, wave and tidal energy, solar and other renewable energy forms. The RES acknowledges the significant contribution renewables can make to County Mayo, by providing more secure energy, reducing reliance on traditional fossil fuels, enabling future energy export and meeting energy targets. The strategy also identifies areas most suitable for renewable energy developments in a tier system. Mayo County Council will commence the review and update the Mayo Renewable Energy Strategy within one year of adopting this plan.

11.7.6 Wind Energy

Mayo County Council recognises the importance of onshore and offshore wind energy as a renewable energy source and its role in meeting Ireland's national energy targets. The Council will endeavour to continue to facilitate wind energy projects that accord with the Mayo RES, the Landscape Appraisal of County Mayo and relevant Section 28 ministerial guidelines. The Council recognises that improvements are required in the existing transmission network to fully harness the County's renewable energy potential. There is also real potential for Mayo to maximise the potential by-products that can be created using wind energy such as hydrogen, agricultural fertilizer and synthetic green fuels. The Plan supports maximizing the potential of accessing new, emerging by-product markets to advance the socio-economic growth of Mayo and to help transition to a low carbon county.

Wind energy is Ireland's largest and cheapest renewable electricity resource and is the second greatest source of electricity generation after natural gas. In 2018, wind energy provided 85% of Ireland's renewable electricity and 30% of our total electricity demand. Mayo has a strong wind resource and a rich history of wind generation. In 1992, Ireland's first commercial wind farm came into operation at Bellacorick. The capacity of the Oweninny wind farm at Bellacorick has recently been upgraded and will be further increased to 172MW, following completion of Oweninny Phase 2. The Oweninny wind farm will generate sufficient electricity to power around 100,000 households per annum.

Mayo County Council recognises that community ownership of wind energy projects enables local communities to benefit directly from local wind energy resources being developed in their local areas, ensuring long-term income for rural communities. The Killala Community Wind Farm project in North Mayo involves a direct community investment in partnership with a private development company. The Killala Community Wind Farm, comprising of five turbines, generates 17MW of renewable power. The Council encourages community ownership of wind energy projects in Mayo.

11.7.7 Solar Energy

Mayo County Council recognises the importance of solar energy as a renewable energy resource. Solar energy is any type of energy generated by the sun. There are a range of technologies available to exploit the benefits of the sun including solar panels, solar farms and solar energy storage facilities, all of which contribute to a reduction in energy demand. Solar technologies can be designed into buildings or retro fitted. The three basic approaches used to harness and gain maximum benefit of solar energy in buildings, include passive solar; active solar heating; and solar photovoltaic (PV) systems.

Larger solar farms have potential to be built on agricultural land, whilst also accommodating the continued use of the land for grazing. These projects are much less visually intrusive than wind and some other forms of energy generation. Mayo County Council encourages community ownership of solar energy projects, for example the community-led solar project by Claremorris and Western District Energy Co-Op approved in Claremorris, which can generate sufficient renewable energy capable of meeting the town's energy needs.

11.7.8 Hydro-electricity

Mayo County Council encourages the use of rivers, where suitable, within the county for the development of hydro energy. For any such proposals, the Council will consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Section (NPWS) of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and Inland Fisheries Ireland, with regard to the impact of such proposals for the free passage of fish, salmonid qualities of the river and ecological impact of any sites of E.U. or national designation.

11.7.9 Tidal/Wave Energy

Tidal stream technologies aim to capture the kinetic energy of the currents flowing in and out of the tidal areas. Since the relative positions of the sun and moon can be predicted with complete accuracy, so can the resultant tide. It is this predictability that makes tidal energy such a valuable resource. The best wave resources in Europe occur along the western seaboard of Ireland. The Atlantic Marine Energy Test Site (AMETS), off Annagh Head on the Mullet Peninsula, is being developed by Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) to carry out full-scale wave energy testing. It is envisaged that the renewable power energy generated at AMETS will be directed into the national grid. The test site is an integral component of Ireland's Ocean Energy Strategy and is being developed in accordance with the national Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPP).

11.7.10 Micro Renewable Energy

Certain energy installations that qualify as being micro-generators constitute exempted development under planning legislation. These planning exemptions apply to residential scale and some commercial scale wind turbine, solar arrays, heat pumps and biomass boilers, subject to meeting certain conditions. The Council encourages small scale generation of heat and electricity by individuals, small businesses and communities to meet their own needs and as an alternative to or to supplement grid connected power.

11.7.11 Low Carbon District Heating

District heating is one of the most efficient and cost-effective ways to heat apartments, homes and mixed-use developments. It involves delivering heat rather than fuel to buildings. District heating networks can be based on a variety of technologies and renewable energy sources, such as combined heat and power (CHP), geothermal or energy from waste. Such schemes work particularly well in built-up urban areas where there is a near constant demand. For the system to work, water is heated using a boiler located in a central heating plant. The heat is distributed to the individual houses via an underground network of insulated pipes. The water in the network is continually circulating and always available. Immersion heaters, boilers and hot water storage tanks are not required, which frees up space for other purposes. The use of a renewable energy solution to provide heating and hot water to houses and businesses contributes to improved sustainability, as it reduces demand for and consumption of energy while using a renewable form of fuel.

11.7.12 Other forms of Renewable Energy Sources

Mayo County Council is fully supportive of all types of renewable energy resources and emerging technologies, all of which will help Mayo transition to a low carbon county. Some notable renewable resources include geothermal energy (from heat below the surface of the earth), biomass (wood, biodegradable waste and energy crops) and green hydrogen (electrical current to separate the hydrogen from the oxygen in water and can be used as transport fuel).

Renewable Energy Policies

- REP 1** To support Ireland's renewable energy commitments outlined in national policy by facilitating the development and exploitation of a range of renewable energy sources at suitable locations within the county, where such development does not have a negative impact on the surrounding environment (including water quality), landscape, biodiversity or local amenities to ensure the long-term sustainable growth of the county.
- REP 2** To support, within the context of the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPP) and its successors, the progressive development of Ireland's offshore renewable energy potential, including domestic and international grid connectivity enhancements.
- REP 3** To actively encourage and support the sustainable development, renewal and maintenance of energy generation infrastructure in order to maintain a secure energy supply, while protecting the landscape, archaeological and built heritage and having regard to the provisions of the Habitats Directive.
- REP 4** To ensure that developers of proposed large-scale renewable energy projects carry out community consultation in accordance with best practice and commence the consultation at the initiation of project planning.
- REP 5** To promote the use of efficient energy storage systems and infrastructure that supports energy efficiency and renewable energy system optimisation, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and consideration of environmental and ecological sensitivities.
- REP 6** To work with relevant stakeholders and industry to establish Mayo as a centre of excellence for renewable energy research and development activities.
- REP 7** To promote the harnessing of wind energy to contribute toward decarbonising County Mayo, including new emerging by-product markets.

Renewable Energy Objectives

- REO 1** To co-operate with the Northern and Western Regional Assembly in identifying Strategic Energy Zones as areas suitable for larger, energy generating projects, community and micro energy production, whilst ensuring environmental constraints and a regional landscape strategy are considered.
- REO 2** To examine options to ensure that community benefits are derived from renewable energy development in the County.
- REO 3** To encourage and facilitate, where possible, the production of energy from established and emerging renewable technologies.
- REO 4** To support and implement the recording and monitoring of renewable energy potential in the county in partnership with other stakeholders including the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI).
- REO 5** To support and work in partnership with local communities in the development of energy efficient and renewable energy projects.
- REO 6** To ensure all renewable energy proposal comply with the provisions of the Mayo County Council Renewable Energy Strategy 2011-2022 (or as updated).

- REO 7** To commence the review of the Mayo County Renewable Energy Strategy 2011-2022 within one year of adopting this plan and update as required in accordance with future legislative guidelines and consistency with the provisions of RPO 4.16 and RPO 5.2(b) of the RSES, 2020-2032.
- REO 8** To encourage the development of wind energy, in accordance with Government policy, and having regard to the Landscape Appraisal of County Mayo and the Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006) and Mayo Renewable Energy Strategy, or any revisions there of or future guidelines, and ensure consistency with the provisions of RPO 4.16 and RPO 5.2(b) of the RSES (2020-2032).
- REO 9** To support Ireland's renewable energy commitments outlined in national policy by promoting the development of solar energy.
- REO 10** To encourage solar energy in commercial and residential development, subject to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and consideration of environmental and ecological sensitivities.
- REO 11** To ensure that solar farm development proposals in the vicinity of major road networks & transport nodes, such as Ireland West Airport Knock (15km Radius), do not create a traffic hazard or endanger aircraft safety by reason of glint and glare.
- REO 12** To support offshore and tidal renewable energy developments subject to environmental considerations and the protection of commercial fishing and the amenities of the surrounding areas in accordance with the OREDPP, subject to proper planning and environmental considerations.
- REO 13** To recognise the important role of the Atlantic Marine Energy Test Site (AMETS) tidal wave test site off Beal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet).
- REO 14** To support the development of appropriate land-based infrastructure at suitable locations, in order to facilitate the transition between the land and sea necessary for off-shore renewable energy projects.
- REO 15** To facilitate large and smaller scale geothermal energy generating developments both standalone and in conjunction with other renewable energy projects.
- REO 16** To promote the use of geothermal heat pumps for space heating and cooling as well as water heating in domestic, commercial and recreational buildings.
- REO 17** To promote on-site wind/solar energy development or other emerging energy technologies, where energy generated is primarily required to meet the needs of households, communities, agriculture and other businesses to reduce their carbon emissions.
- REO 18** Support, promote and facilitate community energy-based initiatives such as the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland's (SEAI) 'Sustainable Community Energy' scheme or similar community energy initiatives to help achieve low carbon communities.
- REO 19** To support Ireland's renewable energy commitments outlined in national policy by promoting the use of district heating systems in new residential and commercial developments.
- REO 20** To consider using heat mapping to support developments which deliver energy efficiency and the recovery of energy that would otherwise be wasted.
- REO 21** To carry out a feasibility assessment for district heating in County Mayo and identify local waste heat sources or renewable energy sources.

REO 22 To promote the use of efficient energy storage systems and infrastructure that supports energy efficiency and renewable energy system optimisation, in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

REO 23 To support and facilitate the achievement of the minimum renewable energy target of 600MW for County Mayo over the plan, and to review/revise this target to ensure consistency with any future renewable energy strategies for the Northern and Western Region.



12
**SETTLEMENT
PLANS**

Chapter 12 Settlement Plans

12.1 Strategic Aim

The strategic aim of this chapter is to create a network of attractive, liveable towns and villages in the County, with increased levels of population, employment activity and enhanced levels of amenity, which support a high quality of life and wellbeing, along with providing an alternative residential choice for those who may not wish to live in the rural countryside.

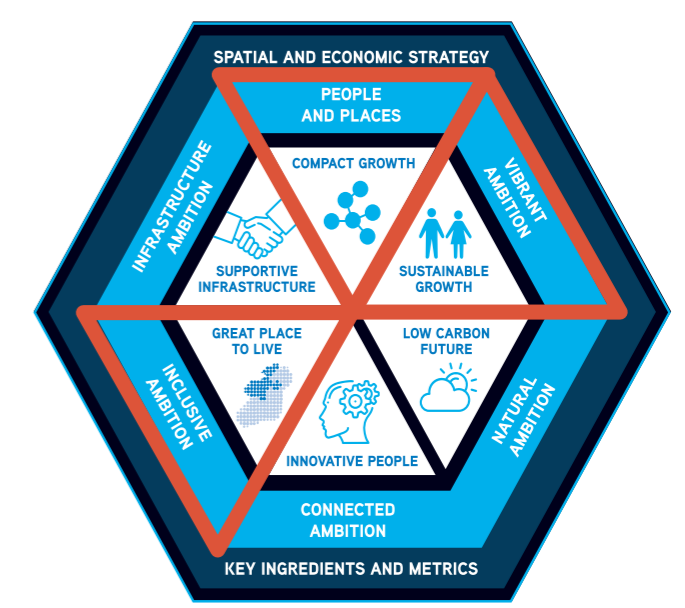
Related UN Sustainable Development Goals



Related NPF National Strategic Outcomes



Related RSES Growth Ambitions



12.2 Settlement Hierarchy Overview

The Core Strategy sets out the settlement hierarchy for the County, which is informed by the settlement hierarchy in the RSES; job-to-work ratio, asset capacity matrix and the role/function of settlements in County Mayo, in order to determine an overall growth strategy and its position on the settlement hierarchy.

Settlement Type	Settlements	Role
Tier I (a) Key Towns	Ballina & Castlebar	Large urban centres with a high level of jobs and services, with the capacity to act as significant economic growth drivers within the Mayo Catchment and wider region, including complementing the Galway Metropolitan Area and Sligo Regional Growth Centre.
Tier I (b) Strategic Growth Town	Westport	Large urban centre with a high level of jobs and services, with the capacity to act as significant economic growth driver, in combination with its intrinsic links with Castle- bar, within the Mayo Catchment and wider region.
Tier II Self- Sustaining Growth Towns	Ballinrobe, Ballyhaunis, Béal an Mhuirthead (Belmullet), Claremorris & Swinford.	Self-Sustaining Growth Towns with a moderate level of jobs and services and their own labour catchment areas. These towns have good transport links and have the capacity for continued sustainable growth. These towns play an important role in supporting the social, economic and cultural life within rural communities.
Tier III Self- Sustaining Towns	Balla, Charlestown, Crossmolina, Foxford, Killala, Kiltimagh, Knock, Louisburgh & Newport.	Self-Sustaining Towns with low to moderate levels of population growth and a limited localised employment base and which are largely reliant on other areas for employment and/or services. These towns play an important role in supporting the social, economic and cultural life within rural communities.
Tier IV Rural Settlements	Ballindine, Ballycastle, Bangor Erris, Belcarra Bellavary, Bohola, Bunnyconnelan, Cong, Dumha Thuama (Doohoma), Gob An Choire (Achill Sound), Irishtown, Keel- Dooagh, Kilkelly, Kilmaine, Lahardane, Mulranny, Shrule & Turlough.	Towns and villages with local service and limited employment functions, which play an important role in supporting the social, economic and cultural life within rural communities.

Table 12.1: Mayo Settlement Hierarchy Table

12.3 Settlement Plans

Individual local area plans will be prepared for the Tier I towns of Ballina, Castlebar and Westport, as statutorily required under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Settlement Plans have been prepared for all Tier II, Tier III, Tier IV and Tier V towns and villages. These plans align with the Core and Settlement Strategy (Chapter 2) and were informed by the asset capacity matrix and the principles set out in Thriving Towns and Villages as per Figure 12.1 below. Each settlement is defined by a development boundary, wherein development is generally encouraged in an orderly sequential manner outward from the core area, depending on the nature of development and the function of the settlement within the Settlement Hierarchy. This pattern of development will maximise the utility of existing and future infrastructure provision in a manner that promotes sustainability, active travel and makes more efficient use of underutilised lands.

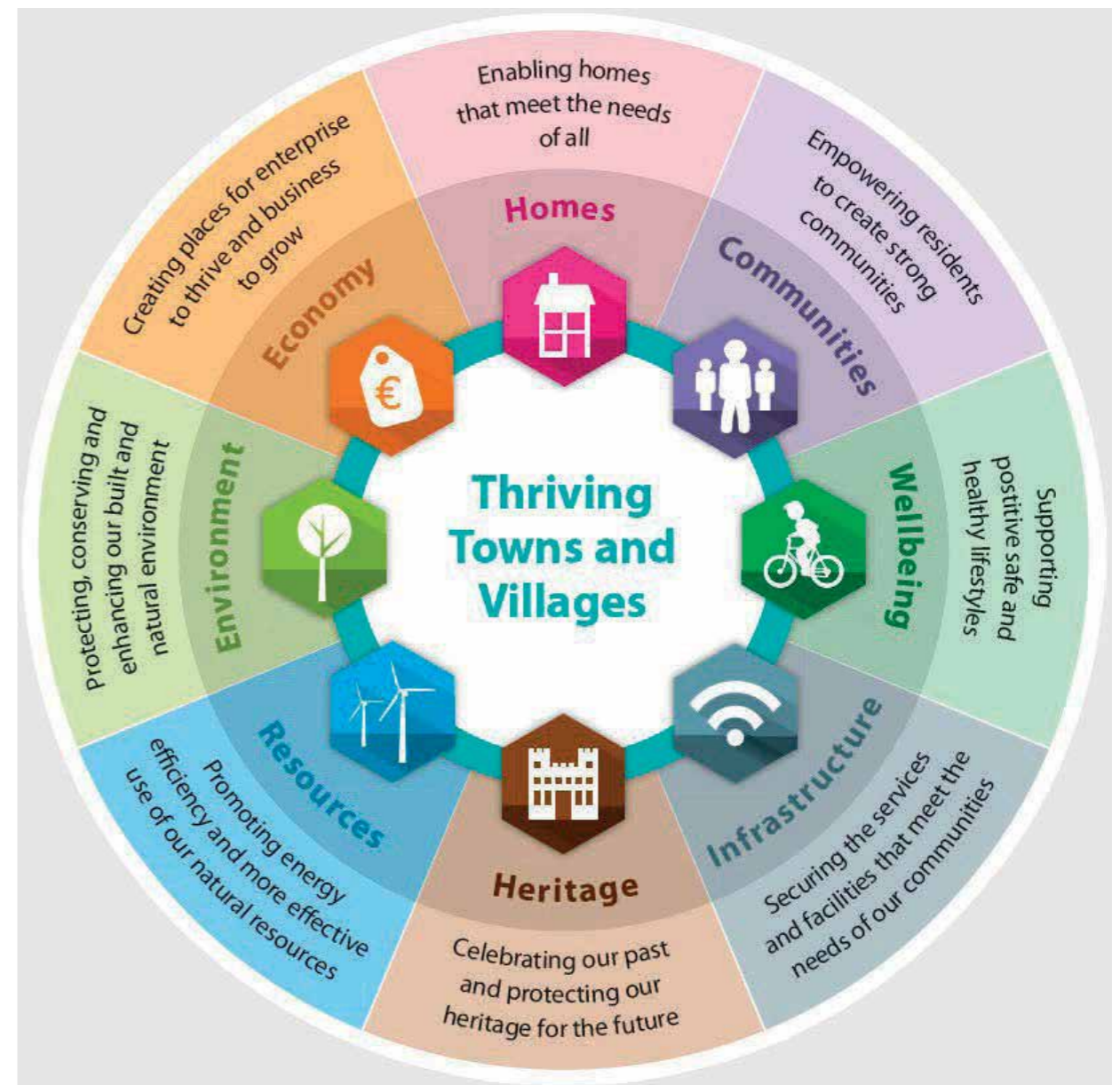


Figure 12.1 - Thriving Towns and Villages. Original Source - Plymouth Town Council

12.3.1 Land Use

12.3.1.1 Tier II Settlements

Tier II towns adopt a conventional land use zoning approach for all lands within the settlement plan boundary. This formal zoning approach identifies lands to accommodate various categories of development, as set out in Table 12.2 (Land Use Zoning Objectives). Table 2.3 (Land-use Matrix) provides guidance on compatible land uses within land use zoning categories.

In order to ensure the effective delivery of new housing targets for each settlement as set out in the Core Strategy, a greater quantity of lands is provided for proposed residential development outside of the defined town centre area. All such lands identified for residential purposes are zoned on serviceable lands.

Town Centre Opportunity Sites have also been identified for Tier II towns to revitalise and repopulate town centre. These Opportunity Sites provide an indicative block framework for the future development of these lands and indicate appropriate development types and potential permeability pathways for pedestrians/cyclists and vehicles. It is envisaged that the 30% new household target within the town centre area (as set out in the Core Strategy), will generally be located within these lands.

A Rural Transition zoning category is provided along the perimeter of each settlement plan. This zoning category accommodates agricultural compatible developments, including single rural houses. It offers an opportunity to build a rural-type house close to a settlement, wherein the distance to employment, schools, retail and other services is reduced, thereby contributing to a reduction of County Mayo's carbon emissions.

Land Use Zoning Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to implement the following land use zoning objectives for lands in Tier II to V Towns and Villages:

1a. Agriculture	To reserve land for agricultural and rural uses and to preserve the amenity of the town setting.
1b. Community Services/Facilities	To provide land for community and social facilities.
1c. Enterprise & Employment	To provide land for light industrial and appropriate commercial development.
1d. Industry	To provide land for industrial use and ancillary facilities.
1e. Infrastructure & Utilities	To provide land for public infrastructure and public utilities.
1f. Recreation & Amenity	To provide land for recreation and amenity purposes.
1g. Existing Residential	To protect the amenity and character of existing residential areas.
1h. New Residential	To provide for high quality new residential development and other services incidental to residential development.
1i. Rural Transition	To act as a transitional area between the build-up area and the rural hinterland. This zoning facilitates agricultural compatible development and renewable energy, including single houses on a limited basis, subject to demonstrable economic or social need (Refer to Objective RHO 1).

1j. Strategic Residential Reserve Tier 1	To protect and safeguard suitable, undeveloped lands for future multiple residential developments. These lands are generally not developable during the lifetime of this plan for multiple residential developments. However, this position will be reviewed by the Planning Authority periodically over the lifetime of the plan to ensure housing growth targets are achieved (Refer to Core Strategy Table). Where it is apparent that 'New Residential' lands cannot or will not be developed within the plan period, residential development may be considered within Strategic Residential Reserve Tier I. Single houses shall only be considered on a limited basis, where it has been established that the lands in question do not adversely impact on the intended future use of these lands; form part of the overall family landholding and no other appropriately zoned lands are available within the plan boundary; and a demonstrable economic or social need has been established (Refer to Objective RHO 1).
1k. Strategic Residential Reserve Tier 2	To protect and safeguard undeveloped residentially suitable lands for future use. These lands are not developable during the lifetime of this plan. Single houses shall only be considered on a limited basis, where it is established that the lands in question are part of the overall family land holding and no other appropriately zoned lands are available within the plan boundary.
1l. Town centre (Inner and Outer)	To maintain and enhance the vitality, viability and environment of the town centre and provide for appropriate town centre uses.
1m. Opportunity Sites	To promote the sustainable consolidation of towns and villages, with a focus on vacant, underutilised, infill and brown-field sites, to provide appropriate uses, including the delivery of high-quality residential, commercial, employment uses, and the delivery of renewable energy uses.
1n. Self-Sustaining Consolidation Zoning (Tier III)	To provide for, protect and strengthen the vitality and viability of Tier III Self-Sustaining towns, through consolidating development, and encouraging a mix of uses, including but not restricted to commercial, residential, industry, enterprise and employment, community, amenity, public realm enhancements, while maximising the use of land.
1o. Rural Settlements Consolidation Zoning (Tier IV)	To provide for, protect and strengthen the vitality and viability of Tier IV Rural Settlements, through consolidating development, and encouraging an appropriate mix of uses commensurate with the character, capacity and connectivity of the rural village, including but not restricted to retail, commercial, residential, community, amenity, and public realm enhancements, while maximising the use of land.
1p. Rural Village Consolidation Zoning (Tier V)	To provide for, protect and strengthen the vitality and viability of Tier V Rural Villages, through consolidating development, and encouraging an appropriate mix of uses commensurate with the character, capacity and connectivity of the rural village, including but not restricted to retail, commercial, residential, community, amenity, and public realm enhancements, while maximising the use of land.

Table 12.2 Land Use Zoning Objectives for Settlement Plans

Land Use Zoning Matrix

Land Use Zoning	Uses Generally Permitted
	Houses, apartments, retirement homes, care homes, medical services, public and community facilities, institutional uses, childcare facilities, places of worship, local shops, local services, leisure & recreation, open space; along with uses that are considered ancillary to the aforementioned uses.
New Residential (≤20 units/Ha)	Local and home offices may be acceptable, provided that there is no detrimental impact on residential amenity or traffic and that the use does not prejudice the primary use of the town centre for office use. All proposals that would be detrimental to established or future residential amenity will not be permitted. These include industrial and warehousing and uses generating significant levels of traffic, noise and other nuisance.
Existing Residential	Permitted in principle uses include residential, sheltered Housing, B&B/guest house, community facility/centre, home based economic activities and utilities. Open to Consideration uses include but not limited to bring banks, convenience outlet, childcare facility, halting site, sheltered housing, healthcare practitioner, leisure/recreation/sports facilities, bar, retirement home/residential institution/retirement village, and veterinary surgery.
Strategic Residential Reserve Tier I and II	Future residential lands, not generally developable in the lifetime of the plan for multiple residential development schemes (see land use zoning objectives for Strategic Residential Reserve Tiers I & II). Temporary uses and single houses will be considered on their individual merits, subject to the use not adversely impacting on the intended future use of these lands to accommodate future population/housing targets in subsequent plans. Single houses will be considered on a limited basis, where it is established that the lands in question are part of the overall family land holding, no other appropriately zoned lands are available within the plan boundary and a demonstrable economic or social need has been established (Objective RHO 1).
Town Centre	Shops (including supermarkets), off-licenses, offices, civic and public buildings, places of worship, public houses, hotels, restaurants, indoor leisure, car parks, apartments, houses, community facilities, parks and open spaces and retirement homes; along with uses that are considered ancillary to the aforementioned uses. Uses that would be detrimental to the vitality and amenity of the town centre, such as industrial uses, will not normally be permitted.
Town Centre Opportunity Sites	Residential and appropriate mixed use, community, amenity and public realm or other uses generally considered acceptable in town centre locations.
Residential High Density (≤35 units/Ha)	Uses that would be detrimental to the vitality and amenity of the town centre, such as industrial uses, will not normally be permitted.
Opportunity Sites	To provide for residential and appropriate mixed use, community, nursing homes, amenity and other uses generally considered acceptable by reason of location and context.

Opportunity Site (Claremorris):	To provide for the production of electricity by renewable energy technologies, incorporating wood Biomass only. To provide for a mix of industries (with no production of wood chip or wood pellets on this site) or research and development facilities where it is established that there is a need to locate such uses, within, adjacent or in close proximity to the primary user of the site (i.e. for the production of electricity from renewable energy technologies, incorporating wood Biomass only) or where it is established that there is insufficient appropriately zoned lands to facilitate such uses.
Enterprise & Employment	Light Industry, Warehousing (retail and non retail), Major Offices, Business and Technology Units, Specialist Offices, R&D enterprises, car showrooms, light engineering works, wholesale and trade outlets, public utilities, petrol filling stations, builders providers, repair garages, civic amenity centres, agriculture outlets, distribution depots, heavy vehicle parks, workshops, tourism related development; along with uses that are considered ancillary to the aforementioned uses. Extensions to existing retail premises will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Uses that would prejudice the primacy of town centre or would undermine the objectives of other land use zoning will not be permitted.
Industry	Industry, Light Industry, Heavy Engineering Works, Warehousing (non-retail), Business & Technology Units, R&D Enterprises; along with uses considered ancillary to the aforementioned uses. Uses that would prejudice the primary industrial function of this zoning or would undermine the objectives of other zoning will not be permitted. These include residential and retail uses.
Infrastructure & Utilities	Public utilities infrastructure, public and civic facilities and public infrastructure, along with uses considered ancillary to the aforementioned uses.
Recreation & Amenity	Outdoor sport and recreation, buildings associated with outdoor sport and recreation and ancillary uses, parks, open space, camp sites, agriculture, allotments; along with uses that are considered ancillary to the aforementioned uses. Temporary markets and exhibitions may be permitted.
Community Service/ Facilities	Schools and education, places of worship, community centres, health centres, leisure and recreation, retirement/nursing homes, libraries, cemeteries, open space, childcare facilities, public and civic facilities; along with uses that are considered ancillary to the aforementioned uses.
Rural Transition	Agriculture, renewable energy, open space, public utilities, outdoor, recreation, camp sites, allotments and cemeteries; along with uses that are considered ancillary to the aforementioned uses. New houses will be considered in this zone on their individual merits.
Agriculture	Agriculture, renewable energy, open space, public utilities, outdoor, recreation, retirement/nursing homes, camp sites, allotments and cemeteries; along with uses that are considered ancillary to the aforementioned uses. New houses will only be permitted in this zone to applicants with demonstrable economic or social need to live in these areas.

Table 12.3: Land Use Matrix for Tier II Settlement Plans

Advise Note: Where a use is proposed that is not listed in the matrix, development proposals will be assessed on their individual merits in accordance with the general guidance provided by the matrix and having regard the principles of proper planning and sustainable development of the area and compliance with the relevant policies and objectives (including land use zoning objectives), standards and requirements as set out in the Plan.

12.3.1.2 Tier III, IV and V Towns and Villages

All Tier III, IV and V towns and villages adopt a single category consolidation land use zoning. This flexible zoning approach provides for a mix of development types that supports the sustainable consolidated growth of these rural towns and villages. All proposals must be compatible with existing adjoining land uses, the character of the area and should also encourage Active Travel. Opportunity Sites have also been identified for Tier III towns. These sites are located within or close to the core of each settlement and seek to guide residential development in a manner that revitalises and repopulates town centres.

12.3.1.3 Tier II and Tier III Settlements

The general policies and objectives for Tier II and Tier III settlements Plan are set out below. The settlement plans provide information on each Self-Sustaining Growth Towns (Tier II) and Self-Sustaining Towns (Tier III) developed from the asset capacity matrix and the principles of Thriving Towns and Villages (Figure 12.1). A conventional zoning map is provided for each Tier II town (Refer to Volume III - Book of Maps), along with identification of town centre opportunity sites, followed by town specific policies and objectives. A single category mixed-use zoning map is provided for each Tier III town, along with identification of opportunity sites, followed by town specific policies and objectives.

General Tier II and III Settlement Policies

GSP 1	To support and promote commensurate population, service and employment growth, to enable the Tiers II and III settlements to fulfil their role as a self-sustaining growth towns and self-sustaining towns, respectively.
GSP 2	To support and encourage the development/redevelopment of identified Town Centre Opportunity Sites in Tier II and Tier III settlements.
GSP 3	To support the provision of mixed-use developments in the town centre which create opportunities to live, work, shop, etc., within the town and reduce the propensity to travel by private car.
GSP 4	To encourage re-development of all derelict buildings within all settlement plan areas listed on the Derelict Sites Register.
GSP 5	To support and promote the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and other buildings in town centre areas for retail and other appropriate uses with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach prescribed in the retail planning guidelines 2012 or amended or superseding guidelines.
GSP 6	To encourage the appropriate use of unoccupied/derelict buildings in the town for start-up businesses and community facilities.
GSP 7	To co-operate with relevant agencies to secure improvements to the public transport system serving Tier II and III settlement towns and to support initiatives designed to improve bus interchange facilities.

GSP 8	To support the establishment of green routes and an accessible walking / cycling network throughout the settlement plan areas and surrounding areas that provides safe and attractive circulation routes for pedestrians and cyclists for the enjoyment and recreational use of the entire community by linking residential areas, community facilities, amenities and the town centre.
GSP 9	To support and encourage Irish Water in increasing the provision of adequate wastewater and water infrastructure, to ensure that services are delivered in line with the further development and growth of settlements.
GSP 10	To support and encourage key stakeholders/providers in increasing the provision of adequate key physical infrastructure (i.e. transportation, parking, communications, energy etc.) and to support the provision of key social infrastructure (health care services, education facilities, burial grounds, fire and emergency services, recreational, cultural facilities etc.) in Tier II and Tier III settlements.

General Tier II and III Settlement Objectives

GSO 1	To ensure appropriate development occurs in a sequential manner outward from the core area, to maximise the utility of existing and future infrastructure provision, to promote sustainability and active travel, to make more efficient use of underutilised lands, and to avoid the inappropriate extension of services and utilities.
GSO 2	To encourage and facilitate the development of the economic and tourism potential of towns in a manner that respects, builds on, protects and enhances the cultural, built heritage, natural heritage and local amenities of the town.
GSO 3	To ensure that the town centre is accessible to all members of the community, including people with mobility issues, the elderly and people with young children.
GSO 4	To work with Irish Water and landowners on the “New Homes in Small Towns and Villages” initiative to augment the delivery of actions by Local Authorities, Irish Water, communities and other stakeholders in the provision of services and serviced sites to create “build your own home” opportunities within the existing footprint of settlements, to meet housing demand.
GSO 5	To require proposals for new development to integrate with existing Green Infrastructure networks and contribute to the development and protection of overall Green Infrastructure assets.
GSO 6	To use active land management measures, such as the Vacant Site Levy (Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015, as amended) and Derelict Site Levy (The Derelict Sites Act 1990 (as amended)), to ensure the delivery of the projected housing units in the identified Town Centre Opportunity Sites and residential zoned lands in Tier II Self-Sustaining Growth Towns, as set out in the Core Strategy or any subsequent Town Centre Opportunity Sites identified over the lifetime of the plan.
GSO 7	To promote and facilitate the delivery of multiple residential development in the identified Opportunity Sites for Tier III Self-Sustaining Towns or any subsequent Opportunity Sites identified over the lifetime of the plan.
GSO 8	To ensure applications for development within the settlement boundaries on lands identified as flood risk areas including benefitting lands, shall be subject to a Specific Flood Risk Assessment and Justification Test, in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2009 or any superseding guidelines and circulars.

GSO 9	To facilitate, identify, support and secure a strategic footpath and cycleway network throughout the plan areas, as appropriate and as resources allow.
GSO 10	To support and facilitate pedestrian mobility and safety in Tier II and III towns by introducing traffic calming measures and pedestrian crossings, where necessary.
GSO 11	To support and where possible, implement measures to create interpretative walking routes in and around Tier II and III towns, linking to special features of built and natural heritage interest.
GSO 12	To develop the local economy by encouraging additional commercial businesses and industries and to promote the clustering of such industries on suitably zoned land in Tier II settlements and at appropriate locations within Tier III settlements.
GSO 13	To protect the role of the town centre as the dominant retailing and commercial area.
GSO 14	To implement the land use zoning objectives in each Tier II settlement plans.
GSO 15	To actively provide or facilitate the provision/upgrade of identified infrastructural deficiencies in settlement plan areas.

12.4 Ballinrobe (Tier II)

12.4.1 Location and Context

Ballinrobe town is situated along the main Galway to Castlebar road at the junction of the N84 National Secondary Road and the R334 Regional Road. The town is approximately 50km north-west of Galway City, 30km south from Castlebar and 36km southeast of Westport. The Ballinrobe area is known as the 'Lake District' of Mayo and the town is well located for easy access to some of the most scenic areas in Ireland.

The population of Ballinrobe has more than doubled in size (112.8%) over the last twenty years, from 1,309 persons in 1996 (Census figures) to 2,786 persons in 2016 (Census figures). Ballinrobe is the 5th largest settlement in Mayo, the 19th largest in the Western Region and the 124th largest in the State. According to POWCAR 2016, the total number of jobs located within Ballinrobe was 1,077. The Ballinrobe labour catchment is the 27th largest labour catchment in the Western Region with a resident 'at work' population of 1,859, and a job to work ratio of 0.969.

12.4.2 Historical Context and Settlement Form

The Irish place name for Ballinrobe is Baile an Róba, which translates as "town of the (river) Robe". Ballinrobe is said to be the oldest town in Mayo and dates back to 1390. Ballinrobe was first established as a market town in 1605, with the town's role as a garrison town during British rule still very much evident today, in the form of the town's rich built heritage. The town has one of the highest concentrations of protected structures in the county. This reflects the historic significance of the town and the important role these buildings play in defining its character and identity. The town has a relatively compacted form framed around a central urban block, with existing residential areas generally located outside of the town centre core.

12.4.3 Function and Vision

Ballinrobe is situated within the Claremorris-Swinford Municipal District. The town provides a wide range of services and facilities to meet the daily needs of the local population. It is an important service town for the wide agricultural hinterland of south Mayo and north Connemara. Ballinrobe also functions as a Gaeltacht Service Town for the nearby Clonbur and Tourmakeady Gaeltacht regions.

It is envisioned that Ballinrobe, along with the Claremorris and Ballyhaunis, can form a Growth Cluster in South Mayo to harness their combined strengths to contribute towards the consolidation of the Atlantic Economic Corridor. Opportunity exists in the town for regeneration and consolidated growth within the existing built footprint.

12.4.4 Economic Development

The main employment sectors in the town according to Census 2016 is the Services Sector (32%), followed by Education, Human Health and Social Work (20.5%) and Manufacturing Industries (16.9%). The town is well served in terms of convenience and comparison shopping, with three of the main supermarket chains located in or close to the town centre. The town also contains several local independent shops. Potential exists in the town centre in the form of appropriately located, undeveloped lands and the re-use of existing vacant buildings, to further enhance the convenience and comparison retail offer. Ballinrobe is home to McHale Engineering, a successful indigenous business in both the domestic and international agricultural industry, providing innovative technologies in agricultural machinery. The business has a large employment base drawing from Ballinrobe and the surrounding hinterland.

12.4.5 Social Infrastructure

Ballinrobe serves as the retail centre and employment base for a larger rural catchment area and provides a range of services, social and community facilities, including a library, garda station, county council office, post office, medical centres, pre-school, primary school, secondary school, churches, banks, enterprise centre, retail shops and public houses within the town. Ballinrobe also has numerous community, sporting and social clubs. Sports and recreational facilities in the town comprise of a racecourse, GAA, soccer pitches, rugby pitches, and children's playground. The town has an active Community Development Council, their objectives include creating sustainable local development, seeking additional infrastructural services and improving the socio-economic conditions in the town. The Bowers Walk, along the River Robe, and The Green constitute valuable natural amenities and visitor attractions for the town.

12.4.6 Physical Infrastructure

Ballinrobe is served by the N84, R331 and R334 national and regional road network. The town is served by an existing municipal wastewater treatment plant (8,000PE) and a water supply from the Lough Mask Regional water supply scheme. There is sufficient capacity for the projected population increase as set out in the Core Strategy. The town also benefits from fibre optic broadband infrastructure (Metropolitan Area Network and VDSL broadband) and has a connection to the national gas grid. A dismantled railway line between runs between Ballinrobe and Claremorris, providing an opportunity to re-establish the line as a walking cycling route or as a spur of the Western Rail Corridor.

12.4.7 Heritage and Tourism

Ballinrobe is rich in built heritage with protected structures (35), NIAH structures (35) and local vernacular buildings, all of which are reflective of the historical development, sense of place and character of the town. The protection, promotion and enhancement of the built and natural heritage of the town and its immediate environs is promoted in this plan. Mayo County Council has carried out habitat mapping in Ballinrobe, which has informed the identification of Local Biodiversity Areas in the town, while an Action Plan has been prepared for Ballinrobe, aimed at conserving and enhancing the natural heritage of the town. The Bowers Walk is an important amenity for locals and visitors to Ballinrobe. This riverside walk stretches for approximately 3 kilometres along the River Robe starting at the bridge, on Bridge Street towards Creagh Bridge and along the old towpath of the canal. Swans and wildlife are plentiful along the walk, together with a variety of flora and fauna when in season.

Lough Mask is home to the annual trout fly fishing World Cup Championship, which attracts significant numbers of tourists into the town. Horse racing forms an important part of the Ballinrobe's heritage and also acts as tourist driver for the town. Ballinrobe is also a base to visit other notable tourist attractions such as Bowers Walk heritage trail, Ballinrobe Golf Course, Ballinrobe Racecourse, Cong, Ballintubber Abbey, Moore Hall; and within easy access to Ireland West Airport Knock. Potential exists for the development of tourist accommodation for visitors travelling to and from these locations. This plan seeks to encourage appropriate development within the town to facilitate and support its tourism potential.

12.4.8 Sustainable Communities

Ballinrobe provides an attractive place to live, is rich in heritage, natural beauty and amenity. The town plays an important economic, social and cultural role for the inhabitants of the town itself and the wider hinterland. The town has good community stakeholder engagement and an active Tidy Towns committee. In order to help create sustainable communities, the development strategy for Ballinrobe is to support new housing and population growth, consistent with the Core Strategy. The NPF and RSES recognise that settlement patterns play a fundamental role in influencing how people travel, both the distances undertaken and the modal choice. New housing will be accommodated through facilitating compact growth and the through revitalisation of the historic town core, together with providing of a mix of housing types, densities and tenure to meet the needs of the area. A strong emphasis is placed on building communities with a high standard of design, the principles of place-making, green infrastructure, permeability and connectivity alongside the integration of community and recreation facilities.

12.4.9 Sustainable Travel

Ballinrobe is located on the main daily bus route between Westport and Galway. A local community bus service, operated by the Mayo Local Link, also serves the town and the surrounding hinterlands. The number of people who walk to their place of work, study and other services in town is above the national average (9.3%). According to 2016 POWCAR, 12.8% of the daily population walk. However, use of cycling as a sustainable mode of travel is less than 1%, compared to the national average (3%). Therefore, Mayo County Council promotes and supports the development of public transport initiatives, in keeping with the principles of Smarter Travel. Increasing the usage of cycling in the town will require further study (audit), including the provision of new or retrofitted infrastructure and adherence to DMURS guidance standards.

12.4.10 Placemaking and Regeneration

Ballinrobe provides the focus for a wide range of activities that contribute to a sense of place and identity. The town has a compact town centre with strong continuous street frontages of two and three storey buildings. It has relatively narrow street proportions and resultant traffic congestion. The two iconic water storage towers provide a sense of place for the town. A number of studies have taken place in Ballinrobe to enhance its urban fabric and address the issues of vacancy within the town centre, including a Town Renewal Scheme study (2000); a Public Realm Plan (2018); as well as projects carried out under the Historic Towns Initiative scheme; and an Adaptive Reuse Project (2019). The Public Realm Plan includes key objectives around the sustainable reuse of existing buildings and a need to encourage town centre living. A number of successful projects have received funding under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, including regeneration works for the development of Market House, the town library grounds and an upgrade of The Bowers Walk.

In terms of placemaking, the main priority is the consolidation of the town centre and support of existing business in order to maintain vibrancy. A challenging issue facing Ballinrobe is the extent of dereliction and vacancy in the town centre, with notable concentrations of vacant structures along Main Street, Glebe Street and especially Bridge Street. Many buildings in the town centre lend themselves for suitable for renovation of upper storeys into residential use. Ground floors should, however, be prioritised for commercial and community uses that activate the street, where possible. Together, these will help sustain town vibrancy, including the evening economy. Accordingly, the potential for more appropriate use of under-utilised sites, vacant sites and buildings within the existing built-up footprint of Ballinrobe, will aid the delivery of quality housing, services and employment opportunities, in tandem with supporting social infrastructure is promoted.

A main priority of the Ballinrobe Settlement Plan is the regeneration and repopulation of the town centre, through the sustainable reuse of existing buildings, focusing on dereliction and the appropriate development of infill opportunity site(s), underpinned by good urban design and placemaking principles.



12.4.11 Town Centre Opportunity Sites (Refer to Map BR 2)

Site A - Convent Road/New Street

A site has been identified along Convent Road in Ballinrobe town centre, which presents opportunity to increase population within the town centre in line with the Core Strategy. This two- hectare site is strategically located to the east of the town centre. An indicative framework has been provided for the site to guide its potential development.

<p>Site A:</p> <p>Location: Lands south of Convent Road.</p> <p>Area: Site area of c. 2 ha.</p> <p>Zoning: Town Centre Mixed Use</p> <p>Potential uses: Residential and Mixed-Use</p>	
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Map 12.1 Opportunity Site A Ballinrobe

Site B - Cranmore House

No indicative development framework has been developed for Site B, owing to the presence of Cranmore House which is a Protected Structure (RPS No. 76). Any future development must prepare a site brief / masterplan for the proposed site and carefully consider the impacts in the Protected Structure.

<p>Site B:</p> <p>Location: Lands at Cranmore House.</p> <p>Area: Site area of c. 2.35 ha.</p> <p>Zoning: Town Centre Mixed Use</p> <p>Potential uses: Residential and Mixed-Use</p>	
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Map 12.2 Opportunity Site B Ballinrobe

<p>Site C:</p> <p>Location: Bog Road</p> <p>Area: Site area of c.0.58 ha.</p> <p>Zoning:</p> <p>Potential uses: Commercial & Industry</p>	
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Map 12.3 Opportunity Site C Ballinrobe

<p>Site D:</p> <p>Location: Watsons Lane</p> <p>Area: Site area of c.0.65 ha..</p> <p>Zoning: Enterprise & Employment</p> <p>Potential uses: Commercial & Offices</p>	
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Map 12.3 Opportunity Site C Ballinrobe

<p>Site E:</p> <p>Location: New Street</p> <p>Area: Site area of c.0.23 ha.</p> <p>Zoning: Town Centre Mixed Use</p> <p>Potential uses: Residential and Mixed Use</p>	
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Map 12.5 Opportunity Site E Ballinrobe

<p>Site F:</p> <p>Location: Neale Road / New Line</p> <p>Area: Site area of c.0.61 ha.</p> <p>Zoning: Town Centre Mixed Use</p> <p>Potential uses: Residential and Mixed Use</p>	
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Map 12.6 Opportunity Site F Ballinrobe

Ballinrobe Settlement Plan Policies

- BRP 1** To promote the development of Ballinrobe, as a driver of economic growth for the south region of County Mayo and fulfil its role as a designated Self-Sustaining Growth Town and support the potential for the creation of an Economic Growth Cluster in tandem with the towns of Ballyhaunis and Claremorris.
- BRP 2** To promote and support the re-development and refurbishment of Bridge Street/High Street whilst safeguarding the protected structures and their curtilages along the street.
- BRP 3** To promote and support the appropriate refurbishment of Cranmore House and the Military Barracks for amenity and cultural purposes.
- BRP 4** To promote and support the re-establishment of the Ballinrobe to Claremorris dismantled railway line as a walking and cycling route or as a spur line of the Western Rail corridor.

- BRP 5** To promote and support the enhancement and extension of The Bowers Walk River walkway and safeguard the value of the river as an ecological “green corridor”. Riverside walkway provisions should be incorporated, where appropriate, into development proposals bounding the river.
- BRP 6** To promote and support the implementation of the projects listed within the Ballinrobe Public Realm Plan during the plan period, to improve attractiveness and permeability of the public realm.

Ballinrobe Settlement Plan Objectives

- BRO 1** To ensure infill development respects the unique height-to-width ratio with respect to building design in Ballinrobe town centre and maintain the existing sense of enclosure on town centre streets.
- BRO 2** To consider the designation in the town centre of an Architectural Conservation Area, including all or parts of Bowgate Street, Main Street, High Street/Bridge Street, Glebe Street and Abbey Street.
- BRO 3** To support and facilitate the development of the two identified Town Centre Opportunity Sites in Ballinrobe for appropriate uses, as outlined in Section 12.4.11, and as generally permitted on Town Centre Opportunity Sites in the Land Use Zoning Matrix (Refer to Map BR 2).
- BRO 4** To seek and encourage ways to make more use of the Cornmarket area, including making the area pedestrian and market-place friendly and encourage and support the provision of a weekly market in the Cornmarket area.
- BRO 5** To protect the water quality and riparian zone of the rivers Robe and Bulkan. Any proposed developments adjacent to or close to watercourses shall be carefully assessed to ensure that there is no adverse impact to the water course, its riparian zone or to any waterbody into which it flows.
- BRO 6** To seek to make Tree Preservation Orders for the tree groups along the River Robe and important tree groups in the town.
- BRO 7** To encourage development in the town of Ballinrobe in accordance with the Land Use Zoning Map.
- BRO 8** To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail and other town centre uses with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach prescribed in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012.
- BRO 9** To use active land management measures, such as the vacant site levy and derelict site levy to ensure the delivery of the projected housing units for Ballinrobe, as set out in the Core Strategy, on Town Centre Opportunity Sites and residential zoned lands.

12.5 Ballyhaunis (Tier II)

12.5.1 Location and Context

Ballyhaunis is located in east Mayo at the intersection of the N60 and N83 national routes and within close proximity to a number of large urban centres such as Claremorris and Tuam. The town also lies on the Dublin-Westport railway line and provides a wide range of services and amenities to a significant rural hinterland.

The population of Ballyhaunis has nearly doubled in size (84%) over the last twenty years, from 1,287 persons in 1996 (Census figures) to 2,366 persons in 2016 (Census figures). Ballyhaunis is the 6th largest settlement in Mayo, the 27th largest in the Western Region and the 147th largest in the state. According to POWCAR 2016, the total number of jobs located within Ballyhaunis was 1,226. The Ballyhaunis labour catchment is the 21st largest labour catchment in the Western Region with a resident 'at work' population of 2,601 and a job to work ratio of 1.460.

12.5.2 Historical Context and Settlement Form

Béal Átha hAmhnais translates to "ford-mouth of strife". The footprint of the town has developed primarily to the west of the River Dalgan, focussed around four main streets: i.e. Main Street, Knox Street, Bridge Street and Clare Road. The town originally developed around the Augustinian Friary, which dates from 1348. The structure of the settlement is well defined with retail and commercial uses primarily located within its town core, and with educational, institutional and community uses generally located on the outskirts.

12.5.3 Function and Vision

Ballyhaunis is located in the Claremorris Municipal District. The town is an important employment base in the east of the county, particularly in the areas of food processing, agri-engineering and manufacturing. Mayo County Council promotes the consolidation of growth within the established footprint of the town in conjunction with regeneration, public realm enhancement, while supporting local employment and the expansion of services to meet the needs of residents and visitors. It is envisioned that Ballyhaunis, along with the Claremorris and Ballinrobe can form a Growth Cluster in South Mayo to harness their combined strengths to contribute towards the consolidation of the Atlantic Economic Corridor.

12.5.4 Economic Development

Ballyhaunis has an established industrial and manufacturing base in the town. According to 2016 POWCAR figures Manufacturing Industries account for 27.3% of the main employment sectors in the town, which is significantly higher than the state average (13%). The other main employment sectors in the town include the Service Sector (19.3%) and ICT and Professional Services (9%).

The key economic activities in Ballyhaunis are concentrated in a number of significant companies that relate directly and indirectly to the food processing industry. The town also has a range of other manufacturing industries that includes furniture, plastics and kitchen construction. A range of medium to small retail outlets, as well as employment in the state sector and the financial sector provide

important employment in the town. Opportunities also exist for start-ups and incubation hubs in Ballyhaunis at the Enterprise Centre, located centrally. Additionally, Ballyhaunis remains an important service town for a wide agricultural hinterland in East Mayo and with a reach into County Roscommon.

12.5.5 Social Infrastructure

Ballyhaunis serves as the retail centre and employment base for a larger rural catchment area and provides a range of services, social and community facilities, including a library, outdoor swimming pool, garda station, post office, medical centres, pre-school, primary school, secondary school, two churches, bank, enterprise centre, retail shops and public houses within the town. It is also home to Ireland's first purpose-built mosque. Ballyhaunis also has numerous community, sporting and social clubs. Sports and recreational facilities in the town comprise of a GAA club, a rugby pitch, children's playgrounds, Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and outdoor gym at the Friary grounds. The Abbey Walk, along the Dalgan River, at the Friary grounds, also constitutes a valuable natural amenity and visitor attraction for the town.

12.5.6 Physical Infrastructure

Ballyhaunis is served by the N60 and N83 National Roads. The town also has direct rail links to Dublin, is located within twenty-minute drive of Ireland West Airport Knock and has VDSL broadband (Very high-speed Digital Subscriber Line) available. Ballyhaunis is served by an existing municipal wastewater treatment plant (4,000PE) and a water supply from the Lough Mask regional water supply scheme. There is sufficient capacity in this infrastructure to cater for the projected population increase as set out in the Core Strategy.

12.5.7 Tourism and Heritage

The Augustinian Friary in Ballyhaunis is the second oldest friary in Mayo, after Ballintubber Abbey. The Friary and its grounds and graveyard are a prominent cultural amenity and tourist attraction in the town. Other tourist attractions include Ballyhaunis Golf Course, a 9-hole parkland course situated on the N83 on the outskirts of the town. Knock Shrine, Connaught GAA Centre of Excellence and Ireland West Airport Knock are in close proximity to Ballyhaunis. Potential exists for the development of tourist accommodation in the town for visitors travelling to and from these locations. The Friary Ground in Ballyhaunis also serves as an important natural amenity for locals and visitors alike, and includes a walkway along the river, playground, MUGA and outdoor gym, along with a new sensory garden and an abundance of flora and fauna.

12.5.8 Sustainable Communities

Ballyhaunis is rich in culture, heritage and amenity, with a diverse mix of cultures and nationalities. The town is the most diverse and inclusive in the country in the 2016 Census, with migrants from 20 different ethnicities making up more than half of the population. Ballyhaunis is a good example of a mixed community, living, working and co-operating together, to create a great place for people to live and bring up families. The town also has good community stakeholder engagement and an active Tidy Towns committee. In order to help create sustainable communities, the development strategy for Ballyhaunis is to support new housing and population growth, consistent with the Core Strategy.

The NPF and RSES recognise that settlement patterns play a fundamental role in influencing how people travel, both in terms of the distances undertaken and the modal choice. Stronger connections and linkages between residential settlements and the town centre is important in ensuring sustainable communities. The NPF and RSES recognise that settlement patterns play a fundamental role in influencing how people travel, both the distances undertaken and the modal choice. New housing will be accommodated through facilitating compact growth and the through revitalisation of the historic town core, together with providing of a mix of housing types, densities and tenure to meet the needs of the area. A strong emphasis is placed on building communities with a high standard of design, the principles

of place-making, green infrastructure, permeability and connectivity alongside the integration of community and recreation facilities. In this regard, a number of Town Centre Opportunity Sites have been identified to encourage development within the town centre.

12.5.9 Sustainable Travel

The number of people who walk to their place of work, study and other services in town is above the national average (9.3%). According to 2016 POWCAR, 15.71% of the daily population walk. However, use of cycling as a sustainable mode of travel is less than 1%, compared to the national average (3%). Therefore, Mayo County Council promotes and supports the development of public transport initiatives, in keeping with the principles of Smarter Travel. Increasing the usage of cycling in the town will require further study (audit), including the provision of new or retrofitted infrastructure and adherence to DMURS guidance standards.

12.5.10 Place Making and Regeneration

Ballyhaunis provides the focus for a wide range of activities that contribute to a sense of place and identity. Public realm enhancement works have been completed at Market Square, Knox Street, Clare Street and Bridge Street through funding received under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. These public realm enhancement and refurbishment works comprised of paving, upgrading of pedestrian footpaths and crossings, undergrounding of overhead cables, new public lighting, surface water alleviation works, all of which have visually enhanced the attractiveness of the town centre. These works also provide social and environmental benefits to the local community and to visitors to the town, encouraging economic growth and providing a pedestrian bias within the town centre. It is envisaged these works will act as a catalyst to assist with the revitalisation of existing building stock along Main Street, Knox Street, Bridge Street and Clare Street.

Funding has also been received through the Rural Regeneration Development Fund to prepare a design brief for the former convent school on Abbey Street for its redevelopment for community use as a workspace hub and to support local enterprise. The design brief also includes a new public plaza adjoining the community hub building and a new pedestrian bridge connecting the plaza to the public swimming pool. Restoration of the existing riverside walk along the River Dalgan, the creation of a new circular walking route through the town and provision of a new cover and heating facilities at the public outdoor swimming pool have greatly improved the amenity offering of the town.

12.5.11 Town Centre Opportunity Sites

The potential exists for better use of under-utilised and vacant sites within the town centre area of Ballyhaunis, to drive the delivery of quality housing, services and employment opportunities, in tandem with supporting social infrastructure. In this regard, four town centre opportunity sites have been identified in the town. An indicative development framework has been provided for each site to guide developers.

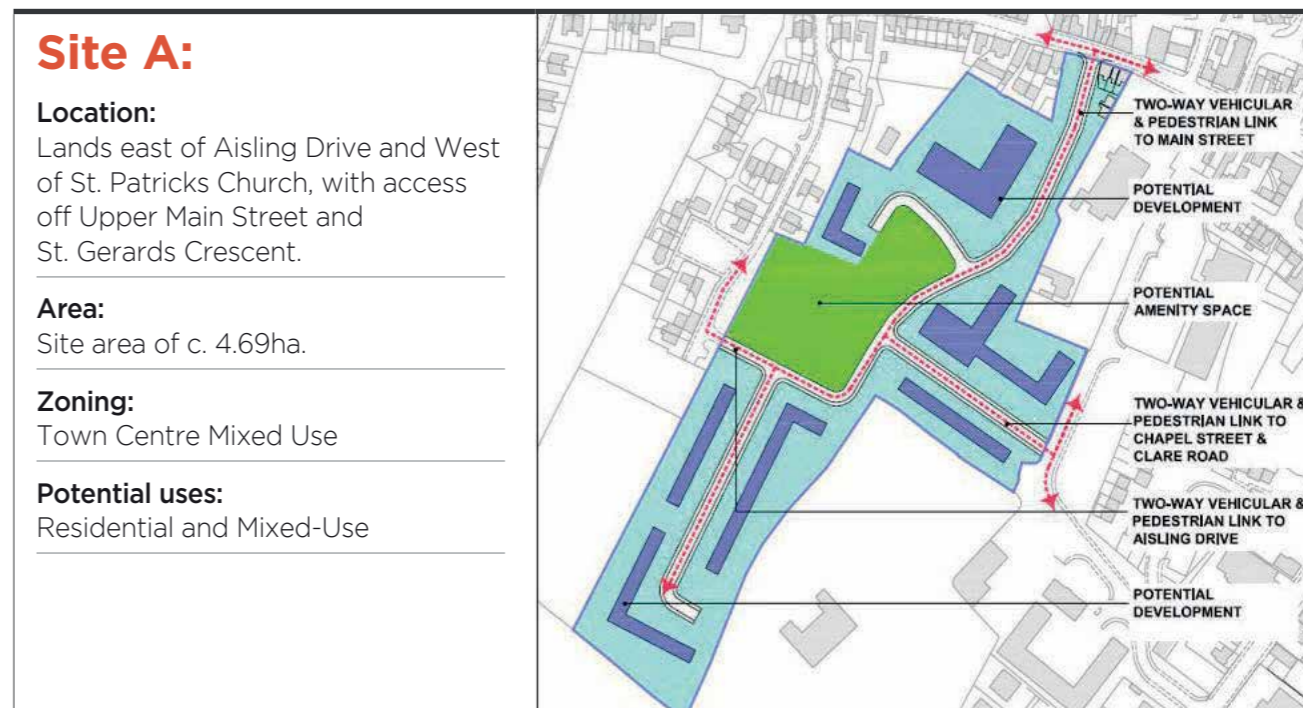
Site A: Lands east of Aisling Drive

Site B: Lands south of Supervalu between St Gerards Crescent and Clare Court.

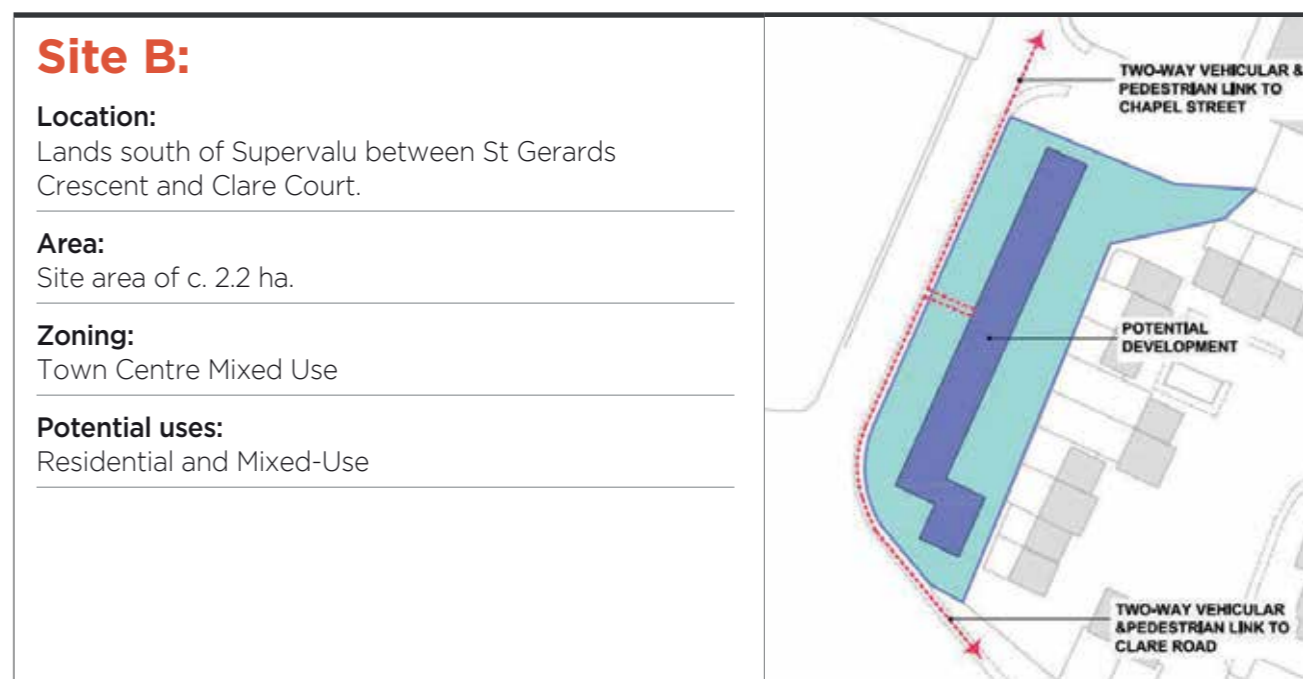
Site C: Lands to the rear of MidWest Radio with access off Barrack Street.

Site D: Lands east of Knox Street

The redevelopment of these sites presents an opportunity to further contribute to the rejuvenation and revitalisation of Ballyhaunis and to enhance the overall improvement of the public realm and visual amenity of the area.



Map 12.7 Opportunity Site A Ballyhaunis



Map 12.8 Opportunity Site B Ballyhaunis

Site A:

Location:
Lands east of Aisling Drive and West of St. Patrick's Church, with access off Upper Main Street and St. Gerards Crescent.

Area:
Site area of c. 4.69ha.

Zoning:
Town Centre Mixed Use

Potential uses:
Residential and Mixed-Use

Site B:

Location:
Lands south of Supervalu between St Gerards Crescent and Clare Court.

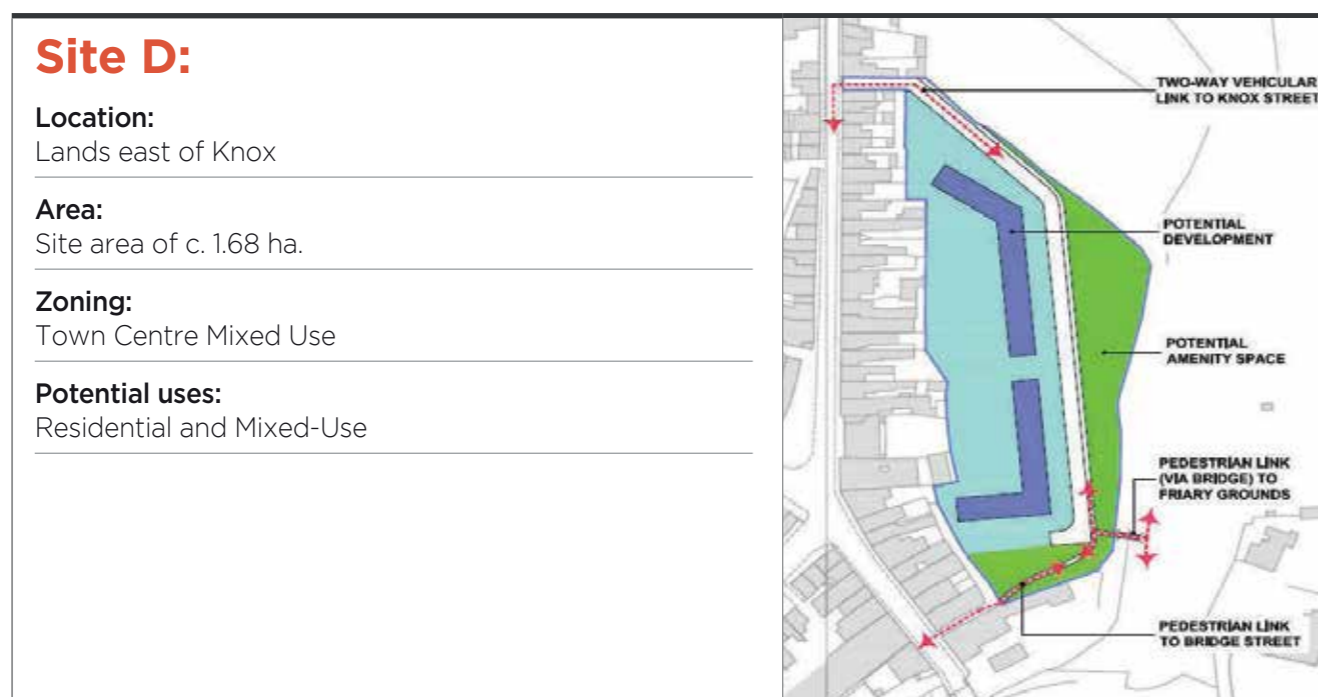
Area:
Site area of c. 2.2 ha.

Zoning:
Town Centre Mixed Use

Potential uses:
Residential and Mixed-Use



Map 12.9 Opportunity Site C Ballyhaunis



Map 12.10 Opportunity Site D Ballyhaunis

Ballyhaunis Settlement Plan Policies

- BSP 1** To promote the development of Ballyhaunis as a driver of economic growth for the southeast region of County Mayo and fulfil its role as a designated Self-Sustaining Growth Town and to further investigate the potential for the creation of an Economic Growth Cluster, in tandem with the towns of Ballinrobe and Claremorris.
- BSP 2** To protect St. Mary's Abbey and its associated lands as one of the town's key tourist attractions.
- BSP 3** To support community-led developments, where appropriate, including the implementation of Community Futures Action Plan for Ballyhaunis (2016-2021) or any amended or superseding Community Futures Plan for the town.
- BSP 4** To promote and support the enhancement and extension of the Dalgan River walkway and to safeguard the value of the river as an ecological "green corridor". Riverside walkway provisions should be incorporated, where appropriate, into development proposals bounding the river.
- BSP 5** To promote the town's strategic location in relation to Ireland West Airport Knock.

Ballyhaunis Settlement Plan Objectives

- BSO 1** To improve the attractiveness of the built fabric of the town centre, including the encouragement of appropriate redevelopment and renewal of vacant sites and buildings, in particular Knox St, and to ensure high architectural quality in all new developments.
- BSO 2** To support and facilitate the development of the four identified Town Centre Opportunity Sites in Ballyhaunis for appropriate uses, as outlined in Section 12.5.11, and as generally permitted on Town Centre Opportunity Sites in the Land Use Zoning Matrix (Refer to Map BS 2).
- BSO 3** To continue to facilitate the further development of the Abbey Walk as an amenity/recreation area in Ballyhaunis.
- BSO 4** To provide a civic amenity facility in Ballyhaunis.
- BSO 5** To continue to encourage rail use as a sustainable mode of transport and to promote the upgrading of the rail services to the town and connecting bus services.
- BSO 6** To ensure the future protection of lands adjacent to the railway station from inappropriate development that could jeopardize the long-term viability and improvement of the transport facility.
- BSO 7** To protect the water quality and riparian zone of the Dalgan River and to encourage appropriate developments that enhance its landscape setting and public benefit.
- BSO 8** To facilitate the construction of the town's outer bypass.
- BSO 9** To ensure that the strategic importance, capacity and safe operation of the Knock Link Road is maintained by restricting the number of access points entering and exiting onto the road.
- BSO 10** To encourage development in the town of Ballyhaunis in accordance with the Land Use Zoning Map.

BSO 11	To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail and other town centre uses with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach prescribed in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012.
BSO 12	To use active land management measures, such as the vacant site levy and derelict site levy to ensure the delivery of the projected housing units for Ballyhaunis, as set out in the Core Strategy, on Town Centre Opportunity Sites and residential zoned lands.

12.6 Béal an Mhuirthead (Tier II)

12.6.1 Location and Context

Béal an Mhuirthead is a coastal Gaeltacht town located in northwest Mayo, between Broadhaven Bay and Blacksod Bay at the entrance to the Mullet Peninsula. The town is situated along the Wild Atlantic Way and is well located for easy access to some of the most scenic areas in Ireland. The town is situated approximately 62km west of Ballina and 75km to the north-west of Castlebar.

The population of Béal an Mhuirthead has marginally increased over the last twenty years, from 954 persons in 1996 (Census figures) to 1,019 persons in 2016 (Census figures). The population of the town is the 12th largest settlement in Mayo, the 60th largest in the Western Region and the 276th largest in the state. According to POWCAR 2016, the total number of jobs located within of Béal an Mhuirthead was 689. The labour catchment is the 28th largest labour catchment in the Western Region with a resident 'at work' population of 1,751 and a job to work ratio of 1.735.

12.6.2 Historical Context and Settlement Form

The Irish place name for Belmullet is Béal an Mhuirthead, which translates as "mouth of the Mullet Peninsula". The origin's of the town can be traced back to Arthur Shaen, who, in 1715, began to develop the town, when he was trying to create a new canal passageway from Blacksod bay into Broadhaven Bay. By the 1820's, Béal an Mhuirthead begin to develop and prosper following the construction of a new road to Castlebar. The landlord, William Henry Carter, was very influential in the development of the town by improving its infrastructure, building the Erris Hotel and a quay, which could accommodate large vessels. The settlement quickly developed into the principle town in the barony of Erris. The structure of the town today is well defined, with retail and commercial uses primarily located within its town core, and with educational and community uses located on edge of town centre locations.

12.6.3 Function and Vision

Béal an Mhuirthead is located in the Westport-Belmullet Municipal District. The town is recognised as the main service centre for the Northwest of Mayo. The function of Béal an Mhuirthead is to provide local residential, retail, services and community facilities to residents and the wider dispersed, rural hinterland. The town is also a designated Gaeltacht Service Town and the largest settlement within the Mayo Gaeltacht. Opportunity exists to increase the population of the town and enhance jobs and services, by consolidating growth within the existing urban footprint.

The Plan supports measures to provide local employment opportunities and an increase in services, together with measures to visually enhance the public realm and historic character and setting of this settlement. The plan also provides an opportunity to maximise the potential of the strategic location of Béal an Mhuirthead, as a Fáilte Ireland 'Destination Town' along the Wild Atlantic Way.

12.6.4 Economic Development

The largest employment sectors in Béal an Mhuirthead according to the Census 2016 are the services sector and the education & social work sectors both accounting for 27.6%, which is higher than the state average for both sectors, 25.7% and 22.8% respectively. Manufacturing industries (10.9%) and ICT and professional services (8.3%) are the third and fourth largest employment sectors, respectively. The town is well served by Údaras na Gaeltachta, which has a business park accommodating many indigenous firms. Údaras also has a state-of-the-art innovation and digital hub. The economic profile of the town is further supplemented by tourism, hotels, large comparison shops, convenience shops and several independent traders. Potential exists in the town centre in the form of the appropriate development of undeveloped lands and the re-use of existing vacant buildings, to further enhance the convenience and comparison retail offer.

12.6.5 Social Infrastructure

Béal an Mhuirthead also has numerous community, sporting and social clubs. Sports and recreational facilities in the town environs comprise of a tidal swimming pool, MUGA, pier, links golf course, GAA pitches, soccer pitches, a handball alley, and children's playgrounds. Áras Inis Gluaire /Erris Arts Centre is Ireland's only bilingual arts centre. It provides a cultural, social, economic and educational service, via the medium of the arts, for and on behalf of the Erris community.

12.6.6 Physical Infrastructure

Béal an Mhuirthead is served by an existing municipal wastewater treatment plant (2,500PE) and a water supply from the Erris Regional water supply scheme, which is sourced from Carrowmore Lake. There is sufficient capacity in this infrastructure for the projected population increase, as set out in the Core Strategy.

The town is mainly served by the R313 regional route, which intersects with the R314 regional route serving the north coast and the N59 national secondary route in Bangor. The Belmullet Aerodrome is located 3.7 km west of the town. Béal an Mhuirthead benefits from fibre optic broadband infrastructure know as Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) capable of delivering virtually unlimited bandwidth. The town has also been selected as a location for the provision of free outdoor public Wi- Fi hotspots under the European Commission Wifi4EU scheme. This will provide free Wi-Fi for visitors and local residents in the town and hinterland, helping to bring about a digitally connected Mayo.

12.6.7 Heritage and Tourism

There are two protected structures in Béal an Mhuirthead, namely Tallagh House and the Church of Ireland, however, there are many more structures included in the NIAH, all of which contribute to the sense of place and character of the town. Mayo County Council have identified Local Biodiversity Areas within the plan area of the town.

Béal an Mhuirthead due to its scenic and coastal location, is a popular tourist destination. The town was also awarded Tourism Destination Town Status by Fáilte Ireland. There are numerous Blue Flag beaches within the area. A strong tradition of fishing prevails and Béal an Mhuirthead Harbour is a focal point for visiting fishermen and locals alike. This plan seeks to encourage appropriate development within the town to facilitate and support its tourism potential.

The town has a very distinctive and strong cultural and linguistic heritage, and this combined with its role as a tourism is one of the main drivers behind economic growth in the town and region into the future. Béal an Mhuirthead also has a rich history as a market town and facilitates many heritage and craft events such as the Erris Agricultural/Heritage Show.

12.6.8 Sustainable Communities

Béal an Mhuirthead provides an attractive place to live, is rich in heritage, natural beauty and amenity. The town plays an important economic, social and cultural role for its inhabitants and the wider hinterland. It has good community stakeholder engagement and an active Tidy Towns committee. Building on this, the Plan supports Béal an Mhuirthead's transition to a low carbon town through Sustainable Energy Community Belmullet. Works include energy efficiency in buildings, installation of renewable technology, distributive grid and smart grid technology. To help sustainable communities, a strong emphasis is placed on building communities with a high standard of design, on the principles of place-making, green infrastructure, permeability and connectivity alongside the integration of community and recreation facilities and supporting community-led projects. In this regard, a number of Town Centre Opportunity Sites have been identified to encourage development within the town centre.

12.6.9 Sustainable Travel

The private car is the primary mode of transport at 79.14%, which is substantially above the national average (61.40%). In terms of public transport, less than 1% use public transport, which can be attributed to the geographical location of the Béal an Mhuirthead in northwest. The town is located on the daily bus route between Béal an Mhuirthead and Ballina, and private bus operators and a local community bus service operated by the Mayo Local Link serves the town and the surrounding hinterlands. The Council is keen to promote and support the development of public transport initiatives in keeping with the principles of Smarter Travel.

The number of people who walk to their place of work, study and other services in town is above the national average (9.3%). According to 2016 POWCAR, 10.95% of the daily population walk. However, use of cycling as a sustainable mode of travel is less than 1%, compared to the national average (3%). Mayo County Council promotes and supports the development of increased cycling in the town, including the provision of new or retrofitted infrastructure and adherence to DMURS guidance standards.

12.6.10 Placemaking and Regeneration

The main priority, in terms of placemaking, is the appropriate protection and enhancement of the built environment in the town centre, including consolidation and support of existing businesses, in order to maintain vibrancy. Béal an Mhuirthead, as a Destination Town, has secured funding for public realm enhancement works. A public realm plan would provide a planned approach to inform enhancement works in the town centre. The town has also been successful under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme for the provision of covered outdoor spaces for community purposes, which will contribute to a sense of place.

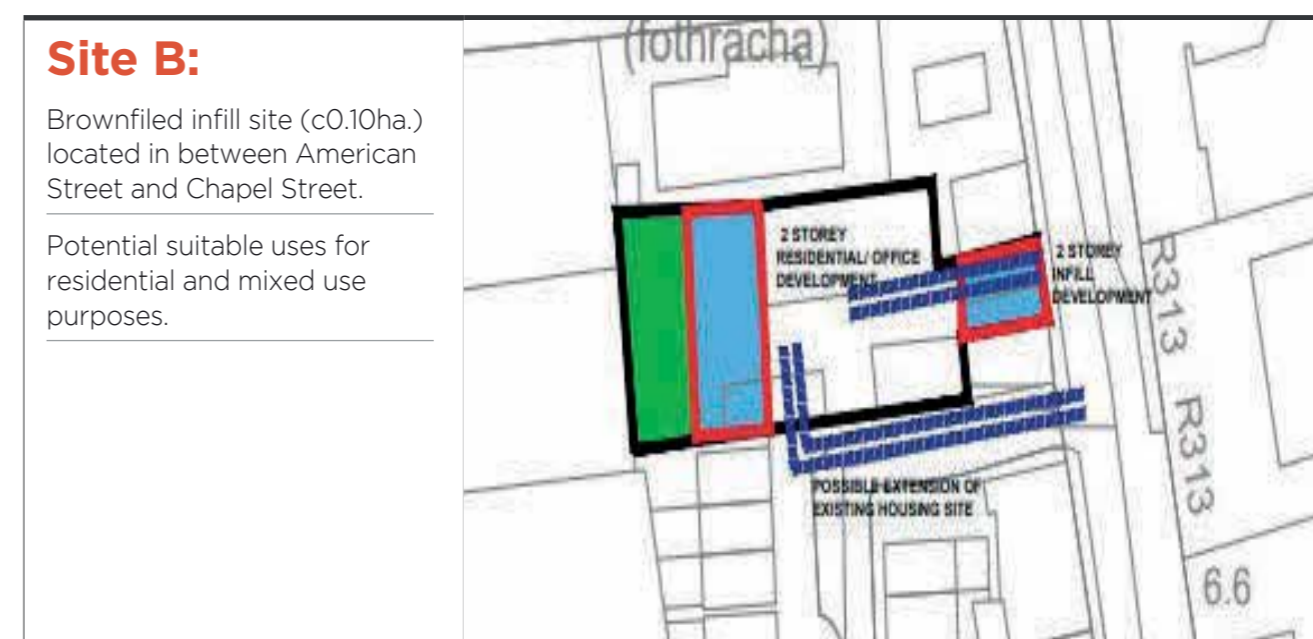
Many buildings in the centre would be suitable for the renovation of upper storeys into residential use. Ground floors should be prioritised for commercial and community uses that activate the street level. Such measures will help sustain town vibrancy, including the evening economy. Mayo County Council maintains a live GIS database of all vacant and derelict buildings in Béal an Mhuirthead and will work with key stakeholders to actively tackle vacancy and dereliction, including through active land management options. Accordingly, the potential exists for better use of under-utilised land, vacant sites and buildings within the existing built-up footprint of Béal an Mhuirthead exists, in order to drive the delivery of quality housing, services and employment opportunities, in tandem with supporting social infrastructure.

12.6.11 Town Centre Opportunity Sites (Refer to Map BT 2)

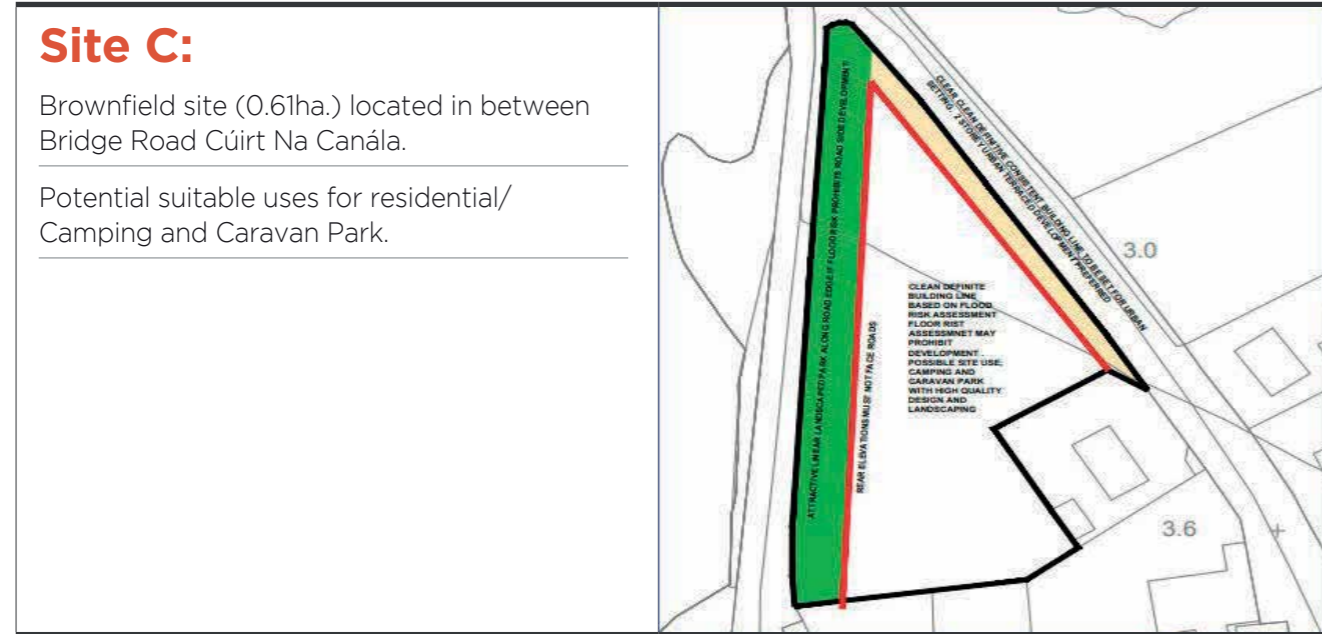
To actively progress town centre regeneration, three Town Centre Opportunity Sites have been identified for comprehensive redevelopment or refurbishment of existing brownfield/infill lands over the lifetime of the plan. The redevelopment of these sites presents an opportunity to contribute to Béal an Mhuirthead's rejuvenation and revitalisation and to the overall improvement of the public realm and visual amenity of the area. An indicative framework has been provided to guide the appropriate development of each site.



Map 12.11 Opportunity Site A Béal an Mhuirthead



Map 12.12 Opportunity Site B Béal an Mhuirthead



Map 12.13 Opportunity Site C Béal an Mhairthead

Béal an Mhairthead Settlement Plan Policies

- BTP 1** To promote the development of Béal an Mhairthead as a driver of economic growth for the Erris region and fulfil its role as a designated Self-Sustaining Growth Town.
- BTP 2** To strengthen and protect the linguistic heritage of the town and to promote use of the Irish language in the public realm through signage and other measures throughout the town centre area.
- BTP 3** To support the provision of a swimming pool in Béal an Mhairthead through public private partnership, assistance to a private promoter or any other means.
- BTP 4** To support community-led development, where appropriate, including the implementation of Community Futures Action Plan for Belmullet (2019-2024) or any amended or superseding Community Futures Plan for the town.
- BTP 5** To support, where appropriate, proposals for the enhancement of the public realm within the town core.

Béal an Mhairthead Settlement Plan Objectives

- BTO 1** To work with local agencies, in particular Údarás na Gaeltachta, to encourage the development and growth of Béal an Mhairthead as an employment centre for the wider rural area.
- BTO 2** To prioritise the construction of a civic amenity site in Béal an Mhairthead.
- BTO 3** To create a more pedestrian friendly environment in the town centre of Béal an Mhairthead.

- BTO 4** To support and facilitate the development of the three identified Town Centre Opportunity Sites in Béal an Mhairthead for appropriate uses, as outlined in Section 12.6.11, and as generally permitted on Town Centre Opportunity Sites in the Land Use Zoning Matrix (Refer to Map BT 2).
- BTO 5** To encourage development in the town of Béal an Mhairthead in accordance with the Land Use Zoning Map.
- BTO 6** To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail and other town centre uses with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach prescribed in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012.
- BTO 7** To use active land management measures, such as the vacant site levy and derelict site levy to ensure the delivery of the projected housing units for Béal an Mhairthead, as set out in the Core Strategy, on Town Centre Opportunity Sites and residential zoned lands.

12.7 Claremorris (Tier II)

12.7.1 Location and Context

Claremorris is located in southeast Mayo at the intersection of the N17 and N60 national routes and within close proximity to a number of large urban centres such as Castlebar, Ballinrobe, Ballyhaunis and Tuam. The town also lies on the Dublin-Westport railway line and provides a wide range of services and amenities to a significant rural hinterland.

The population of Claremorris has nearly doubled in size (92%) over the last twenty years, from 1,914 persons in 1996 (Census figures) to 3,687 persons in 2016 (Census figures). Claremorris is the 4th largest settlement in Mayo, the 18th largest in the Western Region and the 108th largest in the state. According to POWCAR 2016, the total number of jobs located within Claremorris was 1,411. The Claremorris labour catchment is the 19th largest labour catchment in the Western Region with a resident 'at work' population of 2,871 and a job to work ratio of 0.906.

12.7.2 Historical Context and Settlement Form

The town was founded during the late 17th century and early 18th century. The basic linear pattern of the town with its distinctive market square around which the town has grown was already established by the late eighteenth century. The opening of the railway in 1863 strengthened the role of Claremorris and the railway heritage of this era is a distinctive feature of the town.

12.7.3 Function and Vision

Claremorris is located in the Claremorris-Swinford Municipal District. The town is recognised as the main service centre in the southeast of the county and is therefore an important economic driver for the region. Mayo County Council promotes the consolidation of growth within the established footprint of the town in conjunction with regeneration, public realm enhancement, while supporting local employment and the expansion of services to meet the needs of residents and visitors. It is envisioned that Claremorris, along with the Ballyhaunis and Ballinrobe can form a Growth Cluster in South Mayo to harness their combined strengths to contribute towards the consolidation of the Atlantic Economic Corridor.

12.7.4 Economic Development

The main employment sectors in the town according to Census 2016 (POWCAR) is the Services Sector (28.6%), followed by Education, Human Health and Social Work (23.2%) and Manufacturing Industries (12.9%). The town is well served in terms of convenience and comparison shopping, with three of the major supermarket chains located in or close to the town centre. There are two retail parks located along the old Ballindine Road. Potential exists in the town centre in the form of appropriately located undeveloped lands, to further enhance the convenience and comparison retail offer.

12.7.5 Social Infrastructure

Claremorris serves as the retail centre and employment base for a larger rural catchment area and provides a range of services, social amenities and community facilities, including a hotel, library, swimming pool, Town Hall, two national schools, two secondary schools and numerous sporting and social clubs. Located to the south of the town are the Clare and Mayfield Loughs and the looped walk at McMahon Park, which constitute valuable natural amenities and visitor attractions for the town.

12.7.6 Physical Infrastructure

Claremorris is served by the N17 and N60 national routes and has direct rail links to Dublin, and a potential future rail links along the Western Rail Corridor. It is located within a thirty-minute drive of Ireland West Airport Knock and has fibre optic broadband infrastructure (Metropolitan Area Network) available. Claremorris is served by an existing municipal wastewater treatment plant (5,333PE) and has a water supply from the Lough Mask regional water supply scheme. Works by Irish Water to increase the capacity of the municipal wastewater treatment plant (7,900PE) are expected to be completed in 2023, which will provide sufficient capacity for the projected population increase, as set out in the Core Strategy.

12.7.7 Heritage and Tourism

The built heritage of the town is best reflected in the linear street pattern leading to the central square which gives the town its market town atmosphere. There are a number of protected structures (RPS) and historic structures of significance (NIAH) in the town, which greatly contribute to the urban structure and sense of place in the town. The recent development of McMahon Park Loop Walk around Mayfield and Clare Loughs has significantly enhanced the public amenity provision in Claremorris. These amenities have greatly increased the public awareness of the high-quality natural environment and biodiversity that exists on the edges of the urban core. Habitat mapping and a local Biodiversity Action Plan have been completed for Claremorris, which identifies areas of local biodiversity importance in the town.

The attractiveness and potential of Claremorris as a standalone tourist destination and as a base from which to further explore the wider region has developed significantly in the recent years. The recently constructed hotels in the town and the development of the McMahon Loop Walk have been a success in attracting visitors and raising the tourism profile of Claremorris and this strategy aims to consolidate and build on this success.

12.7.8 Sustainable Communities

Claremorris provides an attractive place to live, and is rich in heritage, natural beauty and amenity. The town plays an important economic, social and cultural role for the inhabitants of the town itself and the wider hinterland. The town also has good community stakeholder engagement and an active Tidy Towns committee. The Plan supports Claremorris's transition to a low carbon town, noting that a community-led project by the Claremorris and Western District Energy Co-Operative, were successful in obtaining

planning and financial support for a solar renewable energy project at Streamstown, Claremorris. The cooperative, which is focused on developing renewable energy projects, is a member of Community Power, Ireland's first community-owned renewable electricity supplier. To help create sustainable communities, a strong emphasis is placed on building communities with a high standard of design, the principles of place-making, green infrastructure, permeability and connectivity, alongside the integration of community and recreation facilities. In this regard, a number of Town Centre Opportunity Sites have been identified to encourage development within the town centre.

12.7.9 Sustainable Travel

The number of people who walk to their place of work, study and other services in town is above the national average (9.3%). According to 2016 POWCAR, 15.71% of the daily population walk. However, use of cycling as a sustainable mode of travel is less than 1%, compared to the national average (3%). Therefore, Mayo County Council promotes and supports the development of public transport initiatives, in keeping with the principles of Smarter Travel. Increasing the usage of cycling in the town will require further study (audit), including the provision of new or retrofitted infrastructure and adherence to DMURS guidance standards.

12.7.10 Placemaking and Regeneration

Claremorris provides the focus for a wide range of activities that contribute to a sense of place and identity. Public realm enhancement works to the Town Square in the form of paving, planting and street furniture have greatly increased the attractiveness of the town centre. Further public realm enhancement works to the urban fabric of the town centre will be explored over the plan period. A main priority of the plan is the consolidation, rejuvenation and repopulation of the town centre, which in turn will support local businesses. Central to the physical and social regeneration of the town centre is the development of Town Centre Opportunity Sites. The Plan also includes provisions to encourage the redevelopment of derelict sites and buildings in disrepair on the approaches to the town centre, in particular on Mount Street and James Street.

12.7.11 Town Centre Opportunity Sites (Refer to Map CM 2)

Four Town Centre Opportunity Sites have been identified for comprehensive redevelopment or refurbishment over the lifetime of the plan. The redevelopment of these sites presents an opportunity to contribute to Claremorris's rejuvenation and revitalisation and to the overall improvement of the public realm and visual amenity. An indicative framework has been provided to guide the appropriate development of each site.

Site A: Lands west of Western Rail Corridor

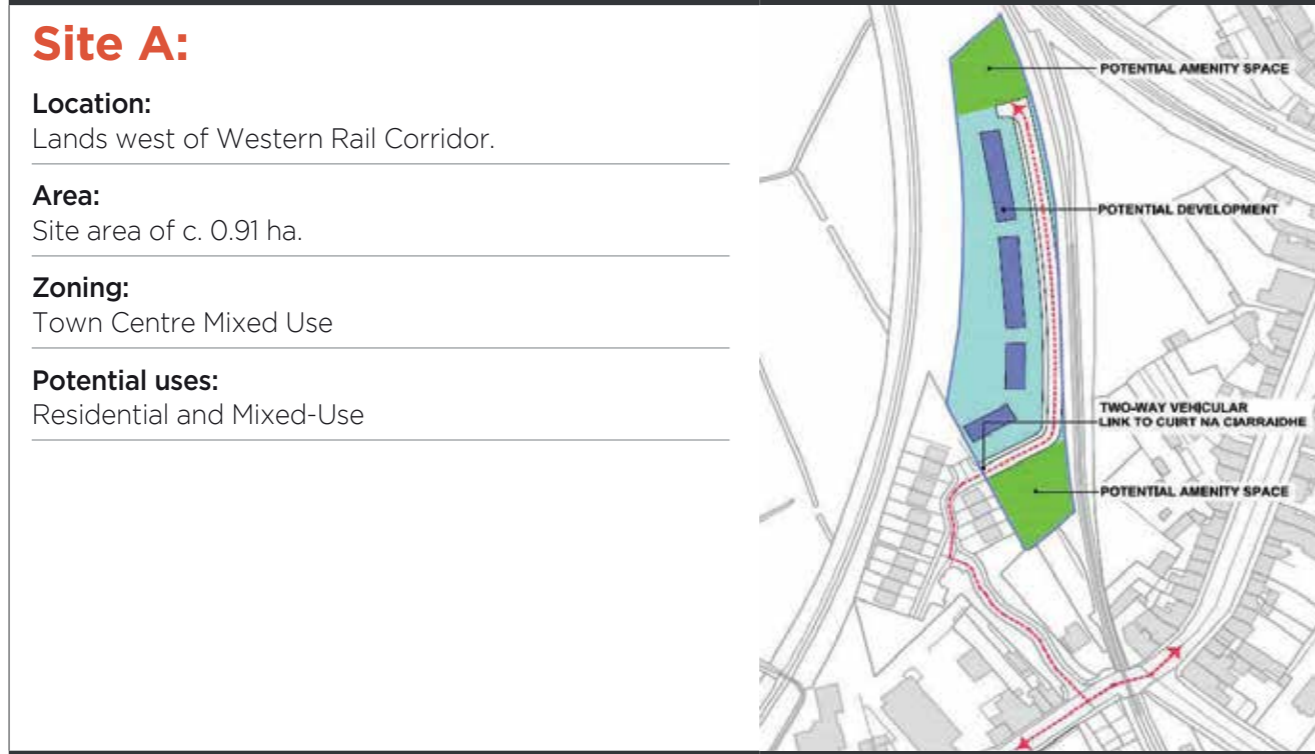
Site B: Lands east of Western Rail Corridor

Site C: Lands at junction of Station Road and New Link Road

Site D: Lands on new link road and to the rear of Mount Street

Site E: Lands rear of Dalton Street.

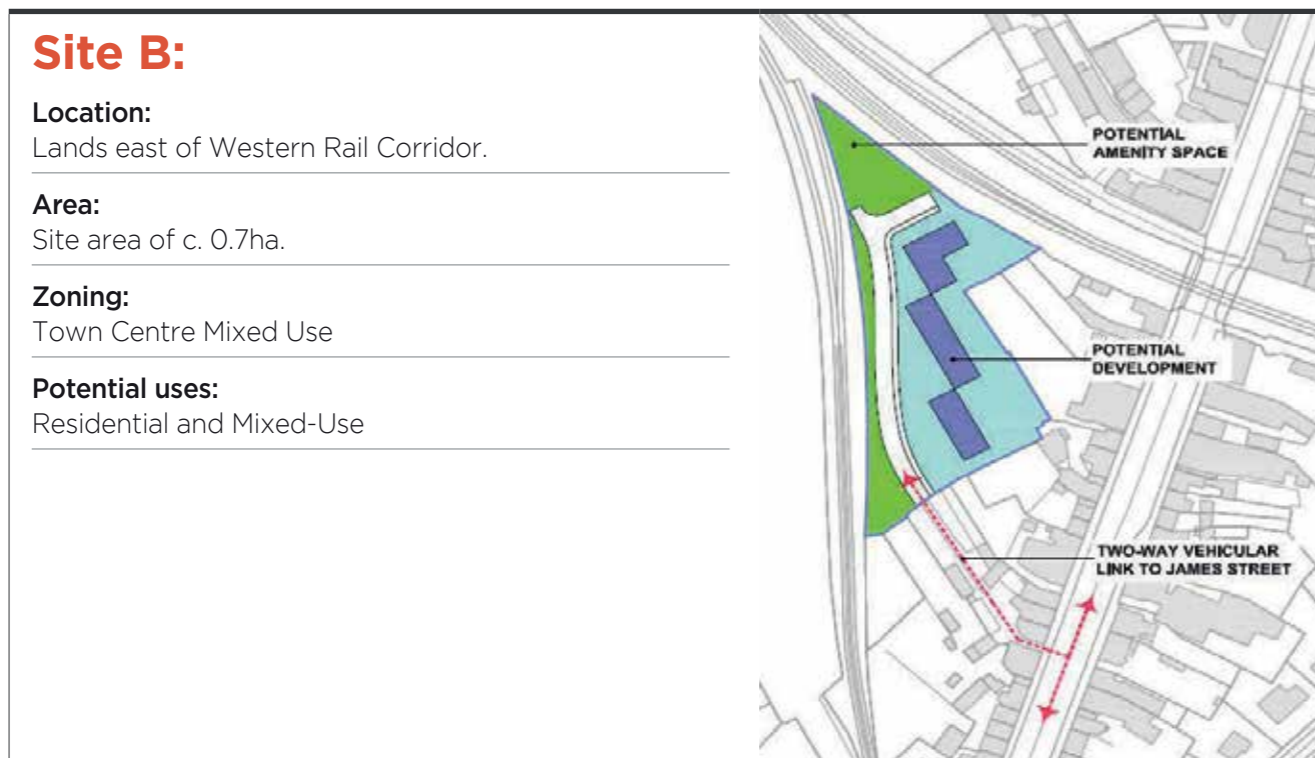
Site F: Lands between Mount Street and Dalton Street.



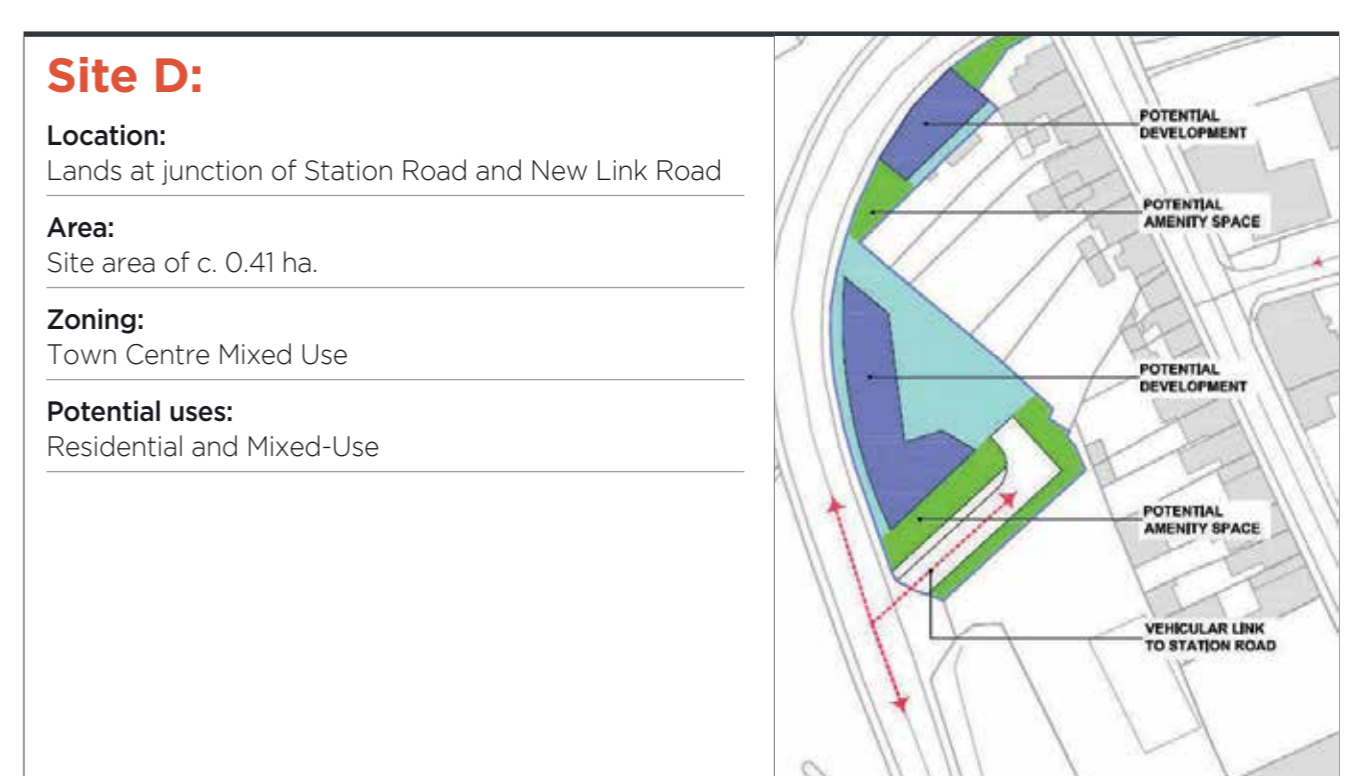
Map 12.14 Opportunity Site A Claremorris



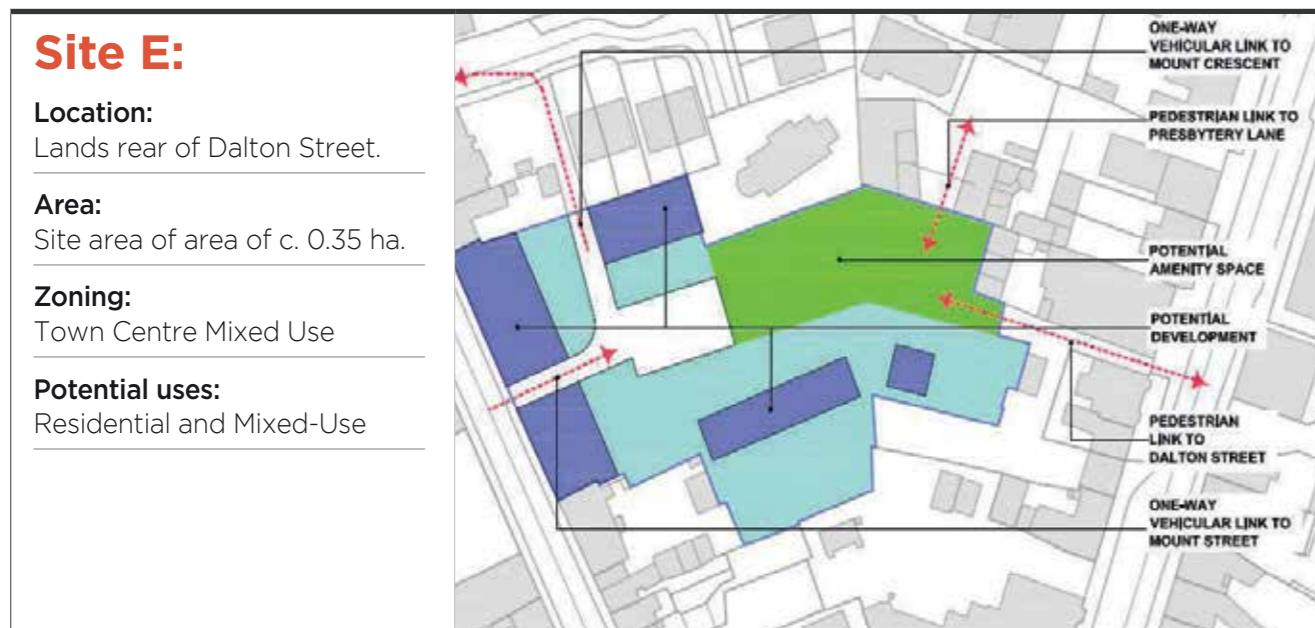
Map 12.16 Opportunity Site C Claremorris



Map 12.15 Opportunity Site B Claremorris



Map 12.17 Opportunity Site D Claremorris



Map 12.18 Opportunity Site E Claremorris



Map 12.19 Opportunity Site F Claremorris

Claremorris Settlement Plan Policies

- CMP 1** To promote the development of Claremorris as a driver of economic growth for the southeast region and fulfil its role as a designated Self-Sustaining Growth Town and to further investigate the potential for the creation of an Economic Growth Cluster in tandem with the towns of Ballinrobe and Ballyhaunis.
- CMP 2** To support and promote the development potential of Claremorris as a transportation hub given its trans-nodal infrastructural location and siting along the Atlantic Economic Corridor.
- CMP 3** To support the reinstatement of the Western Rail Corridor, in particular to actively seek and promote the re-opening of the Claremorris-Galway rail link as well as a link to Sligo; and to safeguard and protect these potential rail links from redevelopment for non-transport related purposes, in order not to preclude their future uses as an operational transportation network.
- CMP 4** To support the development of Claremorris station for passenger and freight services and as a distribution depot.
- CMP 5** To support and develop Claremorris as a low carbon town, in conjunction with relevant stakeholders, including Claremorris and Western District Energy Co-Operative.

Claremorris Settlement Plan Objectives

- CMO 1** To develop an attractive, serviced industrial land bank to the north of the inner relief road, on lands zoned for industrial development suitable for a range of high class and environmentally acceptable business and technology/industrial park type developments.
- CMO 2** To continue to facilitate the further development of the Mayfield Lough and McMahon Park as an amenity / recreation area in Claremorris.
- CMO 3** To support and facilitate the development of the six identified Town Centre Opportunity Sites in Claremorris for appropriate uses, as outlined in Section 12.7.11, and as generally permitted on Town Centre Opportunity Sites in the Land Use Zoning Matrix (Refer to Map CM 2).
- CMO 4** To provide a civic amenity facility in Claremorris.
- To examine the feasibility of, with the aim of constructing, the following road projects within the plan area:
 - i. construction of an inner relief road from the N60 to the old N17
 - ii. construction of a link road from the L-5572-0 (Cloonconner Road) to the old N17 Claremorris/Ballindine Road, with the intention of extinguishing the vehicular right of way on the Cloonconner Road to/from the N17 By-pass. The above road projects will be subject to the normal planning and environmental considerations, including an assessment in accordance with Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive, as appropriate.
- CMO 6** To safeguard and protect the Claremorris By-Pass from development for non-infrastructure related purposes that would prejudice its future use as part of the Western Infrastructural Corridor.

CMO 7	To protect, maintain and enhance, in conjunction with the relevant agencies, the conservation value of Mayfield and Clare Loughs, their associated wetland habitats and rich diversity of plant and animal species and the extent, quality and connectivity of associated surface waters and wetlands as well as to promote the educational role of the lakes.
CMO 8	To protect and enhance the conservation value of the disused railway lines in the town and their setting / margins as wildlife habitats and corridors notwithstanding that such disused railway lines may be developed at some future date as part of the County's infrastructure / greenway network, in a manner that has regard to their inherent conservation value.
CMO 9	To comply with the requirements of the objectives in the Economic Development Chapter of this Plan regarding Seveso II site 'Calor Gas Teo'.
CMO 10	To encourage development in the town of Claremorris in accordance with the Land Use Zoning Map.
CMO 11	To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail and other town centre uses with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach prescribed in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012.
CMO 12	To use active land management measures, such as the vacant site levy and derelict site levy to ensure the delivery of the projected housing units for Claremorris, as set out in the Core Strategy, on Town Centre Opportunity Sites and residential zoned lands.

12.8 Swinford (Tier II)

12.8.1 Location and Context

Swinford is located in east Mayo adjacent to the intersection of the N5 and N26 national routes, on a tributary of the River Moy, the Derryonan River which runs through the town. The N5 lies to the south and the N26 runs through the centre and the town is located less than 30km northeast and southeast of Castlebar and Ballina, respectively. Swinford is located along the disused Western Rail Corridor.

The population of Swinford has marginally increased over the last twenty years, from 1,386 persons in 1996 (Census figures) to 1,394 persons in 2016 (Census figures). Nevertheless, the population of the town has decreased by 7% since 2006, when the population stood at 1,507 persons (Census figures). The population of the town is the 7th largest settlement in Mayo, the 43rd largest in the Western Region and the 217th largest in the state. According to POWCAR 2016, the total number of jobs located within Swinford was 926. The Swinford labour catchment is the 37th largest labour catchment in the Western Region with a resident 'at work' population of 1,118 and a job to work ratio of 2.332.

12.8.2 History and Settlement Form

The origin of Swinford is attributed to a ford crossing the river. The present-day settlement form is attributed to the Brabazon family, who planned the town on their estate. The demesne known as Brabazon Woods is part of the original estate and is a popular amenity in the town. The opening of the railway in the late 19th century strengthened the role of Swinford and the railway heritage of this era is a distinct feature of the town. The urban fabric of Swinford is historically rich, including key buildings which have been conserved and maintained for modern uses.

12.8.3 Function and Vision

Swinford is located in the Claremorris-Swinford Municipal District. The town is the established administrative, commercial and service centre for a considerable hinterland in this part of the county. There are a number of significant employers in the public and private sector, including in the areas of healthcare and pharmaceuticals. Mayo County Council promotes the consolidation of growth within the established footprint of the town in conjunction with regeneration, public realm enhancement, while supporting local employment and the expansion of services to meet the needs of residents and visitors. Opportunities exist for Swinford to develop in a sustainable manner by reason of its close proximity to Ireland West Airport Knock and its location within the Atlantic Economic Corridor region.

12.8.4 Economic Development

The largest employment sector in the Swinford labour catchment according to the Census 2016 is the Services Sector (34.6%), followed by Education, Human Health and Social Work (25.8%), ICT and Professional Services (14.2%) and Manufacturing Industries (11.9%). The town is well served in terms of convenience and comparison shopping with a major supermarket chain located on the southern edge of the town centre, a smaller supermarket in the town centre and a variety of independent traders in the town core. There is a Chamber of Commerce in Swinford who actively work towards the long-term sustainability of local business growth and development of the local economy in the town.

Mayo County Council and the Western Development Commission (WDC) are working in collaboration to deliver "DigiWest", a rural digital working hub network. The Council have selected the former courthouse in Swinford as the first digital hub under this project, with funding under the RRDF. The aim of this hub network is to provide a resource to local entrepreneurs, workers and communities in providing workspace with high-speed telecommunications capacity along the AEC.

12.8.5 Social Infrastructure

Swinford is the retail centre and employment base for a larger rural catchment area and provides a range of services, social amenities and community facilities. These include a library, District Garda Headquarters, a district hospital, a post office, medical centres, a cultural centre, pre-school, primary school, secondary school, churches, banks, a Credit Union, enterprise centre, retail shops, public houses and a hotel. Swinford has numerous social and sporting clubs, amenity walks and a golf course.

12.8.6 Physical Infrastructure

Swinford is served by the N5 and N26 national roads. The town also has direct bus links to Dublin, is located within fifteen-minute drive of Ireland West Airport Knock and has VDSL broadband (Very high-speed Digital Subscriber Line) available. Swinford is served by an existing municipal wastewater treatment plant (6,500PE) and a public water supply sourced from the Carrowcanada Spring. There is sufficient capacity in this infrastructure to cater for the projected population increase as set out in the Core Strategy. Swinford has been selected as a location for the provision of free outdoor public Wi-Fi hotspots under the European Commission Wifi4EU scheme. This will provide free Wi-Fi for visitors and local residents in the town and hinterland, helping to bring about a digitally connected Mayo.

12.8.7 Heritage and Tourism

There are a number of protected structures (RPS) and historic structures of significance in the town, which greatly contribute to the urban structure and sense of place. The protection, promotion and enhancement of the built and natural heritage of the town and its immediate environs is promoted in

this plan. This includes the enhancement of features and areas considered unique and important and the protection of watercourses, while enhancing the accessibility and amenity value of same. These are measures which will also increase the tourist potential of the area. Mayo County Council have also identified local biodiversity areas in Swinford and have recently prepared a Local Biodiversity Area Plan for the town.

Swinford is renowned for its fishing waters in particular the Callow lakes which yield excellent brown trout. Pony trekking and nature walks are among the many activities on offer to the visitor, along with a wealth of archaeological sites within walking distance. The Brabazon Woodlands is an important amenity for the residents and visitors to the town.

12.8.8 Sustainable Communities

Swinford provides an attractive place to live, is rich in heritage, natural beauty and amenity. The town plays an important economic, social and cultural role for the inhabitants of the town itself and the wider hinterland. Swinford has an active Town Towns committee and many other organisations that contribute to the community of the town. The Plan supports community-led initiatives to transition to a low carbon town, including the formation of community power company, similar to Claremorris. To help create sustainable communities, a strong emphasis is placed on building communities with a high standard of design, on the principles of place-making, green infrastructure, permeability and connectivity alongside the integration of community and recreation facilities and supporting community-led projects. In this regard, a number of Town Centre Opportunity Sites have been identified to encourage development within the town centre.

12.8.9 Sustainable Travel

The number of people who walk to their place of work, study and other services in town is below the national average (9.3%). According to 2016 POWCAR, 8.53% of the daily population walk. However, use of cycling as a sustainable mode of travel is less than 1%, compared to the national average (3%). In terms of public transport, 8.47% of people use the bus daily, which is above the national average (5.9%). Therefore, Mayo County Council promotes and supports the development of public transport initiatives, in keeping with the principles of Smarter Travel. Increasing the usage of cycling in the town will require further study (audit), including the provision of new or retrofitted infrastructure and adherence to DMURS guidance standards.

12.8.10 Placemaking and Regeneration

The historically rich urban fabric in the centre of Swinford defines the existing character of the town, with wide main streets and an abundance of impressive two and three storey buildings, albeit with significant levels of vacancy and dereliction. The vernacular architecture makes a strong contribution to the character of the streetscapes and adds to a sense of place in the town. An objective of this plan is the preparation of a public realm plan for Swinford over the lifetime of the plan.

A main priority of the plan is the sympathetic regeneration and reoccupation of the derelict sites and buildings in the town centre. Mayo County Council maintains a live GIS database of all vacant and derelict buildings in Swinford and will work with key stakeholders to actively tackle vacancy and dereliction, including through active land management options. In 2015, the Swinford Urban Regeneration Study was carried out by the Council, which identified key regeneration sites in the town centre area. These sites have been incorporated as Town Centre Opportunity Sites of this plan.

12.8.11 Town Centre Opportunity Sites (Refer to Map SD 2)

Six Town Centre Opportunity Sites have been identified for comprehensive redevelopment or refurbishment over the lifetime of the plan. The redevelopment of these sites presents a significant opportunity to rejuvenate and revitalise Swinford town centre and make it desirable to live, work and invest. An indicative framework has been provided to guide the appropriate development of each site.

Site A: Lands abutting Glebe House off Main Street

Site B: Part of rear garden of Glebe House

Site C: Lands off Station Road adjoining the WRC

Site D: Lands off Brookfield Avenue

Site E: Lands off Brookfield Avenue and Rivergarden.

Site F: Pound Lane

Site G: Station Road



Map 12.20 Opportunity Site A Swinford

<p>Site B:</p> <p>Location: Part of rear garden of Glebe House.</p> <p>Area: The site area of 0.107ha.</p> <p>Zoning: Town Centre Mixed Use</p> <p>Potential uses: Residential and Mixed-Use</p>	<p>POTENTIAL RETAIL UNITS FRONTING ONTO FUTURE PUBLIC SPACE</p>
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Map 12.21 Opportunity Site B Swinford

<p>Site E:</p> <p>Location: Lands off Brookfield Avenue and Rivergarden.</p> <p>Area: Site area of c. 0.45 ha..</p> <p>Zoning: Town Centre Mixed Use</p> <p>Potential uses: Residential and Mixed-Use</p>	<p>POTENTIAL RIVERSIDE AMENITY SPACE</p> <p>TWO-WAY VEHICULAR LINK TO MAIN STREET</p> <p>POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>PEDESTRIAN LINK TO BRIDGE STREET</p>
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Map 12.24 Opportunity Site E Swinford

<p>Site C:</p> <p>Location: Lands off Station Road adjoining the WRC.</p> <p>Area: Site area of c. 0.14 ha.</p> <p>Zoning: Town Centre Mixed Use</p> <p>Potential uses: Residential and Mixed-Use</p>	<p>POTENTIAL AMENITY SPACE</p> <p>EXISTING STRUCTURES RETAINED</p> <p>VEHICULAR LINK TO MAIN STREET</p> <p>POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT</p>
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Map 12.22 Opportunity Site C Swinford

<p>Site F:</p> <p>Location: Pound Lane.</p> <p>Area: Site area of c. 0.43ha.</p> <p>Zoning: Town Centre Mixed Use</p> <p>Potential uses: Residential and Mixed-Use</p>	<p>INDOOR MARKET CONNECTING THROUGH TO MARKET STREET</p> <p>POTENTIAL MIXED USE COMMERCIAL / RESIDENTIAL TO COMPLEMENT THE POUND LANE REGION</p> <p>MARKET / ARTISAN / POP-UP UNITS</p> <p>POUND LANE PEDESTRIAN ZONE</p> <p>PUBLIC PLAZA</p> <p>POTENTIAL MIXED USE RESIDENTIAL AND STUDIOS / WORKSHOPS</p> <p>POTENTIAL CIVIC SPACE CONNECTING DIGITAL HUB TO POUND LANE</p> <p>DIGITAL HUB</p>
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Map 12.25 Opportunity Site F Swinford

<p>Site D:</p> <p>Location: Lands off Brookfield Avenue.</p> <p>Area: Site area of c. 0.16 ha.</p> <p>Zoning: Town Centre Mixed Use</p> <p>Potential uses: Residential and Mixed-Use</p>	<p>EXISTING STRUCTURES RETAINED</p> <p>VEHICULAR LINK TO BROOKEVILLE AVENUE</p> <p>POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT</p>
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Map 12.23 Opportunity Site D Swinford

<p>Site G:</p> <p>Location: Station Road.</p> <p>Area: Site area of c.0.11 ha.</p> <p>Zoning: Town Centre Mixed Use</p> <p>Potential uses: Residential and Mixed-Use</p>	
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Map 12.26 Opportunity Site G Swinford

Swinford Settlement Plan Policies

- SDP 1** To promote the development of Swinford as a driver of economic growth for the east region of Mayo and fulfil its role as a designated Self-Sustaining Growth Town.
- SDP 2** To support and promote the reinstatement of the Western Rail Corridor.
- SDP 3** To support community-led developments, where appropriate, including the implementation of Community Futures Action Plan for Swinford (2013-2018) or any amended or superseding Community Futures Plan for the town.

Swinford Settlement Plan Objectives

- SDO 1** To protect and enhance existing amenity facilities in Swinford, particularly the golf course, tennis courts, Amenity Park and Brabazon Woods.
- SDO 2** To protect and enhance areas considered unique and important in the town such as the Courthouse, the Famine Graveyard and Church of Ireland Graveyard, the Church, the Railway Bridge, the Signal Box and the Water Tower.
- SDO 3** To support and facilitate the development of the six identified Town Centre Opportunity Sites in Swinford for appropriate uses, as outlined in Section 12.8.11, and as generally permitted on town centre Opportunity Sites in the Land Use Zoning Matrix (Refer to Map SD 2).
- SDO 4** To develop the local economy by encouraging additional healthcare and pharmaceutical industries in the town and to promote the clustering of such industries on suitably zoned land.
- SDO 5** To ensure infill development respects the unique height-to-ratio building design in Swinford town centre along Market Street and Main Street.
- SDO 6** To protect the Spaddagh and Derryronan Rivers and all water courses and surface waters within the area, their water quality, ecology and function as ecological corridors, in this regard developers are required to show that any proposed development in the town will not adversely affect the integrity of the River Moy candidate Special Area of Conservation.
- SDO 7** To develop and maintain a pedestrian access to Pound Street car park from the town centre.
- SDO 8** To examine the feasibility of enhancing the link between the town centre and the Tesco development site.
- SDO 9** To support and facilitate the local community in measures to commemorate Swinford 2050 including oak tree planting on site to the rear of the former vocational school.
- SDO 10** To encourage development in the town of Swinford in accordance with the Land Use Zoning Map.
- SDO 11** To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail and other town centre uses with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach prescribed in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012.
- SDO 12** To use active land management measures, such as the vacant site levy and derelict site levy to ensure the delivery of the projected housing units for Swinford, as set out in the Core Strategy, on Town Centre Opportunity Sites and residential zoned lands (Refer to Map SD 2).

- SDO 13** To develop and maintain a civic and parking area on the infill lands located between Main Street, St Ita's Terrace and Circular Road and to establish an appropriate traffic management plan to allow access from Main Street, Market Street and Circular Road.
- SDO 14** No new incompatible development is permitted within Flood Zone A/B areas and that these areas be maintained for the impacts of climate change in accordance with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines (DoEHLG/OPW 2009) and Circular PL2/2014 (or any updated/superseding document).

12.9 Balla (Tier III)

12.9.1 Location and Context

The town of Balla is located on the N60 national route, approximately 13km southeast of Castlebar and northwest of Claremorris. Balla is the 14th largest settlement in Mayo. The population of the town has more than doubled (143%) over the last twenty years, from 316 persons in 1996 (Census figures) to 769 persons in 2016 (Census figures). The focus of the settlement plan is to encourage job creation and population growth within the built-up footprint of the town, combined with service provision and attracting investment into the town.

12.9.2 Historical Context and Settlement Form

Balla was originally known as Ros-Dairbhreach, the Oak Grove, and got its present name in the 7th Century from its association with St. Cronin. The town has developed north of the railway line and station in a linear form along the N60, with one wide main street and a local road providing access east of Main Street. Balla maintains a village character, however, there have been a number of housing developments constructed on the northern outskirts of the town, towards Castlebar. The structure of the town is well defined, with retail and commercial uses primarily located within its town core. Housing developments have been constructed along 'an Straid Mhor' Road beside St. Cronans Church and Balla primary school and an opportunity exists to consolidate development, by strengthening physical linkages between existing residential areas and the town centre and encouraging infill development, over the shop development, redevelopment, or occupancy of vacant properties.

12.9.3 Function and Vision

Balla is located in the Castlebar Municipal District and functions primarily as a commuter town for larger urban centres, particularly Castlebar, which has influenced its rate of expansion. Balla provides a range of services and facilities to meet the daily needs of the local population. Consolidated growth within the development footprint, regeneration, supporting local employment, expansion of services to meet the needs of residents and visitors, together with measures to visually enhance the public realm will be key in realising the potential of Balla as a Tier III Self-Sustaining Town.

12.9.4 Economic Development

Balla provides a range of medium to small retail outlets, as well as public houses and restaurants. Balla Mushrooms is a large-scale mushroom producer and employer in the area, while Balla Livestock Mart is located north of the town along the N60 attracting farmers into the town. Opportunities exist for the town to enhance its retail offer and the Council will look favourably upon the re-use of existing, vacant buildings in the town core for appropriate uses, such as local level convenience shopping in the town.

12.9.5 Social Infrastructure

Balla provides a range of services, social and community facilities, including a post office, pre-school, primary school, secondary school, community centre, parish hall, church, salons, a pharmacy, medical centre, community centre, retail outlets, restaurants and public houses.

Balla also has numerous community groups, a strong community council and Tidy Towns committee and has benefited from the Community Futures Action Planning Process. South West Mayo Development Company is located in Balla and has developed numerous community-based programmes for the town. Balla won the national Pride of Place award in the 300-1000 population category in 2018. It is home to numerous sporting and social clubs along with recreational facilities. Sports and recreational facilities in the town include the town park, the GAA club, golf course with pitch and putt and children's playground.

12.9.6 Physical Infrastructure

Balla is located on the N60, which directly connects the town to the large urban centres of Castlebar and Ballina. The town is served by an existing municipal wastewater treatment plant (1,200PE) and a water supply from the Lough Mask Regional Public Water Scheme. There is sufficient capacity in this infrastructure to accommodate additional population increases in the town over the plan period. The town has high speed broadband and has been selected as a location for the provision of free outdoor public Wi-Fi hotspots under the European Commission Wifi4EU scheme. This will provide free Wi-Fi for visitors and residents in the town and hinterland, helping to bring about a digitally connected Mayo.

12.9.7 Heritage and Tourism

Balla's built heritage consists of its planned form, protected structures (2), record monuments (12) and local vernacular buildings, all of which are reflective of the historical development, sense of place and character of the town. Mayo County Council has identified 'Local Biodiversity Areas' in the town, which includes a strategy for the management of local biodiversity. The Balla Tower is one the main tourist assets in the town. The town park is another amenity available to residents and visitors alike. Balla is a base for many of Mayo's tourist assets and products, with the Balla Tower to Ballintubber Walk forming part of the Croagh Patrick Heritage Trail.

12.9.8 Sustainable Communities

Balla provides an attractive place to live and is rich in heritage and amenity. Community development is a core ethos amongst residents and there are many community organisations and groups which deliver programmes to enhance the town as a place to live and visit, for example a Community Futures Action Plan (2017 -2022) has been prepared for the town. Balla is located along the main daily bus route between Castlebar and Galway. A local community bus service operated by the Mayo Local Link also serves the town and the surrounding hinterlands. The County Council is keen to promote and support the development of public transport initiatives in keeping with the principles of Smarter Travel.

The development strategy for Balla is to facilitate compact growth and re-populate the town core, together with providing a viable alternative to single rural housing within the surrounding countryside. New residential development will focus on compact growth to encourage a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling. Stronger connections and linkages between residential settlements and the town centre is important in ensuring sustainable communities. A strong emphasis will be placed on the principles of green infrastructure, permeability and connectivity, alongside the integration of community and recreation facilities to assist with developing sustainable communities. It is necessary to consolidate and ensure the delivery of sustainable communities in Balla by accommodation a mix of housing types, densities, tenure and a high standard of design.

12.9.9 Placemaking and Regeneration

Balla is an attractive town with a village ethos. The Town Park, Balla Round Tower and Fair Green are significant amenity assets in the town and contribute to sense of place for the town. The disused water tower south of St. Cronan's Church is a landmark structure. The "Dawn Oak 2000" project took place to mark the Millennium where 2000 oak trees were planted, creating a new wood in the town park. Balla provides the focus for a wide range of activities that contribute to a sense of place and identity, including tidy towns, village enhancement programmes and 'pride of place'. The town plays an important economic, social and cultural role. It is a priority to consolidate the existing centre and support existing businesses and activities, in order to maintain vibrancy. There is potential for regeneration of under-utilised lands, vacant sites and buildings within the existing built- up footprint of Balla, which will assist in revitalising and repopulating the town centre. Enhancement works comprising of paving, upgrading of pedestrian footpaths and crossings will enhance the attractive, traditional character of Balla.

12.9.10 Opportunity Sites

Two Opportunity Sites have been identified for Balla (Refer to Map):

Opportunity Site 1

Northern end of Elm Gardens Road to the east of Balla town centre.

Opportunity Site 2

Southern end of Elm Gardens Road to the east of Balla town centre.

These opportunity sites have been identified in Balla for residential purposes to further contribute to the rejuvenation and revitalisation close to and within the town centre. Proposals for development within the opportunity sites should be accompanied by a site brief and should comply with national guidelines that seek to achieve sustainable compact development and to integrate principles of good urban design and placemaking.

Balla Settlement Plan Policies

BAP 1	To support community-led developments, where appropriate, including the implementation of the Community Futures Action Plan for Balla (2017-2022) or any amended or superseding Community Futures Plan for the town.
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Balla Settlement Plan Objectives

BAO 1	To protect and enhance existing amenity areas/facilities in Balla, particularly the round tower, fair green, town park, and its sporting and recreational facilities.
BAO 2	To protect the town park and encourage its enhancement through the Neighbourhood Scheme (2017).
BAO 3	To support and facilitate pedestrian mobility and safety in the town by introducing traffic calming measures and pedestrian crossings.

BAO 4 To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail and other town centre uses with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach prescribed in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012.

BAO 5 To support and facilitate the development of the two identified Opportunity Sites in Balla for residential development, as outlined in Section 12.9.10 (Refer to Map).

12.10 Charlestown (Tier III)

12.10.1 Location and Context

Charlestown is located in northeast Mayo, adjacent to the N17 and N5 national routes and on the Mayo/Sligo border. It is situated approximately 50km northeast of Castlebar, approximately 9km north of Ireland West Airport Knock (IWAK) and is linked to Bellaghy to the north, which is in County Sligo. Charlestown is the 11th largest settlement in Mayo; however, this figure includes Bellaghy. The Charlestown labour catchment has a resident 'at work' population of 962, and a job to work ratio of 0.739. The population of the town has significantly increased (53%) over the last twenty years, from 675 persons in 1996 (Census figures) to 1,033 persons in 2016 (Census figures). The focus of the settlement plan is encouraging job creation and population growth within the built-up footprint of the town, combined with service provision and attracting investment into the town.

12.10.2 Historical Context and Settlement Form

Charlestown is the youngest town in County Mayo and dates back to 1846 when the first house was built on what was previously bog with stepping-stones to the town of Bellaghy. The town is a planned town with wide streets and a central location for trading. The River Mullaghanoe is located on the western boundary of the town, which has developed to the east of the river. The structure of the town is well defined, with retail and commercial uses primarily located within its town core, and educational and other community uses generally on the outskirts.

12.10.3 Function and Vision

Charlestown is located in the Claremorris-Swinford Municipal District. The town functions as a market town and local service centre, providing retail, residential, service and amenity functions for the local population and wider rural hinterland. The strategic location of Charlestown, along the AEC and proximity to IWAK and its economic SDZ, presents opportunities in terms of population growth, enterprise and employment opportunities. The plan supports measures to support local employment opportunities and an increase in services, together with measures to visually enhance the public realm, which will be key in realising the potential of Charlestown as a Tier III Self-Sustaining Town.

12.10.4 Economic Development

The main employment sectors in the town according to Census 2016 are Education, Human Health and Social Work (27.5%), followed by the Services Sector (24.4%), and Manufacturing Industries (13.8%). The town is well served in terms of convenience and comparison shopping, with a range of medium to small retail outlets, as well as public houses and restaurants which provide a range of employment. The Westpoint Business Centre also provides space for start-ups and enterprise hubs.

12.10.5 Social Infrastructure

Charlestown provides a range of services, social and community facilities, including a garda station, library, outdoor swimming pool, arts centre, town hall, post office, medical centre, pre-school, primary school, secondary school, Roman Catholic church, retail outlets, restaurants and public houses. Charlestown has numerous community, sporting and social clubs. Sports and recreational facilities in the town include the GAA club, Multi Use Games Area and children's playground in the town park.

12.10.6 Physical Infrastructure

A new municipal wastewater treatment plant (3,250PE) is planned for Charlestown with an expected completion date of 2020/2021, while Charlestown's drinking water is sourced from a well at Tombohola outside the town. The town is located along the main daily bus routes between Ballina and Dublin Airport and Galway and Derry. A local community bus service operated by the Mayo Local Link serves the town and the surrounding hinterlands. The town is located on the north-south axis of the disused Western Rail Corridor linking Mayo with Sligo. The County Council continues to promote and support the development of public transport initiatives in keeping with the principles of Smarter Travel.

12.10.7 Heritage and Tourism

Charlestown is a planned town with wide streets lending to the design and aesthetic of the town. The Mullaghanoe River is the main natural asset, which is part of the River Moy SAC. Along the river there is an informal riverside walk. Charlestown contains protected structures (2) and recorded monuments (7), which contribute to its sense of place. Knock Shrine, and Ireland West Airport Knock are in close proximity to Charlestown. Potential exists for the development of tourist accommodation for visitors travelling to and from these locations.

12.10.8 Sustainable Communities

A Community Futures Action Plan (2015-2020) has been prepared for Charlestown. The development strategy for Charlestown is to facilitate compact growth and re-population of the town core, together with providing a viable alternative to single rural housing within the surrounding countryside. Settlement patterns play a fundamental role in influencing how people travel, both the distances undertaken and the modal choice. The provision of sustainable mobility options is only realistic for the town when development patterns locate populations close to employment centres and complementary services such as education, retail, leisure and community facilities.

Stronger linkages between the existing residential settlements and the town centre are important in ensuring sustainable communities. New residential development must focus on compact growth, in order to encourage a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling. A strong emphasis will be placed on the principles of green infrastructure, permeability and connectivity, alongside the integration of community and recreation facilities to assist with developing sustainable communities. It is necessary to consolidate and ensure the delivery of sustainable communities in Charlestown comprising of a mix of housing types, densities and tenure of a high standard of design.

12.10.9 Place Making and Regeneration

The town square area located on the junctions of the N5 and N17 routes provides the focus for a wide range of activities that contribute to a sense of place and identity. Enhancement works would revitalise the town centre and provide social and environmental benefits to the local community and visitors to the town. There is potential for better use of under-utilised lands, vacant sites and buildings within

the existing built-up footprint of Charlestown to drive the delivery of quality housing, services and employment opportunities, in tandem with supporting social infrastructure. Opportunities such as the further development of the river walk along the River Mullaghanoe, protection of the handball alley and Fairgreen, and appropriate planting, paving and lighting are supported by Mayo County Council.

12.10.10 Opportunity Sites

Two Opportunity Sites have been identified for Charlestown (Refer to Map):

Opportunity Site 1

At Lavery Heights to the rear (south) of the properties on Chapel Street.

Opportunity Site 2

To the east of the existing Pine Grove estate on the southern edge of the town.

These opportunity sites have been identified in Charlestown for residential purposes to further contribute to the rejuvenation and revitalisation close to and within the town centre. Proposals for development within the opportunity sites should be accompanied by a site brief and should comply with national guidelines that seek to achieve sustainable compact development and to integrate principles of good urban design and placemaking.

Charlestown Settlement Plan Policies

CNP 1 To support community-led developments, where appropriate, including the implementation of the Community Futures Action Plan for Charlestown (2015-2020) or any amended or superseding Community Futures Plan for the town.

CNP 2 To promote and market Charlestown as an Enterprise Centre.

CNP 3 To support the reinstatement of the Western Rail Corridor, in particular actively seek and promote the re-opening of the Claremorris-Galway rail link, as well as a link to Sligo and to safeguard and protect these potential rail links from redevelopment for non-transport related purposes, in order not to preclude their future uses as an operational transportation network.

Charlestown Settlement Plan Objectives

CNO 1 To revitalise the town centre and encourage the redevelopment of the backland areas to the rear of Church Street and Main Street where it can be demonstrated the development will not have adverse effects on the integrity of the River Moy SAC.

CNO 2 To support and facilitate the construction of the N17 Knock to Collooney Atlantic Economic Corridor Road Project, which includes the N17 Charlestown By-pass.

CNO 3 To protect and enhance existing amenity facilities in Charlestown, particularly the fair green, bowling alley, football pitch and the river area.

CNO 4 To protect and enhance areas considered unique and important in the town such as the church, the library, the Arts centre, the Town Hall, the railway line and railway station, Westpoint Business Centre and the health centre.

CNO 5 To secure sites for town centre parking.

CNO 6 To protect the Mullaghanoe River as a salmonid status water course, and all water courses and surface waters within the area, their water quality, ecology and function as ecological corridors and as potential influences on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites within an appropriate radial buffer zone.

CNO 7 To continue to work and co-operate with Sligo County Council to ensure that a coherent and consistent strategy continues to be applied for the overall development of the Charlestown- Bellaghy Area.

CNO 8 To support local sports and community groups in delivering facilities, including the delivery of a new town park on a site identified adjacent to the Church.

CNO 9 To improve and enhance the river walkway within the town and pedestrian linkages within the town.

CNO 10 To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail and other town centre uses with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach prescribed in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012.

CNO 11 To support and facilitate the development of the two identified Opportunity Sites in Charlestown for residential development, as outlined in Section 12.10.10 (Refer to Map).

12.11 Crossmolina (Tier III)

12.11.1 Location and Context

Crossmolina is situated on the Deel River, along the northern shores of Lough Conn, approximately 9 km west of Ballina. The town is located at the intersection of the N59 and the R315, a location from which there is ease of access to some of the most scenic places in Ireland, including Lough Conn, the Nephin Mountains and Ballycroy National Park. Crossmolina is the 2nd largest town in north Mayo and the 10th largest settlement in Mayo. The population of the town has marginally decreased (5.3%) over the last twenty years, from 1,103 persons in 1996 (Census figures) to 1,044 persons in 2016 (Census figures).

12.11.2 History Context and Settlement Form

Crossmolina derives its name from the Irish Crois Ui Mhaoiliona meaning "Cross of Mullany." This name is said to be in memory of O' Maolfhiona, a chieftain of the ancient rulers of Clan Fiachra. The parliamentary Gazette compiled in the 1840's refers to Crossmolina as a market and post town with a population of 1,481 persons in 1831 and 1,672 in 1841, respectively. In terms of form, the town has developed on both the eastern and western banks of the River Deel, resulting in a split urban core. The eastern banks are loosely defined by the junction of Ballina Street and Mullinamore Street and the western banks are loosely defined by the junction of Church Street and Erris Road. The street layout of Crossmolina reflects the historical pattern of growth since the early 19th century configuration. This morphology is characterised by strong built edges and varying plot widths. In more recent times, the town has expanded in a linear form, along all approach roads, but most especially along the Ballina Road.

12.11.3 Function and Vision

Crossmolina is situated within the Ballina Municipal District. The town functions primarily as a service town and provides a range of services and facilities to meet the needs of the local population. Crossmolina provides important local level retailing, social and leisure functions to the wider hinterland. The vision for Crossmolina is to enhance the level of jobs, services and residential development, through consolidated growth within the existing urban footprint. This will involve supporting regeneration of existing vacant buildings and under-utilised sites, to provide residential, local services and employment opportunities. In addition, the plan supports measures to visually enhance the public realm, the historic character and the setting of Crossmolina.

12.11.4 Economic Development

The main employment sector in Crossmolina is the service sector, in particular retail outlets. The town is well served in terms of convenience and comparison shopping, with two medium sized supermarkets located on the eastern and western sides of the River Deel. These are supplemented by a number of independent traders. Opportunities exist for the town to enhance its retail offering. In this regard, Mayo County Council will look favourably upon the re-use of existing vacant buildings in the town core for local level convenience and comparison shopping, including tourism/niche comparison outlets.

12.11.5 Social Infrastructure

Community services within and close to Crossmolina include a national school, two secondary schools. St. Tiernan's College also provides adult education courses in the form of PLCs. Other services available in the town include a town hall, library, childcare facilities, playground, banks, post office, medical centre, tourist office, garda station and sporting and recreational facilities. In recent years there have been a number of positive developments in the town, including a new MUGA and the creation of a linear park and boardwalk along the banks of the Deel, in the town centre. There is community- built light industrial units located in proximity to the Ballina Road, one of which is currently occupied by the Real Deel Craft Brewery, a brand which is gradually raising the national profile of Crossmolina.

12.11.6 Physical Infrastructure

Crossmolina is served by the N59 and R315 road network, which directly connects the town to the large urban centres of Ballina and Castlebar. It is served by an existing municipal wastewater treatment plant (3,150PE) and a water supply from the Lough Conn and Tobermore Well and there is sufficient capacity in this infrastructure to accommodate additional population increases in the town over the plan period. The town has high speed broadband and has been selected as a location for the provision of free outdoor public Wi-Fi hotspots under the European Commission Wifi4EU scheme. This will provide free Wi-Fi for visitors and residents in the town and hinterland, helping to bring about a digitally connected Mayo. In recent times Crossmolina has come to national attention due to incidences of flooding and a Flood Relief Scheme by the OPW is currently planned for the town and will be constructed over the lifetime of the plan.

12.11.7 Heritage and Tourism

There are two protected structures in Crossmolina, namely St. Tiernan's Church and the Church of Ireland. There are many more historic structures which contribute to the sense of place and character of the town. The town also has a rich industrial heritage as a result of its links with the former Bord na Mona peat fuelled power plant at Bellacorrick. The built heritage in the town constitutes a valuable

tourist resource. In terms of natural heritage, Mayo County Council have identified Local Biodiversity Areas within the plan area of the town and have set out a strategy for management of biodiversity at a local level. The new a linear park and boardwalk along the banks of the Deel is an important, local amenity. In terms of tourism, owing to its strategic location on the River Deel, proximity to Lough Conn, the Nephin Beg Mountain range, and the Erris Peninsula, Crossmolina has considerable potential for tourism development.

12.11.8 Sustainable Communities

The compact form of the centre of Crossmolina combined with the range of retail, commercial and leisure services provided within this core, offers opportunities to accommodate the future needs of the town in a consolidated fashion. The delivery of sustainable communities will involve the re-use and regeneration of derelict and vacant buildings within the town centre and the provision of a mix of housing types and densities of high-quality design on infill and brownfield sites, moving out from the centre. Provision is made for the identification and provision of serviced sites within the town to provide opportunities for people to build their own home.

Mayo County Council supports community-led programmes, including the Crossmolina Community Action Plan (2015-2020 or any superseding version), to help meet the needs of the town and contribute to a low carbon energy efficient Crossmolina, such as community renewable energy projects, energy efficiency projects and increased usage of sustainable forms of transport. A public smart lighting and energy efficient programme was implemented in Crossmolina, through Mayo County Council and Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland, in recent years. One such project included making the Civic Centre on Mullenmore street an energy efficient building.

12.11.9 Placemaking and Regeneration

Enhancement works to the public realm in the core area of Crossmolina have the potential to contribute to the revitalisation of the core area and to provide social and environmental benefits to the local community and visitors. This is combined with policies to promote the reuse of existing derelict and vacant buildings for residential and/or commercial purposes, particularly on Mullenmore Street and Erris Street, and the identification of opportunity sites within or close to the town core, capable of accommodating residential developments of a suitable scale and density.

12.11.10 Opportunity Sites

Four Opportunity Sites have been identified for Crossmolina (Refer to Map):

Opportunity Site 1

Located to the rear (south) of the properties on Ballina Street and to the rear (east) of existing properties on Mullinmore Street.

Opportunity Site 2

Located opposite St Tiernan's College (secondary School), at the southern end of Mullinmore Street.

Opportunity Site 3

An infill site located along "The Boreen" to the west of the Deel River.

Opportunity Site 4

Lands off The Boreen adjoining Erris Street properties to the North.

These opportunity sites have been identified in Crossmolina for residential purposes to further contribute to the rejuvenation and revitalisation close to and within the town centre. Site selection accounted for the avoidance flooding issues that currently impact the settlement and availability of services. Proposals for development within the opportunity sites should be accompanied by a site brief and should comply with national guidelines that seek to achieve sustainable compact development and to integrate principles of good urban design and placemaking.

Crossmolina Settlement Plan Policies

- CRP 1** To investigate proposals for the enhancement of the public realm within the town core.
- CRP 2** To support community-led developments, where appropriate, including the implementation of the Community Futures Action Plan for Crossmolina (2015-2020) or any amended or superseding Community Futures Plan for the town.

Crossmolina Settlement Plan Objectives

- CRO 1** To retain and enhance the distinctive character and layout of Crossmolina town, which reflects the historical street pattern of growth since the early nineteenth century configuration and to promote this as part of the town's unique identity.
- CRO 2** To investigate the possible designation of built-up areas of special interest and importance in the town, such as an Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA).
- CRO 3** To support the local community in exploring the creation of a Cultural and Heritage Centre in the town, as resources permit.

- CRO 4** To support and facilitate the full implementation of the Office of Public Work's Flood Relief Scheme for Crossmolina.
- CRO 5** To sustain, enhance and consolidate the retail and services offer within the core areas of Crossmolina and harness and develop the potential of heritage and tourism assets.
- CRO 6** To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail and other town centre uses with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach prescribed in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012.
- CRO 7** To support and facilitate the development of the four identified Opportunity Sites in Crossmolina for residential development, as outlined in Section 12.11.10 (Refer to Map).

12.12 Foxford (Tier III)

12.12.1 Location and Context

Foxford is located in north-east Mayo, at the intersection of the N26 and N58 national routes, on the River Moy, approximately 16 km south of Ballina. Foxford is the 8th largest settlement in Mayo and the population of the town has significantly increased (39.3%) over the last twenty years, from 944 persons in 1996 (Census figures) to 1,315 persons in 2016 (Census figures).

12.12.2 History and Settlement Form

Foxford is located on the site of an ancient settlement that grew around a crossing point on the River Moy. The current town dates from 1683 when John Bingham, MP for Mayo, first took out a patent for 4 fairs and a market for a new plantation of English and Scottish settlers, on the east bank of the river. This is reflected in the existing settlement form, with the town centre and commercial core located on the eastern side of the river while, west of the river is almost exclusively residential in nature. Historically Foxford is renowned as the birthplace of Admiral William Browne (1777-1859). Admiral Brown founded the Argentinian Navy and there is an exhibition centre dedicated to his life and achievements in the town today.

The modern town of Foxford is inextricably linked with and shaped by the fortunes of the Providence Woollen Mills. The Woollen Mills were the principal employer and a significant contributor to the built form, social activity and cultural aspects in the town, from the late 19th to the late 20th century. The development of the town beyond the core area in modern times has extended along the main approach roads, with housing developments located along the Ballina Road, the Swinford Road and the R318 local road, leading to the Train Station. The opening of an inner-relief road in the 2002, connecting the Swinford Road to the southern section of Main Street, has greatly lessened traffic congestion and has presented development opportunities to the rear of the commercial core.

12.12.3 Function and Vision

Foxford functions as a vibrant employment and service centre for the population of the town itself and the wider hinterland. The town draws tourists and visitors attracted by angling on the River Moy and the unique industrial heritage of the town. The vision for Foxford is to enhance the attractiveness of the town centre as a place to live, work and visit, while simultaneously developing the town's heritage and tourism assets.

12.12.4 Economic Development

A former industrial town, Foxford has shifted its focus of employment to newer industries and tourism centred around the industrial heritage of the town and angling on the River Moy. Employment in Foxford is dominated by O' Hara's Bakery located on the western outskirts of the town. Other smaller scale employers in the town include CPAC Foods and the Foxford Woollen Mills Visitor Centre. Convenience retail in the town is catered for by two appropriately sized supermarkets in the town centre.

12.12.5 Social Infrastructure

Foxford is the retail centre and employment base for a larger, rural catchment area and provides a range of services, social amenities and community facilities, including a national and secondary school, childcare facilities, a playground, hotel, post office, leisure centre, shops, restaurants, food outlets, public houses and a range of community, voluntary, arts and sporting clubs.

12.12.6 Physical Infrastructure

Foxford is served by the N26 and N58 national road network, which directly connects the town to the large urban centres of Ballina and Castlebar, respectively. The town is served by an existing municipal wastewater treatment plant, which was recently upgraded by Irish Water to increase its capacity (1,360 PE to 3,500PE). The water supply serving the town is drawn from Lough Muck. The upgrade works to the wastewater treatment plant ensures there will be sufficient capacity to accommodate additional population increase in the town. Foxford is also served by rail and a regular bus service. Foxford experiences regular flood events in recent years and appropriate measures need to be examined to manage this flood risk for the town, in order for it to develop in a consolidated fashion.

12.12.7 Heritage and Tourism

The history and heritage of Foxford, both built and natural, are inextricably linked with the form and function of the existing settlement. There are four protected structures in Foxford, namely the Foxford bridge, St. Mary and Michael's R.C. Church, Church of Ireland and St. Mary's Convent. There are many other historic buildings and structures in the town, which contribute to the sense of place and character. The consolidation and revitalisation of the town core will strengthen the historic character of the town and enhance the tourist experience. The River Moy divides the town physically and attracts many visitors to the town each year. Considerable potential exists to improve access to the river within the town in conjunction with the relevant environmental agencies, thereby, building on its amenity value for both locals and visitors.

12.12.8 Sustainable Communities

The development strategy for the town is to support revitalisation and repopulation of the town centre, by encouraging the reuse of existing vacant or derelict buildings and identifying sites for new residential and/or mixed-use developments that will respect the character and form of the existing core. It is part of the strategy to identify serviced sites within the built-up footprint of the settlement, for the provision of residential development at appropriate locations. Mayo County Council supports increased cycling and walking in the town and other community-led programmes, including the Foxford Community Action Plan (or any superseding version), to meet the needs of the town and contribute to a low carbon energy efficient Foxford.

12.12.9 Placemaking and Regeneration

The placemaking strategy for Foxford builds on the way the town currently functions as both a residential settlement and as an employment and service provider, while also functioning as an attractive and unique tourist destination, centred around the natural and built environment and the industrial heritage of the town. This can be achieved by revitalising and rejuvenating the core area identification of enhancement works both centrally and beyond, designed to provide identification enhancement works both centrally and beyond, designed to provide social and environmental benefits to the local community and visitors alike. In addition, this involves the identification of opportunity sites within or close to the town core capable of accommodating residential developments of a suitable scale and density. In determining the location and extent of such sites, cognisance is taken of the flooding issues that currently impact the settlement.

12.12.10 Opportunity Sites

Five Opportunity Sites have been identified for Foxford (Refer to Map):

Opportunity Site 1

Comprises of the back lands to the rear of the existing commercial properties along Lower Main Street and is bounded by Morrogh Bernard Road.

Opportunity Site 2

Located off Morrogh Bernard Road along Admiral Brown Road and is bounded to the north by Chapel Road properties/Church.

Opportunity Site 3

Located off both Morrogh Bernard and Admiral Brown Roads and adjoins Sliabh Rua estate to the south-east.

Opportunity Site 4

Located on Chapel Street, northern boundary abuts rear boundaries of properties fronting Providence Road.

Opportunity Site 5

Located on St Patricks Terrace, western boundary adjoins Sacred Heart National School.

These sites have been identified in Foxford for residential purposes to further contribute to the rejuvenation and revitalisation close to and within the town centre. Proposals for development within the opportunity sites should be accompanied by a site brief and should comply with national guidelines that seek to achieve sustainable compact development and to integrate principles of good urban design and placemaking.

Foxford Settlement Plan Policies

- FDP 1** To investigate proposals for the enhancement of the public realm within the town core.
- FDP 2** To support community-led developments, where appropriate, including the implementation of the Community Futures Action Plan for Foxford (2017-2022) or any amended or superseding Community Futures Plan for the town.

Foxford Settlement Plan Objectives

- FDO 1** To retain and enhance the distinctive character and layout of Foxford town, which reflects the historical street pattern of growth since the early nineteenth century configuration and to promote this as part of the town's unique identity.
- FDO 2** To support the local community in exploring the creation of a river walk in the town, as resources permit and in a manner that will not adversely affect the integrity of the River Moy candidate Special Area of Conservation.
- FDO 3** To support the further investigation by the Office of Public Works of the necessity of a flood relief scheme for Foxford.
- FDO 4** To sustain, enhance and consolidate the retail and services offer within the core areas of Foxford and harness and develop the potential of heritage and tourism assets.
- FDO 5** To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail and other town centre uses with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach prescribed in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012.
- FDO 6** To support and facilitate the development of the five identified Opportunity Sites in Foxford for residential development, as outlined in Section 12.12.10 (Refer to Map).

12.13 Killala (Tier III)

12.13.1 Location and Context

Killala is a coastal town in north Mayo, along the R314 regional route linking Ballina to Ballycastle. It is situated approximately 13km north of Ballina overlooking Killala Bay. Killala is the 16th largest settlement in Mayo. The population of the town has gradually decreased (14.5%) over the last twenty years, from 657 persons in 1996 (Census figures) to 562 persons in 2016 (Census figures). The focus of the settlement plan is to encourage job creation and population growth within the built-up footprint of the town, combined with increased service provision and attracting investment into the town.

12.13.2 History Context and Settlement Form

The name Killala is derived from the Irish 'Cill Ala', meaning "the mottled church". The origins of Killala diocese date back to the time of St Patrick. In the year 442 AD, St Patrick appointed his disciple, St Muredach, to build a community in Killala, which has resulted in many fine archaeological sites and monuments remaining today, such as Rosserk Abbey, Moyne Abbey, Rathfran Abbey, Meelick Castle and Humberts Rock. The town is dominated by a round tower, which dates from the 12th century. The

tower marks Killala's historic distinction as an important centre of ecclesiastical politics. In the centre of the town is a Church of Ireland cathedral. It was built in 1670 immediately above the remains of an earlier Catholic cathedral. The adjoining graveyard has a 9th century "Souterrain", an underground burial structure associated with the Atlantic Iron Age settlers. The street layout of Killala reflects its historical pattern and there are several cut-stone mill buildings which reflect its commercial past. Housing developments have been predominantly located along the approach roads to the town.

12.13.3 Function and Vision

Killala is located in the Ballina Municipal District and is designated as a Self-Sustaining Tier III town, which functions as a commuter area primarily for Ballina. It functions as an important local service centre, providing retail, residential, service and amenity functions for locals and the rural hinterlands, while supporting the upper tier towns of the Settlement Hierarchy. Opportunity exists to enhance the level of employment and services in the town, given the established employment base and capitalising on developing Killala as a tourist base for local attractions. Opportunities exist for Killala for a data centre and/or renewable energy hub at the Killala Business Park. Consolidated growth within the development footprint, regeneration, supporting local employment, the expansion of services to meet the needs of residents and visitors together, along with measures to visually protect and enhance the public realm and historic character of this settlement will be key in realising the potential of Killala as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town.

12.13.4 Economic Development

The scale and range of commercial facilities in the town make it a significant centre of services and employment for the surrounding rural hinterland. Independent traders include a butcher, a chemist, a draper, confectioners, a petrol station with convenience shop and an Aurivo agri- store. Opportunity exists for the town to enhance its retail offer and the Council will look favourably upon the re-use of existing vacant buildings in the town core for local level convenience and comparison shopping, including tourism/niche comparison outlets.

Enterprise within the town is mainly in the services and light industrial sectors. Killala Precision Components, Killala Upholstery and Killala fish factories provide employment for the town. A supportive approach shall be adopted to promote the expansion of these activities and to further local employment. The Council will support the upgrade, retrofitting and enhancement of existing buildings, particularly in the context of achieving energy efficiency and reducing carbon footprint.

12.13.5 Social Infrastructure

Community Services within and close to Killala include a national school and a community centre. Other services available in the town include a creche, post office, medical clinic, garda station and ATM. Killala has numerous community groups and a strong community council and has benefited from the Community Futures Action Planning Process. In recent years there have been a number of positive developments in the town including a MUGA.

12.13.6 Physical Infrastructure

Killala is served by the R314 regional route which directly connects the town to Ballina. A new municipal wastewater treatment plant (3,155PE) has been operational for Killala since 2020. The new plant brings benefits to Killala, in terms of acting as a platform for social and economic development, increased population, health, integrity of the environment and improved water quality for all. Cleaner water will enhance the amenity value of the town and bay. Killala is served by the Ballina Regional Water

Supply. Killala has good access to internet including broadband. The town is served by a regular daily bus service and the Council continues to promote and support the development of public transport initiatives in keeping with the principles of Smarter Travel.

12.13.7 Heritage and Tourism

Killala has a rich and diverse built heritage, containing protected structures (6); recorded monuments (10) and other historic buildings and structures, all of which contribute to a rich sense of place and character. The round tower is the most distinguishable structure of the town, by reason of its elevated location overlooking Killala Bay. Mayo County Council have completed a comprehensive analysis of the historic development of Killala, its setting and built heritage to identify the town's unique character and recommendations on how that character can be enhanced, including the need for an ACA.

Killala, due to its location, is a popular tourist destination. Its nearest beach, Ross Beach, is a wonderfully unspoiled Blue Flag beach, which is excellent for swimming, surfing and sailing. A strong tradition of fishing prevails in the area, with Killala Harbour providing a focal point for visiting fishermen and locals alike. In addition to natural resources Killala's built heritage constitutes a valuable tourist resource.

12.13.8 Sustainable Communities

A Community Futures Action Plan (2015-2020) has been prepared for Killala. The compact form of the centre of Killala combined with the range of retail, commercial and leisure services within the town core, afford opportunities to accommodate the future needs of the town in a consolidated fashion. The development strategy for the town aims to support revitalisation and repopulation of the town centre, by encouraging the reuse of existing vacant or derelict buildings and identifying sites for new residential and/or mixed-use developments that will respect the character and form of the existing core. It is also part of the strategy to identify serviced sites within the built-up footprint of the settlement, for the provision of residential development at appropriate locations. Stronger connections and linkages between residential areas and the town centre is important in ensuring sustainable communities and for encouraging the use of more sustainable modes of transport.

A strong emphasis will be placed on the principles of green infrastructure, permeability and connectivity, alongside the integration of community and recreation facilities to assist with developing sustainable communities. It is necessary to consolidate the town and ensure the delivery of sustainable communities in Killala, comprising of a mix of housing types, densities and tenure in conjunction with a high standard of design. Mayo County Council support sustainable transport options in the town, such as cycling and walking and community-led programmes, including the implementation of the Killala Community Action Plan (or any superseding version) to meet the needs of the town and contribute to a low carbon energy efficient town.

12.13.9 Placemaking and Regeneration

Killala is an attractive town with a historical atmosphere. The town provides the focus for a wide range of activities that contribute to a sense of place and identity. This town plays an important economic, social and cultural role and the main priority of the Plan is to consolidate the existing centre, while supporting the existing businesses and activities, in order to maintain vibrancy. A character study of the town, with potential for an ACA designation, would ensure the protection of the unique character of the town, whilst allowing new development to compliment same. Funding is secured under the 2017 Town and Village Renewal Scheme for Killala Round Tower Dereliction and Streetscape Improvements. The Plan supports the continued pursuit of all funding streams to sensitively enhance the public realm and the re-use of derelict, vacant and under-utilised lands within the built-up area of Killala.

12.13.10 Opportunity Sites

Three Opportunity Sites have been identified for Killala (Refer to Map):

Opportunity Site 1

Located at the northern edge of the plan, defined to the north by the shoreline, to the west by the R314 road, and to the east by Killala harbour.

Opportunity Site 2

Located off Courthouse Street, to the east of the soccer pitch.

Opportunity Site 3

Located to the west of the Killala plan area adjoining the plan boundary and to the east of Killala FC pitch, and to the east/north of Hillcrest.

These sites have been identified in Killala for residential purposes to further contribute to the rejuvenation and revitalisation close to and within the town centre. Proposals for development within the opportunity sites should be accompanied by a site brief and should comply with national guidelines that seek to achieve sustainable compact development and to integrate principles of good urban design and placemaking.

Killala Settlement Plan Policies

KAP 1	To support appropriate enterprise/employment uses that are sympathetic to and supportive of maintaining the architectural character and setting of Killala House (a Protected Structure) and adjacent lands.
KAP 2	To support the linkage of the Western Way with various local walking/cycling trails in the area including the Great Western Greenway.
KAP 3	Support community-led developments, where appropriate, including the implementation of the Community Futures Action Plan for Killala (2015-2020) or any amended or superseding Community Futures Plan for the town.

Killala Settlement Plan Objectives

KAO 1	To work with existing service providers and relevant interests to promote Killala as one of the key tourist locations within County Mayo, in accordance with the objectives contained within this Plan.
KAO 2	To protect and enhance the character of the pier area and to provide for the development of appropriate commercial, tourism, leisure uses and ancillary works such as car parking and navigation.
KAO 3	To promote greater public accessibility to existing tourist attractions in the town.

KAO 4	To investigate the provision of a bypass around the town and to improve traffic management through the provision of the inner relief road and the development of a town centre car park, subject to no significant adverse effects on the environment, including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.
KAO 5	To ensure that the historic architectural character of Killala is protected and enhanced.
KAO 6	To designate within the lifetime of this plan an Architectural Conservation Area for Killala town centre including Market Street, Courthouse Street, Church Street, Steeple Hill, William Street, Georges Street, and Ballina Road (R314) and the coastline to the pier.
KAO 7	To protect Killala Bay/Moy Estuary Special Area of Conservation (Site Code 000458) and Special Protection Area (Site Code 004036). Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that the development will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the sites.
KAO 8	To retain the tourist accommodation function of the holiday cottages at Steeple Hill.
KAO 9	To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail and other town centre uses with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach prescribed in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012.
KAO 10	To support and facilitate the development of the three identified Opportunity Sites in Killala for residential development, as outlined in Section 12.13.10 (Refer to Map).

12.14 Kiltimagh (Tier III)

12.14.1 Location and Context

Kiltimagh is centrally located within County Mayo, approximately 20km east of Castlebar and southwest of Ireland West Airport Knock. The town is set in an elevated location, with the highest point being 70 metres above sea-level. The Sliabh Cairn Mountain range provides a backdrop from the northwest to the southwest and forms an attractive landscape setting for the town. The Pollagh, Glore and Yellow rivers, which are located in close proximity to the town provides significant natural amenities. Kiltimagh is the 9th largest settlement in Mayo. The population of the town has gradually increased (16.6%) over the last twenty years, from 917 persons in 1996 (Census figures) to 1,069 persons in 2016 (Census figures). The focus of this settlement plan to encourage job creation and population growth within the built-up footprint of the town, combined with service provision and attracting investment into the town.

12.14.2 Historical Context and Settlement Form

The town was first recorded in 1617 and the Irish place name for Kiltimagh is Coillte Mach, which translates as “the woods of Maghach”. Kiltimagh, as we know it today, developed as an artisan village around the late 19th century. The structure of the town is well-defined with retail and commercial uses primarily located within its town core, alongside enterprise and employment, institutional and community uses generally on the outskirts. Residential areas are mainly to be found to the south/southwest of the town. An opportunity exists to consolidate development by encouraging infill development, over the shop development, redevelopment and/or occupancy of vacant properties.

12.14.3 Function and Vision

Kiltimagh is located in the Claremorris-Swinford Municipal District. The town provides an important economic focus, providing retail, residential, education, service and amenity functions for locals and the wider rural hinterlands, whilst supporting the upper tier towns of the Settlement Hierarchy. The plan provides an opportunity to maximise the potential of the town’s strategic central location within the county and along the Western Rail Corridor. Consolidated growth within the development footprint, regeneration, supporting local employment and the expansion of services to meet the needs of residents and visitors, together with measures to visually enhance the public realm will be key in realising the potential of Kiltimagh as a Tier III Self-Sustaining Town.

12.14.4 Economic Development

Kiltimagh is an important local service town for the wider agricultural hinterland of the Kiltimagh area and provides a wide range of services and facilities to meet the daily needs of the local population. The town provides a range of medium to small retail and convenience outlets, hotels, public houses and restaurants, which provide an important employment base. Other notable employers include Genfitt, CMS distribution and the Cairn international trade centre. Opportunity exists for the town to enhance its retail offering, and the Council shall look favourably upon the re-use of existing vacant buildings in the town centre for local level convenience and comparison shopping, including tourism/niche comparison outlets.

12.14.5 Social Infrastructure

Kiltimagh provides a range of services, social and community facilities, including a post office, medical centre, pre-school, primary school, secondary school, parish hall, church, bank, hotels, pharmacies, museums, retail shops, restaurants, take-aways, service stations, public houses, community centre, health centre and library. Kiltimagh has numerous community, sporting and social clubs alongside recreational facilities. Sports and recreational facilities in the town include GAA facilities, approved Velo-Rail, MUGA, and children’s playground. It is also proposed to create a town amenity park to the west of the train station.

12.14.6 Physical Infrastructure

Kiltimagh is strategically located in the centre of Mayo and is served by a range of important regional routes linking the town directly to the nearby settlements of Swinford, Balla, Knock, Bohola and Kilkelly. The town is within 20-minute drive of Ireland West Airport Knock and located along the Western Rail Corridor (WRC), with potential future links to Limerick and Sligo. The town is served by an existing municipal wastewater treatment plant (3,333PE) and a water supply from the Kiltimagh Public Water Supply source from the Glore River. The town benefits from fibre optic broadband infrastructure (Metropolitan Area Network).

12.14.7 Heritage and Tourism

Kiltimagh has retained much of its 19th century features and its townscape has a distinctive character with a considerable number of Victorian buildings and artisan terraces. The town is a historic market town and is defined by Market Square and the collection of associated buildings along Main Street, Aiden Street, Chapel Street and Thomas Street. Kiltimagh contains protected structures (5), recorded monuments (8) and many other local vernacular buildings, all of which are reflective of its historical development, sense of place and character of the town. The town contains a Sculpture Park and Railway

Station Museum, with a station containing on-track carriages from the WRC. Mayo County Council have identified Local Biodiversity Areas in the town and there are plans to enhance the existing Kiltimagh Amenity Park. The built and cultural heritage of Kiltimagh are key tourist attractions to the town. The development of the Velo Rail, along the WRC tracks, will attract many more recreational visitors to the town, with additional tourism opportunities if the WRC reopens for rail purposes.

12.14.8 Sustainable Communities

Kiltimagh provides an attractive place to live and is rich in heritage, natural beauty and amenity. It benefits from strong community involvement and a Community Futures Action Plan (2019-2024) has been prepared for the town. The development strategy for Kiltimagh is to support new housing and population growth, consistent with the Core Strategy. It aims to facilitate compact growth through revitalisation of the historic town core, together with providing of a mix of housing types, densities and tenure to meet the needs of Kiltimagh, as a viable alternative to single rural housing within the surrounding countryside. The town is served by a bus service between Ballina and Claremorris and other local services operated by Mayo Local Link. The County Council is keen to continue to promote and support the development of public transport initiatives in keeping with the principles of Smarter Travel.

12.14.9 Placemaking and Regeneration

Kiltimagh's distinctive buildings, streetscape and sculptures throughout the town provide a distinctive sense of place. In terms of placemaking, the main priority is the consolidation of the town centre, while supporting existing business in order to maintain vibrancy. Many buildings in the centre are suitable for renovation of upper storeys into residential use, while ground floors should be prioritised for commercial and community uses that activate the street, where possible. Together this will help sustain town vibrancy, including the evening economy. Another priority of the Kiltimagh Settlement Plan is the regeneration and repopulation of the town centre, through the sustainable reuse of existing buildings, focusing on dereliction and the appropriate development of infill, opportunity sites, underpinned by good urban design and placemaking principles. This will help drive the delivery of quality housing, services and employment opportunities, in tandem with supporting social infrastructure.

12.14.10 Opportunity Sites

Three Opportunity Sites have been identified for Kiltimagh (Refer to Map):

Opportunity Site 1

Located off and to the south of Clonkedagh Road.

Opportunity Site 2

Located off and to the north of Clonkedagh Road.

Opportunity Site 3

Located to the rear of the properties at the northern end of Main Street (Walshtown) and is bounded by the railway line to the east.

These opportunity sites have been identified in Kiltimagh for residential purposes to further contribute to the rejuvenation and revitalisation close to and within the town centre. Proposals for development within the opportunity sites should be accompanied by a site brief and should comply with national guidelines that seek to achieve sustainable compact development and to integrate principles of good urban design and placemaking.

Kiltimagh Settlement Plan Policies

KTP 1	To support the reinstatement of the Western Rail Corridor, in particular actively seek and promote the re-opening of the Claremorris-Galway rail link, as well as a link to Sligo and to safeguard and protect these potential rail links from redevelopment for non-transport related purposes, in order not to preclude their future uses as an operational transportation network.
KTP 2	To support the work of IRD Kiltimagh Ltd., in providing essential community services for the elderly and marginal groups of Kiltimagh.
KTP 3	To support the creation of an Arts residency programme with revolving art residency spaces.
KTP 4	To promote more frequent bus services to Kiltimagh allowing increased connectivity and accessibility for tourists and residents alike.
KTP 5	To support community-led developments, where appropriate, including the implementation of the Community Futures Action Plan for Kiltimagh (2019-2024) or any amended or superseding Community Futures Plan for the town.

Kiltimagh Settlement Plan Objectives

KTO 1	To protect and enhance existing amenity facilities in Kiltimagh, particularly the Pollagh River, the playground, amenity park, GAA pitch, wetland park and sculpture trail.
KTO 2	To protect existing public sculptures throughout the town and support the provision of additional sculptures at appropriate locations throughout the town.
KTO 3	To support and facilitate pedestrian mobility and safety in the town by introducing traffic calming measures and pedestrian crossings.
KTO 4	To maintain and further develop walking routes and linkages to the walking routes throughout the town.
KTO 5	To implement effective vehicular linkages within and around the town, subject to further feasibility studies, detailed design and traffic impact assessment.
KTO 6	To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail and other town centre uses with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach prescribed in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012.
KTO 7	To support and facilitate the development of the three identified Opportunity Sites in Kiltimagh for residential development, as outlined in Section 12.14.10 (Refer to Map).

12.15 Knock (Tier III)

12.15.1 Location and Context

The town of Knock is located in east Mayo and is an international place of pilgrimage and prayer where over one and a half million pilgrims visit each year. It is located approximately 11km northeast of both Claremorris and Ballyhaunis, respectively. Knock is the 13th largest settlement in Mayo. The population of the town has significantly increased (69%) over the last twenty years, from 575 persons in 1996 (Census figures) to 972 persons in 2016 (Census figures). The focus for the settlement plan is encouraging job creation and population growth within the built-up footprint of the town, combined with service provision and attracting investment into the town.

12.15.2 History Context and Settlement Form

Knock comes from the Irish word “cnoc” meaning hill, historical evidence shows the village had been named that as far back as 1625. The Irish language name was changed to “Cnoc Mhuire” meaning the hill of the Virgin Mary after the visions. Notably, its name is derived from the Knock Shrine, an approved Catholic shrine and place of pilgrimage where the faithful believe that the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph and Saint John the Evangelist appeared on 21 August 1879. The structure of the town is well defined and consists of a linear settlement form, with housing developments located along the approach roads to the town. An opportunity exists to consolidate development by strengthening linkages between residential areas and the town centre and encouraging infill development, over the shop development, re-development or occupancy of vacant properties.

12.15.3 Function and Vision

Knock is located within the Claremorris-Swinford Municipal District. The town functions as an important economic focus, providing retail, residential, service and amenity functions for locals and the rural hinterlands, while also supporting the upper tier towns of the Settlement Hierarchy. Retail and commercial uses are primarily located within its town, with educational and community uses generally on the edge of town centre. Opportunity exists to further develop Knock as an international tourist destination in a manner that maintains and enhances the quality of life for those living, working in and visiting the town. There are further opportunities for economic development, social integration and sustainable transport options including smarter travel, whilst protecting the natural, cultural and built heritage and the environmental quality of the town.

12.15.4 Economic Development

Knock is predominantly a place of international pilgrimage and prayer and as a result has developed into a tourist town. Other forms of employment include a range of medium to small retail outlets, as well as tourist accommodation, public houses and restaurants. All of these provide important sources of employment in the town.

12.15.5 Social Infrastructure

Community services within and close to Knock include a national school and community centre. Other services include a creche, post office, medical clinic, nursing home, garda station and ATM. Knock has numerous communities, sporting and social clubs, however the town has few recreational facilities.

12.15.6 Physical Infrastructure

Knock is served by the N17, R323 and R329 road network, which directly connects the town to the large urban centres of Claremorris and Ballyhaunis. It has a regular daily bus service. The town is served by an existing municipal wastewater treatment plant (6,200PE) and a water supply from the Lough Mask Regional Water Supply Scheme. There is sufficient water service capacity to accommodate the projected additional population increases in the town over the plan period. Ireland West Airport Knock is located approximately 21km northeast of Knock village, which was originally built to bring people to the Knock Shrine.

12.15.7 Heritage and Tourism

Knock has a rich cultural heritage, which has given the town a sense of identity. It has developed into a major pilgrimage centre for national and international groups. The Knock shrine complex incorporates five churches including the Apparition Church, Parish Church, Basilica, Blessed Sacrament Chapel and Chapel of Reconciliation. Knock Shrine is the leading religious tourism destination in Ireland and in Western Europe. It is the second largest Marian Shrine in the world and surpasses all Fáilte Ireland destination sites at a national level in terms of footfall, attracting one and a half million tourists annually. The potential role of religious/pilgrimage tourism is significant in view of the number of the iconic sites at Knock Shrine. There is therefore significant potential for harnessing this footfall to the wider county and region, by way of creative exploration of and interlinking to a range of complementary tourist activities.

12.15.8 Sustainable Communities

Knock has an active local community, and a Community Futures Action Plan (2016-2021) has been prepared for the town. The compact form of the centre of Knock combined with the range of retail, commercial and leisure services provided within its core, provide opportunities to accommodate the future needs of the town in a consolidated fashion. The delivery of sustainable communities will involve the re-use and regeneration of derelict and vacant buildings within the town centre and provide a mix of housing types and densities with high-quality design on infill and brownfield sites, moving outwards from the centre.

The development strategy for Knock is to facilitate compact growth and to re-populate the town centre, providing a viable alternative to single rural housing within the surrounding countryside. Stronger connections and linkages between the existing residential areas on the town's edge and the town centre is important for sustainable communities and for encouraging the use of more sustainable modes of transport. A strong emphasis will be placed on the principles of green infrastructure, permeability and connectivity, alongside the integration of community and recreation facilities to assist with developing sustainable communities.

12.15.9 Placemaking and Regeneration

Knock has developed into a thriving community based around Knock Shrine, providing accommodation, restaurants and souvenir shops, in addition to its role as a service centre to the surrounding areas. The town provides the focus for a wide range of activities that contribute to a sense of place and identity. Enhancement works relating to a shared surface plaza have been carried out in Knock from funding secured from the RRDF. There is potential for more efficient use of under-utilised lands, vacant sites and buildings within the existing built-up footprint of Knock to assist with repopulating the town centre, improving the public realm, and to drive the delivery of quality housing, services and employment opportunities, in tandem with supporting social infrastructure.

12.15.10 Opportunity Sites

Three Opportunity Sites have been identified for Knock (Refer to Map):

Opportunity Site 1

Located off the roundabout of the northern end of the town at the junction of Main Street and the Ballyhaunis Road.

Opportunity Site 2

Located west of Manor Quarter to the South of the National School.

Opportunity Site 3

Located to the east of the southern end of Main Street.

These sites have been identified in Knock for mixed-use and residential purposes to further contribute to the rejuvenation and revitalisation close to and within the town centre. Proposals for development within the opportunity sites should be accompanied by a site brief and should comply with national guidelines that seek to achieve sustainable compact development and to integrate principles of good urban design and placemaking.

Knock Settlement Plan Policies

KTP 1	To support and promote the development of Knock as a world-renowned religious tourist destination.
KTP 2	To support the provision of amenity walkways with dedicated pedestrian and cycle ways, planting and picnic areas in the town.
KTP 3	To promote greater public accessibility to existing tourist attractions in the town.
KTP 4	Support community-led developments, where appropriate, including the implementation of the Community Futures Action Plan for Knock (2016-2021) or any amended or superseding Community Futures Plan for the town.

Knock Settlement Plan Objectives

KTO 1	To facilitate the development of the town's religious tourism products to the highest international standards, in a manner that respects, builds on, protects and enhances the cultural, built and natural heritage and local amenities of the town.
KTO 2	To work with existing service providers and relevant interests to promote Knock as one of the key tourist locations within County Mayo, in accordance with the objectives contained in this Plan.
KTO 3	To ensure that all new development makes a positive contribution to the built and natural environment of the Plan area, by ensuring that it is absorbed into the surrounding streetscape/landscape, so that it does not impinge in any significant way on the character, integrity or uniformity of the town and does not undermine or interfere with the iconic status of Knock Basilica.
KTO 4	To safeguard and protect the Knock By-Pass from development for non-infrastructure related purposes.
KTO 5	To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail and other town centre uses with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach prescribed in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012.
KTO 6	To support and facilitate the development of the three identified Opportunity Sites in Knock for residential development, as outlined in Section 12.15.10 (Refer to Map).

12.16 Louisburgh (Tier III)

12.16.1 Location and Context

Louisburgh is a coastal town on southern coast of Clew Bay along the R335 and R378 regional roads, approximately 21km west of Westport. Louisburgh is the 18th largest settlement in Mayo and its coastal location has influenced the development of the town in recent years. The population of the town has nearly trebled (189%) over the last twenty years, from 150 persons in 1996 (Census figures) to 434 persons in 2016 (Census figures). The focus of the settlement plan is to encourage job creation and population growth within the built-up footprint of the town, combined with service provision and attracting investment.

12.16.2 Historical Context and Settlement Form

Louisburgh was founded in 1795 by Lord Altamont and is a planned town. It was designed to encapsulate a four-street system converging at a central crossroads known locally as “The Square”, which provides a strong focal point for the town. Each corner building on the square has been specifically designed to orientate towards the square. There is a significant level of development on the outskirts of the town, including numerous holiday homes. The Bunowen River lies to the south of the village influencing the shape and form of the town. The town structure is well defined, with retail and commercial uses primarily located within its centre, with educational, manufacturing and community uses generally on the outskirts. An opportunity exists to consolidate development by encouraging infill development, re-development or occupancy of vacant properties.

12.16.3 Function and Vision

Louisburgh is located in the Westport-Belmullet Municipal District. The town provides a wide range of services to meet the daily needs of the local population and rural hinterland. Its coastal location and proximity to other natural amenities, such as Croagh Patrick, makes Louisburgh a popular destination for holiday makers. Consolidated growth within the existing urban footprint, regeneration, supporting local employment, expansion of services to meet the needs of residents and visitors, together with measures to visually enhance the public realm are central to realising the potential of Louisburgh as a Tier III Self-Sustaining Town.

12.16.4 Economic Development

Louisburgh is predominantly a coastal tourist service town but has other forms of employment including an established manufacturing base. A range of medium to small retail outlets, together with tourist accommodation, public houses and restaurants, provide important employment. Louisburgh is an important service town for the islands of Inishturk and Clare Island and for the wide agricultural hinterland in South West Mayo and into County Galway.

12.16.5 Social Infrastructure

Louisburgh provides a range of services, social and community facilities, including a post office, medical centre, pre-school, primary school, secondary school, parish hall, 2 churches (Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland), the Grainne Mhaol Centre, retail outlets, restaurants and public houses.

Louisburgh has numerous community, sporting and social clubs, including facilities such as the GAA club and children’s playground.

12.16.6 Physical Infrastructure

Louisburgh is served by the R335 and R378 regional routes which provide direct connection to Westport. Louisburgh is along the regular bus route between Kiladoon and Westport, while a local community bus service operated by the Mayo Rural Link also serves the town and the surrounding hinterlands. The County Council promotes and supports the development of public transport initiatives in keeping with the principles of Smarter Travel. The town is served by a water supply sourced from the Bunnahowan River, while the existing wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) is operating at capacity. The Plan supports an increased capacity of the plant in order to accommodate additional growth over the plan period and beyond. The town has good access to internet, including broadband.

12.16.7 Heritage and Tourism

Louisburgh’s built heritage consists of its planned form, protected structures (2) and local historic vernacular buildings, all of which are reflective of the historical development, sense of place and character of the town. The Bunowen River is the main natural asset in the town. Along the river there is an informal riverside walk where tree groups and meadows are located which provide appealing views towards the mountains and the sea. The village contains pockets of significant trees, especially along Church Road and south of the river at the end of Bridge Street. Louisburgh is a popular tourist destination due to its coastal location, access to blue flag beaches and proximity to Westport, Croagh Patrick, Clare Island, Inishturk and Connemara, with plentiful tourist accommodation and holiday homes in the town.

12.16.8 Sustainable Communities

Louisburgh is an attractive place to live and is rich in heritage and amenity. It has a strong community focus and has a Community Futures Action Plan (2015 -2021) prepared for the town. The development strategy for Louisburgh is to facilitate compact growth and re-populate the town centre and to provide a viable alternative to single rural housing within the surrounding countryside. Stronger connections and linkages between the existing residential areas on the town’s edge and the town centre is important for sustainable communities and for encouraging the use of more sustainable modes of transport.

A strong emphasis will be placed on the principles of green infrastructure, permeability and connectivity, alongside the integration of community and recreation facilities to assist with developing sustainable communities. It is also necessary to consolidate the town and ensure the delivery of sustainable communities, comprising of a mix of housing types, densities and tenure, with a high standard of design. Mayo County Council supports a bottom-up approach to sustainable communities, including community-led programmes, such as the Louisburgh Community Action Plan (or any superseding version) to meet the needs of the town and contribute to a low carbon energy efficient environment.

12.16.9 Place Making and Regeneration

Louisburgh is an attractive coastal town. The town square provides the focus for a wide range of activities which contribute to a strong sense of place and identity. Enhancement works comprising of paving, and the upgrading of pedestrian footpaths and crossings would serve to further enhance the traditional character of the town. There is potential for better use of under-utilised lands, vacant sites and buildings within the existing built-up footprint, to drive the delivery of quality housing, services and employment opportunities, particularly along Chapel Street, Church Street, Long Street and Bridge Street. Opportunities exist for the development of the river walk along the Bunowen River; the re-establishment of a village green on Church Street; as well as improved linkages between the residential areas and the town centre, which are supported by Mayo County Council.

12.16.10 Opportunity Sites

Three Opportunity Sites have been identified for Louisburgh (Refer to Map):

Opportunity Site 1

Located north of the town centre close to Santa Maria College and has dual access from the R335 and the local parallel road.

Opportunity Site 2

Located off a local road to the west of the R335 adjacent to the Crannogs residential development.

Opportunity Site 3

Located east of the town centre along Chapel Street adjacent to the primary school.

These sites have been identified in Louisburgh for residential purposes to further contribute to the rejuvenation and revitalisation close to and within the town centre. Proposals for development within the opportunity sites should be accompanied by a site brief and should comply with national guidelines that seek to achieve sustainable compact development and to integrate principles of good urban design and placemaking.

Louisburgh Settlement Plan Policies

- LHP 1** To support the promotion of Louisburgh as a key tourist destination in the county and along the Wild Atlantic Way.
- LHP 2** To support community-led developments, where appropriate, including the implementation of the Louisburgh Community Futures Action Plan (2016-2021) or any amended or superseding Community Futures Plan for the town.

Louisburgh Settlement Plan Objectives

- LHO 1** To actively work with Irish Water to increase the capacity/upgrade Louisburgh wastewater treatment plant.
- LHO 2** To re-establish a village green on Church Street.
- LHO 3** To establish a pedestrian link between the town and Carrowmore Beach.
- LHO 4** To encourage the development of a Bunowen River walkway and to safeguard the value of the river as an ecological “green corridor”. Riverside walkway provisions should be incorporated into development proposals bounding the river, where appropriate.
- LHO 5** To protect the water quality and riparian zone of the Bunowen River. Any proposed developments adjacent to or close to watercourses shall be carefully assessed to ensure that there is no adverse impact to the water course, its riparian zone or to any waterbody into which it flows.

- LHO 6** To support and, where possible, implement measures to create interpretative walking routes in and around the town, linking the town’s special features of built and natural heritage interest.
- LHO 7** To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail and other town centre uses with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach prescribed in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012.
- LHO 8** To support and facilitate the development of the three identified Opportunity Sites in Louisburgh for residential development, as outlined in Section 12.16.10 (Refer to Map).
- LHO 9** No new incompatible development is permitted within Flood Zone A/B areas and that these areas be maintained for the impacts of climate change in accordance with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines (DoEHLG/OPW 2009) and Circular PL2/2014 (or any updated/superseding document).

12.17 Newport (Tier III)

12.17.1 Location and Context

Newport is a coastal town located on the north-eastern corner of Clew Bay, along the N59, national route. It is located approximately 14km north of Westport and 18km west of Castlebar. The town is located along the Wild Atlantic Way and is well located for easy access to some of the most scenic areas in Ireland. Newport is the 15th largest settlement in Mayo. The population of the town has gradually increased (10.4%) over the last twenty years, from 567 persons in 1996 (Census figures) to 626 persons in 2016 (Census figures). The focus of the settlement plan is to encourage job creation and population growth within the built-up footprint of the town, combined with service provision and attracting investment.

12.17.2 Historical Context and Settlement Form

Newport (Baile Úi Fhiacháin) was founded in the early years of the 18th century and was formerly known as Ballyveaghan. The combination of its coastal location on the shores of Clew Bay, intersected by and at the mouth of the Newport River, its distinctive topographical features and changing economic and social fortunes over time have shaped the urban form of Newport, giving it a unique and distinctive character of its own. The town has varying backdrops of mature woodland, seascape and key landmark structures such as the seven arch railway viaduct, St Patrick’s Catholic Church and Newport House. The town has a relatively compact form, though there are existing residential developments located at a remove from the town core, with limited footpath and public lighting linkages.

12.17.3 Function and Vision

Newport is located in the Westport-Belmullet Municipal District. The town provides an important economic focus, including providing retail, residential, service and amenity functions for locals and the wider rural hinterlands, while supporting the upper tier towns of the Settlement Hierarchy. The Plan supports opportunities to maximise the potential of Newport, along the Great Western Greenway and the Wild Atlantic Way. Consolidated growth within its footprint, regeneration, supporting local employment, and expansion of services to meet the needs of residents and visitors, together with measures to visually enhance the public realm, will be key in realising the potential of Newport as a Tier III Self-Sustaining Town.

12.17.4 Economic Development

Newport is an important service town for the wider agricultural hinterland of the Newport / Mulranny area and provides a range of services and facilities to meet the daily needs of the local population. A range of medium to small retail outlets, tourist accommodation, public houses and restaurants provide important employment in the town. Opportunity exists for the town to enhance its retail offer and in this regard, the Council will look favourably upon the re-use of existing vacant buildings in the town centre for local level convenience and comparison shopping, including tourism/niche comparison outlets in the town.

12.17.5 Social Infrastructure

Newport provides a range of services, social and community facilities, including a post office, medical centre, pre-school, primary school, parish hall, church, retail shops, butchers, bicycle rental shops, hotels, restaurants and public houses. Newport has numerous community, sporting and social clubs and recreational facilities. Sports and recreational facilities in the town include the GAA club, MUGA, community pitch and children's playground.

12.17.6 Physical Infrastructure

Newport is served by the N59 and R311 and R317 road network, which directly connects the town to Westport, Castlebar and Achill, respectively. A new municipal wastewater treatment plant (1,800PE) is planned for the town with an expected completion date of 2024. The town draws its water supply from the Newport water supply scheme, which is sourced from the Newport River. The town has high speed broadband and has been selected as a location for the provision of free outdoor public Wi-Fi hotspots under the European Commission Wifi4EU scheme. This will provide free Wi-Fi for visitors and residents in the town and hinterland, helping to bring about a digitally connected Mayo.

12.17.7 Heritage and Tourism

The Newport River (also known as the Black Oak River) flows through the centre of the town and there are walking paths along its banks. The Westport-Achill Greenway traverses the centre of the settlement and is an important recreational asset for local residents and tourist alike. Mayo County Council has carried out habitat mapping in Newport, which has informed the identification of Local Biodiversity Areas in the town, while an Action Plan has been prepared for Newport, aimed at conserving and enhancing the natural heritage of the town. Newport contains many protected structures (8), NIAH structures (24), a recorded monuments and other local vernacular buildings, all of which are reflective of the historical development, sense of place and character of the town.

Newport is a strong tourist destination due to its coastal location and proximity to Westport, Castlebar, Croagh Patrick, Achill Island and other areas of the west Mayo coastline. Newport's location on the Newport River, Clew Bay and the Great Western Greenway makes it an attractive place to live in and to visit with great potential for tourism (especially marine related); fishing; cycling /walking and railway enthusiasts. This Plan seeks to encourage appropriate development within the town to facilitate and support its tourism potential.

12.17.8 Sustainable Communities

Newport provides an attractive place to live and is rich in heritage, natural beauty and amenity. It has a strong community spirit, and a Community Futures Action Plan (2011 -2016) has been prepared for the town. The development strategy for Newport is to support new housing and population growth,

consistent with the Core Strategy, facilitating compact growth through revitalisation of the historic town core, together with providing of a mix of housing types, densities and tenure. This is both to meet the needs of Newport and to offer a viable alternative to single rural housing within the surrounding countryside. The town is located on the daily bus route between Westport and Achill and a local community bus service operated by the Mayo Local Link also serves the town and the surrounding hinterlands. The County Council is keen to continue to promote and support the development of public transport initiatives in keeping with the principles of Smarter Travel and increased active travel in the town. A lighting masterplan for Newport has been prepared. Newport is a registered Sustainable Energy Community with the SEAI and is preparing an Energy Master Plan.

12.17.9 Placemaking and Regeneration

The structure of the town is well defined, with retail and commercial uses primarily located within its town core, with educational and community uses generally on the outskirts. Public realm works in the form of paved public open spaces, wider footpaths, safe pedestrian crossings, improved disability access, off-road cycling routes and general streetscape enhancements, including 'Dark Skies-friendly' public lighting, are planned for Newport under the RRDF. A new enterprise hub workspace facility and a new tourism office is planned for local authority/community-owned derelict buildings at Barrack Hill. The realisation of these landmark projects will greatly enhance the public realm and vibrancy of the town. A redesign of sustainable dark-sky friendly lighting is planned for St Patrick's Church and the Viaduct Bridge'.

A main priority of the Newport Settlement Plan is the regeneration and repopulation of the town centre, through the sustainable reuse of existing buildings, focusing on dereliction and the appropriate development of infill consolidation site(s), underpinned by good urban design and placemaking principles. This will help drive the delivery of quality housing, services and employment opportunities, in tandem with supporting social infrastructure. Mayo County Council, in partnership with key stakeholders, carried out the Newport Character Study which highlighted projects that aim to improve the attractiveness of the town centre whilst revitalising and enhancing the historic fabric of the town.

12.17.10 Opportunity Sites

One Opportunity Site has been identified for Newport (Refer to Map):

Opportunity Site:

Site one is located off Quay Road to the North and abuts the Craobh Ban housing development the west.

This site has been identified in Newport for residential purposes to further contribute to the rejuvenation and revitalisation close to and within the town centre. Proposals for development within the opportunity site should be accompanied by a site brief and should comply with national guidelines that seek to achieve sustainable compact development and to integrate principles of good urban design and placemaking.

Newport Settlement Plan Policies

NTP 1	To have regard to the findings and provisions set out in the Newport Character Study.
NTP 2	To support the promotion of Newport as a key tourist destination in the county and along the Wild Atlantic Way, with emphasis on cultural heritage, sailing, angling, fishing and walking/cycling.
NTP 3	To promote more frequent bus services to Castlebar/Westport allowing increased connectivity and accessibility for tourists and residents alike.
NTP 4	To support the favourable conservation status of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>) population located in Newport River, in accordance with the programme of measures contained in the Newport Sub-basin Management Plan. In this regard, development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposed development will not have an adverse effect on the Freshwater Pearl Mussel population or its habitat, by virtue of their conservation objectives.
NTP 5	To support the implementation of flagship lighting designs for St Patrick's Church and the viaduct bridge, to support Newport's Lighting Masterplan and to support the safeguarding the accreditation of nearby Mayo Dark Sky Park.

Newport Settlement Plan Objectives

NTO 1	To protect and enhance existing amenity areas/facilities in Newport, particularly the river/estuary, the playground, the tennis courts, the sporting pitches, Grace Kelly Amenity Park and the Great Western Greenway.
NTO 2	To support and facilitate pedestrian mobility and safety in the town, by introducing traffic calming measures and pedestrian crossings.
NTO 3	To identify an appropriate site within the town for the development of a new community hall.
NTO 4	To protect the water quality and riparian zone of the Newport River and all water courses and surface waters within the area, their water quality, ecology and function as ecological corridors. In this regard, development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposed development will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites including the Clew Bay Complex (Site Code 001482) and Newport River (Site Code 002144) candidate Special Areas of Conservation.
NTO 5	To seek to make Tree Preservation Orders for individual and groups of trees in the town, particularly those located at Newport House, Grace Kelly Amenity Park and along the Newport River.
NTO 6	To support and facilitate the provision of a wastewater treatment plant and associated works for the town.
NTO 7	To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict land and buildings for retail and other town centre uses with due cognisance to the Sequential Approach prescribed in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012.
NTO 8	To support and facilitate the development of the identified Opportunity Site in Newport for residential development, as outlined in Section 12.17.10 (Refer to Map).
NTO 9	No new incompatible development is permitted within Flood Zone A/B areas and that these areas be maintained for the impacts of climate change in accordance with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines (DoEHLG/OPW 2009) and Circular PL2/2014 (or any updated/superseding document).

12.18 Settlement Plans for Tier IV Rural Settlements and Tier V Rural Villages

Tier IV Rural Settlements and Tier V Rural Villages, as identified in the Settlement Hierarchy, provide important local level residential, retailing and community functions to their rural hinterlands. Rural Settlements consist of serviced villages with population levels greater than 50 persons, but less than 500, while Rural Villages consists of both serviced and non-serviced villages, with population levels less than 50 persons.

Irish Water wastewater infrastructure is present in the following Tier V Rural Villages: Aghagower, Ballycroy, Doogort, Moygownagh, The Neale, Tourmakeady, Gaoth Salia (Gweesalia), Hollymount, Roundfort and Kilmovee. Although not all rural villages are serviced, the settlement strategy allows for appropriately scaled developments in such settlements, subject to compliance with normal planning considerations and relevant environmental standards.

In order to realise the consolidation of the Tier IV Rural Settlements and Tier V Rural Villages, each settlement and village are defined by a development boundary. A single category mixed-use zoning called Rural Settlement Consolidation Zoning applies to all Tier IV Rural Settlements. New development is encouraged to be delivered in a sustainable, sequential manner from the village core outwards, while promoting the reuse and redevelopment of vacant and derelict sites and buildings. The same development approach is adopted for Tier V Rural Villages, with the single category mixed-use zoning referred to as Rural Village Consolidation Zoning. The single category zoning approach provides for a mix of development types, which supports the sustainable growth of the rural area, while providing an alternative in terms of housing choice in the form of vibrant rural communities. A common set of policies and objectives apply to Tier IV Rural Settlements and Tier V Rural Villages.

Rural Settlement and Village Settlement Plan Policies

RSVP 1	To promote the development of rural settlements and villages to meet the needs of these established communities and to provide an alternative choice for those seeking to live in a more rural setting, while supporting existing local services and facilities.
RSVP 2	To support the consolidation of Mayo's rural settlements and villages, by promoting proposals that contribute to the sustainable and sequential development of serviceable lands.
RSVP 3	To encourage in-depth residential development in rural settlements and villages, of an appropriate scale, design and density, compatible with the intrinsic character and scale of those settlements/villages.
RSVP 4	To support, promote and encourage the appropriate development of infilling, brownfield or the use of derelict or under-utilised land or premises, subject to siting, design, protection of residential amenities and normal planning considerations.
RSVP 5	To encourage the re-use of existing vacant buildings for commercial or residential purposes and the development of infill sites to create compact, vibrant rural settlements and villages.
RSVP 6	To support public realm enhancements in rural settlements and villages, including signage, public lighting (Dark Sky Friendly), public seating, hard and soft landscaping and improvements to the road and footpath network, where appropriate.
RSVP 7	To support rural settlements and villages in their role as local rural service centres for their population and its rural hinterland.

RSVP 8	Support community-led developments in rural settlements/villages, where appropriate, including the implementation of Mayo Community Futures' Community Action Plans.
RSVP 9	To support the development of a "New Homes in Small Towns and villages" initiative which would augment the delivery of actions by Local Authorities, Irish Water, communities and other stakeholders, in the provision of serviced sites to create "build your own home" opportunities, within the existing footprint of rural settlements and villages, in order to provide new homes to meet housing demand.
RSVP 10	To liaise and work in conjunction with Irish Water in the delivery of an adequate level of water and wastewater services in rural settlements and villages, including pursuing wastewater treatment upgrades, where appropriate, through Irish Water's Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme.
RSVP 11	To support the creation of cycling infrastructure within the rural villages and settlements, their hinterlands and at areas of interest and attractions.

Rural Settlement and Village Settlement Objectives

RSVO 1	To ensure that future housing occurs in rural settlements and villages within the settlement/village boundary (based on the sequential approach), where serviced lands are available.
RSVO 2	To ensure that all rural settlements and villages develop in a self-sufficient manner, utilising existing physical and social infrastructure, where appropriate.
RSVO 3	To promote and facilitate residential development commensurate with the nature and scale of the particular rural village or settlement, utilising brownfield and infill opportunities in order to regenerate and consolidate the rural settlements and villages.
RSVO 4	To support the development of appropriate housing in rural settlements and villages, in order to provide a choice for those who wish to live in a rural setting but not in the rural countryside, subject to a limited scope for individual small-scale multi-house developments of up to 12 houses only or 10% of the existing housing stock, unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that local infrastructure, such as schools, community facilities and water services, are sufficiently developed to cater for a larger residential development.
RSVO 5	To facilitate the expansion of and provision of new mixed-use and employment-generating development within rural settlements and villages at an appropriate size and scale, subject to normal planning requirements and the "good neighbour" principle.
RSVO 6	To seek the improvement, consolidation and expansion of the public lighting and footpath network in rural settlements and villages, including a footpath / cycle link, where appropriate and feasible.
RSVO 7	To facilitate the expansion of the employment and service base in the village.
RSVO 8	To actively support the objectives of the 'Rebuilding Ireland' Strategy to address the shortage of housing.
RSVO 9	To protect groundwater resources within Source Protection Zones.
RSVO 10	To improve recreational/community/social facilities in rural settlements and villages, where appropriate and as resources allow.

RSVO 11	To facilitate additional community facilities and services within the rural settlement and village envelope, where possible.
RSVO 12	To promote and facilitate development that is commensurate with the nature and extent of the existing settlement to support their role as local service centres.
RSVO 13	To ensure new developments do not adversely impact on the setting and/or integrity of the built or natural heritage in or adjacent to rural settlements and villages.
RSVO 14	To facilitate the provision of gateway features and natural edges on the key approaches to rural settlements and villages.
RSVO 15	To facilitate public realm improvements in rural settlements and villages, including signage, public seating, hard and soft landscaping and improvements to the road and footpath network, where appropriate and feasible.
RSVO 16	To consider proposals for small scale, clustered residential development in rural settlements and villages that are not serviced by a wastewater treatment plant. Subject to complying with the most up-to-date EPA Code of Practice Manual for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses.



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